

Blockade Runner's Guide



"...there's always the right smuggler for the right job, but sometimes it gets a little ridiculous. Like this man Karl, he tries to hire me to move four hundred tons of blaster gas clear across the next sector and drop it off on an impounded planet. All I could do was laugh. I mean, what did he expect me to do? Push it out the back when I got there? I told him to go find himself a psycho who doesn't mind flying straight through the Imperial Navy and make a drop-off, that is make the drop-off IF he don't get disassembled in the process. I figure that idiot will probably run out of people to ask around midnight ..."

Berin Havaliss, professional smuggler

"He's paying me 80,000 up front and another 100,000 on completion. I'd rather be a rich psycho than a poor coward - anyway."

Ralston Quev, professional blockade runner

"If smuggling is sending a box of chocolates to a heart patient in a hospital via first class mail, then blockade running is Fedexing a crate of common sense to the KKK. It's almost impossible to get through, but they really need it."

Nealos, webmaster

Smugglers, by definition, are those who seek profit by the transport and delivery of illegal goods. Their methods usually include hiding cargoes in secret bays or burying them in a hold full of legal cargo. They

consider themselves rather subtle, sneaky individuals; the less trouble they get in, the better offers they get. **Everybody likes a clean smuggler.**

Blockade Runners, by definition, are those who seek profit by the transport and delivery of illegal goods by any means necessary to destinations which are locked down by the military or other massive force. They consider themselves a cut above smugglers, because after all, "smugglers try to hide." They are often seen as somewhat suicidal types by others; the bigger the force they can "bust," the better offers they get. **There is no such thing as a clean blockade runner.**



They are, next to the Jedi and the Alliance, among the most wanted individuals in the galaxy. But unlike the Jedi and the Alliance, who must hide as smugglers do, blockade runners enjoy showing the Empire who's boss through force and being back in time for breakfast. Welcome to Blockade Running ...

Section 1: Creating a Blockade Runner

Once you've accepted the life of a blockade runner, the next step toward your adventures is to become one. With the right mix of spice and stats, you'll soon be on your way to becoming your own legend (or myth). The following are suggestions that should help a player (new or old) get the ball rolling. Follow these easy steps to develop your blockade runner; remember, you are what you make of yourself! Have fun...

A good place to start is with the character's origin, background and personality. The background of your character has a great deal to do with how this person will be in the game. Just as your background has a lot to do with what you are like, let it be equally true with your character. Starting with a background lets you flow easily into figuring out what kind of personality and objectives you will wind up with. To start with background, pick an origin of the character. Here's a few examples of places you can be from:



Point NOCA, a trade station concerned primarily with feeding the glut of transportation, is filled with scurrying beings with pressing business elsewhere, tired traders and a rich smuggling legacy...

Vaeirmor, a corporate-owned city-planet brimming with more excitement and individuals than one could hope to deal with in a lifetime, where the rich play hard, the working class work harder and the criminals are the hardest...

Nostalg, an old settlement resting at the south pole of a forgotten planet in an all but lost system, where the weather is unforgiving and frigid, as are the general populace...

Swistern, an industrial planet filled with dark cities and even darker individuals, where many abandoned souls have parked their lot amongst the rest of those seeking a hiding place or ill-gotten gains...



For additional possible places of origin, consult a terrific list found in Platt's Smugglers Guide on pages 5 and 6.

Another way to decide the origin of your character is to pick a race that is not human. In *Alien Encounters* and the *Galaxy Guide 4: Alien Races*, you can find many races that are great for this type of character. I will refrain from making suggestions, but look for good mechanical and technical attribute dice and check the backgrounds for races that lean toward smuggling, trading or related occupations. Also, in the back of *Alien Encounters*, there is a list on pages 183 & 184 that is a space-farers index, which can point you in a lot of good directions.

Once you have that picked out, you should be able to get a background and personality figured out pretty easily. Here's some important tips to keep in mind during development:

Avoid making a character that is too stereotypical.

Though a blockade runner should be someone who is generally of a less-than-savory type, you don't want to create a character that won't allow you to grow in the game. Make them shifty, but not too dastardly. If you can't figure out a good balance, just leave some room...

Develop some traits that only you will have. Maybe your character always smokes a cigar after or before a run is made. Or maybe they scream out a certain saying just before entering combat. Perhaps they have some strange ritual, like a drink, prayer or poem they recite before taking on a run. Whatever you pick, this is what will become your trademark of sorts in the game...



Create a role you'll have fun playing. In other words, give them a personality that you can really get into. A lot of people find that funny, corny characters are a ball to play. They are characters with no social inhibitions, and you can really cut loose with them. Others enjoy serious and pondering types, characters that analyze and examine their actions. These characters can help let out the intellectual and authoritative skills in you and often wind up being very interesting to

play. Whatever you choose, keep in mind that what you do here is how you'll be later, so pick something you can really sink your teeth into, and don't forget to balance it out to keep it even...

Mix it up with some advantages and disadvantages. Find the supplement of the same name here, and follow the rules. Be sure and check with your GM for approval, and make sure you pick things that don't clash too hard with your character's personality or background. And don't forget to pick stuff that you can deal with both easily and in a fun way...

Additional help with creating a character can be found in many of the game books, which you already know of. Take advantage of these resources. Most important, don't be afraid to try out a character type that you've never done before. With some thought and detailed preparation, playing a character you usually would have not created can be easy and exciting, so take a chance! Wrap up this portion of the creation process by picking a height, weight, age, sex and physical description.

At this time, you should be able to tackle your character's objectives and their connection with other players.

Make realistic objectives, but don't hold back. Don't let this part be too simple. Objectives like "To make money and keep my ship well maintained" or "To fight the Empire" are not really objectives, they're almost a given. Defining your character objectives is a great opportunity to define how that character is going to make decisions, and it is also the part where you decide what your character cares about. Spend some thought on this, and reward yourself with objectives that will guide you through the game with depth. Chasing after money is most people's bottom line, but maybe you need the money to help your mom out? Or send your cousin to school? Many want to fight the Empire, but maybe you want to fight them because your son once wished his dad was a "hero." This opens up a new ballfield to play in. Give yourself motivations you can live with, but that serve as a driving force in your character's life.

Connect or disconnect? Most people connect their new character with other characters in the group in simple ways: "Got hired on" and "A ride to Epsilon 7 turned into an extended stay" are two connections I've seen a lot. Connecting with your group doesn't have to be easy and simple though. Think a little about bonding yourself to another character or the whole group through some common goal, and don't make this simple either. Talk to the other players about it. Maybe you wind up all changing your objectives to intertwine each other in different ways. When I say disconnect, I don't mean connect yourself to the others in a rough or difficult manner. I'm talking about NOT connecting yourself with them. Think about starting out alone for a session or two, and talk to your GM about running alone for a bit then role-play your joining the group. Let the GM decide how you all meetup, and let him surprise you all. This way, a part of your character's background can literally be part of the story.

A note on crews. Though it is possible to run blockades alone, it is easier and more likely for you to run with a crew. Running with a crew has pros and cons to it. The pros are that you can divide up chores and develop a team effort. The con is that you will have to come up with a system of dividing the profits and figuring out the way the decisions are made. A good way is to keep the ship as a priority and dump credits into the ship. Take twenty percent of the earnings out of every job and divide that equally among crew members as personal share, with the rest going to

making the ship better. In terms of decisions, flip a coin or discuss it out; try to avoid making an actual leadership hierarchy. Unless you all think it would work perfectly, it usually causes trouble down the road. Doing things by vote is a good way, but can easily turn into a hierarchy itself if there is an odd number of people. Play with different ways and come up with what works for you.

Now that you've rounded out the psychological and emotional side of the character, it's time to tackle the game stats. Even if you've done this many times before, read the following for some helpful reminders...

Balance it or it will fall to one side or the other. Don't forget to not put too much starting dice in one area. Though a blockade runner needs good piloting and gunnery skills, and probably some pretty decent technical skills, don't overdo it. This can be something metered out to others in the group. In other words, if the other players already have established characters, check their strengths and weaknesses. Use that to your advantage. If everyone is making a new character, then maybe everyone can talk about which stats they'll try to concentrate on. One person can tackle mechanical skills, another technical, and so on. But always remember to keep it balanced; if it's not, then your character will "tip" from too much weight in one place.



Don't fret, it will come in time. When one makes a new character, it seems like they don't start with enough dice to even feed themselves sometimes! But remember, that's why they call it role-playing. Especially for players with a lot of experience, a new character with low dice levels increases the need to role-play situations, which in turn makes a role-player a practiced role-player. And practice always helps and never hinders.

Put it where it counts. Keep in mind that the range of skill that a blockade runner will use are almost identical to those that are used by smugglers. Peruse other books that talk about making smugglers, and borrow from this time-honored profession. Also don't forget to place dice that is commensurate with whatever specializations or special abilities you have chosen for yourself (if any).

Once the stats are done with, **pick some equipment and weapons for your character.** Almost no two GMs have the same philosophy governing starting equipment and weapons (and money), so we'll leave that to be handled between you and your GM. Also make sure the character is approved by your GM, and check over everything one last time before you start to make sure you've got everything the way you want it. And remember: this is step one in character creation. The second step is playing, so have at it! If you need ideas or help, take a look at the "Notable Blockade Runners" section for examples, but remember that this is my concept of what a blockade runner is. You will be your own unique and interesting character!

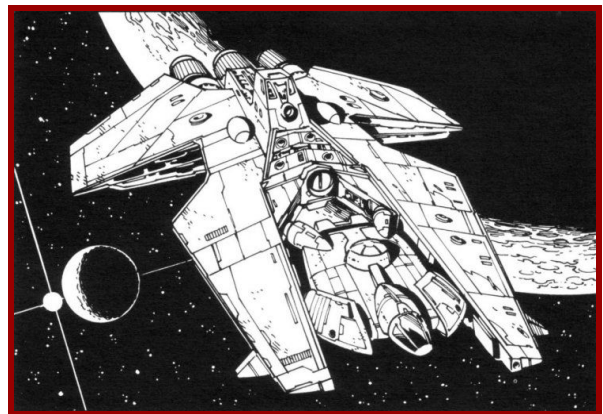
Section 2: Rivals & Enemies

Smugglers. Though one can argue that smuggling and blockade running are the same thing, smugglers and blockade runners do nothing but argue. Many a barroom brawl have broken out after a heated exchange of insults, and when two cross each other on the streets, it's usually on opposing sides. Most don't take it too far, realizing that they are indeed in the same brotherhood, and will surely help each other in a bad pinch. Some smugglers think runners can't smuggle for lack of class and finesse, think their antics are hilarious, and are the first to applaud when one goes up in a fireball. Some blockade runners think smugglers are half-wit, cowardly goof-offs that can't hack combat without wetting their pants and couldn't fly themselves out of a bottle. Interestingly, they never turn each other in to the law, evidence that there is some sort of code amongst these beings.



