

Back Story

During the initial survey of Pulp Earth, the survey team picked up an odd signal and determined that it was coming from the vicinity of Mars. Before returning to Earth Prime, the survey team scouted out the system platform but was unable to unlock any of the portals with their crystal. Due to the loss of the Pulp Earth team this portal has not been (officially) re-investigated as of yet.

Three years ago, a survey team returned to the Pulp Earth node. They were given “off the record” orders to check out the system portal to try and find Mars. If they did, they were instructed to locate the source of the signal and were given a high level crystal in hopes that they would be able to unlock the door. If they found the signal, they were to try and find out who the “Martian agents” were talking to and if there was any information on the lost team from the Prime node. This team also never returned and was listed as lost on the pathway on route to Earth Prime.

During the Nazi strike mission (Deutschland Uber Alles), it was discovered that someone in the base had access to an advanced communication device. This is likely to be connected with the signal detected on the previous mission. It was also determined that the language was no known earth language and was most likely extra terrestrial in nature.

There is no map for this mission and you can use it as is and just run it off the cuff but you are encouraged to use any adventures you have that will fit the bill. You only need to make sure to integrate the important encounters and areas to make this work. For example, the AD&D module *S3 Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*, could work very well if you wanted to make it a huge mission and were willing to do some tweaking.

The Mission

IDET is sending the team back into potential harm's way in order to find the source of the Martian signal and to determine if another Fringeworthy entity is influencing things on Pulp Earth. The mission is to find the system portal that goes to Mars. Once on Mars find the signal's source, make contact with the agent, and determine the agent's intentions. If they are benign, minimize contact and retrieve a first contact team. If they are hostile, take out the agent if possible. Otherwise evacuate the facility, lock the portal, and return to home base. IDET is assuming the latter and fully expects the team to engage in combat. That is why a search and rescue team is being sent to investigate rather than a survey team.

The team leader will be approached after the briefing for an “off the record” discussion. He will be told about the lost team and will be instructed to keep it confidential. His mission is to find out what happened to the lost team and to recover the crystal.

The team will receive a crash course in low-g maneuvering and will get that as a free edge for going on this mission. They will be equipped with an exploration Humvee, whatever armaments they require, and will each have an armored spacesuit package. They will not be able to get one of the hybrid (diesel/electric) Humvees as they are all on assignment. Thus , no driving it on Mars.

Scene 1: The Platform

The portal the party is looking for is Platform (same as Pulp Earth), System, Door 3. While the party does not know which door leads to Mars they will probably not even need to investigate as there is a glaring clue to the proper door.

Lying on the ground next to the pylon at Door 3 is a corpse in a space suit. The suit has a fine red dust all over it (Martian soil). It's hard to tell how long it's been out here but it has an IDET exploration team patch that is at least a year out of date. The name tag on the suit is of one of the members of a missing exploration team. The suit is torn in several places but the cause is indeterminable. A Healing Check of 4 plus a General Knowledge Check of 6 will let the team know that the cause of death is consistent with being exposed to the atmosphere of Mars. There are wounds wherever the suit is torn but the person did not die from those. The body has an empty holster and there is no other ammo in any of the ammo pouches. The oxygen tank is nearly empty and the first aid kit is a bloody mess inside. All of the morphine has been used.

Looking at the pylon, the players will find a clear crystal in the top most spot. They will also see that the door is locked and, of course, several indicator lights reflecting the harsh conditions of the Martian surface.

Scene 2: Welcome to Mars

Remind the players that they have no electronic components working until they recharge their suit's power packs; thus, no radio communication. They are running off mechanical and chemical systems until then. There is a portable solar recharging pack on the Humvee but it will take about an hour to get enough juice to fully charge the entire team's packs. The suits will run off their mechanical and biological systems until recharged but not much longer. The team will need to recharge them before going anywhere.

As the party steps through the ring they exit into a cave. It's exceptionally dark and they will need to crack open their glow rods (big chemical glow sticks). Tossing out 6-8 of these will illuminate enough of the cave to see an IDET exploration base camp. It's a bit tattered and there's obvious evidence of rummaging and combat.

If they search they will find several things:

TN 0 (No Roll)

There is a portable solar charging unit in the middle of the camp. Still plugged into the unit are four fully charged power packs. Two extra fully charged oxygen packs sit next to it. There is a cable leading from the charging unit, down the cave, out to the surface of Mars, and is connected to a solar panel.

There is a specially equipped hybrid (diesel/electric) Humvee on its side next to the ramp. It looks as if it hit the ramp wrong and went off the side. The Humvee will not run without some major repair work.

