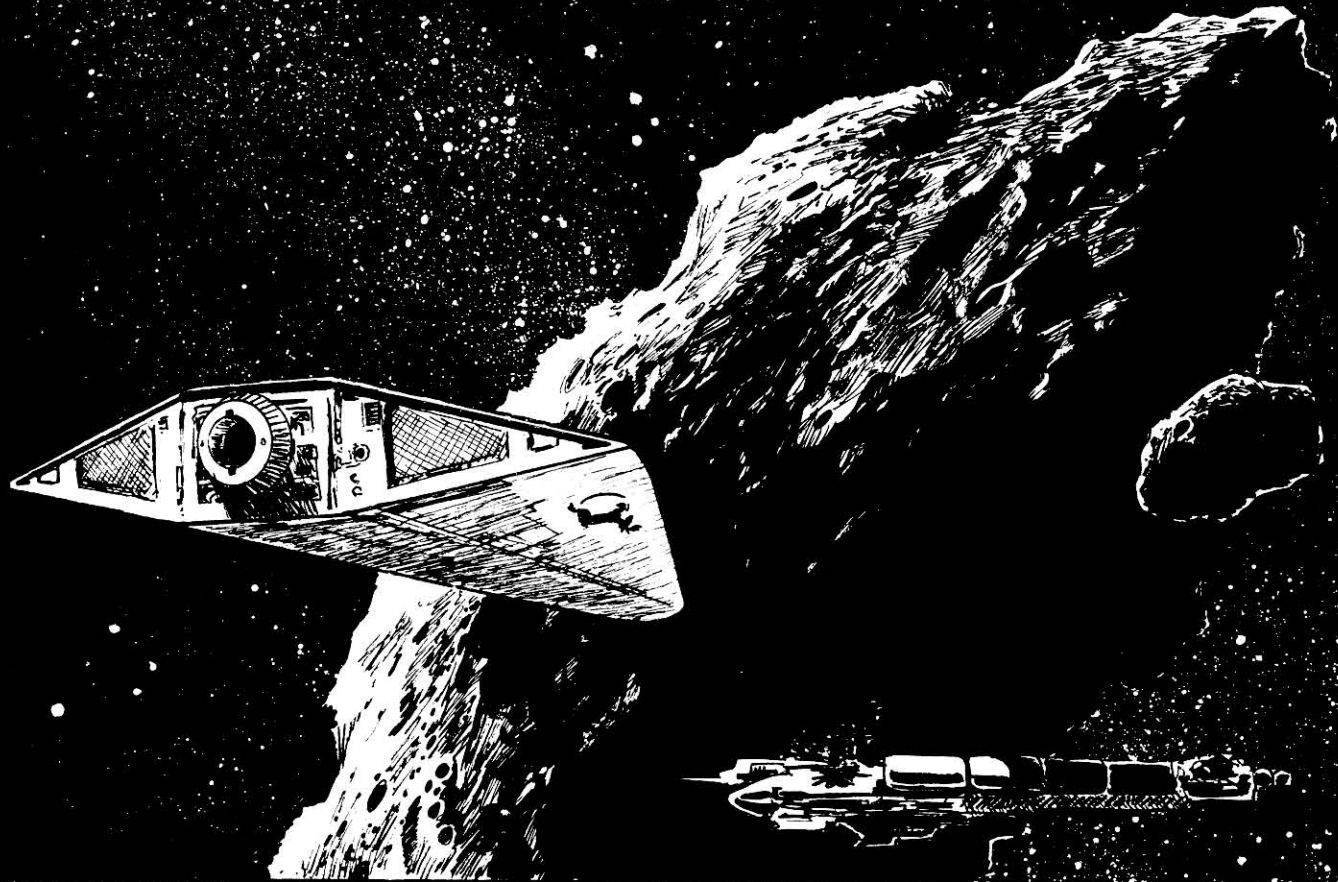


Salvage Mission



Salvage Mission by J. Andrew Keith

This folio adventure is designed for characters with Navy, Marine, or Scout Service backgrounds recalled to active duty during the Fifth Frontier War. The referee may draw characters from any source desired, including existing campaigns; it is urged that characters used have the skills necessary for starship operation.

Approved For Use With

TRAVELLER™
*Science-Fiction Adventure in
the Far Future*

The characters used in Salvage Mission are personnel attached to the Close Escort Stag. Details of the statistics, performance, and layout of this ship can be found by consulting GDW's Supplement 7, *Traders and Gunboats*. Also needed to play this adventure is *High Guard*, TRAVELLER Book 5.

