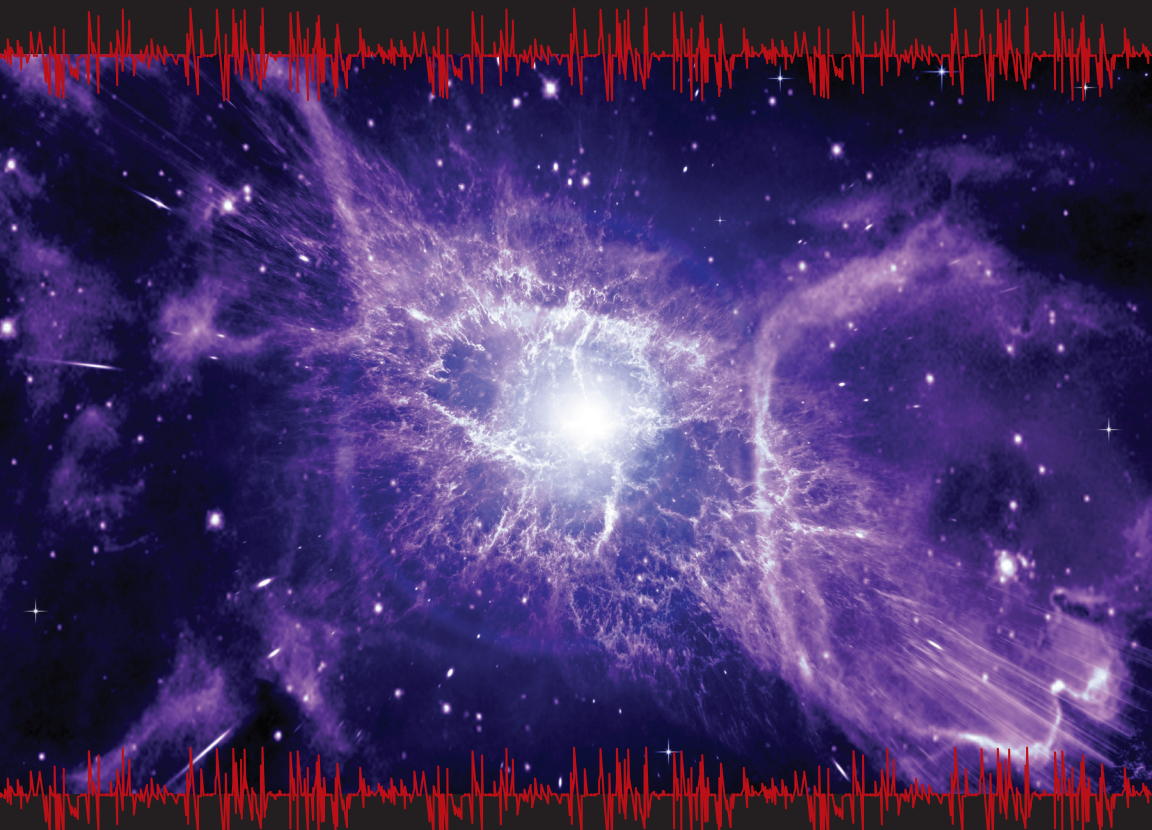


DISTRESS SIGNAL TUNDARA

AN EXTENDED WHITE BOX SCIFI ENCOUNTER

ADVENTURE LOCATIONS - SCIENCE FICTION



BY
ANTHONY C. HUNTER

SLEEPING GRIFFON PRODUCTIONS





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This adventure hook is designed for a group of 3 to 6 adventurers, of level 1 to 2. It can be scaled appropriately by the referee to accommodate more or less powerful groups. This is a sandbox style adventure hook, presenting a situation to the referee and several possible complications to that situation that the referee can then choose from or mix and match as desired.

If you are planning to play this adventure, please lay it down and step away now, all of the information in this document is designed for your referee, who will decide how much of it to share with you and in what degree. Reading further may interfere with your enjoyment of the adventure.

Okay, only referee's here now? Let's continue then. . .



HAVING THE ADVENTURERS FIND THE TUNDARA

The adventurers are crew or passengers aboard a ship (whether their own or someone else's is up to the referee) when a faint, repeating distress signal is intercepted, the message says. . .

