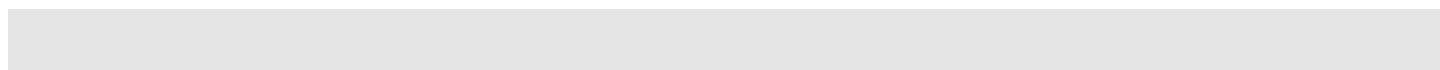


.....
Halfway Station Presents...

The Snowbird Mystery



.....
White Dwarf Classic Traveller Articles
by Andy Slack



⋮

The Snowbird Mystery

White Dwarf Classic Traveller Articles
by Andy Slack

Copyright Statements

These articles, originally printed in *White Dwarf* magazine, are copyright of Games Workshop, and are reproduced by kind permission of the copyright holders.

The *Traveller* game in all its forms is owned by Far Future Enterprises. Copyright © 1977-1998 Far Future Enterprises. *Traveller* is a registered trademark of Far Future Enterprises. Far Future permits websites and fanzines for this game, provided they contain this notice, that Far Future is notified, and subject to a withdrawal of permission on 90 days' notice. The contents of this site are for personal, non-commercial use only. Any use of Far Future Enterprises' copyrighted material or trademarks anywhere on this web site and its files should not be viewed as a challenge to those copyrights or trademarks. In addition, any program/article/file on this site cannot be republished or distributed without the consent of the author who contributed it.

These three articles collectively make up the *Snowbird Mystery* – first the scenario itself, then the deck plans for the ship under investigation, and finally notes on the espionage organisation which employs the PCs.

The Snowbird Mystery

An undercover Traveller adventure by Andy Slack
Originally published in *White Dwarf* 41 - © Games Workshop Limited 1983

*A Traveller scenario using the Traveller Basic Set and Book 4. **Important:** WD40 is essential to play this scenario, as the ship used in the scenario is detailed in that issue. Additional, but not essential information may also be found in this issue's Starbase.*

Referee Only

Module 1: Introduction

This is a *Traveller* scenario for 2-4 players, who are agents of the Covert Survey Bureau [see *Starbase* this issue], and should be run through one year's training before the scenario commences. In this, each has a one-third chance of acquiring a skill level in each of the following skills: Forgery, Bribery, Interrogation, Streetwise, Admin, Recon, Combat Engineering, and the weapon skill of their choice.

Mercenary, Book 4 will be a distinct advantage, as will *The Best of the Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*, issues 1-4, although a capable referee could manage without them. If *Book 4* is not available, ignore all Recon or Combat Engineering skills, and refer to Module 12 for the use of Interrogation skill. In addition, the following materials (while not necessary) will save the referee's time: *Supplement 2, Animal Encounters; Supplement 1, 1001 Characters*. The players should have access to Modules 3-6 inclusive both before and during play.

Referee Only

Module 2: Background

The main problem facing an interstellar Emperor is that of a revolt in the more distant of his provinces. There are several measures which can be taken to counteract this; splitting up provinces into small units to ensure that it is as difficult as possible for a rebel lord to control the whole sector, keeping the masses happy so that they don't feel like revolting, separating military and civil rule, and so on. The Terran Empire does all these, and amongst other measures, the Emperor has control of the Imperial Inspectorate, a body of picked high-ranking officials who travel widely with their own armed forces and pay periodic surprise visits to the provinces to check up on the sector dukes and sector admirals.

Of course, 'surprise' is a loose term when applied to a visit by several thousand tons of shipping with a half-dozen Marine battalions on board; the alert sector duke keeps his eyes open, and can spot such an unexpected audit several weeks away by means of high-Jump couriers and intelligence estimates. Similar methods inform most of the other officials with their hands in the cookie jar in time for their activities to be covered up, unless they are plotting something really major, like a revolt, in which case the mobilisation of troops and ships would be difficult to conceal, and the only hope would be to destroy the visiting Inspector and his men.

Yelov Salash, Sector Head of the Covert Survey Bureau for Sector Antares, has read the computer compilations and siftings of reports from detached duty scouts and other sources, and realises that an Imperial Inspector is on his way to audit the sector and can be expected to arrive in a few weeks. This gives him some cause for despair, as he has been augmenting his private fortune by the somewhat illegal method of using CSB shipping to smuggle the contraband narcotic hyperdexamine, popularly known as 'yag', and an addictive form of combat drug. This would be bad enough, but could be covered up in the normal way of things. However, the latest shipment of yag has gone missing; the ship carrying it had filed a flight plan in accordance with normal procedures, and by collating the various sources of data at his disposal, Salash estimates that the ship disappeared in the Shangrila system. He realises to his horror that Shangrila is one of the stops for the Inspector, according to his computer's predictions from earlier checks. Quickly he transmits the necessary orders; a group of agents are to be assembled from nearby systems at Shangrila and search for the missing vessel and its load of yag, using the cover of asteroid miners searching for a strike in the system's outer moons and planets. The agents won't, of course, be aware of the fact that they are searching for yag.

Players

Module 3: Briefing - Commit and Destroy

As you may or may not be aware, the Bureau maintains an interest in Transtellar Lines, a minor space lane carrier in the sector, to facilitate infiltration, exfiltration and supply of agents in the field, and to carry orders and reports.

The line owns several 'Explorer' class scout craft [see WD40] which are largely used for document transfers and as a sideline collect intelligence by monitoring communications encountered in their travels. One such vessel is the MXV-90658 *Snowbird*, which is now some weeks overdue on a routine courier mission.

The team will equip itself and members will make their way aboard scheduled flights to the Shangrila system (details attached) where, posing as asteroid miners searching for valuable minerals in the outer system, they will recover from the *Snowbird* the crates of documents in the hold, which are confidential accounts and operational records of CSB actions beyond the Imperial border. The team is not to examine these records or open them, since the records should be known to as few people as possible for security reasons. Of secondary importance is the discovery of the reason for the *Snowbird*'s delay and the fate of her crew.

The Bureau has arranged for prospecting licenses and a suitably-modified cutter to be available to the team. The exact techniques employed are at the team's discretion;

however, the records are of paramount importance and the team is authorised to take any necessary steps to retrieve them. If retrieval is impossible, the records are to be destroyed. It is also vital that the Bureau should remain unconnected with the entire operation to avoid compromising our agents and our involvement with Transtellar.

In addition to normal pay for the operation at standard rates, the team will be entitled to a cash bonus of Cr 10,000 each on successful completion of their task. A draft of Cr 100,000 is available for the team to equip itself, but any remaining monies and equipment must be returned to the Bureau after the mission. This draft is also to be used for operating expenses.

Enclosures:

1. Shangrila system [Module 6]
2. Explorer class scoutships [WD40]
3. Navigational analysis of the most likely locations of the *Snowbird*.
4. Personnel records of the *Snowbird's* crew [Module 5]

Players

Module 4: The Cutter

The Bureau's agent-in-place on Shangrila has managed to acquire a set of papers allowing the team to prospect in the system, and in his cover identity as a factor for a large trading concern he has been able to hire a modified cutter for the team's use. He is responsible for its upkeep, and will pay the rental fees for the team.

The cutter is a 50 ton small craft capable of 4G acceleration, with two tons of fuel, and a crew of two, pilot and rider. It mounts a pulse laser (firing at -1 to hit in combat) for mining purposes, and its 30-ton payload space, normally committed to one of a variety of detachable modules, now holds an asteroid mining module worth perhaps Cr 2,000,000, while the cutter itself is worth Cr 28,000,000. It has 1.5 tons of space available for carrying whatever supplies the team feel are necessary, while within the module are six rather cramped cabins, facilities for skimming fuel from gas giants or other wilderness sources, a 10-ton hold for samples of ore, a small laboratory for analysing the ores, and an additional 4 tons of fuel tankage, allowing the cutter to go 12 weeks between refuelling under normal circumstances. One ton of supplies will cost Cr 50,000 and last for 285 man-weeks.

