

# TRAVELLER

GREAT RIFT ADVENTURE 2: DEEPNIGHT ENDEAVOUR



SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

# TRAVELLER

G R E A T   R I F T   A D V E N T U R E   2 :  
D E E P N I G H T   E N D E A V O U R

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# INTRODUCTION

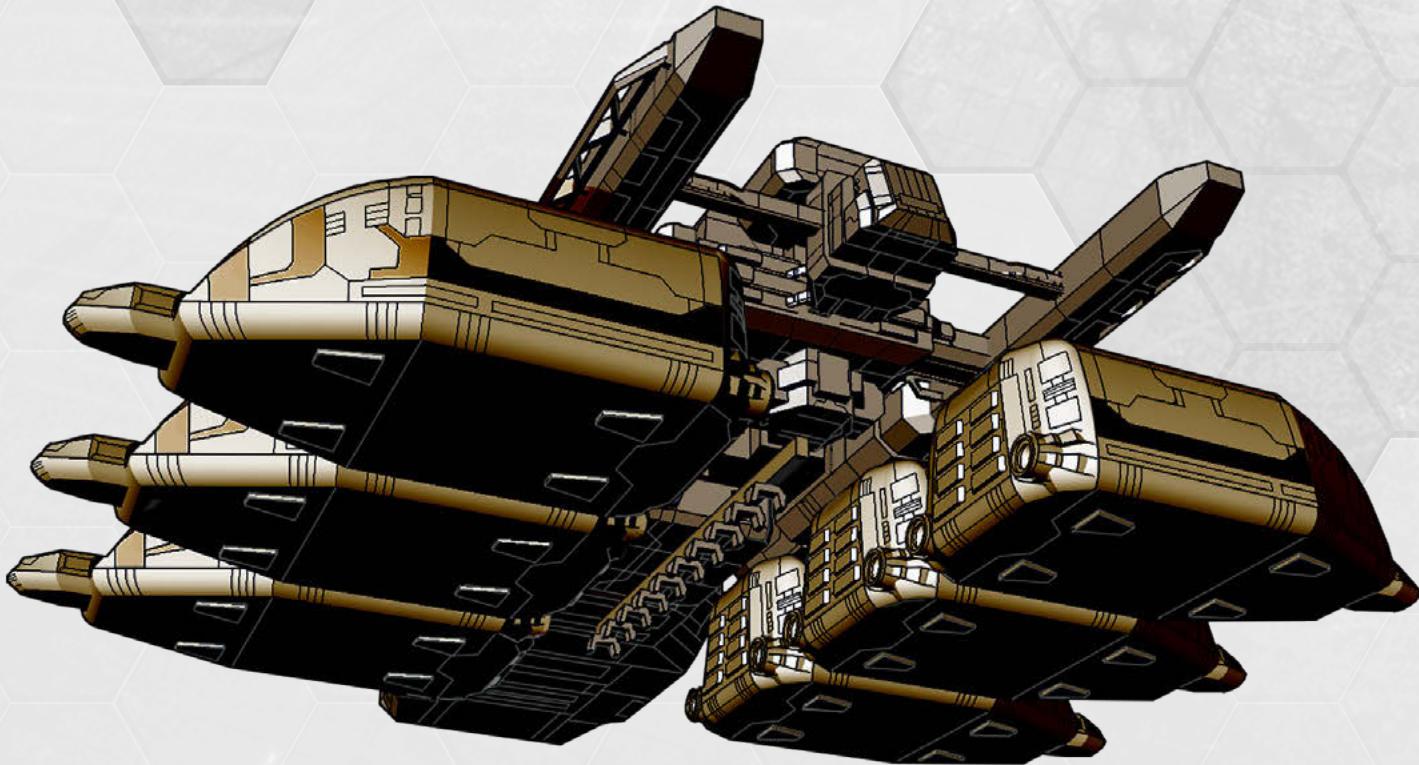
This adventure takes place in the Great Rift, mostly aboard a crippled exploration vessel. The Travellers arrive at the location of *Deepnight Endeavour* with no way to get home, and must board the derelict vessel to locate fuel. Exploring the ship, they discover there are survivors, and that the ship has taken aboard a malevolent entity. The search for fuel is complicated by the presence of this entity and its minions, who seek to reach an inhabited planet. The Travellers might simply try to escape or they could attempt to destroy the entity. Depending on their intentions, they will face opposition from different groups of survivors as well as the entity itself.

The overall style of the adventure depends upon the Travellers. A claustrophobic ‘space horror’ theme, played for tension rather than combat, will suit many groups. Some may prefer to treat the adventure as a stand-up fight rather than a bug hunt. This will work if the Travellers are very well armed, but the entity is

hard to kill and its minions are insidious. There are some problems that cannot be solved by straightforward violence, and opportunities for almost any Traveller to come to the fore even in a head-on confrontation.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins as the Travellers come out of jump in deep space next to the research vessel *Deepnight Endeavour*. They will obviously need a starship to get there, so if the Travellers do not have one of their own they will need to be assigned one – perhaps with a minimal crew to operate it. The Travellers’ Briefing outlines a set of circumstances that have led the Travellers to the *Deepnight Endeavour*, but if the adventure is to be used in an ongoing campaign the referee might instead allow the Travellers to find clues to the ship’s location.



# DEEPNIGHT EXPLORATION, LIC

Deepnight Exploration is an Imperial corporation specialising in deep-space exploration and surveys. It operates a significant number of relatively small scientific and exploration ships, plus a few large vessels. Its primary assets are four very large exploration vessels bearing the corporation's name – *Deepnight Endeavour*, *Voyager*, *Explorer* and *Discovery*. The corporation also has a few permanent bases and outposts.

Deepnight Exploration recruits personnel from a variety of sources, notably the Imperial services and well-regarded merchant shipping lines. Promising graduates are taken on straight after education, serving an apprenticeship aboard a support vessel or outpost before being advanced to the exploration and scientific ships. Some personnel come in by other routes; personal recommendation or expedient recruitment through hiring channels used by other ship operators.

The corporation has an excellent record for quality scientific work and reliability. Safety records are also good, for Deepnight had never lost a ship until recently, and the firm has a solid financial record.

The loss of *Deepnight Endeavour* was a severe blow to Deepnight Exploration. Not only was she a major asset worth a significant percentage of the company's net value, she was also the name-ship of her class and one of the most prestigious exploration ships

in operation. The enormous cost of her mission was essentially wasted by backers, undermining the corporation's reputation. Deepnight Exploration has offered a large reward for the location of *Deepnight Endeavour* or any of her personnel, with bonuses for salvaged data and artefacts.

Some aspects of *Deepnight Endeavour*'s mission remain confidential, but information has been made publicly available to assist in the search. She was engaged in deep-rift exploration work, using a prepositioned refuelling cache to extend her own impressive range. The exact nature of her mission has not been revealed but it is known that she was sent to investigate anomalous or otherwise interesting deep-space objects.

Long-range couriers brought home data from the early part of the mission, along with personnel overdue for furlough. The last courier to return was just over a year ago, reporting nothing untoward. The next vessel failed to find *Deepnight Endeavour*, despite passing through expected rendezvous points. Follow-up searches found no sign of her, and eventually she was posted missing, presumed lost. There is still a chance that *Deepnight Endeavour* might be found, but she is not at any of her expected rendezvous or refuelling points and has left no message or indication of her whereabouts at any of them.



# DEEPNIGHT ENDEAVOUR

*Deepnight Endeavour* is the name-ship of a design created for Deepnight Exploration, LIC. Only four vessels were constructed, though the plans are available for anyone with the money and inclination to construct such an expensive specialist vessel.

Designed as a long-range exploration and scientific vessel, *Deepnight Endeavour* is built as a close structure, with most of her fuel tankage within six breakaway modules. These are independently operable and referred to as fuel shuttles, but remain an integral part of the overall design. Fully loaded, *Deepnight Endeavour* can make two consecutive jump-3 transits using the fuel in her modules, retaining sufficient fuel for a 1-parsec jump in her internal tanks. This can be extended to 3 parsecs if the fuel shuttles are left behind, though would leave the ship unable to obtain more fuel. Internal reserves allow in-system operations for some months whilst *Deepnight Endeavour* awaits assistance. In theory, this capability allows the vessel to leave some or all of her fuel modules behind to skim fuel in one system whilst visiting a neighbouring star system. It is unlikely this capability would ever be used, however.

*Deepnight Endeavour* is equipped with a vast array of scientific equipment, and sufficiently well-armed to not fear small-scale piracy or hijack attempts. She carries a complement of small craft internally and can dock jump-capable vessels or sublight craft of up to 300 tons on external ports, supporting them with power and fuel, and holding them within her jump field.

Computer systems are hardened against radiation effects, as is the main hull; not because combat is expected but in the event that *Deepnight Endeavour* ventures into dangerous areas that interfere with her systems or harm the crew. Radiation shielding also helps prevent interference with sensitive instruments, both from cosmic radiation and the ship's own systems.

*Deepnight Endeavour*'s main hull is rated at 100,000 displacement tons, and her drives and power systems

are suitable for a 100,000-ton ship. However, this is her maximum possible displacement with a full complement of fuel shuttles aboard and craft on the docking rails, and represents normal operating conditions. The vessel would be considered incomplete without its fuel shuttles, but could still jump using internal fuel.

## HULL FORM AND CAPABILITIES

*Deepnight Endeavour*'s hull form is a close structure, built around two Primary Structural Members (PSM) which run the length of the ship. Between these are modules containing the primary components of the vessel, command, operations and engineering modules. The flight operations pod and cargo module lie below the axis of the PSMs, whilst the three scientific modules are above it.

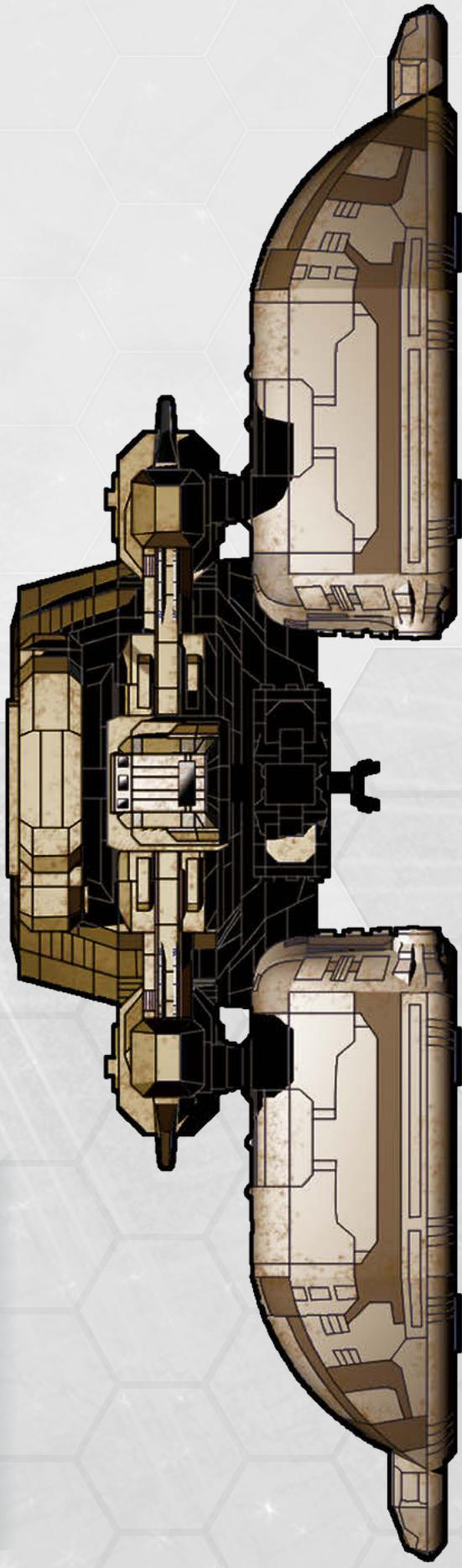
A fairly standard 'flight at the front, drives at the back, accommodation and operations in between' layout is followed, though some systems are dispersed between the hull sections. Total displacement with fuel shuttles attached is a nominal 100,000 tons, including twelve craft of 300 tons each attached to the docking rails of the flight operations pod.

*Deepnight Endeavour* is capable of two consecutive jump-3 transits. Her highly efficient jump drive requires 10% less fuel than standard, so a 1-parsec jump with all fuel shuttles and craft attached requires only 9,000 tons of liquid hydrogen fuel. Each of the six 10,000 ton fuel shuttles carries enough for a 1-parsec jump, plus additional fuel for their own powerplant or to refuel other craft. A further 11,000 tons of jump fuel is carried internally, enabling a 1-parsec jump at full load. In an emergency, this can be increased to 3 parsecs by detaching the fuel shuttles and leaving them behind. The vessel's displacement is 40,000 tons without the fuellers, requiring 3,600 tons of fuel per parsec, or 10,800 tons for a maximum 3-parsec jump.

SIDE VIEW



FRONT VIEW



*Deepnight Endeavour* has a nominal acceleration of 2G at full load. In emergencies she can use the thrusters of the six fuel modules to increase her power; around 2.2G is possible with a good margin of safety, after which the drives of the subordinate craft begin to interact and may cause one another to twist on their mountings. This could cause severe damage or even tear away part of the Primary Structural Members. The risks increase up to about 2.6G, after which damage is very likely and complete structural failure becomes a possibility. With all the fuel shuttles detached, *Deepnight Endeavour* can achieve a sprightly 5G acceleration.

*Deepnight Endeavour*'s weaponry is for self-defence only. Beam laser turrets are scattered all over the ship, and are intended for defence against small craft attempting to board or a salvo of missiles, rather than concentrated fire against a warship. However, there are enough of them to reduce a typical pirate or even a frigate to wreckage.

In the event of a serious threat, *Deepnight Endeavour*'s best chance would be to use her four large missile bays to keep hostile vessels at a distance or swamp them with warheads. The bays carry a large stock of ship-to-ship missiles, but much of *Deepnight Endeavour*'s missile complement is connected with her primary mission; many of her missiles are not combat-capable at all, but instead are buses for the delivery of long-range hostile-environment probes, survey satellites, and monitoring drones. Exotic warheads are sometimes carried for specialist missions, such as experimental antimatter-burst devices for use in astrophysical experiments.

*Deepnight Endeavour* also mounts two cruiser-grade particle accelerator bays, which could in theory

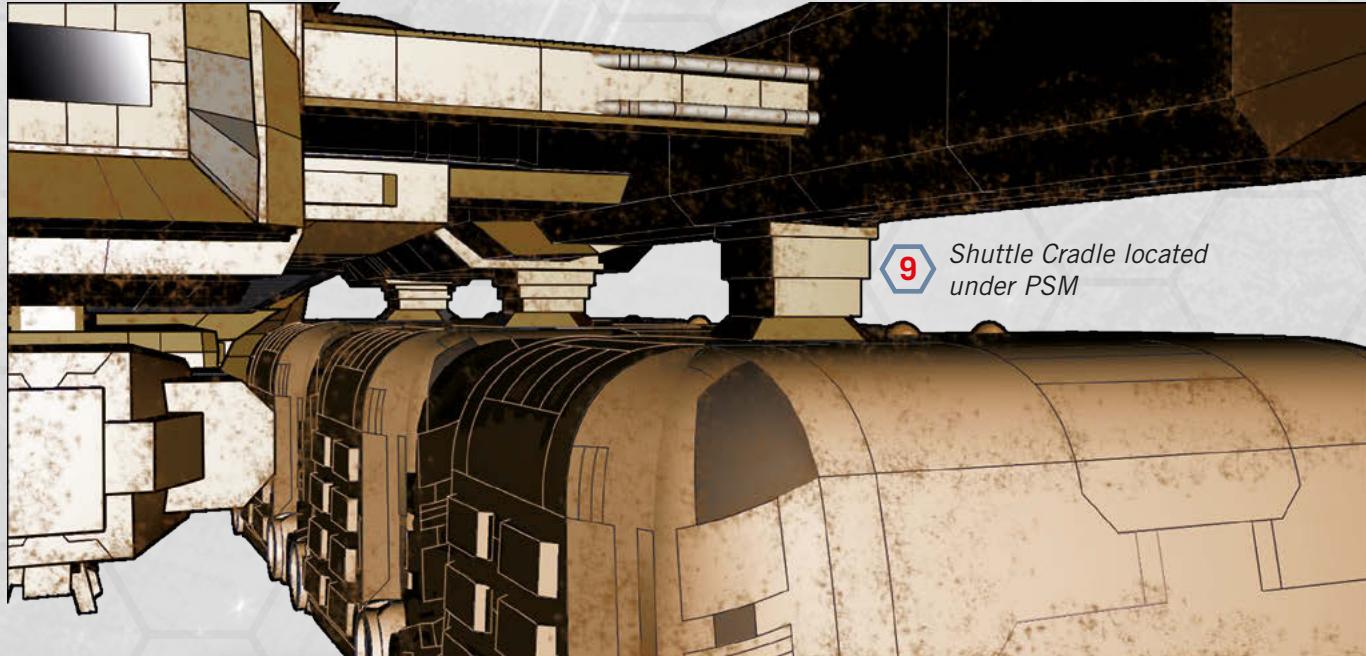
devastate a modestly sized warship. This is not their primary function, however. The accelerators are intended for scientific use, sending beams of particles into a gas cloud or planetary atmosphere to measure its composition, electrostatic response and other phenomena. The accelerators are converted military weapons and retain their full destructive potential.

## OPERATIONS

*Deepnight Endeavour* is designed to spend a long time in transit and on-station, without external support. Standard procedure is to arrive in a new star system near a source of fuel and detach the shuttles to commence skimming operations. The parent vessel will then proceed to its target (usually the mainworld or prospective mainworld) to begin exploration and survey operations, the fuellers following when ready. Small craft and subordinate vessels are used to land personnel or conduct exploration of other bodies in the system. When exploring a region with relatively high stellar density, jump-capable subordinate craft are commonly used to visit nearby systems for preliminary surveys or follow up anything previously detected.

Many operations involve long deep-space transits. It is standard practice to spend a day or two in normal space between jumps, unfurling the extended arrays and taking all possible sensor readings. Even though this may slow down the primary mission, the data collected is often worth it. This is especially true when operating in uncharted regions, where little data may have previously been gathered.

## SHUTTLE CONNECTIONS



# DEEPNIGHT ENDEAVOUR DECKS

## DECK 3 (page 15)

1. Forward Science Pod
2. Central Science Pod
3. Aft Science Pod

## DECK 2

5. Command Section (page 13)
6. Operations Module - OPSMOD (page 13)
7. Primary Structural Member (page 12)
8. Engineering Section (page 14)

## DECK 1

9. Shuttle Cradles (page 10)
10. Cargo Module (page 10)
11. Flight Operations Pod (page 11)

## UNDERSIDE

12. Docking Rail with Docking Clamps (page 10)

# DEEPNIGHT ENDEAVOUR

X

**TL15**

|                           |   | <b>TONS</b>  | <b>COST (MCR)</b>   |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Hull</b>               | 100,000 tons, Close Structure<br>Breakaway Sections (10,000 tons) x 6<br>Radiation Shielding  | -<br>2000<br>-   | 4050<br>4000<br>2500  |
| <b>M-Drive</b>            | Thrust 2, Energy Efficient x 3  | 2000   | 6000  |
| <b>J-Drive</b>            | Jump 3, Decreased Fuel x 2, Energy Efficient  | 7505   | 16886.25  |
| <b>Power Plant</b>        | Fusion (TL15), Power 50,000   | 2500   | 5000  |
| <b>Fuel Tanks</b>         | Jump-1, 16 weeks of operation   | 13000  | -   |
| <b>Shuttle Fuel Tanks</b> | J-3 x 2   | 54000  | -   |
| <b>Bridge</b>             |   | 60<br>80<br>24   | 200<br>750<br>12  |
|                           | Command Bridge<br>Sensor Stations x 24  |  |   |
| <b>Shuttle Bridges</b>    | x6  | 360  | 300   |
| <b>Computer</b>           | Core/100 fib  | -  | 195   |
| <b>Shuttle Computers</b>  | Computer/5 x 6  | -  | 0.18  |
| <b>Sensors</b>            | Advanced, Extended Array<br>Deep Penetration Scanners<br>Life Scanner Analysis Suite<br>Mineral Detection Suite<br>Gravitational Analysis Suite   | 15<br>10<br>1<br>-<br>5  | 15.9<br>10<br>4<br>5<br>12  |
| <b>Shuttle Sensors</b>    | Military Grade x 6  | 12   | 24.6  |
| <b>Weapons</b>            | Large Particle Beam Bays x 2<br>Large Missile Bays x 4<br>Dual Turrets (beam lasers) x 70   | 1000<br>2000<br>70   | 240<br>500<br>105   |
| <b>Systems</b>            | Fuel Processor (10,000 tons/day)<br>Fuel Scoops x 6<br>Advanced Probe Drones x 500<br>Observatory (large, advanced)<br>Observatory (medium, advanced)<br>Scientific Operations Suite (40 scientists)<br>Scientific Operations Suite x 2 (20 scientists each)<br>Docking Clamps (type V) x 6<br>Docking Clamps (type III) x 12<br>Docking Space (500 tons)<br>Brigs x 4<br>Multi Environment Space | 500<br>-<br>100<br>1000<br>400<br>120<br>120<br>300<br>120<br>550<br>16<br>210 | 25<br>6<br>80<br>1250<br>500<br>96<br>96<br>48<br>24<br>137.5<br>1<br>500 |

## CREW

CAPTAIN, OFFICERS X 23, PILOTS X 23, ASTROGATORS X 3, ENGINEERS X 60, MAINTENANCE X 42, MEDIC X 9, GUNNERS X 32, ADMINISTRATORS X 3, STEWARDS X 22, DECK HANDS X 30, MISSION PERSONNEL X 115

