

PIONEERS



Space Probes

Orbital Colonies

And the End of All that Is

Spindrift Games

ILLUMINATED
by LUMEN 

PIONEERS

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

An Oral History of the 2320-2324 Pioneer War

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

Resistance Ops

You are part of the **Rag-Tag Fugitive Resistance** trying to free the Solar System from the clutches of its prodigal electronic children. With all the other players, you comprise a Resistance Cell that takes on missions, called **Ops**, that invariably involve blowing up lots and lots of Pions.

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

Game Mechanics

You have three abilities: **Thrust**, **Gyro**, and **Telemetry**.

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

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

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

Dice Rolling

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

On
a...

-
- 1-2 The action **fails** and there's a **consequence**.
 - 3-4 The action **succeeds** but there's a **complication**.
 - 5-6 The action **succeeds** with **no problems**.

Resource Pools

In addition, you have three resource pools, **Health**, **Impulse**, and **Kit**.

Health tells you how much Harm you can take before dying; each hit by the enemy usually does 1 to 3 Harm.

Impulse is your energy, your drive, your momentum. You can spend Impulse to activate your Talents.

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

Character Creation

Character creation is dirt simple. Follow these steps and you're done.

1. Pick a Class.
2. Choose Your Home Colony.
3. Grab your Weapon.
4. Come up with a Name.
5. Snag a ship.

Class

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

An Oral History of the 2320-2324 Pioneer War

Your **Class** determines your starting attributes and pools, and gives you a choice of Talents. Pick a class from this list:

Apollo You're big, strong, and tough in a fight.

Mercury You're fast, agile, and hard to pin down.

Gemini You're smart, clever, and good with technology.

Soyuz You're a jack-of-all-trades who is pretty good at everything.

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

Colony Origins

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

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

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

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

Cyntherean You're from Venus. *Resist burn Harm.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Apollo

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

Apollo Class Talents

Talent 1
Talent 2

Talent 3
Talent 4
Talent 5

Gemini

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

Gemini Class Talents

Talent 1

Talent 2

Talent 3

Talent 4

Talent 5

Mercury

Thrust	Gyro	Telemetry	Health	Impulse	Kit
1	3	2	5	6	4

Mercury Class Talents

Talent 1

Talent 2
Talent 3
Talent 4
Talent 5



Soyuz

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

Soyuz Class Talents

Talent 1
Talent 2

Talent 3
Talent 4
Talent 5

Equipment

Armor

Tactical Vest
Assault Armor

Weapons

Autolaser *mid* Harm 2, Autofire, Burn
Autorifle *mid* Harm 1, Autofire
Bow *mid, far* Harm 1
Flamethrower *close* Harm 2, Burn
Grenade Mortar *mid* Harm 2, Exploding, Reload, Tactical
Pulse Grenade *close* Harm 1, AOE, EMP, Friendly-Fire, Single-Use
Pulse Pistol *close* Harm 1, Handgun, EMP
Pulse Rifle *mid* Harm 2, Heavy, EMP
Raybeam Pistol *close* Harm 1, Handgun, Burn
Raybeam Rifle *mid, far* Harm 2, Burn
Rocket Launcher *mid* Harm 3, Exploding, Heavy, Reload
SMG *close, mid* Harm 1, Autofire
Shotgun *close* Harm 2

Slug Grenade *close* Harm 1, Exploding, Friendly-Fire, Single-Use
Slug Pistol *close* Harm 1, Handgun
Slug Rifle *mid, far* Harm 2, Heavy
Sniper Rifle *far* Harm 2, Scope, Tactical
Taser Pistol *close* Harm 1, Handgun, Shock

Weapon Tags

AOE Affects multiple targets.
Autofire Can hit multiple targets.
Burn Does burn damage.
EMP Does pulse damage.
Exploding Does explosive damage against multiple targets.
Friendly Fire Targets allies in the range band.
Handgun +1 Harm when fired with Gyro.
Heavy +1 Harm when fired with Thrust.
Piercing Does +1 Harm against armored targets.
Reload Sometimes requires reloading.
Scope Does +1 Harm if you remain stationary when firing.
Self-Destructive Damages wielder.
Single-Use You can only use this weapon once.
Shock Does shock damage.
Tactical Does +1 Harm when fired with Telemetry.





