

WARREN C. NORWOOD'S
DOUBLE SPIRAL WAR



TRAVELLER

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WARREN C. NORWOOD'S

DOUBLE SPIRAL WAR



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A *TRAVELLER* campaign setting based on the *Double Spiral War* trilogy (containing the novels *Midway Between*, *Polar Fleet* & *Final Command*)

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DEDICATIONS

From Jonathan: This book has been a labor of love, through time and trial. Firstly I would like to dedicate this book to Warren C. Norwood for his creation of a universe that I enjoyed enough in which I wanted to game. In addition there are several others that I would like to add to my dedication: Marilyn DeLeon (my mother who in spite of her concern about my gaming, continued to support such a wonderful hobby), Terrence Thompson (my son, who has always been one of my biggest cheerleaders and always first in line for playtesting), and of course to my friends and family that put up with all the playtesting and rules revisions that take place in the middle of the campaign. Last, but not least, I would like to thank Gigi Norwood for allowing me to play in Warren's universe. For that I will be forever grateful.

From Luke: I first came on this project to retype the novels into an electronic form so that Jonathan could produce the omnibus e-book edition and in the course of reading and retyping the story immediately came to enjoy it. I found myself wrapped up in the stories of most of the characters in the series. Of course, the appeal of being able to run my own stories in the setting came up, as always happens. The idea that I would be helping to open the door for other people add their stories an amazing thing. I sincerely hope that whosoever holds this book finds hours of enjoyment out of this setting, it is ripe for great stories.

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WHAT IS THE DOUBLE SPIRAL WAR?

When mankind left behind their old home to seek out new lands beyond the dark spaces between galaxies, they hoped to leave behind them the conflict and chaos that has been their heritage since they first spoke tales of their histories. However, it wasn't as easy as that. Even amongst alien species

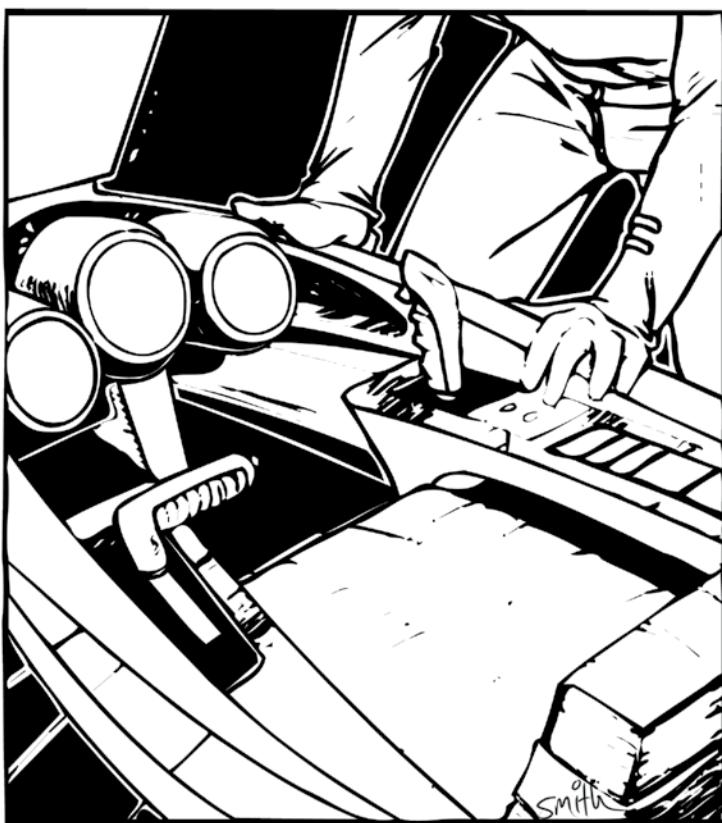


mankind still found cause to war against itself. Several decades before, the Sondak Confederacy worried about the growing power of the United Central Systems, a group dominated by humans genetically modified to have a much longer life span. As a result, they launched a war that waged for years tearing at both societies until finally they forced the U.C.S. to accept humiliating terms in exchange for peace. The Sondak Confederacy has become complacent and is unaware that the U.C.S. is on the verge of finally seeking vengeance for the loss of the previous war. Unfortunately, in the churning wake of these two giants, all the races of the galaxy and the lives of many individuals shall be turned upside down.

The question that these races and individuals could ask is “whose vengeance is being sought?” Is it that of a nation’s or could it be that of a single person? These words are to be found on the back cover of the **Double Spiral War Omnibus**.

“**The Double Spiral War**, Warren Norwood’s chronicle of interstellar combat is a powerful, graphically realistic epic on a vast cosmic scale.” So what does this mean? The **Double Spiral War** is a game where combat is deadly, and of course as you expect there will be a bit of combat. This doesn’t mean that you cannot create a combat related character, as there may be a need during the adventures for the need. You will need characters of various roles, from scientist to merchants. Soldiers are a focus of the setting, but they

are not the only role available nor is it a guarantee that just because you are the best shot in the universe that you will survive the day. Characters will be able to use their skills to test their knowledge, hide in dark places and engage in high diplomacy with the other races of the Caveness Galaxy. Most role playing games are designed to allow your character to do things of heroic proportions. That is not necessarily the case in the Caveness Galaxy; this doesn’t mean that heroism doesn’t have its place. Ask Quarter Admiral Dawson if heroism played any part in his defense of the Mathews System.

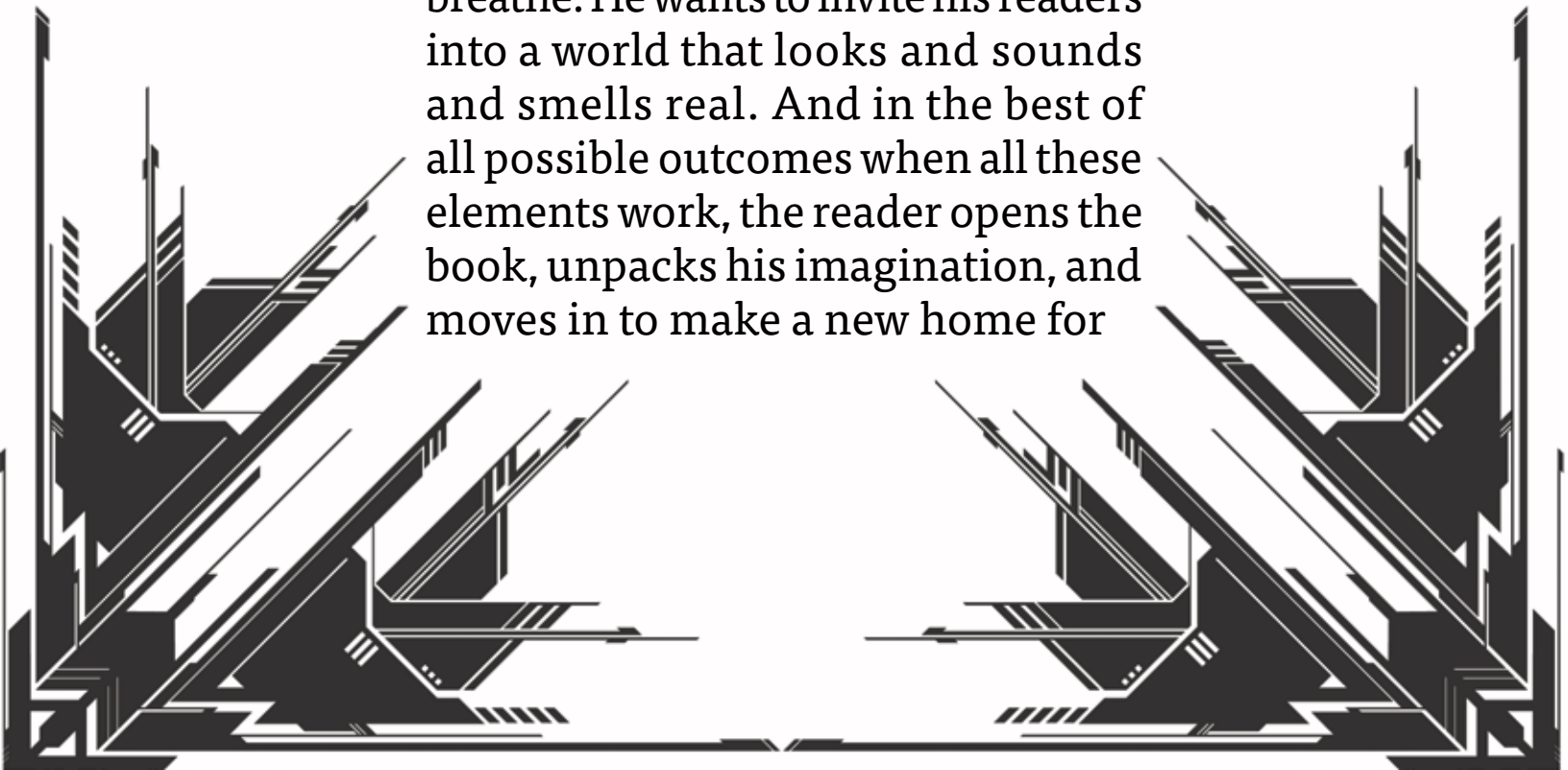


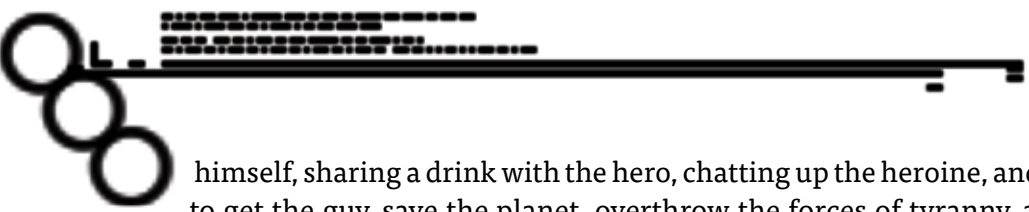


FORWARD

When a writer sits down to tell a story, his highest goal is to tell the truth. He

wants to create recognizable situations and characters who live and breathe. He wants to invite his readers into a world that looks and sounds and smells real. And in the best of all possible outcomes when all these elements work, the reader opens the book, unpacks his imagination, and moves in to make a new home for



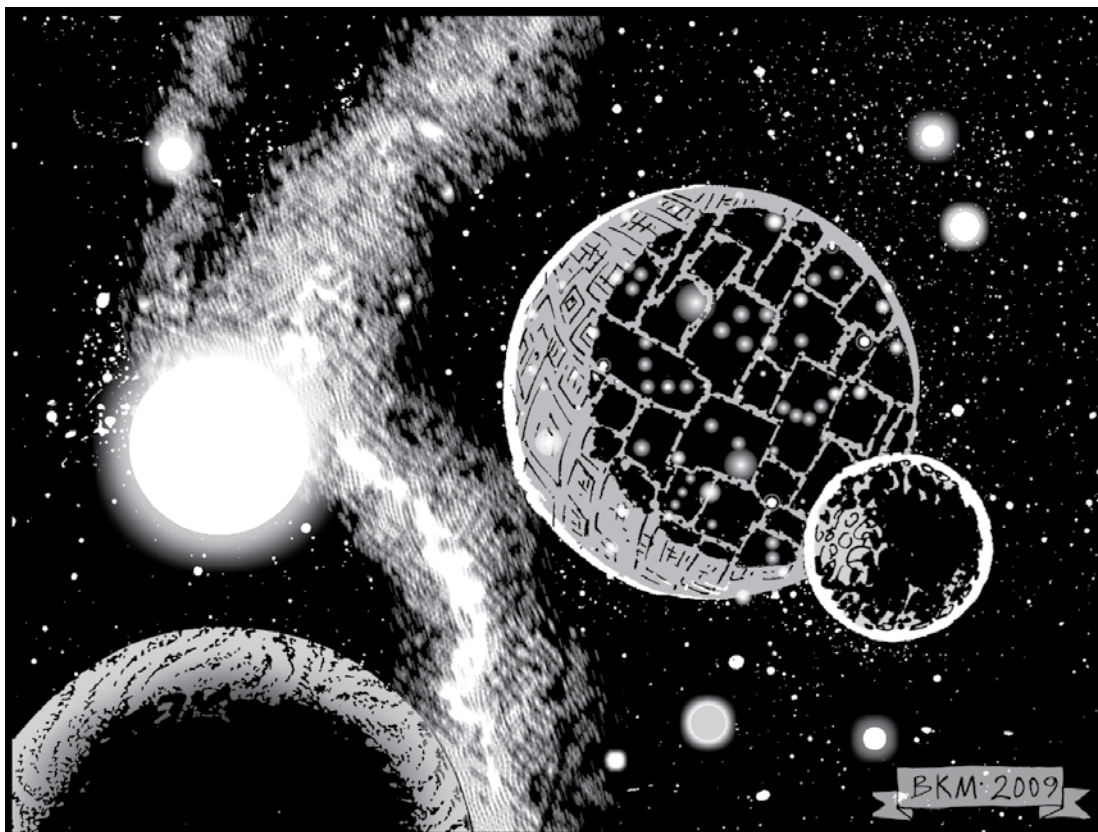


himself, sharing a drink with the hero, chatting up the heroine, and going to work alongside them to get the guy, save the planet, overthrow the forces of tyranny, and make that writer's world a better place.

When Warren C. Norwood wrote his ***Double Spiral War*** trilogy, he wanted to create a universe where he could invite his readers to explore ideas about war in a setting where good and evil were not clearly delineated. He drew from his own combat experiences in Vietnam to tell a distinctly post-World War II tale in which there were no vicious Nazis, vanquished by heroic Americans. Instead there were two sides with opposing, mutually exclusive visions of the world. Each side had noble proponents and leaders with not-so-noble agendas. Each side was willing to do whatever it took achieve victory, and history really would be written by the victors.

This was the world discovered by a teenage Jonathan Thompson, home sick from school and bored enough to root through a bag of paperback science fiction novels brought to him by a friend. Norwood's world fired Thompson's imagination in that best of all possible ways. Thompson took Norwood's Double Spiral galaxy and opened the doors so everyone could come in, create their own characters, explore their own frontiers, and fight their own battles, making the people, the planets, and the conflicts real in ways Norwood never imagined possible. This is the result, and it's yours to shape and mold. Read it, live in it, drive it toward your own benevolent or diabolical ends. Colonize it, and inhabit it with your own imaginations. You are lifting Norwood's world out of the pages of his novel and turning it into a constantly evolving universe. No writer could ask for a better tribute, or a more lasting legacy.

— Gigi Sherrell Norwood





THE SUN STOOD STILL


A SHORT STORY BY DARYL MALLET

Admiral Josiah Gilbert stood in his quarters aboard his flagship, the Biggs, named in honor of the brilliant young engineer who'd designed her third-generation drive system, staring out the window, looking out at the millions of stars in the Caveness Galaxy, a mug of steaming hot tea in one hand, a sheaf of reports from the Joint Chiefs of Staff briefing he'd just come from, forgotten in his other hand.



Almost nine p.m., ship time. Interfleet and interplanet traffic darted back and forth, tiny courier ships and larger personnel transport ships flitting past every now and then, disgorging their cargo. Letters. People coming on or going off shift. Food supplies. All in service to the polar fleet, which was spread dangerously thin across too many star systems. A fleet that was doing its best to keep an eye on the U.C.S. forces that continued to attack anywhere and everywhere it could.

He sighed deeply. Another great galactic war in his lifetime... It was unfathomable that it should have happened again.



The first, which started back in 3021—he couldn't even remember who or what had started it, really—had been bad enough. He had been a young lieutenant, with a wife, a baby girl to think about as he went into battle. Millions of people had been killed on both sides. Thankfully, the U.C.S., unable to match Sondak's capacity for producing tools of war, had sued for peace after only three years of fighting. They had promised to pay heavy reparations to the Sondak Federation and several independent interplanetary systems, and had also promised not to produce war materials for 100 years.

As it turned out, neither promise had been kept or had ever been thought of being kept. Instead it seemed the Ukes, under the direction of Frye Charlton, now Joint Commander of the Uke forces, had been plotting from the end of the last war for Round Two. But Sondak had been too busy to pay attention, caught up in the eruption of the Pikean Revolutionary War, which ended in the Pikeans defecting en masse to the U.C.S., where they licked their wounds but never stopped beating the drums of war. Then the Uke Admiral Nance had gone rogue, trying to take the Cczwyck System by force. Thankfully a routine Sondak patrol had been visiting Cczwyck and managed to avert a full-scale war.

Now, less than twenty-five years later, the Ukes had attacked ten isolated Sondak systems, as well as numerous independents, including Fer-

nandez, Cczwyck, Thayne-G, Ca-Ryn and three systems in the Ivy Chain, destroying most of Sondak's peripheral fleets.

Sondak forces had kept the Matthews System from being captured, but their primary planet, Reckynop, was a natural disaster area after the Ukes had melted the polar icecaps, submerging millions of hectares of land mass, including several dozen major cities. Millions had died on Reckynop alone. And now this... Now a possible mole in the fleet. A high-ranking mole. It was something Sondak couldn't afford at any time, let alone now, with opinions in Central Command fractured.

Sidney Berger of all people! Why, he'd known the man for over thirty years! It was unfathomable... But Berger hadn't been the same since his older brother had been killed in the first war, and then his parents had died not many years thereafter. And there were rumors about his wife having a drug problem.

He sighed again.

He heard the door open loudly and turned. Captain Cody Barker entered the room and stood at attention.

"At ease, AOCO," Gilbert said, smiling at his aide-of-commander. He had watched the captain's career since meeting him at the academy some eight years ago. Barker had excelled at pretty much everything in school and the rugged blond man would have been a good match, Gilbert thought, for his daughter Mica. But the door to that opportunity had closed long ago.

Gilbert said, "Well?"

"It was just like you said, sir. General Berger went into his cabin to make a call. He used a scrambler, so we have no way of knowing who he was contacting. Fifteen minutes later, he caught a transport shuttle over to the Fidelis and went in to the cantina at the PX there. We think he made a couple of calls, but we can't be sure. The girl watching him said he looked very nervous, so she didn't make a move on him."

"Continue."

"He caught a transport shuttle back here, went to his cabin, stayed an hour. Then he left again, catching another transport down planetside, to Calafia. He walked for about ten minutes through town, then hailed a skimmer. He changed skimmers twice, and then went to the space port, where he retrieved a suitcase from one of the lockers, which we knew about, since another team has been tailing his AOCO, and she dropped the suitcase there about an hour before he arrived. So she may have been one of the calls he made."

Gilbert walked to his desk and put the sheaf of papers and the cup of tea down. "And your team checked the contents of the suitcase before he retrieved it, I presume?"

Baker nodded. "It contained only clothing... shirts, pants, a change of uniform, toiletries, the usual. Nothing interesting. But there was something else that was interesting."

Gilbert said nothing, merely raising an eyebrow curiously, waiting for his AOCO to continue.

"The general picked up a package at the space port master's office, along with a ticket. Two of our people followed him to the departure area."

"Why didn't they stop him?"

"We don't have anything solid on him yet, sir. Detaining or arresting him at this point would be a CLM if he's innocent. If he's guilty, we'd just be tipping off his colleagues."

Gilbert smiled thinly at the use of the acronym. A CLM—career-limiting move—was something he was quite familiar with during his three decades of service with the fleet and something he wasn't afraid to do if circumstances called for it. Nevertheless, he was confident in his AOCO's abilities, so he didn't push the issue. His patience was rewarded by his aide.

"There was something much more interesting to consider, sir," said Barker.

"What's that?" Gilbert asked.

"He had military ID in a different name, and checked onto a flight to Satterfield, with the first connection to Ca-Ryn. I believe the false ID was in the package he picked up. He must be running scared."

"The name he used?"

"Colonel Craig Karpoff."

Gilbert sighed.

"Does that name have any relevance, sir?" Barker asked.

The admiral shook his head. "No, AOCO, it doesn't."

Barker said, "You want me to get military police at Satterfield to pick him up?" He checked his watch. "The ship doesn't arrive for about six hours. Possession of illegal military ID is one thing. Using it is another... On that alone, we could detain him, sir. But, again, we run the risk of tipping off his colleagues..."

Gilbert did not answer. He pinched the bridge of his nose and frowned, as if the very act of thinking was causing him pain.

He crossed the room and looked at the star map on the wall opposite his desk, staring at the many different colored points of light on the digital board, then began to trace his finger along a path from their current position near Nordeen to Satterfield to Ca-Ryn.

After a few minutes of silent contemplation, he looked up from the map at his aide-of-commander.

"The report from Ops said that the flight his presumed colleague, Vincent Anton, was on disappeared between Satterfield and Ca-Ryn?"

"Yes, sir."

Gilbert puffed his cheeks out in dismay. "That's a lot of unexplored territory, AOCO."

"Yes, sir."

"The only known inhabited planet anywhere near there is Gramser's Planet."

Barker snorted. "Good luck getting any cooperation from anyone there, sir. They're so independent the independent systems call them standoffish."

"Indeed." Gilbert crossed back to his desk and sat down.

"Do you think Berger's running for keeps this time, sir?"

Staring out the window a moment before answering, Gilbert finally said, "No. I don't think so. But something that was said at the Joint Chiefs meeting spooked him, Barker. I don't know what, and that's a problem."

"Sir, Colonel Brendan Maclear is stationed on Gramser's Planet. Perhaps he could help."

"Is Colonel Maclear a friend of yours, Barker?"

Barker nodded. "Yes, sir. We've been friends since the Academy."

Gilbert smiled. "Then you're a fortunate man, Barker. Maclear's a good man. Met his father at a fleet conference on Chadiver about a hundred years ago. Have a photograph of Berger transmitted to him, since his flight is under a different name. I want Maclear to be able to identify him by sight. I'll get in touch with a contacts on Satterfield and Ca-Ryn with the same instructions."

Knowing the meeting was over, Barker saluted and exited the room.

"We're coming for you, you traitor," Gilbert said quietly but determinedly, as he punched in the call to Ca-Ryn.

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General Sidney Berger stood at the window on the sixth floor in the rooms that had been arranged for him. He swallowed his second drink of the evening, gripping the glass tightly in his hand as he stared down at the city of Gray Niche. The room's environmental control systems hummed away valiantly trying to cool the humid air.

Tiredness wracked his body, pain spasming intermittently across his broad chest like tiny sparks of electricity. Sweat glistened on his forehead and

his back and armpits felt damp, despite the cooling breeze before which he was standing.

I'm getting too old for this dreck, he thought.

He ran a hand through his thinning hair, slicking the sweat back away from his eyes.

The flights had been bad enough. Like thrill rides, interstellar travel had never appealed to him, which is why he'd gone into the Army instead of becoming a Fleetie.

That wasn't the entire reason, of course.

In private, he had to admit he had a more-than-healthy fear of dying in space, suffocating to death in the vacuum. There were enough ways to die on the ground, thank you very much. The long trip to Satterfield, the long layover there while waiting for the transport to Ca-Ryn, delayed by the war. Both sides were stopping ships randomly and searching them for military personnel or materiel... getting anywhere was becoming a nightmare of epic proportions.

Plus the fact that he was risking everything to be a traitor at the end of a long and somewhat distinguished career in the Sondak Armed Forces... not as distinguished as his glorious martyr of an older brother, though. Saint John—or Commander General John Berger—had been killed in the first Sondak-U.C.S. war and he'd lived in that long shadow for a very long time, never quite measuring up in the eyes of his parents, his superiors. Sometimes he suspected even his wife had more admiration for John effing Berger than for him.

He hadn't meant to turn on the federation. He'd been a loyal soldier for over fifty years, gotten commendations for bravery and being wounded in action during the first war, served in just about every aspect of the army. But his wife's gorlet addiction and his own failing health had made the lure of money too great to pass up. When Joint Commander Frye Charlton had reached out to him during the "time of truce," he'd succumbed and had been passing information to the Ukes for nearly fifteen years.

It made him sad and angry. Even though he wasn't one of the darlings of Sondak's military, like or Admiral Josiah Gilbert or General Fortuno Mari, he'd done his part! He was a full general and here he was, cooling his heels in a cheap flophouse on a backwater planet, made to wait by his paymasters like some wet-behind-the-ears private.

He threw the glass goblet across the room, watching disinterestedly as it shattered in a sparkling display of motion.

The megalopolis of Calafia, a brightly-lit plague of humanity spreading out for miles in all directions just outside his window, a ragged, noisy, dirty sprawl of ants on a low-altitude dungpile carved into a hot, wet jungle planet...it drained him. Claustrophobic. Chaotic. It made his head hurt more.

A woman would help, but his handlers had expressly forbid him to have anyone come to the hotel.

No doubt they were checking the hotel now, to be sure he hadn't been followed. He knew it was necessary, but it irked him. He wasn't a rookie. He'd been pacing worriedly for the last two hours. How long would this take?

He stalked over to the minibar and poured himself another drink. Just then, the commlink buzzed at him. Startled, as though a shock of electricity had passed through his body, he put down the glass, wiped his brow and touched the answer button.

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Colonel Brendan Maclear sat in the back of the small, old, unmarked skimmer listening to the phone call, looking around as Private Mills wrote furiously on a pad.

The interior was standard military gray. Communications equipment crammed every inch of the interior, making the cabin uncomfortably warm. He tugged at the collar of his uniform, feeling the sweat trickle down his back.

Plus there was the smell of something rotting that he didn't want to contemplate. Probably part of someone's lunch dropped behind some-

thing, repeatedly heated and cooled by the electronic equipment and the cold nights.

"So, what have we got, Mills?" he asked, as the call disconnected.

"Well, sir, the call didn't last long enough to trace it and no names were used."

"So we've got squat."

It wasn't a question, but Mills, being young and inexperienced, missed the rhetorical and said, "Yes, sir."

Maclear sighed and ran a hand through his still-black hair.

"Guess we're doing this the old-fashioned way, then, eh, Mills?"

He stopped and looked at his assistant for a moment before speaking.

“Get on the horn. Get hold of Cain. I want her and her best team down here in twenty. I think they’re going to move soon.”

"Yes, sir."

As his assistant made the necessary arrangements, the back door of the skimmer opened suddenly.

Maclear jerked his sidearm from its holster and found himself sighting down the barrel at a familiar face.

“Josiah! Good God, man! That is a great way to get yourself killed!”

Admiral Gilbert climbed into the van, smiling, followed by his own AOCO, who shut the door behind them, making the already crowded space even more intolerably small.

"Brendan, I believe you know Cody."

“Yes, sir,” said Maclear, reholstering his weapon. “We’ve known each other since the academy.” He took the other man’s hand. “Good to see you, brother.”

"You, too, old man. Is that ponytail regulation?" Barker asked, grinning.

"Hardly," snorted Maclear. "But in my line of work, it's allowable."

"Sir?" Private Mills turned from the commlink, saluting the other senior officers briefly before continuing. "Captain Cain said to inform you she'd be on-site in fifteen."

"Thank you, Mills."

Barker smiled. "Still running around with Julie after all these years?"

"You bet. She's one of the best. Her husband is also serving here in Calafia, but he's in another unit. Danny, Steve, Reagan...couple of others you know, are also posted here on Gramser's."

He turned to Gilbert and Barker. "Well, gents, let's adjourn to the other vehicles. Berger's about to rabbit."

"Why do people say that?" Gilbert asked.

"What?" Barker replied.

"Do either of you even know what a rabbit is, because I don't."

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The expensive, green Zephyr-class skimmer pulled up in front of the hotel and a well-dressed chauffeur emerged and entered the lobby.

Berger shook his head. While his ego enjoyed the fact they'd sent a luxurious vehicle to pick him up, as befitted his rank and station, the coward in him wondered at the wisdom of having an easily identifiable vehicle such as this be the transportation to a clandestine meeting.

"General Berger?" the chauffeur asked politely, as he approached.

"Yes."

"Come with me, please. They're waiting for you to arrive."

Berger snorted as he rose from the plush chair and followed the chauffeur, who had already turned and headed back to the car.

They're waiting for me to arrive? After keeping me waiting for so long, they can just keep on waiting.

He got in the back of the skimmer and the chauffeur closed the door, walked around the vehicle and got in the front.

The Zephyr whispered away from the hotel. Berger helped himself to more to drink from the plush bar within the cabin of the skimmer as it wove through the chaos of traffic.

Lunatic drivers, the smells of cooking food and garbage in the streets, and all the while the pressing, claustrophobic sensation of sweaty, filthy bodies all around him. Everywhere. Millions of people grubbing out an existence on the surface of the planet, one planet among millions...

Berger shuddered, turning and looking out the back window. He saw nothing. Nor had he expected to. If they were following him, they were very good.

He still felt the pounding in his head, still felt the sweat sticking his shirt to his body.

The spacious interior of the Zephyr felt claustrophobic. The city felt claustrophobic. The very galaxy felt claustrophobic at this point. He just wanted it all to be done, one way or the other.

The driver knew the city and wove in and out of the maniacal traffic which grew thicker, if that was even possible, as darkness fell and lights began coming on all over, giving the steaming miasma of human congregation a smoky, eerie quality.

Eventually the skimmer turned into a quiet avenue and halted outside an ornate gate. In the semi-darkness, a man appeared and peered into the vehicle. Moments later, the gates opened automatically and silently and they passed through.

The vehicle moved up a winding gravel road, a white house—mansion—glowed ahead in the darkness, set amidst a lush garden.

Glowing light washed over the vast lawns dotted with trees and shrubs, and lights blazed from every window. A large swimming pool was lit up with turquoise lights. The place was sumptuous, a fairy tale of beauty on a backwater planet.

As the road swung around, Berger could see guards patrolling around the mansion, carrying very heavy weapons. Inside the glowing windows, he could see the council waiting for him. There were two men and two women present. One man he didn't recognize, but the tall silver-haired man, he recognized as Commander Charlton, one of the U.C.S.'s top military minds. One of the women was Marshall Judoff and the other one—he sucked in his breath in surprise—was Admiral Salvato of the Sondak Deep Space Fleet!

Damn. That was a game-changer...

The skimmer came to a halt on front of the porch and Berger emerged and went inside.

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When darkness fell on Gramser's Planet, it really fell. The lush jungles seemed to reflect the dark, if that was possible. Which was good for the crack military troops sitting in the dark lot awaiting orders from the officers inside the building.

Admiral Gilbert dozed in a fluffy chair in the corner. Colonel Maclear and Captain Barker chatted quietly, while a handful of others monitored the commlinks and video feeds.

"We've got the location, sir."

"You do? How?" Maclear asked.

Captain Julie Cain smiled and tossed her long blonde ponytail behind her. "A girl can't give away all her secrets."

"Funny," he replied.

"Why are you always so surprised?" Cain asked. "I'm just that good."

Maclear and Barker both grinned.

"Okay, let's get ready," Maclear said.

The news passed quickly over the commlinks—"Target sighted entering a compound in the Windhover District."—and, within five minutes, all the troops were prepped and loaded into the personnel skimmers.

"What happens when we get there?" Gilbert asked as the skimmers moved silently into the city.

"Well, sir, with all due respect, you're not going in the initial wave," Maclear said with an apologetic look at his superior officer.

"The hell I'm not!" Gilbert retorted.

Maclear smiled. "Sir, you're an admiral of the fleet, not a member of the planetary shock troops."

"I'm going in."

"Sir..."

"I'm going in with you!"

The two men stared at each other for a long moment. Barker and Cain exchanged glances.

"Don't make me make it an order, Maclear."

The younger man sighed heavily. "If anything happens to you while you're here, it's going to be my ass in the sling."

"I'll be careful."

Maclear snapped his fingers and one of the soldiers in the back passed two extra sets of body armor and helmets forward.

Gilbert and Barker put on their armor as Cain and Maclear whispered orders into their comms.

"Here," Cain said, handing the two fleet officers ear comms. "Use these, but please maintain radio silence."

"Do we need a warrant?" asked Barker.

"No," Maclear said. "Berger is a member of the military engaged in possible terrorist activities, so we have jurisdiction. The locals are happy to let us handle this kind of thing anyway."

Cain snorted. "The locals couldn't find a lost kid if he was sitting in the same room with them."

"Be nice, Julie," Maclear said gently, as he tossed a Gilbert and Barker heavy assault rifles. "I'm assuming they teach you Fleeties how to shoot? I don't want my rear end aerated by accident."

"I was shooting before you were born, Colonel," Gilbert said with a smile.

"Yes, sir," Maclear said before turning to Barker and whispering, "This can't end well."

Barker laughed.

"You always used to say that."

"But now it's always true," Maclear said grimly, as the skimmers pulled up in a well-lit, upscale neighborhood. They two vehicles slid in under the branches of a bushy tree, slightly shielding them from the street lights.

"With all due respect sir," Maclear said to Gilbert, as Captain Cain and the other troops in the command vehicle exited the vehicle, "I have operational command. If you're coming with me, please follow orders?"

"Count on it, Colonel," Gilbert said.

Maclear nodded and threw open the door. Cain and two of her commandos were already gone, leaving three men surrounding the remaining officers.

The soldiers from the second skimmer—Cain's unit—were already running in different directions as Gilbert and Barker emerged from their vehicle.

"Stick with me," Maclear ordered.

They watched as two soldiers scaled the wall surrounding a hilltop mansion, lit up like a holiday celebration.

Gilbert realized he was holding his breath and let it out quietly.

Maclear looked back. "Nervous, sir?"

Gilbert smiled grimly. "It's been a long time since I've seen ground action, son."

There was a sudden zap, zap, zap sound of high-energy weapons and then a tremendous explosion lit up the night sky behind the high mansion walls.

"Son of a...!" Maclear said, before he raced toward the front gate, his weapon raised in his hands.

A sigh of relief escaped his lips as he saw one of his soldiers run up and open the gate. Activating his throat mike, he gave orders to the men. "Wolf pack, we are go. Wolf pack, we are go."

Admiral Gilbert and Captain Barker followed Maclear and his men through the front gate and veered off into the foliage, moving cautiously, searching for guards.

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The five men sat around the table on the pool-side veranda. Lights shimmered around them, reflected off of the turquoise waters of the pool. Servants bustled around them, serving food and drinks, then left them alone to talk. They had moved outside at the request of the man he hadn't recognized, who was introduced as Commander Taylor.

Berger gave his report in a crisp and concise military manner, and then listened as the others gave theirs. He was shocked at the level of detail Admiral Salvato was able to give about all of Sondak's various fleets, whereas he was only able to provide information about his own forces.

After Commander Taylor had finished, they sat silently and waited for a reaction from the U.C.S. senior officers.

Judoff looked at Charlton and said crisply, "Well? What are you thinking?"

"Do you think I could have a moment to think, sha?"

Judoff fell silent, but her fury was visible on her face.

Berger and Salvato exchanged glances, but remained silent. She hadn't expressed any surprise upon seeing Berger when he had entered the mansion, but he was sure she was just as surprised as he had been in the car. That impressed him, because he'd had time to compose himself in the car and as he entered the building. He never wanted to play cards with this woman.

Just as Charlton opened his mouth to speak, they heard the high-pitched sounds of energy

weapons being discharged outside, followed by a loud explosion.

Biting off whatever he had been about to say, Charlton rose quickly and began barking orders.

“Guards! Cover us!”

Several men detached themselves from the shadows surrounding the pool deck, their weapons unholstered.

“The rest of you...inside! Let’s go!” He pulled a sidearm from inside his jacket as he ushered everyone into the building.

As he turned to go in himself, he caught movement from the corner of his eye. Turning, he saw black-clad figures emerging from the shrubbery. He aimed at the oncoming soldiers and squeezed the trigger twice.

The spurt of high energy zapped outward, and two of the soldiers dropped to the ground.

He pushed Berger into through the patio doors and the glass exploded around them as the soldiers returned fire. A cry rang out and he and Berger nearly tripped over the lifeless form of Commander Taylor as he fell to the ground, a smoking hole in his back.

Charlton tripped the lights off behind him as the small group of conspirators moved quickly through the mansion, heading for the basement.



Maclear lay in the bushes watching the group disappear into the mansion.

His group had come out of the shrubs right into the meeting, which was unexpected, and the bad guys had started shooting immediately, which he should have expected.

When he tried to get up, he felt a tug of pain in his left leg and looked down at the scorch marks on his uniform and his leg. He had flung himself back into the bushes, flat on the ground at the sound of the first zap coming his direction, but apparently not fast enough.

“Josiah! Cody!”

There were a few seconds of silence, and then he heard a groan of pain before the voices began responding.

"Yes," Gilbert said quietly.

"Still alive," Barker replied.

Zap! Zap! Zap!

Maclear flattened himself again as more lances of energy shot holes in the shrubbery around him.

Captain Barker rose up in a crouch just to his left and fired back, a scream of pain abruptly cutting off, followed by a splash as one of the guards fell into the pool, his head missing.

“Not bad!” Maclear said.

"What? For a Fleetie?" Barker laughed.

Maclear shook his head. "I didn't say that."

"No. But you were thinking it."

Zap! Zap!

Another few shots buzzed out from his right and the second guard dropped.

“Let’s go!”

They rose and in a crouching run, darted for the shattered patio doors.

Two of the shock troops moved into the building and then continued into the hallway. Maclear stopped at the dead body and rolled it over.

"Commander Taylor," said Gilbert. "Senior aide in Bridgeforce."

Maclear nodded and they followed the shock troops deeper into the mansion. As the two lead soldiers rounded a corner, zap! boom! and they flew backwards into the opposite wall, dropping lifelessly.

Unable to see, his ears ringing, Gilbert dropped to his knees and fired a dozen shots rapidly down the hallway, hearing screams as his bolts found their marks.

Then silence. Nearly deafening silence.
A few spurts of energy weapons outside.
Then nothing.

Then chatter on the comms.

"Area secured, sir," Cain's quiet and steady voice said. "Negative tangos left. Chops and White, KIA, Pitruha and Goodman wounded."

"Acknowledged," Maclear said.

Gilbert rose unsteadily and tottered down the hallway, rifle at the ready.

He found the body of one of the guards first, still clutching his assault rifle, a blackened hole in his chest.

"Sir! Sir!" Captain Barker called through the acrid smoke.

"Down here, Captain."

Barker and Maclear emerged through the gloom and they continued on down the hallway where they found two bodies face-down.

The two junior officers knelt and rolled the bodies over. The first one was General Sid Berger.

"Damn!" Gilbert swore. "I wanted Berger alive."

"Well apparently you're a better shot than I thought, sir," Maclear said, trying to bring some grim humor to the aftermath of the battle.

"You're going to wish this one were alive more, sir," said Barker, stepping back and allowing the admiral to see the second body...that of Admiral Amy Salvato, half of her once-beautiful face shot off but unmistakable from the flaming red hair.

Gilbert sucked in his breath and hissed, "Get me a secure line to the Polar Fleet now and transport immediately back to my ship, Colonel!"

The three officers whirled and ran pell-mell for the skimmers.

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Explosions rocked the prison walls. General Mari howled with pain as he was thrown from

his bunk. A thick cloud of hot dust swept through the grate into his cell. As he struggled to his knees he realized that his broken arm was strapped to his side in a rigid cast over his coarse brown coveralls.

What had happened? What was going on? How long had he been unconscious?

From the distance came the sounds of shouting voices and the staccato blasts of small-arms fire. Suddenly Mari understood what it meant. His troops were attacking the prison!

He crawled to the grate and pulled himself to his feet, choking on the dust. "I'm here," he tried to shout, but all that came out was a croaking whisper.

Moments later a pikean sergeant, his fair-skinned face blackened with camouflage paint, appeared through the dust. "Get back and down, sir," the sergeant said.

Mari had barely moved away from the grate when the sergeant fired several automatic bursts from his rifle. Splinters of shattered metal ricocheted off the slick stones. With a loud crash the grat fell back against the cell wall.

"I'm Sergeant Edwards, sir. General Porras sent us."

"Porras is still alive?" Mari asked as Edwards helped him to his feet. Only then did he see more troopers in the hall.

"Alive and kickin' Ukes. Sit down, sir," Edwards said, pulling off his pack.

Mari obeyed without thinking and Sergeant Edwards pulled a pair of allsize emergency boots out of his pack and slipped them over Mari's feet. Seconds later he had the bindings comfortably tight. "That ought to hold you, sir. Now for your weapon."

Edwards thrust a twelve millimeter combat pistol into Mari's hand, then fastened an ammunition belt around his waist. Mari was startled by the weakness in his arm. The pistol only weighed none kilograms, but it felt like fifty. "Don't think I can shoot very well left-handed," he said.

"Then let's hope you don't have to. Now listen carefully, sir. We're going right down this hall approximately eighty meter. My squad is holding the breach there. The company is holding the compound wall. Once we're through the breach, keep bearing left. Got that?"

"Got it." Mari felt a surge of adrenal energy that fought against the weakness of his body. "I'm ready."

"Then let's go."

Sergeant Edwards led the way with Mari following him and three troopers behind them. Automatic weapons chattered louder and louder as they moved quickly toward the light-filled breach in the wall. "First team coming through," Edwards called.

Even through the firing and shouted commands Mari could hear that message repeated, passed on to the men outside. Just as they reached the breach several explosions rocked the outside compound.

"That's our cover," Edwards said. "Move out!"

Suddenly they were moving through the breach in the wall. Hands grabbed Mari and pulled him over the rubble. Bullets whined and spat over his head. It was either dawn or dusk, he couldn't tell which. The dim air was full of smoke and dust.

Pain lanced through his body at a hundred points as Mari followed Sergeant Edwards in a low, running crouch. When Edwards fired to the right, so did Mari. He couldn't see what he was shooting at, so he just pointed in the general direction enemy fire seemed to be coming from and squeezed the trigger repeatedly. Each recoil of the pistol harshly jerked his arm, and Mari remembered how much he had hated training with the twelve millimeter hand-cannon.

As they reached a second wall, new hands grabbed him and suddenly he was being jerked from man to man. He clung to his pistol. His head swirled. Explosions roared behind them.

"Jump, sir!" a voice commanded.

Mari barely understood what he was doing when he saw the opening to the tunnel and jumped in. A mutilated body lay directly in front of him, smelling of feces and death. The stench struck him like a wall and his knees buckled. Someone grabbed him under the arms and dragged him thirty meters back from the opening. Seconds later the hole filled with troops.

Gasping for breath, Mari checked his pistol. It was almost empty. "Trooper," he said to the soldier closest to him, "reload this for me."

The soldier looked startled, but quickly took the pistol and loaded a new magazine. "Have to move back now, sir," he said as he returned the pistol to Mari. "We're gonna blow the entrance to the tunnel so the Ukes can't follow us."

With the soldier's help Mari got to his feet, then moved in a low crouch behind him through the darkness. The glowlamp on the trooper's utility belt cast a faint light on the damp walls of the tunnel, and Mari had to strain his eyes to keep from tripping or running into him. Every time he raised his head too high he bumped it against the hard dirt roof.

Less than a minute after they started, a faint series of thumping explosions shook the tunnel behind them, but the troopers never hesitated. Mari stumbled along behind him, his breaths coming in long, jagged gasps. His broken arm throbbed with miserable pain. His legs screamed in protest against the low crouching movement.