TN4

A half spilled satchel of clips for a P90 SMG, and 4 hand grenades lies in a pile of debris that spilled out of the Humvee.

TN6

A corpse in a spacesuit lies up on a low ridge, 8 feet up. It's another member of the lost team. He has a P90 that needs repair (TN 4).

TN8

Lying behind a rock, covered in dust, is a laser pistol. It has a dried black substance on the grip that flakes off fairly easily when picked up. Any combat veteran will recognize it as blood. It has 16 charges remaining in it.

On the Surface

Just outside the cave, the base is clearly visible. There is a main facility with what looks to be a greenhouse attachment. The greenhouse is of classic Sci-Fi clear dome (force field) construction. There is a rocket ship next to the base and a big satellite dish nearby. It will take the party 30 minutes to walk the distance between the cave and the base.

Scene 3: The Base

The base is not very large and is of simple construction. The entrance is an airlock capable of holding 6 people. Next to the door is a flat panel covered in Martian dust. It will try to cycle open as soon as anyone puts their hand on it or tries to brush the dust off. The door is malfunctioning and will require a TN4 repair roll to re-affix the loose wires hanging from a nearby panel (someone has broken in here before)

Once inside they will find that there is a working atmosphere but the air is stale. The CO scrubbers need to be replaced, especially if the team is going to be here for more than a few hours. This is a base left over from the common wealth. It's very high tech, with clear control panels that light up but it has a bit of a 50's retro kind of feel. Its purpose is a little bit of a mystery but it was probably used to observe the Earth from a distance. There is a lab used to test plant growth and it's possible the base was also a terra-forming research facility.

As they travel through the base they will find the usual stuff: Living quarters, mess hall, kitchen, showers, etc. The place seems empty and ransacked. They will not be able to find any of the operational rooms however. The access door to all the infrastructure of the base is outside and inaccessible without a card key.

There is an eerie metal on metal screeching coming from somewhere in the base. This can't be found but it will seem to come from somewhere in the middle of the base. It's only once in a while and it's just to set a creepy mood.

To keep the suspense and to give the players something to do, there are three places of interest that the players should investigate before Scene 4: The Rocket Ship, the Captain's Quarters, and the Rocket Lab.

The Rocket Ship

Close to the entrance is a clear tube on the surface that goes out to the Rocket Ship. It ends at a set of stairs to the Rocket Ship's airlock. The party can go from the base to the interior of the ship without being exposed to the Martian atmosphere.

This is much like the base in that it's high tech but retro looking. If the players look in the locker they will find 6 space suits that will not fit any of them. The proportions are off and there are four arms. There are 2 fully charged laser rifles, and 3 fully charged laser pistols. There is a medical and a scientific scanner both in an unknown language.

The ship controls are very intuitive but in an unknown language. There are 5 crew seats and an obvious captain's chair. If a person straps into the captain's chair, the controls will come on-line. A TN4 Smarts Check will allow the team to take off and this will be obvious. The display is in

another language but will clearly indicate that the ship will jump through some type of gate and land on another planet. They can easily avoid activating the launch. They cannot change or control direction as the navigation controls are locked. The ship will take the team to Part 3, Doomed Planet.

The Captain's Quarters

This room is next to the lab and should be the next to the last room visited before Scene 4. This room is in the best condition yet. It's the only room that looks lived in. However, something about it seems off. There is a bed, a dresser, a desk, and chair. On the desk is a clear glass monitor looking device. If a player sits in the chair, the screen will come on and show the inside of a lavish wood paneled room decorated circa 1945. This screen seems to be looking into an office from a desktop. On the wall opposite the screen hangs a Nazi flag.

The speaker's spring to life with the sounds of footsteps and man in an SS Nazi uniform sits down in the seat. He bangs on the side of his screen and the picture bounces around a bit. In German, he says "Ah, that's better. Now then, what do you have... Oh my, now that's interesting." He cuts off communication.

The Lab

Make this the last room they find in Scene 3. This is a force field domed building that is off the main building and is attached by a short hallway. Here they were testing Martian soil to grow plants. This room is overgrown like a jungle as the automated systems are working like a charm. It should be noted that the air is crisp and Earthy and oxygen rich. It's possible that the station's air is supposed to cycle through here but has been shut down or is malfunctioning.