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Salvage Mission

Background: The Fifth Frontier War centered for the most part around the Regina, Jewell, and Villis subsectors of the Spinward Marches, and it was in these regions that the most important actions of the war were fought. The independent worlds of the Querion subsector, however, were also involved in the war when Zhodani and Imperial fleets each strived to develop the region as a staging area for an alternate route into the enemy's domain.

When a Zhodani offensive into the area shattered the Imperial fleet under Vice-Admiral Jaeren haut-Alloran at the Battle of Thanber, other Imperial squadrons were in turn exposed to great danger. One of these, a convoy of troopships carrying elements of the 191st Imperial Marines assembling at DeKalb (Querion 0608), was caught by a large Zhodani force and badly handled before escape became possible. One of the transports, the 2000-ton Pax, was badly damaged in the encounter. Loss of fuel and damage to the engineering sections made a long jump impossible, cutting the ship's chances of escaping to a safe Imperial system. The only alternative was a jump in a different direction. As the Imperial convoy prepared for jump, the captain of the Pax informed its consorts of his intention to jump to Winston in the Darrian Confederation, there to lie low, effect repairs, and later rejoin the Imperial fleet. But Pax never rejoined, and the mystery of the transport's disappearance prompted an investigation.

Ordinarily, the loss of one more ship would have been a minor problem in a war that had already claimed countless lives. But Pax was a special case. . . deep in the transport's hold, Pax carried the payroll for the entire convoy, amounting to over Cr 275,000,000. Recovery of this sum of money is considered urgent enough to warrant the dispatch of a ship in search of the transport. The Stag, a Close Escort, has been selected for the task.

Orders to the Stag stress the importance of the mission, but also the necessity of avoiding any offense to the neutrals of the Darrian Confederation, who claim -- and currently control -- Winston. Imperial diplomacy is hard at work in an attempt to win the Confederation as a new ally against the Zhodani and their supporters, the neighboring Swords Worlds. But allowing the Darrian government to learn of the lost payroll is to be avoided; should there be any question of recovering the payroll from Darrian space, they could claim rights to it and cause a serious breach between the Confederation and the Imperium.

It does not prove difficult for the Stag to reach Winston. The difficulties don't begin until after the ship arrives. . .

Winston (Querion 0610-E887573-6): The system is claimed by both the Darrian Confederation and the Swords Worlds, along with the neighboring systems of Enope and Imperial support of the Darrian claim is among the reasons for the Swords Worlds alliance with the Zhodani during the Fifth Frontier War. Winston is an obscure backwater, of little importance, without either naval bases or other major Confederacy installations.

The Stag: A Close Escort of the Gazelle class, the Stag has a crew of 12. It is capable of Jump-5 and Maneuver-5. The ship is armed with two triple laser turrets and two particle accelerator batteries. The ship also carries a laser-armed gig.

High Guard Stats: CE-13791 Stag CE-3455762-300000-401000-0 MCr 353.30 400 tons
batteries bearing 2 2 Crew=12
batteries 2 2 TL=14

Passengers=0. Low Berths=0. Cargo=0. Fuel=81. EP=21. Agility=0. Troops=0.

NOTE: L-Hyd Tanks add 100 tons of fuel and mass (CE-4444762) and cost MCr .11

Referee's Notes

The players will need to plan how they will track down the lost transport. It is quite possible that the ship is not in the Winston system at all. . .it might never have reached Winston, or it might have been lost after repairs were effected and the journey back to the Imperium begun. However, the referee should impress upon the players the fact that Winston marks the obvious starting point for a search. A search of the system can be conducted with a fair chance of remaining undetected, but the players should keep in mind that some news of the ship might also be found at the planet itself. This may tend to put them on the horns of a dilemma. The possibility of using the Stag's gig to facilitate the search should not be overlooked.

The Search: The last word from the Pax will indicate two general hiding places to be searched. One would be the vicinity of Winston's gas giant, where Pax planned to refuel. The other region requiring investigation would be the system's asteroid belt, which lies between the orbits of the gas giant and Winston itself. Searching the entire belt would be the job of a lifetime; the chance of finding a comparatively small vessel in an area so vast is extremely small. However, the odds can be raised by concentrating the search in that section of the belt nearest the gas giant, as this is the intended area of hiding for the Pax while repairs are made.

To further support the search, the adventurers have been equipped with a semi-portable transmitter designed to activate the transponder on board the Pax anywhere within a million miles of the ship. In this way, even if the ship is keeping total radio silence to avoid detection, the adventurers can locate and home in on the transport at a great distance. The main difficulty, of course, is that activation of the transponder will alert other ships and listening posts to the transport's presence.

