

GURPS® *Traveller*®

# GROUND FORCES

*Furious Action in the Marines and Army*



BY DOUGLAS E. BERRY

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

# COUNTLESS WORLDS. A FEW GOOD TROOPS.

Holding together an Imperium requires the services of an iron elite, Marines willing to jump from a starship and into the teeth of a planetary defense net, Army troopers willing to travel the universe one slit trench at a time, armor commanders willing to bet their lives that they can get there first with the most.

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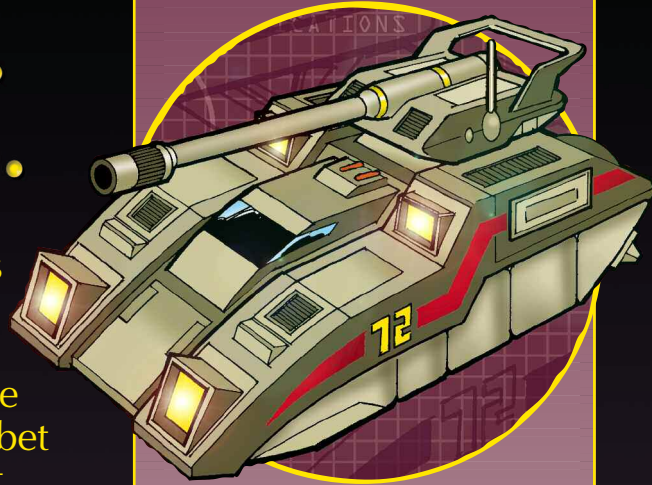
***GURPS Traveller Ground Forces*** describes the Imperial Marines and Unified Armies, laying the foundation for a campaign thick with laser fire and full of action! It includes:

- A history of ground combat and campaigns in the Imperium.
- Detailed descriptions of Marine and Army units, from squads to battalions and up – as well as rules for easily determining the makeup of a world or subsector army.
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FIRST EDITION

PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2000

ISBN 1-55634-444-9



9 781556 344442



SJG02095 **6614**

Printed in the  
U.S.A.



# GURPS<sup>®</sup> *Traveller*<sup>®</sup>

## GROUND FORCES



### *Furious Action in the Marines and Army*

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*Based on the award-winning Traveller  
science fiction universe by MARC MILLER*

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*Author's Dedication: To Craig, for teaching me to play.*

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ISBN 1-55634-444-9

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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 now available include:

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The *GURPS Traveller: Ground Forces* web page is at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/groundforces/](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/groundforces/).

### Page References

Any page reference that begins with a B refers to *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised*; e.g., p. B144 refers to page 144 of *Basic Set*. CI refers to *Compendium I*, GT to *GURPS Traveller, Second Edition*, T:AI to *Traveller: Alien Races 1*, T:AI to *Traveller: Alien Races 2*, T:BC to *Traveller: Behind the Claw*, T:FT to *Traveller: Far Trader*, T:SM to *Traveller: Star Mercs*, and VE to *Vehicles, Second Edition*. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html).

# Introduction

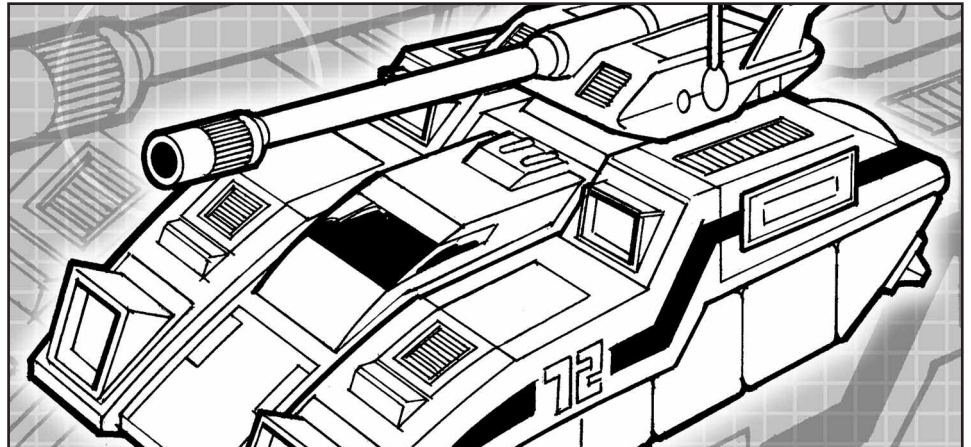
With the release of *Book 4: Mercenary* in 1978, *Traveller* players got their first good look at the Imperium, and the troops that allowed it to exist. After that book, details about the Imperium's forces came in pieces, a magazine article here, a section of adventure there. Only occasionally did we get hints of the scope of the Imperial defense establishment.

