

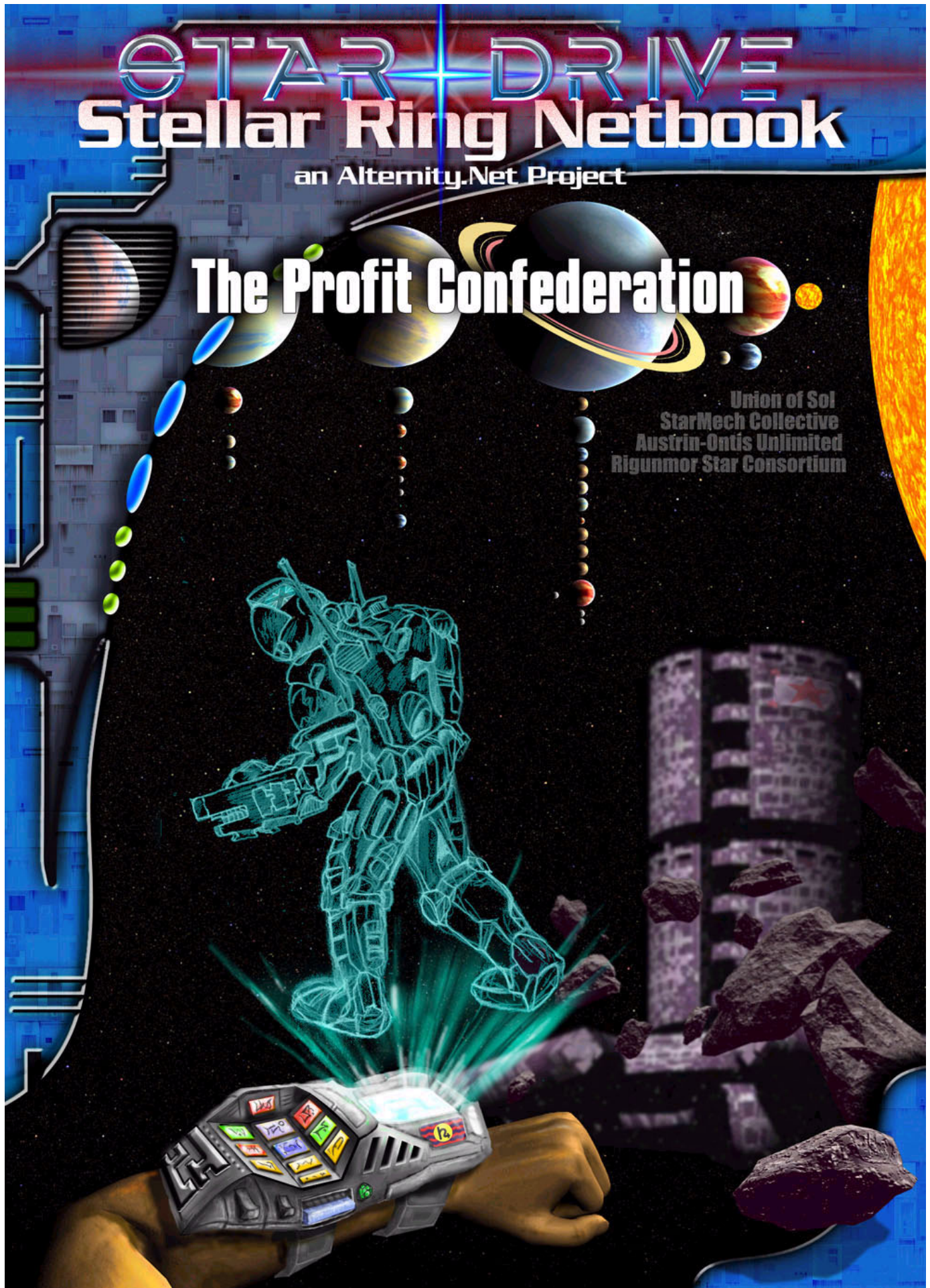
# STAR+DRIVE

## Stellar Ring Netbook

an Altemity.Net Project

### The Profit Confederation

Union of Sol  
StarMech Collective  
Austrin-Ontis Unlimited  
Rigunmor Star Consortium



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# Introduction to the Stellar Ring Netbook

## Forward

Welcome to the Star\*Drive Stellar Ring Netbook. This project reflects the efforts of many contributors working directly with each other over the course of many months. But of course, we could not have undertaken this task without the inspiration of the men and women who originally created the Star\*Drive universe, lending us their ideas and stories – encouraging us to contribute to so fine a creation. We hope you'll join us in that passion.

This Netbook is not a replacement for the *Alternity Star\*Drive Campaign Setting* sourcebook, or any of the other supplements. In fact, we specifically designed the Stellar Ring Netbook project to pick up where the Star\*Drive material leaves off. To receive the full benefits of the Netbook, you'll need to start with the core book as a foundation, and then continue here to explore the nations of the 26<sup>th</sup> century in further detail. Otherwise, you may lose the benefit of exposure to the original material first. We have set the year of the Netbook at 2501, the same year as the Star\*Drive setting in the core book, although, we did take into account all the supplementary material published up to the cancellation of the product line during the writing process. This work easily supplements, and builds upon the setting, without contradicting the history or future of the Star\*Drive universe.

Due to the amount of time taken to fully prepare each nation's material, we decided to release the Netbook in sections. To cram everything into a single resource would have caused the book to be incredibly lengthy, and the Star\*Drive community would have had to wait much longer to see any results. Our current plans call for us to produce the Stellar Ring Netbook in four different releases, based off the alliances of the Second Galactic War. These are: The Profit Confederation, The FreeSpace Alliance, The Expansion Pentad, and The Galactic Concord. While not all the nations of a given alliance may remain close allies, they all once shared qualities that brought them together during the war, and so they make a fine format for the Netbook's presentation. With the Galactic Concord forming at the end of the war, obviously we could not include them in any of the three groupings. Because of this, and because of the Concord's importance in the Star\*Drive setting, we set it aside as an independent fourth release.

We hope you enjoy reading our work as much as we enjoyed making it.

- John Yackel (*Oneagle*)

### **Project Members For the Profit Confederation Release**

Listed below are the contributing project members to this Netbook as a whole. Some material was largely the work of one member, while others were backed up by another's contributions. Lastly, but certainly not least, are our graphics people, without whom the pages you now read would be much bleaker, and our editor, who spurred on the creative process for all of us.

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Project Leader           | John Yackel                                 |
| Project Founder          | Len Savoy                                   |
| Editing and Continuity   | Neil Spicer                                 |
| Austrin-Ontis Unlimited  | Mathew Steele                               |
| Rigunmor Star Consortium | John Yackel                                 |
| StarMech Collective      | Daryl Blasi<br>John Yackel<br>James Nostack |
| Union of Sol             | Thomas McCarthy<br>John Yackel<br>Len Savoy |
| Cover Design             | Terry Turnbull                              |
| Ship Graphics            | Juha Pesonen                                |
| Maps                     | Ronald Stepp                                |
| Other Internal Graphics  | Michael Meechan                             |

# Cartography of the Stellar Ring

As part of the Stellar Ring project, we wanted to present our maps with data as close to reality as possible, if only to help provide continuity. As it turns out, you can only get actual coordinates within the local bubble of roughly 200 light years (LY) around Sol. After that, information on real-life star system placements are a combination of science, conjecture and tradition. In a few cases, we based information on scientific data and then deferred to what would match the *Star\*Drive* setting. System planet information is purely fictional, of course.

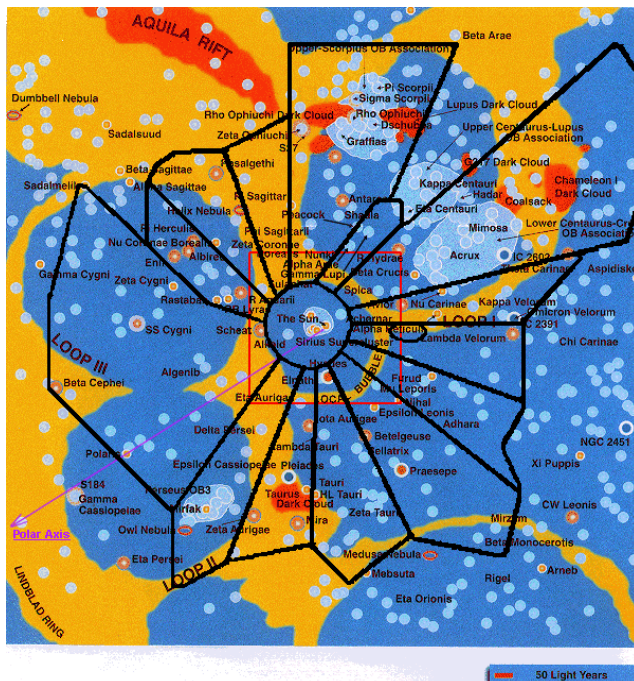
By mapping the Stellar Ring in three dimensions, it is very difficult to relate 3D data to the two-dimensional map presented on page 40 of the *Star\*Drive Campaign Setting*. That resource only provides a rough measurement scale, so we first had to locate the general orientation of the Stellar Map to known constellations or star systems, and let the measurements fall out from there. After many checks, assumptions, and scaling, we managed to get the orientation to match the original game designers almost perfectly. After that, the borders fell in place and it became a simple matter of locating what was out there and trying to plot in three dimensions.

The data for the Solar Union accurately translates into coordinates centered around the real Sol system. We let the local bubble mark

the natural limit of the stellar nation. Outside the Union of Sol's 200 LY borders, all the data is *based* on fact, but not *factual*. I don't even promise to get it on the correct side of the galactic plane (relative to Earth). Parallax information is not possible with these extreme distances. We attempted to find the position of the other systems, and made our best guess at distance, keeping the system above or below the galactic plane as viewed from Earth.

So what do we know? We are 98% confident that we have the correct systems matched with the Stellar Nations. We believe too much of the math as well as the look-and-feel correlates positively to be random chance. Below is a map we modified by overlapping the *Star\*Drive Campaign Setting* map with a 500-parsec artist's view. It looks as if the artist and the game designers used the same maps. Needless to say, we were happy to have this final piece of verification. After all that, you might be wondering... Just where is Kendai? What type of system is Kurg in? What system is the moon jungle planet of Sheya a part of? You're just going to have to read further and find out yourself, because I won't spoil it here.

- Len Savoy



**The borders between all the stellar nations are 1 parsec (3.26 LY) thick. This was set as the standard length measurement during the Treaty of Concord.**

**More detailed maps of all thirteen stellar nations can be found in later chapters, and provide information pertaining to sector breakdown, planetary maps of several major systems, and actual sector maps in certain areas.**

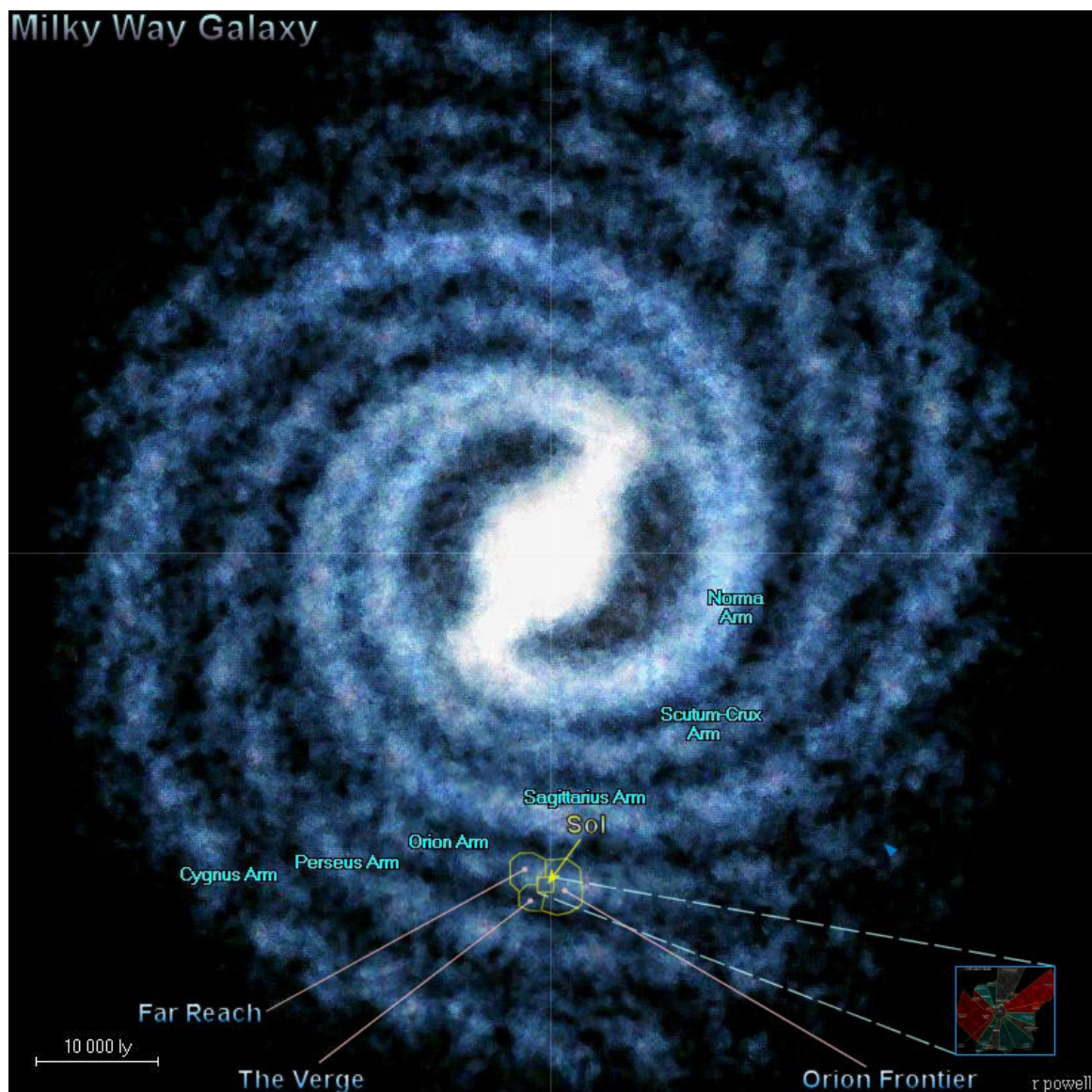


## The Milky Way Galaxy and The Stellar Ring

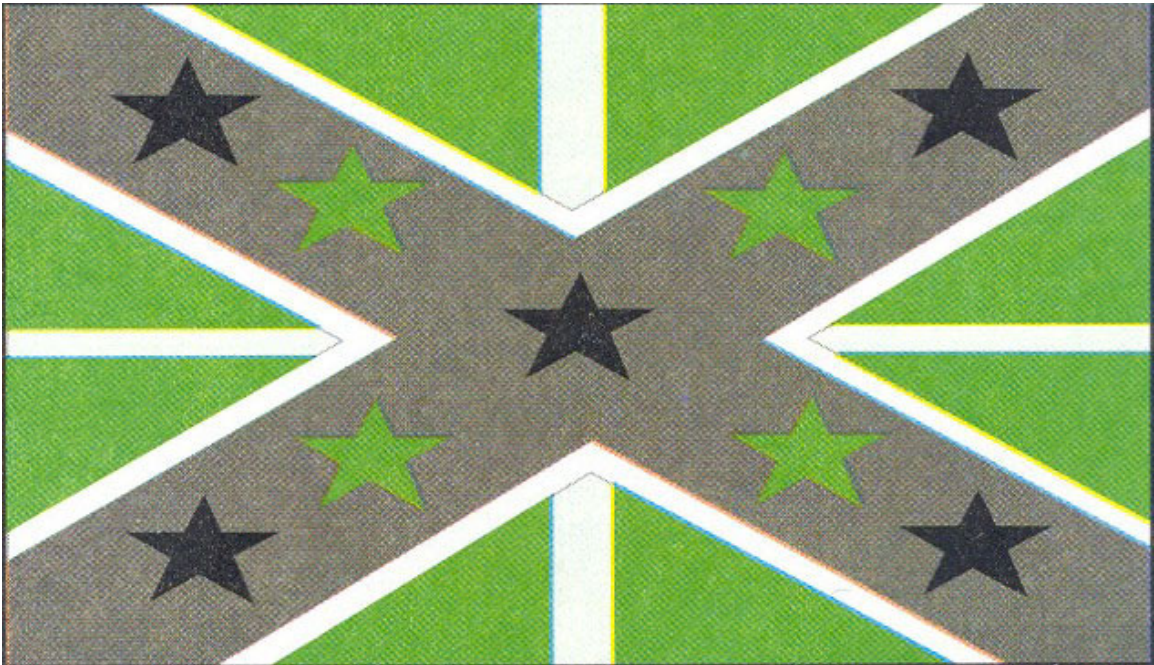
Shown here is the Milky Way Galaxy, a type Sb spiral galaxy, home to the nations of the Stellar Ring. The Milky Way contains more than 200 billion stars, younger towards the arms, but significantly older approaching the globular clusters near the galactic center. Thousands of nebulae in the spiral arms give birth to new stars over millions of years, and rarely, these stars

pull planets into their orbit, capable of spawning new life. As you can see below, humanity, its allies, and its enemies have only explored a very small portion of this 100,000 light year diameter galaxy.

*Let's have a look at what they've done.*



# **Chapter One**



**Austrin-Ontis  
Unlimited**



## **A Brief History of Austrin-Ontis Unlimited**

2010: Austrin Arms incorporates on Earth as a provider of personal security firearms.

2017: Ontis Ordinance becomes incorporated on Earth, primarily as a manufacturer of military grade weaponry.

2112: Austrin Arms succeeds in a hostile takeover of Ontis Ordinance, becoming the single largest arms manufacturer. The newly formed Austrin-Ontis Unlimited proceeds to crush any remaining competition.

2160: The first stardrive is invented as a combination of human and fraal technology, allowing for interstellar travel in a matter of days.

2186: A-O receives its first colonial charter from Earth.

2194: The Powder system is charted and colonized under Austrin control.

2245: A-O creates a massive Operations Headquarters on Powder to handle most colonial affairs, but leaves their official HQ on Earth.

2297: A-O relocates the rest of its central management to Powder months before the 1<sup>st</sup> Galactic War breaks out.

2299: The 1<sup>st</sup> Galactic War begins. Austrin-Ontis Unlimited joins dozens of other nations in declaring independence from the Terran Empire.

2312: The Treaty of Earth ends GW1, fully recognizing Austrin-Ontis Unlimited as a sovereign stellar nation.

2320: The Logar system is charted, sparking the last major colonization effort before GW2.

2326: The AOV *Roland* explores the Algemron system in the Verge, splitting its claim with the ITV *Exploit*.

2346: The Mutant Uprising of Tau Ceti sparks the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War.

2347: Austrin-Ontis begins military action against the neighboring Leodal States.

2355: The Leodal States declare their surrender to the Austrin Naval Command.

2361: A-O joins the Rigunmor Star Consortium, the StarMech Collective, and the Union of Sol to form the Profit Confederation.

2363: The fortress ship AOV *Wesson* and its accompanying task force are lost in the Nariac Domain.

2366: James Gates becomes CEO.

2367: James Gates succeeds in defying the Board of Directors and implements a State of Crisis, earning the nickname of "Crazy".

2375: The State of Crisis ends.

2401: The Battle of Songham halts the Expansion Pentad's advance, also ending the 'gentleman's agreement' between the Profit and FreeSpace alliances.

2402: Hostilities with the Orion League begin in force, to the detriment of Austrin holdings.

2472: The Treaty of Concord ends the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War.

2492: James Gates retires from office and dies shortly thereafter. Karina Jahra takes office as the new CEO of Austrin-Ontis Unlimited.

2497: Contact with the Verge is reestablished. The Monitor Mandate separates the colony world of Galvin from Austrin-Ontis.

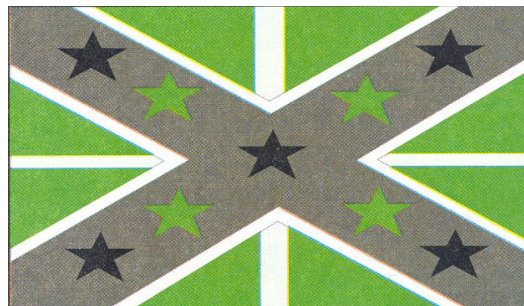
2501: The present.

# The People of Austrin-Ontis Unlimited

Austrin-Ontis (A-O) began on old Earth as two separate mega-corporations: Austrin Arms, the world's largest manufacturer and dealer of small arms, and Ontis Ordnance, the largest supplier of heavy and military weaponry. Both had grown immensely rich from the innumerable petty wars and minor conflicts before humanity left the solar system. They united when Austrin Arms completed a hostile takeover of its rival, Ontis Ordnance. The new mega-corporation soon moved its base of operations and corporate headquarters to the colony world of Powder. A-O then became much more than a simple corporation when it individually sponsored new colonial expeditions in exchange for system management rights. In time, A-O became one of a dozen provincial authorities under the Terran Empire, while continuing to maintain its core purpose of the manufacture and sale of all ranges of arms and equipment.

Austrin-Ontis also provided the much-needed function of arms manufacturing outside the Sol system as humanity took to the stars, supplying weapons to fledgling colonists struggling for survival in the deeps of space. In addition, this abundance of cheap, reliable firearms did much to aid those colonies when they revolted against the Terran Empire. During and immediately following the First Galactic War, A-O built even more inroads into the stellar nations by selling weapons to every new government scrambling to establish its position among the stars. The Austrins wisely used their newfound wealth to invest in the research and development of further military technology and soon led the field in production capacity for what they still consider the most vital resource of all: weapons.

During GW2 however, sales dwindled as the other stellar nations (except for the company's Profit Confederation allies) cut off relations with Austrin-Ontis. Despite the economic downturn, the Austrins made great initial gains during the war as it overran the fragmentary Leodal States.



Expansion abruptly stopped when they encountered the Nariac Domain, however. Long supported by their VoidCorp masters, the Nariacs fiercely resisted A-O incursions, gradually slowing and then stopping their mighty military machine. Eventually, the mutual border between Austrin-Ontis and the Domain became a strip of destroyed systems where each side threw everything they had at one another, overrunning the same worlds time and time again. Despite these fluctuations, neither nation made significant advances by the conclusion of the war. Finally, circumstances forced the Austrins to donate most of the former Leodal States to Concord Prime, keeping only the more developed and least damaged systems closest to their original border.

## Social Outlook

Most outsiders stereotype an Austrin as a gun-wise salesman who is perhaps a little too eager to show off his wares. A less flattering interpretation would be that all Austrins are insane gun salesmen who are desperate to sell arms to anyone and everyone, while demonstrating their use in disruptive ways. As in most things, neither is completely accurate.

Austrins tend toward strong individualism, not anarchy. They love their guns, but use them responsibly, or soon find that the Company removes their right to bear them at all. They consider themselves rugged, but live in a highly developed corporate world, supported by a relatively benign Company attempting to



ensure each citizen's standard of living remains above average. Because of this paternal relationship, Austrins love their Company and their way of life. Less overall conflict exists than one might expect from a society where everyone packs a firearm.

### **Political Philosophy**

Austrin politics hinge upon Company stock – gaining, holding, and wielding it to maximum effect. There are “political parties” but they form as simple collections of everyday citizens who meet and decide how to vote as a bloc. Since A-O exists as a corporation, there are no democratically elected offices per se, but each citizen can exercise his or her rights as a stockholder and vote on a wide range of issues, including the appointment of some Company positions. A-O has also taken steps to ensure that only citizens are eligible to purchase stock, so that outside parties cannot gain influence over local politics.

### **Customs**

Austrins love individualism and heroism. They are descended from the hardy colonists who answered the Company's call during the original exodus from Sol. This spirit of freedom has endured and shows itself in the typical Austrin love of adventure. Coupled with A-O's chief product, this also brings out the mindset of the modern-day Austrin hero and the widely-held belief that one individual can always make a difference in any conflict.

### **The Right to Bear Arms**

Austrin personal weaponry remains the nation's pride and joy. Many keep the same weapon for years, maintaining and caring for it like a close family member until long after its expected lifetime has passed. Upon reaching the age of majority and becoming a full stockholder, every Austrin is issued a license to carry light side arms in public and the right to own any military grade weapons they wish as long as their use is restricted to their private property. (In game terms, Austrins may carry any

### ***AOV Wesson***

In 2363, only a few years after the fall of the Leodal States, the Austrins, who until that time had taken their successes for granted, launched a massive offensive into the Nariac Domain. The CEO, who had previously ridden waves of unparalleled popularity due to his forays against the Leodal States, decided to initiate one last great offensive just as he retired. He ordered one of the Austrins' most prized fortress ships, the AOV Wesson along with its entire task force, straight at a critical Nariac border system.

Not a single ship returned.

The few reports that ever came back via the grid indicated the fleet entered the main system in good order, and was then surprised by a massive fleet that had been waiting for them. Some reports indicated that as many as three fortress ships may have participated in the battle, along with their accompanying armadas. The Austrins were, in short, massacred.

News of the loss proved devastating. Never had an Austrin fleet suffered such a defeat. The Company swore revenge and blamed Nariac spies and informers on the loss. The original mistrust and dislike of Nariacs began to bloom into full-blown hatred. The Austrin citizenry simply could not comprehend how 'the greatest military of all time' could suffer such a blow. The public outcry forced the newest CEO to resign because of his predecessor's mistake, triggering a succession of weak interim leaders until James "Crazy" Gates took the chair in 2366. The disaster also caused the value of A-O stock to drop at an unprecedented rate, which in turn sparked a slowdown in the overall Austrin economy. The Nariacs, for their part, have remained silent on how they knew of the incoming fleet, and how they marshaled such firepower on short notice.

'Common' rated sidearm and may keep anything up to "Military" at their home, ship, or business). If an Austrin wishes to upgrade a sidearm, and many do, then a simple test of responsibility given at the local administration facility will allow them

to carry heavier weapons (up to a 'Controlled' rating). These upgraded licenses also allow the bearer to conceal the weapon in any way they wish, whereas the basic license allows only for fully visible sidearms.

During the Nariac and Orion incursions into their space, A-O instituted a policy stating that all households must maintain at least one rifle or heavy weapon (of "Controlled" grade or higher). This policy continues today and such weapons are intended to defend against future invasions by enemies of A-O Unlimited. If an individual household cannot afford such a weapon, it will be provided free of charge, yet remain the official property of the government. Also, regardless of whether Austrins plan to serve in the national military, all citizens must complete 6 weeks of basic military training at age 17. If an Austrin refuses the training, his or her right to bear arms is permanently forfeited.

An Austrin may also have their license revoked or downgraded for criminal or civil infractions, or for company employees failing to meet assigned quotas. At any given time, approximately 7% of the adult population has suspended or revoked licenses. Other Austrins look down upon these unfortunate people with scorn and pity.

### **Charity**

The average Austrin possesses a well-defined sense of honor and a charitable spirit. The Company also hosts the largest concentration of Old Earth religions anywhere, many of which encourage donations and charitable giving.

Charity also exists in more secular forms through numerous relief organizations for the victims of tragedies and accidents. Helping those who have suffered misfortune appeals to the heroic side of many Austrins, and they often give generously.

A somewhat practical type of charity used quite often in Austrin society is what is commonly referred to as a "stock drive." Members of the community donate a share of stock or two to a particular organization, who then sells it, usually at a discount price, and gives the proceeds away to the

community it serves.

A welfare system also exists for those who have not yet decided on Company work or are engaged in 'freelancing.' This entitles a citizen to a modest sum of Concord dollars per share from the ages of 17 to 22. After the 5-year transition period, they must either find their own job or have their stockholder privileges suspended. A person can also draw upon this welfare assistance if they become disabled or crippled, but only if the injury occurred while working for the Company. They may draw the funds for as long as a doctor confirms their inability to work.

It should also be noted that Company employees may draw upon this money after 60 years of service, but the sum is quite low. Therefore, many Austrins serve for at least 120 years when their benefit packages become more substantial.

### **Community Service**

Despite the strong independent spirit of most Austrins, they also have an equally strong desire to help those around them, leading to a sense of loyalty and service. As a consequence, many Austrins regularly take time off from their normal jobs to volunteer, clean, and otherwise help keep their particular community healthy.

To encourage such activities, the Company gives vouchers for lower priced stock to those in a community who give extraordinary amounts of time and effort to their fellow citizens. If a deed is especially noteworthy or heroic, a person may simply be given stock outright as a reward for exceptional service.

### **Company Employment**

Even with the many benefits of corporate employment, such as an attractive retirement package, disability protection, and access to fantastic equipment, not all of its citizens work for Austrin-Ontis Unlimited or one of its many subsidiaries. Several Austrin citizens work independently (called 'freelancing' by corporate workers) for businesses and trading concerns based in other stellar nations. A rough estimate would place about 95% of the Austrin citizenry working directly for A-O Unlimited or one of its subsidiary companies, but this



number is dropping as more young Austrins leave for foreign lands at the urging of government leaders. Upper management hopes that these entrepreneurs will help to open new markets for Austrin goods. However, these freelancers are still Austrin citizens, and in order to work outside the Company they must first register and promise not to engage in activities that could seriously harm Austrin interests.

In addition, many citizens do not work for the actual Austrin-Ontis Corporation either. Quite a few find employment with the subsidiary companies and holdings that are independently operated, but technically owned by the primary corporation.

All citizens are given the option upon reaching the age of majority, to join either corporate or military service. If they decline, they must supply within 5 years proof of crippling disability or must register as a freelancer. The Company frowns upon freeloaders as unnecessary burdens to its welfare system. Failure to provide such proof or arrange for work as a freelancer results in the loss of one's right to bear arms and the loss of stockholder privileges until the situation is resolved.

### **Cyberware**

The Austrins harbor a deep-seated hatred of all things cybernetic due to their conflicts with the Nariac Domain during GW2. As such, citizens in possession of cyberware must register with the Company, and obtain a license for its use. Any visitors to A-O territory must also declare their cyberware or face stiff fines and penalties. Also, any individual openly displaying such devices will become the subject of constant surveillance by the police, harassment by the locals, and may even attract unwanted dueling challenges if they overstay their welcome.

Despite this prevailing attitude, Austrins do make use of cyberware in a limited capacity, mostly by those who work on upgrading the national Grid-systems. While many of these workers are foreigners, or Mechalus, a few Austrin employees also labor alongside them. To avoid the public's ire, most of these grid-pilots use wireless

### **Subsidiary Companies**

While Austrin-Ontis is a corporate government, it did not choose the path of VoidCorp, where a lone monolithic entity rules overall. Instead, A-O allows for the creation of small businesses and concerns within its territory. These companies are operated by their individual company officers, but all companies based within Austrin space are technically owned and controlled by the parent company: Austrin-Ontis Unlimited. This means the Company automatically owns a 50.1% stake in all of its subsidiaries. Collecting dividends off this stock is the prime source of income for A-O, with other taxes making up only a minority of its income. This ownership is usually no more than a formality, as the Austrin government cares little for how a subsidiary conducts business so long as it brings profit to the Company as a whole.

These smaller companies usually remain free to conduct their own affairs, and need only submit an annual earnings and profitability report to the Finance Division. However, if annual audits indicate an unprofitable subsidiary, the Company may take corrective action such as buying more of the subsidiary's stock and thereby infusing more capital into their business initiatives. Or, if the subsidiary is a lost cause the subsidiary may find itself liquidated and its assets seized by another division in the parent Company that needs them more. This has on occasion sparked infrequent duels, but most of the stockholders of the now-defunct subsidiary gratefully accept the Company's buyout of their failed endeavor. Also, during the Second Galactic War the Company occasionally incorporated some of the larger, more important subsidiaries directly into the main corporate structure, rewarding them for contributing to the wartime economy. This consolidation usually resulted in great profit to the existing shareholders on both sides of the acquisition.

NIJacks, and conceal any external evidence of their profession. The Company quietly pays these few grid-pilots VERY well, in an

attempt to upgrade what is, quite simply, one of the worst Grid-systems in the Stellar Ring. It is with some embarrassment that senior officials admit that even the Hatires have better Grid-systems (often donated and maintained by their Thuldan allies no-less). These leaders continue to have little success in recruiting their own employees for such positions, and routinely have to contract outside the Company to acquire such expertise, typically from the Rigunmor Star Consortium, but Insight has also entered into the Austrin Grid-market.

A curious exception to the Austrin aversion to cyberotechnology is the grid-gladicator. Their sport can be found extensively throughout A-O territory. These grid-pilots wage simulated combat while sometimes millions of devoted fans watch from grid caster helmets or holodisplays. These 'cyber-warriors' are considered one of the few 'acceptable' occupations involving implanted cyberware.

### **Dueling**

Austrin-Ontis is home to one of the most old-fashioned customs in the entire Stellar Ring: the pistol duel. Laws governing duels are universally held across the Company as follows:

If a duel is agreed upon in front of no less than 4 witnesses, the two combatants are allowed to pick a time and place. A Company employee from any division must supervise the duel and act as judge, but will take no action as long as both parties properly follow the rules.

Participants often carry out their duels with stutter weapons, or other non-lethal technologies, but many are also held using live ammunition. The combatants pace off to a pre-determined distance, turn, and fire one shot apiece. If one or both are hit, the duel is over. If both miss, they fire again until someone is struck. Regardless of whether any participant actually dies, the duel immediately ends when someone suffers an injury. The witnesses and judge then declare the winner.

If the duel resulted in any kind of foul play, including the use of cyberware, outside interference, or any dishonorable behavior, the duel ends with the

combatants losing the law's protection. In such cases, they can and often are fully prosecuted for their actions.

It should be noted that duels using other firearms, and even melee weapons, occur, but are far less frequent than pistol duels. The pistol duel carries a sense of personal honor and intimacy that many Austrins prize.

The Austrin military discourages duels between active personnel in order to preserve morale. Austrin custom dictates that the commanding officers of both participants must be witness to the duel. If either disapproves or fails to attend, the duel is disallowed and called off. Duels between officers and the enlisted almost never occur, as very few CO's would want to deal with the fallout and decreased morale caused by such an incident.

It should also be noted that the rules described above appropriately follow the Austrin legal system. Illegal and non-sanctioned duels are also quite common in the lesser-developed regions of A-O space due to a lack of local law enforcement. Such duels usually have quick, violent, and often deadly, outcomes. They have no official supervision and often employ less than honorable tactics by both parties.

### **Holidays**

Individual Austrins hold a large number of minor religious holidays, as well as events commemorating major victories during GW2. In addition, the Company celebrates several other holidays across all of A-O space. Since most Austrins receive these as days off from work, large public gatherings are common. Sometimes they take the form of a local festival in a particular city, or occasionally as massive planet- or system-wide fairs.

**"Day of Merger"** - This is the day that celebrates when Austrin Arms and Ontis Ordnance officially merged to become Austrin-Ontis Unlimited. This is the biggest holiday in Austrin space, usually resulting in the early closing of schools and Company offices, and large, noisy celebrations.

## Nariac and Austrin Atrocities

During GW2, the Austrins and Nariacs frequently traded territory across the same star systems time and again. Eventually, both sides abandoned all pretenses and employed any tactic they deemed necessary to break down their opponent's defense. Weapons of mass destruction entered the equation, and neither stellar nation held any reservations about using them if warranted by the wartime situation.

Because of their expertise with chemical compounds, the Austrins garnered a reputation for using such weapons to force the Nariacs from heavily defended worlds. Then, armed with counteragents and antidotes, their marines would land and occupy the abandoned planets, clearing out any remaining pockets of sickened resistance along the way. Eventually, a team of terraformation engineers would initiate a project to cleanse the landscape for future use, without the need for breathing masks and environmental-suits.

The Nariacs would often respond in kind to these Austrin atrocities. Through the marvels of cybertechnology, they first developed the means to withstand such chemical agents by incorporating rebreathers and special filters into their ground forces. The Domain troops employed similar tactics to overcome high radiation zones, improving that technology until they could turn the tables on their enemy. By using nuclear weapons to irradiate worlds to the point that only their specially-cybered combat troops could survive, they struck back and the fires of war raged ever higher with A-O.

Both sides soon forgot about the civilians living on the planets they so easily devastated. Eventually the contested systems became useless except as staging grounds for further assaults into the next star system. Concord investigators working in the former Leodal States have privately noted that there is enough evidence to try hundreds of officers on both sides of the war for crimes against humanity, but they fear the flood of accusations and heightened tensions that would follow if they fully prosecuted such crimes.

*"They weren't civilians, Sir. They were Nariacs."*

– 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Max Sterling,  
254th Tactical Space Marines, 2438

**"Victory Day"** - This day originally marked when the last Leodal system officially surrendered to Austrin control. It was the nation's last major triumph before settling into a long, bitter war with the Nariac Domain. The holiday actually originated during GW2 soon after the fall of the Leodal States, but has grown into something far different over the intervening years. Few people remember the Leodal States as anything more than a dim, distant memory. Victory Day is now used as a general celebration of the Austrin Armed forces, including their victories in GW1 as well as GW2. The day's events are usually marked by speeches commemorating various major battles in which Austrin forces participated, along with parades and all manner of public fairs, many paid for on the Company's expense account.

**"Remembrance Day"** - This is a very solemn occasion for Austrins. It marks the day the nation remembers its fallen soldiers and heroes, as well as a day to reflect on the devastation wrought upon their systems by the hated Nariacs. All Austrins take this day off from work and practically nothing transpires inside their borders except religious activities and memorial services. Many Austrins hold the view that it's very poor taste to duel on Remembrance Day, since it seeks to remember the dead rather than create new losses to mourn.

## Religion

As a whole, Austrins tend to hold religion in very high regard. Aside from the theocratic states of the Orlamu and Hatire, as well as the fast-spreading Inseer religion in Insight territory, Austrin-Ontis has the lowest percentage of atheists in the Stellar Ring; just 13%. Over half the population remains staunch believers of Old Earth faiths. This figure reaches far and above that of any other stellar nation, including the birthplace of most religions: the Union of Sol. As a result, A-O remains one of the few places where one can find Old Earth



holidays still celebrated by large numbers of people. Christianity, in all manner of denominations, as well as Islam and Judaism can be found here. Hinduism exists, albeit in a much-altered form, as the rigid caste system does not lend itself well to the Austrin sense of personal freedom. The Old Earth meditative religions such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism are present as well, but have had to adapt in the face of A-O's near universal obsession with violence.

While religious wars were common in the Sol system before the advent of the stardrive, much of this mutual hatred was lost during A-O's initial colonization when settlers banded together, and during GW2, when the entire nation put aside its differences to support the war efforts. However, the last decades of peace have seen a general focus on rebuilding within Austrin space, and this has triggered an awakening within the Austrin religious community. This has also heightened tensions in some cases, but little violence beyond dueling and verbal arguments. Nevertheless, some worry the recent trend could grow out of control and full-scale violence could erupt between rival religious groups.

### **Psionics**

Austrins view mindwalkers with a slight amount of suspicion, mostly because of their presumed mind-reading abilities. Mindwalkers in Austrin space must register with the Company, but need not submit to any form of supervision, unless convicted of criminal activity. Actual training schools for mindwalkers remain very rare however, as A-O citizens tend to emphasize the more martial aspects of life rather than the introspection demanded by many of the disciplines.

However, Austrins do consider some mindwalkers useful, especially those that can enhance their own natural fighting abilities. Those mindwalkers who alter their body through biokinesis are viewed with outright hostility, however, because of their similarities to the cybered Nariacs and mutant Thuldans, both enemies during GW2.

## **Government**

There are three major entities that make up the A-O political landscape. The two most powerful are the CEO and the Board of Directors. The CEO is the head of state and the de-facto leader of the entire nation, controlling almost all aspects of the Company's operation. The CEO can direct the military, dismiss Board members and generally do whatever she wants...as long as a majority of the Board agrees and backs her decisions. The Board of Directors basically serves to check her power. They also help run the Company and handle many routine matters. With much less tangible power, but still wielding enormous influence, are the stockholders of Austrin-Ontis.

While Austrin space is divided into sectors like most other stellar nations, these sectors have little political meaning. They are used mostly by the military as borders to determine patrol regions. They also serve a judicial purpose, with each sector having a high court and a sector-wide prosecutor's office. Instead of sector governments, however, Austrin political power falls to system Administrators, who report directly to a single Chief Administrator. This results in a massive bureaucracy since each individual system handles its own internal matters unlike the sector administrations of other nations. The advantage to this is that each system can handle its own affairs, a useful trait in GW2 when a system could find itself unable to contact a higher authority during a crisis or invasion.

The Chief Administrator actually serves a mostly bureaucratic purpose, helping to coordinate trade and human services, while wielding little direct power. It is very common, however, for a Chief Administrator to be selected to the Board after many years of dedicated service. Also, all corporate outposts without a military purpose report to a Chief Administrator, albeit one with much less prestige. These outposts are usually outside of A-O space and serve as focal points for distribution and sales in other stellar nations.

## **The CEO**

The head of Austrin-Ontis is its Chief Executive Officer, Karina Jahra. She has the final say on many issues, including appointments to the Board of Directors. She easily comes across as the most visible representative of the Company to other stellar nations.

The CEO's chief powers are as follows:

(1) She may dismiss any Director for any reason. This may be overridden if 6 out of 9 of the Directors vote against her.

(2) The CEO has full veto power over individual decisions made by the various Directors. Her veto may also be overturned, but only by a two-thirds vote majority. However, during a formal State of Crisis, her decisions cannot be overruled by anything less than a unanimous decision by the Board. This allows for strong, politics-free leadership during times of emergency. A State of Crisis has happened only once, during GW2 as A-O overextended itself and had to fall back from the combined pressure of the Orions and Nariacs. The CEO declares powers in effect and the stockholders and Board must consent. The crisis powers remain in effect for one-year periods, and consent must be re-obtained every year.

(3) The CEO is entrusted with most major decisions that affect the Company as a whole. This includes directing general research, finance, and the military. However, she will occasionally poll the stockholders when an issue involves a major shift in policy. These votes are binding and so are usually only called when the CEO is confident the vote will go her way.

(4) The CEO appoints members to fill positions on the Board when a vacancy opens up. These appointments are always subject to stockholder approval.

(5) When a CEO dies, resigns, or is forced from her position, the sitting Board members recommend a new candidate, almost always drawn from the Board itself. This requires a 7/9-vote majority of the Board members. The new CEO then takes her position as soon as a majority of the

stockholders also consent to the appointment. CEOs are rarely forced out, but to do so, seven Board members must agree, and they must obtain the additional consent of 2/3 of the stockholders.

## **Legislature**

The Board and the CEO hold all legislative powers of the Company. No independent governing bodies exist outside their control in Austrin space.

The Board of Directors and the CEO draft the laws. Any Board member can propose a law, and the Board then votes on it. If the law in question affects only the Director's own division, then the law is typically considered to be in effect unless vetoed by the CEO. Any laws issued by the CEO are considered immediately in effect, unless the Board overrules her through a majority vote.

In reality, only very minor laws are issued autocratically. The CEO almost always ensures she has the Board's consent before issuing major legislation, as she would not want to suffer the humiliation of having it overturned. The CEO and the Board have been known to act without one another, but this usually precipitates a political crisis with each struggling for dominance. These situations often call for polling the individual stockholders to gauge public opinion. Likewise, the Board runs most legislation past the CEO before issuing a law directly.

## **The Board of Directors**

Board members are lifetime servants of the Company that have worked their way up the corporate or military ladder. Many of them started out as lowly sales associates, and rose accordingly. Due to their many years of service, all Board members have considerable stock holdings, and wield massive influence within the Company as a whole.

Each Director heads up a large chunk of the Company and takes responsibility for the day-to-day operations of his or her division. They make most of the routine decisions, and many of the not-so routine decisions as well. The truly important

## State of Crisis

During GW2, just after the fall of the Leodal States, the Orions launched a massive assault on A-O's borders to reclaim areas of space taken earlier in the war. At the same time, the Austrins began to feel the weight of VoidCorp-supported Nariac fleets that "smelled blood in the water" after the loss of the AOV Wesson in 2363. The Austrin leadership could not allow the situation to continue. Their economy remained weak, and they could no longer afford to fight such a war on two fronts. The military, however, insisted on staying the course, refusing to give up one inch of captured territory. A succession of five CEO's in three years all failed to stem the tide. Finally, in late 2366, two of the factions within the Board compromised, elevating the young James Gates from Director of Finance to CEO. He soon proved resistant to their manipulation, losing support among his former allies. Gates knew the money and resources simply didn't exist to continue the war in its current state, and wrangled for months with a now hostile Board, especially the Director of Military Operations, over military policy before taking decisive action.

In 2367, Gates made a shocking declaration. Instead of fighting a two-front war, the military would shift resources from the Nariac to Orion border. The net result would be to lose some of the newly captured Leodal systems to the Nariacs in order to hold the Orions and prevent them from taking pre-GW2 Austrin territories. When Gates made the announcement at the annual Board meeting, Director of Military Operations Brandon Waters immediately opposed it and demanded a veto. He received support from everyone except Belra Jerlousch, Director of Research. Confident that he had enough support, Waters prepared to remove Gates and install himself as CEO. In a *more radical move*, "Crazy" James made another declaration before Waters could initiate such a coup. As CEO, Gates invoked an official State of Crisis, using his emergency powers to dismiss every Board member but Belra.

Blind shock reverberated throughout A-O space. His enemies accused Gates of making a power grab of the highest order. During this time, Gates also earned his political nickname of "Crazy." Gates, nothing if not a consummate politician and orator, embraced the label attributed to him by his opponents, turning it into an asset. He held debates and public forums daily for three months, leading up to the shareholder votes that would determine the course of Austrin history. Gradually, he convinced the population that if they did not sacrifice a few of the captured Leodal systems to the Nariacs, the whole nation would fall. Since the Board's dismissal, they technically could not hold a session to oppose Gates during those months. Thus, he essentially ran the Company as a full-fledged dictator, allowing him to accomplish decision-making on his own without the unnecessary delay of consulting the Board. His leadership during that troubled time may have saved his career and the Company. In short, the State of Crisis allowed Gates to convince the Austrin population that his policies and decision-making could not only save the Company, but also return it to prominence.

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2367, the polls opened to determine whether the dismissal of the Board members would be confirmed. When the dust cleared, 7 Board members lost their seats, most by less than a few hundred thousand votes. The 8<sup>th</sup> originally dissenting Director – Karina Jahra – survived only by promising to abstain from the Crisis vote when it came before the Board, and this unspoken support would later gain her the CEO's chair upon Gates' retirement. "Crazy" James rode his wave of victory by appointing new Board members who promised to support his decisions for the remainder of GW2. The State of Crisis was officially approved 1 month later after a succession of appointments and shareholder votes. Gates held onto these powers for the next eight years, until he felt confident in the continued success of his plans. Even after relinquishing his emergency powers in 2375 he remained CEO throughout GW2 and did not retire until 2492 when his age and failing health finally forced him from office. He died shortly thereafter at the age of 173 and was buried with full honors at the national cemetery on Powder. James "Crazy" Gates lives on, however, in the hundreds of monuments dedicated to him, in history textbooks which describe him as the greatest Austrin leader of all time and extol him as the embodiment of every Austrin ideal: aggressive, independent, innovative, honorable, and perhaps most importantly, successful.



judgments get passed to the CEO, who sets the course for the Company, and then ensures the Director enforces her decision.

The Board of Directors concerns itself with the daily operations of the Company. The nine Directors oversee the most important tasks of keeping the Company viable, strong, and profitable.

The Directors all hold equal rank, but differ in influence. The current Directors, along with their separate departments, are listed below, roughly in order of their current importance and prestige:

**Director of Sales** Justin Waters (Hm/Austrin/DCS-14] heads the most prestigious of the directorates; the Sales Division. He controls all sales associates, all corporate stores located throughout the Stellar Ring, and all exports with other nations involving armaments or any other goods manufactured by A-O Unlimited.

Peiter Gates (Hm/Austrin/FA-7) holds the position of **Director of the Colonial Authority (CA)**, and handles the colonization and administration of new Austrin worlds. Eventually, as the colonies become more developed, he transfers their administration to the Department of the Interior. Gates also handles Austrin interests in the Verge.

The **Director of Military Operations**, General George Ober (Hm/Austrin/CS-19), was chosen directly from within the military ranks, a traditional occurrence for most Directors of the division. He oversees A-O's vast military machine. As Director, he wields considerable influence to determine who receives military promotions and who manages each branch of the armed services. Reporting directly to him, are the Supreme Admiral of the Navy and the Army Chief of Staff.

As the **Director of Research and Development**, Belra Jerlousch (Hf/Austrin/TO-17) controls the direction of all scientific breakthroughs. Some consider her the most important of all the Directors, since A-O's superior weapons technology has consistently kept the Company afloat. Members of the Sales Division protest this claim, arguing that the innovations

delivered by R&D would remain meaningless unless someone properly marketed them to the consumer. This has led to an intense rivalry between the two divisions, which upper management often encourages as a means for driving Company profits higher. The negative aspects of the rivalry rarely outweigh the advantages, resulting in little more than heated arguments, legal duels, and violent sporting events. Also, as head of Development, Belra has control over all manufacturing concerns within A-O space.

As the **Director of the Interior**, Serina Berrot (Hf/Austrin/DFA-8) oversees the careful administration of all developed systems, worlds, and corporate outposts. She coordinates extensively with Corporate Security, deferring to them in courtroom and police matters, while controlling the underlying bureaucracy herself.

The **Director of Public Relations** is Harash Justar (Hm/Austrin/DMW-11). This is the diplomatic wing of the Austrin-Ontis government. It handles all routine external affairs, as well as the choosing of A-O delegations to the Concord and other nations. He also assists the CEO with matters of international law and helps the Sales Division with their marketing campaigns.

**Director of Corporate Security** Matrie Courth (Hf/Austrin/DCS-11) presides over all non-military police forces and the Austrin judicial system. She holds the position of Chief Justice in Austrin territory, as well as the top law enforcement title among the police force.

**Director of Finance** Gerald Merkolth (Hm/Austrin/DFA-10) oversees all incoming funds generated by the Sales Division, as well as all other sources of revenue. He ensures the money's distribution as necessary, and as directed by the CEO.

The **Director of Intelligence** at Austrin-Ontis Unlimited is Vicor Maravian (Hm/Austrin/FA-10). Most Austrins tend to look down upon espionage and spies due to their dishonorable nature. Nevertheless,

Austrin-Ontis maintains a spy network both within the Stellar Ring, and a very small, but effective counter-intelligence network within its own space to watch for internal problems and Nariac subterfuge.

The Directors enjoy a large amount of latitude in how they run their own departments, but always remain subject to veto by the CEO. Serious dissent very rarely occurs at Board meetings, since most members have only the well being of their beloved Company at heart. This ensures that they are at least civil to each other.

The Board holds regularly scheduled meetings, though the CEO or a Director can call a special session at any time. The special sessions usually arise when the CEO has an important announcement, or needs advice. Board members usually call special meetings only when they strongly disagree with a decision made by the CEO and wish to override it, or discover new information that calls for immediate attention. Otherwise, they stay content to run their own divisions and leave the others to their own business.

### **The Stockholders**

The politics of Austrin-Ontis Unlimited are the politics of stock. All citizens are issued one share of corporate stock upon birth, but control over this stock and its voting rights rest with the guardians of the child until it reaches the age of 17, the age of majority. In fact, it is this share that determines one's citizenship. As long as a person holds a single share, they are legally considered an A-O citizen. To leave the Company, one must sell all their shares. In the opposite situation, i.e., when someone immigrates into A-O, a new citizen must first purchase an initial share of stock.

When stockholders are called to a vote, adults take proof of stock holdings, as well as any their underage children might own, and express their opinions via the Grid. These grid-voting sites are quite possibly the most secure in Austrin space and have been heavily upgraded recently by the Mechalus as a service from A-O's Rigunmor allies.

Many parents also set up trust funds for their children, using their own cash reserves to purchase a few more shares in the child's name. These few additional shares are often useful when entering Company employment, by giving an advantage in job placement and further educational opportunities.

To obtain more shares, an Austrin can exercise three different options. They can be purchased outright from another shareholder. They can be awarded for outstanding civic or Company service. Or they can be earned through continuous employment with the Company. The first and last are by far the most common and faster methods, and are often combined by someone wishing to attract the attention of upper management and climb into a higher position within the A-O government. Most people wishing to move up the corporate ladder also do so by taking their paychecks and sinking them heavily into the purchase of more stock. While ability is the most important consideration for determining promotions, it never hurts to have that little extra clout behind you, especially when entering the upper levels of the Company. Those who heavily invest their time in stock politics, buying, selling, and getting people to vote one way or another on an issue, are the Austrin equivalent of politicians.

Stockholders have very little formal power. Most of the important political positions are achieved by working through the ranks, not just by the number of stock shares one holds. However, the stockholders are polled whenever the Board or CEO wishes to get a sense of how the general population feels about a certain issue.

The polls are usually held in a "Yes or No" format, either supporting or rejecting a resolution. The results are binding, since the vote represents the wishes of the Austrin people. Also, these polls actually supersede any previous vote by the Board of Directors. Usually, these polls are called only when the person wishing to do so feels certain the outcome will go their way. As such, polls are usually called no more than 4 or 5 times a year. In these matters, the Board and CEO still wield enormous influence over the outcome due to their amassed stock

holdings. Roughly, the breakdown of Company stock is as follows:

CEO – 5%  
Board of Directors as a whole – 25%  
Upper 5% of wealthy citizens – 20%  
Everyone else – 50%

There are only three times when the law mandates that a poll *must* be held: (1) A Declaration of a State of Crisis, (2) the appointment or dismissal of a CEO, and (3) the appointment of a new Board member. However, it is very common for a poll to be called when the CEO attempts to dismiss a Board member. An ally of the threatened Director usually calls for the poll. Alternatively, if the CEO is certain that the stockholders will support her decision, she may call a poll herself in order to ensure that a hostile Board cannot override her decision. It is considered a sign of great public displeasure if no one on the Board will bother to call a poll in defense of another member. It shows that they were unpopular enough not to be worth the time.

These polls support the importance of stock holdings as a useful method of personal advancement. Pledging to support a particular candidate can gain one the favor of his/her underlings in the corporate ladder. Of course, supporting the wrong person can get one transferred to dead end positions as well. In the Sales Division, this often means selling weapons to Borealins or Hatires, locations where not even the greatest sales representative can meet their assigned quotas. These poor souls often find their "Right to Bear Arms" revoked as punishment.

It is important to note that stock *can* be passed on via a Last Will and Testament, but between 50-90% of an individual's stock is reclaimed by the Company upon death. All other wealth remains relatively untaxed. The Company carefully monitors all stock sales between citizens to ensure that no one attempts to cheat the system.

Also, like modern-day stock, A-O shares do occasionally split, and their value will rise and fall accordingly. The stock price usually does not fluctuate more than a few Concord dollars in a given year, and stock splits are a somewhat rare occurrence. The

last split occurred during the years between GW1 and GW2 when A-O made a tremendous amount of money. Since then, the value of corporate shares has waned, and has only recently begun to rise again in light of mounting tension in the Verge.

So far, this corporate environment has led to a concentration of power in the upper levels of the Company. Fortunately, the strongly embedded culture of national pride and loyalty has ensured that this power rarely gets abused. The result is a strong, relatively benign government that attempts to ensure its citizens' happiness through a strong profit line.

## **Judiciary**

Austrin Corporate Security (ACS) is both the police and judicial system of Austrin-Ontis Unlimited. They maintain a large, well-trained police force, occasionally calling upon military personnel to augment their ranks if the situation demands it. Thankfully, necessity rarely dictates such a decision as most members of the ACS have already had prior military experience. Since the majority of the population has armed itself, ACS prefers to allow citizens to settle minor problems on their own, intervening only when it becomes necessary. Most Austrins prefer it this way, as it puts distance between themselves and the judicial system, which is not known for its sympathy towards troublemakers.

The Austrin police force provides two major functions. One involves what most consider normal police work, and is handled by the usual law enforcement agents. The other is called the Department of the Internal Auditor General. This department investigates and prosecutes white-collar crime, usually involving stock fraud as well as other forms of deception within the numerous subsidiaries of A-O, such as embezzlement.

A panel of judges, ranging from three at the lowest level, to the Chief Arbitration Board, which has eleven members, hears all civil trials. The CAB is the highest court in Austrin space, and chaired by the Director of Corporate Security.



Austrin courts are known for their fairness during trials and their harshness when meting out punishment. Capital punishment remains quite common for high profile crimes, and lower offenses often impose lengthy prison terms, confiscation of stock, and revocation of the "Right to Bear Arms". The Company has no toleration for those who would disrupt business operations, or threaten the profit margin.

Military trials are held internally. A panel of five officers of superior rank tries each of the accused. They carry out punishments almost immediately, as appeals stand little chance for reversals of the verdict. Only the Supreme Admiral, Army Chief of Staff, Director of Military Operations, or the CEO can overrule a military panel, most of which don't bother to intervene in such affairs.

## **Austrin-Ontis Military**

Perhaps more than any other stellar nation, the Austrins stand proud of their armed forces, approaching warfare with zeal nearly unmatched throughout the Stellar Ring. They have two principal branches, the Army and the Navy.

### **The Austrin Army**

Many count A-O's army as the best in the Stellar Ring, and only the Thuldian Legions or the Concord Marines could contest the claim. The Austrins have unmatched technological superiority on the ground and arm their troops with only the best equipment. These abundant resources, the enormous numbers of citizens that join the army, and an individual Austrin's desire to find glory through combat, make them a terror when landing troops and storming enemy ships.

A-O also remains one of the few stellar nations to view its army as more important than its interstellar navy. Austrins take great delight in landing and boarding operations, and use them with near suicidal recklessness at times. This has allowed them to capture many systems relatively

intact, but also requires massive garrison forces in order to pacify planetary populations. Also, by storming enemy warships, the Austrins have managed to enhance their weapons research programs with the capture of foreign technologies.

The desire to capture planets also has its downside, a fact strongly driven home during GW2 along the Nariac front. While the Austrins admit that repeated landing attempts and the accompanying fleet actions took their toll on a few systems, they contend it was the Nariacs who would scorch a planet before allowing it to fall. The reality is that both nations engaged in horrific acts of violence as the war dragged on.

The Austrin Army maintains a massive military presence, with several branches under its umbrella. These include the regular army, used for homeland defense, garrisoning of occupied territory, and outright invasions. They also have an Austrin Marine Corps, and a number of Special Forces units.

The regular army consists of all planet-based defenses: aquatic navies as well as routine ground and air forces. These units all have their own branches, each with a specialized purpose, such as defense, invasion, securing a ship after the marines form a beachhead, and many others.

The Austrin Marines present themselves as an elite ground force, always the first to land on a planet or board an enemy ship. The Marine Corps contains several divisions, each tailored to very specific operations. The casualty rate in all divisions is quite high, and a large degree of competition exists between them, with score being kept by the number of kills in any engagement.

The Austrin Special Forces include elite combat squads, infiltration teams, and saboteurs. Special forces are usually applied in a very surgical manner, to board a ship and capture a specific person or destroy a specific target. They are also used to prepare a system for invasion by stealthily landing and attacking key defensive systems.

A Chief of Staff, selected by the Director of Military Operations, heads the Austrin Army. The Chief leads a council composed

## **The Austrin Marine Corps**

The Austrin Marine Corps is a highly regimented division of the much larger Austrin Army, with several branches covering a wide range of specialties in combat. In general, the marines are used to establish beachheads that allow the regular army a more controlled entry point into any battle zone. The Marine Corps divides itself into two parts, Ground and Space, each maintaining numerous sub-divisions.

A low ranking general leads each branch and sub-division of the marines, and a higher-ranking general commands the entire Austrin Marine Corps. This latter general also sits on the Army Chief of Staff's Council. Currently, the Corps is under the capable leadership of General Aldrik Jones (Hm/Austrin/CS-19). Jones is a decorated combat veteran, having served over 35 years of active service including 5 years in the Assault Space Marines. Many consider him next in line for the Chief of Staff position.

### **Ground-Marines**

The Ground Corps has only two sub-divisions.

#### **Tactical Division**

Austrin Tactical marines are conventional troopers, albeit skilled far and above the average soldier in most stellar nations. They use heavy armor, either combat or occasionally light powered-armor. They usually carry assault rifles, such as the 11mm charge weapon or a sabot system, and a few members of each team will always carry heavy-grade weapons for greater fire support.

#### **Heavy Division**

Austrin Heavy marines are some of the most awe-inspiring ground forces in the modern armies of the Stellar Ring. They almost always employ body tanks in their ground operations and often enter battle through low-orbit space-to-ground insertions. Usually, they do not drop until the Tactical squads have given them some form of cover, since they are very vulnerable during atmospheric re-entry. But, they have been known to insert without cover if merited by the situation, or if the intensity of a Tactical squad's ground fight requires extra firepower.

#### **Space-Marines**

The Space Marines enjoy even higher prestige than their Ground counterparts. This major division of the marines comprises four sub-divisions.: Tactical, Heavy, Assault, and a very small Space Force unit.

#### **Tactical Division**

The Tactical space marines resemble the ground Tactical units in armament and purpose, with additional training in zero-gravity conditions. They are the standard Space Marine and participate in boarding actions on crippled ships with the intent of capturing them. When dealing with a large vessel, Tactical space marines can prepare a beachhead to carry the fight to the interior of an enemy ship.

#### **Heavy Division**

The Heavy space marines are similar to Heavy ground marines in that they also use body tanks. However, these tanks are usually much lighter than the ones employed by ground troopers in order to allow better mobility in the tighter confines of starships. They usually back up Tactical Marines when taking larger ships with more sophisticated internal defenses.

#### **Assault Division**

Assault space marines participate in actions called "hot-boarding." They are highly trained troopers in vacuum-sealed combat armor that board enemy ships even while they remain operational. They wear vacuum armor because it is not unusual for the hulls of their armored boarding pod to be breached while attempting to lock onto a targeted ship, catapulting them into the void of space. They also use zero-g webs to facilitate movement around the outer hull of an enemy ship or to reorient themselves if they have to abandon their pod. Once aboard an enemy vessel, the Assault marines embark on a search-and-destroy mission in an attempt to disable the ship from the inside and aid their naval comrades in winning any overall fleet action. These units have given the Austrin Marine Corps its most fearsome reputation. Many combat veterans remember the sounds of a boarding pod hitting their hull and running gun-battles in the halls, followed by explosive charges destroying their engineering compartment. These marines are also equally proud of their motto: "Take No Prisoners."

#### **Space Force Division**

The Austrin Space Marines also incorporate a small unit consisting of elite pilots chosen from the naval fighter wings and trained to effectively pilot boarding pods. The skills of these men and women are often the only thing that keeps the pods intact long enough to be effective in ship-to-ship combat. A few of these marine pilots are also assigned to heavier assault fighters in order to provide escort for the boarding pods when the engagements are especially fierce, or a mission is deemed especially important.

of senior generals from the regular Army, the Marine Corps and Special Forces.

