FUTURE

STARSHIP 4
THE LIVINGSTONE

d20 system

IT'S HUGE!

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Ronin Arts *Future: Starship 4 — The Livingstone*, the fourth in a new series of PDFs for use with futuristic D20 System campaigns. This series makes some assumptions about your campaign; the starship designs in this series will be most useful in campaigns in which the following statements are true:

■ The campaign is not a hard science setting. Campaigns that are more space opera/adventure movie are the intended target for this series.

■ Starships are not rare or unusual. All of the starships in this series assume that space travel is a standard and common occurrence — individuals either fly their own ships or ride on passenger ships. Starships and space travel are as common for characters as a plane ride is for people of our reality.

■ Space combat is not uncommon. It s just another exciting adventure when the player characters have to engage the enemy while fleeing from some world or other.

■ The campaign is packed with action. If things aren t exploding, how much fun can the game really be?

Most of the starships in this series are designed to fill an even number of pages. This is so that you can print the pages — back-to-back if you wish — and drop them into a binder. This introduction, and the pages of new starship equipment and assorted information, can also be printed separately and added to your binder. The schematic and silhouette page is designed to be used as a player handout — it s what flashes up on their ship systems when they attempt to ID a ship — and GMs need only give the players the page when they encounter a ship from this series.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Hammes has been freelancing in the role-playing industry since 2001. Starting small, he has steadily built his repertoire, and reputation, by working for such companies as Ronin Arts, Alderac Entertainment Group, Dark Quest Games, and E.N. Publishing. He is currently trying to balance his writing schedule with his role as stay-at-home father. To catch the latest from Michael s Imagination, please visit **www.michaelhammes.com.**

E-FUTURE TILES: STAR PATROL

The *Livingstone* design is based on *SkeletonKey Games e-Future Tiles: Star Freighter, Star Patrol,* and *Star Hunter* tile set. While this PDF can be easily used on its own you will get a lot more use out of it in your game sessions if you construct the ship — at miniatures scale — using the printable tiles.

To learn more about SkeletonKey Games please visit their website at **www.skeletonkeygames.com**.

NEW RULES AND IDEAS

CRYONICS

Cryonics - The process of freezing and storing the body of a diseased, recently deceased person to prevent tissue decomposition so that at some future time the person might be brought back to life upon development of new medical cures.

One of the things that is not touched upon in the SRD, but is a staple of much science fiction and future speculation, is the idea of cryonics. And, to be honest, it doesn't need to be. Cryonics, while an interesting concept, is not very relevant to a PC in an action-oriented d20 Future campaign (except to maybe preserve a severely injured PC until he or she can be gotten to proper medical facilities). After all, what kind of role-playing and adventuring goes on while a PC is frozen? Nevertheless, it can have its uses.

CAMPAIGN TOOL

Cryonics is very effective as a campaign tool for the GM to move PCs adventuring in one time (the d20 Modern setting) and transfer them to another time (the d20 Future setting). How? Perhaps while defeating their arch-villain, an evil dictator bent on unleashing an incurable virus upon the world, the PCs are all infected. Realizing that they only have little time to live and with no hope of a cure, the PCs enter a cryonic state and are awakened in the future time.

In addition to cryonics being used to freeze and store the bodies of the diseased and dying for a future time when their afflictions might be cured, cryonics is expected to see use for space travel. At least during the early days (or if the campaign is based on realistic travel times), when it takes years just to reach the edge

of the solar system, crews of spaceships would enter a cryonic state in order to survive the long journey to their destination. They would then remain in that cryonic state until reaching their destination many years hence, or until they encounter an emergency (and we've all seen that movie).

Of course, being in a cryonic state for decades or even centuries causes the world outside to change. The travelers could find that, upon awakening, the empty planet they were set to explore is already a thriving colony thanks to the development of superior engine technologies. This ties in nicely with the idea of moving the PCs from one time to another, with the PCs as the travelers that awaken to find vast changes in the world (and maybe that the arch-villain they defeated also had himself frozen, or perhaps his descendants now rule the world with an iron fist, etc.). There are, of course, many more possibilities, from finding that an alien race has subjugated the PCs homeworld to being the last survivors of their species; I'll leave such particulars up to the GM.

