

STAR*DRIVE SESSION SUMMARY

01/03/2011

Attendance

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Deal</i>	<i>Status</i>
Bruce	Lambert Fulson	Rigunmor Guido Free Agent	Absent
Bruce	Taveer	Mechalus Concord Engineer Tech Op	Absent
Patrick	Martin St. John	Concord Naval Officer Tech Op	Absent
Patrick	Lenny	T'sa Ambassador Free Agent	Absent
Chris	Ten-zil Kem	VoidCorp Ambassador Diplomat (TO)	Present
Chris	Dreth	Pict Warchief Combat Spec	Present
Ernest	Markus Oroszlan	Warlion Bartender Combat Spec	Present
Ernest	Ken Takashi	Concord Naval Officer Diplomat (TO)	Present
Tim	Gerard Peppin	Borealin Ambassador Mind Walker	Present
Tim	Haggernak	Weren Concord Administrator Combat Spec	Present

Hooray for Diplomacy

The diplomatic team sets out for to open negotiations with the medurr. *Ten-zil Kem*, *Gerard Peppin*, and *Markus Oroszlan* prepare a light frigate to rendezvous with the medurr rift ship. They bring *Lenny* and *Lambert Fulson* along, though those two mainly entertain themselves quietly off screen.

The Cambrian System

The characters make plans to rendezvous with a medurr Rift Ship linked to the Cambrian system. About a hundred years ago, humans colonized Cambria II, but they fell prey to the local megafauna. Records from the colonists indicated that the massive predators could push through base defenses and the huge flyers could foul shuttle engine intakes pretty thoroughly. There were no survivors from the initial colony expedition, and the planet was quarantined. Sometime later, when no one was looking, the medurr set up shop on the planet, and are now pretty well established there.

Cambria II is slightly larger than earth but less dense, so it balances out to similar gravity. The atmosphere is breathable, but very dense (which helps support the megafauna and face-sized insects). There are four continents and three large oceans. It is much hotter than earth, and very humid and swampy.

Markus reviews the survey reports and comments: "I see dinosaur hunting in the future."

First Contact

The first human-medurr meeting involved humans discovering an alien hulk near a settled system. Several governments sent ships to investigate, and they fell to infighting on arrival. The medurr emerged to take pot shots. After a suitable number of casualties all the sides withdrew to lick their wounds. Subsequent efforts to re-establish contact have been touch and go.

The medurr are very warlike and martial, and many previous human ambassadors to them have required lengthy hospital stays to recover from their tours. Painful experience has taught that the medurr see an offer of friendship and peace as begging not to be eaten. However, their ambassador, *Stykor* of Clan Vys, has agreed to try opening diplomatic relationships once again.

Concord intelligence reports caution that the medurr are also aggressive and expansionistic. They have several servitor/slave races and a significant stellar polity. Their technology is lower than typical human levels, somewhere between PL 6 and 7. Their space craft match human armor technology, but not weapons technology. Also, the medurr are matriarchal, so they've got that going for them.

Preparations

The characters (at least the responsible ones) spend some time discussing the best negotiating stance to take. They decide that rather than bribing them with human tech to fight the Ikr'l, it would be better to offer them Ikr'l tech as spoils of war. The characters have no idea what sort of non-military tech the medurr might want; their communications and medical technology levels are a mystery. They decide that a secondary goal of this mission is to determine what technology the medurr want/need, anything that could be used for leverage. Beyond that, learning what sorts of interesting medurr technology the Concord (or the Verge Alliance) might be able to obtain would be well worth the effort.

Ten-zil points out that the characters will need guards, so Marcus brings some Pict warriors. (They're elated. "we get to go hang out with king Markus! Squeee!")

Peppin tries to recruit some sesheyan braves from Conference Room B, but they look at him like he's making random crazy noises, so he withdraws in defeat. Peppin consoles himself by buying impressive looking armor and rifles for his camera crew. Ten-zil simply grabs a squad of VoidCorp brand sesheyan assassins. Peppin looks impressed, but slightly hurt.

We Set Out

The characters are able to take a reasonably large frigate to the star system where the medurr rift ship is parked. The rift ship is huge and made of some sort of dark metal. It is all towers and whorls and no straight edges. All told, it is about the size of the *Lighthouse*.

The medurr hail the characters' ship and give approach instructions. The characters park the frigate near the Rift Ship and wait for a medurr needle ship to approach. The needle ship is about 100 meters long, similar in size to the Concord frigate, but distinctly meaner-looking. It docks and a medurr boards with her entourage.

Meeting the Neighbors

The medurr comes on board along with a slimy tentacle monster and a dozen cute furry servants carrying snacks and random equipment. The octopus and groundhogs all wear bright metal collars.

The tentacle monster reaches out and touches Peppin to establish tactile telepathy. Marcus recommends “If it says anything you don't like, give it a jabba slap.” Peppin tries to act like an asshole to impress the space dragon, which seems to confuse her and the octopus. Seeing that this plan isn't taking him anywhere good, Peppin just falls back on his familiar tactic: recklessly mind melding with the aliens.

