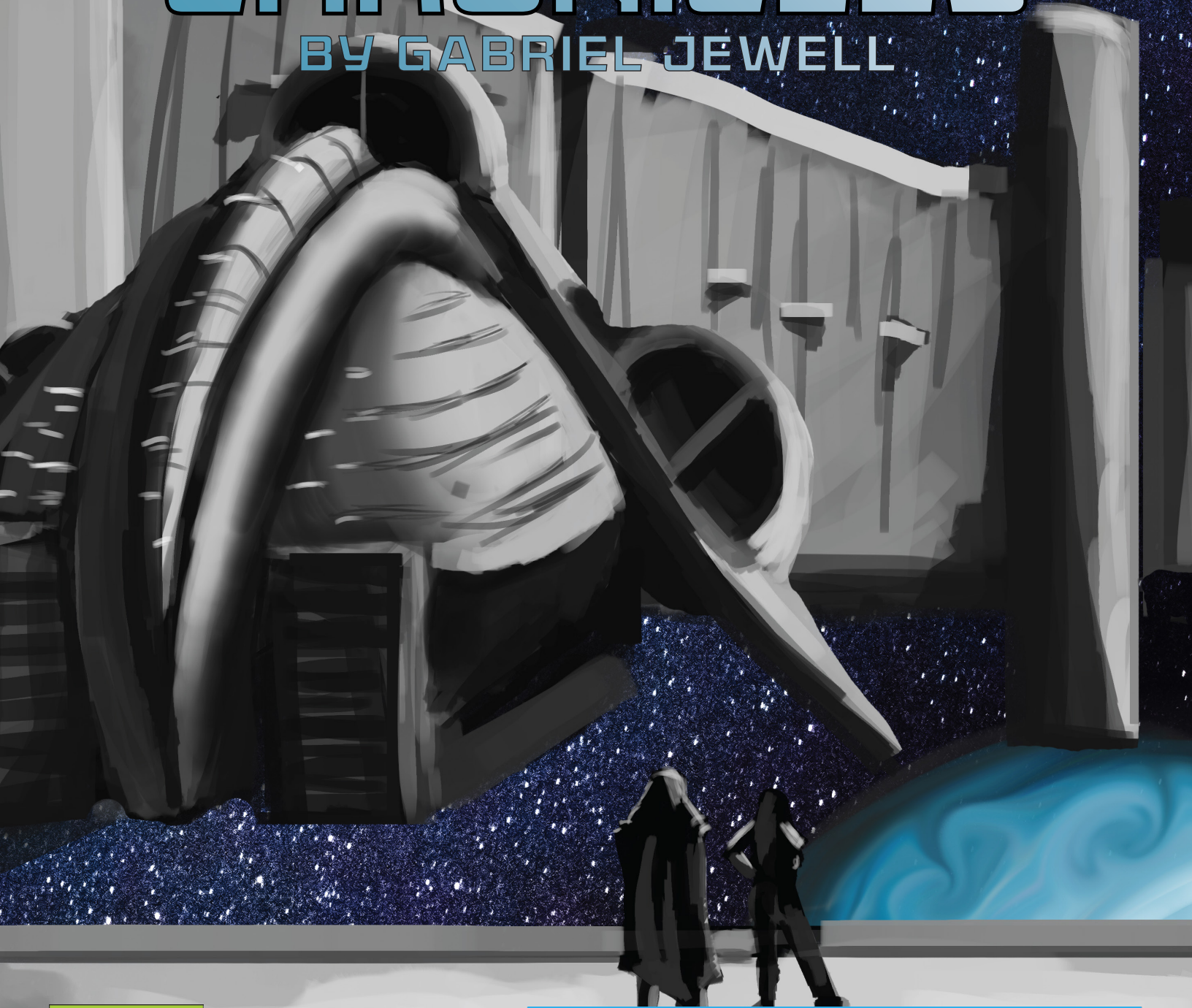




THE STARSEA CHRONICLES

BY GABRIEL JEWELL



ADVENTURES
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STARFINDER
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THE STARSEA CHRONICLES

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THE STARSEA CHRONICLES

A NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

What is contained within these pages is the culmination of years of gaming, writing, day dreaming, and simple idea generation. The ideas and concepts within this book have been waiting in some cases for more than a decade before they were finally put down on paper and it is with great pleasure I am able to share them with you the reader.

I have tried hard to create an open ended universe that you can either pick up and play with little effort or build off of in whatever direction might suit you. Do not feel constrained by whatever restrictions you may find within this text, indeed, feel free to experiment, and mess with the timeline even if it suits you. Who is to say that there is not a universe where the Alliance is a vicious dictatorship, or where the Gener War yet rages on?

What is important is that you who pick up this book, more than anything, have fun. The Starsea Universe is vast and adventure lies around every corner and after every FTL emergence. I have given you the framework, now it is up to you to provide the flesh and spirit that will make your game come alive.

Good luck, and may the rolls always be in your favor unless it would be more interesting otherwise.

-Gabriel Jewell

ADDITIONAL NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

I wrote the words you see above you many years before this book had any hope of being published, and rereading them now that the end of one long road is finally in sight and the start of a new one just over the horizon; I find they ring truer than ever. The Starsea Universe was originally written as a "hard" Science Fiction universe, and yet I intended from the start that if need be it could be easily modified with more fantastical elements if people so choose. Now that I have the pleasure of being able to incorporate the Starfinder system I am grateful for that earlier foresight. How fantastical or how "hard" you choose to make the game is up to you, and I wish you the pleasure of it! Keep those dice rolling.

-A somewhat older and hopefully wiser, Gabriel Jewell

The Lady is my guardian; I shall not want nor know fear. She bids me lie down in green fields: she leads me across the star filled heavens. She restores my soul and she leads me in the paths of righteousness for her name's sake. Though I walk through the void of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for she is with me; her rod and her staff they comfort me, her shield is before me that I may shield her children and her sword at my side that she may guard me her child as I guard my charges in righteous vengeance. She prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies: she anoints my head with oil and my cup runs over with her bounty. Surely I will know righteousness and wisdom shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the Lady's grace forever.

-A common prayer amongst the USDF.

Welcome to a universe where action and adventure lie around every corner, where one can achieve glory, fame, and fortune if they play their cards right. Where starships ply the heavens and strange alien races abound. Whether within the bounds of the Alliance or outside its borders, dash, initiative, and no small amount of luck will carry a person far.

1: OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR PLAYERS

Like cancerous growths, variously colored blobs covered the diagram before him as he studied it intently. Scattered across those were multicolored points of light, each an incident of one sort or another requiring his attention, each its own devotion of always stretched resources, and each a potential flashpoint with one power or another. With his species' equivalent of a sigh, he calls for his aide and makes ready to pass out deployment orders.

The Starsea Universe is filled with a variety of Governments as well as any number of independent systems, outposts, and other islands of civilization in what is a very large, mostly empty, and more often than not, hostile universe. Every type and size of government imaginable, and perhaps a few others besides exist, far more than it is possible to recount here. However, described briefly below are a few of the major players in this section of the Galaxy.

THE UNITED SYSTEMS ALLIANCE

The single most powerful entity in known space, the United Systems Alliance, most often referred to as simply the Alliance, encompasses tens of thousands of populated star systems and is made up of several hundred major species. While the Alliance itself is a popular democracy, systems are left to govern themselves with only minor influence exerted by Sector Governors. Its primary military arm, the USDF, however, is another story, completely apolitical but fanatically loyal to the foundations on which the Alliance is laid, it is by far the most powerful military force known and few doubt its skill.

By its nature, normal affairs within the Alliance tend to be chaotic at best as different groups, systems, and races all work towards their own goals. The Alliance government stays out of such matters for the most part and concerns itself with enforcing the few laws it implements, protecting the spaceways, and interacting with foreign governments. The Alliance relies wholly on peaceful expansion but is quick to respond with overwhelming and ruthless force when threatened.

Those traveling within the Alliance never know what or who they may encounter and adventure often lurks just around the next jump.

THE SAGAREN COLLECTIVE

Relative newcomers to the region, the Sagaren Collective has quickly established itself as a power to be reckoned with. Primarily consisting of Sagarens, several other systems and races local to the area are considered to be under their protection. Enigmatic and mysterious, these warrior traders follow their own code of conduct that seems strange and at times erratically implemented to other species. What is known is that they have no homeworld and instead travel in gigantic homeships that take up residence in uninhabited systems from which they extract resources and act as centers of trade. Additionally, those in this area of space are only a small group, with the rest of the species scattered throughout the galaxy and perhaps beyond.

Individually and as a whole it is hard to earn the trust of Sagarens, but once obtained they have proven loyal and faithful allies. They maintain a very strong military within the systems they occupy, but other than patrolling for pirates and other threats do not maintain a presence outside their own systems. However, with the economic power they wield, their influence extends far beyond their own territory. Due in large part to actions by the exploration team that discovered the Sagarens (Or as the mission leader said wryly, was discovered by) the Sagaren Collective is currently an ally of the United Systems Alliance.

THE ITELLIAN FEDERATION

The Itellian Federation is an aggressively expansionist government only recently appearing on the galactic scene. Shortly after achieving FTL technology the Itellian's conquered several nearby less technologically developed systems, their conquests marked by an exceptional brutality and willingness to destroy population centers in order to force their opponents into submission. Aggressive trading and espionage have produced a rapid rise in technology once they encountered the larger galactic society. This has led to a wide disparity of technologies in use, with a number of different styles and levels erratically in use throughout their territory. Overall their technology, especially militarily, is several steps behind that of the larger galactic civilization, and this is at the moment the only thing holding them in check as the easily exploitable worlds have all been taken and everything else within immediate reach is under the control of one or another regional power that is far more capable of defending itself. However, it seems only a matter of time before the Itellians either try their luck once more or one of their neighbors takes preemptive action against the potential menace on their doorstep before it can gather its strength.

THE BAGGAL EMPIRE

A multi-system single species monarchy located near one of the Alliance's more recently expanded borders, the Baggal Empire's policies tend to vary from Dynasty to Dynasty and the leadership often changes as the various lesser nobles fight to seize the crown when not squabbling openly or otherwise amongst themselves. Generally fairly expansionist, only their own infighting has kept them from being a significantly larger presence in their section of the galaxy, only holding fourteen systems at the moment, however, the majority are heavily developed, some with multiple inhabited planets, providing a strong economic and resource base for the Empire.

Though they consider themselves an honorable people, particularly among the nobles, in actuality many of its nobles fall well short of the ideals they are supposed to represent and uphold. Recently the Baggal Empire came into conflict with the Alliance over an area of space along their mutual borders. Covert operations by the Empire eventually erupted into open warfare when Alliance naval units uncovered several simultaneous plots, including supporting of pirates in the area by the Empire. A major battle over the planet of K1317n on which both sides had settlements (which had been getting along peacefully up to that point) which would have led into full-scale warfare instead of mere skirmishing was averted by an incident that is still classified by both governments but resulted eventually in a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The Baggal Empire is a slowly but steadily growing power in the region and looks to continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

THE INDEPENDENTS

The galaxy is filled with independent governments of all types and sizes who for whatever reason are not under the sphere of one of the major powers or are not a major power themselves. It is here that many fringe ideas and concepts have been put into effect, successfully or otherwise, as well as those who simply refuse for whatever reasons to exist under one of the larger powers. While many are too small, little more than single underdeveloped planets, to have any real effect on the general course of events, many of the larger ones, though not major powers, can still have noticeable effects on galactic politics and even the smaller ones can prove catalysts for incidents between the larger powers as alliances and treaties come into effect. At a minimum, these worlds, non-aligned and otherwise provide opportunities not available within the borders of the major powers.

2: A BRIEF OUTLINE OF RECORDED HISTORY

TOUCHING ON A LIMITED NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

The professor looked up from her lectern, crest bright with advanced age as she acknowledged the point. "I will grant that while it is true that the uprising on Mining Outpost 597 did have some significant changes on society, they were largely wiped out in the reforms of 5597GAD and it was not until the Revolution of 5634GAD that progressive changes in working conditions were firmly established. However that was an excellent connection to have made."

The student nodded, pleased at the hard won compliment and typed something into their data pad as the professor resumed her lecture once more, displaying a satisfied expression.

The galaxy's history is long, complex, and varied, to try to even skim the known portions in whole would be a life's work and then some. However, included here are some of the more important, climatic, and interesting known events.

HELAPIAN CONFLICT: The Helapians were once a powerful space faring race that spread over several dozen systems. However they were struck down by a virulent plague that wiped them out, leaving their automated robotic defenses operating without guidance. Had these defenses simply continued to defend what was once Helapien territory there would have been little trouble, unfortunately, every time they encountered a new potential threat, they did not simply destroy the individual ship or ships, but spread out to confront whatever species it had belonged to. Many newly developing races in the surrounding areas of space were destroyed simply because they were seen as threats, and with automated factories continually producing new units as needed these robotic defenses became a deadly danger to a greater and greater area. While several weaker races in the area had banded together to try and meet the threat, it was not until the arrival of a Sagaren Homeship in the region that sufficient forces were arrayed against the Helapien's automations to bring about what was effectively a stalemate for several years. When the Alliance exploration vessel Star Runner encountered the Helapians it sparked a chain of events that led to a Helapien fleet following a Sagaren task force as it went to meet with the Alliance for the first time. As the Sagaren task force met with the first contact Alliance fleet the Helapien fleet fell on both groups, and only by uniting were they able to defeat the attacking forces. This quickly firmed up relations between the Collective and the Alliance, and it was shortly afterwards that an Alliance expeditionary force engaged in joint operations with the Sagarens

and their combined forces quickly wiped out the last remains of the Helapien automations, ending the conflict and opening up a new section of space for exploration and colonization while ensuring that the United Systems Alliance and the Sagaren Collective would enter into a long standing alliance.

THE UNITED SYSTEM DEFENSE FLEET

SCANDAL: The Fleet Scandal broke out towards the later half of the Helix War and the final dying reverberations are only now beginning to play themselves out. The core of the Fleet Scandal occurred when a number of highly placed members of the Alliance military along with several sector governors, and many of their underlings, began arranging for restricted materials meant for the military to be funneled to outside forces, especially pirates, in return for large amounts of wealth. Everything from guns, weapons, armor, powered armor, and even warships up to heavy cruiser size simply disappeared from the books and ended up in the hands of the Alliance's enemies. Almost as bad was the information that was given, allowing these groups to strike at valuable lightly escorted convoys and independent ships with their new weapons in enough force to prevent the escape of any survivors. It was only when such a force struck a convoy that had the fortune of the battleship Majestic joining unplanned as it was heading to the front that it became known that the attackers were using USDF ships and equipment. It took several more years of careful investigations by USDF Intelligence and the Guardians before all at once in simultaneous actions the majority of those involved were arrested, the remainder taken in over the next few years. Those arrested were questioned, given a fair trial, and those found guilty were hanged as traitors and pirates. One by one, or in groups the stolen USDF ships were hunted down.

The scandal rocked the USDF and the Alliance government and led to a complete reorganization of the Office of Internal Affairs Department of USDF Intelligence. Even today the remnants of the then modern Alliance equipment pop up from time to time as a particularly nasty reminder of what is generally considered to be the most disgraceful affair in the history of the USDF.

ANTERIES SECTOR BORDER DISPUTE: The Anteries Sector Border Dispute was a conflict between the Baggal Empire and the United Systems Alliance over a sector of space that bordered both governments. Both governments already had settled systems in the disputed area and refused to give up those systems. While the Alliance was willing to settle for simply retaining its own systems and allowing free development elsewhere by the Empire, House Retine was looking for a conflict in which to enhance its own prestige and power and as a result steadfastly refused any solution other than the turning over of all the systems in the disputed area to the Empire. While negotiations continued House Retine was busy supplying and supporting several pirate groups in the area that

were preying on Alliance ships and systems. Additionally, they had managed to subvert the Alliance Sector Governor. The U.S.A.S Ulysses, on its first deployment, and carrying the first military exchange with the Sagaren Collective, a squadron of their strike craft and a platoon of their Commandos, played a pivotal role in the conflict. Even as scattered skirmishes broke out between light Alliance and Empire forces, the Ulysses found and eliminated the base of the pirates that had been plaguing the sector, in the process not just uncovering evidence of the Empire's involvement in the pirate attacks, but actually capturing the light cruiser R.M.S Shield in the act of bringing supplies and equipment to the pirate base in return for stolen goods. In retaliation for the attacks by the Empire, several strikes were carried out against valuable targets in Empire space in which a great deal of damage was done. The Governor's treachery was uncovered after the Ulysses received a set of illegal orders to surrender to Empire forces on charges of piracy which led to a joint investigation by USDF Intelligence and a Guardian who happened to be in the area. Ironically, it was the Ulysses that was charged with arresting the governor which only occurred after a sharp firefight with the hired mercenaries the governor had employed as bodyguards.

Meanwhile back in the Empire, House Retine had managed to fan the flames of nationalism to the point that several of the other houses became directly involved in the conflict, and several large strike forces were assembled in preparation for an attack on several key systems. In particular, K1317n was a prime target as before the conflict had begun, it had been settled by both the Alliance and the Empire (and the residents had been getting along just fine) and already the two militaries were eyeing each other both in space and on the ground. Warned by a series of concealed sensor platforms along the border of the incoming attack every available Alliance vessel was rushed to K1317n and before long both sides had assembled substantial forces in the system and were nearly ready to open fire, which would have resulted in outright war between the two governments when something happened. To this day both sides have refused to comment on exactly what that was. All that is generally known is that whatever occurred, it forced the two would be enemies to unite and engage something that resulted in heavy losses for the two fleets before the now united force, along with hastily arrived reinforcements set off in pursuit of something.

The results of these many conflicts, and in particular what came to be referred to as "The Incident", in addition to the shock of the margin of superiority the Alliance held in both technology and numbers, combined with the undermining of the covert end of the Empire's operations provided an opportune time for His Royal Majesty Hiban Riskalian IV to wrest control of the throne. One of his first acts was to sign a treaty with the Alliance, opening the disputed territory to both sides and establishing a working, if somewhat tense relationship between the two governments.

THE KLAEOK INCIDENT: The Klaeok Incident came about at the end of the New Ireland War for Independence. The Ballard Confederacy, already repelled once by the settlers of Klaeok had made clear its intent to make an example of the lightly settled world and its defiant inhabitants. Realizing they faced potential annihilation, the settlers, bolstered by many of the survivors of the first attack who had elected to join with their former enemies, began looking for allies to aid them. Unfortunately, there were none in the area who were willing

to risk a confrontation with the Ballard Confederacy which was the largest local power. Finally, in desperation the settlers turned to a Sagaren Homeship that had arrived in the region only a few years before and about whose inhabitants little was known and a good deal of rumor and conjecture existed.

After a great deal of discussion, the Sagarens agreed to send a delegation to Klaeok to try and hammer out an agreement. Negotiations initially went very well and both parties involved were close to reaching a final agreement when the larger part of the Ballard Confederacy's battle fleet suddenly dropped into the system. Disdaining warnings by the Sagaren diplomats on the planet and in their orbiting starship that the Klaeok system was now under the protection of the Sagaren Collective the Confederation forces prepared to enter orbit and begin their assault. As it became clear that the fleet was not going to back down it was suddenly attacked from behind by a Sagaren taskforce that had been lurking in the system under stealth. Even though they were significantly outnumbered the superiority of the Sagaren forces would have likely assured victory in any case. The crushing surprise missile salvo that streaked in nearly unopposed simply guaranteed that such was the case. The Confederacy forces fought valiantly despite losing their commander and several of their ships in the opening seconds of the battle but were rapidly overwhelmed.

This victory did not merely assure the continued survival of the Klaeok settlers, who soon thereafter renamed their planet New Ireland, but it broke the back of the Ballard Confederacy through the destruction of the majority of its navy. Additionally, it showed that the Sagarens were willing to use force when necessary to assert their influence within the region.

The resulting trade agreements greatly benefited both sides and it is expected that within another couple of decades New Ireland will be able to look after its own defenses without the need for assistance. Since the Klaeok incident, a number of systems have followed New Ireland's example and it seems likely that many of them will form an alliance of some sort in preparation for the time when the Sagarens move on. Ironically enough the remnants of the Ballard Confederacy are likely to be among those who join.

THE WILLIAN CLUSTER CAMPAIGN: Up until just a few years before the Helix War the Willian Cluster had long proven a haven for pirates and raiders, with many bands of each having formed something of an alliance that had spread over several of the star systems in the Willian Cluster. This grouping of pirates, raiders, brigands, and ne'er-do-wells had long been a thorn in the side of organized authority, but none of the governments in the area, even together, had the force necessary to properly deal with the threat this pirate's alliance presented. At best they had been able to keep things somewhat in check by occasional strikes at the periphery against the more weakly defended targets. Things became so bad that large groups of pirates began descending even on the more heavily developed worlds, overwhelming the defenders, taking slaves, looting, and raping while destroying much property and killing indiscriminately.

Ironically, the very events which seemed to best show the pirate's power were those that set in motion their eventual downfall. These large raids raised enough consternation among the local governments that several activated their treaties with each other, and more importantly, managed to gain the support of the United Systems Alliance. This was greatly helped by the fact that the Alliance's attention had already been



drawn towards the Willian Cluster after several rather bold raids into Alliance territory by the pirates.

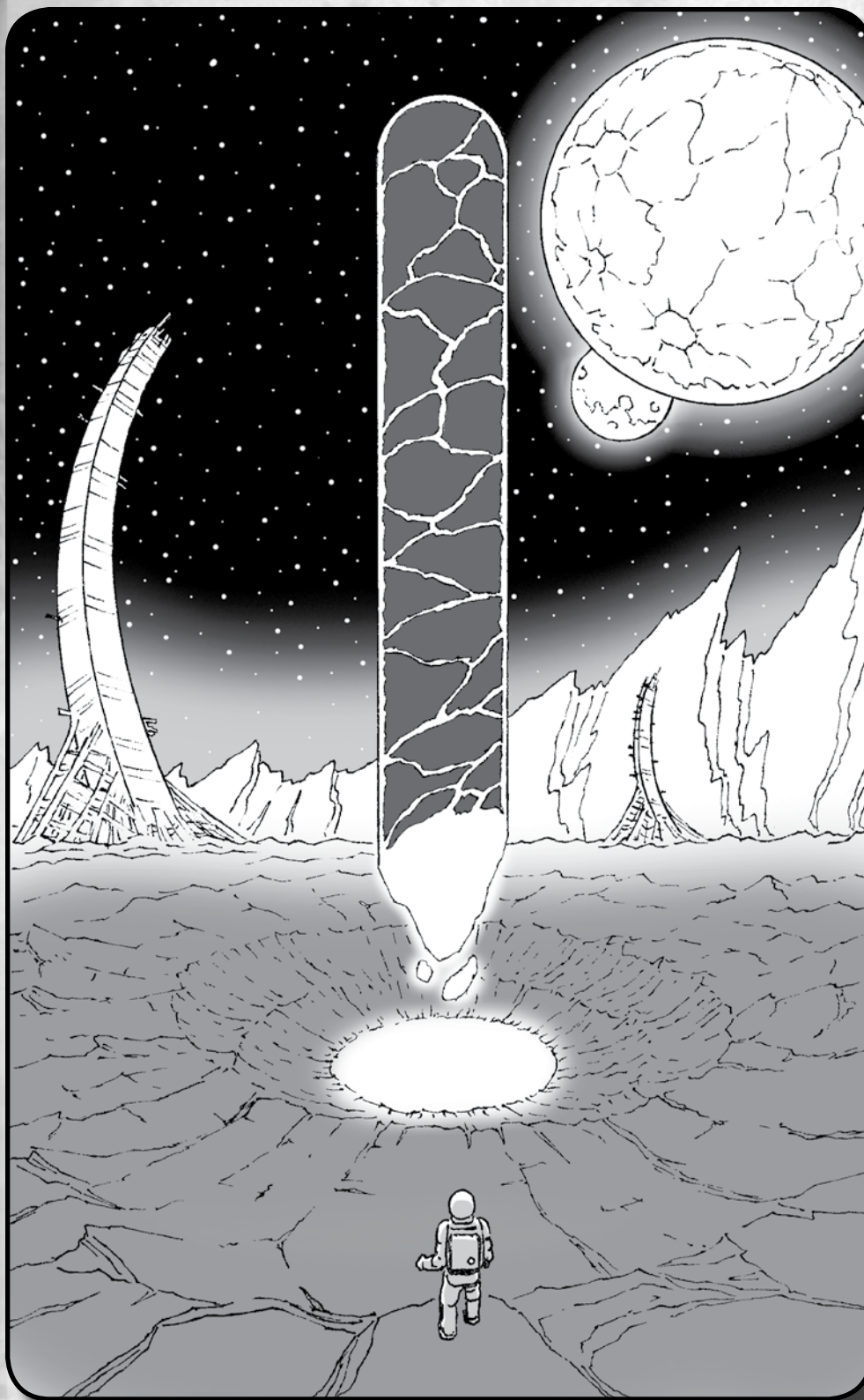
Thus it was that a large allied fleet, its core comprised of USDF warships and supported by the assembled forces of the regional governments moved on the cluster. However the pirates had long been prepared for some kind of attack, though not on the scale that did finally descend on them, and fighting was far more fierce than had been anticipated. Several of the ground assaults undertaken due to the need to rescue prisoners turned what otherwise would have been a series of space battles followed by the orbital bombardment of necessary targets into violent bloody affairs as pitched fighting took place from the ground clear up to space, the attackers running into thick defensive networks practically everywhere they assaulted. It was not until the United Systems Alliance threw another fully supported fleet into the fray while the armada condensed its efforts on fewer objectives at a time that significant and rapid progress began to be made.

In the end, though considered very successful, a campaign that had been expected to take a couple of months at most with minimal casualties ended up stretching out for nearly a year with casualties that while considered light for most military operations of this size, were well beyond what is generally considered acceptable when dealing with pirates and their ilk.

With the end of this campaign, piracy through much of known space dropped off sharply for more than two decades, and it was not until the Gener War was well along and absorbing many of the forces more generally employed in piracy suppression that piracy and raiding began to pick up again, though it has not so far reached its previous levels.

THE DENTIAN CIVIL WAR: The Dentian Civil War was a war that threatened to tear apart one of the leading races within the United Systems Alliance. The origins of the civil war had its origins in the distant past. Since not long before the Dentian's several systems chose to join the then still emerging entity that would eventually become the United Systems Alliance the Dentian culture began to experience a division in what had before been a unified cultural system. Several clans began to allow increasing rights to their females which met with discontent from those clans that didn't do so themselves. In these clans, females were considered little better than second class citizens and were sharply restricted in what they were allowed to do in addition to being required to follow the instructions of their male relatives.

Because of the traditional autonomy of the individual clans when it came to their own affairs and policies, even when laws were eventually passed that allowed at least the option for females to receive equal treatment, once the majority of clans had reformed their policies, these individual clans, and groups



within even the reformed clans, continued to hold to the older ways and continued to not only place such restrictions on their own females; they also tried to undermine the laws put in place.

These two differing factions continued to engage in this conflict of politics, duels, and scuffles between clans and individuals up until nearly the present time. The outbreak of the civil war occurred when the newly elected Grand-Leader tapped M'Lee D'ress for the position of Vice-Leader. A famous Captain in the USDF, and even more scandalously, bond-mate

to a non-Dentian, retired Colonel Matthew Angel from the Alliance Strikers, she seemed to stand for everything the traditionalists hated. Because of this when she arrived in the Dentian home system a number of Dentian naval units mutinied and sided with the traditionalists, launching an attack on the Vice-Leader to be while planetside simultaneously action was taken against the Grand-Leader and reformists.

The would-be Vice-Leader survived only through great luck, the skill of Matthew Angel, pilot, and owner of the Star Runner which she was traveling on, the valiant actions of a pair of loyalist destroyers that threw themselves against heavy odds to buy desperately needed time, and in the end, the Alliance battlecruiser Gargoyle intervening in defense of the Star Runner. The Grand-Leader survived his own attack, though with the loss of most of his bodyguards and badly wounded.

Across the planet, open warfare broke out, and the Dentian navy broke down into vicious infighting in which the reformists quickly gained the upper hand. On planets with large Dentian populations, most especially those that had been colonized before their entry into the Alliance, widespread fighting broke out as clans on each side took up arms in the wake of the initial surprise attack. For more than two years the war raged, involving guerrilla tactics, vicious urban street fighting, assassinations; with friends and even family members fighting each other before the reformists were able to declare victory, and even then, isolated bands and groups of the traditionalists refused to give up and many have resorted to terrorist tactics, leaving the Dentian government with an ongoing problem but firmly establishing the reformists in control and in the majority. As things stand, it seems likely that D'ress will be elected to the position of Grand-Leader

when the current one retires, despite the additional outbreaks of violence it will probably cause.

THE GREAT SIGNING: The Great Signing is the name given to the event that officially resulted in the creation of the original United Systems Alliance. Up until this point, there had been numerous alliances and single governments, generally racially based, that held multiple systems. Conflicts were common, and some had proven exceptionally brutal, incidents like the Galafant Genocide and the orbital bombardment of

the Opo homeworld horrified many and led to a growing belief that some form of overall order needed to be imposed on the galaxy. Several groups tried to do this by force, which only aggravated the problem. As a result of these and other factors, several of the larger powers and many of the minor powers came together in an effort led by the Dentian Commonwealth, the Terran Alliance, the Welbring Confederacy, the Tracurn Cooperative, and several lesser powers. These governments resolved to work together towards securing a peace between as many of the powers as possible. Members would be left strictly to their own affairs when it came to governance so long as civilians were left out of any military action as much as possible, but any action taken against a member by another power would be met with the full unified force of the new Alliance.

Originally consisting of just over fifty signatories, the Alliance saw a steady increase in membership as the security it provided, as well as the economic opportunities available, became apparent. Despite over five thousand years since the signing, and numerous new signatories, the original tenants agreed to have seen little change or modification, indeed, the citizens of the Alliance have long fought fiercely against enemies internal and external that have threatened such changes.

THE SLOUGHING PLAGUE: Before the use of medical nanites came about, the threat of diseases that could rapidly spread through known space was very real and more than one close call was had with several diseases that proved themselves to be anything but picky when it came to what species they would infect. This was of course entirely aside from those that simply attacked things other than people such as livestock, agriculture, and native species. Perhaps the most frightening among these was what came to be known as the Sloughing Plague. Even today no one is entirely certain where it originated, but a long dormancy period during which it was contagious allowed it to spread far and wide through known space before anyone realized what was happening. Within the space of less than a month, hundreds of worlds were infected. Quarantines did little to help even when imposed because of how quickly the disease had spread undetected. Millions died from the painful disease which caused flesh to decay and eventually fall off a person, often leaving bare bone exposed. Billions were horribly scarred for life. Massive efforts by practically every scientific agency in the known galaxy backed by an unheard of near unanimous support of nearly all existing governments finally managed to get the disease under control through mass vaccinations on a scale previously unheard of as well as aggressive treatment of those infected. The last reported case of the Sloughing Plague was reported almost fifty years after the initial outbreak and the disease is believed extinct except for a few very carefully guarded samples. Speculation continues through today that the disease was a bioweapon that got out of control, but it seems unlikely the true origin will ever be known. The Sloughing Plague provided much of the impetus needed to push forward the development of medical nanites that have largely eliminated such problems as well as providing many other benefits.

THE DEADLINE EVENT: Since the earliest days of recorded star travel people have stumbled over the remnants of earlier civilizations. While many never reached the stars, or had only just done so, time and again ruins have been found

that point to great widespread civilizations that ranged well beyond the explored parts of the galaxy. All indications are that they were at least as advanced as any civilization currently known, if not more so, and perhaps most disturbingly, they all disappeared within a very short time without any indications so far discovered as to what caused it. In fact, there are no indications that any spacefaring race which existed at the time continued to do so afterward. The result has come to be called the Deadline Event.

As might be expected, this has resulted in all kinds of theories, from plague to invaders, to a sudden rise to transcendence, too many other possibilities. Across space, both private and government sponsored research teams excavate and examine the ruins in an attempt to glean some sort of indication of what these civilizations were like, and perhaps more importantly, what caused their destruction.

So far as is currently known, the only structures found are those that reside on planetoids of some sort, no space stations, starships, or even satellites have been found. This has only given credence to the belief that whatever caused their downfall, it was not of a peaceful nature.

Recently rumors have arisen that whatever caused the sudden break off of the Anteries Sector Border Dispute had some possible connection to the Deadline Event, and unlike the rumors that have often sprung up in the past, it is refusing to die, giving added credence to the belief that whatever happened so long ago was violent in the extreme given the losses the Baggal Empire and the United Systems Alliance combined naval forces sustained.

Any researcher or team of researchers that find definitive information on these lost civilizations instead of mere conjecture and supposition will likely find themselves set for life financially and catapulted to the head of their field. Until then the peoples of the galaxy will likely continue looking at the stars and wondering just what could have caused such civilizations to disappear with little trace.

THE HELIX WAR: The greatest and most horrifying conflict in recorded galactic history, the Helix War came upon the galaxy unexpectedly. The Geners at first were thought to be a race like many others if a bit reclusive and perhaps more disturbing than most. Their representatives preached a culture of oneness, not of social or economic class, but racial class. To any who would accept they offered the "elevation" of species, using their advanced genetic knowledge to literally reshape other species into their own image. Few as might be expected accepted the offer, and they disappeared into the ranks of the Geners. Or so it was thought.

THE HELIX WAR'S IMPACT

The Helix War is still fresh in the minds of many and its scars run deep. Many people lost friends, family, and loved ones to a fate worse than death. Many others face the horror of simply not knowing what happened to those they cared for.

Thousands of fertile lush worlds were reduced to blasted molten ruin. Many characters, especially with a military background are likely to have been touched by the Helix War in one way or another. And those that weren't would be notable for that fact.

Approximately two years after initial contact with the Geners the United Systems Alliance began to find scattered outermost colonies gone without any trace of what had happened to them. People completely gone, settlements completely leveled, any defenders apparently destroyed without being able to send a distress call. Mystified and concerned, the Alliance began increasing patrols in the border regions affected. It was one of these reinforced patrols that responded to a garbled distress call to find a small Gener task force engaged in landing troops on the small colony world of T'Ger.

After a sharp fight that proved a nasty surprise to both sides the Geners were driven off minus their landing forces. When Strikers descended to relieve the local ground based defenders they found themselves facing not the Geners themselves, but several species of specially grown beings that could only be described as monsters specially designed for combat. Even with support from the orbiting ships fighting was vicious and casualties among the defense forces and Strikers alike were severe before the last of their foes were destroyed, none surrendering.

Even as the Alliance and its allies girded for a war the true horror of what they faced was revealed. Analysis of the corpses of the Helix Warriors brought to light the horrifying evidence that many had previously been the residents of the attacked colony worlds, twisted in mind and body into subervient minions of the Geners. While no one ever found out if their claims of eventual elevation of all life to their "exalted" status was truthful, and they sincerely believed that once all resistance was eliminated they would raise their cannon fodder to such levels, the galaxy responded with a degree of revulsion and outrage never before seen. All in the path of the Geners realized that this was not to be a war for dominance, or even survival, but for the very existence of their races and their souls.

The United Systems Alliance took the unprecedented action of declaring that in light of the atrocities committed and a refusal to negotiate, that the entire Gener race would be completely and utterly annihilated. This, however, would prove far harder to achieve than any might have guessed initially.

The Gener Empire was far more extensive than anyone outside it had realized, and their combination of biological and mechanical technology initially proved an even match for the best the Alliance could field. For the first time in history, the entire Alliance had to shift over to a war footing with all the disruption and chaos that entitled. Almost as bad, system after system continued to come under attack as the Geners were able to choose when and where they would attack and even the Alliance couldn't muster enough forces to guard everywhere strongly enough to repel the sort of assaults the Geners could attack with.

The conflict seesawed back and forth for nearly four decades, neither side able to gain a significant advantage even as the death tolls skyrocketed. Finally, though, the full weight of Alliance production and manpower, along with the introduction of several new technologies turned the tide. Several new Alliance fleets slammed simultaneously into several key Gener systems, destroying the defending fleets, wrecking their space-based industries, and finally glassing all the inhabited planets within.

The Geners never recovered from such a significant loss of military and industrial power. System by system the Alliance swept through Gener space, leaving nothing behind but glowing balls that had once been planets, some of which had once been Alliance planets, but were now so heavily infested with Gener biological creations that they could not be safely retaken.

Towards the end, the Geners attempted to launch several expeditions to colonize areas far from the conflict where they could restart unhindered, but as best can be determined, the Alliance managed to intercept each of these endeavors before they could escape the conflict. The Geners' attempts at resistance grew more and more drastic as the end loomed, but the Alliance drove on regardless of losses, its people not seeing the war so much as conflict as a crusade. Even as they cursed themselves, never knowing if the opponents they cut down might have one time been friends or even family, they destroyed all before them with a ruthlessness that shook the rest of the galaxy to its core as it witnessed the full and unchained might of the gentle giant in their midst brought entirely to bear in a righteous cause.

After sixty-three years the war was officially declared over by the United Systems Alliance. The last Gener strongholds had been utterly annihilated, the last pockets of their race and their creations hunted down and eliminated. When the totals were added up even the most hardened was shocked. It was confirmed that Alliance civilian casualties numbered at least five trillion, with the possibility of it being twice that but having no way of confirming more than that. The Alliance military and its allies, not counting system defense forces, suffered just over a two and a half billion casualties during the course of the conflict. The economic cost was literally uncountable. No one has even tried to estimate Gener losses, but with the extinction of an entire race, it can only be assumed that their losses were higher by several orders of magnitude.

Even now, more than two decades after the official end of the war its effects continue to linger. The United Systems Alliance increased its military half again over what it had been before the war, and advances mean its power is two or three times that prewar. Even now, three decades after the cession of hostilities it continues to hunt for possible Gener remains, determined to ensure that not even one of its dangerous creations survives to multiply and spread. Soldiers and civilians alike still suffer from the trauma of the war, not knowing if their friends and families were simply killed, or turned into abominations that they themselves might have slain.

Rumors continue to emerge about the true horror of the Geners' experiments, the ones that were never designed for the battlefield that left even the returning remains of the elite Ten Percent strike teams pale with horror. Perhaps the most vivid reminder of the Helix War though is the section of space now known as The Ten Thousand Eyes of Death. The name is in reference to the number of planets that were reduced to glowing cinders by massive anti-matter bombardments and the cracking of their crusts by the Alliance as it sought to throw back the Geners and sterilize the worlds they had infected with their deadly creations.

TIMELINE

GAD (General Arbitrary Date) Part of a dating system used by much of the galaxy as a way to standardize dates. Many civilizations and planets though use their own calendars and dating systems in their internal affairs.

GAD years are broken down into ten month spans of four weeks, made up of ten days each of which has twenty-four hours.

-1,500,000 GAD APPROX: Deadline Event.

-57,671 GAD: Sagaren Homeworld destroyed in a nova, survivors launch into space on primitive sublight Homeships.

-7,560 GAD: Humans develop primitive FTL travel.

-5,837 GAD: Iron Age Baggalian Empire establishes complete domination over homeworld.

-5,747 GAD: Conflict between Human Confederation and its rebellious offshoot the Independent Federation ends in the Confederation's victory.

-4,563 GAD: Dentians colonize their first out of system planet setting the stage for the beginning of the Dentian Commonwealth.

0 GAD: New dating system picked by a large number of governments to simplify dating confusion between civilizations.

515 GAD: United Systems Alliance is formally founded in The Great Signing.

3474 GAD: Sloughing Plague officially recognized.

3527 GAD: Sloughing Plague declared extinct.

5518 GAD: Willian Cluster Campaign occurs.

5529 GAD: The Helix War begins.

5592 GAD: The Helix War ends, Gener race officially declared extinct.

5610 GAD: Sagarens enter local galactic region and encounter United Systems Alliance private exploration team.

5611 GAD: Helapian Conflict brought to an end by the combined forces of the Sagaren Collective and United Systems Alliance.

5613 GAD: The Klæok Incident occurs.

5615 GAD: Itellians launch interstellar campaign that conquers several nearby inhabited systems before being stopped.

5620 GAD: Anteries Sector Border Dispute occurs.

5623 GAD: Dentian Civil War erupts.

5626 GAD: Dentian Civil War comes to an end.

5628 GAD: Current Day

Less vivid but of potentially greater long term importance than even The Ten Thousand Eyes of Death is the awareness the Helix War brought to the galaxy as a whole just what the results of an absolute war are when governments become so large and the weapons so advanced. Even earlier conflicts where planets were bombarded in deliberate massacres paled in comparison to the level of carnage that erupted when the two largest known empires went to war to the death.

In many civilizations, there has been a crackdown on genetic experimentation not directly related to the improvement of health for people, agriculture, and livestock, and even their greater oversight is being put into place to prevent the perversion of the science to end result the Gener's arrived at. Other civilizations, impressed with the results obtained by the Geners have increased Genetic research in areas previously considered unprofitable and are generating unrest among their neighbors and the galactic community as a whole at the thought of where such efforts could lead.

Furthermore, despite the losses suffered by the United Systems Alliance, the Alliance actually grew during the conflict, several species joining during the ongoing conflict for protection and having found no reason to leave in the aftermath. Though at no point more than a tenth of the Alliance was directly affected by the Helix War, as a whole the Alliance emerged from the conflict stronger than before and having reaffirmed to both itself and the rest of the known galaxy that it retained the power and resolve to continue on as a healthy and ever growing civilization.

3: THE UNITED SYSTEMS ALLIANCE

"So you see Ma'am, it really doesn't make any difference to my or my crew, I'll simply note in my logs that the local inhabitants declined to join the United Systems Alliance at this time and we'll move onto the next system on our itinerary. However, once the information on your system gets into the databases you'll have fortune hunters, pirates, raiders, free traders, corporations, and other governments here all trying to grab whatever they can. And if you think our small scoutship put paid to your defense grid when it "accidentally" fired on us, the thought of what a proper warship, capable of orbital bombardments with antimatter missiles, could do if you do not comply with their demands, should give you serious pause. If you join with us we will provide protection from them and leave you to rule your system however you wish, bearing in mind our few laws in that regard, and all for only a hundredth of your total system income. Now, you can write all that off as propaganda if you want, that's your decision, but you know our own terms. I'll leave you with the information, we'll be here another couple of days, if you change your mind, you know where to find us."

The Empress watched as the alien made to depart and raised her manipulator. "Wait, the Empire will join your Alliance, send your ambassadors."

The scout ship captain smiled and settled back down to finish the negotiations.

As noted in the first chapter, the United Systems Alliance is far and away the most powerful and wide-spread single organization in known space. As such it is likely to figure heavily into the thinking of any sentient looking to travel, and they would be well advised to at least know the basics about the Alliance.

The Alliance has been around in its current form for at least five thousand years and in various forms before that for longer than easily researched history. Throughout that time the Alliance has shown a slow steady growth in area and population despite many setbacks, including several which came close to destroying it. Through it all, the Alliance has only grown stronger until in these times it seems that nothing short of a force capable of destroying the entire galaxy can do more than give this fairly benign behemoth pause. Its recent sixty-eight-year war with the Geners seems to have only reinforced this conception since as great and terrible as the war was; it consumed only a fraction of the Alliance's seemingly bottomless resources.

A fairly passive entity by almost anyone's standards, the Alliance has time and again proved itself quick to strike back against those who would do it harm, though there is no recorded instance of it striking the first blow in any conflict. But due to its size, it wields political and economic clout that in many ways are more powerful by far than its military. Only the fact that it normally stays out of general galactic politics

and its economy is spread among so many different elements has kept it from overwhelming everyone else by unintentional fiat.

Despite all this, much of the territory claimed by the Alliance is still mostly unknown, with many systems having never seen more of civilization than a simple survey probe. Thus the potential for adventure is still rarely more than a short jump away even within the core of the Alliance.

FOUNDING CONCEPTS

The Alliance is founded on a few simple concepts. However these concepts are held strongly and efforts to undermine them from without and within, whether subtle or obvious have consistently met with fierce resistance. They believe that systems have the right to choose their own decisions, and not have them dictated to by any overarching agency, that peoples have a right and responsibility to put into power the leaders they choose if any, and that all peoples have a right to not fear attack by outside forces

GOVERNMENT

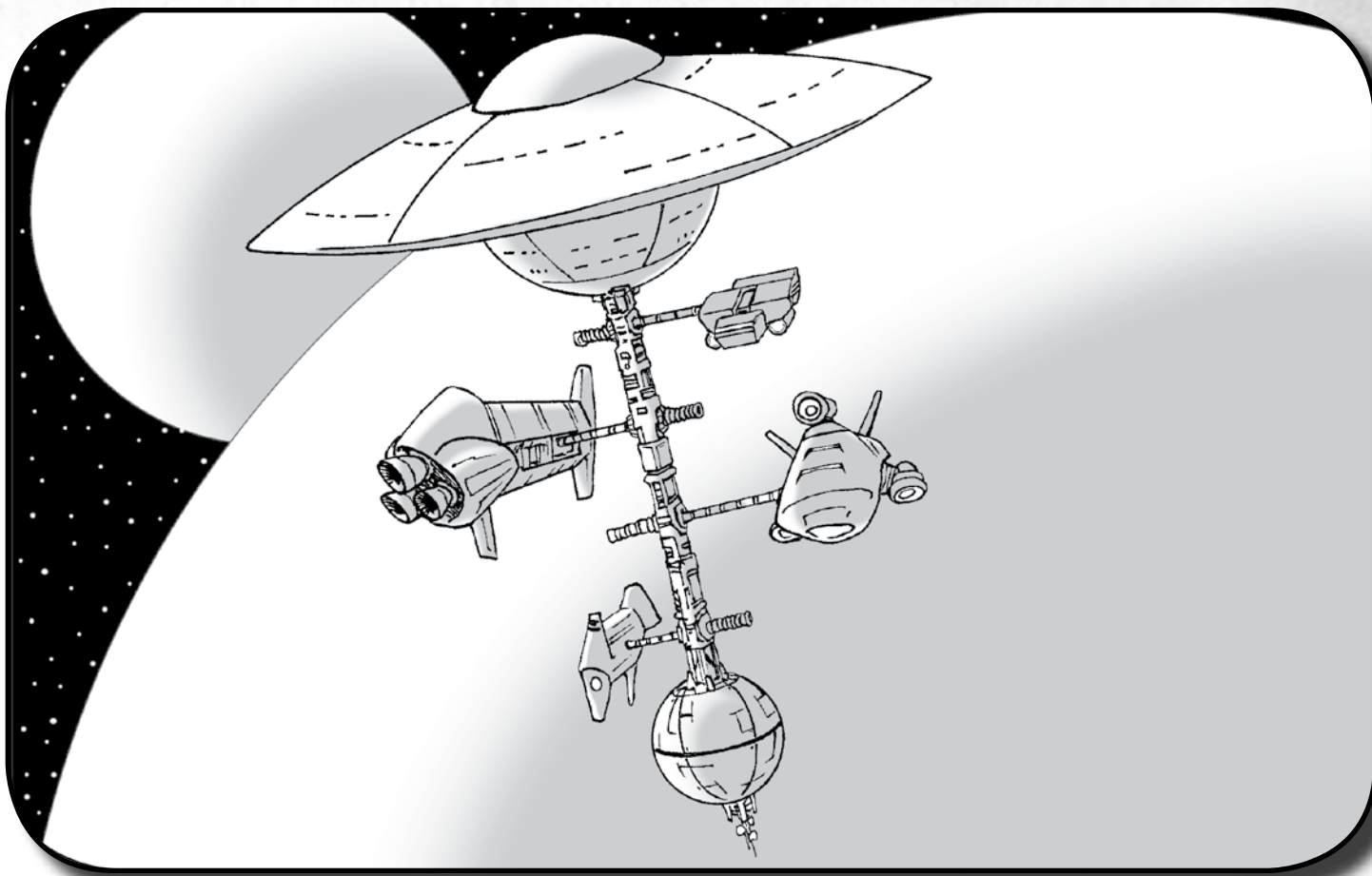
The United Systems Alliance is a coalition of over five hundred major species and many thousands of star systems. As such, any attempt to lay down strict laws or guidelines as to how each system conducts its own affairs would be doomed to failure. In light of this, each system is allowed to govern itself however it wishes, aside from a few minor rules which are covered in the section on laws and regulations.

However, in order to act with unity when it is a necessity there must be some form of overarching government. Technically, therefore, the Alliance is a very loose democracy, with a President elected in a popular election every ten years. There is no congress or parliament, instead, each system maintains a representative who brings issues to the executive department as necessary, with important decisions being attended to by the President directly. In this capacity, the president is supported by a cabinet of experts who are regularly rotated to ensure fresh and up to date experience in assisting making the President's decisions.

For the most part, the Alliance government concerns itself with foreign relations and interstellar affairs, leaving the governing of the systems alone.

The territory of the Alliance itself is broken up into sectors, each run by a sector governor who acts as the local representative of the Alliance government, mediating affairs, settling disagreements, and otherwise handling the necessary acts of governance.

These sector governors are most generally stationed in an uninhabited system in the center of, or in the case of a new sector, where the center is expected to be in order to prevent any perceptions of bias. This system also generally



serves as the center of all USDF activities within that sector, often containing a major base with any number and types of stations, shipyards, repair docks, and extensive defenses as well as a strong permanent USDF presence.

Sector governors have a wide breadth of powers, including the ability to negotiate with foreign powers, impose quarantines, pass sentence, or pardon on criminals prosecuted under Alliance rather than local law. He also has an informal say in the distribution of the USDF within his sector, though he cannot actually give orders, the USDF commander in the region had best have a good reason for refusing to give what assistance the Governor might request within reason.

On a more local level, each inhabited planet or major space colony within Alliance territory generally has an Alliance embassy or at least an office where at a minimum a representative can be found.

A NOTE ON THE USDF FOR GM'S

Despite it's great size, the job before the USDF is even greater and always growing. With so many systems, populated and otherwise to patrol and protect, some may go months or even years without more than perhaps a brief visit by a wandering cruiser. Even within the heart of the Alliance there are numerous places that rarely if ever have a USDF presence and it should never be hard to come up with some reason why they can't come riding to the rescue, at least not until you want them too.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Alliance is by nature a non-aggressive entity, preferring to expand through colonization of uninhabited systems and voluntary membership by existing systems and at times the merging of alliances. This follows the belief that as there is plenty of space and uninhabited systems throughout the galaxy, it simply isn't worth the trouble to take over systems by force. This has led to numerous independent systems and groups of systems within what is accepted as Alliance territory who for one reason or another have chosen not to join.

However, this peaceful approach to expansion does not indicate reluctance in any way of the Alliance to defend what it considers its own. In fact, quite the opposite is the case and the Alliance will rapidly deploy overwhelming force to not only defend its own interests but strike back at any aggressors. If initial strikes at an opponent's military assets and infrastructure fail to secure a peace on acceptable terms the Alliance will begin a systematic destruction of space-borne assets and the infrastructure needed to maintain an interstellar presence.

This hard line policy has long been seen as a deterrent by the Alliance, and by and large, it seems to work aside from isolated incidents, most commonly with recently encountered cultures that have not yet come to understand the full scope of what the Alliance is capable of.

Most treaties agreed to by the Alliance focus on mutual acknowledgments of territory and trade. While the Alliance will not normally attempt the capture and prosecution of its own members who may violate treaties with other governments, neither will it move to assist them if they are caught by the other parties involved unless there is an obvious injustice being enacted.

THE UNITED SYSTEM DEFENSE FLEET

The sole military arm of the Alliance, The United Systems Defense Fleet (USDF) is widely regarded as one of the premier fighting forces in the Galaxy. With vast arrays of species and plenty of recruits to pick from, backed by the largest known industrial base The USDF has had no need to choose between quality and quantity. The USDF is strictly apolitical but its members are fanatical about preserving the founding values of the Alliance and defending its citizens. While its individual components are normally at least the equal if not the superior of their foes it could be said that one of The USDF's core philosophies is the use of overwhelming force whenever possible. Be it on distant borders or in the heart of the Alliance, The USDF is always on watch.

ORGANIZATION: The USDF is a massive organization, as it needs to be in order to perform its job properly across the vast distances of the Alliance. There are three primary ways in which the large number of ships are organized, fleets, task forces, and individual vessels.

FLEETS: The largest groupings of military vessels, a fleet usually numbers at least a couple dozen vessels of varying sizes and usually includes at least a couple capital ships of heavy cruiser size and larger. At the other end, a fleet could consist of hundreds of ships with a dreadnaught at their center. Fleets are rarely deployed except in actual times of conflict, and instead, tend to cluster in nodal locations where their various elements can be assigned to needed duties while always leaving a strong component behind to be deployed in an emergency. Fleets are almost always used only in the assault or defense roles where their power is necessary, lesser tasks being handed off to task forces or individual vessels as needed.

TASK FORCES: The second largest grouping of military vessels is the task force. Often components of a larger fleet, task forces are any grouping of two or more vessels, but they rarely comprise much more than a dozen vessels, though their types can vary dramatically from one task force to the next. Task forces are commonly used in areas where single vessels would be at risk, or to handle missions for which a single vessel could not provide enough resources to handle by themselves. Common missions for task forces comprise escorting merchant ship convoys, heavy patrols, showing the flag, and hit and run strikes, though this list is far from comprehensive. If comprised primarily of smaller vessels, there will usually be at least one ship of at least one class larger to provide support.

INDIVIDUAL VESSELS: Generally comprised of the lighter ships in the fleet, individual vessels do much of the grunt work for The Fleet. Alone and unsupported they perform every mission imaginable. Individual assignments are prized by commanders as they often come with a wide degree of latitude in how operations are conducted and under the right circumstances can be a fast track to promotion for a skilled and lucky captain. In the less civilized outer reaches, larger warships are used more often on such patrols where dangers are much greater.

PERSONNEL: The personnel of the USDF is drawn from countless planets and other habitats and most of the Alliance's member species. The Alliance does not support a draft, and indeed, there is no need for one as the number of applicants

to the USDF has always far outnumbered its manning needs and training facilities despite constant expansion. With such a wide variety and number of applicants, the USDF's basic standards are among the highest in the known universe, on par with most other organizations' elite forces. By the time a group of trainees has finished basic training in their field not only have they become highly trained individuals, but they have acquired an almost fanatical devotion to protecting the Alliance and what it stands for as well as its citizens. Enlisting for ten year stretches they often travel far from their homes and are seen by most as the dark grey line between peaceful civilization and chaos that they are.

SHIPBOARD PERSONNE: Manning the ships and stations of the USDF these persons tend to be highly trained specialists with many years of experience. While many stationed in the more peaceful sectors of the Alliance may never experience anything more exciting than shipboard drills, others will at one point or another find themselves in the line of fire. The backbone of the USDF, those who choose not to reenlist are eagerly sought after for their skills by the civilian market.

STRIKERS: The ground pounders, the grunts; these individuals are the ones who end up facing the enemies of the Alliance up close and personal. Just as well trained and equipped as their ship-borne counterparts, their mere presence or the threat of it has often defused otherwise hostile situations. Strikers specialize in ship to ship operations, strike missions, and short term high-intensity conflicts, as the Alliance doesn't generally conquer hostile planets and most planetary defense is handled by local System Defense Forces. Regardless, they have a reputation as fighters second to none and are known for their skill, mobility, ruthlessness, and most of all, tenacity.

TRAINING: Training standards for USDF personnel are considered easily the highest in the galaxy. With such a large pool of volunteering candidates to choose from, USDF recruiting practices make sure that only the most physically, mentally, and emotionally able enter the initial training process. All candidates, whether shipboard or ground personnel receive the same initial training in which the basics are taught. This provides a mutual understanding, common bond, and unified operational doctrine. It is at this stage that USDF personnel learn how to use teamwork to make the best use of any advantages granted by their race and how to help their companions overcome any disadvantages they may have as a result of their origins. A combination of individual and group grading encourages this teamwork and by the time second stage training begins such efforts become automatic and accepted.

At the second stage ground and space borne personnel begin receiving more specialized training and are split apart. Less physically intensive than first stage training, it is here that individuals acquire the specialized skills unique to each of their positions, including at least rudimentary understandings of tactics and leadership.

Officer candidates go onto the third stage of training that focuses on leadership, tactics, strategy, and the myriad number of other skills needed by those in such important positions of responsibility.

EXPECTATIONS: USDF personnel, regardless of their duties or rank are expected to show initiative and act professionally at all times while on duty. Off duty, personnel is only required to avoid anything that may interfere with USDF operations or disgrace the uniform. However, they are strongly encouraged to spend at least some of their off duty time broadening their educations in matters both general and job-related. Because of this many long term personnel hold a number of technical, and sometimes higher, degrees, often in several different fields. Above all else, they are expected to always remember their duty to the peoples of the Alliance and its ideals and base any decisions they make around them.

SHIP DESIGN

The USDF is the most technologically sophisticated military force in known space, having a massive technological and industrial base to support it. Its general ship design has had millennia to evolve into its current format. It is because of the wide range of military duties and the variety of opponents that they might face that most of their designs favor tactical flexibility over specialization. Combined with the inherent toughness of Alliance designs, USDF vessels are usually able to hold their own even against more specialized vessels. Most designs have a strong emphasis on all around firepower with special emphasis on the ability to concentrate the majority of firepower directly forward. This has led to designs making heavy use of turrets and smaller numbers of much more powerful fixed emplacements. This means most larger USDF vessels tend to be smaller at the bow but spread in both height and beam towards the aft, often with a contraction at the very aft around the engines to allow for aft weapon coverage.

An unusual component of many Alliance warships is that even those that do not have hanger facilities extensive enough to support strike craft will often still carry a small number

attached to the hull, thus giving them the ability to more rapidly make intercepts or simply extend the area they can monitor. The larger the vessel, the more are likely to be carried this way. These penny packets of strike craft are often grouped with strike craft similarly carried by other ships in a fleet or task force into dedicated squadrons.

Overall USDF vessels tend to be very hard to kill with missiles or strike craft due to layered active and passive defense systems, combined with weapon outfits effective at a variety of ranges means that most opponents are faced with a very flexible opponent whose own kill radius must be entered for effective engagement.

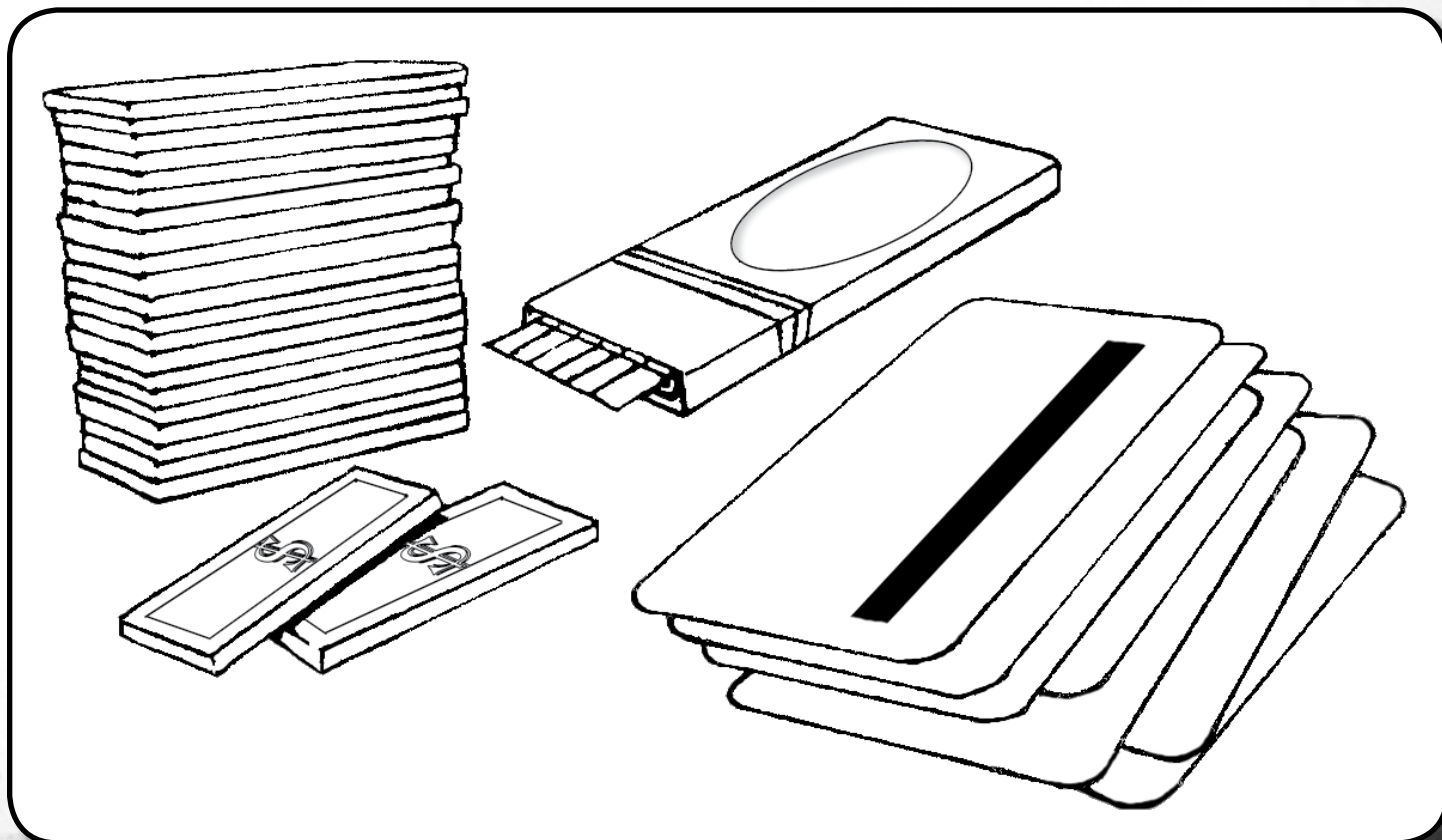
TACTICS

Whether in space or on the ground, USDF tactics emphasize speed and shock, striking the enemy hard where they least expect it while inflicting the maximum amount of damage and number of casualties, taking full advantage of the confusion engendered. Especially in planet side strikes by Strikers where any delay can allow for an overwhelming concentration of force against the attackers, in many cases speed is paramount. When the USDF chooses to accept a stand-up fight it is almost always either on their own favorable terms or when forced into a desperate defense of civilians.

While there are a number of established tactics for varying situations, USDF command personnel is trained to be flexible and innovative in their employment of tactics and have proven difficult to predict by their opponents.

PRIVATEERS

During times of extended conflict, The USDF may authorize trusted armed civilian vessels to act as privateers. Allowed to operate behind enemy lines and make use of USDF facilities to supply and repair when acting in such a capacity, these civilians are required to operate under strict guidelines and their



operations are carefully scrutinized each time they return to Alliance space. At times active USDF personnel is assigned to these vessels as observers and intelligence gatherers. Ships commanded by retired USDF personnel are generally favored for these commissions for obvious reasons.

PRIZE MONEY: Alliance military personnel is awarded bonuses based on a percentage of the assessed value of captured or destroyed enemy equipment and personnel. This prize money is then divided up amongst the members of the crew or unit who participated in the capture based on rank. While normally only a very small percentage of the value of the enemy goods and personnel is given as prize money (far less for those killed or destroyed), given the average cost of a warship or the equipment needed for a well equipped unit, this can quickly add up. This tends to make successful commanders very popular with their subordinates.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

PLANETARY: Planetary laws vary from system to system, planet to planet, and in some places, from location to location on a given planet. This is because the Alliance strenuously avoids trying to micromanage the worlds within its borders. With the wide variety of races and cultures, this would be an impossible task to execute with any sense of fairness or lack of resentment. As such, each planet or system's primary government is fully allowed to institute whatever rules they so choose without Alliance interference in its internal affairs.

This policy of noninterference even goes so far as to refrain from involvement in conflicts on a given planet between its inhabitants. Instead, the Alliance will accept as the legitimate government whatever group can prove that it is the clearly dominant power. More than once a controlling government has been overthrown and had the Alliance deal fairly with its successors.

However, these kinds of conflicts can be one of the few ways the Alliance can choose to intervene in the internal affairs of a member. The Alliance forbids the use of weapons capable of mass destruction such as anti-matter weapons, large scale kinetic energy weapons, and biological warfare of any type in attacking civilian targets. This includes attacking Alliance installations or personnel. Violating any of these rules all but guarantees an overwhelming response by Alliance military forces who will definitively determine who the responsible party is, give them one chance to surrender, and if it is refused, will proceed to eliminate the targeted party in a ruthless and unrelenting manner through destruction or capturing of its assets.

INTERSTELLAR: It is in the depths of space that the Alliance fully imposes its laws, and it does so with an iron and impartial hand. Piracy is a common problem in parts of the Alliance, and it is dealt with ruthlessly. Much of the USDF's energies even in wartime are taken up dealing with pirates. When caught, as most eventually are, if found guilty the punishment is normally death by hanging or the physiological equivalent. Those who fence or otherwise knowingly assist in acts of piracy face the same penalties.

Slavery on an interstellar level is also illegal, which can lead to some interesting complications as it is legal in some systems. Generally, if it is legal in a given world for slavery to be acceptable the penalty is simple confiscation of the slaves who are given their freedom and a heavy fine is levied on the

owner. If however it is found that active slaving has taken place as opposed to just transportation of locally legal assets then the penalty is the same as for piracy, death by hanging or its equivalent. For these purposes, knowingly engaging in the trade of illegally acquired slaves is considered the same as actively enslaving.

The Alliance also dictates the guidelines for interstellar ships and deep space stations and USDF personnel regularly perform inspections on the vessels and structures themselves as well as their paperwork.

The Alliance does not normally concern itself with smuggling, given that what might be illegal in one place could well be legal in another, making it all but impossible to not just keep track of what is legal where from day to day, but almost impossible to prove in any case. Local law enforcement agencies, however, are free to police their own systems and planets as they see fit.

Foreign warships traversing Alliance space without prior treaty agreement or official notice will be escorted to the border once detected and are subject under Alliance law to an inspection by a boarding party if it is deemed prudent by the Alliance officer in command. Refusing to stand down upon instructions or refusal to allow boarding will be seen as proof of ill intent and will be treated accordingly.

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS: Alliance justice tends to be quick and to the point, with a strong emphasis on guilt or innocence rather than technicalities. Chemical truth drugs are generally used, and if there is any doubt it will be used on any parties necessary, accused or otherwise. Trials generally are short and sentencing is carried out as soon as is practical afterward. From arrest to sentencing generally only takes a few weeks; a few months at most for the most complicated and extensive trials.

GENETICS: Genetic engineering is widespread throughout the Alliance but operates under a number of limitations. Correction of genetic defects and overall improvement of physical well being has led to increased lifespans and a near zero birth defect rate as well as people whose physical abilities surpass that of their ancestors in many species. The same also applies to agriculture, with hardier and more nutritious varieties of crops constantly being produced and as well as healthier and hardier livestock. It is forbidden though to use genetics to create new or radically alter existing species.

Since the advent of the Helix War and its conclusion which brought to light the horror of what can happen when genetic tinkering is taken too far, eyes are increasingly turning towards genetic establishments across the length and breadth of the Alliance demanding greater oversight and answers to just what is going on in their labs. Already a couple of major scandals have broken out and it is even rumored that the Guardians have begun their own investigations into a number of companies.

NANOTECHNOLOGY: Nanotechnology is at once one of the most widespread and most controlled technologies in the known galaxy. Within the Alliance, aside from a few races who physiology or beliefs prevent it, nearly everyone has basic medical nanites capable of speeding healing, mitigating the effects of disease and poison, and helping keep the overall level of health high. Military personnel has the heavier duty and more extensive nanite suites capable of a wider variety of functions (see below). Nanites also form the basis of Fabrication

systems. In all cases, nanites are required at a minimum to be designed so as to obtain their power from an outside source, either their host's body or power emitters as a safety precaution to prevent them from getting out of control. Varied additional safeguards are common as well.

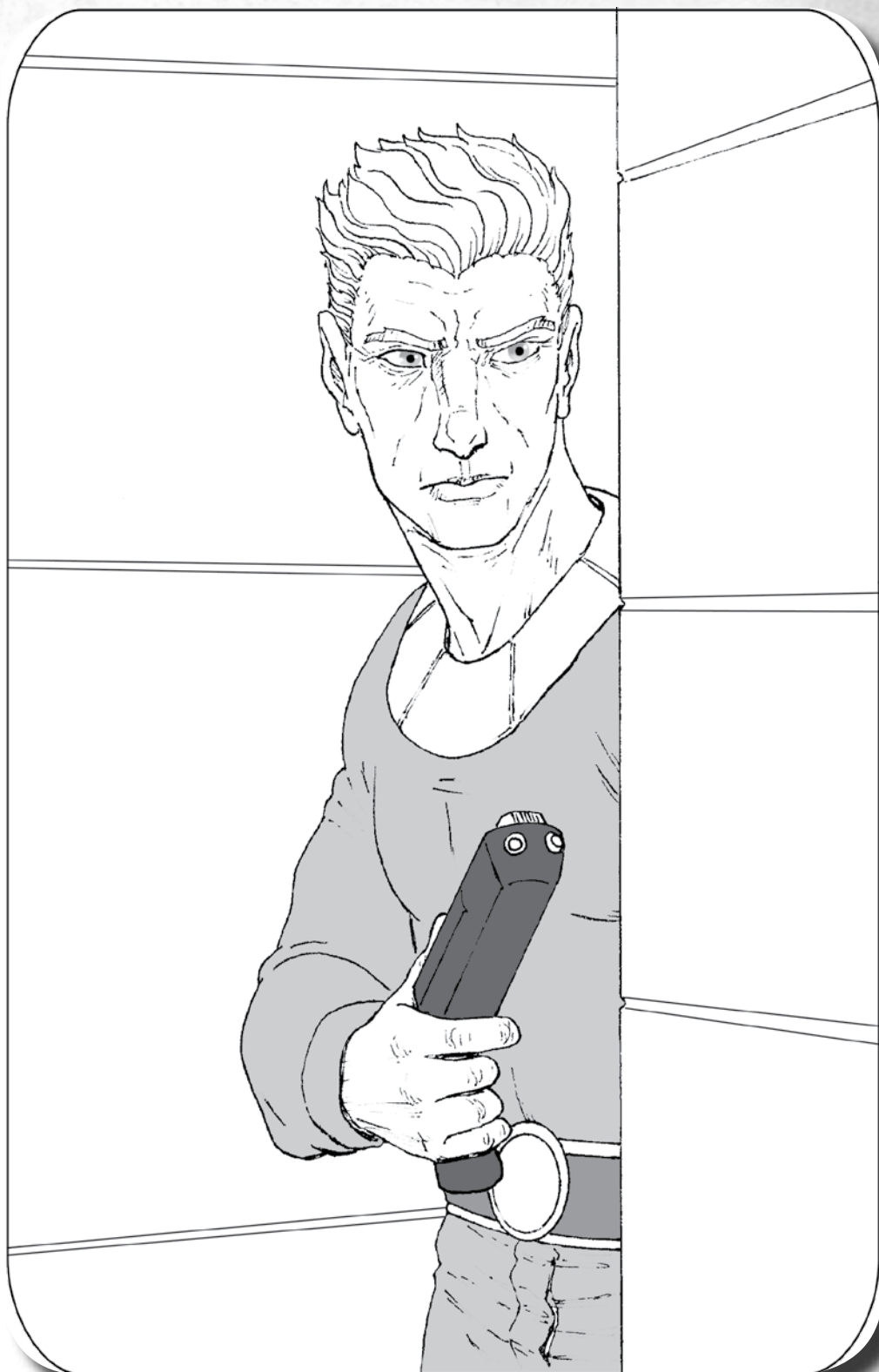
ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

There are many organizations, groups, corporations, and other agencies within the Alliance. While no book or even data chip could hope to even list all of them, much less describe them in any detail, a few of the more important or powerful ones are listed below.

UNITED SYSTEMS ALLIANCE FLEET INTELLIGENCE: While its member worlds and various organizations within the Alliance may rely on their own sources of intelligence, the Alliance itself only has a single intelligence agency, Fleet Intelligence (FI). FI primarily concentrates on information gathering, analysis, and counter intelligence rather than covert operations. While it has informants spread throughout the known galaxy gathering information, it has strict guidelines against active espionage efforts.

Aside from informants much of its information comes from various listening posts, satellites, and bases along Alliance borders. Additionally, specially built vessels, most often frigates, are used in both peace and wartime to covertly survey systems of particular interest.

As FI is a part of USDF, its personnel are USDF personnel and having gone through at least the same basic training often lack the aloofness of members of many other intelligence agencies when working with their fellow military personnel. In addition to having its own facilities FI members are often assigned to both Naval and Striker units to provide on-site intelligence analysis and evaluation. Many of the personnel assigned to such positions generally have excellent computer intrusion skills and programming skills to allow both hacking into hostile computer systems and protecting Alliance information networks. More than one Striker assault has relied on its



attached FI member to allow it to bypass enemy sensors and defenses.

GUARDIANS: The Guardians are an extremely small and elite group charged with ensuring the foundations upon which the United Systems Alliance were founded are maintained. Numbering fewer than one for every five hundred systems, they are the elite of the elite, their recruiting criteria are so strict, the mix of skills and ability so rare, and their screening process so severe, that it is an extremely rare individual indeed that is recruited into the organization. Perhaps the only event

that might cause a convergence of multiple active Guardians is the death of one of their members in the line of duty. The results of the sorts of investigations that follow have been enough to permanently scar many who have found themselves even peripherally on the end of such an investigation.

Much of their time is spent simply rooting out corruption within the Alliance government or tracking down interstellar criminals who have otherwise evaded law enforcement, but when the need arises they are capable of acting with almost unlimited power if they believe it necessary to the preservation of the Alliance and its core principles. They often operate in secret and unknown to those they watch, only appearing if needed to take custody of a guilty party.

With an ability to override planetary law or even USDF law, enlist any assistance they deem necessary, even commandeering entire fleets, they have the potential to wield unequalled amounts of individual power. It is a testament to the skill and integrity of its members that such measures are rarely ever necessary.

MERCENARY REGULATORY AGENCY: The Mercenary Regulatory Agency or simply MRA handles all mercenary groups that operate legally within the Alliance. The MRA keeps up to date files on all mercenary groups and also rates them according to their abilities and performance. They ensure payment of mercenary companies by their clients and ensure that the mercenaries perform the job they're paid to do. They also provide mediation in contract disputes if requested.

MERCENARIES: Mercenaries are surprisingly common within the Starsea Universe, and are a not uncommon sight even within the relatively peaceful and lawful borders of the Alliance. Mercenary strike craft squadrons, light warships, and even in a few very rare cases, small fleets are available for hire to provide escort through dangerous areas of space in times of both war and peace for employers who can meet their price or provide heavy security for any number of space projects or installations. Planet-side, civil wars, and security jobs keep a large number of mercenary companies consistently employed.

Strike missions, escort, espionage, security, defense, armor, infantry, air support, technical support, and much more, whatever job you need to be done, you can probably find a mercenary group that specializes in it. The one job no sane mercenary group will ever take on is one that involves attacking Alliance forces or installations. Such actions will result in the group and its members being declared outlaws and becoming the special focus of a powerful military response. Any standard mercenary contract will have clauses causing it to become immediately null and void if the group's employers should request such action. Still, from time to time, the leader of a group is desperate enough to accept such a job, hoping to get away with it.

POSTAL SERVICE: The Alliance Postal Service is an often overlooked but absolutely vital part of the Alliance. They maintain the extensive network of FTLC (Faster Than Light Communications) satellites that bind the Alliance together and run the official couriers that carry correspondence to those worlds not yet tied into the FTLC network. Its personnel is known for their dedication to ensuring the security of their communications and their timely arrival.

The Postal Service does on occasion offer contracts to independent vessels for runs to worlds truly out of the way, these steady paying, low mass contracts are eagerly sought after by

many independent ship owners, though few meet the rigorous standards required.