"This is Captain Melissa Barron, of the Merchants Union freighter Tundara, we have experienced catastrophic power failure and have a major hull breach. We are dead in space with limited life support and need assistance. Our last recorded coordinates were Zeta 25, Delta 983, Gamma 82 and are drifting at a steady rate of one/tenth sublight speed in the direction of the Falana system. Assistance is needed."

This message will repeat itself every three minutes, obviously on a loop. Any ship that hears such a distress call is considered morally obligated to respond. Many would respond regardless due to salvage rights if the ship is a derelict and rewards from the Merchants Union if the ship is not derelict.



THE TRUE SITUATION (REFEREE EYES ONLY):

The Tundara was unknowingly transporting a newly developed Nano-Virus from a secret lab located on the rogue asteroid of Yvarl to the corporate labs of Klem-Corp, located on the ice moon of Garad in the Falana system (six light years distant), when the nano-virus escaped from it's stasis container and began causing problems aboard the Tundara.

THE NANO-VIRUS: RstMstr-XS1 Nano-Virus was accidentally created by Dr. Fredrick Drummond of Klem-Corp in their Yvarl research lab. The RstMstr-XS1 nanos have a penchant for consuming any ferrous metals they come into contact with as they reproduce themselves, leaving behind a slight oxidized (rusty) metal dust as residue.

Their programming was intended to only utilize specific and limited amounts of nearby material to create specific forms, but a coding error caused the nanos to respond in a viral fashion. Dr. Drummond's team was initially unaware of the error due to the lab area and containment pod being composed of completely non-ferrous materials.

Dr. Drummond decided to ship the completed alpha batch of the RstMstr-XS1 to the nearest fully staffed Klem-Corp lab, located on Garad in Falana system, for further testing and development.

After the Tundara was in deep space, a cyborg crewman aboard the Tundara, Elbrent Smythers, who earns extra credits as a corporate spy for SynthCorp, stole into the cargo hold in an attempt to learn what was in the stasis container and possibly steal a sample for SynthCorp. Upon breaching the seal of the stasis container, the nano-virus quickly overwhelmed the unprepared Smythers and fed off his cybernetic systems, leaving him unconscious and immobile in the cargo hold.

Subsequently, the RstMstr-XS1 began assimilating all available ferrous materials in the cargo hold and was able enter the adjacent engineering bay. In engineering, it began utilizing the engines and related equipment in the bay to expand, causing the ship to lose power and primary life support, as well as creating a large hull breach. As the RstMstr began to grow, it has gained some rudimentary intelligence as well, granting it a limited amount of animal-like cunning. It's growth is currently being thwarted by the non-ferrous bridgework that connects the cargo bay and engineering to the rest of the

ship, while the ship slowly drifts in the direction of the Falana system.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM:

- Destroy the ship, or at least, the 'infected' areas.
- Draw the RstMstr-XS1 away from the ship somehow
- Return the RstMstr-XS1 to the Stasis Container
- Alternate ideas that the players will likely pull out of thin air during play.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS:

- The remaining crew of the *Tundara* (*Captain Barron, First Mate Yvonne Pelton, Engineer Harrison Randolph and Crewman Oran Quegg*) have been able to see the hull damage to the cargo and engineering sections and the fact that apparently a large portion of the engines themselves seem to be missing. They have been trying to contact crewman Smythers and crewman Francisca Terrone (who was in engineering) and are currently trying to determine their options. There is a small lifeboat under the Bridge, and they have enough emergency life support to last another five hours when the adventurers first intercept the distress signal (it will take about an hour to reach the ship). They have space suits close at hand, which they will don if more damage appears to the hull or when they decide to enter the lifeboat. Crewman Quegg is on the verge of unreasoning panic and could prove a danger to himself, his crew mates, and anyone who comes to rescue if not handled delicately.
- The distress signal could draw the attention of pirates looking for easy pickings. A sample pirate vessel and her crew are listed in the encounters section of the adventure.
- A rogue asteroid (iron-rich and quite dense), is tumbling through this section of space and has a chance (1 in 6) of coming dangerously close to the *Tundara* or any ship attempting to board her. If this asteroid were to strike a ship, especially one with no active defenses, the results would be catastrophic for the ship.
- The Nano will begin to create a number of small constructs, designed to scout the available areas of the ship and to evaluate the situation (and possibly locate more ferrous materials). These constructs will be dangerous in their own right, as well

as being in communication with the main body of the nano-virus. As the nano gains information from it's scouts, it will realize that it could access the remainder of the ship without actually 'eating' and begin to move into other areas of the ship, where more raw materials are available.

