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TRAVELLER®

DUNERAIDERS

by William H. Keith, Jr.

W.H. Keith Jr. '83

Gamelords, Ltd.

DUNERAIDERS

A Supplement for Traveller®

by

William H. Keith Jr.

Gamelords, Ltd.

Dedication:
To Hannibal Smith and company . . .

"I love it when a plan comes together . . ."

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 4
- Standards and Assumptions 4
- Using this Adventure 5
- Characters 5
- Beginning the Adventure 6

FIREFIGHT ON THE LOADING DOCK 7
- Referee's Information 8
- Arlana Jeric 9
- Jericorp Mining 9
- The Offer 10

TASHRAKAAR 12
- Offworlders 14
- Civilized Tashrakaarans 14
- Duneraiders 15
- Maps of Tashrakaar 15
- Climate and Topography 17
- Plants and Animals 18
- Politics and Business on Tashrakaar 21

ORECRAWLER 23
- The Mark XIV Orecrawler 23
- Interior Details 24

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS 26
- Personnel Record Extracts of the Crawler Crew 26
- Crew Assignments 30
- Duties 30

THE PLOT 31
- Plots 31

THE DEEP DESERT 33
- The Wrecked Crawler 33
- Discovery of a Nodule Field 34
- Encounter Table 35
- Crawler Combat 35

THE DAKAAR MINERALS SPY 40
- Additional NPC Background Information 40
- The Traitor Strikes 43
- Desert Trek 44
- Weather and Climate 46
- Encounters 47

THE DUNERAIDERS 48
- General Background 48
- Duneraider Encounters 49
- Duneraider Tribes 50
- Dalag-ah Suk 50
- Gabadahk ar Krell 51
- Tallen Zen 52
- Nomad Reactions 54
- Attacking the Off-worlder Intruders 55

WRAPPING UP THE ADVENTURE 56
- The Plot 56
- The Course of the Adventure 57
- Resolving the Adventure 58

Introduction

Duneraiders is a complete adventure for **Traveller**, the science fiction role-playing game from Game Designers' Workshop. It is administered by a referee who is familiar with the rules for Basic **Traveller** (Books 1, 2, and 3, **The Traveller Book**, or the starter edition). **Duneraiders** also makes use of rules and information presented in **The Desert Environment**, a **Traveller** supplement from Gamelords, Ltd. While not absolutely necessary for playing **Duneraiders**, **The Desert Environment** will add a great deal of interest, detail, and excitement to the game; much of **Duneraiders** is set in a desert, and **The Desert Environment** will enhance both the realism and the players' enjoyment of the game.

The worlds of the subsector within which this adventure takes place are described in **A Pilot's Guide to the Drexilthar Subsector** from Gamelords. This booklet will be useful to referees wishing to weave **Duneraiders** into an ongoing **Traveller** campaign within the sector known as Reavers' Deep.

In addition, other **Traveller** rules books and supplements (such as Book 4, **Mercenary**, and Supplement 1, **1001 Characters**) may prove useful in the course of this adventure. The referee will also find paper, pencils, six-sided dice, and square-grid graph paper useful or necessary to run **Duneraiders**.

STANDARDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

This adventure takes place in the fictional universe described in other **Traveller** products, on the world Tashrakaar (0307 D651695-7). Tashrakaar is located in the Drexilthar subsector of Reavers' Deep, a (mostly) independant sector bordered by the Imperium, the Solomani Confederation, and the Aslan Hierate.

The Imperium (sometimes called the Third Imperium) is a gigantic, human-controlled interstellar empire.

The Solomani Confederation is a human-dominated rival of the Imperium. The two are currently at peace.

The Aslan Hierate is a loose, far-flung region dominated by the Aslan, a star-faring race descended from carnivore/pouncer stock.

Tashrakaar is covered mostly by desert. Its equatorial regions are locked in a heat desert — a lifeless zone baked by temperatures which may rise above 90° C. The polar zones are less extreme, however, and the tropical region around the Polar Sea is habitable — if uncomfortably humid during the day.

The population of Tashrakaar is estimated at 8 or 9 million; exact figures are unavailable, since a large percentage of the population lives a nomadic existance in the wastes beyond the "Heaven-watered Lands". These wastes have become important in the calculations of several off-planet mercantile interests. Millenia ago, when the planet was cooler, these deserts were seabeds upon which were laid down extensive deposits of manganese, cobalt, and other elements. These deposits are frequently uncovered by the periodic windstorms called "devilblows" which ravage Tashrakaar's surface, after which they can be extracted by mining vehicles called orecrawlers. Now, several rival mining firms are engaged in clandestine (and occasionally open) warfare for the planet's mineral treasures.

USING THIS ADVENTURE

Duneraiders may be played as a stand-alone game, using the pre-generated characters listed below; or it may be played with characters from an on-going **Traveller** campaign. A new skill introduced in **The Desert Environment** — Desert Survival — will be useful (if not vital!) in the course of this adventure, and the referee should make sure that at least one player character is assigned this skill before the start of the game. The referee should feel free to make any changes necessary to fit **Duneraiders** smoothly into the framework of a **Traveller** campaign; such changes should be obvious.

CHARACTERS

Any group of **Traveller** adventurers may take part in **Duneraiders,** and may consist of pre-generated characters from the list below or of survivors from previous campaigns and adventurers.

Useful Skills: At least one of the player characters should have Desert Survival skill of 2 or better. The referee will use him to pass along important information to the rest of the party relating to their situation. The characters should all have skill with various hand weapons; it is for their proficiency in weapons that they are hired in the first place.

Skill Level 0 may be given to some characters to indicated familiarity — but not expertise — in that skill.

Pre-generated Characters: The following characters may be used by the players for **Duneraiders.** The referee may also choose to use one or more of them as NPCs in various encounters during the adventure.

1. **Ex-Merchant First Officer**	787A97	Age 34 4 terms	Cr22,400
Gunnery-2, Medic-0, Shotgun-1, AutoRifle-1, Navigation-1, Pilot-1			Shotgun
2. **Ex-Scout**	568C88	Age 46 7 terms	Cr20,000
Air/Raft-3, Medic-1, Vacc Suit-2, Computer-1, Gunnery-1, SMG-2, Pistol-2, Pilot-1, Desert Survival-1			Pistol SMG

3. **Ex-Scout**	678887	Age 38 5 terms	Cr1,900
Pilot-1, AutoRifle-2, Navigation-2, Mechanical-2, Jack of All Trades-1, Desert Survival-2			AutoRifle
4. **Ex-Army Captain**	B47789	Age 26 2 terms	Cr0
SMG-1, Pistol-1, Air/Raft-1, ATV-1, Gambling-1			Pistol SMG
5. **Ex-Army Trooper**	7A8765	Age 30 3 terms	Cr30,000
Laser Rifle-1, Rifle-4, Mechanical-1, Brawling-2, Dagger-1, ATV-2, Desert Survival-1			Rifle
6. **Ex-Marine Captain**	A7A989	Age 30 3 terms	Cr17,000
Electronic-2, Mechanical-1, Admin-1, Pistol-1, AutoRifle-1			Pistol
7. **Ex-Navy Lt. Commander**	468987	Age 42 6 terms	Cr500
Gunnery-1, SMG-2, Pistol-1, Vacc Suit-2, Electronic-2, Engineering-1, Mechanical-1, Desert Survival-0			Pistol Traveller's
8. **Ex-Starman**	866679	Age 38 5 terms	Cr1,500
Gunnery-1, Air/Raft-2, Engineering-2, Vacc Suit-1, Electronic-2, SMG-2, Ship's Boat-1			SMG

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The referee should assign the characters and inform the players of the basic background give in **Standards and Assumptions** above.

Next, the referee should lead the players through the action and information presented in the next chapter, **Firefight on the Loading Dock.** This section should be played out as an integral part of the adventure, rather than simply read.

Once the party has accepted the job offered them, they will have access to background information on Tashrakarr and Tashrakaar's several native groups, on the several rival firms competing for Tashrakaar's mineral wealth, and on the current situation. All of this information is given in the third chapter, **Tashrakaar,** and may be read to or by the players. The characters' employer will provide them with all of the equipment they need, though they may (at the referee's discretion) use equipment brought along from a previous adventure — especially weapons.

The chapter entitled **Orecrawler** describes in detail one of the mining vehicles used on Tashrakaar. The adventurers should become familiar with the layout and may want to work out security arrangements aboard the vehicle before the adventure begins.

When these preliminaries have been completed, the adventure proper begins with the chapter entitled **The Deep Desert.** The referee may wish to refer to the section at the end of the booklet entitled **The Course of the Adventure** in the chapter **Wrapping Up the Adventure,** for an outline of how this adventure can be fit together.

Firefight on the Loading Dock

The prospects for work are not good on Tashrakaar. This the adventurers had already learned for themselves the hard way. The threat of a trade war had scared many regular commercial shipping lines away from the desert world, and with the soaring insurance rates, most others no longer carried passengers, "for the duration". In short, the party discovered that it would be two weeks instead of two days until the next ship lifted from Raharora; and with room and board costing what it did at even the cheapest hotel along the startown strip, the need for employment, any employment, was urgent. The problem was that other stranded off-worlders on Tashrakaar had already discovered the same unappealing facts, and there simply weren't that many jobs open in the entire city.

The adventurers were walking across the open expanse of Beta Dock when the heard shouted arguments from the shadows beneath the bulk of a grounded star freighter. An orecrawler — a gigantic, tread-mounted mining vehicle — had been off-loaded from the freighter, and there seemed to be some sort of commotion going on among the workers nearby.

As the adventurers drew closer, they could see a number of men wearing the easily-recognized dress of Tashrakaar desert nomads — black rags and wrappings heavily festooned with metal ornaments and

weapons. Their upper faces, shadowed by hoods, were completely masked behind slit aluminum shields designed to protect against the desert's glare, while their mouths were hidden by the masks which helped them retain and reclaim exhaled moisture. All were armed; they sported a variety of weapons, from swords to automatic rifles, and when first seen they seemed to be completely in charge, herding a number of dock workers away from the massive orecrawler.

The adventurers saw a native tumble from the orecrawler's forward hatch; moments later, the guts of the vehicle were savaged by a chain of explosions which blew out several windows and observation domes and sent flames licking from the open ports. In the next instance, three of the natives singled out one of their prisoners and began beating him with their guns. There was a piercing shriek, and another of the prisoners — an attractive, dark-haired girl of 25 or so — flung herself forward. Another native grabbed her, holding her as she kicked and struggled, while the beating went on. The blows continued as the victim fell limp, and it was evident that the attackers planned to beat him to death.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

At this point, the players may elect to have their characters intervene in the unfolding situation. At their approach, the natives will scatter wildly, drawing their weapons and opening fire in every direction. The characters will happen to be carrying weapons of their own — the local law level not applying to the spaceport. In seconds, they find themselves in a wild firefight.

The referee should allow the players to act out the spaceport battle. The native force will number 1D more than the number of adventurers present. Half willl be armed with rifles, autorifles, and submachine guns, the rest with blade weapons. If the players are reluctant to interfere with the beating, they will be seen by the natives as they stand in the open trying to decide what to do, and the natives — thinking they are being attacked — will open fire anyway. The victims of the native attack will scramble for cover and be out of the line of fire in seconds, all except the girl who, when released as her captor unshouldered his rifle, threw herself over the sprawled form of the beaten man.

In spite of their superior numbers, the native attackers have no wish to engage in an all-out gun battle; after a few shots, they will flee, each running as fast as he can in a different direction. At least one of the adventurers will clearly hear one shout — in Galanglic, not in a native tongue — "Run for it, now!!"" If any are hit by the adventurers' fire, they will either be killed or helped off the field by their comrades; none will be taken prisoner, no matter what the adventurers attempt.

The attackers are typical NPCs with stats which can be drawn from any list of **Traveller** rogues, pirates, or mercenaries. The girl will be the characters' employer in this adventure and, whatever the outcome of the spaceport confrontation, will not be hurt. The referee may have her pick up a gun and help the adventurers in the firefight, however. Her stats are as follows:

Arlana Jeric

Ex-Other	459A97	Age 30 3 terms	Cr1,500
Autopistol-2, Computer-2, Admin-2, Bribery-1			Autopistol

ARLANA JERIC

The girl is Arlana Jeric. Nearly hysterical, she will be tearfully grateful to the adventurers for saving her father, Gill Jeric, from death. Port authorities and an ambulance flyer arrive in moments. The elder Jeric, bloodied and unconcious, is rushed off to the port hospital; the adventurers are questioned briefly by a port security officer, then told they can go. "Hill bandits, from the sound of it," the officer says, shaking his head. "They're getting pretty bold, trying to hijack a crawler right here in the port!!" If one of the adventurers suggests that these might not be natives (because of the snatch of Galanglic heard during the fight, or because the attackers seemed bent on destroying the crawler, rather than hijacking it), the official will refuse to discuss the matter further and walk away. The girl will say nothing to him, beyond answering his few, routine questions.

That evening, Arlana seeks out the group at the spaceport bar where they have been passing the time between job-hunting expeditions and asks if she can join them. She thanks them again for their help that afternoon, tells them that the hospital says her father will be ok, then asks if they are interested in a job. She tells them that it could be quite profitable, though, she admits frankly, not without danger. With a pretty good idea of what's coming, the adventurers agree.

JERICORP MINING

Jericorp Mining is Arlana's father's company, a family business begun on a shoestring budget on a neighboring world twelve years before. Brought to Tashrakaar eight years ago by stories of the planet's mineral wealth, it was one of a dozen small, independant companies working the Tashrakaar mineral flats. Arlana has been working the business end of the operation for five years; she took over as corporate secretary when her mother died in an air/raft accident a year ago.

Lately, the small independants have faced more and more competition from several huge Imperial firms which have set up shop on Tashrakaar, including the megacorporations of Sternmetal Horizons and Delgado Trading. This in itself would not have been disasterous for Jericorp; Tashrakaar's deserts are vast, and Jericorp could never afford to lease more than a very small tract of land for exploration at a time. However, the coming of megacorporations to Tashrakaar meant that the smaller, non-Imperial companies began struggling for one another for their share of what was left.

Jericorp's bitterest enemy seems to be Dakaar Minerals; this company is actually quite large, with branches and holdings widely scattered across Reavers' Deep. Their competitors are fond of reminding one another that Dakaar Minerals is only a generation removed from the Reavers (corsairs who gave the sector its name) themselves, since no one

could find out how the company's founder had come by the money he first invested in the corporation. Dakaar Minerals has singled out Jericorp in a bitter campaign of persecution and outright piracy. The last cannot be proven, of course, but Arlana is certain that Garren Klessterhaven, Vice-President in charge of Dakaar's Tashrakaaran operations, is behind dozens of attempts to discredit Jericorp, scare away Jericorp's workers, and sabotage Jericorp's field operations.

The destruction of the orecrawler in Beta Dock, just leased from Sternmetal Horizons, may have been the final blow. Only the huge megacorporations can afford to buy or build the starship-sized mining crawlers; Sternmetal Horizons will, however lease the machines to smaller companies. Unfortunately, there aren't that many machines available, and the waiting list for crawlers as they become available is quite long. Jericorp had been leasing three orecrawlers. In the past month, one broke down, one was attacked and destroyed by hostile natives in the Deep Desert, and the third simply vanished without a trace. After a six-month wait, a fourth crawler ordered by Jericorp had arrived at the starport that afternoon; with the first crawler just repaired, it was hoped that these two could keep working the corporate "lease" — a tract of desert set aside by Tashrakaar's government for Jericorp's exclusive exploration rights in exchange for a fee of Cr 2,500,000. If that payment is not made in 10 days, the lease will be lost, reverting to the government for leasing to another company.

