

# Dangerous Delve

## Player's Handbook

Layout of this document: Page 1 is essential high points of Player character knowledge. Page 2 is character creation guidelines, Following pages are just “extra credit” if you want to delve deeper.

I sort of been working from an alternate time line of late and the following is the high points so that no one is lost in the dust.

Terledrom is the home world of the vrusk.

The vrusk evolved a hive culture but this “system” collapsed in antiquity for a variety of reasons war, resource depletion, ecological collapse, etc.

Out of the chaos of that the vrusk with similar occupations banded together in proto-trade houses to barter with other trade houses for the goods and service they needed. This led to modern vrusk society governed by trade houses and conglomerates.

In the beginning of the vrusk space age they discovered the dralasites and help them settle on Terledrom. The introduction of this alien species forced changes in Terledrom society. The government is a unique fusion of elected dralasites and a board of the heads of the top trade houses.

Triad Institute of Technology (TIT) was established by decree of the Council of Worlds to be a research center independent of mega corp control. This does not mean that mega corps are not involved as many corporations establish grants, scholarships and endowments for the institute knowing full well that its graduated will yearly flow into their own programs.

The Acquisition Service is a handful of loose teams of archaeologist, scientist and specialist that perform mundane chores like validating artifacts and detecting forgeries, guest lecturing in the classroom, cataloging and organizing exhibits. The field assignments can be more glamorous but sometime those boil down to endless digging in the dirt at a find. Still the AS team members are well paid and there is low turn over in the membership.

The AS has a rivalry with PGC's Artifact Research and Development Team. The corporate sponsored team has had Galactic Task Force mercenaries backing it up in the past and this leads to arrogance on their part. PGC is more concerned with control of discoveries over scientific advancement.

## Character Creation

### Good News and bad news

Original plan was to use AD rules for simplicity but the nature of the beast with this adventure calls for broader skill in the science/scholar area. So we'll be using the skill list from SFman 9 "A Skilled Frontier." This "system handles PSA a little different but because this is a one shot adventure and there is functionally no real opportunity for advancement PSA are irrelevant for our purposes. You can, of course, pick a Primary and secondary PSA as the article details and hang on to this character for future use if you so desire.

So to create your character Use the AD rules for abilities and what not but choose your skills from the Skilled Frontier article (this article is not as complicated as SF2000 or Zeb's Guide skill systems so you should not have to much trouble). Choose either:

- A. One 2<sup>nd</sup> level skill and two first level skills
- B. One 3<sup>rd</sup> level skill and one first level skill

At least one skill should come from Science, Scholar or Scout PSAs in the Skilled Frontier article.

Then apply a **free 5 EXP** to either an ability score or a racial ability

**Free Equipment:** skien suit, tool kit if a skill requires it, free side arm and holster +1 clip or melee weapon and clip (if it needs a clip), If you have a shooting skill then you get a free rifle and two clips besides the pistol. Plus an additional 500 cr to spend.

Team has 1000 Cr to spend on team equipment that may end up carried by you.

If you have an unusual idea about your character that like: he likes to chew on Lossend cigars an you want him to have a pocket full of them but they are not on the equipment list then email me and I'll likely give them to you for free. If it was something that could confer a real game benefit then perhaps I'll assess a credit cost for it.

**Specialties:** this is not required but if you wanted to say that your character was an archaeologist with a specialty in ancient alien civs then there are possibilities in the setting: eorna (Volturnus), sathar, Klikk, tetrarch, vrusk, you could even take the other core four though they don't really qualify as ancient and the period of your specialty would be the first colonization settlements of approx 200-300 years ago. Some one with archaeology and technician or computers could be a specialist in understanding ancient alien tech, someone with a military background may have been in the intell branch and been part of studying captured sathar tech most of what he knows is classified but he would recognize it for what it is. Point is to make a character you think you'll have fun with and I'm open to unusual options.

# A Dangerous Delve

## Player's Intro

The conference room held a loose collection of beings. There was Director Juranec, some of her staff and a handful of members of the Acquisitions Service. Entering the room you notice a “hush” field as you enter.

The presence of a hush field over all windows and doors to the room suggested other security measures would be in place and that this assignment might one of the more interesting sorts. Possibly even an exciting field assignment.