- The Tundara was transporting several large biological creatures destined for medical research and/or to a hunting preserve. These creatures are now loose in the cargo bay area and are hungry, angry and / or frightened, i.e., dangerous.
- A SynthCorp ship is on it's way to a predestined pickup site (near where the ship is currently drifting), to pick up a canister that Smythers was supposed to jettison of whatever he found that might be of value to the Corporation. The Captain of the SynthCorp ship, will assume the players are claim-jumping his prize, or attacking the ship and may decide to intervene.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TUNDARA

Merchants Union Freighter Tundara (*Medium Transport*)

AC: 7 [12] Hit Points 0/75 (drifting under minimum life support)

Shield Strength: 0/3 Movement: 1/6 (drifting) Targeting: +0 Attack: Light Laser (2d6) [pilot linked] Modifications: FtL Drive (currently missing)

Locations:

01: Airlocks - The readouts on the hull side hatches indicate that the interior of the ship has minimum atmosphere, space suits will be required to breathe inside. Since there is no appreciable atmosphere inside the ship, the airlocks only take 2 rounds to cycle through their opening sequence (*as opposed to 10 rounds when the ship is at normal atmospheric pressure*)

INSIDE THE SHIP: With all remaining power diverted to the bridge, the inside of the ship is very dark. There is no gravity anywhere in the ship, so anything 'dropped' will remain floating unless acted upon by an outside force. There are faint red glow coming from the deck panels where the built in deck lights are slowly draining their internal

batteries, but it does not provide enough illumination to see any details farther than a foot from the character's faces. There are occasional creaks, knocks and squeals as the ship 'settles' and the last bits of atmosphere and heat are leached out into space.

The environment is spooky, use that to build up suspense with the players.

02: Ship's Lockers: There are four ship's lockers, two outside each of the airlocks. Each one normally contains 2 spacesuits (*the captain and the remaining crew have taken suits with them to the bridge, before diverting remaining power and life support to the bridge, and Smythers had one on when he went to the cargo hold*), but now there are only 3 hanging in the lockers.

The lockers also contain a standard tool kit, 100 ft of rope (used for EVA's) and two flashlights. Hanging inside one of the suits is a laser rifle and 2 extra energy cells. (*this suit belonged to crewman Terrone, she was usually tasked with exterior security and any hunting duties if the ship was in a dangerous or unfamiliar area*). Each spacesuit will provide the wearer with 1 day of breathable air.

03: The Central Hub: This is the center of the ship's 'airtight integrity'. To the fore and aft in the passage are airtight hatches that can be sealed in case of a hull breach to minimize the loss of pressure within the ship. The hatches are currently dogged shut, but can be easily opened by hand (*characters with a below average strength will need to make a Saving Throw to successfully undog the hatch*)

04: Portside Crew Quarters:

These quarters were occupied by Crewmen Smythers and Quegg.

The Portside Crew Quarters contains four bunks, all currently folded up against the bulkhead, and four lockers, currently closed. In the center of the room is a table and four chairs that can be unfolded from the deck for use when the bunks are folded out of the way.

Searching this room reveals that it was apparently occupied by two individuals, named Quegg and Smythers, according to the labels on the lockers and bunks. The lockers are secured (*Saving Throw to Force Open, modified by the referee as fitting due to the*

character's actions). Inside Quegg's locker, in addition to a few changes of work clothing, is a pharm-dispenser with what appears to be anti-anxiety meds, and a mono-dagger (1d6). Inside Smyther's locker is a laser pistol (1d6+2), clothing, and hidden inside a spare pair of work boots, is a small pouch containing 150 credits.