The mining module is second-hand and obsolescent, as is the cutter; this is perfectly in character for a group of penurious asteroid miners.

Players

Module 5: Snowbird Crew Records

1. *Norton Fitzwarren*: Command Pilot 66B8AA Age 26 2 terms (Scout)
Pilot-2, Computer-1.
2. *Tollen Cobbech*: Navigator 7CB899 Age 38 5 terms (Merchant; final rank 3rd officer)
Medical-1, Navigation-1, Mechanical-1, Jack Of Trades-1, Electronic-1, Body Pistol-1.
3. *Nikolai Malvatnikov*: Chief Engineer 88A788 Age 30 3 terms (Scout)
Pilot-1, Engineering-3, Jack Of Trades-1.
4. *Addison Wesley*: Second Engineer 483589 Age 30 3 terms (Merchant, final rank 4th officer).
Engineering-2, Electronics-1, Gunnery-1, Steward-1.

5. *Mirrila Vigrasse*: Medic 78C784 Age 26 2 terms (Other)
Medical-2, Small Water Craft-1.

The Command Pilot and Chief Engineer are both CSB agents; other crew members are not, and believe themselves to be working for a normal courier firm. Team members should bear this in mind when dealing with them.

Players

Module 6: Shangrila

Shangrila (C668547-6, Agricultural, Non-Industrial; green travel zone, Imperial alignment) is a planet of little importance. Taxes are paid to the Empire in return for protection of an unobtrusive nature, since Shangrila is near the frontier of Imperial space. As part of the price for this, the Empire maintains a small port facility to service its naval and scout ships, which is also available to civilians for normal fees.

The port facility has reasonable repair workshops, but refined fuel is hard to come by and costs double the normal rates to civilian buyers.

The world has an equatorial diameter of slightly over 9,650 km and being of normal density, a surface gravity of approximately 0.8 standard G. The atmosphere is normal in composition and pressure, and breathable by humans without assistance. Some 80% of the world's surface is covered with oceans, dotted with chains of islands supporting fishing communities and a thriving light industry producing excellent mid-tech speedboats with which the locals are often adept. Despite the law level of 7, it is relatively easy to obtain licences for tech 6 weapons. There is a general ban on all items of tech level 7+ outside the starport, except for medical gear.

Shangrila is the second world out from its G7 primary, and the climate is temperate at best, becoming quite cold in winter or at high latitudes. There are four other worlds of a terrestrial size and two gas giants; the gas giants are the fourth and seventh worlds from the star, the fourth being the larger at approximately jovian size, with 14 known moons and occasional claims for more. This is the main site for the asteroid mining which occurs on an irregular basis, usually by offworlders who believe that without local competition there is more chance of a lucky strike.

Referee Only

Module 7: The Missing Ship

Important Note: All deck locations and descriptions (A2, B8, Dorsal Turret etc) are references to the deck plans listed in the article Assignment: Survey! in WD40 which gives Explorer Class (the Snowbird) ship specifications. Referees must have WD40 to play the scenario.

Having arrived at Shangrila, equipped, and set off after the missing ship, the players will take several weeks to find it. While no maps of the system are enclosed, the players do have a navigational analysis of the Snowbird's probable path, which allows them to start looking in roughly the right place - the region of the secondary gas giant's moons, which will take about a week to reach; the cutter could do the trip in less time, but excessive speed would look suspicious.

Once per week of searching in the region indicated by their navigational analysis, the referee should roll 2D6 and add the highest level of Navigation skill available to the party. In addition, DMs may be allowed for exceptionally bright or stupid ideas on the part of the band. A modified score of 12+ indicates that weak distress signals have been picked up. During the search, the referee should also roll weekly on the encounter table of Module 8.

The distress signal mentions only the name and registry of the missing vessel, and the fact that the ship has suffered a major manoeuvre drive failure, thus rendering it unable to move. The voice is anxious, but controlled.

Approaching the source of the signals, the players observe the ship slowly tumbling end to end. Lacking manoeuvre capability, the crew have not been able to restabilise their craft, or aim their laser accurately enough to send a message by it to Shangrila; hence their resorting to the comparatively inefficient method of radio signals. There is the merest glow of navigation lights on the vessel, and no internal lighting; instruments aboard the players' craft, if they use them to check, will reveal that the ship's power plant is still functioning, but at the lowest possible level. There is no sign of life.

The players will probably decide to board the stricken vessel. This requires an approach using vacc suits and backpack thrusters; characters must make the usual roll to avoid mishaps. The main airlock (A9) does not respond to attempts to open it in the normal way; a character of Electronics-3 can bypass the circuits after removing the maintenance panels. Failing that, a character of Mechanical-3 may be able to gain access via the emergency airlock (B6) by fiddling with the handcrank mechanism after removing maintenance panels. The players may decide to make an external survey of the vessel before entering; all seems in order on the outside of the ship. The interior can be seen at two points; first, the windows on the bridge (A1), and second through the port of the dorsal turret.

A character clambering to these locations must make an additional Vacc Suit skill roll to avoid mishap (probably losing his grip and falling off). Once there, he may shine a torch into them. The dorsal turret is empty, and unlit - not even instrument lights are lit up. On the bridge, the figures of the pilot and navigator can be seen strapped into their acceleration couches. They look perfectly at peace, having removed their headsets, and very dead. There is no evidence of decompression if the players think to ask. They should be allowed to confer since they will undoubtedly be in radio contact. Anyone with experience of working as part of a ship's crew - naval, marine, scout or merchant characters for example - may, if he asks, be told the function of the half-dozen instruments which are lit up, providing the only illumination on the bridge. They show that the power plant and life support systems are active; everything else is shut down, and the activity of these two systems is minimal.

If the players have taken more than 15 weeks to find the ship, then the lights will be dimly red; otherwise, they will be green and fairly bright.

Players who specify making an unusually close scrutiny of the crewmen should be told that they appear to be wearing cold weather clothing, their eyes are closed, and on the console between them is an empty pill-bottle, with a plastic bottle of the kind used to hold water. From the way things are floating around, it will be clear to anyone looking in that the ship's internal gravity has been turned off.

Once aboard, the players will search the ship. Below follows a description of what they will find; each location is taken in turn. Descriptions have two parts; the first paragraph, in italics, should be read to the players as they enter the area, and the second paragraph, in normal type, is for the referee.

Aboard, all lights except for those stated are off, as is the cabin gravity. The air is cold, but breathable; not quite cold enough to show condensation from the players' breathing. If anyone tries it though, the lights and gravity can be switched on; the lights by the usual studs, in the area concerned, and the gravity from the bridge or engineering by anyone with ship's crew experience, i.e. those who have served on ships before. The heating can also be restored from these two locations (A1 or A12). However, if by chance the players have taken more than 15 weeks to find the ship no systems can be activated - the power plant will have run out of fuel and stopped working.

If the adventurers have not found the ship by the time the power plant runs out of fuel, then the following modifications apply: First, the crew will all be dead of cold. Second, the air on board, while not actually liquefied, will be far too cold to breathe (say about -150o C) and slightly tainted with waste products from the crew's breathing. Third, there will be no power to run the lights, grav plates etc, and only the bridge lights and the distress call will be functioning - batteries and solar cells provide enough power to run

these. Fourth, because of the extreme cold there will be very little decomposition of the bodies.

