
MONGOOSE LIVING TRAVELLER

Spinward Fenderbender

A One-Round *Mongoose Living Traveller* Adventure

by Steven Parker

Story Coordinator: Don McKinney

A group of travellers are escorting a valuable cargo from Mertactor (Spinward Marches 1537) to Collace (Spinward Marches 1237) when a dangerous collision between their starship and another threatens not just the cargo, but the lives of everyone on board.

Resources for this adventure include *The Spinward Marches* [Martin Dougherty]. *Traders and Gunboats* [Bryan Steele] may be useful for details about the type M subsidized liner.

Sanctioned Play

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an event from the MONGOOSE LIVING TRAVELLER CAMPAIGN website, or you received it from your Senior Referee. To play this adventure as part of the MONGOOSE LIVING TRAVELLER CAMPAIGN (MLTC) – a worldwide, ongoing *Traveller* campaign set in the SPINWARD MARCHES setting – you must sanction it as part of a gaming event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the Referee's house.

The person who sanctions the event is called the Senior Referee and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to MONGOOSE LIVING TRAVELLER CAMPAIGNS in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the Session Referee. Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the Senior Referee is also the Session Referee. You should use the Mongoose Living Traveller Campaign Master Log Sheet (MLS) to track your play and advance your Mongoose Living Traveller Campaign character.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MONGOOSE LIVING TRAVELLER CHARACTER CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT, EVENT SANCTIONING AND REWARDS, VISIT THE MONGOOSE WEBSITE AT WWW.MONGOOSEPUBLISHING.COM.

PLAYERS READ NO FURTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the Referee

only. If you read farther than this section, you will know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you are playing this adventure as part of a sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

This adventure requires only the *Traveller Core Rulebook*. The two worlds involved are described in these pages but *The Spinward Marches* may be of use for background on the District 268 region. The adventure centres on a standard Type M Subsidised Liner, found in the Mongoose Traveller supplement *Traders & Gunboats* (pages 80-82), but deckplans and ship statistics are included here for the Referee.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on non-player characters (NPCs) and creatures appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Refer to the Appendix for full information on NPCs and creatures.

At the end of the adventure, you will note what awards your players' characters received in this adventure and record it on their Master Log Sheets (MLS). If you are playing this as part of a sanctioned event, please turn those details into your Senior Referee. Otherwise, please note what awards were given out and report the results to the Campaign Coordinator.

Adventure Summary

PASSAGE

Participation in this adventure does not require any passage; the cost is built into the adventure.

DATES

All dates correspond to the standard Imperial calendar. The start date of this adventure is Fiday 083-1105 (the 83rd day of the 1105th year since the founding of the Third Imperium). Time will flow normally once the adventure begins. If a different date is required, for example to fit the adventure into an existing campaign, then the start date can be altered with little or no disruption to the adventure.

LOCATION

This Mongoose Traveller adventure takes place in the Spinward Marches, going from Mertactor (Spinward Marches 1537) on

the very edge of the Imperium, to nearby Collace (Spinward Marches 1237) in District 268. The players are escorting a very valuable cargo to the non-Imperial world when there is a dangerous collision between two ships above the highport - one of which is the liner the players are on! As the accident unfolds, the players must help to save the other passengers, protect and take possession of their cargo and make it safely off the ship to deliver their goods.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

This adventure is meant for a handful of spacer type characters, optimally of low or moderate social status. A party of Drifters, Merchants and Scouts should handle this quite well, though a Marine or Navy member in the party would definitely not hurt. The party will be expected to deal with a dangerous Zero-G situation, some combat and some bureaucratic red tape before the adventure is over.

Encounters

This adventure starts on Mertactor in District 268 on 083-1105. All of the action in Imperial space takes place in Mertactor's orbital starport. In broad strokes:

1. The PCs are offered a job escorting a valuable cargo for an eccentric Imperial industrialist. They are offered some cash up front and high passage to Collace. Upon delivery at Collace they will be paid the balance owed. 083-1105, departing 084-1105.
2. Once underway, the PCs are able to hobnob with the Captain and other luminaries, spending a relatively uneventful week in jump. 084-1105 through 091-1105.
3. Upon arrival at Collace, an errant 20-ton launch strikes the liner at high velocity, causing an urgent emergency situation. An unusually quick response by a Collace Search and Rescue cutter is revealed to actually be a gang of pirates infiltrating the liner in the confusion of the wreck. 091-1105; the crash occurs about 6 hours after exiting jump space.
4. The PCs will assume the gang is there to take their cargo and should clash with them immediately. It will become apparent however that the cargo is not actually the gang's target; the gang is making a kidnap attempt against a particular high passenger onboard. The PCs' actions should foil the gang's goals as well as contribute to legitimate rescue efforts. 091-1105; this action covers about 20 to 30 minutes of game time.
5. Collace Highport Authority will contain the accident and all persons, vehicles and debris involved will be sequestered in the highport brig or System Patrol shipyard until an investigation can be completed. This is about 10 hours after exiting jump, early on 092-1105.
6. About 18 hours after being detained, the PCs are released to discover they are immediately famous because of their involvement in the crash and their actions. They are hounded by paparazzi as they track down their personal belongings and their cargo and attempt to deliver it to their client's warehouse in the highport. This should wrap up on the evening of 093-1105 or early on 094-1105. They will be successful, be paid the balance due on their contract and have minor celebrity status on Collace for the next 3-8 days.

THE JOB OFFER

The party is looking for work in the Mertactor Highport when they are contacted by a wealthy non-Noble industrialist. He is looking for a few hardy spacers to escort three 10-ton shipping containers from Mertactor to Collace. The patron, Jannar Djim will travel on a separate ship, his own yacht, to keep his competitors guessing as to what he may be up to. He assures the group it is not necessarily a dangerous job but it is important and his competitors have been known to play some very underhanded tricks on occasion. Assuming departure on 084-1105 and seven days in jump, Djim expects to see the players at Collace Highport on or very near to 091-1105.

The offer is Cr15,000 each, half up front, and high passage on the liner *Vindaar's Gambit*. The remainder of the fee will be paid upon delivery at Collace.

THE TRIP TO COLLACE

The players load their cargo, board the liner and are treated to service traditional to high passage travellers - personal attention from the Steward, exotic toiletries, and so on. They get to meet the ship's Captain and are invited to join the nightly festivities in the ship's lounge.

Most of the trip will be spent in the ship's lounge interacting with the other passengers; they include two Imperials of near-Noble status: a corporate trader attempting to secure a lucrative government contract with Collace and a socialite finalising an arranged marriage into the family of a high-ranking Collacean government representative. These two have the highest SOC onboard the ship; the rest of the passengers are their staffs, as well as common citizens, all of whom are taking middle passage. The low berths are only about half full on this voyage.

The crew of *Vindaar's Gambit* keep mainly to themselves, but the players will get to know them a bit as well since their staterooms are adjoining the crew stateroom section and they probably have some things in common.

ARRIVAL AT COLLACE HIGHPORT

Precipitating from jump is uneventful, save for the socialite suffering from a bit of jump sickness. The liner makes a textbook approach to the highport and is given an orbital 'parking space' to unload passengers via its own launch since the highport can't currently support docking tube procedures for this vessel due to construction limitations. Cargo is to be handled by Collace Highport drones once the liner's main cargo bay is put into Zero-G, which a member of the ship's crew will do after inviting the PCs down to oversee the unloading of their containers.

A few minutes later a drone arrives and begins taking the first container when the ship's alarms go off and the Captain broadcasts an urgent "Brace for impact!!" Ten seconds later the entire liner lurches dangerously and a sickening metallic tearing sound can be heard and a dreadful rumbling felt throughout the ship.

THE FENDERBENDER

The liner's own launch has rammed the ship, destroying its M-Drive and tearing open the rear section of the main cargo bay. The power plant is offline, a few areas of the ship have lost atmosphere and escape pod access has been severely mangled. The PCs witness the death of the crewmember assigned to their cargo-handling and must secure the containers for their patron and of course figure out what happened and how to get safely off the ship.

In a surprisingly short amount of time, a group of humans in boarding vacc suits enter the cargo bay; the PCs may believe this is a hijacking but the boarders will attempt to convince them that they are a Collacean search and rescue team. This team will immediately attempt to get into the passenger areas of the liner but will conduct only minimal communication with the bridge. The PCs should realize this "rescue team" is actually making a dangerous situation even more dangerous in their rush.

When the rescue team gains access to the passenger area, they will immediately begin searching for the corporate trader, escort him to an escape pod and eject him as soon as possible. They will help other passengers to maintain their ruse if need be but as soon as the trader is off the ship they will all attempt to escape as well.

CRASH AFTERMATH

The impostor rescue cutter will pick up the fake rescue team and accelerate away from the area. The liner and the PCs are left on their own to save themselves until about 20 minutes after the crash when construction tugs begin appearing to help the drifting ship. About four hours after the crash, all possible vehicles, debris and persons involved in the assault on the *Vindaar's Gambit* will be in the custody of Collace Starport Authority, either in highport medical facilities or the highport brig.

THE GLARE OF THE LIGHTS

Once the players are released, they will be told their personal belongings can be picked up in the starport warehousing district at Collace Downport but the duty officer has no idea where to find their cargo. They are taken in a police cutter to the downport. It is now 092-1105 and they have lost a day in their schedule, seemingly lost their cargo and they are... famous.

The moment the players exit the police cutter and step into Collace Downport, they are bombarded by yelling, flashing lights and buzzing drone cameras. Apparently the story of their exploits in "The Wreck of *Vindaar's Gambit*" has preceded them and everyone wants to talk to the Imperials who fought off pirates and helped Collace S&R save "innumerable lives!"

There is still a job to be finished, however. The PCs need to get back to the highport and navigate through a swarm of bureaucratic red tape to find their patron's property, make sure it gets delivered and hopefully get paid.

Mertactor (B-262732-B)

Mertactor is a world that lies at the bleeding edge of Imperial space, literally on the border of unincorporated District 268 at the termination of an Xboat route going trailing into Glisten subsector. A small planet in its star's habitable zone, Mertactor is approximately 3,200 kilometres in diameter with a surface gravity of 0.82 (Normal G). This seeming contradiction is due to the fact that Mertactor's planetary sphere is made up of abnormally high concentrations of metals and heavy elements, giving it a density that is rarely seen in Charted Space. About 70% of the planetary surface is considered the "drisk," desolate areas of rock, gravel and mineral deposits which inhibit plant growth and settlement expansion. The Mertactan day is 14 Standard hours in length.