Other Blockade Runners. It is quite standard to have rivalries between people in the same business. Blockade runners have a tendency to take it a little too far. Unless the other guy really needs the money, it's almost common for one to steal another's cargo and take the run themselves, and it's seen as fun. If a blockade runner really needs the run, they better stay up all night protecting it, or pick it up right before they run it. Another common "joke" of sorts between these rascals is to chase each other in space and fire rather heavily. Amongst themselves, they will say it was a way of getting in a little practice, but to the casual bystander it has the unquestionable reek of rivalry. Otherwise, blockade runners are a pretty tight group.

The Empire. First and foremost, this is the prime enemy of all blockade runners. Common forces of the Empire that are after them on a regular basis are the: Sector Rangers, Special Enforcement Officers (SEO), Imperial Office of Criminal Investigations (IOCI), Imperial Customs, Imperial Navy and the Imperial Security Bureau (ISB). The Empire does not take someone flying through a line of ships lightly. It is common for locally famous captains and other officers to take a keen interest in a specific runner should that person become particularly prolific in their runs. Woe is the runner at the top of the local Imperial Navy bulletin board, and is often a good sign that you should remove yourself from the area for a nice long time.



Details on the Imperial Navy, Sector Rangers and Imperial Customs can be found in *Pirates & Privateers* in Chapter 6. Details on the SEO can be found in *Galaxy Guide 11: Criminal Organizations*, page 91. Details on the Imperial Office of Criminal Investigations can be found in both of these books, possibly

others. A good place to start learning on the Imperial Navy and the ISB is with the Imperial Sourcebook. Entries on these two abound throughout many of the books.

Bounty Hunters. More specifically House Tresario, House Renliss, House Salaktori and the Mantis Syndicate. Details on all of these can be found in Chapter Eight of Galaxy Guide 10: Bounty Hunters. The Empire (through most of the institutions listed above) post massive bounties on very successful blockade runners. This is something to be feared for sure, because if you become a large enough thorn in the Empire's side, your days are indeed numbered. However, if you can conceal your identity enough and stay disconnected from your ship, this will buy you some time. But infochants have been known to sell your kind out for the right price, so watch out.

Section 3: A Blockade Runners Life

Risk. First and foremost is the risk. Most characters have a level of risk, but blockade running sometimes runs too high in risk. When one takes on a run, there is no question that some amount of direct combat will ensue. Many runners don't know when their last run will be. Some think they will push it to the limit, whatever that limit is, then drop out of it before the heat catches up. Others embark on what seems like a cake run, and are never seen again. For most runners, this is the hardest part to deal with. They see those they know leave and most of the time come back. Others are lost to the void, be it in jail forever or gone.

Everything a blockade runner does is risky. They cannot take their ships to regular ports, and must land

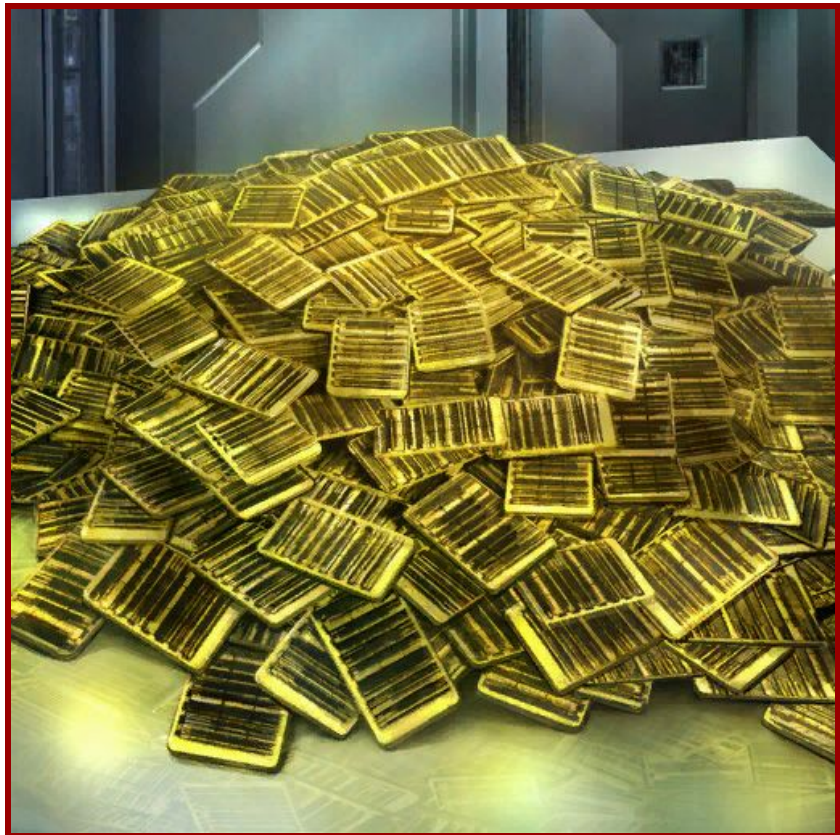


and spend much of their time in shadowports. That alone is risky as the Empire is always seeking them out, and sometimes the natives themselves are as dangerous too. Flying anywhere is a game of total avoidance, for coming across a customs corvette means you must escape. You can try to spend money on outfitting your ship with a different engine every trip or two to change the transponder code, but that costs so much money it is often financially unreasonable. If you get to a regular port, you must be careful as you never can be totally sure whether or not your ship is wanted or you yourself. As a ship, and often as a man, you are tagged constantly and sought after by the best police forces the Empire and local governments have to offer.

To most, this all sounds a little too rough for their taste. But to some, this life appeals to them for a singular reason. This is where those with a passion for combat and conflict can make a massive difference, and be among others such as themselves. Few make a career of it, but it's not too uncommon. Those that do are usually of the type that don't really interface that well with the more common elements of society. Seen as people with a deathwish or as adrenaline junkies, runners have a tendency to get a bad rap. Quite a few of them are running scared, trying to make that "last run" that will make them rich forever. Sometimes it comes, more often it doesn't.

Reward. The rewards that are reaped from blockade running are never small. In fact, most would agree that runners rank among the highest paid professions in the underworld. Though there is no average run amount nor is there a way to easily measure how much a run is worth, the pay mostly runs in the tens and hundreds of thousands. It is not unusual to come across those willing to pay half a million credits for a seemingly simple run. Huge runs where success is terribly unlikely and the prospect of capture would only be avoided by luck can pay several million credits. For a good blockade runner, the cash always flows toward them.

Another reward that a good blockade runner can attain is status. This goes a long way in terms of getting out of it once you've had enough. Pirate and privateer groups want you because you've proved you don't seize up in a pinch. Smuggler groups take interest in you for your usually superior piloting skills. Racing leagues solicit you with offers to fly ships and other vehicles for them, a job that is nothing but fun and money. The Rebellion is always looking for hotshot pilots like yourself that are willing to fly outlandishly dangerous missions. Crime lords see you as a valuable asset if they could only get you on retainer. The list goes on, but suffice it to say that you are a wanted man in more ways than one.



Section 4: Blockade Running Ships

Just like the smuggler, the blockade runner's most important piece of equipment is their ship. But there are important differences between a regular smuggling ship and a blockade running ship. Most have to do with firepower, protection and speed, but there are other things to think about too.

Give me fuel, give me fire, give me that which I desire. Without even knowing it, Metallica coined the perfect motto for blockade runners and their ship. The first weapon a smart blockade runner has against his enemy (the blockade) is speed. With speed, one can hopefully outrun a situation before it progresses rapidly into an incident. Blowing through the ranks with guns blazing is pretty nifty, but hurtling through a line of Imperial ships before they can barely register you on their scans is much more preferred. After all, what would you rather spend? Money on fuel, or eternity in jail? Here's some engines which are sure to tickle your fancy and fit the bill.

Trasst HighThrust. This engine is designed to fit smaller vessels and is primarily used for starships that are involved in racing. Though sublight racing is a (mostly) legal pursuit (no pun intended), the Trasst certainly has other applications. With modifications to fit a typical size of freighter, plus installation and labor, expect this one to put you back by about 630,000 credits. Sound like too much? So does life in a penal colony, doesn't it? The Trasst's weight is about 26 tons and is prepped to give you a total sublight output of 6D+2. Pretty good for a start...

Billeon 500 High Output Drive. Billeon is another engine manufacturer that for some reason or another makes a high performance engine that fits freighter-class ships. This puppy features an advanced nitrogen induction system that offers exceptional cooling capacity. This cooler-running engine means higher power output, thus increased speed. Most of the time, no modification is required to drop this into a freighter, but there's still the cost of installation. The engine itself costs 900,000 credits and produces a sublight speed of 7D. With tweaking (as per rules found on page 30 of the Tramp Freighters Guide), one can pump this up more. It's very expensive, but when the going gets tough, the tough takes out a loan...

Hyperdrives never hurt anyone either (when they work), and for a fast entry and exit, nothing beats a good investment in the right engine. Often times the difference between being caught and not is how far you are from the scene when the man figures out what went down. Try these on for size, but shop around.

Mylon HyperHellion. Most people who purchase these do so on the sly, as they are not produced any more because of some pesky law about having a hyperdrive this fast. The good side? It replaces your backup hyperdrive and gives you a x1/2 hyperdrive rating, fast as you can get. The down side? It costs 34,000 credits and has been known to melt if used for long, sustained trips. Unfortunately, nobody really knows for sure what long exactly means in this case...