"Keep moving, troop," a voice behind him said when Mari slowed to stick the pistol in his belt. "We've got to get the general out of here."

Mari would have laughed if he could have. Whoever was behind him obviously didn't realize who he was following. But Mari clenched his teeth, and quickened his pace as instructed.

Each mechanical step was a lesson in pain. Each ragged breath was an insufficient claim for oxygen. Time became meaningless. Only movement was important. Keep moving, keep moving, his mind commanded. Somehow his body obeyed.

The trooper in front of him stopped without warning and Mari ran into him.

"Easy, sir," the trooper said. "We're almost there."


"Where?" Mari gasped.

"Exit," the trooper said simply. "You can stand up now."

Mari tried, but his muscles screamed in protest. His knees gave way and he collapsed onto the damp floor. Moments later two troopers grabbed him and pulled him up.

"Just a few more steps, sir. Can you make it?"

"Yes," Mari said hoarsely. Amazingly his body again complied with his commands. Ten more steps and they were out of the tunnel. Twenty steps beyond the exit a skimmer sat in the twilight, its engines whining in readiness. Before he knew it he was aboard the open skimmer with six or seven troopers. Then the skimmer lifted and headed out into the growing darkness.



Clinging to the seat brace with his good hand, Mari finally realized with amazement the extent of what happened. He had been rescued, by Porras's pikean troops – those same troops Mari had despised so much. Now there he was riding with them as they chatted happily about what they had just done. Three of their number had been killed, and seven more wounded, but they had accomplished their mission.

As the skimmer bounced gently through the dark over the rough bottoms of dry gullies and across low, rocky hills, Mari wondered how the driver could see where they were going. The man seemed to have a sixth sense about the terrain. For the first time in Mari's life he regretted how he had always treated the pikeans before – even Giselda. They might not be the smartest human ethnic group, but the courage of these pikeans at least, was undeniable.

Suddenly the skimmer slowed to an abrupt stop beside a rocky embankment. Mari could hear running water close by, and overhead the stars of galaxy center shone like a bright cloud through the thin haze of Sutton's atmosphere. He shivered with cold, then shuddered with pain.

"General Mari?" a figure called from the darkness.

It was General Porras. Mari recognized his voice. "Here," he said as he climbed slowly from the skimmer.

"Bless the stars! How are you, General?"

"Battered, sore, and damned grateful, Porras." Mari stuck out his left hand. "Those are find troops you command."

"Only the best, sir." Porras accepted Mari's awkward handshake, then immediately said, "You're freezing, sir. Let's get you inside."

Mari followed Porras up a wide path, then through three heavy blackout curtain into a large, low-ceilinged cavern crammed full of equipment and supplies. In an alcove off to one side he could see a bank of manned radios, its operators all busy. At the far end of the cavern troopers were loading crates into several old freight skimmers. "Incredible! How did you manage to save all this?"

Porras laughed as he led Mari to a small area walled off by boxes. "Some of it was already here. We started transferring supplies, equipment, and ammunition to hidden depots right after the Ukes hit Roberg. Figured the Ukes would get to us sooner or later, so we decided to be ready for them."

"Excellent planning, Porras. I'm frankly amazed." Mari sat on one of the bunks in the cubicle, and almost immediately a trooper appeared with a mess box full of steaming food.

"As soon as you've eaten and rested, sir, I'd like for the medics to check you over."

"Yes. Of course," Mari said around a mouthful of savory meat. "But right now I'd like a report on our status."

"I can give you the details after you've rested, sir, but you might as well know that we're in pretty grim shape. We have roughly one hundred eighty thousand troops of one sort or another operating on the planet, most in units of five hundred or less. About half of those are really civilian guerrillas and various militia units,

including a local artillery battalion you might have heard pounding in your neighborhood."

"Good sounds," Mari said. He swallowed a chewy lump of sweetbread and added, "Gave me hope. Numbers sound much better than I expected."

"The trouble is, sir, not only do the Ukes outnumber us about six-to-one, but we're having a terrible time supplying our units. We probably have enough ammunition to hold out for a long time, but getting it to where it's needed, well that's something else. We're using everything from captured Uke heavy transport skimmers to civilian lorries and even pack animals. But we're restricted to night movement in most areas and short of transport everywhere.

Mari set the half-empty food box on the floor and tried to concentrate on what Porras was saying. His whole body ached and his stomach churned against the unaccustomed richness of the food, but he couldn't rest until...

"However," Porras continued, "our immediate concern is to abandon this headquarters tonight. After our raids on Esqueleada, there will be Ukes crawling all over the countryside as soon as it's light. We need to be well gone by then. Better get some sleep while you can, sir. I'll wake you when you're ready to leave."

With a sigh Mari lay back on the bunk. "Thanks, Porras. And thank your men. We can talk about the rest of ..." Mari knew there was something else he was supposed to say, but he was just too tired. His eyes closed. A jumbled procession of images crowded his mind, images of fighting and death. Floating above those images was an eerie cloud of peace. His mouth twitched in a smile as he fell quickly to sleep.

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Back on his flagship, Admiral Gilbert was meeting with his senior staff, including his daughter, Captain Mica Gilbert, his AOCO, Captain Cody Barker, with Admiral Stonefield, Commander Hew Rochmon, Colonel Brendan Maclear and Admiral Charlene Panjandcan on the viewscreens, when the news came through.

"We've just gotten word that General Mari was rescued by General Porras and his troops," Panjandcan said, glancing at the report her AOCO had just handed her.

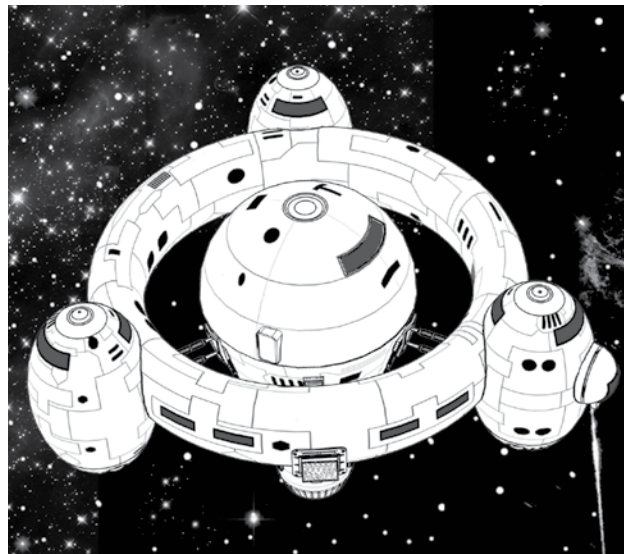
"That's good news, indeed, Admiral," Stonefield said. "But, back to the task at hand...not only was General Berger a traitor, but another high-ranking Sondak officer was killed in the raid on Gramser's Planet, and we need to identify their co-conspirators and contain the damage as much as possible."

"Who was the other officer, Admiral?" Rochmon asked.

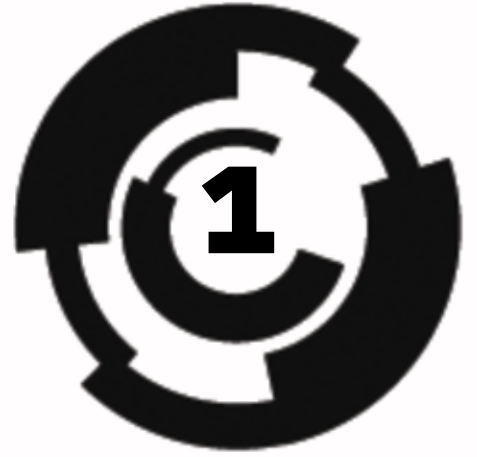
"Admiral Amy Salvato of Deep Space Fleet."

The assembled officers stared silently as they digested that bit of news.

Stonefield sighed in his head before banging his fist on the table. "Get on it! Now!"

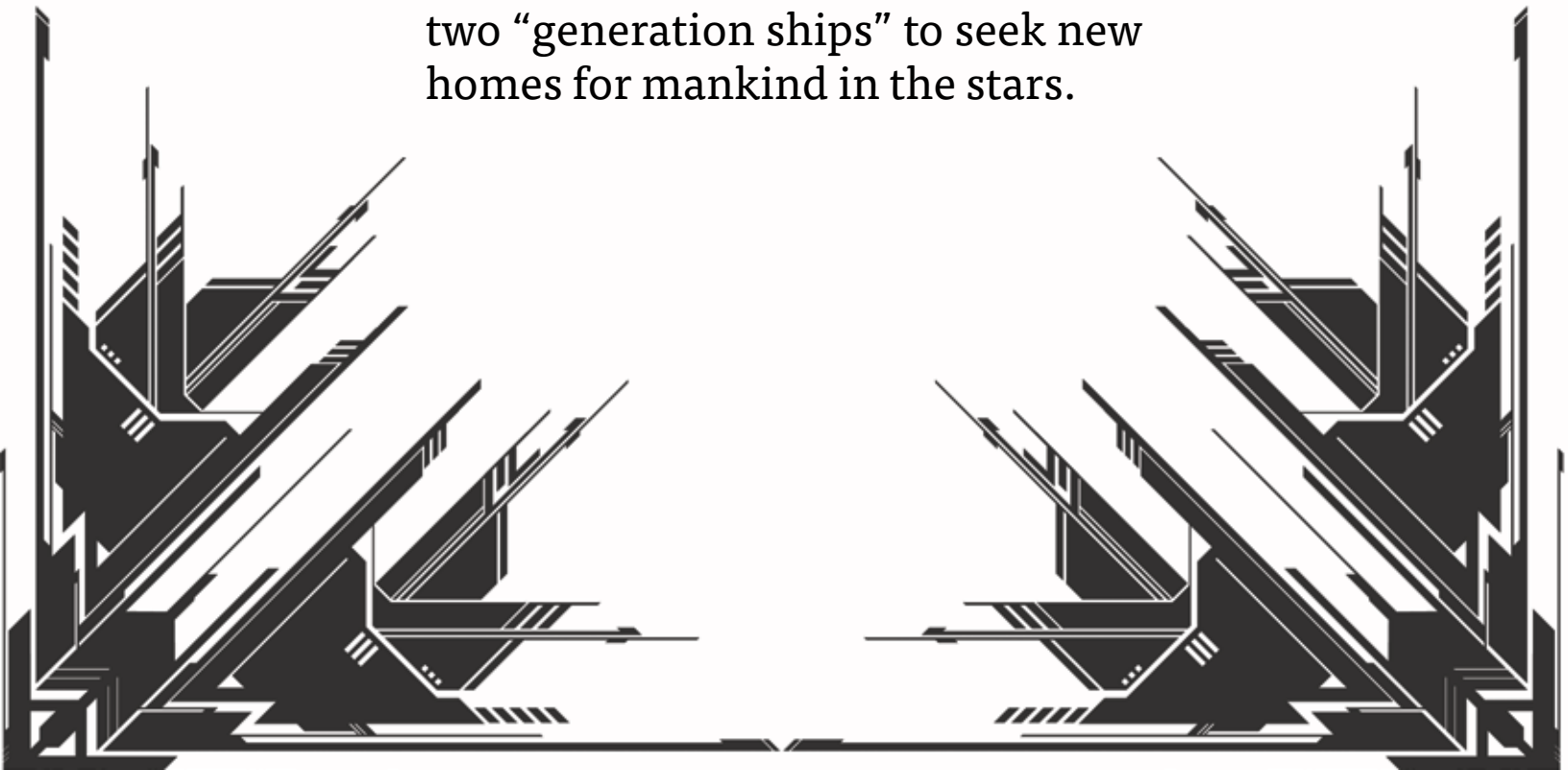






WELCOME TO THE CAVENESS GALAXY

Ninety-two years after the signing of the treaty that officially ended the Unification Wars, Earth sent forth the first two “generation ships” to seek new homes for mankind in the stars.





The *Bohr* and the *Heisenberg* together carried a total of three thousand seven hundred eighty-three pioneers and crew. Each ship was powered by ten linked Hugh drives that eventually pushed them to a speed of one-point-four times the speed of light. At that speed their Benjamin drives took over, and they crossed Einstein's Curve where relative speed could no longer be measured.

Two hundred forty-one ship years later, the descendants of those first pioneers celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of their landing on the planet they named Biery after the woman who led their forebears from Earth. Much to their mixed surprise and fear, that celebration was interrupted by the landing of an alien ship containing a race called the Oinaise. To everyone's relief—including the Oinaise's—the contact was peaceful.

Nine years later the Kobler calendar was established and set the date of the first landing as New Year 2500. The following chronology gives a brief listing of major events dated according to that calendar.

2530 – First contact with the Oinaise.

2575 – First pioneers arrive on Nordeen, the most Earthlike of any planet ever discovered in the galaxy.

2599 – Approximate date the last generation ship left Earth, carrying fourteen thousand new-human pioneers, genetically altered people known as *homo communis*, whose major difference from *homo sapiens* was a greatly extended lifespan.

2648 – The anti-intellectualist riots.

2657 – Beginning of the early expansionist movement seeking other planets and star systems suitable for human settlement

2664 – Last known message from Earth indicating war, famine, and increasing chaos.

2681 – A group of Nordeen's brightest people call themselves *homo electus* and leave aboard the *Mensch* in search of what they hope will be a better home for the intellectually elite.

2723 – The Gouldrive tested and proven. This marks the beginning of the Great Expansionist Movement, the settling of many independent systems, and the establishment of true interstellar trade. The phrase, "a planet for every clan," became popular at this time. Scientific research and technological progress were extremely limited during the movement.

2774 – News reaches Nordeen from the so-called *homo electus*'s first contact with the alien Verfen, a reclusive race inhabiting a cluster of star systems near the galaxy's center.

2784 – First contact with the crab-like, methane-breathing Castorians.

2846 – Discovery of Cloise.

- 2862** – Foundation of Sondak, a loose federation of fifty eight sparsely inhabited planetary systems. Homo electus demanded and received recognition as a separate human race as the price of joining the federation.
- 2893** – Foundation of the misnamed United Central Systems, twenty-seven planetary systems inhabited mostly by *homo communis*. The establishment of the U.C.S. marked the end of the Great Expansionist Movement.
- 3021** – The first galactic war between Sondak and the U.C.S.
- 3024** – The U.C.S., unable to match Sondak's capacity for producing the tools of war, sued for peace. After extended negotiations during which the fighting continued, the U.C.S. promised to pay heavy economic reparations to Sondak and the independent systems, and also agreed not to produce new war materials for one hundred years. Neither promise was kept.
- 3029** – Seemingly spontaneous civil disorder broke out on several planets populated mostly by the fair-skinned, racially distinct, politically fractious Pikeans. Although called by some the Pikean Civil War, the dissidents had neither the numbers nor the equipment to fight a true war, and consequently were forced to leave their home planets. Many of them chose to go to systems controlled by the U.C.S., where they quickly aligned themselves with the political factions that supported a new war with Sondak.
- 3033** – The Cczwyck Skirmish occurred when U.C.S. Admiral Nance made an officially unauthorized attempt to take control of that independent system just as a Sondak border squadron was making a courtesy visit. There was no serious fighting, but the political repercussions caused the U.C.S. to accelerate its secret rearmament program; caused Sondak to increase its economic pressures on the U.C.S. and also on the independent systems that refused to join the confederation; and caused Cczwyck to become more isolationist.
- 3034-3042** – Sporadic raids on U.C.S.-chartered freighters by unknown agents were blamed on Sondak despite fierce diplomatic denials and a total lack of evidence.
- 3038** – Long-range plans began in the U.C.S. for a new war against Sondak.
- 3046** – The so-called "Double-Spiral War" began with raids on ten isolated Sondak systems and several independent systems. During the year the U.C.S. captured the independent systems of Fernandez, Cczwyck, the water planets of Thayne-G, the three systems in the Ivy Chain, and Ca-Ryn. The aliens of Oina and Cloise found themselves drawn unwillingly toward participation in the war. Matthews system, strategically located midway between Sondak and the U.C.S., was the target of an attack and invasion planned and directed by U.C.S. Commander Frye Charlton. The attack failed due to the planning of Sondak Admiral Josiah Gilbert, with the help of Admirals Pajandcan and Dawson, and a great deal of luck. The system was saved, but with a great loss of ships and personnel on both sides. Matthews system's principal planet, Reckynop, was rendered a watery ruin by U.C.S. neutronic missiles that exploded over its poles and melted its icecaps. However, the battle for Matthews was considered a victory for Sondak.
- 3047** – The year opens with the launching of new U.C.S. subspace hunter-killers the Hunks. Sondak's forces on Sutton strongly resist the U.C.S. occupation force and with the aid of a newly reformed Polar Fleet defeat the U.C.S. there and in a space battle for the Satterfield system. The prototype for Sondak's Ultimate Weapon is deliberately lost, and the aliens begin bargaining for a neutral alliance.
- 3048** – U.C.S. Admiral Frye Charlton and Bridgeforce declare a victory at Satterfield and commence planning for a final series of strikes against Sondak, while Sondak's Admiral Gilbert and General Schopper begin their plans for a counteroffensive.

LIVING IN THE DOUBLE SPIRAL GALAXY

Before entering the world of the United Central Systems, Sondak Confederacy and the Neutral Alien Alliance, there are some things about living in these places that all of the residents simply take for granted. These are basic facts of life that should be made familiar before stepping into the depths of politics and history.

HUMANS ARE NOT NATIVES

A brief glance of the Double Spiral Galaxy shows two major human interstellar governments and a handful of neutral colonies encompassing close to one hundred separate colonies as compared to less than twenty planets inhabited primarily by non-human species. Someone who notices this before anything else could be forgiven for thinking that humans were the species native to the galaxy with the other species being recent arrivals. The truth of the matter is that humans have been in the galaxy for just under two hundred and fifty years while the other space-faring species evolved in this area of space.

The humans have not displaced any races, but they have claimed most of the viable colonies in the galaxy, severely limiting the spread of the other races. Likewise, they have put pressure on some of the races that have not moved into space yet, such as the natives of Cloise.

For the most part, humans simply don't think about the other races. For most it's a matter of being out of sight and out of mind. To certain extent, actually, most humans extend this attitude even toward other human colonies. They have kept their individual colonies sparsely populated in comparison to Earth of 21st Century and the wide open spaces give them an impression of being very much alone in the universe. When these humans do think about the other races it is as curiosities more often than anything else, things that stories are told about. The Oinaise are considered to be strange sorts of merchants but more or less respectable for aliens. The Castorians are known to be cannibals and there's a lot of misunderstanding about that. The Cloiseans induce an instinctual sort of fear in humans, possibly due to their resemblance to snakes or dragons, and few humans even know about the Isthians despite them hailing from the same planet.

There are, of course, humans that have more direct contact with or stronger opinions about aliens. Some humans push for more interaction with aliens, such as permanent treaties and alliances and other such things, but most humans that think about other species take a very xenophobic view of things and try to separate themselves more and more from the other species. The governments of both the Sondak and the U.C.S. are dominated by people that take the xenophobic view; in fact the Sondak Confederacy was established to force better trading standards out of the other species. While this racism rarely expresses itself as violence, it is fairly pervasive.

The alien response to human presence varies from species to species, but the prevalence of humanity throughout the galaxy is such that every species has some sort of opinion on humans. They don't have the luxury of an out of sight, out of mind approach to humanity. Oinaise trade with them amicably enough, but still consider them to have strange and dangerous blind spots. Castorians act friendly, but don't really trust the humans, which is actually par for the course for the Castorians with everybody. The two major races of Cloise have suffered from human exploitation for centuries now and many consider them to be soulless monsters that are strangely cowardly in person.

HUMANITY HAS BRANCHED

There are no less than four officially recognized offshoots of humanity in the Double Spiral Galaxy. Humans as a whole are very aware of this, but it is usually never mentioned directly. Meanwhile, the aliens rarely consider there to be any significant differences between various species of humans. Despite the general lack of mentioning the differences in species, each of the two primary nations involved are largely formed of two particular species making for a mild undercurrent of racism that is further underscored by the blatant racism that the Pikeans suffer under.

The four species of human are Homo sapiens, who are the most numerous of the present species and mostly conform to modern day norms; Homo communis, who have a significantly expanded lifespan as compared to other human species; Homo electus, whose designation as a separate species is largely political and Homo Pikean, who are a racially and culturally distinct group descended from Caucasian stock. Both the U.C.S. and the Sondak contain communis, Pikean and sapiens as citizens

but the U.C.S. is heavily dominated by the Homo communis while the Sondak Confederacy is largely Homo sapiens. Homo electus joined with the Sondak Confederacy after their declaration as a separate species was accepted.

Homo sapiens are the most populous human species and the most similar to the Homo sapiens that evolved on Earth thousands of years previous. As a whole, they prefer to live simple lives and have even shown a history of violence toward intellectuals since coming to the Double Spiral Galaxy. Most Homo sapiens live on sparsely populated colonies that sprinkle the galaxy, with the largest number by far being citizens of the Sondak Confederacy. Homo sapiens attitudes toward other species of humans varies from mild unease for the Homo communis, disdain for the self-proclaimed Homo electus to outright prejudice in the case of Homo Pikeans.

The Homo communis are a genetically engineered species that live roughly two to three times as long as other species of humanity and retain their youthful appearances proportionately much longer as well. While they came over on generational ships the same way that the Homo sapiens had, however, their longer life-span means that they had much fewer generations separating them from the Earth of humanity's origin. Significant majorities are eager to keep that connection to Earth and it was the primary motivation for the founding of the U.C.S. Their connection to Earth and their long life spans give them a sense of superiority over the other variations of humanity.

The start of Homo electus came when hundreds of humanity's most intelligent scientists, philosophers and other such people boarded the starship *Mensch* soon after the first human colony was established. At the time, a lot of people blamed the era of war that proceeded Earth's first launch of generational ships on scientists and theoreticians that came up with ideas without considering potential consequences. The more educated individuals of the new colonies were thus faced with a significant amount of social hardship. Given that Homo sapiens-controlled colonies erupted into a series of anti-intellectual riots less than a hundred years later seems to prove the exodus was a wise move on the part of the future electus. For the past four hundred and more years, Homo electus has been trying to control their evolution through a practice of culturally voluntary eugenics where intelligence is considered the primary

factor in choosing a mate. There has been some significant genetic drift due to these practices, but still, everyone tends to make jokes under their breath about how the electus bargained for consideration as a separate species. It is likely that most of the U.C.S. don't consider them as any different from Homo sapiens.

Homo Pikeans bear the distinction of being the only human variation that experiences active prejudice against its members. The Pikeans are descended from Caucasian stock with a far greater propensity for light colorations than other human species. They are rather often viewed as being both incompetent and untrustworthy. This perception generally causes them to be limited to low end menial jobs. There has been a growing trend to ignoring this prejudice and promoting Pikeans to positions of greater authority though there are often clear signs that the position granted is more a matter of appearance than substance. For example, there is a Pikean admiral, however she is assigned to the border fleet in a more or less insignificant stretch of U.C.S. controlled space out of the public view. High ranking members of the military and civilian governments, such as General Mari of the Joint-Chiefs, persist in the belief that the Pikeans aren't worth anything and tend to dismiss examples of competent and trustworthy Pikeans as either exceptions or else simply benefit from having their backs watched by their political allies. The so-called Pikean Civil War that occurred within the last twenty years only served to set back the quest for equality by several decades. Pikeans tend to stick to old-fashioned ways of speech and thought, making them better able to get along with the average communis human than the sapiens human.

In addition, there is the distinction between "dirtsiders" and "spacers" which may lead to another set of branching breeds and may actually have already done so. Given the generational ships that humans came to the galaxy on, it is possible that humanity as a whole has evolved to better handle space travel than modern day humanity on Earth currently is. Still, there are clearly humans who spend most, if not all, their lives in space and humans who likewise spend their lives on the ground. Currently, there is no species distinction for a spacer to a dirtsider, merely a cultural one, but it is feasible to expect that spacers could be a distinct breed of humanity after a few more generations.

SPACE IS VAST

Space is huge and this is something which the setting emphasizes repeatedly. The result is that it seems as if everything takes longer in space than it does on the ground. Where as it is possible to travel from one city to another half-way across the world in a day or less, it takes days or even weeks to travel from one system to another. A fight between two or more people can be over in seconds planetside, while a battle between cruisers and fighters can take hours in space. Searching a wilderness area for a lost traveler could take days but searching an area of nearly empty space could take months.

One of the major pieces of tech characteristic to the setting is the Gouldrive, an FTL drive pioneered by humans which is considered to be the primary means of travel for the space-faring species. The Gouldrive works by allowing the ship to move into a subspace where distances between locations can be traversed much easier. However, the transition from normal space to subspace is not swift. One new class of U.C.S. ship is capable of accelerating to lightspeed in around three hours, which is noted to be twice as fast as anything Sondak has except for an experimental attack ship. What this means is that going from sublight to lightspeed in around six hours is still considered fast at the current time. This is not the instantaneous jump to lightspeed that one finds in other settings, not by a longshot.

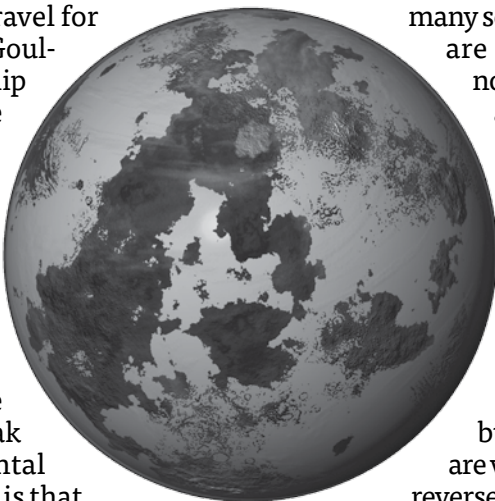
The vastness of space is further emphasized in the efforts to find scout ships that the U.C.S. had seeded around the Reckynop colony prior to their attack of it. The ships were originally sent to the system in the early part of the year with the Reckynop defense forces stumbling on one of them by accident within the next month. An effort to sweep the area for more such ships over the next few months results in Reckynop only finding about fourteen of the ships out of twenty by the time the battle was actually joined. This lengthy search time is brought up again when it takes another twelve ship days to search a system for where an ally's ship crash-landed onto an uninhabited planet.

This factor carries over into space-combat as well. Battles take place at ranges of several thousand kilometers. When a ship has to make corrections to put it back in line, it can take several minutes or even as long as an hour to shift around to the desired course, during which time they move further in the wrong direction. Even conflicts between small superiority fighters become a matter of frequent course corrections interspersed by moments of weapons fire. Space battles in the Double Spiral Galaxy typically last for days, even if everything goes perfectly for one side of the conflict. This is enough of a factor that having reinforcements a day out from the battle is still considered to be of tactical importance.

ALIENS ARE NOT HUMAN

This sounds like it is common sense, but in many settings the non-human species are comfortably within human norms in terms of behavior and appearance with the appearance of human-alien hybrids being relatively common. In the Double Spiral Galaxy, the non-human species are very visibly non-human and often have rather inhuman perspectives. There is some overlap in the ways of looking at things that allows for trade, but the fact remains that aliens are very strange to humans and the reverse is also true.

The Oinaise merchants are probably the closest to the humans in terms of ways of looking at life. They are huge beings with a long proboscis in place of a nose and many-jointed seven-fingered hands. They are merchants through and through, perceiving profit as one of the most important things in life. Most humans associate this perspective with greed and unethical attempts to make money whereas most Oinaise adhere to an ethical pattern of behavior meant to keep them looking trustworthy and thus someone who would get repeat business. They do not understand the concept of charity beyond the provision of aid in an emergency and find it strange that humanity finds virtue in helping people when there is neither obligation nor profit, believing that it only weakens the species in the long run. That said, they extend the idea of profit to abstract things that



humans consider unquantifiable. In addition, the Oinaise typically do not raise their own children, turning them over to professionals trained for that task. This is mostly because they do not have families the same way that humans do. There is no marriage and long term relationships are mostly built on business concerns. Children will contact their relatives as they grow older because they already have a way to make their introductions and relatives will accept the contact because it gives them another asset. To humans it might seem cold, but it is what is natural to the Oinaise.

The Castorians look like giant crabs. They are wider than they are tall with both agile manipulators and claw like pincers. They are friendly and charismatic in behavior, perceiving the meaning of life to be found in the facing of adversity with a community. They also find nothing wrong with the devouring of other sentient creatures. Given the human perspective on cannibalism, they are treated with caution. By and large the Castorians are honest about their desires, being confused as to why other species don't consider it a compliment when told that they look delicious. The truth is that the Castorians don't grab people to eat them; they wouldn't be successful merchants if they did stuff like that in general. It does happen, however, and people of the other species tend to be "offended" when the Castorian authorities act as if it is an understandable, if rude, lapse in control as adverse as an outright sin. The friendliness of the Castorians doesn't mesh with the truth and rumors of their cannibalism and eventually cause people to forget the tales until the Castorians do or say something that bring it back to the forefront. Like humans, the Castorians care for their own offspring, with the devouring of one's own children being the absolute worst crime in their society.

The Cloiseans look like a cross between a lizard, a salamander and a snake. They tend toward monogamy, but are occasionally unfaithful, similar to humans. They appoint leaders to make decisions for them, but they don't run elections save in emergencies. Usually, the prior holder of a position appoints a successor, or suggests a successor if there is someone in a superior position. Most of the time, the successor is not someone who sought the position for themselves. Unlike humans, but like the Oinaise, they don't have any particular emotional connection to their own children. Unlike the Oinaise, they don't particularly care about the life

and death of their children, either. The females frequently lay large groups of eggs and most of the resultant children fail to live out the year and the Cloiseans don't care. Humans have the least tolerance for this isolated species due to an instinctual fear reaction that the Cloiseans provoke. In addition, the Cloiseans have a physical dependence on another species that humans and other species might associate with a sexual relationship, which would be disturbing to humans or others if it was commonly known.

THE SONDAK CONFEDERACY

When mapping the belly of Caveness Galaxy, someone with an odd sense of humor had looked at the long string of stars that formed its internal arm and named it the Great Sperm. Eight thousand parsecs behind the head of the Great Sperm lay Biery, the first settled star system. In the middle of its tail lay Nordeen, the capital planet of Sondak.

Nordeen was the first major colony of humans in the Caveness Galaxy and it served as the kick-off point for the birth of interstellar trade when the Gouldrive was first put into use. As such, Nordeen became the kick off point for the Great Expansionist Movement. With interstellar travel now practical, it became possible for colonies in different star systems to establish formal connections. Between that and encounters with an increasing number of alien species, it was inevitable that the humans would close ranks with each other.


The Sondak Confederacy started as a loose federation of fifty-eight sparsely inhabited planetary systems. In addition to Biery and Nordeen, there was the significant addition of the colony which had been founded by the passengers of the starship Mensch, though the residents demanded to be recognized as a separate species as part of the price for inclusion. This made the Sondak Confederacy easily the most powerful political entity in the galaxy because none of the other races seemed to have moved much further than their own planets.

Now that they were acting as a unit, the Sondak allied systems could negotiate more aggressively with some of the other powers, such as the planet Cloise, who could no longer set the price for their methane in the face of multiple competing colonies. Now, instead of charging a premium from competing colonies for the rights

to harvest methane, they could get low prices and purchase for the entire federation. In addition, Sondak began to standardize its laws and make extradition agreements. Whereas before it was possible for a criminal to escape judgment by traveling to another colony, now their crimes would follow them.

Bit by bit, the member planets of Sondak brought their ways of doing things more and more in line with each other. This firmed up their alliance and increased efficiency with each step they took toward being more centralized.

However, there were some issues. The culture began to be dominated by Nordeen. Any differences between the cultural practices of one colony from that of Nordeen began to feel rather unusual to most of Sondak over time. They were either viewed as quaint, backward, bohemian or any of a variety of other terms that would identify the practices as diverging from the mainstream rather than falling in line with the other cultures aligned with Sondak.



The most telling of these is the persistent discrimination leveled against the Pikean ethnic group. These humans are characterized by blonde-hair, blue eyes and a rather fair complexion. These cultural differences would continue to be a difficulty for the Federation in the years to come.

GOVERNMENT

The Tri-Cameral controls the civilian government while the Joint Chiefs of Staff control the military.

The Tri-Cameral is a three-branch system of representative government. Representatives from each planet in the confederacy are elected by that planet's populations and sent to Nordeen as their representative lawmakers. These representatives go to one of two houses. The House of Populace, where the number of representatives each planet has is based on that planet's population, and the House of Quadrants, where each planet has four representatives. The House of Quadrants is responsible for reviewing and deciding on the final wordings of new laws or policy with the House of Populace responsible for the final ratification of laws.

The House of Populace also decides on candidates for Sondak's Premier with the House of Quadrants settling on the final choice. The

chosen Premier holds his position for the next three years, at which point he or she can either retire or opt to appeal to retain the position. If the Premier leaves the office for any reason, such as retirement or failing an appeal, then a new one is chosen. The Premier is the Confederacy's chief diplomatic agent and is responsible for implementing the policies of the Houses. Ostensibly, the Premier has control over both law enforcement and the military; in practice he serves mostly as a middle-man between the Joint Chiefs and the Houses.

The citizens of each planet vote on local and regional magistrates. The regional magistrates then choose a Tribune to represent the planet in the central courts on Nordeen, the Tribunal. In Nordeen law, the accused is assumed to be guilty until they can prove their innocence. It is the task of the magistrates to judge the evidence presented by the accused and the prosecution's case against their evidence. These cases are usually settled rather quickly, but some cases can linger for weeks, months or even years while the magistrates deliberate on the matter. In the meantime, the accused is left dealing with the stigma of being on trial.

On the military side of things, the Premier technically has the power to promote members of the military to the Joint Chiefs as well as demote them to a lower rank. In practice, the Joint Chiefs nominate their own successors. To date, the Premier has not yet denied such an appointment. In cases where the leaving Chief has left no named successor, such as due to a sudden death, the Premier is free to assign their own choice to the position.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

Sondak is a civilization that prides itself on scientific innovation. They lay claim to being the government that produced the Gouldrive despite the fact that was an innovation that predated the formation of their confederacy. The inclusion of the Homo electus, their acceptance as a separate species and the formation of a major research colony are all indicative of this cultural trend. The work of the scientists on Summer is recognized the galaxy over as some of the most cutting edge work around. Scientists both human and alien all covet a position as a researcher at the facilities upon that planet.

The confederacy is also very protective of its scientific superiority, resulting in the creation of Science-Security. SCI-SEC, as it is most often referred to, is responsible for making sure that the technological developments of the Sondak Confederacy are kept secure and out of the hands of potential rivals or enemies. They have become one of the more dogmatic and fanatical of the government's intelligence agencies. While SCI-SEC tends not to get involved outside matters of scientific discovery, it tends to operate as if its mandate to protect such secrets overrules the jurisdictions of largely anything else in its way. SCI-SEC is reputed to employ methods of investigation and security that even the military intelligence and civilian investigative arms find morally questionable. The agents of SCI-SEC feel the importance of their jobs justifies any such effort they make.

MEDIA

The Sondak media is mostly characterized by a group of men and women who refer to themselves as tellers rather than the more archaic term reporters. The idea is that instead of simply reporting all the facts of a situation, a teller would tell people the important facts of a situation. There are two primary media outlets in Sondak. There's the Flag Report which primarily releases information to the military personnel, and there's the Efcorps which controls both the Courier-Times and Intraworld, which are the major civilian print and broadcast media providers.

The Tri-Cameral Information Release Committee decides what will and will not be released to the Efcorps. By the time the civilian population receives the news, it has been filtered through at least three entities working to determine relevance and appropriateness of that particular piece of information. Information from the military is even more filtered as the military first releases information to the Tri-Cameral Information Release Committee before that committee releases the information to the Efcorps.

Despite this seemingly ironclad control over the media, the Sondak government typically finds that the tellers reporting the news have a tendency to have a mind of their own. Given the philosophy that a teller is meant to decide what the society does or does not need to know, the resulting media picture can at times be rather chaotic, while at other times eerily unanimous. The military does not trust the civilian media

in general and some are doubtful even of their own media system, the Flag Report. Rumors abound that the military tellers act as incognito agents of the brass to get a good image of the situation or morale of a group.

UNITED CENTRAL SYSTEMS

The Homo communis are a variation of humanity with a greatly increased lifespan. The result of that was that many of these colonies still had clearer memories of the Milky Way Galaxy and the Earth that spawned humanity. Many of the communis felt unsatisfied by life among the cultures developed by the sapiens in the time since they had left Earth. Rather than take part in the Sondak Confederacy, many of the communis banded together as a way of keeping true to their culture as inherited from Earth. Like Sondak, they banded together to form a more efficient way of life and make it easier to keep up their old traditions.

In order to accentuate the fact that they were preserving the culture of Earth as much as possible, it was decided that this new interstellar organization would be named the United Central Systems. Given that none of the member planets were very close to the physical center of the galaxy, the implications of the name were not lost on anyone.

Communis average lifespan is at least twice that of a Homo sapiens and they have only been within the galaxy for roughly two hundred and fifty years. While none currently living remember Earth, there are several still alive whose grandparents could say they had lived on Earth and could describe it. They are insistent on protecting this heritage. Combined with their long lifespans, this closeness to their Terran background gives the communis a sense of superiority over the other branches of humanity in the galaxy. It is partially this sense of superiority that encouraged them to move further off from the systems claimed by Sondak to form their own interstellar government separate from the primarily sapiens Sondak.

However, the foundation of the United Central Systems did foul up the purpose for which Sondak founded itself: the reduction of competition. The U.C.S. was not merely a neutral planet choosing not to be part of the confederacy; it was an interstellar government fully half the size of the Sondak itself.

That represented a major competition which the alien and neutral planets could point to in order to keep their prices higher. This economic situation was acerbated by the differences in culture and proved to be the central seed of the violence that would fall between the two powers.

BUREAUCRACY

The U.C.S. government has gone through a number of significant changes in its short existence, and will be discussed further in the segment of the history between Sondak Confederacy and U.C.S. below. However, one thing has remained stable and that is the bureaucracies. The bureaucrats of different departments wield limited but powerful privileges and it is rare that any bureaucracy is ever disbanded. This results in an inefficient mesh of overlapping bureaucracies such that getting anything done requires navigating a virtual labyrinth of red tape or else breaks the regulations and procedures of one department or another.

A large number of these departments are entirely obsolete. This includes a number of departments that were established for emergency reasons. Quite often these bureaucracies have broad powers that would have an impact on their area of concern that they are still exercising today. In extreme cases, the protocol of two separate bureaucracies might be in conflict with each other. One might get a citation with one group and attempt to clear it, get it cleared, only to be told that you went to the wrong department.

The overwhelming paralysis and inefficiency that this encourages would seem to be easy to note, but it has been building up for a little more than a hundred years, piece by piece in a slow accumulation of political and procedural clutter. The U.C.S. citizens are inured to it and hardly even seem to notice it. Outsiders are rarely given much more than a small glimpse of the way things work in the U.C.S.

The bureaucracies thrive on this status of being overlooked, because when it comes down to it, the government has the power to forcibly disband them and force cooperation out of the disparate groups. But, as long as they go unnoticed, each of the departments can keep their power, even if there are three other groups doing their job.

Currently the Bridgeforce, the military high command, is the de facto government of the

U.C.S. This technically means that the culture has been under martial law for a little more than twenty years. Despite this, they've allowed the bureaucracies to continue on mostly as they always have, focusing almost entirely on their military concerns. As long as their orders are obeyed, they see no reason to look into the bureaucracies and thus do not see the monumental level of waste that goes on.

AUXILIARIES

The U.C.S. military make use of auxiliary forces. These are privately maintained and funded paramilitary groups. These organizations are sometimes connected to specific companies, planets or even families. These organizations operate under standardized ranks to make it easy to coordinate with the standing military of the U.C.S. Among the rights of auxiliary forces is the right of their commander to simply not involve themselves in any conflict that they choose. There are only a few legal ways for the standard military to take full command of auxiliary forces.

Most auxiliaries are fairly small organizations such as the security forces of major corporations or the independent planetary defense forces of some planets but there are occasional auxiliary forces that have tremendous military power and political influence. The force that stands out the most in these groups operates under Marshall Judoff, the daughter of an infamous pirate who conquered a planet before joining with the U.C.S.

CULTURE

The U.C.S. is focused around a number of traditions that they've carried from Earth. They consider these traditions and rituals sacred in many cases. Slowly some of these traditions are being cast away by the most recent generations, but for the most part these are still firm parts of the culture. "To ignore tradition is to walk blindfolded into the night of ignorance," is still a very popular and heavily believed proverb.

The U.C.S. citizens are polytheists that follow the teachings of a religious text called the Concordance. This text is a series of parables and proverbs that was drawn together from several ancient Earth traditions until it resulted in its current form. Prayer is carried out at shrines

known as basili and while most people are believers, only the heaviest traditionalists believe that the gods interfere with everything that goes on in life. There are public basili for anybody to pray at dedicated to different gods, and there are private family basili. It is highly unusual for anybody outside of family to be invited to pray at a person's personal basili and such an invitation carries a heavy amount of import.

Work place relationships are not uncommon, especially between a superior and a subordinate they work with frequently. As long as these relationships do not interfere with the performance of one's job and they are kept as discrete as possible, then they are largely dismissed. However, while discrete, long-term work-place relationships are accepted, there are certainly limits. Making no attempt to keep the romance discrete will rub noses the wrong way, especially if one or both of those involved are promiscuous. Nepotism is also frowned upon. Recognizing a soulmate in someone who does their job well is one thing, but raising someone to a position only because they're a good lover is frowned upon. While many of these relationships build into healthy marriages, once it has become official, one of the two lovers will usually retire or transfer to a separate department.

Revenge is a highly valued virtue in U.C.S. culture. When someone is wronged, it is expected that they will try to avenge themselves. To do otherwise is considered an expression of weakness. The actual laws do not encourage this, but the cultural impetus remains strongly in favor of seeking out revenge in some form or fashion. If one can obtain revenge within the bounds of the law that is considered best, but some sort of effort is expected to made.

One of many rituals that is carried out by U.C.S. citizens is the Ritual of Ice Water. This is a meeting taken to privately inform a subordinate of their place in coming plans. By this point, all decisions are supposed to have been already made and no new business is supposed to be brought up. No one besides the superior and their subordinate is supposed to be present and interrupting or disrespecting the ritual is considered highly dishonorable. This ritual is generally only carried out by individuals of some significance. Military commanders, owners of corporations and the heads of major bureaus are the sorts of people that would participate in

this ritual. The actual content of the ritual is pretty much exactly what it sounds like. The information is exchanged and the participants take a ritual drink of water that has been recently melted from glacial ice taken from the polar caps of the hosting planet.