ALLIANCE SCIENCE INSTITUTE: The Alliance Science Institute (ASI) is one of the major exploration and research groups within the Alliance, and certainly the best known. Being allowed to join the ASI, which concentrates more on observation, discovery, and analysis rather than necessarily following through in practical applications, even as an intern or research assistant, is considered a high honor. . While technically an independent organization, the ASI often operates under contract to the Alliance government in cases requiring scientific expertise over the long or short term. The ASI, in addition to a number of planet and satellite campuses as well as research institutions, maintains a good sized fleet of starships optimized for a variety of research endeavors. The ASI often hires freelancers to provide escort and protection for its more dangerous expeditions as the ASI is often the first into unknown and uncharted territory. The ASI also maintains numerous research stations at specific points of interest throughout the Alliance where constant long term monitoring of something is necessary. The ASI might be encountered almost anywhere, both inside and outside Alliance space on everything from extensive and detailed planetary and system surveys to long-term monitoring of astronomic phenomena.

SYSTEM DEFENSE FORCES: Numerous planets and systems throughout the Alliance maintain their own independent defense forces. These can range from small informal militias, to large professional planetary armies with supporting fleets and in-depth system defenses depending on a system's resources, vulnerability, and willingness to support such programs. Generally such forces are a generation or two behind the cutting edge of the USDF, and in many cases largely use surplus or outdated USDF technology, ships, and equipment in addition to designs intended especially for system defense. Use of these forces outside of a system other than local patrols is likely to receive an immediate and violent reaction by the USDF.

CHRONOX INTERSTELLAR CORPORATION:

ChronoX is possibly the largest single business entity in known space. Originally a small corporation that focused on selling precision time pieces, over the millennia it has grown into a giant that has holdings in a bewildering variety of industries and businesses; everything from agriculture to weapons developers to starship construction. While the public at large is mostly unaware of the extent to which this mega corporation is a part of their everyday lives, many in the business community and those charged with policing it are only too aware of the extent to which ChronoX has spread, and more importantly, the methods it has used to reach its current position, hold it, and continue to expand.

Deceptive and illegal business practices, bribery, sabotage, and even wholesale murder are commonly employed and accepted methods within ChronoX. Even when police are able to gather sufficient evidence of wrongdoing ChronoX has almost always managed to arrange for judges and juries to be bribed, witnesses and evidence to disappear, or otherwise evade punishment. So far ChronoX has managed to get away with such practices by being very careful where and what they do, so that only planetary laws can be proven to be violated, and only where ChronoX is confident it can weather any legal problems. What might eventually bring about its downfall are

some of its more extreme actions that can only be considered piracy and even treason. From threads that were first found during the Fleet Scandal during the Helix War the Guardians and other Alliance agencies have been steadily pulling back more and more of the veil over ChronoX's activities, and though no direct link has yet been proven, ChronoX is already frantically taking steps to cover up any remaining traces and mislead the investigators before such an event can occur. Should ChronoX fall, the repercussions both within and outside the Alliance will likely be enormous.

As the apparent confrontation draws ever nearer, ChronoX's methods are steadily stacking the bodies deeper and the heads of the corporation are looking into beefing up their security forces significantly, especially calling in foreign mercenaries, raising the stakes considerably and bringing up the specter of a confrontation between these small armies and navies and USDF units or System Defense Force units called on to support arresting officers. Whatever the conclusion of this looming conflict might be, it is a certainty that the business world will be undergoing severe changes in the years to come.

SOCIETY

Alliance society, as differentiated from that of individual planetary, system, cluster, or racial societies to name just a few, is as might be expected, fairly egalitarian in outlook. With so many races and cultures constantly interacting, tolerance, if not always understanding, is very much needed by anyone looking to get by for any length of time within the borders of the Alliance.

RELIGION: Religions within the Alliance are far too widespread and varied to cover in any detail but in general nearly anything is accepted at least in some places, though planetary laws may in many cases render the practices of certain religions illegal by default. By numbers though followers of the Lady Mother easily dominate any other religion within the Alliance, and many places outside of it as well.

THE LADY MOTHER: The religion of the Lady Mother (or The Lady for short) is widespread both within and outside the Alliance and this is largely due to its all embracing nature and easy ability to be worked into existing belief systems. In brief the religion extols that all beings are the Lady Mother's children be they divine or mortal. She asks for tolerance towards others, even those who seem different from oneself in body, mind or belief. She advocates giving what aid you can to others and the strength of family. She cautions people to be content with moderation and not seek out excess. She believes that love should be tested before a true commitment is made, and even if one should fail sometimes in following her advice, that is only to be expected so long as they continue to try.

However the Lady Mother has a darker side. For all that she promotes peace and goodwill, those who would raise a hand against her children will find the faithful often willing to return said violence in full measure, for she does not believe in toleration towards those who would willingly visit violence and destruction upon her followers for selfish reasons and believes that they should be eliminated with all speed and swiftness.

On all counts her clergy typically advise moderation, even in vengeance so long as it insures an attacker is rendered incapable of repeating their action. As might be expected her clergy are drawn from many races and they offer their comfort

and advice to all who would listen, with many traveling extensively.

DEMOGRAPHIC: With so many races in its make up, no one race dominates the Alliance, the three largest groups by species are Humans which make up approximately 12%, the Dentians which make up approximately 7%, and Gremlins which make up 3% of the total population of the Alliance. While individual systems or groups of systems often have much higher densities of specific species, these are localized concentrations and fail to represent the actual makeup of the Alliance.

IN SUMMARY

The United Systems Alliance is a semi-slumbering giant, and while not as a whole making an active attempt at its expansion, its refusal to reign in or regulate such efforts by individuals or groups along with the rewards such efforts can bring means that of all the known major powers in the galaxy it maintains the highest expansion rate.

With technological and scientific development high on its list of priorities, combined with a massive resource and population base and a willingness to aggressively use it should the need arise, it seems unlikely that the Alliance will face much in the way of real threats economically, militarily, or socially and will only continue to grow in strength. This is especially true with their recent demonstration of just how ruthless this relatively pacifistic civilization can become when aroused in anger. This is only reinforced by its refusal to engage in aggressive conquest and allowing civilizations within what would be considered its borders to maintain their independence if they so choose.

Even though the Alliance is strongly non-interventionist when it comes to foreign affairs, its mere presence and the knowledge that should for whatever reason it choose to become involved, it is normally "a bad thing" for those in question has helped to promote a relative peace in its region of the galaxy with most conflicts being held at a relatively low level.

Conversely, the presence and strength of the Alliance has encouraged other civilizations to become more aggressive in their expansions in all fields as if a true danger to relative galactic peace should arise it is believed that the Alliance would intervene out of sheer self interest.

With secured borders and a strong economic base the Alliance can be expected to continue to grow and flourish, gradually absorbing more races and systems into its makeup either through discovery or simply becoming the best option for those other civilizations that find themselves surrounded by Alliance space.

Already looking to begin exploring the nearest neighboring galaxy, even with the large majority of the current galaxy still left unexplored, such a leap awaits only a few key technologies that may well revolutionize the galaxy as much as FTL travel already has.

There are many who believe the Alliance is nearly on the cusp of reaching the point where it can begin to redefine reality itself, though whether the government will stand by and allow such obviously dangerous technologies to be developed, or will chose to step in and add to its rare cases of interference in such matters is entirely up for grabs.

4: THE SAGAREN COLLECTIVE

"The primary charge is evasion of taxes on transhipped goods."

It had been so simple, a basic transfer of cargo from one ship to the next on the outskirts of the system, it wouldn't even have passed through the Homeship's facilities.

"Additional charges consist of attempting to evade arresting authorities,"

Everything had been going fine right up until the destroyer dropped out of stealth practically on top of them. In retrospect it had been really stupid to try and run at that point.

"failing to power down for boarding when ordered and attempted destruction of evidence,"

Stalling for time and trying to wipe the database had also it turned out been really stupid, as the laser bolts that had blown out his engines a few seconds later had proven.

"and endangering Collective personnel." The Sagaren officer looks up from the datapad him. "Analysis of the accounts accessed shows that this one is incapable of paying both the fines and taxes owed as a result of this one's actions. If this one cannot acquire additional means of payment, ship, cargo, and all possessions aboard will be confiscated and this one and this one's crew will be shipped out to the nearest planet after being banned from Collective space and trade with any Collective citizens." The Sagaren security officer tilts his head at the man. "Does this one have such means of payment?"

It was all over, years of hard work to earn his own ship, and build a successful business, gone in a just a few hours. He shook his head, but then looked up as the Officer's attention was directed behind him at the hatchway. He turned his head and found leaning in the doorway a Sagaren who's sash was heavily decorated, but the insignia of the Black Pelt was highly prominent. "This one thinks Captain Maxwell, that this one may have a solution to Captain Maxwell's current difficulty."

The Sagarens are an ancient and enigmatic race who are relative newcomers to the local space, at least as far as its current residents are concerned. Nomadic warrior-merchants who seem to have some overarching goal in mind that they have yet to share with the rest of the galaxy, they are already having an impact out of all proportion to their numbers. Their alliance with the United Systems Alliance and their united efforts to crush the genocidal robotic remnants of the extinct Helapians immediately afterwards has made a number of the other powers in the region very nervous.

Despite this the Sagarens are rapidly integrating themselves into the local galactic economy and political structure with a speed that is truly astonishing and has the conspiracy theorists working overtime. Already several Homeships in addition to the one initially stumbled upon have moved into unclaimed systems scattered about the region and carved out small

multi-system clusters of Sagaren territory while opening up as centers of trade and industry, generally bringing a degree of stability to regions badly in need of such an influence.

HISTORY

The Sagarens originally evolved on a relatively dry world with large open plains with scattered forests, small scattered seas and no large oceans or mountain ranges. Their origins lie with canid like pack hunters that preyed primarily on both the solitary and herding dangerous large herbivores that populated their planet. Their evolution into sapient beings came relatively late in the planet's history, a factor that was to have a major impact on their civilization in times to come.

The pack nature of the Sagaren's ancestors led to clan-like groups as their society evolved that grew steadily larger. These eventually became nationstates and in some cases full fledged nations.

However, unlike the Dentians who had experienced relatively similar cultural and social evolutions, the Sagarens had no overarching ideal or concept to unify them as a race. Because of this, warfare was constant and grew steadily more destructive as technology continued to improve. Even the leap to space which began to open up the resources of their solar system failed to create any substantial effect on the overarching social structure.

When it was discovered that their primary sun would shift from its main sequence to begin becoming a blue giant before going supernova within less than two hundred years it looked like the Sagarens would end up destroying themselves well before the sun could do so as widespread warfare without any apparent purpose erupted across the surface of the planet. With only minutes remaining before nuclear weapons would have been employed the fighting came to an abrupt and planet-wide halt.

The Sagaren records insist that this unexpected result came about due to the appearance of a godlike being before the population of the entire planet. This being, whom is referred to as The Hunter, not only managed to somehow unite the entire race under a new and powerful religion, put laid forth a solution that would if not save the entire population of the planet, would at least ensure the continuation of the race. Details on exactly how this was achieved are unclear, but the results are plainly written down. Though never seen again, the mysterious figure had set in motion a chain of events that is still playing out today. Those very few members of other races who have been allowed this deep a glimpse into the Sagaren's history have of course theorized about what might actually have occurred, with nearly as many theories as there are those who have known enough to wonder, as might be expected.

With the planet unified and with a single common goal their only concern, events proceeded with a rapidity that surpassed anything that had come before it. By the time the

primary sun's growth rendered the planet uninhabitable almost half of the planet's population had been transferred into what would be the first of the Homeships. Primitive in the extreme by current standards, these vessels nevertheless headed out into the great unknown, each in a different direction, not even having FTL drive initially. It was from these unsteady and uncertain beginnings that the Sagarens began their spread through the galaxy.

GOVERNMENT

Each of the Homeships is governed by a council made of high ranking and renowned Hunters from a variety of fields. These council members may hold office no longer than a decade each. While they do not handle the day to day running of the Homeships, they oversee all major decisions within a given Homeship's sphere of influence. They also serve as a court for any major violations of the Hunter's Code as well as often handling any events within Sagaren society that are outside the normal scheme of things.

Within the confines of Sagaren society their word is law and they are known for laying down their rulings with an iron hand. Most Sagarens dread being brought before the council because they are ruthless when it comes to dealing with those who have broken the law or imperiled fellow Sagarens through either intentional actions or ineptitude.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Sagaren relations with other powers tend to be relatively passive on the interstellar scale, their habit of occupying systems that are unoccupied and exploited means that all but

the most aggressive or territorial of governments are generally content to let them carve out a small niche even within what is often claimed territory. The knowledge that the Sagarens will normally eventually move on likely helps in this regard.

While Sagarens will normally work out non-aggression and trade treaties, they most times attempt to remain neutral in local affairs. The regional Collective's alliance with the United Systems Alliance only came about through a highly unusual set of circumstances.

This is not to say that they have not proven capable of taking a very hard line when they find the need or desire to do so as the Ballard Confederacy found out during the Klaeok Incident.

Individuals outside the sphere of Sagaren space are unlikely to receive any assistance from the Sagaren government should they find themselves at odds with local laws or authority while those aliens in areas of Sagaren governance are held strictly accountable to the laws laid down for outsiders.

THE NAVY

The Sagarens as a race do not normally have a unified navy, rather each Homeship is responsible for fielding its own fleet of vessels for its own duties. In times of conflict which require more than the resources one Homeship is capable of supplying, multiple Homeships will unite their forces, but while their fleets may act in consort, they rarely combine.

As Sagarens almost exclusively grow up in space in artificial environments most have at least a basic understanding of the skills necessary for operating space vessels. Intensive training helps reinforce basic skills and provides specialized training.



Already accustomed to working as a team, little effort is needed to get Sagarens to work as a cohesive unit.

ORGANIZATION:

FLEETS: Sagaren fleets are rarely seen away from their Homeships as the Sagarens have little need to deploy such extensive forces any distance. As such, Sagaren fleets are likely to contain just about every available vessel located in the same system as a Homeship, numbering in at least the hundreds of ships not counting strike craft.

TASK FORCES: If Sagarens see a need to project force outside their own systems they most commonly deploy a heavy taskforce. Typically including at least one, and often more battleships with several fleet sized carriers and suitable escorts Sagaren task forces are normally able to handle anything short of a full scale major fleet action.

INDIVIDUAL VESSELS: Most often used for patrolling local space, Sagarens typically use nothing heavier than a light cruiser on independent assignments.

PERSONNEL: Collective personnel are all Sagarens and members of other races, even those nominally under their protection are forbidden from serving in the Collective military aside the rare Sil'vith (note that the reverse is not true for Sagarens) and are instead encouraged to form their own militaries. This is in part because the Collective almost always eventually moves on and does not wish such groups to become reliant on them, and probably more importantly a result of the inherent secretiveness of the Sagaren culture.

This policy only exasperates the lack of manpower available to any Collective occupied area compared to many empires, thus encouraging the heavy use of automation the Collective relies on in its ships and installations. Despite this lack of personnel, the Collective has consistently refused to lower its standards which are fairly high, but fortunately many of its people because of their lifestyle have at least a good chance of meeting such standards, more, many of its citizens choose to serve at least one term in the military.

SHIPBOARD PERSONNEL: Because of their upbringing on what is effectively a mobile space station, Sagarens have an inherent knack for managing shipboard systems and as such already come to the service with most of the basics skills needed. As such time spent in training can be more fully dedicated to specialized skills and as such Sagaren military personnel generally prove to be highly competent and effective in their roles. Professional personnel are expected to carry themselves as such whether interacting with their own species and with others, and as such, shipboard personnel in particular are far more likely to show a tolerance and willingness to ignore potential incidents that other Sagarens would be likely to react to with varying degrees of violence. That is not to say that they are less capable of responding to such acts, only that they will restrain themselves in the interest of not bringing disgrace upon their position. While not necessarily eager to die, in some ways, even more so than most Hunters, those who crew their military vessels willingly throw themselves into battle with an eagerness that suggests something more than mere tactical aggressiveness.

COMMANDOS: Sagarens have neither the numbers, the inclination, or the need to deploy extensive armies. Instead when the need arises for an engagement involving troops

instead of ships they employ small highly trained units who strike hard and fast, typically without prior warning, completing their mission before disappearing, leaving ruin behind them.

These Commandos specialize in covert installation and extraction generally using nothing heavier than small arms and light support weapons. Typically a mission will center around the destruction of a specific target or series of targets, oftentimes without leaving any trace as to who was responsible. Because of this Commandos are often employed by the Black Pelt as part of its covert arsenal.

EXPECTATIONS: Sagaren military personnel are held to a higher standard than their contemporaries, expected to both follow the Hunter's Code as well as the requirements of their jobs. Few make the military their life, and many join later in their lives, or leave after a few terms of service for other work. This is not only expected, but encouraged as a means of both introducing fresh members into the military who carry a wide background of experiences and expertise, but to pass out into the general population those with the discipline and experience acquired by military service.

While in the service Sagarens are expected to respect the military hierarchy over that of Hunter rank, though it is normal for higher ranking personnel to listen to or even seek the advice of those more experienced in specific matters than themselves, and this is considered an unofficial rule within the service. Generally though there is a tendency for those with the highest qualifications to reach the positions of authority within the military.

SHIP DESIGN

MERCHANTS: Sagaren merchant designs are generally somewhat smaller than those produced by other species, but make up for it with a higher turn of speed and better maneuverability. As they often times travel far from Sagaren space, most are also armed and shielded well enough to fend off the majority of pirates and even light naval vessels if the need should arise. As a result of these features many merchants from other races are eager to purchase Sagaren merchant vessels, particularly those that do more than travel established and well patrolled trade routes. The Sagarens' willingness to sell their merchant ships to just about anyone has allowed many smaller systems, civilizations, or individual companies to begin a rapid expansion of their merchant marine with reasonably priced top of the line civilian designs.

WARSHIPS: Sagaren warships are excellent examples of the Sagaren philosophies of combat. Fast and lightly armored, relying on their shields (the most advanced and powerful known) they carry heavy missile batteries and strong point defenses with only light energy armaments. Their combination of speed and agility along with their heavy missile armaments and defenses makes them formidable opponents at long range, but fragile if brought into energy range. They tend to be long, sleek, and smaller class for class than those belonging to other races.

Recently, as part of the trading of technology with the Alliance; the Alliance received the technology for more compact and powerful shields and power plants while the Sagarens in turn received lighter weight and more effective armor. While many of their warships still use the older armors, more recent

designs have incorporated the new armor among other recent innovations and exchanges.

STRIKE CRAFT: Sagaren strike craft are often treated by their pilots more as extensions of their bodies than machines. They are renowned for their maneuverability, the race's long held knowledge of powerful compact power plants and shield technology has let them build very lightweight strike craft that are fairly durable without the slowing constraints of heavy armor.

Sagaren strike craft, in contrast to their warships, tend to have heavy energy armaments for their size while carrying relatively light missile loads. While this cuts back on short term punch, when combined with their longer term survivability, it allows them to remain a bigger threat for longer than the strike craft of other races. Moreso than most other races, Sagarens rely heavily on light strike craft, preferring their speed and maneuverability over the firepower and ruggedness of larger strike craft.

HOMESHIPS: More mobile planetoids than proper starships, Sagaren homeships are always constructed out of massive asteroids that are turned into self contained worlds. With large open living spaces that resemble the surface of planets, food production facilities, factories, alien trading areas, massive dockyard and port facilities, and all the necessary equipment necessary to a mobile vessel of its size.

Its thick rocky outer skin is backed by armor plating, powerful structural integrity fields, and the strongest shields in the known galaxy. Weapons stud its surface and often remote defenses are thick in surrounding space. However it's first line of defense are the fleets of warships nestled in its depths and patrolling the surrounding space.

TACTICS

Sagarens have evolved from pack hunters that relied on wearing down prey animals before moving in for a final kill. Much of this has carried over into their modern battle tactics and while individual Sagarens can prove formidable opponents, working in groups, they become exponentially, not arithmetically, more dangerous; seeming at times to act almost with one mind as a result of ancient instincts honed by training.

SPACE: Sagaren warships rely on their speed and maneuverability to remain out of their opponents' reach and slowly pick them apart with long range missile fire, typically entire squadrons of Sagaren warships will concentrate their fire on a single opponent, overwhelming their defenses. Once a target is crippled or destroyed they switch targets and repeat the process, picking apart their opponents one by one.

When accompanied by strike craft Sagaren naval forces tend to send their strike craft straight into an enemy fleet, most punching straight through any defending strike craft towards the enemy warships, only a thin screen of light strike craft remaining behind to keep the enemy strike craft occupied. Heavy missile salvos from the Sagaren warships are timed to hit the enemy defensive sphere at the same time as the strike craft, forcing the enemy to divide their fire. Once in close, the Sagaren strike craft rely on their maneuverability and heavy energy armaments to work their way into their opponent's blind spots and overwhelm them with carefully orchestrated energy fire even as further missile salvos are launched by their parent ships.

A LITTLE WORLD ALL ALONE IN THE NIGHT

Sagaren Homeships, while each being unique in term of size and design, are in essence small self-contained worlds with populations ranging from the tens of millions to sometimes in the billions. Always hives of activity and manufacturing a Homeship might stay in a system for centuries or mere months depending on circumstances. Nearly anything might be found on or around such a habitation and no two are alike.

Sagarens are known to specialize in hit and fade tactics, dropping into a system and striking a specific target and escaping before the defenders can concentrate against them, only to repeat the process at another point, gradually wearing an opponent down.

GROUND: Having no need or desire to occupy planets already containing indigenous sapients the Sagarens have concentrated on similar hit and fade tactics to those used in space, striking suddenly in small heavily armed groups only to disappear and then strike from another direction, sowing confusion and destruction in their wake. When not concentrating on destroying enemy forces they're known for their ability to slip in, destroy a target, and then slip out again undetected.

Unlike many other militaries, Sagarens do not shy from hand to hand combat and eagerly take advantage of opportunities to engage in it where they are often able to quickly overwhelm similarly sized forces.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Within Sagaren space there are generally two sets of laws that exist side by side, those for Sagarens and those for other races. This is not as some might assume because the Sagarens are trying to force harsher laws upon those in their domain, but because they take the realistic view that the rules by which they themselves abide are largely driven by their cultural requirements and therefore it is unrealistic to expect outsiders to abide by them.

In addition to the more typical rules that might be expected of a fairly civilized race, Sagarens are expected to adhere closely to the Code of the Hunter.

Other races are given a surprisingly free rein, even within the Alien Quarter of the Homeships, generally not much short of homicide, rape, kidnapping, or outright theft is likely to generate any official reaction. The first three crimes generally end up with the offender pushed out the nearest airlock, whether or not they've been shot first generally depends on the mercy of the judge presiding.

On those occasions the two sets of laws collide, Sagaren law will always take precedence, though decisions made will typically at least attempt some degree of fairness.

HOMESHIP: On board Sagaren Homeships the one inviolate law is that outsiders are not to leave the Alien Quarter. Any outsider other than Sil'vith that manages to get past the extensive security separating the Alien Quarter from the rest of the Homeship is automatically subject to being killed on the spot by anyone catching them.

While this draconian policy has led many to wonder what secrets the Sagarens are hiding in the depths of their ships, in



truth it is as much the Sagaren belief in the right to privacy as much as any attempt at preventing the acquisition of information by outsiders that evokes such a harsh response. As many have learned over the years, Sagarens take an invasion of privacy very seriously, generally with rapid and violent responses.

INTERSTELLAR: When it comes to interstellar law Sagarens primarily concern themselves with keeping the immediate areas around their territory safe for traders. This results in relatively dense and frequent patrols to discourage piracy. Most Sagaren systems also have a number of laws designed to grant them greater control over the traffic that passes through their territory. These often include speed limits and specific areas through which traffic must pass in addition to holding random inspections.

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS: Judicial proceedings of any real severity solely involving Sagarens are handled by the local council. Those matters that involve outsiders are generally brought before a relatively high ranking member of the security force who rotate through this particular duty every few days. This temporary judge generally consults the laws of the station, allows witnesses to be questioned and evidence

presented, and then passes sentence. Once passed there is no appealing the decision and sentencing is carried out immediately. These sentences can range from a small fine, to seizure of assets, and even death. Imprisonment is not an option as Sagarens consider such a use of resources on a nonproductive individual to be counter productive and more harmful to a society than beneficial.

BIOTECHNOLOGY: Sagaren genetic knowledge is overall fairly high. With the constant need for more efficient crops, meat animals, and the threat of new diseases arising with every stop, Sagaren geneticists and microbiologists have continually pushed the boundaries of established knowledge. They have proven able to rapidly adapt to new challenges and many of their enhanced strains of crops or animals have proven to be popular merchandise as other races look for high quality stock from which to start their own populations.

Regional companies or governments often contract with Sagaren research firms for both genetic and microbiology projects, trusting in both their expertise and their confidentiality.

A surprising exception to their expertise is their own species. While they have an extensive genetic library and understanding of their own race, they have no practical experience working with their own genetic code. Unlike many races who upon reaching a sufficient level of genetic knowledge take steps to remove many of the genetic diseases inherent to their species, Sagarens instead trust to the universe to remove weaker members of their race. The expectation is that those who are born with a defect are expected to learn to compensate for it or that through the normal course of events suffer the fate of any being unable to make their own way in the universe. As Sagarens refuse to have offspring with those who have yet to prove themselves, they feel that this gradually winnows out failing genes from the collective gene pool.

The introduction of regeneration therapy by the Alliance has been eagerly embraced as well, with formally Sagarens who had lost limbs being forced to accept prosthetics as the only viable option. While providing a number of appreciated advantages, these cybernetic limbs are by and large being traded in for flesh and blood counterparts.

NANOTECHNOLOGY: Nanotechnology has acquired a relatively new aspect in Sagaren culture in the region. Previously only used in industrial applications, one of the biggest gains from its close association with the Alliance has been the introduction of medical nanites. While staunchly opposed by some traditionalists, many individuals have embraced the new technology. Use is sporadic so far, surprisingly more of the older members of the race are using the technology than younger generations. This seems primarily due to older Hunters seeing no need to prove their toughness any longer, having already proven themselves while the younger ones see it as a crutch.

Substantial portions of any Homeship or its various independent facilities are dedicated to large nano-manufactories, the largest capable of building entire starships. Much of the raw material gathered from a system is processed through these manufactories to meet the needs of the resident population as well as to produce items for export. The ability to become operational as soon as material is available allows a Homeship to quickly establish itself as an industrial and commercial center of whatever region it has moved to occupy. This particularly tends to be true when it moves into an

outlying area where most of the surrounding systems are still underdeveloped and welcome a nearby source of reasonably priced manufactured goods. Not surprisingly this often leads to conflicts with established manufacturers who in many cases hold a monopoly on such trade before the arrival of the Homeship.

ORGANIZATIONS

SCENTERS: The scouts of the Collective, Scenters are those most experienced and reliable Hunters who are employed searching out new territory for the Collective to move to. This does not merely consist of systems suitable for a Homeship's emplacement, which needs to have a variety of plentiful resources, preferably a habitable planet of some sort, be uninhabited, and located in a good place to establish a major trade station if at all possible. It also includes scouting out surrounding systems and potentially making tentative contact with any nearby civilizations if it seems warranted, especially less developed civilizations that might well prove useful markets for Sagaren goods and services. Many civilizations got their first boost into space, or at least regular interstellar travel with such assistance and more than one has survived a potential invasion by coming under such protection as is often offered by the Collective.

As might be expected such individuals have to have a wide variety of skills in order to perform all the necessary duties and being offered such a position is one of the highest marks of praise a Sagaren can receive.

BLACK PELT: The Black Pelt is the intelligence arm of the Sagaren Collective and operates both openly and covertly to assure the safety of and well being of the Sagaren Collective. The Black Pelt is not above underhanded and even violent action when it is deemed necessary, and is swift to take such action, even preemptively at times if they consider it advisable.

Openly it maintains a presence at all Sagaren Embassies, operates a large number of paid informants and is known to employ spies as well. Additionally many of the Hunters scattered throughout the galaxy file regular reports with the Black Pelt as a matter of course on any matter they believe to be of interest or importance.

More covertly it works to bribe government and corporate officials, infiltrate data networks, undermine hostile and potentially hostile powers, and even at times engage in the destruction of strategic assets. While nominally under the direct control of the Council, the Black Pelt typically operates autonomously with little overhead supervision and it is surmised that only ingrained Sagaren respect for their hierarchy has kept them from expanding beyond the bounds of their authority.

XENOLOGY INTERACTION DIVISION: The group dedicated to dealing with the introduction of alien cultures into Sagaren habitats, the XID does not perform a diplomatic function but instead focuses on the day to day activities of aliens on Sagaren Homeships, being available to answer questions, clear up or arbitrate disputes, act as guides, perform translation services when necessary, and generally insure that whatever trouble may arise in the Alien Quarter is not due to simple misunderstandings while helping promote the peaceful flow of trade and interaction that is necessary in the often

SAGAREN SASH COLORS

White: Child/Adolescent

Grey: Wearer has achieved Hunter status.

Blue: Teacher/Examiner

Red: Pilot/Ship Crew

Black: Soldier/Commando/ Security

Yellow: Engineer/Technical Specialist

Green: Administration/Law

Purple: Doctor/Nurse/Medical Technician

Orange: Diplomat

Silver: Religious

Pink: Science

chaotic confines of what is effectively a small confined port city.

THE TURNED CLAW: The official diplomatic corps of the Sagaren Collective, members of The Turned Claw are chosen for their experience dealing with other races, their clarity of judgment, and perhaps most importantly, an ability to keep their species renowned temper in check. Members of The Turned Claw are usually experienced Hunters with many years behind them and much of the youthful fire banked by hard experience and they carry themselves with a great amount of dignity.

Skilled negotiators, members of The Turned Claw are as fierce fighters in negotiations as they are in battle and rarely come away with any less than they were initially willing to settle for.

SOCIETY

The Sagarens are very much a hierarchical culture that puts great store on rank and prior achievement, thus those of higher rank and status have considerable authority over those beneath them, and those of lower rank and achievement are expected to show deference and respect to those higher above them. There are complex rules concerning how those holding various ranks in different fields stand compared to others. However the rank that is most important and carried by all those who have passed their adulthood ceremony is that of Hunter. Rank within this field is more important than any other as it represents a Sagaren's standing not just within a given field of expertise, but their achievements at fulfilling what it is to be a Sagaren.

EARLY YEARS

Sagarens are generally born in litters of two to three, with one of them always being of the opposite sex from the other(s). From early on competition between youngsters is fierce as they strive instinctively to establish themselves above those around them. A good deal of this competition establishes itself physically, often involving actual fighting and more than one adult Sagaren still bears scars from childhood roughhousing that in many other cultures would be considered near attempted



murder. By their fifth year they begin dedicated schooling and training. As they age, more and more of their competition focuses around physical ability but in forms other than fighting. However formal duels begin to occur as ways of resolving insults, actual and perceived that only begins to taper off as they progress through adolescence. Strict rules prohibiting duels to the death until after individual Sagarens have passed their coming of age trials and close supervision of these duels by adults prevents many of them from ending in death.

This is not to say that their entire childhoods or even lives are spent fighting, far from it. Aside from schooling and training much time is spent engaged in friendly competitive activities, time with family, time engaged in personal hobbies or interests, or simply relaxing. Many firm friendships are established during these years that often carry over into adulthood and more than one Fil'ack has formed out of these early relationships.

By the age of twelve, depending on the status of their training and schooling many are allowed to take the coming of age ceremony. Only after completing this are they allowed to exchange the white of a child for the grey of a Hunter.

COMING OF AGE CEREMONY

The Sagaren Coming of Age Ceremony is a major stepping stone in their lives. While the specific details vary from Homeship to Homeship, all Coming of Age Ceremonies involve the same basic trials; general knowledge, technical knowledge, cultural understanding (involving what it means to be a Sagaren, the Hunter's Code, and other basic necessary knowledge to behave properly), xeno-culture (focusing on local races), physical skill, and finally the Hunter's Challenge; where the aspirant is dropped with absolutely no resources on an undeveloped or undeveloped part of a planet with dangerous native wildlife and are expected to track, kill, and bring back to a designated point within a time limit one of the native lifeforms (always non-sapient), the more difficult or dangerous the creature brought back is, the more successful the aspirant is considered to have been, with consideration if an exceptional degree of cunning or guile was used in the effort. It is not in the least bit uncommon for the aspirant's involved to be badly wounded or even killed during this portion of the Coming of Age Ceremony. Simply passing the Coming of Age Ceremony is enough to grant a Sagaren the right to wear the grey badge and the first rank of a Hunter, those who pass with exceptionally high marks are given additional ranks depending on the degree of their success, though never more than five total.

ADULTHOOD

Once they've passed their age ceremony Sagarens either move straight into the careers of their choice or move onto further education if necessary. Many who chose not to continue their education go straight into the military or hire out onto the many merchant vessels based out of or passing through the Homeship. As all Sagarens acquire a degree of familiarity with shipboard operations from a young age they are well suited to any number of shipboard jobs by the time they finish their primary education. Jobs involving combat, particularly strike craft pilots and commandos, bring the most renown, but the larger majority take on the usual jobs needed to keep society running. Those seeking higher education are most often those with the more placid temperaments. Given the fact that Sagarens don't reach old age until they're roughly a hundred seventy years old, many have multiple careers over

the course of their lifetime. It's important to remember though that even the most peaceful and placid of Sagarens is at heart a lethal predator, and the capacity for sudden violence is always lurking just below the surface.

SAGAREN WORLDVIEW IN BRIEF

For Sagarens, all creatures are placed into one of three categories on what is usually an individual basis, Hunter, Prey, and Protected.

A Hunter is one that hunts, the most deadly of the three by far; this category means that one is quick, intelligent, and very, very deadly. Hunters can vary in their level of lethality, thus there are various sublevels included in the label Hunter depending on a Hunter's skill and reputation. By far, the large majority of Sagarens fall into upper end of this category. Hunters hunt both prey and on occasion, other hunters if the situation requires it.

Prey are the main focus of the hunters, this is a very wide category, it incorporates everyone who does not fit in one of the other two categories. Depending on nuances in the way the word 'prey' is pronounced by Sagarens, it can indicate which portion of that category a Sagaren has placed that creature in. At the bottom end of the scale are those creatures that are completely defenseless and pose no threat to the hunter (ie: Rabbits and politicians). At the other end of the scale are those creatures that can prove a menace to a hunter, but lack that vital element that would put them in the category of Hunter (This would include creatures like rhinos and your basic run of the mill thugs.) Note that being prey does not necessarily involve having Sagarens act against you with violence, it may well simply mean that you are considered fair game to be taken advantage of in negotiations, business, or other affairs.

Protected is the final and smallest category. The Protected are off limits to Hunters, and good Hunters are in fact expected to watch after and protect them, regardless of species. This category consists mostly of expecting mothers, small children, and the elderly. In certain cases, a Protected may be reassigned to another category depending on their actions and circumstances.

RELIGION

The primary deity of the Sagaren race is commonly referred to as 'The Hunter.' A chaotic, and impulsive deity, The Hunter is generally said to look like a giant Sagaren, with eyes that glow red, and fur that is midnight black, no specific sex is ever given. The Hunter doesn't demand worship so much as that those who follow he/she/it, obey a set of general guidelines. Followers are expected to push themselves to be the best hunters possible. They are to watch out for the safety of all Protected, even those that would otherwise be considered enemies. Tracking skills and fighting prowess are highly valued, with a tendency to sometimes ignore the odds. Most, though not all followers of The Hunter, tend to be highly straightforward and somewhat blunt when it comes to diplomacy and the like. They will tell you exactly what they are thinking and precisely what they expect of you. This is not to say that they are incapable or unskilled at lying, merely that they rarely bother to do so.

One thing that is slightly unnerving to some of the few members of other races who have been allowed to study the religion closely is the continued mention of a duty to maintain some sort of universal balance. A very few hypothesize that should whatever this balance be shift significantly, the Sagarens may take an entirely different outlook on their interactions with other races; from being relatively benevolent and protective to something much, much darker and more dangerous. Most however scoff at the idea and insist that it refers to some inner balance they strive to maintain. The Sagarens themselves when questioned about this remain enigmatic as ever about such matters.

NAMING CONVENTIONS: Sagarens have two names, their personal name, and their lineage name. Their personal name is given a couple of months after their birth and typically reflects some aspect of their character or physical person. Their lineage name comes from prior generations. Only those who become a Hunter of the Eightieth Rank may begin a new lineage line and only after a thorough review of their actions by the Council. Being allowed to start a new lineage line is one of the highest honors a Sagaren can receive.

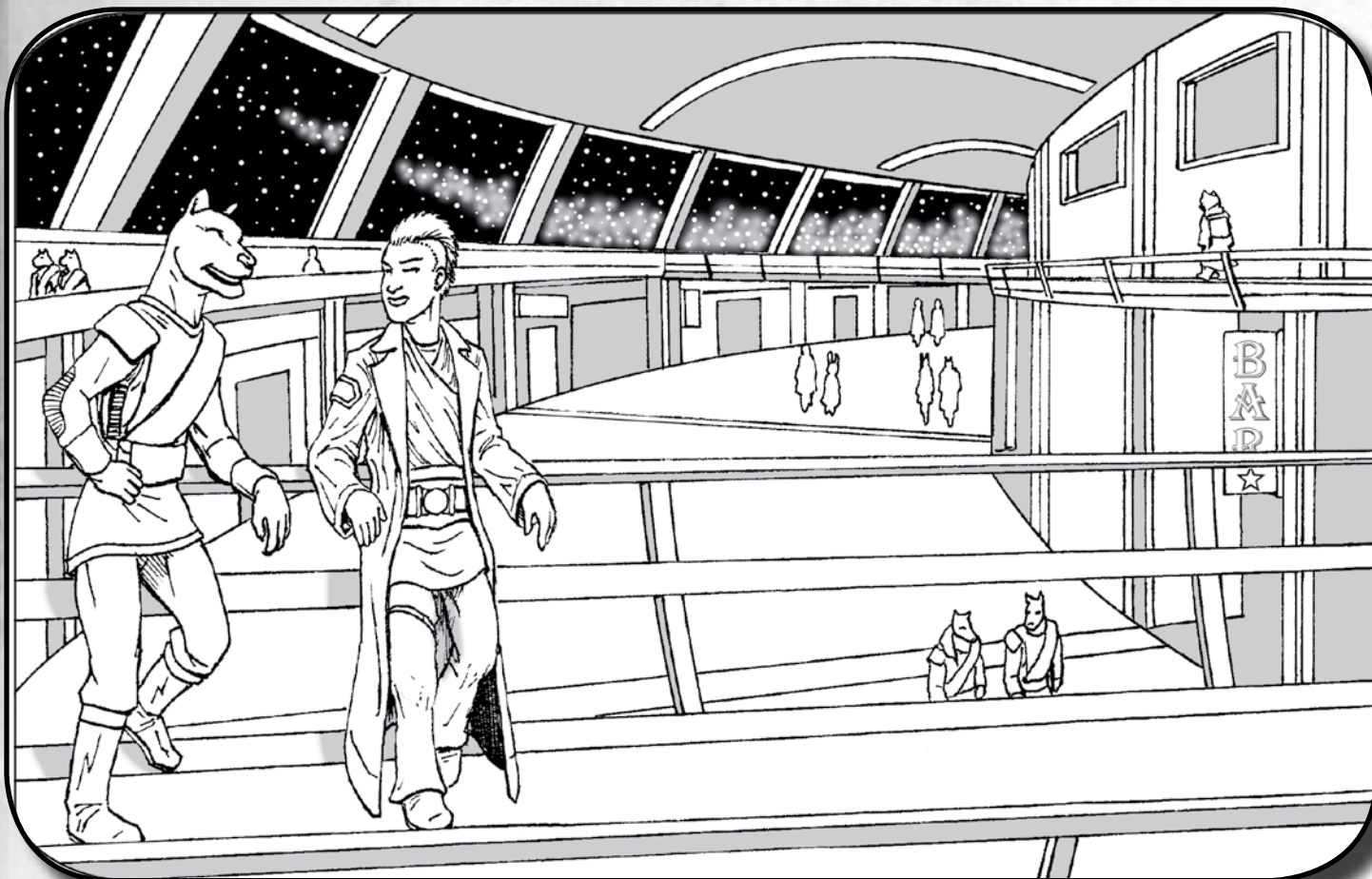
Upon becoming a Hunter Sagarens acquire an apostrophe after the first syllable of their first name. If they manage to reach the status of a rank fifty Hunter they have an apostrophe added after the first syllable of their second name.

SAGAREN DRESS: Sagaren dress, when circumstances don't require something more substantial, consists of sashes that wrap around an individual from shoulder to their waist on the opposite side and back around. This sash is attached to a belt that goes around the waist. The belt often has attached pockets of various sorts for carrying either equipment or miscellaneous items. The sashes are colored according to the profession of the wearer and if their wearer has engaged in more than one profession, the sash will be divided into variously colored stripes. Brown stripes crossing an individual color indicate a person's rank within that field. Various other decorations are used to indicate more specific affiliations, careers, and achievements. Sil'vith of other species often add stripes to their normal clothes to indicate their own abilities and achievements.

SIL'VITH: Sil'vith are those individuals of non-Sagaren races that are effectively accepted as Sagarens. Only those who have proven themselves to an individual Sagaren on the deepest levels are granted this honor. Rarely handed out, it is a mark of high respect and confers many rights, privileges, and responsibilities upon those so chosen, including having to follow the basic code of conduct for a Hunter. One who is chosen as such is treated and is expected to return such treatment as if each were kin to the other. A Sagaren who makes one of another race such places their reputation on the line when doing so, so it is a rare privilege outside their own species. The concluding and most significant part of the ceremony involves a mixing of the blood of the two participants.

Sagarens have a similar ceremony amongst themselves that is much more common and whose purpose is to reinforce and formally bind two or more Sagarens into a relationship in which each is willing to do whatever is necessary to look after and aid the others involved in the ceremony.

DEMOGRAPHIC: The demographic of Homeships is as to be expected almost entirely composed of Sagarens. The



exception is the Alien Zone. Comprising the trade port, shipyards, embassies, many warehouses, sleeping and recreation establishments, and various businesses. This is the only area in which non-Sagarens are allowed with the rare exception of Sil'vith. Within this area though the diversity of races is both astounding and ever changing as ships dock and undock.

IN SUMMARY

The local extension of the Sagaren Collective has managed to insert itself into the fabric of the regional political-economic framework with a remarkable speed born of long practice. Its unusual alliance with the United Systems Alliance has essentially insulated it from any obvious military attempts against it regionally, leaving it free to concentrate on its preferred method of expansion within the economic field.

A stabilizing influence within its local region, the Collective has proven willing to involve itself in outside affairs on several occasions when it has suited their interests. This has left those around them keeping a wary eye on the Collective whenever they consider empire building activities.

More and more though, the Collective's economic empire is spreading throughout many of the smaller systems and civilizations as its merchant ships and trade guilds expand ever outwards. In particular they have shown an ability to take advantage of opportunities either seen as too small to be worth the effort by many of the more established merchant groups and corporations, or finding opportunities where none had

previously been seen to exist. The biggest example of this is of course the Klaeok incident that resulted in its official change to the Republic of New Ireland. This not only was the largest single economic coup yet demonstrated by the local Collective but showed the regional powers, large and small, that they were not afraid to take decisive action and face down other governments.

With more Homeships periodically arriving every several years and carving out their own enclaves in unclaimed territory around other civilizations' borders the Collective's influence is growing, though it seems unlikely with their semi-nomadic nature that they will begin overwhelming the region. Fierce fighters of piracy within what they consider their own territory, the pressure they have been placing upon these lawless elements has been going a long ways towards reducing their numbers and securing space lanes far and wide.

It seems likely that to one degree or another the Sagaren Collective will continue to remain in the region and as an influence indefinitely. While individual Homeships may come and go, the Sagarens are here to stay and these warrior merchants seem poised to become one of the frontrunners in terms of overall power within the region.

5: THE BAGGAL EMPIRE

She ignored the blank stares of the guards in their livery as she strode confidently down the hallways of the palace, datapad firmly in hand. Blood drops left a trail behind her that drew the eyes of palace staff, nobles, and other courtiers, but the expression on her face prevented any of them from stopping her.

Startled cries of outrage as she shoved her way into the line before the audience chamber by angry petitioners were stifled as they saw the ring she wore. With one hard push the doors before her slammed open loudly, causing all in the room to turn at the interruption. She leveled a digit at one noble who's eyes had gone wide at her appearance. The Emperor rose from his seat. "What is the meaning of this interruption, Eye of the Monarch?"

She grits her teeth. "Forgive my interruption Emperor. Baron Iten, as a member of the Monarch's Eye's I hereby charge you with high treason against the Empire, plotting against the Emperor, and the attempted assassination of myself."

The Baggal Empire is an up and coming power, and while only controlling fourteen significant systems, those systems have been well invested and provide a much stronger economic and military base than might be thought. A feudal style monarchy, the Baggal Empire has a strong military spread out among its various nobles with a powerful royal fleet that answers solely to the ruling monarchy and serves as a means of keeping the more ambitious of the nobles in line.

The Royal court is filled with intrigue and plotting, and position and power is constantly shifting, even the Royal Family is not immune, and more than one member of the Royal Family has fallen to an ambitious rival. This often leads to sudden changes of both internal and external policy that can leave outsiders who thought they had a prior agreement or understanding in the lurch with little or no warning.

The major Noble Houses operate with a fair degree of autonomy and those that control an entire system have a power to rival any other system state even without the backing of the rest of the Empire, and more than one Royal family has turned a convenient blind eye to some of the more expansionistic efforts of its nobles.

While there is a clear and well defined distinction between the various class levels, even the commoners live a fairly comfortable if not necessarily luxurious life with sufficient medical care and food. The more powerful nobles can and often do live lives of luxury hard to imagine even elsewhere in the galaxy. While the Empire's expansion has been slow, it has been fairly steady and were it not for its own constant infighting then it would likely be a great deal larger than it currently is. It has fought several fairly intense wars with some of the other regional powers, but was completely unprepared for the scope and power that the Alliance was willing

to bring to bear over what the Empire had considered to be a relatively small border skirmish. The resulting conflict has given the Empire significant pause and it seems that the treaty that resulted will likely hold through at least the next few monarchs.

The Empire has shown almost a Machavellian love of carrying its intrigue and covert work into its relations with other powers and its neighbors are soon quick to look to them anytime such an operation comes to light.

GOVERNMENT

The Baggal Empire's government originates entirely from the power of its monarchy and the currently reigning king or queen wields absolute authority over all their subjects, noble or otherwise. It is they who hold the final word on treaties, colonization efforts, military actions, and whatever may come to their interest. While they mostly leave lesser matters to local nobles, they have the right and power to intercede into even the smallest matters if they so chose. While this can make for fast and rapid decisions at times, it can also lead to too much or too little attention paid to specific subjects depending on what is brought to their attention. Another problem can be that when regents change they may well completely overturn the policies of their predecessors which can unleash chaos throughout the Empire.

Beneath the Royal Family are the Noble Houses who wield nearly as much power, though in much smaller spheres. It is these extended families of nobles that see to the day to day running of the empire for the most part and it is the infighting both within and between their houses that has both given the Empire most of its strength and prevented its farther expansion to this date. Alliances between these Houses are fragile and constantly changing with murder and intermarriage equally common. The largest control entire systems and rule over smaller houses that in turn rule over even weaker houses until at the lowest of levels a single noble might only have control over a single factory or other source of income.

While there is technically very little a weaker house can do to protest the actions of one of the houses over it, those houses or nobles that require too much or disrespect those under them tend to suffer increasing numbers of problems ranging from mere inconveniences to carefully planned and timed actions that can topple an entire Noble House with very little effort. Thus there is an unwritten protocol that underlines the established rules that effectively has the force of law, and those who violate it do so at their own risk.

Because of these factors, the Empire lacks cohesiveness except for when the ruling monarch imposes their authority for some particular task such as a conflict or major project. On the other hand, the large number of directions the Empire might be taking at any point in time helps to make them

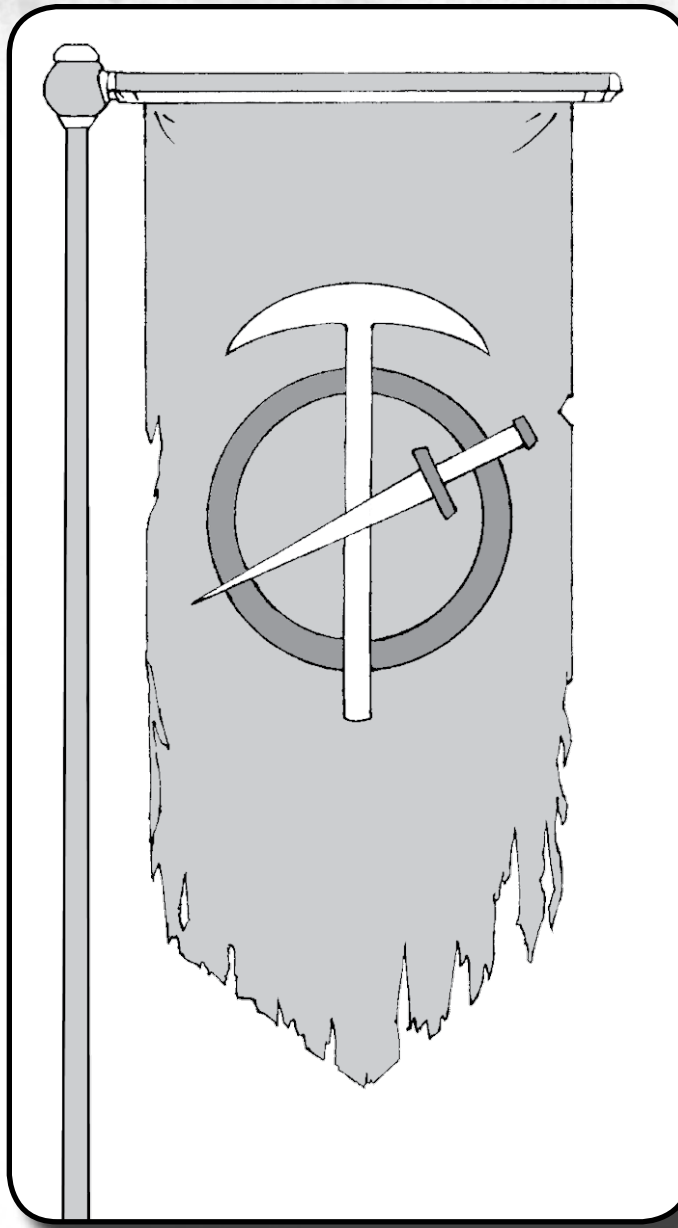
unpredictable while providing the Monarchy a degree of deniability should something blow up in the face of one of their nobles.

THE MAJOR HOUSES

HOUSE CALEL: House Cael is one of the older Houses in the Empire, and has managed to hold onto the status of being such for far longer than any other House. A firm supporter of the monarchy it has proven wily and treacherous when dealing with other houses, constantly seeking to undermine their efforts and plans and often setting them against each other, but has never been proven to have had one of its members make a try for the monarchy itself. It is generally believed, often, but not always with good reason, that any time a Machiavellian style plot is uncovered that House Cael has at least some part in it, even if it is not directly responsible. While lacking the military power of some of the other major Houses, House Cael is generally admitted, begrudgingly, to be the most skilled at the infighting common within the Empire.

HOUSE IKEA: House Ikea has established itself in a firm economic niche that has so far proven unassailable, that of providing the Royal Fleet with the majority of its ships, as well as providing ships to many of the Houses and nobles who lack the shipyards and skilled labor needed to produce their own vessels. It generally goes without saying that the ships House Ikea produces for its own use are the most modern and up to date available within the Empire, many with systems and weapons unavailable for sale. While neither a leader in the political or military spheres, House Ikea has a great deal of economic clout and in the past has used it and its key position with the monarchy to ruthlessly crush any perceived threat against them or their business. House Ikea is known to aggressively engage in industrial and corporate espionage both within and outside the Empire's borders.

HOUSE RETINE: The most militarily aggressive of the major Houses, House Retine is quick to seize the advantage if it should think one of the competing Houses or nobles should seem easy pickings. Striking hard and fast House Retine is not the most powerful House militarily, but makes up what it lacks in military power with cunning and an almost clairvoyant



ability to pick the perfect time to launch an attack, nibbling away at its rivals one little piece at a time. The youngest of the Major Houses, and potentially the one most in danger of falling from such a status the leaders of House Retine are quick to take advantage of any opportunity to increase their power or decrease that of their rivals, taking risks older Houses would never consider. House Retine is quick to try and look for advantages outside the Empire as well as internally, and it was largely their initial actions that nearly thrust the Empire into extended conflict with the United Systems Alliance.

HOUSE GALLOWES: House Gallows is generally considered to currently be in decline, having lost much prestige and power in a recent struggle with House Geru. Having built their powerbase around far flung resource extraction operations around the Empire whose products were then sold both within and without for large profits. House Gallows used threats of withholding these vital resources to force the other major Houses to submit to their demands. This state of affairs had continued for a long time before House

Geru launched a surprise simultaneous assault on many of House Gallows' installations, capturing many, and destroying others. House Gallows' efforts to retaliate and recover from this surprise attack were hampered, both covertly and overtly by other houses and nobles seeing an opportunity to break House Gallows' long term near monopoly. After a protracted conflict House Gallows was forced to accept the loss of much of its powerbase, either absorbed by House Geru and other opportunists, or destroyed in the heavy fighting. House Gallows' position at the moment could be said to border on desperation, with those it lorded over for so long metaphorically (and literally) sharpening their swords and with much of its resource base removed as well as the heavy losses from the conflict, House Gallows is frantically searching for any way to hold onto its power and position. Because of this they are taking ever greater risks and grasping at any opportunity, so far unsuccessfully. Desperate as they are, they are being closely watched by all around them in case they should go too far rather than risk sinking to the status of a minor House.

HOUSE GERU: House Geru until recently was almost unnoticed among the major Houses, staying in the shadows. However with its successful campaign against House Gallows, not only has it brought down a major competitor but it has vastly increased its powerbase with the acquisition of much of House Gallows' industries. Moreso, the other Houses and nobles, not to mention the monarchy, are paying intent scrutiny to House Geru which has proven able to in complete secrecy launch such a devastating campaign without any hint of warning against a superior opponent. Many wonder who or what House Geru's next target will be once they have finished consolidating their recent gains and none of their competition wants to be as caught unawares as House Gallows was. In particular the calculating way in which House Geru took into account the probable actions of the other Houses to their advantage has given them new respect they had lacked before.

For the moment House Geru seems content to merely consolidate its recent gains and fortify its positions, to the almost unheard of extent of trading some of the harder to hold locations to other Houses, both major and minor, and nobles outside their own House or sub-Houses. House Geru can be considered to be exceptionally crafty, and while not as skilled as House Cael at setting the other Houses against each other, it has proven most capable of gauging and using the reactions of the other Houses to events to their best advantage.

HOUSE LILE: House Lile is considered something of a paper tiger by the other major Houses. Where they all have found an economic, political, or military niche with some sort of visible and vulnerable assets House Lile's assets are nearly all electronic, and more importantly to their security, intermingled with those of the many other Houses and nobles. House Lile is the stockbroker of the Empire, managing and handling everyone else's money and resources, including much of that of the monarchy. This, along with a policy of not making any overt actions against the other major houses has largely isolated House Lile from actions by their competitors. The downside is that House Lile's fortunes rise and fall with the financial strength of the Empire, and the Empire's fortunes rise and fall in turn with the power of house Lile. Recently House Lile has been expanding its fortunes outside the Empire in an effort to offset some of its vulnerability.

HOUSE PIKIE: House Pikie is the largest single military entity within the Empire next to the Royal Fleet. While generally not regarded as using the most elegant tactics or best planning, House Pikie knows how to use sheer numbers and firepower to its advantage in a way few other Houses can match, and has the ability to make maximum use of this in a way no other House can match. Surprisingly House Pikie is not the most aggressive of the major Houses, rather it takes advantage of its military strength to make sure they are placed in charge of any important campaign initiated by the monarchy; by doing so they both position themselves to reap the majority of the glory with a minimum of risk, and are able to take first pick after the monarchy of any spoils. The recent lack of conflict with outside sources has left House Pikie in a position where its most prominent asset has not been in demand and rumors are brewing that several of the less militarily powerful Houses might well be planning to join together and challenge House Pikie's position. This has led the heads of House Pikie to advocate ever more fervently taking action against powers outside the Empire, whether or not it may be strategically viable or

wise. It is entirely likely that House Pikie is also looking for a more covert means of igniting a conflict with an outside power, something that could well bring the Empire into a conflict it can ill afford at this juncture.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Somewhat surprisingly given the amount of deceit, treachery, and powerplaying that goes on internally, the Empire has a strong record of honoring its outside treaties and alliances, at least as long as the same monarch remains on the throne. Overall though, aside from regular mutual skirmishing with some of its neighbors and the occasional overly ambitious noble the Empire has good relations with the galaxy in general, if ones usually under watchful eyes.

Because of the high level of development of its systems, their relative compactness, and their strategic position, a great deal of trade passes in, out, or through the Empire's space, the numerous tariffs and fees this generate help keep its economy strong. While many trade treaties are dictated by the monarch, many smaller agreements are reached with the many Houses in the empire or even individual nobles.

In the last few years the monarchy has gone through rulers at a pace blistering even for the Empire. It was one of these changes of government that led to the recent conflict with the United Systems Alliance, and one more that only a little more than a year later led to the current treaty. The current reigning monarch, His Royal Majesty Hiban Riskalian IV has been ruthless in suppressing the normal infighting and intrigue that were the hallmark of the Royal Family and looks to remain on the throne for the foreseeable future. What this means for future foreign relations is not certain other than the likelihood that whatever course the monarch should choose, it is likely to be seen through with a consistency that has not characterized the Empire for some time.

THE NAVY

The Baggal Empire maintains a powerful navy, if one lacking in hull size outside those forces under the direct command of the monarch. A divided command, tensions often quickly rise when the navy is called together and in times of peace the various groups fight against each other almost as often as against their opponents. This has led to the case that while fleets under the control of an individual House or noble operate well together, and their crews are for the most part brave and well trained, mixed groups lack the solidarity necessary for truly effective operations and often end up undermining each other's efforts.

ORGANIZATION

The Empire's Navy is divided between the Royal Fleet and the many smaller navies belonging to the various Houses and more powerful nobles. The Royal Fleet is maintained at a level that leaves it capable of both providing the core of any major offensive action the Empire may take and leaving a strong enough force around the capital to prevent any overly ambitious noble or House from attempting to seize control of the Empire by force. In times of conflict each House and noble is expected to provide at least a minimum number of forces that are determined and revised every decade. Failure to be able to raise the required forces when called upon can lead to the loss of a noble's position or even the destruction of an entire House depending on the circumstances. Because these called



up units are generally unused to working together and may well have actually been fighting each other in the past, the Empire has tried to make the best of a bad thing by keeping these separate forces together as individual units as part of a larger fleet or task force. While this greatly reduces the flexibility of deployments, the alternatives have more than once cost the Empire victory due to a lack of cooperation or even outright opposition between groups. A single noble is often placed in temporary overall command of a combined fleet, but particularly important campaigns will be led by a commander from the Royal Fleet. As the Royal Fleet is entirely made up of non-hereditary nobles, this in itself often creates a great

deal of tension as the nobles tend to rankle at being under the command of a mere commoner, royally appointed or not.

FLEETS: Empire fleets tend to be larger than those of their counterparts as they need more ships to achieve the same level of firepower as other navies due to the prevalence of smaller ships amongst the nobles and Houses that provide the component elements of the Empire fleets. Full fleets are almost always only deployed under the direct orders of the monarchy as only in this way can enough ships be gathered for an actual fleet, none of the Houses being allowed to accumulate that sort of military power in one place normally.

TASK FORCES: Commonly the largest force that a House or noble can manage to assemble in one place, Empire task forces can be large and powerful assemblages able to overwhelm even many of the more powerful single system governments. Often used along disputed borders, external as well as the internal borders between individual Houses and nobles, Empire task forces are quick to apply force to a given situation and are often the first forces to arrive at any sort of incident.

INDIVIDUAL VESSELS: The Empire rarely deploys vessels independently except in the safest of areas or on the easiest of tasks. With not only outside forces to be concerned with, but competing houses and nobles to be wary of, single vessels have time and again proven easy targets hard to resist, and more than one has disappeared without a trace, the victim of a sudden covert strike by an opposing house or noble.

PERSONNEL: Empire personnel are generally very highly trained and many have battle experience. Even those who are not already nobility hold a status above that of mere commoners, these military personnel are highly motivated and extremely loyal to their liege lord or lady. Striving for recognition and the potential for elevation into the nobility for particularly valiant service among other rewards, Empire personnel are courageous almost to a fault, and it is here that their greatest weakness may lie. Between the offensive nature of the armament mix on most of their ships, a culture that glorifies honorable combat, and the desire to gain the greatest glory for the greatest rewards, Empire warriors tend to throw themselves into battle even when that may not be the most prudent course of action. This often leads to heavy losses and when combined with ossified tactics has allowed outnumbered and outgunned forces to successfully oppose more powerful Empire forces in the past.

SHIPBOARD PERSONNEL: With the navy being seen as the most glorious and prestigious service, its personnel receive the highest degree of training and equipment. Training in a crewmember's specific field is as good as can be hoped for, but there is a lack of breadth of knowledge is the case of many training programs outside of that used by the Royal Fleet. This means that while individuals perform well in their jobs, there is little ability to shift crew around to fill the gaps caused by losses in combat, which can have a marked effect on combat efficiency that tends not to show up in peacetime exercises.

GROUND TROOPS/MARINES: Service in the marines is nowhere near as glamorous or likely to provide the means for elevation as directly serving on a military vessel, and as such entry standards and overall training and quality of equipment are somewhat below that of the navy. While the training and equipment can be considered adequate, if only just, on those

occasions the Empire's Marines have engaged in combat, the differences in the standards of training and equipment are evident in casualties heavier than considered standard for such units. The exception to this is the many small elite units raised by the various Houses or nobles for special operations which while varying in quality are generally considered among the best in the known galaxy.

Permanently deployed ground forces, being primarily defensive in nature are even lower on the prestige scale and are often left with refurbished equipment no longer in use by better maintained and supported forces with a commiserate lessening of experience and training.

TRAINING: There are three primary methods of training military personnel employed in the Baggal Empire. The first and most common are the various small and relatively inexpensive training organizations employed by the different nobles and Houses which generally provide very basic training before sending personnel off to actual space duty where the majority of their training takes place in an on the job environment. The second method is to send personnel to the famous Envir V training academy which is run independently of any of the houses by retired military personnel where very high standards are maintained, but it is very expensive. This particular method is not highly favored due to both the price involved and the fact that loyalty to a single house or noble is not reinforced during training as it is for individual training programs run by nobles or Houses. Finally, the Royal Fleet has its own top of the line training program through which it sends its own members. In addition to comprehensive training across a variety of fields and a dedicated officer program, there is a very strong stressing of loyalty to the monarchy rather than the individual Houses or noble.

EXPECTATIONS: Empire military personnel are above all expected to uphold the code of honor that is a primary element of their culture. Unfortunately, much like many of the nobles who espouse this code of honor, as often as not, the personnel who serve beneath them pick and choose when and where they adhere to this code. This leaves interaction with such personnel always a guessing game as there are those who ignore the code, those who adhere rigidly to it, and those, the majority, who fall somewhere in-between. The exception to this, as in many things, is the Royal Fleet, where a practical application of the code is firmly adhered to by its commanders and personnel, if not always its leaders.

As part of this code of honor, absolute and unwavering loyalty to the House or noble one serves under is considered essential even over that of the Empire as a whole. The converse of this is found in the Royal Fleet, where loyalty to the monarch is supposed to be absolute and unwavering. Surprisingly, despite the amount of intrigue and deceit that the Empire is famous for, this is one aspect that seems to remain largely constant. There are few recorded acts of betrayal by military personnel against their superiors.

Empire personnel are expected to show courage in the face of the enemy and achieve whatever their mission is at all costs, regardless of its importance; an expectation that on many occasions has led to heavy casualties for objectives of limited value. However it has also led to many victories where another

force might have pulled back and hesitated in the face of heavy losses; as such it is something of a mixed blessing.

SHIP DESIGN

WARSHIPS: Baggal Empire warships tend towards heavy armor backed by large long range energy weapons mounted in turrets along the ventral and dorsal centerlines. This leaves them somewhat slow and clumsy as well as weak in missile power and close range defenses, but the Empire considers the ability to deliver a crushing broadside at long ranges in rapid order more important than heavy missiles salvos or close range defenses. The biggest disadvantage to this arrangement has proven to be the excessive vulnerability to strike craft and missile heavy ships it engenders; the relatively large number of dedicated escort ships that the Empire deploys only partially helping to compensate for this lack. Additionally, because a large portion of any Baggal fleet will have been levied, there is something of a shortage of truly large capital ships, many of the nobles and their houses unable to afford to support larger vessels. In general, anything larger than a heavy cruiser is if not uncommon, at least not typical. On the other hand, this means that there tend to be much larger numbers of smaller vessels than would be normal in most fleets. The tradeoff tends towards less overall firepower, but any given ship destroyed means a relatively smaller percentage of a fleet's overall combat capability is lost. Still, it has left the Empire at a marked disadvantage in conflicts with navies that support a more balanced fleet except for those occasions when significant portions of the Royal Fleet are detached in support of a campaign

MERCHANTS: Empire merchant vessels tend towards very basic designs, many completely unarmed, slow, and wholly reliant on either escorts or military patrols for protection, being entirely vulnerable to even the smallest armed threat. Only the fact that piracy is almost unheard of within the Empire's borders (at least piracy by people other than rival nobles and Houses) makes this a viable design philosophy, and as trading outside the Empire picks up more and more smaller warships are being tied up in escort duty which may in time cause a rethinking on the design of Empire merchant ships and policies about the use of armed merchant vessels within the Empire's boundaries.

TACTICS: Empire tactics have tended to break down into two different styles. Either standing back at long range and pounding an opponent into submission, or frontal assaults that rely on firepower and numbers to break through an enemy's defenses and then envelope them. While this has proven to work well against outnumbered or outclassed opponents, against equal numbers or a cagey opponent it has often led to very heavy losses as the Empire forces often find themselves out maneuvered and picked apart piece by piece. While the Empire does have commanders who break the mold and develop new and more flexible tactics; who can prove a nasty surprise for an opponent, by and large, those in command are generally those who most conform to accepted standards. These tactics are as much a result of a mindset that sees anything other than bringing an enemy to immediate action a sign of cowardice as an attempt to make the best use of the capabilities of their technology and equipment. Faced with a prepared opponent who knows what to expect, Empire forces, unless overwhelming (Their preferred method), are likely to

suffer heavily even against a weaker opponent. Against an equal opponent, particularly one well equipped with strike craft and faster ships in space, or more mobile infantry on the ground, Empire forces often find themselves slowly bled to death by opponents they are unable to pin down long enough to bring their heavy firepower to bear.

PRIVATEERS: While privateering is technically illegal within the Empire, it is not unheard of for private individuals, even from outside the Empire, to accept a “commission” from one of the Houses or nobles for hostile acts against competitors or opponents within or outside the Empire’s borders. While these intermediaries are illegal under Empire law, there is tacit unspoken agreement between the participants that privateers when found, if bearing the proper papers are not treated as pirates but as regular navy personnel, and need not worry about fear of attack by their employer’s allies, though they are given a permanent expulsion from Empire space, whether they are citizens or not if caught by their foes.

More commonly though, unregistered privateers are used, being allowed to base out of a noble or House’s territory, as well as given support and a place to sell their captured gains. While far more lucrative than “proper” privateering the risks are far higher as well. Without the appropriate papers these “privateers” face not only being attacked by all and sundry, but of immediate execution as pirates if caught.

PRIZE MONEY: While the specifics regarding prize money vary from House to House, it is an accepted practice and one of the primary reasons, along with the chance for elevation of status and the accumulation of glory that Baggalians join the military. While the amount of prize money varies based on rank, after a successful campaign, even the lowest ranked members of a unit can be well set up to open a small business of their own upon release from service. Higher ranking commanders and nobles are often able to retire in luxury after a good campaign.

MERCENARIES: Mercenaries are not uncommon within the Empire, and are the favored tools of the smaller Houses and weaker nobles who cannot afford to raise and maintain military forces themselves. Even at the lowest level for hire security forces are commonly used to defend important assets when vassal forces are unavailable or deemed inappropriate. Mercenary forces tend to break down into three types, those vassals hired out by their liege lords or houses, independent forces formed within the Empire, and mercenary forces from outside the Empire.

Those hired out by nobles or Houses are generally of at least average quality and come with established records of service. More, their contracts are often backed by the reputation of the hiring House or noble, which if nothing else, generally insures that the hired units can be reliably depended on to fulfill the terms of their contracts. Fairly expensive for their value, they are still the most commonly hired both for their reliability and the fact that they are known factors.

Independent mercenary forces raised from within the Empire are not especially common because of the reluctance of the established Houses and nobles to allow armed forces that are not under the control of one or the other group. Many are under the command of nobles from the smaller noble families who had few choices in what they could do with their lives. Others are run by the remnants of what had previously been noble families and houses, their core forces the remnants of

their vassals. Of varying skills, abilities, and reliability, these mercenaries are a chancier risk that those supplied by established Houses or nobles, but generally come cheaper and are far more willing to take on contracts that other mercenary companies sponsored by nobles and Houses won’t. Most of these groups finally end up working outside the Empire for the highest bidder, but many remain, and at times their leaders can even receive fiefdoms in return for exemplary service.

Mercenary forces from outside the Empire are especially frowned on for use within the Empire, not being deemed trustworthy or as capable as indigenous forces. Mostly, small ones are used for work outside the Empire as escorts or guards, however at times they are used within the Empire when complete deniability is needed for particularly sensitive or unwholesome jobs. Able to do the work and then disappear outside the boundaries of the Empire’s reach, such units are shown no mercy or quarter by local forces, all of which combine to make them an expensive proposition.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

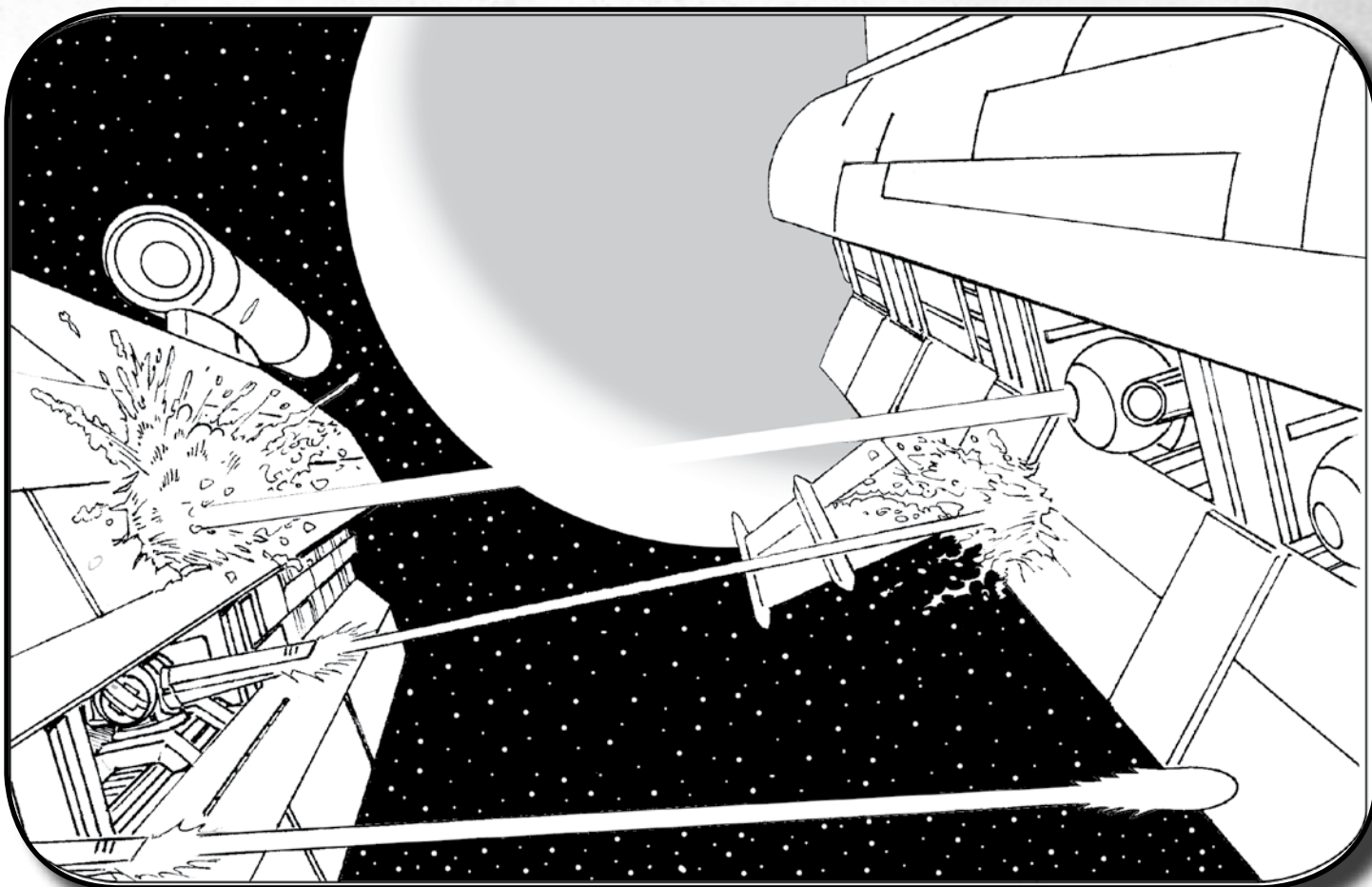
CODE OF HONOR: The actions of the Baggal Empire’s people in addition to the laws laid down is supposed to be governed by a strict code of conduct. In reality even those that follow it, often prefer to follow their own interpretations of it rather than the strict letter of the code. While it is too extensive and detailed to fully lay out here, the basics can be summarized. Above all else loyalty to one’s social superiors is mandatory, not only loyalty in performing one’s duties, but performing them to the highest standard possible. Not surprisingly this is most strongly advocated by the upper classes, and the one subject to the most interpretation by just about everyone.

Not far beneath loyalty is the requirement for honorable combat, among which are, but not limited to, the requirements not to resort to underhanded techniques such as assassination, shooting someone in the back, and refusing a request to surrender. Perhaps more than any other aspect of the Baggal code of honor, this is little more than a legal fiction for many in the Empire. Though there are those who strongly hold to this portion of the code, and often receive great recognition for doing so, many find it far too inconvenient to toss away such quick and easy methods of obtaining power or toppling a rival.

Another component that often comes into play is that of protecting the honor of oneself and one’s House and family. Perhaps the most common cause of duels, this part of the Empire’s code of honor is widely followed, though again, just what falls into this category tends to vary from person to person, but attempts to preserve it have led to dramatic actions of all sorts throughout the Empire’s history, everything from duels between individuals to a couple of outright wars that have drawn much of the Empire into the conflict.

Also those in a position of power are expected to look after and see to the care of those under them. It is as much self interest as a desire to follow this part of the code of honor that has helped insure a relatively happy and healthy population, as such subjects are more productive and less inclined to unrest than abused or neglected subjects.

