

The Mystery Trader

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General information

The Mystery Trader is a random event, so if the game definition has No Random Events checked, then there will not appear any Mystery Traders.

The Mystery Trader, or MT for short, occasionally passes through the galaxy at warps between 7 and 13. He may occasionally change course and/or speed and this is also random.

The earliest year a MT has been seen is 2440, there have not been any reports of more than 4 MTs present in a universe any the same time.

To catch the MT you will need to intercept him with a fleet containing at least 5000 kT minerals (colonists don't count), the whole fleet will be absorbed so ensure that you don't have more ships than you need in the fleet when intercepting him. If the fleet contains less than 5000 kT minerals or you have traded with that trader already, then the fleet will not be absorbed. It is possible to trade with the trader by accident, as you only have to have a fleet with 5000 kT minerals at the same location as the trader, it is not necessary to have targetet the trader. The trader may (very rarely) visit the same location as a planet; this means that a fleet in orbit might accidentally trade with the trader. As waypoint 1 tasks occur after meeting the MT it is possible that a mineral shipment intended for the planet is absorbed by the trader instead, and the trader will absorb the entire shipment even if it is far in excess of 5000 kT. The trader will not trade with a planet, however. Any colonists aboard the fleet trading with the MT will also be absorbed, but colonists do not count towards the minerals traded (5000 kT, or possibly more if the trader is a Tech Trader).

The best way to intercept the MT for trade is to click the MT to check where the MT is going to be in the future, and then find a future waypoint your trading fleet can be near one year before the MT is there - And it is best if your trading fleet can be a little ahead of the MT at that time. After that waypoint you the click the MT as the next waypoint and set the warp speed to the highest the trading fleet can fly, i.e. warp 9 or 10 (remember to ensure the trading fleet has enough fuel to fly a full year at that speed). The reason for setting the waypoint a little ahead of where the MT is expected to be and seeting the speed as high as possibe is that the MT sometimes changes speed, and the MT can fly as fast as warp 13. That way you are almost assured of trading with the MT. Again, remember to split off any ships you don't want the MT to absorb one year before meeting the MT.

Each race can only trade with each Mystery Trader once.

It is possible to prevent another race from trading with the MT. You can either attack the other race's fleet or you can target the MT itself. The MT will not absorb the attack fleet unless the attack fleet also contains at least 5000 kt minerals, but the MT will comment that your fleet does not carry enough minerals for trade if it has less than 5000 kT minerals. A SS race can also use a ship with the Robber Baron to steal minerals from the other race's fleet, and if only 1 kT is stolen, then that might go unnoticed until the MT declines trading because the fleet only carries 4999 kT minerals. Of course, if the other race is carrying 9800 kT minerals in the hope that the trader is a Tech Trader, then it is necessary to steal a good deal more then 1 kT minerals in order to completely prevent trade, though stealing 1 kT from a 9800 kT shipment will mean that the other race will receive one tech level less.

It is also posible to defend against such attempts to prevent trade by bringing along warships. Remember to split the warships off in a seperate fleets at least one year before meeting the MT, as the MT absorbs the entire fleet carrying at least 5000 kT minerals, regardless of which types of ships there are in the fleet.

If it is necessary to bring along fuel supply ships such as Super Fuel Exports, which is often the

case because of the large amount of cargo and high warp speed necessary, then remember to split off the fuel supply ships the year before meeting the MT, otherwise the MT will also absorb the fuel supply ships.