Without that second crawler, it seems unlikely that Jericorp will be able to bring in the critical Cr 2,500,000 necessary to "prove" (retain) the lease, much less meet payroll and operating expenses. Further, though insurance covered Jericorp in the loss of the orecrawler, Jericorp's run of bad luck may result in their being dropped by Sternmetal's insurers, a move which could be blocked only if Jericorp could prove the crawlers had been deliberately sabotaged or destroyed by a competitor.

With tears running down her cheeks, Arlana tells the adventurers that her father has ten days to prove his lease — that is, to bring in at least Cr 2,500,00 to pay off the government. Operating expenses amount to another Cr 120,000, but that money is not due (to make payments to several banks and to Sternmetal for the crawler rental) for another three weeks. If he misses either of these two payments, Jericorp will go bankrupt and he will lose everything he has worked for.

THE OFFER

Arlana was impressed by the adventurers in the fight on Beta Dock, and with hope born of desperation asks them to sign on with Jericorp as "corporate security troubleshooters". Her father had hoped to send out two crawlers at a time, each protecting the other, but the loss of the new crawler at Beta Dock — and the realization that Jericorp is now at the bottom of the waiting list for new crawlers — means that the lease must be proved by one crawler working alone. The two crawlers lost in the desert had been working alone, and Arlana is certain that Klessterhaven's agents — or even a trespassing rival crawler — attacked and destroyed

them. The government blames the loss on Tashrakaar's desert nomads and has sent out punitive raids, nothing more. Arlana fears now that even members of the planetary government and the port security forces have been bought by Dakaar Minerals.

One crawler might still have a chance, though, given a bit of luck and the security offered by a small paramilitary force — the adventurers. An ordinary run — so long as it wasn't disrupted by sabotage — will bring in 50 or 60 thousand credits . . . enough to prove the lease and keep Jericorp going for another couple of weeks. With luck, by striking an untapped, recently exposed mineral bed, enough could be brought in to prove the lease, meet expenses, and guarantee Jericorp's operation for at least another six months.

Klessterhaven is certain to try something, Arlana tells the group; he knows that he has Jericorp beaten if he can prevent their one remaining crawler from scraping paysands. But if the adventurers will help her, Jericorp has a good chance of pulling through, no matter what Dakaar Minerals pulls.

Arlana offers to pay each adventurer Cr 100 per day, plus provide them with free room and board at the Jericorp corporate headquarters. If they can prove that Dakaar agents are working to destroy Jericorp, with evidence which would stand up in court, each will win a bonus of Cr 10,000. She can provide them with weapons if all they have available are small arms. She is able to promise them that they will be paid their wages even if they fail to meet the Cr 2,500,000 payment; since that payment is an all or nothing figure, there is enough reserve money in Jericorp's accounts to pay off the adventurers.

For their part, the adventurers are to ride shotgun on the Jericorp orecrawler, which will be departing for its mining run on the following day. They will provide an extra means of defense against all attackers, whether natives or off-worlders, and they will also provide internal security aboard the crawler against the chance that Dakaar agents have somehow infiltrated the crawler's crew. Arlana is willing to trust the adventurers even though she knows little of their background, simply because they (unlike the port security forces or anyone else) were willing to get involved in the "hijacking attempt" on Beta Dock. (She did, of course, run a routine security check on each of them before coming to meet them in the starport bar).

Arlana promises to supply the adventurers with equipment they need from Jericorp's stores. Special environmental suits, fusion stills, and other high-tech equipment items are not available — expensive luxuries for men working out of air-conditioned crawlers in the first place — but she can provide weapons, ammo, and incidentals such as canteens, rugged desert clothing, and lightweight camping gear.

Arlana is particularly pleased to learn that several of the adventurers have some training in desert survival. "That's wonderful!" she exclaims. "Untrained workers last about two hours in the Deep Desert. I hope you won't need to cross the desert without the crawler — but if you do, you might have a chance!"

Tashrakaar

The following information will be available to the players through library or information services at the starport, or through Arlana Jeric and Jericorp Corporate headquarters. The maps given in this section will be available through the same sources and may be reproduced in facsimile for the adventurers to carry with them. The boundries of Jericorp's exploratory lease are shown on the second desert map presented in the centerfold of this book; this is the area within which much of the adventure will take place.

TASHRAKAAR

(0307 E651695-7 Poor G)

Primary: Naderr, spectral class F6V. ICN S4K0307F6. Mass 1.25 standard. Stellar diameter 1.33 standard. Luminosity 3.04 standard.

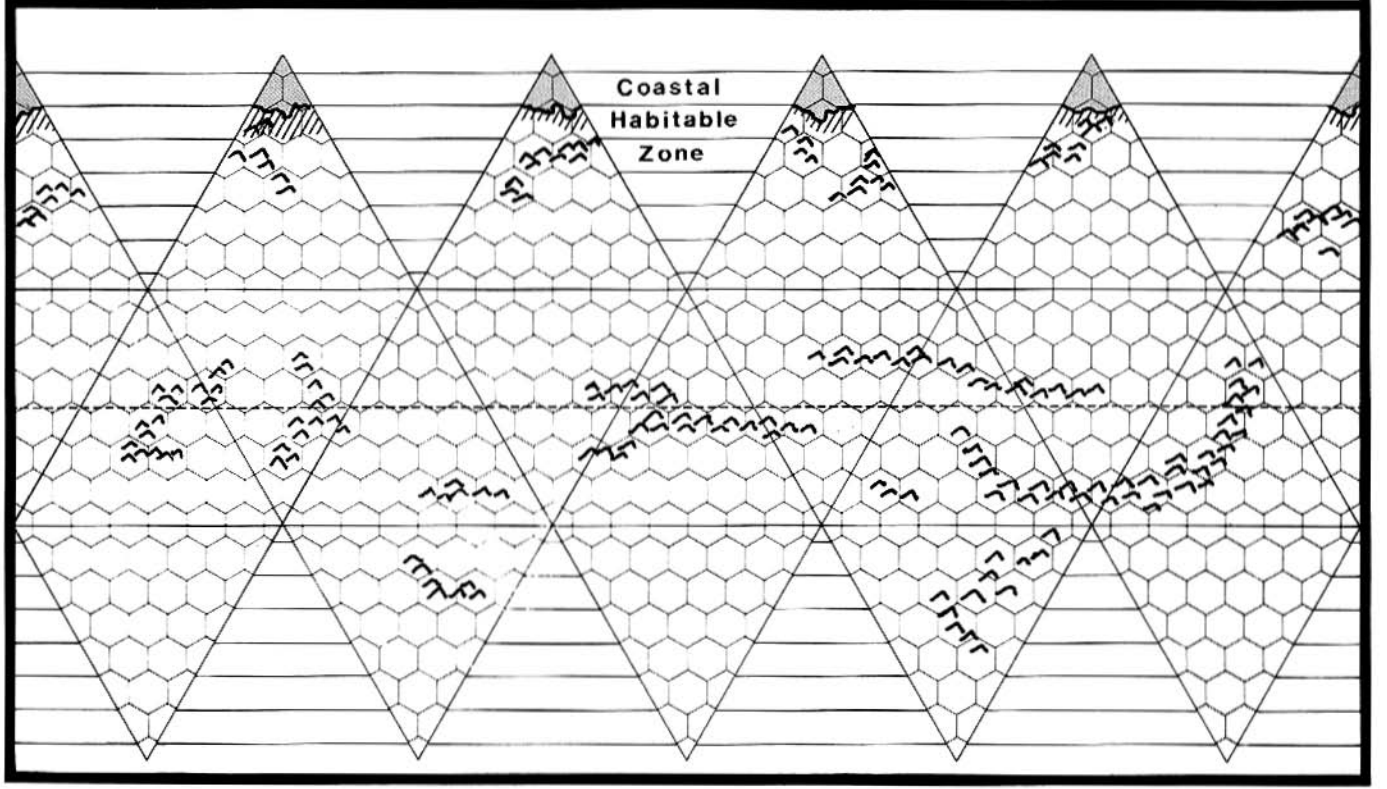
Planetary System: Seven major bodies. One inhabited world (Tashrakaar, IV). Three gas giants, one planetoid belt in system.

IV Tashrakaar: Mean orbital radius, 204.95 million kilometers (1.37 AU). Period, 523.86 days ... Two satellites ... Diameter, 10,427 kilometers. Density, 1.03. Mass, 0.435 standard. Mean surface gravity, 0.77 G. Rotation period: 28 hours, 14 minutes, 29 seconds. Axial inclination, 4°8'5.7" Albedo, .19 ... Surface atmospheric pressure, 0.64atm; composition — standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable without artificial assistance. Hydrographic percentage, 5%; composition — liquid water. Mean surface temperature, 87°C. Polar regions have a temperature of 25° to 35°C.

Physical Description: Only about 5 percent of Tashrakaar's surface is covered by water; a small, highly saline sea is located near the north pole area. This northern sea is called variously "The Polar Sea" or "The Boreal Sea" by off-worlders, and "k'Ramaak tar-Tharish" (Water-from-heavens) by the natives. A relatively small strip of land along the shores of the sea is fertile and enjoys a tropical — and rather humid — climate. Tashport and the inevitable startown rise from the plains outside the principal city of Dirikyeer-u-Thar. Beyond the jungles and savannahs of the plain, the land rises in a low range of hill escarpments, then falls away into a vast desert plain covering thousands of hectares. The arid and semi-arid land immediately south of the coastal escarpments is called the Desert Fringe, while the extremly arid wastelands further south are known as the Deep Desert. A broad, almost featureless plain which extends far into the Deep Desert is called "The Flats" by local off-worlders.

The Flats were, in geological ages past, the floor of an ocean much vaster in extent than Tashrakaar's present sea. Normal seafloor processes created mineral beds — nodule fields of manganese, cobalt, nickel, and copper. As the seas withdrew from beneath a sun grown hotter, mineral salts — boron, gypsium, and sodium chloride — precipitated out as additional layers over the floor.

1. Date of Preparation	2. World Name *(and UPP)*	3. Hexagon Scale In Kilometers
	Tashrakaar E651695 7	1 hex = 1285 km.



The Flats now offer a variety of terrain which includes sand dunes, salt flats, and broken, rocky surfaces. Coriolis storms, called devilblows, sweep periodically from southeast to northwest across the Flats, scouring the sand from some areas, covering others. In this way the desert surface is constantly changing, with new areas exposed after each storm.

The various mining enterprises on Tashrakaar depend on these devilblows. Orecrawlers are machines designed to traverse the desert in search of recently-exposed mineral beds. When a new bed is found, the crawler vacuums the nodules into an extractor which processess, separates, and recovers the various elements and stores them for transport back to base. Each crawler is a self-sufficient mobile industrial paint with its own minerology and chemistry labs, meterology stations, and enough supplies for its crew of fifteen to twenty to remain on station for weeks at a time. The minerals recovered from Tashrakaar's desert are the planet's sole export and source of revenue.

There are rare water holes and oases in the Flats, most known only to the handful of natives who frequent them. There are several extremely saline lakes surrounded by salt flats — dying remnants of the planet's ancient oceans.

Tashrakaar's equatoral zones are a heat desert; the planet's small axial tilt and nearness to its sun have produced a broad and nearly lifeless belt about the planet where temperatures average 90° C. Surveys of the equatorial desert have been made, but it has been determined that commercial mining of the area would not be feasible.

All of Tashrakaar's indiginous population lives between the equatorial desert and the Boreal Sea.

Population: Tashrakaar's population consists of three elements: off-worlders, civilized Tashrakaarans, and duneraiders.

OFF-WORLDERS

Off-worlders are concentrated at Tashport and at a few other locations such as the hydrogen fuel production facilities along the seacoast. There are perhaps a half-million off-worlders on the planet, most of them employees of one or another of the various mining companies. These companies include representatives of the two megacorporations, Sternmetal Horizons and Delgado Trading, as well as dozens of smaller sector, subsector, or planet-wide enterprises such as Dakaar Minerals and Jericorp.

CIVILIZED TASHRAKAARANS

The people known as "Tashrakaarans" or "Tashies" to off-worlders make up a population of about five million in the tropical regions along the Polar Sea's coastlands. Tashrakaarans are descended from human colonizers of the Second Imperium-Long Night periods, perhaps 2900 years ago. They were in an early industrial stage of development when independant traders rediscovered them several centuries ago. The culture is now in a decline due in no small measure to the ingress of technologically advanced off-worlders. More and more young

Tashrakaarans are abandoning farms and home crafts for employment in the off-worlders' factories and port facilities, a move viewed with vocal but otherwise inactive alarm by the tribal elders.

Tashrakaarans are friendly, peaceful, and polite; their government is a relatively inoffensive bureaucracy wrapped around a congress of tribal elders and has the chief function of taxing and regulating the activities of the off-worlder corporations. There have been numerous complaints in recent years by the smaller corporations that big business interests — especially the megacorporations — have been shaping Tashrakaaran government policies and judgements somehow to the advantage of the bigger corporations, but at least outwardly, the Tashrakaaran government remains independant.

Most civilized Tashrakaarans speak both a native dialect (Takaar) and one of several widely-understood varieties of Galanglic, so there is no problem communicating with them.

