

Undercurrents

...a guide to the ongoing colonization of Poseidon.

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A View From Orbit

Ten Years After

This summer's annual Origins Gaming Convention in Columbus, Ohio, marked the ten-year anniversary of the release of the first edition of Blue Planet. The realization that BP has been around for ten years snuck up on us and came as a bit of a shock. It's hard to believe the game has been around so long. Though BP has gone the inevitable way of all small, independent game lines, entering a sort of inactive publishing limbo, no roleplaying game ever really dies as long as folks continue to play it – and there seems to be a lot of folks who are keeping BP in play.

One of the best things about BP is that the game has always had a hardcore fan base that even now continues to support the game, develop material and share it over Commco...the Internet. It is actually due to the efforts of this core community that UC #7 has finally come together. We had always hoped that UC would become a community-driven publication, and so we are pleased to offer a new issue, initiated and written (with only a little fiddling on Biohazard's part) entirely by BP's devoted players.

With the uncertainty about exactly what the future holds for Blue Planet, we thought we would put most everything we have in the Undercurrents pipeline into this one massively-oversized issue, simply to make sure it got published, and as a big thank you for your patience and support. Though we cannot promise this issue means anything more for the future of the BP line than the value of its own content, we hope you enjoy this return visit to the water world. Thanks for coming...

Beneath Still Waters

Five years have passed since *Ancient Echoes*, the most recent Blue Planet supplement, was published, and almost seven years have gone by since the last issue of *Undercurrents* was released. For much of that time, BP was under license to Fantasy Flight Games, while the crew at Biohazard used the hiatus to work on other projects and to attend to their personal lives, which had been much-neglected during the years spent colonizing Poseidon.

Though all rights to Blue Planet have since returned to Biohazard, we have so far done nothing new with the game line. This lack of productivity is not due to a lack of

will so much as to a lack of time and energy – new jobs, marriages, moves and game projects have all conspired to keep us off-planet. We have been away for a long time, but our hearts have remained on Poseidon. Though at this point we cannot promise anything but good intentions, we can at least share some of the potentialities.

Digital Blue Planet – The next thing we want to do, and a near certainty if Biohazard Headquarters can stay put for more than two consecutive years, is to create PDFs of all the published BP material for web-based distribution. The final form these PDFs will take is yet to be determined, but in a perfect world, all the source material will be reformatted into a continuous series of content-specific, modular chapters. This reorganization would involve minor edits, revisions and corrections, and extensive cross-referencing, so it would create a sort of unified, master version of the game. Of course, this project would require a formidable effort, and so it is more likely that when the PDFs happen, they will end up as simply reproductions of the original books, in their current layouts. Regardless of its final format, the digital version of BP will likely be made available through an online vendor such as DriveThruRPG or RPG.net.

Blue Planet Redux – Though Fantasy Flight and Steve Jackson Games have been the only companies to officially license BP to date, there have been a number of other licensing possibilities in recent years. Most interested parties have wanted to do some sort third edition of BP or incorporate the setting into another existing system or space-opera universe. So far, either the parties that inquired chose not to pursue a BP project or we declined their requests for licenses. In just the past week in fact, three different companies have made inquiries about licensing BP, and we are seriously considering one, which would revive the line using lightening press publishing to make production of new supplements economical.

Blue Planet on Screen – Several parties have expressed interest in BP as an intellectual property from which to develop visual media - comic books and even a feature film in one case. There is an outside chance that the setting may eventually be adapted into a television series, and the Biohazard staff has spent some time working with one interested party developing premise and meta-plot ideas. If such a series ever became reality, it would give BP a kind of life we never expected, and would certainly drive a revitalization of the game line.

On the Horizon

Hole City

(Edited from John Snead's original work for BP v1.0)

Orbiting the wormhole on the Earth-system side, at a distance of 500 km is the GEO base, WH-1. Constructed in 2179, WH-1 is the most remote human settlement in the Solar System. Hole City, as it is known by its inhabitants, is really only a collection of 76 squat cylindrical modules, connected to a central axis by two-hundred-meter spokes. Hole City rotates at a rate sufficient to produce one half Earth-normal gravity on the inner rim surfaces, a viable compromise for the 1,100 spacer and non-spacer inhabitants of the station. The inhabitants are mostly scientists and their support personnel studying the wormhole, but WH-1 also houses 91 members of the GEO Transport Authority.

The GEO-TA administers transshipment of cargo and maintains the message pod service between the two solar systems. Because most cargo and transport vessels can typically conserve fuel by making vector changes only in their destination systems, it is uncommon for them to decelerate prior to "shooting the hole," so most pass by WH-1 as little more than short-lived radar blips. Accordingly, most of the actual work the TA does with the shipping of physical cargo is administrative, though they do provide emergency rescue and repair services.

The primary job of the GEO-TA is the maintenance of the mostly automated Trans-Wormhole Communications Ferry. The TA shuttles message recordings through the wormhole from Hole City to the Serpents outpost station, and back again aboard unmanned pods. The pods are sent each way at 12-hour intervals, carrying batches of messages collected via tight beam at the TA's respective in-system transfer offices. Once through the hole, the pods' digital cargoes are downloaded and retransmitted to their final destinations.

While using the Comm Ferry is costly, with civilian rates normally running at 550cs/minute, it does allow two-way communication between Earth and Poseidon on a time scale of 30 to 60 hours. Express messages can be transferred, from transmission to reception, in as little as six hours, but such communications are prohibitively expensive for all but the highest priority information.

Though the sheer volume of new data means that the Poseidon CommCore databases will always be out-of-date compared to those on the Earth-side of the wormhole, it is also part of the TA's charge to transmit primary database updates as frequently as resources allow.

Colonial Contribution

LHL&S INDUSTRIES

(Submitted by Tun Kai Poh)

Location: Penang Island, Malaysia

Focus: Biotechnology, computers, light manufacturing, consumer goods

Assets: 455 billion scrip

Colonial Holdings: None

As one of the largest "second-tier" Incorporates, LHL&S Industries boasts a strong presence in Asia, although it is often overshadowed by the Nippon Industrial State, and has yet to establish holdings on Poseidon. The company has traveled a long and unusual road from its 20th Century roots. Originally a family-run grocery in Singapore, Ling Ho Lai & Sons expanded into a major supermarket chain during the Asian economic booms and moved into agricultural biotechnology in the early 21st Century. Subsequently changing its name to LHL&S Food Industries, the corporation grew to include major holdings within most of the emerging Asian powers of Indonesia and Malaysia.

In 2038, LHL&S generously donated half a billion dollars of hybrid crop seed to Asian countries in an effort to alleviate widespread food shortages, giving it a favorable reputation in the region. Fifty-five years later, during the Blight, similar acts of generosity proved futile, and many of the corporation's branch operations were lost during the widespread chaos. LHL&S would have collapsed along with many other major Asian corporations, if it had not been for a stroke of luck, combined with the initiative and vision of one man.

