



# PIONEERS

**Space Probes**

**Orbital Colonies**

**And the End of  
All that Is**

**Spindrift Games**

**ILLUMINATED**  
by LUMEN 

# PIONEERS

"We named 'em *Pioneers* after the old NASA space probes. Someone here in the lab started calling 'em *Pions* as a cutesy nickname, and it stuck."

*An Oral History of the 2320-2324 Pioneer War*

In **PIONEERS**, you fight to liberate the Solar System from the Pions, cybernetic beings who have already conquered the Earth and much of the Solar System and nuked the Moon. You know, as one does.

**PIONEERS** is a tabletop roleplaying game for 3-6 players. One player takes on the role of **Mission Control** (or, *the MC* for short) and controls **the Pions** – humanity's prodigal, digital children who have returned from the depths of space with technology far beyond that of 24th Century Earth.

The each of other players creates a **Survivor** who is part of the **Rag-Tag Fugitive Resistance** striving to free the Solar System from the crushing **Occupation**.

## Saving the Worlds

As member of the Resistance, your Survivor is part of a small cell of 2 to 5 freedom fighters that undertake missions, called **Ops**, that invariably involve blowing up lots and lots of murderous robots – on Earth, in space, or on one of the **Twelve Colonies of Man** scattered across the conquered Solar System.

If you survive a deadly Op, the most you can hope for is a free drink in one of the underground speak-easies frequented by the Resistance fighters; if you fail, the best you'll get is one of those drinks lifted in honor of your sacrifice.

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# Three Attributes

"In retrospect, putting a map showing how to get back to Earth on those old-fashioned space probes probably wasn't the smartest idea."

*An Oral History of the 2320-2324 Pioneer War*

Your Survivor has three abilities: **Thrust**, **Gyro**, and **Telemetry**.

You use **Thrust** for direct actions – to solve problems that are best solved by an application of force, whether physical or mental.

**Gyro** is all about speed and balance. If it has to be done quickly, gracefully, or both, then you're going to make a Gyro roll.

**Telemetry** covers anything requiring knowledge, whether that's the specialized knowledge of a hacker or surgeon, or just general intelligence about the enemy's movement.

## RESOURCE POOLS

In addition, you have three resource pools, **Health**, **Impulse**, and **Kit**. At the start of each Op, your resource pools are set to their maximum value; while the exact value will go up or down during the Op, you can't go over your maximum value.

**Health** tells you how much Harm your Survivor can take before being KIA; each hit by the enemy usually does 1 to 3 Harm.

**Impulse** is your energy, your drive, your momentum. Your class gives you Talents that you can activate using Impulse.

**Kit** is an abstract measure of how much gear you have. At the beginning of each Op, you adjust your inventory by expending points from your Kit; you can also spend Kit in the field, to represent items that you had on you but didn't want to slow the game down with time-consuming inventory tracking.

## ROLLING THE DICE

When you do an action, either in a fight or not, state which attribute you're using, then roll a number of six-sided dice equal to your score in that attribute. Check the highest number you rolled on one die against the following table:

---

### On a...

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1-2 | The action <b>fails</b> and there's a <b>consequence</b> .     |
| 3-4 | The action <b>succeeds</b> but there's a <b>complication</b> . |
| 5-6 | The action <b>succeeds</b> with <b>no problems</b> .           |

# Survivor Creation

Creating a Survivor is dirt simple. There are just five steps, then you're done.

You can fill in the fields on the Survivor Record, which is a sheet et for recording your character's details.

- 1. [Pick a Class.](#) (p. 4)
- 2. [Choose Your Home Colony.](#) (p. 7)
- 3. [Grab your Gear.](#) (p. 8)
- 4. [Snag a ship.](#) (p. 20)
- 5. Come up with a Name.

Instructions for playing the MC [come later in the rules.](#)

# Class

Your **Class** determines your attributes and pools, your talents, and your starting equipment. Pick a class from this list:

- Apollo** You're big, strong, and tough in a fight.
- Gemini** You're smart, clever, and good with technology.
- Mercury** You're fast, agile, and hard to pin down.
- Soyuz** You're a jack-of-all-trades and born leader.

The table below lists the attributes and pools for each class.

| Class   | Thrust | Gyro | Telemetry | Health | Impulse | Kit |
|---------|--------|------|-----------|--------|---------|-----|
| Apollo  | 3      | 1    | 2         | 8      | 4       | 3   |
| Gemini  | 1      | 2    | 3         | 6      | 3       | 6   |
| Mercury | 1      | 3    | 2         | 4      | 7       | 4   |
| Soyuz   | 2      | 2    | 2         | 5      | 5       | 5   |



# Apollo

| Thrust | Gyro | Telemetry | Health | Impulse | Kit |
|--------|------|-----------|--------|---------|-----|
| 3      | 1    | 2         | 8      | 4       | 3   |

*What you lack in subtlety, you make up in brute force.*

If you can't come up with a name, you can roll a die.

**Name** 1 Lunk, 2 Heavy, 3 Tor, 4 Stonewall, 5 Tiny, 6 Bull

## STARTING GEAR

**Armor** 1-4 Assault Armor, 5-6 Tactical Vest

**Weapon** 1-2 Pulse Rifle, 3-4 Rocket Launcher, 5-6 Slug Rifle

**Weapon** 1-2 Frag Grenade, 3-4 Laser Grenade, 5-6 Pulse Grenade

**Other Gear** 1-4 Med Patch (p. 9), 5-6 Toolkit

**Ship** 1-2 Mining Rig, 3-4 Ore Hauler, 5-6 Shuttle

Spend 1 Kit per list to pick instead of taking what you rolled.

## APOLLO TALENTS

**Shrug It Off** Spend 1 Impulse to ignore 1 helping of Harm.

**Fire in the Hole** Spend 1 Impulse to ignore your weapons' Friendly-Fire tags this Fight.

**Rock 'n Roll** Spend 1 Kit to do +1 damage with Autofire weapons this Fight.

**I Packed a Spare** Spend 1 Kit to ignore your weapons' Reload and Single-Use tags this Fight.

## SHIP TALENT

**Gunner** Spend 1 Impulse to do +1 Ship-Harm on a hit.

# Gemini

| Thrust | Gyro | Telemetry | Health | Impulse | Kit |
|--------|------|-----------|--------|---------|-----|
| 1      | 2    | 3         | 6      | 3       | 6   |

*Why are things so heavy in the future? Is there a problem with the Earth's gravitational pull?*

If you can't come up with a name, you can roll a die.

**Name** 1 Quark, 2 Doc, 3 Rain, 4 The Prof, 5 Specs, Tech

## STARTING GEAR

**Armor** 1-4 Energy Siphon, Assault Armor

**Weapon** 1-4 Sniper Rifle, 5-6 Grenade Mortar

**Weapon** 1-4 Taser Pistol, 5-6 Pulse Pistol

**Other Gear** 1-4 Radio, 5-6 Med Patch (p. 9)

**Ship** 1-2 Comms Relay, 3-4 Liquid-Nitrogen Tanker, 5-6 Repair Pod

Spend 1 Kit per list to pick instead of taking what you rolled.

## GEMINI TALENTS

**Electronic Countermeasures** Spend 1 Kit to shut down 1 Pion until the end of the Fight.

**Salvage Ops** Spend 1 Impulse to gain 1 Kit from a dead Pion.

**Weapon Modifications** Spend 1 Kit to give your weapon Autofire, Burn, EMP, Exploding, Piercing, or Shock for this Fight.

