

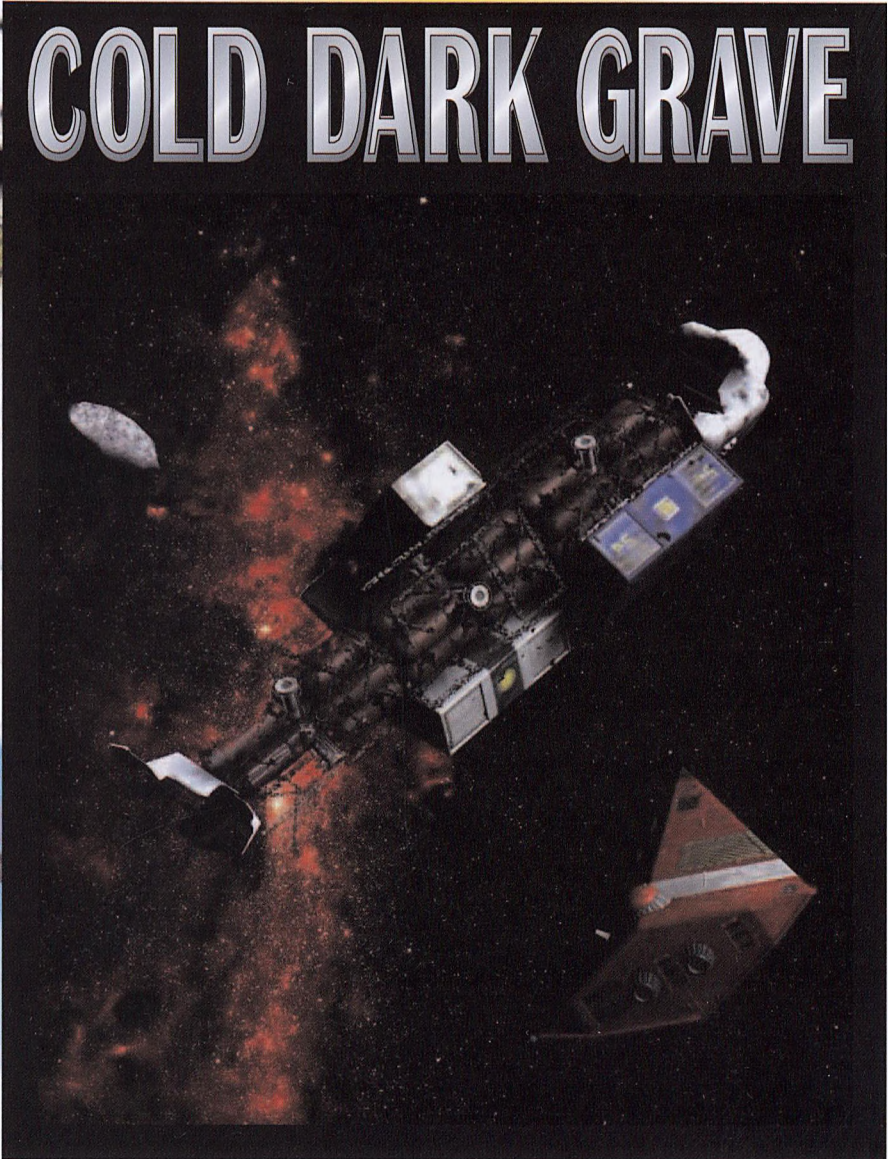
An adventure for

Traveller



Suitable for use with *all* Traveller rule sets

COLD DARK GRAVE



COLD DARK GRAVE

An adventure for

TRAVELLER®

Science fiction roleplaying in the far future

"Still nothing on the scan?"

"Go burn a drive somewhere!"

"Hey, don't get so hassled – it's out there somewhere."

"Yeh, well it's like the ninetyeth time you've asked."

"Look, I am the guy who's bank-rolling this."

"Look, I'll find your star-damned ship – if it's out there."

"Sure, sure, I know everyone has total faith in you Ryanne."

"Well, you can certainly... hold it..."

"What?"

"There's a new echo... hold on, I'll correlate with the tender config..."

"And?!"

"Looks like it's the Deutsche Post... and if these returns aren't being confused by debris, it looks like it's pretty intact."

"So the crates should still be on board! Great! How long to get us there?"

"It's still a good few hours away. We don't want to burn too bright or we might attract the attention of any cruisers patrolling the battle graveyard. I guess now would be a good time to tell us just what is in these crates that makes them so valuable, eh?"

"You know the contract – that's between me and our buyer."

"Hmmm... oh dear... scan's resolved a bit better. Let's just say the ship doesn't look like it's quite as intact as I thought..."

- Neal Slessinger and Ryanne Di Pilla of *Sydni's Search*

Contents

Introduction	3
Game Master's Overview	4
Rules	7
Characters	9
Scenario 1: The Proposal	15
Scenario 2: A Week in Space	20
Scenario 3: Finding the Needle	22
Scenario 4: Coming Aboard	25
Scenario 5: The Trap Is Sprung	30
Scenario 6: Heading for Home	35
Neal's Secrets	36
<i>Deutsche Post</i>	37
Player Handouts	38
Yres Neighbourhood	39
Yres Star System	39
Yres	41
<i>Sydni's Search</i>	43

COLD DARK GRAVE

"Look, I'll find your star-damned ship – if it's out there..."

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and – of course – **Dominic Mooney**.

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This is the second printing, with a few minor corrections due to too many late nights working on the first printing (which was only printed, stapled and cropped on the afternoon of taking it down to Conception 2007 where it was launched). Note that references to the T20 rule set on pp.7-8 are intended as guidance only. None of the material in this book is regarded in any manner as open gaming content.

BITS

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Introduction

Cold Dark Grave concerns a salvage mission undertaken by a small asteroid mining team in order to save their family-owned company from financial doom.

Format

This book is written for a Traveller referee or "Games Master" (GM). The adventure is divided into a series of "scenarios", presented in chronological order, although the scenarios may be adapted, removed or re-ordered to fit with the manner in which the players react to the storyline.

Scene-setting text to be read, paraphrased or otherwise conveyed to the players is shown as:

Example text to be read to the players.

Sidebars are used to present data relevant to particular scenarios; the latter part of this book (p.39 onwards) holds general Library Data which is readily available to the player-characters from background knowledge or computer searches.

Background

This adventure can be set at any point after the Imperium's Fourth war with the Zhodani; added tension may be introduced by setting it just before or after the Fifth Frontier War.

Dates: For the purposes of this scenario, the start date is assumed to be 017-1114, i.e. the seventeenth day of the year 1114 of the Third Imperium. However, it is perfectly feasible to translate this adventure to almost any other timeline by changing the details surrounding the salvaged ship and the battle in which it was 'lost'.

Location: This adventure begins at Yres in the Regina subsector of the Spinward Marches. However, it can be transposed to any star system which has suitable asteroids to mine and a nearby historical space battle site.

Author's Notes

Cold Dark Grave was first published as the BITS tournament adventure *From a Cold Dark Grave* for Gen Con UK 2005. This book extends the original adventure, but can still be run as a tournament (see "Play Options" to the right); if desired, the players can then be graded (and rewarded!) according to roleplaying ability.

Characters

Six pregenerated characters are provided on pp.9-14 with the appropriate mix of skills and personalities to create an interesting game. Alternatively, you may choose to use existing or new characters, either asteroid miners or perhaps a small merchant crew – the key points are that they should have suitable spacer skills for this adventure and can be placed in a position (cashflow or otherwise) where they are forced to undertake it. Where necessary, you should modify the adventure (descriptions, events, etc.) to suit the type and number of PCs.

For less than six players, you can remove a PC, each player can run multiple characters, or you can run some as NPCs. If only five PCs are to be played, remove Miles Bowman; for only four PCs, also remove Enri Wu, or run Neal Slessinger as an NPC. If fewer PCs are run, you should adjust the number of opponents as appropriate.

Neal Slessinger's role in this adventure is key! He should be played by an experienced player (who can spin a good tale and does not mind being the 'bad guy') or you should run him as an NPC. In the latter case you will have to work harder to avoid suspicion falling on Neal too early in the game (players are typically more suspicious of NPCs than of fellow player-characters).

Play Options

This adventure was originally designed as a tournament, so you can run it either as a fast-running game of 4-5 hours gaming time, or allow it to build more slowly over multiple gaming sessions, perhaps having the PCs undertake one or more asteroid mining adventures before running this particular scenario. Suggestions to assist tournament play are marked as follows:

✧ *Tournament play suggestion.*

As always, it's up to you how closely you follow the plot lines given; feel free to adapt the adventure to fit your players and campaign style.

Alternative Plots

The way this adventure plays out can be varied enormously depending upon how much information Neal Slessinger is given at the outset: see *A Traitor* in their *Midst...* on p.6 for details of alternative ways to run the scenario.

Game Master's Overview

Cold Dark Grave

An overview of this adventure with guidance on running it as a tournament.

Overview

This adventure concerns a hard-up Seeker crew who must take on a risky salvage operation in order to avoid imminent bankruptcy. However, the cargo they are tasked to recover is more valuable than they realise and their patrons don't want any 'loose ends' after the mission...

The Good Guys

The player characters (PCs) are employees of a small, privately owned, family mining concern – Ernsteyn Industrial Materials (EIM) – based on the orbital starport of Yres in the Regina subsector of the Spinward Marches.

There is a general recession on Yres, due to frontier trade issues and the ever-present threat of further war. In addition, Ernsteyn and other small mining companies are under increasing pressure from Ling Standard Products (LSP) as this megacorporation has decided to 'muscle in' to the local market.

At the start of this adventure, Ernsteyn have just lost a valuable government contract to LSP, causing a cash flow crisis at a critical time when one of their two Type J Seekers (mining vessels) is undergoing expensive repairs.

Evan Ernsteyn, owner of EIM, is determined not to lay off his crews; it's taken him years to gain such an experienced team and he regards them all as friends. However, he simply doesn't have any cash to fix the damaged Seeker.

The Bad Guys

The cash problems are exacerbated by sudden demands to pay protection money to the Slater Group – a nominal dockers' co-operative run with a steel fist by a core of ex-convicts headed by Christos Slater. Slater has effective control over all dock work at the orbital port. Previously they've ignored EIM, but sensing blood in the water, these dock-sharks have offered to 'invest' in EIM. In reality, this would be a virtual takeover: the firm would become part of a smuggling network owned by Slater's small-time gangsters, specialising in "small packets" (drugs, gun-running, etc.)

In his efforts to find a quick source of cash, Evan is approached by an old colleague and current investor Neal Slessinger (one of the PCs). Neil is a Senior Administrator in the Starport

Authority (SPA) whose personal responsibilities include registration and monitoring of mining concessions and operations. He claims to have a one-off job that will solve all their problems...

The Sting

Neal has details of the course of a 'merchant' vessel that was destroyed in the Fourth Frontier War and lost deep space near Yres, having been totally abandoned by its crew.

He has negotiated a contract from the SPA for salvage of specific items from the ship, and has agreed a collaborative charter with Evan to recover the vessel's contents. This mission will require the remaining Jump-capable Seeker.

However, all is not as it seems. Neal is no longer a friend of the family or business. He has become an owned creature of the Slater Group, won over by the power they wield and the bribes Christos has paid him to ensure the group's shady dealings aren't investigated too closely.

EIM's loss of government contracts was secretly engineered by Neal, using his position of power to force the company into a position where he would be able to inject money into the business on behalf of Slater Group and so covertly take over the company without raising anyone's suspicions.

The Deutsche Post

An opportunity arose to speed up the EIM takeover when Slater's criminal associates came upon Tammias Franck, an elderly crewman from the IISS *Deutsche Post*. An "Earth Mail" class Fleet Tender, this ship was lost in the Battle of the Two Suns (the climactic battle of the Fourth Frontier War) some 30 years ago in 1084.

Given promises of a huge cash payment to "ease his retirement", Franck quickly revealed that, although the ship was badly damaged and the crew abandoned it, significant parts of the cargo holds remained intact. After further persuasion he admitted the cargo included a very valuable prize: prototype anti-matter warheads for field testing in the battle. These would be worth a small fortune on the black market: terrorists, Zhodani, Sword Worlders or even Vargr pirates would be likely to pay tens of megacredits for a single warhead.

As the senior logistics officer on the ship, Franck was one of very few onboard who had any knowledge of the shipment. He convinced Slater that the Imperial Navy were unlikely to have retrieved the warheads because (officially) the ship was supposed to have been scuttled using charges carried by all such vessels to prevent them falling into enemy hands. However, during the ship's evacuation Franck overheard the *Post's* captain cursing an electronics failure which had prevented correct arming of the explosives...

Subsequent surveys of the wrecks across the battlefield had been hampered by the amount of live ordnance drifting around, though small parts of the *Deutsche Post* had been recovered, leading the Navy to suppose the ship had been blown up.

Franck retained a good memory of the ship's position and course: when abandoned it had been accelerating away from the battlefield; using SPA navigation software, Neal eventually calculated that the *Post's* current position would now be millions of kilometres outside the main battlefield area (though still legally a war grave and therefore out of bounds for civilian 'salvage' operations).

Slater is desperate to get his hands on the ship. Even if the warheads are no longer intact, he believes it will contain other valuable military equipment. Franck won't be talking to anyone else now – Slater's thugs 'retired' him before he had the chance to enjoy his promised wealth. Yet Slater is worried the old man might have told his tale to others before he turned up at Yres starport.

Christos has instructed Neal to use his influence to get EIM's remaining Seeker out to the *Deutsche Post* and recover the 'packages', under the pretence that it is a legitimate salvage operation. The Seeker will Jump back from the tender to a prearranged rendezvous where it will be boarded by a corsair. This pirate ship is owned by Slater's cousin Arek Torp – a particularly unpleasant brigand who has been brought in because Slater has no ships immediately at his disposal. Arek has been given simple instructions: dispose of the crew but let Neal return to Yres orbital port with a tale of woe concerning a fatal explosion during the salvage operation which killed the rest of the crew. The Slater Group will then initiate legal action regarding EIM's contract defaults and debts, and forcibly take it over via a leveraged buy-out/merger.

Ideally, Slater would have preferred Arek to do this job on his own, but Arek's crew don't have sufficient space-work experience to perform the salvage and EIM are a deniable and expendable asset which conveniently allows Slater to "kill two Wuffles with one bullet" (as the saying goes).

Preparation

Let the players select their characters, then provide them with their 'background knowledge': their ship (pp.43-44) and the Yres system in which they all live and work (pp.39-42).

Take Neal's character aside and give him the his extra background and mission handouts (p.36). Be prepared to spend several minutes privately with Neal's player as he/she is likely to have questions about their role, background, etc.

✧ *Distribute the characters randomly to the players, but ensure an appropriate player gets Neal Slessinger (see Characters on p.3). Set the players a limit of 20 minutes to get familiar with the characters and background data.*

Scenario 1: The Proposal

The PCs learn of their financial misfortunes and Neal's proposal to save EIM. They have to equip their remaining ship (the Seeker *Sydni's Search*) with demountable fuel tanks to allow them to Jump out to the likely location of the *Deutsche Post* and return promptly.

✧ *Whatever approach the PCs choose to get the demountable tanks, ensure this takes no more than an hour of gaming time. If things are going slowly, use the Slater Group to threaten or to secretly assist them to speed things up.*

Scenario 2: A Week in Space

The PCs have a week to consider the task ahead once Neal has given them details of the ship they're to find. Of course, they'll probably want more information than he is willing to give.

✧ *Spend no more than 20 minutes on this and if necessary, help Neal through this – don't let the others lynch him this early in the game!*

Scenario 3: Finding the Needle

The *Sydni* exits Jump in deep space. It won't take the PCs long to realise they're very close to the site of the Battle of Two Suns, but it may take them a day or two to actually locate the *Post* (while dodging debris from the battle).

✧ *Spend no more than 20 minutes on this – if the sensor rolls are going badly wrong, fudge the results to ensure they find the ship! Use hazards such as live missiles to add tension.*

Scenario 4: Coming Aboard

Getting into the *Deutsche Post* and then getting out again with the cargo is a hazardous operation, but the PCs should have the right skills for the job provided they are careful.

The culmination of this scenario is the arrival of a Naval patrol ship, which will probably force the PCs to hastily Jump back to Yres, though they

may already have sufficient evidence of foul play that they decide to turn themselves in to the Navy.

- ✧ *This is a key part of the adventure, giving the players a chance to experience the dangers of EVA'ing to a tumbling derelict, so allow an hour for this section.*
- ✧ *If this looks like it's going to drag on, there are several threats you can use to increase tension and hurry them up: arrival of the Navy cruiser from the interdicted zone; the approach of a dormant missile which hits either the *Sydni* or *Deutsche Post*; or if really necessary, let them find the net of scuttling charges spread throughout the tender and imply that they have triggered an anti-tamper system, starting a countdown to destroy the ship!*

Scenario 5: The Trap Is Sprung

The PCs have probably used the second Jump tape to return to Yres. Investigating the crates at this point should confirm their concerns that they are in big trouble. Arriving back in Yres, they find themselves deep in the outer asteroid belt with a pirate ship waiting to 'welcome' them aboard.

This could easily be the end of the PCs unless they have a cunning plan to hold off the pirates, or a Navy patrol ship comes to their assistance.

- ✧ *This is a potentially lethal end point, but for a one-off tournament that's fine, as it offers the PCs the opportunity to go out "guns blazing" in a really memorable Cassidy/Sundance finish.*
- ✧ *If Neal has already died, his player can run the pirates for you and get his own back!*
- ✧ *If they can think of a way to get the pirates to back off (e.g. proving that they have booby-trapped the anti-matter warheads) then they probably deserve to escape unscathed! If it doesn't look like the PCs are going to perish here, then make sure you leave at least 10 minutes to wrap things up in Scenario 6.*

If you wish to continue using these characters in future adventures, give them some help to survive this Scenario; it could even get to the point that they are prisoners aboard the pirate ship before the Navy turns up and rescues them!

Scenario 6: Heading for Home

If the PCs somehow survived the encounter with the pirates, or managed to avoid Scenario 5 altogether, then they still have to decide what to do with their ill-gotten gains – do they turn themselves in to the authorities, or try to make some profit from their venture (as any hopes of Neal paying them have likely evaporated by now).

- ✧ *Surviving this adventure is quite a challenge, so ensure the players are congratulated on their achievement!!*

A Traitor in their Midst...

Neal Slessinger's player is unlikely to endear themselves to the other players, especially given play-testing showed that despite initial mis-trust of Neal, his lies were usually believed by his fellows as he was run by a player rather than by the GM.

This section provides possible alternatives for Neal's 'all-out baddy' role. Some of these options require you to modify his handouts (p.36).

1. Decide just what Slater has revealed to Neal about the salvage contents: anti-matter warheads, precious metals, or has he refused even to Neal what he's recovering?
2. Tell Neal's player he's the one who originated this salvage idea (actually, Slater was still behind it, but he fed the data to Neal such that he doesn't realise he's being manipulated).
3. Tell Neal's player the second Jump tape will return to Yres orbital for Slater to unload the crates at the docks. Neal will then be as surprised as the others in Scenario 5.
4. As 2, but have Arek ordered to kill Neal as well as the *Sydni* crew (Arek should let this slip early enough for Neal to decide he should help rather than hinder the other PCs).
5. As 2, but tell Neal's player this mission is for Naval Intelligence. The 'agents' employing him are actually two of Slater's best con-artists, but Neal genuinely believes the salvage is a covert but perfectly legal Navy operation.
6. Neal is actually a good guy whose work for Slater is driven purely by fear and blackmail. He can choose to reveal all to the other PCs at some point (though not too early in the scenario – his fear of Slater runs very deep).
7. LSP are behind all this in some way...