DUELING: Dueling is a common phenomenon at all social levels of the Empire and is governed by strict rules. Chief among them is that although the one challenged may choose to have someone else stand in for them if they so wish, the



challenger has to stand for themselves. This is largely to prevent dueling being used as a way of removing an inconvenience rather than a way of settling actual disputes. The conditions vary from duel to dual, ranging from first touch or blood, to death, and even the weapons used; the conditions generally depending on the perceived degree of insult and the hotheadedness of the participants involved. Typically dueling is used when all efforts to have the parties involved resolve the conflict in a more peaceful manner have failed and no satisfaction has been obtained. Professional duelists are very popular, and it can prove a way for even a person from the lowest rungs of Empire society can raise their status and make a great deal of money. Even though they can only be employed by the challenged party, there is a great demand for them, and many Houses and families have at least one on permanent retainer. Merely having the services of a professional duelist with a proven record available has averted more than one challenge over the years. Many freelance duelists double as bodyguards when not actually employed on a contract and have proven highly effective in this role.

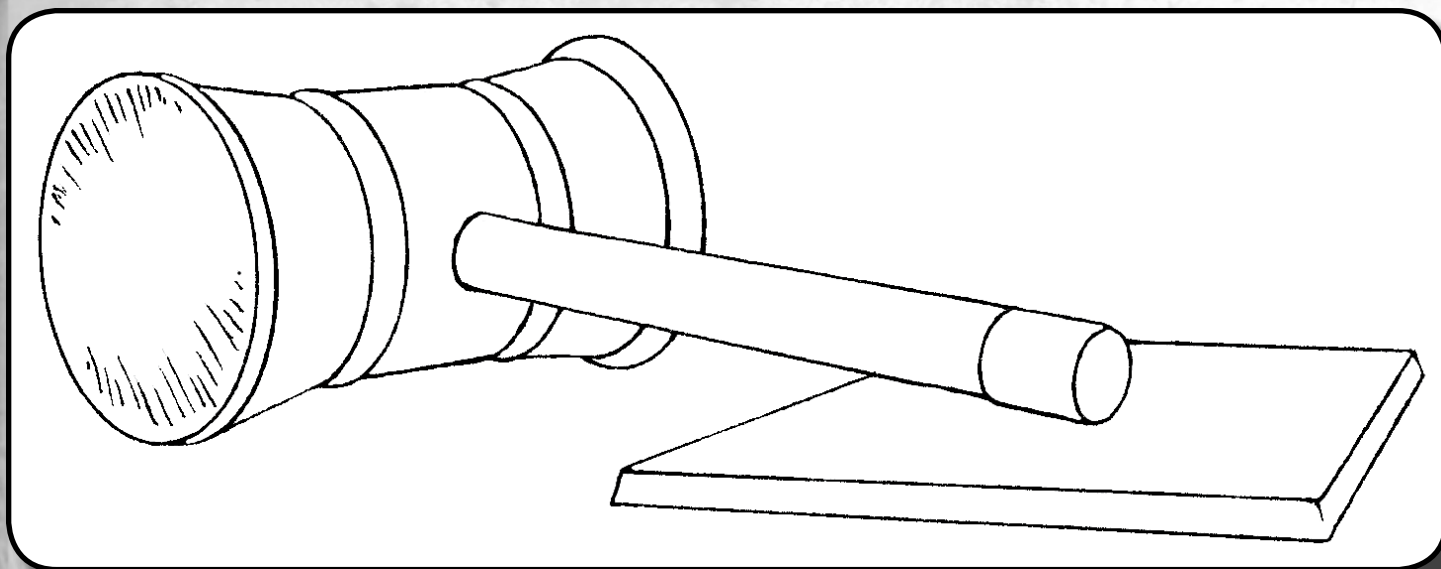
PLANETARY: Planetary laws come under the jurisdiction of the House or Houses that control its surface and can vary from planet to planet. In general they tend to favor punitive punishments rather than corrective incarceration. The exception is when it comes to debt where often the debtor is given indentured servitude until such time the debt is paid off. Laws are in place to prevent abuse of such people or manipulation of their contracts to force them into indefinite servitude, but they are considered the lowest rung of society and have few rights.

INTERSTELLAR: The various Major Houses each controls a section of space around what is considered to be their holdings, and within that sphere they set the laws and regulations. Generally these rules tend towards keeping order, with restricted flight paths, contraband laws, and frequent stops and inspections. Military vessels from other Houses traveling without prior notice are often subject to immediate attack, and vessels from outside the Empire traveling without both a Monarch's charter and a charter with the House whose territory it may be traveling are subject to seizure along with their contents.

In areas not under the jurisdiction of a Major House the Monarchy holds sway. These areas tend to be relatively lightly patrolled except around important Monarchy installations, and at times, specific borders where trouble is expected.

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS: When a suspect has been apprehended they are typically brought either before the local noble or a magistrate specifically assigned by said noble to handle such matters. At this point evidence by both sides is presented, often by representatives hired by the parties involved who specialize in such matters, as well as any relevant witnesses, after which the noble or magistrate either declares the suspect's innocence or guilt, and if the latter, passes sentence.

While the Empire forbids torture to acquire information or confessions, within their realms nobles can grant nearly any other degree of investigatory power other than unlimited detainment of persons without due cause. Even lesser nobles and Houses are not entirely immune to such actions, though generally they are treated with a lighter hand than commoners



simply because they are in a far better position to create trouble for security forces and the noble or House responsible for them.

Within their own domain a noble can do practically anything they might wish without limitation, excepting matters that involve other nobles or Houses, or the Monarchy and its representatives. Most however are careful not to cross a certain line, as modern technology makes it entirely too easy for a commoner with a grudge to take matters into their own hands in a lethal manner.

GENETICS: Genetic technology within the Empire has lagged somewhat behind that of the galaxy as a whole because it is a field that does not grant the honor and recognition of many other scientific fields, most of which do not grant much recognition to begin with. The only area in which it excels is that of determining genetic heritage as such things are much in call among the nobles and Houses of the Empire.

NANOTECHNOLOGY: Nanotechnology is at once one of the most widespread and most controlled technologies in the known galaxy. Within the Baggal Empire, nearly everyone has basic medical nanites capable of speeding healing, mitigating the effects of disease and poison, and helping keep the overall level of health high. Only the lowest of classes who are unable to contribute valuable services or skills typically fail to receive proper nanite treatments. Military personnel have heavier duty and more extensive nanite suites capable of a wider variety of functions (see below). Nanites also form the basis of Fabrication systems. In all cases nanites are required at a minimum to be designed so as to obtain their power from an outside source, either their host's body or power emitters as a safety precaution to prevent them from getting out of control. Varied additional safeguards are common as well.

ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

MONARCH'S EYES: Officially a group whose job is checking the books and seeing that the nobles and Houses of the Empire follow established policy, it is generally understood that they are the spies for the Monarchy. Poking into anything of possible interest, and closely monitoring those in power,

they are a nuisance at best for the nobles and the Houses, and at worse, a potential death sentence should their reports indicate anything that might suggest treason. Hated and reviled, many come to messy ends as those they monitor seek to relieve themselves, at least temporarily, of a major annoyance. Ironically though, it is through the Monarch's Eyes that a noble or House can find itself elevated if it is determined that they are loyal, productive, and have useful skills or resources. While not impossible to bribe, even the attempts are very rare, as doing so is considered an act of treason and penalized by death.

More overlooked though is their official function which they do in fact perform, which amounts to insuring that the mechanics of the Empire continue to function smoothly through the proper distribution of resources and taxes. With all their potential power, The Monarch's Eyes are almost always under constant surveillance from not only The Monarch's Hands, but the intelligence resources of the nobles and Houses.

MONARCH'S HANDS: Often referred to as the Monarchy's bagmen, these people are granted nearly unlimited authority to do whatever dirty work the Monarch requires within the Empire, be it spying, enforcement, blackmail, assassination, sabotage, seduction, or other shady activities. They are perhaps the only organization within the Empire more hated and feared than the Monarch's Eyes.

Highly trained and ruthless, willing to do nearly anything to fulfill their missions, they are notorious for performing even extreme acts on their own initiative. Almost entirely without oversight it is suspected that at least some of the monarchs that met untimely ends did so either directly or indirectly at their hands.

It is also suspected that at least at points within the Empire's history it was they, not the reigning monarch who really ran the Empire, however His Royal Majesty Hiban Riskalian IV seems to have severely winnowed down its ranks and the entire organization seems to be undergoing significant changes both internally and externally. Many have doubts that this will result in any real long term changes, and even those who believe that changes will come watch warily to see exactly what kind of changes may take place.

MONARCH'S CORSAIRS: Dating back to before the uniting of the Empire on the Baggalian's home planet, the Monarch's Corsairs have long been the Monarchy's scouts, seeking out enemies and new lands alike. With the advent of interstellar travel, the Monarch's Corsairs, which had languished for lack of work into near disbandment, they found a new purpose, though their initial explorations were intentionally kept to a local area of space, the Empire not wanting to encounter an equal or superior civilization when it was unprepared to do so. It was the Corsairs that located the systems that form the core of the current Empire and they who made first contact with the Alliance among other foreign governments. With the recent realization of how heavily the galaxy is inhabited the Monarch's Corsairs have undergone a massive expansion, much to the detriment of their formerly elite status.

More than ever before the Empire must turn to these independently minded explorers to find new systems for settlement before it finds itself boxed in by expansionistic neighbors and give warnings of potential future threats.

CLOAKS: The undercover branch of the Empire that operates outside its borders, the Cloaks, like the Monarch's Corsairs, had almost disappeared as an entity until the recent encounters with several new civilizations called for its expansion once more. The Cloaks are currently hampered by a lack of sufficient skilled personnel and more ironically, a lack of good information on their targets.

While at the moment the Cloaks are concentrating almost solely on passive information gathering, in the future they are expected to engage in more aggressive espionage efforts once they have a better basis on which to operate along with more numerous and experienced agents. Other civilizations' intelligence agencies are carefully watching the Cloaks to see just how effective of an intelligence force they will actually prove to be and just how aggressive their policies are likely to become.

SOCIETY

DEMOGRAPHIC: The current demographic of the Baggal Empire is roughly 77% Baggalians, and 23% assorted other subject races that have been incorporated into the Empire from its earlier conquests. There is also a growing transit population of outsiders who are coming into the Empire as its contacts with the greater galaxy continue to increase. Currently there is an effort to develop policies to better deal with this population, especially those that choose to settle within the Empire.

IN SUMMARY

The Baggal Empire is entering a time of change and it has yet to be seen whether it will be a change for the better or not. Until recently the Empire's contacts with other civilizations have been either of similar size to the Empire or smaller clusters of systems. Now though the Empire has begun encountering civilizations that cannot only match its own power, but even exceed it by orders of magnitude. As an example, even though the recent conflict with the Alliance ended relatively well, if unexpectedly due to a surprising turn of events, the sheer volume of resources the Alliance brought to bear in even a short period of time, and the technological superiority displayed proved a nasty shock to a people who had become so accustomed to thinking of themselves as the supreme power that it was accepted as a basic fact of existence. Even as the Empire struggled to come to terms with this change to the status quo, for the second time in the space of only a couple years control of the monarchy changed, and contrary to all previous occurrences, he began eliminating any potential opposition to his position rather than simply exiling or removing threats from power. This has granted him a stable base of power unmatched in the Empire's history and there is much speculation about what path he will lead the Empire in the years to come at the cost of disregarding centuries of tradition and leaving the Houses and nobles of the Empire uncertain and wary.

Already though the Empire is beginning to adapt, trade with sources outside the Empire has skyrocketed, outsiders are becoming an ever more common sight, and they bring with them their different cultures and customs, many of which are at odds with the established order, and may in time undermine the basic tenants of society that cause the Empire to exist as it is.

Strategically positioned, if the Empire can manage to more solidly unite its disparate factions and minimize the infighting that has long proved its greatest obstacle, it has the potential to expand explosively if it can seize the opportunity while it lasts. With a firm hand at the helm and little worry about a change in leadership, whatever course the Empire ends up taking, it is likely to for once, stay the course for good or bad.

6: ITELLIAN FEDERATION

He grimaced as he entered the bridge of the wreck, the damage visible from outside the ship, bad as it looked, was nothing compared to the carnage inside. The pirates had clearly gone on a rampage of destruction once they had finished their looting, maybe they hadn't even waited that long given some of the equipment he saw destroyed. Bodies and pieces of bodies were scattered against one bulkhead, all shot from behind.

One of the members of his team gave a small grunt as it managed to free the ship's black box. Another informed him that the ship's logs and sensor records had been destroyed while the other team informed him that they'd swept the ship and found no survivors. He cursed under his breath and wondered when someone would finally do something about the constant Itellian attacks.

The Itellian Federation is by the normal standards of the galaxy somewhat primitive, both in terms of technology and in some ways culturally. More than once they have been called barbarians in starships. Aggressive and expansionistic, Itellians have only been held back by a relatively low technology base and forced to concentrate on conquering those species around them even less technologically evolved.

It was only several sharp clashes with established interstellar powers on their borders in which they came off far worse than their opponents which brought a halt to the Itellian conquests. Most experts agree however that it is only a matter of time before the Itellians make another major push somewhere. In the meantime the Itellians appear to be focusing their efforts on solidifying and consolidating their current position while using all the means at their disposal to increase their technological edge and destabilize those civilizations around them.

From top to bottom, their society embraces strength, with the stronger ruling over the weaker. This leads to regular changes in leadership at all levels and a ruthlessness that leaves many other races shocked at the degree of carnage it entitles. The major downside of this is that it makes it hard for Itellians to continue with any one project for longer than the length of time the originator of the idea can manage to avoid being offed by one of their subordinates.

Brutish, violent, aggressive, highly opportunistic, the Itellians appear to be setting themselves up for a very rude awakening when one of the local powers finally decides it's had enough and moves to deal with the problem they represent in force. If they should somehow avoid this fate though, through either a sudden cultural change or a large enough increase in technology, they are in a position to become a significant power in the region.

HISTORY

For a long time their home planet was little more than a semi-primitive battleground, with civilization collapsing several times and at least two wars that were bad enough to throw the entire planet back into the dark ages. It was only with the crash of a derelict alien spaceship and the reverse engineering of some of its technology that one of the many small warring states acquired enough power to overwhelm their opponents before being destroyed and quickly make the leap to space shortly before the home planet once again fell apart into multiple warring factions. Since then the history of the Itellians has been much the same as it has always been, but on a much larger scale.

The ascension of Overlord Hoytdinar to a position of precarious leadership has recently given the Itellians more direction than they have possibly ever had, but it remains an open question whether he will be able to hold onto his position and power long enough to have any real effect.

FOUNDING CONCEPTS

The Itellians have no real founding concepts and border dangerously close to anarchy at most times. Their cultural ideals which have led to their current situation are those of exerting power over all those weaker than oneself and taking advantage of any opportunity to place themselves above those around them. It is this that drove them to conquer everyone in their immediate vicinity and will insure they attempt to take advantage of any opportunity offered by one of the surrounding powers whether intentional or otherwise.

GOVERNMENT

The current leader, Hoytdinar, has managed to achieve his position through the simple expedient of conquering his home planet and somehow managing to hold on. While he might technically be Overlord of the entire Itellian Federation, the truth is that many of his subordinates, particularly those in control of other systems for the most part run their own affairs, only obeying those orders that please them unless threats of force or actual force is employed by the Overlord.

The overall government of the federation could therefore be accurately described as barely constrained anarchy. Leaders change regularly from week to week as do the territory they control and experienced traders from outside the Federation have learned that rather than try and establish long term trading partners to instead bring in items that are widely wanted and then hold impromptu auctions, with the goods going to the highest bidders.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Itellians foreign relations can be termed rocky at best as they are rightly considered untrustworthy. Unofficial armed ceasefires are currently in effect with their neighbors and news out of the Federation is greatly restricted, in part because few are willing to trade with the Itellians and partially because many of those who might be willing to do so refuse to accept the risks of entering Itellian space. Those who are willing to trade with the Itellians use heavily armed ships and often rely on either integral security or mercenary forces for armed escorts. More than one skirmish has occurred between these traders and various Itellian groups and those merchants that have proven successful have found that the reputation gained from these encounters is better at preventing further incidents than even a heavy armament or escort. The other side of the equation though is that the profits that can potentially be made are extreme, as even technology considered long obsolete in the known galaxy at large fetches unbelievable prices on the Itellian market. Additionally the Itellian's policy of not caring where products have originated has made them an ideal place for pirates to sell their captured goods and ships.

Further souring their relations with foreign powers are the Itellian's extensive espionage efforts that have so far run the gauntlet from simple spying and bribery, to one famous incident where they attempted to hijack a Carnack Combine heavy cruiser out of drydock. These efforts have almost entirely been aimed at acquiring the military technology the Itellians currently lack and counter-espionage efforts are picking up among those who have suffered and those who are concerned about the Itellians obtaining a higher level of technology.

The Itellians themselves rarely travel out of their own territory with the exception of various pirate groups, the occasional mercenary band, and regular raids against nearby systems and civilizations. These groups are ruthless even by the normal standards such groups are judged by and some of the atrocities they have committed have caused a sharp downturn in public opinion towards a race that previously was barely general knowledge. Where this sudden interest might lead is as of yet unknown, but it is likely to spur action of some sort.

NAVY

The Itellian Navy can barely be called such, for the most part lacking in a solidified command structure, proper support, or even a unified training program. Rather it consists of individual or small groups of ships under the command of whoever can manage to hold them together and support the cost of maintaining them. Training as units is a joke and even individual ships rely more on on-the-job training than any



actual program of improvement. True fleets come together only under the direct order of the Overlord or when the potential for conquest arises.

ORGANIZATION

Organization is generally a joke when it comes to the Itellians, their forces consisting of whatever ships a given leader can manage to coerce or control by force of will and personality into following them. Any sort of actual tactical control consists of little more than trying to point certain components of a fleet at a general target and hoping for the best.

Obviously this is a major drawback and weakness for the Itellians, but it does have the advantage of unpredictability, it is extremely hard to determine what they will do in a battle as individual groups of ships, or even individual vessels operate without any overall cohesion with other vessels. Generally though it allows their opponents to defeat an Itellian fleet piecemeal even when heavily numbered and as long as an

opponent refuses to panic can generally withdraw in good order if necessary. However on those occasions that the Itellians have managed to break up their opponents' cohesion they have almost always overwhelmed individual vessels with heavy casualties on both sides.

Training within the Itellian "Navy" consists primarily of whatever degree of experience individual captains care to force their underlings to endure which can vary from next to nothing to surprisingly high degrees of readiness. Making up for this somewhat is the fact that many Itellian crews have to one degree or another have combat experience from fighting both other Itellians and outsiders. Generally though, overall training and experience standards are poor and this only amplifies the limitations of the generally obsolete equipment they are forced to use.

To speak in broad generalities without hopefully drawing too much of a parallel; Itellian military efforts can be compared to those of a great many groups of similar disposition throughout history, the Dentian Haffins, the Human Vikings, and the Kiltan Grem are just three examples. Itellian operations generally focus on hitting easy targets that can enrich the members of their raiding and assault groups while avoiding fights with evenly matched or stronger opponents whenever possible.

EXPECTATIONS: Itellians are expected to never show fear and engage their opponents aggressively, exploiting any opportunity or sign of weakness. This goes not only for their enemies, but their companions as well. This does not however dictate that they charge blindly in, indeed, cunning and guile are considered to be at least as important as unbridled ferocity.

Hard work and unwavering obedience to their masters, except of course unless an opportunity arises to take the position is the expected norm. Excellence in one's field however is normally neither promoted, encouraged, over rewarded. Indeed, such dedication is likely to cause suspicions about how the person in question intends to use the skills in question.

SHIP DESIGN

Itellian ship design uses several differing levels of technology; because of this, and the fact that they are produced at innumerable small shipyards under the control of various overseers it is rare that two ships are built to the same design. This makes facing an Itellian ship an unpredictable event for any opponent. However it also makes coordinated actions between Itellian vessels that much more complicated as their performance parameters often vary wildly.

Generally Itellian vessels are designed for relatively short duration voyages with cramped quarters, lacking even artificial gravity or efficient compensators. They have oversized engines to compensate for their lower efficiency and thick armor to make up for a lack of any sort of real shielding, but even that is heavier and less efficient by several factors than that typically employed by other civilizations. As the missiles that the Itellians could mount are highly obsolete by the standards of modern navies they have generally forgone mounting them entirely, instead concentrating on various energy and projectile weapons of sizes far larger than those mounted on other vessels of similar sizes but far shorter range and less efficiency. Nevertheless, if an Itellian ship can manage to reach fighting range with another vessel, it has the potential to inflict significant damage, and they rarely attack one on one.

TACTICS

Itellian tactics tend to appear simple, straightforward, and brutal. Not as some might think because they are incapable of developing or executing more complex tactics, indeed, they have proven quite the contrary to be true; rather it is imposed upon them by the limitations their low level of technology force upon them.

As any ship with even relatively modern ECM equipment is all but impossible for Itellian ships to hit at even moderate ranges, and modern sensors can pick up even powered down Itellian vessels at significant ranges; the Itellians are neither able to engage a targeted ship at normal engagement ranges nor sneak in close enough for their weapons to be effective. Thus they have been left with trying to close the range against opponents that not only outrange them, but are often faster as well.

In an effort to overcome this Itellians have been forced to adopt very straight forward tactics, boring straight in at their opponents and accepting the heavy casualties this generally entails. Once in close range they rely on their large overpowered weapons to simply batter down an opponent's defenses over practically open sights.

On those occasions they have to run down a faster opponent that is not willing to stand and fight the Itellians have shown themselves capable of considerable ingenuity, often boxing an opponent in with overwhelming numbers from multiple directions.

Whenever possible Itellians strike from ambush or try forcing their enemies to fight in areas that prevent long range targeting such as asteroid rings or debris fields.

When engaging in ground warfare Itellians do not hesitate to begin with orbital strikes before engaging with infantry, armored vehicles, and large armored mechs. Here too techniques tend to be very straightforward with Itellian forces advancing directly on their already pummeled and disorganized opponents, crushing any remaining resistance with lethal brutality.

PRIVATEERS

While the Itellians do not officially employ privateers a great many have taken to the life of piracy, running for the cover of one of the Itellian systems once their work is done or they face pursuit where they obtain protection from the system governors in exchange for part of their takings. These unofficial privateers are steadily growing in numbers in the regions of space surrounding Itellian territory despite steady losses to both regular naval units and armed merchantmen. Ironically a number of armed merchant ships of other governments have begun moving into the area to prey on the pirates in turn, using the advantages granted by their superior technology to make respectable profits off of the standard bounties offered for pirates. Mercenaries are also flocking to the surrounding region to provide their services in space in hunting down pirates as well as providing escorts and defending the smaller colonies from the ground raids that are increasingly taking place.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Within Itellian society the laws tend to devolve to whatever a given leader can manage to impose on those under him. While uneasy truces often exist between factions in an area,

beyond that the weak have little protection from those with the desire and ability to take it from them. As bad as this is among Itellians, it is far worse for those species that have been subjugated by the Itellians as in a brutal society they are on the very bottom and attempts to defend themselves only end in more violence.

NANOTECHNOLOGY: Unlike most other races, the Itellians lack nanotechnology except for a few very powerful individuals who have medical nanites implanted by outside sources for princely sums. This has largely stemmed from a lack of interest in the sciences among most Itellians, most especially in the medical field in a culture that places so much importance on the strength and physical prowess of an individual.

Cheap labor has also stymied research into more efficient methods of production and any domestically developed application of nanotechnology seems highly unlikely in the visible future.

This is not to say that the Itellians cannot and do not have access to nanotechnology, a number of small nano-fabbers have been obtained either through covert trade or captured and are greatly prized by their owners as steady income generators. Of course, Itellian society being what it is most have changed hands several times through violent acquisition and many of the small number available have been destroyed as a result.

MERCENARIES: About the best things that can be said about Itellian mercenaries are that they work cheap and have no qualms about taking on the dirtiest of jobs. Otherwise they tend to be highly undisciplined, undertrained, and, underequipped compared to most other mercenary forces in the galaxy. There is also the added problem of the massive amounts of collateral damage they cause anytime they are employed, looting entirely aside. In fact their reputation and past acts are such that several independent systems and at least one small multi-system government have declared the use of Itellian mercenaries to be a war crime. Finally, more than one employer has found the Itellians simply taking the money and leaving once things got difficult, or even turning on their erstwhile allies. The general galactic consensus seems to consider Itellian mercenaries a last resort, cheap cannon fodder, or to be used when absolutely no one else will take the job.

SOCIETY

Itellian society is brutal and violent with the strongest rising to positions of power, often leaving a trail of bodies behind them. The lowliest of Itellians lead hard and generally short lives doing the hardest and most dangerous jobs for the fewest benefits. Even from a young age Itellians face hard work and violence as their parents force them out as early as possible to make their own way. Gangs of Itellian youths who roam about after clustering together for mutual protection are a major threat even to adult Itellians and engage in all manner of activities that would be considered illegal in most other places. Many of these gangs stay together through adulthood and form the basis of both the Itellian work force and the Itellian military. These groups generally end up with a single Itellian in charge who manages the other and takes the place of a foreman, manager, officer, or similar role as the profession the group migrates into dictates.

At the highest of levels these groups can blossom into fully fledged organizations in and of themselves as they continue to acquire new members, often the remains of their opponents. It was one of these groups that finally managed to seize first planetary and then interstellar power (it remains to be seen how long it will hold together at the distances involved). However even within these relatively stable groups there is constant infighting for position and only the harshest of measures by the leaders keeps it all in check. Even then it is not uncommon for a leader to fall to one of their underlings who in turn assumes the mantle of power.

It is this inherent viciousness and ingrained cultural assumption that makes Itellians such a terror to those who deal with them. Even those who bargain from a clear position of power know that the briefest moments of apparent weakness is inviting an attack.

DEMOGRAPHIC: The population of the Itellian Federation, as best can be determined from the sketchy data available suggests that Itellians make up approximately 73% of the entire population with the rest made up of the species of a half dozen subjugated races, whose numbers continue to dwindle under the Itellian's domination.

IN SUMMARY

The Itellian Federation is poised on a knife's edge. Should its leader manage to better unify his people while acquiring a higher degree of technology than they currently experience they will be well poised for an explosive expansion into the independent and currently disunited systems and civilizations surrounding them. If this should happen the Itellians could well find themselves on par with many of the major civilizations in this section of the galaxy, at least in terms of territory and potential resources. Of course, this would involve a lot of ifs.

It seems more likely that before this could happen the Itellians will either manage to annoy one of the greater galactic powers enough for them to take punitive action, or their neighbors will manage to band together and move to eliminate what they see as a major threat.

Strategically positioned and with what could be a very solid base from which to launch a campaign of conquest the Itellian Federation has so far managed to keep its victims from turning on them en masse as much by fear as anything, with systems that resist or actively campaign to do something about the Itellian threat suddenly suffering from the concentrated ravages of pirates and raiders. So far this has kept the surrounding systems and civilizations off balance and terrified, but there is a growing resentment and numerous secret talks are being conducted. On the flip side the Itellians are still trying to assimilate their relatively conquests and are suffering from a great deal of infighting that is hamstringing their ability to strike while what may be their best opportunity might be slipping away.

Whatever may happen, the next decade or two is likely to decide whether the Itellians become a true major player or are removed from the galactic playing field entirely. In either case these fierce warriors will not simply fade quietly into the cold eternal darkness of space.

7: STARSHIPS & SPACE STATIONS

He watched as they passed, squadrons of quick nimble strike craft, inquisitive frigates, fast lethal destroyers, sleek imposing cruisers, hollow-bellied carriers, rakish battlecruisers, ponderous but dignified battleships, even a mountainous dreadnaught whose looming bulk temporarily eclipsed the sun, throwing the massive battlestation, small still though beside the dreadnaught, into darkness. And behind that, a small fleet in themselves, supply ships, transports, auxiliaries, and more. It had been a long and hard campaign, and many ships still bore the marks of the last battles, hard fought and won. Bristling with powerful weapons, sheathed in thick armor, they had met the enemy and proven triumphant, and then, between one heartbeat and the next, with only an exchanged salute of running lights with the station, they were all gone, having leapt into the great darkness beyond.

Starships are the elements that hold the galaxy together, whether carrying needed goods, people, or the implements of war, the ships that ply the stars are perhaps the single most vital aspect of modern society. Overall ship design varies greatly from culture to culture depending on any number of factors from a culture's ascetic views to military tactics. When multiple cultures are brought together things become far more complicated. However even within a single culture form can vary greatly depending on individual designers and vessel purpose.

Much the same can be said for space stations. Those designed to act as waystops on the fringes of known space are far different from those serving as scientific bases, and they in turn are far different from those designed to defend a planet or installation from hostile attack. Many stations are unique in their design, and even within a standardized class it is not unusual to find small differences. While starships may be what allow civilizations to spread through space, it is the stations that secure it behind them and allow the business that is necessary for civilization to continue to exist.

There are too many designs to be able to even list them in a document many times this size, but some of the more noteworthy examples are listed below.

MERCHANTS

The lifeblood of the galaxy, merchant ships come in an innumerable number of shapes and sizes; from massive lumbering freight haulers that need to visit multiple planets in order to fill their holds to quick little couriers that carry little more than their crew and the information stored in their computers. With few exceptions they tend to be built to far less exacting standards than military vessels, but then they rarely are put through the same stresses. While many interstellar merchant vessels carry at least minor defensive

armament, only in the Alliance is it a requirement along with a computer system capable of linking into an integrated defensive network. Refitted merchant vessels are often the favorite of both pirates who generally build on an already successful design, granting them both the ability to carry their stolen cargo and anonymity amongst their similar seeming prey; and amongst the smaller governments who find them a cheap alternative to proper warships.

LIGHTFOOT CLASS FAST MERCHANT

ORIGIN:	Independent
TIER:	2
BP:	86, Small Shuttle
SPEED:	12
MANEUVERABILITY:	Perfect, Piloting +2, Turn 0
FTL:	9ly/day
AC:	20
TL:	20
HP:	35
DT:	:
CT:	7
SHIELDS:	None
POWER:	Pulse Prismatic (300 PCU, 256 Max Usage)
FTL ENGINE:	Very Fast
SYSTEMS:	Crew Quarters (Good), Mk2 Mononode, Basic Medium-Range Sensors
EXPANSION BAYS:	Smugglers Compartment (DC30), Guest Quarters, Cargo Bay
MODIFIERS:	+2 to any one check a round
COMPLEMENT:	1
CREW:	
PILOT:	Piloting +9 (2 ranks)

The Lightfoot class of ships are very small, very fast craft, designed to move small perishable cargoes rapidly from one point to another without needing to stop. Capable of landing and taking off from a planet Lightfoots are designed to be run with no more than two or three people at most, and indeed lack the accommodations for more. Many a shipping company had its start with one or two of these little ships. Little larger than a big gunboat, Lightfoots are hard pressed to fit an FTL drive into their frames in addition to their needed crew accommodations, fuel, and very limited cargo space.

While mostly used for perishable cargoes the Lightfoot has found a variety of uses, personal transports for the wealthy, powerful, or important, courier ships, and but perhaps most famously as smuggling vessels. Able to outrun all but the fastest warships and even many gunboats, the Lightfoot has many times eluded authorities who could do little more than gnash their teeth in frustration. The Lightfoot is incredibly vulnerable to any hostile action, lacking both proper defenses

COMMON SHIP PREFIXES

U.S.D.F.S.: United Systems Defense Force Ship

U.S.A.M.S.: United Systems Alliance Merchant Ship

R.B.V.: Royal Baggalian Vessel

H.B.V.: House Baggalian Vessel

B.C.V.: Baggalian Commercial Vessel

S.C.W.: Sagaren Collective Warhip

S.C.M.S.: Sagaren Collective Merchant Ship

S.S.: Independently Owned Ship

I.W.S.: Independent Warship

P.V.: Private Vessel

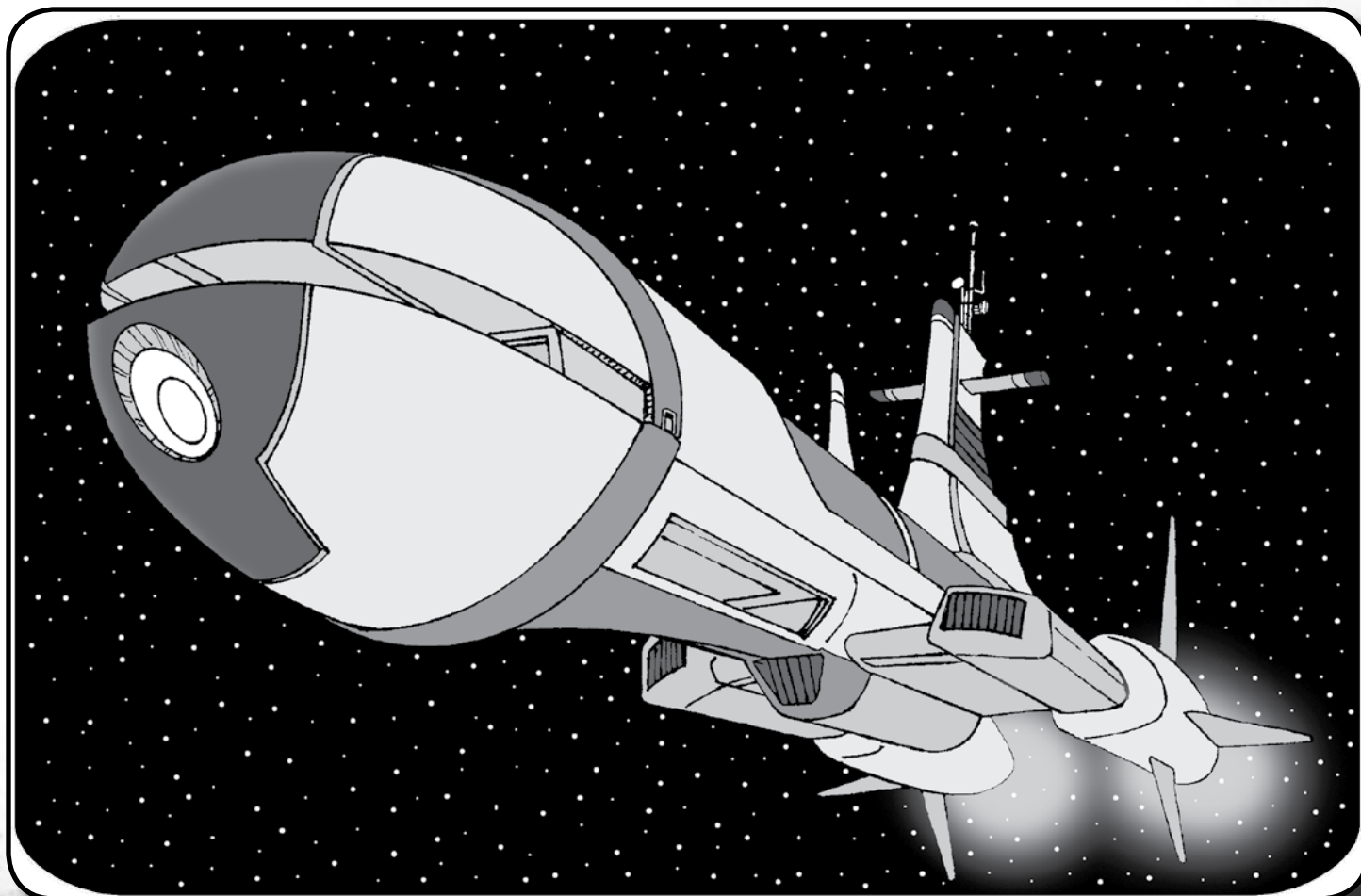
and any armament, if run to ground, wise pilots quickly surrender rather than risk incoming fire.

Cheap, dependable, and easily upgradeable, the Lightfoot is likely to remain a popular choice among hotshot pilots for some time to come and continue to be a common sight zipping across the galaxy.

DRAKE CLASS PRIVATEER

ORIGIN: United Systems Alliance
TIER: 7
BP: 172, Medium Explorer

SPEED: 8
MANEUVERABILITY: Good, +1 Piloting, Turn 1
FTL: 6ly/day
AC: 21
TL: 21
HP: 65
DT: :
CT: 11
SHIELDS: Medium Shields 100 (Forward 25, Port 25, Starboard 25, Aft 25)
ATTACK (FORWARD): Light Particle Beam 3d6
ATTACK (PORT): Light Particle Beam 3d6
ATTACK (STARBOARD): Light Particle Beam 3d6
ATTACK TURRET): Flak Thrower 3d4 (Point +8)
POWER: Nova Ultra (300 PCU, 318 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE: Fast 6ly/day
SYSTEMS: Crew Quarters (Common) Mk 4 Armor, Advanced Medium Range Sensors, Mk 4 Defenses, Mk 2 Duonode Cargo Bays x4
EXPANSION BAYS:
MODIFIERS: +2 to any two checks a round, +1 Piloting
COMPLEMENT: 6
CREW:
CAPTAIN: +10 Diplomacy (7 ranks), +16 Gunnery (7 ranks), +10 Intimidate (7 Ranks), +13 Piloting (7 Ranks), +16 Computers (7 Ranks), +12 Engineer-



ENGINEERS:	ing (7 Ranks)
GUNNERS:	(1 Officer) +12 Engineering (7 ranks)
PILOT:	(2 Officers) +16 Gunnery (7 ranks)
SCIENCE:	(1 Officer) +13 Piloting (7 ranks)
	(1 Officer) +16 Computers (7 ranks)

The Drake was designed from the start as a vessel ideal for a privateer, with a heavy armament for what is nominally a merchant vessel, a high rate of speed and decent maneuverability, long range, as well as a cargo hold large enough to store choice cargo this vessel has been the bane of merchant fleets during wartime, proving far more effective than the normal merchant conversions that are often used. It is little surprise then that the Drake often finds employment with pirates as well as privateers and pirate hunters.

While not normally a match for most proper warships, the Drake has often managed to engage smaller escorts with some success, though smart commanders work hard to avoid confrontations with actual naval vessels regardless of size. Though occasionally used as a naval auxiliary by smaller naval forces, its largest legitimate uses after privateering are for trading in dangerous areas and as police vessels.

A sleek good looking vessel, the Drake has starred in many an entertainment production as both hero and villain and thus is one of the most easily recognizable ships in space. With a firm reputation and established history the Drake continues to serve in a variety of configurations in a variety of roles, much beloved by those on both sides of the law who use it and often feared by those who suffer its predations.

SHERPA MEDIUM MERCHANT

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	2
BP:	71, Medium Transport
SPEED:	4,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Average, +2 Piloting, Turn 2,
FTL:	3ly/day
AC:	12
TL:	12
HP:	70
DT:	:
CT:	14
SHIELDS:	n/a
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Light Laser Cannon (2d4)
ATTACK (AFT):	Light Laser Cannon (2d4)
ATTACK TURRET):	Flak Thrower (3d4 Point +8), Flak Thrower (3d4 Point +8)
POWER:	Pulse Blue (200 PCU of 181 Max Usage)
FTL ENGINE:	Average 3ly/day
SYSTEMS:	Crew Quarters Common, Mk1 Duonode, Basic Short-Range Sensors
EXPANSION BAYS:	Cargo Bays x4, Guest Quarters
MODIFIERS:	+1 to any two checks a round, +2 Piloting
COMPLEMENT:	5
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+6 Diplomacy (2 ranks), +8 Gunnery (2 ranks), +6 Intimidate (2 Ranks), +6 Piloting (2 Ranks), +8 Computers (2 Ranks), +6 Engineering (2 Ranks)

ENGINEERS:	(1 Officer) +6 Engineering (2 ranks)
GUNNERS:	(1 Officer) +8 Gunnery (2 ranks)
PILOT:	(1 Officer) +8 Piloting (2 ranks)
SCIENCE:	(1 Officer) +8 Computers (2 ranks)

An excellent example of innumerable designs of mid sized merchants that ply the spaceways, the Sherpa is neither glorious or elegant, but strictly utilitarian, able to carry large amounts of cargo for its size at very low cost for relatively long distances. While not as efficient as the far larger bulk carriers, smaller merchants like the Sherpa do not need to wait for such large shipments to be available, nor are they tied to strict schedules as are larger ships. Because of this a sharp and lucky captain can turn an excellent profit by forgoing steady business for higher profit opportunities. Most make their money by transporting cargoes too large for smaller cargo ships but too small for the bulk carriers used by major shipping companies. In the less developed sections of the galaxy medium sized merchants like the Sherpa are generally the largest merchant ships many worlds ever see, and many captains can do quite well running regular trade routes where they do not have to compete with the larger cargo vessels.

Normally only lightly armed, the Sherpa and those like her are often the favored prey of pirates, privateers, and raiders. Because of this many travel in groups to provide themselves with mutual protection or take advantage of passing naval vessels for added security.

The Sherpa uses aft mounted engines, allowing each cargo bay to be opened in whole or in part out to either side allowing the loading of a wide variety of sizes of cargo or even mixed loads within a single hold. The Sherpa, like most merchants in its size class is capable of planetary landings on hardened fields, but is too large to normally land on unprepared surfaces.

In addition to its cargo holds, Sherpa's carry a few spare cabins for the transportation of passengers heading in the same direction (or often times simply looking to get anywhere that isn't where they are at the moment) and many people on limited budgets find that traveling by such means is often an effective means, if a somewhat slow one, of reaching their destination.

While rarely gaining the spotlight, it is ships like the Sherpa that provide for much of the essential transport of products throughout the galaxy, including nearly all of those that cannot be transported economically in extremely large bulk.

CARAVAN CLASS BULK MERCHANT

ORIGIN:	Independent
TIER:	4
BP:	125, Huge Bulk Freighter
SPEED:	4
MANEUVERABILITY:	Poor, +1 Piloting, Turn 3
FTL:	1ly/day
AC:	15
TL:	15
HP:	180
DT:	5
CT:	32
SHIELDS:	n/a
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Heavy Laser Cannon (4d8)
ATTACK (AFT):	Heavy Laser Cannon (4d8)
ATTACK TURRET):	Flak Thrower (3d4 Point +8),

POWER CORE:	Flak Thrower (3d4 Point +8) Nova Heavy (200 PCU of 185 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Slow 1ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Crew Quarters Common, Mk1 Duonode, Basic Short-Range Sensors;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Cargo Bays 10
MODIFIERS:	+1 to any two checks a round, +1 Piloting
COMPLEMENT:	21
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+8 Diplomacy (4 ranks), +10 Gunnery (4 ranks), +8 Intimidate (4 ranks), +9 Piloting (4 ranks), +10 Computers (4 Ranks), +8 Engineering (4 Ranks)
ENGINEERS:	(1 Officer, 4 Crew) +16 Engineering (4 ranks)
GUNNERS:	(1 Officer, 4 Crew) +16 Gunnery (4 ranks)
PILOT:	(1 Officer, 4 Crew) +17 Piloting (4 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(1 Officer, 4 Crew) +16 Computers (4 ranks)

The Caravan is an example of cargo carrying efficiency carried to its apex. Little more than living quarters connected to a large engine section by a spar, the Caravan is designed to pick up and drop up to thirty modular containers, each as large as some starships. Normally working a set route it picks up and drops off certain containers at different places at scheduled intervals, sometimes with routes planned years in advance. Not suited for carrying anything less than bulk cargo, ships like the caravan carry the larger volume of goods through space. Too expensive to be run by anything other than massive corporations, they turn a higher average profit margin than most smaller vessels, making them very efficient at their work. While they carry light armament, their greatest protection is generally the fact that the cargo they carry is often worth little for its volume and is thus unattractive to pirates and many raiders.

SYSTEM DEFENSE SHIPS

System Defense Ships (SDS's) can fall into any of the normal warship categories but are generally designed specifically for individual system defense and are built lacking FTL drives, therefore lacking much of the equipment found on FTL vessels, either managing to fit equal combat capability into a smaller vessel, or just as commonly, considerably more combat capability into a similar sized vessel.

Monitor: A vessel only used in system defense, monitors, like their ancient namesakes, generally carry weapons far larger than normal for vessels their size but relatively few of them, backed by close range defense weapons, heavy armor and in recent years, shielding. Slow and unwieldy they have proven ideal at protecting strategic positions within a system where the enemy is forced to come to them.

IRONSIDE DEFENSE MONITOR

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	24
BP:	1,419, Colossal Dreadnaught
SPEED:	4
MANEUVERABILITY:	clumsy, -2 Piloting, turn 7
AC:	32
TL:	28
HP:	700
DT:	45
CT:	80
SHIELDS:	Superior Shields 600, Superior Shields 600 backup (Forward 150 [150 Backup], Port 150 [150 Backup], Starboard 150 [150 Backup], Aft 150 [150 Backup])
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Vortex Cannon (2d12x10, Vortex), Super-X Laser Cannon (3d4x10 Line), Linked Persistent Particle Beam Cannon (4d10x10)
ATTACK (PORT):	Antimatter Mega Missile-Launcher (4d10x10, Graser (7d10, Irradiate), Gravity Gun, (6d6, Tractor Beam), Plasma Cannon (5d12)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Antimatter Mega Missile-Launcher (4d10x10, Graser (7d10, Irradiate), Gravity Gun, (6d6, Tractor Beam), Plasma Cannon (5d12)
ATTACK (TURRET):	Laser Net, Laser Net, Light Particle Beam, Light Particle Beam
POWER CORE:	Gateway Ultra x2, Gateway Light (1300 PCU of 1247 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	-;
SYSTEMS:	Advanced Long-Range Scanners, Mk 15 Armor, Mk 15 Defenses, Mk 5 Trinode, Super Heavy SIF;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Shuttle Bay x3, Hanger Bay x3, Medical Bay, Tech Workshop
MODIFIERS:	+5 to any three checks a round
COMPLEMENT:	400
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+32 Diplomacy (24 ranks), +36 Gunnery (24 ranks), +32 Intimidate (24 ranks), +32 Piloting (24 ranks), +36 Computers (24 Ranks), +32 Engineering (24 Ranks)
ENGINEERS:	(4 Officers, 20 Crew each) +40 Engineering (24 ranks)
GUNNERS:	(4 Officers, 20 Crew each) +44 Gunnery (24 ranks)
PILOT:	(4 Officers, 20 Crew each) +40 Piloting (24 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(4 Officers, 20 Crew each) +44 Computers (24 ranks)

The Ironsides is a venerable design that has long served in numerous Alliance systems and has seen numerous marks that have consistently upgraded its capabilities, the most recent models carrying the newer shields and powerplants. Lacking in an FTL drive Ironside monitors are shipped in pieces to the necessary systems and assembled there or built in the systems

themselves. With armor and shields equaling that of most battleships and an extremely heavy main armament, the Ironside is a formidable opponent when used as it most commonly is in defense of specific planets or installations. By itself easily able to fend off even the most powerful pirate attack, it can hold its own against even powerful raiding groups. Its greatest disadvantage is its relatively slow speed and lack of an FTL Drive that limits it primarily to a defensive role.

GUNBOATS

Somewhere between a strike craft and a frigate in size and capability, gunboats are normally designed for employment within a system, though some races use them instead of fighters in carriers. Relatively cheap, and with the advantage over strike craft in being able to be deployed independently for some weeks or even months at a time, they carry a mix of full sized starship weaponry and strike craft weaponry making them versatile in the tactical role. Many systems use them as police craft, and in some of the poorer or more recently settled systems, they might be the only warcraft available. Those able to deploy without support for months at a time are often left behind if a fleet is forced to abandon a system, hiding out and drawing on hidden supply caches, they launch hit and run strikes on supply and refueling vessels until a counterattack can be launched.

Without an FTL drive, gunboats are entirely dependent upon true starships on those occasions they are moved from one system to another.

SPOTLIGHT CLASS SECURITY GUNBOAT

ORIGIN:	Independent
TIER:	3
BP:	93; Small Gunboat
SPEED:	8,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Good, +1 Piloting, Turn 1
AC:	15
TL:	15
HP:	50
CT:	8
SHIELDS:	n/a
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Gravity Gun (6d6 Tractor Beam)
ATTACK (PORT):	Light EMP Cannon (Special, EMP)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Light Particle Beam (3d6)
POWER CORE:	Pulse Black (120 PCU of 114 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	-
SYSTEMS:	Crew Quarters Common, Basic Medium-Range Sensors, Mk 1 Trinode, Mk 1 Armor, Mk 1 Defenses;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Guest Quarters (Cells)x3;
MODIFIERS:	+1 to any three checks a round, +1 Piloting
COMPLEMENT:	6
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+6 Diplomacy (3 ranks), +9 Gunnery (3 ranks), +6 Intimidate (3 ranks), +7 Piloting (3 ranks), +9 Computers (3 Ranks), +7 Engineering (3 Ranks)
ENGINEERS:	(1 Officer) +7 Engineering (3 ranks)

GUNBOAT CONSTRUCTION

To create a gunboat base frame simply use the Light Freighter Template but replace the 2 light arcs in the forward mount with a single heavy arc.

GUNNERS:	(2 Officers) +9 Gunnery (3 ranks)
PILOT:	(1 Officer) +8 Piloting (3 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(1 Officer) +9 Computers (3 ranks)

Created by the Keegan Construction Corporation, a ship-building industry that controls its own system, the Spotlight was originally created for their own security duties, but has since spread throughout known space as a relatively cheap and easy to maintain in-system patrol and customs craft capable of dealing with most smugglers and even the occasional small pirate. Often carrying a small security team in addition to its crew the Spotlight is well designed for boarding and inspection work, and is just heavily armed enough to insure that most merchant captains will comply rather than attempt rash action. Not intended for long duration patrols, the Spotlight is rarely deployed for more than two weeks at a time, both due to a need to resupply and to prevent unnecessary tensions among the crew in their cramped quarters. The Spotlight is fast and carries a sensor suite quite powerful for a craft its size in order to better complete its normal duties. Not a proper warship, the Spotlight nevertheless performs an invaluable function in many systems.

K'NARN CLASS ASSAULT GUNBOAT

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	5
BP:	137; Small Gunboat
SPEED:	10,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Good, +1 Piloting, Turn 1,
FTL:	-
AC:	20
TL:	26
HP:	50
CT:	8
SHIELDS:	Light Shields 80 (Forward 20, Port 20, Starboard 20, Aft 20)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	X-laser Cannon (8d6 Line)
ATTACK (PORT):	Tactical Nuclear Missile-Launcher (5d8, Irradiate)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Tactical Nuclear Missile-Launcher (5d8, Irradiate)
POWER CORE:	Pulse Blue (200 PCU of 178 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	-;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Mk 4 Armor, Mk 10 Defenses, Mk 2 Trinode, Advanced Medium Range Sensors;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Cargo Bays x3;
MODIFIERS:	+2 to any three checks a round
COMPLEMENT:	6
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+8 Diplomacy (5 ranks), +14 Gunnery (5 ranks), +8 Intimidate (5 ranks), +10 Piloting (5 ranks), +14

ENGINEERS:	Computers (5 Ranks), +10 Engineering (5 Ranks)
GUNNERS:	(1 Officer) +11 Engineering (5 ranks)
PILOT:	(2 Officers) +13 Gunnery (5 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(1 Officer) +10 Piloting (5 ranks)
	(1 Officer) +14 Computers (5 ranks)

Armed nearly as heavily as some of the older models of assault frigates the K'Narn is one of the first gunboats to incorporate shielding, making it a dangerous opponent in even small numbers. Designed to work in groups against small warships the K'Narn is also designed with the secondary role of providing ECM/ECCM support and fire support to individual strike-craft wings. Currently only deployed in high risk systems this top of the line craft has yet to truly have a chance to prove itself in its intended roles of fleet support or harassment but is expected to exceed all original expectations.

FRIGATES

The smallest vessels normally considered to be considered proper warships, frigates are often the most numerous class of warship, ranging the gauntlet from specially designed escort frigates packed with light weapons that can cut apart an incoming missile or fighter strike to mysterious intelligence gathering vessels that probe deep into enemy held systems. While individually they are generally only a minor threat to larger vessels, or even a full squadron of strike craft, they are generally deployed in groups of two to four and are often handled aggressively by their captains, relying on their high speed and maneuverability to offset any advantages their opponents may have. Always poking their noses into everything, from the smallest unoccupied systems to deserted moons, they are the bane of most pirates, typically showing up when least expected.

BERET CLASS SCOUTING FRIGATE

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	7
BP:	195; Medium Transport
SPEED:	6,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Average, +1 Piloting, Turn 0,
FLT:	6ly/day
AC:	21
TL:	26
HP:	80
CT:	14
SHIELDS:	n/a
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), Light Laser Cannon (2d4)
ATTACK (AFT):	Flak Thrower (2d4, Point +8)
ATTACK TURRET):	Laser Net (2d6, Point +10), Laser Net (2d6, Point +10)
POWER CORE:	Nova Ultra (300 PCU of 303 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Fast, 6ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Shadowcloak Stealth System, Advanced Long-Range Sensors, Mk4 Armor, Mk9 Defenses, Mk2 Trinode;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Cargo Bays x3, Guest Quarters (Bar-

MODIFIERS:

COMPLEMENT:

CREW:

CAPTAIN:

ENGINEERS:

GUNNERS:

PILOT:

SCIENCE OFFICER:

racks) x2
+2 any three checks a round, +1 Piloting, +10 DC to efforts to Scan 6 (plus 24 Strikers)
+10 Diplomacy (7 Ranks), +16 Gunnery (7 Ranks), +10 Intimidate (7 Ranks), +13 Piloting (7 Skill Ranks), +16 Computers (7 Ranks), +12 Engineering (7 Ranks)
(1 Officer) +12 Engineering (7 Skill Ranks)
(2 Officers) +16 Gunnery (7 Skill Ranks)
(1 Officer) +13 Piloting (7 Skill Ranks)
(1 Officer) +16 Computers (7 Skill Ranks)

The Beret class light scout was designed almost two centuries ago for the primary duty of slipping into hostile systems unnoticed and collecting vital information. Additionally the class's stealth combined with a planetary landing capability made them popular amongst special operations groups. Only lightly armed and with minimal armor they relied on a combination of stealth and speed for their survival. Already approaching obsolescence by the beginning of the Helix War despite regular refits and upgrades, the introduction of shield systems rendered them completely obsolete; lacking both the room for shield generators without extensive rebuilding and a gradual decrease in effectiveness despite upgraded systems; the class was retired at the war's end and many of them ended up on the civilian market. Excellent vessels for explorers, if a bit complex and expensive for most, it is expected that the survivors will soldier on as exploration vessels and fast armed couriers for decades to come. It was the heavily refitted Beret class Star Runner that made first contact with the Sagarens and played a pivotal role in the opening battle of the short lived Helapian conflict.

BAILIFF CLASS PATROL SHIP

ORIGIN:	Independent
TIER:	1
BP:	73; Medium Explorer
SPEED:	8,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Good, +1 Piloting, Turn 1,
FTL:	1ly/day
AC:	13
TL:	13
HP:	55
CT:	11
SHIELDS:	n/a
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Light Laser Cannon (2d4)
ATTACK (PORT):	Light Laser Cannon (2d4)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Light Laser Cannon (2d4)
ATTACK TURRET):	Flak Thrower (3d4, Point +8)
POWER CORE:	Pulse Red (175 PCU of 174 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Slow 1ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Mk2 Armor, Mk2 Defense, Mk1 Trinode,

EXPANSION BAYS:

Basic Medium-Range Sensors;
Cargo Holds x2, Guest Quarters
(Cells) x3

MODIFIERS:

+1 to any three rolls a round, +1
Piloting

COMPLEMENT:

6

CREW:**CAPTAIN:**

+4 Diplomacy (1 Skill Ranks), +7
Gunnery (1 Skill Ranks), +4 In-
timidate (1 Skill Ranks), +8 Piloting
(1 Skill Ranks), +7 Computers (1
Ranks), +5 Engineering (1 Ranks)
(1 Officer) +4 Engineering (1 Skill
Ranks)

ENGINEERS:**GUNNERS:**

(2 Officers) +7 Gunnery (1 Skill
Ranks)

PILOT:

(1 Officer) +8 Piloting (1 Skill Ranks)

SCIENCE OFFICER:

(1 Officer) +6 Computers (1 Skill
Ranks)

Widely used by system security forces for light patrols and traffic regulation, the Bailiff is to star systems what police cars are to planets. Lightly armed, much of the interior space of the Bailiff is turned over to holding cells and a compact criminal sciences lab.

Designed for short term patrols of little more than a few weeks at a time, the Bailiff is cheap, effective, and under no circumstances intended to manage anything more than a lightly armed merchantman.

While its standard configuration is unsuited for any sort of real combat, many models have been heavily modified to make them more combat worthy, stripping out much of the equipment related to security duties and installing heavier weapons and defenses. However it is not normally used in such a way by official forces, who generally find designs built for combat more effective for the cost than modified Bailiffs. However it is much easier for individuals to obtain a stock Bailiff in many places than a combat ready frigate.

Not particularly well suited for combat or raiding duties even after modification due to their short endurance and civilian construction, only those without any other choice make due with these ships in such a capacity.

DESTROYERS

If heavy cruisers are the work horses of a navy, then destroyers are the sheep dogs, handling the lighter duties of lightning raids, convoy escort, light patrol tasks, and protecting the larger vessels in battle. Often given independent deployments, successful captaincy of a destroyer is seen as a fast track to promotion in many navies due to the opportunities they provide.

BLACK FLAG

ORIGIN:

Itellian

TIER:

7

BP:

189; Large Destroyer

SPEED:

6,

MANEUVERABILITY:

Average, +1 Piloting, Turn 2;

FTL 1LY/DAY**AC:**

21

TL:

18

HP:

170

CT:

30

SHIELDS:

n/a

ATTACK (FORWARD):

Linked Plasma Cannon (10d12)

ATTACK (PORT):

Light Plasma Cannon (2d12)

ATTACK (STARBOARD):

Light Plasma Cannon (2d12)

ATTACK (AFT):

Light Plasma Cannon (2d12)

ATTACK TURRET):

Light Plasma Cannon (2d12)

POWER CORE:

Arcus Ultrax2 (300 PCU of 267 max
usage);

FTL ENGINE:

Slow 1 ly/day;

SYSTEMS:

Crew Quarters (Common), Mk5
Armor, Mk3 Defense, Mk1 Duonode,
Basic Short-Range Sensors;

EXPANSION BAYS:

Cargo Bays x5

MODIFIERS:

+1 to any two checks a round, +1
Piloting

COMPLEMENT:

21

CREW:**CAPTAIN:**

+10 Diplomacy (7 ranks), +13 Gun-
nery (7 ranks), +10 Intimidate (7
Ranks), +11 Piloting (7 Ranks), +13
Computers (7 Ranks), +10 Engineer-
ing (7 Ranks)

ENGINEERS:

(1 Officer, 4 Crew) +18 Engineering
(7 ranks)

GUNNERS:

(1 Officers, 4 Crew Each) +18 Gun-
nery (7 ranks)

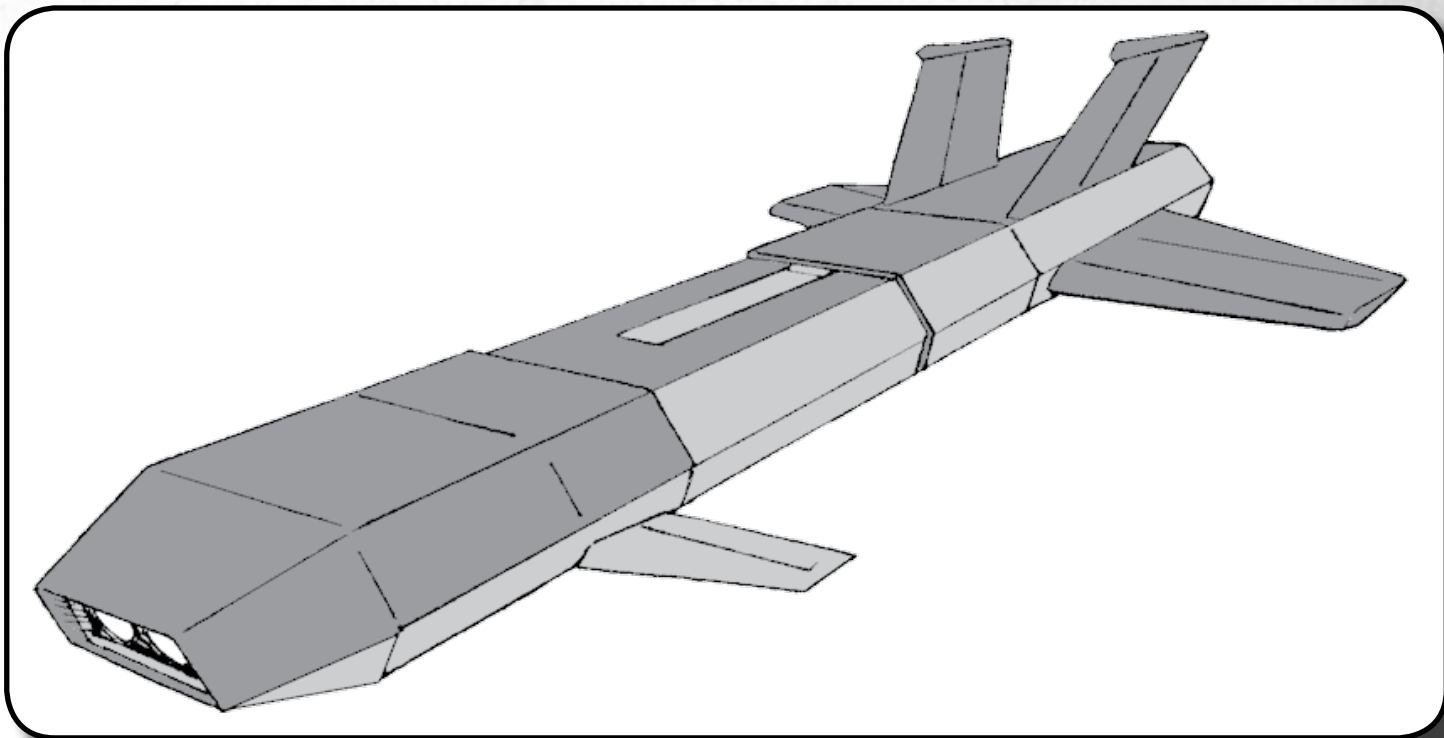
PILOT:

(1 Officer, 4 Crew) +18 Piloting (7
ranks)

SCIENCE OFFICER:

(1 Officer, 4 Crew) +18 Computers (7
ranks)

The Black Flag is representative of one of the more common Itellian warship variants largely employed by the species' pirates and marauders. Cramped, crowded, slow, lacking in protection or defenses, but with a heavy armament of close range plasma cannon they are in no way a real threat to a well handled modern warship and even many of the more heavily armed merchant plying the spaceways. That said, any ship that foolishly allows them to get to close range will find their



plasma cannon devastating. These ships and those like them are becoming regrettably ever more common and prove a constant nuisance for the professional navies and a growing danger to civilian ships and isolated planets.

LIGHTNING CLAW CLASS DESTROYER

ORIGIN:	Sagaren CollectiveTier: 14
BP:	457; Large Upgraded Destroyer
SPEED:	8,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Average, Turn 2,
FTL:	6ly/day
AC:	29
TL:	32
HP:	210
CT:	30
SHIELDS:	Medium Shields 200 (Forward 50, Port 50, Starboard 50, Aft 50)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), X-laser Cannon (8d6 Line)
ATTACK (PORT):	Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), Linked Light Particle Beam (6d6)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), Linked Light Particle Beam (6d6)
ATTACK (AFT):	X-laser Cannon (8d6 Line), Light Particle Beam (3d6), Tactical Nuclear Missile-Launcher (5d8, Irradiate)
ATTACK TURRET):	Heavy Laser Net (5d6 Point +12), Linked Light Particle Beam (6d6)
POWER CORE:	Pulse Prismatic x2 (600 PCU of 553 max usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Fast 6ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Advanced Long Range Sensors, Mk3 Trinode, Mk6 Armor, Mk10 Defense,

EXPANSION BAYS:

MODIFIERS:

COMPLEMENT:

CREW:

CAPTAIN:

ENGINEERS:

GUNNERS:

PILOT:

SCIENCE OFFICER:

Cargo Bay x5

+3 to any three checks a round

20

+17 Diplomacy (14 ranks), +23 Gunnery (14 ranks), +17 Intimidate (14 ranks), +17 Piloting (14 ranks), +23 Computers (14 Ranks), +19 Engineering (14 Ranks)

(1 Officer, 3 Crew) +23 Engineering (14 ranks)

(1 Officer, 6 Crew) +27 Gunnery (14 ranks)

(1 Officer, 3 Crew) +23 Piloting (14 ranks)

(1 Officer, 3 Crew) +27 Computers (14 ranks)

The Lightning Claw is a fairly standard example of Sagaren destroyer construction, with a heavy missile armament for its size and a relatively light energy armament. Designed with speed and maneuverability as primary attributes the Lightning Claw is not designed to stand and fight, but rather to provide long range fire support or as an opportunist, picking off smaller vessels that are unable to effectively reply or defend themselves at long range from the missile barrage the Lightning Claw can lay down. However if brought into close combat it will quickly find itself overwhelmed by most other vessels, its particle and laser cannon notwithstanding.

SMIRE CLASS DESTROYER ESCORT

ORIGIN:	Baggalian Empire Collective
TIER:	10
BP:	267; Large Destroyer
SPEED:	6,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Average, +1 Piloting, Turn 2,
FTL:	3ly/day

AC:	19
TL:	19
HP:	190
CT:	30
SHIELDS:	Medium Shields 140 (Forward 35, Port 35, Starboard 35, Aft 35)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Heavy Laser Net (5d6, Point +12), Heavy Laser Net (5d6, Point +12)
ATTACK (PORT):	Laser Net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Laser Net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK (AFT):	Laser Net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK TURRET):	Laser Net (2d6, Point +10)
POWER CORE:	Pulse Prismatic (300 PCU of 319 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Average 3ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Mk4 Armor, Mk8 Defenses, Mk1 Trinode, Advanced Short-Range Sensors;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Cargo Bays x5
MODIFIERS:	+1 to any three checks a round, +1 Piloting
COMPLEMENT:	20
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+13 Diplomacy (10 ranks), +18 Gunnery (10 ranks), +13 Intimidate (10 ranks), +14 Piloting (10 ranks), +18 Computers (10 Ranks), +14 Engineering (10 Ranks)
ENGINEERS:	(1 Officer, 3 Crew) +19 Engineering (10 ranks)
GUNNERS:	(1 Officer, 6 Crew) +25 Gunnery (10 ranks)
PILOT:	(1 Officer, 3 Crew) +20 Piloting (10 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(1 Officer, 3 Crew) +23 Computers (10 ranks)

The Smire is one of several escort classes the Baggal Empire has developed in an attempt to compensate for the lack of sufficient defensive weaponry on the majority of their vessels. Armed entirely with light defensive weaponry they are completely at the mercy of even the smallest warships that can keep their distance and pick them apart. However their light rapid fire weapons can carve a path through a thick missile salvo or strike craft attack at close range. The need to directly interpose themselves between their charges and incoming fire requires nerves of steel and losses tend to be heavy. Despite this, the Smire remains a popular ship and is known for surviving far more damage than a ship its size might be expected to.

CRUISERS

Within a fleet, cruisers tend to be the true workhorses. Jacks of all trades they can be found everywhere performing tasks from duty with the battleline to anti-piracy and smuggling patrols. While not able to go toe to toe with heavier ships, cruisers can often use superior numbers to bring down larger opponents, and superior tactics can let them bring a faster opponent within range of their weapons. Often considered ideal for commerce raiding, cruisers have the speed and range to strike quickly deep inside enemy territory and enough firepower to overwhelm lighter escorts. Only a few such strikes can force an opponent to pull heavier forces away from the front to begin defending their convoys. Cruisers tend to see far more combat than their larger brethren as they can be spared to run patrols while larger ships are often held in centralized reserve.

ARMED MERCHANT CRUISERS

Armed Merchant Cruisers (AMCs) are distinct from armed merchant ships in that they are designed and expected to fight rather than merely fend off an attacker. Some are retro-fitted merchant vessels, others are designed for the task, in either case they are nasty surprises for anyone who preys on merchant vessels, whether professional fighting forces, privateers, or pirates.

Looking like merchant vessels, but far more heavily armed, AMCs are wolves hidden amongst sheep. Often slipped into convoys, they have proven a lethal surprise for many attackers. Their biggest disadvantages are that due to their bulk they tend to be slower and less maneuverable than similarly armed conventional warships. Those converted from merchant designs generally prove to be less capable than those built to purpose. The mere knowledge that an AMC is operating in the area is often a large deterrent to would be raiders of merchant craft.

RODEO CLASS MERCHANT CRUISER

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	18BP: 824; Upgraded Bulk Freighter
SPEED:	6,
MANEUVERABILITY:	poor, +0 Piloting, turn 3,
FT:	3ly/day
AC:	34
TL:	33
HP:	240
DT:	10
CT:	32
SHIELDS:	Light Shields 80 (Forward 20, Port 20, Starboard 20, Aft 20)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), X-laser Cannon (8d6 Line), Graser (7d10), Light Particle Beam (3d6)
ATTACK (PORT):	Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), X-laser Cannon (8d6 Line), Graser (7d10), Light Particle Beam (3d6)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), X-laser Cannon (8d6 Line),

ATTACK (AFT):

Graser (7d10), Light Particle Beam (3d6)
Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), X-laser Cannon (8d6 Line), Graser (7d10), Light Particle Beam (3d6)

ATTACK TURRET):

Heavy Laser net (5d6, Point +12), Linked Maser (12d10), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)

POWER CORE:

Gateway Ultra, Gateway Heavy (900 PCU of 899);

FTL ENGINE:

Average 3 ly/day;

SYSTEMS:

Common Crew Quarters, Advanced Long-Range Sensors, Mk8 Armor, Mk8 Defenses, Mk3 Tetranode, Advanced SIF;

EXPANSION BAYS:

Hanger Bays x2, Shuttle Bay;

MODIFIERS:

+3 to any four checks a round, DC 36 Scan check needed to distinguish from a normal merchant ship.

COMPLEMENT:

50

CREW:**CAPTAIN:**

+24 Diplomacy (18 ranks), +28 Gunnery (18 ranks), +24 Intimidate (18 ranks), +24 Piloting (18 ranks), +28 Computers (18 ranks), +24 Engineering (18 ranks)

ENGINEERS:

(3 Officers each with 3 crew) +32 Engineering (18 ranks)

GUNNERS:

(3 Officers each with 3 crew) +36 Gunnery (18 ranks)

PILOT:

(3 Officers each with 3 crew) +32 Piloting (18 ranks)

SCIENCE OFFICER:

(2 Officers each with 3 crew) +36 Computers (18 ranks)

The Rodeo AMC is a venerable design that has served well against pirates and raiders for a couple of centuries with steady upgrades and refits continuing to keep it suitable for second line service. Outwardly appearing to be a Traveler class medium merchant ship, a class that has had an equally long career, the Rodeo carries an armament that would not be found amiss on many heavy cruisers. Additionally the Rodeo makes use of its large internal volume to carry a full squadron of strike craft to further add to its combat power as well as a short company of Strikers with assault shuttles to capture disabled raiders and pirates. Another advantage the Rodeo has due to its internal volume is a missile magazine capacity outstripping that of many larger warships, and enough supplies for very long deployments. Slow and clumsy for a warship, though more nimble than most merchants in the same size range, the Rodeo relies on surprise and the fact that most times its opponents are far weaker than itself to succeed in combat. Even in second line duties though the Rodeo is beginning to show its age, the growing use of shielding which the ship is ill designed to be retrofitted with, and the increasing power and size of raiders means that the Rodeo is slowly becoming outclassed, able to only reliably fend off the more aged opponents. Heavy losses during the Gener conflict where the class repeatedly found itself outnumbered and outgunned by Gener raiding forces only served to emphasize this fact, for though they acquitted themselves valiantly, many were lost in defense

of their convoys far behind what were normally considered the front lines.

After long service, the survivors of this class are slowly being retired as newer AMCs come into service, but the constant need for such escorts means that they will likely continue to see service for some time to come in the backwaters of the galaxy where opposition is not as fearsome.

LIGHT CRUISERS

Often found accompanying a small squadron of destroyers, light cruisers are a delicate balance between speed and sufficient firepower to comfortably outgun smaller ships. Heavily used as scouts and escorts during wartime, during peacetime they are kept busy safeguarding the space lanes and suppressing piracy.

TRACKER CLASS SCOUT CRUISER

ORIGIN:

Sagaren Collective

TIER:

15

BP:

516; Huge Upgraded Cruiser

SPEED:

8,

MANEUVERABILITY:

Average, +0 Piloting, turn 2,

FTL:

12ly/day

AC:

29

TL:

28

HP:

255

DT:

10

CT:

36

SHIELDS:

Heavy Shields 240 (Forward 60, Port 60, Starboard 60, Aft 60)

ATTACK (FORWARD):

Antimatter Mega-Missile-Launcher (4d10x10), Light Particle Beam (3d6)

ATTACK (PORT):

Tactical Nuclear Missile-Launcher (5d8, Irradiate), Light Particle Beam (3d6)

ATTACK (STARBOARD): Tactical Nuclear Missile-Launcher (5d8, Irradiate), Light Particle Beam (3d6)

ATTACK (AFT):

Tactical Nuclear Missile-Launcher (5d8, Irradiate)

ATTACK TURRET):

Particle Beam (8d6), Laser Net (2d6, Point +10)

POWER CORE:

Nova Ultra x2 (600 PCU of 610 Max Usage);

FTL ENGINE:

Plaid 12 ly/day;

SYSTEMS

Common Crew Quarters, Mk6 Armor, Mk6 Defenses, Mk2 Trinode, Advanced Long-Range Sensors, Shadowcloak Stealth System, Advanced SIF;

EXPANSION BAYS:

Hanger Bay, Shuttle Bay

MODIFIERS:

+2 to any three checks a round

COMPLEMENT:

81

CREW:**CAPTAIN:**

+18 Diplomacy (15 ranks), +24 Gunnery (15 ranks), +18 Intimidate (15 ranks), +20 Piloting (15 ranks), +24 Computers (15 ranks), +20 Engineering (15 ranks)

ENGINEERS:

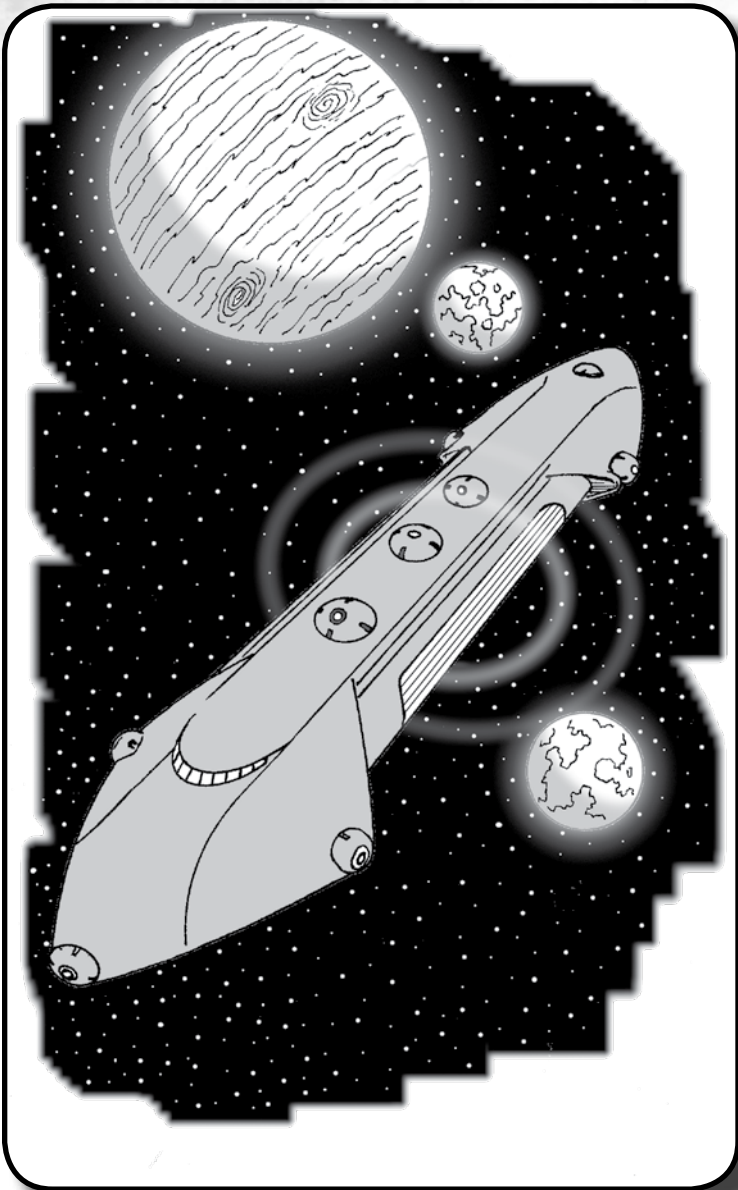
(4 Officers each with 4 crew) +28

GUNNERS:	Engineering (15 ranks) (4 Officers each with 4 crew) +32 Gunnery (15 ranks)
PILOT:	(4 Officers each with 4 crew) +28 Piloting (15 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(4 Officers each with 4 crew) +32 Computers (15 ranks)

A nomadic people, the Sagarens have long needed a ship to scout ahead of the movements of a Homeship, the Tracker fulfills this role very well. Fairly well armed, though carrying a light missile armament by Sagaren standards, the Tracker is equipped with the best sensors and ECM capability they could manage. Slipping quietly into systems the Tracker can quickly determine their suitability for the Collective's goals, and most importantly, if there is any signs of intelligent life. A small fighter hanger in the bow further increases the range that the ship can survey and provides it with some additional protection. During times of war the Tracker serves to monitor enemy fleets from a distance, its great speed allowing it to remain out of reach even should it be detected. Not intended for intense combat, the Tracker instead normally uses its abilities to pick and choose its time and place to engage targets. When used as a patrol vessel, the Tracker has proven very effective in anti-piracy work and it is primarily in this role that most other races know the Tracker.