**Armorer** Spend 1 Kit to fully repair any Armor.

## SHIP TALENT

**Damage Control** Spend 1 Kit to repair 1 Ship-Health.

# Mercury

| Thrust | Gyro | Telemetry | Health | Impulse | Kit |
|--------|------|-----------|--------|---------|-----|
| 1      | 3    | 2         | 4      | 7       | 4   |

*It's time to buzz the tower.*

If you can't come up with a name, you can roll a die.

**Name** 1 Slick, 2 Cheyn, 3 Maverick, 4 Ace, 5 Charm, 6 Recon

## STARTING GEAR

**Armor** 1-4 Stealthsuit, 5-6 Energy Siphon

**Weapon** 1-2 two Laser Pistols, 3-4 two Slug Pistols, 5-6 one Pulse Pistol and one Taser Pistol

**Weapon** 1-4 Bow, 5-6 Flamethrower

**Other Gear** 1-4 Toolkit, 5-6 Med Patch (p. 9)

**Ship** 1-2 Mining Rig, 3-4 Racing Yacht, 5-6 Solar Glider

Spend 1 Kit per list to pick instead of taking what you rolled.

## MERCURY TALENTS

**Moving Target** Spend 1 Impulse to instantly change your Range Band.

**Rapid Fire** Spend 1 Impulse to make another attack at -1 Harm.

**Gun-Kata** Spend 1 Kit to use two Pistols in one attack, adding the Harm together.

**Dive for Cover** Spend 1 Impulse to ignore Harm from an AOE, Autofire, or Exploding attack.

## SHIP TALENT

**Ace Pilot** Spend 1 Impulse to add +1 to a ship roll.

# Soyuz

| Thrust | Gyro | Telemetry | Health | Impulse | Kit |
|--------|------|-----------|--------|---------|-----|
| 2      | 2    | 2         | 5      | 5       | 5   |

*You're everyone's second-best friend.*

If you can't come up with a name, you can roll a die.

**Name** 1 Sarge, 2 Trace, 3 Alyn, 4 RJ, 5 Cap, 6 Smokey

## STARTING GEAR

**Armor** 1-4 Tactical Vest, 5-6 Stealthsuit

**Weapon** 1-4 SMG, 5-6 Autolaser

**Weapon** 1-4 Slug Pistol, 5-6 Pulse Pistol

**Other Gear** 1-4 2 Med Patches (p. 9), 5-6 Long-Range Radio

**Ship** 1-2 Racing Yacht, 3-4 Repair Pod, 5-6 Shuttle

Spend 1 Kit per list to pick instead of taking what you rolled.

## SOYUZ TALENTS

**Adaptable** Spend 1 Health, Impulse or Kit to add +1 Impulse, Kit, or Health.

**Resupply** Spend 1 Kit to replenish anyone else's Kit total.

**Rousing Pep Talk** Spend 1 Impulse to replenish anyone else's Impulse total.

**Field Medic** Spend 1 Kit to replenish anyone else's Health total.

## SHIP TALENT

**Fleet Tactics** Spend 1 Impulse to give everyone +1 on their next ship roll.

# Colonial Origin

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We created the Pions. We sent them before us, and followed them to space. We gave them life; they gave us the planets. We gave them a galaxy to explore. We never imagined they would want to return.

*Introduction to Earthfall: The Roots of the Pion War*

In the 24th Century, humanity has long since colonized the Solar System, building both surface bases on inhospitable planets and moons, and orbiting colonies above them.

Choose one of the following origins for your Survivor, and note it on your Survivor Record.

**Callistoan** You're from Jupiter's moon Callisto. +1 *Ship-Telemetry on Liquid-Hydrogen Tankers*.

**Cererean** You're from Ceres, in the Asteroid Belt. +1 *Ship-Gyro on Mining Rigs*.

**Cyntherean** You're from Venus. +1 *Ship-Thrust on Racing Yachts*.

**Enceladan** You're from Saturn's moon Enceladus. +1 *Ship-Gyro on Shuttles*.

**Eridian** You're from Eris. +1 *Ship-Gyro on Ore Haulers*.

**European** You're from Jupiter's moon Europa. +1 *Ship-Telemetry on Shuttles*.

**Ganymedean** You're from Jupiter's moon Ganymede. +1 *Ship-Telemetry on Ore Haulers*.

**Granger** You're from O'Neill Station in the L5 point. +1 *Ship-Gyro on Repair Pods*.

**Hermean** You're from Mercury. +1 *Ship-Gyro on Solar Gliders*.

**Leo** You're from an orbital colony in Low Earth Orbit. +1 *Ship-Thrust on Comms Relays*.

**Martian** You're from Mars. +1 *Ship-Health on any ship*.

**Plutonian** You're from Pluto. +1 *Ship-Telemetry on Comms Relays*.

**Selenite** You're from Luna, Earth's moon. +1 *Ship-Gyro on Racing Yachts*.

**Tellurian** You're from Earth. *Start each operation with +1 Kit above your maximum*.

**Titanian** You're from Saturn's moon Titan. +1 *Ship-Telemetry on Mining Rigs*.

**Uranian** You're from Oberon or one of the colonies on Uranus's moons. +1 *Ship-Thrust on Liquid-Hydrogen Tankers*.

# Gear

When you first create your Survivor, you're given a suit of armor and two or three weapons, as shown on the page for your class.

If you don't like the results you rolled, you can spend one Kit before your mission to change those to another option on your list.

After each Op you have the option to spend 1 Kit each to change your armor or weapon for any others, including those that aren't on your starting gear list.

## ARMOR

Armor is *ablative*, meaning that when it protects you, it becomes weaker. A new suit of armor starts out with a full set of charges, and you can repair it between Ops to reset those charges to their maximum values.

**Assault Armor** Ignore 1 Harm per attack (6 charges)

**Energy Siphon** Ignore Burn, Pulse, or Shock Harm (3 charges)

**Stealthsuit** Ignore Harm from *far* sources (3 charges)

**Tactical Vest** Ignore Harm from *close* sources (3 charges)

**Vacsuit** You don't get KIA if your ship is destroyed (1 charge)

## WEAPONS

Each weapon lists the ranges at which it can be used – *close*, *mid*, and *far* – as well as the damage and any Weapon Tags (see below).

**Autolaser** *mid* Harm 2, Autofire, Burn

**Autorifle** *mid* Harm 1, Autofire, Heavy

**Bow** *mid*, *far* Harm 1, Reload

**Flamethrower** *close* Harm 2, AOE, Burn

**Frag Grenade** *close* Harm 1, Exploding, Friendly-Fire, Single-Use

**Grenade Mortar** *mid* Harm 3, Exploding, Reload, Tactical

**Laser Grenade** *close* Harm 1, AOE, Burn, Friendly-Fire, Single-Use

**Laser Pistol** *close* Harm 1, Handgun, Burn

**Laser Rifle** *mid*, *far* Harm 2, Burn

**Pulse Grenade** *close* Harm 1, AOE, EMP, Friendly-Fire, Single-Use

**Pulse Pistol** *close* Harm 1, EMP, Handgun

**Pulse Rifle** *mid* Harm 2, EMP, Heavy

**Rocket Launcher** *mid* Harm 3, Exploding, Heavy, Reload

**SMG** *close*, *mid* Harm 1, Autofire

**Shotgun** *close* Harm 2

**Slug Pistol** *close* Harm 1, Handgun

**Slug Rifle** *mid*, *far* Harm 2, Heavy

**Sniper Rifle** *far* Harm 2, Scope, Tactical

**Taser Pistol** *close* Harm 1, Handgun, Shock



## WEAPON TAGS

These tags apply to both personal weaponry and weapons on spacecraft (p. 20).

