

Issue  
25

# STAR FRONTIERSMAN Magazine

A Star  
Frontiers Alpha  
Dawn Adventure



## Balneum Blue

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#### ON THE COVER:

The cover for Balneum Blue was done by Khairul Hisham.



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### FOREWORD

Welcome to Issue #25 of the StarFrontiersman.

You may have thought that the VOID swallowed us up or maybe Sathar agents destroyed us. But no, in reality, life happens and so there have been delays in getting this Amazing issue published. But have no fear, things are changing.

Thank you to Ben Gorman for the adventure, his lovely wife for proofreading, all of the great artists and everyone else who had input into making this adventure happen.

You should be familiar with the article “Going for a Swim” from Dragon Magazine #110, or the remastered one from Star Frontiersman #24 before playing this adventure. Enjoy this great underwater adventure and hopefully your players won’t drown in the process.

There are major changes going on in the Fandom of the Frontier. For more details, see Tom Stephens’s article at the end of the issue. This was going to be the final issue of the StarFrontiersman but a new and exciting path is being created and all of us at the Star Frontiersman and Frontier Explorer look forward to many more exciting issues in the future.

We ask often and so please take us seriously: If you have any creations, ideas, or art you would like to submit, please do. Even if it is an old file on that ancient media “paper”, email me and let me know and we can see about getting it published. This has and always will be a community magazine.

“To the Frontier!!”  
William Douglass  
Wdouglass1970@gmail.com

It was just supposed to be a job.  
An easy paycheck.  
You show up, take a few samples and  
go home.  
What could possibly go wrong?  
How does that old saying go?  
When something seems too good to  
be true, it usually is.

### Balneum Blue

*A vast array of waves dance,  
sapphire and pearl; shimmering green,  
whitecaps crest upon the expanse,  
intermixed, swirling; serene.*

*Such beauty breathtaking to behold  
as yet by mortal voice untold.*

*But eyes turn aloft to the amber sky  
where in ghostly silence, mist-enfured,  
immense tentacles drape from on high  
and slowly drift about this water-world.*

*Such is this place as seen by this crew;  
such that I now christen it 'Balneum  
Blue'.*

*Entry from the log of Capt. Farley of the Exploration  
ship 'Wanderer'.*

Picture by BlackArroquill @

<http://blackarroquill.deviantart.com>

#### Disclaimer:

Any technical information presented within the context of this work is intended solely for the purpose of playing a game and is not intended for use in any underwater situation. This work is not intended to be an instructional textbook. Technical information presented herein is simply intended to work within the confines of an imaginary setting and has been condensed to include only those aspects that are important to the game mechanics. This means that if practiced in an actual underwater setting, vital information will be left unexposed to the reader and as such, life-threatening situations could result. It is the advice of this author that anyone seeking to learn how to operate in an underwater environment, do so by learning the appropriate skills as taught by an accredited instructor.

#### Author's notes:

This outline is intended to familiarize the Game Master (GM) and players with this previously unknown part of frontier space. A basic adventure is outlined herein to get things started, but once started there are several avenues that can be considered for future play and it is up to the GM to develop them further to fit into their universe.

This adventure can easily be incorporated into any existing campaign or used as a stand-alone adventure, whichever the GM wishes. Unless otherwise noted, this adventure was created with Star Frontiers Alpha Dawn Remastered in mind (which can be found at its new home on the web at: <http://www.starfrontiersman.com/remastered.php>). Any rule-related questions concerning this adventure can be answered by consulting the aforementioned work.



All conversions from metric to American units of measurement have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Unless otherwise stated, it is assumed that the standard modifier for working with alien technology will be -20%.

## Alpha Section:

Abbreviations	
AGS	Artificial Gill Suit
C	Celsius
COFE	Central Office of Freelance Explorers
CM	Centimeter(s)
CR(S)	Credit(s)
DEX	Dexterity
ELF	Extremely Low Frequency
EXP	Experience Points
F	Fahrenheit
FEV	Freelance Exploration Vehicle
FT	Feet
GM	Game Master
HAGS	Hard Artificial Gill Suit
HR(S)	Hour(s)
IM	Initiative Modifier
IN	Inch(es)
INT	Intuition
IR	Infrared
KGS	Kilograms
KM	Kilometer(s)
KPH	Kilometers per Hour.
LBS	Pounds
LDR	Leadership
LOG	Logic
M	Meter(s)
MI	Mile(s)
MIAGS	Military Issue Artificial Gill Suit
MIHAGS	Military Issue Hard Artificial Gill Suit
NPC(s)	Non-player Character(s)
PC(s)	The Player's Character(s)
PS	Punch Score
PER	Personality
PTS	Points
RND(S)	Round(s)
RS	Reaction Speed
RW	Ranged Weapon Attack Score
SQ	Square
SEU	Standard Energy Unit
STA	Stamina
STAT(S)	One (or more) of the base character statistics
STR	Strength
UPF	United Planetary Federation
UV	Ultraviolet
VLF	Very Low Frequency
YRD(S)	Yard(s)

### Alpha Subsection 1:

#### Adventuring Underwater:

Since the vast majority of this adventure takes place underwater some guidelines for continuing the adventure beneath the waves will be presented below. However, there is no way to cover every possible situation that can arise in an underwater setting so it will be incumbent upon the GM to use his best judgment when ruling upon situations outside the scope of this work.

Some of the information presented below relies upon information presented in the 1986 article from issue #110 of Dragon Magazine; 'Going For A Swim', by William Tracy See previous article. Though it is not critical that the GM and PCs have access to the aforementioned work by William Tracy, it is recommended.

**Note:** Since the gravity on Balneum Blue (Ball-knee-um Bloo) is 1.1 atmospheres, the numbers presented below will all be off from standard earth calculations by 10 m (33 ft). As a standard rule of thumb, it can be assumed that each increase or decrease of atmospheres by 0.1 will change the depths associated with underwater operations by + or - 10 m (33 ft), respectively.

### Alpha Subsection 1a:

#### Specific Environmental Hazards:

##### Some words on 'old-school' (current) dive gear:

If the GM plans to use current dive technology in this adventure, then some information is being provided below in order to incorporate such 'old-school' tech in this setting. It should be mentioned that this information is purely optional and for informational purposes only. One of the purposes of this adventure is to delve deep into the notion of extraordinary and astounding science fiction, particularly the exotic technology that is presented within this work.

If the GM so chooses this information can be incorporated into this adventure, especially at the outset. Perhaps the employer is somewhat eccentric and wishes to use only older tech during the exploration of Balneum Blue out of a sense of antiquity? Or perhaps the employer is poor and can only afford older tech? These are questions that are being left up to the GM to answer.

#### Decompression Sickness (the Bends):

In the real world, the body absorbs nitrogen from breathing compressed air (or from holding one's breath). This can be an issue if the diver remains underwater for lengthy periods of time or at great depths. When the diver returns to the surface, the reduction in pressure can cause the nitrogen to form bubbles within the diver's bloodstream. This condition can be deadly if it is not properly managed.

This condition is not particular to underwater activity and can be a factor in other environmental situations where breathing compressed air in pressurized environments is necessary. But those are issues for other bodies of work and fall outside the scope of this document.

In Star Frontiers this situation is circumvented by the use of an Artificial Gill Suit (AGS - found in '[Going For A Swim](#)') which filters breathable air directly from the water and does not use compressed air. Decompression can still occur even when using an AGS, if the AGS malfunctions for whatever reason and the PC in question must hold their breath for a prolonged period of time while rapidly reaching the surface to take a breath.

Treatment involves the use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy in recompression chambers or the use of a freeze field until the injured PC can be treated properly as detailed in, '[Going For A Swim](#)'.

Generally, if the diver spends more time at a certain depth (see table below) than is considered safe, they must spend time gradually coming back to the surface in order to decompress. This time varies and is subject to complicated algorithms that will serve no real purpose in this game setting. For the purpose of the game, suffice it to say that the diver, having spent more time at depth than he should have, should return to the surface no faster than 10 m (33 ft) per minute. This usually involves ascending in 10 m (33 ft) increments, then stopping for 1 minute and repeating until the diver has reached a point about 5 m (16 ft) from the surface. At that point, the diver will usually stay there for an additional 5 minutes as a safety precaution in case there was a malfunction in his timing equipment. This should be sufficient to allow the GM to calculate a reasonable passage of time to simulate the experience within the confines of the game. The numbers presented in this paragraph shall remain constant no matter the gravity on the world where the divers are operating.

Below is a table detailing how long a diver can stay at the listed depth without having to take steps to counteract decompression sickness.

### Time at depth table:

Depth in meters (feet) 1	Depth in meters (feet) 2	Max time spent at depth without decompression:
9 m (30 ft)	0 m (0 ft)	No Limit
15 m (50 ft)	5 m (16 ft)	100 minutes
30 m (100 ft)	20 m (66 ft)	25 minutes
37 m (120 ft)	27 m (89 ft)	15 minutes
43 m (140 ft)	33 m (108 ft)	10 minutes
46 m (150 ft)	36 m (118 ft)	5 minutes

1 = Depth in meters on an earth-like planet with a gravity of 1.0.

2 = Depth in meters on Balneum Blue with a gravity of 1.1 (notice that the adjustments of 0.1 atmospheres reduces the depth by 10 meters!)

It is possible to protect oneself from the effects of decompression sickness, even if a rapid ascent (emergency) is required. This is accomplished by breathing compressed oxygen (rather than compressed air) just prior to, and continuously during, the ascent to the surface. This helps mediate the effects of decompression sickness by helping to

eliminate excess nitrogen from the body much faster than usual. This is not a fool-proof fix however and the best method of avoiding decompression sickness is to ascend slowly with frequent breaks, breathing normally during the process.

### Nitrogen Narcosis:

In situations where a diver descends beyond 20 m (66 ft.), the nitrogen in compressed air can have a detrimental effect on mental processes. This affect manifests in the form of mild to severe intoxication. Euphoria can set in causing the diver to act recklessly. They may become wildly overconfident, combative toward friends attempting to help or may become completely disoriented and simply wander off.

The simple act of returning to the surface will reverse the condition completely.

Again, as with decompression sickness, this malady can also be circumvented by using the advanced technology of Star Frontiers (the AGS or other such equipment listed in Zeta Subsection 1b) as this technology does not use compressed air. Both decompression sickness and nitrogen narcosis have been presented here for the benefit of those GMs that wish to use 'old school' (current) dive gear.

### Maximum depth:

For the purpose of this adventure setting, the maximum depth that a PC can go (unless otherwise specified in their racial description or detailed in '[Going For A Swim](#)') will be 36 m (118 ft.) with standard (current) equipment. If using the AGS, this depth is increased to 100 m (328 ft.). This depth (36 m) is assuming that the diver in question is using standard compressed air (no exotic mixtures) and standard (current) equipment. This depth (36 m) can dramatically increase when specialty gas mixtures and gear is included. Records (on earth) having been noted for dives as deep as 304 m (1,000 ft) and one for 610 m (2,000 ft) using a 'hard suit'.

As a rule of thumb, the pressure increases by one atmosphere for every 10 m of

descent meaning that the average PC can withstand 4.6 atmospheres of pressure at 46 m (150 ft.) on earth which translates to 36 m (118 ft.) on Balneum Blue. This standard rule of thumb translates directly to equipment and vehicles as well.

### Drowning:

Obviously drowning is a very real possibility in a setting such as this where the environment is as dangerous as or even more dangerous than the creatures that occupy it. As in space, every task underwater is fraught with peril and is

magnified many times in difficulty. As a result, a simple accident can prove fatal if it is enough to cause a malfunction in a critical piece of gear separating the individual from direct exposure to the environment.

For the purpose of this work, drowning shall begin to occur whenever a PC finds himself without adequate air to breath. Once that criterion has been met, the PC will be able to hold his breath for a number of turns equal to the character's current STA/5. After that, the PC will begin taking 2d10 points of damage each turn until death.

### Hypothermia:

Hypothermia is a condition in which the core body temperature of an individual drops to a point below that which is necessary for normal metabolism and body functions. This is unlikely to happen in this setting because the PC's equipment is generally artificially warmed by the power regulators of their various suits. Even the new, bio-engineered power armor has its own source of warmth (it is a living creature) to help keep the PCs warm. However, situations could arise that find the PCs in the water, unprotected for a period of time. In a case such as that, this information would be helpful and so, it is being included.

Hypothermia is divided into differing degrees of severity which are associated with very specific sets of debilitation. For the purpose of simplicity, each race will be treated the same in regards to the disabling aspects of each level of severity (as described from a human point of view). In reality however, each race would be different and the GM should feel free to adjust these guidelines as he sees fit to better differentiate between the various races.

### Mild onset hypothermia:

Mild hypothermia is usually distinguished by mild shivering, tachycardia and mild mental confusion. This could be simulated in the game by applying a -15 to all actions.

### Moderate onset hypothermia:

Moderate hypothermia is usually distinguished by violent shivering, labored movement and obvious coordination issues, mental confusion, pale skin and extremities (fingers, toes and lips) may become blue in appearance. This could be simulated in the game by applying a -30 to all actions.

### Severe onset hypothermia:

Severe hypothermia is usually distinguished by decreases in heart and respiratory rates, reduction in blood pressure, difficulty speaking and amnesia. In the latter stages the victim will lose most motor control, walking/swimming will be difficult if not impossible and they will become incoherent. This could be simulated in the game by applying a -60 to all actions.

How long does it take for hypothermia to take hold? This question is impossible to answer definitively as it depends upon a number of factors. In a worst case scenario, a PC can

go from normal to severe onset hypothermia in a matter of minutes. It all depends upon the degree of extreme temperature that is being encountered, the quality of the gear that is being used to insulate the body and the physical condition of the victim.

Since there are so many variables, the following table will attempt to condense it all into a relatively simple mechanic to approximate this dangerous condition. It will not, of course, be perfect and the GM is encouraged to consider his own guidelines if the situation ever arises in his adventure. The following table is considering PCs that are completely or mostly submerged and that have no protective covering or a protective covering that is malfunctioning and no longer adequately retaining or producing heat.

### Hypothermia table:

Temp of Water	Modifier	Mild: -15 to all actions	Moderate: -30 to all actions	Severe: -60 to all actions
27C (80F)	+10%	Roll STA per hour	Roll STA per hour	---
21C (70F)	+00%	Roll STA per hour	Roll STA per hour	Roll STA per hour
16C (60F)	-10%	Roll STA per hour	Roll STA per hour	Roll STA per hour
10C (50F)	-20%	Roll STA per minute	Roll STA per minute	Roll STA per minute
04C (40F)	-30%	Roll STA per minute	Roll STA per minute	Roll STA per minute
-01C (30F)	-40%	Roll STA per minute	Roll STA per minute	Roll STA per minute

The modifier column is the bonus given to the STA at the time of rolling. The negative modifier given for all actions if hypothermia is present does not apply to the hypothermia roll itself. Example, a PC becomes mildly hypothermic. The following hour the GM rolls to determine if the hypothermia advances to moderate, but does not apply the -15% to all actions from the mild hypothermia.

In those areas that say, 'Roll STA per hour' the GM should roll a current STA check each hour to determine if the PC begins to become hypothermic. In all of the 'per hour' categories, falling victim to hypothermia equals the loss of 1 STA per hour until such time as the victim is able to raise their core temperature.

In those areas that say, 'Roll STA per minute', the GM should roll a current STA check each minute to determine if the PC begins to become hypothermic. In all the 'per minute' categories, falling victim to hypothermia equals the loss of 1 STA per minute until such time as the victim is able to raise their core temperature.

Once the core temperature of the PC has been stabilized, they will begin to regain STA at a rate of 1d10 per hour.

Simple warmth and rest is enough for them to quickly rebound. In reality, it is more complicated than this and indeed, there are further complications that could occur but for the purpose of this game, this will suffice.

Though this information could be similarly applied to out-of-water situations, there would be some very different things that could happen or that could impose other modifiers; wind chill and frost bite (which could cause lasting or even permanent damage) for example. These things are not being addressed in this section as that falls outside the scope of this document.

Some temperature ranges for the core four races are detailed below. It will be left up to the GM to determine the specifics of any other races if he wishes to. This table can be utilized if the GM wishes to go into detail for the benefit of a medical PC in order to heighten the RP experience.

### Racial body temperature table:

The following table is being presented to allow the GM to see what temperatures to expect at particular depths in

Race	Average Body Temp	Onset of Hypothermia (mild/moderate/severe)
Dralasite	30C (86.0F)	Degrees C: 25-28/21-25/13-21
---	---	Degrees F: 77-82/69-77/55-69
Human	37C (98.6F)	Degrees C: 32-35/28-32/20-28
---	---	Degrees F: 90-95/82-90/68-82
Vrusk	38C (100.4F)	Degrees C: 33-36/28-33/21-28
---	---	Degrees F: 91-96/83-91/69-83
Yazirian	39C (102.2F)	Degrees C: 34-37/29-34/22-29
---	---	Degrees F: 93-98/85-93/71-85

order to aid in determining adverse effects on PCs who are not adequately protected from the cold (this can occur if their suit/vehicle is damaged such that the heating properties are no longer functioning or if they are out of power to supply their artificial heat source).

### Average Water Temperature at Certain Depths:

Oceanic Zone	Depth	Average Temp
Epipelagic	200 m or less	38C to 15C (100F to 59F)
Mesopelagic	200 m - 1,000 m	5C (41F)
Bathypelagic	1,000 m - 2,000 m	4C (39F)
Abyssalpelagic	2,000 m - 6,000 m	2C (36F)
Hadalpelagic	6,000 m or more	1C (34 F)

### Alpha Subsection 1b: Underwater Perception:

#### Vision:

When attempting to visually perceive the world below the waves without goggles or a mask, images will be blurry and indistinct. Visual range underwater is limited depending upon light sources and water turbidity; but under ideal conditions (crystal clear water on a bright sunny day and within 10 m [33 ft] of the surface), range will be about 10 m (33 ft). However, at 10 m (33 ft) only indistinct blobs will be discernible; essentially just movement and shadow. That object seen 10 m (33 ft) away could be Fred the jolly dralasite or it could just be a lump of coral. At 5 m (16 ft) the viewer will be able to make an educated guess and likely be correct (perhaps 75% of the time). At 2 m (7 ft) the viewer will be able to accurately see things and know what they are, even though no fine details will be discernible.

When attempting to visually survey an area underwater with goggles or a mask things improve considerably, though the viewer is still limited by light sources and water turbidity. Under ideal conditions (crystal clear water on a bright sunny day and within 10 m [33 ft] of the surface), visual range will be about 40 m (131 ft)\*. The viewer will be able to see clearly enough at 40 m (131 ft) to accurately identify objects.

A PC can see with only sunlight as their light source about 3 m (10 ft) away at 30 m (98 ft) deep and about 1 meter (3 ft) away at 60 m (197 ft) deep. Beyond 60 m (197 ft) deep with nothing but natural lighting, visibility will be non-existent. If the PC is using flood lights, their visual range will increase to the maximum of 40 m (131 ft) while a flashlight will allow them to see a maximum of 20 m (66 ft) regardless of depth.

However, lighting conditions are directly affected by turbidity (water cloudiness). Clear turbidity will not change the maximum ranges of visual perception listed above. Low turbidity will reduce visual ranges by 10 m (33 ft), moderate turbidity will reduce visual range by 20 m (66 ft) and high turbidity will reduce visibility by 40 m (131 ft).

What is turbidity? Turbidity is akin to smoke in air. It is a word used to describe the suspended solids in water. It can be the result of sediment stirred up on the bottom and could quickly dissipate. Or it could be the result of a current bringing particulates into an area and increasing the turbidity for an extended period of time or even indefinitely. For the purpose of this document, turbidity will include such things as high concentrations of algae, agitated sediment, dense schools of fish, etc. - anything that reduces vision (even though that is not the traditional definition of the word). It will be left up to the GM to determine what level of turbidity exists in any particular area when visual range becomes a question.

**\*Note:** The quoted 40 m (131 ft) visual range is when using the AGS from 'Going For A Swim'. The AGS' mask is constructed so that it enhances visual acuity and corrects distorted depth perception. If using old school technology, this range would be 30 m (98 ft) maximum and the diver would also suffer a -10% modifier to all actions associated with vision as their depth perception would be off.

### **Infrared detection devices:**

Infrared detection devices are completely impractical to use underwater as their detection range drops to a mere 1 m (3 ft). Their only value is if the PC has no artificial light source and would otherwise be completely blind.

### **Night vision detection devices:**

If only using natural lighting, these devices are only useable if within 3 m (10 ft) of the surface and are subject to the 40 m (131 ft) maximum visual range.

However, these devices can be outfitted with a small blue-green laser that is designed to put out a broader beam. Though it does next to nothing to allow unassisted visual detection, it does provide enough light for a night vision detection device to collect, therefore allowing the device to perform its standard function at any depth.

### **Ultraviolet detection devices:**

These devices are unaffected in their standard operation by underwater environments but only to a maximum depth of 275 m (902 ft) and only during daylight hours. They allow the wearer to see visually to a maximum range of 40 m (131 ft).

These devices can operate independent of any light source during the day as previously described. However, during the night or at depths greater than 275 m (902 ft), they would require the additional use of a UV laser designed to put out a broader beam in order to function.

Ultraviolet detection devices will not function underground (aquatic caverns either wet or dry) without the aid of a UV laser.

Unless noted, other visual devices that enhance vision will function under the constraints of the maximum visual range of 40 m (131 ft) detailed above.

### **Hearing:**

Hearing is a tricky proposition in this environment. On the one hand, it is muffled and this would seem to make sounds more difficult to perceive. This is because hearing (from a human perspective) is adapted to sensing sounds in air, not in water.

On the other hand, sound is transmitted through water at a much greater speed and distance than air. This does not, however, translate into sounds being better perceived by the auditory senses of beings adapted to life above water.

Therefore, though sounds will still be able to be perceived readily enough, the direction from which the sounds come can be difficult to discern. To further complicate matters, distance is also audibly distorted. A sound could seem far off, but be close or the other way around.

### **Radar vs. Sonar:**

Radar uses detection techniques based on the sending and receiving of radio waves. Standard radio waves do not transmit well through water. In fact, they are so poorly transmitted through water as to be virtually useless.

Sonar uses a similar principal as radar. But instead of transmitting radio waves and measuring the distance between the transmission and the reception, sonar uses sound waves. As such, sonar is perfectly designed for use underwater. Though an excellent tool for 'seeing' over greater distances underwater, sonar can still be fooled by large numbers of small objects in close proximity; such as large schools of fish. Such objects can be mistaken for the sea floor or even larger objects moving about when in fact, they are simply small fish.

If the sonar source is projecting from a position out of the water, it will not be able to detect objects under the water.

### **Underwater Radio Communications:**

Traditional radio waves do not work well underwater at all - to the point of being worthless. However, very low frequency (VLF) radio waves are capable of transmitting about 20 m (66 ft) underwater. Such radios are extremely cheap as their effectiveness is questionable. They are however, fairly popular in recreational diving gear as they are inexpensive and readily available.

Extremely low frequency (ELF) radio waves are a different story however. Civilian markets are capable of achieving a range of about 1km (about one fifth of a mile or 1,094 yds) underwater utilizing ELF radio waves and such devices can be applied to AGS, HAGS and civilian submersible craft.

Militarily speaking, the range has been extended to 1.5km (about one third of a mile or 1,640 yds) and an encryption unit has been added.

The figures presented above are for radio communications from one underwater radio source to another underwater radio source. For the purpose of an above water radio source transmitting or receiving to/from an underwater radio source the maximum untethered range will be 1.5 km (about one third of a mile or 1,640 yds).

These ranges can be extended considerably between an underwater source and an above water source if the underwater source surfaces, extends an antenna to within at least 20 m (66 ft) of the surface or releases a tethered antenna buoy that can get to within at least 20 m (66 ft) of the surface. Any of these actions taken by the underwater



source will allow it to conduct normal radio operations and should be handled as usual.

None of this is applicable if the sender and receiver are tethered by a radio cable, in which case the range is only limited by the length of the cable.

#### **Scent and taste perception:**

Perceiving scents and tastes may only be accomplished by PCs whose racial description notes their ability to breathe water.

#### **Alpha Subsection 1c:**

##### **Underwater Movement:**

For the purpose of simplicity, all of the Star Frontiers Alpha Dawn rules for swimming will be employed within the context of this adventure module (ie, all PCs swim at 10 m per turn regardless of race or ability and begin losing STA after swimming for 1 hr).

However, the movement guidelines set forth in the work of Charles A. Vanelli in his article, '*Jetboots, don't fail me now!*' published in 1988 in issue #139 of Dragon Magazine could be used if the GM wished. If any reader would like to incorporate these guidelines into their game as a whole, it is recommended that they print off a copy of his work (which can be found at <http://www.spy.net/~curator/jetboot.htm>) for further information.

#### **Alpha Subsection 1d:**

##### **Underwater Combat:**

##### **Character stats:**

As noted in '*Going For A Swim*', unless the PC's race is amphibious or aquatic, their statistics will be adversely affected in this environment:

*"A character's Dexterity and Reaction Speed scores are reduced by 25 points; also, a character's Strength score is reduced by 35 points when figuring the effects of melee on the Punching Table (page 25, Expanded Games Rules). A minimum score of 10 applies in all cases."*

This adventure module has been written with this in mind.

It should be noted that the gnatha carapace power armor found in Zeta Subsection 1 nullifies this effect.

##### **Melee Combat:**

Any melee attacks that rely upon impact in order to transfer damage to the target will effectively be useless underwater. As such, only bladed weapons intended for short, slashing strokes or stabbing actions will be capable of really accomplishing anything.

If a target is physically grappled, the full STR of that target may be used to stave off the grappling attack.

#### **Throwing Things:**

Throwing attacks are all but useless in an underwater environment. At best a PC might be able to lob an object a meter or so assuming they are properly braced against something solid and exert all their effort toward the goal of flinging that object.

More likely is the notion that the PC will drop an object from a shallower depth. In this way, properly sealed grenades could be dropped upon an enemy below and cause considerable damage through concussive force. The shrapnel from a fragmentation grenade won't be nearly as effective as it would be above water. But the concussive force would be doubled. Unlike what is stated in '*Going For A Swim*', it seems more likely that the fragmentation grenade would effectively work in a very similar fashion as it would above water, except that the damage would be impact-related rather than shrapnel-related.

Regardless, that is a decision that will be left up to the GM and is being expanded upon here simply to supply the GM with another option to choose from.

#### **Technology:**

The technology addressed below will be spoken of in general terms in order to give the GM some footing when attempting to convert some items that have not been covered either in '*Going For A Swim*' or in this work.

#### **Pneumatic/Tension (devices which throw stabilized projectiles like arrows):**

Unless designed specifically for underwater use, all weapons that rely upon forced air or spring tension in order to propel their damaging component downrange will be affected adversely by the resistance of the water. This adverse effect will manifest as all ranges and damage being reduced by 75%.

#### **Explosive Projectile (devices which throw solid slugs like bullets):**

Unfortunately, projectile weapons suffer dramatically from the resistance applied to their projectiles from water. This leaves them with an extremely short range and decidedly reduced power which directly affects their lethality. This makes them all but useless underwater even if they have been adapted for underwater use.

#### **Fire:**

Unless the source of the fire is some sort of chemical reaction as can be found in underwater welding (or hyperbaric welding), weapons that use flame in order to distribute their damage simply are not possible underwater.

**Electricity:**

Unless the operator of the weapon is somehow properly insulated, using a weapon underwater that damages targets using electricity is never a good idea. As the weapon in question, no matter what it is (unless otherwise noted), will act as a burst weapon doing its damage to everything (including the operator!) within a given area every time it is activated.

**Light:**

Traditional laser weapons are next to useless underwater as the light gets diffused quickly and renders the weapon ineffective.

There is a solution however. Blue-green lasers. This type of laser is specifically designed for underwater use. It is identical in all respects (relating to damage, range, accuracy, weight, etc) to standard lasers except that they are specifically designed for underwater use. Unfortunately they cost 50% more to purchase.

**Sound:**

Sonic attacks have the benefit of interacting well with the fluid environment. This doubles the range of all sonic weapons when used underwater. Unfortunately, visibly is rather low even under the best of conditions rendering this advantage basically moot.

**Mental powers (Mentalism/Psionics):**

Mental powers would work as well beneath the waves as above them. The only difficulty may be in acquiring a line of sight and holding it long enough to use the ability.

An exception to this would be any pyrotechnic mental abilities. They would still work on a molecular level, thereby causing their damage, but they will not cause nearby flammable objects to ignite. Instead, the immediate area will begin to boil. Furthermore, as soon as the user stops concentrating, the affect would immediately cease. The GM is, of course, free to rule on this differently as fits into his universe.

# PART I

## Beta Section:

**General Adventure Background/Introduction:**

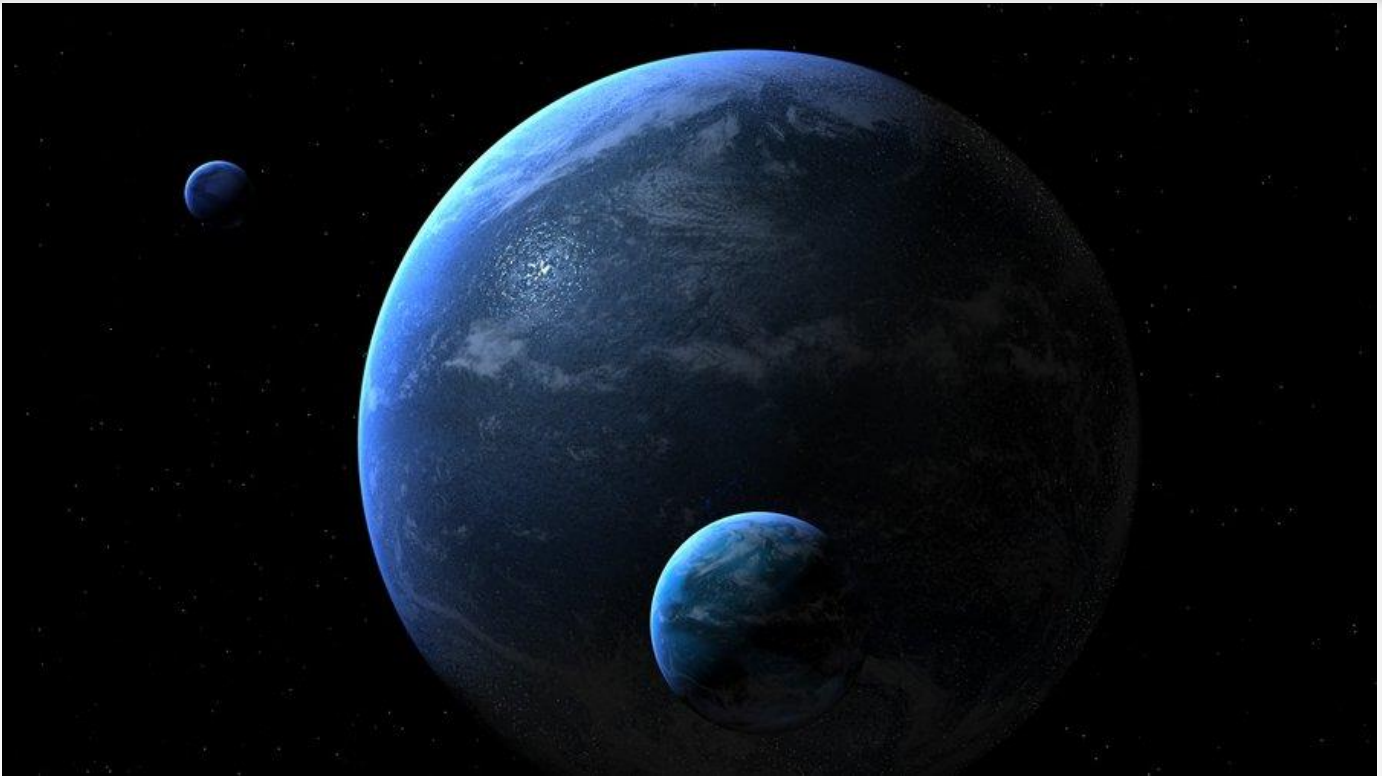
For the most part, this scenario takes place on a 'water world' called Balneum Blue. The names of the star and the planet have already been assigned by the explorer that discovered the system. However, the creatures on Balneum Blue have only been assigned names using a descriptive naming technique for ease in identification for the GM while reading this work. Since the PCs will be the first Frontiersmen to explore this planet it is suggested that the GM allow them to name all of the creatures and plants that they interact with to forevermore be known by those new titles within the GM's universe if the PCs would like. If this path is chosen by the GM perhaps all of the creature names should be completely withheld from the players so that their titles can be imparted without bias later during the course of play.