Player Materials

For the sole purpose of running this adventure, you are permitted to photocopy the character data (pp.9-14) and all pages marked as handouts (specifically pp.36-44).

Bibliography

For additional information about starports:

- *Starports*, Steve Jackson Games, 2000.
- For additional background data:
 - *Supplement 3 The Spinward Marches*, GDW, 1979, pp.4-5, 12-13.
 - *Fifth Frontier War*, GDW, 1981.
 - "TNS (Revisited)", *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society #19*, GDW, 1984.
 - *Behind the Claw*, Steve Jackson Games, 1998; including errata at: www.sjgames.com/errata/gurps/traveller-behind-the-claw.html.

Given the plethora of Traveller rule sets available, it's difficult to avoid rules-specific information in an adventure, but this section sets out how we try to keep things simple whatever the rule set that you prefer to use.

Rules

Wherever possible, this adventure presents tasks and other gaming information in a generic, rules-agnostic manner. In general, 'Classic' Traveller (CT), MegaTraveller (MT), Traveller: The New Era (TNE) and Marc Miller's Traveller (T4) all share similar attribute ranges, skill names and task systems, whereas GURPS Traveller (GT) and d20 Traveller (T20) use different attributes, skill names and tasks.

In this book, tasks are presented using the **BITS Generic Task System** and NPCs are described using the **BITS Generic NPC System**.

All other information is described first for the 'common' (CT, MT, T4) versions of Traveller, with any clarification or translation for other rule sets given afterwards *in italics*. For example an Education of 10 (for CT, etc.) would be listed as *EDU 10 (GT: IQ 14)*, because GT uses IQ instead of Education, and Edu 10 roughly translates to a GT IQ of 14.

Care should be taken not to confuse skills, e.g. Navigation in early rule sets referred to interstellar navigation, whereas in T4 and GT this skill was renamed Astrogation and Navigation referred instead to planet-bound mapping. This adventure always uses the *later* definitions.

This adventure avoids rule-specific equipment or statistics, so weapons, armour and other kit is only mentioned by name – please refer to your preferred rule set for the technical details (as damage, weight and other factors change depending upon rules system).

Tasks

The **BITS Generic Task System** provides a common ground for all rule sets, by defining one set of difficulty ratings (conveniently similar to MT, TNE and T4) with corresponding task modifiers for CT and GT, and target rolls for T20, as shown in Table 1. (Suggested improvements to the T4 task system were at one time tagged "T4.1" and are included here for completeness.)

Task definitions are given at appropriate points in this adventure to assist you, but you should modify task difficulties as appropriate to the situation, skills and equipment employed by the PCs. Simple tasks are included within the text, e.g. "make a **Difficult Recon (GT: Tracking)** roll". Where a more complex task roll is required, it uses the following format:

To locate a safe path through the swamp:

>**Difficult Recon (GT: Tracking)**, or

>**Difficult Hunting**, or

>**Formidable Survival**

- +1 Difficulty if running.
- -1 Difficulty if moving cautiously.

Spectacular Success: As Success, and the PC can maintain a fast jogging speed.

Success: A safe path is found, but the PC's progress is slowed to a walk.

Failure: Finding a safe path is slow and difficult. This task must be repeated to avoid getting lost.

Spectacular Failure: The PC has wandered off the path and into an area of quicksand...

TABLE 1: TASK DIFFICULTIES

BITS Task Difficulty	T4 Task Difficulty	T4.1 Task Difficulty	GT Mod	TNE Task Difficulty	MT Task Difficulty	CT Mod	T20 Task Difficulty
Easy	Easy (Auto)	Easy (1D)	+6	Easy	Simple	-4	Easy (10)
Average	Average (2D)	Average (2D)	+3	Average	Routine	-2	Average (15)
Difficult	Difficult (2.5D)	Difficult (2.5D)	0	Difficult	Difficult	0	Hard (20)
Formidable	Formidable (3D)	Formidable (3D)	-3	Formidable	Difficult	+2	Difficult (25)
Staggering	Impossible (4D)	Staggering (4D)	-6	Impossible	Formidable	+4	Formidable (30)
Hopeless	(5D)	Hopeless (5D)	-9	Impossible	Impossible	+6	Challenging (35)
Impossible	(6D)	Impossible (6D)	-12	Impossible	Impossible	+8	Incredible (40)

+1 Difficulty indicates a harder task (e.g. an Average task becomes a Difficult task); -1 Difficulty means the task becomes easier (e.g. a Staggering task becomes Formidable).

The means by which spectacular (*GT: critical*) success or failure are achieved are defined by the rule set used, but guidance as to the outcome in such cases is given in the task description (see the example on the previous page).

Similarly, special tasks (opposed, co-operative, hasty, cautious, etc.) should be handled according to the rule set used.

As always, these are guidelines: you may alter any task roll as appropriate to enhance the game.

Example

Maria Charles is forging a complex document which you decide is a Staggering task. Maria has *Forgery-4* (*GT: Forgery-16; T20: Forgery-18*) and *INT 10* (*TNE: INT 9; GT/T20: IQ 14*).

CT: Task success is normally $2D + Skill \geq 8$. Maria requires $2D + Forgery \geq 12$ ($8 + 4$ for Staggering difficulty). Alternatively, apply the target modifier as a negative on the dice roll, i.e. $2D + 4$ (skill) $- 4$ (Staggering difficulty) ≥ 8 .

MT: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to MT's Formidable (15+), thus the task is $2D + Skill + (Stat / 5) \geq 15$. For Maria this is: $2D + 4 + 2 \geq 15$.

TNE: Staggering difficulty is equivalent to TNE's Impossible, thus the task is $d20 \leq (Skill + Stat) \times \frac{1}{4}$. For Maria this is $d20 \leq 3$, i.e. ($INT 9 + skill 4$) / 4, rounded down.

T4: Maria requires $4D \leq INT + Forgery$. (Note that T4's Staggering rating of 3.5D is ignored.)

GT: Maria requires $3d6 \leq Forgery + Target$ Modifier, i.e. $3d6 \leq 16 - 6$.

T20: Maria requires $d20 + 18 \geq 30$.

The exact likelihood of success varies with rule system, but in our experience these rules are adequate for gaming purposes.

Non-Player Characters

The **BITS Generic NPC System** is intended to allow us to describe NPCs without needing a whole page each to cover the multiple rules sets

available for Traveller. In reality, the majority of NPCs do not require detailed descriptions with every attribute and skill listed – it is usually their appearance, motivation and aims which are important to an adventure (and a good gaming session), rather than a long list of gaming stats.

In this adventure the abilities of most NPCs are summarised by allocating them an overall skill level from Novice to Elite (as shown in Table 2).

NPC Attributes:

- 1 Attribute at Maximum level;
- 2 Attributes at Average level (*GT: 1 attribute*);
- Other attributes randomly distributed between Average and Minimum.

NPC Skills:

- 1-2 Skills at Maximum level;
- 2-5 Skills at half Maximum Level;
- Other Skills randomly rolled as needed to see if they are possessed at a minimal level.

Note: For T20, use the above as a rule of thumb as there is no simple means of defining the skill and feat combinations available.

Example

For example, an Experienced (●) NPC soldier created for a CT game is rated 3/9/11 for min/avg/max attributes. Following the rule above, they might have maximum Endurance, average Strength and Dexterity and lower Intelligence, Education and Social, giving a Universal Personality Profile (UPP) of 99B674 (the 6, 7 and 4 were selected at random in the range 3 to 8).

This NPC would have two key skills (say Rifle and Stealth) at level 2 and several lesser skills at level 1; no need to list these – if the soldier needs to make a skill roll, and it's a skill they ought to have because of their background, then give them level 1 in it. For less common skills, they might have level 0, or no skill at all (decide yourself or roll a d6 – on a 6 they have the skill).

For GT, we select one less attribute at average level, so this NPC might become ST 14, DX 11, HT 16, IQ 8, with Rifle and Stealth skills at 15.

Note that where felt appropriate by the authors, GT data does not always follow the simple conversion guidelines given in the GT rule book.

TABLE 2: NON-PLAYER CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES AND SKILL LEVELS

Rule Set:	CT, MT, T4		TNE**	GURPS			T20***	
Skill Level	Attributes*	Skill#	Attributes*	Attributes*	Skill#	Level	Skill#	
Elite (★)	4 / 11 / 15	4-5	3 / 10 / 14	7 / 17 / 20	19-25	15-20	18-23	
Veteran (☆)	3 / 10 / 12	3-4	2 / 9 / 11	6 / 16 / 18	16-18	9-14	12-17	
Experienced (●)	3 / 9 / 11	1-2	2 / 8 / 10	4 / 14 / 16	13-15	5-8	8-11	
Novice (○)	2 / 8 / 9	0-1	1 / 7 / 8	3 / 12 / 14	8-12	1-4	4-7	

*Minimum / average / maximum. **Skill as CT,MT,T4. ***Attributes as per GURPS. #Maximum.

Six pregenerated characters are provided with personalities and motivations for this to be run as a “pick up and play” adventure. See “Characters” on p.3 for more details. You are permitted to copy these characters to distribute to the players (though it may be preferable to transcribe them on to separate character sheets).

Karin Ernsteyn

Belter, daughter of Evan Ernsteyn. Human Female, Age 33, born Yres/Regina, 57-1081.

UPP 7779A8, 1.72 m, 64 kg.

Astrogation-1, Bribery-1, Broker-2, Carousing-1, Computer-1, Fast Talk-1, Leadership-1, Mechanics-1, Pilot-1, Prospecting-2, Sensors-1, Ship's Guns-1, Streetwise-2, Survey-1, Trader-2, Vac Suit-2.

GT: ST 10, DX 10, IQ 12, HT 10, 5' 8", 141 lb.

Astrogation-13, Astrography-13, Carousing-13, Computer Ops-13, Electronic Ops (Sensors)-11, Fast Talk-13, Gunner (Ship's Lasers)-12, Leadership-13, Merchant-15, Piloting (Spacecraft)-11, Mechanic-11, Prospecting-13, Streetwise-15, Vac Suit-13.

Advantages: Ally Group (Father owns company); Intuition; Reputation (Respected belter). Status 1.

Disadvantages: Proud (of your father's company).

Items: DataPad (powerful handheld computer); Nice (rented) apartment; Cr70,000 (invested in EIM); Cr5,000 (cash).

Background: You were born to Evan and Sydni Ernsteyn during the expansion of their mining business shortly after their marriage. They'd pooled resources, moving from sole Seeker operations to a small co-operative. Success followed with government contracts after the 1084 False War. Sadly your mother died in childbirth when you were eight, partly due to complications that couldn't be handled out on a starship. This strengthened the close bond with your father, who tended to dote on you and paid for your University education.

After three years studying Business and Mining Technologies, you joined the family business when you graduated. You quickly picked up the practical aspects of the job and soon became your father's 'right hand', helping manage the business. You're practically inseparable, though you get the impression sometimes your father worries that you're not getting enough out of life for yourself.

Miles Bowman is like a favourite uncle to you: when you were young, you called him Uncle Miles (sometimes you still do that by accident) – you have fond memories of him taking you to grav ocean-races. When you began working for your father, it was hard at first to have such a close friend working for you, but everything has worked out well and you feel safe leaving much of the direct operations management to Miles, as he's worked for EIM for 30 years (incidentally, you know he's older than he looks, as he uses anagathics).

Ryanne 'Needles' Di Pilla is a free spirit whom you met through some old university friends. She had been 'downsized' from the IISS after the Fifth Frontier War, but you recruited her for her sensors expertise. She's a wild party animal when in dock, and tries to drag you out on her social jaunts.

Joseph Michael Accrington is chief engineer. He joined about the same time as you and is very competent (you wonder what keeps him in EIM; he could easily get a better job elsewhere). He is a very private individual but you know he's from a Solomani exile family, and should by rights be called 'Sir'. He's mentioned resigning from the Imperial Navy some years before the Fifth Frontier War but wasn't called up for the reserves and no one has pressed him for the reasons behind this.

Enri Wu is a great kid, a few years younger than you and once quite attractive but he suffered a crippling injury in the IISS. In zero-g, however, he has honed his skills and is a fantastic asset.

Neal Slessinger is an old family friend, a big investor in EIM and has assisted the company through his SPA position. Unfortunately, as you've got older you've realised he's a slime-ball; he's tried to hit it off with you before now, even though his thirty-something looks belie the anagathics he uses – he's actually as old as your father. He may be a big shareholder, but it's still your family's company!

Miles Bowman

Belter, Ex-Scout – Human Male, Age 54 (apparent 46), born Yres/Regina, 262-1060.
UPP 68B986, 1.83 m, 90 kg.

Administration-2, Astrogation-2, Brawling-1, Bribery-1, Business-2, Carousing-2, Communications-2, Electronics-1, Engineering-1, Fast Talk-1, First Aid-1, Gambling-2, Grav Craft-2, Gravitics-2, Jack-of-all-Trades-2, Leadership-2, Mechanic-1, Pilot-4, Pistol-1, Prospecting-4, Sensors-1, Ships Boat-3, Streetwise-1, Survival-1, Trader-2, Vac Suit-1.

GT: ST 9, DX 11, IQ 11, HT 13, 6' 0", 199 lb.

Administration-13, Astrogation-13, Brawling-10, Bribery-12, Carousing-13, Elec Ops (Comms)-13, Elec Ops (Sensors)-12, Electronics-12, Engineer (Starship)-12, Fast Talk-12, First Aid-12, Gambling-13, Guns (Pistol)-12, Leadership-13, Mechanic-12, Merchant-13, Pilot (Contragrav)-13, Pilot (Spaceship)-14, Pilot (Starship)-15, Prospecting-15, Streetwise-12, Survival-12, Vac Suit-12.

Advantages: Alertness +1; Ally Group (close friend of the Ernsteysn); Common Sense; Contacts (you know pretty much every Belter and SPA official in the Yres system).

Disadvantages: Intolerance (of fools); Sense of Duty (absolute dedication to the company).

Items: DataPad (powerful handheld computer); Average bachelor apartment (owned); Extensive electronic and mechanical tool kits; Ex-Scout service issue Snub Pistol (3 clips @10 rounds: 2 tranq, 1 HEAP); Cr 90,000 (invested in EIM); Cr 200,000 (invested in Bowman Racing); Cr 4,000 (cash).

Background: You became a Belter when you were young, back in 1078; it was the biggest opportunity in Yres at the time with many firms recruiting, encouraged by the government's preferential grants of licenses to small firms rather than megacorps. You'd barely learned your trade when the False War broke out and you were drafted into the reserves, assigned to the Scouts because of your familiarity with starships. Your operational experience was classified – spent in the 'Deep Black' at the edge of systems, listening to Zhodani and Vargr sensor traffic. You don't talk about this, but you developed a hatred for Vargr after listening to the atrocities of their pirate attacks on merchants.

When peace broke out you returned to mining, signed on with EIM and found a niche, where you've grown comfortably through some 30 years to become Chief Pilot, responsible for day-to-day operations. Your main passion is ocean grav racing – you piloted some mean gravsters yourself in your youth but Yres' fluorine-tainted oceans are pretty dangerous so in later years you have sunk much of your money into a racing team (with some modest success). You've also invested in EIM, to provide your retirement income, but have had to sell quite a lot of these holdings to pay for your anagathics, which you've been taking for about eight years now. You have a semi-serious long term relationship with Anni, chief mechanic for the race team.

Karin Ersteyn is like a daughter to you. You were always very close to the Ernsteysn, and when Sydni died, you helped bring up her daughter Karin. You fondly remember the little girl you used to bounce on your knee and take to the races with Anni. You've watched her grow up into a real professional, and you're proud of her... though she does seem a bit too focused on work rather than her social life!

Ryanne 'Needles' Di Pilla is undeniably damn good at her job, her nickname referring to her wizardry with sensor suites. However, you're not convinced she is a good person for Karin to socialise with, given the latter's somewhat restricted social 'experience'. Ryanne is a party animal, and the crowd she mixes with could be a bad influence. You wouldn't have let her into the company if Karin hadn't recruited her.

Joseph Michael Accrington ('Joey', as you call him behind his back) is a superb engineer but you can't understand why he stays with the company, as he could easily get a better job; perhaps he likes feeling he's part of a family. You know he had a messy divorce in his past, which he only mentions when drunk. Professionally, you respect him, but in the last 12 years he's never really come out of his shell.

Enri Wu is a great kid, a few years younger than Karin. It's a shame that he was injured so badly in the Scout Service, but he's a fantastic asset in zero-g. You know he doesn't need to work (he got a big fat payout on discharge) but you know the job makes him feel useful. Surprisingly, Joey recruited him after meeting him at a social do.

Neal Slessinger is an old family friend of the Ernsteysn and was one of the original investors in EIM. You think he's quite a good bloke and he shares your enthusiasm for the ocean grav races. He's even talked about investing in your team!

Ryanne “Needles” Di Pilla

Belter, Ex-Scout – Human Female, Age 31, born Yres/Regina, 88-1083.
UPP 8768A7, 1.77 m, 71 kg.

Astrogation-2, Carousing-3, Communication-1, Computers-1, Electronics-1, Fast Talk-1, Intrusion-1, Pilot-1, Pistols-1, Prospecting-2, Sensors-4, Streetwise-1, Survey-1, Vac Suit-2.

GT: ST 11, DX 10, IQ 12, HT 9, 5' 10", 157 lb.

Astrogation-14, Carousing-15, Computer Ops-13, Elec Ops (Comms)-13, Elec Ops (Sensors)-16, Electronics-13, Fast Talk-13, Guns (Pistol)-11, Locks-12, Pilot (Starship)-12, Prospecting-14, Streetwise-13, Survey-13, Vac Suit-12.

Advantages: Alertness +1; Combat Reflexes; No Hangover (somehow you never seem to suffer like your drinking colleagues!)

Disadvantages: Compulsive Carousing (if there's a party going on, then you want to be in on it – better still, drag along your colleagues so every has a great time!); Intolerance (of parental guidance); Obsession (desperate to earn the down-payment on your own Scout ship).

Items: WristPad (powerful wrist computer linked to eye lens); Body Pistol (5 clips @ 5 rounds); Multi-purpose knife/tool kit; Cr 150,000 (Banked); Cr 1,500 (cash).

Background: Born in the middle of the False War to middle-class parents, you were a bright child and everyone had high expectations for you. However, by university you had become tired of your parents' continuous drive to achieve academic excellence and began missing your law classes to attend science and space courses and develop your social life. Having flunked the first year your family pulled strings to get you a job in a local corporation, but the interviewer could see your heart wasn't in it and suggested you try the Scouts. Your parents despaired but it was the right choice for you and you spent the next eight years in the service until you became part of the financial cutbacks at the end of the Fifth Frontier War. You got a good payout and a ticket home to Yres but in your heart you were devastated that you had insufficient service to be eligible for detached duty and your own Type-S Scout.