**AOE** Affects multiple targets.

**Autofire** Can hit multiple targets.

**Burn** Does burn damage.

**EMP** Does pulse damage.

**Exploding** Does explosive damage against multiple targets.

**Friendly Fire** Targets allies in the range band.

**Handgun** +1 Harm when fired with Gyro.

**Heavy** +1 Harm when fired with Thrust.

**Piercing** Ignores Resist.

**Reload** Sometimes requires reloading.

**Scope** Does +1 Harm if you remain stationary when firing.

**Self-Destructive** Damages wielder.

**Single-Use** You can only use this weapon once.

**Shock** Does shock damage.

**Tactical** Does +1 Harm when fired with Telemetry.

## OTHER ITEMS

**PIONEERS** isn't a subtle game. You get a mission, go in, kill robots, and get out. There's not a lot of room for the niceties – your Survivors are Resistance freedom fighters constantly on the run. There's not a need for specialized equipment. We assume your Survivor has the basics to do their jobs:

### Clothes and a Backpack

**A Toolkit** for basic repairs

**Water/Rations** dried "astronaut food"

**A Map** of the mission area

If you need anything else, you can spend 1 Kit before or during the mission to say you brought it with you.

### Med Patch

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Med patches are one-shot sources of Health that are in high demand but limited quantities among the Resistance.

When they take their turn, a Survivor can use one on themselves or on another Survivor – this doesn't use up their opportunity to attack during a turn, although they can only use one Med Patch each turn.

A Med Patch heals 1 Health and then is used up.

# Fights

"I fuckin' hate these goddamn space probes. 'Explore the universe and report back' - fuck that, does us no damn good down here on planet Earth. Earth first, always."

*An Oral History of the 2320-2324 Pioneer War*

**PIONEERS** is a game of violent resistance to the Occupation, so of course violence is likely to ensue. We call each instance of that a **Fight**.

In a fight, the players and the MC alternate turns – each of the players gets to have their Survivor do something, and then the MC takes a turn for the Pions.

## RANGE BANDS

Unlike some tabletop RPGs, **PIONEERS** is not concerned with exact position and distance; instead, participants in a fight are classified as being in *close*, *mid*, or *far* range, relative to the other combatants. This affects the effectiveness of most weapons and can interact with class's Talents.

## PLAYER TURNS

On the the players' turn, they can act in whatever order they like, until every player has had to chance to act.

When it's your turn, you can do any or all of these:

1. **Change your Range Band** by one – *close* to *mid*, *mid* to *close* or *far*, or *far* to *mid*. (You can't jump from *close* to *far* or vice versa.)
2. **Make an Attack** against one of the Pions.
3. **Use Your Talents** by paying a cost from the appropriate pool. You can use as many Talents as you wish during your turn, but you can only activate each Talent once during that turn.
4. **Use an Object** if you've picked up something interesting along the way or are carrying a [med patch](#) (p. 9).

## ATTACKING

To attack, choose which weapon you're using and which attribute you're using for the attack – *Thrust* for a direct attack, *Gyro* for quick strikes or feints, and *Telemetry* for a steady, aimed attack – and pick your targets.

Roll a number of dice (d6s) equal to your score in the attribute, then compare the highest die to the total.

On a **5 or 6**, you hit your target and do damage equal to the Harm rating of your weapon.

If the high score is a **3 or 4**, you still do the same Harm, but there's also a *Complication*, which means the MC gets to have the Pions do something – usually doing Harm to your Health.

If you didn't roll higher than a **1 or 2**, then you failed to Harm your target, and the MC can make a move for the Pions.

### Doing Harm

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When you successfully hit a Pion with a weapon, you do Harm equal to the weapon's Harm score, plus other modifiers such as the weapon's tags.

Most weapons do *untyped Harm*, meaning it's not some energy type. Weapons with specific tags do *burn*, *exploding*, *pulse* or *shock* Harm.

If a target has a **Resist** tag against a type of harm, they take 1 less point of Harm from the attack. Conversely, if they have a **Vulnerability** to that type of harm, they take an extra 1 point of Harm.

Each Pion is resistant and vulnerable to different types of attacks, so it pays to switch up your tactics during a fight as you discover how it reacts to each.

## THE MC'S TURN

During the MC's turn, they can do any or all of these:

1. **Change the Range Band** for some or all of the Pions, relative to the Survivors.
2. Make a **Big Change** in the fight.
3. Have the **Pions make moves**.
4. Have the **Pions counter-attack**.

At the end of the MC's turn, two things happen:

1. **The MC generates Drops** if any Pions were killed since the end of their last turn.
2. **Check on dying characters**.

### Big Changes

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A Big Change means that the battle is shifting in some way – it might be that the Pions retreat to a secured location. It could be that a new, larger model of Pion arrives. The environment could be working against the Survivors – barriers slamming down, hatches opening to space, a rumbling geiser erupts.

The idea is not to undo the players' hard-earned victories but to change things up so that their tactics evolve.

## Pion Moves

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Each model of Pion has three “moves” listed that describe their usual tactics in battle. These aren’t just methods of attack but give a specific feel to each type of Pion – playing to these standard moves rewards the players for learning what each does, while subverting the moves can be a Big Change itself.

## Pion Counter-Attacks

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Usually, the MC doesn’t need to specifically have the Pions attack; complications rolled by the players are usually enough to keep the flow of damage in both directions. However, a concentrated counter-attack could be the Big Change that the MC chooses during their turn.

When this happens, the MC describes the type of attack or attacks used by each enemy, and the players can describe how their Survivor is avoiding the Harm. They roll the appropriate number of dice and check the high number as always; on a 5 or 6, they escape taking any Harm; 3 or 4 they take Harm equal to half the Pion’s Harm rating; and 1 or 2 they take the full amount of Harm.

## Drops

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At the end of the MC’s turn, they one die 1d6 for each enemy that died since the end of the MC’s last turn, and check this table.

| Roll | Pool       | Example  |
|------|------------|--|
| 1-2  | +1 Health  | Defeating the Pion gave a quick opportunity to bandage wounds. |
| 3-4  | +1 Impulse | The rush of victory is invigorating.                           |
| 5-6  | +1 Kit     | Scraps of Pions can be used for a variety of purposes.         |

The players can then decide among themselves who will claim each drop. No player can exceed their maximum in a pool.`

# Death and Dying

**PIONEERS** isn't, broadly speaking, a happy game where the Survivors triumph and a parade is thrown in their honor. Instead, human civilization is on the brink of destruction and the Survivors' actions can only delay an end that seems inevitable. The spectre of death hangs over each Survivor and many are haunted by what they've seen and done.

When a Survivor is reduced to 0 Health, they're **Taken Out** of this fight and don't get to act during the Survivors' Turn step of the fight. This lasts as long as they are at 0 Health.