The world's unusually robust gravitational force also helps it to hold a light Standard atmosphere which is breathable by Humans but volatile in another sense: "drisk storms" are sudden, turbulent gales which kick up the rocks and pebbles of the drisk in high-speed funnels and twisters; near the outer edges of the storms it can literally be raining rocks while the storm centres are cauldrons of wind-blown destruction. Curiously, they are mostly confined to the drisk proper; the scant seas and coastal areas (about 20% of the planet's surface) as well as the surrounding light forests are generally safe from the worst aspects of them. Were it not for these extremely dangerous storms, Mertactor would enjoy vast

wealth from its abundant metal and mineral resources.

The population of Mertactor is Human and numbers just under 11 million. A voluntary, self-perpetuating oligarchy known as the Mertactan Council handles the planet's interstellar affairs, while internal policies are mainly left to the population's intensely defined familial relationships and customs. The actual "laws" of Mertactor are few but it is quite easy for offworlders to offend the locals by violating an obscure family rule that only Mertactans could be aware of. Mertactan natives are intensely supportive of one another, rely greatly on each other's word and honour and consider offworlders to be crass and somewhat underdeveloped socially; visitors are advised to behave in the most civilised and conservative manner possible.

There is an Imperial Scout base in the system, which operates several tenders and a large amount of Xboats; heavy exploratory vessels are also a common sight. Mertactor's lack of a gas giant means that the port's refuelling operations are handled by atmosphere-capable tenders that process hydrogen from the planet's few seas, another unfortunate roadblock to the system's growth and the rare area of Mertactan life that is highly controlled and regulated by both orbital and planetary police forces. Regardless, passenger liners are frequent clients at Mertactor's highly efficient class B orbital station as, in addition to being a gateway into District 268, the system enjoys a highly renowned cuisine which brings in food connoisseurs from all over the region.

Collace (B-628943-D)

Collace is a planet in its star's habitable zone, approximately 10,000 kilometres in diameter with a surface gravity of 0.91 (Normal G). It's Very Thin and Tainted atmosphere requires a filtered respirator and the average temperature of -9 degrees Celsius requires reliable cold weather gear when venturing outside of the "Hab," Collace's pressurised and acclimatised living structures. All of Collace's copious water is locked in ice except for a few lake bottoms and a summertime strip along the equator when glacial runoff creates a string of meandering rivers and small shallow seas. Collacean days are approximately 20 Standard hours in length.

There are about 1 billion inhabitants on Collace, nearly all Human, who live under a representative democracy with two fringe factions that hold views counter to the main government: that is, they do not see membership in the Imperium as good for the future of Collace. The majority of Collace - indeed, the main government - is strongly pursuing membership in the Imperium and is positioning Collace to be the subsector capital of District 268 since it the most advanced world in the subsector and one of the most populous. In fact the majority government of Collace (known simply as the People Of Collace, or POC) has applied for membership in the Imperium through Glisten; the application is still pending.

While POC sees the planet's high-tech industrial capacity as a strong incentive for Imperial membership and support, the minority fringe elements consider their planet's economic strength the very reason to avoid being consumed by what appears to them to be a voracious and uncaring interstellar entity. The POC (and most of the world's population) consider these fringe groups as nothing more than minor irritants; the Right

Of Collace Coalition (RCC) has staged small demonstrations and pickets in the past but has become more militant of late. The smallest and least active of the groups, Collace Now, while a true anti-Imperial party, concern themselves mainly with domestic issues such as habitat regulation, waste management and atmosphere legislation.

The Law Level on Collace is relatively low, but due to the nature of the atmosphere and environment some tough regulations are in place: ships are restricted to the starport areas only and many of the more powerful weapon systems are capped or forbidden in port environs. Personal armours are unaffected but personal arms are limited to melee weapons outside of the starport areas to minimise risk of damage to Collace's vast network of sealed habitats; within most port areas, pistols are allowed to be carried openly. Fighting of any sort in any pressurized area carries stiff penalties, generally 1-3 weeks incarceration, 1-3 months if firearms were involved. Although rated class B, the highport and downport are both undergoing expansion at this time due to the growing amount of trade and travel coming from trailing out of Glisten subsector; construction delays are frequent but not overly long.

There is a moderate Imperial Scout base in the system operating a few scout/couriers and other exploratory vessels but mainly assisting with growing the port's navigation and traffic control network. That base is the core of the political fringe groups' problems - they see it as the sole of the Imperial boot coming down on their necks. However, most people on Collace crave all things Imperial - news, celebrities, art, culture and especially commerce.

Introduction

How the PCs all gather in the same bar is fairly irrelevant; they could have all just mustered out, just finished various jobs, or have been here at the end of the line for a while, looking for some way to make some money besides venturing out into the drisk and risking life and limb for a few tons of ore and even fewer credits. The fact that they're all of similar backgrounds (spacers down on their luck) should make it easy for them to end up around a series of empty glasses together.

The PCs should know a bit about Mertactor, having probably been stuck there for a bit before this opportunity comes along. The world write-up for Mertactor should be made available to the PCs for help in their role-playing, but Mertactor is just a jumping-off point and not a lot of time should be spent there. Although their patron is a Mertactan native, he is also a savvy businessman and cultured traveller in his own right so he will not be as "Mertactan" as other NPCs in this adventure, for example the crew of the *Vindaar's Gambit*.

The *Gambit* may actually be known to the PCs if it is decided any of them have been on Mertactor for more than a month; the liner has been making the Mertactor-Collace run for over a hundred years. "Steady as the *Gambit*" is a phrase often heard around Mertactor highport in honour of the old ship.

PLAN OF ADVERSARIES

Jannar Djim and his precious cargo are not actually the target of this adventure's adversaries; their target is Alamen Grisst, a very wealthy businessman on the liner that the players will have met over the course of the week in jump. Grisst is attempting to finalize a lucrative contract for his company with the main government of Collace, the POC.

Grisst is the target of a kidnapping attempt by the Right of Collace Coalition. The most volatile group of dissenters on the world, the Coalition is ready to take more definitive steps in their campaign to prevent Collace's "swallowing" by the Imperium. They plan to take Grisst the moment he arrives in-system, hold him for two weeks until his company's intended negotiations collapse and then release him unharmed in Collace Highport.

The RCC have been working on this operation for quite some time, gathering information from their moles in the POC and spies in Imperial space. They have a mole on the *Gambit* as well, the ship's 2nd Steward, Otto Hureelee, who has been sending them passenger and cargo manifests for quite some time. They know Grisst will be on the *Gambit* and they know who he is. Their plan is as follows:

1. Using their contacts in the POC they will have access to a damaged rescue cutter, which is undergoing repairs to meet Collace regulations. There will be a kidnap team on the cutter ready to board the *Gambit*, disguised as Search and Rescue technicians.
2. A small second team will be at the highport docking tubes. Posing as offworld tourists confused by all the construction, this second team will commandeer the launch of the *Gambit* after her passengers have left and kill or incapacitate the pilot. One member of the team will then fly the launch back to the *Gambit*.
3. The launch will be put on a collision course and rammed into its own liner. The Coalition pilot will abandon the launch on its fatal vector and await the arrival of his companions in the cutter.
4. The rescue cutter will arrive and pick up the launch pilot (who will take over cutter flying duties and comms) while the entire rest of the team board the *Gambit*, find and capture Grisst and then eject him in a rescue bubble or escape pod and flee. All will rendezvous with the cutter, which will then leave the area and make for a hiding place on the planet's surface.
5. Two weeks later Grisst will be dropped drugged and unconscious in a highport fresher stall. He will not have been harmed and will have no idea who is responsible, but his company's negotiations will have collapsed.

The Job Offer

The party is looking for work in the Mertactor Highport when they are contacted by a wealthy non-Noble industrialist. He is looking for a few hardy spacers to escort three 10-ton shipping containers from Mertactor to Collace. The patron, Jannar Djim will travel on a separate ship, his own yacht, to keep his competitors guessing as to what he may be up to. He assures the group it is not necessarily a dangerous job but it is important and his competitors have been known to play some very underhanded tricks on occasion. Assuming departure on 084-1105 and seven days in jump, Djim expects to see the players at Collace Highport on or very near to 091-1105.

The Mertactor Highport is a very busy place, it being the end of an Xboat route which comes direct from famous Glisten itself. Xboats, Scout ships, liners, huge freighters... surrounded by a swirling cloud of launches, shuttles and boats. The Imperium should be proud of this place, bright and busy on the bleeding edge of the frontier where all the familiar comforts could be gone in an instant. The native Mertactans are certainly proud, almost to a fault. You've learned to be extra nice to people here; sometimes it seems like saying "Good Morning" to the waitress means you just offended her father or maybe her father's father.

You're sitting in the Spinning Lady, a cheap but decent highport bar, trading stories and hoping a job will come along to get you all off this tin can when a loudly over-dressed man walks in. Obviously a Mertactan, he looks the place over and is about to leave when he notices your group. He hesitates a moment then strides purposefully across the bar to you.

This is Jannar Djim, a very eccentric Mertactan industrialist. His clothing is flashy by Mertactan standards, he carries a large personal comm from a couple tech levels ago and he obsessively runs his hands through his thinning gray hair to the point of distraction.

He will buy a round to open the conversation if need be, but only one drink for each character. He is looking for a group to accompany a valuable shipment of cargo to Collace, a few parsecs spinward of here, and make sure nothing happens to it - no theft, damage or contamination of any sort. He offers more money than the job should be worth, Cr15,000 to each of them and high passage on the liner which will haul the cargo. Half up front, half on delivery at Collace.

"Here's the thing," Djim says, sipping with a look of mild distaste the best wine the bar-tender could offer. "My competitors watch my every move. They know I have a shipment to Collace, they know I'm in this bar right now. They don't know what I have to sell, what ship it's going on, who the buyer is... they actually know nothing. But this is a big deal for me. It will lock up a cross-border trade agreement

with an associate on Collace which could mean quite a bit of money for me and quite a bit of work for some hardy spacers such as yourselves. Dangerous is too strong a word for what I'm asking you to do. I'm looking for insurance and everyone knows cheap insurance never pays off."

If pressed, Djim will tell the characters that he has three 10-ton cargo containers which hold a variety of drisk ores, rare and hard-to-mine heavy elements intended for high-tech industry, a perfect cargo for ice-bound Collace with its lack of natural mineral and metal resources. He will not elaborate on how he acquired the ores.

The characters will be expected to personally oversee the ship's crew as the containers are both loaded into the cargo bay and unloaded at Collace. Collace Highport is under expansion so construction there will mean a Zero-G situation to navigate as drones take each container out of the ship and lash them together for a tug to take to the highport. The PCs are to follow the tug to the warehousing area in the ship's launch and personally confirm their placement in Djim's facility.

