

STAR*DRIVE SESSION SUMMARY

07/24/2011

Attendance

Bruce and *Georgina* shock everyone by both connecting in remotely from Richardson, TX and hinting that she has been promoted from gamer groupie to gamer girlfriend. It is clear that this is one of the signs of the Impending Apocalypse. She comments, “I was saving myself for Tom Cruise, but he’s crazy.”

Ernest comments, “I see. So you settled for Mel Gibson?” He goes on to describe some details from his recent trip out to Bulgaria. For example, he actually visited Varna, the port city where Dracula departed on the way to England. He also learned about various interesting local units of measure like the so-called “meter”, which is apparently how they describe feet over there.

Paul is baffled. Everyone else seems to have picked up on dramatic personal life changes, but he’s still not totally sure what it was. *Patrick* knows, but decides not to say anything.

Tim shows up somewhat later. He is intrigued by the new social developments.

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Deal</i>	<i>Status</i>
Bruce	Lambert Fulson	Rigunmor Guido Free Agent	Present
Bruce	Taveer	Mechalus Concord Engineer Tech Op	Present
Patrick	Martin St. John	Concord Naval Officer Tech Op	Present
Patrick	Lenny	T’sa Ambassador Free Agent	Present
Chris	Ten-zil Kem	VoidCorp Ambassador Diplomat (TO)	Present
Chris	Drest Talorgin	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	Late
Tim	Haggernak	Weren Concord Administrator Combat Spec	Late

Last Time – in a Nutshell

The characters are investigating the situation on Alitar. They traveled north to check out the locals, the xe'reen aka "sealphins," a sentient but non-tool using race. It turns out that the xe'reen are being manipulated by a local eco-terrorist organization that has persuaded them to attack area mining concerns run by Northern Pride. Those mining concerns, it turns out, are controlled by the Galvin Intelligence Directorate.

The Galvinite interest comes from the fact that a source of transuranic elements (useful in weapons) was discovered in the north polar region. They killed all but one of the members of the original survey team and took control of the Northern Pride mining concern so they could control the supply of superheavy minerals. The minerals themselves ("unobtainium") are shipped directly to Galvin.

The characters talk to the one surviving surveyor. He explains the situation and points out the location of a specific, heavily-defended mining installation that is likely the center of all unobtainium mining.

The Approach Plan

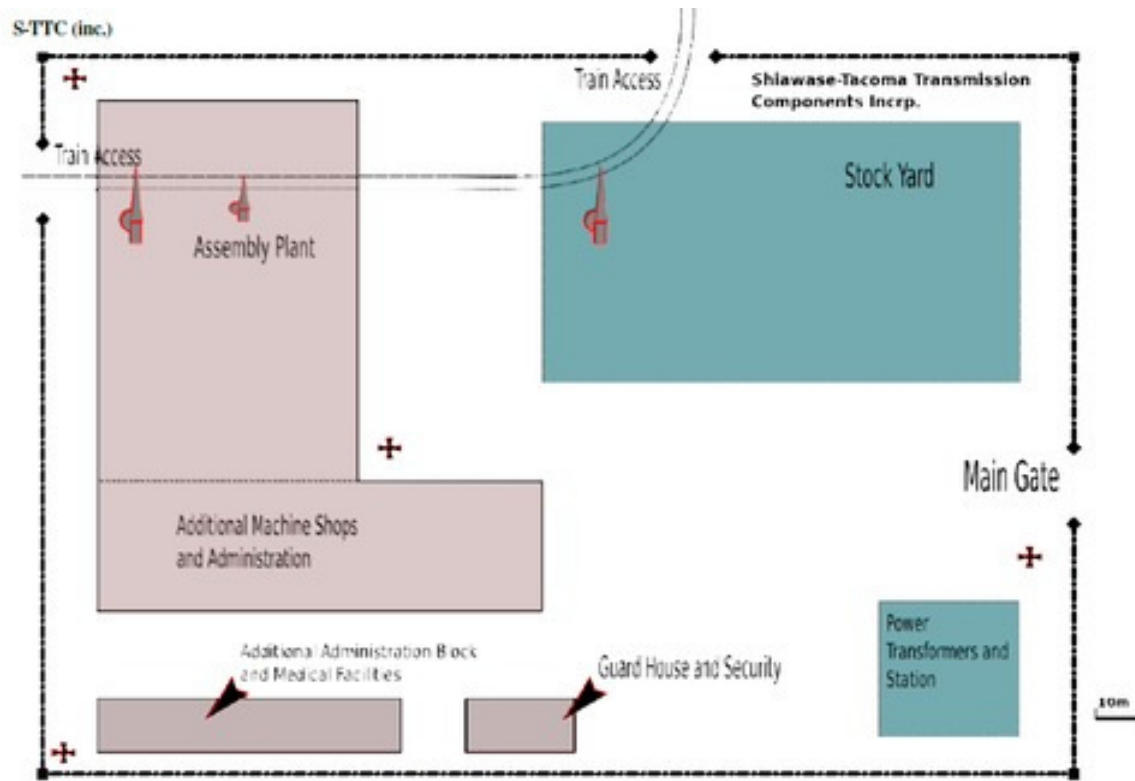
The characters want to investigate and/or attack the Northern Pride installation. There are a couple of possible approaches, all of them complicated by the presence of the *thraat*, a sort of predatory demonic sea-mandrill. Using wetsuits (underwater) or zodiacs both offer plenty of opportunity for the *thraat* to attack. *Ten-zil Kem*, after viewing a picture of the *thraat*, is adamantly against plans involving water travel and suggests doing a HALO-style drop instead. He points out, "We do that, if the demon sea ape wants to jump into our way and get splashed on our windscreen that's his problem."