A1: Bridge

Two human males in cold weather clothing are seated in the acceleration couches. They look dead, but perfectly composed, and relaxed, as if they'd died in their sleep. Some lights are glowing on the low console between these couches, and on it are an empty pill bottle and a water bottle of flexible plastic. All the other consoles are apparently dead. Floating near the crewman in the left-hand couch is a notepad with a pencil attached. Neither man is wearing his headset.

Obviously, if the gravity is turned back on the notepad will fall. It is covered with deliberate calculations in a firm hand, which are clearly estimates of how long the crew can survive under various regimes of emergency measures. Near the bottom, the answer to the final calculation is '20 weeks', this is underlined several times, heavily. If other pages of the notebook are examined, they contain the identification of the man in the left seat; he is the pilot. Also present are his will, a brief log of the time since they were marooned by drive failure, and instructions for the finder to deliver two letters which are to be found in his pockets. The log is fairly straightforward and will tell the players little that they don't already know, but near the front in large letters is an announcement that the crew have taken fast drug to eke out their supplies of oxygen and food, and that provided they are found by such-and-such date (given as 15 weeks after the players started their search) they can be revived. The crew will actually be awake and active for a few hours halfway through the 6th week, but don't let the players find them moving about! The whole log only covers about four days.

The pill-bottle bears numerous formulae, trade names and so on which will allow any character with Medical skill to deduce that it contained fast drug.

The letters in the pilot's pockets are addressed to his girlfriend (contents fairly predictable and harrowing) and to the Manager of Transtellar Lines Courier Division. This second letter is a report of circumstances leading up to the crew's death and the cause of the disaster, namely unexpected and irreparable manoeuvre drive failure. Recommendations as to how to prevent the recurrence of the mishap are given, as are the details of everything the crew tried to repair the motor.

Characters examining the bodies should realise that something is wrong; they are in no way decomposed, and are even slightly warm. They are the pilot and navigator.

A2: Pilot's Stateroom

This is a fairly normal-looking stateroom. It's been left neat and tidy, and the only things that stand out are a large 3-D hologram of a young girl and a metal strongbox on the desk.

The stateroom contains about what you'd expect; a remote terminal for the ship's computer, a rack of technical manuals describing pilot's procedures for the ship, spare uniforms, and an emergency vacc suit on a wall frame in case the ship is decompressed while the occupant is asleep (all staterooms have this). In the desk drawers is a bundle of love letters from the pilot's girlfriend, and a collection of excellent quality tapes for the entertainment system. The hologram is in the form of a cube about 10 cm on a side, with a stud near the bottom at the back. If pressed, this causes the image of the girl to go through a short loop of movement and action (always the same loop) in which she smiles and says endearing things, obviously meant to cheer the pilot up and assure him of her affection.

The strongbox bears the crest of the Covert Survey Bureau and contains course tapes different from those presented to the players in several major aspects. A character of Electronics-3 or better may attempt to open it; on a roll of 9+ on 2D6 he succeeds, otherwise he fails. If he fails, or anyone else tries to open it without the proper key, acid

spills onto the tapes inside, destroying them and causing a foul grey smoke to spurt from the box. If opened, the box's tapes present an opportunity for the referee to continue the scenario into other adventures; they detail the location and characteristics of the unexplored and deserted world where the Bureau's resources are being diverted to manufacturing hyperdexamine (see Module 10) for Yelov Salash, together with reports from his manager at the plant which make it clear what Salash's underhand scheme is. The two CSB agents in the crew are unaware of the contents and have no key to open the strongbox.

A3: Navigator's Stateroom

An unremarkable stateroom. There is a sealed letter plainly visible on the desk, but all else has been packed away neatly.

The contents of this stateroom are fairly standard except for the letter. It has been handwritten, and is addressed to a family which the players will know from their briefing includes the navigator's parents. If opened, its contents are again predictable, except for one passage in which the navigator urges his parents not to dig too deeply into the circumstances of his death, for their own good; he advises them patriotically that he died in the service of the Empire, but no-one can ever tell them exactly why for security reasons. He states that he was aware of the risks, and considered the tasks worthwhile.

A4: Chief Engineer's Stateroom

This stateroom is the worst pigsty you've ever seen aboard a ship - things are carelessly strewn about, which is rare on a ship, where a sudden acceleration could hurl loose objects dangerously about. There are erotic posters on the walls and numerous empty beer cans dumped hastily on the unmade bed. The desk, as well as the papers on it, are very much the worse for wear and covered in hastily-scrawled calculations. Drawers and cupboards hang open revealing clothing carelessly stuffed inside them, and in one corner a mysterious apparatus is half-built, surrounded by tools, parts and bits of what appears to be charcoal, among other things.

The calculations are useless to the players - the engineer has been using his desk as a scratch-pad for years, and the figures refer to everything from his losses at diamondback to the ship's maximum power output to his beer expenses.

The mysterious apparatus will be recognised as a makeshift air purifier by anyone with Medical-2 or Engineering-2; the CE has been spending his brief periods of activity building it to give the crew a few extra hours when all other sources of oxygen have been exhausted.

A5: Second Engineer's Stateroom

A neat and orderly stateroom which has been tidied as if its occupants were leaving it for a long period. There is a dartboard opposite the door at head height, and below it a box of six darts securely fastened in.

There is nothing of special noteworthiness here.

A6: Sick Bay

This room can obviously serve as a stateroom or sick bay to taste. At the moment it is set up as a sick bay.

There is only normal medical equipment to be found, though obviously stateroom facilities are present in a stowed form - bed folded up into the wall, and so on.

A7: Crew Common Area

A deserted common area with all the cooking and recreational facilities stowed away. There are numerous posters of emergency and safety procedures on the walls in prominent places.

A careful search of this room will reveal nothing, except for about two Credits in loose change which have fallen down behind the seat cushions.

A8: Medic's Stateroom

A spotlessly clean stateroom with a large rack of journals and text tapes along one wall, and a tape viewer on the desk. Posters cover the far wall, and are concerned with first-aid procedures for the most part, although there are some pictures of high performance small water craft.

The journals and texts are mostly concerned with medicine, but about one-quarter of them have titles such as 'Antarean Power Boat News', or 'Handling Speedboats on Low Gravity Worlds'. It should be obvious that the medic's hobby is powerboating. A search of the desk drawers will reveal several certificates attesting to her skill, and membership cards for several boat clubs, some of which could conceivably be used by the players to gain access to the club premises in future adventures. A character collecting and studying the instructional manuals for six months, provided he has some practice as well, will acquire one level of expertise in Small Water Craft skill, provided he saves vs Intelligence on 2D6 at the end of that time. A further attempt is permitted, but the manuals are of a simplified nature, and a character of Small Water Craft-2 or better can gain no benefit from them.

A9: Main Airlock

This is an ordinary airlock, containing safety lines and umbilicals, facilities for their attachment, and other EVA stores such as lights, overshoes and so on. There are half-a-dozen vacc suits present.

A thorough check of the airlock will reveal that all the air tanks on the vacc suits have been emptied and are exhausted of air. The crew have been using them to eke out the shipboard lifesupport by bleeding their contents into the atmosphere aboard.

A10: Ship's Locker

This room is about half-full of survival stores. There are a few blades and rifles, preserved rations, water cans, life rafts and similar items.

The referee should feel free to add appropriate items to the above list as the characters search; note, however, that all types of filter mask or respirator are missing (the chief engineer has cannibalised them for the mysterious apparatus in A4), as are the suits of cold weather clothing, which the crew are wearing, having turned down the heating to conserve power. Some of the packs of rations have been broken into, and some individual packets are missing, having been eaten by the crew.

