KAPITAN

HUANG BAO

Pheidippides-Class Fast Courier Vessel

Huang Bao

History

Huang Bao saw the light of the `Verse more than a century ago, when she was launched as a Mercury Class Fast Courier Boat to serve with the Shinon Postal Service. Like all boats of her class she's had a vivid history, and few of her original Parts apart from the hull still remain.

When the Mercury Boats had served their time and became obsolete, they were sold off by the lot to frontier worlds, where they served pretty much the same purpose, and were valued for their long legs: obsolete by core standards or not, they could still reach almost every world in the `Verse in less than three weeks.

In this time Huang Bao, like most of her sisters, underwent her first major overhaul: many of the fancier core "high tech" systems were replaced by simpler, more rugged devices – after all, obsolete by core standards still meant "beyond high tech" on the rim. Many of the original systems were left in place, though, partly to spare the cost of removing them, partly to serve as redundancy. New systems were installed on top of the original ones, not really adding to the ships comfort or elegance.

To compensate for this reduction in automation, Huang Bao got refitted to support a crew of two as opposed to the single operator that had seemed sufficient in the core. Life aboard got pretty cramped, but when you are in postal service on the rim, you are no stranger to cramped.

With the outbreak of the war, things changed dramatically, and so did Huang Bao. The hostilities in space made any kind of postal transport unthinkable in the rim, since the Alliance considered the Independent's communication a prime target, and so the service was discontinued.

But when the Browncoats realized they had no hope to regain control over their space, an urgent need for fast and clandestine courier vessels arose in order to bring at least the barest necessities to the troops, like medical supplies or key personnel.

They found themselves in the possession of an entire fleet of former postal vessels, fast and sturdy, yet not quite fit for the job.

All Mercuries the Independent High Command could get their hands on were seized and refitted.

Already equipped with an extremely powerful pulse drive, they weren't too maneuverable, and thus got their maneuver pods replaced with the best the Browncoats could muster. Furthermore they got clad in armor plating and armed with a single weapon turret. Protective shields were added aft, to shield the sensitive pulse drive from maneuver exhaust.

The most important changes were done to the electronics, though: the entire cockpit was replaced and the boats were equipped with the latest in sensors, stealth- and EW-equipment.

To operate sensors and weapons, a crew of five would now be needed, so Huang Bao received two more staterooms and a boost to the life support system at the cost of cargo space. Crew and eventual passengers had to share bunks, and living conditions aboard got … well – more than cramped.

After the refit, the Vessels were re-launched as Pheidippides-class fast courier craft. They were pretty successful, and only few were lost. The boats were stealthy enough to slip most blockades and fast enough to outrun pretty much every threat when hiding failed. None is known to have ever fired a shot in anger.

While many survived the war unscathed, they were destined for a much darker future afterwards: when the allied fleet took control of the remnants of the Browncoat navy, they started selling off transports and supply ships to cover at least for parts of the war costs. But the Pheidippides' high TCO and low cargo capacity made them unfit for pretty much any kind of legitimate business. Fearing that they would see use in more shady dealings should they be sold, they were designated for target practice by the allied navy instead.

Rescue came from an unsuspected direction: United Logistics and Transportation had bought the remnants of the various postal services immediately after the end of hostilities. Now they claimed that the original commandeering of former postal vessels by the independent high command had been illegal – referring to several prior verdicts that had been decided to allow core companies to take control of rim and border industries.

They won under the condition that they would bear all costs for demilitarization, and sold them off by the scores.

Huang Bae is one of those ships: old stager, war veteran; scarred and aged but not done for yet. She has seen a lot, and she shows. The scars where the armour plating got ripped off her skin still deface her – no one ever cared to treat her a paint job. As a matter of fact the fading logos of the Shinon Postal Service, her first owner, still mark her flanks. The now-empty gun turret and sensor bulb still plaguespot her back. Her left side was cut open to make for an airlock. She ain't a pretty, but she shows a determination and stubbornness that speak of what she'd been through.

When Václav Hanka first saw her, he immediately felt that she was his soul-mate. After the purchase, he kept her outer appearance, but had her interiors redone: for the business he intended he didn't need an awful lot of cargo space, but a large crew. He added another stateroom and even a small galley, and with three staterooms double occupied, she now sails with a crew of eight.