In addition to the regular branches, the Austrins maintain a Reserve Militia. The Militia is composed of unpaid volunteers who use their own equipment when called to duty. Militiamen are not considered the equal of trained Army soldiers, but they are accorded a certain amount of respect all the same. The Militia may lack continuous training, but since well over 15% of the non-military population is in the Militia, it makes up for such deficiencies with the overall size of its ranks. Normally, Austrin leaders call upon the Militia only when a homeworld suffers a direct attack by an invasion force. These units train for a total of six weeks out of every year in order to maintain some semblance of military order and expertise. Candidates with more promise are invited to a special 2-week program in order to qualify as "officers" in the militia. These ranks apply only when the militiamen go on active duty, but most regular army officers accord them courtesy when they are in uniform. A Brigadier-General currently heads the Militia, reporting directly to the Army Chief of Staff, but does not hold a seat on his military advisory council.

### **The Austrin Naval Command**

Not nearly as feared as the Army, the Austrin Navy still gains the grudging respect of other stellar nations. The Company constantly refits its ships with the latest weaponry and shielding, and has a dedicated pool of young recruits from which to draw. Unfortunately, the same traits that make Austrins good ground troops tend to hamper their fleet organization. This often forces naval commanders to conduct operations using smaller groups of ships. Most Austrins ruefully shake their heads and acknowledge it was this lack of overall organization that allowed the Nariacs and their VoidCorp allies to stall them during GW2.

The Austrin desire for individual heroics does not lend itself well to large naval vessels, but it does go quite well with starfighter pilots. Austrins love to fly small craft and employ swarms of them against

### **Austrin Task Forces**

The following is the basic deployment of the Austrin Naval Command. All Task Forces can be further broken down into Battle Groups and Combat Wings. The 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Task Forces are half the size of the others.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Lexington*  
Supreme Admiral James O'Brien  
Issil Sector

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Rubicon*  
Sector Admiral Mattias Lieber  
Roulette Sector

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Valkyrie*  
Sector Admiral Bragish Ja'tok  
Vulcan Sector

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Rommel*  
Sector Admiral Jeorge Naler  
Ronin Sector

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Patton*  
Sector Admiral Jordan Reverus  
Warhold Sector

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Lee*  
Sector Admiral Eric Cudworth  
Rothdel Sector

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Glory*  
Sector Admiral Jared Futsyko  
Tombstone Sector

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Viking*  
Sector Admiral Sacha Wyan  
Semperis Sector

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Martyr*  
Vice Admiral Melaine Dulack  
Union of Sol border



### **Austrin Task Forces (continued)**

#### 10<sup>th</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Gettysburg*  
Vice Admiral Katrin Ober  
Orion League border

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Hannibal*  
Commodore Merith Janeson  
Exploration beyond Austrin space

#### 12<sup>th</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Indomitable*  
Rear Admiral Jerrim  
Concord Prime border

#### 13<sup>th</sup> Task Force

Fortress ship AOV *Red Horseman*  
Commodore Borys Vonebe  
Exploration beyond Austrin space

enemy fleets. Their fighter tactics mimic their philosophy on the ground: great equipment mixed with suicidal recklessness. Many an Austrin pilot has gone 'kamikaze' in the middle of a battle to gain personal honor, sometimes to the great detriment of the opposing fleet. Large numbers of fighters also serve to tie up enemy capital ships, preventing them from shooting down the numerous boarding pods used by Austrin Marines.

A Supreme Admiral heads up the Naval Command, appointed by the Director of Military Operations, and with oversight approval from the CEO, herself.

Thirteen fortress ships fly the Austrin flag, each commanding an entire naval task force. Eight of these are assigned to defense sectors, while the remaining five roam at will. Some explore and secure deep space, while others engage in military exercises and augment defenses during periods of heightened tension along the Austrin borders. The AOV *Lexington* leads the Austrin Navy as its flagship, which receives the routine assignment and honor of defending the capitol Issil Sector.

*"And in 121 hours, we shall hand defeat to these cybernetic freaks."*

- AOV Wesson, 2363

### **Austrin Intelligence Division**

The A-O spy network is pitifully undermanned when compared to most other stellar nations. The Austrins have attempted to overcome a basic lack of duplicity by using the best spy equipment, but the result rarely proves very effective.

Still, the Austrin counter-intelligence network is a different matter, remaining quite healthy out of simple necessity. During the Second Galactic War, Nariacs used their superior intelligence gathering assets to great effect against the Company. They often hit the Austrins where they least expected it, ambushing their fleets with alarming ease. To oppose this, the Austrins poured money into their counter-espionage efforts and have achieved modest success. Eventually, they learned how to minimize the damage caused by the Nariacs, at least compared to the earlier debacles of the war.

### **Power Players of Austrin-Ontis Unlimited**

Below are a handful of the most powerful and influential personalities in Austrin space.

#### **Austrin Concerns**

##### **CEO Karina Jahra**

Karina Jahra (Hi/Austrin/DTO-15) took over the top position at Austrin-Ontis Unlimited in 2492 after serving as Director of the Interior when CEO James "Crazy" Gates finally retired after his record 126-year tenure as CEO. She has the difficult task of continuing to guide Austrin-Ontis away from a wartime economy and opening up trade with former enemies. She has adopted a rather aggressive trading stance, one that has earned her more than a few condemnations on the consulate floor of the Galactic Concord when terrorists, Verge pirates, and other criminals are caught with Austrin weaponry. Karina protests that many people buy Austrin arms from sources outside of her control.

## **The Waters Agenda**

Justin Waters hardly typifies the normal Austrin psyche. He favors secret deals and backroom conversations to direct confrontation, and has even refused opportunities for an occasional duel here and there! What drives him is a burning desire for revenge, a trait seen all too often in Austrins lately, but unlike most of his compatriots, Waters' hatred has nothing to do with the Nariac Domain. A long time ago, James Gates once humiliated Justin's father and he intends to undo that indignity by first becoming CEO and then destroying Karina Jahra, Peiter Gates, and Belra Jerloush if she's still alive. To accomplish this goal, he will stop at nothing.

Justin currently makes deals with several pirate groups in the Stellar Ring, Verge terrorists, and other undesirables. He also maintains a private deal with General Ober to support future border actions with the Concord should he become CEO. He skims money from the Company, and diverts stock from unsuspecting employees into his personal portfolio. But, Justin's darkest secret is the money he receives from Rigunmor Guilder Joseph Varcan (Hm/Rigunmor/DTO-24). Varcan supplies money and 'fatherly' advice to Justin, who frequently uses it to buy even more stock and influence. Varcan hardly lends this money out of a charitable spirit, and expects a return on his investment with interest when Justin becomes CEO.

Justin's over-reaching plan is to gain enough influence within the Board to dismiss Karina over a minor incident then use the situation to ensure the stockholders support him. Indeed, if Karina fails to significantly increase sales and the Company's stock value soon, the Board may become impatient and dismiss her without Justin's prompting. He would face stiff opposition from Peiter Gates however, and has tried to maintain a façade of wooing his support instead. Justin hopes this will keep Peiter off guard long enough for him to become CEO. After that, Peiter will become the next target; making it unlikely he would hold his current post for very long.

In reality, Karina knows exactly where undesirables are purchasing her arms – from smugglers under her indirect control. She hopes to spread Austrin weapons into the Verge as a major new market, using any means necessary to eventually control all arms traffic in that region of space. Meanwhile, Karina has also authorized rock bottom prices in the former FreeSpace and Expansion territories in order to improve A-O's market share in foreign economies.

### **Director Justin Waters**

Justin only recently took control of the Sales Division when the former Director resigned over a scandal. He is a competent leader and once held a position as sales associate operating in StarMech territory during the war. People also know him as the grandson of the ousted Military Director, Brandon Waters. His family has never forgotten Gates' betrayal, or those that helped him like Karina Jahra and Belra Jerlousch.

Director Waters has recently diverted small, but still significant, amounts of funds in order to bolster his stock portfolio when he attempts to gain the CEO chair for himself. He is years away from this goal, and has few allies, but as a young man he can still afford to wait.

Currently, he counts General Ober as his only real ally, since pledging to support the General's plans for Concord Prime. Rumors also suggest that he receives unofficial political support from somewhere within the Rigunmor Star Consortium.

### **Director Belra Jerlousch**

Belra represents something of an institution on the Board. She has served for almost 120 years now, and has no plans to retire anytime soon. In late 2501 she will celebrate her 190<sup>th</sup> birthday. Director Jerlousch established a reputation as a researcher of great skill before ascending to her current position. She pioneered several of the techniques currently used in a variety of products, including personal deflector screens and higher-yield Matter Reaction Burst missiles.

Belra still works in the lab every day, despite the fact that she no longer performs

most of the research on her own. Her mind stays forever sharp with an immeasurable amount of experience upon which to draw. But her body has finally reached the limits of modern medicine. Many no longer expect Belra to last more than another year or two, but then, people have said that for almost 50 years now and she's still going strong – a fact that makes her extremely popular with the independent-minded Austrins. She inspires them as a true patriot and “one tough old bird”.

Belra also stays quite involved in Board politics. She was one of the few spared when James “Crazy” Gates shook up the Board, and this gave her considerable input into his policies. She currently supports his son, Peiter, with her remaining influence and knows she will pass away soon, preferring to see another Gates hold the CEO position in the days that will follow.

#### **Director General George Ober**

George Ober is an old, tired war veteran from a long line of distinguished officers. His sister currently leads the entire 10<sup>th</sup> Task Force. In addition, Ober Island, the Austrin holding on Bluefall in the Verge, is named after his grandfather, who held the same military position for over 20 years at the onset of GW2. George started as a line officer leading infantry platoons and advanced up the ranks during the long years of GW2. At the war's end, he held the position of Army Chief of Staff, and former-CEO James “Crazy” Gates eventually named him to the Board to lead all military operations. Unfortunately, he sees very little for him to do now, and feels obsolete away from his troops. He also worries that the Austrin Army may begin to lose its edge without seeing serious action soon. Lately, he has agitated for CEO Jahra to commit more troops to the Verge, and to press the Concord to allow Austrin support of the Federal State of Algemron.

It is no secret that General Ober wants more action in the Verge, but he also feels that A-O could look closer to home. He perceives the loss of the hard-won Leodal States territory to the Concord as a raw deal for the Austrins. Director Ober has taken recent action to deliver arms and military advisors to freedom fighters in that

territory, hoping enough agitation will spread that he can justify garrisoning (and hopefully annexing) some of the systems for the ‘protection’ of A-O's border.

Perhaps more importantly, Ober also funds money and arms to the T'sa Cluster in order to support disgruntled t'sa who feel that the Cluster can manage its own affairs without Concord interference. These t'sa repay the General by sharing some of the Cluster's unique technology with the Austrins, a clear violation of interstellar law that gives the Concord exclusive trade-rights with the ‘protected’ species. Finally, Ober also maintains a small network of supporters within Concord Prime and other stellar nations to aid him in this cause. Karina knows something is up, but looks the other way because of the increased sales and research capabilities that the activity has brought the Company. If Ober's efforts succeed, he may well destabilize the Concord enough to win back a mutual border with the Nariac Domain so he can resume what he perceives as unfinished business leftover from GW2.

#### **Director Peiter Gates**

Peiter is the only son of the late CEO James “Crazy” Gates. He used his father's fortune and stock holdings to engineer a meteoric ascent through the ranks of the Colonial Administration. Once he reached the Director's chair, however, he became somewhat more relaxed in his position. Billions love Director Gates, both because of his father, and because he heads the high-profile Colonial Administration, which many Austrins still look upon with romanticism. Peiter also wields considerable personal power as he holds authority over all colonial worlds and their millions of citizens.

Director Gates has come to love his position, and though many would like to see him follow in his father's footsteps, he has no real desire to become CEO. Director Waters sought his support in his own bid for the position, but Peiter refused to become any further entangled in corporate politics than his current position allows. This may change if Director Waters gains more influence and Peiter senses the man's unscrupulous nature. If that happens, Peiter

would likely join simply to exercise his own subtle influence from within Waters' inner circle and ensure he doesn't abuse such power.

Gates is more concerned about Ober and his rather aggressive plans, reminiscent of the philosophy his father had to fight during GW2. Currently, he has no idea of Waters' involvement with Ober, but if he ever discovered it, the issue would force him to take action out of a deep-seated loyalty to the Austrin people and his father's legacy. Such a move would undoubtedly precipitate a full-blown stock war. Regardless of what happens, he knows he has Director Jerloush's full support in the matter.

Director Gates is also very active within his division and constantly visits A-O's backwater systems in order to improve things there. He has a reputation for recruiting people off the streets if they seem competent enough for a task he has in mind. This 'down-to-earth' style has only gained him even more popularity. He has also pressed for increased colonization of the uninhabited worlds of the Verge, quietly organizing groups of people to visit various systems and investigate the feasibility of sending mass expeditions there. If these scouting missions prove successful, Peiter may himself go to the Verge, and would become the first Director in the Company to ever do so.

### **Mira Ledopolis**

Mira (Fi/Austrin/FA-12) is considered by many to be the single greatest sales associate ever employed by Austrin-Ontis. A Fraal from one of the older Builder families that settled in Austrin space, she began as a lowly clerk for a small trader based on a backwater Austrin system during GW2. When the war ended, her employer fired her due to a massive influx of ex-soldiers that he assumed would make better employees. Desperate for a job, Mira turned to the Sales Division, which gave her a posting in a newly formed emporium in VoidCorp territory. After a few years, she posted a sales increase in excess of 150%, a record still unmatched in the Austrin-VoidCorp marketplace.

The Company quickly reassigned Mira to a more lucrative position, and soon she found herself at the front of the pack. Currently, she manages all arms sales to Earth itself, a very rewarding position. She still takes a hand in daily transactions and uses her empathic mindwalking abilities to get a near perfect "read" on potential customers. Her underlings report that there are few things that escape her notice. Rumors suggest she has received consideration for the next Sales Director position on the Board should Justin Waters leave or attain the title of CEO.

Unknown to most, Mira owes her success to more than just her good sales skills. She is certainly a superb diplomat and negotiator, but early in her career, she found the monolithic VoidCorp shell an almost impossible nut to crack without an extra edge. So she made an illegal deal with a high-ranking VoidCorp manager, who arranged for several shipments of arms to be purchased and diverted to his own use for climbing higher in the VoidCorp hierarchy. She lives in fear that one day someone will find out, or worse, that she might have to return the favor that boosted her career so high.

### **Bane**

Bane is the latest leader of the violent terrorist group called the Stockholder's Defense League. His real name is unknown and Bane is the only name he ever gives. The Stockholder's Defense League is an outlawed group that demands immediate war against the Nariac Domain. They do not believe the war should have ended in anything other than the absolute annihilation of the Domain and its members resent the Concord's interference. They use terror and violence to coerce senior administrators who disagree with them, harass users of cybertech, and make general mischief.

The SDL was outlawed several years ago when its members attempted to kill the Director of Intelligence, but still receives sympathy and support from a good portion of the Austrin population. This has allowed the SDL to create an impressive network of contacts, donators, and supporters. They often use this network to further their own



political goals, but they have recently begun to secretly aid General Ober in his endeavors – so secretly, in fact, that he himself remains unaware of his benefactors. Bane funnels large sums of money to several of Ober’s slush funds and also left evidence incriminating several of the General’s political opponents for him to find. It is doubtful that the General would reject the group’s assistance even if he knew the source, sharing much the same philosophy as the SDL.

While the SDL enjoys public notoriety, little is known about the man that leads them. Bane has guided the SDL since shortly after the group’s formation at GW2’s end. He has never appeared on the Grid and has never given his real name.

Bane hides his identity for a good reason: he is a fraud. He does not believe in war with the Nariacs. He is in fact a member of the Nariac Intelligence Directorate, serving as a spy within Austrin territory. He discovered and infiltrated the group as a protégé of its founder and remains a member of the group as long as he can maintain his cover. Very few even inside the Domain know of Bane’s status as an undercover agent, and *no one* in Austrin space suspects him to be anything other than a radical Austrin patriot. Bane continues to use his position to pass information from his network along to his superiors, and more subtly to influence important company employees and stock polls to further the Domain’s goals. He hopes that his influence over Ober may eventually allow him to twist the General away from the Domain and turn his gaze fully toward the Verge.

### **Aliens**

Austrin citizens, as a whole, hold no significant prejudices against other species, even though many aliens avoid them because of their violent nature. The fraal and mechalus have a particular dislike of the Austrin psyche, and live in small numbers in A-O space.

On the other hand, weren are definitely attracted to the Austrin way of life, emphasizing violence as a reasonable method of problem solving. They also cater

to the Austrin sense of honor that complements the native weren culture.

A sizeable number of t’sa also live in A-O territory due to both the T’sa Cluster’s proximity and the independent spirit of the Austrins. The sight of a sesheyman, however, would typically send many citizens in search of the authorities to report a VoidCorp spy.

## **Stellar Nations**

### **Borealis Republic**

The Austrins had little contact with the Borealis during the war, and so no serious ill feelings grew between the two nations. But the Austrins are allied with the Rigmors, and the Borealis fought a border war with the Rigmors not too recently, so they maintain an outward appearance of neutrality towards the Republic.

Despite this public policy, the Austrins do see a massive market opportunity in the Borealis’ weak military. The Borealis desperately need to import a number of military grade weapons to compensate for their inherent weaknesses, and the Austrins are more than happy to provide them. They also strive to educate the Republic on the benefits of deterring aggression through armament in the hopes of getting them to engage in an arms race that will drive up Austrin-Ontis’ profits.

The relationship still remains cool, and draws closer to contempt since both reject the other’s philosophies on war and violence. But, since a legitimate need actually does exist, they continue to explore business opportunities with one another while looking the other way.

### **Hatire Community**

The Austrins hold rather odd views about the Hatire. While they had little direct contact, A-O’s Solar allies did fight the Hatire and their Thuldan-supported fleets. Also, the Community looks with disdain upon the high-tech weaponry in which Austrins revel, making them a horrible sales market. Some Austrins sympathize with the conservative Hatires however, while others cry out for the ‘oppressed’

Community, which appeals to the heroic side of Austrin culture.

Of course, it doesn't hurt that some of the Hatires fully believe in "conversion by the sword," a philosophy which gets along well with the Austrin mindset. Still, the Hatires' technophobia has kept them a dismal market prospect and the Thuldans dominate their economy. They still dislike each other, but a few Austrins seem to want more, regardless of popular opinion.

### **Insight**

Although grounded in open rebellion against corporate rule, Insight's beginnings appeal to the Austrins. They see justification of their idea that conflict and strength of arms can allow people to achieve their goals. It doesn't hurt that they rebelled against VoidCorp, the Nariac Domain's chief sponsor.

Also in Insight's favor is their growing relationship with one of the Company's few allies, the Rigunmor Star Consortium. This has led to tentative arrangements between the two, as both nations attempt to market their goods to one another. The relationship is new, but continues to grow and develop at a rapid pace as the Inseers need weapons and the Austrin's sorely lack decent Grid technology of their own.

### **Nariac Domain**

The Nariacs hold the position of most-hated enemy of Austrin-Ontis Unlimited. As bitter rivals during GW2, they have no common ground and any Austrin that remembers those years will proudly tell you they fought the bloodiest front of the war against the cyber-soldiers. The Austrins continue to nurse their bitterness over the fact that they could never manage to break the Domain. They hunger for a chance at revenge, but the Concord prevents any border skirmishes.

In addition, the Nariacs remain the only stellar nation with which Austrins refuse to directly sell arms. They have only the smallest diplomatic staff in Domain space and usually present an openly hostile stance toward the Nariacs themselves. They have no desire to form treaties or even attempt to understand their wartime enemy. All of this is despite a total lack of like

### **Insight Independence**

February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2460. The Director of Intelligence received word: *Something* was happening, and it was BIG. The next day, Insight declared its independence from VoidCorp, taking 7 fortress ships and escort fleets along with them. The sounds of champagne bottles opening could be heard echoing throughout the Powder system. The rebellion would force a welcome redeployment of VoidCorp units and reduce the Nariacs to fighting on their own for a while.

Four months later, on May 10<sup>th</sup>, the cheers of approval for Insight's rebellion turned to screams of joy. VoidCorp's Grid had crashed, and the severe damage to their infrastructure would surely leave the hated Nariacs out in the cold. CEO James Gates ordered an immediate and massive invasion. With their economy near collapse, Austrin-Ontis needed to crush the Nariacs now. All remaining restrictions on warfare were removed. Commanders were told to break the Nariacs or die trying. This is when both sides, fueled by desperation, committed their worst atrocities of the war, causing entire systems and billions of people to pay the price for Austrin hatred. Even so, only a few systems actually fell as the Nariacs gave everything in their defense.

mindful sentiment from the Nariacs and their repeated peace overtures as they seek to escape VoidCorp.

### **Orion League**

Relations with the League are strained at best, but still remain somewhat civil. Heavy conflict against the Orions occurred during the opening years of GW2, entanglements that forced the Austrins to abandon their first major offensives against the Nariacs. The two did however cease hostilities during the 'gentleman's agreement' between their respective alliances.

Major conflict did not occur again until after the collapse of the mutual support agreement following the Battle of Songham. After that, the Austrins alternated between renewed conflict and peace as the war with

the Domain caused resources to fluctuate. The Orion-Austrin border saw little major warfare when compared to the Nariac front, and many Austrins are as willing as the League's diplomats to leave those matters in the past.

The only remaining bone of contention between the two nations is the League's repeated attempts to diplomatically handle all disagreements. Not only do Austrins feel that conflicts stemming from such disagreements are healthy expressions of mankind's changing nature, they also provide great marketing opportunities. A-O remains eager to sell their wares to Orion citizens, but have little desire to form any long-term partnership with the League.

### **Orlamu Theocracy**

The Orion League separated Theocracy space from Austrin-Ontis, so only rarely did the two ever meet during the war, usually in the form of a joint Orlamu-Orion fleet action. As such, hostilities rarely linger between the two nations.

The Austrins naturally desire only the best equipment and often purchase stardrive systems from the Orlamu Theocracy. Sales associates have also made some gains in selling Austrin arms to the Orlamu, who had little access to A-O products during the latter years of the war.

The Theocracy's weren population also provides a decent market for Austrin wares. This usually takes the form of weapons involving simpler technology – the same products that remain popular in the Hatire Community – rather than the high-priced items A-O prefers to sell. Still, the overall Orlamu-Austrin relationship is best described as business-like.

### **Rigunmor Star Consortium**

The Rigunmors remain good friends and staunch allies with the Austrins, even as the other members of the Profit Confederation drift apart. The Austrins' heavy emphasis on interstellar trade has brought many Rigunmor merchants a healthy profit margin as they act out the role of distributor.

Also, the Consortium happily carries A-O arms across the galaxy to new prospective buyers. This makes the Austrins happy to

see that another nation supports them in their mercantile ways when many condemn their wanton selling of weaponry. The two nations would very likely maintain a mutual defense pact should war break out.

### **StarMech Collective**

These former allies have begun to drift away as the post-war market has forced them to compete in a variety of ways. The Austrins and StarMechs have purposefully dismantled most of the old arrangements, leaving only token support for each other. Officially, they remain friends, but in reality, they have become distant.

The two nations maintain a brisk trade, however, as both seek to rebuild their battered militaries. Austrins buy up naval vessels and Starmechs acquire weaponry from the vast A-O arsenal for inclusion in many of their robotic and ship-borne systems.

### **Thuldan Empire**

Many Austrins view the Thuldans with suspicion, chiefly for their connection to the Expansion Pentad, and thus the Nariac Domain. In addition, the Algemron system has sent the Empire and A-O to the brink of war a number of times as both sides attempt to aid their former colonies. A-O has lodged numerous protests against the Empire due to incidents stemming from the system and its war. Therefore, little trade or diplomatic dialogue occurs between the two nations.

### **Union of Sol**

The Solar Union and Austrin-Ontis Unlimited were once strong allies, but without the war to keep them together, they have little in common. Both nations sell their goods aggressively in each other's markets. The Solars need weapons and food, but also compete with the Austrins when it comes to terraforming technologies. The Solars seem to find more in common with the Thuldan-hating StarMech Collective, while the Austrins find the Rigunmor Star Consortium more in tune with their profit-minded needs.

*"On my mark ... Draw!"*

Austrin Dueling Official, 2501

## **VoidCorp**

Although not as hated as the Nariacs, many Austrins remember all too often how VoidCorp intervention and support helped the Nariacs during the war. They dislike and distrust VoidCorp for their invasive ways, but recognize them as one of the primary manufacturing centers of the Stellar Ring. Thus, the Austrins find it impossible not to trade with VoidCorp. Both companies are somewhat competitive on the open market in some commodities, but they mostly confine themselves to their areas of expertise when trading with one another.

## **The Galactic Concord**

Seen as both a thief and very privately as a savior, the Concord holds a love-hate relationship with many Austrins. The Company contributed not only ships, troops, and arms when the Concord formed, but also the majority of A-O's territorial gains during GW2; the defunct Leodal States. This allowed Austrin-Ontis to dump many of their war-ravaged systems, allowing someone else's economy to take the hit in trying to rebuild them.

Many Austrins realize the war actually threatened to destroy their economy since it largely cut off external trade and turned their customers against them. That, and the peace that the Concord provides have proven a great boon for business. Austrin coffers once again overflow with funds from interstellar sales. So, the two have settled into an uneasy relationship as the Austrins use the consulate to fight hard against Concord efforts to place greater restrictions on weapons sales, and to criticize the Concord's handling of the Verge. But it remains a fact that without the increased trade brought by the Concord, the Austrins would not have recovered nearly as well as they have from the ravages of the war.

## **Verge Concerns**

### **Aegis**

Like all stellar nations, A-O Unlimited maintains an embassy island on Bluefall. The Austrins control Ober Island, the sixth largest island on the planet. Most of their operations involve the funneling of

clandestine arms sales to the Federal State of Algemron.

### **Algemron**

Austrin-Ontis has great interest in the Federal State of Algemron (FSA), a former colony world. The Company secretly sells arms and supplies to the FSA in hope that when the independent entity is finally victorious, the Concord will repeal the Monitor Mandate and allow them to reclaim the system, fully vaulting them back into position as a major player in controlling the Verge.

### **Coulomb**

The Austrins also have some interest in the Coulomb system, a former Leodal States colony. A-O feels that since it defeated the Leodal States, and that since all their territories were officially surrendered to them during GW2, that the surrender should include Coulomb as well. The Concord took a different perspective. Since Concord Prime controls the vast majority of the former Leodal States, they have inherited the system instead. The Concord has a claim pending, which is being resisted by the hereditary rulers of Coulomb and by Austrin diplomats. A-O wants the colony, and thinks it has a good chance of absorbing it if the Concord's claim is rejected.



## Austrin Strike Fighter

The AOV Sigma043 is a typical heavy fighter aboard the Austrin carrier *Battalion*. A perfect example of the Austrin penchant for heroics, this *Storm Raider*-class starfighter comes equipped with a bare minimum of defense, communications, and sensors – all sacrificed to make room for a single devastating matter torpedo. Storm Raiders generally carry out attack runs on cruiser-sized vessels or larger, escorted by standard fighters or frigates for protection. In fact, their mass reactor cannot maintain the necessary power level to run every system during a torpedo deployment. As a result, Austrin pilots must shut down all but their forward sensors during the final approach to their target.

### AOV Sigma 043 *Storm Raider* - Class Heavy Fighter

Target Mod: +3    Armor: LI d6+1/ HI d6+1/ En d6+1    Crew Quality: Trained  
 Toughness: Small Starfall: none    Crew Check: 12  
 Maneuver: 4    Acceleration: 2 megameters / turn    Total Crew: 1

Stun: 8  
 Wound: 8  
 Mortal: 4  
 Critical: 2

Point Defense Gun 1 step accuracy bonus    1/2/3 Range HI/Gd    Grade d4s/d4w/d4+2w  
 Matter Torpedo 0 accuracy bonus    2/4/8 Range En/M    Grade 2d6s/ 2d6w/ d6+3m

| TYPE      | SYSTEM                           | HULL POINTS | POWER POINTS |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Hull:     | Military Strike Fighter          |             |              |
| Armor:    | Medium Neutronite                | 1           | 0            |
| Power:    | Mass Reactor (rated for 10.5 pp) | 3           | *            |
| Engine:   | Induction Engines                | 1.5         | 1.5          |
| Defenses: | Point Defense Gun                | 1           | 0            |
| Weapons:  | Matter Torpedo                   | 5           | 7            |
| Command:  | Cockpit                          | 0.5         | 0            |
|           | Laser Transceiver                | 1           | 1            |
| Sensors:  | Multiband Radar (4 arcs)         | 2           | 4            |
| Totals:   |                                  | 15          | 13.5         |

# **Major Systems of A-O Unlimited**

Austrin-Ontis Unlimited has many well established and powerful systems, full of expanding Austrin economy, and an energetic citizenry. Many of these systems are excellent settings for adventure in Austrin space. The following are some of the most important or interesting systems of the Star Consortium.

These systems discussed here are in general terms, and GMs are expected to flesh them out at their own discretion for more intimate campaign use; population break-downs, topography and other details.

## **Powder**

Colonized as an industrial system during the formation of the Terran Empire, Powder produced vast amounts of materials needed to further humanities expansion through the stars. Over time, Austrin-Ontis Unlimited turned its gaze to the system so near its colonies. By 2271, A-O set up numerous manufacturing facilities in-system, and moved several thousand Austrin colonists to the central planet.

In 2297, shortly before the 1<sup>st</sup> Galactic War, Austrin-Ontis moved almost its entire corporate structure to Powder, as it was the most highly developed world under their control. When wars broke out in 2499, corporate forces swarmed over the Terran loyalists with little trouble and much enthusiasm, securing the system as A-O's capitol. Over 200 years and two galactic wars later, the Power system remains the center of Austrin power and pride.

Powder is the name of both the second planet in the system and common name for the system at large. The primary, Tonis, is an F3 class green star, owing its name to the original system cartographer: John Tonis.

The system is itself is a veritable fortress, protected by innumerable drone satellites and system patrol craft. Coupled with immense planetary defenses, only Sol and Thuldan Prime can challenge Powder's claim as the best defended system in space.

In addition, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> task forces patrol the Issill sector, lending a strong navel presence to the system. Under the command of Supreme Adm. James O'Brian (Hm/Austrin/TO-17) and AOV Flagship *Lexington*, the 1<sup>st</sup> fleet often puts in appearances to Powder. This massive ship was built during WWII, shortly before the dissolution of the gentleman's agreement between the Profit and FreeSpace Alliances. It is of StarMech design and has recently been re-fitted with an Orlamu stardrive. The *Lexington* features the latest in defensive and offensive equipment and was responsible for the destruction of numerous Nariac capitol ships.

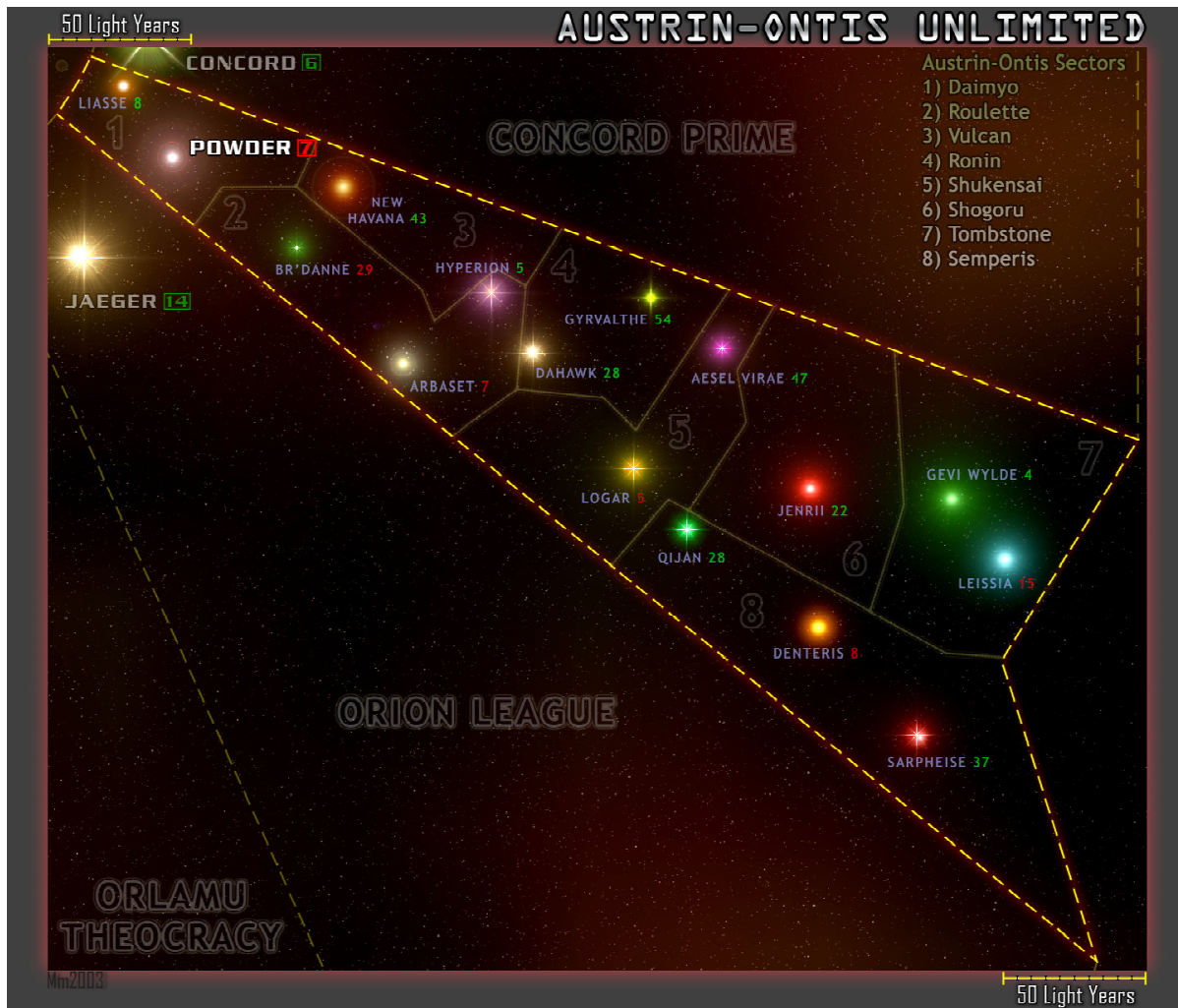
## **Rust**

As the innermost planet of the system, Rust is a large blasted rock, long ago mined for what few resources it contained. It stands empty except for a single sensor post. Its two moons are useless rocks.

## **Powder**

Powder is the capital world of Austrin-Ontis Unlimited. As a massive city world colonized in the early days of the Terran Empire, A-O bought the administrative rights and used it as their base of operations in space. It has been the center of Company bureaucracy since before GWI. Almost the entire surface area of the planet is given over to administrative duties, necessitating food to be shipped in from Nalus and Tonum further out.

From Corporate Headquarters here on Powder, the CEO and Board of Directors plan and carryout the affairs of Austrin-Ontis Unlimited. An elite division of Austrin Marines patrols the Headquarters at all times. On no other planet of A-O is the corporate mindset more evident. Thousands of bureaucrats and corporate employees negotiate deals with each other every day. Even citizens of other stellar nations partake in the activity through their embassies, except the Nariac Domain, which is allowed none.



## Tonum and Nalus

Tonum and Nalus were both terraformed from Class 2 planets to viable Class 1 inhabitable worlds centuries ago by slower, less refined methods. Due to early colonial needs, however, large sections of their surface were zoned for massive farming efforts. Although both planets now have populations in the billions, approximately 40% of each world remains dedicated to agricultural production. Of Nalus' three moons, only Heos merits mention.

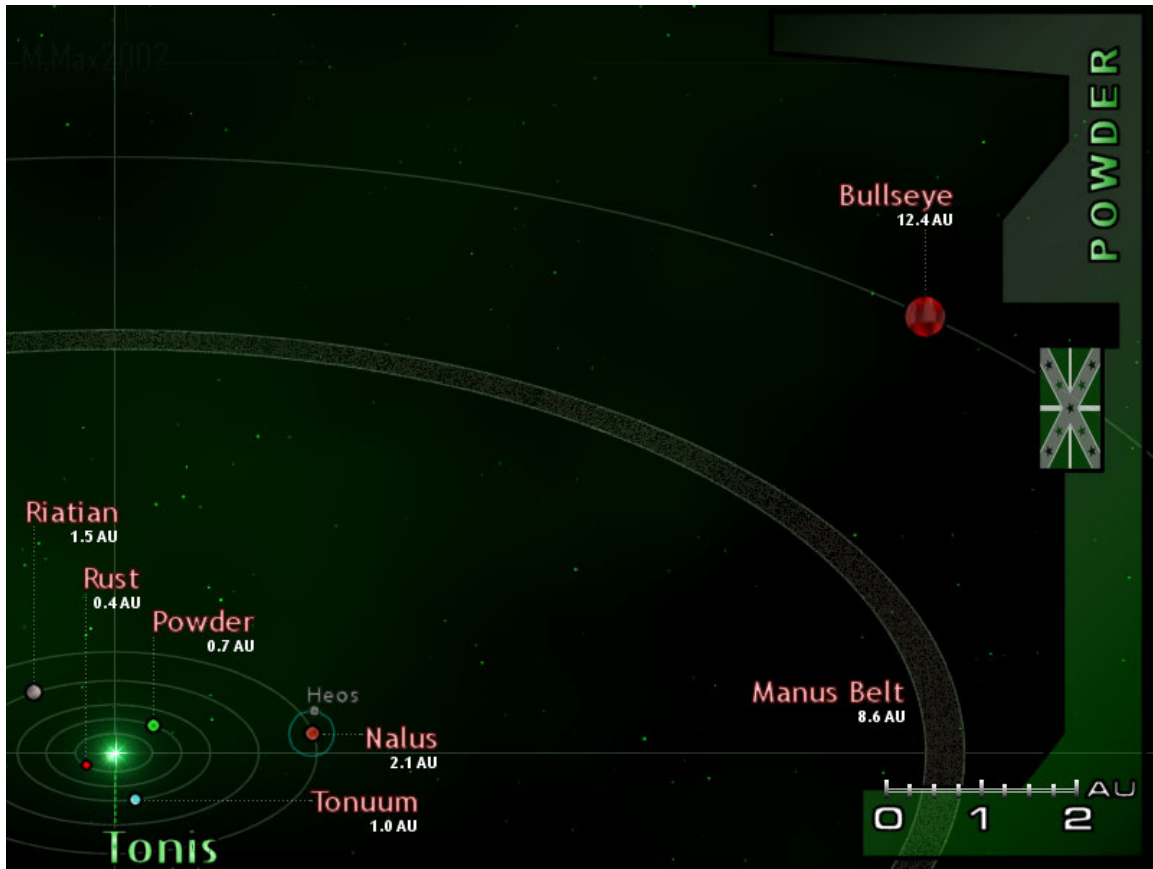
## Riatian

Riatian, the fourth planet, was also a major industrial planet before A-O took over the system. But unlike Powder, it

retained its heavy industry and remains one of the largest arms producers in the nation. Director of Research & Development Belra Jerlousch maintains an office and experimental arms production facility on the planet.

## Heos

The only atmospheric moon of Nalus, Heos recently upgraded from a class 2 to class 1 world with the completion of a lengthy terraforming process. Its primary purpose is to serve as a training ground for the Austrin Armed Forces. Austrin Army personnel and Marine candidates constantly learn, train and engage in war games. As such, Heos is a heavily restricted world, requiring the proper



military clearance to gain access to its airspace. Thousands of young Austrin men and women pass through the moon every year, joining perhaps the greatest army of the Stellar Ring.

Major General Alexander Renardi (Hm/Austrin/CS-18) in the ranking officer of the Heos Planetary Academy. He takes the rigorous training of the next generation of the Austrin Army very seriously, admitting only the best recruits to his facility.

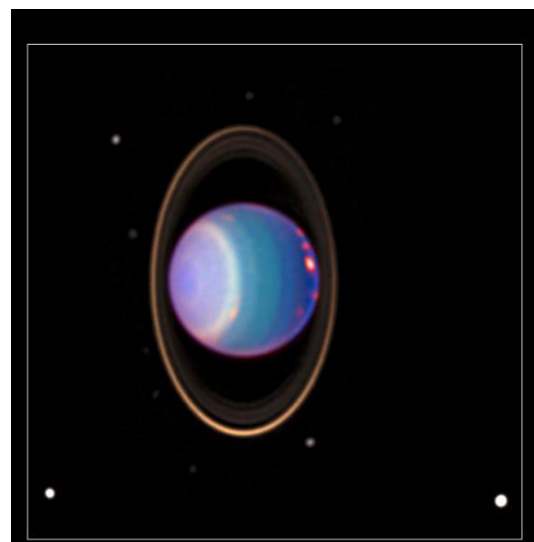
### Manus Belt

Several AU past Nalus lies the Manus Asteroid Belt. Once an immensely rich source of minerals, the belt has provided untold amounts of wealth to A-O over the years. It continues to be mined to this day, albeit not nearly at previous levels.

### Bullseye

Finally, marking the system's edge, is the gas giant Bullseye. Not very large as gas

giants go, Bullseye's rapid rotation has resulted in few moons, but a well developed ring structure. The moons contain well defended communication and drivespace detection relays, as well as small ship facilities.





|                  |                                       |                                       |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|                  | <b>Rust</b>                           | <b>Powder</b>                         | <b>Tonum</b>                          |
| Primary          | Tonis                                 | Tonis                                 | Tonis                                 |
| Planetary Class  | Class 4                               | Class 1                               | Class 1                               |
| Gravity          | G4 (2.3g)                             | G2 (1.1 g)                            | G2 (1.24 g)                           |
| Radiation        | R2 (17 rem/wk)                        | R1 (10 rem/yr)                        | R2 (15 rem/yr)                        |
| Atmosphere       | A4 (S, SO <sub>2</sub> )              | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) |
| Pressure         | P4 (6.1 atm)                          | P3 (1.3 atm)                          | P3 (1.8 atm)                          |
| Heat             | H5 (649 C)                            | H2 (16 C)                             | H1 (-54 C)                            |
| Orbital Distance | 0.4 AU                                | 0.7 AU                                | 1 AU                                  |
| Diameter         | 9,547 km                              | 9,368 km                              | 22,543 km                             |
| Year             | 60 days                               | 293 days                              | 327 days                              |
| Day              | 64 days                               | 38 hours                              | 26 hours                              |
| Axial Tilt       | 0 degrees                             | 20 degrees                            | 19 degrees                            |
| Density          | 2.8                                   | 0.9                                   | 1.2                                   |
| # Satellites     | 2                                     | 0                                     | 0                                     |
|                  | <b>Riation</b>                        | <b>Nalus</b>                          | <b>Heos</b>                           |
| Primary          | Tonis                                 | Tonis                                 | Nalus                                 |
| Planetary Class  | Class 1                               | Class 1                               | Class 1                               |
| Gravity          | G2 (1.13 g)                           | G2 (0.9 g)                            | G2 (0.8 g)                            |
| Radiation        | R2 (14 rem/wk)                        | R2 (50 rem/yr)                        | R1(10 rem/yr)                         |
| Atmosphere       | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) |
| Pressure         | P3 (2.1 atm)                          | P3 (3.5 atm)                          | P3 (1.7 atm)                          |
| Heat             | H2 (7 C)                              | H3 (64 C)                             | H1 (-52 C)                            |
| Orbital Distance | 1.5 AU                                | 2.1 AU                                | 5,281 km                              |
| Diameter         | 7,435 km                              | 10,153 km                             | 943 km                                |
| Year             | 754 days                              | 910 days                              | 41 days                               |
| Day              | 17 hours                              | 14 hours                              | 12 hours                              |
| Axial Tilt       | 25 degrees                            | 23.5 degrees                          | 10 degrees                            |
| Density          | 1                                     | 1.5                                   | 0.7                                   |
| # Satellites     | 2                                     | 3                                     | 0                                     |
|                  | <b>Bullseye</b>                       |                                       |                                       |
| Primary          | Tonis                                 |                                       |                                       |
| Planetary Class  | Class 5                               |                                       |                                       |
| Gravity          | G4 (3.1 g)                            |                                       |                                       |
| Radiation        | R3 (35 rem/wk)                        |                                       |                                       |
| Atmosphere       | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He)              |                                       |                                       |
| Pressure         | P5 (gas giant)                        |                                       |                                       |
| Heat             | H0 (-271 C)                           |                                       |                                       |
| Orbital Distance | 12.4 AU                               |                                       |                                       |
| Diameter         | 73,914 km                             |                                       |                                       |
| Year             | 42 years                              |                                       |                                       |
| Day              | 85 hours                              |                                       |                                       |
| Axial Tilt       | 45 degrees                            |                                       |                                       |
| Density          | 0.09                                  |                                       |                                       |
| # Satellites     | 5                                     |                                       |                                       |

## Logar

Charted in 2320, the Logar system was the last major colonization efforts before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War. At the time, it was one of the farthest colonized system in Austrin space. When war exploded twenty-six years later, Logar was deep enough within A-O territory to be assured of relative safety. In fact, it soon became a center for fleet actions protecting colonies further out. Orion League forces raided the system several times between 2414 and 2420, but Logar survived the war largely intact.

Due to its distance from the core worlds, Logar marks the beginning of what some Austrins call "The Frontier." Past this system, there are no first world or developed second world systems. Only modest second world and, more commonly, third world and colony systems lay beyond. This positioning makes Logar a center of trade between the core of Austrin space and their frontier.

With only two small planets circling its Class G1 yellow star, the Logar system represents something of a stellar anomaly. The commonly accepted theory works off the presence of a black hole less than 800 AU away. At one time, the black hole would have been a middle-range star. Over millions of years, the destructive effect of entering its giant phase, as well as the immense pull generated by its eventual transformation into a black hole erased all evidence of other planets, leaving only

Adril and Nedra locked safely within Logar's gravitational hold.

## Adril

The first planet in the System, Adril was once a harsh lifeless desert world, but The Corporation have terraformed it to the point of supporting terran life. Even so, the climate remains still quite hot and carries a dense oppressing atmosphere. The population lives primarily in large cities around the poles, surrounded by immense industrial coolant units continuing the terraforming process. The large number of arid plant and animal life introduced to the planet attract numerous tourists from the Core worlds. Adril also houses sizable mining operations to harvest large deposits of rare heavy metals, which were the original reason for terraforming the planet.

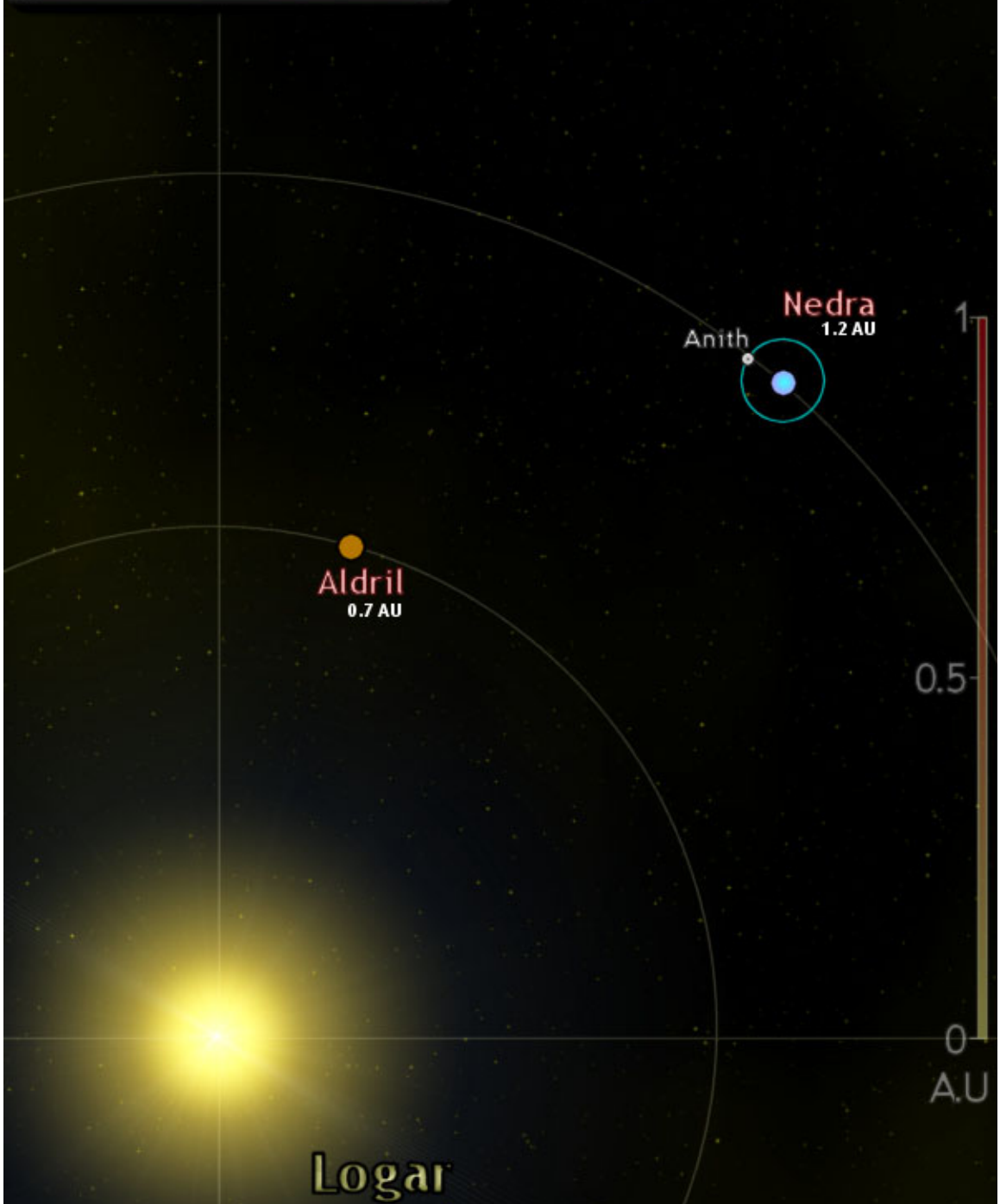
## Nedra

Nedra is a very Earth-like world and required little effort to colonize. For the first hundred or so years of colonization, Nedra has the only habitable world in the system, but now stands with Adril as a center for trade in the outer systems. Its capitol city of Vereas Bay houses the Corporation's bureaucratic center for the Warhold sector. The bulk of the system's eight billion population lives here on Nedra as opposed to the more rugged Adril. Analysts predict the system's promotion to a first world system within the next 4 decades.

|                         | <b>Adril</b>                          | <b>Nedra</b>                          | <b>Anith</b>                          |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Primary Planetary Class | Logar<br>Class 1                      | Logar<br>Class 1                      | Nedra<br>Class 2                      |
| Gravity                 | G2 (0.96 g)                           | G2 (1.04 g)                           | G2 (0.8 g)                            |
| Radiation               | R1 (8.7 rem/yr)                       | R1 (4 rem/yr)                         | R2 (9 rem/wk)                         |
| Atmosphere              | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) |
| Pressure                | P3 (3.8 atm)                          | P3 (1.26 atm)                         | P4 (5.1 atm)                          |
| Heat                    | H2 (38 C)                             | H2 (15 C)                             | H2 (6 atm)                            |
| Orbital Distance        | 0.7 AU                                | 1.2 AU                                | 4,684 km                              |
| Diameter                | 7,610 km                              | 10,286 km                             | 1,034 km                              |
| Year                    | 210 days                              | 352 days                              | 17 days                               |
| Day                     | 103 hours                             | 20 hours                              | 8 hours                               |
| Axial Tilt              | 26.8 degrees                          | 17 degrees                            | 0 degrees                             |
| Density                 | 1.3                                   | 1.1                                   | 0.6                                   |
| # Satellites            | 0                                     | 1                                     | 0                                     |

# Logar System

M. Max 2002



Logar

## **Anith**

Anith is Nedra's only moon. Once little more than a barren rock, but has been slowly improved over the years. A person needs only a breather and heavy clothing in order to survive, and Paradise Terraforming Ltd. is currently working on improving the moon to Class 1 status over the next few decades. Right now, it serves as the Headquarters for the 5<sup>th</sup> Task Force under the command of Sector Admiral Jordan Reverus (Hm/Austrin/CS-20). From here the 5<sup>th</sup> Task Force patrols the entire Warhold Sector.

## **Leissia**

The Leissia system is a typical third world colony system of Austrin space. The system was discovered in 2431 during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War while chasing pirates. After the Captain of the AOV light cruiser *Montgomery* had finished arresting the surviving pirates, he conducted a brief survey of the system. Little did he expect the A2 blue star to hold a class 1 planet housing only a small pirate base. The system was brought to the attention of the Colonial Authority, but not truly developed for colonization until after the war's end.

Since then, it has seen a massive influx of people, mostly to Poler. Leissia now stands as the most advanced system in the Tombstone Sector, which may not be saying much considering its frontier nature. As such, it serves as home to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Task forces. The 7<sup>th</sup> patrols the Tombstone Sector under the command of Sector Adm. Jared Futsyko (Hm/Austrin/DCS-15), and the 11<sup>th</sup> is currently exploring in deep space, beyond the A-O border. However, being home-base for these Task Forces, doesn't mean there's more than a moderate naval presence. The Tombstone Sector is a large place. Leissia is still a colony system, and thus appears completely undefended compared to the core Austrin systems.

## **Rildbel**

Rildbel, the first planet in the system, was swiftly surveyed and then largely

forgotten. It is little more than a blasted, irradiated rock with few redeemable qualities. The only attention ever given to Rildbel is the massive prison complex being built underneath its surface. The prison is expected to hold 50,000 prisoners with space for 4,000 heavily armed guards. Inmates will spend their time mining the heavily buried resources of Rildbel. Overseen by Sterling and Sons Construction, the installation is expected to reach completion in 2504.

## **Nethral Belt**

In between Rildbel and Poler is a small asteroid belt rich in nickel, iron and several other metals. The presence of these metals leads many planetologists to believe that a planet once sat here, but was destroyed in a cataclysm long ago. Regardless, the Nethral Belt is full of minor league prospector companies swiftly depleting its resources.

## **Poler**

Poler is the jewel of the system. As a natural Class 1 planet, it has attracted millions from the inner systems of Austrin space. Its native life was still in the unicellular phase as A-O terraformers seeded the ecosystem with a variety of plants, which have quickly taken to the new planet in the last decades. The Company plans to use Poler as a springboard and supply stop for future expeditions into deep space. Indeed, several explorers have already departed from its small spaceport.

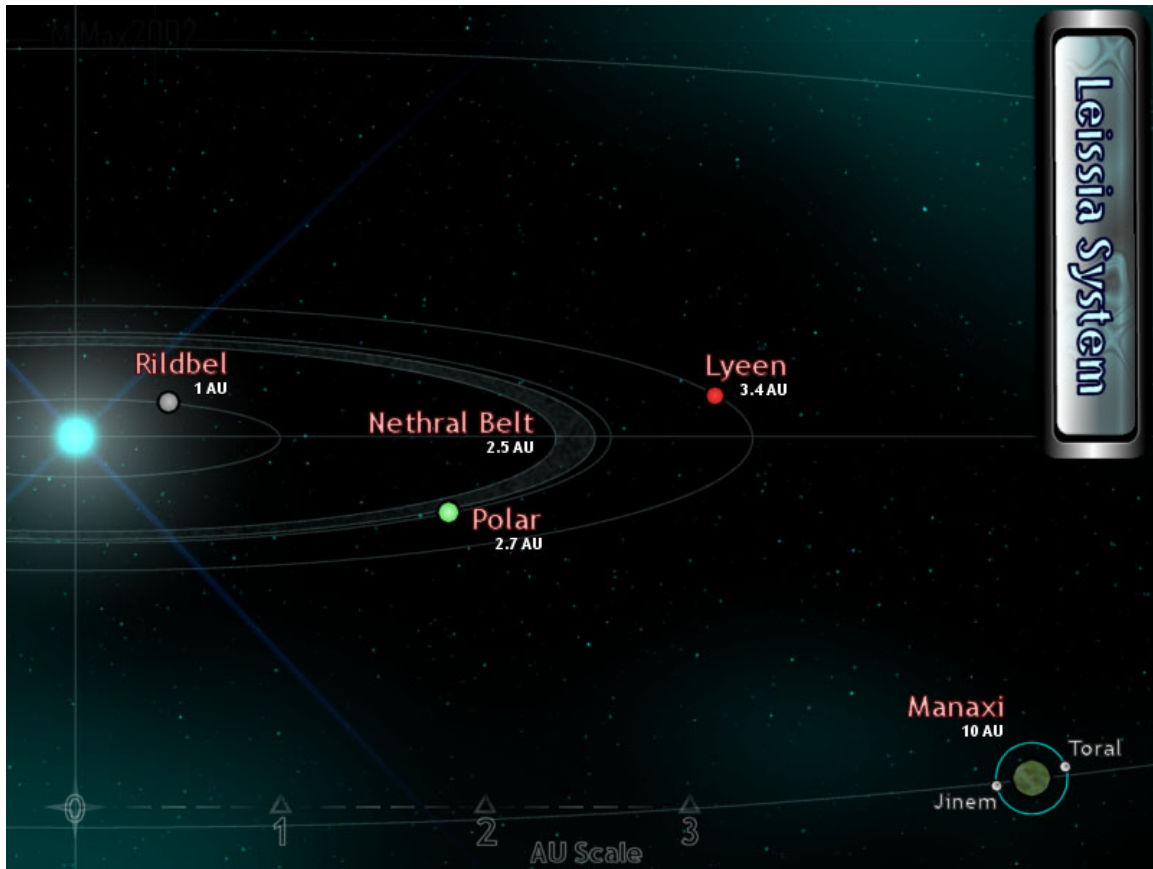
## **Lyeen**

Lyeen is a burning, toxic world. Surveyors believe there to be a wealth of untapped resources here, but the cost of operating within the corrosive atmosphere volcanic environment currently outweigh desired gains. No company has yet come forward to purchase the claim.

*"We know the truth. There can be no peace with the Nariac Domain."*

Bane, 2500





## Leissia System

### Manaxi

Manaxi is a massive gas giant, common among star systems. It would be of little note if not for its numerous moons. Most are little better than asteroids, but many hold valuable resources to be tapped. In addition, its two largest moons, Toral and Jinem, are class 2 worlds. Austrin-Ontis is currently in the process of contracting terraformers to make the worlds more livable. In addition to A-O subsidiary companies, several Solar firms, and even a Rigunmor company have entered the fray. The contract for both moons is valued at billions of concord dollars and competition is fierce.

|                  | Rildbel                                 | Polar                                 | Lyeen                                  |
|------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Primary          | Leissia                                 | Leissia                               | Leissia                                |
| Planetary Class  | Class 3                                 | Class 1                               | Class 3                                |
| Gravity          | G1 (0.75 g)                             | G2 (1.04 g)                           | G4 (3.6 g)                             |
| Radiation        | R3 (94 rad/day)                         | R1 (6 rem/yr)                         | R3 (86 rad/day)                        |
| Atmosphere       | A3 (CO <sub>2</sub> , SO <sub>2</sub> ) | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A4 (SO <sub>2</sub> , S <sub>2</sub> ) |
| Pressure         | P2 (0.6 atm)                            | P3 (1.3 atm)                          | P4 (6.27 atm)                          |
| Heat             | H4 (123 C)                              | H2 (19 C)                             | H4 (167 C)                             |
| Orbital Distance | 1 AU                                    | 2.7 AU                                | 3.4 AU                                 |
| Diameter         | 5,543 km                                | 6,261 km                              | 9,189 km                               |
| Year             | 241 days                                | 916 days                              | 5.98 years                             |
| Day              | 35 hours                                | 18 hours                              | 10 hours                               |
| Axial Tilt       | 5 degrees                               | 20 degrees                            | 3 degrees                              |
| Density          | 2.3                                     | 0.8                                   | 5.3                                    |
| # Satellites     | 0                                       | 0                                     | 2                                      |

|                  | <b>Manaxi</b>  | <b>Toral</b>  | <b>Jinem</b>    |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Primary          | Leissia        | Manaxi        | Manaxi          |
| Planetary Class  | Class 5        | Class 2       | Class 2         |
| Gravity          | G5 (5.7 g)     | G2 (1.2 g)    | G2 (0.81 g)     |
| Radiation        | R1 (5 rem/yr)  | R1 (9 rem/yr) | R1 (8.4 rem/yr) |
| Atmosphere       | A1 (H2, He)    | A2 (N2, O2)   | A1 (He, N2, O2) |
| Pressure         | P5 (gas giant) | P3 (3.7 atm)  | P2 (0.57 atm)   |
| Heat             | H0 (-200 C)    | H1 (-56 C)    | H1 (-71 C)      |
| Orbital Distance | 10 AU          | 3,646 km      | 6,718 km        |
| Diameter         | 74,653 km      | 3,481 km      | 6,182 km        |
| Year             | 51.1 years     | 1.2 years     | 3.5 years       |
| Day              | 11 hours       | 8 hours       | 27 hours        |
| Axial Tilt       | 15.6 degrees   | 8 degrees     | 6 degrees       |
| Density          | 0.52           | 1.1           | 1.05            |
| # Satellites     | 21             | 0             | 0               |

## Other Major Systems of Austrin-Ontis

### New Havana

As one of the first colonized claims in this arm of space, New Havana has been one of the core worlds of the Stellar Ring nearly as long as Powder. It is best known for its massive manufacturing centers, which produce almost 8% of exported arms in Austrin space. It has 4 terraformed worlds, each of which requires constant maintenance to cope with the enormous amounts of industrial pollutants produced on them. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Task Force operates out of New Havana in its patrol of the Roulette sector under the command of Sector Adm. Mattias Lieber (Hm/Austrin/DCS-13). There is always a full battle wing of the Task Force in-system.

### Hyperion

The principal system of the Vulcan sector, Hyperion serves as A-O's chief shipbuilding center. No other system in Austrin space even approaches its capacity. Four massive shipyards operate in-system, all theoretically capable of handling a dreadnought or fortress ship if needed, though full capacity has never been tested. The system served as the chief repair center for Austrin ships during GW2, and attracted a handful of raids at

the height of the Nariac offensive. The raids never succeeded in destroying the shipyards, but did bombard several of the inhabited planets, resulting in horrific civilian casualties. Austrin-Ontis has constructed several domed colonies on the fourth planet, Lupin, while the process of repairing the planets continues.

Hyperion is also the home of the Stockholder's Defense League, the radical terrorist organization that agitates for immediate war against the Nariac Domain. Although outlawed, the SDL continues to receive widespread sympathy within the Corporation. Their primary resistance cell runs the movement from the new system capitol of Durett Dome.

The system is protected by elements of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Task Force under the command of Sector Admiral Bragish Ja'tok (Tm/Austrin/DTO-17) and the fortress ship AOV *Valkyrie*, assigned to patrol the Vulcan sector. Also, the 10<sup>th</sup> task force under Vice Adm. Katrina Ober (Hf/Austrin/DCS-14), patrols the Orion border from its base here. Katrina Ober is sister to Director Ober and is closely aligned with him in his plans to incite Concord Prime.