A11: Port Drive Access Crawlway

This passage obviously allows access to the drive machinery for repairs. All the internal plates for access to the drives have been removed, and there are clear attempts to jury-rig some kind of emergency system to the drives. An open tool kit is in the crawlway, as are several maintenance manuals and an empty beer can.

All this should be self-evident as to purpose. A character with Engineering skill can determine from a brief inspection that the manoeuvre drives are hopelessly damaged by some sort of internal explosion, possibly a component failure of an unusual type, and can only be replaced.

A12: Drive Room

This room contains controls for the engines of the ship, and instruments to monitor them. There are two couches before the consoles, both occupied; the people in them are both human, one male and one female, and are holding hands across one of the monitors between them. They seem to have died in their sleep, and on the control board before them are a small empty pill-bottle and a flexible plastic water bottle. Pinned against the rear wall by the ship's rotation is one of the scruffiest individuals you have ever seen, with his hands in his pockets and a baseball cap pulled down over his eyes. All three are wearing cold weather clothing, and there is a box in one corner of the room. The floor iris valve has been disabled, and there are wires protruding from an open panel near it which have clearly been cut.

The people here are in much the same condition as those on the bridge; the same notes apply to it, and to the pill bottle. The girl is the ship's medic, the seated man its second engineer; the pinned figure is the chief engineer. A check of the controls and instruments by someone with Engineering skill will reveal that the power plant is operating (if less than 15 weeks were required to find the ship, otherwise it is not - and the side effects will be that nothing in the ship works and the air is unbreatheable) at the minimum possible level, to conserve fuel, but both it and the jump drive are in perfect condition. If the searchers think to check the fuel gauges, they will see that the tanks are practically dry, with no fuel left for another jump, which can mean one of two things; either the ship jumped a lot farther than its flight plan indicates (this is in fact the truth), or it was in a great hurry and had to make two or three jumps without stopping to refuel.

The chief engineer wrecked the iris valve in the floor to seal off the cargo hold. More of this later...

A13: Starboard Drive Access Crawlway

This crawlway allows access to the drives for maintenance. All the inspection panels have been removed, and there are signs of attempts at repairs.

The only thing worthy of note here, which a thorough check against their deck plans and a search will reveal, is that the flight recorder has been disconnected, apparently accidentally and some years ago. This instrument's normal purpose is to log the ship's movements and 'vital signs' so that if it crashes, the flight recorder may give some clue as to what went wrong. The fact that it is disconnected may raise some suspicions.

B1: Payload Bay

This room is occupied by racks of extremely complex looking electronic equipment, whose control boards have been locked shut. Mostly sensors and recorders.

If the characters were not already CSB men, this would make them suspicious; no normal courier vessel would have such expensive arrays of high-powered sensors and recording gear. These instruments are used to gather intelligence during 'innocent' courier runs. Due to their training by the Bureau, the characters can quickly find the hidden keys to the covers of the control boards, hidden in one of the inspection plates. However, following Bureau doctrine, the crew wiped clean the electronic memories as soon as it became obvious that their position was desperate, to avoid the information contained in them becoming public - or worse, falling into enemy hands.

B2: Circulation Space

An empty corridor. To either side are small alcoves with couches in them, obviously control positions for the two ventral turrets.

B3, B4: Air Raft Bays

Both these rooms contain a standard air/raft and facilities for their launch and maintenance.

There is nothing of particular interest here.

B5: Circulation Space

An empty corridor. The nearby inspection plates have been removed and someone has obviously been modifying the life-support gear behind them.

The engineers and the medic have been working here to stretch out their oxygen supplies by tampering with the recycler.

B6: Emergency Air Lock

A cramped chamber containing a single vacc suit and a small first aid kit.

The air bottles of the suit are empty - see A9 for the reason.

B7: Fresher

A small room containing sanitary and washing facilities, apparently adaptable for zero-gravity use.

Nothing of interest.

B8: Cargo Hold

The iris valve leading into the hold seems to have been deliberately wrecked, and quite thoroughly. A notice attached to the door on headed notepaper of Transtellar Lines announces that the contents are confidential personnel records of the company, and under Imperial law the crew are within their rights to maintain its confidentiality by any means available to them. The finders are requested to inform Transtellar of the ship's location.

The players will doubtless eventually find a way to burn or blow their way in; an Electronics-3 character could jury-rig a bypass circuit to allow the door to be opened, and energy weapons or explosives could also be used. As a last resort, entry might be gained by vandalising the cargo lift from the outside.

When they do enter, they will find half-a-dozen crates labelled Transtellar Lines: Confidential Personnel Records: Fragile and well-braced by assorted packing materials and ropes against accidental movement. Nonetheless, perhaps as a result of violence by the players in entering the area, perhaps due to a sudden lurch when the manoeuvre drives failed, one crate has come loose and burst open, spilling recording modules everywhere; small oblong objects about the size and shape of tape cassettes. And something else; a couple of larger containers marked Erasable Recording Modules: Do Not Expose to Light and with a notice explaining that the most confidential records are kept on modules which, as a security precaution, are erased if exposed to light unless certain measures are taken to prevent this. Investigation of the other crates reveals two similar containers in each. Players being a curious lot, they will likely open one to see if there is any profit to be made; they will find, not recording modules, but carefully-packed plastic bags of small white pills. These are hyperdexamine or 'yag'; see Module 10 for further details. Note only a Streetwise-2 character can recognise this substance. However, it will now be clear to the players that all is not what it seems. The recording modules are blank.

Dorsal Turret

This turret has controls for the beam laser and missile rack fitted to the ship. All its systems are turned off.

There is also an octant in a glass case for use in emergency navigation in the case that the computer malfunctions; it is possible to plot jumps manually, but exceedingly difficult and time-consuming and with a great chance of error. The octant and its accompanying manual are there more for reasons of morale than practicality.

Referee Only

Module 8: Naval Counter-Intelligence

Naval Counter-Intelligence, or NCI as it is usually called, is responsible for security and counter-espionage within the Imperial borders. This involves counter-terrorist work and occasional simple police tasks; where crime is of a scale too large for individual worlds to combat effectively, yet too small in scope to attract the attention of the Inspectorate, it falls to NCI to track down and apprehend the perpetrators. In practice, this usually means piracy and smuggling fall into NCI's province.

NCI is a great rival of the CSB, and the two agencies will do anything short of actual violence to damage each other's operations and reputations. In this case, while tracking down large-scale hyperdexamine smuggling in the Fodor subsector, NCI have come across clues to CSB involvement. Nothing that will stand up in court; but the higher-level agents in each organisation know each other's 'handwriting' - subtle differences in tradecraft, ways of doing things peculiar to certain agents - and are suspicious; they have recognised typical CSB techniques in the smuggling. The exact world which is the source of the 'yag' and the method of transferring it to Fodor are unknown, but they have a rough idea of which areas to search. Hence the potential for encountering them.

NCI agents are all naval officers who have been assigned to Intelligence School. Any naval officer character is usable in this role if the referee has any at hand; in the case that they have not actually been assigned to Intelligence School at any stage, the referee should roll 1D6 for each of the following skills: Forgery, Bribery, Streetwise, Gun Combat, Interrogation, with 1-2 signifying one level of expertise in the skill, 3-4 two levels and 5-6 no expertise. Interrogation is defined in Books 4 and 5; if these are not available, use the following simplification to represent their use. Once each week, the character interrogated rolls two dice and the interrogators add the sum of their skill levels to the result; a score greater than the victim's intelligence shows that he has 'broken' and revealed his knowledge. Victims with Interrogation skill may use its level as a DM in their favour, subtracting it from the roll.