05: Starboard Crew Quarters:

These quarters were occupied by Engineer Randolph and Crewman Terrone

The Starboard Crew Quarters contains four bunks, all currently folded up against the bulkhead, and four lockers, currently closed. In the center of the room is a table and four chairs that can be unfolded from the deck for use when the bunks are folded out of the way.

Searching this room reveals that it was apparently occupied by two individuals, named Randolph and Terrone, according to the labels on the lockers and bunks. The lockers are secured (*Saving Throw to Force Open, modified by the referee as fitting due to the character's actions*). Inside Randolph's locker is clothing, a Tool Kit, a flashlight, and a printed book labeled QX45 Reactor Drive Repair Manual. Inside Terrone's locker are clothing, including items of an obviously female nature, a suit of Medium armor (*Flight suit with reinforced pads built in*), a headset with a single eyepiece (*targeting HUD, provides wearer with a +1 to hit with ranged attacks and improves range by 50%*), and a small box containing a hologram cube (2" on a side) that will project a series of images of a woman, child and a dog, and 25 credits.

06: Crew Lounge: This appears to be the central gathering place for the crew. There is a kitchen on the starboard side, the port bulkhead appears to be a video screen and below it are controls for an entertainment system, that would normally output music or videos to the screen. Examining the system will reveal that it can also be tied into the ship's communications system.

In the center of the room are several sets of chairs and tables that can be unfolded from the decks, and there are several comfortable sofa's built into the bulkhead, all of which are currently folded up. There is an airtight hatch leading forward through the ship and one leading back to the hub.

07: Captains Quarters: This is the personal quarters of Captain Melissa Barrons. The bulkheads are a uniform shade of pale blue. There is a desk and chair that will fold into the bulkhead on the aft side of the room, and a large, comfortable bed that is folded up into the bulkhead on the forward side. The far end of the room contains a personal 'fresher unit (toilet/shower) and a small kitchenette and a small table with two chairs. Beside the bed is the captain's locker, standing slightly ajar. It contains several changes of casual/work clothes and a few sets of nicer wear, possibly for shore leave and relaxation time.

The only thing of significance in the locker besides the clothing is a disassembled laser pistol (could be repaired) in a box with spare parts and small tools.

08: Mate's Quarters: This is the personal quarters of First Mate Yvonne Pelton. It is identical in layout to the Captain's Quarters, except the bulkheads of this room are painted a vibrant mixture of pinks and yellows. In the Mate's locker (*secured, requires a Saving Throw to Force Open*) there are an assortment of what are obviously work and casual clothing, as well as several lovely dresses and evening gowns.

09: The Bridge: Approaching the Bridge from the passageway, Lights can be seen through the viewport in the hatch. This hatch is dogged and sealed, as the captain has diverted life support and power to the bridge.

Unless it is opened from the inside, it would require being forced . The hatch has a AC of 9 [10] and 50 hit points - reducing it to less than 25 hit points will ruin the seal and destroy airtight integrity, causing the hatch to explosively exit it's frame and be forced into the passageway by the escaping air pressure (+6 to hit anyone in the passageway, the door will do 2d6 damage to anyone it hits as it is blown into the passage, traveling for 10m (5 squares) before coming to a halt and floating above the deck.

The surviving crew are on the bridge, unless they have been forced by time or subsequent hull damage to abandon ship in the lifeboat.

In an alcove on the port side of the bridge is an iris hatch in the deck that leads down to the lifeboat bay.

10: Crew Fresher Unit: *(that's a space toilet/shower to you groundlings!)*

This compartment contains 3 personal sized 'fresher units for the crew and any passengers to use.

11: Ship's Stores: This compartment is used for crew personal storage and ships' supplies. Located in this compartment are containers of paper goods, extra linens, spare jumpsuits, two tool kits, six 50' ropes, a dozen flashlights and a cabinet full of spare electrical and electronic parts and circuit boards.

12: Cargo and Engineering Access Hatch: This iris hatch in the deck leads to the access point between the cargo bay and the engine room *(or where the engine room used to be)*. It is sealed and locked, but can be opened easily from this side. The area below this hatch is open to vacuum, so any air pressure will be forcibly pulled down from here. There is a polymer ladder leading down to the lower deck.