When making the search, the adventurers roll 2D each week. On a 10+, they will locate the Pax. Another throw of 2D gives the number of hours required to rendezvous with the transport. Other ships in the system will arrive to investigate the transponder signal in 2D + 8 hours.

The Pax: The transport Pax is indeed in the Winston star system, drifting in the asteroid belt. When discovered, it will not answer any hails, and visual contact will show that the ship appears damaged, not only from battle, but from one or more collisions with asteroids. A party may be sent on board to investigate the derelict; they will find the rather small crew dead, killed by explosive decompression when an asteroid breached the hull. All power has also been cut off, apparently from a failure of the engineering systems. With the power failure, the troops kept aboard in low berth were also killed.

The cargo deck of the transport holds the object of the salvage mission: 10 tons of currency, coin, and a large number of computer records and the like, all needed for the payroll aboard. This cargo -- particularly the money -- must be transferred to the Stag (or the gig). The job will take 1 man 20 hours to complete. More people reduce the time required.

There is no need for maps or deck plans for the transport; the process of removing the cargo can be carried through without this. If the referee so desires, however, he should feel free to develop a deck plan, or perhaps borrow one or more of the decks from the Azhanti High Lightning or other sources to represent the Pax.

Should other ships arrive while the salvage procedure is going on, the referee is responsible for resolving the situation that develops. The players will have to decide whether to continue operations at the risk of being attacked, or abandon the mission and escape with whatever has already been salvaged.

DIPLOMACY: The players may find it necessary to deal with the system authorities. This is especially true if they are trying to discover any news that may be found concerning the Pax. In so doing, their best course is to equip the gig with the transponder trigger used to discover the transport, and let it search while Stag pays a call on the planet itself.

Darrian interests at Winston are represented by Bresarden Haicarla, the Port Master. Haicarla has held the position for some 45 years, and has represented not only the Darrian Confederation, but also, many years past, the Swords Worlds at a time when they were in control of the system. His own local influence has kept Haicarla in charge of the port and all related functions despite these changes of allegiance.

The arrival of an Imperial vessel in neutral space will be greeted with mixed emotions on the part of the local government. The Imperium has supported Darrian claims to Winston, and generally sought to strengthen the confederation as a check on the Swords Worlds, and thus there is some bond of friendship between the two powers. But, on the other hand, the early success of the Zhodani in Querion and Vilis, and the presence of a fairly large fleet near at hand, have both served to keep the Darrian Confederation wavering in a neutrality that generally seems to back the winning side at any given time. Thus, the Reaction Table may be brought into play (though extreme results should be discounted) to give the proper sense of uncertainty to the actions of the locals. Generally, a warm welcome will indicate that the locals are willing to refuel and resupply the Stag, but little else. A negative reaction serves to show an extreme reluctance to deal with the Imperials at all.

The referee should keep in mind several other factors, however. First, the Port Master is serving two masters, not one. On the arrival of the Imperial mission, he will notify both the Darrian government and the Swords Worlds, with whom he has an understanding. Too open an approach on the part of the players could lead to intervention from the Swords Worlds. Haicarla, in fact, may attempt to lay a trap for the Imperial party by urging them to stay -- even if this contradicts initial reactions. The players may greet this as an unexpected benefit. . .until a trap is sprung on them. The details of any course of action are up to the referee; these notes are intended as guidelines only.

Winston itself maintains only a handful of antiquated small craft; no large starships are present. However, as the weeks go by, the referee should consult the Event Table below to determine additional arrivals in the system which might complicate the diplomatic situation.

EVENTS

- 1-3 NO EVENT
- 4 Darrian ship arrives
- 5 Swords Worlds Squadron arrives
- 6 Darrians demand departure

An event can only take place once; the referee should feel free to further modify, add to, or subtract from the table given here.

Darrian Ship: A ship arrives from the Confederation. It is recommended that this be a Type C, 800 ton cruiser. Actions and reactions are up to the referee.

Swords Worlds Squadron: 2-12 small vessels arrive from the Swords Worlds, claiming the right to use the neutral port. They may attempt to interfere with the Imperials, at the referee's discretion.

Departure Demanded: The Port Master demands that the Imperials leave at once. The referee may wish to modify this if he is actively laying the groundwork for a confrontation.

The referee will find this situation demanding. It will be necessary to manipulate events to a final climax, with one or more parties greatly interested in the player's salvage operations. The adventurers, obviously, want to escape with as much of the money as possible; their handling of the diplomatic situation, however, will be of great importance to the overall framework of the War, and they should be reminded of this aspect of the adventure throughout.