Gun Combat skills will most likely be in Auto Pistol or Body Pistol, but other weapons are possible. In a firefight a typical NCI tactic is for one agent to feign a serious wound or death at an early stage, and lie doggo until such time as his sudden recovery may help his comrades, for example by attacking the players from the rear after they have passed by him, carrying back a report if all the others are slain, and so on. To use this tactic, NCI men must outnumber their opponents and there must be at least three of them to start with.

NCI who find that the players are (a) CSB men and (b) in possession of yag will offer amnesty and rewards to those who will betray their organisation in this affair.

The NCI in general is a fairly efficient and gentlemanly organisation, and the players have little to fear in terms of torture or doublecross.

There is a chance (roll 10+ on 2D6) that a patrol vessel carrying an NCI team will find the Snowbird while the players are aboard. Subsequent events must be adjudicated by the referee using Modules 9 and 11.

Referee Only

Module 9: Encounters in the Shangrila System

Each week that the players spend in space, the referee should roll two dice and consult the encounter table below:

Dice	Encounter
2-6	None
7	Type M
8	Decathlon Class
9	Type M
10	Type T – Naval
11	Hugin Class
12	Type T – Inspectorate

This table differs from the standard encounter matrix for C class starports in introducing two new types of vessel, which are detailed below.

Type M Merchant: (Book 2) A standard subsidised merchant. Encounters with Type M merchants are with innocent, peaceful traders carrying passengers and freight to and from Shangrila. The players arrived on one such ship, and will leave on another after completing their mission, hopefully with the cargo of the Snowbird and possibly with her rescued crew.

Decathlon Class: Using a 400 ton hull, the *Decathlon* class represents a step up from the standard free trader, purchased by successful captains and medium-sized interstellar trading companies. Its main advantage is the powerful jump drive F, rendering it capable of jump-3 and making most worlds accessible. Also fitted are manoeuvre drive B and power plant F, making the ship capable of 1G acceleration. Fuel tankage of 150 tons supports the power plant for four weeks and allows one jump-3. A model/3 computer is fitted adjacent to the bridge. There are 14 staterooms and 20 low berths. Four hardpoints are fitted, and four tons of fire control space are held in reserve, but no weaponry is initially fitted. A special compartment holds an air/raft for surface excursions, and there is a cargo hold of 96 tons. The hull is streamlined.

A standard design, the *Decathlon* class costs Mcr 169.56 and takes 14 months to build at a Tech Level 10 shipyard. A crew of six is required; pilot, navigator, two engineers, medic and steward.

Decathlon class vessels encountered by the party will be ships of the Red Giant Corporation's Beverage and Spices Division, purchasing and shipping Amurr leaves (like tea) and other agricultural produce to other worlds.

Type T: The Type T patrol cruiser is found in the deluxe *Traveller* set, but could easily be replaced by the *Gazelle* Close Escort or even a Type C Cruiser.

Naval vessels will mostly be on routine patrols aimed at showing the flag, spotting trouble and dealing with it, and trade protection. However, there is a chance (1 in 6) that the vessel carries a team from Naval Counter-Intelligence who suspect the true nature of the Snowbird's cargo and are seeking proof with which to discredit and embarrass the CSB (see Module 8, Naval Counter-Intelligence) having uncovered traces of CSB handiwork in their investigations of hyperdexamine smuggling. In either case, the naval personnel will attempt to board the players' vessel to make a routine check - the NCI will be more

likely to spot anything amiss, of course - and the players would do well not to arouse their suspicions. Should the players get into trouble and try to get out of it by revealing their true identities, the naval crew will treat them with all possible contempt, harassment and hostility short of actual violence; the navy doesn't like the scouts, and it especially doesn't like their spy-boys. NCI agents will behave likewise, but may possibly imprison or assault the players. Harmless asteroid miners, of course, while not of high status, are law-abiding citizens - when anyone's looking, that is. They are known to indulge in smuggling, which the naval officials will be looking for; if they find hyperdexamine on board, the group will be locked up and the key thrown away.

Whatever happens when a naval vessel is encountered, the referee should contrive during normal conversation or interrogation for one of the naval personnel to mention to the band, or to be overheard commenting to another crewman, that there is considerable drug-smuggling activity in the area which the navy is especially interested in stopping, before the Imperial Inspectorate arrives to check up on how they are handling the crime in the region.

Inspectorate vessels represent advance units of the Imperial Inspector's forces, sneaking ahead of the main body to check things out. Also known as the Earth Police, the Inspectorate is very much in favour of rough justice. Like naval crews, Inspectorate vessels will stop the players, board their craft, and check it out. If they find nothing incriminating, they will be pleasant enough, if a trifle self-assured. If they discover the players' true identity, or find anything suspicious, they will separate the players instantly and question them separately one at a time (Referee: Ask the players to describe their cover stories to you individually, without allowing them to confer or overhear each other.), with any discrepancy being regarded as sufficient grounds to impound the cutter and imprison the players. The Inspectorate are not quite a secret police; if the players can convince them of innocence, they will be released. However, any suspicions of the group being involved with illegality - e.g. hyperdexamine smuggling - will result in incarceration. If the Inspectorate discover that the players are CSB men involved in hyperdexamine smuggling, the band will be offered a deal; charges will be dropped against them if they will testify before the Sector Court about Salash's involvement.

Inspectorate vessels should provide the adventurers with the following information, which the referee should contrive to insert into the conversations with their crews; first, the nature and purpose of the Inspectorate (see Module 2: Background) and second, that the Inspectorate suspects some of the high-ranking Imperial personnel in the sector are misusing their powers to line their own pockets.

Hugin Class: The *Hugin* class scoutship is a larger, more expensive, and more flexible ship than the normal Type S. Using a 200 ton hull, it has jump drive C, manoeuvre drive C, and power plant C, giving a performance of jump-3 and 3G acceleration. Fuel tankage of 90 tons allows one jump-3 and supports the power plant for four weeks. Adjacent to the bridge is a model/3 computer. There are 8 staterooms and 8 low berths. Two hardpoints each mount a triple turret sporting beam laser, missile rack and sandcaster. A special compartment carries a standard Air/Raft, and there is a cargo hold for 10 tons. The hull is streamlined.

A standard design, the *Hugin* class costs MCr 106.44 and takes 14 months to build at a Tech Level 9 shipyard. A crew of 5 is required; pilot, engineer, medic and two gunners. *Hugin* class vessels encountered will most likely be of scout service registry, though a few may have other owners - roll one die, with 1-4 signifying scout service ownership, 5 naval registry, and 6 commercial ownership. Scout service vessels may be carrying non-urgent messages or updating star charts; the *Hugin* class is not much used for exploration because it requires refined fuel for safe travel on a long-term basis, and does not have the sophisticated sensors required. They are common carriers for mail, proclamations, and news, though. Naval vessels are normally outriders for task forces or fleets, which may be passing through a few weeks later on exercises; so if a naval *Hugin* class appears, treat the next encounter as a naval Type T ship without actually rolling for the encounter. There will be 2-12 other naval vessels of varying sizes with this Type T when it appears. Commercially-owned *Hugins* have the same general purposes as scout vessels, but they

may also be transferring new trading factors to this or another system, or trying to negotiate favourable trade deals with the locals.

Referee Only

Module 10: Hyperdexamine

If the containers in the hold are opened, against orders, by the players, any character with Streetwise-2 or better will recognise the contents as hyperdexamine, and should be allowed access to this module - in private if possible, since he may not want to tell the others. Each container holds 200 pills of hyperdexamine.

