Imperium Miners
by
Marisa Giancarla

Purpose:

Some planets are incapable of supporting life due to an atmosphere that is too thin or having no atmosphere at all. If you unload people onto the surface of one of these planets, they will die as soon as the air they carry on their back runs out (1 ITU) unless they are transferred onto another ship. This does not mean you can't extract minerals from these planets, however.

There is a special class of ship known as a "miner" that can do this for you, without any crew on board at all. Miners can be loaded into the hold of other ships (if they have enough free cargo space), and then dropped onto the surface of an inhospitable planet to mine whatever minerals they can and then radio you of their progress.

Creation:

Miners are built on a planet just like any other class of ship. In a "standard" universe they will cost 275 production units (plus the standard "monetary" cost per unit), and can carry 3000 units of ore/bars. Note that the ship you start out with does NOT have enough cargo space to carry a miner, while the largest hull could carry several.

Use:

A miner is first loaded into the cargo hold of another ship via the "load miner" command. Both the miner and the ship must be on the same planet, and miners can not be transferred between ships directly. They must first be unloaded from one ship and then loaded onto the other.

Once the miner is loaded you may use the "miner refuel" command to transfer some of the ship's active field energy (not it's "fuel", you are charging a field coil in the miner directly. The miner has no way to convert raw "fuel" into energy) to the miner. (If you forget this step you won't see much work :-).

Before dropping the miner off you way wish to use the "miner program" command to change how the miner will operate. This can only be done while the miners' umbillacle is still attached to the mother ship's cargo hold. Once you arrive and have landed on the target planet you may use the "unload miner" command to place it on the surface and it will begin it's work. You may either stay on the surface and wait for it, or leave and come back when it's cargo hold is full. Note however that your presence on the planet's surface is much more noticeable then a small miner...

When the miners hold is full you can use the "load miner" command to place it in the cargo hold of your ship (you can load it at any time, if you need to clear out of the area in a hurry, say) and then use the "miner empty" command to transfer any ore or gold bars to your ship's cargo hold.

To make all your miners actually do their work you need to use the "miner update" command. Note that this may NOT be required if the deity has set up Imperium so that miners get updated on their own. Check with them and see if this is the case.

At any time you may use the "miner list" command to display one or more of your miners, and their current status.

Programming:

There are three items you can set on a miner, and each items can be one of four "levels". The items are "ore", "messages", and "gold". The "levels" are "none", "low", "medium", and "high".

For "ore" and "gold" the levels represent the amount of energy that should be used to attempt to mine the respective mineral. The levels compete against each other, such that setting both to "low" will result in equal low-level production, but setting "ore" to "medium" with "gold" to "low" will result in more energy going to ore production at the cost of gold production. If a planet is very low in either gold or ore, you may set the appropriate item to "none" and the miner will not waste any energy trying to mine that mineral.

The "messages" item indicates how verbose the miner should be about notifying you of it's progress. The higher this level, the more messages you will get (either as on-line messages, or as telegrams if you are not logged in when the miner is updated). The higher the message level, the greater the chances that someone else will discover your miner.