Director Juranec stepped to the podium and addressed the room, “Gentle beings, this briefing is under condition black security protocols. However, it’s entirely possible that some or all of the contents of the briefing are already leaked out to undesirable agencies.”

At that statement all the members of the Acquisitions Service sat a little straighter. No doubt the leaks Director Juranec was referring to had occurred before the information reached her and “undesirable agencies” was the director’s preferred way of describing artifact acquisition teams employed by mega corps. Usually that meant PGC but not always and at least on one occasion she had used that phrase for a government agency. Yes perhaps this was going to be more than just a run of the mill assignment.

Director Juranec continued, “Three GST months ago the mining ship Ragnar’s Rock suffered a massive engineering catastrophe in orbit over Terledrom. Before the local militia could respond the ship’s orbit decayed and the ship crash landed on the southern continent. Some of the crew managed to eject in life pods. The militia performed SAR operations for almost two weeks rescuing two survivors and recovering four bodies two of the ship’s crew are listed as lost and presumed dead. During their SAR the militia discovered ruins and monoliths suggesting the presence of a hitherto undocumented hive deep in the jungle.”

“The board of trade houses running the Terledrom government eventually awarded the concession to explore this find to Vrusk Atlas Manufacturing Corporation [player’s note: VAMC taken from module SF-0]. VAMC sent a survey team but lost contact with them. Two weeks ago one member of the team was rescued but seems to have encountered some infectious agent that has rendered him incomprehensible.”

“Fearing a review of their concession, VAMC has decided to bring in specialist in the field of archaeological survey with a specialty in dealing with hazardous environments. That brings us to the institute and you lot.”

A light chuckle rippled through the room.

“As you know the institute has collaborated with VAMC many times on many projects in the past. They greatly prefer to deal with us over other,” Juranec paused briefly before finishing, “agencies.”

Another light chuckle rippled through the room.

“The Terledrom government has complicated laws concerning the export of cultural artifacts however VAMC, as part of its concession with the government will receive a percentage of artifacts found. They in turn will be making a loan to the institute museum of artifacts from the find as well. This means that not only will we get first look at a significant find from the hive period on Terledrom but the institute will have the major exhibit of vrusk hive period artifacts in the Frontier. That will be quite a feather in our cap for the institute and the museum.”

Juranic gestured to a member of her staff, “Victor, will brief you on the details we know as well as accompany you to Terledrom to act as an advisor.”

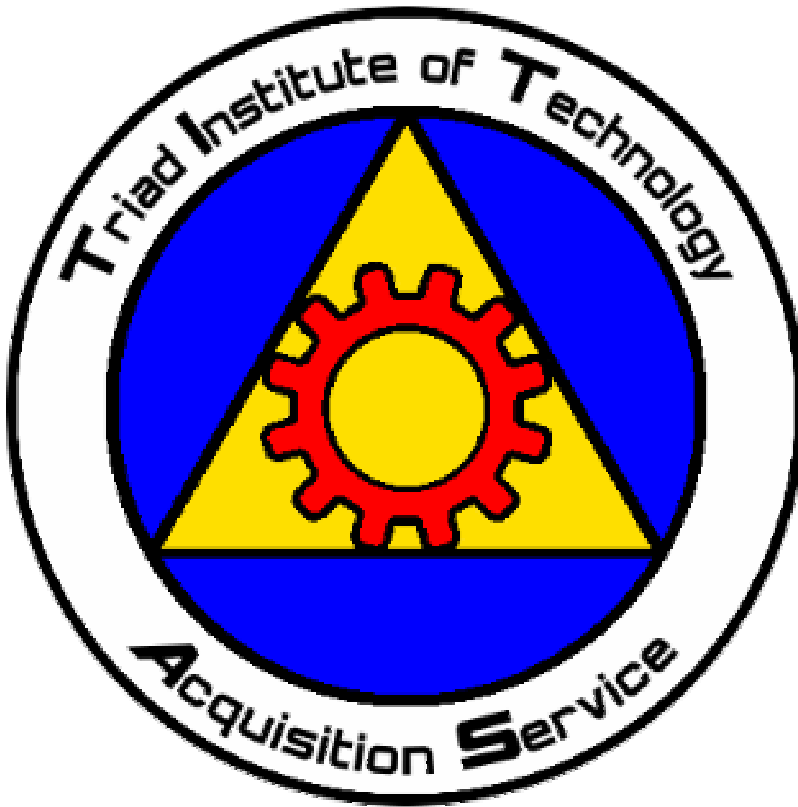
Vi-k'tr stepped forward. He was a vrusk himself and a bean counter. Normally, he never went on field assignment but his inclusion on this mission made sense since he spoke the language and had just delivered a graduate paper on the vrusk hive period. Whether he was left back at the hotel or dragged along into the jungle would require a team decision. Even money the team would vote to leave him behind since he'd been a pain in the past over squaring accounts for funds issued to the team.