LANCE CLASS LIGHT CRUISER

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	17
BP:	744; Huge Upgraded Cruiser
SPEED:	10,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Average, +0 Piloting, Turn 2
AC:	25
TL:	26
HP:	280
DT:	15
CT:	36
SHIELDS:	Heavy Shields 280 (Forward 70, Port 70, Starboard 70, Aft 70)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Persistent Particle Beam Cannon (2d10x10), Linked Persistent Particle Beam (20d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK (PORT):	Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), Light Particle Cannon (3d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), Light Particle Cannon (3d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK (AFT):	Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), Light Particle Cannon (3d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK TURRET):	Persistent Particle Beam (10d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
POWER CORE:	Gateway Heavy x2 (800 PCU of 788 max usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Fast 6 ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Mk10 Armor, Mk12 Defenses, Mk 2 Trinode,



EXPANSION BAYS:	Super-Heavy SIF Field, Advanced Long Range Sensors;
MODIFIERS:	Hanger Bay, Shuttle Bay; +2 to any three checks a roundComplement: 81
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+20 Diplomacy (15 ranks), +26 Gunnery (17 ranks), +20 Intimidate (17 ranks), +22 Piloting (17 ranks), +26 Computers (17 ranks), +22 Engineering (17 ranks)
ENGINEERS:	(4 Officers each with 4 crew) +30 Engineering (17 ranks)
GUNNERS:	(4 Officers each with 4 crew) +34 Gunnery (17 ranks)
PILOT:	(4 Officers each with 4 crew) +30 Piloting (17 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(4 Officers each with 4 crew) +34 Computers (17 ranks)

The Lance class light cruiser is a new and already popular addition to the USDF. Following on the heels of the successful Ulysses class assault carrier which pioneered the combined use

of a number of relatively new technologies, the Lance is the first light cruiser to have been constructed following the same philosophy.

Loaded with cutting edge technology, the Lance class is confidently expected to even be able to hold its own against many older heavy cruisers. Those already in service have proven their worth as escorts, long range scouts, squadron leaders, and all the many other roles that have long been fulfilled by this type of vessel.

Improvements in automation and miniaturization of technology have allowed the Lance to be built little larger than a destroyer while having the firepower and protection of older large light cruisers. Of particular note were the actions by the Lance class cruiser U.S.A.S. Clocker when it stumbled upon a small pirate squadron unexpectedly, and despite being badly outnumbered and outgunned, wiped out the entire group of pirate vessels who had expected to easily be able to overwhelm the deceptively small vessel. She then went on to track down and destroy the pirates' base of operations, several more ships, and affect the rescue of a number of hostages, all before summoned reinforcements could arrive.

This and other successes by this class of ship have been hailed as proof of the effectiveness of the new design philosophy espoused by now retired Admiral MacLeod and has given added emphasis to pushing the construction of other ship classes built with the same philosophy to replace many of the aging models still used by the Alliance in order to keep its forces at the very edge of military technology while at the same time materially boosting not only overall firepower, but, with the savings in crew size allowing a larger number of hulls as well.

HEAVY CRUISERS

Workhorses of most any fleet, heavy cruisers are often the largest vessels many outer systems see for decades or even centuries at a time. As such they are the primary fleet presence in many places, a role for which they are well suited. Within the Alliance heavy cruisers probably best represent the multi-platform philosophy, used for everything from diplomatic functions to deep space mappings along with other more combat orientated duties.

ECLIPSE CLASS HEAVY CRUISER

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	24
BP:	1,469; Huge Upgraded Cruiser
SPEED:	6,
MANEUVERABILITY:	average, +1 Piloting, Turn 2,
FTL:	3 ly/day
AC:	30
TL:	31
HP:	305
DT:	10
CT:	36
SHIELDS:	Medium Shields 160 (Forward 40, Port 40, Starboard 40, Aft 40)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Persistent Particle Beam Cannon (2d10x10), Linked Persistent Particle Beam (20d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK (PORT):	Heavy Nuclear Missile-Launcher

(10d8, Irradiate), Light Particle Cannon (3d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)

ATTACK (STARBOARD): Heavy Nuclear Missile-Launcher (10d8, Irradiate), Light Particle Cannon (3d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)

ATTACK (AFT): Heavy Nuclear Missile-Launcher (10d8, Irradiate), Light Particle Cannon (3d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)

ATTACK TURRET): Gravity Gun (6d6, Tractor beam), Linked Persistent Particle Beam (20d6), Laser Net (2d6, Point +10)
Gateway Heavy x2 (800 PCU of 763 Max Usage);

POWER CORE: Average 3 ly/day;
FTL ENGINE: Common Quality Crew Quarters, Mk8 Armor, Mk10 Defenses, Mk1 Trinode; Basic Long-Range Sensors, Advanced SIF,

EXPANSION BAYS: Hanger Bay, Shuttle Bay
MODIFIERS: +1 to any three checks a round
Complement: 81

CREW:
CAPTAIN: +27 Diplomacy (15 ranks), +30 Gunnery (25 ranks), +27 Intimidate (25 ranks), +29 Piloting (25 ranks), +30 Computers (25 ranks), +28 Engineering (25 ranks)

ENGINEERS: (4 Officers each with 4 crew) +36 Engineering (25 ranks)

GUNNERS: (4 Officers each with 4 crew) +38 Gunnery (25 ranks)

PILOT: (4 Officers each with 4 crew) +37 Piloting (25 ranks)

SCIENCE OFFICER: (4 Officers each with 4 crew) +38 Computers (25 ranks)

The Eclipse is a common sight amongst the Alliance spaceways, running patrols and surveys, or providing escorts to civilian and military vessels alike. While not specializing in any particular sphere, the Eclipse is a versatile multifunction platform, able to engage an opponent at nearly any range while retaining the speed and durability to match most other ships within its class and quite capable of looking after itself even in a heated fleet action. Seemingly endlessly upgradeable, the Eclipse came into being just before the start of the Helix War and served valiantly throughout the conflict, coming to be well liked by its crews and a popular posting. It has also proved the bane of pirates, carrying enough firepower to single handedly crush most pirate groups, regularly running patrols through otherwise nondescript systems and a tendency for showing up at the worst possible time for enemies of the Alliance. The class is also often used to "show the flag" in many of the more distant systems and in some places may be the only contact with the rest of the galaxy some planets may have for months at a time.

Beginning like many ships designed around the same time to show its age, it is expected that in the next decade or so the Eclipse will be retired to secondline duties as more capable and modern ships replace it on the frontlines.

KNIGHT CLASS CRUISER

ORIGIN:	Baggalian Empire
TIER:	15
BP:	506; Huge Upgraded Bulk Freighter
SPEED:	4,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Poor, +1 Piloting, Turn 4
AC:	23
TL:	15
HP:	220
DT:	7
CT:	32
SHIELDS:	Basic Shields 20 (Forward 5, Port 5, Starboard 5, Aft 5)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Linked Twin Laser (10d8), Linked Light Particle Beam (6d6)
ATTACK (PORT):	Twin Laser (5d8), Light Particle Beam (3d6)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Twin Laser (5d8), Light Particle Beam (3d6)
ATTACK (AFT):	Twin Laser (5d8), Linked Light Particle Beam (6d6)
ATTACK TURRET):	Linked Maser (12d10), Linked Maser (12d10)
POWER CORE:	Nova Heavy, Nova Ultra (500 PCU of 483 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Slow 1 ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Budget Long-range Sensors, Improved SIF, Mk10 Armor, Mk4 Defenses, Mk1 Duonode;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Cargo Bay x4, Shuttle Bay x2;
MODIFIERS:	+1 to any two checks a round, +1 Piloting
COMPLEMENT:	50
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+18 Diplomacy (15 ranks), +19 Gunnery (15 ranks), +18 Intimidate (15 ranks), +20 Piloting (15 ranks), +19 Computers (15 ranks), +19 Engineering (15 ranks)
ENGINEERS:	(3 Officers each with 3 crew) +25 Engineering (15 ranks)
GUNNERS:	(3 Officers each with 3 crew) +25 Gunnery (15 ranks)
PILOT:	(3 Officers each with 3 crew) +26 Piloting (15 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(2 Officers each with 3 crew) +25 Computers (15 ranks)

The Knight class heavy cruiser was designed with only one purpose in mind, to meet the enemy in battle and crush them utterly. With an incredibly heavy main energy armament for a ship its size, practically that of many older classes of battlecruiser though fewer in number, any warship of similar or smaller size that comes within reach of its weapons can expect to find its defenses battered down in short order. However mounting such a fearsome armament comes at a price, the Knight falls behind its contemporaries in speed and maneuverability as well as suffering a significant lack of defensive weaponry. This has left the Knight vulnerable to smaller faster

and more maneuverable vessels that can manage to avoid its crushing main gun salvos; in particular the Knight has proven to fare very badly against strike craft who can often strike the ship with near impunity and missile heavy ships that can hold the range open and batter it to pieces from outside the range at which it can reply. That said, the Knight is not a ship to underestimate and well handled can match any ship in its class with a fair amount of luck.

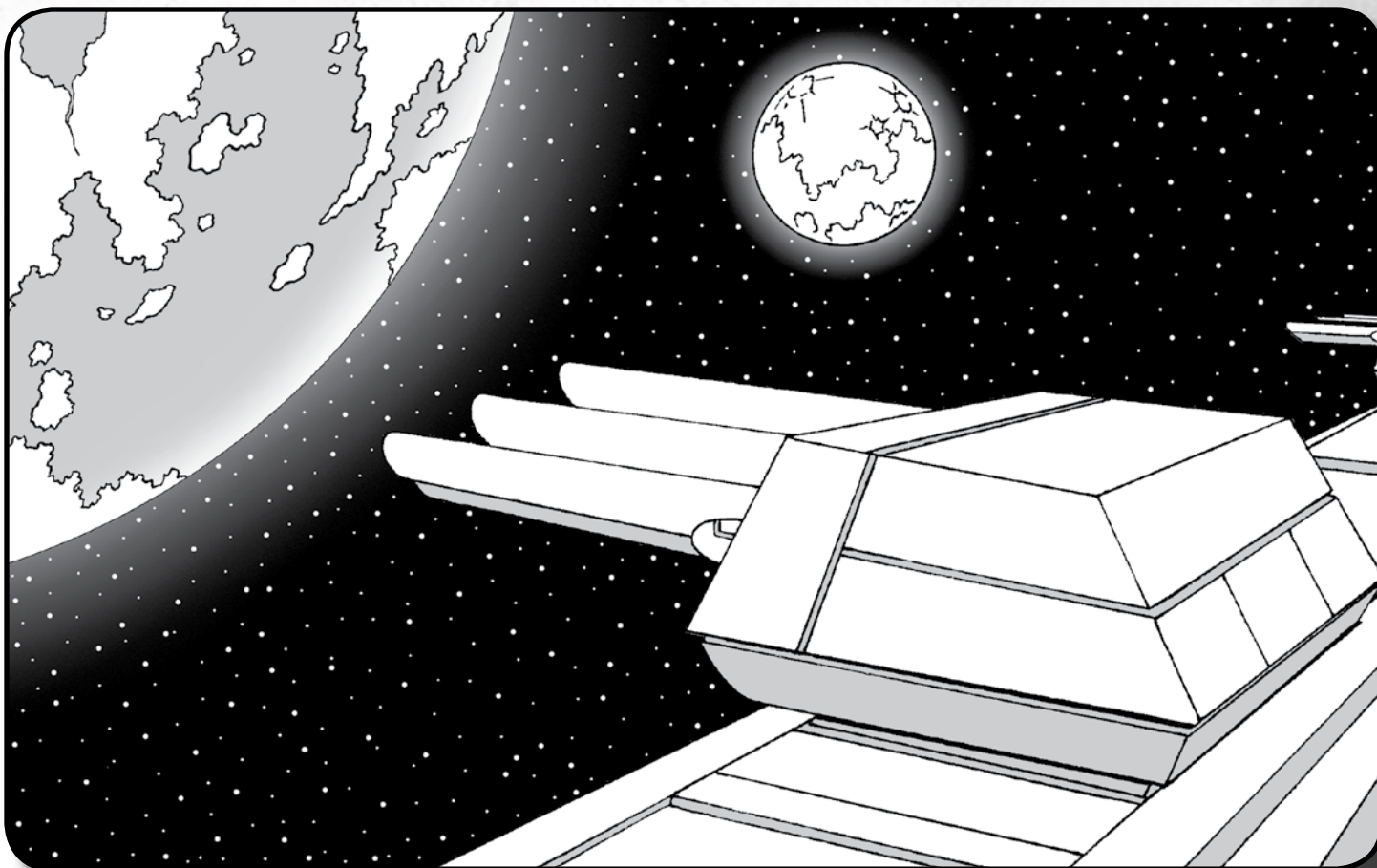
Best suited to fighting within the defensive structure of a fleet or task force the Knight's armament makes it a valid threat even to larger vessels. While this may distract their attention from more important opponents, the Knight tends to suffer the consequences of being on the receiving end of a weight of weaponry it simply could not be designed to withstand.

BATTLECRUISERS

Heavily armed and fast, battlecruisers are designed to run down and destroy smaller vessels while outrunning more powerful opponents or perform quick strikes deep in enemy territory. Though the recent advent of practical shields has to some degree mitigated their thin armor in navies that have adopted them, they remain far better able to dish out damage than absorb it. Often the core of moderately sized task forces, their captains have to rely on skill rather than brute force in most situations.

GARGOYLE CLASS BATTLECRUISER

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	21
BP:	1,103; Gargantuan Upgraded Battleship
SPEED:	8,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Average, Turn 2, +0 Piloting,
FTL:	3ly/day
AC:	31
TL:	36
HP:	480
DT:	20
CT:	56
SHIELDS:	Heavy Shields 240 (Forward 60, Port 60, Starboard 60, Aft 60)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Linked Super X-laser Cannon (6d4x10, Line), Linked Graser (14d10, Irradiate)
ATTACK (PORT):	Heavy EMP Cannon (Special, EMP), Particle Beam (8d6), Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Heavy EMP Cannon (Special, EMP), Particle Beam (8d6), Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10)
ATTACK (AFT):	Maser (6d10)
ATTACK TURRET):	Linked Super Graser (4d8x10, Irradiate), Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), Laser Net (2d6, Point +10)
POWER CORE:	(1,200 PCU of 983 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Average 3ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Basic Long-Range Sensors, Advanced SIF, Mk6 Armor, Mk10 Defenses, Mk2 Tetranode;



EXPANSION BAYS:
MODIFIERS:
COMPLEMENT:
CREW:

Hanger Bay, Shuttle Bay x2;
 +2 to any four checks a round
 200

CAPTAIN:

+24 Diplomacy (21 ranks), +28 Gunnery (21 ranks), +24 Intimidate (21 ranks), +26 Piloting (21 ranks), +28 Computers (21 ranks), +26 Engineering (21 ranks)

ENGINEERS:

(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +34 (21 ranks)

GUNNERS:

(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +36 Gunnery (21 ranks)

PILOT:

(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +34 Piloting (21 ranks)

SCIENCE OFFICER:

(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +36 Computers (21 ranks)

The Gargoyle is one of the oldest classes of warships within the Alliance to still see regular frontline service. A dated design, the Gargoyle yet remains a formidable opponent; when originally designed there were many who criticized the ship as being over-engined, over-gunned, and over-armored for a battlecruiser without being powerful enough to be considered a true battleship. However it is exactly these features that have left it competitive on the battlefield when many equally old designs have been relegated to second-line duties or scrapped. The power it had to burn has let it continually be upgraded while its weaponry and armor has left it competitive with more modern craft. Now nearing its twilight years the Gargoyle is still a force to be reckoned with and its heavy forward armament is enough to give even a battleship a rough handling

with a little luck though the ship is unlikely to win such a fight in the long run. Originally built in large numbers for a ship of its class the Gargoyle might show up just about anywhere without warning and its sudden appearance more than once has turned the tides of a fight. Often used on solitary patrols, the captains of such ships are among the best the Alliance has to offer and they have gone far towards securing the Alliance's outer reaches.

SOJOURN CLASS BATTLECRUISER

ORIGIN:

Sagaren Collective

TIER:

20

BP:

1,014; Gargantuan Upgraded Battleship

SPEED:

8,

MANEUVERABILITY:

Average, +0 Piloting, Turn 2,

FTL:

6 ly/day

AC:

30

TL:

35

HP:

480

DT:

20

CT:

56

SHIELDS:

Heavy Shields 420 (Forward 105, Port 105, Starboard 105, Aft 105)

ATTACK (FORWARD):

Linked Supermaser (4d8x10), Antimatter Mega Missile-Launcher (4d10x10), Antimatter Mega-Missile-Launcher (4d10x10)

ATTACK (PORT):

Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), Persistent Particle

	Beam (10d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), Heavy Antimatter Missile-Launcher (10d10), Persistent Particle Beam (10d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK (AFT):	Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK TURRET):	Antimatter Heavy Missile-Launcher (10d10), Antimatter Heavy Missile-Launcher (10d10), Persistent Particle Beam (10d6), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
POWER CORE:	Gateway Heavy x3 (1,200 PCU of 993 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Fast 6 ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Advanced Long-Range Sensors, Mk6 Armor, MK10 Defenses, Blacknight Stealth System, Advanced SIF, Mk3 Tetra-node;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Hanger Bay, Shuttle Bay x2;
MODIFIERS:	+3 to any four checks a round, +15DC versus Scans
COMPLEMENT:	200
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+23 Diplomacy (20 ranks), +30 Gunnery (20 ranks), +23 Intimidate (20 ranks), +26 Piloting (20 ranks), +30 Computers (20 ranks), +26 Engineering (20 ranks)
ENGINEERS:	(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +34 (20 ranks)
GUNNERS:	(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +38 Gunnery (20 ranks)
PILOT:	(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +34 Piloting (20 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +38 Computers (20 ranks)

One of the newest classes to emerge from the shipyards of Sagaren homeships, the Sojourn sacrifices much of the armor and energy armament typical to many modern battlecruisers in order to pack in an absolutely massive missile armament for a ship its size, not merely in terms of number, but in size as well, mounting a missile battery whose power would not be amiss on a battleship. In many ways the ideal of the Sagaren concept of shipbuilding, she is fast enough to outrun nearly any ship in her own class as well as any larger vessel while being able to hold an opponent under heavy fire at ranges they cannot effectively reply to. Equipped with the latest in available stealth technology, indeed, many times an opponent's first warning that a Sojourn is around is when a salvo of missiles screams into their defense perimeter.

Favored for the rare independent patrol or individual raiding and harassment missions, the Sojourn is an eagerly sought for command, and elevation to such a position is considered a high honor.

Even when deployed as part of a fleet or taskforce the Sojourn has proven its worth, its heavy defensive armament greatly bolstering a group's defensive network while its missiles

are often used to single out a target apart from the rest of the fleet and quickly pound it into destruction.

As one of the newest classes of Sagaren warships the Sojourn can confidently expect to hold its own against even the most modern of opponents it may encounter as long as it is careful to keep them at arms length.

CARRIERS

Carrying wings of strike craft, or in some cases, gunboats, carriers are a vital component of most fleets, greatly extending the range over which a commander can extend their influence while increasing the security of their own forces. Generally fragile and underarmed compared to other warship classes they do their best to remain out of the fray, instead sending wave after wave of strike craft to batter and harry their opponents.

ESCORT

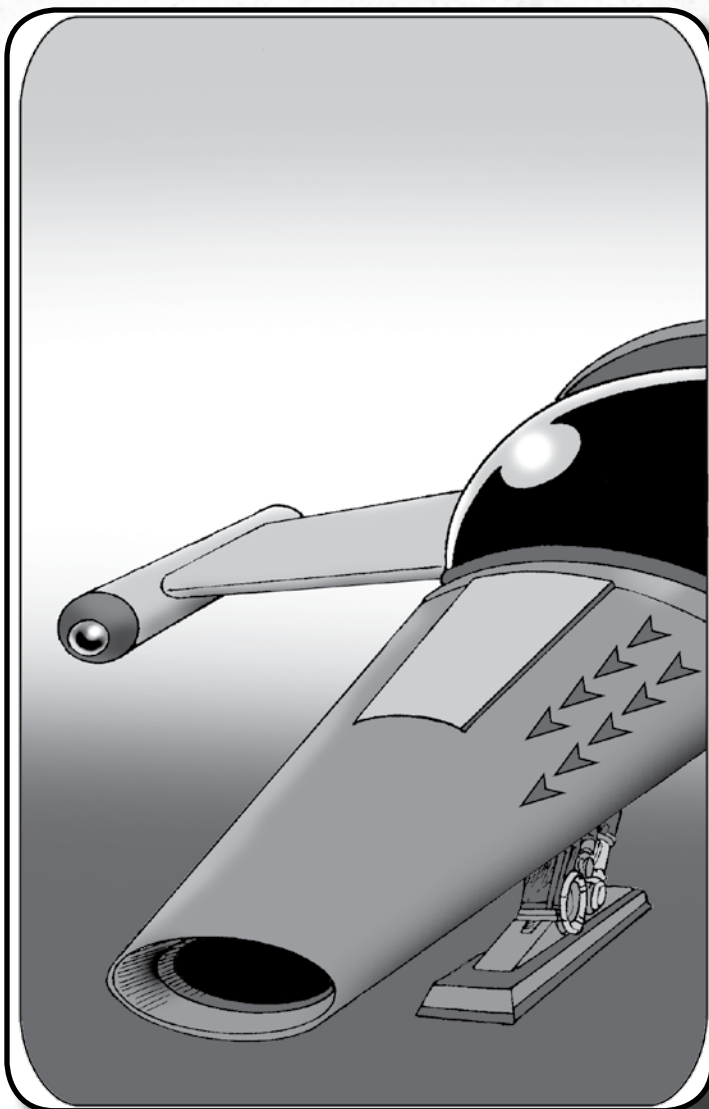
Escort carriers typically carry only a single wing of strike craft and a few small auxiliary craft. A cheap way of conveying strike craft to where they are needed or where a full sized carrier would be excessive, compared to fleet carriers they are slow and lightly armed, though by no means completely defenseless, and are usually used to provide a strong strike craft escort to convoys and a fleet CAP during large battles, thereby freeing up the fleet carriers to throw their whole weight directly against the enemy.

DEALER CLASS ESCORT CARRIER

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	7
BP:	185; Large Upgraded Heavy Freighter
SPEED:	6,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Average, +1 Piloting, Turn 2,
FTL:	3 ly/day
AC:	19
TL:	22
HP:	140
CT:	24
SHIELDS:	Light Shields 80 (Forward 20, Port 20, Starboard 20, Aft 20)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Heavy Laser net (5d6, Point +12), Laser net (2d6, Point +10), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK (PORT):	Heavy Laser net (5d6, Point +12)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Heavy Laser net (5d6, Point +12)
ATTACK TURRET):	Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
POWER CORE:	Pulse Prismatic (300 PCU of 359 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Average 3 ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Mk1 Duonode, Mk3 Armor, Mk 5 Defenses, Basic Short-Range Sensors;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Hanger Bays x2
MODIFIERS:	+1 any two checks a round
COMPLEMENT:	20
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+10 Diplomacy (7 ranks), +14 Gunnery (7 ranks), +10 Intimidate (7

PACK CLASS LIGHT CARRIER

ORIGIN:	Sagaren Collective
TIER:	15
BP:	534; Huge Upgraded Bulk Freighter
SPEED:	8,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Poor, -1 Piloting, Turn 3,
FTL:	3 ly/day
AC:	29
TL:	30
HP:	220
DT:	10
CT:	32
SHIELDS:	Medium Shields 160 (Forward 40, Port 40, Starboard 40, Aft 40)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Heavy Laser Net (5d6, Point +12)
ATTACK (PORT):	Heavy Laser Array (6d4, Array), Heavy Laser net (5d6, Point +12), Heavy Anti-Matter Missile Launcher (10d10)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Heavy Laser Array (6d4, Array), Heavy Laser net (5d6, Point +12), Heavy Anti-Matter Missile Launcher (10d10)
ATTACK (AFT):	Heavy Laser Net (5d6, Point +12)
ATTACK TURRET):	Light Laser Net (2d6, Point +10), Light Laser Net (2d6, Point +10)
POWER CORE:	Nova Ultra x2 (600 PCU of 534 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Average 3 ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Advanced Medium-Range Sensors, MK6 Armor, Mk8 Defenses, Advanced SIF, Mk3 Trinode;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Hanger Bays x2
MODIFIERS:	+3 to any three checks a round
COMPLEMENT:	50
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+20 Diplomacy (15 ranks), +25 Gunnery (15 ranks), +20 Intimidate (15 ranks), +20 Piloting (15 ranks), +25 Computers (15 ranks), +21 Engineering (15 ranks)
ENGINEERS:	(3 Officers each with 3 crew) +27 Engineering (15 ranks)
GUNNERS:	(3 Officers each with 3 crew) +29 Gunnery (15 ranks)
PILOT:	(3 Officers each with 3 crew) +26 Piloting (15 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(2 Officers each with 3 crew) +29 Computers (15 ranks)



ranks), +11 Piloting (7 ranks), +14 Computers (7 Ranks), +12 Engineering (7 Ranks)

ENGINEERS: (1 Officer) +12 Engineering (7 ranks)

GUNNERS: (1 Officer, 1 Crew) +16 Gunnery (7 ranks)

PILOT: (1 Officer) +13 Piloting (7 ranks)

SCIENCE OFFICER: (1 Officer) +14 Computers (7 ranks)

The Dealer is a tried and proven model that came into being approximately halfway through the Helix War when it became apparent that the scope of the war made the current numbers of escort carriers insufficient to meet both frontline and rear area requirements, a new design was called for incorporating several newly developed technologies that allowed for more efficient operations, a more durable ship, and larger carrying capacity for strike craft. The Dealer quickly proved its worth both as convoy escort and in several pitched battles. Popular because of its survivability and its ability to launch a full wing of strike craft, the Dealer has become a common sight in the outer reaches of the Alliance and the bane of pirates and raiders.

The Pack class carrier falls into the nebulous area between a full sized fleet carrier and an escort carrier. Lacking the versatility and power of the later, it is a more effective combat machine than the former. The Sagarens often favor this ship as it is fast enough to easily keep up with their light task forces and durable enough to survive in moderately heavy combat. It is often also used as the core of small patrol forces where the power of a fleet carrier would be wasted but an escort carrier would be more of a liability than an asset.

Though normally deployed with at least a light escort, the Pack is fairly capable of looking after itself and aggressive captains often show little hesitation about joining their escorts in pursuit of hostile forces; more than one group of pirates or raiders have jumped one of these vessels expecting an easy fight only to receive a bloody nose from the encounter.

However as with any dedicated carrier, the Pack's real fighting power comes from the two wings of strike craft nestled within. Usually comprising an equal mix of light and medium strike craft the Pack's brood can prove an excellent counter to hostile strike craft and gunboats and so are often tasked either to escort or to long range interception, allowing the heavier strike craft based on fleet carriers to dedicate themselves to strike missions.

A common sight in Collective space, they are one of the military designs the Collective freely exports to outside buyers, though with slightly dated equipment rather than the top of the line equipment used by the Collective itself. Thus this ship can be found turning up in the most unlikely of places and is much favored by mercenary forces in a variety of roles.

FLEET

Fleet carriers typically carry on average three full wings of strike craft plus a wide variety of other auxiliary small craft. Intended to provide a powerful long distance striking power to proper fleets they are fast and powerful vessels, though still not intended for direct conflict with other warships.

STAR DUST FLEET CARRIER

ORIGIN:	Baggalian Empire
TIER:	6
BP:	171; Gargantuan Carrier
SPEED:	4,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Poor, +1 Piloting, Turn 3
AC:	7
TL:	7
HP:	270
DT:	10
CT:	48
SHIELDS:	n/a
ATTACK TURRET):	Laser net (2d6, Point +10), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
POWER CORE:	Gateway Light (300 PCU of 295 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Slow 1 ly/day
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Budget Short-Range Sensors, Mk1 Armor, Mk1 Defense, Mk1 Mononode;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Hanger Bay x2, Shuttle Bay
MODIFIERS:	+1 to any one check a round
COMPLEMENT:	200
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+9 Diplomacy (6 ranks), +10 Gunnery (6 ranks), +9 Intimidate (6 ranks), +11 Piloting (6 ranks), +10 Computers (6 Ranks), +10 Engineering (6 ranks)
ENGINEERS:	(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +16 (6 ranks)
GUNNERS:	(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +16 Gunnery (6 ranks)

PILOT:	(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +17 Piloting (6 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +16 Computers (6 ranks)

The Baggal Empire has never seen strike craft as anything other than a tertiary support unit, and the StarDust carrier reflects that philosophy. Small for a fleet carrier by galactic standards, the StarDust is weakly defended and its facilities for both crew comfort and strike craft handling are well below the standards considered acceptable by most other navies. Faced with any real opposition, and generally given only the sparsest of escorts, the StarDust is highly vulnerable and a prime target for opposing forces. In many cases assignment to a StarDust is seen as punishment duty which does little to help improve their efficiency. Overall a fairly ineffective design it has no outstanding attributes and is widely regarded by both those who serve in them and its opponents to be little better than a death trap.

STABLE CLASS GUNBOAT CARRIER

ORIGIN:	Independent
TIER:	14
BP:	470; Gargantuan Carrier
SPEED:	6,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Poor, +1 Piloting, Turn 3,
FTL 1 LY/DAY	
AC:	26
TL:	25
HP:	330
DT:	20
CT:	48
SHIELDS:	n/a
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Particle Beam Cannon (3d4x10), Linked Particle Beam (16d6)
ATTACK (PORT):	Heavy Laser Array (6d4, Array), Particle Beam (8d6)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Heavy Laser Array (6d4, Array), Particle Beam (8d6)
ATTACK TURRET):	Laser net (2d6, Point +10), Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
POWER CORE:	Gateway Light x2 (600 PCU of 525 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Slow 1 ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Budget Long-Range Sensors, Mk 6 Armor, Mk 6 Defenses, Mk 2 Trinode;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Shuttle Bays x5
MODIFIERS:	+2 to any three checks a round, +1 Piloting
COMPLEMENT:	200
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+17 Diplomacy (14 ranks), +19 Gunnery (14 ranks), +17 Intimidate (14 ranks), +19 Piloting (14 ranks), +19 Computers (14 Ranks), +19 Engineering (14 ranks)
ENGINEERS:	(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +27 (14 ranks)
GUNNERS:	(2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +27 Gunnery (14 ranks)

PILOT: (2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +27 Piloting (14 ranks)

SCIENCE OFFICER: (2 Officers, 10 Crew each) +27 Computers (14 ranks)

The Stable is one of many unique designs produced by the multisystem corporation The Combative Combine. With its distinct triangular head-on profile the Stable is generally considered a cross between a gunboat carrier and a light cruiser. Able to quickly drop a full squadron of gunboats, where most carriers try and avoid combat, the Stable is quick to engage hostile targets directly, using its heavy weaponry to rapidly destroy the raiders, pirates, and smugglers that are its usual opponents. Its gunboats, while not as fast or maneuverable as strike craft, are more heavily armed and capable of independent patrols in a system lasting several weeks which suits the Combine very well as it gives them a relatively cheap and easy way of deploying patrol forces into systems on short notice, the gunboats spreading out and the Stable standing by to respond to any situation that is too difficult for the gunboats to handle.

ASSAULT

Assault carriers are a new concept, and so far only the Alliance has seen fit to put them into limited production after the first operational prototype proved a resounding success. Combining the firepower, speed, and armor of a battlecruiser with the hanger capacity of a large fleet carrier these battleship sized vessels have proven well able to look after themselves on dangerous independent patrol and strike missions. Their inherent flexibility combined with their ability to project large amounts of power suggests that their use will only continue to grow.

ULYSSES CLASS ASSAULT CARRIER

ORIGIN: United Systems AllianceT

IER: 33

BP: 2,372; Colossal Upgraded Dreadnaught

SPEED: 8,

MANEUVERABILITY: Clumsy, -2 Piloting, Turn 5

AC: 45

TL: 49

HP: 750

DT: 30

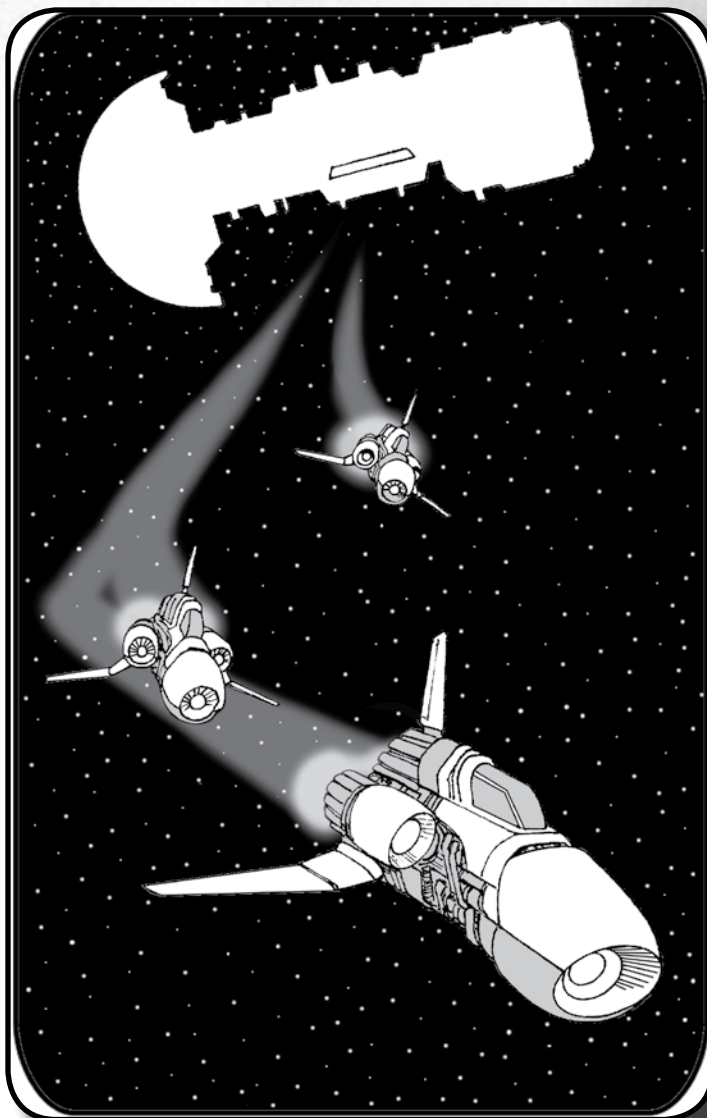
CT: 80

SHIELDS: Superior Shields 600, Superior Shields 600 (backup), Superior Shields 600 (backup) (Forward 150, Port 150, Starboard 150, Aft 150)

ATTACK (FORWARD): GSC (Special), Linked Persistent Particle Beam Cannon (20d6), Linked Supermaser (4d8x10)

ATTACK (PORT): Anti-Matter Mega Missile Launcher (4d10x10), Anti-Matter Mega Missile Launcher (4d10x10), Anti-Matter Mega Missile Launcher (4d10x10), Heavy Laser net (4d6, Point +12)

ATTACK (STARBOARD): Anti-Matter Mega Missile Launcher (4d10x10), Anti-Matter Mega Missile Launcher (4d10x10), Anti-Matter



ATTACK (AFT):

ATTACK TURRET):

POWER CORE:

FTL ENGINE:

SYSTEMS:

EXPANSION BAYS:

MODIFIERS:

COMPLEMENT:

CREW:

CAPTAIN:

Mega Missile Launcher (4d10x10), Heavy Laser net (4d6, Point +12)

Heavy Laser Array (6d4, Array), Persistent Particle Beam (10d6), Heavy Laser net (4d6, Point +12)

Heavy Anti-Matter Missile Launcher (10d10), Heavy EMP Cannon (Special), Heavy Laser net (4d6, Point +12), Heavy Laser Net (4d6, Point +12)

Gateway Ultra x4 (2,000 PCU of 1,785);

Fast 6 ly/day;

Common Crew Quarters, Mk3 Tetra-node, Mk 8 Duonode, Mk10 Armor, Mk15 Defenses, Nightshade Stealth System, Advanced Long-Range Sensors, Super Heavy SIF;

Hanger Bays 5

+8 to any two checks a round, +3 to any four checks a round, -2 Piloting, +5 DC versus Scan

500

+36 Diplomacy (33 ranks), +48 Gun-

ENGINEERS:

ner (33 ranks), +36 Intimidate (33 ranks), +42 Piloting (33 ranks), +48 Computers (33 Ranks), +44 Engineering (33 Ranks)

(4 Officers, 20 Crew each) +52 Engineering (33 ranks)

GUNNERS:

(4 Officers, 20 Crew each) +56 Gunnery (33 ranks)

PILOT:

(4 Officers, 20 Crew each) +50 Piloting (33 ranks)

SCIENCE OFFICER:

(4 Officers, 20 Crew each) +56 Computers (33 ranks)

One of the newest ships to ply the Galaxy, the Ulysses class assault carriers are a new concept, a carrier designed to be able to look after itself without the need for an escort force. The first ship since the Helix War to be built from the keel up with all the most recent technological innovations rather than being refitted or constructed with only a limited selection. Fast, flexible, and well armed, the U.S.A.S Ulysses herself, the lead ship of the class more than proved the validity of the concept during the near war with the Baggal Empire where the actions of its captain and crew time and again proved crucial in protecting the Alliance's interests and eventually bringing about peace. With its critics permanently silenced the class has gone into hi-speed production and looks to become a common sight both within fleets and cruising independently.

The Ulysses class carries an unusual mix of weapons for a ship its size, lacking a number of the larger turret mounted weapons found on battlecruiser sized ships, instead it carries a much larger number of multi-purpose medium weapons that can be used both defensively and offensively backed by a much denser pattern of purely defensive weapons. A heavy missile armament gives the Ulysses the ability to engage its opponents at a range most cannot match. Its forward firepower is unmatched by anything other than a battleship, with a variety of very heavy fixed energy weapons, and most frightening for its opponents, a brand new mark of the feared Alliance Gravic Cannon, capable of completely destroying anything less than a dreadnaught in a single shot, or even cracking a planetary crust from orbit.

However, formidably armed as the Ulysses is, its primary weapon is the waves of strike craft it can disgorge on short notice to tear apart enemy vessels, or slip undetected deep into a hostile system before executing a devastating strike and disappearing again. Alone, or as part of a larger force the Ulysses is a dangerous opponent.

The hallmark of the Ulysses class is flexibility, the introduction of both Alliance and Sagaren technologies have granted it more power, speed, stealth, and stronger defenses than anything else of similar size and grants its captains great diversity in their tactical and strategic choices. An example of the flexibility designed into this class of ship is that an entire deck is reconfigurable to a variety of roles, from mobile hospital, to barracks, to storage, and any number of other combinations, granting the Ulysses class a quick response role to any number of situations that are not necessarily military in nature. Finally, the Ulysses is unusual for a warship of its size of having covered fairings for all its weapons allowing it to assume a streamlined hullform so that it can move through the outer layers of a planetary atmosphere and refuel itself without needing to resort to small craft or cometary refueling. This has allowed the class to deploy for much longer periods of time

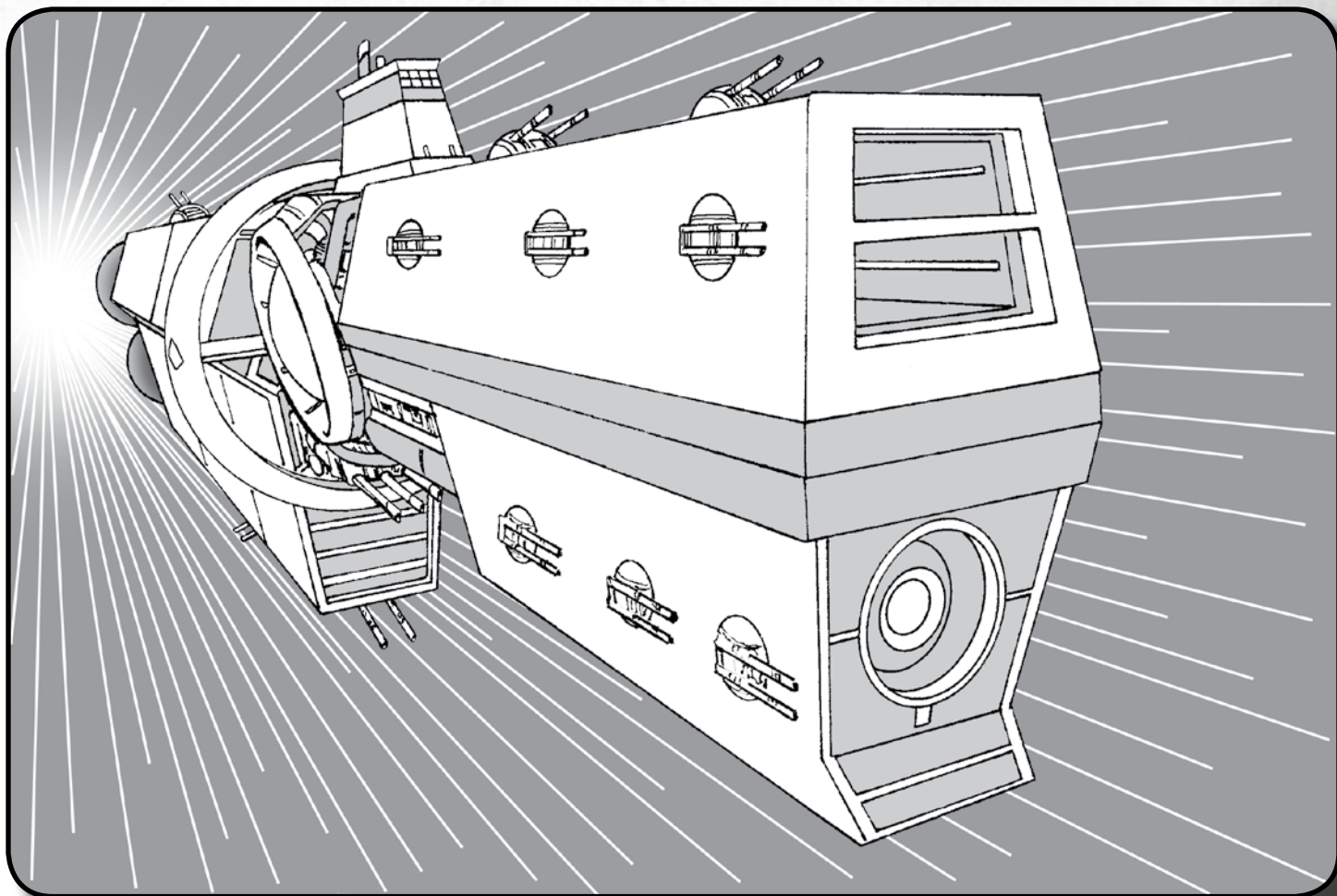
without support than would otherwise be the case as well as before its capabilities became better known to leading many of its opponents to dramatically underestimate its combat ability.

BATTLESHIPS

The mainstay of any real navy's battleline, battleships are large and powerful vessels that are usually used as the primary striking force in any large engagement. Typically disdaining any subtle tactics and boring straight in, relying on their strong shields and heavy armor to survive the enemy's fire while using their heavy armament to batter enemy vessels into submission. They are often used as fleet flagships and even a few of these behemoths can assure victory against an opponent who has none.

WARLORD CLASS BATTLESHIP

ORIGIN:	Baggalian Empire
TIER:	21
BP:	1,122; Gargantuan Upgraded Battleship
SPEED:	4,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Average, +2 Piloting, Turn 4,
FTL:	3 ly/day
AC:	40
TL:	35
HP:	280
DT:	25
CT:	56
SHIELDS:	Medium Shields 120 (Forward 30, Port 30, Starboard 30, Aft 30)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Linked Particle Beam Cannon (6d4x10), Linked Maser (12d10)
ATTACK (PORT):	Linked Super Maser (4d8x10), Heavy Laser Array (6d4)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Linked Super Maser (4d8x10), Heavy Laser Array (6d4)
ATTACK (AFT):	Laser net (2d6, Point +10)
ATTACK TURRET):	Linked Heavy Laser Array (6d4), Heavy Laser Net (5d6, Point +12), Heavy Plasma Torpedo Launcher (5d10)
POWER CORE:	(800PCU of 728);
FTL ENGINE:	Average 3 ly/day;
SYSTEMS:	Common Crew Quarters, Mk13 Armor, Mk10 Defenses, Mk 3 Tetra-node, Advanced Long-Range Sensors, Heavy SIF;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Shuttle Bay x2, Cargo Bay x4
MODIFIERS:	+3 to any four checks a round
COMPLEMENT:	300
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+24 Diplomacy, +31 Gunnery, +24 Intimidate, +29 Piloting, +31 Computers, +27 Engineering
ENGINEERS:	(4 Officers each with 14 Crew) +37 Engineering
GUNNERS:	(4 Officers each with 14 Crew) +41 Gunnery
PILOT:	(4 Officers each with 14 Crew) +39



SCIENCE OFFICER: Piloting
(4 Officers each with 14 Crew) +41
Computers

The mainstay of the Baggalian Royal Fleet, the long sleek Warlord class battleship is one of the most heavily armed warships plying the galaxy. Able to bring an unprecedented amount of firepower to bear there are few ships or stations that can withstand more than a couple of salvos from this behemoth. With thick armor and recently installed first generation shields the Baggalian forces cannot field a unit that is tougher or more dangerous for the enemy. Unfortunately the Warlord suffers from many of the same faults of other Baggalian designs, namely a weak missile armament for its size and weak point defenses. Additionally, the Warlord is notoriously slow and unmaneuverable, allowing smaller craft to work their way to positions much of the Warlord's formidable armament cannot reach. Up until the Empire's brief conflict with the United Systems Alliance, the class held a reputation as being invincible, having never lost a ship to enemy action. The loss within seconds of each other of two Warlords to the U.S.A.S. Ulysses's Gravic cannon along with much of their accompanying fleet was a very rude shock to the Empire and even though much of the event can be attributed to surprise (on both sides) and pure bad luck, it has brought scrutiny to the overconfidence with which this class was previously deployed.

Solely used by the Baggalian Royal Fleet the Warlord is too expensive for most of the Houses to operate, even if they were allowed to do so. Thus it is rarely deployed except on

operations the Monarchy considers crucial to the Empire as a whole and not merely those of an individual House or noble.

DREADNAUGHTS

When a USDF dreadnaught shows up the enemy quickly learns the meaning of the phrase "irresistible force". While even the Alliance is incapable of keeping more than a few dozen of these multi-mile long behemoths operational at any given time, once brought into play their thick armor, heavy shields, and heavier weapons are capable of devastating any number of lesser ships with ease. Relatively slow vessels they are often the flagships of major fleets and the appearance of a fleet with a dreadnaught in it's midst on someone's borders has on more than one occasion quelled a potentially violent situation by its mere presence and the implied threat. At this time only the Alliance is known to operate any of these massive and expensive vessels.

ARMAGEDDON CLASS DREADNAUGHT

ORIGIN:	Alliance
ARMAMENT:	Classified
CREW:	Classified
SMALL CRAFT:	192 Strike Craft, numerous small craft

Massive, ponderous, devastating, all this and more describes the Armageddon, able to single-handedly lay waste to entire systems and their defending fleets there is nothing in the known galaxy short of perhaps a Sagaren Homeship that

could hope to meet one of these monsters on an even basis. Extremely rare even within the Alliance, the mere threat of their employment has been enough to bring about rapid capitulation on several occasions.

Dangerous enough by themselves, they are never deployed without fleets of supporting ships and several of them spear-headed the offenses towards the end of the Helix War that crushed all in their path.

Developed specifically for the Helix War, they are pure warships without much of the utility built into other Alliance designs. They are useful in one and only one role, confronting the enemy and destroying them utterly. While many have suggested mothballing these expensive warships with the end of the Helix War, it has been judged that the deterrent effect alone created by these death machines is well worth operating them and keeping them up to date.

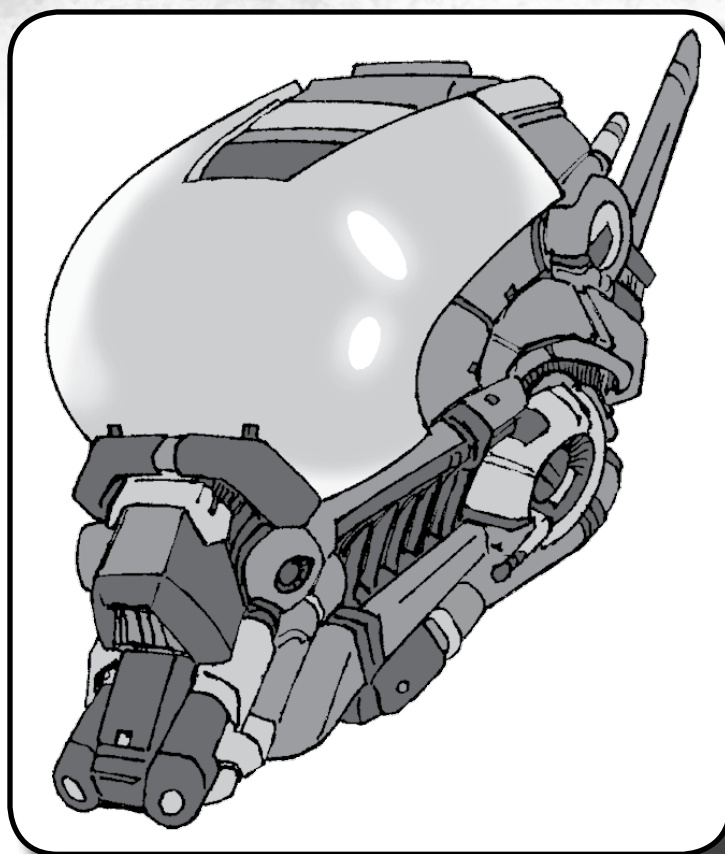
STRIKE CRAFT

Strike craft are small vessels, generally with one to four crewmembers that place great reliance on speed and maneuverability for survival. Used to extend the reach of capital ships and provide a relatively cheap and expendable defense force, strike craft are ubiquitous throughout the galaxy. Individually weak compared to even a true small warship, in sufficient numbers they have the potential to overwhelm and destroy even a dreadnaught.

LIGHT: Light strike craft are primarily designed to defend against other strike craft and to intercept missiles. Only lightly armored (and shielded in the newer models) and generally armed with a few light rapid fire energy weapons as well as a small external missile armament, light strike craft carry extremely limited life support and are the fastest and most maneuverable of all strike craft, but are generally unsuited for strike duties.

LIGHTNING CLAW LIGHT STRIKE CRAFT

ORIGIN:	Sagaren Collective
TIER:	1/2
BP:	43; Tiny Interceptor
SPEED:	14,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Perfect, +0 Piloting, Turn 0,
FTL:	-
AC:	14
TL:	16
HP:	30
CT:	6
SHIELDS:	Basic Shields 20 (Forward 5, Port 5, Starboard 5, Aft 5)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Light Laser cannon (2d4), Light Torpedo Launcher (2d8)
POWER CORE:	Micron Ultra (80 PCU of 77 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	-;
SYSTEMS:	Mk1 Armor, Mk3 Defenses, Mk2 Mononode, Advanced Short-Range Sensors;
EXPANSION BAYS:	-
MODIFIERS:	+2 to any one check a round
COMPLEMENT:	1



CREW:

PILOT:

+6 Piloting, +10 Gunnery (1 rank)

The Sagarens have long held a strong belief in the use of the light strike craft as an effective unit and tend to deploy them in greater numbers than many other races. The Lightning Claw is one of several classes they deploy and the one most geared towards dogfighting. Widely regarded as the fastest crewed ship in the known galaxy the Lightning Claw combines unparalleled speed and maneuverability and in the hands of a skilled pilot is practically untouchable other than through sheer luck. On the downside the Lightning Claw can't withstand more than a few hits from any weapon and its armament is too light to be a threat to anything bigger than another strike craft. However in the role of an interceptor or escort, the Lightning Claw is a very effective craft in skilled hands.

MEDIUM: Medium strike craft generally are the most numerous as they are capable of fulfilling a wide variety of roles with at least acceptable effectiveness. Reasonably armored (and in newer models, shielded) They tend to carry a mix of medium and light energy weapons, often having a rear firing turret and a co-pilot as well as a substantial external missile armament. Generally able to deploy for at least a few days at a time (uncomfortably) if need be, they form the core of the galaxy's strike craft.

WOLVERINE MEDIUM STRIKE CRAFT

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	1/2
BP:	57; Tiny Upgraded Fighter
SPEED:	10,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Good, +1 Piloting, Turn 1
AC:	17
TL:	15
HP:	35
CT:	7
SHIELDS:	n/a
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Laser Net (2d6, Point +10), High Explosive Missile Launcher (4d8)
ATTACK TURRET):	Light Laser Cannon (2d4)
POWER CORE:	Arcus Light (75 PCU of 71);
FTL ENGINE:	-;
SYSTEMS:	Basic Short-Ranged Sensors, Mk 2 Mononode, Mk4 Armor, Mk2 De-fenses;
EXPANSION BAYS:	n/a
MODIFIERS:	+2 to any one check a round, +1 Piloting
COMPLEMENT:	2
CREW:	
PILOT:	+7 Piloting, +8 Gunnery (1 rank)
GUNNER:	+8 Gunnery (1 rank)

The Wolverine stood as the hallmark of Alliance strike craft technology for nearly a century, at the time of its creation it straddled the line between medium and heavy strike craft and was ubiquitous both as the mainstay of the USDF, and in various system navies, and private usage. The Wolverine combined the assets of firepower, durability, speed, and maneuverability into a single vessel that many pilots still consider to be unmatched. Fulfilling many roles the Wolverine was consistently employed in everything from interceptions to strike missions and formed the bulk of the USDF's strike craft forces for the duration of its service. Maneuverable and fast enough to avoid becoming an easy target for lighter strike craft, yet still retaining the firepower and durability to compete with heavier strike craft.

It was only with the introduction through technology exchanges with the Sagarens that resulted in miniaturized powerplants that supplied a great deal more energy and shield generators small enough for strike craft that the Wolverine was finally considered obsolete, it being easier, more economical, and more effective to design an entirely new vessel than to try and once more upgrade the venerable craft.

Yet, the Wolverine continues to soldier on in the ranks of many system fleets, mercenary groups, security agencies across the known galaxy, and even in the USDF as a trainer, now being cheap, plentiful, and still effective. The ease with which it can be customized is also very appealing and numerous variants continue to make themselves known. In the right hands the Wolverine is still considered a match for even more modern strike craft and an opponent to be respected.

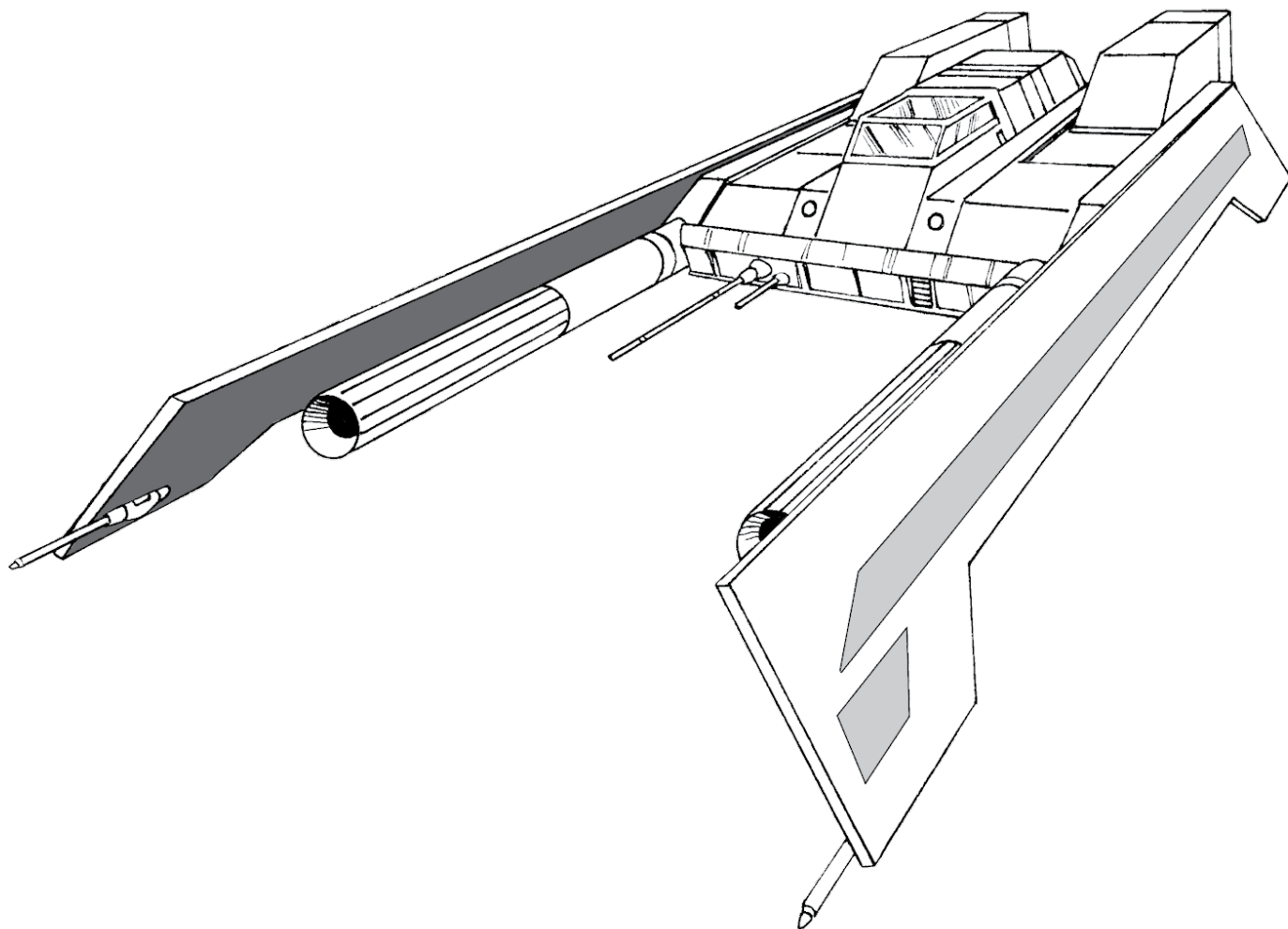
RAZOR RAT MEDIUM STRIKE CRAFT

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	2
BP:	85
SPEED:	15,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Good, +0 Piloting, Turn 1
AC:	20
TL:	17
HP:	35
CT:	7
SHIELDS:	Basic Shields 30 (Forward 10, Port 7, Starboard 7, Aft 6)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Laser net (2d6, Point +10), High Explosive Missile Launcher (4d8)
ATTACK (AFT):	Laser Cannon (2d4)
ATTACK TURRET):	Laser net (2d6, Point +10), Light Laser Cannon (2d4)
POWER CORE:	Pulse Black (120 PCU of 109 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	-;
SYSTEMS :	Basic Short-Range Sensors, Mk5 Armor, Mk5 Defenses, Mk2 Mononode;
EXPANSION BAYS:	-
MODIFIERS:	+2 to any one check a round
COMPLEMENT:	2
CREW:	
PILOT:	+8 Piloting, +10 Gunnery
GUNNER:	+10 Gunnery

The RazorRat is the newest medium strike craft to emerge from the development labs of the Alliance, replacing the long time Wolverine in the ranks of the USDF. The RazorRat outperforms its predecessor in every category and with the addition of shielding has firmly established itself in the space superiority role.

While not in service long enough to have acquired much of a reputation, so far its pilots have been very pleased with it, and it has proven its worth in several small conflicts and looks to continue to keep the USDF in the forefront of strike craft design for the foreseeable future.

HEAVY: Heavy strike craft are slow and cumbersome compared to their smaller counterparts, but they make up for it in firepower. Well armored and shielded, and carrying a mix of light through medium energy weapons with two to three crewmembers and often one or more turrets plus a heavy external missile armament heavies tend to blow through enemy formations on their way to the target rather than dogfight. Generally used for strike duties against small capital ships, heavy strike craft are a threat to any warship stripped of its own strike craft defenses.



VAMPIRE CLASS HEAVY STRIKE CRAFT

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	4
BP:	127; Tiny Upgraded Fighter
SPEED:	8,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Good, +1 Piloting, Turn 1,
FTL:	-
AC:	22
TL:	21
HP:	40
CT:	7
SHIELDS:	Light Shields 50 (Forward 15, Port 12, Starboard 12, Aft 11)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Laser net (2d6, Point +10), High Explosive Missile Launcher (4d8)
ATTACK (PORT):	Micro Missile Battery (2d6, Array)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Micro Missile Battery (2d6, Array)
ATTACK (AFT):	Light Laser Cannon (2d4)
ATTACK TURRET):	Laser net (2d6, Point +10), Light Plasma Cannon (2d12)
POWER CORE:	(140 PCU of 130 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	-;
SYSTEMS:	Basic Short-Range Sensors, Mk6 Armor, Mk6 Defenses, Mk2 Duonode;
EXPANSION BAYS:	-
MODIFIERS:	+2 to any two checks a round, +1

COMPLEMENT:

Piloting

CREW:

3

PILOT:

+11 Piloting, +11 Gunnery (4 ranks)

CO-PILOT:

+11 Piloting, +11 Gunnery, Computer
+11 (4 ranks)

GUNNER:

+11 Gunnery (4 ranks)

The Vampire is hardly an instrument of subtlety, instead it is a mailed fist that shatters the enemy, scattering them and leaving them vulnerable to attack. Designed halfway through the Helix War the Vampire served with distinction on the frontline cracking through heavy defenses time and again, clearing the way for assault strike craft to reach their targets and smaller strike craft to exploit the openings they'd made. Unable to really dogfight, the Vampire has excelled at meeting enemy strike craft and gunboat groups head on and leaving little more than scattered survivors in their wake, even smaller escorts are not safe from concentrated close range strikes. When forced into close combat with smaller strike craft the Vampire has proven to retain enough maneuverability that wingmen are able to provide sufficient mutual support to level the playing field.

ASSAULT: Assault strike craft are the slowest and least maneuverable of all strike craft but their shields and armor are almost the equal of a gunboat's. Where a heavy strike craft is at least expected at times to engage other strike craft and armed as such, an assault strike craft is only lightly armed with

weapons designed for engaging other strike craft and only carries a moderate missile armament, typically biased towards decoys and other counter measure payloads. What an assault strike craft has that others do not are short range weapons nearly capable of matching an actual warship's individual weapons in terms of power. Once in close, assault strike craft are capable of overwhelming most warships and getting inside the effective range of their active defenses.

SHIVA CLASS ASSAULT CRAFT

ORIGIN:	United Systems Alliance
TIER:	6
BP:	174; Tiny Upgraded Fighter
SPEED:	6,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Good, +3 Piloting, Turn 1,
FTL -	
AC:	26
TL:	25
HP:	40
CT:	7
SHIELDS:	Light Shields 70 (Forward 20, Port 15, Starboard 15, Aft 20)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Light Particle Beam (3d6), Tactical Nuclear Missile Launcher (5d8, Ir-radiate)
ATTACK (PORT):	Linked Gyrolaser (2d8, Broad Arc)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Linked Gyrolaser (2d8, Broad Arc)
ATTACK (AFT):	Laser net (2d6, Point +10), Light Particle Beam (3d6)
ATTACK TURRET):	Linked Plasma Cannon (4d12)
POWER CORE:	(150 PCU of 144 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	-;
SYSTEMS:	Advanced Medium-Range Sensors, Mk8 Armor, Mk8 Defenses, Mk 2 Duonode;
EXPANSION BAYS:	-
MODIFIERS:	+2 to any two checks a round, +3 Piloting
COMPLEMENT:	3
CREW:	
PILOT:	+16 Piloting, +15 Gunnery (6 ranks)
CO-PILOT:	+16 Piloting, +15 Gunnery, Computer +15 (6 ranks)
GUNNER:	+15 Gunnery (6 ranks)

The Shiva is slow, clumsy, and quite capable of reducing anything that makes the mistake of getting in front of it to incandescing gas. A squadron of Shivas can destroy a heavy cruiser in only a single pass and even larger ships need to be wary when a group of these lethal craft appear. Easy targets for smaller strike craft, they generally need an escort to survive against such aggressors. However they excel against capital ships and are famous for their infighting tactics, at times almost skimming the hulls of their targets and proving very elusive targets. What they lack in speed and agility compared to other strike craft, Shivas make up in part by carrying shields and armor tough enough to rival a gunboat. Shivas are generally only deployed on in system stations or fleet carriers, being considered too specialized for general deployment.

SMALL CRAFT

Smallcraft are generally defined as vessels which are primarily intended to operate with the support of a base or starship and are generally only capable of in-system travel. Shuttles, runabouts, refuelers, and most workcraft fall into this category. While generally overlooked, no star system could properly operate without them. Most vessels of any size generally carry at least one small craft, and vessels incapable of landing on a planetary surface don't have any option but to carry at least one. Unless a ship is designed with hanger space included most such vessels dock to their mother ship in semi-recessed conformal slots.

TRANSPORT SHUTTLE: A basic carrier of people and cargo, transport shuttles come in a wide variety of designs, but all serve the same essential function, providing transportation services between spaceships and planets as well as other ships and installations. Normally unarmed and unarmored they are not intended for combat but purely administrative duties, and nearly every ship carries at least one of these useful utility craft, and most decently sized ships carry several.

Short ranged vehicles, they normally do not carry more than the most basic of amenities and generally lack more than a few days of life support. Most can carry around thirty to fifty human sized creatures and basic luggage, or have the seats removed or folded away to carry a good deal of cargo, or they can have only some of the seats removed to provide a combination of the two.

Most have at least one personnel airlock as well as a large rear opening cargo ramp and can land on a variety of surfaces without any special preparation. Most spaceports of any size keep at least a few on hand to allow orbital rescues, maintenance, or simply being rented by orbiting ships that have a need.

Many shuttles are also used for short interplanetary trips within a system for movement of both cargo and persons where the use of a full sized starship is either uneconomical or impractical.

LIFTBIG MULTI-ROLE SHUTTLE

ORIGIN:	Independent
TIER:	1/4
BP:	11
SPEED:	6,
MANEUVERABILITY:	Perfect, +3 Piloting, Turn 0;
FTL:	-
AC:	11
TL:	11
HP:	35
CT:	7
SHIELDS:	n/a
POWER CORE:	Arcus Light (75 PCU of 40 max usage);
FTL ENGINE:	n/a;
SYSTEMS:	mk1 Mononode;
EXPANSION BAYS:	Cargo Bays x5, or Passenger Seating x5;
MODIFIERS:	+1 to any single roll a round, +3 Piloting
COMPLEMENT:	1

CREW:

PILOT:

+8 Piloting (1 rank)

The LiftBig is a good example of the many many different models of civilian shuttles plying the spaceways hauling cargo or passengers. Able to swap between passenger hauling and cargo hauling with only a few hours work this shuttle is well liked for its versatility and ease of handling.

COMBAT SHUTTLES: Built along lines similar to transport shuttles, combat shuttles are essentially beefed up shuttle designs, boasting more powerful engines, a more rugged structure, at least minimal armor, onboard weapons, and the ability to carry external ordinance. Typically used for either boarding operations or ground assault, combat shuttles are not designed for space combat or indeed anything more energetic than close ground support. Normally only used by the military and various security agencies, older models can often be obtained by civilians who know where to look, though how combat capable they are likely to remain is up for grabs, especially as most often they are stripped of weapons and other military equipment.

The biggest internal change aside from the additional equipment needed for a combat environment are adjustments so that the shuttle can quickly be refitted to allow the carrying and rapid deployment of loaded combat troops and their gear. Ones intended for boarding actions also come with special equipment to allow burning through airlocks or straight through a ship's or station's hull.

REFUELING TENDERS: Used both by gas extraction stations and ships that expect the need to refuel without existing facilities. They are small streamlined ships that are nearly all engine and holds that are specially designed to withstand the rigors of diving into the upper atmosphere of gas giants while scooping in large quantities of gas that will later be converted within the mother ship. Normally manned by only a single pilot they are not designed to operate independently for more than a few hours at a time and thus lack nearly any amenities. A risky job, even many strike craft pilots look askance at those who take such work.

GIGS/CUTTERS: Even smaller, slower, and shorter ranged than shuttles, these small craft are mostly used for light maintenance duties or moving personnel between nearby ships or stations when actual docking is inconvenient or unnecessary and a shuttle is larger than necessary for the work involved. Regular sights in orbit around any planet with a substantial amount of space infrastructure, such craft are often busy maintaining satellites and with other short range duties. Many specialized versions exist with equipment expressly designed for their designated duties.

SATELLITES

Satellites are common sights throughout space and almost inevitably have been since the earliest days of space flight. Depending on their design and size they can serve a variety of purposes, and in well developed systems they can easily number in the thousands. Satellites can normally be broken down into five types, commercial, residential, industrial, research, and military. Though many might incorporate two or more of these aspects, one is almost always the primary purpose of a given satellite.

While most satellites exist within inhabited systems, others may be more remote, deployed as way stations or research outposts in otherwise uninhabited systems, or providing a base for commercial exploitation; in deep space in the voids between the stars many satellites spend lonely existences as refueling and resupply stops, some completely automated except for those rare times when visited by maintenance crews.

The design of satellite can vary widely depending on their builders, their purpose, and their age. There are satellites thousands of years old still in regular use, many that still rely on rotation for gravity generation and that have had bits and pieces added on over the many generations since their creation. Others are shiny and new, recently built and as advanced as any starship.

Whatever their design, whatever their purpose, satellites have long proven an efficient economical method of conducting business in space, and it seems doubtful they will ever be replaced in this role.

RESIDENTIAL SATELLITES

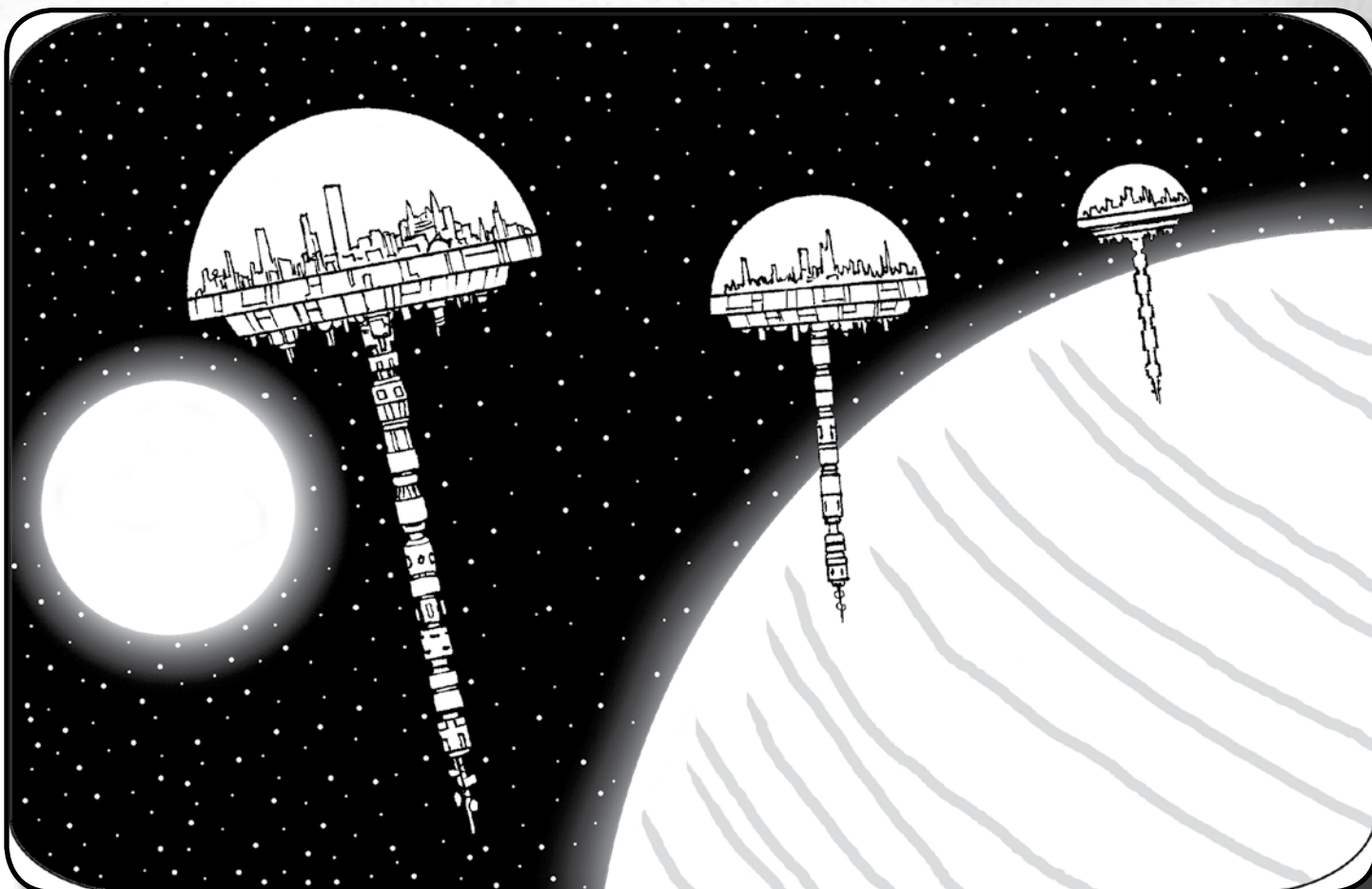
Generally the largest satellites, residential satellites come in all shapes and sizes, from hollowed out asteroids to sprawling domed landscapes. Inhabited with anywhere from a few thousand to millions of inhabitants, residential satellites often contain some degree of industry and commercialism as well. Others are massive pleasure resorts where a person's deepest (or most twisted in some cases) fantasies can be fulfilled as guests busy themselves with eating, carousing, gambling and myriad other pleasures.