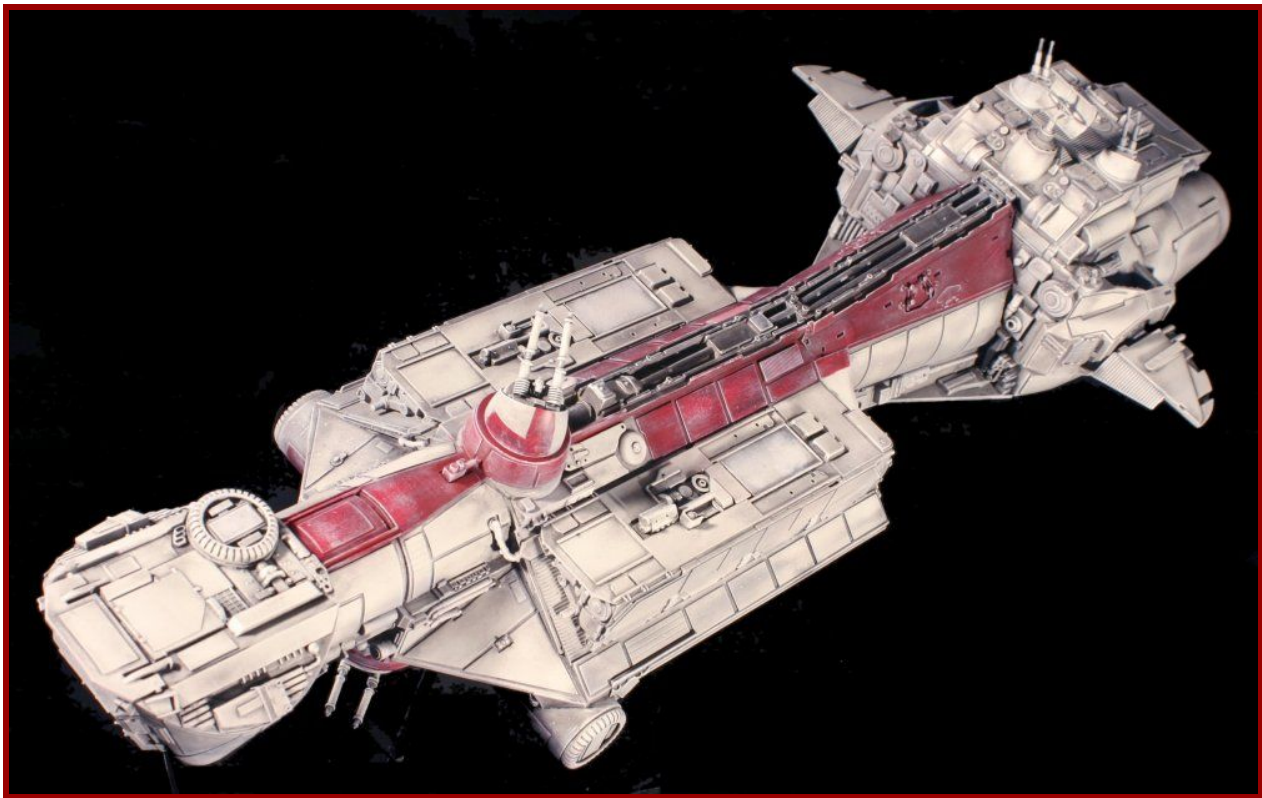
V'Karr Series .5. This is another drive you can only find at the local dive. These are very hard to find, but are worth it. General going rate for one is about 40,000 credits, but that doesn't include installation. What makes them worth it? Well, besides the fact that they also produce a x1/2 rating, unlike the HyperHellion, they actually stay solid under sustained use. Have fun finding parts for this one, though. You might find yourself knee-deep in owed favors by the time you get even just a tune-up on it...

When you got your speed down to a science, it's time to look at the second most important part of your ship. This would be **protection**. There are many products on the market that create increased shielding

and armor for your ship, some good and some bad. None really stand out, though. Your best bet is to not take on really big jobs until you have a hull rating of at least 4D and shields of at least 3D. You can get by with 2D, but I wouldn't suggest it. You don't want to be floating in space after a battle while an ISD is reeling you in and all you are thinking is "If I had that extra dice, I..."

The same goes for **weapons**, in terms of amount. There is no such thing as overkill here. Basically, be willing to sacrifice a lot of cargo space to get it going on in terms of armament and protection. Turbolasers are good. Forget ion cannons of any sort; they are a total waste of money and space in these terms. You want "one shot one kill" ability here, or the next best thing.

Consult *Galaxy Guide 6: Tramp Freighters* for information on tweaking your ship, namely Chapter 8. Another good resource is Chapter 3 of *Platt's Smugglers Guide*. In this chapter, don't pay much attention to the discussions on documentation, seeing as you will be extremely wanted by the Empire upon completion of your first run (so why bother, right?). Oh, and don't goof around with sensor decoys to avoid this. Doing so is playing with fire when you are a blockade runner. Remember, in and out as fast as possible. Also, there is a large variety of websites which offer homebrew weapons, and some searching



would do you well. A notable place for weapons is at the [Servais Sector](#), where you will find (under Technology) a section by a company called M & G, which cater to starship weaponry and have fine offerings.

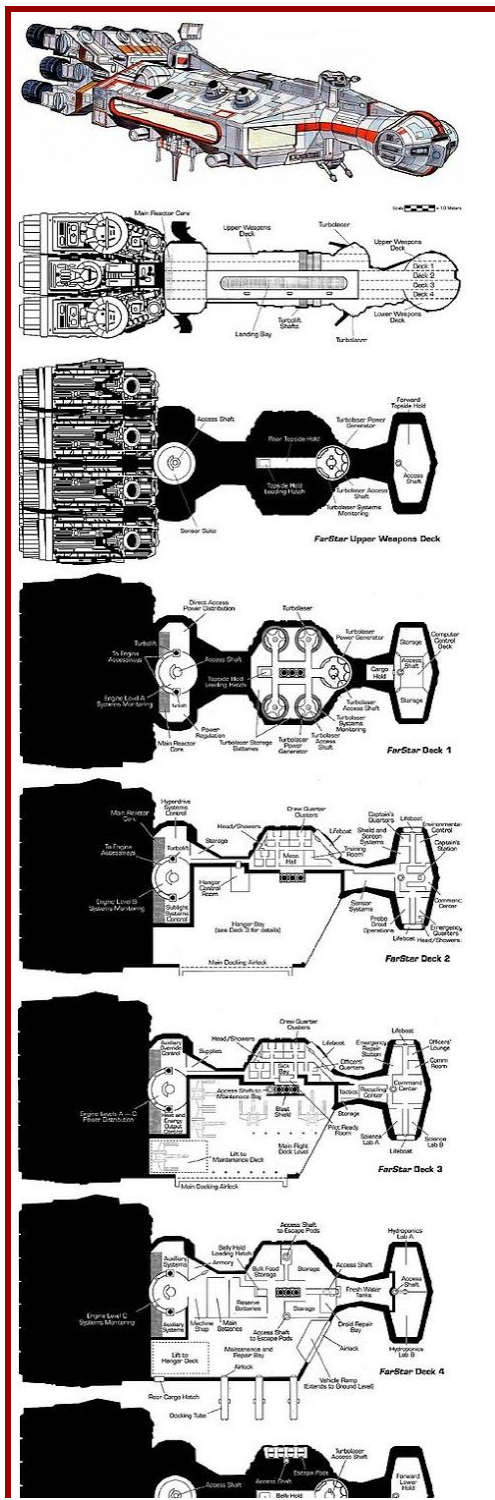
For finding ships to use, there are a great deal of resources available. On the web, the first recommendation I'd make is over at [Smilin' Drex Furlow's Stockyard](#). This site has terrific pictures and info on both stock and modified ships, and the author is always adding stuff and takes requests. There

Otherwise, in terms of books there's *Stock Ships* and *Pirates & Privateers*, both books full of ships that are useful. Also, it's recommended that you check out *Galaxy Guide 8: Scouts*, because I've found that scout ships fit blockade running very well. The *Adventure Journals* have many ships in them that would be good choices, and *Fantastic Technology* has a few gadgets that would possibly complement your style. I basically don't recommend any specific ships because I want you to pick one that is right for you without any advice from others. It is said elsewhere, but I remind you here that unlike smuggling, the bigger the ship you have the bigger the target you are. Imperials don't shoot randomly at ships - they shoot at attacking vessels, which is all you're going to be doing. Choose wisely and carefully.

Speed, Shields, Hull and Hyperdrive. Don't worry too much about these if they are stock ships because you will need to upgrade whatever you get anyway. Check out a discussion on [modifying hyperdrives to escape the gravity well projectors of an Interdictor Cruiser](#).

Floorplans. Highly recommended as this can expedite gaming and make the process of customizing your ship a lot more fun. If you find one in a book, take it down to a copy shop and see what you can do with it in terms of pasting out stock areas and drawing in your own modifications and quirks. Not only is it fun, but impress the hell out of me and send me a copy of it by scanning it into a file (this can be done at your copy shop) and attaching it to an e-mail. I'll post it here.

Maneuverability. Depending on your piloting skill, this needs to be kind of high. Don't worry if you don't have a lot of maneuverability but a high pilot skill. This is the best scenario, because maneuverability dice can be taken away from you by battle damage while your piloting dice cannot.



Sensors. This is something that will depend on how you do your blockade running. Some prefer to strip them out almost entirely, saving space, weight and money. Others pump the best sensors into their ship and lurk behind a nearby moon, monitoring their target and waiting for their best moment to run. You should think about this BEFORE you are in the situation, not during. It's probably best to start with them, then as you go, dump them if you don't use them.

Consumables. It's recommended that you not only find a ship with high consumables capability, but boost it even further yourself. Why? Because a die-hard tactic is to hide in a region of untravelled space, floating for very extended periods of time (sometimes weeks or even months) after you've made a run. This way, nobody will find you and figure you long gone from the general area. In case you have to do this in an emergency, it's smart to give yourself the capability. If you become the Sector Fleet's pet for a month, you really have little alternative other than finding a hole and crawling in it.

Passenger Space. This is a good time to indicate to you NOT to blockade run passengers under ANY circumstances. Blockade runners are VERY wanted people, and the Empire is all too deft at offering those of you who are greedy LARGE sums of money to transport an undercover Sector Ranger to an impounded world. The only way to get caught easier is to land yourself in the hangar of an ISD and say "Spank me, I've been very naughty." Convert your passenger space to other uses; this is a good place to increase your consumables rating.

