

G U R P S<sup>®</sup>

# Grendel



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AN *e23* ADVENTURE  
for GURPS<sup>®</sup> from  
STEVE JACKSON GAMES  
FOR 3 TO 6 PLAYERS

Written by James L. Cambias  
Edited by Scott Haring  
Illustrated by Paul Daly

*Marsnet Newsfeed (Cydonia): Terraforming Consortium engineers blamed an unexpected influx of cold water into the Boreal Sea for last month's devastating series of windstorms which left 4 dead in Cydonia and Elysium. According to TC scientist Kasei Enriquez, anomalously cold water draining into the Boreal Sea from Hellas last summer disrupted the normal current and heat-transfer pattern, creating a pocket of warm water in the Chryse Gulf which spawned the storm. "We're working to understand why the Hellas water was colder than normal, to make sure this doesn't happen again," said Enriquez. (Link to expanded version.)*

*FROM: DocPavonis (mars.terraform.geeks): What the HELL is going on with the Hellas operations? We're getting drought conditions all through Cimmeria just as the new plants need rain! If the geniuses in charge of the ocean don't get some water vapor out here, they can kiss a couple million square km. of plants goodbye!*

*FROM: Esposito (mars.terraform.geeks): Don't blame us. The ocean temp's exactly where it should be for evaporation. Icecap's a little bigger than usual this summer, but that shouldn't make much difference. Could the problem be not enough dust in the air to seed rainfall?*

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*FROM: DocPavonis (mars.terraform.geeks): You want dust? I'll give you dust! Right now there's four dust devils active in Cimmeria, throwing up about 1,000 tons of dust per hour. That's because the lichen which SHOULD be holding the soil in place is all dead. That's because there isn't any RAIN!*

*Marsnet Newsfeed (Deimos): Engineers at the space mirror ring are unable to explain why the Hellas Sea region's temperature data has consistently exceeded projections for the past year by up to 3 degrees C. "The mirrors are properly aligned," said Dana Walsh, Director of Mirror Operations. "Hellas shouldn't be getting any more watts per square meter than before. I can't understand why the water's reading warm." Scientists at the Terraforming Consortium speculated that the region's albedo has changed for some reason, and are examining records of cloud cover and snowfall. (Link to expanded version.)*

*From: JWilson@henson.sci  
To: Phoenix@analysis.mdf  
Subject: Data Anomalies*

*I hate to admit this, but your sabotage theory is getting more plausible every day. Something is wrong with our data, and it's affecting half the planet. I can't believe any of my people are involved, but at this point I'm willing to consider anything. Could you send down some people to have a quiet look around and see if they can find out what's going on?*

**Grendel** takes place in the Terraformed Mars setting from *GURPS Mars* (pp. 71-90) and uses the *GURPS Third Edition, Revised* rules. The player-characters are a team sent to deal with recurring acts of sabotage at a facility atop the ice of the new Hellas Sea. Sometime in the early 22nd Century, solar mirrors have warmed Mars and comet impacts have brought additional water and volatile elements, but plants have not yet created a breathable atmosphere. The lowlands are already flooded and the landscape is being seeded with modified plants. Getting the air breathable without creating a runaway glaciation is a tricky project, and requires complete information about the state of the planet.

The adventure is designed for 150-point characters who are Mars Defense Force operatives. Four characters are included at the end of the adventure; players can also create their own. If this is used as part of an ongoing campaign, assume the existing PCs are called in as outside experts by the MDF.

## The Mission

The team members get their orders to assemble at the Mars Defense Force base at Tyrrhenia Terra for a briefing and mission assignment. Like most MDF facilities, the base is small, well-camouflaged, and self-sufficient. If the characters have not adventured together before, they have the chance to get acquainted over lunch before the briefing.

## The Briefing

At 1300 hours local time, the team members meet with Phuong Kim, an intelligence specialist attached to the Mars Defense Force's counter-terrorism analysis group.

"Good afternoon. You're here because the analysis group is reasonably certain we've discovered an ongoing program of sabotage against the terraforming project. The Hellas Sea is an important part of the planetary heat-management system; by controlling outflow and ice cover we can control the rate of planetary heating from the orbital mirrors.

"However, over the past solar year, the Hellas Sea management operation has started to go wrong. The engineers there haven't been able to properly control ice formation, their data on the heat content of the sea is incorrect, and efforts to correct these problems have only made them worse.

"I've been analyzing information from all the Hellas ocean management stations, comparing them with one another and baseline data from previous years. It appears that someone has been deliberately altering information from the underwater sensor net. The only place where that can be done is a facility called Henson Station. That's where the sensor net data is collected and relayed to the other stations.

"Now, I think the saboteurs – and the analysis group agrees that it's almost certainly a Red Mars faction opposed to terraforming – don't know that we've found what's going on yet. If we can uncover their operation in place, catching them by surprise, we can learn a lot more about their organization, methods, and sources of support.

"Your mission is to visit the station under cover, pretending to be in the area doing a routine survey of local assets available in the event of an invasion or natural disaster. Find out who's sabotaging the sensor readings and how, and take them into custody."

If the PCs have any questions, Kim answers them, providing as much information as the investigators want. He beams two sets of orders to their

personal computers – their real instructions, and a set of orders from the logistics command for the cover story.

## Equipment

In addition to the standard duty equipment listed in the character descriptions at the end of the adventure (pp. 10-12), the investigators can requisition stuff from the Tyrrhenia base supply depot. There are some limits, of course. Assume each character is limited to \$1,000 worth of gear in addition to the basic package. Mars Defense Force equipment is standard TL9 stuff, limited by the Hard Science and Safetech options described in *GURPS Ultra-Tech 2*. Any heavy weapons or other items with a Legality rating of less than 3 require permission from the base supply officer, and getting that permission requires good roleplaying and a logical reason for requesting the item from the PCs. Only one attempt per item is allowed – once the supply officer says no, he means it. Players should remember that this is primarily a law-enforcement and information-gathering mission, *not* a tactical strike.