## RUNNING COSTS

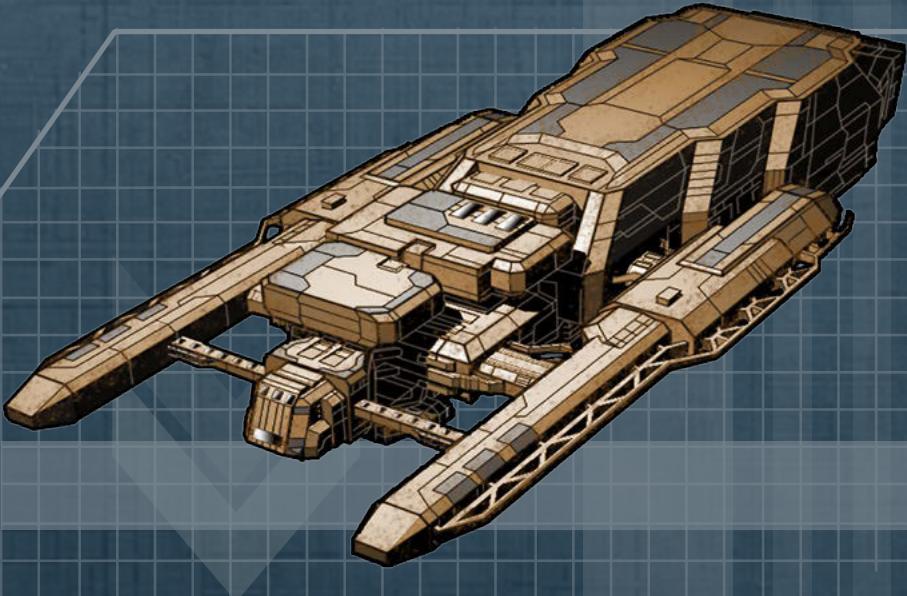
### MAINTENANCE COST

Cr3.700644/month



### PURCHASE COST

MCr44407.73



## POWER REQUIREMENTS

5000

MANOEUVRE  
DRIVE

20000

BASIC SHIP  
SYSTEMS

22500

JUMP DRIVE

26

SENSORS

55000

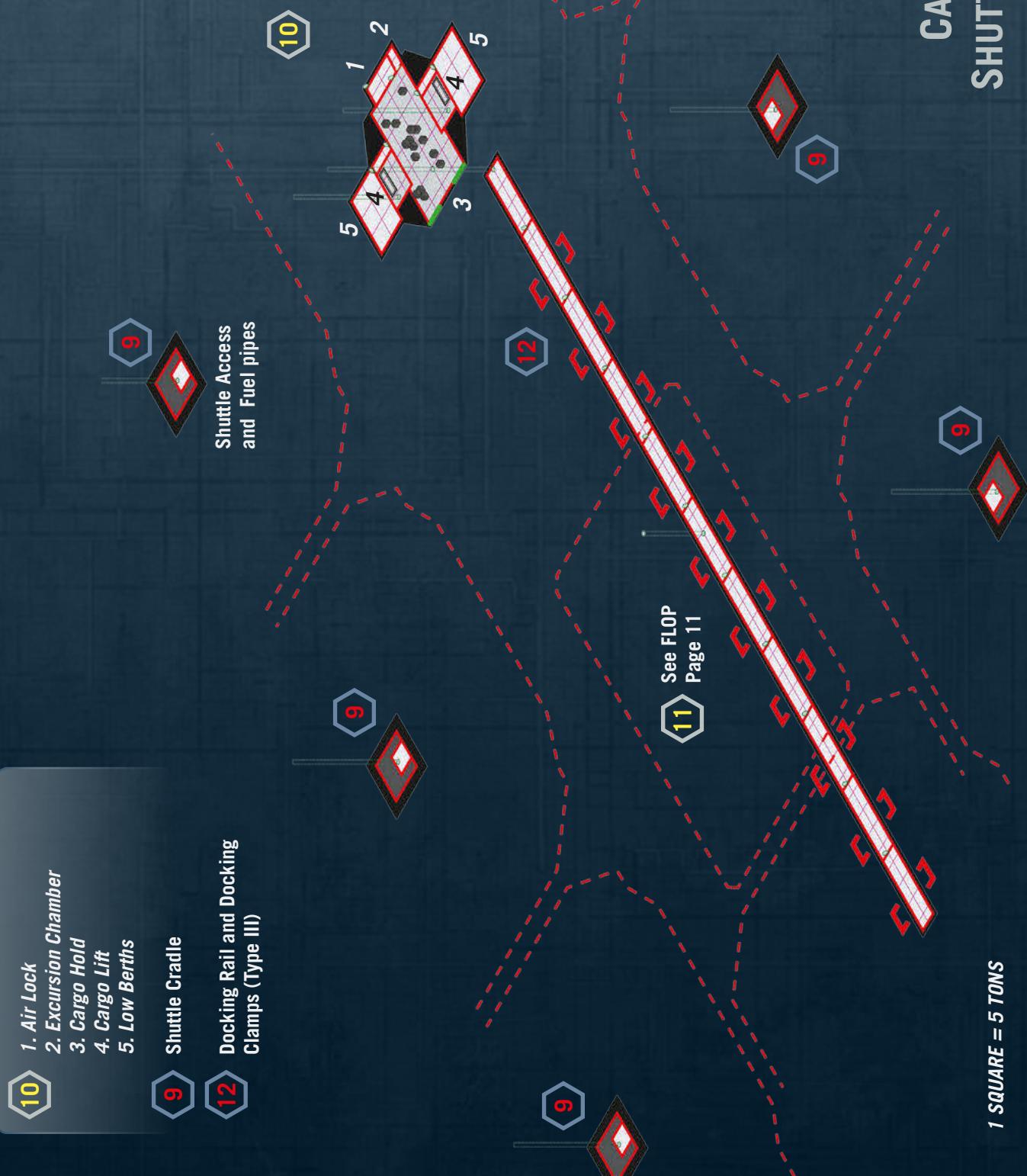
HULL POINTS

TL15

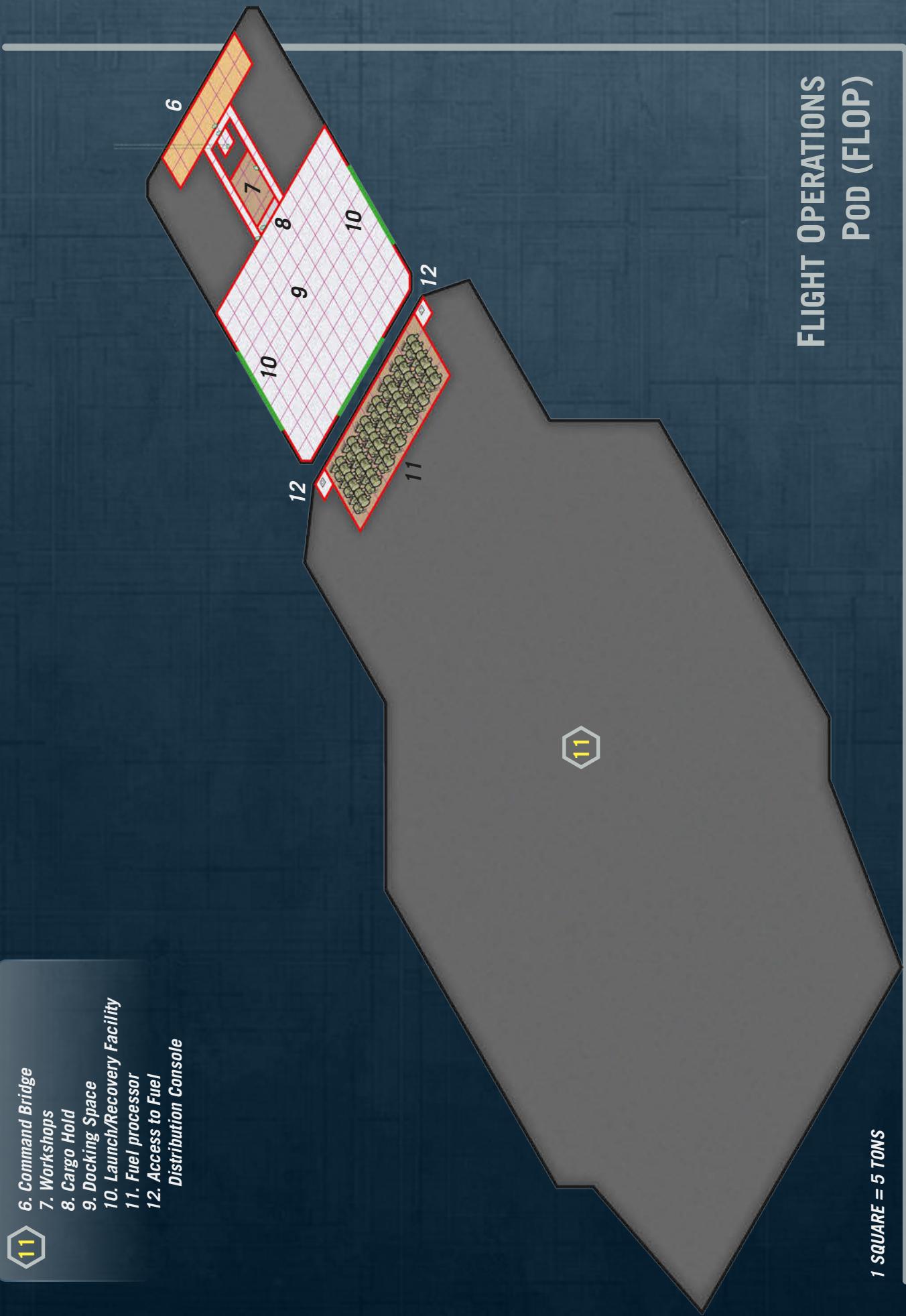
|              |                             | TONS | COST (MCR) |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------|------------|
|              | Laboratories (60 personnel) | 240  | 60         |
|              | Workshops                   | 60   | 9          |
|              | Armoury                     | 8    | 2          |
|              | Briefing Rooms              | 24   | 3          |
|              | Chart Rooms x 4             | 64   | 5          |
|              | Medical Bays x6             | 24   | 12         |
| Staterooms   | Standard x 400              | 1600 | 200        |
|              | Emergency Low Berths x 60   | 60   | 60         |
| Software     | Manoeuvre/0                 | -    | -*         |
|              | Jump Control/3              | -    | 0.3        |
|              | Library                     | -    | -          |
|              | Science (general)           | -    | 25         |
|              | Advanced Science x 6        | -    | 180        |
|              | Mentor/3                    | -    | 4          |
|              | Research Assist/3 x 6       | -    | 24         |
|              | Flight Operations/3         | -    | 15         |
|              | Planetology/3               | -    | 7          |
| Common Areas |                             | 2400 | 240        |
| Cargo        |                             | 1408 | -          |

TOTAL: MCR 44407.73

## CARGO MODULE & SHUTTLES CRADDLES



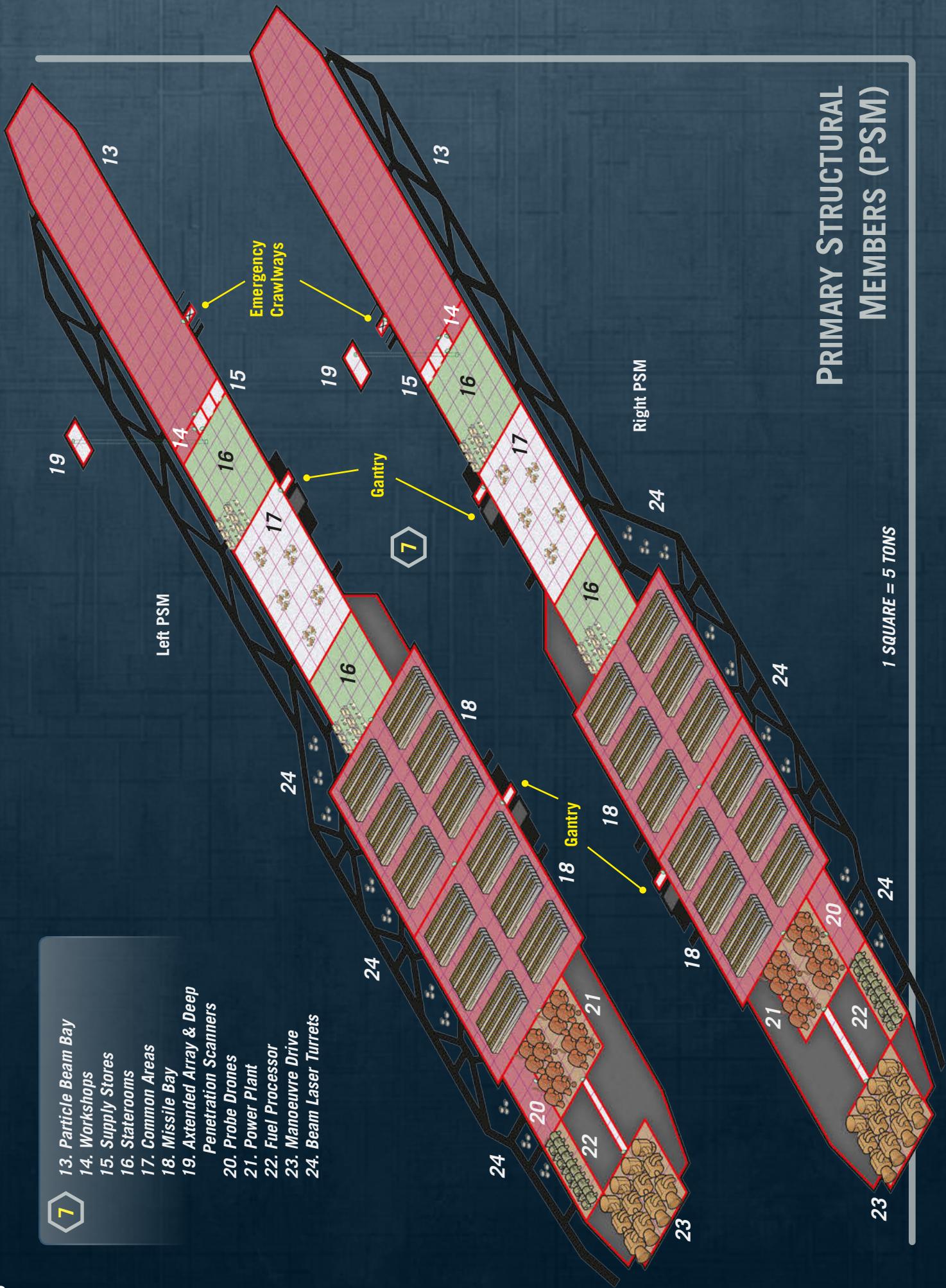
## FLIGHT OPERATIONS POD (FLOP)



1 SQUARE = 5 TONS

## PRIMARY STRUCTURAL MEMBERS (PSM)

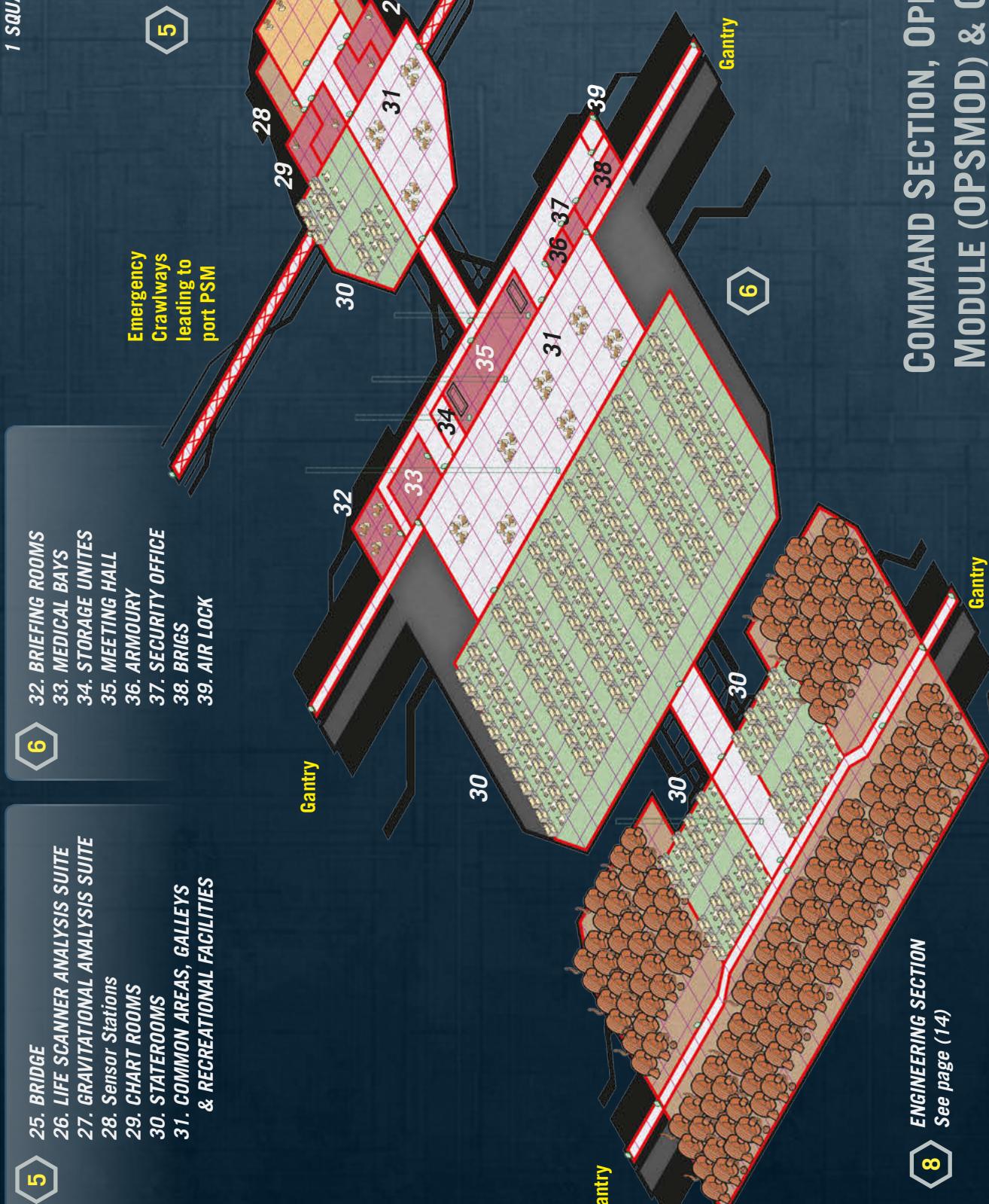
1 SQUARE = 5 TONS



1 SQUARE = 5 TONS

- 5. 25. BRIDGE
- 26. LIFE SCANNER ANALYSIS SUITE
- 27. GRAVITATIONAL ANALYSIS SUITE
- 28. Sensor Stations
- 29. CHART ROOMS
- 30. STATEROOMS
- 31. COMMON AREAS, GALLEYS & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
- 32. BRIEFING ROOMS
- 33. MEDICAL BAYS
- 34. STORAGE UNITS
- 35. MEETING HALL
- 36. ARMOURY
- 37. SECURITY OFFICE
- 38. BRIGS
- 39. AIR LOCK

- 6.



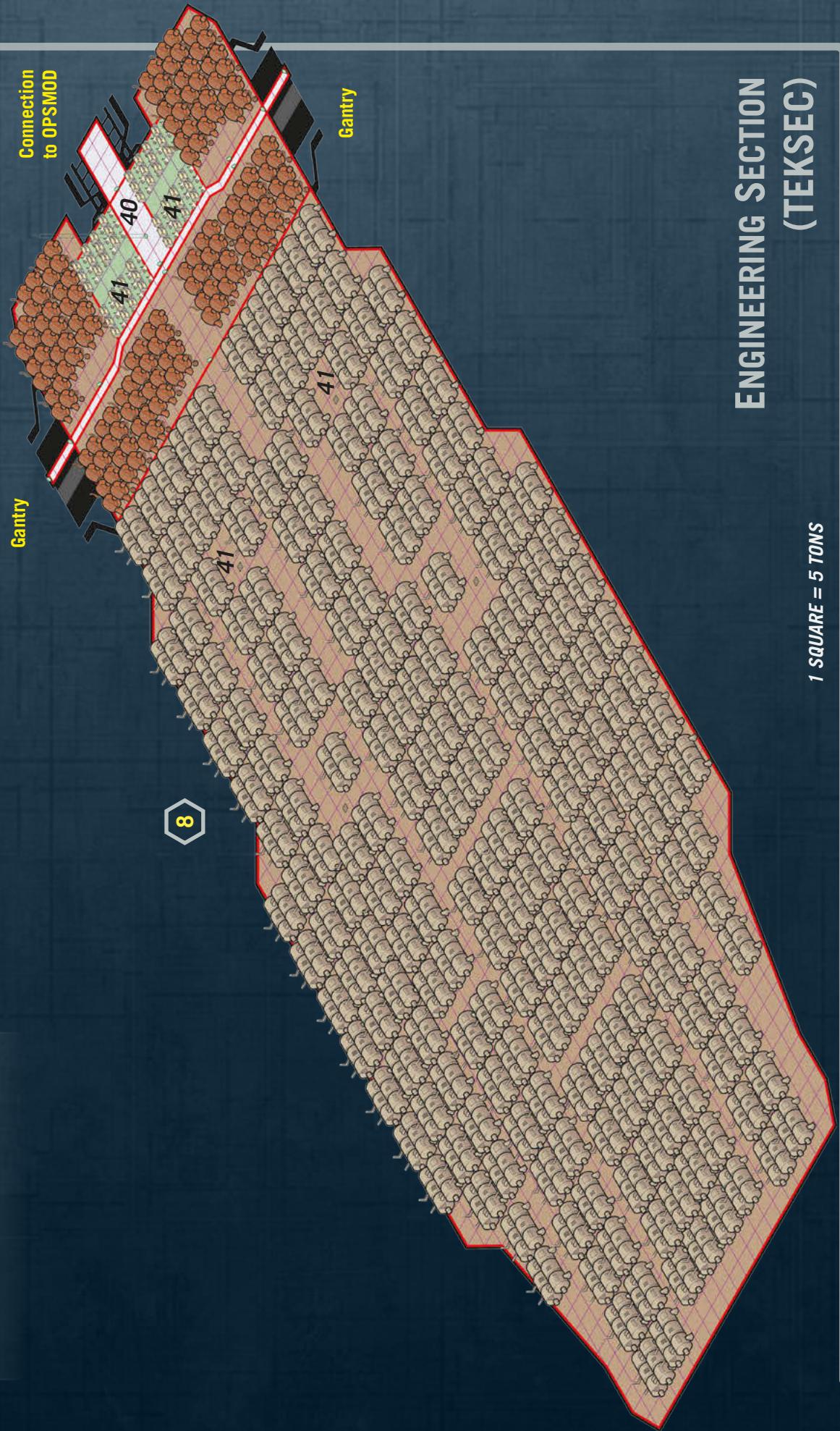
- 8.