Types of Mystery Trader

There are three different types of Mystery Trader, each described below:

[Tech Trader](#)

[Part Trader](#)

[Ship Trader](#)

Tech Trader

The TechTrader gives out technology levels. The number of levels you get will be based on the total number of tech levels you have and the amount of minerals you give if your total tech levels is at 95 tech levels or less. This is the only type of Mystery Trader where giving more than 5000 kT gives a benefit. Here is a table of the number of tech levels gained by total tech levels and minerals given:

Total tech levels:	Minerals given:				
	5000 kT	6200 kT	7400 kT	8600 kT	9800 kT
0-59	6	7	8	9	10
60-71	5	6	7	8	9
72-83	4	5	6	7	8
84-95	3	4	5	6	7
96-107	2	2	2	2	2
108+	1	1	1	1	1

As can be seen, it is clearly best to bring 9800 kT minerals if the Mystery Trader is a Tech Trader and you have 95 techlevels or less. However, the player often does not know which type of trader it is when launching the intercept fleet, so it is usually best to give 9800 kT minerals every time, unless you have a trustworthy ally who can tell you what he got from the trader, or you already have 96 tech levels or more.

Part Trader

The Part Trader gives out the plans for an MT part, the different possibilities are described in the section [MT Parts](#). Each Part Trader has a specific part they will usually give out, but if the race already has that part, then the trader will give a random other part which the race does not have. If the race already has all MT parts, then the trader absorbs the minerals and fleet, tells you to he has nothing to trade, and suggests meeting with other traders as they may have something to trade.

Each MT part has certain minimum tech requirements, so it may be necessary to research those tech levels before the part can actually be built.

Ship Trader

The Ship Trader gives out 1-6 ships of one of these three types: The [MT Lifeboat](#), the [MT Probe](#) and the [MT Scout](#). The number of ships is random, and different races may receive different numbers of ships and/or a different type of ships, but all ships received by each race are the same type. The three ships types are described in the section [MT Ships](#).

MT Parts

The MT can give out 12 different parts, which you can put on your ships (except for the [Genesis Device](#) and the [Mini Morph Hull](#), of course). All of them are useful, at least at some stage in the game, but there is some discussion just how useful each of them is.

The costs listed below are respectively without miniaturization and at max. tech (tech 26 in all fields). The cost at max. tech is for races without the BET LRT.

The abilities and costs listed are for a race whose PRT and LRTs do not affect such abilities and costs.

Alien Miner



Tech: Ener 5, Con 10, Elec 5, Bio 5

Cost without miniaturization: I8 B0 G2 R20

Cost at max. tech: I3 B0 G1 R7

Type: Mining Robot, Mass 20

Abilities: Mines 10 kt/yr, Cloak=30%, Jam=30%, +1/8 Movement

This can be a game winner for the simple reason that one 5000kt investment can negate the disadvantages of taking OBRM. Building massive fleets of mini miners with these will actually pay off very quickly, and you can strip mine all those unused worlds in your space and keep the BB's churning out in the mineral short late game as fast as those ARM types. The Alien Miner is very cheap to build, it's very light, and a Mini Miner with these is actually gateable. The built in Jammer 30 cloak, and half jet is at least semi-useful in helping keep your new mining fleet from being seen or destroyed.

Anti Matter Torpedo



Tech: Weap 11, Prop 12, Bio 21

Cost without miniaturization: I3 B8 G1 R50

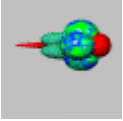
Cost at max. tech: I2 B6 G1 R40

Type: Torpedo, Mass 8

Abilities: Damage=60, Range=6, Initiative=0, Accuracy=85%

This is a medium strength torpedo that's very light and cheap to build. Good for horde fleets if you have high biotech. No other torpedo has a higher base accuracy, making this a nice weapon to have if your opponent has good jammers. And as it is range 6, and very light, it is possible to build light fast missile ships to counter those fast beamers the enemy keeps sending at you.