## Getting There

The team can get to Henson Station either by driving in a rover or getting a lift aboard a military VTOL aircraft. If they go by rover they can keep the vehicle until the mission ends; the aircraft can only drop them off. Henson Station can't be reached by normally available civilian transport, unless one is willing to rent a rover in the Hellas colony and drive there. By air it's a quick 2-hour trip, by rover it takes 30 hours from Tyrrhenia or 10 hours from Hellas.

## Ice Station Henson

Ice Station Henson is located at the center of the Hellas Sea, near the northern edge of the permanent ice shelf. It is about 10 kilometers from the edge of the ice, and 300 kilometers from the Hellas colony on the western shore.

## The Station

Henson Station is a semi-permanent base, built of prefabricated modules connected by passage tubes buried in the ice. During the winter it is completely buried in snow, sometimes to a depth of more than 3 meters. In summer the top half of each module is exposed. The station modules are mounted on heavy

## CROSSOVERS

As noted in *GURPS Mars*, the Terraformed Mars setting can be dropped into other game universes with a little fiddling. In the world of David Brin's "Uplift" series described in *GURPS Uplift*, one important addition to this adventure would be sentient dolphins. The simplest way to adapt this adventure is to replace the squids with dolphins. The Red Mars activists are probably dupes or agents of one of Humanity's alien enemies, and the subsurface base could be a hiding place for the alien masters. Brothers of the Night are a particularly good choice for the alien villains.

In a cyberpunk setting, the whole adventure needs a more ambiguous tone. The terraforming project is being carried out for profit by a consortium of megacorporations, and the Red Mars activists really are sincere about preserving the planet and keeping it free of corporate control. The MDF characters are effectively company police doing a dirty job. Can they find a solution that allows them to keep their self-respect?

In the *Traveller* universe, this can be any small dry TL9 planet in the middle of a terraforming project. Replace the Red Mars activists with agents of some power that doesn't want to see a thriving Imperial colony world in this particular part of space. If the PCs are off-planet mercenaries with high-technology gear, make sure to even the odds by giving the saboteurs their own advanced gear.

skids, and if the ice underneath becomes unstable, each one is dragged by tractor to a safer location.

The station has 9 modules: one houses the 12-person staff, one serves as a common area and galley, two are lab space, one is a computer and communications center, one is a maintenance shop, one houses the powerplant and life-support systems, and two are storage space for provisions and equipment. The base is not self-sufficient, but at times the staff may have to wait a month or more between visits from supply aircraft or crawlers.

The buried passage tubes also connect to a series of tunnels in the ice. Some of them were dug for extra storage space, or to take core samples. Others give access to the sea beneath the ice. The ice tunnels are lit by halogen panels and have a steel mesh floor to let meltwater drain off, but otherwise they are quite unfinished.

## Managing the Hellas Sea

The Hellas Sea is a huge impact basin, now flooded to a depth of 4000 meters. Because Hellas is separated from the entire northern-hemisphere ocean drainage system, it serves as an important water reservoir and heat-budget regulator. Artificial canals connect Hellas to ancient flow channels in the Isidis depression, which drains into the main Martian ocean. By controlling the amount of Hellas water passing into the canals, the terraforming engineers can adjust the planet's temperature and water balance. In addition, modified algae living in the waters of Hellas are helping to generate oxygen for a breathable Martian atmosphere.

Hellas itself requires constant management to prevent it from icing over and turning stagnant. Planetary engineers dust the icecap with black carbon powder to help it absorb more solar heat, and pump water from the depths to the surface to adjust the sea's heat balance. In extreme situations they use brute-force methods like explosives and melting with the orbital mirrors to break up the icecap. During winter, the sea freezes over (and in fact the engineers try to speed up the process as the ice helps insulate the water below), but in springtime only the northern half melts.

## The Computer Network

Henson Station is the nexus for a web of automated monitoring devices and research robots scattered throughout the Hellas Sea. Devices on the icecap measure ice movement and snowfall, units on the seafloor monitor currents and water temperature, small mobile robot probes sample water composition and heat transfer, and orbiting satellites observe the winds and weather patterns. All that information is collated at Henson Station, and the staff also maintains the sensing devices and installs new ones as needed.

The computer that manages all this realtime data is a Complexity 5 Microframe, with terminals in every room and wireless connections to all the staff personal computers and the utility robots.

The system has user logs, recording whoever gains access to the system. Unfortunately, they are blank. A successful Computer Operation skill roll can quickly determine that there is a small subprogram running that erases all logs every minute.

## The Staff

Henson Station is designed for 12 people, but currently two of them are away on leave. The remaining 10 are:

*Dr. Juan Wilson, the station director.* Wilson is a 43-year-old climatologist, who has been part of the Mars Terraforming project for the last nine years. Before that he was on Earth, doing climate-engineering research. According to available records, Wilson is a good scientist, competes in long-distance cross-country bike races on Earth and Mars, and is considered a good security risk by the Terraforming Consortium's internal security department. He is not currently in any romantic relationships, but has an ex-wife and three children back on Earth. Dr. Wilson is the only staff member (other than the culprit, of course) who is even aware the project is being sabotaged.

*Dr. Vladimir Esposito, climate researcher.* Esposito is 70 years old, born on Mars in one of the original settlements. His doctorate was awarded by a college he helped establish, long after he was widely recognized across the Solar System as an expert on planetary climate modeling and manipulation. Henson Station is a semi-retirement position for Esposito; he draws no salary and pays his own expenses just to keep his hand in.

*Dr. Yuki Kirishima, oceanographer.* Kirishima is 36 years old, born on Earth. She came to Mars at age 19 and since then has studied the development of the planet's oceans. Kirishima is probably the most vocal advocate of terraforming, and treats any expression of doubt or regret as "proof" of Red Mars sympathies.