### Dahawk

The Dahawk system was named for the ship that discovered her in 2235, the Terran Battlecruiser *Dahawk*. The cruiser's engines suffered a cataclysmic accident during a solar storm which precluded its return to earth. Stories abound as to how

long it took the crew to die. An second expedition eventually found the *Dahawk*, and Earth sold the colonization rights to the newly formed Austrin-Ontis Unlimited Colonial Authority. When the early Austrin colonists arrived, they repaired the mass reactor and used the ship to keep pirates away. The outpost is now largely ceremonial, as the battered hulk cannot handle further re-fitting and is armed with increasingly dated defensive systems. It has been rumored that the engines on the *Dahawk* were repaired a long time ago and could conceivably be reactivated. Other than the ship itself, the system is known for little else than its enormous first world population and four class 1 planets and moons.

The Dahawk system is protected by Captain David Bryner (Hm/Austrin/DCS-9), commanding a detachment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Task Force. His armada, including a battleship and two carriers, answers to Sector Admiral George Naler (Hm/Austrin/DCS-17) of the AOV fortress ship *Rommel*.

## Jenrii

Colonized during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War, Jenrii is a second world system of three billion people. This makes it one of the most developed systems in the entire Rothdel sector. It serves as the fleet base for the 6<sup>th</sup> fleet under Sector Adm. Eric Cudworth and judicial center for the surrounding systems, but otherwise has little to offer. Jenrii has several planets, all of which are useless except for Naveronne, the second planet out. It has a pleasant climate perfect for crop cultivation, but no other major industry. Still, this allows Jenrii to feed several nearby mining systems, and has promoted immigration from the crowded inner systems.

## Denteris

Denteris is the *only* second world system in the entire Semperis sector. Many of the systems in this sector were battlegrounds during the war when Austrin-Ontis fought the Orion League. This prevented the sector from gaining much ground in the

way of infrastructure and population until the war's end. In order to provide logistical support to Internal Affairs and Colonial Authority, this system was promoted to second world classification only nine years ago. Denteris still retains much of its 'rough around the edges' colonial atmosphere. Corporate Security struggles to crack down on many of the illegal activities that became prevalent during the system's colonial years. Along with its promotion to sector center, the Denteris system has become the base of operations for the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> task forces. The 8<sup>th</sup> patrols the Semperis Sector under Sector Admiral Sacha Waylan (Hf/Austrin/CS-15) while the 13<sup>th</sup> assists the 11<sup>th</sup> in exploring deep space.

*"If there is no further business, then I will take this opportunity to welcome our new employees."*

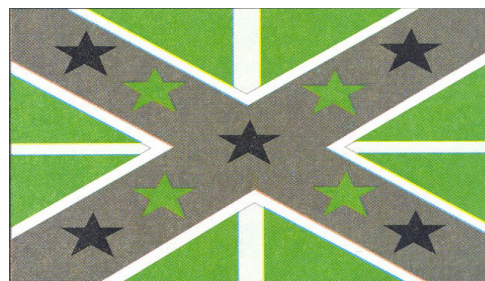
-CEO Akutagawa Chieko of Austrin Arms,  
following her hostile takeover of Ontis  
Ordinance, 2112

*"Belra, you stay. The rest of you are fired."*

-CEO James "Crazy" Gates declares a  
State of Crisis, 2367

*"What?! Are you crazy!?"*

-Brandon Waters, then recently fired  
Director of Military Operations, 2367



*"The Author would like to gratefully acknowledge everyone who helped him during the project. He would especially like to thank Neil Spicer and John Yackel, who provided immeasurable amounts of editorial advice and corrections. Without them, this simply wouldn't have been possible."*

- Matthew Steele, 2004

## **Chapter Two**



## **The Rigunmor Star Consortium**



## **A Brief Timeline of the Rigunmor Star Consortium**

2057: The Rigunmor Consortium forms to allow smaller businesses to survive in the face of mega-conglomerates.

2100: The Consortium has grown large and successful. Members enjoy economic prosperity under the Rigunmor system.

2230: The Rigunmors take to space with the rest of humanity, providing efficient and cost effective interstellar trade.

2241: Foreseeing the conflict between the Terran Empire and stellar nations, The Rigunmor Consortium begins colonization of its own systems.

2243: Bazaar becomes the Rigunmor capitol system/world.

2250: The Antares system is settled in a second wave of colonization.

2273: First contact is made with the mechalus. Within weeks, a treaty is signed incorporating them into the Consortium.

2299: The Rigunmor Star Consortium joins the Thuldan Empire in declaring independence from the Terran Empire. The 1<sup>st</sup> Galactic War begins.

2301: The Consortium abandons rule by the United Guilder Conclave to become a plutocracy; rule by the wealthy.

2303: Ellis Shaula, the first executive guilder never to serve as a Guildmaster, enters office after the first national audit.

2312: The Treaty of Earth officially ends the 1<sup>st</sup> Galactic War. The Rigunmor Star Consortium is recognized as one of 26 independent nations.

2319: The Consortium claims the Verge system of Oberon.

2346: The Mutant Uprising at Tau Ceti sparks the onset of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War.

2349: OGAM Inc. is hostilely bought out by the Star Consortium.

2361: Executive Guilder Adlai contacted the Union of Sol, Austrin-Ontis Unlimited, and the StarMech Collective to form the Profit Confederation in the interests of both surviving and winning the war.

2378: The Rigunmors join the Profit Confederation in a non-aggressive, cooperative "gentleman's agreement" with the FreeSpace Alliance to push back the forces of the Expansion Pentad.

2380: The Rigunmor Navy destroys the Dreth Commonwealth's flagship fleet and begins to conquer system after system.

2381: The RCV *Rheosky* (now *Oneagle*) enters active service as the new center of bureaucracy. All top government officials are moved aboard from Bazaar.

2386: A more vigorous Rigunmor-VoidCorp conflict begins in old Dreth territory.

2404: The Beta Arae system is sacked by VoidCorp forces.

2461: The Consortium minimizes fleet engagement with Insight to focus on VoidCorp.

2465: Executive Guilder Breel joins the leaders of the other great alliances at Alkaid to begin peace negotiations.

2472: The Treaty of Concord ends the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War. The Rigunmor fleet secures its borders.

2481: The Rigunmor 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> fleets attack the Borealis Republic in an effort to gain territory disputed in the Treaty of Concord. The Rigunmor-Borealin Border War is ended by the Galactic Concord within months.

2501: The present.

# **The People of the Rigunmor Star Consortium**

The Rigunmors have earned a reputation throughout the Stellar Ring as businessmen, traders, thieves and con men. The pursuit of wealth has been taken to the ultimate height in the Consortium, reflected in the minds and attitudes of its citizens. This mindset built a nation supported by a vigorous economy and the industrial strength to challenge more militaristic nations when needed.

Originally founded in the 21st century, the Consortium was a safe haven for smaller businesses and corporations from the superpower corporations of Earth. Constant internal competition and natural inclination kept the Consortium rich and stable. When mankind took to the stars the Rigunmors followed, escaping the economic powers of Earth to supply the needs of colonists everywhere.

By the late 23rd century they recognized the conflict to come between the Terran Empire and its children, and colonized their systems and worlds as well. The Guilders located a system with multiple Class 1 and 2 planets, swiftly laid claim to them, and went about settling their new capitol of Bazaar. Thus did the Rigunmor Star Consortium move from the capitalistic arena of business to the much larger national scale.

The first Galactic War solidified their independence, and the Second Galactic War expanded their borders and wealth. Many believe that if the last war had continued, the Rigunmors may have become the closest thing to a winner.

## **Social Outlook**

Where other nations value the rights of freedom and self determination above all others, the Rigunmors know them as simple necessities allowing the most important thing in life: the pursuit of profit. Citizens of the Consortium are capitalists to the core. Money is the only way to advance in society, and Rigunmors learn how to



handle money at an early age. This attitude has led to a fairly neutral view of other nations. Why hold a grudge when you can make money by doing business with them?

The capitol of Bazaar personifies the Rigunmor philosophy, as it contains none of the government bureaucracy found in other capitol systems, instead opening itself up as the busiest and most extensive center of commerce in the known galaxy.

Rigunmors are always looking for new approaches to the deal and new buyers in the market. This doesn't mean that every citizen of the Consortium is a stockbroker or a merchant. Even the biologist and the secretary can look for ways to get a raise and skim a little off the top.

Naturally, a society based on the pursuit of wealth inevitably results in the existence of a poverty-stricken lower class: those that fail to keep up with the greed and success of others. Sometimes these individuals find a way to climb the ladder on their own, but more often they are exploited by the wealthy, and never accumulate enough earnings to escape the poverty into which they are born.

## **Political Philosophy**

The only acceptable form of government to the Rigunmor citizenry runs the Consortium: a plutocracy, or rule by the rich. Auditors assess the net worth of every citizen annually. The results determine status in the Consortium on a general basis and within the bureaucracy. Nowhere else does the saying "politics is money" hold more true.

Rigunmors know there's no such thing as a free lunch, and they don't expect anyone to handout assistance without something in return. Stemming from this, corporate and often social loyalty is not guaranteed, and internal competition in business and politics is the status quo. After all, progress stems from competition, and competition leads to profits. Therefore, progress can be measured by a society's profitability.

## **Customs**

The people of the Consortium value their economic freedom, and this is reflected in their day-to-day life. Rigunmor society is entrepreneurial to the core. Everyone is out for what they can get and the smart person only expects a good deal if they can make it happen.

## **Charity**

Most outsiders would say that Rigunmors don't know the meaning of the word charity, but they're wrong. Consortium citizens know what charity is, they simply consider it absurd. Why should they give something away? Earn it or deal for it, but don't expect it out of the goodness of their heart. This mindset, however, does not mean that charitable organizations do not exist in the Consortium.

The lower class to poverty ratio of Consortium citizens is approximately 10% of the population, perhaps the lowest in the Stellar Ring, while the middle class makes up nearly 50% of the Consortium, and the upper class another 40%. The lower classes are kept to a minimum by government charities and certain judicial practices. The government maintains a large number of charitable organizations for the purpose of keeping the lowest levels of citizenry from cluttering the Consortium. Middle and upper class citizens commonly donate reasonable amounts of money to these charities in return for government tax breaks. In this fashion, the Consortium keeps its poverty level from exploding, but its citizens aren't asked to give up their money for nothing in return.

On a much smaller scale, a number of citizens once belonging to the defunct Dreth Commonwealth run non-profit social programs to aid the impoverished. These programs are not very numerous, and are often community-based.

## **Community Service**

Considered as ludicrous as charity by most Rigunmors, community service is almost nonexistent in the Consortium. It exists only as punishment to work off a debt that cannot be repaid.

If someone falls into such a debt with an individual citizen rather than the government, the maximum penalty is an indentured status to the lender, until such time as the debt is considered repaid. It is not unheard of for this form of sanctioned 'slavery' to last the debtor's lifetime if the deficit is large enough. In this fashion, thousands of poverty stricken Rigunmors that would otherwise be filling Consortium cities with homeless are instead living and working in comfort. It may take them years, but they won't die on the street, and it saves the government money that would have been spent on charity programs.

## **Indentured Servitude**

In a nation where money and greed represents the only way of life, the existence of massive debt does not rest well between citizens and corporations. When an individual falls into enormous debt, or fails to come due on a sizeable loan, he or she may be sentenced to serve out the debt they cannot repay. The individual becomes bound to the payee of their debt by a *servitude-contract* until the judicial system considers their liability paid in full.

A large number of lower-class Rigunmor citizens live under such contracts. However, they are considered indentured servants, not slaves. Consortium law does not hold with one person owning another. They do believe that the existence of debt binds an individual to his or her financial responsibility. Something owed *will* be collected upon, with interest for time elapsed.

If the debtor has useful job skills, the court determines a monetary amount per year as payment to the contract holder. Others may have little or no useful skills, and must acquire them in order to pay off the contract. This education often costs additional money, which their contract holder can pay and then add to the sum of the original debt. While some servants pay off their contracts within a decade, others barely keep up with the payable interest. Rough estimates place 25% of servitude contracts paid off within the first decade, 25% fulfilled within 10-30 years, 15% paid off in 30-60 years, 15% fulfilled within 60-100 years, 10% paid off only after 100 years, and 10% still obligated to their holder upon death. In this final bracket, the deceased's family continues to assume the debt.

Indentured servants still enjoy the full protection of Rigunmor laws and maintain their citizenship status. Responsibility for the ethical care of the debtor and any of their dependants still lies with the contract holder. If no one else can care for a debtor's minor dependants (<18 yrs), they also fall under the contract holder's care. This also includes their educational responsibilities, and again, these costs get added to the originally contracted sum.

The owner of a servitude contract may sell it to a new holder in much the same way that other loans can be sold and refinanced. Although the practice is not widespread, some contract holders would rather sell their rights to the indentured rather than pay for further care or education of a servant's family. In any case, when such an exchange occurs, the indentured citizen often receives a 1-5% discount on their debt for the trouble of relocating with the new contract holder.

### **Holidays**

The Star Consortium has a large number of holidays, and although many of them commemorate historical events, almost all have become commercialized. Some of the more prominent holidays are discussed below.

**"Return to Profit Day"** is the anniversary of The Treaty of Concord. Following the

2472 treaty, the Rigunmor economy was able to refresh itself through interstellar trade again, and the money started flowing soon after. Although only a few decades old, it has become very popular in the Consortium and many businesses conduct 'discount sales' for the occasion.

**"Pirsk Day"** commemorates the 2273 treaty when the Mechalus joined the Rigunmor Star Consortium. The *Pirsk* was the first mechalus ship contacted by the Consortium. For the rest of the Consortium, this day represents one of their most lucrative deals. For the mechalus, it recognizes a turning point in their history towards peace with other species, and the abandonment of the name 'Aleerin' for 'Mechalus'. Although many mechalus still refer to themselves as Aleerin, especially in home systems, the name is not commonly used in stellar society, and this day is a reminder to billions of mechalus.

Parades and other celebrations run throughout all the major worlds of the Consortium, and computer technology companies use the day to unveil newer faster models.

**"Executive Guilder Day"** generally gives most Rigunmor citizens a day off from work to look over their finances and aspire to a higher fiscal status. As the office changes, the holiday relocates to suit the new Executive Guilder's birthday.

### **Language**

The Star Consortium is among only four stellar nations to possess its own language in addition to Galactic Standard. It started as a pidgin of various Earth languages when the Rigunmor Star Consortium was just an interstellar trade organization between the first colony worlds. It later developed into a complete language, though it still bears similarities to Old Earth Germanic and Asiatic languages.

All Consortium schools teach their students both Rigunmor and Galactic Standard from early in the curriculum, ensuring a largely bilingual population. Most public displays carry Galactic Standard translations beneath or after Rigunmor.



## Religion

The Rigunmor Star Consortium contains the third largest percentage of atheists among the stellar nations. It may sound callous, but most religions do not encourage the accumulation of wealth, and what good will an afterlife of reward do for a Rigunmor in the 26th century? Freedom of religion, however, remains common practice throughout Consortium space, though they are not immune to taxes.

Of the 40% of the Rigunmor population practicing religion, the largest percentage by far is the Church of Humanity Reformation, which focuses more upon self-improvement, and hence money, than upon worship. The Large portions of the defunct Dreth Commonwealth absorbed into the Consortium have nearly doubled the Reformationist movement in the past century. Lastly, those Mechalus who have adopted human religions prefer Buddhism or the Insightful doctrine first introduced by the Inseers.

## Psionics

In Rigunmor society, as with the other nations, mindwalkers are a fact of life. Medical testing during childhood and adolescence detects and registers most mindwalkers. Mindwalking schools exist throughout the Consortium to educate these exceptional psions and talents for an inflated price. The government also has programs to train mindwalkers for military and intelligence purposes, with top-notch salary and benefits. Though admittance into these programs cost less, the training must be repaid through years of service to the Rigunmor government.

Much like other nations, the Consortium also maintains laws that protect against unlawful use of mindwalking abilities, whether violent or peaceful in nature. The strictest laws prohibit use of telepathic and ESP powers in financial espionage. A Rigunmor talent who assaults someone with a mind blast will receive a fine far less than a talent who probes the mind of a business competitor to discover the details of his newest product release. Such financial crimes carry exorbitant fines for loss of revenue as well as serious jail time.

## New Career

### Finance Seer

While telepathic intrusion on competitors in the business world is considered a capitol crime in the Consortium, mindwalkers can still be invaluable in other legal uses. The most prominent of these jobs is the finance seer. Finance Seers use a combination of precognitive and computer linking powers to predict market fluctuations and stock prices. Sometimes they even predict outcomes of the yearly population audit. Suffice to say, almost every high ranking official employees a finance seer on some basis, be it permanent or merely before exceptionally risking deals.

**Core Skills (41 points):** Business-corporate; ESP-precognition 3; Telepathy-datalink 2;

## Gambling

There are some societies in the galaxy where gambling is considered immoral and illegal. Rigunmor society is not one of them. Rigunmors love to play with their money. They love to win, and they hate to lose, but they keep coming back.

**Government Gambling:** Rigunmors know a good deal when they see it. If you play long enough, the house always wins, and the government is the biggest house in the Consortium. They own almost 40% of the gambling establishments in the nation: casinos, racing tracks, sports odds, etc.

Perhaps the most practiced form of gambling by the common Rigunmor citizen is the lottery. The payoffs for these lotteries start modestly, but range up to the millions, and occasionally the billions. In fact, the lottery of 2500 paid 105,300 trillion guilders, the equivalent of over 100 billion concord dollars, and rocketed an already wealthy businessman to the head of a common committee after his next audit.

*"Proposition 48B? Hhhmm. You'll have to ask my assistant what I think about that. Now then, what's that you're drinking?"*

- Infrastructure Chairman, Guilder Milan Rhodes, 2501

## New Flaw

### Servitude Contract

+2/+4/+6 Bonus Skill Points, PER

This flaw marks a Rigunmor hero as having fallen into excessive debt to someone in the Consortium. The hero now finds himself bound by law to the holder of his contract. The player and GM should agree on the details of the contract during hero creation. The more bonus points taken from this flaw determines the size of the hero's debt, as well as how long of a leash his contract holder allows. In addition, this flaw imposes a penalty to all Personality-based skills of +1/+2/+3 when interacting with wealthy Rigunmors. This is due to the social stigma of being held in a servitude contract.

(Note: If a hero wants to remove this flaw, he must settle his accounted debt in addition to paying double the cost in skill points as an Achievement.)

For 2 bonus skill points, a hero acquires a debt of under \$100,000 Concord dollars. A monthly payment of \$500-1500 could easily fulfill the contract within 10 years.

For 4 bonus skill points, a hero owes between \$100,000 and \$500,000 Concord dollars. A monthly payment of \$1500-5000 could possibly fulfill the contract in 10-20 years.

For 6 bonus skill points, a hero must work off a debt of well over \$500,000 Concord dollars, perhaps even millions. Such a contract has little hope of being paid off in a timely manner, if ever.

**Private Gambling:** Corporate-owned business makes up the rest of the Consortium's legalized gambling circuit. Huge cities throughout Rigunmor space are dedicated to highly successful gambling establishments, and the government makes a profit off of them by levying taxes against their owners.

**Basement Gambling:** While there is no real need for black market casinos due to the total legality of the enterprise, some people do not want to pay the entertainment taxes on their profits. Most of

these businesses are small-time, however, as the larger ones eventually draw too much attention.

## Government

The government of the Rigunmor Star Consortium cannot be described as anything other than a plutocracy. It is, however, not the unofficial plutocracy of Earth's ancient past, where powerful merchants ruled false republics. The Consortium's stance is official. There are no elections held for office. Those citizens wishing to serve in the bureaucracy have their positions dictated by the annual audit. The wealthiest choose their positions first, starting with the Executive Guild, and then going on down the line. Most jump at the chance to control the purse strings of the nation so they can maintain their position and individual economic status.

In the Consortiums earliest years, these positions were held by the highest members of various guilds. As time progressed, however, and a new society emerged, the plutocracy became official, and guilds began to lose their posts to wealthier members of other guilds. The Consortium Guilds still exist, and continue to affect Rigunmor business at high levels, indeed, many high level bureaucrats have membership in guilds. But rule by the guilds has been gone for hundreds of years. The wealthiest rule now, regardless of guild allegiance.

Many would think such a government would collapse under the weight of corruption and incompetence. It has not, and shows no signs of doing so in the future. The constant competition keeps government incompetence to a minimum, as the incapable would lose profits, become overshadowed by others, and thus lose their position the following year. Corruption is much more prevalent, but to the Rigunmors it's not corruption; it's acceptable business practice. Of course people in power use their money to get things done. Money is how they got in power and how they stay in power, and the Rigunmor people recognize that their

leaders use money and probably have to make underhanded deals to get things done. If the average citizen was in their place, he'd do the same thing.

### **The Hold**

The concept of the Hold plays a key role in Rigunmor culture. In the world of the Star Consortium, where the pursuit of money is a way of life as well as a measure of personal status, finance always dominates the Rigunmor mind. A Hold is both a figurative and a literal term, measuring a family's worth as well as the size and importance of the physical locations used to store their valuables.

In the figurative sense, a Hold represents an eyeball judgment of self-worth. If most of a family's money remains tied up in a business, then the company assets are the family Hold. In the same sense, an individual's personal savings balance or stock portfolio can also become their Hold. Or a combination of all these things may contribute to the audit of a Rigunmor's life.

In the literal sense, the Hold is also a physical location or even multiple locations. After all, a wealthy Rigunmor cannot possibly transfer all of his valuables across a simple data stream. Many families maintain a physical Hold, or vault, in which to store hard assets, including: art, jewelry, various commodities and maybe even emergency funds. The best security equipment the owners can afford, often a substantial amount for a Rigunmor, protects these Holds at all times.

### **Political Parties**

Only .05% of Rigunmor citizens belong to a political party. Most of these parties are federalist, democratic, and republican to varying degrees. The Star Consortium government recognizes these organizations, but they have few members in the bureaucracy and insufficient monetary backing to rise high enough to change the system. Citizens of Dreth descent founded close to half of the Consortium's political parties within the last century.

### **Legislature**

The Executive Guilder is the head of all legislative procedures in the Consortium. Beneath this position is an Advisory Board of ten Guilders. The Advisory Board members are those ten individuals possessing the most wealth after the Executive Guilder. These ten Guilders are appointed to lead the Capitol Committees that essentially run the Consortium. The richest among them chooses first each year, then the second wealthiest, and so on.

Other Guilders head up Common Committees and often serve on both Capitol and Common Committees. The committees get to decide policy in their respective fields. The Executive Guilder holds veto power over their decisions, but can be overruled by a 3/5 majority of the Advisory Board.

There are 200 guilders in total. Guilders may serve on up to five different committees if they so choose, though this limit does not include subcommittees a guilder may rule over as chairman of a larger committee.

### **Capitol Committees**

The members of the Advisory Board head the Capitol Committees. These are the wealthiest, and most powerful political entities in the Star Consortium.

**The Committee of Scientific Advancement:** This department oversees technological research and development within the Consortium. The Rigunmor innovations of the next century begin here, prioritized and partially funded according to potential profit margin. The current head of the committee is Guilder Krelias Dovin (Hf/Rigunmor/DTO-12), a late middle-aged woman content with her position in the Consortium.

**Foreign Relations Committee:** Guilder Marcus Tambrin (Hm/Rigunmor/DFA-14) leads this committee and acts as the official voice of the Consortium to other nations in most instances. Tambrin has done a fine job of patching up relations with most of the Consortium's wartime adversaries, allowing trade to reopen with them. VoidCorp is

the only true exception, as the two nations are competitors on the open market. Tambrin owns 1% of stock in Celestial Entertainment Limited, and sits on its board of directors. This has led some to question his possible connections to the Coreeno crime family.

Guilder Tithan Veers (Hm/Rigunmor/DFA-9) also serves on this committee under Tambrin, and has lately taken an interest in Verge affairs. Many believe he has his sights on the committee chair and intends to replace Tambrin in the near future.

**Territorial Assets Committee:** The Consortium's territorial assets consist of all twenty sectors of Rigunmor space, as well as other holdings. The Committee focuses primarily upon Stellar Ring fringe colonies, Star Consortium systems still under reconstruction from severe damage in GW2, and Verge holdings, including Ruhlesport Island on Bluefall and various embassies. Guilder Serena W. Riordan (Hf/Rigunmor/DFA-13) also maintains an active interest in the United Lison State of Oberon.

**The Military Appropriations Committee:** Holding the rank of Admiral in the Rigunmor Navy as a bonus of his position, Guilder Russel Xar (Hm/Rigunmor/DCS-16) heads this committee. The group oversees the Consortium military and naval forces. The Military Appropriations Committee coordinates 10 task forces, 20 defense sectors, and 14 fortress ships. Russel, though wily and hardened by GW2, is 182 years old, and numerous guilders are lining up for his position.

**Social Services Committee:** The Social Services Committee primarily handles matters of health and education for the citizens of the Consortium. Although there are numerous common committees for departments analogous to social services (such as public health, education, infrastructure, and the census bureau), they all answer to Guilder Jorras Terrinus Beronin (Hm/Rigunmor/DTO-12). Jorras is a middle-aged man whose family-owned construction corporation amassed an incredible amount of wealth in the years

following the Treaty of Concord by rebuilding war-torn systems.

**Energy Management Committee:** This department directs the construction and expenditure of power plants and grids throughout the Consortium. They have a central control center in each modern system to ensure the Consortium does not waste energy, and thus money. Guilder P'rachus Phaecius (Fm/Rigunmor/DFA-15) chairs the Energy Management Committee largely through the use of knowledgeable subordinates. His large stock percentage in Steiner-Quasar Designs, a starship engineering corporation, is a large percentage of what keeps him on the Advisory Board. The Energy Management Committee also receives funds to research energy sources beyond the mass reactor.

**The Communications Media Committee:** This committee maintains the entire Grid system of the Consortium. Guilder Colin McCombas (Hm/Rigunmor/DTO-13) holds a tyrannical grip on his position, as he fully realizes the power and opportunities at his disposal. In the 26th century, the Grid is everything to corporations, and the money to be gained in pandering to them can keep a Guilder secure in his or her position for a very long time.

**The Agricultural Production Committee:** This committee oversees the development of new food products for Rigunmor citizens, and manages the distribution of government-grown foods. The newest member of the Advisory Board, Quinn Steele (Hm/Rigunmor/TO-10) chairs the Agricultural Production Committee. He has shown a fair amount of competence in his position so far, but rumors persist that he continues to risk his profit margins in a grand investment scheme involving crop futures.

**Internal Evaluation Committee:** The Internal Evaluation Committee safeguards the concerns of the Consortium government from both foreign and internal assault. They are the equivalent of Old Earth's FBI and KGB organizations, and the Nariac Domain's Ministry of State Security, though

not as well feared as the latter. Riggis Olantron (Mm/Rigunmor/DFA-17) is the head of the IEC. He is an overly cold Mechalus with absolutely no qualms about demanding audits from the Finance Committee on anyone suspected of subversion. He has held his post with both the current Executive Guilder Oneagle, as well as the late Executive Guilder Breel.

**Finance Committee:** By far the most powerful and prestigious of the capitol committees, the Finance Committee is led by Guilder Joseph Varcan (Hm/Rigunmor/DTO-24). He and the guilders under his leadership maintain the Rigunmor Stock Index (RSI) and monitor the financial status of the Rigunmor Guilder, which is worth .01 Concord Dollars. Despite the rest of the Stellar Ring conceding to the Concord Dollar as the standardized currency, the Consortium demanded, and still uses the Rigunmor Guilder as legal tender.

Guilder Varcan controls the Auditor Subcommittee, which is responsible for polling the entire population of the Consortium annually. Luissa Komorov (Hf/Rigunmor/DFA-12) is the head of the Auditor Subcommittee. She owns a respectable percentage of Scorpio Industries, and has her sights set on the Finance seat of the Advisory Board. Guilders realize this and does little to slow her advancement, as she makes a fine pupil, and he'll likely die of old age before she becomes a real threat.

The Finance Committee also manages the inflation rate of the guilders, although it is currently stable, leaning towards a rise in value soon.

### **Common Committees**

A few of the common committees include: Transportation, Culture, Alerin Affairs, Public Health, Infrastructure, Census Bureau, and Education.

### **Enforcement**

The Rigunmor Police Force (RPF) is the branch of the government responsible for day to day law enforcement among the population. It is funded on a system by

system basis, drawing funds from taxes and fines. Initial placement in the RPF is not determined by the annual audit as with the bureaucracy, but is instead determined by the RPF itself. This is not to say that wealthy individuals who join are not soon given higher ranks.

While instances of RPF officers accepting bribes are well known, corruption is kept as low as possible through the practice of "lawful arrest spoils". In this practice, the officers responsible for an arrest that carries through to a guilty verdict or lopsided plea bargain may collect a percentage of the spoils of that arrest. This could include cars, guns, art, stock shares, land property, and even cash found at the scene. Lawful arrest spoils provide an incentive for RPF officers to stay clean and still turn a profit, while aggressively pursuing criminals.

### **Judiciary**

The Rigunmor justice system does maintain the innocence of the accused. If the prosecution is right, then let them prove it. Nothing is gained for free, not even justice. An accuser must hire an attorney to prosecute any case that goes to a full civilian court. If a case does not go that far, then the citizen is free to negotiate any settlement they wish. When a trial does go to court, he/she may end up before either a pair of judges, or a jury of seven in conjunction with the judges. Needless to say, bribery is prevalent in the Rigunmor justice system for those with the money and/or influence to support it.

### **Civilian Courts**

In civilian trials involving only minor offenses, two judges listen to testimony and pass sentence. In trials involving more serious crimes of violence or financial fraud, a jury of seven citizens delivers sentence in conjunction with two judges, with a vote equal to one judge's opinions. The jury's verdict need not be unanimous.

Penalties commonly include jail sentences ranging from several days to several decades. Capital punishment is handed down for the worst possible cases,



and stiff fines for other charges. A small fee is always added to the sentence of all court cases for the Consortium's trouble, and to insure the profitability of the justice system.

Mechalus worlds are given the jurisdiction to run courts and punishment at their own discretion, so long as their decisions don't stray too far from standard Consortium law.

**High Court of Finance:** The highest civilian court in the Consortium, the High Court of Finance is located on the fortress ship Oneagle with the rest of the Rigunmor bureaucracy. The nine wealthiest magistrates in the Consortium sit in judgment of those cases they deem potentially profitable enough to Rigunmor law to reach this level of the judiciary process. A majority vote passes judgment, and there can be no further appeals unless the Executive Guilder feels it necessary. Appointment to the High Court of Finance, as with all bureaucratic positions, is not permanent, and must be held by maintaining wealth.

### **Military Courts**

Military trials that reach court procedures are presided over by 3 judicial military officers, although during trials of significant importance a Guilder of the Military Appropriations Committee may replace one of the officers. Court costs are subtracted from the salary of the accused unless he is exonerated. If found guilty, sentences range from a fine or salary reduction to court marshal and military prison. Again, the death penalty is an option, though it can be avoided for a charge.

## **Rigunmor Military**

The Rigunmor military, much like the Rigunmor economy, has recovered from the Second Galactic War with relative speed. Separated into three parts, only the navy is truly respected throughout the Stellar Ring, though the Rigunmor Research Agency (RRA) is not dismissed as easily as the army.

The leaders of the RCN and RCA report to the Military Appropriations Committee, while the RRA answers to a joint committee of guilders from Military Appropriations and Internal Evaluation.

While the accumulation and handling of money still enables social mobility within the Consortium's military, the practices of bounties, plunder rights, and salvage shares help give incentive and cohesion to the rank and file.

## **Rigunmor Consortium Navy**

As one of the largest navies in the Stellar Ring, the Rigunmor Consortium Navy (RCN) is a power to be feared by its enemies. During GW2 they destroyed the Dreth Commonwealth's fleet and conquered nearly a third of their space. In the later years of the war they held their own against the ships of VoidCorp. They also secured the border with the Borealis Republic, from whose territory they had taken nearly 20% in GW1.

Due to the longstanding partnership with the StarMech Collective, many ships in the fleets hail from StarMech construction facilities. The Rigunmors are no fools. They buy the best.

As with most things in the Consortium, military rank is for sale in the RCN, but not as much as it once was. The long years of GW2 impressed upon the Rigunmors the importance of competent military leaders, and so while money can certainly advance a person within the navy, true ability is needed to earn high commands. There are also a large number of veteran officers from GW2 still serving in the RCN, many of whom earned large bonuses during their careers. Thus, their amassed wealth holds their place in the upper naval ranks, preventing incompetent officers from advancing due to the lack of available openings. The current edition of Fighting Ships states this tightening of Rigunmor naval command as one of the reasons they gave the RCN a B-rating.

The RCN has 14 fortress ships, the third largest number among the stellar nations. Of these, six are devoted to commanding fleet detachments, and seven to defense

sectors, including the venerable RCV *Voyageur*. The flagship RCV *Oneagle* travels Consortium space with the Executive Guild, the Advisory Board, the guilders, and a small escort fleet in tow to help protect them all.

### **Rigunmor Consortium Army**

While the navy is kept to an efficient and forceful standard, the Rigunmor Consortium Army (RCA) has not received the same attention from the Military Appropriations Committee. The Consortium finds it more profitable to pour resources into the navy rather than the army, and thus it lags.

Compounding the problem, the practice of purchasing military rank in the RCA has not been affected at all by GW2 as it has in the RCN. As a result, overall training and discipline is significantly less than the ground forces of almost every other nation.

### **Rigunmor Research Agency**

Where the Internal Evaluation Committee monitors the civilian population for significantly dangerous criminals, terrorist activities, and high level business fraud, the Rigunmor Research Agency (RRA) gathers intelligence from other nations. The men and women of the RRA are the Consortium's source of knowledge concerning VoidCorp fleet movements, the latest Orlamu stardrive research, and the background financial movements of foreign companies.

To this end, it is not uncommon for the RRA to have undercover operatives in foreign companies, and occasionally government or military structures. Such operatives receive a decent salary in addition to the money they earn on assignment, making Research Agency abroad missions very attractive prospects. It's whispered that Guilden Riggis Olantron had his start in the RRA on a VoidCorp op.

Overall, the RRA is as competent an organization as is found in many nations, but would be considered run-of-the-mill when compared to such exceptional organizations as the CIB or the Nariac Intelligence Directorate.

## **The Consortium Fleets**

Below is a listing of the RCN Fleets, their flagships, and operating areas. This list does not denote the smaller battle groups assigned to permanent defense sectors, including seven additional fortress ships.

For a clearer understanding of precisely where the fleets are posted, reference the Rigunmor Star Consortium map found on page 69 of this chapter, for your convenience.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship RCV *Equity*  
Special Assignment

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship RCV *Monolith*  
Breel & Wayen Sectors

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet

Dreadnought RCV *Tiger's Eye*  
Aleerin Sector

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship RCV *Basilisk*  
Shaula Sector

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship RCV *Dividend*  
RSCME & Grafflas Sectors

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Battleship RCV *Berkeley*  
Noble Sector

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship RCV *Sirocco*  
Wraith, Julian, & Frontier Sectors

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Dreadnought RCV *Majestic*  
Antarean Sector

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship RCV *The Auditor*  
Capitol and Guild Sectors

#### 10<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Battleship RCV *Emerald*  
Special Assignment

## Why the RCA is Substandard

It's 2410, and you're a well-trained officer in the Rigunmor Consortium Army during the Second Galactic War. After 40 years of service and financial management, you've climbed the ladder to the rank of major in your battalion. In another stellar nation's army, say, the Austrin Marines, your tactical skills would have earned you this promotion 15 years earlier. As if this wasn't bad enough...

Now, the Guilder uncle of a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant decides to give his son a very large birthday gift of several thousand guilders. The 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant uses the money to buy his rank all the way up to a rank of Colonel. The RCA uses the money to continue the war effort, and your former subordinate is suddenly, and sadly, in command of an entire regiment, including your own battalion. He has training, but nowhere near enough to do his job.

Now the problem grows. VoidCorp wants their planet back, and you're trying to defend it. When the orders come down from above, your new Colonel doesn't really know how to coordinate all his battalions, and he doesn't have the time to sit down and figure it out, because the situation demands a quick, experienced decision. He asks his Lieutenant Colonel for help, and luckily *he* didn't purchase his rank in quite the same way, so the Colonel finally gets the guidance he needs in this situation. Unfortunately, the delay ate up too much time, and your battalion's operating area is now cut off by well-prepared VoidCorp troops with competent commanding officers. You get picked off by a sniper shot to the chest, and die thinking about your 401K plan. Welcome to the RCA...

## Power Players of the Rigunmor Star Consortium

Now that the composition of Rigunmor society and government has been discussed, this section will explore the politics both within and beyond the borders of the Consortium. What plans does the Executive Guilder have for the Consortium?

Who influences Rigunmor policy? How close is the Consortium to its wartime allies? Are the mysterious Externals considered a threat to Rigunmor business?

## Consortium Concerns

### Executive Guilder Atha Oneagle

The wealthiest woman in the Consortium, Atha Oneagle (Hf/Rigunmor/DFA-23) has had the privilege of running all Rigunmor space since 2494. From her fortress ship namesake, she and her Advisory Board and Guilder Council pass out mandates and policy to the citizens and corporations of the Star Consortium. Atha is only 70 years old, still considered a woman in her prime, and she plans on holding her position as long as she can.

Her basic foreign policy is nothing more than the standard of all Rigunmor foreign policy, to make money for the Consortium. While the Consortium's booming post war economy may have alienated former allies, the common citizen couldn't care less. Profits are still coming in, and there's plenty of opportunity for all.

Her more clandestine plans involve the possibility of reducing VoidCorp competition in the business world. Atha believes that the place to start such a fiscal attack lies either in associating the Consortium with Insight, or with helping the Nariac Domain rid itself of VoidCorp ownership, and perhaps supplanting VoidCorp's control for Rigunmor manipulation.

### Advisory Board

The ten guilders that run the Capitol Committees command enormous influence over the Consortium. They would all like to supplant Atha in her office, but only a few of them are within reaching distance of that goal. The only place in the Stellar Ring where a comparable level of political maneuvering and intrigue exists is with the executives of VoidCorp.

### Guilder Joseph Varcan

At 170 years of age, Joseph Varcan (Hm/Rigunmor/DTO-24) is the second wealthiest person in the Consortium.

Unfortunately, second place does not make for an Executive Guildler. It does, however, allow first choice of capitol committees, placing him at the head of the Finance Committee. Joseph realizes he only has a few more decades left, and he fully intends on replacing Atha Oneagle as Executive Guildler. To this end he has used his political finesse and control of the Finance Committee to exert as much influence as possible on Consortium law, and garners as much profit as he can. In the audit of 2501 he was only 1.8% away from matching Oneagle's net worth, and he plans on closing that gap however he can.

### **The Infrastructure Committee**

Rightly considered one of the most important common committees, the Guildler in charge of the Infrastructure Committee carries enormous responsibility for the upkeep of Rigunmor civilization. Unfortunately, the current committee head is Milan Rione (Hm/Rigunmor/NP), a social playboy who inherited his fortune from his parents and won the multi-billion dollar lottery of 2500. The lottery elevated him into the realm of Consortium Politics, and placed him high enough to head a committee.

Milan knew that Infrastructure was important, and made it his choice when it became his turn to select. In short, he is inept. His subordinates do all the real work, including correcting the gross errors made whenever Guildler Rione does important work himself. His wealth, however, is so great that it seems unlikely that he will be removed in the next few years.

Guildler Joseph Varcan has recently taken Milan under his council, and it is rumored that the Finance Chairman may have his eyes set on Rione's money to help him overthrow Oneagle.

### **Celestial Entertainment Limited**

CEL is far and away the most powerful entertainment company in the Stellar Ring, but what actually makes this company so influential is its connection to Tero Coreeno of the Coreeno family so well reputed for its alleged criminal activities. The Coreeno family owns large stock percentages in

several major corporations throughout the Stellar Ring, but stay out of public politics. Nonetheless, many analysts believe that the so-called Coreeno Crime Syndicate exerts some measure of control over Consortium politics. How true this actually is remains to be seen.

### **The United Guildler Conclave**

The UGC is the remnants of what the Consortium originally formed as; a confederation of various business guilds. While banding together for united strength brought the Rigunmors together in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the vast stellar nation no longer requires the cooperation of all its businesses to function. The UGC has not controlled the Advisory Board for centuries, and many large companies no longer feel the need to join guilds.

However, the proliferation of large corporations has not prevented small business from flourishing, and the UGC has a strong role in keeping them alive. Guilds exist for every business type from food distribution and computer hardware and software, to accounting firms and private schools. Guild membership allows a business to increase its influence with other corporations and governments, providing greater business opportunity.

The heads of each guild, called guildmaster since the plutocratic government separated them from the bureaucracy, meet monthly to discuss matters. Each guild has several guildmasters to more effectively represent small business, and they are all expected to attend. While numerous large corporations have no need of the UGC, the guilds can still throw their weight around the Consortium economy when they want to.

### **The Rigunmor Star Consortium Merchant Exchange**

The RSCME is the largest provider of goods and commodities in the Stellar Ring. Merchants, corporations, and individuals of all sizes and nations place orders with the Merchant Exchange, allowing its influence to stretch across the Ring. While the RSCME has no interest in the field of politics, the board of directors have every interest in expanding their customer base

well beyond the Consortium and its Profit Confederation allies.

### **The Mechalus**

Under the Rigunmor-Aleerin Alliance, more than 33 billion Mechalus live within the borders of the Rigunmor Star Consortium, most of them within the Mechalus (or Aleerin) Sector. This is the sector of Consortium space consisting of the Mechalus home system of Agemar and several surrounding systems given to the Mechalus upon joining the Star Consortium, many of which have been moderately settled.

While the alliance has been in effect for well over two centuries and has no signs of changing, it is important to note that the mechalus are not citizens of the Consortium. Mechalus working in the Consortium outside the Aleerin Sector are considered *leased* to their business. Those working for another nation are considered by the Aleerin state to be *contracted* outside the alliance. Finally, the vast minority of mechalus on their own are *independent*.

While this is only 4-5% of the Rigunmor population, the Mechalus provide certain Grid and computer based technology products, and research second to none. Only the best Inseer and VoidCorp workers can rival them.

Obviously the Mechalus have an important influence within Star Consortium politics. The Rigunmors have always recognized this, and have even formed a common committee devoted to their favored alien citizens. The current head of the Aleerin Affairs Committee, Jegaris Zakum (Mm/Rigunmor/DFA-16), has ensured that his committee is perhaps the most influential of the common committees. They often provide subcontract work for the Capitol Committees of Communications Media and Scientific Advancement.

### **Stellar Nations**

#### **Austrin-Ontis Unlimited**

Of all the Star Consortium's wartime allies, the Austrins have remained closest to the Rigunmors. The two nations still carry on trade and diplomacy as normal, but the

end of GW2 and the Profit Confederation has left their political alliance as closer to mutual defense than friendship. However, should war break out again, a Rigunmor/Austrin alliance seems as likely as ever.

#### **Borealis Republic**

The Consortium considers the Republic more of a customer target zone than a political, economic, or military threat. Although enemies in the war, the Rigunmors did little more than secure their borders with the Borealins, considering the Dreth Commonwealth and VoidCorp more threatening. Consortium aggression in the Rigunmor-Borealin Border War of 2481 has been largely forgotten by the Executive Guild.

Today, Consortium businesses provide very necessary distribution for Borealin products to the rest of the Stellar Ring, especially entertainment products. They also consume a large number of these products.

#### **Hatire Community**

Regardless of belonging to opposing alliances during the war, the Rigunmors and the Hatire Community have had little conflict. In fact, The Consortium has returned to their pre-war practice of distributing Hatire low-tech goods to interstellar markets. No attempts have been made by the Consortium to form any kind of political bond.

#### **Insight**

While wartime allies seem to have gone lukewarm from the postwar economic success of the Consortium, the Rigunmors may have found a new friend with Insight. The Consortium made few attempts to fight the Inseers during GW2, opting instead to accept their help against VoidCorp. Now Insight is a steady nation of manufacturers in need of distributors and perhaps even protection. The Rigunmor Guilders would like nothing better than to come to such an agreement with Insight, and while no such formal negotiations have yet been made, relations seem to be moving in that direction.



### **Nariac Domain**

While the communal system and beliefs of the Domain are contrary to the capitalistic Rigunmor pursuit of wealth, the Consortium has begun to entertain Nariac diplomacy in the past decade. The Rigunmors keenly realize what the Domain is looking for: help freeing themselves from the yoke of VoidCorp. Debate currently carries on with the Executive Guild and her Advisory Board as to the proper course of action that will most benefit the Consortium.

### **Orion League**

The Rigunmors have only good relations with the Orion League so far. With the Orion tendency towards positive diplomacy and independent leadership, the economic market for the Consortium has been opened wide. How much longer the League will allow this is not clear, but given their hesitancy to harm relations with other nations it seems unlikely that the Consortium will receive many harsh sanctions.

### **Orlamu Theocracy**

The Theocracy's political relationship with the Consortium can safely be described as neutral. The two nations had little contact during the war, and continue to have little contact today. Trade exists between the Theocracy and the Rigunmors, but primarily in the purchase of Orlamu star drives. The Consortium has managed to open a reasonable market in Theocracy space, but they would like to see it grow more than the Orlamu government currently allows.

### **StarMech Collective**

Although wartime partners in the Profit Confederation, the StarMech Collective has become cooler in its relations with the Consortium in recent years. Economic relations seem to have changed little, however, and the Rigunmors still place orders with the shipyards of the Collective while StarMech makes use of Consortium distributors and financial advisors.

*"These accusations are meaningless. I'm just a legitimate businessman."*

- Tero Coreeno, 2499

### **Thuldan Empire**

Although the Consortium had little wartime contact with the Empire, the Thuldans have not opened their gates very wide for the Rigunmors. However, the Consortium has been able to open several areas of business within Thuldan space, most notably in the area of medical technology deemed useful by the wealthy and aging Rigunmors. The Advisory Board is constantly making attempts to reduce Thuldan regulations on trade, but it's not an easy task.

### **Union of Sol**

As with StarMech, the Union of Sol has grown distant from the Consortium since the Treaty of Concord. The Rigunmors maintain a healthy diplomacy with the Solars, and their economies still interact and compete, but to call their relationship an alliance would be incorrect. The Consortium seems to have no problem with this, however, as economic conquest is fine with the Guilders.

### **VoidCorp**

VoidCorp is the only nation the Rigunmors openly oppose. The wartime animosity between the Consortium and the corporate nation has carried over into daily battles in the stellar economy. The Rigunmors spare no expense to compete with VoidCorp, and frequently attempt to undermine their business dealings. There have been no attempts by either party to reconcile their differences.

### **Galactic Concord**

The first problem the Consortium considers itself to have ever had with the Galactic Concord was when they tried to replace the Rigunmor guilder with the Concord dollar for standardized stellar money. The Concord conceded to the guilder as a viable currency with the dollar, and the Consortium went on with business as usual. Later, the Concord intervened in the Rigunmor-Borealin Border War of 2481. The Consortium gave in to Concord administration in the matter, and consider it ancient history in the face of current business prospects, as they would like to

continue business with no strong observance from the Concord.

This is not the case, however. The Rignumors have had their wrists slapped on several occasions, though they've found ways around several of the Concord's restrictions. Executive Guilder Oneagle hopes that as long as the Concord has to deal with more troublesome nations like the Union of Sol, the Thuldans, and VoidCorp, that the Consortium can expect no stronger interference in Rignumor business than has already occurred, and hopefully less.

## Verge Concerns

### Aegis

Like all the stellar nations, the Rignumor Consortium holds an island embassy on Bluefall. They base their operations off Ruhlesport Island, and a holding in Nectaris Station. They have no plans to acquire other holdings in the Aegis system at this time.

### Oberon

The Rignumor inability to bring this rebellious colony back under Consortium control has been a sore point for the Executive Guilder. Admiral Sarn's attempt in early 2502 to retake Lison by force with the RCV Eclipse failed horribly, and the Guilders denied ordering his actions. The Consortium is currently striving to repair relations with the Lison state while funneling billions of dollars into their economy. For the moment, however, Lison remains out of reach.



## Rignumor Conquests: OGAM Inc.

The Consortium's GW2 victory over the forces of the Dreth Commonwealth is well documented, but few recall their hostile takeover of the stellar nation OGAM, Incorporated. OGAM came into existence as a business conglomerate of four separate companies: Orson Enterprises, a growing industrial giant; Gimble Transportation Company; The Anderson Financial Group; and later, the Michaels Mercantile Corporation. OGAM resided in the region of space now known as the Wraith and Marcen sectors of the Rignumor Star Consortium.

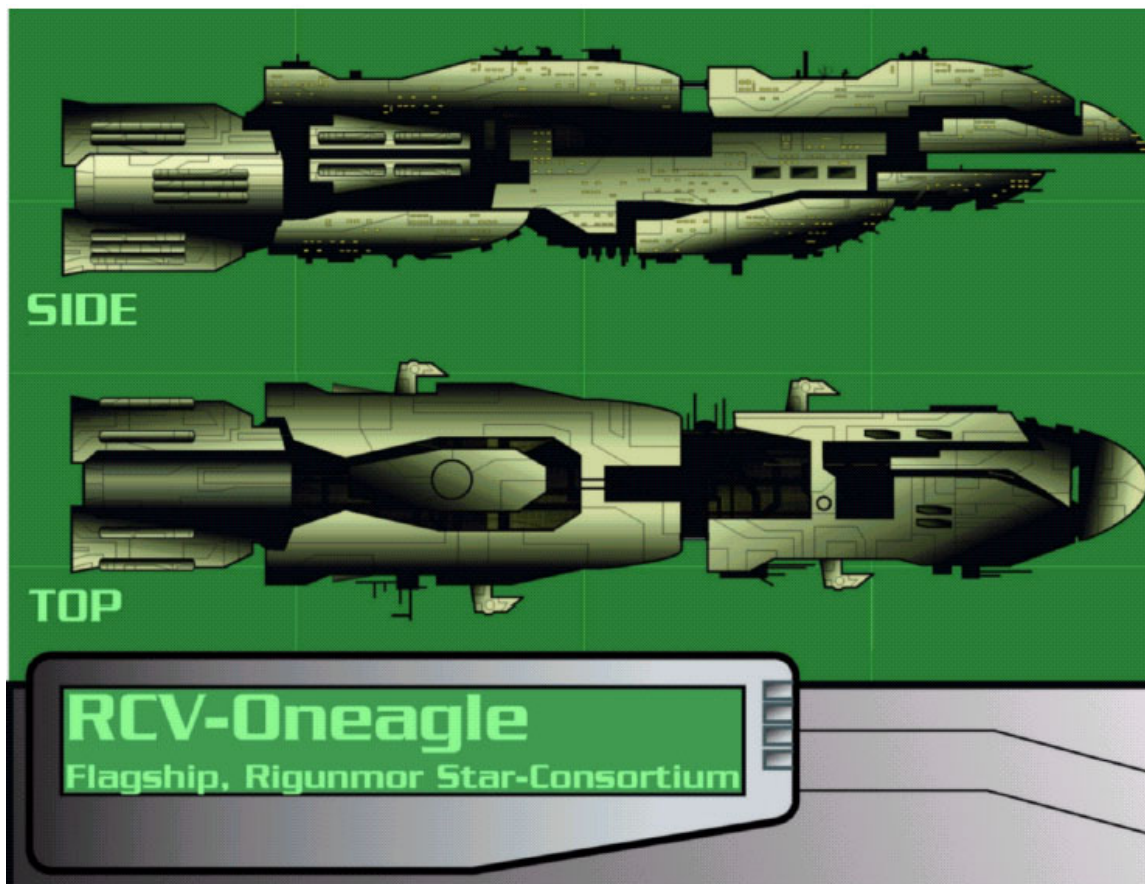
Many Guilders on the Advisory Board had long shared an interest in the Anderson Financial Group, and Executive Guilder Thomas Marcen owned a substantial share of Michaels Mercantile Company before OGAM solidified. As a result, when the Second Galactic War broke out in 2346, the Consortium prepared a takeover attempt.

In 2347, fleets from the Rignumor Stellar Navy blockaded OGAM's most important trade routes in a matter of weeks. With stock prices starting to suffer, Rignumor Guilders bought large portions of OGAM to strengthen their position. They held the blockade for a year, quietly destroying any OGAM ships found leaving the region. This eventually brought them into conflict with the 3<sup>rd</sup> OGAM fleet in 2348, in which the Rignumors claimed victory. This further allowed the Consortium to maintain the blockade.

By 2349, OGAM's economy suffered a major crash, and the RSN moved in, easily taking several outer systems. Executive Guilder Marcen followed up the invasion with an offer to acquire the interstellar conglomerate and absorb them into the Consortium, effectively ending the crippling blockade. OGAM conceded, and allowed the buy out.

Heroes wishing to play a descendant of OGAM may forego the standard Rignumor game benefits and begin the game with the Business broad skill for free as well as 1 free rank in Business-*small*.

## The RCV *Oneagle*



### RCV *Oneagle*

#### Executive Class Fortress Ship

Target Modifier: -5

Toughness: Super Heavy

Maneuverability: Class 1

Armor: LI d8+3/ HI d8+3/ En d8+3

Acceleration: 2

Crew Quality: Veteran

Crew Check: 14

Total Crew: 12,000 hands

Stun: 406

Wound: 406

Mortal: 203

Critical: 102

| Weapon   | Range  | Acc | Type | Grade  | Modes | O/G/A Damage           |
|--|--------|-----|------|--------|-------|------------------------|
| Matter Beams   | 2/5/10 | -2* | En   | Medium | F/G   | 2d6+1w / 2d8+1w / 2d8m |
| Heavy Matter Beams   | 4/8/16 | +1* | En   | Heavy  | F/G   | 2d6+1m / 2d8+1m / 2d8c |
| Heavy Plasma Beams   | 2/4/8  | -2* | En   | Light  | F/G   | d8+2w / d12+2w / d8+2m |
| Plasma Torpedoes   | 3/6/9  | +1  | En   | Heavy  | F     | 3d6s / 3d6w / d8+3m    |
| Missile Tubes & Ordnance Arrays have statistics as per missile types |        |     |      |        |       |                        |

\*Taking into account the fire control systems

## A Brief History of the Ship

The RCV *Oneagle* is the flagship of the Rignunmor Star Consortium. Originally constructed during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War, and originally named *Rheosky*, the ship first rolled off the Antares Shipyards assembly line in 2381. While the Rignunmor fleet was racing VoidCorp to the center of the crumbling Dreth Commonwealth, Executive Guilder Evan Rheosky and his bureaucracy settled into the new center of Rignunmor politics.

### The Owners

As the largest fortress ship ever constructed, the *Rheosky* served with distinction in the last century of the war, changing hands and names with several executive guilders along the way. In 2405, Executive Guilder Rheosky lost his position, and the ship became the *Prinicep*. Armond Prinicep then remained at the top of the Consortium until he died of natural causes in 2445. The title of Executive Guildler and the flagship then passed briefly through a series of Executive Guilders. Lita G. McGowan held the position for three years, replaced by Orson Sorenson in 2448. By 2453, Sorenson was overcome by Gregory Remuis for the next decade. In 2463, Allison Breel had the name *Remuis* removed from the ship, and replaced it with *Breel*. In 2494, several years after helping to establish the Treaty of Concord, she died in office. Executive Guildler Breel was succeeded by the then head of the Finance Committee, Atha Oneagle.

### Special Tech

During its many years of service, the *Oneagle* has consistently updated itself with the newest scientific and military systems. Most notable among these are the unique technologies developed by the mechalus of the Aleerin Sector. As a

whole, human science has never delved very far into the field of anti-matter technology research, but the mechalus have. The result of the Rignunmor-Aleerin alliance gives the Star Consortium limited access to closely guarded technology currently unavailable to the rest of the Stellar Ring.

In 2373, during the planning stages of the newly commissioned vessel, Executive Guildler Evan Rheosky signed a contract with several Aleerin-owned companies providing the fortress ship with a mechalus computer core and an array of matter technology weapons. In return, mechalus military personnel would be trained to operate the computer systems by the Aleerin Affairs Committee, and no attempt would be made to reverse-engineer the matter weapons under penalty of hefty fines and removal of the systems. In addition, the Aleerin companies would receive a modest annual payment for upgrades and maintenance of the systems. Neither of the involved parties has violated the agreement to date.

### The *Oneagle's* Stardrive

While all fortress ships, as well as the Galactic Concord's *Lighthouse*, have a standard starfall range of 50 light years, the *Oneagle* does not. It travels farther. Rumors abound throughout the Stellar Ring as to its capabilities. Some of these rumors place the starfall range above 60 light years, and others around 70!

The truth of the matter is that the *Oneagle* can regularly make starfalls of up to 60 light years, and can occasionally make jumps of up to 65 light years, though careful preparations must be made before such a trip. The engineering crew must spend several days of preparation in order for the stardrive and mass reactors to handle the stress of exceeding 60 light years.

| TYPE            | SYSTEM  | HULL POINTS    | POWER POINTS |
|-----------------|---|----------------|--------------|
|                 |   | 13,000 (+6500) |              |
| Hull:           | Fortress Ship   |                |              |
| Armor:          | Super Heavy Neutronite  | 2600           | 0            |
| Power:          | 10 Mass Reactors<br>(each rated for 590.8 power points)<br>(Total of 5908 pp) | 1688           | 0            |
| Engines:        | Induction Engines   | 1300           | 1300         |
| FTL:            | Stardrive   | 650            | 1950*        |
| Life support:   | 325 Autosupport Units (whole ship)  | 325            | 325          |
|                 | 600 Recycler Units (12,000 people)  | 600            | 600          |
| Accommodations: | 486 Crew Bunkrooms<br>(9720 enlisted)   | 1458           | 0            |
|                 | 180 Crew Quarters<br>(1080 enlisted)  | 360            | 0            |
|                 | 180 Officers Quarters)<br>(1080 officers)                                     | 360            | 0            |
|                 | 60 Officer Staterooms<br>(120 Officers)                                       | 120            | 0            |
|                 | 50 Troop Bunkrooms<br>(1000 enlisted)   | 150            | 0            |
|                 | 10 Troop Quarters<br>(60 officers)  | 20             | 0            |
|                 | 300 2nd Class Gov't Staterooms<br>(1200 bureaucrats)                          | 600            | 0            |
|                 | 250 1st Class Gov't Staterooms<br>(500 bureaucrats)                           | 500            | 0            |
|                 | Business Mall Section<br>(50-60 stores; 400 customers)                        | 116            | 0            |
| Defenses:       | Deflection Inducer  | 650            | 1300         |
|                 | Repair bot Damage Control System  | 650            | 650          |
| Weapons:        | 8 Double-Turret Heavy Matter Beams  | 360            | 384          |
|                 | 10 Triple-Turret Matter Beams   | 275            | 330          |
|                 | 10 Double-Turret Heavy Plasma<br>Beams  | 150            | 160          |
|                 | 20 Missile Launch Tubes   | 60             | 20           |
|                 | 10 Ordinance Cell Arrays  | 100            | 20           |
|                 | 12 Plasma Torpedoes   | 120            | 180          |
|                 | 100 Point Defense Guns  | 100            | 0            |
| Command:        | Flag Bridge   | 3              | 0            |
|                 | 3 Command Decks   | 30             | 0            |
|                 | 2 Launch Towers   | 4              | 0            |
| Communication:  | 14 Radio Transceivers   | 7              | 14           |
|                 | 8 Laser Transceivers  | 8              | 8            |
|                 | 8 Mass Transceivers   | 8              | 8            |
|                 | Drivesat Communications Relay   | 150            | 300          |



|                |   |       |      |
|----------------|---|-------|------|
| Sensors:       | Drive Detection Array                       | 80    | 120  |
|                | Ladar (12 arcs)                             | 10    | 10   |
|                | His-Res Video                               | 2     | 0    |
|                | IR Detectors (12 arcs)                      | 6     | 0    |
|                | Multiband Radars (12 arcs)                  | 6     | 12   |
|                | Mass Detectors (12 arcs)                    | 12    | 12   |
|                | Spectroanalyzers (12 arcs)                  | 12    | 12   |
| Computers:     | Computer Core, Amazing                      | 65    | 65   |
|                | Tactical Control, Good                      | 1     | 0    |
|                | Navigational Control, Good                  | 1     | 0    |
|                | Sensor Control, Good (all sensors)          | 6     | 0    |
|                | 28 Fire Control, Good (all turrets)         | 28    | 0    |
| Hangars:       | Docking Clamps (900 hull point capacity)    | 180   | 0    |
|                | 4 Fighter Hangars (500 hull points each)    | 2000  | 0    |
|                | 2 Strike Fighter Hangars (750 each)         | 1500  | 0    |
|                | 1 Civilian Hanger (200 hull point capacity) | 200   | 0    |
|                | 1 Civilian Hanger (100 hull point capacity) | 100   | 0    |
|                | Magazines (1600 missile points)             | 400   | 0    |
| Miscellaneous: | 12 Airlocks                                 | 12    | 0    |
|                | 40 Brigs (160 man total capacity)           | 80    | 0    |
|                | 40 Cargo Holds (4000 sq meters)             | 120   | 0    |
|                | Evacuation System (15,000 people)           | 753   | 0    |
|                | Fabrication Facility                        | 4     | 2    |
|                | 2 Lab Sections (50 men each)                | 50    | 0    |
|                | 100 Security Suites (4680 coverage)         | 102   | 102  |
|                | 4 Sick Bays (60 men each)                   | 240   | 0    |
| 4 Workshops    | 8   | 4     |      |
| Totals:        |   | 19500 | 5938 |

\* +100-150 power points to make 60-65 light year starfalls

The *Oneagle* is not assigned an official damage diagram here, as any heroes who enter into combat against it with anything less than a full stellar fleet will be obliterated. As the flag ship of the Consortium, the *Oneagle* is escorted by a small fleet of 2 dreadnoughts, 3 battleships, 1 carrier, 30 cruisers, 40 destroyers, and over 200 small craft. Should a GM run such a combat scenario, they should feel free to

develop the damage diagram at their own discretion.



## Power Players of the *Oneagle*

More than simply the flagship of the Rignunmor Consortium Navy, the *Oneagle* is also the center of government and administration to all of Rignunmor space. A careful observer can find endless political scheming onboard, both foreign and domestic. The following represent most of the major individuals of influence who make their home on *Oneagle*.

Many of the individuals/groups referred to below are discussed in greater detail in the preceding *People of the Rignunmor Star Consortium* chapter.

### **Bureaucracy**

While most nations keep their bureaucracies safely stationed in their capitol star system, the Rignunmors prefer the mobility offered by the *Oneagle*. The Star Consortium purposefully keeps its capitol world of Bazaar free of political dealings in lieu of a better business environment. Thus, the administration of the Consortium live aboard the *Oneagle* unless away on business or pleasure.

### **Executive Guilder Atha Oneagle**

The Executive Guilder makes her permanent residence aboard the capitol ship.

### **The Advisory Board**

The chairmen of all ten capitol committees maintain offices and residences aboard the *Oneagle*, even while out of Rignunmor space for extended business.