At home you quickly became frustrated by your parents who never forgave you for going your own way. You rediscovered your old friends and got introduced to Karin, leading to your recruitment as a survey specialist for EIM four years ago. You quickly acquired the nickname “Needles” for the way you can spot rich ore pickings from even the most vague of sensor scans. Your aim in life now is to save enough money for a down-payment on your own Scout ship – if you can hit enough really big lodes, you get a share of the finder's fee. You have an active social life in port, though it's a little disturbing that so many of your friends are marrying and settling down; something you've avoided if only to annoy your estranged parents.

Karin Ersteyn is a great laugh... when she relaxes, which is almost never. She worries too much about work and needs to lighten up, so you take it as a personal mission to try to drag her along to 'see the lights' whenever the ship is docked (you're well known at the local bars).

Miles Bowman is a little strange: his mood swings between really friendly and resolutely stand-offish. If he wasn't with Anni – chief mechanic of the grav-craft team he owns, you'd have thought that he fancied you. Actually, for a man in his fifties, he's quite good looking. He's very defensive of Karin though – having known her since she was a child.

Joseph Michael Accrington needs a good dose of positive vibes to lighten up. He seems obsessed with the past, though just occasionally he remembers how to smile and can be a really nice guy.

Enri Wu is an ex-Scout and a good laugh – you get along like a house on fire, though after his accident in the Scouts, it's really only the wonders of grav support that he still gets about.

Neal Slessinger is a boring, shifty investor “suit” who thinks he's God's gift, thanks to his anagathics. Miles and Joseph have told you before not to bad-mouth Neal, but you don't trust him... he acts like he's some kind of playboy but he's just a puffed-up starport paper-pusher.

Joseph Michael Accrington

Belter, Ex-Merchant, Ex-Navy (Lieutenant) – Human Male, Age 42, born Yres/Regina, 122-1072.
UPP 877A9C, 1.78 m, 77 kg.

Administration-1, Broker-1, Carousing-1, Communications-1, Computer-1, Engineering-3, Environment Combat-1, Fencing-1, First Aid-1, Forensics-1, Gambling-1, Grav Craft-1, Instruction-1, Investigation-1, Liaison-2, Naval Architect-2, Pilot-2, Pistol-2, Prospecting-1, Ship Tactics-1, Ships Guns-1, Trader-1, Vac Suit-3.

GT: ST 11, DX 10, IQ 12, HT 10, 5' 10", 170 lb.

Administration-13, Carousing-13, Computer Ops-13, Criminology-13, Elec Ops (Comms)-13, Engineer (Starship)-12, First Aid-13, Free Fall-11, Gambling-13, Gunner (Ship's Lasers)-12, Guns (Pistol)-12, Merchant-13, Pilot (Contragrav)-11, Pilot (Starship)-12, Prospecting-13, Savoir-Faire-12, Shipbuilding (Starship)-14, Sword (Foil)-11, Tactics (Starship)-13, Teaching-13, Vac Suit-14.

Advantages: Acute Vision; Combat Reflexes; 3D Spatial Sense; G-Experience.

Disadvantages: Code of Honour (Noble and Naval Officer); Loner (though you now feel part of the EIM 'family', at heart you long for your real family); Secret (you don't talk about your past and resent anyone asking – if they do, you simply clam-up); Sense of Duty (to the Imperium).

Items: Auto Snub Pistol (5 clips @ 10 rounds: 3 x tranq, 2 x HEAP); Fencing Sabre (very finely crafted); DataPad (powerful handheld computer, contains family videos and pictures); Good quality apartment (owned); member of Traveller's Aid Society; Cr 200,000 (Invested in EIM); Cr 12,000 (cash/liquid assets).

Background: You are a divorced ex-naval officer who joined EIM 12 years ago. By rights, you should be called by your noble title as you are technically an Imperial knight. However, your fiefdom was lost over 100 years ago after the War of Solomani Liberty (the "Great War of Independence") when the former Solomani Sphere broke away from the Third Imperium. Your family fled as refugees and have been unable to return.

In 1090, rather than waiting in hope of regaining your title, you decided to join the Imperial Navy. Your career went well until you joined a group investigating naval ship accidents and spaceworthiness assessments. When one such enquiry forced a corrupt senior government official to resign, his patrons (local politicians) initiated a smear campaign against your team. Not only were you forced to resign your Lieutenant's commission but the 'repercussions' led to your wife leaving you: she now lives on Menorb with your (teenage) children, and the courts have refused you access to them.

You encountered Evan Ernsteyn at a TAS function while you were trying to drown your sorrows. He was a good listener and you quickly became close friends. You accepted his offer of the role of engineering manager for EIM and have finally found some comfort in the "big family" feeling of this company. You've invested heavily in EIM to re-build your financial reserves (most of your original fortune was absorbed by the divorce or put into a fund to support your children when they reach maturity). However, it's difficult not to think back to the wife and family that you've lost, so you have to keep yourself busy. You were also hurt that you were not re-activated for the naval reserve during the Fifth Frontier War – either your records, or someone who retained a grudge, were sufficient to stop you.

Karin Ersteyn is very professional and focused (probably too much for someone her age) and you have a lot of respect for her. You know her dad worries about her lack of social life and sometimes he has asked you to encourage her to take a break and socialise.

Miles Bowman is a good guy. You know he teases you behind your back, but you can rely on him, personally and professionally, though he does have a habit of pushing 'your' ship to its limits.

Ryanne 'Needles' Di Pilla is a crazy kid. You often wonder if your kids will grow up like her. Sometimes she enjoys herself a little too much – and you worry she could be a bad influence on Karin, but she's certainly a wizard at the sensor boards.

Enri Wu was someone you recruited yourself after he inspired you with his enthusiasm at a TAS meeting. He's demonstrated only too well his ability to overcome his crippling injuries to become a valuable team player. You wish you had the same positive outlook and drive that he's got.

Neal Slessinger is one of the company's shareholders. You've met him a few times, and the rumours about him in the TAS lounge aren't that good. Apparently, he mixes with a dodgy crowd and lives the high life. His investments must have done well – he has afforded anagathics from an early age.

Enri Wu

Belter, Ex-Scout – Human Male, Age 29, born Yres//Regina, 359-1085.

UPP 6B6994, 1.72 m, 69 kg.

Astrogation-1, Demolitions-2, Electronics-1, Environment Combat-1, Geology-2, Mechanics-1, Pilot-1, Pistol-1, Prospecting-1, Recon-1, Streetwise-1, Vac-Suit-3.

GT: ST 8, DX 15, IQ 12, HT 8, 5' 8", 151 lb.

Astrogation-13, Demolitions-14, Electronics-13, Free Fall-17, Geology-15, Guns (Pistol)-14, Mechanic (Starship drives)-13, Piloting (Starship)-13, Prospecting-13, Streetwise-13, Tracking-13, Vac Suit-17.

Advantages: Absolute Direction; Ambidexterity; G-Experience; 3D Spacial Sense; Strong Will.

Disadvantages: Disabled (crippled legs); Status -1.

Items: Auto Pistol with 4 clips @ 15 rounds; Grav Support Chair (you require this as you cannot support your own weight in normal gravity); DataPad (powerful handheld computer); Traveller's Aid Society member; Cr 200,000 (invested in EIM); Cr 20,000 (cash/liquid assets).

Background: You joined EIM a year ago, after your discharge from the IISS, which resulted from the crippling injuries you received when a seismic charge (for analysing subsurface geological structures) went off prematurely. Your legs and spine were peppered with shrapnel which caused sufficient nerve and muscle damage that even reconstructive microsurgery couldn't give you back their use.

However, you refused to have your legs replaced with prosthetic limbs, preferring to keep your bodily integrity and instead use a grav chair. The 'chair' is an advanced grav harness which keeps your legs folded in front of you (rather than dangling below you). Thankfully your upper body was unaffected and you retained your excellent dexterity and zero-g co-ordination. Though you need the 'chair' in normal gravity, in low-g situations you can float free of it and use your superior free-fall skills to move yourself around surprisingly well. You have a heavily customised space suit to handle your grav chair or – with some help – you can get out of your 'chair' and worm your way into a standard space suit, though you would need support until you reach a low-grav area.

When you met Joseph of EIM through a mutual friend in TAS, it took a long while to convince him of your potential, but repeated demonstrations of your free-fall capability eventually won him over. You have subsequently become a valued and popular crew member.

Karin Ersteyn seems rather up-tight, though you've only rarely worked directly with her and it can't be easy helping her father run a mining company like EIM. Ryanne says she's okay when she lets her hair down and she'd be quite attractive if she took the time to think about her appearance...

Miles Bowman is your boss. He can be a bit serious at times, but you get on well with him. He really knows his stuff and – somehow – still finds the time to run a grav watercraft team alongside his mining responsibilities. He's an ex-Scout himself, so knows what the Deep is like. He must also have liked risking his life in his youth to have raced over Yres' dangerous fluorine-laced oceans.

Ryanne 'Needles' Di Pilla is an ex-Scout, so you often find yourselves thinking in step. You really like her company, and wish you could get more of it, but you're usually on different ships. You know she's a wizard with sensors and good at picking the most profitable asteroids to mine.

Joseph Michael Accrington is a very private man who won't discuss his past, but he's a good guy – after all, he's the one that got you the job with EIM. You respect him for his technical knowledge.

Neal Slessinger is an up-and-coming bureaucrat in the starport authority. You've heard he thinks he's quite a ladies' man and he's got an unusually fancy lifestyle for an SPA official, thanks to careful investments which paid off when he was a lot younger. He's also got investments in EIM.

Neal Slessinger

SPA Official, Ex-Merchant – Human Male, Age 50 (34 apparent), born Yres/Regina, 202-1064.
UPP 69679A, 1.77 m, 88 kg.

Astrogation-1, Bribery-1, Broker-2, Chemistry-1, Communications-1, Computer-2, Dagger-2, Demolitions-1, Electronics-2, Environment Combat-1, Fast Talk-2, First Aid-1, Forgery-1, Gambling-1, Interrogation-1, Intrusion-2, Leadership-3, Perception-1, Pilot-1, Pistol-1, Sensors-3, Ships Guns-1, Stealth-2, Streetwise-2, Trader-2, Vac Suit-1.

GT: ST 9, DX 12, IQ 11, HT 9, 5' 10", 193 lb.

Astrogation-12, Bribery-12, Chemistry-12, Computer Ops-13, Demolitions-13, Elec Ops (Comms)-12, Elec Ops (Sensors)-14, Electronics (Starship)-13, Fast Talk-13, First Aid-12, Forgery-12, Free Fall-13, Gambling-12, Guns (Pistol)-13, Gunner (Ship's Lasers)-12, Interrogation-12, Knife-14, Leadership-15, Lockpicking-14, Merchant-14, Pilot (Starship)-13, Stealth-14, Streetwise-13, Vac Suit-12.

Advantages: Alertness; Ally Group (Special); Contacts (Starport Authority); Status 1.

Disadvantages: Callous; Greed; Selfish (it's quite simple: you look out for number one!)

Items: Auto Snub Pistol with 6 clips @ 20 rounds (4 x HEAP, 2 x Tranq); DataPad (advanced hand computer including salvage license for *Deutsche Poste*); Body Pistol with 2 clips @ 5 rounds (concealed, undetectable by weapons sensors); Memory Dagger (plastic belt buckle which resumes knife shape when struck very hard); Cr 250,000 (invested in EIM).

Background: You are a founder investor in Ersteyn Industrial Materials, having been an up-and-coming Starport Authority official at Yres Orbital when you met and befriended Sydni Ernsteyn. You quickly realised that she and her husband Evan were sharp operators with a lot of potential, who desperately needed cash to support their fledgling company. You invested almost everything you had into their work, in exchange for a substantial holding in the new company.

Since then, you've helped them out, putting contracts their way and easing their claim paperwork, i.e. generally protecting your investment. However, you've been pretty careful to ensure that no one can trace this back to you – it would lead to some painful investigations and probably your dismissal from the SPA.

Karin Ersteyn is a bit of a pain – you've known her since she was a kid and she's grown into a real belter, but she focuses solely on work; when you tried to seduce her a few years back she ignored the benefits you could bring to her and the company, and she turned you down in no uncertain terms. However, perhaps the enforced proximity of a small Seeker will give you another opportunity to prove to her what a good match you could be?

Miles Bowman has been around the port for years and you've known him most of that time, but somehow he's always seemed to act a bit morally superior in your presence, which is annoying. However, he does share your love of ocean grav racing (to the degree that you like to watch other people doing it – you'd never chance your own life on something that risky!); you've even hinted to him that you might invest in Miles' racing team.

Ryanne 'Needles' Di Pilla is (allegedly) an excellent sensor technician but you've not had any reason previously to get to know anything else about her.

Joseph Michael Accrington is a stuck-up ex-Navy type whose official investigation 12 years ago killed the careers of several government officials – one of whom is now a close colleague in the SPA.

Enri Wu is a cripple, though EIM must have some reason for keeping him on the team – perhaps there's some special government grant for such things? Frankly, if he couldn't handle himself well enough to avoid the accident that damaged his legs, you wonder how much of a liability he'll be now...

The Proposal

Scenario 1

The PCs learn their mining company has serious financial problems but a patron is offering a way to salvage their honour. However, there are technical (and other) difficulties to surmount before the group can get on their way.

1. Introductions

For tournament play, or if you simply want to get your players into the scenario quickly, use the following introductory text.

If you would prefer to introduce the PCs to the situation more gradually, role-play the meeting described below. The PCs are called into the EIM office for a meeting with their boss, Evan Ernsteyn (Karin's father). Ensure that the PCs show appropriate respect for Evan – they've worked for EIM for years and should all trust his judgment. Whatever the discussion that occurs, the outcome is predetermined: Evan has decided that Neal's offer is the only viable option for saving his company and – as the majority shareholder – it's his decision that counts (though he'll accept constructive suggestions from his staff).

This is a good opportunity for the players to get into their roles.

You've just come out of a meeting that has shocked you all. You knew that the business climate was bad, but until you all put it together you hadn't realised just how much of a knife's edge the company had been balanced on.

Miles knew that the loss of *Evan's Endeavour* to a drive failure would have repercussions for EIM's ability to meet some of the contracts that the company held, but he'd assumed that another vessel could be chartered in the short term to cover their commitments.

Joseph-Michael knew that the drive failure was bad news, but when he investigated he realised the damage was more extensive than first thought. The accompanying power surge had crippled the computer systems and a complete rebuild was needed. That wasn't going to be cheap – the cost for fixing the computer was several megacredits and needed to be carried out by professionals, so the ship had been put into a repair dock. What no one realised until too late was that the insurers had recently changed the clauses covering such incidents, so it would only pay out for the drive and the company would now have to pay for the computer repairs itself.

Karin knew that the company hadn't the money to cover this, not with the lost revenue from the

contracts that the *Endeavour* was now unable to fulfil. She also knew just how perilously close the finances were to the limit, with creditors demanding payment, and banking facilities being cut as the financial institutions pulled their horns in because of the current recession. Chartering an additional vessel simply wasn't an economically viable option, leaving only *Sydni's Search* to continue operations.

She hadn't expected the news her father Evan had given her just before the meeting. The company had received a demand from the local mob for protection money. "Oh yes", they said, "You can pay us in shares if you like". Accepting that offer would definitely put them in the euphemistically named 'small packet trade' – something none of them was willing to accept.

So, there was a major cashflow crunch. Commitments couldn't be met because of unforeseeable circumstances, but Evan refused to lay off staff. Instead he had negotiated with the other four staff for them to spend the next few weeks down on *Yres* taking unpaid shore leave.

Fortunately, one of the company's current shareholders had a proposal. Neal Slessinger, a senior starport administrator familiar to you all, had come across an opportunity for some legal work that should be profitable enough to keep the company in business. Evan had brought Neal into the meeting to explain...

Through Neal's work, he had become aware of a wrecked merchant vessel in deep space, lost since the Fourth Frontier War some 30 years ago. A search of records, and the asteroid impact survey database, had located the ship. According to insurance records it could have very valuable non-perishable cargo on board – precious metals and rarities in vacuum-sealed packages – all of which could be retrieved and sold for a significant profit under standard salvage law.

Neal was sufficiently sure of the prospective payback that he had offered to pay Evan a charter payment from his personal finances for up to 3 weeks' use of the *Sydni's Search*. He would then share the profits 50/50 with EIM.

If the operation was successful, Neal would also apply for full salvage rates for the ship, but that would have to be handled by a professional

salvage group because of the size of the ship in question.

Evan wanted the best crew he could put together in the circumstances, so he has selected you as the best team to pull this off.

Karin, his daughter, is to lead the mission. Miles will captain *Sydni's Search* with mission guidance from Neal, the patron. Joseph-Michael will be the engineer – his past experience of accident investigation could be advantageous. Enri and Ryanne are the two best mission specialists that the company has.

Neal has indicated that the salvage ship is out beyond the extreme edge of the system. The only sensible way to get there is to Jump out and Jump back but *Sydni's Search* only carries sufficient fuel for a single Jump. With no fuel sources out on the rim, you'll need a demountable fuel tank to provide the extra tankage.

EIM own one set of demountable tanks... but they're in the hold of *Evan's Endeavour* and Evan reluctantly admits that the repair yard has halted work as EIM was unable to meet even the first instalment of the repair fees...

This is an opportunity for the players to get into their roles. Note that Neal was introduced in the meeting, so he is already with the crew and can start interacting immediately.

☼ *The PCs should be surprised at how close the company is to ruin – Evan's kept this close to his chest. Each of them already has a view on Neal, but don't let this first introduction turn nasty (plenty of time for that later) so limit the chatting to 5 minutes and move them into Nugget 2 fairly promptly.*

2. Planning the Trip

The PCs need to plan their trip and get *Sydni's Search* equipped for the journey. But first they'll probably expect a briefing from their patron.

Briefing

Neal's player may wish to wing the briefing or quote from his handout (p.36) – this has all the facts he knows about the task. Clearly there are certain facts he needs to conceal from the others (especially the true contents of the cargo they intend to salvage). He may need some assistance from you to get through the briefing, as you can assume the other players will smell a rat from the outset. However, they don't really have much option – Evan has ordered them to undertake this job and Neal is the patron, so they have to follow his instructions (at least until they have some solid proof that he's up to no good).

Where are we Going?

Neal should not provide the other crew with the exact location of the *Post* until they have left the orbital and are preparing to Jump using the pre-prepared Jump tape (see sidebar) that he's carrying. He should only tell them that it's at the edge of the system.

This is sufficient for anyone with Astrogation or reasonable Pilot skill to know that they will definitely need a demountable Jump tank to give them the extra fuel to Jump out to the site and then Jump back – without such a tank, the chance of finding a refuelling source that far out of system is negligible, and using normal manoeuvre drives to return from the edge of system would take weeks or even months.

Joseph-Michael knows the company's only demountable tank is stored in one of the ore bays of the *Evan's Endeavour* which is docked in a repair bay at Clarkson Speedy Repairs, several sectors around the orbital's rim. Access to the ship is restricted as Clarkson began work on the *Endeavour* but then found EIM couldn't pay for the work done so far, let alone the complete computer re-build required.

Demountable tanks are described in the sidebar – getting hold of one is covered in Nugget 3. Getting the Tank.

If Evan's mention of the Frontier War sparks any enquiries regarding this, see the sidebars on the Battle of Two Suns and the Frontier Wars in Scenario 2 (p.20). Miles and Joseph-Michael both know this information.

Neal should not let slip the name of the ship they're going to find, nor its location other than that it is out beyond the edge of the system.