In many ways a residential satellite can be viewed as a town or city in space, many having vast tracks of farmland that can take advantage of round the clock sunlight and low gravity areas, others using vast hydroponics farms. Usually the heavier industries associated with such a satellite are buried beneath the outer surface and outgas directly to space. Here too are the receiving areas for bulk goods, separate from those for smaller items and passengers that are usually closer to the surface.

Like cities, the amount of effort and money available to a residential satellite does much to dictate its character, if times get hard a satellite can start a steady downward spiral into disrepair, poverty, rampant crime, and eventually complete failure. Such a structure is a dangerous place and travelers are well advised to steer clear of such satellites.

Generally though the standard of living on a satellite is fairly high, even for those people working what could be considered menial jobs, if only because otherwise the risk of people going mad is far too high.

MONASTERY CLASS HABITATION: The Monastery class space station has been around for many generations and



has undergone little change in that time. Designed specifically for reclusive religious communities the basic Monastery is a very austere design, with little more than the bare essentials to keep its inhabitants alive far from civilization with little to no outside contact; more expensive models can be as elaborate and ostentatious as the grandest of cathedrals.

Regardless of their austerity or lack thereof, the Monastery is entirely self-sufficient with extensive hydroponics farms and recycling systems as well as fabrication systems even at full capacity a Monastery is expected, barring any major disasters, to sustain even its maximum population for at least seventy years without any outside contact. Those that are equipped with small inner-system resource gathering craft able to gather raw material to feed into the fabricators are capable of lasting indefinitely.

As many of these stations are built and inhabited well beyond established borders by people who often have gone out of their way to cut off contact with civilization they are vulnerable to attack by pirates, raiders, and the myriad other dangers lurking beyond the fringes of explored space, the Monastery is equipped with a light defensive armament and an unusually strong SIF field for a residential station.

While many who inhabit these seek to cut themselves off from civilization, others merely seek solitude for contemplation, and more than once a weary traveler has found succor or a brief rest where they least expect it beyond the traveled space lanes.

VAN DER STATION: Van Der Station can be taken as representative of any number of large residential stations

throughout space, no two exactly alike after decades of development and inhabitation.

Van Der station was emplaced in the Van Der system where there was an abundance of resources but no habitable real-estate. A massive endeavor Van Der was less a satellite than a small nation in space. Under massive domes small skyscrapers and tracts of farmland were laid out, and were it not for the ever-present domes overhead one would be hard pressed to know they were living on a planet's surface.

With a permanent population of more than two million Van Der station is a complex and constantly evolving society that has seen both high and low points. Now nestled in a relatively quiet but still busy backwater of the galaxy Van Der station serves as a central hub for its small cluster of stars.

While the surface of the station may appear as if it had been lifted in pieces from a planet and placed under glass, with buildings, farms, roads, and woods (spread out under several connected domes); beneath its surface is where much of the vital work goes on. This area contains the factories that produce the finished goods that form much of the income for the station as well as nearly all the vital machinery that keeps the station running and the inhabitants alive.

While many of its inhabitants live and work on the station others may leave for weeks at a time to gather the resources from the surrounding system which are then brought back and processed into finished goods.

Relatively defenseless, the station and its inhabitants rely on a small military station and its accompanying starships located nearby for protection from outside threats. In turn the military personnel are grateful to have a nearby location where they can spend their leaves in comfort.

Never built for efficiency, Van Der station was intended as a place that would be easy for people who were not necessarily comfortable with living in space to be able to do so, thus allowing a more rapid colonization and exploitation of the Van Der system and the surrounding systems.

APHRODITE CLASS PLEASURE SATELLITE: The ultimate in luxury resort satellites the designers of the Aphrodite class boast it being able to fulfill the desires of any sapient being anywhere, no matter how ostentatious. Staffed by highly trained entertainers of all professions and a bewildering variety of species, visits to an Aphrodite are a privilege of only the super rich. From massages to games of chance or skill as well as more carnal pleasures an Aphrodite offers it all.

While some Aphrodites are located in systems with very liberal views and laws, most are located in otherwise empty systems where the threat of breaking a law are non-existent. Early on in their existence an Aphrodite was taken over by a group of pirates who intended to ransom its patrons for obscene amounts of money. Though the station was eventually retaken since then most Aphrodites have been well protected by hired mercenary groups both internally and externally.

INDUSTRIAL SATELLITES

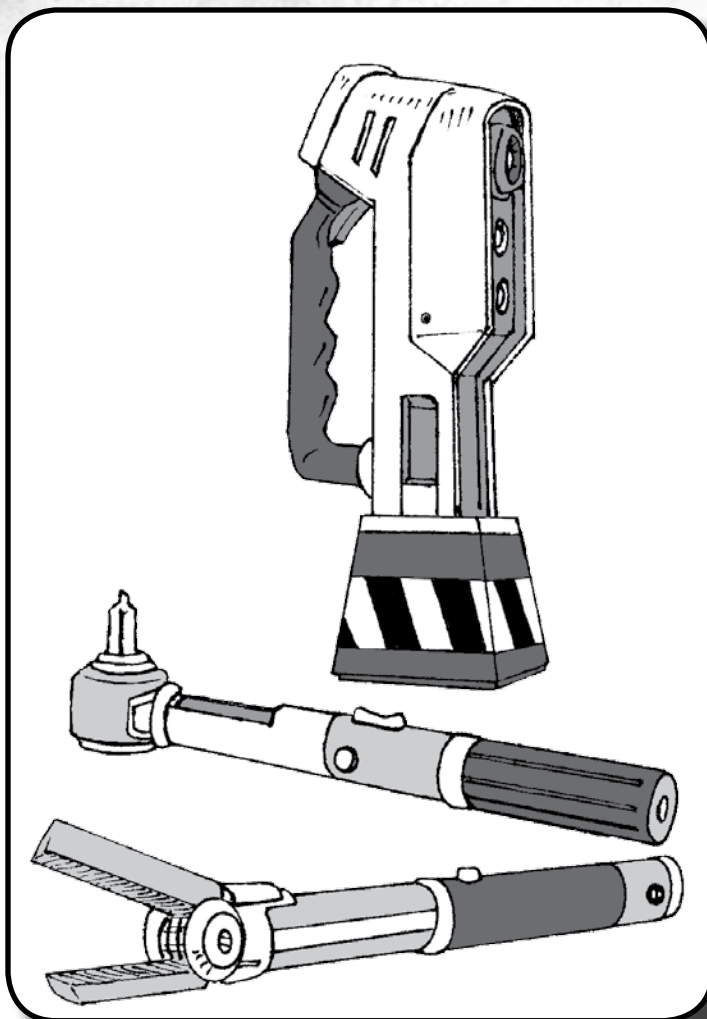
Probably the most common types of satellites in the galaxy, industrial satellites come in all shapes and sizes depending on the resources they are expected to exploit or the materials they are designed to create. Often the space around such structures is filled with a haze of gases and other wastes, around really bad industrial stations there might even be fields of more substantial debris that could prove a threat to small craft. Especially in a well developed system a large portion of its production can come out of these spaceborn factories. Set up to orbit near resource rich asteroids or over gas giants filled with valuable gases, industrial satellites remove the threat of pollution from inhabited planets while allowing the production of many materials that benefit from the effects of micro or zero gravity.

The largest of these structures have to be the ones that are used to build entire starships, whether they use massive nano-fabricators to create smaller ships, or the even larger ones where they are built by skilled workers these massive dock-yards are awe inspiring sights.

Many industrial satellites are vital to their systems' economy and in times of war are prime targets for quick strikes by the enemy and thus are often defended by mine fields and weapon platforms during times of war.

SHIPWRIGHT AUTOMATED FREESPACE DOCK-YARD: The epitome of shipbuilding technology, the Shipwright is the most advanced of the automated shipyards that only really gained in popularity during the Helix War when skilled ship builders were in short supply. The answer was the creation of many automated yards that had before met with much resistance from spacers and workers alike. While only able to build ships up to the size of large destroyers, they freed up desperately needed skilled labor for larger vessels.

Little more than giant nano-fabricators, much like the ones used by some carriers to replace their strike craft but far larger, the necessary amount of material is simply fed in, power is supplied, and within a couple of months a brand new starship slides out ready for space once the few elements of an FTL



drive that can't be fabricated by this method are installed and it is supplied and crewed.

The Shipwright is the most recent variant of one of these dockyards and is faster and more efficient than its predecessors. Almost large enough to build a light cruiser, the Shipwright can produce smaller ships at an astounding rate; frigates, destroyers, couriers, and even if need be, several wings of strike craft or gunboats at a time, come floating out from its massive doors as if off an assembly line. Increased automation and more sophisticated computers have reduced the crew requirements to little more than a dozen full time personnel, and in a pinch it can be run with a quarter of that number. Also, unlike many earlier automated shipyards that required power to be supplied from an outside source, the Shipwright contains a fusion plant powerful enough to meet any needs it might have. An additional advantage of the Shipwright is that it can be broken down for easy transport in just a couple of weeks and reassembled just as quickly, making it easy to quickly move ship production to where it is most needed.

Rarely deployed alone, the Shipwright is often just one of several, all of which are often part of a larger complex or establishment. Growing in popularity despite its initial hefty price tag, while the Shipwright and its cousins are unlikely to ever truly replace the need for skilled ship builders, they will undoubtedly continue to leave their mark in the galaxy.

SIPHON CLASS CONDENSER STATION: An older model station for collecting the atmosphere from gas giants for industrial and commercial use, the Siphon still functions as

an effective and efficient base for such work where it does not face competition from more modern competitors. Little more than a hanger with attached living facilities, a processing plant, and massive armored gas bags a Siphon is hardly a comfortable place, but it does its job of housing and maintaining the little fleet of small craft that are used to collect gas from the atmosphere of the planet it orbits and then breaking it down into its usable components for further refining elsewhere. Many colonies and less developed systems rely on a Siphon to provide necessary materials so that even in this day and age they are a common sight.

WORM CLASS MOBILE REFINERIES: Massive slowly moving processing stations, Worms are mobile processing plants that move through a system consuming asteroids and other cosmic debris, either whole, or a piece at a time if too large to process all at once. Once a Worm begins work, the material consumed is broken up and run through an internal processing plant that separates out the various materials and then refines them to the point that they can be put to immediate use while waste material is ejected out behind the station.

Normally transported in pieces and then assembled within a selected system, Worms are only normally deployed in systems thick with smaller debris, often with few or no planets. Unable to traverse the interstellar void by themselves, even if it were profitable to do so, they are generally serviced by a number of freighters that transport the various materials to wherever the largest profit can be had.

While theoretically the Worms could be entirely automated, in practice they have a small crew with long term residence facilities. Though technically they are there to perform maintenance and handle any emergencies that might arise, more often than not, the crews have little to do other than kill time. As an example, a currently popular novel series has been written entirely by a crewman on a Worm and is up to over a dozen books. Considered easy duty, such assignments are eagerly sought after and more than one person recently out of school or apprenticeship has been assigned to one, the company seeing it as good experience where it is unlikely the services of an experienced crew member will be needed, and the crew member seeing it as a cushy job with good pay for little work.

An intimidating machine to watch at work, many systems rely on Worms for at least part of their raw materials.

COMMERCIAL STATIONS

Commercial stations perform a variety of functions, from trade and repair stations to floating warehouses, communications stations, rest and resupply stops, to resorts of all kinds. Commercial stations litter close orbit around developed worlds and are often the most outerflung of all stations, pressing at the very borders of known space.

Even small system local corporations often own at least one satellite and multi system corporations can own hundreds or thousands not even counting orbital warehouses. By their nature many commercial satellites have a tendency to attract misfits and the seedier elements of society, either as permanent residents or vagrants. Generally more secluded and secure than planets, certain commercial stations are well known as places where no questions are asked about a person's business.

WAYFARER CLASS DEEPSPACE STATION: An aging design, the Wayfarers are rapidly reaching the end of

their useful lives, passed on by not merely by technology, but by changing times that has left them unable to serve their original function. Originally built after one of the explosive expansions the Alliance occasionally undergoes, they were designed to be quickly assembled on the very edge of known space and provide a place for ships to resupply and refuel as well as transship cargo and perform minor repairs. As a cost and maintenance saving measure many parts of their design were intentionally built using obsolete but still functional technology. For example the entire series relied on rotational forces to provide gravity, a fact that made docking with one of the Wayfarer's an interesting experience to say the least.

Because duty at these far flung stations could last for years, accommodations were made so that families could remain together. Far from support, the stations carried a heavy armament for a civilian station at the time and several gave good account of themselves when faced with outside threats.

Many ended up acting as way stops on new trading routes, allowing ships to make passages they otherwise would have lacked the range for; others provided launching points for explorations further into unexplored space. More than one Wayfarer was a site for a first contact encounter, and one had the unwelcome distinction of being the last site of a Gener infestation when a research ship violated quarantine and accidentally unleashed a swarm of lampreys that killed all aboard the station as well as the crews of docked ships, only the greatest of good luck prevented their spread to perhaps dozens of systems. The class has earned a reputation for being places where things happen and more than one entertainment movie or series has starred the venerable stations.

Now however the class is finding itself farther and farther behind the steadily advancing borders of the growing Alliance as ships gain ever longer legs, leaving the aging Wayfarers with little purpose and not enough traffic to cover their operating costs. Already many of the survivors have been disassembled and those that remain with rare exception are likely to soon follow.

SIKAR CLASS TRADING STATION: Typical of many smaller trading stations the Sikar has no outstanding features other than those that are standard on most trading stations. Relatively cheap to construct and operate, the Sikar boasts voluminous hanger bays and storage facilities for its size along with a variety of shops and basic rest and recreation facilities. Sikar stations and those like them are common in areas where trade isn't heavy enough to warrant the larger and more elaborate stations and they primarily service the smaller merchant ships typical of independent captains. They are common sites for deals to be brokered and independent captains can get the latest information on available jobs. Designed for fast efficient servicing (in all meanings of the term) of its clientele the Sikar is no resort but serves the needs of its customers well enough.

Because of the value of such a target and the fact that Sikar stations may be deployed far from help they are well armed to ward off pirates or those thinking to make a quick buck. Conversely, more than one Sikar station has proven a valuable base of operations and warehouse for groups of pirates and raiders.

The Sikar class and its ilk may not be glamorous or share the fame of larger and more impressive stations, but out beyond the developed systems they are vital links that help hold civilization together and allow it to flourish.



MILITARY STATIONS

While many space stations, especially those expected to be placed outside of what can be considered secured space, carry armament, military stations with the partial exception of secured listening posts make their civilian equivalents look positively defenseless by comparison. Bristling with energy weapons, kinetic weapons, and missiles, backed by powerful shields and ECM, military stations are unencumbered by the need for engines and many of the other volume costly equipment needed by warships and thus ton for ton are far more dangerous. Even in peacetime these installations are often surrounded by thick minefields and weapons platforms. While unable to move without assistance, military stations can prove a formidable way of protecting a fixed installation or planet and often take a small fleet of ships to overwhelm. Generally the most cost effective method of removing such a station as a threat is to knock out enough of its defenses to permit boarders to breach its outer skin, but even this is likely to

entitle heavy casualties among both ships and soldiers as many military stations are designed to be easily defended internally and normally have their own garrisons. A well placed series of mutually supporting stations can make anything less than a full scale system assault suicidal and even then they stand an excellent chance of inflicting exorbitant casualties.

Because of this many of the more well developed systems have such stations around their major world or worlds despite the expense involved.

Other stations are more subtle but perhaps even more dangerous to an opponent, military sensor and spy stations are often the center of long networks of stealthed sensor platforms that may radiate over hundreds of light years and can provide vital data. Generally far less well armed than their counterparts, they normally rely on secrecy more than anything for protection.

FORTRESS CLASS

DEFENSE STATION: Larger than a battleship, the Fortress class is considered the pinnacle of defense stations. Armed with enough weaponry to lay waste to a small fleet and backed by several wings of strike fighters, heavy shields, and an entire battalion of soldiers it is formidable enough in itself to discourage most attacks. However due to the cost of emplacing one of these behemoths they are only placed around the most important of targets, and they are almost never

emplaced singly, but in groups that are mutually supporting and interlocked with additional smaller defense satellites, weapons platforms, and in war time, extensive minefields. For the most part only heavily populated and invested worlds of strategic significance warrant such elaborate and expensive measures, but their value has been proved several times over, not merely in giving a secure base to work from, but in repelling invaders, during the Helix Wars on several occasions the Breta system came under heavy attack but at no point did Gener forces manage to force their way into close orbit or assault the planet itself and each time suffered very heavy losses and a couple of times near annihilation.

Perhaps just importantly as their performance when actually engaged is the deterrence effect they have on potential enemies and the mobile forces they free up for offensive operations. Single Fortresses backed by smaller defenses are often emplaced as the centerpieces of Sector Headquarters, granting

the installations a secure base of firepower as well as a fully equipped operations center from which operations throughout the sector can be managed.

Unlikely to be surpassed anytime soon, the Fortress defense stations can be expected to remain operational and continue to be emplaced for the foreseeable future providing protection and security for billions of citizens.

BULWARK CLASS SECURITY STATION: Widely employed, the Bulwark class of security stations are used by a variety of agencies ranging from private corporations to a number of professional militaries. Moderately well armed the Bulwark can serve effectively alone or as part of a larger defense network, but is often deployed independently as a patrol station from which patrolling ships can be deployed throughout a system or close grouping of systems.

Containing an integral wing of strike craft the Bulwark is often emplaced around moderately important targets where it can provide sufficient defensive fire to hold off even small strike groups. The security as opposed to the straight military version of the Bulwark has two additional modules, one containing a large secure holding area for prisoners while the other contains more extensive docking facilities that allow the station to serve a larger number of in-system patrol craft.

Often used where more powerful or complex stations would be wasted or too expensive the Bulwark has long stood as a symbol of security and order in the galaxy.

STALWART ENERGY WEAPON PLATFORM: The Stalwart is a common and relatively inexpensive independently deployed weapons platform that can be found throughout space. Capable of mounting a variety of energy weapons, the most common combinations are two heavy laser cannon, four medium pulse lasers, or a pair of medium particle cannon. Using extensive stealth technology these platforms are often able to remain undetected until they open fire. Used in concert with missile platforms, minefields, and other defenses even a small number of Stalwarts can defend most industrial and commercial installations well enough to discourage attack.

LONGARM MISSILE PLATFORM: Often considered the counterpart to the Stalwart, the Longarm is an independently deployed missile platform that uses much of the same technology found in the Stalwart. Holding twenty medium sized missiles, like the Stalwart, the Longarm can and usually is interlinked with other platforms to provide concentrated fire on a target. Longarms are less frequently deployed than Stalwarts due to the cost of replenishing their ammunition, but when used provide a powerful long range punch the Stalwarts lack.

RESEARCH STATIONS

Research stations tend to be few and far between, but are some of the more interesting places in the galaxy. Deployed around strange space phenomenon for long term study, or over planets of interest, they are often small, lightly manned, and remote from nodal points of civilization.

Manned by dedicated researchers, or simply automated equipment, research stations are where many new discoveries are often made as well as providing the vital surveillance of the heavens for natural dangers such as supernova, stray asteroids, and other cosmic threats. Research stations also scan space for traces of intelligent life, and more than one civilization

has been located after FTL or STL signals were picked up by monitoring stations.

ASIMOV CLASS AUTOMATED SURVEY

STATION: A very old model, the Asimov has spent centuries being dropped off in deep space or in deserted out of the way systems. Uncomplicated, the Asimov carries only a basic assortment of sensors and relies on solar panels and a small fission plant for power. Not intended to make new discoveries, the Asimov is deployed to monitor large swaths of sky to protect against cosmic hazards. Many have been performing their duty effectively for generations with little or no maintenance. Cheap, disposable, and ordinarily forgotten, the Asimov's have saved countless lives by providing adequate warning of incoming disasters, of particular note was the warning one gave of a wandering neutron star that allowed the evacuation of the heavily populated Ghile system, an undertaking that took over a dozen years and a massive investment of resources.

HAWKING CLASS LONG ENDURANCE STATION:

The Hawking is a long term station deployed around specific phenomenon and is manned by a small staff of dedicated researchers. Often highly isolated, Hawking stations are expected to be able to sustain themselves and their inhabitants for no less than five years without outside aid. They are equipped with multiple labs that are normally configured to specifically study the phenomenon in question. Not deployed as general stations, Hawkings are very mission specific and their value is such that they are often well worth the effort to disassemble and then transport to another location once their job is complete. They are equipped with a light armament to discourage pirates from simply showing up and stripping the station bare.

Because of the great length of time these stations are often completely out of contact with the rest of the galaxy they have some of the highest rates of mental breakdowns among their staff that are only partially allayed by the extensive living quarters and recreation facilities.

Some Hawkings are equipped with additional facilities to support small craft for more extensive surveys of local space if necessary, though it is not a standard or even common addition.

While assignment to a Hawking is often eagerly sought due to the opportunities it can present a scientist or researcher, it is generally restricted to those not in a relationship as many can go years without even being able to send or receive messages. Because of their usual isolation, efforts are normally made by USDF ships to visit regularly if located within a patrol area, both to check on their well being, and because such stations often notice activity of interest due to their extensive sensor arrays.

8: VEHICLES

The all new model Wind Rider, the latest in a long line of high end aircars. Whether you want to take the family out for a day of entertainment, embark on a long trip, or simply have a car to commute to work, the Wind Rider is the vehicle for you. Able to reach altitudes unrivaled by its competitors and capable of nearly reaching the speed of sound while its safety rating is unmatched. Get yours now while supplies last.

As much now as ever the galaxy relies on the use of vehicles in both war and peace. They come in all types, sizes, and designs. While many may vary from species to species, most major manufacturers have gone to some lengths to make the personnel sections of their vehicles easily modular so that rather have to build an entirely new vehicle for every single race, they can merely plug in a suitable personnel module.

ARCO CLASS ALL-TERRAIN EXPLORER: A hardy and reliable vehicle well liked by explorers and others who have to regularly brave rough and dangerous or varied terrain the Arco is a mainstay of many expeditions, able to cross nearly any terrain while providing safety to its occupants. Also appreciated is the spacious storage bay for equipment or specimens. For those expecting attacks by hostile wildlife or natives, it can be equipped with a heavy weapon to provide fire support for it's crew.

ARCO CLASS ALL-TERRAIN EXPLORER

Large Land and Water Vehicle (8ft Wide, 15ft Long, 8 ft High)

PRICE:	50,000 Credits
LAND SPEED:	25ft Round, 15 ft, Full 650ft Round, 70 mph
WATER SPEED:	15ft Round, Full 300 ft Round, 30mph
EAC:	20K
AC:	20Cover: Partial Cover
HP:	100 (50)Hardness: 8
ATTACK:	Collision 5d6 (DC13)
ATTACK TURRET):	One Heavy Weapon Up to Bulk 2
MODIFIERS:	+2 Piloting, +6 Attack, (+3 at full speed)
SYSTEMS:	Planetary comm unit, TrackedPassengers: 4
SPECIAL ABILITIES:	

TRACKED: Tracked vehicles ignore up to 10 points to any penalties from moving through difficult terrain due to the extra traction and control provided.

SKYHEART CIVILIAN GROUND TRANSPORT

VEHICLE: Despite its unglamorous title, the Skyheart series of family cars is a good representative of most of the mid-sized family vehicles in production and use throughout the known universe. Running off a hydrogen fuel battery the Skyheart is durable enough for use even in fairly rural settings, though not for off road travel. Reasonably priced, able to seat up to six human sized passengers, and with a Class II personality that

can navigate the vehicle on or off an integrated traffic network, the Skyheart is a vehicle for the everyday person.

LIFELINE LONG RANGE CARGO CARRIER:

Designed for long range cargo transfers on planets without the series of small commercial aerospace ports that many more developed worlds rely on, the Lifeline is a heavy duty anti-grav transport train comprising of at least one engine and several cars, but can add additional engines for pulling even more cars and full trains of several engines and hundreds of cars are not unknown. The Lifeline uses a Class III personality that helps the crew monitor the status of each engine and car and each engine holds crew quarters for up to three separate shifts. Its use of antigravity and a powerful fusion plant in each engine allows the Lifeline a great degree of movement over completely undeveloped terrain as long as it is relatively flat. Various versions can be produced for worlds with different types of hostile environments, and there is even a military version that incorporates light armor and integrated weapons cars. Because of its relative economy of use for the amount of cargo used, the Lifeline is highly popular with large corporations that may have a large number of operations scattered over an otherwise undeveloped or uninhabited world, picking up raw materials and placing them in cargo cars emptied of necessary supplies.

BLOODHOUND SECURITY VEHICLE: The Bloodhound is a popular vehicle in use with both police and various security organizations around the known galaxy. Equipped with a secure holding chamber, a large amount of detection and investigative gear, and armored well enough to provide protection against most civilian grade weaponry, it provides a secure base of operations for police or security personnel to perform their duties. Typically holding two officers the Bloodhound is capable of running down most civilian vehicles and is equipped with a pair of short range EMP fixed cannon mounted into the front of the vehicle for disabling fleeing vehicles. On some worlds where police forces use more draconian force these cannon are often replaced by more lethal hardware. Using recessed and armored lift fans the Bloodhound can operate up to several thousand feet in the air and thus is capable of not merely patrolling groundside, but at altitude.

(See: Police Cruiser, PG 229 of the Core Starfinder Rulebook)

GROUND STALKER MAIN BATTLE TANK: The Ground Stalker is widely regarded as a formidable and dangerous opponent whose 15cm Multi-purpose Guass Cannon is capable of destroying any opponent it might meet on the battlefield. Its secondary 4cm Legion Heavy Assault Cannon is in itself more than capable of eliminating most targets. Further armed with machine guns and HVM missiles the Ground Stalker is king of the battlefield. While some consider it somewhat obsolete due to using treads instead of lift fans as well as some less than cutting edge technology, these are actually considered features, greatly reducing maintenance requirements and increasing reliability, key factors

A BRIEF NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

Most of the items in this section were developed long before the title "StarFinder" was ever heard yet can still be easily connected to existing items in the Starfinder Core Book. The descriptions are provided here both for the convenience of the reader and to give you a more detailed idea of their context in the StarSea Universe. For the purposes of saving space the few needing further elaboration will have their basic statistics added at the end of their entry.

for units that can expect to be operating far from established supply bases. Thick armor is backed by a SIF that is among the heaviest deployed on a ground vehicle and allows it at least a chance to survive hits even from weapons as heavy as its own main armament. Powered by dual hydrogen engines, the Ground Stalker's range is practically unlimited with the use of a built in fuel cracker that allows it to refuel anywhere water can be found in any form.

With all these features it is little wonder that it is widely used by the Alliance's Strikers as well as many planetary defense units within the Alliance.

GROUND STALKER MAIN BATTLE TANK

Huge Land Vehicle (10ft Wide, 20ft Long, 15 ft High)

PRICE: Not Available on Open Market
SPEED: 25ft Round, Full 650ft Round, 70 mph
EAC: 40K
AC: 40Cover: Total Cover
HP: 200 (100)Hardness: 20
ATTACK: Collision 10d10 (DC 17)
ATTACK TURRET): 15cm Gauss Cannon 5d10x5 20ft radius, or 7d10x5
ATTACK (AX TURRET): Legion Heavy Assault Cannon (5d10x2) x3
ATTACK TURRET): StarSong Missiles (7d10x7, ammo 2) x4
ATTACK (TURRET) [CX]: Karalane Rockstorm (6d8 single, 12d8 Burst)
MODIFIERS: +2 Piloting, +6 Attack, (+3 at full speed)
SYSTEMS: Planetary comm unit, TrackedPassengers: 4
SPECIAL ABILITIES

TRACKED: Tracked vehicles ignore up to 10 points to any penalties from moving through difficult terrain due to the extra traction and control provided.

CO-AX: A co-ax weapon is mounted alongside another larger weapon and by taking a -2 to each attack may make an additional attack at the same target as the main weapon.

HARDSHELL ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER:

Considered the compliment to the Groundstalker main battle tank, the Hardshell uses many of the same components and carries nearly as much armor, in fact using the same powertrain, intended not only to carry an entire squad of

Powersuited strikers, or, more typically, a squad of Strikers in combat armor and a support weapon section, but to remain near the front in a support function to the infantry. Others are set up to be able to deliver critical supplies to the front-lines even under heavy fire, or to act as battlefield ambulances. Many chassis have been produced mounting a variety of weapon outfits and special equipment, everything from providing dedicated air-defense to tank killer versions armed with heavy HVM suites. Typically though the Hardshell is armed with a turret mounted 4cm Legion Heavy Assault Cannon and dual quad racks of StarSong missiles in addition to a co-axel machine gun and an automatic grenade launcher mounted on a ring mount on the commander's turret, it is often considered a light tank in its own right.. Reliable and well liked, the Hardshell is used not only by the Alliance, but by a large number of organizations throughout the known galaxy.

HARDSHELL PERSONNEL CARRIER

Huge Land Vehicle (10ft Wide, 20ft Long, 15 ft High)

PRICE: Not Available on Open Market
SPEED: 25ft Round, Full 650ft Round, 70 mph
EAC: 40K
AC: 40
COVER: Total Cover
HP: 200 (100)Hardness: 20
ATTACK: Collision 10d10 (DC 17)
ATTACK TURRET): Legion Heavy Assault Cannon (5d10x2) x3
ATTACK TURRET): StarSong Missiles (7d10x7, ammo 2) x4
ATTACK (TURRET) [CX]: Karalane Rockstorm (6d8 single, 12d8 Burst)
MODIFIERS: +2 Piloting, +6 Attack, (+3 at full speed)
SYSTEMS: Planetary comm unit, TrackedPassengers: 15

SPECIAL ABILITIES

TRACKED: Tracked vehicles ignore up to 10 points to any penalties from moving through difficult terrain due to the extra traction and control provided.

CO-AX: A co-ax weapon is mounted alongside another larger weapon and by taking a -2 to each attack may make an additional attack at the same target as the main weapon.

NEW VEHICLE PROPERTIES:

TRACKED: Tracked vehicles ignore up to 10 points to any penalties from moving through difficult terrain due to the extra traction and control provided.

CO-AX: A co-ax weapon is mounted alongside another larger weapon and by taking a -2 to each attack may make an additional attack at the same target as the main weapon.

9: TECHNOLOGY

She flipped the switch and nodded approvingly at the subsonic vibrations that grated on her back teeth as the security fence/bug repeller activated, securing the campsite for the night. The small solar powered fabricator dinged as it produced the evening's meal, a panel sliding open revealing a standard issue military ration, not fancy, but the pattern was cheap and easy to obtain. The sampler continued to beep away as she ate, analyzing the day's samples, maybe she'd strike pay dirt finally, or maybe she'd have to try and find yet another promising site.

Technology is the backbone of the Starsea Universe, whether as blatantly obvious as the powerful drives that throw starships across the galaxy, or as subtle as the computers that quietly run much of the aspects of everyday life from behind the scenes, technology is the foundation upon which all else rests. Constantly evolving and expanding technology is having a greater and greater effect as time goes by, and there are those who believe that being able to alter fundamental aspects of the universe is not far out of the grasp of civilization in the near future. Whether found in the hands of everyday people, or those individuals who have a greater effect upon the course of events, technology in its many and varied forms is all prevalent and has an affect upon nearly every aspect of existence in the Starsea Universe.

AI'S

True AI is extraordinarily rare and difficult to produce and thus is usually purpose built for specific tasks, only the largest corporations or wealthiest governments can afford to create significant numbers of these beings. However there are numerous lesser grade of computer "intelligence" and many can pass successfully as fully independent beings without specialized and exhaustive testing.

CLASS I

Class I personalities are some of the most pervasive in society, they are also very basic with only minimal capability to function outside of very specific parameters. They are most commonly found in small household appliances and personal equipment.

CLASS II

Class II personalities are still relatively restricted in their capabilities but are expected to be able to react to changing circumstances and conditions. Many civilian vehicle computers are perhaps some of the most common examples of everyday Class II personalities as the need to react to outside stimuli is beyond the ability of a Class I personality. Class II personalities are also common in personal home computers, a limited ability to learn and broadly interpret data making them far more efficient than their distant ancestors in meeting the desires of their uses in quick efficient manners.

CLASS III

Class III personalities are typically where the primary operating program reaches a complexity that it might reach the point at which it could be mistaken for an actual person, though one that would seem somewhat slow and socially inept. Far more flexible than even a Class II, a Class III is actually capable of taking limited independent action outside of its primary instructions and is thus favored in situations where there is limited or no oversight by an actual person as they have a capacity to deal with limited emergencies or unexpected events. Class IIIs are also often installed on ships where there is either a limited crew or the owners wish for a ship that can almost run itself.

CLASS IV

Class IV personalities are highly complex and nearly incapable of being discerned from an actual person without extensive testing. Highly independent and capable handling even complex situations without oversight, a Class IV can easily run an entire starship with only slightly less efficiency than a full and experienced crew and at times can seem to display more initiative than even many actual people. Most large Alliance warships use a Class IV as the basis of their computer systems though they are rarely given full control except in the most dire of circumstances. Class IV's are the current pinnacle of non-AI computer technology and only the inability to achieve truly intuitive thought prevents them from being considered full fledged AIs. Despite this, their processing capabilities are such that they often give the impression of being able to make use of intuitive thought.

CLASS V

Class V personalities are fully autonomous and it is only recently that they have been produced with any real success. While rights, privileges, abilities, and usage varies from place to place, generally created AIs are expected to serve their creators for a certain period of time as repayment for the expense of their development and to get used to the complexities of biological cultures. After which they are free to either continue their employment or find their own path. So far there is no known limit on their potential and it remains to be seen what will become of the older ones as they continue to develop.

MEDICAL

Medical technology has reached a high peak and in most areas, as long no serious damage is done to a person's brain and they are gotten to even basic medical facilities within a reasonable amount of time there is an excellent chance for full recovery. Emergency medicine is able to allow even people with the most perfunctory training to stabilize critical cases as long as the equipment is available.

These days it is almost unheard of for a doctor or surgeon to actually have to slice someone open and nearly all surgery is able to be performed in a noninvasive manner. While

CYBERNETIC AUGMENTATION (MEDICAL NANITES)

Cost: 5,000 civilian, 50, 000 Military

Level: 5

Effect: Basic Civilian Models add a +5 to all heal checks performed on the owner and grant a +2 to checks to resist Disease or Poison. Additionally, the character may burn 2 Resolve Points to immediately try and Stabilize.

Military Models add a +10 to all heal checks performed on the owner and give +5 to all checks to resist Disease or Poison. Additionally the character may burn 2 Resolve Points to automatically stabilize or attempt to heal a number of Hit Points equal to their character level plus Constitution modifier.

not having removed the need for doctors and other medical personnel, advanced medical technology has allowed fewer medical professionals to treat more patients more effectively.

NANITES: Medical nanites are one of the most common and pervasive types of medical technology, but are the ones most often overlooked or taken for granted. Implanted at a very early age they subsist off nutrients, minerals, and the heat energy given off by an active body. In return they help repair genetic code that may deteriorate, eliminate cancerous cells, remove harmful substances from the body, clear arteries, attack harmful diseases, carry oxygen to vital organs even if bloodflow should slow or stop, and speed healing after injury. Perhaps the most useful feature though is their ability to rapidly stop bleeding from even severe wounds, greatly increasing the amount of time a person can survive until help can reach them. Generally civilians carry less comprehensive nanite suites while military personnel have theirs upgraded upon enlistment to better handle massive trauma, potential bioweapons, poisons, and other hazards that most civilians rarely need to worry about.

Performing surgery on a person with a medical nanite suite requires the use of specific chemical mixes that the nanites are designed to recognize and temporarily shut down upon detection of, otherwise they would be actively working against much of a surgeon's efforts.

Medical nanites have probably single handedly saved more lives than all other medical inventions in history combined, either in response to direct trauma, or simply through eliminating any number of natural problems that otherwise would lead to premature death. While not able to stave off death indefinitely, they allow people to live much longer and more comfortable lives than they could otherwise.

BINDER: A useful piece of any medical kit, binders are devices designed to pull two pieces of skin together before sealing them, thus closing open wounds. Naturally this is limited by the stretchiness of the skin in question and the size of the wound that is being worked on. While other things (nanites prime among them) are used to stop bleeding, a binder helps insure that further damage is not done and helps speed the removal of scar tissue.

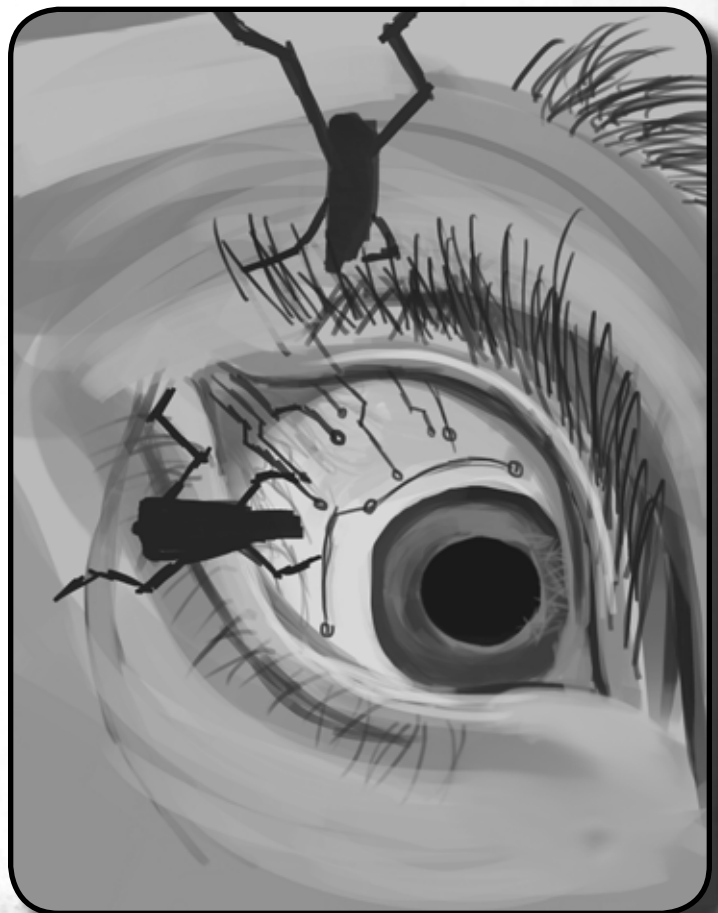
BIOFOAM: Biofoam is the tool that no medic, field soldier, first aid kit, or ambulance should be without. Injected directly into a wound from pressurized cans it expands and semi-hardens quickly into a substance that inhibits bleeding and provides many of the materials needed help a body and its nanites begins repairs. Almost any wound, be it in the abdominal cavity or a limb can be almost instantly filled and sealed with Biofoam. Even a person without any medical training or knowledge is easily able to use Biofoam as a person simply

puts the nozzle into the wound and depresses the button until the wound fills.

QUICK SKIN: Under a variety of names, quick skin is a readily available civilian product. Simply sprayed on over a shallow cut or wound, the substance quickly acquires many of the qualities of actual skin, preventing infection and sealing over a wound to allow rapid healing. Quick skin comes in a variety of colors and textures to cover a range of species and skin types, though those included in emergency packs are usually some bright color to allow emergency crews to quickly identify injured areas. While not as vital as biofoam, quick skin is probably more commonly used in day to day life.

Using Quick Skin is a full action and restores 1d4 hit points instantly and grants a +1 to the next Heal Check

REGENERATION TANKS: Literal lifesavers, regeneration tanks are well known for being able to save a person so long as there is even a hint of life left in them, assuming that the brain has not been severely damaged. Once a person is dumped into a regen tank all their vital functions are taken over by the medical nanites that allow the tank to do its work as the person



is rendered comatose. A bad wound can normally be repaired in an hour or so, limbs can be regrown in the space of several hours, and even a body almost unrecognizable as such can be brought back to full health after day or so.

While originally regen tanks required a doctor to monitor them at all times, modern regen tanks can all but operate themselves, only needing the patient to be lowered into them and the tank activated. At that point a computer analyzes the patient, compares it to a database containing information on thousands of different species, and then begins treatment, stopping bleeding, removing scars, even replacing limbs and organs. This has made regen tanks godsend to people such as EMTs, ER doctors, and battlefield surgeons and medics as it gives them an ability to rapidly and safely stabilize large numbers of injured persons. A common technique in cases where the patients outnumber the available regen tanks is to place them in the tanks only long enough to stabilize them before placing someone else inside. Many ships that are likely to find themselves far from help also carry at least one of these devices, using them in place of a fully trained doctor. Even poor colony worlds often manage to scrape enough together to insure that at least one of these is available.

While doctors are still very necessary to handle all the things that do not require what is the modern day equivalent of surgery, regen tanks have in large part allowed them to focus more on their patients needs, and to watch over larger numbers of patients. For bad, but less than life threatening injuries, smaller versions of the tanks that can be wrapped around a limb or appendage are generally used.

Unfortunately a side effect of regen tanks is that occasionally there are people who suffer violent reactions to the regeneration treatment and can even die if not removed and seen to by a doctor quickly enough.

Continually refined and improved, regen tanks are a medical staple for emergency care and can be credited with saving innumerable lives since their invention.

POWER

With all the technology in the galaxy, almost none of it would run without sufficient power being supplied. Since even before the days of spaceflight or even industrialization available power has long been an indicator of the success and technological ability. The more power available, the greater the advantage a civilization has in its struggle to survive. Modern society has a variety methods to generate levels of power that would stagger the imagination of people in the past. A brief description will be given here of the most common forms of modern power production and their usages.

SOLAR POWER: Solar power has long been used in space where it is far more efficient than on a planetary surface at the same distance from a light source. The primary means of power in early space exploration and a vital auxiliary power means for centuries longer. Largely unused in modern times due to the availability of much cheaper, more powerful, and reliable energy producing methods, solar power still occasionally finds use in smaller portable devices, and a number of recharging devices for explorers and soldiers for use out in the field rely on high efficiency conversion panels for solar power. Small outlying settlements may use solar power to meet part or all of their needs on worlds so undeveloped that running



power out to them from a more central source is impractical. An even rarer application is use by intelligence vessels as a passive power source for the bare essential systems when extreme stealth is necessary.

HYDROPOWER: Surprisingly enough hydro power is still a relatively common form of power generation. Hydro power is normally employed where steady power is necessary but with little call for high demand, many smaller communities on more rural worlds that have access to an appropriate water source rely on hydropower as a form of power generation that is efficient and easy to maintain with local resources. The typical reservoir that generally forms behind a hydropower station has its uses as well. Some more developed worlds use larger hydropower stations as emergency backups as they can normally be relied on to be running after many disasters that might well knock out power from more modern sources.

Not greatly improved except in terms of efficiency from earlier versions, hydropower occupies a small but crucial niche in modern society and is often one of the first power sources constructed by colonists.

COMBUSTION: Combustion as a source of power is almost unheard of as a standard form of power generation, even on the most primitively furnished of newly founded colonies. Dirty, inefficient, maintenance intensive, and a multitude of other issues leave combustion a poor second to practically any other power source that might be used. Thus combustion is normally only found on worlds that have yet to reach the stage technologically of being able to exploit better power sources.

GEOTHERMAL: Many worlds have highly active volcanic systems, and where this is the case geothermal power is often

very widely used as a cheap, safe, and efficient means of power that is highly resistant to being disabled through accident or misfortune. Even where it cannot be used as a standard source of power, isolated areas might well use it. While geothermal power cannot compare to the amount of energy a large fusion plant can provide, a decent geothermal system can easily meet the normal demands of even a large metropolitan area. A useful side effect is that in many cases the steam produced by the geothermal powerplants can be condensed and then processed into hydrogen that can be used to power back up or primary fusion plants.

WIND POWER: While no longer in standard usage, wind power in greatly evolved form still continues in usage both to provide power to isolated outposts and in special instances special high speed turbines are used on dangerously windy worlds as a primary power source. Otherwise wind power has been found to be too intermittent, resource, and land intensive for economic use when other much more efficient forms of power generation are available with the exception of a few worlds where integrative wind power technology makes it feasible as it is part of the overall infrastructure.

FISSION POWER: The controlled splitting of the atom is one of the major breakthroughs when it comes to power generation, especially once the earliest versions are refined for efficiency and safety. Relatively cheap and plentiful power, the ability to miniaturize them often made them the power sources of choice for early space travel, manned and unmanned. Even once space travel becomes more common straight fission power is generally a standard, initially being cheaper and smaller than early versions of cold fusion. This expansion of fission power is generally assisted by both the fact that disposal of radioactive material is greatly simplified when it can be dumped into the sun, and the fact that many systems contain a fair amount of radioactive material that can be easily mined and refined. The greatest downsides to fission power end up being the amount of needed shielding and the fact that much simpler and more efficient systems of generating power are evolved as technology improves, and thus it is rarely used in the modern day, the major exception being the deepspace FTL Communication Satellites which use fission power to continue running for hundreds of years without the need for refueling. Of course the tendency to spread radiation when damaged, even when most designs had evolved past the point of the danger of a meltdown, made people keep a wary eye on them at the best of times, and in combat a runaway reactor with safeties disabled due to damage was every engineer's worse nightmare.

For a long time fission weapons were the primary warheads of starship missiles, and the glares of nuclear fire and the horrors of radiation sleeting through a ship were long accepted parts of space combat until the advent of anti-matter weapons which in addition to being far cleaner are far more powerful, leaving fission weapons obsolete in modern combat.

FUSION POWER: Cold fusion was long considered the holy grail of energy production, safe, clean, efficient, and cheap, many races spent centuries after the practical applications of fission power were widespread trying to develop practical fusion power before achieving success. Even today varieties of fusion power are the mainstay throughout the known galaxy, powering planets, stations, and starships. The most common form runs off of hydrogen either extracted from

gas giant planets or cracked from water and ice. However many fusion plants are designed to run off just about anything that can be shoveled in, simply running the most efficiently off of pure hydrogen. This has an added advantage for starships as hydrogen can be obtained in almost any system, in the form of cometary ice that can be broken down via a cracking system if nothing else, which means a ship rarely needs to worry about running out of fuel, though refueling, especially for larger vessels can take up a great deal of time if proper fueling facilities are not available.

Even more than the simplicity of operation and its efficiency, the primary outstanding virtue of cold fusion is safety. While more powerful forms of power generation are in fact available, they all carry inherent dangers, where it has been repeatedly proven that even subjected to sudden massive damage all a fusion planet does is cease to work, no explosions, no release of harmful substances, and even in normal operations there is no harmful bi-products.

ANTI-MATTER: Anti-matter as a power source has long gone in and out of favor. Without a doubt it is the most efficient and powerful source of energy available, a small amount of anti-matter properly used can power even the largest of space faring vessels for great distances. Because of this, ships using anti-matter engines don't require the large bunkering space needed by ships relying on fusion power. Of course the downside to this is that anti-matter power plants are notoriously temperamental and accidents are rarely minor when it comes to anti-matter.

In fact anti-matter is so powerful that the only place it consistently finds use is in starship missiles, as even a minor anti-matter explosion on a planetary surface qualifies as a major disaster. Further, anti-matter is devilishly difficult to produce and transport, and the difference between the minor amount needed to power even an armory of missiles and that needed to run a starship for an extended period of time greatly increases the hazards involved.

While some races still use anti-matter as a common power source, finding the power it provides an acceptable trade off for the risks in certain situations, the majority of the known galaxy has relegated it to the role of a weapon of great destruction.

GENERAL USAGE

There are a variety of technologies that are used in day to day life, and are so commonplace as to be hardly thought about most of the time. These are the technologies that form the basis of civilization, that allow food to be produced and harvested, minerals mined, and things to move around.

ANTI-GRAVITY: The term Anti-gravity is something of a misnomer as the technology behind it does not actually repel gravity, but manipulates magnetic fields to produce a repulsive force that can be used to levitate objects, even starships, above the ground without actually having to touch down. Used in everything from cargo pallets to starships, anti-gravity is widely used, and very energy efficient. Its greatest problems are that its effectiveness relies on a corresponding magnetic field to push against, making it of limited utility on planetoids without a strong magnetic field, secondly, while it may allow something to hover over a rough surface, many vehicles lack generators powerful enough to lift them over such obstructions. Another thing to consider is that while anti-gravity

may temporarily remove the weight of objects, they retain their mass, making moving large containers or objects around a very dangerous business. Overall though anti-gravity is a highly useful technology that has greatly increased everyday efficiency.

FABRICATORS: Ubiquitous, fabricators form much of the foundation of modern civilization. By using nanobots, fabricators can take practically any raw material and break it down to its atomic level if necessary before reassembling it into the desired product. The two largest drawbacks to fabricators is the sheer amount of power required for any sizeable conversion, and the fact that items that are sensitive to energy fluctuations during assembly cannot be created as the energy radiated to power the nanites causes unacceptable distortions. This is particularly true of many of the more sensitive components that make up FTL systems of all types.

However despite these drawbacks fabricators are widespread, ranging from small units carried by individual soldiers or explorers to the massive shipyards that can turn out entire ships. Most ships carry fabricators at least large enough to turn out a supply of many kinds of spare parts if something should break or be destroyed, and many larger carriers often mount fabricators big enough to create entire strike craft.

Because they use nanites, and of the potential for all kinds of accidents or deliberate misuses fabricators of all sizes come with a great number of safe guards, above and beyond those normally imposed on nanite technology. Considered a bare minimum are scanners designed to make sure that the fabricator cannot operate while there is anything alive within its confines.

While fabricators can use just about any available material, it is far more energy efficient and much less time consuming to use materials of the needed type or similar in composition to what is required in the finished product. Most fabricators come with a number of preset items they can produce depending on their primary purpose, but all can have additional ones added or run off installed chips.

Unfortunately fabricators can only mass produce items, and thus for true craftsmanship people must still rely on individual craftsmen, and in many fields they are still trusted over the soulless fabricators, this is still especially true when it comes to ship construction in which fabricators have only recently began to find purchase.

INERTIAL GENERATOR: The name inertial generator is something of a misnomer as this piece of vital technology is not really a generator at all, but more of an energy absorption and release device. Used by starships, when combined with SIFs, inertial generators allow them to perform maneuvers that it would seem physics should disallow. In simple terms an inertial generator absorbs the force represented as inertia exhibited by a vessel and then releases it in another direction. This means rather than having to fight inertia when maneuvering, the majority of a ship's energy can go towards acceleration. The problem with inertial generators is that as a vessel increases in size, so must the inertial generator, even as its efficiency decreases. Thus larger vessels, and vessels lacking top of the line inertial generators are slower than smaller or more advanced craft. As an example, many gunboats, the smallest craft to generally carry full sized inertial generators, can rotate one hundred-eighty degrees and change direction within

their own length while a battleship can take several seconds to perform the same maneuver.

Strike craft and other small vessels rely on smaller and less efficient inertial sumps that fail to completely absorb the difference caused by rapid changes of direction and instead focus on providing a degree of protection to the crew and any passengers against the massive g-forces that are formed by high speed changes of direction most often found in dogfights or combat maneuvers.

The failure of an inertial generator can be fatal as even the slightest change of direction at the speeds normally traveled by space craft will turn a crew to little more than interesting stains on a bulkhead. Because of this even most merchant ships carry at least two inertial generators that run constantly at no more than half power, insuring that if something should happen to one the other can insure the survival of the crew while military ships normally carry several, considering the mass and volume costs more than worth the degree of safety it gives them as well as allowing them to perform acceleration and maneuvers beyond those of most civilian craft.

GRAVITY PLATES: Essential for modern starships and space stations, gravity plates draw off the inertial drives to produce a the equivalent of gravity regardless of the actual motion of the ship or station, a vast improvement over the old need to rotate a vessel or station to provide simulated gravity of whatever degree is required. This is a boon for species that require gravities different from those typically sustained by many species. Gravity plates are also useful for dealing with unruly passengers or border as simply by cranking up the gravity to several times normal in a specific area of a ship or station to force all the parties involved to the floor immobilized. As a consequence of it being a function of an inertial drive, if the drive is completely powered down then all gravity in the ship is lost other than that given by actual inertia. Because of the size and power requirements of an inertial drive, many space stations forgo the use of gravity plates, instead relying on the older method of generating gravity by spinning.

SMART CLOTH: Smart cloth is the industry standard when it comes to clothing items. The most basic version are designed to stay dry, be very resistant to tearing, somewhat resistant to burning, and adjust so that it is comfortable for a wearer between 30 and 120 degrees Fahrenheit, keeping them warm in one case and cool in the other. More advanced versions of smart cloth are able to change the patterns and colors on their surface. While civilians use this to vary their wardrobe, militaries use it to vary camouflage as necessary. The most advanced versions can even be attached to a system that takes in the wearer's surroundings and adjusts the clothing to best match. Additionally most military versions of smart clothing are designed to help present the passage chemicals through their surface to the wearer underneath.

UTILI-CABLE: Often called the engineers' best friend utilicable serves a variety of purposes. A strong highly flexible cable built with internal lines capable of carrying digital data as well as large amounts of power it also functions effectively as cordage for any number of activities. While not as efficient or effective as dedicated cables, it's versatility has made it the treasure of the handyman, explorer, and anyone who has ever had to do damage control.



DEFENSES

As weapons have continually evolved, so have defenses, in a continuing rivalry older than recorded history, each at times outdoing the other until some new development occurs to redress the balance. For millennia armor was the primary defense against attack, it generally achieved this through simply being too tough to be penetrated, dispersing the incoming damage, or as a final resort, sacrificing itself through ablation to provide protection. Here will be described in brief the various types of defenses used, ranging from basic body armor up through the newly discovered shielding technologies employed on advanced starships. Not found here will be indirect defenses such as ECM, decoys, and simply getting out of the way.

BODY ARMOR

The most basic form of protection begins just past a person's skin, and while basic body armor is still vulnerable to the more high powered weapons, even the relatively limited degree of protection it provides can easily be the difference between life and death. At the other end of the spectrum are the massive power armors used by the best equipped military units, practically small tanks in terms of speed, defense, and firepower.

Body armor comes in a variety of types to defend against a variety of weapons, and there is no single material that effectively defends against all weapon types. The most effective body armors use layers of different materials to provide a degree of protection against any weapon, but are generally too heavy, bulky, and expensive for day to day use by anyone other than the military. Even more than for vehicles or starships, weight and bulk are a major concern for personnel armor and is usually the primary limiting factor in what kind of protection is chosen.

COMPOSITE CERAMICS: Composite ceramic body armor is one of the most effective single types of armor available. Made up of a mix of ceramics and binding materials, composite ceramics are able to shrug off even powerful impacts from physical weapons, and can bleed off a lot of the initial heat created by laser weapons preventing burn throughs. It is easily craftable into a variety of shapes, allowing for armor to be tailored to a specific wearer or into mass produced forms. On the downside, if struck hard enough it is entirely possible that the entire armor will shatter from the impact, rendering it useless, even if it doesn't allow penetration of the shot. Additionally, even though for its strength composite ceramic armor is lightweight, it is extremely bulky, and the heavier armors are enough to slow down most people. Straight composite ceramic armors generally come in two types of armor, large

Armor	Level	Price	EAC Bonus	KAC Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Max Dex	Speed Adj	Upgrade Slots	Special	Armor Type	Bulk
Sunburn Reflective Vest	1	313	3	0	0	+6	-	0		Light	L
Sunburn Reflective Fiber Shirt	1	532	3	2	-1	+8	-	0		Light	L
Last Chance Reflective Fiber Armored Vest	5	6,800	8	7	-2	+5	-	1		Light	1
Backstop Model IX Ballistic Vest	4	2,900	0	10	-3	+5	-5 ft	2	Does Not Provide Protection versus Melee	Light	1
Backstop Ballistic Suit	7	3,700	0	12	-4	+4	-10 ft	3	Does Not Provide Protection versus Melee	Heavy	2
Springback Reflexive Armor Vest	7	10,100	12	12	-5	+4	-5 ft	2	Does Not Provide Protection versus Melee	Light	L
Springback Reflexive Armor Suit	9	17,200	15	15	-6	+3	-5 ft	3	Does Not Provide Protection versus Melee	Heavy	1
Barkstone Composite Torso Suit	12	55,700	17	17	-6	+3	-5 ft	3		Heavy	2
Barkstone Composite Hardshell	14	230,400	20	20	-7	+2	-10 ft	4		Heavy	3
Indomitable Combat Infantry Armor	15	450,700	25	25	-2	+4	-	5	+2 to Hit w/ ranged, +4 to Perception, Darkvision/Low-Light Vision 120ft, Blind Sense 20 ft	Heavy	3

GUARDIAN TECH POWERED ARMOR

EAC Bonus 30	KAC Bonus 30	Speed 30ft	Capacity 100	Usage 1/minute
Max Dex +6	Armor Check Penalty	Size Large (10ft reach)	Weapon Slots 4	Upgrade Slots 8
Strength 32 (+11)	Damage 3d10 B	Level 18	Price 1,296,588	Bulk 30
Special +4 to Hit w/ranged, +6 to Perception, Darkvision/Low-Light Vision 120ft, Blind Sense 20 ft				

solid single piece plates that wrap around a body or form a solid block, and armors where the composite ceramics are many small blocks on some sort of lattice, being more flexible and light weight than the former, but far less effective. Composite ceramics are considered a must in any truly broad spectrum armor, usually in at least several thin layers. They are heavily used in vehicle and starship armor, providing excellent protection for weight and are often cast as an integral part of the vehicle or ship's hull.

FIBER: Fiber armor is an old and proven technology that has been continuously improved since its inception; now using materials far in advance of the ones originally used which were based on derivatives from spider silk. Relying on flexible fibers wound together into a tight lattice, fiber armor provides protection by dispersing the energy from projectile hits over a wider area and thus removing much of their penetrative capability. Most fiber armors designed for nonconcealment, and some that are, also have provisions for ceramic or metal inserts to provide additional protection. In current times a reflective outer covering is often used to provide at least brief protection against laser weapons as fiber is by itself completely ineffective against lasers, simply melting. Modern versions even provide excellent protection against more mundane threats such as blunt impacts, slashing, and stabbing. In purely civilian applications fiber armor is used in clothing and protective gear in situations where abrasions and flying debris can be expected to be encountered. Fiber armor has proven popular as a low profile light body armor that can be disguised as normal clothing; but it is considered insufficient or ineffective against many modern weapons which have the capability to simply blow through its protection or bypass it entirely, and thus is not used by proper militaries, though some militias unable to obtain anything better use it as it is easy to produce even with low levels of technology. While it occupies the lowest level of body armor protection in general use, fiber armor is likely to continue to see use in one form or another for some time to come due to its cheapness and easy production.

REACTIVE ARMOR: Reactive armor is a type of [vehicle armor](#) that reacts in some way to the impact of a weapon to reduce the damage done to the vehicle being protected. Most often by detonating a small focused explosive charge outward from the vehicle at impact. It is most effective in protecting against shaped charge style weapons. Ineffective against other types of attacks, reactive armor has largely fallen out of favor in modern times as only the most unsophisticated militaries rely on shaped charge warheads as a primary attacking system, instead using HVM warheads against which reactive armor is completely ineffective. The exception is a developed form of PreActive Armor which is typically laid in small strips or blocks around a vehicle and responds to nearby motions that meet certain criteria or manual commands by exploding in a hail of supersonic balls or flechettes. This is most commonly used as an antipersonnel device to prevent anti-vehicle charges being placed or any of the other forms of mischief infantry can perform once inside the radius of a vehicle's weapons.

REFLEXIVE ARMOR: Reflexive armor is made up of what is called non-Newtonian substances that when struck rather than spread out instead contract at the point of impact, almost instantaneously hardening from something flexible enough to be used as clothing into a substance hard enough to stop high speed weapon fire. Ineffective against slower attacks, such as

those from melee weapons, and also useless against energy weapons, reflexive armor is effective against all but the most powerful projectile weapons, and its flexibility of use has made it a very popular substance for moderate threat body armors, as with a reflective covering it provides an effective defense against nearly all civilian grade and some military grade projectile and energy weapons. It is often used in combination with fiber armor to provide more complete protection without increasing the overall weight by much. Very popular as a form of low profile protection in clothing, thicker layers of this are also often used in security and law enforcement vehicles to give the occupants some degree of protection from incoming fire and to allow vehicles to be used as a form of mobile cover.

COMBAT INFANTRY ARMOR: Combat Infantry Armor, or CIA is considered unpowered armor even though it uses a number of electronic components because it lacks the strength boosting servos that are distinctive of true power armor. Completely enclosed, allowing operation in variety of environments, including deep space, the hallmark of CIA is its versatility, with the addition of easily attachable equipment a wearer can be operating in hard vacuum, and within a few moments be prepared to operate at extreme ocean depths under tremendous pressures. Modern CIA is made up of multiple layers of a variety of materials designed to provide protection against all personnel weapons to at least some degree and provides its wearer the ability to shrug off an amount of punishment that in prior times was reserved for armored vehicles. While it is standard to provide this degree of protection from all directions, many models have additional frontal protection in the form of blocks of armored material along the limbs where armor is necessarily thinner than that protecting vital areas. The armored helmet often contains a medium range radio, full sensor suite, miniature computer, and HUD, in fact, it is so comprehensive that most individuals of most races are unable to use it to full effect as the information overload is simply too much to handle. Sensors in the weapon holding appendages are generally designed to link in with whatever weapon is at hand to allow integrated targeting as well as monitoring of weapon status. More expensive models come equipped with a surface capable of changing coloration and pattern either manually or automatically to allow an additional measure of camouflage. Combined with inherent heat dispersion capabilities it can render the suit almost invisible once it's broadcasting electronics are shut down. The most advanced models are designed to run off of the wearer's body heat and locomotion for power, saving excess energy for future usage, and eliminating the need to recharge the CIA while allowing it and the wearer to stay in the field indefinitely, the wearer ingesting food and liquid through a special slot in the helmet that allows for their passage while preventing the passage of dangerous elements, usually through the use of specially designed packages. While not providing the protection or firepower capabilities of powered armor, CIA is far cheaper to produce, easier to maintain, and is ideal for long term deployment, not needing the constant recharging of powered armor. Because of these qualities CIAs are far more common on the battlefield, giving the average grunt a capable piece of hardware to wrap around a body that is manifestly incapable of absorbing the damage regularly dealt out on the modern battlefield while greatly enhancing their combat effectiveness and ability to coordinate as a cohesive unit. So while powered armored may provide a powerful striking force or defensive bulwark, it is



CIA equipped infantry that does the bulk of the unglamorous work in the modern military.

POWERED ARMOR: Powered armor is the pinnacle of personal armor, more a small wrap around tank than body armor, powered armor turns gives an individual soldier the firepower equivalent of a heavy weapons platoon and the survivability of a light tank. A completely sealed environment, powered armor normally comes standard with all the equipment to operate effectively in almost any combat environment without modification. Powered armor comes with an even more comprehensive sensor suite than CIA and a more powerful computer that can even operate the powered armor to a limited degree should its operator become incapacitated. Automatic targeting systems and stabilized weapons give powered armor pinpoint accuracy out as far as LOS allows in most circumstances, making them a dangerous threat at a range lesser infantry are unable to match. Between powered servos that give the wearers the strength to punch through even reinforced clasticrete and short term boosters embedded at strategic points in the armor, powered armor has unparalleled maneuverability, able to make massive leaps and run at high speeds on the ground and maneuver freely in space.

Powered armor can carry a variety of armaments, not merely infantry weapons, but support weapons, making them able to not only lay down devastating fields of fire on the defense, but quickly bring it to bear on the enemy on the attack. Armor that can shrug off anything short of a direct heavy plasma hit without undue harm makes powered armor units the units of choice to form the core of any infantry force on either the defense or offensive. Few things are as terrifying to be on the receiving end of as an assault spearheaded

by powered armor, whether it is assaulting a position, or moving forward as a mobile reserve on the defense, even well entrenched and supported CIA equipped infantry will be hard pressed to hold against such opposition without heavy support units. The biggest disadvantage powered armor experiences, aside from almost instantly receiving the complete and full attention (as well as fire) of every enemy on the battlefield is a relatively short operational span before it needs to be recharged. Under normal circumstances modern powered armor can operate for several weeks at a time without needing to fall back to recharge, but in heavy combat powered armor rarely lasts for more than a few days of steady fighting before needing to recharge.

Best used as shock forces, powered armor even in small numbers can quickly turn the tide of battle, being fast, mobile, and a valid threat to anything else on the battlefield. The only thing preventing more widespread use is how hideously expensive even a basic suit of this armor is to purchase and maintain.

REFLECTIVE ARMOR: Reflective armor is a cheap and effective defense against laser weapons. Simply a highly reflective material designed to ablate away any heat that it cannot directly reflect reflective armor is completely useless against anything other than laser weapons which severely limits its usefulness by itself, but it is generally lightweight enough to easily put on over more substantial protection. By its very nature reflective armor only has a limited lifespan and even the best is unlikely to stand up to more than a few shots in the same area. Not as effective as composite ceramics, reflective armor is both far lighter, and far cheaper.

SUNBURN REFLECTIVE VEST: A lightweight vest made of highly reflective non-conductive material that provide no protection other than against energy weapons.

SUNBURN REFLECTIVE FIBER SHIRT: A shirt made of densely woven non-conductive fibers covered with a reflective layer that can help minimize the damage from weak attacks. Better than nothing but not by much.

LAST CHANCE REFLECTIVE FIBER ARMORED VEST: A thick heavy vest that will provide adequate protection against most threats made of densely woven fibers with ceramic plates for added protection covered with a reflective surface.

BACKSTOP MODEL IX BALLISTIC VEST: A fairly lightweight vest that provides some basic protection against projectile weapons with high density carbon fiber weave.

BACKSTOP BALLISTIC SUIT: A reactive piece of armor where the molecules lock together to form strong bonds at extremely fast impacts covering the entire torso, this suit provides significant protection against projectile weapons but none at all against energy or melee weapons.

SPRINGBACK REFLEXIVE ARMOR VEST: A vest made of materials that react to high speed impacts by briefly increasing its density at the point of contact. With a refractive underlayer this armor is solid protection against most forms of ranged attack but provides no benefit against melee attacks. This model is a longtime favorite of those expecting trouble but hoping not to find it.

SPRINGBACK REFLEXIVE ARMOR SUIT: A heavier version of the Springback Reflexive Armor Vest this armor is a full body suit to provide maximum possible ranged protection. A popular model among the bodyguards of the wealthy and influential due to its combination of low profile and adequate protection. Some versions may include advanced targeting and vision systems.

BARKSTONE COMPOSITE TORSO SUIT: A heavy armor made up of several materials that can take substantial damage from all attacks, it only covers the wearer's torso and head as a helmet is standard. Some versions may include advanced targeting and vision systems.

BARKSTONE COMPOSITE HARDSHELL: The latest in a well respected line from the Barkstone Armor Corporation this is especially heavy armor that is designed to take a beating, Composite Hardshell is a full body suit and provides excellent protection. Some versions may include advanced targeting and vision systems at additional cost.

INDOMITABLE COMBAT INFANTRY ARMOR: A top of the line armor equipped with advanced sensors and miscellaneous additional equipment designed to facilitate longterm use even in hostile environments. This is the armor of choice for most professional militaries that can afford the price and is the standard armor issued to Alliance Strikers.

GUARDIAN TECH POWERED ARMOR: A small walking tank. The finest armor available. Guardian Tech Powered Armor provides heavy protection at the cost of high energy usage. Guardian Tech Powered Armor can mount up to two support weapons in addition to a melee and anti-personnel weapon. Equipped with heavy computer support to insure mastery of the battlefield this armor is not available on the open market and currently only operated by Alliance Strikers.

ENERGY DEFENSES

While the primary defense for people and vehicles stretching back to the days when clothing was first worn was armoring of some sort. Cloth and leather eventually gave way to metals of various types, which in turn led to ever more complex composites. However armor has always proven expensive, heavy, and in need of regular replacement when it sees use. When nuclear weapons became commonplace in space, the amount of armor needed for sufficient protection was bad enough, but the advent of anti-matter weapons rendered armor almost completely ineffective, as no amount of armoring could withstand the energies involved.

The first steps towards a solution were tentative, structural integrity fields had only recently come into being and initial efforts were directed at strengthening them enough to grant armor at least some degree of effectiveness against the more powerful weapons that had evolved. For a long time SIFs were the only viable solution and it was not until the advent of practical shields that combat saw a true revolution in defenses.

SHIELDS: A projected energy field that rides just outside the skin of a starship or station, projected by special emitters, shields were first developed in local space by the United Systems Alliance during the course of the Helix War. Massive, heavy, energy hogs, and only minimally effective, the first generation of shields completely changed the balance of power in the conflict once they entered widespread usage. Where before in a battle between ships of relatively equal power, the first to score a hit gained a decisive advantage as weapons and sensors were wiped away even if the hull remained relatively undamaged due to SIFs; shielding meant that ships could survive even multiple hits by anti-matter weapons and continue fighting at full efficiency, it removed much of the advantage offered by a lucky first hit, and when a shielded ship faced an unshielded ship, unless there was a massive disparity in firepower the end results were almost inevitable.

Shield technology has continued to evolved steadily, with the Alliance and the Sagaren Collective currently holding a strong lead over other powers in the region. Many of the smaller or less sophisticated powers still lack shields, and even many others have only the first generation of shielding, lacking the miniaturized power plants needed for the most powerful versions.

Recent versions have even proven small enough to begin fitting to strike craft, granting these small vessels a resilience that has greatly increased their deadliness, though a hit from a larger shipboard weapon is still enough to destroy one outright.

In response to the evolution of shielding many militaries are either attempting to pack the largest possible missile armament into their ships in order to insure that enough can break through a ship's other defenses to bring down its shields, or, they have shifted towards a heavy energy armament and use tactics that involve getting close enough to overwhelm a ship's shields with heavy and constant energy weapon fire.

STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY FIELDS: Structural integrity fields, known universally as SIFs, are critical to space travel; an energy field that lays just under the surface of a ship's hull, it reinforces the natural bonds between molecules and allows the hull of a starship or vehicle to withstand forces that otherwise would easily snap it. Until the advent of shields, along with armor, SIFs were a ship's primary defense, the more powerful ones on warships even able to minimize the damage from anti-matter warheads for a time. Heavy military vehicles such as main battle tanks use much weaker SIFs (but still very powerful for ground based technology) for additional protection, making them all but immune to light weapons that could otherwise rip through even their heavy armor.

WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY

Weapons abound in the Starsea Universe, in all kinds, types, and sizes. While many are very highly advanced, using complex technologies, others are very basic, little changed from the original designs tens of thousands of years old. Carried by hand, mounted on vehicles or starships, it is the use of weapons that in the end decides the course of the galaxy. While there are nearly as many ways to kill a person as there are people, and exotic weapons are not unknown, here will only be covered in brief some examples of the most common forms of weaponry found in the Starsea Universe.

SHIPBOARD

Shipboard weapons are, by their definition, the heaviest weapons one will generally find in the Starsea Universe, the smallest of them equal in power to the most powerful ground based systems. Though normally only brought to bear against other starcraft and similar targets, on those occasions they are employed against ground based targets the effect is almost universally devastating.

Most starships that carry weaponry rely heavily on turrets to grant the largest possible firing arcs for its available weapons. However turrets require a fair amount of space and the weapons a ship can mount in a turret are generally smaller than those it could mount in a fixed position.

Fixed mounts are weapons that have very limited firing arcs, often no more than enough to allow some minor adjustments to assist in targeting. They weigh considerably less and take up less space than turret weapons of similar size and power, but by their nature require maneuvering the ship to aim them at the target. Because of this, most fixed mounts are emplaced in the forward arc of the ship and are generally the largest and most powerful weapons aboard, allowing a ship to close with an opponent while subjecting it to heavy fire.

Even more powerful than simple fixed mounts or turrets, some larger warships have weapons that are literally built as part of the ship. Generally aligned with the centerline of the vessel, these massive weapons are aimed by moving the entire vessel, but are many times more powerful than anything else that can be carried, some capital ships even carry entire batteries of these weapons that can often completely destroy any smaller vessel that cannot stay out of their extremely limited arcs of fire.

ENERGY WEAPONS

The most common form of weapon found in space, energy weapons are widely employed due to their versatility, efficiency, cheapness, reliability, and ability to function as long as power is available without having to take up space storing ammunition.

LASERS: A standard in space since the earliest days when relatively powerful energy plants became available, lasers are still the weapon most encountered in space. Considered a near perfect balance between energy usage, range, power, and accuracy they are used both defensively and offensively and range from the small rapid fire weapons found on starfighters to the massive cannon that equip capital ships and can crush shields and armor. Most are designed to be able to switch between different frequencies, from visible light to X-Ray, penetrative capability and range in vacuum increasing as its range in atmosphere decreases.

PULSE

Pulse lasers tend to come in two different types, either gatling style barrels or single barrels designed for rapid cooling, effectively though they both achieve the same effect, a large number of relatively weak laser shots in a short space of time. Not generally effective against anything bigger than strike craft and gunboats, or in the larger incarnations, escort vessels, they are normally used as either the primary weapons of strike craft, or as defensive weapons on starships, often with multiple weapons mounted in single turrets. There are some especially large variants of this weapon, but much past the size of a medium laser they tend to become increasingly less effective due to their size and energy requirements.

STANDARD

Standard lasers are slower to fire than pulse lasers, but fire more powerful beams over greater distances. They often comprise the main armament of smaller warships and even the heaviest warships carry extensive batteries of laser cannon for both defense and offense. The heaviest laser cannon are formidable weapons with great range and accuracy and can literally hole smaller craft clean through.

EMP CANNON

Duplicating the electromagnetic pulse effects of a nuclear burst, EMP cannon do not inflict physical damage on their targets, but rather destroy electronics through massive power surges. While most spacecraft are shielded against just such effects, if only to protect against natural sources of electromagnetic radiation that can cripple a ship otherwise, even military grade shielding can only be considered partially effective against the concentrated effects of an EMP cannon. Shorter ranged and less versatile than laser weapons, EMP cannon are generally only carried in relatively small numbers by larger warships. Additionally, while shields protect fully against the damaging effects of EMP cannon, incoming EMP fire still places a strain on them like any other weapon.

PARTICLE CANNON

Firing charged particles at near light speed velocities particle cannon are some of the most destructive weapons normally available to a starship. Mass and energy intensive, even the largest warships only carry a limited number of these weapons. Another disadvantage is the relatively limited range at which they are effective. However their ability to shred both shields and armor make them a potent weapon and smaller ships that are willing to sacrifice the space and power required to operate these weapons can often inflict significant damage even to far larger ships if they can get in close enough to use them.

GRAVIC SINGULARITY CANNON

A weapon that defines the word unstoppable, developed towards the end of the Helix War by the United Systems Alliance it effectively channels the entire energy output of a starship through a temporary gravic anomaly into a focused intense beam of destruction that can core even a fully shielded warship from bow to stern. A GSC is so massive and complex that any ship equipped with it practically has to be built around the weapon, generally nothing smaller than a battlecruiser is capable of mounting one of these behemoths. Until recently only a single shot could be fired in any reasonable amount of time due to power and cooling requirements, recent

GRAVIC SINGULARITY CANNON

Super Capital Direct Fire Emplacement

Build Points: 220 Single Shot, 540 Double Shot (Includes the cost of adding 1 Super Capital Emplacement)

Range: Very Long

Damage: Equal to ship's PCU

Special: Line

Note: A Gravic Singularity Cannon cannot be retrofitted to a design and must be included in the original ship construction. A GSC can only be installed on a Gargantuan or larger vessel which must have at least 1000 PCU and it must be installed in the forward firing arc.