*Anais Saint-Cyr, biologist.* Saint-Cyr is 32 years old, an ecologist by training who is fairly proud of the fact that she has no academic status. All her knowledge was acquired on the job for the Terraforming Consortium. She is Martian by birth, but considers herself to be a patriotic Frenchwoman. Saint-Cyr has been at Henson Station for only a year and is bored out of her mind. She alleviates matters by playing practical jokes on her colleagues, provoking arguments, and inventing insulting nicknames for people. She will be very curious about any visitors,

but will also try to play jokes on them and take outrageous positions to provoke a dispute.

*Parvati Souza, research assistant.* Souza is 22 years old, just graduated from college and working toward a graduate degree under the supervision of Dr. Esposito. Unfortunately, she is in grave danger of destroying her career because of the obsessive love affair with Douglas Ybarra which has been going on for six months now.

*Ares Jones, research assistant.* Jones is 23 years old, educated at home by his radical parents, now studying ocean chemistry with Dr. Kirishima. He is Martian-born, from a tiny separatist colony in Elysium. His parents are famous Red activists, opposed to terraforming, interplanetary corporations, the current Mars government, and a good many other things. Jones is sick of all that, and is chiefly interested in making a lot of money and meeting a lot of attractive women. He is working at Henson because he figures the Terraforming Consortium is a great way to turn his weird but extensive home education into a high-paying job. Jones has already had affairs with Knudsen, Kirishima, and Saint-Cyr, and will spend as much time as possible with any female members of the investigating team.

*Miranda Knudsen, the general services technician.* Knudsen is 31 years old, born on Earth but a resident of Mars since age 11. She grew up at a remote mining camp near the Argyre basin and had no formal education at all, but is a self-taught expert on just about all kinds of mechanical and electronic systems. Her chief flaw is that she assumes everyone understands things as easily as she does, so her repairs and modifications are not documented or labeled.

*Karl Rotmann, the life support technician.* Rotmann is 26 years old, a native-born Martian from Eos. His dossier indicates that Rotmann has been working at Henson Station for three years. He graduated from Tharsis Regional College with a degree in Complex Systems Theory five years ago. (If asked about what he was doing in the “missing” two years, Rotmann shrugs and says he was “just bumming around.” Actually he was being recruited and trained by a faction of the Red Mars movement.)

*Douglas Ybarra, the information services technician.* Ybarra is 28 years old, a Martian from Cydonia. He has a degree in programming from Chryse Technical School, and four years of experience working for the Terraforming Consortium. He has

been at Henson only a year now. Ybarra doesn't want to admit that he relies heavily on help from Karl Rotmann to keep the information systems running – partly because Rotmann obviously understands them better than he does, but mostly because it gives Ybarra more free time to spend in his quarters with Parvati Souza.

*Yu Sung, supply manager and chef.* Yu is 37 years old, and emigrated from Earth 12 years ago. He is a mild Red Mars supporter, from what is known as the “Brown” faction which accepts limited terraforming. He isn't very fervent about this but makes no secret of it either. Yu works closely with Karl Rotmann in the performance of his duties, and has noticed that Rotmann spends more time doing Ybarra's work than he does at his own.

The two staffers currently away from the station are Martina Halaby, a research assistant working with Dr. Wilson who has taken medical leave after falling into a crevasse and breaking eight bones; and Bernard Kerr, an ecology research assistant who was working with Ms. Saint-Cyr until he resigned and left to get a job running a hydroponic farm on Deimos. Ms. Halaby is still getting back on her feet, but plans to return to Henson and complete her studies in oceanic engineering. Kerr wants to stay as far away from Ms. Saint-Cyr, Henson Station, and ecologists as he can. Neither one has any record of involvement in Red Mars causes, nor do they know anything about the sabotage.

## The Mystery

The mystery the heroes must solve is simple. Who has been sabotaging the ocean-management program? But solving it isn't simple at all.

## Incidents

It requires an exhaustive study of the station's data files to even discover when and how the program has been sabotaged. A successful Computer Operation roll at a penalty of –4 is needed. On a successful roll the investigator can discover some alterations to the stored data made after the fact. Apparently the saboteur altered files about once a month during the past Martian year. A critical success on Computer Operation lets the user find the original un-altered data stored in a backup cache. An oceanographer (like Dr. Wilson) with the opportuni-

ty to compare the original data with the altered files can conclude that the saboteur is systematically biasing the data to make the Hellas Sea seem warmer than it really is. Terraformers using the bogus data could end up under-heating the region, which would throw off the whole terraforming program for years.

There were also some instances of physical sabotage, especially to the robot drone probes used for undersea monitoring. Three of the station's four drones were damaged by someone who bashed their propellers with a hammer. The damage didn't make the probes unusable, and they still remain in service, but it does make them slow and noisy underwater. Any military personnel making an IQ roll will realize this makes them easier to detect and avoid.

## Clues

Solving the mystery will require some real detective work on the part of the players as well as their characters. How can they determine that Karl Rotmann is the culprit?

The computer system is where Rotmann has been doing most of his damage. It shouldn't be hard for the investigators to realize that the saboteur must be a skilled programmer. The best computer programmers at Henson are Ms. Saint-Cyr, Rotmann, and Ybarra. Rotmann tries to downplay his skill, claiming that his degree is all theory with little practical application. But once the team discovers that he's been doing most of Ybarra's work for him, that explanation won't hold up.

Another avenue to explore is background. Most of the older personnel have long records of solid work for the terraforming program; it's unlikely that any of them could be deep-cover moles. That leaves the younger staff members: Souza, Jones, Rotmann, and Ybarra. None of them has much history, and Jones is known to be from a family of fairly hard-core Red Mars supporters.

Interviews with suspects can narrow the field, although the investigators must tread carefully to avoid revealing their mission. Detect Lies or Psychology skill rolls can help determine if the suspects are telling the truth, but Rotmann is a good actor.