Escape Pods. For some bizarre reason, pretty much no ship explains itself in terms of this capacity, and it doesn't even have a place in ship stats. Talk to your GM about escape pods on the ship you choose (if the ship's description doesn't already include these). Some people keep them for obvious reasons. I've known others to take them out to avoid the temptation of escaping, claiming they'd rather die than be caught or abandoned forever. It's also not uncommon to stuff them full of detonite and fire them off at a capital ship (at best a stunning event, at worst a spectacular diversion). Think about it.



Maintenance and Repair

Considerations. Do you have a very good skill in starship repair, or does somebody else on board? Is there a shadow starship mechanic that knows how to work on your ship very well? Does that mechanic have recommendations as to what ships are good and which aren't? Are parts hard to find for your ship? Are the parts expensive? How often do you have to tune the engine? What about the reliability of the ship you have chosen? Are there certain systems that can't be worked on while in transit or in space? Ask yourself these questions now before they rule your characters life. And remember that you will only be able to land at shadowports since you will be illegal, which restricts your choices by the parts and labor that is available there. I've seen many a

character hanging on to the side of their ship in space, banging the hell out of the hull with a hydrospanner and yelling very embarrassing obscenities because they didn't cover these areas before they became important.

Did you catch the write-up on strap-on cargo pods located [here](#)?

Section 5: Contacts & Associations

Most professions form groups that the members can find strength in and draw resources from to help further their own goals. Some are meant only to protect them from their employers, others seek to unify them toward a greater goal, while most are generally official excuses to get together and have fun. Blockade running, while still a somewhat bonafide profession, lacks the support of a cohesive group. This is because of the nature of the runner. Almost all are fiercely stubborn and independent, making the formation of a guild or other all-encompassing entity a daunting task. Still, one can find small bands at shadowports that are solely made up of runners, and depending on the disposition of that particular group, will welcome a newcomer in.

Geizal

Geizal is so inhospitable, it is a going joke that even if the Empire found the shadowport there, they would think the inhabitants were already in trouble and move on. Though it has some relatively mild temperate zones, the air is basically poisonous to most species. The shadowport (of the same name) rests in the northern arctic region and is hell.

The port rests in a shallow valley that measures about forty kilometers wide. Nobody has actually ventured beyond about sixty kilometers, so little is known of the region. The port rests in the center to



allow approaching ships as much visibility as possible. Some encampments lie against the valley walls twenty kilometers away. The general population of Geizal is 800, quite healthy considering the weather. The port lies on an ice floe that is roughly 1.5 kilometers thick, and covers the span of the valley. Snow falls continuously, either in blizzard conditions or wispy flurries. Due to very high winds that sweep the valley floor, accumulation is minimal, nothing much past snow piling against anything that stands out (ships, buildings, etc.). In blizzard conditions, visibility is zero and it is dangerous to be out.

In the port, landing pads are meter-thick neoprene gridpads large enough to land a light freighter on one. Several pads can be pulled together to land larger ships. The pads have a heating element on the top that keeps the ships from sinking into the ice from running heat then freezing into the floor. There are about two hundred pads scattered about, mostly covered in ice. Structures are few and far between, mostly small affairs with glowing light pouring from the slits of thick aluminum shutters. The locals enjoy using wood for fuel (specifically, geeder, a slow-burning tinder with an enjoyable aroma), as mandated by a general vote. They found that using wood to heat reduced the energy signature detectable from orbit enough to make it almost nil. Also, energy here is not that plentiful, and is rationed for repairs, refueling ships and other such matters of importance.

Trenches that measure about a meter high connect the structures and also surround them like a moat. A structure will typically rest about four meters under the ice in an attempt to trap ambient heat. They are prefabricated buildings, dropped into a pit carved out for their size and sheathed with some heat-retaining material. They wind up being surprisingly efficient, considering their surroundings. The roofs are usually sloped over by snow accumulation, and look to be little more than bumps on the horizon. Once can come here and build their own structure. They must supply their own fuel and purchase the services of the local equipment and materials to dig the appropriate trenches and construction of the building. In all, it costs about 6,000 credits, a bargain if you survive the first month.

Nencarn : An Encampment

Nencarn is one of the encampments that lies about twenty kilometers away from the shadowport proper. It rests at the foot of the valley wall (which is about twenty meters tall) and is home to a group of blockade runners. They call the camp Nencarn, whose definition is not known exactly. Some remember the Nencarn as a fictional race of benevolence, while others seem to recall the Nencarn being a raging, psychotic creature that resides elsewhere in limited numbers and is hunted viciously (with little success).



Twenty-two blockade runners make up the encampment. They are a motley bunch, with thick but friendly rivalries running amongst each other and practical jokes as plentiful as the snow itself. They enjoy each other's company a great deal and have formed a real community feeling about Nencarn. Other blockade runners are welcomed wholeheartedly, but woe to those seeking to do them harm or injustice. Geizal isn't the place to make enemies just for the climate. Otherwise, they are cordial and inviting to any other type of visitors, and one is likely to make many friends for life just venturing into the camp.

Venturing into the camp is the hard part. They have sensor outposts that rest two kilometers out from Nencarn in all directions on the valley floor, to serve as an early warning. Also, speeder bikes don't really work very well on Geizal, nor do most repulsorcraft. Nencarn happens to have some speeder trucks they have modified to comply better with the bitter cold, but unless you are able to acquire your own transportation, you must surrender yourself to one of the pack animals found in the port. These are usually taun-tauns, so if you plan on riding 20 clicks through snow and subzero temperatures, plan to stay a while and tell them you are coming in advance. If you don't arrive in proper time, Nencarn will form a search party (usually one man with a sensor pack and a speeder truck) and rescue you.

There are about six separate crews and ships in Nencarn, though it is not unusual for two or even three crews to form temporary alliances to tackle a very big job. Otherwise, it is somewhat common for them to all run cargoes to the same destination at the same time. They each do it a different way, and it sows terrible confusion with the blockading force, a point of hearty laughter for the Nencarn camp. Their camp houses all the crewmen, landings for the ships, and there are enough stored energy supplies in terms of wood and energy fuel to shore them up for about six standard months. They always anticipate being blockaded themselves by the Empire and want to be prepared. They are working on a tunnel system that goes into the valley wall, but recently procrastination has been the watchword. Besides, maintaining the camp is difficult enough.

There are guest quarters, blankets, heaters and plenty of food for visitors, and even though they keep a very obvious watchful eye, the Nencarn camp is warmer than most resort planets. The main port enjoys it when a Nencarn comes in for supplies or just to visit. Joviality is the watchword for these men. Though they enjoy spinning yarns of past exploits, they are tightlipped about their employers. They say that it is

because they believe in the code of silence on this one, but the truth is they are all on retainer with the Alliance. Though they all want to seem like hard, grizzled individuals, they all have families trapped by the Empire or hidden away on a safeworld. Being together with their sons, daughters, and wives one day is what keeps them warm on Geizal, not their laughter. But, laughter always helps.

Section 6: Bases of Operation

The places where a blockade runner base their operations from are as varied as the runners themselves. There are several different things you can base your choice of a hideout on. Also, there are many different types of bases that are available.

You can choose a location based on...

Proximity. Being close to a swarm of "hot spots" is both lucrative and for the iron of stomach. If you are hidden in the middle or right next to a cluster of continually blockaded planets, you are pretty much guaranteed to have a job offered to you all the time. The bad side to this is that you are smack dab in the middle of a hornet's nest of Imperial activity. This has proven to be hazardous to one's health...

Safety. Placing yourself according to how well you are hidden is easy for safety concerns, but heavy on the wallet. Half the time, you can find a shadowport that you can attach yourself to that is hidden quite well. The other half of the time, to be hidden very well you must create your own base of operations in a system as remote as hitting a lottery. The good side is that your enemy must beat the same odds to find



you. The down side is that you may be far removed from services for yourself and your ship, and it may entail traveling a lot which will eat a great deal of fuel.

Numbers. Hooking yourself into the quagmire of a shadowport may be your cup of tea. If there are no other blockade runners there, it is even better. If the location is compromised, you are sure to find out before it's too late. Also, being the only runner there, you will get all the running jobs that come to that port. This can be comfortable, but keep in mind the freaks that tend to hang out in entirely criminal areas. Try to find a port that is hosted by some sort of an authority figure. Even if they are almost dictators, it beats anarchy any day of the week. Dictators don't take any crap, so you wouldn't have to either.

Brethren. At some shadow ports, one can find a collective of blockade runners. For details on such bands, refer to the "Contacts & Associations" section. These collectives are good and bad. They are good because you will have like-minded individuals around you that have an interest in watching your back (so that you will watch theirs). They are bad because you are among competition when jobs come along. It should be noted that these collectives are generally only found where there is enough work for everyone. Shop around and find a group that you like and that likes you and your crew.

There are a multitude of base types that can be used. Some are extravagant and complicated, stocked to the gills and well defended. Others are fitting of a shoestring budget and rather minimal, but home nonetheless.

Before going on, it is highly recommended you refer to *Hideouts & Strongholds*. This book is one of the few that is worth its weight in gold for the Star Wars Role-playing Game. In this book, you will find a base-creation system with rules and equipment, plus over twenty superb examples of bases.

Otherwise, an example of a blockade runner's base for one crew follows. For an example of a base for a group of runners, refer to *Section 5: Contacts & Associations*.

Pinion's Enclave

Westham Pinion, a blockade runner of five years, operates in the Yegrin Sector with a crew of three other men. This sector contains about forty systems of importance, ten of which have been under Imperial blockade for the past sixteen months. These systems are under blockade mostly because the Empire wishes to possess them, but they have resisted with great strength. The Alliance is involved in fighting ground engagements on all of the main planets of these systems, and Pinion's group is one of many blockade runners delivering medicine, food, bacta, ammunition, weapons, parts and personnel to these troubled areas.

Pinion's Pack, as he and his crew call themselves, have carved out a rather cozy and secure niche for themselves in a useless and ignored system called 34T-910. The planet they are on is not even designated, but the Pack refers to it as their own.



They share "their" planet with nobody else, nor does anyone know where it is with the exception of the Alliance.