The author hopes that this book will please both the military fans and those looking for interesting roleplaying. Now sound the charge and move out!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Doug Berry began his interest in science fiction by stealing books from his brother's room. A *Traveller* player and referee since 1977, he also has a life-long interest in military history. Doug served as an infantryman in the U.S. Army, where he mastered both the M-21 sniper rifle and the floor buffer.

Doug is living with Hodgkin's disease, which has given him more time to game. He and his wife share an apartment in San Francisco with an ever-increasing number of stuffed animals. His previous work includes *At Close Quarters* from BITS.



## ABOUT THE LINE EDITOR

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, and then came to SJ Games, where he is *Traveller* line editor and expert-in-residence.

## JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY

The long-running *Traveller* magazine is now online at [www.sjgames.com/jtas/](http://www.sjgames.com/jtas/), edited by Loren Wiseman. It supports all versions of *Traveller* with news, articles, discussion areas, and reviews. Subscriptions are \$15/year for 52 weekly 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](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/news.html). The SJ Games *Traveller* links page ([www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/links.html](http://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, contact [traveller-owner@mpgn.com](mailto:traveller-owner@mpgn.com).



Enlisted (Rank 0) troops are the bottom of the pecking order. These are the privates and Marines who do the actual heavy work. Enlisted personnel spend their time either following orders or trying to dodge their leaders. Rank 0 troops have very little personal freedom of action. The service controls their every move.

Non-commissioned officers (NCO) (Ranks 1-2) are the sergeants. They have the legal authority to give orders to any troops placed under their control. In combat units, the NCOs are the ones who will do the majority of the leading in combat. Sergeants run the military; generals may order, captains may shout, but it takes the NCOs to actually get everything moving. Rank 1 troops have a little more freedom of action, while Rank 2 sergeants are actually quite powerful.

Commissioned officers (Ranks 3-8) are the commanders and leaders. They hold a commission from the Emperor, a duke, or a planetary leader allowing them to issue orders and lead forces. Some joke that Imperial officers are “people who needed a message from the Emperor to get a job.” There is of course a great deal of difference between a Rank 3 2nd lieutenant and a Rank 8 general. As he rises in the ranks, the soldier’s power increases, but so does his accountability. That lieutenant only has to answer to his company commander, whereas the general has to answer to the commanders of the Army and local nobility.

The Imperial Army and Marines use slightly different ranks:

## IMPERIAL ARMY

Level	Rank	GURPS Rank	Level	Rank	GURPS Rank
E1	Private	0	O1	2nd Lieutenant	3
E2	Private 1st Class	0	O2	1st Lieutenant	3
E3	Lance Corporal	0	O3	Captain	4
E4	Corporal	0	O4	Major	4
E5	Sergeant	1	O5	Lt. Colonel	5
E6	Staff Sergeant	1	O6	Colonel	6
E7	Leading Sergeant	2	O7	Brigadier	7
E8	First Sergeant	2	O8	Major General	7
E9	Sergeant Major	2	O9	Lt. General	8
			O10	General	8

## IMPERIAL MARINES

Level	Rank	GURPS Rank	Level	Rank	GURPS Rank
E1	Recruit	0	O1	Force Ensign	3
E2	Marine	0	O2	Force Lieutenant	3
E3	Marine 1st Class	0	O3	Force Captain	4
E4	Corporal	0	O4	Force Commander	4
E5	Sergeant	1	O5	Lt. Colonel	5
E6	Gunnery Sergeant	1	O6	Colonel	6
E7	Section Sergeant	2	O7	Brigadier	7
E8	Ship Sergeant	2	O8	Marshal*	7
E9	Fleet Sergeant	2			

\* The Marines have no equivalents to the Army’s two highest ranks, and currently do not use the rank of marshal; see p. 47.