Jump Tapes

Astrogation is an exceptionally complicated task, requiring the use of advanced computer systems which can predict a safe path for the ship across light-years of space from one gravity well to another, predicting the positions of thousands or even millions of space bodies and their combined effects on the ship's Jumpspace path.

Given this complexity, many commonly used Jump routes have prepared Jump tapes available, removing the need to do the calculations and making the Jump fast and relatively safe. However, the crews of many small ships prefer to avoid the costs of such tapes and take the time to calculate the routes themselves. However, the Jump time and exact emergence point are usually more variable than with a commercially available Jump tape.

Filing a Flight Plan

Remind the PCs that all ships leaving the orbital port are expected to file a flight plan indicating their destination, purpose, passengers and cargo: see Nugget 4. Filing a Flight Plan.

Kitting Up

PCs always want to buy equipment... they can do so, but they are limited by their personal funds, as EIM's credit rating at the port is now zero. Yres is TL7 but items up to TL12 (*GT: TL10*) are available at 110% of normal price. See the Ship's Locker listing below for existing kit.

The players can assume their characters have basic clothes and other everyday personal effects (but this won't include armour or guns – the crew wouldn't have a reason to own these).

If they haven't already had a run in with Slater's thugs, this is a good opportunity: see Nugget 5. Unwelcome Visitor.

Ship's Locker

The *Sydni's Search* already has a reasonably well kitted-out ship's locker, but the PCs can add to this if they can afford it.

- Plasma Cutting Torch (on a trolley, but it does damage equivalent to a PGMP-12, albeit only up to 1 metre range!)
- Seismic charges x 20 (powerful demolition charges, used for breaking up asteroids)
- Electronic timer detonator x 10
- Radio-controlled detonator x 10
- Shotgun, with 20 rounds
- Snub Pistol, with 4 x 10 round HEAP clips
- Chemstick lights x 20
- 200m super-strong synthetic rope, with pitons
- Vac Suits x 6 (24 hour oxygen supply); all include heads-up displays, patch kits, radiation sensors, etc.
- Survival Knife x 6
- Survival pack x 6
- Emergency bubble shelter
- Med-Kit (well stocked – asteroid mining is dangerous!) In a separate secured box* in the med kit, strictly for critical emergencies are:
 - Fast Drug x 4, Slow drug x 1
- Multiscanner
- Radiation counter, Inertial locator
- Mechanical tool kit (pretty extensive – Seekers often have to improvise repairs in the field)
- Electrical tool kit (likewise)
- Cr 10,000 emergency fund (in a secure* box).

*All the crew have an individual code to open these boxes, but the code is recorded, so EIM knows who opened the box!

Demountable Fuel Tanks

Collapsible fuel tanks are sometimes installed in the hold of a starship to temporarily extend its Jump range. Such demountable tanks are called DFT's or "bladders" in ship slang.

Despite the wonders of high tech materials, fitting such tanks is a serious undertaking – the slightest failure of a joint or seal would release super-cold liquid hydrogen into the ship. In addition, the ship's normal fuel systems have to be adjusted to ensure correct flow from the additional tankage into the power plant.

For the Seeker, the LSP *FlexiTank J10* DFT is specifically designed to fit in one of the two ore bays and provides 10 dT of fuel to extend the Seeker's range from Jump-1 to Jump-2. (Either ore bay can be used, as both contain the necessary auxiliary fuel connectors to feed the liquid hydrogen into the engine systems.

3. Getting the Tank

There are several potential options to obtain a DFT for the *Sydni*:

1. Break into the Clarkson dock and demount the tank from the *Endeavour*: this will require a number of **Difficult Intrusion** and **Stealth** tasks and a **Formidable Engineering** task to get the tanks out quickly before they are noticed (e.g. when security shifts change).
2. Bribe the Clarkson junior administrator to allow them access to remove the tank from the *Endeavour*. A careful approach would be needed here, or things could get quite nasty, possibly involving the starport police. At least a **Difficult Bribery** roll would be required with some good roleplaying.
3. Make a down-payment of at least Cr 150,000 to Clarkson for the repairs performed so far. This will have to come from the PCs' personal funds (Neal will not contribute here as he feels he's already invested quite enough in EIM). After a little diplomacy to reassure Clarkson, the PCs will be allowed access to the ship to recover the tank.
4. Buy a new tank; this would cost Cr 10,000 and a further Cr 2,000 for parts to mount it in the ship. However, the scarcity of materials in the current recession means the lead time on a compatible new tank is nearly ten weeks!
5. Buy and fit a second-hand DFT. This would cost around the same as a new tank (in this recession), possibly more if the PCs let on that they are desperate. Appropriate **Difficult Streetwise** and negotiation skills will be required to locate a compatible tank; failures

will increase the delay or cost. The best possible outcome is a suitable tank is found within 24 hours. However, the current owners won't pay for dock time, so it will be up to the PCs to collect the 'bladder' themselves and mount it in the *Sydni's Search*.

Clarkson Speedy Repairs

Clarkson are one of the cheaper local repair docks, with two small docks (for ships up to 200 dton) and one larger bay (up to 600 dton). Each is available for rental – for a crew to make its own repairs – or can be fully staffed by Clarkson's small but experienced engineering team.

Jeremiah Clarkson, runs a tight operation and though he has known Evan Ernstejn for many years, he has felt obliged to halt repairs on the *Evan's Endeavour* because Evan had to admit that he has no means of paying for the work. Clarkson is currently holding the *Endeavour* in Dock A as collateral against his expenses so far.

The docks are overlooked by a small office and a large store of equipment and spare parts. The Far Trader *Elypsis* is in the adjacent 200 dton dock but work isn't due to start on her for two days. With the *Endeavour* work halted, that means most of the time the docks are deserted and Clarkson's staff are taking a short holiday to see family on the mainland below.

Access to the *Endeavour* dock is either through the equipment store from the main orbital thoroughfare (which may attract attention from passersby and is covered by security cameras) or via the dock's external door (a huge clamshell which seals the dock against space to allow the area to be pressurised).

Clarkson's most junior admin is sometimes in the office – he's been left to answer the comms if a new job comes in. When he's not in the office, the SPA has been contracted to have a security guard look in on the office every two hours.

It's likely that the PCs will run foul of the SPA security but the labour market means the guards are typically reasonably inept, relying upon their uniform to intimidate people.

Cheap Security Guards: Novice (O)

- Cloth armour
- Short range communicator
- Non-lethal stunner.

The stunners are tasers, powered from a battery-pack in the weapon and good for 5 shots. On a hit, they do 1d6 (GT: 2d6) non-lethal damage to each physical attribute. The darts trail a wire back to the hand unit, allowing the user to again shock their victim the next round, or to shoot a new dart. If any attribute is reduced to zero, damage after

this point becomes lethal. If hit by a dart, a PC must make an **Average Endurance** check to overcome the shock and manage an action.

If a guard faces serious opposition (or guns!) he will call for back up, initially bringing more security guards but armed with snub pistols (loaded with tranquiliser rounds but with HEAP rounds available) and wearing gas masks.

The PCs are unlikely to escape after a gun fight without being traced back to EIM, at which point a lot of unhappy SPA officials, with heavily armed security will turn up at the EIM office and impound the *Sydni's Search*.

4. Filing a Flight Plan

The PCs need to file a flight plan for the *Sydni* before it will be given clearance to undock.

It's unlikely Neal will have revealed their true destination this early, so the crew will have to fabricate a likely destination and purpose (and should also declare Neal's presence on board as a passenger). If necessary, Neal should reinforce the need to keep their destination secret lest anyone else try to steal the salvage before them.

✧ *Feel free to take Neal's character aside to pre-brief him on the need to keep the destination secret; certainly no one should suspect they're visiting the area of the Battle of the Two Suns.*

Neal's senior position in the SPA means that almost any flight plan he supports, or submits himself, will be accepted.

Raising Suspicion

If the *Sydni's* flight plan appears unduly suspicious, one of the SPA clerks will mention it to the Starport Customs Unit (dodgy flight plans submitted by nervous crew usually indicate smuggling or other illegal activity!)

The SCU will call the *Sydni* or the EIM offices and double-check the plan before the ship departs. If they remain suspicious after this, the SCU will monitor the *Sydni's* outbound flight and the energy signature as it Jumps, to confirm that it is keeping to its plan.

If the PCs file a reasonable-looking flight plan (e.g. where their declared Jump is in the rough direction of their true target, but ends far short of it, well within the Yres system) then their initial flight path and energy signature as they enter Jump will be sufficiently close to the plan that the SCU will not be concerned.

However, if the SCU are really apprehensive, they may opt to send a customs cutter or divert a Type-T patrol vessel to the ship's declared destination just to make sure the *Sydni* is

undertaking a legitimate operation. Assuming the filed flight plan had false co-ordinates, failure to find the *Sydni* at its declared destination would put them under significant suspicion of smuggling or claim jumping.

If the Jump location was in-system, even if the patrol ship had to Jump out to it, it will probably be within a few light-hours of Yres, so the SCU will be notified fairly quickly and an alert will be sent out to all patrols in the system, indicating that the *Sydni* should be hailed and boarded by any ship which encounters it. This will complicate any interaction with Imperial patrols later in the game!

Although the space around Yres is monitored by a satellite navigation and sensor network, the PCs can further confuse matters by moving out into the Ufie Disc before entering Jump.

5. Unwelcome Visitors

At some point during the crew's preparation to depart, one or more of the PCs will face an unwelcome visitor from the mob – they'll most likely target Karin or Miles, but any of the other PCs might notice someone 'watching' them, perhaps while they're out in the port markets, buying last-minute kit.

Two of Slater's henchmen will intercept a PC, or turn up at the *Sydni*'s berth:

A short, wiry woman in a cheap Yonth skin jacket stands nonchalantly in your way. Just behind her, a man is lounging against the wall – he looks like a gorilla squeezed into a boiler suit.

"Are you the right one to ask about the money?" says the woman with an annoying nasal twine. "Our boss says he's still waiting..."

The PC might think they're from Clarkson, though if they make a **Average Streetwise** roll they'll realise this pair are from the Slater Group.

If they've found Karin, the woman will begin trying to sweet-talk her into selling out, calling it an "opportunity for investment". Assuming Karin refuses (or if talking to any of the other PCs), she will make threatening noises about "payments being behind", but without giving any specifics.

If someone demands her name, she's "Mrs. Smith" and the man behind her is "Mr. Smith". Her only purpose is to intimidate the crew and ensure they carry out the salvage mission. If anyone mentions Neal's job, Mrs. Smith will appear surprised (to remove any suspicion that Slater has anything to do with the salvage) and tell them

they'd better make some money from it, so they can "pay their debts".

If seriously threatened, Mrs. Smith will retreat behind Mr. Smith and the pair will retreat, promising that the PCs "will be sorry later". This pair can re-appear in the final Scenario, if desired.

Mrs. Smith: Experienced (●)

• No armour • Short range communicator • Small concealed blade.

Mr. Smith: Novice (○), Strength D (*GT: ST 18*)

• No armour • Large extensible metal cosh.

6. Who's Sharing?

The *Sydni* normally carries two to four crew, but for this mission it will need to accommodate six, including Neal Slessinger.

The forward staterooms (S1 and S2 on the deckplan) would typically be allocated to the more senior staff – Karin and Miles – with the other two staterooms converted for double-bunking.

Most of the crew will be happy to double-bunk, though standard courtesy is for men and women to have separate rooms. However, Neal may decide he wants his own room (and others may decide they *don't* want to share with him).

If necessary, the dorsal cargo area could be jury-rigged with a sleeping bag in a safety sling (necessary in case of failure of the ship's grav plates or inertial compensators).

7. Leaving Port

Once the crew have filed flight plans and feel suitably kitted out, leaving the orbital port requires only an **Average Pilot** roll to get away safely.

Assuming they are not being chased by the authorities at this point, Yres orbital will give them a cheery farewell and wish them a safe voyage.

"*Sydni's Search*, this is Yres Orbital. We confirm you are cleared for departure. Please remain on your plotted route in orbital space. Miles, Karin, have good hunting, and hope to see you back in time for the challenge cup next month! Please acknowledge."

(If anyone asks, the Challenge cup is a local grav-racing event on the planet's surface and Miles certainly intends to be back in time to see his team racing in it.)

While the *Sydni* is travelling out to the salvage location, the characters have a week to further discuss the mission.

1. Making Time Pass

During the 6 hours travel out to the Jump point (assuming the PCs are entering Jump as soon as they reach the 100-diameter safety limit from Yres) the group has a chance to talk through further details of the task ahead.

Average checks of **Pilot**, **Astrogration** and **Engineering** should be made to ensure the ship is in good shape to enter Jumpspace, but otherwise this period should be uneventful (unless the PCs are fleeing the orbital due to earlier misdemeanours).

If you wish to add a little tension, have the PCs hailed by a passing patrol cruiser (a standard identity check).

Unless the team have done all the investigation and preparation needed before leaving port, they can spend part of the week in Jumpspace refining their plan. Otherwise (to avoid player boredom) simply ask each character for one or two key activities that they wish to undertake during the week in Jump, then determine the outcome of each of their tasks.

If the PCs haven't learned the information in this section during Jump, they'll almost certainly start asking during the next Scenario...

2. Tell us About the Ship?

The crew need to have details of the ship they are targeting, in order to plan their approach, boarding and salvage operations.

At this point (and no earlier) Neal can provide the handout on the *Deutsche Post* (p.37). If anyone suggests a military connection he should deny this, claiming that it was simply a merchant ship which happened to be lost around the time of the Battle of Two Suns. (Any characters with an interest in the battle can either ask their ex-Naval colleagues, or consult the ship's library to learn the information given in the sidebars.)

Similarly, the PCs will want to know the nature of the salvage. Neal knows that most of the goods on the *Post* are likely to be military equipment and supplies, and the particular cargo Slater wants is likely to be highly illegal (otherwise it wouldn't be worth so much to the mobsters). Neal can identify the two crates they must recover, but must

fabricate a convincing story regarding their contents (if he hasn't done so already!):

- Serial numbers 1516414136 and 1516414128
- Container size 6 x 1.5 x 1.5 metres
- Mass about 2 tonnes including contents
- Located in Cargo Module 5 (middle bottom module in the diagram of the ship).

Battle of the Two Suns

The final battle between Imperial forces and the 'barbarians' in the Fourth Frontier war in 1084. Losses on both sides were heavy, but the Imperium held the field and the barbarians were unable to continue their advance due to their lengthening supply lines. Had the battle gone the other way, the loss of both Yres and Menorb (the encounter occurring midway between those two locations) would have forced the evacuation of Efate and meant collapse of the entire coreward end of the Regina subsector.

In the years afterwards it was commonly rumoured that the battle was over a secret way station established by the Zhodani on a rogue world located in deep space between Yres and Menorb. However, Imperial Naval and intelligence sources quickly became reluctant to discuss this matter, either because the information was incorrect or because they wished to secretly use this mysterious site for their own purposes.

The battlefield is an Amber Zone as it is a war grave and still a dangerous area, littered with debris and potentially hazardous munitions.

The Frontier Wars

A series of wars between the Zhodani and the Imperium. The Fifth Frontier War (1107-1110) included both Vargr and Sword Worlds fleets in an alliance with the Zhodani termed the Outworld Coalition. The war ended in stalemate with none of the groups winning or losing any significant worlds. The Fourth Frontier War (1082-1084) is known as the False War due to the reluctance of the combatants to engage in full-blown star battles to the degree seen in the previous wars.

3. Hazards of Space Derelicts

Joseph-Michael has the best knowledge of space wrecks, though any of the crew can deduce one of the following bits of information with a successful **Difficult Vac Suit or Engineering** roll:

- Derelicts are often tumbling, so careful manoeuvring is required to approach safely, especially if trying to dock with it. A slightly safer approach is to get close, then have vac-suited crew use their personal thruster packs to cross to the derelict. If the PCs don't think of it themselves, an exceptional success on an **Engineering** roll would give the idea that the derelict's spin could be countered (at least to some degree) by attaching large thrusters packs to its ends and using controlled bursts to slow its tumble; the crew have some thrusters packs in the upper deck store, for use in manoeuvring asteroids.
- Boarding a tumbling derelict can be very disorientating.
- Debris near a wreck, both small and large, can be quite dangerous to anyone in a vac suit moving around outside.
- Debris inside a wreck can be just as hazardous if the ship's tumble is disturbed and loose items within the ship start shifting about in zero-g.
- A wreck in deep space will gradually cool to near absolute zero, especially if its hull integrity has been compromised. If air-tight compartments remain within the ship, the gaseous components of the air may have frozen into layers of 'snow'. The heat from a vac suit can cause these gases to flash off. This can cause freeze burns or even a small explosion (which is just as likely to push a suited person on to sharp debris as to cause them direct explosive damage).
- A derelict in direct sunlight may catch sufficient energy to become quite hot over a long period of time.
- Whether the ship is very hot or very cold, such extremes of temperature are likely to have caused internal systems to have failed. Some systems (e.g. the electronics for iris valves) are designed to withstand vacuum and low temperatures for a reasonable period of time, but after 30 years even these may have failed.
- If the core of the power plant has been breached, there may be radioactive contamination of the surrounding area.
- Under the cold of deep space, close metal surfaces often vacuum weld themselves

together and lubricants boil off, so machinery – including hatches – can be hard to operate.

4. Where Are We Going?

Once in Jump, the PCs may decide they want to try to work out where they are going.

Neal's Jump tape provided the Jump configuration data to the drive without explicitly displaying the destination point on the ship's navigation screens.

However, careful analysis of the drive configuration at Jump entry, with a successful **Astrogation** roll will give a fair approximation of the end point. The first such roll is **Hopeless**, but reduces by one difficulty level for each further day spent working on the data.

If the roll is made, it reveals the destination is in deep space between Yres and Menorb, within a few million kilometres of the edge of the Battle of Two Suns. Miles and Joseph-Michael know the following, but any of the crew can work this out from the ship's library data:

- The area is interdicted space because the battlefield was declared a war grave.
- The Imperial Navy takes a poor view of anyone violating war-graves.
- The area is also interdicted because it contains debris, radiation and potentially live ordnance.

Miles can give a personal view of the location, as he was a Scout Service observer prior to the battle:

"The battle took place nearly 30 years ago, in 1084, at a deep space asteroid which the Zhodani were developing into a full Calibration point. This gave them a Jump point at which to stage a fleet for a deep-space surprise attack, with full repair and refuel capabilities.

We picked up some signals when we were lying doggo in the outer-system of Yres and were sent in to observe. When we confirmed the Zhos were there, the Imperial Navy sent in two task forces, one with black globes, for a surprise attack and nuked the Zhodani back across the frontier.

The asteroid was destroyed as well – at least, that's what the official reports said. Certainly when we left that place our sensors weren't picking up anything alive except stray ordnance and the warning beacons we left.

Sometimes the Navy or the Patrol run a ship up there to make sure the beacons are okay."

Neal is now likely to come under further pressure regarding the exact nature of the *Post* and it's cargo...

Finding the Needle

Scenario 3

Searching for a derelict ship in space can be like finding a needle in a haystack...

1. Emerging from Jump

Everyone feels the faint 'lurch' of Jumpspace transition as *Sydni's Search* returns to normal space. Residual Jump readings look good, so you've not misjumped: you have reached your intended destination. Your screens show the black of deep space, punctuated by pin-prick stars, the overall effect strongly emphasising the vast emptiness of space. Hopefully Neal's projected path for the derelict ship was accurate, otherwise you could spend months looking for it out here...