Enigma Pulsar



Tech: Ener 7, Prop 13, Con 5, Elec 9

Cost without miniaturization: I12 B15 G11 R40

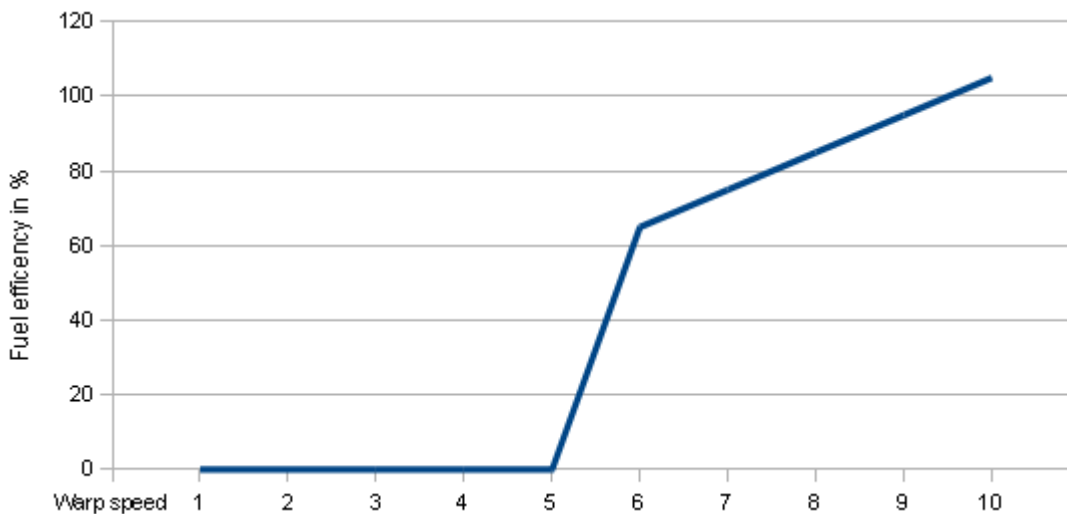
Cost at max. tech: I6 B7 G5 R19

Type: Engine, Mass 20

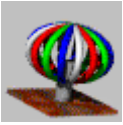
Abilities: Cloak=10%, +1/4 Movement

This engine is great! Only the Trans-Star is better, and even then only arguably: The Trans-Star is cheap and uses half as much fuel, but it lacks the goodies of the Enigma, and who wants to research Prop 23 early, especially with NRSE? Anyway, the Enigma is like the IS-10, and only requires a little more tech. However it travels at warp 5 free, is cheaper to build, lighter, has a small cloak, and most importantly a built-in maneuvering jet. This is great for those heavy BB's where you get four free jets, great to ensure all your Cruisers move 2.5, and is the engine to use for everything, at least with NRSE.

The fuel efficiency is as follows (sorry, this is not the semi-logarithmic scale of the fuel efficiency graphs in Stars!):



Genesis Device



Tech: Ener 20, Weap 10, Prop 10, Con 20, Elec 10, Bio 20

Cost without miniaturization: I0 B0 G0 R5000

Cost at max. tech; I0 B0 G0 R3800

Type: Planetary

Abilities: Randomly resets hab and mineral concentrations

This is useful in the very late game, and as such often never plays a role as the game is over long before it becomes efficient to use this or even before you get the requisite tech. The power of this is that it basically gives you a free planet: You can convert that low 20% hab planet with mineral concentrations of 1 in everything to a 100% planet with tons of minerals - Or you might end up with a -45% planet with horrible mineral concentrations if you are unlucky. Using it, you reset a planet to random hab values and random mineral concentrations, so you can remote strip mine it again, making it so you can never run out of minerals in your empire. As it does destroy all factories and mines, it's more useful for AR races as they don't have to rebuild anything. A CA (especially with TT) will have a much better chance of a high hab value or even a 100% planet from the start after a planet rebirth. The 5000 resources to set one off once is a bitch, especially for a normal race trying to make a green out of a red, but in the "my stack of 3000 Nubians can beat up your stack of 2000 Nubians." stage of the game when tech is maxed and minerals are scarce, it's certainly more productive than Alchemy.

