

STAR*DRIVE SESSION SUMMARY

01/10/2010

Attendance

Chris (Ten-zil Kem and Rokk Tressor) tells *Patrick* (Martin St. John and Lenny), “You know that... thing I gave you last week? I found some... accessories for it. They’re over there in that box, you should take it away. Don’t worry, they’re all sealed off in black plastic. Oh look! A rodeo clown!”

Ernest (Captain Ken Takashi and Markus Oroszlan) reflects that normally he’s the one who’s being portrayed as having socially disjoint interests and high prurience quotient. Now Chris has taken his thunder, a clear indication that he needs to work harder.

Paul quietly hopes that Ernest and Chris don’t get into some kind of childish contest over maximum level of immaturity, at least at the gaming table. In the meantime, he’s got a fancy new *Alternity Starship Combat Simulator* to show off! Written in TCL, so you know it’s good!

Tim (Haggernak and Gerard Pepin) notes that he’s being skipped over in the introduction because the game is actually starting on schedule for a change. He feels slighted. *Bruce* (Taveer and Lambert Fulson) feels that Tim has nothing to complain about because...

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Spec / Level</i>	<i>Description</i>
Lambert Fulson	Bruce	FA 5	Rigunmor Trader
Taveer	Bruce	TO 6	Lighthouse Chief Engineer
Martin St. John	Patrick	TO 6	Lighthouse Head Pilot
Lenny	Patrick	FA 5	T’sa Ambassador
Ten-zil Kem	Chris	D (TO) 7	VoidCorp Ambassador, dressed like a 1980’s Space Pimp
Rokk Tressor	Chris	FA 6	Concord Intelligence Officer
Markus Oroszlan	Ernest	CS 6	Thuldan Warlion

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Spec / Level</i>	<i>Description</i>
Ken Takashi	Ernest	D (TO) 5	Star Force Captain
Ivan Stukov	Peco	D (CS) 5	Thuldan Diplomat and Retired General
Adun Zelnaga	Peco	MW 6	Fraal Mindwalker Doctor Guy
Gerard Pepin	Tim	D (MW) 5	Borealin Professor and Ambassador
Haggernak	Tim	CS 4	Administrator and Security Officer

The Fleet Limpes Back to Port

The I-krl attack of last session has left both the *Basilisk* and the *Bang* gravely damaged. Most of the *Lighthouse* marines have been detailed to the rescue operation, as there are at least 100 crew killed and another 100 crew badly wounded on board the frigates. The rest of *Admiral Raastad's* fleet will be no immediate help, as half of their ships were crippled in the battle and have their own problems.

This is an issue because there is a disabled klik frigate drifting near the *Lighthouse*. Because the kliks normally take a lot of steps to ensure that they leave behind no potential captives or useful technology, this is a huge opportunity. *Captain Ken Takashi* puts *Martin St. John* in charge of assembling the boarding party.

Knowing that he cannot rely too heavily upon the station's 200 Concord Marines, Martin St. John calls the former Thuldan warlion *Markus Oroszlan*. He explains the situation and asks him for his help.

Oroszlan responds with his deep and mellifluous voice, "I will need guns." St. John is surprised, as he would have thought that if anyone needed guns it wouldn't be Oroszlan. Then he remembers that the warlion pretty much says that any time anyone asks anything of him.

How Many Marines Do We Sacrifice?

Captain Takashi calls Admiral Raastad to learn what the typical crew and marine complements of a klik frigate looks like. The Admiral notes that frigates are the biggest klik ships seen so far. Depending upon their mission profile, they seem to carry anywhere from very few to lots and lots of crew and troops. Captain Takashi thanks the Admiral for his (so-called) help.

In an effort to actually help the *Lighthouse* boarding attempt, Admiral Raastad offers to send over an *Organic Interface*. It is a rare semi-organic device that can connect to a computer gauntlet and interface it to a klik organic system.

Klik Intelligence

Kliks are an alien species external to concord space. They made their first appearance in the Verge in May 2489 when they destroyed the Borealin colony on Spes. Since then they have established hidden bases within the asteroid belts of the Hammer's Star system. Nobody has ever seen their ships starfall or starrise, but there is wide speculation that they have visited other systems in the Verge.