Hyperdexamine is a fairly new drug, an addictive variant of normal combat drug. Like combat drug, when ingested (it comes in pill form) it increases the swallower's strength and endurance by two each. The effect phases in over the 30 seconds after ingestion, and lasts for about an hour - much longer than normal combat drug. It also produces in the user a feeling of euphoria, and he becomes convinced that he has become invincibly strong and powerful - anyone taking it without recognising it for what it is should be told that his strength and endurance have increased by four each to simulate this, although all attacks etc are resolved as if he was but two points stronger and more enduring. When the effect wears off, the user takes 1D in wounds.

Hyperdexamine has an insidious effect, however, in that a habitual user develops a tolerance to the drug, as well as a craving for it. How the referee simulates the craving is up to him - players will probably take it for use in combat, and if the referee is subtle they will not discover that they have an inflated view of its worth. To simulate the tolerance, for each five uses of the drug the number of pills needed to obtain the effect is increased by one. Thus, for the first five uses the effect is obtained by taking one pill; the sixth through tenth uses require two pills, and so on. Each pill, of course, causes 1D of wounds - so on his 12th use of yag (the slang name for the drug) an addict is taking three pills, and will take 3D of damage when the effect wears off.

It is suggested that each week after starting to take the drug, a character must make a saving roll to avoid having to take more yag; roll 2D6, and if the result is over the character's intelligence, he must go on a hyperdexamine binge. A DM is applied to the dice of +1 per pill required to bring on the effects; +3 for our 12-time user above. Any friends with Medic skill may use their skill level as a + or - DM on this roll, at their discretion. If a character can avoid taking yag for six months, he has kicked the habit. Most users, of course, are eventually slain by the after-effects.

Characters with Streetwise-2 or better can sell yag in the right quarters for Cr 100 x law level of the world where the sale is made per pill, thus higher law level planets yield a higher return - the supplies of yag are harder to come by. Contrariwise, on low law level worlds no-one makes a particular effort to stop yag smuggling, and it is more plentiful and prices are lower. Characters of Streetwise-1, if they are told that the stuff is yag, can get half this price for it - they get burned because they are unfamiliar with the market.

Anyone caught selling yag is in serious trouble; 2-12 years imprisonment.

Referee Only

Module 11: Referee's Notes

1. Instruments of Destruction

The players are all too likely to overequip themselves with weapons and armour. The referee should remind them that vast amounts of arms and armour will arouse suspicion; they are supposed to be asteroid miners, not mercenaries. If they go ahead and outfit themselves for the Third Interstellar War, well, they were warned. Interstellar and interplanetary space within the Terran Empire is considered to be at Law Level 3 for purposes of deciding which weapons are legal; while there is no need to roll for police harassment on a daily basis in space, any boarding party which finds weapons contravening the limits of Law Level 3 will automatically suspect the group of foul play.

Specifically, combat armour, battle dress, explosives, poisons, lasers, energy weapons and body pistols will be sufficient grounds for imprisonment. Clearly non-military explosives will be allowable, since the group are supposed to be miners.

Referees should bear in mind that even with the power off, iris valves can still be forced open (or closed) on a throw of 9+ on 2D6, with DMs of +1 if the character has strength 10+, +2 if dexterity 10+, -3 if wearing vacc suit. It may be necessary to drop gentle hints about this possibility to the party.

2. The Crew

If rescued, the crew will be properly grateful and the players will have several people who owe them a favour - a more subtle reward than cash, but always useful. The pilot and chief engineer, being CSB men, will be anxious to get their cargo moved on to the proper hands - there are of course certain code introductions by which the players can assure them of their true identities if they so wish, and it would be wise for at least one to do so since otherwise the rescued agents are likely to try a doublecross to speed their cargo on its way. The rescued agents are unaware of the true nature of their cargo, believing the same cover story as that told to the players. Once they discover that there are CSB agents in the rescuing party they will confide in them, saying that they are somewhat suspicious of their orders; these specify disconnecting the flight recorders and filing false flight plans with both traffic control and the CSB. This is highly irregular, and they believe something underhand is going on - possibly one of the high-ranking administrators is a double agent, so that he must be fed false data.

3. Timing

When the players arrive on Shangrila, it is three weeks since the Snowbird was expected to report in. They will have 1-2 weeks cooling their heels in Port Royal before the cutter is ready, and indeterminate time before they find the ship; it will then take them 1-3 weeks to return and await the arrival of a ship out of the system. Normal encounters should be rolled using Book 3 on the ground and Module 11 for incoming ships.

4. After the Adventure

Once the scenario has been played through, it still provides some useful things for the referee. The CSB, the NCI and their rivalry can provide future plots and employment - apart from the obvious ones, the referee may like to consider that in the case of total success by the group, Salash may decide that they know too much and try to remove them. There are several new ship types and a planet to use in later games.

The Explorer class in particular was designed to be loaned to a group of adventurers by a powerful patron for a long-term commission, much in the manner of *Adventure 4, Leviathan*.

Author's Notes

This is another article that happened almost by accident. I originally submitted Assignment: Survey! as a stand-alone piece under a different title; but White Dwarf's editorial policy at the time was that no deck plans could be published without an accompanying scenario. So, this was written and playtested one winter weekend with the help of far too much beer and curry and a couple of ~~vietims~~ dedicated players.

I cringe inwardly every time I read it now, because there are a number of errors in the basic physics of the situation. Nobody who plays it seems to mind, though - see how many you can spot!

Explorer Class Scoutships

Explorer Class Scoutships in Traveller by Andy Slack

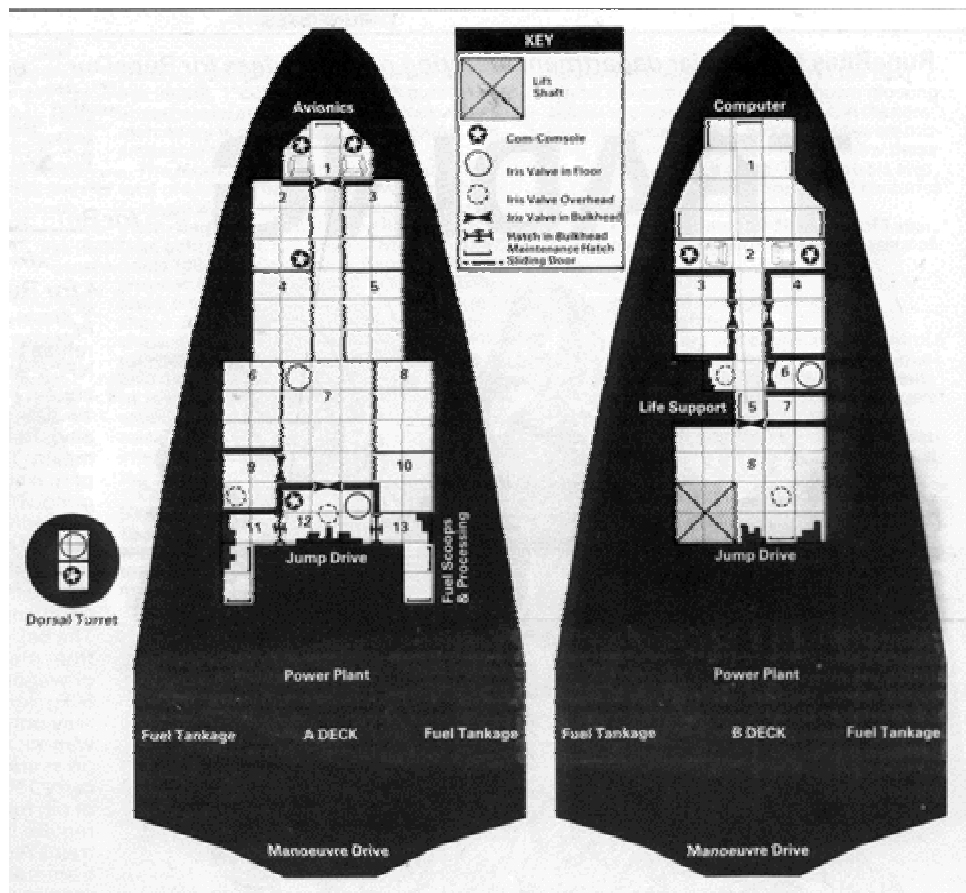
Originally published in White Dwarf 40 - © Games Workshop Limited 1983

941: The Red Giant Corporation commissioned the Solstice Yards of Fodor for a heavy duty long range scout survey vessel. The Explorer class scoutship was born.