Djim will be travelling separately in his own yacht in order to create a bit of confusion for his competitors and keep them guessing as to his true agenda. He will be arriving a half-day or so after the PCs and will contact them as soon as he is in-system.

Djim will have a hand-comp capable of thumb-printing a contract and will expect each PC to sign it and then give them copies if they desire. He will then give them his personal comm code and ask them to go to a small bank nearby where the credit chips for their advances will be waiting. The bank manager will also give them identity codes for the containers. From there the PCs will have the rest of the day to get their personal affairs in order and purchase any equipment they might deem necessary. They will be expected to report to the port's Cargo Handling Desk (CHD) first thing the next morning.

It's an easy thing for Djim to email thumbprint IDs of the characters to the bank manager; in fact, the bank manager will most likely know who the characters are before they and Djim leave the Spinning Lady. The characters can go as a group to the bank but Djim will feel more comfortable if they go separately over the course of the afternoon.

At CHD they will need to authorize the release of Djim's cargo to the Purser of *Vindaar's Gambit* with a standard thumbprint scan as Djim's acting agents. They will then be allowed access to the cargo inspection area and be shown the containers, at which point they will have an opportunity to check the ident codes supplied by the bank manager. While they are checking the codes, the 2nd steward of the *Gambit*, Otto Hureelee, will arrive and take the characters and their cargo to a nearby spacedock for loading into the main cargo bay of the *Gambit*.

The Trip To Collace

The players load their cargo, board the liner and are treated to service traditional to high passage travellers - personal attention from the Steward, exotic toiletries, and so on. They get to meet the ship's Captain and are invited to join the nightly festivities in the ship's lounge. After overseeing the loading of their cargo containers, the group is underway.

CARGO BAY

The highport spacedocks are Zero-G climate-controlled areas that mate directly with most ships' main cargo hatches; *Vindaar's Gambit* is in just such a position as the PCs arrive so they are able to personally oversee Otto and the Mertactan stevedores as they load and secure their cargo. Perceptive PCs may notice with a successful Education check (Difficult, -2; optional DM +1 per 2 weeks that they have been on Mertactor) that Otto is not a Mertactan native and that there is some tension between him and the stevedores. They will drop the cargo (where Otto tells them to) and take their grav forks and leave as soon as possible. If questioned, Otto will simply explain away the tension as a "little labour dispute, nothing a couple credits won't take care of when we're back in a few weeks."

From here on the Referee should review the deckplans in order to understand the references made in the text. Also, the Main Cargo Bay is in Zero-G; any characters not accustomed to such an environment may prefer to watch from the cargo inspection area rather than from inside the bay itself. They will however need to cross the Bay in order to enter the ship proper through the airlock on the starboard side of the Bay.

Detail-oriented characters in the Bay will notice the following with an Intelligence check (Routine, +2): the containers are held in place by magnetic buckles which are powered through conduits in the bay floor; also, there is a floor hatch far to aft behind their first container. Traditional tie-downs and straps are not used on the *Gambit* but there are six wooden crates on wood pallets in the forward section of the bay which are held in place by strands of superdense cabling. If questioned, Otto will explain that the crates hold cloth sacks of Mertactan dry dyes which, being derived from the metal-heavy tissues of Mertactor's plant life, will react unappealingly with the base metals of standard shipping containers. Lastly, there is an airlock directly across from the main bay doors, which leads into the low berth area.

A SHORT TOUR

Upon completion of their cargo tasks, the characters will be escorted through the bay to area 9 and introduced to the chief steward, Galeana Avalar. She will accompany the characters past the low berth section, taking them forward towards the small passenger lift where she will take their weapons for safekeeping

in the ship's locker. Then she will lead the characters to their staterooms on the passenger deck, showing off the passenger lounge and common area (both labelled area 1) on the way; she will make sure they get settled in and have every little thing they need. She will then invite them to join the Captain and other passengers in the lounge for a farewell toast. After that, the ship will be underway.

These first sections are meant to move along rapidly; the real point is to familiarize the PCs with the layout of the liner and cargo bay. By now it is mid-afternoon on 084-1105.

FAREWELL AND JUMP

Most of the trip will be spent in the ship's lounge interacting with the other passengers; they include two Imperials of near-Noble status: a corporate trader attempting to secure a lucrative government contract with Collace and a socialite who is finalising an arranged marriage into the family of a high-ranking Collacean government representative. These two have the highest SOC onboard the ship; the rest of the passengers are their two attendants, as well as common citizens, all of whom are taking middle passage. The low berths are only about half full on this voyage.

The crew of *Vindaar's Gambit* keep mainly to themselves, but the players will get to know them a bit as well since their staterooms are adjoining the crew stateroom section and they probably have some things in common.

The characters will be in the stateroom section forward of the crew section (area 3) very close to the lounge area. This gives them a good opportunity to get to know the crew as well as the other passengers. They should feel some fish-out-of-water sensations here as they might not normally travel high passage; the personal attention, fine accents and extras in the staterooms and quick courteous responses from crew members (especially the Steward staff) should feel odd to the characters. Characters with Carouse or Steward skill may take to the attentions more naturally than those without; these characters can act as liaisons for the rest of the group in order not to offend other passengers or find themselves relegated to a lonely table in the corner of the lounge for the duration of the trip.

The first order of business after securing the final cargo is the ship's traditional Farewell Toast. Started 103 years ago by the first Captain of the *Gambit*, the ship has never left a port without assembling all its passengers in the lounge and having a small toast to the health of the ship and the joy of jumping to other stars. This is where the PCs will be introduced to Captain Alvernon Olicie as the stewards hand out drinks of the passengers' choice. Captain Olicie is an older gentleman of Mertactan birth, a few months away from retirement but still spry. The characters will

not meet Grisst or Ongilii yet, but they should notice them as Chief Steward Avaral is attending to them personally and Captain Olicie will join them and personally clink their glasses.

After the toast the ship will be given clearance to leave the spacedock and the liner will be underway. This is in the afternoon of 084-1105; *Vindaar's Gambit* will enter jump space about four hours from port departure, after which dinner will be served.

Meals may be taken in rooms or in the lounge. The circular lounge is often split in half by retractable partitions to allow more varied entertainment to occur simultaneously; at those times it is also generally closed off from the square common area just to aft.

Chief Steward Avaral's Daily Calendar of Events for the week in jump is as follows:

084-1105 Toast, Departure, Dinner, Holo-film

085-1105	5 AM - 8 AM	Breakfast
thru	8:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Port Lounge: Gym/Athletics
090-1105		Starboard Lounge: Spiritual Centre
	11 AM – 12 PM	Full Lounge: Bar and Library
	12 PM – 2 PM	Full Lounge: Lunch, Bar and Library
	2 PM – 3 PM	Lounge Closed
	3 PM – 5:30 PM	Port Lounge: Day Spa (light massage, facial, nails, etc) Starboard Lounge: Holo-vid
	6 PM – 9 PM	Full Lounge: Dinner
	9 PM - Midnight	Full Lounge: Bar and Games

091-1105 Breakfast as usual; Full Lounge as Bar and Library until arrival

The characters may take advantage of all the events above if they wish; the daily activities aren't well attended in general but the games in the evenings are quite popular.

The entire crew of the *Gambit* is Mertactan except for 2nd Steward Otto Hureelee. The crew is detailed in the Character Appendix but for now know that they are Mertactan through and through but the characters' status as high passengers will allow them to make the occasional unintended gaffe without consequence. They will interact mostly with the Steward staff (Galeana, Otto and 3rd Steward Neenah Tromt) and possibly with Captain Olicie in the evenings in the lounge.

The liner's 36 staterooms will be full on this voyage, with all 12 crew members enjoying their own staterooms and four more being taken up by the NPCs detailed below and their assistants. The remaining staterooms will be filled by the characters and the balance by a mix of Imperial and Collacean citizens travelling middle passage; there are 13 passengers in low berths. This means there will be 20 middle passengers, less player party size, for probably 13 - 15 other passengers.

The PCs are the only high passengers aboard, except for one Alamen Grisst, a wealthy trader from Mille Falcs and one

Mikeska Ongilii, a socialite from Egypt in Glisten subsector. They both have fairly high social status though they are not Noble; they both expect their business dealings on Collace to elevate them to the next level of social strata in the region.

Alamen Grisst is approachable but quick to be bored unless the conversation is of trading or economics or gambling. He is attempting to finalise a lucrative deal for his company with the POC on Collace, a subsidised route for his company's small fleet of merchant vessels. He is travelling with his secretary, a young woman named Ana Pyriem who keeps to herself but is always attentive to her boss. Grisst will scoff if Jannar Djim's name is mentioned:

"Jannar Djim?! Hah! That man's an imposter, a quack who thinks his will can outweigh the force of interstellar economics. He talks out of both sides of his mouth! He makes money, to be sure, but he's just lucky. Real business in this area needs government support which is why I'm doing what I'm doing."

If questioned as to why he is taking the *Gambit* to Collace, rather than a company ship, Grisst will explain that the *Gambit* is a slice of history, a stalwart subsidised liner that has done more than her fair share to broaden the Imperium's influence in District 268. Seeing that his company expects their own ships to be as long-lived and profitable as the *Gambit* has been, he decided to take the trip on her to see if he could deduce some clues about the secret of her success.

Being from Mille Falcs, Grisst has little patience for the Mertactan crew's slightly superior attitude and tendency to take offense "at the slightest remark!" It makes him irritable but he enjoys gambling in the evenings; should one or more of the characters become involved in a game with him, he will warm up to them considerably. The Referee may play out an evening of gaming with a simple 2D roll, one for Grisst and one for the player, DMs + Gambler or Deception (Int); highest roll wins money equal

to the difference of the two rolls times Cr100. After a couple evenings of gaming, Grisst will tell the characters that they could probably make more and easier money working with him rather than Djim; interested characters can attempt to make a Contact of Grisst for the future.

Mikeska Ongilii will not join in the games, but will occasionally attempt to engage Grisst in conversation. He is not very interested in her but the savvy lady is always seeking new alliances and ways to improve her standing or her business portfolio. His connection to the POC is quite interesting to her but his innate coldness towards her makes it difficult for her to gain ground with him. Characters with Carouse skill may attempt to melt the ice between the two, which if successful will result in Ongilii letting the characters know (later, in private) that Grisst has an excellent reputation in the region and is expected by many to be Knighted by the Imperium shortly for his work in District 268.

At any rate, it seems Ongilii is attempting to finalize an arranged marriage for her unborn daughter with the unborn son of a high-level official in the POC government. She is actually several months pregnant, a fact which will slip out in late night lounge conversation with her nurse, Elleena Erior, after Ongilii has gone to bed.