Kliks resemble four-legged arachnids with a radial body structure and four manipulative limbs. Their torsos are suspended beneath the legs, protected by a hard chitinous shell that is resistant to small arms. Their sensory organs are located at the base of their main body and feature a 270-degree field of vision. They are known to be intelligent and aggressive. No klik has survived in captivity for longer than a few minutes.

Klik weapons are based upon an unknown dark matter principle and are describes as "blacklasers". They are also lethal in unarmed combat: their clawed manipulators can inflict significant damage and they radiate a *bioweakness field* with a 10-meter radius that makes most intelligent creatures dazed, dizzy and eventually unconscious.

The Boarding Crew Assembles

The *Lighthouse* boarding crew will consist of Pilot Martin St. John in command, Security Officer *Rokk Tressor* as second in command, Administrator *Haggernak*, Chief Engineer *Taveer*, warlion Markus Oroszlan as a consultant, one squad of Marines in Paladin battle armor and two squads of Marines in standard protected-forces gear. The Marine contingent TOE is:

- *Heavy-Armor Squad A* (5): Paladin battle armor, 11mm charge rifle
- *Heavy-Armor Squad B* (5): Paladin battle armor, 11mm charge rifle
- *Rifle Detachment A* (5): Battle vest, 11mm charge rifle; 1 man with a charge machine gun

- *Rifle Detachment B* (5): Battle vest, 11mm charge rifle; 1 man with a charge machine gun
- *Rifle Detachment C* (5): Battle vest, 11mm charge rifle; 1 man with a charge machine gun
- *Rifle Detachment D* (5): Battle vest, 11mm charge rifle; 1 man with a charge machine gun

Markus Oroszlan loads up with his new quantum minigun. Taveer, sensing that a spreadable strategy for opening up recalcitrant bulkheads would be valuable, packs up four frag grenades and a dozen charges of plasma jelly

<i>Explosive</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Amazing</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Ordinary</i>
Plasma jelly, single	En/G	d4m (contact)	n/a	d4+1w (out to 2)
Plasma jelly, double	En/A	d4+3m (contact)	d4+3w (out to 2)	d4+1w (out to 4)
Frag grenade	HI/G	d4+1m (to 2)	d8+1w (to 6)	d8w (to 10)

To prepare for the effects of bioweakness *Doctor Adun Zelnaga* issues everyone two Stim Injectors to remove stun and fatigue damage. He urges everyone to remember that using more than one Stim dose in a 24-hour period is quite dangerous.

The Assault

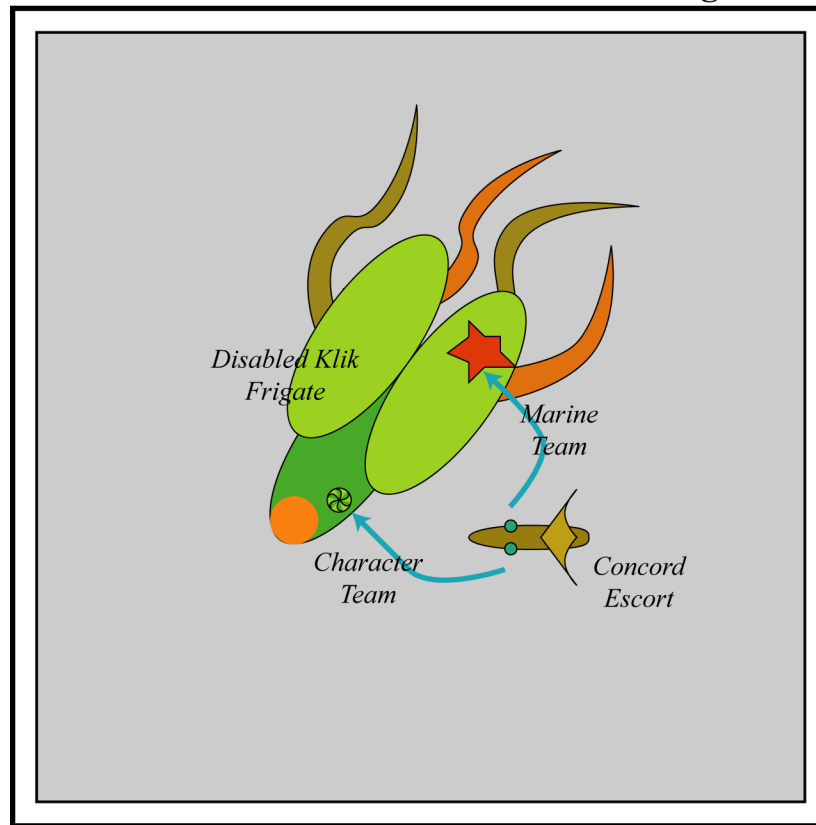
Markus Oroszlan urges everyone, “Keep moving and don’t do anything stupid! The key to success is to overrun them before they can prepare defensive positions against our advance. That’s your shock trooper 101 training.”