Hush-a-Boom



Tech: Weap 12, Elec 12, Bio 12

Cost without miniaturization: I1 B5 G0 R5

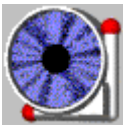
Cost at max. tech: I1 B2 G0 R2

Type: Bomb, Mass 5

Abilities: Pop-Kill-Rate: 3.0% Facs/Mines/Defences Destruction: 2

This is just a bomb, which is kind of like a Smart Bomb, in that it's very good at pop killing (better than a Cherry, and almost as good as Enriched Neutron) but not so good at installation destroying (only as good as Lady Finger). The special thing about this, is that it's very cheap and light. Light means ships other than Mini Bombers are gateable, and cheap means (especially with a non-NRSE race where engines aren't expensive) vast hordes can be churned out without eating up valuable minerals or resources. You get it pretty early tech-wise too, before bombs of comparable firepower.

Jump Gate



Tech: Ener 16, Prop 20, Con 20, Elec 16

Cost without miniaturization: I0 B0 G50 R40

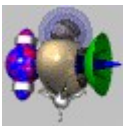
Cost at max. tech: I0 B0 G38 R30

Type: Mechanical, Mass 10

Abilities: Allows the ship to jump from space to a friendly planetary stargate

Ships with the Jump Gate can gate cargo. With the Jump Gate, you basically become an IT. Put one of these on a freighter, and you can quickly send colonists and minerals across your empire. Note it basically takes you two years to "gate" cargo from planet to planet, as you have to move away from a planet into space first before jumping, because while at a planet a ship will always attempt to use a planetary gate. Ignore the "never" sign on the warp dial if one appears, your ship and its cargo will arrive where you send it, assuming the destination stargate is powerful enough. When using the Jump Gate, it is the mass and range limitations of the destination stargate that determines whether the ship is damaged or lost to the void, but as for an IT, cargo does not count against ship mass. Remember that **every** ship in the fleet you want to jump has to have a Jump Gate mounted, otherwise the fleets goes nowhere.

Langston Shell



Tech: Ener 12, Prop 9, Elec 9

Cost without miniaturization: I10 B2 G6 R20

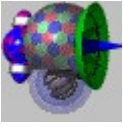
Cost at max. tech: I4 B1 G3 R9

Type: Shield, Mass 10

Abilities: Shield=125, Armor=65, Cloak=10%, Jam=5%, Scan=50/25

This is a good shield component. It's the third best shield in the game, with 15 more dp than the Gorilla Delegator, and you get it 2 Ener levels earlier too. A 25 ly pen-scanner isn't that good, but if you have NAS you'll still be glad to have it.