The familiar Type S scout/courier fulfills vital needs within the Imperium by its exploratory and courier work; in survey missions beyond the Imperial borders, it is carried aboard vessels of cruiser displacement, and thus its performance need not be great, since it will either be within known space or near a base ship with considerable facilities. However, megacorporations also conduct exploratory missions, and rarely wish to construct scout cruisers; yet the Type S has neither the size nor the range to be used alone.

For this reason, in 941 the Red Giant Corporation issued a specification to Solstice Yards of Fodor for a long-range, heavy scout vessel for use by its trade pioneer teams in their planned survey of the volume of space near Alpha Scorpii, beyond the borders of the Terran Empire. The *Explorer* class was the final result.

During the proving trials, ITSS and naval procurement officials became interested in the class; and while the original purpose of the class was as a transport for commercial pioneers seeking new markets and sources of products for their sponsoring corporation, the craft are now to be found in government service; the navy uses them for courier and reconnaissance duties, while the ITSS vessels perform these duties and 'First-In' survey missions in addition.



Specifications

Tonnage:	300 tons standard, 4200 cubic metres
Crew:	5
Dimensions:	42L x 19.5 W x 10 H
Acceleration:	2G constant
Jump:	5
Powerplant:	5
Engineering:	One Malvatnikov 27F fusion power plant driving one NovZem Motors Q4 impulse manoeuvre drive and one TCS Drives type 15 Mk II series Jump drive.
Gravitics:	Variable floor fields, 0-2G, and inertial compensators,
Electronics:	One RSM Computronics Mk V series 17 computer with integral fire control and AstroScan sensor package.
Range:	Unlimited manoeuvre, one Jump-5 (165 tons fuel tankage), 30 days standard supply consumption.
Armament:	Variable, depending on mission and owner. Typically one beam laser with facilities for ladar sensing and comms duty, and one missile rack modified to launch sensor probes and message torpedoes as well as dogfight missiles.
Screens:	None
Configuration:	Wedge. Unarmoured. Fully streamlined.
Capacity:	One passenger, 11 tons of cargo (usually trade samples and/or data storage modules).
Ship's Vehicles:	Two standard air/rafts.
Special Features:	Fuel scoops and purifiers. Crew escape pods. Observation platform. 'Evil Eye' sights.

Crew Roster

Ranks are given for the Merchant Service to represent trade pioneer teams, for the Navy to represent fleet couriers, and for the ITSS [See *Star Patrol*, WD20] to represent scout service First-In teams.

The medic is usually required to man the dorsal turret in combat. If extra crew seem necessary, staterooms may be used in the double occupancy mode, allowing at most 12 persons aboard - however, even in double occupancy it is rare to carry more than 10 persons, as this would require dismantling and storing the medical apparatus in A6.

Position	Merchant	Navy	Scout	Stateroom	Duty Station	Battle Station
Pilot	Captain	Sub-Lt	G4	A2	A1	A1
Navigator	1 st Off	CPO	G3	A3	A1	A1
1 st Engineer	2 nd Off	PO 3 rd	G3	A4	A12	A12
2 nd Engineer	4 th Off	Able SH	G2	A5	A12	A12
Medic	4 th Off	Able SH	G2	A8	A6	Dorsal Turret

Deck Plan Location Key

Dorsal Turret. Floor iris valve to A12. Doubles as astrogration blister.

A Deck

1. Bridge. Positions for pilot and navigator; one collapsible 'jump seat' for visitors. Command override of engineering functions in the event that the drive room is disabled.
2. Crew stateroom.
3. Crew stateroom.
4. Crew stateroom.
5. Crew stateroom.
6. Passenger stateroom. In non-courier service, this is usually outfitted as a sick bay; the equipment may be removed and stored in the hold to allow extra accommodation.
7. Crew common area. Floor iris valve to B5. Includes cooking and recreational facilities.
8. Crew stateroom.
9. Main airlock. Ceiling iris valve to exterior dorsal surface.
10. Ship's locker.
11. Port drive access crawlway. This cramped passage slants up from the deck and curves aft; it is less than half a metre high at best, and partially obstructed by protruding pieces of equipment. It allows in-flight maintenance of the drives, and some limited repair work on commonly-failing components.
12. Drive room. Positions for two engineers; one collapsible 'jump seat' for visitors. Iris valves to B8 and dorsal turret.
13. Starboard drive access crawlway. Similar to A11, but allows access to the fuel purifier and flight recorders.

B Deck

1. Payload bay. In service, this carries various specialist sensor or data storage gear as appropriate to the mission; if encountered on detached duty or in private hands, may have been converted to a store room, recreation area, etc.
2. Circulation space. To port and starboard are remote gunnery positions for ventral turrets.
3. Port air/raft bay. In service, often used as a specimen or data store, or as extra cargo space (4 tons), omitting the air/raft. Floor swings down and port to serve as a bay door.
4. Starboard air/raft bay. Normally the air/raft carried here is left in place, as without it the craft is slightly unstable and rolls to port in rough weather (-2 to any handling rolls made while in this condition). Floor swings door and starboard to serve as a bay door.
5. Circulation space. Ceiling iris valve to A7.
6. Emergency airlock. Auxiliary handcrank mechanism to open iris valve to exterior dorsal surface in case of power failure, by crank alone from inside or by crank and key from outside. The crashed ship usually rests on its ventral turret blisters.
7. Fresher.
8. Cargo hold. Ceiling iris valve to A12. Lift platform descends through exterior ventral surface on hydraulic 'legs', one at each corner, to ease loading.

Ship's Vehicles

Two standard air/rafts are fitted for excursions on world surfaces.

Special Features

Crew Escape Pods: The bridge (A1) and the drive room (A12) are fitted with small solid fuel rocket motors, ablative shielding, and paraglider assemblies as well as very basic survival kits. In dire emergencies, either or both can be blown free of the main hull by small explosive charges, carrying the occupants clear of the wreck. The pods have automatic circuits which can be overridden from within the pod, but otherwise will take the following action: (a) if near a world with an atmosphere of 5 or greater, the pod will re-enter and land (roll 4+ for success, DM -1 per person aboard in excess of 3. If this roll is failed, roll 1D6; if the result is odd, the pod has 'bounced off' the atmosphere and drifts helplessly off into space; if the result is even, the pod has burned up on re-entry. The pod has oxygen for 6 man-days. (b) if near a gas giant, or world with atmosphere 4 or less - which would render landing impossible, as the pod depends on atmospheric braking - the pod will attempt to achieve a stable orbit and transmit distress signals; (c) if in deep space, the pod will do nothing but transmit distress signals. Limited manoeuvring is possible in, for example, docking at an orbital station. If either pod is launched, the ship's streamlining is ruined. If the drive room is launched, the bridge may take control of the drives, but not vice versa. When launching the drive room pod there is a slight delay as the dorsal turret must be explosively jettisoned first.