TRANSPORTATION USE

While cryonics allow the transporting of a severely injured PC (or NPC) until he or she can get the proper medical attention, cryonics is also very useful for transporting potentially troublesome or lethal cargo. Criminals, aliens, mutations, clones, and deadly viruses and diseases (did I mention captured/kidnapped PCs?) are just a few of the creatures or things that might be placed into a cryonic state in order to be transported from one place to another. Naturally, something always seems to happen to such cargo; it inevitably wakens (or is released) early and begins to wreak havoc (we've all seen that movie too).

QUICK RULES OF CRYONICS

In general, cryonics does not become a reality until PL 6. At this point, drugs capable of preserving organs (especially the brain) from suffering damage during a long-term cryonic state as well as the procedures for safely placing a person into and out of a cryonic state become a reality.

At early PL 6 a cryonic specialist must still carefully monitor this process, and both placing an individual into and out of a cryonic state requires the proper equipment and a successful Treat Injury check (DC 25; considered surgery) on the part of the cryonic specialist. A failed Treat Injury check means that the individual entering or exiting a cryonic state suffers some sort of ill effect (usually one, but to make things interesting the GM can use 1d4):

Roll d100	Result
01-07	**Individual is blind** (01-25 left eye, 26-50 right eye, 51-100 both eyes; blindness in one eye throws off depth perception and imposes a -4 penalty to all ranged attacks and a -2 penalty to Spot checks).
08-14	**Individual is deaf** (01-25 left ear, 26-50 right ear, 51-100 both ears; single ear deafness causes -4 penalty to all Listen checks and other hearing-dependent skill checks).
15-21	**Individual suffers spinal damage** (01-50 paraplegic, 51-100 quadriplegic).
22-28	**Individual suffers nerve damage and loses the use of one limb** (01-25 left arm, 26-50 left leg, 51-75 right leg, 76-100).
29-50	**Individual suffers brain damage** (01-40 loses 1d4 points of Intelligence permanently, 41-80 loses 1d4 points of Wisdom permanently, 81-100 loses 1d4 points of Intelligence _and_ 1d4 points of Wisdom permanently).
51-57	**Individual suffers serious scarring and disfigurement** (loses 1d4 points of Charisma permanently).
58-62	**Individual suffers nerve trauma** (loses 1d4 points of Dexterity permanently).
63-67	**Individual suffers muscular damage** (loses 1d4 points of Strength permanently).
68-87	**Individual suffers great physical trauma** (loses 1d4 points of Constitution permanently)
88-92	**Individual becomes insane** (either permanent _confusion_ effect or GM picks from one of the hundreds of mental afflictions; paranoia and personality changes are favorites).
93-100	**Individual dies** (01-35 cardiac arrest; 36-100 brain aneurysm).

An individual cannot enter a cryonic state without a cryonic specialist. An individual forced out of a cryonic state without a cryonic specialist (i.e. due to a power failure, computer error, damage to the equipment) at a minimum suffers 1d4 of the ill effects and will most likely also die (85% chance of instant death in addition to the ill effects) since there is no cryonic specialist to oversee the process and administer the proper drugs.

Placing an individual into or out of a full cryonic state requires 4 hours. An individual is sedated within 1 minute of beginning the process to enter a cryonic state and is not fully revived until the last 10 minutes of exiting the cryonic state (and is then groggy and disoriented for an hour thereafter).

If the GM wishes to make the process more hazardous, he or she may require a Treat Injury check every hour and can also require the individual entering or exiting a cryonic state to succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 20), either once, or every hour, with failure resulting some sort of ill effect as illustrated above.