Fights

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

An Oral History of the 2320-2324 Pioneer War

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sed ligula eu mi laoreet ornare. Ut tempor pretium ex. Etiam eu semper arcu sem gravida metus, at vestibulum erat augue vel ante.

Drops

At the end of the GM's turn, roll 1d6 for each enemy that died.

Roll Result

- 1-2 +1 Health
- 3-4 +1 Impulse
- 5-6 +1 Kit



The Solar System

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

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

Location Tags:

Atmosphere The location has a breathable atmosphere.
Blocade Currently blocaded by the Pions.
Cold It's too cold for a human to survive without protection.
Colony Recognized as an independent colony.
Farming Farming is a major industry.
High-G The gravity is relatively high.
Hot It's too hot for a human to survive without protection.
Ice Frozen water can be found at this location.
Life This location has native life forms.
Low-G The gravity is relatively low.
Manufacturing The manufacture of goods is a major industry.

Mining Mining of metals is a major industry.
Occupation Under military occupation by Pion forces.
Orbit At least one orbital settlement exists.
Prison The location has at least one penal colony.
Siege Currently besieged by Pion forces.
Spaceport Facilities for spacecraft landing and launching.
Surface At least one surface settlement exists.
Underground At least one underground settlement exists.
Volcanos The location has active volcanos.
Water Liquid water can be found at this location.

Earth Orbit

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

Luna is the second most populated colony and is primarily technological workers. It's also the communications hub of the Solar System ... or at least, it was.

Located in the La Grange 5 point, O'Neill Station is the largest orbital colony in the Solar System.

Earth Maximum Population, Atmosphere, Blocade, Farming, Ice, High-G, Life, Manufacturing, Occupation, Orbit, Spaceport, Surface, Underground, Volcanos, Water
Luna High Population, Colony, Low-G, Mining, Siege, Spaceport, Surface, Underground





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

Inner Planets

Mercury is a very hot planet on the side facing the sun, and a very cold planet on the side facing away from the sun.

Venus has floating cloud cities occupied by the wealthy above, and gas miners on the lower decks.

Mars is the most populous colony in the Solar System. Its two moons are known for their shipbuilding.

Ceres is the largest and most populous planetoid in the asteroid belt.

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

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

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

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

Jupiter

All but one of Jupiter's largest moons are home to Earth colonies.

Europa is known for the indigenous life forms in its chilly seas - a primitive form of brine shrimp.

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

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

Io Cold, Hot, Low-G, Volcanos

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

Saturn

Titan Low Population, Blocade, Cold, Colony, Life, Low-G, Orbit

Rhea Minimal Population, Cold, Ice, Low-G

Iapetus Cold, Ice, Low-G

Enceladus Low Population, Cold, Colony, Low-G, Surface, Water

Dione Cold, Low-G

Tethys Cold, Ice, Low-G

Mimas Cold, Ice, Low-G

Uranus

Oberon is the nominal capital of the five united colonies on Uranian moons.

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

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

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

Ariel Minimal Population, Cold, Low-G, Mining,
Underground
Miranda Minimal Population, Cold, Low-G, Industry,
Underground

Neptune

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

Trans-Neptunian Space

Pluto is the second most distant colony and is primary for astronomical research.

Eris is on the far edge of the Solar System and is a mining penal colony. Its remoteness let it escape Pion notice.