## Red Menace

Karl Rotmann isn't going to just sit back and let the MDF team expose him. Once he figures out that the visitors are investigating the sabotage he's been

## RED HERRINGS

To complicate the mystery, there are several false avenues and bogus clues to lead the investigators astray.

### Reds Under The Bed

Two staffers have known Red Mars connections. Ares Jones's parents are famous activists, and Yu Sung is a moderate Red supporter. Both naturally deny any connection with the sabotage, but if Rotmann becomes aware he is under investigation, he will try to deflect attention onto them.

### The Joker

Anais Saint-Cyr loves practical jokes and provoking people. If the visitors seem paranoid about Red Mars activists, she's likely to start spouting extreme Red positions just to get a reaction. Anyone who genuinely annoys her can also expect revenge in the form of itching powder in the suit liner or marker dye in the soap. As long as her jokes are funny the other staff won't expose her, which can add to the PCs' paranoia.

### The Lovers

Ybarra and Souza are hiding (very unsuccessfully) a passionate love affair. Both disappear frequently and are vague about what they were doing. Most of the other staff won't embarrass them by gossiping, except Saint-Cyr, who might make up some outrageous story.

doing, Karl will fight back. His control of the station's computer network includes all the override controls for the utility robots that do a lot of the maintenance work at Henson Station. This gives him a weapon to use.

At an appropriate time during the investigation, one of the PCs gets a message just after dinner, routed untraceably through the station communications network. It says "I know who's behind it all. Meet me in the storage tunnel under Hab Four at midnight. Tell no one."

Assuming one or more PCs accept the invitation, the tunnel is empty at midnight except for a couple of

# Press Help

If the investigators are having a hard time figuring out that Rotmann is the guilty party, here are some ways to help them along:

Ares Jones's parents are well connected in the Red Mars movement; a detailed investigation of him might turn up evidence linking Karl Rotmann to the movement – such as an old video showing Karl at a Red Mars rally before he went undercover.

Karl might panic, especially if the robots fail to stop the PCs, and flee the station.

Karl might have a change of heart, especially if one of his fellow Henson staffers is

endangered during the robot attack, and confess what he's been up to.

A witness might come forward if the attack becomes common knowledge, someone who has been keeping silent until now. Possible witnesses include Ms. Saint-Cyr (waiting to let the investigators make fools of themselves), Doug Ybarra (quiet because he didn't want to endanger his cushy arrangement to let Karl do his work), or Yu Sung (reluctant to expose a fellow Red Mars activist, especially since it might throw suspicion on himself).

maintenance 'bots testing a power conduit. Once the investigators reach the rendezvous point, two more robots crawl out of a side corridor, and all four attack!

The robots' tactics depend on how many PCs are present. If the whole team shows up, the robots will try to kill them. They are smart enough to know what guns are, and so will attack anyone obviously armed first.

If there are only one or two PCs at the rendezvous, the goal of the robots is to capture them, stuff them into rescue bags with life-support packs, and drop them into the ocean where the Red Mars fighters can pick them up. The captives will be interrogated using truth drugs and imprisoned in the undersea base. Rotmann will send another message warning the MDF to call off the investigation or the hostages will die.

## TL9 Utility Robot

These robots have a cost of 71 points, including the 36-point Model Cost (the actual point value is much higher, but they get the divisor for being obviously mechanical robots). They normally are programmed with a restrictive program making it impossible for them to harm any human or human-shaped thing (equivalent to Pacifism), but Karl has removed that as part of his plan. Their Reprogrammable Duty normally makes the station director their "primary master" followed by Doug Ybarra, Miranda Knudsen, and then the rest of the staff in order of seniority. Karl has edited that to put himself at the top of the list.

This kind of robot is very common on Mars and Earth, and most humans require an IQ roll to even notice when one is in the room. Each one resembles a king crab, scuttling quietly on four legs and using two arms for work. They stand about three feet tall.

In combat they are unskilled, punching using a DX roll, but they can use All-Out Attack to improve their chance of hitting. Damage is 2d-3 with the heavy left arm, 1d-4 with the right. They can also attack using their cutting torches, with a base skill of 6, doing 1d cutting damage with a range of 3 yards, half that to 15 yards. The torches have enough fuel for 5 minutes of operation. Note that the suction pads on their feet let the robots operate on walls and ceilings. Dodge score is 5.

*Brain:* TL9 Standard brain, with the Neural Net option (20 lbs, .4 cf, \$15,000, Complexity 4, 70 points).

*Sensors:* TL9 Basic package, with Infrared Vision, One Eye, No Sense of Taste/Smell, Smoke Detector, Codereader, and Radiation Detector options (1.2 lbs., 0.024 cf, \$3,350, -5 points).

*Communicators:* TL9 Basic package with Disturbing Voice and Infrared Comm options (0.75 lbs, 0.015 cf, \$250, 10 points).

*Arm Motors:* One ST 10 Cheap arm motor (3 lbs, 0.06 cf, \$1,500). One ST 20 arm motor with Bad Grip (3 lbs, 0.06 cf, \$3,000, -10 points).

*Propulsion:* TL9 200-watt Leg drivetrain, 4 legs (8 lbs, 0.16 cf, \$400).

*Accessories:* Integral Mechanical Tools (10 lbs, 0.2 cf, \$200, 5 points), Cutting Torch (6 lbs, 0.12 cf, \$20, 1 point), Mini-Fire Extinguisher (0.25 lbs, 0.01

cf, \$5, 1 point), Inertial Compass (0.5 lbs, 0.01 cf, \$125, 5 points).

*Power System:* TL9 500-watt Fuel Cell (5 lbs, 0.1 cf, \$500, 20 points). TL8 Self-Sealing tank with 0.18 gallon of hydrox fuel (1.08 lbs, 0.027 cf, \$8). Endurance 24 hours at full output.

*Subassemblies:* Body, two arms, four legs.

*Body Design:* Houses brain, sensors, communicators, inertial compass, fuel cell, and fuel tank, totalling 0.576 cf, plus 0.024 cf empty space for a total volume of 0.6 cf.