The planet is mostly covered in thick and unwieldy jungles. Random mountain and volcano chains line the surface haphazardly and it is within one of these mountain chains you will find Pinion's Enclave tucked away. The Enclave lies at the side of a river at the bottom of a very deep and narrow canyon. The walls of the canyon are about 450 meters high and at the base the it is very narrow, about 100 meters wide (the top is not much wider, at about 120 meters). The canyon bottom weaves tightly around, snaking it's way to a small ocean which is about forty kilometers from the Enclave.

The bottom is quite nice, actually. The river runs along the western side of the canyon and sticks pretty close to a width of 35 meters. In this portion of the canyon, the river is only about two meters at it's deepest, against the western cliffwall. The other 65 meters is comprised of about 55 meters of dense jungle and ten meters of sandy shore along the river. Pinion's Pack has cleared out an area along the river which runs about 200 meters alongside, and all the way against the eastern cliffwall. In all, the clearing measures about 200 meters long (next to the river) and 65 meters wide from river to cliff.

On the north end of the clearing is the landing area for their ship. There is room enough next to this main landing area to accommodate a second vessel, though one has never been here yet. On the north edge of the landing area is a hut filled with stocks for the ship. West of the landing pad, almost up against the cliffwall are two power generators capable of recharging the ship cells at a rate of about two cells a day.

South of the landing pad, and up against the cliffwall (again, west) are two large huts. The first (closest to the landing area) houses a rudimentary machine shop for repair and maintenance of parts for the ship. The second hut, south of the first, is a two-room structure that has a commons where the crew meets to discuss missions, and a stock room with supplies for the Enclave (food, power cells, etc.).

On the south end of the clearing, two huts lie up against the jungle. These huts are the sleeping and private quarters of the crew. Each hut houses two men. Behind these two huts, halfway into the jungle (to be hidden) is an anti-starfighter emplacement that can be manned by one person. This gun has never been used, and probably doesn't work very well. But, it goes a long way in terms of peace-of-mind for Pinion's Pack. Someday, Pinion hopes to acquire a small shield system that can be put on the top of both cliffwalls and cover the entrance to the canyon bottom by way of hovering down to the Enclave (which is how they arrive and depart at their home).

This example can be used and modified by anyone for their game. Add to or change the structures in the camp, or do something completely different in the clearing. One could even carve out some protected caves in the cliffwall should one be able to acquire heavy equipment to do so. Or, come up with your own unique idea for a hideout. Let me know what you do, and I'll post it here as an example to others.

Section 7: Tactics & Doctrine

The act of actually breaking through a blockade can bend the nerves of even the most steeled veteran of space combat. Blockade runners must pit their wits (and the speed and armament of their craft) against the combined might of a massive, organized and disciplined foe. In any situation, the best defense is

planning and preparation. Knowing how the Empire works in terms of blockades and such is valuable--indeed necessary--information for those who would challenge Palpatine's control of space. (Also, learning from other runners'--successful and unsuccessful alike--can make the difference between life and death.)

Imperial Blockades and You

The Empire's actions in the Mid- and Outer Rim regions can appear quite random to the casual observer. (In fact, despite current military doctrine, Imperial movements frequently are random in order to confuse enemy surveillance and tactical planning). In terms of blockading, there are several rules that the Empire cleaves to. There are always exceptions, of course, but the following should suffice as general guidelines for typical Imperial blockade actions.

Why Does The Empire Blockade?

The Empire undertakes blockade actions for a variety of reasons:

Rebel Activity. In the period following the Battle of Yavin, the Empire has used "suspicion of treasonous/sedition activity" as justification for the blockade of a planet or system. In some cases, the restricted planet is not a hotbed of active rebellion; merely providing assistance in the form of supplies or medical attention can bring the wrath of the Emperor down on a planet. The Empire makes few distinctions between worlds seething with armed resistance and passive sedition as described above; target worlds are treated as armed enemies regardless of the level of resistance they display. Such planets will be blockaded to varying degrees prior to the imposition of martial law and the arrival of occupation forces.



Other planets may possess resources important to the Imperial war machine--rare minerals or ores, unusual medical supplies, key manufacturing centers--or strategic locations. For Rebels, these areas are prime targets, and it is not impossible (or even all that rare) for a single, small Rebel cell to wreak havoc against Imperial interests on such worlds. But, when the crackdown comes, Alliance agitators often need rescue or support. If the situation is important enough, the Alliance may authorize relief missions (frequently hiring privateers or smugglers) to slip through the inevitable blockade.

Criminal Activity. Imperial interdiction of ship traffic in order to cut the flow of contraband or to prevent violence in a region is exceedingly rare (particularly in the Outer Rim region, where Imperial power is projected much more judiciously). Still, it does happen; Reuss VIII--a hotbed of crime in the Outer Rim region--has been blockaded repeatedly since the Battle of Hoth, with little

success. (Smugglers and lawbreakers of every type seem to circumvent whatever measures Moff Ammar undertakes to block illegal traffic.) Sometimes, a crime boss becomes too bold, endangering Imperial troops or interests on a particular world. When the local police force is either too small or too inept to deal with the situation, the Empire may move in to "correct" the situation. In the event of heavy smuggling, a planet will be blockaded. Most of the time, the situation is temporary, but there are cases where permanent blockades are in place.

Crucial Location. Some locations are too valuable to the Empire to leave to patrols. Constant blockading by a very powerful force is used to deter Alliance forces from hitting such a target. Kuat--home of Kuat Drive Yards--for example, boasts a tremendous Imperial Navy presence, and approaching ships are routinely searched and scanned. Other important locations house facilities crucial to the supply and maintenance of the Empire (for example, sites where hyperbarides are mined, turbolasers or repulsorlifts are constructed, and so on.) These locations are protected by sizable forces that are always present and whose sole purpose is to defend the area against infiltration...to the death.

There are several different levels of blockading. Imperial Customs is usually involved, but sometimes it is strictly a military operation. They depend mostly on what the area has, where the area is and at what level the area is seeing current subversive activity:

Level 1. This is the least intrusive of Imperial blockades, and are typically employed against worlds that show a great deal of traffic in relatively benign contraband (luxury items, bootleg recordings, banned holobooks, and so on). Such worlds are typically the capitals of unimportant sectors, or are of limited strategic value. Level 1 blockades are usually enforced by a small strike group consisting of one or two combat shuttles (tasked with customs duty) and, if armed resistance--particularly from starfighters--is expected, perhaps a customs or Corellian corvette.

Level 2. Systems that have seen recent Rebel activity (such as a bombing or involuntary extraction of Imperial personnel), or planets that house medium- and high-security penal facilities receive Level 2 blockades. Occasionally, the Emperor or his advisors will order a Level 2 blockade against a planet to express displeasure to a planetary governor who may not be performing to Imperial Center's satisfaction. (Imperial Navy troops frequently refer to such actions as "political duty," and generally consider it a paid vacation.) Level 2 blockades are typically comprised of one light capital ship (such as a Carrack light cruiser), a Dreadnaught heavy cruiser, or a Strike medium cruiser. Where such craft are not available, lighter vessels are substituted (in greater number); three Corellian corvettes can do the work of one Dreadnaught, for example.

Level 3. Level 3 blockades are employed against targets where heavy opposition exists. Systems warranting a Level 3 blockade are sites where there is either current Rebel activity (or such activity is predicted), or a large smuggling network has been located. Level 3 blockades are temporary by nature; if a protracted stay is necessary, a garrison is dropped to the surface and the blockade is maintained for a few additional weeks. Level 3 are generally composed of either up to two light capital ships (as listed above) with several support ships, or a Star Destroyer (Victory- or Imperial-Class) with several support vessels. Occasionally, an Interdictor heavy cruiser is present.

Level 4. When the Alliance concentrates enough firepower in a system, or when the Empire has begun an important military engagement, Level 4 blockades are implemented to prevent support/re-supply of the enemy. These blockades are charged with sealing the planet completely, and are not intended to defend

a system or particular planet against a concentrated assault. Support vessels involved with the ground engagement are usually set aside for such events, and will be spread out amongst the system. Level 4 blockades have an average of two to four light or medium cruisers, and one or two heavy cruisers. Most of the time, an Interdictor heavy cruiser is on hand, and itself will have a detachment of several support vessels (normally one or two Corellian gunships and several Katarn- or Grek-Class boarding shuttles).

Level 5 (Special). When a single system or a cluster of small systems has fallen under hot contest between the Empire and the Alliance (or some other independent government), and is what the Imperial Army terms "at maximum combat probability," Level 5 blockades are used. They are complicated and involve several groups of vessels. The main arteries of travel that enter the system in question will be blockaded (usually by a force comparable to that of deployed for a Level 4 blockade). The areas between these routes that lead to the system are mined and patrolled by smaller capital ships and starfighters (or overseen by Golan II or III defense stations or Rendili StarDrive Bavos-I or -II space platforms). In the heart of the contested system, a Level 4 blockade is placed around the target world. While such operations are difficult to conduct, Imperial commanders--in both the Army and Navy--receive frequent supplemental training in these actions.

Level 5 blockades rarely fail to cut off a system and squeeze it dry of seditious elements. One critical failure of such blockades should be noted; Imperial attention is typically leveled at the target world, or against the potential threat of enemy capital ships. Level 5 blockades are somewhat unwieldy when dealing with freighters or smaller vessels engaged in smuggling. Rebel relief efforts to Ralltiir in the period following the destruction of Alderaan, for example, were tremendously successful in circumventing Imperial control of the system.

Level 6 ("Capitol Blockade"). As previously stated, there are many regions of the Empire that are crucial to military survival and maintenance. The protection of sector capitols has long been a major priority to Moffs. In particular, protecting the Moff (including his personal staff), the key infrastructure that the Moff primarily utilizes, and the planet the Moff calls home are of the utmost importance to system defense forces. Not all sectors need heavy guarding, but there are plenty of "red sectors" which are constant



targets for terrorists and subversives. The more valuable a sector is, the more of a target its capitol is. Level 6 was created solely for capitol blockading, and as such is not a "true" blockade (as the needs of such protection are very specific and never vary). While most blockades are designed to keep supplies, materiel or personnel from reaching a target world, the Level 6 blockade is designed to keep enemy troops from making planetfall; essentially, Level 6 is a rearguard action intended to give the local Moff time to escape or rally his forces.