Balneum Blue is located in the largely unexplored system located in sector Z (x-axis), G (y-axis) on the Star Frontiers 3.01 Map Grid (located at: <http://www.starfrontiersman.com/downloads/starfrontiersman> In the Sheets & Stuff category under the heading July 04, 2007), called Farley's Star. The GM should feel free to move this system's location wherever it would best suit their universe, of course.

**Beta Subsection 1:****System Brief:**

Balneum Blue is a 'super earth' planet comprised mostly of surface water. In addition to Balneum Blue, there are two other planets in the system, both unnamed. The one closest to the star is a Mercury-sized ball of super-hot rock. The other one is a Pluto-sized ball of frozen rock. Neither of these bodies has an atmosphere nor do they contain any minerals worth taking the time to mine.

Both Farley's Star and Balneum Blue have been previously discovered by Captain 'Smilin' Jack Farley, captain of the freelance explorer, Wanderer (or so he claims). Upon discovery, Captain Farley landed upon the planet, Balneum Blue, and took stock of the planet over the course of a couple days. He was able to take some rudimentary core samples and discovered trace amounts of various hard minerals in his first few test samples - which strongly suggested that the planet was a veritable gold mine of extremely rare ores. Furthermore, though the planet is teeming with life, it showed no signs of civilization, meaning that his claim was secure so long as he could get back and properly post it.



Art by sgste @ <http://sgste.deviantart.com/>

And post it he did, naming both of his discoveries at the time he filed his claim at the Central Office of Freelance Explorers (COFE) located in Gran Quivera in the Prenglar system.

Balneum Blue is a water world. Though it is mostly covered in salt water, there are many thousands of very small; atoll-like islands that dot the surface; most of which are 3 sq km or less (2 sq mi). All together these small islands make up only 9.7% of the planet's surface. The atmosphere is mostly nitrogen and oxygen but there is also a fairly high concentration of hydrogen at about 3.75%. The atmosphere is non-toxic by human standards.

System: Farley's Star (mostly unexplored)	
Star	Yellow-Orange (K0)
Total # of planets in the system	3
Habitable World	Balneum Blue
Composition	9.7% land, 90.3% salt water (max ocean depth 15km [9mi]).
Moons	2
Artificial Satellites	None
Diameter	20,673 km/ (12,846 mi)
Gravity	1.1
Length of Day	37 hrs
Length of Year	200 days (16.6 days/month)
Seasons	Mild
Average Temp	20 degrees C +/- 5 degrees (68 degrees F, +/- 9 degrees F)
Prevalent Race	None
Population	None
Trade	None

Most of the planet enjoys a summer-like season resulting in average temperatures reminiscent of tropical climes on a year-round basis. Temperatures at the poles of the planet are generally a bit cooler, down to about 14 degrees C (58 degrees F). Though the planet is comprised mostly of salt water that does not mean there is no fresh water to be found. The atmosphere is thick with moisture, it often rains (at least twice - every day!) and in the mornings and throughout the nights, dense fog banks develop; making freshwater pretty easy to come by above the surface of the sea. Even throughout the warm days the atmosphere is shrouded in a hazy cloak that looks something like smog on planets with heavy industry.

Balneum Blue is indeed loaded with hard minerals as Captain Farley suspects. These types of ores are often located in oceans on earth-like planets. Unfortunately the geochemical properties of these elements typically mean that they are widely dispersed and not found in deposits that are economically viable to extract. This fact makes them somewhat rare. However, unlike most other sources of these ores, the deposits on Balneum Blue are heavily concentrated making the planet extremely valuable for mining operations.

The hard minerals in question are: promethium (radioactive), cerium, gadolinite, praseodymium, lanthanum, neodymium, samarium, europium, terbium, dysprosium, holmium, erbium, thulium, lutetium, lithium, scandium and yttrium. These elements are typically utilized by the UPF industrial block in various critical items including, but not limited to; nuclear batteries, lasers, masers and various alloying agents.

As well as being rich in hard minerals, the planet also boasts a dense array of lifeforms, the vast majority of which are aquatic in nature. There is however, a small percentage of lifeforms that lives on the atoll-like islands that can be found here and there around the planet. Most of these creatures have either risen from the waves or adapted to life on land or in the air, or they are more primitive life forms like insects, worms, bacteria and the like.

Dry land on Balneum Blue, what little there is of it, is also host to some plant life; the vast majority of which is innocuous and unexciting. Most of the vegetation that can be found on these islands is adapted to life in a tropical climate and to silica-rich and/or limestone-like soils. They tend to be smaller plants - the largest of which may grow to a height of 3 m (10 ft). Balneum Blue has a vast array of bromeliads (air plants) that could keep a botanist happy for years examining and trying to identify them. At all times of the year some species of bromeliad can be seen floating in the hydrogen-rich air, presumably being carried to other islands around the globe.

Gaseous hydrogen in the planet's atmosphere is an important part of the ecosystem on Balneum Blue. Two of the largest creatures on the planet have adapted a very close relationship with the gas. The aerial hydrozoan and the sky grazer both rely on hydrogen to survive. In the case of the sky grazer, it relies upon the gas as a food source as well as a source of buoyancy which enables the creature to remain aloft at the higher altitudes where it can feed in relative peace. While the aerial hydrozoan uses the gas to elevate its immense bulk just above the waves where it can capture its prey in the water below through ambush. Of course, it goes without saying that hydrogen is equally important to the aquatic creatures of the planet for obvious reasons.

In the vast expanse that is the ocean of Balneum Blue, animal life can be found at all depths. Plants meanwhile are restricted to depths of about 275 m (902 ft). At that depth the flora is exclusively comprised of various species of red-algae kelp and seaweed. They are infused with phycoerythrin pigment which makes them red in color, but also allows them to photosynthesize in the dim light conditions that exist at that depth.

## Captain Farley's classified ad:

Join my crew and expand your mind!  
Are you stuck in some office cubicle,  
dreaming of the stars?  
The man got you down?  
Tired of Starlaw telling you what you can  
and can't do?  
Stims may be illegal on most worlds, but  
they aren't out in the black!  
Captain Farley has a strict 'Don't ask,  
don't tell' policy.  
Come fly with me and be free!

Smilin' Jack



Exploration & Charters

Captain Farley's ship, the 'Wanderer'  
needs a crew to check out the vastness of  
space and see what's out there!  
Smilin' Jack Farley, freelance explorer: It's  
out there, just waitin' to be found and I  
know where to look!

Chronocom Subspace Relay#  
736529810052017  
VidCom me baby!

Pursuant to frontier code #7864356912-  
86713-79B, this advertisement is not  
endorsed, condoned, approved of or  
otherwise supported by this advertising  
agency in any fashion whatsoever. Please  
see our legal disclaimer for further  
information.

**Beta Subsection 2:****Employment:**

The GM is, of course, free to involve his players however he wishes in this adventure. For the purpose of this writing however, it will be assumed that the GM is utilizing the outline being detailed here.

Some words concerning Captain Farley:

Captain 'Smilin' Jack Farley is intended to be portrayed as a loveable rogue, a free wheelin', happy-go-lucky sort of guy and wannabe poet who would give you the shirt off his back if you were in need - someone who couldn't possibly be nefarious. To that end, the GM should feel free to use Farley's poem from above in a creative fashion in order to garner the sympathy and support of the PCs. Perhaps he has it laminated on a plaque that he keeps on the bridge of the Wanderer. This is all part of the creative license of the GM and is being left up to him. But this is an important facet of the NPC and plays a role later in the adventure since Captain Farley is actually quite duplicitous.

Farley's friendly, stoner persona is designed to draw in losers who would be barely capable of doing their jobs as all he needs is a disposable workforce to fulfill the requirements of the COFE. Farley and Holmes are, in fact, well-practiced in this type of deception as they have conducted similar operations before. They are cold-hearted sociopaths and have no moral issue with disposing of the characters in order to insure that they get the pay they were promised. To date, this operation will be the biggest payday that these two have ever received so they will be more than happy to lie, cheat and/or kill in order to attain it.

**Beta Subsection 2a:****Placing the call:**

At some point in the game the GM should bring the attention of the PCs to the above classified add which will be printed in the local news vid and can also be heard on any of the pedestrian monitors scattered around the city (or wherever the PCs happen to be hanging out at the time). It can be found pasted on the side of a building on an old-fashioned poster and can also be picked up on any of the subspace advertisement or entertainment channels.

If the PCs use the chronocom subspace relay number to contact Smilin' Jack Farley, they will be treated to a recorded message that states:

*"Well smack my bum and call me Nancy! Someone actually called this number? Hello? Hellooo? Is anybody there? Oh - wait, is this thing on?"*

*"[garbled voice in the background]"*

*"Yeah? It's recording? Oh! Okay. Um, yeah - if you wanna join my crew I'll be holding interviews at the Subspace Bar and Grille located in Port Loren on Gran Quivera, Prenglar*

*for the next 30 days GST. Look 'em up - they have a most excellent hookah bar baby!"*

*"[garbled voice in the background]"*

*"Oh - right, the job. I need a crew! I need scientists; geologists, meteorologists, oceanographers, botanists, zoologists, physicists, astronomers, engineers and maybe a being or two who knows their way around the business end of a blaster! I need ten people - those with the best qualifications get to go! We'll discuss the terms of employment at the interview. See ya there baby!"*

*[long, static-filled pause]*

*"[garbled voice in the background]"*

*"Switch? This switch right he..."*

*CLICK*

Assuming the PCs decide to follow up on this potential job, they should make their way to Gran Quivera over the course of the next 30 days GST. Once on Gran Quivera the PCs can use the local directory to find the Subspace Bar and Grille easily enough.

The GM is encouraged to fill the intervening 30 days with adventure as he sees fit - whether en route to Gran Quivera aboard a ship or kicking around Gran Quivera before or after the interview.

**Beta Subsection 2b:****The Interview:**

Once the PCs find the **Subspace Bar and Grille**, they will easily be able to locate Captain Farley. Simply asking around will cause knowing smirks and the occasional chuckle as the informants point him out.

Smilin' Jack Farley is a 50-something human male with a receding salt-and-pepper hairline and a graying mustache. He perpetually wears a pair of Bermuda shorts and a garishly colored loose-fitting, button-down, short-sleeved shirt that is usually some odd pattern (it closely resembles a tie-dyed treatment). He almost always wears sunglasses, even when they aren't needed. There is always a cigarette or cigar dangling from his lips. He is an easy going, happy-go-lucky sort of person that seems to have some minor mental issues, likely related to past (or present?) drug use. He also likes to imbibe heavily of alcohol. He prefers to be called Cap'n Jack or Smilin' Jack.

During the interview he is only interested in a few things: Can the PC read? Do they have a scientific background and if so, what science? Can they handle themselves in a firefight? Fistfight? Are they currently running from Starlaw and if so, will that trouble catch up with them on his ship?

Of course any PC will be accepted as having the 'best qualifications' to fill the job slot. There are ten open slots to be filled. The captain and the first officer (Wendal Holmes) are two NPCs that will be along regardless (for a total of at least 12 beings). If the GM has more PCs than the ten available slots he can simply modify the recorded message to include a number of slots needed to encompass his group as the ship's life support is capable of handling 24 people. If he has fewer players than needed, he can fill the empty slots with whichever NPCs he wishes (except Jack Farley and Wendal Holmes of course).

## Beta Subsection 2c:

### The Job:

The job is to fill a slot as a crew member aboard the Wanderer on an extended freelance exploration mission. The system to be explored has been previously discovered and subsequently claimed by Captain Farley. He assures the prospective employees that he is certain there is rare ore to be found on the planet but they need to spend some time prospecting and doing a full survey so that they can sell the claim to a large corporation and turn a nice profit.

The Wanderer (Captain Farley's ship) is fully equipped to conduct underwater operations. They will be taking core samples from here and there around the planet, analyzing those samples and recording their results. As well, they will be conducting full meteorological, oceanographic, geographic, zoological and botanical surveys as dictated by the COFE and their claims division in order to fully certify the claim. The GM should be sure to give the PCs plenty of time to play up this aspect of the adventure as scientific exploration is what they signed on to do.

Captain Farley and Wendal Holmes will always remain with the ship. Any missions away from the ship will be undertaken by the PCs. Unfortunately the NPCs are all fairly useless except as pertains to their scientific field of expertise. Since the ship is fully equipped with various labs pertaining to their respective scientific fields, they will be right at home running the core sampler or in the labs doing research and studying specimens that are collected by the PCs.

## Beta Subsection 2d:

### Pay:

Daily pay will be left up to the GM to determine based upon the pay/employment and monetary system that he uses in his universe. Something on the order of perhaps 100cr per day (+/-) seems appropriate.

This is what the PCs will be told:

The PCs will be furnished with basic equipment, food and housing as part of the employment package. They will also be temporarily added to Captain Farley's insurance policy for as long as they are part of the crew - just in case something catastrophic happens.

In addition to standard daily pay, the PCs will be eligible for a share of any extraordinary finds (if any) that the survey might uncover. The share will be a percentage equal to the number of crew members.

And finally, in addition to the above, all crew members will be eligible for a share of the sale of the claim once the planetary survey has been completed.

This pay schedule will be as follows:

Captain Farley will get 50% and the remaining monies will be equally distributed to the rest of the crew. This sum will be 1,100,000cr after Farley's share has been deducted. Assuming that there are 11 crew members, each one will get 100,000cr from the sale of the claim.

## Beta Subsection 3:

### Employer Provided Equipment:

Captain Farley will be covering all of the associated ship costs; fuel, maintenance and jump overhauls.

Freelance Exploration Vessel (FEV), 'Wanderer'	
HS	03
HP	20
ADF	04
MR	04
DCR	29
Crew Size	12
Ship Dimensions	
Length	40 m (131 ft)
Diameter	16 m (52 ft)
Hatches	01
Engines	02 (Atomic; size A)
Weapons	
Defenses	RH, dorsal and ventral heavy weapon mounts*.
Other Equipment	
	Workpod (x1 - not rated for underwater operations), Radar, Sonar, Energy Sensors, Hull Cameras, Skin Sensors, Intercom, Subspace Radio, Videocom Radio (civilian ELF capable), 8 very powerful floodlights capable of penetrating clear water to a range of 100 m (328 ft) with a 50 m (164 ft) diameter flood effect (the mounts are such that four lights can be swiveled to cover the same area within a 360 degree view) & life support for 12 people (with backup LS for 12 people if both systems are employed at the same time then 24 people can be sustained).

\* The heavy weapon mounts are suitable for mounting any heavy (small) arm. These mounts are not designed for full-blown starship weapons and any weapons that can fit in these mounts are effectively worthless for use in space.

These mounts are intended solely for ship defense after it has landed on a planet during exploration and prospecting operations.

These mounts are capable of acquiring any target within a 360 degree view; with one mount covering the dorsal part of the ship while the other mount covers the ventral portion. If left to automatically target hostiles, the mounts will have a 65% chance to hit. They can be manually operated by a gunner which will override the automatic targeting function and rely upon the gunner's skill to hit instead.

Weapons placed in these mounts that require energy to fire will draw that energy directly from the ship. Weapons that utilize some external source of ammunition will be able to be reloaded from inside the ship.

The Wanderer boasts a gimbaled bridge meaning that it rotates to facilitate both space and atmospheric flight. It locks in the vertical position for space flight and in the horizontal position for atmospheric flight. When maneuvering in an atmosphere, all crew members must be on the bridge, most of which will be strapped into seats in one of the two rounded alcoves behind the flight crew seats. There are 24 total seats on the bridge though those seats located in the alcoves are simple 'jump seats' designed to be folded into the hull until needed.

Note: This ship is a special design and functions as an exploration craft. It has a full laboratory section that encompasses several scientific disciplines (geology, botany,

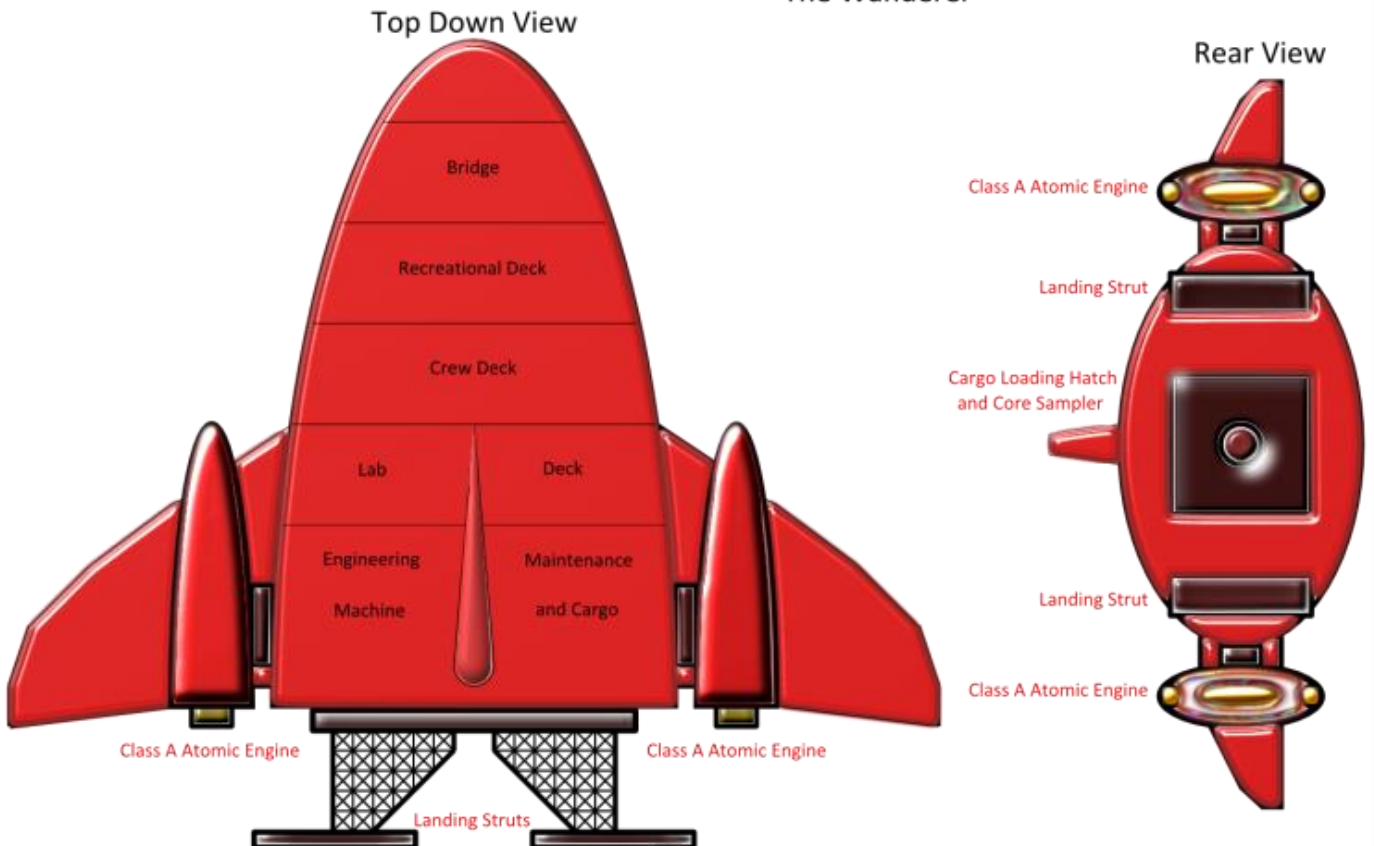
zoology, medical, chemistry, oceanography, physics, meteorology and astronomy). It is also equipped with a drilling rig, making it capable of taking core samples from a planetary body. It carries 500, 3m (10ft) drill pipes; enough pipe to drill 1,500m (4921ft). Each pipe weighs 5kg (11lbs), making the entire bundle weigh in at 2,500kg (5,512lbs). It routinely carries 6 rotary-style drill bits designed for the task.

The core sampler is a drill rig that is permanently attached to the ship in the engineering section. The drill rig can function whether the external hatch is open or closed; the drill shaft operates through a sealed aperture in the door. It has been designed for underwater operations and can withstand depths of up to 1,609 m (1 mile) on a standard earth-like planet with a gravity of 1.0 (or 1,599 m on Balneum Blue). Because of this design, the hull is extra thick (providing extra structural points for the purpose of resolving small arms damage). There are also numerous extra bulkheads around the inside of the ship comprised of federanium for additional depth-related crush resistance.

This ship has a structural hull capacity of 450 pts. Specifically targeting the hull with small arms (or other, similar attacks) in order to breach the hull would require that the hull is purposely targeted for that reason and that sustained fire is directed at the same spot. Random shots from incidental fire will effectively cause no damage.

The ship also has an e-clip recharging unit built in. It allows 4 long e-clips to be charged per 20 minutes (one charger with four slots). It also has 2 ports in the side so that it can

## The Wanderer



recharge backpacks and backpacks if needed at a rate of 1 SEU per minute.

## Beta Subsection 3a:

### Ship Equipment:

The Wanderer has two blue-green heavy lasers stored in cargo storage bins. These heavy lasers are intended to be mounted in the external weapon mounts affixed to the dorsal and ventral sides of the ship once the planet has been reached. They are identical to standard heavy lasers except that they will function underwater and they cost 50% more than a standard heavy laser.

In addition to the heavy lasers, the ship also has:

1	Manta mini-sub (equipped with a civilian ELF radio)
2	Hand-held sonar scanners
1	AGS (equipped with a civilian ELF radio) per crew member with 8 extras (two per core race) in case some get damaged
1	Personal watersled per crew member (with two long e-clips each)
6	Months of food for the entire crew (mostly in the form of self-stable rations)
1	HAGS (equipped with a civilian ELF radio) per crew member with at least one suit available for each PC

## Beta Subsection 3b:

### Emergency Equipment and Weapons Lockers:

The emergency equipment and weapons lockers aboard the ship have some basic supplies provided by Captain Farley. These lockers are designed to withstand a severe impact event in the case of a crash landing so that these supplies are likely to remain intact for use in an emergency situation.

The inventory of supplies is as follows:

Emergency Equipment	
1	Standard sea survival pack per crew member
1	Emergency rebreather mask per crew member
1	Life bubble per crew member
4	Medkits (waterproof)
75	Long e-clips (for use in powering suits, watersleds, hand scanners, etc)
6	Power Back Packs
12	Power Belt Packs

**Note:** The standard sea survival pack and the life bubble are always stored together in a hard backpack that is capable of being integrated into the HAGS and can be attached (in a backpack-like fashion) to any AGS or HAGS using Velcro straps. Though it is common practice for this 'pack' to be taken on every outing away from the ship, the pack can be cumbersome. It is therefore incumbent upon the PCs to let the GM know if/when they will take the pack with them. It is assumed that the emergency rebreather mask is always taken with the PC(s) as one is attached to every AGS and

HAGS as standard emergency gear and would have to purposely be removed before each dive.

### Weapons Lockers (all weapons are standard weapons - not designed for underwater use)

2	Auto-pistols with 100 rnds of ammunition for each one
5	Laser pistols with 3 long e-clips for each one.
2	Gyrojet pistols with 100 rnds of ammunition for each one
3	Pump action scatterguns with 100 rnds of ammunition for each one

## Gamma Section:

### The Adventure Begins!

Once the PCs have had their interview and been hired by Captain Farley, they will have some time in Port Loren to do some shopping if they wish. They have already gotten a briefing about their upcoming job so they are fully aware that they will be going to a water world. They can therefore, purchase specialty gear for the environment. The GM should use the guidelines presented in section Alpha Subsection 1 above and in the '[Going For A Swim](#)' article from Dragon Magazine to help determine what can and can not be adapted to underwater environments. Since such equipment is not a terribly common request, the GM should consider increasing the price ranges for such equipment by perhaps as much as 20-30%.

It should be noted that there are no weapons adapted for underwater use stored in the ship's weapons locker. If any PCs are concerned about defending themselves while working for Captain Farley, they should consider buying something that will function underwater.

Once the PCs have finished their shopping spree in Port Loren it will be time to board the Wanderer and get underway!

The PCs may encounter some difficulties en route to Farley's Star if the GM so wishes. Those details will not be addressed in this work. Captain Farley will immediately be recognized as a happy-go-lucky roguish short of fellow. He is a bit forgetful and easily distracted. He lives up to the claim on his classified ad as running his ship with a 'don't ask don't tell' atmosphere, leaving everyone aboard to do as they please so long as they aren't harming anyone else or endangering the ship and/or job. His first officer, Wendal Holmes, is a bit sterner - but not much. Happily he doesn't seem to have Captain Farley's mental deficiencies and tends to pick up a lot of Farley's slack. They are on good terms and seem to be very good friends.



**Gamma Subsection 1:****Balneum Blue:**

The trip from Prenglar to Farley's Star will take 33 days assuming the GM doesn't waylay the Wanderer somewhere along the way.

Once in the system, the Wanderer rotates to point its engines toward the planet and begins its deceleration. From space, Balneum Blue can barely be seen beneath a cloak of fluffy clouds, though occasionally the surface can be viewed, gleaming brilliant blue.

The ship enters orbit and after a short while preparing and plotting the course vectors, the ship begins its decent into the atmosphere. The ride is a bit bumpy, but nothing unusual. The seating galleries, where the non-flight crew sit during atmospheric operations, have portholes and monitors that can show live feed of the surroundings from the ship's hull cameras.

At first the images viewed are of nothing more than thick clouds and condensation building up on the portholes and camera lenses.

But then Captain Farley can be heard saying, "Contact bearing 31 degrees port. Looks like its going to transect our flight path Holmes - roll starboard 6 degrees then swing around to port and we'll take a look."

First Officer Holmes nudges the yolk and the Wanderer responds, rolling gently to the right before Holmes changes direction back to port. A few moments later the ship drops below the cloud cover enough to see an immense creature lazily floating in the air. The thing is easily 1.5 km (1,640 yds) in length and half a kilometer (547 yds.) wide! It has no wings, though a couple odd-looking appendages look something like wings, except that they are not moving. It is unclear exactly how the thing is staying aloft. At the fore end of the creature is a three-jawed orifice that is gaping wide open as it drifts along, presumably feeding on something in the atmosphere.

Captain Farley calls out, "*Fascinating! Just a sampling of the marvels that we're gonna find here I am sure!*", then grinning widely he winks and adds, "*Just wait till you see the giant tentacled creatures hovering over the ocean! That'll blow your mind man!*"

Throughout the flight, no signs of any civilization are apparent.

The sky is very crowded the closer to the surface the ship gets. There are millions of avian creatures flying every which way and a potentially damaging mid-air collision could result depending upon what the GM wishes to do. This will be left entirely up to the GM and could be a factor anytime that the ship is airborne. It is suggested that if the GM chooses to have the PCs placed in such peril, that the damage to the ship be minor - perhaps resulting in only

some mild turbulence and with some repairs needing to be conducted upon landing.

First Officer Holmes gets the Wanderer back on track in short order. Meanwhile, Captain Farley begins explaining the landing.

*"There is some land here and there, just a bunch of islands really, nothing major. We're gonna land on some of these islands and spend a few days collecting some samples. Most of our stay on this planet will be spent underwater and it'll take as long as it takes! We've enough food and supplies for 6 months so settle in and plan to stay awhile if need be. "*

A few minutes later Holmes aligns the craft for landing and sets it down on one of the small, sandy islands. A few moments longer and the whine of the engines ceases as he powers down.

**Gamma Subsection 2:****Land Ho!**

The seal around the tail hatch releases, allowing a gust of warm, moist air to rush into the Wanderer as the crew uses the hydraulic lift, which is large enough to manage an explorer, to lower everyone down to the sandy island. Though warm, it is not blazing hot as the sky is somewhat overcast, lending a bit of relief from the distant star. On occasion the dim outline of one of the unnamed moons can be seen hanging large in the daytime sky as it peeks through the cloud cover.

The air smells strongly of the sea and overhead fish-like 'birds' wheel and dive, filling the air with their strangely piercing cries. In the distance, perhaps 1,000 m (3,281 ft) off shore, a huge jellyfish-like creature seems to float in the air. Its tentacles dangle down into the water and periodically the water churns and boils beneath it. Flashes of what appears to be electrical energy can clearly be seen coursing along the tentacles and dancing about on the surface of the ocean. Every now and then the creature lifts a tentacle with some other creature clutched in its grasp and brings it to its 'bell' where the other creature quickly disappears. The huge jellyfish-like thing is perhaps 1,500 m (4,921 ft.) in length with a 'bell' that is about 500 m (1,640 ft.) wide, though it is difficult to tell for sure at this range. A handful more of these odd creatures can be seen here and there around the area in all directions.

The island is small, perhaps 3 square kilometers (1.3 sq. mi) and is covered in squat, broad-leafed trees only about 3 m (10 ft.) in height. In almost every tree a small (1 m [3 ft.] long, 2 m [7 ft.] wing span), ray-like avian creature can be found. They are light blue in color with no feathers and they seem almost bat-like in their mannerisms, even roosting upside down by using their feet to grasp their perch. The island is covered in the tell-tale, splattered, white and blue designs left by their excrement.

Captain Farley plans to start with his project by collecting

and analyzing samples from dry land before moving on to the underwater portion of the planetary survey. There are only a handful of dangerous/semi-dangerous creatures that frequent dry land on Balneum Blue. The GM should consult the encounter tables below (Zeta Subsection 1g) for further information on them. Meanwhile, the PCs will be split into groups with some being tasked with collecting samples of everything they see and others being tasked with operating the core sampler. It will take the crew 12 hours to collect their specimens and take the core sample at the desired depth; which also includes packing and unpacking the drill rig and pipe, etc. After that, the crew will turn in to discuss their plans for the next day.

The plans for the following day will be to secure the ship and fly to a different island some distance from their current location. Once there, they will spend 12 hrs collecting samples and taking the core sample.

The GM is free to allow for mid-air collisions with the local avian-like life forms if he so chooses. This could force the crew to have to spend a day or more working on ship repairs and slow up their time collecting samples.