The “Level” entry is based on current U.S. usage. It is used in this book only to clarify the relationships among different Army and Marine ranks. The Imperium does not actually use this terminology!

Rank costs 5/level. The rank of the troopers must be appropriate to the campaign theme. While playing a dashing Marine brigadier might be fun, it will be a little out of place if the game is about a single squad. In the Third Imperium, those with Military Rank (p. B22) receive a free level of Status for every three levels of Rank purchased, rounded to the nearest Status.

## Character Clichés

Over the years, military fiction has developed a dependable set of character types. At least a few of these clichéd stereotypes seem to show up in every film or book. And the fact is these types exist in the real armed forces.

### The Opie

Opies are guys from rural areas, low population planets, or backward areas. They enter the service wide-eyed and innocent, and can get badly shocked by what they see. Conversely, Opies are sometimes the best equipped to handle the rigors of military service, having grown up under tough circumstances.

When creating an Opie, disadvantages like Easy to Read (p. CI89), Gullibility (p. B33), Oblivious (p. CI92), Shyness (p. B37), and Truthfulness (p. B37) help set the persona of a fairly unsophisticated farm kid.

On the other hand, Opies will probably be very true to their friends, and bring with them some very useful field skills. Advantages such as Common Sense (p. B20), Luck (p. B21), and occasionally Unfazeable (p. CI31) are characteristic.

The best example of an Opie in popular culture is the title character of the *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.* TV series.

### The Get-Over Artist

The get-over artist is the trooper who will always find the way of doing the task at hand with the least possible amount of effort. This soldier is not shirking the work, but just fails to see why it should not be as easy as possible. Get-over artists often cannot see the necessity of certain tasks, much to their sergeant’s frustration.

The prime characteristic for a get-over artist should be Laziness (p. B34). Get-over artists might want to consider some points in Fast-Talk (p. B63) and a few levels in Charisma (p. B19) to charm their leaders into giving them the easy jobs.

### The Casanova

This type believes the service exists to provide him or her with opportunities for romance. Casanovas will probably be able to locate companionship on PR 1 worlds.

Casanovas should take Sex Appeal (p. B64) and Charisma (p. B19). A few points to raise the trooper’s Appearance (p. B15) and Fashion Sense (p. CI24) round out a real lady-killer.

The ultimate military Casanova in modern fiction was Capt. James T. Kirk of *Star Trek* fame.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## You Are Not Cleared to Read This Sidebar!

**A**rmies depend upon absolute security to survive. The loss of critical information to hostile forces can spell disaster, or even total defeat.

The Imperial services use *classifications* to indicate the sensitivity of particular documents or facilities. Personnel are given clearances based on what their assignments require them to have access to on a daily basis.

### "Need to Know"

All classified information is handled with the stipulation that only people with the *need* to have access to that information can *have* access to that information.

Obviously, some things that are given low-level classifications will be known by so many people as to make the exercise moot. For example, the effective range of a commonly issued weapons system might be considered sensitive information, but every private knows it by heart.

### Confidential

The lowest level of classified material, Confidential materials are those that won't cause extreme difficulty to the service if revealed. Almost everything produced in a military office is likely to be stamped Confidential as a matter of habit.

Confidential materials might be as mundane as a report on the repairs of the sewer system of a base. Since there is some reason to keep the information away from the public (the sewers could be used to infiltrate the base), but it also needs to be used by large numbers of people, the reports are merely Confidential.

### Sensitive

Sensitive materials could, in the wrong hands, cause the Army or Marines some difficulty. The military pays a great deal more attention to the security of Sensitive materials than it does to Confidential. Personnel files kept at the unit level are an example of the types of material considered Sensitive.