At the **end of the MC's turn**, each player whose Survivor is at 0 Health rolls a die and checks the following table. If another Survivor gave first aid to the dying Survivor during their previous turn, they can roll a die as well, and the Survivor uses the best value of any die rolled.

| Roll | Result                                |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| 1-2  | Too late; they're <b>Dead</b>         |
| 3-5  | No change                             |
| 6    | Miraculous recovery! <b>+1 Health</b> |

The Death roll happens *after* the Drops get distributed; if a Survivor who is at 0 Health claims a +1 Health Drop, they're no longer dying when it's time for Death rolls.

# The Solar System

... WILL REPEAT ON THIS FREQUENCY.  
BROADCASTING ON UNITED COLONIES  
EMERGENCY RADIO BAND 143.625 MHZ.  
MAJOR ATTACK ON PLANET EARTH AND  
ALL LEO ORBITAL HABITATS BY  
UNKNOWN FORCE UNDERWAY. GTSRKO IS  
OFFLINE. 文昌航天发射 IS OFFLINE. ALL  
COMMS ANALOG VOICE ONLY. UPDATES  
TO BE BROADCAST IN 300 SECO – OH  
DEAR GOD ABOVE ALDRINPORT IS GONE,  
THEY BROKE THE MOON, THEY BRO–

*Transcript of emergency broadcast, unknown speaker. June  
19 2320*

By the first part of the 24th Century, mankind has left their home planet of Earth and spread throughout the Solar System.

The first surface colonies on the Moon and Mars were soon joined by orbital colonies in long, rotating spheres or wide, circling toruses, housing up to several million people. Even more remote settlements were built in asteroids or buried into the surface of terrestrial planets.

Beginning with Mars and then Ceres, some colonies were granted independence, allowing them to function as the equivalent of national governments. The costly and asymmetrical Colonial War of the 2270s granted independence to all human colonies outside of the Earth's orbit.

## LOCATION TAGS

These are tags that apply to locations within the Solar System that can be used to give MCs and players an idea as to what any particular planet or satellite is like, as well as the level of Pion influence.

For more information on locations in the Solar System, including photographs or artists' renderings, check out [NASA's web site \(p. 0\)](#)! Apart from being set 300 years in the future and occupied by humans and killer robots, the Solar System of **PIONEERS** is the same Solar System we inhabit today.

**Atmosphere** The location has a breathable atmosphere.

**Blockade** Currently blockaded by the Pions.

**Cold** It's too cold for a human to survive without protection.

**Colony** Recognized as an independent colony.

**Farming** Farming is a major industry.

**High-G** The gravity is relatively high.

**Hot** It's too hot for a human to survive without protection.

**Ice** Frozen water can be found at this location.

**Life** This location has native life forms.

**Low-G** The gravity is relatively low.

**Manufacturing** The manufacture of goods is a major industry.

**Mining** Mining of metals is a major industry.

**Occupation** Under military occupation by Pion forces.

**Orbit** At least one orbital settlement exists.

**Prison** The location has at least one penal colony.

**Siege** Currently besieged by Pion forces.

**Spaceport** Facilities for spacecraft landing and launching.

**Surface** At least one surface settlement exists.

**Underground** At least one underground settlement exists.

**Volcanos** The location has active volcanos.

**Water** Liquid water can be found at this location.



## EARTH ORBIT

Earth is home to the vast majority of the human race, and is surrounded by large orbital colonies in Low Earth Orbit used for farming.

Luna is the second most populated colony and is primarily technological workers. It's also the communications hub of the Solar System ... or at least, it *was*, until key stations were struck by Pion nuclear weapons.

Located in the La Grange L5 point, O'Neill Station is the largest orbital colony in the Solar System. McKendree Station, O'Neill's sister station, was cataclysmically destroyed in 2150 in the largest space disaster in human history – with over 2 million humans dying instantly.

**Earth** Maximum Population, Atmosphere, Blockade, Farming, Ice, High-G, Life, Manufacturing, Occupation, Orbit, Spaceport, Surface, Underground, Volcanos, Water

**Luna** High Population, Colony, Low-G, Mining, Siege, Spaceport, Surface, Underground

**O'Neill Station** Medium Population, Atmosphere, Farming, High-G, Occupation, Spaceport

## INNER PLANETS

Mercury is a very hot planet on the side facing the sun, and a very cold planet on the side facing away from the sun. Low-scale mining takes place there, plus solar batteries store photonic energy for shipment throughout the Solar System.

Venus has floating cloud cities occupied by the wealthy above, and gas miners on the lower decks. The atmosphere remains poisonous to human lungs, but extensive glass walls give the Venusian colonies the appearance of domed cities.

Mars is the most populous and oldest colony in the Solar System. Its two moons are known for their shipbuilding, although both have been seized by the Pions and are being refitted to produce Pion craft instead.

Ceres is the largest and most populous planetoid in the asteroid belt. Once the site of a major mining operation, the asteroid is honeycombed with occupied tunnels and caverns. Ceres serves as the capital of the Asteroid Belt and prior to the coming of the Pions was a major transit port between the Inner Planets and the Outer Planets.

**Mercury** Low Population, Bright, Cold, Colony, Hot, Mining, Orbit, Siege, Surface, Underground

**Venus** Medium Population, Colony, High-G, Hot, Life, Mining, Occupation, Orbit, Spaceport, Surface

**Mars** High Population, Cold, Colony, Ice, Manufacturing, Mining, Occupation, Orbit, Spaceport, Surface, Underground

**Ceres** Low Population, Blockade, Cold, Colony, Ice, Low-G, Mining, Spaceport, Underground

## JUPITER

After Earth and Mars, Jupiter is the most populated planetary system in the Solar System. No one dwells on the gas giant, of course, but all but one of Jupiter's largest moons are home to Earth colonies.

Europa is known for the indigenous life forms in its chilly seas – a primitive form of life akin to brine shrimp – that was the source of the first extraterrestrial life found by humans. Europa is currently under a crushing Pion blockade, but to date, they have attempted no landings there.

Cleomestra Station orbits Ganymede, the largest moon in the Solar System; the Station is the second most distant orbital colony from Earth. Prior to occupation by the Pions, Ganymede was a commerce port, centered on the ice-mining trade.

Callisto's surface is dotted with numerous small manufacturing facilities, many of them almost entirely automated, that are actively being bombarded by Pion *Sakigake* ships.

**Europa** Medium Population, Cold, Colony, Life, Low-G, Blockade, Surface, Water

**Ganymede** Low Population, Cold, Colony, Ice, Low-G, Mining, Occupation, Orbit

**Io** Cold, Hot, Low-G, Volcanos

**Callisto** Low Population, Cold, Colony, Ice, Low-G, Manufacturing, Siege, Surface

## SATURN

Even in the 24th Century, the ringed giant remains widely acknowledged as among the most breathtaking locations in the Solar System. Of Saturn's many moons, only Titan and Enceledas have sizeable populations, with Rhea being a research station.

The methane-based native life forms of Titan are found in its icy methane seas and are massive, ponderous creatures somewhere between a coral colony and enormous whales. Idaeia Station, which orbits Titan, is the furthest orbital colony from Earth and was built using materials mined on Jupiter's moon Ganymede rather than on ores mined in the asteroid belt.

Enceledus's colony is the oldest among Saturn's moons, and one of the few sources of liquid water in the outer planets.