Mega Poly Shell



Tech: Ener 14, Con 14, Elec 14, Bio 6

Cost without miniaturization: I18 B6 G6 R65

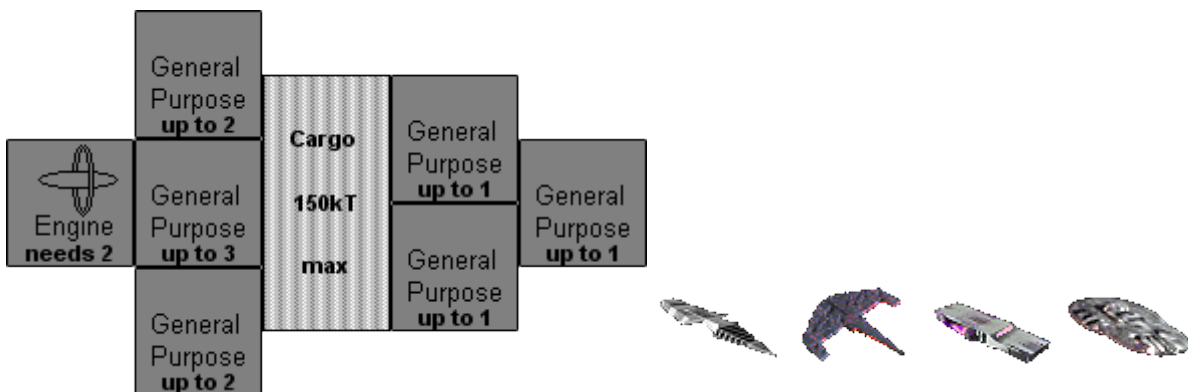
Cost at max. tech: I9 B3 G3 R34

Type: Armor, Mass 20

Abilities: Armor=400, Shield=100, Cloak=20%, Jam=20%, Scan=80/40

This item is incredibly powerful. It's the second strongest Armor in the game. It has the same dp as Valanium, but you get it 2 Con levels earlier. It weighs half as much too, and we all know how important weight is in getting those Cruisers and Nubians under 300kt. Mega Poly has a shield component, so you can have the advantages of shield stacking without having to waste a slot on an actual shield. It's also has other very useful goodies, such as a decent cloak, and a 40 ly pen scanner which is great to get when you have NAS. However the best thing about it is the built in Jammer 20. This allows you to get very high jamming without having to waste Elec slots (which are better used on computers). Fill one armor stack on your SB's and start with 73% jamming! This is a great thing to hold you over the big gap in Con tech until you get Superlatanium and Jammer 30's, and even then you lose some of the advantages this gives you.

Mini Morph hull



Tech: Con 8

Cost without miniaturization: I30 B8 G8 R100

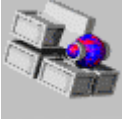
Cost at max. tech: I8 B2 G2 R28

Type: Ship Hull, Mass 70kt

Abilities: Max. Fuel 400mg, Armor 250dp, Shields none, Cloak/Jam 0%/0%, Initiative/Moves 2 / --

This ship is a mini Nubian, though it lacks the size and base armour to be an effective warship even in the CC era. Its main use would be for a cheaper version of the galleon for sweeping/skirmishing/raiding and cloaked scanning/minelaying.

Multi Cargo Pod



Tech: Ener 5, Con 11, Elec 5

Cost without miniaturization: I12 B0 G3 R25

Cost at max. tech: I5 B0 G1 R10

Type: Mechanical, Mass 9

Abilities: Armor=50, Cloak=10%, Cargo=250

The Multi Cargo Pod adds a lot of storage capacity to whatever ship it is put on. Each one of these is 2½ Super Cargo Pods or a free Privateer. With a few of these you can easily make a Galleon have more capacity than two Large Freighters (or make a Nubian be more than seven Large Freighters). This may help in shuttling the massive minerals your massive mining fleets generate. However, it is usually a bad idea to use up a valuable ship slot, and you can just built twice the number of Freighters if you have any heavy duty transportation needs. Note that this is the only Mechanical or non-Armor or Shield item that adds dp. So if you say wanted to make the toughest Destroyer possible, put one of these in the Mech slot, and you'll not only be tougher, you'll be able to scoop up some of the minerals of the ships you snipe (that is not recommended as a ship design, though). Note this is also a Mech item like the Jump Gate, where Mech is the only item category to have two MT toys for it.

Multi Contained Munition



Tech: Ener 21, Weap 21, Elec 16, Bio 12

Cost without miniaturization: I6 B40 G6 R40

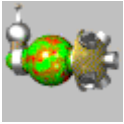
Cost at max. tech: I5 B32 G5 R32

Type: Beam Weapon, Mass 8

Abilities: Damage=140, Range=3, Initiative=6, Cloak=10%, Torp accuracy +10%, Scan=150/75, Bombs Planets at 2% colonists & 5 installations Lays 40 mines/yr

By some called the ultimate weapon, this item can do almost everything. It's first and foremost a beam weapon, which has twice the firepower of Blasters, but is a little shy of Disruptors, the next class up. It is range 3, although if you have Weap 21, you might prefer to just research one more Weap level and go with Mega Disruptors, or use normal range 2 Disruptors for half the mineral cost. As a bomb, it's about as good as an M-80, although it does have the advantage of being not much heavier than any beam weapon, so you can load a BB with these and have a gateable bomber that packs quite a bit more punch than those two slot Mini Bombers. Perhaps it's best use is as a pen-scanner for NAS races, where 75 ly of pen-scanning is very good. One might be able to load a Nubian or some other ship with these, and have a multi-purpose SB killing, planet bombing, mine laying to secure the area capital ship.