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

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

Opponents

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

An Oral History of the 2320-2324 Pioneer War



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

Cassini Diplomat

Mariner Troop transport

Rover Infantry

Ulysses Commander

Venera Air Support

Viking Marine

Cassini

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

Health 5

Vulnerable pulse

Finger Lasers *close, mid* Harm 2, Burn

Moves Issue threats, call for help, strategic withdrawal

Mariner

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

Health 20 (Ship-2)

Vulnerable explosive

Thunder Cannons *mid, far* Harm 4, Exploding

Moves Lift off, disgorge troops, hover precipitously

Rover

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

Health 4

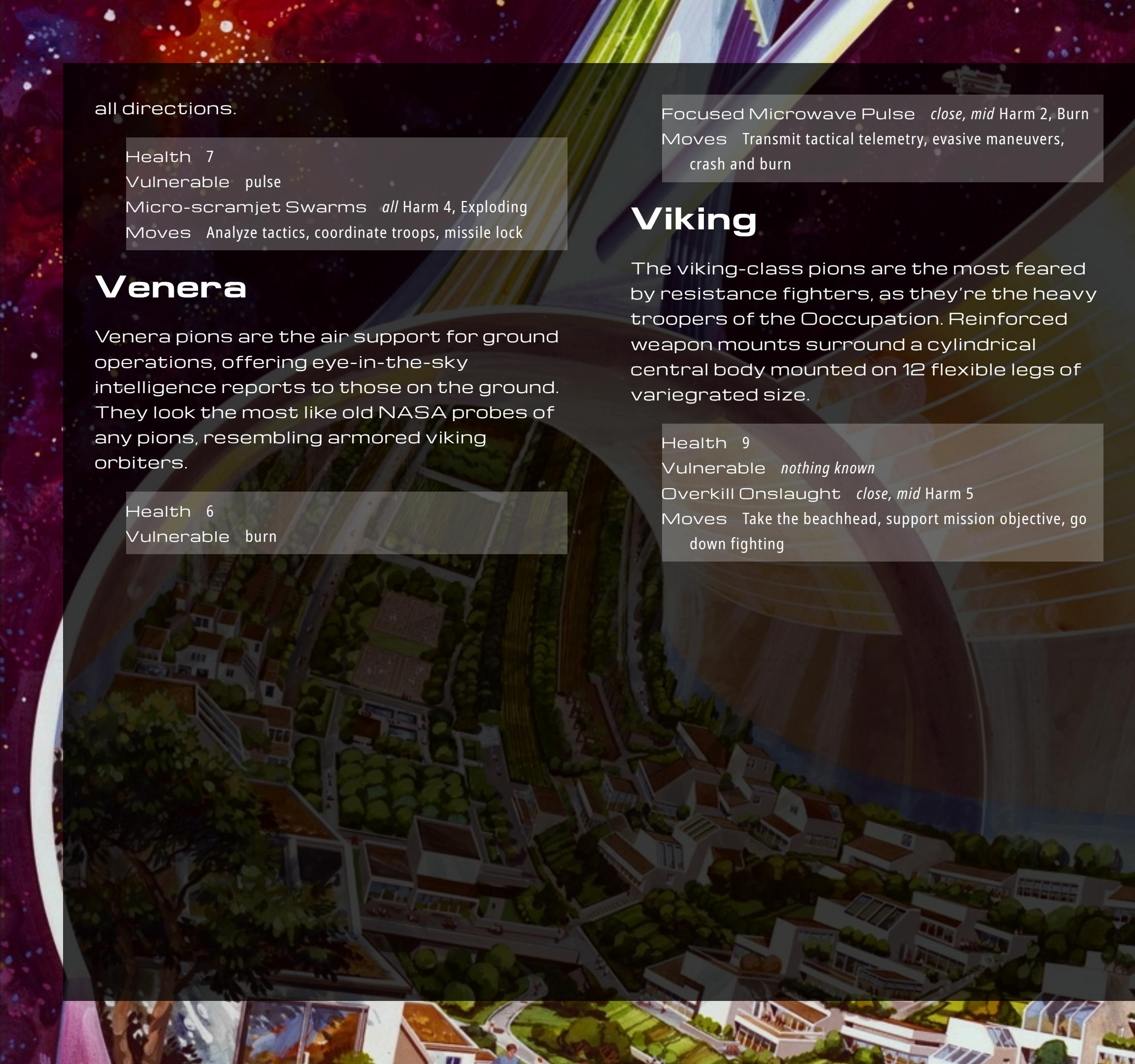
Vulnerable explosive

Slugthrowers *close, mid* Harm 1

Moves Swarm the humans, obey orders, breach defenses

Ulysses

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



all directions.