In 2093, the citizens of Penang Island severed all land links with mainland Malaysia and declared independence from the crumbling government. LHL&S's brilliant but eccentric chairman, Stanley Ling, in a decisive move, negotiated with the newly independent city-state for the transfer of all of the company's holdings to Penang. Within six months, LHL&S was the sole corporate sponsor on Penang, providing the technology needed for the island to survive the Blight, including genetically engineered tapioca crops as an alternative food source immune to the Fischer Virus. While the rest of the region collapsed into anarchic Free Zones or GEO protectorates, Penang became one of the largest technological enclaves in Southeast Asia.

Soon after Biogene successfully established a sovereign state in 2094, LHL&S launched a copycat effort to do the same, silently taking over the Penang government, while absorbing the island's highly advanced computer and light manufacturing industries. In 2095, Stanley Ling managed to secure UN recognition of LHL&S Industries as an Incorporate city-state.

In the years that followed, Ling directed the Incorporate to take a competitive rather than cooperative approach to combating the Blight, diverting huge sums into many secret and often redundant projects intended to give LHL&S the lead in countering the Fischer Virus. Ling was adamant in his refusal to share his company's research with the GEO and other governments, let alone rival companies.

His increasingly irrational obsession with secrecy disrupted efforts to stop the Blight in Asia and wasted valuable company resources. Finally, in 2106, the Executive Board of LHL&S ousted Ling, who died soon after in a mysterious accident that claimed not only his life, but the results of his anti-Blight research as well. With the mad visionary died almost everything LHL&S had learned about the Fischer virus, crippling the Incorporate's efforts to cure the Blight. Many historians today believe that LHL&S could have shared the glory of defeating the Fischer Virus with Biogene, if not for Stanley Ling.

LHL&S Industries emerged from the Blight Years as one of the smallest of the Incorporate city-states, and lost many battles against the NIS for control of the new Asian markets. In 2168, the company finally broke into the tightly held Chinese markets, due largely to the diplomatic efforts of LHL&S's Executive Board, fully half of whom are ethnic Chinese, descended from company founder Ling Ho Lai. LHL&S's genetically engineered crops have become an essential element in rebuilding agriculture in mainland China, and the company has become the primary supplier of computer technology to the Chinese government. Since then, the Incorporate's unique and highly coveted trade status with China has remained its single greatest asset.

The company was slow to respond to the re-opening of Poseidon, and fell behind other bioengineering firms when the Long John revolution swept the industry. It wasn't until 2191 that current chairman Josephine Ling made a deal with GenDiver to acquire a regular supply of xenosilicate ore, in order to remain competitive in the biotechnology field. Today, LHL&S is finally preparing to establish a research lab on Poseidon, in the New Hawaii chain. LHL&S currently maintains good relations with GenDiver and Independent China, and stands with its allies in opposing the authority of the GEO.

Access Denied

When Josephine Ling took up her position as chairman of LHL&S in 2190, she began a private project to uncover Stanley Ling's long-lost research projects, in the interest of historical curiosity. She has recently discovered a hidden data archive in the Ling family estate in Penang containing stunning information about the dark legacy of Stanley Ling's paranoia.

In 2101, Stanley Ling secretly commissioned the construction of a half dozen fully automated biodomes in secluded locations around the world, in order to test strains of the Fischer Virus in various controlled environments. The exact locations and natures of the biodomes were kept secret through extortion, threat and assassination. Isolated from the rest of the world, managed entirely by computers, these biodomes were only ever visited by Ling himself. The secret domes might have produced results that could have cured the Fischer Virus years before Biogene did, if Ling had not erased all traces of their existence shortly before his death in 2106.

They still wait, dormant, their fusion reactors long dead, in six well-isolated, geologically stable locations around the world. Josephine Ling is currently organizing expeditions to enter and explore these long-lost installations. She has also obtained six tactical nuclear warheads from her Chinese military contacts - just in case any of the expeditions accidentally unleash a long-slumbering strain of the Fischer Virus upon an unsuspecting planet.

The thing that most bothers Josephine Ling about her ancestor's secrets is not what she has discovered to date, but what she has not yet found. For Stanley Ling's archives hint at even more secret projects that were underway when he died, projects that have remained hidden for over ninety years...

Longshore **(Submission by Neil Smith)**

Location and Local Terrain

Longshore is located at 2° 56' 37" S, 2° 24' 18" E, on the northern shore of the island of Mandalay. The town is on the seafront on the western shore of the Irrawaddy River estuary. The town is named for the 4 km long sandy beach that runs along the local coast. This gently shelving beach provided the original Native community with a low-surf shoreline on which to easily beach their boats. Behind the beach, the land rises gently for about two and a half kilometers before rising steeply into the hills of northern Mandalay. The shore is covered in lush tropical rainforest.

The Irrawaddy estuary is dominated by tidal mudflats that form a rich feeding ground for wading avians and intertidal creatures. Depending on the tide, the navigable portion of river varies in width from 200 meters to 3.2 kilometers. The eastern shore of the estuary is rocky and undeveloped, with no anchorage. The town's proximity to the equator ensures that it is very rarely threatened by large cyclonics, but smaller storms are not uncommon.

History

The region around what would become Longshore was originally explored in 2091 (CY 04) by an expedition of Athena colonists seeking to colonize New Hawaii. They stopped off at numerous places en route from Haven and founded Atlantis later that year. Following the eruption of Mt Odysseus in 2124 (CY 33) and the subsequent destruction of Atlantis, 150 people decided to settle the Longshore site. These people survived by fishing, aquaculture, and farming, and their settlement also served as a layover port for the occasional travelers moving between New Hawaii and the Haven Cluster.

After Recontact, the story of Longshore is typical of many settlements across Poseidon. A GEO survey team visited Longshore in 2166 (CY 70) and noted its potential for development. Nine years later, a GEO science mission set up in Longshore, to catalogue the ecologies of the island of Mandalay and the surrounding area; it became a HIST mission in 2188 (CY 89). This mission prompted a small colonization effort, with the colonists mostly integrating well with the Native community.

The discovery of Long John in 2187 (CY 89) changed Poseidon, though it took a few years for the changes to become apparent in Longshore. As news of the discovery spread, the populations of many small colonies boomed, and Longshore was no exception. In 2191 (CY 92), the first small deposits were found in the Squall Alley region and the floodgates opened. As the nearest colonial settlement to the Squall Alley fields, Longshore became a regional staging areas for the northern part of the Haven Cluster.

Two Incorporate states also set up large colonization efforts nearby. The Hanover Industries incorporate state founded Lebensraum in 2193 (CY 94) and the Nippon Industrial State founded Simushir in 2195 (CY 95). Both of these city-states are centers of massive development, each with current populations of over 25,000. As their development continues, it is sure to have an increasing impact on Longshore and the region.

Physical Layout

Longshore is sited in a broad, shallow bay at the mouth of the Irrawaddy River. It is built on the edge of the long, sandy beach. There is a shallow-water anchorage at the

eastern end of the beach; a deep-water anchorage and harbor is being built to the west. There are large aquaculture fields in the nutrient-rich outflow of the Irrawaddy and along the main beach.

The town is built along two streets that run parallel to the shore. The Promenade runs right along the beach, with native huts lining the seaward side of the road. The beach also serves as an open-air workshop for boatwrights and netmakers. On the shoreward side of the Promenade, native huts have been replaced by colonial buildings – mostly shops catering to the prospectors, with a few bars and restaurants offering pleasant sea views.