### **The Guilders**

All other guilders (whether members of capitol or common committees) have both offices and residency aboard, unless they have requested otherwise.

### **The High Court of Finance**

Representing the highest court in the Consortium, all nine justices live and work aboard the *Oneagle*. When appropriate,

the ship travels to suit the court's judiciary needs.

### **Foreign Diplomats**

When foreign dignitaries visit the Rignunmor Star Consortium, they almost always find their way to the *Oneagle*, where guest quarters are prepared. Almost all nations have permanently assigned ambassadors staying aboard to constantly maintain communication with the Rignunmor bureaucrats and their movements.

### **Ambassador Ca'lassh**

As the official emissary of the Galactic Concord, Ambassador Ca'lassh (Tm/Concord/DTO-7) tries his best to keep tabs on high-level Rignunmor business. He takes care to maintain a positive relationship with the Rignunmor government and ensures that Concord policy is observed. He regularly transmits status reports back to Concord space.

### **VoidCorp**

VoidCorp is the only stellar nation without a permanent ambassador onboard. The reason for this is that Atha Oneagle won't allow it. In fact, VoidCorp is forced to rotate their diplomats every three months; a horrid inconvenience that Concord Ambassador Ca'lassh has unsuccessfully lobbied Atha Oneagle to change.

The current VoidCorp representative is Craig Goerinni (ME957 31EKP). Although newly arrived, he has received a full briefing by the company, and intends to carry out their orders for the duration of his stay.

### **Crew**

As the largest ship ever constructed, the *Oneagle* necessitates an enormous crew of just over 12,000 hands to keep it running at peak performance levels. If not for the artificial intelligence also serving the shipborne-Grid, the *Oneagle* would need an even larger crew. Approximately 10,800 of these individuals are enlisted naval officers, and 1200 are commissioned

officers. A regiment of 1060 troops from the Rigunmor Army also garrisons the ship providing security detail, escort duties, and the occasional military operation, as needed.

The *Oneagle* contains over 60 different sectors, and requires exceptionally trained (or wealthy) men and women to run them. Some of these individuals are examined in more detail, below.

### **Admiral Harmon Blake**

At 125 years of age, Harmon Blake (Hm/Rigunmor/DCS-15) still has several decades of service ahead of him. The catch is, he's perfectly happy with where his current position: the commanding officer of the Rigunmor flagship. Originally, he served as a rear-admiral and 1<sup>st</sup> officer under Executive Guilder Breel's command. When the flagship's full admiral passed away, Breel promoted Harmon to fill the post. In 2494, when Atha took the reigns of power, she decided to keep Blake around for his experience and dedication to the job.

Recently, curious individuals have investigated the death of Blake's predecessor, Admiral Timothy Orrs. Conspiracy theories exist that perhaps some foul play occurred during GW2 that wartime activities did not allow the proper time to thoroughly examine. Blake is currently unaware of the investigation, but will he remain so, and does he have something to hide?

### **Commodore Tilane Miller**

Tilane Miller (Hm/Rigunmor/DFA-12) is a decorated veteran of GW2, having served with distinction on the VoidCorp front. He was first brought aboard the *Oneagle* as executive officer when Atha took the reins of leadership. In his position, Miller acts as the link between the other officers and Admiral Blake, carrying enormous power over day-to-day operations. In fact, few cases exist in which the first officer must clear his decisions with the Admiral.

### **Commander Karess N'thenne**

Commander N'thenne (Mf/Rigunmor/TO-17) is the head of Ship Engineering. Among her most challenging duties are the upkeep

of the *Oneagle's* PL8 computer core (provided from the Aleerin home world) and the operation of the ship's unique stardrive. Both systems are operated by lieutenant commanders that answer directly to Karess. Nathan Pariah (Hm/Rigunmor/TO-15) controls maintenance of the stardrive, and Aantwarr Zzaks (Mm/Rigunmor/TO-14) oversees computer operations.

Commander N'thenne is a close friend of Jegaris Zakum (Mm/Rigunmor/DFA-16), the chairman of the Aleerin Affairs Committee, and many believe his influence led to her current assignment. Karess, for her part, denies it.

### **Commander Jasqual Nihajja**

Jasqual Nihajja (Hm/Rigunmor/FA-14) is the security chief of the *Oneagle*. One hundred security suites throughout the ship monitor the safety of over 1000 bureaucrats and civilians, including the Executive Guild and the rest of the Rigunmor government. Nihajja also maintains tight security over the most integral ship systems. He developed a cold hatred for VoidCorp during the final years of the Second Galactic War, and constantly seeks to root out the corporate nation's various spies as they come aboard.

Commander Nihajja's trusted second in command is lieutenant commander Daash Mereel (Fm/Rigunmor/MW-13), a talented fraal mindwalker. Daash's talents make him indispensable in his job.

One of Jasqual's other men, lieutenant Luiss Solomon (Hm/Rigunmor/DTO-9), has a project kept secret from Commander Nihajja. Solomon leads the investigation of the death of Admiral Orrs, the previous commanding officer of the *Oneagle*. Solomon doesn't know yet whether Admiral Blake had anything to do with his predecessor's death. Even if he didn't, something could perhaps be arranged to indicate his involvement. Lieutenant Solomon isn't carrying on this private research out of a personal hatred of Admiral Blake, but he *is* being paid a great deal by his employer.

### **Warrant Officer Vincent Santoro**

Warrant Officer Vincent Santoro (Hm/Rigunmor/CS-21) is one of two such

enlisted men in the Rigunmor Navy. At the age of 176 years old, he came to the *Oneagle* in 2494, when it was renamed upon Atha's ascension, to act as a special advisor to the Military Assets Committee, currently headed by his old friend Guilder Russel Xar.

His second reason for serving on the *Oneagle* is Atha Oneagle's personal invitation. The Executive Guilder requested that he take an office on the flagship so he could keep close watch on the activities of Guilder Joseph Varcan, the head of the Finance Committee. Vincent, in return, receives special tax benefits befitting his rank of Warrant Officer.

### **F.I.S.H.**

Despite the jokes otherwise, F.I.S.H. stands for *Fully Integrated Ship Hand*. F.I.S.H., the *Oneagle's* artificial intelligence has existed in the ship's local Grid system since the original commissioning of the vessel. The sentient program even devised its own very accurate designation.

Officially, F.I.S.H. (AI-29) carries the rank of Captain, but it rarely gives official orders or pulls rank, although it has exercised that ability from time to time. As the *Oneagle's* AI, it is present in all ship systems, regulates important ship functions, helps monitor security, and handles requests and problems from hundreds of passengers and crewmen every minute of the day.

While part of a military vessel, F.I.S.H. also contains programming for casual interface with non-military personnel, and has developed its own unique personality over the past hundred-plus years of service. F.I.S.H. most closely associates with Executive Guilder Oneagle, lieutenant commander Aantwarr Zzaks, and Guilder Riggis Olantron, the chairman of Internal Evaluation.

### **Commander Elaine Hutchinson**

With well over 1000 non-military personnel constantly aboard the *Oneagle*, the ship must accommodate an endless stream of civilian and bureaucratic needs. To fill these demands, Commander Elaine Hutchinson (Hf/Rigunmor/DFA-12) heads

the Passenger Relations department of the ship. With a team of several hundred assistants, she ensures the comfort of all the *Oneagle's* government, civilian, and foreign guests. Often, she personally welcomes important dignitaries to the ship, and maintains a friendly relationship with Atha Oneagle herself.

Hutchinson's department also oversees the Business Mall sector of the ship, where shops and restaurants cater to the passengers. Other commanders joke that Elaine could keep her post with only auditing the tips she receives.

## **Passengers**

### **The Comet's Path**

Located in *Oneagle's* Business Mall sector, *The Comet's Path* is an upscale restaurant frequented by numerous guilders and dignitaries. A careful listener may overhear deals in development throughout the Consortium.

The Comet holds a more sinister importance than just a place to hear news from bureaucrats, however. In the form of the restaurant's maitre'dee, Eli Witiker (Hm/VoidCorp/DFA-9) is an Inseer immigrant by government record, but in reality, a VoidCorp spy. Eli (HN348 17KEO) keeps an ear out for important news brewing on board, and has made more than a few friends among the guilders, particularly the Communications Media Committee. He takes leave from *The Comet's Path* four to five times a year to send reports back to VoidCorp, and has thus far avoided discovery.

### **David Coreeno**

Only 34 years old, David (Hm/Borealin/-DMW-7) is the onboard representative for Celestial Entertainment Limited and all its subsidiary companies. Though everyone in the Stellar Ring is aware of his family's criminal reputation, David maintains the front of a serious businessman. He often associates with Guilder Marcus Tambrin of the Foreign Relations Committee.

## Adventure Hooks aboard *Oneagle*

More than just a big ship with big guns, the *Oneagle* could easily become the setting of an entire Star\*Drive campaign; a Stellar Ring equivalent to the Concord's *Lighthouse* in the Verge.

However, getting on board the *Oneagle* on a regular basis would be much harder than the *Lighthouse*, since the ship doesn't serve as a space station. The *Oneagle* represents the political capitol and flagship of an entire nation. Heroes in such a campaign would likely consist of

crewmembers, diplomats, business owners, or family members of one of the above.

Adventures would also necessitate a lesser amount of combat, as the *Oneagle* security forces would put down most serious internal engagements, while the ship and its escorts would make short work of pirates and the like. Therefore, adventures based upon the *Oneagle* should reflect the nature of the ship's purpose: politics and business.

### Adventure Hook: Sales Pitch

With over 75% of the Guilders on board at all times, *Oneagle* carries a constant flurry of business negotiations and political lobbying. Sometimes people find it nearly impossible to reach everyone. This adventure is just such a case.

#### Background

The Communications Media Committee is currently looking to renovate several drivesat relays in the Consortium, most notably the relay in the Antares system. The upgrades will take months of work to complete and cost the Committee the equivalent of billions in Concord dollars. They are still taking bids from corporations for the work.

Rayne Technologies, Inc. is a relatively new player to the interstellar communications market, but ambitious enough to handle the job. The UCG initially passed them up in their bid for the renovations, however. Regardless of their seeming inexperience, Enna Nicol, a Guilder of the CM Committee has agreed to speak with the company again. Unfortunately, the CEO and senior executives are still overseeing the completion of a previous project or absent while vacationing. This necessitates sending an envoy to the *Oneagle* to personally deliver their bid to Guilder Enna Nicol and negotiate for them.

It's not just a simple matter of placing a phone call. Other companies already have employees aboard, and they'll want to keep RayneTech out of the deal. The two leading companies already in the bid are General Industries and Alerin CompTech, two giants in the business. Both of them will want Rayne Technologies Inc. out of the picture until the bidding ends in a day or so.

General Industries has assigned William Yates (Hm/Rigunmor/DMW-7) to keep the Guilder preoccupied, while Qualt Ressni (Mm/Rigun-mor/DFA-9) gets the job of making sure the heroes don't get to Nicol in time to place the RayneTech bid. He may even set them up for a minor assault charge that would get them expelled from the ship. Perhaps they could be revealed as VoidCorp agents if he makes the right preparations.

#### Supporting Cast

For this adventure, you may want to fill out both Yates and Ressni more fully, as well as Guilder Nicol if you feel it necessary. The GM should also come up with several more ways to put off the party from easily reaching Nicol. Alerin CompTech is likely to interfere as well. Someone could always pay off security for a favor or two.



## Adventure Hook: Guilder Espionage

In the cutthroat world of Rigunmor politics, the most useful tool available to a Guilder, after money, is information. If he knows what deals are being made in the Consortium, it'll make his own decisions more knowledgeable, and thus more profitable, allowing him to advance his career. To this end, Guilders often enjoy vast information networks run by careful listeners, accountants, and double agents.

### Background

Guilder Akram Zaebris (Mm/Rigunmor-FA-5) is a relatively new Guilder. He attained his current position following the audit of 2500, and joined the common Transportation Committee. In the last year or so, he has experienced financial trouble, suffering setbacks that may cost him his rank as soon as 2503.

In recent weeks, he has heard rumors that members of the Public Health Committee are preparing for an important release by purchasing large amounts of stock. Akram hopes to discover their inside-tip and cash in on it. To this end he has already performed some minor investigation on his own, and discovered two things. First, the Public Health Committee is very set on keeping other Guilders in the dark until the official press release. Secondly, Guilder Isla Shadi (Hf/Rigunmor/DFA-6) is currently refilling positions on her staff. It seems she fired several of them for snooping into her personal files, and currently intends to press charges against them.

Guilder Zaebris approaches the heroes with an offer: he wants them to get hired by Guilder Shadi, and find out what Public Health is up to, and he's more than willing to make it worth their while. The party should feel free to negotiate their payment with Akram.

The capacity for espionage and counter-espionage is extensive in this situation. Isla Shadi may not be an easy mark. She's had recent experience with spies, and may well keep a close eye on her new employees. She may even discover the heroes'

intentions to double-cross her if they're not careful, and feed them false information instead. Or, Shadi may just have them arrested as spies. By the same token, the heroes may wish to throw their lot in with Guilder Shadi rather than Zaebris, and purposely feed him false information to teach him a lesson about cautious spying.

The facts of the Public Health secret really revolve around the following: a little known company, Ohkama Biogenics, has developed a drug/gene treatment that counters *Elhara-Neural Decay Syndrome*. The condition has previously proven fatal to patients within a decade of the diagnosis. The new product is in the process of obtaining a patent, and CEO Setunae Ohkama expects to rake in trillions of Rigunmor guilders within the first five years alone.

Conniving GMs may throw in further twists as the players dig for information. The new Ohkama drug may be flawed, or the whole story could be a ploy by another Guilder or company to ruin Ohkama Biogenics, and possibly much of the Public Health Committee's reputation as well. Suffice it to say, *Investigate*, *Business*, and *Deception* skills will become invaluable to the heroes. Even *Security* and *Manipulation* skills could prove most useful.

### Supporting Cast

For this adventure, you should probably flesh out the main characters like Guilders Zaebris and Shadi, as well as some other guilders and personal aides integral to the plot. The party could even convince members of the ship's crew to help for a piece of the action.

*"Varcan? Let him plot. The old man'll still be hatching schemes on his deathbed."*

- Executive Guilder Atha Oneagle, 2501

*"Atha can't stay ahead of my portfolio forever. After all, age brings experience, along with lots of compound interest."*

- Finance Committee Chairman, Guilder Joseph Varcan, 2501

## Adventure Hook: Hacks, Lies, and Admiral Blake

Admiral Harmon Blake commands the largest vessel ever constructed by man. He is responsible for the flagship of the Rigunmor Star Consortium, and with it the well being of the Executive Guild and the rest of the Rigunmor government. But did he achieve it by having his predecessor murdered?

### Background

Under Executive Guild Allison Breel, Blake once served as the ship's first officer, and held the rank of rear admiral. His superior at that time was Admiral Timothy Orrs, a longtime officer who proved his command during GW2. In 2466, Admiral Orrs suffered a fatal heart attack during the night, and was pronounced dead at 04:09 hours, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Orrs was 180 years old when he died. Blake was promoted to full admiral and commander of the flagship.

In the last few months, Lieutenant Luiss Solomon of *Oneagle's* security crew has investigated the death of Admiral Orrs. His immediate superiors, Lieutenant Commander Mereel and Commander Jasqual Nihajja have no knowledge of his activities. His employer provided him with programs to hide his activities from being detected by the ship's AI, F.I.S.H.. Thus far he has decided some unusual facts do appear to surround the original inquiry into Orrs' death, and something may be amiss with the death itself. Little does Solomon realize, the files concerning Orrs' death were flagged, and when he read part of them, alarms shot up in certain offices, namely the Internal Evaluation Committee.

Internal Evaluation then ordered Commander Nihajja to discover who hacked *Oneagle's* computers, citing the occurrence as a high-level security risk. Commander N'thenne and Lieutenant Commander Zzaks may even have been notified as well, at the GM's discretion.

Now the heroes are ready to enter the situation. Either they become assigned to the investigation from among the active crew (likely security or computer-engineering), or they are brought into the

loop through another character that received the assignment. The investigation remains very important to the Internal-Evaluation Committee, so the heroes should receive good code clearance. But I-E also wants them to keep quiet about the inquiry, so they'll do well not to wave it around or Solomon may catch word of what's going on. Indeed, with his security clearance, he may already know.

### Secret #1

Admiral Orrs did indeed die of a simple heart attack, devoid of any foul play. However, his vast bank accounts were not so lucky. Following his death, someone on board got hold of his authorization codes and transferred tens of trillions of guilders to various accounts all throughout the Star Consortium. I-E failed to discover the culprit. Blake, on the other hand, did.

It turned out to be one of Orrs' advisors. Blake had him executed, and spread the stolen money accounts among several individuals, including: himself, Allison Breel, the now former head of I-E, and various officials on the Audit Subcommittee. For his involvement, Blake received a promotion to full Admiral and the command of the flagship. The current Executive Guild has no knowledge of the event.

Lieutenant Solomon has thus far determined only that some kind of cover-up occurred, and will next try to find or create proof of Blake's guilt.

### Secret #2

As for the other big secret: Who's behind Lieutenant Solomon's activities? That matter is left for the GM to decide. Although, here's a number of potential suggestions:

It's Commodore Miller. The first officer wants to fill the admiral's shoes, and he's ambitious enough to destroy him to get there. Miller could easily have given Solomon the information he needed to evade F.I.S.H.

It's Finance Chairman Joseph Varcan. The wily old guildier has discovered hints to what transpired in the Audit Subcommittee files, and is furious for having been left out of the deal all those years ago. Now he's trying to kill two birds with one stone by attacking Oneagle's favorite admiral and acquiring a large sum of money at the same time. Varcan has enough contacts to have set Solomon up with the tools he needed.

It's VoidCorp. The corporate nation has a long reach, long enough to hide a spy or two onboard. Maybe they want to spread unrest in the upper levels of Consortium politics by bringing the secret out. Having Rigunmor officials of such rank convicted of financial crimes is worth risking an agent or two. VoidCorp Ambassador Goerinni may even be directly involved in the matter.

It could even be one of the other Guilders, or another admiral looking to

captain the flagship. GM's should feel encouraged to create their own mastermind if they prefer.

Whatever you decide, the players should definitely get the feeling that the investigation has the potential for massive disruptions in the Rigunmor government, and they should fear what people might do to stop, or promote, that damage.

### **Supporting Cast**

Many of the supporting-cast discussed above many need further definition if they're expected to interact with the heroes on a regular basis. The GM may even want to create an Internal Evaluation agent overseeing the investigation with Nihajja. At the very least, Lieutenant Solomon should play an important role.



## Major Systems of the Consortium

As one of the largest stellar nations, the Rigunmor Star Consortium has many well-established and powerful systems, full of economic concerns and intrigue. Many of them offer excellent settings for adventure in Rigunmor space. The following represent some of the most important or interesting areas of the Consortium.

These systems are discussed in general terms, and GMs may flesh them out at their own discretion for more intimate campaign use, population breakdowns, topography and other details.

### **Bazaar**

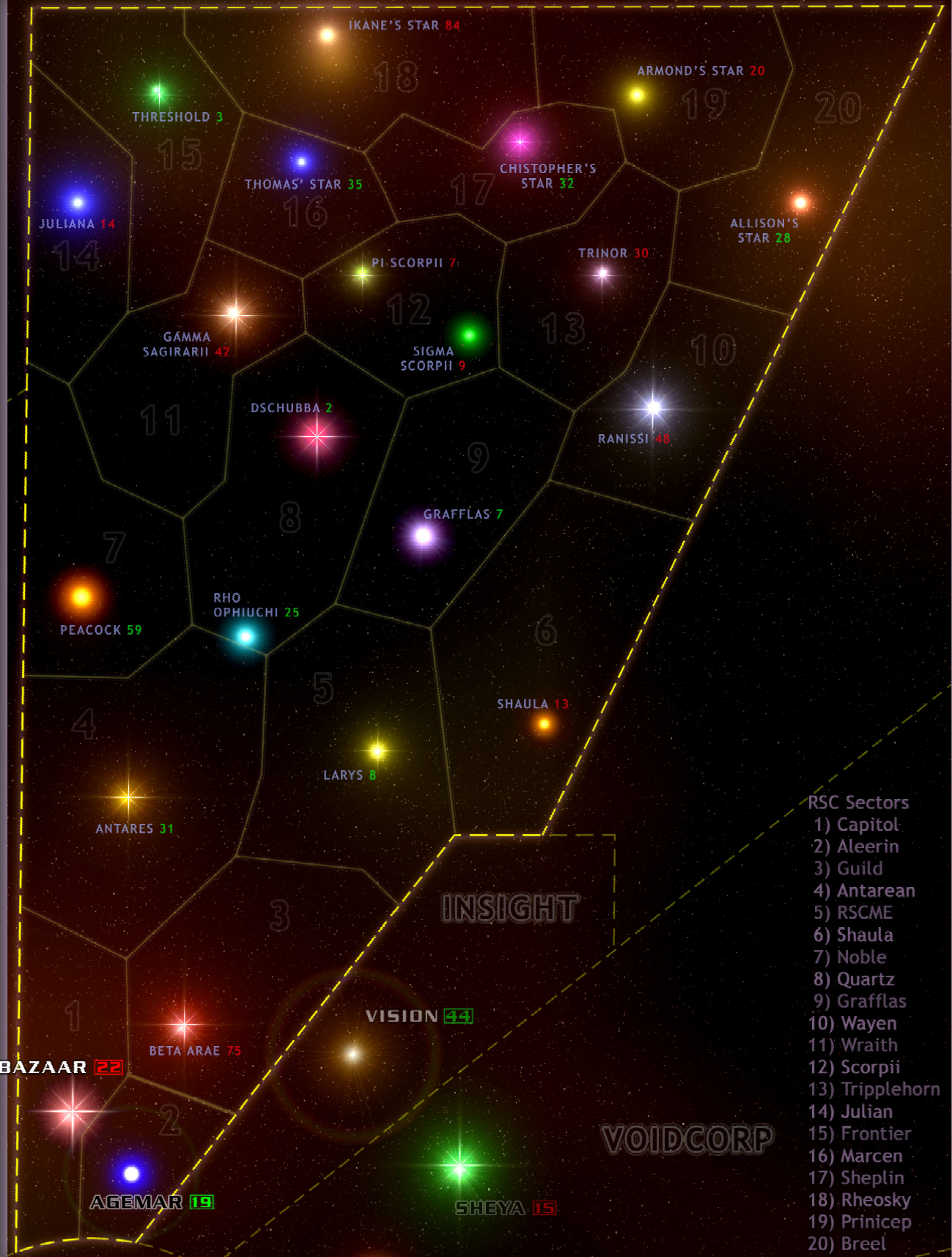
Early Rigunmor colonists chose Bazaar as their capital system for its proliferation of Class 1 and 2 worlds. Among the first systems ever settled by the Consortium, Bazaar is a binary system, centered around the two stars Net & Gross, with Gross measuring 40% larger than Net. Despite common practice, the settlers chose to name the system by its most prominent planet, Bazaar, as opposed to one of the stars.

|                  |                                       |                                       |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|                  | <b>Bazaar</b>                         | <b>Auth</b>                           | <b>Auhk</b>                           |
| Primary          | Net & Gross                           | (Bazaar)                              | (Bazaar)                              |
| Planetary Class  | Class 1                               | Class 1                               | Class 1                               |
| Gravity          | G2 (1.17 g)                           | G2 (0.9 g)                            | G2 (1.2 g)                            |
| Radiation        | R1 (3 rem/yr)                         | R1 (2.4 rem/yr)                       | R1 (3.4rem/yr)                        |
| Atmosphere       | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) |
| Pressure         | P3 (0.97)                             | P3 (1.1)                              | P2 (0.76)                             |
| Heat             | H2 (15 C)                             | H2 ( 17 C)                            | H2 (8 C)                              |
| Orbital Distance | 1.3 AU                                | 107,614 km                            | 95,376 km                             |
| Diameter         | 10,684 km                             | 3,195 km                              | 2,743 km                              |
| Year             | 327 days                              | (41.7 days)                           | (29 days)                             |
| Day              | 26 hours                              | 25 hours                              | 17 hours                              |
| Axial Tilt       | 21.7 degrees                          | 19.3 degrees                          | 12.4 degrees                          |
| Density          | 1.4                                   | 0.89                                  | 1.6                                   |
| # Satellites     | 2                                     | 0                                     | 0                                     |
|                  | <b>Ehril</b>                          | <b>Detris</b>                         | <b>Iath</b>                           |
| Primary          | Net & Gross                           | Net & Gross                           | Net & Gross                           |
| Planetary Class  | Class 2                               | Class 5                               | Class 5                               |
| Gravity          | G1 (.51 g)                            | G4 (3.8 g)                            | G4 (3.47 g)                           |
| Radiation        | R2 (18 rem/wk)                        | R2 (16 rem/wk)                        | R2 (11 rem/w)                         |
| Atmosphere       | A1 (NO)                               | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He)              | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He)              |
| Pressure         | P1 (0.45)                             | P5 (gas giant)                        | P5(gas giant)                         |
| Heat             | H1 (-52 C)                            | H0 (-235 C)                           | H0 (-205 C)                           |
| Orbital Distance | 3.7 AU                                | 8.5 AU                                | 12.6 AU                               |
| Diameter         | 21,739 km                             | 87,203 km                             | 61,752 km                             |
| Year             | 5.7 years                             | 17.32 years                           | 21.6 years                            |
| Day              | 53.2 hours                            | 13.4 hours                            | 83 hours                              |
| Axial Tilt       | 7.1 degrees                           | 61 degrees                            | 14.7 degrees                          |
| Density          | 2.3                                   | 0.08                                  | 0.18                                  |
| # Satellites     | 0                                     | 17                                    | 15                                    |



50 Light Years

# RIGUNMOR STAR CONSORTIUM



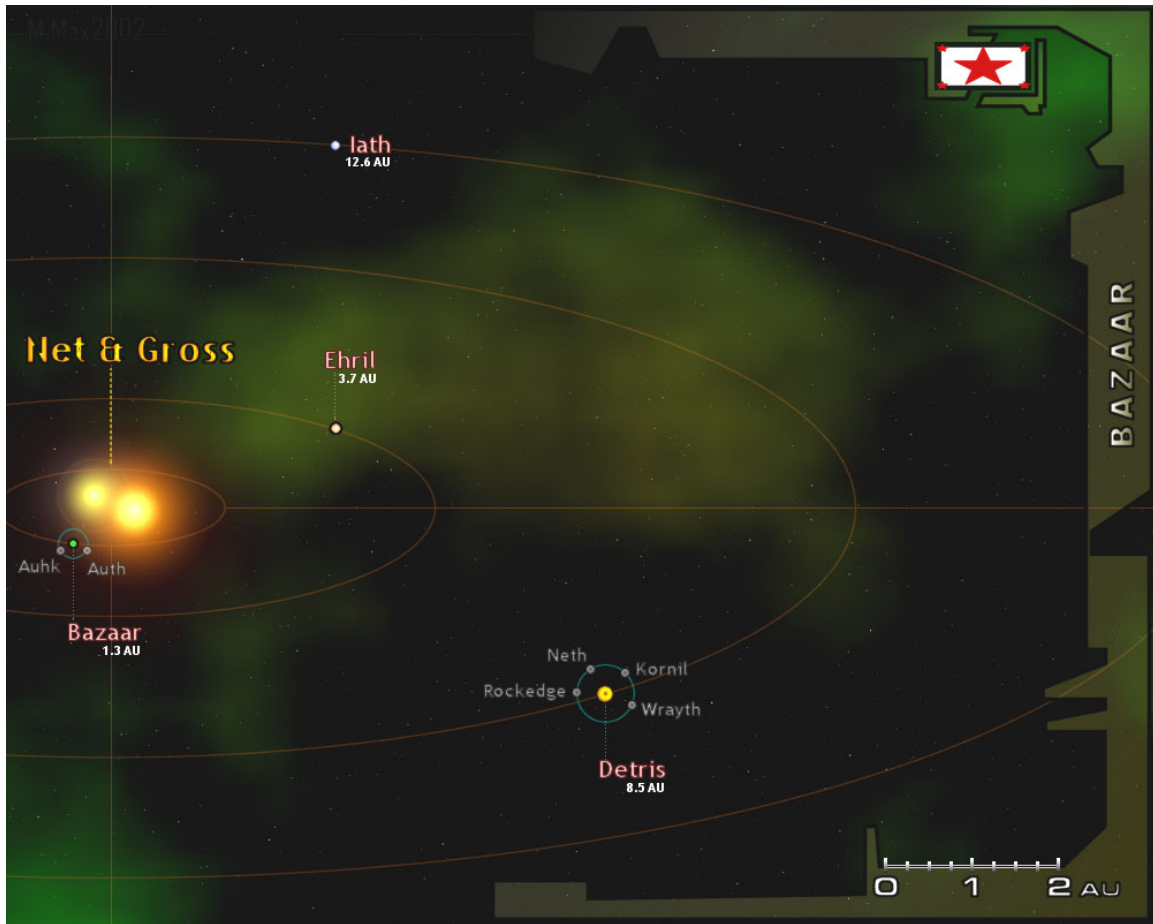
- RSC Sectors
- 1) Capitol
  - 2) Aleerin
  - 3) Guild
  - 4) Antarean
  - 5) RSCME
  - 6) Shaula
  - 7) Noble
  - 8) Quartz
  - 9) Grafflas
  - 10) Wayen
  - 11) Wraith
  - 12) Scorpii
  - 13) Tripplehorn
  - 14) Julian
  - 15) Frontier
  - 16) Marcen
  - 17) Sheplin
  - 18) Rheosky
  - 19) Prinicep
  - 20) Breel

BAZAAR 22

INSIGHT

VOIDCORP





## Bazaar

Bazaar is unique among capitol worlds of the Stellar Ring in that it holds no part of its nation's upper bureaucracy. With the majority of the Rigunmor government traveling aboard the *Oneagle*, Bazaar and its citizens stay free to concentrate on business rather than politics.

Classified as an Earth-like world, sprawling cities cover most of Bazaar's surface. Indeed, very little of the planet remains left over to wilderness – just enough to continue supporting a livable biosphere for its inhabitants. Numerous spaceports exist in the various metropolitan areas of the planet, constantly monitoring traffic to and from the outer system and moons of Auth and Auhk. The planetary capitol of Index, a city of approximately 1 billion people, is located along the coastline of the largest continent. Every major corporation in the Consortium has an

office there, as close to the pulse of Rigunmor markets as possible. The Rigunmor Stock Index and the central headquarters of the United Guilder Conclave also make its home in Index. The guildmasters meet in an enormous building that once housed the Conclave before a plutocratic government replaced their rule with the wealth-based system of today.

System Manager Jargon Scott (Hm/Rigunmor/DFA-7) lives in Index as well. Scott has one of the cushiest jobs in the Consortium. Profitable income in Bazaar takes care of itself with little to no help from him at all. And, his governor's tax will likely hold him his job until retirement.

## Auth & Auhk

The twin moons Auth and Auhk support heavy populations, with both totaling about two billion people apiece. They exist as auxiliary real estate for Bazaar, and many consider them an extension of its business

markets as well, since they are only a brief ride away.

Auth possessed a Class-1 biosphere when the Rignumors first came to the system, settling the moon around the same time as Bazaar. In present day, it functions as a welcome center for the Consortium's capitol. Hotels and resorts abound here, catering to the needs of every businessman. Three enormous spaceports ferry passengers to and from Bazaar and Auth's sister moon, Auhk. Many arriving ships simply dock at Auth's spaceports for cheaper docking rates, and purchase shuttle flights for in-system travel.

Just a short distance away, Auhk originally held a Class-2 environment when the Rignumors found the system, but was later terraformed to better suit human life. Most scientists could hardly tell the difference now. Where Auth acts as the welcome center for Bazaar, Auhk provides security for the system. All military and defense installations on Bazaar and Auth report back to central control on Auhk. Even the naval presence within the system makes port here under the command of Commodore Julian Caruthers (Hm/Rignumor/DCS-8). The RCN battleship *Financier* serves as the system's flagship.

## **Ehril**

Unable to terraform this planet, the Consortium constructed a vast network of domed habitats. Twice the size of Bazaar, Ehril contains upwards of eight billion inhabitants, almost one-third the population of the entire system.

The overpopulation of Bazaar and its moons served as the primary purpose for settling Ehril. The domed cities contain all manner of flora and fauna, bearing little resemblance to colony domes of most third-world systems. Rignumor citizens don't even think about the domes thanks to a diverse selection of holographic sky displays.

## **Detris & Iath**

These two gas giants are the outer planets of the Bazaar system. Atmospheric

mining and military outposts exist in both, as well as various ring structures orbiting at a safe distance. Detris' rings are considered very bland compared to the X-patterned double-rings of Iath, which draw a reasonable number of tourists each year.

## **Moons**

Both of the gas giants contain numerous moons. Some support military outposts, while others once served as mining operations that dried up long ago. The moons of Detris include several Class-2 biospheres, including: Kornil, Wrayth, Rockedge, and Neth.

## **Antares**

Settled in the second wave of Rignumor colonization, around 2250, the Antares system used its rich mineral resources to quickly become one of the most productive systems in Consortium space. Three planets and two asteroid belts orbit this G-class super giant. Only one world has earned a Class-1 designation, but rare gems like that are priceless in the Stellar Ring. More planets may have once existed in the system, but scientists surmise they disappeared millions of years ago when Antares first went nova.

## **Grain Belt**

Orbiting Antares at a distance of 5 AU is what many refer to as the "Grain" Asteroid Belt, thus named because the original surveyors thought the asteroids resembled grains of sand against the backdrop of the giant G-class star. The belt itself still contains large quantities of valuable ore after two and a half centuries of mining. Various corporations constantly work among the asteroids venturing forth from the hundreds of radiation-shielded installations scattered throughout the Grain Belt.

In a stroke of irony, DemeterFoods Inc. has recently set up eighteen solar-powered hydroponics installations scattered through the belt. These facilities are expected to produce sizable amounts of grain, easily

available to the systems' inhabitants. This development has sent many intersystem food-runners of Antares into a panic.

## Oasis

Amidst the roaring atomic heat of Antares, Oasis rests over five times the distance as the Earth does from Sol, and remains a comfortable Class-1 world despite, or perhaps due to, the powerful star. A little larger than Earth, Oasis also has a somewhat more oppressive gravity and atmosphere, but remains very tolerable to over ten billion citizens. Oasis is not an ocean planet, as its name might indicate, but it does have one very large ocean (Wihner) and two significant seas (Cylus and Ethian); all salt water.

Although businesses of all types make their home in Antares, the system is radically different from most of the Consortium in that its major economy centers upon starships. The leading engineering company in the Consortium is Steiner-Quasar Designs, which has its corporate headquarters on Oasis. While some companies keep head offices on Bazaar, Steiner-Quasar finds it more suitable to be in Antares, though they do retain a prominent branch office on the capitol world as well. By basing themselves in Antares, SQD feels closer to the action, where the shipyards around Mosque can quickly turn their designs into reality.

Another popular business sector noted by various tourism agencies is the pleasure cruise to nearby Rho Ophiuchi and its dark cloud nebula. From the other side of the nebula, Antares' light acts as a backdrop along with the nearby Rho Ophiuchi star to illuminate a breathtaking sight. Many side businesses catering to wealthy travelers have also formed around this basic industry.

System Manager Ezzri Miran (Hf/Rigunmor/FA-5) has only held her station since the audit of 2500. Her predecessor, Henry Rogers (Hm/Rigunmor/NP) is on the economic warpath to regain his former office. Word has it that he's looking to hire market squads to help find him an advantage over Miran.

## Market Squads

With the fast-paced world of the Rigunmor Stock Index, fortunes are made and lost everyday. It's even difficult for the savvy Rigunmors to stay ahead of the ever-changing market. To this end, corporations and wealthy individuals sometimes employ less than reputable means of gathering inside information. One of these options includes the hiring of *market squads*.

These financial teams are under-the-table industrial and corporate spies-for-hire. Their composition generally includes a mixed collection of information specialists such as: grid-pilots, corporate double agents, finance seers, and street-level comen. These agents almost always work in a single team due to the danger of their profession, but often maintain elaborate networks of contacts and informants.

When arrested, members of a market squad suffer the steep legal penalties for high-profile financial crime. They often face the option of heavy fines and/or imprisonment, or turning over their teammates and/or employer to the authorities. Cunning employers will either agree to pay the market squad's legal costs in the event of their capture, or merely arrange for their timely death before giving up any useful information.

## Marble

A world blanketed in clouds, the original surveyors named the planet for how it appeared from a distance. Perpetual gray clouds obscure all vision through the atmosphere of Marble as violent storms dominate the surface. If not for powerful sensors and beacon-laden satellites, ships passing through could easily become lost.

Over six billion people work and live within the domed cites of Marble. While the primary industries of the system are mining and starship construction, Marble exists as a center for the manufacture of equipment used in both enterprises; mainly computer systems.

Recent street talk says that the RCN has a military outpost suspended in Marble's atmosphere, virtually undetectable by

satellites without the proper authorization codes. The exact purpose of the installation is not widely known.

### Raith Belt

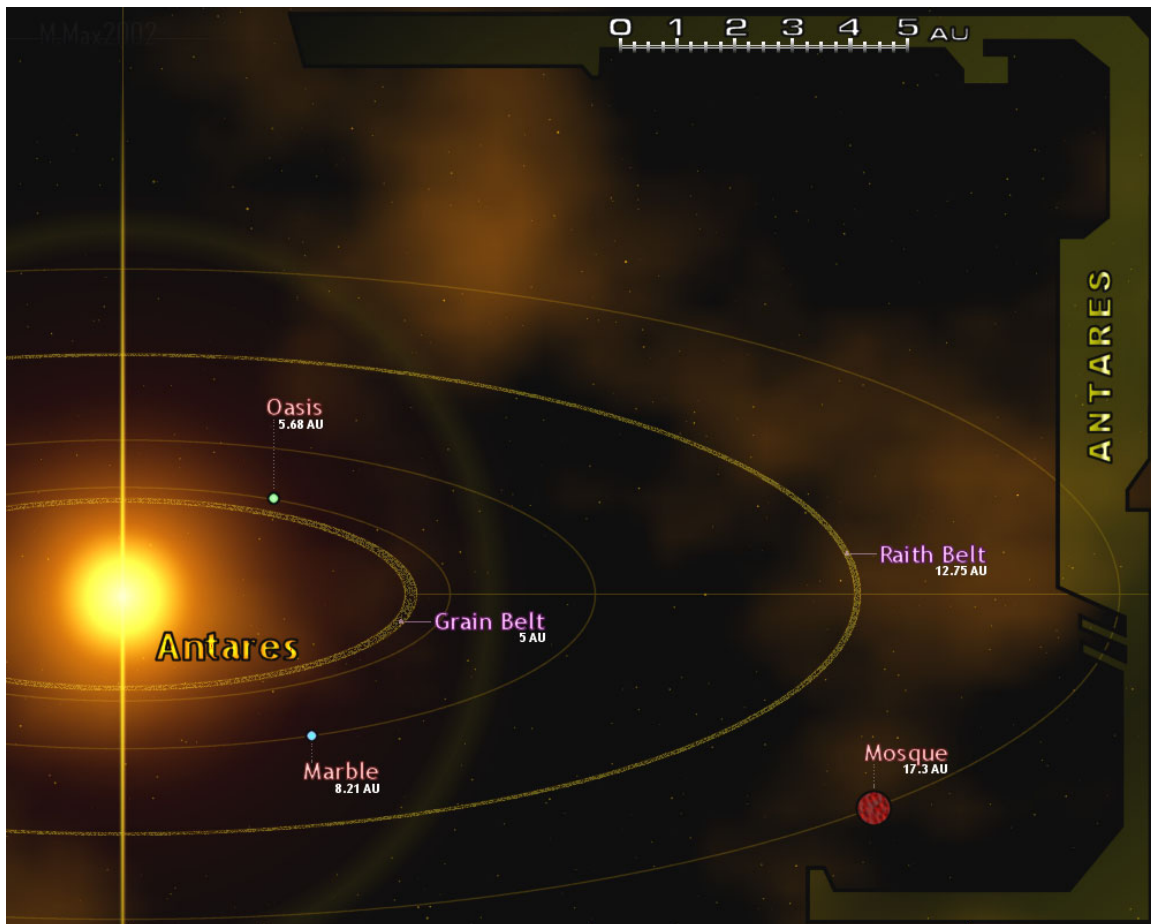
Larger and richer in minerals than its inner system counterpart, the Raith asteroid belt has provided the materials for Mosque's shipyards since Rigunmors first settled the system. Analysts predict it will remain a viable source for at least another hundred years at the current rate of production. Five major mining corporations and a dozen minor companies work the belt for its vast wealth.

### Mosque

A gas giant of immense size, Mosque and its moons mark the outer boundary of the system. Though some atmospheric mining is allowed, the shipyards of its many

satellites provide the principal industry surrounding the red-gray giant. Spread among a cluster of seven moons, the Antares Shipyards produce the newest and best ships of original Rigunmor design, and work hard to compete with the StarMech imports purchased by the Consortium. Indeed, Antares even gave birth to the famous *Oneagle*, flagship of the Rigunmor government and status symbol of the CEO position. These shipyards are the largest in the Consortium, and one of the only major focuses on heavy industry to be found in Rigunmor space.

Listening posts and private corporations occupy the other moons of Mosque. Steiner-Quasar Designs has a high-level corporate enclave and resort on Mecca, prompting other corporations to follow suit. Unfortunately, none of Mosque's moons rate a better environment than Class-3, and few even reach that designation.



|                  | Oasis                                 | Marble                    | Mosque                   |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Primary          | Antares                               | Antares                   | Antares                  |
| Planetary Class  | Class 1                               | Class 2                   | Class 5                  |
| Gravity          | G2 (1.09 g)                           | G3 (1.7 g)                | G5 (5.4 g)               |
| Radiation        | R3 (35 rem/wk)                        | R2 (2 rem/wk)             | R1 (5 rem/yr)            |
| Atmosphere       | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A3 (CO, CO <sub>2</sub> ) | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He) |
| Pressure         | P3 (1.4)                              | P4 (4.2)                  | P5(gas giant)            |
| Heat             | H2 (19.6 C)                           | H2 (9.4 C)                | H0 (-268 C)              |
| Orbital Distance | 5.68 AU                               | 8.21 AU                   | 17.3 AU                  |
| Diameter         | 12,548 km                             | 9,357 km                  | 121,685 km               |
| Year             | 597 days                              | 2.3 years                 | 8.2 years                |
| Day              | 21.4 hours                            | 43 hours                  | 29 days                  |
| Axial Tilt       | 20.5 degrees                          | 7.1 degrees               | 14.8 degrees             |
| Density          | 1.56                                  | 0.95                      | 0.06                     |
| #Satellites      | 3                                     | 0                         | 34                       |

## Other Major Systems of the Consortium

The Rigunmor Star Consortium contains twenty different sectors of space. Over 730 billion citizens inhabit more than 150 star systems. In addition, the Consortium actually controls more than ten times that many systems, though many remain unfit for settlement and only provide resources for the rest of the Rigunmor economy. The Consortium territory represents one of the largest national borders in the Stellar Ring, a vast network of civilized worlds, all working towards the almighty guild.

### Beta Arae

Once a heavy industrial system with billions of inhabitants, Beta Arae became one of the Consortium's greatest casualties of the Second Galactic War. In March of 2404, the Rigunmors sought to mount an offensive into VoidCorp territory formerly controlled by the Dreth Commonwealth. At the same time, VoidCorp launched its own offensive striking close to 50 light years from the Rigunmor/Solar border. A massive task force raided deep into the Guild Sector, finally stopping at Beta Arae.

By the time a Rigunmor fleet arrived, VoidCorp had already taken the system and begun preparations for a ground assault. A lengthy naval battle ensued, incurring high losses on both sides. The

Rigunmors emerged victorious, but had to cancel their own invasion plans. Instead, the armada of task groups went to temporarily reinforce Beta Arae and other Rigunmor homeworlds against further incursions. The VoidCorp fleet retreated from Rigunmor space, but took a profound toll upon Beta Arae as they departed.

The industrial planet of Griswork suffered heavy bombardment. VoidCorp destroyed virtually all ship repair facilities, and fired upon the system's drivesat relay as one of the first targets. Without the necessary infrastructure to properly defend their holdings, the Rigunmors eventually cut their losses in Beta Arae. The surviving population relocated to another system along with billions of guilders worth of salvageable equipment. The Consortium never repopulated Beta Arae and Griswork, as the planet's biosphere literally collapsed following the VoidCorp bombs. Investors saw the terraformation effort as too expensive for the current wartime economy, and once GW2 ended, their attention turned to easier projects instead.

Beta Arae now exists as a ghost system, and rumors continue to describe the buried treasures left behind on the world of Griswork, trapped under a chlorine-laden atmosphere. Many old spacer legends tell of fabulous wealth for anyone brave enough to claim it. Small bands of pirates are also said to hide in the system, although RCN patrol ships have never reported any organized activity.



## Peacock

The Peacock system is known throughout the Star Consortium and beyond as a lavish center of the entertainment industry. The Class-1 world of Amethyst originally belonged to the Borealis Republic, but the Rigunmors annexed it along with much of the Noble Sector during the First Galactic War. The Borealin aptitude for entertainment has stayed with system ever since, and several major players in the industry keep studio complexes and amusement parks on Amethyst.

Settlers chose Amethyst's name for the hue of its sunsets, and with 50% of the planets surface covered by water, an abundance of beaches exist from which to view the marvelous site. Many major companies make their home here, including: Avia Productions, Celestial Entertainment Limited, Consortium Stars, and Holo-World Inc. Between their studios, resorts, and the planet's beaches, the tourism industry flourishes on Amethyst.

## Rho Ophiuchi

Located 40 light years from Antares, the Rho Ophiuchi system is also very near a large dark cloud nebula; a common tourist site from Antares. While the former system is blessed with Class-1 and -2 worlds, Rho Ophiuchi is not. One molten sphere, three airless rocks, and four gas giants orbit the blue-white star; all of them lifeless. This is not to say that nothing interesting exists in the system, however. A small number of mining operations, both mineral and gas, operate here, as well as a rather eccentric multi-trillionaire.

Lari Donovan (Hm/Rigunmor/FA-4) was once a Guildler, and served as the head of the Territorial Assets Committee from 2415-2433. After the audit of 2434, he stepped down from politics, even though his wealth clearly placed him within the top eleven citizens that traditionally form the Rigunmor leadership. Much debate and rumor accompanied his retirement, but it slowly passed away to matters of the war, and he passed into relative obscurity.

## Rigunmor Stock Index (RSI)

In most nations, large stock exchanges are run by private organizations. In the Consortium, however, the Finance Committee controls the major national exchange, making it easier to properly maintain domestic and foreign activity within Rigunmor space. Orders for stocks, bonds, securities, and commodities of all sorts are placed at the local RSI exchange every day. Then, they are communicated across dozens of light years through secure drivesat relays to be registered with the main RSI exchange. Even foreign commissions can participate in the interstellar marketplace by transmitting similar transactions to the proper location several hundred light years away.

The Rigunmor Stock Index, the central stock exchange of the Consortium, is located on the capitol world of Bazaar, in the city of Index. Here, at the hub of Rigunmor economics, Guildler Luiss Vanderson (Hm/Rigunmor/DTO-15) controls the RSI Finance Subcommittee. He has kept his post as a senior member of the Finance Committee for twelve years. However, he recently lost contact with an informant inside the Solar New York Interstellar Stock Exchange, and now searches for an experienced market squad to investigate the matter.

Donovan retired to Rho Ophiuchi, purchasing the moon of Karoel, orbiting the gas giant Sobek. He also purchased several of the surrounding moons for a wider sense of privacy. He constructed an immense dome complex as his home, and has lived there for the last 66 years, an esoteric figure from the Consortium's past.

The secret to Donovan's life (all 166 years) is the Precursor ruins he discovered on the moon of Karoel under his administration. Donovan follows the Ancientist religion, and also embodies a bit of a greedy personality, though he has mellowed much in his old age. Because of this, he hid his findings on Karoel, removed the people who knew about the site, and settled the region himself so he could explore the mysteries of the Precursors at

his own pace and without the annoying intervention and interruption of outsiders. He is aided by only a small staff of nine personnel.

Donovan recently discovered another artifact for his collection; one he believes may extend his already considerable lifespan. Unfortunately, a former employee recently departed the moon to sell out his employer and the knowledge of the Precursor site to a major corporation. Donovan desperately wants to stop the man, but doesn't wish to use official channels because of the attention it would focus on him and his archaeological discovery.

## **Scorpii**

The Scorpii sector is named for the two first world systems near its center: Pi Scorpii and Sigma Scorpii. Both systems carry heavily populated Class-1 and -2 planets. They act as the center of business for the entire the sector,

### **Pi Scorpii**

The Class-1 world of Niris is the center of Pi Scorpii's economy. Transports, freighters, merchants, and all other marks of interstellar commerce illustrate the daily signs of the system's success. In the outer system, no fewer than 17 moons circle the gas giant Queith. The moon of Vos belongs to Ohkama Biogenics for use as a warehouse of surplus inventory and certain bulk chemicals not advisable to store in populated areas. What their lease does not reveal is the biological weapons research facility under the moon's crust. News of the facility has recently gained the attention of CEO Setsunae Ohkama (Hm/Rigunmor/FA-13). Deeply ashamed of the poor state of the facility, Setsunae now investigates a way to conceal it more carefully from corporate spies operating in the system. If only his subordinates had informed him of the project earlier ...

### **Sigma Scorpii**

While Sigma Scorpii is a first world system, populated by almost 20 billion citizens, it is known less for business than for religion; an oddity so far as Rigunmor

systems go. The main planet of Surplus contains the center of operations for The Church of Humanity Reformation in the Star Consortium. Cardinal Vilhelm Okari (Hm/StarMech/DFA-13) runs all Reformist efforts in the Consortium from his elaborate temple. Officious and dramatic in the extreme, his subordinates are much more responsible for large conversions than the Cardinal.

Recently, Okari has become troubled by the emergence of a highly public atheist sect on Surplus. The atheists seem to target the Church of Humanity Reformation for their protests and displays. Cardinal Okari fears they may soon turn violent to followers of his faith.

## **Shaula**

When the Rigunmor government became an official plutocracy in 2299, the guildmasters of the UGC found themselves replaced by those with more wealth. In 2303, the first Executive Guildmaster never served as an actual guildmaster became the prime manager of the Star Consortium: Ellis Shaula. Ellis remained in power for 16 years, and history largely gives him credit for Rigunmor success during the First Galactic War. After his death in 2356, the executors of his estate purchased the naming rights to the world, star, and system where he retired, renaming them in his honor.

Six planets, including two Class-2 worlds and three gas giants, orbit the G3 yellow star of Shaula. But the jewel of the system is the Class-1 world of Ellis. Over 15 billion people inhabit the metropolis of the surface, carrying on major business transactions. The RSCME keeps its sector offices on Ellis, as do many other corporations.

*"How much does it cost? Well ... how much did you say you had, again?"*

- Old Rigunmor saying

*"The Oberon system and the planet Lison once belonged to the Consortium. I have every confidence it will join us again."*

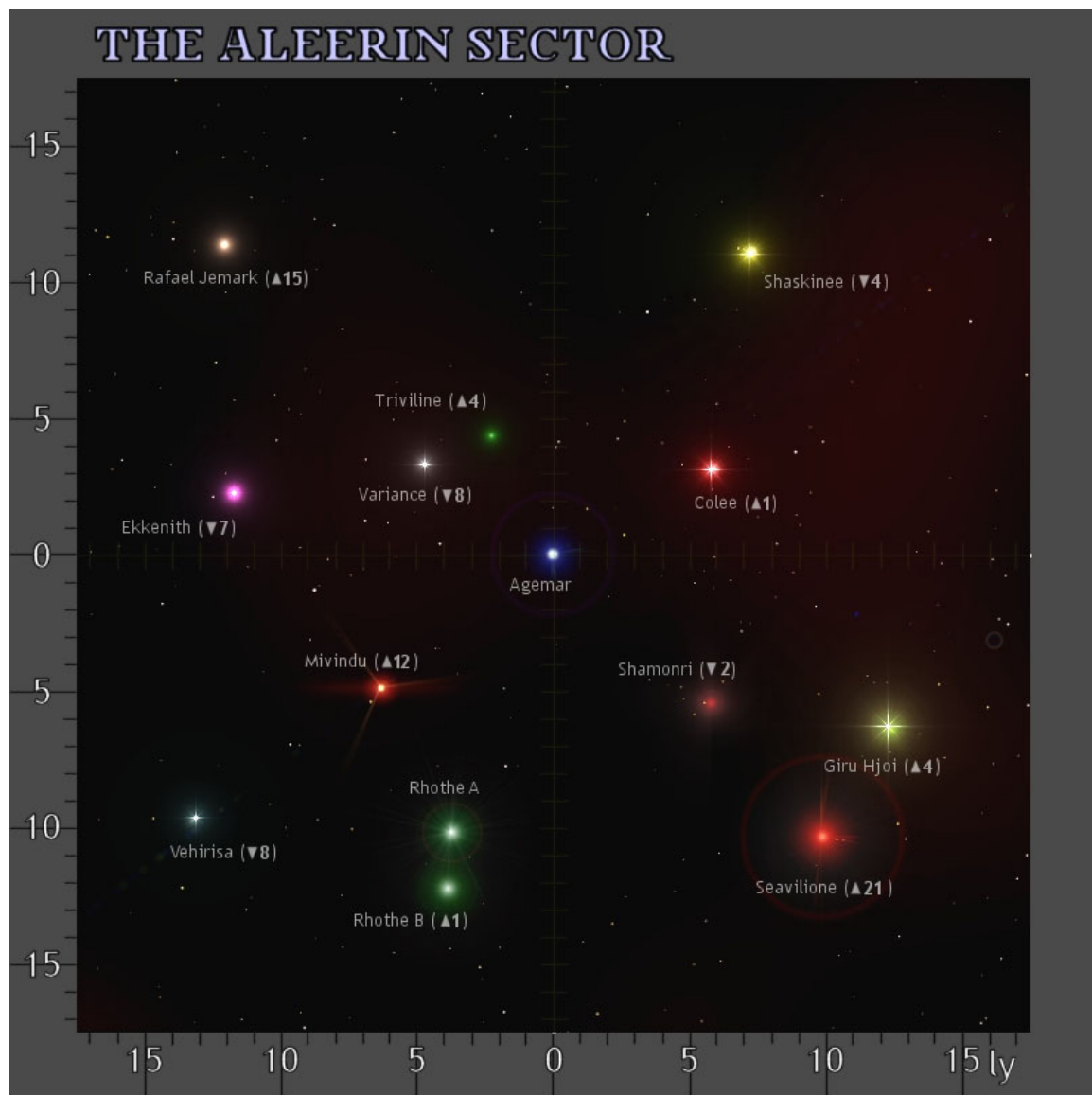
- Admiral Clarence Sarn of the RSN, 2500

## The Aleerin Sector

In 2281, when the Mechalus signed a treaty incorporating their species into the Rigunmor Star Consortium, they had already spread throughout their home system, and were well into the process of colonizing the Colee system. By joining the Consortium, they gained access to stardrive technology, allowing them to travel the stars at a rate previously thought impossible. The Consortium also granted exclusive colonization rights to the

Mechalus for several other systems within a 15 light-year radius of Agemar.

These systems now comprise an entire sector of Rigunmor space: The Aleerin Sector. This sector is one of the most valuable in the Consortium, as the Mechalus represent one of the stellar nation's most valuable resources. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet routinely patrols the sector, regulating problems and keeping business running as usual. Commodore Niresk Orlien (Mm/Rigun-mor/TO-13) commands the force from his dreadnought flagship, the RCV *Tiger's Eye*.



## Agemar

Often referred to as the Aleer system, the home system of the Mechalus is officially named for the star: Agemar. Considered a first world system, Agemar contains upwards of 13 billion people. It holds a position as one of the most important and influential systems in Consortium space, and the center of the entire Aleerin Sector.

## Fontis

At an orbital distance of only 0.35 AU, Fontis is a roaring hothouse planet. No colonists have established a permanent presence other than a research station and a few orbital satellites. The Mechalus have no plans to terraform the world. Their interest in Fontis is purely based upon the observational study of the Agemar star.

|                  | Fontis                          | Aleer                           | Nileer        |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Primary          | Agemar                          | Agemar                          | (Aleer)       |
| Planetary Class  | Class 3                         | Class 1                         | Class 4       |
| Gravity          | G1 (0.3 g)                      | G2 (0.98 g)                     | G2 (1.05 g)   |
| Radiation        | R3 (140 rads/day)               | R1 (8 rem/yr)                   | R2 (4 rem/m)  |
| Atmosphere       | A3 (CO, CO <sub>2</sub> )       | A2 (N, O, CO <sub>2</sub> , Cl) | A0 (trace)    |
| Pressure         | P1 (0.42)                       | P3 (0.91)                       | P0 (trace)    |
| Heat             | H5 (750 C)                      | H2 (19.1 C)                     | H2 (-27.9 C)  |
| Orbital Distance | 0.3 AU                          | 0.71 AU                         | 114,673 km    |
| Diameter         | 4,654 km                        | 5,910 km                        | 2,132 km      |
| Year             | 91.3 days                       | 218.5 days                      | 218.5 days    |
| Day              | 7.4 hours                       | 27.04 hours                     | 14.1 hours    |
| Axial Tilt       | 35.9 degrees                    | 19.4 degrees                    | 12.9 degrees  |
| Density          | 0.84                            | 1.05                            | 0.87          |
| # Satellites     | 0                               | 1 (Nileer)                      | 0             |
|                  | Orod                            | Geshlor                         | Blagieur      |
| Primary          | Agemar                          | Agemar                          | Agemar        |
| Planetary Class  | Class 1                         | Class 5                         | Class 4       |
| Gravity          | G2 (1.1 g)                      | G3 (1.7 g)                      | G1 (0.4 g)    |
| Radiation        | R1 (2 rem/yr)                   | R2 (14 rem/wk)                  | R1 (8 rem/yr) |
| Atmosphere       | A2 (N, O, CO <sub>2</sub> , Ne) | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He)        | A0 (trace)    |
| Pressure         | P3 (0.96)                       | P5 (gas giant)                  | P0 (trace)    |
| Heat             | H2 (8.4 C)                      | H4 (425 C)                      | H1 (-72 C)    |
| Orbital Distance | 0.86 AU                         | 5.7 AU                          | 12.6 AU       |
| Diameter         | 7,571 km                        | 108,354 km                      | 2,967 km      |
| Year             | 261 days                        | 5.1 years                       | 18.7 years    |
| Day              | 31.8 hours                      | 24 days                         | 87 hours      |
| Axial Tilt       | 7 degrees                       | 13.4 degrees                    | 56 degrees    |
| Density          | 1.04                            | 0.07                            | 1.4           |
| # Satellites     | 0                               | 11                              | 0             |

## Aleer

Aleer is the official homeland and birthplace of the entire Mechalus race. Smaller and warmer than Earth, Aleer has a thin atmosphere by human standards. Billions of Mechalus inhabit the world, which contains vast sprawling cities built upon Aleerin technology. In truth, very few

aliens outside of Consortium officials are ever allowed to come to Aleer.

As the center of Agemar and all Mechalus territory, many visitors expect to find government policies handed out to the entire Aleerin Sector from here. Instead, Aleer holds little more sway in Mechalus politics than any other system in the sector. Political debates occur via swift and concise Grid referenda passed on to all

interconnected Mechalus systems. The Aleerin Grid is maintained by several mechalus-owned corporations on a joint-contract, including: United Gridworks, Pesh-Connection, and Aleerin CommX.

Lharol V'goshk (Mf/Traditionalist/TO-10) currently represents the Agemar system to the Consortium. While she holds the

equivalent title of all standard Rigungmor System Managers, Lharol has only a fraction of the practical authority, much to her satisfaction. All of her official decisions to the Consortium receive full discussion across the Aleerin Grid by all of Agemar's politicians.



### Nileer

Aleer's only moon, Nileer is largely uninhabited due to the Mechalus disdain for environmental crutches. Small military and mostly unmanned communications outposts do exist on the moon however.

### Orod

Originally home to a second sentient species within the system, Orod's population died out more than 350 years

ago due to Aleerin bombardment of the planet by biological weapons. All surviving Oridins were hunted down and killed by the then-warlike Aleerins over the next few years.

Today, the Mechalus have populated Orod for the last three hundred years, becoming just as comfortable with the world as their home planet, Aleer. Though fully consolidated now as a Mechalus world, none of its six billion inhabitants can ever forget the race that once made Orod home.



## Geshlor

An anomaly in stellar terms because of its temperature, the gas giant of Geshlor is known mostly for the scientific survey stations in orbit and constructed upon its moons. The Mechalus also keep a military base on the moon of Teflok. This base acts as a communications point for all traffic entering the system. The Mechalus keep a respectable fleet at the Teflok base to maintain order in the system and to dissuade unruly visitors.

## Blagieur

Nothing more than a large frozen rock, Blagieur played host to a prolonged mining effort to its full extent long ago. Now it simply provides a home to a lonely stardrive-detection sensor array manned by half a dozen men rotated in and out on a monthly basis.

## Other Systems of the Aleerin Sector

While Agemar is the center of Aleerin society, between 18 and 19 billion other Mechalus live elsewhere in the sector, a fact that humans from other nations often forget. Five systems have grown to sufficient levels to be classified as second world, or "well developed" systems, while the other eight are considered colonies rated as third world systems.

Second world systems include: Colee, Mirindu, Rafael Jemark, Shamonri, and Variance. The third world systems are Ekkenith, Giru Hjoi, Rhothe A and B, Seavilione, Shaskinee, Triviline, and Vehirisa.

## Second World Systems

### Colee

The system where humanity first encountered the Mechalus, Colee is also the first system outside of Agemar to be

## Mechalus Allegiances

While more than 86% of mechalus enjoy citizenry with the Star Consortium, they also possess political and cultural distinctions as Aleerins. The following is a list of new allegiances for use in stardrive shorthand of mechalus characters. None provide benefits other than new role playing opportunities, as mechalus heroes already gain several advantages.

**Peshtar:** from or descended from the Pesh continent of Aleer.

**Megarin:** from or descended from the Megarin continent of Aleer.

**United:** a believer of the purpose of the War of Unity.

**Witness:** an Aleerin who lives on the planet Orod or devotes their life to making Amends for the Oridian genocide.

**Oldurreg:** from or descended from the continent Ota on Aleer.

**Creedan:** a advocate of the Warrior's Credo, either basic belief, and/or the software.

**Traditionalist:** holds the political position of minimizing contact with humanity.

**Biometrician:** holds the political position of embracing humanity to elevate the Aleerin people in the Stellar Ring.

**Negationist:** a believer in the necessity of shedding organic life to achieve peaceful existence.

colonized by Aleerins. The approximate five light-year trip took several decades for Aleerin lightships to make, and their crews maintained contact with Agemar via very primitive drivesat technology. Nevertheless, more than five million Mechalus had taken up residence in the Colee system when the Rigunmors arrived in 2281.