Health 7

Vulnerable pulse

Micro-scramjet Swarms *all* Harm 4, Exploding

Moves Analyze tactics, coordinate troops, missile lock

Venera

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

Health 6

Vulnerable burn

Focused Microwave Pulse *close, mid* Harm 2, Burn
Moves Transmit tactical telemetry, evasive maneuvers, crash and burn

Viking

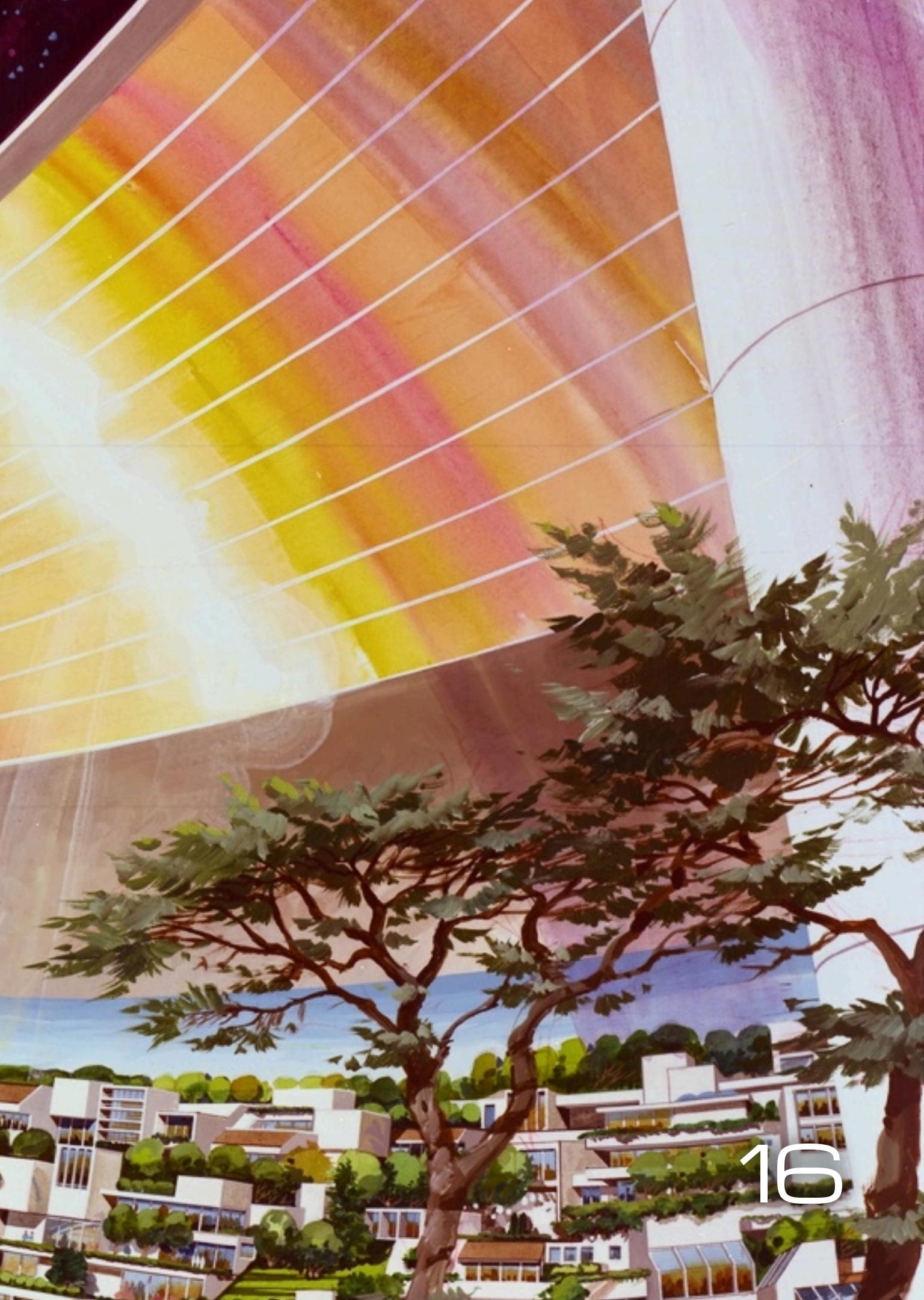
The viking-class pions are the most feared by resistance fighters, as they're the heavy troopers of the Occupation. Reinforced weapon mounts surround a cylindrical central body mounted on 12 flexible legs of variegated size.