A Level 6 blockade is comprised of three to four Victory-class Star Destroyers, six Lancer frigates, and two Dreadnaught heavy cruisers. An Imperial Customs detachment of three Carrack cruisers and two Light corvettes are included. Level 6 is charged with locking the capitol down to only those with pressing business and an invitation. They are quite successful, and can even hold out against a concentrated force long enough for sector forces to come to their aid.

Level 7 ("Pinpoint"). "Pinpoint" blockades use the concept of finding a main artery of trouble and pressing hard enough to kill it. Once Imperial Intelligence has identified the proper placing of a Pinpoint, it is implemented and almost never lasts longer than one week. The planet in question is not notified as per normal regulations that they are under blockade, and conducts business as usual. Intelligence operatives are used to stir up some event of importance that is likely to suck in as many local privateers, pirates, smugglers and/or rebels. The blockade lies in wait in an outlying portion of the system, and comes down on the planet in a flash once it is believed that the maximum number of targets will be captured or destroyed. Main entry and exit points to the area are blocked, and the planet itself is occupied. Troops are dropped to collect those not foolish enough to attempt to break out, and martial law is implemented. Level 7 operations are thoroughly planned and are not common. A target world must draw the wrath of the Emperor or his advisors to warrant such a blockade.

Pinpoint blockades usually consist of a force roughly equal to several Level 6 blockades. They include three Interdictor heavy cruisers, plus one for each main entry/exit point of the system, with full accompaniment per cruiser. The Alliance only authorized blockade runs past Level 7 actions only in cases of dire emergency. Such blockades are exceedingly rare, but pay very high (and on the scale of blockade running, that can be enough for a lifetime).

Level 8, Level 9 & Level 10. These levels are the most dangerous class of interdiction operation. Levels 8, 9 and 10 authorize brutal methods against those attempting to circumvent the blockade. Standard orders include permission for "on-sight elimination" of any perceived threat ("threat" being defined by the ranking officer on the scene). Because of the political liability involved in launching such blockades, the Empire takes pains to ensure that legitimate shipping traffic knows to avoid the system. Holomessages at every port, beacons near the target system, public updates to BoSS, and word of mouth keep non-hostile craft away from the target area. Those who enter the region do so at their own peril. Level 8 forces are equal to those of Level 4, and Level 9 forces are equal (roughly) to Level 6. The difference in operation is minor, except that these are purely military operations in nature and customs duty is virtually non-existent. (Targets are destroyed, not captured and searched.) They are placed over systems after an official warning has been delivered by the Moff of the sector, and last anywhere from two weeks to several months or more.

Level 10 blockades rival Base Delta Zero operations (full obliteration of a location) in sheer brute force. They are massive, of no average size or composition, are given orders entirely dependent on the situation, and give those commanding them one of the best opportunities to prove themselves for a fleet position. Level 10 operations are very rare, sometimes confused with a traveling force, and are to follow

only one rule: no latitude. Those who attempt to come bumbling into a blockaded system can expect to meet a bad end, almost instantly. It is not unusual for forces conducting a Level 10 blockade to fire on ground targets from orbit, usually at random. Humanitarian aid is rejected out of hand, and starvation, poverty and disease among the ground population reaches dramatic levels over time. (Level 10 blockades are designed to starve a system into submission. This is one of the few ways the Empire acquires systems with "minimal casualty," and do so when the system contains something they want very badly but can't afford to destroy.)

"...so, I cut my thrusters, and let the grubber overshoot. Zelt here, he cuts loose with this incredible shot from the belly turret and rips up the Skipray's power plant. The explosion fouled up the Interdictor's target lock on us, and poof! We wuz outta there."

"Sure. And I'm the Emperor's uncle, bantha breath."

Overheard conversation in Fathom's (Calamari).

For every smuggler or would-be blockade runner in the galaxy, there are ten ludicrous, impossible spacers' tales. Stories of how a pilot, flying a Ghtroc held together with copper wire, plasti-resin and good wishes flew rings around a wing of TIE Defenders to deliver "the big run" of glitterstim or explosives.

The amazing facet of these tales is that some of them are true.

In fact, just enough of these ludicrous, apocryphal stories contain nuggets of truth to be dangerous. It can be very difficult for spacers to sift through the rumors, half-truths and outright lies to glean useful tactical data. Believing the wrong story can be fatal.

This section describes a series of difficult, dangerous and occasionally suicidal maneuvers a blockade runner can attempt. Success hinges largely on an able pilot, a quick mind and a fast ship. And, of course, a great deal of luck...

In general, the most successful tactics to employ against a blockade are unorthodox tactics. While the Imperial Navy is competent and disciplined, there is a certain rigidity of thought inculcated in military personnel. As a result, it is possible to take an enemy captain by surprise and then exploit that advantage to great effect. Unpredictability is the key to success for blockade runners.

Covert Shroud Gambit

The so-called "covert shroud gambit" is a time-tested stratagem used by smugglers to avoid capture by large capital ships (such as Interdictors or Star Destroyers).

According to Imperial anti-smuggling protocols, this maneuver consists of three phases: acquisition, shroud (or blinding) and escape.

Acquisition occurs when the target vessel has been targeted (or is about to be targeted) by a pursuing vessel's tractor beam. Once acquired, the smuggler can do one of four things: evade, surrender, detonate his engines (thereby committing suicide) or execute the shroud.

The shroud itself is literally a cloud of sensor-confusing particles that are jettisoned from the fleeing craft, in order to confuse the targeting scanners of the pursuing craft (and, hopefully, allow the smuggler to effect an escape).

In general, trac-reflective particles are the most effective for this maneuver, as they disrupt the targeting lock on a tractor-beam's control computer (though dust treated with hard radiation can also work).

However, shroud particles can consist of any fine-grain powder: course meal grain, silicate desiccant crystals, or even a mist of water (which hardens to tiny ice crystals upon exposure to space) can also work, with varying degrees of effectiveness.

Once the shroud is deployed, the runner should immediately flee, taking whatever advantage he can from the shroud--this is the escape phase.

While the Imperial Navy has no set doctrine on how to counter a shroud, some Imperial commanders have developed their own methods for capturing craft that attempt to escape using this tactic. One of the more common responses is the repositioning of the chase vessel to avoid the shroud, though a skilled pilot can keep the dust cloud between his ship and the pursuing vessel long enough to program a hyperspace jump and escape.

Typically, Imperial commanders tend to blanket the general position of the target vessel with turbolaser fire, forcing the him to either surrender, or take evasive action (and, in all probability, move outside the minimal protection the shroud offers). This tactic is of no value when a target must be captured alive, but Imperial commanders generally prefer to disobey a capture order and destroy a target, rather than let him escape.

Covert Shroud Package

Type: Illegal starship countermeasure

Scale: Starfighter

Skill: Starship gunnery

Crew: 1

Cost: Varies; typically, anywhere from 5,000 to 15,000

Availability: X

Radius: 100-300/400/600 meters

Damage: Special (see below)

Game Notes: The shroud is a cloud of sensor-fouling particles that can reduce the effectiveness of an enemy craft's sensors. For the actual sensor penalty, use the chart to the right.

Shroud is composed of:	Enemy's Sensor Penalty	Range
Trac-reflective particles	-2D	1 Space Unit
Radiation-emitting dust	-2D	3 Space Units*
Fine grain, ice crystals	-1D	100-400 meters

* **Note:** This typically inflicts damage on the crew of the smuggling vessel. The gamemaster should use his own discretion when determining how severe the effects are: radiation sickness, damage to the electronic systems of the craft, erroneous sensor readings, etc.

Covert Shroud Variants

As discussed, the covert shroud gambit has been around for quite a long time. Smugglers being smugglers, the gambit has been modified any number of ways (to reflect the needs of a given situation and the limits of the pilot's craft and budget). The following are some examples of how the covert can be employed:

Hidden Explosives. Hidden within the shroud is a high-yield warhead (easily obtained through trade on low-tech worlds) or a modified ion or magpulse weapon, programmed to detonate as the pursuer moves near or fires through the cloud. The smuggler's craft must be a minimum of 20 Space Units away from the center of the cloud or it will likely be destroyed in the resulting blast. The effects of the blast will vary based on explosive type, so gamemasters and players should use their best judgment.

"Seeking" Cloud. The deployed shroud has been given a positive ion charge, which is attracted to the pursuer's shields. The pursuing craft can disperse the cloud by altering the polarity of the shields (Moderate capital ship shields roll) or suffer a -2D penalty to all sensors and gunnery rolls). This typically only works when the shroud is deployed within 500 meters of the pursuing vessel. Beyond that, the shroud is generally ineffective; if the particles can not find a shield to "latch on to," the particles' like charge pushes them further apart, effectively dispersing the cloud.

Mynock. The "mynock gambit" is a complicated procedure, typically only attempted by Alliance operatives or members of a well-financed criminal syndicate. The runner's ship appears to be a light or medium freighter, until the shroud is deployed. Then, explosive bolts blast away cleverly disguised sections of the fuselage, revealing a smaller ship within (typically a starfighter or shuttle). As the pursuing vessel attempts to re-acquire sensor contact, the fleeing craft can make good its escape.

Going Dark

One of the best means of avoiding detection is to shut down all external and internal power sources, maintain a stationary position, and hope that picket craft pass by. In general, the only systems that can remain active are passive sensors and rudimentary life support (typically 1-6 hours' worth). Ships that are actively seeking the "dark" craft are successful only on a Very Difficult sensors roll (within 1 Space Unit of the hiding ship). This is further modified if the smuggler is hiding within a cave or in a crater, or other such obstacle. For every 10 meters of rock or metal (or other suitable distortion, such as gas clouds within a nebula), the difficulty to detect the hidden craft increases by +10.

Note that, with the above rules it is possible for a craft to be completely impossible to detect with sensors. This is, of course, balanced by the fact that the hidden ship must remain stationary--if it is drifting or moving at the barest minimum of speed, detection is more likely.

Nightlight

A "nightlight" is a risky maneuver intended to blind an enemy ship's sensors. It works best on pursuers that are attempting to focus scan for the runner's ship, though it can work to lesser degrees if the enemy is using other scan modes. The nightlight works in three phases: evasion, shut-down, and illumination.