The GSC takes five rounds to charge, during which no other system can be active and it fires with a -10 to hit. It can only be fired at Gargantuan or larger targets. After being fired either once or twice depending on the model, the cannon takes five hours to cool and recharge.

technology exchanges have resulted in the development of newer versions that can fire twice in quick succession. So far the Alliance has managed to keep the knowledge of these weapons a closely guarded secret and has gone to extreme lengths to insure that this technology does not fall into other hands.

MISSILES

Missiles are major components of almost any space battle, though mass and volume intensive, and far less likely to strike a target than an energy weapon, they carry the corresponding advantages of a greater effective range than any other weapon available, being able to carry a variety of payloads, and finally, of either singly or in groups delivering a great deal of power in a very short space of time. The larger the ship, the larger the missiles it can launch, and the difference between one launched by a destroyer and one launched by a battleship is significant. Strike craft, when not carrying advanced chemical warhead missiles to use against each other tend to use smaller, somewhat less capable versions of those used by full sized warships.

STANDARD

Standard shipboard missiles are typically armed with powerful warheads designed to explode on contact with a target, or proximity detonation in order to destroy or disable nearby fighters or missiles. In addition to complex targeting systems and ECCM systems, modern frontline missiles usually incorporate at least some level of stealth technology to better help them elude detection and defensive fire from their targets.

There are few proper warships that do not mount at least some missile armament due to the range and flexibility it offers. Even smaller warships often carry light missile armaments as it gives them a good chance of being able to inflict significant damage on even a heavier opponent when working together given some luck, whereas a heavier ship can often successfully engage a number of smaller vessels if it should come down to a fight within energy range due to the disparity in power available.

JAMMERS

One payload for standard missile bodies is a complex jamming system designed to blind a target's defensive systems with large amounts of constantly changing electronic static, thereby granting an increased chance for accompanying warheads to slip through an opponent's active defenses.

DOPPELGANGERS

Often used in concert with Jammers, Doppelgangers try and overwhelm an opponent's defenses not by scrambling an opponent's sensors, but rather by presenting the image of a dozen or more missiles, forcing an opponent's defenses to deal with the false targets as well as the actual threats.

GAUSS WEAPONS

Some of the earliest weapons in space were simple developments or modifications of old style chemically powered projectile weapons. Inefficient, slow, and hard to use effectively against mobile targets, they were soon replaced with a new generation of weapons with which the only thing they had in common was that they fired solid projectiles.

Early railguns were mass and power hogs, still with limited utility against maneuvering targets at any real range, but their speed was sufficiently high enough that the targets of the time were almost guaranteed to suffer severe damage simply from the kinetic energy of even a small projectile traveling at near lightspeed.

As defenses improved so did the weaponry and modern day railguns, generally referred to as gauss weapons, are more powerful as well as more energy and mass efficient than their predecessors. While rarely the primary weapons of a starship, gauss weapons will continue to find use for the foreseeable future as secondary weapons in both the defensive and offensive role.

RAIL-CANNON

The spiritual successors to the chain guns and gatling cannon of ages past, rail-cannon tend to be small caliber short ranged weapons that can lay down a literal hail of near lightspeed fire in the path of attacking strike craft or missiles. While lacking the range and accuracy of small pulse lasers, and requiring an actual ammunition supply, their far smaller energy requirements and much higher rate of fire make them popular choices as secondary defensive weapons where power requirements would otherwise prevent weapons being installed. A solid burst is generally enough to tear apart even a well shielded and armored strike craft, however even concentrated fire at close range is unlikely to penetrate the hull of anything other than the smallest starships, though they can sweep away many exposed systems.

MASS DRIVERS

The largest of gauss weapons, mass drivers hurl large projectiles at appreciable fractions of lightspeed. Typically too slow and clumsy to be used on other starships, they can prove very effective against space stations and habitats as well as remote defense systems at ranges beyond which the defenders can reply. On those occasions they're turned against ground targets the effects are nightmarish, with even a small shot packing the power of a nuclear explosion, though without the resultant radiation. Large batteries of these weapons are often carried on ship specially designed for ground support and system assault operations.

STRIKE CRAFT WEAPONS

Strike craft weapons are generally much the same as their shipboard counterparts, but much reduced in size. Effective against similar sized craft, skill or large numbers are needed to use these weapons effectively against full sized warships. Larger strike craft can often carry a small number of full sized missiles just as capable as those launched by warships, but against other strike craft carry smaller, faster, and more maneuverable missiles armed with powerful chemical warheads as anti-matter or even nuclear warheads are too powerful to use in the close range dogfights they often engage in.

With squadrons and wings linked together by complex computer systems a well organized strike craft force operates more like a single well dispersed entity that can prove a threat to even the largest opponent.

*More information on Starship Weapons and Equipment can be found in the Starship's Chapter.

GROUND SIDE

Weapons employed by infantry and planetary bound vehicles and installations are universally smaller than those mounted on starships, but for the uses to which they are put they are quite effective when properly employed. Even more than in space, the number and types of weaponry available is staggering, so only a brief overview of the more common weapon technologies used will be covered here.

NEW WEAPONS

POWER BLADE: Power blades come in a variety of sizes, from small units little bigger than a knife to full sized industrial units that can slice through even heavily armored starship hulls. Specially treated monomolecular blades that remain recessed in a housing until a charge is put through them causing them to straighten and extend, after which what is effectively a variant on an SIF provides a energy blade capable of slicing through almost anything not protected by an energy field with little effort.

Designed as a tool, it is also a viable weapon once combat becomes hand to hand. In most properly equipped military units a two foot power blade will be issued to every member of a ground unit, not just as a weapon, but for the versatility as a tool it offers for felling trees, cutting rock, slicing open armored bunkers or vehicles and basically combining the best aspects of a machete and a chainsaw in a lightweight compact package little larger than a small flashlight.

VIBRO BLADES: Vibro blades are cutting implements relying on a rapid microvibration to slice through many materials, they have largely been replaced by monomolecular blades

and power blades. Used in a variety of industrial, medical, and commercial endeavors as well as in bladed weapons.

MONOMOLECULAR BLADES: Monomolecular blades are cutting implements whose edge has been sharpened down to a single molecule, granting them the ability to slice through a variety of materials but leaving them vulnerable to fracturing. Most commonly used in modern times for medical instruments, they have been replaced in most other applications by power blades.

GAUSS

Gauss weapons are some of the most common ground weapons in existence, with the ability to change the power, speed, and distance of any given shot with little more than the turning of a dial, relatively low power consumption, a high rate of fire, low weight of ammunition, and incredible hitting power, Gauss weapons range from rifles up to massive tank mounted weapons that can core through most of a mountainside. At maximum power the projectiles fired by these weapons do not so much penetrate as explode on contact with great force. Because of the size needed by the anti-recoil equipment anything smaller than a rifle has so far proven impractical.

BLACKLAKE PRIMARY INFANTRY ARM: Seen as the standard by which all other modern gauss rifles are compared, the Blacklake may not be the most high tech rifle in existence, but it's durability, effectiveness, versatility, and ability to be customized have made it the mainstay of not just the Alliance military but practically anyone else looking for a solid well priced infantry weapon. Firing 5mm rounds capable of being accelerated to almost a tenth the speed of light by a magnetic field, not even modern powered armor is completely immune to a lucky or particularly well aimed shot. A reclamation field that absorbs excess energy both reduces recoil to a manageable level and allows for a couple of thousand full powered shots off a standard power pack before switching out is necessary, plus the size of the ammunition means that a single magazine can hold over ten thousand rounds. A partial dampening field reduces the recoil to levels manageable for most species and greatly improves accuracy. Dials for speed of the shot and number of rounds per pull of the trigger provide for very fine control. The grips are designed for full interfacing with most combat suit models allowing for pinpoint accuracy and monitoring of vital information on a standard helmet HUD. Accessory rails allow for the use of a variety of attachments, a grenade launcher currently being the most common and popular, though scopes, laser sights, and other additions are commonly added by those lacking the imaging capabilities of a combat suit. These weapons have repeatedly been put through conditions that would and has rendered other models to little more than expensive junk and continued to remain functional.

KALRANE ROCKSTORM: The RockStorm is a heavy support weapon firing 1cm rounds from ammunition containers allowing much longer and more accurate automatic fire than is available from a gauss rifle while impacting with much greater force. If given enough time (a rare occurrence in combat) it can even chew its way through the thick armor on many heavier vehicles and is a serious threat to lighter machines while it is a nightmare for powered armor. With enough recoil that it can only be fired by a powersuit if

mounted as an integral weapon, it is normally placed on either a tripod or mounted on a vehicle where it can even prove a threat to air support craft when controlled electronically. A mainstay of Alliance Striker support teams the RockStorm is a deadly defensive weapon and only a few of these can stop anything short of a full and well supported assault when properly emplaced. When firing at its maximum rate, almost only ever used when a position is in immanent danger of being overrun due to the extreme wear this places on its components, it has proven to be less an automatic weapon than a directed wall of death and has been largely credited with stopping innumerable Gener charges during the war that had managed to reach a defensive line in spite of everything else that could be brought to bear. Its largest disadvantages are a voracious appetite for ammunition during heavy combat and a tendency for inexperienced users to burn out barrels through excessively long (and typically unnecessary) bursts, at times resulting in explosive failure.

The RockStorm is currently unavailable to the civilian market as Kalrane Industries has focused almost its entire production efforts of this weapon to supplying the needs of the Alliance military and this shows no signs of changing in the apparent future. A model for similar weapons, the RockStar is battletested and unlikely to be surpassed anytime soon.

LEGION HEAVY ASSAULT CANNON: This 4cm rapid fire weapon is the standard secondary weapon for Alliance heavy armor and the primary weapon of its APCs. While nowhere near as powerful as the far heavier main weapons of battle tanks, it is very effective in its role as an anti-infantry and light armor weapon as well as providing somewhat effective air and artillery defense. Capable of several hundred rounds a second the Legion is well known for leaving a trail of destruction in its wake and in many cases is more feared than even its larger brethren.

The large number of vehicles the Legion is mounted on testifies to its effectiveness and versatility in its different roles. When employed en masse they are capable of clearing a battlefield without any other assistance and are well liked by the infantry they are typically deployed in support of. Fast and accurate, with enough punch to be a threat to a wide range of targets, the Legion is the weapon of choice for smaller vehicles and many light tanks. Employed in batteries it is even capable of chewing through thick armor given enough time, and at least one successful vehicle based around this concept has seen employment.

15CM MULTI-PURPOSE GAUSS CANNON: Representative of a variety of similar models, the 15cm MGC is a versatile and well proven weapons system most commonly found on the Alliance's Ground Stalker main battle tank. While it gives up something in actual penetrative power, in return it has gained a flexibility and reliability that have seen it through more than three centuries of effective service with only minor changes. At maximum power it is still quite capable of penetrating reliably the defenses of any opponent that might be encountered, while at lower powers it is capable of lobbing rounds containing HE, chemicals, or even anti-matter in an arc, granting it an indirect fire capability that many purely anti-armor cannon lack. Requiring a fusion reactor to provide the necessary power, the 15cm MGC is capable of a rapid rate of fire for as long as its ready supply of ammunition lasts, and has on rare occasion been known to fire



up until the barrel itself melted down before failing, but more typically it is used as a precision tool with a high first shot kill ratio. Its size and its high power requirements means nothing short of a tank can move and use it effectively; though on occasions it has been used in fixed emplacements to support other systems or in various models of tank destroyers, a role in which it has proven very deadly. Considered by many a near perfect combination of attributes the 15cm MGC can expect to see many more long years of service ahead of it.

LASER

An old and proven technology, laser weapons were used mounted in starships and on vehicles long before they became practical personal weapons. Once the constraints of a compact power source and sufficient cooling were overcome lasers became the standard personnel weapons until the advent of easily portable gauss weaponry. Even now though while gauss weapons may generally be preferred for larger weapons, sidearms are still almost exclusively laser weapons. Even in rifles and carbines lasers continue to find a place in cases where penetrative power is less important than reliability and ease of maintenance. The biggest disadvantage to a laser is that unless a beam can be held steady on a single point its penetrative power is below that of even older fashioned projectile weapons, and far below that of gauss weapons. A lesser disadvantage is a loss of power over distance, something that increases exponentially in the presence of particulate in the atmosphere. Overcoming these disadvantages in most cases though is the ability to adjust the beam to uses ranging from a cutting beam, to a flashlight/spotlight, signal light, and igniter. Best described as jacks of all trades, masters of none, laser

BASIC MELEE WEAPONS

Melee Weapons	Level	Price	Dmg (Small)	Dmg (Medium)	Critical	Bulk	Special
Vibro Knife	2	6,000	2d4 S	2d6 S	x3	L	Ignores EAC/KAC 5
Monomolecular Blade	7	12,000	3d4 S	3d6 S	x4	L	Ignores EAC/KAC 10
Power Blade	10	45,000	2d10 S	2d12 S	X5	L	Ignores EAC/KAC 20

SMALL ARMS

Small Arms	Level	Price	Dmg (Single)	Dmg (Burst)	Dmg (Automatic)	Critical	Capacity	Range	Usage	Bulk	Special
High Star Police Special	6	4,000	2d8 F	-	-	x2	20	80	1 (S)	L	1d4 Burn
Gauss Pistol	12	50,440	6d8 P	-	-	18-20x4	12	60	1 (S)	1	Minimum Str 20 to wield, -4 to hit penalty, no more than one shot per round. Knockdown.

LONG ARMS

Long Arms	Level	Price	Dmg (Single)	Dmg (Burst)	Dmg (Automatic)	Critical	Capacity	Range	Usage	Bulk	Special
Right Heart Sporting Carbine	12	28,830	3d8 F	5d8 F	7d8 F	x2	50	110	1 (S) 3 (B) 10 (A)	1	3d8 Burn
Black-lake Primary Infantry Rifle	13	55,650	5d8 P	10d8 P	15d8 P	19-20x3	500	100	1 (S) 10 (B) 50 (A)	2	Can be fired at emergency auto, requiring all targets in a 100ft cone to make a reflex save DC 15 or take full damage. This empties the weapon and gives it the Broken condition.

HEAVY WEAPONS

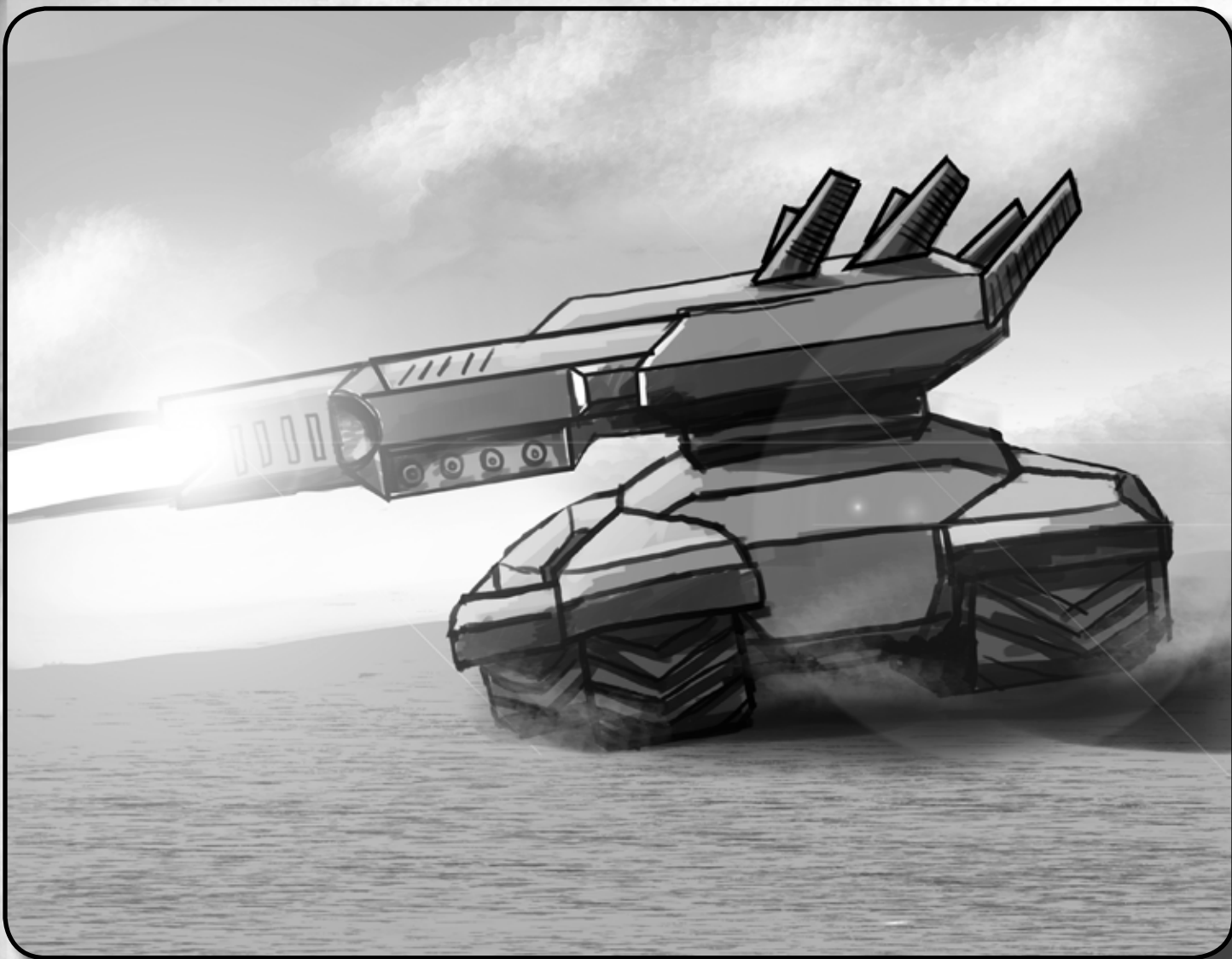
Heavy Weapons	Level	Price	Dmg (Single)	Dmg (Burst)	Dmg (Automatic)	Critical	Capacity	Range	Usage	Bulk	Special
Kalarane Rockstorm	16	105,860	6d8 P	12d8 P	18d8 P	18-20x4	2000	150	1 (S) 25 (B) 100 (A)	3	Automatic
Fireplume Shortarm	10	53,620	6d8x2 F	-	-	16-20x5	3	150	1 (S)	3	Inflicts 3d8 points of damage in 10ft radius around user. Applies 1d8 Burning damage for 1d4 rounds.
Novawave Fieldarm	14	135,870	6d8x2 F	6d8x4 F	-	16-20x5	25	200	1 (S) 5 (B)	3	Inflicts 3d8 points of damage in 10ft radius around user. Applies 1d8 Burning damage for 1d4 rounds.
KISS HVM	12	87,390	8d6x2	-	-	18-20x6	1	500	1 (S)	2	Ignores 40 KAC
Marlin Industries Support Laser	10	64,760	4d8	8d8	12d8	x2	500	300	1 (S) 5 (B) 20 (A)	3	Burn 4d4

VEHICLE MOUNTED WEAPONS

Vehicle Mounted (Direct Fire)	Dmg	Critical	Capacity	Range	Special
Legion Heavy Assault Cannon	5d10x2	x3	-	2,000	-
15 cm Multi-Purpose Gauss Cannon	See Special	x5	-	4,000	5d10x5 20ft radius, or 7d10x5
Higilth Arclight Vehicle Laser	3d10x2	x2	-	1,500	Burn 2d10

INDIRECT FIRE WEAPONS

Indirect Fire Weapons	Dmg	Capacity	Range	Special
75 mm Automatic Infantry Mortar	Special	3	1,000	Explode (HE) 7d8 P 50ft Burst, DC 15 Reflex Save for half Varied by other ammunition types.
125mm Roaring Thunder Mobile Light Artillery	Special	10	2,000	Explode (HE) 15d8 100ft Burst, DC 20 Reflex Save for half. Varied by other ammunition types.
380mm Ragnarok Fire Superiority System	Special	1	Continental	Explode (HE) 20d20 200ft Burst, DC 30 Reflex save for half.



weapons are popular and widespread and look to continue to be for the foreseeable future.

HIGHSTAR POLICE SPECIAL: While not the most powerful laser pistol in existence, the Highstar is widely used by police and security agencies throughout the known galaxy as well as being a popular civilian sidearm. A semiautomatic, the Highstar lacks many of the features integral to higher priced pistols, but still remains a useful multi-tool with variable beam strength and spread. One feature well liked by security, police, and citizens alike is a sensor built into the grip that can be programmed to only allow the gun to fire when one of the authorized wielders grasps it. Capable of firing several hundred shots at standard power the Highstar can burn through light armor plating when wielded as a cutter and retains the punch to remain a threat to a person wearing many of the civilian models of body armor available. Relatively cheap and reliable, the Highstar may not excel in any particular area but it remains a popular model nonetheless.

RIGHTHEART SPORTING CARBINE: Designed specifically for civilian use on worlds where wildlife can be a significant threat and maintenance facilities are likely to be primitive, the Rightheart has proven a compact, reliable, and flexible sporting arm. In many ways the Rightheart is overpowered, relying on brute force in place of much of the sophistication

used by other designs. Accurate, and with a scope, able to pack a punch even at seven hundred yards distance the Rightheart is a firm choice for sportsmen, frontier law enforcement, and those spending a good deal of time in the wilderness. Capable of semi-automatic, sustained, burst, and fully automatic fire it has proven its worth time and again against threats large and small. Its greatest disadvantage is the comparatively limited number of shots it provides due to the high power used. The variety of power and shot duration settings also makes it a useful tool in many situations. It has in addition become a popular model among some planetary militias who find it an easy to maintain alternative to many military weapons.

MARLIN INDUSTRIES SUPPORT LASER: In a galaxy where gauss weapons have come to predominate in the support role the MISL has managed to carve out a niche for itself as a lightweight squad support weapon. Capable of accepting standard powerpacks, its heavy duty cooling sleeve allows for much longer periods of fire than previous lightweight laser support weapons. While not packing the punch of a gauss rifle, the sheer volume of fire it can lay down for short periods of time has proven it to be an effective support weapon and when set to continuous fire can burn through things that even concentrated gauss rifle fire cannot break through. Its primary drawback is the sheer number of powerpacks that need to be carried to allow prolonged usage, though there are

provisions for connection to the larger power supplies used by most semi-fixed support weapons or even to a powergrid if available and operational.

HIGHLTH ARCLIGHT VEHICLE LASER: Considered an acceptable alternative to heavy guass weapons where space and power are restricted the Arclight is at best a moderately effective weapon by modern standards, only somewhat making up for this by being easily mountable on a variety of vehicles. The Arclight is most common among second rate militaries and militias mounted on a variety of chassis in roles as widespread as infantry support and air defense. Nearing total obsolescence the Arclight is one of the last of its kind, where once lasers ruled the planetside battlefield, they are now steadily being replaced by newer generations of guass weapons that are growing ever smaller and more efficient. Despite this, the Arclight is not a weapon to scorn and properly employed remains a viable threat on the battlefield to even a modern force that fails to give it the respect it deserves. Needing to maintain pinpoint fire for several seconds to pierce modern heavy armor, the Arclight can still quickly cut through the armor on lighter vehicles and pose a significant threat to even modern aerial support when employed in batteries. Employed against infantry or emplaced structures this invisible beam of heat can prove a terror as it leaps from soldier to soldier, striking them down or forcing them to watch as their metal or clasticrete protection heats up before collapsing in a consuming flame.

Though faced with all the usual limitations of a laser weapon, the Arclight is a very reasonably priced weapon that is easily available and in any application other than a modern conflict can still acquit itself very well. This makes it a favorite among explorers who are looking for something heavier in the way of firepower than infantry weapons but still light enough to mount on a relatively small vehicle.

PLASMA

Plasma weapons operate on the principle of generating short lived superheated plasma and wrapping it in a magnetic field to hold it relatively stable before ejection at a target. The rapid deterioration of the magnetic field resulting in the rapid cooling and diffusion of the plasma is the reason that plasma weapons are so short ranged as no reliable method of extending the duration of the magnetic field outside the firing chambers has been yet developed. Despite this, plasma weapons are a terrifying weapon to face on the battlefield due to their superheated nature and ability to burn through even thick armor and incinerate those within. Its splash effect when it hits something makes even a near miss extremely dangerous. It was in just such an incident that the Alliance hero Matthew Angel lost his right arm and eye despite his CIA during the heated battle on Oglone Defense Station IV.

Often not practical for starships or vehicles because of their extremely short range, infantry find them useful for defense against vehicles, emplacements, and to a lesser degree personnel. Where plasma weapons truly excel though is as a counter to powered armor, giving the infantryman in simple combat armor the ability to counter what is effectively a small armored vehicle. While powerful, plasma weapons are exclusively support weapons, even the smallest having to be wielded as over the shoulder weapons by anyone not wearing powered armor. They also have a number of disadvantages aside from their size and weight. The heat they produce upon

firing is potentially lethal to someone wearing less than a fully sealed combat suit for a significant radius around the firer. Range at best is measured in tens of meters for shoulder weapons and no more than a couple of hundred for mounted weapons. Plasma weapons are also massive energy hogs, needing reloading of power packs every few shots. Lastly they are prone to breakdowns and are highly maintenance intensive. On the upside even a single plasma shot is usually enough to at least disable a suit of power armor or light vehicle, and repeated well aimed shots are theoretically capable of damaging even a battle tank.

FIREPLUME SHORTARM SUPPORT DEVICE: A older model plasma cannon, the Fireplume is most commonly found among those who can't afford better and it is not uncommon to find one in the hands of pirates or shippers out on the frontiers. Slow to fire, and unable to fire more than three shots before needing to reload, it is still quite capable of burning through bulkheads or armored airlock doors, much less people and can prove a nasty surprise to those on the receiving end. Unfortunately many of those who manage to acquire one of these weapons lack the training necessary to use them, and attempting to emulate the characters seen in popular media have severely injured or killed both themselves and those around them.

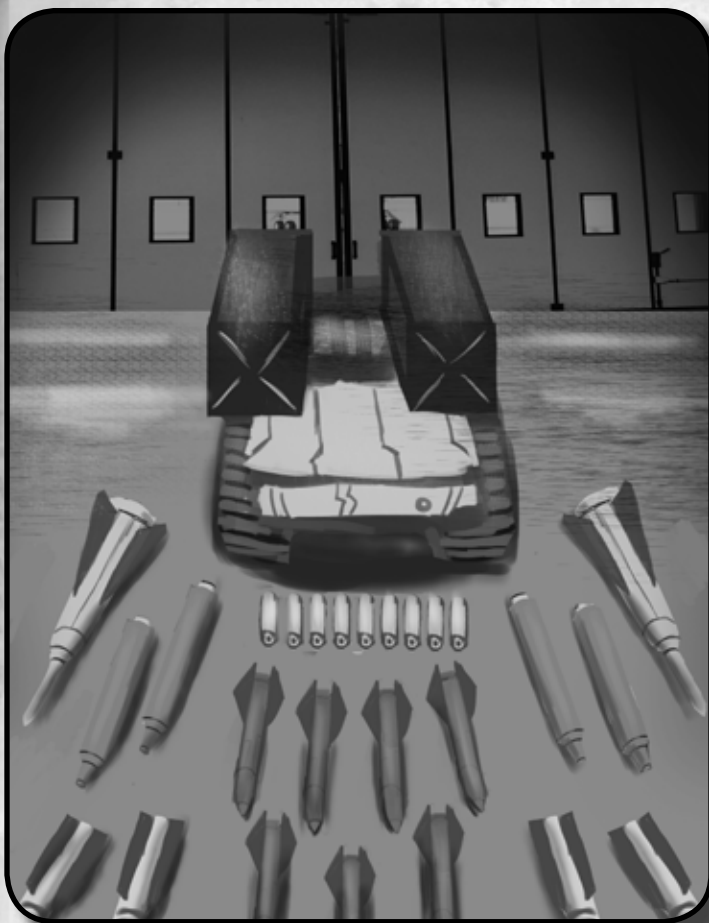
NOVAWAVE FIELDARM: A heavy tripod mounted plasma cannon, the Novawave is the latest incarnation of a long and venerable line of heavy support weapons favored by the Alliance military. A top of the line model the latest version of the Novawave is more powerful, efficient, reliable, and has a slightly better range than its predecessor. Capable of near semi-automatic fire and when attached to the normal power pack it can fire more than twenty shots before needing to switch out, making it a threat even to heavily armored vehicles and lethal to even significant numbers of power armor. An additional feature is the ability to be used to full effect without a tripod by soldiers in power armor without any modifications, a major advantage over many other models.

Already having seen extensive use towards the end of the Helix War and receiving high marks from its users the Novawave's market share continues to steadily improve along with its reputation.

HYPERVELOCITY MISSILES

With the ever growing efficiency of defenses, increasing speed of hostile vehicles, and the growing inability of standard chemical boosters and warheads to provide the needed performance at sizes useful to soldiers on the ground, increasingly infantry, and to a lesser degree vehicles with a secondary anti-armor capability, found themselves unable to effectively engage armor at any range successfully.

For a time it seemed that once more heavily armored tanks would rule the battlefield, impervious to anything short of another tank. What arose to redress this balance was an offshoot of the technology put the stars within reach. Using effectively what were miniaturized sublight engines designed to burn themselves out almost instantaneously in exchange for incredible accelerations, missiles suddenly acquired a whole new lethality. Moving too fast for active defenses to interdict at planetary ranges and no longer needing a warhead to be highly lethal, or even guidance systems beyond those in the launcher itself to achieve high degrees of accuracy, armored vehicles suddenly found themselves as vulnerable as they ever had



been. The introduction of SIF fields into armored vehicles has brought the arms race between tanks and their opponents back to where it has more typically stood, with neither side able to survive without the assistance of the other on the battlefield.

For their weight HVMs provide a lot of firepower in a very small package, even the handheld variants are definite threats if properly aimed and used in numbers against a modern heavy tank. While no guarantee of an outright kill, they are quite capable of crippling tanks and more than able to entirely destroy lesser vehicles. Vehicle mounted HVMs are correspondingly more lethal and able to kill even the most well armored tank, SIF field or not, with a fair amount of luck.

The advent of HVMs also gave ground forces a potent weapon against aerial attack, with their effectively instantaneous ability to hit a target, any aircraft ventured over the battlefield at its own peril. Modern aerial support craft rely on constant jerky maneuvers that are designed to prevent an initial target lock as well as high speeds and minimal exposure times over hostile areas.

HVMs have found little use in space due to the distances involved granting targets the time to maneuver, making guidance systems and sustained thrust necessary for a missile to strike a target.

KINETIC IMPACT STRIKING SYSTEM: The KISS HVM system is a shoulder launched system in widespread use throughout the galaxy and has been in production for more than two centuries. A very basic design, the KISS has relied on simplicity where other systems have grown steadily more complicated and expensive. Little more than a lightweight three foot tube with a very basic targeting system, the KISS is designed to be fired once and then thrown away and it is

not uncommon for one or more to be issued to every soldier in a unit. While not the most destructive or accurate HVM available, the KISS is cheap, readily available, and effective, especially in numbers. As such even a moderately professional mercenary unit is likely to have at least some in its possession.

STARSONG MISSILE DEPLOYMENT SYSTEM: The StarSong is a powerful HVM system that is highly accurate and effective. Typically mounted on vehicles, it has also been used on aircraft and in remote turrets for perimeter defense. Too large to be portable by infantry (with a few rare exceptions), the StarSong is most commonly seen as a secondary weapon mounted on vehicles to provide them with an effective anti-armor weapon, though some vehicles are specifically designed with the StarSong as their primary weapon and most have proven quite effective in the anti-armor or direct support role.

With a complex detection and aiming system the StarSong has a record of over a ninety percent hit rate when properly employed and is capable of shattering even heavy defensive works or armor reinforced with standard SIFs. The largest downside of the StarSong is its expense, both for the detection and acquisition equipment, as well as the launcher and the missiles themselves. Additionally, without specialized training much of the effectiveness of the system is lost and the equipment requires regular maintenance. Because of this the SongStar is generally only employed by those military forces for whom expenses are little concern.

Considered the current pinnacle of HVM technology the SongStar has firmly established itself as a staple of most of the truly professional militaries in this section of the galaxy and looks to remain at the forefront of the HVM field for some time to come.

GRENADES

Grenades have long been a standard part of any infantryman's equipment, cheap disposable explosive devices, they can be used for everything from clearing a room to bringing down a structure if properly employed. From the basic fragmentation grenade that was originally used the grenade has evolved into a wide variety of types each with a different purpose. Originally thrown solely by hand, in modern times it is at least as common for grenades to be fired from a variety of specialized launchers granting them much greater range and penetration.

FRAGMENTATION: The most basic form of grenade, the fragmentation grenade has changed little from its earliest incarnations. Little more than an explosive charge surrounded by some sort of fragmentations, the greatest change has been a steady increase in killing power to compensate for heavier and more effective armoring for soldiers. The more expensive fragmentation grenades on the market currently are capable of potentially puncturing a standard CIA suit at close range and often come with a variable power setting to allow for fine tuning of blast radius and penetration, typically used by forces that lack modern body armor and thus cannot throw the grenade farther than its probable kill radius.

SMOKE: Smoke grenades serve a variety of purposes, among which are signaling, anti-personnel, destruction of flammable materials, and providing cover. Perhaps the most versatile grenade available, smoke grenades come in a variety of types and colors, with most modern versions additionally being

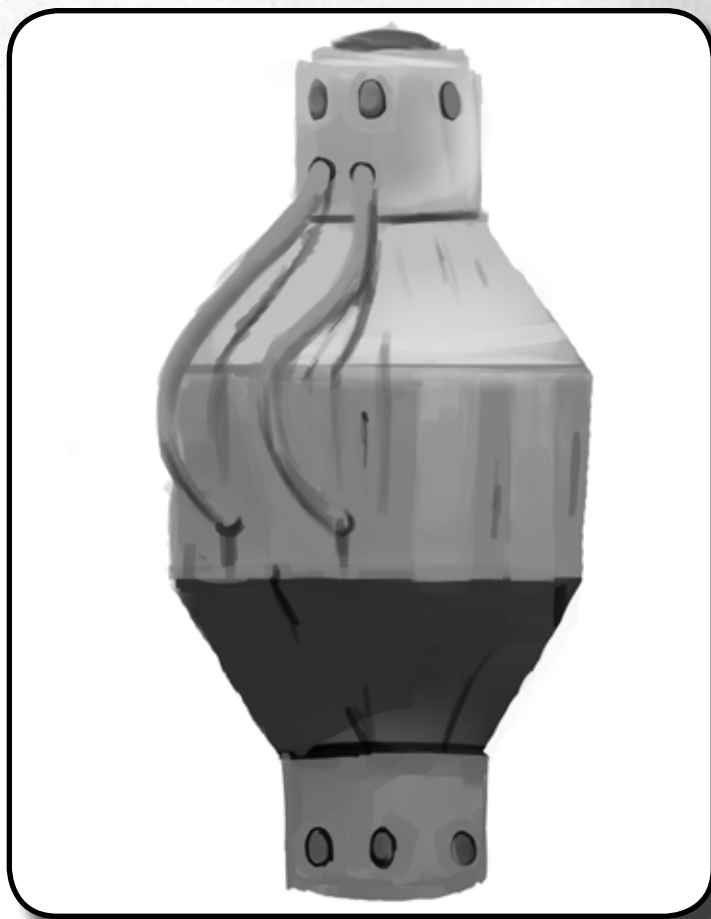
designed to obscure thermal image as well as visual by using small metallic particles that are suspended in the smoke. Generally using chemicals that are designed to burn even in the absence of oxygen, when used in the anti-personnel role they can cause hideous burns as they will continue to burn into the skin until they extinguish themselves as they resist almost all normal efforts to extinguish. Nothing short of a CIA suit will provide adequate protection against a smoke grenade due to its splash and ability to burn through many types of materials.

INCENDIARY: Incendiary grenades are typically used for the destruction of enemy equipment or forced entry. Designed of materials that burn at insanely high temperatures incendiary grenades literally melt their way through most materials, making them ideal for destruction of heavy equipment, structural members, as well as providing a way to burn through even heavy armor. In those cases that the material in question is not melted clean through, it can usually be assumed to end up solidly and irredeemably welded into a solid nonfunctional block. Not normally standard equipment for infantry, they are often issued to raiding parties and combat engineers who use them for quickly destroying enemy equipment and vehicles or in penetrating enemy fortifications.

FLASH-BANGS: More often used by civilian security forces or police than the military, flash-bangs are grenades designed to produce a sudden bright flash and loud concussive noise that is supposed to stun opponents long enough for the users to close in. Most often they are employed in hostage situations where a direct assault would be too costly in terms of casualties among the rescuers and hostages. Flash-bangs are completely ineffective against properly equipped troops however as most military helmets are designed to protect the wearer against sudden bursts of noise and light.

GAS: Gas grenades can be loaded with a wide variety of gasses that are released on detonation. Within the Alliance, due to rules about the use of chemical weapons against civilians, these are exclusively non-lethal gases designed to disable or drive off the targets and are used to disperse riots or render criminals or dissidents unconscious. However outside the Alliance the use of more lethal or harmful agents are not unknown. Gas grenades unfortunately suffer some severe limitations in either form. Firstly, most militaries are well equipped to defend against gas or chemical weapons as even the most rudimentary CIA suits are completely sealed. Secondly, the wide pervasiveness of medical nanites means that even non-lethal agents have to be much stronger than they would be otherwise and their effects do not last nearly as long as they would otherwise. Finally, many gases have different effects depending on the species and are therefore risky to use in multi-species environments.

EMP: EMP, Electro Magnetic Pulse grenades are powerful specialized weapons designed to give infantry the ability to disable complex equipment rapidly. While most proper military vehicles are too heavily shielded against EMP for the small weapons to be effective against them, a great deal of smaller military equipment is at risk from its effects to varying degrees. In particular the individual weapons and equipment of an infantryman are often vulnerable to EMP effects, being unable to carry full shielding due to the weight it would require. A volley of these tossed into an oncoming assault, or



into a group of defenders can leave a group of soldiers temporarily disoriented and vulnerable. The best defense is training which can grant a soldier the vital reflexes necessary to shut his electronics down before the pulse can take effect, reducing or negating the effects of the blast.

EMP grenades can also be used against structures, overloading many of the electronic defenses, particularly inside a structure where much of the shielding is weaker than externally, relying on the building itself to provide protection. Thus assault teams often carry a number of these weapons in order to quickly bypass both active and passive defenses.

PLASMA: Plasma grenades combine some of the worst effects of fragmentation, incendiary, and EMP grenades along with some nasty effects of their own. Upon detonation they reach temperatures even higher than those achieved by incendiary grenades while throwing out a brief short range burst of EMP as well as blobs of glowingly white hot plasma that immediately stick to whatever they land on. While not able to burn through nearly as much as incendiary grenades because of their short life span, in the time they last they can burn through materials that thermal grenades could not. This makes them particularly well suited to disabling or destroying power armor which lacks the ability to properly resist a well placed plasma grenade. Of course, to place one in such a manner, requires great skill, courage, and luck on the part of the thrower. There is also a danger to personnel not wearing at least CIA as the plasma grenade can inflict lethal injuries on those in its surroundings if used improperly.

GRENADE LAUNCHERS

The earliest grenade launchers consisted of special attachments to rifles that would allow them to launch grenades a greater distance than they could be thrown. Today grenade launchers have advanced beyond the need for such clumsy measures but their role is still much the same, to provide a quick easy way to launch grenades farther and faster than is possible by hand. They run the gauntlet from simple tubes that attach under the barrel of a rifle, to standalone weapons that are a soldier's primary weapon, to crew served weapons that can fire several grenades a second with pinpoint accuracy.

LITTLE BABY LAUNCHER ATTACHMENT: One of the most basic models currently available, the Little Baby is designed to clip in under the barrel of a wide variety of weapons. Holding up to three grenades of various types as well as other special rounds, the Little Baby allows a standard rifleman to quickly bring grenades into play or merely lob them from behind cover to hit a relatively distant target. Accurate up to 300 yards and able to reach out to 600 yards, the Little Baby has proven a cheap effective method of increasing the firepower available to an individual soldier as well as entire units.

However the Little Baby lacks many of the more sophisticated features found on more expensive models. While it to some degree can be linked into a CIA's HUD, it lacks any direct feedback ability, significantly decreasing accuracy. While it can hold up to three shots, they must be individually loaded rather than using a magazine load. Finally, it lacks many of the additional features that are designed to greatly improve accuracy, making effective use of the weapon greatly depend on the skill of the individual user. Regardless of these drawbacks, its cheapness, reliability, and simplicity make it a popular choice.

THE M591 GRUNT: So named because of the sound it makes when firing, the Grunt is a stand alone grenade launcher designed to be fired by a single infantryman and holds several advantages over an underslung launcher. The Grunt fires from a drum magazine that depending on the size, can hold between ten and thirty grenades of assorted types. The Grunt also contains a built in targeting and stabilization system that can also tie into a CIA suit which grants it much better accuracy than underslung launchers. With spare drums carried by the rest of the unit, one or two Grunts can provide fast responsive fire even quicker than mortars and at a greater distance than underslung launchers can manage. Accurate out to 800 yards and able to fire out to 1200 yards, the Grunt spans the gap between the relatively limited underslung launchers and the crew served heavy grenade launchers.

METEOR STORM AREA DENIAL WEAPON: A two crewperson served weapons system, the Meteor Storm fires grenades at up to seven a second and nothing less than power armor can hope to survive within its field of fire. Fed by either a belt or from an attached box, the Meteor Storm is a deadly weapon emplaced on the defensive and can chop apart most assaults without armor support. With a complex targeting system and an ability to fire out to almost 2000 yards with pinpoint accuracy the Meteor Swarm excels at not only direct fire, but harassment and interdiction, and area denial. Even light vehicles are not safe from the Meteor Storm when it begins firing plasma grenades instead of its usual HE/Fragmentation grenades. The downside to being able to unleash

this kind of firepower is that as soon as a Meteor Storm begins to fire, it is almost inevitably the target of everything within range and unless very well dug in and used judiciously, the life spans of its operators are often measured in a few tens of seconds.

Another use for the Meteor Storm is as an auxiliary weapon on a number of military vehicles, generally fired from a commander's hatch or remotely from inside the vehicle and they have proven very successful in this role.

INDIRECT FIRE WEAPONS

Even in a day and age where there are weapons available that can cut through a mountain, soldiers on the ground still find a regular need for weapons that can hit an enemy even when neither side can see the other. However even the most basic of these weapons are a far cry from the days when even with an observer hitting a target was as much luck as skill. With modern ammunition spanning the range from reconnaissance rounds that send back live imagery for intelligence gathering or simply refining data for live ordinance, to specially designed armor busting shells that can identify a specific design of armored vehicle and target weak points in its upper armor, to large varieties of more conventional ordinance.

Indirect fire weapons can range from grenade launchers attached to an individual soldier's primary weapon to massive mobile artillery pieces that can hit targets clear over the horizon with ordinance capable of penetrating even the most deeply dug and heavily armored bunker. Best deployed in large numbers, even with the advent of weapon systems that can intercept and destroy large numbers of incoming rounds, properly employed artillery can quickly turn even a strong assault into a rout with heavy casualties.

75MM AUTOMATIC INFANTRY MORTAR: A standard piece of equipment throughout the galaxy, the 75mm AIM provides even light infantry with rapid response artillery that they can carry with them right into the battlefield. Either deployed singly or in groups the 75mm AIM can provide a blanket of fire out to around 4,000 yards in its distinctive three round groupings. Able to hold up to three rounds at a time in an automatic feeding hopper, the 75mm AIM is accurate enough to ensure that all three rounds hit within inches of each other or with the twist of a dial, ensure a good spread to cover a target area. With rounds light enough to be easily spread out amongst an operator's accompanying infantry, the 75mm AIM's biggest flaw is the rate at which it burns through ammunition. While not typically a problem when emplaced in a defensive network, on the assault its operator needs the strictest discipline to avoid burning through their limited ammunition supply too quickly.

Of little use against any but the lightest of armored vehicles the 75mm AIM is quite capable of pinning down and inflicting heavy casualties on even a relatively well dug in infantry force. With repeated pinpoint shots and armor piercing rounds it can even burrow its way into many types of bunkers. While experienced soldiers know to time their movements to take advantage of the pause while its three round hopper is refilled, experienced operators pair up and stagger their firing so as to prevent a reprieve for their targets.

125MM ROARING THUNDER MOBILE LIGHT ARTILLERY: A popular model of artillery the Roaring Thunder carries enough firepower to be a threat to most

targets while remaining fast and nimble enough to not only rapidly redeploy to counter enemy threats, but is able to reach areas heavier equipment cannot. The Roaring Thunder rides on four pairs of wheels which are each run by a separate motor that are all powered from the central engine and are capable of independent movement. This grants the Roaring Thunder excellent all terrain capability, good mobility, high speed, and a resistance to being immobilized.

Its 125mm rapid fire cannon is equipped with a complex targeting computer that can accept information from a variety of sources and achieve very high accuracy. It is fed from a pair of five round hoppers and at maximum range can loft all ten rounds into the air before the first impacts, granting it a powerful Time on Target ability. Able to fire practically all ordinance types, the Roaring Thunder has a powerful secondary direct fire anti-armor role, with many armored vehicles unable to withstand up to ten closely spaced armor piercing impacts in the space of a few seconds.

However the Roaring Thunder is unable to shrug off much in the way of return fire, carrying only enough armor to ward off shrapnel and small arms fire. Additionally the Rolling Thunder is exceptionally vulnerable to infantry that get in close as it lacks any secondary weapons to fend them off with.

As dangerous as a single Roaring Thunder is, its low price means that even militaries lacking the funds for full modernization are generally able to purchase significant numbers of these weapons, and thus it is rarely found operating alone, but instead in batteries that are devastating operating in concert.

From all appearances it seems that the Roaring Thunder will continue to find regular employment with a wide number of agencies and governments for the foreseeable future as a cheap and effective weapons system.

380MM RAGNAROK FIRE SUPERIORITY

SYSTEM: When it comes to heavy artillery, few would dispute the claim of the 380mm Ragnarok Fire Superiority System to mastery in its field. Heavy, slow to deploy, expensive, slow to fire, and maintenance intensive, the Ragnarok is not a weapons system casually purchased or employed. However, once brought onto the field of battle and deployed, little is safe from this monster's massive reach and incredible firepower. Even the standard unguided high explosive rounds can demolish heavy armor with just a near miss and leave a crater large enough to hide a gunboat with room to spare.

However, out of the wide variety of ordinance the Ragnarok can fire, most feared is its anti-matter capability, one of the few ground weapons capable of lobbing such dangerous weapons at all, much less from a distance where it will not be destroyed by the effects of its own ammunition impacting and exploding. Almost never employed in such a fashion, the mere threat of the possibility has caused the collapse of organized resistance on several occasions as opposing forces have routed rather than face furious anti-matter fires against which they can mount scant defense.

EMP CANNON

While not typically suited for military use on the ground because most military vehicles contain enough shielding to make effective EMP cannon too large for general deployment, law enforcement and private security find them an excellent non-lethal weapon for disabling vehicles, civilian grade weaponry, and other electronics when necessary.

GLACIAL CORPORATION DIMMER: The Dimmer is a small handheld EMP device with very limited range and power. Not much larger than a standard sidearm the Dimmer is not typically standard issue for police but deployed as needed. Able to disable many electronic locks and security systems as well as numerous civilian weapons the Dimmer is a potent tool when used properly. Many security agencies use them as a way of making sure no electronic equipment is brought into prohibited areas, and while not foolproof, are generally considered a welcome additional tool.

BLACKLIGHT SCRAMBLER: The Scrambler is a larger shoulder mounted EMP weapon intended to allow ground personnel to disable even large unshielded vehicles. The Scrambler is commonly used by police to disable fleeing vehicles or for large area neutralization of weapons containing electronics. An uncommon weapon, the Scrambler is not in widespread usage due to being fairly specialized.

THE STOPPER: A very popular model, The Stopper is a rapid pulse EMP weapon designed for dual fixed mounting in civilian style vehicles. Lightweight for its size and powerful enough to disable anything short of space grade or military shielding, The Stopper has practically become a standard in any vehicle intended for general police use. The ability to modulate the power and firing rate of its shots allows for even airborne vehicles to be disabled relatively safely by a skilled operator. The original model was developed several centuries back and was so well designed that only minor changes have been made since its original introduction. The model is so popular that there is practically no successful competition with it in the current market and today there are few law enforcement officers on technologically developed worlds that would consider going on vehicular patrol without The Stopper under the hood of their vehicle.

NON-LETHAL WEAPONS

There are many circumstances in which police and security force might wish to incapacitate individuals or groups of people without necessarily inflicting lasting harm on them. While much of this type of technology has to be tuned to specific species, several very popular products have proven successful either because of their ability to be used on a wide spread of species at once, or being easily adjusted for different species.

CHEMICAL

Chemical weapons are at once both some of the most common and most dangerous employed in subduing people. Easily released in any number of ways, bad reactions and complications can potentially prove lethal in rare cases, and even then are not necessarily enough to stop a subject or subjects if they are determined enough.

LDX-591: The most commonly deployed chemical crowd suppressant LDX has proven effective against a wide variety of life forms without alteration, making it a favorite on those planets, stations, and ships where a number of different species can be reasonably expected to be involved in any civil disruptions requiring the use of crowd control devices. LDX-591 specifically is designed to partially remove oxygen from an atmosphere reducing it to a level that results in immobilization or unconsciousness. Other variants are designed to work with different kinds of atmospheres. All variants can be dispersed by canister, grenade, vent systems, or pressure guns.

NON-LETHAL WEAPONS

Non-Lethal	Level	Price	Capacity	Range	Usage	Bulk	Special
Blacklight Scrambler	7	33,420	1	75	1	3	20ft Burst, Electronic Devices must make a DC 15 Fort save or be disabled until repaired
Stopper	12	62,850	15	100	3	6	Electronic Devices must make a DC 15 Fort save or be disabled until repaired
Banshee Suppression Unit	7	31,450	20	10	1		Stunned/Deafened 3d4 Rounds DC 15 Fort Save
Migraine Riot Breaker	12	64,760	50	-	2		Stunned/Deafened 3d4 rounds, 25 ft Cone DC 15 Fort Save
Blinker Handheld Security Device	5	5,540	10	15	1		Stunned/Blinded 1d4 rounds DC 15 Fort Save
Noontime Crowd Disperser	15	99,890	20	-	2		Stunned/Blinded 1d4 round, 50ft Cone DC 15 Fort Save

SONIC

Non-lethal sonic weapons work on the principle of creating a sound frequency of a pitch that is so painful that those subject to it are incapacitated. Easily used to incapacitate large crowds with even relatively small projectors, sonic weapons are favored heavily by police and security forces as being easy to safely use with minimal training and quickly adjustable for use across a variety of races.

BANSHEE SUPPRESSION UNIT: The Banshee is a basic model nonlethal sonic weapon capable of being carried by a single human sized operator or mounted in linked batteries on a vehicle for larger crowd control situations. Officers or security personnel equipped with tunable ear protection can easily move among disabled subjects for arrest and capture. Lacking some of the bells and whistles of more expensive or comprehensive systems the Banshee is cheap enough to be standard issue among some of the better funded police forces of the galaxy.

MIGRAINE RIOT BREAKER: A vehicle mounted non-lethal weapons system the Migraine can easily suppress even a full scale riot in progress and is even powerful enough to override many forms of aural protection on its higher levels. In improper or inexperienced hands the Migraine can easily cause permanent hearing damage or even complete loss of hearing. At its highest levels the Migraine can even inflict physical damage at close range and when tightly focused can shatter brittle building substances. Time and again the Migraine has proven to be a powerful weapon for the forces of law and order, as well as those of oppression and corruption.

VISUAL

Non-lethal weapons depending on strobing lights to disable individuals or crowds are among the least popular. Requiring an expert to retune them to work on different species, completely ineffective on a large number of species, needing specific conditions for effective employment, and easily negated, visual weapons are nonetheless employed by some police forces for large riots or civil disturbances. Strobes

rely on rapidly flashing a bright light in patterns that induce seizures in a person or crowd, rendering them incapacitated for the authorities to take proper action.

BLINKER HANDHELD SECURITY DEVICE: Small and cheap enough to be carried by individual officers, the Blinker is effective when properly employed, but suffers a number of drawbacks that mean it often ends up remaining in the trunk when a call is answered. First, as a safety feature its frequencies can only be adjusted with special equipment rather than with the device itself, severely limiting its usefulness in jurisdictions where multiple species might be encountered. Additionally, the Blinker is relatively fragile and easily damaged by rough handling, a common condition in police work. Finally, though capable of being carried by a single officer, it is just bulky enough that its use indoors has consistently proven problematic. Overall, despite the potential for being an effective tool, a general intense dislike of strobe devices among police forces and several notable flaws has left the Blinker an underused and often hated piece of equipment.

NOONTIME CROWD DISPERSER: A large vehicle mounted device, the Noontime is a rare sight, only purchased by the most well funded police agencies that can regularly expect widespread civil disobedience. Able to use several different strobe patterns at once the Noontime is even relatively effective against several species at once. Capable of omni-directional projection the Noontime is often mounted on important governmental, or in rare cases, corporate buildings as a way of protecting the buildings in time of civil unrest. Mounted on low flying airborne vehicles the Noontime can quickly disperse even widespread riots over large areas. Considered one of the few truly effective non-lethal visual weapons, the Noontime is hampered more than anything by its high price tag and the fact that for anything other than regular use against large numbers of civilians it is massive overkill, the product has not seen the sales success it might otherwise have.

CYBERNETICS

With the ability to replace missing limbs and organs with cloned replacements, cybernetics and prosthetics are almost unheard of as replacements except in the very rare circumstances where a person's body refuses to accept such replacements. Where they are used most extensively is in the military where various augmentations are often employed, though rarely at the expense of removing a natural part of the body. Civilian usage can vary greatly from culture to culture, some of the more extreme ones advocating the replacement of every possible part of the body with mechanical equivalents, to others that refuse to use them at all. Most often though cybernetics that are used are small, unobvious, and provide some basic useful function. Small communication devices implanted in the mastoid are popular in field where communication over any real distance is necessary among a large group of people. Some people go a step farther and might have a thin miniature computer implanted in an arm under a natural looking covering. In the modern day cyberware, aside from the most extreme examples, can almost always be concealed or made to look completely natural.

DERMAL ARMOR: A popular choice among police, security personnel, some combat personnel, and certain prominent public figures, subdermal armor generally consists of numerous small ceramic plates implanted in the front and back and sometimes sides of the torso just under the first few layers of skin. Dermal armor isn't capable of withstanding sustained or heavy fire but can keep most side arms and some hand weapons from piercing to vital organs. Combined with actual armored clothing it has the potential of even preventing damage from more substantial weapons at least briefly. While normally only applied to the torso it can be applied practically anywhere on the body for protection that is practically undetectable without special equipment. Not a replacement in any sense for proper body armor, the few seconds of grace it can provide have more than once meant the difference between life and death for their user.

MASTOID COMMUNICATIONS IMPLANT: A popular choice among starship crews and companies requiring communication among separated members, but who don't need a range of frequencies, this tiny transmitter is implanted in a person's mastoid bone and responds to subvocalized speech which it broadcasts over a short range, needing a larger unit to broadcast more than a few feet. It then turns received signals into a vibration that travels through the bone to the ear which then perceives it as sound. They are often tuned into a ship's computer which automatically rebroadcasts. Its greatest disadvantages are its short range, single channel, and lack of any encryption capability. Most commonly it is used by a group leader or commander to replay order to subordinates, and only used by subordinates to report a crisis or emergency. The implant can be easily reset with a tool designed for the purpose so that it can be set to different frequencies.

NEURAL RELAY BOOSTERS: Often referred to simply as Boosters, neural relay boosters effectively bypass part of the nervous system with a much faster transmission medium, taking movement impulses and then rebroadcasting them to the receiving muscles in less time than it would take for the body's natural impulses. Unobtrusive and very simple, boosters are common among both military personnel and

CYBERNETIC AUGMENTATION (MASTOID COMMUNICATIONS IMPLANT)

Cost: 5,000

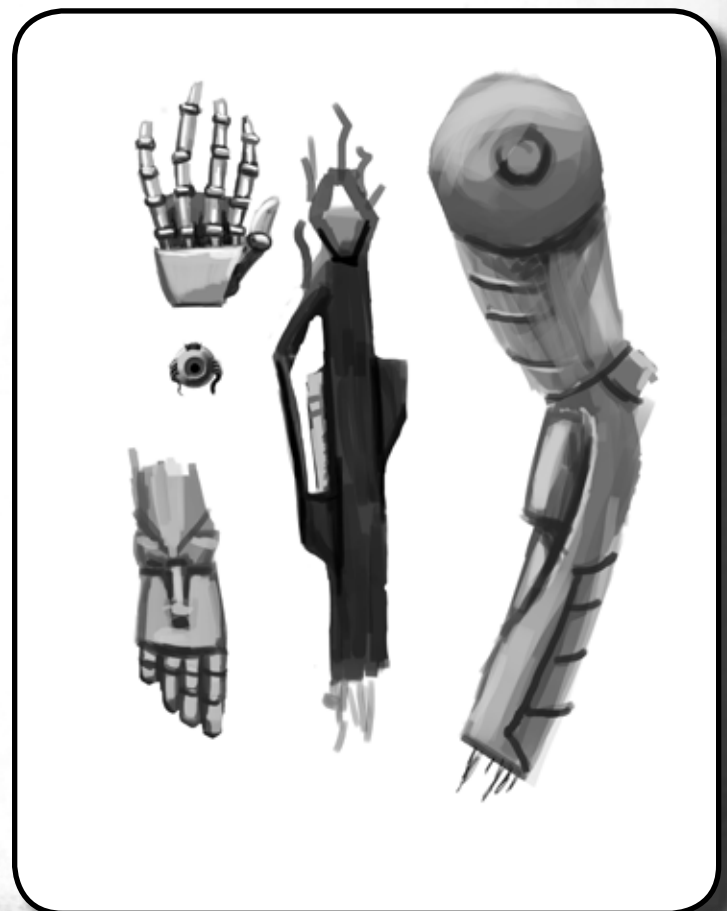
Level: 5

Effect: Provides short range communications out to five miles with a limit of five separate frequencies

those holding jobs where fractions of a second can make a critical difference. Once implanted it usually takes a minimum of a week's recovery time for a person to adjust to the new rate at which their bodies react to their brain's commands during which steady physical therapy is necessary.

BONE AND MUSCLE DENSITY ENHANCERS:

Almost a standard in many militaries, and not uncommon in civilian life, Bone and Muscle Density Enhancers (BMDEs) do exactly what they say, greatly increasing the bone and muscle density of the recipient, causing increases in overall strength, and the ability to withstand the stresses associated with moving increased masses. It has also proven to greatly reduce broken bones and strained muscles, though it requires an increased intake of nutrients to help compensate. This is largely why military rations are capable of sustaining unaugmented people nearly twice as long as most military personnel.



10: WE'RE ALL ALIENS TO SOMEONE

"Ok, listen up, those of you who are new here, this is the deal, those of you who've shipped with me before, consider this a reminder." The assembled serving staff of the liner looked at him in varying degrees of attentiveness. "We're due to have over five thousand passengers this run, and over two hundred different species. Remember they don't merely have their own dietary and environmental preferences, they may have vastly different cultural expectations than you may realize. What might be a joke to one species might be a deadly insult in another. Make sure you memorize the information packets on the species in your areas of responsibility, and if you have any questions, call the central directory immediately. Do not try and wing it." Some of the faces had sobered. "Now, for the most part we've tried to match you up with your own species where possible, or at least those that you're most compatible with. We've also given the more experienced staff what are expected to be the most difficult assignments, but don't go thinking this is going to be a pleasure cruise." That brought out various species equivalent of laughter. "All right, you're all dismissed, make a final walkthrough of your areas and make sure you read your packets before boarding begins."

BAGGALIANS

Baggalians are the primary species in the Baggal Empire, with a long established and stratified culture. Baggalian culture is a feudal monarchy with a tiered structure starting with the Monarchy at the top and the common people at the bottom, with a large number of noble houses and individual nobles in-between. There is constant tension between these groups as each of them strives to improve its position at the expense of those around them. This often breaks out into open warfare when not conducted at the level of subterfuge, back-room deals, and assassins.

The Baggal Empire is highly expansionistic and occupies several major systems, including some in which they have subdued the original inhabitants and incorporated them into their own culture and government. Baggalians tend to be very sure of their positions in life, whether noble or commoner and they interact with others based on their perceived station. This often leads to trouble with outsiders who are not a part of the Baggalian status system, especially among some nobles who attempt to treat them as mere commoners.

DESCRIPTION: Baggalians are bipedal humanoids that average four feet high with squat bodies and two pairs of limbs that end in equally dexterous appendages. Baggalians have two pairs of eyes, one above the other, one of which operates in the visible light spectrum, the other which operates in the infrared spectrum and a large pair of flexible ears on the top of their heads that are generally held upright, but can swivel to better focus on specific sounds. Their skin is a dark red with occasional splotches of yellow.

STAT ADJUSTMENTS: Constitution +2, Dexterity +2, HP+4

SIZE MODIFIER: Baggalians are Small humanoids with the Baggalian subtype and receive a +1 to their AC.

LANGUAGES: Baggalians begin play speaking Baggalian. Baggalians with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want.

RACIAL ABILITIES:

INFRARED VISION: Baggalians have a second set of eyes that allow them to see into the infrared spectrum as well as the normal visible light spectrums.

ACUTE HEARING: Due to the nature of their auditory organs Baggalians receive a +2 to all Perception rolls related to hearing.

STATUS CONSCIOUS: Baggalians are used to a very structured society. Therefore they gain a +2 bonus to Diplomacy and Sense Motive rolls in which the social standing of both parties is clear.

POLITICALLY SAVVY: Baggalians daily have to negotiate with various groups and subcultures and thus need to remain aware of shifting allegiances and political machinations. Therefore they gain a +2 to all Knowledge (Culture) checks.

DENTIANS

One of the major players in the Alliance, the Dentians are a complex people. Bipedal humanoids who average around five feet tall, their primary culture is still in the middle of a period of great change. Most of the major clans are split between the older patriarchal system or the more recent egalitarian system with the rift between the two groups at times leading to violence between individuals or even occasionally entire clans when things get out of hand.

Dentian culture is based around the concept of large family clans. While individual achievements are lauded, it is as much for the renown they bring a clan as the individual in question. Dentians tend to be very confrontational when dealing with people, trying to quickly establish just where a person stands on important topics. While no quicker to anger than most people, they have a well-deserved reputation for never forgetting a grudge. It may take years, but a Dentian will insure that any wrong done them is repaid with interest. In the converse, they tend to be very loyal friends and allies to those who gain their trust.

Dentians can be found in nearly any position within Alliance society, though most often they are on their way to working for a better position or leadership roles.

DESCRIPTION: Averaging five feet tall with the females slightly taller, Dentians are covered with short fur of a uniform



Baggalian, Dentian, Human

color, though the specific color can vary from individual, with various shades of brown being most common. Dentians have raised slightly pointed ears that can swivel on either side of their heads and widely spaced eyes that see light towards the red end of the spectrum. Their hands are tipped in non-retractable claws that are razorsharp on the inside.

STAT ADJUSTMENTS: Dexterity +2, Constitution +2, Charisma -2, Wisdom +2, HP +4

SIZE MODIFIER: Dentians are Medium Humanoids with the Dentian subtype and receive no modifiers due to size.

LANGUAGES: Dentians begin play speaking Dentian and Alliance Standard. Dentians with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want.

RACIAL ABILITIES:

SHARP CLAWS: Dentians have razor sharp claws that they can use in combat, inflicting 1d6 crit19-20x2 damage.

ACUTE SENSES: Dentians have above average hearing and vision and thus gain a +2 bonus to all Perception rolls.

PERCEPTIVE PERSONALITIES: Dentians have a great deal of practice quickly judging others characters, granting them a +2 bonus to all Sense Motive checks.

GRUDGE BEARERS: Dentians hold long and hard grudges. They gain a +1 morale bonus to any attack rolls against an individual who has been perceived to do them an injustice in the past.

GENERS

Geners were a race that held sway over a powerful empire populated by their numerous genetic creations which handled nearly all the menial work and brute labor, leaving the Geners themselves to take the positions of supervision and higher intellect. Geners were without question the best geneticists ever known, much of their technology was organic in nature and what was not relied heavily on being integrated with organic technology. The Geners espoused the idea of a oneness of race among all beings, and with their technology

had the ability to alter other races into their own image. Initially none realized that this was not merely their mindset, but something of a holy crusade for them.

When only a few beings accepted the Geners' offer they moved onto the next stage of their operations; that of assimilation by force. Numerous colonies suffered from unknown attacks that left no survivors before the cause of the attacks was determined. Eventually it became clear that the Geners, even after such measures as they had taken, had a different view of their crusade than others had gained, namely that only upon the removal of all other races would they change others into their own kind, until then captives were to be turned into warriors, workers, and other more horrible organisms.

After a war lasting more than six decades and that saw thousands of planets utterly destroyed the Geners' were eliminated as a race by the United Systems Alliance and its allies, ongoing efforts continue even in current day to scour the galaxy for any trace of Gener remains or holdouts.

DESCRIPTION: Geners were a symmetrical octagonal race whose limbs could all be used either for locomotion or manipulation. Geners were uniformly grey in color with the exception of bright red pupiless eyes. Able to spread themselves out to almost twenty feet across, they more typically when standing were around five feet by five. Fast and agile, Geners could also lift several times their own body weight which averaged around a ton. Geners proved to have remarkable regenerative abilities, almost on par with the most advanced medical technology available to the galaxy at large and could quickly regrow even lost appendages. No one is certain that the Geners even resemble their original forms, or if they even came all from a single race originally as they had undergone significant genetic alteration to create their form. What is known is that their actual numbers were relatively low, only rarely breeding for unknown reasons, much of their empire run under their supervision by their creations.

STAT ADJUSTMENTS: n/a

GREMLINS

Their name derived from their initial activities with the survey team that discovered their homeworld, Gremlins have more than lived up to their name since then. With an average height/length of six inches and an almost devious intelligence they are regarded as the premiere mechanics and engineers of the galaxy, their small size, nimbleness, incredible speed, and inherently electrical nature allowing them to often make repairs while equipment is still running, saving the wasted hours it would take to otherwise pull the machine apart to fix the problem normally. Often compared by humans to "mice on speed crossbred with spiders" Gremlins never go anywhere by the floor when a wall or even ceiling is available, and never walk when they can run, this has the added benefit of preventing them from being stepped on by larger creatures. Perhaps their biggest overall disadvantage is that they are considered incredibly cute by many races, humans in particular are often guilty of this, to the point of often being treated by those who should know better like adorable pets instead of fellow sentient beings. Suffice to say, Gremlins don't particularly care for such treatment and they have the means of making such dissatisfaction quite clear if a verbal request doesn't get the point across. Having evolved on a planet where nearly everything uses electricity to one degree or another,

they themselves, in addition to actually being able to feed off electrical energy are capable of producing a massive electric shock capable of knocking a person unconscious or even killing them should the Gremlin wish it. Gremlins do not care for being talked down to, and most will make it a point to state as much in completely unambiguous terms to the offending party. Overall Gremlins are in general an exceptionally easygoing race as long as those they're dealing with are willing to treat them as equals and they are known to form strong friendships.

DESCRIPTION: Gremlins average 5-8 inches in height/length, are covered with a soft layer of fur that varies in color by individual, and look a great deal like small kangaroo rats with slightly pointed ears. They also have a prehensile tail. While active, their fur tends to stand on end from a build up of static, if a Gremlin gets agitated it is not uncommon to see sparks jumping from one ear to the other, during times of extreme agitation electricity can start jumping between not only both ears but the tail and the whiskers as well while a smell of ozone will begin to pervade the atmosphere.

STAT ADJUSTMENTS: Physical: Strength -6, Dexterity +6, +2 HP

SIZE MODIFIERS: Gremlins are Tiny Rodents with the Gremlin subtype and gain a +2 modifier to AC.

LANGUAGES: Gremlins begin play speaking Gremlin and Alliance Standard. Gremlins with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want.

SPEED: Gremlins have a move speed of 60ft a round.

RACIAL ABILITIES

ELECTRIC SHOCK: Gremlins are capable of producing an electric shock capable of stunning a person or even killing them. By making a melee touch attack a Gremlin can inflict 1d3 electric damage for every two levels and force the target to roll a Fortitude check versus DC10+Con the Gremlin's modifier or be knocked unconscious for 1d6 rounds. Alternatively they can choose to forgo the damage in favor of raising the DC of the save by +1 for every two levels.

ELECTRIC IMMUNITY: Gremlins are completely immune to any electrical damage.

ELECTRIC DEPENDENCE: While Gremlins can vary their diet, having regular access to a source of electricity is vital to their continued health. Any time a Gremlin goes more than 24hrs without access to a source of electrical energy they become fatigued, have their movement speed halved, and can no longer use their Electric Shock ability. The Gremlin also begins to suffer the effects of Starvation. These modifiers are removed once they regain access to a source of electricity.

WALL CRAWLERS: Gremlins have extremely fine but stiff hairs on their hands and feet that allow them to navigate across most surfaces and even on walls and ceilings. Gremlins may always take 20 on any Acrobatics checks for the purpose of crossing a surface.

ALLIANCE HUMANS

One of the most widespread and numerous races, humans are also a race that many others have trouble understanding, not the least because unlike many other species that have at least generally similar cultural outlooks often derived from unification before reaching the stars, humanity is a mix of cultures and traditions that seems to only be growing, many often adopting the cultures of other species or mixing aspects of different cultures into something new and individual. It's enough to give any sane sapient a mindache.

However this diversity in culture and body types may well be why humans have proven to be such a successful species. Where other species have been limited by need or preference to only exploit and inhabit specific environments, humans can be found nearly anywhere engaged in practically any occupation. Additionally, many consider that their individuality and lack of conformity give them an edge over other species as many consider it impossible to know what any individual human will do without personal observation of the individuals in question.

The human homeworld has long been lost to history though dozens of planets make the claim, it is likely at this late date it will never be proven conclusively which if any of them is right. Because of this Humans form stronger attachments to the world they grow up on rather than some unknown ancestral homeworld.

While widespread throughout space those members of the race belonging to the Alliance or having reached the same technological level are the most widespread. They tend to be healthier and quicker of thought than baseline members of their species due to extensive nanite suites and cleaning up of genetic the genetic code.

DESCRIPTION: Humans are bipeds who generally range from 5'9" to 6'3" with females being slightly smaller, however this can vary widely as in addition to normal differences, after many generations or living in extreme environments there are humans whose physiology varies greatly from the generally accepted norm for the species, those living in extremely high or low gravity being just two examples.

STAT ADJUSTMENTS: +2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, +6 HP

SIZE MODIFIERS: Alliance Humans are Medium Humanoids with the Human subtype and receive no modifiers due to size.

LANGUAGES: Humans begin play speaking Alliance Standard. Humans with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want.

RACIAL ABILITIES:

BONUS FEAT: Alliance Humans gain one bonus feat at 1st level.

IG'N

The Ig'n are a relatively new race to interstellar space, but they have had much of their system well colonized and settled for several centuries before first contact with other races. Industrious and energetic, the Ig'n are comprised of three different castes, workers, warriors, and supervisors and are almost always found at least in groups of three as each caste secretes pheromones that the other castes need to remain healthy, but as long as at least one of each is available, there need not be more than one of each caste even in a large group. They are not however a hive mind species or show any sign of telethapy. Ig'n tend to be friendly, outgoing and mingle well with other races. Groups of them are not uncommon and their bubble domed merchant ships are increasingly common sights throughout the Alliance and beyond. The Ig'n joined the Alliance during the height of the Helix War when they were discovered by Alliance survey teams scouting for Gener systems and outposts. The Ig'n's quickly updated military proved vital a few years later when a massive Gener offensive sliced into their section of space. Fighting alongside available Alliance forces the Ig'n's warriors fought against steep odds forcing their enemy to pay for every inch of space and clear down to the planetary surface where fierce fighting erupted even as the battle in space continued. When the Geners were finally driven off much of their planet was in ruins and much of the infrastructure of their system was destroyed. Despite this the survivors turned to rebuilding with a will and in current day there is little evidence left of the carnage that engulfed their civilization other than the simple memorials that dot their planet. Since the war the species has actively worked to colonize new systems and is renowned for the speed at which they turn colonies into fully functional systems.

One thing the Ig'n seem to mostly lack is any overwhelming sense of curiosity, it was primarily this that kept them from exploring their own system for so long, and once there, prevented them from putting serious effort into attempting to explore beyond their own system or develop the technology needed to do so.

There is a great deal of evidence that suggests the Ig'n were at some time in the distant past the subject of extensive genetic manipulation or were even created entirely from whole cloth. The most common theory at this point in time is that they were to be a servant race to a more technologically advanced species. No one knows for certain though, and if such was the case there is no evidence as to who the creator race might have been or what happened to them. The Ig'n themselves do not seem overly concerned with the idea though they continue to research it at their own pace with no real sense of urgency.

DESCRIPTION: All Ig'n are mammal like bipeds with soft brown fur and a pair of large eyes that see in the infrared. Supervisors are the least physically imposing of the race, averaging just under six feet tall and of slim build. While soldier and worker castes are capable of independent action and are far from ignorant or showing initiative the presence of a supervisor grants them a singleness of direction and purpose that greatly increases the effectiveness of any group of Ig'n.

Workers are shorter, about five feet tall, but wider, and are quite powerful, they form the backbone of Ig'n civilization filling in almost any role one can think of. Industrious workers can engage in physical activity for long periods of time with



Ig'n Supervisor, Ig'n Worker, Ig'n Warrior

little need for rest and are becoming popular as mobile workforces throughout the galaxy.

Warriors are the largest of the castes, almost seven feet tall, they are lean and fast while retaining much of the strength of the worker caste. While all Ig'n have small claws on the tips of their appendages, the claws on the warrior caste are longer and sharper than those of the other two castes.

When two Ig'n of the same caste mate the offspring are always of that caste, whenever two Ig'n of different castes mate the offspring are always of the third caste. This gives the species the ability to quickly breed to meet their civilization's needs.

Ig'n mature within ten years and their early lives are generally kept busy learning the skills needed for their roles in life, though each caste seems to have an uncanny knowledge of how to perform within their fields.

STAT ADJUSTMENTS:

SUPERVISORS: +2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma, -2 Strength, -2 Constitution, +2 HP

WORKERS: +2 Strength, +2 Constitution, +4 HP

WARRIORS: +4 Strength, +6 HP

SIZE MODIFIERS: Supervisors and Workers are Medium Humanoids with the Ig'n subtype and receive no modifiers due to size. Warriors are Large Humanoids with the Ig'n subtype and suffer a -1 to AC.

LANGUAGES: All Ig'n begin play speaking Ig'n. Additionally Supervisors begin speaking Alliance Standard. Ig'ns with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want.

RACIAL ABILITIES

INFRARED VISION: Ig'n can see the infrared spectrum but lack the ability to see into the normal visual spectrum.

COOPERATIVE: Ig'n work best together, therefore they double any aid another bonuses when working with members of their own species or gain a +1 when working with members of another species.

UNITY: Ig'n gain a +2 morale bonus as long as they are around at least one of each of the other castes.

PHEROMONAL HEALTH: If an Ig'n goes more than three days without being in the presence of a member of each of the other castes their health begins to suffer. For each subsequent day they lose -1 Constitution.

ITELLIANS

Itellians are newcomers to the galactic arena but are rapidly making a name for themselves, not however one that most other races would be eager to claim for themselves. Brutish and primitive even by the widely accepted standards of tolerance generally practiced, Itellians have managed to alarm and aggravate all those they have come in contact with their openly embraced aggression and opportunism. Having conquered several primitive nearby systems and enslaved their populations, the Itellians attempted to continue the process with their galactic neighbors and rapidly found themselves badly outclassed, with most of their space fleet destroyed. Only the fact that the other parties involved (not including the Alliance) lacked the resources to engage in the wholesale conquest that would have been necessary to eliminate the threat, instead settling for merely dealing with the immediate threat.