As cryonic research progresses through PL 6, the risk begins to be minimized and more of the process becomes automated. In the latter stages of PL 6, a cryonic specialist is still required to bring an individual into the cryonic state (by performing a physical and tailoring the process to the individual's physical and mental limitations), but the procedure has been more standardized and automated so that the Treat Injury check is reduced (DC 15). Furthermore, the individual can now be brought out of a cryonic state purely by automation. However, this does require initial set-up and input from a cryonic specialist and is thus subject to the same Treat Injury check (DC 15) to account for the cryonic specialist's skill and automation errors.

At PL 7 and beyond the cryonic process becomes fully automated; in order to enter a cryonic state, an individual must do nothing more than enter a chamber set up for this process. At this point, the process is so safe that unless there is deliberate sabotage, or a catastrophic equipment failure, there is no chance of suffering any ill effects (except perhaps a case of vertigo or indigestion). Entering and exiting a cryonic state requires 30 minutes, with the individual being sedated within 1 minute of beginning the process and also being fully revived 1 minute before the end of the process (and being in full possession of his or her faculties within 1d4 minutes of completing the process).

Finally, keep in mind that, at least as far as travel is concerned, cryonics really applies mostly to those campaigns that use realistic travel times (see Realistic Space Travel) where it can take years to travel between systems. If fantastic travel times are employed, or there are other ways to move rapidly between systems (such as jump gates), travel times are dramatically reduced (see Fantastic Space Travel) and the need for cryonics, at least as for normal space travel is concerned, is also greatly reduced.

SHIPS AND THEIR ARMS AND ARMAMENTS

Whether civilian ships have weapons, and what kind of weapons and armor they have, depends entirely on what kind of a campaign the GM is running and where a ship is going to operate.

No matter what, military ships will always have the best available arms and armor, but when you read through the SRD, you see that every ship gets some form of weapon; even a lowly garbage scow has a pair of lasers. The question becomes, is this actually realistic?

Taking a look at ships of the current day, you don't find weaponry mounted on most civilian ships (pirate ships and other criminal vessels excepted) because it is not necessary (and is also outlawed in territorial waters). However, there have been times when civilian ships have had weapons mounted on them. A good example would be the ocean liners that were used to ferry troops and cargo ships during WWII. These ships were equipped with some armament (chiefly anti-aircraft and small guns to shoot at submarines) because it was wartime. Once wartime was over, the armaments were removed.

From this example you can assume that it is the environment that is the determining factor of whether a civilian vessel will have weaponry. If a hauler is operating in a safe system it probably won't have any weaponry mounted.

If it operates in an area where there is a good possibility of assault, such as areas where pirates are known to operate, it would carry at least some weapons as a deterrent.

If it operates in a war zone, it might not only have better armaments, but also better armor. Again, this is nothing that will compete with an actual military starship, but the best possible to give it a fighting chance in a battle.

Thus, even though the write-up of the *Livingstone* shows it armed with 2 fire-linked heavy

lasers, the GM should not feel bound by this. If the *Livingstone* is operating in a peaceful area, the GM can decide that there is no reason for it to be armed at all. Conversely, if the Livingstone is operating in a lawless area or even a warzone, the GM can give it much more powerful armaments (and perhaps even bump up the Hit Dice in order to add another weapon) as well as better armor.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The SRD write-up of ships with a fusion torch, such as the Hauler and Destroyer subtype, is in error. In the case of the Hauler, assuming a universal base speed of 3,000 feet, the presence of a fusion torch adds +500 feet and the presence of alloy plating subtracts -500 feet leaving the ship with a tactical speed of 3,000 feet. However, the Hauler is listed with a tactical speed of 2,500 feet. The same error is evident in the Destroyer, the Bulk Freighter, the Cruiser, the Battleship, the Fleet Carrier, and the Heavy Transport.

Thus, either the math is in error, or the bonus for the Fusion Torch engine was meant to be +0 ft. Although ultimately this is up to the GM to decide, in this book it is assumed that the math in the SRD is in error and as a result the aforementioned ships should have their tactical speeds increased by +500 feet.

This has been taken into account with the *Livingstone*, which is powered by a fusion torch and protected by alloy plating, thus giving it a tactical speed of 3,000 feet.