The evasion phase is self-explanatory; the runner, having been detected by an enemy craft, takes some kind of evasive action, preferably into an asteroid field, canyon, crater, or other such obstruction. Once out of direct line of sight with the pursuer, the runner jettisons a remote-detonated powerful explosive (preferably a fission weapon, magpulse or ion blast device), performs a quick stop--under cover where possible, and goes dark (see above).

Once dark--the shut down phase--the smuggler monitors passive sensors, waiting until he detects active or focused sensors probing the area (Moderate sensors roll).

When the enemy craft has moved within range of the explosive (preferably within 1 km, but this can vary at the gamemaster's discretion depending on the type of weapon used) the pilot detonates it. Consult the chart below:

Target Scanners are...	Result
Passive	Target loses sensors for 1 round
Scanning	Target loses sensors for 1D rounds
Searching	Target loses sensors for 1D minutes
Focusing	Target loses sensors for 1D hours

* **Note:** The weapon inflicts damage on the target craft if it is within the blast radius; this is in addition to detrimental scanning damage. However, it is somewhat unlikely that a target craft will stray that close. Again, the gamemaster should use his discretion and decide what best serves the needs of his scenario.

Riding the Bantha

This is an exceedingly risky maneuver that only crazy or supremely skilled pilots should attempt. "Riding the Bantha" means that a runner manages to harddock with a larger enemy vessel without detection, in essence "riding" the larger ship.

This is accomplished by making a high-speed, low-level pass in the general area of the bridge of the ship (dodging incoming turbolaser fire, usually well concentrated near the bridge). This should startle the crews long enough to distract their attention from their targeting scopes.

After blasting past the bridge, the pilot must execute a quick stop, and harddock (using a docking claw or magnaclamp) near the engine exhaust nozzles, or other heavily armored portion of the ship. Immediately after harddock, the smuggler's craft must instantly shut down all onboard systems.

To escape, the pilot must wait until the Imperial vessel dumps excess waste materials prior to jumping to lightspeed. Then, it is a simple matter of detaching from the larger ship and floating amidst the detritus until the enemy ship departs.

In general, this maneuver can only be attempted by an agile craft (a starfighter or heavily modified light freighter). Attempting this maneuver with, for example, a bulk freighter will result in collision. In addition, the larger vessel must be considerably larger than the smaller one (roughly 20 times the smaller craft's mass). Otherwise, the pilot of the larger craft will detect handling differences in his craft and raise an alarm. For game purposes, this should not be attempted on craft smaller than a Dreadnaught.

To attempt this maneuver, the pilot must first make a successful Very Difficult piloting roll to perform the quick stop. At the same time, the entire ship must be shut down (a Moderate computer programming/repair roll). The ship can only be detected by an active scan or visual search to that specific portion of the ship). Multiple action penalties apply; failure to make the quick stop indicates that the smaller craft has crashed into the enemy vessel. There are no "near misses" in this kind of maneuver; spending a Force Point is recommended for this maneuver.

Running Silent

Running silent is one of the best methods of slipping past a blockade. In general, this requires specialized equipment aboard a runner's ship (described in detail in *Pirates & Privateers*, pages 38-40). However, for craft that are not stealth-equipped, it is possible to run silent, though with much less effectiveness.

A pilot can reduce emissions from his craft during the course of an overhaul. The base difficulty for this procedure is Very Difficult (rolled on the appropriate repair skill), reduced by one level per day spent overhauling the sensors, engines and shielding (to a minimum of Easy). This increases the sensor difficulty to detect a ship running silent by +1D.

To effectively run silent past a blockade, the pilot should exit hyperspace at the far edges of the system. Once emerging into realspace, the pilot should kill all onboard systems except passive sensors and the navigation computers. The next step is to plot a linear, line-of-sight route to the target insystem (usually a planet or moon), using passive sensor data to determine the position of enemy ships). Note that it is possible to attempt to use the mass of planetary bodies in the system to build up velocity or alter course, but a miscalculation could lead to serious trajectory problems that can only be corrected by reactivating the ship's engines...which will make it much easier for blockading craft to detect it.

Once the route is plotted, the pilot should use his thrusters to move his ship onto the proper course. Once moving (at a speed of 2 or less), the craft drifts into the system. Typically, this type of maneuver takes as long as 2 days or more.

Without a series of backup battery to power life support systems, the smuggler's ship must maintain basic life support power for this maneuver. If executed properly, the smuggler's craft requires a Difficult sensors roll to detect. (Note that, this difficulty refers to scanning and sensors; if a TIE patrol or other craft moves close enough to make visual contact, the ship is detected.)

Gamemaster Notes. This type of maneuver is never the same twice, as it varies in a number of ways: composition of the system (number of planets, stellar phenomenon, navigation hazards, and so on), size

and composition of the blockade, and, of course, the skill roll of the pilot. In general, this type of maneuver can be extremely tense and suspenseful, since the player characters' are effectively blind (relying on passive sensors). Modify the difficulty of the required skill rolls--or require more of them--and make sure the players do not know the final difficulty number they have to hit. If they fail a roll, work in some sort of complication (a flight of TIEs happens by and must be avoided, a rogue asteroid is approaching and narrowly misses the ship, or other such "scare") to heighten tension.

Sensor Decoys

Sensor decoys are invaluable tools for blockade runners; basic stats for sensor decoys appear in *Pirates & Privateers*, page 39.

Sensor decoys can have a few tactical uses: they can be used to lure a target craft away from a ship running silent; they can be used to lure a target craft into the blast radius of a mine or other explosive device; they can even be used to convince enemy forces that there are starfighter squadrons attacking (with some major reprogramming).

Spearing the Krayt

A favorite tactic of the Rebel Alliance starfighter squadrons has been nicknamed "spearing the krayt" by smugglers and blockade runners. "Spearing the krayt" involves a fairly large number of ships, armed with targeting data and a large number of proton torpedoes.

This tactic works best when deployed with two elements: the target designator and the attack element. The target designator uses his target acquisition sensors to pinpoint a single spot on the shields of an enemy capital ship. Once acquired, the target designator feeds this data to the attack element. Once the telemetry data has been sent, the attack element fires in two volleys. The first volley slams into the enemy ship's shields, creating a power flux that weakens the shielding enough to allow the second volley (fired a split second after the first) to pass through and strike critical hull targets--the bridge deflector generators, the transparisteel bridge viewport, gravity well projectors, and so on.

It takes roughly 3-5 rounds to successfully execute this maneuver, and the target designator is typically exposed to enemy starfighter screens. Ideally, one person should be piloting the craft, and another should target the enemy capital ship (to cut down on multiple-action penalties). Targeting has a base difficulty of Moderate (increasing depending on the severity of evasive maneuvers that the craft is engaged in). Once the target has been acquired, the gunner must send telemetry data to the attack element (which takes 1 round and an Easy communications roll).

Finally, the volleys must be launched. This requires a Moderate gunnery roll to coordinate the two volleys. Failure indicates that the torpedoes do not destabilize the target's shields and they inflict damage as normal, in all likelihood merely scratching the target, not damaging it.

This maneuver works best with an attack element consisting of 6-8 craft with fire-linked torpedo launchers (launching 12-16 torpedoes per volley). Roughly 25% of the torpedoes will pass through the shields and strike the hull, inflicting severe damage.

For every 3 additional craft in the attack element, the difficulty to coordinate the volleys increases by one level. This can be countered by using R2 units to assist in the targeting procedure; such an action adds 1D rounds to the time taken to coordinate, but adds +1D per R2 unit to the roll.

Note to Gamemasters. Due to scale differences, even slipping torpedoes past the shields will only inflict minor damage to the target craft. Gamemasters should use their own judgment--applied consistently--to generate the results of such attacks. At dramatically appropriate moments, if the players have planned the attack carefully and rolled and roleplayed well, they should be rewarded by a spectacular salvo against the enemy ship, possibly destroying or crippling the craft. At the same time, this tactic can't work every time, or the players will become complacent and will not be intimidated by the appearance of a Star Destroyer.

Spinstop Reverse

The appearance of an Interdictor cruiser spells certain capture--and probably death--according to conventional spacer wisdom. At some point, a desperate smuggler devised this dangerous tactic to avoid an Interdictor, though it likely cost him his ship, or his life. The Spinstop Reverse is extremely stressful to craft and pilot, and in virtually all cases inflicts severe damage to the ship attempting it.

The Spinstop Reverse is executed when a target craft is caught (or near capture) by a pursuer's tractor beam. By swinging in an arc (using the pull of the tractor beam to maintain a semi-stable orbit), the target craft can momentarily evade a target lock. (This requires a Difficult piloting roll.)

Next, the pilot must reverse-trigger the ship's acceleration compensator (which takes 1 round to configure; the pilot or co-pilot can flip the appropriate toggle switches, or an astromech can handle the procedure on a verbal command). This slams the ship into a full-stop (inflicting 2D damage to the pilot). Unless the enemy gunner makes a Very Difficult gunnery roll, the target lock is broken, and the tractor beam continues to track on the target craft's former course. At the same time, the pilot must make a successful Very Difficult piloting roll, or he will lose control of the craft for 1D rounds.

Note. If the pilot fails this roll, he must attempt to regain control, and can not evade incoming attacks. If the pilot rolls a "1" on the Wild Die, the ship explodes due to stress and severe malfunction.

At this point, the target craft can flee (an advisable course of action) or launch torpedoes (which, on a successful Very Difficult roll are pulled in to the tractor beam and guided towards the projectors).

The escape is not without cost, however. Almost invariably, this maneuver inflicts severe damage on the hyperdrive of the fleeing craft, which should be treated as a hyperdrive malfunction (see the "Astrogation Mishap Table" on page 119 of the Star Wars Roleplaying Game, Second Edition: Revised and Expanded). The fleeing vessel will probably make it out of the system, but not very far. The ship will likely be very heavily damaged, and it will only be a matter of time before the pursuit craft tracks it down...

Modes of Operation

To most others, blockade running seems simple and almost arrogant in fashion. While arrogance is something many runners will admit to, simplicity has no place here. Careful planning and attention to detail is crucial, more so than smuggling in many aspects. Blockade runners will insist that theirs is an artform, a state of mind and a lifestyle.

Section 8: Modes of Operation

To most others, blockade running seems simple and almost arrogant in fashion. While arrogance is something many runners will admit to, simplicity has no place here. Careful planning and attention to detail is crucial, more so than smuggling in many aspects. Blockade runners will insist that theirs is an artform, a state of mind and a lifestyle.