The captain plans to repeat this process 5 times. Each time that the Wanderer takes to the air the GM should allow for a 10% chance that someone looking out a porthole or viewing one of the monitors spots a huge shadow just beneath the surface of the sea. It is apparent that the object is circular and stationary. If ever such a thing is spotted, Captain Farley will make note of its position and announce that they may come back to that location once the planetary survey is complete in a few months. What has been spotted is the top of one of the many underwater gnatha cities.

The rain on Balneum Blue comes every single day and nearly at the exact same times; you could almost set your chronograph by them (usually by midday and then again about two hours later).

At night both moons become visible, one much smaller than the other. The larger one is the one that can be viewed during the day.

### **Gamma Subsection 3:**

#### **Hello, What's This?**

Upon landing on the fourth island, the team responsible for collecting specimens will stumble across an old impact crater that measures approximately 10 m (33 ft.) in diameter and 5 m (16 ft.) deep. After a series of successful skill checks, (based in geological sciences), the GM may inform the PCs that the small crater appears to be between 25 to 35 years old. If the PCs use a magnetic or geological scanner (or both) they will find a high density of metals; molybdenum, iridium, nickel and chromium (further analysis in a laboratory setting will reveal that this is a strong, heat-resistant alloy that is not terribly common, but

is known to the worlds of the frontier). Furthermore, these scanners will pinpoint a high concentration of that same metal in a specific location about 3 m (10 ft.) north of the center of the crater and about 1.5 m (5 ft.) beneath the soil.

If the PCs dig the object out of the sand they will find a metallic canister that is about 0.6 m (2 feet) in length and about 12 cm (5 in) in diameter (the metallic fragments scattered around the crater appear to have been some sort of containment vessel or vehicle for the canister). The metal that the container is made from does not exhibit any signs of oxidation or corrosion. There is a series of 6 oval depressions spanning the circumference of the canister at both ends - each depression is about 3 cm (1 in) long and half as wide. There seems to be no way to open the canister. Any scans (using portable scanning devices) run on the object at the crater will show it to be free of any harmful radiation, chemicals or poisons.

If the PCs report the object, Captain Farley will have them bring it back to the ship for further examination. If the PCs just bring it back, Captain Farley will have them take it to the lab for further examination.

If a microscopic examination of the canister is done, it will reveal that about 13 cm (5 in) from each end is a seam that runs around the entire circumference of the canister. This seam is not visible to the naked eye. Furthermore, the analysis will reveal that there is a microstamp on the canister which is also not visible to the naked eye.

The script is alien in origin and consists of glyphs comprised of geometric shapes. This language can come from whatever 'bad guy' race the GM wishes (existing or homegrown, whatever). First Officer Holmes claims to have seen that written language before when he was serving in the armed forces. He identifies it as sathar script (or whatever race the GM wishes to use instead).

For the purpose of this work, the sathar were intended to have been the 'source' of this canister. However, it is well understood that the sathar are always poking around and sometimes a GM may wish to have a bit of diversity in his adventures - or perhaps the GM isn't even using the sathar in his universe. For those reasons the 'source' of this mysterious canister is being left entirely up to the GM. It will also be left up to the GM to determine whether this written language is known to the PCs (or if they have access to a data base aboard ship that can identify it - if they do then the GM should confirm what it is).

Regardless of the source of the canister, the results will be the same. Now that the canister has been disturbed, it will eventually spring open. When this happens is up to the GM but it should occur at a point when the canister is not being quarantined and when it will affect a maximum number of crew members (i.e., PCs) - preferably when being taken aboard the ship to be examined in the lab or even upon initial discovery at the crater.

When the canister 'springs open', both end-caps simultaneously and instantly rotate, opening the oval depressions near each end of the canister. When this happens, an invisible, odorless gas will be expelled from the container. In the atmosphere (or inside the ship), the gas will immediately affect an area 5 m in diameter (16 ft) and will expand to encompass an area of 500 m (1,640 ft) within 10 turns. If it is calm this will translate into a circular area. If it is windy at all, this will translate into an oval-shaped area extending downwind.

Once the crew (or portion thereof) has been exposed to the gas they will be relieved to find that they seem to suffer no immediate ill effects from it. A subsequent examination by a medically-trained PC or NPC will find no forthcoming ill effects either.

A proper examination of the canister as well as an analysis of the gas residue inside, will find that the canister contained a weaponized prionic pathogen that had been engineered to target a specific DNA structure. Now that the medical scientist knows what to look for, further tests on the crew members that have been affected by the gas will show that their bodies now contain the same DNA that the prionic pathogen was designed to target, though the alien DNA is completely inert in all of the crew members that have been contaminated. Furthermore, those same tests will show that all of the crew members affected are now carriers of this prionic pathogen. This pathogen seems to have been purposely tailored to act this way and does not seem to pose a threat to the carrier. It is important that the GM note who has and who has not been infused with this inert gnatha DNA. The reason will become apparent later.

If the medical scientist doing all of this sleuthing is an NPC, their theory will be that this canister was likely just one of many and that the majority of life on this planet is likely a carrier of this engineered pathogen. Checking the samples already collected confirms that everything currently in the inventory is contaminated with this prionic pathogen. However, since this planet is mostly water, it was likely an accident that this particular canister landed on an island. This makes the NPC wonder what will be found underwater.

It takes 6 days for the crew to finish the land survey since much of the day was lost after the encounter with the canister and the subsequent personnel examinations and medical testing. By the end of the 6th day the NPC (or PC, whichever the case may be) in charge of the medical lab will have arrived at their conclusion.

#### **Gamma Subsection 4:**

##### **Day 7:**

Day seven comes around and the crew of the Wanderer has finally finished their land survey. So far the pathogen has turned up in everything they have sampled and it will continue to turn up throughout the process.

While conducting core sampling operations underwater, there will be two teams as before; one operating the drill rig and one that is outside the ship collecting samples. Depending on the depth at each sampling site, the team in the water will be wearing either their AGS or HAGS and the GM should roll for encounters on the appropriate encounter table.

The crew of the Wanderer will be able to complete one core sample per day and needs to complete 100 core samples in order to form an accurate profile of Captain Farley's claim for the bean counters back in Port Loren.

#### **Gamma Subsection 5:**

##### **Day 90:**

At some point during day 90 of underwater operations the NPC detailed below in Gamma Subsection 6 (if Banrog is an available NPC it is suggested that he be used here as his skill set and personality is applicable) slips an advanced chronocom (found in issue #08 of Star Frontiersman Magazine, p.04) into the rebreather mask carrying case of any one of the PCs. Since this is an emergency piece of equipment that everyone is likely to take with them whenever they venture out of the ship, but never really look at, this small chronocom is likely to go unnoticed for some while. The GM should only reveal this if the PC in question specifically looks through the rebreather's carrying case.

#### **Gamma Subsection 6:**

##### **Day 93:**

On the 93th day of underwater operations an accident will claim the life of one of the NPCs (GM's choice; Banrog if he's available). During standard core sampling operations, a pressure release valve will become overloaded and cause a blowout, rupturing the pipe and fatally skewering the aforementioned NPC.

If any of the PCs get curious and poke around the ruptured equipment, they may be able to find the remaining parts of the valve. Upon closer inspection it appears that the release mechanism of the valve has somehow become welded closed. This would be a difficult thing to find unless the PCs knew exactly what to look for.

What the PCs do with this information is up to them of course. If they keep it quiet then no one seems to be the wiser. If they bring it to the attention of Captain Farley or First Officer Holmes, they will be distraught, thank the PCs for their diligence and explain that they will make a note of it in the log and start an investigation immediately.

If the PCs ask after the investigation at any point thereafter they will be informed that the metal inside the valve was friction welded due to galling and that the investigation has been closed. The valve is presumably in the possession of Captain Farley and no longer available to the PCs unless the GM allows otherwise of course.

If the PCs take this information to the physics lab and inquire after the veracity of the claim, they will find that it is an entirely possible explanation.

## Gamma Subsection 7:

### Day 99:

On the 99th day of underwater operations any one (or all) of the PCs happens to be on the bridge with the First Officer and the Captain as the ship is being moved to a new drilling location, when an alert sounds from the sonar unit. The unit has a heads-up display console just above the pilot's seat making it nearly impossible for anyone on the bridge to miss seeing it unless they are simply not paying any attention to it. The console shows something huge looming in the inky distance. Captain Farley clears his throat and sets down his coffee mug. He glances over his shoulder at those present and then returns his attention to the display, reaching up to silence the 'chirping' alarm.

*"Ehm, what's this? Looks to be huge - it's off the screen, so more than 1,000 meters man!"*

A quick glance at the sonar shows the depth at about 900 m (2,953 ft.), with another 100 m (328 ft) to go to get to the sea floor. The range to the target is currently at about 1,000 m (3,281 ft.).

First Officer Holmes glances at Captain Farley who nods slightly. Holmes shrugs and positions two more of the ship's

floodlights forward then moves the Wanderer to within 40 m (131 ft.) for a closer look.

Four of the powerful floodlights mounted on the outside of the ship are able to swivel around and light up the area out to 100 m (328 ft). Those on the bridge are treated to what appears to be a huge coral column. They cannot see the edges of it in any direction at the moment. What they can see though are numerous irregular openings that appear to be covered in a clear film or membrane. They look amazingly enough like doors or windows!

With a furrowed brow of consternation, Captain Farley says to Holmes, "Station-keeping Holmes ... and kill the lights for a second."

First Officer Holmes switches the flood lights off and immediately a soft, blue glow can be seen emanating from the structure. The glow looks strikingly similar to an energy field of some kind.

*"Find a flat spot and set 'er down Holmes." says Captain Farley. Then he turns to those on the bridge and says, "Suit up people! Let's go see what that thing is."*

Art by Khairul Hisham



## PART II

### Delta Section:

#### Into The Unknown:

Of course the PCs are the ones chosen to suit up and investigate the structure. The PCs can of course, take a couple NPCs along with them if they wish.

At this depth, the PCs will need to be wearing the HAGS underwater systems in order to survive. They are nearly at the extent of the depth that the suits are capable of protecting against.

Hopefully the PCs have been in the practice of taking their emergency equipment and backup power supplies with them as this will be the last time they see the Wanderer on Balneum Blue.

#### Delta Subsection 1:

##### Video Conferencing:

At some point the PC with the NPC's advanced chronocom will find it. But it is hoped that they will not find it until sometime after they have left the ship to investigate the structure. When they do they will find it alternating between the time and a message that reads, 'Video Memory Full'. In addition, there will be a small red LED flashing on the side of the device.

Stored in the video memory of the chronocom is a series of 50 short videos recorded by the NPC detailed in Gamma Subsection 5-6. He (or she) starts out with a handful of videos that seem like paranoid ravings about the Captain and First Officer being 'on to him' and 'out to kill him'. Buried in the video files toward the end of the memory content are digital downloads of a handful of letters sent on company letterhead directed to Captain Farley.

#### These documents prove that:

- 1) Farley and Holmes had been hired to conduct a false survey mission in order to complete the filing of a fraudulent claim so that they could sell the claim to the corporation. The corporation would then be free to mine to their heart's content having done away with the indigenous population (as they would never have been granted clearance to mine on a planet with an advanced civilization residing on it). If the issue ever came up they could simply cite the 'found' canister by the original survey team - which is properly filed back at COFE in Port Loren and blame the genocide on the sathar (or whomever the GM decided to use as the scapegoat).
- 2) The company created the bio-weapon and attacked this planet with it, leaving a canister on a specific island a couple decades ago at the time of the attack specifically to be found as 'evidence'; it took a while for the victims to be

completely eradicated. The plan was to plant evidence and pin the attack on the sathar.

3) The company has had a team of scientists attempting to figure out the artifacts found in the now-vacant cities for some time, but they could never figure the technology out. So they collected samples and took them back to their corporate headquarters and have written off the vacant cities. They see huge profits over the course of many decades just from the mining and figure that the artifacts are minor and secondary to that. If they're eventually able to figure them out, then good but it's no big deal if they never figure them out.

4) If any of the survey crew finds out what's going on they are to be disposed of.

***Why Farley kept these documents is unknown, perhaps as insurance in case things went sideways with the company.***

The company in question can be whatever mega corp the GM wishes it to be with the understanding that this mega corporation will have participated in genocide, murder and fraud. It can be one that is of the GM's own devising or it can be an existing mega corporation within Star Frontiers Cannon.

If it is one of the cannon corporations, it should be realized that this situation will cause a great deal of turmoil within the various branches of government and with a number of mega corporations. It is likely though, if the PCs are able to get this information to the proper authorities, that the current corporation management would be put on trial and made an example of while the corporation itself would probably continue to exist. There would be new management and perhaps that would mean that the corporation would become a changed entity (working within the law or maybe even become a force for good in the frontier), but all of this is up to the GM to decide.

How the NPC came into possession of these documents is never divulged in his videos, but he had a lot of expertise with computers. Perhaps he was able to hack into the Captain's personal logs.

#### Delta Subsection 2:

##### What's Behind Door Number One?

Once suited up, the PCs (and NPCs if any were taken along) enter the airlock at the tail of the ship and head out into the crushing depths. It takes them several moments to reach the structure.

The area where this structure is located is devoid of plant-life as light is unable to penetrate to this depth. However, on the back side of the structure is a sheer cliff wall that stretches toward the surface to a point at which plant-life can grow. If the PCs ever find themselves at this level of the structure they may be able to look over vast fields of red kelp that are rooted to the sea floor and that stretch all the

way to the surface. These fields are all encompassed in square rock walls on the sea floor that are about 2 m (7 ft) high.

First they come to the gently glowing energy field. Touching this field causes no harm whatsoever. In fact, other than visually perceiving its proximity, none of the PC's other senses register it. The energy field seems to extend about 20 m (66 ft.) in front of the coral monolith. It also seems to completely envelope the structure - at least that is the obvious assumption that can be made judging from the available information.

The structure is about 2,000 m (6,562 ft.) in diameter and ascends all the way to the surface - or rather, just below the surface (about 1,000 m or 3,281 ft.). The energy field does indeed envelope the entire structure.

As cautious as the PCs may be when interacting with this energy field, they will eventually have to pass through it as they cannot enter the structure without first passing this field. Passing through the field is not difficult at all as it provides no resistance to their passage. It provides no resistance because it is attuned to react when presented with a specific external inertial force traveling at a certain velocity threshold or presenting a specific application of force. Simply swimming past at a leisurely speed will not cause the field to react but violently stabbing it with a vibroknife will.

Once beyond the energy field they are quickly able to locate a clear, membrane-covered opening that is roughly 6 m by 6 m (20 ft. by 20 ft.). Peering into the chamber beyond this membrane reveals what appears to be a room that is approximately 12 m by 12 m (40 ft. x 40 ft.). There is a similar membrane-covered opening on the opposite wall.

Again, if the PCs wish to continue their investigation they will have to pass through this opening. As it turns out this is not difficult at all. Simply approaching the opening (coming to within 1 m or 3 ft.) causes the membrane to retract beyond the top of the 'door frame' allowing access (or egress) to the chamber beyond.

Once the PCs have entered this chamber and passed beyond 1 m (3 ft.) of the doorway, the membrane will quickly re-cover the opening and the room becomes flooded with a pale green, bio-luminescent light emanating from the ceiling. Within moments the room begins to empty of all water. This process takes about 10 turns, but at the end of it, the room is empty of water except for shallow pools and puddles scattered here and there around the irregular, coral-like floor. As soon as the water recedes the membrane of the opposite wall retracts, allowing access to another room beyond.

If the PCs remove the dive helmets of their HAGS they will discover that the air in the room is breathable and actually fresh as though it has just been pumped in.

It is obvious after having passed through the outside doorway that the external walls of this structure are about 6 m (20 ft.) thick. The membrane retracts upward, but remains exposed upon the inner wall of the chamber as the PCs enter and it can be seen re-covering the opening after they move past. This membrane seems organic in nature and is also about 6 m (20 ft.) thick.

### **Delta Subsection 3:**

#### **Left Behind:**

Almost at the same time that the membrane covering the internal doorway retracts, the PCs communications equipment crackles to life.

One of the NPCs is screaming into the radio:

*"The Captain and Holmes have gone crazy! They're shooting anything that moves! They're ..."*

The radio crackles for a moment then goes silent. There was an awful lot of background noise (screams and weapon's fire) making it difficult to tell who was screaming into the radio. The GM can pick whomever he wishes of the remaining NPCs to have made the transmission and allow the PCs a roll to determine if they can recognize the voice.

After a few moments, while the PCs are considering their options, Captain Farley's voice comes over the radio.

*"Aw man what a friggin' mess! Had to be done though, too much at stake."*

He keeps the mic keyed and he can be heard chuckling before he begins speaking again.

*"Hey, I really gotta thank you grunts. You lot did all this work for us. That's something right? But the guys back at corporate have it in for ya. Nothin' personal yeah? Oh well, it's been fun workin' with y'all but there's a few good lads from corporate security that want to speak with ya. They'll be along shortly with your severance and don't think you can hide from 'em in that structure, you can swim all you want but you'll just die tired! Don't think you'll find anythin' to help you in there either. Our scientists have been playin' with that stuff for a while now and have nothin' to show for it. Anyway, me and Holmes have got an appointment to keep and time's a wastin'."*

There's a pause in Farley's speech as he keeps the mic keyed but turns his face away to address Holmes making his voice sound a bit farther away,

*"Wrap up that launch sequence Wendal and let's get outa here. The goons will take care of these guys. I'll go dump the bodies out of the airlock."*

Click. The radio mic is released and all goes quiet.

If the PCs try to contact the Wanderer via radio they will be unable to get a reply. Farley has either turned off the radio or is ignoring them. The Wanderer is in the final stages of the launch sequence and the PCs have absolutely no hope of reaching the ship before it takes off. Of course, they can't know that and if they attempt to make a dash for the ship they will ultimately fail to arrive before the ship speeds away.

If the PCs do go back outside of the structure they will eventually be able to see numerous class E chemical light sticks drifting down toward them. These chemical lights are emitting a green light that is fairly effective at illuminating a large area (each one illuminates a 40 m [131 ft] area). Then, several floodlights come into view as a ship rapidly approaches their position from above. All of these lights are far off (in respect to visual ranges underwater) but they are bright lights and can be seen - just not in any detail.

If the PCs happen to have a sonar scanner and use it to scan the incoming vessel they will be able to determine (from its dimensions) that the ship is hull size 3. It is obvious that some kind of corporate paramilitary group is about to be close on their heels.

The ship is a starship designed for underwater operations like the Wanderer, but it has military-grade weapons intended for use in space and is capable of carrying and deploying a couple squads of soldiers, which it is currently in the process of doing.

#### **Delta Subsection 4:**

##### **Hide & Seek:**

The corporation has sent 2 full squads of mercenaries (ie, corporate security) to clean up the stragglers from Farley's ship (any surviving PCs and NPCs). Each squad consists of 10 mercenaries (see Mercenaries below in the NPC section). Their orders are to eliminate any non-company personnel found in the vicinity of the Wanderer's last coordinates. It is expected that the targets will seek refuge inside the structure. It is perfectly fine for the GM to increase or decrease the number of mercenaries as appropriate for their PC group size. However, bear in mind that this force is intended to be overpowering in order to herd the PCs into the structure where most of the action will take place.

If the PCs are outside of the structure and using a portable sonar scanner they will be able to see the ship come to a halt about 100 m (328 ft) away. A few moments will pass and then the sonar unit will suddenly register 20 new objects in the water (roughly human-sized). These new targets are approaching the PCs at a speed of about 10kph (they are using personal watersleds). As soon as these 20 human-sized targets enter the water and begin moving toward the PCs, the ship rapidly ascends and quickly leaves the area.

If the PCs don't happen to have a portable sonar scanner, then none of this will be visible in any detail until either the PCs or the mercenaries are within maximum visual range as detailed above in Alpha Subsection 1 (the chem lights dropped by the ship are more than adequate for UV or night vision goggles to gather the light and function as normal).

Assuming the PCs head into the structure to seek shelter from the incoming mercenaries and that they intend to flee from the overwhelming odds, then they will have a few moments head start and will be able to enter the structure as before; moving past the airlock room a short while before the mercenaries can reach the outer doorway.

Since this situation can play out numerous ways, this writing will focus on some of the intervening rooms that the PCs can pass into while evading the mercenaries and leave all the fine details to the whim of the GM.

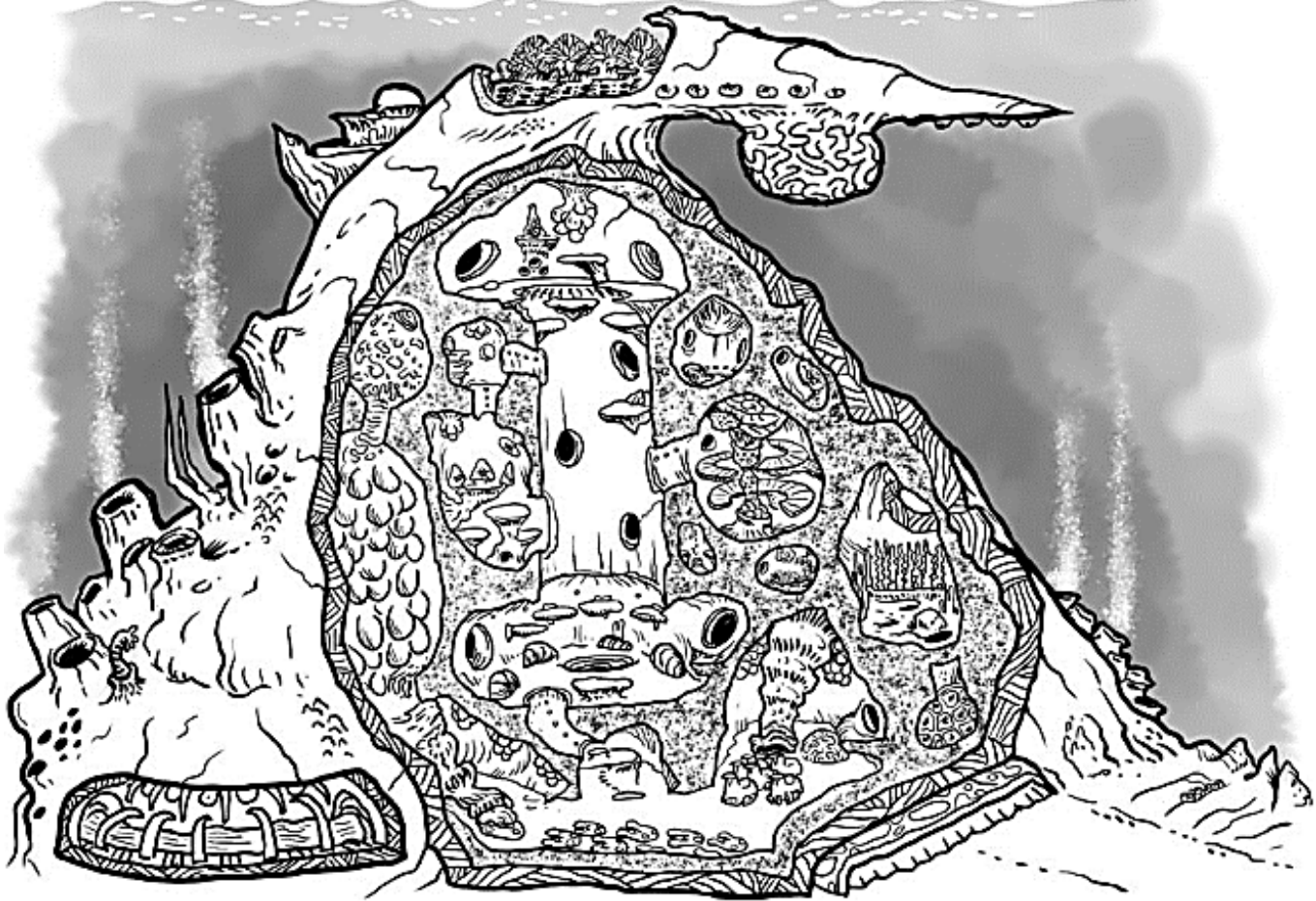
#### **Delta Subsection 4a:**

##### **General Conditions Throughout The Structure:**

Water will eventually become a concern. The PCs were sent on what they believed to be a standard exploratory mission to investigate the structure and they may have elected to leave their emergency pack with their survival rations and water on the ship. There are no sources of fresh water inside this structure so the PCs will have to use their wits to survive since, even if they brought their emergency packs along they have only enough water (10 liters [2.25 gal]) for about 4 days if they ration it.

There is really only one practical method by which the PCs can drink the sea water around them given the equipment and tools that they (will) have at hand. They can desalinate the water using evaporation (boiling a pot of sea water and capturing the steam). In order to accomplish this they will need to have a heat source in order to boil the water and produce steam, and they will have to have a way to collect that steam so that it can condense and be captured as purified, fresh water. They could use parts of their HAGS to do this but the process would be tedious and slow.

Once whatever rations they have with them are all used up, food will also become a concern. Though they have plenty of food sources around them, even in the structure, so they will not starve - or even come close. They can even stay nutritionally balanced if they eat the kelp from the kelp fields near the structure or eat some of the sea grasses, seaweeds and algae that can be found at the top level of the structure. Other than plant matter, there are plenty of fish or other creatures readily available for protein sources.



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Immersion injuries are also a concern since the PCs will be wet most of the time. If allowed to remain wet for prolonged periods of time their epidermis may begin to blister and die. Gangrene is the end result which can be life threatening. This can be avoided if the PCs spend as much time as possible out of their diving suits and resting somewhere that is actually dry. Some of the below-described coral nodules can serve this purpose if they can find ones that are large enough to accommodate whichever PC is attempting to stay dry. The kinetic algae from Zeta Subsection 1 below could be particularly helpful here.

The GM should feel free to have random areas - even entire levels - be flooded as this structure is designed to be completely flooded or completely dry or have absolutely random areas flooded willy-nilly. It is therefore being left up to the whims of the GM how wet or dry the inside of this structure will be.

Aside from mercenaries, the PCs will also face a few natural hazards that have taken up residence inside the structure. Creature like the clawed worm, earwig, sea flea and the tunneling worm have invaded the vacated structures around the globe and now call them home.

Clawed worms can move freely anywhere they wish inside the structure(s), though they will completely avoid the

uppermost levels wherever natural light can penetrate. They can freely roam in 'dry' areas or flooded areas and can pass through airlocks or other gnatha barriers with ease. Of all the natural hazards within the structure(s) these will be the most common and the most fearsome.

Earwigs will be able to be found only in areas of the structure where natural light can penetrate and will be especially common on the uppermost level.

Sea fleas will be more common in the lowest level of the structure(s), living in the sediment at the bottom of the holding tanks. They will also be prevalent out in the kelp 'fields' as the naturally clear sea floor is ideal habitat for them.

Tunneling worms can be found in any flooded space that has access to open water. They cannot survive in dry areas and cannot, therefore, pass through airlocks to infest a flooded chamber that has no other access to water otherwise. Tunneling worm segments can filter into the structures and end up in pooled water here and there.

Beyond the airlock room will be a short hallway, about 15 m (49 ft) in length. This hallway is representative of all the hallways that will be found throughout this structure. It is about 6 m (20 ft) wide and about 6 m (20 ft) high. All of the surfaces in this structure (unless otherwise noted) should be assumed to be rough and coral-like from floor to ceiling and wall to wall.



There are constant rivulets of seawater running down the walls and trickling over the floors to disappear into drain holes at the base of the walls. Water even drips randomly from the ceiling. This makes for a 'dry' environment that is very damp with the sounds of gurgling water echoing all about. This gurgling effect modifies all hearing related perception checks by -10%. As well, the air temperature inside this structure is maintained at about 16 degrees C (about 60 degrees F). The floors and walls are seemingly heated as is the water trickling along them; keeping them all at about 24 degrees C (75 degrees F).

The air in these 'dry' areas is warm and very humid but completely breathable by human standards.

In most areas (an area being defined as a length of hallway or a room), the soft glow of bio-luminescent light emanates from some strange bacteria-like growths that cover much of the ceiling. This soft glow provides adequate light to see by, but it is dim and can cast odd, very dark shadows here and there. This glow is usually limited to a certain color in any one area. These colors are significant as they denote specific areas within the city and always correspond to a similarly color-coded placard which can be found marking the entrance into such areas. Oftentimes these placards can also be found in areas that are lit by a different color than the placard. This is a way of pointing the direction to the area that corresponds to the color on the placard. In these cases, the placard will be in the shape of a wedge, or triangle that points in the direction that needs to be traveled in order to reach the area indicated by the placard.

#### The colors of the placards are

Green	Public areas - shops, food courts, etc.
Yellow	Bio-tech workshops, maintenance, etc.
Red	Administrative
Orange	Private housing

In larger rooms coral-like nodules grow right out of the floors, walls and ceilings and almost appear to be furniture, though they certainly would not be terribly comfortable by human standards. They range in size from office-chair dimensions to something more like a large couch. Most have a similar shape; something like what a door knob looks like. Occasionally a wall will be broken by what seems like a window that is covered in a thick, transparent, membrane-like barrier. These openings provide a view of the sea beyond, unfortunately without any light sources outside, there isn't much to see. Occasionally a bio-luminescent creature of some type or another will pass by. If it weren't for the enormity of the situation it would be beautiful.

### Delta Subsection 4b:

#### Reception Room:

The reception room is quite large - a rough estimate placing it at about 300 m (984 ft.) wide by 300 m (984 ft.) long by 6 m (20 ft.) high. The entire room is bathed in the soft, green glow of bio-luminescent light filtering down from the bacterial colonies living on the ceiling overhead. As far as the PCs can tell there appear to be open doorways, or cave-like rooms, spaced fairly evenly apart at about 3 m (10 ft.). These cave-like rooms are all irregular, but of a similar size and basic shape. They are about 3 m (10 ft.) wide, 3 m (10 ft.) high and 5 m (16 ft.) deep. They appear to be shop-like stalls, though all are empty except for coral-like protrusions from the walls here and there or odd coral-like nodules (detailed below).

There are hundreds of coral-like nodules scattered around the entire room, over the floor, walls and ceiling, though primarily over the floor. Some floor space is devoid of these odd coral-like nodules but most of it is densely covered.

Occasionally a recessed area is found in the floor that is filled with water at about 3 m (10 ft.) deep and about 10 m (33 ft.) by 10 m (33 ft.) square. These odd pools have the aforementioned coral-like nodules evenly spaced at the bottom. As well, these pools have small squid-like creatures swimming around in them and snail-like mollusks creeping along the walls and floors.

This area could easily be likened to the food court of any large shopping mall.

About halfway across this room will be a hallway to the left and one to the right. These hallways are obvious because they break up the pattern of cave-like rooms. These hallways have a 5% slope leading down and are marked on either side of the entrance by a sickly looking, yellow panel that seems to serve no other purpose than to be a color-coded placard. The placard glows from within (all such placards are bio-luminescent). Along the ceiling of this hallway are bio-luminescent bacteria colonies that glow yellow rather than the green that the PCs have been used to in the other areas that they have visited.

On the opposite wall (from the entrance) another hallway can be seen positioned in about the center of that wall. It has a 5% slope leading up. The entrance to that hallway is flanked by green, glowing placards and the bacterial colonies on the ceiling are glowing green.