Multi Function Pod



Tech: Ener 11, Prop 11, Elec 11

Cost without miniaturization: I5 B0 G5 R15

Cost at max. tech: I2 B0 G2 R6

Type: Electrical, Mass: 2

Abilities: Cloak=30%, Jam=10%, +1/4 Movement

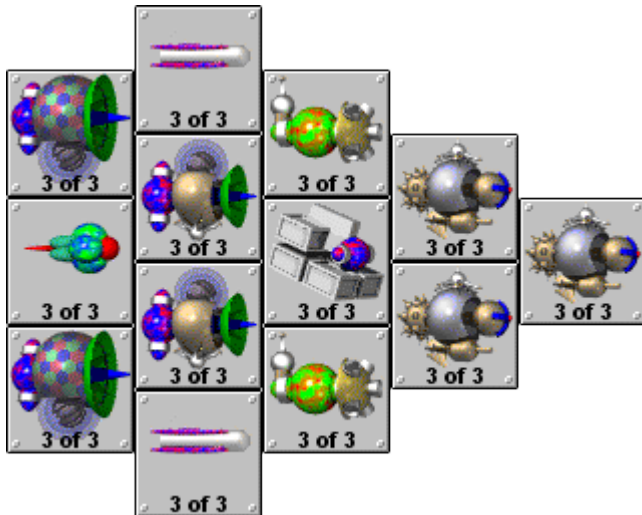
This is another small item that you can build early. It's basically a maneuvering jet, but with a small cloak and jammer. It's useful when trying to make a $2\frac{1}{4}$ speed ship be $2\frac{1}{2}$, say a beamer BB where an overthruster is overkill for that front slot, and where this gives you more than just the ordinary jet. It's also an electrical item, so you can still speed up your ships if you want to use a mech only slot for something else.

MT Ships

There are three types of ships the MT gives out. The [MT Lifeboat](#) based on the Nubian hull, and the [MT Scout](#) and [MT Probe](#) based on the [Mini Morph hull](#). The cost of each type of ship is not listed, as the cost is irrelevant when the MT gives the ships out, and if you want to build an identical design, then the cost will depend on miniaturization, and possibly also your PRT and LRTs.

The statistics listed are for a race whose PRT and LRTs do not affect such statistics.

MT Lifeboat



Max. Fuel: 5000 mg

Armor: 7940 dp

Shields: 1350 dp

Rating: 3366

Cloak/Jam: 94%/90%

Initiative/Moves: 2 / 2½

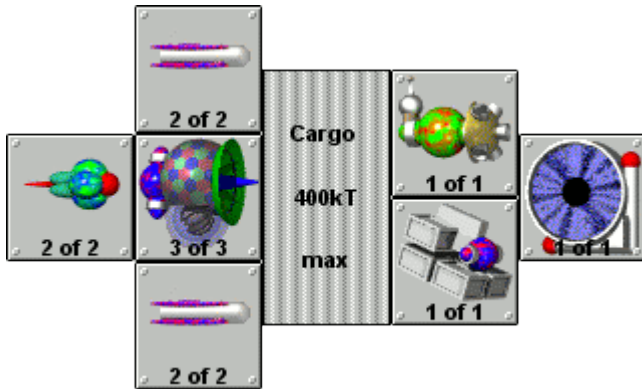
Scanner Range: 263 / 131

Cargo capacity: 750 kT

Mass: 499 kT

The MT Lifeboat is the only capital ship available in the limited to tech 10 demo, and at low tech levels it might be able to defeat pretty much any fleet going against it. At higher tech levels it is usually a better choice to scrap them to free up the design slot and possibly gain tech levels and/or some of the parts on it.