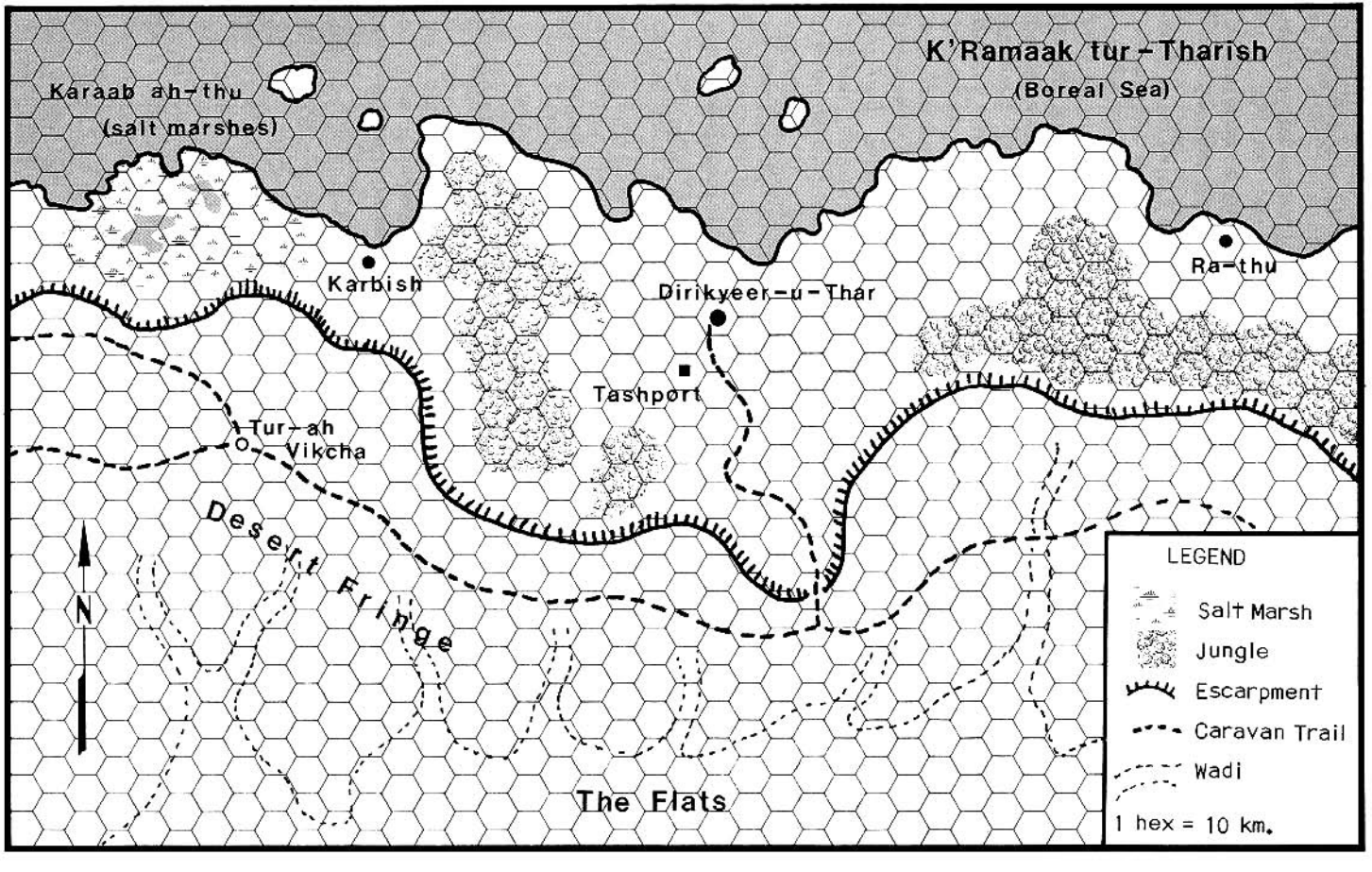
DUNERAIDERS

"Duneraiders" is the most popular of dozens of names for the third Tashrakaaran population element, desert nomads which inhabit the wastes beyond the tropical fringe of the Polar Sea. No accurate census is available, but their numbers are estimated at three to four million. There is an enormous diversity in the customs, backgrounds, and cultures of the Tashrakaaran nomad tribes. Most began as outcasts from the coastal civilization; Tashrakaaran tribal law has long held expulsion into the desert to be the most expedient punishment for a variety of crimes. Some groups deliberately migrated to the desert at various times in Tashrakaar's history, seeking to escape persecution, injustice, and stagnation in a static culture, or to found a new utopia free from the trappings of a decadent civilization. The Duneraiders are feared by coastal Tashrakaarans, with good reason. Many are bandits who prey on outlying settlements and the caravans which connect the coastal Tashrakaaran enclaves. Others are fierce religious fanatics who view as evil the ways of soft, water-fat coast-dwellers. A few are relatively peaceful, but all will fight to protect the vast and ever-shifting tracts of land (the boundries move as the tribe moves) which each tribe sees as its own. The nomads identify strongly with the land, and perceive the desert where they currently located as somehow spiritually a part of the tribe itself, and therefore to be defended from trespassers. Since the land so claimed can include many thousands of hectares of utterly barren and empty wasteland, it is not surprising that misunderstandings and feuds have arisen between the Duneraiders and the corporations which send orecrawlers and prospecting teams into the Tashrakaaran desert.

Several Duneraider tribes which may figure prominantly in this adventure are described in the chapter entitled **Duneraiders.**

MAPS OF TASHRAKAAR

Map 1: Map 1 is a standard world map of Tashrakaar showing its climactic zones and principal features. The equatorial zone is lifeless


K'Ramaak tur-Tharish
(Boreal Sea)
Karaab ah-thu
(salt marshes)
Karbish
Dirikyeer-u-Thar
Ra-thu
Tashport
Tur-ah
Vikcha
Desert Fringe
N
The Flats
LEGEND
Salt Marsh
Jungle
Escarpment
Caravan Trail
Wadi
1 hex = 10 km.

and deadly to unprotected intruders. The North Pole is capped by a small saline sea. A habitable, tropical zone exists along the coastland of the northern sea, populated by both native and off-world humans. The arid regions between the coastal strip and the equatorial desert are sparsely inhabited by the nomadic peoples called Duneraiders.

Map 2: The second map is a view of the portion of the inhabited coastal strip about the Boreal Sea. Rough terrain, jungle, salt flats and salt marshes separate enclaves of Tashrakaaran communities. Treacherous and shallow coastal waters, and fierce nightly storms have discouraged the invention of boats or seamanship, so these communities are linked by caravan routes that skirt the edge of the desert. Both the caravans and the communities themselves are subject to frequent Duneraider attacks.

Map 3: (located in centerfold) This map shows the desert area leased by Jericorp some two hundred kilometers south of Tashport. Major features are indicated, but it should be remembered that the periodic storms (devilblows) repeatedly change the topography of the desert. This encompasses the region in which much of the **Duneraiders** adventure will take place.

CLIMATE AND TOPOGRAPHY

The larger part of Tashrakaar's surface is uninhabitable, with temperatures that range as high or higher than 70°C. There is a constant movement of hot air rising from the equator and passing at high altitudes north to the pole. This air carries with it what little water vapor there may be at any given time over the equatorial desert; it has not rained in the equatorial zones since Tashrakaar entered its current dry period, perhaps 12 million years ago. Moisture collected from across the planet's surface falls as rain in fierce storms which form over the polar sea at night; these nightly storms have been a primary reason for the lack of maritime skills and development among Tashrakaar's population.

The sea cools the coastlands. The average temperature along the coast is 28° Centigrade. Cool, water-laden winds move at low altitudes south from the pole and are trapped by the low mountains which separate the coastlands from the desert. As a result, the skies over the coastland are nearly always overcast, the air is humid, rain along the coasts is frequent, and there are pockets of thick tropical vegetation and jungle everywhere near the sea.

Beyond the coastal escarpment is an arid and semi-arid zone called the Desert Fringe, a rainshadow desert where the temperature averages 30° Centigrade and rainfall is relatively infrequent. Mountain cloudbursts do occur occasionally; when they do, the wadis and gulches below them fill with raging torrents of water, flash floods which have been known to wipe away an entire caravan. Normally, the land is dry, though a variety of hardy plants adapted to arid conditions can be found there; after the infrequent rains, however, the desert surface comes alive with strange and beautiful forms of flowering vegetation which have lain dormant between wet periods. The desert fringe is criss-crossed by the caravan trails which connect the Tashrakaaran coastal communities;

these trails are usually invisible to the off-worlder eyes, but tend to connect by more or less straight lines the various oases and water holes which are scattered throughout the Fringe.

Beyond the Fringe is the Deep Desert. This is the region within which mining operations take place, for here the wind alternatively scours the sand from the ancient nodule beds, and then covers them over again. The temperature in the northern parts of the Deep Desert averages 35° Centigrade, and rises about a degree for every 50 kilometers' travel south. Rain is infrequent.

Far more common are the "devilblows", fierce sandstorms which follow coriolis tracks from southeast to northwest. These are the storms which expose the nodule beds and are also responsible for the weird topography of many Deep Desert regions. These storms are quite dangerous. With winds in excess of 100 kmh, blown sand can pare away a man's flesh leaving nothing but the bones in moments. The enormous orecrawlers offer shelter from the sand, but even they must be carefully serviced after weathering a devilblow and have their armor replaced. Nomads have a remarkable ability to sense an approaching devilblow and seek shelter in the numerous caves and crevasses in the area.

Oases exist in the Deep Desert — normally in secluded and sheltered rocky areas protected from sandstorms. The locations of theses places are carefully guarded secrets of the Duneraider tribes which discover them, and few are known to outsiders.

The Deep Desert topography is divided between vast ergs, rugged and sand-blasted badlands, and barren serir or reg plains — which are where the exposed nodule beds are found. Barchan dunes are frequent in and near the reg, while transverse dunes are common in the erg. The normal wind patterns at the desert surface level run from north to south; the further south a traveller goes, the more he finds the erg — dune seas — predominating. Devilblows are poorly understood reversals of the usual weather patterns related to low pressure cells in the usually high-altitude equator-to-pole air flow.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

While both flora and fauna abound in the tropical coastlands, life is sparse in the arid regions beyond the coastal escarpments and non-existant in the arid regions in Tashrakaar's equatorial regions. A few species are important, however; they are described below:

Plated Welldigger — Aquaindagator cassis

Intermittant	6kg	5/ 8	mesh	1	claws	F5 A8 S1

This small, harmless animal is of particular importance to the natives of Tashrakaar. With extremely keen smell, it can sense water at considerable depths and uses its broad, clawed feet to burrow through loose dirt or sand to reach it. Some tribes have semi-domesticated these

animals, keeping them on long leads and using them to guide the tribe to water in low-lying terrain and dry streambeds. The shell and "helmet" protect the welldigger from the sun and help insulate it against the desert heat. Natives use these for bowls and drinking cups, the claws for ornaments.

An encounter with this animal in the desert suggests that water is nearby, often only a meter or two below the surface. They are also found near oases and water holes, and may provide a clue that open water is close at hand.

Sandstinger — Xenomastigoproctus mordens

Hunter	3kg	5/ 4	jack	3	stinger	A2 F7 S0

This is a small animal resembling arthropodal forms of other worlds. The front pair of its six legs have developed into shovel-form pincers which it uses for burrowing. A whiplike tail delivers a potent neurotoxin through a stinger in its tip. The animal burrows into soft sand, remaining completely hidden. Animals of any size which tread near the sandstinger's hiding place may be attacked. Characters and animals which have an encounter with sandstingers must each roll 2D; each is attacked by different animals (they tend to congregate in "fields") on a roll of 10+. They are found only in soft sand, particularly in dune country on or near the Desert Fringe. They use their poison to paralyze or kill animals much larger than themselves, which the entire sandstinger "community" then feeds upon.

Characters stung by sandstingers suffer an immediate three hits. They will continue to suffer three hits **every combat round** until a tourniquet can be placed on the wounded limb (stings are almost always on the legs or arms) and the poison extracted by suction in the same manner as for snakebite. (The poison is harmless if swallowed).

The hits are randomly applied against the character's Strength, Endurance, Dexterity, and Intelligence. Losses in these stats are not recovered until the character can receive extensive medical care and treatment. A character with his Intelligence reduced to zero is completely delirious; treatment at a hospital (there is one in Tashport) is sufficient to restore a stung character completely to health in 2D weeks.

Seriks stung by sandstingers die almmost immediately. Sandstinger venom is tailored by evolution to quickly kill native Tashrakaaran life, but [redacted] it does not work so speedily on humans.

Serik — Macrocephalosaur deserta (and related species)

Grazer	400kg	29/14	none	12	teeth	F4 A8 S2

The serik is a quadripedal herbivore widely used as beast of burden and riding animal on Tashrakaar. Many species have evolved from the original jungle-dweller stock; those found in arid regions have wide, flat, three-toed feet with thick pads, well-adapted for walking on soft sand. Though fearsome in appearance, the serik is a herbivore and generally placid. The teeth and thick lips of desert species allow them to eat spiked and tough-skinned desert plants, particularly the moisture-rich waterstore.

Grappleweed — Laqueaherbinutilis vorax

Although this is a plant, its reproductive form is highly mobile and can be as dangerous as some animals. The reproductive form resembles a half-meter-wide ball of tangled branches and brush and appears dead. It is blown by the wind, rolling across the sand at high speed.

When the grappleweed encounters organic matter — animal, rooted vegetation, or humans, it entangles it in its branches, adhering with sucker-tipped branches which rapidly send penetrating rootlets into the matter in search of water. To be removed, it must be cut or burned off, and the rootlets left in the skin burned out one by one. Rootlets left in the victim will begin growing in 24 hours, a process which will eventually kill the victim and ensure a supply of water and food on that spot for the new plant.

When an encounter result of grappleweed occurs, each character present rolls 2D; on a roll of 10+, a grappleweed will adhere to him and cause 1 damage point. Cutting and burning the plant off will take 1 hour; if this cannot be done for any reason, the swiftly growing plant will cause 1D damage points each hour until it is removed, and will take 1D additional hours to remove.

Waterstore — Aquabundantia spina

This is a common plant throughout the Desert Fringe and northern portions of the Deep Desert. It is a low, massive looking growth covered with long, wiry white hair or threads, sprouting several dozen razor-edged spikes. Each waterstore plant has subsurface root systems of truly astonishing breadth and complexity. This root network gathers surface water after the infrequent rains and channels it back to the body of the plant, where it is stored between waxy cell layers as a sticky white fluid.

Natives cut chunks of waterstore with their knives — taking care not to be cut by the dangerously tough protective "hair" or the meter-long blade-like spikes which have evolved as a defense against wind-blown grappleweeds, the waterstore's principal predator. These chunks can be chewed to extract moisture from them; ten pieces may yield as much as a half pint (.2 liters) of water. They may also be squeezed or mashed and the water collected in a container, or the pieces may be used to charge a solar still.

Getting at the water-bearing plant body can be a bit of a problem. For each attempt, the character must roll his Dexterity or less on 2D to avoid 1 damage point. Plants which are destroyed (by gunfire or by bowling them over with a vehicle) are useless, for most of the water trickles away into the sand as soon as massive damage occurs.

POLITICS AND BUSINESS ON TASHRAKAAR

The Tashrakaaran government is a relatively harmless bureaucracy with the prime function of taxing and regulating off-world interests on the planet. Each separate off-worlder corporation leases a tract of desert; payment is a sum based on the size of the tract, the smallest of which goes for Cr 25,000,000. If this fee is not paid on time each month, the corporation loses the rights to that tract, which can then be leased to another company. The secret struggle for "lost leases" can be fierce, and many charge that bribery and corruption within the government determine who wins bids for unleased territory.

The largest corporations engaged in mining on Tashrakaar are Sternmetal Horizons and Delgado Trading, both megacorporations. They can afford to pay larger fees for larger tracts of desert and turn profits of billions of credits annually. In addition, Sternmetal Horizons builds and leases the giant orecrawlers necessary for mineral reclamation on

Tashrakaar. It is rumored that the company deliberately holds down the production rate of these machines in order to suppress competition by the smaller mining enterprises.

These smaller enterprises include dozens of corporations, from sector-wide operations like Dakaar Minerals, to single-planet businesses like Jericorp. Each uses leased crawlers to criss-cross its leased land in search of untapped mineral nodule fields. While most operations manage — barely — to make expenses and turn a small profit, a rich strike can make a company's owners wealthy overnight, especially since the government's cut is a fixed amount rather than a percentage.

Since the coming of the megacorporations, competition has increased between the smaller operations. Desperate owners have been known to take their crawlers into another's lease — especially if a rich nodule field happens to extend across the border. Orecrawlers are equipped with turret-mounted lasers for slicing up large ore masses, and these can become formidable weapons.

All mining is done with orecrawlers, starship-sized vehicles which use air/rafts to seek out nodule fields recently exposed by storms, then strip the nodules from wide swaths of desert. Manganese, nickel, cobalt, copper, and other elements are extracted, separated, and stored in tanks for return to Tashport. At Tashport the purified ore is sold through a commodities exchange and shipped off-planet.

The Duneraiders resist all intruders into their territory. Each tribe — though nomadic — perceives the land the tribe currently occupies as an extension of itself, something to be protected from intruders. The borders of this territory are ill-defined; roughly speaking, the tribe claims everything within line-of-sight as its own. Unless a treaty is in force, bloody battles erupt when two tribes wander into close proximity. In addition, most Duneraiders look down on the civilized Tashrakaarans, whom they regard as soft, decadent, or evil. They think even less of the off-worlders who trespass on their lands in machines which scour paths through the desert, and who store Gift-of-Gods (water) in tanks. Nearly every crawler mission has to contend with Duneraider parties. Sometimes they can be bribed with water; more often, they must be fought. Though the raiders cannot destroy the monsterous crawlers, they can and do ambush the crews when they are working in the open, and have been known to scale the machine's sides and blast open hatches with explosives in attempts to get inside. Some few of these attempts have been successful, and a number of crawlers have simply vanished, their fate unknown.