Suddenly a proximity alarm sounds, and just moments later you all hear a tiny metallic 'ping' somewhere on the hull!

When the ship emerges from Jump, if the secret isn't already out, it will take less than 30 minutes and an **Average Astrogation** roll to confirm the location of the ship: it is several million kilometres (around 10 light seconds) outside the interdicted graveyard of the Battle of Two Suns.

The 'ping' sound was a tiny piece of debris, still flying away from the battle zone after 30 years. It hasn't damaged the ship, but is a reminder of the potential hazards of this area.

The first **Average Sensors** roll will show the *Post* is not in their immediate vicinity, so they will need to search for its exact location.

2. Finding the Derelict

They can opt either to use active sensors (which will reveal their own position to anyone else out here in space) or passive sensors (which takes longer but is more secretive, in case the crew are feeling paranoid that there might be another ship out here with them).

Passive Sensors

Passive sensors rely purely upon capturing and analysing the energy coming from the heavens around them. The ship doesn't emit any signals (beyond the natural energy signature of its hull and drives), but sits there quietly analysing wide ranges of the electromagnetic spectrum (including visual and near-visual) to detect targets.

It takes a long time to scan space in every possible direction, as the PCs have no idea where the *Post* lies. Therefore only one **Sensors** roll is made every 12 hours, starting at **Impossible**

difficulty and decreasing by one difficulty level for each subsequent 12 hours (the longer the sensors can amalgamate incoming signals, the more chance they have of detecting the tiny signature of the *Post* directly, to notice its movement in front of a distant star, or to pick up the faintest of changes as it tracks across the ever-present background radiation of furthest space.

When a successful Sensors roll is made, the PCs detect the *Post*, several hours travel away.

For each unsuccessful 12 hours, roll 2d6 once on the encounter table below to see if they pick up a signal from some other item in space.

Active Sensors

Active sensors send out signals in various parts of the electromagnetic spectrum and analyse the returns when these signals bounce off targets in space. This is a faster method of finding the *Post*, but they still have a very large area of space to scan, giving them a **Sensors** roll every 4 hours, starting at **Hopeless** difficulty and reducing the difficulty by 1 level for each 4 hours thereafter.

For each active sweep, roll 2d6+2 once on the encounter table below, with a cumulative +1 for every sweep after the first.

3. Deep Space Encounters

Given the length of time for which the ship is scanning, it's likely to pick up something during that time, hence this table is biased towards finding things, despite being in deep space. If the *Sydni* fires its weapons, or a missile explodes, add +1 to the next encounter roll.

Roll	Encounter
2-4	Nothing of interest – there are some tiny specs of debris less than a centimetre across, but the sensors only pick these up when they are really close.
5-8	Tiny debris in the distance – a few tens of centimetres across, this is too small to be of interest, and far enough away not to be a hazard to the ship. If the PCs waste time investigating, the debris is either a fragment of asteroid (from the secret Zhodani base?) or a scrap of metal from a ship's hull – there's no way of telling if it's from the <i>Post</i> .

9 **Debris on a collision course** – this will hit the ship if not avoided. Roll 1d6 for the difficulty of the **Pilot** task: 1=Easy, 2-4=Average, 5-6=Difficult. If the debris hits, roll 1d6+4 on the Ship Damage table but only apply the minimum possible amount of damage – they need to know that it's dangerous out here, but no significant part of the ship should lose function, and repairs are twice as fast and 1 level easier than for other damage!

10 **Active Missile!** Active sensor use, or the ship's proximity, has awakened a missile, fired during the battle but which went dormant when it lost track of its target and drifted out of the battle zone. The missile's fuel reserve is very low, so it will execute a sudden burn to home in on the ship, but will lose power before it hits home, so an **Average Pilot** task will move the *Sydni* out of harm's way. If this is failed, they can have one go at shooting the missile – see below. If the missile should hit the ship, roll 2d6 on the Ship Damage table.

11 **Active Missile!** As 10, but this missile was deployed as a 'mine', i.e. it has a full fuel reserve. It locks on to the *Sydni* and races in for the kill. The missile is too fast to outrun, but could be evaded for long enough that it will run out of fuel. However, this requires four consecutive **Formidable Pilot** rolls. The alternative is to shoot it with the ship's laser: a **Difficult Sensors** roll is needed to acquire a firing solution and a **Difficult Ship's Guns** (GT: **Ship's Lasers**) roll to hit it. If the sensor roll is failed, the gunnery task becomes **Formidable**. In either case, there is one chance for the sensor roll, and two for the defensive fire. If the missile gets within 100 metres of the *Sydni*, they find out it's a kinetic kill proximity warhead, which fires a spread of super-dense metal 'ball-bearings' to punch holes in the ship. Roll 2d6 twice on the Ship Damage table.

12+ An Imperial Patrol Ship monitoring the interdicted zone (or deployed from a secret Imperial base on the ex-Zhodani rogue moon – it's up to you how far you push this point!) detects the *Sydni*, either because the PC are using active sensors, or they've used their lasers, or the patrol ship's passive sensors have detected their ship's energy emissions. It's several million miles away, so it will not hail them

immediately, but will stealthily pursue the *Sydni* to determine its purpose (see Time To Go in Scenario 4, p.29).

Ship Damage Table

(In combat, a multi-weapon turret rolls one hit per weapon; optionally, missiles get 1d6 damage rolls and pulse lasers two rolls, as per CT rules!)

Roll	Damage
2	Power Plant – the ship must now operate on battery power until the damage is repaired; this prevents the use of weapons or drives.
3	Manoeuvre Drive – each hit reduces the drive rating by 1G. Repairs
4	Jump Drive – each hit reduces the Jump capability by 1.
5	Fuel – each hit loses 10% of the remaining fuel.
6-7	Hull – each hit decompresses a bulkhead area. PCs within this area must roll an Average Dexterity roll to avoid taking 2d6 shrapnel damage. If they were not already in a vac suit, they must also succeed at a Difficult Vac Suit task to do it before the depressurisation does nasty things to them!
8	Hold – decompresses a hold area. Cargo is damaged on 1-3 on a d6. Crew in the hold are affected as per a Hull hit.
9	Computer – after a hit, use of any ship system linked to the computer requires a roll of 5+ on 2d6. Each subsequent hit increases this target by 2. This roll is required every time a computer-assisted task is performed (changing course, using ship's weapons, etc.) – if the roll fails then the system does not operate correctly. A second attempt at the same task requires a re-roll, but remember you only get one chance to make a successful Jump...
10	Turret – each hit knocks out the turret and its weapon(s). Any crew within are affected as per a Hull hit above.
11	Hold – as 8 above.
12	Critical – Oops! A major ship component is destroyed beyond repair (roll 1d6): 1: Power Plant 2: Manoeuvre Drive 3: Jump Drive 4: Computer 5: Crew (explosions, or loss of all gravitic compensation requires every crew person to roll to avoid damage, as per a Hull hit). 6: Explosion (best not to roll this, unless it's for the climax of the adventure!)

Repairs to drives, power plant, turret or computer use the following task:

To repair ship damage

>Formidable Engineering (GT: Engineer (Starship drives))

- This task takes 2d6+12 hours.
- If additional skilled engineers help in this task, reduce the time by one quarter, but only the most skillful engineer makes the roll.

Success: As Success but the time is reduced by one quarter.

Success: Repairs are successful but only for 2d6 days – a full repair can only be done in a shipyard.

Failure: The repairs are not yet completed; a further roll can be made after a similar period.

Spectacular Failure: This repair is not possible – the damage is too great, or the necessary spares aren't available. A **Staggering Engineering** roll allows the required part to be cobbled together from other components after 2d6+24 hours.

The same task is used for hold or hull repairs, but requires only a **Difficult** roll and takes 1d6+6 hours per attempt. Destroyed components can't normally be repaired but, if this would unfairly terminate the adventure prematurely, then allow a **Staggering Engineering** (or similar) task roll to improvise a repair, taking 1d3+2 days.

4. Up Close and Personal

The *Deutsche Post* is just a few hours travel away – an **Average Pilot** roll will provide a fast intercept course, given the derelict's tumbling course. Roll one further encounter (from the table on p.22) during this time, as the ship's motion, drive burn, etc. may still attract unwelcome attention.

Once the ship is within an hour's travel, the sensors will have built up sufficient information to let the PCs see its damaged state – show them the handout on p.38.

The visual images show clearly that the *Deutsche Post* has suffered fairly severe damage. PCs will also be able to determine the following:

- The ship is tumbling end over end, while also rotating about its axis, moving sufficiently quickly that it would be dangerous to bring the *Sydni* in too close for fear of a collision;
- It will be clear to anyone with Naval experience that this ship has been in a war zone. In addition, the ship has Imperial Navy Reserve markings on its hull.
- The aft engineering module has been torn apart, exposing various parts of the drives and

power plant directly to space. An **Average Sensors** roll will indicate there is some radioactivity from the area.

- The bow crew and control module has been totally separated from the ship, exposing the end of the central transit shaft which runs the length of the ship. This means there's no chance of finding the bridge, computers or any crew areas.
- Most of the cargo modules are missing, but if Neal's diagrams are correct, then module 5 (the central module on the ship's 'underside') is still intact and connected to the ship.

By this point it's unlikely that anyone will believe Neal's claims that this isn't desecrating a war grave, so he might need some good incentives (e.g. the promise of massive financial rewards) to stop them from simply turning around and leaving the scene.

If the PCs do decide that this is one step too far, then Neal should still try to persuade them to use the second Jump tape to 'return home', i.e. to reach the pirate ship – proceed to Scenario 5.

Docking

The PCs may wish to dock with the *Deutsche Post*, but this simply won't be possible due to the larger ship's tumbling motion – matching vectors with it sufficiently to allow a flexible airlock to be connected would require an **Impossible Pilot** roll. Failing this by even the smallest margin will result in the airlock quickly getting torn apart as the *Sydni* failed to synchronise its motion with the huge tender. A more likely result is that the *Sydni* will collide with the spinning tender, in which case roll on the Ship Damage table on p.23 and require a **Difficult Dexterity** roll from any character who is not securely strapped in, as the jolt to the ship will throw them about, causing 1d6 damage.

Even if the pilot roll is successful, another such roll is required every 5 minutes to keep the vectors of the two ships perfectly matched.

Stopping the Tumble

The PCs cannot stop the tumbling, but could slow it sufficiently to reduce a docking attempt to **Formidable** difficulty. However, this would require them to EVA to the *Deutsche Post* and position their asteroid-maneuvring thrusters packs at the ends of the tender, then firing them in a controlled manner. This might sound like a good idea, but the reality is that their time would be better spent simply getting into the *Post* and retrieving the cargo. Prolonged thruster discharge may also attract the attention of a Naval patrol vessel.

Finding the *Deutsche Post* may have been problematic, but getting onboard and retrieving the cargo is far more hazardous.

1. Mind the Gap

The players should use the tender handout to work out possible ways to enter it (these are described in more detail under the following subheadings). If they do not work out the potential pro's and con's of each way in, or if they get stuck finding a suitable entry, let them make **Average Vac Suit** rolls: for each success, give them some pointers from the following subsections.

The Grav Buggy would provide a safer means of travelling over to the wreck and can be of great help in moving the cargo, given its power and its manipulative arms. However, its size will prevent it from getting into the ship unless a suitable hatch is opened for it, or it is manoeuvred very carefully through a hole in the hull.

Most of the crew are competent in space-walking, but Enri is the natural choice to lead the way given his vac suit and zero-g skills.

Before setting out, you should make a secret **Average Vac Suit** roll for each person EVA'ing, to check they have suited up correctly. If a player suggests this themselves, then they can make the same roll themselves – if they succeed, they will notice if any of their colleagues have a problem (resulting from your earlier, secret rolls).

If a character becomes disoriented or otherwise fails a task roll during EVA, the following task applies:

To maintain or regain stability in zero-g:

➤ **Average Environmental Combat** (GT: *Free Fall*)

➤ **Difficult Vac Suit***, or

➤ **Difficult Battle Dress*** (GT: *Battle Suit**)

*Requires the appropriate garment to be worn.

• -1 Difficulty if using handholds.

Spectacular Success: As Success but the PC has achieved good stability and gains -1 Difficulty on their subsequent roll.

Success: The action was carried out properly without causing any disorientation. If previously disoriented, reorientation has been achieved.

Failure: Character loses (or fails to regain) their hand-hold or orientation.

Spectacular Failure: Character begins to tumble; all reorientation tasks are at +1 Difficulty and character can perform no other task but this one until reoriented.

Main Transit Shaft at Ship's Bow

Since the ship is rotating about its centre of mass and spinning slowly about its axis, it would be safest to EVA to the centre (where the spin has least effect) – an **Average Vac Suit** task.

From this point, they can either try to find a hatch to break through (a **Difficult Intrusion** or **Mechanics** task), or climb along the outside of the shaft (past the framework and damaged fuel tanks) – a **Difficult Vac Suit** roll – to the exposed bow end. Failure could indicate difficulty in gaining entry, a jammed hatch, damage to one's vac suit, or perhaps losing one's grip on the hull and being thrown out into space by the derelict's spin. Since the spinning force is strongest at the extremity of the ship, this is not a good place to lose one's grip! (Make another **Difficult Vac Suit** roll, modified for any precautions taken, such as using safety lines).

Anyone foolish enough to try to EVA straight from the *Sydni* to the bow end of the spinning ship requires a **Staggering Vac Suit** roll to avoid a painful collision with the tumbling hull!

If the Mining Buggy is used to get to the end of the transit tube, a **Difficult Grav Craft** (GT: *Spaceship*) roll is required to avoid colliding with the spinning ship, or getting caught by a jutting piece of its torn hull.

Once within the shaft, the PCs can see several personnel lift shafts and a large (4 metre diameter) central cargo shaft. The lifts are not working, so they will have to climb down a service ladder in the cargo shaft; this will feel like they are climbing downwards, but head first (perhaps an **Average Environmental Combat** or **Free Fall** task not to get disoriented). From here they can get to the transit shaft branch that leads out to cargo pod 5.

The Mining Buggy will just fit into the cargo shaft (barring scraping past the torn edges at each end of the ship), but once inside cannot turn around. The PCs will only find by trial and error that there is insufficient space where the shaft branches into the cargo modules to turn the buggy into the module – it must stay in the main shaft, so the most it can do is to pull or push debris or cargo containers up and down the shaft.

Engineering Module

Getting into the transit shaft via the engineering module requires much the same tasks as for the bow entry, with the added fun of lots of sharp, radioactive metal within the engineering module – an additional **Difficult Vac Suit** roll is required to avoid getting too close to a radiation source or snagging one's suit.

Cargo Module Transit Hatches

Most of the *Deutsche Post's* cargo pods appear to have been jettisoned or ripped free of the support frame. This exposes the end of the transit shaft which branches out to each pod.

The end of these branches is sealed with a large (4 metre diameter) iris valve. Due to their inherent strength, the lack of power to the door electronics and vacuum-welding of the manual release mechanism, the only way to open one of these hatches is with the plasma cutter or a demolition charge (both from the ship's locker).

The closest exposed hatch to pod 5 is that for cargo module 4, which conveniently is also near the centre of the spinning ship (see tasks in the previous "Ship's Bow" section). Using the cutting torch or explosives is a **Difficult** task in vacuum and zero-g – possible mishaps include failing to open the hatch, cutting through one's own space suit, or detonating the explosives while still in close proximity, which could blow a PC off into space with a shrapnel-peppered vac suit.

The Hole in Cargo Module 6

Cargo pod 6 has been ripped apart and most of its cargo lost to space many years back. Though it is near the centre of the ship, the amount of ripped hull around the entry point requires a **Difficult Vac Suit** task to enter safely. Within are torn structural beams, partially dislodged cargo containers and the warped remains of the robotic cargo manipulation system, again needing a **Difficult Vac Suit** roll to pass through safely.

The hatch into the transit shaft (see preceding section) has been weakened by the damage to the cargo module, so opening it (using the plasma cutter or charges) is only an **Average** task.

Cargo Module External Hatch

In the middle of the side of each cargo module is a 6 metre square loading hatch. These might seem like the most direct way into a pod, but these huge hatches are of reinforced hull material and – in flight – have extra secure interlock systems, all of which are engaged and vacuum-welded in place after 30 years.

In addition, the ship's tumble is exacerbated by moving out on to the side of the ship, requiring at

least a **Difficult Vac Suit** (or equivalent if in the Grav Buggy) roll to reach the hatch, and a further roll to work on it (e.g. using the plasma cutter or explosives). Cutting the hatch will require 30 minutes work and a **Formidable Engineering** or **Mechanic** task roll; if failed, a second **Difficult** roll can be made after another 30 minutes. Similar times and rolls are required to blow the hatch, and at least 4 charges must be used in order to make a hole sufficiently large to extract the intended salvage cargo containers.

2. Here I Go...

If a PC is thrown off the derelict for any reason, they may be picked up in space using the Mining Buggy, or the *Sydni* itself. However, as they are likely to have sustained suit damage in such an event, they need to make a **Difficult Vac Suit** roll to patch the damage, reduced to **Average** if they can make an **Environmental Combat** (*GT: Free Fall*) roll beforehand.

If they are injured or running out of air, then the pilot of the buggy or ship should make a suitable task roll to successfully manoeuvre into a position to 'catch' their comrade (the buggy can use its manipulator arms, but the ship would require someone to EVA from an airlock).

3. Moving Around in the Ship

Once inside the ship, movement will be far less problematic, but the varying pseudo-gravitational forces will make it a challenge for the stomach and dexterity.

None of the ship's systems are working – even the batteries in the emergency lighting are dead. Jury-rigging a battery pack from the *Sydni* (for example to try to power a hatch motor) will require a **Formidable Engineering** or **Electronics** roll, not because the task itself is complex, but because they must overcome long-term damage to the ship's systems, including vacuum-welding of hatch edges, etc. However, a successful task roll will allow (for example) a hatch to slowly crank open under the battery power.

The bad news is that several of the crew were killed in the first attacks on the ship – the PCs should run into one such freeze-dried corpse floating in part of the ship. This should give them a shock, as well as reminding them that this is nominally a war grave.

The characters will encounter some floating debris within the ship, but if using the cargo transit shaft, there are no hatches to block their progress from one end to the other, as this area was usually left at low pressure or vacuum.

Apparently randomly along the floor are areas of ice from solidified air. In open areas, disturbing this ice will have little effect, but a few areas of the engineering deck are still sufficiently enclosed that large areas of liquefied air have built up and causing this to vaporise suddenly could result in an explosion, especially if the plasma torch is used to cut into such an area.

4. Are These the Crates?

Unless the PCs have gained access to cargo module 5 from the outside, they will need to breach the internal transit shaft hatch to access the pod (task as per Cargo Module Transit Hatches on p.26).

The cargo modules are all vented (i.e. in vacuum) during travel, so there is little chance of liquefied air or other such hazards within.

You already know that each cargo module is about 50 metres long, 30 metres wide and 12 metres high (internal dimensions). Now that you're inside, your high power suit lights illuminate rows of crates packing the bow and aft sections of the module, with a 10 metre wide gap between them in which sits a robotic cargo handling system. The handler unit runs on a maglev rail between the two external hatches and across to the transit shaft hatch. Its huge power-manipulator was presumably used to move containers to and from the hatches or to store the cargo in the huge frames that fill the front and rear of the pod.