Engineering Section  
See page (14)

## COMMAND SECTION, OPERATIONS MODULE (OPSMOD) & GANTRIES

## ENGINEERING SECTION (TEKSEC)

1 SQUARE = 5 TONS



## SCIENCE PODS

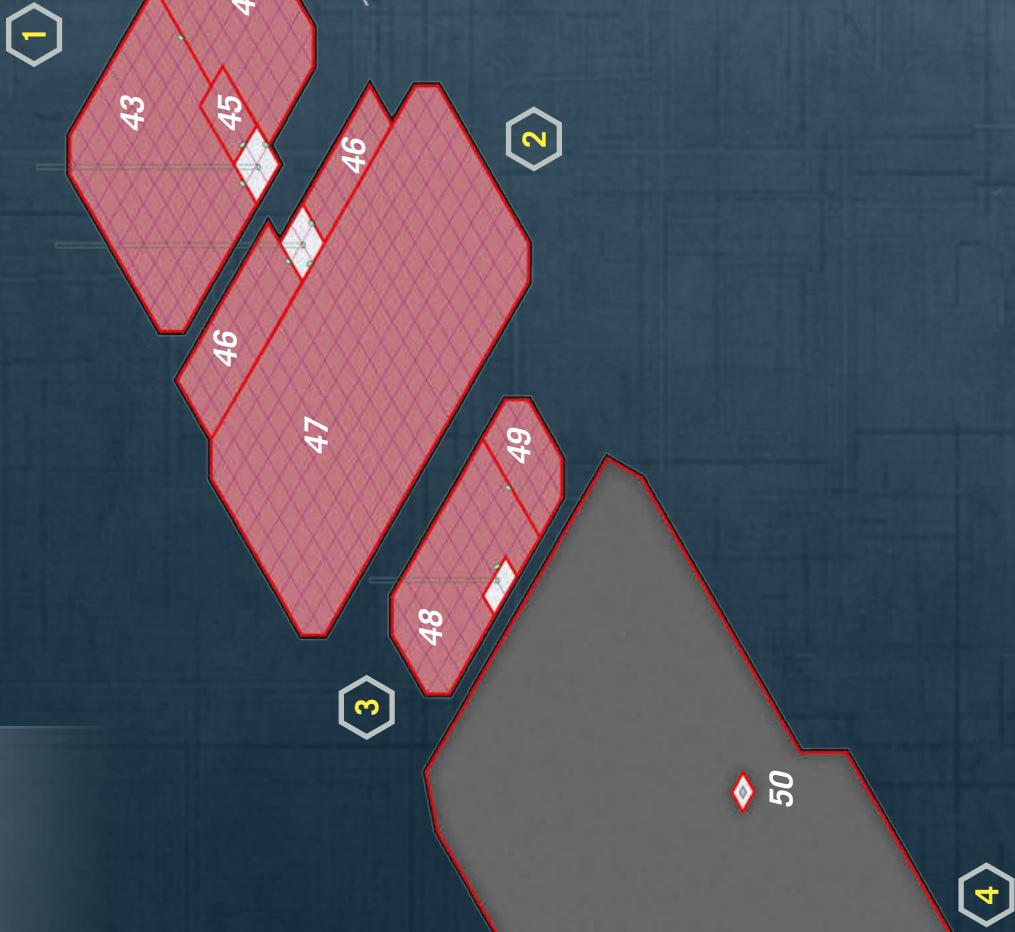
1 SQUARE = 5 TONS

**1** 43. MEDIUM OBSERVATORY  
44. LABORATORIES  
45. WORKSHOPS

**4** 50. LIFT TO TEKSEC AND  
ACCESS TO FUEL CONSOLE

**2** 46. SCIENTIFIC OPERATIONS SUITE  
47. LARGE OBSERVATORY

**3** 48. MULTI ENVIRONMENT SPACE  
49. SCIENTIFIC OPERATIONS SUITE



# DEEPNIGHT ENDEAVOUR FUEL SHUTTLE

[ X ]

TL15

TONS COST (MCR)

|              |                                 |      |       |
|--------------|---------------------------------|------|-------|
| Hull         | 10,000 tons, Close Structure    | -    | 450   |
|              | Radiation Shielding             | -    | 250   |
| M-drive      | Thrust 2 (Energy Efficient x 3) | 200  | 600   |
| Power Plants | Fusion (TL15), Power 5,000      | 250  | 500   |
| Fuel Tanks   | 1,440 weeks of operation        | 9000 | -     |
| Bridge       |                                 | 60   | 50    |
| Computer     | Computer/5 fib                  | -    | 0.045 |
| Sensors      | Military Grade                  | 2    | 4.1   |
| Systems      | Fuel Scoop                      | -    | 1     |
| Staterooms   | Standard x 6                    | 24   | 3     |
| Software     | Manoeuvre/0                     | -    | -     |
| Common Areas |                                 | 240  | 24    |
| Cargo        |                                 | 224  | -     |

## CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOT, ENGINEERS X 2,  
MAINTENANCE X 4

## RUNNING COSTS

### MAINTENANCE COST:

.....

### PURCHASE COST:

.....

## POWER REQUIREMENTS

500

MANOEUVRE DRIVE

2000

BASIC SHIP SYSTEMS

2

SENSORS

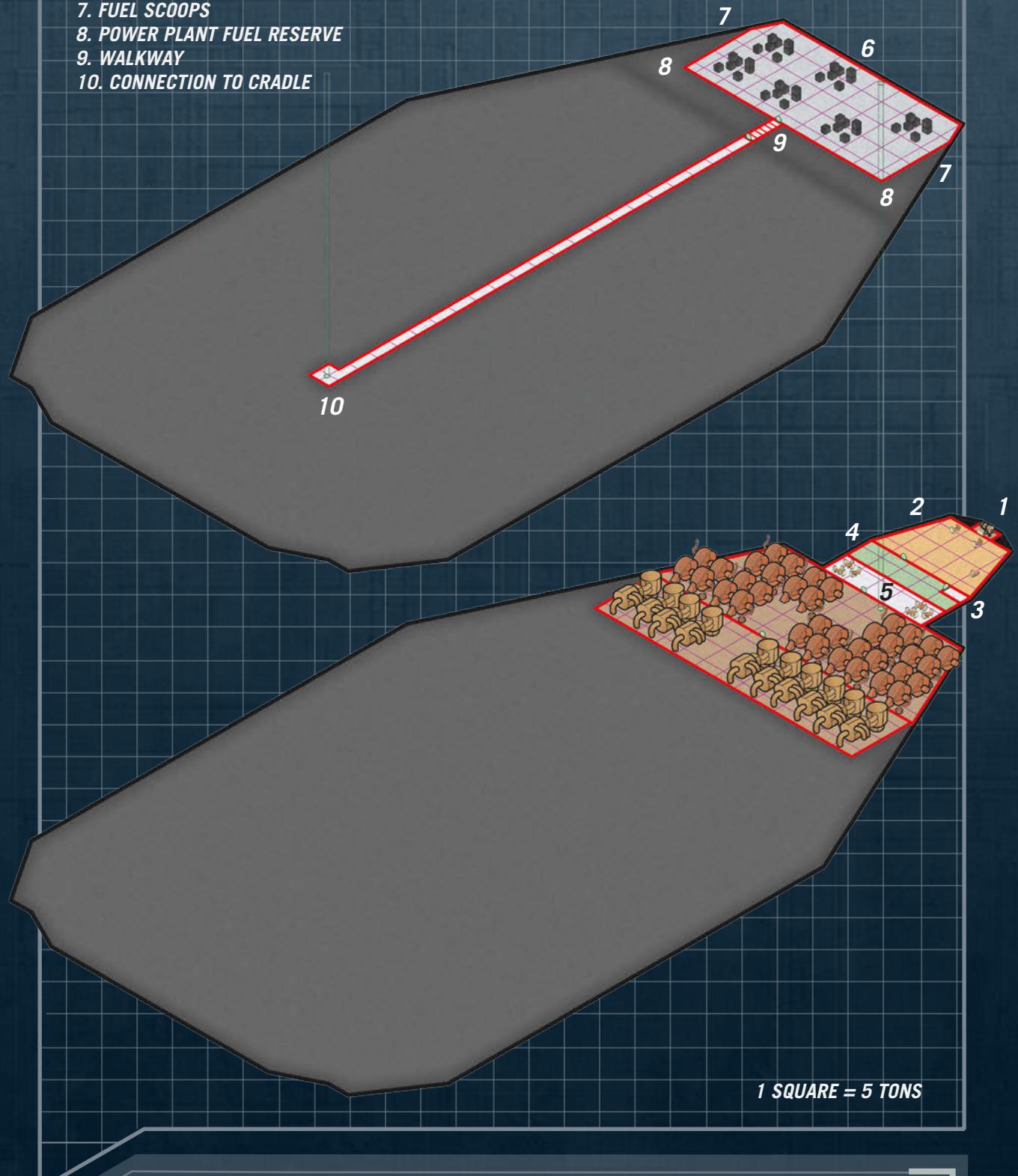


4400

HULL POINTS

Note that all six fuel shuttles are calculated into the Deepnight Endeavour's profile. The following should be used only if a fuel shuttle is detached.

1. SENSORS
2. BRIDGE
3. AIR LOCK
4. STATEROOMS
5. COMMON AREAS
6. CARGO HOLD
7. FUEL SCOOPS
8. POWER PLANT FUEL RESERVE
9. WALKWAY
10. CONNECTION TO CRADLE



# CREW

*Deepnight Endeavour* requires a considerable amount of effort just to keep her systems functioning, but as a large ship her systems are arranged more efficiently than on small merchant vessels. ‘Operating’ crew levels are significantly lower than normal, mainly to reduce fatigue and provide backup in an emergency. Many personnel are multi-skilled, carrying out a range of day-to-day tasks when their specialist area of expertise is not required.

*Deepnight Endeavour* has a lot of weapons, but as a non-military ship she cannot afford to carry large numbers of specialist gunners. Thus her crew is divided into three main areas – Flight, Engineering, and Operations – with a small number of weapons specialists attached to the Operations crew. The Command crew is not part of any of these departments, and includes the ship’s senior officers and some specialists who support them.

## Chain of Command

The ship’s captain is responsible for the safety and behaviour of the vessel and all her crew. Other senior officers have specific duties or areas of responsibility. In the event that the captain is unavailable, command devolves in a well-understood manner.

The crew of *Deepnight Endeavour* are less formal than those aboard military ships but, if anything, the chain of command is more important. Aboard a vessel many parsecs from assistance and in completely unexplored territory, mistakes can be fatal – as can disputes over who is in charge. The chain of command aboard *Deepnight Endeavour* is indicated by a system of ‘<sup>n</sup>th officer’ designations.

Once the end of this chain of senior officers is reached, command devolves to the most suitable officer available. This is (in theory) on the basis of the most senior surviving bridge or flight officer, unless a vastly more experienced officer from another department is available. In practice, once the senior officers are gone the situation is probably too desperate for any prior planning to be relevant. Note that some officers are not in the chain of command – a relatively junior bridge officer would be

expected to take over before the ship’s doctor, even if the doctor is an experienced naval officer.

The chain of command also dictates who can legitimately give orders to whom. To be valid, an order must come from the command crew and pass down the chain of command from a department head, through his subordinate officers, directly to the recipient. Thus, the ship’s engineering officer cannot give a legitimate order to a small-craft pilot whose chain of command runs through the Flight branch. In practice, if an experienced officer makes a ‘respectful suggestion’ to someone from another department, that department’s commander would endorse it and such an order would be considered legitimate unless it contravened regulations or contradicted orders coming through the normal chain of command.

Orders issued by officers with particular responsibilities are normally assumed to be issued with the consent and approval of their superiors. For example, when a department head gives orders to his subordinates, the order is assumed to have the authority of the captain and command crew behind it. There is no need for every order to be checked with the commanding officer, and a captain who tries to micromanage a ship by issuing all orders himself will rapidly run into serious difficulties.

Mission personnel are not part of the ship’s formal crew and are thus outside the chain of command, though they may have useful advice to offer. The mission officer is normally consulted before major decisions, but in a crisis the captain is in sole charge.

As might be expected, the Flight department operates the ship’s control systems and also crews small and subordinate craft. This gives *Deepnight Endeavour* a large pool of qualified pilots who can be assigned to whatever missions are required. Flight department also includes astrogation, navigational sensor operators and general bridge-watchstanding personnel.

Engineering department carries out all major technical tasks aboard *Deepnight Endeavour* and supplies engineers to subordinate craft as well. Engineering personnel also support subordinate craft operations and maintain any vessels or craft assigned to the parent ship.

## Chain of Command

| Position in Chain of Command | Responsibility Aboard Ship | Chain of Command Title |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1                            | Captain                    | Master                 |
| 2                            | Executive Officer          | First Officer          |
| 3                            | Flight Officer             | Second Officer         |
| 4                            | Weapons Officer            | Third Officer          |
| 5                            | Operations Officer         | Fourth Officer         |
| 6                            | Engineering Officer        | Fifth Officer          |

Operations department carries out all duties required to keep the ship and her crew functioning. This is subdivided

into several specialist areas, whose personnel often overlap in their duties and transfer from one task to another.

## Command Crew

The command crew is small, consisting of the following personnel:

- Captain:** In overall command
- Executive Officer:** Charged with making the captain's orders happen, and having an accurate summary of the situation available whenever needed.
- Weapons Officer:** Responsible for the maintenance and operation of the ship's weaponry. Although *Deepnight Endeavour* is not a military ship, her weapons officer is still very busy. They also oversee weapons-related tasks such as particle accelerator firings for scientific purposes.
- Master-at-Arms:** Not an officer, but the individual responsible for issuing small arms to personnel and if necessary enforcing the captain's wishes. The Master-at-Arms is often considered to speak for the captain on all matters other than manoeuvring the ship, and is essentially the most senior non-officer aboard.
- Administrative Officer:** Charged with keeping accurate records of stores expenditure and ensuring that mission logs are up to date.
- Ship's Clerks (3):** Full-time administrative personnel assisting the AO.

## Flight Department

Flight Department can be run by a skeleton crew, but numerous additional personnel are required to crew small craft, fuellers and other subordinate vessels. Critical positions such as astrogation and sensor operations are backed up by junior officers to provide round-the-clock coverage, cross-check findings and absorb casualties in the event of disaster.

- Flight Officer:** Heads the flight department.
- Astrogation Officer:** Senior astrogator aboard the vessel
- Assistant Astrogator (2)**
- Sensors Officer:** Officer in overall charge of sensor equipment necessary for shipboard operations ('mission' equipment may lie outside his remit)
- Bridge Officers (2)**
- Chief Pilot:** Senior pilot, in charge of all manoeuvring operations
- Craft Control Officer**
- Pilots (variable complement, typically 22 personnel)**

## Engineering Department

The most numerous department aboard *Deepnight Endeavour*, the personnel of Engineering are subdivided into two groups. Engineers are, for the most part, specialists who maintain the power plant, drives and major systems of the vessel and subordinate craft. Maintenance personnel are more general in their skillset and provide supporting expertise as well as carrying out the enormous number of routine tasks required to keep a big ship flying.

### Chief Engineer (Engineering Officer)

### Engineering Officers (3)

- Assistant Engineers (9)**
- Engineers/Drive Hands (51)**

### Maintenance Officers (3)

- Senior Maintenance Technicians (6)**
- Maintenance Technicians (36)**

## Operations Department

Operations is the most varied of all departments, with sub-departments each having a specialist role. Most personnel are multi-skilled and can switch between tasks at need. *Deepnight Endeavour* does not use military terminology accurately, if at all, since her particle and missile systems are intended for scientific applications and would be used against another ship only in self-defence. Note that *Deepnight Endeavour* only carries enough gunners for some of her armament. These personnel maintain all beam weapon systems and are often ‘borrowed’ by other parts of Operations. At need, a full complement of gunners is created by calling deck and maintenance personnel to the guns.

Deck personnel are the jacks of all trades among *Deepnight Endeavour*’s complement. They carry out whatever odd jobs need doing, though each has a definite secondary role – gunner, security/firefighting, medic, assistant steward, cargo handler, and so forth, and have the skills to match their role.

### Operations Officer

#### Directed-Energy Systems Officer

**Particle System Operators (4)**

**Beam Gunners (20)**

#### Remote Systems Officer

**Missile Bay Operators (8)**

**Missile/Probe Handlers (4)**

#### Chief Steward

**Steward (3)**

**Assistant Stewards (18)**

#### Chief Medical Officer

**Assistant Medical Officers (2)**

**Sick Bay Attendants (6)**

#### Senior Deck Officer

**Deck Officer (2)**

**Senior Deck Hands (6)**

**Deck Hands (24)**

## Mission Personnel

Mission personnel are not critical to the operation of the ship, and can vary considerably. Organisation of the tends to be on a team basis as necessary, with the mission officer liaising with rather than reporting to the captain. Mission personnel are expected to obey the captain’s orders in an emergency or any situation where the welfare of the ship or crew is at stake, but the rest of the time they are permitted to get on with their work as they think best.

On this mission, *Deepnight Endeavour* carried mainly space and planetary scientists as it was engaged in exploration work, with a small complement of social scientists and contact experts in case a new culture was discovered. Teams were formed of scientists and research assistants in a roughly 1:2 mix.

### Mission Officer

**Cosmology and Astrophysics Team (38)**

**Planetary Science Team (26)**

**Hard Sciences Team (physics, chemistry, metallurgy): 8**

**Life Sciences Team (biology, biochemistry): 12**

**Social Sciences Team (linguistics, xenoarchaeology, sociology): 9**

**Contact Team: 5**

**General Assistants: 17**

# GENERAL INFORMATION

*Deepnight Endeavour's* systems were laid out in a manner intended to balance concentration of components (and thus ease of use) with an ability to survive damage. Thus, there are small powerplant rooms throughout the ship, and computer cores are likewise dispersed.

Most of the ship's beam armament is mounted in turrets scattered all over the Primary Structural Members, with additional weapon mounts elsewhere to give a wider field of fire. The four large missile bays are located on each of the PSMs, between the fueller cradles, while particle beam bays are at the front tip of each PSM. There is a small amount of 'configurable' space within the various modules, left empty to permit additional stores, equipment or to be converted to mission-specific requirements. This space can be used to carry cargo but is not well situated for loading or unloading. Smaller stores and oddments are often dumped in these spaces.

In general, personnel are accommodated close to their primary place of work, but sensitivity to the need to survive a catastrophe prompted a policy of berthing some personnel elsewhere. Most of the engineering and maintenance crew are therefore berthed in the engineering module, close to the primary drive rooms and powerplant, but some are elsewhere, ensuring that a meteoroid strike cannot wipe out the entire engineering staff.

The ship's complement is geared towards a three-shift pattern, with most departments and sub-departments capable of carrying out normal operations at standard staffing levels. Large tasks require moving personnel from one shift to another but, given the amount of time *Deepnight Endeavour* spends in transit, most jobs can be done on a steady-effort basis.

*Deepnight Endeavour* shipped out carrying the following subordinate craft on her central docking rail:

**Type S Scout/Courier:** 4

**Type A2 Far Trader** (converted to carry additional fuel and stores): 4

**Type A2 Far Trader** (converted to low-capability exploration vessels): 4

The following small craft were berthed internally in the Flight Operations Pod, with some space left over:

**40-ton pinnace:** 12

The flight complement aboard *Deepnight Endeavour* was not quite sufficient to crew all these craft at once, but there were sufficient additional pilots, astrogators and engineers available among multi-skilled crewmembers that the whole subordinate craft complement could be deployed if necessary.

## Personal Weaponry and Equipment

As an exploration ship, *Deepnight Endeavour* could encounter almost anything. Her crew were armed for self-defence, some of the deck crew were specifically trained at shipboard security tasks (including combat but also firefighting, emergency procedures for a hull breach and rescue work), and a very small proportion of the ship's complement had security as their primary occupation. Most of the time this was simply unnecessary, so weapons would be issued when the master-at-arms or senior officers decided it was appropriate.

Most of the ship's guns and other equipment were stored in the main armoury (located with the master-at-arms' office and brig in the central part of the main hull), with emergency lockers scattered around the ship. The decision was taken to use a one-size-fits-all approach to armament for the mission, allowing a single ammunition type to be used for almost all weaponry. The weapon chosen was the snub pistol and a scaled-up version converted into a carbine. Very simple to use and with low recoil, these weapons were deemed ideal for personnel with little firearms training, and were eminently suitable for low-gravity operations.

The ship's more combat-experienced personnel might have disagreed with this choice, but it was cost-effective and reduced logistics load. In addition to 120 snub pistols and 30 snub carbines, the ship's armoury contained 20 laser rifles 'just in case'. Senior officers were issued a sidearm for emergencies, or could provide their own. Most took the standard snub pistol but a few chose a weapon more to their personal taste.

In addition to these guns, some specialist personnel were permitted to bring their own weapons aboard. These included body pistols for the contact team and powerful rifles for some exploration experts. All such weapons were stowed in the central armoury when not in use.

A few security stations throughout the ship contained a pair of snub pistols and batons for emergency use. These were secured by keycode but accessible by any officer or security specialist. The central armoury was accessed only on the authorisation of the captain, executive officer or master-at-arms.

## Primary Structural Members (PSM)

Each of the two PSMs is large enough to be a starship in its own right. Roughly rectangular in cross-section, the PSMs consist of a long, relatively narrow hull section with an external latticework of support and bracing members. Three cradles on the ventral surface of each PSM support the fuel modules when attached. The size of the fuellers can make the PSMs seem thin and flimsy, but up close their massive strength is obvious.

Each PSM has a particle accelerator bay at its foremost tip, along with some accommodation, workshops, recreation areas, and other general-purpose areas. The main attachment gantries for the primary modules are located on the inner surface of the PSM, between the docking cradles for the fuellers. On the outside of the PSM at these locations are the missile bays and probe storage areas.

The aft section of each PSM contains a small powerplant and manoeuvre drive. In theory, a severed PSM could be flown from the emergency controls contained in its drive rooms, but this would be tricky at best. A small amount of fuel is also stowed in this area, along with stores and supplies.