**Titan** Low Population, Blockade, Cold, Colony, Life, Low-G, Orbit

**Rhea** Minimal Population, Cold, Ice, Low-G

**Iapetus** Cold, Ice, Low-G

**Enceledus** Low Population, Cold, Colony, Low-G, Surface, Water

**Dione** Cold, Low-G

**Tethys** Cold, Ice, Low-G

**Mimas** Cold, Ice, Low-G

## URANUS

Terrorists claiming to represent the five distant Uranian colonies incited the bloody Colonial War, described at the time as “Mankind’s Last War.”

Combining a frontier toughness with deep religious convictions, colonists on Uranus’s moons speak of themselves as Uranians first, not individual colonies as found in Jupiter’s and Saturn’s satellites.

Oberon is the nominal capital of the Uranian colonies and the center of their growing spiritual movement.

**Umbriel** Minimal Population, Cold, Ice, Low-G, Mining, Underground

**Titania** Minimal Population, Ice, Cold, Low-G, Surface

**Oberon** Low Population, Cold, Colony, Ice, Low-G, Mining, Spaceport, Surface

**Ariel** Minimal Population, Cold, Low-G, Mining, Underground

**Miranda** Minimal Population, Cold, Low-G, Industry, Underground

## NEPTUNE

Once thought to be a prime location for extraterrestrial life, Neptune’s chilly moon of Triton is home to just a small ice mining colony affiliated with the Plutonian colony.

**Triton** Minimal Population, Cold, Ice, Low-G, Surface

## TRANS-NEPTUNIAN SPACE

Pluto is the second most distant human colony and is primary for astronomical research; in 2309, they detected anomalous radio signals from the vicinity of Epsilon Eridani that continue to defy human explanation. The sub-surface astro-colony was the first human settlement to encounter the returning Pions. Pluto fell to their troops and went radio-silent a full three days before the attack on Luna, although few seemed to seem to care at the time.

Eris is on the farthest edge of the Solar System and is a mining penal colony. Its remoteness let it escape Pion notice; with the occupation of Earth, the prison’s wardens soon lost control of the inmates, who seized control of the distant colony. Of the few convicts who have managed to leave the dwarf planet, most have joined with the Resistance.

**Pluto** Minimal Population, Cold, Low-G, Occupation, Spaceport, Underground

**Eris** Minimal Population, Cold, Prison, Mining, Spaceport, Underground

# The Pions

---

"We were just trying to make them more like us - more human, with a range of simulated emotions. And that was the problem, we made them too much like us."

*An Oral History of the 2320-2324 Pioneer War*

Six classes of pions have been positively identified, although there may be more as yet unseen.

**Cassini** Diplomat

**Mariner** Troop transport

**Rover** Infantry

**Ulysses** Commander

**Venera** Air Support

**Viking** Marine

## CASSINI

The only pions who have verbally spoken with humans. Roughly humanoid, slender, eight feet tall, and with clear domes over their blinking cybernetic brains. They're the spokesrobots for the Occupation.

**Health** 5

**Vulnerable** pulse

**Finger Lasers** *close, mid* Harm 2, Burn

**Moves** Sarcastically issue threats, call for help, strategic withdrawal

## MARINER

The largest of the non-vessel Pions, they're less like individual robots and more like small shuttlecraft used as troop transports. Their rectangular bodies are the size of a large truck and have fore- and aft-facing cannons.

**Health** 20 (Ship-2)

**Vulnerable** explosive

**Thunder Cannons** *mid, far* Harm 4, Exploding

**Moves** Lift off, disgorge troops, hover precipitously

## ROVER

These pions are about the size of a large dog; their four limbs are made to fold inward, or extend to maneuver over obstacles. They're the rank-and-file infantry of the Occupation.

**Health** 4

**Vulnerable** explosive

**Slugthrowers** *close, mid* Harm 1

**Laser Torch** *close* Harm 1

**Moves** Swarm the humans, obey orders, breach defenses

## ULYSSES

The Ulysses pions are the command-and-control leaders of pion ground forces, including the rovers and the vikings. They're shaped like six-legged mechanical spiders about the size of a small car, with sensors in all directions.

**Health** 7

**Vulnerable** pulse

**Micro-scramjet Swarms** *all* Harm 4, Exploding

**Moves** Analyze tactics, coordinate troops, missile lock

## VENERA

Venera pions are the air support for ground operations, offering eye-in-the-sky intelligence reports to those on the ground. They look the most like old NASA probes of any pions, resembling armored viking orbiters.

**Health** 6

**Vulnerable** burn

**Focused Microwave Pulse** *close, mid* Harm 2, Burn

**Moves** Transmit tactical telemetry, evasive maneuvers, crash and burn

## VIKING

The viking-class pions are the most feared by resistance fighters, as they're the heavy troopers of the Occupation. Reinforced weapon mounts surround a cylindrical central body mounted on 12 flexible legs of variegated size.

**Health** 9

**Vulnerable** *nothing known*

**Overkill Onslaught** *close, mid* Harm 5

**Moves** Take the beachhead, support mission objective, go down fighting

# Ships

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**PIONEERS** isn't just a game that takes place on the surface of planets – there's just as much that happens in the dark void of space.

Instead of the players all serving as crew on one large ship, each Survivor has access to one ship, randomly determined at character creation.

This section presents general rules on spacecraft and ship-to-ship combat; for examples of ships, read about the [rag-tag fugitive fleet](#) (p. 23) and the [Pion ships](#) (p. 26) in later sections.

The [Resistance Ops](#) (p. 30) has details on missions that happen both primarily in space and in a mixture of planetary and space action.

## SHIP STATS

Each ship is defined by the following stats:

**Thrust** Which works as the personal attribute, but for the ship.

**Gyro** Also works as the personal attribute.

**Telemetry** And also the same as the personal attribute.

**Health** Ships are rated with Ship-Health scores; each Ship-Health point is equal to 10 personal Health points. Things that heal Ship-Health can't heal personal Health, and vice versa. Ship-Health is lost only to weapons that do Ship-Harm.

**Resist and Vulnerable** Ships resistant to certain attacks take 1 less Ship-Harm from those attacks, while those vulnerable to such attacks take 1 more Ship-Harm.

**Mount Points** These are an abstraction of the ability to add weapons and other devices onto a ship.

Most ships have between 1 and 4 Mount Points.

At the start or end of an op, a player can spend 1 Kit to swap 1 piece of mounted gear for another.

**Tags** Like weapon tags and system tags, ship tags give a ship new abilities. At the start or end of an op, a player can spend 2 Kit to swap 1 Tag for another.



# SHIP FIGHTS

Ship fights work exactly like normal fights, except that instead of using your Survivor’s Thrust, Gyro, or Telemetry, you use the ship’s attribute.

If a ship is destroyed, anyone on board is KIA unless the ship has the EVA tag, the ship has Escape Pods, or a person is wearing a [vacsuit](#) (p. 8).

At the end of their turn, the MC still [rolls as normal for drops](#) (p. 12) for any Pion killed, but uses the following table instead:

| Roll Pool          | Example   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1-3 +1 Ship-Health | With one less Pion to worry about, the pilot can get their ship running again.      |
| 4-6 +1 Impulse     | Acts of destruction only spur some people forward toward ... even more destruction. |

# SHIP-RANGES

Ranges in spacecraft fights use the same *close*, *mid*, *far* bands as personal fights, but refer specifically to *close-ship*, *mid-ship*, and *far-ship* ranges. All personal range bands are within *close-ship* range.

# SHIP-TALENTS AND REGULAR TALENTS

Each class has one Ship-Talent that applies only to spacecraft fights; it can’t be used in regular fights. Likewise, no standard Talents can be used in a ship-to-ship fight.

