

Retrieve & Repatriate Service (RRS)

Candidate Induction Interview

Applicant: **Colonel Gundel Haan**
Notes: DOB 2062, implanted, Sanford: HLD, combat service status: retired

Date: 17.04.2120 (Ark Standard)

Location: Ohio Central Recruitment Facility, Earthside

Panel: Chair: Dr Lenora Weiss (Human)
Ops Rep: Commander Halvorsen (Ret.)
Ethics Liaison: ArkNet Observer Node Δ-12

Status: **ACCEPTED**

Note: This document is frequently cited in RRS training as an example of “Ideal Motivational Alignment.”

01. Dr Weiss: **Colonel Haan, why do you want to join Retrieve and Repatriate?**

Gundel Haan: Because it’s a necessity as our species grows out into the neighbourhood space and the colony line is pushed further and further away from Earth, and I think I can make a difference. That probably sounds pretentious, but I don’t mean it that way. I know what you are aiming to build here and I think my skill set and experience have a good fit. We’ve built a civilisation that assumes continuity, that assumes someone will be there when things go wrong. As the need for a combative military force recedes, I believe that R&R is the backstop for that assumption.

I’ve worked disaster response, salvage, and deep-field logistics. I’ve seen first-hand what happens when recovery is delayed, or delegated, or written off as “statistically acceptable loss.” Real people die in those calculated margins, and I think we can do better.

R&R, as I understand it, is being created to reduce that inevitable loss, the loss generated by progress. I don’t expect the service will ever be able to erase the errors that result in termination, no, that’s a fantasy, but to give people a fighting chance to *come back whole enough* when things don’t go

according to plan; that's what this service should be aiming to do.

If we're going to push outward, advance the colony line, stretch ourselves into new systems and basically to take risks on that scale, then someone has to be willing to go in afterward and deal with the consequences. I'm applying because I think I can make that work and help you build a service that people rely on.

Q2. Cdr. Halvorsen: You're aware the service pairs human operatives with Artificial Persons. How do you feel about working alongside an AP?

Gundel Haan: Honestly? I've always got on with APs. I understand them and I think they very quickly understand me. I trust their steadfast response to rapidly evolving situations. I have never seen an AP lose its head when things go very quickly south. So, I'd say relieved, yes relieved I think you need them at the front line.

Machines don't panic. They don't freeze. They don't decide that something is "too much" halfway through a job. In the environments R&R is going to be operating in, that matters.

That said, I don't think APs replace human judgment, they're there to complement it. All the APs I have worked with are better at consistency; they are right there when you need them. They're great at optimising. Yes, a machine will optimise the hell out of a plan; I think that is a benefit, just sometimes, at least in my experience, a human will notice when the plan shouldn't exist in the first place, or maybe there is something beyond the plan that maybe just might be better.

Q3. ArkNet Δ-12: Do you have any ethical reservations about reintegration?

Gundel Haan: Yes, of course, who doesn't? I think anyone who says they don't is lying to everyone, including themselves.

Reintegration isn't resurrection. It's restoration under constraint. Sometimes it works beautifully, and when it does there is really nothing better. But other times, and I have seen the results, it leaves people... mmm, how can I say it? I don't know... misaligned I think is the best way of putting it. Anyone pretending it's a clean reboot hasn't watched someone try to reconcile a rebuilt body with missing and fractured memories and the awful reoccurring nightmare of their own death.

But the alternative is terminal, and I don't think fear of imperfection is a good enough reason to deny people the option of continuation. The cost is worth it. So yes, ethically, I'm more than comfortable with giving people a second chance. What they do with it, how they live afterward... that'll be beyond our remit. This service is being set up to retrieve and repatriate, I don't think it is our role to look further than that.

04. Dr Weiss: **What skills do you believe you bring to the service?**

Gundel Haan: Apart from my experience in the field, which I am sure you are all fully conversant with, from a personal perspective I feel that I'm good under pressure. I don't mean that in the heroic sense, I mean that I don't panic, I just keep functioning.

I'm observant. I notice when systems don't behave the way that the operations manual says they should. I'm also reasonably good at talking to people when they're not at their best, you know, when they are injured, frightened, disoriented.

I've been told that I say it as it is, and I think people need to hear the truth, provided it's calmly spoken. I don't see that as a flaw. I see it as a quality, let's call it integrity under pressure.