Observation Platform: The lift in B8 may be extended to the 'full down' position and locked there for use as an observation platform while in flight, provided that the craft's speed does not exceed Mach 0.25 while in atmosphere. Slot-in safety rails are provided, along with lugs for attaching safety harnesses and recorders.

Evil Eye Sight: In the event that insufficient personnel are available to man all turrets, crew headsets on the bridge (A1) have a sensor mechanism enabling the turrets to be slaved individually or severally to the crew's head movements; thus, whatever the designated crew member is looking at, the turret points at. This restricts weapons to a

forward arc of fire, and targets that the designated crew being can actually see - range is thus restricted. Further, a DM of -1 is imposed on the rolls to hit, and no DMs for skill are allowed. In some vessels, the weaponry may be placed in a fully automatic mode, in which any vessel within range is automatically engaged so long as it continues to fire or manoeuvre. If several targets are present, the closest is engaged first. Such fire is at -2 to hit, and no skill DMs are allowed.

Build Details

The majority of vessels constructed at Solstice Yards, Fodor, but some few unlicensed copies constructed beyond the jurisdiction of the Earth Police. In excess of 700 craft in use by various organisations, notably Red Giant Corporation's Trade Pioneer Division (250), Imperial Terran Scout Service (200 ordered and delivered, but some now being paid off), and Imperial Terran Space Navy (150 in service, but plans to phase these out as more modern units become available). Construction commenced in 948, and still continues on an intermittent basis. Vessels are typically named for famous explorers - *Marco Polo, Shackleton, Afanasiy Nikitin, Gagarin, Armstrong* etc.

Second Edition High Guard

This vessel has been designed under second edition High Guard rules. Its profile is as follows:

SH-3252551-000000-000000-0

MCr 255.328. 300 tons. Crew 5. TL 14. Passengers 1. Low 0. Cargo 11. Fuel 165. EP 15. Agility 2. Marines 0. Fuel scoops and purifiers. One double turret and two hardpoints.

Standard Computer Programmes

The Explorer class is furnished with an RSM Computronics 5C basic software package when first purchased, which contains the following programmes: Manoeuvre; Jump 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5; Navigate; Target; Auto/Evade; Return Fire; Anti-Hijack; Library.

Use In Adventures

The referee may use this starship in a variety of ways. It may be used as a non-standard encounter; the above descriptions will allow the players to interact with it in the normal ways, from exchanging gossip to boarding. The mission the craft is on will be obvious once its owner is determined.

It was designed, however, as a ship to be loaned to a group of players by a powerful patron for a long-term commission, much in the manner of *Adventure 4, Leviathan*; typically, the band will be approached by an executive of a megacorporation and offered a contract as trade pioneers, to explore new worlds in search of markets and profits for the company, but the ship may also be used for deep penetration spy missions by obscure scout service agencies such as the Covert Survey Bureau [see next issue]. In such a ship, the band will be able to hold its own against most randomly encountered shipping short of naval units, and have considerable freedom of action, but will still be under the referee's control as he, in the guise of the shipowner, may still order the group.

Alternatively, any *Star Patrol* scout (or group of scouts) who can acquire three 'ship' benefits on mustering out may be granted constructive possession of one of these craft, on the usual terms. Next issue's scenario features this new ship.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

This is the only surviving component of the proposed Games Workshop licensed Traveller supplement The Riftspan Reach. This sector of space was assigned to GW as an area for licensed products, and as GW's resident Traveller fan I wrote a Spinward Marches style booklet as the first such product. As far as I know, it was I who named the sector.

The project was cancelled while still at the first draft stage, and as far as I know the manuscript was destroyed when GW moved office in 1983-84, so it is lost to posterity. About the only thing I can still remember is that the small cluster of worlds mid-rift on the J-5 Route was to have been a small, independent human state where most of the adventures would have occurred. (I still like this idea a lot and may return to it sometime.) A J-5 Route implies J-5 ships to traverse it, and the supplement would have included J-5 versions of common starships, including the Explorer class. I still thought the ship was pretty cool, so it appeared in my Terran Empire campaign, where for a time one of the PC groups was a trade pioneer team for RGC. By this time I was no longer working for Games Workshop, but still writing for WD. The editorial team at the time didn't want to publish deck plans unless there was a scenario to go with them, so I wrote one - the first scenario I ever had published.

The Covert Survey Bureau

*An Imperial Intelligence Agency by Andy Slack
Originally published in White Dwarf 41 - © Games Workshop Limited 1983*

There are certain tasks which any government must perform, but to which it can never publicly admit; the secret and darker side of diplomacy, also called espionage. The Terran Empire is no exception, and it, too, has an instrument which performs distasteful tasks for the good of the state. This is the Covert Survey Bureau, usually referred to as the CSB; an obscure corner of the Imperial Terran Scout Service whose openly-acknowledged brief is the survey of newly-discovered cultures to assess the desirability and likely results of more formal contact, and the optimum methods of contacting the culture.

In addition to its stated task, the Bureau also sifts reports by serving and detached scout personnel; monitors and intercepts messages within and beyond the Imperial borders; creates and breaks codes and ciphers; prevents espionage by foreign powers against the Imperium; supports revolutionary, terrorist and pirate organisations whose actions further the state's ends; and conducts espionage operations beyond the Imperium borders. The CSB has a controlling interest in several medium-sized companies, including a merchant shipping line, to aid its operations.

Actual structure is fluid, but in four layers. At the top of the pyramid are administrators, responsible for overall strategy and policy.

The second layer is composed of case officers or directors, local commanders who control and pay agents on a day-to-day basis. These are rarely involved in any dirty work, and normally have a legitimate cover as, for example, an embassy official.

The third layer is that of the agents or operatives, who perform actual operations as directed by a case officer. Their main activity is developing contacts who can pass them useful information, typically by bribery, blackmail, seduction or threats. If sabotage or assassinations are required, these persons carry it out. Agents are normally native to their world of employment, and frequently believe themselves to be working for someone other than their true employer. Agents are at the full mercy of the local authorities if caught, unlike the case officer, who will either have diplomatic immunity or work from the relative safety of the starport's extraterritoriality. Therefore, agents are told only what they need to know.

The lowest layer consists of contacts, couriers and cut-outs who obtain and transfer information, orders and so on for agents. These are invariably natives and often innocent of any treasonous intent, believing their tasks are legal and for respected citizens; either that, or they don't care who they work for, or think they are working for someone supporting their own ideological position.

Player character agents of the CSB will be of two kinds; the potential case officer and the roving paramilitary troubleshooter. Normally recruited from Imperial service in their thirties, player agents are trained for one year at the Covert Survey School [see Star Patrol, *White Dwarf 20*]; each year thereafter, there is a 1 in 6 chance that they will be recalled for further training, being groomed for promotion. Agents are paid a monthly retainer according to ability - Cr 250 for each point that the sum of their intelligence and education exceeds 16, plus a further Cr 1,000 for each assignment to Covert Survey, Covert Survey School, or Intelligence School.

The CSB only hires freelance adventurers in the following cases: Where a sacrificial decoy is needed, if risks are too great for their own men, if there is no suitable CSB agent available, or if the Bureau cannot afford to be linked to the operation in question.

Inter-service rivalry between the CSB and the naval intelligence units is great, leading to intrigue as the services try to discredit each other - this is mainly because they compete for appropriations from a limited budget.

Because of the sheer size of the Empire and the Bureau, different departments often work at cross-purposes; the secretive nature of their work compounds this.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

This was this first detailed mention of the Covert Survey Bureau, an organisation which had been lurking in the shadows of my Traveller universe for several years and had been mentioned in passing in Backdrop of Stars in WD24.