The week in jump should flow quickly but not be rushed by the Referee; the characters should feel they know some of the crew as well as Alamen Grisst. Mikeska Ongilii is a bit of a red herring; her pregnancy should make her stick out in the characters minds when the collision occurs and cause them to think twice about their actions once the "rescue team" boards the ship. If the game is nearing the 90 minute mark at this point, the adventure session will be in good shape.

Arrival At Collace Highport

Precipitating from jump is uneventful, save for the socialite suffering from a bit of jump sickness. The liner makes a textbook approach to the highport and is given an orbital 'parking space' to unload passengers via its own launch since the highport cannot currently support docking tube procedures for this vessel due to construction limitations. Cargo is to be handled by Collace Highport drones once the liner's main cargo bay is put into Zero-G, which a member of the ship's crew will do after inviting the characters down to oversee the unloading of their containers.

The *Gambit* exits jump space without issue; it will take a little over five hours for the ship to reach Collace highport. It is now 091-1105 at about 10AM local highport time. Most passengers will have lunch and gather their belongings then relax in the lounge until the ship reaches the port. Ongilii has a bout of jump sickness upon precipitation; she will remain in her stateroom while her nurse Elleena handles the business of getting ready to leave the ship.

The liner proceeds to Collace Highport without incident and is given coordinates for a station-keeping orbit near the facility. The 2nd Pilot of the *Gambit*, Evendas Arliin will begin readying the ship's launch, the *Vinny*, for passenger transport to the highport proper. Meanwhile, 2nd Steward Hureelee will meet the PCs in the Lounge and escort them to the corridor of area 9 and into the main cargo bay where he will assist them in donning vacsuits; the cargo bay will then be evacuated of atmosphere and placed in Zero-G in preparation for the arrival of the highport cargo drones. Through-out the trip from the lounge to the cargo bay, Hureelee will be making private comm calls; characters who can pass a Intelligence (Difficult, -2) check will realize he is not in communication with the bridge crew during half the comm calls. If questioned he will offer only a brusque "Ship's business!" and talk to the characters as little as possible.

Characters that do not have Zero-G or Vacc-Suit skill may opt to be in the lounge with the Captain, Chief Steward Avalar and the other passengers: one viewport allows an unobscured look at the area below and directly in front of the main bay doors. Those who do suit up with Hureelee will be in the bay with him as he opens the main doors of the bay, revealing the small Collacean highport floating against the black in the middle distance, spindly fingers of unfinished superstructure growing from it on three sides.

Hureelee will then begin programming a hand-comp, interfacing it with Port Authority and receiving command codes for the cargo drones. They will be departing the highport area in a few minutes; in the meantime, Hureelee begins breaking loose the magnetic buckles on the containers, leaving one in place on each container until the drones arrive.

In the lounge, the Captain and Chief Steward will each personally say farewell to every passenger as they depart and are led to the launch boarding area (area 5) by 3rd Steward Neenah Tromt. The *Vinny* can handle six passengers per flight; the first flight will leave about the same time as the characters are suiting up. Grisst wants to have one last drink on the old *Gambit* before leaving so he and Ana Pyriem will be in the lounge and will leave on the final launch run. Ongilii has decided to wait longer for her jump sickness to subside before taking the launch so she is still in her stateroom; normally the ship's medic would be warming the low berths right now but he and the Captain have decided that attending to Mikeska Ongilii is a more prudent choice at this time since she is pregnant. Elleena Erior is in the lounge attempting to contact Ongilii's family on Collace; she hopes that they will be able to take the next launch flight. This leaves (14 - player party size) middle passengers in the lounge area waiting to depart when Otto opens the main bay doors, in addition to Grisst, Pyriem and Erior.

About 20 minutes later, the drones have not arrived. The characters may push Otto to apply pressure on the Port Authority and he will do so but he seems agitated; he is irritable and disrespectful to the (high passenger) PCs, utilizing some choice spacer expressions when querying Port Authority about the drones. (He is expecting something to happen with his Coalition friends but he does not know what the actual plan is.) Port Authority is apologetic and promises the drones will be underway shortly; the construction has everything bunged up.

At this point, the ship's launch should have returned but has not and the Captain and Chief Steward are both called away from the lounge to deal with an agitated Ongilii and a late launch. 3rd Steward Tromt will offer various refreshments to the increasingly impatient passengers, explaining that delays are normal when a highport is under construction.

A few minutes later both the highport drones and the *Vinny* are confirmed to be vectoring to the *Gambit* and should arrive in about two minutes.

The Fenderbender

The liner's own launch has rammed the ship, destroying its M-Drive and tearing open the rear section of the main cargo bay. The power plant is offline, a few areas of the ship have lost atmosphere and escape pod access has been severely mangled. The characters witness the death of the crewmember assigned to their cargo-handling and must secure the containers for their patron and of course figure out what happened and how to get safely off the ship.

CARGO BAY

Otto Hureelee, under the watchful eyes of the PCs, will begin manipulating the first cargo drone into the Bay; as soon as the first container is up and underway the ship's warning system goes off and the Captain broadcasts an urgent ship-wide warning: "Brace for impact!!"

Two combat rounds later the ship shudders violently and a sickening metallic tearing sound can be heard and felt throughout the *Gambit*. One combat round after that most areas of the ship will lose gravity and general lighting; the ship will revert to emergency power (red LED strip lighting and manual door and valve operation) and any areas that can maintain atmosphere will start to fill with a hazy gray smoke which seeps in through the ventilation system. Everyone on the ship may throw a Dexterity check (Difficult, -2) to properly brace themselves if they state that they are trying to do so; success means they may reduce any collision damage they suffer (see below) by 50%.

Characters in the cargo bay will be the first to see the effects of the accident in the red glow of the safety lighting: the aft wall of the bay will immediately buckle and the ceiling will be torn open, revealing the void outside. Some (1-3) of the 1-ton wooden containers in the forward area of the Bay will be knocked out of their moorings and begin drifting in freefall. Also, the character's own containers will be jarred into a slow freefall drift. Anyone in the main cargo bay will suffer 1-6 hits, DM -1 for every level of Zero-G skill, also reduced by 2 if they successfully braced for impact. Every three combat rounds there is a small chance (10+ on 2D) that a character will need to dodge a drifting container, which may cause 1-3 hits and a loss of control if they fail the dodge. On a natural 12 they will not see the object coming but can be possibly be warned by someone else.

- Check to dodge a drifting container: Zero-G + Dexterity (Difficult, -2).
- Check to regain control if lost: Zero-G + Dexterity (Difficult, -2).

Being near the main doors, Otto Hureelee will be crushed by a wooden pallet and his vacc suit will rupture in several places. Despite their most heroic efforts the characters will not be able to save him from suffocation. His hand-comp will drift in the bay until a character thinks to try and grab it.

- Check to grab Otto's hand-comp: Zero-G + Dexterity (Difficult, -2).

The drone handling the cargo is pre-programmed to immediately exit any ship broadcasting emergency alarms so it will attempt to set down the cargo container it holds once it re-orient itself to the drift of the ship (three combat rounds to re-orient, two to set the container down). Players with their own hand computers (or Otto's) may attempt to override this programming but the character must make a check to be steady when attempting the override. It will take 1D6+3 combat rounds to override the drone programming but then the drone can be put to work gathering up the free-floating containers and the other characters can begin securing the containers to minimize damage. Both these actions, successful or not, require three combat rounds each.

- Check to secure a drifting container: Zero-G + Dexterity (Difficult, -2).
- Check to reprogram drone: Computer or Engineer (Electronics) + Education (Difficult, -2).
- Check to maintain control during drone reprogramming: Zero-G + Dexterity (Very Difficult, -4).

If the characters need 10 rounds or more to begin securing their (Djim's) containers, apply 1 hit of damage to any of them in freefall per minute, until they are secured (the Referee should track all damage suffered by Djim's containers). The metal containers will not breach or rupture but the wooden pallets might (5+ on 1D6, roll once every three combat rounds for each drifting pallet) and if they do, the fine-grained powders inside will burst forth and obscure vision (no warnings for drifting containers, a cumulative -1 DM per burst crate on all drone tasks).

If the characters fail twice to grab a container or pallet with the drone it will be bumped towards the bay doors and may drift into open space (DM -1 on the next handling task; failure means the container in question has drifted out of the bay). The bay doors cannot be closed due to a sheared power conduit in the torn ceiling of the hold.

The characters may feel the cargo is not worth securing at this point and may attempt to get out of the main cargo bay. The starboard airlock and the floor hatch to aft both show red access lights, indicating there is atmosphere on the other side. The only way out would be to spacewalk out of the main bay doors and try to enter the ship from another point - an extremely foolish idea at best. Anyone near the bay doors attempting to see what happened will be able to discern the smashed launch drifting away from the *Gambit*, trailing bits and pieces of machinery and hull plating; Collace Highport is still visible but is nearly upside down relative to the last view of it the characters had.

ONBOARD THE GAMBIT

Any characters in the lounge area will hear and feel the terrible crunching of the collision; all persons in this area will suffer 1D3 hits and be knocked into freefall. Reorienting requires a check (see below) and will take three minutes for everyone here to accomplish. The passengers in the lounge will then begin to panic and try to reach the lift to corridor 9 and the escape pods.

- Check to reorient after collision: Zero-G + Dexterity (Difficult, -2).

The lift is not operational under emergency power; any characters here may attempt to override the lift programming or bypass the emergency breaker in order to get the lift working (see check below). If the PCs do not succeed (they may try more than once, each attempt will take one minute) or are not here, assume that the bridge will restore power to the lift six minutes after impact.

- Check to operate the lift locally: Computer, Engineer (Electronics) or Mechanic + Intelligence (Difficult, -2).

Characters if present may attempt to corral the passengers and create a more organized escape from the area (see check below) and this will allow six passengers per minute to be evacuated into corridor 9; otherwise only four passengers per minute will be able to leave the lounge once the lift is operational.

- Check to organize the escape: Leadership or Persuade + Intelligence (Difficult, -2).

Chief Steward Avarar and 3rd Steward Tromt are at the aft end of the starboard corridor leading to the boarding area (area 5) when the crash occurs, they will most likely be knocked unconscious during the crash.

The ship's crew will all be at duty stations when the *Vinny* hits, many in the Bridge section: Captain Olicie is there, and the Chief Pilot Gavlan Harlo who is trying desperately to get the M-Drive back on line (the 2nd Pilot, Evendas Arliin, was ostensibly flying the *Vinny* and is presumed dead). The Navigator and Purser are also there; the Navigator is trying to contact Engineering and get the power plant back online, and the Purser communicating with Collace Highport and trying to get rescue teams on the way.