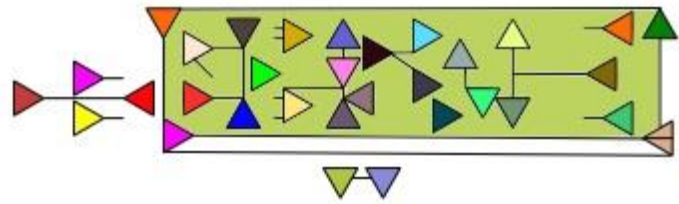
**Delta Subsection 4c:****Going Down:**

Since the mercenaries are not far behind, the PCs may end up coming to these chambers first as the hallways leading here are also the first hallways they will find leaving the Reception room. This could be a stroke of good luck for the PCs as most of what they will need to survive in this structure will be found here. Aside from that, any creatures that have been bio-engineered and that reside in this area will be completely docile to the PCs (more on this below) but not to the mercenaries.

Heading down the ramp, the group finds themselves traveling in a straight line, more or less. They walk for nearly 50 m (164 ft.) before this ramp turns in a gentle semi-circle back upon itself just before it opens up into a huge room. The entire ceiling (which is about 50 m [164 ft] overhead) is covered with yellow-glowing bacterial colonies giving the chamber an otherworldly feel. The room is so huge that it is impossible to see the other side unassisted by visual enhancement devices (2,000 m [6,562 ft] in diameter). The PCs have entered this room more or less in the center. It is circular in nature with a honey comb-like floor. Each rough square that makes up the floor is about 50 m (164 ft) by 50 m (164 ft) and is filled with sea water. The floor is actually nothing more than walkways between these floor-level tanks. Every now and then something breaks the surface in these tanks - some of these things are large and some are small. Without entering the tanks it is difficult to determine exactly what is in them, but whatever is contained within seems to be alive.

The walkways between the tanks are about 5 m (16 ft) wide with no guardrails. As with everything else in this place, these walkways are composed of a coral-like substance. Beneath each walkway is what appears to be a weir-like device. Any PCs with an environmental skill may roll to determine its function. If successful they will be able to determine that the spacing in the coral-like bars that make up the device seems to be designed so that smaller creatures in the pools to the left can swim through the mesh and into the adjacent tank. Presumably the bigger specimens will be housed in the tanks to the extreme right side of the chamber. These weir-like devices only occur from left to right and not from front to back. Perhaps a single creature type is housed in each row. However, without actually entering the water and checking, it will be difficult to be certain.

Each tank also has an irregularly shaped, fleshy, organic console of sorts associated with it. They can be somewhat round, triangular or square but they all seem to serve the same purpose. If any of the PCs that have been infused with inert gnatha DNA touch any of these consoles they will light up (bio-luminescently) and look very much like a computer interface - only biological in nature; the colors of this lighting seem to be able to reproduce any color in the spectrum. In addition to the color variations, the console has some form of cuneiform-like symbology inscribed on it.



**Example of gnatha cuneiform**

Any interaction with these alien 'computer consoles' will be done at -20% (standard modifier for working with alien technology). If successful, the PCs will be able to determine that these consoles are used to manually affect water flow and water levels in the tanks.

Directly in the middle of the chamber (this is where the PCs exit the hallway) there are no tanks. Instead, there is a 100 m (328 ft.) wide swath of sea floor with numerous clusters of hydrothermal vents that stretch the entire length of the pool (2,000 m [6,562 ft.]). These vents are submerged in sea water that is about 40 m (131 ft.) deep. The water is literally boiling hot. The steam coming off the boiling pool is caught by gigantic fan-like structures in the ceiling. This steam actuates these fans for some unknown reason. If the PCs wish, they could fashion some receptacles from some of the larger parts of their HAGS in order to capture the steam for drinking water. The HAGS will be unharmed during this process and will be able to be put back together easily and reused for its intended purpose.

As well, evenly spaced along this central pool are four huge, seaweed-like stalks that measure about 50 m (164 ft) in diameter and grow up from the sea floor, and into the ceiling above. These gigantic stalks are glowing a faint blue color that is very similar (if not identical) to the color of the strange energy field outside the structure. Though it is extremely difficult to ascertain, if a PC makes a successful Intuition roll -30% they will be able to notice an almost imperceptible, continuous swaying motion of the four, blue-glowing stalks - almost as if in time with wave action generated at the surface (If they ever go higher in the structure this will become more and more obvious). This is indeed the case and is the source of power that keeps the immense inertia shield that surrounds the structure continuously energized. This shield is capable of absorbing 100% of the inertia damage directed at it up to 2,500 points. It regenerates its damage capacity by 100 points per minute.

After the PCs cross the halfway point of this room they will notice that the tanks have increased in size. The first 8 rows of tanks are 75 m (246 ft.) by 75 m (246 ft.) with the last 3 rows being 100 m (328 ft.) by 100 m (328 ft.). Occasionally some really large creatures briefly break the surface. Rough estimates will put these creatures at between 15 m - 50 m (49 ft. - 164 ft.) in length, depending upon the size of the

tank and whether it is farther left or right of center.

If the PCs ever venture all the way to the left of this level they will find that there seems to be an intake of fresh sea water along this wall that feeds all of the tanks. They will also be able to locate what appear to be incubation chambers - laboratories if you will - where eggs and/or embryos are engineered before being placed in the first tank directly below the labs. Here the PCs will find banks of organic interface consoles as well as boxes made of coral and trays made of seaweed-like fibers. There are tanks here that house a whole host of creatures. A successful environmental skill check will reveal that these creatures are likely breeding stock. As with everything else in this huge chamber, a fresh influx of sea water automatically transports in food and carries away waste from the tanks of these breeding stock creatures. One of the first things that will be noticed about these operations however, is that many of these tanks housing the breeding stock are empty - presumably the occupants died off long ago and decayed, becoming part of the food chain.

Similarly, if they ever go all the way to the right of this room they will find that there seems to be a drainage point to allow the water and waste products to be carried away naturally. As well, it looks as though the creatures in the tanks can find their way back out into the open sea from here once they pass the weir-like device. In this way this room seems to act as a biological conveyor belt of sorts - on a huge scale. Everything seems to be completely automated from what the PCs can tell. Whatever the creatures are in these tanks (and there must be many thousands of them), they seem to get their food directly from the environment within the tank. However, a successful environmental skill check -20% (for interacting with alien devices) will allow the PCs to deduce that after a decade or more of inattention, the system is in the beginning stages of breaking down as there are no new juvenile creatures being added at the front of the conveyor belt. In another 5 years (+/-) this system will cease to function as designed.

All of the creatures in this immense room can be found in the Gnatha Bio-tech section listed below. Since the PCs had been infused with inert gnatha DNA when they handled the bio-weapon canister on the island shortly after they first arrived, all of the creatures in this room will react to them as if they were gnatha. This is the link that the corporate scientists have overlooked and is the whole reason why they are unable to interact with this technology. This is not the case with the PCs.

If the PCs enter any of these tanks or even just reach into them they will be able to interact with the creatures contained therein in the fashion that the creatures were designed to interact. The creatures in the tanks, no matter how fierce they may be, will be tame and docile toward the PCs. These creatures are living organisms; genetically designed for certain functions and they perform those

functions whenever the opportunity is presented for them to do so.

So, for example, if a PC dips his hand into a tank that houses Inertial cavitation creatures, the nearest one will swim up and entwine itself around the hand and lower arm of the PC in question. The creature knows what to do and is largely idiot-proof. So the PC(s) will not have a -20% modifier when interacting with any of the gnatha bio-tech weapons, armor or any other wearable bio-tech items (perhaps the GM wishes to add some of his own). At first, this might seem like an attack to the PCs. But once attached, the creature will cause no damage and the PCs may eventually figure out that by flexing certain muscles in their lower arm, the creature will react in certain ways (please see **Zeta Subsection 1** for further details).

In regards to the gnatha bio-tech 'vehicles', they can be found in the larger tanks. The PCs would have to actually enter the tank with the desired creature in order to embark. Once inside the creature, the PCs would be subject to a -20% modifier to use the alien technology (please see Zeta Subsection 1a for further details).

It is important to note that any PCs or NPCs (if the PCs brought any of them along) that have not been infused with gnatha DNA may be attacked by creatures in these tanks if they reach their hands in or otherwise enter any of them. This could result in an uncontaminated NPC being spectacularly eaten by one of the larger denizens of the tanks before the eyes of the PCs! How and when (and even, if) these attacks take place is entirely up to the GM and could present a really big problem to the PCs if their plans include using any of this bio-technology and including any uncontaminated personnel.

Positioned about in the center of the chamber, but on the opposite side of the room from where they entered is a hallway identical to the one that they used to get down to this level. This hallway leads upward at a 5% slope. Following this hallway leads the PCs back to the Reception Room (Delta Subsection 4b). They could arrive back at the Reception room by going up the same ramp that they just descended as well - but then they might run into a group of mercenaries if they did so.

This unrestrained access to alien bio-technology presents the PCs with an advantage over any mercenary forces sent after them by the corporation. Though the mercenaries certainly will not be easy to overcome, the PCs should at least be on even footing with them. Another very important aspect of this bio-tech access is to enable the PCs to survive indefinitely on the planet depending upon the GMs vision of the adventure and how expansive he wishes to make it.

**Delta Subsection 4d:****Going Up:**

If the PCs choose to head up the ramp at the center of the far wall of the Reception Room, they will find themselves climbing about 25 m (82 ft.) to a different level of the structure marked by a small landing. At this landing they can go down a hallway to their left or right, or continue climbing upward along the course they were just traveling.

If they turn either left or right they will find red glowing placards and the bacterial colonies are also glowing red.

Traveling through this area will reveal numerous cave-like alcoves on either side of the hallway. Some of these alcoves have membrane-covered outer doors that open into small foyers with another membrane-covered door before entering the room beyond. It can be seen, from outside, that the room beyond is flooded with water. A successful environmental skill check will reveal that it is supposed to be that way and that the foyer serves as an airlock. If the outside door is opened and then closed, the foyer will fill with water and then the inner door will automatically open. After a few moments that inner door will automatically close and the foyer will be quickly drained, leaving it ready for the next passerby.

Most of these cavern suites have those same, odd, coral-like nodules protruding from the floor and in the case of the flooded suites; the nodules are also on the walls and ceilings. Closely associated with these nodules are organic interface consoles that are very similar to those found in Delta Subsection 4c.

The entire level is a maze of corridors and cavern suites as described above.

**Delta Subsection 4e:****Government Housing:**

If the PCs chose to continue along their route back at the landing the upward-sloping hallway will still be green marked with orange-colored triangles pointing upward. The remainder of the structure is made up of levels that are essentially the same as the description below except for the very top. Of course, this structure is completely irregular meaning that no two rooms are the same, they're just similar.

The ramp proceeds ahead until it levels out at a landing giving the traveler a choice of going left, right or continuing upward. The hallways here are bathed in a dim orange light coming from the bacterial colonies on the ceiling. These hallways leading left and right will eventually lead to the outer wall of the structure and following it around in a circular fashion. Every 20 m (66 ft.) will be another hallway that goes back toward the center of the structure. Evenly spaced along all of these hallways will be membrane-covered doors that lead to small foyers with a second membrane-covered doorway beyond that which leads into

a chamber that is about 10 m (33 ft.) by 20 m (66 ft.). Though all of the hallways are bathed in the orange glow of the bacterial colonies overhead, the interiors of all of these chambers are bathed in random colored light which is not restricted to the colors that the PCs have seen thus far; they can be any color. If the PC ever happen to go back over ground that they have previously covered, the GM may allow them to make a Intuition roll. Success will reveal that a previously passed room was glowing a different color! Perhaps the bacterial colonies are capable of changing the color that they glow.

Further examination of the membrane doors and the small foyers common to all of these chambers reveals that these are small airlocks and these rooms appear to be capable of being flooded if desired.

Evenly spaced around the outer wall the PCs will encounter large balcony areas that are closed off by airlocks - usually four separate airlocks per balcony. These balconies allow for ingress or egress without having to descend to the bottom level. The airlock membranes (as with everywhere else that they exist in this structure) allow a fairly clear view of the space beyond. As the PCs climb higher and higher they will eventually be able to see out of these airlock doors or any one of the multitude of 'windows' that they periodically encounter whenever they are walking along the outer wall of the structure, as the natural light from the surface begins to filter down to their level. Eventually they will be able to see the vast kelp forests that they were not able to see previously. At some point they may be able to spot some of the coral walls that have been built around the kelp out in the 'fields' if ever the GM wishes to allow them to find some kelp 'fields' near enough the structure and the surface to allow them to be seen.

This kelp is a staple of the diet of the gnatha; the primary source of plant matter that they consumed. These kelp fields are actually agricultural plots.

**Delta Subsection 4f:****Skylights:**

Eventually the PCs will come to the uppermost level of the structure. As they get nearer and nearer the surface they will find that the structure sways with the wave action to a greater and greater degree. Along the way to this point they will have noticed that the closer to the top the more they can see that the chambers along the way have been flooded. The GM may allow for an environmental skill roll if he wishes. Success will mean that the PC(s) will understand that the sensation of swaying due to wave action will have been lessened a bit by filling the room with water. Perhaps these chambers will have been less desirable to reside in.

The last level is simply a huge domed chamber which is prodigiously pocked with 'skylight-like', membrane-covered windows. This chamber is completely open and is filled with water. The PCs must pass through an airlock in order to gain entrance here. From the level below, there are four such airlock entrances to this chamber situated adjacent to the four external balconies.

This is a duplicated, shallow sea ecosystem. The floor of the chamber is covered in shallow sea plants and shallow sea creatures frolic freely about the area. In essence, it is a garden.

This chamber is positioned a scant 3 m (10 ft) beneath the waves, thus allowing ample sunlight to penetrate and nurture the ecosystem. There are a multitude of small holes all around the outer wall of this chamber which seems designed to keep the room flooded and could also be a source of water replenishment for the entire structure.

These holes are randomly placed and many of them are large enough to allow a human to pass through if they had to - though it might be a bit of a tight squeeze in a HAGS.

The PCs may be surprised to find that the four blue, glowing, seaweed-like stalks that they found on the lower level of this structure seem to have persisted through the entire height of it as they can be seen here, supporting the domed ceiling.

This is the only level that does not have any bio-luminescent lighting.

## Epsilon Section:

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### Epilogue:

Hopefully the PCs are able to route the mercenaries and escape into the 'wilds' of Balneum Blue. Unfortunately they have been abandoned on a water world with no resources except what they can find here. Happily an ancient civilization has left them ample tools to survive, but only if they can figure them out. Are the PCs destined to live out the rest of their lives on this soggy planet or does fate have another course for them to follow?

Of course this will be left up to the GM to answer. It would seem however, that their chances of finding their way off this planet are good since the corporation will no doubt send seek and destroy units to look for them periodically, especially if their initial group of mercenaries doesn't come back, and of course, there are the forthcoming mining parties. Eventually the PCs should be able to find their way back to civilization with an interesting story to tell - and some documents in their possession to prove it.

In the meantime however, the GM has a vast array of scenarios that he can initiate from this adventure. Will the PCs set about trying to commandeer a ship so they can leave? Will mining operations commence on the planet and how well will the PCs and miners get along? How long will the PCs have to survive on their own; a month, six months, a year, more? Will they be able to learn to use the Gnatha bio-technology enough to restart the bioengineering labs and keep them running? If this bio-technology is just the initial stuff that they found, what else could be out there waiting to be discovered? What will they do with the Gnatha DNA in their bodies? Can it be isolated? Can a Gnatha be cloned from DNA found embedded in their technology? Can the species be brought back from extinction? If they ever do manage to get off the planet, what will they do with the information they have on the corporation? Has the corporation found out that they have this information and will the chase continue on any of the frontier worlds? Will the PCs ever meet Farley or Holmes again? If so, how will that meeting go?

### Epsilon Section 1:

#### Re-negotiated Pay Schedule:

It would seem that the pay schedule originally given to the PCs back in Beta Subsection 2d has been voided. Indeed, they have received only those funds that the GM may have given them from their 'employer' prior to leaving Port Loren. Any other monies that they were promised have not and will not be paid out by the corporation or by Farley.

This does not necessarily mean that the PCs are out their payday however. If they ever manage to make it back to civilization and if they manage to use their evidence to expose the corporation and their murderous ways, then Farley's claim will be ruled invalid - thus meaning that any claim that the corporation has on the planet will similarly be nullified. This is not something that would happen overnight however as there would be boards of inquiry and court actions, etc. But ultimately the surviving PCs would end up being given the claim if they want it. They could then sell it to a reputable outfit and get 2 million credits for their troubles (to be evenly divided amongst them). Or, they could simply pay the annual fees to keep their claim active thereby retaining their claim and protecting the planet from any future exploitation. At least until someone comes along and manages to cheat, trick or somehow steal it away from them.

As well, for every piece of alien tech that they bring back and turn over to the government, they will be rewarded with 100,000cr! There are 22 individual items (kinetic algae potentially counts as 3 items!) listed in Zeta Subsection 1 that would qualify for these payouts - potentially adding an additional 2.2 million credits (to be evenly divided between everyone in the group)! And of course each PC would qualify for 100,000cr for their blood samples as their blood is currently host to Gnatha DNA; this cash would not have to be divided between everyone else.

Indeed, if the PCs play their cards right they could easily come out of this adventure fairly well off depending upon the number of party members (and let us not forget to include any surviving NPCs that the PCs dragged along with them).

### **Epsilon Section 1a:**

#### **Experience Awards:**

This adventure can effectively be broken into two parts as far as experience is concerned. The outline of EXP awards below shows the EXP given to each party member. These EXP awards are only recommendations and the GM should feel free to adjust them as necessary in order to properly reward his players for good roleplaying, etc.

#### **First Part:**

Conducting sampling operations during the first 100 days on Balneum Blue.

#### **Maximum EXP award:**

05 points should be awarded for groups that suffer no PC casualties during this part of the adventure.

#### **Average EXP award:**

03 points should be awarded for groups that suffer 25% or less casualties during this part of the adventure.

#### **Minimum EXP award:**

01 points should be awarded for groups that suffer more than 25% casualties during this part of the adventure.

#### **Second Part:**

Escaping the mercenary force and exploring the gnatha city.

#### **Maximum EXP award:**

15 points should be awarded for groups that are able to find and figure out all of the bio-tech listed in Zeta Subsection 1 and suffer no PC deaths during this part of the adventure.

#### **Average EXP award:**

10 points should be awarded for groups that are able to find and figure out at least 75% of the items listed in Zeta Subsection 1 and suffer 25% or less casualties during this part of the adventure.

#### **Minimum EXP award:**

05 points should be awarded for groups that are only able to find and figure out 50% or less of the items listed in Zeta Subsection 1 and suffer more than 25% casualties during this part of the adventure.

## **Zeta Section**

### **Adventure Support Materials:**

Below will be found several sections of support material for this adventure; Gnatha bio-technology, miscellaneous equipment (some new and some from sources other than Alpha Dawn and Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space), a description of the Gnatha, a complete listing of adventure NPCs, encounter tables and a complete listing of creatures specific to Balneum Blue. The GM should feel free to expand upon any of these sections as he sees fit.

The biotechnology being presented below should be viewed by the GM as a small fraction of what can be found in the gnatha cities scattered around the globe. For example, this civilization was very skilled in bioengineering techniques and will have had biotechnology involved in their everyday lives. The GM should feel free to add to the below items as he sees fit, especially in the area of simple, everyday items.

Similarly, there would be a great distance between most of the gnatha cities around Balneum Blue. With that in mind each city zone could almost be considered a 'country' in human terms. Therefore, it seems conceivable that each city/state could have its own biotechnological style; perhaps very similar to all the other cities, but unique in some way.

### **Zeta Subsection 1:**

#### **Gnatha Bio-tech (weapons, armor and other wearable items):**

The gnatha bio-tech weapons are living creatures. So if they were to be transported away from their water environment they would have to be transported in water that is at least 99% chemically identical to their homeworld or they would die.

In the case of the below described weapons (cavitation, resonance, spine and static); all of the 'pistols' use tentacles to wrap themselves around the lower arm of the wielder, encasing the phalanges, wrist and the forearm. A semi-solid, fleshy protrusion (grip) extends down into the hand and responds by actuating their designed attack when squeezed.

All of the 'rifles' use tentacles to wrap themselves around the entire hand and arm, to include the shoulder. The off-hand remains free and they function in the same fashion as the 'pistols' above.

If the grip is released, the creature will retract and curl up in a streamlined lump of flesh upon the forearm of the dominant appendage. If the wielder wishes to 'draw' his weapon, he simply has to hold his arm out in front of himself, ball up his fist and squeeze. The resulting muscular movement will cause the creature to reflexively expand itself and move back into firing position. Either process takes only as long as it would take to draw a conventional weapon from a conventional holster.

All gnatha bio-tech is specifically coded to recognize and respond to gnatha DNA with regards to their special functions. Such bio-tech will only work for a being that has gnatha DNA (inert or otherwise) contained within their body.

Unless otherwise stated, it is assumed that all weapons are capable of depths of at least 4,000 m (13,123 ft).

Rifles and pistols for each category of ranged weapons are essentially identical in appearance, just on a larger or smaller scale respectively.

#### **Ranged Weapons:**

**Inertial cavitation weapons (though the creature is amphibious, the effect works underwater only):**



Art by Khairul Hisham

**Skill to use:** Projectile/gyrojet/sprayer.

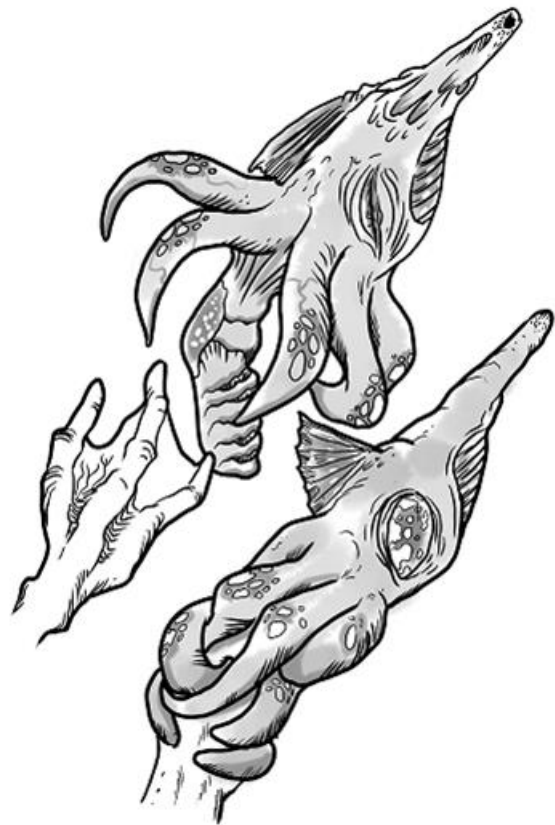
These 'weapons' were created by splicing the DNA of the sand spitter with that of a small squid-like creature. The resulting weaponized creature is capable of creating an inertial cavitation bubble around a grain of sand whenever it is prompted to do so. This ability, combined with its affinity for filtering sand in order to eat allows it to essentially expel bullets of water with precision.

Generally, it is only capable of expelling a single grain of sand at a time (ie, no auto-fire capabilities). However if a small amount of pressure is exerted upon an obviously raised (button-like) nerve bundle, the creature's expulsion cavity will be locked in an open position that is about three times wider than normal. In addition, the esophageal duct leading from the feeding orifice to the expulsion cavity will dilate and allow 20 (+/-) grains of sand to pass into the expulsion cavity thereby allowing 20 (+/-) grains of sand to be expelled simultaneously. This greatly increases the damage caused but also greatly reduces the range. Applying pressure to the nerve bundle again will relax it and return the 'weapon' to single-grain status.

Since the ammunition requirement is a simple grain of sand, a small handful (1,000 grains) can allow the operator to fire 1,000 times between reloading. This number is dramatically reduced if the dispersal setting is left activated however.

This creature survives by filtering microorganisms from the sand that it sucks into its feeding orifice. So simply being in water with access to a sandy bottom allows it to feed. It can leave the water for a number of hours. However, it will eventually die if it is not moistened and allowed to feed.

**Resonance weapons (amphibious weapons):**



Art by Khairul Hisham

**Skill to use:** Beam.

Resonance rifles and pistols both use the same base creatures for their weapon platform; the flying fish and a small squid-like creature. The DNA of the two creatures is spliced together resulting in a creature with the ability to emit focused sound waves and that has tentacles that enable it to cling to its operator. Though, if used continuously over an extended period of time the creature would eventually need to rest but such a circumstance is not likely to occur in a standard combat situation within this game. It will therefore be left up to the GM to judge if this situation should ever come to pass during the course of this adventure.

The sonic properties of these weapons may only be used once per turn. It is a natural ability of the base creature and does not therefore ever need to be recharged/reloaded.

This creature survives by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. It can leave the water for a number of hours and still perform its designed function. However, it will eventually die if it is not moistened and allowed to feed.

If used out of water, all ranges are halved.

**Spine weapons (amphibious weapons):**



Art by Khairul Hisham

**Skill to use:** Projectile/gyrojet/sprayer.

The spine rifle and pistol both use the same living creature as a base for their weapon platform. The DNA of the many-finned cuttlefish was mixed with the DNA of an urchin-like creature that survives by sucking in sand and filtering off any organic debris. It then compacts the sand and deposits the pellets back on the sea floor as waste. The resulting creature is a squid-like thing with a powerful oral expectoration reflex. But in place of the tongue (as in the case of the many-finned cuttlefish), a puff of either air or water is violently ejected using a hydraulic, jet-propulsion-like action. Carried with this puff of air or water is a compacted silica 'spine'.

This creature has an 'ammo' orifice which must be filled with sand in order for it to be able to compact and create the 'needle' ammunition. This is how the creature feeds. Once it has been fed, it will completely reload its 'ammunition' payload in 4 hours (5 spines per hour). Though these spines are similar to needler ammunition, they cannot effectively be coated with poisons as such a coating would affect the living weapon and, if used underwater, would immediately be dissolved in solution.

This creature survives by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. It can leave the water for a number of hours and still perform its designed function. However, it will eventually die if it is not moistened and allowed to feed.

If used out of water, all ranges are doubled.

**Static weapons (amphibious weapons):**

**Skill to use:** Beam.

The static rifle and pistol both use the same base creature as their weapon platform; the static crab. The crab's DNA was spliced into the DNA of a small squid-like creature resulting in a weaponized creature with the ability to eject focused electrical energy via the oral orifice and with tentacles allowing it to cling to its operator. This creature may use its attack once per turn and needs no form of ammunition in order to fire as its discharge is a natural ability. Though, if used continuously over an extended period of time the creature would eventually need to rest but such a circumstance is not likely to occur in a standard combat situation within this game. It will therefore be left up to the GM to judge if this situation should ever come to pass during the course of this adventure.

This creature survives by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. It can leave the water for a number of hours and still perform its designed function. However, it will eventually die if it is not moistened and allowed to feed.

If used out of water, all ranges are halved.

This weapon should never be employed underwater unless in conjunction with a static inhibitor/discharger.





Art by Khairul Hisham

**A note concerning static weapons:**

These weapons are very dangerous when used in water. They are direct-fire weapons that target one specific thing, however everything within 10 m (33 ft) of the bolt they generate (from its starting point at the muzzle of the weapon all the way along its path to the target) is subject to half damage. The main target of the attack meanwhile, is subject to full damage.

**Defensive Weapons (smaller devices that wrap themselves around the barrels of the above-detailed ranged weapons):**

**Displacement Weapon (though the creature is amphibious, the effect works underwater only):**

**Skill to use:** Projectile/gyrojet/sprayer.

The displacement weapon is a small, squid-like creature created through the manipulation of the DNA of the many-finned cuttlefish. It has been altered to be docile and to react to applied pressure from a hand-like appendage. This small creature uses several small tentacles to anchor itself to the barrel of a weapon.

When squeezed by the operating being, it will immediately expel a forceful jet of water in the direction in which it was pointing at the time it was squeezed. The effect is to cause a swirling jetty of water in a cone-shaped area extending away from the creature a maximum of 15 m (49 ft.).

Obviously the operator should be braced before firing otherwise the force of the discharge will reduce the forward range of the blast by half and the operator will be repelled 7.5 m (25 ft.) in the opposite direction. Any targets within the field of affect must roll a RS check or lose the following turn re-orienting themselves. This affect works against the operator as well, if he did not properly brace himself before firing. If the operator is wearing the carapace 'power' armor below, then no bracing is necessary as the swimming capabilities of the armor will keep the operator properly oriented.

This creature is capable of releasing such forceful bursts of water once per turn, but for as many turns as it wants. It survives by filtering microorganisms out of the water. So simply being in water allows it to feed. It can leave the water for a number of hours. However, it will eventually die if it is not moistened and allowed to feed.

**Ink Diffuser (though the creature is amphibious, the effect works underwater only):**

**Skill to use:** Projectile/gyrojet/sprayer.

The ink diffuser is a small, squid-like creature created through the manipulation of the DNA of the whalesquid. It has been altered to be docile and to react to applied pressure from a hand-like appendage. This small creature uses several small tentacles to anchor itself to the barrel of a weapon.

When squeezed by the operating being, it will immediately expel a stream of oily, black ink that seems to increase in volume as soon as it mixes with water. Once released, this ink quickly expands to cover an area of approximately 25 meters within 3 turns of release (5m on turn 1 and 10 additional meters on turns 2 and 3) and will take an additional 7 turns to dissipate. If any craft happen to occupy the initial 5m area at the time of release, visual equipment could be fouled and would then need to be manually cleaned before functioning properly.

In game terms this weapon would put up a visual barrier that cannot be seen through without some form of sonar. It could be used to force an opponent to lose a turn in order to get out of the cloud or it could be used to foul the optical devices of a craft, etc.

This creature is capable of releasing two such clouds of ink before it must rest and naturally recharge. It will replenish its ink supply by one burst for each passing hour. It survives by filtering microorganisms out of the water. So simply being in water allows it to feed. It can leave the water for a number of hours. However, it will eventually die if it is not moistened and allowed to feed.

## **Thrown/Dropped Weapons:**

### **Self-propelled Shells (aquatic only):**

**Skill to use:** None.

The self-propelled shell – aka; the spiny cuttlefish – is an example of a more current creature type which had been bioengineered and weaponized. The gnatha bred the creatures in large natural tanks. Through a tedious and lengthy process of selective breeding, they were able to engineer a creature that is similar to, but in many ways, quite different from the original stock. Outwardly it still looks very similar except for some coloration differences. The bulk of the changes however, occurred within the brains of the creatures.

These engineered spiny cuttlefish, or 'shells' (gnatha slang for the creatures), are bred to recognize a specific color that does not occur naturally anywhere on the planet except within the bio-luminescent glands of the lantern fish. By extracting this oily gel from the fish, the gnatha found that it persisted for several moments in suspension and that they could keep it indefinitely if they encapsulated it. They were able to use their ink diffusers and a modified kelp bladder to weaponize this oily pigmented gel.

The spiny cuttlefish has also been engineered to imprint upon the first creature to physically handle it for 1 hour (if no such creature is present then that portion of the spiny cuttlefish's engineering will simply never happen and it will go about its life normally). This bond makes the spiny cuttlefish want to stay close to the being upon which it has been imprinted.

