PHOENIX

Beyond the Stellar Empire

Ground Party Manual

www.kjcgames.com/phoenix.htm

Ground parties

A ground party is the term for a collection of items in one location under the control of one authority. They are normally formed for a specific short-term reason and the composition invariably reflects this. A ground party set-up to survey a planet for example will consist of an exploration module and some sensors for the finding and prospecting of mineral deposits. Some shuttles or ground vehicles should be present, to allow relocation of the ground party to new sites, and finally crew are needed to operate all the items.

A ground party set-up to attack a starbase on the other hand is unlikely to have much more than large amounts of ordnance and troops.

Ground parties behave in virtually the same way as starships in most respects. As such they share most of the orders used by starships, including transactions, exploration and surveying. For more information on these subjects, see the starship rulebook. All that needs to be detailed here are the differences to ships.

Advantages and Disadvantages

A ground party does not need maintenance or refits. Nor does it suffer integrity losses. It does not have minimum crew requirements or maximum cargo capacity. These can be defined by simply changing the quantity of items present. They are however much more susceptible to weapons fire than ships due to the lack of hulls.

Setting Up Ground Parties

Ground parties can be set-up from any position except political positions and agents. The create ground party order produces a new position and an update is sent out to the creating player on the same day. On the following day, more items can be delivered to the ground party. As the ground party is a new position, it will only have 60TU's available with its first update. It is important to remember this, especially if the ground party is being created in a hostile region.

Ground parties are dangerous positions to be in as there is little or no protection offered. As a consequence, a creation fee of 1000 stellars is always charged and a further weekly fee of 100 stellars is incurred. This weekly fee is on top of any wages.

Disbanding a Ground Party

Disbanding a ground party is easy, simply deliver or dispose of all items in a ground party and it will be automatically deleted. Make sure though that the component providing the crew factors is delivered last of all, i.e. deliver crew last. This will prevent the ground party from suddenly becoming inefficient, or worse, incapable of action.   **int**: if the ground party is disbanding into an allied starbase and it has been around for a long time, then make sure that a recreation visit is performed towards the end. This will recover a few stellars.

A starbase can effectively disband a ground party by picking up all items. This is not the same as embarking a position which will effectively keep the ground party intact.

Creation Procedure

1. Issue "Create GP" order.
Next day, issue delivery orders now that a position number is known.
When sufficient TU's have accumulated run the GP as normal.

Spread

The player should designate the spread of the ground party. This determines how effective the shields are but also how much damage they will suffer from a strike. This is covered in the combat rules.

Movement

Unlike ships, ground parties are incapable of utilising ISR fields for interplanetary movement. They can however use thrust movement and also have access to air and ground movement. Together, these can move the ground party across the surface of a world, up into orbit and back and even between planets and their moons. If a ground party is built in space however, it is effectively marooned.

A ground party is only capable of movement if it has sufficient cargo space for the type of movement attempted. The cost of movement in TU's is based on the slowest vehicle capable of the type of movement attempted. Obviously if this is ground movement, items capable of walking will only do so if there is insufficient cargo space for them to hitch a ride. The program deals automatically with ensuring the fastest speed possible for each movement type. The movement costs are always shown on the turn report, so it is often a good idea to get an update after there has been a change in possessions and before attempting movement.

Movement Types

There are three types of movement available to a ground party, ground, air and shuttle. When a party attempts to move, the program will pick the most efficient method of moving, i.e. the type of movement that would take the least TU's. This will be based on cargo capabilities and destination. If a ground party is capable of both shuttle and ground movement, it may be faster to move on the ground if the destination is an adjacent sector although if the destination is the other side of the planet shuttle movement may be faster in order to avoid entering each sector between.

Should a ground party wish to move by a specific method, such as by shuttle movement to avoid contact with hostile forces on the ground, or by ground to avoid detection from orbit during shuttle flight, the ground party should make sure that they are incapable of moving by any other method.

Movement

Ground movement – Ground party movement costs are measured in TU's. This is the time required to move across 1 sector. Each terrain type has a multiplier which is applied to ground movement. Open terrains such as crust and plains have a multiplier of 1. This means that a ground party can cross them at the normal ground speed. Other terrains such as mountains have multipliers of 4. This means that it requires 4 times as many TU's to cross one of these terrains. The TU cost is paid for the terrain being entered. So moving from a plains to a mountains costs 4 times the basic movement cost while moving from a mountainous region to a plains only costs the normal movement rate. Certain terrains such as gaseous regions, representing the 'surface' of a gas giant cannot support ground movement. While a ground party is considered to have peripheral items such as floatation devices preventing it plummeting down into the heart of the giant, they cannot be used to move from one region to another.

Air movement – Certain vehicles have the ability to fly but still be largely bound to the surface of the world. The use a variety of methods to obtain thrust including reaction drives, repulsion fields and such. Being land-bound means that they cannot lift into orbit but can move around gas giants. They are not subject to terrain multipliers.

Shuttle movement – This type of movement takes the ground party directly from one region to another via a low orbital trajectory and as such is not considered to pass through intervening sectors. Shuttle movement is also capable of moving the ground party from the surface of the world into orbit. It is also possible to move from the orbit of one world to another as long as the worlds are linked. Linked worlds are moons of a planet and the planet itself. They are all in the same orbital quadrant and orbit about each other. In some situations two or more celestial bodies may be present in the same orbital quadrant but not linked. In these cases the ground party cannot move from one to another.

Credits

Phoenix Initial Concept

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