13: Upper Deck Access Hatch: The polymer ladder in the center of this space leads up to the access hatch that opens onto the main deck of the ship. The area here is open to the vacuum of space as it appears most of the engine room to the aft is gone. There are fragments of dust, wiring and polymers floating in the vacuum to the fore and aft of the ladder, approximately where the airtight hatches to the cargo hold and the engine room would have been.

14: Remains of the Engine Room: The first thing the characters see as they approach this area is the vastness of space, trailing in the open behind them. There are a few square meters of decking remaining in place here, and bits trailing behind the ship where whatever destroyed the engines and hull pulled the ship apart. There are bits of wiring, polymers and miscellaneous debris floating about here, and over to the port side, where a corner remains, is what appears to be a dark cloud of swirling debris, that just swirled around and appears to be headed directly for the players.

This is the main body of the RstMstr XS1 nano virus. It senses any metals the characters may be carrying and will attempt to consume those, starting with larger items like weapons and tools that may be carried or worn on the outside of their space suits.

(RstMstr XS1 statistics will be found in the rear of this document)

15: The Cargo Hold There is a shimmering force field in the passageway, just fore of where the hatch would have been. When the hull was breached, the field automatically went into place, trapping the remaining atmosphere inside the cargo hold. The field is designed to trap atmosphere, but allows denser items (*such as people and animals*) to pass through the field. The characters will likely see any creatures that are loose in the hold if they take a moment to look. On the forward bulkhead of the cargo hold is a hidden hatch that leads to the lifeboat deck. The metallic parts of the hatch are shielded by the thick polymers that line the bulkheads of the cargo hold, thus far preventing the RstMstr XS1 from detecting them.

The referee should list any items he wishes to be of potential value to the characters if they decide to loot the cargo hold. Anything with ferrous metal that was not in a stasis container or a sealed, non-metallic container will have been 'eaten' by RstMstr XS1 or it's scouts. There are a number of empty stasis containers inside the bay, including the one that the RstMstr was in to begin with.

NOTE: If a stasis container is placed within 2m of the nano or It's constructs, and activated, it will 'stun' the nano's and allow them to be placed inside the containers.

16: The Lifeboat Bay: If the crew has not abandoned ship, the lifeboat will be in this bay. It has been loaded with extra supplies and what personal items the crew wanted to keep, and is ready to go when they decide to abandon ship.

Tundara Lifeboat AC: 8 [11] Hit Points: 15 Shield Strength: 2 Movement: 2 Attack: none Modifications: Extended Life Support (*20 days for 6 people*)



Rewards:

The rewards will depend upon the resolution of the situation. If handled badly, the characters could wind up dead or stranded in space with a hungry nano-virus. With a bit of ingenuity and luck, the characters can rescue the remaining crew and help tow the ship to a nearby port and collect a reward.

In addition to the XP rewards listed for the creatures and other encounters in the adventure, the following amounts should be given:

- For each member of the Tundara's crew that survives aboard the ship: 25 XP
- For returning the RstMstr XS1 to a Klem-Corp facility or representative: +150 XP
- Returning the Tundara to a nearby port: A reward of 2000 credits from the Merchant's Union
- Seeing the RstMstr XS1 and it's drones to a Klem-Corp representative: A reward of 1000 Credits and a possible useful contact in the future.
- Helping the SynthCorp rep to acquire the RstMstr or at least a sample - a reward of 500 Credits from SynthCorp and a possible useful contact in the future.



Encounter Statistics

Captain Melissa Barron - Human Soldier AC: 7 [13] (flight suit)

Hit Dice: 1+1 Total Hit Bonus: +1 Attacks: Laser Pistol: 1d6+2, Mono Dagger 1d6+1
Saving Throw: 17 Movement: 12 HDE/XP: 1/15