MT Probe



Max Fuel: 400 mg

Armor: 1500 dp

Shields: 300 dp

Rating: 480

Cloak/Jam: 67%/54%

Initiative / Moves: 2 / 2¼

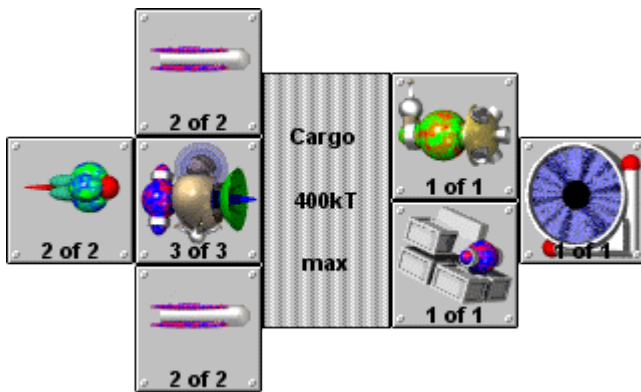
Scanner Range: 105 / 52

Cargo capacity: 400 kT

Mass: 223 kT

The MT Probe is very similar to the MT Scout, so most of what is written here also applies to the MT Scout. The best use for the MT Probe at low tech levels is probably as a skirmisher as its range of 6 [Anti Matter Torpedoes](#) and 2¼ battle move makes it extremely difficult for a freighter to disengage before destroyed, and it can pick up some or all of the debris afterwards. The [Jump Gate](#) makes it easy to get the collected minerals home, and also allows it to easily escape if something nasty is coming towards it. At higher tech levels it is a better choice to scrap them to free up the design slot and possibly gain tech levels and/or some of the parts on it. The [Jump Gate](#) is particularly useful at any tech level - Once you can build it, that is. The better armor, cloak, jamming and scanner range compared to the MT Scout makes it a better skirmisher than the MT Scout, and the fact that it has lower shields hopefully should not matter much. Of course, in the role of a skirmisher it is hoped that the armor and jamming does not come into play.

MT Scout



Max. Fuel: 400 mg

Armor: 495 dp

Shields: 375 dp

Rating: 480

Cloak/Jam: 60%/23%

Initiative / Moves: 2 / 2¼

Scanner Range: 65 / 42

Cargo capacity: 400 kT

Mass: 192 kT

The MT Scout is very similar to the MT Probe, so what is written about the MT Probe above also applies to the MT Scout. The lower armor, cloak, jamming and scanner range makes it less effective as a skirmisher, though it is still useful as a skirmisher at lower tech levels. The slightly higher shields is not much of an advantage over the MT Probe.

Trading MT parts

Trading MT parts is done by scrapping and/or battle, but trading MT parts do not follow quite the same rules as tech trading for tech levels. For each event (each relevant fleet scrapped or each relevant battle), there is first a 50% chance of gaining nothing. Then there is a check for each MT part type in the fleet, where the chance is 2% for each instance of the part up to 25 instances of that part in the fleet (the only case where it pays to have more than one of the part in the fleet). This means that if there is only one part type but 25 instances of that part (such as 25 Scouts with one [Anti Matter Torpedo](#) each, or 1 Nubian with 25 [Multi Contained Munitions](#)), then the total chance of gaining the part is 25%.

It should also be noted that if there is one or more parts that require higher tech than you have, then there is a chance of getting a tech level instead. I do not know whether the check to see whether a tech level is gained is done before or after the check(s) to see if a MT part is gained, and it is not possible to gain both.

If there is more than one part type in the fleet, then the second check is repeated for each part type, so if there is more than one MT part type in the fleet, then the total chance of gaining something can be higher than 25%, but that also means that you cannot be certain what you will get if you get something.