# SHIP-MOUNTED EQUIPMENT

These weapons or other devices are attached to a ship’s mount points. The tags for ship equipment are equivalent to the [parallel tags for personal weapons](#) (p. 9).

- Asteroid Drill** *close-ship* Harm Ship-2
- Booster Rocket** *mid-ship, far-ship* Harm Ship-5, Explosive, Single-Use
- Docking Clamps** *close-ship* Harm none or Ship-1; prevents other vessel from moving
- EMP Burster** *close-ship* Harm Ship-4, Pulse, Single-Use
- Escape Pods** crew not KIA when ship destroyed
- Flak Cannon** *close-ship* Harm Ship-2, AOE, Exploding
- Fuel Reserve** *close-ship* Harm Ship-3 (explosive) + Ship-3 (burn), Single-Use
- Gatling Laser** *mid-ship* Harm Ship-3, Autofire, Burn
- Jumpstart Hawasers** *close-ship* Harm Ship-1, Shock
- Laser Cannon** *mid-ship, far-ship* Harm Ship-1, Burn
- Laser Refractor** *close-ship, mid-ship* Harm Ship-2, Burn
- Manipulator Arm** *close-ship* Harm Ship-1; can move objects around
- Micro-Nuke** *close-ship* Harm Ship-6 (explosive) + Ship-6 (burn) + Ship-6 (burn) + Ship-6 (pulse), AOE, Friendly Fire, Self-Destructive, Single-Use
- Microwave Scrambler** *mid-ship, long-ship* Harm Ship-1, Pulse
- Ore Extractor** *close-ship* Harm Ship-3, Shock
- Osmium Ballista** *mid-ship* Harm Ship-5, Reload
- Patch Kit** *close-ship* Repairs Health Ship-1
- Railgun** *far-ship* Harm Ship-4, Reload, Scope
- Ramming Spike** Ship takes only one third of its maximum Health when using Ramming Speed.
- Refueling Tether** *close-ship* Harm Ship-1, Burn
- Seeker Mines** *close-ship* Harm Ship-2, Explosive
- Tesla-Coil Turret** *close-ship, mid-ship* Harm Ship-2, Shock
- Van de Graaff Howitzer** *mid-ship, far-ship* Harm Ship-3, Pulse
- Welding Torch** *close-ship, mid-ship* Harm Ship-2, Burn

## SHIP TAGS

These tags give ships additional abilities. At the start or end of an op, a player can spend 2 Kit to switch one tag for another.

**Atmospheric** Can touch down or launch in an atmosphere.

**Balanced** Add 1 to Gyro.

**Cargo** Can carry cargo, including a ship of Health up to half its' Health.

**Compact** Ship can't be targeted at Close-Ship range.

**EVA** Pilots can easily eject in space.

**Networked** Other pilots can use this ship's Telemetry.

**Nimble** Ship can't be targeted at Mid-Ship range.

**Passengers** The ship can carry passengers – a number equal to its Health squared.

**Ramming Speed** Make a close attack with Thrust to do Harm equal to its maximum Health, take Harm equal to half its maximum Health.

**Reinforced Bulkheads** Add 1 to Health.

**Sensor Array** Add 1 to Telemetry.

**Stealth** Ship can't be targeted at Long-Ship range.

**Tailgunner** The ship's mounted weapons can be fired by a co-pilot.

**Turbocharged** Add 1 to Thrust.

# The Resistance Fleet

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With the Solar System's small military forces disabled or destroyed in the initial Pion attack, the Resistance has been forced to assemble a rag-tag fleet comprised of ships not normally used in battle.

The most common ship types are:

- Comms Relay**
- Liquid-Hydrogen Tanker**
- Mining Rig**
- Ore Hauler**
- Racing Yacht**
- Repair Pod**
- Shuttle**
- Solar Glider**

## COMMS RELAY

These ships were constructed from old communications satellites.

**Thrust** 1

**Gyro** 2

**Telemetry** 3

**Health** Ship-4

**Resist** shock

**Vulnerable** pulse

**Mount Points** 2 (Microwave Scrambler, EMP Burst)

**Tags** Networked

**Names** *Ansible, Molniya, Syncom, Telstar Venus Equilateral*

## LIQUID-HYDROGEN TANKER

Large, ponderous tankers that actually move quite quickly when they get up to speed.

**Thrust** 3

**Gyro** 2

**Telemetry** 1

**Health** Ship-8

**Resist** pulse

**Vulnerable** burn

**Mount Points** 4 (Docking Clamps, Escape Pods, Fuel Reserve x2)

**Tags** Ramming Speed, Tailgunner

**Names** *Auriga, Kobayashi Maru, Raza, Valdez, Yamato*

## MINING RIG

Primarily used in the asteroid belt to mine ores.

**Thrust** 2

**Gyro** 2

**Telemetry** 2

**Health** Ship-3

**Resist** explosive

**Vulnerable** burn

**Mount Points** 2 (Asteroid Drill, Ore Extractor)

**Tags** Compact, EVA

**Names** *Cavendish, Herschel, Morrison, Piazzzi, Tylum*

## ORE HAULER

Largest ships in the Resistance fleet, but lacking in mount points for its size.

**Thrust** 3

**Gyro** 1

**Telemetry** 2

**Health** Ship-10

**Resist** everything

**Vulnerable** none

**Mount Points** 2 (Escape Pods, Flak Cannon)

**Tags** Cargo x2, Ramming Speed, Tailgunner

**Names** *Cygnus, Kate Rice, Narada, Nostromo, Snark*

## RACING YACHT

A sleek vessel not designed for space combat.

**Thrust** 2

**Gyro** 3

**Telemetry** 1

**Health** Ship-5

**Resist** shock

**Vulnerable** pulse

**Mount Points** 2 (Escape Pods, Raybeam Cannon)

**Tags** Atmospheric, Nimble, Passengers, Tailgunner

**Names** *Christina, Double Down, Mariquita, Prometheus, Splendour*

## REPAIR POD

Small and maneuverable with tools for repairing other ships in battlefield conditions.

**Thrust** 1

**Gyro** 2

**Telemetry** 3

**Health** Ship-2

**Resist** shock

**Vulnerable** burn

**Mount Points** 2 (Patch Kit, Jumpstart Hawsers)

**Tags** Compact, EVA

**Names** *Betty, Bowman, Discovery Two, Icarus, Palomino*

# SHUTTLE

The workhorses of the Resistance; able to fly, land, and lift off in an atmosphere.

- Thrust** 2
- Gyro** 2
- Telemetry** 2
- Health** Ship-5
- Resist** none
- Vulnerable** none
- Mount Points** 4 (Manipulator Arm, Laser Refractor, Booster Rockets x2)
- Tags** Atmospheric, Cargo, Passengers
- Names** *Columbia, Galileo, Moonraker, Narcissus, Salmacis*

# SOLAR GLIDER

An agile, reflective ship with solar sails and a tiny radar signature.

- Thrust** 2
- Gyro** 3
- Telemetry** 1
- Health** Ship-1
- Resist** burn
- Vulnerable** shock
- Mount Points** 1 (Seeker Mines)
- Tags** EVA, Nimble, Stealth
- Names** *Blanchard, Kahanamoku, Norrin, Paskowitz, Slater*

# Pion Spacecraft

Pion ships are essentially huge, self-piloting robot vehicles; each is controlled by redundant central computers, and has no separate pilot.