Handling Sensitive materials requires that the person have a genuine need to know. For things like personnel files, this permission is automatic for clerks and the like. For some other areas, it might be more difficult. An old security trick is to hide a Most Secret file in plain sight by labeling it Sensitive and keeping the need-to-know list to a few "in" people.

*Continued on next page . . .*

A far more typical Type 2 mission is any of the raids made by the Marine Force against Vargr corsairs along the coreward edge of the Imperium. Rarely more than a few ships and a company of Marines are used in these missions, which disrupt the corsairs' bases of operation.

### Type 3: Local Defense

Local-defense missions involve defending an area from an invading force. While the popular view of this mission is the brigade or division digging in alongside the local defense troops, the mission can extend far beyond the surface of one planet. The mission for the entire Unified Army of Jewell was local defense from the moment the last Frontier War started until the cease fire was announced.

Local defense is what the Army excels at, and throughout the history of the Imperium, invaders have learned that challenging the Imperial Army on its home turf is an expensive proposition.

### Type 4: Police Action

Police action is a generic term for combat operations without a formal declaration of war, usually those fought inside the Imperium. Many interventions take the form of police actions. The Army is far more likely to be assigned to a police action, as the Marines are not properly equipped or trained for the long-term nature of these conflicts. The Marine Force's tendency to shoot first and not to even bother with the questions is a definite liability when involved in a police action.

These missions can prove to be very frustrating. In some cases the local government or population will, out of sympathy for the opposing force, prove to be a hindrance to the success of the mission. Moreover, the arrival of Imperial troops might be seen as nothing more than an invasion, with predictable results.

### Type 5: Counter-Insurgency

Counter-insurgencies are an attempt to remove a hostile force from occupied territory. The classic insurgency is a guerrilla war with the troops suppressing the enemy while striving to eliminate the enemy leadership. Inside the Imperium, this usually means either rival nations on balkanized planets or forces in rebellion against either the planetary or Imperial government. Prior to the Fifth Frontier War, an entire field army was involved in a counter-insurgency on Efate/Regina against Ine Givar-backed rebels.