Health 9

Vulnerable *nothing known*

Overkill Onslaught *close, mid* Harm 5

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



Ships

Ship Fights

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

If a ship is destroyed, anyone on board is KIA unless the ship has the EVA tag or Escape Pods.

Ship Weaponry

These weapons or other devices are attached to a ship's mount points.

Asteroid Drill *close-ship* Harm Ship-2
Booster Rockets *mid-ship, far-ship* Harm Ship-5, Explosive, Single-Use
Docking Clamps *close-ship* Harm none or Ship-1; prevents other vessel from moving
EMP Burster *close-ship* Harm Ship-4, Pulse, Single-Use
Escape Pods crew not KIA when ship destroyed
Flak Cannon *close-ship* Harm Ship-2, AOE, Exploding
Fuel Reserve *close-ship* Harm Ship-3 (explosive) + Ship-3 (burn), Single-Use
Gatling Cannon *mid-ship* Harm Ship-3, Autofire
Jumpstart Hawser *close-ship* Harm Ship-1, Shock
Laser Refractor *close-ship, mid-ship* Harm Ship-2, Burn
Manipulator Arm *close-ship* Harm Ship-1; can move objects around

Micro-Nuke *close-ship* Harm Ship-6 (explosive) + Ship-6 (burn) + Ship-6 (burn) + Ship-6 (pulse), AOE, Friendly Fire, Self-Destructive, Single-Use
Microwave Scrambler *mid-ship, long-ship* Harm Ship-1, Pulse
Ore Extractor *close-ship* Harm Ship-3, Shock
Osmium Ballista *mid-ship* Harm Ship-5, Reload
Patch Kit *close-ship* Repairs Health Ship-1
Railgun *far-ship* Harm Ship-4, Reload, Scope
Raybeam Cannon *mid-ship, far-ship* Harm Ship-1, Burn
Ramming Spike Ship takes only one third of its maximum Health when using Ramming Speed.
Refueling Tether *close-ship* Harm Ship-1, Burn
Seeker Mines *close-ship* Harm Ship-2, Explosive
Tesla-Coil Turret *close-ship, mid-ship* Harm Ship-2, Shock
Van de Graaff Howitzer *mid-ship, far-ship* Harm Ship-3, Pulse
Welding Torch *close-ship, mid-ship* Harm Ship-2, Burn

Ship Tags

Atmospheric Can touch down or launch in an atmosphere.
Balanced Add 1 to Gyro.
Cargo Can carry cargo, including a ship of Health up to half its' Health.
Compact Ship can't be targeted at Close-Ship range.
EVA Pilots can easily eject in space.
Networked Other pilots can use this ship's Telemetry.
Nimble Ship can't be targeted at Mid-Ship range.
Passengers The ship can carry passengers – a number equal to its Health squared.

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

Reinforced Bulkheads Add 1 to Health.

Sensor Array Add 1 to Telemetry.

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

Turbocharged Add 1 to Thrust.