Vi-k'tr began his briefing, “SAR operations turned up these pyramidal obelisks. We believe that these may be boundary markers for a hive. Ancient records of the hive period are fragmentary and there is no mention of a hive in this region. The standard hive boundary marker found at sites all over the planet looks like this: an obelisk. This marker was first described by the pilot of the team that discovered it as a truncated obelisk. Before SAR operations ceased they discovered two more.”

“If these truly are boundary markers for a lost hive it will be the discovery of the century in the area of Vrusk History and Archaeology. All known boundary markers are marked with glyphs naming the hive and give directions to the location of the next two markers on the boundary. Thus the monoliths are the logical place to begin the investigation. In this arial photograph you can see the wreck of the mining ship Ragnar's Rock close to one of the monoliths and two more are on an arc here and here.”

Vi-k'tr droned on with his briefing but many members of the Acquisition Service had speculative looks on their faces; a field mission that could be the find of the century!

# Triad Institute of Technology; Acquisition Service



## Background

Triad Institute of Technology (TIT) was established by decree of the Council of Worlds to be a research center independent of mega corp control. Its idyllic campus includes a beautiful mall and gardens spread over several city blocks in New Hope, the capitol of Triad. Triadians are immensely proud that Triad won out over Gran Quivera for the location of the institute.

The mandate that TIT is to be free of direct mega corp influence is aimed at the issue of control. Mega corporations direct research according to what is considered profitable. The institute, officially at least, directs research based on academic considerations. Being federally funded, TIT often must invest resources toward research for the benefit of Star Law, Space Fleet and Land Fleet. The upside is that the institute can occasionally call on these and other federal organizations for assistance in the pursuit of its aims.

Note: TIT gaining help from other federal organizations is not the same as a Star Law marshal commandeering a space ship in the pursuit of a criminal. The cross agency assistance usually requires written requests, bureaucratic review and time consuming coordination with said agency.

The fact that the institute is independent of the mega corps does not mean that the mega

corps is not involved. Triad is the headquarters for Cassidine Development Corporation (CDC) and Nesmith Enterprises of Triad (NET), both with heavy investments in the high tech field. Surprisingly many mega corps have established grants and endowments, for the university, recognizing that highly trained researchers and scientist graduating yearly is a benefit to their research programs. CDC, NET, and even Streel have become significant patrons of the institute. Pan Galactic Corporation, which supported the bid for Gran Quivera to host the institute, has not. In fact PGC's Artifact Research and Development Team has become a significant competitor of the Acquisition Service.

The Acquisition Service works directly for the museum portion of the Institute. They acquire and authenticate artifacts as well as negotiate for collections in private hands to be loaned to the institute's museum. The service is made up of scientist, technicians, adventurers and what one might even call mercenaries. Their duties range from the mundane; investigating counterfeiters, to the exciting; discovering alien artifacts on strange new worlds.

The service has at its disposal the research capabilities of the institute as well as a modest inventory of equipment. For most assignments it contracts for interstellar transport on commercial vessels. If a mission is believed to be of significant importance a chartered vessel maybe provided. Rather than transport vehicles from Triad the service relies on locally rented vehicles unless traveling beyond the known Frontier.