*Arm Design:* The right arm holds the ST 10 motor, the cutting torch, the mini-fire extinguisher, and 0.11 cf of empty space for a total volume of 0.3 cf. The left arm holds the ST 20 motor, the mechanical tools, and 0.04 cf of empty space for a total volume of 0.3 cf.

*Leg Design:* Each leg holds part of the drivetrain and .06 cf of empty space for a total volume of 0.1 cf.

*Area:* Body 5, each arm 3, each leg 1.5, for a total surface of 17 sf.

*Structure:* TL9 medium structure, 51 lbs, \$1,700.

*Hit Points:* Body 8, arms 9 each, legs 2 each.

*Armor:* DR3 ablative armor, PD 2 (1.02 lbs, \$8, 10 points).

*Surface Features:* Sealed (\$170), Suction Pads (\$600).

*Statistics:* Weight 110.8 lbs (0.0554 tons), volume 1.6 cf, cost \$26,836. Body ST 11, right arm ST 10, left arm ST 20 (70 points), DX 10, IQ 8 (-15 points), HT 12/8 (0 points). Ground speed 11.4 (25 points). Cannot float (-5 points). Legality 6. Point cost: 182 points. Model point cost: 36.

*Advantages:* Absolute Timing, Eidetic Memory 2, Lightning Calculator, and Mathematical Ability (from computer brain); Ambidexterity [10], Literacy [0].

*Disadvantages:* Reprogrammable Duty, No Sense of Humor (from computer brain).

*Skills:* Area Knowledge-12 (Henson Station) [2], Chemistry-7 [1/2], Climbing-9 [1], Computer Operation/TL9-12 [2], Computer Programming/TL9-8 [1], Electronic Operation/TL9-9 (Comm.) [1], Electronic Operation/TL9-11 (Sensors) [2], Electronics/TL9-10 (Sensors) [2], Engineer/TL9-10 (Electrical) [2], Jumping-11 [2], Mechanic/TL9-11 (Fuel cell/electric motors) [2], Mechanic/TL9-11 (Robotics) [2], Meteorology/TL9-8 [1/2], Scrounging-9 [1], Stealth-10 [2]

*Languages:* Martian English (preprogrammed), Chinese-7 [1/2], French-8 [1/2], Japanese-7 [1/2], Spanish-8 [1/2].

*Utility Programs:* Data Recovery, Datalink, Janitorial, Repair (self), Voiceprint Recognition.

# Under Martian Seas

If the PCs can successfully interrogate Rotmann, or if they can break into his personal computer files (roll a Quick Contest of skills between the intruder's Computer Hacking skill and Rotmann's Computer Programming), they make a startling discovery. Rotmann hasn't been working alone. The Red Mars terrorists have a hidden base on the bottom of the Hellas Sea, not far from Henson Station. One of the reasons for sabotaging the ocean management program was to keep the base from being discovered by the monitoring devices. Apparently the base is home to a really big, terribly secret Red Mars operation. Rotmann doesn't know what the project is, but he does know that it is probably the most important thing in the whole movement.

## Finding the Base

Rotmann doesn't have coordinates for the base. The few times he has visited the installation, he simply rendezvoused with a Red Mars minisub, and he never paid much attention to which way they were going.

There are several ways to locate the hidden base. If the sensor network is free of Rotmann's interference, the player characters can use it to find the base. The base has to have a power source, which means it must be giving off waste heat. Homing in on any small source of warmer-than-usual water could reveal the base.

Another possibility is to use the underwater probes to search for the base. There are half a dozen probes, and each one can search a swath 200 meters wide. At a cruising speed of 10 kilometers per hour, the probes can search 12 square kilometers in an hour. The Hellas Sea has an area of 2.4 million square kilometers, so a complete search would take about 10 Martian years!. However, if the investigators concentrate on the region around Henson Station, it takes only 50 hours to find the Red Mars base.

## A Few Good Squids

If the heroes contact MDF headquarters, the strategy specialists agree that the team should take immediate action against the Red Mars base. The longer the delay, the greater the risk that the terrorists will realize something is up and either prepare defenses or flee. The MDF can send a VTOL flyer loaded with equipment and a squad of 6 extra troops for the job. The troops are underwater specialists: genetically-engineered squids with human-level intelligence.

### THE BIOWEAPON

The bioweapon is a suite of artificial prion diseases, designed to affect humans and all the organisms in the Martian oceans, especially the plants and algae that will transform Mars's atmosphere to oxygen. Prions are an even simpler pathogen than viruses, and even TL9 medicine has a hard time stopping them. Humans exposed to the prion suite must make a HT-3 roll to resist infection. If infected, the victim must make a HT roll each month or lose 1 from each attribute. The lost points do not heal back. When HT reaches 0 the patient dies. Medical care can slow or stop the disease. Each month the patient's attending physician can make a Physician skill roll at a penalty of -3. On a successful roll the character loses no attribute points that month. On a critical success the doctors have found a way to trigger the patient's immune system to fight the disease. Thereafter the patient makes a HT roll once per week, and after two successful rolls in a row he is cured. Attribute levels lost to the disease cannot be recovered.

The Reds did not create all the prion strains in the bioweapon. Some are natural diseases from Earth, and some were acquired from illegal "black" bioweapon labs or hostile governments. Getting the source information hidden in the seafloor base will allow the MDF and authorities on Earth to uncover a whole network of smugglers and suppliers, including some corporations and governments on Earth that are trying to stop the terraforming program.

They are described in detail in the characters section below. The leader of the squid squad is Sergeant Nozomi. If the PCs are still badly wounded from the fight with the robots, the GM may assign players squid troopers to run in the seafloor operation.

