

General Premise:

Rhode Island-class scouts are designed to precede explorers on deep space missions to identify interesting sites for exploration and to ferret out any potential threats. They are fast, well-armed, and discrete. Well, they're meant to be anyway: Captain Gaudain is young, reckless, and not afraid to get his hands dirty, and so the *Apollo* under his command is just as likely to shoot its way out of a dangerous situation as it is to use its class-nine warp drive to escape. In the Delta Quadrant, this kind of grit is what it's going to take to get the lay of the Nacene Reach.

Launched in 2390, the *Apollo* is now ten years old and has just been through its second major overhaul. Under the command of Captain Sean Gaudain, it has been assigned as one of several ships on the vanguard of an exploratory mission to the Nacene Reach, the area in the Delta Quadrant where *Voyager* was transported in 2371. This area is sparse in resources and home to many hostile races, including the Kazon and the Vidiians, and the *Apollo*'s primary mission is to assess the current balance of power and the state of technology in the region.

Operating several weeks ahead of larger ships, the *Apollo* will generally be on her own in the Delta Quadrant. Her crew of just ninety will be on one of the archetypal Starfleet missions: deep space independent exploration, on a frontier known to be compelling, dangerous, and rife with opportunities for discovery and conflict. Many of her adventures will involve deciding when to fight, when to flee, and when to negotiate, as a young captain comes into his own. While the *Apollo* herself faces off against Kazon carriers and Vidiian harvester ships, the crew must bond in close quarters and challenging situations as they learn to operate as a unified whole.

Additional Setting Information:

Being located in the Delta Quadrant requires more thought into what other Starfleet assets are nearby than in Federation space. While it would be tempting just to have ships show up as necessary for the plot, I'd like to be consistent about which ships went through the wormhole together and their command relationship. Though part of the Fourth Fleet Expeditionary Group like all Bravo Fleet RPGs, the *Apollo* is on detached duty and reports to Rear Admiral Hayden, aboard her flagship, the *Arcturus* (the GM's primary command), and uses this *Odyssey*-class ship akin to a starbase for rest and resupply. Another *Rhode Island*-class scout (the *Sophia Danenberg*) and two *Luna*-class light explorers (the *Taygete* and *Kalyke*) round out this small exploratory group. These off-registry NPC ships will infrequently feature in the adventures of the *Apollo*, generally as reinforcements that are too far off to help or requesters of support that the *Apollo* is too far away to provide. The names are thematically appropriate to their classes (moons and an explorer) but unlikely to conflict with other stories.

Crew additions will come from one of these four other ships due to the isolation of the Delta Quadrant. Real-time communication with the *Arcturus* is generally possible, but the *Apollo* is often *just* far enough ahead of her to have to rely on asynchronous communiqués. The *Apollo* has two Type-9 shuttles and a Waverider, which means that the crew has limited capability to take away missions far from the mothership.

The presence of the Rear Admiral is a source of some consternation to Captain Gaudain, who feels surveilled by Starfleet, but she gives him a wide berth, and this is essentially a projection on his part. Gaudain has a genuine rivalry with the captain of the *Arcturus*, who is both younger and, by all accounts, *better* than he is.

Mission Concepts:

Arc 1: Delta Quadrant Anabasis

In these three missions, the *Apollo* will journey from the mouth of the Barzan wormhole deep into the Nacene Reach to do initial reconnaissance of the current state of the region, while Starfleet evaluates the long-term feasibility of continued exploration in the Delta Quadrant. This anabasis will test the ship's crew, forcing them to bond in a short amount of time to meet the challenges they will face.

Mission 1: Sic Parvis Magna

Before departing through the Barzan Wormhole, the *Apollo* is assigned to participate in a war game with the other vessels assigned to Rear Admiral Hayden's exploratory mission to test their ability to operate as a coherent unit. The Andorian Imperial Guard has been selected for this war game because their ship designs and tactics resemble much more refined versions of those used by the Kazon: forward-facing weapons mounted on ships that operate in packs.

This mission will involve the entire senior staff, as the goal is to bond as a unit and participate successfully in the war game. Settings like the *Arcturus* will be introduced and the relationships between various off-screen characters like Rear Admiral Hayden, Captain Lancaster, and the rarely seen captains of the other ships in the flotilla. Medical and science will be slightly disadvantaged, but medical can complete crew physicals, and science will be drafted into optimizing the ship's sensors for a war game.

Act I: Captain Gaudain and the rest of the crew board the *Apollo* in dock at Starbase 38. Impulsively, Gaudain orders the ship out of port ahead of schedule for a quick "run around the block," encountering the much more massive *Arcturus* at the edge of the system.

Act II: A formal dinner for the senior crews of all five ships is held aboard the *Arcturus* in the presence of more flag officers than any of them feel comfortable around. Gaudain's rivalry with Captain Lancaster plays center stage and the senior staff bond at being assigned to one of the smaller two ships in the group. A briefing establishes the goal of the war game: to protect the *Arcturus* against the Andorian attack.

Act III: The morning of the war game, Gaudain orders a readiness drill aboard the *Apollo*. The ship's senior officers must make sure their departments are in tip-top shape, with little time to prepare for the actual event. At 1200 hours, the ship joins the rest of the small fleet for the war game, awaiting the admiral's signal to engage.