05. Cdr. Halvorsen: **This work exposes operatives to significant psychological strain. How do you manage stress?**

Gundel Haan: That's a work in progress. I don't let it affect my work, but as any of the ships I have worked with will tell you, my quarters tend to build up a fair degree of mess. I see that as my stress outlet... nothing that a little auto arrange can't put right.

Over the years I have learned not to let the inevitable build-up of stress interfere with the job at hand. Sometimes I think that it gives me the edge in that a certain heightened level of cortisol helps create focus. I never get overwhelmed by it; I compartmentalise. I deal with what's in front of me, and I leave the rest for later. I talk things through when I need to. I don't pretend I'm unaffected — I just don't let it dictate my actions.

If the question is whether I think I'm invulnerable, the answer is no. If the question is whether I think that disqualifies me, the answer is also no.

06. ArkNet Δ-12: How do you view the balance of authority between human crew and resident Machine Intelligences?

Gundel Haan: Carefully. Some of my best friends are Machines, but what I mean to them...? I am not so sure I could tell you that.

MIIs are extraordinary. They see more than we do. They plan ahead, that's for sure. But they don't carry the same consequences in the same way that say a biological entity does. When something goes wrong, that involves human and R&R fails, then... mmm, how can I say it...? Well, then it's a human who has to explain to another human what went wrong.

Given how smart the MIIs are, I am under no illusions that they see the benefits of this balance of authority better than we do and play along as it suits all of us. I for one am happy to go along with that as I know that at the end of the day an MI I work with will have my best interest in mind and will undoubtedly out guess me every time. I can live with that... no I would go one further, I think I relish in it... Working with an MI that knows what it is doing certainly frees me up to do my job.

07. Dr Weiss: Where do you see yourself and the service in ten years' time?

Gundel Haan: I'd like to say not needed, you know, obsolete, because disaster prevention systems have evolved to the point where the R&R service is no longer needed. Forgive me for smiling at that thought... I know, likelihood... zero.

Realistically? I guess all we can hope is that the service becomes quieter. Less reactive. More preventative. I hope we learn to see the warning signs earlier and can adopt an advisory role, putting our understanding of what can and does go wrong, to good use.

In the likely even that that takes more than a decade, I hope to have refined the service, to have set benchmarks, to have helped write the rule book of the perfect R&R. I think I would like to take on a training role, growing the competence of the service.

08. Cdr. Halvorsen: What do your family and friends think about your decision to apply?

Gundel Haan:

Relieved, I think. If you're talking about my mother, she doesn't really understand what the job entails and is just happy that I retired from the frontline military service. In any case she is currently obsessed with regressing her circa age back to childhood to see if she can relive it and grow back into herself... whatever that means. Sorry, I digress, but I still can't really understand why she is doing that.

As you know I don't have a partner and the few friends that I have all understand what I am doing. Mostly they're my ex-service buddies, and I actually think they are a bit jealous that I have been given this opportunity.

With properly maintained backups and the use of a sender when absolutely necessary, I get the feeling that most of my friends think that everyone is making a big deal out of the dangers of R&R. I sense that most of them think the worse thing for me will be coping with the boredom on those long distance outflights with nothing to do. Why do accidents always happen so far away? You know what I mean?

09. Dr Weiss:

Final question. Why should we trust you with this responsibility?

Gundel Haan:

Because I think you will be able to rely on me. I will bring my huge experience in disparate and challenging theatres to bear in to help develop this new R&R service. I will imbue every action with a large degree of common sense and human knowhow. I understand the risks and in that understanding I know that I am up to the challenge. I want to help Ohio build this into the R&R service that I know you want it to be. I realise how fundamental this operation is to our species' continued expansion, and I take those aspirations very seriously. Don't worry, I'm not a yes man, I'll argue when something feels wrong, so what you'll get when the situation requires it, is always, the truth. We all know that that's the way to improve a new service as it develops. I'll follow orders when they make sense, but question them all the way to the top when they don't.

And when I have to stand in front of someone and tell them that the R&R failed... tell them what we couldn't save — you can trust me not to hide behind procedure.

That's why I'm the candidate for this role and why, if you don't mind me being so bold as to say, that you would be failing in your duties were you not to trust me with this responsibility.