The klik frigate has two avenues for entry: an airlock and a breach in the accommodations section. The character team, with one heavy detachment and two rifle detachments, will take the airlock. The remaining heavy detachment and two rifle detachments go for the breach.

Martin St. John pilots a shuttle over to the klik derelict. He maintains jamming to obscure any surviving klik sensors.

The klik vessel is an organic construct, so the characters land on its skin. Taveer is unable to spoof the lock into opening, so he simply blasts it open using a plasma jelly charge. The characters, preceded by heavy-armored Marines, move into a curving hallway.

Marine Assault on the Klik Derelict Frigate

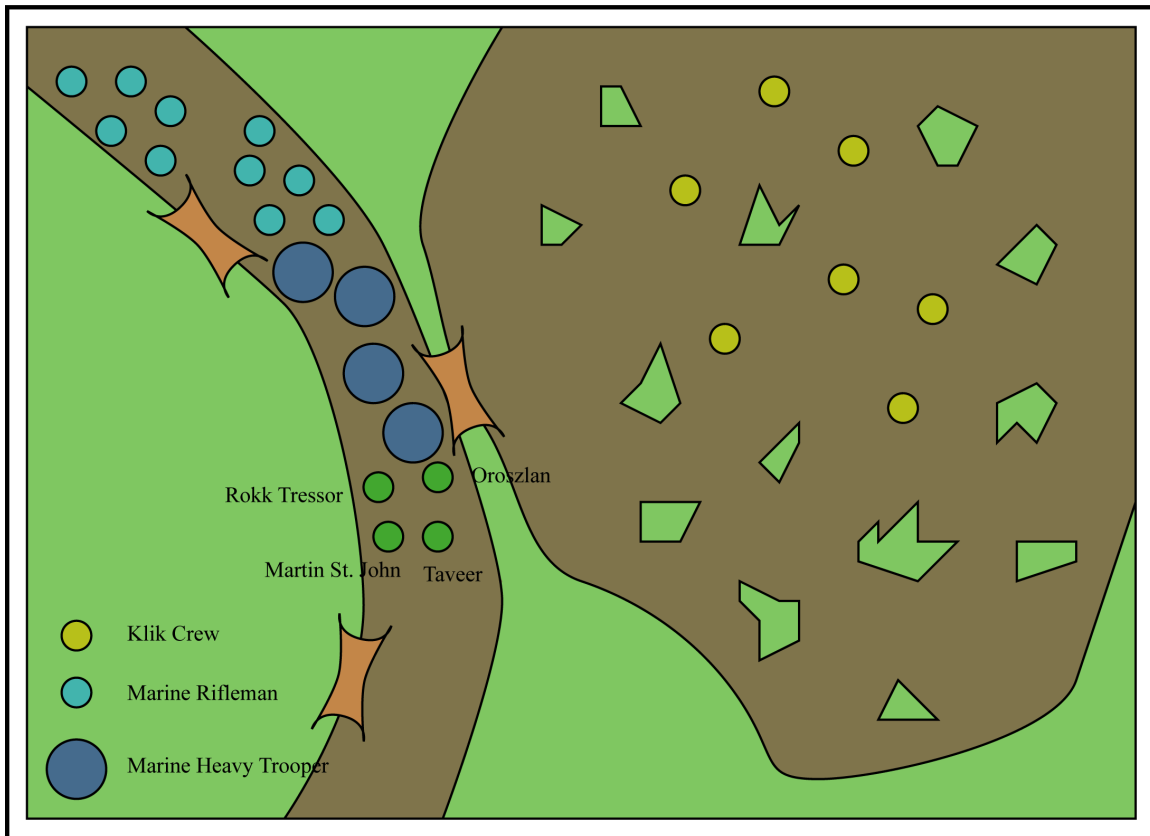


The characters reach a bulkhead door. Taveer is able to use the organic interface to force it. The Marines pour into a large, misshapen room filled with a maze of irregular columns. There is no line of sight greater than three meters available. The floor is slick and liquid. The air is filled with a strange semi-rhythmic clicking. And seven klicks are scuttling around inside the chamber.