Now, when a target within 50 m (164 ft) is marked with this pigment, the gnatha could drop a spiny cuttlefish and the little creature would immediately race to the target and crash into it causing 1d10 damage. As long as the target is within 50 m (164 ft.) at the time the spiny cuttlefish is released, the cuttlefish will follow it at a rate of 40 m (131 ft.) per turn until the target has moved at least 51 m (167 ft.) away from the spiny cuttlefish, until the 'mark' has worn off (10 turns) or until the target has been struck. At that point, the spiny cuttlefish will return to its imprinted operator at a rate of 40 m (131 ft.) per turn.

In game terms this means that a target must first be 'marked' with the ink capsule (that takes one turn and uses the skill of the PC to determine a hit or miss). The ink infuser can be loaded with one capsule at a time. The capsule can be fired a maximum of 50 m (164 ft). The following turn, the PC can drop a spiny cuttlefish and forget about the little creature. The spiny cuttlefish will then race toward the target – using its own chance to hit as the percentage (65%). Most often this will take place in the same turn in which the diminutive creature was released. After it has struck its target, it will return to its operator (which usually takes a turn, or portion thereof). In the case that the spiny cuttlefish misses its target, it will keep trying until it is successful, until the 'mark' wears off or until the

target manages to move at least 51 m (167 ft) away from the spiny cuttlefish. In the case that the target dies after the spiny cuttlefish has been released, but before it has managed to strike, the spiny cuttlefish will strike the corpse and then return to the operator.

One aspect of the creature's behavior that was not successfully bred out of the spiny cuttlefish was their penchant for going into a frenzy when in a group. For that reason it is never considered a good idea to release more than 4 of these creatures in close proximity of each other as anyone (except for the imprinted operator) could end up being attacked.

One common practice of the gnatha was to designate one being in their group to be the 'shell carrier' so that there would never be more than 4 spiny cuttlefish loose at any one time. Another common practice was to distribute only one per being with only 4 party members having a spiny cuttlefish in their possession.

A favorite tactic of the gnatha was to always keep all of their spiny cuttlefish released and an ink capsule loaded. This would allow them to get their 'shells' into the fray much faster.

In addition to the spiny cuttlefish and the ink capsule, the gnatha also developed a 'shell' carrier designed to cradle 4 spiny cuttlefish. This carrier is a living, fleshy mat with numerous small tentacles that wraps itself around one of the forearms or thighs of the being carrying the 'shells' (it will wrap around anything that is about the size of a human thigh or smaller and it is quite capable of holding many items, not just 'shells'). Each spiny cuttlefish is then placed on the mat and a pair of small tentacles wraps around the spiny cuttlefish, holding it fast. When the 'shell' is grasped, the tentacles will release and drop the creature into the waiting hand of the PC.

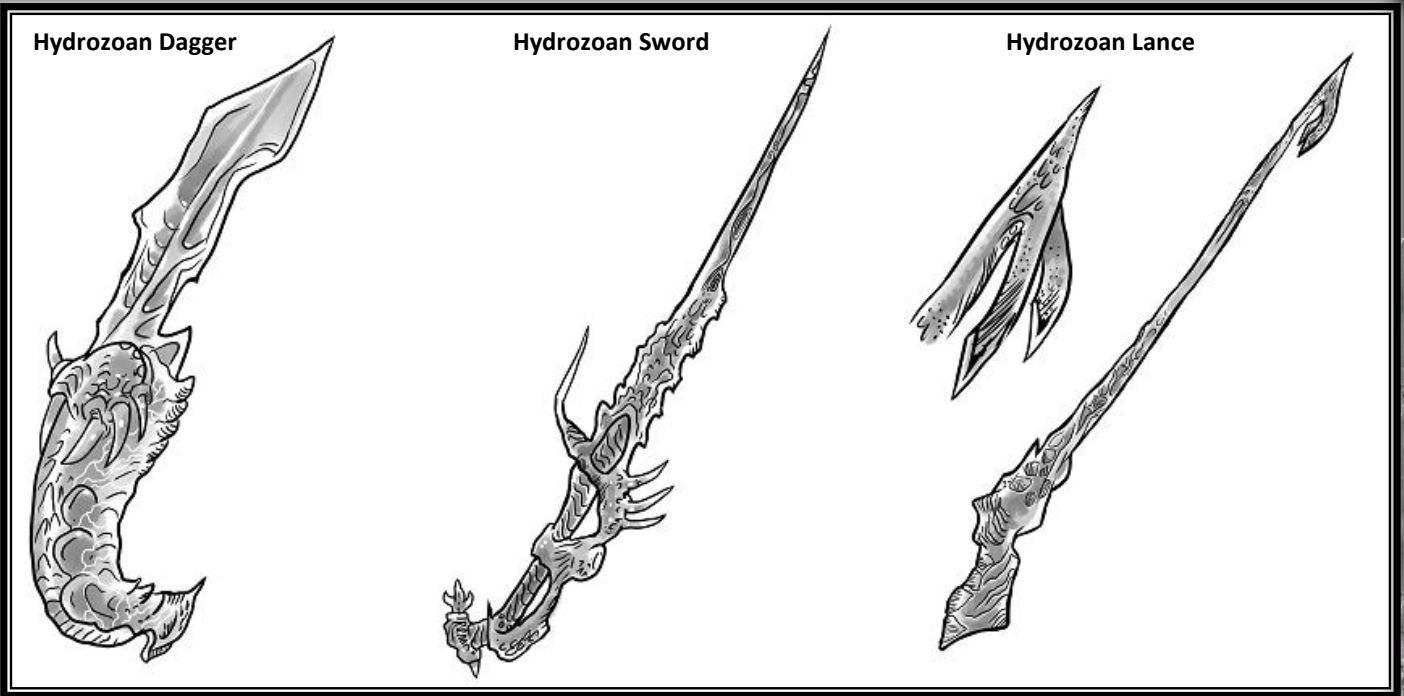
## **Melee Weapons:**

### **Hydrozoan Blades (amphibious):**

**Skill to use:** Melee

Hydrozoan weapons are creatures that have been created using the spliced DNA of small stinging hydrozoan and an earwig. The resulting creatures could be grown to differing lengths in order to develop longer 'blades'. The blades are extremely durable and strong chitin. Because they are grown, they tend to be asymmetrical. In addition to the damage delivered by the blades themselves, each one is also capable of delivering a load of poison. If the target fails a STA check then the poison adds 2d10 damage to the base blade damage.

All hydrozoan blades are intended to be stabbing weapons or used with short, slashing attacks. Long slashing, chopping or thrown attacks are generally ineffective underwater. The water simply produces too much drag to allow for any quick or powerful attacks with melee weapons.



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In the case of the hydrozoan lance, the barbs on the head of the weapon can be retracted to allow the weapon to be pulled out of the victim whenever the wielder wishes. This is accomplished by simply depressing a raised nerve bundle located on the outer edge of the angle that comprises the butt of the weapon. In addition to holding skewered prey, this weapon's barbs are designed as small cutting edges so that they create a larger wound channel, thereby inflicting heavier damage than its lesser counterparts.

These creatures are capable of delivering a load of poison 10 times before they run out of venom and must wait 1 hour per load to regenerate it.

These are living creatures and they survive by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. They can leave the water for a number of hours and still perform their designed function. However, they will eventually die if they are not moistened and allowed to feed.

**Armor plates (amphibious):**

**Skill to use:** None.

Gnatha armor plates – aka; scales, have been engineered from the DNA of the flatflake crab and a small squid-like creature resulting in small, flexible and very light-weight chitinous plates that have tentacles growing from them. These plates are living creatures and will wrap themselves around whatever they are placed against, conforming perfectly and holding fast. They can be overlapped to create joints; in effect creating a suit that resembles platemail armor.

These plates are intended to be used in order to create a 'suit' to be worn or to be placed on small articles of equipment in order to better protect it. It would be

impractical to attempt to use these plates to armor larger items like vehicles, etc. For larger items, see kinetic algae below.

These armor plates can be used in conjunction with kinetic algae (see below).

**These chitinous plates come in three different thicknesses:**

Plate Type	Thickness	Weight (full suit, human-sized)	Protection Value
Light	0.5 cm (0.2 in)	2 kg (5 lbs)	50
Medium	1 cm (0.4 in)	4 kg (10 lbs)	75
Heavy	1.5 cm (0.6 in)	6 kg (15 lbs)	100

The protection value of this armor relates to damage (from inertia and laser energy) that will be completely absorbed up to its protection value before allowing damage to pass through to the wearer. If a plate is breached, the PC can make a note of which one was breached and replace that single plate to 'repair' his suit after the conflict (assuming he survives).

These armor plates are living creatures. They survive by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. They can leave the water for a number of hours and still perform their designed function. However, they will eventually die if they are not moistened and allowed to feed.

**Weapon Tables:**

\* 2-H = 2 handed weapon; wielder must use two hands to effectively use.

Ranged Weapons:	Wgt (kg)	Damage	Ammo	SEU	Rate	Defense	Range (PB/S/M/L/E)
Inertial Cavitation Pistol	2	1D10	1k shots	---	3	Inertia	20/40/60/80/100
<i>Dispersal setting</i>	--	2d10	50 shots	---	3	Inertia	5/10/20/30/40
Inertial Cavitation Rifle	4	2D10	1k shots	---	3	Inertia	30/60/90/120/150
<i>Dispersal setting</i>	--	4d10	50 shots	---	3	Inertia	10/20/30/40/60
Resonance Pistol	2	4d10	---	---	1	Sonic	20/40/60/80/100
Resonance Rifle	4	8d10	---	---	1	Sonic	30/60/90/120/150
Spine Pistol	1	1d10	20 shots	---	4	Inertia	5/10/20/30/40
Spine Rifle	2	2d10	20 shots	---	4	Inertia	10/20/30/40/60
Static Pistol	2	3d10	---	---	1	Gauss	10/15/20/25/30
Static Rifle	4	5d10	---	---	1	Gauss	10/20/30/40/50
Defensive Weapons:	Wgt (kg)	Damage	Ammo	SEU	Rate	Defense	Range (PB/S/M/L/E)
Displacement Weapon	1	---	---	---	1	RS Check	5/--/10/--/15
Ink Diffuser	1	---	---	---	1	Sonar	5/--/15/--/25
<i>Marker Capsule</i>	0.01	---	1	---	1	---	10/20/30/40/50
Mucin Dispenser	1	---	---	---	1	---	within 1 m
Static Inhibitor	1	---	---	---	Infinite	---	within 1.5 m
<i>Static Discharger</i>	1	5d10	---	---	1	Gauss	10 m
Thrown/Dropped Weapons:	Wgt (kg)	Damage	Ammo	SEU	Rate	Defense	Range (PB/S/M/L/E)
Self-propelled Shell	0.5	1d10	---	---	1	Inertia	5/10/15/25/50
<i>Aka: Spiny Cuttlefish</i>	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Melee Weapons:	Wgt (kg)	Damage	Ammo	SEU	Rate	Defense	Special
Hydrozoan Knife	1	1d10	---	---	1	Inertia	Poison +2D10
Hydrozoan Lance	2	3d10	---	---	1	Inertia	*2-H, Poison +2D10
Hydrozoan Sword	1.5	2d10	---	---	1	Inertia	Poison +2D10

**Mucin Dispenser (though the creature is amphibious, the effect works underwater only):**

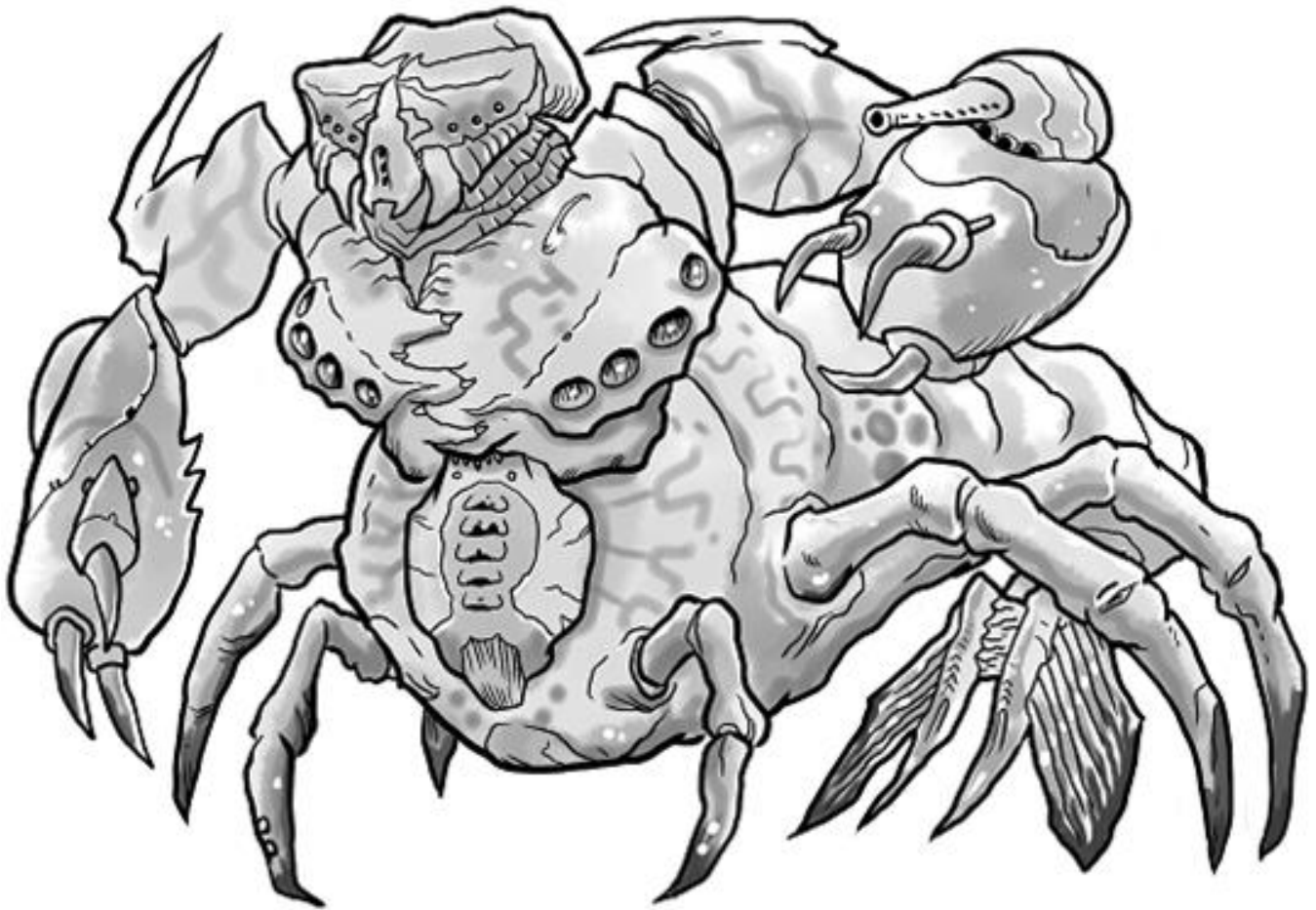
The mucin dispenser is starfish-shaped and is created from the DNA of the snot fish and a small, starfish-like creature. It has suction cup-like structures along the undersides of its arms which allow it to cling tenaciously to any surfaces that it is placed on. The creature measures about 20 cm (8 in) in diameter and has an array of feather-like structures situated along the full length of each arm and intersecting in the center of the creature's body. These structures are pressure-sensitive and react when they detect a pressure change consistent with a pressure wave consisting of a specific series of compressions and rarefactions produced by weaponized sound waves.

Once the feather-like detection structures perceive the incoming pressure wave of a sonic attack, the creature will instantly secrete a mucus-like chemical that reacts with water in a the span of a split-second. In the time it takes for the weaponized sound to reach the creature, an irregular glob of mucus will have formed in a rough globe encompassing an area about 2 meters in diameter with the

creature at the center. Upon contact with the sound wave, the globe will shatter, leaving thousands of small shards of brown, glass-like material left to drift to the sea floor. The globe will have intercepted and completely absorbed the incoming sonic attack.

The creature can only use its sonic defense once every other turn. Once it has used its defense 5 times, it will need to rest for 1 hour per globe in order to replenish its mucus reserve.

This is a living creature. It survives by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. It can leave the water for a number of hours however, it will eventually die if it is not moistened and allowed to feed.

**Power Armor (amphibious):****Skill to use:** Power armor or RS.

Gnatha 'power armor' – aka; carapace, utilizes grappling lobster DNA to create a smaller version of the creature that is docile and capable of surviving on its own, even if it needs intelligent intervention in order to breed. The DNA manipulation takes advantage of the armored shell of the grappling lobster (but on a grander scale), affording the wearer 250 points of armor. This armor protects the wearer from inertial and laser beam damage equally well (though it was never intended to protect against beam sources of damage, happenstance has made it so). Any damage directed at an armored being will be reduced by 75% (25% goes to the pilot and 75% goes to the armor). Once the creature's armor has been breached it can withstand another 50 points of damage before it dies; 50% goes to the pilot and 50% goes to the creature until the creature dies, then the pilot is on his own.

This creature can cruise through the water at 20 kph (12 mph) and is capable of bursts of speed of 30 kph (19 mph) - backward only - that will last for 1 turn and can be enacted every other turn over the course of 10 turns before the creature must rest for 10 turns.

This is a living creature. It survives by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. It can leave the water for a number of hours and still perform its designed function.

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However, it will eventually die if it is not moistened and allowed to feed.

In order to 'wear' it, the pilot simply backs into the gaping, toothless mouth of the creature and it does the rest reflexively.

The mouth of the creature is primarily comprised of the 'chest' portion depicted in the image below. Those chest plates have a seam running vertically in the center that can open like two doors. The head portion of the image is actually the upper jaw. When the mouth is open that upper jaw tilts backward, exposing the hollow 'helmet'. The lower jaw is comprised of the armor plate that resembles a shield. When the mouth is open, the lower jaw extends downward.

Once the orifice is open, the pilot simply backs into the creature's mouth. Once the creature closes its mouth, the pilot can then put two of its appendages into the 'arms' of the beast. Its musculature is attached to its shell leaving hollow areas that can be occupied by the pilot (or his appendages). This muscle arraignment provides the pilot with a soft cushion between them and the creature's hard armor.

The lower extremities of the pilot are directed down a second esophageal tract and into an empty, bladder-like compartment leaving the pilot to essentially stand inside the creature's mouth during normal operations. This compartment is about 2 m (6.5 ft.) tall though smaller or larger carapace's can be utilized to increase or decrease the size of the pilot's compartment. Once inside, the creature closes its mouth, effectively sealing the pilot in. This whole process takes only 2 turns to complete.

Once inside, the pilot's head will be covered by the 'helmet'. Inside the helmet will be an array of organic receptors that allow the pilot to hear and see what the creature hears and sees. Hearing is much the same as a human's abilities. But vision is accomplished by way of a sonar-like sensing array that allows for a 360 degree field of view out to a range of 75 m (246 ft). In human terms, this would make the 'helmet' seem like a transparent bubble so anywhere the pilot's head pivots, their surroundings can be viewed (the 'helmet' is stationary and cannot swivel, it is a bit larger than a basketball however, leaving ample room for a human to have full range of motion while encased within). This is accomplished through a blending of sound and electrical impulses given off by most living things and provides an image to the pilot that would look something like ultraviolet vision with bright colors, primarily comprised of blues, yellows and reds of varying degrees. This allows the pilot to 'see' in total darkness and even allows the pilot to 'sense' creatures hiding behind objects if the object is 1.5 times the size (or smaller) of the creature using it for cover. Objects being used for cover that are larger than 1.5 times the size of the creature are able to mask the electrical impulses and sounds enough so that the carapace's preceptors cannot pick them out. This is not the ability to see 'through' objects, rather it is the ability to sense energy distortions radiating away from a target that create a sort of aura that extends away from the target for a short distance. This ability extends to the full range of the carapace's 'vision' (75 m [246 ft.]).

Though this visual acuity is fairly impressive underwater, it is not so impressive on dry land. If the carapace is 'worn' on dry land, its visual range is only 30 m (98 ft) as water serves to transmit the creature's sound and electrical emanations much better than air.

Piloting the 'armor' is fairly straight forward. The pilot simply leans forward and the creature will swim forward at 20 m per turn (66 ft). Leaning to the left makes the creature turn left – the harder the pilot leans, the tighter the turn. Leaning right turns right. Leaning back stops forward progress and leaning back hard makes the creature swim backward at 30 m per turn (98 ft). And of course, stretching up or squatting down makes the creature go up or down respectively.

To exit the 'armor', the pilot simply retracts both of his appendages simultaneously from the creature's arms. This

action prompts the creature to reflexively release its grip and regurgitate the pilot. This process takes 1 turn.

Any of the gnatha weapons listed in this section are able to be used in conjunction with this armor (though frontier weapons are not as the PC inside the armor would not be able to adequately manipulate the firing mechanism). This is accomplished simply as a function of the weapon's ability to use tentacles to wrap themselves around the appendage of the operator and in the carapace's ability to fold back a membrane located on either arm which allows the weapon to partially enter the pilot's compartment in order to be actuated directly by the pilot's appendages. The carapace can then seal the membrane around the entry point to keep it pressure safe. The carapace is capable of wielding one weapon in this fashion on each arm.

The hands of the carapace can also be manipulated in order to pick up objects, though interaction with the fingers will be difficult for any except a dralasite or vrusk leaving other races that are not similarly configured with a -10% to all actions with the hands (dralasites and vrusk have no modifier for interacting with the hands).

Either the AGS or the HAGS systems can and must be worn while operating this 'power armor' as the pilot compartment fills with water every time the creature uses its water jets to move about. The water intake channels for the jets are located on both chest panels.

While wearing this 'armor' the physical limitations placed upon the PC(s) as detailed in Alpha Subsection 1d are not applicable.

This creature can withstand depths of up to 4,000 m (13,123 ft). The pilot is also able to withstand such depths as long as they are protected inside the beast. If they leave the protection of the creature however, they are immediately subject to whatever limits their body/gear are susceptible to.

#### **Static Inhibitor/Discharger (amphibious):**

The static inhibitor/discharger is a creature that has been engineered from the parent DNA of a static crab and another, small crab-like creature. It is much smaller than the static crab however, being only about 25 cm (10 in) in diameter from leg tip to opposite leg tip. It looks like a small crab that continually crackles with electrical energy between a pair of chitinous nodes located at both the anterior and posterior aspects of the creature.

When placed against a structure that the creature can wrap its legs around, it will reflexively do so (forearm, backpack strap, whatever). From then on, anything within 1.5 meters of that creature will benefit from its ability to nullify any electrical field or attack that causes 60 points of damage or less (a source of electrical damage that causes more than that will kill the small creature and do full damage to the wearer).

As well, if the creature is pressed upon with a fair amount of force, it will become agitated and will burst with electrical energy, causing 5d10 damage to anything within 10 meters (except the wearer). The creature may cause such a burst once every five turns and needs no reloading or external energy sources as this is a natural ability.

This is a living creature. It survives by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. It can leave the water for a number of hours and still perform its designed function. However, it will eventually die if it is not moistened and allowed to feed.

If the burst ability is used out of water, the range is halved.

#### **Kinetic Algae (amphibious):**

Kinetic algae is a creature that has been created through the manipulation of a fast-growing algae and a large clam-like bivalve. The resulting creature groups together in communities of millions, forming algae-like mats that produce hair-like filaments. These filaments are comprised of keratin and certain polyphenolic proteins. The creatures are able to secrete this substance between themselves and the surface of any rough object that they are placed upon. Within moments the filaments harden, creating an intricate patchwork of fibrous tendrils that are adhered to the surface permanently.

These hair-like filaments can be collected and woven into very strong, silk-like cloth and does not degrade in water like other textiles. If ever the PCs happen to search through any of the 'apartments' in any of the living areas they are very likely to find cloth made of these fibers. Clever PCs will realize that they can fashion hammocks out of this cloth and elevate themselves off the wet floors in order to rest in comfortable and dry conditions. This will enable them to avoid immersion injuries as detailed in Delta Subsection 4a.

Due to the underlying filaments, this creature grants a limited immunity to kinetic forces. This is accomplished by distributing the energy over a large area of the impacted surface and by working as an adhesive net to keep the underlying material mostly intact, even if it cracks.

Another interesting aspect of this creature is that it is actually many millions of creatures living as a large communal organism. Therefore, if a part of it receives enough damage to destroy the area of impact, the creature can naturally regenerate those areas in a fairly short period of time. As long as at least 1 cm<sup>2</sup> of this creature remains intact on a surface, it will eventually regrow and recover the structure or item.

#### **Kinetic Algae effectiveness table:**

Size Comparison	Thickness	Regeneration Time	Protection Value
Human sized	1.3 cm (0.5 in)	1 hour/1d10	150
Explorer sized	2.5 cm (1 in)	1 hour/2d10	300
Building sized	5 cm (2 in)	1 hour/3d10	600

This creature has been bio-engineered so that it will not populate any surface that has been infused with gnatha DNA. In this way, the creature can be controlled so that it does not spread unchecked. And, as an aside, if the PCs discover this fact, they will be able to simply look for a previously placed colony of kinetic algae, find one of the borders of its growth and chip off a sample in order to have a viable (not inert) sample of gnatha DNA. That sample could then be turned over for a cash reward as per Epsilon Section 1 and would be considered different from the blood samples with the inert DNA because those blood samples could provide clues for scientific research on a whole different level.

This is a living creature. It survives by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. It can leave the water for a number of hours and still perform its designed function. However, it will eventually die if it is not moistened and allowed to feed.

For the purpose of determining the pay schedule from Epsilon Section 1, this item will count as three separate alien artifacts if a sample of the cloth and a sample of viable gnatha DNA is turned in as well as a sample of the kinetic algae.

## Zeta Subsection 1a:

Unless otherwise noted, all of the 'vehicles in this section may be used while wearing an AGS or a HAGS.

When a space inside one of these creatures is described as 'dry' this means, moist in an organic way, but dry in the sense that the void is not filled with water.

Bi-winged Scooter (aquatic only)	
Type	Large Planktivore
Number	Varies
Move	Medium
IM/RS	+5/50
Stamina	85
Attack	55
Damage	3d10 Claws or 2d10 Bite
Special Attack	None
Special Defense	None
Native World	Balneum Blue

### Description:

The bi-winged scooter is a relatively small bio-engineered craft that moves about through the use of jet propulsion. The creature accomplishes this by sucking in water and forcing it out of specialized sphincters located in the posterior section of its 'wings'. The creature respirates in this fashion.

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Each of the creatures 'eyes' act as windows for the occupants. As with the 'helmet' of the carapace bio-armor, this allows the observer to hear and see what the creature perceives in a similar fashion as outlined for the carapace armor above except that visual range is much greater at 500 m (1,640 ft.).

Located on either side of the creature are powerful claws positioned away from the creature's body on flexible stalks. These claws are capable of extending away from the creature's body in any direction to a maximum range of 15 m (49 ft.). They can be used to manipulate objects with the precision of a human thumb and forefinger, or they can be used as defensive weapons, using the operator's PGS skill, though the creature can be allowed to defend itself with a 55% chance of successfully striking its target(s). If used as a weapon, these pincers cause 2d10 damage each.

To enter this vehicle, the occupant(s) simply grasp the base of the sensory barbels located on either side of the creature's mouth. This makes the creature reflexively open the orifice to allow entry. The operator then uses the barbels as leverage to enter the mouth feet first where they are then 'swallowed' by the creature. Once in the esophageal tract, the occupant simply rolls to the left or the right to be shunted into either the left or right 'cockpit'. Each 'cockpit' is capable of containing two human-sized occupants. There are no chairs inside these cockpits. Rather the operator(s) lie on their backs where they have ready





access to an organic computer on the ceiling of the cockpit. This configuration also allows the occupant(s) easy viewing of the inner surface of the creature's eye so that visual reference can be made concerning their surroundings.

The organic computer 'screen' operates like touch-screen technology, except that the 'buttons' on the 'screen' correspond directly to synaptic pathways in the creature's brain. Simply touching those 'buttons' makes the creature react accordingly.

This 'vehicle' has been engineered so that the internal pockets, or cockpits, can be filled with water or purged and left dry. As well, if the cockpits are filled with water then the water will constantly circulate, allowing for fresh oxygen-laden sea water to constantly be replenished for the purpose of respiration of the occupant(s). Similarly, the creature is able to process oxygen in its bloodstream and divert a portion of it into the cockpits if they are 'dry', thus infusing the pockets with a constant supply of air for the occupants to breath.

Located in any passenger compartments inside this creature is a subsurface network of bio-luminescent veins. These veins are close enough to the surface tissue all along these internal voids to allow a soft green glow to permeate the compartment(s). The creature can be directed to stop the glowing via the organic interfaces if so desired by the occupant(s).

The temperature inside the creature will remain at a constant 13 degrees C (55 degrees F) if the cockpits are left dry. If they are flooded with water then the temperature range will be just a few degrees warmer than the surrounding water temperature outside the creature.

This creature survives by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. This is a strictly aquatic creature and cannot survive outside of its environment for more than a few moments.

Harpoon Fighter (aquatic only)	
Type	Large Planktivore
Number	Varies
Move	Fast
IM/RS	+6/60
Stamina	85
Attack	65
Damage	3d10
Special Attack	+2d10 poison. Current STA check for half damage from poison.
Special Defense	None
Native World	Balneum Blue

**Description:**

The harpoon fighter is a small, two being bio-engineered craft and is designed to be fast and maneuverable. It only seats two occupants, though it can successfully be piloted with just one, it is easier to work all of its controls with two operators.

Located on the front of the creature is a long, saw-toothed proboscis which functions as a ram. The intended purpose is for the pilot to ram this craft in a large target, causing extensive damage from the deep wound. In the process of extricating the proboscis from the victim however,

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the harpoon fighter's saw-teeth are retracted into the snout and a poison is released which causes further damage to the target in a fashion similar to a jellyfish nematocysts.

To enter this 'vehicle', the operator(s) simply touch the underside of the beast while which will cause it to open its mouth (located on the underside behind the group of legs). Once the mouth is open, the operator(s) simply slide in, head first and can hop into either the left or right cheek (or cockpit) of the creature. The occupant then simply sits upon the cockpit floor with their lower extremities pointing forward just to either side of the proboscis. Directly in front of the seated occupant and just below the eyes of the creature will be found the organic computer(s) that allow interaction with the 'vehicle'. The 'screens' of these organic computers operate much like touch-screen technology, except that the 'buttons' on the 'screen' correspond directly to synaptic pathways in the creature's brain. Simply touching those 'buttons' makes the creature react accordingly.

Each of the creatures 'eyes' act as windows for the occupants. As with the 'helmet' of the carapace bio-armor, this allows the observer to hear and see what the creature perceives in a similar fashion as outlined for the carapace armor above except that visual range is much greater at 650 m (2,133 ft.). In addition to the creature's auditory and visual capabilities, this creature can also detect specific scents at a concentration that is as little as 10 ppm (parts per million) and out to an astonishing range of 10 km (6 mi)! This sensitive olfactory acuity allows this creature to sense and track specific scents, making it an excellent choice for seek and destroy or search missions.