Since then the Itellians have consolidated their position, and are steadily rebuilding and upgrading their forces. Meanwhile various Itellian "pirates" have begun raiding well beyond their established borders, and cases of attempted espionage have increased by an order of magnitude.

An Itellian will only respect an individual who proves themselves to be the stronger individual and even then will take any perceived opportunity to assert power over that individual. Working in gangs from a young age that eventually evolve into the adult groups that continue to remain together in a specific profession, Itellians are held together more by the fear of those above them in the hierarchy and unwilling to leave their group for fear of becoming a victim of other groups.

Some Itellians have begun to offer themselves as cheap mercenaries willing to accept jobs other groups won't touch and have begun to find employment by those looking to get dirty deeds done without dirtying their own hands. Without fail, these operations even when they have succeeded resulted in excessive damage, casualties, and wastage. Despite that, their habit of not asking questions or turning away any job, no matter how distasteful most might find it seems to insure that they will continue to find employment.

DESCRIPTION: Itellians are a species that average between three and three and a half feet tall, two to three feet long, and are lightly built with thin hollow bones. Itellians only have a single gender and reproduce through impartial exchanges of genetic material. Itellians have three eyes spaced equally around their heads and a six limbed body that rises in the front into an upright torso with the primary manipulator limbs. Their skin is a blotchy pattern of bright colors and is layered with patterns of thin scales.

STAT ADJUSTMENTS: Constitution +4, Wisdom -2, Charisma -2, +6 HP

SIZE MODIFIERS: Itellians are considered Small Humanoids with the Itellian subtype and gain a +1 to AC.

LANGUAGES: Itellians begin play speaking Itellian. Itellians with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want.

RACIAL ABILITIES

AGGRESSIVE NEGOTIATIONS: Itellians gain a +2 to all Intimidate checks due to their brutal and aggressive nature.

EYES IN THE BACKS OF THEIR HEADS: Itellians cannot be flanked and gain a +4 bonus on Perception checks related to sight.

ZEROED IN: Because of their superior vision Itellians gain a +1 on all ranged attacks.

SAGARENS

The Sagarens are a semi-humanoid canid race. The Sagarens left their planet millennia ago when it was found that their star would soon go nova. Escaping in planetoid sized spacecraft they are now nomads who wander the space lanes, trading with any and everyone. Generations of living in space and defending their homes from aggressors have caused them to become some of the best pilots in the galaxy. While most stay at home to work and defend the ships, many freelance, some offering their services wherever the job is simply too dangerous for the average pilot, others working as bodyguards, mechanics, and traders. They are a relatively easygoing race as a whole, getting along with most other species with little problem. It is said that the Sagarens live for the thrill of the hunt, tracking down their prey, sentient or otherwise, until they run it to the ground for the kill. Many Sagarens join close-knit groups known as hunt packs. On rare occasions, one who is not a Sagaren may be inducted into a pack if they have proven themselves worthy to their Sagaren comrades. Blood bonding between individual warriors is also common.

DESCRIPTION: A Sagaren is a bipedal humanoid that averages between five and six feet tall standing with the males being slightly larger than the females. A Sagaren's body is covered with a layer of short fur that can vary widely in both coloration and patches. Their head is largely canine, with eye colors tending towards the darker hues, though lighter colored eyes are not unheard of. A Sagaren's forehands conceal razor sharp retractable claws that are capable of inflicting grievous wounds.

STAT ADJUSTMENTS: Strength +2, Dexterity +2, +4 HP

SIZE MODIFIERS: Sagarens are considered Medium Humanoids with the Sagaren subtype and receive no modifiers due to size.

LANGUAGES: Sagarens begin play speaking Sagaren. Sagarens with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want.

RACIAL ABILITIES:

SHARP CLAWS: Sagarens have razor sharp claws that they can use in combat, inflicting 1d6 crit19-20x2 damage.

TECHNICALLY ADEPT: Due to the nature of their upbringing Sagarens may choose to add +2 to one of the following, Piloting, Knowledge (Engineering), or Repair. This choice must be made at first level and once made cannot be changed.



Ig'n, Itellian, Sagaren, Tallathian

CERTAINTY OF PURPOSE: Their racial belief in a greater purpose allows Sagarens to be indomitable in the face of great odds. Therefore they gain a +2 bonus to all Will saves versus fear.

TALLATHIANS

A long time Alliance species, the Tallathians resemble centaur like avians. A relatively pacific species the Tallathians are perhaps best known as interstellar missionaries. Practicing a variety of faiths Tallathians can be found almost anywhere inside or outside the territory of the United Systems Alliance, even the most remote outpost may host at least temporarily one of these wandering holy beings. Once a Tallathian has chosen a religion to follow, generally chosen at the time of their adulthood, but sometimes later in life, it is almost unheard of for them to either cease following it or to change to another religion. Almost a fifth of the species are full time missionaries and supported by one religious organization or another they spread "The Word" throughout the galaxy.

Generally energetic speakers and very charismatic, Tallathian missionaries can often be found at the center of

large crowds made up of either worshipers of the relevant faith, those who are interested, and, most often on the more backwater worlds, those looking for some form of entertainment. When two or more Tallathian missionaries of different faiths chose to preach simultaneously things can become very energetic as each tries to outdo the other while at the same time trying to undermine their competitor. And if the different congregations should choose to take part it is not unheard of for actual violence to take place.

Dedicated to their holy duty, more than one has been martyred in the name of their cause and many serving as chaplains in various services have received the highest respective decorations as they remained behind to provide aid and comfort to the dead and dying.

It is thought that the focus and fascination so many Tallathians have shown for religion comes in large part from the lack of any institution of a similar nature in their culture until they came into contact with other species.

DESCRIPTION: Tallathians are a taurian six limbed species, capable of either moving on all six limbs at great speed, standing partially or fully upright to allow the use of their front

two pairs of limbs to act as hands. Two pairs of semi-circular vestigial wings can unfan from along their spine and each limb has a smaller fringe along its back. These are remains from a time far back in history when their species ancestors could achieve flight. The rest of their skin is made up of small hard overlapping scales. Adults can reach six feet in length, but rarely weigh more than a hundred twenty pounds due to their lightweight construction. Quick and agile, they are not well suited for most physical confrontations but they excel at outthinking and outmaneuvering their opponents. Of generally dull grey plumage, occasionally one will be born with a rainbow spectrum of colors and are accorded special honors.

STAT ADJUSTMENTS: Strength -2, Dexterity +2, Wisdom +2, Charisma +2, +2 HP

SPEED: 40ft/rd

SIZE MODIFIERS: Tellathians are considered Medium Taurians with the Tellathian subtype and receive no modifiers due to size.

LANGUAGES: Tellathians begin play speaking Tellathian and Alliance Standard. Tellathians with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want.

RACIAL ABILITIES:

GREAT ORATORS: Tallathians are experts at swaying others through words. They gain a +2 to all Diplomacy checks.

THE GOOD BOOK: Even Tallathians who do not take up a religious calling normally have a good grasp of most of the major religions. They gain a +2 to all Knowledge (Mysticism) rolls.

DIVINELY INSPIRED: Calling on the power of their faith Tallathians are capable of pushing themselves to great acts. Once a day a Tallathian may add +1 to any roll.

AERIAL HERITAGE: Due to their ancestor's ability to fly modern Tallathians retain a fine sense of kinesthesia. This grants all Tallathians a +1 to Piloting checks and +2 to all Acrobatics checks.

11: PEOPLE OF NOTE

"Today is the release of An Abbreviated Biography of the Galaxy by the famed Gremlin author Rxxttilan. In it are compiled over five thousand short biographies of some of the most important figures in recent history, the famous, the infamous, and the practically unknown. Much speculation has taken place about who is and is not included in the book, along with why. Reportedly the author has received all manner of threats and bribes by parties wanting their inclusion in the book or a more favorable representation, but he has repeatedly assured that he has refused all such things. He has said though that much of the information contained in his book has previously been secret or unknown and is likely to send ripples throughout the galaxy upon its public release. Stay tuned as we keep you updated on the latest developments."

ADMIRAL BRIAN MCLEOD

Within the USDF Brian McLeod is something of an icon, a hard fighting starship captain who came up from the engineering deck, he made his name initially in several hard fought engagements in several different conflicts, but it was after he was transferred to a desk that he became more than another captain that had made his name in combat. Working his way up through the Engineering Department he continually pushed for new and more effective technologies and ship designs. With the advent of the Helix War he found himself placed in charge of the entire USDF Engineering Department and before long new technologies and ship designs began to rapidly reach the front lines. It was under his direction, and oftentimes direct contributions, that devices and designs such as the gravic cannon, first generation shielding technology, more advanced powerplants, improved combat armor for infantry, the Ulysses class assault carrier, increased automation for ships and stations, and numerous other innovations that revolutionized not just the USDF, but many other aspects of galactic life. Only recently retired at the rank of Admiral, Brian McLeod has definitively left his stamp on the USDF and the galaxy and is widely regarded as a revolutionary in the field of engineering.

COLONEL MATTHEW ANGEL

The human Matthew Angel is one of the few universally acclaimed heroes of the United Systems Alliance. First making a name for himself in the Willian Cluster Campaign, he went onto even greater exploits during the Helix War. Losing his family early in the war, he was repeatedly wounded and unable to accept regeneration therapy or vat grown organs he has had to settle for cybernetic replacements of his right arm and eye after a close encounter with a plasma blast. He has repeatedly refused promotion in order to stay close to his people and only passed the rank of Captain by a promotion passed while he was unconscious and the honorary promotion granted to USDF personnel upon completion of at least forty years of service upon retirement. When the Strikers refused to let him continue in combat because of the maintenance liability his cybernetics offered he transferred to the USDF where he

rose to the rank of Wing Commander before the war ended. Discharged at the end as the most decorated member of the USDF in Alliance history he was enlisted by the Guardians and unlike many was often in the spotlight in the course of his duties.

Leading a private exploration expedition commanding the Star Runner encountered both the Helapian automations and the Sagaren Collective, being instrumental in the forging of the alliance that followed. Recalled to duty to serve as a military liaison to the Sagaren Collective he eventually was transferred to the USAS Ulysses to assist in the first military exchange with the Collective. Riding out the Anteries Border Dispute as the head of the Ulysses' Striker compliment he finally retired for good shortly afterwards.

Having settled down with his bond-mate M'lee D'ress he currently serves as her body guard in her duties as Vice-Leader, having already saved her life several times in this capacity.

Fanatically dedicated to the Alliance, armed with what at the time were the most advanced soldier boosts and augmentations, a noted tactician, and leader whose writings are required reading by numerous militaries, an engineer and mechanic who has several patents, to many he seems the ideal of what a person can achieve in the Alliance with courage, perseverance, and a little luck.

VICE-LEADER M'LEE D'RESS

Dentian M'lee D'ress came from a clan divided amongst the progressives and the traditionalists and was fortunate enough to have her immediate family amongst the former. Entering the USDF she started as a strike craft pilot and encountered her eventual bond mate Matthew Angel during the Willian Cluster Campaign when he led his platoon deep behind enemy lines to rescue her after her strike craft crashed.

A careerist, she rapidly rose to captaincy and served with honor throughout the coming Helix War, reaching the rank of commodore by the end of the war due to her refusal of an admiral's rank which would have kept her from the captain's chair. By war's end she had gained the distinction of commanding the Alliance's most successful raiding squadron, its actions materially assisting in the successful conclusion of the war.

Just before the Anteries Border Dispute her record led to her being given command of the untested assault carrier U.S.A.S. Ulysses in which she was pivotal in bringing to an end. It was during this time that the several decades old on again off again relationship between herself and Matthew Angel solidified.

Retiring shortly after the conflict she was chosen for the position of the Dentian Vice-Leader, an action which ignited the Dentian Civil War. Currently still serving in the position it seems likely she will ascend to the position of Leader when the current one steps down.



GROUP COMMANDER LI'BUS MYRTRAX

Li'bus Myrtrax is a Sagaren Hunter with a long and honorable history even before the arrival of Sagarens in this section of the galaxy. Originally a teacher of history he eventually became a freelance strike craft pilot, traveling many of the worlds in the area of space his Homeship occupied at the time, in the process not only making a name for himself, but becoming something of a recognized expert in dealing with alien races. When he finally returned home and joined his Homeship's Defense Forces his skill and rank quickly brought him command of an entire strike craft wing, and finally command of an entire carrier's strike craft component. It was this position he held when his Homeship traveled to a new area and encountered the robotic remains of the Helapians, and eventually after several years of stalemated conflict, encountered an Alliance private exploration vessel under the command of a then retired Matthew Angel caught between a Sagaren task force responding to a garbled distress call in an unknown language and a Helapian fleet that had been hunting down the Alliance vessel after the genocidal robots had stumbled over it due to a freak accident. It was at Group Commander Myrtrax's urging that the Task Force Commander took his outnumbered forces in to engage the Helapians in defense of the strange vessel that was putting up a desperate losing fight after finally having been run to ground. It was Group Commander Myrtrax that took on the primary role in establishing relations with the mixed crew that finally emerged from the badly damaged vessel. And it was he who helped forge the initial bonds that eventually led to the treaty between

the Sagaren Collective and the United Systems Alliance. Afterwards he led the first military exchange mission and he and his unit served with distinction during the maiden voyage of the U.S.A.S. Ulysses. At the moment Li'bus Myrtrax is serving as the military liaison to the Alliance forces in Sagaren space but is known to regularly travel about on various matters official and otherwise.

HIS ROYAL MAJESTY HIBAN RISKALIAN IV

The current ruler of the Baggalian Empire, Riskalian literally and figuratively climbed to power over a pile of bodies. Firm, ruthless, highly intelligent, and a person of his word, Riskalian may well be the best chance the Empire has of true unification.

Originally a distant member of the royal family, he took advantage of the upheaval and distraction caused by the Empire's conflict with the Alliance to strike against the established rulers. Successfully taking the throne he broke with tradition by ruthlessly eliminating anyone who seemed to have even the slightest chance of repeating his actions. Quickly arranging a peace with the Alliance that satisfied both sides, he has set about reigning in the various Noble Houses by restricting their freedom of action and making them more accountable for the actions of their members.

Such a rise from obscurity to the heights of power is almost unheard of within the Empire and many view it with suspicion, wondering just how he arranged for such things to come about.

No one is entirely certain what his long term goals are, but it seems likely that they focus on expanding the Empire in some manner. Most outside powers though seem to be looking forward to dealing with a more stable and centralized Empire as being more predicable than the old Empire.

OVERLORD HOYTDINAR

The current supreme leader of the Itellian Federation, Overlord Hoytdinar reached its position by being willing and able to use more force than it's competitors, steadily taking over their homeworld before culminating in a nuclear strike that crushed its remaining foes. By sheer force of personality it has brought a large number of Itellians under its control and brought the other major warlords under some degree of control. However its position is precarious to say the very least and most of its time and energy is spent simply trying to hold onto its position and power, leaving the major Itellian warlords mostly free to conduct their own business. Should it get a better hold on the Itellians as a whole they could prove a viable threat to their local galactic region, but it seems unlikely that it will be able to do this.

12: SYSTEMS & PLANETS

Outside intelligences, exploring the solar system with true impartiality, would be quite likely to enter the sun in their records thus: Star X, spectral class G0, 4 planets plus debris.

— Isaac Asimov,

Essay 16, 'By Jove!'. In View From a Height (1963), 227

PLANETARY DESIGNATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

The number and variety of planets and stars that fill the galaxy are diverse enough that it would be impossible to provide a complete catalog. However a list provided here will attempt to list and briefly describe some of the more common types of planets and stars.

PLANETS

From barren asteroids to verdant worlds full of life, if it isn't a mass of burning incandescent gas, you can probably find it here.

D%	World Type
1-3	Paradise World
4-13	Devil World
14-22	Greenhouse World
23-32	Rock World
33-43	Super World
44-50	Standard World
51-59	Marginal World
60-66	Ocean World
67-80	Marble World
80-95	Iceball World
96-100	Rogue World

CLASS 1 (PARADISE) WORLDS: Featuring a pleasant atmosphere, comfortable gravity, abundant resources, and vibrant life, Class 1 worlds earn the name of Paradise worlds. Much sought after for colonization, more than one paradise world has held its secret serpents, but by and large, they are the easiest places in which to begin a new world. Highly productive it is not uncommon for Paradise worlds to be the center of a Sector's economy and governance. Paradise worlds also tend to have a higher than usual chance of fostering a sapient race and those moving to investigate one are advised to be wary lest the natives prove restless.

CLASS 2 (DEVIL) WORLDS: Baked, swept with radiation, often with their surfaces near the melting point, Class 2

worlds are generally those that circle just outside the line at which point it would be impossible for them to hold together from being too close to a star. Many are very small and rocky while completely lacking in an atmosphere, either too small to retain one, or suffering having it ripped away by powerful solar winds. Existence on these worlds is only possible by digging deep enough to escape the fury of the nearby star.

CLASS 3 (GREENHOUSE) WORLDS: Completely inhospitable to life even when supported by modern technology, Class 3 worlds are deadly places, swept by poisonous gases, often suffering rains of acid and not uncommonly covered with molten rocks and metals, the air temperature of a Greenhouse world is enough to kill most species outright.

CLASS 4 (ROCK) WORLDS: Asteroids most commonly fall into this category, when a Class 4 has an atmosphere it is usually uninteresting in the extreme. Barren of life or interesting features, many are little more than rocky conglomerations. Some however bear large amounts of precious minerals that can be mined, some smaller asteroids have been almost wholly consumed by eager mining companies, leaving only a scattering of loose rubble behind. More than one Class 4 world bears the heavy scarring of extensive mining operations across and under its surface; with no need to worry about the environment miners are able to produce material far more efficiently than on life holding planets.

CLASS 5 (SUPERS) WORLDS: Class 5 worlds are massive gas giants that just fall short of the mass necessary to have begun sustained combustion as a star. Space around these giants is almost always filled with hard radiation, fluxuating magnetic fields, and numerous other hazards including all sorts of debris attracted by their gravity wells up to the size of terrestrial planets. In many cases these captured wanderers are of more use and more interesting than their capturer, however, many Class 5 Supers are regularly used as a place to gather hydrogen for the powering of fusion plants by specially equipped craft or ships diving into the upper atmosphere and gathering the needed material. Some even have permanent siphoning stations in low orbit that can fuel most of a system.

CLASS 6 (STANDARD) WORLDS: Class 6 worlds are worlds that are relatively easy to inhabit, but for whatever reason do not qualify as Class 1 worlds. It may be a case of gravity being too high or low, a less than ideal amount of water, hostile water, dangerous indigenous species, or any number or combination of other factors, but are still survivable without special equipment. Class 6 Standards make up the larger part of inhabited worlds, though many over time have been tamed to various degrees. Life on these worlds while not easy is by no means above the capability of the average sapient and much of the galaxy's population resides quite comfortably on such worlds.

CLASS 7 (MARGINAL) WORLDS: Class 7 worlds are planets that fail in at least one major category to be easily inhabitable. Whatever the case, Marginal worlds require some form of special equipment to be livable, breathing masks and/or special clothing are typical examples. Marginal worlds are often found just outside the band of space in a star system where Class 1 and Class 6 worlds tend to form and are very common. Class 7 worlds are generally only inhabited when there are a lack of more suitable worlds in a region, or when there is something of enough worth on the planet to encourage the growth of more than a small series of outposts. The other major cause for settlement of Class 7 worlds is during a race's initial forays into space when they have to take what they can reach. With time and a great deal of effort some Class 7 worlds can be terraformed into Class 6 worlds.

CLASS 8 (OCEAN) WORLDS: Class 8 worlds would otherwise be Class 1, Class 7, or Class 6 worlds except for the fact that the majority of their surface is covered with water with very little available land mass for standard settlement. There are actually many races that find these worlds by far the most suitable and they aggressively colonize these worlds. They are also popular among fringe groups who can afford the resources necessary to establish underwater colonies as they tend to be largely left alone. Class 8 worlds are often notorious for the massive powerful storms that can cover their surfaces and laugh at most attempts at above ground inhabitation. The creatures that can inhabit these worlds can grow to truly monstrous proportions and thus are favored grounds for many sporting expeditions by big game hunters and fishermen. While not as common as Class 6 or class 7 worlds, Class 8 worlds are more numerous than Class 1 worlds and thus are not uncommonly inhabited out of necessity or choice. Many if nothing else maintain outposts where their enormous water reserves can be broken down into fuel for starships, and many of these have been expanded by militaries into full fledged support bases for their navies.

CLASS 9 (MARBLE) WORLDS: Class 9 worlds are very similar to Class 5 Supers in that they are gas giants many times the size of terrestrial planetoids, however they are not nearly as massive as Class 5's and as such do not generally acquire micro systems quite as extensive. Like Class 5's, Marble worlds are often the sites for orbital fueling stations fueling stations and are favored due to their generally lower gravity and other reduced hazards. Marbles tend to have fairly extensive micro-systems in orbit around them, even up to the size of inhabitable planetoids.

CLASS 10 (ICEBALL) WORLDS: Generally the smallest of planetoids, often even smaller than Class 2 Devil worlds, Iceball worlds are primarily made up of frozen substances, many of which would be gasses at temperatures more reasonable, with bits and pieces of rocky debris scattered throughout. By necessity even in a system with a small weak star Class 10's can only exist in the outermost fringes where the radiant heat is weakest. This also means that Iceballs tend to be the planets most often lost by a solar system, already being the most weakly attached to a given star. Generally considered useless for anything other than the occasional outer system sensor post, Class 10's are largely ignored by the galaxy at large.

CLASS 11 (ROGUE) WORLDS: Technically a Class 11 world can be any of the previous classifications. The prime

requirement for Class 11 be that it exist outside an established solar system. However, the act of being thrown from a solar system in addition to the sudden lack of light and warmth generally result in drastic changes for many classes of planets, this is especially true for planets typically considered to be inhabitable. Oceans freeze, life dies out, eventually even the atmosphere begins to rain down as temperatures drop, during gasses into solids. Gas giants tend to fare much better, their own internal processes producing enough heat to sustain their normal states.

Rogue worlds can be created through a variety of processes, the most common of which is the passage of a large body near or through a solar system. Black holes, neutron stars, even a large rouge planet coming close enough might be enough to throw planets out of their established orbits and into the cold unforgiving depths of interstellar space. Surprisingly Rouges are found fairly commonly given the circumstances of their creation, the repeated dropping into normal space required by FTL travel means that especially around more traveled trade lanes there is enough sensor coverage that many of these stray worlds are detected, even in the vastness of space.

Astonishingly, at least three have been discovered over the millennium capable of supporting life on their surfaces, somehow warmed by internal or intrinsic properties that allowed life to continue or to emerge. These strange worlds each host a full array of intrigued scientists and their teams from around the known galaxy. Several other worlds have been discovered bearing on them the ruins of previous civilizations that failed to survive the effects of being tossed into the void.

STARS

A star is a massive, luminous ball of plasma that is held together by gravity. These massive spheres are the prime component of any solar system, without which it would be nothing more than a loose nebula of gas and debris. Stars fall into several primary classifications depending on their mass and age. Below will be covered the most common types.

D%	Star Type
1-3	Black Hole
4-13	Type K
14-22	Type O
23-32	White Dwarf
33-38	Type F
39-50	Type M
51-55	Nebula
56-59	Protostar
60-63	Type B
64-66	Neutron Star
67-80	Type A
80-95	Type G
96-100	Pulsar

TYPE O: Type O stars are hot massive giants among even their own kind that dump much of their radiation in the ultra-violet range. Quick to burn through their hydrogen fuel, they rarely survive long in their primary state. Compared to other stars in the galaxy they are relatively rare, the majority having burned out long ago.

TYPE B: Type B stars are far smaller than Type O's, but still giants among stars. Like Type O's they burn through their supplies of hydrogen remarkably fast and thus are relatively short lived. Type B's tend to shine in the blue part of the visible light spectrum and are very bright, with the accompanying amounts of radiation.

TYPE A: Type A stars are common and tend to glow white or bluish white and are normally easily visible with the naked eye.

TYPE F: Type F Stars are also very common and glow a bright white.

TYPE G: Type G stars are very common and glow yellow. Fairly long lived, type G stars are commonly the centers of extensive solar systems, the relatively lesser amounts of radiation, solar winds, and gravity allowing a greater number and variety of planets to often form while still retaining enough gravity to avoid losing much of its system to deep space. For some reason Type G stars are the ones that most commonly give rise to sapient life, almost a third of all sentient races having their origin around a Type G.

TYPE K: Type K stars are commonly found giants and burn cooler than Type G's with an orange light.

TYPE M: Type M stars are the most common stars in the galaxy, glowing a dark red they are very low mass, but can often take up a great deal of volume in addition to being smaller than the previous types of stars mentioned. Older stars, Type M's are known for collecting all sorts of oddities in orbit around them and often hold surprises.

ODDITIES

Here you will find objects that do not fit into either of the above categories but are still of significance to travelers.

BLACK HOLE: A black hole is a region of space in which the gravitational field is so powerful that nothing, including light, can escape its pull. The black hole has a one-way surface, called an event horizon, into which objects can fall, but out of which nothing can come. It is called "black" because it absorbs all the light that hits it, reflecting nothing.

Black holes are the remains of super massive stars that have gone supernova and are still some of the greatest mysteries in the known universe due to the inability to gather any information from within the event horizon.

Black holes can be very dangerous, some wander through space and their passage can do everything from simply pulling an unsuspecting ship off course, to throwing inhabited planets out of their orbits, to destroying entire stars. Explorers in particular are at risk, as data on stars in unexplored territory, relying wholly on visual observation, can be centuries or even millennium out of date, and if a ship's navigation safeguards are not set high enough, rather than dropping out a safe distance from a star, the ship can come out too close to a black hole to be able to avoid the event horizon before the crew can react.

WHITE DWARFS: White dwarfs are low-mass stars that are no longer undergoing nuclear fusion and have shrunk to planetary size, slowly cooling down. White dwarfs are technically no longer suns as they have ceased to undergo fusion. Because of this white dwarfs are very common throughout the

galaxy, the funeral pyres of the stars they once were. Becoming a white dwarf is often the fate of stars lacking the mass to collapse into a neutron star or black hole.

This does not however mean that white dwarfs are irrelevant in the grand scheme of things, many, even those formed by the results of a supernova still carry the remains of their previous systems around them in orbit. The remains of more than one civilization that was unable to escape the death of their star have been found around a white dwarf, and many white dwarf systems contain a multitude of debris that may well have commercial value.

This is entirely apart from those white dwarfs that are a part of a multi-star solar system where their presence, even if at a great distance can have a wide range of effects.

NEUTRON STARS: Neutron stars are the remains of super massive stars that did not quite have the mass to completely collapse into black holes but stopped just short of such a catastrophic change. Incredibly dense, neutron stars are the single most massive objects in the universe for their size next to black holes, and the passage of a wandering neutron star can disrupt large portions of space, flinging planets out of the orbits of nearby star systems, pulling ships in STL space far off course, and sending comets and asteroids flying out of their orbits and into the paths of inhabited planets.

Dark forbidding objects, Neutron star systems are often sparsely populated if at all, whatever was not destroyed or flung from the system during the original star's spectacular death throes are almost inevitably cold, dark, barren rocks cracked and scorched by the explosive actions of the supernova that briefly filled the system.

So dense is the material neutron stars are made of, neutronium, that a mere handful weighs more than even the largest of starships. So powerful is the gravity produced by this material that significant energy is being poured into research to utilize the gravity produce to provide the next generation of power sources. So far progress has been severely limited by the extreme difficulty in both obtaining and transporting even the smallest quantity of the substance.

PULSAR: Pulsars are highly magnetized, rotating neutron stars that emit a beam of electromagnetic radiation. This beam of radiation can only be detected when pointed directly at an observer, and with rotation times that measure seconds at most pulsars seem to strobe for observers, thus granting them their name. Many pulsars are as accurate as even the most elaborate clocks and are often used to check for synchronization of chronometers after long journeys. Perhaps more importantly, because the timing and position of all known pulsars are logged, they can be used by ships as natural navigation beacons, even those that have gone far off course into uncharted space.

However there is a dark side to these beacons in the night, any vessel caught directly in the beam within several light years of its point of origin can suffer heavy damage or even be destroyed if close enough, even through heavy shielding and thick hulls. The few ships that have survived such encounters, usually having suffered the misfortune of dropping out of FTL space in the beam's path while exploring, have been reduced to little more than radioactive wrecks, electronics fried, and crews suffering extensive burns and radiation sickness.

NEBULA: Nebulas are large clouds of condensed gases floating in space and held together by the generated gravity



of untold number of molecules. Often beautiful to observe from light years out, contrary to popular fiction the greater number of nebulas are so thin, only a few additional molecules over normal space per square foot, as to be almost undetectable from within, and certainly pose no danger or difficulty to starships traversing them. Nebulas are often the remains of a supernova or smaller repeated novas, they are formed from the outer layers of gas that are blown off a star during one of these events and are steadily expanding.

The exceptions to the above are those nebula that are contracting and beginning to form protostars, such nebula are dangerous places indeed, with odd bits of debris floating around, often at high speeds, reduced sensor range and definition, arching energy caused by the dense concentration of charge particles, radiation, and various other difficulties.

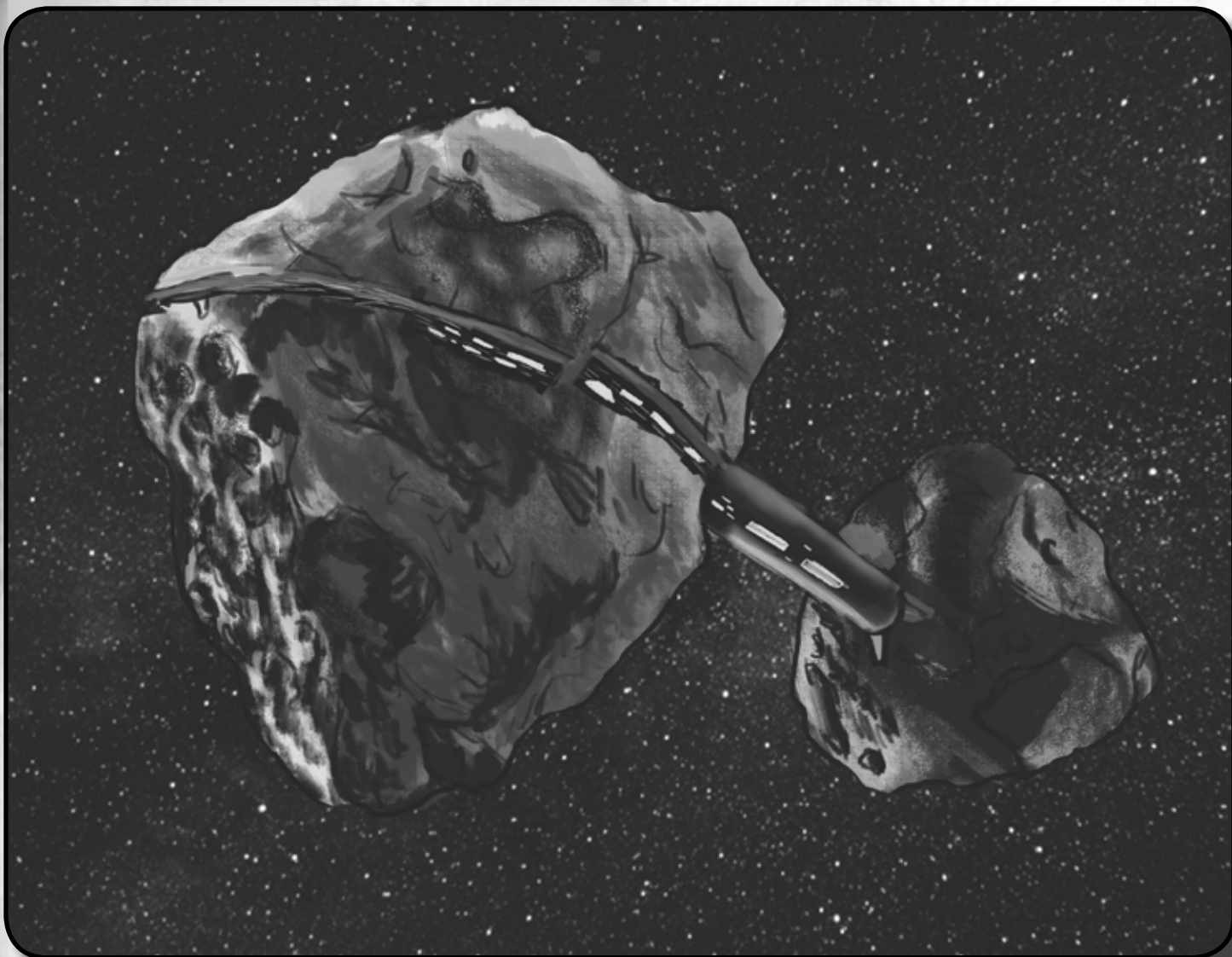
PROTOSTARS: A protostar is a large object that forms by contraction out of the gas of a giant molecular cloud in the interstellar medium. The protostellar phase is an early stage in the process of star formation. Protostars are interesting places to say the least, full of energy, debris, and of course the gases that make up the material being condensed into a new star. Protostars begin to be formed when the gravity of a nebula begins to override the forces that prevent it from spreading out.

Several protostars are under long term observation to better learn how solar systems form and to investigate several forms of matter that only seem to be generated in the chaotic confines of an actively forming star system.

EXAMPLE SOLAR SYSTEM

M-523 (FATSO) : TYPE II BRIGHT GIANT

One of many stars found during various types of surveys by the Alliance, this Type II Bright giant was given the designation M-523 and, being somewhat off the regular travel routes, was then largely forgotten until a Sagaren survey ship dropped into the system. What the survey crew found was a system tailor made for a Homeship to take up residence. With five planets, one of them a gas giant with a number of moons, four other planets, and a position only a little ways off the more well traveled paths, M-523 with the arrival of the Sagaren Homeship turned into a major trading hub for the sector. Although not officially designated as such, the Sagarens onboard the Homeship that arrived were not one to stand on ceremony and quickly named it Fatso, a reference to it's high axial rotation rate that causes it to bulge out in the middle.



BLOOD: CLASS V DEMON

AGE: 6 Billion Years

DIAMETER: 11,657km

SURFACE: 1000 Degrees Plus K.

ATMOSPHERE: Turbulent, saturated with toxic chemicals and thermionic radiation

LIFE-FORMS: Uninhabited

The innermost planet of the system, Blood orbits M-523 at the very edge of the area inward of which a planet would be torn apart by M-523's gravity.

A seething cauldron of death, Blood is of little use or interest.

WHITE EYE: CLASS N REDUCING.

AGE: 6 Billion Years

DIAMETER: 13,832km

SURFACE: Acid covered, super hot, molten

ATMOSPHERE: Extremely dense, carbon dioxide and sulfides

LIFE-FORMS: None

White Eye is the second planet out from M-523. The greenhouse effect gone wild, White Eye is completely uninhabitable,

with acid rains and a molten surface making it impossible for any attempt at exploitation or habitation.

ANTERIES PRIME: CLASS I SUPER GAS GIANT

AGE: 6 Billion Years

DIAMETER: 12 Million km

SURFACE: Hydrogen, hydrogen compounds, ammonia, helium, radiates heat.

ATMOSPHERE: Constantly changing due to heavy up and down drafts, massive storms cross the planet regularly.

LIFE-FORMS: Uninhabited

A super massive gas giant, Anteries Prime is the third of M-523's five planets. Anteries Prime has seventeen moons of varying sizes and types plus an extensive debris field. The Sagarens mine Anteries Prime for the hydrogen, helium, and ammonia in its atmosphere that is then converted into fuel among other things.

ANTERIES I&II: CLASS V DEMONS

AGE: 5 Billion Years

DIAMETER: 12,857km

SURFACE: 1000 Degrees Plus K.

ATMOSPHERE: Turbulent, saturated with toxic chemicals and thermionic radiation

LIFE-FORMS: Uninhabited

These twin planets actually revolve around each other at the same time that they revolve around Anteris Prime. The constant pull of each other's gravity causes massive volcanic eruptions that sometimes reach into nearby space before the ejecta slams back into both planets.

ANTERIS III: CLASS D MOON

AGE: 5 Billion Years

DIAMETER: 3,786km

SURFACE: Large concentrations of heavy metals like iron, nickel, lead; some deposits of aluminum, zinc

ATMOSPHERE: None

LIFE-FORMS: None

Anteris III is a barren wasteland that circles the super gas giant Anteris, heavily pockmarked and cratered, it is the site of extensive mining operations by the Sagaren Homeship within the system.

ANTERIS IV-VI, VIII&IX, XI&XII, XIV: CAPTURED ASTEROIDS

AGE: 6 Billion Years

DIAMETER: Irregular

SURFACE: Barren/cratered

ATMOSPHERE: None

LIFE-FORMS: None

Stray asteroids captured by Anteris Prime's gravity, they are unremarkable, varying somewhat only in size and shape.

ANTERIS VII: CLASS O MOON

AGE: 5 Billion Years

DIAMETER: 12,147km

SURFACE: 85% water, 15% land.

ATMOSPHERE: Nitrogen, Oxygen, carbon dioxide, trace elements

LIFE-FORMS: Extensive numbers and variety of non-sentient life forms on both land and in the oceans. Wide variety of plants.

Anteris VII is a fertile and lush planet. It is the main source of water for the Sagaren Homeship residing in the system. With its land area varying between dense forest and grasslands, it is used by the Sagarens as a regulated hunting preserve, seeing an average of 1,500,000 Sagarens a year from the Homeship. Anteris VII also provides much of the protein for the Sagaren Homeship, with regulated harvesting of the planet's abundant sea life. Access by other species is strictly regulated, with few non-Sagarens ever getting closer than orbit.

ANTERIS X: CLASS D MOON

AGE: 5 Billion Years

DIAMETER: 2,659km

SURFACE: Extensive deposits of precious metals like gold, and silver, titanium, several sites containing diamonds have been found indicating that the planet was tectonically active in the distant past.

ATMOSPHERE: None

LIFE-FORMS: None

Anteris X, like Anteris III is a barren wasteland that circles the super gas giant Anteris, heavily pockmarked and cratered, it is the site of extensive mining operations by the Sagaren Homeship within the system.

ANTERIS XIII: CLASS L MOON

AGE: 5 Billion Years

DIAMETER: 1,786km

SURFACE: Large concentrations of radioactive metals like plutonium, and uranium.

ATMOSPHERE: Oxygen/argon, high concentration of carbon dioxide, very thin.

LIFE-FORMS: None

Anteris XIII is the site of extensive mining operations by the Sagaren Homeship within the system.

ANTERIS XV: CLASS K MOON

AGE: 5 Billion Years

DIAMETER: 8,230km

SURFACE: Mineral poor, occasional pockets of water vapor.

ATMOSPHERE: Thin, nitrogen

LIFE-FORMS: None

Anteris XV is unremarkable in any way, lacking the valuable resources of many of the other moons orbiting Anteris Prime, its sole interesting fact is that it houses a permanent sensor station with deep space scanning arrays and a small Sagaren starfighter base.

ICE: CLASS P GLACIATED

AGE: 6 Billion Years

DIAMETER: 16,743km

SURFACE: Ice covered, 20km deep ocean under the ice.

ATMOSPHERE: Oxygen, argon

LIFE-FORMS: Unknown, possible life in under ice ocean.

Ice is the forth planet out from M-523. With no usable mineral deposits, it has been left untouched. Scans have indicated the presence of a large under ice ocean produced by internal heat with the possibility of life.

LONE WANDERER: CLASS R ROUGE PLANET

AGE: 15 Billion Years

DIAMETER: 7,692km

SURFACE: Barren rock/nitrogen ice

ATMOSPHERE: None

LIFE-FORMS: Extinct

The Lone Wanderer is the farthest planet out from M-523. Actually a rouge planet captured by M-523's gravity, the Lone Wanderer has an orbit that is both highly elliptical and erratic, at times reaching the cometary halo. Now cold, barren, and lifeless, surveys of the Lone Wanderer have uncovered the ruins of an unknown civilization that once existed on the planet. A small Alliance Science Institute research base has been established on the planet in addition to a mixed Confederation/Sagaren fighter base constructed to defend the planet from pirates and raiders.

SAGAREN HOMESHIP: PLANETOID SIZED MOBILE HABITAT

SIZE: Approximately 575km long, Averages 70km in diameter

LIFE-FORMS: 1.267 Billion Sagarens with a transient population of other species of roughly 73,000.

Though not technically a planet, the Sagaren Homeship needs to be mentioned, as without it M-523 would still be little more than a notation on a star chart. One of many Sagaren Homeships scattered throughout the galaxy, it is effectively a small mobile planet. Drawing on the resources of the system itself, it produces large quantities of raw materials for trade and internal use. Equipped with repair bays, docking bays, shipyards, and manufacturing plants equivalent to most major planets, it has become a vital trade point for the sector. With a population of more than a billion Sagarens plus tens of thousands of transient outsiders, it is most populated habitat, natural or otherwise, for several lightyears.

At its marketplace, anything from small bobbles from a primitive planet to a full-sized warship can be purchased. Aside from the trade it brings to the region, the Homeship also serves as a repair and refueling stop for both civilian and military ships, and the space around it is normally filled with everything from tramp freighters coming in to drop off a cargo, to Alliance warships seeking repairs for battle damage or simply seeking some brief R&R. The Homeship itself is heavily armed, but its main defense comes from the swarms of Sagaren strike craft and warships that are in constant attendance in addition to any Alliance forces that may be in the area. Little more is known about this Homeship, or others of its kind by non-Sagarens as few of them are ever allowed past the areas set aside for the other races and those are sworn to silence.

HOMESHIP B: SMALL ROCKY MOON

SIZE: Approximately 605km long, Averages 77km in diameter

LIFE-FORMS: Sagaren Construction Crews

Not yet officially granted a name, this rocky moon in orbit around Anteris Prime is slowly undergoing the conversions necessary to turn it into a fully functional Sagaren Homeship. Expected to take several decades even with steady work, only a few years into construction were it not for the activity around and on it, one would have no idea that it is undergoing such a conversion. Most of the activity so far is beneath the surface, hollowing out the needed passages and compartments in preparation for the installation of the needed equipment and amenities. Expected when completed to be capable of holding an even larger population than the other Homeship is system, which is large even among its brethren. Scouts have already begun surveying several systems for suitability where the new Homeship can move once completed.

SOLAR MAJOR: TYPE 'A' HOT BLUE STAR

Solar Major is a relatively recently settled star system, Alliance settlers only arriving fifty years ago. On the border of what is considered local Sagaren space, Solar Major sees a lot of business between people from the Alliance and the Sagaren Homeship that occupies the M-523 system. The system contains three planets with a sparse asteroid field between the second and third planets. What will eventually be a large Alliance starbase serving as sector headquarters is located within the system.

THOR: CLASS N REDUCING

AGE: 7 Billion years

DIAMETER: 17,529 km

SURFACE: Barren, Acid

ATMOSPHERE: Carbon Dioxide, Water Vapor

LIFEFORMS: None known

Thor, named after the mythical Norse god of storms, circles the sun only just inside Infinity's orbit and for an average of nine of the fifteen months of Infinity's orbit can be clearly seen from Infinity's surface. Thor got its name from the massive thunderstorms and superbolts that light up its atmosphere, at times the entire planet is wreathed in these storms, providing a spectacular view from Infinity.

INFINITY: CLASS M TERRESTRIAL

AGE: 6 Billion years

DIAMETER: 13,631 km

SURFACE: 47% Water, 53% Land

ATMOSPHERE: Oxygen, Nitrogen

LIFEFORMS: No native life forms higher than large herbivores, populated primarily by humans, some members of other species are present.

Infinity got its name from the original survey ship when, in a state of drunken jubilation at finally finding a habitable planet, the ship's Captain jokingly said that they'd reached the end of infinity. Infinity is often used by adolescent Sagarens to acclimate to dealing with foreign cultures outside the confines of the Homeship.

WOLF'S DEN: CLASS Y DEMON

AGE: 3 Billion years

DIAMETER: 30,614 km

SURFACE: Completely molten, covered in massive volcanoes

ATMOSPHERE: Highly toxic

LIFEFORMS: None

STARBASE MCCOY: Located near Wolf's Den, Starbase McCoy was built and is used by the Alliance Navy. Starbase McCoy is the largest Alliance base in the area, and much of its infrastructure is still under construction, at the moment hosting only minor sized repair and supply capabilities, meaning that most maintenance for both civilian and military ships in the area ends up going to the nearby Sagaren Homeship. Lightly manned in the best of times due to the lack of any real threats to the region, a recent upsurge in pirate attacks in the region has spread thin the assets of the Alliance forces that normally were based in the system. This has led to the base commander and Sector Governor, upon finding that it

would take some months for significant reinforcements to reach them given the distances involved, to swallow their pride and request assistance from the Homeship in system M-523. After some consideration, the requested assistance was sent, with the result being that the base currently hosts a nearly equal mix of Alliance and Sagaren ships, starfighters, and personnel.

KLAEOK (NOW THE REPUBLIC OF NEW IRELAND):

A Type G star, Klaeok Prime is the center of a remarkably desolate system, inhabited only by one planet and a scattering of asteroids and other stellar debris.

NEW IRELAND: A Class M World, New Ireland was settled by a private group of individuals seeking to distance themselves from what they saw as the overbearing government that existed in the Ballard Confederacy. The planet is heavily forested and home to a bewildering variety of native plants and fungi, many of which can be harvested and turned into different medicines which form the primary export of the planet along with lumber. Weather tends to be both wet and severe, with storms with winds reaching over one hundred miles an hour not uncommon. The primarily human population numbers no more than fifty-thousand spread over most of the planet in individual homesteads and small townships.

Recently the planet broke away from the Confederation after being threatened with a draft that would have forced a slow death upon the colony. Heavy fighting ensued when the Confederation sent the 210th Multispecies Regiment and supporting units to subdue the rebellious planet. After heavy fighting, the Confederation forces were repulsed, with many of the abandoned troops electing to settle down on the planet they had only just recently tried to capture. Seeking new markets, and allies in a decidedly dangerous universe, New Ireland elected to appeal to the Sagaren Collective for aid. A second attempt by the Confederation to retake the planet was stopped by the arrival of a Sagaren Collective battlegroup during the middle of negotiations. Now a firm ally of the Sagaren Collective, New Ireland is rapidly growing both economically and culturally, with much of the newfound wealth going into the planet's infrastructure. Over seventy percent of the planet's medicinal production and fifty percent of its lumber production is now sold to the Sagaren Collective at what is a hefty profit for the planet and great savings for the Collective over what they had been forced to pay before. At the moment, system security is being provided by the Sagaren Collective with a gradual turnover to New Ireland planned.

13: EINSTEIN IS SPINNING IN HIS GRAVE

*I like relativity and quantum theories
because I don't understand them
and they make me feel as if space shifted about
like a swan that
can't settle,
refusing to sit still and be measured;
and as if the atom were an impulsive thing
always changing its mind.*

— D.H. Lawrence
'Relativity', David Herbert Lawrence, *The Works of D.H. Lawrence* (1994), 437.

The universe works in mysterious ways, and scientists and philosophers alike continually strive to expand the understanding of its workings. Listed here are some of the more relevant aspects of the way the universe works.

FASTER THAN LIGHT TRAVEL

The ability to travel quickly between the stars forms the underpinning of all modern civilizations. Without it, realistic exploration and colonization in the early days, as well as the commerce that connects the galaxy together in current times would be entirely impossible. Based on the science of the Interstellar Jump Drive (IJD) the actual mathematics behind it are often referred to as It Just Does by laymen.

FTL travel is obtained by slipping into another dimension that overlaps our own. Transiting between the two requires an incredible amount of power and smaller ships often have to turn off non-essential systems in order to make the transition.

FTL SPACE

Discovered by a variety of races at different times, FTL space opened the stars up for exploration and exploitation. FTL space exists concurrent with but separate from normal space (also sometimes called real space, subspace, normal space, and prime space to name a few) and thus moving in one space you can reach a point in the other by crossing between them. The most important difference between the two is the apparent lack of an upper limit on the speed of light in FTL space (it is believed that there is one, but engines powerful enough to reach it have yet to be developed as much like normal space the faster one goes the more power is necessary to increase speed). FTL space is empty of actual physical objects but is filled with radiation and gravity fields. Controversy still continues on whether gravity is caused by a mass in the normal universe that bleeds over, or if it is created in FTL space and bleeds over into normal space. Regardless, it is these gravity fields that make FTL travel both so complicated, and possible at all.

ENTERING FTL SPACE

Entering, or "jumping" to FTL space from normal space requires a Computers check against DC 10 and needs the FTL Drive of a vessel to charge for 1d6 rounds while at full thrust in a straight line for the same amount of time to allow the spatial rupture field to properly form in front of the ship.

By making both a Navigation Check versus DC 25 and an Engineering Check Versus DC 25 this time may be cut in half. Failure of either of these rolls results in 1d6 points of damage to the ship per 5 points of failure as the ship is torn by conflicting directional forces or power surges. Failure of both results in 2d6 points of damage per 5 points of failure. This damage is unaffected by DT or Shields.

FTL NAVIGATION

Navigation in FTL space is a combination of dead reckoning and gauging one's position from identifying surrounding gravity fields. Because gravity fields prove slightly irregular even in well charted and traveled space and can alter a ship's course most FTL flights involve regular drops back into normal space to check a ship's position and adjust their course. In uncharted or sparsely traveled space these stops are far more frequent.

No FTL drive can operate within the depths of a gravity well, and the larger the mass in normal space, the more powerful a gravity field is and the greater area it covers. Any vessel that runs into a gravity well while in FTL space is abruptly forced out into normal space, suffering severe structural damage and heavy power surges. Thus most ships drop into normal space at the edge of a system, calculate their position and make a briefer jump to a place just outside the gravity well of their destination before proceeding under standard drives. Military vessels though are likely to risk dropping in much deeper into a gravity field in order to save time and achieve an element of surprise against an opponent. Because of the danger of running into a gravity field most ships have emergency programs that automatically drop a ship into normal space if it comes too close to a gravity field.

FTL SENSORS

Sensors in FTL space are very limited, with only gravity fields, and the signatures of ships actually underway in FTL space readily apparent. Millennia of experience have given analysis programs the ability to analyze these information poor readings and more often than not draw the correct conclusions. Unfortunately, ships in FTL space are unable to see anything smaller than a planet (and even that only indirectly) in normal space, and thus are forced to drop back into normal space blind. For this reason, tradition has long dictated that incoming traffic to a system comes in above the elliptic, and

A NOTE ON FTL NAVIGATION IN THE STARSEA UNIVERSE

Starships in the Starsea Universe use standard FTL drives. These drives propel ships through FTL space. Navigating FTL Space can be tricky, especially in areas poorly charted and rarely traveled. DC's for Navigation checks are as follows.

Unknown Regions: DC 30

Poorly Traveled: DC 20

Well Traveled: DC 10

A failure results in 1d10 being rolled per Light Year Traveled, the resulting being a percentage of how far off course you've wandered.

The difficulty of such checks can be reduced by returning to normal space once every six hours for at least an hour to recalculate one's position. This reduces the difficulty of such checks by 10. For every 5 points by which a DC is exceeded a ship travels an extra light year a day.

outgoing traffic leaves below the elliptic in order to help avoid the potential for collisions. However, ships in normal space are able to see into FTL space and can, therefore, detect vessels in motion in FTL space. This can give alert defenders in wartime warning of the arrival of enemy fleets and give them time to mobilize while invaders are forced to wait until entering a system to know what awaits them.

It is generally impossible to determine exactly what ship, or even what kind of ship is in FTL space purely from FTL sensors, various characteristics inherent to a given ship or type of ship's field can provide clues that an experienced sensor operator can use to deduce at least the general type and size of the vessel.

FTL COMMUNICATIONS

FTL communications are a large part of what ties the galaxy together, faster than even the speediest starship but far from instantaneous, FTL communications are limited in range and are prone to garbling at times. Most interstellar governments sow their space with FTL Communication relays that can pick up, clear up, and then retransmit messages in a relay system. The Alliance is notorious for having multiple generations of relays in use covering the same areas, the older relays coming online in times of high message volume or when more modern relays are offline for whatever reason. Most ships also make it a habit to relay any messages they may pick up. In this way even a ship well outside the range of normal FTL communications can quickly make sure needed information gets where it needs to go. Places off the beaten track or out of range of existing Communication Relays rely on regular (or irregular) message delivery service. In these places arrival of a ship carrying mail is often a cause for celebration.

14: CHARACTERS

Born on the fifth moon of Doran Prime towards the outer edges of explored space, Mandela Kulan grew up surrounded by the constant presence of the influence of the spaces between the stars, whether it be the crews of the merchant ships constantly coming and going or the sailors of warships brimming with death. But being right on the border of two corporate territories brought trouble as well as prosperity. Nearby skirmishes with pirates were not uncommon, and one never knew when the corporations themselves might erupt into all-out war threatening everything.

The constant memory of this apparent Sword of Damocles hanging over his own and the heads of all he knew was to have a strong impact throughout his life. Though both his parents, his mother a prominent research scientist and his father a university professor both wished otherwise he applied to the Peacekeepers as soon as he came of age to do so, managing to be one of the few accepted applicants. Roughly two decades later he retired at the rank of Captain, a full pension, a chest full of medals, with a crippled leg and missing an eye in addition to a strong love and skill at building and tinkering and a desire to keep flying whatever the cost.

NEW CHARACTER CLASSES

ENGINEER/MECHANIC/TECHNICIAN

The folks who keep the galaxy running, whether they are designing the latest ship to roll out of the yards, some new invention that will revolutionize how things are done, or are the ones who keep said inventions running, they are vital to keeping civilization on an even keel, something many of them are happy to point out if they feel their efforts are being taken for granted. As a rule such people either tend to either highly focus on one specific aspect of their field or are more generalists, knowing enough to be effective in most fields, but lacking the ability to produce the often astounding results that more focused specialists regularly manage.

There are of course the exceptions, particularly gifted and experienced individuals who have truly mastered a variety of fields and are as comfortable wielding a wrench as a calculator. These people are often referred to as wizards or miracle workers and those able to obtain their services bless their luck.

Always useful to have around, these sorts of characters if played with ingenuity and creativity can often get a group out of (or into as the case may be) situations that no amount of firepower could.

Some are just like any other people, others care more about their creations or charges than people, most fall somewhere in-between. Played straight this character concept can be a handy ship's mechanic or engineer, however it doesn't take much to realize that the character concept could fit the role of a mad scientist, or at least a slightly unbalanced one.

Potentially very versatile characters, this concept can give a lot of freedom in their creation and are an excellent addition to most groups, regardless of their composition or task.

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence

SUGGESTED ATTRIBUTES: Strength, Dexterity

HIT DICE: D6

SKILL POINTS: Engineers receive 2 Skill Points a Level plus their Intelligence Bonus.

CLASS SKILLS: Athletics, Computers, Craft, Engineering, Perception, Profession

PROFICIENCIES: Light Armor Proficiency, Basic Melee Weapons, Small Arms

HANDYMAN: At 1st level an Engineer gains a +2 bonus to all Craft, Engineering, and Profession rolls. This increases by +2 for every five class levels.

ARMOR IMPROVEMENT: At 2nd level an Engineer may make a number of armor improvements equal to their Intelligence bonus. These improvements can be used to raise Maximum Dexterity, Defense Value, reduce the Armor Check Penalty by one point, or increase EAC or KAC by five points. These improvements can be made to one, or multiple pieces of armor. No single value may be improved by more than one step.

At levels 8, 13, and 18 these bonuses can be increased by an additional step.

WEAPON IMPROVEMENT: At 3rd level an Engineer may make a number of weapon improvements equal to their Intelligence bonus. They may add a +1 to damage, +1 to hit, increase the critical hit range by one, or increase the critical damage rating by one. These improvements can be made to one or multiple weapons. No single value may be improved by more than one step to a maximum of +4.

At levels 9, 14, and 19 these bonuses can be increased by an additional step to a maximum of +4.

MR. FIXIT: Starting at Level 4 once a day for every four class levels the Engineer may instantly conduct repairs on a vehicle, weapon, armor, piece of equipment, or structure for a number of hitpoints equal to their level times their Intelligence Bonus provided appropriate materials are available. This is a full round action.

CAN WE BUILD IT, YES WE CAN!: Starting at 5th level an Engineer may cut the time required for repairs or construction by a percentage equal to their craft or repair roll.

COST EFFICIENCY ANALYSIS: Beginning at 6th level an Engineer may cut the costs for any repairs or construction by a percentage equal to the result of a Engineering roll.

ITS NOT A BUG, ITS A FEATURE: Starting at 7th level an Engineer may disguise a flaw or penalty in a piece of armor, equipment, weapon a vehicle, or a structure by beating whoever they're tricking in an opposed roll of Engineering versus Sense Motive. Note, if an Engineer attempts to use this ability on another Engineer they may choose to also roll Engineering instead of Sense Motive.

ENGINEER/MECHANIC/TECHNICIAN

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Special
1	+0	+0	+1	+1	+2	Handyman
2	+1	+0	+1	+1	+3	1 st Armor Improvement
3	+1	+1	+1	+1	+3	1 st Weapon Improvement
4	+2	+1	+2	+2	+3	Mr. Fixit
5	+2	+1	+2	+2	+4	Can We Build It, Yes We Can!
6	+3	+2	+3	+3	+4	Cost Efficiency Analysis
7	+3	+2	+3	+3	+5	It's Not a Bug, It's a Feature
8	+4	+2	+3	+3	+5	2 nd Armor Improvement
9	+4	+3	+4	+4	+5	2 nd Weapon Improvement
10	+5	+3	+4	+4	+6	Built to Last
11	+5	+3	+5	+5	+6	Let The Hammer Fall
12	+6	+4	+5	+5	+7	Jack of all Trades
13	+6	+4	+6	+6	+7	3 rd Armor Improvement
14	+7	+4	+6	+6	+7	3 rd Weapon Improvement
15	+7	+5	+7	+7	+8	Superior Analysis
16	+8	+5	+7	+7	+8	Practical Applications
17	+8	+5	+8	+8	+9	Improved Mr. Fixit
18	+9	+6	+8	+8	+9	4 th Armor Improvement
19	+9	+6	+9	+9	+9	4 th Weapon Improvement
20	+10	+6	+9	+9	+10	Pinnacle of Design

BUILT TO LAST: Starting at 10th level Engineers double the hitpoints of any item they create, including armor, weapons, equipment, and vehicles and grant an additional +5 EAC and KAC to these items.

LET THE HAMMER FALL: Practical engineering requires a lot of hands on work and Engineers often build up a surprising amount of strength and endurance. At 11th level they get a +2 to their Strength and Constitution scores.

JACK OF ALL TRADES: Engineers pick up a wide variety of talents and skills, beginning at 12th level they are considered to have a bonus equal to a third their class level to any craft skill they do not have actual ranks in.

SUPERIOR ANALYSIS: Beginning at 15th level an Engineer may add a +10 bonus to their Engineering roll only for the purpose of identifying an item or piece of technology.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS: The Engineer learns how to best apply their experience and design theories to everyday problems. At 16th level they gain a +2 bonus to their Intelligence score.

IMPROVED MR. FIXIT: At 17th level the amount of damage an Engineer can repair is doubled.

PINNACLE OF DESIGN: Truly master Engineers know how to get the most out of any design. At 20th level they may add 10% to any two values of a vehicle or structure they directly have a hand in designing. This includes Build Points, PCU, hitpoints, EAC, KAC, SR, Defense Value, speed, and cargo capacity.

FRONTIERSMAN

These are rugged individuals used to surviving on the various frontier planets, often outside the bounds of settled lands with little to no company other than perhaps a riding or pack animal of some sort. By necessity, they tend to be very self-reliant and individualistic. Generally excellent guides and scouts, many make their living providing such services to outsiders, others may drift from odd job to odd job, prospect, or otherwise gather certain valuable items. Depending on the exact conditions of the world in which they operate on and their specific background they may be accomplished riders, gunslingers, herders, lawmen, or even outlaws. Most of their

skills are likely to be geared around surviving in the environment they are most used to along with basic camouflage and fighting skills (and in some places those may be basic survival skills in and of themselves). Note though that this doesn't mean that they lack proficiency with modern technologies, indeed, in many cases they may well have a better understanding of how much of their equipment works (and while not necessarily top of the line, may well be far from obsolete) than most characters since they likely have only themselves to turn to when something needs to be fixed.

These people make excellent characters if a game is primarily set on one of these worlds, but they may end up nearly anywhere, either on the run, or having simply found a single planet too small for their restlessness, and provide an interesting contrast to other characters more urbane personalities. They may not be the smoothest characters around, but those rough edges of theirs are going to leave some definite marks on the galaxy.

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Constitution is a key attribute for Frontiersmen as it raises their ability to endure and survive in even the harshest conditions. Wisdom and Intelligence come a close second as they are important to many key skills for the Frontiersman. Dexterity will grant the Frontiersman the reflexes needed to survive both combat and other tense situations.

HIT DICE: D8

SKILL POINTS: Frontiersmen get 6 skillpoints per level plus their Intelligence bonus.

CLASS SKILLS: Athletics (Str), Computers (Int), Engineering (Int), Intimidate (Chr), Life Science (Int), Perception (Wis), Piloting (Dex), Profession (Chr, Int, or Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Stealth (Dex), Survival (Wis)

PROFICIENCIES: Light Armor Proficiency, Basic Melee Weapons, Small Arms, Longarm Proficiency

HARD LIVING: Years of living on the fringes of "civilized" space have endowed the Frontiersman with an ability to endure conditions that would kill others. Frontiersmen double their Constitution score for the purposes of resisting environmental effects or determining how long they can hold their breath.

SHELTER: Frontiersmen are experts at arranging adequate shelter for the night. Any time they roll Survival to create a shelter against the environment they gain a +10 to the roll.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFINITY:

At 2nd level, a Frontiersman may select a type of Environment from the table below. The Frontiersman gains a +2 bonus on Initiative Checks, Life Science, Perception, Stealth, and Survival skill checks when he is in this terrain. At 7th, 13th, and 19th levels they may either pick a new environment type or add a +2 to a previously selected environment.

Environments
Earthlike
Arid
Aquatic
Jungle
Airless World
Vacuum
Arctic

IN TUNE WITH THE ENVIRONMENT: Frontiersmen are naturally in tune with their surroundings. At 3rd level they receive a Perception bonus equal to a third of their class level to notice anything unusual.

TRUSTY COMPANION: It is not unusual for Frontiersmen to rely heavily on a specific piece of equipment. Therefore at 4th level they may add a +1 attack, damage, or skill bonus to any piece of equipment or alternatively may designate a vehicle and add +2 to any one attribute. One selected this item or vehicle cannot be changed unless destroyed in which case a replacement may be acquired and receive the bonuses after no less than one month of use.

OUTDOORSMAN: At 5th level Frontiersmen receive the Great Fortitude feat. At 10th Level they gain Improved Great Fortitude as a feat.

BENCHTHUMPING: Frontiersmen often have to keep old or unreliable equipment running even (or especially) under adverse circumstances. Once a day starting at 6th level they may engage in percussive maintenance on a piece of non-functional equipment to allow it to function for a number of rounds equal to their class level. This can only be done once per item after which it must be properly repaired.

TARGET FOCUS: At 8th level a Frontiersman learns to how to study an opponent for weaknesses and exploit them. By spending a Resolve Point they may pick an opponent and after studying it for at least one full round, doing nothing else, they may apply a +1 to attack and an additional dice of damage for the duration of the combat. At levels 12, and 17 he adds an additional +1 and dice of damage. He may use this ability a number of time per day equal to a quarter of his Frontiersman level.

BIG GAME HUNTER: Starting at 10th level the Frontiersman adds an additional dice of bonus damage on creatures of Large size or greater.

DRIVES A HARD BARGAIN: Frontiersmen are used to having to make a little go a long way. Starting at 14th level they may double any Diplomacy roll used for the purposes of negotiating an exchange of goods or services.

BONUS FEAT: At Level 9 the Frontiersman may pick a bonus feat. They must still meet all the prerequisites of any feat selected. They pick another feat at 15th level.

OLD RELIABLE: At 16th level the Frontiersman may add an additional bonus to his chosen piece of equipment or double an existing bonus.

IMPROVED BIG GAME HUNTER: At 18th level a Frontiersman adds an additional dice of damage to that granted by Big Game Hunter and additionally doubles the critical range of his weapon against such targets.

ULTIMATE SURVIVOR: At 20th level a Frontiersman is unmatched for ruggedness and survival ability. They add a +2 to Constitution, double all survival rolls and additionally automatically stabilize if they fall below zero hit points.

FRONTIERSMAN

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Special
1	+0	+2	+1	+1	+2	Hard Living, Shelter
2	+1	+3	+1	+1	+3	1 st Environmental Affinity
3	+2	+3	+1	+1	+3	In Tune With The Environment
4	+3	+4	+2	+2	+3	Trusty Companion
5	+3	+4	+2	+2	+4	Outdoorsman
6	+4	+5	+3	+3	+4	Benchthumping
7	+5	+5	+3	+3	+5	2 nd Environmental Affinity
8	+6	+6	+3	+3	+5	Target Focus +1
9	+6	+6	+4	+4	+5	Bonus Feat
10	+7	+7	+4	+4	+6	Big Game Hunter, Outdoorsman
11	+8	+7	+5	+5	+6	Tough as Nails
12	+9	+8	+5	+5	+7	Target Focus +2
13	+9	+8	+6	+6	+7	3 rd Environmental Affinity
14	+10	+9	+6	+6	+7	Drives a Hard Bargain
15	+11	+9	+7	+7	+8	Bonus Feat
16	+12	+10	+7	+7	+8	Old Reliable
17	+12	+10	+8	+8	+9	Target Focus +3
18	+13	+11	+8	+8	+9	Improved Big Game Hunter
19	+14	+11	+9	+9	+9	4 th Environmental Affinity
20	+15	+12	+9	+9	+10	The Ultimate Survivor

MEDICAL DOCTOR

With the wide prevalence of medical nanites and the effectiveness of regeneration tanks you might think there is little need for doctors. Quite the opposite is the fact. While being able to stabilize someone is within nearly anyone's capabilities, severe wounds require experience and training that only a Doctor can provide away from the sanctuary of a regeneration tank, which are often rare outside the most well-developed of worlds and expensive to use in such cases, even assuming one can afford the attention needing one is likely to bring.

Many Doctors who do more than simply staff hospitals often have a number of related skills, particularly in the fields of biology and microbiology, and their analytical ability can prove crucial to an exploration team investigating a new world or interacting with a new species.

Generally focusing more on brains than brawn, a doctor is likely to be the intellectual of any group and is often the first to devise a solution to puzzles and problems that present themselves.

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence is the single most important skill for a Medical Doctor, it fuels their primary skill

sets and grants them the points to provide expertise in a wide range of fields. Wisdom is important as it lets a Doctor pick up on important clues that otherwise might be missed.

HIT DICE: D6

SKILL POINTS: A Doctor receives 4 skill points a level plus their Intelligence bonus.

CLASS SKILLS: Computers (Int), Life Science (Int), Medicine (Int), Perception (Wis), Profession (Chr, Int, or Wis), Sense Motive (Wis)

PROFICIENCIES: Light Armor Proficiency, Basic Melee Weapons, Small Arms

A DOCTOR'S TOUCH: Even with the most rudimentary of tools a Doctor can save lives and speed healing. A Doctor may stabilize a dying character by making a DC10 Heal check as a Full action even without proper supplies.

A HEALER'S HANDS: A Doctor can make a little healing go a long way. When using the Medicine skill to restore hit points a Doctor may attempt to add 10 to the DC of the skill check in order to double the number of points restored.

MEDICAL DOCTOR

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	A Doctor's Touch, A Healer's Hands
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Medical Knowledge
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	The Good of the Many
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Medical Knowledge
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	I'm a Doctor Not a...
6	+4	+2	+2	+5	Medical Knowledge
7	+5	+2	+2	+5	Bonus Feat
8	+6	+2	+2	+6	Medical Knowledge
9	+6	+3	+3	+6	Bonus Feat
10	+7	+3	+3	+7	It's Just a Flesh Wound
11	+8	+3	+3	+7	Greater Medical Knowledge
12	+9	+4	+4	+8	Bonus Feat
13	+9	+4	+4	+8	Doctor Heal Thyself
14	+10	+4	+4	+9	Greater Medical Knowledge
15	+11	+5	+5	+9	Bonus Feat
16	+12	+5	+5	+10	Greater Medical Knowledge
17	+12	+5	+5	+10	Bonus Feat
18	+13	+6	+6	+11	Immunity of the Healer
19	+14	+6	+6	+11	Greater Medical Knowledge
20	+15	+6	+6	+12	He's Dead Jim

MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE: Provided with the proper tools a Doctor is capable of feats not much short of miracles. Beginning at 2nd level a Doctor may choose one of the following as a permanent ability. They make pick another ability at the following levels, 4, 6, and 8.

ONLY AS GOOD AS THEIR TOOLS: A Medical Doctor doubles the healing rate of any medicine or medical equipment they employ.

SLIP HIM A MICKEY: Using their knowledge of Medicine a doctor can quickly and painlessly knock "patients" of most species unconscious. By making a successful Slight of Hand check a Doctor can force an opponent to roll a fortitude save versus DC 15+ ½ Doctor's level or collapse immediately unconscious for a number of minutes equal to which they failed a save as the Doctor injects them with a powerful knock

out drug. A Doctor may use this ability a number of times a day equal to their Intelligence score +3, minimum 1.

A FEW ACHES AND PAINS: Starting at 5th level a Doctor can use their knowledge of medicine to inflict 2 points of ability damage on an opponent by making a melee attack and forcing an opponent to roll a fortitude save versus DC 15+ ½ Doctor's level. For every five points by which the save is failed the Doctor may add an additional 2 points of damage to the same ability. A Doctor may use this ability a number of times per day equal to half their Medical Doctor Level.

MEDICAL ANALYSIS: The galaxy is a large and dangerous place full of unknowns. Some of those unknowns can make people extremely ill. A Doctor can through careful study and analysis of a sample, or an ill patient, determine the cause of disease and poison even if otherwise unknown and

develop a cure. A Doctor can add their class level to all Medicine check rolls for the purposes of identifying and devising a cure for an ailment and may roll even if the patient is not currently making a saving throw against the effect.

WALKING TALKING PHARMACY: With their vast knowledge of Medicine it is little wonder that Medical Doctors can in many cases not just use but produce various drugs. With this ability a Doctor may create a Drug, Poison, or Medicinal for half the listed price with a DC equal to 3 times the item level plus 10.

OPERATING ON A SHOE STRING: There are times a Medical Doctor must rely on less than plentiful resources and thus experienced Doctors often learn how to make the most of minimal supplies in difficult situations. Using this ability, by making a DC 25 Medicine check a Doctor may double the effect of any Medicinal or Drug that does not restore Hit Points or Stamina Points.

THE GOOD OF THE MANY: A Medical Doctor may choose to split the healing abilities of a consumable medical item between two patients, each with half the stated effect. This ability may not be used simultaneously with Operating on a Shoe String.

I'M A DOCTOR NOT A...: Doctor's often find themselves picking up any number of oddball skills. At 5th level a Doctor may add 1/3 of their class level to any Intelligence based Skill Check as well as Slight of Hand and Stealth checks.

BONUS FEAT: At 7th level the Medical Doctor may pick a bonus feat. They must still meet all the prerequisites of any feat selected. They may pick an additional bonus feat at levels 9, 12, 15, and 17.

IT'S JUST A FLESH WOUND: Even the most grievous wounds can be minimized with prompt modern medical care. Starting at 10th level a Doctor may spend a Resolve Point to administer emergency treatment to another character anytime they suffer an attack that would drop them below -10 hit points to instead have them reduced to merely 0 hit points. The Doctor must be within 5ft of the affected character and spend a full round providing healing. The Doctor must make a Medicine check with a DC equal to 15 plus the amount of damage beyond -10. The Doctor may only perform this action once a day.

GREATER MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE: An experienced Medical Doctor can be considered a true master of the art of medicine and can perform veritable miracles when the need arises. Beginning at level 11 a medical Doctor may pick one of the following abilities permanently. Alternatively they may pick a Medical Knowledge ability they did not previously select.

A HEALER'S HANDS IMPROVED: A Doctor's skill becomes so great that they quadruple the number of hit points or ability points recovered through Long Term Care.

MORE THAN A FEW ACES AND PAINS: A Doctor's mastery of medicine has increased such that they can inflict damage on two abilities for -4 points each and the DC to save against is raised to DC 20+ ½ Doctor's level. For every five points by which the save is failed the Doctor may add an additional 2 points of damage to the same two abilities. A

Doctor must have already taken the A Few Aches and Pains Ability already to take this ability.

COMBAT MEDIC: At times even the most pacifistic of healers finds the need to take up arms to defend themselves and their charges. A Doctor may choose to raise the crit rating of any attack they make by one step and add their Intelligence bonus to attack rolls. This ability lasts a number of rounds equal to their Intelligence bonus.

THAT WAS A STRONG MICKEY: With increasing knowledge and experience comes increased power and potency. When using Slip Him a Mickey a Medical Doctor raises the DC to 20 plus the Doctor's level. They must already have the Slip him a Mickey ability to take this advanced ability.

WHEN YOU NEED A GOOD FIX: It is far from unusual for a Medical Doctor to focus on the creation of various substances, legal and otherwise. Building on earlier experience a Doctor may create a substitute for any Drug, Poison, or Medicinal even if the proper ingredients are not available by adding an additional 10 to the DC check given in Walking Talking Pharmacy. A Doctor must have already taken Walking Talking Pharmacy as an ability to take this ability.

MEATBALL SURGERY: A Medical Doctor used to treating horrendous wounds gains great skill in saving lives. A Doctor with this ability may take 10 on all attempts to employ Medicine.

MIRACLE WORKER: True practitioners of the Art of Medicine can produce results that are truly miraculous. When Treating Deadly Wounds they may do so as a single round action and reduce the DC by half their Medical Doctor level.

DOCTOR HEAL THYSELF: Eventually a Medical Doctor will have come into contact with various diseases, poisons, and drugs so often that they have built up a relative tolerance to these things. Thus at 13th level a Doctor adds +4 to all checks to resist disease, poison, or drugs.

IMMUNITY OF THE HEALER: Starting at 18th level a Doctor may call upon respect of the profession to render themselves and any patient they are currently treating immune to attack for a number of rounds equal to half their class level. The Doctor or patient cannot engage in hostile action or this effect ends immediately. An opponent may ignore this ability by making a Will save versus DC 25.

HE'S DEAD JIM: For a truly skilled Doctor even death itself at times must bend. At 20th level a Doctor can spend a Resolve Point revive a character dead for a number of minutes equal to their class level. This roll requires a DC 30 Heal check and at least a minimum of medical equipment. The patient's body must still be mostly intact for this ability to function.

SCIENTIST

Whether they're pure eggheads that deal strictly with the theoretical or more down to earth types that work with the practical end of things, the scientist concept covers a broad array of fields and possibilities. Often at the edge of many adventures, either intentionally or caught up in circumstances beyond their control, the desire to acquire knowledge or to make a breakthrough that will grant them fame and perhaps fortune will many times have them be the most adamant about pushing on or taking excessive risks.