The dorsal and outer surfaces of the PSMs house most of the vessel's deployable sensor arrays and many of her instrument clusters. These are mainly found in the forward half of the PSMs, away from the drive section and its complex emissions.

## The Fuel Shuttles

Although spacecraft in their own right, the six fuellers are referred to as shuttles as they are not intended to operate independently other than when skimming fuel – they are essentially detachable fuel tanks that can fly off and refill themselves. Typically, a fueller will carry a crew of eight when skimming – two bridge-qualified personnel, two engineers and four multi-skilled crewmembers to ease the load on the experts. A starship of this size would require more crew, but the fuellers are really just ship's boats on a gigantic scale. The fuel modules are capable of 2G acceleration and have a very long endurance even without depleting jump fuel.

The fuel modules are built as self-contained vessels, making them more expensive than a typical breakaway section. However, this increases their survivability and – in theory at least – allows the design to be used for purposes unconnected with the *Deepnight Endeavour*-class of starship. Fuel shuttles of this design might be used to skim fuel from a gas giant and bring it to a refinery, for example.

The fuellers have an inverted teardrop cross-section, with most of the lower and 'fatter' part taken up with a 9000-ton fuel tank. Fuel scoops are located in a ring around the front of the teardrop. The single crewed deck contains the bridge, crew accommodation and living area, with powerplant and drives aft. Above this is a narrower 'access and cargo' deck which also contains a much smaller fuel tank for the powerplant reserve.

The cargo capacity of the fuellers is deliberately located where it is easy to access from the dorsal surface, as this is where the fuel module docks to *Deepnight Endeavour*. This space is therefore available as extra stowage for anything that does not fit easily in the PSM and is sometimes referred to as 'the basement'. Occasionally, a necessary item is found to be half a system away aboard a module engaged in skimming operations but most of the time the arrangement is satisfactory. Similarly, living space aboard these modules is generous, allowing the primary ship's crew to spread out a bit and enjoy a little more personal space.

## Attachment Gantry

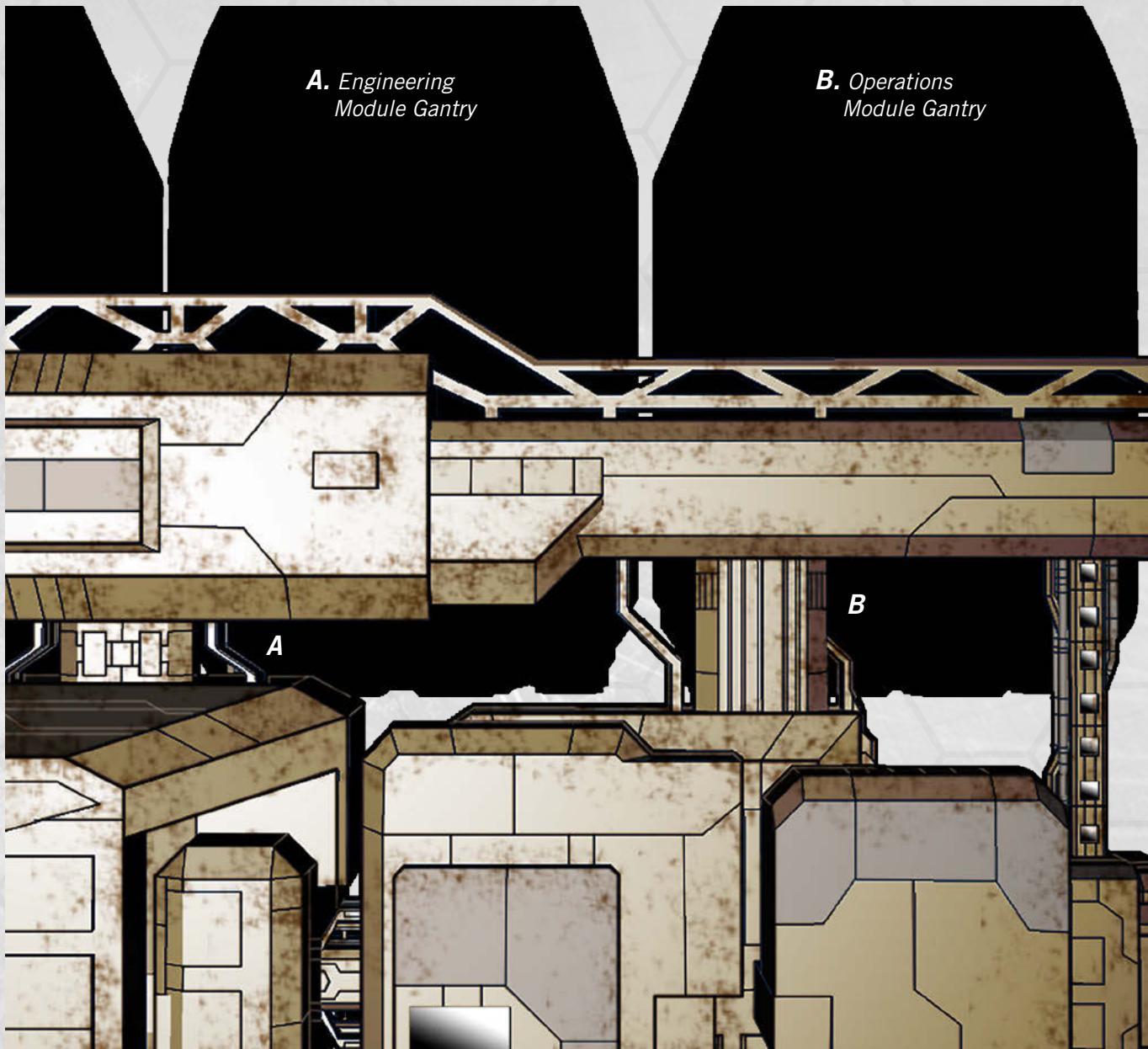
The port and starboard PSMs connect to the central modules by short access tubes running within heavy structural members. These are 'plumbed' to allow fuel to be transferred from the fuel modules to the internal tank or directly to the jump drive, and they also contain fuel processing equipment. The fuel shuttles cannot process their own fuel; it is pumped into the main hull for refining and then back into the shuttle tanks for storage.

The gantries are nothing more than connection components. They are heavily overbuilt to withstand a 2G turn with fully loaded fuellers attached to the PSMs. Other than a few stores lockers and miscellaneous electronic systems, the attachment galleries are structural rather than 'working' components.

## Operations Module (Opsmod)

The Operations module is the heart of *Deepnight Endeavour*. It contains the main accommodation and stores area, with most of the crew accommodation, galleys, recreational and common areas, and a large meeting hall frequently repurposed as a temporary stowage area whilst inventory is being taken. When not being misused in this manner, it allows the crew to gather for lectures, briefings and mission updates, as well as social activities. The Operations Module also contains a number of other specialist functions such as the brig, security office, armoury and medical centre.

The Opsmod lies between the two PSMs and is connected to each by the main attachment gallery plus



additional struts and bracing. The cargo module is directly connected to the ventral surface of the Opsmod, but is a separate structural component accessed only at a few points. These include a set of heavy-duty cargo lifts used to move stores up from the cargo hold to the Opsmod's stowage areas.

### Command Section (Comsec)

The Command Section is housed in a bulbous projection forward of the Opsmod, housing the bridge, administrative centre and a fair proportion of the ship's computer systems. There is an accommodation and

recreation block for the command crew (traditionally termed 'officers' country') and another for members of the flight crew usually assigned to bridge functions as opposed to subordinate craft operations.

The command section is connected to the forward part of the PSMs by bracing and struts, but is not normally accessed from them. There are emergency crawlways, but these are rarely used unless an inspection of every inch of the ship has been ordered. Normally, access is by way of a connecting tube from the Opsmod.

## Engineering Section (Teksec)

The engineering section lies aft of the Operations Module and is connected to it by a tube encased in supporting structural members. Like other structural components, and given the size of the ship, this looks flimsy but is in fact a heavily overbuilt structural member. Teksec (a corruption of 'technical section') is also linked to the PSMs by way of aft connecting gantries.

Teksec houses the main powerplant, most of the ship's manoeuvre drive components and the jump drive. There is also an accommodation block for most of the engineering and maintenance crew, with associated recreation facilities and common spaces. Most of the ship's internal fuel tankage is here, along with endless lockers for spares, tools and supplies.

## Flight Operations Pod (Flop)

The 'Flop' is connected to the ventral surface of the engineering module. It contains a command bridge normally used to control small-craft operations but which can coordinate a planetside mission or act as a full backup command facility for the entire vessel. In addition, the Flop has docking space for up to 500 tons of small craft, accessed by way of aft doors, with a secondary launch/recovery facility on each side. These are not rapid launch and recovery systems as found on naval carriers, but it is possible to have craft entering the ship at the rear and launching from the sides simultaneously.

It also contains workshops dedicated to supporting *Deepnight Endeavour*'s subordinate craft, a small amount of cargo space normally used for spares and stores, and fuel tankage for quick resupply of docked craft.

The Flop is connected to the cargo module by the docking rail, a gantry-like structure of lighter construction than the PSMs and attachment galleries, but still very robust. Within the gantry runs a corridor subdivided into sections in case of depressurisation. Twelve clamps on the ventral side of the rail each allow a craft of up to 300 tons to dock and be carried through jumpspace.

## Cargo Module (Hold)

The cargo module is made up mostly of cargo space, with the main hold subdivided by retractable partitions which can remain gas-tight provided they are not struck hard by a vehicle or cargo container. Smaller holds have permanent bulkheads around them, with some areas capable of being climate-controlled.

A set of cargo lifts connects the hold with Opsmod above, and the end of the docking rail also has an entry hatch to the cargo area. At the fore end of the cargo module is a large airlock which can dock craft of up to 1,000 tons for cargo transfer. Alongside this is an excursion chamber containing heavy-duty vacc suits and equipment for rescue and repair work.

## Forward Science Pod

The forward science pod is connected to the dorsal surface of Opsmod, and is currently configured for a mix of space sciences and astronomy, containing *Deepnight Endeavour*'s secondary observatory and an array of laboratories and workshops. Like the other dorsal pods, the forward science pod is rounded but not designed to withstand immense stresses in an atmosphere or high-g manoeuvring.

## Central Science Pod

The central science pod is the largest of the three dorsal pods, connected to the aft dorsal surface of Opsmod but not to any other part of the ship. It houses the main observatory as well as most of the ship's conferencing facilities and a very impressive data-presentation suite. Most of *Deepnight Endeavour*'s extendable arrays are located on the outer surfaces of this pod or the PSMs.

## Aft Science Pod

The aft science pod is located above the dorsal surface of the engineering module, connected to it but not to any other part of the ship, and is primarily dedicated to life sciences and facilities for the social scientists and contact team. It has extensive astrophysics instrumentation along its outer surfaces but these relay to the central and forward pods under the present configuration.

# THE FATE OF *DEEPNIGHT ENDEAVOUR*

The following account is for the use of the referee. The Travellers may be able to piece it together from logs or accounts of uninfected survivors. Such accounts are likely to be personal and – perhaps unintentionally – biased. Survivors will recount what they saw and what they did (perhaps phrased in a way that makes them seem more heroic or less culpable than the truth might) and will mix misconceptions and possibly incorrect beliefs. With enough effort, the Travellers might be able to fully reconstruct the events that occurred aboard this ship, but they should not be simply given a simple and correct narrative at the outset.

The story of *Deepnight Endeavour* is one of conflict between two opposing instincts; to protect and to survive. The crew inadvertently brought aboard the remains of a strange alien being, which infected the crew and began to take over the ship. It was not sentient or even malevolent, but its instinct was to survive, grow and spread. The desire of the crew to reach a safe port served the Entity's purpose; had *Deepnight Endeavour* made planetfall, an entire world might have been infected.

How the various crewmembers reacted to their circumstances might have been quite different with another crew but, fortunately for nearby worlds, those who realised the threat early enough were in a position to prevent the ship from returning. By doing so they condemned everyone aboard to a slow death, and set themselves against those who believed their first duty was to save the ship – or who simply wanted to get home alive.

*Deepnight Endeavour*'s mission went more or less according to plan at first. Several anomalies and deep space objects were visited either by the vessel herself or one of her subordinate craft, and data was sent home by courier. It was not until the mission entered its final phase that anything untoward happened. Whilst investigating a distinctly mundane – if large – interstellar comet, *Deepnight Endeavour* detected a number of other objects within reach of her jump-capable subordinate craft and dispatched vessels to visit them.

The vessel assigned to this particular object was a scout/courier, which went out with a 4-person crew in accordance with standard practice. Jumping to the location of the object, the scout ship found the object was a much larger ship which appeared to be a derelict vessel of Droyne origin. The vessel was very old – the crew estimated tens of thousands of years – and had decayed to the point where its structure was beginning to disintegrate.

Two members of the crew entered the wreck, salvaging artefacts for later analysis. Over a period of a few days, the scout ship crew made repeated forays into the wreck, finally encountering the remains of the Entity's central cluster. They took samples and returned to their vessel, puzzled. During preliminary analysis of the recovered material, the scout ship crew became infected. Infection progressed very quickly as they had been exposed to central tissue from the Entity. Within days two were dead and the others rapidly degenerating into Shamblers.

When the scout did not return, a second ship was sent to investigate. This too was standard practice; standing orders were to return quickly from a mission that discovered nothing of interest and remain on station to gather data if the location seemed promising. Since non-return might be due to a problem or a discovery, ay a second ship would be dispatched. This avoided wasted time spent returning to report a find then assembling a team to go back. The second crew had no idea what had befallen the first, but when their communications were not answered they quickly realised something was wrong.

Finding their sister vessel dead in space, the second crew boarded her and were attacked by the Shamblers. They made a brave attempt to search the scout ship for survivors, not initially realising the Shamblers were their former comrades. Retreating to their ship, the rescue crew jumped back to *Deepnight Endeavour*, unaware that one of their number had been infected. By the time they arrived at the parent ship, all four members of the rescue crew were showing symptoms.

The surviving scout/courier was recovered and her crew sent to *Deepnight Endeavour*'s medical facility, sealing the fate of the entire vessel and her crew. However, it was not immediately apparent what had happened.

Precautions were taken, but the crew simply did not know what they were dealing with and infection inevitably occurred as a result of the rescue crew's contact with the Shambler. Progress of the infection was much slower this time, manifesting at first as what appeared to be a viral outbreak not unlike influenza.

*Deepnight Endeavour* stayed on station long enough for her other jump-capable craft to return and the scientists aboard discussed whether they could find a cure and thus allow the mission to continue. As ever more crewmembers began showing signs of illness, the captain reluctantly decided to head for home.

En route, *Deepnight Endeavour* suffered a serious misjump. This was no navigational error but a deliberate misplot by the astrogator. Infection was progressing slowly, but the astrogator realised what was happening to her and made the decision to quarantine the ship in the most dramatic manner possible. By the time *Deepnight Endeavour* emerged from jump, the astrogator was severely ill, and once navigational readings had established a misjump had occurred the assumption was that it had been accidental.

With the ship in deep space rather than at a refuelling point, it was obvious that *Deepnight Endeavour* could not reach her fuel caches with remaining reserves. However, her captain was an old navy man and knew of a hidden deep-space refuelling point within reach – just. By discarding her fuel shuttles as they became empty, *Deepnight Endeavour* extended her jump range and managed to crawl towards the cache. Several fraught weeks passed, during which more of the crew became infected despite the best the science and medical personnel aboard could do.

By the time *Deepnight Endeavour* reached the cache, something was growing in one of the science pods, and the crew were fighting Shambler for control of Opsmod. Factions had emerged among the survivors, centring on the captain, mission officer and chief engineer. The captain was obsessed with bringing his ship home – or to any inhabited world where help might be available. The mission officer was infected at this time, and shared the captain's desire to get the ship to an inhabited world, though for a different reason. The chief engineer mistrusted the captain and led a mutiny, intending to use the ship's craft to evacuate her supporters.

A pitched battle took place as *Deepnight Endeavour* approached the fuel cache, fuelled by fear and paranoia. Factions that had started out arguing about how to go about an agreed necessary task now battled for control of the ship's key functions with snub pistols and wrenches from the tool lockers. In the middle of the chaos, the gunnery officer calmly – and in complete control of her faculties – turned the ship's weapons on the fuel cache. She had realised the ship carried something deadly that could not be allowed to reach an inhabited system, and quietly committed suicide to prevent it.

Return fire from automated defences severely damaged *Deepnight Endeavour*, and soon afterward a party of mutineers seized some of the subordinate craft. As they attempted to launch, *Deepnight Endeavour* fired upon them, resulting in a collision and fuel explosion that wrecked the flight operations pod.

*Deepnight Endeavour* still had fuel to run her powerplant but could not jump. Almost within reach of an inhabited world, she lay dead in space whilst survivors entrenched themselves in different parts of the ship. In the medical centre, the Entity reached its final form and began sending Clouds and Shambler to take over the rest of the ship. It had learned of the existence of populated worlds from those it infected, and its imperative was now to reach such a world. Instinctively, and without any understanding of what it was doing or why, the Entity worked towards getting a jump-capable vessel and reaching a world it could infect.

*Deepnight Endeavour* was no longer such a vessel, and all jump-capable craft were destroyed or inoperable, so the Entity slowed its expansion, eking out resources to last decades before slow deterioration would begin. If *Deepnight Endeavour* was found, the Entity would achieve its purpose. If not, it would go back to sleep for millennia. Time was on its side, and the longer some of the crew remained uninfected, the longer the Entity's reserves would last.

The crew fought to survive, and the Entity reduced its assault upon them. They tried to repair damaged craft, not knowing their escape from *Deepnight Endeavour* would do the Entity's work for it. They killed one another out of fear or over dwindling resources. And into this perilous situation came a band of Travellers....

# THE ENTITY

The Entity was found aboard a derelict starship. It is a form of life not previously encountered, and hard to categorise. It appears to have a cunning animal-level intellect taking the form of a central cluster of fungus-like material, capable of controlling distant parts of itself such as humans infected with its cells.

It is old. How old, it does not know. It is not sentient in the human sense, but is aware of its existence and imperative. It can learn and adapt. It has done so in the past and has forgotten much of what it knew.

The Entity is made up of living cells, some taken from crewmembers as they were slowly dissolved into the Entity's form. Other cells were grown from any source available – mould on bread, or a potted plant in an office cubicle; anything will suffice at need.

It knows nothing of malice or hatred. It simply does what it needs to survive and grow. It cannot be bargained with or bribed; it has no remorse or mercy, but will ignore people it does not need to deal with. It will absorb and use whatever it can, but will not seek out what it does not yet need. It is no more inimical than gravity, and no less deadly.

The Entity was almost dead when it was found aboard a Droyne starship that had been drifting for millennia.

Could it be some weapon left over from the Ancients' Final War, or something unconnected? Where did it come from? Are there more like it? These questions cannot be answered by anyone aboard *Deepnight Endeavour*, including the Entity. It does not know anything; it simply is, and does.

It needs water and air, though not much of the latter. It needs living cells to add to its mass, and it needs to feed those cells with organic matter. Hydroponics or a similar environment could help sustain it, growing plant matter to feed the central mass. However, the life processes of the Entity slowly break down its own structure, requiring replenishment with additional living matter. Animal cells provide high-value sustenance, with preserved food being of much lower value but still better than nothing.

The Entity exists to live and grow, and although it is not sentient its instincts and understanding of the universe expand as it gains in size. Absorbing self-aware beings with advanced cognitive functions may also allow the Entity to learn, but not in the academic sense to. Instead, its ability to sense and react will grow as it absorbs more people, and wane again as they degenerate and their braincells deteriorate. The Entity will instinctively try to reach a planet with life, without ever understanding what planets or starships are.



It has a primary cluster, the seat of most of its main functions. This is immobile, consisting of twisted fungus-like growths with discernible body parts of previous victims slowly being absorbed. Secondary clusters are similar but smaller. In addition, the Entity has three mobile elements: Clouds, Creepers and Shamblers.

The cluster possesses a form of crude instinctive telepathy which enables it to sense nearby creatures, and control remote clusters and minions. It does not seem to have much purpose beyond surviving and growing, but perhaps when the Entity reaches a certain size or level of sophistication a new phase of its existence will begin.

## INFECTION

A person or animal exposed to 'spores' from the Entity risks what can be called infection, though it is not quite the same as a disease. The spores are in fact tiny fragments of the Entity, typically just a few cells. Spores can be inhaled or absorbed by skin contact, but the most serious risk of infection comes from a wound that breaks the skin. To infect a person, these spores must make contact with the nervous system. Travelling through the bloodstream to reach spine or brain tissue is most effective; outer nerves are much less likely to be successfully infected.

Infection is by no means certain under any circumstances, though resisting it is more difficult if spores have reached the bloodstream. Conventional antibiotics and the like will not help – this is not a normal infection – but specialised drugs could be formulated to help the body fight the effects of infection. The Mission faction has managed to produce a suitable agent, but they may not be willing to share it.

To avoid infection when exposed to spores: Easy (4+) END check, DM-1 per point of damage suffered.

A check must be made immediately a Traveller is exposed, such as when entering an area with airborne spores or when a wound is taken. Prolonged exposure requires a check every hour. DM+2 applies to the check if the Traveller is taking basic precautions such as using a respirator. Exposure is not possible if the Traveller is inside a sealed suit, though removing one that has become contaminated might pose a hazard.

Infection is not likely from one-off contact, but over time it becomes certain. Once a Traveller becomes infected, they progress through the following stages:

**Exposed:** The Traveller's body will attempt to fight the infection, resulting in a slight fever, a generally 'unwell and out of sorts' feeling, and irritability. The Traveller

is still himself and in complete control of their actions; they may not realise they are infected at first. However, they will gradually become aware of a mental 'pull' which makes some actions seem more attractive than others. In short, they are still human but the Entity is beginning to take control.

**Infected:** The Traveller's body has been invaded by the Entity's cells, with small concentrations scattered throughout the body. These will grow in organs, especially the brain, and begin converting the tissue around them. The infected person retains free will but is prone to anger and will often display short periods of extreme clumsiness. A Traveller who is at this stage can be saved if the invading cells are destroyed, but this would be a complex medical procedure. The 'pull' is much stronger, prodding the Traveller towards actions that benefit the Entity. A Traveller may feel an overwhelming compulsion to take a particular action such as opening a door or bite (and infect) someone else. Resisting this requires an Average (8+) INT check.