Huang Bao

Internal Layout overview

1	•Bridge
2	•Toilet
3	•Bathroom
4	•Cap'n Stateroom
5	•Becans Stateroom
6	•Sarah and Linda
7	•Art and Reginald
8	•Chikako and Dandan
9	•Airlock
10	•Galley
11	•Cargo hold
12	•Engine Room

Huang Bao

Internal Layout description

The interior of Huang Bao is quite cramped and it doesn't look pretty. Pipes, ducts and conducts run along walls, ceilings or even on the floor. Machine parts stick out at odd places, were broken systems got replaced with parts not quite fitting. Theoretically the deck height on Huang Bao is 2,2 m, but you hardly get that anywhere: apart from ducts and the like, the ceilings are covered with hanging lockers to store spare parts, supplies or personal effects. Running down the hallway is not advised, unless you know it like the back of your hand, else head injuries are bound to happen.

1 The Bridge – an oversized cockpit actually – has two workstations, one for the pilot and another for sensors and EW. If needed, a third chair can be added to have a specialized sensors operator and to free Linda to concentrate fully on electronic warfare, but it gets pretty cramped and the air tends to get really bad.

2 The ships WC, plain and ordinary. It is also used to store cleansers, rags and the like. Having only one toilet for a crew of eight does create some tension at times.

3 The bathroom is the most disputed territory on Huang Bao. The Captain insisted on installing a bath tub – unheard of on a vessel this size (and this cramped). The Japanese style sitting bath is also used as a shower and to do the laundry (and even to do the dishes, at least if it is Reginald's turn: "put 'em in, add some soap and turn on the Jacuzzi – easiest way!"). But since the Captain loves to take a bath for hours and hours, it is rarely free for such uses. The room is nicked "Captains Office" by the crew, and Hanka is known to actually do much of his work in the bathtub (i.e. when the relieved watch after their shift has to report to the captain, this is done frequently in the bathroom). In shipboard poker games "bathing time" is a frequent stake.

4 The Captains stateroom is one of only two single occupancies aboard, but on the rare occasions Huang Boa transports passengers, the Captain shares his room also. Hanka furnished the room

in that "old fashioned" style, he associates with "classy" people: parquet flooring, hand-woven carpet, antique roll-top desk, that sort of things. Also, he considers himself the only one aboard entitled to a "big black leather chair". Storage space is provided – like in all staterooms – by a corner cabinet, drawers under the bed and ceiling boxes. The room also contains the ships safe.

5 Becan is the only crew member – aside from the Captain – who has his own stateroom: he is just too strange for anyone to share a bunk with him (including his brother). Since he doesn't have many (or care for) personal affects, he just put two workbenches in there and turned his room into a makeshift workshop. Since he is obsessed with keeping the engine room tidy, it is here where he does most tinkering and repairs.

6 This bunk is shared by Linda and Sarah. Sarah uses it as a small office for her duties as First Officer and keeps a small library, since she loves to read "real books". Linda also uses the desk when she needs some quiet to do cortex research or hack into systems.

7 Art and Reginald share this room, so cabinets and cupboards are mainly used to store weapons, armour or ammunition. They also made themselves a small couch'n'screen corner, since both enjoy watching cortex feeds of the main soccer leagues. When there are major games, half the crew squeezes into the small stateroom to watch 'em together (and it remains a mystery why the galley isn't used for that). They kept the original floor plates, since they are easy to clean from beer and chips stains afterwards.

8 Chikako's and Dandan's room is the largest stateroom on board. They need the space, since both have an extensive wardrobe to store. They also have a small make-up corner, which gets used by Sarah and Linda as well. When they have some free time to go downtown in any city to speak of, the four girls meet here for extensive "getting dressed and painted"-partys. Chika also has a small Buddhist shrine on an antique half-table where she burns incense and such.

9 The airlock is pretty oversized for a craft this small to allow taking aboard larger crates or containers, even small skiffs without having to depressurize the whole cargo bay. To do this, the entire aft wall of the airlock can be opened instead of the normal door leading to the hallway. But usually the crew uses the airlock to store equipment, the armoured vacc-suits or weapons.

10 The galley and common room of the ship serves as a kitchen, dining room and living room for the crew. The room also doubles as a makeshift infirmary in case of need: medical equipment is stored in pull-down ceiling lockers above the dining table (then the operation table). Lindas horrible cooking skills have led to frequent accusations she would use “operation leftovers” when it’s her turn to cook. The dining table doesn’t sit more than five at a time, but since two crew member would be on watch at any given time and Becan prefers to eat in his room, that’s enough. If the whole crew wants to dine together, the usually move the table to the cargo room.

11 The cargo hold is much too small to allow for Huang Bao operating a regular transportation business and is rarely used to actually store freight. The high paying (and highly illegal) goods Huang Bao sometimes transports don’t use much room and are stored on the starboard wall of the hold. Thus there’s enough room for the ship’s UM-17 “Cockroach” cargo mule. If there is any room left, the crew uses the hold frequently for recreational purposes like billiard, dart, sports, dancing and listening to music or just escaping the crampedness of the rest of the ship. In the starboard aft corner of the hold there is access to the bilge (kinda basement) where Becan keeps spare parts and such, as well as to the “attic”, a half-deck where the weapons station and ammunition storage used to be when the ship still was armed. Now the attic is used to store food and supplies.