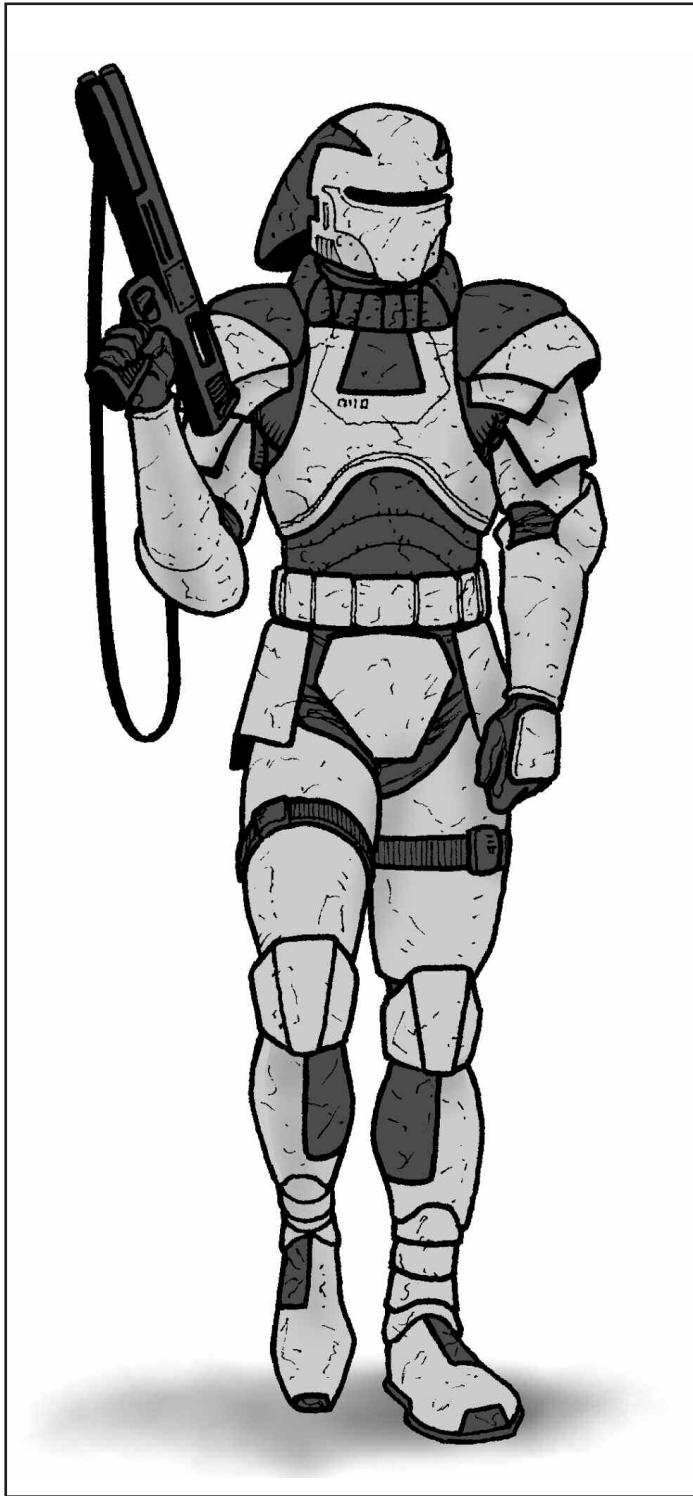
### Type 6: Internal Security

Also called "baby-sitting." These missions put Imperial forces into a disputed area to maintain the peace or enforce treaties. This is usually accomplished by physically separating hostile powers along some boundary. Another method





## TYPE 438-B REDDING ASSAULT BATTLEDRESS (TL12)



The standard armor of the Imperial Marines, assault-grade battledress is illegal to own under any circumstances (LC 0).

Although the battledress can fly at up to 290 mph, doctrine discourages this in combat, since a flying target is an easy kill. Instead, the flight capabilities are used to clear obstacles or to make quick “skips” over open areas.

The pilot uses Battlesuit skill. The suit has quick access to his crew station, computerized controls, six hours of life support, and NBC protection.

Surface features include sealed, radical stealth, radical emissions cloaking, basic sound suppression, and instant chameleon. The suit can easily withstand 216 standard atmospheres of pressure, and up to 1,000 standard atmospheres with increasing risk of suit failure.

The Marine usually carries a fusion rifle (p. 102) and a battle pod on his back hardpoint. The pod has PD4, DR300 and all the surface features of the *Redding* armor. It usually holds 2 rE cells (for the rifle) with room for 0.6 cf or 30 lbs. of additional gear. Doctrine has a Marine in each squad exchange a 155-kW NPU for the rE cells. (He usually carries a LEMB-20 Gauss rifle; see p. 102.) The NPU can then be used for field recharges. The battle pod weighs 110 lbs. (140 lbs. loaded) and costs KCr18.5 or KCr34.5 with the NPU. It has a volume of 1 cf.

**Subassemblies:** Body, top limited-rotation Turret, two Arms, two Legs. Standard Human size modifiers.

**P&P:** 150-kWh rE cell w/ 1.6-kW TL12 drivetrain [Legs], 2×250-lb. vector reactionless thruster [Legs], 6,000 lbs. contragravity.

**Fuel/End:** 75 hours of normal operation or 5 hours of flight.

**Occupancy:** CCS.

**Cargo:** 0 cf.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
<i>Body:</i>	4/400 L	4/400 L	4/400 L	4/400 L	4/400 L
<i>All else:</i>	4/300 L	4/300 L	4/300 L	4/300 L	

Thermal-superconducting: all faces +250 DR vs. energy weapons.

### Equipment

*Body:* Small hardened Complexity 6 computer, 200-lb. hardpoint (on back). *Tur:* Medium tightbeam radio w/scrambler, short range lasercomm, 15-mile Scan 18 PESA, 3×1-mile Scan 11 PESA (cover 120° arcs right/back, left/back, top), 5-mile Scan 15 AESA, 10-mile Scan 17 radscanner, surveillance sound detector-10, HUDWAC w/pupil scanner. *Arms:* 2 × ST 80 arm motors.