He is able to construct a successful mental bridge with the medurr matriarch through the tentacle monster. He intones in flat syllables, “Nystor of Clan Kor extends greeting in hopes of becoming battle allies and not enemies.” The other characters understand instantly that this is the medurr speaking through Peppin – they have seen him play this kind of game so many times they automatically assume that he's never traveling alone when his vocal mannerisms suddenly shift.

Peppin answers audibly and introduces himself as a diplomat, and indicates that Markus and Ten-zil are his allies. *Nystor* introduces her dhamrin (the horrifying tentacle monster) servitor as *Masorr*. She does not bother listing the pafals' (adorable Narnian groundhogs) names; they are essentially interchangeable.

A quirk of secondary sexual characteristics among aliens: the female medurr lack breasts, but the female dhamrin are quite busty. No one bothers sexing the pafal.

Peppin remembers to introduce Lenny and Lambert, but indicates that they are his servitors. He resolves to later claim that this was a translation error, if either of the two find out. The characters also learn that Nystor is the daughter of *Stykor*, and that Stykor did not come to meet us as a precaution against assassins.

Through the Rift

Masorr goes to the bridge to issue instructions on accessing the rift. Nystor asks why the characters' ship is so poorly armed. Marcus indicates that the real human warships are off to combat the Ikr'l. Nystor is impressed; the Medurr have also faced the Ikr'l and consider them to be serious opposition. Her mother has survived several gardhyi assassination attempts.

The characters ask Nystor if she has faced many Klicks. She says no, the Aaln (females) do not risk themselves in personal combat, while the Graaln (males) serve as ground troops. Peppin asks if the Medurr employ psychics, and Nystor sneers in disgust. She indicates that psionics have little to no combat relevance.

The characters fly to the rift ship. As the frigate approaches it seems to open like a flower to reveal a field of stars within. The frigate flies straight through. There is no sensation of crossing a threshold or teleportation but when the characters emerge from the other side of the rift ship, they are in the Cambrian system. Nystor casually mentions that the Medurr Imperium contains about a hundred colony worlds.

Looking Around

The characters make some sensor sweeps of Cambria II. They are able to identify four significant concentrations of domed structures (presumably medurr installations), with another four under construction. There are large artificial tunnel networks underneath each settlement. Tens of thousands of Medurr and slaves could be living on the world below.

Masorr directs the characters to the night side of the planet, explaining that nightside landings avoid complications from the giant air predators. The characters' ship lands safely. A squad of Medurr males wielding Quakestaves and Tailstunners greets them. They also wear high-tech harnesses; crossed chain hauberks with obvious electronics components.

Medurr architecture includes lots of spires and weird spikes and curved walls. Medurr, dhamrin, and pafel move about industriously. The characters also see a bunch of blix, wearing the same collars as the other slave races. Peppin asks Nystor about the blix, and she tells him that they are a more recent addition to the Imperium. Ten-zil suspects that the blix have already rewired their slave collars and kept working anyway because... that's just what they do.

Meeting Stykor

The characters are escorted into Stykor's Lair. She has an honor guard arrayed around her. Some of them are like the males we had seen before, and some are stranger looking – darker scales, bigger teeth, and sleeker-looking.

Stykor greets the human ambassadors and asks “Are you weaklings like the last ones?”

Peppin answers “No.”

“You look somewhat small.”

“I am.”

“That seems weak.”

“Well... I'm a space god.”

“... then prove it”

Peppin successfully taps into the falkri entity and lifts a foot off the ground and emits light from his eyes. The servants all take a step back and look impressed. A random medurr smacks one of the awestruck dhamrin in annoyance.

Stykor has no eyes for unnatural violations of physical law. She is more interested in Markus. She suggests, “You look like a true warrior, would you face my honor guard in ritual combat?”

Markus grins and draws his gravmace, “One at a time or all at once?”

“How about three against three?”

“Sure. My friend here is better with guns than melee. 'Zat kosher?”

“That is acceptable”

Ten-zil takes a dose of something that convinces himself that this is a wonderful idea. Peppin contemplates his oneness with the universe; his *good* channeling result gets him +2 Str, Con, and Dex. He also gets an Anti-Life Ray (1d4 wounds / 2d4 wounds / 3d4 wounds; EN; bypasses armor; uses any ranged attack skill) and a force field (good quality, 2d4/2d4/2d4).

The Duel

The characters square off against their three opponents. The medurr are armed with quakestaves (similar to Markus' gravmace) and tailstunners (similar to a power cestus). Their harnesses apparently augment their natural armor rather than replace it. The signal to begin is given, and the PCs launch into action before the medurr can really get started.