SCIENTIST

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	1 st Focused Study
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	+3	Investigator
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	+3	Bonus Feat
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	+3	Improvisation
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	+4	2 nd Focused Study
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	+4	Bonus Feat
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	+5	Applied Research
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	+5	Hasty Study
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	+5	3 rd Focused Study
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	+6	Prototype
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	+6	Bonus Feat
12	+6	+4	+4	+8	+7	Improved Improvisation
13	+6	+4	+4	+8	+7	4 th Focused Study
14	+7	+4	+4	+9	+7	For Science!
15	+7	+5	+5	+9	+8	Egghead
16	+8	+5	+5	+10	+8	Bonus Feat
17	+8	+5	+5	+10	+9	5 th Focused Study
18	+9	+6	+6	+11	+9	Advanced Prototype
19	+9	+6	+6	+11	+9	Noted Expert
20	+10	+6	+6	+12	+10	Certified Genius

While many who regularly work outside of a lab have a good deal of common sense, pure egg heads may well have lived a sheltered life and blithely walk (or fly, or crawl, or etc) into situations that anyone else would quickly steer clear of. On the other hand, once their intellect is brought to bear on a problem, there is little that it cannot break down, analyze, and then solve.

Often having to be somewhat coddled and looked after by the rest of a group (even many of the otherwise competent ones) because of their normal unsuitableness once danger rears its head, their value remains indisputable, and if given time many are capable of cobbling together improvised equipment that can prove a nasty surprise.

A must on any exploration team, scientists might be either extreme specialists, or have trained in a variety of fields and can offer valuable support to a group as well as an insight into

whatever phenomenon, creatures, objects, relics, etc. that they may come across.

This concept could be played in a number of ways, from the stereotypical absent minded genius, to the mad scientist, to the adventuring archeologist, or the ruthless brain for hire for whom no research is too sick or twisted for him to accept payment for. In any case underestimating one of these braniacs is something to be done at your own risk.

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES: Intelligence

HIT DICE: D6

SKILL POINTS: A Scientist gets 6 skill points a level plus their Intelligence Bonus

CLASS SKILLS: Craft (Int), Computers, Culture, Engineering, Life Science, Medicine, Physical Science, Perception (Wis), Profession (Wis)

PROFICIENCIES: Light Armor Proficiency, Basic Melee Weapons, Small Arms

FOCUSED STUDY: Scientists specialize in a scientific field. Because of this at 1st level they pick one skill to add their class level to from Computers, Culture, Engineering, Life Science, Medicine, Physical Science.

At levels 5, 9, 13, and 17 they may select an additional skill from the above list to apply the bonus to.

INVESTIGATOR: Proper scientific research requires a strong attention to detail, starting at 2nd level Scientists gain a bonus equal to half their level for any Perception checks.

BONUS FEAT: Scientists gain a bonus feat at levels 3, 6, 9, and 16.

IMPROVISION: Scientists are skilled at coming up with solutions on the fly. Starting at 4th level by taking a full action and rolling a relevant Knowledge check (DC dependent on the complexity of the item) they may come up with a design out of available materials that can duplicate the function of any specific piece of equipment whose Item Level does not exceed their class levels for a single round after which the device breaks.

APPLIED RESEARCH: Beginning at 7th level, by spending a minimum of a week (8hrs a day), engaged in research in a specific field a Scientist may raise 1d100xclass level credits from the results of their efforts.

HASTY STUDY: Sometimes a Scientist must rush their results. They can halve the time needed for any research roll by adding 10 to the existing DC.

PROTOTYPE: Scientists often spend work on new and fascinating developments, making continuous small improvements. Starting at 10th level a Scientist may create a Prototype version of a weapon, armor, or piece of equipment equal to their Scientist level plus three. A weapon may have its damage dice increased by one step, an additional dice of damage added, or raise its to hit by one. Armor can have its Defense rating improved by one, its Dexterity bonus raised by one, its EAC and KAC raised by five, or reduce its armor check penalty by one. A piece of equipment can be designed to provide double its usual bonus. Scientists may create a number of Prototypes equal to their Intelligence Bonus. Each prototype requires a full week of effort to produce and the appropriate Craft skill.

IMPROVED IMPROVISION: Starting at 12th level a scientist's Improvisation lasts for a number of rounds equal to their Intelligence bonus.

FOR SCIENCE!: A Scientist's enthusiasm can get the best of them at times. Starting at 14th level a Scientist may once a day for a number of rounds equal to half their class level add their Intelligence Bonus to one of the following. Attack rolls, damage rolls, Defense, or any one save. At the start of each round they pick which of the above the bonus applies to.

EGGHEAD: Years of diligent and energetic study hone a Scientist's mind. At 15th level they gain a +2 to their Intelligence score.

ADVANCED PROTOTYPE: Continued refinement increases the capabilities of a Scientist's inventions. They may now apply two bonuses to any one item and those bonuses are doubled.

NOTED EXPERT: Starting at 19th level a Scientist is skilled enough to be able to Take 10 on checks for the following skills, even if normally there would not be sufficient time to do so. Computers, Culture, Engineering, Life Science, Medicine, and Physical Science.

CERTIFIED GENIUS: By 20th level a Scientist is a leader in one, if not several fields, and as a result of this recognition they gain a +1 morale bonus to all rolls. Additionally they gain a +2 to Intelligence.

NEW ARCHETYPE

ALLIANCE STRIKER (SOLDIER ARCHETYPE)

Alliance Strikers are trained to hit hard and fast, ideally completing the mission and pulling out before an opponent can respond. Equipped with high-end cybernetics and implants Alliance Strikers move with superhuman speed, grace, and strength and few things short of an immediately mortal wound will stop them from completing their mission.

2ND LEVEL: Skeletal Reinforcement: To provide sturdy anchor points for future enhancements, allow the use of increased strength without fractured bones, and other feats that put stress on the skeletal system Alliance Strikers receive metallic reinforcements at the cellular level to their skeleton. The Striker gains +4 to all Fortitude Saves, and gain dr10 versus bludgeoning attacks. This is on top of any bonuses granted by armor. By spending a Resolve point the Striker can ignore the first 20ft of any fall or other action that would result in being thrown into an object, structure, or creature.

4TH LEVEL: Reaction Booster: Alliance Strikers have neural implants designed to boost their reflexes by moving nerve impulses faster than mere flesh can manage. The Striker gains +2 to all Reflex Saves and +2 to all Ranged Attacks. These bonuses double at level 13.

6TH LEVEL: Combat Grade Nanites: Over and above the usual suites of nanites carried by Alliance civilians and non-combat military Strikers are granted with an enhanced suite of maintenance and medical nanites. By responding rapidly to injuries they can keep a Striker alive despite the most horrendous wounds. Unless dropped past -10 HP a Striker will always stabilize at 0 HP. If knocked below -10 HP a Striker may spend 1 Resolve Point and roll a DC 10+ damage beyond -10 Fort save to stabilize. Note this is not an option for any attack which would instantly cause death. A Striker may also spend 1 Resolve Point at any time to gain fast healing 5 for a number of rounds equal to their Alliance Striker level as the nanites work furiously to rebuild damaged tissue and bone. These benefits are in addition to those granted by a Military Grade Nanite Suite.

9TH LEVEL: Hit Them Where It Hurts: Alliance Strikers are extensively trained to search out weak points in their opponent's defenses and maximize the damage they produce with each shot. By spending 1 Resolve Point the Striker may add one additional die to all weapon or unarmed damage rolls that

have a specific target for 3 rounds. The duration doubles at 16th level.

12TH LEVEL: Might as Well Throw the Gun at Them: Experienced Alliance Strikers are granted powerful dermal plating giving them the equivalent of Dermal Plating mk7. This replaces any other dermal plating.

18TH LEVEL: Death or Glory: The most experienced and deadly of the Alliance's soldiers are given the opportunity of having an injector of dangerously powerful combat drugs attached directly to their cardiac system. Once a day a Striker may spend 1 Resolve Point to activate this ability for ten rounds. Doing so doubles a Soldier's total Armor Bonus from equipment, natural armor, and Dexterity, allows them to ignore all armor class penalties, grants them DR 10/: in addition to any existing DR provided by equipment, and causes any attacks that round to be automatically confirmed as critical hits. In exchange, any damage sustained that round is automatically doubled and the Soldier becomes Fatigued immediately after this ability deactivates and must roll a DC 25 Fortitude save to avoid becoming violently nauseated from the aftereffects of the drugs, rendering them unable to take any actions for 1d6 rounds.

NEW CLASS THEMES

BLACK PELT OPERATIVE

THEME: Intelligence Agent

ABILITY SCORES: Wisdom is your most important ability score due to the fact you will be focusing on gathering and shifting through information. Charisma is equally important to helping get information out of other people and finally Dexterity can help get you out of tight situations.

SPECIALIZATION: Spy

OPERATIVE EXPLOITS: 2nd Level: Nightvision. 6th Level: Certainty, Sure-Footed, Enhanced Senses. 14th Level: Uncanny Senses

FEATS: Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Veiled Threat

SKILLS: Bluff, Culture, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Perception, Sense Motive

ALLIANCE SCIENCE INSTITUTE SCOUT

THEME: Surveyor

ABILITY SCORES: Intelligence is your most important ability score to let you maximize your versatility and make the most of your various most important skills. Dexterity is important to help you get out of tight spots and Charisma is vital to helping you gather information and avoid trouble in the first place.

SPECIALIZATION: Explorer

OPERATIVE EXPLOITS: 2nd Level: Alien Archive, Jack of All Trades, Certainty, Sure-Footed. 10th Level: Glimpse the Truth, Versatile Movement.

FEATS: Diehard, Dive for Cover, Toughness

SKILLS: Athletics, Computers, Culture, Diplomacy, Engineering, Life Science, Medicine, Perception, Physical Science, Piloting, Survival

LADY'S MISSIONARY

THEME: Preacher

ABILITY SCORES: Charisma is your most important ability score as it will help you sway the minds of others and let them realize the truth of your words. Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution can be valuable when having to defend the flock.

ENVOY IMPROVISATIONS: 1st Level: Inspiring Boost. 4th Level: Long-Range Improvisation, Watch Out. 8th Level: Sustained Determination

EXPERTISE TALENTS: Additional Skill Expertise (Mysticism), Cautious Expertise (Diplomacy),

FEATS: Skill Synergy (Diplomacy, Mysticism), Iron Will

SKILLS: Culture, Diplomacy, Mysticism, Perception, Sense Motive

MONARCH'S EYE

THEME: Court Agent

ABILITY SCORES: Intelligence and Charisma are equally important given the skills you are likely to be using most often. Wisdom will also be useful to help you pick up information in other ways.

SPECIALIZATION: Detective

OPERATIVE EXPLOITS: 2nd Level: Combat Trick (Diehard), Quick Disguise. 6th Level: Mentalist's Bane, Stalwart. 10th Level: Ever Vigilant, Glimpse the Truth, Master of Disguise. 14th Level: Uncanny Senses

FEATS: Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

SKILLS: Bluff, Computers, Culture, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Perception, Sense Motive

15: STARSHIP CREATION

"She's not going to be cheap you know." The woman said, looking up at the man across from her. "Even if she wasn't a custom build from the keel out, you've got so much reinforced bracing, redundant systems, extra power leads, and whatnot, that even if it was just a refit job it would cost a couple limbs. And don't get me started on the non-standard parts."

The man nodded. "My credit's good, so the only question is, are you capable of building her or not?" She looks insulted at the suggestion. "Damn straight we can build her, and it will be on time and under budget, or my name isn't Wyldfire."

He smiles and offered his hand. "It will be a pleasure working with you Madam Wlydfire."

She took it with a firm grip, and the deal was sealed.

Here is how to go about creating a starship (or smaller vessel if you wish) in brief. I will avoid going into great technical detail or throwing tons of numbers around and concentrate on fleshing out a basic concept. Along with each step will be provided an example of one such process to help give you a good idea of how to go about doing so.

THE CONCEPT

The single most important part of the creation process. Before you can do anything else you need to have a very good idea of what you want your ship to do. Once you have decided on this you can start deciding what type of ship it is going to be; a merchant, a warship, something in-between, or something else entirely? The next question to ask is price and availability. How much can you afford to spend? How much do you want to spend? Having a ship designed to your particular needs from the ground up and then built is hideously expensive even for a small ship. On the other hand a preexisting model might either not be exactly what you are looking for, or may not even be available. A new ship will cost a good deal more than one that is used, but used ships will likely come with quirks and problems all their own. Many governments and organizations are often willing to help with the acquisition of a ship in exchange for being able to call upon it and its crew in times of need.

Hans Rudel having acquired the necessary funds from years of investments, prize money, and being willing to work for the Alliance from time to time, wishes to go into business for himself and has decided to become the owner of his own starship. An ex-strike craft pilot and wing leader for the USDF he decides he wants to try his hand at hunting down pirates for bounties and maybe supplementing his income by providing escort services for civilian vessels. This means essentially a warship of some sort.

He decides that he wants what is effectively a small assault carrier, something capable of carrying around a squadron of strike craft but being a viable fighting ship in and of itself. After a good deal of research, he decides that none of the models available really meet his requirements even with extensive remodeling. Thus he decides to have a design of his own created. This is going to cost a good deal more, both in hiring someone to create the design and to have a custom job done at the shipyard from scratch.

Being ex-military and in good standing, Hans knows that he can arrange for some equipment normally unavailable to civilians, though not quite up to the standards of current USDF vessels, at a good price at that, and he makes a note to incorporate them wherever possible.

Because of the concept, he knows his ship is going to be a good-sized vessel, probably around the size of a large light cruiser, though a good portion of that volume is going to be dedicated to hanger space and thus not add a lot to actual mass.

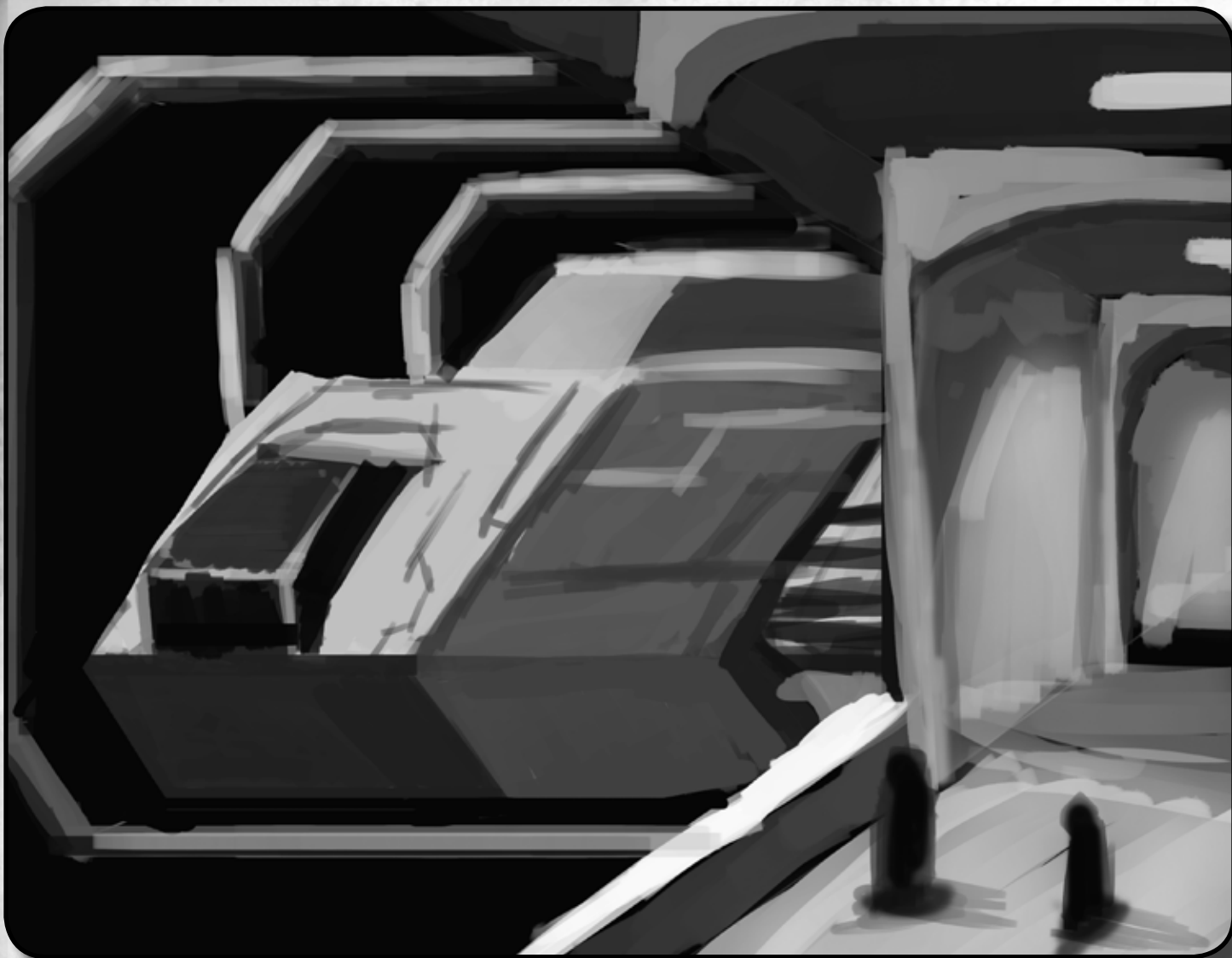
HULL TYPE

After concept, the next most important design feature to consider is hull size and hull type. This will in large part depend on your overall concept and budget. An airformed hull will be more expensive and less efficient when it comes to available volume but will be capable of moving through an atmosphere and with the right equipment, able to land with little difficulty. This is done largely by smoothing away any sharp angles and insuring any equipment that would stick out into the airstream or be capable of either retracting or folding into a less air resistant position.

An unairformed hull will be almost entirely unable to enter an atmosphere, at least not more than once, and is likely to have to entirely rely on small craft for space to ground transportation. The upside is that without having to worry about streamlining a ship can be constructed to be much more efficient with its design better reflecting its purpose without having to conform to a specific shape.

A common compromise is a partially airformed hull which incorporates some elements of each, allowing a ship some atmospheric maneuverability but nowhere near that of an airformed hull. This is often used by the smaller military ships as it allows them to dip into the atmosphere of gas giants for refueling without the time-consuming use of small craft to conduct the same task.

Another part of hull design is determining how much, if any, armor you want to be built directly into the hull. This is not armor laid over the hull, but armor used as part of the hull's intrinsic integrity. The more armor used the better the protection provided and the more expensive in terms of money and mass. It is also more costly and time consuming



to replace than armor layered onto the hull because repairing it essentially means replacing a good section of a ship's basic structure. Its largest advantage is that it weighs less for its effectiveness than armor added to the hull. Because of this it is normally only installed on warships.

The next part to consider when it comes to a ship's hull is how heavily compartmentalized you want it. The more compartmentalization the stronger the ship's integrity and the more damage it can sustain (not to mention the increased likelihood of crew and passengers surviving a penetration), but the more expensive and mass heavy the final result will be as well as having less volume available for other uses. Most civilian designs incorporate minimal compartmentalization with airtight doors and bulkheads every several compartments. Proper warships, in contrast, are often completely compartmentalized, with each door and bulkhead being airtight supplemented by increased internal bracing and supports.

The final point of consideration is to decide on the actual shape of the ship. This really involves an overall consideration of a number of factors, including where you'll want to place weapons if any as well as engines, cargo holds, hangers, etc.

Because he wants his ship to be able to operate without the need to depend on refueling stations but doesn't plan on having to land on a planet, he chooses a partially airformed hull, considering the somewhat reduced efficiency of layout

an acceptable compromise for the ability to refuel itself and not need to carry refueling craft.

The design is a warship when all is said and done and therefore he decides to opt for complete compartmentalization despite its disadvantages, ensuring that the ship will be able to remain operational even after taking heavy damage.

For overall shape, after taking into consideration everything he wants his ship to be able to do, he decides on a flattened hexagonal shape, giving plenty of hull space for weapons and other equipment, good internal volume, and a compact design that should maneuver well. He decides to have the hanger launch out of the top of the ship at an angle by a ramp, allowing for smooth flight operations. Because of this, he picks a carrier template for the basis of the vessel. Overall these give the ship a mean bruiser-like look that should leave most opponents reluctant to come to grips with it.

POWER

Choosing a power source or sources is a vital part of designing a vessel. The pros and cons of most viable power sources are described earlier and will not be discussed here. When choosing a power plant the first question that needs to be asked is just how much power is really going to be necessary?

Just about everything on a ship requires power to operate, from the engines to the computer consoles in the bridge. Energy weapons are massive power hogs as are shields and SIFs that are designed to do more than ward off the occasional micrometeorite. Military engines can also require large amounts of power to operate, especially when used for more than merely cruising.

If a ship isn't designed for travel outside of a solar system a designer can get by with a far lower power requirement than a ship that needs to be able to produce the forces needed to break into FTL space, in fact if it isn't expected to do much more than move around a system they may well opt for a fission plant in order to prevent the need for frequent refueling. Most ships though are going to opt for a fusion plant of one size or another. Merchant ships often get by with only a single moderately sized plant having relatively low power requirements, some smaller ones are even designed to only be able to achieve the power requirements needed to achieve FTL space by temporarily shutting down non-vital systems. Warships though have far higher power requirements and thus tend to devote a much higher percentage of their internal volume to meeting their power requirements, and many carry one or more extra power plants to not merely provide the required power but provide redundancy in case of damage.

Another source of power are batteries which generally are reserved for emergencies in case the main plant fails, and in the case of warships, many systems often have dedicated banks of batteries, this is especially true for anti-matter containment systems. While lacking the raw power of a working plant, they can usually keep vital systems running long enough for crews to repair the damage or be rescued.

Unlike batteries which release their stored power over a long period of time, capacitors store up energy and release it all at once. They are almost exclusively used for extremely large energy weapons or breaking into FTL space. By using large banks of capacitors even a relatively low powered ship can manage to make the break into FTL space, but the time between jumps may require days as power is slowly built up out of whatever can be spared from normal operations.

Hans knows he is going to need a lot of power to run all the systems on his ship, weapons, engines, shields, sensors, and miscellaneous systems are all going to require a significant power investiture. Considering the available options he decides that a fusion plant is his best source for power generation, allowing maximum production of power for its volume and mass without the dangers inherent in an antimatter power plant. Wanting redundancy he also opts to install a second fusion plant to provide excess power and a backup in case of damage that is able to at least get the ship to safety. By installing a second power plant he can help offset some of the volume and mass it consumes by reducing the number of capacitors since much of the power needed for breaking into FTL space can be provided out of base

FTL DRIVES

Type	FTL Speed	Min PCU	Cost (in BP)
Slow	1 ly/day	75	3 x size category
Average	3 ly/day	100	6 x size category
Fast	6 ly/day	150	10 x size category
Very Fast	9ly/day	175	15 x size category
Plaid	12ly/day	200	25 x size category

power availability. He also makes sure enough batteries are installed to provide minimal power for life support for at least a month as a safeguard against a truly horrendous disaster as well as providing an extra source of power that can be tapped in case of a crisis. With his connections he's able to get a Gateway Ultra for his primary plant and a Gateway Light power core as a backup; both advanced designs slightly used by the USDF, they are better than most found on civilian craft, able to provide more power for the same mass and volume.

Taken together Hans is unlikely to have to worry about power as his ship has plenty to burn and then some.

ENGINES

Engines come in nearly as many types as there are vessels. From the relatively low powered units many civilian craft use to the overpowered energy hogs employed by military vessels. When it comes to engines the first thing that needs to be considered is how much raw power you will need. Most civilian vessels can afford the slower acceleration of lower powered engines because it adds little to the overall time spent in interstellar travel. Military vessels on the other hand normally use much more powerful engines, not simply because they tend to mass more for a given volume, but because when it comes to tactical maneuvering high accelerations are vital.

A secondary question is whether you want them placed internally or externally. Externally placed engines are more vulnerable to damage and generally harder to perform maintenance on unless some sort of access is available from inside the main body of the ship. Many engines that are technically externally located are placed in pods directly attached to the hull of a ship with fairings over them to allow pressurized access without crewmembers having to use an airlock. The upside is that externally mounted engines free up internal space. This makes them relatively popular among civilian merchant designs that have little need normally to worry about sustaining serious damage and are looking to maximize available cargo carrying capacity. It also means that if something should go critically wrong with an engine the collateral damage is likely to be minimized even if the ship is unable to jettison the pod.

Internally mounted engines, of course, take up valuable volume that could otherwise be put towards other uses but are

far better protected from damage and easier to maintain. Of course, if something should really go wrong with an engine, the collateral damage and casualties can be severe. Almost all military vessels use internally mounted engines due to the added protection provided, preferring to run the risk of extra damage if one should explode to leaving them vulnerable in the first place.

Hans has already decided to provide his ship with as much sublight engine power as a large light cruiser, a ship relatively the same size as his own vessel. He decides to mount a set of G6 thrusters internally for the added security it offers. However, given that a significant percentage of his ship's volume is going to be the relatively open space needed for a full sized strike craft hanger it is going to leave his ship both faster and more nimble than most ships its size. Likely an unpleasant surprise for any opponents to be sure. As an escort vessel and pirate hunter getting from place to place in a hurry is important so he installs a Fast FTL Drive as a reasonable compromise between size, price, and speed.

WEAPONS

Most ships that travel the spaceways carry at least a minimal defensive armament if only to keep would be pirates from simply coming alongside in a ship armed with a popgun and demanding a ship's surrender. Merchant vessels rarely carry many weapons, and those are even more rarely anything heavier than a medium laser cannon. A typical armament for a medium sized merchant vessel for instance would be a few medium laser turrets backed by some lighter point defense weaponry.

Warships on the other hand, unless specialized designs, tend to bristle with weapons of all kinds allowing engagement at a variety of ranges. The actual particulars can vary greatly depending on the class of vessel, it's civilization of origin, and its intended purpose.

Weapon mixes also tend to center heavily around the primary purpose of a design modified by a civilization's preferences. Ships designed to engage at long range are likely to be missile heavy while ships designed to engage an enemy at a closer range are likely to place more emphasis on heavy lasers and particle cannon. Most warships, however, carry at least a few weapons suited for each engagement range in order to avoid being caught in a completely indefensible position by an opponent.

Missiles are massive space and volume hogs, not to mention being terrifically expensive and often hard to obtain, and thus are almost exclusively the domain of military vessels. Gauss weapons are normally limited to point defense batteries, and then most heavily on ships which have little excess power to spare and whose builders are willing to suffer a degree of degradation in each individual emplacement's defensive ability in order to be able to pack in a larger overall number of defensive weapons. The need for ammunition storage means they require more space than pulse lasers installed for the same purpose but require far less energy to operate.

Because of these and other factors, most ships use near exclusively energy armaments (missiles aside), being cheap to operate and easy to use and maintain while taking up little space, with lasers leading the pack by a large margin.

A NOTE ON SIF FIELDS

SIF Fields help hold a ship together and help its hull structure to resist impacts and attacks. In game terms they do this by adding a multiplier to the ship's Damage Threshold. An integral part of the structure of the ship SIF Fields require no additional space and cannot be knocked out so long as they have sufficient power. Those listed here are only those that provide a bonus above and beyond a standard ship's DT.

Type	DT Bonus	Min PCU	Cost in (BP)
Improved	DT x 1.5	10	4
Advanced	DT x 2.0	20	8
Heavy	DT x 2.5	35	16
Super Heavy	DT x 3.0	50	32

Hans knows that a careful choice of weapon selection is going to be crucial in the creation of a successful vessel. After long consideration he decides reluctantly to forgo any missile armament, it simply being too expensive a proposition to use them regularly. He reasons that as a small carrier he can rely on his squadron of strike craft to help in part make up for the lack of long-range punch this entitles and the knowledge that most pirates and raiders lack decent missile armaments of their own. By choosing this he not only greatly reduces the likely expense of any given engagement, but leaves a great deal of space available for other more cost effective weapons and additional equipment.

He decides that the power of at least one fixed forward firing weapon is worth the volume cost and expense, he decides that he will have a Persistent Particle Beam Cannon installed, giving the ship a good portion of the fixed forward firepower of a modern large light cruiser.

For all around defensive firepower, he picks a pair of laser net turrets to intercept incoming missiles and small craft.

In each broadside he puts a pair of Heavy Laser Nets for a mix of offensive and defensive capability, a Heavy EMP Cannon to help disable pirate vessels, and a Particle Beam for the serious punch. This gives him a ship with more firepower than most cruisers, but this is largely offset by its lack of missile armament which effectively prevents any long-range engagement ability other than it's strike craft (Of course most pirates and raiders also lack these capabilities so it's not as big an issue as if he was intending to engage proper warships). The inclusion of a full squadron of strike craft grants it a degree of flexibility rarely matched in a ship its size, and with proper hanger facilities with the ability to rapidly repair and rearm the strike craft will prove an excellent force multiplier.

STEALTH SYSTEMS

Name	Penalty to Opposed Sensor Checks	Min PCU	Cost (In BP)
Nightshade	+5 DC	10	2 x size category
Shadowcloak	+10 DC	25	5 x size category
Blacknight	+15 DC	50	10 x size category

PASSIVE DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS

In order from the hull out passive defensive systems incorporate armor, SIFs, and shields (if available).

The most basic level of defense available to a spacecraft is armor, putting a layer of tough material between a spacecraft's vitals and whatever is seeking to do harm. Thicker and more advanced armor, of course, provides more protection (and the more advanced, for less weight) than a light coating obviously. However, by itself, armor is only moderately effective. It is when it is paired with an SIF that armor truly begins to shine through, reinforced by even a basic SIF armor can shrug off heavy hits with minimal ablation. Older armors are cheaper, but less effective and more mass intensive for their volume while modern composites can shrug off incredible amounts of damage while weighing less.

SIFs come in a number of power levels, ranging from the minimal ones used on small craft like civilian shuttles which don't expect to have to engage in heavy maneuvering or taking fire, to the super heavy SIFs used by military craft that can even give a nearly unarmored hull the ability to withstand at least some degree of damage or allow an armored hull to withstand even antimatter warheads (for a time). Of course the heavier the SIF the more energy it requires when brought up to full combat power. Most ships carry something in-between the two extremes and most merchant ships get by with as light an SIF field as they can in order to save on costs and maintenance.

Shields are a relatively new introduction to this part of the galaxy and as such are still far from standard even among many civilization's militaries, much less civilian vessels. However, when it comes to providing protection, they are hard to beat due to their ability to completely prevent damage from practically any weapon as long as they remain functional. Initial versions were mass, volume, and energy hogs while providing only moderate protection. More advanced variants are much smaller and far more efficient, providing a great deal of extended protection and have even been miniaturized far enough that along with the newest generation of power plants strike craft can mount these lifesavers (though admittedly very weak ones).

Hans expects his ship to engage in combat at some point and thus its defense is one of his priorities. Acquiring a powerful and efficient SIF presents no difficulty if some added expense. Because of this, he picks the equivalent of an Advanced SIF Field Choosing how much armor to add

presents more difficulty though. As he expects his ship to directly engage in combat he decides to make use of integral armor, though only as much as a destroyer would likely carry in total, both to reduce costs and mass, as well as because he wants to rely more on the ship's shields, speed, and maneuverability to avoid expensive damage in the first place. He has already had a fair amount of integral armor built into his ship and adding too much will significantly impair his ship's speed and maneuverability. He decides to layer on enough additional advanced armor to bring it up to spec with that of some of the older designs of light cruisers. This should be plenty to handle the weapons pirates are likely to be armed with and still give the ship a good turn of speed. This grants the ship the equivalent of Mk4 Armor.

Once more calling on his contacts and a few old favors Hans manages to acquire a third generation shield system, giving his ship better protection than many proper navies are able to boast. This grants his ship the equivalent of Heavy Shields 360.

Hans' ship is beginning to shape into quite the scrappy little fighter and he can be confident that it will take quite a pounding before severe damage can begin to be inflicted.

ACTIVE DEFENSE SYSTEMS

Active defense systems comprise those systems that actively seek to deny an opponent the ability to inflict damage against a ship that does not fall under the category of defensive weapons. Electronic Counter Measures (ECM), stealth systems, and decoys comprise the majority of said systems.

Such systems are almost never carried by honest merchants because of the expense, volume and mass requirements, and the degree of specialized maintenance needed to keep such systems operating. Employing equipment that is solely intended for combat is also extremely cost ineffective for ships never intended to ever engage in combat in the first place. Even pirates and raiders often forgo such systems, not needing them against their usual targets of lightly armed merchantmen, though many who modify or have custom built ships often try and incorporate at least some degree of stealth technology in order to allow them to get closer without being spotted.

Decoys are just that, systems designed to be deployed in battle in order to confuse enemy sensors, and more commonly draw off incoming missiles. Most do this by throwing off a sensor image to match that of the defending vessel or a target that will more likely draw off incoming fire. They tend to be most effective against missiles which suffer from limited sensor systems due to the limited space available for the equipment; however at long range they can often fool the main sensor suites onboard ships if used well. Most are fairly large and good only as long as their limited power sources can continue to meet the heavy power requirements; they also tend to suffer heavy attrition as they do their job, attracting enemy fire.

ECM is a variety of electronic methods of either trying to deny an opponent's sensors information or to ensure that the information they get is inaccurate. Jamming is generally considered the most effective and common method, which essentially boils down to throwing out a lot of static on the channels an opponent's sensors and communications use in order to render them blind. Other more complex methods involve adjusting a ship's sensor profile or otherwise altering the information being received. The converse to ECM is

Electronic Counter Counter Measures (ECCM) which are systems specifically designed to defeat ECM.

Both decoys and ECM/ECCM suffer from the need to constantly be updated as even being a generation or so behind an opponent's ability in this area renders such systems nearly useless and gives said opponent a distinct advantage. Such systems are usually among the most jealously guarded by civilizations' militaries.

Stealth capability simply comprises reducing a ship's emissions signatures to make it harder to detect. Some aspects of this are the ability to change the coloration and patterns of a ship's outer skin, using heat sinks to reduce its infrared emissions, using shielding to conceal its other electronic emissions, and installing systems that reduce emissions in the first place. Additionally running the ship at reduced levels of power can go a long way towards increasing a ship's stealthiness, while conversely at full power a ship is easily detected even at long range.

Hans knows that a lot of pirates and raiders forgo the use of ECM/ECCM and decoys due to the cost and difficulty in acquiring worthwhile systems, not to mention the little need they normally have for them. Thus having even a halfway decent set of active electronic defense systems will give his ship a significant advantage over his likely opponents. Rather than going through Alliance channels he elects to arrange to acquire the majority of such equipment from the Sagaren Collective which has no problems providing it at a reasonable price and just a couple of steps below its own military's capability to almost anyone who is interested, giving him the equivalent of Mk 8 Defenses. Hans decides to also add an optional feature that allows him to alter the sensor image of his ship in order for him to lure pirates in more easily, hoping that by the time they're close enough to see through the deception they will be too close to run successfully.

Hans also decides to heavily stealth his ship, adding the equivalent of a Nightshade stealth system both in order to help reduce its chances of being detected while working as an escort and to allow him to sneak up on pirates when operating in a more offensive role.

These systems taken together will add yet another layer of defense to an already impressive defensive network.

SENSORS

Even the most austere and limited space vessel carries at least basic navigational sensors. Science vessels can carry a bewildering variety of powerful standard sensors and more exotic variants that are unlikely to be found elsewhere. Warships generally carry powerful versions of standard systems and large numbers of targeting and analytical sensors, in addition to numbers of secondary and backup systems to compensate for damage, often along with dedicated computers to interpret the information gathered.

Sensors break down into two main types, those that can be used in FTL space or to detect objects in FTL space, and those that are used in normal space. By their nature, FTL sensors are rarely able to do more than give location and approximate mass and speed, though from these factors a good sensor operator can often extrapolate additional data.

Standard sensors on the other hand effectively cover the spectrum from one end to the other with power and sensitivity depending on the ship in question. It is largely this being restricted to light speed gathering of information (though closer vessels or sensor platforms can transmit that information over their FTL communications systems to ships farther away giving virtually real-time data even at great distances) that has for so long had ships normally engage at several millions of miles from each other at most, even when the theoretical range of such weapons is farther. This is part of what makes missiles so popular and dangerous, being self guiding they can adjust in order to hit even a maneuvering target at long range.

However even the most powerful sensors are useless without a computer capable of interpreting the incoming data and presenting it in an understandable form. Many make the mistake of employing powerful sensors without the computer capability to make the best use of them.

Hans knows that good sensors will be vital for his ship to detect pirates and raiders at a distance they cannot detect his own ship in return, whether he is actively looking for them or is screening merchant vessels. Advanced notice will give him vital time to maneuver for an advantage or to evade if necessary. Since he was already planning to have a powerful computer system he decides it's unnecessary to add additional dedicated computing power.

Hans decides to pick the best sensors he can manage, selecting the equivalent of Advanced Long-range sensors.

COMPUTER SYSTEM

If a ship's power plant is its heart, then the computer is its brain. Without the massive processing power typical to ship computers (along with the relevant programs) a ship is nothing more than an expensive piece of space junk. Life support won't run, the engines won't fire, the sensors and helm will refuse to function, and all the myriad other parts of the ship are inert and useless (except likely for the mostly hardwired emergency systems for as long as battery power lasts).

Small ships like transport shuttles not expecting to do much more than go from point A to point B at a moderate rate of speed and with little maneuvering can get by with systems that take up less space than a personal com unit. Larger ships generally have much heavier computers as well as at least a basic backup system. Even small warships generally have at least one backup system, and usually two if there is any way to squeeze them in. Furthermore, military computers are almost inevitably hardened against EMP effects, the expense of which is often considered excessive by civilian owners.

Hans wants a powerful computer system to allow for rapid FTL navigational calculations as well as providing enhanced capabilities in controlling and numerous other systems onboard, including weapons. Thus he selects a Mk 2 Tetranode. He also picks a backup Mk 1 Duranode system capable of handling minimal ship functions and computing navigational requirements, though it will take far longer than the primary system. Both systems will be hardened as much as possible as well as being placed in the two most well shielded parts of the ship for added protection.

SMALL CRAFT ACCOMMODATIONS

While many smaller vessels that are capable of landing themselves often forgo a compliment of small craft, most large ships must carry with them at least a shuttle or two. Generally, in these cases, such small craft are recessed into special alcoves that allow access to them from the mothership will maintaining an airtight seal without taking up excessive internal space and generally giving the ability to reach at least some of the mechanical spaces without needing to suit up. Otherwise, they may simply be attached to the hull of the mothership with access through special hatches that link directly with the smaller vessel's main airlock. Smaller Alliance warships are notorious for carrying at least a couple of parasite strike craft in addition to sometimes having small workcraft hanger facilities. Other larger ships, particularly carriers, the larger classes of warships, and especially large cargo vessels may carry entire wings of smaller craft in dedicated hanger bays. Warships that have dedicated hangers usually have strike craft, shuttles, and other utility craft all stored together, rearranging the vessels inside as necessary to maximize efficiency for the task at hand.

At the most basic, hangers do little more than provide a sealed environment in which to store and work on such craft. More elaborate designs contain extensive repair and refitting facilities, or even fabricators big enough to create strike craft wholesale and large parts for bigger craft. Some are designed to allow the craft to transit without depressurizing the hanger, but most vessels find the space and mass required of such elaborate systems, as well as the additional time involved in flight operations to be prohibitive.

The core concept of Hans' ship is its ability to carry a squadron of strike craft and rapidly launch them. Theoretically, he could get by with a series of parasite fighters, but that would greatly complicate repairs, maintenance, and rearming. Instead he opts for an internal hanger large enough to carry a squadron of strike craft, a quartet of assault shuttles, several miscellaneous craft, and enough spare room to allow for additional vessels or an increase in the size of integral craft in the future. Thus he selects the equivalent of two Hanger Bays. He decides to add hanger maintenance facilities extensive enough to handle anything short of major damage in a reasonable amount of time. Deciding that speed is more important than convenience he chooses a design that pumps all the air out before opening to space rather than a more complicated airlock system. Launching will be from a ramp that opens out at an angle from the top of the ship, reducing the surface space used and allowing small craft to leave at high rates of speed.

MISCELLANEOUS

With the major components of the ship decided on and mostly positioned, what is left are all the little details that will complete the vessel. These include but are not limited to the amount of life support, crew size, crew and passenger accommodations, room set aside for cargo, fuel capacity, and miscellaneous equipment. While not perhaps as flashy as the more major components these little things are vital to the operation and effectiveness of any vessel.

Hans knows that he wants his ship to be able to operate for extended periods of time without support which means that a sizable amount of room is going to need to be set aside for supplies for both the crew and the ship, though fabricators and recycling systems greatly reduce the amount from what it once might have been.

Long range cruising means that even with efficient engines he's going to want a great deal of fuel capacity and it is likely that once everything else is put in place, any remaining space will be turned into bunkering.

Accommodations for personnel are likely to be larger than one might think, needing not only space for the ship's normal crew and the strike craft crews, but the entire maintenance section for the strike craft, boarding parties, and several prize crews as well. Total crew size, even with extensive automation is probably going to be around a hundred and fifty. Actual life support and accommodations are going to be set up to handle thrice that under normal circumstances (not counting the extra capacity designed to compensate for battle damage) in order to handle captured pirates and rescued hostages. He makes sure that there is a reasonable amount of dedicated recreation space in the form of a couple of larger rooms that can be rearranged as needed for everything from briefing rooms, to game courts, to theaters, training simulators, or more typically, an exercise room by installing a Recreation suite (HAC). Accommodations in individual cabins and bunkrooms while not elaborate will be reasonably comfortable, providing the equivalent of Good Crew Quarters.

Cargo space aside from that for needed supplies will be limited by necessity, but Hans makes sure to leave at least some room for the storage of recaptured goods or salvaged equipment.



FINAL TOUCHES

Once a ship is built and nearly ready to go there are only a few final preparations. A crew will need to be found and hired, supplies will need to be bought and stored, the ship will need to be named and registered with a government, insurance should be bought, reams of paperwork are likely to have to be filled out, small craft purchased, inspected, and brought aboard, and dozens of other details need to be attended to, and all this before it even embarks on its first job.

Hans has gone through a lot, but now has his ship. However, before it's ready to depart he needs to take care of a few last details. For much of the core of his crew, Hans contacts a few old friends who are interested in the proposal, the rest is acquired by enlisting a search service that screens potential applicants and presents a final list for his perusal to pick from.

Supplies and fuel are easier and simply acquired through normal channels, though some of the military gear is likely to require additional permits.

After due consideration Hans decides to name the ship Corsair's Bane and registers it with the United Systems Alliance as an independent warship, granting it the designation I.W.S.

For small craft, Hans ends up picking a pair of new transport shuttles for basic utility duties. He manages to acquire a pair of used older model combat shuttles which he has refurbished. While not quite up to current standards, for his purposes they will serve very well in allowing efficient boarding actions. Finally, for his strike craft squadron he decides to go with a set of rebuilt Wolverines that have had a pair of their Medium pulse lasers switched out for a pair of light particle cannon, an uprated power plant and more powerful engine along with improvements to its SIF, a light shielding system, and a more powerful computer system which helps compensate for the removal of the co-pilot to provide additional room for some of the new equipment. These ships are expected to be superior to anything they are likely to encounter in the course of their duties.

With everything and everyone onboard, all that is left is to find some work, preferably something not too difficult at first in order to give time for the crew to get used to working together and to put the new ship through its paces.

LIGHT ASSAULT CARRIER (CORSAIR'S BANE)

GARGANTUAN CARRIER

ORIGIN:	Independent
TIER:	15
BP:	587
SPEED:	6
MANEUVERABILITY:	Poor, Turn 3
FTL:	6 ly/day
AC:	27
TL:	28
HP:	360
DT:	20
CT:	48
SHIELDS:	Heavy Shields 360 (Forward 90, Port 90, Starboard 90, Aft 90)
ATTACK (FORWARD):	Persistent Particle Beam Cannon (2d10x10)
ATTACK (PORT):	Heavy Laser Net (5d6 Point +12), Heavy EMP Cannon (EMP), Particle Beam (8d6)
ATTACK (STARBOARD):	Heavy Laser Net (5d6 Point +12), Heavy EMP Cannon (EMP), Particle Beam (8d6)
ATTACK TURRET:	Laser net (2d6), Laser net (2d6)
POWER CORE:	Gateway Ultra, Gateway Light (800 PCU, 684 Max Usage);
FTL ENGINE:	Fast;
SYSTEMS:	Mk 4 Armor, Mk 6 Defenses, Advanced Long-Range Sensors, Crew Quarters (Good), Nightshade Stealth System, Mk2 Tetranode, Mk 1 Duonode (backup), Advanced SIF Field; Expansion Bays: Hanger Bays (2), Cargo Bay, HAC Recreation Suite
MODIFIERS:	+2 any four checks per round, +5 DC vs sensor checks Complement: 150
CREW:	
CAPTAIN:	+18 Diplomacy (15 ranks), +24 Gunnery (15 ranks), +22 Intimidate (15 ranks), +26 Piloting (15 ranks), +24 Computers (15 Ranks), +18 Engineering (15 Ranks)
ENGINEERS:	(3 Officers, 30 Crew Each) Engineering +26 (15 ranks)
GUNNERS:	(3 Officers, 20 crew each) Gunnery +32 (15 ranks)
PILOT:	(1 Officer, 4 Crew) Piloting +26 (15 ranks)
SCIENCE OFFICER:	(1 Officer, 3 crew) Computers +28 (15 ranks)

16: OUR OWN LITTLE WORLDS

There is a single general space, a single vast immensity which we may freely call void: in it are innumerable globes like this on which we live and grow; this space we declare to be infinite, since neither reason, convenience, sense-perception nor nature assign to it a limit.

— Giordano Bruno

Quoted in Joseph Silk, *The Big Bang* (1997), 89.

While there is plenty of adventure to be found beyond the atmosphere, it is likely you will spend at least some, if not most of your time planetside. Because of this, being able to create a planet from scratch can prove highly useful. Just as important is the fact that if you can create one planet, you can easily create an entire solar system.

While it may seem a bit overwhelming at first when you consider all the necessary aspects involved in creating a world, we'll be presenting the basic steps along with an example to make it a bit easier. The thing to remember is that the degree of detail about a world is likely to be proportional to how much time is going to be spent there. The more time spent the more underlying detail should be provided.

CONCEPT

Before we can determine anything else about a world we need to know what we want it to be. Will it be inhabitable without any life support or special equipment, inhabitable only with such equipment, or completely uninhabitable? Does it support a population, and if so how large and of what species? Does it have any indigenous life, sapient or otherwise? What role does it play? These and other questions will help you establish the specifics about your planet.

We decide we want a relatively small world that is unimportant in the overall galactic scheme of things. We decide it is survivable without special equipment, but rather on the dry side and with a limited and relatively primitive ecosystem that is vulnerable due to the lack of overlapping links. It was settled several decades back by a mixture of Humans and Gremlins, though at this point a few members of other species can be found as well. At the moment it is slowly becoming a self-sufficient colony world that has only just begun to acquire a basic industrial base. It often serves as a base from which explorations of the local area of space, relatively poorly mapped, can launch.

TYPE

Earlier on note has been made of the different types of planets in brief, and this is the next step, from your concept you'll have some idea of what type of planet you're envisioning, and the descriptions provided will help you clarify the details

of your world. Once you know what the overall existing conditions are likely to be, you will be able to begin determining what adjustments to your concept you are going to have to make to have things fit. Something to keep in mind is that realistic worlds are rarely all one type of terrain or climate, Earth is an excellent example, with a variety of terrains and climates spread across the planet's surface. Most often single climate worlds exist on the outer edge of or beyond what is normally considered inhabitable, and even then there are often variations, it not ones large enough to normally attract the notice of people to whom the entire planet is a hostile environment.

Planet type will often also be the biggest factor in determining where within a solar system a planet exists. Generally, habitable planets exist only within thin bands around stars unless other factors are involved.

Our world isn't perfect but is survivable without too much effort and without the need for special equipment, thus we know it is a Class 6 Standard world. We've already decided that the primary reason for its Class designation is that it is a bit on the dry side to be a Class 1 Garden world. We further decide that the local flora and fauna are incompatible in terms of nutrition with the majority of races, thus giving another reason to avoid the Class 1 designation. Likely the planet exists closer to the inner edge of habitability than the outer edge.

ATMOSPHERE

The atmosphere of a world will in part depend on its type, but even Type I Garden worlds can have a wide range of atmospheres, and what may be suitable for one species might be lethal to another.

There are a number of ways for an atmosphere to form, but the thing to keep in mind is how it is sustained. The most ideal atmosphere in the universe is useless if there is no way for it to renew itself. Methods range from gases produced internally to life-forms on the surface taking in one set of gases and converting it to another type. In the second case, it may well be that the entire ecosystem of the planet is based on this process.

In the majority of cases, most sapient species breathe some mixture of oxygen and nitrogen, but many use different combinations or entirely different gases. Even different mixtures of similar gases can make a significant difference in the suitability of any given world for a given species.

Knowing that both humans and gremlins are able to survive without life support equipment we can infer that a suitable oxygen and nitrogen atmosphere with some carbon dioxide is likely present along with the usual smattering of trace gases.

Knowing there is a basic ecosystem in place we decide that several different species of biota are responsible for maintaining the atmosphere.

TOPOGRAPHY/WEATHER

Topography is where you decide on what the planet's surface is like. At its extreme, this can involve considering a variety of conditions over a long period of time such as weathering, climate, plate movements, and other factors over the period of the planet's existence. However, while you are more than welcome to go to whatever lengths you want in determining this sort of thing, this is a quick and dirty guide. As this is for a game the rule of thumb is whatever suits your needs is acceptable, and you can figure out how it got that way later if need be.

A few key points to keep in mind though, large bodies of water tend to produce humid areas around their borders that are also not subject to as extreme temperature changes as other areas. Mountains tend to trap moisture on one side, thus leaving it wet and the other side dry, the degree to which this effect occurs can vary depending on the height of the mountains and the amount of moisture carried over them by prevailing winds. This also often can result in powerful local weather patterns as well.

The larger the bodies of water, the more extreme the weather is likely to be as it moves from one end to the other, or in more extreme cases completely around a world. Massive waves, powerful storms, and fast moving currents are just some of the effects that these bodies of water can produce.

Large flat areas of land also tend to produce extremes of weather, even if it is not necessarily violent. But they also tend to be relatively stable when it comes to prevailing climate conditions.

Another point to consider is axial tilt, while not technically part of topography it can have significant effects on weather patterns, generally speaking, the more severe the tilt the more erratic and severe the weather.

We know our world is a bit on the dry side. That suggests a scarcity of water. We decide to go with a single medium sized inland sea and scattered large lakes as the primary sources of water, not counting the relatively small ice caps. It is a young planet and thus many of its mountain ranges are massive, not having been subject to millions of years of erosion on a planet that is still very tectonically active with plenty of plate movements resulting in plentiful volcanoes. These factors combine to make much of the planet either very humid or barren desert and difficult to travel great distances on the ground. Short term weather tends to change rapidly and proves very powerful, sweeping down from the mountains as significant differences between hot and cold fronts excite the atmosphere. Long-term weather patterns tend to vary only moderately due to only a minor axial tilt.

RESOURCES

Most planets are settled because they offer something, be it isolation, strategic position, or most commonly, resources that the planet possesses or provides access to. Resources can range from valuable minerals, usable wood, medicines, food sources, fuel sources, to other more exotic items.

D%	Resource Type
1-20	Mineral Rich
21-40	Exotic Minerals
41-60	Pharmaceuticals
61-80	Ancient Ruins
81-100	Agricultural Boon

When constructing your world you'll need to decide what kind of resources if any it contains that drew people there or are available for use, or failing that, what other reasons there are for people to be present (if any in fact are).

Mineral wealth is likely the most common reason for a world to be settled, either specifically for its mining potential or because such resources are invaluable to a newly founded colony.

Food sources are probably the next most common reason for settlement. A world easily able to produce large amounts of food, normally through growing grains or harvesting of easily processable native life often proves to be the center of a cluster of less bountiful worlds, the massive fabricators otherwise needed to feed populations in their entirety often more expensive than shipping nutrient rich food in bulk from nearby systems.

Many worlds sport small outposts that have grown over time almost by accident that were sited solely as a refueling stop. While worlds containing large amounts of easily converted fuel are not necessarily uncommon, there are often stretches of space where only a couple such worlds exist and often installations spring up to not merely offer refueling but a variety of other services.

Keep in mind that many colony worlds are chosen specifically because they have a variety of resources that are useful not only to a starting colony but for a more established world as well. If a world cannot be made eventually self-sufficient the odds of it being picked for the primary intent of colonization are less likely.

We already know that our world relies heavily on the exportation of harvested grains, the rich volcanic soil and mild climate allowing for multiple bountiful crops with relatively little effort. We decide that because of the heavy tectonic activity there are relatively plentiful mineral deposits available, including a wide array of radioactive, though the amount of plate activity makes them too expensive to export successfully, they'll prove useful not only to the growing colony now, but when it begins to rapidly expand in the future. Otherwise, there is little in terms of resources worth mentioning.

SATELLITES

What's hanging around in orbit above a planet can have a significant impact on a world. Moons can exert powerful tidal forces, provide launching platforms into space, or valuable depositories of resources, not to mention the possibility of having settlements all their own. Whether they are captured by a planet's gravity or otherwise acquired, moons should be

noted, whether they serve an important purpose or merely a romantic backdrop to an evening.

Major artificial satellites are also noted here, some may even be the primary reason for a settlement on the planet's surface. At the very least they are likely to bring a fair amount of extra traffic to a world they orbit, and depending on the exact type, may well do far more than that.

Planetary rings are surprisingly common, but most are generally too thin to be seen unless at just the right angle, and many end up deteriorating over time until there is nothing left.

Our planet lacks any natural satellites, but the USDF maintains a small support base in orbit that sees a fair amount of traffic and provides a measure of security. Its personnel often visits the planet on either business or R&R and provides a valuable degree of security.

NATIVE LIFE

Some worlds come with native life already established even before explorers stumble over it or colonists import lifeforms of their own (intentionally or otherwise). While the aspects of handling an encounter with intelligent life is beyond the scope of this section and going into any real detail about setting up an ecosystem could fill an entire series of book, we can at least glance over very briefly some of the most basic aspects of a standard ecology. I'll leave it to the reader to come up with more exotic systems.

Fortunately, in most cases, you won't need to go into a planet's ecology in too much detail, but having at least a basic idea of what performs what role is not a bad idea.

Figure out what the major predators and providers are and how they interact. Find out what converts or concentrates base sources of energy into a form that other life forms can consume efficiently.

If your planet relies on a biological source or sources to produce a breathable (or turn a breathable atmosphere into an unbreathable one) figure out what it is and what process it uses in brief. You may also want to figure a diversity of species for different environments on the planet.

Keep in mind those lifeforms that might be a threat to people, either directly, or imperiling their means of livelihood or sustenance.

Life on our world is fairly basic but widespread. There is little overall diversity due to the fairly uniform climate planetwide. At the most basic level are microscopic vegetables and animal creatures that absorb the large amounts of gases released into the oceans and atmosphere and as a waste product produce oxygen and nitrogen. This is scaled up through the first several layers of the ecosystem and is entirely prevalent among the plant life. At this point in the evolutionary process, predation is in its most basic stages and predators are rather clumsy, but still highly effective as their prey species have yet to evolve defenses.

Plantlife has taken the form of mosses, with even floating masses having taken to the air and often discoloring the sky for wide swaths. Others form bulging masses that heap themselves upwards in great mounds.

The animal life is mostly slow moving and fairly passive, however several predators evolved the ability to move at what for the planet is a fairly rapid pace for short periods by using special muscles that store up energy. None of them, however, are a direct threat to the settlers as they hunt by

tracking the pheromones of their prey and do not recognize the off-world scents.

REASONS FOR SETTLEMENT

If a world is settled, there needs to be a reason for it, an indigenous population, survivors of a shipwreck, a planned colony, a temporary resource extraction base, a fueling station, research lab, or a military outpost. The reasons behind the original settlement will have a large impact on the people and culture on a given world, even if it has been generations since the original settlement. It can also have an effect on where the majority of people live and the more common professions.

Our world was settled primarily to serve as a nearby source of foodstuffs for several other nearby systems. It was a planned colony and well funded which meant that the colonists underwent few of the hardships that many do and were able to start from a firm base rather than having to try and build up to the bare essentials. A small USDF support base is in orbit over the world to provide a base for patrols in the surrounding region with the growing population and industrialization making the cluster more prone to raiding and piracy. Recently because of its central location, decent infrastructure and the presence of several poorly explored clusters nearby, there has been an increase in the transient population of spacers and explorers.

Thus there are a great many farmers on the planet along with the specialists that are there to support them, along with a scattering of spacers, explorers, scientists, and USDF personnel on leave, providing an interesting spectrum of people.

POPULATION

Who and what lives on your world? What species? How widespread are they? Do they live in one or two main settlements or are they scattered widely across the surface or is it a mixture of both?

We already know that the primary population of the planet is a mixture of Gremlins and Humans. There are not enough members of any other species to note here, but the odd individual could prove to be interesting. Humans only comprise roughly one in five of the settlers, with the prolific Gremlins making up the rest of the population.

The overall population is around a quarter million with the largest concentration in the main settlement of Moss-fall which has around forty thousand. The rest are scattered in small settlements or homesteads in the main and surrounding valleys.

CULTURE

Culture is a crucial factor to take into account when designing a world. What are the people like, are there any major religions that will have an impact on interactions between people? What kind of government do they have? What are the laws? What are outlooks on life? What ideas and concepts are held in high esteem or disfavor? These and many other questions can be answered depending on how detailed you want a given planet's culture to be.

17: SPECIES CREATION

The people of our world being from the Alliance and composing more than one species have a strong tolerance for different opinions, ideas, lifestyles, and species, so long as it doesn't threaten their livelihoods. Like in many other places, the two primary species have taken advantage of each other's natural abilities to achieve a high degree of cooperation and efficiency.

The government is a democracy with each person having a vote and a governor elected every five years. Most settlements of more than a couple of dozen people have a local spokesman, and larger settlements have an elected mayor.

With little to do on the planet, a sizeable portion of young adults leave to work elsewhere, with the local USDF station receiving a surprisingly large number of would-be candidates. Outside of Mossfall, people are mostly too widely scattered to have easy access to services many people take as standard and thus are used to being ruggedly independent and fairly self-sufficient. Because of this, most families have at least one form of transportation and people like doctors and repair personnel are used to making long trips out to residences.

A great deal of the universe does not need any explanation. Elephants, for instance. Once molecules have learnt to compete and to create other molecules in their own image, elephants, and things resembling elephants, will in due course be found roaming around the countryside ... Some of the things resembling elephants will be men.

— Peter William Atkins
The Creation (1981), 3.

The Starsea Universe is filled with a multitude of creatures both sapient and otherwise, any interstellar traveler is likely to encounter at least a few new species, if not dozens or hundreds. Simply creating and placing one or several species within an ecosystem is generally not overly complicated at the level of detail normally needed. However creating a sapient species that is more than simply background fluff can be a far more complicated process.

Because of this, we'll walk through the most basic steps of creating one suitable for use. You should feel free though to expand as much as you want upon these foundations.

CONCEPT

The most important step when creating a new race the concept, what role is this race going to play? Even though as individuals they may do a great deal of different things, what does the rest of the galaxy see them as? Honorable warriors, suave diplomats, great pilots, or many other concepts, where have they been pegged, accurately or otherwise?

How do they see themselves? Are they unified or divided? What is important to them as a species? What kind of worlds do they inhabit? How technologically advanced are they? What kind of culture or cultures do they have? How far have they expanded? Nail your concept down and the rest should easily flow into place with a little application of logic.

We visualize our race as a group of aquatic beings that evolved on a world that is mostly water. They are known generally as philosophers and intellectuals and due to the amount of extra life support needed to survive in most environments, they are not known to travel much beyond their own system. A generally unified race, the art of debate and discussion have been elevated to a high degree. So far they only inhabit in any numbers their homeworld and a few other places within their own system that they have installed extensive life support systems. Because of their waterbased existence, they were unable to create a particularly high degree of technology until discovered by outsiders who were able to provide the technology that could be used as the base for an underwater industry.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

How your creature looks will depend on a number of things, primarily the environment it comes from and what the processes of evolution created in terms of advantages. Creatures rarely have attributes that are not advantageous at some point in their evolution, even if the need no longer exists. This can really work in two ways, either you decide what the creature looks like and can do, and then come up with an environment that makes those viable evolutionary choices, or you can design the environment and use that to decide what kind of creature would evolve under them.

Keep in mind that a creature needs a way to interact with its environment, examine its environment (even if only through touch), and potentially move just as a beginning.

We know already that our species evolved on a primarily water world and is an aquatic species. This leaves us a good number of body forms open to us and puts little upper limit on overall body mass. We decide we want them to be about 30ft long and weigh in the range of 4-5 tons total. While large for an aquatic creature, it certainly isn't huge. We decide that we want it to be a mammal-like species with the ability to regulate its body temperature to some

degree to better let it cope with their world's varying water temperatures.

We want them to be omnivores and to give them a taste of the exotic, as well as neatly cover some other angles; so we decide to give them two primary methods of feeding. One orifice they use to filter feed, gathering in microscopic plants and animals as they swim through their world's oceans. Through another, they ingest larger pieces of food, snatched by a group of fourteen tentacles spaced around their forward section. The ability to filter feed means that they normally do not have to work overly hard to secure food while the ability to ingest more concentrated sources of energy allows for periods of high activity and the tentacles provide manipulative appendages. Propulsion is provided by four sets of three flippers, with two sets located along the upper body and two along the lower body.

The creatures have sonar that they use to navigate, explore their surroundings, and communicate. They also have four eyes located near the front of their bodies located in pairs on their upper and lower body.

Their coloration is split between a dark green on the top and a light green on the bottom, matching the coloration of their world's oceans while their overall body form is teardrop shaped, bulged at the front and tapering at the rear. Thin scales cover much of their body affording them some protection from predators on their homeworld.

They have an internal skeleton and maintain air bladders while using gills to breathe and can expect to live three hundred standard years or more, even without the likely advances in medical sciences likely to come about in the near future.

CULTURE

Culture is an important aspect of any species, whether sapient or otherwise. At all but the most basic levels individuals and groups within a species have certain ways of interacting with each other, even normally anti-social species have some rules for how they avoid each other.

In sapient species, cultures can be very complex, and some species may well have more than one culture in addition to numerous subcultures. Often though when it comes to other species, one particular culture will become the one a given species is known for, whether because it happened to be the one first encountered, most often encounters, or the one that best plays to stereotypes depends on the circumstances. Of course, this can lead to individuals either trying to conform to that cultural stereotype when among other species or going out of their way to avoid conforming to that stereotype.

When you create a culture it can be as complex or simple as you want, always remembering you can expand on the basics later on if you need to. Remember that you should keep in mind not only how a culture(s) interact among themselves, but in reaction to outsiders.

Because our creatures are relatively free to move around their planet and can communicate over long distances they effectively have a unified culture. As they need to expend relatively little effort normally in order to survive and their habitat is not conducive to complicated tool creation, this has left them a great deal of time to turn intellects elevated by millions of years of need to work together to thwart the larger predators on their planet, towards the arts of philosophy, debate, and other mental exercises.

They are social creatures and work in groups throughout their lives, each group normally being under the control of the senior matriarch who directs where the group moves and any efforts towards gathering additional food beyond what they could normally acquire through simply moving about. They often though not always lead the group discussions.

As a species, they still are not sure how to react to the outside universe that has only recently introduced itself. Long accustomed to a stable and predictable environment the culture shock is not yet fully worn off, though to outside appearances they are adapting well enough. A small industrial base capable of operating in their environment has already been set up and some of the more adventurous ones have already left the planet, either traveling or setting up several small bases within their own system with the help of the newcomers. It is expected that in time they may well begin to colonize many of the largely water filled worlds that are often left nearly untouched.

HISTORY

Even a brief history and outline of a species' past can be greatly illuminating. While there is no reasonable way to hope to compact an entire species' comprehensive history into the space normally available (though feel free to try), nor in many cases is there any need to do so.

Our species' history is entirely oral, recorded in songs that are memorized by great storytellers, and while interesting enough to them, is generally rather dull for outsiders. Few things of real note occurred until the arrival of a United Systems Alliance Survey ship that set down to refuel and contact was made. While not yet having joined the Alliance it seems likely that once the species gets around to forming some sort of body that can act on behalf of the species as a whole (if they ever do) they may well choose to join. For now though they are relying on their small amount of offworld trade and private enterprise to generate enough income for their few modern projects.

OTHER DETAILS

Often times even after you've filled out everything else there will be a few pieces you want to include but just weren't able to put down for one reason or another. Feel free to make a note of them after everything else.

18: EXAMPLE OF SPACE COMBAT

"The maneuvers exhibited by modern spacecraft would have been thought impossible by earlier physicists and space travelers. They had believed any real sort of ship to ship combat unlikely, and if it happened at all would consist of a brief high speed pass or orbital slug fests where opponents would match speeds and tear away at each other until fatal damage was inflicted. However, with the invention of the inertial drive, SIFs, and more efficient forms of propulsion combat more closely resemble that imagined by entertainment and literature of the time period."

-Excerpt from the USDF's An Introduction to Modern Stellar Combat training manual.

Acting on a tip-off the pirate ship Breezy (A modified Drake Class Privateer) lies in wait in deep space for a particularly rich prize. Its FTL sensors patiently scan for lightyears in several directions. While the odds of its quarry dropping out of FTL space within range are exceedingly slim, with the knowledge obtained about their prey's likely course they can be fairly certain it will drop out of FTL space for a navigational fix within range of their sensors, at which point they can make a short FTL transition and drop on top of it before its FTL engines are prepared to activate again.

(The Breezy's Science Officer, being in no hurry takes 20 on a Scan check. 20+16 for a total of 36 versus DC 30, easily beating it.)

Sure enough, after a couple days of patient waiting an FTL signature matching what they expect shows up and a short while later disappears off their sensors a fair distance away, indicating its return to normal space.

(The Breezy's Pilot, taking the information from the Science Officer calculates a short FTL jump, He rolls a 15+13 for a total of 26 versus DC 20. He passes the check with a good margin for error.)

The Breezy arms its weapons and defensive systems while going to its equivalent of general quarters before it makes a short FTL flight before returning to normal space only a couple hexes away distance away from the intended target.

(The Breezy's Science Officer makes another Scan check and rolls a 2+16 for a total of 18, not beating a DC 36)

More detailed sensor readings at close range confirm that it is the expected target, the large Lifter class merchant ship Java Spice loaded with a valuable cargo. Lightly armed with defensive weaponry there is little chance of it fending off the heavily refitted pirate ship.

Almost immediately the Java Spice hails the newcomer, demanding its identity and purpose. The captain of the Breezy chooses to not reply yet and his ship continues to close on the merchant which after several more increasingly panicked attempts at establishing communications begins to accelerate

sluggishly away from the oncoming vessel and begins transmitting a distress signal. Only now does the pirate captain respond, ordering the merchant to heave to, cease transmitting, and prepare for boarding, promising to spare the crew if there is no resistance, and promising to slaughter everyone if they continue to try and evade.

(The Breezy's Captain makes an intimidation check to try and bully the Java Spice into surrendering without a fight, rolling a 10+10 for a total of 20 versus DC 42. Failing the Check though he doesn't realize it)

The Java Spice's captain seemingly bows to the inevitable and reluctantly brings his ship to a relative stop, laying broadside to the oncoming pirate vessel.

(The Breezy's Science Officer now makes another effort to Scan the ship for further details, rolling a 8+16 for a total of 24, again failing the DC 36 check)

However the crew of the Breezy was so intent on their quarry they failed to notice the other FTL signature closing until it dropped out of space on top of the other two vessels in a show of superb (or very lucky) navigation. There is panic initially on the Breezy as the first thought is that it might be a naval vessel which changes to confusion when they recognize it as another pirate ship, the Anguish (A modified Caravan Class).

The captain of the Breezy hails the Anguish and demands to know what they are doing here in addition to warning them off his prize. The captain of the Anguish replies that she has an equal right to the prize as they waited just as long and that in any case there is plenty of cargo for both ships.

(The Captain of the Anguish tries a Diplomacy check, roll a 14+4 for an 18 total versus DC 25, failing the check.)

While there is no honor among thieves, poaching another pirate's target rarely results in a positive response and the Breezy's captain is no exception. He angrily orders the Anguish to clear the area or else. On both pirate vessels the Java Spice is temporarily forgotten as the potential confrontation looms. Both carry fairly heavy energy armaments, though their configurations are better suited for running down merchants than proper naval combat, the Anguish is unusual for a pirate in carrying a light missile armament, and though it is well out of date by the standards of modern navies, is usually more than sufficient for its usual targets. The Breezy on the other hand is unusual in mounting an only slightly obsolete ECM system that they took off an earlier victim.

Both pirate vessels begin maneuvering to try and maneuver to the best advantage.

(The Breezy's Pilot rolls a 18+13 for a total of 31, the Anguish's Pilot rolls a 13+17 for a total of 30, only just losing out to the Breezy and moving to close the range first. The Anguish's Science Officer rolls a Scan check with a 15+16

for a total of 31, beating the Breezy's DC of 21 easily and obtaining information about the other ship's defenses. The Breezy moves to close the distance as well, with its' Science Officer rolling a 12+16 for a total of 31 versus the Anguish's DC of 14)

The Anguish opens fire first with a Heavy Torpedo Launcher, taking advantage of the longer range they offer to try and destroy or drive off their competition. (The gunner on the Anguish rolls a 15+16 for a 31 against the Breezy's TL:21, meaning the torpedo locks onto the target and given the range will strike this round unless shot down) Neither pirate ship carries much in the way of defensive armament and the Breezy begins evasive maneuvers with its pulse lasers opening fire as the missile comes in range. The torpedo is picked off just short of impact by the defensive lasers (The Breezy's gunner opens fire with her Flak Thrower as a free action due to its Point special ability, rolling a 18+8 for 26 versus the torpedo's DC of 24, destroying it at the last moment.). The Breezy turns on the Anguish and its forward fixed mount energy weapons open fire, (The Breezy's Gunner returns fire, rolling a 10+16 for a total of 26 versus the Anguish's AC of 15, hitting. He rolls 3d6 for the Light Particle Beam for a total of 12 damage) a beam strikes the Anguish with one managing to hole an empty cargo hold. Streaming air the Anguish prepares to return fire when the Breezy is suddenly enveloped in a series of powerful anti-matter explosions which leave only incandescent gas behind when they fade.

(The USDF Trapper's Gunners fire the ship's entire port broadside into the unsuspecting Breezy, easily hitting and inflicting more than twice the damage than the Breezy had hit points, utterly vaporizing the pirate vessel. The Trapper's Captain rolls an Intimidate check versus DC 21, rolling a 9+24 for a 33, easily beating the DC)

Automated warnings blare out on the Anguish as it is lashed by powerful targeting sensors from the "merchant vessel" both pirates had continued to close on which only now reveals itself to be the USDF Armed Merchant Cruiser Trapper by its identification beacon and a terse message from it's captain ordering the Anguish to prepare for boarding. With the remains of the Breezy left behind by the unseen salvo of heavy weapons still visible, the captain of the Anguish finding the shoe on the other foot for a change opts to surrender despite the United Systems Alliance's well known policies for dealing with pirates, exchanging a certain death for a thin thread of hope of managing her survival somehow.

The captain of the Trapper is well pleased with itself, not having expected to snare two pirates at once with the bait of a richly laden merchant ship he had let leak some weeks ago. As boarding shuttles full of Strikers and a prize crew launch to take over the Anguish it looks forward to being able to proceed on it's way within a couple of hours at most, and with luck capture a few more overly ambitious outlaws, not only making the space lanes a little safer for honest travelers, but enriching its own and its crew's pockets with prize money as well.

GLOSSARY

SIL'VITH: Outsiders accepted into Sagaren society as equals and given their full trust. An extremely high and rare honor granted to those who have proven their friendship to the Sagaren race and shown that they exemplify the tenants laid down by The Hunter, though they need not follow him/her/it. Such people have all the rights and responsibilities expected of Sagarens and as such are granted full access to their at times secretive culture.

It can also be used as a term between two or more Sagarens indicating a deep level of trust, respect, and support.

BOND-MATE: A term most commonly used within the United Systems Alliance, it is used to indicate a romantic relationship between two or more people, who either because of cultural reasons, or practical applications, cannot arrange for the formal equivalent of marriage. The actual conditions may vary, but within the Alliance, those involved are recognized legally as spouses.

FIL'ACK: A closely knit group of three or more Sagarens who typically work together and who implicitly trust each other.

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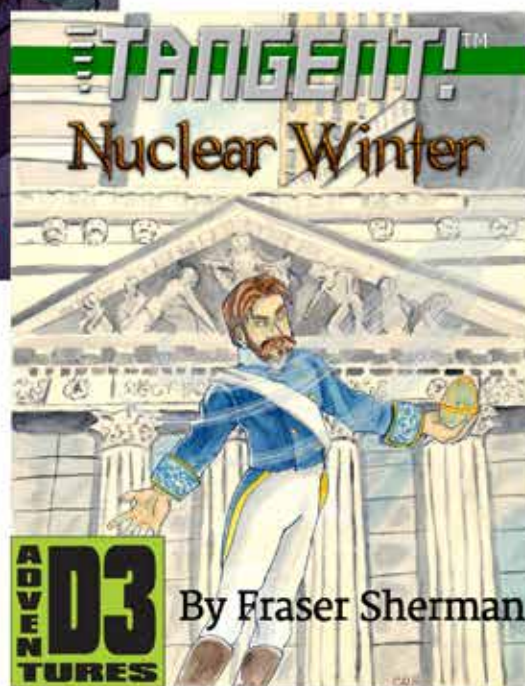
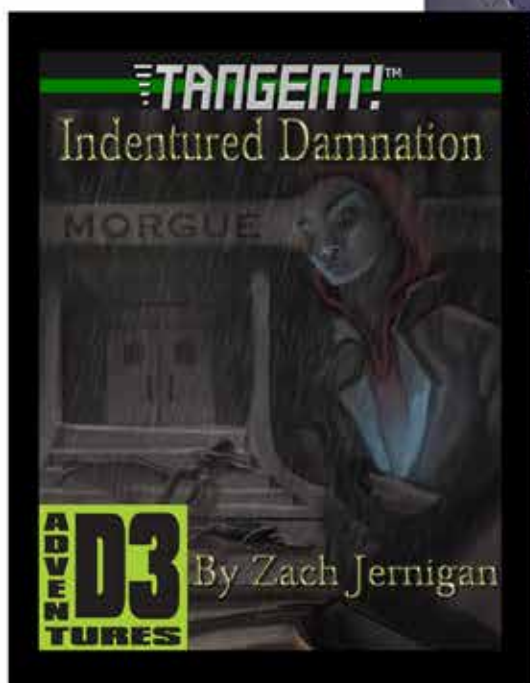
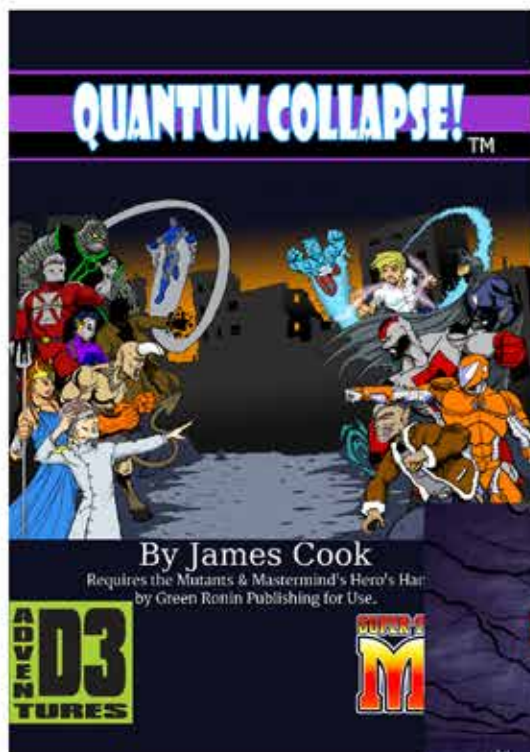
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