The Tombs of Delios

An introductory *Lancer* oneshot adventure

The player characters are a squad of lancers aboard the Union naval ship *Godavari*, tasked with finding (and, hopefully, rescuing) a missing USB team on the planet Delios, a remote FirstComm-era colonial world. Delios is of interest to the USB as an archaeological curiosity, as the ancient colony is noted in UAD records as having gone dark shortly after its founding.

The USB archeological team assigned to Delios initially reported that there were no survivors in the ruins of the colony, but recently made a shocking breakthrough when they discovered a large number of people preserved in cryo-stasis in ancient tunnels deep beneath the old colony site. Shortly after that report, their signal also went completely dark, and their fate is unknown. With any luck, they're still alive.

Preparation

The Tombs of Delios is a short *Lancer* adventure, designed for you to run in a single session.

Before players start, they should:

- Have at least the free version of the *Lancer* core book
- Create a LL0 character (Comp/Con is a fantastic free character creation tool)
- Familiarize themselves with the basics of play, including skill checks and the various actions they can take in combat
- Stop reading here!

Before you run this game, you should:

- Make sure you have the paid version of the *Lancer* core book. This contains the NPCs you'll need to run the session as well as rules for sitreps
- Read through the rules for running narrative and combat scenes
- Familiarize yourself with this adventure
- If you're playing online, set up a virtual tabletop of your choice – common options are Roll20, Foundry, or Owlbear Rodeo – with a map for combat
- The map should be set up for an Extraction sitrep (*Lancer*, p. 270): around 20 spaces between Extraction zone and Objective, with a *lot* of cover between

Overview

Unfortunately for the USB team, the report of the cryo-preserved colonists leaked to outside interests. Shortly afterwards they were ambushed by Wildfire Company, a squad of mercenaries hired by Smith-Shimano Corpro (SSC, see *Lancer* p. 398), who seek to secure the secrets of the frozen colonists for the corpro-state.

Most of the USB team has gone to ground in the colony ruins, but after an initial firefight the mercenary team managed to capture the lead USB scientist, Dr Elizabeth Lars, who so far has solidly refused to give them the information they require.

The mission is a race against the clock. The USB team is running out of supplies and can't stay hidden forever. Meanwhile the SSC merc squad is trying to either get Dr Lars to cooperate, or failing that, to brute force their way in – either way it's only a matter of time before they succeed.

The mission consists of three scenes: a briefing, scouting the colony ruins, and a combat against the mercenaries.

Beat 1: A Brief Descent

The adventure begins with the player characters making the descent to the surface of Delios, during which they are being briefed by their commanding officer, Captain Colville. The descent through Delios' thin atmosphere is a little turbulent but ultimately uneventful.

The PCs are already mounted up in their mechs and ready to move out immediately upon landing. Give each player a chance to introduce and describe their character, and also their mech!

During the briefing, Colville provides the following information:

- Long range scans confirmed an active transponder with an unknown ident somewhere in the ruined colony site. Hopefully this means someone is alive down there
- The transponder deactivated shortly after the *Godavari* arrived in orbit. It's not clear if it ran out of power or if someone shut it off
- The PCs are being sent to the surface with mechs to scout out the area
- Their primary mission is to locate the USB team – and if they are still alive, secure their position for evac

- The dropship does not have its own weapons and won't hang around in potentially-hostile territory. It will dust off immediately after deploying the PCs and shelter somewhere nearby; the ship will remain in contact via radio but cannot help directly
- The PCs will be trusted to make judgment calls on the ground, but should be careful if they run into trouble – not only are they responsible for getting the scientists out safely, there are also potentially many more lives at stake, frozen somewhere below the colony

The PCs have an opportunity to ask questions here (both in and out of character!) and make any last minute preparations for deployment.

Beat 2: The Colony Ruins

The dropship takes off, leaving the PCs at the edge of what must once have been an ancient, FirstComm-era colony. It has clearly been a considerable amount of time since anyone lived here; most of the structures have crumbled and are in ruins.

The PCs' first major objective is to find any trace of the USB team. To do so, they must collectively attempt a Skill Challenge (see *Lancer*, p.47). Success in the skill challenge means they find the USB team quickly and without complications. Failure means they find the USB team after some time searching, but draw attention to themselves in the process – causing them to come under attack from distant artillery.

Many skill triggers can be used to help find the USB team. Encourage your PCs to use their triggers creatively, and roleplay their success or failure! Some examples of approaches the PCs might take:

- Investigate or Spot can help find signs of recent activity by the team
- Assault or Survive might pick up traces of weapons fire or mech tracks
- Act Unseen or Unheard or Get Somewhere Quickly might be used to traverse the dangerous, crumbling ruins

The PCs can also use their backgrounds and pilot gear for Accuracy on these checks.

When the PCs find the USB team, they are holed up in a prefab housing block that is a little more intact than its neighbors - an old version of the GMS logo is still visible on its dilapidated surface. Access to the block is hampered by rubble, but dismounted pilots can gain access without issue.