For packing efficiency, it appears several containers can be stacked end to end within the frames, such that getting to a particular container may require other containers to be lifted out first. You assume that the robotic manipulator was programmed to do this ... except that the system has no power and after 30 years it's probably a little 'stiff' from lack of use.

If the PCs examine the crates:

Each crate has a mix of text, digital reader markings and bar codes on each surface. If the ship's computer were working, finding the desired crates would probably take mere seconds. In this case, it looks like you'll have to manually check the labels on the visible ends of the first row of crates. Unfortunately you can't even see the other containers that are stacked behind this first row...

Of course, the two crates they are hunting for are in the *second* row of crates, i.e. hidden behind the first row, so they will have to move some crates to have any chance of identifying them. Show the players the crate image on p.38. As these are standard containers, the only way to check the contents is to open them (see p.30).

Moving Crates Manually

Though the area is in zero-g, moving crates manually is very hazardous: not only is a lot of effort required to start them moving, but once in motion their momentum (even at slow speed) will crush anyone who gets caught in the way.

Moving Crates with the Mining Buggy

If the external cargo hatch is breached (see Cargo Module External Hatch on p.26) with 10 or so charges, this will allow the Mining Buggy to get into the cargo module. Its manipulators are sufficiently strong to allow it to move crates around, but it's pure chance how long the PCs take to find their target crates. It takes about 10 minutes to move 5 crates out of the racks and dump them out into space, so roll 2d6 – on a 12 they've found the crates. For the next 10 minutes, roll again – 11+ indicates success, and so on...

Using the Cargo Handler

If a PC examines the cargo handler in detail, they can make two task rolls:

- An **Average Engineering** or **Electronics** roll indicates that if powered up, the cargo handler is probably in sufficiently good state that it could be manually controlled. This requires a second roll to jury-rig a power supply from the Mining Buggy or using battery packs from the ship's locker and a third roll to override the control system. For each 10 minutes of use, a **Difficult Electronics** or **Computer** roll is needed to use the handler to move crates around the hold without colliding with a PC, or over-stressing the cargo manipulator.
- A **Difficult Trader** (GT: **Merchant**) or **Computer** roll allows them to realise that a small plastic slab on the side of the cargo handler (which appeared to be part of the mechanism) is actually a simple handcomp unit on a magnetic clip. The handcomp is out of power, but if attached to a standard battery pack can be turned on. Its static data store has retained the entire ship's cargo manifest! This allows them to immediately locate Neal's crates, though it shows their contents to be "chemical disinfectant" (as they were being carried covertly, even the ship's manifest was falsified). It will also allow them to locate other valuable cargo if they wish to do so.

5. Salvage!

Moving each of the target crates across to the *Sydn* is best done using the Mining Buggy manipulators (an **Average** task), though very careful use of personal suit thrusters would allow

two crew working together to move a crate 'manually' (a **Difficult** roll from the two crew).

The *Sydni's* ore bays have wide hatches to allow easy loading of ore, so moving the crates in is another **Average** task using the Mining Buggy, **Difficult** for vac-suited crew.

If the PCs determine to take any other crates from the cargo module, the same tasks apply, but they can only fit a couple of similar sized crates into each bay, as the ore bays are designed for loose ore, not for large cargo containers. Further, one of the bays will be mostly full of demountable fuel tank, so the fuel from this must be transferred to the internal fuel tanks so that the 'bladder' can be disassembled and stored against one side of the bay (taking up about 3 dtons of space).

Repair and Restock?

If the *Sydni* has key components damaged or lost fuel earlier, the PCs can try to obtain replacement parts or fuel from the *Deutsche Post*. Create some appropriate tasks, remembering that parts will probably be incompatible and need adapting, while working with liquid hydrogen fuel is always potentially hazardous!

6. What Else is Here?

It will no doubt occur to the characters that there might well be other valuable cargo aboard the *Deutsche Post*. They should think hard about 'stealing' from such a war grave, though if they're already intending to remove the cargo Neal wants, does it make any difference if they take a few more crates?

With no working computer systems on the *Post*, finding useful stuff amongst the cargo will be a hit-and-miss affair, but whether the PCs can decode the crate labels, break into some crates or pick some randomly to transfer to the *Sydni*, the following is a list of the sort of things they might find. Clearly some items are potentially quite valuable to them for their monetary value, while others might

Determine the size of each container randomly, bearing in mind its contents and their value.

Engineering Stores

- Batteries, spare
- Lubricating oil, drums
- Grease, drums
- Airlock seals
- Thruster plate components
- Lanthanum coils (lucky you!)
- Line Replaceable Units (LRUs), Electronic
- Switchboard Units, spare
- Fusion reactor containment magnets

- Fusion reactor initiation lasers
- Circuit breakers, spare
- Cabling, electrical
- Cabling, fibre optic
- Antennas, spare
- Multi-function consoles, crated
- Hand tools

Clothing Stores

- Imperial Navy uniform clothing
- Boots
- Vac Suits
- Bed linen
- Evacuation clothing packs (jumpsuits, underwear, trainers)

Cleaning Supplies

- Disinfectant, drums
- Detergent, drums
- Cleaning cloths, mops, brushes
- Paint
- Personal cleaning items

Life Support Stores

- Nitrogen, canisters
- Oxygen, canisters
- Air, Ultra-high-pressure vacc suit bottles
- Water, 50 litre jerrycans
- Water, 1 litre drinking bottles

Food Stores

- Combat Rations, packaged
- Dry stores, canned
- Dry stores, freeze dried
- Dry stores, bulk goods
- Frozen stores (in refrigerated container)
- Drink mixes
- Garbage containers, prefabricated

Medical Supplies

- Drugs
- Dressings
- Surgical instruments
- Medical low berth modules, self contained
- Operating theatre modules, self contained

Damage Control Stores

- Portable generators
- Portable cryogenic fuel pumps
- Portable atmosphere compressors
- Fire fighting clothing & breathing apparatus
- Fire extinguishers
- Rescue balls
- Safety harnesses and lines
- Breach plug putty
- Vacc suit zero-gee manoeuvring thrusters
- Inflatable vacc habitats, self contained
- Portable lighting

Weld-down salvage commo/sensor packs, self contained

Salvage thruster packs

Demolition charges

Short range radios and rad sensors

Wide spectrum visual goggles

Armaments

Naval missiles (7-ton)

Sand canisters

Communication satellites, deployable

Sensor drones

Particle accelerator magnet rings, spare

Laser focussing arrays, spare

Small arms, gauss, laser and fusion

Small arms power packs

Combat armour / battledress

Battledress power packs

7. Time to Go

If the PCs had already alerted a Navy patrol ship to their presence (Deep Space Encounters table on p.22) then as they are starting to load the first crate, the patrol ship finally decides they're up to no good and starts heading for them at full speed. It is about 3 hours from intercept but within just 20 minutes will be within firing range as its military low-emission signature makes it unlikely the *Sydni* will have noticed it before this point. However, if the crew have clearly declared they're mounting a round-the-clock sensor watch, then you should secretly make some **Difficult Sensors** rolls, starting with the patrol ship about 5 hours out, to see if they spot it early.

If the Navy weren't alerted earlier in the scenario, then allow the PCs sufficient time to fill the hold with crates before initiating this patrol ship encounter.

As soon as it's clear to the patrol ship that it has been spotted, it will hail the *Sydni*:

Sydni's Search! This is Imperial Navy patrol ship *Old Faithful*. You are in an interdicted zone. Power down your drives and weapon systems and prepare to be boarded.

The patrol ship will have interrogated their transponder to find their identity. If the transponder has been disabled (which is highly illegal), the patrol ship will assume they are criminals and open fire as soon as possible.

Type T Patrol Cruiser "Old Faithful"

- 400 dton streamlined hull
- Jump-3, Manoeuvre 4G
- 2 x Triple laser turret; 2 x Triple missile turret (HE, not nuclear)
- Carries G-Carrier and Ship's Boat

Fleeing the Scene

It's very likely the PCs will panic when the patrol ship approaches: no matter what excuses they think up, they are almost certainly guilty of stealing from a war grave – and that's before anyone opens the crates and finds out just what they've taken onboard.

Such a rushed departure is an ideal opportunity for Neal to ensure that they don't question the use of the second Jump tape – proceed to Scenario 5. Unless someone has already declared their intent to plot the return Jump course earlier in the scenario, then there is no way for them to calculate a safe Jump in the few minutes before the patrol ship arrives.

If they were clever enough to calculate a Jump course, they must choose from Yres (home), Menorb (a neighbouring world) or Pixie (where there is a Naval presence) – see Scenario 6.

The patrol ship will open fire when it detects the *Sydni's* Jump drive powering up – it's up to you whether they hit (use the Ship Damage table on p.23 if so), but ideally the PCs should be scared but allowed to escape.

Surrender

If the PCs are feeling righteous, the ship's too damaged to flee, or they are pretty sure they've rumbled Neal's plan, then they may decide to surrender to the patrol ship. Neal shouldn't take this lying down, unless the others have already immobilised him, or he genuinely believes he can talk his way out of this sticky situation.

The patrol ship will send in a battledress-equipped boarding party – they won't take any chances. Depending upon what the PCs have actually stolen from the wreck and the tale that they tell (let the players do their best to explain!) the outcome could range from their immediate arrest and the impounding of the *Sydni* to a sympathetic hearing and the possibility of co-ordinating a sting operation to catch out whoever is waiting in Yres at the point given by Neal's second Jump tape – see Scenario 5.

Fighting it Out

This isn't a particularly even fight – the patrol ship has a total of six lasers and six missile launchers, against the *Sydni's* single pulse laser. Resolve this using the standard space combat rules. If the *Sydni* isn't destroyed outright, then they will be boarded as noted above, but no one is going to listen to their story – they are destined for the ship's brig and a prompt trip back to Yres for a military trial.

The Trap Is Sprung

Scenario 5

Assuming the characters escape the incoming patrol ship, they may have programmed a Jump to Yres, Menorb or Pixie (Scenario 6), but most likely they have used Neal's second Jump tape, in which case an unpleasant surprise awaits them. But first, they have a week in Jumpspace...

1. What's in the Crate?

The arrival of the patrol ship should have precluded the PCs from investigating their haul too closely, but with a whole week of Jumpspace ahead of them it's very likely that they will decide to open the crates. Neal should already have warned them against doing this (hopefully with a convincing reason why they shouldn't touch the crates). However, by this point his word probably doesn't carry much weight.

The crates look like standard containers, hermetically sealed against vacuum and low temperatures. However, a quick check of the lock (**Average Intrusion, Difficult Electronics**) reveals them to be high security locks – they will need to be 'cracked' or broken open.

Every 6 hours, a **Formidable Intrusion**, or **Staggering Electronics** task can be made, to overcome the crate locks.

Forcing the locks requires a **Formidable Mechanic** or similar task, as they (and the whole container) are much stronger than a standard crate, though this isn't apparent from the outside.

Using explosives to remove the locks is a **Formidable Demolitions** task – the results of a critical task failure are left to your imagination given the crate's contents!

Once opened and the top layer of packing removed, the crate's contents are pretty obvious:

Under the top layer of Foam-a-pack lies a bulbous 5 metre nose cone, marked with warning symbols and Imperial Navy insignia. You are in no doubt that this is a missile warhead of some sort, and it's much bigger than the standard missiles you've seen before.

The PCs aren't going to find a convenient label anywhere telling them that this is an anti-matter warhead, but it should be obvious that this is more than just a standard ship's missile.

The only label of use is a Naval part identification code: NAV-PIXIE-7634-AFX-76-350001KQ. This indicates the warhead had been stockpiled at Pixie temporarily – if they discover this while at the *Deutsche Post* it might prompt them to plot a course for Pixie, to return the warheads to their rightful owners.

2. We Want the Truth!

If Neal hasn't already been beaten to pulp by his paranoid comrades, he will probably be subjected to a week of interrogation and mounting suspicion.

Whether he can continue to spin a convincing line will determine whether the PCs decide he needs to view Jumpspace close up (involving a rapid exit from an airlock), though they may hold on to him if they believe he is a worthwhile hostage when they arrive back in Yres. Unfortunately this isn't the case, though at whatever point this ploy is used, it will cause the pirates to hesitate for several minutes before Arek Torp decides that the warheads are worth a lot more than the ear ache he'll get from Slater if Neal doesn't return alive.

Where are we Going?

If the characters want to try to work out where the second Jump tape is actually taking them, they can use the same task as on the outbound flight (see p.21). Success will reveal they are headed for a point in the middle of the Yrun's Jewels asteroid belt on the far side of the system from Yres.

3. Look Who's Waiting

Emerging from Jumpspace, the PCs should be watching their sensors intently. A **Difficult Astrogation** roll will confirm they are in the Yrun's Jewels asteroid belt, many millions of kilometres across the system from Yres. (This task drops to **Average** after a few more minutes, but they'll probably be trying to get a position fix quickly.)

An **Average Sensors** roll will also quickly identify a 400 dton ship lying doggo about 1,000 km away. This ship quickly powers up its drives and begins moving slowly towards the *Sydni*.

A further **Average Sensors** roll will give a reasonably good image of the incoming ship (pictured on p.31). They might be surprised to see it's a 400 dton bulk carrier, rather than a sleek threatening warship. However, its crew are 10 space thugs under the command of Arek Torp, who's overseeing this transaction personally.

Arek's first approach will be to hail the *Sydni* in a friendly tone – he needs to determine whether everything has gone to plan, so he will want to talk

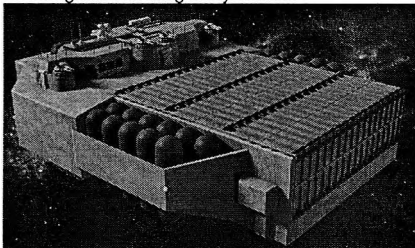
to Neal. If the characters have already locked up, or disposed of Neal, they will need a very good bluff if they are not to arouse Arek's suspicions and initiate an immediate attack.

Maagukii Class Bulk Carrier

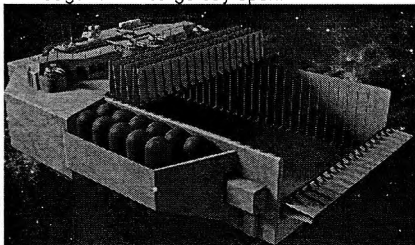
All Gone Pear-Shaped Again

- 400 dton hull, unstreamlined hull
- Jump-2, Maneuvre 3G
- 3 x Single laser turret; 1 x Triple missile turret (HE, carries 9 missiles total)
- Carries Ship's Boat
- 164 dton cargo hold

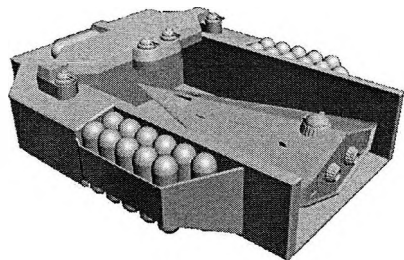
Maagukii with cargo bay closed:



Maagukii with cargo bay open:



Swallowing a Seeker...



Arek will ask the *Sydni* crew to stand to and allow the *All Gone Pear-Shaped Again* to dock the Seeker in its extensive cargo bay (see pictures).

Standing Off

It's fairly likely the PCs won't want to get caged in, so won't dock with the bulk carrier. If they don't actually flee, Arek will try to soothe their concerns and offer to send over some crew in their ship's boat to remove the cargo from the *Sydni*. These crew will be the same heavies listed below. If they get the opportunity to enter the Seeker, they'll try to take control, but if there's a stalemate they will at least try to get away with the warheads.

If things turn nasty, Arek will open fire on the *Sydni*, aiming to knock out its turret and drives, but carefully avoiding hitting the hold area (not only might he destroy a very valuable warhead, but the resulting explosion might take out his ship too).

If he disables the *Sydni* then he will try to capture it within his ship's cargo bay then board the Seeker (see "Let's Dock" below). If docking isn't possible (e.g. the carrier's taken damage to its bay) then his crew will EVA or use their ship's boat to reach the *Sydni* and blow their way in through the external hatches.

Running For It

If the PCs flee, Arek has no option but to open fire. As noted above, he will target the turret and drives, then dock and board the ship.

Let's Dock

If the PCs comply, Arek will bring in the Seeker (either forwards as shown in the picture, or aft-first, as shown in the deckplans on p.33) and extend a flexible airlock from one of the gantryways to the nearest hull airlock or hatch.

Needless to say, his welcoming committee consists of four heavies whose intent is to take control of the *Sydni* as quickly as possible.

If Neal is still capable of acting, this is the point where Arek is expecting him to use his concealed pistol or blade to help take control of the Seeker – preferably by being on the bridge as the thugs arrive at the airlock.

Heavy 1: Experienced (●)

• Vac Suit • Snub Pistol (1 x 20 solid rounds; 1 x 20 HEAP rounds) • Cutlass

Heavy 2: Experienced (●)

• Vac Suit • Shotgun (2 x 10 round mags) • Cutlass

Heavy 3: Novice (○)

• Vac Suit • Snub Pistol (1 x 20 solid rounds; 1 x 20 HEAP rounds)

Heavy 4: Novice (○)

• Vac Suit • Shotgun (2 x 10 rounds)

If things don't go smoothly for the pirates, Arek will reluctantly send in the Gunners (see crew list in Nugget 5). If he can't subdue the Seeker crew then he may simply close up the bay door and have his men float over the *Sydni's* hull to plant disabling charges on its turret and engines, while he decides whether to starve them out or cut a new way in through the hull.

The PCs might notice that the carrier's turrets cannot depress sufficiently to target the *Sydni* while it's in the cargo bay (a safety measure to prevent accidentally hitting the bay doors – Arek hasn't thought to remove this restriction from the gunnery software). However, the *Sydni's* turret, albeit only a single pulse laser, can easily bear on the larger ship's bridge and turrets, at point blank range! This provides an opportunity for the PCs to turn the tables on the pirates, severely damage the carrier and possibly escape relatively unscathed. Since the Seeker is unlikely to be carrying sufficient fuel for another Jump, they will probably want to head off across the system towards Yres – see Scenario 6.

Note: if anyone suggests using the anti-matter warheads, remind them that they are not full missiles, only the warheads, and the PCs don't know the arming codes, though sufficient explosives packed around one *might* set it off!

If the PCs surrender or are captured alive, you may decide not to summarily execute them. This would be the most efficient option in Arek's opinion, but if Neal's still around, or Arek takes a fancy to any female members of the Seeker crew, he may opt to clear out a stateroom on the carrier and keep them prisoner until he decides what to do with them – full deckplans of the carrier are given in Nugget 5.

4. Here Come the Cavalry

If the PCs had set up a sting with the Navy in Scenario 4, or perhaps the patrol ship had simply monitored their Jump signature and tried to match their vector, the arrival of the Naval ship can be used to 'save the day' should you feel this is appropriate.

Even if a 'sting' was planned, travel time through Jumpspace will be slightly different for the patrol ship and the Seeker, so it's quite possible that the Navy turns up later than the PCs were expecting.

5. Aboard the Pirate Ship

Details of the Maagukii are given below, with full deckplans, in case the PCs are taken aboard as prisoners or – unlikely as it may seem – try to fight their way on to the pirate ship!