Lifestyle. The way a blockade runner lives has a great deal to do with how they operate. Most blockade runners (at least the smart ones) live entirely separate from general society. They steer clear of all regular ports and stations, and at all costs will avoid risking capture even if they are out of fuel or other immediate needs. Visiting a regular port is flirting with disaster and is only done if the runner decides it is the end of the line for them.

Shadowports are filled with nothing but criminals and other assorted slime. The atmosphere of such a place infringes on a runner in many ways. First, their personal safety is at stake. Often times, bounties on a runner are high enough to entice too many people, including anyone at a shadowport. Runners beware, for areas full of unscrupulous beings make for an environment of suspects. Second, their ships are a hefty target for shipjackers and others. Usually, a blockade runner's ship is filled to the gills with state-of-the-art equipment and the highest quality hyperdrives and engines. Their guns are usually very valuable, as are their shield generators. To jackers, this is the ultimate ship, for a ship like this demands the best price on the market. For both reasons, runners need to be on constant guard, but at the same time avoid undue paranoia.

State of Mind. The above type of lifestyle lends itself to careful planning and being very alert. Most blockade runners are loners because of this, but a few who prove to be savvy can interact with the rest of the crowd without seeming too shifty. Otherwise, the rest tend to hang out in groups and will have their own haunts and hideouts. These may not be necessarily on their own planet, but will be separated from the general area of the shadowport. They will venture into the port proper for supplies, special orders and other such things. Those seeking to hire them are pointed in the direction of the blockade runners encampment or area.

Blockade runners pay a great deal of attention to personal and material security. Bonds between them are often among the strongest. Getting between two blockade runners

usually requires either stupendous amounts of money or power tools. This is not because of a brotherly feeling, it is because runners truly believe in "doing to others as one would have done to themselves." Selling out a fellow runner is fine, but don't hang out and be surprised when it happens to you.



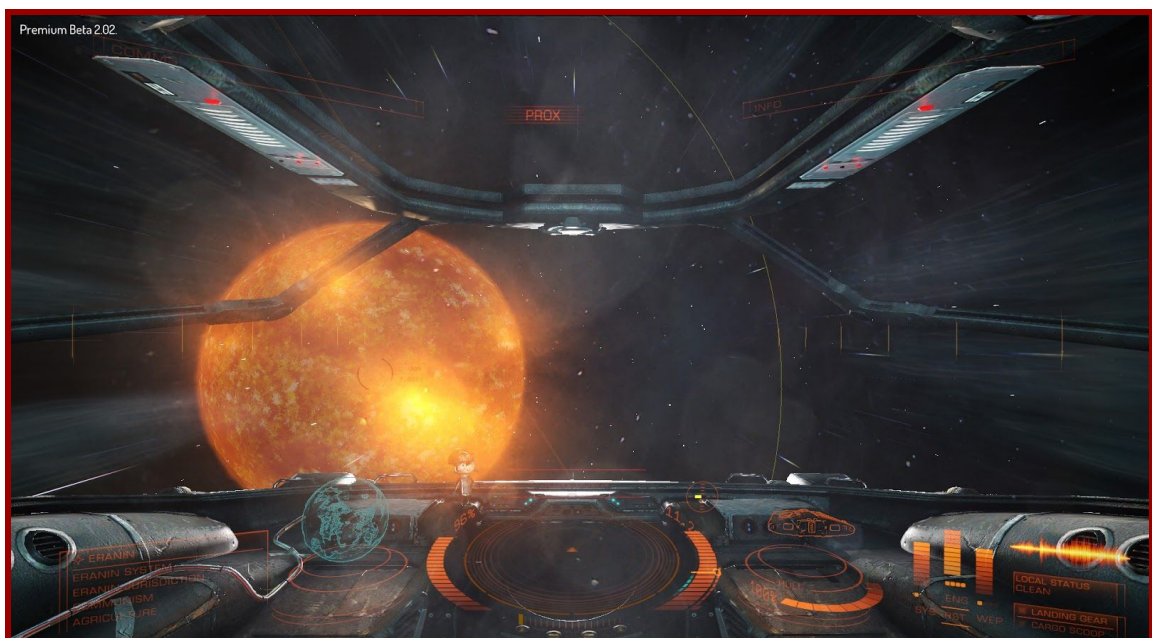
Artform. The ways blockade runners do their thing actually involves more planning than most imagine. Only the careful survive here, where the most minute problem can spell doom. No two blockade runners are very alike in how they conduct their runs...

The usual method of running is to enter a system and proceed to pierce the blockade with pure speed. The runner must land and deliver the goods, and flee before too much force is brought to bear upon them. This is harder than it sounds.

Before accepting the run, do your best to check that it's not a setup. Nobody really has a system that really works to do this, but the best bet is to acquire information on your employer. You can get this from an infochant or other information broker (services which are easy to find at shadowports). To this end, develop a relationship with your local infochant to ensure that you feel comfortable with each other. This goes a long way in getting good info. When you check the background, look for things like criminal record and military service. If it's iffy, don't do it, and don't be afraid to say no. "D" is for Desperation and Death. Do the same information search on your target destination. Find out why it's blockaded and what is there. This is almost crucial to your run because if you know there is too much there to go up against, you know not to even proceed.

Before leaving for the destination, the ship must be checked and rechecked. Small problems that develop with the hyperdrive, sublight engines, weapons and shielding systems, and the main hull itself are simple for a smuggler but can mean the difference between life and death for sure with a blockade runner. Even cargo bay systems like the ramp and loaders must be examined each time to ensure proper operation. Imagine taking a run and the ramp won't open! Main and auxiliary power systems should be tested, keeping an eye out for surges and other power anomalies. If you are blazing full-on through a picket line, and your turbolaser is firing, you better make sure you have enough power to feed all of that before you shut down in mid-combat. Any special systems that you've put on your ship should be checked in harmony with all other systems in as many configurations as possible. Don't trust a mechanic when they tell you "Yeah, it works fine."

En route, keep an eye on your systems. Having droids is a good way to do this, but check things yourself too to make sure the droid isn't on the fritz and giving you false reports on system status. Also be at the ready when you drop out of hyperspace and when you enter it. Plot your course carefully, allowing to drop into a system at the very edge. Before entering hyperspace, check for anyone tracking you.



When you get there, you have options on how to tackle the situation. You can drop in on the edge of the system and weave through the planets and moons to the main target. Or you could plot a course that drops you right in the lap of the blockading force. This is almost too dangerous for obvious reasons, but is the best surprise. Another way is to lurk behind some moon or in some nearby asteroid belt. While there, you can watch for the patterns the blockade force patrols at, and pick the prime time to go in when the force is at it's thinnest. Whichever one you pick doesn't matter as much as making sure you take the minimum of chances you are willing to handle. Overloading yourself will cost you dearly, and in the case of blockade running, overload is around every corner.

Running the blockade is pure hell and a frenzy of nerves. Keeping yourself steel is the best defense against botching a job like this. It's ok if you lose your cool, but you better find it before you blink again. Contrary to popular belief, there is no set type of ships that are used all the time in blockading. With fleet engagements and patrols stepped up in the Outer Rim, the blockade is often whatever the Empire could throw there immediately. In other words, no two blockades are alike.

Getting past an Interdictor cruiser is information that may prove useful more and more. Interdictor cruisers have risen in popularity as a staple of a large blockading force. Though it is still quite random and not that often to run into one, it helps to know in advance if there is one there. Knowing ahead of time can help you figure out some slick maneuvers. First, either fly there yourself in a clean ship or have a friend do it. Enter the system and plead ignorant to knowing the system was under blockade. The Imps will let you go, probably after searching your ship and questioning you for some time. On your way out of the system. Choose a destination that you would like to jump to after the actual run, and plot that course. At the same time, remember to record what escape vector you are traveling on. Once that is done, plot another course wherever else and leave the system. When you get back to your own ship, set the hyperdrive to disable the safety cutoff quickly. When you enter the system again and begin your run, disable the cutoff and feed the navigation coordinates you took from the first visit into the Nav computer. When you're ready to go, the Interdictor will try to keep you from jumping, but with your safety cutoff disabled and your coordinates pre-plotted, you can get away easily. Just cross your fingers - a micro-jump is recommended for this little maneuver. For better detail, go [here](#).

Making the drop is the reason why you're there and must go as fast as possible. Every second you are landed is another second a fighter or other ship is getting closer to you. If you have too much on top of you while you are landed, you will never be able to get off the ground and the enemy will make short work of you. Thankfully, you don't have to plan this part of the run - it should be set up beforehand and ready for your arrival. Unfortunately, you have to rely on the planning skills of the one who hired you. If they are not up to par, you pay for it. Usually, it is best to have a wide open area to land where you can't get boxed in easily. If you are really confident, as your employer to arrange a canyon or similar area. These are easier to hide in, but once caught are much harder to bust out of. While landed, there needs to be a pickup group that will gather the cargo from you ship. It is up to you to devise a way to get the cargo off your ship in record time. The faster the better, but don't break the goods. Some runners will open their



cargo ramps and dump the loads in pre-packed blocks out the back in midair while flying low. This is only successful if you pack them with a lot of padding and put them on a rigid platform of some sort. It also doesn't hurt to put a few parachutes on it, depending on the load weight.

Once back, the first thing you need to do is acquire a cold beverage and kick back. Your nerves should be pretty shot at this point (at least on the first few runs). Collecting the remainder or full amount of your pay for the job is recommended too. And always keep your mouth shut about what you just did - others could live for years off the bounty you just racked up.

How does one get these jobs anyway? Most of the time, you will be approached by prospective employers who are seeking the services of a person like yourself. This will only happen if you let the word get around about what you do. A good way to do this is to let the local bartenders, crime bosses, infochants and other similar persons know. After that, you will get offers and it will be up to you to judge the value of the offer. Keep in mind that though battle is almost a given in every single run, some are far more suicidal than others. If you are offered a job that almost ensures your demise, make for damn sure you're getting at least in the middle-six figures for it. Other ways of seeking employment (as this one does) follow along the same lines as smuggling does, so follow their lead and reap the rewards. This part of the process should have some pretty decent output from the GM, not only the player.