This 'vehicle' has been engineered so that the internal pockets, or cockpits, can be filled with water or purged and left dry. As well, if the cockpits are filled with water then the water will constantly circulate, allowing for fresh oxygen-laden sea water to constantly be replenished for the purpose of respiration of the occupant(s). Similarly, the creature is able to process oxygen in its bloodstream and divert a portion of it into the cockpits if they are 'dry', thus infusing the pockets with a constant supply of air for the occupants to breath.

Located in any passenger compartments inside this creature is a subsurface network of bio-luminescent veins. These veins are close enough to the surface tissue all along these internal voids to allow a soft green glow to permeate the compartment(s). The creature can be directed to stop the glowing via the organic interfaces if so desired by the occupant(s).

The temperature inside the creature will remain at a constant 13 degrees C (55 degrees F) if the cockpits are left dry. If they are flooded with water then the temperature range will be just a few degrees warmer than the surrounding water temperature outside the beast.

This is a living creature. It survives by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. This is a strictly aquatic creature and cannot survive outside of its environment for more than a few moments.

Deep Sea Dirigible (aquatic only)	
<b>Type</b>	Giant Planktivore
<b>Number</b>	Varies
<b>Move</b>	Slow
<b>IM/RS</b>	+3/35
<b>Stamina</b>	300
<b>Attack</b>	See below
<b>Damage</b>	See below
<b>Special Attack</b>	8d10 Keening Song-This creature can emit a devastating sonic blast once per turn that will cause full damage to anything within 25 m (82 ft) - half damage if a successful RS check is made - and half damage to anything from 25 m (82 ft) to 50 m (164 ft) - one quarter damage if a successful RS check is made.
<b>Special Defense</b>	Immune to sonic attacks
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue

### Description:

The deep sea dirigible can come in various sizes, the largest of which is outlined here. In this size category, the creature is capable of carrying up to 25 beings in a large hollow void within its body. To enter this void, passengers must approach the creature from the posterior aspect and touch a membrane that covers an orifice. This action will cause the creature to retract that membrane and allow passage into an organic tract that leads to another membrane a short distance away. When stroked in a similar fashion, this membrane will also retract and allow access to the internal void. Once inside, passengers will be treated to a number of porthole-like transparent membranes that allow them to view the outside world when lighting permits.

The creature's sensory organs act as windows for the occupants. As with the 'helmet' of the carapace bio-armor, this allows the observer to hear and see what the creature perceives in a similar fashion as outlined for the carapace armor above except that visual range is much greater at 1,000 m (3,281 ft). Unlike the other bio-vehicles previously described however, the entire passenger void becomes a visual sensation for the occupants. It is as if they are traveling in a transparent bubble and can see everything in every direction out to 1,000 m (3,281 ft)! It can be a bit disorienting what with all the auras and rich colors as well as the sensation of flying without a vehicle. It is breathtakingly beautiful just the same, even if it does take a lot of getting used to. Some passengers may find it disorienting enough to cause 'motion sickness'.

Once inside the creature, the occupant(s) will find that there are a couple organic computers that allow interaction with the 'vehicle'. These interfaces are at a level that would be comfortable for a standing human to manipulate. The 'screens' of these organic computers operate much like touch-screen technology, except that the 'buttons' on the 'screen' correspond directly to synaptic pathways in the creature's brain. Simply touching those 'buttons' makes the creature react accordingly.

This 'vehicle' has been engineered so that the internal pocket, or passenger void, can be filled with water or purged and left dry. As well, if the void is filled with water then the water will constantly circulate, allowing for fresh oxygen-laden sea water to constantly be replenished for the purpose of respiration of the occupant(s). Similarly, the creature is able to process oxygen in its bloodstream and divert a portion of it into the void if it is 'dry', thus infusing the pocket with a constant supply of air for the occupants to breath.

This creature is capable of external bio-luminescence and can create enough light for a human to see objects within 30 m (98 ft) of the porthole that he is peering out of. This bio-luminescence can be any color that the creature wishes (or that the operator chooses through the organic interface), but is most often a soft green glow.

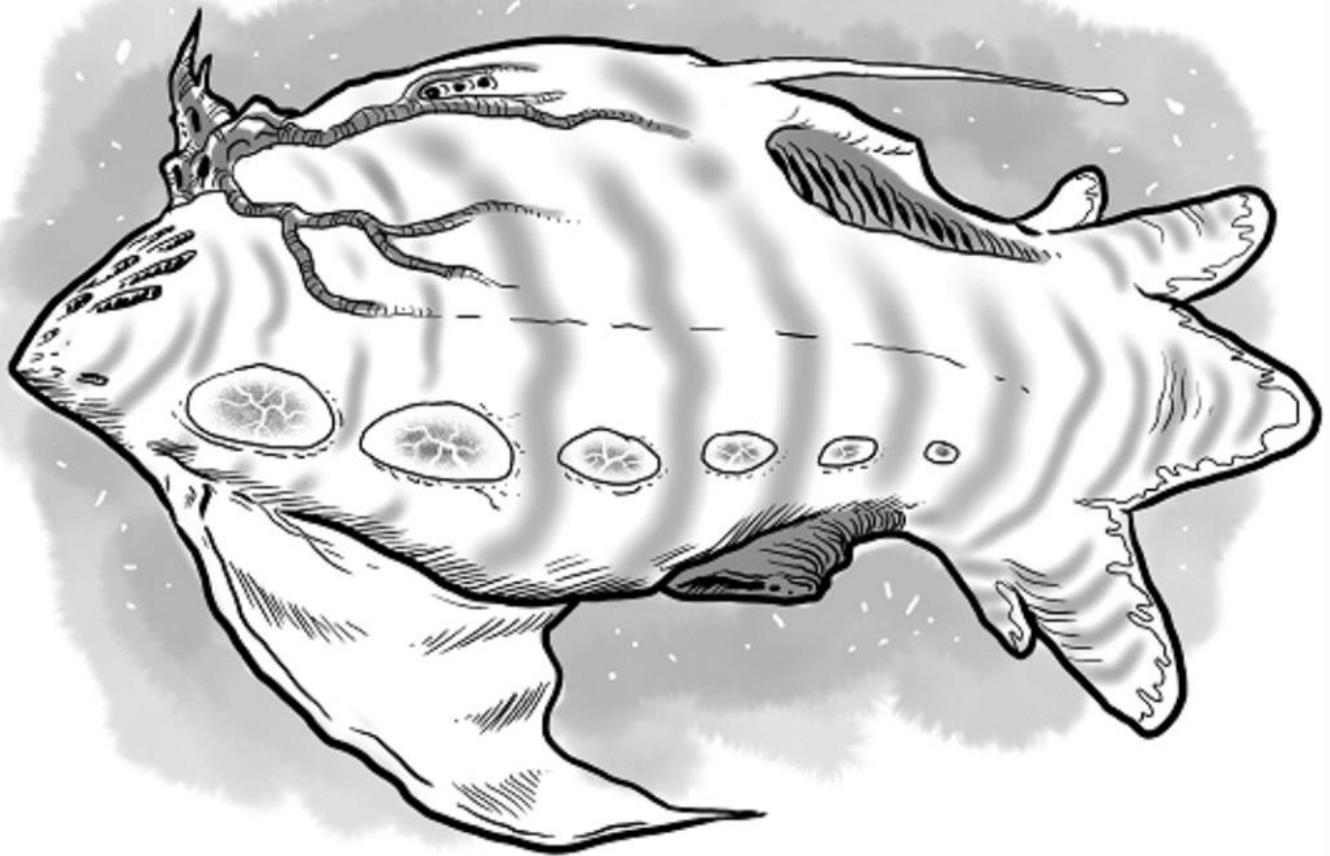
It moves by drawing water into its jet propulsion system through ducts in its head and then, forcefully flushing the water out similar ducts located in its posterior section. This is also how the creature respire and as such, the movement is natural, non-tiring to the creature and very gentle as far as perceived motion to the occupants.

Located in any passenger compartments inside this creature is a subsurface network of bio-luminescent veins. These veins are close enough to the surface tissue all along these internal voids to allow a soft green glow to permeate the compartment(s). The creature can be directed to stop the glowing via the organic interfaces if so desired by the occupant(s).

The temperature inside the creature will remain at a constant 13 degrees C (55 degrees F) if the void is left dry. If it is flooded with water then the temperature range will be just a few degrees warmer than the surrounding water temperature outside the beast.

This is a living creature. It survives by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. This is a strictly aquatic creature and cannot survive outside of its environment for more than a few moments.

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Armored Crawler (amphibious)	
<b>Type</b>	Giant Planktivore
<b>Number</b>	Varies
<b>Move</b>	Slow
<b>IM/RS</b>	+4/35
<b>Stamina</b>	400
<b>Attack</b>	65
<b>Damage</b>	4d10 Bite
<b>Special Attack</b>	This creature can be grown with either an inertial cavitation cannon or a static cannon. For further information, please consult the vehicle weapon table below.
<b>Special Defense</b>	Armored shell can absorb 250 points of damage (from inertial and laser beam damage before the creature is harmed). Immune to electrical attacks that cause 40 points of damage or less. Will take full damage from any damage inflicted from electrical energy in excess of 40 points. This electrical defense is extended to any passengers inside the armored crawler.
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue

### Description:

This creature can come in various sizes, the largest of which is outlined here. In this size category, it can carry up to 20 passengers. The smallest version is still quite large - it has to be in order to facilitate the cannon that it employs - and is capable of carrying up to 10 passengers.

The armored crawler is a giant creature that walks about on the sea floor rather than swimming. Though, it can propel itself through the water for short distances at a time using jet propulsion. This method of movement is generally used only for rapidly retreating or advancing and rarely used for actual travel.

To enter this bio-vehicle, passengers need simply approach to within 5 m (16 ft.) of the beast's mouth and it will open its jaws and allow entry from any being that has been infused with gnatha DNA. The creature is able to lower a tongue-like flap which covers its esophageal tract and instead, reveals a hall-like tube that leads a short distance to a closed sphincter. At that point, the creature can close its mouth and drain any water in the cavity before relaxing the sphincter and allowing access into the passenger void, thus creating an airlock for underwater operations.

Once inside the creature, the occupant(s) will find that there are a couple organic computers that allow interaction with the 'vehicle'. These interfaces are at a level that would be comfortable for a standing human to manipulate. The 'screens' of these organic computers operate much like touch-screen technology, except that the 'buttons' on the 'screen' correspond directly to synaptic pathways in the creature's brain. Simply touching those 'buttons' makes the creature react accordingly.

Situated near the front of the creature, an irregular, ladder-like structure can be found that leads upward along an organic tunnel-like void. Following this ladder-like structure will lead to a small compartment that houses the cannon (either an inertial cavitation cannon or a static cannon, GM's choice). There is an organic interface here which will allow a being to manually fire the weapon using his skill rather than the skill of the creature. If the occupants would rather the creature do all the fighting, it will have a 65% chance to strike targets with its cannon.

### A note concerning the static cannon:

This is a very dangerous weapon in water. Though it is a direct-fire weapon that targets one specific thing, everything within 25 m (82 ft.) of the bolt it generates (from its starting point at the muzzle of the weapon all the way along its path to the target) is subject to half damage. The main target of the attack meanwhile, is subject to full damage.

The creature's sensory organs act as windows for the occupants. As with the 'helmet' of the carapace bio-armor, this allows the observer to hear and see what the creature perceives in a similar fashion as outlined for the carapace armor above except that visual range is much greater at 800 m (2,624 ft). Similar to the deep sea dirigible vehicle, the entire passenger void becomes a visual sensation for the occupants. It is as if they are traveling in a transparent bubble and can see everything in every direction out to 800 m (2,624 ft)! It can be a bit disorienting what with all the auras and rich colors as well as the sensation of flying without a vehicle. It is breathtakingly beautiful just the same, even if it does take a lot of getting used to. Some passengers may find it disorienting enough to cause 'motion sickness'.

This 'vehicle' has been engineered so that the internal pocket, or passenger void, can be filled with water or purged and left dry. As well, if the void is filled with water then the water will constantly circulate, allowing for fresh oxygen-laden sea water to constantly be replenished for the purpose of respiration of the occupant(s). Similarly, the creature is able to process oxygen in its bloodstream and divert a portion of it into the void if it is 'dry', thus infusing the pocket with a constant supply of air for the occupants to breath.

Located in any passenger compartments inside this creature is a subsurface network of bio-luminescent veins. These veins are close enough to the surface tissue all along these internal voids to allow a soft green glow to permeate the compartment(s). The creature can be directed to stop the glowing via the organic interfaces if so desired by the occupant(s).

The temperature inside the creature will remain at a constant 13 degrees C (55 degrees F) if the void is left dry. If it is flooded with water then the temperature range will be



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just a few degrees warmer than the surrounding water temperature outside the beast.

This is a living creature. It survives by filtering microscopic organisms from the water. It can leave the water for a number of hours and still perform its designed function. However, it will eventually die if it is not moistened and allowed to feed.

Vehicle Table: Type	Top Speed (kph)	Cruise Speed	Max Depth (m)	Passengers	Cargo Limit (kg)
Armored Crawler	20 (12 mph)	15 (9 mph)	4,000 (13,123 ft)	20	5,000 (11,023 lbs)
Bi-winged Scooter	40 (25 mph)	30 (19 mph)	3,500 (11,483 ft)	4	350 (772 lbs)
Deep Sea Dirigible	25 (16 mph)	20 (12 mph)	6,000 (19,685 ft)	25	10,000 (22,046 lbs)
Harpoon Fighter	50 (31 mph)	40 (25 mph)	3,500 (11,483 ft)	2	200 (440 lbs)

Vehicle Weapon Table	Damage	Defense	Range (PB/S/M/L/E)
Armored Crawler (Bite)	4d10	Inertia	Melee
Armored Crawler (Dispersed Inertial Cavitation Cannon)	8d10	Inertia	20/30/40/50/70
Armored Crawler (Inertial Cavitation Cannon)	4d10	Inertia	60/90/120/150/180
Armored Crawler (Static Cannon)	8d10	Gauss	20/40/60/80/100
Bi-winged Scooter (Claws)	2d10 (each)	Inertia	15 m (49 ft.)
Bi-winged Scooter (Bite)	2d10	Inertia	Melee
Deep Sea Dirigible	8d10	Sonic	50 m (164 ft.) area
Harpoon Fighter	4d10+2d10 poison	inertia	Melee

## Zeta Subsection 1b:

### Miscellaneous Equipment:

Gear which has been previously published has been cited so that readers may go back to those sources and find more information concerning those items as only pertinent information has been reproduced here. Items that have no citations have been fabricated just for this adventure and cannot be found anywhere else.

### Artificial Gill Suit (issue #110 Dragon Magazine):

To survive underwater for long periods, characters must employ a breathing apparatus known as an artificial gill suit (AGS), which covers the wearer's entire body. It is made of a material that is similar to that used in skeinsuits, and it may be left transparent or colored as the manufacturer desires. Normal goggles may be worn by Humans, Vrusk, and Yazirian divers.

The AGS will absorb one-fourth of all damage caused by projectile and gyrojet weapons, fragmentation grenades, explosives, and melee weapons. It cannot be worn with any other suit of armor, but a screen may be used with it. When the AGS has taken 35 points of damage, it will be ruined and useless as armor.

The AGS for Humans, Yazirians, and Vrusks conforms to their basic physical shape. The AGS for Dralasites will stretch to accommodate their shape-changing abilities. A Yazirian AGS covers the glide-wing membranes without hampering their use in swimming.

Much of the exterior of the AGS is covered by a series of microfilters, all made of tough, translucent plastic. These microfilters draw oxygen from the water, pumping the gas mixture through small tubes to the area of the body where the wearer inhales air. The waste gases produced are released directly from the suit.

The whole system is regulated by a computer chip and powered by a small energy cell good for 5hrs before it needs to be recharged. The AGS also has a small digital display which can easily be seen by the wearer. The display shows the diver's depth, time in the water, and the amount of power left in the suit's energy cell. The suit also has a built-in low-frequency radio system, which has a range of one

kilometer. The suit can be safely used at a maximum depth of 110 m (361 ft) on earth-like planets (100 m or 328 ft on Balneum Blue). Weight: 5kg. Cost: 800cr.

The military version of the AGS is called the Military Issue Artificial Gill Suit (MIAGS) and is the same as the AGS except that it can withstand 50 points of damage instead of just 35. Weight: 5 kg. Cost: 1,000 cr.

### Artificial Gill Suit (Hard):

The hard artificial gill suit (HAGS) allows a full range of motion and is identical to the AGS except it has an internal air conditioning unit which allows the wearer to remain comfortable in water that is between 1 degrees C (33.8 degrees F) and 100 degrees C (212 degrees F). This AC unit consumes 4 SEU per hour of operation and can use standard or long e-clips, a backpack or a backpack.

Under normal conditions, the AGS allows a diver to descend to a depth of 110 m (361 ft) on an earth-like planet (100 m or 328 ft on Balneum Blue). However, the HAGS is made of a hard polymer that is reinforced with federanium and that allows the diver to achieve a depth of 1,075 m (3,527 ft) on an earth-like planet (1,065 m or 3,493 ft on Balneum Blue). Similar to the AGS, the HAGS will absorb one-fourth of all damage caused by sources of inertia damage but it can withstand 75 points of damage instead of just 35.

The HAGS has external mounts where things like flashlights/floodlights or scanners can be mounted. These extraneous devices can not be powered by the the same power source powering the suit. They must be hooked up to a separate power source worn as a backpack or backpack. It can use power from its rechargeable, internal power source (which allows for 5 hrs of operation before it needs to be recharged), long or short e-clips, power backpacks or power backpacks. It uses 4 SEU per hour of operation to power its basic functions.

The suit is covered with hard 'cargo-style pockets' designed to hold extra gear in strategic locations for easy access. Items like an emergency rebreather mask, flashlight, spare e-clips or even a folded backpack. It weighs 15 kg and cost: 2,500 cr.

**Artificial Gill Suit (Military Issue Hard):**

The military issue hard artificial gill suit (MIHAGS) is nearly identical to the HAGS detailed above except:

The MIHAGS will absorb one-half of all damage caused by sources of inertia damage and it can withstand 100 points of damage before its protective capacity is exhausted. It also contains military grade radio equipment built into the helmet which has a range of 1.5km and utilizes a built-in encryption unit in order to keep outside forces from listening in. Weight: 20kg. Cost: 3,000cr.

**Chemical Light Stick (aka, chem stick or chem light):**

Disposable chemical light sticks come in a variety of sizes and are labeled size **Class A-E**. They can be made to emit light that is visible to the naked eye and UV, IR and Night Vision visual detectors. Or they can be produced so that only technological detectors can detect them at the same cost. Or they can be made so that they can be seen by the naked eye and have no special properties toward technological detectors. Whichever option is chosen, it must be specified at the time of purchase.

A **Class A** chem light can emit enough light for any of the aforementioned technological devices to 'see' out to half of their standard range. All other classes of chem lights emit enough light for these sensitive pieces of equipment to 'see' out to their maximum range. They can be configured to generate light in any color that the buyer wishes but they are most common in white, green, yellow and red.

To activate a **Class A-C** chem light, the plastic tube is simply bent in order to snap a small glass ampule inside which releases a secondary chemical that reacts with the primary chemical. Then the device is briefly shaken, causing a dull light to be emitted without heat. To activate the **Class D & E** chem lights, a spring-loaded button situated on one end is depressed. This releases a small firing pin inside that shatters the glass ampule. **Class D & E** chem lights do not need to be shaken as the ampule is completely shattered at the time of activation.

These devices are made standard to function as described on dry land or underwater at any depth. They can be made to function in space for double the listed price.

A **Class A** chem stick is small, only about 16 cm (6 in) long and 1.5 cm (0.5 in) in diameter. They can illuminate an area of about 3 m (10 ft.) in diameter for 24hrs. Weight: 1kg for 10 sticks. Cost: 1cr each.

A **Class B** chem light is mid-sized, about 32 cm (12 in) and 3 cm (1 in) in diameter. They can illuminate an area of about 5 m (16 ft.) in diameter for 24 hrs. Weight: 1kg for 5 sticks. Cost: 2cr each.

A **Class C** chem light is a bit larger at about 61 cm (2 ft) in length and 5 cm (2 in) in diameter. They can illuminate an area of about 10 m (33 ft.) for 24 hrs. Weight: 0.5kg. Cost:

5cr.

A **Class D** chem light is large at about 1 m (3 ft) in length and 8 cm (3 in) in diameter. They can illuminate an area of about 20 m (66 ft) for 24 hrs. Weight: 1kg. Cost: 25cr.

A **Class E** chem light is a bit larger at about 1.5 m (5 ft) in length and 10 cm (4 in) in diameter. They can illuminate an area of about 40 m (131 ft) for 24 hrs. Weight: 2kg. Cost: 50cr.

**Life Bubble (p.58 & 91 Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space):**

The life bubble is of the same material and basic design as the infla-tent but completely envelops the wearer in one turn. They are worn like a backpack and are used by sailors or downed pilots on a watery world or sea. The normal oxygen supply inside one of these bubbles is two hours maximum but a small air hole can be opened for use with an attached snorkel, then sealed again against the elements. A life bubble will keep most bioforms alive until they are rescued or run out of provisions, but the enveloped character must keep movement down to a minimum to stabilize the air hole's position above the water. Weight: 20kg. Cost: 175cr.

**Manta Mini-Sub (p.54 SFMan08):**

The Manta mini-sub is a portable, inexpensive submersible vehicle available on the open market. It is often used by research organizations, but also sees use by the security departments of major corporations with ocean-going assets. It and other vehicles like it are common sights on aquatic worlds, where they replace terrestrial cars as the major mode of civic transportation.

The Manta's extremely efficient design and magneto-hydrodynamic drive enable it to achieve relatively high speeds. The drive requires the use of a Type 3 parabattery to meet its power needs. It has a maximum depth capacity of 1,100 m which would be 1,090 m on Balneum Blue (approximately 3,576 ft.). It can ascend at a rate of 210 m (approximately 700 ft.) per minute, or 21 m per turn. It can descent at a rate of 120 m (approximately 400 ft.) per minute, or 12 m per turn.

Two passengers can ride comfortably within the Manta. A third passenger can be stuffed into the interior in case of an emergency, but must be small. Two passengers can be accompanied by up to 50 kg of extra cargo, which can occupy a storage volume of up to one cubic meter and is accessible from the interior of the mini-sub.

The Manta is equipped standard with basic GPS and communications gear, civilian sonar and forward-aiming flood lamps. It has life support capacity for 96 hours before needing to refresh. The Manta has no hardpoints for mounting weapons and cannot be modified except with great difficulty for this purpose. Mantas can be ordered with upgraded electronics systems, including better GPS, sonar

and communications packages at the GM's discretion. Top Speed: 35 kph (22 mph). Cruise Speed: 20 kph (12 mph). Cost: 10,000 cr.

### Personal Watersled:

This is a single-person form of conveyance. It can transport one person (or a person wearing a HAGS or even power armor adapted for use underwater) through the water (surface or underwater) at a top speed of 10 kph (6 mph), cruise speed of 5 kph (3 mph). The rider simply lies on top of the board, grasps the handles and is propelled forward by twin power fans. It takes two 20 SEU power clips (one for each motor) to power it or can be plugged into a power backpack or beltback and consumes 2 SEUs per hour. Weight 5 kg. Costs: 500 cr.

### Pump Action Scattergun (p.16 SFMan04):

The most common civilian model is the pump action (PA) scattergun. This model does not automatically load a round into the chamber after a round has been fired, but instead requires that the user 'pump' the weapon (slide the fore-grip back and then forward again) to load another round into the chamber. Pump action scatterguns do not use a conventional magazine, but instead hold their rounds internally. Because of this, the weapon must be reloaded manually instead of changing magazines. A character can load up to half his Initiative Modifier worth of rounds into a scattergun in one round. These scatterguns are typically used as personal defense weapons by frontier settlers, and as hunting firearms.

Because scatterguns fire a cluster of small pieces of shot or flechettes, attacking with a scattergun is very similar to using a burst attack with an auto-weapon. Each 'shot' from a scattergun contains 10 projectiles. A shot can be aimed at up to five adjacent characters in an area up to 5 meters wide, or at just one character. Only one die roll is needed to hit all the characters aimed at. Because of the number of projectiles fired, the shooter gains a +10 bonus on the hit chance. If the shot is aimed at one character it causes 2d10 points of damage. If it is aimed at more than one character, it causes 2d10 points of damage plus 1d10 for each additional target. These points are divided as evenly as possible among all the targets. Any leftover points of damage are lost.

Ammo costs 10cr for 20 loose rnds.

Weapon	Cost (cr)	Wgt (kg)	Damage	Ammo	Rate	Defense	Range
Scattergun (PA)	200	3	2d10	5 shots	2	Inertia	5/15/40/75/150

### Rebreather Mask (p.21 SFMan03):

This mask seals around the face, adhering to the wearer's flesh easily. It draws oxygen through its specialized membranes, and provides sufficient breathable air to the wearer for about 120 turns (that's about 12 minutes). It

cannot be worn when in normal atmospheres, only when submersed. Rebreather masks must be purchased for, and will only work for, the species for which it is designed. The membranes do not have a long shelf life. If kept in storage too long, the membranes wear as if used for one minute per week of storage. For this reason, they are usually hermetically sealed in a plastic shrink-wrap until needed. The mask is discarded when its membranes are spent. These masks are routinely kept in one of the pockets of the AGS or HAGS so that they will be available in a diving emergency. Weight: 1 kg. Cost: 100 cr.

### Standard Sea Survival Pack (issue #149 Dragon Magazine):

The standard sea survival pack is a small, durable, buoyant backpack that contains the following: one all-weather blanket, one first-aid pack, four survival rations (eight days of food), one compass, 10 salt pills, 10 liters of water, one flashlight, one pair of sea goggles, and an emergency beeper that emits a signal for 20 km for 48 hours. Weight: 1kg. Cost: 150cr.

### Underwater Radio (Civilian ELF):

The civilian extreme low frequency (ELF) underwater radio is a small radio unit that can fit into the helmet of an AGS, HAGS or can be fitted into the console of any civilian submersible. It has a range of 1 km (about one fifth of a mile or 1,094 yds) between two underwater sources or that same distance between an underwater source and an above water source. Weight: 0.5 kg. Cost: 500 cr.

### Underwater Radio (Military ELF):

The military extreme low frequency (ELF) underwater radio is a small radio unit that can fit into the helmet of a MIHAGS or can be fitted into the console of any military submersible. It has a range of 1.5 km (about one third of a mile or 1,640 yds) between two underwater sources or that same distance between an underwater source and an above water source. Weight: 0.5 kg. Cost: 1,500 cr.

### Underwater Radio (Recreational VLF):

The civilian very low frequency (VLF) underwater radio is a small radio unit that can fit into the helmet of an AGS, HAGS or can be fitted into the console of any civilian submersible. It has a range of only 20 m (66 ft) underwater and cannot be picked up above water unless the underwater radio source surfaces - in which case it will act as a standard chronocom radio. Weight: 0.25kg. Cost: 50cr.

### Underwater Radio Antenna:

This is nothing more than a telescoping radio antenna that is

usually mounted on the top of a submersible vehicle. They are usually about 10 m (33 ft) in length once completely extended and will allow longer communication ranges between underwater radio sources and above water radio sources as long as the submerged radio source is able to get



the antenna to within at least 20 m (66 ft) of the surface. Weight: 250kg. Cost: 450cr.

#### Underwater Radio Buoy:

The radio buoy is a buoyant sphere containing antenna and amplification equipment. It is tethered to the parent submersible craft by a pre-set length of cable (determined at the time of purchase) which, when released, will float to the surface (or just below the surface). This enables the submerged craft to use its normally short ranged underwater radio as a standard above water radio. This device is functionally very similar to the underwater radio antenna listed above but it allows the submerged craft to remain at greater depths while still enabling long distance communications. Weight: 50 kg. Cost: 250 cr for the buoy and 10 cr per meter (3 ft) for the cable.

#### Zeta Subsection 1c:

##### Gnatha:

The gnatha were an ancient, amphibious people that once lived on Balneum Blue. Their civilization consisted of thousands of underwater cities scattered all around the planet. Most of these cities can be found at depths of 1,000 m (3,281 ft.) though some can be found at greater or lesser depths. The one detailed in this adventure is 2,000 m (6,562 ft.) in diameter but they can be any rough shape or size. All are grown from a coral-like structure using bioengineering techniques and appear vaguely tower-like as they all reach from the sea floor to near the surface. Each of these

underwater cities will have housed many thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of individual gnatha.

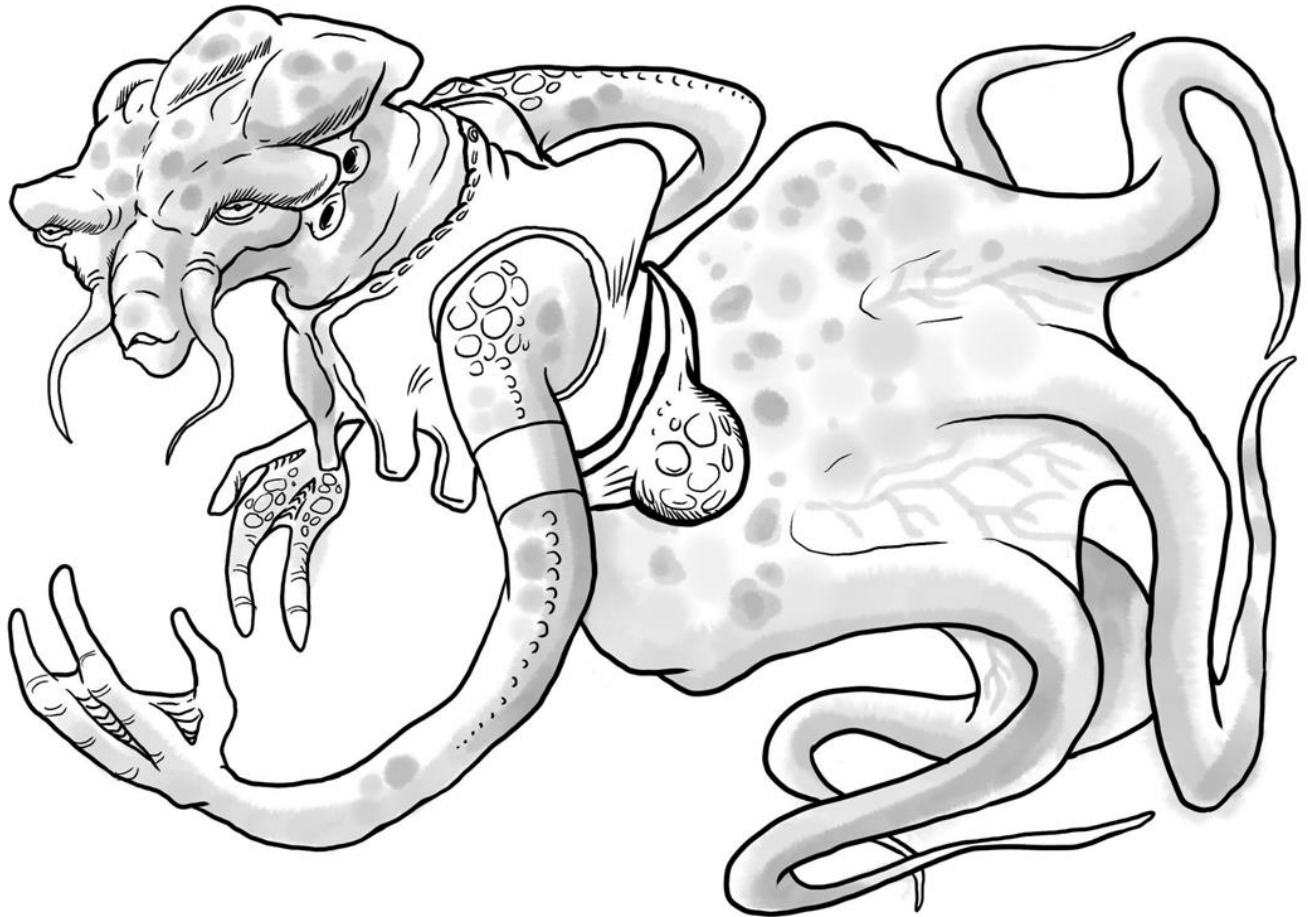
Unfortunately, after having been eradicated by a biological weapon introduced into their planet's ecosystem, the UPF now has nothing but archeological and DNA evidence to go by when attempting to understand these beings.