Markus Oroszlan reacts first by flinging a frag grenade into the chamber. Bits of chitin from wounded klicks clatter off the internal braces. Then the klicks bring up their blacklaser rifles and open fire. Markus Oroszlan takes three mortal wounds, but shrugs them off, “My redundant vital organs protected me! I have another one of those.” The heavily armored Marines demonstrate that their armor is really quite able to withstand man-portable attacks.

As Taveer moves back out of reach of the klicks, Martin St. John and Rokk Tressor advance to get a better firing angle on the aliens. Rokk Tressor sets his quantum rifle on autofire and rakes the advancing klick crew. His blast rips through the lead klick’s armor. The creature collapses.

Inside the Klik Derelict



A furious gunfight follows with Marines, Markus Oroszlan, Rokk Tressor and Haggernak exchanging fire with the klik crew. The klik crew are tough, but have the drawback of not being encased in powered armor: the ongoing barrage of charge rifle and quantum blaster fire reduces them to goo. By the end of the fight, one of the heavy armored Marines is down from stun and Oroszlan has taken serious damage. Rokk Tressor administers a trauma pack to stabilize the warlion and treat his wounds. Unsatisfied with the results of the healing attempt, Oroszlan jabs himself with an analgesic to eliminate his pain penalties. Everyone else watching this process appreciates just why the Thuldans were so successful in their recent war.

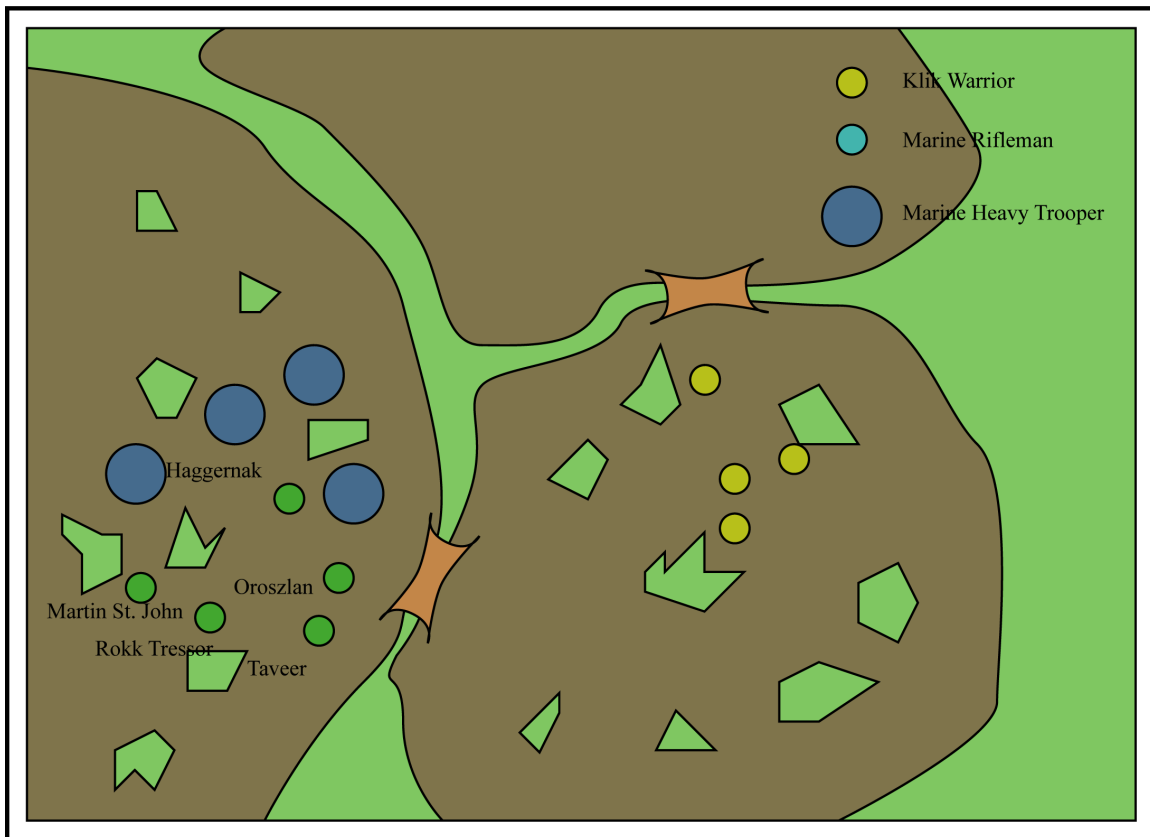
Martin St. John dispatches a rifleman squad to bring a couple of klik corpses back to the shuttle. He notices that they are wearing plastic bags over their sensory organs and cilia-covered pads on their feet. He deduces that this is what vacuum gear looks like for a klik, but cannot determine anything beyond that.