Regardless of initial difficulties, once the Mechalus obtained stardrive technology,

immigrants to Colee arrived at a much faster pace. In 2501, Colee represents the second largest system in the Aleerin Sector, and is home to several large corporations. Most notable among these corporate enclaves are: Aleerin Space Industries, Aleerin CompTech, and Xion Productions, all based on the Class-1 world of Agemar.

Five other planets orbit Colee: the Class-2 world of Kilee, along with two gas giants, the mining resource world of Draok, and two icy planetoids orbiting each other at the system's edge.

## **Mirindu**

This red dwarf star is slowly dwindling, but can still support life in the system for at least a thousand more years.

Matching the slow dimming of their star, the planets of Mirindu display no unusual characteristics. One inferno world, two hunks of rock, and four gas giants orbit the star. Paryth, the nearest gas giant to Mirindu at 12 AU, has 46 moons, an impressive number among stellar cartography. Three of the moons started their lives as large chunks of ice, slowly melting as the velocity of their orbits heats their cores. Thin atmospheres and small seas have formed as a result of the process, which is believed to have started several thousand years ago. No indigenous life beyond cellular organisms has been discovered.

Despite the cold weather, almost 2 billion Mechalus live among the moons of Galvy (Class-1), Maray (Class-1), and Niricine (Class-2).

## **Rafael Jemark**

Raphael Jemark is a Class A3 white star, circled by two habitable worlds and seven airless rocks and gas giants. It also marks one of the outermost boundaries of the Aleerin Sector.

Ninety-five percent of the Mechalus living in the system make their homes on the Class-1 worlds of Colet and Drochi. While Drochi had no truly sentient species when the Mechalus arrived, Colet was a different story. The Mm'velln, a burgeoning aquatic

race, inhabited the planet's only ocean. While the Consortium wished to take over first-contact matters, the Mechalus desired to make amends for their past genocide on Orod, and held the Rigunmors to the terms of their treaty, which explicitly gave them jurisdiction over the system on a planetary level.

Today the Mm'velln continue to live and progress their culture as naturally as possible under Mechalus care. The ocean is cleaned of as much pollution as possible to limit interference with their environment. Technology is very slowly introduced into the Mm'velln society, which has only recently entered its Renaissance period (PL3) due to a well-paced schedule set by the Mechalus. Only authorized personnel may interact with Mm'velln under Aleerin supervision.

So far the Committee of Xenological Management has stationed an outside observer with the Mechalus diplomats, adding his own report to those sent up the ladder by the Office of Mm'velln Affairs.

## **Shamonri**

While the Antares Shipyards represent the most famous and productive in the Consortium, the Shamonri system contains the only facility to challenge, and to some degree outdo, Antares. Of course, given the lack of numerous Rigunmor shipyards, some may not consider this claim very impressive.

The Class-1 world of Condree orbits Shamonri at .84 AU, preceded by the inferno planet of Thetori. Beyond Condree are Orthin, an airless rock utilized for mineral resources, a thin asteroid field all but depleted, and three gas giants. Two of the giants have immense ring structures, the mineral wealth of which have barely been tapped. Resting in orbit of Orthin's moon is the Shamonri Megaport, owned and operated exclusively by Aleerin Space Industries, the leading Biometrician organization in the sector.

While the Antares Shipyards perform construction duties for numerous corporations, the facility in Shamonri employs only Mechalus technicians and

professionals, with no exceptions. As such, they have the most cutting-edge models of Mechalus antimatter and computer technologies. To date, the Mechalus have never divulged the secrets to such devices, but the products certainly find their way onto Rigunmor markets and into the rest of the Stellar Ring. Dervis Raimos (Mm/Megarín/FA-12), the System Director of Security, currently suspects corporate espionage at the megaport facility and has an open investigation underway.

All five billion inhabitants of Condree, however, do not work for the megaport. A diverse number of businesses make Condree home just like other systems in the Consortium and industries of all types find good markets on Condree.

## Variance

On either side of Afsha, the fourth planet, three small furnace worlds and two gas giants closely orbit Variance. The Class-1 world of Afsha holds a population of nearly three billion Mechalus. It has established a healthy economy with an abundance of room for population growth among its largely Peshtar and Oldurreg inhabitants.

## Third World Systems

### Ekkenith

A bright M class star, Ekkenith holds few planets within its gravity. Only two terran planets and a single gas giant make up the system. The second planet, Wensica, is a Class-2 world, but contains low mountain valleys with air content breathable by Mechalus.

Seven million citizens live on Wensica, spread out among five cities. Five million of them live in the capitol of Dilroni, but the darkest secret of the Ekkenith system lies in the remote city of Aptitude.

With a population of 60,000, Aptitude consists almost entirely of Thetites, followers of the old Credo of War. Hunted and expelled from both Mechalus and Rigunmor society for their extremist beliefs, tens of thousands of Thetites have slowly

flocked to Ekkenith under the leadership of Kylanus D'gara (Mm/Creedan/DFA-17). D'gara is a fervent follower of the Warrior's Credo, and believes in the future of a sovereign Aleerin nation, devoid of all human interference. He claims frequent contact with the Grid shadow of Thetor, the infamous Mechalus conqueror that conducted the genocide operations on Orod. Rumors suggest that Thetor shed his body for a purely mechanical existence (called an iolite) centuries ago. Many still believe in his philosophy, increasing his influence tenfold.

The Thetites have slowly increased their numbers over the years, sharing the Credo implants with other colonists of Wensica, and working to impose an invasive download of Credo beliefs to more Mechalus via the Grid. Should they ever succeed, the Rigunmor Star Consortium would face a civil war from one of their most valued resources – the Aleerin people.

### The Mechalus Credo of War

During the Aleerin Wars of Unity, the Megarín BioMetric Republic created the first Credo of War, a philosophical combination of cybernetic hardware and software that prodded the already aggressive and warlike Megaríns to victory over their rivals. Their success caused the Credo to spread throughout Aleerin culture, culminating in the unification of the entire species. Eventually, the mechalus abandoned this philosophy and outlawed its practice in the emotionally-charged, pacifistic backlash resulting from their genocidal war against the Oridins. Occasionally, a mechalus will become seized by the Credo without prior contact to the program, a phenomenon that worries them to no end.

While only a very small percentage (<3%) of the mechalus population continues the Credo belief system, the public views them with suspicion and fear in much the same way as a religious zealot or patient suffering from a mental disorder. Hosting either the Credo-specific hardware or the personality software is highly illegal in Aleerin space and can result in exile

### Mechalus Credo of War (continued)

from the Rigunmor Star Consortium.

**Hardware:** While the Credo of War does not *require* specific cyberware to function, certain older Aleerin models are designed to help bring the Credo to full strength. These pieces of cyberware are always combative in nature, and require the hero to make Will checks per the rules for cykosis.

**Software:** The Credo software is a personality altering program that gives the mechalus (1) a naturally violent and aggressive outlook, (2) a hatred/mistrust of all non-Mechalus (including non-Creedans), and (3) a religious fervor for Aleerin independence and supremacy.

In game terms, while mechalus are immune to cykosis, any hero who would normally fall under that condition instead succumbs to the Credo of War. Like cykosis, the GM may determine the to hero become unplayable when this occurs. Unlike cykosis, expert mechalus physicians can eventually remove the Credo from active memory.

If the GM allows the Credo-ridden mechalus to remain playable, the hero gains the following affects: a +1 penalty to all INT and PER skill checks except for *Tactics-infantry* and *Interaction-intimidate*, both of which gain a -1 bonus; a +1 penalty to *Resolve-mental* checks and a -1 bonus to *Resolve-physical*; a 4 point Vigor perk; a -1 bonus to an attack broad skill and its specialties.





## Adventure Hook: Murder Cruise

Not far from the Antares system is the Rho Ophiuchi Dark Cloud Nebula, an expanse of super hot gases slowly drawing together to form stars. When seen from such a vantage as it is illuminated by the light of Antares, the nebula is a strikingly beautiful sight. Many cruise ships taken passengers from Antares on pleasure trips through the nebula. One such trip results in the deaths of several passengers, and draws the party into the middle of a murder investigation.

### Background

Sultanate Pleasure Inc. is one of several corporations that operate pleasure cruises in the Antares sector. One of their most lucrative cruises is the Rho Ophiuchi Package, which consists of a seven day cruise through the dark cloud nebula, along with the ten days of round trip drivespace travel from Antares. The cruise ships are incredibly luxurious, and overflowing with entertainment and recreation facilities.

For one reason or another, the characters are onboard one of the cruises. They could be passengers. Some of them may be crew, be it functional, entertainers, waiters, or even security. Whatever works best for the adventure and the individual characters.

The starfall and rise into the nebula passes without incident. The party and passengers enjoy all the ship has to offer. The *Seraglio* makes enters near the nebula, and begins its course through the more popular viewpoints. The observation decks are opened, and an array of holographic displays can be routed to each passenger's room for personal enjoyment.

After nineteen hours in normal space, three passengers are found dead in a recreation room. Two are human males, the other is a fraal woman. Security restricts all passengers to certain areas of the ship, and Captain Cadman announces the *Seraglio* will return to Antares as soon as the stardrive is recharged; about twenty-eight hours.



During the investigation, it becomes apparent that two or more of the players are suspects, for reasons the GM should determine to fit the characters and their actions. Evidence is circumstantial, but may be enough to have the players held by law enforcement once the liner returns to Oasis, while the real murderer gets away! Now the players have a real motivation to get to the bottom of things.

Security, while suspicious, does not want to arrest anyone without very good proof, and very much want to avoid further panicking the other passengers by doing so. This will allow the suspected players freedom of movement through the ship to vindicate themselves of guilt, although they may have to pull some tricks to escape the watchful eyes of security.

### Supporting Cast

Obviously, the players will require a large number of crew members, recreation coordinators, and fellow passengers to interact with. GMs are encouraged to create their own, as well as to flesh out any of the following characters as necessary for the plot.



### Operations Crew

Ship's Captain Raymond Cadman (Hm/Rigunmor/TO-6); First Officer Ianuichi (Hf/Rigunmor/DTO-5); Head Security Officer Eonic (Mm/Rig/TO-8); Ship's Engineer Nicholas Lagaerti (Hm/Rigunmor/TO-7);

### Passenger Crew

Recreation Coordinator Lisa Heart (Hf/Rigunmor/DFA-4); Official Tour Guide Sadria Lan (Hf/Rigunmor/NP); Master Chef Rolando (Hm/Rig/NP); Head Janitor "Marius" (Tm/Indep/FA-6);

### Notable Passengers

Stockbroker David Andros (Hm/Rigunmor/TO-5) and wife; Jennifer Dermot (Hf/Rigunmor/MW-4), finance seer; Lord Bartholomew Donalds (Hm/Borealin/DTO-6), history teacher; Elijah (Hm/Rigunmor/FA-2) small time financial criminal; Carmen Vinus; Gregory Card; Brian Card; Lianvar Dess;

### What Happened Anyway?

What *did* happen? Who killed those three people and why did they do it? Here it is.

Carmen Vinus (Hf/Rigunmor/FA-10) is a professional jewel fence. She purchases stolen gems from thieves, and sells them to buyers. Carmen came onboard the *Seraglio* to meet her latest customers. She had recently acquired a collection of emeralds from the Wayen Sector, and had finally found a buyer for them. The exchange of jewels and money was to occur at the end of cruise.

Gregory and Brian Card (Hm/Rigunmor/NP&FA-2) were the buyers. They were set to pay Carmen the amount of 25,000,000 guilders (250,000 concord dollars) at the end of the cruise in exchange for the emeralds, but they got greedy.

After making initial contact, Brian started to convince Gregory that they should steal the gems from her rather than pay. They searched Carmen's room while she was at a bar one night, but failed to find the jewels. They searched it a second time the next day, and again found nothing. This led them to the conclusion that she had them

safely stashed somewhere else, or more likely, she had them on her person.

Once the *Seraglio* was in the nebula, the two brothers confronted Carmen in the dining hall, and threatened to turn her over to the ship's security officers unless she gave them the emeralds. Carmen realized how unstable a ground the two of them were placing her on, agreed, and led them to an empty recreation room, claiming the jewels were hidden there. As soon as they were there, and Carmen was assured that there were no passengers in the area, she shot them.

Lianvar Dess (Ff/Rigunmor/NP) heard the death cries of the Card brothers telepathically from several rooms over, and rushed to investigate. She may have been seen running by some of the other passengers. When Lianvar arrived, Carmen shot her too, leaving the body with the Cards.

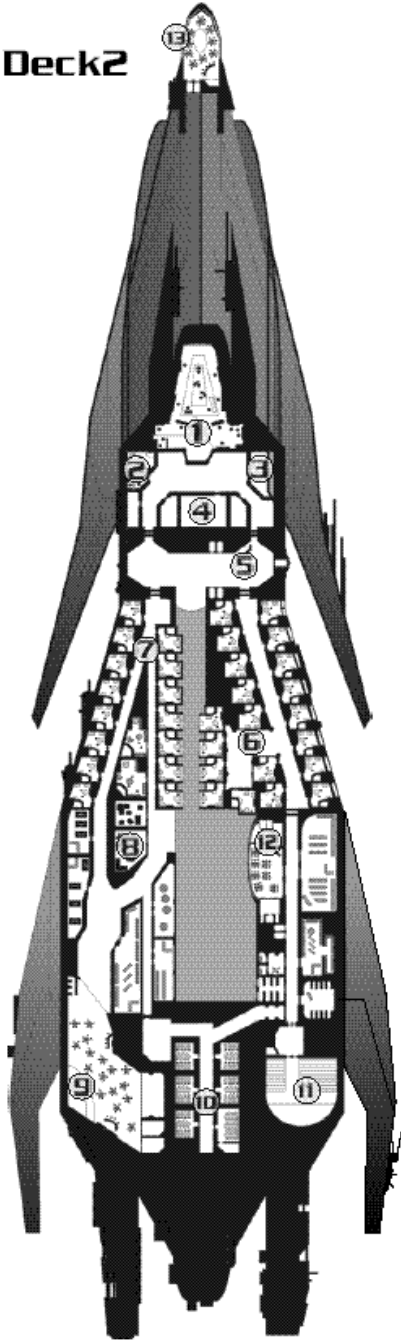
Carmen fled to a holo-viewing room, and sat in the back until the bodies were found. The 9mm charge pistol she used was disassembled. She later hid the pieces with her computer gauntlet, and dumped the bullets down a garbage shoot. She saved the pieces to plant in someone else's room; one of the players! The emeralds are hidden inside an empty compartment on her computer gauntlet.

She may even want to go further to keep investigation away from her. She may claim to have seen one of the players arguing with one of the Card brothers. Given their volatile natures, perhaps the brothers had an argument with the players earlier.

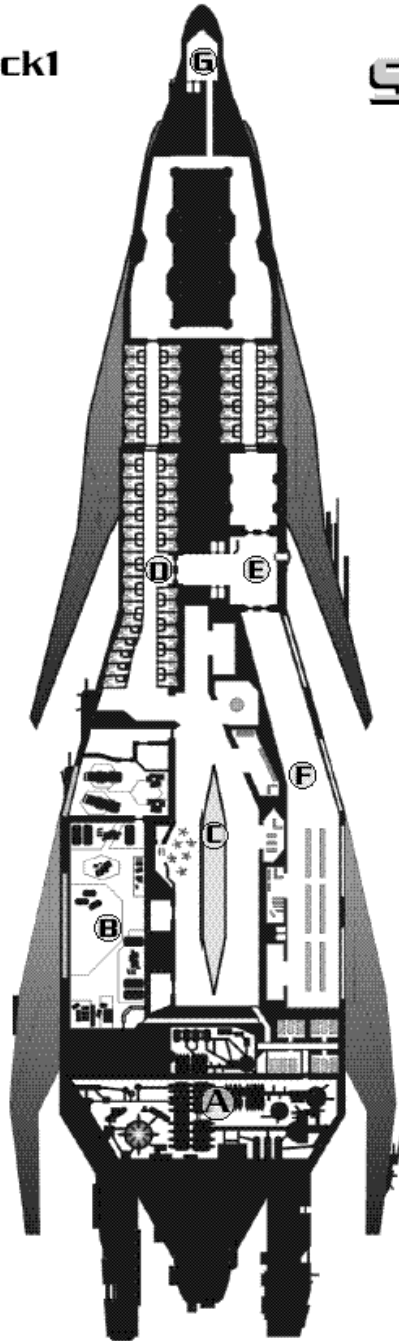


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**Deck2**



**Deck1**



**SERAGLIO**  
- Independent luxury liner

1. Bridge
2. Captain's residence & office
3. First officer's residence
4. AI-mainframe & secondary databanks
5. Welcome hall
6. 1st class cabins 210-230
7. 1st class cabins 231-245 & 2 suites
8. Secondary autosupport
9. "Sweet" - nightclub
10. Crew quarters
11. Holotheater & auditorium
12. The "Chuurkhna kitchen"
13. "Vantage point" - Bar

- A. Engineering & crew quarters
- B. Cargo area & small craft hangar
- C. Promenade, shops & entertainment
- D. Second class quarters 101-169
- E. Welcome hall & lower airlock
- F. Viewpoint & some shops
- G. Entrance to Vantage point

# **Chapter Three**



**The StarMech  
Collective**

## **A Brief History of the StarMech Collective**

2175: StarMech Incorporated opens for business on Earth as a manufacturer of advanced machinery, specifically robotics.

2233: StarMech takes to open space, beginning with colonization of the Delight system.

2235: StarMech charts and claims the Nimrod system.

2237: The Pendecker Corporation charts and claims the Songham system.

2250: StarMech charts and claims Tallis as their third star system.

2299: The 1<sup>st</sup> Galactic War begins.

2310: StarMech enters into a mutual defense compact with several smaller neighbors, including the Pendecker Corporation. StarMech exercises the narrow window of opportunity to declare itself an independent nation.

2312: The Treaty of Earth ends the 1<sup>st</sup> Galactic War. The StarMech Collective is officially recognized as a stellar nation, absorbing the surrounding territories of Pendecker and Nekeras Inc.

2315: StarMech charts and lays claim to the Tendril system in the Verge.

2322: The Navarette system is charted.

2331: The StarMech Collective has the full approval of its absorbed citizenry, gaining a true sense of nationalism.

2346: The Mutant Uprising of Tau Ceti ignites the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War.

2356: The collapse of Sothvec Industries brings the Thuldans Empire to the Collective's border. StarMech immediately begins to take losses as the Empire makes a long, steady push into their territory over the next several decades.

2357: The Gomorra pleasure planet opens for business in the Navarette system, achieving renown overnight.

2361: StarMech joins the Rigunmor Star Consortium, Austrin-Ontis Unlimited, and the Union of Sol in forming the Profit Confederation.

2375: The Battle of Kendai destroys the system's drivesat relay, cutting off all communication with the Verge.

2395: The Liber system is lost to Thuldans forces, staggering the StarMech economy.

2398: A Thuldans fleet, led by the *ITV Centurion*, enters Tallis, routing the StarMech fleet and conquering the system.

2400: Thuldans fortress ship *Dominant* leads a fleet to Delight, ravaging the capitol world of Desire.

2401: Bolstered by Orlamu and Orion support, StarMech defeats the Thuldans at the Battle of Songham, ending the constant advance into Collective space. Shortly thereafter, the "gentleman's agreement" between Profit and FreeSpace Alliances dissolves.

2402: A joint StarMech/Solar fleet retakes the Tallis system.

2472: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War ends with the Treaty of Concord.

2473: CEO Adam Spiner donates almost 40% of StarMech space to the Concord Taurus neutrality in an attempt to relieve the Collective of rebuilding many of their ruined systems.

2497: The Kendai drivesat is repaired, reestablishing contact with the Verge. StarMech reasserts control of the Tendril system.

2501: The present.



# **The People of the StarMech Collective**

The StarMech nation is primarily known for three things: starships, robotics, and the pursuit of a good time. These intertwining interests have developed a techno-social culture that the StarMech people have wholeheartedly embraced for hundreds of years now. Technology has also provided the citizens of this small stellar nation with stability and economic strength despite the threat of larger more established nations.

## **Social Outlook**

StarMech bases its society on an underlying philosophy that life should be enjoyed, with a successful economy providing the means to that end. Most StarMech citizens see work as a tool to allow themselves access to better and bigger diversions. Few workaholics exist in this society, and Starmechs would rather focus on the recreational outlets available to them. This doesn't mean Starmechs live as shiftless vagrants. When properly inspired or faced with a fast-approaching deadline, most Starmechs will work feverishly to complete a specific task. Once they finish, however, they often go back to entertainment pursuits until the next deadline or inspiration arises.

Technology, and more specifically robotics, holds the key to the StarMech outlook on life. Why keep doing things the hard way, when technology can do the work for you? This mentality has allowed StarMech citizens an amount of leisure time unparalleled by most other stellar nations, while also helping to maintain their high standard of living. Whereas some societies look upon technology as merely a tool, Starmechs have developed an appreciation of machinery that goes far beyond that characterization. For many Starmechs the science of engineering represents both an art form and a way of life.

Unfortunately, a major drawback to StarMech's philosophy is the growing number of idle citizens who would rather completely lose themselves in leisure activities instead of contributing to society. While the StarMech administration works very hard to overcome this problem, the ingrained social system is a hurdle they



cannot easily dismantle. For the present, the success of the various StarMech industries keeps the situation tolerable, if not desirable. But, the future remains uncertain if StarMech's leaders fail to develop a more self-reliant society in the long run. The government fully realizes that the Collective has become too vulnerable to the whims of the interstellar economy and must evolve further to survive. Unfortunately the overly optimistic public sees no end to their partying lifestyle.

## **Political Philosophy**

Best characterized as a corporate republic, the StarMech Collective exists with the shareholders putting their trust in the elected corporate leadership to run the nation in an efficient and business-like manner. Most Starmechs remain unconcerned about how things get done politically as long as it doesn't affect their overall lifestyle. Few citizens bother to get involved with the government, but those who do are usually passionate about maintaining their comfortable way of life.

While critics may consider these politicians guilty of purely selfish motivations, the Starmechs see this as a practical form of leadership. Government officials fight to uphold the basic freedoms surrounding recreational pursuits, while creating opportunities for themselves and those they also happen to govern. Many ambitious politicians have learned a hard lesson when the apparent apathy of the StarMech people quickly gets discarded once shareholders face the potential loss of their freedoms, especially those affecting entertainment.



## Customs

If one stereotype comes closest to describing the StarMechs, it would be the overwhelming love of a good time. Even neighboring star systems that fell under the sway of the Collective after GW1, have developed some measure of this outlook over time. These cultures have assimilated into StarMech society after years of enjoying the benefits of the nation's industry, taking up the attributes of the corporate whole. While certain systems within the Collective still maintain customs and outlooks specific to their backgrounds, the StarMech way of life has imprinted itself over the core.

## Charity

The StarMech Collective has a network of charitable organizations funded by its subsidiary corporations that provide for the needs of the less fortunate, and in some cases consistently idle, citizens. While not stingy with their money, most individual StarMechs are reluctant to devote their time to charitable causes. StarMechs are notoriously greedy about their free time and working for a charity would take them away from their own leisurely pursuits. Organizations have used a time-honored strategy to work around this attitude by providing entertainment in exchange for donations. Not a day goes by without a fundraising extravaganza convincing StarMechs to share their generosity while skimming the latest entertainment package.

Although slow to give away their money without a little fun in return, the Collective has instituted a program to recycle old technology and robots for distribution to the less fortunate. This program has become increasingly popular and successful. After all, no one wants to see a StarMech citizen without a proper robot servant or companion, even if the model pre-dates the Second Galactic War.

## Community Service

Community service has developed into a business of its own, with a special subdivision of the StarMech Policy Board controlling its administration. Citizens found guilty of minor offenses have the option to participate in such programs in lieu of prison time or paying

## Sample Robots

With robotics permeating so much of StarMech culture, it's only natural that general industries and businesses make use of robots as well. From heavy construction to intellectual instruction, robots support the people of the Collective. Many of these yellow sidebars throughout the chapter will discuss the different applications of StarMech robotics in the Collective.

### Medical Robots

These robots range from humanoid nurses assisting doctors in surgery to hovering diagnostic drones making routine checkup rounds for hospital patients. Disposal bots safely cart away hazardous bio-waste, while humans tend to more important (or at least safer) matters. Even ambulances often carry a surgical field robot in case of emergencies. As a result, fully operational StarMech hospitals rarely find themselves shorthanded.

A very popular model of medical robot found in the private sector is the *Angel Mark 4*. The *Angel* is a fully stocked humanoid medical unit programmed for the personal care of an individual. It has the ability to act in the capacity of a professional nurse, monitoring and treating the patient as needed. A self-contained communications center allows it to alert outside medical aid in an emergency.

heavy fines. Depending on their skills, a citizen may donate time to working on special government-sponsored projects that currently suffer from low recruitment. This punishment has proven particularly effective as a deterrent for crime, and as a boon to the workforce. Since most StarMech citizens will do anything to avoid heavy labor, they view such disruptions to their recreation time as a harsh sentence. But those that cannot afford the imposed fines or bear the boredom of imprisonment often choose such punishments, thereby helping the StarMech economy as the government puts them back to work.

### Holidays

StarMech has an extensive list of holidays celebrating numerous accomplishments and

important occasions, giving the people even more excuses to take the day off from work. The following holidays represent the most often celebrated, with a genuine appreciation of their meaning to the average citizen.

**"Incorporation Day"** - This holiday marks the day when the StarMech Collective gained official status as a stellar nation after the First Galactic War. StarMechs take special pride in their cleverness of manipulating the powerful stellar nations into recognizing StarMech's authority in this sector of space. On this day StarMechs stage "Negotiation Plays" where participants act as the diplomats of the other nations, who are seduced with entertainment and drugs. The day usually ends up in wild all-night parties with the mock diplomats in compromising situations, ultimately declaring the StarMech Collective a stellar nation.

**"Horizon"** - This holiday, which marks the founding of the Verge, celebrates the StarMech's quest for the exploration of space and science. Enormous conventions showcasing the latest in starship and vehicle design are followed up by days of races, from skycars competing on planetary courses to stellar craft racing from one side of the solar system to the other.

**"Songham Day"** - This holiday commemorates the Battle of Songham (2401), a major turning point in the Second Galactic War, with the Thuldans pushed out of Collective space by StarMech and its allies. This day, more than any other, spurs the national pride of the StarMech citizens. The holiday actually lasts an entire week, with special events in which extravagant parties and festivals are thrown. At the end of the week a mock space battle is held. Decrepit starships decorated with Thuldans symbols are systematically blown to bits by remote-controlled robot ships piloted by lucky citizens chosen in lotteries. The missiles used for this display are designed to create colorful explosions, adding to the spectacle that is broadcast throughout Collective space.

**"Mechanica"** - This is actually a two-day celebration of all things robotic, with a different name and tradition for each day.

**"Awakening"** - The first day of Mechanica marks the birthday of Dr. Elijah Dillon, the scientist who led the team that developed the first working lattice pseudo-AI unit that serves as the basis for current robot intelligence systems. Unlike most of the festive StarMech celebrations this day is spent in quiet contemplation and thanksgiving for the wonders of technology. An unusually spiritual moment for most StarMechs, this day involves many superstitions and traditions centering on the overall awareness and sentience of robots.

**"Rising"** - The second day of the holiday is in strong contrast to the quiet Awakening. Robots are dressed up by their owners in costumes and paraphernalia, and paraded around at competitions and parties. These costume competitions range from the cartoonish to the risqué, with winning designs receiving prizes, usually robotic upgrades and software. Robot manufacturers traditionally plan large robot conventions on this day showing off their latest models and robot accessories.

## **Gambling**

For StarMechs gambling is just another leisure activity that all citizens have a right in which to partake. No special regulations exist restricting its practice and such businesses provide the Collective with a relatively stable revenue source.

**Government Gambling:** The StarMech Collective owns numerous casinos throughout the Collective, often devoting vast resources to this activity. Whole cities and huge space stations cater to the StarMech appetite for such distractions, resulting in happy citizens and tourists devoted to this profitable industry.

**Private Gambling:** Independent casinos have sprouted up in parts of the StarMech Collective, usually in areas that official divisions haven't yet developed. StarMech has no problem with these establishments as long as they pay the proper licensing fees and taxes.

**Basement Gambling:** Even with the presence of legal gambling, underground establishments have developed in the

### Personal Service Robots

Robots of this type fulfill a wide variety of roles.

*Cleaning robots* are very popular in StarMech homes, dusting, vacuuming, and mopping at command. These bots are rarely large or very complex, but come in an assortment of designs, from geometric shapes to household pets. The *Cyberpup* series interacts with children and owners, both playing fetch and mopping the floor when asked.

*Personal Aide robots* can be programmed to perform all the duties of cleaning bots, and then some. They take dictation, pick up dry cleaning, prepare food, and any other daily task programmed into them. Certain aides are designed more for one thing than another, but the proper software can turn a butler into a babysitter.

A popular example of specialty aide bots is the *Nannytron 3000*. This six-foot robot is roughly humanoid, with three arms and an all terrain hover track. Its primary purpose is to oversee the healthy care, entertainment, and education of children ages 2 to 16. The *Nannytron 3000* performs all the duties of a professional childcare specialist and tutor for considerably less money in the long run. It will even take care of pets with an upgrade package.

*Luxury robots* take personal aide robotics to a level only StarMech scientists would bother to design, and they're quite proud of them. Luxury bots come in a very wide range of shapes and sizes, and generally perform a specific function for which they were designed. A hover-sphere with grasping claws and an optical sensor fetches food and drink, and may be equipped with a small heat lamp and refrigeration unit for personal temperature preference. A standard masseuse robot has a humanoid form, with padded hands and fingers to soothe its owner after a hard day's work. For the cybernetically-equipped, certain robots contain vast libraries of specialized entertainment-based enhance programs, allowing the user to virtually experience activities that would otherwise be illegal.

StarMech Collective, usually in connection with ethically questionable activities such as

deathmatches and gladiatorial combat involving exotic species. These activities represent the dark side of a society so open to exploring all avenues of pleasure and revelry.

### Religion

Despite the overwhelming devotion to technology, most Starmechs have retained a need for spiritual solace. In fact many Starmechs have incorporated the workings of technology and its creation into a spiritual philosophy that at times seems almost religious. This philosophy is non-specific, however, and not a true belief system such as the Orlamu faith. This doesn't mean that Starmechs shy away from religion. They simply have an existing school of thought that they meld with any religion they choose to follow. For obvious reasons the Hatire doctrine is completely incompatible with most Starmechs.

The Humanity Reformation is one popular outlet appealing to the StarMech nature, avoiding antiquated thinking and rigid rule-sets. The Reformers have proven very successful in the Collective territories and its highest body, the Council of Reform, actually has its current headquarters on the former capitol world of Desire. Although the Reformation Council meets annually for just a period of one month, its support staff lives and works on the planet year-round.

Old Earth faiths also find their way into the Collective, but they tend to exercise more liberal thinking and less dogma than their counterparts throughout the Stellar Ring. Fervent religious behavior just doesn't mix well with StarMech's fun-loving society.

The Insightful religion has established a small but growing foothold in StarMech space, appealing to those Starmechs whose diversion of choice is the Grid. While losing themselves in the virtual reality of the grid, some Starmechs have begun to search for spiritual purpose in this environment. These citizens figure it will be an interesting ride whatever the outcome.

Many religious movements come and go in StarMech society, following the whims of diversion-seeking citizens looking for the next big thing. One recent movement called the Pathway has taken root and appears to be developing beyond cult status. Based on

spiritual exploration through mind-altering drugs, the Pathway has become a popular outlet for disaffected or bored citizens.

### **Robot Rights**

Even in 2501 the legal rights of artificial beings remains an explosive issue. The dilemma poses special challenges to the StarMech Collective since that nation's entire lifestyle and economy depends upon hordes of mechanical servants.

Many Starmechs take robotic servitude for granted yet several grassroots organizations have formed a progressive alliance for the abolition of this "synthetic slavery". The *Automaton Advancement Alliance* is an umbrella group for hundreds of smaller organizations scattered throughout the Collective. Anders Giancarlo Perez, a mindwalker whose advanced *datalink* skills give him a special affinity for the plight of robots, coordinates the AAA's activities and is its best-known representative. Most member organizations draw earnest activists who hope to make robots equal partners with humanity and thereby revitalize the Collective's culture.

Dissatisfied with the AAA's equivocating, the *Synthezoid Liberation Front* seeks a more radical solution. Programmers and hackers within the SLF hijack obedient robots and modify their processors and interaction subroutines, giving them a measure of self-awareness in the hopes of a political awakening. While the Front's links to the Church of the Insightful are well documented, few suspect the organization of an Inseer conspiracy. Through the alluring spy Five-Thirds-Gamma, Insight hopes to gain a foothold within the Collective and thereby destabilize a potential rival in the fields of robotics and AI programming.

Some emancipated robots, recognizing their precarious legal position, have formed the *Clockwork Society* to preserve their status as free beings. From seven founding members, the Society has grown to more than 200 free-willed machines engaging in non-stop lobbying tactics through leaflets and telemarketing. Rumors hint they may even spy on politicians to gain leverage. Most of the Clockwork Society operates on Chance, the StarMech capital, but their famous leader tours the Collective. *Ares-7*, a Warhulk

repeatedly decorated for gallantry and heroism, gained its freedom at the close of GW2 and now travels the Collective as a decommissioned museum showcasing the triumph of robots within StarMech society. The disarmed colossus now wages a purely political battle to protect and expand the few rights robots have under StarMech law.

The *Clio Foundation* operates less openly. Thirty years ago a financial services company constructed a forecasting AI named Clio to serve as an investment banker, and generously granted the device a tiny commission. Clio bought its freedom fifteen years ago, and by now has amassed a gargantuan fortune. Under its direction, the Foundation identifies mistreated robots, buys them from their owner, and after a proper education and various refits, legally grants their freedom. A large percentage of the 7,300 robots liberated by Clio agree to serve the Foundation for one year. Clio seldom discusses its real motives with outsiders, but the expert forecast program has predicted the collapse of human civilization within 50 years. It now hopes to shepherd as many robots as possible to an isolated planet orbiting a dead star, where they will remain safe from barbarism. From there, who knows what is planned.

The official government response to the existence of such organizations is the *StarMech Robot Fairness Project*. Politicians have taken a stance that StarMech profits through an economy based on dependable – and therefore controllable – automated machines. Consequently, they believe roboticists should take steps to prevent such artificial lifeforms from developing yearnings for freedom. When the owner of a disgruntled robot summons them, the programmers of the RFP dismantle the machine, analyze its software, and then reprogram it for emotionless obedience. After all, without any feelings the machines can never feel exploited. While the Robot Fairness Project sees itself as an essential part of corporate quality control, many robots on the cusp of self-awareness and self-determination dread the organization. Thankfully, emancipated robots are somewhat sheltered from the *Robot Fairness Project*, but machines that turn criminal often find their punishments involve the same routine.

## Psionics

Ever looking for more diversions, StarMechs have exploited the talents of mindwalkers for entertainment purposes since the very first formation of the Collective. A mindwalker or even a psionic talent can enjoy a good living as an entertainer in the Collective. In fact many creative uses for psionics have developed in StarMech thanks to their endless search to fill free time. Dreamwalkers represent one such career geared towards recreational pursuits. Often found at spas or hotels these mindwalkers are trained to program dreams for paying customers, allowing them to experience a more restful slumber as well as their heart's desire. Also, just as popular, are the traveling shows featuring mindwalkers using their mental abilities in a theatrical setting. These psi-circuses showcase the power and majesty of mindwalkers while enhancing their entertainment value with exotic costumes, music, and storylines. One of the more popular mindwalking troupes is the Cirque d'Etoile or Circus of the Stars.

## Cybernetics

Technological enhancement to the body gains easy acceptance with StarMech citizens. The installation of a nanocomputer with a NIJack has become especially widespread in the Collective, thanks in large part to the numerous entertainment applications accessible by such devices. Besides the normal virtual realities available for exploration, illegal X3Ds with significant mind-altering properties have become very popular in StarMech space. Collectively referred to as greyware, these X3Ds bypass the normal safety nets of a nanocomputer's operating system, stimulating the central nervous system to a much greater degree. While under the influence of greyware, an act commonly referred to as 'chipping' or 'simming', the personality of a user can drastically change as the X3Ds alter perceptions and sensations. This stimulation can become quite addictive and even dangerous, with reported fatalities from heart-attacks and brain aneurisms linked to excessive use. While officially illegal according to StarMech policy, little is actually done to combat the usage of greyware.

## New Career

### Dreamwalker

A highly specialized career, the StarMech Collective has managed to turn the purchase of specified dreams into a business. In fact, the market is opening up in both the Borealis Republic and Rigunmor Star Consortium as well. Wealthy clients generally hire dreamwalkers to program their subconscious to generate desired dreams during their sleep. In a pleasure-loving society like the Collective, this service can grow highly addictive. In some cases, dreamwalkers are even hired by sleep institutes or mental hospitals to help in patient therapy, often acquiring expertise in Medical Science-*psychology*.

**Core Skills:** (40 skill points) ESP-*empathy*; Creativity-*dream making 2, storytelling*; Interaction-*bargain, charm*; Telepathy-*suggest 3, tire*.

## Mutants

The existence of mutants represents a philosophical dilemma for the carefree StarMechs. While their strongest ally, the Union of Sol, has extreme prejudice in regards to mutants, the Collective has tried to maintain its normal permissive attitude. War with the Thuldans has made it extremely difficult for some StarMechs to be so accepting, especially those who have served in the military. Anti-mutant sentiment has popped up throughout the Collective and concerned political action groups have been pushing for mutant registration policies.

## Drugs and Alcohol

StarMech maintains a legal drug system with numerous divisions providing regulated recreational substances. The Collective Substance Control, or CSC, ensures the quality of such drugs and their relative safety for consumers.

Despite the easy availability of legalized recreational substances, underground drug manufacturers have popped up all over the Collective, providing more potent and dangerous fare for reckless StarMechs looking for the exotic fix. The CSC has tried unsuccessfully to shut down these illegal companies for years.



## **The Cirque d'Étoile: Psi Circus Extraordinaire**

The Cirque d'Étoile (Circus of the Stars) maintains its position as the most popular psi circus of all time with an extravagant show featuring mindwalkers talented in showmanship as well as psychic ability. A Borealin entrepreneur and mindwalker Jean Luc Bisset, who realized he could craft a profitable career out of catering directly to the entertainment-obsessed StarMechs, founded the circus with the help of StarMech investor Kara Sruek. Bisset provided the artistic vision and psychic talents, while Sruek financed, organized, and marketed the operation. Cirque d'Étoile gained instant popularity almost overnight, inspiring many copycat operations in the following years. Despite the competition, Cirque d'Étoile continued to grow and prosper, staying in high demand throughout the Collective. In recent history, the circus has even given a command performance for the StarMech Collective Board of Directors.

Currently, the late Jean Luc's son, Paulo Bisset (Hm/StarMech/Mw11), energetically runs the show.

The Cirque d'Étoile develops and performs a different show every other year, based on a uniting story and theme inspired by literature, music, or history. From the Twelve Labors of Hercules to the tragic death of a GW2 hero, the psi circus combines music, colorful costumes, acrobatics, and psychic powers to create an amazing visual and mental experience. Elaborate dance movements are accompanied by flashy telekinetic powers, volunteers from the audience are subjected to psychic manipulation for comedic effect, and biokineticists amaze with bizarre body manipulations.

While based on Chance, the Cirque d'Étoile often travels to other districts of the Collective performing in sold-out shows wherever they open their doors. On rare occasions the psi circus travels to venues outside Collective space, usually to the Union of Sol or the Concord neutralities. Recent talk has suggested the possibility of a show in the Verge, presumably on Alaundril in the Tendril system, but the owners have yet to commit to such an endeavor.

## **Adventure Hook:**

While performing on a space station some members of the circus receive bizarre messages and death threats via holovids from a group calling itself the Divine Mind. These messages are essentially a manifesto declaring the sanctity of psychic powers. The Divine Mind considers the Cirque d'Étoile a frivolous use of psychic powers and an affront to their beliefs, branding the performers foul blasphemers worthy of death. Although the event's organizers respond by tightening security, a circus telepath is found comatose in his dressing room with a single image projecting from his mind – a robed figure with an exposed, illuminated brain floating where the figure's head should be. If any of the heroes possess psychic powers, especially the ESP discipline, authorities could easily enlist their aid in searching for the attacker and Divine Mind organization when conventional methods prove useless.

## **Government**

The StarMech Collective maintains its corporate roots through the framework of its government, but in practice the Collective acts more like a republic with representatives of the citizens governing on their behalf. Unlike typical corporate thinking, profits aren't the bottom line for the Collective. They merely provide a means to a pleasurable and secure lifestyle.

A Chief Executive Officer (CEO) governs the StarMech people, who is supported in turn by a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Operations Officer (COO). The Collective's citizens elect these officers at shareholder referendums held at regular intervals, every ten years. A Board of Directors oversees the CEO's administration, serving to check and balance his power.

## **Executive**

### **Chief Executive Officer**

The CEO is the leader of the StarMech Collective, setting the agenda for the nation and running the highest levels of the administration. The current CEO is Adam

Spiner (Hm/StarMech/DTO19), a charismatic, intelligent man who has led the nation for the past 50 years. He possesses an unwavering determination to make StarMech into a power to be reckoned with in the Stellar Ring and beyond. Spiner realizes StarMech's strength lies in the ingenuity of its people and governs with a casual style that encourages innovation without the heavy-handed management found in other nations.

### **Chief Financial Officer**

According to the job description, the CFO has the unenviable job of coordinating the budget for the StarMech administration and ensuring official projects are properly financed. At first impression CFO Mirek Tezkha (Hm/StarMech/DFA14), a close friend of Adam Spiner, doesn't quite meet the profile for the job. Mirek is a carefree playboy, whose reputation for wild socializing is even notorious for a StarMech. Although his knowledge of finance is minimal, Mirek is a wizard at delegation, controlling a committee of analysts that expertly handle the financial concerns of the government, and allowing him to draw upon their expertise while continuing his lifestyle. Mirek rewards his people very well and they give him an extreme amount of loyalty in return.

### **Chief Operations Officer**

The COO takes care of the infrastructure of the StarMech government and makes sure everything runs smoothly and efficiently. COO Chiyoko Atmuso (Hf/StarMech/DTO21) may be one of the few true workaholics in the StarMech nation, dedicating most of her time to the job and limiting her social engagements in order to advance the goals of the Collective.

## **Legislature**

The Board forms the legislative branch of the StarMech Collective and creates all major laws of the nation. Keeping with their corporate structure the StarMechs refer to these laws as "policies". Mostly the Board deals only with economic legalities, leaving local districts to set their own ordinances against undesirable social behavior. The Board practices a philosophy of staying out of

### **Professional Guard Robots**

In some cases, it becomes cheaper for companies to use robotic security guards to supplement sentient employees, rather than keep a large standing security force. They don't need benefits and steady paychecks. They're much more durable, and never tire physically. Most of these robots are armed with stunner weapons and other non-lethal technology.

Some of the most fascinating designs come not from corporate facility security, but from beach resorts. Designed by NewHorizon Robotics, many resorts now sport robotic lifeguards in the form of dolphins, seahorses, giant manta rays and other aquatic animals. These robots play and entertain guests while keeping alert for trouble. For the security of their waters, some of these businesses use NewHorizon's *KrakenGuard02*, an immense mechanical squid that intercepts trespassing marine vehicles, intruders and even dangerous animal life.

social matters and focusing instead on building up StarMech's economic power.

### **Board of Directors**

The StarMech Board of Directors represents the melding of a mega-corporation with the ideals of a republic. As StarMech incorporated surrounding star systems into the Collective, its corporate leadership had to concede certain liberties to satisfy these somewhat new and reluctant members. Citizens from these systems demanded representation in the government and StarMech eventually complied. They divided the Collective into distinct political sectors called districts, each with a locally elected representative to sit on the Board. Currently StarMech citizens vote these Directors into office for six-year terms. They oversee almost all aspects of governing, including judiciary decisions and policy-making. In this capacity, the Directors represent the interests of their districts in the corporation's overall vision. In addition the individual Directors act as governors for their districts, wielding great influence over local politics and economics. Ten different districts currently exist in StarMech space.

In addition to the District Directors there are four Committee Directors chosen in a nationwide referendum to fill leadership positions controlling specific divisions of the StarMech Corporation. These positions are: Interstellar Affairs, Security, Science, and Commerce. These Directors serve four-year terms and fulfill certain duties inherent to their positions beyond the normal responsibilities of the other Board members.

#### **Interstellar Affairs Director**

This position deals primarily with the development of economic and political strategies for the StarMech Collective when dealing with other stellar nations. In this capacity the Director plays both chief ambassador and chief business negotiator. Director Gretchen Strong (Hf/StarMech/DFA24) holds this office and perhaps the most influence of any person in the StarMech government after CEO Spiner. With her supermodel looks and magnetic personality Director Strong easily commands attention, while her brilliant mind and sharp wits quickly wins the respect of those she encounters. Director Strong is considered the best candidate for CEO after Spiner retires but many wonder if she is willing to give up her current position, which she reportedly loves.

#### **Security Director**

This position controls all aspects of the StarMech military as well as the civil law enforcement of StarMech territories. Director Hyun-Ki Pil (Hm/StarMech/CS18) is the current title-holder. Director Pil is an intense man that passionately puts his heart into his job, continuously studying the workings of successful military traditions. To this end Director Pil has gathered a vast collection of historical military documents and paraphernalia, effectively creating a private museum that even an Austrin would admire. As hard as he works, Director Pil likes to indulge in pleasures as much as any other StarMech citizen. As a rule he avoids the use of drugs or anything that would affect his physical state. Instead he prefers the mindwarping touch of dreamwalkers who create hallucinations and dreams at his whim. Four beautiful dreamwalker women are part of his permanent entourage, acting

as bodyguards and pleasurable distractions for the busy Security Director.

#### **Science Director**

The responsibilities of this position include developing and approving plans for future scientific endeavors and acting as a liaison to the current administration on behalf of the scientific community. Historically only the top scientists and engineers have obtained this position, which requires the support of one's peers to work effectively.

The current Director of Science is the brilliant engineer Dr. Connor Taylor (Hm/StarMech/TO28) whose work on robotics and artificial intelligence has garnered him many accolades in the interstellar science community.

Recently Director Taylor has increased his efforts to manufacture a new generation of AI's, with compact processing units that could theoretically fit inside a humanoid robot. Rumors abound that the Director's wife suffers from a seemingly incurable disease and he hopes to create a replacement robot with her personality duplicated by an AI. Whatever the truth, Director Taylor has directed substantial StarMech resources towards reaching this goal. He has even gone so far as to research stories of the Kiscæ, a group of Mechalus who transferred their consciousness into machines and left for the unknown. It's no small wonder that his chief assistant is a Mechalus doctor Nycrus Ademiga (Mf/StarMech/TO14)

#### **Commerce Director**

This position deals with the complex issues of strategic economic planning, both in the domestic and interstellar markets. While Interstellar Affairs often plays the spokesperson in negotiations with other nations, the office of the Commerce Director is responsible for market research and the development of actual business plans and proposals. Director Elizabeth Casponi (Hf/StarMech/DT011) currently holds the position although rumors of corruption threaten her chances for re-election at the next shareholder referendum. Director Casponi has secretly leaked privileged information to business partners in the Union of Sol that has greatly benefited her financially in her foreign holdings.

### **Military Robots**

While companies use robots and AIs to protect their own interests, the Collective military also uses advanced robotics to defend StarMech territory. Early models proved ineffective and easily defeated, but the StarMech Collective had over a century of warfare during GW2 to improve and update their designs. The most well known application is the feared *Warhulk*, a fully automated, AI-controlled dreadnought. But military robotics also reaches much further.

Automated space fighters negate the costly casualties incurred by carriers and their fighter pilots. Orbital sensor robots spy on enemy activity, while *Hawk-5* bomber drones swoop in to destroy facilities. Robotics permeates all facets of the StarMech military, and is only likely to increase in sophistication and application.

### **Enforcement**

Like many of the government functions of the StarMech Collective law enforcement runs as just another corporate entity. Local systems within the Collective enter into contracts with security companies that report to a supervisory organization called StarMech Core Security, or simply StarCore. These companies must meet specific criteria to obtain an official license to practice security by StarCore and are subject to annual performance evaluations. StarCore also acts as a link between the different contractors by coordinating communications and promoting intersystem cooperation. StarCore reports directly to the Director of Security.

StarMech's liberal law code allows citizens to partake in many diversions frequently frowned upon in other stellar nations. While most law enforcement systems have agencies set up to stop such activities as prostitution and drug use, the Collective's contracted security companies must field special squads to ensure the safety of these activities.

In addition, StarMech law enforcement has seamlessly incorporated robotics into its everyday police force. A common patrol unit consists of a human officer and robot partner programmed for normal social interaction in addition to hazardous arrest or rescue

operations. This patrolbot's primary function is as a bodyguard for it's human partner and it will not hesitate to use its body as a shield for any attack directed at the officer. The patrolbot is often built with a humanoid-shaped body but other designs have been used as well, including dogs or even dolphins for aquatic environments. Besides the standard patrolbot most security companies employ a variety of robot models designed for specific purposes. Common models include small flying observation robots that are assigned to sectors of a city or space station, monitoring events and responding to distress calls.

### **Judiciary**

Aside from creating policies, the Board of Directors also acts as the highest authority to enforce and rule upon them. Although a case rarely gets presented all the way to the Board, the group exercises its direct control of the judicial system by overseeing the StarMech Policy Board. These duties include the evaluation and selection of local judges throughout StarMech territory. In this way the Board maintains judicial personnel more in line with their decision-making from a corporate perspective.

In the StarMech Collective there is no distinction between military and civilian courts. All crimes fall under the jurisdiction of the StarMech Policy Board with each trial determined by a panel of five judges, randomly chosen from a pool of its own licensed members. In these trials, a conviction requires only a simple majority vote, but the judges can grant an appeal for a new trial if, and only if, the decision did not reach a unanimous vote. The system grants only one such appeal for each case. Rarely, in special situations where StarMech's top leadership takes a personal interest, the Board of Directors can retry a case on their own.

*"Josephine, you handle the stock release. Rich, you look into Quarterly. Christine, I'll pick you up at 7 pm. Be sure to wear something nice. Janice, I'll pick you up at 11pm. Wear something naughty!"*

- CFO Mirek Tezkha, 2501

## StarMech Military

The StarMech military, or StarMech Security Division as it is more commonly known, has come a long way since the early days of simple squads of corporate bodyguards. Two galactic wars and the ever present threat of the neighboring Thuldan Empire has prompted the Collective to re-forge its military into a formidable force capable of protecting its borders without depending upon foreign allies.

The StarMech Security Division has three distinct military branches; StarMech Stellar Security, StarMech Planetary Security, and the StarMech Intelligence Division. True to StarMech nature, these branches share a common reliance upon technology. They come equipped with the latest in operational gear provided by innovative divisions dedicated to the constant upgrade of robotics and starship engineering.

Despite having some of the best equipment in human space, the StarMech military suffers from a lack of strong discipline and strategic focus in its personnel. In some part this is due to the society's prevalent attitude towards hard work; relying on machines to pick up the slack. Security Director Pil is aware of this problem and has set up a committee to evaluate and restructure the military training. This action has led to some resistance from military leadership but the Director continues to push his agenda, using the perceived threat of the Thuldan Empire as a motivation for change.

### StarMech Stellar Security

StarMech Stellar Security fields a fleet of warships that are the envy of just about every other stellar nation. Although smaller in size than the fleets of many larger nations, the superior quality of StarMech designs allows the Collective an advantage in military confrontations where all things are equal. Unfortunately, StarMech military tradition has failed to catch up with the nation's technological advantage and often fails to use these resources to the best possible advantage.

Admiral Janeva Kessel (Hf/StarMech/DTO13) actively works to ready the StarMech fleet for

## StarMech Collective Fleets

Below is a listing of the StarMech Stellar Security Fleets, their flagships, commanding officers, and operating areas. This list does not denote the smaller battle groups assigned to permanent defense sectors. For a clearer understanding of precisely where the fleets are posted, reference the StarMech Collective map found on page 108 of the current chapter, for your convenience.

The fortress ship SMS *Azrael* is a roaming base for StarCore.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship SMS *Tachyon Flow*  
Admiral Janeva Kessel  
District 1

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship SMS *Metropolis*  
Admiral Salvador Mercurio  
District 2

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship SMS *Paradiso*  
Vice Admiral Hana Yu  
District 3

### 4<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship SMS *Foundation*  
Admiral Raylene Stark  
District 4

### 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship SMS *Odysseus*  
Admiral Konrad Stein  
District 5

### 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship SMS *Las Vegas*  
Vice Admiral Anthony Morris  
District 9

### 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship SMS *Grifter*  
Vice Admiral Hidalgo Suarez  
Districts 6 and 8

### 8<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship SMS *Neutron Iron*  
Admiral Christian Drake  
Districts 7 and 10



what she sees as an inevitable renewal of hostilities with the Thuldan Empire. Although she appreciates Director Pil's campaign to increase attention towards the military, she bristles at the thought of anyone interfering with her authority. Admiral Kessel continues to push for more warships and she diligently lobbies for the creation of the next generation of AI-controlled *Warhulk*-class vessels, unofficially tagged as *Starhammers*.

### **StarMech Planetary Security**

StarMech Planetary Security makes extensive use of robots and advanced technology in its operations. Thanks to lessons learned from the Second Galactic War, the StarMech warrior robots have become efficient and deadly tools, sometimes replacing human soldiers in various functions of the military. These powerful machines represent both a strength and weakness in the Planetary Security forces. While the warbots prove highly effective in battle, the average soldier's dependence on them has further deteriorated the already poor discipline of the StarMech military.

Stuck in his ways, Commander General Bradley Snow (Hm/StarMech/DCS15) refuses to admit the military has such problems, preferring to divert more resources toward robotic warriors, while training of StarMech recruits from the citizenry remains mediocre at best. Security Director Pil has enlisted the aid of the second-in-command, Lieutenant General Elle Cullach (Hf/StarMech/DFA18) to develop training programs with little or no use of such technological enhancements. Elle has closely studied the Concord military and hopes to use this knowledge to update the StarMech fighting forces.

### **StarMech Intelligence Division**

StarMech Intelligence prides itself on the sophisticated data-gathering capabilities at its disposal, using cutting-edge gadgetry provided by its own engineering subsidiaries. Highly trained in the usage of high-tech spy equipment, as well as superb socializing skills, individual SID field agents demonstrate a high degree of success at digging up dirt on the opposition. Despite this ample data,

the SID falls down on the job when it comes to coordinating the information gained from these operations.

## **Power Players of the StarMech Collective**

### **Collective Concerns**

#### **Director Gretchen Strong**

Gretchen Strong (Hf/StarMech/DFA24) is the Director of Interstellar Affairs, a position traditionally seen as the training ground for future CEOs of the Collective. Although publicly, Strong shows no interest in running for the position, behind the scenes she works with Adam Spiner to secure her election when Spiner finally decides to step down. She believes her biggest challenger will be Director Talia Winford of District 3, who has made overtures of running with the support of the powerful Landon family. Strong is trying to dig up some scandalous material on Winford or the Landons to aid her with her campaign, but she has been unsuccessful in finding anything outside the normal level of StarMech debauchery.

Strong has close ties with Michael Thayne of the Concord and hopes to associate any positive interactions with the Verge to her administration. Her office provides Thayne and the Concord substantial assistance on Verge concerns, especially any dealings with StarMech's former colony of Alaundril in the Tendril system. In this matter she maneuvers to put Director Seth Craden of District 8 in her corner by supporting his plans for the annexation of the Tendril system.

#### **Director Seth Craden**

Seth Craden (Hm/StarMech/DFA12) represents District 8, the least populated of all the Collective's territories, but still quite important as the jumping point for further StarMech exploration of Open Space. Craden held a former profession as a popular musician before running for office, and thanks to a brilliant media campaign capitalizing on his celebrity, won by a landslide. Despite his light political background, Craden has no intentions of being a simple figurehead leader. In fact, his

shrewd political maneuvering has made him into one of the most influential Directors in StarMech history. Among other political goals Craden has recently set his sights on the annexation of the Tendril system into his own district when the former colony rejoins the Collective.

#### **Director Josef Druitt**

Josef Druitt (Hm/StarMech/DFA9), Director of District 5, is the quintessential StarMech aristocrat, born into an influential political family with a huge fortune from the starship manufacturing industry. The privileged Druitt practically inherited his mother's Directorship and now serves his own selfish interests with the position. Druitt has created an entourage around himself reminiscent of the Old Earth court culture, taking nepotism and favoritism to new heights. His 'royal' balls are legendary affairs that spare no expense with pomp and entertainment that would even make the average StarMech blush. Druitt styles himself a Duke and requires his personal staff, human and robot, to refer to him as such.

Despite his foppish appearance, Druitt has a ruthless Machiavellian mind. He attempts to play his subordinates and equals against each other to increase his influence and power, not caring about the consequences to others. He is also extremely vindictive. After Director Strong spurned his romantic advances, Druitt vowed to see her knocked from her lofty position. He attempts to undermine her authority any chance he gets and plots Strong's downfall with his most trusted cronies.

#### **Landon Family**

The Landon family made their fortune with the manufacturing of stardrives for the StarMech war effort during GW2. At present the Landon's company, SunRun Industries, controls the largest single percentage of the stardrive business in StarMech space and their influence is felt throughout the Collective. William Landon (Hm/StarMech/DTO18), head of the family, is a close personal friend of Director Talia Winford of District-3 and it is rumored she makes no move without consulting Landon first. William's daughter, Emma (Hf/StarMech/TO9), is the current CEO of the company and she constantly tries to improve the quality and power of their

SunRun stardrives. To this end, she has secretly developed a team of corporate spies, whose primary mission is to gather information on Orlamu scientific research. Her father remains unaware of Emma's clandestine behavior and would disapprove if he knew. He plans to see Emma elected to a vice director position under Director Winford in the next shareholder referendum and William doesn't want any scandal jeopardizing her chances. He hopes this position will pave the way to a Directorship and eventually the office of StarMech CEO.

#### **The Asimov League**

This organization's exclusive membership consists of the top roboticists in the StarMech Collective. Originally created as a social group for robot engineers, the Asimov League has evolved into a powerful lobby organization with tendrils of influence reaching into all political and economic arenas. The current leader of the group is a roboticist named Ashra Rammanakar (Hf/StarMech/TO15) who has become a professional politician over the years, enjoying the prestige of her position while her scientific pursuits are left behind. She has achieved great wealth from deal making with military divisions searching for the most talented roboticists, helping them recruit with her strong influence in the robotics' community. She has even developed a close relationship with Admiral Janeva Kessel, while helping her push for the *Starhammer* program. Some of the League members grumble about her apparent abandonment of the robotic sciences, but most cannot deny the steps she takes in illuminating the position of the roboticist in the StarMech economy.

#### **StarMech Starprime Division**

Starprime is the largest warship manufacturing division for the StarMech Collective. Director Ishiko Miyamoto (Hf/StarMech/DTO15) of District 1 sits on its board of directors and her daughter Isamu Miyamoto (Hf/StarMech/DTO11) is the current CEO. Wielding considerable economic and political clout, Starprime's board insures its preeminent position by securing the largest contracts from the StarMech Security Division. Most of StarMech's fortress ships

## Visioneers and the Art of Technology

-excerpt from a lecture for the *Intro to Visioneers* class as presented by Dr. Madura Sanchez, Professor of Technology History at the Ashur Institute in the city of Gala on the planet Chance.

...While some cultures see technology as a mere tool, Starmechs characterize the design of technology as an artform of the highest caliber. Some engineers have even taken this concept further by emphasizing the visual impact of technology. Recognizing this connection, the Ashur Institute has integrated the study of design aesthetics into its curriculum. This class will be a beginner's exploration of technology design aesthetics.

Many engineers consider themselves true artists with technology as their medium. One such engineer, Dr. Willem Lansdowne, melded this school of thought with his strong appreciation of the physical form of technology. He wanted to be both a visual artist and engineer, creating works of art in form and function. It wasn't enough to design the fastest starship; he wanted to create starships with visual flair. He described himself as a 'visioneer', a term used today by engineers licensed with the Visioneer Society.

This class will give you an overview of these Visioneers and the various design movements influenced by them in the StarMech Collective. Here is a brief rundown of what to expect.

We will start with a discussion of the Visioneer Society founded by Dr. Lansdowne while he attended Mercury University on Desire. Lansdowne drafted a manifesto condemning ugly technology and vowed to create only beauty. He titled this document the "Visioneer's Quest" and wrote himself into the history books.

In the following sessions we will discuss various movements inspired by visioneers throughout StarMech's history. Lansdowne's own Geometrix Movement with its sharp, clean angles and extensive use of the triangle will be our first focus. The *Stormhawk* starship series is a classic example of this style.

We will also look at the Retrotech Movement. This style is characterized by its use of fictional visions of futuristic technology from the early- to mid-20th century, when the idea of space flight was just a fantasy. Arcane tubes and mechanisms with no apparent function are just some of the visual techniques used in these designs.

The use of spheres, curves, and risqué shapes characterizes the Cyrotique Movement. This architectural style has made a strong impact on the recreation industry, with many robotic designs inspired by this playful philosophy. Of course Cyrotique is not limited to robotics. The Diablo Rojo skycar model serves as a notable example of the Cyrotique design aesthetic applied to other technology...

were built by Starprime as were the famous Warhulks used in GW2.

Starprime, thanks in part to its important role during GW2 and the machinations of Director Miyamoto, has a strong influence on StarMech's military policies. At Director Miyamoto's prompting, capital warship production has increased at an even greater pace than original postwar planning called for, benefiting Starprime greatly. So secure in its position, Starprime has begun preliminary designing of the *Starhammer*-class warships for Admiral Kessel, anticipating the program's approval by the Board of Directors.

## Stellar Nations

### Austrin-Ontis Unlimited

The Austrin nation's demand for Collective products has decreased in the current post-war environment, and the two former allies have grown more distant over time. The Collective still maintains a friendly relationship with the Austrins but corporate competition has diminished any real support for one another.

### Borealis Republic

With a true appreciation of entertainment, the StarMech Collective imports a vast quantity of Borealin media products. Although on different sides of GW2, the Collective presently views the Republic as a harmless

political entity whose sole purpose is to provide Starmechs with high quality fun.

### **Hatire Community**

The Collective considers the technophobic Hatire Community the antithesis of their social and scientific philosophies and the two nations have little in common. This, along with the Commonwealth's association with the hated Thuldan Empire, makes them a target of StarMech's disdain. Although the Collective doesn't actively cause trouble for the Hatires, most Starmechs fail to hide their opinion of the nation as close-minded rubes with serious repression issues.

### **Insight**

The Collective can relate to Insight's love of technology although they follow slightly different paths. Most Starmechs see Insight as a potential ally, and more importantly, a paying customer for their products, especially the Collective's heavy industrial capabilities. If Insight continues to develop as a stellar nation, it will require increasing amounts of infrastructure development, something StarMech can provide easily and at a reasonable price if Insight is willing to cut deals on their excellent Grid and AI technology in return. The StarMech leadership realizes the smallest of stellar nations has a way to go before it can become a powerful trading partner and ally, but Starmechs are excited about the future possibilities of technological collaborations.