BASIC INFORMATION

The *Livingstone* is a unique ship whose most obvious features are the four bays containing 28 cryonic pods. It is these pods that are the focus of the ship and allow the *Livingstone* to fulfill a number of different roles:

Colony Scout Ship - as people begin to take the first tentative steps to colonizing the planets, colony scout ships are sent out to promising planets and star systems. These ships are crewed by scientists of all stripes and tasked with ensuring that a planet is indeed safe for colonization. The crews enter a cryonic state for their multi-year journey, awaken when they arrive at their destination, conduct their research, and communicate back to their sponsor. If a planet suitable for colonization has indeed been found, larger colony ships subsequently follow.

Floating Laboratory - the *Livingstone* makes an excellent space-based laboratory (especially of the illegal/outlawed kind; why else would it need to be able to move about in space?). Her cryonic pods can easily be assumed to be experiment pods where her crew of scientists (with some guards) conducts various experiments. And what kind of experiments? Genetic manipulation, cloning, mutation research, designer viruses, and xenobiology, whatever is most effective for the GM's campaign.

Hospital Ship - The *Livingstone* can serve as a hospital ship, perhaps as part of a smaller military fleet, a private mercenary organization, or a private company (perhaps space mining). Her cryonic pods keep those that are severely injured or diseased alive until they are attended to by the crew of doctors and nurses in her operating room.

Morgue Ship - For those beyond medical hope, the *Livingstone* serves as a transport back to their home planet where they can receive a proper burial. This just cries out for a "zombies-in-space" kind of thing, especially when you consider her crew of bored (and unarmed) orderlies.

Prison Transporter - The *Livingstone* transports only the most dangerous prisoners, keeping them in a cryonic state throughout their journey. Sure she's staffed with guards, but you just know that when the prisoners thaw out, they won't be able to handle it.

As a flipside of this, the *Livingstone* could be used to keep hostages or kidnap victims "on ice" for some powerful pirates, corporation, or government.

Specimen Transporter - This is a spin on the floating laboratory, but instead of producing the specimens, the *Livingstone* transports them. This is ideal for introducing new aliens or races as well as some biological horror or other. On a more benign level, she could be transporting plant specimens from recently discovered planets that promise to hold the cure for a variety of ills. In this case, she might be crewed by nothing but scientists, or she might have a mixture of scientists and guards.

The point is that while the *Livingstone* is not a combat ship or something that the PCs would get much use out of owning, she makes an ideal platform for any number of adventures.

GAME STATISTICS

LIVINGSTONE (PL 6)

Type: Light

Subtype: N/A

Defense: 7

Flat-footed Defense: 5

Autopilot Defense: 5

Hardness: 20

Hit Dice: 27d20 (540 hp)

Initiative Modifier: +2

Pilot's Class Bonus: +3

Pilot's Dex Modifier: +2

Gunner's Attack Bonus: +2

Size: Colossal (-8 size)

Tactical Speed: 3,000 ft. (6 sq.)

Length: 335 feet

Weight: 4,500 tons

Targeting System Bonus: +3

Crew: 8 (+4 trained)

Passenger Capacity: 30

Cargo Capacity: 2,560 tons + 28 cryonic pods

Grapple Modifier: +16

Base Purchase DC: 58

Restriction: Restricted (+2)

Attack: 2 fire-linked heavy lasers -3 ranged (12d8)

Attack of Opportunity: None

LIVINGSTONE DESIGN SPECS:

Engines: Fusion torch, thrusters

Armor: Alloy plating

Defense Systems: Autopilot system, improved damage control system (3d10)

Sensors: Class II sensor array, targeting system

Communications: Laser transceiver, radio transceiver

Weapons: 2 fire-linked heavy lasers (range incr. 4,000 ft.)

Grappling Systems: N/A

STARSHIP KEY

Although a general description of what the various areas of the ship are used for is included here, the GM should feel free to modify this information in accordance with the role that the *Livingstone* is intended to play within the campaign. Examples and suggestions will be provided within the text, and given the fact that the *Livingstone* is a unique ship that is designed as the basis for adventure, the GM should take the time to adapt it to the adventure's needs.