First Mate Yvonne Pelton AC: 7 [13] (flight Suit) HD: 1-1 Total Hit Bonus: +0

Attacks: Laser Pistol: 1d6+2 Saving Throw: 18 Movement: 12 HDE/XP: 1/15

The rest of the Crew: AC 7 [13] Flight Suit HD: 1/2 Total Hit Bonus: +0

Attacks: Improvised Weapons: 1d3 Saving Throw: 18 Movement: 12 HDE/XP: 1/15

RstMstr-XS1 Nano-Virus [*Amorphous Cloud of nanites*] AC: 4 [15] HD: 4+4

Total Hit Bonus: +4 Attacks: Pseudopod Bash 1d6 Saving Throw: 16

Special: Consumes Metal Movement: 12 (flying/gliding) HDE/XP: 5/325

Consumes Metal: On it's turn, the RstMstr can attempt to engulf a single object containing ferrous metals (up to 1 square meter) and will attempt to convert the metals to feed it's mass. The item gets a saving throw each round of 18. On a failed save, the item is destroyed and converted to mass for the RstMstr, leaving behind a slight powdering of oxidized metal, and any non-ferrous parts that were occupying the same space. Feeding will also heal 1d6 damage that RstMstr may have taken.

RstMstr Scout drones AC: 8 [11] HD: 1+1 Total Hit Bonus: +1

Attacks: Bite (1d6) or Bash (1d6) Saving Throws: 18 Movement: 8

Special: Consumes Metal HDE/XP: 2/30

Consumes Metal: As with the RstMstr-XS-1, except that targets of the drones feeding may attempt a saving throw to resist transitioning with a Saving Throw of 16, due to their lesser power

(Author's Note: personally, I picture the drones as looking like a classic rust monster - but describe them in whatever way suits your setting)

The Drunken Comet (Pirate Vessel)

AC: 2 [17] Hit Points: 90 Shield Strength: 10 Movement: 10 Targeting: +2
Attack: Laser Cannon (x4) 4d6 Modifications: FtL Drive

Crew of the Drunken Comet (Pirate Vessel)

Captain Creed McDow AC: 5 [14] (reinforced flight suit) HD: 4+4
Total Hit Bonus: +4 Saving Throw: 16 Movement: 12
Attacks: Mono Axe (1d6+2) Laser Pistol (1d6+2) HDE/XP: 4/120

First Mate Ares Starkiller AC: 7 [12] (flight suit) HD: 2+2 Total Hit Bonus: +2
Saving Throw: 17 Movement: 12 Attacks: Mono Sword (1d6+2) Laser Pistol
(1d6+2) HDE/XP: 2/30

Pirate Crew (x6) AC: 7 [12] (flight suit) HD: 1+1 (HP: 3, 6, 4, 2, 3, 7)
Total Hit Bonus: +1 Saving Throw: 18 Movement: 12
Attacks: Mono-Sword (1d6+2) Laser Pistol (1d6+2) HDE/XP: 1/15



Possible Biologicals being transported:

Skytopus (as found on page 90 of the White Star Book, reproduced here for simplicity)
AC: 6 [13] HD: 3+3 Total Hit Bonus: +3 Attacks: Bite (1d6) Saving Throw: 16
Special: None Movement: 12 (flying) HDE/XP: 3/60

Space Monkeys (x3) (as found on page 91 of the White Star Book, reproduced here for simplicity)
AC: 7 [12] HD: 1+1 Total Hit Bonus: +1 (HP: 3, 7, 4) Saving Throw: 18
Attacks: Bite (1d6) or Scream (1d6) Movement: 12 Special: Scream HD/XP: 1/15

Scream: 60' range, very painful (1d6 damage) Saving Throw or be deafened for 1 hour

Rhino-Blastar AC: 5 [14] HD: 3+3 Total Hit Bonus: +3 Saving Throw: 16
Attacks: Kick (1d6+1) or Horn-Blast (1d6+2) 60' [18m] range Movement: 10
Special: Horn Blast (60' [18m] range) HDE/XP: 4/120

SynthCorp Executive Transport Ship - *SC Paradigm Flux (modified yacht)*

AC: 4 [15] HP: 45 Shield Strength: 2 Movement: 12 Targeting: +0

Attacks: Light Laser (2d6) - Pilot Linked; Laser Cannon (4d6) (x2)

Modifications: FtL Drives

Captain: Junior Vice-President of Research Leo Thorndol AC: 7 [12] (flight suit)