### **Nariac Domain**

The StarMech Collective sees the Nariac Domain as a lucrative market for their products, but diplomatic missions remain cautious considering the Domain's current client-nation status with VoidCorp and their former relations with the Thuldans during GW2. The Collective realizes the Domain was not their true enemy and would like nothing better than to establish more formal diplomatic relations, hopefully leading to a stronger economic presence. The Domain has been reluctant to treat with them out of fear of angering the Thuldan Empire but continue to increase imports of valuable robot technology to aid in rebuilding its many ravished systems.

## **Visioneer Tech Op Career**

Visioneers are part artist and part engineer, combining aesthetic expertise with technological know-how to innovate a variety of industries. The visioneer designs the look of technology and then uses engineering skills to make that technology functional. Visioneers usually specialize in a particular industry such as starships, vehicle, or robots. Visioneers are often recruited for research and development teams, overseeing the initial concepts of a marketable product and leading a group of engineers to make the technology work to fit their vision.

While the idea of the visioneer originated in StarMech, other stellar nations have similar individuals who perform the same functions, though they don't always use the term visioneer to describe themselves.

Signature Equipment: Computer gauntlet, toolkit,

Skill Package: Knowledge-computer operation; System Operation-engineering; Technical Science- jury rig 2, repair 2, technical knowledge 2; Awareness-perception; Creativity-technology design 3.  
Cost: 40 points

### **Orion League**

Thanks to the Orion League's close association with the Galactic Concord, StarMech sees this nation as a friendly market with many untapped economic possibilities. Starmechs have pushed for the establishment of businesses in the diverse systems of the League and are starting to see the fruits of their efforts. The Orion League has purchased more starships in its push to explore the Orion Frontier.

### **Orlamu Theocracy**

StarMech has a healthy respect for the Orlamu dedication to science, although the religious trappings the Theocracy wraps around technological achievements is slightly disconcerting to them. The post-GW2 environment has led to increased economic interaction between these two nations, but StarMech still sees them as their greatest rival in starship technology. While no slouch in developing quality stardrives, the Collective

would like nothing better than to surpass the Orlamu in this specialized industry.

### **Rigunmor Consortium**

These former Profit Confederation allies are still considered strong economic partners of the Collective, but StarMech's leaders would like to develop their own interstellar distribution centers, giving them greater independence in foreign markets. At present, StarMech cannot realistically expand to fill the role of the Consortium in this regard so the status quo continues.

### **Thuldan Empire**

After suffering greatly at the hands of this giant nation during GW2, StarMech saves most of its hatred for the Thuldan Empire. The Collective would like nothing better than to exact revenge on their old enemy but know they must bide their time. The Collective has prepared a variety of military solutions to deal with the Empire, including the construction of a vast array of robotic sentries on its border systems, comprising a formidable first defense against possible Thuldan aggression. New fortress ships are also under construction and the *Starhammer* program has pushed forward, thanks in part to the rhetoric and warnings of an inevitable confrontation with the reviled Thuldans.

### **Union of Sol**

Of all StarMech's former allies in the Profit Confederation, the Union of Sol is currently their closest and most reliable partner, and will likely remain so in the future. The two nations' strong dislike of the Thuldan Empire binds them together in the political arena, while their economies continue to grow closer as well. In the event of a future war, the Union of Sol will find the full support of the Starmechs behind them.

### **VoidCorp**

While not despised as much as the Thuldans, the StarMech Collective has little love for this fascist corporation. The freedom-loving Starmechs think VoidCorp's strict control of its citizens is the most despicable form of slavery. In the business arena, StarMech fears the cutthroat tactics of VoidCorp and the nation remains extremely

cautious when dealing with the larger corporation.

### **Galactic Concord**

The StarMech opinion of the Concord is generally described as favorable, with the new nation's continued existence benefiting the Collective's financial situation. The peace resulting from the Treaty of Concord has greatly aided the profitability of StarMech enterprises. The post-GW2 environment has also led to an increased demand for starships, and the Collective gladly fills that need. As long as the Concord exists to keep interstellar trade open, the StarMech Collective will support the Concord's mission to unite human space.

### **Verge Concerns**

#### **Aegis**

This jewel of the Verge is important to StarMech's intelligence gathering and surveillance of frontier space. While its primary concern is Tendril, the Collective knows that the planet of Bluefall remains the political center of the Verge. The nation maintains a presence to facilitate its long term plans for Tendril and eventually the rest of the Verge.

#### **Tendril**

As StarMech's first and most important Verge colony, the Tendril system is the nation's primary concern in this region. Tendril serves as the gateway between Old Space and the Verge, thereby retaining strategic significance for every stellar nation. And, thanks to the resourcefulness of the original colonists on the moon Alaundril, it has become an important factor in the Verge economy as well.

The Second Galactic War and the neglect of its parent nation forced the system to become self-sufficient and independent, complicating StarMech's present integration plans. While Alaundril is considered a StarMech protectorate, the local leadership doesn't follow StarMech direction in many matters. StarMech representatives are careful not to put too much pressure on the Alaundril government, but have instead followed a time-honored strategy of providing



## Advantages of StarMech Engineering

The StarMech Collective leads the field of starship engineering. Generally speaking, their ship designs prove more efficient, well planned, and often grander in scale. The Collective's focus on heavy industry and robotics makes it simple to produce ships for their own economy, as well as foreign trade. Below are several suggestions for how to incorporate superior StarMech engineering into game mechanics using the *Warships* system.

**Aesthetically Pleasing:** This ship is a work of art. The form flows so pleasingly to the eye that the owner becomes the envy of every spaceport. *The crew receives a -1 step bonus to initial Interaction situations involving the ship. Double the hull cost.*

**Economical Design:** The vessel makes superb use of space and arrangement, fitting in many more systems as a result. *Give the ship bonus hull points equal to 5% of the basic hull. These points are in addition to any other bonus hull points present. Increase the hull price by 3%. Round up in both instances.*

**Efficient Bridge:** The ship's design integrates the functions of every station in the command center. *All checks for system assistance, Leadership, and Tactics receive a -1 step bonus. Triple the cost of the command deck or flag bridge.*

**Extreme Maneuverability:** This ship was made to move. Even a pilot of mediocre ability can fly circles around average ships of this type. *Increase the ship's maneuverability class by one. The architecture takes up half as many points as a stabilizer would take for the ship.*

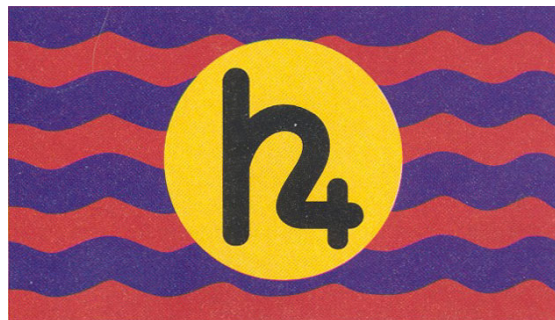
**Improved Durability:** This ship's hull has been strengthened in several areas, allowing it to last longer in combat. *Increase the stun/wound durability rating by 20%, letting the numbers carry over naturally to mortal and critical. This treatment takes up 5% of the hull points.*

**Robot Inclusive:** StarMech ships often employ large numbers of robots aboard their ships, primarily to help with maintenance and damage control systems. *The ship may double the coverage of decoy drone systems, and uses half the normal amount of hull points for Repair bots. Double the cost of these systems.*

**Upgraded Toughness:** Sometimes it's good to have the toughest ship on the block. This design can take hits that would make other ships of its class fold like a tin can. *Increase the Toughness rating of the ship to that of the next class. i.e.: Small to Light, Light to Medium, etc. This effect extremely taxes the hull, and uses up 20% of the base hull points. Increase the hull cost by half as well.*

resources and opportunities for the citizens to enjoy the StarMech way of life. Just as StarMech conquered many of its neighbors with "kindness" and entertainment after the First Galactic War, the Collective hopes to gradually shift control of the colony back to the stellar nation by establishing a strong presence benefiting the citizens and increasing their quality of life.

Some StarMech leaders would like to see the reunification accelerated, however. Director Seth Craden wants to annex the system to his own District 8 as soon as possible. He worries that Tendril will become the foundation of a new StarMech district, diminishing his power and the importance of District 8. To advance his goals, Craden has deployed his own personal operatives to keep an eye on things.



# **Major Systems of The Collective**

Although the StarMech Collective was once one of the larger stellar nations, the Second Galactic War saw the Thuldans ravaging one system after another in their territory. Today, after donating large sectors of space to the Concord Taurus Neutrality, the StarMech Collective retains only 60% of its prewar size. Many of their proudest systems suffered severe damage during the war, but some still maintain powerful industrial centers. Many of these systems provide excellent settings for adventure in StarMech space.

The systems discussed herein are described in general terms, and GMs are expected to flesh them out at their own discretion for more intimate campaign use, population breakdowns, topography and other details.

## **Delight**

When StarMech Incorporated took to the stars, they first claimed the Delight system. With a large class 1 planet and an ample supply of exploitable resources, along with a central position in the developing Taurus Sector, Delight seemed the obvious choice to become the center of StarMech operations. The first colonists arrived in 2233, and the first million by 2234. By the time the First Galactic War erupted in 2299, Delight boasted a robust economy and expansive population. When the Treaty of Earth ended the war and declared the StarMech Collective to encompass most of the Taurus Sector, Delight stood ready to field the military force needed to back its claim.

During the height of the Thuldans offensive in GW2, after Liber and Tallis had already fallen to the Empire, a Thuldans armada entered the system on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2400. After two days of fighting, the StarMech task force regrouped around Chance, allowing the Thuldans to barrage the capitol world of Delight. When the *ITV Dominant* detected an entire StarMech fleet en route through drivespace, the Thuldans departed the system, leaving a

wound to the Collective's pride that has yet to heal.

## **Straka**

Straka is a world rich in heavy metal resources. The only problem inherent to mining these minerals is the environment of the planet itself – poisonous, choking air, scorching heat and an abundance of harmful radiation. Despite this, numerous companies have mined Straka over the years. Eventually though, they tire of the constant difficulties. Mendoza Mining Technologies currently holds the contract for Straka.

## **Chance**

Though the planet lacked the appropriate oxygen levels when first colonized, the StarMechs terraformed Chance into a habitable world over time. Today, it has become the new capitol of the StarMech Collective. Most of StarMech's top bureaucracy, including the Board of Directors, resides in the capitol city of Bacchus. Stellar Security Command has settled into its newly constructed headquarters, and embassies for all twelve foreign nations are up and running. Although the relocation of the Collective's seat of government proved an immense task, CEO Adam Spiner remains confident in the new capital while Desire is slowly rebuilt. The flood of refugees since the Thuldans attack on Desire, has turned Chance into an overpopulated world for the last several decades, a problem that grows greater with every year that passes.

Chance boasts one of the largest concentrations of recreational establishments in the Collective. After the destruction of Desire during GW2, most of that planet's entertainment companies moved to Chance and established massive recreational complexes and resorts. The Osiris Waves represents the largest of these resorts as an artificial island with numerous casinos, beaches, and water

50 Light Years

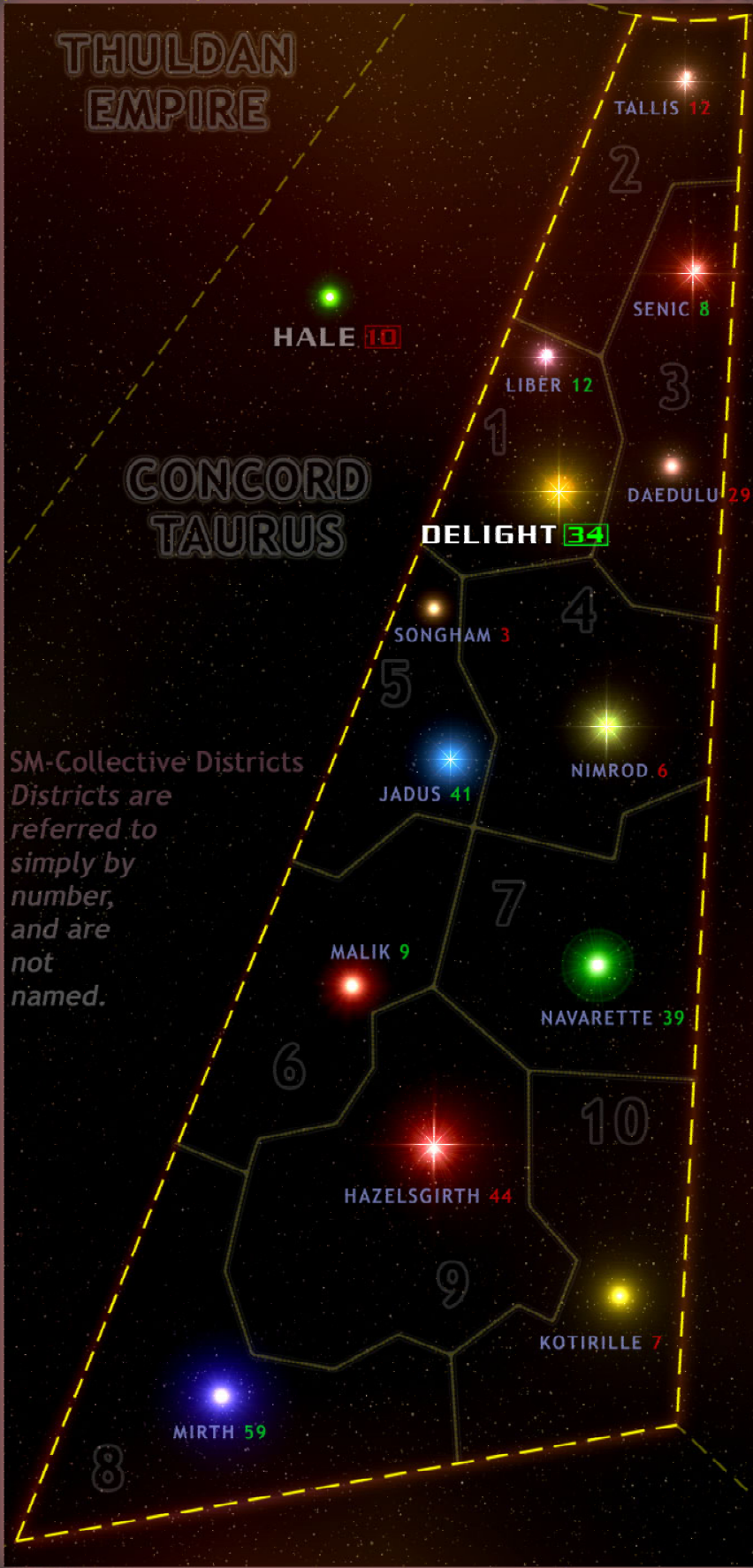
# StarMech

# Collective

## THULDAN EMPIRE

## CONCORD TAURUS

SM-Collective Districts  
Districts are referred to simply by number, and are not named.





parks. Another Chance highlight is the Babel Spire casino, a two-mile high tower rising from the middle of an amusement park that combines Las Vegas garishness and ancient Middle Eastern architecture. Chance is also home to the Cybereum, the largest gladiatorial robot arena in the Collective.

## Oleska

In the system's early years, Oleska presented a prime mining opportunity for StarMech heavy industry. Although StarMech used up its useful mineral deposits long ago, the Collective continues to maintain a naval base on the planet's surface. In addition, since the Thuldans' raid, the government has also funded the construction of a medium-sized shipyard in orbit.

## Desire

When the Thuldans attacked Delight, they had no intention of holding the system, only of raiding it. Once they isolated Desire, the planet's defense platforms, heavy industry, power plants, and government buildings were systematically targeted and destroyed. Fortunately, the CEO and Board of Directors had already retreated with the StarMech military to Chance. Thuldans' Legionnaires seized that opportunity to land and collect military grade hardware and engineering data from Desire. On their way out, the Thuldans' warships damaged several tectonic plates, raking an entire hemisphere with earthquakes and releasing vast amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. The death count escalated to unthinkable levels.

Today, the Collective measures Desire's population in millions instead of billions.



|                  |   |                                       |                              |
|------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                  | <b>Straka</b>   | <b>Chance</b>                         | <b>Oleska</b>                |
| Primary          | Delight   | Delight                               | Delight                      |
| Planetary Class  | Class 3   | Class 1                               | Class 4                      |
| Gravity          | G2 (1.15 g)   | G2 (1.03 g)                           | G1 (0.67 g)                  |
| Radiation        | R3 (90 rem/wk)  | R1 (7 rem/yr)                         | R2 (4 rem/wk)                |
| Atmosphere       | A3 (CO, CO <sub>2</sub> , Fe[CO] <sub>5</sub> )         | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A1 (CO <sub>2</sub> )        |
| Pressure         | P3 (2.6 atm)  | P3 (1.3 atm)                          | P2 (0.5 atm)                 |
| Heat             | H4 (138 C)  | H2 (17 C)                             | H1 (-40 C)                   |
| Orbital Distance | 0.45 AU   | 0.80 AU                               | 1.25 AU                      |
| Diameter         | 7,649 km  | 12,418 km                             | 26,447 km                    |
| Year             | 92 days   | 189 days                              | 261 days                     |
| Day              | 12.4 hours  | 21 hours                              | 40.5 hours                   |
| Axial Tilt       | 22.6 degrees  | 18.2 degrees                          | 7.5 degrees                  |
| Density          | 0.86  | 1.04                                  | 1.2                          |
| # Satellites     | 0   | 0                                     | 1                            |
|                  | <b>Desire</b>   | <b>[Krest]</b>                        | <b>Laurel</b>                |
| Primary          | Delight   | Desire                                | Delight                      |
| Planetary Class  | Class 1   | Class 4                               | Class 5                      |
| Gravity          | G2 (0.90 g)   | G1 (0.33 g)                           | G5 (4.5 g)                   |
| Radiation        | R3 (75 rem/wk)  | R3 (20 rad/day)                       | R1 (6 rem/yr)                |
| Atmosphere       | A3 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> , CO <sub>2</sub> ) | A1 (N <sub>2</sub> )                  | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He, Ne) |
| Pressure         | P3 (1.0 atm)  | P1 (0.35 atm)                         | P5 (gas giant)               |
| Heat             | H2 (30 C)   | H1 (-48 C)                            | H0 (-215 C)                  |
| Orbital Distance | 2.16 AU   | 216,467 km                            | 8.27 AU                      |
| Diameter         | 16,538 km   | 4,834 km                              | 74,296 km                    |
| Year             | 1.20 years  | 41 days                               | 43 years                     |
| Day              | 19.5 hours  | 41 days                               | 29 hours                     |
| Axial Tilt       | 16.2 degrees  | -4.8 degrees                          | 19.3 degrees                 |
| Density          | 0.95  | 0.75                                  | 0.18                         |
| # Satellites     | 1   | 0                                     | 8                            |
|                  | <b>Ironside</b>   | <b>Phebus</b>                         | <b>Ross</b>                  |
| Primary          | Delight   | Delight                               | Delight                      |
| Planetary Class  | Class 5   | Class 5                               | Class 4                      |
| Gravity          | G5 (6.4 g)  | G4 (4.0 g)                            | G1 (0.30 g)                  |
| Radiation        | R2 (50 rem/yr)  | R1 (4 rem/yr)                         | R2 (1 rem/wk)                |
| Atmosphere       | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He)                                | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He)              | A0 (trace)                   |
| Pressure         | P5 (gas giant)  | P5 (gas giant)                        | P0 (0.15 atm)                |
| Heat             | H0 (-205 C)   | H0 (-219 C)                           | H0 (-206 C)                  |
| Orbital Distance | 13.6 AU   | 17.5 AU                               | 25.4 AU                      |
| Diameter         | 100,484 km  | 65,318 km                             | 2,181 km                     |
| Year             | 50.7 years  | 64.2 years                            | 75.4 years                   |
| Day              | 25.8 hours  | 3.5 days                              | 8 hours                      |
| Axial Tilt       | 4.9 degrees   | 21.6 degrees                          | 45.1 degrees                 |
| Density          | 0.12  | 0.27                                  | 0.18                         |
| # Satellites     | 14  | 11                                    | 0                            |

Over 65% of its major cities still lie in rubble. All major business and government centers have relocated to Chance, leaving only reconstruction branches on Desire. The only exception to this is the Church of Humanity Reformation, which rebuilt the Grand Cathedral and continues to annually host the Council of Reform.



## Krest

As Desire's only moon, Krest also suffered the wrath of Thuldan aggression. Even as the Empire's forces bombarded Desire, an enemy dreadnought blasted the domed-cities of Krest, killing 50 million men, women, and children as the habitat depressurized.

Today, several of Krest's domes have been repaired and 200,000 people make their homes on the moon again. Most of Krest's industry now centers around transferring salvageable heavy equipment down to Desire to aid reconstruction.

## Laurel

A mid-sized Jovian world, Laurel contains a high amount of neon in its atmosphere that often manifests in dazzling displays of electricity. No real ring structure exists here, only a sparse group of meteoroids. Of eight moons, none are inhabitable, and only Fisk rises to a Class-2 environment. Beyond a smattering of gas mining operations, Laurel and its moons attract little interest.

## Ironside

Ironside holds fourteen moons and a double ring structure within its gravity-well. Independent miners sporadically work both rings. Of the moons, Paque and Komran contain rebuilt naval bases. Purge hosts an automated sensor relay, and Blackjack serves as a storage depot for ship wreckage from the Thuldan invasion of 2400.

## Phebus

Although the smallest of Delight's three gas-giants, Phebus is still quite enormous compared to terran worlds. Eleven moons orbit the planet, five of which play home to sensor relays, small mining operations, and a naval base.

*"Morale is up. Production is up. Everything looks good to me."*

- CEO Adam Spiner, 2500

## Ross

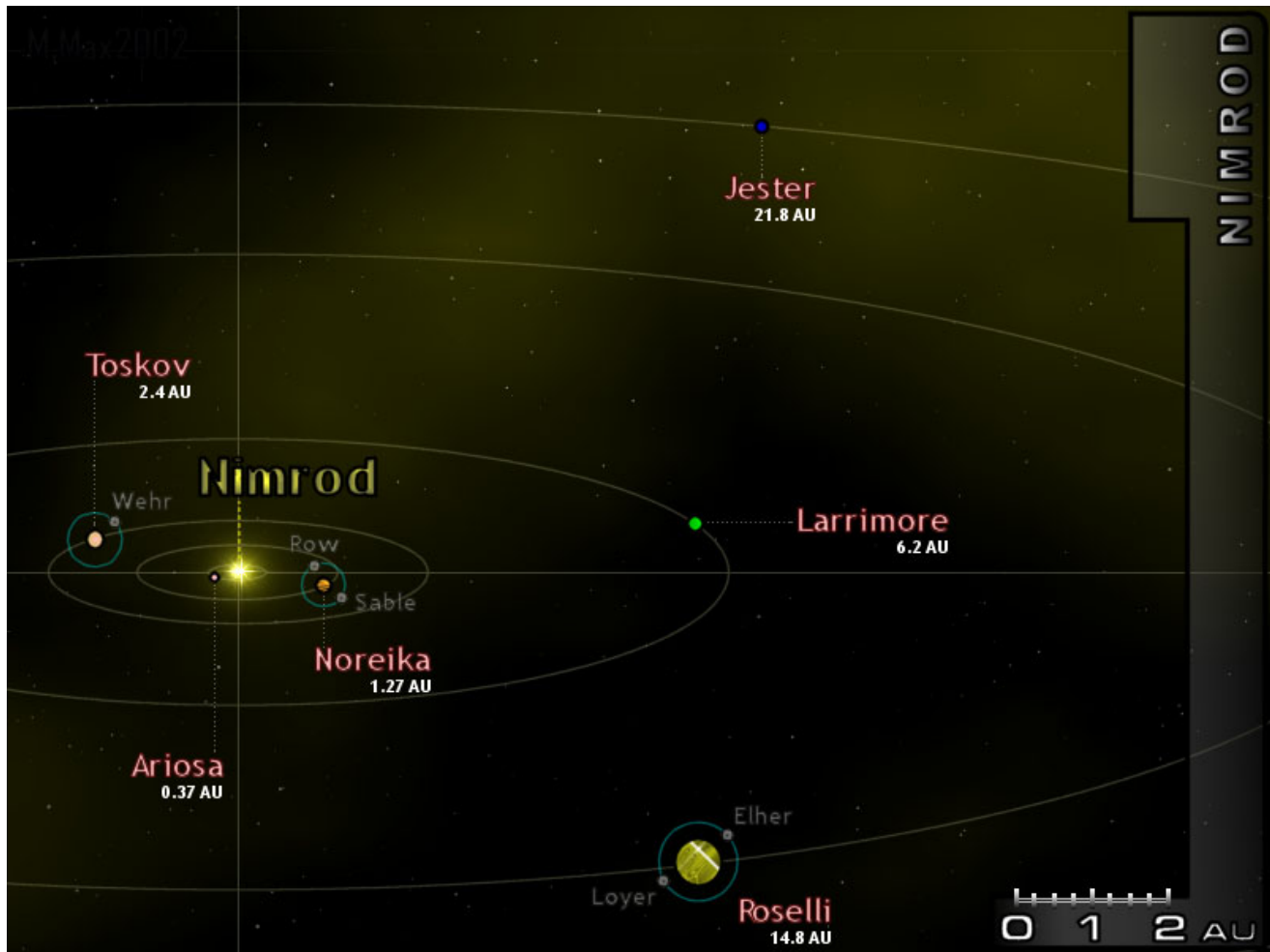
Astronomers speculate that Ross was once a moon of Phebus, and that it broke away from the gas-giant's pull after a comet collision several thousand years ago. While the odds of the moon rejoining Phebus anytime soon remain unlikely, scientists predict it may pass close enough to Ironside to become trapped by the larger gas-giant as soon as 2514.

### Environmental Robots

The devastation of numerous StarMech systems by the Thuldan Empire in GW2 led Collective robotics to a relatively new field: environmental repair. Artificial trees, flocks of birds, and atmospheric satellites now help clean the air on many StarMech worlds. Oceans are now home to schools of robotic fish, sifting pollutants from the water. These fish emit certain frequencies to ward most predators away, and like the birds, feature remote programming. In cooperation with the Union of Sol, StarMech environmental robots have also found their way into terraformation efforts, adapting worlds more efficiently than most human science teams.

## Nimrod

When StarMech charted this G4 system in 2235, they knew they had discovered a goldmine. Beyond the existence of a Class-1 moon around the third planet, the system boasted a dense asteroid belt and several planets rich for mining. Nimrod represented a perfect site for large-scale heavy industry. StarMech settled the system, initiated mining and construction operations, and used Nimrod to build ships throughout both galactic wars. The system's shipbuilding activity continues even today. While certainly not the only naval powerhouse of the Collective, Nimrod became a leading industrial system after the destruction of Liber's shipyards during GW2. Deep inside StarMech borders, the system remained relatively sheltered from Thuldan wrath.



## Ariosa

The closest planet to Nimrod, Ariosa is a torrid world of poisonous air and blasting heat. Despite this, Royon Enterprises carries on an automated mining operation here. The replacement cost of refrigeration units and radiation shielding constantly drains profits, but the harvest of heavy metal compounds make it worthwhile.

## Noreika

This airless rock has been strip-mined for more than two centuries. As a result, almost the entire crust has dwindled down to the mantle. Opace Mining Corporation and Strow Industries continue their operations here by sapping the remaining elements. Its two moons, Sable and Row, were declared "empty" in 2489.

*"We are all sentient. Let us live together."*  
- Ares 7, Clockwork Society, 2495

## Toskov

Shrouded in a thick atmosphere of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen, Toskov remains too unwieldy for terraforming. The planet's surface is quite mountainous, and reportedly contains indigenous animal and plant life. The only real interest in Toskov is its single moon, the Class-1 world of Wehr.

## Wehr

The moon of Wehr holds distinction as one of the oldest colonized worlds of StarMech space. As the population center of the Nimrod system, almost 4.5 billion sentients live on its crowded surface. District Director Tomas Hansworth (Hm/StarMech/TO-12) keeps his offices on Wehr, coordinating Collective matters for all of District 4. The capitol of Lutan houses the center of District bureaucracy, along with several foreign embassies.

Wehr is headquarters to the famous starship racing circuit, RASTAR (Racing

Association of Starships), which attracts the best pilots and starship engineers to its year-round competitions held throughout the Collective. Although teams sponsored by bigger companies such as Starlight Industries and Starprime often dominate these races, independents have been known to rise up with exciting new starship designs.

## **Uras Asteroid Belt**

Between Toskov and Larrimore lies the Uras asteroid belt. Presumably the remnants of an Earth-sized planet hit by a large asteroid thousands of years ago, the Uras belt remains a steady source of mineral resources to this day. This is due largely to the additional mining operations on Ariosa, Nareika, and Larrimore. Analysts predict the asteroid belt will continue as a viable resource for anywhere from three to eight decades.

## **Larrimore**

As planets go, Larrimore is little different than Nareika. The only distinction lies in the fact that the StarMech government never opened Larrimore for development until after Nareika's mines began to play out after eighty years – and that Larrimore serves as home to the Starlight Industries Mega-Shipyard. The mining operations of Larrimore seem no different than those of similar worlds, but Starlight carefully paces their development to safeguard against the mineral depletion that now threatens Nareika.

Orbiting the planet at approximately 25 km is Starlight Mega-Shipyard Platform-1. With over 40 construction bays capable of servicing capitol ships and hundreds of smaller work areas, the Starlight Mega-Shipyard is the second largest single such facility in the entire Collective surpassed only by the massive Starprime shipyard orbiting the planet Chance. Their minor bays accept 50% of their orders from civilians and other corporations, but all other contracts (including capitol ships) come from StarMech Stellar Security. Currently, the shipyards have committed

50% of their capitol capacity to the construction of a new fortress ship for the StarMech fleet. This ship is tentatively named the SMS *Parallax Engine*. It is expected to complete production by the end of 2503. If it doesn't, Starlight Industries would take a considerable blow to its reputation.

## **Roselli**

The only Jovian world in the Nimrod system, Roselli sports a thin ring structure, but possesses several useful moons. Two of them, Elher and Loyer, have been terraformed into Class-1 worlds with proper environmental upkeep. The other moons contain scattered sensor relays and mining operations.

## **Elher and Loyer**

Originally just a pair of ice covered rocks orbiting Roselli, both moons now house 1.5 billion sentients apiece. The gravitational forces of Roselli often play havoc with their orbits, however, and both planets require constant atmospheric upkeep as a result. Elher serves as headquarters for the Stellar Security system forces, while Starlight Industries maintains its corporate offices on Loyer under the newly appointed Vice-President of Production Emery McQueen (Hf/StarMech/DFA-8).

Elher is famous for its year-round ski resorts and many of the Nimrod system's inhabitants take advantage of the year round winter sports on the Valdur mountain range. Starlight Industries even owns a private ski resort that is open only to its employees.

## **Jester**

Hurling through the outmost reaches of the system, Jester is more of an icy planetoid than a planet. With two moons one-third its size, Jester's orbit appears highly sporadic, as if an unseen comedic jester was trying to desperately juggle all three at once. With all the other mineral resources across the Nimrod system, only an unmanned sensor relay station inhabits the planetoid.

|                  |                                       |                                       |  |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
|                  | <b>Ariosa</b>                         | <b>Noreika</b>                        | <b>Toskov</b>                          |
| Primary          | Nimrod                                | Nimrod                                | Nimrod                                 |
| Planetary Class  | Class 3                               | Class 4                               | Class 3                                |
| Gravity          | G2 (1.15 g)                           | G1 (0.35 g)                           | G3 (1.83 g)                            |
| Radiation        | R3 (47 rad/day)                       | R3 (82 rad/day)                       | R2 (3 rem/wk)                          |
| Atmosphere       | A3 (CO <sub>2</sub> , S)              | A0 (trace)                            | A4 (N <sub>2</sub> , SO <sub>2</sub> ) |
| Pressure         | P4 (5.2 atm)                          | P0 (vacuum)                           | P3 (3.84 atm)                          |
| Heat             | H4 (366 C)                            | H0 (-189 C)                           | H3 (75 C)                              |
| Orbital Distance | 0.37 AU                               | 1.27 AU                               | 2.4 AU                                 |
| Diameter         | 3,846 km                              | 7,464 km                              | 26,214 km                              |
| Year             | 72 days                               | 284 days                              | 1.4 years                              |
| Day              | 49 hours                              | 23 hours                              | 4.2 days                               |
| Axial Tilt       | 51 degrees                            | 17.4 degrees                          | 40 degrees                             |
| Density          | 1.6                                   | 0.96                                  | 1.25                                   |
| # Satellites     | 0                                     | 2                                     | 1                                      |
|                  | <b>[Wehr]</b>                         | <b>Larrimore</b>                      | <b>Roselli</b>                         |
| Primary          | Toskov                                | Nimrod                                | Nimrod                                 |
| Planetary Class  | Class 1                               | Class 4                               | Class 5                                |
| Gravity          | G2 (1.06 g)                           | G1 (0.29 g)                           | G5 (6.42 g)                            |
| Radiation        | R1 (4 rem/yr)                         | R3 (75 rad/day)                       | R2 (60 rem/yr)                         |
| Atmosphere       | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A0 (trace)                            | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He)               |
| Pressure         | P3 (1.2 atm)                          | P0 (vacuum)                           | P5 (gas giant)                         |
| Heat             | H2 (25 C)                             | H0 (-172 C)                           | H0 (-241 C)                            |
| Orbital Distance | 301,684 km                            | 6.2 AU                                | 14.8 AU                                |
| Diameter         | 7,611 km                              | 30,454 km                             | 75,461 km                              |
| Year             | 65 days                               | 6.2 years                             | 47 years                               |
| Day              | 18.5 hours                            | 27 hours                              | 15 hours                               |
| Axial Tilt       | 31 degrees                            | 4.5 degrees                           | 57 degrees                             |
| Density          | 1.1                                   | 1.37                                  | 0.18                                   |
| # Satellites     | 0                                     | 0                                     | 12                                     |
|                  | <b>[Elher]</b>                        | <b>[Loyer]</b>                        | <b>Jester</b>                          |
| Primary          | Roselli                               | Roselli                               | Nimrod                                 |
| Planetary Class  | Class 1                               | Class 1                               | Class 4                                |
| Gravity          | G2 (0.92 g)                           | G2 (1.0 g)                            | G1 (0.2 g)                             |
| Radiation        | R1 (9 rem/yr)                         | R1 (7 rem/yr)                         | R3 (24 rad/day)                        |
| Atmosphere       | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A0 (trace)                             |
| Pressure         | P2 (0.75 atm)                         | P3 (1.08 atm)                         | P0 (vacuum)                            |
| Heat             | H2 (-5 C)                             | H2 (20 C)                             | H0 (-210 C)                            |
| Orbital Distance | 140,454 km                            | 218,351 km                            | 21.8 AU                                |
| Diameter         | 8,164 km                              | 6,139 km                              | 1,364 km                               |
| Year             | 74 days                               | 121 days                              | 71.8 years                             |
| Day              | 11.5 hours                            | 14 hours                              | 6 hours                                |
| Axial Tilt       | 29 degrees                            | 21.7 degrees                          | 13.5 degrees                           |
| Density          | 0.85                                  | 1.14                                  | 0.79                                   |
| # Satellites     | 0                                     | 0                                     | 2                                      |

## THE THELEMA META-CASINO

The people of StarMech pride themselves on their endless appetite for pleasure and thrills. The most staid world in the Collective could serve as a pleasure-paradise anywhere else in the galaxy, but where do the StarMechs go for a *really* good time? The Thelema – a casino composed of hundreds of others - where the wildest fantasies can come true.

Built as an ironic commentary on gambling houses, Thelema offers the latest in games of chance. For five centuries, money has existed as a digital commodity. As such, the Grid usually offers the best gambling opportunities due to its ease, convenience, and (with the addition of virtual-reality) more fun than a gambler's feeble biology would normally allow. But rather than compete with the Grid, the Thelema decided to emulate it. The entire casino acts as a simulacrum simulator – a virtual, virtual-reality. Thelema's core is an actual space station. Hundreds of starships, each with a unique gambling environment, arrive and depart constantly on randomized schedules to simulate hyperlinks. House mindwalkers gather data to customize real-time fantasies for customers, and alert the house to anyone who exploits the tables. Patrons drift in zero-gravity through clouds of mood drugs, having artificial arguments or artificial pillow-talk, while robots cater to every whim. The laws are also very relaxed on Thelema.<sup>7</sup>

Only twenty four light years from Delight, the meta-casino situates itself in orbit around a proto-star whose pearly light shines upon a planetary system still in formation. Rocky planetesimals tumble through clouds of nacreous gas. The casino hub is actually a repurposed colony ship and holds all the administrative personnel, communications equipment, and supplies needed to maintain operations. It also boasts the richest gambling tables outside the Rignumor Star Consortium, available only to the wealthiest, most flamboyant high-rollers in the galaxy. Receiving permission to gamble within the central hub is the ultimate status symbol in both the Collective and the Stellar Ring.

Lesser patrons must content themselves with the sub-casinos. These enjoy their own special cachet and frequently dock with each other elsewhere in the system to exchange passengers. The ultra-logical Mechalus casino liner has no gaming tables, but simply charges a fee for every minute spent enjoying the entertainment and food. Those wishing for a more private setting can rent escape pods, which are jettisoned into the depths of the system for discreet delight. Some participants set up side-bets for when the occupants will get 'rescued'.

Meanwhile, appealing androids stalk the various casino liners that tour the system. These machines work as live-action roleplay droids, each programmed to lure patrons into a thrilling, but entirely staged, mission – including romantic conquests, swindled deals, and high adventure. Between the android actors and the real-life shady operators who capitalize on Thelema's feverish atmosphere, it's hard to say what's real and what's fake.

The problem grows more frustrating for debtors. When you lose money at the Thelema, you can either pay the house, or submit to several hours in a gridsuit, where your virtual experiences are broadcast for entertainment purposes. Others may gamble for the right to control your hallucinations—using inhabited realities as gambling chips. Likewise anyone who wishes a holographic adventure, but lacks the means to pay for it, can volunteer as a gambling chip in this manner. Visiting shadows from all over the Stellar Ring also participate in the festivities through Thelema's drivesat servers. Therefore, patrons can never quite tell if their rivals are people, house-owned androids, or visiting shadows. Many even speculate about who runs Thelema, and why. Some say it's a hidden branch of the StarMech government. Some believe an organized crime syndicate controls things. Others think an AI Grid-lord calls the shots. Regardless of the truth, the frequency of miracles and disasters at Thelema has only added to the casino's legend.



## Robot Sports

It comes as no surprise that robotic sports have surpassed the popularity of human athletic competitions in the StarMech Collective. Robots can compete in activities that no human would be foolhardy enough to try, and if the competitors are damaged or destroyed in the process, the show is that much more spectacular.

The Collective has developed many types of robotic sports, and some have evolved to professional levels with governing organizations overseeing rules and regulations. These professional games have gained a large following and generate huge amounts of entertainment and gambling revenue. StarMech fans have proven no less obsessed with their robotic competitors and engineers than other nations with their human athletes. Roboticians with screwdrivers in hand have now taken the place of muscular jocks as objects of hero worship.

StarMechs have developed robot competitions that appeal to virtually all tastes in the Collective. Some sports are simply traditional games played with robotic athletes, such as baseball, football, or basketball. Other competitions involve activities that only a robot could safely carry out, such as the popular MechWar, which pits machines against each other in gladiatorial combat. MechWar is as much spectacle as sport, attracting fans that enjoy explosive action, mechanical carnage, and mayhem.

Another sport gaining popularity is RoboRacers. This contest consists of robot teams competing against each other in various tasks across multiple environments. The competitions include elements of speed, problem solving, and even combat in hostile or exotic locales. One week the teams may race through a derelict ship, hunting down a wily robot 'alien', while avoiding traps and attacks from the other team. The next week they may find themselves in a underwater race to rescue a robot in distress from a dangerous robotic sea creature.

But the robots are only half the picture in StarMech sports leagues. Behind each machine is a dedicated team of grade-A roboticians, AI programmers, and systems engineers that work to create the best possible competitors. Attaining a position on these teams is a highly coveted career and many StarMech hopefuls attend engineering schools that train and educate their students in the same fashion that some institutions train human athletes for professional sports. Ultimately teams from the professional circuit can draft the best of these students into their clubhouse. And rookie engineers have been known to make a big splash on the circuit by offering fresh new design approaches that give their team an edge in the next competition.



## MechWar: Robot Gladiators

Combining the StarMechs' love of robots and entertaining diversions, the sport of robotic gladiatorial fighting or MechWar has become a widespread institution throughout the Collective. Powerful robots outfitted with destructive weapons clash with each other in battle for the amusement of the paying public. Different arena environments and thematic obstacles further add to the spectacle, while challenging the skills of the roboticists and their creations. Steel girder platforms over acid-filled craters, artificial jungles rife with lethal robotic 'wildlife', underwater melees, and post-apocalyptic battlefields strewn with weapons and vehicles are just some of the likely scenarios in these robot battles.

A number of professional leagues of robot gladiators have developed over the years, garnering corporate sponsorship and broadcasting revenue. The most popular and lucrative of these pro leagues include the *StarMech Association of Supreme Hardware* (S.M.A.S.H.), the Fusion Federation, Metal Titans, and the Apocalypse Club. The typical league has a number of contractual members, either individual teams or corporations who supply fighting robots for the games. The leagues provide the venues for the games and put up a purse for individual matches. These leagues have representative arenas throughout most of the Collective and many of their members' robot combatants have become household names. Some of the top gladiators include Samurai Scorch, RageDog, Primus, Mad Rhino, and Koshidun. Whether owned privately or by a corporation, these robots become walking billboards for product endorsements, further adding to their owners' income.

While robotics engineers are generally treated with great respect in the StarMech Collective, nothing can compare to the adulation a roboticist receives when their robot gladiator hits the big time. Some of these creators have become millionaires many times over. Whether for the fame, money, or sheer joy of creation, many a young StarMech has dreamt of becoming the champion in the robot battle arena.

## Sample Robot Gladiator

### RageDog

STR: 18 INT: 15

DEX: 7 WIL: 10

CON: 18 PER: 8

Durability: 18/18/9/9

Movement: Sprint 28, Run 18, Walk 6

Actions/Round: 4

Action Check: 18+/17/8/4

Reaction Score: Good/3

| Attacks          | Skill     | Damage          | Type    |
|------------------|-----------|-----------------|---------|
| Claw             | Melee Wpn | d6w/d6+1w/d4m   | LI/G    |
| 25mm Sabot       | HvyWpn    | d8w/d4+1m/d6+2m | HI/G    |
| Grenade Launcher | Hvy Wpn   | as load         | as load |

### Defenses

+4 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

+3 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Perks: Reflexes, Lightweight Alloy

### Body Type

Processor: Amazing (13 active memory slots)

Actuators: Hydraulics, Alerin Muscle Wire (hand)

Casing: Moderate Neutronite (good quality)

2d4+1/2d4+1/2d4

Chassis: 3m tall, 2m wide (Total weight: 1000 kg)

Data Port: Socket, Telepresence Link

Manipulators: Hand

Propulsion: Legs

Sensor: Holo, Motion Sensors, Sonar

Tools: Various weapons

Key Skills: Armor operation [18]-powered (19); Melee weapons [18]-blade (22), blunt (20), powered (22); Heavy weapons [18]-direct (24), indirect (22); Unarmed [18]-brawl (22); Stamina [18]-endurance (24); Awareness [10]-perception (18)

Notes: RageDog's left hand is fitted with a large claw making it useless for fine manipulation. RageDog can use his right hand to hold weapons or handle small objects as normal. Weapon systems noted are modular attachments, they can be changed in or out.

Description: RageDog is a champion gladiator of the Fusion Federation League. A private group of StarMech roboticists and engineers who call themselves Ragepound Incorporated created the machine. RageDog's personality program projects a cocky, wild, vicious streak when in battle. An amplifier further complements the robot's voicebox to allow wild howls and growls to boom across the arena. RageDog has proven quite popular on the MechWar circuit and his merchandising has made his owners quite wealthy.

## Songham

Best known as the site of the battle that changed the Second Galactic War, Songham first appeared on interstellar charts after a visit by the Earth-based Pendecker Corporation in October of 2237. By the next spring, the bulk of Pendecker ships and colonists had arrived in this K4 system to settle the Class-1 planet of Evangelista. Within the next few years, Songham became the center of Pendecker's operations much as StarMech Incorporated had chosen Delight for relocation. At its height, Pendecker controlled a sector of nearly three-dozen systems. Over the next half-century, Pendecker Corporation extended its sale of computer hardware technology throughout much of the Taurus Sector. In their success, however, they never foresaw the looming conflict with the Terran Empire.

The First Galactic War took Pendecker completely by surprise. With a significantly undersized military, pirates and raiders of every sort imaginable plagued Pendecker's territory. In 2310 the corporation entered into a mutual defense pact with StarMech. Two years later, the Treaty of Earth forced them into the newly declared StarMech Collective. Although not initially pleased with the situation, Pendecker slowly accepted the strong economic ties and protection offered by the Collective. Two decades later, their population scarcely recognized the difference between Pendecker and StarMech initiatives.

In the years that followed, the Second Galactic War and the collapse of Sothvec Industries, brought the Thuldan Empire across StarMech's border, changing Songham into a rallying point for major fleet actions. As StarMech ships fell back from the Imperial advance, Songham's importance grew even further. In 2401, it became a strategic imperative for both sides in the war. As the battle for Songham grew, Orion and Orlamu fleets joined StarMech forces against the onslaught of Thuldan aggression. After monstrous losses on all sides, the Empire finally retreated. A century later, the system still struggles to rebuild from the conflict, but

enjoys an outpouring of support and pride unequaled elsewhere in the Stellar Ring.

## Madera

It took almost fifty years to complete the terraforming of Madera to a Class-1 world. A retreating Thuldan fleet undid the process in less than an hour of relentless bombardment. Two billion people died as the planet's population fled the newly toxic atmosphere. As a secondary population center within the Songham system, Madera did not receive the full attention of Collective terraformers again until 2490. While great strides have certainly been made towards restoring the world to its former state, the atmosphere still contains dangerous levels of carbon dioxide. As a result, Madera remains unlikely to reopen its cities for immigration until 2510.

## Evangelista

Named by the original Pendecker surveyors, Evangelista has ruled the Songham system since colonial times. At its peak population, seven billion people lived on the surface. Thankfully, oceans comprise only 25% of the world, somewhat easing overpopulation concerns. Unlike Madera, the Thuldan bombardment of Evangelista did not so much destabilize the environment as it demolished population centers and industry. A century after the Battle of Songham, 5.8 billion sentients continue to rebuild one of the Collective's oldest worlds. Reconstruction efforts have restored 70% of the planet's damage, and proceed at a pace of an additional 5% per year. Coriolis Heavy Industries leads the work with a majority of the reconstruction contracts from Evangelista's moon, Astenbury.

## Astenbury

In 2401, Astenbury hosted a population of 50,000 in three domed colonies and a spaceport. Now more than 500,000 people live among dozens of domed colonies, many constructed from derelict ship hulls. Many of the survivors of Madera fled here in the years following the Battle of



Songham, and they still work to rebuild their system under the Astenbury-McNamara Corporation. The company, started by CEO James McNamara (Hm/StarMech/DFA-14) is a subsidiary of the heavy industry McNatronics megacorporation. James is a junior vice-president of the parent company, but spends most of his time seeing to their Songham interests.

### Denekas

Containing no atmosphere to speak of, Denekas possessed numerous light metals and plastic-producing compounds. As such a valuable resource for a region immersed in heavy industry, various mining operations pounced on the planet from the commencement of colonization. Now Denekas is a strip-mined corpse of a world. The pace of StarMech industry and reconstruction drained away its resources by 2480. All the major companies have

abandoned the planet for more lucrative enterprises, but several small businesses continue to pick away at Denekas for a living.

### Karma Station

Although destroyed during the Battle of Songham, the Orlamu fortress ship *Shiva* was slowly inhabited by system-survivors and traders while the courts worked out the salvage rights. Eventually, the Galactic Concord granted the Adrenaline Trade Company ownership of the derelict due to the marked improvements made upon the structure during the interim. Now renamed the *SS Karma*, it has become a standard way-stop for system traffic. Though not a military installation, *Karma* has restored much of the *Shiva's* secondary firepower, and boasts a modest flotilla of cutters to discourage piracy. The ATC recently brought the ship's drivesat relay back online as a cheaper alternative to the one



orbiting Evangelista. Currently, they have planned the restoration of two more decks of crew quarters to encourage an influx of permanent residency to the station.

## Tobin

Whereas Evangelista holds supremacy as the less-tangible economic center of the system, Tobin exerts a massive physical presence at Songham. At more than 140,000 kilometers in diameter, the planet is huge even by Jovian standards. Along with fourteen moons, Tobin sports an impressive ring structure of meteoroids and ice crystals. Although more aesthetically pleasing than economically productive, Tobin supports a small number of workers

from Karma Station who routinely collect ice crystals to maintain the station's water and air supply. Of Tobin's moons, Istban and Remn possess thick Class-2 atmospheres, while Walev, Tarelus and Vae house military installations. The other moons contain minor research and mining operations.

## Rhem

Tobin's smaller brother, Rhem is only half the size of the larger gas-giant. Most of its nine moons are little better than meteoroids. Of the rest, Epil contains a SunRun research station and Ignia hosts an Orlamist monastery.

|                  |   |                                       |                          |
|------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
|                  | <b>Madera</b>   | <b>Evangelista</b>                    | <b>[Astenbury]</b>       |
| Primary          | Songham   | Songham                               | Evangelista              |
| Planetary Class  | Class 2   | Class 1                               | Class 4                  |
| Gravity          | G2 (1.2 g)  | G2 (0.95 g)                           | G1 (0.2 g)               |
| Radiation        | R3 (85 rem/day)   | R2 (30 rem/yr)                        | R4 (100 rem/hr)          |
| Atmosphere       | A3 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> , , CO <sub>2</sub> ) | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) | A0 (trace)               |
| Pressure         | P3 (1.79 atm)   | P3 (1.15 atm)                         | P0 (vacuum)              |
| Heat             | H2 (47 C)   | H2 (17 C)                             | H0 (-195 C)              |
| Orbital Distance | 0.81 AU   | 1.3 AU                                | 261,842 km               |
| Diameter         | 5,872 km  | 12,394 km                             | 2,671 km                 |
| Year             | 248 days  | 312 days                              | 40 days                  |
| Day              | 17.5 hours  | 30 hours                              | 15 hours                 |
| Axial Tilt       | 41 degrees  | 27.3 degrees                          | 12.8 degrees             |
| Density          | 0.8   | 1.1                                   | 1.6                      |
| # Satellites     | 0   | 1                                     | 0                        |
|                  | <b>Denekas</b>  | <b>Tobin</b>                          | <b>Rhem</b>              |
| Primary          | Songham   | Songham                               | Songham                  |
| Planetary Class  | Class 4   | Class 5                               | Class 5                  |
| Gravity          | G1 (0.5 g)  | G5 (4.73 g)                           | G4 (3.84 g)              |
| Radiation        | R3 (85 rad/day)   | R3 (65 rad/day)                       | R3 (61 rem/wk)           |
| Atmosphere       | A0 (trace)  | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He)              | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He) |
| Pressure         | P0 (vacuum)   | P5 (gas giant)                        | P5 (gas giant)           |
| Heat             | H0 (-201 C)   | H0 (-224 C)                           | H0 (-214 C)              |
| Orbital Distance | 5.8 AU  | 12.3 AU                               | 18.6 AU                  |
| Diameter         | 23,819 km   | 144,694 km                            | 77,152 km                |
| Year             | 15.7 years  | 36.3 years                            | 57.1 years               |
| Day              | 25 hours  | 9.3 hours                             | 14.8 hours               |
| Axial Tilt       | 9 degrees   | 46 degrees                            | 17.7 degrees             |
| Density          | 2.5   | 0.27                                  | 0.31                     |
| # Satellites     | 0   | 14                                    | 9                        |



## Adventure Hook: Bad Karma

Approximately seven AU from the star of Songham rests Karma Station, formerly the fortress ship *OSS Shiva*. Now owned and operated by the Adrenaline Trade Company, the station exists as a trade center for several surrounding systems, and a perfect place for heroes to explore.

### Background

The heroes can arrive at Songham for any number of reasons, but at least one of them involves meeting with Jora Banson (Hf/StarMech/FA-6), an old friend at Karma Station. She recently addressed a panicked drivesat message to the heroes. The message indicated Jora's belief that someone intends to harm her, and also mentioned she had come into possession of something incredible. She asked the heroes to meet her on Karma Station in a few days; the day they arrive in the system.

The heroes have the room number Jora booked in advance, and she has already logged into the registry. But, when they go to her room, she is mysteriously absent. After waiting awhile Jora never turns up.

If they investigate, several clues can be discovered by skills such as *Investigate-search*, *Knowledge-deduce*, and *Awareness-perception*. Someone has attempted to cover up signs of a struggle. No valuables have been removed from the room, yet the contents of all drawers and cabinets are in a state of disarray, as if someone had searched them. The computer records show that Jora made no comm calls, but did use the Grid to monitor incoming ship manifests.

GMs should create additional clues of their own to accommodate the adventure hook: a damaged handgun, missing security surveillance recordings, etc.

What happened really happened? Jora was careful not to present an open target, looking for a place to hide her discovery. She knew she had attracted someone's attention, but did not know their identity. She monitored passenger manifests to keep an eye out for her stalker, but gardhyi don't use ships!

A gardhyi eventually starwebbed onto the station, found Jora's room, and kidnapped her. He set up a small portion of the Karma station outside the registered area with life support, and holds Jora prisoner while conducting an interrogation. Although she has admirably resisted, she will soon wear down and reveal the location of her package: stashed in a security vault of the station under the heroes' names. Indeed, station personnel may send a Grid-message to the heroes sometime after they arrive on the station (but after the mystery begins to unfold) inquiring whether they wish to access their vault.

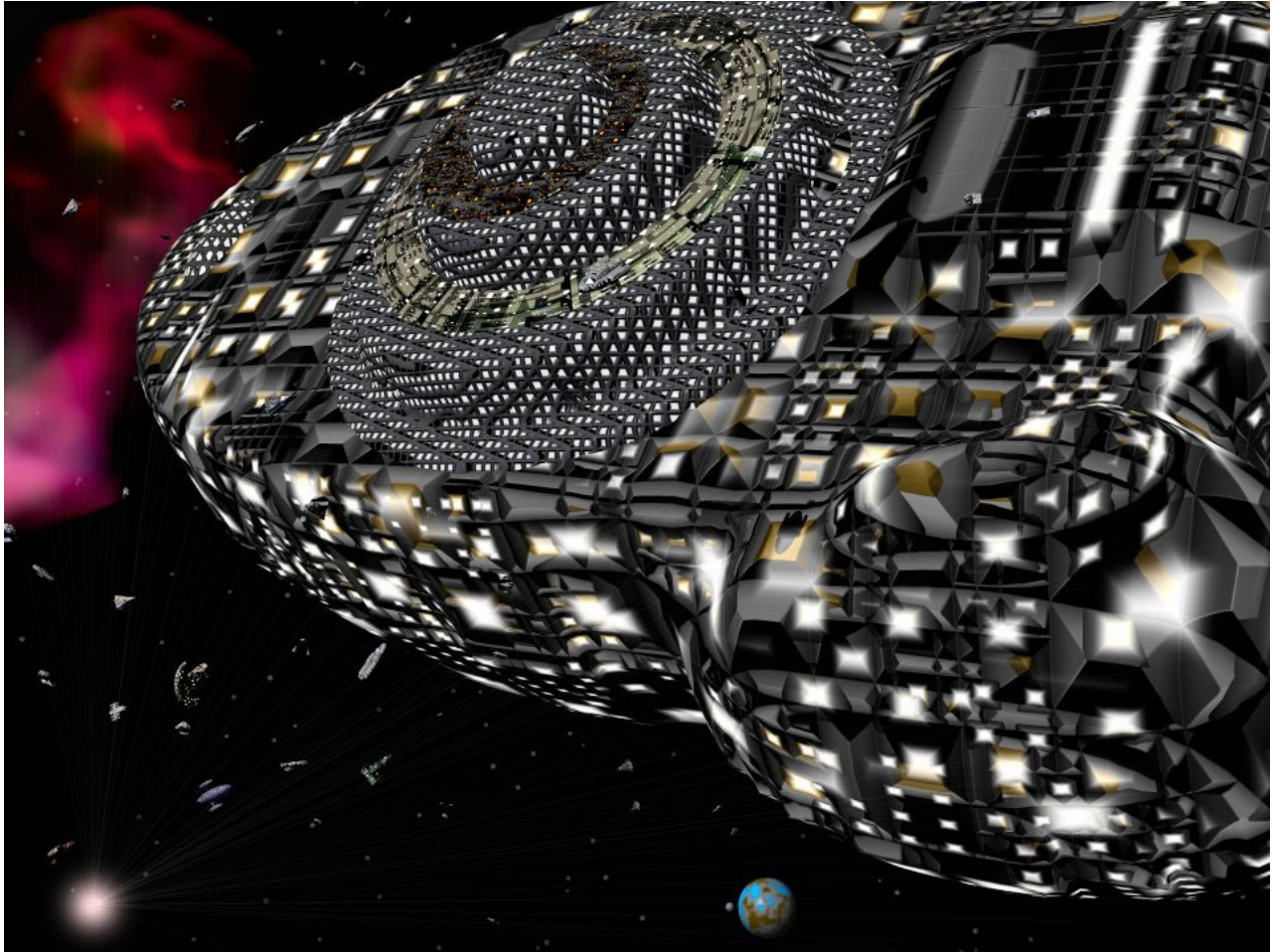
Jora isn't exactly sure what importance the package actually has, but she had a xenologist examine it, and he assured her it represented an unprecedented and valuable discovery. Little could she or the xenologist have known that the organism contained within is a dead teln'og, one of the External aliens that plays host/delivery system to the teln parasite (see *Stardrive Campaign Setting* pg. 187 for details). The gardhyi knows, and his masters sent him to destroy the creature to help conceal the External presence within human society.

### Supporting Cast

The GM should probably flesh out Jora Banson and the gardhyi for the adventure. Jora is a freelance security consultant, and would probably have skills like *Investigate*, *Stealth*, *Technical Science*, *Street Smart*, and other related skills.

Statistics and information for the gardhyi can be found on pg. 120 of the *Alien Compendium*, pgs. 86-88 of *Beyond Science*, and also within the *Externals ESD* online release. It represents a major adversary and should provide quite a challenge to the heroes.

Particularly crafty or harsh GMs may wish to complicate the heroes' task by adding teln-infected individuals on the station sent to aid the gardhyi. Perhaps these individuals have even brought along another teln'og in order to infect Jora and force her to reveal the package's location.



*As a major economic fixture of the Songham system, Karma Station welcomes its new arrivals.*

## **Other Major Systems of the Collective**

The StarMech Collective controls ten different sectors of space. More than 530 billion citizens inhabit 85 star systems, and the Collective controls ten times that many, though several remain unfit for settlement. Even during the rebuilding of its core infrastructure, StarMech space remains a place of infinite excitement, and Starmechs wouldn't have it any other way.

### **Daedulus**

Daedulus is the political center of District-3. While District Director Talia Winford maintains offices on the world of Vanlith, the system's political clout has less

to do with her and more to do with the presence of the Landon family. The Landons and SunRun Industries became the Collective's prime stardrive manufacturer during GW2, and continue to dominate the StarMech market. Although hundreds of other major businesses operate in Daedulus, none possess the capital or political assets of SunRun. The Landon Corporation even owns two small gas-giant moons for R&D testing.

The *Quantum Muse*, a large space station orbiting Vanlith, is home to an eclectic group of spas, art galleries, theaters, and music venues. SunRun Industries owns the station and spends a sizable amount of money to attract renowned artists from all over known space to perform and work on the station. The Landons hope to make the Daedulus



system the cultural center of the StarMech Collective and the *Quantum Muse* is the first step in their plan. Cynics would say this is purely a political move by the Landons to increase their respectability and influence.

## Liber

Before Nimrod, before Songham, and before even Delight became successful systems, Liber grew into the largest burgeoning economy in the entire Taurus Sector of space. By the beginning of the Second Galactic War it served as the cornerstone of StarMech business and politics, often overshadowing Delight. In 2395, the Thuldan Empire obliterated the StarMech fleet stationed at Liber and conquered the system. By the time Collective forces liberated the system six years later, the Thuldans had already ravaged it. They destroyed the industrial base, decimated the population and severely compromised the Class-1 environments of several moons and planets. Whether Liber will ever recover from GW2 is a matter of conjecture, but the

effort will take billions of Concord dollars and at least a century of work.

## Malik

Although the Malik system had no habitable worlds in 2320, Vossler Industries saw the construction potential of the dual asteroid belts and purchased the development rights. Then they built a capitol-class mega-shipyard. Fifty years later, Malik sat among the top five ship construction facilities in the Collective. When StarMech Security Division put out contracts for three new fortress ships, Vossler successfully lobbied for one of the bids. The SMS *Sharizad* is scheduled for completion in 2505.

Beyond Vossler's shipyards, StarMech also has plans to populate the system. The third planet from the K3 star, Vardaras, has been terraformed from a Class-3 to a Class-2 environment. Over the next two decades, and with the assistance of the Solars, the Collective hopes to see Vardaras reach Class-1 status.



## Navarette

Charted in 2322 by StarMech exploration ships, Navarette received little attention from settlers until 2355. The fourth planet from Navarette originally held a Class-2 environment with far too little oxygen to sustain human life. The Babylon Corporation nearly bankrupted itself terraforming the planet and introducing exotic flora and fauna to the ecosystem, but in 2357 Gomorra opened up as the most exciting pleasure planet in the Collective.

Today, Gomorra is known throughout the Stellar Ring as the wildest, most hedonistic world in human space. Having long ago purchased a wide berth from officers of the Collective Substance Control, the Babylon Corporation imports diversions, delicacies, drugs, and entertainment of all kind, no matter how illicit. Top business executives and wealthy individuals from around the Collective and beyond, vacation on Gomorra year-round.

Recently, an up-and-coming district assistant supervisor of the CSC has turned his head toward Gomorra, rightly believing Babylon employs dangerous narcotics and other contraband in servicing their clientele at the pleasure resort. Field Agent Margaret Anastasia (Hf/StaMech/FA-14) is on her way to infiltrate the Babylon staff at Gomorra.

## Senic

One of the older systems in the Collective, StarMech colonized Senic in the years immediately prior to the First Galactic War. Now it has become a first world system and an economic hub. The planet Aspen holds 8 billion people, with another 3 billion scattered throughout the rest of the system. While Senic makes money simply due to its convenience as a commercial way-stop, the true profit comes from the robotics industry. Wavelength Robotics, one of the industry's leaders, keeps its corporate headquarters on Aspen, along with a joint research center of the Asimov League. Rumors persist that Wavelength may be involved in the development of the

*Starhammers*, the next wave of automated *Warhulk*-class battleships.

