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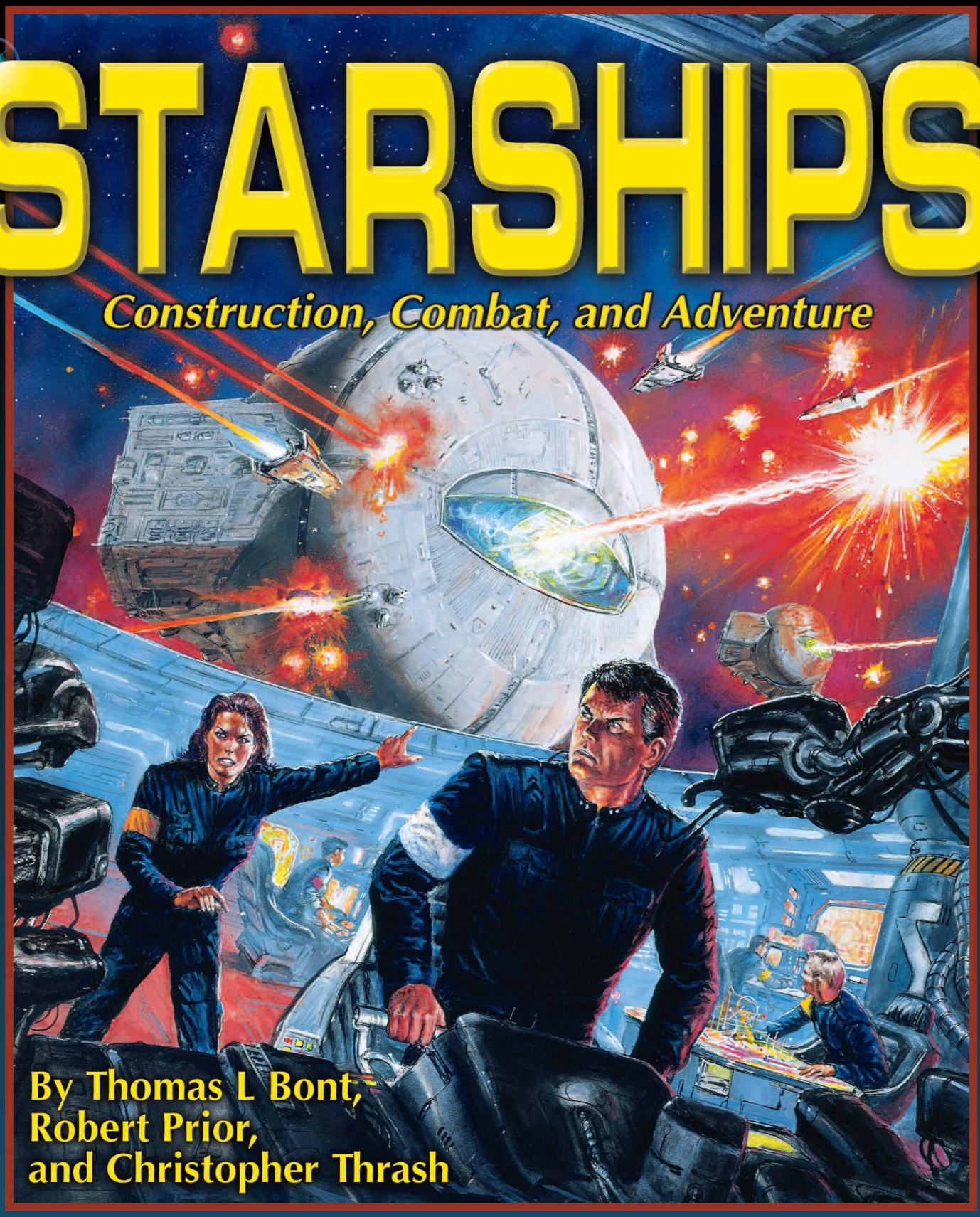

By Thomas L Bont,
Robert Prior,
and Christopher Thrash

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

When ships to sail the void between the stars have been invented, there will also be men who come forward to sail those ships.
– Johannes Kepler,
***Somnium**, -2887 (1634 A.D.)*

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- *Leaping Snowcat*-Class Safari Ship
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GURPS® Traveller®

STARSHIPS™

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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About *GURPS*

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the ***GURPS*** system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

Pyramid (**www.sjgames.com/pyramid/**). Our online magazine includes new ***GURPS*** rules and articles. It also covers ***Dungeons and Dragons, Traveller, World of Darkness, Call of Cthulhu,*** and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like ***In Nomine, Illuminati, Car Wars, Toon, Ogre Miniatures,*** and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

New supplements and adventures. ***GURPS*** continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. For a current catalog, send us a legal-sized or 9"×12" SASE – please use two stamps! – or just visit **www.warehouse23.com**.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all ***GURPS*** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see below.