Members of the Acquisition Service have the benefit of free training at the institute if it's a skill that the referee rules is taught there. For example laser weapons marksmanship would not be while computer sciences would. In addition the service provides its teams with a credit line to cover mission expenses. Team members who are qualified (i.e. they have weapons skills) have a federally issued gun permit allowing them to possess and transport most pistols and rifles on interstellar transports. They still need to follow local laws and check proscribed weapons, like rifles on planets like Clarion. While it would be frowned upon for the team to walk around armed for razor teeth in settled areas it is recognized that security precautions need to be taken in wilderness and unexplored areas.

## **TIT: Acquisition Service Personnel**

The following non player characters are part of the administration and support structure of the Acquisition Service. Players will have opportunity to interact with them at the beginning of an adventure and possibly later on as communication links allow. They're provided as a cast for the referee to set the stage for the adventure and provide limited guidance.

### **Dajana Juranac; Director**

Human Female, Level 5, Abilities 55%, Age 40

**Bio:** Dajana's family comes from Croatian stock that eventually settled on Lossend, Timeon to farm. Dajana was expected to follow through on a semi-arranged marriage but fled to Cassidine, working her passage on a freighter. She worked her way up to lower

management within a subsidiary of the CDC before taking advantage of a corporate training program. She worked within a CDC research division for another 7 years before cashing in her profit sharing to attend Zebulon University.

She's attained her position with the institute on drive and ability but is not a neophyte in the area of academic politics and in-fighting, having seen it all before in the corporate world. She does not encourage too much familiarity with her subordinates and often presents a severe no nonsense persona. Despite that, she cares for everyone who works for her, returning loyalty for loyalty, and is unafraid to go to bat for them.

### **Vi-k'tr ("Victor"); Accountant**

Vrusk male, Level 2, Abilities 40%, Age 25

**Bio:** The offspring of vrusk pirates, Vi-k'tr was raised by humans on Clarion, after the Royal Marines captured a vrusk pirate ship. With all the adult pirates killed and no out system vrusk trade house interested in taking the orphan, Vi-k'tr ended up a ward of the Crown and was fostered to a working class family. Never really fitting in he's long felt like a misfit. In recent years he's become interested in his vrusk roots and become an amateur historian of the vrusk hive period (treat as level 1 scholar on this period if needed). He's been building an impressive personal collection of hive period artifacts, art and literature.

At the institute he's found his place in the universe becoming extremely loyal to the board of directors. His loyalty to the institute's board leads him to be very diligent and frugal with the institute's money. This can set him at logger heads with the action team of the Acquisition Service as he tries to only disburse just enough funds with little wiggle room to do the mission. He's also a bit anal about wanting a full account of expenses and equipment post mission.

### **Dr. Tollon of Terledrom; Professor/Researcher**

Dralasite, neuter, Level 6, Abilities 40% (reduced due to age), Age: 221

**Bio:** Tollon attended universities on Terledrom, Gran Quivera, and the famous University of Zebulon. He has multiple doctorates and authored several books on a wide variety of subjects. Semi-Retired from teaching, Dr. Tollon has been assigned to the Acquisition Service with its less strenuous demands due to his age. He still fills in as a guest lecturer and substitute professor at the institute but his primary duty is as advisor the Acquisition Service.

At his age he's turned neuter and is anticipating his 222nd budding day. He's jolly and quick to laugh, often inordinately fascinated by the least little discovery. He has a habit of beginning any exposition with the corniest joke he can think of.

### **Sanlein Garu; Conservator**

Yazirian female, Level 3, Abilities 45%, Age: 35

**Bio:** Born and raised on Hentz, Sanlein attended the University of Zebulon for post graduate work. Relieved from the oppressive atmosphere of Hentz society she never returned. She's worked with a number of smaller museums, particularly with organizing

and setting up new exhibits. When the organization of the Triad Institute of Technology was announced she came to Triad and campaigned for a job.

She's not vocal against the Family of One but has been dabbling in the alternative yazirian religion known as Bajorism. She's a technical expert with a knack for understanding out of date computer code.

*Notes on NPC stats-* rather than detail lots of stats that may never get used, each character is assigned a general level that represents the level of the NPC's principle skills and a general level for ability scores. Simply use the listed score for any dice roll that requires the actual ability score. If skills levels for secondary skills are required for these NPCs use 1/2 the stated character level. Each NPC can be considered to be carrying equipment that the referee needs them to carry.