1. Cockpit - The cockpit of the *Livingstone* features four positions: pilot, copilot, communications/navigation, and engineering/sensor operator (if the *Livingstone* has guns, the gunnery is accomplished by the copilot).

Although the cockpit is always laid out in this fashion, depending on the role that the ship plays (see the **Basic Information** section), the cockpit may be more protected than standard for a civilian/commercial vessel. Especially if the *Livingstone* is serving as a prisoner transport or carrying illegal cargo (aliens, virus, etc.), the cockpit is not only well protected (instead of having a standard steel door, it is vanadium), it also serves as the most secure area of the ship (with its own air system, for instance, to avoid contamination).

Furthermore, other steps would be taken to make the cockpit a kind of "last stand" place. The door might have a weapon slit to allow someone to fire (with weapons that are stored in the cockpit) from it into the hallway beyond. The cockpit might also have a button that allows the rest of the ship to be flooded with gas (either knockout or fatal). Finally, the cockpit might be separable from the ship, allowing survivors to pilot it (with thrusters) to the nearest safe planet. Again, the GM should modify the ship as needed to fit the goals of the adventure/campaign. Did I mention it should have a self-destruct mechanism (if you're a rules stickler, bump up the ships Hit Dice by 3 to make room for it)?

2. Higher Ranking Crew Quarters - These crew quarters feature individual beds and have their own toilet, in-wall sink, and in-wall closets. As such, they are reserved for the higher-ranking members (sergeants of the guard, scientists, doc-

tors, supervisors, etc.) of the crew on board the *Livingstone*.

If the GM desires to have more space, the single beds can be changed to double (or triple) bunks. Furthermore, the bunks can be shared through "hot racking" (see **General Crew Quarters** below), although this is rare.

3. Head - These two fully equipped bathrooms serve the fore and aft sections of the *Livingstone*. Each has a toilet, sink, and shower and operate on a first-come, first-served basis.

4. General Crew Quarters - Featuring four double (or triple) bunks, these areas are home to the lower ranking members of the crew (i.e. guards, research assistants, physician assistants, cooks, maintenance workers, etc.). A stack of lockers on one wall provides a small place for the storage of personal belongings.

The GM can adjust the amount of individuals making use of such an area through the practice of "hot racking", or having a number of individuals sharing the same bunk (each person has the bunk for an 8 or 12 hour shift).

5. Engineering/Engine Access - These are the chief engineering areas. In addition to providing access to and maintenance of the *Livingstone's* engines and myriad other systems, these areas serve as storage for the various spare parts and tools required by the engineering crew.

6. Cryonic Bay - This is where the cryonic/experiment pods are located. This area is obviously the most important part of the ship as this is where the ship's "cargo" is going to be located.

Depending on what is in the pods, security can range anywhere from non-existent or minimal (most likely as a colony scout) to ridiculous (electronic locks, blast doors, live guards, automated weaponry, etc.; most likely on something transporting prisoners or dangerous creatures). Again, this is something that the GM has to determine based upon what the ship is carrying and how the adventure is to run.

7. Medical Quarters/Infirmary - In most situations, this is either where the medical staff of the *Livingstone* resides or serves as the infirmary where those out of immediate danger can recover; often, it is a combination. Of course, this area can also serve senior crew as staff quarters.

8. Galley - This is area serves as kitchen, dining room, and social lounge. Since it is the only truly public space on the *Livingstone*, it is almost always occupied (unless something has happened to the crew). At any given time of the day people are sitting here reading, playing games, eating, talking, working on the computer station, etc.

9. Monitoring Station - This lonely station serves as the monitoring station for the Cryonic Bays. It is from here that the condition of the units and their occupants is monitored.

10. Operating Room - This area is self-explanatory and is used for healing the sick, or performing experiments, or both, as the GM desires.