The equipment consists of a load of weapons and armor for the player-characters: suits of TL9 Infantry Combat Armor (see p. UT74), Micro-Torpedo Launchers (see below), and Gyroc carbines loaded with APEX and Chem rounds filled with Riot Gas (see p. UTII 69). The shipment also includes drugs to help the human troops resist the effects of high pressure at the bottom of the sea (the squid troops are naturally immune). Any gear the PCs have requested is included in this cargo, assuming MDF's allocation specialists approved.

## Red Harvest

Attacking the seafloor base successfully depends a lot on how quiet the troops are and whether Rotmann has been able to get a message off to his terrorist friends. If the Reds have more than a day's warning, all the PCs discover at the bottom of the sea is an abandoned habitat (if the GM wants to liven things up, the Reds may have booby-trapped it before they left, to give the PCs the opportunity for some life-or-death bomb defusing).

If the Reds don't know the MDF are coming, it requires a Contest of Skills between the attacker with the worst Stealth skill and the Red habitat's automated sonar system, which has an effective hearing Perception of 16. Use the range modifiers on p. B201 to modify the sensor roll, checking as soon as the penalty gets below -12, and at each range increment thereafter until detection.

The undersea habitat is a simple pressurized dome made of tough monocrys fabric (DR 20). The Reds come and go aboard a minisub, but it isn't armed and can't really play much of a role in the adventure.

The habitat holds nine Red Mars terrorists, from the ultra-radical "Infrared" wing. Their purpose (which they haven't revealed to Rotmann) is to release a combination of deadly artificial prion diseases into the Martian oceans, wiping out all life in the water and possibly making the planet uninhabitable by humans for good.

The Reds have some surplus military wetsuits with integral monocrys armor (PD2 DR8), and half of them have old TL8 Combat Infantry Dress armor to wear within the habitat if it is attacked. They are armed with surplus CLAWs and a couple of caseless

Battle Rifles (see p. UTII 49). Note that range for firearms is divided by 20 underwater. They also have their bioweapon. If it appears that they have lost the fight but one Red is still alive in the habitat, he (or she) will try to trigger the weapon.

# Characters and NPCs

## MDF Intelligence Specialist 150 Points

Intelligence specialists are the information warriors of the Mars Defense Force. They analyze enemy intentions and capabilities, attempt to penetrate deceptions, and try to keep knowledge of the MDF's forces out of enemy hands. On the battlefield they are eager to take prisoners, clever about using deception, and skilled at getting people to give up without a fight. If that doesn't work, they are trained soldiers with weapons.

Standard MDF duty uniform is a Skinsuit vacc suit combined with TL9 Light Monocrys body armor suit (PD 2, DR 8) and a TL9 Infantry Combat Helmet (see p. UT75); normally the suit life-support unit is not worn. Standard sidearm is a Gyroc launch pistol loaded with SLAP and APEX ammo. Troops in the field are issued an emergency medkit. Intel specialists normally carry a personal computer.

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10], DX 12 [20], IQ 12 [20], HT 12 [20], Move 6.

**Advantages:** Charisma +1 [5], Danger Sense [15], Military Rank 2 [10], Strong Will +1 [4], Versatile [5].

**Disadvantages:** Curious [-5], Duty (to MDF) [-15].

**Skills:** Armoury/TL9 (Gyroc) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Computer Operation/TL9 (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14, Demolition/TL9 (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Diplomacy (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Driving/TL9 (Mars Rover) (P/A) DX [2]-12, Electronics/TL9 (communications) (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11, Electronics Operation/TL9 (comm.) (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14, First Aid/TL9 (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Forensics/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Forward Observer/TL9 (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Free Fall (P/A) DX-1 [1]-11, Gunner/TL9 (Infantry Missile Launcher) (P/A) DX+2 [2]-14\*, Guns/TL9 (Gyroc) (P/E) DX+4 [4]-16\*, Intelligence Analysis/TL9 (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-14, Knife (P/E) DX [1]-14, Navigation/TL9 (M/H) IQ

[4]-12, NBC Warfare/TL9 (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Research (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14, Survival (Martian Surface) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Vacc Suit/TL9 (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14.

\*includes the +2 bonus from IQ.

## MDF Counterterrorist Specialist 150 Points

The MDF's counterterrorist operatives are as much detectives as soldiers, and get extensive training in police techniques as well as combat (although they probably see more actual fighting than most other troops in the service). They are more used to solo operations than other MDF personnel.

Standard MDF duty uniform is a Skinsuit vacc suit combined with TL9 Light Monocrys body armor suit (PD 2, DR 8) and a TL9 Infantry Combat Helmet (see p. UT75); normally the suit life-support unit is not worn. Standard sidearm is a Gyroc launch pistol loaded with SLAP and APEX ammo. Troops in the field are issued an emergency medkit.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0], DX 12 [20], IQ 12 [20], HT 12 [20], Move 6.

**Advantages:** Combat Reflexes [15], Fearlessness +2 [4], Fit [5], Military Rank 2 [10].

**Disadvantages:** Duty (to MDF) [-15], Stubbornness [-5].

**Skills:** Armoury/TL9 (Gyroc) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Computer Operation/TL9 (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Demolition/TL9 (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Detect Lies (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Diplomacy (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Driving/TL9 (Mars Rover) (P/A) DX [2]-12, Electronics/TL9 (communications) (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11, Electronics Operation/TL9 (comm.) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, First Aid/TL9 (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Forensics/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Forward Observer/TL9 (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Free Fall (P/A) DX-1 [1]-11, Gunner/TL9 (Infantry Missile Launcher) (P/A) DX+2 [2]-14\*, Guns/TL9 (Gyroc) (P/E) DX+4 [4]-16\*, Interrogation (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14, Judo (P/H) DX+2 [16]-14, Knife (P/E) DX+2 [4]-14, Law (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Navigation/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, NBC Warfare/TL9 (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Research (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11, Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-12, Survival (Martian Surface) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Vacc Suit/TL9 (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14.

\*includes the +2 bonus from IQ.