Gamer input. We value your comments, for new products as well as updated printings of existing titles!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at **www.sjgames.com** for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. ***GURPS*** has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of ***GURPS.*** To join, point your web browser to **www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l/**.

The ***GURPS Traveller: Starships*** web page is at **www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/traveller/starships/**.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the ***GURPS Basic Set,*** *Third Edition.* Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the ***Basic Set*** – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the ***Basic Set,*** *Third Edition.* Page references that begin with CI indicate ***Compendium I.*** Other references are BIO to ***Bio-Tech***, CII to ***Compendium II***, RO to ***Robots***, S to ***Space***, *Third Edition*, UT to ***Ultra-Tech***, VE to ***Vehicles***, *Second Edition*, GT to ***Traveller***, *Second Edition*, T:AIII to ***Traveller Alien Races 3***, T:FT to ***Traveller Far Trader***, T:FI to ***Traveller First In***, T:GF to ***Traveller Ground Forces***, T:SM to ***Traveller Star Mercs***, and T:ST to ***Traveller Starports***. The abbreviation for *this* book is T:S. For a full list of title abbreviations, see p. CI181 or visit the updated web list at **www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html**.

Introduction

As the name implies, ***Traveller*** is about *traveling* – heading toward new adventures, shaking pursuit from old adventures, and reveling in the freedom to explore the galaxy. Travelers who possess a starship have more control over their destinies, because it gives them more independence and freedom of movement than a group without a ship. An adventuring group that lacks its own starship will find buying, building, finding, or stealing one to be an important goal.

GURPS Traveller: Starships is intended as the ultimate guide to starships in its universe. This book contains extensions to the starship-design rules found in ***GURPS Traveller***, fully compatible with those rules and with ***GURPS Vehicles***. It also provides rules for starship operations, and details of what life aboard a starship is *really* like.

So sign on the roster, grab your duffel, and get ready to lift ship!

About the Authors

Thomas L Bont has been a gamer for over 20 years. This is his first foray into printed media, aside from a few collaborations from a gearhead perspective. He is the lead programmer for ***GURPS Vehicle Builder*** and has over a dozen articles to his credit in the ***Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society***. Currently, he is the president of Bont Software & Control Systems Inc., based out of Hickory Creek, TX.

Robert Prior has played ***Traveller*** since it was first published. He has written for Digest Group Publications, Heliograph, the Canadian Space Agency, and Steve Jackson Games, including more ***Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*** articles than any other mortal. When not dreaming about the future, he nurtures it, one mind at a time.

Christopher Thrash is a serving military officer and a qualified helicopter pilot. He has spent far too much time away from his family, and has learned a fair amount about ships and shipping in the process. He has been playing roleplaying games since March 1976, ***Traveller*** since December 1977, and ***GURPS*** since 1991.

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Loren Wiseman was one of the founding partners of GDW Inc., original publishers of ***Traveller***, and spent more than 20 years there as a game designer, developer, typesetter, and editor. After GDW closed, Loren freelanced for a time, then came to SJ Games, where he is the ***GURPS Traveller*** senior line editor and ***Traveller*** expert in residence.

Jon F. Zeigler has been a science-fiction fan since the cradle (literally). He and his wife and two children live in Maryland, where he works as a computer-security consultant. He has written several past books for ***GURPS*** and ***GURPS Traveller***, and currently serves as the ***GURPS Traveller*** line editor for Steve Jackson Games.

Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society

The long-running ***Traveller*** magazine is now online at **jtas.sjgames.com**. It supports all versions of ***Traveller*** with news, articles, discussion areas, and reviews. Subscriptions are $20 per two years, for 52 biweekly updates and full access to archives.