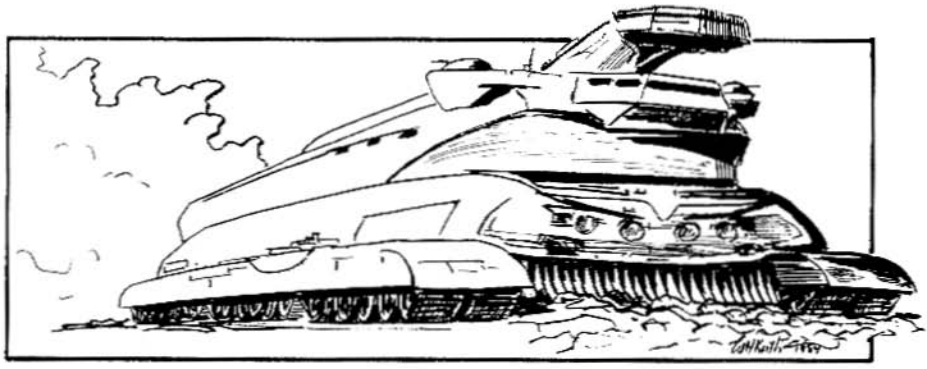
The deck plans for the Mark XIV Orecrawler are available to the adventurers after they agree to work for Ariana Jeric. Since the adventurers are being hired to provide internal security aboard the crawler — among other things — they may wish to plan security arrangements using these deck plans, determining where to post sentries, where to search for stow-aways or bombs, and so on.

THE MARK XIV ORECRAWLER

The Mark XIV is a standard model produced by Far-Star Mining Equipment, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Sternmetal Horizons, with its corporate offices on Caledon, in Reavers' Deep. At 1200 tons displacement, it is equivilant to a small starship in size. It can be run by a crew of 4 and nomally operates with 12 men aboard working 8-hour shifts. On-board accomodations can support as many as 24 men under somewhat cramped conditions. It moves on 6 pairs of wide treads; grav plates assist the vehicle in "swimming" through sand in dune seas or when buried by a devilblow, though this is a power-costly technique reserved for emergencies. (Power is insufficient to allow flight). The hull is armor plated against sand abrasion and superficially streamlined to allow maneuvering in high wind.

The space between the leading treads is occupied by the vehicle's scraper-intakes, a kind of grav-boosted vacuum cleaner which sucks up nodules loosened by sonic projectors and the intake blades and deposits them in the extracter tanks. There, the nodules are heated by bleed-off from the crawler's fusion plant, and grav separators are used to purify each of a number of elements in liquid form. Manganese, nickel, copper, and iron are the most common products and are the basis for Tashrakaar's mining industry, but the process also handles other metals as well. Rare bonanzas have been struck in the past when the extractors separated sizeable amounts of gold, silver, platinum, iridium, or uranium — all extremely valuable in high-tech industries everywhere. Purified metals are stored in liquid form in large storage tanks; base rock left over from the metal extraction process — called "screep" in crawler-miner jargon — is deposited on the desert floor as odd, lumpy masses of fused carbon and silica. Often, when a great deal of sand is pulled in through the extracters along with ore nodules, these deposits are crystalline and transparent, and consist of almost pure glass. They reflect sunlight easily and are positive evidence of the recent passage of an orecrawler.

A turret mounting a single laser on the crawler's forward hull is used to slice up large masses of rock, such as boulders or cliffs with exposed veins of ore. The scraper-intakes can handle chunks up to half a meter across, but larger pieces must be broken up. Explosives are also carried aboard the crawler to clear impassible terrain or to expose ore veins otherwise inaccessible to the laser.



A pair of air/rafts are carried in an airlock on the upper deck. They are used for reconnaissance missions in search of exposed nodule beds and to track the course of devilblows from a safe distance.

Fuel tanks carry water both as fuel and coolant for the vehicle's fusion power plant, and as a store of drinking water for the crew. More than enough water is available for every need for many months of continuous operation.

INTERIOR DETAILS

The following numbered areas refer to the deck plan layouts provided for the Mark XIV Orecrawler. The deck plans are on the back of the map in the centerfold of this booklet; the entire page may be removed for easy reference.

1. **Flying Bridge:** essentially an observation deck with visicom links with the control center. Both human and electronic lookouts observe the terrain and direct the steering of the crawler. The flying bridge is extended above the body of the crawler to provide clear visibility, even during a sandstorm.

2. **Passageway:** stairwell running from the upper deck to the flying bridge.

3. **Control Center:** operations control for the vehicle, with helm and navigation instruments, chart projection, and communications stations. Communications links are maintained with the flying bridge (including TV images from flying bridge cameras of 360° view) with headquarters and with reconnaisance air/rafts. Extraction and separation processes operations are run from here.

4. **Passageway:** corridor connecting service areas on upper deck.

5. **Laser Turret:** can be operated by gunner or by remote control from control center. Ladder leads up into turret from passageway.

6. **Air Intakes:** louvered openings normally open to admit air. They can be closed during storms or attack.

7. **Air Conditioning Machinery:** cools and humidifies air from outside, circulating it throughout the vehicle.

8. **Air/Raft Bay:** twin air/rafts, with sliding panels in overhead for launch. Bay can be used as an airlock on worlds with poisonous or no atmosphere.

9. **Upper Deck Stores:** equipment and supplies, machine parts, spare parts.

10. **Stairwell:** connects upper deck with lower deck.

11. **Lower Deck Passageway:** joins crew spaces on lower deck.

12. **Quarters:** double-occupancy cabins with twin beds, lockers, and lavatory facilities. Cabins can be rigged for four occupants in staggered shifts, with some crowding.

13. **Common Room:** mess and recreation room.

14. **Galley:** with open counter connecting mess area for food service.

15. **Galley Stores:** locker for food and galley supplies, with refrigerated and freezer lockers for perishable goods.

16. **Sick Bay:** facilities for crew medic, including two bed "hospital" and compact surgery.

17. **Engineering:** moniters and controls for fusion plant, engine, and mining equipment.

18. **Cargo Deck Stores:** supplies, tools, equipment and spares for engineering.

19. **Forward Lock:** wide sliding doors alow loading of heavy machinery and equipment. Functions as an airlock in hostile environments. Includes weapons storage locker.

20. **Water Tanks:** fuel and drinking reserves.

21. **Power Plant**

22. **Track Drives**

23. **Extraction, Refining, Separation Machinery**

24. **Ore Storage Tanks**

25. **Aft Lock:** Outer door opens down to provide ramp. Ladder leads up to lower deck passageway. Functions as an airlock in vacuum or poisonous atmospheres.

Mark XIV orecrawlers are widely used across the Imperium and on hundereds of worlds beyond the Imperial borders. **Traveller** referees may wish to introduce the Mark XIV in other adventures. Though designed as piloted mining equipment for worlds of size 1 and larger, they may also be encountered as robot miners, or — with special attachments — as logging, road building, firefighting, port service or demolition vehicles. They may also be found pressed into service as armored transports, troop carriers, armored fighting vehicles, or as exploration vehicles on particularly hostile planets.

Modifications and additional possible uses are left to the **Traveller** referee's imagination.

Non-Player Characters

Though the crawler is designed to operated with 12 men working 8-hour shifts, only 8 Jericorp men are available to man it. If some of the adventurers have skills such as Gunnery or Communications skill, they may be allowed to take crew positions manning the laser turrets or radio gear. This is not absolutely necessary, since the Jericorp personnel are willing to work six-on-six-off shifts.

The player characters should have an opportunity to meet the crawler crew before the mission begins. Since they are charged with the security of the operation, the adventures may — if they request it of Arlana Jeric — see the personnel record on each of the crew members. Extracts of these records are provided below. They should be shown to the players only if the player characters ask to see them.

PERSONNEL RECORD EXTRACTS OF THE CRAWLER CREW

1. Hal Southerland — Captain

Ex-Marine Major 676A97 Age 58 8 terms Cr21,000
Engineering-1, ATV-2, Air/Raft-1, Laser Rifle-1, Electronics-2, Computer-1, Bribery-2, Tactics-1, Desert Survival-2

Southerland has worked for Jericorp for seven years, beginning as a mining engineer and working his way up to crew captain. Before that, he spent 8 terms as an officer in a Caledon marine unit, where he became familiar with many types of armored and all-terrain vehicles.

He was a major in the marines; his title of "Captain" reflects his position aboard the Jericorp crawler. He is a loyal and competent worker and seems devoted to Jeric and his daughter. He is something of a legend in Tashport for having (unofficially — the incident was never reported) outfought two orecrawlers trespassing on Jericorp's lease six months ago, destroying one and damaging the other.

He has had extensive experience in desert environments — both on Tashrakaar and on desert worlds served on during his marine service.

2. Vincent Perez — First Engineer

Ex-Marine 689586 Age 38 4 terms Cr18,700
Engineering-2, Mechanical-2, SMG-1, Electronics-2, Computer-1, Gambling-1

Perez is also an ex-marine, with four terms in the Imperial marines before he resigned and wandered into Reavers' Deep to take a mining engineer job with Jericorp. He has worked for Jericorp for four years and is normally competant, loyal, and hard-working.

He has been reprimanded three times for drinking while standing watch, and is currently on probation with the company. His record otherwise shows him loyal and hard-working, and his competance has won for him the position of First Engineer on Jericorp crawlers. He stands his watches under Southerland and is responsible for the functioning of the crawler power plant and mining equipment as well as the actual mining operation itself.

3. Elu Gulushiggisun — Technician

Ex-Army Trooper 4B8743 Age 34 3 terms Cr1,000
Mechanical-2, ATV-1, Computer-1, AutoRifle-1, Air/Raft-1, Communications-2

Gulushiggisun is an ex-trooper with three terms of service in the army of a mostly Vilani-populated world in the Imperium. He is the chief communications technician aboard the crawler, responsible for radio communications with the base and with the air/raft recon patrols. He generally stands the first watch with Southerland and Perez. He has worked for Jericorp for three years, is quiet, works hard, and generally wants to be left alone. He is known to be keenly interested in Vilani and First Imperium history, but he rarely shares his enthusiasm with his few friends. He has had one reprimand, logged one week ago for fighting.

4. Ranold Halfesson — Technician

Ex-Merchantman 987864 Age 34 4 terms Cr21,500
Mechanical-1, Electronics-1, Shotgun-1, Gambling-1, Air/Raft-1, Gunnery-1

Halfesson came to Jericorp after fourteen years in various merchant lines operating in Reavers' Deep. He is known to have emigrated to the Deep from the Solomani Confederation with his parents 28 years ago, but he is not known to have ever had political interests or connections.

He has been reprimanded for fighting three times since he came to work for Jericorp a year ago; he does have controversial political and racial views, about which he can be quite outspoken. His last fight was with Gulushiggisun only a week ago. Normally, the two men would be assigned to different crawlers, but this is impossible with the current situation. He now shares the same watch with the Vilani technician, on the theory that Perez and Southerland will always be about to keep an eye on them. The two men have not spoken to each other since last week's incident.

5. Murray Gerbert — First Officer

Ex-Merchant Second Officer 778996 Age 38 4 terms Cr50,000
AutoPistol-1, Electronics-2, Admin-1, ATV-1, Computer-2, Medic-2

Gerbert is first officer of Southerland's crawler, and officer in charge of the 2nd duty shift, when Southerland, Perez, Gulushiggisun, and Halfesson are off-duty. He is experienced and has worked for Jericorp in various capacities for four years. Before coming to Reavers' Deep, Gerbert served aboard merchant liners in the Imperium, retiring as a 2nd officer after 16 years. His medical experience singles him out as the paramedic aboard the crawler, in charge of the sickbay and treating injuries as they occur.

6. Harimandir Sin — Second Engineer

Ex-Marine B9A987 Age 38 5 terms Cr12,000
Engineering-2, Mechanical-2, Dagger-2, Rifle-3, Cutlass-2, Computer-2, Desert Survival-2

Sin is a Dharak, a descendant of a human warrior race on a world within the Imperium. Dharaki are known and feared in many parts of human-colonized space; the hard conditions of their native world have produced a hard and cunning race with ancient, inflexible warrior traditions and codes of honor. He is quiet and soft-spoken, and so far seems a dedicated and hard working employee. His remarkable qualifications won him his post as second engineer aboard the crawler, in charge of engineering duties when Perez is off-duty. He has been on one crawler mission to date and carried out his duties competently.

7. Thoris Dennechek — Technician

Ex-Marine 947997 Age 34 4 terms Cr45,000
Communications-1, Gunnery-2, ATV-1, Air/Raft-2, Laser Rifle-1, Mechanical-1, Cutlass-1

Dennechek has been employed with Jericorp for about a year and is an enthusiastic and dedicated worker. He received a personal commendation from Jeric less than six months ago after he began for discovering agents of Dakaar Minerals in the act of sabotaging a crawler the night before a mission. Before coming to work for Jeric, he was a trooper in the space marines of the Carillian Assembly, a small empire elsewhere in the Drexilthar subsector. He was discharged with honor, after which he emigrated first to Caledon, then to Tashrakaar to take a position with Jericorp. His military training is an important asset, and he is responsible for the maintainance and repair of the crawler's laser cannon. He is also slated as the crew's air/raft technician and is responsible for seeing that both air/rafts are equipped and in working order.

8. Karl Jung — Technician

Ex-Army Trooper 334579 Age 30 2 terms Cr500
Gunnery-1, Mechanical-1, Rifle-1, Jack of All Trades-1, Steward-1

Jung has begun work with Jericorp within the past week as a junior technician and is considered to be still in training. He formerly served as steward with a passenger line out of Caledon, and before that he was in the army. He is a friendly, likeable person but was reprimanded for

carelessness when he failed to secure an overhead hatch which subsequently nearly injured Captain Southerland. It was determined that the event was an accident due to Jung's inexperience.

Additional information is given on some of these characters in the section on **The Dakaar Minerals Plot** later in this booklet. Only the referee may see this information, which is used to round out the characters outlined above.

CREW ASSIGNMENTS

Normally these eight individuals would make up two groups called respectively Crew One and Crew Two, alternating six-hour shifts. During certain periods, such as the cutting away of an ore-bearing cliff face or when reconnaisance air/rafts are aloft, both crews may be on duty at the same time.

Player characters with appropriate skills (especially Gunnery, Engineering, ATV, Communications, Mechanical or Electronics skills) may join as active crew members and help round out a third and possibly a fourth crew. As brand new employees, they may not be in charge of a shift; any of the others with the exception of Jung can serve as watch officer, and the choice would probably be made in terms of seniority (Perez would be next after Gerbert, followed by Gulushiggisun).

The players may suggest new watch standing arrangements, but they will have to be approved by Arlana (i.e., the referee). In any case, the players should be reminded by Arlana that security is their primary duty.

DUTIES

Characters with Gunnery skill may operate the vehicles's laser cannon during mining operations and (rarely) during combat.

Characters with Engineering, Electronics, and Mechanical skill may be assigned to the engineering deck where they will supervise the operation of the vehicle's mining equipment, power plant, and drive.

Characters with Communications experience may man the radio linking the crawler with headquarters and with recon air/rafts. They may also man the radio on recon air/rafts.

Characters with Air/Raft skill may carry out recon missions in search of exposed nodule fields or devilblows.

Characters with ATV skill may drive the orecrawler or may direct it from the flying bridge.

These duties may be assigned to the player characters by the Captain even if the characters themselves did not form a third duty crew; this will especially be true if anything happens to any of the regular crew members.

The Plot

For reasons which will be revealed later, Dakaar Minerals is ready to go to any length to destroy Jericorp. They have managed to secretly infiltrate one or more of their people into the orecrawler crew, but they have also planned an inital attack as a diversion, something to convince the new team of security people aboard that the situation is under control.

This attack will take place at some time during the crawler's outward journey. The player characters should be allowed to win (not too easily) by their own efforts and to enjoy a hearty round of self-congratulations. Of course, if they were so lax that this diversionary attack succeeds, they deserve whatever happens to them. Surviving characters may continue with the adventure, of course, but they are unlikely to learn of the nature of Dakaar's plans or to prevent the destruction of Jericorp.

The referee may choose one of the following options or roll 1D for a random choice. Details may be changed in any way desired to conform to the flow of the adventure.

