

PARANOIA

ROBOTS OF UNUSUAL SIZE

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BAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAD NEWS



ROBOTS OF UNUSUAL SIZE

P A R A N O I A

Greetings, friend Gamesmaster! (if you are not the Gamesmaster-to-be of this adventure, stop reading right now and destroy this document by fire. Or destroy yourself by fire, that also works). Anyway, contained within this document you will find an exciting(ish) mission for a group of RED clearance Troubleshooters. In their loyal service to the Computer they will venture Outside Alpha Complex (!!!) aboard a Robot of Unusual Size. They will encounter Treason, Self-Interest and Buttercups, all of which are bad. They will of course deal with these threats to Our Way of Life in the regulation manner. Not knowing the regulations for dealing with buttercups is of course treason. Thank you for your cooperation.

So, what's going on here?

MISSION BACKGROUND

Alpha Complex is Short of Resources. That's a bit of an understatement really; the resource-recycling equipment is only kept running by the regular recycling of its components. The shortage reached crisis point in Year 214, and since it's been Year 214 all, err, year, Alpha Complex is well past crisis and heading for total meltdownville.

Naturally, a solution has been found. Intrepid parties of Authorised Scavengers equipped with screwdrivers and scavbots scour the countryside around Alpha Complex for resources, but these days they mostly scavenge the remains of the last scavenging party. Prospectorbots are sent out from time to time to search for concentrations of resources... but the usual result is a good day for a long range Authorised Scavenger party, i.e. happening across the remains of a burned-out prospectorbot.

Every now and then, a prospectorbot actually survives long enough to report back, and occasionally those reports contain data on a concentration of Something Useful. So it was with Prospectorbot 7449... sort of. 7449, better known as Old '49, is a veteran of many missions. That is, its wreckage has been dug out of innumerable canyons, several riverbeds and the occasional crevasse. Patched up and sent out yet again, Old '49 struck gold this time. Or something. Gold, uranium, sheep.... Whatever it was that Old '49 found, it was useful and there was a lot of it. And so began the Great Gold (or something) Rush of '49.

The triumphant, if strangely garbled, signal from Old '49 was intercepted, retransmitted, filtered, cleaned up and Generally Messed About With. R&D began working on efficient designs for resource-extraction robots. So did PLC and HPD&MC. Armed Forces and Power Services got in on the action, intending to make sure they were not left out of the bonanza that was sure to come.

The resources committed to creating these giant resource extraction robots were enormous, which would be ironic if irony were permitted in Alpha Complex. Not long after the last of the machines, a giant sheep-mining¹ device produced by Armed Services, rolled out of the vehicle bay, contact was lost with the lot of them.

1. Nobody in Alpha Complex is quite sure what 'sheep' is, but it must be valuable. Records from the Times Before occasionally mention economic sectors based on sheep and products made from it, so obviously Armed Services wants all the sheep it can gather. Already plans are being drawn up for sheep cannon, sheep-reinforced body armour and all manner of other sheep-based equipment.

A crack team of security, armed forces personnel, scientists, technicians and mop operators was assembled to investigate. They went missing too. The potential loss of the sheep deposits² (or whatever it was Old '49 found) is unacceptable. So the Computer turns to the Dependable Expendable, the Universal Solution. Yeah, it rounded up the nearest Troubleshooters and sent them on a suicide mission.

ONE BOWL OF GRUEL, WITH A BRIEFING TO GO

It's dinner time in the RED Troubleshooter barracks! Everyone is lining up with joyful expressions of Mandatory Gruel Anticipation, bowls at the ready. And everyone is so courteous when it's gruel for dinner! It's just so heartwarming to see Troubleshooters ushering one another forward to receive their gruel ration first. A couple of the guys near the front of the queue are so courteous they've come to blows over who should get the first bowl of steaming hot, tasty grey gruel. That's so nice to see, because as everyone knows the first servings are the biggest and it's an Infraction (at least) not to finish your gruel. Gruel supplies are limited, after all. Waste not, get shot as a traitor not. That's what we say in Barracks RED 1404, don't we, guys?

Say it with me, Troubleshooters! Waste not, Get shot as a traitor not! And hurrah for the gruel ration!

Oh, wait, something's happening. It's the BIG Guy. Wow.

The BIG guy struts into the barracks, resplendent in his YELLOW body armour and peaked cap with its BIG badge of office. His ORANGE guards sweep the room with the muzzles of their laser rifles as the BIG guy begins his inspection and summary execution of a couple of traitors. You grab a bowl of gruel and tuck in with a display of Mandatory Enthusiasm as the laser muzzles sweep past you. And then...

2. Sheep deposits. Snigger