Inland of the Promenade is Rangoon Street. The town center is at the eastern end of this road along the riverfront, hosting many businesses and the main offices of the various organizations operating in and out of Longshore. Most colonial residences are found on the western half of Rangoon Street or north on the western bank of the Irrawaddy, along a muddy track called Irrawaddy Way.

Demographics

Longshore is, in Poseidon terms, a fairly large town with around 5200 residents, including 600 Natives and 25 cetaceans. It also serves as a center for another 2500 roving prospectors and other bush-dwellers inhabiting the surrounding islands. There are a number of UK colonists working in Longshore, ostensibly under the aegis of a colony effort by the newly reestablished United Nations.

Government

The town is formally administered by the GEO, though a locally elected council handles the day-to-day management. The natives generally shun the council, opting to handle their own affairs – creating a sort of village-within-a-town hybrid not uncommon where colonies are established on native townsites. There are also offices for Hanover Industries, Biogene, Lavender Organics, and the UN.

Town law enforcement is handled by the administrative headquarters for Sector 1, District 2 of the GEO Patrol (Mandalay and southern New Hawaii) and Marshal Hector "The Vector" Stack is based there.

Economic Base

The town is supported, to a large extent, by the coin of the itinerant Long John prospectors. Many colonists and natives alike work at fishing and aquaculture to feed the town and the prospectors. Most of the rest of the inhabitants work in various cottage industries that provide services to prospectors, such as vehicle maintenance, guiding, entertainment, Long John brokerage and survey equipment sales.

While there is a healthy economy of repair, maintenance, and modification businesses, there is little actual heavy manufacturing in Longshore. This sector is filled by factories in Lebensraum and, to a lesser extent, in Simushir. These settlements have large-scale manufacturing plants, and their output is easily shipped to Longshore. Indeed, a Hanover emporium ship visits Longshore at least every two weeks. In addition, shopping trips and visits to Haven and Lebensraum are commonly made by Longshore residents.

Infrastructure

Longshore's power is provided by a fusion plant operated by the GEO. The plant provides all the local electricity needs, including power for desalination, the water treatment works, and a large satellite communications hub. The majority of roads are paved with coral sand biocrete and most of the colonial buildings are built from bioplastic. Transport within the town is generally on foot, though there are numerous, small, battery powered scooters and carts, and a few transport and delivery drones follow dedicated lanes.

There is a small landing field to the west of the town, and work has started nearby on dredging out a deep-water inshore anchorage and harbor. There is a daily flight to Haven and flights twice each week to Second Try, Cliffside, and other regional destinations.

At the eastern end of town near the river, there is a government complex containing the town hall and colonial manager's office, the GEO patrol's district headquarters, and a small hospital. The hospital deals with minor injuries and illnesses and emergency care, but after being stabilized, serious medical cases are airlifted to facilities in Haven or Lebensraum. The hospital building is also providing lab space to a HIST biological survey team currently based in Longshore.

Just north of the government center, a small GEO school offers primary and secondary education to local children, and a small home-stay program allows the children of prospectors and outlying settlements to attend the school as boarding students.

Fighting Fast Fungus - by Dr. Melissos Sameina, HIST (Submitted by BP List Member Max)

Virtually everyone who has spent more than a few weeks on Poseidon has had at least one unpleasant encounter with one of the more virulent strains of fast fungus. It is a little known fact that this saprophyte has been responsible for more deaths on this planet than those attributed to encounters with large predators. The first colonists were unprepared when they discovered aggressive fast fungus strains that could destroy food stores in only hours, infect

open wounds, and even infest healthy human skin. They were surprised to find that their mostly bioplastic clothing, tools, devices, buildings and vehicles could be digested and broken down almost before their eyes. Even many of these non-medical infestations have proven fatal, when devices failed, buildings collapsed or vehicles crashed. Today many cures have been offered, but this insidious problem continues to claim the lives of many Poseidoners and cause economic damage totaling millions every year.

There are two general strategies in the fight against fast fungus: disinfection and prevention. Whereas disinfection relies on constant vigilance, prevention is based on trust in the effectiveness of applied anti-fungus technology. Prevention efforts started very early, with fungicides being mixed into the nutrient solutions of the different bioplastic strains. After some setbacks several compounds were identified that halted or at least slowed the spread of fast fungus on bioplastics.

The efficiency of these measures was far from total, with some strains developing a resistance against the new chemicals at an astonishing rate. To address this problem, several companies have recently offered fungicide coatings that can be applied to the surface of existing bioplastic and, most importantly, wooden products.

In the likely event that some species will develop immunity against the fungicides, more efficient compounds should be developed. To this end we have taken a closer look at the commercial products offered as fungicidal coatings and have tested their efficiency against all strains of fast fungus that have been cataloged in the biological database at HIST.

Our results were revealing: all tested products were virtually identical in composition, differing only in the inactive portions of the applied polymeric compounds. It is therefore not surprising that they all showed the same shortcomings. They displayed good fungicidal properties against the vast majority of archived strains, but only inhibited the growth of three strains, two of them native to the Pacifica Archipelago.

The compounds were least effective against a particularly virulent strain that was retrieved from within the Sierra Nueva cluster. This species seemed to thrive on the fungicides, demonstrating exponential growth and devouring the treated samples within hours. It is not known if this particular strain occurs outside of the region in which it was found, but if it does it would prove devastating to those who rely on the efficacy of antifungal products.

Another way to inhibit the spread of fast fungus is to seal the surface with inorganic compounds that are indigesti-

ble. One type of material that has recently been marketed for this purpose is a form of nanocomposite. Nanocomposites are made up of alternating monomolecular layers of organic and inorganic polymers that form a very tough material not unlike that of seashells. Unlike polymer-based fungicides, nanocomposites rely solely on a perfect seal to protect underlying substances. Nanocomposites are uniquely designed to be abrasion-resistant and so serve well to protect materials for extended periods.

We have tested the two commercial nanocomposite forming solutions under realistic conditions on a variety of common items. After artificially aging the items, they were subjected to the same strains of fast fungus as utilized in the lab tests of the fungicidal coatings. Especially on wooden surfaces, but to a smaller extent also on bioplastics, microscopic cracks in the coating formed during the artificial aging allowed fast fungus to infect the underlying material. From these footholds, the fungi were able to eventually digest the material below, with the coating providing a slowing effect at best.

The cracking in the nanocomposite surfaces can be attributed to small inclusions and high surface roughness of the substrate. During production these problems are addressed by air filtration and plasma treatment of the surface before application of the nanocomposite forming solutions. As one would expect, bioplastic items that were coated in factories showed no micro-cracking after aging and were immune to fast fungus infection. Wooden items on the other hand cannot, due to their humidity-dependent change in volume, be effectively coated. To address this problem, research on a solution that diffuses deep into the wood before hardening is currently under way at HIST. As an added benefit, nanocomposite reinforced wood would have far better physical properties than untreated wood.

Killer Fungus Strain Stolen from HIST **Colonial Times / 378.99 local**

An early morning break-in at the Advanced Materials Lab at the Haven Institute of Science and Technology allowed intruders to abscond with all known samples of a uniquely virulent strain of the destructive fast fungus saprophyte. The theft was discovered by Dr. Melissos Sameina, lead scientist on a research project developing valuable anti-fungal technologies. According to Dr. Sameina, most of his data pertaining to his fungal research was eradicated by a system-wide worm program that specifically targeted his records.