PLOTS

1. A man wearing a Tashrakaar security forces uniform slips unnoticed into the Jericorp equipment bay during the night before the mission and attempts to plant a bomb on board the crawler. If the players have thought to post a close guard on the vehicle (two or more men walking around outside it) the intruder will be caught. He is armed with an automatic pistol and a hidden dagger and will fight to avoid capture. If he is captured, he will be stubbornly uncooperative and yield no information before the mission leaves.

The bomb will turn out to be a small tactical nuclear warhead concealed in an attache case. If the intruder is not caught, the bomb will detonate when the vehicle is in the Deep Desert, and the orecrawler will be vaporized. When the timer is set, it can be disarmed simply by pulling out the timer wires which are readily visible. The Dakaar plant knows about the bomb; depending on the situation, he will leave it as a back-up in the event of his own discovery and death, disarming it just before it is due to detonate; "discover" it to prove his loyalty; or use it as a threat to win control of the vehicle.

2. A Tashport technician — one of a crew of workers in the Jericorp bay — managed to plant the bomb described above before the adventurers arrived (at about the time of the loading dock firefight, as a matter of fact). The bomb is hidden on the flying bridge, jammed under the chair at the small instrument panel. Player characters should roll 2D each time

they enter the flying bridge; they will notice the attache case if the result is less than their intelligence.

3. As number two above, but the bomb is hidden in one of the air/rafts. The air/raft must be entered for the bomb to be seen, but no roll need be made to notice.

4. An ambush has been laid for the crawler at Daybreak Pass through which the party must pass to reach the Desert Fringe. It consists of 30 men dressed as natives who are actually in the pay of Dakaar, armed with automatic weapons and explosive charges with which they will attempt to blow open one of the crawler's hatches. Their gunfire cannot hurt the vehicle, of course, but in the noise and smoke, 1D men will leap off an escarpment onto the crawler's back and manage to force the dorsal air/raft hatch open enough to get in. The subsequent gun battle can be resolved, if desired using **Snapshot** or **Azhanti High Lightning** rules for **Traveller** combat. The raiders' goal will be to capture the crawler if possible, but at all costs to do as much damage as possible — destroying air/rafts, engineering equipment, and controls.

Captured "tribesmen" will prove to be off-worlders, not desert natives. Interrogation of prisoners will prove them to be mercenaries hired by Garren Klessterhaven of Dakaar Minerals. As with the attack at the loading dock (which some of these men participated in) the attackers are wearing native garb to frighten Jericrop personnel and to stir up trouble between Jericorp and the Duneraiders.

5. At some point in the Desert Fringe, someone may notice a pair of reflective, silvery specks low in the eastern sky. These will prove to be a pair of air/rafts approaching at low altitude at high speed. Each mounts a laser cannon which does damage in the same way described in the section entitled **Crawler Combat.** The party may return fire using the crawler's cannon, and combat may be resolved using the **Crawler Combat** rules and damage tables.

6. At some point near the edge of the Deep Desert, the party will encounter another orecrawler which will open fire as soon as they come into view. The attack will not be a determined one, and the attacker will retire if he does not immediately cause some encouraging damage or if he is damaged in return. (Crawlers are, after all, rather expensive pieces of equipment). Combat and damage can be resolved using the rules and damage tables in **Crawler Combat.**

It should be emphasized that this attack or plot is planned as a diversion, and that the referee should carefully balance the determination of this attempt; the attempt must be determined enough to be interesting for the players and to convince them that it is genuine, but at the same time the referee should allow it to succeed only if the players are being unusually careless.

The Deep Desert

The referee should keep track of the party's progress on the area map (Map 3, in the center of the book). Each hex represents 10 kilometers; smooth and open terrain can be crossed in about 30 minutes, while rough terrain requires one hour. The crawler may not enter terrain coded as very rough, nor may it cross the lines marking canyon walls.

If the players and referee agree, the adventure proper may begin some distance into the desert, with the referee adding up the number of clear terrain hexes crossed, dividing by 2, and announcing that that number of hours have passed since the mission left Tashport. The results of any Dakaar Minerals plots should be woven smoothly into the adventure narrative, of course.

Once the party is well into the Deep Desert, they must begin searching for nodule fields. Each time the crawler enters a hex which the party wishes to search, the referee rolls 2D on the **Search Table** below. It takes one hour to cross an open hex while searching it and two hours to search a rough terrain hex. Air/rafts may be launched to search additional hexes. In one hour, an air/raft may cross 10 hexes or search 5 hexes of any kind of terrain.

A DM of +2 is made for search rolls in reg or rough terrain.

The map distinguishes between erg and reg; a nodule field may be found within erg (dune) territory as an area where the sand has been blown aside, but they are far more common in reg (flat, rock-surfaced) desert.

SEARCHING

Die roll	Result
2	Half-buried crawler (first time only; treat as Nodule field thereafter)
3-11	Empty desert
12	Nodule field

THE WRECKED CRAWLER

Should a roll of 2 be made (possible only in sandy erg terrain), the searchers will spot a glint of metal in the sand, and investigation will spot an abandoned orecrawler with only its flying bridge and part of the dorsal surface exposed. Inspection shows that this is the Jericorp crawler lost without a trace several months ago. It shows evidence of having been destroyed from within by fire and explosion, and bullet holes made by automatic weapons are stitched across several interior bulkheads.

The wreck can be entered through the dorsal hatch and explored; it is identical to the party's own orecrawler, and the same set of deck plans can be used. The air/rafts have been destroyed by explosions, both water and ore storage tanks are empty, and all equipment lockers have been looted — probably by passing nomads. In the control center,

all navigation and log records have been removed. A safe in the Captain's cabin has been blown open and emptied.

A character in the control center who rolls less than his intelligence on 2D will notice a wad of paper in one corner. Written on the paper are formulas which indicate it was a scratch sheet for someone working out navigational bearings, and the notation:

"Pt. — Chargas cnyn!!!!"

The bearings are useless without references — little more than doodles made by the individuals on duty working out a plot for the navigational computer and logs.

Nothing else can be learned from the crawler. Its bearing where it lies in the sand suggests that it was heading straight back towards headquarters when it was destroyed. Questioning headquarters by radio will reveal that the crawler was last heard from in a brief radio transmission which indicated that the crew was cutting their mission short, but that they gave no reason for this and no position. It is obvious they were destroyed en route.

DISCOVERY OF A NODULE FIELD

Harvesting the ore from a nodule field takes 2D x 5 hours, during which time the orecrawler must remain within the same hex on the map. A separate 2D roll is made for each different nodule field, since some are quite large, others small. The crawler needn't harvest ore for the entire indicated period, of course, but may harvest for up to the indicated time before the supply of nodules runs out. A crawler will be able to fill all of its storage tanks by working a large field but will usually have to find and strip several smaller fields before every tank is filled.

The orecrawler has ten ore storage tanks; it takes 10 hours of harvesting to fill one tank. Market rates vary at different times and for different metals. Each full tank will bring 1D x 2000 credits when delivered to Tashport. (This applies to normal runs with finds of

manganese, iron, copper, and the like, of course, not rare earths or precious metals). The roll of 1D is made only once; the resulting credit value is applied to all the tanks in the crawler. The players should keep track of how long they spend harvesting a field and how many tanks they get from it, since their goal is to find enough metal to pay for the Jericorp lease.

Orecrawlers cannot harvest while engaged in fighting or crossing country at their usual rate of 1 or 2 hexes per hour. Other activities may be carried out at the same time as harvesting operations — such as air/raft reconnaisance — so long as 1 qualified crew (Captain or other senior officer, 1 engineer, 2 technicians) is aboard to operate the vehicle.

ENCOUNTERS

Twice each day, the referee should roll 2D on the following table for an encounter to occur. Exactly when during the day the resulting encounters occur is up to the referee, who should work them into the over-all flow of events and situations.

ENCOUNTERS IN VEHICLES

Die roll	Result
2-8	No event
9	Devilblow approaching. Warning will be given 1D hours ahead of storm's beginning by meteorological equipment on the crawler. For the results of the storm, see the section on **Climate and Topology.**
10+	Encounter: roll 1D below.
	1 'Spoor' of another crawler — a recently picked-over nodule field and glassy screep wastes.
	2 Wrecked crawler — see the description of the wrecked crawler above for details.
	3 Air/rafts sighted — two air/rafts are seen in the distance, shadowing the crawler. Pursuit may be attempted, if desired; the air/rafts do not attack, but will defend themselves with laser cannon.
	4 Crawler(s) encountered — roll 1D: 1-4, 1 crawler; 5-6, 2 crawlers. Vehicles seem to be heading south, and have been coming from the east; one crawler will attempt to evade, two will attack.
	5-6 Natives encountered — a band of nomads appears in the crawler's path. They may be attacked or negotiated with; they will not attack unless provoked (see the section on **Duneraider Encounters** for details).

CRAWLER COMBAT

The time may come when the party finds themselves in their crawler, squared off in combat against one or more enemy crawlers and/or

air/rafts. Combat resolution can be quick, simple, and graphic using the rules suggested in this section.

Map: Use a piece of blank hex-grid paper as a playing surface. This is left blank for encounters in open terrain. In rough terrain, the referee may mark some hexes at random. These hexes may be fired through but not entered by opposing crawlers; they represent boulders too massive to climb. As an added challenge, he may, if he wishes, mark several groups of five to eight adjacent hexes to represent rock formations taller than the crawlers themselves; these hexes may neither be entered or fired through.

One hex represents 100 meters. One game turn represents 15 seconds, the standard combat round.

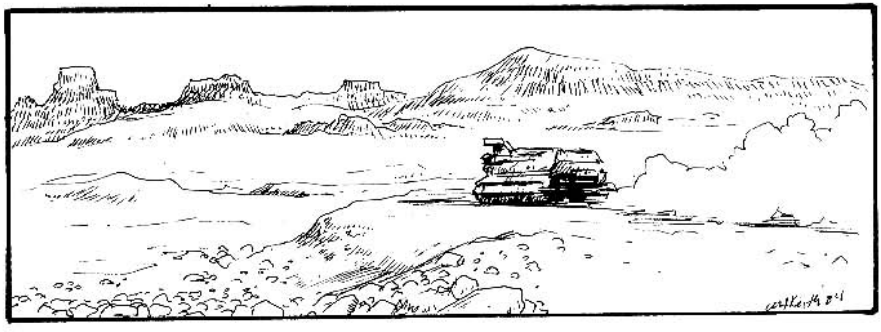
Pieces: Counters may be made from half-inch cardboard squares or blank game counters, or may be taken from another game. They should be marked in such a way as to indicate a front end for the direction of movement. Counters represent each crawler and air/raft engaged. One of the players should move the Jericorp crawler; if possible, players with characters aboard secific air/rafts should move those air/raft counters. The referee moves all enemy counters.

Placement: Pieces enter from opposite ends of the map. The exact direction each unit is moving may be suggested by the situation thus far, or the referee may make an arbitrary determination.

Movement: Both sides move at the same time. (With so few counters, movement can be nearly simultaneous, with the referee saying, "Ready . . . move"). Crawlers move one hex each turn, or they may remain stationary. Air/rafts may move up to ten hexes each turn, or they may remain stationary. Air/rafts which land are inverted in the hex in which they land. Air/rafts which dock with their crawlers are removed from the map. Crawlers may not enter terrain marked as rock formations. Air/rafts may move through (fly over) any terrain.

Air/rafts which fly off the edge of the map may return on the same map edge during any later turn.

Air/raft pilots may announce that they are "down on the deck" — that is, flying so low that they can take advantage of cover offered by



rock formations and crawlers. Naturally, they may not enter marked hexes, nor fire through them, when they are on the deck. At any time they may announce they are at altitude again, at which they may enter any hex, but no longer receive the benefit of cover from ground obstacles. Pilots may fly toward an obstacle (rock formation or crawler) on the deck, and then announce that they are going to altitude in the hex before the obstacle hex. They must roll 9 or less on 2D; if the roll is 10+, they crash into the obstacle, and the air/raft (and occupants) are destroyed. Air/Raft skill may be used as a negative DM in this maneuver. All enemy air/raft operators have Air/Raft-1 skill.

Turning: Crawlers may change heading by 60 degrees (one hex side) during each turn. This change of facing does not count as a move. Air/rafts may change 60 degrees (one hex side) at no movement cost, for each new hex that they enter. They may change their heading 120 degrees (2 hex sides) with each new hex entered, but this maneuvering limits their speed to more than three hexes in a single turn.

Collisions: If two crawlers attempt to enter the same hex at the same time, they will collide. Both will be immobilized, and it will take 1D hours to separate them. They may continue firing at one another, though with only a single turret unless the target is directly ahead or behind.

Air/rafts may collide deliberately or accidentally (see roll for maneuvering over obstacles above) with a crawler. The air/raft will be destroyed and its occupants killed. The crawler will suffer two hits on its body, with a DM of +3 on the damage results rolls. A result of 13 or higher is treated as a 13. Duplicate results are ignored.

Any number of air/rafts may be in the same hex at the same time without collision.

Combat: Units may fire during each turn. Air/rafts fire from any one hex during their movement and must fire directly ahead. Crawlers have twin laser turrets set on either side of their flying bridge. The right turret may fire straight ahead, straight to the rear, or toward any hex to the right of the vehicle. The left turret may fire ahead, behind, or to the left. Both turrets may fire during the same turn, as long as they are both operable and are both manned.

Line of sight is determined from the center of the firing unit's hex to the center of the target hex. Fire is blocked between a crawler and another crawler if any part of that straight line enters a marked (rough terrain) hex. Line of sight between an air/raft at altitude and any ground hex is always uninterrupted. Line of sight is interrupted by ground obstacles for air/rafts flying on the deck.

Crawlers may fire at an air/raft in any hex during its flight. The air/raft is stopped in mid-move, the results of the fire resolved, then (if the air/raft survives) the movement continues. Two crawlers (or two turrets on the same crawler) may fire at the same air/raft in two different hexes during its movement.

Combat Results: Each time a player or the referee fires, he states what his target is, using the targeting table below. Note that fire may be

directed against different parts of the crawler. A roll of 2D is made, and results determined using this table:

CRAWLER COMBAT RESULTS

Target	2D result 2-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13+
Crawler Body	MISS	HIT	HIT	HIT	HIT	HIT	HIT	HIT
Treads	MISS	MISS	HIT	HIT	HIT	HIT	HIT	HIT
Flying Bridge	MISS	MISS	MISS	MISS	HIT	HIT	HIT	MISS
Turret (l/r)	MISS	MISS	MISS	MISS	MISS	HIT	HIT	MISS
Air/raft	MISS	MISS	MISS	MISS	MISS	MISS	HIT	MISS

Each shot may be modified by the factors listed below.

SHOT MODIFIERS

Condition Modifier	
For each level of Gunnery skill of character firing (enemy gunners all have Gunnery-1)	DM+1
Target is stationary air/raft	DM+2
Target is in same hex	DM+4
Target is in adjacent hex	DM+2
Target is two hexes distant	DM+1

Any shot fired at a crawler which results in a miss may have hit some other part of the crawler than the area aimed at. Roll 2D again; if the unmodified result is a 9+, the miss is turned into a hit on the crawler body — even if the crawler body was the original target. If the roll is 8 or less, the shot missed the crawler entirely.

Damage Results: Hits may or may not score critical damage on an enemy crawler. All hits on air/rafts result in the air/raft's destruction. To determine damage, roll 2D on the following table:

CRAWLER DAMAGE

Crawler Body: Die roll	Result
2-8	Minor damage only.
9	Water tank pierced — drinking water supply lost or contaminated, though enough remains to fuel power plants.
10	Dorsal hatch damaged — hatch cannot be opened to admit or release air/rafts; damage cannot be repaired in desert.
11	Radio antennae severed — long range communication with base ended. Irreparable in desert.
12	Control center hit — explosions wrack control center. Each character in center must roll 9- to avoid 2D injuries; all controls and weapons are permanently knocked out.