Act IV: The wargame itself commences, with the *Apollo* and her sister ship taking point to pull the Andorians away from the larger vessels with hit and run attacks. Engineering devises a novel solution: by boarding one of the Andorian frigates, they can disrupt targeting and give the rest of the Starfleet vessels a chance to disable them. While this proves successful, opinions are mixed at whether it upholds the spirit of the game or not, but in the end, the admiral commends the *Apollo*'s crew for original thinking.

Act V: After one last night aboard Starbase 38, the *Apollo* and her crew depart through the Barzan Wormhole to the Delta Quadrant. After lingering for a moment with the flotilla, the *Apollo* jumps to high warp to begin her mission: seeing what lies beyond.

Mission 2: Abyssus invocat

While on a long warp run towards the edge of known Kazon territory, the science department detects a very faint Starfleet communications signature emanating from an uncharted system: the wreck of the USS *Cochrane* has been discovered! The presence of the *Apollo* searching for her sets off a race against time to either recover or destroy the wreck, to avoid allowing its vital technologies from falling into Kazon hands.

This mission will provide engineering a chance to get off the ship, as well as for the bridge officers to work through a tense situation. The idea of faster-than-warp travel will be addressed here, in the form of a failed slipstream experiment. The sight of one of the *Apollo*'s sister ships in distress will give the crew pause.

Act I: Many of the senior staff are taking some downtime as there is little to do during a long warp journey, but the science department is hard at work analyzing the data coming in from this barely-explored quadrant. Something unusual is detected: a faint Starfleet signal. Analysis

confirms that it is the USS *Cochrane*, a *Rhode Island*-class ship retrofitted to serve as a testbed during Starfleet's latest ill-fated experiments with slipstream flight, lost in 2395.

Act II: The crew works to trace the location of the *Banting*, narrowing the signal down to an asteroid belt in an uncharted system. As they search for the ship, Kazon vessels appear at long range, prompting the captain to take the ship to yellow alert.

Act III: The *Banting* is located intact but abandoned on the surface of an asteroid, her crew able to use the escape pods before the malfunction that sent her into the Delta Quadrant while the computer followed its directives to preserve the ship and the data she contained. While an away team works on repairing damage to get the ship off of the asteroid, a substantial Kazon force enters the system.

Act IV: The away team begins a desperate plan to download the *Cochrane*'s computer records to the *Apollo* so information about the slipstream experiment can be preserved, while the *Apollo* goes to minimum systems power to try to avoid detection. This ruse does not work, and the *Apollo* is forced to destroy the *Cochrane* to keep it out of Kazon hands.

Act V: While the team salvaged little data about the slipstream experiment, the science department is buoyed when they find an enormous cache of *navigational* data providing a fascinating slice of the galaxy between the Alpha and Delta Quadrants that was previously unexplored. While Starfleet is disappointed that this lost prototype couldn't be recovered, the crew is commended for keeping it out of the hands of the Kazon, who now see Starfleet as their confirmed enemy.

Mission 3: Hostium munera

While on a routine survey of an uninhabited system, the *Apollo* encounters a derelict Vidiian vessel. Though it presents some risks, Captain Gaudain decides to investigate, eager to see if the ship's records can shed any light on the current state of the Vidiian Sodality. While an away team is able to recover some data, the ship is quickly surrounded, but not by the Vidiians, but by the... Ocampa?!

This mission will explore races that featured prominently on Voyager without doing anything to permanently alter them, at least in their conception in BF's canon. Exploring the data from the ship will give medical a chance to guess at what the current status of the Phage is, but as we are leaving that ambiguous, they will get conflicting results. This is a mission which will feature bridge officers prominently, so non-bridge officers will be featured on the away mission at the beginning.

Act I: A Vidiian ship is detected unpowered at extreme range. To protect from contamination, Gaudain has the away team board wearing environmental suits. They are able to retrieve some general data, while the bridge crew assesses the damage to the ship. Kazon ships with unusual power signatures arrive, and they are revealed to be crewed by Ocampa.

Act II: After a tense stand-off, the Ocampa reveal that they are looking for a missing colony ship taken by the Vidiians quite a while ago. They were hoping to use the disabled ship as a lure for other Vidiian ships. Using the sensor data from the derelict with the *Apollo*'s own advanced sensors, the crew is able to locate the colony ship several systems away.

Act III: Receiving permission from the admiral to accompany the Kazon, the *Apollo* journeys to the colony ship's location, hosting a few of the Ocampa along the way to learn more about their culture. They are one of many splinter groups who left Ocampa following the destruction of the Caretaker's Array, having 'acquired' Kazon vessels and modified them with tetraon-based technologies.

Act IV: The *Apollo* enters the system and discovers a heavy Vidiian presence, as well as a sizeable population of Ocampa who appear to be kept as, essentially, livestock--a source of organs and other material for the Vidiians to graft onto themselves. The Ocampa are enraged and summon their other ships, forcing the *Apollo* into a prime directive situation. The captain must decide whether the situation warrants or allows for their involvement.

Act V: Deciding to toe the line of appropriateness, the *Apollo* jumps into the battle, using its weapons to Vidiians' projectile weapons and grapplers, rather than the ships themselves, while using its own shields to intercept energy weapons. Thus, not technically attacking any of the Vidiians, but frustrating their efforts long enough for the Ocampa to gain the upper hand and rescue their people.