The five known types of Pion ships are:

**Genesis** Worldship

**Kosmos** Carrier

**Mariner** Troop transport and lander

**Sakigake** Artillery Ship

**Zond** Interdictor

## GENESIS

Only one of these ships is known to exist, and that's fortunate. Nearly the size of O'Neill Station, *Genesis* is a mobile battlestation that was at first mistaken for a small natural satellite, but this is no moon.

*Genesis* is only found in Earth orbit or nearby.

**Health** Ship-1000

**Vulnerable** *nothing*

**Ship-to-Ship Defense Batteries** *close-ship* Harm Ship-2, Burn

**Pulse Cannons** *mid-ship* Harm Ship-4, Pulse

**Tracer Railguns** *far-ship* Harm Ship-6, Autofire

**Moves** Rain death and destruction upon the Earth, direct the fleet, orbit ominously

## KOSMOS

A total of 8 *Kosmos* carriers have been identified by Resistance Intel Officers. One is in Earth orbit, and another in Lunar orbit. Every human colony under a blockade – Ceres, Europa, and Titan – has a *Kosmos* craft stationed nearby, and three more prowl the reaches of the Solar System.

Their primary function is akin to an aircraft carrier. They have facilities for creating and launching the *Zond* attack interceptor craft, and landing facilities for those and other Pion ships, including hangars for *Mariners*.

**Health** Ship-50

**Vulnerable** burn

**Electrostatic Defense Field Generators** *close-ship* Harm Ship-2, AOE, Shock

**Moves** Launch interdictors, fire point defense guns, recall Zonds

## MARINER

*Mariners* are the smallest of the Pion ships, even smaller than the *Zonds*. Unlike most spacecraft, they *can* be affected by personal-level weaponry; see the section on planetary Pions [for their stats in a personal context \(p. 18\)](#).

In addition to transporting troops, *Mariners* also move Cassini-class Pions and valuable human prisoners within planetary systems. They're found throughout the Solar System.

**Health** Ship-2

**Vulnerable** explosive

**Attack** *none*

**Moves** Enter atmosphere, dock with capital ship, reload troops



## SAKIGAKE

Smaller than the *Kosmos*-class carriers, *Sakigake* craft are primarily weapons of mass destruction that can attack from the edge of a planet's orbit. They're mostly used to shell occupied planets that get out of line and destroy infrastructure on colonies that resist traditional occupation. *Sakigakes* are found wherever the Pions are actively besieging a colony – Mercury, Luna, and Callisto.

At least two dozen *Sakigake* are known to exist; they usually travel in pairs, with *Zond* escorts. Although they pack a devastating punch, *Sakigakes* are, relatively speaking, glass cannons.

**Health** Ship-10

**Vulnerable** pulse

**Laser Bombardment Cannons** *far-ship* Harm Ship-6, AOE, Burn, Reload

**Moves** Swath of destruction, recharge cannons, retreat to a safe distance

## ZOND

*Zond*-class craft are agile and deadly interceptor craft that hunt in packs like wolves or sharks. They're most frequently encountered near *Kosmos* carriers or *Genesis*, although they can be found as escorts for any other Pion craft.

Their inability to function in any kind of atmosphere is the only factor limiting their deadliness. Resistance pilots using [shuttles \(p. 25\)](#) or [racing yachts \(p. 24\)](#) have learned to ditch their *Zond* pursuers with a dive into an atmosphere – even one that's not breathable by humans.

**Health** Ship-4

**Vulnerable** shock

**Pulsed Maser Cannon** *close-ship, mid-ship* Harm Ship-2, Pulse

**Moves** Concentrate on the leader, break off attack, suicide run

# Mission Control

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If you're playing as Mission Control instead of creating and playing a Survivor, you've got an important role in the game – but it's *not* to kill the other players' Survivor characters.

Think of yourself less like the players' opponents and more like a director or producer – you give the players challenges that their Survivors can overcome, but you're still rooting for them to win in the end.

In your role, you can control the pacing and difficulty of the game more directly than the other players can. As a consequence, you shouldn't grow that attached to your own Pions – they only exist to put up a token amount of threat and then get mowed down by the Survivors.

## ROTATING MCs

**PIONEERS** is a very *episodic* game, meaning that there aren't really storylines and plots that run from one Op to the next.

That makes it to switch roles between Ops; for many groups, it makes sense for a player to take on the MC role for one mission, and then pass it on to another player at the end of an Op.

This is how we recommend you play the game – it gives everyone a chance to experience the game from two different sides, and all the players get to make up Survivors! Character creation can be a fun mini-game.

## THE QUESTION OF WHY?

You might notice that nowhere in **PIONEERS** do we actually explain *why* the Pions are doing this. That's deliberate, not an oversight!

In the TV shows and movies [that inspired this game \(p. 34\)](#), such as 2004's *Battlestar Galactica*, attempts to explain the backstories of the villains usually made the shows worse, not better.

If it's going to make a difference in the way you play, then of course you can make something up – we're not stopping you! But ultimately **PIONEERS** just isn't a game about understanding the motives of your enemies but about breaking evil robots, so that's what the game does.

We also don't offer an explanation of why the Pions haven't wiped out humanity and are instead trying to conquer and control Earth and her colonies. Also deliberate, and for the same reason!

If the players bring this up during the game, just smile knowingly and say something vague, like, "Hmm, that *is* mysterious, isn't it?" If you're one of those players reading this and the issue arises later, either play along with the MC or make up some ridiculous cockamamie explanation. Hey, maybe it's true in *your* game, right?

## ROLEPLAYING THE PIONS

Unlike many roleplaying games, interactions between the player characters and non-player characters don't play a huge role in **PIONEERS** – the preceeding section explains why!

The [Cassini model \(p. 18\)](#) are the only Pions who talk, so when one of those shows up – and they're found in most Pion bases – feel free to play them to the hilt.

They're meant to be the exact opposite of the alien, non-communicative types that make up the vast majority of the Pions. Cassinis are snide, taunting, and duplicitous.

You can also roleplay the other Pions without having them speak directly. Describe how their sensors track the Survivors with stony indifference. Give them unfamiliar beeps and electronic squawks as they die; just make sure they're implacably inscrutable.

# Resistance Ops

The basic cycle of a **PIONEERS** looks like this:

- 1. The players create Survivors.
- 2. Survivors are assigned an Op with a specific mission.
- 3. Survivors prepare for the Op and get in position.
- 4. One or more fights ensue on the way to completing that mission.
- 5. Survivors leave, bury their dead, and recover.
- 6. Back to 2, until the players are satisfied with the game.

Survivor creation is [covered in a previous section \(p. 4\)](#); this section will tell you how to send those Survivors on those dangerous missions where they might get killed.

## OP TYPES

Broadly speaking, there are three kinds of Ops: **Planetary Ops** that take place on the surface of a planet or moon; **Space Ops** that happen in spacecraft; and **Combined Ops**.

Each has their own unique qualities, and in general it's more fun to have variety in Op types.

Most Survivors' Talents are directly tied to personal-scale fights, and those should be the emphasis of a **PIONEERS** – but not exclusively.

Use the chart at the bottom of this page to determine what type of Op a mission will be.

## Planetary Ops

On these missions, Survivors are tasked with carrying out an Op on the surface of a planet or moon. Their gear will be adapted to function in such an environment, if necessary – for example, missions to Mars will include O<sub>2</sub> tanks and filters.