Treads: Die roll	Result
2-7	Minor damage only.
8-10	Tread blown — paired multiple treads allow vehicle to continue to maneuver with up to three blown treads. Destruction of a fourth tread will immobilize crawler; repairable in desert in 1D hours per tread while not under fire.
11+	Drive or axle hit — vehicle cannot move. Damage is irreparable in desert.

Flying Bridge: Die roll	Result
2-5	Minor damage only.
6-9	Moderate damage — characters on flying bridge must roll 9- to avoid 2D damage.
10+	Flying bridge destroyed — characters on bridge killed on 2D roll of 8+, receive 3D damage on 7-.

Turret: Die roll	Result
2-4	Minor damage only.
5-7	Turret jammed — may no longer fire. Repair possible in desert with 1D hours work while not under fire.
8-10	Turret badly damaged — may no longer fire. Occupant must roll 9- to avoid 2D damage points. Irreparable in desert.
11+	Turret destroyed — occupant killed.

Combat continues until one side or the other moves his crawler(s) off the map, surrenders, or is destroyed. Player characters may elect to "abandon ship" by running into the desert on foot. Pursuit in such an event would not be rigorous, for the enemy will be content to let the desert finish off any survivors.

Whether one side elects to pursue the other and continue the battle after combat has broken off depends on the situaton and can be agreed upon by the players and referee together.

If the adventurers manage to beat off an enemy attack, they may elect to return to Tashport, or they may continue with the mission. Captain Southerland will feel obliged to continue as long as possible, but he will listen to arguments put forth by his crew.

If any prisoners are taken in battle, they will be technicians who know nothing except that their destination was someplace called Chargas Canyon. They will believe that they are within the Dakaar Minerals lease and that the Jericorp crawler is illegally tresspassing. Enemy leaders captured will not speak of their purpose. If, by chance, the Jericorp characters manage to capture an enemy crawler, navigational data for Chargas Canyon will be loaded into the computer, and the place will be prominantly marked on their charts.

The Dakaar Minerals Spy

One or more of the Jericorp crawler's crew is a traitor or spy in the pay of Dakaar Mineral's Vice-President Klessterhaven himself. The identity of this traitor must be determined by the referee before play begins.

Of the eight Jericorp personnel, Southerland and Gerbert are always loyal. Any of the others could be a Dakaar plant. Additional information is given for each of these six in the following paragraphs. The referee should choose one or two of these characters as Dakaar agents, either choosing them from the list or rolling 1D for a random result.

Additional information about some of the other characters may also be applied by the referee. Should the players dig into the backgrounds of any of these NPCs, these facts may surface. Some facts suggest the NPCs are traitors; some may simply make the players suspicious. The adventure can be played as a mystery or spy adventure, with the player characters shadowing certain of the NPC suspects, attempting to learn more. Of course, some of this incriminating evidence can lead the characters to faulty conclusions, but that's half the fun of a genuine mystery. . . .

ADDITIONAL NPC BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. **Vincent Perez** is fighting a losing battle with alchohol. He has been desperately trying to hold his life together, but he is beginning to lose control; any dangerous or stressful situation is liable to make him panic.

His resignation from the Imperial marines four years ago was required of him. During a raid on a rebel stronghold, he panicked, and the platoon he commanded at the time was cut to pieces as a result. He happened to have highly-placed political connections; his father was on the staff of a powerful duke in the sector. Perez should have faced a court martial, but was given the option of resigning to avoid scandal.

Time is too short to learn these facts from sources within the Imperium. If closely questioned or threatened, he may reveal these facts about himself — especially if he is caught while well on the way to making himself drunk. Another NPC may know about his past, too; interrogation of Harimandir Sin may unveil Perez's past.

It is possible that Perez is a traitor. Klessterhaven learned of his background shortly after he began working for Jericorp and is using this information to blackmail him. Of course, being forced to betray Jeric has deepened the conflict in his life, made him drink more, and has brought him yet closer to a mental breakdown.

If Perez is **not** a traitor, he still may go to pieces in a critical moment, causing additional problems for the adventurers. He may also be the target of Harimandir Sin, below, and this conflict could produce a complicating and interesting subplot within the adventure.

2. **Elu Gulushiggisun** is an unlikely traitor at first sight, and for that reason may be a good choice. As a communications officer, he would be in a good position to listen for information of interest to Dakaar Minerals and pass it along. He is totally apolitical, but he may be involved in a conflict with Ranold Halfesson which could complicate matters somewhat. If he is a traitor, he sold out for money about one year ago. Investigations of his bank records in Tashport (which can be accomplished by bribery or the use of Computer skill 3 or better) will reveal that he has several accounts under several names and a total of over 95,000 credits . . . hard to explain on his salary with Jericorp.

3. **Ranold Halfesson** is a blowhard, a braggart, and something of a bully. Though non-political, he does hold with many of the extreme theories about the racial superiority of the Solomani and frequently sounds off about them — especially in front of the Vilani-descended Gulushiggisun. The latter is quiet and slow to anger, but when he loses his temper, it is suddenly and with violence; he nearly killed Halfesson in a fight Halfesson provoked one week ago. The feud between them can form an interesting and sometimes dangerous subplot to the adventure.

If Halfesson is the traitor, he sold out for money. Simply checking his account at the Tashport bank (Cr 21,500) should make the adventurers suspicious, since this is more than a technician with 1 year's experience can be expected to have saved. Again, the adventurers can try Bribery or Computer-3 skill to get this information from the bank.

4. **Harimandir Sin** is the brother of Ghan Sin, an Imperial Dharak marine sergeant who was killed while serving under one Captain Vincent Perez, in a rebellion four years ago on a distant world. Sin's arrival one month ago has — to say the least — accelerated Perez's breakdown. He doesn't know that Harimandir is Ghan's brother (he probably didn't even know Ghan Sin's name) but Dharaki warriors are thinly enough spread through the Imperium that the sight of Sin would be certain to make a guilty man nervous.

Sin plans, of course, to kill Perez. The act will be swift, silent, clean, and in circumstances which will not endanger others.

If Sin is the traitor, it is because up to a month ago he was working for Dakaar Minerals on another planet when a computer matched him with the disintegrating employee of Jericorp. Klessterhaven offered Sin the chance to win his revenge — but demanded that Sin act as his agent in return. Sin accepted. His notions of descent from honorable warriors is largely nonsensical; he has the name but not the heart of true Dharaki. He will defer his revenge until after his mission is carried out — at Klessterhaven's orders.

Sin may be able to tell the adventurers something of Perez's past — though he is unlikely to do so without rather strong inducement.

DAKAAR

5. **Thoris Dennechek** is an obvious candidate for spy — especially if the adventurers have had any past experience with the Carillian Assembly. (See **The Drenslaar Quest**, an adventure for **Traveller** from Gamelords, Ltd., which introduces these charming folks). If he is not Klessterhaven's spy, he may be exactly what he claims to be . . . an ex-Assembly marine trooper.

If he is the spy, it is because Dakaar Minerals has several close ties to the Assembly. Having done some favors for the Assembly in times past, Klessterhaven was in a position to ask for help in the form of one of the Assembly's countless intelligence officers.

Rather than try to hide his background, he rather brazenly flaunts it, posing as an emigrant and nonpolitical trooper who has escaped from the militant life within the Assembly. It will be impossible to link him with either Dakaar Minerals or his Intelligence Service, but the players may suspect him just because they don't trust Carillians. (If they've not played **The Drenslaar Quest**, the Carillian nature may be suggested by stories and anecdotes of the Assembly's ruthless treatment of several subject worlds).

Dennechek's real mission may be more complex. It has been learned (through Dennechek's efforts) that Klessterhaven has discovered that there is something of great value within the Jericorp lease — something that Jeric doesn't yet know about. This something is so valuable that Klessterhaven has gone to insane lengths to drive Jericorp out of business and take over its lease, lengths (such as tactical nuke bombs, if they are introduced) beyond all reason. Dennechek may, then, be playing a double game — acting as an agent for Klessterhaven, but also ready to betray Klessterhaven should he learn what this valuable something is and be able to secure it for his real masters — the dictators of the Assembly.

6. **Karl Jung** is, on first impression, something of a klutz, generally falling over his own feet. If he is not the traitor, he is naturally clumsy — but the results of that clumsiness or carelessness could divert the adventurers into thinking he is working for Dakaar Minerals.

If he is the traitor, his clumsiness is a front, designed to mislead others into thinking that he is not capable of leading a single life, much less a double one. He began work for Jericorp only a week ago. He is in fact a freelance industrial spy, hired by Klessterhaven to act as his agent within Jericorp.

The referee should feel free to edit or rearrange this additional information in any way which adds to the smooth flow of the adventure plot. He should take care not to add too much extraneous detail and background to otherwise unimportant NPCs for fear of causing the adventure to bog down in minor subplots. He should build his traitor (or traitors — there could be two of them working together) carefully and logically and not allow them to be too obvious.

THE TRAITOR STRIKES

The traitor's task is to capture or disable the orecrawler. There are a number of possible ways he can strike. A few are outlined below:

1. He secretly plants explosives in the engineering deck, contaminates the water supply, and sabotages the air/rafts. He might blame the explosion on a bomb planted before the crawler left base; or he could kill one of the other crew members and claim that he saw the man with the bomb, shot him, but watched him detonate the bomb with his dying breath. The spy's plan is to go with the crew into the desert and be picked up by a Dakaar Minerals crawler which is following them. In an alternative scenario, the spy sets the bomb, destroys one air/raft, then escapes in the other. Either way, he may re-appear later in the adventure.

2. At some critical point, (during a battle with an enemy crawler, if possible) the spy or spies appear in the control center with guns, kill Captain Southerland, and take over the crawler. This rather blantent hijacking is designed to put an end to Jericorp by having its last crawler and crew vanish; it will in fact rendevous with several Dakaar Minerals crawlers in Chargas Canyon. In this scenario, someone — one or more of the NPCs if the player characters don't do it — will try to jump the agent(s). In the resultant battle, the control center is so badly shot up that the crawler is crippled and must be abandoned. It will later be discovered that both air/rafts have been sabotaged, and the water supply poisoned.

3. The enemy agents could, at a pre-arranged time, open the crawler's locks to admit a number of Dakaar Minerals men wearing desert nomad dress. The agents would have arranged the ambush ahead of time by radio and been ready to open the crawler at just the right moment. In the course of the battle, the crawler itself would be crippled, and it will be found that the air/rafts have been sabotaged. The crew — whatever the outcome of the battle itself — will find themselves alone and on foot in the desert.

4. The spy could do nothing, because something else (such as a battle with a Dakaar crawler) cripples the orecrawler. In this case, he will continue to go with the rest of the group, ready to sabotage their efforts at a critical moment if necessary.

Which path the enemy agent(s) takes is up to the referee and to his ideas of how to arrange a good spy-mystery yarn.

DESERT TREK

Marooned: With the destruction or capture of the Jericorp crawler, the second phase of the adventure begins, with the adventurers finding themselves on foot in an alien desert, short of water, and pursued by the forces of Dakaar Minerals. The characters can find themselves in this position in one of several ways — as a result of losing a battle with Dakaar crawlers, because of sabotage, or because Dakaar agents in the crew hijacked the crawler despite the security team's best efforts.

As the plot develops, the referee should keep in mind several goals and manipulate events to allow these goals to be met. These goals are the following:

The Jericorp orecrawler should be wrecked — or at least so badly damaged that to try to repair it would invite capture by the enemy.

The air/rafts must be destroyed, disabled, or stolen, so that the adventurers can't simply fly back to civilization.

The group should be short of water (see **Water**, below).

Communications should be cut off or the radio wrecked before Jericorp HQ can be informed of the party's position or situation, or, failing this, it should be established that there is no way HQ can rescue the stranded party.

Southerland and any other strong leader (other than a traitor) among the NPCs should be killed or so badly wounded that he can no longer lead the group. The adventurers must be forced to take the initiative in leading the party out of the desert.

The group should be aware that enemy crawlers are in the neighborhood and closing in. This is to discourage any notions of hanging around in the shelter of the crawler until help arrives.

The desert trek portion of the adventure begins with the surviving crewmembers abandoning the wrecked orecrawler and escaping into the desert. Their success at survival may depend on how well they've anticipated and prepared for the possibility of losing the crawler.

Water: The referee should further contrive to limit the party's water supply. Normally there is more than enough drinking water available in an orecrawler's tanks. The group may elect to stay in the shelter of the crippled orecrawler, but it is a sure bet that enemy crawlers are on the way (unless the Jericorp crawler was destroyed by them, in which case they've already arrived). If they set out across the desert, they will only be able to take with them the water which they each can personally carry. If the crawler's water tanks have been ruptured (due either to combat or sabotage) the only water available will be that which the adventurers might have thought to save in canteens ahead of time — a wise precaution which may save all their lives. If the crawler's water is safe, they may be able to carry some along in 4-liter jerry cans or other containers which the referee allows them to salvage.

As a general rule, 1 liter of water weighs 1 kilogram. The weight of extra water carried should be calculated and distributed according to the rules for carrying weights given in **Basic Traveller**. Sleds can be improvised to help carry extra water supplies, but hauling the sled counts as hard work in the rules governing Endurance Loss Points given in **The Desert Environment**.

Known water sources are marked on the map the adventurers should have with them. Of course, if they abandon the crawler and no one thinks to bring the map along . . . .

Destination: Once the group is afoot in the desert, their immediate destination will depend on where they happened to be stranded, whether or not enemy forces are after them, and whether or not an oasis or water hole marked on their map happens to be within walking distance. The players should decide on the group's destination and work out the best way to get there. **The Desert Environment** lists some of the problems faced by travellers in the desert, especially if they're foolish enough to

travel by day. This rules supplement will help the referee simulate the rigors of travel through an arid environment, of water loss, and heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

While the trek across the desert on foot is the time for the referee to exercise the detailed rules in **The Desert Environment,** other elements of the adventure plot already introduced should be continued. There are Dakaar Mineral forces in the area, and they will be on the lookout for Jericorp fugitives from the abandoned crawler. If one or more Dakaar Minerals agents remain undetected within the party, there may be added complications from this source.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

With virtually no axial tilt (a shade over 4 degrees), Tashrakaar does not have seasonal climate variations. Furthermore, the lengths of day and night are always about equal, each lasting about 14 hours. Since the adventurers are near the planet's pole, the sun will appear to rise in the east, circle low across the southern end of the sky not far above the horizon, and set in the west. The referee should keep this in mind while setting up battles where the position of the sun might be important.

Daytime temperatures in the Desert Fringe average 30° in the day and fall to around 10° or less at night. In the northern reaches of the Deep Desert, where most of this adventure will take place, daytime temperatures range from 35 to 45° in mid-afternoon and fall to 5 or 10° at night. The temperature is far more severe — reaching 90° or more — near the equator.

Rain: Rainfall is infrequent south of the coastal escarpment, daily north of it. The referee needn't worry about rain slowing up a desert march. He may, if he wishes, introduce a rare, sudden flashflood if the adventurers are travelling through the wadis of the Desert Fringe. This option is entirely at the referee's discretion and is described in detail in the companion volume, **The Desert Environment.**

Devilblows: A devilblow may be the result of a roll on an encounter or event table, or the referee may choose to introduce one at his own discretion. Devilblows are a combination of sand and dust storms, with winds of hurricane force, which sweep across the desert from southeast to northwest. Characters inside orecrawlers are safe from these storms, though the referee may wish to **suggest** danger to the players by describing the creaking and shuddering of metal walls, and the sounds of 150 kph sandblasts buffeting the hull.