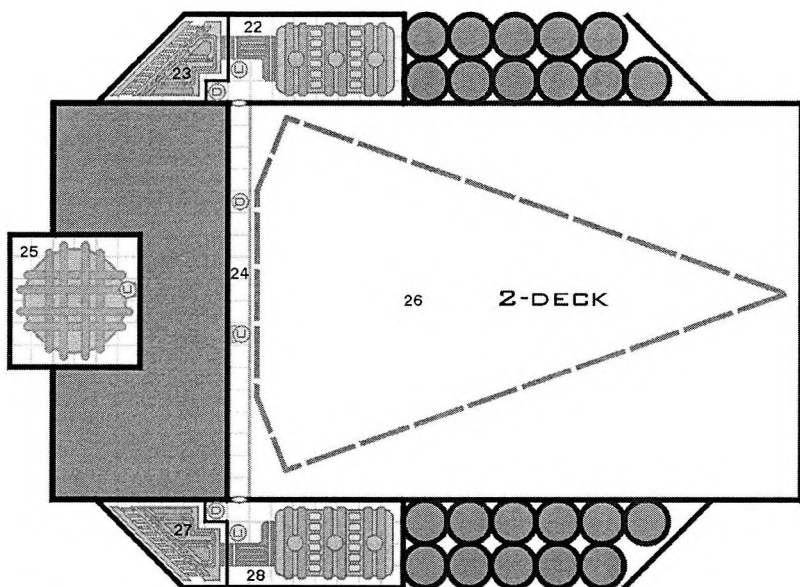
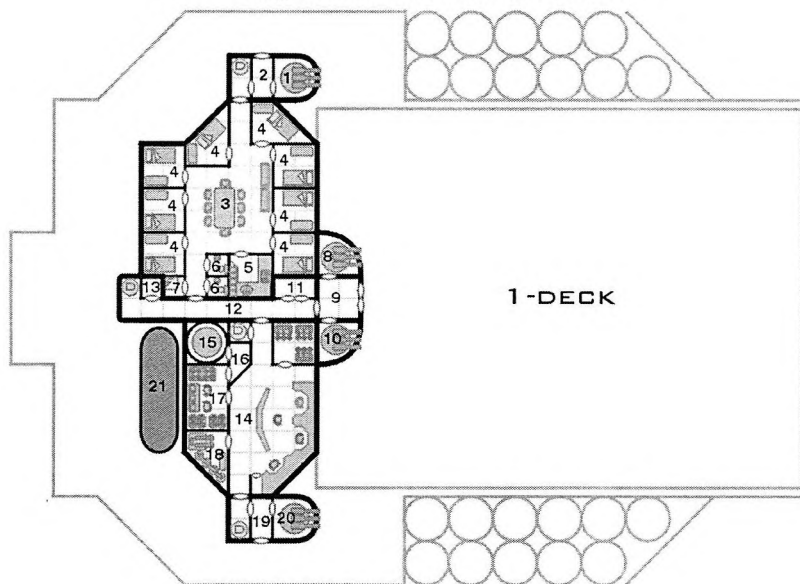
In addition to the four thugs in Nugget 3, the ship has the following crew:

Arek Torp: Veteran (★)
 • Vac Suit or Cloth armour • Gauss Rifle • Cutlass
Pilot: Experienced (●)
 • Vac Suit • Shotgun (1 x 10 round mag) • Dagger
Navigator: Experienced (●)
 • Vac Suit • Autopistol (1 x 10 round mag)
Chief Engineer: Experienced (●)
 • Vac Suit • Snub Pistol (1 x 20 solid rounds; 1 x 20 HEAP rounds) • Cutlass
Engineer: Novice (○)
 • Vac Suit • Autopistol (1 x 10 round mag)
Gunner: Novice (○)
 • Vac Suit • Snub Pistol (1 x 20 solid rounds; 1 x 20 HEAP rounds)
Gunner: Novice (○)
 • Vac Suit • Shotgun (2 x 10 rounds)

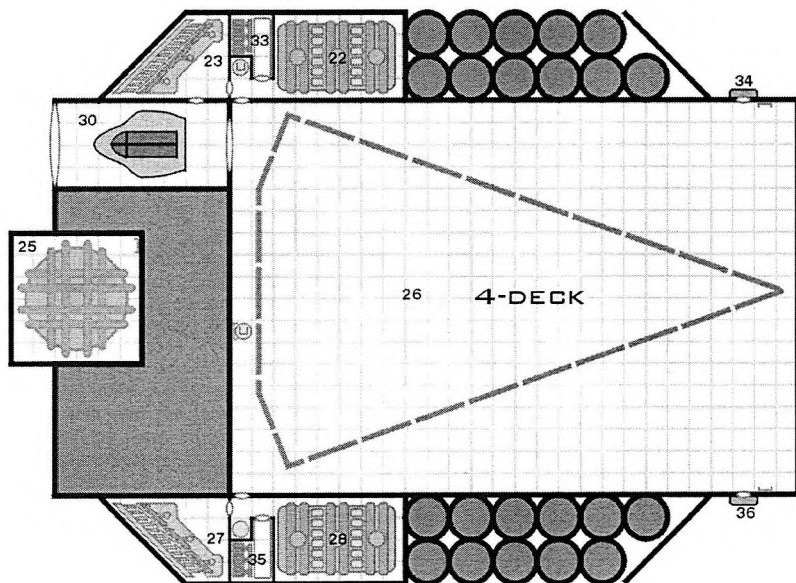
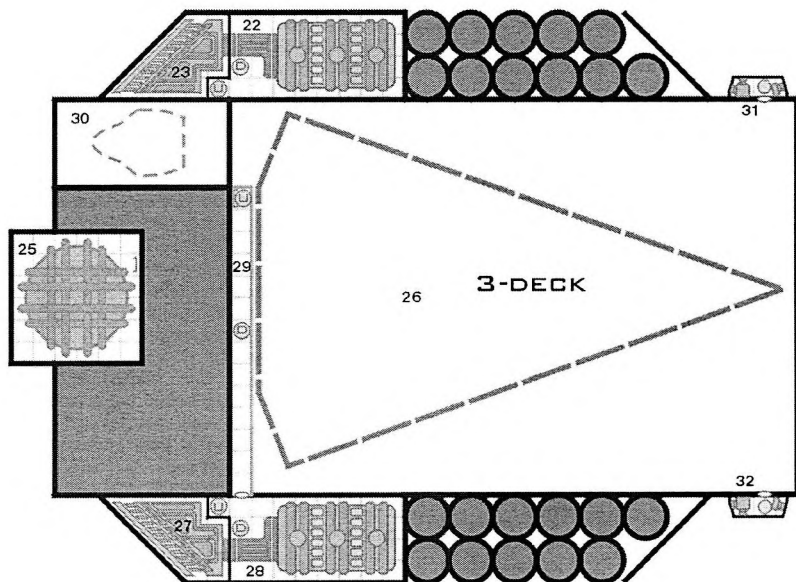
Key to Deckplans (pp.33-34):

1. Turret
2. Port Airlock
3. Crew Lounge
4. Staterooms (junior crew double-bunk)
5. Galley
6. Fresher
7. Shower
8. Turret
9. Main Airlock
10. Turret
11. Ship's Locker
12. Main Corridor
13. Ship's Locker
14. Bridge
15. Sensor Mast
16. Maintenance Airlock
17. Sensor/Comms Shack
18. Life Support
19. Starboard Airlock
20. Turret
21. Fuel Tanks
22. Port Power Plant
23. Port Manoeuvre Drive
24. Deck 2 Gantryway
25. Jump Drive
26. Cargo Bay
27. Starboard Manoeuvre Drive
28. Starboard Power Plant
29. Deck 3 Gantryway
30. Hangar (Ship's Boat)
31. Port Auxiliary Thruster
32. Starboard Auxiliary Thruster
33. Port Aft Boarding Ramp
34. Port Forward Boarding Ramp
35. Starboard Aft Boarding Ramp
36. Starboard Forward Boarding Ramp

Maagukii Class Bulk Carrier: Decks 1 and 2



Maagukii Class Bulk Carrier: Decks 3 and 4



The characters blast off and head for Jump but are likely to be pursued by Imperial fighters!

1. Did We Miss Something?

If the characters chose to avoid the pirate encounter in Nugget 5, or subsequently managed to Jump away from the pirate, they have three likely destinations:

Yres

Heading straight for home at the orbital might seem a good choice except that they should know by now that Slater will be waiting for them and probably won't be happy to see them turning up alive, with or without his cargo.

They might opt to hide for a while in one of their better-known asteroid haunts, or out by one of the gas giants, to give themselves a breathing space and decide how to resolve this adventure – move to Nugget 2.

Pixie

The primary reason to choose this system is to take their knowledge (and the warheads, if they have them) to the Naval authorities. Their initial reception may be unpleasant (the Navy doesn't like uninvited guests near their base) but if they explain the situation, a patrol cruiser will arrive, board them and confirm their story.

Once the Navy are involved, it's likely to bit of a roller-coaster for the PCs, starting with them desecrating a war grave, but balanced with the return of extremely important military equipment, as well as information about the criminals behind this venture.

In order to keep the whole situation quiet (after all, the Navy doesn't want the PCs blabbing about the warheads, nor about the Navy having 'lost' a whole ship 30 years ago), it's likely the PCs will receive a mixed warning/blessing, perhaps get some free repairs to their ship, and may be asked to return to Yres to complete a 'sting' operation against Slater – move to Nugget 2.

Menorb

Menorb is a relatively safe haven if the PCs are on the run, but all it can give them is a place to think and prepare – they cannot avoid returning to Yres if they are to have any chance of saving EIM – see Nugget 2.

2. Coming Home

If the PCs haven't made a pact with the Navy at some point earlier, they may be stopped by a patrol vessel because of earlier misdemeanours, or suspicions about their flight plan. It's likely they will be arrested and the ship searched. Once the warheads are found, they will have some serious explaining to do.

Charges range from violating the Imperial Rules of War (a capital offence), smuggling, gun-running, disturbing a war grave and anything else the Navy can think of. The ship will be impounded and EIM is guaranteed to go bust unless the PCs can sweet talk a solution – perhaps offering to try to entrap Slater and his men.

If the PCs already have the Navy on their side from Pixie, or from meeting the patrol cruiser in deep space or during Nugget 5, then they will probably have been asked to engage in a 'sting' operation to capture Slater and his cronies. As a result, they will be allowed to return to Yres orbital and 'hand over' the crates to Slater.

Of course, Slater will probably turn up with a lot of thugs, but after a short gun battle (if you'd like the PCs to get a chance to shoot some of Slater's baddies) they will find that just about every other bystander is actually a heavily armed Imperial agent and the load thumping sound is the marines in battledress coming down the dock. Basically Slater's had it at this point.

It's up to you if you want to extend the game by fully playing out this section.

It can be further complicated if you decide that the real powers behind Slater and the salvage mission were actually LSP, or perhaps even a Zhodani intelligence operation?

Basically if the PCs performed really honourably throughout, the Navy and SPA between them will arrange for all repairs necessary to the *Sydni's Search* and *Evan's Endeavour*, putting EIM firmly back in business. If the PCs weren't quite so heroic, at least one of the two ships is repaired and some mining contracts get re-routed their way to keep them in business.

The one character who probably doesn't want to be around at this point is Neal Slessinger, as it's unlikely he's got a single friend left in the whole system...

Your Secret...

This information will put your character at risk if disclosed to the other players, so guard it carefully.

Background: Unbeknownst to the Ernsteysns, since you invested in EIM you have used a little fraud and bribery to ensure they got the more lucrative contracts and prospecting sites – after all, you wanted to protect your investment! When money started coming in, you realised at 34 you weren't getting any younger, so you began using anagathics. Unfortunately you chose some bad people to supply the drugs – you only had to suffer one lot of withdrawal effects to know you were hooked. Your dealers started asking you to do them 'favours' and before long you found yourself working for the Slater Group. It worked both ways: they helped put the right word in the right ear as you progressed up through the SPA while you routed shipping where they asked and 'lost' or altered paperwork when it suited them.

When EIM got into financial trouble, you saw an opportunity to take over the company, so deliberately moved some contracts away from them to increase the pressure. You were looking to move on EIM when Slater told you his group had 'bought out' EIM's debts... you would have to undertake a special 'job' for them before they would let you take over. The job turned out to be the recovery of high value military cargo from an Imperial tender lost in deep-space after the Battle of the Two Suns. This would be violation of a war grave, so you falsified a civil salvage contract to show to Evan Ernsteyn. Afterwards your instructions are to rendezvous with a Slater ship in the asteroid belt. The question is, can you afford to leave the crew alive after they've witnessed all this? Perhaps Karin might appreciate you more when she realises the power you now wield? Frankly, losing the rest of the crew would be a sad loss to your company, but... then again, leaving them alive might be too much of a risk. Anyway, Miles is too arrogant and defensive, Joseph-Michael got one of Slater's past associates arrested back when he was a Navy investigator and Enri's a cripple, so really you'd be doing Slater a big favour getting rid of them all...

The Mission

Christos Slater wants you to recover two crates from the *Deutsche Post* – an Imperial tender lost in the Battle of the Two Suns 30 years ago on the edge of the system. He's told you the contents must be taken directly to a ship of his waiting in the asteroid belt. Slater has given you two ready-to-use Jump programs (one to reach the approximate location of the *Post* and the other to reach the waiting ship). Your instructions are given below. The crew will expect you to brief them, and they may ask awkward questions – you'll need to deflect such queries or think up appropriate answers to put them at their ease.

1. The mission requires two consecutive Jumps, so the *Sydni* needs demountable fuel tanks to allow it to do this. *Note: searching for ice asteroids to refuel once you're out there could take weeks.*
2. Use the first Jump tape to reach the projected location of the *Deutsche Post*. *Notes: just call it "the tender", otherwise someone might work out it's a Navy ship; if they ask, say it's just chance that it happens to be near the Battle of the Two Suns; remember that you supposedly found this through some old port records, and the value of the cargo was indicated in insurance records, so it's okay to sound a bit vague on detail – if you can't answer the crew's questions (or make something up) just say you don't know because the records weren't that exact.*
3. Locate the tender using the *Sydni*'s sensors, board it and recover the two crates. *Note: you have the unique identity codes for the crates, but not the exact storage location, so the crew will either have to search for it, or hope that one of the tender's computer systems is still operable to locate it. Once the crates are found, don't let the crew open them. Make up whatever story you need to ease their curiosity.*
4. Use the second Jump tape to rendezvous with Slater's ship hiding in the asteroid belt. *Note: If possible, make the crew think this is a Jump back to Yres; if they work out that it's not, tell them the buyer for the cargo can't come to the port, so they have to do the exchange in the asteroid belt. At this point the crew will probably be somewhat paranoid, so make up whatever story you have to. As a last resort, claim this is a covert Imperial intelligence operation and you simply can't tell them the whole story.*
5. Get the ship into the corsair's bay, then let the pirates onboard to finish off the EIM crew.
6. Return home in a couple of weeks, claiming to have hidden in the engine space after a pirate ship surprised the ship at the edge of the system. Then foreclose on EIM's loans and take the company, using it as a shell for smuggling, with a ready investor in Christos Slater.

Hull: 10,000 dton, Unstreamlined, TL12, MCr 5,260.

Drives: Jump 2, Manoeuvre 1G.

Weaponry: 100 hardpoints (up to 40 triple lasers in 4 batteries; up to 60 triple sandcasters in 6 batteries).

Crew: 14 Officers, 61 Ratings, up to 40 passengers. Total of 120 staterooms.

Cargo: 9 Cargo Modules carrying 650 dton each (total 5,850 dton).

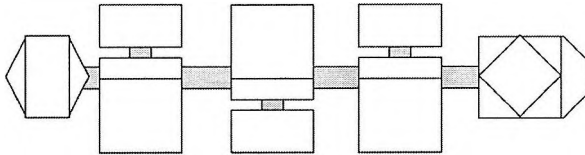
Electronics: Computer model 7fib.

Fuel: Fuel scoops, purification (18 hours), 2,200 dton fuel.

Sub-Craft: 2 x 95 dton Shuttle (carried above and below the crew module).

Design: A central shaft containing transit lifts, power and control cabling runs from the crew module to the engine module. This shaft is surrounded by fuel units within a rigid framework to which are attached the nine cargo modules (the transit lift system branches out from the central shaft to each module). Each module also has two side hatches for cargo loading.

SIDE ELEVATION

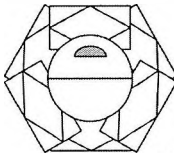


LIFE SUPPORT &
AVIONICS MODULE

CARGO MODULES
x9 ~650dT ea

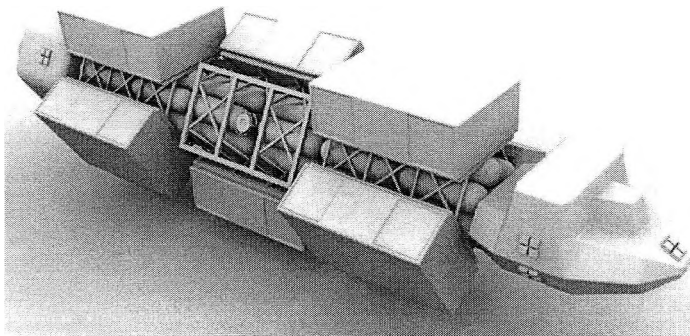
ENGINEERING MODULE
JUMP 2 ENGINE
1G DRIVE

FRONT ELEVATION

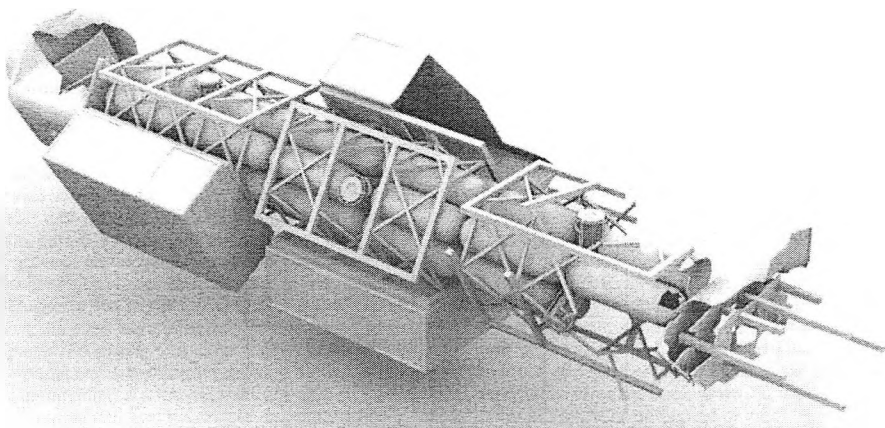


10,000 dT Modular Tender
Imperial Subsidised Design
5.850dT Modular Cargo Space

THREE-DIMENSIONAL PROJECTION

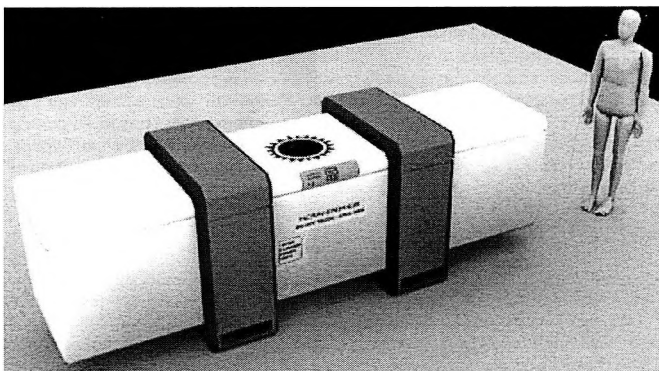


Visual spectrum analysis of the Deutsche Post



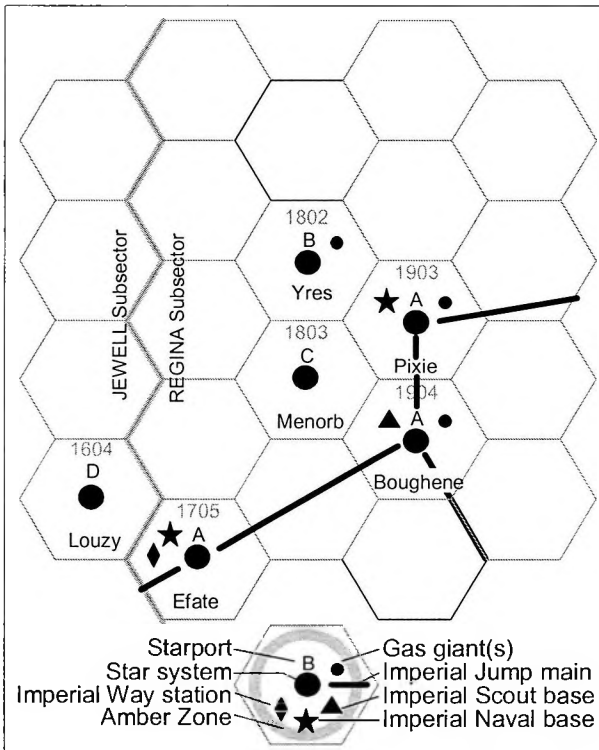
Structural Analysis in progress...
...Engineering Section destroyed
...Crew Section destroyed
...Cargo Modules 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9 lost
...Cargo Module 6 destroyed

A Mysterious Crate



Yres Neighbourhood

Jewell/Regina subsector border worlds



Louzy has huge gold mines owned by rich conglomerates which have attracted millions of workers. However, most of its 10 billion populace are little more than poorly paid slaves in the many 'support' industries such a world requires.