### Statistics

*Size:* 7'1" tall. *Payload:* 380 lbs. *Lwt.:* 987 lbs.  
*Volume:* 5.76 cf. *Maint.:* 49 hours. *Price:* KCr166.

*HT:* 12/84.

*HP:* 72 [Body] 30 [Tur] 30 [each Arm] 36 [each Leg].

*gSpeed:* 16 *gAccel:* 8 *gDecel:* 20 *gMR:* 3 *gSR:* 2  
 Low GP. Off-road speed: 13.

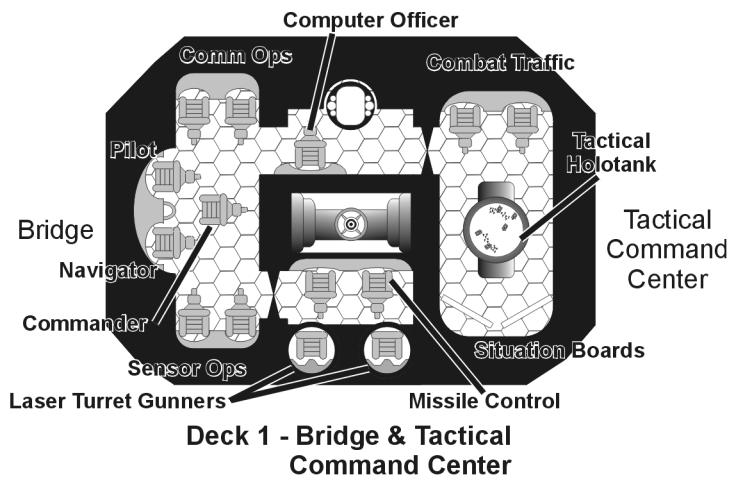
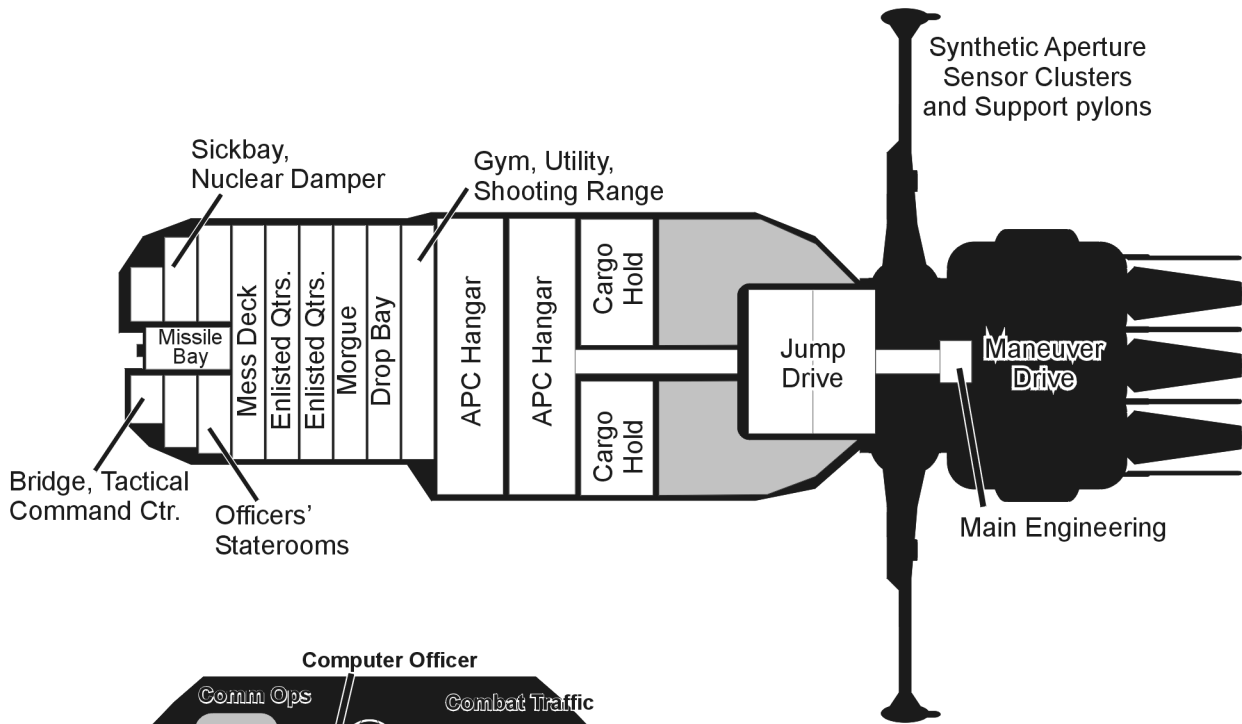
*aSpeed:* 290 *aAccel:* 10 *aDecel:* 24 *aMR:* 6 *aSR:* 2  
 Stall speed 0. Space performance: 0.5 Gs.