12 The engine room is Becans realm, and he doesn’t really like anyone else in it. They make it untidy. It is separated from the rest of the ship by a very heavy blast door. The unfavourable position of the cargo lift/doors make it hard to reach when they are opened.

Huang Bao

The stats

Attributes

AGILITY
敏捷
d12
- near perfect
- like a Fighter

STRENGTH
實力
d4
- 140 t
- small transport

VITALITY
活力
d10
- redundancies
- well maintained

ALERTNESS
機敏
d10
- superiour EW
- excellent sensors

INTELLIGENCE
情報
d8
- crash avoidance
- auto-landing

WILLPOWER
意志
d10
- blast doors
- backup systems

Skills

Athletics	Covert	Engineering	Perception	Pilot
• d2	• d4	• d2	• d4	• d4

Armour

Wound	Stun
• 1	• 1

Derived Stats

Life Points	Initiative
• 14	• d12+d10

Huang Bao 黄豹

Data

Tonnage	Cruise Speed	Hard Burn	Fuel Capacity	Endurance
•140 t	•10	•14	•9 t	•1.800 h

Complexity	Price	Maintainance	Staterooms	Cargo
•48	•1.753,50 €	•1.344,00 €	•5	•45 t

Traits

Assets

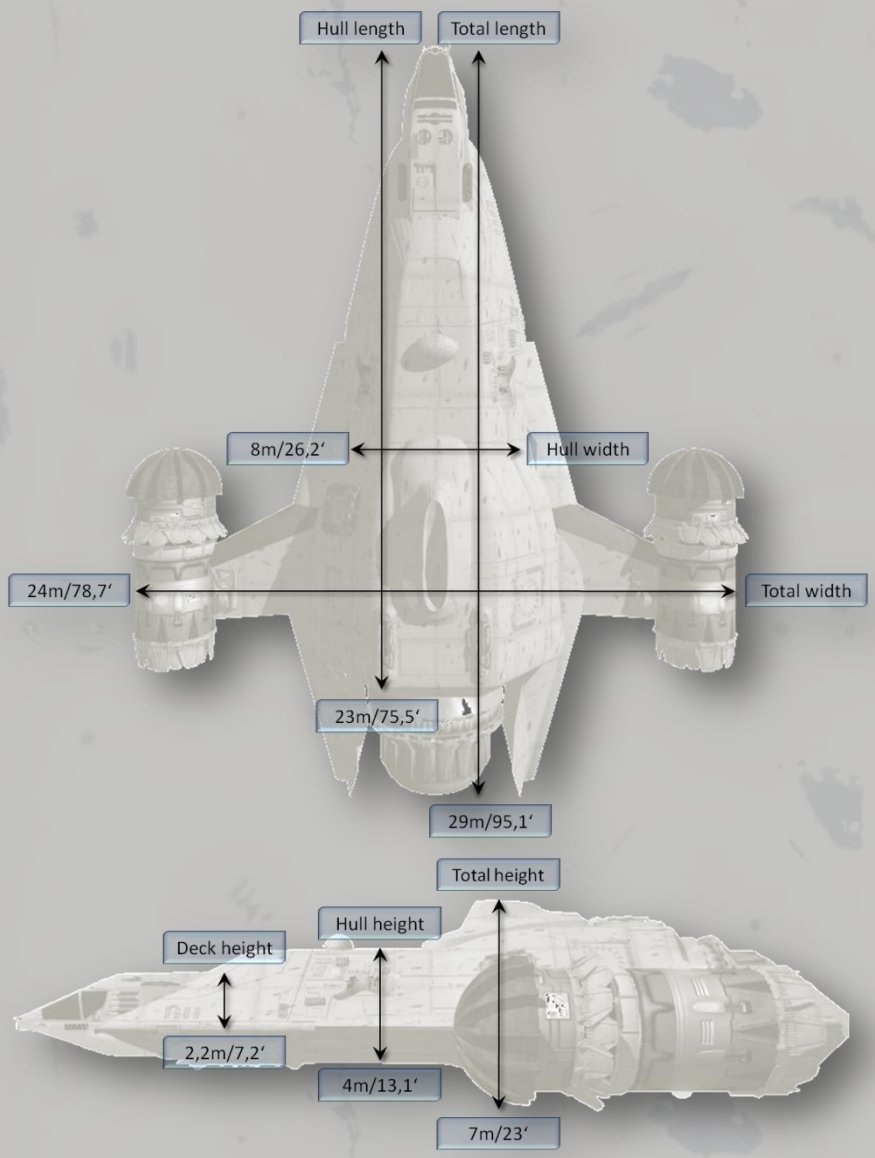
- Fast Throttle (major)