The characters determine that there are fleshy open spaces within each of the pillars in the chamber. In some ways, they are reminiscent of the space-vampire pods found earlier on the Thuldan *Trinity* station. Haggernak calls out, “Beds!”

Warrior Patrol!

The other characters search the chamber and find nothing that looks like a computer or data access port. They conclude that this is a *nest chamber*. There is another door on the other side of the chamber, heading towards the front of the ship. Everyone assembles in assault formation and Taveer opens the door to reveal another nest chamber. Just as he jimmies the door a patrol of four klik warriors enters.

Klik Warrior Patrol!



Markus Oroszlan flings a frag grenade into the chamber with one hand as he pulls Taveer back out of the way. One of the klik warriors absorbs the bulk of the grenade blast and falls unconscious. Oroszlan exults, “A prisoner!”

Martin St. John cautions him, “Remember that those things tend to die pretty quickly if they get captured.”

Markus Oroszlan ignores him: he is too busy blazing away at faceless alien bugs. Haggernak joins in, spraying the warrior patrol until his gun jams. He roars in frustration, exceeding the volume capacity of his commlink and sending awful feedback sounds through the assault group's LAN audio channel. He howls even louder when three klik warriors spray him with blacklaser shots. He takes four mortal hits, but remains standing.

Taveer is amazed, "You've taken enough damage to kill a normal human! How is it that you're still standing?"

Haggernak explains, "I am weren. We have half-again as many wound boxes as feeble humans. Unfortunately, I am also a blacklaser attractor."

Oroszlan yells, "Cover that big guy! And unload on those sons of bitches!" The heavy Marines leap to obey, but their accuracy leaves a lot to be desired.

Haggernak flings a grenade into the midst of the klik, but his throw is just off by enough that he doesn't take any of them out. Rokk Tressor levels his quantum rifle at the closest two warriors, taking one of them down. The Marines follow with a volley that eliminates another warrior. And Martin St. John annoys the last warrior with his heavy maser pistol.

Oroszlan decides that he's had enough. He charges the last klik with his gravmace, howling, "This is what's happening! This is what's happening!" He smashes the klik's nerve-cluster to the decking.

Noting that Haggernak has taken quite a bit of damage, Oroszlan and Rokk Tressor work to patch him back together. After a couple of false starts they manage to stabilize him, though it is clear that he needs surgery. Taveer admits, "I can't fix Haggernak, but I can fix his gun. Here, you just hit this button and it's all good." His repair job is amazing.

The characters recognize that the second nest chamber is taking them farther away from the ship's control center. They pull back and let Taveer seal the door. As an added bonus, Taveer also sets one of his plasma jelly charges as a booby-trap on the door. Noting that the explosion is unlikely to actually kill any klik warriors, Oroszlan suggests putting an alert transponder on the detonator. Taveer agrees and rigs something to ping his computer gauntlet when the trap goes off. Rokk Tressor sends a tweet back to the

Lighthouse to complain about how bossy the engineer is. He also puts a technical diagram of the trap on his Facebook page. Taveer groans.

The Control Chamber

The characters move forward and open another room. The floor is covered in an array of troughs. Foul-smelling liquid with chunks floating in it moves almost imperceptibly slowly. Haggernak opines, “This is either the cafeteria or the bathroom. Let’s move on.” The group moves on.