It is possible to increase the total chance per turn of gaining a part by scrapping more than one fleet, but that is expensive given the fact that each fleet should contain 25 instances of the part. The formula for calculating the probability for gaining the part is

$((1-(1-(0.5*(0.02*\text{noOfPartsPerFleet})))^{\text{noOfFleets}})*100\%$, The chances are shown below. As can be seen from that table, the best way to increase the chance of transferring the part is to increase the number of instances per fleet, but to get more than a 50-50 chance, several fleets have to be scrapped, making it pretty expensive in resources and minerals.

The chance of gaining a part by the number of parts per fleet and the number of fleets are:

Number of parts:	Number of fleets:									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1.00%	1.99%	2.97%	3.94%	4.90%	5.85%	6.79%	7.73%	8.65%	9.56%
2	2.00%	3.96%	5.88%	7.76%	9.61%	11.42%	13.19%	14.92%	16.63%	18.29%
3	3.00%	5.91%	8.73%	11.47%	14.13%	16.70%	19.20%	21.63%	23.98%	26.26%
4	4.00%	7.84%	11.53%	15.07%	18.46%	21.72%	24.86%	27.86%	30.75%	33.52%
5	5.00%	9.75%	14.26%	18.55%	22.62%	26.49%	30.17%	33.66%	36.98%	40.13%
6	6.00%	11.64%	16.94%	21.93%	26.61%	31.01%	35.15%	39.04%	42.70%	46.14%
7	7.00%	13.51%	19.56%	25.19%	30.43%	35.30%	39.83%	44.04%	47.96%	51.60%
8	8.00%	15.36%	22.13%	28.36%	34.09%	39.36%	44.22%	48.68%	52.78%	56.56%
9	9.00%	17.19%	24.64%	31.43%	37.60%	43.21%	48.32%	52.97%	57.21%	61.06%
10	10.00%	19.00%	27.10%	34.39%	40.95%	46.86%	52.17%	56.95%	61.26%	65.13%
11	11.00%	20.79%	29.50%	37.26%	44.16%	50.30%	55.77%	60.63%	64.96%	68.82%
12	12.00%	22.56%	31.85%	40.03%	47.23%	53.56%	59.13%	64.04%	68.35%	72.15%
13	13.00%	24.31%	34.15%	42.71%	50.16%	56.64%	62.27%	67.18%	71.45%	75.16%
14	14.00%	26.04%	36.39%	45.30%	52.96%	59.54%	65.21%	70.08%	74.27%	77.87%
15	15.00%	27.75%	38.59%	47.80%	55.63%	62.29%	67.94%	72.75%	76.84%	80.31%
16	16.00%	29.44%	40.73%	50.21%	58.18%	64.87%	70.49%	75.21%	79.18%	82.51%
17	17.00%	31.11%	42.82%	52.54%	60.61%	67.31%	72.86%	77.48%	81.31%	84.48%
18	18.00%	32.76%	44.86%	54.79%	62.93%	69.60%	75.07%	79.56%	83.24%	86.26%
19	19.00%	34.39%	46.86%	56.95%	65.13%	71.76%	77.12%	81.47%	84.99%	87.84%
20	20.00%	36.00%	48.80%	59.04%	67.23%	73.79%	79.03%	83.22%	86.58%	89.26%
21	21.00%	37.59%	50.70%	61.05%	69.23%	75.69%	80.80%	84.83%	88.01%	90.53%
22	22.00%	39.16%	52.54%	62.98%	71.13%	77.48%	82.43%	86.30%	89.31%	91.66%
23	23.00%	40.71%	54.35%	64.85%	72.93%	79.16%	83.95%	87.64%	90.48%	92.67%
24	24.00%	42.24%	56.10%	66.64%	74.64%	80.73%	85.35%	88.87%	91.54%	93.57%
25	25.00%	43.75%	57.81%	68.36%	76.27%	82.20%	86.65%	89.99%	92.49%	94.37%