Use the following table to decide the mission paramters for a Planetary Op.

| Die Roll | Result  |
|----------|---|
| 1        | <b>Sabotage Industrial Center</b> 1 on Earth, 2 on Venus, 3-4 on Mars, 5 on Mimas, 6 in the asteroid belt                         |
| 2        | <b>Rescue Crash Survivors</b> 1-2 on Titan, 3-4 on Oberon, 5-6 on Io  |
| 3        | <b>Liberate a Settlement</b> 1-2 on Venus, 3-4 on Mars, 5-6 on Enceledas  |
| 4        | <b>Destroy a Pion Base</b> 1 on Earth, 2-3 on Venus, 5-6 on Mars, 6 on Dione  |
| 5        | <b>Steal Intelligence</b> 1 from Earth, 2-3 from O'Neill Station, 4 from Venus, 5 from Mars, 6 from Ganymede's Cleomestra Station |
| 6        | <b>Assassinate a Cassini (p. 18)</b> 1-2 on Earth, 3-4 on O'Neill Station, 5 on Ganymede, 6 on Pluto                              |

| Die Roll | No Prior Op | Last Op: Planetary | Space     | Combined  |
|----------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1        | Planetary   | Planetary          | Planetary | Planetary |
| 2        | Planetary   | Planetary          | Planetary | Planetary |
| 3        | Planetary   | Space              | Planetary | Planetary |
| 4        | Space       | Space              | Planetary | Space     |
| 5        | Combined    | Combined           | Space     | Combined  |
| 6        | Combined    | Combined           | Combined  | Combined  |

## Space Ops

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For these missions, the Survivors have to perform a mission primarily in space. At no cost, a Survivor can swap out their armor for a **vacsuit** (p. 8) without paying a cost in Kit.

Use the following table to decide the mission paramters for a Space Op.

### Die Roll Result

---

- 1 **Salvage** 1-2 the asteroid belt, 3-4 near Triton, 5-6 near Pluto
- 2 **Escort Mission** 1-2 Callisto to Europa, 3-4 Enceledas to Ariel, 5 Oberon to Triton, 6 Pluto to Earth
- 3 **Destroy a Sakigake** (p. 27) 1-2 near Callisto, 3-4 near Mercury, 5-6 near Oberon
- 4 **SOS Received** 1-2 in the asteroid belt, 3-4 near Jupiter, 5-6 near Saturn
- 5 **Resupply Eris** 1-2 food, 3-4 fuel, 5-6 water
- 6 **Blockade-Running** 1-2 to Ceres, 3-4 to Europa, 5-6 to Titan

## Combined Ops

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Specialized gear for use on a surface will be issued to the Survivors, as per planetary ops. At no cost in Kit, a player can choose to have a vacsuit on their ship for this mission, and can switch between that and their normal armor during a lull in the action.

Use the following table to decide the mission paramters for an Op that has both Planetary and Space objectives.

### Die Roll Result

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- 1 **Free Important Prisoners** 1-2 on Venus, 3-4 on O'Neill Station, 5-6 on Ganymede's Cleomestra Station
- 2 **Rescue Trapped Colonists** 1 on Luna, 2 on Mars, 3-4 on Europa, 5 on Callisto, 6 on Mirans,
- 3 **Liberate a Ship** 1-2 on Earth, 3-4 Earth orbit, 5-6 on Mars
- 4 **Evac a Resistance Base** 1-2 on Mercury, 3-4 in the asteroid belt, 5-6 on Callisto
- 5 **Broadcast a Message** 1-2 on Earth, 3-4 on Luna, 5-6 on Pluto
- 6 **Infiltrate Genesis** (p. 26) 1-2 rescue a prisoner, 3-4 steal plans, 5-6 sabotage a comms center

# MISSION PREP

Survivors’ Health, Impulse, and Kit pools reset before an Op. Each player can make a prep roll before an Op to prepare for the upcoming mission using an attribute of their choice. The appropriate pool – and its maximum value – increases by 1 for the entirety of this Op.

| Die Roll | Attribute: Thrust | Gyro       | Telemetry  |
|----------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| 1        | +1 Kit            | +1 Health  | +1 Impulse |
| 2-3      | +1 Health         | +1 Impulse | +1 Kit     |
| 4-6      | +1 Impulse        | +1 Gear    | +1 Health  |

Before each mission, players roll to see which weapons, armor, other gear, and ships they have access to during this Op. Any Survivor who has customized their weapon or ship can keep that from their last Op and doesn’t have to roll.

Right before an Op, a Survivor can spend Kit (and only Kit) to change out their gear for another choice on the appropriate table. Survivors without a Med Patch can also spend 1 Kit to grab a Med Patch – but no Survivor can have more than one at the start of an Op; they’re too rare among the Resistance and are heavily rationed.

# TRAVEL TIME

Obviously, the Solar System is huge. With realistic travel times, it could take years to get from one side of it to another. If the travel time ever matters, here are some approximate values you can use.

Travel between Earth and O’Neill Station takes 1d6 hours, as does travel between Earth and Luna.

For travel within the inner planets – Mercury to Mars – roll 1d6 for the travel time, in days. Add 2 days for travel to or from Ceres.

For travel from the inner planets to the outer planets, roll 1d6 days and add the base travel time from the table below.

For travel between two outer planets, use the higher base travel time, plus 1d6 weeks.

Travel time between moons of the same outer planet takes 1d6 hours.

| Outer Planet | Base Travel Time    |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Jupiter      | 1 week              |
| Saturn       | 2 weeks             |
| Uranus       | 5 weeks (1 month)   |
| Neptune      | 8 weeks (2 months)  |
| Pluto        | 11 weeks (3 months) |
| Eris         | 19 weeks (4 months) |



## WHEN AN OP IS OVER

An Op concludes when the Survivors have finished an Op, or when at least one of them has died and the players decide to scrub the mission and return home.

## POST-OP RECUPERATION

After an Op, the Survivors retreat to a hidden base to await further orders from the Resistance.

Any player whose Survivor died during the previous Op can create a new Survivor during Post-Op Recuperation. Likewise, any player who wishes to try a different character can make a new one during the

Post-Op.

Pools don't automatically refresh at the end of an Op. Survivors who have points remaining in their Kit can spend 1 point on *one* of the following options:

1. **Customize Weapons** Spend 1 kit to switch 1 Tag on a weapon to a different Tag.
2. **Customize Ship Weaponry** Spend 1 kit to switch 1 ship-mounted weapon for a different ship weapon.
3. **Customize Ship Tags** Spend 1 kit to switch 1 Tag on a ship for a different ship Tag.

# Credits

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This game was created by [Cadera Spindrift](#).

**PIONEERS** was created as part of the [LUMEN Jam](#) hosted by [Gila RPGs](#).

This game is Illuminated, and is made using the LUMEN system created by Spencer Campbell of GilaRPGs. This game is not affiliated with Gila RPGs.

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This game is primarily an homage 1970s-era space science and science fiction.

*Battlestar Galactica* in its original, 1978 form is a key inspiration, as well as the later 2004-2009 remake. Other influences include the obvious *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, but also *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Space: 1999*, and *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*.

Around 1975-1977, as a young nerd girl growing in California, I was fascinated by astronomy and the *science-based* vision of a future in space portrayed in NASA's concept art – some of which appears in **PIONEERS!** – that is, until a certain *space opera* movie came out in the summer of 1977.