The next room is some kind of control chamber. The floors and lower surfaces around the room have complex control structures. There is a bowl-shaped depression in the center of the chamber, with a matching dome on the top. The roof the chamber is scattered with a variety of bulges. Two klikks work here: one studies a hologram projected in the central bowl, while the other works at one of the wall stations. Four more klikks guard them. The technician klikks look smaller and less-armored than the warriors.

Haggernak advises the others, “No frags! Don’t damage the equipment! Don’t bust up the slickery computers!” Taveer agrees with him, takes a single laser shot at a warrior, then pulls back to let the professionals handle the violence.

Rokk Tressor amazes everyone by making a remarkably good impression of a klik battle-scream. He takes careful aim at a klik warrior.

Markus Oroszlan opens up on full auto with his quantum minigun, tearing clean through a klik warrior. Shattered bits of alien anatomy spray the wall.

The klik warriors unlimber their blacklaser rifles and engage the characters. The technicians take cover and pull out blacklaser pistols; the characters recognize them only as smaller goo-sacks. Haggernak takes a blacklaser beam to the face. He mourns, “I’m almost out of meat!”

The Marines open fire, shredding one warrior and desperately injuring a second. Martin St. John takes a shot. He hits a warrior, but is disappointed to see his maser beam reflect harmlessly off the creature’s carapace.

Rokk Tressor notes with some dismay that the warrior he had been aiming at was reduced to a pile of smoking ooze by the Marines, so he takes a shot at a technician

instead, wounding the creature badly. The technician returns fire, inflicting a respectable hit on Rokk.

Haggernak storms forward to engage a klik warrior with his tri-staff. The klik squawks once and collapses.

The Marines concentrate fire on the remaining warrior, destroying it. With all the warriors gone, the technicians attempt to hide. The characters slaughter them mercilessly.

Haggernak admits, “I’ve taken about fifteen wounds here, so I’m feeling pretty woozy.”

Rokk Tressor steps forward with his trauma pack. He spray-treats Haggernak’s worst injuries, announcing, “This man is shot full of holes! I need more tampons!”

Subverting the Klik Controls

The characters examine the controls. The hologram appears to be a representation of the entire ship. Taveer launches into understanding how to use it. Meanwhile, Martin St. John determines that he cannot reach the other boarding party over his comlink. Rokk Tressor points out, “We left NPC’s on their own – they have surely found the klik ice-cream room and been wiped out to the man.”

Taveer figures out that the bulges around the walls are flat display screens: they open like eyes when the proper control is pressed. Rokk Tressor notes that there are thousands of tiny filament wires projecting from the upper and lower surfaces around the hologram, almost but not quite touching. He tries touching one with a severed klik limb. This temporarily disrupts the hologram.

Taveer pulls up a map of the ship and identifies a four-lobed series of rooms all around a central chamber near the stern of the ship. All agree that this looks like the command deck.

Space-Vampire Signature!

Martin St. John gets a message relayed from the *Lighthouse*. The crew has just detected two space-vampire teleportation events, one on board the *Lighthouse* and one on board the klik ship. They cannot tell whether the signature indicated something leaving or arriving upon the *Lighthouse*.

The characters immediately move towards the control nexus. Rokk Tressor tells the others, “If you see a space vampire, shoot at it first!”