### Design Notes

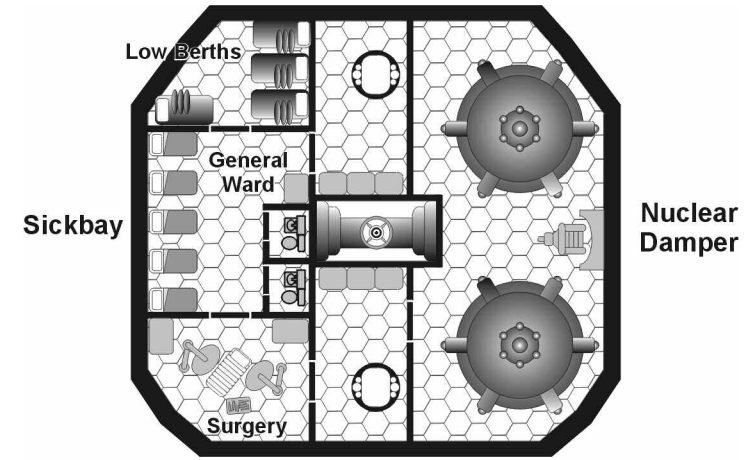
The suit features an extra-heavy, expensive structure and improved suspension. Volumes/areas are torso 2.8 cf/34 sf, head 0.76 cf/5 sf, arms 0.26 cf/2.5 sf each, and legs 0.84 cf/6 sf each. The body includes 0.044 cf of waste space. Armor is expensive. Typical flight drag is 43. Body ST (per *GURPS Robots*) is 80.

Note that if payload is 310 lbs. or less (including pilot and battle pod), GP becomes very low with full off-road speed.

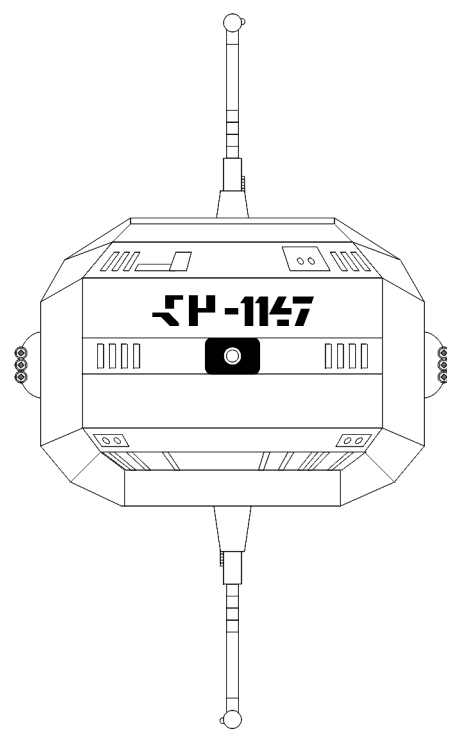
# CAEN-CLASS 1,200-TON DROPSHIP (TL12)



Deck 1 - Bridge & Tactical Command Center



Deck 2 - Sickbay & Nuclear Damper





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