**Controlled:** The Traveller is now under the control of the Entity, at least in a general way. Damage to their cells will be apparent in their appearance and the way they tend to lurch and stumble from one action to another. Controlled people retain their skills to some extent and can be used for complex tasks like changing the ship's sublight course or cutting through a door. They cannot perform complex mental tasks such as setting up a jump plot, however. The Entity itself does not really understand the tasks its minions carry out; it knows it wants something on the other side of a barricaded door, but it is the remnant intellect of the controlled person that realises the door could be cut through. Controlled people gradually degenerate and lose their faculties, eventually becoming Shamblers.

**Shambler:** Shamblers are little more than animated corpses. Most life functions have stopped and brain activity is virtually zero. Shamblers resemble a mass of fungal matter and protoplasm in a generally humanoid shape, and are useful only as raw labour to carry objects or attack enemies. Shamblers degenerate over time, and are typically drawn back to the central cluster to be absorbed into it as they become increasingly useless.

## PROGRESS OF INFECTION

Every 2D hours, an Exposed or Infected Traveller must make a Routine (6+) END check. Failure results in progression to the next stage of infection. Success indicates the Traveller has resisted progression but is not cured; an Effect of 6+ indicates the Traveller has completely defeated the infection and is now free of it.

Medical assistance can help, and treatment of symptoms provides DM+1 to resist, whilst a treatment developed specifically to fight the infection will provide DM+2.

Once the Controlled stage is reached, degeneration into a Shambler is inevitable. This typically takes 3D days but can be much longer in some cases. Shamblers last a further 4Dx10 days before the final decline begins. This takes another 4Dx10 days before the Shambler becomes immobile. It will normally be withdrawn to a cluster halfway through this time and end its existence as an increasingly misshapen servitor. Some body parts may retain mobility after the Shambler has collapsed, creating a mass of arms and legs which can be a threat to anyone approaching the central cluster.

## CLOUDS

Clouds are made up of spores, small fragments of matter from the Entity. They may be held together by a form of telekinesis; clouds flow as if slightly heavier than air but can rise up a shaft or over an obstruction, though they cannot get past a sealed door or an area exposed to hard vacuum. Contact with a Cloud can result in infection. Clouds are used mainly as relatively fast moving scouts and guards, ensuring unprotected personnel cannot approach an area claimed by the Entity without infection.

The Clouds are able to find their way through poorly secured ventilation grilles and similar small openings but are defeated by measures as simple as good filters or stuffing rags into cracks around doors. They cannot directly harm someone, but anyone exposed to a Cloud runs the risk of infection. Clouds will stick to anyone wearing protection such as a respirator or vacc suit, trying to find a way in. This is very frightening, and can induce panic.

*To avoid panicking when under attack by a Cloud:*  
Average (8+) END check.

Panicked individuals will try to flee the area or get the Cloud off, perhaps by using a shower or fire hose. They may cause problems such as opening secured doors and allowing the Cloud into a previously safe area, or crashing into other Travellers and perhaps knocking their respirators off. However, for those who keep their heads, Clouds are a creeping, insidious threat rather than an imminent danger.

Clouds can be dispersed by a powerful jet of water or air, though this takes effort and requires the jet to be concentrated where it will have the maximum effect. A dispersed Cloud will reform in a few hours, but could be contained in a tank or other sealed vessel. Randomly blowing bits of Cloud around might also expose additional personnel to infection.

*To safely disperse a Cloud, or drive it into or out of an area:* Difficult (10+) DEX check, (1D rounds).

The referee should use Clouds as a creeping menace and a way to drive the plot of the adventure. The need to keep filters repaired and shore up failing seals should drive survivors and Travellers to scavenge for components in potentially dangerous parts of the ship, and can provide a backdrop of constant menace and tension. Clouds are in many ways the least immediately threatening yet most dangerous of all the Entity's tools. They will eventually get into an area and infect those within, robbing them of their humanity and turning them into a threat to other survivors.

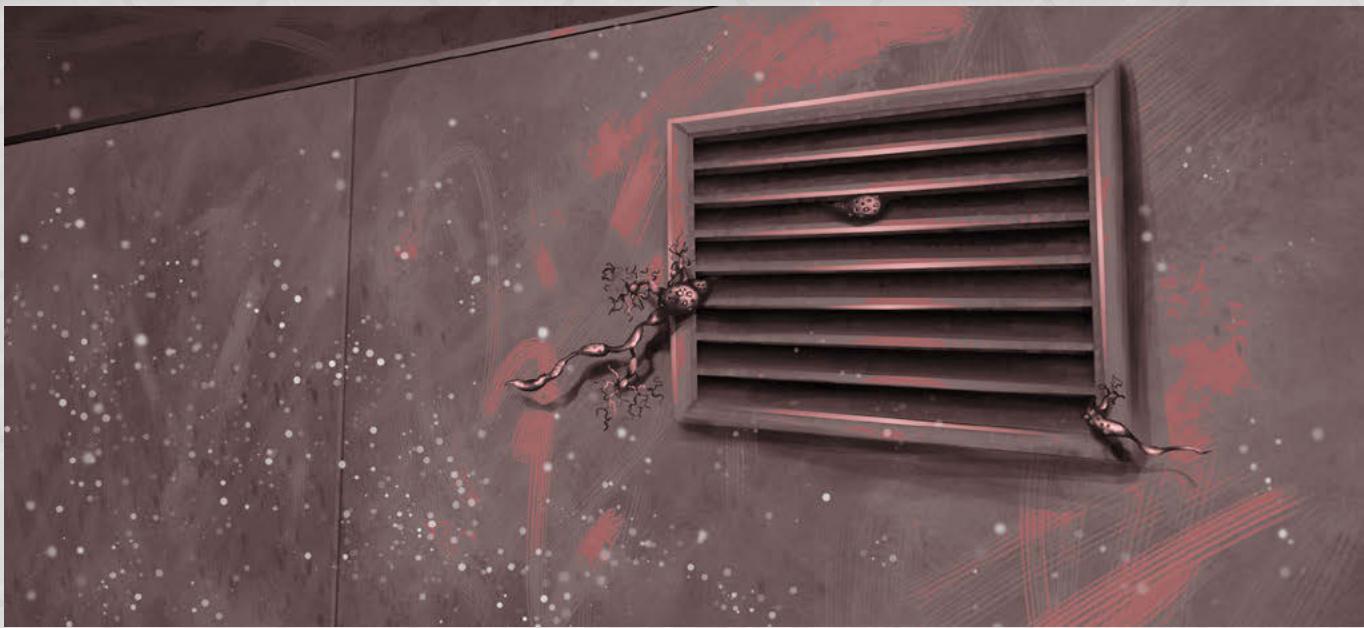
## CREEPERS

Creepers are detached parts of the Entity. They resemble vegetation or fungal matter, and could easily be missed in a cursory glance of a cluttered area. Creepers move slowly through the ship, seeking concentrations of organic matter to feed upon. A Creeper could in time grow into a small or main cluster, though the process would be very slow. Mobile Creeper segments are small; typically less than 30cm long. However, one that finds a suitable source of nourishment – such as a corpse, hydroponic plant bed or pile of ration packs – will begin to grow. Eventually this infestation will grow into another cluster.

Creepers are also more of an insidious threat than an immediate one. They move slowly through ducts or corridors, and can apply a surprising amount of force to very slowly bend seals or panels aside. Anyone who touches a Creeper runs the risk of infection, even through protective clothing. The Creeper will sense living flesh and begin to push tiny tendrils into it, clinging to clothing or suits as it tries to penetrate a seam, seal or the weave of cloth. Penetration requires 1D rounds plus 2 rounds per point of Protection. If the Creeper is noticed during this time, it may be dislodged by scraping or knocking it off, but grabbing it is likely to result in attachment to a new host.

*To dislodge a Creeper:* Average (8+) DEX check (1 round).

Creepers can be completely destroyed by intense heat or immersion in a corrosive substance for a period of minutes. Deliberate destruction with a device such as a blowtorch takes 1D rounds, though the Traveller will need to avoid contact during this time, and Creepers will be automatically killed by a Fire weapon. Cryogenic weapons will freeze a creeper and render it dormant for 2D hours, but will not kill it. Even if smashed whilst frozen, the Creeper will reform or continue to exist as several smaller Creepers.



They will creep into places where they can be inadvertently touched or slowly force a panel open. Some Creepers take the form of long tendrils leading out from a cluster, but most are independent. An infestation of Creepers may grow in a chamber, making it impassable, or may jam a doorway rather than forcing it open. This is not always due to some plan on the part of the Entity; much of its behaviour and that of its minions tends to be instinctive and sometimes counterproductive. Thus, some areas the Travellers might want to pass through could be completely choked with Creepers without being of any benefit to the Entity.

## CONTROLLED PEOPLE AND SHAMBLERS

Shamblers are humans who have been fully infected by the Entity, passing through a stage where they retain skills and capabilities, at least to some extent. A Shambler starts out nearly indistinguishable at first glance from the person it used to be. Over time, neural pathways break down until the Shambler is good only for absorption as food. Thus, some early-stage Shamblers are essentially controlled people who can carry out complex tasks or use firearms, whilst those in the later stages are simply lumbering corpses.

Rebuilding a Shambler to the point where it can carry out tasks such as opening an airlock might be possible for the Entity but this would absorb a lot of resources. It would only be done at desperate need unless the Entity had resources to spare. Shamblers do not seem to have much memory – if any – of who they were but do sometimes retain the ability to open electronic doors and may even be able to input a security code.

Thus, any Shambler might be able to carry out complex actions, which could surprise Travellers who think they have figured out what Shamblers can and cannot do.

Shamblers and controlled people are treated more like conventional opponents than Creepers or Clouds. A controlled person is still alive, and can be harmed or killed by normal means. However, a dead controlled person might immediately become a Shambler if infection is sufficiently advanced. If not, the infection will spread rapidly through the dead tissue and produce a Shambler later. Roll 3D-6 when a controlled person is killed. The result is the number of hours before the corpse becomes a Shambler. A result of zero or less indicates that this occurs immediately.

A controlled person can be stopped from turning into a Shambler by the same means as a Shambler can be destroyed. Cremating the body will work, whilst extreme cold will halt the process until the corpse is reheated. Dismembering a controlled body will prevent a Shambler from arising, but the corpse may begin to put out Creepers instead. Fighting Shamblers and controlled people can be a disquieting affair, with some casualties refusing to stay dead and others sprouting Creepers an hour or two later. Scenes of previous encounters could become overgrown and choked with Creepers.

As noted above, controlled people take normal damage from all sources. Shamblers take full damage from explosives, energy weapons and fire, but are difficult to kill with other means. Normal projectiles, blades and bludgeoning weapons have their damage halved. Impaling weapons and low-velocity projectiles like spears or arrows do 1 point of damage per dice normally rolled, ignoring any additional points (so, for

## Controlled Crewmember

| SPECIES     |   | GENDER  |   | AGE                             |
|-------------|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Human/Vargr | - | -   | - |                                 |
| STR         | 8 | INT   | 5 | SKILLS                          |
| DEX         | 6 | EDU   | 3 | Athletics 0, Electronics 0, Gun |
| END         | 8 | SOC   | 3 | Combat 0, Melee 0, Recon 0      |
| EQUIPMENT   |   | Snub Revolver (3D-3) (DM-2 to attack), Improvised Weapon (2D-2) |   |                                 |

example, a dagger normally doing 1D+2 damage only does 1 point of damage to a Shambler). Cutting or blowing a Shambler apart renders it incapable of action but does not prevent Creepers from growing from the remains. Only destruction by fire or similar means will prevent this.

Controlled people can use firearms, though not well. They suffer DM-2 to attack rolls with any ranged weapon but fight normally with melee weapons. Shamblers can use melee weapons, though with DM-2 for their clumsiness, and will normally treat firearms as improvised weapons. However, occasionally a Shambler will retain enough memory to loose off a few random shots.

## CLUSTERS

Clusters are immobile masses of protoplasmic flesh and ropy fungal matter. Typically, a cluster consists of several clumps of matter linked with tendrils, with half-absorbed Shamblers visible here and there. The central Cluster is much larger, and has a carpet of half-absorbed Shamblers surrounding it. These can grab at anyone approaching, and concealed among them are several servitor Shamblers not yet being absorbed. These can ambush intruders or drag them towards the central Cluster.

Clusters are not defenceless. In addition to the Shamblers, Clusters can also attack with tendrils which are essentially large Creepers. Some are heavy enough to bludgeon a Traveller; others will simply grapple them.

Tendrils can be severed by delivering 6+ damage in a single blow with a bladed implement. This will still leave the end of the tendril attached to the Traveller, which may result in infection in the same manner as having a Creeper attached. A small cluster has 1D tendrils available; the central cluster has 3D. Half of the available tendrils will grapple while the other half are capable of bludgeoning for 3D damage.

Killing a Cluster is not easy. Tendrils can be cut but will simply fall to the floor and eventually be absorbed or begin to grow from their new attachment point.

## Shambler

| ANIMAL    | HITS                                | SPEED |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Shambler  | 25                                  | 3m    |
| SKILLS    | Melee (bludgeon) 1                  |       |
| ATTACKS   | Club (2D) or Arms (1D); DM-2 to hit |       |
| TRAITS    | Special (see description)           |       |
| BEHAVIOUR | Mindless                            |       |

The Cluster itself is resilient in the same manner as Shamblers, and requires a great deal of effort to destroy. If damaged, a minor Cluster regenerates hits at the rate of 1D per hour; this rate is 3D for the central Cluster. Doing so uses up resources, requiring replenishment with organic cells, but a Cluster can rebuild its own structure using internal resources for quite some time.

Fire, explosives, or corrosive liquids are the most efficient way to deliver damage to a Cluster, though one could be rendered inert by exposing it to cryogenic fluids or hard vacuum. This will not kill it, but will cause it to become dormant which might give time for a more permanent solution.

Even reducing a Cluster to 0 hits will not kill it, merely spread its components around. Eventually, it will recombine and even if just spores and fragments remain, a new Entity may grow once a food source or more people to infect become available. Abandoning an Entity on a dead ship with no organic material to absorb might eventually kill it, but it could sustain itself for thousands of years in a dormant state, slowly consuming its own cells.

To get rid of a Cluster completely would require utterly destroying its cells with heat or some other form of energy. Intense ultraviolet light will sterilise Cluster cells and spores, but not quickly. Fire will kill most of the cells present but may blow some around; intense heat contained in a small area would be sufficient to kill a cluster, as would prolonged exposure to hard radiation. It might be possible to do this but if any material whatsoever survived, there would always be a risk of future infection.

A quick-and-dirty purge of all spaces with heat, UV light and/or radiation might suffice to make the ship operable in the short term providing precautions were taken, but if *Deepnight Endeavour* is recovered and put back into service, then sooner or later the disaster will be repeated – and in the meantime, she might infect other vessels or whole worlds. The only way to be sure is to completely destroy the ship, perhaps by sending her into a star.

# CREW AND FACTIONS

In the months since the discovery of the Entity, the crew has fragmented into three major factions and several smaller groups. Certain individuals have also emerged as personalities with whom the Travellers might have to interact. In general, the survivors are paranoid and less

than completely rational as a result of being trapped in deep space with a malevolent entity capable of turning them into monsters. Most have no real idea what is going on, and a variety of wild theories and baseless suppositions exist.

## THE BRIDGE FACTION

The Bridge faction centres on *Deepnight Endeavour's* captain, Miklos Zenkhuirli. It is the largest of the factions, with 23 surviving members, and claims the command section as its territory. The faction is not large enough to control the whole module, and remains close to the bridge. Occasional armed parties are sent out through crawlways to the starboard PSM and thence to other parts of the ship, and more commonly the faction scours the command section for useful items.

The faction tends to be authoritarian in outlook and members are convinced they have the right to give orders to anyone as they are reporting directly to the captain. They rarely negotiate as such, preferring to demand obedience to the chain of command or their superior numbers. The Bridge faction is in what might be termed a blood feud with the Engineering faction; many members have become obsessed with putting down the mutiny rather than saving the ship and everyone aboard.

The Bridge faction has been struggling to obtain sufficient food for some time, and is considering a raid in force to secure a stockpile of rations that has been recently located. Food

**Members:** 23

**Primary Location:** Command Section

**Agenda:** Save the ship, get home, put down the mutiny in Engineering

### NOTABLE MEMBERS:

- Bridge Faction Member
- Captain Miklos Zenkhuirli
- Master-at-Arms Riece Arbonne

would be a useful bargaining chip with them, and might offset the malnutrition and physical weakness that many faction members display.

There are significant stocks of bulk rations in the cargo pod, most of which are untouched due to the difficulty of getting at them. The operations module also has large amounts of food and dietary supplements still in the galley storerooms, but getting to these might be hazardous – the stocks in safer areas have been picked clean.

### Bridge Fraction Member

| SPECIES     | GENDER | AGE  |
|-------------|--------|--|
| Human/Vargr | -      | -  |
| TRAITS      |        | SKILLS   |
| STR 6       | INT 8  | Athletics 0, Electronics (sensors),              |
| DEX 7       | EDU 9  | 1, Gun Combat (slug) 1, Melee 0,                 |
| END 4       | SOC 5  | Recon 0  |
| EQUIPMENT   |        | Snub Revolver (3D-3) or Improvised Weapon (2D-2) |

## Captain Miklos Zenkhirli

| SPECIES |   | GENDER               |    | AGE  |
|---------|---|----------------------|----|--|
| Human   |   | Male                 |    | -  |
| TRAITS  |   |                      |    | -  |
| STR     | 5 | INT                  | 9  | SKILLS   |
| DEX     | 8 | EDU                  | 10 | Athletics 0, Diplomat 2, Electronics (computers), 3, Gun Combat (slug) 1, Leadership 3 |
| END     | 5 | SOC                  | 10 |  |
| WEAPONS |   | Snub Revolver (3D-3) |    |  |

Captain Zenkhirli is unlikely to leave the bridge area without pressing reason. If he does, he will be protected by the master-at-arms and some of his most healthy supporters.



## Master-at-Arms Riece Arbonne

| SPECIES |   | GENDER                          |   | AGE                               |
|---------|---|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Human   |   | Male                            |   | -                                 |
| TRAITS  |   |                                 |   | -                                 |
| STR     | 8 | INT                             | 6 | SKILLS                            |
| DEX     | 6 | EDU                             | 7 | Athletics 2, Gun Combat (slug) 2, |
| END     | 9 | SOC                             | 7 | Melee (bludgeon) 1, Recon 1       |
| WEAPONS |   | Snub Revolver (3D-3), Club (2D) |   |                                   |

The master-at-arms is loyal to his captain, and acts as his bodyguard when not leading expeditions into other parts of the ship. Any party of Bridge faction personnel is likely to be led by him.



# THE ENGINEERING FACTION

The Engineering faction is far more pragmatic than the Bridge faction in outlook. They follow the Engineering Officer, Dakh Moralder, as she showed them the impossibility of surviving in the long term aboard *Deepnight Endeavour* and had lost faith in the captain. Dakh, who is racially a Vargr but completely Imperial in cultural outlook, wants only to get her followers off the ship. To this end, she sends out small parties to scavenge absolutely everything that might be of value, even if this means risky expeditions into the parts of the Operations Module infested by the Entity.

The 17 members of the Engineering faction do not return the enmity of the Bridge faction. They will fight if attacked but are focussed on escape rather than conflict. The Engineering faction is the most likely to ignore what the Travellers have to say and simply grab their ship, but is also the most amenable to a practical plan offering a chance of survival for everyone.

**Members:** 17

**Primary Location:** Engineering Section

**Agenda:** Escape the ship; gather all useful items and hoard them

## NOTABLE MEMBERS:

- Engineering Faction Member
- Chief Engineer Dakh Moralder

The Engineering faction are better fed than the Bridge faction but obsessed with power and fuel. Power plant spares or access to the fuel system would be a potent bargaining chip.

## Engineering Faction Member

| SPECIES                            | GENDER | AGE                               |
|------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Human/Vargr                        | -      | -                                 |
| <b>TRAITS</b>                      |        |                                   |
| STR                                | 8      | INT                               |
| DEX                                | 9      | EDU                               |
| END                                | 7      | SOC                               |
| <b>SKILLS</b>                      |        |                                   |
|                                    | 8      | Athletics 0, Electronics          |
|                                    | 7      | (computers), 1, Mechanic 2, Melee |
|                                    | 6      | 0, Recon 0                        |
| <b>EQUIPMENT</b>                   |        |                                   |
| Cutlass (3D), Tough Coveralls (+2) |        |                                   |

Most members of the Engineering faction have made themselves a weapon (usually a cutlass) in the ship's workshops. Some designs are rather fanciful but all are deadly. There are a few guns in the Engineering section but ammunition is in very short supply.