The *Traveller News Service* is updated weekly, chronicling the life and times of the Imperium, and is viewable *free* at **www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/news.html**. The SJ Games ***Traveller*** links page (**www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/links.html**) links to the ***Traveller*** Web Ring, which includes most of the major ***Traveller***-oriented websites. For information on subscribing to the ***Traveller*** mailing list, go to **tml.travellercentral.com**.

Chapter One

Starships

Consider how often we take the parameters of interstellar technology for granted. It's true that the workings of the jump drive are so perplexing that very few civilizations have ever developed it independently. Aside from that obstacle, however, almost everything about interstellar travel is easy. Once the jump drive is known, it can be built by relatively primitive cultures. It requires no extraordinary skill to maintain or use. It can be installed in ships small and simple enough to be operated by a single crewman. Its operating costs are well within the reach even of individual entrepreneurs.

As a result, interstellar travel is within the reach of common individuals everywhere in Charted Space. We can afford to use it for the most prosaic purposes: warfare, trade in basic commodities, migration, even idle tourism.

There's no obvious reason why this had to be the case. Suppose interstellar travel cost the equivalent of billions of credits per ton-parsec, could not be accomplished by ships smaller than flying mountains, and required skills only a tiny fraction of Humans could master. History would have been utterly different – assuming that an interstellar civilization could be built at all, under such circumstances.

– Sir Shamash Thomas,
An Overview of Imperial History

Starships bind the Imperium together. Millions of starships are registered within Imperial space, carrying cargo and passengers, protecting the trade lanes, helping Imperial citizens go about their business. Most citizens will never travel from one world to another – but starship stories fill the Imperial news and entertainment channels, giving every citizen a picture of what life aboard is like. Every citizen knows *something* about the ships that carry goods and passengers, protect the trade routes, or explore new worlds. Starships are romantic, promising the freedom to travel widely, visit exotic places, take part in a millennia-old tradition, and make one's personal fortune.

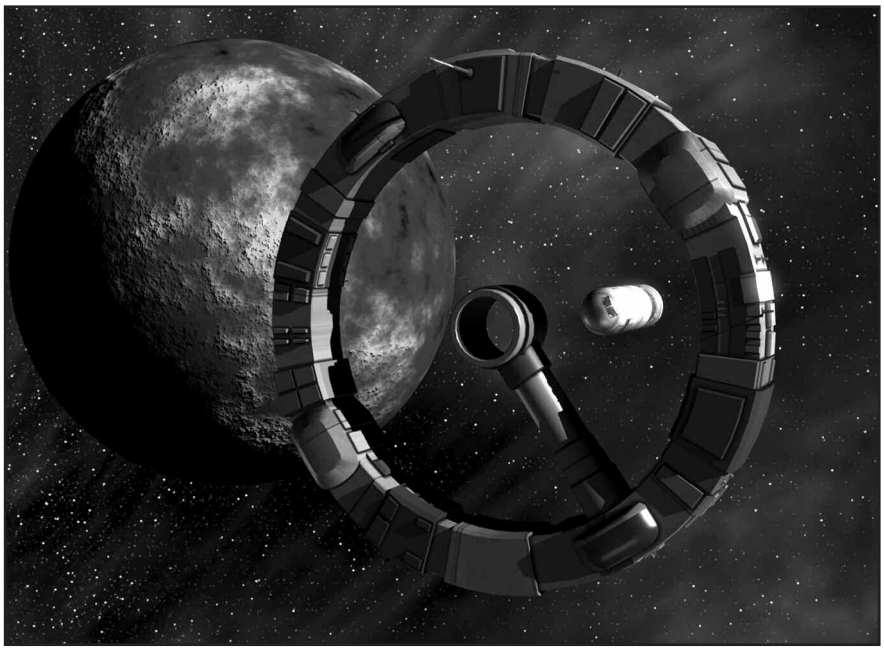
Traveller revolves around starships. Almost every adventuring party will spend much of its time making its way from one world to the next via starship. Perhaps only one member of the group will own a ship (or at least *control* it, in the case of a detached Scout). Or the adventurers may be part owners in a merchant starship. Or the GM may turn the acquisition of a ship into an adventure, making would-be starfarers earn their wings.