Markus bashes one of the Medurr into relative submission, so wounded that a stiff breeze and angry glare could knock him over. Peppin finishes him with an eye beam. Markus moves on to pulverize a second one handily. Ten-zil fires at the third one with his maser pistol; the Medurr are pretty resistant to energy weapons, but masers still hurt. Peppin blasts the third medurr with eye beams, but the creature stays up. The wounded

medurr swings at Markus, and connects with the tail stunner. Markus looks annoyed and drops him with a backhand, then points at an overclawed Medurr yelling “YOU!!”

Stykor calmly says “The khaaln do not fight head to head.” Ten-zil snickers quietly.

Begin the Negotiations

Markus brags of destroying Klicks, a name that Stykor is not familiar with. Ten-zil shows a hologram from his wrist computer, and Stykor recognizes it as “The Ikr'l insects.”

She is enthusiastic about allying and splitting the spoils of war. The rift ships are good defensive weapons, since they can instantly rally their armies wherever the rifts are. However, without FTL travel, the medurr cannot expand quickly or hit the Ikr'l in their home systems. She suggests that if the Verge Alliance were to provide stardrives this weakness would be removed.

One other aspect of rift technology is its massive energy demand. The medurr have a zero point reactor that gives them, effectively, infinite energy. The characters start noticing conspicuous use of power, such as doors that simply vanish rather than swing on hinges; the medurr simply disintegrate and then reform parts of the walls as needed. Ten-zil suggest that power outages must be especially inconvenient.

The characters initial negotiations are pleasant (giving allowances for the occasional death struggle), but Stykor is frustrated that we didn't bring a general with us to discuss battle plans right now. We explain that we need to make sure we know about the nature of the alliance before moving forward, which she accepts.

Stykor indicates that the medurr are hesitant to relinquish their rift technology. The characters concede that they are equally hesitant to relinquish stardrive technology. The medurr ambassador points out that we just landed a stardrive capable ship on her planet, but Markus replies that it's a civilian ship with a bottom line stardrive; she doesn't know our actual military capability.

A long but successful negotiation session behind them, the characters retire to quarters.

Harassing the Help

The medurr escort the to some local quarters with a bunch of pafal servants. They don't really know what humans consider comfortable, so the room is mostly full of crude benches and piles of pelts. The pafal also bring food, and seem completely subservient to all the PC's commands.

Peppin tries to engage one of the pafal in conversation, which is complicated by its timid nature. He learns that its name is *Connor*, and that it doesn't know very much at all. Peppin and Markus send a pafal off to fetch them a dhamrin. The creature returns with a male named *Varnoc*. The characters spend a while talking with him (and Connor), learning a fair amount about the various slave races that make up the medurr Imperium.

The dhamrin are hexopods like the Medurr, but tentacled. They are telepathic and highly technical, rather the local fraal equivalent. They lost most of their culture and history when the medurr conquered them, keeping only their philosophies. They are very fatalistic and more or less at peace with their lot. They don't like using their telepathy on the medurr because it is painful: the medurr have a natural resistance to psionics. The dhamrin are the source of the zero point generators, and serve as pilots and technicians, though the blixx have lately taken over the technician duties.

The pafel are small bipeds that look like intelligent groundhogs. They were not a technological race before the medurr found them. The collars they wear explode when pafal try to escape – this is their leading cause of death. The pafel have no real idea of what life was like before the medurr; they kept no written histories, only an oral tradition.

The timarn are primates, similar to humans, but now nearly extinct within the Imperium. Peppin theorizes that they might have been the source of the rift technology.

The nigram are cruel cephalopod slavemasters who make the explosive slave collars. They also have a lot of cybernetic expertise. Peppin wonders if they look like mind flayers.

The esyor are an avian people. They make the defensive harnesses used by the medurr warriors.

The medurr themselves don't have an even gender split; only one in eight younglings are female (Aaln). The rest are males of different castes; Graaln (soldiers),

Khaaln (assassins) and Traaln (hunters). There may be other, less common, male castes that the characters have not yet encountered.

Ten-zil enlists Lenny's help in inspecting the collar of a cooperative but absolutely terrified pafel. They determine that the technology is rather crude: it only uses PL 6 encryption. The system uses pings to make sure servants are in line, and can deliver stun damage if they get out of range. In more serious cases, they can be detonated and cause 2d4 mortal wounds (no armor). Ten-zil determines that he could probably co-opt or shut down the entire collar network if he really wanted or needed to. It isn't clear if this would effectively free all the slaves, or simply detonate everyone at once.

Dino Hunt

The characters retire for the night. The next morning they are invited on a dinosaur hunt. The medurr representatives explain that they will be seeking a cambionics. These creatures combine the worst aspects of a T. Rex and a velociraptor: they are huge predators that hunt in packs.

The hunters use hover-skiffs piloted by dhamrin and armed with machine guns. The Traaln ride local bipedal megafauna called narwalkers, distinguished by their single massive horn. Ten-zil decides that he wants to ride a narwalker, but Peppin and Markus are quite happy with the hover skiffs.

The End of the Session

The session ends with the hunting party mounting up and heading into the jungle. The dino hunt will have to wait until the next session.