Characters outside an orecrawler, frankly, have no chance of survival **unless** they can find cover. (After all, nomads survive storms, or there wouldn't be any nomads left).

A devilblow will give **1D** hours warning of its approach — the exact value known only to the referee. The warning will be a rise in the wind, and the appearance of a low, black cloud on the southeast horizon, led by an eerie blanket of sand suspended a meter or so above the desert floor. Characters caught in the open can try to reach the shelter of a

crawler or an air/raft (air/rafts on Tashrakaar are enclosed; they cannot fly during a storm, but they can weather it on the ground) or they can seek shelter among caves or rock outcroppings. For each 10 minutes they search for such shelter, they should roll 2D. (Each **separate** group of characters can roll separately). If they are in rough terrain, they will find suitable shelter on a roll of 10+. In very rough terrain, they will find safety on an 8+. In open or dune terrain, they will find no cover; they may, however, try burying themselves in the sand. This will protect them from the effects of the storm, but they must roll Endurance or less on 2D every 10 minutes to avoid suffocation unless they have their own air supply along.

Characters caught in the open by a devilblow suffer 2D damage points every 10 minutes. The storm will last 1D hours. **Maybe** they'll survive . . . .

ENCOUNTERS

At least once each hour while the party is in the desert on foot, the referee should roll 2D on the Encounter Table. The animals encountered are described more fully in the section entitled **Plants and Animals.**

ENCOUNTERS ON FOOT

Die roll	Event
2	Lost crawler discovered (disregard if crawler already found earlier in the adventure; treat as 'No event').
3-8	No event.
9	Enemy in pursuit — air/rafts or crawlers seen in distance. If approached, they are Dakaar Minerals vehicles searching for party; party will not be seen unless they (or enemy agent among them) **tries** to attract attention.
10-11	Animal encounter — roll 2D below.
	2-8 Waterstore cactus.
	9 Welldigger — not found in dune country; treat as 'No event'. Water in some form will be located nearby.
	10 1D seriks — not found wild in dune country; treat as 'No event'. On roll of 9+, seriks are part of domestic herd and are guarded by nomad sentry.
	11 Sandstinger field.
	12 Grappleweed.
12	Special event — roll 1D below.
	1 Uncharted waterhole — on roll of 9+, waterhole will be salty and undrinkable.
	2 Rising wind — a devilblow will begin in 1D hours.
	3 Flashflood — occurs only in wadis in Desert Fringe; otherwise treat as 'No event'.
	4-6 Duneraider encounter.

Sooner or later, no matter which direction they set out in, the party is going to run into a band of Duneraiders, even if the referee must juggle die rolls to make it happen.

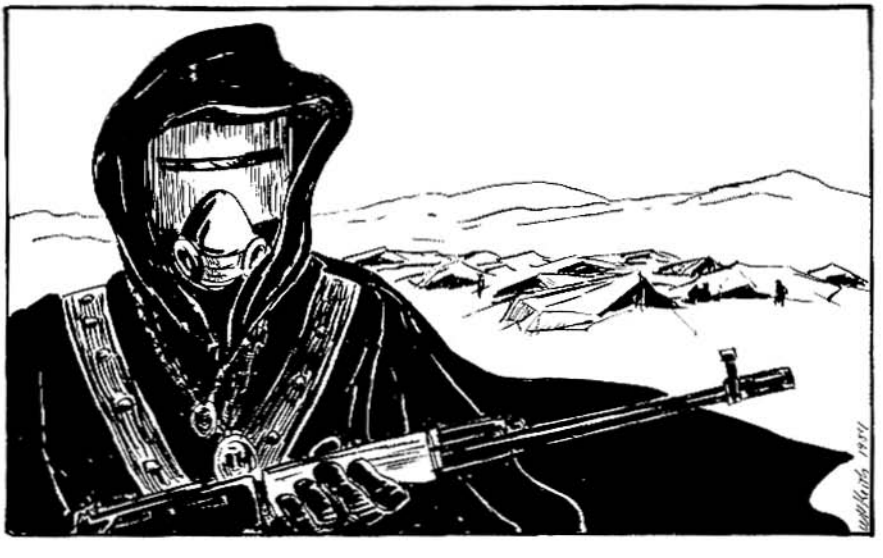
The Duneraiders

Hundreds of distinct bands of the nomads known as Duneraiders live within the desert and Desert Fringe of Tashrakaar. They are feared and hated by the inhabitants of the Polar Sea coastlands, upon whose caravans and outlaying villages they prey.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

The Duneraiders are descendants of various individuals and groups of people banished from the civilized enclaves along the coast across the centuries for crimes ranging from banditry and murder to differences in political or religious thinking. They are organized into tribes which generally take the name of some prominant terrain feature near which they sometimes camp, such as "Pinnacle Rock", "Glittering Sands", or "Path of the Wind". One tribe generally consists of several score bands, with between 20 and 70 individuals — men, women, and children. About one third of this number will consist of warriors, men whose duty it is to defend the band, to find and secure water sources, to fight off intruders, and to plunder the "Waterbearers" — their name for the coastland dwellers.

Most of the bands wander freely across both the Desert Fringe and the northern reaches of the Deep Desert, though each may have favorite campsites or water holes. A few are "Kerr-klerr hu" (literally, "deep roots") bands who have been able to settle in an oasis or other site which



provides enough for their needs that they have given up the nomadic life. The nomadic tribes have an unseen and constantly shifting "territory" which generally consists of any land the tribe lookouts can see and the warriors defend. Tresspassers in this territory will be confronted and (depending on the tribe and on the circumstances) driven off, killed, or welcomed as guests. Kerr-klerr hu bands have territories usually marked with rock piles or cliffside pictographs. Since they see themselves as the caretakes of the water source they have settled near, they tend to be more hospitable — less likely to shoot first and question later — than the wilder nomadic bands.

Although Tashrakaar is rated at a tech level of 7, the desert nomads make do with a far more primitive technology. Duneraiders carry a variety of weapons, ranging from blade weapons to rifles, pistols, and (occasionally) submachine guns and autorifles. Most weapons, ammunition, and other technological items come from raids on coast dweller settlements or caravans. However, many enclaves carry on a profitable and vigorous trade with the nomads despite official protestations to the contrary. In recent years, Duneraiders are more and more frequently seen in large coastal settlements, especially in Tashport, where they trade jewelry, ornately wrought silver daggers or cutlasses, and caravan booty for weapons, food, currency, and ammunition.

Vehicles (short of the monstrous and expensive orecrawlers) are notoriously unreliable in Tashrakaaran desert conditions and are unknown beyond the coastlands. The nomads have domesticated several species of animals, and one of them — the serik — is used as a beast of burden, for pulling wagons or dune sleds, and for riding. (It is noteworthy that even coast dwellers rarely use motorized vehicles outside the coastlands, and vast majority of caravan wagons are pulled by seriks.)

DUNERAIDER ENCOUNTERS

Which tribe of Duneraiders the adventurers run into will depend largely on what direction the referee wants the plot to move in. The Dalag-ah Suk are average hill-bandit types who might be either dangerous or hospitable; the referee can use them in any way he desires. The Gabadahk ar Krell are nearly always bad news — religious fanatics who hate water-fat coastlanders, although it is possible to get on what little good side they have. The Tallen Zen are found only in the Deep Desert — usually in the region near Chargas Canyon. They are quite hospitable towards strangers and always willing to help passers-by in distress.

If the Duneraiders are first encountered while the adventurers are in their orecrawler, they are likely tribe sentries or outriders who wish to know who the strangers are and what they are doing in the tribe's territory. They will accept gifts of water and allow the strangers to pass — but if they are Gabadahk ar Krell, they will be enraged if they see that the strangers have more than a canteen's worth of water stored in one place. It is hard to tell what enraged Gabadahk ar Krell will do.

Subsequent events are up to the referee; they are unlikely to attack an orecrawler — but they might follow it at a distance and launch harrassing attacks when the opportunity presents itself. They will definately attack men in the open whom they believe have angered their gods.

If the Duneraiders are encountered while the party is on foot, fairly strict laws of hospitality to strangers in distress apply — even for religious fanatics. The adventurers will be taken to the tribe's current campsite (which will be within 20 kilometers of the encounter), given food and drink, and questioned. In each case and initial roll is made on the **Nomad Reaction Table,** with subsequent rolls for each attempt to win information, direct events, or somehow confront their hosts.

DUNERAIDER TRIBES

The adventurers may encounter one of several tribes during their wanderings on Tashrakaar. They are described in detail below.

Each description includes a set of modifiers for use on the special reaction table which follows this section. Die rolls on this table may be modified by those factors which are applicable, to determine **in very general terms** how the tribe, a group of tribesmen, or an individual will react in an encounter with the adventurers.

Some members of most native tribes speak a dialect of the trade tongue (a corrupted form of Galanglic introduced by off-worlders); the referee may blame misunderstandings and the referee's own failure to pass along all pertinant information to problems understanding the natives' thick accents and strange words.

DALAG-AH SUK

This is a large and wide-spread tribe found throughout the Desert Fringe and Deep Desert areas shown on Map 3.

The Dalag-ah Suk are a comparitively peaceful people. Though they share with the other Duneraiders an inate suspicion of outsiders and will fight to defend their territory, they are generous with unthreatening strangers and lavish with their hospitality toward individuals found stranded in the desert.

Their raids on caravans and villages have evolved into a system of "taxation". Goods and currency are demanded in exchanged for "protection". Usually, this offer is genuine; armed bands will frequently accompany a caravan which paid its "tax" to make sure no other nomad band molests it, and they have been known to offer similar protection to orecrawler crews. (Their usual fee is 1D rifles or 1 automatic weapon, with 100 rounds of ammunition for each). They will laugh at the "water-fat" coast dwellers, but bear them no ill-will.

Reaction Table Modifiers: The referee should add up the following DMs which apply in a given situation and apply them to rolls on the **Nomad Reaction Table.**

DALAG-AH SUK REACTION MODIFIERS

Adventurers are bold and direct in their manner, appearing unafraid	DM+2
It is known that adventurers have been attacked by Dakaar Minerals (whose men have committed several atrocities against Dalag-ah Suk to the east)	DM+2
Adventurers fired on natives before they themselves were attacked	DM-3
Initial roll on Reaction table was 2-6	DM-2
Adventurers accepted initial offer of 'protection'	DM+3

GABADAHK AR KRELL

This tribe makes up for what it lacks in size with sheer bad temper. The people are descendants of a religious cult driven out of the coastlands over two centuries ago. Their mythology retells this history as an inspired exodus from wicked peoples doomed to judgement. Those who seek to "meddle with the life gift of the gods" (i.e., put water in tanks, reservoirs, or pipes) and who "hoard, fattening themselves to excess with the gods' gifts" (i.e., storing water and drinking more than is seemly) are doomed to die at the hands of Shek-khoul — a deification of the periodic desert devilblows — by being tied up and left in the path of an approaching storm.

The tribe — unlike those with no religious pronouncements against storing water — does not have a communal water "treasury" but relies on "gifts" or "blessings" of the gods — water holes, oases, and places where water can be drawn out of the sand through hollow reeds — to satisfy the water needs of each member of the community. Small water bottles — canteens, 1-liter containers, and the like — are permitted, but being caught with a large amount of water (say, a sled piled high with 1-liter containers) would be considered blasphemy and worthy of death.

Though highly skilled at finding water in the desert, the tribe has never encountered a solar still. This bit of technology would appear as magic to them, indicating that the adventurers have some sort of personal line to the water-givers. Properly staged (and assuming the tribesmen don't kill the adventurers out of hand first), the creation of a solar still could so impress the tribe that captured off-worlders would be released — or at least spared. The adventurers should be allowed to think of this ploy for themselves. Details for constructing a solar still are described in The **Desert Environment**. Similar results cannot be won by a fusion still or other high-tech means of gathering water; a solar still is so simple — no parts but a plastic sheet, a bowl, and a hole in the ground — it is obvious that there are no hidden tanks of water in the mechanism, which might be suspected when fusion equipment is used.

Leadership of this tribe is split between a chief and the tribal Kah-lul, or shaman, who interprets the signs and messages from Ahdahk (water) — the water-givers. Often, the referee can simulate this division of

power by making two rolls on the reaction table and having the lower of the two represent the shaman's opinions. The difference between the shaman's roll and the normal roll can become a DM in suseqent reaction rolls, showing the shaman's influence.

Reaction Table Modifiers: The following DMs are made in rolls on the **Nomad Reaction Table**, when applicable.

GABADAHK AR KRELL REACTION MODIFIERS

General modifier for bad attitude, always applied to Gabadahk ar Krell Reaction table rolls	DM-3
Strangers are found with large supply of 'hoarded' water. For example, water is seen running from hole in crawler's side, or found in air/raft fuel tanks	DM+3
Strangers open fire on natives without being attacked first	DM-2
Adventurers are found stealing water belonging to tribe (including personal water of individuals, and water taken from adventurers when they were captured	DM-4
Initial roll on Reaction table was 2-6	DM-3
Adventurers make a gift of their water supply to the tribe; this must be done in such a way that it is obviously a present, and not spoils of war — for example, the gift is made of water the nomads don't know about, such as the fuel reserves of an air/raft, or the water produced by a solar still	DM+1
Adventurers prove their favor with the gods by building solar still, or by surviving being left for Shek-khoul	DM+3

TALLEN ZEN

The Tallen Zen are Kerr-klerr hu ("deep-rooted", that is, not nomadic) with several secret community sites in the Deep Desert. One of these is in Chargas Canyon, which is called Chu-ahr alla ahr Nund, or "Place of the Grey-Metal Cliffs".

As caretakers of major water sources, the Tallen Zen feel an obligation of hospitality towards lost desert strangers. If the adventurers encounter these people while crossing the desert on foot, they will be made welcome, given water, and cared for. However, the tribe is caught up in crisis, for off-world strangers have moved into Chargas Canyon several days ago and Tallen Zen warriors on guard were attacked and killed. Many have fled to another hidden oasis village, while a few warriors remain hidden in the canyon, watching.

The adventurers may be able to learn much about Dakaar Minerals' activities if they ask the right questions of the Tallen Zen. Warriors who have seen the intruders in Chargas Canyon can describe the insignia painted on the sides of orecrawlers — the diamond-and-spaceship corporate logo of Dakaar Minerals. They can tell the adventurers that there are three orecrawlers and at least thirty men in the canyon and that they seem to be searching for something.

All in all, the Tallen Zen are perhaps the most civilized of the Duneraiders; though they can be suspicious of outsiders — especially if they associate them with the intruders in their home canyon — they treat strangers well and might even be talked into mounting an attack accompanied by the adventurers to drive the Dakaar Minerals people out of Chargas Canyon.

Reaction Table Modifiers: The following modifiers are applied when appropriate to any rolls on the **Nomad Reaction Table.**

TALLEN ZEN REACTION MODIFIERS

Adventurers attack tribesmen without being attacked first	DM-3
Adventurers are polite when they first meet tribesmen; when asked if they have water, the adventurers offer to share what they have	DM+3
The tribe learns that the adventurers are enemies of the Dakaar Minerals people (they were seen fighting Dakaar crawlers or men) or they convince the tribe that they are enemies of the intruders	DM+2
The adventurers suggest an alliance, a joint attack to drive the intruders out of the Challis Valley	DM+3

The referee should be guided by the arguments and persuasions used by the adventurers in their dealings with the Tallen Zen. It could be that an initial low roll on the reaction table represents not hostility, but disagreement or divided opinion, which a later roll (representing further arguments) eliminates. The Tallen Zen are unlikely to attack strangers unless they are strongly provoked (attacked first without cause) or unless they think the adventurers are working with the intruders in their canyon home. There is ample opportunity here for a Dakaar agent — if there is still one unrecognized in the party — to stir up trouble and misunderstanding; if he is unmasked by the adventurers,

the dramatic revelation is likely to swing the nomads wholly to the side of the adventurers, leading to an attack on the Dakaar invaders.