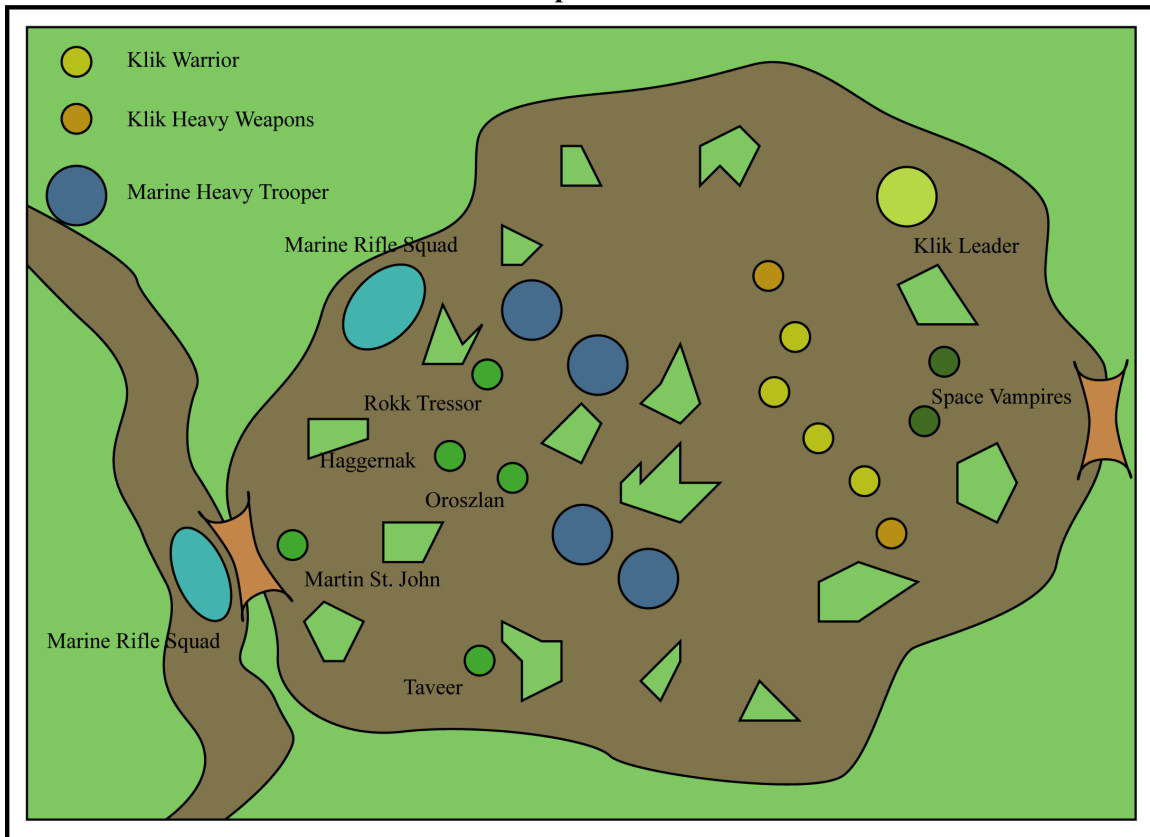
The Weapons Garden

The characters see a large chamber that resembles a thin rainforest. Strange pillars are covered with dripping water and strange vine structures. Unusual plants cover the floor. Weird fruits hang from vines and boughs.

Markus Oroszlan orders, “Nobody touch nothing!”

Rokk Tressor halts with an apple-like object just shy of his teeth. Martin St. John knocks it out of his hands, “Bad! Bad! Wrong!”

The Weapons Garden



Once the characters enter the chamber and examine the plants they note that the fruits have a remarkable similarity to the components of a blacklaser rifle. Markus Oroszlan looks around, “Wow. They’re growing guns...”

Rokk Tressor suggests, “Let’s bring those two machine-gunners forward so they can shoot holes through something.” Just as he speaks, a column of klik warriors storms

into the room, backed by two space vampires, two klik warriors with heavy weapons, and a massive klik leader.

Taveer surprises everyone by being first to act. He moves to cover behind an unusual shrub and covers the far door with his laser rifle.

One of the space vampires tells the characters, "You are outmatched! If you fight us you will lose! Surrender at once!" The heavy armor Marines open fire on the space vampires and suppress the klik warriors as Martin St. John orders the Marine rifle squads forward.

A klik heavy weapons carrier opens fire on a heavy Marine. The blacklaser beam chews into the Marine's armor, inflicting much more harm than the other warriors' personal weapons. The purple-eyed space vampire shoots a purple beam of mental force at the same Marine, but misses. The Marine calls out, "Hoo-ah!" and continues laying down suppression fire on the klik warriors. One of his squaddies manages to gun down one of the klik heavy weapons carriers. All celebrate. Haggernak takes a shot at the other heavy weapons carrier, but the creature weaves to the side and avoids the blast.

A Marine rifle detachment opens fire on the klik leader, led by their machine gunner. The klik leader's near-impervious shell deflects almost all of the damage, but the successive impact of multiple charge weapon strikes manages to bludgeon the creature unconscious.