The Northern Pride Installation

The Northern Pride mining site is protected by a high fence broken in two places by tracks for rail line access. There are several massive cranes and constructor-earthmover devices located in the Stock Yard, along with some massive crates of equipment. The trains link into the general Alitarian rail network, and that leaves the characters with another idea for entry: hitching a ride on an unoccupied train car.

Ten-zil Kem suggests a plan. The characters will infiltrate through the train, with the xe'reen as backup. The characters will be hidden inside crates that can be parked in

the Stock Yard for a couple of days, then picked up and shipped on to another destination. To ensure that nobody interferes with the crates they will be labeled “Slu”. This is actually potted dhros meat, a product that *Lambert Fulson* has been selling off the *Lighthouse* – he changed the name for marketing reasons. “It’s the bracing taste that braces!”



Corrupting Railway Officials

Lambert Fulson finds an official in the Alitarian Railroad Ministry who is willing to listen to his plan to deliver temperature-controlled tanks of Slu to the remote Northern mining outposts as a combination low-cost food for mine workers and a durable lubricant for equipment. As an added bonus, for every trainload of Slu there will be a nice kickback for the official. He quickly gets agreement to ship two tanks of Slu – one will actually house the characters, the other will contain a small hovercraft so the characters have an escape path that doesn’t depend upon rail lines when everything goes to hell in a handbasket.

It is about this time that *Gerard Peppin* comes to consciousness. None of the others really understand what this might mean.

Lenny realizes that he will be the one leading the infiltration effort. He suggests that he'd really like to have some radiation protection and a rad-detector. He reasons that accidentally laying his junk on a pile of trans-uranic ore samples could be bad for him. The others point out that actual radiation shielding would make him insufficiently stealthy, thus is right out. The compromise point is for the now-conscious Gerard Peppin to pump him full of anti-rad drugs. Ten-zil Kem lends him a sensor gauntlet to give him a better chance of identifying when he's walking into trouble before he starts spitting up teeth.

Lenny comments, "Remember the time when Peppin got British and peed on a reactor?"

Peppin points out, "Actually, what you're thinking about is the time when I got radiation poisoning from a glowing thing. Everyone else was wearing their rad-suits. The camera crew got great footage!"

The characters decide to bring along Marine *Corporal Klinger*, one of the characters' select team of Marines (The others being Animal Mother, Lutefisk, Wiersbowski and Motorhead. They are all quite glad to miss this particular errand).

Operation Otter Pop Is Go!

The characters conceal themselves in their false Slu tank, with a few actual containers of Slu in front of them to keep the inspectors satisfied. They have a bad moment when they hear a couple of railyard workers commenting on the cargo: "What the fuck is this? Slu? Maybe we should break it open and find out what's inside." The characters are relieved when another worker who has actually tried Slu before shows up and warns them away.