Major producers of commercial fungicides had attacked Sameina's work when his findings were made public last month. Spokespeople for Biogene, Atlas and GenDiver

claimed that research data was falsified and that there is no such thing as the "killer strain" described by "the misguided doctor." A Biogene press release made this morning stated that the alleged theft would "benefit Dr. Sameina by making a verification of his bogus claims impossible." Based on these sentiments and the professionalism with which the theft and data wipe were carried out, the GEO Patrol suspects industrial espionage.

In a related story, a previously unknown organization calling itself the "Insubordinators" has claimed responsibility for the theft. The group is threatening to use the killer fungus to wreak havoc among the "alien invaders of Poseidon." The authenticity of this claim has not yet been verified.

Poseidon Art **(Edited from a submission by Jonas Steverud)**

The natives of Poseidon are a young culture, and one in which resources are used primarily for survival. Accordingly, natives produce very little of what can be called art in a traditional sense. There are few paintings, statues or purely ornamental works of any kind. Most native objects that are considered art are everyday items that have been decorated and valued for sentimental reasons.

This has begun to change with Recontact, however, and its resulting surge in population—and especially the increase in the numbers of colonials with significant disposable income. With the technological and economic resources now available to the natives and the freedom from daily survival tasks they allow, the number of indigenous artists has increased.

The market for native art is new, and as a result, indigenous works are currently earning high prices at auction, especially on Earth. Novelty is driving the market, and though the novelty will not last, the political plight of the natives lends an air of humanism to many of their works that will help them maintain their value and relevance. Though few individual Poseidon artists—or artistic works—are yet famous, there are two that might be known to even those unfamiliar with the art world.

Jessica's Fishing Net

This net is really just a piece of ordinary fishing net made of nylon. It is about a meter square and dark blue-green in color. In each corner, a number of beads have been fastened made from bone, stone, plastic, glass and other durable substances. The mother of Jessica DeMarco, the first child born on the planet, made this while she was pregnant.

The conventional story says that the mother simply wanted something to occupy her in the later stages of her

pregnancy, so she decorated part of a discarded fishing net. More prophetic tales, common in the native population, describe various and unlikely adventures of mother and infant, and the even more unlikely role of the net in said tales.

The net itself was virtually unknown until 2188 when it suddenly became the focus of a conflict between newcomers and the natives. An art collector, with ties to off-world interests, decided the net should be part of an Earth exhibition of native work. When some shady deals put the net in the collector's hands, there were accusations of theft, though many claimed it was only on prolonged loan. No matter the actual legal status of the net, it became a flashpoint for the budding native rights movement. Despite organized protests, the net was apparently shipped to Earth, but in the end never made it to the exhibition. The present location of the net remains a mystery and its disappearance has only served to enhance its legend.

Stone Chaser

There are works of art that make you marvel at the artist's skill, there are works that make you question the sanity of the artist, and then there are works that make you question your own perceptions. Rarely however, does an artist manage to capture all these potentials in a single work. It is exceptional to capture such potential more than once in a career, and unprecedented to capture it eleven times.

During the last six years, eleven sculptures have been sold at various auctions, and the winning bids have been uniformly astronomical. The artist, believed to be a bottlenosed dolphin named Stone Chaser, has never appeared in public and remains a compelling mystery. He, if in fact the artist is even male, or even a cete, is known only from his incredible and uncanny work. His sculptures are all made from natural materials – wood, stone, coral – and are all phenomenal masterworks. One piece however, is considered the hallmark of the series.

Poseidon Weeps is a smallish sculpture about a meter tall, and though irregularly shaped, its overall form is roughly cylindrical. The primary medium is a native Poseidon coral analog, but the sculpture incorporates various stone and wood components also from the water world. The diverse materials have been selected for their natural colors, and the fantastic hues are central to the piece. The colors transition from a ruddy orange at the bottom to a stunning azure at the top, without any chromatic gaps in the form and no visible seams between the various materials.

At first glance the outer surfaces of the piece seem to have been left in their found, natural states. In truth how-

ever, as one moves around the sculpture, subtle shapes resolve themselves. The protrusions, bumps and other irregularities merge and coalesce to form myriad scenes of colonial Poseidon – here a landscape being plowed for agriculture, there a polluted reef devoid of life, here a mining operation, and there an abandoned native village. Most incredibly, and the signature feature of Stone Chaser's work, when viewed through echolocation, or with hi-res artificial sonar, the interior of the sculpture reveals even other forms. From one side, the viewer sees a native woman's face, wearing an expression of profound sorrow, tears running down her cheeks. From the other side, one sees a school of ray-like creatures swimming in an enigmatic pattern.

Most Wanted

Dr. Melissos Sameina
(Submitted by BP List Member Max)

Melissos was born in the military outpost of Heraion on one of the Northern Sporades Islands off the Turkish coast in 2166. His parents, both Silva, were serving in the GEO Marines. His father, fascinated with military history, wanted to name his son after a great warrior. The only warrior he found any reference to who was born on the island of Samos was an ancient Greek Admiral. Without noticing that he had used an old edition of *Greek Philosophers* for his search, he named his son Melissos. This oversight turned out to be prophetic, as the young Melissos lacked in physical abilities but was gifted with intelligence and intuition.

Born Silva, the traditional option he had was to join the GEO Armed Forces. Instead of becoming a shock trooper as his parents had originally hoped, he joined the GEO Marines Corps of Engineers. His high intelligence allowed him to breeze through GEO Military Academy in Geneva, but his frequent questioning of standard procedures did not make him many friends. Still fascinated by his early experiences with the sea, he chose to specialize in naval construction and demolition.

As he moved from assignment to assignment he began to realize that technical issues alone were not satisfying his thirst for knowledge. When he was given the chance to volunteer for one of the first GEO military assignments to Poseidon, he jumped at the opportunity. He was enthralled by the prospect of experiencing the development of a new society in a world that reminded him so much of his childhood home.

On Poseidon he was responsible for supervising the GEO's military construction efforts. Although he excelled

at his work, he was denied promotion past the rank of major. Being at the climax of his career in the GEO peacekeeping force, he did what would have been unthinkable for him on Earth: he left the military. As he had always strived to further his knowledge, both professional and personal, he felt most at home in a scientific environment. Only two years after beginning his civilian life he received his Ph.D. in Biochemistry at the Haven Institute of Science and Technology. With the unique combination of skills and experience he had amassed over the years, he was the natural choice for the position of director of the newly established materials science unit at HIST.

His calm demeanor and his rational style of communication had allowed him to overcome most of the prejudice that is directed at Hybrids even on Poseidon. His resonant voice has an exotic accent that in combination with his manner of speech has often surprised people unfamiliar with him. Unlike most other Silva, he is not obsessed with his physique and has allowed his head to begin balding. When not in his lab, he can usually be found wandering the streets of Haven while discussing the mundane and the philosophical with his diverse group of friends, or simply sitting at the edge of the sea contemplating the ways of this ever-changing world.