The ship's medic is in a starboard-side stateroom with Ongilii when the collision occurs. The Gunner was stationed in the ship's single turret; it was he who alerted the bridge about the odd vector the *Vinny* was using to approach. He will not notice the launch pilot abandon ship, nor a nearby vessel also vectoring towards the *Gambit*. After the collision, the Gunner will drop down to the bridge deck, arm himself from the ship's locker (gauss pistol (3d6) and two full clips, TL 8 flak jacket (6)) and then move into corridor 9 to begin evacuating passengers.

The crew stateroom area and passenger boarding area suffer extensive damage; engineering is effectively destroyed and both engineers along with it (the *Gambit* takes 1D6+3 hits, the first three disabling the M-Drive). The rear lifts between area 4 and 5 are useless, 60% of the port side escape pods are destroyed and the ship is venting a small amount of hydrogen into the void. Sections 4, 5 and 7 are ruptured and depressurized, and the main corridor traversing the ship (9) past the main cargo bay and low berths has a small leak aft near the lifts (13-18 minutes until the corridor is void of air).

People onboard the ship (outside of the cargo bay) when the collision happens will suffer damage starting at 5D6 in Engineering and reducing by 1D6 for every 10 metres they are forward of the engineering section; also reduce damage by one die for being on a different deck than the engineering room (The Chief and 3rd Stewards will both be taking 4D6 hits). Persons in vacc suits may reduce damage by half.

Communications are possible only through suit comms or personal comms; shipboard comm systems are shorting out and effectively useless. Any players running through the local comm bands will pick up communications that sound distinctly calm and goal-oriented, on a small frequency band that is rarely used in port areas. The calm communications are discussing a ruptured vessel, obviously the *Gambit*, and they seem to be trying to hail a particular individual who is not responding (the late Otto Hureelee).

This Is A Rescue?

In a surprisingly short amount of time, a group of humans in boarding vacc suits enter the cargo bay; the characters may believe this is a hijacking but the boarders will attempt to convince them that they are a Collacean Search and Rescue team. This team will immediately attempt to get into the passenger areas of the liner but will conduct only minimal communication with the bridge.

CARGO BAY

About six minutes after the collision, a group of humans in vacc suits begin entering the main cargo Bay through the rent in the ceiling. They number (player party size) +2 and are (secretly) armed with gauss pistols (3d6) and smoke grenades and several large satchels. The characters may at first think they are a Search and Rescue team, but they will not communicate with them, instead heading directly for the manual hatch to aft which leads down to the crew stateroom area.

The Boarders will immediately try to cycle the floor hatch but will have to resort to a small shaped explosive charge to breach the valve. If the characters try to intervene they will authoritatively state "Port Rescue Service! Stay back and await further instructions!" Once through the hatch they will apply a hull patch from the other side to stop atmosphere loss and foil pursuit. Scout, Navy, Marines or Merchant characters will realize this rescue team is actually making a dangerous situation even more dangerous in their rush.

The characters can use cargo containers and the cargo drone to fight the boarders, if things go that way. A successful cargo-handling task as detailed above will strike one boarder for 1D6 hits and knock him out of control for four combat rounds; if the boarder had his gun drawn, it will float free and the PCs may attempt to grab it.

- Check to grab loose weapon: Zero-G + Dexterity (Very Difficult, -4).

Using cargo containers as free-floating projectiles may damage the characters' own containers, however; for each use of a container against the boarders, one of the character's containers will suffer 1 hit on 9+ on 2D. If the characters do fight, the boarders will stick to their plan and eight combat rounds after hostilities start they will have breached the floor valve. Four combat rounds later they will be through the breach and five combat rounds after that they will have applied the hull patch and effectively trapped the characters in the bay.

If no boarders were killed or knocked out (or the characters do not think to search them) the players may use the cargo drone to attempt to smash through the hull patch. They will gain DM+1 if they think to use a cargo container as a ram. Each attempt will require three combat rounds and every second attempt gains a cumulative DM+1.

- Check to use the cargo drone to smash through the hull patch: Computer, Engineer (Electronics) + Intelligence (Very Difficult, -4).

If the characters do search any incapacitated boarders, they will find one explosive charge, one hull patch, 10 metres of steel cable with magnetic grapples on each end, two smoke-signal grenades and a gauss pistol (3d6) with two clips of ammo on each one. Obviously, the Referee will need to track the boarders use of these items in the preceding combat but no boarder will use a shaped charge to fight the characters, so there should be one or two for the characters to find. Using the shaped charge to breach the hull patch takes three combat rounds. Failing the first attempt means that characters will automatically succeed on the second attempt or if they now try ramming the patch open.

- Check to use shaped charge to breach hull patch: Explosives + Intelligence (Average, +0).

If the characters offer to help the "rescue team" they will be given two coils of magnetic safety cable and a smoke grenade and be told to exit the ship through the main bay doors, attach themselves securely to the hull and detonate the grenade to signal the rescue cutter waiting nearby. Characters who have served in the Scouts, Navy or Marines may make an Intelligence check (Average, +0) to realize that the orders go counter to all known orbital emergency procedures because at least one rescue tech would be accompanying them on the EVA and communicating with the cutter on their behalf.

If the characters do indeed foolishly lash themselves to the hull, they will be waiting for quite some time. The "rescue cutter" certainly will not pick them up and they will helplessly watch escape pods pop out of the top of the stricken liner only to be left drifting as the cutter accelerates away from the scene. If any characters are left in the ship, the Referee should continue to play out the kidnap attempt but if not this portion of the adventure ends here with the successful kidnapping of Grisst. A few minutes after the impostors depart, highport tugs will arrive and begin gathering up escape pods and stabilising the *Gambit*; not long after that a police cutter will arrive and the characters will be taken into custody.

The characters should have figured out by now that these boarders are not in communication with the bridge and are acting on their own. If queried as to their behaviour, the boarders will indicate they are to rescue “government liaisons and Collacean citizens first and foremost” and that the characters will face “severe legal consequences” if they do not do as ordered.

Characters who warn the bridge will be contradicted by the boarders, who will cite a meaningless and false “Port Authority Regulation” number and continue on their way. Captain Olicie will be heard to comply with the boarders’ requests; his only concern is getting all of his passengers off the liner safely.

Whether they fight or not, the characters’ interaction with the boarders should delay the kidnap operation for several minutes before the boarders are able to move forward. The hatch should be blown three to four minutes after the boarders first appear, nine or ten minutes after the collision.

LOUNGE

When the rescue team gains access to the passenger area, they will immediately begin searching for the corporate trader, Alamen Grisst, escort him to an escape pod and eject him as soon as possible. They will help other passengers to maintain their ruse if need be but as soon as the trader is off the ship they will all attempt to escape as well.

At the eight minute mark, most of the passengers from the lounge area will have been evacuated into corridor 9, where they are all crowded, panicky and waiting desperately to get into escape pods. Strangely, the ship’s gravity is functioning in this area. Grisst is here now, stunned and woozy, as well as the ship’s gunner and purser. The purser will take the lift back down to the stateroom areas to begin gathering rescue balls from the staterooms while the gunner will work his way through the crowd to the escape pod section. The medic, having sedated Ongilii in her room, will place her in a rescue bubble then take the lift to corridor 9 with several other rescue bubbles and attempt to calm the passengers and institute some sort of crowd control. The sound of the boarders’ second explosive detonating (if it does) will make the passengers even more panicky.

- Check to calm passengers: Leadership or Persuade + Intelligence (Very Difficult, -4).

The delay in escape pod deployment is due to the fact that the rear lifts have been jammed up into the corridor leading to the pod airlocks. The portside pods are completely inaccessible; the gunner will try to clear debris to get to the starboard side locks but a large piece of deck plating is too big for him to move on his own. He requests help from the characters if any are here, from the ship’s crew if they are not.

Moving the deck plate will require 32 Strength points to be applied at once; any characteristic DMs may be added to the total. Athletics or Mechanic skill may be added as well, to simulate the use of leverage. Once the 32 point minimum has been reached, the character in charge should roll a Strength check (Difficult, -2), with the effect of the roll indicating the time it takes to move the plating: Effect of -6 or less requires 3 minutes, 0 to -5 requires two minutes and +1 or greater requires only one minute. If no characters are in this area at this time, assume that the plating will be moved in four minutes, about 12 minutes since the ordeal started.

Once the plate is moved, the gunner will begin evacuating passengers at the rate of two per pod, one pod every three combat rounds. This is roughly six people per minute so the liner should be free of passengers, except for Ongilii and Erior, in about three minutes, or 15 - 18 minutes after the initial crash.

WHERE ARE THE BOARDERS?

At the 10 minute mark, the boarders will blow the airlock into the passenger section (area 2) and sweep into the lounge area, finding it empty except for the Purser who is still gathering uninflated rescue bubbles. Realizing the jig is up and Grisst is most likely gone already, the boarders will immediately head back down the corridor and apply a hull patch at the valve between the crew staterooms and the passenger area. Once that is completed they will blow the airlock to area 4 and escape the ship through the torn walls of the launch bay. Their cutter will arrive in eight combat rounds, pick them up and accelerate away from the area. This should be 12 - 14 minutes after the crash and assumes the characters were not able to prevent the Boarders from getting here in the first place.

The characters should be able to breach the hull patch in the cargo bay floor two to three combat rounds after the boarders have sealed off the passenger section; there may be another combat here but the boarders will attempt to minimise casualties and escape the ship.

This is the late afternoon of 091-1105 and the adventure session now should be around the 2 1/2 hour mark.

Crash Aftermath

The impostor rescue cutter will pick up the fake rescue team and accelerate away from the area. The liner and the characters are left on their own to save themselves until about 20 minutes after the crash when construction tugs begin appearing to help the drifting ship. About four hours after the crash, all possible vehicles, debris and persons involved in the assault on the Vindaar's Gambit will be in the custody of Collace Starport Authority, either in highport medical facilities or the highport brig.

Collace Starport Authority (SA) will respond by sending two construction tugs to the area, which will arrive about 17 minutes after the crash and will begin stabilising the liner and launch and gathering up any escape pods that may eject. A police cutter will arrive about 23 minutes after the crash to dispatch four Star Marines in combat mode as well as six Star Marines in Search and Rescue (S&R) mode to finish evacuation of the liner.

The tugs will gather up any and all debris, vessels, escape pods and persons involved in the accident and will place everyone in Starport Authority holding until an investigation can be completed.

The players who do not need serious medical attention will be detained for 12 hours, plus an additional 2D6 hours. They will be given light medical treatment and a meal and questioned for several hours about their actions on the *Gambit* (the Referee needn't role-play the interrogation sessions; suffice to say the characters are exhausted by the hours-long ordeal). Any attempts by the players to inquire about their personal belongings or Djim's cargo will fall on deaf ears. Asking about the safety of the other passengers on the *Gambit* will reduce their brig time by 1D3 hours. Anyone who was seriously injured will need to remain in the highport hospital until they can leave under their own power or be taken into the care of a licensed medic or doctor (Medic-2 or better).