From archeological evidence determined in large part because of the 'dry' spaces found within their cities, it has been postulated that these creatures were amphibious, but strongly preferred an aquatic lifestyle. Some scientists believe that this species was on the cusp of an adaptive awakening which has led some members of the scientific community to wonder if the planet has recently (in planetary terms) undergone a geologic change which has made dry land available or more available than it had been in the planet's past.

Other physical evidence found within their cities suggests that their torsos were about human-sized but that their lower extremities were between 2 to 3 m (7 to 10 ft.) in length (for a total length of about 4 m [13 ft.] +/-).

Judging from an analysis of viable DNA, it will become known that these creatures were highly developed cephalopods. Their internal 'bone' structure consisted of a minimum of cartilaginous structures that exist only in their upper torso.

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This would mean that locomotion on dry land for these creatures would have been accomplished hydrostatically and would have been comparable to that of a dralasite. Underwater movement however, would have been a different story as this creature will have been much faster and much more graceful, using a combination of its lower tentacles and water jet propulsion to move about.

Though it is unknown for certain, it is thought that this species could withstand depths of between 1,000 m (3,281 ft.) and 4,000 m (13,123 ft.) unprotected.

Due to the composition of their internal skeletal structure, it is also thought that this species would have been able to get into extremely small areas in comparison to its overall body length. Essentially, as long as the space was big enough around to allow its head to pass through, then the rest of the body would have been able to easily pass through as well. The head of one of these creatures would have been about the size of a basketball or about 76 cm (30 in) in circumference. Similarly, as long as the space was roughly three times the size of its head, the creature will have been able to get its entire body into that space.

This information has been provided so that the GM can provide more background information to his players if they are clever enough to investigate the species during their time on the planet (and lucky enough to succeed in their skill rolls!). As well, this information has been made available so that the GM can complete them for his universe if he decides to use them as a race for whatever reason; perhaps they have been cloned from the viable DNA (if it was ever found) or perhaps a small number of them are found locked away in a 'doomsday' bunker somewhere on Balneum Blue.

Whatever the reason, if the GM wishes to use them as a race the information provided above should be adequate for the GM to easily fashion a racial template for them. They are being left undeveloped on purpose in order to give the GM latitude to develop them as he wishes in order to better fit into his universe.

## Zeta Subsection 1d:

NPCs:

Captain 'Smilin' Jack Farley, Captain of the Wanderer	
Race	Human male
STR/STA	45/50
DEX/RS	50/50
INT/LOG	65/65
PER/LDR	50/70
PS	+3
IM	+5
RW	25%*
M	25%*
Walk	10m
Run	30m
Swim	10m (1km/hr)
Special Abilities	None
Skills	Technician PSA, Pilot 2, Computer 2, Technician 6, Environmental (chemistry) 2, PGS 2

\*+10% per skill level for RW & M

## Smilin' Jack



## Exploration & Charters

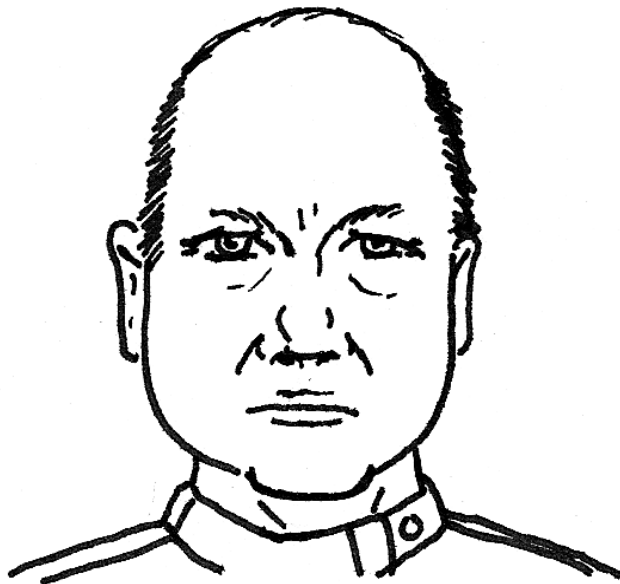
### Demeanor:

Jack Farley is a happy-go-lucky fellow, eager with a smile and quick to lend a hand whenever it's needed. He is often seen with some sort of cigar or cigarette dangling from his lips. He seems almost grandfatherly in his kindness almost like you could confide anything in him and always have him there to watch your back. As with Wendal Holmes, below, Jack Farley is a ruthless sociopath who can lie convincingly and would sooner cut your throat than treat you fairly. He's all about the money at the end of the job and doesn't care at all what happens to anyone in between him and those credits.

Wendal Holmes, 1st officer of the Wanderer	
Race	Human male
STR/STA	55/55
DEX/RS	50/50
INT/LOG	60/65
PER/LDR	45/45
PS	+3
IM	+5
RW	25%*
M	28%*
Walk	10m
Run	30m
Swim	10m (1km/hr)
Special Abilities	None
Skills	
Technician PSA, pilot 4, Computer 2, Technician 6, PGS 2	

\*+10% per skill level for RW & M

Art by A. J. Davis



**Demeanor:**

Wendal Holmes is somewhat strict when it comes to adhering to the rules of the ship and is quick to correct anyone that isn't doing things properly. He seems like an approachable guy though and is friendly enough. All of this is an act however as in reality he is self-serving and coldhearted. He is out for himself and to that end he will act however he has to in order to earn his paycheck. He isn't above killing innocent women and children in order to earn his credits.

Jonathan Hale	
Race	Human male
STR/STA	50/50
DEX/RS	55/55
INT/LOG	60/65
PER/LDR	45/45
PS	+3
IM	+6
RW	28%
M	28%
Walk	10m
Run	30m
Swim	10m (1km/hr)
Special Abilities	None
Skills	
Biosocial PSA, Environmental (geology) 4, Medical 2, Computer 2	

Art by J. A. Davis



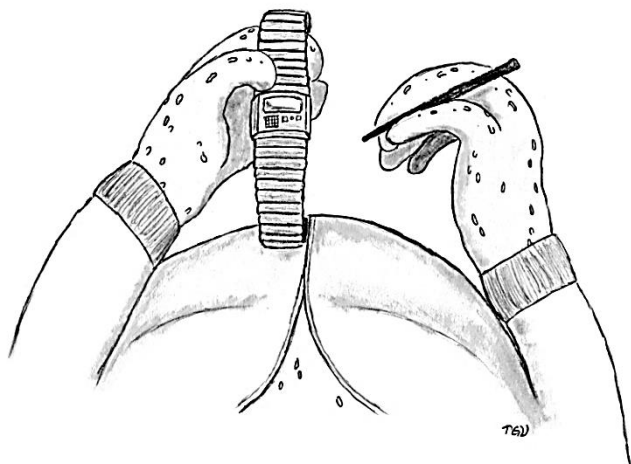
**Demeanor:**

Johnathan is an absolute rock hound. Nothing keeps him away from the rocks when he's out and about and nothing makes him happier than checking out the dirt on alien worlds. He is so fascinated by geologic formations that he often spends his time looking down rather than paying attention to his surroundings. This has led him into several ego-bruising accidents where he wasn't paying attention to his surroundings and ended up falling down an otherwise obvious embankment, etc. There was even a time when he had to be wrestled away from large, irate lizard by his crew mates. If it hadn't been for them he'd have been eaten! Generally though the guy is nice enough and only seems rude but is really just passionate about geology.

Name	Puroo
Race	Dralasite female
STR/STA	60/60
DEX/RS	50/50
INT/LOG	55/55
PER/LDR	45/45
PS	+3
IM	+5
RW	25%
M	30%
Walk	5m
Run	20m
Swim	10m (1km/hr)
Special Abilities	Elasticity, lie detection 7%.
Skills	
Technician PSA, Computer 2, Technician 2, Engineering 4	

Name	Banrog
Race	Dralasite male
STR/STA	55/55
DEX/RS	45/45
INT/LOG	55/55
PER/LDR	50/50
PS	+3
IM	+5
RW	23%
M	28%
Walk	5m
Run	20m
Swim	10m (1km/hr)
Special Abilities	Elasticity, lie detection 15%.
Skills	
Technician PSA, Computer 4, Technician 2, Engineering 2	

Art by Thomas Verreault



**Demeanor:**

Puroo loves tinkering with technology and is particularly delighted to take something completely apart and then put it all back together again whether it needed repairing or not. As with others of her species, Puroo loves playing practical jokes and will often do so through technology. One of her favorite jokes is to abscond with someone's chronograph for a few moments and quickly reset the alarm chime to make loud sounds of flatulence whenever it goes off. She will then set the alarm for several hours later in the hopes of catching her target during a particularly embarrassing moment.

Art by J. A. Davis



**Demeanor:**

Banrog is a known prankster. He delights in pulling pranks on others even though they are well aware that he is prone to do something whenever he gets a chance. It's almost like a personal challenge to surprise others. He is a friendly sort, very outgoing and approachable.

Name	Frobban
Race	Dralasite female
STR/STA	55/55
DEX/RS	45/45
INT/LOG	55/55
PER/LDR	50/50
PS	+3
IM	+5
RW	23%
M	28%
Walk	5m
Run	30m
Swim	10m (1km/hr)
Special Abilities	Elasticity, lie detection 9%.
Skills	
Biosocial PSA, Environmental (meteorology) 4, Medical 4	

*Frobban has been around for a long time. Over the years she has posed for many pictures and could not decide on which would be the best for her profile.*

**Demeanor:**

Frobban is known for her empathy which makes her an excellent medic. She is very kind, almost grandmotherly though she also has a slightly impish side common to all dralasites. She loves a good prank, but is often satisfied simply to watch someone else's prank play out than she is to enact her own. She is always quick to laugh and tell off-color jokes.

Name	Yat Prinou
Race	Yazirian male
STR/STA	45/45
DEX/RS	55/55
INT/LOG	65/65
PER/LDR	45/45
PS	+3
IM	+5
RW	28%
M	28%
Walk	10m
Run	30m
Swim	10m (1km/hr)
Special Abilities	Night vision, gliding, battle rage 5%.
Skills	
Biosocial PSA, Environmental (zoology) 4, Medical 2, Computer 2	

Art by J. A. Davis



**Demeanor:**

Yat is a big softy really. He talks tough, but in the end he wouldn't hurt a fly - which is really odd for his race. Rather than learn the ways of physical combat as most individuals of his race do, Yat has thrown himself into his mental pursuits. For that reason he is often looked down upon by other yazirians and is considered a bit of an outcast. He likes to joke that he became a zoologist so that he'd better know which animals were good to eat. But the real reason is that he simply likes to interact with lesser creatures.

Name	Yautsee Zu
Race	Yazirian female
STR/STA	50/50
DEX/RS	55/55
INT/LOG	60/60
PER/LDR	40/40
PS	+3
IM	+5
RW	28%
M	28%
Walk	10m
Run	30m
Swim	10m (1km/hr)
Special Abilities	Night vision, gliding, battle rage 10%.
Skills	
Biosocial PSA, Environmental (Botany) 4, Melee 2, Computer 2	

Art by J. A. Davis



**Demeanor:**

Yautsee is an easy-going yazirian who is considered a prodigy within the circles of her scientific discipline. She is very young for her accomplishments, being only 15 years of age. She is still a bit juvenile; she often tends to buck authority and talk back and can be argumentative at times. But she is a very good botanist.

Name	Hachi Latcha
Race	Yazirian male
STR/STA	40/40
DEX/RS	50/50
INT/LOG	65/65
PER/LDR	45/45
PS	+2
IM	+5
RW	25%
M	25%
Walk	10m
Run	30m
Swim	10m (1km/hr)
Special Abilities	Night vision, gliding, battle rage 15%.
Skills	
Biosocial PSA, Environmental (physics) 4, Medical 2, Martial Arts 2	

Art by J. A. Davis



**Demeanor:**

Hachi is a boisterous yazirian. Often overshadowing others with his very opinionated personality. Hachi is never wrong - at least, as he sees it - and is quick to let others in his field know that. He is often viewed as a bullying loudmouth that is entirely too cocky.

Name	Clikzitz'Vraz'Lat
<b>Race</b>	Vrusk female
<b>STR/STA</b>	45/45
<b>DEX/RS</b>	45/45
<b>INT/LOG</b>	65/65
<b>PER/LDR</b>	45/45
<b>PS</b>	+3
<b>IM</b>	+5
<b>RW</b>	23%
<b>M</b>	23%
<b>Walk</b>	15m
<b>Run</b>	35m
<b>Swim</b>	10m (1km/hr)
<b>Special Abilities</b>	Ambidexterity, Comprehension 17%.
<b>Skills</b>	
Biosocial PSA, Environmental (astronomy) 4, Astrogation 2, Computer 6	

Name	No'zan'Qil'Te
<b>Race</b>	Vrusk female
<b>STR/STA</b>	45/50
<b>DEX/RS</b>	45/50
<b>INT/LOG</b>	65/65
<b>PER/LDR</b>	50/45
<b>PS</b>	+3
<b>IM</b>	+5
<b>RW</b>	23%
<b>M</b>	23%
<b>Walk</b>	15m
<b>Run</b>	35m
<b>Swim</b>	10m (1km/hr)
<b>Special Abilities</b>	Ambidexterity, Comprehension 15%.
<b>Skills</b>	
Biosocial PSA, Psychosocial 4, Environmental (chemistry) 4	

Art by Thomas Verreault



*NO Image available of Qil'Te as she hates to have her picture taken.*

**Demeanor:**

Clikzitz'Vraz'Lat's name is often shortened simply to 'Clicks' by most other races. She doesn't seem to mind, choosing instead to turn her energy inward to her scientific pursuits. In fact, her love of science precludes even standard social interactions, making her somewhat awkward in any social situation.

**Demeanor:**

'Guilty' (from the Qil'Te in her name) absolutely hates her nickname bestowed upon her by most humans that she encounters. She knows the meaning of the word and loathes the chuckles that it elicits amongst those hairless primates. This friction has caused her to deal with humans in a fairly rude and callous manner under most circumstances.

Name	Kax'Vax'Zi
Race	Vrusk male
STR/STA	40/50
DEX/RS	45/55
INT/LOG	70/70
PER/LDR	55/45
PS	+2
IM	+6
RW	23%
M	23%
Walk	15m
Run	35m
Swim	10m (1km/hr)
Special Abilities	Ambidexterity, Comprehension 22%.
Skills	
Biosocial	PSA, Environmental (oceanography) 4, Psychosocial 2, Computer 2

Art by Albin Johnson



**Demeanor:**

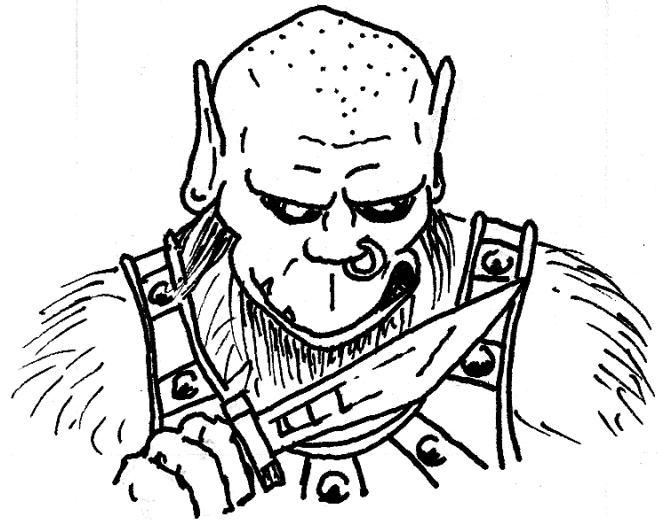
Vax, as he is often called by members of different species, has always had an affinity for science and has taken a particular interest in oceanography. He is a generally calculating and thoughtful vrusk, always thinking analytically.

**Mercenaries:**

Name	Corporate Commandos
Race	Equal mix
STR/STA	65/65
DEX/RS	60/60
INT/LOG	50/50
PER/LDR	40/50
PS	+4
IM	+6
RW	30%*
M	33%*
Walk	Varies by race
Run	Varies by race
Swim	10m (1km/hr)
Special Abilities	Varies by race.
Skills	
Military	PSA, Beam 2, PGS 3, Melee 2, thrown 2 and Medic 3 (OR Demolitions 3 OR Computers 3 OR Robotics 3 OR Technician 3)
Note	If the mercenary has a medic, demolitions, computers, robotics or technician skill detailed above, then their PGS skill will be 2 and their beam skill will be 1

\*+10% per skill level for RW & M

Art by J. A. Davis



**Demeanor:**

These corporate commandos are specifically chosen by the corporation for their cold, unswerving nature. Most come from hard lives, often having been orphaned at a young age and made wards of the state. For the most part, though perhaps not outright evil, these people do whatever they are told to do as long as there's a paycheck in it for them. Their general attitude is, 'Just following orders'.

These mercenaries are never privy to the actual corporate plans for whatever job they are tasked to do. They are simply told to accomplish some mission and they are expected to do just that exactly as outlined in their



briefings. If one of these mercenaries ever has a crisis of conscience they end up disappearing and none of the others have any illusions about what happened to them. Often they willfully choose to keep themselves in the dark as ignorance is their best defense. Those in good standing with the corporation are often allowed to retire with a hefty retirement nest egg to insure their discretion and compliance.



Art by J. A. Davis

Each squad consists of a squad leader, a medic, a demolitionist, a technician and 6 standard soldiers. Robotics and Computer-skilled mercenaries are only used in cases where their expertise is expressly required and are not generally part of a standard squad build.

Art by J. A. Davis



## Zeta Subsection 1e:

Equipment issued to each of these mercenaries:

1	MIHAGS.
1	personal watersled (with two long e-clips each and an additional 2 long e-clips as backup).
1	standard sea survival pack (with an additional 5 days shelf-stable rations).
1	emergency rebreather mask.
1	Life bubble.
1	Inertia Screen w/1 power backpack.
1	Gyrojet rifle w/100 rnds each (10 jetclips).
1	Vibroknife w/1 long e-clip (and an additional long e-clip as backup).
1	Power backpack to power the HAGS and/or periphery equipment.
1	Shoulder-mounted flood light (to be powered from the backpack); uses 1 SEU/10 minutes of operation.
1	Weapon power light; uses 1 SEU for 20 hours of operation (uses the SEU equivalent of a standard 20 SEU e-clip).
10	Chem sticks (class A - green, visible to the naked eye as well as all vision tech).
5	Chem sticks (class B - green, visible to the naked eye as well as all vision tech).
1	Tech-kit - carried by the technician.
1	hand-held sonar scanner - carried by the technician.
1	hand-held sonar scanner - carried by the squad leader.
1	Medkit (waterproof) - carried by the medic.
10	TD-19 w/20 variable timers - carried by the demolitionist.

**Note:** The GM should keep those personal watersleds in mind as once the mercenaries access the structure, they will likely leave them (and their 2 long e-clips each) in the airlock room. That means that there will be a large number of e-clips just lying around if the PCs ever find that they need replacement e-clips to power the vital functions of their suits!

## Zeta Subsection 1f:

### Flora and Fauna Specific to Balneum Blue:

Though it is entirely up to the GM, it is recommended that encounters be rolled for every 4 hours. On any d100 roll that is equal to or less than 25%, the GM should roll for an encounter on one of the appropriate tables below. At times the GM could break things up a bit by exchanging a creature encounter for a technical malfunction of some piece of equipment if he wishes. Equipment malfunctions can be deadly serious at any depth, but particularly so if those depths are greater than 30 meters.

## Zeta Subsection 1g:

### Encounter Tables:

#### Epipelagic Zone (200 m or less):

Roll d100	Creature
1-5	Aerial Hydrozoan
6-11	Armored Ray
12-16	Asymmetric Whale
17-22	Floating Weed
23-29	Grappling Lobster
30-34	Gossamer Serpent
35-40	Luminous Eel
41-45	Murmuring Siren
46-50	Ravenous Prawn
51-55	Sea Flea
56-60	Sea Wasp
61-65	Shovel Billed Ray
66-72	Shovel-mouthed Pinniped
73-77	Sky Shrimp
78-83	Spiny Cuttlefish
84-89	Stinging Hydrozoan
90-95	Stunning Ray
96-100	Toxic Wisp

#### Mesopelagic Zone (200 m - 1,000 m):

Roll d100	Creature
1-10	Armored Ray
11-20	Asymmetric Whale
21-30	Luminous Eel
31-40	Many-finned Cuttlefish
41-50	Murmuring Siren
51-60	Ravenous Prawn
61-70	Shovel-mouthed Pinniped
71-80	Spiny Cuttlefish
81-90	Stunning Ray
91-100	Whalesquid

#### Bathypelagic Zone (1,000 m - 4,000 m):

Roll d100	Creature
1-10	Armored Ray
11-20	Asymmetric Whale
21-30	Lantern Fish
31-40	Many-finned Cuttlefish
41-50	Ravenous Prawn
51-60	Many-finned Cuttlefish
61-70	Spiny Cuttlefish
71-80	Squidshrimp
81-90	Translucent Lacerta
91-100	Whalesquid

#### Abyssalpelagic Zone (4,000 m - 6,000 m):

Roll d100	Creature
1-10	Asymmetric Whale
11-26	Many-finned Cuttlefish
27-42	Flatflake Crab
43-56	Spiny Cuttlefish
57-72	Squidshrimp
73-86	Static Crab
87-100	Translucent Lucerta

#### Hadalpelagic Zone (6,000 m or more):

There are no encounters at this depth since all creatures in this zone are things like tube worms, bacteria and the like.

#### Land (or in the sky overhead):

Roll d100	Creature
1	Aerial Hydrozoan
2-30	Earwig
31-45	Flying Fish
46-50	Sky Grazer
51	Stinging Hydrozoan
52	Stinging Lotus
53-100	Zephyr Ray

#### Underwater (or dry) Caverns/Ruins:

Roll d100	Creature
01-25	Clawed Worm
26-50	Grappling Lobster
51-74	Sea Flea
75-100	Tree Stripper

## Zeta Subsection 1h:

### Creatures:

<i>Aerial Hydrozoan</i>	
Type	Giant Carnivore
Number	1
Move	Slow
IM/RS	+3/30
Stamina	3,500
Attack	50
Damage	15d10 Electrical Discharge.
Special Attack	Electrical discharge will stun victims for 1d100 turns unless a STA check is made
Special Defense	Immune to electrical energy
Native World	Balneum Blue



Art by Khairul Hisham

**DESCRIPTION:** The aerial hydrozoan is an immense creature measuring about 500 m (1,640 ft) across at the bell and with tentacles that can reach a length of 2,000 m (6,562 ft)! Its bell acts as a gas bladder where atmospheric hydrogen can be collected and stored, thus allowing them to float serenely above the surface of the world. It is their habit however, to remain positioned over the sea – which isn't a terribly difficult prospect since most of the surface of their world is covered in water – so that their tentacles may dangle down, into the water for the purpose of feeding. They have enough control over their hovering to enable them to travel against the wind if they desire to do so, albeit

very slowly.

Periodically, this creature can release a huge amount of electrical energy as a burst. They do this whenever threatened (which is an extremely rare occurrence!) or whenever they wish to feed. The electrical energy courses down their dangling tentacles, into the water below and electrocutes anything within 500 m (1,640 ft). The creature then grasps anything of any size (whales and the like) and lifts the creatures out of the water and to the base of the bell, where the mouth is located, for consumption.

These discharges are enough to disable watercraft if they are not insulated and as such, can also electrocute those in the vessel.

<i>Floating Weed</i>	
Type	Plant
Number	10d100+
Move	Drift on the current
IM/RS	None
Stamina	1
Attack	None
Damage	None
Special Attack	None
Special Defense	None
Native World	Balneum Blue



Picture by Gabriel McEver @McEver Studios

<http://mcever.zenfolio.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The floating weed is a free-floating seaweed that grows to lengths of 100 m (328 ft) and can encompass vast areas (hundreds or even thousands of square kilometers) of the ocean's surface. This weed could easily clog the engines of water-going vehicles if they attempt to navigate through the dense growth. Many creatures make their home in this dense tangle of weed as it provides both food and shelter. Larger predators are also attracted to it because of the dense population of prey items in the area.

Floating weed is edible and, though a bit salty, tastes a bit like kale.

## Asymmetric Whale

<b>Type</b>	Giant Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1
<b>Move</b>	Medium
<b>IM/RS</b>	+4/40
<b>Stamina</b>	500
<b>Attack</b>	30
<b>Damage</b>	8d10 Collision
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Thomas Duffy @ <http://thomastapir.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The asymmetric whale can reach a length of some 25 m (82 ft) in length – but 50 m (164 ft) from the tip of the dorsal fin to the tip of the anal fin. They are generally dark gray in color with the occasional bit of random, white mottling.

They are microphagous in nature (eating only microscopic plants and animals), lazily drifting about the seas with their mouths open, filtering out the nutrients suspended in the water. They are often seen at or near the surface and as such, can accidentally collide with surface or submersible craft.

## Grappling Lobster

<b>Type</b>	Medium Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1d10
<b>Move</b>	Medium
<b>IM/RS</b>	+5/50
<b>Stamina</b>	55
<b>Attack</b>	65
<b>Damage</b>	2d10 Bite
<b>Special Attack</b>	If a bite attack is successful, the victim takes 2d10 damage automatically thereafter (as it is torn into pieces and consumed). A successful STR check will break the hold. Once in the creature's grasp, the victim must make a second STR roll or be paralyzed for 1d10 hours.
<b>Special Defense</b>	Shell armor can take 50 points of damage (from inertial and laser beam sources) before the creature can be harmed.
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Rob Powell @ <http://rpowell77.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** This creature can achieve a length of about 2 m (7 ft) and looks similar to a large lobster without claws, but with mandibles adapted for catching and holding prey. Once a victim has been so restrained, the grappling lobster uses two modified legs near its oral cavity that are hollow and capable of delivering a powerful dose of neurotoxin. It stabs these appendages into the victim, often subduing it very quickly. It then dines leisurely on the paralyzed creature.

The grappling lobster is edible and quite tasty by human standards.

## Gossamer Serpent

<b>Type</b>	Small Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	2d10
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+6/60
<b>Stamina</b>	20
<b>Attack</b>	60
<b>Damage</b>	1d10 Bite or 4d10 electrical discharge.
<b>Special Attack</b>	Electrical discharge manifests as a bolt of electricity that is generated directly from the mouth of the creature.
<b>Special Defense</b>	Immune to electrical energy
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by sioSin @ <http://siosin.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** This creature is delicate and graceful in appearance and indeed it almost appears dainty. Its frilly fins serve as camouflage while it swims about its preferred habitat; thick beds of seaweed.

When hunting, the gossamer serpent will usually employ its electrical charge in order to subdue its prey before swooping in to snatch the fish. It is also very willing to use its electrical discharge to defend itself if need be.

## Lantern Fish

<b>Type</b>	Small Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	2d10
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+7/70
<b>Stamina</b>	15
<b>Attack</b>	65
<b>Damage</b>	1d10
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	When excited, the lantern fish exudes a gel-like substance from four tentacle-like appendages around its head. This substance is bioluminescent and hangs in the water like oil, causing visibility to be slightly obscured in the immediate area. This effect provides the lantern fish with a modifier of -10% to be hit with melee or ranged attacks whenever it employs this defense. This oily gel persists for 10 turns after being deployed.
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Rob Powell @ <http://rpowell77.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** This creature grows to a length of about 1 m (3 ft) and has a wicked-looking mouth full of long, curved teeth. It has an aggressive temperament and often attacks creatures much larger than it, flashing in to take a bite and then zipping away. Alone these creatures are not much of a threat. The trouble is, they often form schools and attack their prey in a group.

<i>Many-finned Cuttlefish</i>	
<b>Type</b>	Large Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1d5
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+6/60
<b>Stamina</b>	100
<b>Attack</b>	65
<b>Damage</b>	4d10 Beak
<b>Special Attack</b>	Elastic tongue-This creature can 'shoot' its tongue out like a projectile. The tip of the tongue has thousands of tiny hook-like structures that cause it to stick to the target until the creature chooses to release it. Once a victim is ensnared, the tongue will quickly retract into the beaked mouth where the victim will immediately be bitten. This process takes but one turn to accomplish. The range is 15 m (49 ft).
<b>Special Defense</b>	Armored shell can withstand 50 points of damage before the creature will be harmed.
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Michael Beaudry @ <http://michaelbeaudry.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** This creature vaguely resembles a cuttlefish except that it has many independently-rotating fins which enable the creature move very fast in any direction it wishes to go and with great agility. It also has two modified tentacles with bio-luminescent tips. It can grow to about 5 m (16 ft) in diameter.

The many-finned cuttlefish is edible and tastes a bit like calamari.

<i>Ravenous Prawn</i>	
<b>Type</b>	Tiny Carnivore (parasite)
<b>Number</b>	5D10
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+7/65
<b>Stamina</b>	3
<b>Attack</b>	50
<b>Damage</b>	1 point
<b>Special Attack</b>	If even 1 point of damage is caused directly to the victim, the ravenous prawn will have breached the target's skin and entered the soft tissues of the victim. Until removed, the prawn will cause 1 point of damage automatically each turn. As well, until removed the victim will be at -10% to all actions due to intense pain as the creature burrows around in the victim's muscle tissue.
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



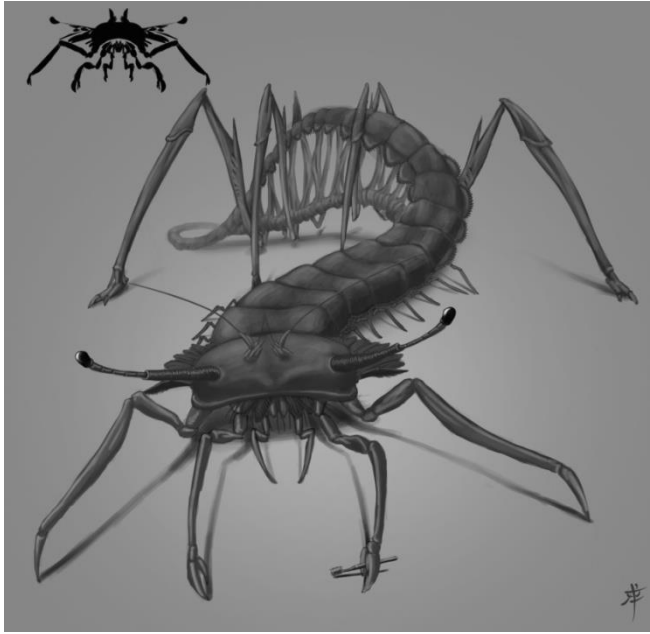
Art By Zeldrak @ <http://zeldrak.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The ravenous prawn is a very small creature, only about 2 cm (0.75 in) in length but it is adapted to burrowing into flesh where it lives the majority of its life feeding upon the tissues of its host.