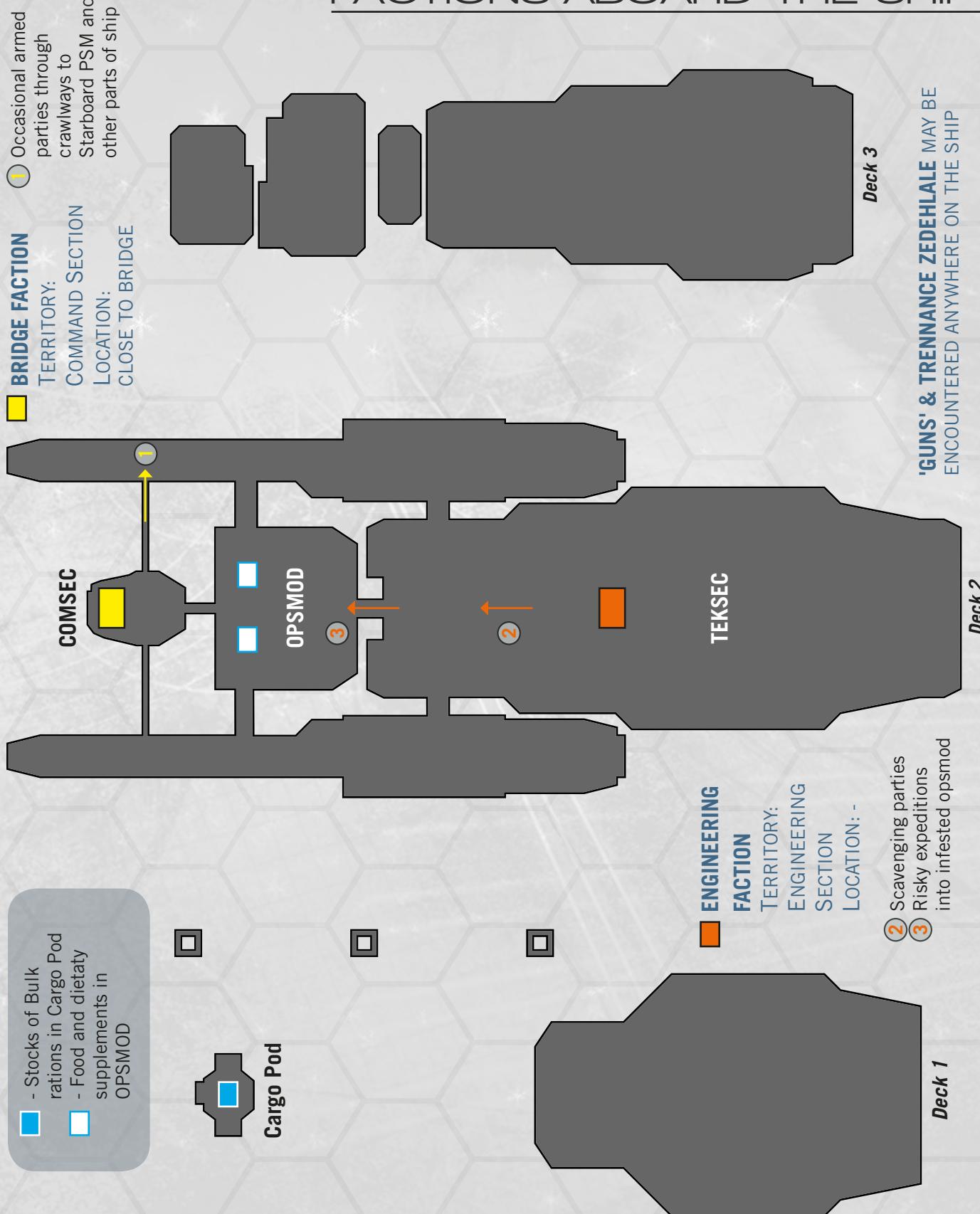
## Chief Engineer Dakh Moralder

| SPECIES                            | GENDER | AGE  |
|------------------------------------|--------|--|
| Vargr                              | Female | -  |
| <b>TRAITS</b>                      |        |  |
| STR                                | 7      | INT  |
| DEX                                | 8      | EDU  |
| END                                | 7      | SOC  |
| <b>SKILLS</b>                      |        |  |
|                                    | 9      | Athletics 0, Electronics (remote ops)  |
|                                    | 9      | 2, Engineer (j-drive) 4, Gun Combat (slug) 1, Leadership 1, Mechanic 2, Melee 0, Persuade 2, Recon 0 |
| <b>WEAPONS</b>                     |        |  |
| Snub Revolver (3D-3), Cutlass (3D) |        |  |

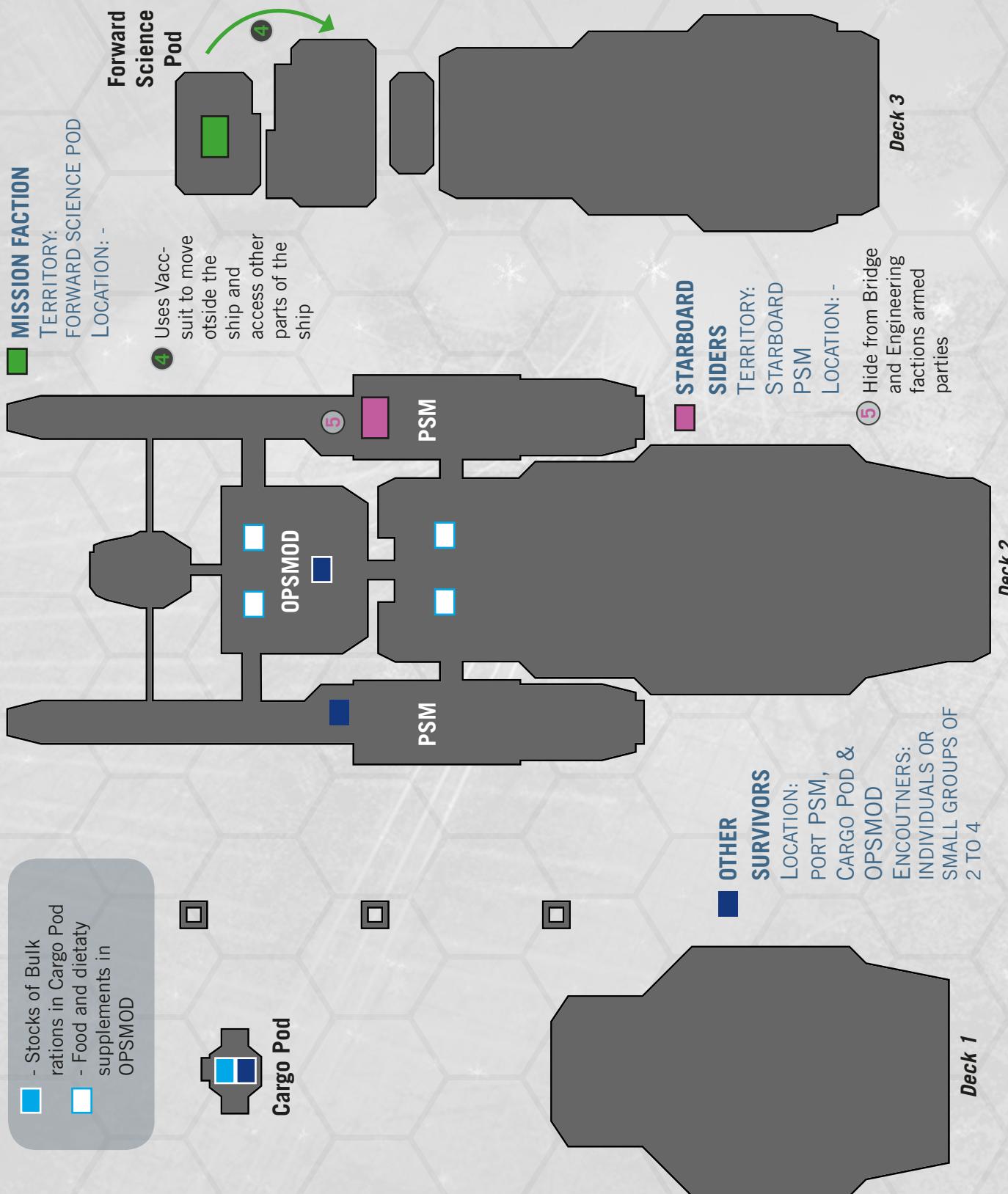
Dakh Moralder is a Vargr, one of about a dozen among the crew. She is highly respected among her followers, but takes too many personal risks. This has won the enduring loyalty of her faction but her insistence on doing everything herself will sooner or later leave them leaderless.



# FACTIONS ABOARD THE SHIP



# FACTIONS ABOARD THE SHIP



# THE MISSION FACTION

The Mission faction formed around the Mission Officer, whose agenda was to find a scientific solution to the disaster. Joined by some of the crew, the faction retreated to the forward science pod and destroyed most of the connecting shafts. Faction members make the occasional foray, often using vacc suits to move around the exterior of the hull and gain access to other areas without going through hazardous areas. The faction's scientists are working to slow down the infection and reverse it, and have made significant progress. In fact, they have made more progress than they know.

The Mission Officer, Jarla Kleine, was among the first infected along with several of the life sciences personnel. She successfully concealed her symptoms and worked with her colleagues to find a cure. Most succumbed quickly, but they produced an exotic drug which offered some promise. Jarla used the first batch on herself out of desperation, and it appeared to work. Indeed, a refined form of the drug can help the body fight the Entity's infection and in some cases even reverse it. However, the first batch was flawed.

**Members:** 12

**Primary Location:** Forward Science Pod

**Agenda:** Find a Cure; purge the Entity from the ship

## NOTABLE MEMBERS:

- Mission Faction Member
- Mission Officer Jarla Kleine

Although outwardly fine, Jarla has Entity cells in her nervous system and has increasingly aligned herself with it. She is capable of being her usual charming and highly intelligent self, but is secretly plotting to bring the Entity to an inhabited world. If a whole cluster cannot be transported, enough of its matter to rapidly create a new Cluster will suffice. Jarla's supporters do not share her allegiance but are sufficiently suspicious of the other factions that they will follow Jarla's lead even if obviously questionable acts are called for.

## Mission Fraction Member

| SPECIES                          | GENDER                   | AGE |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| Human/Vagr                       | -                        | -   |
| TRAITS                           |                          |     |
| STR                              | 5                        | INT |
| DEX                              | 8                        | EDU |
| END                              | 9                        | SOC |
| SKILLS                           |                          |     |
| Electronics (computers) 2, Melee |                          |     |
| 0, Recon 0, Science (varies) 3   |                          |     |
| WEAPONS                          | Improvised Weapon (2D-2) |     |

## Mission Officer Jarla Kleine

| SPECIES        | GENDER | AGE   |
|----------------|--------|---|
| Human          | Female | -   |
| <b>TRAITS</b>  |        |   |
| STR 6          | INT 11 | SKILLS  |
| DEX 2          | EDU 13 | Electronics (computers) 3,<br>Investigate 2, Melee 0, Persuade 3, |
| END 5          | SOC 9  | Recon 0, Science (biology) 5                                      |
| <b>WEAPONS</b> |        | Snub Revolver (3D-3)  |

Jarla is both fully in control of herself and wholly aligned with the Entity. She will help prevent Travellers from becoming infected if it suits her long-term agenda, which is to get the Entity's central cluster tissue to an inhabited world. Occasionally, the disruption to her nervous system interferes with fine motor skills, so Jarla tries to get others to do delicate work for her. She moves very carefully, which might be noticed by Travellers, but has a standard explanation: 'Years of working around dangerous... you know, stuff... makes you careful.'

Jarla is not controlled by the Entity. She is something far more dangerous – an ally with all the cunning and intellect of a highly accomplished



human. Where the Entity acts on instinct, Jarla makes careful plans. She has no emotional attachment to any part of the Entity, not even the main Cluster. She understands its nature – if any part of it survives, all of it does – and will tell Travellers how to kill Clusters so long as she is sure she can preserve one elsewhere.

## THE STARBOARD SIDERS

The Starboard Siders are not a faction as such, though they cooperate with one another to some extent. The only thing they have in common is that their home territory is in the Starboard Primary Structural Member. The Starboard Siders are likely to be the first survivors encountered by the Travellers. They are desperate and frightened, but not so far gone as to be completely unreasonable.

**Members:** 8-12

**Primary Location:** Starboard PSM

**Agenda:** Not die today

### NOTABLE MEMBERS:

- Starboard Siders

The Starboard Siders have retained some sense of crew unity and some are friends. However, they steal from one another when they have to, and some survivors have died as a result of losing an item they needed. The Starboard Siders know that infection can be avoided (though not with absolute certainty) by using a cloth to cover the face and avoiding direct contact with

Shambler. They are terrified of Clouds and frightened of the armed parties from the Bridge and Engineering factions who rove through their territory from time to time. The usual solution is to hide and hope they pass by, but there have been some bloody battles and some areas are booby-trapped to protect essential supplies.

## Starboard Sider

| SPECIES     | GENDER  | AGE |   |   |
|-------------|---|-----|---|---|
| Human/Vargr | -   | -   |   |   |
| TRAITS      |   |     |   |   |
| STR         | 6   | INT | 7 | SKILLS  |
| DEX         | 7   | EDU | 8 | Electronics (comms) 1, Melee 0,               |
| END         | 6   | SOC | 6 | Recon 0, Stealth 1, Steward 1,<br>Vacc Suit 1 |
| WEAPONS     | Improvised Weapon (2D-2) or possibly a Snub Pistol (3D-3) |     |   |   |

## OTHER SURVIVORS

An unknown number of other survivors can be found in the Operations module and what remains of the cargo pod, and in the central part of the Port PSM.

These survivors are mostly individuals or small groups of 2-4 who have banded together for mutual protection. They are paranoid and very frightened, but they are not lunatics. Most are willing to listen to reason but their judgement is clouded by fear and a desperate need to get off the ship. The daily grind of staying alive in the wreckage of *Deepnight Endeavour*, along with the knowledge that others will kill them to take what resources they have managed to gather makes these people dangerous. They are not in any way 'psychotic barbarians' or even 'bad guys'; they are just people who may be too desperate to do anything other than kill intruders and take their supplies.

**Members:** Unknown

**Primary Location:** Mainly Port PSM and Opsmod

**Agenda:** Varies

### NOTABLE MEMBERS:

- Other Survivors

## Other Survivor

| SPECIES     | GENDER  | AGE |   |                                  |
|-------------|---|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| Human/Vargr | -   | -   |   |                                  |
| TRAITS      |   |     |   |                                  |
| STR         | 6   | INT | 7 | SKILLS                           |
| DEX         | 7   | EDU | 8 | Skills vary, typically including |
| END         | 6   | SOC | 6 | Melee 1, Recon 1, Stealth 1      |
| WEAPONS     | Improvised Weapon (2D-2) or possibly a Snub Pistol (3D-3) |     |   |                                  |

## NOTABLE CHARACTER: ‘GUNS’

**Primary Location:** Anywhere  
**Agenda:** Destroy the Entity; prevent its spread

### ‘Guns’

#### (Weapons Officer Andrea Ricardsen)

| SPECIES                                   | GENDER | AGE  |
|---|--------|--|
| Human                                     | Female | -  |
| TRAITS                                    |        |  |
| STR 6                                     | INT 8  | SKILLS   |
| DEX 9                                     | EDU 9  | Gun Combat (energy) 1, Gunner (capital) 3, Recon 2, Stealth 1, |
| END 6                                     | SOC 8  | Vacc Suit 2  |
| WEAPONS                                   |        |  |
| Laser Rifle (5D+3) and snub pistol (3D-3) |        |  |

Andrea Ricardsen was the ship's weapons officer, and is responsible for *Deepnight Endeavour*'s present predicament. At the time she turned the ship's guns on the fuel cache, she was thinking clearly and acting to protect every world within jump distance. Since that time, however, she has become dangerously (though lucidly) psychotic.

Attacked by several crewmembers after using the particle weapons, ‘Guns’ somehow fought free of them and escaped, though she was badly injured. She is scarred and limps when walking, but can run and fight with a shocking intensity that belies her injuries. ‘Guns’ is something of a lost soul. She knows the ship and her crew can never return home – must never be allowed to do so – but wants to live as much as anyone else. This



manifests as rage against the Entity and leads her to seek out and destroy Shamblers with the laser rifle she has obtained.

‘Guns’ will assist anyone, of any faction, who is in danger but is also willing to kill to prevent anyone – including the Travellers – from leaving the ship. She will probably become an ally of the Travellers in the short term but will oppose them if they try to leave. Her goals can be overridden by a desire to strike at the Entity, which she hates with a white-hot passion. She would probably trade her life for a chance to cause it some real harm.

# NOTABLE CHARACTER: TRENNANCE ZEDEHLALE

**Primary Location:** Starboard PSM

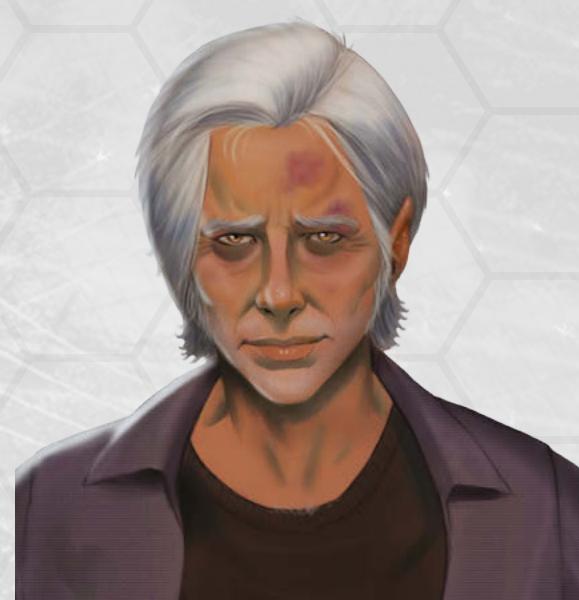
**Agenda:** Survive, escape, rescue as many survivors as possible.

## Trennance Zedehlale

| SPECIES        |   | GENDER                         |    | AGE  |
|----------------|---|--------------------------------|----|--|
| Human          |   | Male                           |    | -  |
| <b>TRAITS</b>  |   |                                |    | -  |
| STR            | 5 | INT                            | 11 | <b>SKILLS</b>  |
| DEX            | 8 | EDU                            | 9  | Electronics (computers) 1, Gun   |
| END            | 6 | SOC                            | 7  | Combat 0, Investigate 1, Jack-of-all-Trades 2, Mechanic 1, Persuade 1, Recon 1, Stealth 0, Vacc Suit 2 |
| <b>WEAPONS</b> |   | Snub Carbine (3D-2), Club (2D) |    |  |

Trennance is an Imperial citizen of Darrian extraction. Whilst uncommon, this is not remarkable, though there are some who think it has a bearing on his aptitude for science. Trennance was a research assistant aboard Deepnight Endeavour; a multi-skilled individual tasked with providing support to any of the scientists and crew. As such, he was occasionally assigned to some distant part of the ship. A long and extremely boring reconfiguration of the portside extendable array (on the port PSM) kept him out of the life sciences area during the initial stages of infection, and his quick grasp of how the infection was spreading enabled him to advise others on protecting themselves.

Trennance found none of the factions to his liking, and stayed out of the fighting. Instead, he ranged the ship and eventually created a fairly secure hideout in one of the starboard PSM laser turrets. Gathering what supplies he could, he created stashes, and traded items and advice with other independent survivors. Trennance knows most of those in the starboard PSM and is well thought of, though goodwill only goes so far. The rest of the ship is far more dangerous.



Trennance is smart enough to seek out the Travellers and observe them, then make contact if they seem amenable. They represent his best chance of getting off the ship alive, though he will prefer to work with them to save the ship or at least some crewmembers rather than just saving himself. Although Trennance' first approach to the Travellers is motivated by pragmatism, if treated reasonably he will develop a similar loyalty to them as he has to crewmembers of Deepnight Endeavour – that is, he will help out even if it does not benefit him, just because it seems like the right thing to do. It would take a lot to make Trennance actively betray someone, but he is first and foremost a survivor and knows that others can turn on him. His trust and willingness to provide assistance may only go so far.

Trennance is likely to be a source of information for the Travellers, though that is a two-way street. He will give a little to establish goodwill but thereafter expects something in return. If threatened or mistreated he will slip away and avoid further contact, making the Travellers' task a lot harder.

# IN THE DEEPEST NIGHT

This adventure does not have a set plotline. Certain events will occur, and the Travellers' actions will trigger others. However, there is no single path from one end of the adventure to the other. The Travellers' goal is to survive, which means at the very least gaining access to fuel from *Deepnight Endeavour's* stocks. They may take it upon themselves to retrieve survivors or obtain assistance for the stricken vessel. They might even decide to destroy the Entity and purge it from the ship, though that would be a difficult undertaking.

The adventure could be a simple plunge into the wreckage (which will likely become a lot less simple along the way) to obtain fuel or might be a long and involved mini-campaign in which the Travellers broker an alliance between the survivor factions and assemble the necessary components of an assault upon the Entity. Their actions will determine whether the factions assist them or attempt to kill them, though to some extent the factions will tend to act in their own perceived self-interest and may not be receptive to ideas that run contrary to their own philosophy.

The referee must adjudicate the Travellers' actions as they go rather than guiding them through a set plotline. If the Travellers become aimless, it may be useful to impose events to get them moving such as an encounter with a helpful survivor or an attack by a group seeking to steal the Travellers' ship.

Whether the Travellers seek to simply escape or aim to destroy the Entity, they will need to move around the ship searching for what they need. This may lead to incidental encounters with Shamblers or hostile survivors, but the referee should resist the temptation to turn the adventure into a 'dungeon crawl'. Too many fights will dilute the atmosphere of creeping menace about the ship and may lead the Travellers to the false conclusion that they can storm through the vessel killing everything in sight on the way to a boss fight with the central Entity. Think of *Deepnight Endeavour* as a science-fiction horror movie in which the Travellers need to find an inventive solution to their problems rather than just shooting everything in sight. It is not coincidental that most of the weapons aboard the ship are ineffective against Shamblers and Clusters.

The information below is presented by location, since the various component modules of the ship are separated from one another. This does not mean the Traveller must 'complete' one module of the ship before moving to another. They can do anything they like, moving back and forth as they please, and the referee must adjudicate what happens in each place. In the meantime, events may be unfolding in the background.

Once the Travellers have found out a little about the situation, they are likely to formulate one of three goals:

- Obtain fuel and escape
- Take control of the ship and/or unite the factions
- Destroy the Entity and purge it from the vessel

These goals can overlap, and many of the tasks required to complete one goal will support another. The referee should never forget that the survivors have their own agenda and in most cases are desperate to escape from *Deepnight Endeavour*. Few are willing to be used as cannon fodder to help the Travellers refuel their ship and escape, and those who think the Travellers intend to leave without them will – at best – try to convince them to take the survivor along. More likely, they will attempt to eliminate or neutralise the Travellers (perhaps by locking them in a compartment they cannot get out of, with or without additional hazards) and steal their ship.

Smart Travellers may be able to strike a deal with some of the survivors, perhaps by agreeing to take the Starboard Siders (or some of them) when they leave in return for guarding their ship. Arrogant, pushy or self-centred Travellers will probably end up alienating everyone they meet and uniting the factions against them.

## OBTAINING FUEL

The Travellers will need fuel to escape aboard their ship. There is more than enough remaining aboard *Deepnight Endeavour*, but obtaining it will be a problem. Only a little fuel remains in each of the PSM power plant tanks; most is in the central tank aboard the engineering section. A ship attached to a docking point such as the three remaining intact on the starboard PSM is connected to *Deepnight Endeavour's* fuel system, but the machinery will not function.

Attempting a system diagnostic on the fuel transfer controls indicates the pumping system has been locked down by command from the bridge. Records indicate a rather confusing set of instructions in which fuel was pumped back and forth between the central tank in engineering and the two PSMs. Much was lost from the port PSM, whose system was heavily damaged, before the system was locked. It seems that orders originating from the bridge and the engineering section countermanded one another before the whole system was placed in emergency shutdown on the captain's authority.