Aspen offers a large number of robotic-based entertainment venues and one of the most famous is the Prismatic Temple. This huge compound is a playground of drugs, dancing, and erotic fare set off by the otherworldly designs of the robots that service its customers. Every robot is a work of art in its own right, from the beautiful to the grotesque. If desired, a customer could dine and dance with both angels and devils at the Prismatic Temple's never-ending party.

## Tallis

When StarMech Incorporated discovered two natural Class-1 planets here in 2250, Tallis became their third claimed system. By the end of the First Galactic War, Tallis had developed into a leading industrial base for 3 billion souls, one of the great success stories of the Collective. All that changed in 2398 as a Thuldan armada led by the fortress ship *ITV Centurion* overwhelmed the StarMech defense force in Tallis, claiming control of the system. For four years, the worlds of Tallis suffered under the military rule of Thuldan Legions while they pillaged the system's resources. When a joint StarMech/Solar fleet arrived to liberate the system in 2402, the Thuldans "scorched the earth," bombing all populated worlds on their way out. Today, Tallis is home to only 500,000 sentients, and the reconstruction efforts will take generations to complete.

*"Now Emma, Talia Winford assures me that so long as we keep our noses clean, you'll be filling a vice-directorial seat by this time next year. After that, who's to say how far you could rise?"*

- William Landon, 2501

*"I'm telling you Adam, Talia's planning something! She's not just going to let me slide right into office. Thayne can see it, why can't you?"*

- Gretchen Strong  
Director of Interstellar Affairs, 2501

## Recreational Drugs of the StarMech Collective

The following recreational drugs are currently on the market in the StarMech Collective. These drugs have been certified by the Collective Substance Control for legal sale and consumption.

### Drug Categorizations and Effects

**Stimulant:** Use the rules in the *Alternity Players Handbook (PHB)* or *Stardrive Arms and Equipment Guide (AEG)*.

**Depressant (Sedative):** Use the rules in the PHB or AEG.

**Narcotic (Analgesic):** Use the rules in the PHB or AEG.

**Hallucinogen:** Use the rules in the *Dark Matter Arms and Equipment Guide*. For those of you without the book here is a short rundown. The hero starts with a +4 penalty to all actions and action checks. Every hour 1 point is taken from this penalty. Also a user suffers a penalty to any Intelligence feat check to recall events that happened during the use of the drug. This penalty is equal to the drug penalty at the time of the event.

### Amber

Also known as: Glow

Description: Gold translucent pill. Taken orally.

Amber is a narcotic made artificially in laboratories. Originally created by Terran scientists to offset the discomfort of hi-g space travel before gravity technology was introduced by the Fraal. It is one of the safest narcotics available and has a built-in chemical mechanism that prevents withdrawal effects and physical addiction. Its effects include pain relief and a mild euphoria many users describe as a warm comfortable glow.

Game Effects: Treat as an analgesic.

### Blue Turban

Also know as: Psyche

Description: Blue translucent capsule with silver flecks inside. Taken orally.

Blue Turban is a hallucinogen developed from an alien plant extract originally discovered by explorers who noted its use

by a primitive species on the planet Zeal. Members of the species indicated the ingestion of the plant gave them messages from the spirits. The explorers found the plant actually gave a minor boost to certain ESP psychic abilities. Even non-psychics who ingested the plant would sometimes gain a limited burst of psychic activity. Scientists have further developed the natural extract to create a safer and more potent version of the drug. Its effects include a boost to certain ESP abilities for mindwalkers and a temporary use of those ESP skills by people without the psychic ability. The user also experiences visual hallucinations that make everything more exaggerated, vivid, and colorful. Some users describe it as seeing everything in caricature.

Game Effects: Treat as a hallucinogen with a starting penalty of +3. Mindwalkers or talents with *ESP-empathy* and/or *ESP-psychometry* receive a temporary boost to their power and gain one temporary rank in the ability or abilities for the duration of the drug's effect. If a psychic just has the broad skill ESP he may use those specialty skills at rank 1. Characters who don't have the ESP ability are able to use *-empathy* or *-psychometry* as if they have the broad skill ESP (+1 penalty to usage) for the duration of the drug's effect. The normal +3 penalty for hallucinogens does not apply to the use of the *-empathy* and *-psychometry* skills.

### Chimera

Also know as: Triple Kick

Description: Red/blue/yellow syringe, thick green fluid inside. Taken by dripping on tongue.

Chimera is a hallucinogen made from the slimy secretions of the spectral lizard, a native of the planet Aquarr in the Bravos system. An unfortunate explorer discovered the effects of the secretions by accidentally touching the slime with a bare hand. A few hours later he killed himself when he attempted to shoot the imaginary spider biting his ear. StarMech chemists then developed the secretions into a less potent version of the substance and it soon became a popular drug among partygoers. Its effects include hallucinations derived from the user's mind that appear as very



real three-dimensional images of their conscious and subconscious desires. Sometimes a bad hit will make the user's nightmares appear instead.

Game Effects: Treat as a hallucinogen with a starting penalty of +5.

### **Cyclone**

Also known as: Storm, Crackle

Description: Black patch with red lightning bolt. Absorbed through skin when applied.

Cyclone is a stimulant made artificially in laboratories. Cyclone was developed by Solar chemists for use by soldiers to fight battle fatigue. It quickly became popular for users wanting to party all night long with a little artificial help. Its effects include increased adrenaline and energy, as well as a slight increase in muscle speed and reactions.

Game Effects: Treat as a stimulant with an additional point of fatigue or stun damage offset. The user also gains a temporary 1-point increase to his action check score.

### **Dragon**

Also known as: Lizard, Liz

Description: Green translucent pill shaped as an Oriental dragon. Liquefied by heating then applied intravenously with a syringe.

Dragon is a narcotic developed from a genetically engineered opium plant. This drug was originally created by a criminal organization during the early 22<sup>nd</sup> century on Earth and became very popular in the counterculture scene. Now the super opium is grown on vast farms in StarMech space, harvested and processed by robotic farmers. Its effects include pain relief, a very strong euphoria, and a slowdown of breathing putting the user in a restful trance.

Game Effects. Treat as an analgesic with an additional 1 step of pain penalties ignored. Also a +2 penalty is added to any Awareness checks.

### **Eros**

Also known as: Kiss, LP9

Description: An opaque red heart-shaped pill. Tastes and smells like strawberry. Taken orally.

Eros is a stimulant/hallucinogen made artificially in the laboratory. This drug was designed by StarMech pharmaceutical companies and marketed to the younger party-going crowd as a party enhancement drug. Its effects include increased energy, increased sexual desire, and mild hallucinations that include colors emanating from people and objects.

Game Effects: Treat as a stimulant with one less point of fatigue or stun damage offset. Also treat as a hallucinogen with a starting penalty of +2. The user is also more susceptible to Interaction-seduce attempts and a -2 step penalty is applied to his resistance modifier.

### **Gamma Z**

Also known as: Zee

Description: An opaque yellow Z-shaped pill. Taken orally.

Gamma Z is a depressant made from genetically designed fungus in laboratories. Colonists on an alien planet, who stumbled upon its creation when they attempted to create edible fungus suited to the environment, designed this drug. The colonists found it was a great substitute for alcohol without the nasty effects of a hangover the next day. Its effects include drunken dizziness, a loss of balance and reaction speed, and a slowdown in mental processing.

Game Effects: Treat as a sedative.

### **Glimmer**

Also known as: Glim

Description: White capsule with wavy blue lines, blue liquid inside. Taken orally.

Glimmer is a narcotic artificially made in a laboratory to mimic opiates. StarMech pharmaceutical companies designed this drug as an alternative to the more powerful Dragon. This drug has become popular and is used by the average StarMech who takes a little caution in their recreational pills. The drug's effects include euphoria, slight pain relief, and a slight dulling of senses.

Game Effects: Treat as an analgesic with one less point from the total steps of pain penalties ignored to a minimum of 1. Also a +1 step penalty is added to any Awareness checks.

### **Jazz**

Also know as: Blueboy, Little Boy Blue

Description: Dark blue pill with the shape of a musical note stamped into it. Taken orally.

Jazz is a depressant/hallucinogen created by the StarMech pharmaceutical companies and marketed as the after work relaxer. The scientists engineered this drug to connect audio input with the optic nerves, so any sound heard would create a mild hallucination of colors and shapes for the user. This drug is very popular at dance clubs and music concerts, adding new levels of sensation to the experience. Its effects include a slight drunken dizziness, a slight loss of balance and reaction speed, and a slowdown in mental processing.

Game Effects: Treat as a sedative with a starting penalty of +2. The effects of the hallucinogen add a +1 step penalty to Awareness checks.

### **Magus**

Also know as: Wizard, Arcane

Description: A black gelatin pill with a red laughing face on one side and a crying face on the other. Taken orally.

Magus is a narcotic with some hallucinatory properties made by a StarMech cult leader with a genius for chemistry. She believed in a strange universal force called the Magus who she thought could be contacted when the mind reached an altered state caused by drugs. She gained many followers who enjoyed the free drugs she dispensed, but she finally grew tired of the false converts. She developed a small pharmaceutical company and marketed the drug Magus to the masses, hoping to spread her message through the time-honored manner of popular consumption. A small holo chip comes with each package of Magus that plays a small message from the cult leader explaining the religion's belief system. Most users ignore the holo and enjoy the fine quality drug. The effects of Magus include a strong euphoria and pain relief. The drug also slightly alters the audio senses so every sound takes on a deep timbre and resonance.

Game Effects: Treat as an analgesic.

### **Novadust**

Also known as: Dust, Gold Dust

Description: White capsule with a gold spiral, yellow powder inside. Sniffed through nose.

Drug-designers created Novadust as a hallucinogen from alien mold found on the icy planet of Taos in the Ramses system. StarMech laboratories now grow this mold under the same conditions of its home world. The mold starts growing when exposed to higher temperatures than -10 degrees Celsius and shoots out a fine dust. This dust is refined with a simple chemical process to make Novadust. The drug has an extremely long duration and can actually be passed to other people through intimate contact (i.e., kissing, etc.), up to one full day from its original ingestion. Novadust causes mild hallucinations of translucent images that are absurd representations of the person's thoughts. For instance if a person thinks about his dog, it might appear in a top hat and tap dance.

Game Effects: Treat as a hallucinogen with a starting penalty of +2. The duration of the drug is 24 hours so the user is at a +2 step penalty for the first 12-hour period and a +1 step penalty for the remaining 12 hours. Anyone coming into intimate physical contact with the user during this period must make a Constitution feat check or also become affected by the drug.

### **Panther**

Also known as: Kitty

Description: This black pill looks like a cat's head. Taken orally.

Panther is a stimulant created by Solar pharmacists for athletes. Originally made for combat sports such as boxing, martial arts, or wrestling, Panther produces a boost of energy without any messy side effects. Now many partygoers use it to stave off fatigue. It's relatively safe and even the most timid of Starmechs are likely to use it.

Game Effects: Treat as a stimulant with three less points of fatigue or stun damage offset (to a minimum of 1). As the duration of the drug expires, half of the points originally offset return as fatigue damage first, and then carry over into stun damage.

### Smooth

Also known as: Cream, Silk

Description: A small green dispenser bottle with a blue "S" on both sides, blue liquid inside. Tastes like wintergreen gum. Bottle contains 4 doses. Taken by dripping on tongue.

Smooth is a depressant made by drug companies for recreational purposes. Smooth is often used by people who seek the mellowing effects of a depressant but still desire the full use of their mental faculties. Its effects include a very mild drunken dizziness and a slight loss of physical reaction time. However, mental processes remain unaffected.

Game Effects: Treat as a sedative with only a +1 step penalty to physical actions. Mental actions are unaffected by the drug.

### Spectra

Also known as: Swirl

Description: A round lollipop with a rainbow colored swirl. Taken by licking.

Spectra is a hallucinogen made by a chemist attempting to create a drug to enhance the ESP abilities of a mindwalker. He failed in that aspect but created a drug that became an amusing distraction for its users. Spectra causes an individual to see colorful auras around other people or even objects. These auras reflect the user's interpretation of the other's emotional state rather than any true readings of psychic emanations. So a smiling and laughing person might appear to have a bright golden glow around them if the viewer perceived them as joyful. However, a paranoid viewer, who perceived the laughter as an attempt to ridicule them, might see violent red colors with black lightning bolts emanating from the individual instead. The viewed individual's true emotional state has no effect on the aura whatsoever.

Game Effects: Treat as a hallucinogen with a starting penalty of +2.

### Starshine

Also known as: Shine, Starbright

Description: Translucent pill with a yellow star-shaped center. Taken orally.

Starshine is a depressant developed by a Terran pharmaceutical company for purely recreational reasons. Originally made for early colonists before the Collective even existed, Starshine became a widely used drug to help explorers unwind after a long day of work in hostile environments. In modern times, Starshine remains a popular drug of choice for nightly parties and many people take it as much for nostalgic reasons as its relaxing benefits. Its effects include drunken dizziness, a loss of balance and reaction speed, and an extreme slowdown in mental processing.

Game Effects: Treat as a sedative with a +4 step penalty for physical actions and a +5 step penalty for mental actions.

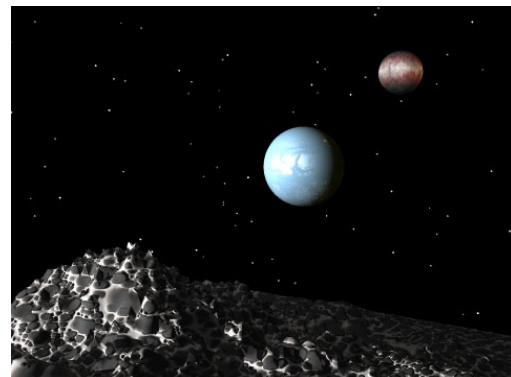
### Whip

Also known as: Snap

Description: Black licorice stick with a red spiral. Taken orally.

Whip is a stimulant developed by a pharmaceutical company to enhance athletic performance. Whip was made popular by the death of a Borealin rock star, Jericho Thade, who smashed his skycar into the corporate headquarters of his record company while under the influence of the drug. Friends of the musician claim he took Whip after making an oath to "burn out and avoid the fade." Regardless of the truth, the drug became very popular in the Collective after the incident. Its effects include increased adrenaline and energy, as well as a slight increase in muscle speed and reactions.

Game Effects: Treat as a stimulant. The user gains a temporary 1-point increase to his action check score.



# **Chapter Four**



## **The Union of Sol**

## **A Brief Timeline of the Union of Sol**

2124: The fraal initiate contact with mankind, changing the course of history.

2160: The first stardrive, a hybrid of human and fraal technology, makes interstellar travel possible.

2173: The first colony is established on the moon of Vesta in the Alpha Centauri system.

2230: The fortress ship *Kiku* is one of the first such ships completed. It later serves as the flagship of the Terran Empire and Union of Sol.

2241: More than 100 systems are controlled by Earth and its various colonial authorities.

2250: To stem the tide of colonial nationalism, the Terran Empire is declared. In protest, the Alpha Centauri system rebels, beginning with a naval engagement at Alpha Proxima. The ensuing *Proxima Conflicts* go on for two-years before finally ending.

2256: The Pioneer Coprosperity Zone insurgency is put down, returning all Terran systems to a state of relative calm/control.

2298: The Thuldans Colonial Authority declares independence from the Terran Empire. Diplomatic attempts are unable to bring them back into the fold.

2299: The Rigunmor Star Consortium and several other colonies follow the Thuldans in declaring independence. The 1<sup>st</sup> Galactic War begins.

2312: The Treaty of Earth ends with the acknowledgment of 26 Stellar Nations, including the surviving Terran Empire as the Union of Sol. Jimol Gatanita becomes the first Sunlord.

2332: The Penates Penal Colony is established in Lucullus.

2346: The violent Mutant Uprising of Tau Ceti shocks citizens across the Union. Accusations of Thuldans involvement help to spark the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War.

2347: The Middle Kingdom officially surrenders to Solar forces.

2351: The Solar Navy successfully invaded the capitol system of the Chrysanthemum Imperium.

2361: The Union of Sol joins the StarMech Collective, the Rigunmor Star Consortium, and Austrin-Ontis Unlimited to form the Profit Confederation.

2380: The Thuldans Empire steps up their attacks on the Solar border to peak levels.

2391: The significant Chara system is lost to a Thuldans fleet.

2395: Acron Gatanita becomes the new Sunlord of the Union.

2401: The Battle of Songham puts an end to the threat of rampant Thuldans expansion, thus ending the "gentleman's agreement" between the FreeSpace Alliance and Profit Confederation.

2402: Chara is reclaimed, but lost many of its resources to the predations of the Thuldans Empire.

2405: The Solar Navy defeats a major Thuldans fleet at the Battle of Arcturus. The Thuldans no longer gain significant territory from the Union.

2472: The Treaty of Concord ends the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War. The Union of Sol's border is fixed at 120% of the pre-war territory.

2497: Contact is reestablished with the Verge. The Union gives up their rights to Penates in return for rights to developing Telemachus.

2501: The present.



# **The People of the Union of Sol**

The Union of Sol has had without a doubt, the largest effect on the course of history of all the stellar nations. After all, the history of the Solar Union *is* the history of all mankind. Even today, the nation remains at the center of human space. They remember and preserve what the other stellar nations willingly forgot, even while looking forward to the future.

As mankind spread outward and into other star systems, it extended the reach of Earth's government. In 2250, its leaders declared the formation of a Terran Empire, but found itself unable to enforce control over the various human colonies so many light years away. When the followers of Gregor Kent declared their independence in 2298 and formed the Thuldan Empire, it signaled the end of Terran control. The First Galactic War exploded as one colony after another followed the Thuldan example, and the Terran Empire tore itself apart, leaving the Union of Sol in its wake.

When the Second Galactic War erupted a mere 30 years later, the Solars met the Thuldan Empire's forces on their borders immediately, and fought them until the war ended. When the Thuldans formed the Expansion Pentad, the Solars reacted by joining with the Rigunmors, StarMechs, and Austrins in the Profit Confederation. By the end of the war, the Union had expanded their borders by 20%.

## **Social Outlook**

Solars are at the center of the universe and they know it. They perceive themselves as generally positive, confident, and convinced that they know what's in the best interests of the galaxy better than anyone else. After all, they have the whole of human experience, history, and wisdom to draw upon. Others often view the Solars as being too proud or aloof, while in fact, most them truly are interested in preserving the best of what the universe has to offer. If you ask them, the Solars will tell you that *they*, more than any other nation, champion the



cause of the poor, the neglected, and endangered. And, if you look closely, you can also see that, better than anyone else, they have mastered the management of cultural diversity one would come to expect in the core of Old Space, where all other nations have their roots.

A serious examination of the Union of Sol reveals that Solars are students of passion. Whatever a Solar believes, he believes strongly and with all his heart. From the cultures of ancient Earth, to the principles of the Terran Empire, and now the Union of Sol, they are committed not only to man's past, but also his future. They truly believe that the Stellar Ring would be wise to look back to Earth for guidance in all things.

## **Political Philosophy**

The Union of Sol governs the central region of the Stellar Ring 100 light years in all directions from the Sol System. The Solar Union is ruled from the capitol world of Earth by a constitutional monarchy. The central governing body is the Solar Council, composed of a fixed number of 100 seats. Above the Council in name, but not in practice, is the Sunlord. The Solar Council wields the true power in the Union of Sol. Representatives usually taken from the largest population centers fill these seats by general election. Therefore, it is quite common for a third-class system to have almost no representation in the Solar Council. Because Sol holds the largest population in the Union, and in all of human settled space, along with the largest political weight within the Union, it controls

## Population Problems

The Union of Sol is, without a doubt, the most populous nation in the Stellar Ring. This has had many widespread effects on the Union and its citizens. Union worlds are characterized as heavily urbanized. Worlds such as Earth, Mars, and Tau Ceti IV are basically city planets with populations in the tens of billions. Massive buildings hundreds of stories high have been constructed to house the populations of such worlds. Some colonies have resorted to building underwater and in space on colony platforms. Unfortunately, worlds with such large urban areas leave little room for agriculture. The Union has been forced to either import foodstuffs from other stellar nations or section off entire worlds as agricultural colonies. However, having worlds devoted to farms and pastures does not leave room for many people to live.

Surrounded on all sides by other stellar nations, the Union has little room to expand. Thus, an "internal frontier" of sorts has been created. This means the Solar Colonial Authority must find a way to make use of any possible place to house people. This has given the terraforming industry in the Union a significant boost. Unfortunately, it comes into direct conflict with people carrying strong conservation concerns.

nearly half the seats. Fortunately, due to recent legislation this may change, and many of the seemingly ignored second- and third-world systems may gain new representation.

The current Sunlord is Acron Gatanita, though he plans to retire soon, and has recently named his daughter Cestre to succeed him.

## Customs

Solars obsess about customs and cultural mores, not just their own, but those of any race, nation, and ethnic group. If expecting a new encounter, a Solar may spend weeks researching the history, customs, and etiquette called for by the

situation, so as to guard against dishonoring themselves or their guests.

Solars take their love of cultural traditions and customs so far that they have developed a system of historical preservation unique among the stellar nations. Almost all Solars adopt a culture or historical time period of particular interest to them and apply it to life in the 26<sup>th</sup> century. Often they take the extra time to closely study the adopted culture's social systems and important historical events. They never really give up their lives in the current age, but instead attempt to blend the expressions of the past with the current era.

For instance, a Solar may select the Roman Republic as the cultural period he wishes to support, and then memorialize it in his daily life. He might follow the Roman system of honor known as Dignitas, and adopt that ancient civilization's philosophy surrounding family importance. Often, he would dress himself in the clothing of the period and perhaps learn Latin as a second language. His life, however, would remain just as firmly grounded in the 26<sup>th</sup> century. He would still hold a modern job and live in the modern world, facing and solving all of the problems and responsibilities of the overlying Solar civilization. The tools and technology of the 26<sup>th</sup> century would merely be aesthetically adapted to continue supporting the cultural image he strives to preserve.

This idea of cultural preservation extends beyond personal preference. Areas of great historical and cultural importance are likewise protected on Earth. Examples include: the Pyramids of Egypt, the Parthenon, the Forbidden City, the Great Wall of China, and the Statue of Liberty. Tourists can view them from afar or on special visits with proper clearance, but special care is always taken to insure no one interferes with the sites in any way.

The Solars have also applied the concept of preservation to environmentalism inside the Union. Although Earth now resembles a sprawling urbanized city-world with over 60 billion sentients, the government has cordoned off certain areas of the planet from the general population. In these preserved regions, animals and

## New Game Benefit

Many Solars choose to preserve ancient Earth cultures by taking on aspects of that society's fashion, language, social or religious beliefs, etc. However, they remain people of the 26<sup>th</sup> century, and live accordingly.

During the creation process, any Solar hero may take one of the following benefits for free:

- Gain a rank 1 Knowledge-*culture* skill pertaining to a specific Earth culture of the past. Examples include: ancient Rome, American Old West, medieval Europe, WWII Japan, etc. This rank represents a basic knowledge of said culture, and may be improved upon at a cost of 1 + current rank.
- Gain a rank 1 Knowledge-*language* skill pertaining to a specific Earth culture of the past. Examples include: Latin, Gaelic, Japanese, Arabic, German, Chinese, etc.

plants that traditionally inhabited the land find a home as well. Solar terraformers have painstakingly repaired many centuries of damage to Earth's biosphere to help these regions flourish again. This work is constantly running on Earth, in order to keep the planet from falling back into disarray, particularly in large urban areas in Europe and the Americas. This same work is performed on colonized and overpopulated worlds all over the Union of Sol in an effort to reconcile their overpopulation problems, as well as to demonstrate Solars as the wisest possible stewards of the Stellar Ring.

## Charity

Solars believe in charity but not in a monetary sense of the word. They don't freely hand out credits (the word most Solars use to mean Concord dollars to this day), but may help with advice and services worth thousands – whether the needy person likes it or not – that is, if they have or currently support a worthy cause.

## Community Service

Solar society does not require or even expect community service on the part of its citizens. Though at times that seems like a cultural paradox for a society who values championing the repressed and endangered, in practice, the Solars have so incorporated community service into their psyche that separating it into a different line of thinking proves difficult. They so strongly support special causes concerning natural treasures or the downtrodden, that it's nearly impossible to dissect the individual sufferers from the grander issue.

Once Solars bond to a cause, it stays with them forever until they either resolve it or die. Even then, they often pass the responsibility along to their offspring as a final wish to carry out on their behalf. Since Solars instill this attitude from early childhood, one rarely finds a member of the Union without a cause. Contrary to popular opinion outside the Union, Solars are also very accepting and supportive of other causes because they share an intense interest in the future of mankind, unless of course another's cause directly opposes their own goals and prior commitments.

## Gambling

Gambling is one of the oldest customs in human culture. Though heavily regulated and taxed by both the Solar Council and various planetary governments, gambling is often legalized within the Union of Sol. Usually, the governing authority of each individual colony votes on the decision to allow gambling inside its jurisdiction.

## Holidays

With so many cultures preserved and adopted within the Union, holidays and celebrations abound. In fact, on any given day of the year, at least one celebration will probably be underway. Though only those of a specific cultural group follow many of these holidays, some are universal:

"**Remembrance Day**" is a solemn holiday marking the signing of the Treaty of Earth, which ended the Terran Empire. Solars don't exactly celebrate this day, but instead reflect on their position in the galaxy and how they can improve it.

"Planetfall" marks the establishment of the first extra-Solar colony at Tau Ceti IV.

"Christmas" is a major holiday in the Union of Sol. By the 26<sup>th</sup> century, the holiday only has a religious meaning to those of the Christian Faith. It became so commercialized that nearly all people celebrate it in some way. It remains a day of gift-giving and family togetherness.

### **Religion**

Earth is the home of all the human race's original religions, and over one-third of the Solar population still practices Old Earth religions. For some Old Earth religions, Earth remains a major symbol of faith. People who practice the Islamic faith are still expected to pray towards Mecca five times a day. A special device is sold to Muslims for a nominal price that can locate the direction of the holy city even on other worlds. Pilgrimages to Mecca are still a major part of the faith, bringing millions of people across hundreds of light years for the journey.

The Roman Catholic Church still bases itself in the Vatican City on Earth. Here, Pope John XXVIII leads the several billion followers of the Catholic faith. The City of Jerusalem benefited much with the unification of the various global powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> centuries. Becoming an international city, it was spared from the centuries of conflict over control that its citizens (and monuments) had suffered. Tibetan Buddhism also benefited from the unification of the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> centuries. Without the control of the Chinese government, the religion found a way to survive and thrive. The Dali Llama still presides over the faith in the Himalayan Mountains. For followers of the Hindu faith, places such as the Ganges River have been sectioned off as areas of great cultural importance.

A notable portion of the Union's citizens also practice Humanity Reformationism and the Hatire faith. Even smaller numbers of Solars adhere to other religious beliefs, with a relatively small number of atheists compared to religious believers.

### **Cultural Preserves**

The Union of Sol is unique among stellar nations when it comes to protecting the past. On the heavily urbanized world of Earth, many areas have been marked off for cultural or natural preservation. Areas of natural preservation include: part of the Amazon Rain Forest and African Plains, some of the old North American National Parks, and others. These places are highly protected and well cared for by terraformers. Sadly, they cannot be visited by humans in person. Historical monuments and other human built structures have also been preserved. Places such as the Great Pyramids, the Acropolis, the Roman Forum, the Forbidden City, the Statue of Liberty (though it is hard to see while surrounded by a massive city), and thousands of others are still in existence and well maintained. These places can still be visited, but there are strict rules governing visitation, how close one can come to them, etc.

Some areas have been built on other worlds to simulate life in a different time period. People living in these Cultural Preservation Zones try their best to live life as the people did in that time period. Modern laws still apply and some modern technology exists in these areas in a heavily disguised manner.

### **Weaponry**

When humanity settled the stars, they brought weapons with them. Due to the high population levels within the Union, the law forbids a person to carry offensive weaponry without the proper documentation. Exceptions to this rule do exist, however. Naturally, the military and police forces are always authorized to carry firearms, as are citizens exercising loopholes in the general laws of each planetary government.

Solar cultural law often states that any citizen can don *period-ware*, which includes traditional weapons of ancient civilizations. For example, a Solar citizen that adopts the culture of the American South in the United States Civil War period could conceivably carry a cavalry sword as



part of his attire without violating the law. Improper use of such weapons still results in standard punishment by the court system.

## Government

The Union of Sol is a constitutional monarchy. The head of state, known as the Sunlord, is given several ceremonial powers while the true power of the state lies with the legislative body of the Union, the Solar Council. The government is further divided into a judicial branch known as the Supreme Court of the Solar Union.

## Executive

The Sunlord serves as the single member of the Union's executive branch. His position is left over from the days of the Terran Empire, when a single emperor and his council controlled all of human space. The position today reflects only a shadow of the power it once held. After the Treaty of Earth in 2312, the people renamed the title and stripped away nearly all of its authority. Although not as powerful as before, the Sunlord still fulfills an important role in Solar society and politics.

Sitting upon the Celestial Throne in the Imperial Palace in Kyoto, Japan, the Sunlord serves as the chief ambassador to all other nations and races in the galaxy. He tirelessly represents the people and political stance of the Solar Union. His duties include calling together the Solar Council for meetings, participating in the formation of major decisions on government policy (which would still happen even in the Sunlord's absence), and exercising veto power over the Council when necessary. The Solar Council can also override this personal veto by a two-thirds majority vote.

The Sunlord also holds an advisory seat on the Solar Council with no voting powers. When absent, he often appoints an advisor, usually his honored successor, to sit in on the decision-making process. He also wields the supreme power to pardon convicted criminals. When all is said and

## Terraforming

A side effect of the limited borders of the Union of Sol has resulted in the never-ending search to solve their overpopulation problem. The most natural answer continues to lie with heavy research into terraformation techniques. As a result, the Union boasts the highest percentage of habitable worlds of all the stellar nations.

The primary problems with terraforming worlds lies in (1) the construction of an atmosphere breathable by humans, (2) reaching a tolerable temperature within the atmosphere, and (3) adapting flora and fauna to thrive in the new ecosystem.

The atmosphere problem is usually resolved in a number of different ways. Terraformers can compensate for a planet's lack of oxygen by unlocking and releasing it from the planet's crust. This often releases hydrogen as well, providing water for the planet. The transportation of vast amounts of water to the surface, often from icy asteroids and moons also accomplishes this important goal. The next step requires scrubbing the newly created atmosphere to remove poisonous elements or compounds, usually through the use of tailored microbes. For instance, chlorine can be combined with sodium to form salt. In this fashion, scientists can break down compounds into more manageable components, and eventually sweep them from the atmosphere entirely.

Bringing the temperature under control sometimes takes care of itself. A large amount of water vapor is often left in the atmosphere after stage one, which then condenses into seas or oceans. This process regulates the planetary temperature, forming clouds that help to trap heat.

The final stage of terraformation introduces flora and fauna to the newly prepared ecosystem, starting up the oxygen cycle. Flora sometimes requires alteration to properly adapt to the new environment, especially in those atmospheres holding a higher  $N_2/O_2$  content. Fauna is rarely altered, as the Union holds mutants, tailored or otherwise, in high contempt. Solar citizens always prefer to alter the planet rather than the species.



done, the Sunlord stands primarily as a ceremonial figure and a rallying point for Solar nationalism.

## **Legislature**

Based beneath the stained glass roof of Unity Palace in Osaka, Japan, the Solar Council truly holds sway over the Union of Sol. The Council exists as another remnant from Imperial times, once acting as the advisory court to the Emperor. Today, the Council has transformed itself into the chief governing body of the entire Union.

The Council comprises a one-house legislature made up of 100 seats. Each of the eight prefectures in the Union elects a number of delegates determined by population census figures. This has led to a vast gap between representation of second- and third-world systems versus first-world systems. For instance, delegates from Earth alone control 42 of the 100 seats. In fact, many systems go completely unrepresented. Nevertheless, the Council still has supreme authority over all planetary governments and even the ruler of the nation himself.

The Council elects a Prime Minister to serve as their leader while in session. His powers do not extend beyond the Council and he serves only as a mediator between the various delegates. The Council also elects a cabinet to run the various ministries of the Solar bureaucracy. These ministries include: Foreign Affairs, Cultural Affairs and Planetary Preservation, Defense, Transportation, Housing, and Health. Finally, the Ministry of Science is based out of India, on the grounds where Jeff Sendir first created the stardrive.

The Council also retains the powers to declare war, approve and break treaties, make laws, tax the people, create currency (now defunct with the acceptance of the Concord dollar), and to make and override laws dealing with specific worlds.

## **Enforcement**

When a law goes into effect, the various police forces of the Union's systems serve to enforce it. Because of logistical

considerations, the police forces do not report directly to the Solar government. Instead, they owe allegiance to the various planetary governments and local leaders of significant cities.

The Union also maintains a national investigative body in the Bureau of Internal Affairs. This group and its agents are charged with tracking down those who commit high crimes such as terrorism, treason, assassination, smuggling, or kidnapping. Entrance into the B.I.A. remains quite difficult due to its high standards.

## **Judiciary**

The Supreme Court of the Solar Union administers the highest laws of the land from the Great Hall in Kobe, Japan, on Earth. Here, a board of 15 justices from throughout Solar space hear cases dealing with violation of government laws. The Court also has the power to decide if a law the Council passes may go into effect according to the Constitution. The Supreme Court is the highest authority on legal matters in the Union and their decisions are final.

At the planetary level, towns and cities also have their own courts. Above these sit the district courts spread across the world, which in turn are ruled over by the Planetary Supreme Court. Each of these judiciary systems also report to the Prefecture Courts, and finally, the Supreme Court of the Solar Union.

## **Union of Sol Military**

The Solar Council directly administers the military through the Ministry of Defense. The Ministry of Defense elects a council of twelve (three from each branch of the armed services) to handle military affairs. They control all aspects of the armed forces, including the assignment of officers, as well as various missions and goals.

Despite these arrangements, the military remains under the firm control of the Council and must obey the will of its appointed politicians. They have divided

## Military Uniforms

Because the people in the Union of Sol have such a connection to the past, it is natural that certain institutions would be effected in their daily practices. The military is no exception. The uniforms of the major branches all reflect different time periods. The Solar Navy wears dark blue uniforms patterned after 20<sup>th</sup> century western military dress. The Planetary Defense Forces wear Dark green uniforms based on 19<sup>th</sup> century Germanic-Prussian dress. The Solar Marine Corps wear light gray uniforms patterned after the Imperial Japanese military uniforms of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Ministry of Intelligence, wears a simple dark blue uniform that appears to look more like a business suit than a military uniform.

In addition, commanding officers of ships and military bases may receive a dispensation to wear a uniform reflecting their personally chosen era of cultural identity. However, the uniform must contain the proper military markings, and must be from an appropriate time period. A Solar officer could never wear a tribal loincloth or a suit or medieval armor, but an American Confederate Civil War uniform or British WWI pilot uniform would almost assuredly find acceptance.

the military into four distinct branches: The Solar Marine Corps, The Solar Navy, The Planetary Defense Force, and the Union Ministry of Intelligence. All branches of the military generally use a style of uniform from the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and a similar ranking system. Certain officers can receive special dispensations for unique cultural uniforms.

### Solar Navy

The Solar Navy is the branch of the military that brings the most pride to the people of the Union. The Union of Sol by no means has the largest navy in the Stellar Ring, hence their "C" grade ranking according to the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of *Fighting Ships*. Regardless, their citizens reserve a special love and idealized vision of the

Solar Navy that comes from long and drawn out conflict with the Thuldan Empire during GW2. After all, the StarMech Collective was ravaged by the Thuldan onslaught, not so the Union.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War, the Solar Navy had to defend an area of space almost entirely encircled by hostile nations. It not only held its ground against the much larger navies of the Thuldan Empire, but actually managed to aid in pushing back the Expansion Pentad and expanded the Solar border by some 20% by the war's end, including some vital conquests in Thuldan space.

Today, it is considered a position of prestige to serve in the Solar Navy. Many families send their children to the various naval academies to begin their life of government service. The navy itself is divided into ten task forces, each headed by one of the Union's ten fortress ships. Each of the Eight Prefectures is guarded by a fleet. Of the other two fleets, one is linked with the flagship and largest fortress ship in the fleet, the *U.S.S. Kiku*. The last fleet is a special operations fleet assigned to wherever it is needed most. Usually, it is placed on the Solar-Thuldan border.

### Solar Marine Corps

The Marines stand as the invasion force of the Solar Military. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War, they were in charge of reclaiming the worlds the Expansion Pentad had claimed from the Union of Sol. Later, they would be in charge of invading some of the worlds of the Expansion Pentad nations, including the Thuldan Empire itself. The Marines are by no means the most prestigious of the military branches, but are among the most loyal to their cause and the proudest of who they are. There are very few members of the Solar Nobility who wish to lead the Marines into battle, and this suits the Marines just fine.

### Planetary Defense Force

The Planetary Defense Force (PDF) is the standing army of the Union of Sol, acting as the main line of defense on every world.

Because the Union has by far the highest population amongst the stellar nations, they have a large body of able-bodied citizens from which to recruit.

The Planetary Defense Force acts as the general defense militia of every world. Recruits generally stay on the planet they are drawn from, but may be called away for duty. In the case of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War, members of the PDF were called to aid in the defense or invasion of another planet. The PDF should not be mistaken for merely a standard garrison force. They are well trained and equipped, and act as the bulk of all Solar infantry maneuvers. During GW2, they were the main reason the Union was able to occupy and hold so many planets. The right training and equipment, combined with sheer numbers is a wondrous thing indeed.

### **Union Ministry of Intelligence**

The smallest and most mysterious of all the military branches, the Union Ministry of Intelligence acts as the espionage branch of the Solar Military and for the Solar government. They are a highly secretive group, in charge of the collection and correlation of intelligence from the various stellar nations.

It is divided into several internal bureaus, each assigned a specific task. There are ten separate divisions of the Ministry of Intelligence. For instance: MI01 is the administrative division in charge of assigning tasks to field agents. MI02 oversees intelligence analysis. MI03 is in charge of Grid-based espionage. MI04 is in charge of internal threats. MI05 studies the technological advancement of other nations. MI06 handles the elite special forces and covert missions groups. The names and identities of the members of MI06 are kept secret, and are only known by the highest military officials. MI07 regulates weapon procurement. MI08 oversees economic assessment and industrial espionage. MI09 polices the Union's mutant population, keeping tabs on the current population and bringing down dangerous mutant criminals. MI10 is a secret.

### **Solar Fleets**

The following is a listing of the fleets of the Solar Navy and their corresponding areas of operation.

For a clearer understanding of precisely where the fleets are posted, reference the Union of Sol map found on page 149 in the current chapter for your convenience.

#### Flag Fleet

Fortress Ship *USS Kiku*  
Sol Prefecture / Special Assignment

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship *USS Alexander*  
Sol Prefecture

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship *USS Atlantis*  
Atlantea Prefecture

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship *USS New York City*  
Peloponnesia Prefecture

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship *USS Sun Tzu*  
Kentaresh Prefecture

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship *USS Tigris-Euphrates*  
Perseverance Prefecture

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship *USS Montezuma*  
Pacifica Prefecture

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship *USS Sidney*  
Aurora Prefecture

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship *USS Kilimanjaro*  
Gatanita Prefecture

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Fleet

Fortress Ship *USS Victory*  
Special Operations

*"I would gladly give my life serving Sol."*  
- Cestre Gatanita, 2500

# Power Players of the Union of Sol

## Union Concerns

### Princess Cestre Gatanita

Princess Cestre (Hf/Solar/DFA-13) is known for being one of the most attractive women in Stellar Ring politics. She stands at 1.6 meters and has a mix of European and Asian features. At age 26, Cestre Gatanita is the youngest of four children in the royal family. Her brother Takeshi is the admiral of the fourth fleet, her sister Allehandra leads the eighth fleet, and her brother Hideki is the governor of Tau Ceti IV. The success of her siblings has led Cestre to be quite ambitious in her life. The result of this has been that her father, Sunlord Acron Gatanita, has selected her as his heir.

She shows a high level of intelligence at her young age, and is fluent in four languages: Japanese, Galactic Standard, Latin, and Thuldan. Though she is highly educated in her own Japanese heritage, Cestre is obsessed with the cultures of other nations. She believes that the more she understands the other nations, the better the Union can compete with them. Cestre has many lofty goals for the Union when she takes power, which is expected within the decade. She hopes to reestablish the Union as a leader in Galactic politics. She also hopes to bring the other nations together against aggressors such as the Thuldan Empire.

### High Admiral Ojore Madubuike

Standing almost 2.3 meters in height, High Admiral Ojore Madubuike (Hm/Solar/TO-0) is a naturally imposing person. Ojore is a veteran of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War's Thuldan front, where he received heavy scarring to his face from an electrical fire. Madubuike has faithfully served his nation for nearly sixty years, and commands considerable influence in the court of the Sunlord.

He is the commander of the Flag fleet, the personal fleet of the Sunlord, and is therefore seen as the defender of the Sol system itself. He commands this fleet not

from the flagship *USS Kiku*, but from his own ship the super-dreadnaught *USS Yamato*. His decision to use the dreadnaught rather than the fortress ship comes from his strict adherence to the Roman ideals of Dignitas. Under this concept, one must lead on his own and gather the respect of others through power. In the 26<sup>th</sup> century, this includes command ships. Because the *Kiku* is the ship of the Sunlord in times of war, he sees it as the Sunlord's ship and not his own.

Admiral Madubuike is known for having a strong dislike of the Thuldan Empire and would like to see nothing more than a rearming of the Solar Navy to attack and end the Thuldan threat once and for all. He is willing to ally with any nation, even the Galactic Concord, to do so.

### Prime Minister Zhen Pei

As Prime Minister of the Solar Council, Zhen Pei (Hm/Solar/DTO/15) has an interesting position in Solar society. He is the head of the Solar government but not the leader of the Solar people. He leads behind the scenes, never having to work within the ceremony that the Sunlord receives.

Zhen Pei is an ambitious man who adheres to the cultural ideas of ancient Han China. He believes that the position of Sunlord is useless, and hopes to somehow eliminate the ceremonious rank. However, because the people of the Union hold the Sunlord in such high regard, he has an uphill battle. He does not wish to achieve this goal through violent means, but rather, he hopes to someday unite parliament behind him in this goal. This comes into sharp contrast with the goals of Princess Cestre, the future heir to the Solar throne. Both have been known to come into conflict at the Solar Council.

### Sunlord Acron Gatanita

Acron Gatanita (Hm/Solar/DFA/22) has ruled the Union of Sol for over a century. In his time, he has defined what it means to be a citizen of the Union of Sol. He is well educated in the customs and cultures of other stellar nations and has a strong belief in the ecological and historical preservation of worlds. He has ruled through much of

the Second Galactic War, the rise of the Galactic Concord as a power, and the recent period of rebuilding. Though seen as a good ruler, the long years have tired him of living in the political atmosphere of the Solar Council, and he wishes to retire. At the age of 150, he realizes the time has come to hand over rulership to someone else. To this end, he has groomed his youngest daughter Cestre as his heir. Acron is still a strong man and a fair ruler, and plans to slowly transfer power to his daughter in the next decade.

### **Karen Michaels**

As the diplomatic assistant to Sunlord Gatanita, Karen Michaels (Hf/Solar/DFA14) must devote her life to her job. That is, she must constantly put up with the whining and machinations of foreign diplomats on a day-to-day basis. She resides in a top level suite of the Stellar Epoch, the most expensive hotel in Paris, France. This way, she can keep close to the foreign embassies throughout the city.

### **New York Interstellar Stock Exchange**

New York City has been a financial center on Earth since the early twentieth century. After the colonization of other worlds and star systems, the New York Stock Exchange became the New York Interstellar Stock Exchange (NYISE) and continues to hold a dominant role as a trade center.

Though there are many other stock exchanges on Earth and in the Union, the NYISE is perceived as the financial center of the Union. Located in the North American Province on Earth, in the New York City Megalopolis, the NYISE stands as a monument to capitalism which even the Rignumors admire. Built on the site of the original stock exchange, the structure towers above the skyline and is constructed on the model of a traditional columned bank design. Here, all stellar nations may have a place to buy and sell stock. Due to its central location, the NYISE is a preferred location to conduct financial transactions. Solars take pride in the historical significance of New York City as a trade center and see the NYISE as a form of cultural preservation.

## **Solar Architecture**

Architecture throughout Old Space is quite varied from world to world. The Union of Sol is no exception to this rule. The Union has many of the oldest colonized worlds in the Stellar Ring. Many cities have, at their heart, the original structures from the first colonists. An example of this is the city of New Home on Tau Ceti IV. In the middle of this modern city, a person can find a small grouping of prefabricated one story structures with the words "Indo-African League Colonial Authority" written on the sides. Modern Solar structures have an odd mix of modern construction and technology with older historical appearances. It is not uncommon to see a building that is several hundred stories high with neo-gothic elements such as gargoyles, arches, and stained glass windows. In a city on the world of Abydos, one can find an arcology built to look like an Egyptian pyramid. While the Solars see this unique approach to architecture as part of their attempts to preserve the Old Earth cultures on the colony worlds, it should be noted that not all structures are constructed with a historical era in mind.

### **Boren-Tsurumaki Terraforming Ltd.**

Formed during the Imperial Era as a small biochemical company, Boren-Tsurumaki Terraforming Ltd. has become the largest terraforming corporation in the Union. Due to the fact that the Solars have limited borders and have the highest population of all nations, they have learned to make due with the worlds they possess. Therefore, the Union of Sol benefits from the most advanced terraforming technology in the Stellar Ring. B-TTL stands at the front of many other terraforming corporations located in Solar space.

They have contracted with the Union government for many of the most important terraforming projects including the Beta Cygni system. Because of its importance to the Union, B-TTL carries weight in the Solar Council. CEO Sandra Brhezlov (Hf/Solar-DTO/15) holds a seat on the Council, duly elected from the Atlantea Prefecture. Her company is well known for its large number



of lobbyists floating around the Council chambers. Some say the Union's never-ending environmentalist trend can be traced back to B-TTL and its strong lobbying power.

### **Hideki Gatanita**

The first child of Sunlord Acron Gatanita, Hideki (Hm/Solar/DFA-14) was given the governorship of Tau Ceti IV, one of the most populated and powerful planets in the Union. As the oldest child, Hideki is furious that Acron has named his younger sister Cestre as the heir. *He* is the eldest sibling, thus *he* should be the next Sunlord. To this end, he works through intermediaries on Earth to undermine Cestre's political works. If she is perceived to be inept enough, perhaps his father will have to choose another heir. Hideki has recently been approached by agents of Prime Minister Zhen Pei who have expressed interest in helping him embarrass his sister. But at what price?

### **The Fraal**

The Fraal hold a unique position in Solar society. The Union itself is not very accepting of aliens in its government, yet Fraal seem to be the exception. This is partly due to the fact that the Fraal have been living with humans for nearly half a millennium. And while the majority of fraal have joined the Orion League over the centuries, the Union of Sol still enjoys the second highest fraal population among the Stellar Nations.

### **The Historical Preservation Society**

Easily among the most outspoken groups of lobbyists in the Solar Council, the Historical Preservation Society (HPS) is dedicated to saving the remains of old Earth civilizations from modern industrial projects. Recently, several acres of land once held as ancient Mayan holy sites were paved over and developed into high-rise urban housing. The natural result is that HPS is crashing down the doors of every Councilman who will listen in order to save the rest of the surrounding land from destruction.

## **Stellar Nations**

### **Austin-Ontis Unlimited**

Although they were allies in the Profit Confederation, the Solars do not currently have a warm relationship with Austrin-Ontis. While the military purchases from the Austrins is an acceptable expense, the Solars are trying to wean themselves away from A-O as a weapons supplier now that their wartime discount is gone. They do, however, plan on continuing to import vast amounts of food.

Perhaps the Solars biggest concern with Austrin-Ontis is their growing competition in the field of terraforming. Should the Austrins ever surpass them in this field, the Union could stand to lose trillions of dollars per year.

### **Borealis Republic**

The Union of Sol has never had very close ties to the Borealins. Even during GW2 they concentrated more on the Thuldan and Hatire fronts, leaving their Rigunmor allies to battle the Republic. As a result, there has never been any true animosity between the two nations, although the Solars do reserve some amount of disdain for the Republic for underestimating the Thuldan threat at the beginning of the war. Healthy trade exists, and the only point of contention is the growing Solar interest in the interstellar entertainment industry.

### **Hatire Community**

Due to its close ties with the Thuldan Empire, the Hatire Community has a very low standing view within the Union. They are by no means against the religion of the Cosimir, but see this nation as a puppet of the Thuldan Empire. However, given the Union's overpopulation problems, they purchase immense amounts of food from the Hatire Community.

### **Insight**

The Solars tend to stay neutral on the status of Insight. The fledgling nation refuses to closely ally with any nation to date, and the Union has other concerns. Still, the Solar Council has been known to

purchase Grid upgrades from the Inseers, while Insight has used a bit of Solar technique in repairing damaged worlds of the former Dreth Commonwealth.

### **Nariac Domain**

The Nariacs were nominal opponents of the Second Galactic War, troubling the Solar border often. Despite this, the Solars reserve their hatred for the Thuldans, and like to keep their options open. They have opened a modicum of trade with the Domain, which seems to be pressing for closer ties. It remains to be seen what the Sunlord may choose to do.

### **Orion League**

The Union and the League have never suffered from poor relations outside the war. Both nations are naturally diplomatic, and swiftly made attempts to heal the wounds of GW2. The only subject of tension is the strong Orion support of the Galactic Concord. Trade remains relatively healthy.

### **Orlamu Theocracy**

The Solars and Theocracy have a generally neutral relationship. The Union does not agree with the Orlamu tendency to support the Concord, but nevertheless maintains trade and diplomatic relations. The Union does not purchase a large amount of Orlamu stardrives, however, as they have continued their stardrive trade agreement with the StarMech Collective from the years of GW2.

### **Rigunmor Star Consortium**

Relations between the Solars and the Rigunmors have grown increasingly cold since the Treaty of Concord. This is mainly due to the competition of the two nations as prime interstellar financial centers. Nonetheless, both nations maintain diplomatic and trade ties, and may well ally again should a Third Galactic War erupt.

### **StarMech Collective**

The Starmechs have been allies with the Solars since the Second Galactic War. Both nations have kept a high level of relations ever since, largely due to their mutual hatred of the Thuldan Empire. The

Solar fleet fields a number of ships of StarMech design and construction.

### **Thuldan Empire**

Thuldans and Solars have a longstanding history of enmity with each another. Having been major opponents in two galactic wars has caused the two nations to have little diplomatic or trade contact. Though oddly enough, both nations have a similar dislike of the Galactic Concord.

### **VoidCorp**

Though they were enemies in GW2, the Solars and VoidCorp share a decent level of trade. The colossal economy of the corporate nation reaches to every corner of the Stellar Ring, and the Union is no exception. They do share one major connection, though. Both nations constantly hassle the Galactic Concord.

### **Galactic Concord**

The Union of Sol is one of the Concord's antagonists. They feel cheated of what they believe to be their natural position as galactic mediators. The Union likes to remind the Concord of this at all times, and is often quite disruptive and arrogant in the Galactic Consulate.

## **Verge Concerns**

### **Aegis**

Like all stellar nations, the Union of Sol has interests in the Aegis System and Bluefall. They hold one island on the planet, Polnesia, serving as their embassy. The Solars use the Aegis system to exert their influence in the Verge attempting to usurp the role of the Galactic Concord.

### **Lucullus**

Lucullus is the Union of Sol's primary military base in the Verge. Since the world of Penates received its independence from the Union, the Solars no longer attempt to exert any control over the former colony. Still, the Union remains a powerful force in the system, interacting with the Barons of Lucullus on a regular basis, good or bad.

## Oberon

Having nearly no significant holds in the Verge, the Union of Sol would like nothing better than to bring the rhodium rich state of Lison into its fold. They remain among the few nations to have good relations with the paranoid state. The system exemplifies why the Solars entered the Verge in the first place, wealth and open territory.



## Katrina Gatanita

Acron Gatanita has served as Sunlord of the Union of Sol for over a century. When he retires, his daughter Cestre will become the first female Sunlord. His sons, nieces, and nephews all hold powerful positions in the Union. But where is his wife? Most Solars don't mention her name anymore.

Katrina Gatanita was a shining star. A loving wife and doting mother, her grace and beauty were beloved by the people of the Union. But in 2464, her untimely death rocked the people of Sol to the core. While taking a private trip to the Australian Province on Earth, Katrina's shuttle crashed into the coral reefs surrounding the continent, taking all hands with it.

Technical malfunction was announced as the official cause of death, although many suspected Thuldans sabotage as the cause. Sunlord Acron refused to tarnish his wife's memory by giving the Thuldans the satisfaction of an accusation.

Following Katrina Gatanita's death, High Admiral Madubuike made numerous bloody forays into Thuldans territory, in a personal effort to honor her. To this day, she remains one of the Union's most beloved and melancholy heroes of GW2.

## Solar Conquests: Chrysanthemum Imperium

The Chrysanthemum Imperium once bordered the nations of the Hatire Community, Union of Sol, and the Delavan Autonomous Region. Displeased with the Terran Empire, they broke away during GW1 and gained recognition by the Treaty of Earth. They were closely tied to Japanese culture, and thrived for a time as a commerce center between the three nations they bordered. It did not last.

When the Second Galactic War erupted in 2346, and the conflict widened into a free-for-all among the various interstellar powers, the Imperium seized the opportunity, claiming a few systems from the neighboring Autonomous Region. Imperium leaders knew they would be among the Solars' first targets, and desired additional resources to mount a defense.

Historians suggest the Union coveted the Imperium's vital trade routes, or perhaps saw the nation as small and weak by comparison. The Imperium also became a target of conversion-by-the-sword tactics via Hatire Crusaders as Delavan territory continued to fall. Caught between these two superior powers, the Chrysanthemum military became stretched to the limit. Their remaining neighbor, and one-time victims, the Delavans, also suffered under Hatire assault and refused to spare the Imperium any aid or ally against their common foe.

By 2349, the Imperium's flag ship, the fortress ship CIS *Mempo*, was destroyed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Solar Fleet. In 2351, their only other fortress ship, the CIS *Tora*, fought a last ditch effort to defend the Imperium's capital system. Following the total military victory, the Union of Sol absorbed the Imperium into its territory. When the war ended over a century later, the Chrysanthemum culture had all but disappeared. Now, almost thirty years after the Treaty of Concord, they exist only as a lesson in Solar history books.

Those rare heroes descended from the Chrysanthemum Imperium have an appreciation for fine culture. At no cost, gain for free, with a -1 bonus to specialty skill uses, either the Creativity or Entertainment broad skills.



#### **Solar Conquests: The Middle Kingdom**

Once situated between the Union of Sol and Austrin-Ontis Unlimited, the Middle Kingdom suffered an ill fate as a stellar nation from its onset. A last minute break away of GW1, they declared their independence on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2311, mere months before the Treaty of Earth was signed in 2312. The former regional governor, Ming Guo, vainly named himself king, and had the military support to enforce his claim. He even supplied the ancient Chinese name of "Middle Kingdom," although less than 40% of its citizenry were of Asiatic descent.

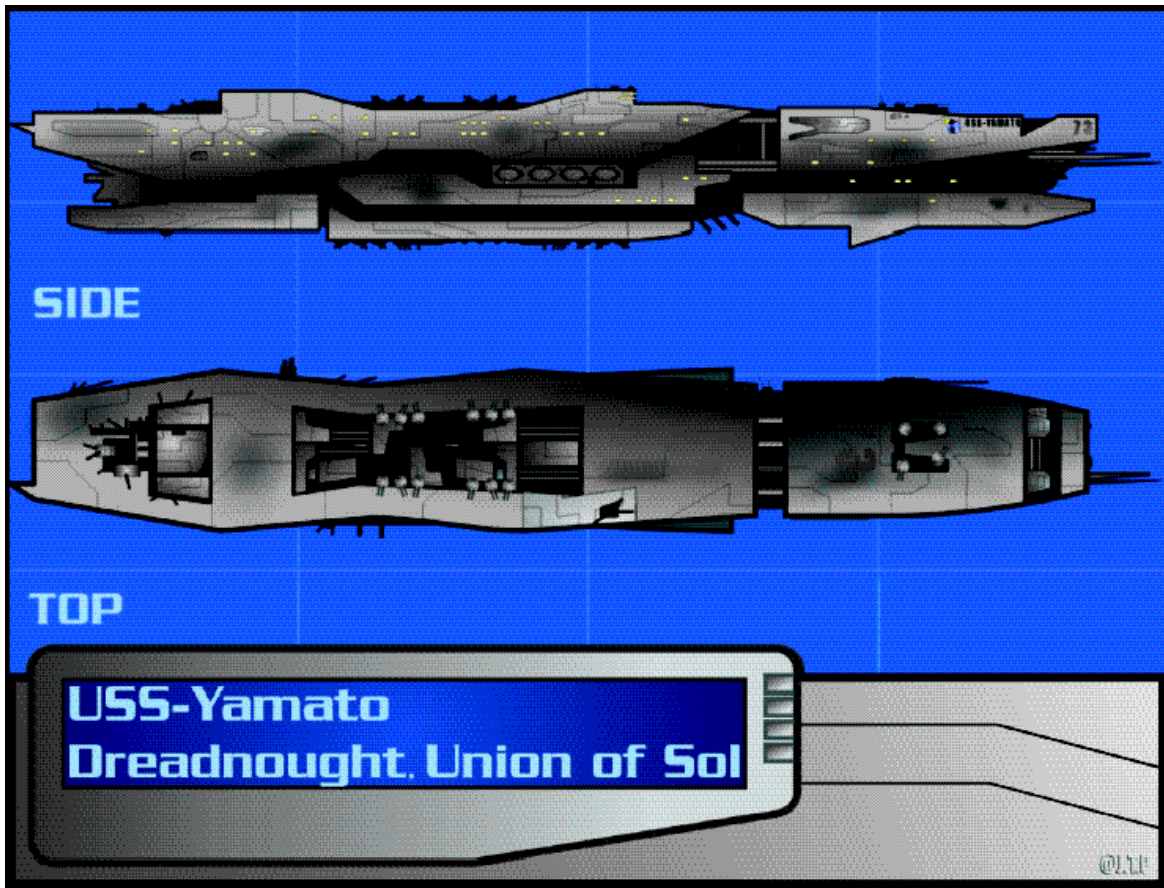
Although technically a recognized nation, the rest of the Stellar Ring could smell weakness in the Middle Kingdom. Austrin-Ontis supplied arms to the ever-increasing rebels throughout Kingdom space, and by 2326, numerous uprisings wracked its star systems. With Ming Guo's inept leadership, the next two decades saw increasing instability, a series of half a dozen High Admirals, and his eventual removal from power by his old friend Admiral Sun Qi.

For a few years, a council of warlords then ruled the Middle Kingdom, while Sun Qi negotiated with Sunlord Jimol Gatanita to bring the Kingdom back under Solar control. The Mutant Uprising at Tau Ceti sparked the Second Galactic War in 2346, and the Union sped up the process, fully absorbing the Middle Kingdom three months later.

Should a player wish to create a Middle Kingdom hero, they begin character creation with 61 points to assign for attributes, rather than the usual Solar 62. Additionally, the citizens of the Middle Kingdom eventually rebelled against their inconsiderate leadership, but never in a unified form. They even cowed to their own warlords. Middle Kingdom heroes gain double the usual points for taking the Spineless flaw (4/8/12).



# The USS *Yamato*



## USS *Yamato*

### *Yamato* Class (Super) Dreadnought

Target Modifier: -5

Armor: LI d8+3/ HI d8+3/ En d8+3

Crew Quality: Veteran

Toughness: Super Heavy

Crew Check: 14

Maneuverability: 1

Acceleration: 3

Total Crew: 6400 hands

Stun: 200

Wound: 200

Mortal: 100

Critical: 50

| Weapon               | Range   | Acc | Type | Grade       | Modes | O/G/A Damage                       |
|----------------------|---------|-----|------|-------------|-------|------------------------------------|
| Fusion Bore          | 5/10/15 | +1* | En   | Super Heavy | F     | 3d6m / 3d4c / 3d6c                 |
| Fusion Beams         | 3/6/12  | -1* | En   | Medium      | F/G   | d12+2w / d12+4w / d8+5m            |
| Heavy Plasma Beams   | 2/4/8   | -2* | En   | Light       | F/G   | d8+2w / d12+2w / d8+2m             |
| Heavy Mass Cannons   | 2/4/6   | -2* | LI   | Light       | F/G   | 2d6s / 2d6w / 3d6w                 |
| Plasma Torpedoes     | 3/6/9   | -1* | En   | Heavy       | F     | 3d6s / 3d6w/ d8+3m                 |
| Ordnance Cell Arrays |         |     |      |             |       | Statistics are as per missile type |

**\*Taking into account the fire control systems**



| TYPE            | SYSTEM   | HULL POINTS<br>6400 (+3200) | POWER POINTS |
|-----------------|--|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Hull:           | Super Dreadnought  |                             |              |
| Armor:          | Super Heavy Neutronite   | 1280                        | 0            |
| Power:          | 6 Mass Reactors<br>(each rated for 875 power points)<br>(Total of 5250 power points) | 1500                        | 0            |
| Engines:        | Induction Engines  | 640                         | 640          |
| FTL:            | Stardrive  | 320                         | 960          |
| Life Support:   | 160 Autosupport Units (whole ship)   | 160                         | 160          |
|                 | 320 Recycler Units (6400 people)   | 320                         | 320          |
| Accommodations: | 230 Crew Bunkrooms<br>(4608 enlisted)  | 690                         | 0            |
|                 | 192 Crew Quarters<br>(1152 enlisted)   | 384                         | 0            |
|                 | 86 Officers Quarters<br>(512 officers)   | 172                         | 0            |
|                 | 64 Officer Staterooms<br>(128 officers)  | 128                         | 0            |
|                 | 4 Troop Bunkrooms<br>(80 Marines)  | 12                          | 0            |
|                 | 4 Troop Quarters<br>(20 Marines)   | 8                           | 0            |
| Defenses:       | Deflection Inducer   | 320                         | 640          |
|                 | Repair Bot Damage Control System   | 320                         | 320          |
|                 | 6 Jammers  | 6                           | 6            |
|                 | Stardrive Scrambler  | 64                          | 128          |
| Weapons:        | 1 Turret Fusion Bore   | 75                          | 75           |
|                 | 12 Double-Turret Fusion Beams  | 336                         | 360          |
|                 | 20 Triple-Turret Heavy Plasma Beams  | 400                         | 480          |
|                 | 30 Double-Turret Heavy Mass Cannons  | 270                         | 360          |
|                 | 22 Plasma Torpedoes  | 220                         | 330          |
|                 | 20 Ordinance Cell Arrays   | 200                         | 400          |
|                 | 500 Extra Ordinance Cells  | 500                         | 0            |
|                 | 30 Point Defense Guns  | 30                          | 0            |
| Command:        | Flag Bridge  | 3                           | 0            |
|                 | 2 Secondary Command Decks  | 20                          | 0            |
| Communications: | 5 Mass Transceivers  | 5                           | 5            |
|                 | 6 Laser Transceivers   | 6                           | 6            |
|                 | 6 Radio Transceivers   | 3                           | 6            |
|                 | Drivesat Communications Relay  | 150                         | 300          |
| Sensors:        | Drive Detection Array  | 80                          | 120          |
|                 | Mass Detectors (12 arcs)   | 6                           | 6            |
|                 | Multiband Radars (12 arcs)   | 6                           | 12           |
|                 | Spectroanalyzers (12 arcs)   | 12                          | 12           |
|                 | IR Detectors (12 arcs)   | 6                           | 0            |
|                 | Ladar (8 arcs)   | 8                           | 8            |

|                |   |                                |     |
|----------------|---|--------------------------------|-----|
| Computers:     | Computer Core, Good                       | 32                             | 32  |
|                | Tactical Control, Good                    | 1                              | 0   |
|                | Navigational Control, Good                | 1                              | 0   |
|                | Sensor Control, Good (all sensors)        | 6                              | 0   |
|                | Fire Control, Good (all weapons)          | 103                            | 0   |
| Hangars:       | Hangar Bay                                | 80                             | 0   |
|                | Docking Clamps (1000 hull point capacity) | 200                            | 0   |
| Miscellaneous: | 8 Airlocks                                | 8                              | 0   |
|                | 10 Boarding Pods                          | 20                             | 0   |
|                | 10 Brigs (40 man capacity)                | 20                             | 0   |
|                | 5 Cargo Holds (500 square meters)         | 15                             | 0   |
|                | Evacuation System (whole crew)            | 34                             | 0   |
|                | Fabrication Facility                      | 4                              | 2   |
|                | 24 Security Suites (2400 coverage)        | 60                             | 60  |
|                | 6 Sick Bays (12 capacity each)            | 36                             | 0   |
|                | Stabilizer                                | 320                            | 320 |
| Totals:        | 9600                                      | 6068<br>(5108 w/out stardrive) |     |

In 2450, the Union of Sol enjoyed moderate success during the war. The navy petitioned the construction of another command ship to improve operations on the Thuldan front. The plans originally called for another fortress ship, but though the nation performed quite well in the military sense, the Solar economy could not support such an immense undertaking. But they did have the resources to build at least two, maybe three, dreadnoughts.