The train reaches the Northern Pride mining station on schedule. The Teamsters start unloading the crates just as the sealphin attack begins. That has the effect of distracting most of the workers and putting the unloading operation on pause. Ten-zil Kem monitors the situation through a camera monitor, keeping an eye on a porn stream on the side. He is very disappointed in the quality of Alitarian porn: most war-torn hell-holes have much more depraved product available.

Two teamsters start to discuss breaking into the Slu crate and sampling the contents. They have clearly not learned from the experiences of their railyard brethren.

Gerard Peppin takes Lenny's little spiderbot *Rench*, turns it (and his arm) incorporeal, and uses the "psychic glory hole" technique to drop it outside the crate so it can go off and trigger a fire alarm. *Rench* makes its way over to a nearby building and a convenient fire alarm unseen.

Ten-zil Kem takes this moment to reveal that he added an additional feature to the crate: a pack of dhros concealed within a cage. Just as *Rench* triggers the fire alarm, *Markus Oroszlan* and *Klinger* launch the dhros-bomb, spreading chaos through the already chaotic installation.

Lenny sneaks across the stockyard and into a nearby office building. Very unfortunately, he runs square into a surprised junior executive. He tries to stun the man, but finds that the energy cell lock on his stutter pistol is defective: he raises the gun, gets one shot off, then watches as the energy cell simply falls onto the floor. Never one to be sideswiped by mischance, Lenny proceeds to use his martial arts mastery upon the man. He tries for a takedown and finally brings the guy down. He ignores Markus' comments on the characters' comnet: "Did you ball-gag him too?"

Lenny continues investigating until he finds a couple of radioactive crates. He tells the others. Ten-zil Kem turns to hacking the local network. His goal is to get the shipping crate reclassified as something that needs to be sent to the newly-discovered secret underground track – which may be a track that goes directly to occupied Galvinite territory, or may just go to some intermediate offload site. It turns out that digging an underground train track hundreds of miles long is fairly easy if you have access to automated razor-boring machines. Unfortunately, food products are apparently never shipped down to Galvinite territory so he turns to the alternate plan of having the containers unloaded into the stockyard, with the characters infiltrating from there. Possibly disguised as crates with feet sticking out of the bottom.

Ten-zil's efforts work quite nicely: he is able to get the crates unloaded and brought into the main building, several floors above the entrance to the secret railroad but still fairly close.

The characters kick open the crates, sending cans of Slu spinning all over. They all have guns out and pointing in different directions so they look like a creepier version of the Charlie's Angels silhouette. They run to the entrance of the secure portion of the

facility. Lenny and Rench attack the maglocks. Between the two of them and Lenny's amazing-quality lockpicks the security measures don't last long. Lenny suspects a trap; "Surely the Galvin Intelligence Directorate could afford better security?"

The characters make their way down a long stone shaft ("Shaft!") and into the lower mining facility. Markus Oroszlan has his stutter cannon out. He explains to the others, "This is basically an incontinence gun, courtesy of *Transmetropolitan*."

The characters continue down a darkened tunnel lined with mining equipment. They come to a railhead. There are bins full of ore all around – characters with sensor gauntlets confirm that the ore is radioactive. *Lambert Fulson* keeps his distance on the notion that he doesn't want to irradiate his nads. They take a lot of photographs, videos and other evidence. Markus Oroszlan leaves some C25 charges behind in the tunnel facility, to make the subsequent airstrikes all the more effective.

After some discussion, the characters decide to pull back out to their crate with their evidence, get their crate expedited out of the site, and then alert *Colonel Brett Darred* of the 119th Alitarian Air Cavalry Battalion. With the information they can provide, they expect that the Colonel will be able to level the place in detail.

They Carry Guns Here!

Before we can extract, a woman's voice calls out, "Who is there?" She follows her question with a shot from an 11mm charge rifle.

Lenny curses, "They found me! Curses!" He turns around and scurries back down. As he does, the other characters see four security troopers rush out of the underground train station. There is a lot of cover available from the various pieces of mining equipment and so on, and both Lenny and Peppin take advantage of it before opening fire. They are quite happy to find that they can easily get "heavy cover" because they're hiding behind almost impenetrable items.

Lenny takes careful aim and shoots one of the security goons, managing a clan hit. Peppin fires with his stutter pistol, prompting some critical comments from the others about his tendency to carry nonlethal weapons. Peppin defends himself by noting that his stun weapon did more damage than Lenny's lethal one.