Results of 2 or 3 on the reaction table should be interpreted as argument rather over hostility — counsel by some of the tribal leaders to abandon Chargas Canyon or to send the adventurers on their way or whatever. The adventurers have little to fear from the Tallen Zen unless they provoke them.

The referee should bear in mind that the adventurers will be unaware of the Tallen Zen's peacefullness. They should learn of the habits and dispositions of the tribes for themselves.

NOMAD REACTIONS

The modifiers above are applied to 2D rolls on the reaction table in a variety of situations. A roll should be made the first time the adventurers and tribesmen meet face to face. Rolls are also made whenever the adventurers attempt to persuade either individuals in the tribe or an entire tribe to do something — whether it is to attack and enemy orecrawler or to let them live. The results should be freely interpreted by the referee, based on the specific situation. An extremely hostile response (roll 2 or 3) could be anything from angry shouting to a death sentence. The results are intended as general guidelines, rather than specific responses.

NOMAD REACTIONS

Die roll	Result
2-3	**Extremely hostile.** Strangers met for the first time are attacked. Prisoners are killed outright or left in the desert without water. Guests of tribe are ordered to leave at once and may be followed and attacked. Angry, possibly violent response to requests or questions.
4-6	**Unfriendly.** Strangers are warned once to leave, attacked if warning is ignored. Prisoners will be tied up, forced to walk along behind guard on serik. Suggestions or requests of guests will be turned down cold, future requests rolled on this table will have DM-3.
7-9	**Suspicious.** Strangers may be warned to leave or taken back to camp for questioning. Prisoners are closely guarded, and frequently questioned about why they are there and what they want. Suggestions or requests of guests will be politely ignored, disregarded, or refused. Adventurers are thought by some to be in league with enemies.
10+	**Friendly.** Strangers are welcomed as guests. Prisoners are freed on promise of good behavior, or are well treated in hopes of winning a ransom from someone in Tashport. Suggestions are carefully listened to and valued, requests are granted if reasonable. Suggestions of alliance or mutual aid are positively received.

ATTACKING THE OFF-WORLDER INTRUDERS

One possible climax for **Duneraiders** is an attack mounted against the Dakaar Minerals people operating in Chargas Canyon. It should become obvious to the players during the course of the adventure that Dakaar Mineral's campaign against Jericorp is an attempt to find something of importance in this canyon which lies within Jericorp's lease (see **The Plot**, in the section entitled **Wrapping Up the Adventure**). The best possible resolution of the adventure is for the players to kick the Dakaar Minerals people out of the canyon with the help of the Tallen Zen and, with their co-operation, to find for Jericorp whatever it is that Dakaar Minerals has been looking for.

An attack against three orecrawlers by a handful of adventurers and a band of Tech 6 warriors is somewhat less than sane. However, the referee should contrive things so an attack **could** succeed, with patience, determination, and careful planning.

The three orecrawlers will not be operating in the same area and cannot support one another. The Dakaar Minerals crewmen will not be particularly careful of their security. They will have sentries posted against the possibility of native attacks, but the adventurers should have numerous opportunities to sneak up on men working outside the crawlers one by one, to overrun a crawler sitting idle with its hatches open, or to capture an air/raft which lands in a remote area to take samples and then use it as a Trojan Horse to sneak an armed party into an unsuspecting crawler for a sneak attack. The Tallen Zen warriors may launch a diversionary attack, may supply extra men and guns for an assault, or may provide overwhelming firepower in a carefully staged canyon ambush.

If the adventurers can capture one crawler, they have an ideal opportunity to sneak up close to the other two one at a time (perhaps by pretending radio difficulties) and knock them out before they know they're being attacked. For an extra exciting finish, the referee may allow the adventurers to use a captured crawler to take out one enemy crawler by surprise, but then be forced to duel to the death, one-on-one, with the last crawler, warned by its comrade before that comrade was destroyed.

The Dakaar Minerals men will not be particularly fanatical fighters. They are, after all, mining engineers supported by a few corporate mercenaries and unwilling to fight to the death for the financial security of their employer. If offered a chance to surrender, they will do so — but only to other off-worlders, for they have a rabid fear of Duneraider "savages". If cornered, unaware that they are fighting off-worlders as well as Duneraiders, they will fight to the death; a favorite off-duty pasttime has long been the circulation of Duneraider atrocity stories — stories which have little basis in reality.

Wrapping Up the Adventure

THE PLOT

Six months ago, a Jericorp orecrawler made spectacular discovery while routinely surveying unexplored Chargas Canyon. There, an ancient and long-vanished river laid down priceless treasure before Tashrakaar's oceans died — billions of credits worth of platinum and iridium. Wind erosion has exposed a cliff face which shows streaks of dull silver-grey metal.

The Jericorp crawler commander who made the discovery knew better than to radio the find back to base, since rival companies would be quick to steal the find. Instead, he set course directly for base. He never got there.

Somehow, Dakaar Minerals got word of the find and arranged an ambush. It is quite possible that a Dakaar agent was aboard the Jericorp crawler. The crawler was destroyed, its crew murdered, and the news of its discovery lost to all but the Dakaar mercenaries who rifled its logs and navigational computer. Dakaar Minerals knew that a fabulously rich platinum deposit had been found somewhere in Chargas Canyon — a series of canyons and gulches covering hundreds of square kilometers in the Deep Desert within Jericorp's lease — but not its precise location.

Garren Klessterhaven, the man in charge of Dakaar Minerals' operations on Tashrakaar, instituted a double-headed strategy to secure the platinum find for his company. Dakaar Minerals crawlers began exploring Chargas Canyon, searching for the cliffside deposit described in the Jericorp crawler's log. A native settlement was discovered in one of the canyon branches and driven off. Meanwhile, Dakaar Minerals began a campaign of covert warfare against Jericorp. If Jericorp could be forced to forfeit its government exploration lease (making the company miss its monthly Cr 2,500,000 payment would suffice), Klessterhaven's well-paid contacts within the Tashrakaaran government would be able to see that Dakaar Minerals, adjacent to the Jericorp lease, would be able to pick up the vacant lease and add that territory to its own, thus making them the legal possessors of the platinum when it was found.

Dakaar Minerals almost succeeded. One Jericorp crawler was temporarily put out of action by sabotage by inside agents. Later, agents dressed as Duneraiders to mislead onlookers and terrify Jericorp employees managed to destroy Jericorp's replacement crawler as it was being unloaded on the spaceport dock. Many Jericorp workers were frightened away, and it was certain that the embattled company could not hold out much longer. The lease payment was due in ten days, and Jericorp hadn't sent a crawler out for weeks.

Of course, Klessterhaven could not have foreseen the impact caused by the arrival of a small group of space-wandering adventurers.

THE COURSE OF THE ADVENTURE

Duneraiders is a relatively open-ended role-playing adventure, one in which the characters can move in a number of directions. The referee must choose from all the diverse elements provided in this booklet and combine them into a coherent narrative. The arrangement which best combines the various plot elements in **Duneraiders** is as follows:

1. The adventurers take charge of security operations aboard the orecrawler. A plot to sabotage or attack the crawler shortly after it departs is thwarted.

2. The lost Jericorp crawler is discovered in the desert. Clues discovered aboard point to a find of great importance in Chargas Canyon. The decision is made to head for the canyon and see what is there.

3. A Dakaar Minerals agent is uncovered among the Jericorp crewmen. This takes place either just before or during a fierce battle with enemy forces.

4. The crawler is badly damaged, either in battle or by an enemy agent, and the adventurers and crew are forced to abandon it; they discover that the air/rafts have been sabotaged and are forced to set out on foot, knowing enemy forces are closing in.

5. After a harrowing desert crossing, the adventurers meet Tallen Zen nomads at an oasis. A second Dakaar Minerals agent makes himself known (or is discovered while committing further sabotage) and tries to ruin relations with the tribe. He is foiled, and the adventurers strike a alliance with the natives to drive the outsiders from Chargas Canyon.

6. A skillful series of coordinated attacks drives off or captures the Dakaar Minerals people in the canyon. Soon thereafter, one of the

adventurers notices the silver-grey sheen of metal on a weathered cliffside. Analysis shows the metal to be platinum, platiridium, and iridium, in quantites which will make Jericorp disgustingly wealthy. The adventurers strike a bargain with their new-found Duneraider allies; so Jericrop gets the platinum and the Tallen Zen are allowed to live in peace — perhaps as caretakers of the canyon for Jericorp.

RESOLVING THE ADVENTURE

Complete success is won when the adventurers manage to secure Chargas Canyon for Jericorp and discover the treasure-trove of platinum there. The adventurers' reward is up to the referee — anything from their original agreed-upon payment (which, under the circumstances, would be rather shabby of Jeric!), to bonuses of hundreds of thousands of credits for each characters and offers of future employment.

Other outcomes are possible. The adventurers might never reach Chargas Canyon, but if they piece together various clues (the wadded-up paper aboard the lost crawler and Tallen Zen reports of off-worlders raiding the "place of silver cliffs"), they may be able to form a good idea of what is going on and get that information back to Jericorp base. Their trek across the desert to reach civilization, replete with Duneraider encounters along the way, would form the background of an exciting and satisfying adventure. Simply surviving a desert crossing or thwarting the designs of an enemy saboteur would make a good adventure, though the plot might seem a bit incomplete.

An unusual twist can be played out with the referee secretly agreeing with one of the players that the player's character is the Dakaar Minerals agent. They can work out the character's history and circumstances together, using the information given for the possibly traitorous NPCs. This player would then secretly work against the other players, with the referee determining how effective one side or the other is in the contest and handling the interactions of hidden moves and secret plans by both.

An even more unusual twist might find the players deciding to sell out to Dakaar Minerals! In this version, it is recommended that the Tallen Zen show up at their canyon for an all-out battle to the death with the intruders, one which could well bring down the sides of the canyons in devastating avalanches, burying forever the secret of the canyon's treasure. Variations include a double agent's sell-out for the sake of gaining more information, perhaps in a raid on Dakaar Minerals' local headquarters.

Enough material is presented in **Duneraiders** for a creative and imaginative referee to come up with dozens of further adventure situations, either instead of the possibilities above or as a continuation of them, leading into a long and complex campaign on Tashrakaar. The discovery of a rich platinum deposit could be the spark which ignites all-out open tradewar on Tashrakaar and in surrounding space, an event certain to promise many hours of danger and excitement for **Traveller** adventurers who happen to be there!

ENVIRONMENTS FOR ADVENTURE

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Riches, danger, and mystery lie within the arid wastes of Tashrakaar, a desert world peopled by the savage and inigmatic **Duneraiders.** The players soon learn that desert nomads and desert heat aren't the only enemies they face when they find themselves trapped in the midst of vicious inter-corporate war!

Duneraiders is a complete adventure for **Traveller®**. This scenario makes use of rules and information presented in **The Desert Environment,** a **Traveller®** supplement from Gamelords, Ltd. **The Desert Environment** is recommended for playing **Duneraiders,** but not required.

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1989

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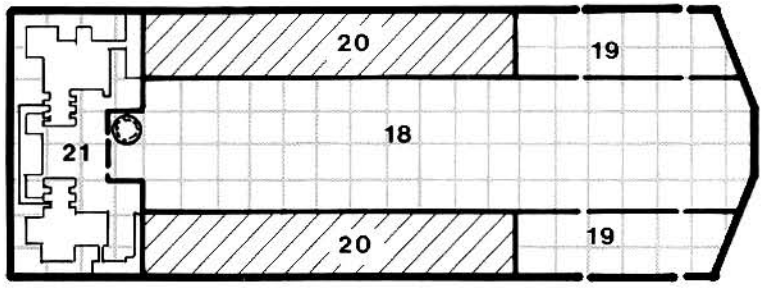
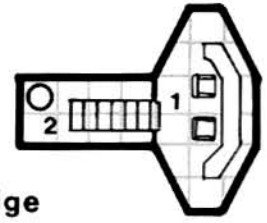


Cargo Deck



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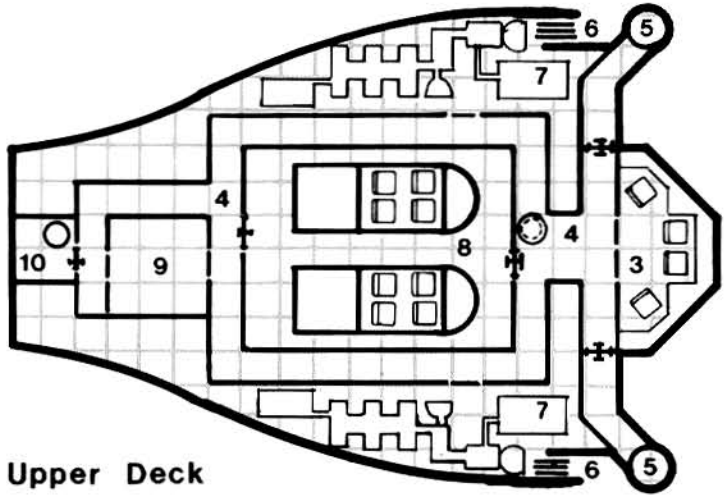
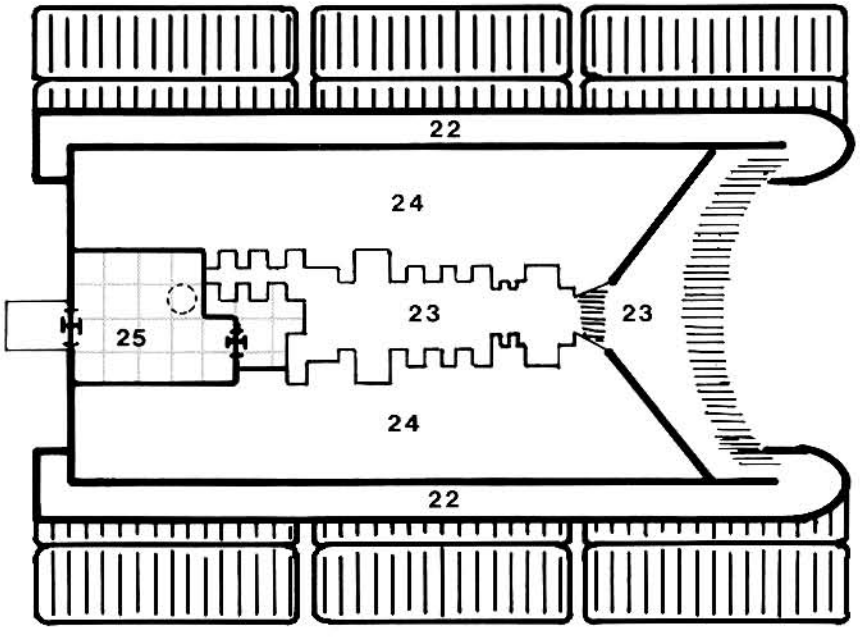
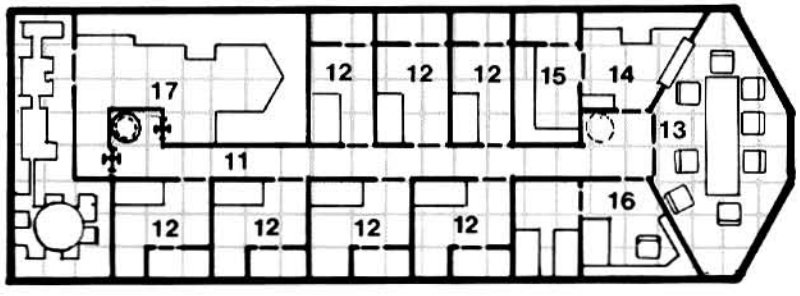


Upper Deck



Extraction Plant



Lower Deck

MARK XIV ORECRAWLER

1.5 meters