Another cultural norm is the idea of committing suicide in the face of death and dishonor. Many U.C.S. military commanders own weapons especially for that purpose. The oldest military families keep antique automatic slug-throwing pistols that have been passed down as heirlooms since they left Earth more than four hundred years ago. While this cultural tradition is no longer commonly followed, there are still more than a handful that consider it to be of some importance. In some cases the choice will come down to whichever they consider the most important: their honor or their revenge.


THE NEUTRAL PLANETS

Between the Sondak Confederacy and the United Central Planets lie a fair number of colonized planets that owe allegiance to neither of these two major powers. This includes planets that are home to alien life such as Castor, Oina or Cloise as well as several human planets. These planets are mostly self-sufficient and many are quite capable of protecting themselves from the encroachment of greater powers. Others find themselves constantly pressured by the U.C.S., Sondak or both powers either for trade or to bring them into their governments. Neutral powers tend to be staunchly independent and not look to any sort of protection outside of what they are able to provide themselves.

CASTOR AND OINA

Castor and Oina are the centers of two alien merchant empires. They are not especially aligned with each other, but they do have some similarities. They are both the homes of space-faring alien species that have access to the Gouldrive technology developed originally by humans. They both base their influence on their status as independent merchants. Unlike Cloise and most of the human neutral planets, both Castorians and Oinaise actively make contact with settlements all over the galaxy and deal with practically everybody. They are both influential because of their mercantile practices.

Of the two, the oxygen breathing Oinaise have the best reputation. Profit is the central gauge of morality for their culture. This sounds like it produces a society of greedy, conniving merchants; however, the majority does not approach the concept of profit from a short sighted perspective. It is, for example, recognized that honoring agreements and treating people with respect is more likely to garner long-term customers and thus a greater profit in the end. This is not to say that there aren't those Oina that pursue profit without regard to either ethics or morality, but they are far from the average and usually kept at a distance from other Oinaise. Admittedly, that distance is usually still close enough to profit off something the black sheep has in mind if it looks relatively safe.



Castorian lives revolve around facing adversity as a community, but they're more commonly recognized throughout the galaxy as cannibals. The Castorians will quite cheerfully comment on how delicious a person looks without understanding how this is not a compliment. The Castorians do engage in a brisk interstellar trade, because while the Oinaise are the most influential and dominant traders, the Castorians do have one resource that they have something of a corner on: methane. The Castorians are methane breathers that maintain colonies on several planets with a methane atmosphere. They harvest the methane of their own atmospheres as a commodity to trade to the other races to use as fuel for their fighters and for other purposes. As such, many people are willing to deal with the Castorians despite their reputation and oddity.

CLOISE

Cloise is a methane planet populated by three separate sentient species. The snake-like amphibious Cloiseans control the world government, with the Isthians living among them, sometimes acting as scientists. The dominate ruling class of Cloiseans have chosen not to reveal all their secrets to offworlders, and it is unknown the nature of the third species on Cloise. Cloise is not yet a space-faring society. The Cloiseans have an almost instinctive fear of space-travel and Isthians and Cloiseans require each other to live healthy lives. In addition, this lack of space-faring technology heavily limits their ability to defend their own planet. In the past they have had troubles from pirates harvest-

ing their atmosphere for methane as a way of getting around dealing with the Castorians. Cloise is under constant pressure from Sondak and companies associated with that interstellar government. They have become increasingly isolationist and xenophobic.

NEUTRAL HUMAN COLONIES

Many human colonies have stayed resolutely separate from the two greater powers of the galaxy. These colonies have mostly no need for anything Sondak or the U.C.S. has to offer and thus prefer to live the way that they want to live. The most well-known of these is Cczwyck, which has been the subject of attempted annexation from the U.C.S. as well as continued courtesy visits from the Sondak border patrols. Between the U.C.S. claims that many of these neutral colonies already belong to them and attempts to enforce that and the Sondak tendency to apply economic pressures to those colonies that refuse to join, these colonies are bitter about the other powers in the galaxy. They have not started to reach out to each other yet to form a third power for mutual protection.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF RECENT HISTORY

THE RISE OF THE INTERSTELLAR POWERS

The Great Expansionist Movement was still strong when the Homo electus colony reported its encounter with the mysterious Verfen in 2774. New colonies were being settled all the time, primarily by the humans but also by the Oinaise who had purchased Gouldrive technology from one of the many independent colonies that were springing up around the galaxy. The Oinaise, in the midst of a general population decline, were very selective about their selection of new colonies, making only a handful of small outposts on worlds that soon came to be inhabited by multiple species, such as Patros. This left much of the galaxy for humans to lay claim to.

In 2784 the Castorians were encountered by a human merchant on sheer chance. At first interactions were cordial between the two species and Gouldrive technology was even made available to them. It was only later discovered that

the Castorians considered all species outside their own to be fit for consumption. This caused the humans to shy away from contact with the Castorians save where necessary. Given the access to methane the aliens had, however, there was still a lot of contact. Then came the discovery of Cloise in 2846, another methane planet. This planet, unfortunately, had a civilization as well, but that civilization was not space-faring and was much more easily pressured into selling their methane at favorable cost as compared to what the Castorians requested.

An attempt was made to forcibly harvest methane from the atmosphere in Cloise in the universal year 2856, as the humans counted it. The Cloiseans responded by igniting their atmosphere and causing the destruction of dozens of expensive harvesting ships as well as the deaths of hundreds of humans. It also ravaged the surface of the planet itself. This left the humans back at the economic mercies of the Castorians for their methane needs and caused several of the sparsely populated planetary systems inhabited by humans to begin a push for unification.

Over the course of six years, contacts were made and meetings held. Much of the delay came from those colonies that were populated by the self-proclaimed *Homo electus* who would only join in the unification process if they were officially recognized as a separate race of humanity. Once they were united, these colonies were able to present a combined front against the Oinaise and Castorians and pressure them to make prices more reasonable. During the same time, the laws and society of Nordeen pressed itself onto that of the member states of the Confederacy and they started to place more and more pressure on the still unaligned human colonies.

The Sondak recruiting methods slowly escalated from friendly invitations up to outright extortionist tactics. This had an impact that the leaders of the young power did not expect. Several communities of *Homo communis* sought out and found colonies as far as possible from Sondak and collectively founded the United Central Systems with twenty-seven planetary systems. This group likewise unified its own policies in direct competition with Sondak. In so doing, the U.C.S. probably helped the Castorians and Oinaise secure their positions as the premier merchants of the system. The very humanity of the U.C.S.,

despite being of one of the newer off-shoots, made the action to found their own government seem very personal to the leaders of the Sondak Confederacy.

Over the next twenty years, as the U.C.S. grew stronger and stronger, the Sondak Confederacy grew more and more concerned that they would find themselves eventually unable to compete with the other government populated by the long-living *communis* humans. Then the U.C.S. began to lay claim to certain neutral colonies in the strip of space between Sondak and the U.C.S. The neutrals mostly repelled the attempts at forced annexation, all of which were officially unsanctioned actions by individual Marshals such as the former pirate Judoff. Still, the Sondak Confederacy took this as the final straw and began stepping up their industry while making plans for war.

THE ERA OF CONFLICT


Cloise would say the period of conflict began earlier, when pirates began to raid their atmosphere. When the violence did begin, it spread across the galaxy started in a rather large way.

In 3021, twenty-eight years after the formation of the U.C.S. and fifty-nine years after the foundation of the Sondak Confederacy, the Sondak fleets attacked the U.C.S. with neither warning nor obvious provocation. The younger interstellar power resisted bravely, but did not have the same ability to produce the tools of war that their attackers did. Still, the Sondak were not willing to go to the expense of a full out conquest either. After the first year they simply persisted in the expectations of forcing the U.C.S. into suing for peace.

During the war, the U.C.S. military suffered several handicaps due to the overly cautious second-guessing of their civilian leadership, the Amarcouncil. In the second half of the war, the leaders of the military performed a coup in order to take direct control of the war and the U.C.S. They called themselves Bridgeforce. Despite no longer having to worry about political influence, the U.C.S.' lack of production capabilities eventually pushed them closer and closer to defeat. Finally, after three years of vicious battles that drained the coffers of both powers, the U.C.S. sued for peace. It took most of the following year to settle on terms, but eventually the war came to an end.

Among the conditions of peace that were forced on the U.C.S., they were expected to pay heavy economic reparations to both Sondak and the independent systems, the latter being included as a thinly veiled attempt at currying favor with the other human colonies in hopes of luring some to the Sondak Confederacy. They were also forbidden from producing war materials for one hundred years. The implications of both of these conditions made it clear that Sondak intended for history to blame the entire conflict on the U.C.S., casting them as instigators. Predictably, the U.C.S. kept neither of these promises that were forced on them at literal gunpoint.

The four year war between Sondak and the U.C.S. ended, but that did not bring an end to the period of conflict. There were several small uprisings and incidents throughout Sondak space, including the Salimar Rebellion that lasted from 3025 to 3027. It was just five years after the end of the first war between the U.C.S. and Sondak that the next major series of events erupted.



In 3029, civil disorder broke out on several planets, mostly throughout Sondak space. The one thing these incidents had in common was that they involved a human ethnic group known as Pikeans. Racially distinct from most other humans, the fair-skinned Pikeans had faced a long history of racial discrimination and many of them had turned the long history of frustration into an eruption of rage.

These actions and conflicts continued over the course of a year and have generally been called the Pikean Civil War. Despite the name, the events never rose to the point of being an actual war. The dissidents had neither the numbers nor the equipment to fight a true war. It was simply a series of incidents ranging from civil disobedience to disorganized mobs and highly organized terrorist actions. None of it really made much of an impact on Sondak's stability as a whole and the worst of the instigators were eventually forced to leave their home planets. Many of these Pikean instigators ended up in the U.C.S. where they quickly went back to instigating. They aligned themselves with the factions of the population that supported a new war with Sondak.

The events set the plight of the pikans loyal to Sondak back by decades. These incidents left many people with the idea that Pikeans in

general were violent and disloyal despite the fact that the majority of Pikeans remained loyal and did not take part in the troubles. Pikeans began to face a rising tendency of racially motivated violence in the following years. Most of these went more or less unnoticed by the media or the population and resulted in a new generation of dissatisfied Pikeans.

The Cczwyck Skirmish in 3033 proved to be the next event that attracted major attention and colored the shape of the galaxy's politics. The U.C.S. Admiral Nance made a supposedly personal decision to take the independent colony of Cczwyck as part of the U.C.S. At the same time, a Sondak border squadron was making a courtesy visit to the planet. There was no serious fighting, but the situation remained tense and inflamed several political situations between the powers.

The population and government of Cczwyck found themselves virtually under siege between the U.C.S. aggressors and their supposed rescuers, who themselves were using the incident to impose themselves on the neutral colony. The Sondak forces pushed through the entire situation for the Cczwyck to give over command of their military resources in order to "better insure their safety". The U.C.S., meanwhile, found them stymied again by the Sondak. Meanwhile the Sondak felt that Cczwyck was entirely ungrateful given how they had been protected from the U.C.S.

The end result of the skirmish was for the U.C.S. to speed up their secret rearmament programs, while the Sondak increased its economic pressures on the U.C.S. and the neutral planets, and Cczwyck became more isolationists, setting a trend for the other neutral planets. The galaxy was becoming more and more polarized by the actions of the two great powers. The aliens meanwhile primarily continued on as they had been for some time, and largely shrugged aside the dramas of the humans as unimportant.

This environment allowed several criminal elements to prosper in the galaxy. There was a definite increase of piracy for about eight years starting in 3034. The U.C.S. made several claims that the majority of these raids were being carried out on freighters chartered to their government. Their claim was that Sondak was sponsoring pirates to attack U.C.S. freighters.

This was vehemently denied and there was no evidence of it. Indeed, the U.C.S. ignored any evidence showing that the piracy was becoming a widespread issue. Eventually, increased patrols by both the Sondak and U.C.S. as well as the growing tendency of the Oinaise and Castorian to arm their ships caused the majority of the pirates to be hunted down. However, there continued to be many unexplained attacks.

MARCH TO WAR

It was in the middle of the increased piracy that the U.C.S. began making actual plans to return to war. Force Commander Frye Charlton was assigned to build the overall attack strategy for the coming war in 3038. Charlton's wife was among those who vocally demanded revenge against the Sondak for their unprovoked war and assault followed by the insulting demand that reparations be made by the U.C.S. to the rest of the Galaxy. Her passion fueled Charlton's own zeal for the project, especially due to the fact that she was facing a progressively debilitating and eventually terminal illness. He put his every waking effort into the plan for the sake of his wife.

During this time, a political movement within the U.C.S. called the Kyosei began to grow in power. The Kyosei were elitists and isolationists who had plans to completely cut off the U.C.S. from the rest of the galaxy once the war was won. They had no question that the war would be won and thus regarded the Sondak as a non-issue. Nor did they concern themselves much with their own common civilians, whom they regarded as untrustworthy and inferior. Their real concern was the other members of their own government, and so they began a campaign of progressively undermining and taking control of the political scene.

These plans included seeding the populations of several Sondak planets with spies and especially Pikean infiltrators and rabble-rousers. The Pikean instigations met with limited success due to the slowly improving status of Pikeans within both society and the military, including the presence of at least one Pikean officer of Admiral Rank. Still, they were careful and they formed a strong network throughout the Sondak systems wherever they could find dissatisfied Pikeans. Beyond that, they began to inspire groups of sympathizers in the general population.

Despite the diplomatic posturing of many U.C.S. dignitaries and the aggression displayed in the Cczwyck situation, these spies managed to give the Sondak a sense that the U.C.S. were not thinking about war. The civilian authorities, security forces, and military officials of the Confederacy were mostly convinced that there would not be a war anytime soon and steps were taken to start a cut back on military spending. Strangely enough, many of the members of the high command were among those most strongly pushing for a reduced military.

The U.C.S. was becoming a much more oppressive society, living under martial law since before the previous war had ended. They built up a large fleet in secret, keeping it out of the sight of Sondak espionage. At the same time, Sondak was reducing its military and growing relaxed. The end result was a Sondak Confederacy which was totally and completely unprepared for a wide scale invasion by the U.C.S.

THE DOUBLE SPIRAL WAR

The Battle of Midway

In 3046, the U.C.S. initiated a full scale assault, invading neutral and Sondak planets all along the borders between the two giants. The Border Fleet of Sondak found itself ravaged in the first wave of the assaults and was more or less destroyed over the next few months while the Polar Fleet and Home Fleet hastened to prepare themselves for battle. The U.C.S., meanwhile, continued to push onward while Charlton ironed out the last details for his assault on Reckynop in the Matthews System, midway between Sondak and U.C.S. space, with a distraction assault in the direction of some of Sondak's polar colonies.

On the other side of the field, command of the defense of Sondak space was turned over to Admiral Josiah Gilbert. Gilbert was familiar with Charlton and his methods and also deduced that the next major attack would come to the Matthews system. Despite the U.C.S. espionage efforts, the Sondak was able to keep their intention to meet the U.C.S. at Reckynop well hidden. Resources were sparse due to both the battles that were being fought all over the galaxy and the trend of demilitarization that the military Joint Chiefs of Staff had been pushing for in Sondak during prior years.



During the course of all this Marshal Judoff, a strong leader within the Kyosei movement was maneuvering herself politically. Like the rest of the Kyosei, she assumed that a U.C.S. victory was inevitable and thus ignored any concerns about Sondak and focused herself on attacking her real enemies. Her followers moved to enact her designs throughout Sondak, undercutting Charlots in his command and questioning Bridgeforce about his suitability. Through her insistence, the Kyosei began to rouse political unrest in the common population, despite their distrust of such individuals. This resulted in political protests being carried out on more and more planets, eventually including the capital world, Gensha.

One of Judoff's loyal followers in the official military of the U.C.S. even took it upon himself to attack and try to subjugate Oina. This caused the Oinaise to cease all trade and interaction with the U.C.S. which the isolationist Kyosei and Judoff herself were quite happy with. They saw the Oinaise as a militarily insignificant power, but failed to consider what the loss of trade would mean for them. Without connections to neutral merchants such as the Oinaise and the Castorians, the U.C.S. found themselves once again in a situation of low resources in comparison to their enemies.

In another effort to undercut Charlots, Judoff withdrew her forces from the assault on

Reckynop at the last minute. This left Charlton's main fleet with a much smaller force than he'd originally planned on, though he still believed that he had more than enough ships. Instead of a simple push to annihilate Reckynop's meager planetary defenses, Charlton found himself engaged in a full scale battle against a prepared enemy. Admiral Gilbert's plan managed to drive the U.C.S. out of the system before they could take it, but Charlton had the last word when he ordered the detonation neutronic missiles over the ice caps, melting them and flooding the planet. This killed millions and rendered Reckynop unusable by either side of the battle. The diversionary assault on the Sondak polar colonies proved more effective. With the help of Pikean infiltrators, the U.C.S. was able to capture Sutton.

U.C.S. Advances

At the beginning of the year, the U.C.S. fielded two new weapons: an infantry weapon roughly the size of a squad support weapon which had projectiles with enough firepower to classify as moderate artillery and a new hunter-killer spaceship.

Of the two, the Hunks had the most impact on the war effort in that year. The hunter-killers, referred to as Hunks, were designed to be hard to detect and could accelerate to light speed faster than any other vessel, taking only 6 hours to achieve hyperspace. Initially, the new Hunks faced limited success as a flaw in their design had led to them becoming extremely easy to notice whenever they started targeting their weapons. Eventually, a change of tactics caused their effectiveness to explode. They were spread out into the systems with orders to make Sondak shipping into a nightmare prospect, and they proceeded to do so.

Sutton-Satterfield Political Issues

The battle for Reckynop became known as the Battle of Midway, referring to the positioning of Matthews and Reckynop at just about midway between the U.C.S. and Sondak. Sondak declares the battle a victory despite its Pyrrhic nature and focus shifted toward the conflict in the Sondak polar colonies. The U.C.S. simply did not acknowledge the Battle of Midway as ever having happened to their own people.

Sondak and the U.C.S. both faced political issues regarding Sutton, Satterfield and the other Polar colonies. The commander for the invasion that Charlton had picked died in the initial assault on

Sutton leaving a politically connected but militarily incompetent commander in his place. With the Sondak, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were still reluctant to engage in an offensive action against the U.C.S. The commanders of the Reckynop planetary defense, Admiral Charlene Panjandcan and Admiral Dawson, were moved to command of the Polar Fleet with orders to prepare a defense of the Satterfield colony which was expected to come under assault next. Unsatisfied with this, Panjandcan and her subordinate officers decided to define Sutton as critical to the matter of Satterfield's defense and begin plans for retaking it under the nose of the Joint Chiefs.

The failing health of Admiral Tuunee, Supreme Director of Bridgeforce, prompted him to take steps to shore up the political situation caused by the Kyosei contingent by appointing Charlton to Bridgeforce as his successor and promoting him to full Admiral. As an act of balance, the other members of Bridgeforce moved to also place Judoff on the council. Using her new position and the fact that the commander of Sutton's occupation was one of her loyalists, Judoff convinced Charlton and Bridgeforce to include her forces in the plans to conquer Satterfield.

The Sondak Joint Chiefs of Staff eventually caught onto what Panjandcan was planning. Initially they planned to put a stop to it and discipline the Admiral, but were convinced by Admiral Gilbert that an offensive of this nature is what they needed to do. Reluctantly, the Joint Chiefs allowed the plans to go forth. They then quietly set a second fleet in close enough proximity to the battle as to provide reinforcements if necessary.

Sutton Resistance

As luck would have it, one of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Fortuno Mari, a general of the planetary forces, had been on Sutton when it was conquered. At first he was taken prisoner and tortured by the U.C.S. but he was eventually freed by the remaining resistance on Sutton. Command policies by the U.C.S. officer in command had made it easy for the resistance to move about the planet to some degree, especially leaving the expansive wilderness areas wide open for travel by Sondak-loyal groups. Mari gave command of the defense over to one of the planetary defense leaders and set himself up as an adviser and observer of the war effort.

Once they had gotten into contact with Panjandcan and her subordinates, the Sutton resistance began a more focused and organized resistance. They relayed valuable information about troop locations while also continuing harassment and espionage against the U.C.S. There were many Pikean traitors acting in support of the U.C.S. occupiers, but this simply allowed the much more plentiful Pikean loyalists to take advantage of the fact and infiltrate U.C.S. command posts across the planet. The incompetent U.C.S. commander responded by trying to pull tighter and tighter into the cities to ward off attacks while increasing the number of aircraft strafing and bombing runs on suspected resistance camps. That measure was only minimally effective.

Sutton-Satterfield Engagement

Admiral Charlton and Admiral Panjandcan both approached their attack plans in very similar ways. Charlton planned to strip the defense fleet around Sutton in order to augment his own attack on Satterfield. Supplemented by Judoff's forces, he expected the battle to be a difficult victory. On the Sondak side, Panjandcan and her subordinate officers likewise planned to leave their defenses momentarily weakened in order to conduct a swift raid on the occupational force at Sutton in coordination with a general resistance offensive on the ground supported by planetary forces drops. Due to their care not to let these plans be leaked, neither side learned what the other was doing nor that the timing was going to be virtually simultaneous.

Admiral Panjandcan sent one of her subordinates to command the Sutton liberation fleet while she continued to command the remaining defenders. Both the battle over Sutton and the battle over Satterfield began on approximately the same day as the two fleets each reached their targets and discovered them to be much more vulnerable than they had anticipated. The resulting dual engagements lasted for the next two weeks as the defenders engaged in delaying tactics against their enemies.

Once word of the battles reached the command structures of both Sondak and Sutton, actions were taken. The Joint Chiefs of Sondak's military ordered their reserve fleet to move to reinforce Panjandcan while Bridgeforce commanded Charlton to return to Sutton and reinforce the occupational force. Charlton refused the order, confident of his victory over

the outnumbered Satterfield defenses, however, Judoff broke away to go rescue Sutton's occupational forces.

In the battle over Sutton, the Sondak space forces had mostly taken control of the situation, with only a handful of skirmishes remaining. In analyzing the shifting tactics and strategies of the U.C.S. forces, the officers of the liberation force realized that Sutton was expecting reinforcements. An attached communications officer, the daughter of Josiah Gilbert, reasoned that the reinforcements will be coming from Satterfield and likely led by Judoff based on the woman's past actions. The majority of the Sutton liberation fleet turned to intercept Judoff and ambush her. This attack was successful and Judoff was forced to flee for U.C.S. space as the Sondak fighters and cruisers chewed up her auxiliaries, making this the second time that she has abandoned the field.

Roughly at the same time, Charlton received a report that Sondak reinforcements were no more than a day out. Faced with the prospect of a full, rested fleet coming to join the conflict, he reluctantly broke away from Satterfield. Before he left, Charlton repeated his actions at Reckynop by cascading Satterfield with nuclear weapons and filling the atmosphere with radioactive debris; rendering another planet useless to most people. Panjandcan was critically injured in the battle, but managed to survive.

Both sides declared the engagement to be a victory for political reasons and both sides began making plans for a full scale offensive against the other.

Sondak Offensive Preparations

Despite some anti-war protests on Nordeen and a handful of other worlds, preparation for an offensive against Sondak began with full support by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the majority of the civilian population. The primary problem facing the offensive was the terrible supply situation in front of them. They needed to be able to sustain a supply line into U.C.S. space and a solution proved difficult to find. They eventually employed a young Pikean colonel to set up the logistics plan in exchange for her getting a combat posting. After some initial difficulties in getting full cooperation from the impatient colonel, she put forth a very innovative and easily maintainable logistics solution to the problem.

The gist of the Sondak plan is for a three pronged assault on U.C.S. controlled planets eventually pushing all the way into U.C.S. territory itself and up to Gensha. Admirals Panjandcan, mostly recovered from her injuries at Satterfield, and Gilbert each commanded one of the prongs of the fleet while the third was commanded by a General Schopper of the planetary forces. Admiral Gilbert planned to liberate Ca-Ryn before moving into U.C.S. space while Panjandcan was sent straight ahead to attack the U.C.S. planet of Buth. Schopper was set to liberate the neutral planets between the U.C.S. and Sondak.

The planetary troops gathered at Mungtinez to train for the upcoming offensive. The U.C.S. received some word of this from the spies that they still had in place, but largely ignored the situation as unimportant. All in all the preparations for the offensive on the Sondak side were swift, cooperative and complete.

U.C.S. Offensive Preparations

Political infighting stalled the planning of any effective offensive by the U.C.S. Bridgeforce had become enamored of the idea of building two gigantic bombships which they insisted have to be ready before any offensive can begin. Despite his position as Chairman and Supreme Director, Charlton found that he could not stop the work on these bombships. Meanwhile, these bombships were granted priority over materials for the production of new ships of more practical designs. This left the U.C.S. facing a shortage of both combat and supply ships.

Despite this, Charlton continued trying to get the rest of Bridgeforce behind the idea of a swift offensive against Sondak. He hoped to be able to push as far as Nordeen itself and hold the Sondak hostage by the metaphorical throat. In order to address the shortage of ships, he suggested arming civilian craft for planetary defense and stripping more combat capable vessels away from such roles to be placed in the assault fleet.

Marshall Judoff left Gensha in the midst of these arguments in order to pursue some sort of "ultimate weapon" she'd been obsessing over of late. This took her out of contact with her followers and left the way open for Charlton and his allies to scatter her auxiliary forces, mixing them in and among multiple other fleets. This essentially removed Judoff's ability to command them

and thus prevented them from being pulled out of combat a third time.

About the same time, Charlton began receiving messages from someone who claimed to be his eldest daughter "Barra" saying that she is privy to Sondak plans. These messages began as threats intended to make him back off, but then shifted to offers of help. The confusion of motivations left Charlton distrustful of her information and he was slow to respond to it. Among other things, he found the idea that the Sondak would be able to launch an offensive as massive as the one she claimed was coming to be ridiculous. Still, he did raise the alert level just to be safe.

The U.C.S. was only in the initial planning stages for its own offensive and almost totally unprepared when the Sondak offensive began.

Sondak Offensive

The Sondak Offensive proceeded almost completely according to plan despite some unfortunate losses in battle. General Schopper advanced through the Ivy Chain and Thayne-G with relentless efficiency. Admiral Panjandcan eliminated the space forces of Buth easily and, instead of opting for a planetary invasion or blockade of the planet to prevent it from being by the U.C.S., she took up Charlton's tactics and used neutronics to melt the ice caps rendering Buth a water planet, partially as revenge for what he had done to Reckynop and Satterfield. She then proceeded on to Yakusan. Gilbert liberated Ca-Ryn rather easily, but was stalled in the fighting over Shakav.

Frantic, Frye Charlton ordered the evacuation of all forces from the neutral planets of Fernandez and Czcwyck ahead of Schopper's assault. He used these forces to shore up his defenses and proceeded to send his fleets to harass the three prongs of the offensive. Unfortunately, with so many ships lost in the past three years and few if any new ones being built, he was only able to send older model ships to attack Sondak. This resulted in him basically bleeding off resources. In particular, the newer model of Hunks was becoming increasingly scarce and he was forced to use the older models from the previous war. During this time, the Bridgeforce refused to understand that they were losing the war and thus refused to move resources away from the construction of large bombships towards more practical and proven technologies like launchships, fighters and Hunks.

Shakav surrenders, but Gilbert was still stalled by harassing forces. Taking a risk, he left a token force behind to defend the system while he headed for Hiiifi-II in order to rendezvous with General Schopper. He arrived before the General and took control of the system. Once General Schopper arrived to carry out the planetary invasion, Gilbert split Schopper's forces. He took some with himself and sent the rest to reinforce Admiral Panjandcan at Yakusan. He planned to attack Gensha directly, basically mirroring Charlto's intentions for his own impossible offensive.

Charlto commanded that all combat capable vessels rendezvous at a little known science colony at the planet Alexvieux. He planned to take this impromptu fleet straight into the heart of the Sondak region and conquer Nordeen in order to force political concessions out of Sondak. Unfortunately, his orders were not carried out and he was only granted a few vessels, none of which were particularly useful to him. Any attempt he made to recover from this betrayal by his own people was put to a stop when the Verfen, a very reclusive alien species, appeared and psychically forced Charlto and his followers to land their ships on the planet in a way that damaged them and left them unfit for space-flight. This essentially stranded Charlto and his troops on Alexvieux.

The U.C.S. surrendered to the Sondak and Admiral Gilbert began to negotiate conditions of that surrender. The Verfen insisted on having a voice in the negotiations. Admiral Gilbert was promoted to head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff after a suicide bomber on Nordeen killed the entire council of the Joint Chiefs there.

Frye Charlto and his ragtag fleet were forgotten on Alexvieux where he suffered from nightmares of suicide. He was already plotting to continue an extended war against the Sondak Confederacy and now the Verfen as well. He expects this to be a plan that will take generations, however, and that he himself is unlikely to live to see it.

OTHER EVENTS

The Kyosei (U.C.S.)

The Kyosei are a recent political and cultural movement among the U.C.S. population. They are predominately wealthy and politically powerful individuals as well as those with the ambition to become so. They are marked by elitism including a noted skepticism of the competence and even

trustworthiness of more average citizens. They are eager to spread the power of the U.C.S. but, at the same time, have isolationist leanings.

This political group is pointedly different from the communis supremacists that initially pushed for the foundation of the U.C.S. away from the Sondak in one particular respect: they do not respect the traditions that the original founders of the U.C.S. hold particularly dear. The Kyosei tend to scoff at the religious and consider most of the old traditions of the rest of their people as obsolete. To them, the disaster of the first war with Sondak is proof of how ineffective the old ways are. Despite this, they remain convinced of their own superiority over the other branches of humanity in the galaxy.

The Kyosei are primarily interested in undermining their political rivals rather than facing external enemies. They have a tendency to take the defeat of outsiders for granted given their own perceived superiority. The fact that the U.C.S. lost the previous war is fervently blamed on their political rivals with the assumption that it was only the incompetence of the previous regime that allowed their defeat. To date, they have been very subtle about their machinations and while many of the old guard find them to be rather distasteful, their growing power has been largely overlooked.

Of special note is the fact that despite their own disdain for the lower classes of their own society, the Kyosei have been very successful at subverting the politics of the masses bit by bit to their own support. The impoverished populace has also embraced the rather romantic notions of being a superior people, as well as the idea that their own leaders are to blame for the earlier defeat.

The Kyosei started to assert their acquired power much more firmly after the second war began with Sondak. They insisted on placing political officers with most, if not all, military vessels. These political officers had standing orders to sacrifice mission goals in order to preserve the ships and other resources of the military. These orders were not relayed to the commanding officers of the units or vessels to which they're assigned.

It was also suspected that the steadily increasing number of anti-war protests may have been encouraged by the Kyosei to some degree. This may or may not be true. Given that most of the

leaders that were specifically mentioned by the protests are political rivals to the Kyosei, there is some possibility that it is the truth. It also fit in with their generally subversive and short-sighted methods, focusing on their rivals and ignoring the ongoing war with the outsiders.

The actions of Marshall Judoff eventually led to the crippling of the movement. For quite a while, Judoff had been able to hide the extent of her peculiarities from public view. There was whispering about her sexual activities, but most people didn't think this was any different from the relationships carried out by other military officers. On the other hand, her political maneuvering and tendency to pull her forces out of battle at critical moments had led Charlton to keep an eye on her activities.

Eventually Charlton discovered that Judoff was embezzling funds and misusing U.C.S. resources in pursuit of her own plots. He waited to reveal this until she was out of touch with Bridgeforce and unable to defend her position. This caused her reputation to take a severe hit, even among other Kyosei and enabled him to scatter her fleets. She received word about her fleets and came to try and stop Charlton. When she found herself unable to do so, she lost her senses for a moment, attacking and killing the spy that had brought the evidence against her. When next she saw Bridgeforce it was to discover herself being removed from Bridgeforce and arrested on charge of murder.. This caused her to attempt to kill Charlton, getting herself killed in the process.

Soon after these events, the Sondak offensive forced the U.C.S. into surrender. The combination of events signaled the death knell of the Kyosei movement at least in its current incarnation. It is entirely possible that the attitudes have simply gone underground.

Anti-War Movement and Presumption of Innocence (Sondak)

In the wake of the first war between Sondak and the U.C.S., there came a rising tide of people in Sondak that presumed that the previous war had settled the matter. It was assumed by both the military and civilian governments that the U.C.S. would not start a war and that if they intended to start a war that it would be something which their intelligence services would easily notice before it became too much of a threat. About twenty years

after the end of that first war, partially due to U.C.S. agents instigating such thought, a movement started that began to speak up about how that first war had been entirely the responsibility of the Sondak Confederacy. Shortly before the Double Spiral War began, this movement went from speaking about it to actively protesting and demanding that Sondak make reparations.

As the Double Spiral War started, these activists rose up as anti-war activists. They either ignored the fact that the U.C.S. were the attackers this time, felt it was deserved or else felt that it was a lie told by the government. In any case, these activists staged numerous protests as well as such things as anti-war poetry readings and the publishing of anti-war propaganda. They believed that if the Sondak government would only open up communication with the U.C.S. that all of the misunderstandings would immediately end and both branches of humanity would live in brotherhood with each other.

Unfortunately for the activists, most of the population had either accepted that the U.C.S. had attacked first or else had witnessed it as refugees from conquered colonies like Nordeen and other core colonies. As a result, their progress to get the populace to turn against what they saw as an unjust war of aggression was at best minimal. They quickly became frustrated with their inability to get people to take them seriously and began taking more extreme methods leading up to violence. As the Sondak offensive forced the U.C.S. to surrender, one of the major leaders of the anti-war movement became a suicide bomber and successfully assassinated the Sondak Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as a large number of high level officers at the Sondak headquarters.


At the same time, there was another political movement going on that was largely unnoticed during the war. For the longest time, the court system in Nordeen has been based on a presumption of guilt. Those accused are assumed to be guilty from the moment of accusation and they must, themselves, provide proof of their innocence. However, over the course of the three years of the war, several politicians and activists managed to argue for and eventually adapt a policy overturning that fundamental assumption and reversing it to a presumption of innocence.

Part of this is because of the excesses taken by Science-Security and other intelligence services

during the war time. Under the assumption of guilt, Sci-Sec was able to operate with near impunity on a number of citizens who were only accused of being witnesses and possibly having information about espionage going on. Several reputations were ruined by over-zealous agents looking for traitors and using the presumption of guilt in order to cast a wide net and bring in potential enemy collaborators.

While the actions of Sondak's counter-intelligence operatives may have instigated the change, it had still been a long time coming. Most people had heard of at least one instance in which someone was wrongly accused and yet had their life pretty much ruined because of it. While there was enough evidence to prevent them going to jail, they were still treated as criminals throughout society. The civilian population has been mumbling about the unfortunate impact of the presumption of guilt for decades. It is entirely possible that some member of the civilian government took the opportunity presented by the war to put forth legislation to reverse the law.

The Ultimate Weapon



The mostly drab planet of Summer houses one major settlement of note. The city sized research facility commonly referred to as Drautzlab, named for the founders and owning family. The one purpose of this city is scientific research. The planet itself is owned by Drautzlab and lab space is leased out to any of a number of other research companies, though Drautzlab itself makes use of most of the facilities. While the majority of the research projects taking place at Drautzlab are relatively mundane, they do receive major grants from the Sondak Confederacy and thus have a large weapons development section. At some point before the beginning of the Double Spiral War, they began work on an ultimate weapon, the hope being that having such a weapon would keep everyone else from even thinking about starting a war.

The ultimate weapon was supposed to be a doomsday weapon capable of eliminating a planet but they were having severe issues getting the system to work as intended. One of the main researchers on the project, one Ayne Wallen, had already written off the entire idea behind the weapon as being a bad joke.

To be fair, Wallen had considered it a bad theory from the beginning and simply felt he would

humor his employers until they put him on a project he felt was worth his time. Of course, he was not quiet about his opinions on the matter and these opinions began to wear at the patience of both his immediate supervisor, Sjean Birkie, and their mutual employer. A consistent trend of sexual harassment toward Birkie only made the situation worse.

Shortly before being fired by Drautzlab, Wallen had been re-examining the formulas for the weapon and made a slight error in his calculations that led to a startling discovery. While the concept they were basing the weapon design on was, as he thought, impossible, an alternate theory of creating a weapon with another concept was not only feasible but potentially more powerful. After his dismissal, he copied his initial work and deleted every other copy he'd known about to keep Drautzlab from figuring out what he'd discovered. Then he left with the idea of selling the information for his own profit.

Wallen was unaware that Birkie had placed extra watches on his consoles, however. While she initially didn't notice anything about the formulas he'd left behind, something nagged at her and she examined them again. Eventually she came to the same realization that Wallen had and Drautzlab was back to work on the development of this super weapon, only now it would be aimed at destroying a star rather than a planet.

When Wallen had originally left after deleting all his work, Birkie and Drautzlab had simply been annoyed. Once they realized that he had taken with him the basic work necessary to design a star-killing weapon, they reported him to Science-Security. Despite the head start that the scientist had, he soon found himself hounded by Sci-Sec from several directions. Over the course of the early hunt, Wallen committed numerous crimes ranging from petty con games all the way up to the murder of two naval officers. Eventually he was able to reach the neutral planet of Patros.

On Patros, he found himself stuck since Sondak agents were watching traffic onto and off of the planet. He began searching the criminal element in order to find a broker who would be able to get him away from Patros and into U.C.S. space in order to sell his skills as a scientist as well as the project of the weapon itself.

Through information received from off-world contacts and his own poking around, he eventually found his way to the Oinaise “broker”, sort of a criminal negotiator, known as Xindella. The Oinaise agreed to help Wallen broker a trade for his information and skills. In addition, Wallen received food and safe lodgings in exchange for his skills as a Gouldrive mechanic while waiting for the sale to be brokered. It didn’t take long for Xindella to introduce Wallen to the Oinaise candy known as gorlet, a substance which is horribly addictive to humans.

While Wallen was looking for an escape off Patros, Inspector Thel Janette of Sci-Sec was assigned to the case of tracking down and either capturing or eliminating him. She started by taking a repeat statement from Sjean Birkie and her employer, Caugust Drautz. At this point, the two scientists grew wary of the destructive nature of their project and were considering halting development. Inspector Janette insisted that they continue with the project stating that they would need its deterrent in case Wallen got his information to anyone else.

In the meantime, Xindella brokered a deal with Marshall Judoff to turn over Wallen in exchange for money. However, after handing Wallen over to the U.C.S., Judoff cheated him. As such, Xindella no longer had control of Ayne Wallen by the time Inspector Janette tracked the scientist’s movements to him and appeared to pay a visit. After a round of threats and bribery from Janette, Xindella passed on the information that Wallen was now in the hands of the U.C.S. and directed Janette to his cousin Delightful Childe.

When Inspector Janette arrived at Oina to talk to Delightful Childe, he was unable to leave as he was stuck in the mating process. The Oinaise merchant instead requested for his human partner, Lucky Teeman, to take up the task of taking her to the prison planet that supposedly held Wallen.

Teeman and Janette instantly rubbed each other the wrong way. Eventually, as a sort of apology, the Inspector decided to drug and rape Teeman. They were then stranded by an equipment failure and rescued by Xindella, whose ship contained two human passengers. The first was Ayne Wallen, whom Xindella had recovered himself, and the second was a woman by the name of Marsha Yednoshpfa who was Teeman’s former lover and partner.

Marsha opted to remain on Teeman’s ship while Inspector Janette attempted to take Wallen from Xindella. When that failed, the Sondak agent then attempted to force Yednoshpfa and Teeman to follow Xindella’s ship in spite of threats from the Oinaise that he would fire on them if they tried. The two independent merchants manage to incapacitate her and keep her shackled for the remainder of the trip back to Oina. The entire episode left a firm amount of hatred between Inspector Janette and the other participants in the situation.

At the same time, Caugust Drautz and Sjean Birkie intentionally sabotaged the first test of the new weapon, called the Wallen by Birkie. They feared that using it would result in a chain reaction that would destroy the galaxy. In order to hide the sabotage, they arranged for the weapon to be “lost” in transit to the test site. By happenstance, Xindella stumbled onto the weapon and set Ayne Wallen to making it work. Xindella then contacted Judoff, Drautzlab and Oina about a festbid, as the Oinaise callterm for an auction, for the acquisition of the weapon along with the scientist that created it. Xindella planned to sell the weapon to the highest bidder.

Once she learned about the Festbid, the now obsessive Janette returned to Drautzlab where she used brain-scanning technology in order to learn anything else Birkie might have known about Wallen. While Birkie knew nothing useful about Wallen, she did reveal her and Drautz’s act of sabotage while under the machine’s influence. Janette uses knowledge of this to force them to cooperate with her. Despite the fact that it was obvious that Birkie knew nothing of any use, Janette subjected her to the machine multiple times resulting in several negative side-effects for the scientist. While Birkie mostly recovered, she continued to have migraines and night terrors from that point onward.

Lucky Teeman and Marsha Yednoshpfa attended the Festbid on behalf of Oina and the newly formed Neutral Alliance in their ship the Greycloud. Their plan was to either recover and destroy the weapon themselves, or else allow the U.C.S. to acquire it in order to balance the power between both Sondak and the U.C.S. Their hope was that this would bring the war to an end. They succeeded in making the high bid, but both Janette and Judoff cheated by using various methods to follow Xindella’s ship and the Greycloud to the site of the exchange.

In transit, Judoff learned about the scattering of her fleet and left her ship in command of a subordinate in order to salvage her power back in Gensha. Her subordinate, Kuskuyet, tried to hijack the transfer, but Xindella and the Greycloud managed to temporarily escape by making a quick subspace hop. Xindella crash landed on an uninhabited planet at their destination while Kuskuyet overshot the entire system.

Xindella and Wallen were stranded, waiting for Lucky and Marsha to find and rescue them. Not long afterwards, Inspector Janette tracked down Xindella's ship by following a beacon she'd attached to it. She managed to catch Xindella unawares and forced him to go to the cargo area where they discovered that Wallen had committed suicide as he ran out of the gorlet he was completely addicted to. Before the Greycloud could come to Xindella's aid, Janette had forced the alien to help her take the weapon to her own ship. Unfortunately for Janette, once they were in space they were almost immediately set upon by Kuskuyet who had finally returned to the system.

The Greycloud hung back to watch and make sure that Kuskuyet got the weapon, insuring that there was a balance between the U.C.S. and Sondak. Janette went down to the cargo area to sabotage the weapon. However, before he committed suicide, Wallen had sabotaged the weapon himself. As soon as Janette cracked the casing on the weapon, she had time to see the sabotage done before the weapon exploded. Xindella's and Kuskuyet's ships were completely destroyed, killing all on board. Some distance away, the Graycloud was severely damaged and left with failing life-support systems until Delightful Childe could come to rescue Marsha and Lucky.

ATLAS OF THE CAVENESS GALAXY

ALEXVIEUX V

Allegiance: United Central Systems
Government: Research Outpost
Type: Twilight
Primary Terrain: Mountainous
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: (0.8) Thin
Gravity: .75 Standard
Native Sapient: None
Size: Medium (7,900 miles)

Alexvieux is a small civilian research facility on the edges of U.C.S. space. It cannot even be considered a full colony, having barely more than a couple hundred scientists and staff on hand. The subjects being researched here are not of any real importance and generally include areas such as star mapping and theoretical physics with no real practical application. For the most part, people are unaware of its existence simply because it isn't really important enough for anybody to be aware of it.