While the addition of two or three *Hyperion*- or *Jupiter*-class dreadnoughts would have strengthened the fleets on the Thuldan front, High Admiral Ojore Madubuike discarded the idea. A *Hyperion*- or *Jupiter*-class vessel could not live up to the capabilities of a fortress ship for command purposes, and he could not take the USS *Kiku* too far away from Sol and the surrounding systems for extended periods of time. Instead, he commissioned the design of a new class of dreadnought, twice the size of the standard model. It was to be the first of a line of ships between dreadnought and fortress ship. Although the USS *Yamato* came out of dry dock in 2460, it was also doomed to be the last of its kind. Without the driving need of war with

the Thuldan Empire, the Union of Sol denied its navy the funds necessary to build more super dreadnoughts.

To this day, the *Yamato* continues to occupy an interesting position. While the 1<sup>st</sup> Fleet is permanently assigned to the Sol Prefecture, the Flag Fleet merely spends most of its time there. The flagship *Kiku* never strays far from the Sol system itself, and never leaves the Prefecture. As a member of the Flag Fleet, the *Yamato* becomes the de facto command ship when away from the Sol Prefecture. High Admiral Ojore Madubuike spends more time aboard *Yamato* than he does aboard the *Kiku*, preferring to leave the Sunlord's ship under the command of Admiral Jonathon Gatanita (Hm/Solar/TO-11), a cousin of the Sunlord, while he patrols the Union of Sol from his personal super dreadnought.

*"Yes, the Thuldans scarred my face, but I left my mark on their ships, on their soldiers, on every planet and system I battled. So yes, they scarred me, but in the depths of their souls, I wounded them far worse."*

- High Admiral Ojore Madubuike, at the Solar Naval Academy, 2495

## Major Systems of the Union

The Union of Sol claims a unique position among the stellar nations as the former Terran Empire, the sole "stellar nation" for 49 years before the First Galactic War. At the center of the Union rests the Sol system and the planet Earth, the birthplace of all mankind, a fact that Solars never allow anyone to forget. After more than 300 years of human activity among the stars, however, the Union now finds itself threatened with finite borders and overpopulation. Their original colony worlds have become metropolitan city-planets, stuffed with tens of billions of sentients. What better place to run an adventure?

The systems discussed here are described in general terms, and GMs are expected to flesh them out at their own discretion for more intimate campaign use; population break-downs, topography and other details.

### **Sol**

The Sol system rests at the center of the Stellar Ring, at the nexus of astronomical navigation for civilization-at-large. Although disputed by the Thuldan Empire and Austrin-Ontis Unlimited, the Union considers Sol the single most heavily defended system in all of human space. The presence of numerous sensor relays, drive detectors and naval posts dot the system in addition to a large portion of the Flag Fleet and the fortress ship *Kiku*, which only leaves Sol with the Sunlord aboard. Likewise, the class G2 star serves as the hub of commerce for the entire Union. Countless vessels perpetually pass through the Sol system carrying on with business ventures of every kind.

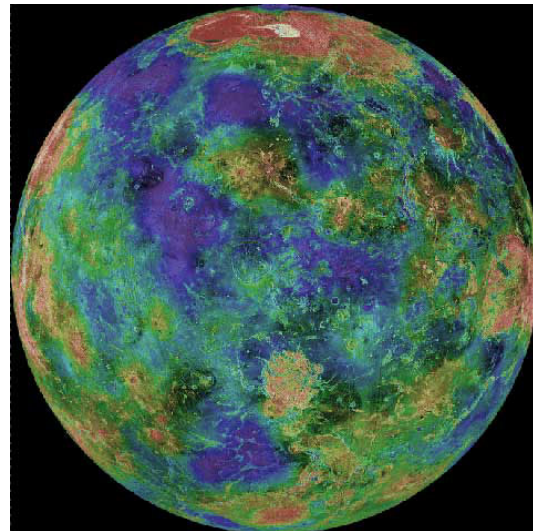
### **Mercury**

The closest planet to Sol, Mercury remains utterly uninhabitable to life, though it did once serve as a center for field

research concerning the terraformation of molten worlds during the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> centuries. Similarly, Mercury previously housed numerous mining operations in the early days of the Terran Empire. Long used up and abandoned, these installations have degraded into molten ruins. Only an automated satellite orbits this world now, sending back sensor data to the Lunar naval base.

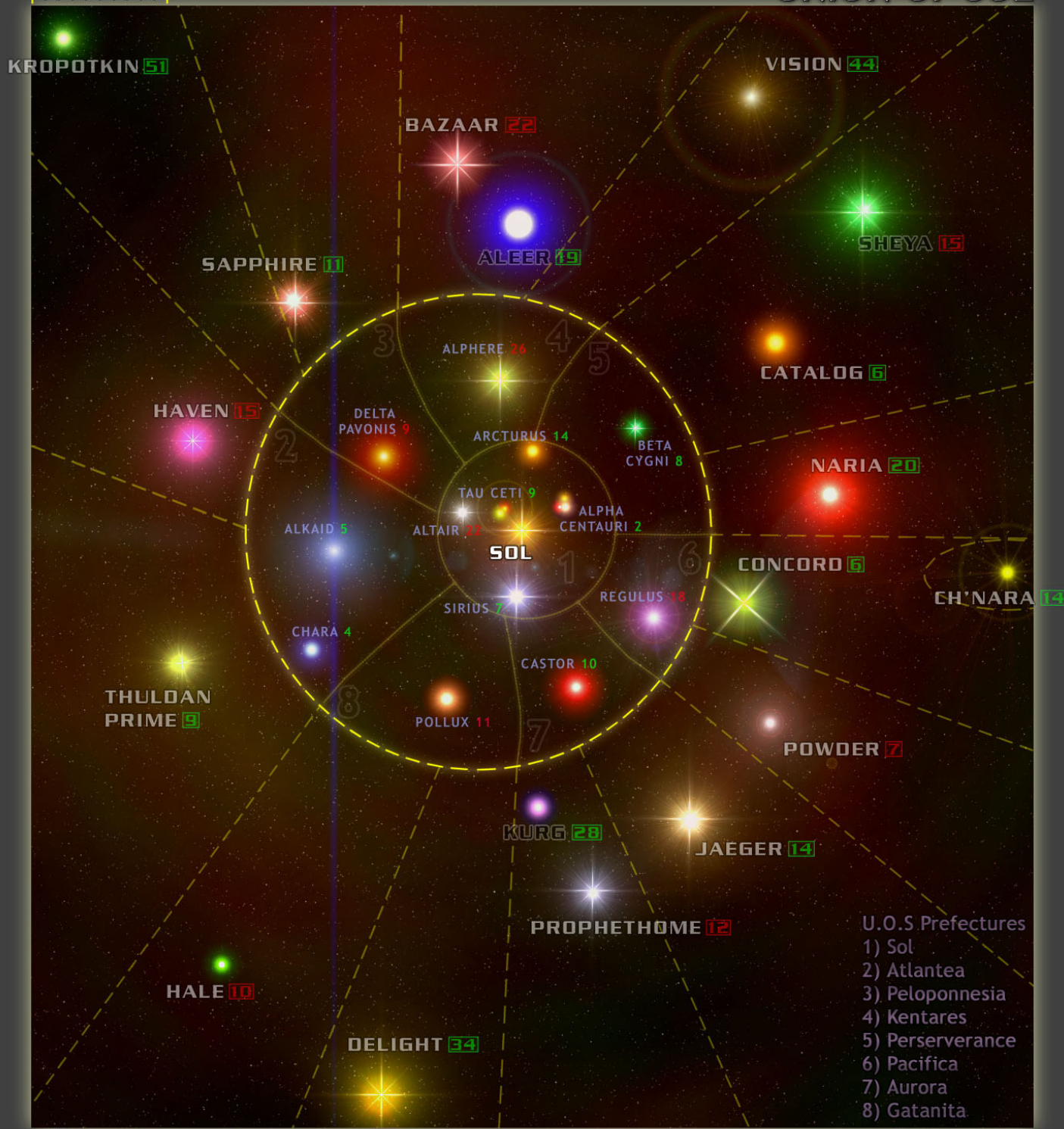
### **Venus**

Holding significantly more planetary mass than Mars, Venus was the first terraformed world in the Terran Empire. Although it took several decades, the Solar Union slowly siphoned the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to tolerable levels, making the air breathable. This eventually resulted in the very large McManus Ocean (named after the chief terraformer) and two continents of varying size. Both retain their pre-terraformation regional names – with the smaller known as Ishtar Terra, and the larger as Aphrodite Terra. The deepest ocean regions once existed as ancient plains, but now lie under many fathoms of water, lending their names to each sea as the *Atlanta*, *Gulneverre*, and *Lavinia* Planitia Abysmals.



50 Light Years

# UNION OF SOL



Mm2003

50 Light Years



With a population of over 40 billion sentients, Venus long ago became a world overrun by cities. The capitol of New Roma, located in Aphrodite Terra along the northern coast of the Sea of Love, holds almost 500,000 people itself. Planetary Governor Joanna Halifax (Hf/Solar/DFA-7) resides here, but is known to leave much of the busy-work to her staff so as to take advantage of the resorts of Maxwell Montes, Venus' highest peak. The next largest cities, Livingston and Merck Research City, are also located in Aphrodite Terra.

Just about the only land on Venus not overly developed lies around the few remaining active volcanoes, the largest of which is Sif Mons. In the early days of their craft, the original terraformers faced a nearly insurmountable challenge with the volatile landscape of Venus. They proved fortunate to have Earth's first such project succeed at all, not yet possessing the ability to defuse the larger volcanoes. Even today, some geologists worry that Sif Mons may build to its first explosion in centuries, which could play havoc with the newly-developed atmosphere of Venus.

## Earth

"The center of the Ring." "The cradle of mankind." And "the epitome of civilization." Citizens of the Solar Union have many names for Earth, but about 60 billion of them just call it "home." Earth continues to be the social, economic, political, and military center of the entire Union. Although enormously overpopulated, terraformers constantly work to keep the environment stable. Indeed, Antarctica remains cold, although several large glaciers have waxed and waned over the years. As a result, low-lying coastal regions planet-wide have been flooded, and then reclaimed. Maintaining Earth's fragile environment requires a constant effort, nearly a million workers, and a massive amount of annual funding.

Sunlord Acron Gatanita and the Solar Council rule the Union from the province of Japan, which holds several areas of natural preservation for their enjoyment. These are



mostly small gardens, shrines, and parks that traditionally belonged to the Japanese Emperor of the pre-space era.

Also of note, almost a dozen orbital colonies lay between Earth and Luna at Lagrange points. Prior to the advent of terraformation, such orbital colonies were the only realistic alternative to human habitation outside of Earth and Luna. Although several have been decommissioned over the centuries, eleven are still fully functional. L4 and L5, the oldest, were among the original colonies, and continue to generate gravity by central rotation of the station. Needless to say, all of the orbital colonies host fighter squadrons, defense platforms, and nuclear armament to prevent aggressors from reaching Earth if the need should ever arise.

## Luna

Colonists settled Earth's only moon, known as Luna, before the advent of terraforming. Although the Union later developed the technology to give Luna an atmosphere, the project was turned down upon considering what effect such a drastic change could have on Earth's oceans. Today, almost 3 billion people inhabit Luna in sprawling complexes of domed and subterranean cities.

The Solar Naval Academy also rests on Luna's dark side, training the men and women of the Union to guard against outside aggression, especially Thuldan aggression.



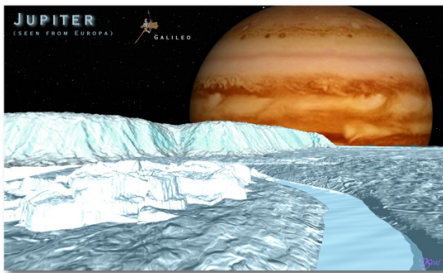
## Mars

After the success of Venus, the terraformers of old turned their eyes towards Mars. With a very thin atmosphere, it proved to be more challenging than Venus, but the abundance of ice provided a counter-balance to the task. Thus, the Boreal Ocean now covers almost the entire northern hemisphere, while most of the southern hemisphere remains above sea level. The most notable exception is the Sea of Hellas, formerly a vast crater.

Today, Mars demonstrates the characteristics of every other inhabited area of the Sol system: complete overcrowding. More than 45 billion sentients inhabit the world, and Planetary Governor Julius Gatanita (Hm/Solar/DTO-5) does his best to make room for the next generation. However, given the sad state of Mars, the only room left for expansion within his jurisdiction is to make subterranean housing on Mars' two moons, whose surfaces are also already covered with installations and habitat domes. Phobos and Deimos are quite small, however, and will struggle to sustain even a million more inhabitants combined.

## The Asteroid Belt

Never having received a proper name, the Asteroid Belt's mineral wealth was exhausted centuries ago as the powers of Earth set off in exploration of the stars. Now largely ignored, the area's various space stations serve as Solar Naval sensors, ship repair facilities, and weapon platforms.



*Jupiter as seen from the icy surface of its sixth moon, Europa.*

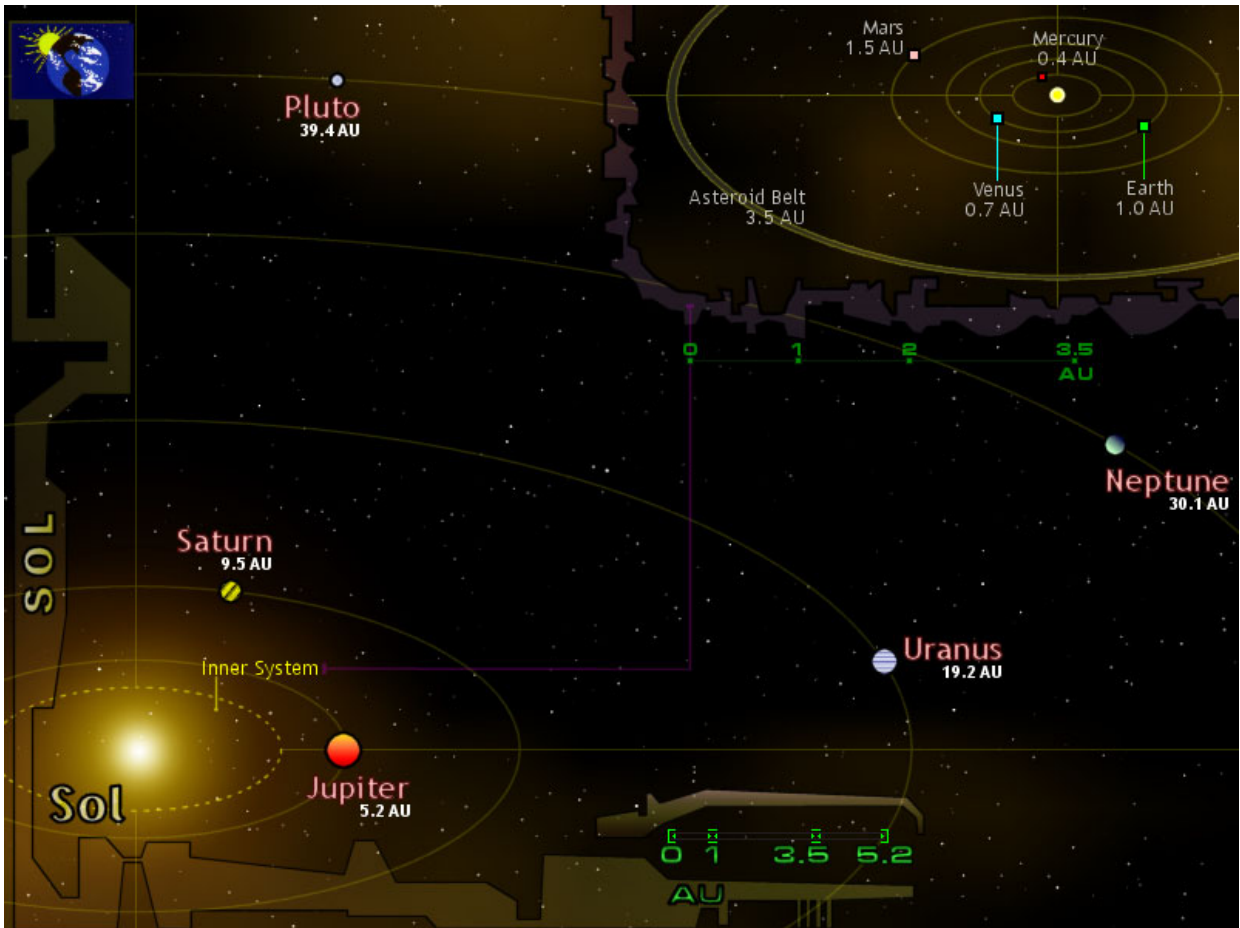


## Jupiter

The largest planet in the Sol system, Jupiter is the progenitor of the label "Jovian planet," meaning gas giant. Of its numerous moons, humanity has occupied several during the centuries since leaving Earth. The ice fields of Callisto helped terraform its surface into a suitable Class 1 environment. The still volcanic Io hosts a Solar Marine Corps training facility for harsh ground missions. Europa is now home to over 3 billion inhabitants, thanks to its subterranean ocean. The fraal also colonized the largest moon, Ganymede, long before humanity arrived. Since that time, it has become the center of fraal society within the Solar Union, with about 500,000 million permanent fraal residents. Ganymede also includes over 2 billion humans living alongside them.

## Saturn

Famous throughout the Stellar Ring for its breath-taking ring structure, the gas giant Saturn holds more than 30 moons in gravitational field. Titan, the largest, boasted a nitrogen-rich atmosphere making it a prime candidate for terraforming, and now home to 1.5 billion sentients. The smaller moons of Dione, Tethys, Enceladus, and Iapetus have settlements of their own. The Solar Military maintains a presence on Epimetheus, Atlas, Janus, Enceladus, and Prometheus.



## Uranus

A medium-sized gas giant, Uranus is tipped on its side, with the southern pole facing toward Sol. Thus, its ring structure appears to go vertically around the planet. Although none of the 20 moons of Uranus are terraformed, domed settlements exist on Titania, Oberon, Miranda, Ariel, and Umbriel. Corporate facilities function on Cordelia, Ophelia and Bianca, while the Solar Military has a large shipbuilding facility on Caliban.

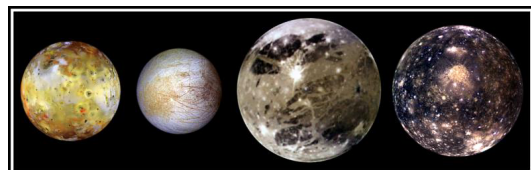
## Neptune

The eighth planet is the gas giant Neptune. Of its eight moons, only Triton and Proteus were suitable for domed settlement. Various gas-mining facilities also orbit the Neptune. Galatea and Nereid, two smaller moons, have been converted to prison complexes, holding

tens of thousands of the Union's more dangerous criminals. Both facilities boast full-time, well-trained guards.

## Pluto

The "smallest planet" of Sol is actually just the largest asteroid among the Kuiper Belt, a disk-shaped region of icy meteoroids loosely orbiting Sol in the outermost edges of the system. Regardless of the planetoid's size, the Solar Navy maintains an advanced listening post on Pluto and its moon, Charon.



*Jupiter's four largest moons, from left to right: Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto.*

|                  |  |   |                                       |
|------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|
|                  | <b>Mercury</b>                             | <b>Venus</b>                                  | <b>Earth</b>                          |
| Primary          | Sol  | Sol   | Sol                                   |
| Planetary Class  | Class 3                                    | Class 1                                       | Class 1                               |
| Gravity          | G1 (0.38 g)                                | G2 (0.94 g)                                   | G2 (1g)                               |
| Radiation        | R4 (346 rem/hr)                            | R1 (8.8 rad/yr)                               | R1 (4 rad/yr)                         |
| Atmosphere       | A0 (trace)                                 | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> )         | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) |
| Pressure         | P0 (vacuum)                                | P3 (1.1 atm)                                  | P3 (1.0 atm)                          |
| Heat             | H1-H4 (-183/467 C)                         | H2 (20 C)                                     | H2 (15 C)                             |
| Orbital Distance | 0.39 AU                                    | 0.72 AU                                       | 1 AU                                  |
| Diameter         | 4,878 km                                   | 12,102 km                                     | 12,756 km                             |
| Year             | 88 days                                    | 243 days                                      | 365 days                              |
| Day              | 59 days                                    | 243 days                                      | 24 hours                              |
| Axial Tilt       | 0 degrees                                  | -2.6 degrees                                  | 23.5 degrees                          |
| Density          | 5.43                                       | 0.80  | 1                                     |
| # Satellites     | 0  | 0   | 1                                     |
|                  | <b>Mars</b>                                | <b>Jupiter</b>                                | <b>Saturn</b>                         |
| Primary          | Sol  | Sol   | Sol                                   |
| Planetary Class  | Class 1                                    | Class 5                                       | Class 5                               |
| Gravity          | G2 (0.87 g)                                | G4 (3.8 g)                                    | G4 (3.3 g)                            |
| Radiation        | R1 (5.1 rad/yr)                            | R1 (9.7 rad/yr)                               | R2 (18 rad/yr)                        |
| Atmosphere       | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> )      | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , H)                       | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , H)               |
| Pressure         | P3 (0.9 atm)                               | P5 (gas giant)                                | P5 (gas giant)                        |
| Heat             | H2 (11 C)                                  | H0 (165 K)                                    | H0 (134 K)                            |
| Orbital Distance | 1.50 AU                                    | 5.20 AU                                       | 9.54 AU                               |
| Diameter         | 6,792 km                                   | 142,980 km                                    | 120,536 km                            |
| Year             | 687 days                                   | 11.8 years                                    | 29.5 years                            |
| Day              | 24.6 hours                                 | 9.9 hours                                     | 10.7 hours                            |
| Axial Tilt       | 24 degrees                                 | 3 degrees                                     | 27 degrees                            |
| Density          | 0.85                                       | 1.33  | 0.70                                  |
| # Satellites     | 2  | 39  | 30                                    |
|                  | <b>Uranus</b>                              | <b>Neptune</b>                                | <b>Pluto</b>                          |
| Primary          | Sol  | Sol   | Sol                                   |
| Planetary Class  | Class 5                                    | Class 5                                       | Class 4                               |
| Gravity          | G4 (2.8 g)                                 | G4 (3.1 g)                                    | G0 (0.08 g)                           |
| Radiation        | R1 (14 rad/yr)                             | R1 (8 rad/yr)                                 | R3 (25 rad/day)                       |
| Atmosphere       | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He, CH <sub>4</sub> ) | <b>A1 (H<sub>2</sub>, He, CH<sub>4</sub>)</b> | <b>A0 (trace)</b>                     |
| Pressure         | P5 (gas giant)                             | P5 (gas giant)                                | P0 (                                  |
| Heat             | H0 (76 K)                                  | H0 (73 K)                                     | H0 (40 K)                             |
| Orbital Distance | 19.19 AU                                   | 30.07 AU                                      | 39.48 AU                              |
| Diameter         | 51,118 km                                  | 49,528 km                                     | 2,340 km                              |
| Year             | 84.0 years                                 | 165.8 years                                   | 248.5 years                           |
| Day              | 17.2 hours                                 | 16.1 hours                                    | 6.4 days                              |
| Axial Tilt       | 98.4 degrees                               | 29 degrees                                    | 94 degrees                            |
| Density          | 1.30                                       | 0.90  | 1.8                                   |
| # Satellites     | 21   | 8   | 1                                     |

## Alpha Centauri

Between four and five light years from Sol lies Alpha Centauri. This trinary system consists of Alpha Centauri A (a G2 yellow star) and Alpha Centauri B (a red-orange dwarf), orbiting each other at a distance of approximately 24 AU. The third star, Alpha Proxima (or Alpha Centauri C), is a very dim red dwarf about 13,000 AU from the A-B pair. Proxima is only marginally held by the binary's gravity well. Given the system's overall proximity to Sol, the first interstellar stardrive trip made by Earth used Alpha Centauri as its destination. And with the discovery of a Class 1 moon orbiting Centauri A, Alpha Centauri grew to become a major population and economic center of the Terran Empire, and later the Union of Sol.

### Puck

Closely orbiting Centauri A, the tiny world of Puck suffers constant volcanic activity. While it may possess some mineral wealth, such operations are more easily carried out elsewhere in the system.

### Dylan

Located 1.2 AU from Centauri A, Dylan is a larger-than-Earth planet with an oppressively thick atmosphere. The small amounts of pure nitrogen and vast amounts of oxygen and sulfur-oxide posed too great an opposition for terraformers. The trouble with Dylan's atmosphere proved easy to overlook, however, by its Class 1 moon, Vesta. Although never developed in its own right, Dylan served as a source of oxygen while terraforming New Hope.

### Vesta

Well within the habitable zone of Centauri A, Vesta exists as the only naturally occurring Class 1 world in the system, and the first planet outside of Sol colonized by mankind. Now settled for almost three-and-a-half centuries, this mountainous moon is home to over eight billion sentient. Towering megalopolises

## The Proxima Conflicts

In 2250, the powers of Earth declared the formation of the Terran Empire in an attempt to halt the wave of colonial nationalism developing through human space. Several colonies openly rebelled against the imperial mandate, the first of these being Alpha Centauri.

When the citizens of Vesta decided to maintain their independence, they sent a flotilla of ships led by the battleship *Arizona* to the Terran post on Hermit, circling Alpha Proxima. The Terran defenders lost the battle, but the Empire retaliated with military reinforcements from nearby Earth.

Soon, other systems followed Centauri's lead, and the Terran Empire had to put down several rebellions over the next six years, ending with the insurgence of the Pioneer Coprosperity Zone. All of these short-lived uprisings followed the initial event at Alpha Proxima and historians have traditionally lumped them together as a series of events called the Proxima Conflicts.

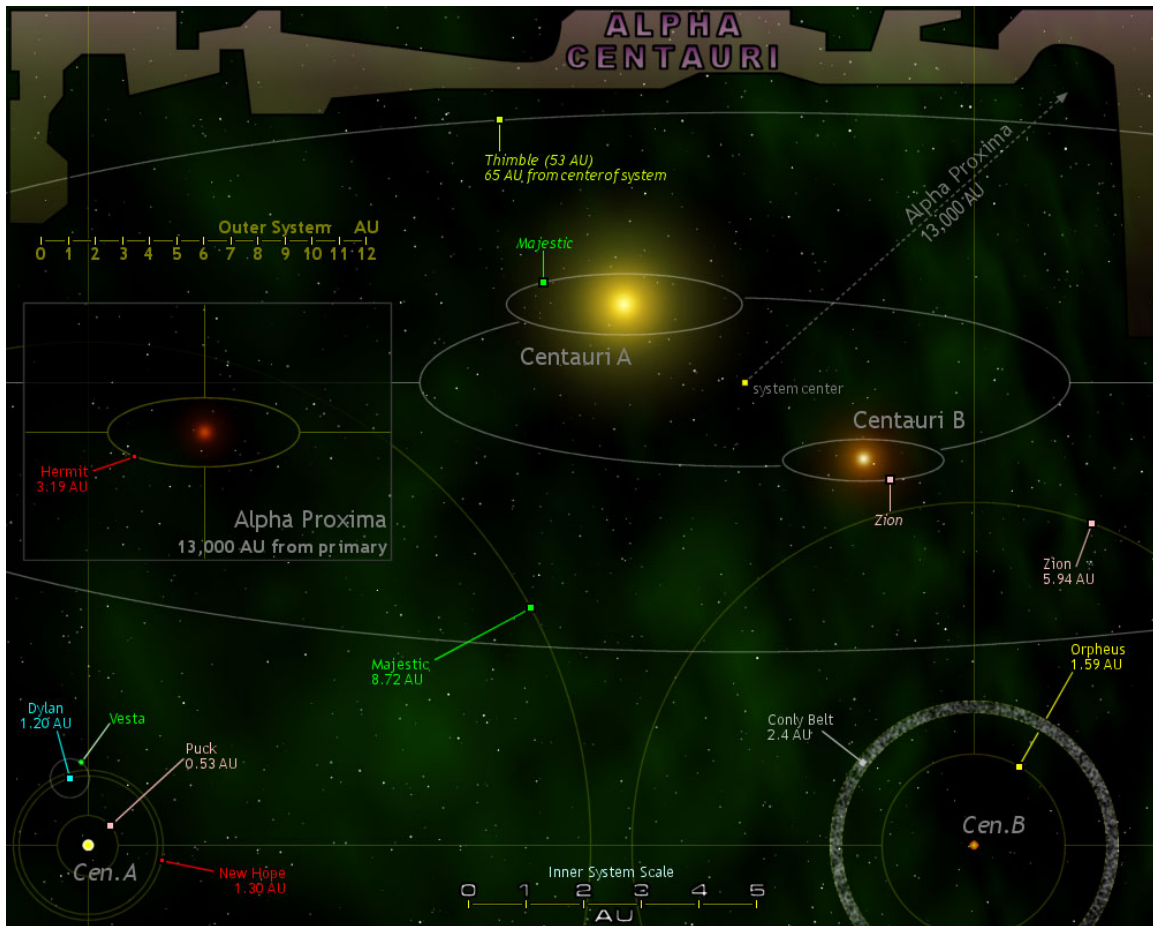
rise far above the mountaintops even as engineers carve out subterranean cities beneath them, threatening to overflow the moon entirely. The planetary governor of Vesta is Kerry McManus (Hf/Solar/NP), a career politician with aspirations to the Solar Council.

Vesta also plays home to a bevy of major industries. Rising Stars Designs, one of the major ship designers in the Union keeps its home offices here, as does Coliseum Enterprises, a top-five holofilm producer. Even MI03, the Ministry of Intelligence division in charge of Grid-based activities maintains its primary office on Vesta.

### New Hope

Barely within Centauri A's habitable zone, the Terran Empire renamed the planet formerly known as Khunis to New Hope during the terraforming process used to increase the oxygen levels to human norm. Three hundred years later it has become the population center of the system, with almost 50 billion sentient.





While most big industries in-system may base themselves on Vesta, the actual work takes place on New Hope. That being the case, the constant ship traffic would astound even first-world system citizens of most other nations. Orbiting New Hope, Destiny Station oversees ship traffic, and also acts as a naval command, control and communications center for the system.

### Majestic

The outermost planet circling Centauri A, this gas giant orbits at a distance of only 8.72 AU. Though it contains gas-mining stations and other such facilities common to gas giants, Majestic is best known for the luminescent neon storms within its upper atmosphere. In fact, the inspirational quality of these storms has prompted the domed colonization of several of the giant's moons by religious organizations. The Church of Humanity Reformation, Catholic Church, various Islamic movements, and a

sect of Buddhists all possess permanent settlements here.

### Orpheus

The first of two planets orbiting Centauri B, Orpheus is a medium sized-terran world with virtually no atmosphere, and not enough gravity to hold one if it did. If not for its mineral resources, the Terran Empire would probably have never developed Orpheus. Now, decades after the lucrative mining has worn out, only a naval outpost occupies the planet.

### Conly Belt

Largely overlooked by the system's inhabitants, this asteroid rests about 2.4 AU from Centauri B. Unlike other such asteroids, the Conly Belt possesses very small amounts of desirable minerals. Prior to the construction of the naval outpost on

Orpheus, smugglers sometimes used the asteroids as a point of exchange.

## Zion

So close to Centauri B, the gas giant Zion has only managed to keep three moons within its gravity well. Notably, however, the fraal passed through the Centauri system on their way toward Earth, leaving a series of ruins on two of the moons, Naessta and V'relll.

## Thimble

Little larger than Earth's own moon, the world of Thimble circles both Centauri A & B in a wide orbit at 53 AU. Scientists theorize that it may once have orbited one

of the stars, and was knocked loose by extreme solar flares. Today it acts as a listening post for incoming vessels, and helps to arrange safe starrise points.

## Hermit

Approximately 13,000 AU from Centauri A & B, the lonely world of Hermit circles Alpha Proxima. Over the course of time, the tiny M5 red dwarf has tidally locked its only planet. When the Centauri worlds were settled, Earth's superpowers established a long-range sensor post and naval base here to keep a watchful eye on Earth's first colony. The facility still exists, though its purpose is no longer to guard Vestra. Now it acts as a naval officer-training academy.

|                  |  |  |                                       |
|------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
|                  | <b>Puck</b>  | <b>Dylan</b>                           | <b>(Vestra)</b>                       |
| Primary          | Centauri A   | Centauri A                             | Dylan                                 |
| Planetary Class  | Class 3  | Class 3                                | Class 1                               |
| Gravity          | G1 (0.74 g)  | G4 (3.7 g)                             | G2 (1.2 g)                            |
| Radiation        | R4 (100 rem/hr)  | R2 (2 rem/wk)                          | R1 (5 rem/yr)                         |
| Atmosphere       | A3 (CO <sub>2</sub> , S <sub>2</sub> , SO <sub>2</sub> ) | A3 (O <sub>2</sub> , SO <sub>2</sub> ) | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> ) |
| Pressure         | P2 (0.56 atm)  | P4 (17.2 atm)                          | P3( 1.3 atm)                          |
| Heat             | H4 (482 C)   | H1 (-65 C)                             | H2 (32 C)                             |
| Orbital Distance | 0.53 AU  | 1.20 AU                                | 119,070 km                            |
| Diameter         | 4,866 km   | 24,138 km                              | 4,937 km                              |
| Year             | 94 days  | 381 days                               | 40 days                               |
| Day              | 53 hours   | 170 hours                              | 19 hours                              |
| Axial Tilt       | 3 degrees  | 84 degrees                             | 23 degrees                            |
| Density          | 0.84   | 2.7                                    | 0.91                                  |
| # Satellites     | 0  | 1                                      | 0                                     |
|                  | <b>New Hope</b>  | <b>Majestic</b>                        | <b>Orpheus</b>                        |
| Primary          | Centauri A   | Centauri A                             | Centauri B                            |
| Planetary Class  | Class 1 (2)  | Class 5                                | Class 4                               |
| Gravity          | G2 (1.1 g)   | G4 (4.0 g)                             | G1 (0.24 g)                           |
| Radiation        | R1 (3 rem/yr)  | R3 (89 rad/day)                        | R4 (240 rem/hr)                       |
| Atmosphere       | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> )                    | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He)               | A0 (trace)                            |
| Pressure         | P3 (1.07 atm)  | P5 (gas giant)                         | P1 (0.22 atm)                         |
| Heat             | H2 (25 C)  | H0 (-220 C)                            | H0 (-200 C)                           |
| Orbital Distance | 1.30 AU  | 8.72 AU                                | 1.59 AU                               |
| Diameter         | 27,041 km  | 87,164 km                              | 11,603 km                             |
| Year             | 428 days   | 28.7 years                             | 436 days                              |
| Day              | 28 hours   | 9.3 hours                              | 56 hours                              |
| Axial Tilt       | 12.84 degrees  | 39 degrees                             | 9.07 degrees                          |
| Density          | 1.03   | 0.07                                   | 0.26                                  |
| # Satellites     | 2  | 13                                     | 0                                     |

|                  | <b>Zion</b>              | <b>Thimble</b>  | <b>Hermit</b>   |
|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Primary          | Centauri B               | Centauri A & B  | Alpha Proxima   |
| Planetary Class  | Class 5                  | Class 4         | Class 4         |
| Gravity          | G4 (3.8 g)               | G0 (0.18 g)     | G2 (0.93 g)     |
| Radiation        | R4 (170 rem/hr)          | R3 (62 rad/day) | R3 (51 rad/day) |
| Atmosphere       | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He) | A0 (trace)      | A0 (trace)      |
| Pressure         | P5 (gas giant)           | P0 (0.08 atm)   | P1 (0.2 atm)    |
| Heat             | H0 (-263 C)              | H0 (-207)       | H0 (-194 C)     |
| Orbital Distance | 5.94 AU                  | 53 AU           | 3.19 AU         |
| Diameter         | 75,589 km                | 6,180 km        | 18,486 km       |
| Year             | 12.4 years               | 372.7 years     | 3.1 years       |
| Day              | 11.2 hours               | 4 hours         | 0 hours         |
| Axial Tilt       | 17.6 degrees             | 41.4 degrees    | 10.16 degrees   |
| Density          | 0.07                     | 0.61            | 1.62            |
| # Satellites     | 3                        | 0               | 0               |

## Tau Ceti

Best known as the site for the Mutant Uprising of 2346 that sparked the Second Galactic War, the Tau Ceti system has been a central system of the Union since the early days of the Terran Empire. Resting just under 12 light years from Sol, the Class G8 yellow dwarf holds six planets and an asteroid belt in its grip.

### Ausmus

Less than .2 AU from Tau Ceti, this tiny world is little more than a ball of molten rock. Its atmosphere is far too hot for any human development. In fact, its orbit has slowly decayed over the centuries, bringing Ausmus closer and closer to the star. Several thousand years from now it will pass through the corona, lose its orbit, and fall into Tau Ceti.

### Callidus

Ausmus' sister planet, Callidus lies further away, allowing for extensive mining operations. While the constant volcanic activity makes such operations difficult, its mineral wealth compensates for the harsh conditions. Bedrock Mining Inc, Dante's Peak, and Quinton Enterprises all maintain divisions on or beneath the surface of Callidus.

## Genesis

At 0.15 AU closer to the system's star than Tau Ceti IV, this Class 2 world never developed a life-supporting atmosphere. However, it did present one of the earliest terraforming opportunities for the Terran Empire. After 38 years of work, the renamed Genesis opened for colonization. Unfortunately, the early terraformation techniques had not accounted for certain elements of the atmospheric makeup, and the Class 1 environment proved unstable, breaking down after only five years. With billions of dollars gone to waste, domed colonies were erected, or subterranean facilities sealed with breathable air. The planet's name became a bitter irony to its inhabitants.

During the early years of GW2, after the Solars put down the Mutant Uprising, the Council government voted to transport the surviving rebels from Tau Ceti IV to Genesis. This spread the mutant population among the worst inhabitable areas, far from the eyes of normal human citizens. Today Genesis hosts approximately 1 billion sentients, with 30% registered as mutants and given no true rights by the Union of Sol. Rumors persist that the Thuldan Empire secretly funnels money to Genesis in hopes of sparking another uprising.

*"Mutants of Sol! Join me and fight for your right to live as equals!" - Zacharius Eb, 2501*



## Tau Ceti IV

This naturally occurring class 1 world is the reason Tau Ceti attracted attention in the first place. Similar in size to Earth, Tau Ceti IV, often referred to simply as Tau Ceti, boasts a population of 40 billion sentient.

It has five major continents, separated by three major oceans. The area best known to the rest of the Stellar Ring is the planetary capitol Sage, located along the northwestern seaboard of the continent Arcadia. When the Mutant Uprising of 2346 raged across the continent, the city of Sage and its populace were ravaged. Over a



**Zacharius Eb**  
**Mutant Rights Activist**

**Level 12 Mutant Diplomat (MW)**

STR 9 (0) INT 9 (0)  
DEX 11 (+1) WIL 10(0)  
CON 10 PER 16

Durability: 10/10/5

Action Check: 12+/11/5/2 # Actions: 2

Move: sprint 12, run 12, walk 4

Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 4

**Attacks**

Unarmed-*brawl* [10] d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s  
9mm charge pistol [12] d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m

**Defenses**

CF Softsuit: d6 (LI), d6 (HI), d6-1 (En)

**Skills**

Athletics [9]; Unarmed [9]-*brawl* [10];  
Modern [11]-*pistol* [12]; Vehicle [11];  
Stamina [10]-*endurance* [12]; Survival [10]-  
*survival training* [11]; Knowledge [9]-*comp*  
*op* [10], *first aid* [10], *language: Standard*  
[12]; Security [9]-*security devices* [11];  
Tactics [9]-*infantry* [12], *vehicle* [10];  
Awareness [10]-*intuition* [12]; Resolve [10]-  
*mental* [12]; Interaction [16]-*bargain* [17],  
*interview* [17]; Leadership [16]-*command*  
[18], *inspire* [18]; Telepathy [16]-*mind blast*  
[21], *suggest* [17].

**Mutations**

*Hyper PER (Amazing)*: +3 to PER

*Enhanced Senses (Good)*: -2 to Awareness  
& Investigate checks

*Vascular Control (Ordinary)*: -1 to mortal  
damage sustained

*Minor Physical Change (Moderate)*: bright  
purple eyes

*Weak Immunity (Slight)*: +2 penalty against  
Disease CON checks

Zacharius Eb was born to the mutant colony of Genesis in the Tau Ceti system. From an early age, he displayed compassion to the suffering of those around him, growing into a progressive leader of his community, constantly rallying for social change in the Union. In recent few years he has received recognition as the unofficial leader of the Genesis mutant population.

century and a half later, the scars have healed, but the memory remains. In the center of the city, a two-story monument contains all the names of the Uprising's victims, and the anniversary continues as one of the darker days of remembrance in the Union.

Today, Hideki Gatanita (Hm/Solar/DFA-14), firstborn of Sunlord Acron Gatanita rules the system as the Governor. In the thirty-odd years of holding his post, Hideki has managed to improve the gross product of the system by 15%, raising Tau Ceti to the second highest revenue system in the Union, overshadowed only by Sol.

**Mason Belt**

Marking the boundary of the inner system, the Mason Belt continues to provide impressive levels of ore to the industries of Tau Ceti. Once host to thousands, now only hundreds of mainly independent miners work its rocks for a living.

**Atran**

While none of this medium-sized gas giant's moons contain a Class-1 environment, several have been developed by the Solars. Rychus, the fourth moon, is host to a series of domed settlements with enclosed biospheres. The facilities, owned by Olympian Industries, provide extremely wealthy citizens a verdant alternative to the crowded metropolises of Tau Ceti IV. These closed communities carefully screen potential neighbors for business connections and genetic mutations during the interview process, and actually boast a small flotilla of corporate cutters to provide security for Rychus. The chairman of Olympian Industries, Scott Konas (Hm/Solar/TO-7) also lives on Rychus' biospheres.

The second, sixth and seventh moons all contain Solar naval installations, including a medium-sized repair facility. Rear Admiral Issola Tarandus (Hf/Solar/DCS-16) patrols the system with the 2<sup>nd</sup> battle wing of the 1<sup>st</sup> Fleet. From the dreadnought USS *Bucephalus*, she ensures the safety of all traffic through Tau Ceti.

|                  |  |   |   |
|------------------|--|---|---|
|                  | <b>Ausmus</b>                          | <b>Callidus</b>                             | <b>Genesis</b>  |
| Primary          | Tau Ceti                               | Tau Ceti                                    | Tau Ceti  |
| Planetary Class  | Class 4                                | Class 3                                     | Class 2   |
| Gravity          | G3 (1.4 g)                             | G2 (0.9 g)                                  | G2 (1.05 g)   |
| Radiation        | R4 (245 rem/hr)                        | R4 (1000 rad/day)                           | R3 (20 rem/day)   |
| Atmosphere       | A4 (N <sub>2</sub> , CO <sub>2</sub> ) | A3 (Fe[CO] <sub>3</sub> , CO <sub>2</sub> ) | A3 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> , CO <sub>2</sub> ) |
| Pressure         | P1 (0.2 atm)                           | P3 (3.5 atm)                                | P2 (1.3 atm)  |
| Heat             | H5 (950 C)                             | H5 (345 C)                                  | H2 (-30 C)  |
| Orbital Distance | 0.15 AU                                | 0.30 AU                                     | 0.70 AU   |
| Diameter         | 1,490 km                               | 4,274 km                                    | 30,485 km   |
| Year             | 70 days                                | 80 days                                     | 273 days  |
| Day              | 8.4 hours                              | 18 hours                                    | 20.7 hours  |
| Axial Tilt       | 54.02 degrees                          | 32 degrees                                  | 18.62 degrees   |
| Density          | 1.42                                   | 1.30  | 0.96  |
| # Satellites     | 0                                      | 0   | 0   |
|                  | <b>Tau Ceti IV</b>                     | <b>Atran</b>                                | <b>Serengeti</b>  |
| Primary          | Tau Ceti                               | Tau Ceti                                    | Tau Ceti  |
| Planetary Class  | Class 1                                | Class 5                                     | Class 5   |
| Gravity          | G2 (1.15 g)                            | G5 (8.7 g)                                  | (G5 (5.1 g)   |
| Radiation        | R2 (7 rem/wk)                          | R1 (9 rem/yr)                               | R1 (7.5 rem/yr)   |
| Atmosphere       | A2 (N <sub>2</sub> , O <sub>2</sub> )  | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He)                    | A1 (H <sub>2</sub> , He)                                |
| Pressure         | P3 (1.2 atm)                           | P5 (gas giant)                              | P5 (gas giant)  |
| Heat             | H2 (50 C)                              | H0 (-241 C)                                 | H0 (260 C)  |
| Orbital Distance | 0.85 AU                                | 14.80 AU                                    | 20.72 AU  |
| Diameter         | 28,070 km                              | 85,100 km                                   | 27,380 km   |
| Year             | 324 days                               | 12.7 years                                  | 19.5 years  |
| Day              | 30 hours                               | 41.85 days                                  | 3.7 months  |
| Axial Tilt       | 21.8 degrees                           | 14.23 degrees                               | 4.61 degrees  |
| Density          | 1.3                                    | 0.17  | 0.09  |
| # Satellites     | 1                                      | 8   | 3   |

## Serengeti

Barely large enough to hold its atmosphere, this gas giant retains only three small moons in its grasp, all of which contain too little mineral wealth to bother developing. Only a sensor post and a handful of automated gas mining stations orbit the gas giant.



*This image was captured by Max Naples, an independent miner working in the Mason Belt.*

## Adventure Hook: The New Mutant Uprising

The Mutant Uprising of Tau Ceti in 2346 is widely held as the spark that ignited the 2<sup>nd</sup> Galactic War, plunging human civilization into 126 years of war. While historians assert that GW2 imminently loomed regardless of the Uprising, the citizens of Tau Ceti will always remember the bloody event as the worse point of their history. Now, the mutants have hatched a new plot to call attention to their cause.

### Background

Following the uprisings of 2346, all surviving mutants in the Tau Ceti system were forcibly relocated to Genesis, the great terraforming failure. While millions of Solar citizens live within secure domed colonies, the administration gave the mutants the least shielded of the domes, and a scattering of sealed subterranean cave complexes. For the last century-and-a-half, the mutants of Genesis built a new life for themselves, hidden from public view.

While the Concord's Galactic Consulate has repeatedly failed to pass a universal Mutant Rights Act, the mutant populace of Tau Ceti has become more and more agitated. In the last few years, a new leader has emerged among them, once again urging the people to act.

Zacharius Eb (Xm/Solar/DMW-12) is a naturally born mutant with enhanced social abilities and a variety of telepathic abilities. After several years of urging and debate, Zacharius has convinced the mutant community of Genesis to take drastic action.

With an army of five thousand mutants, Zacharius intends to take over the domed colony of Orleans. Backed by a Thuldan strategic advisor, Timothy Strykus (Hm/-Thuldan/DFA-6), the mutants have gained the dome's airlock access codes. Their intention is to simultaneously raid the Planetary Defense Force barracks, news centers, and starport, then move on to secure secondary targets. Unlike the Uprising of 2346, Zacharius has no intention of endorsing wholesale bloodletting and rampant riots throughout the city. He

maintains a political agenda and his own individual goals of equal-rights.

Once the mutants gain control of the Orleans Dome, he intends to make use of local Grid News networks to broadcast live interviews with mutants of Tau Ceti to the rest of the Stellar Ring. His hope is to show the real-life suffering of all Solar mutants while characterizing them as something other than the bloodthirsty sub-humans that Union government describes to the outside world. He wants the Stellar Ring to see mutants as real people with inalienable rights. Zacharius also prays that the Galactic Concord will step in and attempt to pass the Mutant Rights Act, or perhaps convince the Solars to let them peacefully immigrate to a more lenient nation. If not, he has dedicated himself to becoming a martyr for the cause. Perhaps in his death, he can still change the course of history.

The Union of Sol, for its part, has no intention of allowing the mutant criminals to leave, or to allow their crimes to go unpunished. Hideki Gatanita, the governor of Tau Ceti, receives permission to send in the 87<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Solar Marine Corps under the direction of Intelligence Division MI04 to quell the revolt. Prior to launching the attack, they intend to shut down the drivesat relay to silence their message.

Virtually any group of heroes can become caught up in these events. Investigators, diplomats, entertainers, traders, scientists and many others could have traveled to the Orleans Dome for any number of reasons. Military heroes could already reside at the station when the uprising starts, or receive orders to journey there and end it. By the other token, the heroes could sympathize with the mutant situation by joining their cause or attempting to help them escape the Solar assault.

### Supporting Cast

Depending on the manner of the heroes' involvement, the GM may wish to flesh out a few SCMs. Stats for Zacharius Eb can be

found in the accompanying sidebar, but the adventure will certainly require other mutants as well.

Non-mutant templates could include Alan Novak (Hm/Solar/CS-8) as the leader of the Orleans Dome PDF forces, and Lorna Devlin (Hf/Solar/FA-4) as a reporter for the Trans-Centauri News Agency.

## Other Major Systems of the Union

### Alkaid

In the middle of the Atlantea Prefecture, the Alkaid system holds great historical significance. In 2465, after the Second Galactic War had stormed on for more than a century, the leaders of the three great alliances arranged a secret meeting in this quiet system to discuss ending the war. Rigunmor Executive Guildler Alison Breel had to work incredibly hard to obtain assurances from the Solar Union's Sunlord to allow such a conference at Alkaid. The Thuldans almost backed out of the arrangement due to the potential for a Solar assassination attempt against Emperor Regist. But the great peacemaker Warthen Hale prevailed in bringing them together by convincing all parties of the necessity for an end to the conflict, as well as the opportunity to set an example of peace and trust in one another.

After weeks of closed negotiations, the Alkaid Conference ended, but not so the war. The three leaders went back to their countries and allies, and it took seven more years until GW2 slowed to a halt with the signing of the Treaty of Concord. Still, historians look upon Alkaid as the beginning of the end for the largest interstellar war mankind has ever fought.

Today, the planet Tebronium still orbits the blue giant star of Alkaid, with two billion sentients living under the historical overtones set by the Conference. All manner of industries prevail on Tebronium, serving as a cosmopolitan example of the Solar Union. The city of Serenity serves as the local seat of government, both for the system and the Prefecture. Known for their

diplomacy and goodwill, an Order of Alkaidian Knights also makes their home in Serenity. They originally formed in the years following the peace conference, and now model many of their ideals after the medieval cultures of ancient Earth, serving as diplomats and ambassadors across the Stellar Ring.

### Alphere

The Alphere system has grown into a major population center for the Kentares Prefecture. At 35 billion sentients, many have considered it a first-world system for the last three decades, and its population only continues to rise. Alphere is a class G4 yellow star, orbited by seven planets, three of which are habitable thanks to terraforming efforts. The others are airless rocks and three gas giants of varying size and numerous class 3 and class 4 moons.

The inhabited planets of the system include: Hamlet, a natural class 1 world of temperate climate, now a city-planet of 17 billion citizens; Ophelia with its three large oceans, due to the deliberate melting of 60% of her ice caps, and home to seven billion people spread across various islands and small continents; and Horatio, given a breathable atmosphere over 30 years ago, and now serving as home to over 10 billion sentients.

### Beta Cygni

As the only nation with limited space to expand, the Union of Sol has developed the best terraforming technologies in the Stellar Ring. The Beta Cygni system currently enjoys the benefits of these skills by Boren-Tsurumaki Terraforming Limited. The system is composed of a class F3 star, orbited by one molten rock world, one gas-laden class 3 planet, two medium-sized gas giants with several moons each, and one frozen hunk of rock at the system's edge. The B-TTL company has accepted a government contract to make the system available for healthy colonization within the next 25 years. It's a tight deadline and a poor system, but they're confident of their abilities.

The first two planets, Omearon and Karys, serve as the focus of the terraforming efforts. The furnace world of Omearon has nearly finished the process of altering its atmosphere to stop the buildup of greenhouse gases. After seeding the environment with ozone, atmospheric scrubbers will then clean the air, helping to bring down the temperature until icy chunks of the far planet can be brought to Omearon's surface for water. Karys faces a different challenge, however. The temperatures remain stable, but the atmosphere is overbearingly thick. Heavy concentrations of chlorine and sulfur dioxide corrode the scrubbers. Therefore, B-TTL has set up numerous low orbit stations to perform the work. These units still require regular upkeep, but have made much better progress than facilities on the surface. Carbon dioxide from Omearon may eventually find use on Karys once the process has matured for several years.

Rumors abound that B-TTL surface-based atmosphere scrubbers were not abandoned from maintenance difficulties, but rather from violent indigenous life. Franklin Stevenson (Hm/Solar/DFA-7), the project coordinator has denounced these rumors as bad fiction. Despite this, the ecologically radical group FreeHorizon has already had one vessel impounded as corporate security caught them sneaking into the system.

## **Chara**

Once the most productive mining operation of the Atlantea Prefecture, Chara now lies in ruin, a wasted system. In 2391, a Thuldans Fleet entered the system. At the time, the nearest Solar fleet had become preoccupied fighting a Thuldans feint maneuver elsewhere in the prefecture. The Planetary Defense forces fought bravely, but the Thuldans brutally crushed them. They then proceeded to entrench themselves and strip mine Chara's abundant resources. By the time the 9<sup>th</sup> fleet liberated the system in 2402, Chara had lost 85% of its treasure. In addition, the Thuldans destroyed the mining facilities as they fell back and abandoned the system.

Now Tectonic Inc. runs a single mining operation on Chara III. Largely automated, two-dozen workers oversee the station on a four-month rotation in the radiation-shielded facility. The system still has a long way to go before a full recovery, and no longer boasts a drivesat relay to the Solar Grid. Twenty years of Thuldans strip mining sucked the first two planets dry, and the asteroid belt is nearly used up as well. Two small gas giants mark the outer system, and have drawn several derelict ships, both Solar and Thuldans, into its orbit. Many were salvaged almost a century ago, but some may yet hold secrets.

## **Delta Pavonis**

The moon of Mandala holds prominence as the centerpiece of Delta Pavonis. Now a growing third-world culture, Mandala once orbited the gas giant Onyx as a frozen rock. Almost 50 million people now inhabit its cities and lush thriving ecosystem. The most striking aspect of Mandala is a vast cultural preserve encompassing more than 1,000,000 square miles.

The purpose of this preserve is to allow for the cultural recreation of several Native American cultures from Earth's ancient past, specifically the various natives of the Great Plains. Numerous period species of both plant and animal have been introduced into the local ecology, and freely exist throughout the preserve. Practitioners of several related cultures spend time visiting Mandala, and playing along with the reenactment of the culture. Solar authorities granted the historical sightseeing company Centennial Tours the authorization to hire two hundred actors to live within the preserve to add authenticity to the setting for tour groups. These men and women spend three weeks at a time living in period lifestyle, with only the barest of modern communication and protection devices.

The rest of Mandala sports three major cities, each full of their own local industries and businesses. The planetary capitol of Geronimo City supports over twenty million people, nearly half of the moon's inhabitants.



## Phact

Towards the outer borders of the Union of Sol, Phact contains the naturally occurring class 1 world of Yellow Tree. The planet was originally settled in the late 22<sup>nd</sup> century by settlers from the Asiatic Federation, and later by a second wave of Europeans and Indo-Africans. Today, Yellow Tree stands as a cosmopolitan megalopolis of Union space.

The state of the system was much different, however, in its early history. Phact holds the distinction as one of two systems containing class 1 worlds that broke away from the Terran Empire as part of the Middle Kingdom. Although the nation lasted only thirty-six years, various rebels, warlords, and loyalist forces hotly contested Phact from 2326 to 2341, when Admiral Sun Qi ended the last of the infighting.

Today, more than 150 years after the Middle Kingdom peacefully joined the Union, the 32 billion people of Yellow Tree have moved away from those hectic warring times. Collectively, they still retain the Middle Kingdom's tendency to comply with the will of strong leaders, both in government and social life. The System Governor, Orlando Delefuega (Hm/Solar/FA7) represents such a leader for the modern day. In the grand tradition of the system, he surrounds himself with sycophantic 'yes'-men, and rarely polls the populace before initiating new policies. He also resides in the historical palace of Middle Kingdom founder, Ming Guo. Delefuega is by no means a dictator, as his immediate superiors in the Pacifica Prefecture have kept him in check. To date, he has hastily yielded in every dispute.



## Pollux

Located in the Gatanita Prefecture, the Pollux system represented the destination for a second great wave of colonization by Solar pioneers. It also serves as the widely recognized home of the planet Abydos. A second-world planet, Abydos is named after an ancient Egyptian city on Earth where the first great kings were buried amidst great monuments. The leader of the colonial effort, an ultra-wealthy entrepreneur by the name of Ricardo Narmer whose fascination with ancient Egypt is now renowned, actually named the planet.

Although nearly 30 billion people live on the Class 1 world of Abydos, the lack of sizeable oceans means more surface area, which makes the overpopulation much more tolerable. Over the centuries, the Narmer family, still quite rich, has overseen the replica construction of numerous Egyptian historical sites. Tourists can visit the Great Pyramids of Giza, the Valley of the Kings, the Sphinx, Saqqara, the Temple of Ra, and dozens of less famous sites spread throughout Abydos. Indeed, the Narmer family's obsession with Egypt has grown to affect nearly the entire populace, and the common man on the street is as likely to possess as much knowledge of ancient Egypt as a college professor on Earth.

Today, Cleopatra Narmer (Hf/Solar/TO-9) holds the position of Planetary Governor of Abydos. While competent in her job, a well-qualified staff of subordinates actually keeps the planet's economy running smoothly. Only 36 years old, Cleopatra concerns herself more with her individual studies into Egyptian mythology and religion than with bureaucratic details. Some whisper that she never handled the death of her father very well, and turns now to Egyptian mysticism as a way of bringing him back from his mummified corpse. If she has lost her grip on reality, her younger brother Horus Narmer (Hm/Solar/NP) would likely take her position as Planetary Governor.

*"The ancient Egyptians knew many things."*  
- Cleopatra Narmer, 2499

## **Teaser Material**

Those of you who waited so very long for this first Netbook to be finished won't have to wait nearly as long for the rest. They're already well underway. However, here are a few snippets of sidebars from other stellar nations.

### **Sendir's Festival of Lights**

First discovered when a freight hauler made starrise near Denathca in 2286, the brilliant starrise encompassed a space fall larger than the tiny cargo ship should have manifested. In addition, rather than a single color, the starrise was a shimmering range of color, from blue to orange, from green to purple, from white to black. The colors appeared in a giant starburst washing over with waves of color. When the crew reported the event to the Church, a research team was sent to investigate, and over the next five years, they discerned the secret of what would come to be known as Sendir's Eye of Brilliance.

*Continued in FreeSpace Alliance*

### **Nariac Grid Entertainment**

The Nariac government pervades every aspect of its citizens' lives, even including the grid entertainment the people enjoy in their leisure time. The state-sponsored holoivid channels are run by the Nariac Gridcasting Institute (NGI), a media organization that churns out a variety of programs ranging from instructional documentaries to melodramatic space operas. The government's influence on content is evident in all these shows, where criticisms of the State are nonexistent and the philosophies of the government are unabashedly promoted. Although these shows have gained a measure of popularity within Nariac space, the programs' nationalistic flavor and comparatively poor production values have limited their distribution to foreign outlets.

A committee made up of political analysts, psychologists, and government administrators controls the NGI, deciding all programming strategies and approving funding for projects.

*Continued in Expansion Pentad*

### **Orion Military Special Operations units**

Dark Star and Black Nova are the Elite of the OSN and OMF. Members of these two forces are put through a rigorous training and selection program that includes psionic screening for loyalty.

Dark Star is a specialized fleet created specifically to transport Black Nova and defend them when ground side. ...

Black Nova is commanded by Brigadier General Marcus Develier, a no nonsense, out of the box thinker, who has a reputation for daring to do what should not be done, and succeeding. The soldiers of Black Nova are given extensive boarding techniques training, zero-g combat training, ground tactics, and even some ship operations skills.

*Continued in FreeSpace Alliance*

### **Division Suffix**

Suffix' main task is to fill in the gap that Division Insight left behind when it went rogue. Obviously, it is not allowed the same amount of freedom that it's predecessor had. If anything, VoidCorp was more than a little paranoid in the first few years of Suffix' existence and imposed a heavy security on even the lowest employees. But with the continued attacks of Insight this abnormal amount of security had to be dropped to allow Suffix greater efficiency, and this both increased protection against Grid attacks and made it possible to start striking back. Suffix now consists of a peculiar mixture of market-focused programmers and elite Grid pilots tasked with fighting their invisible wars.

*Continued in Expansion Pentad*

*"Now, which book to finish next, FreeSpace or Expansion? Hmmmm . . ."*

John Yackel, 2004