11. Supply Storage - These storage areas hold necessary supplies for the kitchen, the medical staff, and any items needed for research or experimentation.

12. Cargo Bay - These two bays hold general cargo, everything from personal baggage to replacement machinery to bulk goods such as food, radioactive sludge, mutagenic agent, virus fertilizer, etc.

13. Shuttle - The crew of the *Livingstone* can use these shuttles for a variety of purposes. A colony scout ship would send out a shuttle to a planet that needs exploring before committing the entire ship planet-side. A ship engaged in illegal research would use the shuttle to run all kinds of errands, especially for getting supplies, rather than risking having outsiders come aboard the ship. Of course, the shuttles can also be the crew's means of escape during a disaster (in this case, the GM might wish to not have the cockpit separate, thus forcing any survivors in the fore section of the *Livingstone* to make their way to the aft section; this would be a good time to make use of the self-destruct mechanism).

A NOTE ON CRAWLSPACES, AIR DUCTS AND MAINTENANCE TUBES

It is a perfectly reasonable expectation that a ship of the *Livingstone's* size would have some means of traversing the length of the ship without actually having to walk down the hallways. Such ways could include crawlspaces, air ducts, and maintenance tubes.

Whether the ship actually has them, and if it does, whether it is possible to go from one end of the ship to the other strictly through them, is up to the GM. Of course, what the crew can use, the "cargo" can use as well.

Should such features be included, the GM is advised to study the layout of the *Livingstone* closely to avoid making any mistakes when deciding where such features exist and where they run too. It is a good idea to trace an outline of the exterior of

the ship as well as the interior walls on a piece of paper and create a rough sketch of where such features begin, go through, and end.

In general, such features will run from their point of origination (a good point of origination are the large empty spaces surrounding the Cryonic Bays, although such systems could begin anywhere in the floor, ceiling, or even the engines) through the ceiling (usually air ducts) and the floor (usually maintenance tubes and crawlspaces), branching out from the center of the ship to the outlying areas.

So, with just a little bit of preparatory work, the GM can create one or two additional claustrophobic levels for adventure use. Trust me, the players love that sort of thing.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

JUST LIKE IN THE MOVIES

The PCs respond to a distress call from, or are tasked to explore, a derelict *Livingstone*. If the PCs respond to the distress call they will have to discover exactly what it is that is going on.

If they are employed to check up on the ship, information is scant, especially about what exactly befell the vessel. Private inquiries by the PCs yield only to stonewalling by their employer or to unsubstantiated rumors that the *Livingstone* was engaged in something dangerous, illegal, or both.

Of course, in either case, once the PCs are on board they find out exactly what happened to the crew and what was going on aboard the *Livingstone*.

IT'S LOOSE!

Either the PCs are members of the crew of the ship (probably as private guards) or are otherwise on board (perhaps the *Livingstone* picked them up in response to their distress call). In either case, unbeknownst to them, the *Livingstone* is transporting something it shouldn't be. Whatever it is, it breaks loose, and it's up to the PCs to save the day.

HOSTAGE RESCUE

The PCs are hired to rescue an important kidnapped scientist from the clutches of a notorious criminal that is preparing to sell her to the highest bidder (she has some very valuable skills and/or knowledge). Unfortunately, the hostage is being kept on board the *Livingstone* in a cyronic state. So not only do the PCs have to get on board a heavily guarded ship, they've also got to get the scientist thawed safely (obviously, this is much more of a problem during PL 6 unless some nasty explosives are rigged to her cryonic pod), and make it out in one piece.