Dive In

The Greater White Whisperer
(Submitted by Jérôme Darmont, from the original French)

Prelude

Everything had started almost ordinarily. Raster Bob used to work for the New Rastafarian Movement from time to time. He was smuggling weapons for them on his modified catamaran. He was getting the cash in Kingston, exchanging it for the guns in the Dolphin Sea, and sailing back to a small cove somewhere between Kingston and Marley. The NRM had kept a keen eye on him at first — not the kind of guys to entrust just anybody with their scrip — but even they were beginning to relax. And then, the blow. An unforeseen cyclone, and not a small one. His catamaran sunk above a trough, cargo lost, and Raster Bob knocked out after the mainmast broke, gliding downward into the abyss...

It was dark, cold, and Raster Bob, still unconscious, was about to succumb to the crushing pressure when a bluish light appeared. The origin of the light, an aborigine from the Sierra Nueva cluster, explored the memories of the unfortunate smuggler, had a thought, and then decided to use this human against the Despoilers. After a couple

of biochemical modifications, the creature healed Raster Bob and sent him back to the surface.

Raster Bob awoke amid his boat's debris. By luck, he found his emergency raft. Swiftly and lucidly evaluating the trouble in which he found himself, he decided to adopt a low profile and steered for Haven.

The Mission

Depending on the characters' background, the moderator will have to adapt this introduction. If they are incorporated citizens, it will be simple: their company state will assign them the mission — probably as part of a contract with GenDiver. If they are independents, they may be tempted by a well-paid job offer (you can go up to 50,000 cs per PC, as GenDiver does not really expect them to survive to reclaim their money). If they are closer to the GEO, their employer will ask them to apply to the job incognito to discover what is going on. In that case, the character of Camille Bachj (see below) might be downplayed or eliminated, unless the moderator wishes to exploit internal rivalries between different GEO services, which could be fun.

One way or another, the characters end up in Haven, in the offices of the Haven Policy Institute, a consulting firm representing the interests of GenDiver in the city — GenDiver does not recognize GEO authority and maintains no official presence in Haven. The players' mission is explained by a man wearing a dark suit who does not introduce himself. If the characters ask, he calls himself Harry Waffelmann. They must simply escort the San Diego, a Long John cargo ship hoisting GenDiver's colors, from Santa Elena to Haven. The problem is that three similar ships have already been lost at sea these last months and internal security has been unable to determine how nor why. Each time, observation satellites or aerial escorts could not provide any useful data because of clouds or a sudden storm. GenDiver's own internal security is overwhelmed with the Sierra Nueva Cluster events, so GenDiver decided to call on independents. What Waffelmann does not confess is the extent of escort vehicle and soldier losses GenDiver has suffered.

The characters are scheduled to transfer to Santa Elena the next day. A patrol jumpcraft (PG 157) will be at their disposal for the mission's duration if they do not own any vehicle themselves. The 2313 km-long trip takes 8 hours by jumpcraft. If the characters own slower vehicles (surface ships or submersibles) they absolutely want to use, the departure of the San Diego will have to be delayed, but this is something the characters can negotiate.

Before embarking on the San Diego, the characters may want to take advantage of travel time to research information on CommCore. Concerning GenDiver, they can learn most of the general information from the Player's Guide (PG 218). An Average Intellect + Computers roll is sufficient. Through more detailed study (Complicated Intellect + Economics roll), they realize that if Long John shipments continue to be lost at this rate, it will very soon be a non-negligible financial problem for the Incorporate. Not enough to bankrupt GenDiver, but certainly enough to destabilize its position with its rivals. Besides, the GenDiver scrip exchange rate is not at its best – 0.61 GEOcs – bad news for the characters!

The characters can also obtain the list of the lost ships' crewmembers to crosscheck it with the crewmember list of the San Diego. A simple analysis (Intellect + Computers roll) reveals that three people have survived the three wrecks in a row and have been picked up by the rescue teams: Charlie Barbora, Raster Bob, and Rocco Swifter. Most other survivors have left the company or now occupy a safer job ashore. If the characters do not think to seek this information at this step, they can do it later, aboard the San Diego. Rocco and Charlie are pretty proud of being such tough guys. It will be difficult to obtain more than the names and ID-holos of these three, but a successful Intellect + Computers roll can give the characters access to survivors' personal addresses in Santa Elena.

Witnesses and Suspects

Raster Bob Raster Bob grew up as many native kids from Kingston's poorer districts. Forced to take care of himself since he was very young, he managed to "make it," as he says, by trafficking here and there. Practicing the dubious profession of smuggler, he performed several "runs" on the NRM's behalf. After his accident and the loss of a precious cargo of weapons, he found it preferable to adopt a low profile and put distance between the NRM and himself. As a result, he found a job at GenDiver as a cook on the Incorporate's ships. He is only starting to realize that he may have provoked the sinkings and that it is probably only by chance that he wasn't swallowed by a greater white... He is the only survivor to have witnessed the wrecks' monstrous causes, but he keeps this information to himself because of his suspicions.

A confirmed chat-up merchant, Raster Bob is a tall black guy with dreadlocks. He generally only wears dirty, white trousers and chef's jacket – cooking is a dirty job after all. Cool by nature, he is nevertheless swift to wave his diamond knife at the face of suckers. Or even use it, if necessary.

Rocco Swifter and Charlie Barbora Rocco and Charlie have been inseparable since their early childhood. Always found together, they are like brothers. Both are tall and dark-haired. Their resemblance has increased even more due to the cosmetic modifications they have undergone. They like wearing tank top t-shirts that outline their muscles. It appears that these two geniuses have no other goal in life but becoming rich, surrounding themselves with beautiful girls, and living like kings. They survived three wreckages in a row by luck, but also because they show an exemplary solidarity and loyalty to each other.

Tom Wheeler Tom Wheeler was born on a kelp farm located many kilometers from civilization. He had a happy childhood with few cares about Recontact, until pollution of officially unknown origin, but attributed to a neighboring Long John mine, ravaged his parents' harvests several years in a row. Ruined, the Wheeler family was forced to join the growing number of poor in nearby Kingston. Tom was a perfect recruit for the NRM, to whom he remains a devoted member with strong political and religious convictions.

His most recent job is to find Raster Bob, and he tracked him to Santa Elena from Haven. Tom was hired aboard the San Diego as a sailor. His intention is to recover the money Raster owes the NRM. Blond-haired with dark eyes, Wheeler hides his firm resolution and considerable tenacity behind a semblance of naiveté. His paramilitary training and his biomodifications make of him an adversary not be underestimated.

Camille Bachj A product of the GEO, Camille Bachj is on duty to discover the reason why several GenDiver ships have disappeared and, if possible, to discover if there is a link with the Sierra Nueva insurgents. She does not need to step in; she is just here to discover what is going on. However, Bob Raster's uncanny abilities will raise her curiosity and she will probably offer him GEO protection. Her cover on the San Diego is as the ship's medic. Brunette, petite, Eurasian, she simply wears the functional whites of her apparent occupation.

Captain Rafik Drug-addict and irascible, Habib Rafik was the only one willing to take on the "cursed" post as GenDiver ship's captain. He is easily identified because of the noise he makes while walking. His prosthetic his right leg is faulty, but he does not care about getting it fixed, preferring to spend his cash on pharium. If a character fixes his leg, maybe he will show him some friendship.