Telemetry 3

Health Ship-4

Resist shock

Vulnerable pulse

Mount Points 2 (Microwave Scrambler, EMP Burster)

Tags Connected

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

The Resistance Fleet

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

The most common ship types are:

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

Comms Relay

These ships were constructed from old communications satellites.

Thrust 1
Gyro 2

Liquid-Hydrogen Tanker

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

Thrust 3

Gyro 2

Telemetry 1

Health Ship-8

Resist pulse

Vulnerable burn

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

Tags Cargo, Ramming Speed

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

Mining Rig

Primarily used in the asteroid belt to mine ores.

Thrust 2
Gyro 2
Telemetry 2
Health Ship-3

Resist explosive
Vulnerable burn
Mount Points 2 (Asteroid Drill, Ore Extractor)
Tags Compact, EVA
Names *Cavendish, Herschel, Morrison, Piazzi, Tylium*

Ore Hauler

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

Thrust 3
Gyro 1
Telemetry 2
Health Ship-10
Resist everything
Vulnerable none
Mount Points 2 (Escape Pods, Flak Cannon)
Tags Cargo x2, Ramming Speed
Names *Cygnus, Kate Rice, Narada, Nostromo, Snark*

Racing Yacht

A sleek vessel not designed for space combat.

Thrust 2
Gyro 3
Telemetry 1
Health Ship-5
Resist shock
Vulnerable pulse
Mount Points 2 (Escape Pods, Raybeam Cannon)
Tags Atmospheric, Nimble, Passengers

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

Repair Pod

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

Thrust 1
Gyro 2
Telemetry 3
Health Ship-2
Resist shock
Vulnerable burn
Mount Points 2 (Patch Kit, Jumpstart Hawsers)
Tags Compact, EVA
Names *Betty, Bowman, Discovery Two, Icarus, Palomino*

Shuttle

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

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

Solar Glider

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

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

The Pion Fleet

Pion ships are essentially huge robots; each is controlled by redundant central computers and has no pilot.

Genesis Worldship
Kosmos Carrier
Mariner Troop transport and lander
Sakigake Artillery Ship
Zond Interdictor

Genesis

Health Ship-1000
Vulnerable *nothing*
Ship-to-Ship Defense Batteries *close-ship*
Harm Ship-2, Burn
Pulse Cannons *mid-ship* Harm Ship-4, Pulse

Tracer Railguns *far-ship* Harm Ship-6, Autofire
Moves Rain death and destruction upon the Earth, direct the fleet, orbit ominously

Kosmos

Health Ship-50
Vulnerable burn
Electrostatic Defense Field Generators
close-ship Harm Ship-2, AOE, Shock
Moves Launch interceptors, fire point defense guns, recall Zonds

Mariner

Health Ship-2
Vulnerable explosive
Attack *none*
Moves Enter atmosphere, dock with capital ship, reload troops

Sakigake

Health Ship-10
Vulnerable pulse
Laser Bombardment Cannons *far-ship* Harm Ship-6, AOE, Burn, Reload
Moves Swath of destruction, recharge cannons, retreat to a safe distance

Zond

Health Ship-4
Vulnerable shock

Pulsed Maser Cannon *close-ship, mid-ship* Harm

Ship-2, Pulse

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

Resistance Ops

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Curabitur ornare ex nisi, sit amet aliquet libero bibendum non. Curabitur sed ligula eu mi laoreet ornare. Ut tempor pretium ex. Etiam eu semper arcu sem gravida metus, at vestibulum erat augue vel ante.

Op Types

There are three basic Op types:

- Planetary Ops
- Orbital Ops
- Combined Ops

Preparing for the Mission

Travel Time

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

approximate values you can use.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Credits

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

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

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

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The contents of the game are covered by the *Anti-Capitalist Attribution Cooperative License*, written by [Takuma Okada](#) which you can [read here](#).

This game is an homage to *Battlestar Galactica* (both incarnations), with *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* thrown in, as well as a tribute to my 1970s-era nerd-girl fascination with NASA.