If the PCs succeeded at the skill challenge, the team will be in good health and have scavenged supplies that might help the PCs in the upcoming combat. Each player may choose one of the following reserves (see *Lancer*, p.51):

- Ammo
- Extra Repairs
- Deployable Shield
- Smart Ammo

If the PCs failed the skill challenge, missile fire begins to rain down as they locate the USB team. This causes injuries and forces the team to abandon any supplies they might have gathered, as the PCs must relocate them to somewhere more secure.

In either case, the USB team will give the PCs the following information:

- The team came under attack by what seemed to be a mercenary force using mechs, with an IFF signal that identified them as Wildfire Company
- They aren't sure why the mercenaries are here. They assume it's related to their recent discovery
- There was a firefight as members of the team attempted to escape through the ruins, defending themselves with small arms
- Most of the team escaped, but the team leader (Dr Elizabeth Lars) was captured
- Unfortunately the rapid escape meant they had to abandon their omnihook so have been unable to contact anyone offworld for help
- They can give the location of their former base, which the mercenaries now control (if the PCs failed the previous skill check, this is also the approximate source of the artillery fire)
- All of the data the team has gathered on the people in cryo-storage is back at the base, stored on encrypted servers. They are confident that those people were the former colonists, and at least some of them are still alive
- This is very unusual! Stasis usually only keeps people alive for around a century
- The team were waiting approval from higher-ups at the USB before even attempting to open any of the pods. There are a number of scientific and ethical issues to consider in doing so

With most of the team secured, the PCs could choose to call in the dropship now, but Dr Lars is still missing and it is unclear what the mercenaries want with the frozen colonists. To complete their mission, the PCs will have to press on and confront the mercenaries.

Combat: Fight Fire With Fire

The PCs make for the base, and are able to pick up activity (including mech signatures) on their scanners. Inside, mercenaries in fatigues point weapons at a lab-coated woman, who is being forced to work at a terminal. As the PCs enter, they are immediately fired upon; mercenaries scramble towards their mechs and begin to mount up, and the captive scientist is dragged to the back. The PCs have the advantage, but it won't last – it's only a matter of time before they are overwhelmed by reinforcements.

This is an **Extraction** sitrep (see *Lancer*, p. 270). The objective in this case is Dr Elizabeth Lars, a size ½ human. Before you begin the sitrep, take a moment to note the rules for how the objective moves and read them out explicitly to your players – they are **very** important!

Enemy Forces - Wildfire Company

Players	Callsign	NPC Type	Optionals
3+	"Brick"	Veteran Bastion	Fearless Defender, Vet. (Hull), Legendary
	"Chopper"	Elite Cataphract	Charge, Electrified Lasso
	"Dead Meat"	Rainmaker	Hound Missiles
	"Firefly"	Support	Remote Cloud
	"Sphinx"	Witch	Chain
4+	"Titan"	Veteran Bastion	Fearless Defender, Vet. (Hull), Legendary
	"Sensible"	Cataphract	Charge
	"Warden"	Support	Remote Cloud
5+	"Lucky"	Veteran Bastion	Fearless Defender, Vet. (Hull), Legendary
	"Sunburn"	Rainmaker	Hound Missiles
	"Ghost"	Witch	Chain

Running the Combat

At the start of each turn when you deploy NPCs as reinforcements, tell your players the NPC type and template of each one. Be open with information about their weapons and systems, with the exception of their Optional systems – to find those out, the PCs need to use the Scan action or encounter their effects directly.

When the combat begins, deploy your first reinforcements as close to the objective as you can, and make the PCs come to you. Prioritize deploying in groups, as you get the most benefit out of your NPCs' systems and traits when they are close to each other. Remember that the objective of this combat is not to destroy the PCs' mechs, but to prevent Dr Lars from being extracted. Moving an NPC next to her will stop her from being moved by the PCs, until they push that NPC away or destroy it.

Similarly, the PCs will need to focus on the objective: this is a tough fight and simply destroying the mercenaries is not enough on its own to secure victory – the rest of Wildfire Company are inbound and the PCs are running out of time. Moving across the whole map and back can be difficult given the limited time and opposition. It is often best for the faster members of the team to push forward and secure the objective, while other members provide cover or secure their retreat. Dr Lars and all PCs need to extract by the end of round 10 regardless of how many NPCs are left on the map, or else the PCs will be overrun and any remaining PCs captured.

Wrapping Up

If the PCs win, the mercenaries withdraw, having lost their best chance to access the cryo-tombs below the city. The PCs are able to extract the USB team safely, along with their data. From captured mercenary pilots or logs from their destroyed mechs, they will be able to determine that Wildfire Company were hired by SSC to recover data on the frozen colonists, though the reasons why remain a mystery.

If the PCs lose, they are forced to retreat before they can properly secure Dr Lars, who is forced to give up the secrets of the USB research data. Having encountered Union forces the mercenaries will still retreat and leave the planet, but not before securing their prize and taking Dr Lars with them. Captured PCs may be able to escape, and the PCs may be able to discover who the mercenaries were working for after the fact, but by that point it is too late to stop them delivering the data to SSC.

The one-shot ends here! If you choose to expand the narrative into an ongoing story, the PCs will get to increase their license level after this mission – and perhaps continue to explore the mystery of the frozen colonists, and discover what Smith-Shimano might want with them.

Credits

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