Once they are released, the characters are told their personal belongings and credit chips can be picked up at Collace Downport. They will have to find their cargo from there; the Duty Sergeant doesn't know where S&R placed the wreck of the *Gambit* or her contents. Any pleas to be released into the highport will be ignored and they will be taken in a police shuttle to the surface and released into Collace Downport.

The Glare Of The Lights

The moment the players exit the police cutter and step into Collace Downport, they are bombarded by yelling, flashing lights and buzzing drone cameras. Apparently the story of their exploits in "The Wreck of Vindaar's Gambit" has preceded them and everyone wants to talk to the Imperials who fought off pirates and helped Collace S&R save "innumerable lives!"

Once in the Collace Downport police facility, the players will notice that they are being treated with a lot of courtesy by the officers processing their personal (non-weapon) belongings. They will be offered coffee, shown holograms of the transit system and so forth. No one can tell them the whereabouts of their cargo but they can direct them to Cargo Handling and verify that any personal weapons they had on the *Gambit* can be picked up at the Port Authority Security Desk, not far from this facility. The *Gambit* herself, and her launch *Vinny*, are both in orbit at the shipyard, undergoing repair evaluation. It should now be the afternoon of 092-1105 which makes the characters about a day late on completing their contract with Jannar Djim.

If any characters think to contact Djim while in police custody, they will be allowed to do so and will easily get in touch with him. Djim arrived in system several hours after the crash and was contacted by the purser of the *Gambit*, who explained the situation to him. His cargo containers are being held for several days until Port investigations are completed.

Djim will be very impressed with the characters, congratulating them for their heroism and courage. He will offer to meet them at the Highport the following morning to finalise their arrangement but will ask them to inspect the containers for damage and come with a report on the status of the cargo.

The officer who escorts the characters to the facility's public area will pat one of them on the back and say "Good work!" before showing them to the entrance of the Downport.

The Downport is part of a large network of sealed habitats that stretch across the surface of Collace like the root system of a great tree. The port area is one of the oldest and most developed sections of "the Hab," some areas dating back hundreds of years. The Collace hubs make extensive use of drones and robots for transport, cleaning and maintenance work. Grav tech is ubiquitous but the atmosphere of the planet means tunnels are used to connect many areas, with large airlocked bays for large vehicles and long overland journeys.

When the characters walk into the port's main terminal, they will find themselves surrounded by blinding photo strobes, buzzing drone cameras and a push of humanity thrusting microphones and tri-dee equipment in their faces. They have

become minor celebrities over their time in the brig as the story of their exploits has spread like wildfire throughout the Collace habitats. Everyone wants to talk to the Imperials who fought off the "murderous pirates during The Wreck of the *Vindaar's Gambit*" and also saved "innumerable" lives.

The crowd of reporters will follow the characters everywhere they go for the next several hours, creating a nuisance for the various offices they have to visit and making any task checks during this time more difficult; for the next two hours they will suffer a DM of -3, then a DM of -2 for the hour after that and finally a DM of -1 during the fourth hour after release.

The Referee should emphasize the annoying and insistent nature of the reporters and make any simple thing the characters try to do be the subject of a whole new round questions and photographing.

If the characters decide to stop and do an impromptu press conference, it will take an hour and then most of the paparazzi will leave; they will then suffer only a DM of -1 for the following hour. If on the other hand any characters get violent with the paparazzi, even more strobes will go off and in a few minutes local police will arrive. The police will review some of the copious paparazzi video footage and then regretfully arrest the offending characters and they will be placed in jail for 1-6 days, a rather light sentence based on their heroic actions on the *Gambit*. They will then be hounded for another four hours from the time of the arrest, as described above.

If the players haven't tried yet, they will find it easy to contact Jannar Djim but he will not speak with the characters until the paparazzi is gone and they can be assured of privacy. In the meantime they should go to the Cargo Handling Desk.

CARGO HANDLING DESK

The characters need to get back to the highport and navigate through a swarm of bureaucratic red tape to find their patron's property, make sure it gets delivered and hopefully get paid.

At CHD, the characters will need to find someone who can tell them where their containers are. This check takes half an hour, and is modified by the presence of annoying paparazzi. If they fail they will be able to try again in an hour.

- Check to find someone who can locate the containers: Admin + Intelligence (Average, +0).

Success means that they will be verified as legitimate acting agents on behalf of the cargo's owner and will have verified the cargo ID codes. They will then be given a data chip and sent to the Requisitions Office to find out where their cargo actually is.

It will take about 20 minutes to get to the Requisitions Office via grav-tube. A successful check takes an hour (again modified by the presence of paparazzi), after which their data chip will be updated, verifying them as the cargo's agents and told that their containers are in Quadrant Four of Collace Highport.

- Check at Requisitions Office: Admin + Intelligence (Average, +0).

The characters, knowing they must go back to the Highport, will want to collect their weapons from the Security Desk. There is no task roll involved in this but it will take half an hour to complete. From Security they can catch a shuttle to the Highport (Cr200 each) which will depart in about 45 minutes.

BACK TO THE HIGHPORT

If the characters have moved fast enough to still have reporters following them, they will be able to lose them in the hustle and bustle of the highport terminal if they so desire. No paparazzi will be waiting for them here at the highport but they will see themselves occasionally on vid-screens and holo-displays, footage from when they were first released a few hours ago.

People will recognize them; mostly shop owners, dockworkers, port personnel and the like. They will smile and wave, occasionally clap or pump their fists, but otherwise leave the characters be. It is obvious that their efforts are appreciated by the crews here, people that spend most of their lives one thin metal wall away from the void.

Finding their containers will be a simple task (no roll) taking only a couple of hours. Proper inspection of the containers is an Intelligence check (Routine, +2) which takes about half an hour. The players can contact Djim now if they wish, or wait until the morning. Regardless, they can arrange transport of the containers to Djim's warehouse for Cr500 each, which Djim will reimburse them for.

If any characters were injured badly enough to be put in hospital, they can be visited now. It is the late evening of 092-1105; the PCs will need to eat and find lodging for the evening, which to their surprise will be offered to them for free at whichever establishments they visit. They are heroes, after all!

The next morning they will be able to meet with Djim at his warehouse and provide the Starport Authority report on the damage the containers may have suffered. Although proud of the party for their actions, Djim will tell them he can only pay them a portion of the agreed-upon amount (subtract Cr1000 for each hit the containers suffered in crash and divide the result between all the PCs) and can only pay once the containers are released. The PCs will balk of course, but Djim will be firm - undamaged delivery was a principle tenet of the contract. If any containers were lost during the assault (i.e., floated outside the cargo bay), Djim will deduct 20% per lost container (in light of the fact that they will have been recovered by the Starport Authority).

Smart PCs will remember they were escorting heavy elements and ores and ask how much damage can such materials actually suffer. Djim will smile at this point and pull out a small plastic disk, the Imperial sunburst, and place it on his lapel. He will tap it and it will begin changing colours, play the Emperor's March, show a small holographic Scout ship and so forth. It is utterly tacky and yet somehow fascinating.

"There's no ore in those containers, my friends. I'm sorry to have misled you and my ancestors will hound me forever over that. But I couldn't risk the truth coming out. These little sunbursts will sell here for a credit each and you brought three million of them here! They are part of publicity drive by the People Of Collace to show local support for their application of membership to the Imperium. And after what you did, I think I'm going to need three million more!"

The characters will most likely really balk now that they know the truth - what's a few damaged trinkets among millions? But he stands firm on his reduced payment. He does however tell the characters that he has discovered that any boarder killed or captured on the *Gambit* have since been identified as terrorist operatives of the Right of Collace Coalition and the characters may claim a bounty of Cr2000 for each they overcame in the assault. He will assist them over the next few days by providing any legal aid they need to claim the bounties and make sure that they have decent lodging while waiting here at the highport.

Conclusion

The characters will enjoy the gratitude of the Collacean citizens while they wait for Djim's containers to be released and their bounties to be paid. They will not have to pay for food and many drinks will be poured for free. Any equipment they own that may have been damaged will be repaired for only the price of parts. Many people will clap their backs and want to hear their stories and they will be asked to interview for the infotainment channels. Alamen Grisst (if he was not taken) will contact them and offer to pay for their rooms at a swank highport hotel. And lastly they will be invited by the crew of *Vindaar's Gambit* to attend a memorial dinner for the ones who didn't survive the collision. The next morning (096-1105) Djim's containers are released, he will pay them the (adjusted) balance of their contract and he will tell them they can report to the Highport Security Desk to claim their bounties. The characters are now free to leave Collace or stay on and enjoy another few days of celebrity status while looking for their next adventure.

Mongoose Living Traveller Campaign rewards are based on the following events throughout the adventure. If the characters obeyed the instructions of the 'boarders' and did not intervene, or escaped from the ship in an escape pod with the other passengers in a panic, the ending should be very different. While the characters will get some payment (assume all cargo was lost and recovered by the Starport Authority), none of the other rewards will be available. Assuming that the characters did act heroically, intervene and delayed the boarders, the following rewards are available.

1. The characters should have made close to Cr15,000 each on the job, less any damages.
2. The characters will have gained "Contact – Merchant Jannar Djim", though perhaps not as robust as they might have thought; his odd insistence on reducing their fee but then paying for legal assistance may make the characters wary of him. His tacky sunbursts will become an instant hit on Collace and stay such for the next few months until memories of the 'Wreck of the *Vindaar's Gambit*' begin to fade.

3. The characters may have gained "Contact – Merchant Alamen Grisst", although he may be a bit aloof since he will soon discover (if he doesn't know already) that they were working for one of his rivals, Djim. However, Grisst could still be important as he rises in noble status. His negotiations will go well, and Collace will have another subsidised route connecting into the Imperium.
4. If any characters were arrested for striking a reporter or a drone camera, they will have to pay Cr2,000 in fines and damages for each reporter or camera hit.
5. If any characters were put in hospital, Collace Starport Authority will cover their medical expenses as reward for their efforts in helping to save the passengers of *Vindaar's Gambit*.
6. If any of the boarders escaped capture, the characters gain "Enemy – Right of Collace Coalition". It will take several months for them to become active again.

Investigations will reveal that the Right of Collace Coalition was behind this debacle. Their political charter will be revoked and within six months the party will cease to exist. Their membership will drift mostly into the POC but some will remain anti-Imperial and join Collace Now. Any boarders that were taken into custody will be in jail for a very, very long time.