Adventuring without a ship is possible, but the campaign takes on a radically different nature (which some players may prefer). The focus changes from interstellar to interplanetary (or single-planet) situations, and the group tends to linger in one system or on one world. The group can take passage on NPC-operated starships, stow away, or otherwise arrange to travel from world to world – but this cannot always be done freely, at the will of the adventurers.

The Starship Environment

In ***Traveller***, a starship is defined as a spacecraft capable of faster-than-light travel. Because there is only one means of FTL travel in ***Traveller***, this specifically means any spacegoing vessel that has a jump drive. Slower-than-light generation ships can engage in interstellar travel, but are not called starships because they do not use jump drives. Such vessels are obsolete. Battle riders are large, extremely powerful ships of the line, but they have no jump drive, and thus are not starships.

A starship presents an artificial environment which spends much of its time utterly isolated from the wider universe. Crewmen and passengers coming aboard for the first time will find much of it unfamiliar, despite efforts to make it safe and comfortable.



Size Range

A starship must displace at least 100 dtons (see p. 12) in order to use a jump drive. The most common starship of this size is the *Suleiman*-class scout/courier, used by the IISS and by detached scouts throughout the Imperium and beyond. Coming in a close second is the 100-dton express boat (Xboat).

The upper limits of starship size have yet to be reached, but current theory places the maximum size of a starship between 1.5 million and 2.5 million dtons – although some engineers claim that there is no real upper limit.

Starship Structure

Every starship has a *hull*, a main body or shell which acts to contain the ship's components and payload. The hull always carries some armor to protect against meteor impact and other natural hazards. It may or may not carry extra armor to protect against combat damage.

The hull is internally divided into *compartments*, each of which contains some of the ship's components or provides space for payload. Compartments are separated by *bulkheads*, *decks*, and *partitions.* Decks are usually perpendicular to the onboard artificial gravity's "down" axis, while bulkheads and partitions are parallel to it. More intuitively, one walks on the decks and opens doors set into the bulkheads and partitions.

Bulkheads are structural elements of the ship and can withstand differences in air pressure on either side. A compartment which is sealed by bulkheads will maintain its internal environment even if there is a hull breach in an adjacent area. Bulkheads are used to surround very important or dangerous areas of the ship, such as the bridge, the engineering compartment, or the block of crew quarters. Bulkheads cannot be moved around the ship without a significant amount of work at a shipyard.

Partitions are simple walls, serving to divide compartments without being airtight. They can easily be moved from place to place by a mechanic-and-electrician team. As a result, different ships (even of the same class) can have different internal arrangements.

Common Ship's Systems

A variety of equipment and systems will be found inside the hull of any starship, all designed to provide basic support to the vessel and help fulfill its intended function. Each ship's internal design is different, but certain systems are common to almost all starships.

Almost all starships will have one or more *power plants*. In the present-day Third Imperium, these are usually reliable, long-lasting fusion installations. There may be backup power plants or energy banks using other technologies. The power plant is the basic energy source for all other ship's systems.

Most starships will have a *maneuver drive*. This system permits the vessel to travel under power through normal space. Maneuver drives can make use of a variety of technologies (see Chapter 4), but most Imperial starships use reactionless thrusters. Thrusters require no fuel, instead converting energy from the ship's power plant directly into motive thrust.

By definition, all ***Traveller*** starships will have a *jump drive*. The jump drive is the key to interstellar travel. It permits starships to traverse interstellar distances in reasonable time, by taking "short cuts" through an alternate dimension called *jumpspace*. Jump drives use power-plant energy, but they also use hydrogen fuel which is expended in the course of the jump. Jump drives are rated according to their operating range; a jump-1 drive can move its starship one parsec at a time, while a jump-6 drive can make six-parsec jumps. A controlled jump of more than six parsecs is theoretically impossible, although starships occasionally jump further as a result of "misjump" accidents. High-rated jump drives are very expensive and use vast quantities of fuel, so only courier and military vessels routinely use higher than jump-3.

Starships usually mount *communications* and *sensor* equipment. Most of this equipment uses very old technology for manipulating the electromagnetic spectrum: radios, communication lasers, telescopes, radar, and so on. More exotic electronics, such as meson communicators and gravitic sensors, are available on high-technology worlds. In ***Traveller***, all sensors and communications in normal space are restricted to lightspeed; as a result, interstellar communication is usually handled by courier starship.