Efate is the home of the 193rd Fleet, with a large Naval base, extensive shipyards and support facilities for Marine, Army and Scout units.

Yres' fluorine atmosphere has driven many of its 30 million inhabitants to live either in undersea cities or in orbital units. Its asteroid belts support an active mining community.

Menorb is an agriculturally self-sufficient world but its exports are limited by a lack of investment in its starport.

Pixie is primarily just a well-equipped waypoint starport with a few beltlers hoping for a decent find; its tiny permanent populace have little interaction with the Naval base far out in the system (berth for subgroups of the 193rd fleet).

Boughene is a sparse system and its fluorine-laden atmosphere keeps its populace in large orbiting habitats, many employed at the headquarters of General Products LIC.

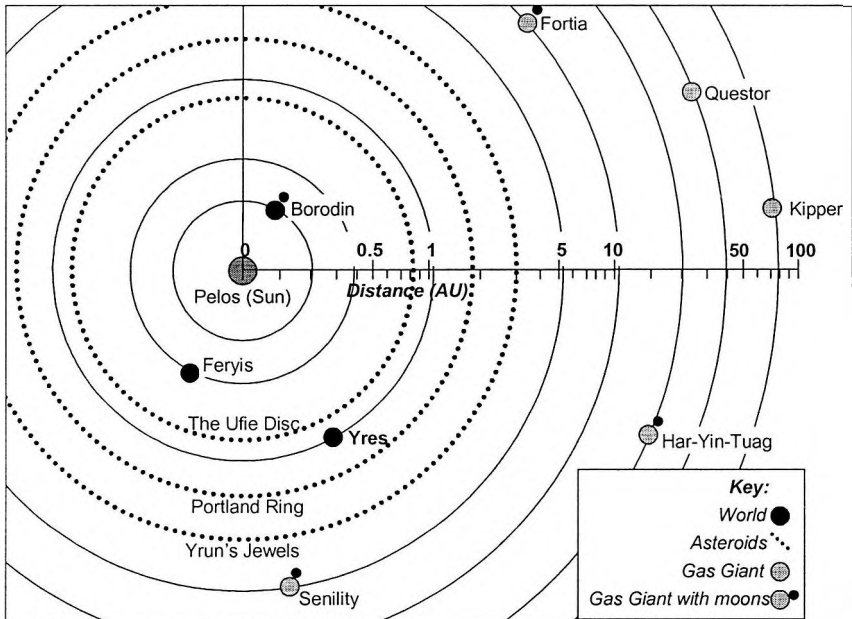
Loc	Name	Statistics	Base/Notes	PBG	Alg	Star	Pt	Dia	Atm	Wat	Ctrl	TL
1604	Louzy	D322A88	8 P Na In	110	Im	F6 V	II	3356	VTP	16%	5	8
1705	Efate	A646930	D N Ni Wy	810	Im	K4 V	V	6339	VTP	60%	0	10
1802	Yres	BAC6773	7 FI	335	Im	G5 V	IV	9820	E	61%	2	7
1803	Menorb	C652998	7 Po	310	Im	M5 II	III	5718	S	20%	6	7
1803	Pixie	A100103	D N Ni	901	Im	M1 V, M0 D	V	590	N	0%	2	10
1804	Boughene	A8B3531	D S Ni	601	Im	M7 V	V	8328	E	30%	1	10

Key: **Base:** S=Imperial Scout; N=Imperial Navy; Wy = Way Station. **Notes:** Ag=Agricultural; Cp=Capital; Hi=High population; In=Industrial; Lo=Low population; Ni=Nonindustrial; Ri=Rich; Va=Vacuum. **PBG:** Population digit, planetoid belts, gas giants. **Alg**=Allegiance: Im=Imperial. **GT:** **Pt**=Port. **Dia**=Diameter (miles). **Atm:** Oxygen-nitrogen unless otherwise noted; D=Dense; E=Exotic; N=None; P=Polluted; S=Standard; T=Thin; Tr=Trace; VT=Very Thin. **Wat**=Surface water. **Ctrl**=Control. **TL**=Tech level.

Note. This information pulls together a 'best fit' view, given variations in 'canonical' data and between rule systems.

Yres Star System

Navigation Display of Orbital Bodies



Orb/Sub-orb	Name	Statistics	Notes	Pt	Dia	Atm	Wat	Ctrl	TL
0	Borodin	H100462 6		I	1064	N	0%	1	6
40	Tumeris	YS00000 0		0	796	N	0%	0	0
1	Feryis	F330223 6	Co	I	3655	VT	0%	2	6
2	The Ufie Disc	X000000 0		0	-	N	0%	0	0
3	Yres	BAC6773 7	FI	IV	9820	E	61%	2	7
4	Portland Ring	X000000 0		0	-	N	0%	0	0
5	Yrun's Jewels	X000000 0		0	-	N	0%	0	0
6	Senility	Large Gas Giant		0	140364	E	0%	0	0
1	Old Bony	YR00000 0		0	-	N	0%	0	0
3	Old Time	YR00000 0		0	-	N	0%	0	0
4	Old Yan	Y100000 0		0	1485	N	0%	0	0
6	Tammik	Y300000 0		0	3655	N	0%	0	0
7	Fortia	Small Gas Giant		0	98574	E	0%	0	0
1	Hurby	YR00000 0		0	-	N	0%	0	0
6	Prefwif	Y340100 6	Re	I	3108	T	0%	0	6
12	Fikej	Y200000 0		0	-	N	0%	0	0
40	Tasmet	Y200100 6	Re	I	2942	N	0%	0	0
8	Har-Yin-Tuag	Small Gas Giant		0	65875	E	0%	0	0
5	Paulo	YR00000 0		0	-	N	0%	0	0
9	Questor	Large Gas Giant		0	119174	E	0%	0	0
10	Kipper	Large Gas Giant		0	95283	E	0%	0	0

Key: As per the "Area of Operations" display, p.39.

Yres (BAC6773-7)

Orbital Starport Library Data

System

Yres is noted for the unusual distribution of asteroids in the inner system. Studies by the research station on Tasmet indicates that during the system's formation, the gas giant Senility formed very quickly and disturbed the particulate matter that might otherwise have formed worlds in the inner orbits. However, the more valuable of the asteroid belts is the Ufie Disc which is believed to have resulted from an early planetary collision in the inner system, leaving this belt unusually close to Yres itself, which has made it particularly easy to exploit.

World

Orbit: Yres takes around 390 standard days to circle its sun (called Mij, or Yres Alpha) at a distance of 152,300,000 km, with an orbital eccentricity of 0.005.

World: With a diameter of 15,800 km (9,820 mi) and a standard density molten core, Yres has a mass of 1.35 (relative to Terra) and a surface gravity of about 1.2g. The planet has an axial tilt of 4° and rotates once every 17 hours.

Atmosphere: Fluorine contamination makes Yres' atmosphere a hazardous, insidious mixture which is lethal to normal beings and requires substantial protective measures for all who travel through it – typically neutralising sprays for the hulls of craft, and disposable vac suits for those foolish enough to venture out on its surface.

Fluorine is extremely reactive and so is usually only found in combination with other elements. Combined with water it creates highly corrosive hydrofluoric acid. Much like chlorine, fluoride salts are highly poisonous to humans

Surface: The gentle rolling browns, greens and blues of Yres' surface bely its corrosive nature. Close up these crystalline 'fields' can be seen to be the result of fluorine combining with mineral veins (containing various metals such as iron) which have been exposed from the underlying rocky crust. Changes in the landscape are rare due to the planet's minimal tectonic movement – earthquakes and volcanoes are almost unknown.

Relatively strong winds blow up for weeks at a time, carrying thick white clouds of particularly corrosive vapours with them. Average daytime temperatures range from 0°C at the equator to -50°C at the poles, with little seasonal variation.

The seas which cover 61% of its surface are acidic due to the fluorine, but as hydrofluoric acid evaporates at around -19°C, the equatorial seas do support a few types of simple fungi-like flora which have spread over the sea floor, using a mixed oxygen/fluorine chemical energy cycle.

People

Population: The population of 30,000,000 are roughly divided into three parts, with one-third of them living in a single sprawling subsea metropolis (Aranea) ruled by a somewhat conservative oligarchal Council of Yres which proudly traces its heritage back to the first Imperial settlers. A further 18,000,000 people are spread across the 11 continents and 23 seas in a variety of undersea and subterranean cities, ruled by the Council of Unity, a more open and democratic amalgamation of break-away locals and immigrant factions.

The remaining populace are spread across several large orbiting ecologies and the highport; each of these has its own elected councils, with a strong bias towards distinguished scientific types (due to the inherent technical imperatives of managing spaceborne habitats).

Overall, the planet's outlook is fairly indifferent towards outsiders but they are exceptionally psi-phobic: people showing possible psionic abilities (which they take to include all Zhodani) are liable to brutal and summary treatment by the law (if the locals don't get them first). Archaic local beliefs dictate that psi's must have their heads pulped and then burned to prevent them from implanting a long-term psionic 'curse' on their foes.

Various sports have evolved to meet the world's unusual nature, including ocean grav racing, which uses high speed air/water vessels to race challenging courses across the acidic ocean, battling against the strong winds.

Law: The open display of weapons is generally frowned upon, both dirtside and in the space communities, due to the fragile nature of these habitats. However, it is perfectly legal to carry and trade in weapons which are not of a strictly military nature.

Economy: Yres exports a range of natural resources based on the exotic chemistry found on its surface (ores, metal and non-metallic compounds) as well as the traffic in processed ore from the Ufie asteroid belt handled by the orbiting manufacturing facilities. Their prowess in medical,

environment and transport technologies far exceeds the world's TL rating (by 2 levels) due to their need to survive Yres' hostile chemistry.

Yres also has a well-developed entertainments industry to keep the populace happy with their near-permanent subterranean imprisonment.

Some food is imported, but extensive hydroponic factories (both on-world and in orbit) provide much of the local produce.

History: Like many worlds in this area, Yres has suffered from the sporadic Frontier Wars with the Zhodani Consulate, though to the latter it appears only ever to have had strategic importance as a gateway into neighbouring parts of the Spinward Marches.

Military

Until the Battle of the Two Suns, Yres was primarily of value as a refuelling site (given its gas giants) *en route* to its neighbours: Pixie with its heavy Naval presence, and the relatively habitable world of Menorb. As a result it does not have a Naval base but its gas giants do have several substantial systems defence ships lurking within them to dissuade any future intruders.

Given Yres' hostile surface, the orbital facilities have a high perceived strategic value and have avoided war damage except for one rash Vargr

raid during the Fifth Frontier War which destroyed one orbital habitat and left some parts of the planet's surface highly radioactive.

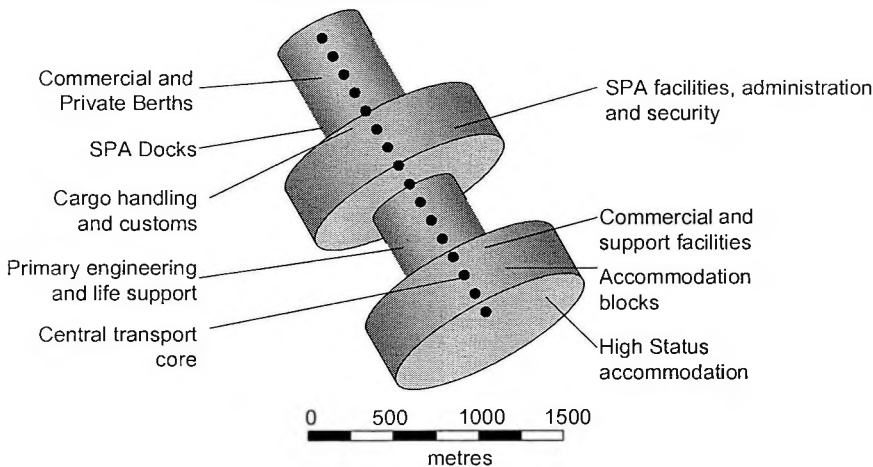
Orbital Port

The primary starport for Yres is a 1800 metre long port spinning habitat. Ship docks are concentrated at one end, well away from the main accommodation areas, though subsidiary docking points and emergency escape shuttles can be found throughout the structure. A set of central transport tubes in low-g run from the docks, through the SPA facilities (where customs and cargo storage are handled) and continue through the main engineering sections to the commercial and residential areas.

For economy reasons, most of the port relies upon spin for gravity, reinforcing the use of outer areas for standard grav habitats and inner areas for low-g operations (e.g. cargo handling). Dock areas vary between 0.5 and 0.8g typically, with some repair yards placed at the end of the spindle, giving them negligible gravity.

Note that alongside the central core, large numbers of individual lift shafts and stairwells provide access between levels.

Yres Orbital: Overview



Ship's Data: Type J 'Wobbegong' Class Seeker

Hull: 100 dton, Streamlined, Size 8, Armour 10, Structure 6, TL12, MCr23.4. (GT: 100-ton SL Hull, Heavy Compartmentalisation, TL10, PD4, DR 200, EMass 263, LMass 382, HP 15,000, Size Mod +8.)

Drives: Jump 1, Manoeuvre 3G, Power Plant 3. (GT: Airspeed 2,350.)

Weaponry: Fire Control Rating 0. Turret: Pulse laser (1/0/0/0) (GT: 360-MJ).

Crew/Cargo: 4 Crew (Captain/Pilot, Astrogator/Comms, Engineer, Mining Specialist), optional double-bunking in two staterooms. 20 dton Cargo in two 10 dton ore bays.

Electronics: Standard Controls, computer model 1/bis. Sensor Rating A2 P3 J0. (GT: Basic Bridge, Basic Stealth, Basic Emission Cloaking, Prospecting Module.)

Communicators: Radio 3,000,000 km, Laser 6,000,000 km.

Sensors: PESA 160,000 km, AESA 320,000 km, AMAS (Active Mining Analysis Sensor) 5,300 km.

Fuel: Fuel scoops, purification (12 hours), 16 dton fuel.

Sub-Craft: Air/raft (mining buggy).

Many small ships have been converted from their standard models to create mining ships but the Wobbegong class was – in theory – designed from scratch. In reality, the limitations of a 100 dton hull and a realisation that re-using a standard hull would much reduce costs, led to its final design closely resembling other Type J's such as those based on the Suleiiman class Scout/Courier. The Wobbegong does have some refinements, having a relatively spacious dedicated EVA airlock and a very compact engineering section (by moving the smaller Jump drive to beneath the main engineering deck). The design is slightly more costly than some competitors, but the money has been well spent on heavily-tested, reliable systems, giving this class an enviably good safety record. To give maximum possible ore bay space, the normal fuel tankage only allows a single Jump-1; for longer distances one or more demountable tanks must be installed in the ore bay(s). Balancing this are the 3G manoeuvre drives, allowing the ship to move more quickly than most competitors between prospecting sites within a system.

Key to Deckplans:

A: Airlock. Main airlock, with extending ladder to ground level; main lockers in the engineering area just to aft of the airlock. There are multiple other hull hatches but this is the only dedicated airlock.

AR: Air/raft. A fully pressurized mining buggy, mounted with low power cutting lasers and two long manipulator arms for taking samples, placing explosive charges, etc.

B: Bridge. Positions for Pilot/Astrogator and Prospector/Engineer. The ship can be run by a single person if required.

C: Cargo Hold. 5 dton of space, holding mining equipment, ore analysis kit, explosive charges, manual drills, extra supplies and ore analysis equipment. The reduced ceiling height is annoying but crew quickly get used to ducking. Also provides access to the dorsal turret.

CG: Main Cargo Holds. Dual 15 dton holds for carrying ore, including large underside doors for easy loading. Both holds have the necessary control systems and pipes to mount a dismountable fuel tank.

CL: Crew Lounge. A compact lounge/galley with entertainment suite and wall-mounted fitness kit.

F: Fuel Scoops. With integral fuel purification plant.

JD: Jump Drive. LSP "Torment" AX2 drive, capable of Jump-2 range. Mounted in the lower engineering space to reduce the engineering area needed on the main deck.

L: Ship's Lockers. Contain vac suits, medical and survival equipment.

LG: Landing Gear. Compared to the Suleiiman based designs, this ship has its landing gear moved outwards from the spine to allow more efficient usage of cargo space.

MD: Manoeuvre Drive. Two LSP MS-R-x-82 (compact) thruster units.

PP: Power Plant. Two-part AA1089 power units providing fail-over redundancy.

S1-2: Front Staterooms. Compact crew cabins with integral fresher cubicles. These cabins are smaller and so usually given to the junior crew.

S3-4: Rear Staterooms. These slightly larger crew cabins may be used by senior crew, or can be set up for double-bunking to carry up to 6 crew in total, in which case the senior crew tend to move into S1-2.

V: Avionics Suite. Survey scanners in addition to standard ship sensors and communications.

*This adventure is suitable for use with all forms of Traveller - from 'classic' Traveller through Steve Jackson's **GURPS Traveller** to **T5** and beyond.*

Being a Belter...

...is a risky line of work at the best of times. Ernsteyn Industrial Materials is a family-run asteroid mining operation which has hit hard times.

The sharks are closing in...

...and there's not much a small company can do when one ship is grounded needing expensive repairs and your other Seeker might as well stay in dock because suddenly the decent mining grants aren't coming your way.

There's a job (isn't there always)...

...which could save the company. It's a simple salvage operation and the patron is well know to EIM, but surely there must be a catch (isn't there always...)?



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