Habitat: Alexvieux supports life but it is not very habitable from a human perspective. There is plenty of oxygen, but the plants do not provide much in the way of nourishment for human beings. The planet is roughly two-thirds the size of the average Earth-type planet and has a short day-night cycle but there is little difference in the quality of light at any given point in the cycle. For the most part, the planet exists in a near perpetual twilight.

The climate is harsh from the perspective of most sentient beings in the galaxy, but there is a thriving ecosystem in place. The plants seem to be more akin to fungus than the normally recognized sort. The animals range from small herbivores and scavengers to large predators and herding herbivores. Scent and hearing are more commonly used as primary senses, rather than eyesight, though there are a handful of predators with very good eyesight as well.

The terrain is fairly mild, as the planet is pretty old and most of the mountain ranges have been worn

FROM THE SOUTHERN POLAR PERSPECTIVE



down over time. Water covers about one-third of the world's surface, primarily in the form of lakes and rivers with only one ocean and two small seas.

Alexvieux is barely capable of supporting human and Oinaise life and the nitrogen-oxygen atmosphere is toxic to Castorians and Cloiseans. The local plants do not have enough of the necessary trace elements for humans to live on. Surviving on local life would require primarily hunting the larger herbivores and predators in order to get some nutrients in enough quantities. Lesser animals do not have enough of a concentration of all nutrients for survival. The outpost currently survives on imported food in order to get around this. Sustained living on Alexvieux would require a lot of skill with survival and logistics, but it is possible.

BAKKE

Allegiance: Sondak Confederacy
Government: Colony
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Forests
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Ideal
Hydrographics: Humid
Gravity: .85 Standard
Native Sapient: None
Population: Just under 500 thousand

Bakke is one of Sondak's polar colonies. It is lightly populated in comparison to some of the colonies deeper in Sondak space, with just fewer than five hundred thousand citizens. Bakke is most well-known for its tourist industry. It also acts as a sort of crossroads planet before one moves from the polar region of Sondak controlled space toward the older, more central colonies. Most of the trade from Sutton, Satterfield and Wallbank comes through Bakke before proceeding on through Yaffee. The status of being such a crossroad has resulted in Bakke also being the headquarters for POLFLEET.

Habitat: Bakke has numerous spectacular views and wilds that are pristine on the surface. The environment is very well maintained, and is, for the most part, very domesticated. The animal populations are controlled to keep them from threatening visitors and dangerous plants have been culled where possible. All in all, Bakke presents an image of a wild planet without the actual danger of an untamed wilderness. The only real threat is

weather, which has proven impossible to control completely. Bakke experiences the normal array of weather varieties that most habitable worlds do.

There are three main continents on Bakke and five sub-continents. Most of the true civilization is limited to the continent of Shiori, where the government offices, starports, hotels and living space for most of the planet reside. The rest of the world has scattered small towns, emergency outposts and villages, some living in deliberately simple or primitive manners as either part of some commune or else a crafter tourist attraction. POLFLEET bases its operations from an orbiting space station with some bases on the surface.

BIERY

Allegiance: Sondak Confederacy
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Rainforests
Climate: Tempestuous
Atmosphere: Humid
Hydrographics: Wet
Gravity: 110% Standard
Native Sapient: None
Government: Representative Parliament
Population: Just over 1 billion

Biery is one of Sondak's oldest colonies and is very close to the capital planet of Nordeen. Biery is the self-proclaimed homeworld of the Homo electus and is thus home to a large number of universities and foundations of academic interest. The population tends to be more conservative and elitist, fitting with its background as the established home of the Homo electus. Since inclusion in the Sondak Confederacy, they've grown slowly more tolerant and less elitist than they had been, but they still think that the gifted few are more trusted with leadership than the common masses. Biery's industry is more automated than the average planet as the population tends to be more disdainful of manual labor than the rest of Sondak.

Habitat: Biery is a nitrogen-oxygen planet, like all of Sondak's colonies, though it is marked by violent weather cycles over large portions of the planet. It was not originally chosen as a settlement for this reason and was only taken up later by Homo electus after the rest of humanity passed

it over. Two-thirds of its surface is covered by water and the rest is taken up by five continents of varying sizes. Rainforests, mountains, and hills make up the bulk of the terrain features, but there are a handful of small, dangerous deserts. The majority of the planet is cultivated in some form, though the environment is still healthy. Large sections of the planet have been maintained as wilderness preserves for the purpose of research.

As mentioned earlier, the weather of Biery is infamously bad. The coasts have frequent typhoons and the land is rocked by thunderstorms on a regular basis. There are some quips as to whether Homo electus are so confrontational as a result of dealing with this violent weather or whether the violent weather resulted due to the presence of the aforementioned confrontational people.

BUTH

Allegiance: United Central System
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Mountainous
Climate: Cold
Atmosphere: Average
Hydrographics: Dry
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapient: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 300 million

Buth is one of the U.C.S.'s outlying colonies. Because they are on the edge of U.C.S. territory and the fact that they are publicly still obeying the punitive peace-treaties of the previous war, their visible military presence is limited to recruitment and training facilities, and some basic ground forces bases. It is a highly traditional society, even by U.C.S. standards. Citizens of Buth have a tendency to be more old fashioned and formal in behavior than other parts of the U.C.S. This also makes them one of the staunchest proponents of the old code of vengeance. Even Buth, however, has found itself being strangled by Kyosei attitudes. Most of Buth's industry comes from merchant traders both from U.C.S. and independent traders. There is one major starport and several smaller ones on the planet.

Habitat: Buth has a fairly mild climate for the most part. It is on the cold side as far as most humans are concerned, ranging from temperate to arctic regions and some sub-tropical zones

around the equator. Climatologists have been theorizing for decades that it is slowly moving into an ice age. Storms are fairly regular, with severe weather being mostly uncommon. The terrain is fairly varied, with some older mountain ranges that have been weathered over the years and at least two young systems of mountains presenting high jagged peaks. Two thirds of the planet's surface is covered in water. There is a large, frozen desert in the planet's southern hemisphere where the U.C.S. recruits are often sent for cold-weather survival training or for simple maneuvers given a dash of extra difficulty by the low temperatures. The planet has four continents, with the southernmost continent primarily being empty and used by the U.C.S. military for wilderness training exercises. The other continents have a variety of cities, mostly in the small to medium sizes, with the only sizeable city being based around the main starport of the planet.

CA-RYN

Allegiance: Sondak Confederacy
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Mountainous
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Polluted
Hydrographics: Average
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapient: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 5 million

Ca-Ryn was a hot spot during the Pikean Civil War and saw a lot of fighting during that time. It is still recovering from that conflict as things stand. As part of the continuing trend of both the disarming of the military and the encouragement for trusting the Pikeans, Ca-Ryn was one of the first planets that had its military presence drastically reduced. Most of the industry at this time comes from small companies and independent merchants. It is only slowly recovering more than local industry via the efforts of spacer merchants native to the planet.

Habitat: Ca-Ryn formerly had numerous forests and preserved wilderness areas, but the Pikean Civil War saw a lot of the wild areas used as hiding places and battlegrounds. Large parts of the planet still show signs of the damage taken during that period. The rain still brings down a

fair amount of acid with it despite concentrated efforts by the Sondak government to clean up the atmosphere and repair the damage done by the previous war. Fortunately, the conflict did not see too many weapons of mass destruction used, so that the damage dealt was not as bad as it could have been. Despite this, medical experts have tracked a growing number of cancer cases on the planet since the war ended. It is believed that the peak of such problems has already passed, but it is hard to say for certain.

CASTOR (FALSE)

Allegiance: Castorian
Type: Methane
Primary Terrain: Swamp
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Thin
Hydrographics: Wet
Gravity: 130% standard
Native Sapient: None
Government: Decoy Colony
Population: Nearly 1 billion

Castor is the planet which the crab-like Castorian aliens publicly acknowledge as their homeworld. It is a very humid and wet planet overall, though the water on the planet manifests primarily as broad-ranging swamps sprinkled with rivers and lakes rather than the usual seas or oceans. It has a more than healthy population of Castorians, plenty to give it the appearance of an actual homeworld. Most of the cities, built to be raised off the swamp on stone quarried from both the few dry patches and from underneath the swamp, are named identically to the cities on the true Castor. There are monuments and historical sites and more, all tied to the true history of Castor for the purposes of making a more convincing illusion of being the true homeworld. Granted, they have few enough visitors from the mostly oxygen-breathing other races, but they are careful.

Habitat: As already stated, Castor is an almost entirely swamped planet. Water is everywhere, though it is rarely safe to drink, even for the inhabitants. The environment is harsh and dangerous with plenty of predators lurking outside the cities. The atmosphere is a methane one, leaving it completely hostile to both the Oinaise and the various breeds of human. The atmosphere of Castor has been growing some-

what thin due to a policy of trading its methane out as use for fuel to other races and also for providing Castor itself with fuel for their own ships. Currently, the balance of methane trade and atmospheric stability is easily sustainable. Increasing the amount of outgoing methane would make things expensive for Castor, but can be done for a limited amount of time.

CASTOR (TRUE)

Allegiance: Castorian
Type: Methane
Primary Terrain: Swamp
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Ideal
Hydrographics: Wet
Gravity: 135% standard
Native Sapient: Castorian
Government: Feudal
Population: Nearly 5 billion

The true Castor is home for the majority of Castorians. The cities here have the same names as the cities and towns on the false Castor but are more developed and more expansive. The planet remains dangerous mostly because the Castorians only really feel comfortable when facing danger with others. As such, many predators have been allowed to continue to thrive and while the cities are made to be safe in general, there are still occasions where a wild animal manages to get into one of them.

Habitat: The climate of the true Castor is the same basic eternal humid swamp as on the decoy Castor. The true Castor, however, has not had much in the way of methane harvesting performed on it for centuries. False Castor provides almost all of the methane for the needs of both Castor and those it sells to. There is more dry land and a few more large lakes, created by draining the swamp from one spot to another. In most cases this happens where a tapped quarry has been turned into a lake or reservoir for fresh water and a new quarry or mine is being set up.

CCZWCK

Allegiance: Neutral
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Mountainous
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Average
Hydrographics: Dirty
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Military Government
Population: Nearly 100 million

Cczwck has been increasingly isolationist ever since the U.C.S. attempted to assimilate the planet. That incident occurred at the same time that the Sondak were making diplomatic overtures and resulted in a skirmish between the two forces. As a result, Cczwck has cut off diplomatic relations with both sides and increased their military as a means of keeping out the two galactic superpowers. Despite the increased military, their lack of contact with even other neutral powers has resulted in their tech being very obsolete in comparison.

Habitat: Cczwck is a very mountainous habitat, almost as rich in mineral resources as some of the asteroids and dead planets that are used strictly for mining. Flatlands are sparse but very fertile with volcanos and volcanic soil being the norm. The lack of places available for conventional farming is such that the planet does not support as many people as its size would indicate. As a result, a fair amount of the planet is still wilderness in between cities, farmland and mining facilities.

CHADIVER

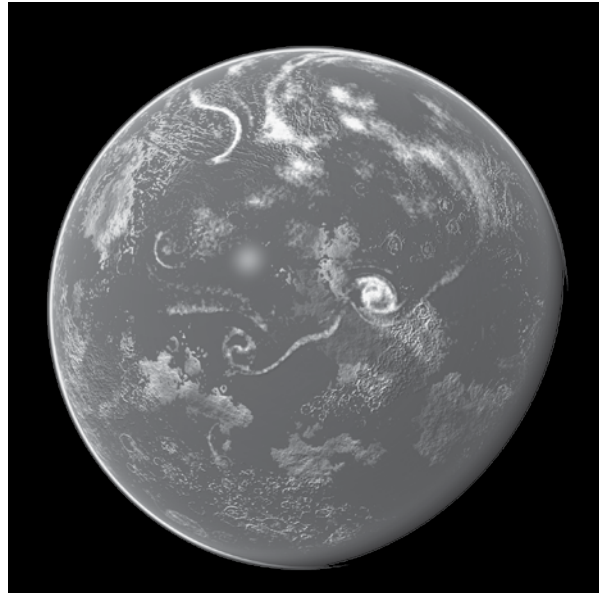
Allegiance: United Central Systems
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Steppes
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Good
Hydrographics: Below Average
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 700 million

Chadiver is one the U.C.S.'s main colonies and is a fairly industrialized society. Chadiver is certainly an industrial center for the nation, if not the primary industrial site. The planet is

fairly rich in minerals to begin with and suitable for supporting a large population even without support from other more agrarian colonies. Kyosei politics is rife in the colony and protests are a common tool used by the Kyosei to influence policy.

Habitat: Chadiver is primarily characterized by steppes and rocky hills. The hills often have mines, refineries and factories built around them with a lot of the agriculture being based in the steppes.

Primarily, Chadiver farms herd animals and takes vegetables from other colonies. There has been some limited terraforming done, but for the most part it has been left in a more or less natural state. There are three major oceans, but there are only a few lakes with most of the fresh water being in the form of rivers.



CLOISE

Allegiance: Cloisean
Type: Methane
Primary Terrain: Mountainous
Climate: Warm
Atmosphere: Thin
Hydrographics: Humid
Gravity: 80% Standard
Native Sapients: Cloisean and Isthian
Government: Elected Dictatorship
Population: Nearly 3 billion

Cloise is the home planet of at least two sapient species that exist together in a symbiotic mix. The Cloisean society is largely fearful of space and as such does not have much more than basic satellites and space stations which leaves them a little more vulnerable to the more advanced and space-faring races. They dwell in extensive burrows and caverns bored into the mountains and live off of the fungus and animals that are reared in the deeps of the world. Travel between cities is done on the surface as well, with most of the civilization being shallow into the mountains or built downward and outward from the minimal dwellings on the surface.

Habitat: Cloise is a heavily mountainous planet with a large amount of water. A good three-quarters of the planet seems to be covered in water of some kind, making it just short of being a water planet. The high populations exist due to the preference for underground dwelling thus meaning that they don't require as much surface area. The atmosphere is frequently foggy as well, in addition to being a methane environment, which is already thicker than most oxygen planets.

EIDI

Allegiance: United Central Systems
Type: Arctic
Primary Terrain: Barren
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Thin
Hydrographics: Wet
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 350 thousand

Eidi is a mining planet that is in the midst of an ice age. The majority of the planet is covered in either ice or snow and maintaining working machinery has proven to be difficult as a result. They depend heavily on frequent shipments of spare parts and replacement machines from the rest of the U.C.S. Most of the residents are miners or company or government officials and their families. It also has a thriving military research facility kept out of the eyes of both the public in the U.C.S. and the rest of the galaxy.

Habitat: Eidi is locked under ice, with free flowing water mostly being found closer to the equators. Even there, the climate is just about temperate. There is one major ocean near the equator in the Western hemisphere, but the rest of the world at least appears to be land locked. There is water deep under some of the ice in the north and south, but for all practical purposes, it is out of reach. Terrain is rugged, but has been flattened around the main mining facilities and starport.

FERNANDEZ

Allegiance: Neutral
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Plains
Climate: Warm
Atmosphere: Average
Hydrographics: Wet
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 270 million

Fernandez is a neutral settlement that exists between the U.C.S. and the Sondak's polar colonies. It has largely kept out of the overall politics of the two superpowers, maintaining business connections around the galaxy. The people are fairly laid back in attitude, not having had as much pressure on them as other neutral colonies. In general, they've been overlooked in favor of more mineral rich colonies such as Cczwck. They primarily engage in farming and merchant work, trading between both the U.C.S. and the Sondak as well as with the other powers in the galaxy.

Habitat: Fernandez is marked mostly by rivers and plains, with four small continents and one larger one as well as five oceans. It rains frequently and the rivers and flood plains are mostly refreshed by the constant rain rather than by underground springs. Numerous large scale farms exist in between the smaller towns and cities. The only major city, by the standards of other planets, surrounds the major starport and is built using mostly imported materials.

GENSHA

Allegiance: United Central Systems
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Plains
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Average
Hydrographics: Dry
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Representative Government
Population: Nearly 3 billion

Gensha is the capital planet of the U.C.S. and is one of the most well-developed planets in the

Galaxy. It is a place of mixed politics where both the older traditionalists and the Kyosei have a fluctuating balance of power between them. Most of the decisions for the U.C.S. are made here by either the civilian or the military governments. Political protests are rare on the capital planet even though they are getting more common elsewhere in the U.C.S. Gensha benefits from the best tech and luxuries of the U.C.S.

Habitat: The majority of Gensha is plains or other sort of wide flat terrain, but there are some extensive forests in places and several mountain ranges, mostly of the older, more rounded and gentle varieties. The atmosphere is pleasant enough, and the cities are very clean. There is a great deal of farming surrounding the big cities and most of the wilderness is generally tame.

GRAMSER'S PLANET

Allegiance: Neutral
Type: Barren
Primary Terrain: Mountainous
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Minimal
Hydrographics: Dry
Gravity: 110% Gravity
Native Sapients: None
Government: Mining Colony
Population: Nearly 600 thousand

Gramser's Planet is a dry, barren piece of rock. It is a huge piece of rock, bigger than some habitable planets, but it is still a piece of rock. Gramser's Planet was established as a mining colony nearly a hundred years ago and has been kept up as such by the descendants of the initial group ever since. It is out of the way of the majority of the rest of the galaxy, lucky enough to have never been caught up in the arguments between Sondak and the U.C.S. and too far out of the way for either superpower to make much of an attempt to assimilate. It has since traded mined raw materials out to corporations, governments and individuals all over the galaxy.

Habitat: Gramser's atmosphere is barely present but enough to allow for residents to go outside without much more than a face mask and oxygen tank. There is only a little water present and very little life. What atmosphere exist is a result of the Gramser's Company's con-

tinuing terraforming efforts. Most of the planet's populous lives in isolated domes. The planet is still probably hundreds of years away from being truly habitable without such things.

HIIFI-II

Allegiance: United Central Systems
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Jungle
Climate: Warm
Atmosphere: Over-Rich
Hydrographics: Wet
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapient: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 15 million

Hiifi-II is one of the U.C.S.'s main training facilities, making use of the more or less untouched jungle on several continents to engage in training activities and placing military facilities out of the eye of Sondak or other foreign powers. One of the four continents has been mostly tamed as a place for the small civilian population to live, while the majority of the military facilities remain hidden in the jungles. Publicly, the colony is primarily focused on medical research using samples from the various indigenous life on the planet.

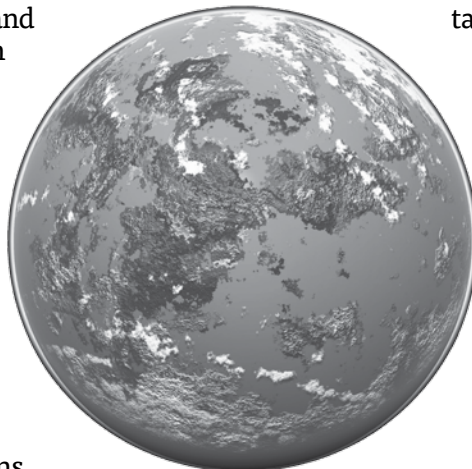
Habitat: The frequent rainfall and volcanic soil that is common across the planet has rendered Hiifi-II verdant and rich with wildlife. The atmosphere itself has moderately high oxygen content and though it is still within human tolerances, a lot of the population uses filtration masks to keep the air quality closer to what they're used to. On the three more or less wild continents, there are still a lot of unexplored regions and new species are always being discovered. There are several active volcanoes around the world and a handful of volcanoes that are not actively erupting currently, but could potential have an explosive eruption. Earthquakes are also common given the level of seismic activity in the planet.

ISOKA

Allegiance: United Central Systems
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Hills
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Average
Hydrographics: Average
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapient: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 5 million

Isoka is a small U.C.S. colony sitting just a little too far off the main trade routes to see much in the way of prosperity, nor does it have as much in the way natural resources as some other hilly planets. What it is, is out of the way, and it has been taken as a sort of settlement for people to get away from the most hectic parts of U.C.S. politics. Artists, intellectuals, and people that simply want to be left alone tend to live here.

Habitat: The planet is hilly without being overly mountainous; there is an average amount of lakes and rivers as well as seven major bodies of water splitting two major landmasses. The consensus is that the planet is fairly old and that most of the spectacular mountains of the past have been eroded away over time down to these rolling hills and gentle mountain slopes. Some of the views can include quite lovely and beautiful horizons. A large portion of the planet is completely untouched and despite looking gentle and safe can prove quite dangerous in terms of roaming predators and natural things such as storms.



IVY CHAIN

Allegiance: Neutral
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Forests, Mountains and Plains
Climate: Temperate, Hot and Cool
Atmosphere: Ideal, Thick, Thin
Hydrographics: Average, Wet and Dry
Gravity: Standard, 90% and 105%
Native Sapients: None
Government: Monarchy
Population: Nearly 1 billion

The Ivy Chain covers three different close systems that established what amounts to a monarchical system. The planets are all three basically owned by the same family due to early claims on the systems and thus rulership passes down through the family. While no aristocratic titles are used as such, the system amounts to the same thing. Still, the family tends to choose the next heir by ability rather than by who was born first, and they choose husbands and wives likewise. The family is spread out over several loosely related surnames now, with the current owner being a woman of the Hollick family and she handles things from the third planet of the Ivy Chain.

Habitat: The Ivy Chain planets have somewhat differing terrain. The first of the planets Mian, closest to the Sondak side of things, is temperate with many forests and about average humidity and water surface. The second, Meiwaku, is hotter, more humid and stormy and filled mostly with mountains and some volcanoes. The last, Yogiyo, is cool and dry and features a number of plains and steppes that aren't quite deserts.

JUENE

Allegiance: United Central Systems
Type: Barren
Primary Terrain: Mountainous
Climate: Cool
Atmosphere: Volcanic Ash
Hydrographics: Dry
Gravity: 70%
Native Sapients: None
Government: Mining Colony
Population: Nearly 5 million

In some ancient language, Juene meant "young" and Juene is certainly a young planet with lots of seismic and volcanic activity going on over much of the planet. It is small, with very weak gravity and, so far, only small portions are stable enough to provide long-term settlement. But it is a great place for setting up an orbiting manufacturing facility for the U.C.S. space fleet as well as civilian vessels.

Habitat: The habitat of Juene is in its infancy. There are a few indigenous plants and animals of a primitive nature, but for the most part, it is mountains with volcanoes and earthquakes everywhere. Only about half the planet is covered in water and much of the air is filled with volcanic ash at any given time. Despite this, it is fairly cool away from the volcanoes, with ashy snow being a common sight.

MUNGTINEZ

Allegiance: Sondak Confederacy
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Steppes and Canyons
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Average
Hydrographics: Average
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 345 million

Mungtinez is a Sondak colony on the standard routes from the polar colonies. It is a rather bustling colony due to both merchant vessels and the tourist industry. It's used mainly to store goods and house people for short term while ships are being refueled on the way out or from

the polar systems or on farther travels. There are several canyons and valleys that are used by visitors for camping and other such activities as well as a number of Sondak ground forces bases in addition to an orbiting military spaceport.

Habitat: While it has a fairly average amount of water, a greater portion of that water is salt water rather than the fresh found on many terrestrial planets. Approximately seven-ninths of the planet is covered in oceans or seas and most of the storms and precipitations occur out over open water. The result is that the landlocked areas are mostly semi-desert steppes or badlands. It is sparkled in places by lush forests or swamps mostly at coastlines or following river tracks down from the mountainous regions.

NORDEEN

Allegiance: Sondak Confederacy
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Steppes and Canyons
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Average
Hydrographics: Average
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 345 million

Nordeen is the capital government of the Sondak Confederacy and home to probably the largest economic power in the galaxy. Nordeen is perhaps considered to be the most ideal planet of the Galaxy by human standards, and is believed to be the most like the original Earth from ancient history, based off of existing knowledge of the planet. It is a highly developed, very modern planet with numerous cities and a huge, bustling population. It is the main hub of both business and government in the Sondak Confederacy.

Habitat: Nordeen has a wide variety of terrain types, including the vast Musgrave Desert, mountains, plains and oceans. It has seven medium sized continents and four major oceans as well as a number of seas. It's primarily temperate in climate, with good atmosphere balance and plenty of water. It was one of the first planets settled and remains one of the more desirable ones.

OINA

Allegiance: Oinaise
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Mountains
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Average
Hydrographics: Wet
Gravity: 105%
Native Sapients: Oinaise
Government: Plutocracy
Population: Nearly 600 million

Oina is ruled by a collection of merchant houses. Wealth is considered a measure of worth since individuals are expected to earn their own rather than simply inherit. The planet has slightly more gravity than humans are used to, but not enough to cause them too much distress. The cities of the Oinaise are crafted to be tall spires and towers with platforms for the landing of private vessels at each large building rather than having a single massive starport. Each family is responsible for its own business and provides its own defense. Much of the city is run by "checkdroids" which appear to be small, artificial copies of the Oinaise themselves. There is a decline in population lately leading to many of the great cities being emptier than people would first think.

Habitat: The cities of the Oinaise are built using tall towers because much of the planet itself is vertical. There are a large number of mountains across the surface and most of the agriculture comes from underground fungus and the like. The temperature is average and the air is fairly humid with frequent rain storms, but the weather is not exceptionally violent. The planet is more or less tame and very few wild, unexploited areas remain.

PATROS

Allegiance: Neutral
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Plains
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Polluted
Hydrographics: Average
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 150 million

Patros is a neutral planet in the outer arms of the galaxy that famously serves as the port of call for any number of criminals, pirates and mercenaries. While there is legitimate business there, it has been largely overshadowed by the plethora of dealings that would be considered illegal anywhere else and it is full to the brim of fugitives seeking escape from the long arms of the laws of other planets.

Habitat: Patros has a rather standard style of terrain, but the amount of political and corporate corruption has resulted in the planet being a very dingy, dirty place, with terrible air quality and lots of practices that have little regard for the long-term health of the planet.

SATTERFIELD

Allegiance: Sondak Confederacy
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Plains
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Average
Hydrographics: Average
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 15 million

Satterfield is one of Sondak's major polar colonies. They're not quite on the furthest edge of Sondak controlled space, but they're close. They don't have too much in the way of industry yet, consisting mostly of independent farmers and ranchers. It is a mostly peaceful settlement with only a small starport and a small garrison assigned by the POLFLEET headquarters on Bakke.

Habitat: Satterfield is primarily plains and

scattered prairie. Some of it has been cultivated into fields and orchards, but for the most part the planet is still fairly wild. Most of the mountainous part of the land mass is on the coastlines of the major continents, often in the face of prevailing winds. While this holds off events such as hurricanes in the majority of places, it creates a tendency for heavy thunderstorms and windstorms developing over land due to the air coming down off the mountains.

SHAKAV

Allegiance: United Central Systems
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Hills
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Thin
Hydrographics: Average
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 145 million

One of the U.C.S.'s major colonies, Shakav is probably the most obviously military colony in the U.C.S. with the exception of their capital, Gensha. There is a military presence in every large city on the planet. The cities are recent and modern, mostly having been rebuilt since the first war between the U.C.S. and Sondak Confederacy. At the moment, the government is fueling an appearance of prosperity, and people believe it, but the bubble is starting to wear thin.

Habitat: Shakav is an older planet with very few mountains of any height, but still having a large number of rolling hills and river valleys that have been shaped by eons of erosion from rain and wind. The atmosphere and electromagnetic field are both thinning and estimates suggest that it only has a few thousand more years of easily inhabitable time barring the development of better terraforming technologies, including some way to jumpstart a planet's electromagnetic field.

SUMMER

Allegiance: Sondak Confederacy
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Bleak
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Thin
Hydrographics: See Below
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Corporate Colony
Population: Nearly 17 million

Drautzlab Corporation is totally owned and governed Summer. Because of that, Sondak's government had limited influence there. Yet in addition to the minerals, Summer contained other vital keys to Sondak's future. Only seventeen million humans and aliens live there. A million of those are miners and drillers working for Drautzlab's exporting division. They live where the minerals are. Most of the remaining sixteen million live on the low plain around Lake Roxie, the only fresh-water lake of any size on the planet.

Habitat: Summer's greatest assets are a stable orbit, a warm, but relatively pleasant climate, and an overwhelming abundance of mineral resources. Iron, nickel, platinum, tin, gold, copper, zinc, bauxite, and silver were just a few of its plentiful minerals. Around the planet, lakes of sweet crude oil bubble out of the ground, and rich seams of coal crop up as naturally as the almost daily rain showers – all attesting to Summer's once lush climate and vegetation.

Its surface is dotted with hundreds of thousands of tiny lakes and ponds that sparkle with reflected sunlight. Most of those lakes are so saturated with dissolved minerals as to make them useless. Fresh water was scarce and difficult to find, and was recognized by even the earliest of pioneers as the most valuable commodity on the planet.

With no seas and no spectacular mountains or thrilling vistas, Summer looks uninteresting from the air. Most of the vegetation covering its monotonously rolling hills and broad flat plains consist of low-lying shrubs, grasses, and thorny succulents in endless varieties of grey-green growth. Millions of square kilometers of its surface have been mapped in great detail, but by order of Summer's owner, has never been explored or touched by humanity.

SUTTON

Allegiance: Sondak Confederacy
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Mountainous
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Average
Hydrographics: Average
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 45 million

Sutton is actually the name of the star of this system with the planet instead being formally referred to as Sutton Six, but in casual speech, Sutton generally refers to the planetary colony rather than the system as a whole. Sutton is probably the most settled of the polar colonies with the exception of Bakke in its position as a cross-roads. Sutton has a modest star fleet garrison and at least two major starports as well as a good garrison of planetary forces. Most of the planet is involved in seeking out and harvesting the natural resources in the many mountains on the planet.

Habitat: Sutton has two major continents, Elias and Jasper, separated by the Sea of Sabrina. A fast boat can cross the sea in eleven hours, though this comes with clear dangers as the Sea of Sabrina tends to be stormy with the winds being forced over it between the two mountainous land masses. The two continents are surrounded by larger oceans which are sparkled with archipelagos but no other major land masses. The majority of the mountains and hills in Sutton seem to be riddled with both natural caverns and manmade mines and tunnels.

TEXNOR

Allegiance: United Central Systems
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Mountainous
Climate: Warm
Atmosphere: Thick
Hydrographics: Wet
Gravity: 120%
Native Sapients: None
Government: Prison Colony
Population: Nearly 80,000

Texnor is a place rarely heard of by those outside of the U.C.S. It is a prison colony specifically for

political prisoners placed deep in a mostly forgotten corner of U.C.S. space. Those that know about Texnor prefer not to speak of it and the majority of the U.C.S. population simply knows that people who disagree with the political climate of the time have a tendency to disappear though it is not known where they go.

Habitat: Texnor is a highly unpleasant place to live. The gravity is a lot higher than the preferred level for humans and the air is frequently humid and thick with water vapor. While there is only rarely violent weather, the constantly warm temperatures, heavy gravity and wet atmosphere result in people who live here being uncomfortably pasted in sweat most of the time. Prison guards and other faculty usually have compensation suits and climate controlled living quarters, but the prisoners rarely have such privileges unless they perform favors in exchange for such.

THAYNE-G

Allegiance: Neutral
Type: Water
Primary Terrain: Jungle
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Ideal
Hydrographics: Water Planet
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapient: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 5 million

Thayne-G is a planet in neutral space. Due to the very limited living space on the planet, it is very lightly populated despite its central location between the U.C.S. and Sondak Confederacy. They have one major starport and mostly export various sorts of fish or minerals and chemicals drawn from under the widespread waters of the planet. The water itself is also an important commodity once it has been desalinated. It is of limited use despite its strategic location because of the fact that only a few small islands exist for people to live on and most of those are unpopulated.

Habitat: Thayne-G is one of the few water planets with anything resembling a substantial population. Many of the hilly islands, mostly extinct volcanoes, are still undeveloped, however, and have been overrun with lush jungles full of a

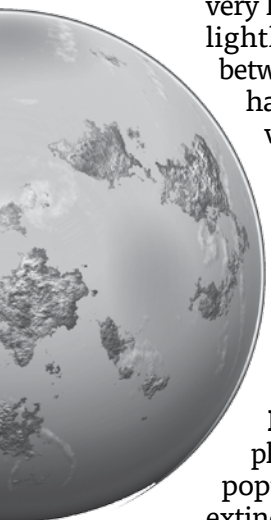
number of pests including a very irritating fungus that gets into the skin. Given the proper medical treatment, it is easy to deal with, but given the extremely wet environment, that fungus can be persistent. The waters have numerous large animals, including several dangerous predators as compared the jungles, where the majority of the animals are small, though there are some native arthropods, these are hard-shelled insects that are either poisonous or else possess a swarm instinct.

TYAW

Allegiance: Neutral
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Forest
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Ideal
Hydrographics: Wet
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapient: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 100,000

Tyaw sits on the very edge of the galaxy and is well outside of the normal politics. It is neither close to the Sondak Confederacy nor the U.C.S., nor does it have significant mineral resources. It is a very lush and idyllic environment with a few small towns and villages that so far stayed out of the general galactic chaos. Unknown to the majority of the residents, who would not want a presence from either great power, the Sondak Confederacy maintains a secret village here centered on the training of espionage agents. The site was chosen because of its total lack of strategic value.

Habitat: Tyaw is an idyllic planet that was discovered late and was initially not colonized due to the fact that it was determined to have little to no mineral value as well as no strategic value. Much of the planet is still wild and predators and weather are the most dangerous aspects of living here. In addition, there are so few people and merchants come so rarely that it is easy to find oneself isolated from help.



WALLBANK

Allegiance: Sondak Confederacy
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Plains
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Thin
Hydrographics: Dry
Gravity: 95%
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 25 million

Another of the five polar colonies aligned with the Sondak Confederacy, Wallbank is closer to the Sondak core space than to the neutral or U.C.S. borders. It is slightly off line from the direct route to the core systems however, and thus does not enjoy the same level of prosperity as Bakke does. The majority of the planet is small independent settlers, though there are representatives of some major companies present as the planet does have significant gold reserves which are mined for use in electronics throughout Sondak.

Habitat: Wallbank is a very rugged, hilly terrain that has been covered with a number of mining operations both big and small. The plants are mostly cactus-like with water being a scarce commodity often found in the form of snow at higher altitudes. Regular melts cause seasonal flooding along several established river beds which then drop to about the level of a stream or creek once the freeze starts again. There is only one small ocean but three fair-sized seas and several lakes throughout the planet. Still, only about two-fifths of the planet is covered in water.

YAFFEE

Allegiance: Sondak Confederacy
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Mountainous
Climate: Temperate
Atmosphere: Thin
Hydrographics: Dry
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 135 million

Yaffee's primary industry is to process and refine the material coming in from the polar and neutral

colonies. It is filled with factories and refineries, though it is still not as heavily industrialized as Nordeen, it does provide a convenient place to deal with the transported materials.

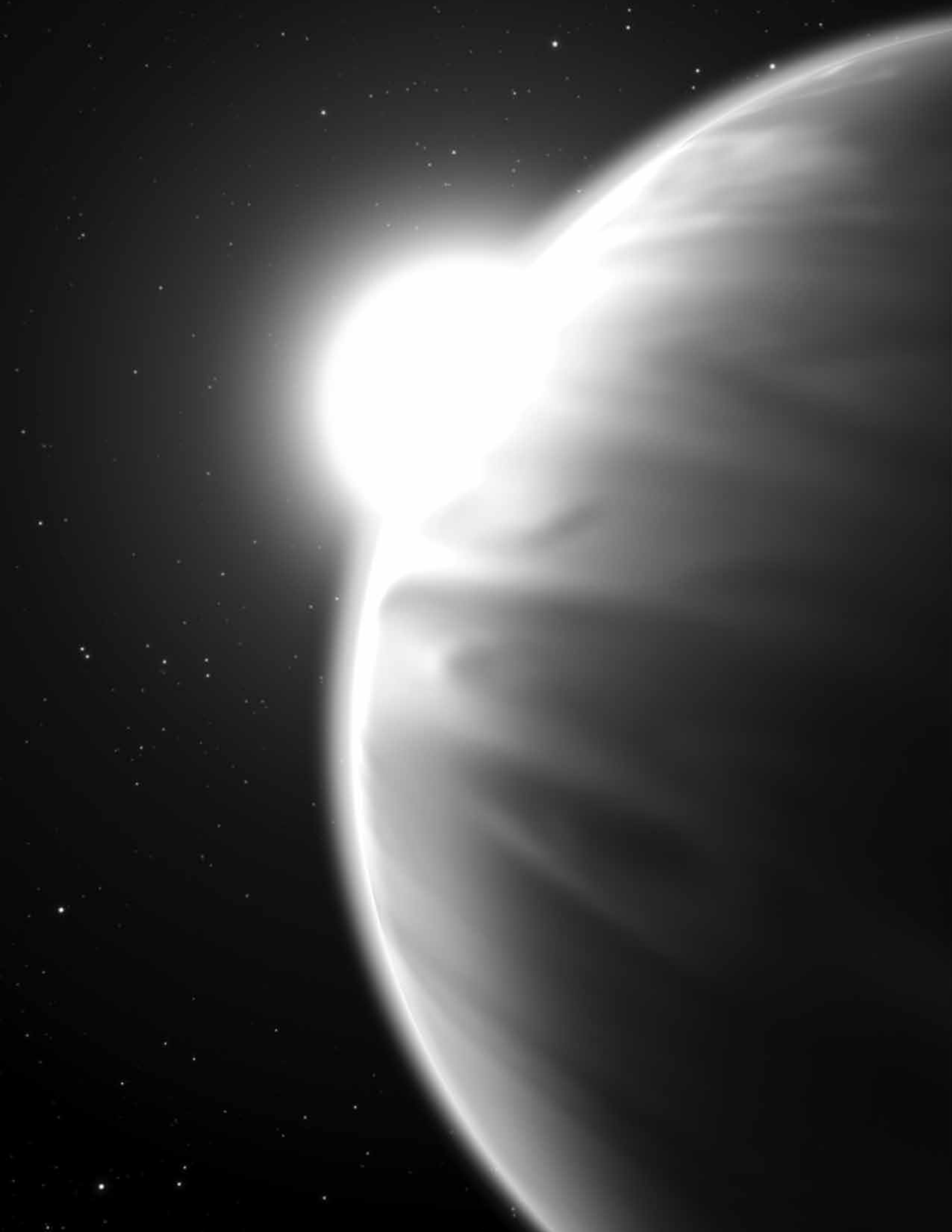
Habitat: Yaffee is a mostly barren planet with very little water, a thin atmosphere, and no indigenous life forms. There hasn't been much of a terraforming attempt here, just barely what was necessary for survival, mainly converting the atmosphere into something that required only basic oxygen masks to operate in. This is accomplished through several atmospheric generators positioned at key points around the world, though there has been talk of trying to do a more complete terraforming such as by trying to bring in trees and other plants to help produce more oxygen into the environment.

YAKUSAN

Allegiance: United Central Systems
Type: Terrestrial
Primary Terrain: Reclaimed swamp
Climate: Cold
Atmosphere: Average
Hydrographics: Wet
Gravity: Standard
Native Sapients: None
Government: Colony
Population: Nearly 320 million

Yakusan is the largest colony that the U.C.S. has on its borders. It is a more or less thriving merchant center for both independent traders and U.C.S.-registered craft. It is also the planet where diplomatic contact occurs between the U.C.S. and Sondak Confederacy when it is necessary. As such, it is the planet that Sondak has the most knowledge about and also the most agents placed in. Yakusan has been a hot bed of espionage activity for decades because of this.

Habitat: Yakusan is well known for having a near arctic environment including large slush-swamps, moors and bogs that probably hold the bodies of many lost agents from both sides of the conflict. Most of the cities are built on top of land that has been drained, dried out and then fortified to support large, modern buildings, but the cold swamps still persist in the regions between the cities and the few places of high altitude.







CHARACTER CREATION

Just like in the core Traveller book, you can make characters that are not your average ordinary human. There are several races available to players in the *Double Spiral War*, although three of them are variations on human.



RACES OF THE CAVENESS GALAXY

CASTORIAN

Castorians are large, shelled crab-like creatures. They are not quite as tall as humans (58"-66" average), but they're much heavier and stockier of build (215 lbs – 350 lbs). They tend to be twice as broad as the average human is at the shoulders (42"-54" at shoulder). They walk somewhat hunched over and their shell-like carapace. They usually have a brown coloration, but can get as light as tan or yellow and can also appear in reds or blacks.

The most important thing to know about Castorians is that they consider every other species as suitable for eating. They are not embarrassed by this and will quite cheerfully discuss with others. The ones that discuss this easy are the ones less likely to plot to arrange for them to have a chance to eat others. The dangerous Castorians tend to avoid bringing the subject up and try to lull others into a sense of trust and safety.

Facing shared danger is an essential part of the Castorian cultural heritage. If there are no dangers to face and no community to share dangers with, then one cannot be considered a true Castorian.

Castorians do not kill other Castorians ideally; it is considered a High Crime to kill another Castorian and especially to devour offspring. They do not have a death penalty; instead, they are kept in a small cell until a place can be found to banish them to, a place with no possibility of danger. The lack of community and danger to face eventually drives the criminal insane. However, they are willing to turn over such criminals to someone else to execute provided the method of execution is dignified enough. Burning alive is an acceptable execution method.

Castorians have two planet Castors. There is a Castor which they allow the rest of the galaxy to know about and to serve as a focus for

methane traders and methane pirates and there is a Castor whose location they keep secret so that pirates don't come looking for them and threatening the lives of their people.

Castor creates spaceships and has a definite presence in the galaxy.

Racial Abilities

Armored (4), Atmospheric Requirements (Methane), Natural Weapon (Claws)

Castorians tend to be only out for themselves, they find that other races are good to eat. So they typically are shunned for that. The rare individual will be part of a group of other adventures, but the fact they do sometimes go out and about to other planets as diplomats or other types of workers allows them to be off their homeworld. The GM must give careful consideration to the groups needs before allowing a Castorian as a PC.



HUMAN (HOMO SAPIENS)

Humans are the dominate race of the galaxy and the Homo sapiens sub-race is the largest subset of that species. They arrived from a planet called Earth from outside the galaxy over five hundred years ago and have since spread to nearly every life-sustaining planet that was not already claimed by another species. They are innovative, reckless and have a reputation for extents of stupidity that the other species of the galaxy find bizarre in the extreme. The Double Spiral war is considered only the most recent example of such stupidity.

This species is naturally highly adaptable, and if they cannot adapt themselves to a particular situation, then they have the ability to adapt the situation to something that is to their own advantage. In addition, humans are fiercely protective of their young, even to the point of sheltering them from even the ideas of other humans. This protectiveness results in most children reaching adulthood rather than dying young and is a large part of why humans have spread so quickly over the galaxy.