Many starships are armed. Starships can use a variety of beam weapons such as laser cannon, particle accelerators, meson guns, plasma guns, or fusion guns. Many starships also use missiles. Small weapon systems can be mounted in *turrets* on a starship's hull. Large warships are often designed around *spinal mounts*, gigantic beam weapons that are aimed by turning the entire ship.

To defend against attack, starships use a variety of techniques. *Sandcasters* can be used to fill nearby space with prismatic particles, providing some protection against laser weapons. At high levels of technology, a ship can use force screens such as *meson screens* or *black globes* to protect against beam weapons. Ships' beams weapons also can be used in a defensive role, to shoot down any incoming missiles. Very advanced ships can use *repulsors* to deflect missiles or *nuclear dampers* to prevent nuclear explosives from working.

Many starships carry smaller craft on board as auxiliary vehicles. Auxiliaries give a starship greater flexibility, permitting cargo, fuel, or passengers to be carried where the starship itself can't go. Some starships (such as fighter-wing carriers) are designed entirely around their carried craft.

***Fiery*-Class 500-ton Gunned Escort (TL11)**

This is a more refined, streamlined version of the *Gazelle*. The external drop tanks are replaced by internal fuel tanks, limiting the ship to jump-4 without the possibility of the extended-range jump-5. Few navies regard this as a major shortcoming, but many don't like the fact that the *Fiery* is slower than a tankless *Gazelle*.

The *Fiery* is much less common than the *Gazelle* because it cannot be built at less sophisticated shipyards like its ancestor can (p. 97).

It has a heavy frame and heavy compartmentalization.

The typical crew of 13 includes four command personnel, two engineers, four gunners, and three maintenance crew.

Subassemblies: VGSL Hull +9, 4×Turret +5.
Powertrain: Engineering, 25 Jump Drive, 104 Maneuver.
Fuel: 200 Jump Fuel Tank.
Occ: 8 Staterooms **Cargo:** 3.5 dtons

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Hull:	4/1,700	4/1,700	4/1,700	4/1,700	4/1,700
Turrets:	4/850	4/850	4/850	4/850	4/850

Weaponry

2 Turrets with 2×1.4-GJ Turret P-Beam [1 per Turret].
2 Turrets with 6×390-MJ Turret Lasers [3 per Turret].

Equipment

All: Basic Emission Cloaking and Stealth. *Hull:* Emergency Aid Station; compact Basic Bridge; Enhanced Sensor System; 2 Fuel Processors; Utility; 20-dton Vehicle Bay (for *Faun*-class Gunned Gig).

Statistics

Size: 138'×90'×28' *Payload:* 127 stons *Lwt.:* 2,754 stons
Volume: 500 dtons *Maint.:* 76.6 mh/day *Price:* MCr255

HT: 12 *HPs:* 90,000 [Hull], 2,400 [each Turret].

sAccel: 3.8 Gs/4 Gs empty *Jump:* 4 *aSpeed:* 4,850 mph

***Condor*-Class 2,000-ton Belt Surveyor (TL7)**

The *Condor*-class belt surveyor represents what a lower-tech society committed to exploring its solar system can achieve. It is designed with long-term comfort in mind for the crew, with single-occupancy staterooms, an oversized recreation facility, and two gymnasiums. Its acceleration is nothing to be proud of, but it can make the Earth-Mars run in around five months (coasting most of the way). It would require refueling at the end of its journey, and thus would not normally travel to a destination without a guaranteed supply of water.

It carries five triple-missile racks. They are for point defense against rogue asteroids and for making smaller asteroids out of larger ones, enabling easier study.

A standard crew would be 33: 13 command personnel, a medic, 14 lab technicians, and five gunners/maintenance crew.

Subassemblies: Hull +10, 5×Turret +5.
Powertrain: Engineering, Power Core, 476 Fission Rocket.
Fuel: 1,290 dtons Water, 1,290 Fuel Tanks.
Occ: 33 Staterooms **Cargo:** 172 dtons

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
All:	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100	4/100

Weaponry

5 Turrets with 15×250mm Missile Racks [3 per Turret].

Equipment

Hull: Sickbay, 2 Gymnasiums, 6 Isolation Labs, Hall, Command Bridge, Advanced Sensor System, Planetary Survey Module, Enhanced Communication System, 2 Large Entry Modules, Complete Workshop.