TOP VIEW
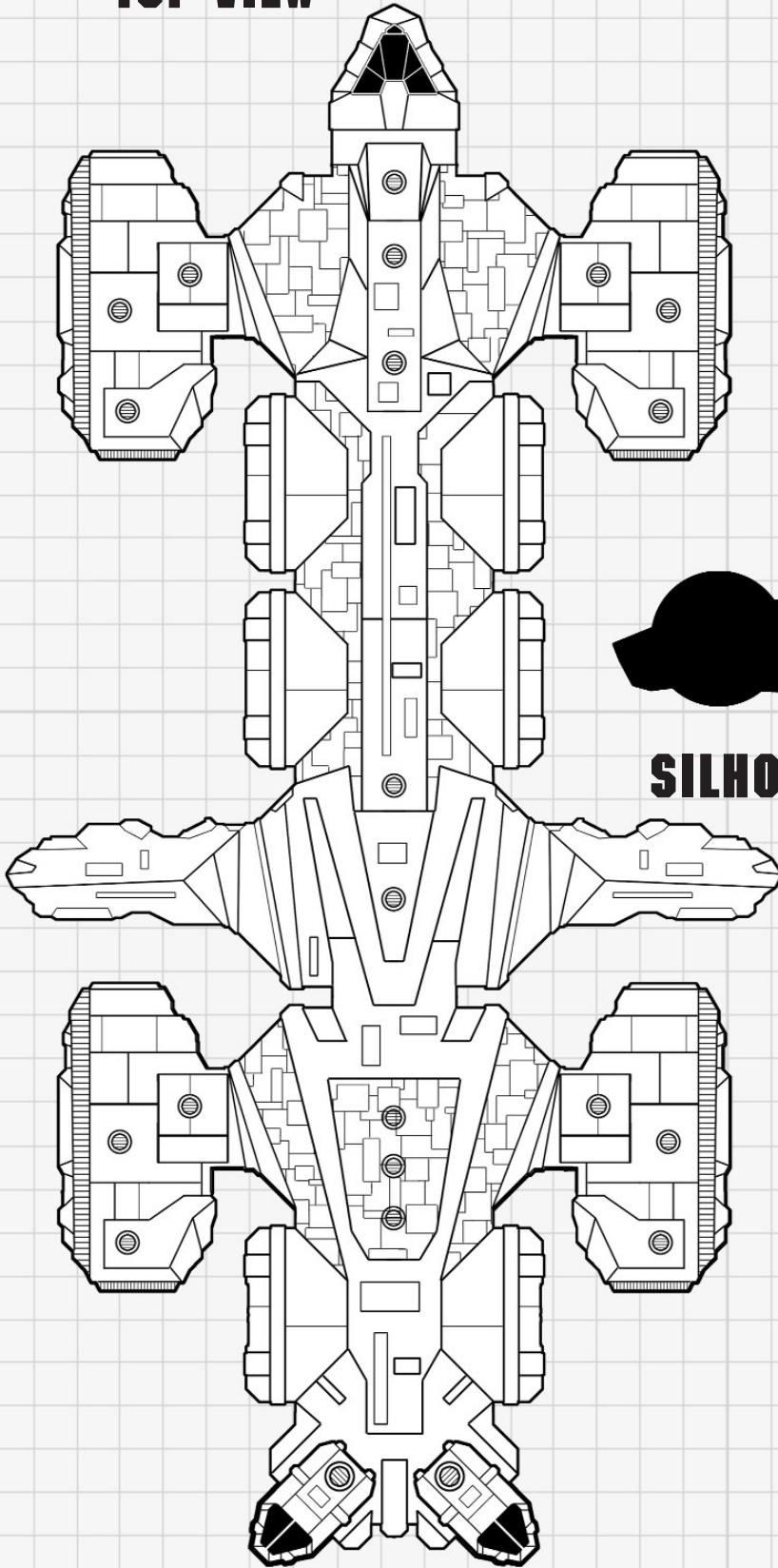
SILHOUETTE VIEW – FRONT

LIVINGSTONE
UNIQUE DESIGN

LIVINGSTONE
UNIQUE DESIGN

1. Cockpit
2. Higher Ranking Crew Quarters
3. Head
4. General Crew Quarters
5. Engineering/Engine Access