The guards send a volley of fire down the tunnel. Ten-zil Kem takes a hit, but not one that stops him. Markus figures that reinforcements may be on the way down from

above and asks Ten-zil: “Do we want to take this train out of here instead?” Ten-zil nods. Markus takes his satchel charge, sets the timer to 10 seconds, puts it in the elevator, and presses “G”.

Lambert Fulson evades the guards’ gunfire, takes cover, and shoots one with his sabot gun. The guard shudders, but does not fall. Corporal Klinger shoots another one.

The guards’ return volley is substantially better. Even against great penalties, one guard manages to wound Lambert Fulson fairly badly. Another one catches Ten-zil Kem in the open and deals him three points of mortal damage. And the third gets an equally impressive hit against Markus Oroszlan, whose armor sloughs off almost all the damage.

Lambert Fulson retaliates with a good hit on a guard, almost knocking the guard down. Ten-zil Kem decides to take off the kid gloves: he shoots a guard with his quantum rifle. The guard turns into a glowy outline around a skeleton, then vanishes. Everyone else is so shocked they completely forget to make snarky comments.

Markus Oroszlan turns away from the elevator door just as the explosives far above go off. He is limned by flame and smoke as he steps into the corridor with his heavy charge machine gun, spitting fire and devastation into the remaining guards. The shells tear through the guards’ armor, ripping them apart.

Lenny gets a good dark plasma shot on a wounded guard, taking him down. Ten-zil Kem lines up his quantum rifle on the last guard left alive and disintegrates him.

Markus looks around for a security office where the lady boss might be. He spots a likely door and flings his grenade, but is disappointed to see the door withstand the blast.

The Mine Director

At this point, Mine Director *Milla Jend* emerges from the side office. She is armed with a mysterious weapon attached to a huge tank on her back. The characters just know that she’s got strange forbidden radiation compressed in that tank. Ten-zil Kem screams, “Forbidden weapon!” and dives for cover.

Markus is dismissive, “You can call it what you want, but to me it’s all still hiding and crying.” He stands firm against her approach. She gestures and every crab-bot in the

facility swarms out around her and moves to the attack. Every single one of them is singing “Bad Romance”. They have Skorpion SMGs strapped to little rods coming out of the top of their shells. We mock them, as everyone knows that Skorpions are only for the use of the lowest grade of action movie threat, like Malaysian mooks on motorbikes or the like.

Milla Jend points her Mysterious Radiation Gun at Markus Oroszlan in his battle armor and opens fire. The gun launches a huge projectile at him with a threatening humming noise, but he deflects it with his cerametal shield. He laughs at her insufficient weaponry.

The crab bots open fire on Ten-zil Kem and Lambert Fulson, both of whom have sufficient cover to protect themselves. Markus Oroszlan announces, “I have antirobot grenades!” He fires a pulse grenade into the crowd of crab bots.

Milla Jend takes cover and sends an ill-aimed shot at the characters as all of her crab bots fire wildly with their charge SMG’s. Gerard Peppin takes a couple of bullets, but nobody worries too much about that. At least until they realize that he has taken enough wounds to need to make stamina rolls. Peppin collapses like a sack of potatoes.

Markus Oroszlan sends another pulse grenade into the crab bots. They’re still clattering and shooting, so he clearly hasn’t launched enough grenades yet. The bots answer him by blazing away, to very little effect. 9mm rounds fly in literally every direction.

Lambert Fulson takes a carefully aimed shot at Milla Jend. He inflicts nine wounds, and her armor prevents only takes one of those. Markus comments, “You can always count on Lambert when a woman needs hurting.” The others note that Lambert doesn’t immediately object to this characterization. Ten-zil Kem follows up with a burst from the quantum rifle, dealing three points of mortal damage and three wounds through her armor. This is enough to put her down.

Markus’ last pulse grenade is enough to shut down all the remaining crab bots. Most of them end up on their backs, little legs twitching in the air.

Markus yells out, “Peppin! Get over here and save the administrator’s life! Oh, right – Peppin’s down.” He’d just assumed that the robot gunfire was so ineffectual that nobody could have been seriously hurt by it. Ten-zil Kem works over Peppin, stuffing

him with gauze and artificial flesh to keep him alive. Markus does what he can for Milla Jend.