*To determine the fuel system is locked down and why:*  
Average (8+) Electronics (computers) check (INT, 1D minutes).

Unlocking the system requires the authorisation of a senior officer and must be done from the bridge. However, the situation is more complex than this, as the chief engineer's authority over the system has been revoked by the captain and control over the fuel system from the bridge is no longer possible due to a control pathway interruption. This is not apparent without careful analysis of the fuel system.

*To obtain additional information on the fuel system status:* Difficult (10+) Electronics (computers) or Admin check (INT, 6D minutes).

One way to free the fuel system would be to repair the break in the control system – which was deliberately created by the Engineering faction to prevent the bridge crew from denying them fuel – and to have a senior officer other than the engineering officer reset the system. This will require visits to the command and engineering sections.

There are other ways to solve this problem. An inventive band of Travellers might be able to hotwire the fuel processors to force a transfer into the starboard PSM tanks, and from there transfer fuel to their own ship. This would be a lengthy process but provides an alternative means of escape for Travellers unable to complete the adventure any other way.

## SEEKING INFORMATION FROM SURVIVORS

Once the Travellers make contact with any surviving crewmembers they will be able to obtain information. Of course, there is no guarantee how accurate or self-serving this information might be. Most survivors are desperate enough to mislead the Travellers in order to steal their ship or gain assistance against one of the other factions. For many, focus has been lost and all that now matters is control of the small and dying world

that is *Deepnight Endeavour*. Some are confused or to all intents and purposes quite mad.

Much of the information that could be obtained from survivors is also stored in the ship's logs. However, only the command section has a complete set. Engineering logs deal only with technical matters whilst the mission logs, stored in the forward science pod, are full of a wealth of data of which only a little deals with what actually happened aboard the ship.

Most survivors are aware of the following set of facts:

- A scout ship came back from some alien wreck. The crew got sick and soon afterward other people did too.
- The sick crewmembers were cared for in the ship's laboratory complex in the aft science pod, which contained medical as well as life-sciences research facilities.
- *Deepnight Endeavour* stayed on station long enough to collect her subordinate craft, during which The Big Meeting took place. After a lot of discussion, the senior crew decided to head for home.
- *Deepnight Endeavour* misjumped into deep space, and not long after the senior astrogator as well as a lot of the crew got sick.
- According to scuttlebutt, the astrogator said she had deliberately set up the misjump, not long before she went crazy and started attacking people.
- The captain pledged to get the ship home somehow, and everyone pulled together for a while.
- The sickness spread as the ship tried to make it to a deep-space fuel cache.
- *Deepnight Endeavour* reached the cache, but by then most of the crew were sick and there were weird plant-things in some compartments, with corpses shambling around the corridors. Nobody knows who started it but there was a rush for the jump-capable ships, and a big fight in the portside PSM as well as some other parts of the ship.
- The weapons officer turned the guns on the fuel cache and destroyed it, but not before it launched a salvo of torpedoes that crippled *Deepnight Endeavour*. 'Guns' was attacked by a mob but according to some rumours managed to escape.
- The captain and the chief engineer got a lot of people killed fighting each other for control of the ship's systems, and tried to kill each other's faction off by venting compartments or turning off the power.
- The surviving Mission staff plus a few crew cut themselves off in the forward science pod and promised to find a cure, but they never did.
- *Deepnight Endeavour* has been dead in space ever since. Sooner or later the power plant fuel will run out or the Shamblers will get the last survivors.

## MOVING AROUND

Moving around *Deepnight Endeavour* is no longer as simple as it used to be. Some areas are barricaded off or cannot be entered by usual means. It is always possible to find a way into an area, but this may mean taking a spacewalk in vacc suits and seeking a maintenance hatch or working airlock. Fuel and ventilation ducts, or rarely used access crawlways may provide other ways into an area, but in many cases these have been plugged up with wadded fabric or makeshift filters. Entry points may have covers welded over them. There is always the possibility of encountering a Cloud or Shambler, or survivors who may or may not be hostile.

Internal doors are normally set up to automatically open when someone approaches. This means they open for Shamblers as well as humans, though doors can easily be reset to require identification. It is sufficient to be carrying an identity keycard; doors and other systems can detect and scan ID within a few metres.

Secure access points include airlocks, turrets, weapon lockers and critical areas such as the bridge, computer cores and engineering spaces. These require crew identification and in some cases an additional code which must be manually input using a keypad. Secure access points do not open automatically but require the crewmember to push a stud or make a verbal command.

**Crew** access requires nothing more than possession of an identity card. Cards belonging to deceased or incapacitated personnel are removed from the database and will not work, but the system has been updated on a very patchy basis. Note that a Shambler with a keycard somewhere in the remains of its clothing can open any crew-access door providing it remembers enough to slap the 'open' control.

**Department** access is restricted to members of the relevant department plus the ship's senior officers and master-at-arms. For example, any gunner can open a turret or weapons bay, but cannot access the bridge or engineering spaces unless a member of that department opens the doors. Some areas are secured at a higher level, requiring an access code known to the department's officers but which can be given to others. Codes are supposedly changed from time to time, but *Deepnight Endeavour* is not a military ship and security has never been tight.

**Restricted** access is reserved for highly sensitive areas of the ship such as specialised electronics systems, hazardous materials storage, laboratories, the bridge and the armoury. Restricted access requires possession of both a code and relevant identification card. The captain, executive officer and master-at-arms have all-areas-access cards, whilst other specialised personnel have access to areas related to their role. In many cases, quite junior personnel may have restricted-level access to some areas. For example, the missile technicians had access to the magazines whereas some members of the command crew did not. Laboratory techs had access to the biomedical equipment whilst non-mission staff were locked out of it for their own good.

## Bypassing Security

Most secure-access areas can be entered without the right keycards, given enough time. Doing violence to a control panel achieves nothing beyond breaking it, but it is possible to run a hard bypass by interrupting the wiring or reprogramming the lock. Doing either requires a successful Average (8+) Electronics (sensors or computers) check. It is also possible to directly induce the mechanism to open the door, requiring a Routine (6+) Mechanic check. This requires access to the mechanism, which takes D3x10 minutes if the system has to be dismantled.

Alternatively, it would be possible to create a device which spoofs the electronic locking system. Any electronic device capable of receiving the security system's interrogative signals and transmitting a response could be set up this way. A personal comm or 'frankenstein'd device built out of a defunct keycard and some electronics spares could be put together in an hour or so with a Difficult (10+) Electronics (sensors) check. This will give department level access, but codes will still be required for some doors. Physically jammed, welded or barricaded doors may require physical means to access them even if the electronic lock is bypassed.

Security access is one of the challenges the referee can place in front of the Travellers, especially if they need something from a locked area. However, the adventure should not become an endless cycle of traipsing around the ship trying to find the right department keycard to get through a door.

# MODULES AND LOCATIONS

*Deepnight Endeavour* consists of a great many compartments, corridors and working spaces, most of which are in a similar state. It is rare to find a compartment not littered with useless items scattered about during a fight. Dimly lit, smelly and dirty, these areas would take too much time to detail to the Travellers one by one. Instead, the referee should establish early in the adventure what most areas are like, and indicate variations rather than attempting to spell out every little detail.

## STARBOARD PSM

The starboard PSM is the most likely entry point to the ship for the Travellers. It is very much a disputed territory for the survivors, and not controlled by any faction. It is possible to move around the Starboard PSM for some time without encountering any sign of life, though sooner or later an encounter with survivors will happen. Most of the starboard PSM is not contaminated, though a few Shamblers have got in and the occasional Cloud sweeps through to reconnoitre the situation. This area is the most liveable part of the ship not controlled by a faction and, not surprisingly, it has been picked over by scavengers.

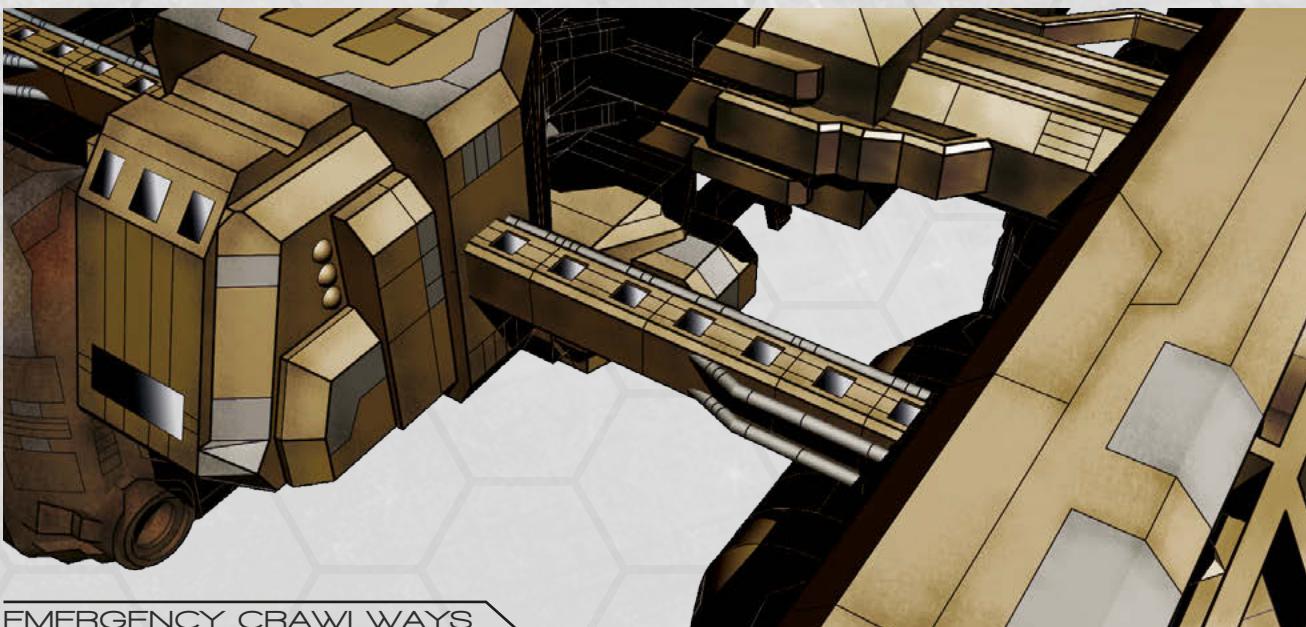
The starboard PSM is connected to the command section by a set of crawlways, and to the Opsmod and Engineering section by major access corridors running through the connector modules. The corridor to the

operations module contains a makeshift barricade but access to the internal airlock leading to the Opsmod is still possible. The airlock is functional and will open for anyone with a crewmember's identity card. Shamblers get in this way from time to time. The corridor to the engineering section is similarly barricaded and guarded by Engineering faction personnel

## PORT PSM

The central section of the port PSM is habitable, with heavy damage forward and less aft. These areas contain some compartments not open to space, which can be accessed by vacc-suited personnel. Some survivors may have constructed hideouts or equipment stashes in this area, and there is always the possibility of being attacked by a vacc-suited survivor who thinks the Travellers are after his hard-earned stash of food and equipment. The central section sees considerable Shambler activity as the internal airlock to the operations module is jammed.

The port PSM is connected to the engineering module by way of the aft connector, but since this leads into an area of mangled and depressurised wreckage the Engineering faction welded it shut on their side. The connection to the Opsmod is open as noted above, and the wreckage at the fore end of the PSM is still connected to the command section, though crawlways are depressurised and difficult to negotiate in a vacc suit.



## COMMAND SECTION

The command section is the territory of the Bridge faction, though there are too few of them to fill the available space. Most are congregated around the bridge area, with a few dwelling near crawlways to the starboard PSM. The command section is more or less cut off from the operations module; the corridors between them are barricaded and the doors welded shut at the command section end, and choked with Creepers at the Opsmod end as a result of a battle with Shamblers. Crawlways to the starboard PSM are still open. If the Command faction travel anywhere they must make the laborious and scary journey through the crawlways to the starboard PSM and onward from there.

## OPERATIONS MODULE

The Opsmod is a sort of no-man's land picked over by scavengers. It has significant Shambler activity and there is a small Cluster in one of the compartments. This is probably the most dangerous part of the ship, other than the central science pod. Few survivors live in this area, preferring the safer territory of the PSMs. However, this does mean there is more intact salvage and better stocks of food than anywhere else, so it is visited frequently. Other survivors are as big a danger as the Shamblers.

The module is cut off from the command section as noted before, but can be accessed from the starboard PSM by way of the main access corridor and airlock. The main accessway to the port PSM is jammed open. Movement between the engineering section and operations module is possible by way of the main access corridor, though the airlock at each end requires a crew access card and the Engineering faction guard the entryway to their territory.

Two of the science pods are also accessed from this area. The forward pod is very difficult to get into as the shafts have been opened to space by explosions and the internal airlock at the top requires Mission department ID or that of a senior officer. The main (central) science pod is not easily accessible but for a different reason; the elevator shafts and emergency ladders are choked with Creepers. Access to the cargo pod by way of the internal elevator/airlock is still possible, but the pod is depressurised.

## CARGO POD AND FLIGHT MODULE

Most of the flight module is little more than wreckage, though enough remains of the docking rail that a vacc suited person could crawl along it from one module

to the other. The cargo pod is mostly open to space and contains dangerously jagged wreckage, but some compartmentalised areas and lockers have survived. These have, for the most part, not been pillaged by the survivors.

## ENGINEERING SECTION

The engineering section is the territory of the Engineering faction, though as with the Bridge faction they are too few to hold down their territory with complete security. Guards are maintained (as far as possible) on the corridor to the Opsmod and starboard PSM. Doors to the corridor leading into the port PSM are welded shut, as are those leading up to the aft science pod. The latter are also heavily barricaded, and the seals are checked frequently. The inter-module airlock between the flight operations pod and engineering section is shut down as the Flop is nothing but wreckage, though still works if powered up.

## FORWARD SCIENCE POD

The forward science pod is the territory of the Mission faction, who have secured their position by depressurising the shaft to the Opsmod. The forward science pod is free from contamination and probably the safest place in the ship when the Travellers arrive.

## MAIN SCIENCE POD

The main science pod contains the primary Cluster and numerous Shamblers, and for this reason has not been scavenged as thoroughly as the rest of the ship. It is a highly dangerous environment, with Creepers making progress difficult in most corridors and concealing Shamblers waiting in ambush.

## AFT SCIENCE POD

The aft science pod contained the ship's medical facility and was the site of the initial infection. A Cluster grew in the medical/life sciences suite, and would have developed into the primary Cluster had it not been attacked with improvised flame-throwing devices and laser weapons. Most of the crewmembers involved lost their lives, along with the majority of the available laser rifles. Explosions blew out some compartments, opening part of the pod to space, which had the effect of curtailing growth of the Cluster in this pod. Some of the scientific equipment remains intact and could be salvaged or even used in situ. Not surprisingly, the Engineering faction sealed off this pod after the failed assault on the Cluster.

# RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The following is a general outline for how the adventure might play out. Travellers being what they are, this plan might not survive contact with the docking ports, but most groups will follow at least the general outline – or parts of it. There is no reason why the referee has to stick to these guidelines, however. The Travellers' choices might lead to a quite different adventure path, requiring the referee to adjudicate accordingly.

Note that there may be a considerable amount of to-ing and fro-ing as the adventure plays out. The Travellers may end up acting as middle-men or carrying out tasks for various factions as they attempt to bargain for what they need or create an alliance to take on the Entity. This will require moving around the ship, having incidental encounters with Shamblers, Clouds and survivors, and passing through the same area more than once. The referee should not forget that the ship is mostly dark and smelly, and that creeping death may lie just around the next corner. Prolonged movement is almost as dangerous as staying too long in one place; there is no real safety to be had aboard *Deepnight Endeavour*.

The referee should impose encounters whenever they seem appropriate, but should resist the temptation to turn the adventure into a series of fights. Success requires negotiation, stealth, ingenuity and improvisation as well as well-timed violence. Different groups of Travellers might even define success in various ways – for many, just getting out alive will suffice.

A quick and easy briefing for the Travellers is provided here but, in an ongoing campaign, the referee might like his group to begin picking up rumours of the *Deepnight Endeavour* and perhaps engage in several adventures as they finally track down the location of the ship.

## TRAVELLERS' BRIEFING

*Deepnight Endeavour* was a research vessel, the flagship of the Deepnight Exploration corporation's fleet. She was big, capable, and highly prestigious. When she went missing a year ago, Deepnight Exploration suffered a major financial loss; their stock took a serious hit in the markets and the firm lost potential contracts. Not

surprisingly, they offered a large reward for information leading to the recovery of *Deepnight Endeavour* or any of her crew.

Nothing was found, and the search was reluctantly abandoned. However, not everyone stopped looking. You had your reasons – a friend or relative aboard, hope of sharing in the vast reward for the ship's recovery, maybe the chance to impress Deepnight Exploration and get a berth aboard one of their other ships. Maybe it was the call of the unknown or the hope of salvaging something from the wreck but, for you, the search went on.

Eventually the threads came together. Rumours on the datanet about a trans-rift exploration ship picking up a months-old distress call from *Deepnight Endeavour*; the accidental discovery of records detailing an old navy refuelling cache in the Great Rift... fragments of data that spiralled together. If *Deepnight Endeavour* was there, at that time, then she might have tried for the cache. Perhaps there are clues there...?

The potential payoff seemed worth a week there and back. A simple enough trip – jump out to the cache and run a deep-space sensor sweep. Refuel and head back if nothing was found. It was a long shot, but you don't get lucky if you don't give yourself the chance. So here you are, emerging from jump space in the Great Rift, probably on a fool's errand.

Sensor data coming in suggests it wasn't so foolish.... You've found her!

What's left of her, anyway....

## PRELIMINARY RECONNAISSANCE

Upon emerging from jump, the Travellers easily locate *Deepnight Endeavour*. She is broadcasting a low-powered transponder signal and has some energy emissions suggesting that at least some parts of her hull are still powered. However, all is clearly not well. *Deepnight Endeavour* is at the centre of a slowly expanding debris

cloud. Her six fuel shuttles are all missing and the docking rail as well as most of the flight operations pod are gone. She has no radar or other sensor emissions, and does not respond to communications.

*To analyse the debris pattern:* Average (8+) Electronics (sensors) check (INT, 2D minutes). Success indicates two central points from which the debris was scattered. The first is *Deepnight Endeavour* herself, centring on the flight operations pod but with hits scored elsewhere on the hull. The second debris source was about 500 kilometres from *Deepnight Endeavour*, apparently a catastrophic explosion scattering wreckage at a higher velocity than that originating from the ship. This was the deep-space refuelling cache; there is nothing left of it now.

Anyone with experience of naval operations can deduce that *Deepnight Endeavour* exchanged fire with the cache, which was presumably defended by an automated system. She received a concentrated missile salvo on her underside and a few hits elsewhere on the hull. This has resulted in a slow tumble that will make docking slightly tricky but by no means impossible. The obvious docking point on the flight operations pod is

nothing more than twisted wreckage now, but there are other options.

A flyby will indicate the general condition of the various components and suggest options for gaining entry.

**Starboard PSM:** Apparently intact despite some missile impacts. Some lights are on.

**Port PSM:** Forward section heavily damaged, dark, and clearly open to space in some areas. Lights are on in the aft third, up to the connector leading to the engineering section. All three fueller attachment points are destroyed.

**Command Section:** Apparently intact, lights are on in some compartments.

**Operations Module:** Apparently intact, lights are on in some compartments.

**Engineering Section:** Some damage to the ventral surface, lights are on in some compartments.

**Flight Operations Module:** Comprehensively wrecked, little remains but loosely attached debris.

**Cargo Module:** Heavily damaged, no lights are on. Forward access airlock is twisted and could not dock a ship but might be used for personnel entry.



**Forward Science Pod:** Apparently intact but only loosely attached to the hull. Appears to have suffered an explosion at the base attachment point.

**Main Science Pod:** Apparently intact, few lights on.

**Aft Science Pod:** Damaged and holed in places. Dark and at least partially open to space.

## ENTERING THE HULL

The best prospects for gaining entry are the port and starboard Primary Structural Modules. Docking points for the fuel shuttles along the underside are more or less intact the starboard PSM. Any hull breach could be used by personnel, as could the remains of the cargo airlock, though getting from a holed section to one with atmosphere might pose a problem.

Hull breaches are for the most part quite small, too small for a person to fit through. Those that are accessible have jagged edges that could snag and tear a vacc suit, and lead into a depressurised area a few compartments in size. Internal doors and compartmentalisation have reduced the amount of the ship opened to space and limit the area that can be explored from a breach without finding a way into a compartment that still has air. The easiest way to do this is to set up an inflatable emergency airlock and cut through the bulkhead. This will create a weak area which might be torn open by accident or weapons fire, but which will allow access without depressurising the chambers beyond.

Depressurised areas will have lost many small objects out of the breach during the first few seconds, though larger and heavier items remain. Corpses found in these areas will not show signs of changing into a Shambler unless already subject to advanced infection, but an infected corpse might begin to change once brought into an area not exposed to the cold of space. Indeed, a recovered body might reanimate at an inopportune time.

*To avoid snagging a vacc suit whilst entering a jagged breach:* Routine (6+) Vacc Suit check (DEX, 1D minutes).

Entering through a functioning airlock avoids these problems, though it may alert survivors in nearby compartments. The airlocks in the intact parts of the PSMs still function, and the Travellers' ship can dock directly to one of the fueller attachment points on the starboard PSM.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The Travellers may gain an impression of the situation aboard *Deepnight Endeavour* from an initial flyby, along with physical observations and sensor readings. After docking, they will have a chance to observe conditions

inside the ship. The referee is advised to approach this part of the adventure slowly and establish the general look and feel of the interior. This can then be alluded to later without having to repeat descriptions. The Travellers should be given time to wonder what has happened and develop a sense of threat about the silent, dimly lit corridors and compartments of *Deepnight Endeavour*.

It is likely that the Travellers will enter the ship through the Starboard PSM, arriving in an area of the ship that has light and air. It is obvious that things are not good – to put it mildly – and the Travellers should be asked to make the occasional Recon check. The referee should play for tension, describing half-seen movements at the edge of vision, odd sounds in the ducts, shouts or shots in the distance from time to time, and other ‘horror movie’ gambits to raise tension without resolution.