The thing that confuses the other races the most about the humans is the fact that they don't have a unified culture the way the other species do. With each family spending so much individual effort on their own children, the ideals of society amongst humanity have spread across a wide range. It is to the point that some humans are more alien to each other than to other species.

It is the human capacity for intelligence and innovation combined with their recklessness and tendency to leap ahead to see what will happen that gives them their reputation for stupidity. It is well noted that human scientists have progressed farther ahead than many other races, even being responsible for the invention of faster than light travel in the form of the Gouldrive. However, the other races cannot help but to wonder if humanity should advance such ideas the way they do.

Racial Abilities

Human characters are identically to the core rules.

HUMAN (HOMO COMMUNIS)

Homo communis is the human sub-race that has most deviated away from the homo sapiens genetics. The primary difference between communis and the other human races is that homo communis live significantly longer lifespans. A communis can expect to live two to three times as long as the human beings of other genetic branches and a communis in his eighties appears to be somewhere in the thirties. Unlike electus and pikean, the communis drifted from Homo sapiens as a result of deliberate genetic experimentation.

Like the original sapiens settlers into the double spiral galaxy, the communis race originated in the Milky Way galaxy from research conducted on Earth. They arrived in the Double Spiral galaxy approximately three hundred years after the arrival of the first homo sapiens colony ships. Between their extended life-span and the fact that their connection to Earth is only a few short generations back, the communis occasionally have the attitude that they are the superior branch of humanity.

The majority of communis are associated with the United Central Systems, but not every communis is a member of that nation. There are several families of communis loyal to the Sondak Confederacy as well as many independent, unaligned spacers who are communis. It is the United Central Systems, however, that forms the majority of what people see as the standard attitude and behavior of a communis.

Racial Abilities

Engineered, Extended Longevity (begin Aging Rolls at 80 years old instead of 40 years old)

HUMAN (HOMO ELECTUS)

Nearly three-hundred years ago, sometime before the arrival of homo communis, some of the most intelligent people from the planet of Nordeen left aboard a colony ship in response to growing anti-intellectual attitudes and sought to found their own colony apart from the rest of humanity. They declared themselves homo

electus and later only joined the Sondak Confederacy at the cost of having their status as a separate race recognized by the other humans around them.

By and large, electus are very prideful and intelligent. They maintain high standards of education and primarily involve themselves in occupations that focus on the intellect and mental ability. They are, in general, very firm about being seen as a separate race and consider themselves the superior human race due to their generally extremely high intellect.

Electus are the least likely of the human sub-races to involve themselves romantically with a member of another human species. Even the communis, who have much larger genetic differences between them and other humans, are more accepting of relationships between humans of differing sub-species. For the electus, the very concept of being attracted to members of the other species is a denial of their own separation and superiority.

After several generations, there are definite differences between sapiens and electus, though geneticists argue over whether the differences are truly genetic in nature and not just a result of their higher value on matters of intellectual pursuit. A very silent minority of the electus have taken a position radical for their people that they aren't truly so different from the other humans as they would like to think.

Racial Abilities

Notable Intelligence (+2)

HUMAN (HOMO PIKEAN)

Characterized by pale, pinkish skin and bright blonde hair, pikeans are an ethnically distinct subset of humanity that is regarded by many as an inferior offshoot of humanity. Pikeans typically suffer from poor education and are often ridiculed for their old-fashioned manner of talking which only adds to the perception people have of them being generally stupid. They are a very emotional, physically oriented people and tend to be more often associated with occupations

that involve dangerous and heavy labor that most assume does not require much intelligence.

Until recently, at the insistence of such forward thinkers as Admiral Josiah Gilbert, the pikeans have been given more and more opportunity in the Sondak military even to the point of having a handful of pikean colonels and at least one admiral at the time that the Double Spiral War starts.

Pikeans are highly passionate people that care a high amount about their personal and familial honors. They do not let a grudge die easily, if at all. Not too long ago a number of Pikeans rose up in an attempt to grab equal rights for themselves in an event called the Pikean Civil War. They did not have the resources to actually fight a war, however, and Sondak easily shut them down. In the aftermath a large number of pikeans fled to the UNITED CENTRAL SYSTEMS and allied themselves with those who desired another war with Sondak. Since then, Uke-allied pikeans have proven themselves adept at infiltrating Sondak pikean populations and carrying out espionage and sabotage duties.

Racial Abilities

Prejudice (Other races are prejudiced against them, thinking them incompetent and untrustworthy), Appearance (Pikeans tend to have lighter skin tone and hair).

OINAISE

Oinaise appear to be mammalian, like a cross between a boar and an elephant. They are not much taller than a human (64"-78"), but are broader than humans and much denser than the Castorians (250 lbs – 520 lbs). They have a similar skin coloration and variation to human beings.

The Oinaise are a race largely known for their many mercantile activities. They are larger and stronger than humans, with seven fingered hands and a long proboscis that hangs down from their face. They are oxygen breathers and capable of speaking human languages. They also try to mimic human expressions when dealing with the other race with varying degrees of success. Some of the sounds Oinaise are able



to make cause intense physical pain to humans, but most seem to forget this fact.

There are far more female Oinaise than male, with the population dropping slowly. As a result, it is considered a civic duty for males to mate and sire children. Unlike with humans, Oinaise reproduction is not so simple and for best results both parents remain connected to their offspring by an umbilical cord for the period of a year. After that period, the child is left in the hands of a Tender who raises the child to adulthood. There is no marriage to speak of and there appears to be a register of females who have claim over the next available male. Due to the demands of reproduction and the low population, most of the society's influence and control is in the hands of non-fertile female Oinaise.

Oinaise are highly concerned with ethics as opposed to morality. Their codes are developed primarily in terms of customer and client, employer and employee or similar such things. For

example, an Oinaise might have an ethical imperative to help a bunch of stranded humans due an expectation of help in return at another time.

Racial Abilities

Notable Dexterity (+2), Natural Merchant (+2 DM on Merchant Qualification rolls)

CAREERS

BACKGROUND SKILLS

Before embarking on your careers, you get a number of background skills equal to 3 + your Education DM (1 to 5, depending on your Education score).

Homeworld

Growing up on your homeworld gave you skills that depend on the planet's nature. You can select any skill that matches your homeworld's planetary description and trade codes. If you came from a planet already established, then consult those sources for the planet's description.

Agricultural:	Animals	0
Asteroid:	Zero-G	0
Desert:	Survival	0
Fluid Oceans:	Seafarer	0
Garden:	Animals	0
High Technology:	Computers	0
High Population:	Streetwise	0
Ice-Capped:	Vacc Suit	0
Industrial:	Trade	0
Low Technology:	Survival	0
Poor:	Animals	0
Rich:	Carouse	0
Water World:	Seafarer	0
Vacuum:	Vacc Suit	0
Education	see below	

Education

A formal education gives you a basic level of competence in various sciences and academic disciplines. Any character may choose from the following list:

Admin	0
Advocate	0
Art	0
Carouse	0
Comms	0
Computer	0
Drive	0
Engineer	0
Language	0
Medic	0
Physical Science	0
Life Science	0
Social Science	0
Space Science	0
Trade	0

CAREER FORMAT

Qualification: What you need to roll to enter that career. Military careers use Enlistment as the description for this roll instead of qualification. If you fail this check then you cannot enter your chosen career this term. You must either submit to the Draft or take the Drifter career for this term. You suffer a -1 DM to qualification rolls for each previous career you have entered. Once you leave a career you cannot return to it. The Draft and the Drifter career are exceptions to this rule – you can be Drafted into a career you were previously in but got ejected from and the Drifter career is always open.

Skills and Training: Each career has skill tables associated with it – Personal Development, Service Skills, Specialist Skills and Advanced Education. In each term you spend in a career, pick one of these tables and roll 1d6 to see which skill you increase. You may only roll on Advanced Skills if your character has

the listed qualification (usually Education 8+ or a certain Rank). You may only roll on the Officer Skills if your career has one and if you have received a commission.

Skills can be listed with or without an associated level. If no rank is listed, then you gain that skill at Level 1 if you do not have it already, or increases its level by one if you are already trained in that field. If a rank is listed, then you gain the skill at that level as long as it is better than your current level in that skill.

Basic Training: For your first career only, you get all the skills listed in the Service Skills table at Level 0 as your basic training. For any subsequent careers, you may pick any one skill listed in the Service Skills table at Level 0 as your basic training.

Survival: Each career has a survival roll. If you fail this roll, roll on the mishap table. This mishap is always enough to force you to leave the service. You lose the benefit roll for the current term only. A natural 2 is always a failure.

Events: If you are still in your career after resolving the survival roll, roll on the events table to see what interesting things befall you this term.

Commission: This only applies to the military careers of Army, Navy and Marines. A character who succeeds at a commission roll becomes a Rank 1 officer in that career, and uses the officer Rank table from then on. A character may attempt a commission roll once per term, and trying for commission is optional.

If you obtain a commission after having already advanced several ranks, you become a Rank 1 officer as normal but you may add your two final ranks together for the purposes of determining benefits and pensions.

Some events give a bonus DM to advancement rolls, or give automatic advancement. You can apply these DMs to commission rolls also.

Advancement: Each career has an advancement roll.

If you make a successful Advancement roll, then you move to the next rank and gain an extra roll on any of the Skills and Training Tables for this career. You also get any benefits listed for your new rank. You may only attempt to advance once per term.

If your result is equal to or less than the number of terms you have spent in this career, then you cannot continue in this career after this term. Either your services are no longer required, or events have caused you to leave, or perhaps you are simply bored and want a new challenge.

If you roll a natural 12, then you must continue in this career.

Ranks and Benefits: You start at Rank 0 in your career. Each time you succeed at an advancement check, you move onto the next Rank.

Some ranks have benefits associated with them, such as extra skills or more benefits. You gain these benefits as soon as you attain that rank.



ACADEMIC (SCHOLAR)

You are the discoverer of the secrets of the universe. Scientist, doctor, researcher, inventor, you seek to improve society by expanding knowledge.

Qualification: Int 6+

-1 DM for every previous career.

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- Scientist
- Physician
- Researcher

Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)
1	+1 Edu	Computer	Language (any)
2	+1 Int	Investigate	Computer
3	+1 End	Diplomat	Advocate
4	+1 Int	Medic	Medic
5	+1 Edu	Admin	Engineer (any)
6	Investigate	Any Science	Any Science

Roll	Specialist: Scientist	Specialist: Physician	Specialist: Researcher
1	Computer	Medic	Investigate
2	Comms	Comms	Computer
3	Investigate	Investigate	Survival
4	Mechanic	Medic	Language (any)
5	Admin	Persuade	Diplomat
6	Any Science	Any Science	Any Science

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Scientist	Int 6+	Edu 6+
Physician	Int 7+	Edu 8+
Researcher	Int 5+	Edu 7+

Mustering-Out Benefits

1d6	Cash	Other Benefits
1	10,000	+1 Edu
2	10,000	+1 Int
3	20,000	Scientific Equipment
4	25,000	Two ship shares
5	50,000	+1 Soc
6	100,000	Lab ship
7	150,000	Lab ship

Ranks and Skills

Rank	Scientist	Skill/Benefit	Rank	Physician	Skill/Benefit	Rank	Researcher	Skill/Benefit
0			0			0		
1		Computer 1	1		Medic 1	1		Investigate 1
2			2			2		
3		Physical Science (any) 1	3		Life Science (Biology) 1	3		Social Science (any) 1
4			4			4		
5		Investigate 1	5		Space Science (Xenology) 1	5		Computer 1
6			6			6		

Mishaps

1d6	Mishap
1	Injured. Roll on the Injury Table.
2	You anger a superior by casting doubts onto his research. You are assigned to a remote facility as punishment. Gain an Enemy and Survival 1 as your position is forgotten and phased out, forcing you to leave this career.
3	The government commandeers your research, forcing it in a direction that you dislike. You can continue with the research, gaining one rank in any Science skill and losing one point of Social Standing. You can quit the research, gaining one Rival and gaining one rank in any Science skill. Quitting your research does not cause you to leave this Career.
4	Your experiment or research goes disastrously wrong, injuring many people. Your work is destroyed and you are forced out of your position.
5	You are injured while working on someone else's research. Roll twice on the Injury Table, taking the lower result. Gain one Rival.
6	Your work is sabotaged by someone who feels wronged by you. Gain a Rival, but you do not have to leave this career.

Events

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You discover a critical error in a supervisors experiment. If you offer to assist him, gain an Ally and Investigate 1. If you wait to expose the error after publication, gain one Rival.
4	Your research has been noticed by a powerful patron. Gain an Ally and Any Science 1 as you work for them.
5	You are given advanced training in a specialized field. Throw Education 8+ to receive any one skill of your choice at rank 1.
6	You and your research team win an award for your work. Gain a +1 DM on your next Benefit roll.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events Table (page 98).
8	Your work leads to a book deal and some bit of notoriety. Gain either +1 Social Standing, +2 DM on your next Advancement roll, or +1 DM on any Benefit roll.
9	You are appointed as the head of a research team. Gain one of Admin 1, Advocate 1, Diplomat 1, or Leadership 1.
10	Your work on some innovative research gains you notoriety. Gain either +1 Social Standing or a +4 DM on your next Advancement roll.
11	You are asked to work on a secret project. Gain one of Any Science 1, Investigate 1, Admin 1, or Medic 1.
12	You discover a groundbreaking scientific innovation. You are automatically promoted.

ARMY

You are a member of the ground forces used to protect planets and governments.

Enlistment: End 5+

-1 DM for every previous career.

-1 DM if over 30 years old.

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- *Infantry:* You are a ground pounder, the heart and soul of the Army.
- *Support:* If the Army needs it, you make sure it is there and working.
- *Armoured/Cavalry:* The heavy hitting units of the Army. Tanks, heavy weapons, and combat assault units.

Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)	Commissioned Skills (Officers Only)
1	+1 Str	Gun Combat	Medic	Leadership
2	+1 Dex	Heavy Weapons	Tactics	Advocate
3	+1 End	Melee	Explosives	Comms
4	+1 Int	Recon	Battle Dress	Diplomat
5	+1 Edu	Survival	Mechanic	Sensors
6	Carouse	Drive	Navigation	Tactics

Roll	Specialist: Infantry	Specialist: Support	Specialist: Armoured/Cavalry
1	Athletics	Comms	Explosives
2	Melee	Computers	Heavy Weapons
3	Gun Combat	Sensors	Drive
4	Drive	Steward	Remote Operations
5	Comms	Admin	Recon
6	Flyer	Broker	Battle Dress

Ranks and Skills

Rank	NCO Rank	Skill or Benefit
0	Private	Gun Combat (Slug Rifle), Melee (Unarmed Combat)
1	Corporal	
2	Sergeant	Leadership
3	Staff Sergeant	
4	Master Sergeant	
5	Sergeant Major	Tactics
6	Command Sergeant Major	

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Infantry	End 5+	Edu 8+
Support	End 6+	Int 9+
Armoured/Cavalry	End 7+	Int 7+

Commission: 9+

DM +1 if Soc 9+

Mustering-Out Benefits

1d6	Cash	Other Benefits
1	2,000	Low Passage
2	4,000	Weapon
3	8,000	+1 Int
4	10,000	+1 Edu
5	10,000	Armour
6	20,000	+1 End
7	30,000	+1 Social

Rank	Officer Rank	Skill or Benefit
1	Lieutenant	
2	Captain	Leadership
3	Major	
4	Lieutenant Colonel	Tactics
5	Colonel	
6	General	Social Status 10 or Social Status +1, whichever is greater.

Mishaps

1d6	Mishap
1	Severely injured in action. (This is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury table.) Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury table (page 37) and take the lower result.
2	You were captured as a Prisoner of War during a clandestine operation. Reduce either your Intelligence or your Social Standing by one.
3	Your ship is damaged, and you have to hitch-hike your way back across the stars to the nearest scout base. Gain 1d6 Contacts and 1d3 Enemies.
4	You expose a commander as corrupt. Gain the commander as a Rival and 1d3 Contacts.
5	Your battalion was part of an unsuccessful insurgency on a neutral planet. Gain the planetary government as an Enemy.
6	Injured. Roll on the Injury table.

Events

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You are given specialized training to complete your tour of duty. Throw Education 8+ to increase any one skill you already have by one level.
4	You are part of an elite assault operation. Throw Endurance 8+ to avoid injury. If successful, gain one of Stealth 1, Recon 1, or Vacc Suit 1.
5	You perform an exemplary service for the Army. Gain a +1 DM to any one Benefit roll.
6	You are engaged in an extensive ground war. Throw Endurance 8+ to avoid injury. If successful, gain Gun Combat (any) 1, and one of Recon 1, Engineer (any) 1, or Tactics (military) 1.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events Table (page 98).
8	You are assigned to a post on a planet with a hostile environment. Gain Vacc Suit 1, and one of Recon 1, Survival (any) 1, Mechanic (any) 1, or Drive (any) 1.
9	You successfully manage an extraction of your unit from a difficult situation. Gain a +2 DM to your next Advancement roll.
10	You become the trusted aid of your commanding officer. Gain either Admin 1 or a +4 DM to your next Advancement roll due to his influence.
11	You are assigned to a garrison post. Gain one of Admin 1, Recon 1, Diplomat 1, or Streetwise 1.
12	Your unit successfully completed a clandestine operation. You are automatically promoted.

DIPLOMAT

Qualification: Soc 6+

-1 DM for every previous career.

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- Envoy
- Emissary
- Administrator

Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)
1	+1 Edu	Admin 1	Deception 1
2	+1 Int	Diplomat 1	Language (any) 1
3	+1 End	Advocate 1	Leadership 1
4	Diplomat 1	Persuade 1	Social Sciences (any) 1
5	Persuade 1	Computers 1	Persuade 1
6	Advocate 1	Comms 1	Art (Writing) 1

Roll	Specialist: Envoy	Specialist: Emissary	Specialist: Administrator
1	Deception 1	Language (any) 1	Comms 1
2	Carouse 1	Comms 1	Computers 1
3	Diplomat 1	Social Science (Sophontology) 1	Advocate 1
4	Computers 1	Carouse 1	Steward 1
5	Leadership 1	Streetwise 1	Sensors 1
6	Advocate 1	Diplomat 1	Admin 1

Ranks and Skills

Rank	Envoy Skill or Benefit	Rank	Emissary Skill or Benefit	Rank	Administrator Skill or Benefit
0		0		0	
1	Advocate 1	1	Carouse 1	1	Admin 1
2		2		2	
3		3		3	
4	Diplomat 1	4	Persuade 1	4	Advocate 1
5		5		5	
6	Social Status 10 or Social Status +1, whichever is greater.	6	Social Status 10 or Social Status +1, whichever is greater.	6	Social Status 10 or Social Status +1, whichever is greater.

Mishaps

1d6	Mishap
1	Injured. Roll on the Injury Table.
2	Your supervisor committed a faux pas that he managed to blame on you. Gain one enemy and you are drummed out of the service.
3	You manage to foil an assassination attempt, but are injured in the process. Gain Soc +1 and roll twice on the Injury Table, taking the higher result. Your position is filled when you recover from your injury.
4	You are caught in the middle of inter-departmental rivalry. Gain a Rival as your position is eliminated.
5	Regulatory changes and budget cuts eliminate your position.
6	Your work is sabotaged by someone who feels wronged by you. Gain a Rival, but you do not have to leave this career.

Events

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
3	Through your many dealings and negotiations you have met many influential people. Roll Social Standing 8+ to gain an Ally. If you fail you gain a Contact instead.
4	Your success in your career has sent you to many postings as a troubleshooter. Roll Social Standing 8+ to gain 1d3 Contacts. If you fail, gain one Contact and one Rival.
5	You inherit a gift from a grateful client. Gain a +1 DM to any one Benefit roll.
6	You are given advanced training in a specialist field. Roll Education 8+ to gain any skill.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events Table (page 98).
8	Your work in the Foreign Office proves to be most beneficial. Roll Persuade 8+ to gain an Ally; if you fail, gain a Rival instead.
9	Your dedication and diligence to your career earns you one of Advocate 1 or Diplomat 1.
10	During some high stake negotiations, a charismatic leader from the opposing side offers you a lucrative deal to switch sides. If you accept gain one Benefit roll and your previous employer becomes a Rival. If you refuse, your current employer becomes an Ally and you gain +2 DM to your next Advancement roll.
11	Your successful career has placed you in a favorable position. Gain one Benefit roll or +4 DM to your next Advancement roll.
12	You perform exceptional work for your government. You are automatically promoted.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Envoy	Edu 7+	Soc 6+
Emissary	Edu 6+	Soc 7+
Administrator	Edu 5+	Int 6+

Mustering-Out Benefits

1d6	Cash	Other Benefits
1	1,000	+1 Edu
2	2,000	+1 Int
3	5,000	+1 Soc
4	15,000	One Ship Share
5	25,000	Contact
6	30,000	+1 Soc or one ship share
7	50,000	+2 Soc

NAVY

Enlistment: Int 5+

-1 DM for every previous career.

-1 DM if over 34 years old.

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- **Crew:** You are the one who gets things done, and keeps the Navy working smoothly.
- **Engineering:** Without you, the Navy comes to a standstill. You keep everything from ships to space stations working.
- **Flight:** Whether you are a starship pilot or a pipe jockey, you are the one who gets people where they need to be.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Crew	Int 5+	Edu 6+
Engineering	Int 6+	Edu 7+
Flight	Dex 8+	Soc 8+

Commission: Soc 9+

Mustering-Out Benefits

1d6	Cash	Other Benefits
1	1,000	+1 Int
2	2,000	+1 Edu
3	5,000	Ship's Boat or 1 ship share
4	10,000	Weapon
5	15,000	+1 Int or +1 Edu
6	50,000	2 ship shares
7	75,000	+2 Social

Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)	Commissioned Skills (Officers Only)
1	+1 Str	Vacc Suit	Comms	Leadership
2	+1 Dex	Zero-G	Astrogation	Pilot (any)
3	+1 End	Gun Combat (any)	Engineer (any)	Tactics (Naval)
4	+1 Int	Pilot (any)	Medic	Admin
5	+1 Edu	Gunner (any)	Sensors	Tactics (Naval)
6	+1 Soc	Computer	Mechanic	Diplomat

Roll	Specialist: Crew	Specialist: Engineering	Specialist: Flight
1	Steward	Engineer (any)	Pilot (any)
2	Gun Combat (any)	Mechanic	Flyer (any)
3	Vacc Suit	Zero-G	Sensor
4	Melee (any)	Vacc Suit	Zero-G
5	Mechanic	Gunner (Any)	Astrogation
6	Comms	Computer	Comms

Ranks and Skills

Rank	NCO Rank	Skill or Benefit
0	Crewman	Vacc Suit 1
1	Able Spaceman	
2	Petty Officer Third Class	Mechanic 1
3	Petty Officer Second Class	
4	Petty Officer First Class	
5	Chief Petty Officer	
6	Master Chief Petty Officer	+1 Edu

Rank	Officer Rank	Skill or Benefit
1	Ensign	
2	Lieutenant	Leadership 1
3	Commander	
4	Captain	Tactics (Naval) 1
5	Rear Admiral	
6	Admiral	Social Status 10 or Social Status +1, whichever is greater.

Mishaps

1d6	Mishap
1	Severely injured in action. (This is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury table.) Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury table (page 37) and take the lower result.
2	A serious accident occurs on your watch and you are blamed for it. The accident is not your fault and is the result of another crew-member's negligence, but you are blamed. Gain an Enemy.
3	Your ship is destroyed in a naval battle. You survive in an escape pod, but the ensuing inquiries and post-mortems end your career.
4	You are taken prisoner in action and are unable to continue in your role once repatriated.
5	A vindictive officer sinks your career. Gain a Rival.
6	Injured. Roll on the Injury table.

Events

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
3	Special Mission: You are assigned a secret mission by the navy. The mission goes off without a hitch, but something from the mission may show up during the campaign. Discuss the exact nature of the mission with your Referee.
4	Extra Training: You are given extra training. Roll Education 8+ to gain any one skill.
5	You uncover evidence of a conspiracy within the navy. Either join them, or reveal their existence and gain 1d3 Enemies.
6	New Contact: You pick up a new Contact. Roll 1d6: 1-3: Naval, 4-5: Civilian, 6: Superior officer or unusual.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events Table (page 98).
8	Cross Training: You receive training in a different branch of the navy. Roll on any Service Skill table besides your own. You can join this branch if you meet its requirements next term with a +4DM to enlistment.
9	Holding Action: You are on board a warship that holds off a vastly superior hostile force for a prolonged period of time before relief arrives. This action results in all the crew being considered heroes both within the navy and amongst the wider population. Increase Social Standing by one or gain a +1 DM to your next Benefits roll.
10	New Rival: Someone on board ship or encountered while serving takes a strong dislike to the character, and becomes a rival.
11	Lifesaver: You save the life of a crewman who becomes a lifelong friend. Gain a new Ally.
12	You perform an exemplary act, saving your ships crew. You are automatically promoted.

MARINE

Enlistment: Str 5+

-1 DM for every previous career.

-1 DM is over 30 years old.

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- **Support:** The quartermaster, the motor pool mechanic, and the squadron medic are all Support troops.
- **Marine:** The space Marine is the ground troop and boarding troop aboard naval ships.
- **Assault Troop:** When someplace needs invaded, you are the first boots on the ground.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Support	End 5+	Edu 7+
Marine	End 6+	Edu 5+
Assault Troop	Str 7+	Int 6+

Commission: Soc 7+

Mustering-Out Benefits

1d6	Cash	Other Benefits
1	1,000	Weapon
2	5,000	+1 Str
3	10,000	Armour
4	20,000	+1 Int
5	25,000	+1 Edu
6	30,000	Weapon or Armour
7	40,000	+2 Soc

Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)	Commissioned Skills (Officers Only)
1	+1 Str	Gun Combat (any)	Battle Dress	Tactics (Military)
2	+1 Dex	Melee (Blade)	Medic	Leadership
3	+1 End	Athletics (any)	Mechanic	Diplomat
4	+1 Str	Explosives	Heavy Weapons (any)	Sensors
5	+1 End	Recon	Tactics (Military)	Admin
6	Carouse	Drive (any)	Survival	Advocate

Roll	Specialist: Support	Specialist: Marine	Specialist: Assault Troop
1	Medic	Gun Combat (any)	Battle Dress
2	Mechanic	Battle Dress	Gun Combat (any)
3	Drive (any)	Heavy Weapons (any)	Explosives
4	Heavy Weapons (any)	Zero-G	Survival
5	Gun Combat (any)	Melee (Blade)	Heavy Weapons (any)
6	Flyer (any)	Recon	Melee (any)

Ranks and Skills

Rank	NCO Rank	Skill or Benefit
0	Private	Gun Combat (Slug Rifle)
1	Lance Corporal	
2	Corporal	
3	Staff Sergeant	Survival
4	Gunnery Sergeant	
5	First Sergeant	Leadership
6	Sergeant Major	

Rank	Officer Rank	Skill or Benefit
1	Lieutenant	
2	Captain	Leadership
3	Major	
4	Lieutenant Colonel	Tactics (Military)
5	Colonel	
6	General	Social Status 10 or Social Status +1, whichever is greater.

Mishaps

1d6	Mishap
1	Severely injured in action. (This is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury table.) Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury table (page 37) and take the lower result.
2	Finding conditions to be inhumane under a barely sane commander during your current posting you desert and are now a wanted man. Gain 1d3 Enemies amongst the military, including your former commanding officer, who will try to bring you to justice.
3	You have a strong relationship with a munitions supplier which is deemed to be too close by your superiors and you are 'requested' to resign from the service. Gain the supplier as a Contact.
4	You are sent to a very unpleasant region (jungle, swamp, desert, icecap, urban) to battle against guerrilla fighters and rebels. You are discharged because of stress, injury or because the government wishes to bury the whole incident. Increase Recon or Survival by one level but also gain the rebels as an Enemy.
5	You spend several days in the brig after getting into a fight with a superior officer. Gain that officer as a Rival as he has you ejected out of the service.
6	Injured. Roll on the Injury table.

Events

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
3	Surrounded and outnumbered by the enemy, you hold out until relief arrives. Gain a +2 DM to your next Advancement check.
4	Weapon Cache. You stumble upon a stockpile of weaponry and armament. When no one is looking you manage to claim a piece of the find for yourself. Add an Armour or Weapon Benefit (player's choice) when you muster out.
5	You save a member of your unit's life and gain a new Ally.
6	You are assigned to protected forces training, gain one of Vacc Suit 1 or Zero-G 1.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events Table (page 98).
8	You are assigned to Officer Training, gain a commission, if you are already an officer you are automatically promoted.
9	You are thrown into a brutal ground war. Throw Endurance 8+ to avoid injury; if you succeed, you gain one level in Gun Combat (any) or Leadership.
10	Heroic Stand: You are caught alone in a fire fight where you hold off an enemy force for a prolonged period of time. Increase Social Standing by 1 or gain a +1 DM to your next Benefits roll.
11	You are assigned to Military Intelligence. Gain one level in Streetwise, Computer, Interrogation (any) or Deception.
12	You discover a world, item or information of worth to the Imperium. You are automatically promoted.

MERCHANT

Sellers, buyers, and the ones who bring you everything you need.

Qualification: Int 5+

-1 DM for every previous career.

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- *Broker*
- *Merchant Marine*
- *Free Trader*

Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)
1	+1 Str	Persuade	Pilot (any)
2	+1 Dex	Broker	Admin
3	+1 End	Vacc Suit	Advocate
4	+1 Int	Zero-G	Astrogation
5	Carouse	Comms	Computers
6	Gamble	Steward	Diplomat

Roll	Specialist: Broker	Specialist: Merchant Marine	Specialist: Free Trader
1	Persuade	Vacc Suit	Pilot (spacecraft)
2	Deception	Pilot (any)	Zero-G
3	Broker	Engineer (any)	Vacc Suit
4	Admin	Mechanic	Engineer (any)
5	Advocate	Sensors	Mechanic
6	Diplomat	Gunner (any)	Jack of All Trades

Ranks and Skills

Rank	Broker Skill or Benefit	Rank	Merchant Marine Skill or Benefit	Rank	Free Trader Skill or Benefit
0		0	Crewman	0	
1	Broker 1	1	Senior Crewman Steward 1	1	Pilot (any) 1
2		2	4 th Officer	2	
3	Persuade 1	3	3 rd Officer Mechanic 1	3	Jack of All Trades 1
4		4	2 nd Officer Pilot (any) 1	4	
5		5	1 st Officer	5	Persuade 1
6		6	Captain +1 Social Standing	6	

Mishaps

1d6	Mishap
1	Injured. Roll on the Injury Table.
2	Hard times force you to deal with shady characters. Throw Streetwise 8+ to keep your Benefit throw for this term.
3	A sudden war destroys your trade routes and contacts, forcing you to flee this region of space. Gain Gun Combat (any) 1.
4	Pirates target your shipping contracts. Gain Investigate 1 and an Enemy.
5	Your ship or station is attacked and severely damaged. Gain Pilot (any) 1.
6	You are bankrupted by a rival. You lose all Benefit throws from this career and gain the other trader as an Enemy.

Events

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You invest wisely in the market. Gain one Ship Share.
4	You have the opportunity to set up a trade deal with an alien race. Throw Intelligence 8+. If you succeed, gain a +1 DM on a Benefit throw. If you fail, gain an alien Enemy.
5	You are asked to help law enforcement break a smuggling ring. Throw Intelligence 8+ or Deception 8+. If you succeed, gain one of Investigate 1, Advocate 1, or Streetwise 1. If you fail, gain an Enemy.
6	You are given cross training in a specialist field. Throw Education 8+ to gain one level in a new skill available in the Merchant career.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events Table (page 98).
8	You have a chance to get in on a risky venture. Throw Gamble 8+ or Broker 8+. If you succeed, gain an additional Benefit throw. If you fail, lose one Benefit throw.
9	You are able to sell trinkets to primitives for valuable raw materials. Throw Intelligence 8+. If successful, gain one of Deception, Broker, or Physical Science (any).
10	You befriend a useful ally. Gain an Ally and gain either one level of Carouse or a +4 DM on your next Advancement throw thanks to his aid.
11	Your successful dealings gains you a Contact.
12	Your brilliant endeavor brings in huge profits. You are automatically promoted.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Broker	Edu 5+	Int 7+
Merchant Marine	Edu 5+	Int 6+
Free Trader	End 6+	Int 6+

Mustering-Out Benefits

1d6	Cash	Other Benefits
1	1,000	Ship Share
2	2,000	Gun
3	5,000	+1 Int
4	10,000	+1 Edu
5	20,000	Blade
6	30,000	Free Trader
7	40,000	Free Trader

MEDIA PRACTITIONER

The Media Practitioner creates works of fiction and fact for public entertainment. This job takes them across charted space, on location or doing the marketing, and while it can be pampered it can also be dangerous.

Qualification: Soc 6+

-1 DM for every previous career.

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- **Producer:** You write or direct or find the cash, and make the production happen by force of will.
- **Technician:** You work behind the camera to make sure the work looks, feels, and sounds as perfect as can be.
- **Teller:** You work in front of the camera, or you have your name on the byline. If you are lucky, one day everyone will know your name.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Producer	Int 5+	Soc 8+
Technician	Edu 5+	Int 7+
Teller	Soc 4+	End 8+

Mustering-Out Benefits

1d6	Cash	Other Benefits
1	500	Contact
2	1,000	+1 End
3	2,000	+1 Int or +1 Edu
4	10,000	Vehicle
5	30,000	Ally
6	50,000	+1 Soc
7	100,000	+2 Soc

Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)
1	+1 End	Art (any)	Admin
2	+1 Int	Carouse	Advocate
3	+1 Edu	Persuade	Social Science (any)
4	+1 Soc	Drive or Flyer (any)	Computers
5	Gambling	Comms	Deception
6	Carouse	Language (any)	Investigate

Roll	Specialist: Producer	Specialist: Technician	Specialist: Teller
1	Broker	Mechanic	Melee (any)
2	Art (any)	Computers	Art (any)
3	Persuade	Remote Operations	Athletics (any)
4	Recruiting	Engineer (any)	Carouse
5	Leadership	Sensors	Persuade
6	Admin	Explosives	Art (any)

Ranks and Skills

Rank	Producer Skill or Benefit	Rank	Technician Skill or Benefit	Rank	Teller Skill or Benefit
0	Wannabe	0		0	
1	Persuade 1	1	Grip Comms 1	1	Field Teller Art (any) 1
2		2		2	
3	Art (any) 1	3	Computers 1	3	Carouse 1
4	Auteur	4		4	Star Teller
5	Leadership 1	5	Wizard Remote Ops 1	5	Diplomat 1
6	Mogul	6		6	Megastar

Mishaps

1d6	Mishap
1	Injured. Roll on the Injury Table.
2	Offended Others: One of your works offends a radical political or religious faction and you go into hiding after they place a hit on you. Gain two enemies: the political or religious faction and the assassin assigned to kill you.
3	Stalker: An obsessed fan stalks you and ruins your life. You are mentally traumatized and gain an Enemy.
4	Blacklisted: You are blacklisted by an influential studio boss and everyone refuses to hire you. Gain a Rival.
5	Addicted: You become so addicted to drink or drugs that you wreck your career. Lose 1 year to rehab and throw Persuade 8+ or become estranged to any spouse or children. If you later relapse, immediately lose 1 Endurance and regain your addiction.
6	Taboo: You are accused of a social taboo. Throw Advocate 8+ to retain your reputation and your career, or lose 2 Social Standing in the ensuing scandal, as well as having to leave this career.

Events

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
3	Your latest work is a big hit and you make a lot of money. Gain an extra Benefit roll.
4	An older star mentors you in the ways of partying hard. Gain Carouse and an Ally.
5	You become a cult favorite. You do not win wider fame, fortune, or accolades, but to your fans, you are a megastar. Gain a +2 DM to any personal interactions with any of your fans.
6	You become embroiled in a conflict with an influential critic. Gain a Rival and a level in Persuade.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events Table (page 98).
8	You are nominated for a big award for your latest work. Throw 10+ to win, gaining a +2 DM to your next Advancement roll and 1d3 Rivals from among your fellow nominees. Failing to win gains a +1 DM to your next Advancement roll and 1 Rival of the winner.
9	You make a good friend at a terrible party. Gain an Ally.
10	You are asked to become a spokesperson for a charity. Gain a level in Diplomacy.
11	You catch the attention of an influential patron. Gain a Contact and a +2 DM to your next Advancement roll.
12	Your latest work is a major hit and you are propelled into the spotlight. You are automatically promoted.

ROGUE

Rogues live by their wits. Through lies, deception, manipulation, and larceny Rogues can only win as long as someone else loses. They live for the thrill of taking risks and are always seeking the big payoff, which can often lead to their downfall.

Qualification: Int 6+

-1 DM for every previous career.

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- *Gambler:* Whatever your game, you know the odds and can read the opposition. Bluff and deception are your stock in trade.
- *Grifter:* There is a fool born every minute. It is your job to separate those fools from their hard earned cash.
- *Wheeler-Dealer:* Buy low, sell high. Whether it is stolen, smuggled, contaminated, or just past its sell by date is not your concern.

Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)
1	+1 Str	Gambler	Art (any)
2	+1 Dex	Carouse	Advocate
3	+1 End	Streetwise	Computers
4	+1 Int	Deception	Admin
5	Melee (any)	Drive or Flyer (any)	Comms
6	Gun Combat (any)	Persuade	Jack of All Trades

Roll	Specialist: Gambler	Specialist: Grifter	Specialist: Wheeler-Dealer
1	Gambler	Deception	Trade (any)
2	+1 Int	Persuade	Admin
3	Carouse	Stealth	Advocate
4	Persuade	Investigate	Streetwise
5	Deception	Admin	Persuade
6	Gambler	Deception	Broker

CAREER PROGRESS

	Survival	Advancement
Gambler	Int 6+	Soc 6+
Grifter	Edu 7+	Int 5+
Wheeler-Dealer	Int 5+	Edu 8+

MUSTERING-OUT BENEFITS

1d6	Cash	Other Benefits
1	None	Contact
2	1,000	+1 Int
3	5,000	+1 Edu
4	15,000	Weapon
5	30,000	Flyer
6	50,000	+1 Soc
7	150,000	Ally

Ranks and Skills

Rank	Gambler Skill or Benefit	Rank	Grifter Skill or Benefit	Rank	Wheeler-Dealer Skill or Benefit
0		0		0	
1	Gambler 1	1	Deception 1	1	Broker 1
2		2		2	
3	Deception 1	3	Persuade 1	3	Streetwise 1
4		4		4	
5	+1 Soc	5	Admin 1	5	Advocate 1
6		6		6	

Mishaps

1d6	Mishap
1	Injured. Roll on the Injury Table.
2	Irritant: You annoy powerful forces. You must take your next term in the Citizen career as you lay low for a time.
3	Runner: You have a large (100,000+) price put on your head. You must escape as you are pursued by every bounty hunter in the area. Gain 1d3 Rivals.
4	Angry Mark: An angry mark comes after you. Roll on the Injury Table and roll Streetwise 8+ to avoid a second injury.
5	Caught: You are arrested. Roll Advocate 8+. If you fail, go to prison next term.
6	Shoot Out: You get yourself into a gun battle with law enforcers. Throw Gun Combat 8+. If you fail, roll on the Injury Table and go to prison next term.

Events

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
3	You spend time on safari. Throw Intelligence 8+ to gain either Survival 1, Animals (any) 1, Flyer (any) 1, or Gun Combat (any) 1.
4	You spend some time networking. Gain 1d3 Contacts.
5	You are pressed to become a police informant. If you accept, throw Deception 8+ to avoid gaining a criminal Enemy. Reject the offer and gain an Enemy in the police.
6	You spend time playing the luxury liners, cruising from planet to planet. Gain one from Vacc Suit 1, Zero-G 1, or Computers 1.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events Table (page 98).
8	You are a frequent sight in all the casinos and clubs. Gain Carouse 1 and a Contact.
9	You observe the push and pull of society around you. Gain Social Science (any).
10	You are involved in a gun battle. Roll Gun Combat 8+ to avoid injury. If you succeed, take one of Streetwise, Gun Combat (any), Tactics (Military), or Stealth
11	You spend time among spacers. Roll Intelligence 8+ to gain either Pilot (any) 1, Astro-gation 1, Tactics (Naval) 1, or Gunner (any) 1.
12	You gain the big score. Gain an extra Benefit throw.

SCOUT

The true explorers of the galaxy. Scouts explore new star systems, map uncharted areas, and act as high speed government couriers, keeping governments running smoothly.

Enlistment: Int 5+

-1 DM for every previous career.

Assignments: Choose one of the following:

- **Courier:** A high speed transporter of government documents and data. Maintainers of the inter-planetary communications networks.
- **Survey:** Mapping and collecting data on newly discovered star systems.
- **Exploration:** Stretching the boundaries of known space, discovering new star systems and planets.

Career Progress

	Survival	Advancement
Courier	End 5+	Edu 8+
Survey	End 6+	Int 9+
Exploration	End 7+	Int 7+

Mustering-Out Benefits

1d6	Cash	Other Benefits
1	10,000	Weapon
2	20,000	+1 Edu
3	30,000	Weapon
4	30,000	+1 Int
5	40,000	Ship Share
6	50,000	Scout Ship
7	50,000	Scout Ship

Ranks and Skills

Rank	Title	Skill or Benefit
0		
1	Scout	Vacc Suit 1
2		
3	Senior Scout	Pilot 1
4		
5		
6		

Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Minimum Edu 8)
1	+1 Str	Pilot (spacecraft or small craft)	Medic
2	+1 Dex	Survival	Navigation
3	+1 End	Mechanic	Engineer (any)
4	+1 Int	Astrogation	Computer
5	+1 Edu	Comms	Space Science (any)
6	Jack of all Trades	Gun Combat (any)	Jack of all Trades

Roll	Specialist: Courier	Specialist: Survey	Specialist: Exploration
1	Comms	Sensors	Sensors
2	Sensors	Persuade	Pilot (spacecraft)
3	Pilot (spacecraft)	Pilot (small craft)	Pilot (small craft)
4	Vacc Suit	Navigation	Life Science (any)
5	Zero-G	Diplomat	Stealth
6	Astrogation	Streetwise	Recon

Mishaps

1d6	Mishap
1	Severely injured in action. (This is the same as a result of 2 on the Injury table.) Alternatively, roll twice on the Injury table (page 37) and take the lower result.
2	Psychologically damaged by your time in the scouts. Reduce your Intelligence or Social Standing by 1.
3	Your ship is damaged, and you have to hitch-hike your way back across the stars to the nearest scout base. Gain 1d6 Contacts and 1d3 Enemies.
4	You inadvertently cause a conflict between the Imperium and a minor world or race. Gain a Rival and Diplomat 1.
5	You have no idea what happened to you – they found your ship drifting on the fringes of friendly space.
6	Injured. Roll on the Injury table.