The Referee should make sure to let the Story Coordinator know what rewards above were granted in the adventure for future campaign consideration.

Appendix 1: Passengers On The Gambit

JANNAR DJIM

Merchant (Broker) 3

Abilities Str 6 (+0), Dex 6 (+0), End 7 (+0), Int 9 (+1), Edu 10 (+1), Soc 8 (+0)

Languages Anglic

Skills Broker 3, Admin 2, Advocate 1, Persuade 1, Soc Sci (Psychology) 1, Diplomat 1, Carouse 1

Possessions comm, TL 13 hand computer

Jannar Djim is a wealthy trader from Mertactor. He is the last surviving member of his family, having never married or had children, so his strict Mertactan upbringing has been softening over the last few years. He favours loud clothing, old technology (he's nostalgic about it) and fine wines. He built himself up from modest beginnings and has very little patience for those who complain about things as if they have no influence on their own lives.

He won't buy or lease trading ships himself, though that would probably be a good move for him; he prefers to hire existing vessels for his dealings, believing there are plenty of struggling ships out there who don't need competition from him. It is his combination of high-finance acumen and salt-of-the-earth humanity that make him both a valuable friend and an exasperating partner.

ALAMEN GRISST

Merchant (Broker) 5

Abilities Str 7 (+0), Dex 7 (+0), End 6 (+0), Int 9 (+1), Edu 9 (+1), Soc 10 (+1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Broker 3, Advocate 2, Persuade 1, Soc Sci (Economics) 1, Diplomat 1, Carouse 1, Gambler 1

Possessions TL 13 hand computer

Alamen Grisst is a wealthy corporate businessman from Mille Falcs. His work for his small trading company, Grisst Enterprises, has done much over the years to solidify trading across the border into District 268. He is a frequent visitor to Glisten and moves in high social circles throughout the region.

Grisst is doing everything he can to ingratiate himself with any Imperial nobility possible. He never married, thinking he might find a young Noble heiress to woo; he has never captained his own ships (he currently runs three free traders and some small craft) as he sees that as a commoner's approach to living. His work seems to be paying off: not long ago noble friends on Glisten succeeded in having him named to the honours list, and hinted that he would soon be elevated to knighthood.

Grisst fancies himself a romantic and dashing figure; he loves to gamble though he is not especially good at it and he often drinks a bit too much when he is winning.

ANA PYRIEM

Citizen (Corporate) 2

Abilities Str 5 (-1), Dex 7 (+0), End 6 (+0), Int 8 (+0), Edu 10 (+1), Soc 8 (+0)

Languages Anglic

Skills Admin 2, Advocate 1, Computers 1, Diplomat 1

Possessions comm, TL 11 hand computer

Ana is a pretty, well-dressed executive assistant of the highest calibre. She expects to become an integral part of Grisst Enterprises, perhaps even running the company, when Grisst accepts his Knighthood and most likely moves to Glisten to join the nobility there. She is from Mille Falcs and says she has no time for personal attachments but she does seem a bit lonely on occasion.

MIKESKA ONGILII

Citizen (Corporate) 4

Abilities Str 5 (-1), Dex 6 (+0), End 7 (+0), Int 9 (+1), Edu 10 (+1), Soc 9 (+1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Advocate 2, Diplomat 2, Carouse 1, Persuade 1, Broker 1, Leadership 1

Possessions comm, TL 9 hand computer

Mikeska Ongilii is a socialite from Egypt in Glisten subsector, a successful attorney who was able to marry into a rich expatriate family from Collace and thus retire from the working life. While her husband attempts to make inroads at Glisten, she is taking advantage of his long Collacean heritage by marrying her daughter into the family of a high-ranking representative of the People Of Collace with whom her husband had many dealings in the past.

Ongilii is somewhat severe, but approachable and a bit of a gossip. She will believe that the assault on *Vindaar's Gambit* was an attempt to kill or kidnap her in order to prevent the marriage she is still negotiating.

ELLEENA ERIOR

Scholar (Physician) 1

Abilities Str 6 (+0), Dex 8 (+0), End 7 (+0), Int 8 (+0), Edu 8 (+0), Soc 8 (+0)

Languages Anglic

Skills Medic 1, Admin 1, Computers 1, Diplomat 1, Phys Sci (Biology) 0

Possessions comm, TL 9 hand computer

Elleena is a young Egyptian who was working her way through medical school when she met Mikeska Ongilii at a fundraiser. Being sympathetic to the young lady's struggle, Ongilii offered to hire her as a personal nurse during her pregnancy and for a short time after, in order for young Erior to save money to complete her education. Erior accepted and is quite happy with the arrangement; in fact she is wondering how she might stay on with Ongilii after her child is born.

Appendix 2: Crew Of The Gambit

CAPTAIN ALVERNON OLICIE

Merchant (Free Trader) 5

Abilities Str 4 (-1), Dex 6 (+0), End 5 (-1), Int 8 (+0), Edu 7 (+0), Soc 8 (+0)

Languages Anglic

Skills Comms 2, Pilot (spaceships) 1, Sensors 1, Steward 1 Computers 1, Admin 1, Astrogation 1

Possessions comm

Alvernon Olicie is of Mertactan descent, of a respected and long-lived family of merchants and traders. He is the third member of his family to serve on the *Vindaar's Gambit* and is only a few months from retirement. He has been quite happy making the Collace run for all these years and is proud of his service and his record as a ship's captain. He has two children, both of whom are serving in the Imperial Navy. His wife died several years ago and when he retires he plans on building a cabin in the hilly forests outside of Mertactor's capitol and planting the flower garden she always wanted.

CHIEF STEWARD GALEANA AVALAR

Merchant (Free Trader) 3

Abilities Str 7 (+0), Dex 8 (+0), End 7 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 8 (+0), Soc 7 (+0)

Languages Anglic

Skills Steward 2, Computers 1, Admin 1, Pilot (small craft) 1, Persuade 1, Gambler 1

Possessions Comm

Pretty, thoughtful and proud, Galeana Avaral is a near-perfect Steward. While demanding of her staff and fellow crew, her drive is based on a real desire to see her ship's passengers have the most enjoyable voyage possible. Her entire family lives and works on Mertactor proper; she leaves many duties to her 2nd Steward when the *Gambit* calls at its home port so she can visit with them as much as possible before her next journey. She is engaged to a chef on Mertactor, who provides her with excellent victuals for the high passengers on *Vindaar's Gambit*.

2ND STEWARD OTTO HUREELEE

Merchant (Free Trader) 2

Abilities Str 8 (+0), Dex 8 (+0), End 7 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 6 (+0), Soc 6 (+0)

Languages Anglic

Skills Steward 1, Computers 1, Vacc Suit 1, Mechanic 1, Zero-G 1, Streetwise 1

Possessions comm, TL 12 vacc suit, blade

The only crewmember on *Vindaar's Gambit* who is not Mertactan, Otto is a native of Collace from a family of low-income maintenance workers. His time spent working with overbearing high passengers and with his proud and seemingly superior crewmates has pushed him to the edge and he joined the RCC as a way of getting past his disillusionment about the people and planets around his homeworld.

3RD STEWARD NEENAH TROMT

Merchant (Free Trader) 2

Abilities Str 6 (+0), Dex 9 (+1), End 7 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 7 (+0), Soc 6 (+0)

Languages Anglic

Skills Steward 1, Computers 1, Persuade 1, Melee (Blade) 1, Comms 1

Possessions comm, blade

Being the only daughter in a family with three boys, Neenah pushes herself extra hard in order to be "taken seriously" by men; she still carries a bit of a chip on her shoulder from all the teasing her brothers gave her growing up. She is developing a bit of a crush on Otto although she knows romances among ship crews rarely work out well.

CHIEF PILOT GAVLAN HARLO

Merchant (Free Trader) 4

Abilities Str 7 (+0), Dex 10 (+1), End 7 (+0), Int 8 (+0), Edu 8 (+0), Soc 6 (+0)

Languages Anglic

Skills Pilot (spacecraft) 2, Sensors 1, Computers 1, Pilot (small craft) 1, Persuade 1, Zero-G 1

Possessions comm

Imagining himself an adventurous hotshot, Gavlan Harlo exhibits the worst behaviour of both arrogant starship pilots and Mertactan pride. No one on the ship can really stand him but he has the Captain's ear so he is tolerated as best as can be.

2ND PILOT EVENDAS ARLIIN

Merchant (Free Trader) 2

Abilities Str 9 (+1), Dex 9 (+1), End 8 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 6 (+0), Soc 5 (-1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Pilot (spacecraft) 1, Pilot (small craft) 1, Vacc Suit 1, Zero-G 1, Sensors 1, Streetwise 1

Possessions comm, TL 12 vacc suit

Light-hearted and easy-going with a self-deprecating sense of humour, Evendas is loved by all; his personality is very un-Mertactan and yet his native brethren would walk through fire for him - except perhaps his immediate boss, Gavlan Harlo, who often gives Evendas ridiculous chores such as polishing the pilot's control couch or oiling the manual controls of the *Vinny*.

NAVIGATOR TREVOR DANTINE

Merchant (Free Trader) 3

Abilities Str 6 (+0), Dex 7 (+0), End 8 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 8 (+0), Soc 6 (+0)

Languages Anglic

Skills Astrogation 2, Sensors 1, Computers 1, Persuade 1, Mechanic 1, Admin 1, Art (Instrument) 1

Possessions comm.

A decent enough individual, Trevor is a musician of some small renown on Mertactor; when off-duty he will keep mainly to his stateroom practising his electric flute; if asked, he can talk for several hours about the musical history of Mertactor and his family without once allowing the listener to speak.

PURSER HELMUT GELDAUN

Merchant (Free Trader) 3

Abilities Str 5 (-1), Dex 6 (+0), End 6 (+0), Int 8 (+0), Edu 8 (+0), Soc 6 (+0)

Languages Anglic

Skills Broker 2, Steward 1, Persuade 1, Comms 1, Admin 1, Advocate 1, Soc Sci (Economics) 0

Possessions comm.

Purser Geldaun is the perfect stereotype: nebbish, penny-pinching bean counter. Captain Olicie hand-picked this man to keep the books on the *Gambit* because he knew this person would never be influenced by anything as base as greed; Helmut lives for the purity of mathematics and a holo-vid in the evening.

MEDIC AGAR STARRETT

Scholar (Physician) 2, Merchant (Free Trader) 1

Abilities Str 6 (+0), Dex 9 (+1), End 7 (+0), Int 9 (+1), Edu 8 (+0), Soc 7 (+0)

Languages Anglic

Skills Medic 2, Computers 1, Persuade 1, Investigate 1, Diplomat 1, Phys Sci (Biology) 1, Steward 1

Possessions comm.