Ira Ramstein This blazing red-haired woman seconds Rafik with efficiency and loyalty. She knew him before his downturn – caused by the death of his wife in the nautical accident that cost him his leg – and still owes him a debt of friendship. She holds the real power aboard the San Diego, and she could prove useful to the characters if they manage to earn her confidence.

Scout This eccentric dolphin was assigned from GenDiver's internal security to serve as pilot for the San Diego. Quite an opportunity for a fin who has been considering, for some time now, deserting and joining the Sierra Nueva insurgents. He communicates with the rest of the crew through his CICADA's drone.

Investigation at Santa Elena

Normally, the characters should arrive at Santa Elena the night before the San Diego departs. This gives them time to visit the apartments of Bob, Swifter, and Barбора, if they so choose. The three live in low-rent living quarters provided by GenDiver to its contract employees, but they are currently aboard the San Diego preparing for departure. Swifter and Barбора live together, and Raster lives in another building. Their tiny apartments are sparsely furnished with minimal kitchens and bathroom facilities and basic smart home computer systems with CommCore access. A Complicated Dexterity + Lockpicking roll is needed to open the apartment doors.

Both apartments contain nothing notable, save general clues to the personalities of the occupants – a Bob Marley poster and a little pharium hidden under the bed mattress at Raster Bob's, and body-building equipment, dirty dishes, game program and pornographic spikes in the other. If the characters hack the computers' passwords (Formidable Intellect + Computer roll if they lack the suitable intrusion software), they can review their suspects' last communications. These appear to be everyday and professional calls, except calls to a bar called "The Nirvana" and to a certain "Mrs. Shawa" for Raster Bob.

The Nirvana The Nirvana is a trendy bar. Hexagonal in shape, the main room is lit by blue neon and leads to four secondary, themed rooms – one of the themes changes each month. A fifth door leads to a pool open to the ocean, which allows cetaceans to mingle with the customers. The entrance and the nearby bar lie on the sixth side of the hexagon. The characters can have a good time here, but they will not learn much about Raster Bob, who seems to be a nice guy, though he frequently leaves rather drunk.

Mrs. Shawa The mysterious Mrs. Shawa lives in the large and miserable native district, in a haphazardly built house made of scavenged bioplastic and wood. A curtain of beaded shells conceals the entrance to a dark room, at

the center of which shines a bedside lamp with a red bulb. An old aquaform with gray hair and azure eyes sits cross-legged on worn pillows. If the characters ask around before calling on her, they discover Mrs. Shawa is a healer in good standing, and many also believe she is a seer. At first, she will politely decline to divulge information about Raster Bob, but if the characters are persuasive or offer a few hundred scrip, she will tell a little about him. Bob came to see her two or three times, searching for specific memories that he believes he has lost. According to her, he is an upset man, a lost soul she could do little to soothe. It is difficult to learn more, and the characters will even have to sort out what the old woman says because she mischievously uses almost incomprehensible, mystic-charlatan gibberish.

Aboard the San Diego

The San Diego is a standard cargo ship. During the trip, the moderator will have to make sure the players are not bored, while dealing with their character's actions, those of the NPCs and the PC-NPC interactions. This is the heart of the scenario. It is very open and wholly depends on player groups and moderators. Nevertheless, the following elements will help make it interesting while creating a tense and heavy atmosphere. Moderators are encouraged to modify, improvise and remix their own version of the story to best fit their players' characters, playing styles and interests.

Embarking Ira Ramstein will greet the characters when they come aboard, Rafik having once more locked himself in his cabin to lose himself in a pharium haze. Having to direct the departure maneuver, she will guide them through a short tour of the ship and will introduce them to the other officers – Camille Bachj and Scout.

The Course The San Diego's cruising speed is about 30 km/h, which means the trip should take about 80 hours. Departure from Santa Elena is scheduled for 1500 h. The characters will therefore stay two full nights at sea before presumably reaching their destination.

Weather Forecast During the trip, the temperature will vary between 40°C during the day and 30°C at night, with a very high humidity. The weather will be sunny the first day, but the San Diego will suffer a small storm in the evening — nothing dangerous for the ship, but it will hamper the characters' movements on the open decks. The next day and a good part of the night will be very cloudy, and then the weather will clear again. The characters can easily forecast this by consulting CommCore (Routine Intellect + Computers roll) or by making a meteorological study (Intellect + Meteorology roll).

The Long John Be clear with the players right away – they should forget about stealing the Long John shipment for themselves! The ore is stored in an armored hold sealed with sophisticated electronic locks – the physical and digital keys to which aren't even on board. If the characters still decide to go for it, they must have the appropriate equipment, and two Formidable Intellect + Electronics rolls are necessary to open the vault. In addition, the hold is guarded by a variety of alarm systems and 12 well-trained and armed members of GenDiver's internal security operating in four-man shifts.

Red Herrings

Rocco and Charlie are clearly bullies, but it should not be difficult for the characters to guess that they are not involved in the wreckages – the moderator can allow an Awareness + Psychology roll if necessary. The PCs will however, have to be careful not to earn the Italians' suspicions by openly spying on them.

The characters cannot afford to overtly cause any problems or discord on board ship. They may be responsible for ship's security, but Rafik is still the ship's master and the stubborn old man may well decide to confine them to their cabins if they cause any real problems. This would certainly make their task more complicated!

The characters can initially call Scout for help, but unless they keep a close eye on him they will be confused when he apparently disappears. Scout will defect to the insurgency during the first night's storm. He will program his CICADA to keep circling around the San Diego, just deep enough below the surface so that it is hard to distinguish whether it is the dolphin or not, but ships sonar can identify it as non-biological. Scout will head directly for the Sierra Nueva Cluster.

If the characters are observant, they may notice the medic is not often in sick bay. Camille Bachj will do all she can to protect her cover – even a medical demonstration if necessary. If things start going badly for her or the ship, however, and the characters appear trustworthy, she might share information with them while remaining vague about her true employer.

During a good part of the first afternoon, the San Diego is followed at a distance by a transport jumpcraft. It does not answer to any radio call because it is piloted by bandits. If no action is taken against the jumpcraft, it will end up changing its course at dusk and heading off toward Nomad. If the PCs or guards attack, the bandits will immediately flee.

Poor Raster Bob

The very first evening, some time after dinner, Tom Wheeler walks into the wardroom and threatens Raster Bob about "money he owes some powerful people." The altercation between the two men is heated, but no blows are exchanged. Thereafter, Wheeler always keeps an eye on Raster Bob, which irritates the latter and will eventually lead to a real fight. This could be the chance the PCs need to intervene and try to win Raster Bob's trust. Wheeler's priorities are to first get the NRM's money back, and second to bring Raster Bob back to Kingston or eliminate him if it becomes clear he is a traitor and will not pay.

Actually, Raster Bob is quite disoriented and increasingly frightened. Because of his induced amnesia about his accident, the blurred recall of greater whites that should have devoured him during the first two GenDiver sinkings, worsening insomnia, and the fact that the NRM has now apparently found him, he is ready to accept help from the characters. You may let the players roll for Perception + Psychology to detect this weakness.