Markus picks up Milla Jend's gun for later investigation. His eventual conclusion is that it depends upon a unique liquid transuranic element to function. In some ways, the effect of the weapon is that of a combination of depleted uranium ammo and a Super Soaker that fires blobs of mercury. This seems just fine as long as you can get access to a sufficient supply of transuranic elements. It has 18 remaining shots (clip size of 20) and inflicts mortal damage on both good and amazing hits, making it a good sniper weapon.

The Train!

Starting the train engine up is complicated by the fact that someone recently set off several pulse grenades next to it. Lenny manages a nice jury-rig effort to set the engine up, and Lambert Fulson promptly breaks the key off in the lock. Lenny again fixes the ignition, only to see Lambert flood the engine badly. Lenny sighs and proceeds to work the engine for a couple of hours, trying to dry out the turbine.

While Lenny is working on the train, Markus Oroszlan spends his time searching for useful records in the mine office and Ten-zil Kem searches the area. Finally, Ten-zil Kem finds that there are several dirt bikes stored near the train engine. He tells the others, "We're not taking the train. We're taking the bikes. Lenny, get out of there – we're not giving Lambert another chance to screw this up."

The characters board dirt bikes and ride towards an unknown Galvinite military facility. Along the tunnel, Ten-zil Kem spots an access shaft to the surface – he very much does not want to visit a Galvin military base. The shaft ends at a disguised ventilation port in the desolate arctic wilderness of the Northern Alitar polar wastes. A few minutes later, one of the *Red Queen's* Knight drone fighters shows up to pick the characters up and get them out of the wilderness.

Tying off Some Loose Ends

The characters deliver their information to the two active Alitarian officers they know, along with some commentary on how helpful the sealphins were in executing the operation. Gerard Peppin and his film crew set to portraying the xe'reen sealphins as being the emblem of a heroic independent Alitar.

The characters return to the *Red Queen*, park Peppin into the bacta tank, and head back to the (basically) lawless moonlet of Wreathe.

Markus Oroszlan asks Lenny and Lambert Fulson for paint visible through polarized lenses, but invisible to normal vision. He wants to stencil the phrase “Ram Ovipositor Here” onto the throat-plate of all the Marines’ armor suits. Lambert and Lenny both agree instantly: it should be lots of good fun waiting for the Marines to spot it.

The Galvinite New Initiative

The characters go back to Midas City to talk to *Kiara Mantel*, the mysterious fraal at the *Auxiliary Bar*. She and Markus share a “moment.” They find that young *Kelvin Otterschmidt* the Murder Ninja is hanging out there, though none of the characters actually present have ever really met him before (except for Ten-zil Kem, who was shot by his butler). Ten-zil Kem calls him over and gets him into a conversation about life, work, and what it takes to get along with the Cartel. Kelvin explains that the Cartel demands a tax for local activity, criminal and otherwise.

The characters make an arrangement to see the bosses of the Cartel. They travel in a hover-limo to an isolated mansion that appears to have been airdropped onto the surface of the moonlet. The front grounds of the complex have been carefully landscaped with native plants, with Earth plants located under protective environmental bubbles closer to the main house.

The characters enter the main house and meet with *Carmin Blake*. He is a large, bald man dressed in a smoking jacket. He meets the characters in a sitting room very ostentatiously decorated with an open fire. “I have heard a lot about your reputation as a gun runner, and about your other exploits. It is good when folks of our caliber can meet peacefully in an environment without recording devices.”

“There are things that I and my associates are interested in down on Galvin. The leaders of Galvin are promoting a New Initiative, sort of a eugenics program. We very much want to know more about it. If you could find out more about what they’re doing we would appreciate it. They seem to be doing standardized testing of their population recruiting the best into a special program that modifies them to give them psychic powers. Successful candidates are molded into a new ruling class. This may not sound

unique to a Thuldan, but to the Rigunmor-descended Galvinites it represents a huge deviation.”

The characters discuss the matter at some length with Carmine Blake. He wants information, but he doesn't mind (in fact specifically mentions) if the characters publicize whatever they learn on the Peppin Show. He ultimately wants to discredit the program, rather than to be marked as a public figure.

The End of the Session

Each participating character gains 5 experience points.