This should not go on for too long, or the Travellers will become bored and blasé. They should be permitted to search a few empty cabins and compartments, finding plenty of litter and broken personal effects but little of use. The following facts should be established during this phase of the adventure:

1. The lights are dim and often flicker. They are out in some areas, leaving just the emergency lighting. This, too, is non-functional in some places.
2. Most compartments have been ransacked. Personal effects and clothing are strewn about but there are no signs of anything that could be used as a tool or weapon.
3. The air is circulating but smells bad but does not set off chemical or biological warning devices.
4. Water supply is intermittent and tastes bad. Chemical analysis shows it is contaminated with unpleasant but not dangerous levels of a variety of chemicals, all of which are found aboard starships. There is nothing to suggest that the water situation is due to anything other than lack of maintenance.

These conditions apply throughout the ship, unless indicated otherwise.

## ENCOUNTER

### WITH A SHAMBLER

The Travellers' first encounter with a Shambler should be played for mystery and horror rather than a simple fight. Ideally, the Travellers will wonder what manner of creature they have encountered, then become slowly

aware that it is a caricature of a human (or Vargr, or some other spacefaring race represented in the crew of *Deepnight Endeavour*) and its intentions are hostile. Shamblers are hard to kill, which may result in an initial feeling of confidence turning to desperation.

Once the Shambler has been brought down it can be examined. There is a risk of infection during the fight and subsequent examination of the corpse. Observant Travellers may realise this is the case, and any analysis of the Shambler's tissues will indicate the tissues are more like fungus than animal flesh, and that the outer surfaces are covered in tiny hair-fine tendrils that break off to form something like spores. It will also be apparent that the Shambler used to be a person.

Standard precautions like using gloves and probes rather than touching the Shambler's tissues with bare skin will suffice to prevent infection on this occasion, and the referee should not inflict infection upon a Traveller at this stage unless they do something very stupid.

*To realise that 'you shouldn't touch that with bare skin':* Routine (6+) Recon or Survival check (INT, 1D seconds).  
*To conduct a basic analysis of the Shambler's tissues:* Average (8+) Science (biology) check (EDU, 4D minutes).

This encounter should alert the Travellers to what they are up against whilst posing more questions than providing answers.

## CONTACT WITH SURVIVORS

As the Travellers explore further, they will sooner or later encounter survivors. If the Travellers are keen on combat, the referee can drop in a fight with desperate survivors wanting to steal their equipment, supplies or ship. Survivors who choose to attack will attempt an ambush rather than a head-on attack, though some will prefer to get the drop on their victims and demand they hand over weapons or supplies rather than kill them. This is sometimes due to a reluctance to kill other survivors but can also be self-interest of a sort – the more humans are alive aboard the ship, the more the Shambler threat is diluted.

Sooner or later, the Travellers will encounter someone willing to talk. This may well be Trennance. If so, he will observe the Travellers before making contact. He is good at this, but might be spotted.

*To realise the Travellers are being watched:* Difficult (10+) Recon check (2D seconds, INT)

Trennance will think more highly of a group that spots him and either challenges or sneaks up and corners him without doing violence than one that blunders around unawares. Shooting at him without effect is not a deal-breaker – Trennance knows everyone is jittery, and will still attempt peaceful contact if possible.

It is obvious to Trennance (and other potentially friendly survivors) that the Travellers are new arrivals and must therefore have a ship. He concludes that it is in his interest to help the Travellers, though he is only willing to provide so much information without getting something concrete in return.

Trennance can arrange meetings with other survivors in the Starboard PSM and the Engineering faction. He is not exactly friendly with the latter, but has a working relationship based on mutual benefit. He can also provide a general outline of the situation aboard *Deepnight Endeavour*.

The referee can use Trennance or other non-hostile survivors to provide guidance to the Travellers, and the following advice may be available at a price:

**Getting fuel:** The fuel system is locked down from the bridge and requires authorisation of the captain or senior surviving officer (other than the engineering officer, but most survivors do not know that). The control pathway to the engineering section where the fuel pumping equipment is located has been severed.

### Solutions:

1. Reinstate the engineering officer's command privileges (requires the approval of the captain or senior surviving officer).
2. Repair the control pathway breach (control circuits have been physically severed between the Opsmod and Teksec) and run the fuel transfer from the bridge.
3. Any of the senior officers (captain, executive officer and so on, or the senior surviving member of the chain of command, or someone acting with their authorisation) could go to the engineering section and control the fuel system from there. Only the senior surviving officer can authorise someone to do this, essentially co-opting them into the chain of command as a replacement officer and updating the ship's records to show this.

**Uniting the factions or obtaining their cooperation:** You're kidding, right? Not long ago the Bridge and Engineering factions were battling to the death, and the Mission group

has barricaded itself in the forward science pod and gone silent. You're not kidding? Well then....

#### Solutions:

1. Everyone has something they want. At the most basic level this is food, water, powerplant fuel and the like; ammunition and tools or spares as well. Minimal cooperation could be set up by third parties perceived to be neutral, perhaps by arranging trade for necessary items as a way of establishing cooperation and reducing enmity. Generating trust and goodwill is a bit much to ask...
2. On a slightly grander scale, one thing very much lacking around here is hope. If someone can present the factions with a workable plan that offers a chance of something beyond a slow death and turning into a Shambler, most survivors will listen. Some have done things they will not believe can be forgiven (and some are right) and will try to steal a ship or increase their power aboard the dying *Deepnight Endeavour* rather than grasp the slim chance of salvation... but most will grab at a lifeline once convinced it is for real.
3. Any sort of concerted action will require clear benefits for everyone, and something up front; little is taken on trust aboard *Deepnight Endeavour*. The idea that the Travellers could go for help aboard their ship, leaving the survivors behind, might be the best hope for everyone aboard but getting the factions to believe the Travellers will not abandon them will be very difficult.
4. It might be easiest to ram a plan down the factions' throats by force or with the threat of annihilation as the alternative. That could be done by convincing them of imminent destruction of the ship or an overwhelming attack by the Entity, or by threatening to vent an entire module to space or open it up and let the Shamblers in. Any threat has to be credible, and if the Travellers go down that road their bluff is likely to be called. People who have been living in the shadow of a horrible death for months may not react the way outsiders expect.

**Destroy the Entity and save the ship:** This is not an original idea; others have tried. 'We made a big attack on the aft science pod and tried to kill some sort of... thing... that was growing there. A lot of us died, and we didn't succeed... though we did damage it pretty good'.

1. It would first be necessary to destroy any Clusters and hunt down Shamblers, then undertake a detailed search for Clouds and Creepers.

2. Venting an area to space will freeze all components of the Entity but will not kill them. Shamblers can function for a time in vacuum, and air reserves are limited. Causing explosive decompression to empty a compartment of bad stuff will waste air that cannot be spared.
3. It might be possible to clear out sections of the ship and decontaminate them, gradually moving into the more heavily contaminated areas once enough of the vessel is made safe.
4. A cure for the infection might be possible. The Mission faction was working on one, but it is not known how far they progressed.

#### The Bridge Faction

Making contact with the Bridge faction is not easy. They gave up monitoring external communications a long time ago, and mostly remain sequestered in the command section. Getting into it by way of the Opsmod would be very difficult, leaving the crawlways from the Starboard PSM as the only option. Anyone coming in this way is certain to be detected, by a reconnaissance party or sentries at the PSM end of the crawlways if factions members are abroad, and at the command section end if not. Contact might be made by sending a messenger – perhaps Trennance – to invite some of the Bridge faction to a meeting in the PSM.

The Bridge faction are defensively minded and very security conscious, to the point they are tending to send out less and less scavenging parties. They are already very short on rations and suffering from malnutrition. At the same time, the faction is held together by respect for the chain of command and the captain's authority, and cannot tolerate any challenge to these concepts. Captain Zenkhuirli knows just how fragile his control over his followers can be, and if necessary will make an example of anyone who shows dissent or disrespect. He has a particular and personal hatred for 'Guns' as she destroyed the fuel cache that could have got *Deepnight Endeavour* home. He also despises the chief engineer as a traitor and would be very reluctant to work with her. The Mission faction are an unknown to the captain; the science teams were always outside his immediate remit so going their own way did not offend the captain the way the Engineering-led mutiny did.

The Bridge faction is desperate for food and wants to regain control over the ship's systems. Any plan or bargain that offers this will be attractive, but for now the faction members are more stubborn than desperate. A working relationship could be established if the

Travellers can set up a reliable supply line, perhaps arranging for independent survivors to scavenge food and necessary components for the Bridge faction. If any of the independents can be induced to swear renewed allegiance to the captain, essentially joining the Bridge faction, this will go a long way towards developing trust.

## The Engineering Faction

The Engineering faction is both the most amenable to bargaining and the hardest to win over of the factions. The Engineers are willing to make a deal with anyone who has something to offer, and tend to play fair with anyone who has not betrayed them. However, their position is probably the best of all the factions. They have control of the main powerplant and plenty of fuel for it, reasonable stocks of food and access to workshops they can use to make whatever they need.

The Engineering faction does not hate the 'Bridgers' anything like as much as the Bridge faction hates them. There is bad blood as a result of the fighting that took place during the mutiny, but the Engineers' attitude to the captain is more a loss of faith than enmity. The captain would be very surprised to hear his former chief engineer was willing to work with him, and might not believe it, but it is true so long as there are guarantees of good faith.

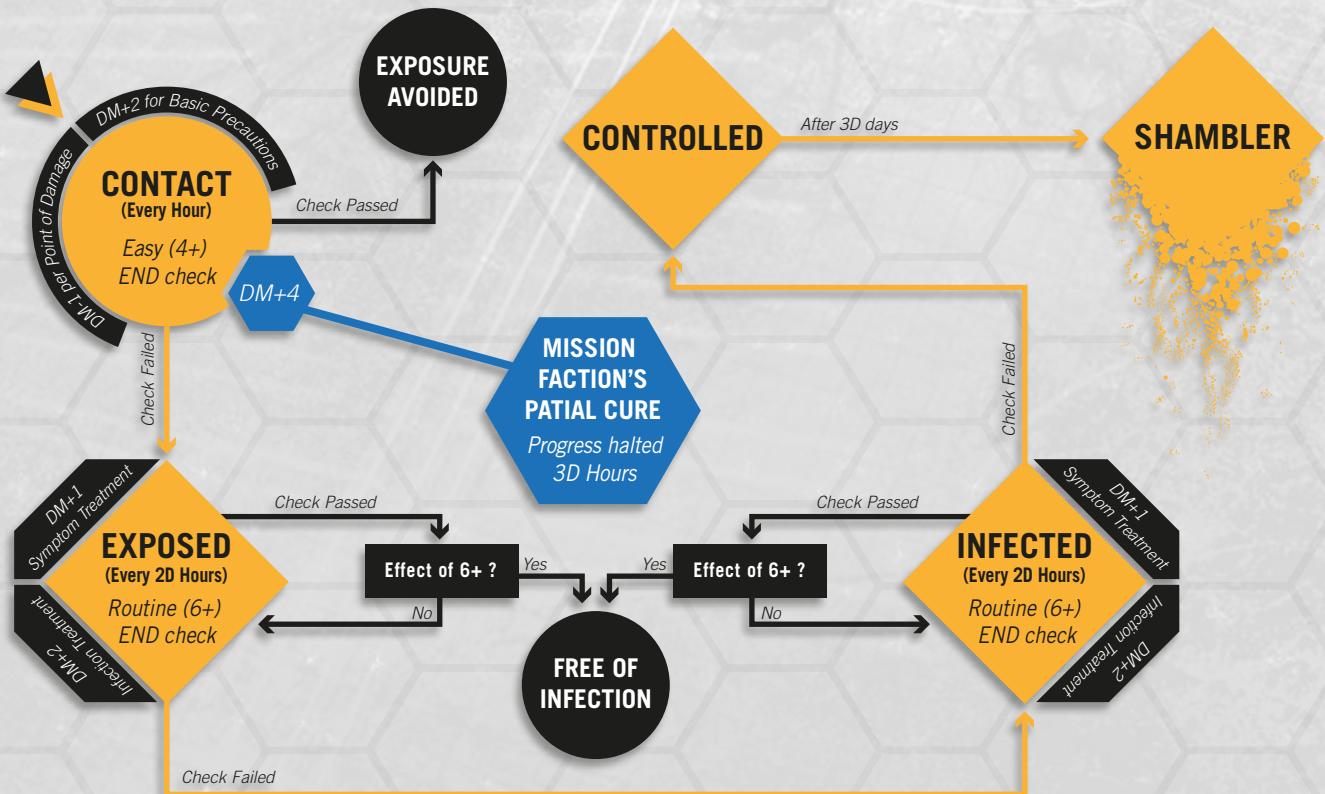
The Engineering faction simply wants to survive. That seems to mean getting off the ship, but if someone were to come up with a workable plan to take on the

Entity and destroy it, they would be willing to listen. In the meantime, they have created a workable system and will probably survive longer than the other factions. The Engineers are well aware of the eventual outcome aboard *Deepnight Endeavour* but at present can see little chance of avoiding it other than outlasting the Bridge faction and using the remaining resources aboard the ship to do... something. As yet, no clear plan has emerged.

The Engineers are thus easy to talk to but require convincing to get involved in any plan other than their own. They can afford to wait whereas the Bridgers cannot. If the Bridge faction became enough of a threat, the Engineers might consider cutting off the power to the command section but this would be hard to do and essentially pointless unless the backup power system in the module was disabled. As yet, the Engineering faction does not know its status and has no way to shut it down remotely. If things got bad enough between the command and engineering factions, the Travellers might be asked to assist, perhaps trading the murder of a third of the surviving crew for fuel.

## The Mission Faction

The mission faction is more active than the others know, using vacc suits to transit outside the ship. They have a jury-rigged airlock in the port PSM to enter the main hull sections, though sometimes maintenance hatches and other secondary access points are used.



The Mission faction has an adequate supply of water, air, and food, and has repurposed scientific equipment in the forward science pod to investigate the Entity and its subordinate beings.

The Mission faction has a partial... antidote, cure... there is no term for exactly what is needed. The antidote at present will only slow down the progress of infection. Each dose is effective for 3D hours, and grants DM+4 on checks to avoid infection. For those already infected, progress is halted for the effective period. The Mission faction know how valuable this would be to the other survivors but have not shared or offered it for trade. This is in part because it is difficult to make and requires core cells from a Shambler. Extraction is tricky and dangerous, even after the Shambler has been put out of action.

Cells from a Cluster might work even better, and the Mission faction is keen to obtain some. Their own personnel are unwilling to take the risk, but Travellers may be willing to give it a go in return for the antidote.

The Mission faction is amenable to bargaining or a workable plan, and has no hatred of the other factions – there is plenty of mistrust, however! Jarla will go along with any plan to wipe out the Entity so long as she can save some core Cluster cells. This is all she needs to infect a whole world, and if destroying the rest of the Entity is the price tag for that, she is willing to pay it.

Given enough time and a lot (a few kilograms) of core Cluster cells, the Mission faction could create an agent that will kill spores. It will not harm Shamblers or Clusters but will render Clouds inert and harmless, and decontaminate areas. The initial form is a vaporous suspension which would need to be laboriously sprayed into every corner of an area, but with additional work – requiring many weeks in a decent life sciences lab – an airborne agent could be created which could be introduced into the air supply. The ship would gradually become safe again as the air circulated and spores slowly died. However, sources of spores such as Shamblers, Creepers and Clusters would have to be rooted out and destroyed.

Similarly, a cure capable of reversing infection could be created using core Cluster cells. This would require significant research, building on the existing partial antidote. The only lab suitable for creating the cure or the decontamination agent is in the life sciences section of the sealed-off Aft Science Pod. Much of it is open to space and there is a Cluster inside which would need to be cleared out but, in theory, a concerted effort could retake this part of the ship, after which work might begin on the counter-agent.

**Note:** Jarla will actively work towards a cure and purge of the ship. It suits her purposes for *Deepnight Endeavour* to be pronounced safe and will allay suspicion. Her only deviation from the plan will be to preserve some Cluster tissue where she can later retrieve it. To this end, she might send someone to make a secret stash – perhaps even one of the Travellers – saying the tissue is needed for a cure and she cannot risk its destruction by well-meaning crewmembers. She will also argue for tissue to be preserved in the laboratory against future need for a cure.

It is likely that unless her plan is discovered, Jarla will never actively betray the Travellers; instead she will allow them to ‘win’ and carry her to a world where she can begin the infection process. However, if the Travellers are too successful against the Entity and Jarla is not sure she can obtain core cells, she will try to impede or even kill the Travellers. Ideally, she would prefer to send them somewhere the Entity can kill them (and use their cells!) but turning other survivors against the Travellers is also an option.

## Guns

At some point, the Travellers will encounter ‘Guns’. She is a zealot these days, fighting the Entity any way she can, and will jump aboard any plan to attack it. The idea of extracting tissue to study is questionable in her view, and will vigorously argue against it unless someone convinces her that it will lead to a cure and maybe the destruction of the Entity as a whole.

‘Guns’ has an idea to take out the Cluster in the main science pod (and the aft one too, if necessary). The weapons turrets along the upper surfaces of the PSMs could bear on the pods if the safety locks were removed. This would require a major reprogramming job but could be done by a skilled person.

*To remove the safety locks from one of the ship’s turrets:* Very Difficult (12+) Electronics (computer) check (2D hours, INT). It is possible to retry multiple times, adding an additional 1D hours to the time for every negative Effect point.

The guns would also have to be freed to fire. The captain has set the ship’s weaponry to ‘tight’ after the fuel cache incident, and ‘Guns’ has had her authority revoked. It would thus be necessary to convince the captain to allow the Travellers to fire on his ship with its own weapons. The Travellers’ own ship may also have suitable weaponry.

Lasers will not completely destroy the Entity but will open compartments to space and freeze what survives, causing it to become inert. This would make harvesting cells very easy. A pod could also be severed, removing whatever Entity components are inside from the ship.

## ENDGAME

There are three possible ‘wins’ for the Travellers.

1. Total Victory: The Entity is defeated and the ship purged using a combination of the antidote/counter-agent and other means such as ultraviolet light or intense heat.
2. Partial Victory: The Travellers manage to rescue some or all of the crew in an uninfected or cured state. A rescue mission might be arranged now that *Deepnight Endeavour* has been found.
3. Escape: The Travellers manage to refuel their ship and escape without being infected or obtain a cure then make their escape.

Ironically, the two victory outcomes carry a risk of defeat – and defeat of unimaginable proportions. If infected crewmembers are brought to an inhabited world they will sooner or later get sick and the process will repeat on a planet-wide scale. If Jarla manages to reach an inhabited world (or even another ship) with core tissue, the infection process will be far more rapid and guided by a deceitful but brilliant human intellect. It is possible that the Travellers might be asked to return to *Deepnight Endeavour* seeking a cure or to go to an infected world – they will be the nearest thing to experts the authorities can find.

The outcome of the adventure thus depends entirely on the Travellers’ actions. The following checklist indicates what might be necessary to win a total victory, though Travellers being who they are they may well find a much harder way to do it!

1. Board *Deepnight Endeavour*
2. Initial investigation
3. Encounter the Shamblers
4. Meet the survivors
5. Learn about the factions and find out what they want
6. Obtain the Bridge faction’s cooperation by securing their food supply
7. Establishing a working relationship with the Engineering faction
8. Enter the cut-off forward science pod and meet the Mission faction
9. Find out what is needed for a cure
10. Obtain core cells from a Cluster
11. Clear out the aft science pod and secure it
12. Stay alive whilst the surviving scientists work on a cure or decontaminating agent
13. Destroy the remaining clusters and decontaminate the ship
14. (Optional: Discover Jarla’s intentions and stop her.)

Some or even all of these tasks can be carried out despite opposition from some of the factions, and independent survivors may impede the Travellers as they try to get through another day. Ideally, the Travellers will be able to win over the factions and some of the independents, giving them greater manpower and a larger skills pool to work with. However, the Travellers’ fate (and that of *Deepnight Endeavour*) is ultimately in their own hands. They will make their own decisions and act upon them.

Perhaps the Travellers will succeed, or perhaps they will join the crew of *Deepnight Endeavour* in a lonely interstellar grave. And perhaps someone else will find the Entity aboard the ancient Droyne ship or *Deepnight Endeavour* herself. Perhaps someone already has....

# EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONRY

Virtually all guns aboard Deepnight Endeavour are of two designs, both based on the snub pistol and its 10mm ammunition.

03/61152

## SNUB REVOLVER

The standard sidearm is a six-shot revolver, a top-break design with chambers accessed by releasing a catch and pulling the barrel down. Cartridges are ejected vigorously if the barrel is yanked, or gently pushed up so they can be picked out if the user is more careful. With a large trigger guard to accommodate gloves, this design offers very modest combat capabilities in terms of sustained fire but is easy to use even in a vacc suit. Snub revolvers are also well suited to poorly trained personnel as they have little recoil and few features. There is no external safety catch; a heavy trigger pull is the only safety feature.



03/61153

## SNUB CARBINE

The ship's armoury also contains snub carbines for use by security personnel or those who might have need of greater firepower. Using the same ammunition as the revolver, the carbine is fed from a 24-round magazine and capable of burst fire. Fully-automatic weapons were not considered desirable by mission planners, though security personnel might disagree.



Weapon

TL

Range

Damage

Kg

Cost

Magazine

Magazine Cost

Traits

Snub Revolver

8

5

3D-3

1

Cr160

6

Cr10

Zero-G

Weapon

TL

Range

Damage

Kg

Cost

Magazine

Magazine Cost

Traits

Snub Carbine

8

25

3D-2

3

Cr300

24

Cr30

Zero-G. Auto 3

The only 'combat' weapons aboard Deepnight Endeavour were TL11 laser rifles (see page 121 of the Traveller Core Rulebook), intended to be broken out at need but hopefully stored in the armoury for the duration of the mission. Whilst a few snub revolvers were located in security lockers around the ship, all laser rifles were locked up in the armoury. However, most were used during the assault on the Cluster in the aft science pod and the majority lost with their owners. A handful remain, carefully hidden or carried by owners who prize them highly. These weapons have proven highly effective against Shambler, which snub weapons have not.

# DECKPLANS LEGEND

## ISOMETRIC DECKPLAN KEY



## ISOMETRIC FLOORPLAN