## MDF Ranger 150 Points

The rangers are the Mars Defense Force's elite commandos, expert in operations on the surface. In

peacetime they often do search and rescue missions, but in war their job is to stay hidden and make life difficult for the enemy. They have a reputation as the most “gung-ho” of the Mars Defense Force’s personnel. Standard MDF duty uniform is a Skinsuit vacc suit combined with TL9 Light Monocrys body armor suit (PD 2, DR 8) and a TL9 Infantry Combat Helmet (see p. UT75); normally the suit life-support unit is not worn. Standard sidearm is a Gyroc launch pistol loaded with SLAP and APEX ammo. Troops in the field are issued an emergency medkit, and rangers are never seen without a combat knife.

**Attributes:** ST 12 [20], DX 12 [20], IQ 12 [20], HT 12 [20], Move 6.

**Advantages:** Combat Reflexes [15], Fearlessness +1 [2], Fit [5], Military Rank 2 [10].

**Disadvantages:** Extremely Hazardous Duty (to MDF) [-20], Workaholic [-5].

**Skills:** Armoury/TL9 (Gyroc) (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Camouflage (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14, Computer Operation/TL9 (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Demolition/TL9 (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Driving/TL9 (Mars Rover) (P/A) DX [2]-12, Electronics/TL9 (communications) (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-10, Electronics Operation/TL9 (comm.) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, First Aid/TL9 (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Forward Observer/TL9 (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14, Free Fall (P/A) DX [2]-12, Gunner/TL9 (Infantry Missile Launcher) (P/A) DX+2 [2]-14\*, Guns/TL9 (Gyroc) (P/E) DX+4 [4]-16\*, Judo (P/H) DX [4]-12, Knife (P/E) DX+2 [4]-14, Navigation/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, NBC Warfare/TL9 (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Stealth (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14, Survival (Martian Surface) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Tactics (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Vacc Suit/TL9 (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14.

\*includes the +2 bonus from IQ.

## MDF Technical Specialist 150 Points

Technical specialists keep the MDF running. Out of combat they maintain weapons and vehicles, build fortifications, man listening posts, and develop new weapon systems and countermeasures. In the field they do all the same things but with people shooting at them. Sometimes they shoot back – when the job at hand is done.

Standard MDF duty uniform is a Skinsuit vacc suit combined with TL9 Light Monocrys body armor suit (PD 2, DR 8) and a TL9 Infantry Combat Helmet (see p. UT75); normally the suit life-support unit is not worn. Standard sidearm is a Gyroc launch pistol loaded with SLAP and APEX ammo. Troops in the

field are issued an emergency medkit. Technicians also carry a mini-toolkit (see p. UT16).

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10], DX 12 [20], IQ 12 [20], HT 12 [20], Move 6.

**Advantages:** Lightning Calculator [5], Manual Dexterity +2 [6], Military Rank 2 [10], Versatile [5].

**Disadvantages:** Duty (to MDF) [-15], Workaholic [-5].

**Skills:** Armoury/TL9 (Gyroc) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Chemistry/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Computer Operation/TL9 (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14, Computer Programming/TL9 (M/H) IQ+1 [6]-13, Demolition/TL9 (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14, Driving/TL9 (Mars Rover) (P/A) DX [2]-12, Electronics/TL9 (communications) (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Electronics Operation/TL9 (comm.) (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14, First Aid/TL9 (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Free Fall (P/A) DX-1 [1]-11, Gunner/TL9 (Infantry Missile Launcher) (P/A) DX+2 [2]-14\*, Guns/TL9 (Gyroc) (P/E) DX+4 [4]-16\*, Knife (P/E) DX+2 [4]-14, Mechanic/TL9 (electric motors) (M/A) IQ+3 [8]-15, Navigation/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, NBC Warfare/TL9 (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Research (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Scrounging (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14, Survival (Martian Surface) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Vacc Suit/TL9 (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14.

\*includes the +2 bonus from IQ.

## Ocean Management Scientists 80 points

This is a kind of “default” staff member at Henson Station. Each of them has in addition a personal specialty at skill level 14, based on their position at the station.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0], DX 12 [20], IQ 12 [20], HT 11 [10], Move 5.

**Advantages:** Versatile [5].

**Disadvantages:** Curious [-5], Workaholic [-5].

**Skills:** Biochemistry/TL9 (M/VH) IQ [6]-12, Chemistry/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Computer Operation/TL9 (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Driving/TL9 (Mars Rover) (P/A) DX+1 [4]-13, Electronics Operation/TL9 (sensors) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, First Aid/TL9 (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Geology/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Navigation/TL9 (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11, Planetology (Mars) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Research (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Vacc Suit/TL9 (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14.

**Languages:** English-12 (native), Chinese-11 [1].

## Karl Rotmann (150 points)

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0], DX 12 [20], IQ 12 [20], HT 12 [20], Move 6.

**Advantages:** Combat Reflexes [15], Strong Will +2 [8], Versatile [5].

**Disadvantages:** Post-Combat Shakes [-5], Secret (Red Mars mole) [-20], Sense of Duty (Red Mars colleagues) [-5].

**Quirks:** Prefers being alone [-1].

**Skills:** Acting (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14, Area Knowledge (Henson Station) (M/E) IQ+2 [2]-13, Armoury (small arms) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Biochemistry/TL9 (M/VH) IQ [6]-12, Brawling (P/E) DX+3 [8]-15, Chemistry/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Computer Operation/TL9 (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-14, Computer Programming/TL9 (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-14, Demolition/TL (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Driving/TL9 (Mars Rover) (P/A) DX+1 [4]-13, Electronics Operation/TL9 (sensors) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, First Aid/TL9 (M/E) IQ [1]-12, Forgery/TL9 (M/H) IQ+2 [8]-14, Geology/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-12, Guns/TL9 (Gyroc) (P/E) DX+4 [2]-16\*, Knife (P/E) DX+2 [4]-14, Navigation/TL9 (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-11, NBC Warfare/TL9 (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Piloting/TL9 (human-powered aircraft) (P/A) DX-1 [1]-11, Planetology (Mars) (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Research (M/A) IQ [2]-12, Stealth (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14, Vacc Suit/TL9 (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14.