Bob's behavior and mental state are odd enough that the PC's are justified in having him checked out by Camille. If the characters make Raster Bob undergo a complete physical, blood analysis reveals high levels of unknown chemical substances. Actually, the aborigine's modifications cause him to unknowingly produce very strong greater white pheromones that work to attract the massive predator. With some time Camille can use the shipboard resources to identify the compound as a pheromone, and if Raster Bob tells the PCs about his curious memories of the previous greater white attacks, they should be able to make some logical conclusions about the nature of the pheromones themselves. The only obvious way to avoid a new attack is to get Raster Bob off the San Diego as soon as possible

The Attack

During the second day – the exact moment to be determined by the moderator based on where the character's actions have led them – a greater white finds the San Diego. If the characters decide to take Raster off the ship, the monster arrives just as the characters depart. See the Moderator's Guide (MG 171) for the greater white's description.

Suddenly, a silence falls on the ocean. Even the sound of the engines and the ship's wake seem dampened. The most observant characters will spot a bow wave that is rapidly growing in height and is heading toward the San Diego at high speed (Complicated Awareness/Vision roll). Whatever the characters do, it is likely too late to save the ship and its precious cargo. The greater white violently rams the ship, opening an enormous breach on its portside hull. The San Diego rocks on its side and sinks in a matter of minutes.

The greater white does not stop with the sinking alone, but it remains in the area hunting for anything it might consider prey – swimmers, life rafts, submersibles, even low flying jumpcraft. The only people who are really safe are those who stay close to Raster Bob, who is protected by his pheromone secretions. Play the scene frantically, without letting the players have much time to think. If the PCs are heroic or have formed relationships with the crewmembers, they will likely try to save some of them if possible. Do not hesitate however, to sacrifice equipment or NPCs right in front of hesitant or reckless characters for dramatic effect.

Conclusion

The aim of the greater white's attack is not to kill the characters, but do not hesitate to give them a bad fright. Normally, they should survive to reach Haven either by their own means or with the help of the ERT sent to the wreck's location. Once back on dry land, they will have to decide to whom they want to deliver Raster Bob. Will they set him free or deliver him to GenDiver or even the GEO? It is up to them – they can make a friend or a foe who may become a useful ally or some day come back for revenge.

Besides, this scenario lays the ground work for at least two sequels. First, there is all this Long John lying around on the ocean's floor that GenDiver would like to recover. The mystery of what happened to Raster Bob also remains and he, or the organization that end up with him, will certainly want to learn more. Assuming Tom survived, the PCs may also run into problems with Wheeler and the NRM!

Character improvement (PG 76)

Roleplaying – 1-5 points

Achieving Objectives – 1 for a good investigation, 1 for discovering what is going on, 1 for saving crewmembers during the attack

Surviving – 1 point

NPC Stats

Raster Bob

Species: Osmoform aquaform

Origin: Native

Background: Independent, Street

Goal: Survival

Motivation: Guilt

Attitude: Cool

Role: Smuggler

Primary attributes: Build 1, Fitness 2, Agility 0, Dexterity 1, Awareness 0 (Chemical 0, Hearing -1, Intuition 2, Touch -1, Vision 0), Intellect 0, Presence 1, Will 1

Derived attributes: Endurance 3, Reflexes 0, Strength 1, Toughness 1

Modifications: Improved echolocation, Multiglans, Improved blood oxygenation, Night vision

Aptitudes: (Superior) Communication, Vehicles (Strong) Close combat, Culture, Fine arts, Subterfuge

Skills: Bureaucracy 3, Economics 5, Law 5, Management 3, Aquaculture 1, Aquatics 2, Armed combat 4, Unarmed combat 3, Negotiation 8, Persuasion 5, Writing 2, Colonial culture 5, Incorporate culture 2, Native culture 3, Street culture 7, Cooking 4, Handguns 2, Meteorology 3, Hiding 4, Shadowing 3, Sneaking 4, Bribery 3, Fast talk 9, Lockpicking 2, Sleight of hand 1, Fishing 1, Navigation 5, Computers 4, Damage control 1, Electronics 2, Mechanics 1, Driving 2, Sailing 5, English 5

Equipment: MacLeod carbon-edged knife (damage 3)

Tom Wheeler

Species: Diver aquaform

Origin: Native

Background: Rural, Street

Goal: Revenge

Motivation: Faith

Attitude: Disciplined

Role: Ecoterrorist

Primary attributes: Build 4, Fitness 2, Agility 2, Dexterity 0, Awareness -1, Intellect 0, Presence -1, Will 0

Derived attributes: Endurance 3, Reflexes 0, Strength 3, Toughness 2

Modifications: Myo-skeletal enhancement, Ballast, Subdermal plates (bare hand damage +1), Rib covers (Armor +1)

Aptitudes: (Superior) Close combat, Survival (Strong) Farming, Firearms, Athletics, Stealth

Skills: English 5, Aquaculture 1, Aquatics 5, Colonial culture 2, Fishing 4, Native culture 3, Sailing 1, Animal husbandry 2, Botany 3, Driving 2, Farming 2, Mechanics 1, Orienteering 4, Zoology 3, Fast talk 3, Hiding 4, Law 1, Persuasion 2, Sneaking 4, Street culture 3, Unarmed combat 4, Bribery 1, Computers 1, Incorporate culture 2, Disguise 1, Electronics 1, Handguns 3, Lockpicking 1, Politics 1, Remote operation 3, Shadowing 1, Armed combat 2, Demolition 1, First aid 4, Heavy weapons 2, Leadership 2, Longarms 5, Military culture 3, Strategy 2, Tactics 2, Throwing 3, Foraging 3, Meteorology 2, Mountaineering 3, Navigation 2, Tracking 3

Equipment: Knife (damage 2), Submachine gun (damage 6/9) hidden in his cabin

Camille Bachj

Species: Modified human

Origin: GEO

Background: University, GEO

Goal: Justice

Motivation: Loyalty

Attitude: Optimistic

Role: Undercover agent

Primary attributes: Build -1, Fitness 1, Agility 1, Dexterity 1, Awareness 0, Intellect 2, Presence 1, Will 1

Derived attributes: Endurance 2, Reflexes 0, Strength 0, Toughness 0

Modifications: Improved blood oxygenation, Multiglands, Spyware, Cybernetic eyes with all options, Anti-poison

Aptitudes: (Superior) Technical, Stealth (Strong) Medicine, Athletics, Firearms, Culture

Skills: Fast talk 5, Bureaucracy 3, Computers 6, Earth culture 5, GEO culture 6, English 5, French 7, Politics 5, History 2, Writing 2, Incorporate culture 4, Bribery 3, Colonial culture 2, Demolition 3, Disguise 5, Electronics 3, Handguns 5, Hiding 3, Thai 5, Lockpicking 3, Longarms 4, Persuasion 3, Remote operation 4, Shadowing 5, Sneaking 3, Unarmed combat 4, Biochemistry 1, Chemistry 1, First aid 5, General medicine 5, Pharmacology 3, Psychology 3, Surgery 1, Veterinary medicine 1, Armed combat 1, Heavy weapons 1, Leadership 1, Military culture 1, Strategy 1, Tactics 1, Throwing 3