Flaws

- Everybody has one
- Seen better days (major)
- Ugly as sin (major)

Optional rule: The flaws ‚Seen better days' and ‚Ugly as sin' can both be bought off. Since the logic of the design system would cause this to raise complexity and thus mainainance cost (that is, if you give her a full overhaul, the maintainance cost actually rises), you might consider doubleing the cost to buy off those flaws, but keep complexity where it is instead.
Buy off 1 level of uglyness: 3.000,00 €
Per level of ‚Seen better...': 28.000,00 €

Dimensions



Huang Bao

Crew (see crew file for more detail)

Václav Hanka (Cap)

- Captain and Pilot
- Nickname: Cap'n

Sarah Neumann (Ops)

- First Officer and Enineer
- Nickname: Iron Maiden

Art O'Keeffe (Guns)

- Gunman and Interrogator
- Nickname: Coffee

Linda Pak (Echo)

- Electronic Warfare and Medic
- Nickname: Darling

Becan O'Keeffe (Engines)

- Mechanic and Driver
- Nickname: Bacon

Dandan Tao (Helm)

- Pilot and Mechanic
- Nickname: Swallow

Chikako D'aubigne (Cash)

- Economist and Socialite
- Nickname: Chicka

Reginald Burton (Sec)

- Security and Gunman
- Nickname: Gina

Huang Bao

Operations and Shipboard traditions

Captain Hanka commands the Huang Bao like a military vessel – the only way he knows.

For the very cramped and intimate conditions the crew lives in, he prefers to maintain some distance to them. He calls them by their last name or, when giving orders, by their function (like calling Mr. O'Keeffe "Guns" or Mrs. Neumann "Ops").

Among each other the crew uses first names or – more often –nicknames, with the exception of Sarah Neumann who uses last names and is referred to as "Ma'am" or Mrs. Neumann. The Captain is usually called "Sir" or "Cap'n", in more casual situations "Skipper".

The crew is divided into three watches that correlate with the bunk occupancy, the starboard, port and midship watch, each doing two 4-hour shifts, two 4-hour free periods and one 8-hour sleep period per day.

The Captain and Becan are considered to be on "continuous watch", meaning that they have no fixed shifts. Becan because he is constantly tinkering, repairing or "improving" anyway, and the Captain because he has … well … Captainly things to do.

The Crew shares the profits of their exploits quite evenly. After deduction of the ships operational costs, all money is split into 10 even shares. Each crew member receives his tenth (including the Captain and Huang Bao) and the last tenth is put in the crew kitty. Because of this practice, the crew refers to themselves as "Likedeelers", a nick Sarah came up with and that somehow stuck.

Huang Bao's share is accumulated in case some major repairs are necessary, or the crew wants a new kitchen and the like. Half of everybody's share as well as the kitty and Huang Bao's share get managed by Chikako and invested in stocks, shares or other legitimate ways. Her keen business sense has served the crew well, over the years, and they don't have to worry about old age pensions too much.

Like the ships of the late independent navy, Huang Bao has a "Port Song", meaning a song played on all stations over the internal speakers when making or leaving port: "It's A Long Way To Tipperary".

When planetside and off the job, the crew usually goes out the first night together, hitting the bars and getting as drunk as humanly possible. This evening they call "Tipperary". After that on subsequent nights, they split up and everyone goes his or her own ways, to make up for the lack of privacy when aboard and in the black.

While Sarah Neumann is the first Officer of Huang Bao, Art O'Keeffe is in charge of all ground operations (including boarding) and thus the crew sometimes consider themselves to have two first officers.

The chain of command would be: Cap'n, Ops, Guns, Sec, Helm, Echo, Cash, Engines.

Huang Bao

The business

Václav Hanka was able to start his business pretty well funded, after he sold off his last cargo as a blockade runner following the end of the war. Huang Bao is not only fully paid for, Hanka was also able to keep some reserves for bad times.

The Likedeelers have done pretty well ever since, so they have a substantial financial ceiling by now.

Since Huang Baos small cargo hold and high cost of operation make her unsuitable for any transport business, even smuggling, the Likedeelers main field of operation include highly sophisticated theft, outright robbery and "personnel extraction", the latter being their specialty.

The most lucrative "personnel extraction" usually means freeing people from prison (for substantial fees), but sometimes includes high class headhunting and – rarely - even kidnapping.