Events

2d6	Events
2	Disaster! Roll on the mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
3	Your ship is ambushed by enemy vessels. Either run, and throw Pilot 8+ to escape, or treat with them and throw Persuade 10+ to bargain with them. If you fail the check, then your ship is destroyed and you may not re-enlist in the Scouts at the end of this term. If you succeed, you survive and gain Sensors 1. Either way, gain an Enemy.
4	You survey an alien world. Gain one of Animals (riding or training) 1, Survival 1, Recon 1 or Life Science (any) 1
5	You perform an exemplary service for the scouts. Gain a +1 DM to any one Benefit roll.
6	You spend several years jumping from world to world in your scout ship. Gain one of Astrogration 1, Navigation 1, Pilot (small craft) 1 or Mechanic 1.
7	Life Event. Roll on the Life Events Table (page 98).
8	When dealing with an alien race, you have an opportunity to gather extra intelligence about them. Roll either Sensors 8+ or Deception 8+. If you succeed, gain an Ally in the Imperium and a +2 DM to your next Advancement roll. If you fail, roll on the Mishap table, but you are not ejected from this career.
9	Your scout ship is one of the first on the scene to rescue the survivors of a disaster. Roll either Medic 8+ or Engineer 8+. If you succeed, gain a Contact and a +2 DM to your next Advancement check. If you fail, gain an Enemy.
10	You spend a great deal of time on the fringes of known space. Roll Survival 8+ or Pilot 8+. If you succeed, gain a Contact in an alien race and one level in any skill of your choice. If you fail, roll on the Mishap table.
11	You serve as the courier for an important message from the Imperium. Either gain one level of Diplomat, or take a +4 DM to your next Advancement roll.
12	You discover a world, item or information of worth to the Imperium. You are automatically promoted.

LIFE EVENTS TABLE

2d6	Life Events
2	Sickness or Injury: The character is injured or suffers a serious illness. Throw on the Injury Table.
3	Birth: Someone close to the character gives birth, or is born. The character is involved in some fashion (mother, father, relative, godparent, or similar).
4	Relationship: A romantic relationship ends badly. Throw Persuade 8+ or gain your former partner as a Rival.
5	Bad Luck: The character becomes addicted to something. It could be gambling, alcohol, drugs, or something more exotic.
6	Good Fortune: The character's lifelong dream comes true. Gain one of +1 Intelligence, +1 Education, or a +1 DM on a Benefit throw for this career.
7	New Contact: The character meets someone new who becomes a useful contact throughout their life. Gain one Contact.
8	Betrayal: The character is betrayed by a friend. Change an Ally into an Enemy.
9	Travel: The character spends a lot of time in space. Gain one of Vacc Suit 1, Zero-G 1, or Steward 1.
10	Crime: You are the victim of some fraud or robbery. Lose one Benefit throw.
11	Death: Someone close to the character dies (a close friend or family member). Alternately, one of the characters Allies dies.
12	Unusual Event: Throw 1d6 to determine the type of unusual event.
1d6	Unusual Event
1	Disaster: You are at the site of a major disaster and your heroic actions (real or not) are caught on video making you a celebrity for a short time. Gain +1 Social Standing.
2	Alien Artifact: You have a strange and unusual device from an alien culture that is not normally available to humans.
3	Aliens: You spend time among an alien race. Gain Life Sciences (Biology) and a Contact among an alien race.
4	Amnesia: Something happened to you, but you do not know what it was.
5	Government Contact: You briefly come into contact with the highest echelons of your government – A member of Parliament or, perhaps the foreign intelligence department.
6	Mystery Planet: During your travels you discovered a planet in a location where no planet was thought to exist.

MUSTERING-OUT

Mustering-Out Benefits: When you leave a career for any reason, you gain material benefits from that career. There are two tables – Cash and Benefits. You may only roll on the cash tables a maximum of three times, regardless of how many careers or benefit rolls you have. You get one benefit roll per full term served. Leaving due to a mishap means you lose the benefit roll for that term, but not previous full terms in that career.

If you reached rank 1 or 2, you get an extra benefit roll when leaving that service. If you reached rank 3 or 4, you get two extra benefit rolls, and if you reached rank 5 or 6, you get three extra benefit rolls and may apply a +1 to rolls on the Benefits table that you gain from that career.

Benefits are gained when a character leaves a career for any reason other than failing a survival roll.

You may only roll on the Cash table a maximum of three times no matter how many careers you have had.

Cash Benefits

A character with the Gambler skill at level 1 or better gets a +1 DM to all rolls on the Cash table.

If the character has any money after rolling on the Cash table then he may purchase personal equipment worth up to 2,000 credits immediately.

Other Benefits

When you leave a career in good standing with your previous employers, you are permitted to keep various pieces of equipment or even shares of a vessel.

Retirement Pay

A character that leaves a service at the end of the 5th or later term of service may receive retirement pay.

Terms	Pay
5	Cr. 10,000
6	Cr. 12,000
7	Cr. 14,000
8	Cr. 16,000
9+	+2,000 per term beyond 8



AGEING

The effects of ageing begin when a character reaches 34 years of age. At the end of the fourth term, and at the end of every term thereafter, the character must roll 2d6 on the *Aging Table*. Apply the character's total number of terms as a negative Dice Modifier on the Aging Table.

Ageing Crisis: If any characteristic is reduced to 0 by ageing, then the character suffers an ageing crisis. The character dies unless he can pay $1d6 \times 10,000$ credits for medical care, which will bring any characteristics back up to 1. The character automatically fails any Qualification checks from now on – he must either continue in the career he is in or become a Drifter if he wishes to take any more terms.

Anagathics: While using anagathic drugs, the character effectively does not age – add the number of terms since the character started taking anagathics as a positive Dice Modifier to rolls on the ageing table. If a character stops taking anagathics, then he must roll immediately on the ageing table to simulate the shock that comes from his system beginning to age again.

The risk of trying to obtain a reliable supply and the disruption to the character's biochemistry means the character must make a second Survival check if he passes his first Survival check in a term. If either check is failed, the character suffers a mishap and is ejected from the career.

The drugs cost $1d6 \times 2,500$ Credits for each term that the character uses the drugs. These costs are paid out of the character's eventual mustering-out cash benefits. If the character cannot pay these bills, he goes into debt.

INJURIES

Characters that are wounded in combat or accidents during character creation must roll on the Injury table.

Injury Crisis: If any characteristic is reduced to 0, then the character suffers an injury crisis. The character dies unless he can pay $1d6 \times 10,000$ credits for medical care, which will bring any characteristics back up to 1. The character automatically fails any Qualification checks from now on – he must either continue in the career he is in or become a Drifter if he wishes to take any more terms.

Medical Care: If your character has been injured, then medical care may be able to undo the effects of damage. The restoration of a lost characteristic costs 5,000 Credits per point.

If your character was injured in the service of a patron or organisation, then a portion of his medical care may be paid for by that patron. Roll 2d6 on the table below, adding your Rank as a DM. The result is how much of his medical care is paid for by his employer.

Medical Debt: During finishing touches, you must pay any outstanding costs from medical care or anagathic drugs out of your Benefits before anything else.

FINALISE CONNECTIONS

The connections between characters rule can give you bonus skills. At this stage, you may make (or finalise) a connection between your character and up to two other player characters. For each connection you make, you may gain one level in any skill, but you cannot bring a skill above level 3 using this rule nor may you take the Jack of all Trades skill.

SKILL PACKAGES

As a group, select one of the following skill packages.

Traveller Skill Package: Pilot (any) 1, Sensors 1, Comms 1, Gunner (any) 1, Gun Combat (any) 1, Persuade 1, Stealth 1, Medic 1.

Mercenary Skill Package: Sensors 1, Comms 1, Medic 1, Leadership 1, Heavy Weapons (any) 1, Gun Combat (any) 1, Gun Combat (any) 1, Stealth 1.

Trader Skill Package: Pilot (any) 1, Sensors 1, Medic 1, Streetwise 1, Broker 1, Advocate 1, Diplomat 1, Astrogation 1.

Starship Skills Package: Pilot (any) 1, Gunner (any) 1, Engineer (any) 1, Mechanic 1, Sensors 1, Medic 1, Comms 1, Astrogation 1.

Explorer Skills Package: Pilot (any) 1, Astrogation 1, Sensors 1, Survival 1, Recon 1, Gun Combat (any) 1, Stealth 1, Medic 1

Diplomat Skill Package: Advocate 1, Diplomat 1, Persuade 1, Stealth 1, Streetwise 1, Deception 1, Computers 1, Comms 1.

Investigator Skill Package: Advocate 1, Admin 1, Investigate 1, Persuade 1, Stealth 1, Streetwise 1, Computers 1, Sensors 1, Gun Combat (any) 1

Criminal Skill Package: Pilot (any) 1, Sensors 1, Stealth 1, Deception 1, Persuade 1, Streetwise 1, Broker 1, Medic 1.

AGING TABLE

2d6	Effects of Aging
-6	Reduce three physical characteristics by 2, reduce one mental characteristic by 1
-5	Reduce three physical characteristics by 2.
-4	Reduce two physical characteristics by 2, reduce one physical characteristic by 1
-3	Reduce one physical characteristic by 2, reduce two physical characteristic by 1
-2	Reduce three physical characteristics by 1
-1	Reduce two physical characteristics by 1
0	Reduce one physical characteristic by 1
1+	No effect

INJURY TABLE

1d6	Injury
1	Nearly killed. Reduce one physical characteristic by 1d6, reduce both other physical characteristics by 2 (or one of them by 4).
2	Severely injured. Reduce one physical characteristic by 1d6.
3	Missing eye or limb. Reduce Strength or Dexterity by 2.
4	Scarred. You are scarred and injured. Reduce any one physical characteristic by 2.
5	Injured. Reduce any physical characteristic by 1.
6	Lightly injured. No permanent effect.

MEDICAL BILLS

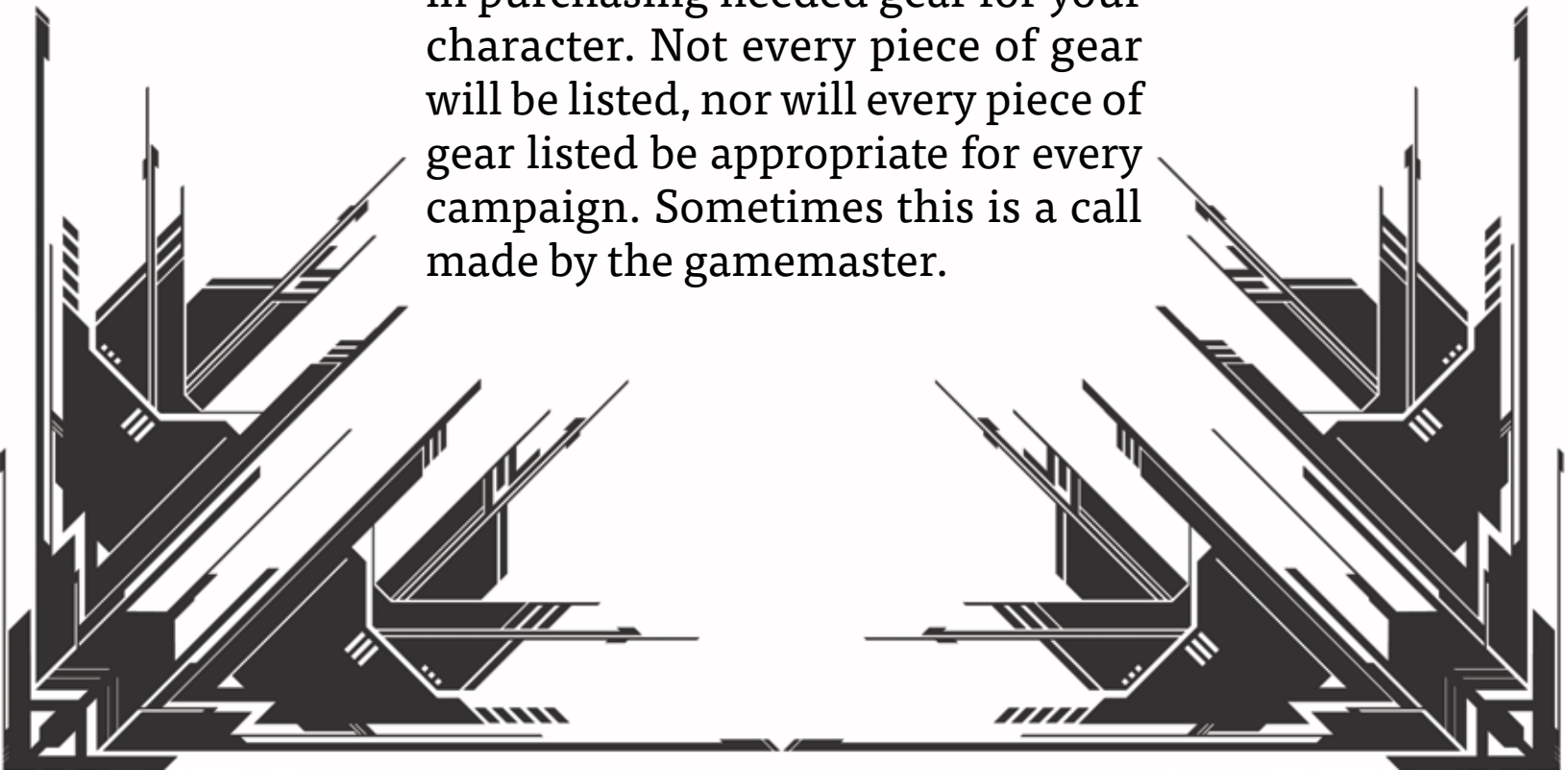
Career	Roll of 4+	Roll of 8+	Roll of 12+
Army/Navy/Marines	75%	100%	100%
Agent/Nobility/Scholar/Entertainer/Merchant/Citizen	50%	75%	100%
Scout/Rogue/Drifter	0%	50%	75%





EQUIPMENT

Even in the Double Spiral Galaxy people are in need of gear. They use everything from arms and armor to sometimes needing to buy a table or services. This section is designed to assist you in purchasing needed gear for your character. Not every piece of gear will be listed, nor will every piece of gear listed be appropriate for every campaign. Sometimes this is a call made by the gamemaster.



TECHNOLOGY LEVEL

The TECHNOLOGY LEVEL rating assigned to a world is intended to indicate the highest level of technology in common use. It does not matter whether this technology is locally produced or imported on a regular basis, so long as the world can support it with maintenance or new imports.

The rated level of technology is likely to be encountered close to the Starport or capital, and in major industrial or commercial centers. Further out from the main regions, TECHNOLOGY LEVEL is likely to be lower. This is particularly true of mid-tech worlds (TL 5-9) where large segments of the population live in rural areas with much more limited technology than their urban cousins. Lowtech (0-4) and High-tech (9+) worlds tend to be more uniform in technology distribution.

The TECHNOLOGY LEVEL chart is not a hard and fast rule. Examples of higher-tech equipment may exist, for example in the homes or businesses of the ruling elite, or in the hands of special military units. The TECHNOLOGY LEVEL rating ignores items like this, since they form a small proportion of the available tech base.

The following section attempts to give an overview of each Tech Level. Note that there will always be variations. There are other ways to do things, and sometimes a high-tech device can be copied crudely at lower tech levels; more advanced versions of a lower-tech item may be in use. People are always full of surprises, especially on unusual worlds where alternate technologies have been explored. Stone-age laser weaponry should be rather rare, though...

Note also that social development can be (and usually is) entirely independent of technology. While some forms of government need technological assistance, the majority can exist anywhere. Advanced republics are possible at the stone age level of technology, while brutal anachies or dictatorships are possible no matter how advanced the material technology of the world may be. It is particularly important to realize that

comparisons between TL and Old Earth Calendar technology do not mean that society will be in any way similar to the equivalent period of Earth's history. TL 7 does not mean flares, white suits and medallions in the disco...

TECHNOLOGY LEVEL 0 (Stone Age)

Dwelling in natural caves or crude shelters, TL 0 citizens generally have no writing and preserve knowledge through oral tradition. They are capable of domesticating animals for travel and work purposes and of constructing crude boats such as dugout canoes. Muscle is the only energy source available. Hunting and simple agriculture feed the people, who arm themselves with spears and clubs for the hunt and for war. Medicine is a matter of mystical tradition, and may include brutal or wildly incorrect "treatments" alongside excellent herbal remedies. Common injuries (such as broken limbs) can be treated reasonably effectively.

TECHNOLOGY LEVEL 1 (Bronze Age, Iron Age to Early Middle Ages)

Dwellings range from wooden huts to houses of stone or fired brick, and may be grouped into large settlements or even cities. Castles and other fortifications are possible. These settlements are supported by irrigated agriculture and may utilize water power. Communication is by messenger, and perhaps technological means such as signal fires, smoke and heliographs. Early wheeled vehicles (carts and chariots) are used in work, trade and war, while coastal voyages by galleys and early sailcraft are possible. Warfare is conducted with swords, bows and metal body armor, with sieges supported by catapults and similar engines. Advances in mathematics (devices such as the abacus and functions like trigonometry) make such weapons effective. Medicine is somewhat advanced, and many diseases can be diagnosed, though treatments are rather crude and often ineffective.

TECHNOLOGY LEVEL 2

(Circa 1400 to 1700)

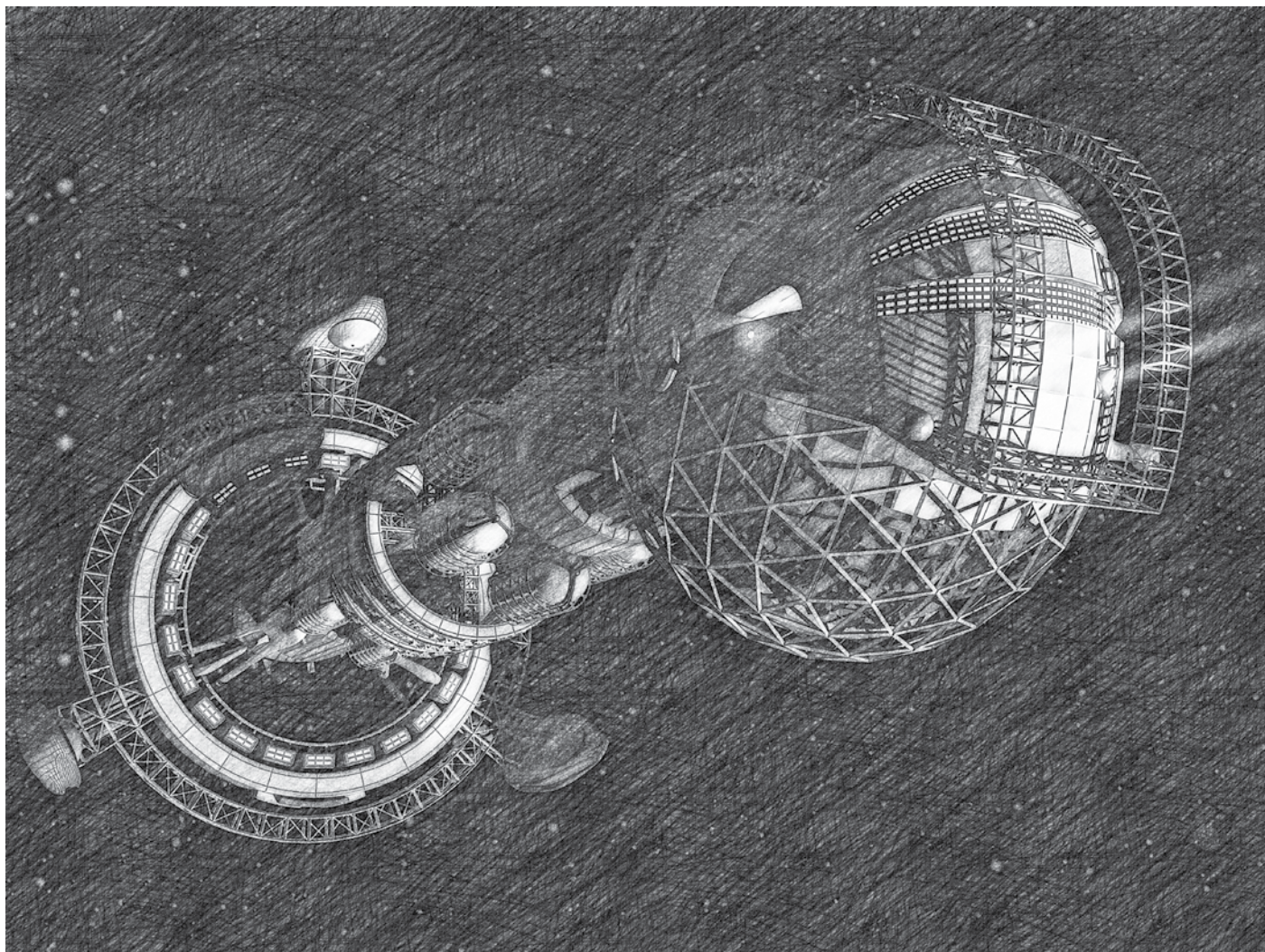
Increasingly large cities are connected by good roads and canals to facilitate trade and communication. Quite advanced (animal-powered) wheeled vehicles with early suspension use these roads, while at sea large sailing vessels make long voyages aided by advances in mathematics (including algebra) that lead to crude but effective navigation methods. In the cities, printing presses make the written word available to a larger segment of the population, while wind power increases productivity.

Warfare is conducted with advanced versions of TL 1 weapons, plus primitive firearms and cannon. Medicine advances to an understanding of internal anatomy.

TECHNOLOGY LEVEL 3

(Circa 1700 to 1860)

The road network is more or less universal, and travel is increasingly common. Stagecoaches and similar vehicles can make regular runs on land, while at sea advanced sailing ships can reliably navigate the entire globe. Cities now include cement structures while early experiments with electricity allow the creation of a limited electric telegraph system. Other experimentation leads to advanced mathematics (calculus) and a variety of inventions including hot air balloons. Firearms now dominate warfare, with muskets and flintlock rifles being the main small arms in use. Mobile cannon make battlefield artillery support highly effective, and crude but effective surgery is available to patch up the many victims.



TECHNOLOGY LEVEL 4 (Circa 1860 to 1900)

Steam powered railways and ships help open up remote areas, and quite large cities can be built in rugged or inhospitable areas. Air transport in the form of dirigibles is also possible, though of limited use. Steam engines are used in industry and in warfare, where ironclad warships and mechanical machineguns, combined with repeating cartridge firearms give the beginnings of a “modern” warfare capability. Other advances include vaccination, antiseptics and a variety of devices including primitive audio recordings, mechanical calculating machines and telephones.

TECHNOLOGY LEVEL 5 (Circa 1900 to 1940)

Petrochemical exploitation allows the creation of useful self-propelled ground vehicles and early aircraft, while rail and sea travel are commonplace. Advanced structures such as skyscrapers become possible, as do sealed, environmentally controlled buildings. Warfare is conducted with crude armored vehicles, good quality artillery and bulky automatic weapons.

Early submersibles and armored battleships are the main sea combatants. Crude rockets are capable of putting a satellite into orbit, while radar and radio communications are available, if unreliable. Other inventions include electric calculating machines and the use of X-rays in medicine.

TECHNOLOGY LEVEL 6 (Circa 1940-1970)

Cities can be built almost anywhere, including in deep jungle, mountain or arctic terrain. Advanced submersible craft begin exploration of the oceans, while manned rockets perform the same task in space. Satellites are common. Nuclear fission allows cheap power and the creation of nuclear warheads. Coupled with advanced radar, early computers (a massive

mainframe equivalent to the Model/1) and missile technology, space defense is now marginally possible, as is total global destruction. Warfare is conducted with early jet aircraft, advanced tanks and helicopters.

Fully-automatic small arms are commonplace. Medicine now understands viruses. Other advances include television and early prosthetic limbs.

TECHNOLOGY LEVEL 7 (Circa 1970-1990)

Large cities can now be built in any terrain, including underground, and are linked by satellite communications and early desktop computers. Travel is possible in a variety of vehicles from advanced high-speed trains and hovercraft to ultralight aircraft and supersonic airliners. Unmanned long-range space probes can be launched and solar power is becoming a viable largescale energy source. Weaponry is increasingly advanced, with experimental beam lasers and advanced missiles complementing composite armor for ground vehicles. Personal protection in the form of ballistic cloth gives a measure of defense against small arms. Organ transplants become more or less reliable, and Medical Slow drug is available.

TECH LEVEL 8 (Circa 1990-2100)

Orbital shuttles and space stations mark a new capability in travel, in that the civilization can now launch manned missions to other worlds in the system and even building small outposts there. On-planet, deep submergence vehicles and hypersonic aircraft further advance existing capabilities, while early artificial gills make lengthy underwater operations a possibility. Weather control is also feasible on a limited scale. Weaponry includes early particle accelerators and laser small arms, though neither is very effective. Massive computers are capable of advanced functions while optical communication (fiber-optics) and data storage increase computing power

still further. Geothermal power is reliably useful, and medicine is capable of creating artificial organs by a variety of means.

TECH LEVEL 9 (Circa 2300)

The Hugh Drive becomes available, though only producing the speed of .4C is possible. Early interstellar ships can be constructed (usually by linked drives). Superconductors and early gravitic technology open up new possibilities, including ultra-high-speed rail links and orbital cities. Primitive and bulky fusion plants provide cheap power for vehicles and installations. Huge self-contained cities (arcologies) are possible in any terrain, while reliable space vessels make in-system travel commonplace. Early grav tanks equipped with mass driver guns and lightweight composite armor make their appearance, while orbital combat vessels and grav-assisted fighter aircraft contribute to planetary defense. Small arms include reliable laser weapons, which creates a need for ablative personal anti-laser armor. Computers are capable of full voice control. Communication is mainly by flat-screen video link. Medicine is capable of cryogenic suspension.

TECH LEVEL 10 (2700 - Present)

The Gouldrive tested and proven. Marks the beginning of the Great Expansionist Movement, the settling of many independent systems, and the establishment of true interstellar trade.

CHARTS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Only equipment new in the *Double Spiral War* universe is listed in this section, appropriate equipment from the *Traveller Core Rulebook* is provided in a list. You will need to go to that book to determine the price and statistics of that equipment.

ARMOR

Light Infantry Armor

Medium Infantry Armor

Spacesuit

Spacesuit, armored

Pilot's flight suit

Heavy Grav Labor Suit

Police Armor

Shock Troop Armor

WEAPONS

Laser Pistol

Laser Rifle

Laser MG

Blaster Rifle

Blaster Cannon

Mobile Artillery Rifle

Heirloom Pistol (9mm)



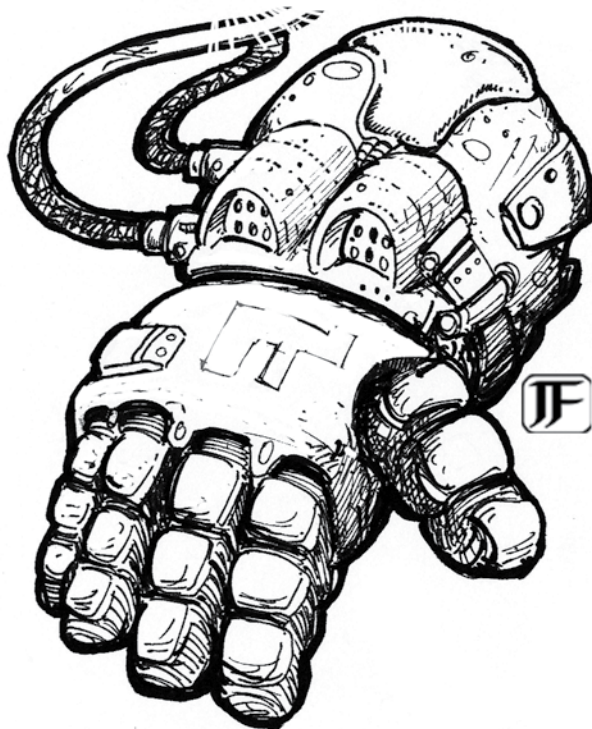
BAGS AND BOXES

Item	Weight	Cost
Alloyed Traveling Case		
– 10 lb capacity	5	\$65
– 40 lb capacity	10	\$70
– 75 lb capacity	15	\$75
Briefcase	2	\$50
Contractor's Field Bag	2	\$45
Daypack	2	\$40
Handbag	1	\$35
Range Pack		
– Standard	2	\$50
– Oversized	3	\$60
– Patrol Box	4	\$60

Notes:

Contractor's Field Bag: Shoulder bag capable of holding 10 lbs of equipment

Patrol Box: Large case used by traveling salesmen to display wares



CLOTHING

Item	Weight	Cost
Clothing Outfit		
– Business	3	75
– Casual	2	55
– Formal	3	90
Fatigues	3	60
Uniform	2	60
Ghillie Suit	5	45
Explorer Outfit	2	45
Outerwear		
– Coat	2	55
– Fatigue Jacket	2	50
– Overcoat	3	60
– Parka	3	60
Photojournalist's Vest		60
Windbreaker		50
Tool Belt		60

CHEMICAL AND MEDICAL GEAR

Item	Weight	Cost
Antitoxin	–	45
Hyper-Shot	–	45
Metabolism Boost	–	45
Radiation Sink	–	45
Panacea	–	45
Medikit, Advanced	3	50
Medikit, Fast Use	3	50

Notes:

Antitoxin: Counteracts many poisons

Hyper-Shot: Grants a boost to the user's reflexes

Metabolism Boost: Hypes the users healing rate for a day

Radiation Sink: Chemical designed to treat radiation exposure

Panacea: Chemical designed to treat many diseases

Medikit, Advanced: Grants a bonus to medical rolls

Medikit, Fast Use: Computers and gear allow for quickly treating injuries and disease

COMPUTERS AND CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

Item	Weight	Cost
Camera	–	85
Lapelcom	–	60
Computer		
– Desktop	10	125
– Laptop	5	130
Digital Audio Recorder	1	65
Digital Video Camera	2	70
Display Glasses	1	75

Notes:

Lapelcom: Communication device that sits on the lapel, works as a communicator.

Display Glasses: Displays information from your computer direct to the lenses

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

Item	Weight	Cost
Alloy Cable	3	35
Climbing Tag	1	40
Heads-Up Display	1	50
Laser Tripwire	–	40
Nano Beacon	–	55
Quick Weld	1	55
Fusion Torch	3	65
Intellipicks	1	80
Translator	–	45

Notes:

Alloy Cable: 100ft of cable with 10 ton test weight

Climbing Tag: Six-inch diameter disc which attaches to surfaces

Heads-Up Display: A pair of glasses designed to relay information to the wearer

Laser Tripwire: A device for triggering other devices.

Nano Beacon: A tracking beacon.

Quick Weld: Device for quick-welding doors shut so they can't be passed.

Fusion Torch: Handheld welding tool

Intellipicks: Aids in picking locks

Translator: Translates languages

SENSOR EQUIPMENT

Item	Weight	Cost
Chemical Analyzer	1	105
Geological Analyzer	1	105
Motion Sensor		85

Notes:

Chemical Analyzer: Detects and analyzes chemical compounds

Geological Analyzer: Detects and analyzes minerals

Motion Sensor: Detects motion within 100 ft

SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT

Item	Weight	Cost
Black Box	–	Illegal
Comm Interceptor	–	150
Nightvision Goggles	3	100

Notes:

Black Box: Handheld device to disguise source of a communication

Comm Interceptor: Device meant to intercept communications.

Nightvision Goggles: See in the dark.



SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT

Item	Weight	Cost
Binoculars		
– Standard	2	50
– Rangefinding	3	90
– Electro-Optical	4	95
Chemical Light-Sticks	1	25
Climbing Gear	10	70
Compass	–	40
Fire Extinguisher	3	55
Flash Goggles	2	90
Flashlight		
– Penlight	–	30
– Standard	1	35
– Battery Flood	2	45
Gas Mask	5	80
Mesh Vest	7	55
Portable Glow Lamp	–	35
Portable Stove	1	60
Purifier	2	60
Sleeping Bag	4	60
Tent		
– 2 person dome	4	70
– 4 person dome	7	75
– 8 person dome	10	80
Rations (12)	1	40

Notes:

Purifier: Purifies Water

Rations (12): Meals Ready to Eat

DESCRIPTIONS

Personal Weapons

Humans use lasers and blasters for personal weapons and as standard arms. Slugthrowers – mostly handguns – are still carried as heirloom weapons at least in the UCS.

Lasers are fast firing lightweight weapons. They are used as personal defense weapons by both civilians and the military. These are the standard weapons used by infantry all over the galaxy. Blasters are heavier fire weapons only legal for military use and used primarily to attack hardened positions. They can't fire as quickly but carry a much heavier punch.

Armor

Armor is a regular part of most space goers lives, whether it is a protective suit for laborers in heavy gravity situations, a pilot's flight suit or actual battle armor. The development of new alloys and materials has allowed for ever more practical and usable designs in protection.

Pilot's Flight Suit

This suit is designed to absorb some of the knocks that a pilot might take in the course of controlling a space craft. It only really provides protection from bludgeoning damage and vacuum, but that is essential in case of an emergency in space. Assuming the suit is in good condition, it holds an emergency supply of two-hours of air and keeps the wearer pressurized against the threat of open vacuum. Any slashing or piercing damage is likely to ruin the vacuum seal as well as the air supply since it would leak out.

Heavy Grav Labor Suit

This suit is built for those laborers working in areas of extreme gravity. The suit can be set to a preferred level of gravity and will negate as much as one G's worth of gravity for the wearer. However, it is a bulky suit and applies a -1 difficulty to Agility rolls while wearing it. While it provides some protection from attack, use in combat will likely ruin the suit for future use.

Every time the wearer is struck, roll a die against a Target Number of 4, starting with d12 and reducing it by one die type for each new strike. Once this roll is failed, the suit is useless for its intended purpose. In order to reset to d12, it needs to be repaired.

Police Armor

Light armor used by law enforcement personnel the galaxy over. This armor only covers the torso, but it is especially effective against armor piercing rounds. Not only does it cancel 4 points of AP, but it also is counted as armor rating +4 against such weapons. Against all other attacks, it acts as +2 Armor.

Infantry Body Armor

This body armor is worn by the average invasion troops in every human army and aliens likely have their own variation of this armor. It covers the entire body and doesn't inhibit action, though it does add to encumbrance.

Hard Suit

This is basically the infantry body armor with more plates added to vulnerable areas. It increases both defense and weight and is commonly given to units expected to be regularly placed in heavy fighting.

Shock Troop Armor

This body armor is worn by the first wave of invasion troops in any ground battle as a way to help ease some of the massed fire those troops take from the defensive positions. It imposes a -1 penalty to Agility rolls.

Alloyed Travelling Case

This is a basic, metal travelling case intended to provide secure transport for delicate materials. This might be electronics, information, medicine or so on. It is often bulky due to being built to protect the contents, which does not make it easy to open quickly. These cases often have combinations or other secure locking mechanisms to further protect the contents.

Briefcase

An old-fashioned carrying case used by businessmen and merchants to organize their papers.

Contractor's Field Bag

This is a shoulder bag meant to be a carrying case for a portable computer and assorted other pieces of equipment such as might be used by an engineer, geologist, surveyor or other professional in order to take readings and make notes out in the field.

Daypack

This is a bag meant to carry about ten pounds of clothes, books and daily necessities. It does not provide any protections for the things carried, since it is not meant for carrying fragile material. It is a basic traveler's pack meant for tourists and others taking trips of short durations.

Handbag

A simple handbag carried mostly on daily businesses. It can hold about two pounds of material and is usually meant for money, small snacks and other such things one might need while shopping or doing errands for an hour or two.

Range Pack

These massive backpacks are designed to carry a large amount of equipment and material for travelling in hard areas. It is similar to the daypack in that it is built more for economy of space rather than protection of what is inside. It is meant for carrying tents, survival gear and the like. The standard pack can hold eight pounds in the main areas and another four pounds in the outer zipped pockets. The oversized pack can hold twelve pounds in the main areas and another six pounds in the outer zipped pockets.

Patrol Box

These are large cases of either wood, plastic or metal built with many drawers to carry a large number of various items. They are often carried by travelling salesmen and those who have to carry a wide variety of equipment. Forensic

experts, locksmiths, computer technicians, hobbyist fishermen and so on are other sorts of individuals who use these boxes. These are designed to carry about five pounds of equipment.

Clothing

These are common everyday outfits worn for different purposes.

Fatigues

These are utility uniforms designed for the military. They can come in a variety of colors as camouflage in different sorts of terrain. When wearing the proper sort of camouflage, they provide a +1 bonus to active Stealth rolls.

Uniform

A uniform meant for military or law enforcement personnel. Some other companies require their employees to wear uniforms of similar quality.

Ghillie Suit

A suit of camouflage meant to allow a wearer to remain in hiding while in otherwise plain sight. These are all individually crafted and suited to specific terrains. But a properly used Ghillie Suit improves the wearer's Stealth rolls by 1 die type as long as they do not move.

Explorer's Outfit

The explorer's outfit is the standard uniform for bold adventurers taking their first steps into the unknown. It includes a set of cargo pants and a utility vest, each covered in numerous pockets and pouches for holding miscellaneous gear. Additionally, the explorer outfit features a pair of durable all-weather boots with a built-in knife sheath, as well as a neck-shading cap, a pair of utility sunglasses, and a belt that holds pouches of all kinds. The chief premise of the explorer's outfit is versatility, giving the explorer a basic set of clothing that can be added to and augmented for each particular mission.

Outerwear

In addition to keeping a character warm and dry, coats and jackets provide additional concealment for things a character is carrying.

Coat

An outer garment worn on the upper body. Its length and style vary according to fashion and use.

Fatigue Jacket

A lightweight outer garment fashioned after the fatigue uniforms worn by military personnel when performing their standard duties.

Overcoat

A warm coat worn over a suit jacket or indoor clothing.

Parka

This winter coat grants the wearer a +1 bonus for dealing with cold weather situations.

Photojournalist's Vest

Made of cotton with mesh panels to keep the wearer cool, the photojournalist's vest has numerous obvious—and hidden—pockets. It counts as loose and bulky clothing when used to conceal Small or smaller weapons, and also grants the "specially modified to conceal object" bonus when used to conceal Tiny or smaller objects. See Concealed Weapons and Objects.

Windbreaker

This is a lightweight jacket made of wind-resistant material.

Tool Belt

This sturdy leather belt has numerous pockets and loops for tools, nails, pencils, and other necessities for repair and construction work, making it easy to keep about 10 pounds of items on hand. The pockets are open, however, and items can easily fall out if the belt is tipped.

Anti-Toxin

This comes in a ready to use vial that is already set up to be injected into the blood stream. Each Anti-Tox is designed for a category of poisons and increases the patient's Vigor die type by one for rolls against the targeted poisons for the next hour.

Hyper-Shot

Once injected, this chemical gives the user a +1 on Agility and Strength checks, also he can swap cards with the person with the next highest for the next initiative sequence. However, once the benefit has passed, the user needs to make a Vigor roll or else suffer a full day of -2 to Agility and -1 to Vigor rolls. This chemical is known to be habit forming.

Metabolism Boost

This chemical is used by the medical profession to boost the healing rate of injured individuals. It effectively doubles the user's healing rate for one twenty-four hour period. However, it also comes with an equivalent doubling of appetite. As such it is generally only used for a short term in emergencies.

Radiation Sink

This is an injector kit often found in first aid kits along with the anti-toxin and panacea. Once injected, the material soaks up any radiation within the body and then passes out of the system harmlessly. It gives the patient an increased Vigor die type for resisting radiation poisoning for the next three hours.

Panacea

This is a chemical designed to boost the immune system to better deal with infections. It will give an increase in the Vigor die for rolls to resist disease for the next four hours. This is good for giving a boost to stop the initial infection when someone might be in a situation prone to exposure.

Advanced Medikit

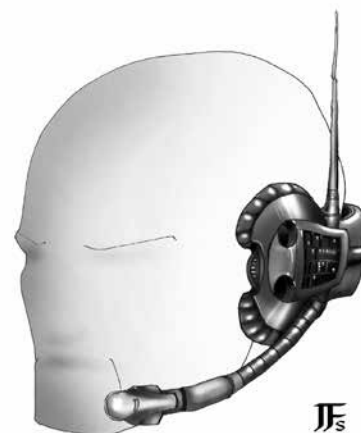
This package contains everything a medic or doctor needs to ply their trade. It can act anywhere from a first aid kit to a field surgery kit.

Fast-Use Medikit

This is a kit with several preset uses of drugs and material such that it can allow a medic to treat people with increased speed. All of the equipment is intended for a single use and, overall, each kit has enough for ten uses before it needs to be refilled.

Lapelcom

A communication device common among the military, this is the size of a small brooch. It allows the wearer to communicate with other individuals on the same network.



Computer

Computers are nearly ubiquitous on spacecraft and the more advanced planets. They generally come in a variety of sizes and types, with desktops and laptops being the most common.

Digital Audio and Video Recorders

These are recorders that are highly specialized for recording either video or sound. They can record at much better quality than single unit cameras do and thus are the choice equipment for news and entertainment cameramen.

Display Glasses

These look like regular sunglasses, but are designed to display the information from a computer on the lenses, thus limiting the need for a monitor. The physical world is obscured from view while wearing these.

Alloy Cable

A 100 ft long cable capable of holding as much as ten tons of weight, used all over the galaxy for various purposes such as climbing, securing cargo or even as crane cable.

Climbing Tag

A piece of equipment that can be fitted to a length of alloy cable in order to create a climbing rope. It will attach to surfaces of any kind via an adhesive, microscopic hooks or magnetic pull.

Heads Up Display

Similar to the display glasses, these glasses are designed to display similar types of information but without obscuring the rest of the world. The graphics are, by necessity, not as detailed as on the display glasses, but they don't need to match the graphics of a full computer monitor either. The HUD can be used for range finding and to highlight specific targets, giving the wearer a +1 bonus to attempts to keep track of highlighted topics.

Laser Tripwire

This device, sold as a paired set, is set up across a position so that an unbroken and invisible beam of light is formed. When this light is broken, the device sends a signal. Any other piece of equipment can be set to receive that signal so that this can trigger a trap, an alarm, camera or any of a number of other things.

Nano-Beacon

This is a minutely sized tracking beacon that can be used to track cargo and people. It transmits out to ten miles and will last for one week. It can last indefinitely if wired into another piece of equipment.