Inertia screens and full environmental armor will keep the beasts from coming into contact with the skin. However, any exposed skin will provide an easy access point for the ravenous prawn to enter the body and begin its painful journey through the host.

Ravenous prawns are edible and quite tasty by human standards but you need quite a few of them to make a decent meal.

<i>Sea Flea</i>	
<b>Type</b>	Medium Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	3d10
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+6/60
<b>Stamina</b>	25
<b>Attack</b>	75
<b>Damage</b>	1d10 Bite
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Rob Powell @ <http://rpowell77.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The sea flea is an insect-like crustacean. They can grow to a length of about 1.5 m (5 ft) and tend to be tan in color. They often lie upon the sea floor, their coloration blending in with the sediment at shallower depths. When bottom-feeding creatures happen by, the sea flea will leap into action, often a couple dozen at a time as they tend to group together. Larger creatures can usually survive the onslaught, but smaller victims can easily be overwhelmed and killed if there are enough sea fleas. They will usually only bite once, and then skip away.

<i>Sea Wasp</i>	
<b>Type</b>	Tiny Herbivore
<b>Number</b>	10d10
<b>Move</b>	Very Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+7/70
<b>Stamina</b>	1
<b>Attack</b>	40
<b>Damage</b>	1 point Sting
<b>Special Attack</b>	Poison/+1d10 (poison damage negated if STA check is made)
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Grumbleputty @ <http://grumbleputty.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The sea wasp is a tiny aquatic insect measuring a meager 6cm (2 in) in length. If viewed closely, a mouth full of wicked-looking teeth can clearly be seen. These teeth however have adapted to chew the tough kelp that these creatures eat and are not used for defensive purposes; they rely upon their poisonous sting for that.

These insects act in a similar fashion to bees; swarming whenever their nest is disturbed, etc. They secrete a very strong resinous material when they construct their nests. This material hardens a short time after it has been exposed to sea water. Once it hardens it resembles brown coral with a slick or glassy look.

## Spiny Cuttlefish

<b>Type</b>	Small Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	2d10
<b>Move</b>	Very Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+8/80
<b>Stamina</b>	10
<b>Attack</b>	65
<b>Damage</b>	1d10 Impact
<b>Special Attack</b>	This creature hunts by targeting its prey and then moving toward it at extremely high velocity. Upon impact, the creature's shell absorbs the damage and its sharp ridges and spines inflict damage on the target.
<b>Special Defense</b>	Armored shell can withstand 25 points of damage before the creature can be harmed.
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Rob Powell @ <http://rpowell77.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** These creatures are relatively small, only about 12 cm (5 inches) in diameter. Their preferred prey are small fish, no more than 0.5 m (2 ft) in length.

These creatures have four eyes and can see a wide range of colors at extraordinary range under water (up to 50 m [164 ft]). They usually target their prey visually and stalk it, attacking from ambush most of the time. Often these creatures can be found in groups. When in a group of 5 or more, the sounds they create by jetting about seems to send them into a frenzy such that they will attack anything nearby. For that reason it can be very dangerous to approach a group of feeding spiny cuttlefish.

Their shells are designed to absorb impact and as such, they will be undamaged by kinetic forces unless the damage is enough to exceed the strength of the shell in one blow.

## Static Crab

<b>Type</b>	Large Herbivore
<b>Number</b>	2d20
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+5/50
<b>Stamina</b>	75
<b>Attack</b>	40
<b>Damage</b>	1d10 Bite
<b>Special Attack</b>	Static arcs directly forward and behind cause 4d10 to anything within 25 m (82 ft).
<b>Special Defense</b>	Immune to electrical energy and shell armor can withstand 75 points of damage (from inertial and laser beam sources) before the creature will be harmed.
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Rob Powell @ <http://rpowell77.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The static crab is a docile species that subsists on oceanic vegetation, primarily seaweed-like plants. It has a thick exoskeleton that protects it from many dangers but in addition it possess a strong defensive mechanism to ward off any stubborn aggressors; a powerful static discharge.

This creature can attain a diameter of about 5 m (16 ft) and resembled a horseshoe crab. It has 14 compound eyes capable of gathering enough light to see in extremely low-light environments. Even when light is not present, this species has the ability to see in electronic impulses. Its vision manifests in a sonar-like view but with living creatures being easily 'seen' by perceiving their faint electrical discharges. The crab itself puts of a faint electrical discharge which it is able to perceive as it bounces off of or is absorbed by solid objects, allowing it to thrive even in complete darkness.

Static crabs are edible and quite tasty by human standards.



## Stinging Hydrozoan

<b>Type</b>	Giant Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1d2
<b>Move</b>	Medium
<b>IM/RS</b>	+4/40
<b>Stamina</b>	135
<b>Attack</b>	65
<b>Damage</b>	6d10 Feeding Probosci.
<b>Special Attack</b>	When grappling, this creature will automatically sting its victim with the stinger associated with the tentacle that is grappling the victim. The sting will deliver a neurotoxin which causes complete paralysis unless a STA check is made.
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Jason Heeley @ <http://jasonheeley.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The stinging hydrozoan is a large creature, measuring up to 50 meters in length (the bell measuring only 10 m [33 ft] while the tentacles make of the rest of the length).

The stinging hydrozoan feeds by grappling a victim with a tentacle and stinging it, causing it to be paralyzed. It then brings the victim up to the worm-like structures situated at the base of the mantle. These structures burrow into the flesh of the victim, seeking out certain organs (liver, brain and pancreas) which will systematically be sucked out of the victim and consumed. Once that is complete, the victim will be released and the stinging hydrozoan will go about its way.

Even if found dead, washed up upon a beach, the stinging cells of this creature can fire reflexively, delivering their poison to whatever contacted the creature.

## Whalesquid

<b>Type</b>	Large Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+5/50
<b>Stamina</b>	150
<b>Attack</b>	50
<b>Damage</b>	3d10
<b>Special Attack</b>	Ink cloud-This creature can release a cloud of thick ink into the water which will cover an area of approximately 25 m (82 ft) within 3 turns of release (5m [33 ft] on turn 1 and 10 additional m [33 ft] on turns 2 and 3) and will take an additional 17 turns to dissipate. If any craft happen to occupy the initial 5m (33 ft) area at the time of release, visual equipment could be fouled and would then need to be manually cleaned before functioning properly.
<b>Special Defense</b>	Burst of speed-Increase movement to very fast for 1 turn. Cannot be used on the turn immediately following one in which Burst of speed was used.
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue.



Art by Jonathan Gonzalez  
@ <http://brotherostavia.cghub.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The whalesquid grows to a length of about 5 m (33 ft) and instead of possessing a tail fluke like other known whale species; this one has tentacles like a squid. These tentacles, combined with a forceful hydraulic release similar to a water jet, propel the creature through the water at great speeds.

The whalesquid is a fairly docile creature and feeds on tiny waterborne crustaceans common to its world. As a filter feeder, it will cause damage to other creatures only by accident (usually by bumping into the victim), preferring to flee from a threat whenever possible.

## Zephyr Ray

<b>Type</b>	Small Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	10d10+
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+6/60
<b>Stamina</b>	15
<b>Attack</b>	50
<b>Damage</b>	1d5 Bite
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Raul Ramos @ <http://daitengu.deviantart.com/>  
 And  
<http://www.deviantart.com/users/outgoing?http://raulramosart.blogspot.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The zephyr ray was once quite at home beneath the waves. But over time it adapted to an aerial life style. It is now the dominant terrestrial lifeform on the planet. There are literally billions of the beasts crowding the skies. They feed by flying low over the waves, dipping their lower jaws into the water and skimming along. Occasionally they will close their mouths, filtering out the water and swallowing their catch of small fish and swimming crustaceans.

At night they roost along cliff faces and in trees upon the atoll-like islands scattered around the planet. They roost by using their rear claws to dangle upside down in a similar fashion to a bat. The monumentally huge number of these creatures around the planet means that every bit of soil is painted with their excrement.

They have pale blue skin with even lighter blue stripes and can reach a length of about 1 m (3 ft) with a wingspan of about 2 m (7 ft). They are not a particularly dangerous creature as they much prefer to flee from a threat rather than attack, but if forced into a confrontation, they can deliver a feeble bite. The danger with this creature lies in its ability to fly and its sheer numbers which result in a danger to aerial craft. The high population density of the creature makes the potential for aerial collisions fairly high. Such a collision can cause considerable damage to such a craft which could easily result in a crash.

They are edible by human standards and taste something like fishy chicken. They give birth to live young, usually 2 to 3 in a clutch.

## Luminous Eel

<b>Type</b>	Medium Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1D10
<b>Move</b>	Medium
<b>IM/RS</b>	+6/60
<b>Stamina</b>	50
<b>Attack</b>	75
<b>Damage</b>	2D10 Bite
<b>Special Attack</b>	In lieu of melee attack, may issue an electrical discharge that causes 2D10 damage to anything within 10 meters. In addition to the damage listed, the target must also roll STA or be stunned



Art by Edtya @ <http://apsaravis.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The luminous eel is a snake-like creature with bio-luminescent frills and a bio-luminescent lateral line. It has two front legs that it uses to help propel it through the water at greater speeds. They can attain a length of about 3 meters.

Luminous eels hunt small fish, though they can be extremely dangerous if threatened. They will usually warn any threat with an electrical burst followed by a painful bite if the burst fails to deter them.

<i>Toxic Wisp</i>	
<b>Type</b>	Small Herbivore
<b>Number</b>	2D10
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+7/65
<b>Stamina</b>	15
<b>Attack</b>	35
<b>Damage</b>	1D5 Claw
<b>Special Attack</b>	Poison cloud. When threatened will release a 5 meter diameter poison cloud. Contacting this poison on bare skin will cause 1D10 damage while swallowing or breathing this poison will cause 5D10 damage. All damage is negated if a successful STA check is made.
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Catharina Wendland @ <http://ormirian.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The toxic wisp is a small creature, similar in structure to an otter with no rear legs. It also has no eyes, instead it senses movement and scents with its barbels located around its mouth. The toxic wisp feeds on floating seaweed which is also the source of their poisonous ability.

<i>Squidshrimp</i>	
<b>Type</b>	Giant Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+5/50
<b>Stamina</b>	275
<b>Attack</b>	60
<b>Damage</b>	10d10 Claws
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	Armored Carapace; can absorb 100 points of damage before the creature is harmed.
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Catharina Wendland @ <http://ormirian.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The squidshrimp resembles a cross between a giant squid and a giant shrimp. It has tentacles at its posterior end, but where the mantle of a squid would be, is something resembling the head of a shrimp but with a toothy maw and six appendages that end in wicked, blade-like claws.

This creature is attracted to light sources and will immediately investigate any such sources it perceives. When seizing prey, the squidshrimp will usually use its tentacles to grasp the victim, preventing it from fleeing and then will repeatedly impale the hapless target with its wicked claws until all resistance ceases.

## Tree-stripper

<b>Type</b>	Medium Omnivore
<b>Number</b>	1d10
<b>Move</b>	Medium
<b>IM/RS</b>	+5/55
<b>Stamina</b>	55
<b>Attack</b>	60 Claw
<b>Damage</b>	1d5 Stinger
<b>Special Attack</b>	Poison-If the stinger does at least 1 point of damage beyond whatever defensive capabilities the target has, then the target will be poisoned. STA check or suffer an additional 2D10 damage.
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



COW 247

Art by Rob Powell @ <http://rpowell77.deviantart.com/>

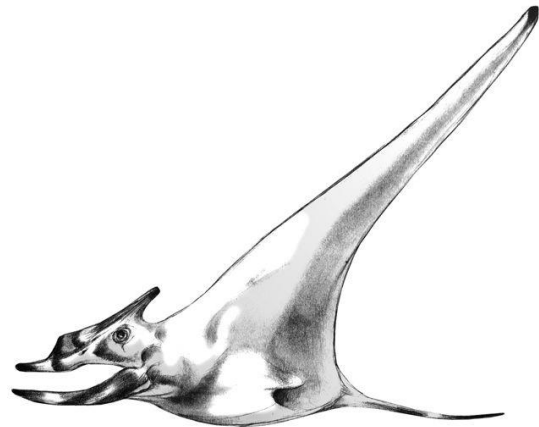
**DESCRIPTION:** The tree stripper is an odd-looking crustacean with a semi-red underbelly and a bright blue back. It has a scorpion-like tail which is outfitted with a stinger. Though it is a crustacean, this crab-like creature's shell never completely hardens. It remains fairly soft and easily punctured; a precursor perhaps to adapting to a permanent terrestrial life-style. The tree stripper must return to the water periodically to moisten its gills.

Though its shell is fairly soft, it is hard enough to support the creature when it moves about on dry land or when it

climbs trees to eat the leaves or search for eggs to scavenge. The claws are useless for defending itself or for attacking however as they are too flimsy and no real pressure can be exerted. Instead, they are used as climbing 'hooks' when the creature climbs.

## Shovelbilled Ray

<b>Type</b>	Medium Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1d10
<b>Move</b>	Medium
<b>IM/RS</b>	+6/55
<b>Stamina</b>	35
<b>Attack</b>	55
<b>Damage</b>	1d5
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Thomas Duffy @ <http://thomastapir.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The shovelbilled ray looks almost bird-like except that they have no feathers or legs. They can grow to be about 2 meters in length with a 4 meter 'wing span'.

They are a fairly docile creature, choosing to flee more often than not. When feeding, they leap from the waves and glide over the course of a short distance, dipping their lower jaws into the water and scooping up whatever happens to get caught.

<i>Stunning Ray</i>	
<b>Type</b>	Medium Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1d10
<b>Move</b>	Medium
<b>IM/RS</b>	+5/50
<b>Stamina</b>	125
<b>Attack</b>	65
<b>Damage</b>	1d10 Bite or 4d10 Electrical discharge
<b>Special Attack</b>	Electrical discharge; In addition to damage, this discharge can also stun the victim for 1d100 turns unless a STA check is made.
<b>Special Defense</b>	Immune to electrical energy
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Thomas Duffy @ <http://thomastapir.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The stunning ray can reach a diameter of 3 meters with a 'wingspan' of 6 meters. It is a mottled black and white color and spends most of its time at or near the surface where it hunts smaller fish.

When the stunning ray attacks it can either deliver a minor bite, or it can choose to deliver an electrical discharge. When it uses its electrical attack, it must still contact its target in order to activate the reflexive action required to initiate the discharge.

<i>Armored Ray</i>	
<b>Type</b>	Medium Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1d10
<b>Move</b>	Medium
<b>IM/RS</b>	+5/50
<b>Stamina</b>	100
<b>Attack</b>	60
<b>Damage</b>	2d10 Bite
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	Armored shell can absorb 200 points of damage before the creature is harmed. Each successful attack has a 65% chance of impacting the shell instead of the creature.
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Thomas Duffy @ <http://thomastapir.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The armored ray looks vaguely turtle-like but without legs. They can grow to a diameter of about 3 meters with a 'wingspan' of about 5 meters.

The creatures are relatively docile as long as they are not approached too closely. If provoked, they will rush to attack the trespasser.

## Murmuring Siren

<b>Type</b>	Medium Herbivore
<b>Number</b>	10d10
<b>Move</b>	Medium
<b>IM/RS</b>	+5/55
<b>Stamina</b>	75
<b>Attack</b>	75
<b>Damage</b>	2d10 Rumble
<b>Special Attack</b>	Rumble; A deep, resonant sonic attack that covers an area of effect to within 100 meters of the creature. See below for further information.
<b>Special Defense</b>	Immune to sonic attacks
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Thomas Duffy @ <http://thomastapir.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The murmuring siren can be heard well before it is ever seen for its continuous murmuring can be heard for kilometers in every direction. This creature can grow to a length of 3 meters and is usually a drab brown or gray color. They give birth to live young; usually only one at a time.

The murmuring siren has a specialized nasal configuration that vastly amplifies the sounds that the animal creates. In addition, the creature's skull is configured to further enhance sound. The creature has no traditional auditory sensory capabilities, but they are extremely sensitive to tactile sensations. They therefore, 'feel' sounds and can distinguish between precise modulations and pitches. Not only can they distinguish subtle variations in sounds – they can exactly mimic them.

One reason that they group together in such large 'herds' is for protection. They are relatively defenseless when found alone. But as a group they can build upon the reverberating murmurs of other murmuring sirens until an acoustic resonance is achieved (it takes 2 turns to tune the sounds – but once matched, this damage is continuous until the creatures stop). The voice of one then becomes the voice of many and the sonic attack is greatly amplified. This is simulated in the game environment by increasing the number of dice rolled for damage to 10% of the total number of murmuring sirens in the immediate area.

**Example:** If there are 100 murmuring sirens in the immediate area then the attack will be equal to 10d10 in an area 100 meters in diameter!

Most other creatures that share the habitat of the murmuring siren have learned to steer clear of them. They are well-feared by even the largest and most belligerent of aquatic creatures. This makes even single murmuring sirens relatively safe as most creatures flee as soon as they hear the harmless, constant murmuring of the approaching creature.

## Shovel-mouthed Pinniped

<b>Type</b>	Small Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	2D10
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+6/60
<b>Stamina</b>	20
<b>Attack</b>	60
<b>Damage</b>	1d5
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Thomas Duffy @ <http://thomastapir.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The shovel-mouthed pinniped is a small, seal-like creature that dives through large schools of small fish with its mouth agape. The creature attains a length of only about 1 meter. It is not particularly dangerous and often chooses to flee rather than fight.

**Six-tailed Fish**

<b>Type</b>	Giant Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1d5
<b>Move</b>	Medium
<b>IM/RS</b>	+6/60
<b>Stamina</b>	115
<b>Attack</b>	60
<b>Damage</b>	4d10 Bite
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue

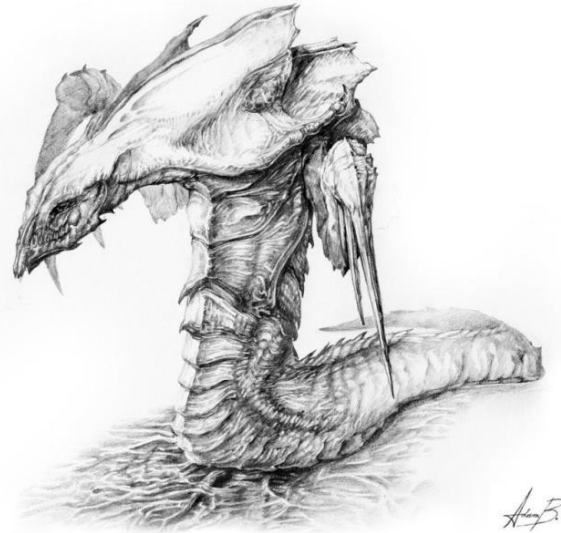


Art by Thomas Duffy @ <http://thomastapir.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The six-tailed fish is an odd creature. It has 6 tails and a face full of barbels for sifting through debris in search of food. It is equally happy scavenging as it is catching prey. It has a habit of sucking in victims with a quick gulping reflex (DEX check to avoid or target is sucked into the mouth and immediately bitten then swallowed). This often leads to victims being wounded, but still alive after having been swallowed.

**Clawed Worm**

<b>Type</b>	Medium Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	1d10
<b>Move</b>	Medium
<b>IM/RS</b>	+6/60
<b>Stamina</b>	100
<b>Attack</b>	75
<b>Damage</b>	3d10 Claw
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	Immune to sonic attacks
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Adam Burnier @ <http://aburnier.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The amphibious clawed worm is a vicious predator that enjoys killing just for the sake of killing. They can grow to a length of about 3 m (10 ft) and possess 2 long, blade-like claws on the ends of their forelimbs. Their underbellies are covered with tiny, hook-like protrusions (like the skin of a shark, only on a larger scale). This enables them to cling easily to rough surfaces, seemingly defying gravity when out of water. They can breathe as readily on land as they can in water. Though there is not much land to find on their world, they adapted to life in undersea cavern systems where finding dry spaces were somewhat common and they adapted to fill the niche.

They are brutal and hideous in appearance and absolutely without remorse. Their coloration ranges from dark browns to grays and even black.

They often employ a basic level of intelligence above that of a simple animal, though still less than what it would take to create a civilization – but only just. They seem to have a language as well, though it consists of various growls, snorts and snarls. If it is a language it is certainly primal in nature and very coarse.

The clawed worm can sense through scent and tactile sensations. It can 'see' aromas in the air and follow them to their source. It does not see with eyes, rather it has pit receptors scattered around its head that enable it to visualize scents. It can build a picture in its mind this way, something similar to sonar or radar. Similarly, it does not have ears. Rather, it senses sounds by feeling vibrations in the air. This information is processed and integrated into their visualization of sound. This effectively gives this creature 360 degree 'vision' that is far superior to human senses in an aquatic environment.

In a watery environment, this creature can detect the scent of a particular fish that is uninjured from 1 km (1,094 yds) distant. If the fish in question is wounded and bleeding, the clawed worm can sense the blood from 10 km (6 mi) and track it directly back to its source.

Out of water this creature's senses are roughly the same as those of a human, though strong scents that might go unnoticed by a human will easily be detectable by this creature.

Because of their heavy reliance upon scent, a weapon devised to produce overpowering scents could effectively scramble their form of visualization, blinding them while within the influence of the overpowering scents. Similarly, though they are unaffected by sonic weapons, constant, discordant noises could potentially disrupt their ability to visualize sound. If both senses were disabled, these beasts would be rendered completely blind and incapable of assimilating sensory stimuli.

<i>Translucent Lacerta</i>	
<b>Type</b>	Small Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	2d10
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+6/60
<b>Stamina</b>	20
<b>Attack</b>	65
<b>Damage</b>	1d10 Bite.
<b>Special Attack</b>	Poisonous-a successful bite attack delivers a load of poison causing +2d10. A STA check negates this effect.
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Pearlpheonix @ <http://pearlphoenixsun.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** This creature grows to a length of about half a meter and primarily hunts small fish at great depths. It can cause all of its internal organs to glow through bioluminescence and is a way for it to attract its prey. When its organs are lit, the brightly colored, iridescent scales of the creature become readily apparent. The glistening of the scales from the internal luminescence can be seen flashing in the darkness even before the creature's silhouette can be discerned.



**Sky Shrimp**

<b>Type</b>	Small Carnivore
<b>Number</b>	10d10
<b>Move</b>	Fast
<b>IM/RS</b>	+6/60
<b>Stamina</b>	10
<b>Attack</b>	50
<b>Damage</b>	1d5
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	None
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue



Art by Anne Draaisma @ <http://xaqt.deviantart.com/>

**DESCRIPTION:** The sky shrimp grows to a length of about half a meter. It has developed the ability to leap from the water and glide through the air. It can stay aloft for several minutes at a time before plunging back into the sea to take a breath. It is common to see large numbers of sky shrimp leaping from the waves when being chased by some aquatic predator.

**Sky Grazer**

<b>Type</b>	Giant Univore
<b>Number</b>	1
<b>Move</b>	Slow
<b>IM/RS</b>	+3/30
<b>Stamina</b>	5,000
<b>Attack</b>	None
<b>Damage</b>	None
<b>Special Attack</b>	None
<b>Special Defense</b>	Immune to electrical energy
<b>Native World</b>	Balneum Blue

**DESCRIPTION:** This creature is absolutely immense, measuring 2 km (1.25 mi) in length and 1 km (1,094 yds) in width. They have two wing-like gas bladders situated on their backs (where wings might otherwise be) and six flipper-like appendages that dangle uselessly at their sides as they have no locomotive function. The mouth of a sky grazer consists of three jaws that protrude outward from the head like a giant proboscis. When fully opened the mouth encompasses a huge area and serves to draw in the atmospheric gases upon which the creature feeds.

They have no internal skeletal structure. Rather they are physiologically similar to a jellyfish, moving the various parts of their bodies through a hydrostatic process. Moving about their environment is purely a random thing as their bodies are buoyant in the atmosphere due to their gas bladders and as such they go wherever the winds blow them.

The atmospheric hydrogen that they exclusively feed upon is separated in their bodies; some is used to fill their gas bladders to facilitate 'flight' while any extra hydrogen collected is consumed. Any other atmospheric gases they gather are either respired or excreted as waste. Waste that is excreted is usually in the form of oxygen, carbon dioxide and pure water. Sometimes when it rains on the planet, looking up will reveal that a cloud grazer happens to be passing overhead and the rain in question is not being generated by weather.

The sky grazer lives exclusively on atmospheric hydrogen. But cruising about as it does with its mouth gaping while it collects its gaseous meal, it can also accidentally consume large quantities of insects and other aerial creatures.

The sky grazer never lands. It spends its entire life cycle in the upper reaches of the sky; living, giving birth and dying.

It is a docile creature with no form of attack. If it were to ever pose a danger to anything it would be purely by accident; crashing into an aerial craft or creature in dense fog or dying and falling out of the sky onto some hapless victim below.

## **Eta Section:**

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### **Credits:**

Art, Bio-tech, Cover & Gnatha: Khairul Hisham  
Art, Creature: Various Artists  
Art, The Wanderer:  
Creatures, Equipment, Wander Ship Design, Writer/Story:  
Ben Gorman  
Editing:  
Layout: William Douglass  
Play Testing: Larry Moore & Crew  
Proofreading: Lauren Wise

## **Final Words from the Editor....???**

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As the editor for the Star Frontiersman for the past 6 issues, I have had a blast working with all of the writers, artists, and other fellow Frontiersman.

My goal when I was asked to take over as the head editor was to get the magazine back on track with a more regular release time. Little did I know that I was to encounter several roadblocks to my goal? I had also decided that I would publish all of the remaining material in the Star Frontiersman queue that I could, as I was not receiving any more material at the time.

All of this was and is subject to change as life happens. So with some planning, a little arm twisting, and a little begging, I was able to secure some more material and art and put issues 20-25 together. I found great covers and great artists to fill in some gaps.

The plan was to end the Star Frontiersman with a bang. The Frontier Explorer started up and has made it through their first two years and is going strong, so there will be no permanent end to our love for all things Star Frontiers.

So I hope you have enjoyed this blockbuster adventure and will continue to support your Star Frontiers Community on the web sites and in the Frontier Explorer.

William Douglass-Editor for the Star Frontiersman.

*OK, when I wrote these final words, it was just that, the end of the Star Frontiersman. Now everything has taken another turn and one for the better.*

*Keep reading to the next page and see the new and improved plan as it begins to unfold.*

On to A Changing Frontier.....

# A CHANGING FRONTIER

I'll admit this is an article I never dreamed that I would be writing, especially after starting the Frontier Explorer. As you've probably guessed by now there are changes afoot with the Star Frontiersman.

The first change is a new, redesigned web site. It's still at the same web address (<http://starfrontiersman.com>) and we have all the same great content but with a shiny new look and now separate from the [DwD Studios site](#). In many ways it's a throwback to the old site. It's also been designed with mobile browsers in mind and should look good regardless of the size of screen you're using.

Along with the new website, the bigger news is that we are also announcing that ownership and management of the magazine has been transferred from Bill Logan, who originally created the Star Frontiersman back in early 2007 and the founder of DwD Studios, which has run the magazine since late 2009, to Tom Stephens, the co-founder and senior editor of the [Frontier Explorer magazine](#). With this change, the two Star Frontiers fan magazines come under one roof and will be run by Frontier Explorer Media. Hopefully I can live up to the legacy Bill has left behind.

What does this mean for the Star Frontiersman? The short answer is that we're not completely sure yet. William Douglass will remain in his position as the lead editor for the magazine. We do have a number of remastered Dragon articles that have yet to be published and there are still a number of the original modules that haven't been given the remastered treatment. We hope to get to all those items in the future. Also, we are completely committed to keep the magazine and remastered rules available and on-line. And we'll continue to publish new issues as content is submitted. The Star Frontiersman definitely won't be going away.

A final project is to complete the online, [wiki version of the Star Frontiersman articles](#) which lives on the [Star Frontiers Network wiki](#). I started this project years ago but it kind of fell by the wayside over the years. Issues 1-6 and 14 are completely online. I'd like to see the others go up as well. If you're interested in helping out with this project let us know at [editors@starfrontiersman.com](mailto:editors@starfrontiersman.com).

And we're still accepting submissions. If you want to submit content to the magazine, please do so. The fan magazines can't survive without input from the community. We're not the only ones with great ideas and we want to hear yours.

And submissions don't have to be Star Frontiers specific. The Star Frontiersman will remain completely Star Frontiers focused. The Frontier Explorer was always planned to have a broader coverage so no matter what you submit we'll find a place for it to be published.

To submit content, all you have to do is hit the big gold "Submit New Content" button in the left sidebar on the website. The only change is that any submissions will go into a shared queue, to appear either in the Frontier Explorer or the Star Frontiersman as we see fit. The truth is that editing and producing a fan magazine of this size is a lot of work. We're still figuring out how to juggle both of them and do them both justice. If you're interested in helping out and getting involved, feel free to drop me a line at [editors@starfrontiersman.com](mailto:editors@starfrontiersman.com) and let me know.

If you want to be kept abreast of new issues or other announcements, consider [signing up for our newsletter](#) mailing list. We'll use that list to send out occasional (probably less than six times a year) announcements of new issues and other news related to Star Frontiers in general. And if you had signed up for the newsletter in the past, please do so again as that old mailing list was lost in a database crash on the old web site.

Whether you've traveled the spaceways of the Frontier for years or are just arriving for the first time, we hope you'll keep coming back for new adventures with both the Star Frontiersman and the Frontier Explorer. We look forward to seeing you in the space lanes.

- Tom Stephens  
*Managing Editor*



## BALNEUM BLUE

By Ben Gorman

The sonar unit chirps three times, drawing the attention of Captain Farley. He reaches up and taps the small instrument and then cants his head to the side curiously.

"What's this? Looks to be huge - it's off the screen. It's More than a thousand meters!"

A quick glance at the sonar shows the depth at about 900 m, with another 100 m to the sea floor. The range to the target is about 1,000 m.

First Officer Holmes glances at Captain Farley who nods slightly. Holmes positions two more of the ship's floodlights forward then moves the Wanderer to within 40 m for a closer look.

Everyone on the bridge is treated to what appears to be a huge coral column. You cannot see the edges of it in any direction as the water serves to cloak it from prying eyes. What you can see are several, irregular openings that appear to be covered in a clear film or membrane. Amazingly enough they look like doors or windows!

With a furrowed brow of consternation, Captain Farley says, "Do you see that? What is that?" then he turns to Holmes and says, "Station-keeping Holmes ... and kill the lights for a second."

First Officer Holmes switches the flood lights off and immediately a soft, blue glow can be seen emanating from the structure. The glow looks strikingly similar to an energy field of some kind.

"Find a flat spot and set 'er down Holmes." Says Captain Farley. Then he turns to those on the bridge and says, "Suit up people! Lets go see what that thing is."

Yautsee leans in close and whispers to you, "I thought there wasn't supposed to be anybody here..."