Equipment: Light Polyflex armor (armor 2/4), Concealable handgun (damage 6)

Rocco Swifter & Charlie Barhora

Species: Modified humans

Origin: Colonial – Urban

Background: Colonial, Incorporate

Goal: Wealth

Motivation: Dissatisfaction

Attitude: Arrogant

Role: Sailors

Primary attributes: Build 2, Fitness 2, Agility 1, Dexterity 1, Awareness -1, Intellect -3, Presence 2, Will -1

Derived attributes: Endurance 0, Reflexes 0, Strength 2, Toughness 1

Modifications: Body sculpting, Salt tolerance

Aptitudes: (Superior) Technical (Strong) Athletics, Close combat, Survival

Skills: Aquatics 4, Bureaucracy 3, Colonial culture 6, Computers 5, Driving 2, GEO culture 2, Incorporate culture 4, Piloting 2, Cetacean culture 1, Native culture 1, Economics 1, English 2, Italian 1, Management 1, Negotiation 1, Artisan 3, Chemistry 1, Damage control 3, Demolition 1, Electronics 3, Lockpicking 3, Mechanics 3, Physics 2, Remote operation 3, Botany 1, First aid 1, Fishing 2, Foraging 2, Hiding 1, Longarms 1, Meteorology 1, Mountaineering 2, Navigation 1, Orienteering 2, Sneaking 1, Tracking 2, Zoology 1, Unarmed combat 4, Sport: Body building 1

State of the Art

ELAD 4 - GSV Fearless (Submitted by Ando Muneno)

The ELAD class of limited transatmospheric ships is part of an ongoing GEO effort to increase their force projection capabilities. ELAD's primary mission is to provide Marine units with rapid, prolonged, close-in, amphibious support. Operating in concert with traditional GEO "Gargoyle" class assault dropships, ELAD's provide ready reinforcements for extended engagements. Due to this mission profile and the GEO's relatively small footprint on Poseidon, ELAD's have seen very little service in the sector. Compounded by the ships' relatively complex orbit-reaching procedures (attachment to a heavy lifting tug and fitting with additional reusable boosters), it is only the most recent escalation in Incorporate/Native/GEO violence that has led to the deployment of a full ELAD task force to the Lambda Serpentis system. There are some concerns over the task force's utility as the planetside resupply infrastructure doesn't exist to provide complete long-term support. Plans for non-orbital support ships are in the works, and modular bioplastic construction techniques could bring these vessels to the fleet in only a few months.

Because of design constraints, the ELAD is not an effective spaceborne weapons platform. The ELAD utilizes a reusable "Drop Cradle" to handle orbital insertions and braking maneuvers. Small primary thrust coils and practically vestigial maneuvering thrusters translate into basic station keeping and rapid and precise deorbits into the combat zone. Underway oceanside is a different matter entirely. Free of the drop cradle, an advanced trimaran hull and powerful, redundant MHD arrays give the ELAD significant speed, maneuverability, and survivability. The addition of a ballast system and dive planes (part of the ELAD's modular upgrade design system) gives the ELAD reliable if average subsurface operations.

The ELAD class lacks significant surface combatant armaments and must generally rely upon its escorts for protection against modern surface threats. The ELAD does support significant point defense systems that can be slaved to a master firing control system for the shortest possible threat response loop. Combined with crew-served weapons the ELAD can provide adequate defensive fire against most minor surface threats. Subsurface defense is handled by a small array of automated torpedo launchers and a single, deployable super cavitation cannon. Plans for an extensive detachment of remote defense/intelligence drones were scrapped due to budget

and mass constraints, but the mounting brackets and data trunklines are still in place. Despite this, the ELAD has basic drone rigging capacity with a small but well-rounded constellation of def/tel drones.

ELAD's, like most modern ships, are designed to be run with only a handful or bridge personnel. If the ship is crewed by non-cetaceans the minimum bridge crew is 6 to cover the usual roles of helmsman/gunner/comms. The addition of a single well-trained cetacean utilizing a complete neural shunt allows this number to be reduced to 3. In theory this single cetacean pilot should be able to manage all ships' systems, including engineering, for short periods of time. Due to time and budget constraints, only a single Master Pilot has been assigned to each ELAD until their relief arrives from Sol in 6 months.

The ELAD actually features a relatively large ship's company in comparison to most modern vessels. This is due primarily to the diversity of the ship's mission profile. While many systems, including the General Stores Management System, and Air Traffic Control System are fully automated, GEO regulations insist on human failsafes and the capability to carry on even in the event of a complete power failure.

Specifications:

Length: 160 meters

Widest At Beam: 35 meters

Top Speed: 66 kilometers

Power Plant: milspec fusion plant, 4 industrial hydrogen crackers for non-propulsion power.

Primary Propulsion (exoatmospheric): 3 GP fusion thrust coils, series of smaller thrusters for maneuvering and station keeping.

Primary Propulsion (at sea): multi-array high efficiency MHD (ventral array, 2 support MHD's for a total of 4 in each outrigger.)

Vehicles/cargo: Three vehicle decks (3500 square meters), Two cargo/ammo magazines (1800 cubic meters), various advanced sub/surface landing craft per mission profile, 4 7m utility boats, 2 12m assault/recon surface pinnaces

Aviation systems (in situ with full support capabilities): two VTOL ground support aircraft/one VTOL assault transport.

Ship's company: 150 officers and enlisted

Minimum ship's emergency crew: 3-6 personnel (1 cetacean, 2 non-cetacean)

Marine detachment: 800 non-cetaceans, numbers are reduced significantly if primary navy cetacean spaces are expanded to hold a marine cetacean complement

Biohazard

Eyespots

The “eyespots” that make of the visual organs of most of Poseidon’s animals are not true eyespots in the terrestrial use of the term. In fact, in many ways they are far more sophisticated than even the most complex terrestrial visual systems. Most animals have two or more rows with multiple organs in each row. This typically provides several advantages; extreme peripheral, sometimes 360 degree or even spherical fields of vision, better sense of parallax and relative motion, and enhanced depth perception – advantages for both predators and prey.

The individual eye organs are actually shallow cavities covered by a shield of clear connective tissue similar to the cornea of terrestrial animal eyes. Within the cavity is a suspension fluid that supports dozens, and in a few cases even hundreds, of tiny “bubble lenses.” These structures are small globules of clear, semi-solid secretions that are ringed by complex muscle groups that can adjust the focal length and direction of focus of each lens, over a considerable range. This allows the eyes to focus one or more lenses on one or more classes of retinal tissues on the inner surface of the eyespot cavity. These light-sensitive tissues typically include cells sensitive to the visible light spectrum as well as the far red and ultraviolet wavelengths. This allows each eye to optimize its sensitivity to the incident wavelengths, and allows even a single eye to focus on a variety of objects at various distances, all at the same time, and from the most obscure angles.

What organisms possessing such eyes actually see is as hard to visualize as what dolphins “see” when they echolocate, but the possible advantages for both predators and prey are obvious. The visual cortex of these animals is large and well-developed to control the arrays of lenses and to interpret the information they bring in, sometimes comprising more than a third of the species’ brain mass.

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