Quick Weld

This is a small device that can be placed at the point where two metal surfaces meet. Within a couple of seconds of being activated, the device essentially self-destructs into molten metal and then rapidly cools down again, producing a quick weld point. This is primarily used for

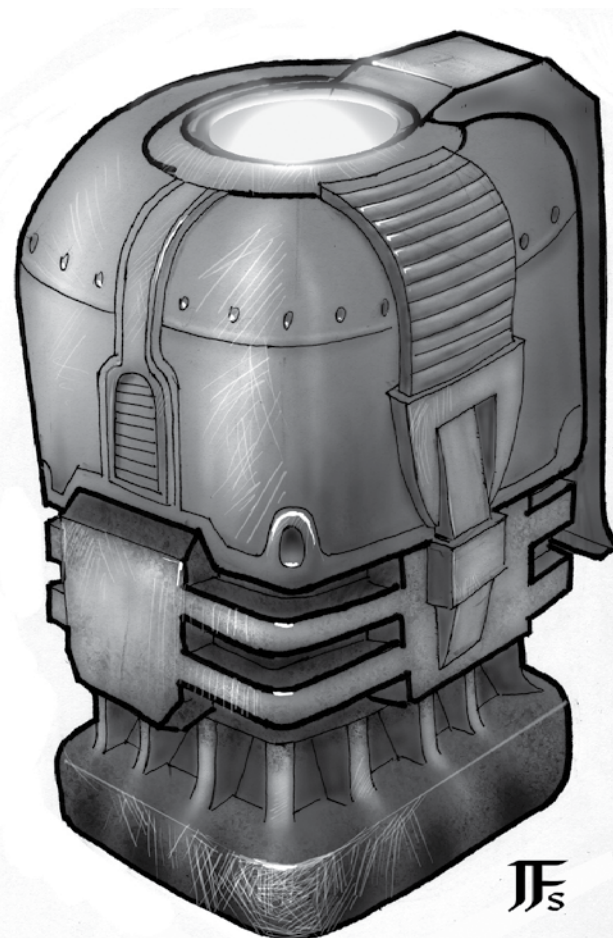
emergency repairs in various facilities and spacecraft, however, they have also been used by criminals and operatives to cut off pursuit by welding doors closed behind them.

Fusion Torch

This device is a handheld welding tool used by professionals all over the galaxy. It deals 3d10 damage to inanimate objects, but can be used as an improvised weapon dealing 1d10 damage to living beings.

Intellipicks

This piece of equipment handles some of the difficulty of picking locks for the user. They are used by police officers, locksmiths and criminals. There are varieties for both electronic and mechanical locks. This increases the die type of the smallest die by one when making Lock-picking rolls.



TS

Translator

This device translates spoken languages for the owner so that they can communicate with other people despite differing languages. It can come with up to four languages. Roll a d8 with a -1 penalty against a Target Number of 4 every ten minutes to see if the programming makes a significant error in translation.

Analyzers, Geological and Chemical

These devices provide a +2 bonus to the appropriate science knowledge skill when focused on identifying and locating a specific mineral or chemical.

Motion Sensor

These devices detect and display motion within one hundred feet. The sensor itself has to be stationary or it will produce multiple false positives.

Black Box

This very illegal device works by disguising the source of a communication by copying signals and ID messages of nearby sources of signals. Roll a d8 and this presents the difficulty for the receiver to note the fraud. Someone with Knowledge (Computers) can replace that roll with their own Knowledge (Computer) roll if they wish.

Comm Interceptor

This device is used to grab signals out of the area and listen in on them. It is used by intelligence and law enforcement operatives to quietly perform surveillance and listen in to the conversations carrying on in the air around them. The user needs to make a Knowledge (Computers) roll against a Target Number set by the GM to find a relevant conversation to listen in to.

Nightvision Goggles

These devices remove the penalty for Darkness up to, but not including, total darkness. However, bright flashes of light will blind the wearer for three rounds.

Binoculars

These give a +2 bonus to visual Notice rolls only for the purpose of negating range penalties.

Range-Finding Binoculars

As per the standard binoculars, but also give the user an accurate range reading at the center of the display.

Electro-Optical

These can be used to zoom in, record images and data. The information can then be shared with computers.

Chemical Light Sticks

These light sticks produce light in a ten foot radius for ten minutes after being activated.

Climbing Gear

This is everything needed for safe climbing. It provides a +1 bonus to Climbing rolls.

Compass

A small item which will point to the current planet's magnetic north.

Fire Extinguisher

An emergency fire-extinguisher meant for dealing with small fires. It needs to be re-pressurized and re-filled after each use.

Flash Goggles

These protect the wearer from sudden, bright flashes of light such as from stun grenades.

Penlight

This small pocket light produces about as much light as a candle.

Flashlight

This standard light produces a cone of light thirty feet long and twenty feet wide.

Battery Flood

This light produces a cone of light a hundred feet long and forty feet wide.

Gas-Mask

A gas mask is used to breathe safely within an area of hazardous vapors. They have a two hour air supply similar to the pilot's flight suit, but are also built with filters and provide a +2 to Vigor rolls to resist contact or gaseous poisons.

Mesh Vest

This is a vest with numerous pockets and hooks that can carry up to forty pounds of equipment. It is also designed to ease the weight on a person so that the carried equipment is counted as half the same amount of weight for purposes of Max Load.

Portable Glow Lamp

This provides light in a thirty foot radius.

Portable Stove

A small stove designed for camp cooking.

Purifier

This is a water filtration and purification device. It removes impurities and toxins from water to make it safe for drinking. After purifying ten gallons, the filters and chemicals used need to be replaced or else the processed water might come out in an even worse quality than it went in. The filters and chemicals cost about a quarter of the cost of the whole machine.

Sleeping Bag

A bag designed to allow one person to sleep warmly overnight. They are typically designed for temperate zone winters, but users will require more shelter for anything colder.

Tents

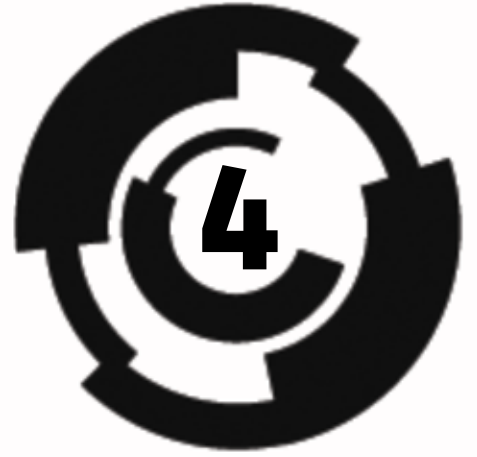
These tents provide shelter from the elements for the stated number of people.

Rations

All the nutrients a person needs for a full day of moderate activity.

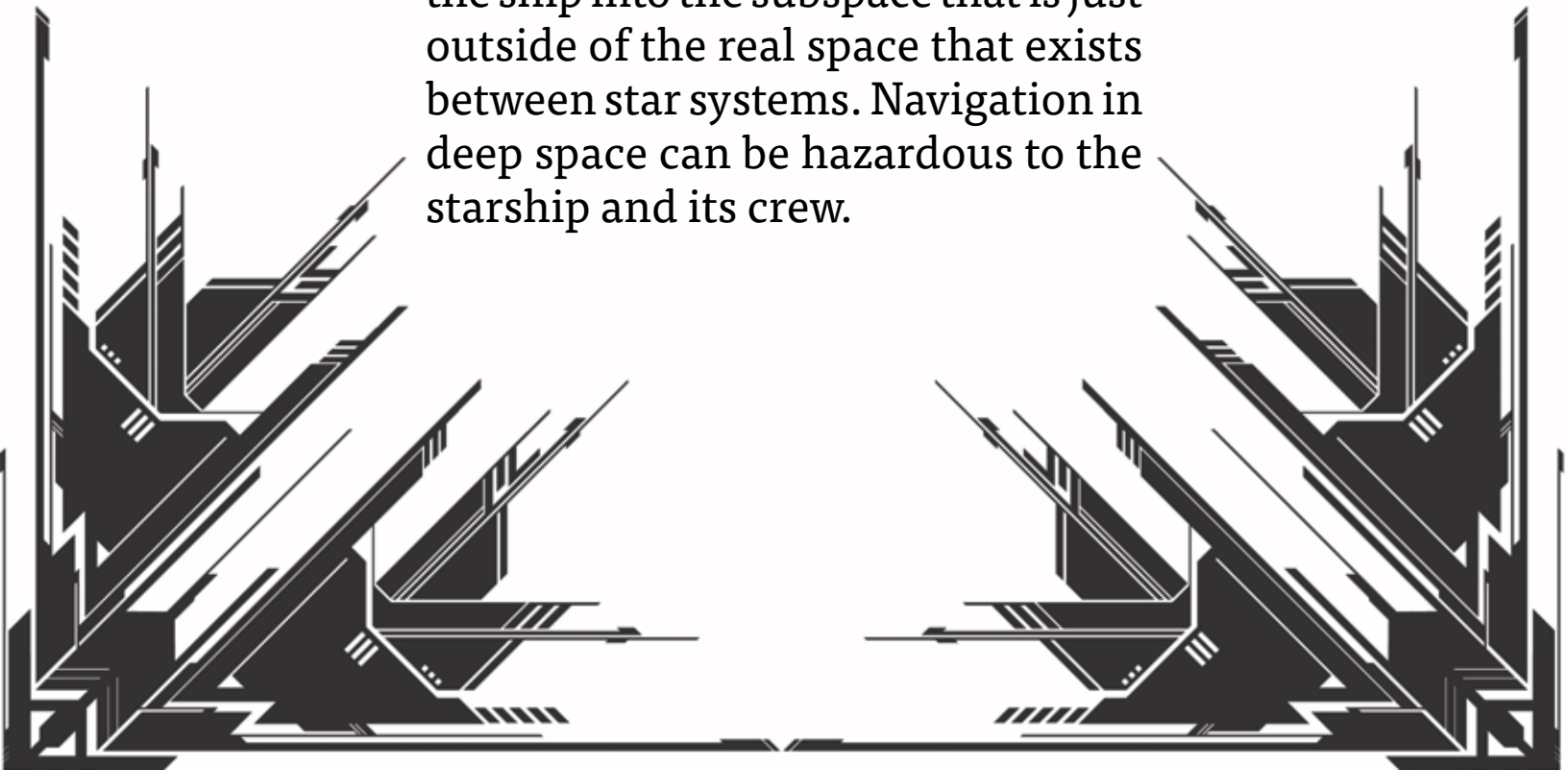
Mobile Artillery Rifle

After the first attacks on the border and in preparation for the attacks on Sutton and Matthews, the UCS brought forth a new infantry weapon. It is a long barreled rifle that can be carried and fired by a single man. One barrage by three men is enough to obliterate most common buildings and three volleys is enough to destroy shielded fortification walls. One man can carry one hundred rounds of fire and an extra two hundred can be carried by a squad of twenty-three men.



STARSHIPS AND SPACE TRAVEL

Like in most science fiction settings, ships in the Double Spiral Galaxy travel by faster-than-light travel. In the Double Spiral Universe they refer to FTL travel as warp drive, which pushes the ship into the subspace that is just outside of the real space that exists between star systems. Navigation in deep space can be hazardous to the starship and its crew.



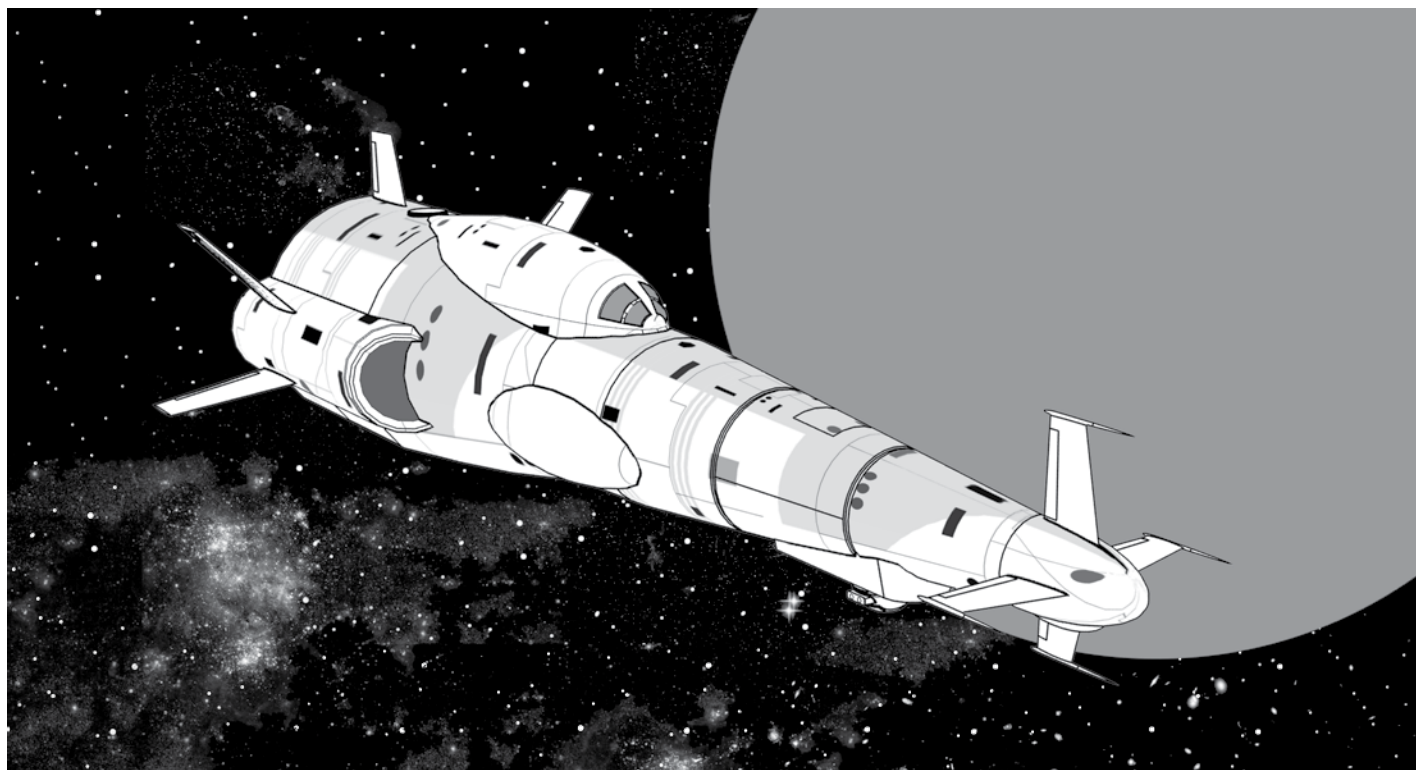
TRAVELLING THROUGH SUBSPACE

Subspace travel can seem slow, a ship must spend anywhere from 6-8 hours being pushed toward light speed, powered by trans linked fusion drives, before the Gould drive takes over to launch the ship into subspace. Ships in the **Double Spiral Galaxy** do not use a jump drive; instead the starships in the **Double Spiral Galaxy** are propelled by what humanity calls the Gould-drive. It takes over after the ship reaches 1.4 times the relative speed and as such relative velocity is no longer measurable. All ships, even the aliens, are powered by a Gould-drive, or its equivalent. The Gould-drive has allowed ships to go farther and faster. Ships can generally travel as far as 6500 Light years on a single warp for most civilian starships; military starships can travel a bit farther.

NAVIGATION MISHAPS

On a navigation mishap they can end up anywhere from being light-years off course, to being trapped in the event horizon of a previously undiscovered black hole. If an astrogation roll fails then you roll on the Navigation mishap table.

Effect	Hazard
	Travel distances are increased by 25%
-1	Subspace conditions are difficult. Increase travel time by 50%
-2	Subspace conditions are very difficult. Increase travel time by 75%
-3	Subspace conditions are extremely difficult. Increase travel time by 100%
-4	Unforeseen forces in Subspace damage the ship. The ship suffers the equivalent of a double hit and sustains 6 damage, plus a Crew Hit. If the ship survives, travel time is increased by 100%
-5	As above, but the fierce gravitational forces attempt to tear the ship apart. Damage is 4d6, plus a Crew Hit. If the ship survives, travel time is increased by 100%
-6	Ship hits a previously undiscovered navigational hazard (Gamemasters Choice)



LIGHT-SPEED FREIGHTERS

There are a wide variety of freighters on the market produced by all the major civilizations of the **Double Spiral Galaxy**. The various manufacturers boast a range of features and capabilities but most of the real differences are minimal. The crew for such vessels is minimal, designed for two people, though a single person can handle them with very little difficulty. These

are a favorite craft of the independent trader as well as the average smuggler, while the corporations maintain small fleets of such vessels.

Most light-speed freighters double as the homes for their crew. The majority have fairly comfortable accommodations including a handful of berths that can handle passengers and a general living area for eating and socializing. Concealed cargo bays are a common feature of these ships, though hardly ever an official one, but there's a lot of dead space behind the decorative stylings

Strategic Launchship

		TL13	Tons	Price
Hull	30,000 dtons	Hull 200 (per section)		3000
	3 sections	Structure 200 (per section)		
	Cylinder configuration	Partially Streamlined, 80% weapons bearing		
	Self-Sealing			300
Armor	Crystaliron	12 points	4,500	1800
	Reflec Coating	3 points vs. lasers		3000
	Radiation Shielding	6 points vs radiation damage		7500
	Nuclear Damper x2	Reduces nuclear damage by 4d6, removes crew hit	60	80
Gouldrive		30,000 dton portal	1,200	2400
Manuever Drive		Thrust 2	375	187.5
Power Plant		Rating 2	600	1500
Bridge	3 Command Modules	Holographic Controls (+2 Initiative)	450	562.5
	Flag Bridge		240	420
Computer	Core/7	Rating 80		70
Electronics	Countermeasure	Enhanced Signal Processing, Distributed Arrays	27	42
Weapons	Bay #1 - #20	Torpedo Bay	1,020	240
	Turret #1 - #70	Triple Turret (Pulse Laser x3)	70	175
	Turret #71 - #140	Triple Turret (Sandcaster x3)	70	122.5
	Turret #141 - #210	Triple Turret (Beam Laser x3)	70	280
	Turret #211 - 280	Single Turret (Particle Beam)	70	350
Ammunition		480 Torpedoes	1,200	
		20,000 Sandcaster barrels	1,000	
Fuel	800	Four weeks of operations	800	
Cargo	1500	6 months endurance before resupply	1,500	
Staterooms	420		1,680	210
Extras	Fuel Scoops			1
	40 Fuel Processors	Processes 800 dtons/day	40	2
	460 Escape Pods		230	46
	55 Probe Drones		11	5.5
	Repair Drones		300	60
	16 Armories		32	8
	Medical Facilities		48	16

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Strategic Launchship

	TL13		Tons	Price
	15 Briefing Rooms		60	7.5
	Machine Shop		8	2
	Electronics Shop		8	2
	Brig		8	1
Craft	78 Light Fighters (20 dtons)	Full Size hangar	2,028	—
	78 Heavy Fighters (40 dtons)	Full Size hangar	4,056	
	Fighter Fuel	20 days operations for all fighters	800	
	Fighter Ammunition	20 sorties	5,000	
	Modular Cutter ×4	Full Size hangar	260	89.88
	Extra Cutter Modules ×4		120	3.96
	Ship's Boat	Full Size hangar	39	17.829
	Cutter & Boat Fuel	4 weeks operations for all non-fighters	20	
Launch Tubes	2× 40 dton		2,000	1000
Software	Maneuver/0	Included		

Total Tonnage & Cost

Strategic Launchship Section Hit Tables

	Engineering	Main	Forward			
	Hull 200	Hull 200	Hull 200			
	Structure 200	Structure 200	Structure 200			
	External	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal
2	Hull	Crew	Hull	Crew	Hull	Crew
3	Nuclear Damper	Gouldrive	Staterooms	Cutter Hangar	Hull	Structure
4	Maneuver Drive	Power Plant	Launch Tube	Light Fighter Hangar	Sensors	Ship's Boat
5	35x Beam Laser Turrets	Fuel	35x Sandcaster Turrets	Fighter Fuel & Ammo	35x Beam Laser Turrets	Bridge
6	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure
7	Armor	Hold	Armor	Hold	Armor	Hold
8	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure	Hull	Structure
9	35x Sandcaster Turrets	Fuel	35x Particle Beam Turrets	Heavy Fighter Hangar	35x Particle Beam Turrets	Computer
10	Maneuver Drive	Gouldrive	Launch Tube	Torpedo Bays	Distributed Array	Structure
11	35x Pulse Laser Turrets	Power Plant	Hull	Repair Drones	35x Pulse Laser Turrets	Flag Bridge
12	Hull	Critical	Hull	Critical	Hull	Critical

of the individual models which can be easily converted into usable cargo space. They are easy to maintain, easy to pilot and can survive a great deal of wear and tear for their size. A few are armed in order to provide defense against pirates and raiders, but for the most part the light-speed freighter pilot is the trucker of the **Double Spiral Galaxy**.

Trade freighters like this form the basic life's blood of the trade in the galaxy. Small independent traders who own or lease their own ships form the majority of the merchants that make up the interstellar trade lines. Most people have seen one of these sorts of ships at least once in their lives, even if it is just as the ship is passing overhead on its way to breaking atmosphere. This class of vessel is the first most people think of when asked about spacecraft.

LIGHT-SPEED FREIGHTERS

Launchships

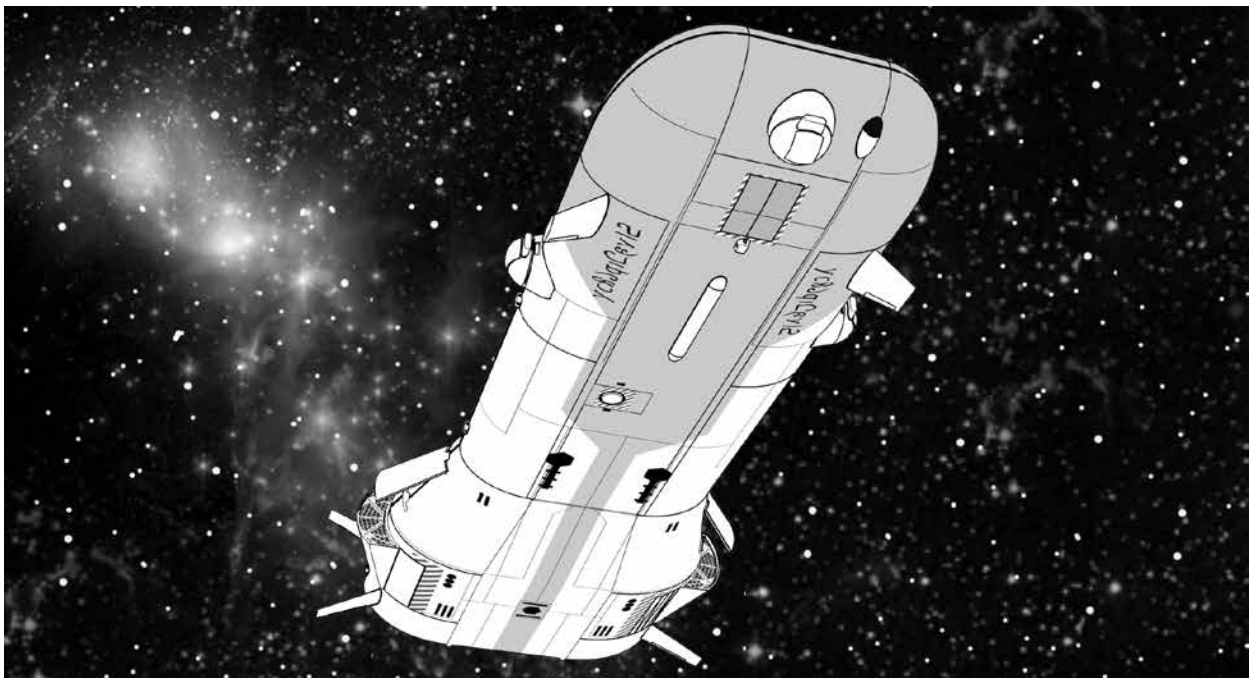
The launchships of the UCS and Sondak Confederacy serve the role of the aircraft carriers of the modern day. They are a mobile tactical base providing ammo and fuel for several squadrons' worth of one and two-man fighters, bombers and scouts. Launchships are considered to be the keystone of any offensive or defensive unit by both sides in the **Double Spiral War**.

These craft are well suited to serve as flagships. While all military craft are capable of monitoring large portions of local space and keeping

track of where everybody is, the nature of the launchship requires a higher standard of Command and Control capability. Even if they aren't the flagship of their task force, they need to be able to monitor the positions of their own fighters and relay instructions. The c&c facilities that make that sort of coordination simple are easily adapted toward monitoring and commanding entire fleets. By comparison, other ships in the fleet have far more minimal c&c requirements and while they can serve as flagship, would not prove to be as convenient.

Launchships also enjoy a central place in the propaganda and recruiting material of both sides of the conflict. In the eyes of the public, the launchships are the homes of the highly romanticized fighters and their pilots. Most civilians connect launchships with heroism and leadership in the fleets and most new recruits enter the fleets in hopes being assigned to a launchship as either part of the fighter wings or the command staff. Even being part of the flight crews has a certain level of mystique to it.

The prestige of the launchships means that more thought is given toward the aesthetic design of these ships and their interior than is true for most other ships in the fleets. Both the UCS and the Sondak are highly aware of the place these vessels have in the public eye and make the best use of it possible. Launchships are more often upgraded when compatible new tech becomes available.



CHAPTER 4

Tactical Launchship

		TL13	Tons	Price
Hull	30,000 dtons	Hull 200 (per section)		3000
	3 sections	Structure 200 (per section)		
	Cylinder configuration	Partially Streamlined, 80% weapons bearing		
	Self-Sealing			300
Armor	Crystaliron	13 points	4,875	1950
	Reflec Coating	3 points vs. lasers		3000
	Radiation Shielding	6 points vs radiation damage		7500
	Nuclear Damper x2	Reduces nuclear damage by 4d6, removes crew hit	60	80
Gouldrive		30,000 dton portal	1,200	2400
Manuever Drive		Thrust 3	450	225
Power Plant		Rating 3	750	1875
Bridge	3 Command Modules	Holographic Controls (+2 Initiative)	450	562.5
	Flag Bridge		240	420
Computer	Core/7	Rating 80		70
Electronics	Countermeasure	Enhanced Signal Processing, Distributed Arrays	27	42
Weapons	Bay #1 - #20	Large Torpedo Bay	2,020	480
	Turret #1 - #70	Triple Turret (Pulse Laser x3)	70	175
	Turret #71 - #140	Triple Turret (Sandcaster x3)	70	122.5
	Turret #141 - #210	Triple Turret (Beam Laser x3)	70	280
	Turret #211 - 280	Single Turret (Particle Beam)	70	350
Ammunition		1,200 Torpedoes	3,000	
		20,000 Sandcaster barrels	1,000	
Fuel	1500	Six weeks of operations	1,500	
Cargo	2400	9 months endurance before resupply	2,400	
Staterooms	350		1,400	175
Extras	Fuel Scoops			1
	75 Fuel Processors	Processes 1500 dtons/day	75	3.75
	440 Escape Pods		220	44
	50 Probe Drones		10	5
	Repair Drones		300	60
	13 Armories		26	6.5
	Medical Facilities		48	16
	8 Briefing Rooms		32	4
	Machine Shop		8	2
	Electronics Shop		8	2
	Brig		8	1
Craft	39 Light Fighters (20 dtons)	Full Size hangar	1,014	
	26 Heavy Fighters (40 dtons)	Full Size hangar	1,352	
	Fighter Fuel	30 days operations for all fighters	468	
	Fighter Ammunition	30 sorties	2,340	
	Modular Cutter x4	Full Size hangar	260	89.88
	Extra Cutter Modules x4		120	3.96
	Ship's Boat	Full Size hangar	39	17.829
	Cutter & Boat Fuel	4 weeks operations for all non-fighters	20	
Launch Tubes	4x 40 dton		4,000	2000

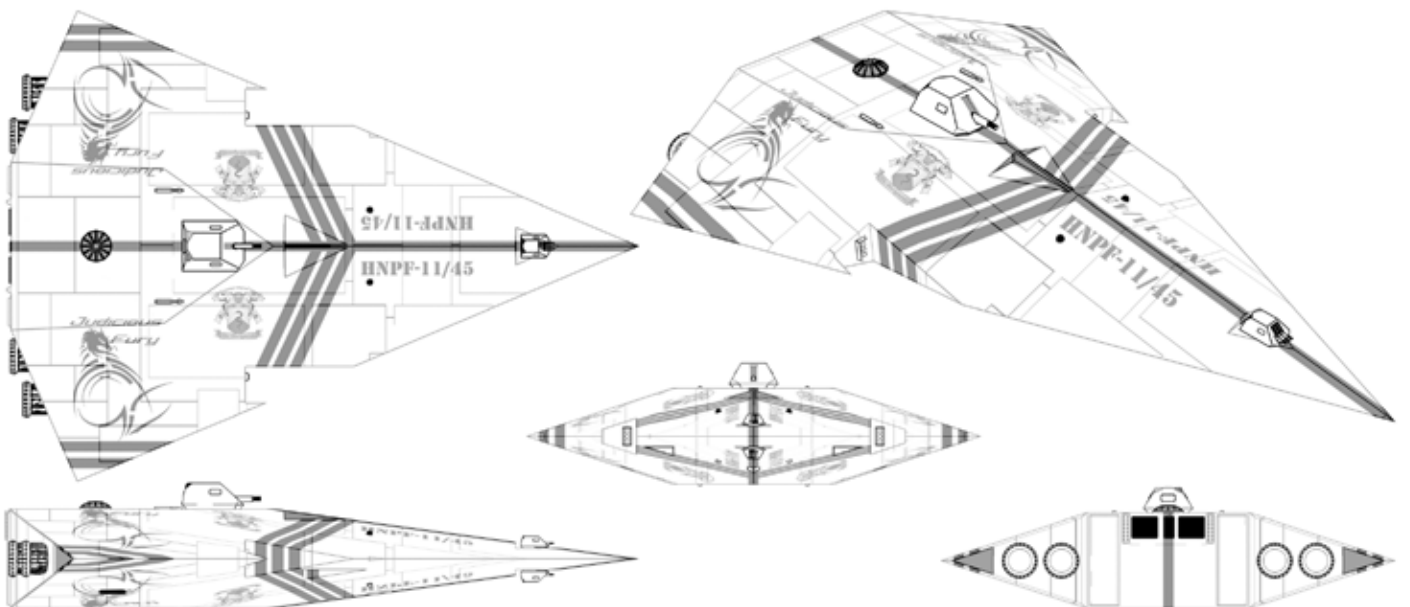
Tactical Launchship

		TL13	Tons	Price
Software	Maneuver/0	Included		
	Library/0	Included		
	Gouldrive Control/2	Rating 10		0.2
	Evade/3	Rating 25		3
	Fire Control/5	Rating 25		10
	Auto-Repair/2	Rating 20		10
Total Tonnage & Cost			30,000	25,277.12
				-2,527.71
				Total Price 22,749.41

Crew	Department	Crew Damage Track	% of Full Crew
15	Command	Dead	0%
17	Engineering	Survivors (-4)	1-10%
321	Gunnery	Skeleton (-2)	11-25%
209	Flight	Half (-1)	26-50%
0	Troops	Weakened	51-75%
90	Service	Full	76-90%
0	Frozen Watch	Battle -- Starting Position	91-120%
652	Total	Overstrength	121-150%
21	Passenger Staterooms	Massively Overstrength	151%+
0	Low Berth Passengers		

Fighters

Fighters are one and two man craft that serve a number of roles in battle. They are agile, with a great deal of sub-light speed and mobility as



compared to other craft. Given their small size, most fighter craft are highly specialized to perform specific tasks. One such fighter might be designed to carry torpedoes or other heavy ordnance for the sake of striking capital ships. Other fighters are designed for greater maneuverability and with quick firing, highly accurate laser cannons and for the sake of engaging and destroying other small craft. Most space fighters are specialized for vacuum operations but a few are also capable of atmospheric flight. Fighters are not large enough to be practically equipped with Gould Drives and thus are dependent on launchships to be deployed to their operating theaters.

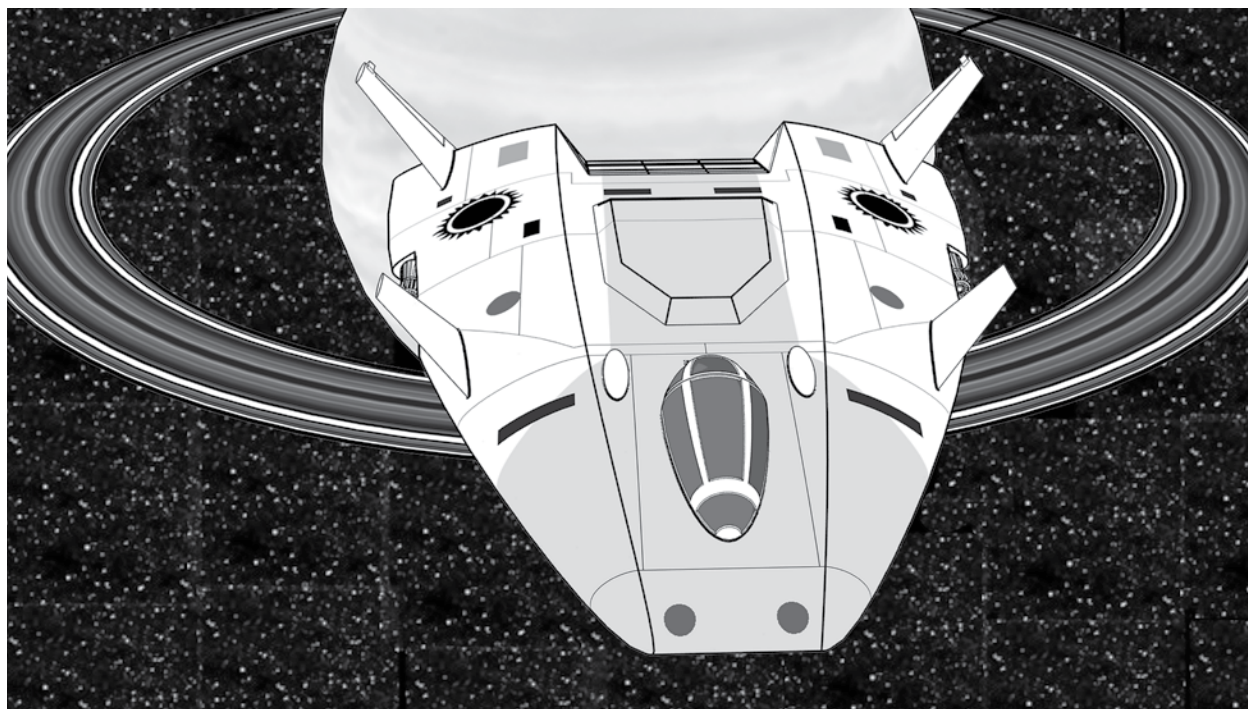
Fighters are the class of ship that is most frequently impacted by new technologies. Larger ships can be retrofitted to new technologies rather easily, but changes to things like weapons and engines in a fighter often require changes to the basic structure of the fighter, essentially requiring the creation of an entire new model. The public does not often notice these changes since the fighters are wrapped in extraneous structure designed for appearance's sake and the common names of most fighters remain the same from year to year. There is a consistent

practice of decommissioning the oldest fighters and putting them to use by planetary peace-keeping forces as the newer models are assigned to the launchships. In general, it is assumed that fighters will have a five-year life-span in the military and a ten to twenty year life-span in law-enforcement use after that.

Fighters, along with the independent life-speed freighters, are the most romanticized space craft. Like with the pilots of the freighters, there is a myth of independence surrounding the pilots of these craft. The extent of their myth is such that it has been extended to the launchships that carry them from place to place. It is assumed that fighter pilots are the best of the best, brash men and women that have no sense of fear or humility. Both the fighters and their pilots are prone toward having colorful and flamboyant model names and call signs. Squadrons are prone to taking on unofficial unit designations and customizing the appearance of their ships. Reputation is very important to fighter pilots in general.

Dropships

The most common way to get people and materials from place to place is to use a freighter



Light Fighter		TL 12	Tons	Price	E TRAVEL
Hull	20 tons	Hull 0 (Personal scale 4)		1.2	
		Structure 1 (Personal scale 6)			
	Streamlined			0.12	
	Stealth	-4 to sensors to locate or lock on		4	
	Radiation Shielding	(+6 armor vs radiation)		5	
Armor	Crystaliron	12 points armor	3	72	
Manuever Drive	sM	Thrust 12	7	14	
Power Plant	sM	Rating 12	5.1	9	
Bridge	Cockpit	One crewman	1.5	0.1	
Computer	Model/5	Rating 25		10	
Electronics	Basic Military	DM +0	2	1	
Weapons	Hardpoint #1	Fixed Mount Beam Laser	1	1.1	
Fuel		1 day	0.2		
Cargo			0.2		
Software	Maneuver/0				
	Library/0				
	Evade/3	Rating 25		3	
	Fire Control/5	Rating 25		10	
			20	130.52 MCr	
				-13.052 less 10% standard design	
				Total Price 117.468 MCr	

Heavy Fighter		TL 12	Tons	Price	
Hull	40 tons	Hull 1 (Personal scale 8)		1.4	
		Structure 1 (Personal scale 10)			
	Streamlined			0.14	
	Stealth	-4 to sensors to locate or lock on		4	
	Radiation Shielding	(+6 armor vs radiation)		10	
Armor	Crystaliron	12 points armor	6	84	
Manuever Drive	sT	Thrust 9	13	26	
Power Plant	sT	Rating 9	8.7	20	
Bridge	Cockpit	Two crewmen (pilot, gunner)	3	0.2	
Computer	Model/5	Rating 25		10	
Electronics	Very Advanced	DM +2	5	4	
Weapons	Hardpoint #1	Double Turret (Missile Rack/ Beam Laser)	1	2.25	
Ammo		36 Missiles	3		
Fuel		1 day	0.3		
Software	Maneuver/0				
	Library/0				
	Evade/3	Rating 25		3	
	Fire Control/5	Rating 25		10	
			40	174.99 MCr	
				-17.499 less 10% standard design	
				Total Price 157.491 MCr	

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or other such transport and offload at a starport. However, in some cases there is no starport or the starport cannot be used and the material involved is too awkward to offload manually. In those cases, there are dropships. These are massive transports that are designed to drop landing pods that are built to facilitate the off-loading of personnel and materials.

For the most part, people associate dropships with the military and invasion fleets in particular, but there are other purposes. Dropships are generally used to carry infantry to a planet's surface. Because the passengers require no

of new colonies and the delivery of relief in the face of natural disasters and other emergencies. In fact, the basic design of dropships is based on the most ancient of colony ships dating all the way back to the Milky Way Galaxy. There are some definite differences between the various sorts of dropships.

Colony ships are largely one-trip vehicles and the landing craft are not intended to be recovered. On the other hand, the facilities that these ships carry are largely more robust than with the other two varieties. The off-loading facilities in the landing pods of colony ships are meant

Drop Ship				Tons	Price
Hull	100 tons	Hull 2 (Personal scale 20)		2	
	Streamlined	Structure 2 (Personal scale 20)		0.2	
	Self-Sealing			1	
	Stealth	-4 to sensors to locate or lock on		10	
	Heat Shielding			10	
	Radiation Shielding	(+6 armor vs radiation)		25	
	Reflec	(+3 armor vs lasers)		10	
Armor	Crystaliron	10 points armor		12.5	1
Manuever Drive	sS	Thrust 5		12	24
Power Plant	sS	Rating 5		8.1	18
Bridge	Cabin	Pilot, Engineer, Gunner		9	0.5
Computer	Model 4	Rating 20			5
Electronics	Advanced	DM +1		3	2
Weapons	Hardpoint #1	Triple turret: Pulse laser, Sandcaster, PGMP-12		1	1.77
Ammo		20 Sandcaster Barrels		1	
Fuel		3 days		0.9	
Cargo		Mission-configurable payload space		45.5	
		Example: seating for 60 Marines takes 30 dtons and costs 1.8 MCr			
Extras	Airlock	Personnel/Assault lock		1	0.2
	Airlock	Cargo/Vehicle lock		1	0.2
	Aerofins	(+2 to manuever in atmosphere)		5	0.5
Software	Manuever/0				
	Library/0				
	Evade/2	Rating 15			2
	Fire Control/3	Rating 15			6
				100	119.37 MCr
					-11.937 less 10% standard design
					Total Price 107.433 MCr

landing pods themselves are designed to be converted into long-term shelters for the colonists. Some families still reside in the original colonial landing pods that were dropped more than two hundred years ago. Once a colony ship has landed all its pods, it lands itself as well.

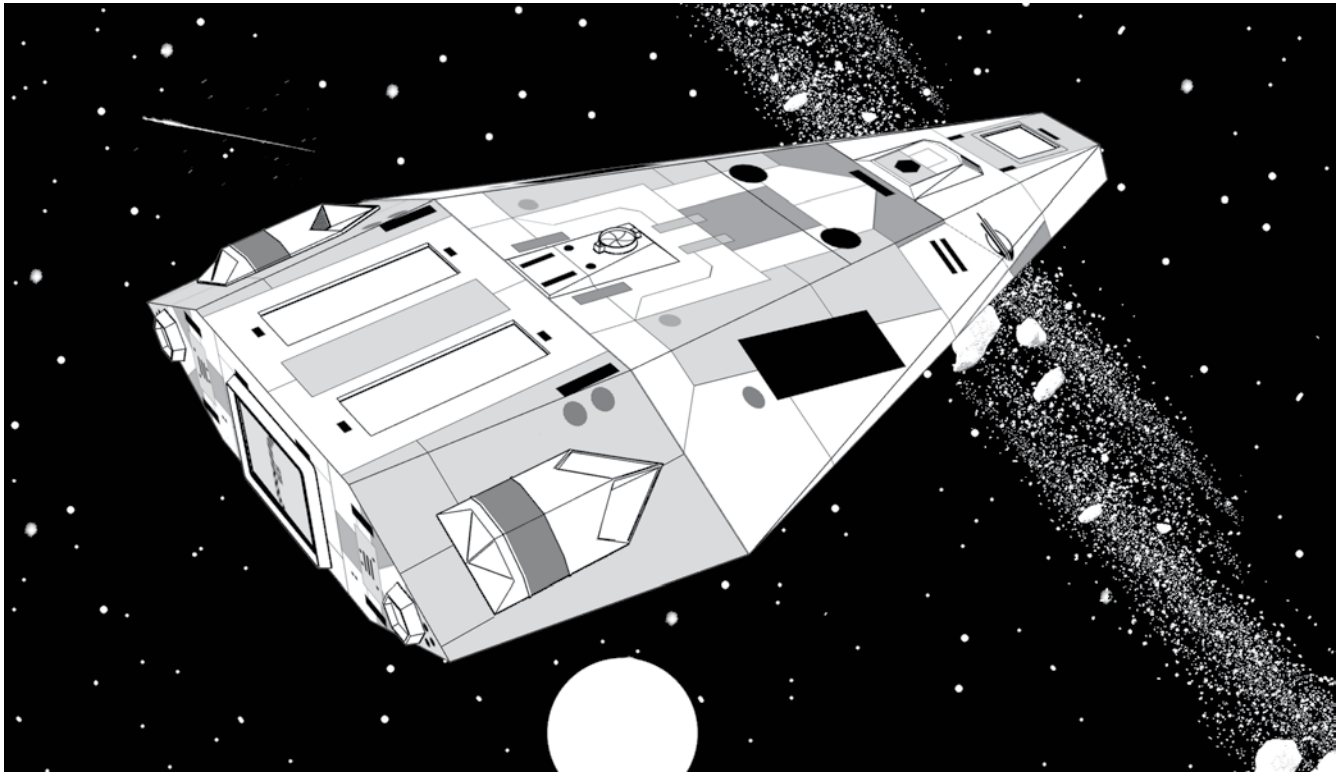
The pods of military dropships are heavier and able to land in a larger variety of terrains. They are often smaller since most are specialized for delivery combat vehicles and troops rather than the massive sort of equipment that colony drops use, at least in the first wave. Everything in a military landing pod is designed to be taken apart and returned to the drop ship to be used again in the next invasion. Every military dropship has redundant landing pods to account for those destroyed in invasion actions. In general,

military dropships carry three times as many pods as they need to deliver their assigned troops and materials.