6. Cryonics

LIVINGSTONE
UNIQUE DESIGN
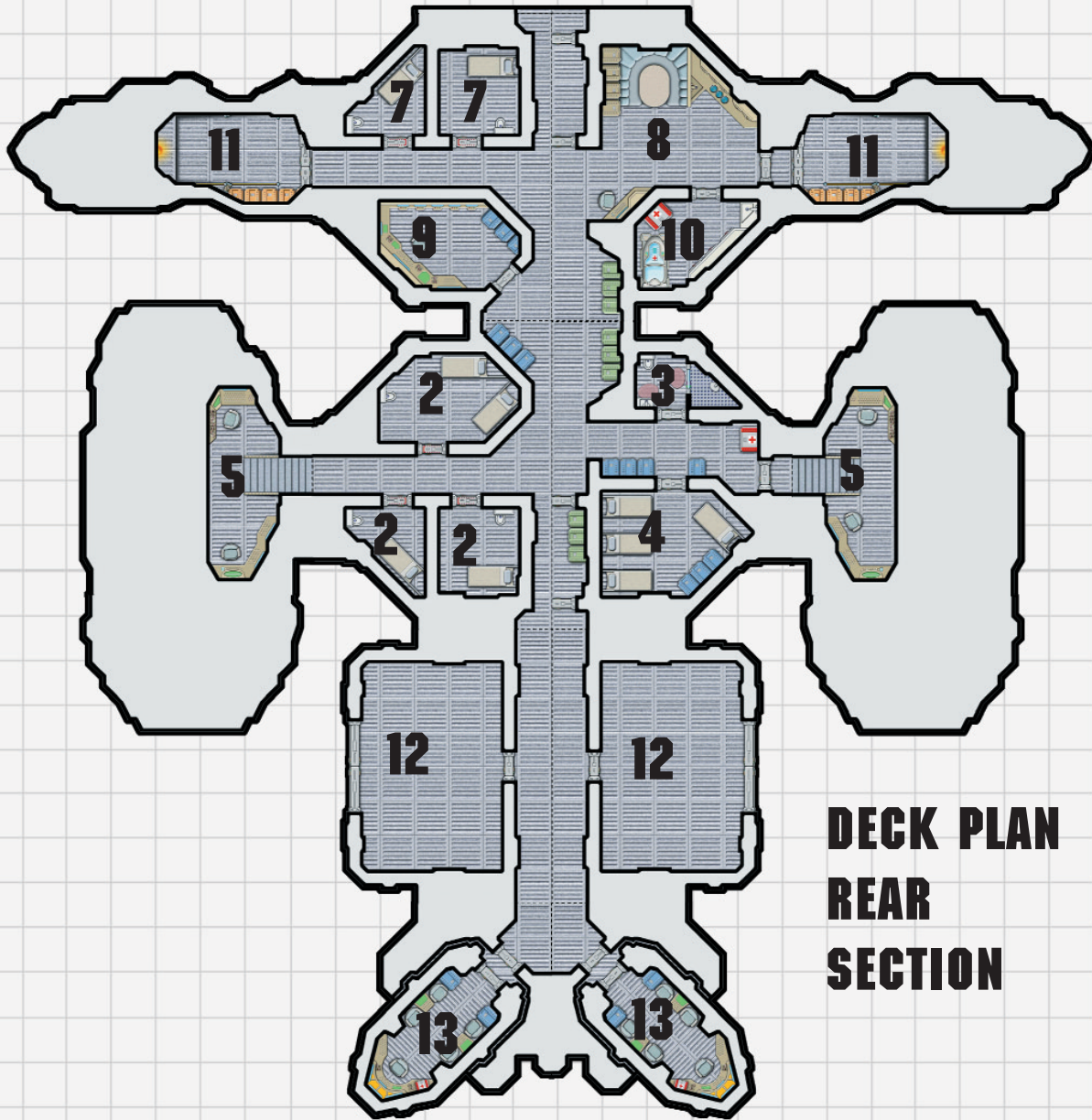
DECK PLAN

REAR

SECTION

7. Medical Quarters/Infirmery
8. Galley
9. Monitoring Station
10. Operating Room
11. Supply Storage
12. Cargo Bay
13. Shuttle