After several years of service in the medical facility of Mertactor Highport, Agar decided to finally strike out into the void and see some other worlds. He is the newest crewmember of the *Gambit* and is still feeling his way around shipboard life.

ENGINEER JONNO GILES

Merchant (Free Trader) 4

Abilities Str 8 (+0), Dex 7 (+0), End 7 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 6 (+0), Soc 5 (-1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Engineer (Jump Drive) 2, Mechanic 2, Engineer (Electronics) 1, Vacc Suit 1

Possessions comm, TL 12 vacc suit

Jonno Giles comes from a long line of Mertactan starship engineers and takes his job very seriously, almost to a fault. A somewhat sombre man, he finds solace in long games of holo-chess.

DRIVE HAND CLARISS VIGNA

Merchant (Free Trader) 2

Abilities Str 7 (+0), Dex 8 (+0), End 9 (+1), Int 7 (+0), Edu 5 (-1), Soc 4 (-1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Engineer (M-Drive) 1, Mechanic 1, Engineer (Life Support) 1, Vacc Suit 1, Gambler 0

Possessions comm, TL: 12 vacc Suit

Clariss is a cute, greasy-faced drive monkey and a good foil to her boss, Engineer Giles. She likes to get some gambling going in the evenings in the crew lounge despite the fact she loses more than she wins.

GUNNER TIVAS LINGULA

Navy (Gunnery) 1, Merchant (Free Trader) 1

Abilities Str 9 (+1) Dex 9 (+1) End 8 Int 7 Edu 7 Soc 5 (-1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Gunnery (Turrets) 1, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1, Zero-G 1, Vacc Suit 1, Mechanic 1, Melee (Unarmed) 0

Possessions comm, gauss pistol (3d6), flak jacket (6)

After a short stint in the Imperial Navy, Tivas left the rigid military life for the steady, easy-going pace of the *Gambit*. His traditional Mertactan family is not pleased with his choice.

Appendix 3: Boarders

BOARDER PILOT

Rogue (Pirate) 2

Abilities Str 7 (+0), Dex 9 (+1), End 7 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 6 (+0), Soc 5 (-1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Pilot (small craft) 1, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1, Zero-G 1, Vacc Suit 1, Streetwise 1, Deception 1

Possessions comm, gauss pistol (3d6), TL 12 vacc suit with magnetic grapples and thruster pack (6)

BOARDER LEADER

Rogue (Pirate) 3

Abilities Str 8 (+0), Dex 9 (+1), End 8 (+0), Int 8 (+0), Edu 7 (+0), Soc 4 (-1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1, Zero-G 1, Vacc Suit 1, Streetwise 1, Deception 1, Stealth 1, Pilot (small craft) 1

Possessions comm, gauss pistol (3d6), TL 12 vacc suit with magnetic grapples and thruster pack (6), smoke grenades (2), magnetic safety cable, hull patch, light shaped explosive charge

BOARDER TEAM LEADER 1

Marine (Star Marine) 1, Rogue (Pirate) 1

Abilities Str 9 (+1), Dex 8 (+0), End 8 (+0), Int 6 (+0), Edu 8 (+0), Soc 5 (-1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Gun Combat (slug pistol) 2, Zero-G 1, Vacc Suit 1, Slug Rifle 1, Explosives 1, Stealth 1, Streetwise 1

Possessions comm, gauss pistol (3d6), TL 12 vacc suit with magnetic grapples and thruster pack (6), smoke grenades (2), magnetic safety cable, hull patch, light shaped explosive charge

BOARDER TEAM LEADER 2

Marine (Star Marine) 1, Rogue (Pirate) 1

Abilities Str 8 (+0), Dex 9 (+1), End 8 (+0), Int 7 (+0), Edu 8 (+0), Soc 4 (-1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Zero-G 2, Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1, Vacc Suit 1, Streetwise 1, Explosives 1, Stealth 1, Deception 1

Possessions comm, gauss pistol (3d6), TL 12 vacc suit with magnetic grapples and thruster pack (6), smoke grenades (2), magnetic safety cable, hull patch, light shaped explosive charge

BOARDER TEAM 1 (2 -4 INDIVIDUALS)

Rogue (Pirate) 2

Abilities Str 7 (+0), Dex 8 (+0), End 7 (+0), Int 6 (+0), Edu 5 (-1), Soc 4 (-1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Gun Combat (slug pistol) 1, Zero-G 1, Streetwise 1, Deception 1, Vacc Suit 0

Possessions comm, gauss pistol (3d6), TL 12 vacc suit with magnetic grapples and thruster pack (6), smoke grenades (2), magnetic safety cable, hull patch, light shaped explosive charge

BOARDER TEAM 2 (2-4 INDIVIDUALS)

Rogue (Pirate) 2

Abilities Str 7 (+0), Dex 7 (+0), End 8 (+0), Int 5 (-1), Edu 5 (-1), Soc 4 (-1)

Languages Anglic

Skills Zero-G 1, Streetwise 1, Deception 1, Vacc Suit 0, Gun Combat 0

Possessions comm, gauss pistol (3d6), TL 12 vacc suit with magnetic grapples and thruster pack (6), smoke grenades (2), magnetic safety cable, hull patch, light shaped explosive charge

Appendix 4: Vindaar's Gambit

Vindaar's Gambit was laid down at Glisten in 999 on behalf of Mertactan trading company Vindaar Shipping and Travel, LIC and was completed on 017-1002. Her maiden voyage was a jump to Egypt, followed by two jump-1's to Mille Falcs and then to Mertactor. The vessel's registration was updated to reflect Mertactor as her home port and the liner began servicing an

emerging cross-border route that included trips rimward to Trexalon and coreward up the main as far as Forine. She's been a lucky ship in this undeveloped and occasionally rough region, having had relatively few scrapes with pirates and the like. She is a favourite of the Mertactan highport, a symbol of the steadfastness and strength of Mertactor and her people.

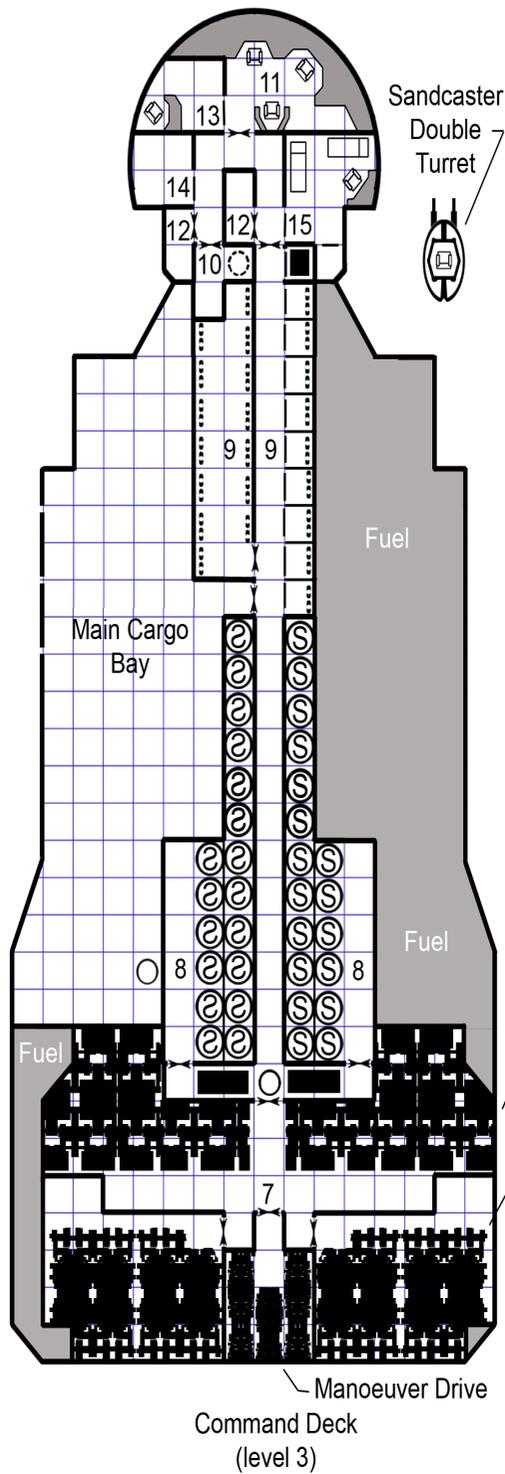


SUBSIDISED LINER, TYPE M

The type M is used to ferry paying passengers from one place to another. Each type M can carry dozens of passengers and their belongings comfortably in several staterooms, but many end up in low-cost berths to get from system to the next.

The normal crew consists of a captain, 2 pilots, navigator, 2 engineers, 1 gunner, purser, medic and 3 stewards. Normally 51 passengers are carried, with 24 in low berths. The subsidised liner is a Technology Level 12 design.

Subsidised Liner			Tons	Price (MCr)
Hull	600	Hull 12 Structure 12 Streamlined		48
Armour	None			4.8
Jump Drive J		Jump 3	50	90
Manoeuvre Drive C		Thrust 1	5	12
Power Plant J		Rating 3	28	72
Bridge			20	3
Computer	Model/2bis	Rating 10 (15 for jump control)		0.24
Electronics	Basic Civilian	DM -2	1	0.05
Weapons	Hardpoint #1	Double Turret (Sandcaster/Sandcaster)	1	1
	Hardpoint #2	Empty	1	
	Hardpoint #3	Empty	1	
	Hardpoint #4	Empty	1	
	Hardpoint #5	Empty	1	
	Hardpoint #6	Empty	1	
Ammunition		20 sandcaster barrels	1	
Fuel	216 tons	One Jump 3 – Four weeks of operation	216	
Cargo	62 tons		62	
36 Staterooms			144	18
	Luxuries 5		5	0.5
24 Low Berths			12	1.2
Extras	Fuel Scoops			1
	Fuel Processor	40 tons per day	2	0.1
	Ship's Boat		30	17.964
	Escape Pods	One per Stateroom	18	3.6
Software	Manoeuvre/0			-
	Library			-
	Intellect	Rating 10		1
	Jump Control/3	Rating 15		-
Maintenance Cost (monthly)				0.0229
Life Support Cost (monthly)				0.0744
Total Tonnage & Cost			600	274.454



1. Passenger Common Area
2. Passenger Stateroom
3. Crew Stateroom
4. Small Cargo Bay (doubles as crew common area)
5. Greeting/ Boarding Area
6. Ship's Boat Berth
7. Engineering
8. Escape Pods
9. Low Berths
10. Sandcaster Barrel Storage and Turret Access
11. Bridge
12. Ship's Locker
13. Captain's Office
14. Purser's Office
15. Sick Bay