At about the point they start to get bored, have one of them find an IDET space suit helmet. On inspection, it has bits of bone and hair stuck to the inside and on the visor. Right about then, the party will hear rustling in the plants all around them. These are the least Mellor waking up. The round they hear them doesn't count but after that, the party has three rounds to get out of the lab before the attack starts. There are a few hundred Least Mellor in the lab and they will basically keep coming until the party escapes. Once in the hall to the main building, it is easy enough to shut them in via the air lock. If anyone goes to set off a grenades that produce flame, have them make a Smarts Check DV 4. If they succeed, remind them about how rich the air is with oxygen. Setting off a pyrotechnic grenade will extend the range 1 increment (ex. small burst to a medium burst) and add 1d6 to the damage as the rich atmosphere feeds the flame. The place is too big to take them all out with 1 grenade. It can buy them a few rounds however.

If they make a break for the airlock allow them to get to it quickly and it's an Athletics Check DV 6 to get through it in one round without letting the swarm in. Make everyone roll and just go with the highest. Assume that he is the one who closed the door.

Scene 4: All Hell Breaks Loose

The Mellor are trapped but they will eventually get through the airlock. If the party is smart, they should be running for the exit. If they aren't, give each of them a benni and tell them they are now running for the exit.

After running for a few minutes they will come to the hall leading to the exit. At the end of the hall there will be a man in an IDET space suit with a large crack in his helmet (High_Mellor). If the party opens fire, he will shift as he charges the party and will attack. They will only get one round as he is exceptionally fast. Otherwise he will wait until they reach him.

He will try to convince them that he is a survivor from the previous team. This is a hollow story but it's the only human form he currently has. If the party actually buys this then he'll fall into the middle of the group and attack from surprise. He can't leave without a crystal, he knows they have one, and doesn't know who has it. He also doesn't want to get too far from his backup.

If the party is having too easy a time, bring in one or two Lesser Mellor. It/They will drop down from above (ambush TN 8 Notice Check or surprised). The Mellor will attack the closest surprised character first.

They have 10 rounds to win this clash before the least mellor get through the airlock. They will hear them coming and will have 2 rounds to run. If they run, they can make it out before the least reach them.

Scene 5: Wrap Up

The party is probably hurt. This means that the space suits are most likely damaged. Not good news for anyone who's injured. The suits have sealant but it's for temporary use. The Least Mellor are relentless and they will keep coming. The party only has two escape routes; the Rocket Ship and the Portal. If they go directly to the space ship they will be okay. If they try to make it to the portal, each wounded person will need to take one wound every 5 minutes for 6 rounds. This will probably kill any wounded members and this is sort of the point. The Rocket Ship will take them directly to the next plot point which should be your goal. If you want to let them make it to the portal, or they have figured out a way to make it there that you just cannot deny, that's okay. You'll just have to figure out another way to get them into part three if you want to use it.

Laser Pistol

Name	Damage	ROF	Range	Weight	Clip	Notes
Kruss P4	1-3d4+1-3	1	15/60/60	1	30	AP 4

The battery holds 30 charges. There is a slider that will click into four positions. The first position is off. The next and will cause the weapon to do 1d4+1 points of damage. Each click beyond that will do an additional d4+1 of damage up to 3d4+3. When the pistol is switched on, a series of indicator lights will go from red to green indicating the charges left in the pistol. Each click uses an additional charge. Thus, at 1d4+1, the pistol uses 1 charge. There is another switch that will allow the weapon to become a flashlight. This will drain one charge per hour and will remain on even when firing the weapon. The beam is adjustable and if set to narrow (3" dia at 30 ft) it will add +1 to hit.

Laser Rifle

Name	Damage	ROF	Range	Weight	Clip	Notes
Kruss R4	1-3d6+1-3	3	25/50/100	3	60	AP 4

Kruss laser weapons are powered by a rare Fringe-friendly biological battery. This battery feeds off of special fields emitted by most Fringe technology. Anywhere within

The battery holds 60 charges.

There is a slider that will click into four positions. The first position is off. The next and will cause the weapon to do 1d6+1 points of damage. Each click beyond that will do an additional d6+1 of

damage up to $3d6+3$. When the rifle is switched on, a series of indicator lights will go from red to green indicating the charges left in the rifle. Each click uses an additional charge. Thus, at $1d6+1$, the rifle uses 1 charge. A second switch causes the weapon to go to full auto mode and raises the ROF to 3. There is a third switch that will allow the weapon to become a flashlight. This will drain one charge per hour and will remain on even when firing the weapon. The beam is adjustable and if set to narrow (3" dia at 30 ft) it will add +1 to hit.