HD: 1+1 Total Hit Bonus: +1 Saving Throw: 18 Movement: 12

Attack: Laser Pistol (1d6+2) HDE/XP: 30

CorpBot Crew (x4) AC: 6 [13] (metal bodies) HD: 1+1 (HP: 3, 5, 2, 6)

Total Hit Bonus: +1 Saving Throw: 17 Movement: 12 (treads)

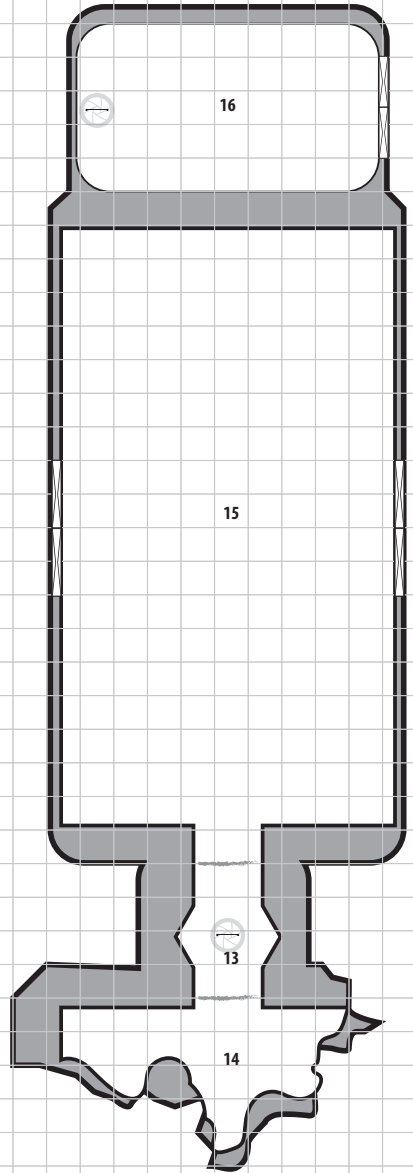
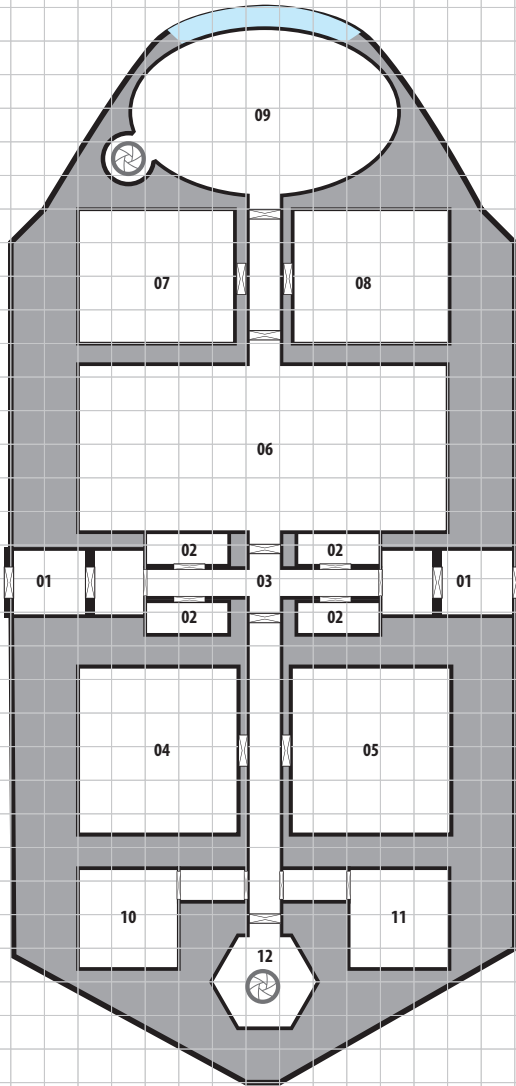
Attack: Laser (*mounted in 'head'*) (1d6+2) Special: Armor Plating HDE/XP: 1/30



MAIN DECK

CARGO & ENGINEERING DECK

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DECKPLAN OF THE
MERCHANT UNION FREIGHTER
TUNDARA

1 SQUARE = 2m

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