Emergency relief dropships are essentially a hybrid of the military and colony dropships. They contain some of the same massive pieces of equipment used by the colony dropships but are also designed to be temporary and recoverable like the military landing pods. They lack the armor of the military ships or the endurance of the colony ships, so the landing pods of these are the least resilient to damage.

CRUISERS

Cruisers are the workhorses of a fleet. Their primary purpose is to defend the launchships



and troop transports of a fleet. They are also used to patrol space to control piracy and smugglers and can serve as an impressive defensive fleet even when lacking launchships. If there are no destroyers or fighters, cruisers do have the firepower necessary to eliminate capital ships. Cruisers are also among the most common of the larger ships precisely because of their versatility.

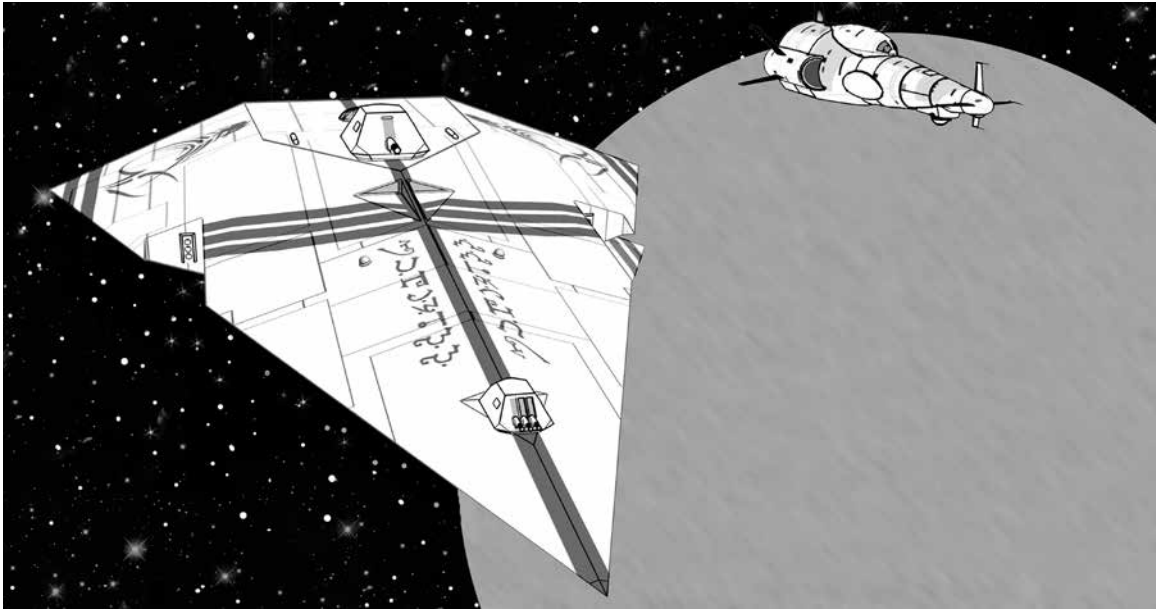
For the most part, cruisers are meant to provide anti-fighter protection by boasting a wide set of accurate, fast-firing point defense weapons. Combined with Combat Space Patrols of superior firepower, it creates a field that is deadly for enemy assault fighters to try to pass through on their way to their primary targets. In addition to this, cruisers are armed with the heaviest of cannons for the purpose of crippling and destroying larger craft like destroyers and even launchships.

Cruisers are close to matching the glamour of fighter craft and the launchships. Due to their use as patrol vessels, cruisers are probably the most frequently seen military craft in either the Sondak or the UCS. They are the face of the local government whether that represents oppression or valor. They also get all the assignments that fly under the radar, patrolling empty space on the border or other such unglamorous work. This means that while being assigned to a launchship is always an honor and being assigned to a destroyer takes rather specific training, being assigned to a cruiser can either be a dead end or a sign of a rising star depending on the assignment of that cruiser.

Destroyers

Like their modern day counterparts, destroyers are craft specializing in the destruction of escort

Cruiser			Tons	Price
Structure 28				
Armor	Streamlined			14
	Self-Sealing			14
	Crystaliron	12 points	210	84
	Reflec Coating	3 points vs. lasers		140
Gouldrive	Radiation Shielding	6 points vs radiation damage		350
	Nuclear Damper × 2	Reduces nuclear damage by 4d6, removes crew hit	40	60
	F	1400 dton portal	70	60
Manuever Drive	N	Thrust 3	25	52
Power Plant	N	Rating 3	40	104
Bridge		Holographic Controls (+2 Initiative)	40	8.75
Computer	Model/5	Rating 25		10
Electronics	Countermeasures	Enhanced Signal Processing DM+4	9	14
Weapons	Hardpoint #1	Particle Bay	50	20
	Hardpoint #2	Particle Bay	50	20
	Hardpoint #3	Torpedo Bay	50	12
	Hardpoint #4	Torpedo Bay	50	12
	Hardpoint #5	Triple Turret (Beam Laser × 3)	1	4
	Hardpoint #6	Triple Turret (Beam Laser × 3)	1	4
	Hardpoint #7	Triple Turret (Beam Laser × 3)	1	4
	Hardpoint #8	Triple Turret (Beam Laser × 3)	1	4
	Hardpoint #9	Triple Turret (Beam Laser × 3)	1	4
	Hardpoint #10	Triple Turret (Sandcaster × 3)	1	1.75
	Hardpoint #11	Triple Turret (Sandcaster × 3)	1	1.75
	Hardpoint #12	Triple Turret (Sandcaster × 3)	1	1.75



Cruiser			Tons	Price
	Hardpoint #13	Triple Turret (Sandcaster ×3)	1	1.75
	Hardpoint #14	Triple Turret (Sandcaster ×3)	1	1.75
Ammunition		1000 Sandcaster barrels	50	
		44 Torpedoes	110	
Fuel	52 tons	4 weeks operation	52	
Cargo	113 dtons	9 months before resupply needed	113	
Staterooms	22	43 Crew	88	11
Barracks	20	20 Marines	40	4
Low Berths	Emergency Low Berth	Holds 20 people	5	0.5
Extras		Fuel Scoops	Included	
	2× Fuel Processors	Process 40 tons/day	2	0.1
	2× Breaching Tube		6	6
	G/Carriers ×4		40	60
	Medical Facilities		24	8
	3 Armories		6	1.5
	Briefing Room		4	0.5
	Machine Shop		4	1
	Electronics Shop		4	1
	Brig		4	0.5
	Repair Drones		14	2.8
Craft	Modular Cutter x2	Full Size hangar	130	44.94
	Extra Cutter Modules x2		60	1.98
Software		Maneuver/o	Included	
	Library/o	Included		
	Gouldrive Control/3	Rating 15		0.3
	Evade/3	Rating 25		3
	Fire Control/5	Rating 25		10
	Auto-Repair/2	Rating 20		10
Total Tonnage & Cost			1400	1,300.62
-130.06 less 10% standard design				
Total Price 1,170.56 MCr				

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vehicles and capital ships. The presence of a destroyer is most obvious by a swarm of sensor blips as they release salvo after salvo against their targets. These ships are set to take out the Hunks that threaten the shipping lanes or the cruisers that stand against the swarms of fighters. They are not the largest of escorts, and lack the overall glamor of riding wing in a space fighter, but they can be some of the deadliest ships in a fleet.

Missiles afford these compact, efficient vehicles with almost matchless destructive power. Their laser cannons are limited by the power that a ship of their size is capable of putting out, but their missiles have no such problem. Rather like an assault fighter, but with many times more missiles than even a full wing of assault fighters can carry. They also trump the assault fighters in the range of warhead types they are able to

carry. They are also capable of firing their missiles in a range of spreads and patterns to make it more difficult for enemy ships to avoid them.

Aside from their missiles, destroyers are notable primarily for their sensors. There are specialized ships that have stronger sensors, but none of them also have the firepower of the destroyer. They can sit silent and quiet in the void listening to everything going on around them and almost unseen until they fire, or they can broadcast a barrage of active sensors like sonar or radar to cut through any attempt to remain hidden. They can be the hounds herding the prey in or the hunter waiting for the opportune moment.

Hunter killers are the equivalent to modern day submarines. You can use the same stats as the frigates, but with the modifications listed in the text if you want to use them in the

Destroyers			Tons	Price
Hull	5,000 dtons	Hull 50 (per section)		500
	2 sections	Structure 50 (per section)		
Cylinder configuration		Partially Streamlined, 80% weapons bearing		
	Self-Sealing			50
Armor	Crystaliron	11 points	688	
	Reflec Coating	3 points vs. lasers		500
	Radiation Shielding	6 points vs radiation damage		1250
	Nuclear Damper x2	Reduces nuclear damage by 4d6, removes crew hit	40	60
Gouldrive		5,000 dton portal	200	400
Manuever Drive		Thrust 4	88	43.75
Power Plant		Rating 5	200	500
Bridge	2 Command Modules	Holographic Controls (+2 Initiative)	50	62.5
Computer	Core/7	Rating 80		87.5
Electronics	Countermeasure	Enhanced Signal Processing, Distributed Arrays	27	42
	Bay #1 - #8	Particle Beam Bay	408	160
	Bay #9 - #16	Large Torpedo Bay	808	192
	Bay #17 - #20	Large Missile Bay	404	96
	Bay #21 - #24	Missile Bay	204	48
Weapons	Turret #1 - #13	Triple Turret (Beam Laser x3)	13	52
	Turret #14 - #26	Triple Turret (Sandcaster x3)	13	22.75
Ammunition		132 Torpedoes	330	
		3000 Missiles	250	
		1000 Sandcaster barrels	50	
Fuel	267	Four weeks of operations	267	
Cargo	250	6 months endurance before resupply	250	
Staterooms	70		280	35
Extras	Fuel Scoops			1
	13 Fuel Processors	Processes 260 dtons/day	13	0.65
	60 Escape Pods		30	3
	15 Probe Drones		3	1.5

Destroyers			Tons	Price
	Repair Drones		50	10
	3 Armories		6	1.5
	Medical Facilities		24	8
	2 Briefing Rooms		8	1
	Machine Shop		4	1
	Electronics Shop		4	1
	Brig		4	0.5
Craft	Modular Cutter ×3	Full Size hangar	195	67.41
	Extra Cutter Modules ×3		90	2.97
Software	Maneuver/0	Included		
	Library/0	Included		
	Gouldrive Control/4	Rating 20		0.4
	Evade/3	Rating 25		3
	Fire Control/5	Rating 25		10
	Auto-Repair/2	Rating 20		10
		Total Tonnage & Cost		5,000
				-421.44
			Total Price 3,792.99	

Crew	Department	Crew Damage Track	% of Full Crew
10	Command	Dead	0%
5	Engineering	Survivors (-4)	1-10%
85	Gunnery	Skeleton (-2)	11-25%
10	Flight	Half (-1)	26-50%
0	Troops	Weakened	51-75%
15	Service	Full	76-90%
0	Frozen Watch	Battle -- Starting Position	91-120%
125	Total	Overstrength	121-150%
4	Passenger Staterooms	Massively Overstrength	151%+
0	Low Berth Passengers		

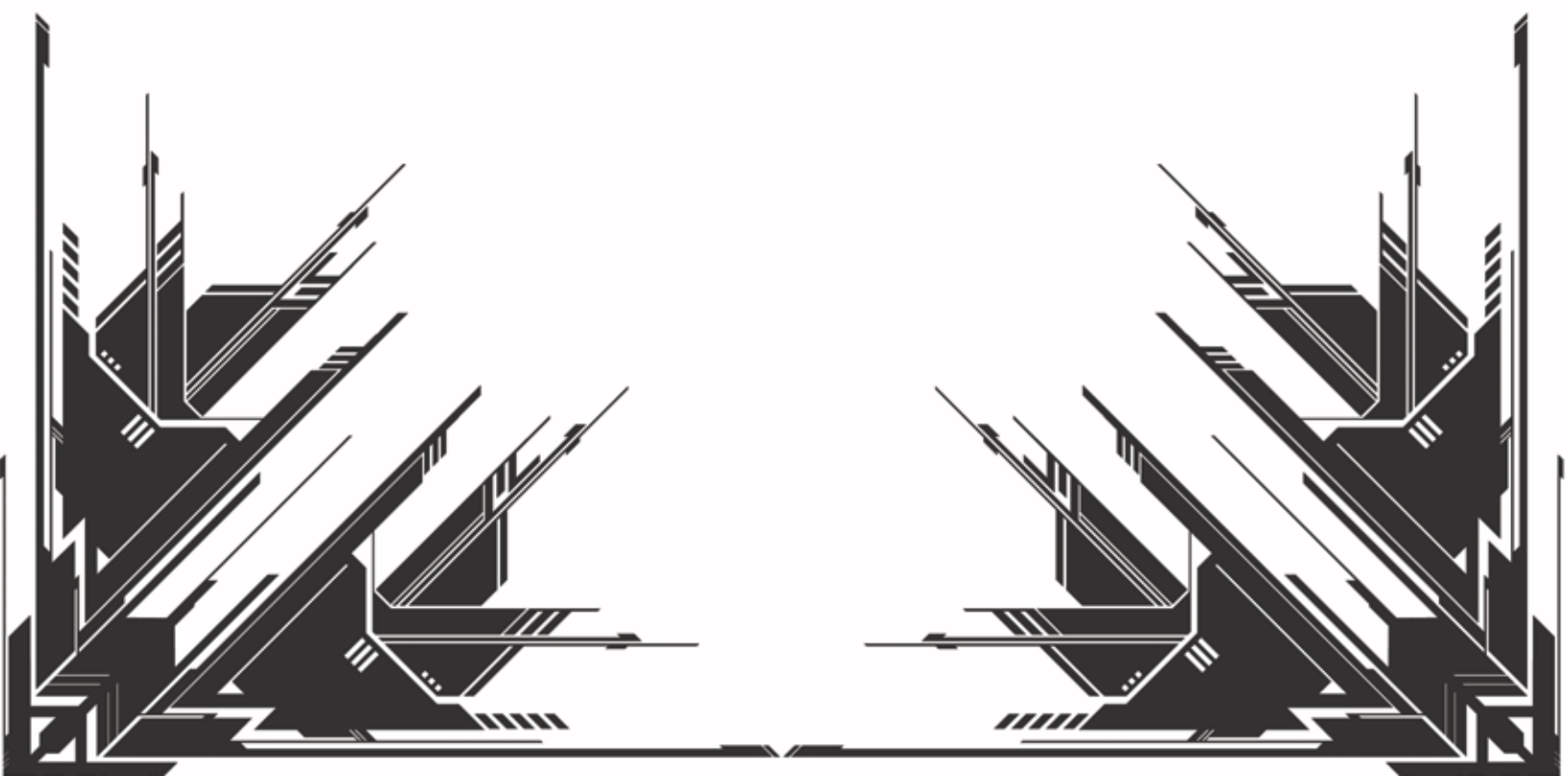
Section Hit Tables

Engineering		Forward	
Hull 50		Hull 50	
Structure 50		Structure 50	
External	Internal	External	Internal
2	Hull	Crew	Hull
3	Nuclear Damper	Gouldrive	Bridge
4	Maneuver Drive	Power Plant	Cutter Bay
5	Fuel	Particle Bay	Sandcasters
6	Hull	Structure	Torpedo Bay
7	Armor	Hold	Structure
8	Hull	Hold	Armor
9	Fuel	Structure	Hold
10	Maneuver Drive	Missile Bay	Hull
11	Distributed Arrays	Beam Lasers	Structure
12	Hull	Sensors	Large Missile Bay
		Hangar	
		Critical	
		Hull	
		Critical	



CHAPTER 4





person to go to. This is the reason that Delightful Childe took him on as a business partner.

Despite the fact that he is *Homo communis*, Lucky has no particular love for the UCS. His vessel is originally registered as a Sondak vessel, but he moderately favors the UCS because their trading policies are a little more flexible for free spacers. In general, he prefers to avoid other humans entirely. His one major exception is his former partner Marsah Yednoshpfa, whom he loves whole-heartedly.

Soon after the war started, Lucky found himself exposed to the Oinaise candy, gorlet. He spent a miserable time going through withdrawal to be purged of the candy, which is highly addictive to humans. He still occasionally feels an urge for it, though he has remained clean. The humiliating and demeaning experience is one of money that has left him feeling fed up with life recently. These misfortunes have resulted in him occasionally bemoaning his fate, something which Delightful Childe does not tolerate. However, in between these rare moments of despair, he remains an exceptional spacer.

Marsha Lisa Cay Yednoshpfa
(*Freespacer – Homo communis*)

STR	DEX	END	INT	EDU	SOC
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4	8	7	10	7	7
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Melee (Unarmed Combat)- 1, (Blades)- 1, Gun Combat (Energy Pistol)- 1, Astrogation- 1, Tactics- 1, Broker- 0, Stealth- 0, Survival- 0

Marsha does not want to be serving in the war, but she made a promise to her father years ago when she left to travel through space on her own. Now, with the war between Sondak and the UCS started, she has returned home to serve by her father's side and she's found that things are not at all what she expected them to be. She was never close to her father, but in her memories he was never as vicious as he was now. Nor was she aware of her mother's death until she came home.

This military trained woman is a freespacer at heart. The military discipline of the UCS and

the overwhelming desire for revenge is not something she feels. Indeed, one of the reasons that she originally left was to get away from the pervasive desire for revenge that drove most of the people in her life including both parents. However, she had made her promise. If the UCS went to war, then she would be there to serve her people. Now, unfortunately, she's finding that the military service is nothing at all like she remembered it. The idea that her father would sacrifice large numbers of their own troops in battle is appalling to her and not all what she expected of her father, who had always worked to minimize his casualties before. The fact that her mother died via suicide assisted by her father has only heightened the disgust she now feels for him.

Marsha would much rather be with Lucky, her former lover. She complimented him very well, bringing the practical and administrative skills that she'd learned in the military to complement his mostly self-taught collection of abilities. They feel comfortable with each other, and being away from him is one of the most horrible things she's experienced in the recent past. Things were so much simpler when it was just her and Lucky in the *Greycloud* taking product from one point to the next. She hadn't had to worry about whether or not she was abandoning anybody to a needless death. She didn't have to question whether an order was moral or ethical or not. The battle at Reckynop sealed her decision: she isn't going to stay in this place. No matter what, she is going to find a way to abandon her post and return to Lucky. If he'll have her.

SONDAK

Sjean Birkie (Sondak Scientist Homo sapiens)

STR	DEX	END	INT	EDU	SOC
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4	4	6	12	8	7
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Physical Sciences (Electronics)- 2, Persuade- 1, Admin- 3, Mechanics- 1, Investigate-1, Recon- 1

Sjean Birkie is one of the brightest scientists of Drautzlab. She oversees the Ultimate Weapon project which primarily consisted of herding

the arrogant Ayne Wallen into taking the work seriously. When the temperamental genius finally pushed her and the owner hard enough to find himself fired, she found some equations left behind in some memory that he had tried to delete and realized it was a new path to the Ultimate Weapon they were trying to develop.

Birkie is a middle-aged woman far more intelligent than the majority of people; however, her brilliance comes from hard work and discipline rather than true genius. Her devotion to her job has caused her personal life to suffer, at least from an outside point of view. She is a divorcee and has no interest in pursuing a social life at this point in her life. She has her friendship with her employer and coworkers and her work, this is plenty for her. She remains reasonably attractive despite her age and a number of people have trouble understanding that she really doesn't feel all that lonely in her life.

Originally, she had no particular concern for the government agents that were assigned to Drautzlab, considering them a necessary evil and respecting them as professionals. However, with Ayne Wallen's actions, a new breed of Sci-Sec operatives has shown its hand in Drautzlab. Operating under Thel Janette, a woman Sjean considers rather odious, these most recent agents are invasive investigators looking for any possible sign of disloyalty. They frequently return to her and barrage her with the same set of questions with very minor variations on the chance that they might be able to provoke something she'd either forgotten or was hiding.

On top of that, her work on the Ultimate Weapon project is becoming more and more a strain on her mind. The equations and tests she's performing are making her worried that they will never be able to control the processes involved in the weapon. Her greatest fear is that, in the process of testing the weapon, they'll end up destroying the galaxy. Sjean's life is growing quickly more intolerable with each passing day.

Quarter Admiral Dawson

STR DEX END INT EDU SOC

7 7 8 12 10 11

Tactics (Naval Tactics)- 4, Persuade- 2, Leadership- 2, Admin- 2, Investigate- 2, Gun Combat (Energy Pistols)- 1, Melee (Unarmed Combat)- 1, (Blades)- 1

Once upon a time, Dawson was the defense coordinator for the Gyle Coalition in what is known as the Salimar Rebellion. He gave the besieging Sondak forces quite a lot of difficulty until the colony finally surrendered. At the time he expected to be executed or imprisoned as one of the officers in the rebellion. Instead, he was surprised when the commanding admiral chose not to execute the rebels. Since then he's felt that he owes a debt to Sondak, and he now looks to fulfill that debt.

Dawson is *Homo communis* and thus a lot older than he looks. He is a cynical man who is used to being asked to perform miracles with minimal resources. In this case he's being asked to attend to the defense of Reckynop and he will do everything in his skill to strengthen the defense of the planet. Despite this, he is not convinced that there is much that can be done to protect the system with what he has.

When he first arrived to the system, he was a civilian consultant. As expected he received an amount of almost instinctive dislike from the assigned Fleet officers in charge of the defense of the system, Post Admiral Panjandcan chief among those detractors. Still, he had in his position coded authority from the Joint Chiefs and security codes which were given to his possession. Right up until the unpredictable Panjandcan destroyed the discs after being told that she couldn't hold on to them. Now, with nothing to hold over the local military officers to prove his authority and being forced to cooperate with them, things have gotten even worse as he has been informed that he is now being granted the military rank of Admiral.

It seems to Dawson as if his debt to Sondak for sparing his life will cost him his life. This is something he's always suspected but now, with a hopeless situation in front of him, he is forced to confront it directly rather than hold it at the edge of his conscious thought.

Admiral Josiah Gilbert
(Sondak Strategy Commander Homo sapiens)

STR DEX END INT EDU SOC

4 6 7 12 10 12

Tactics (Naval Tactics)- 4, Persuade- 2, Leadership- 2, Investigate- 2, Streetwise- 1, Gun Combat (Energy Pistol)- 1, Melee (Unarmed Combat)- 1 (Blades)- 1

Josiah Gilbert is a brilliant officer with a masterful understanding of the way people think and act. He has a tendency to take younger officers under his wing and develop a mentor and prodigy relationship. This has left him with a string of old students scattered throughout the military in various levels of influence. Despite this, he himself has been frozen out of much of the politics of the Sondak military due to his controversial views.

Josiah Gilbert has been pushing several ideas which eventually saw him and many of his prodigies in virtual exile in Polar Fleet assignments. For one thing he has been forefront in encouraging the military to promote more pikeans to positions of authority and importance in the fleets. He's also been encouraging the Sondak Cofnederacy to pursue more actual alliances with alien races, going against generations of a culture that came together as a way of minimizing alien influence in the galaxy. Finally, Josiah Gilbert is one of the officers whose been most vocal about the idea that the UCS would eventually attack in revenge for the previous war.

He's been proved correct about that last prediction and this has virtually catapulted him back into a position of favor. Josiah Gilbert has been made responsible for countering the UCS offensive, a job he started with the planning for the defense of Reckynop. Leaving his loyal subordinates to fight a holding action in the polar

colonies, Gilbert has been working with several of his past prodigies in setting up a noose for the UCS to fall into.

The admiral is not above manipulation when he feels that it is in the best interests of others. Several of his prodigies have found their careers intersecting with others he's helped or guided throughout his career. He keeps track of his old friends and students this way, and subtly influences his other students to look out for each other, whether it is asked for or not. Some are flattered and impressed by this interest while others find it aggravating. Most realize that he has the best of intentions in mind, however.

Captain Mica Gilbert
(Sondak Communications Officer Homo sapiens)

STR DEX END INT EDU SOC

4 8 6 10 9 8

Tactics (Naval Tactics)- 1, Leadership- 1, Admin- 1, Persuade- 1, Investigate- 2, Computer- 1, Gun Combat- 0, Melee (Unarmed Combat)- 0, Recon- 0

Mica Gilbert is the daughter of Admiral Josiah Gilbert, and also one of the youngest of his prodigies. She is a very straight forward individual with a heavy core of idealism and patriotism. She is a communications specialist initially assigned to help the effort to decrypt the UCS codes. However, she has also found herself recruited to be an "honor trustee" for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and thus report on everything her father and the others are doing. To make things more complex, everyone she's supposed to be spying on is well aware of her situation.

Captain Mica Gilbert is a young woman with a promising career. She is much younger than most other people of her rank, in fact. While much of this is due to her father and his prodigies looking out for her, she is, indeed, very good at her job. Mica is very skilled at making communication between various fleets secure, efficient and clear of purpose. Like her father, she is skilled at perceiving the possible motivations, strategic or tactical, of various actions which makes her an excellent adviser to any commanding officer.

Mica's observational skills have blindspots, however. She has not really experienced much in the way trauma in her life, and she is occasionally oblivious to the trauma being suffered by other people. In addition, while she is observant and has no trouble with keeping a secret from strangers, she is almost completely transparent to people who know her well. Her father and immediate commanding officer both have already told her they know she's spying for the Joint Chiefs. She has not yet been in a battle, though she is set to be her father's comms officer in the coming defense of Reckynop. Her inexperience in war and intelligence leads her to see a lot of things in black and white despite her intellectual understanding of the complexities involved. Nor does she handle personal or emotional surprises all that well.

*Colonel Rasha'Kean Ingrivia
(Sondak Logistics Officer/Battle Commander
Homo sapiens (pikean))*

STR DEX END INT EDU SOC

7 7 7 9 8 7

Leadership- 2, Tactics (Military Tactixs)- 1, Melee (Unarmed Combat)- 1, (Blades)- 1 Gun Combat (Energy Rifle)- 1, Interrogation- 1, Athletics (Co-ordination)- 1, Broker- 3, Survival- 1, Liaison- 3

"Born to Battle" that is what Rasha'Kean's name means. Only it seems as if the powers that be only intend for her to ever be in battle against numbers and paperwork. She wants to get into the thick of battle where she can avenge the recent death of her mother, an admiral along the border, and the past imprisonment and death of her father. Unfortunately, she's shown a certain skill in logistics which has left her stuck in offices managing the distribution of supplies.

Despite being a colonel in the planetary forces, Rasha'kean is young and impatient. She's risen to her rank on the strength of her skill in handling logistics, a skill she wishes she never had since it keeps her out of the fight. In addition, she's suffered for the fact that she is pikean, being one of the few promoted to high rank.

There is a lot of drive for her to prove herself and she just can't see how that's possible in her current position.

At the moment, the Sondak forces are all reacting and moving defensively. No offensive has begun yet and troops are only just being sent to various places. There's as great a need for people pushing papers to get everything lined up efficiently as there is for people to go out to battle. She is sitting on her desires at the moment, but they are getting more and more insistent with each passing day.

Rasha'kean is not afraid of using her good looks to get things out of her commanding officers and tends to be rather surprised when someone sees through her flirtatious manipulations. She is otherwise blunt and straight to the point with a propensity for self-centered thinking that is occasionally self-defeating. Most of this behavior can be explained by the current war-time situation and her growing need to be out there. Before the war, she was an exemplary officer and never distracted from her duty. It's only recently that she has become more and more focused on what she wants to do rather than her job. But still, she's one of the best logistics officers in the military, Fleet or Planetary Forces.

*Inspector Thel Janette
(Sondak Sci-Sec Investigator Homo sapiens)*

STR DEX END INT EDU SOC

4 7 7 11 10 7

Astrogation- 0, Persuade- 2, Diplomacy- 2, Melee (Unarmed Combat)- 1, Gun Combat (Energy Pistol)- 1, Interrogation- 3, Investigate- 3, Survival- 1, Stealth- 1, Athletics (Climbing)- 0, Streetwise- 1, Pilot (Small Craft)- 1, (Spacecraft)- 1

Thel Janette is a tiny woman with a presence that fills any room she is in. She has many weapons ranging from her beauty to her martial arts skills and she uses each one with the expertise of a professional. This Science Security agent will do whatever she can to insure that her duty is fulfilled and that she protects the scientific secrets of the Sondak Federation from its enemies. She is willing to go very far in pursuit of this cause.

As a woman, Thel is very aware of her beauty and she makes use of it, but not in a sexual manner. Rather, Thel uses her beauty to further enhance her presence, making her seem just that much more intimidating. It adds to her impression of perfection and the feeling people have that there is no way to get past her. It makes people cautious around her and sets them off balance, making it easier for her to manipulate them into the decisions she wants them to take.

Inspector Janette goes more in for brute force personality and psychological trickery than persuasion. The use of blatant authority and will is, in many ways, a feint in and of itself that makes her seem at first to be a blunt instrument and conceal her subtler mind games from her opponents. None of her methods of persuasion are very friendly. She uses passive intimidation, active intimidation, authority, bribery and other such things almost exclusively. All while keeping a calm and civilized appearance.

Despite her methods and techniques, Thel Janette is not entirely callous to the feelings of other people, or at least she doesn't think so. However, her perspective on things is more than a little skewed. She'll feel bad for innocent people while she uses machines to search through their memories and force them to speak on many topics and she'll apologize to a man by putting him in a drugged stupor and raping him. She is very much a genial person forced to do horrible things by her duty. That is her perception of herself.

General Fortuno Mari
(*Sondak General Homo sapiens*)

STR	DEX	END	INT	EDU	SOC
8	4	9	7	7	8

Tactics (Military Tactics)- 1, Persuade- 2, Leadership- 2, Admin- 1, Investigate- 2, Streetwise- 1. Gun Combat (Energy Pistol)- 1, Melee (Unarmed Combat)- 1

Fortuno Mari was an arrogant and racist planetary forces general who was lobbying for military cutbacks and reduction.

General Mari was an outspoken general sitting on the Joint Chiefs who was pushing for disarmament due to his belief that there was no threat of war. The U.C.S. attack on Sondak forces is a terrible embarrassment to him given this and he seems to take it as a personal affront. He disagrees with Admiral Gilbert's assessment that the Ukes will attack Matthews and is plotting to undercut the Matthews defensive plans, which he sees as pointless, when the attack at Sutton sees him imprisoned by U.C.S. forces and pikean rebels.

General Mari despises pikeans. He sees them as unintelligent, lazy and overall inferior. Despite this, he finds them attractive and amusing, keeping a pikean mistress named Giselda whom he is regularly abusive toward and tends to refer to her in the same manner most would a pet. After the Sutton resistance campaign and working with the predominately pikean soldiers on that planet, he begins to respect the ethnicity but still views them as inferiors in spite of that.

Admiral Charlene Panjandcan
(*Sondak Admiral Homo electus*)

STR	DEX	END	INT	EDU	SOC
6	7	7	10	9	10

Tactics- 2, Admin- 2, Persuade- 1, Leadership- 2, Investigate- 0, Interrogation- 2, Streetwise- 1, Gun Control (Energy Pistol)- 1, Melee (Unarmed Combat)- 1

Post Admiral Charlene Panjandcan is a *Homo electus* and one of Josiah Gilbert's past prodigies. She is a spacer, born and bred, with little to no patience for dirtsiders or fools. Her high energetic, typically belligerent attitude does much to conceal the fact that she is an imaginative and intelligent officer who cares greatly for her subordinates and charges. Like many of Admiral Gilbert's prodigies, she's found herself relegated to a relatively minor position despite her high rank. However, she's done better than many of those connected with him due in part to the fact that their relationship seemed to end on a hostile note, at least publicly.

Panjandcan appears reckless to the casual observer. It is easy to forget that she is one of the *electus* since she seems to very much live and breathe in her physicality. At times she conducts interviews with newly assigned and unwanted subordinates while engaging in a high-energy zero-gravity exercise routine that forces the other person to move their eyes about rapidly to keep focused on her as she bounces from wall to wall in her office. It simultaneously lets her burn off frustration and forces the pest to feel some of that annoyance. Once someone thinks they have her figured out, she does something completely unexpected. Like destroying a pair of security discs direct from the Joint Chiefs simply because if she can't have something on her station then no one can have it.

The Admiral has begun to worry that she is being completely side-lined in the battle to come. More and more it seems as if the defenses for the system are being planned without taking her into account. She's pulled Dawson to heel and she trusts the loyalty of her own command explicitly, but some of the commands she gets from Nordeen just seem as if they expect her to be a non-element in the coming defense. Meanwhile she has troubles with the occasional discovery of UCS neutronic missiles just floating about in the space around her command. So far she hasn't been able to get a good look at these things because every time one of her ships gets close enough to do some actual scanning, the missiles explode. At first, they had found two of the things, but they keep popping up and Panjandcan worries about just how many of the things are lingering in her system just waiting for the order to strike her planet.

Jectiverdifiaad Barrabockerman Montivillieo
Questen Pasqualini
(Traitorous Cryptographer Homo communis)

STR DEX END INT EDU SOC

4 4 6 15 6 5

Physical Sciences (Mathematics)- 4, Persuade- 2, Deception- 2, Recon- 1, Investigate- 2, Interrogation- 2, Melee (Unarmed Combat)- 1, Streetwise- 1

Bock. Barra. The child of whore Pasqualini born in the gutters of Montivillieo. Bock is a brilliant but megalomaniacal woman who is loyal to no one but herself.

Bock is a civilian cryptographer working in Hew Rochmon's department at the start of the war. She helps break the Q2 code used by the U.C.S. but soon comes under suspicion for being a traitor or a spy and falls victim to the guilty until proven innocent nature of the Sondak legal system. She is secretly the elder and illegitimate daughter of Frye Charlitos.

Bock is a brilliant computer programmer and has an extremely intuitive understanding of codes and cryptographer. She finds it easy to get in and out of computer systems that are supposed to be secure, even from halfway across the galaxy and maintains a laundry list of contacts through whom she can manipulate events to her liking.

Bock enjoys her own intelligence and ability and especially enjoys flaunting the fact that she is quite often better than everybody else. She leaks information to people such as Ayne Wallen and Krykie Kinderman for no apparent reason other than simply being able to impress someone with how influential she is. Anything she can do to get her way will be done. Anybody that tries to stop her from pleasing herself is treated with disrespect and disdainful laughter. She is a bisexual who relentlessly pursues any individual she perceives as attractive, to the point of the objects of her attention complaining of assault.

It is apparent that she was leaking information to random eccentrics whom she could manipulate into believing herself to be an influential

ally, people who never see her. However, it doesn't appear that she was acting as a spy for the U.C.S. at first. In fact, she even sent a threat to her father intended to make him end the war because of the problems it was causing her. Likewise, after being slapped by Rochmon and told that she was acting like a child, she started betraying the Sondak to their enemies.

She is brilliant but essentially selfish, petty and childish.

Commander Hew Rochmon
(*Cryptography Officer Homo sapiens*)

STR	DEX	END	INT	EDU	SOC
7	7	8	9	8	8

Physical Sciences (Mathematics)- 2, Persuade-2, Admin-2, Investigate- 2, Interrogation- 2, Melee (Unarmed Combat)- 1, Streetwise- 1, Gun Combat- 0, Recon-1

Hew Rochmon is cursed by an attraction for Mica Gilbert and loyalty to a woman that has no understanding of the meaning of the term.

Hew Rochmon is in command of the cryptographer department in Sondak Headquarters when the war starts and remains in control of it for the entire war. During that time he works directly with the joint chiefs to break the U.C.S. codes and give them the intelligence found in those codes. He is immensely loyal to Bock through her legal troubles, even to the point of vouching for her and pushing the issue with the Joint Chiefs when he can.

Commander Rochmon is a protégé of Josiah Gilbert and has the same characteristic of looking around the obvious that most of Gilbert's people have. He is intelligent and patient, with a firm eye for details and an intuitive mind for motivations and intentions. Unfortunately, he is easily blinded and distracted by his emotions.

Despite his understanding of human motivations in a distant, military and intelligence application, Rochmon doesn't have much understand of people from a social stand point. He doesn't truly have strong connections with anybody, even if he respects and enjoys the

company of people such as Josiah Gilbert. He has a habit of purchasing ephemera sexual substitutes to satisfy his needs and is constantly distracted by his physical attraction for Mica Gilbert which he eventually convinces himself is love. Also, he is incapable of seeing any sort of disloyalty in Bock, seeing only her self-destructive childishness.

Henly Stanmorton
(*Combat Teller Homo sapiens*)

STR	DEX	END	INT	EDU	SOC
6	3	7	13	10	8

Admin- 2, Persuade- 2, Art (Writing)- 3, Recon-2, Stealth- 1, Investigate- 3, Streetwise- 3, Survival-1

Twenty-two years ago, Henly Stanmorton was a battlefield teller in the first war between Sondak and the UCS. He spent a lot of time in the trenches with the soldiers and seeing things from their point of view. His articles on the way things were going in the war brought to light a lot of things that made the commanders and civilians rethink their perspectives on that war. After the UCS sued for peace, it seemed like things would never again get so bad. Henly hadn't ever really believed it, and now it seems that his foreboding of another war was right.

After the previous war, Henly moved on to become a civilian teller, but now that a war has come back, he wants to get back to the front lines to see what's going on in the war and tell the people back home what's really going on. For the moment, however, he's stuck with the civilian perspective and taking the information squeezed out by the Efcors for the tellers to give to the public. He's limited to vague news and human interest stories involving the occasional refugee that manages to get to Nordeen, or the business people that were on the capital for some reason when they heard that their homes had been attacked and conquered.

Henly is rather critical of the philosophy behind modern tellers. He sometimes thinks back to the times of far history when instead of having tellers there were reporters. The way he sees it in the past reporters collected and related all

the facts of a situation honestly and allowed the public to make their own decisions about what those facts meant and how they should respond to them. These days it was the explicit position of the tellers to filter through the facts and determine exactly what was useful for the public to know. He expects that his view of the old way of doing things is likely to be rather idealized and that the reality was probably not much better than he deals with, but he still finds himself wishing.

Ayne Wallen (Rogue Scientist Homo sapiens)

STR DEX END INT EDU SOC

4 7 6 15 11 5

Physical Sciences (Physics)- 4, Engineer-4, Persuade- 2, Stealth- 0, Streetwise- 0, Recon- 2, Investigate- 0, Melee- 0, Gun Combat- 0

A brilliant and egotistical genius who does not think about the consequences of what he does.

Ayne Wallen stumbles on a set of equations that form the basis for a starkiller while working at Drautzlab. He tries to destroy the research, mostly as a show of pique for being ordered around, keeping a copy for himself. When he is fired, he immediately sets off to sell the discovery.

Wallen is a brilliant physicist and a skilled goul-drive mechanic. In addition, he proves skilled in evading Sci-Sec pursuit and staying under the radar. He can be seductive in a straightforward way that seems to be more a consequence of his sense of his own importance being contagious than any particular ability of his to understand people.

This scientist is essentially egotistical and short sighted. He rarely looks further ahead than what he wants or needs at the moment and rushes headlong into his own problems. His combination of naïvete and arrogance quickly see him addicted to gorlet and at the mercy of Xindella.

UNITED CENTRAL SYSTEMS

Lieutenant Bon (Kyosei Political Officer)

STR DEX END INT EDU SOC

4 8 7 9 9 9

Persuade- 2, Tactics-2, Navigation- 1, Recon- 1, Pilot (Small Craft)-1, Melee-0, Gun Combat- 0

The second in command of the first of the newest HunKs put out by the U.C.S., Lieutenant Bon has some initial doubts about his commander.

Bon is assigned to the U.C.S. Misbarrett as a political officer and is not shy about showing his Kyosei affiliations. He makes frequent criticisms of his captain before their war mission begins in earnest and at first finds him to be an irreverent fool of a military spacer. This starts to change over time as it becomes apparent to him that his captain's philosophies are a lot more practically applicable than those of the Kyosei.

Bon is a capable second in command even before he starts turning away from his Kyosei indoctrination. Ishiwa relies on him frequently to attend to all the duties of an executive officer during their extended tour of duty and listens to this advice, dismissing those pieces that are filled with Kyosei propaganda and praising those that show good common sense.

Frye ed'Laitan Charlton

(U.C.S. Strategy Commander)

STR DEX END INT EDU SOC

7 7 7 9 9 8

Tactics (Naval Tactics)- 4, Admin- 3, Persuade- 2, Leadership- 2, Investigate- 2, Interrogation- 2, Gun Combat (Energy Pistol)- 1, Melee (Unarmed Combat)- 1

Commander Frye ed'Laitan Charlton is renowned as a brilliant strategic commander with a reputation for trying to end battles with as little bloodshed and loss of life as he can manage while still winning. At least, that was the reputation he came out of the last war with. He is still a brilliant strategist, but he no longer has the same level of concern for the lives of his soldiers and fleets. He wants to avoid a Pyrrhic

WARREN C. NORWOOD'S

DOUBLE SPIRAL WAR

The ***Double Spiral War***, Warren Norwood's chronicle of interstellar combat is a powerful, graphically realistic epic on a vast cosmic scale.

When mankind left behind their old home to seek out new lands beyond the dark spaces between galaxies, they hoped to leave behind them the conflict and chaos that has been their heritage since they first spoke tales of their histories. However, it wasn't as easy as that. Even amongst alien species, mankind still found cause to war amongst itself. Several decades before, the Sondak Confederacy worried about the growing power of the United Central Systems, a group dominated by humans genetically modified to have a much longer life span. As a result, they launched a war that waged for years tearing at both societies until finally they forced the U.C.S. to accept humiliating terms in exchange for peace. The Sondak Confederacy is complacent and unaware that the U.C.S. is on the verge of finally seeking vengeance for the loss of the previous war. And in the churning wake of these two giants, all the races of the galaxy and the lives of many individuals shall be turned upside down. But the question is whose vengeance is being sought? Is it that of a nation's or could it be that of a single person?

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