Statistics

Size: 318'×80'×40' *Payload:* 20,217 stons *Lwt.:* 25,636 stons
Volume: 2,000 dtons *Maint.:* 113 mh/day *Price:* MCr554

HT: 11 *HPs:* 90,000 [Hull], 1,200 [each Turret].

sAccel: 0.13 Gs 0.81 GRds

Warships and Dreadnoughts

Large starfaring services such as the Imperial Navy usually organize themselves around "capital ships," massive warships whose primary armament is a spinal-mount beam weapon. During wartime, these ships serve as the primary arm of battle. In peacetime, they provide command-and-control services for routine patrols and other non-combat missions.

***Azhanti High Lightning*-Class 60,000-ton Frontier Cruiser (TL11)**

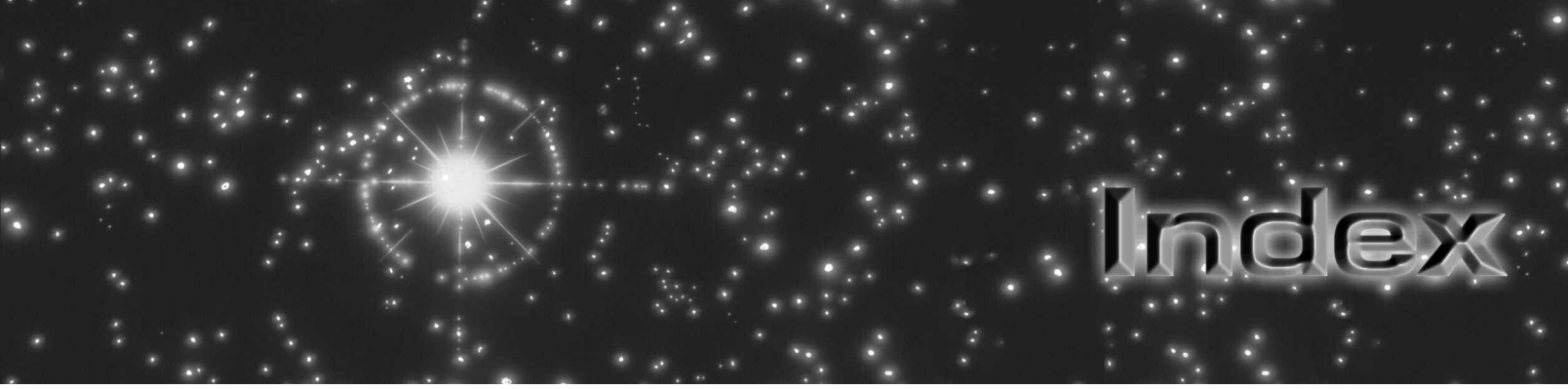
Conceived as a fleet intruder, the *Azhanti High Lightning* was designed with unusual mobility and defenses; at the time, jump-5 capability and meson screens were very unusual for warships below the capital class. The first members of the class were built in the years just before the Solomani Rim War, and many of them saw valiant service during that conflict.

The original *Azhanti High Lightning* class presented here has long since been declared obsolete by the Imperial Navy. Examples can still be encountered in IISS service, or (with most or all weapons removed) in commercial service. A number of the original model have also been transferred to local or allied service (notably to the Darrian Confederation and Vegan Autonomous Region).

In the 1080s, 28 *Azhanti High Lightnings* were taken out of mothballs and refurbished to reenter frontier service. A spinal meson gun replaced the particle accelerator, with particle accelerators replacing most of the missile batteries, and a black-globe generator and meson screen were installed. The refurbished cruisers were deployed to the Imperium's most dangerous "trouble spots," the Spinward Marches, the Solomani Rim sector, and the turbulent client states along the Gateway frontier to trailing. Although several of the refurbished ships have been lost, most remain in active Imperial service.

The ship has an extra-heavy frame.

A standard crew of 662 includes 30 bridge, 10 countermeasures, 196 flight, 106 gunnery, 136 engineering, four medical, and 180 service personnel, with 150 troops and up to 52 non-crew personnel often carried, as well.



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