The Marine riflemen turn their guns upon one of the space vampires. Again, their weapons are unable to pierce the creature's surprisingly good armor, but they are able to drive one of the creatures unconscious from sheer volume of fire. Haggernak draws odd puce-colored blood from the second space vampire just before Markus Oroszlan charges into the creature, cracking it in the head with his gravmace. The space vampire spits out a tooth and teleports away.

With their leadership incapacitated, the fight just goes out of the remaining klik warriors. The Marines gun them down.

Smoke starts to pour out of the unconscious space vampire's body. The creature burns up from the inside, leaving nothing more than an ashen corpse. Martin St. John orders, "Bag that thing and transport it back for analysis! I don't care if you can't tell

what species it came from!” Markus Oroszlan quietly makes plans to have a cross etched into his gravmace.

Rokk Tressor proclaims, “To the bridge, for humanity! And its slave races!” The characters leave a squad of Marines on guard and head to the bridge.

The Klik Bridge

The bridge is clearly the bridge, as it features a giant three-meter-long hollow for the klik leader. There are a few technicians remaining on staff as well. They are completely immersed in the control apparatus, to the point that they are unaware of their immediate surroundings. Martin St. John is able to identify the piloting station, though he is unable to determine how to operate it. Taveer identifies all of the control stations, and further determines that the bridge controls are all secondary controls – the primary control locations are actually distributed throughout the ship.

A population inventory of the klik technicians shows three surrounding the central hologram and six more in individual control seats. Each technician is physically connected to its workstation with tubes and wires actually piercing the creatures’ carapaces.

Martin St. John gives orders to kill the klik technicians at the gunnery, engineering and drives stations, leaving only the technicians controlling the sensors, life support and so on stations.

The characters are able to determine that the other marine group was ambushed by a heavy detachment of klik warriors and wiped out to a man. Most of the klicks involved were killed in the Weapons Garden fight, so all that is left is a certain amount of mopping-up of isolated klik crew.

Bring in the Science Teams

Once all resistance has been suppressed the characters turn the derelict klik frigate over to the local fleet. Concord Spaceforce ships tow it into a geosynchronous orbit over Spes, where it is guarded by two gunships. Naval intelligence guys swarm on board and do what they can to interrogate the ship computer and (through computer link) the klik technicians before they pass away.

Initial investigation suggests that there is nothing the Concord scientists can recognize as a stardrive on board. The entire ship appears to be a living organism. Martin St. John suggests that this ship may be nothing more than a parasite or subsidiary organism, something grown from a larger mothership that might have a stardrive and which is probably still out in the asteroid belt somewhere. Rokk Tressor makes sure that the characters are all gathered together for a nice group photo around the unconscious (and dying) body of the klik leader before everyone heads back to the *Lighthouse* and leaves the ship to the science and intelligence teams.

Meanwhile on the Planet Below

Down on Spes, *Professor-Ambassador Pepin* and several other characters observe that all spaceports and hospital facilities have been turned over to the evacuation of wounded crew from the fleet ships. Pepin volunteers that he has medical training and contributes to the relief effort.

Professor Anthony Darrokin is quite surprised to see Pepin engaging in actual work. Pepin does his best to reassure Darrokin that his mission is not to enforce arbitrary standards of orthodoxy upon the colonist population. Darrokin points out that when he arrived he found that the colonists had turned to electing their own Dean, a step that is absolutely necessary in the circumstances, but also absolutely against normal protocol. Pepin assures him that he has no intention of forcing change upon the core practices necessary to keep the colony viable, but expects that some measures will be necessary to assure the core Borealin Republic worlds that protocol is being sufficiently observed.

We Enjoy A Few Quality Moments

Back on the *Lighthouse* both Markus Oroszlan and Haggernak spend some quality time in the infirmary. Markus notices that the female Thuldan engineer from the *Trinity* has arrived on station, so he takes out some spare time to seduce her.

The End of the Session

Those characters who were involved in the adventure each gain six experience points, except for Haggernak (who gains five so Pepin is able to get one and gain a level). There will be some time passed before the next adventure, so everyone should think about what they are going to work on for the next few weeks. The *Lighthouse* schedule

for the rest of the year will be Chenju, Tychus (for an Orlamist holiday), Vieron (where the Kroath are a threat), Argos (to transfer an Concord development team), Mantibron and Aegis.