\*Includes +2 bonus from IQ.

**Languages:** English-12 (native), Chinese-11 [1], German-12 [2].

## Red Mars Terrorists 100 points

The Red Mars terrorists are determined to keep humans from “destroying” Mars by terraforming it. The nine Reds in the undersea habitat are all wanted criminals and are perfectly willing to fight to the death. Three of them have additional science skills at level 14 (Genetics, Biochemistry, and Ecology), which they are using in the preparation of the bioweapon.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0], DX 12 [20], IQ 10 [20], HT 11 [10], Move 5.75

**Advantages:** Daredevil [15], Strong Will +2 [8].

**Disadvantages:** Fanaticism (protecting Mars from humans) [-20].

**Skills:** Armoury (small arms) (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Brawling (P/E) DX [1]-12, Computer Operation/TL9 (M/E) IQ [1]-10, Demolition/TL (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12, Driving/TL9 (Mars Rover) (P/A) DX [2]-13, Electronics Operation/TL9 (sensors) (M/A) IQ [2]-10, First Aid/TL9 (M/E) IQ

[1]-10, Guns/TL9 (SMG) (P/E) DX+2 [2]-14\*, Guns/TL9 (rifle) (P/E) DX+2 [2]-14\*, Knife (P/E) DX+2 [4]-14, Navigation/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-10, NBC Warfare/TL9 (M/A) IQ [2]-10, Piloting/TL9 (human-powered aircraft) (P/A) DX [2]-12, Scrounging (M/E) IQ [1]-10, Stealth (P/A) DX+2 [8]-14, Swimming (P/E) DX [1]-12, Vacc Suit/TL9 (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-12.

\*Includes +1 bonus from IQ.

## Squid Troopers 100 points

The MDF Squid Troopers are typically armed with a standard TL9 gyro rifle in space or surface situations, and a micro-torpedo launcher (see box) underwater. Standard squid duty uniform is an insulated suit combined with TL9 Light Monocrys body armor suit (PD 2, DR 8). In battle they wear Heavy Monocrys (PD 2, DR 24). Troops in the field are issued an emergency medkit.

The leader of the squid team, tactical specialist Nozomi (known as “Sergeant Nozomi” to just about everyone) has Tactics-12 and Leadership-12, and has the additional Advantages Military Rank 1 and Strong Will +1.

**Attributes:** ST 8 [20]; DX 13 [10]; IQ 11 [10]; HT 12 [0].

**Advantages:** Acute Vision +1 [2], Combat Reflexes [15], Fearlessness +1 [2], Fit [5], Manual Dexterity +1 [3], Uplifted Squid [43].

**Disadvantages:** Extremely Hazardous Duty [-20]; Gullibility [-10], Honesty [-10], Sense of Duty (fellow Squid troopers) [-5], Stubbornness [-5].

**Skills:** Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-14, Computer Operation/TL9 (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-12, Electronics Operation/TL9 (Communications) (M/A) IQ [2]-11, First Aid/TL9 (M/E) IQ [1]-11, Forward Observer/TL9 (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Free Fall/TL9 (P/A) DX [2]-13, Gesture (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Gunner/TL9 (Micro-torpedoes) (P/A) DX+3 [4]-16\*, Guns/TL9 (Gyrocs) (P/E) DX+3 [2]-16\*, Knife (P/E) DX+1 [2]-14, Navigation/TL9 (M/H) IQ [4]-11, Scrounging (M/E) IQ [1]-11, Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-13; Survival (Ocean) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Swimming (P/E) DX [1]-13, Tactics (M/H) IQ [4]-11, Underwater Demolition/TL9 (M/A) IQ [2]-11, Vacc Suit/TL9 (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-12.

\*Includes +2 bonus for IQ.

## Uplifted Squid 43 points

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST -4 [-30]; DX +2 [20]; HT +2 [20].

## TL9 20mm Micro-Torpedo Launcher

This weapon refines another model created for commando forces operating in Earth's oceans. It is a simple, extremely cheap, revolver-action launcher that shoots small torpedoes with HESH (High Explosive Squash Head) warheads. The warheads will not explode until the torpedo has gone at least 10 yards (to avoid injuring the user). The launcher has a small flashlight mounted below the barrel.

<i>Malf</i>	<i>Dam.</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Spd</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Min/Max</i>	<i>RoF</i>	<i>Shots</i>	<i>WpS</i>	<i>CpS</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Wt. Empty/Loaded</i>
Crit.	4d	12	32	2 sec.	10/64	3~	6	.5 lbs.	\$7	\$155	1.5 lbs./4.5 lbs.

**Advantages:** Chameleon 2 [14]; Constriction Attack [15]; Extra Arms (8, all of which are Short Arms, -25%) [60]; Extra Flexibility [10]; Gills [10]; Injury Tolerance (No Neck) [5]; Night Vision [10]; Peripheral Vision [15]; Sharp Teeth [5].

**Disadvantages:** Bad Grip [-10]; Cold-Blooded [-5]; Edgy [-5]; Invertebrate [-20]; Legless [-35]; Mute (Mitigated by computer interpreter, -60%) [-10]; Short Lifespan 2 [-20]; Stress Atavism (Mild, uncommon) [-6].

The "Kraken" series uplifted squid are most common beneath Earth's oceans, working in undersea construction and fish farming. A number have ven-

tured to space, finding a niche in orbital colonies where extra arms and no legs are a distinct advantage. A small colony have established themselves on Mars, and they are likely to expand to Europa and Titan along with humans. Like wild squids, they have eight short arms and two long hunting tentacles. They are capable of breathing air for extended periods as long as they can keep their gills wet. They can get around clumsily on land, dragging themselves with their arms at a speed of 1; squids who spend a lot of time out of the water use motorized carts, often with a mist-spray feature.

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