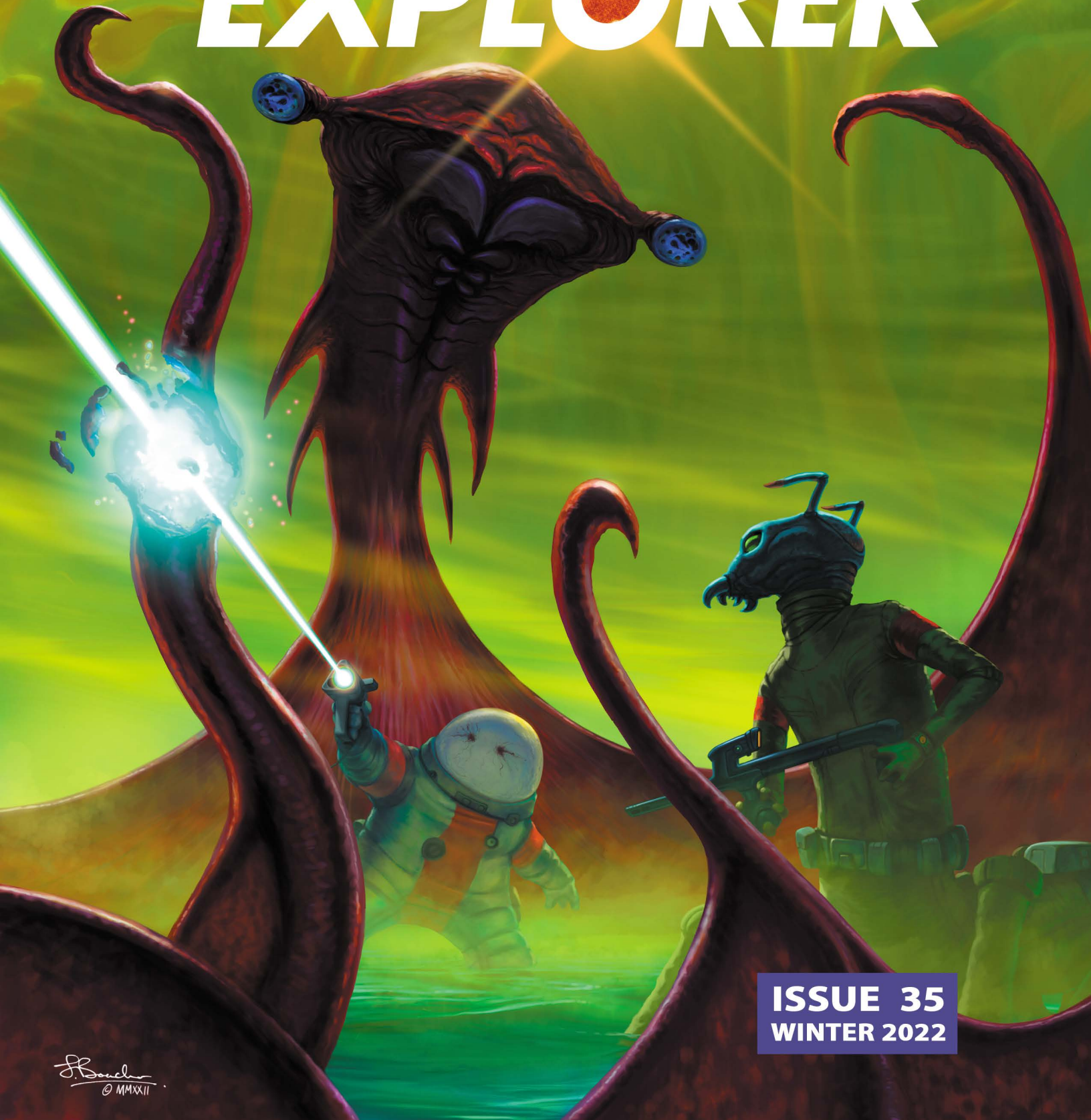


FRONTIER EXPLORER



ISSUE 35
WINTER 2022

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Do you have material you'd like to see published in the Frontier Explorer? We accept submissions of any fan material for Star Frontiers, FrontierSpace, or any other sci-fi role-playing game whether it is new races, equipment, vehicles, setting material, play reports, or anything else.

If you have something you'd like to share, head on over to the [Frontier Explorer website](#) and hit the gold "Submit New Content" button. We'll help you get the material ready for publication and into a future issue of the magazine.

GETTING THE RULES & BACK ISSUES

The published rules and modules for Star Frontiers and FrontierSpace, as well as all back issues for the Frontier Explorer and the Star Frontiersman (including print-on-demand physical copies of the Frontier Explorer) are available for purchase or download on DriveThruRPG.

All the old issues of the fan magazines, as well as print-on-demand versions of the Frontier Explorer can be found at [the Frontier Explorer page](#). These products are offered as pay-what-you-want. You can grab them for free, but this provides a way for you to make a donation to help support the magazines if you so desire.

Wizards of the Coast offers the Star Frontiers rules and modules on their [Star Frontiers page](#).

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello Explorers!

Welcome to the 40th anniversary year of Star Frontiers! I've been playing this game off and on for 38 of those years as I first picked up the game in 1984. This is also the 10th anniversary year of the Frontier Explorer. I can't believe we've been producing the magazine that long.

This issue starts with a throwback to those early days of the game with an article by Richard Rose about one of the first ships he designed even before he had the Knight Hawks rules. He also gives us a Knight Hawks adventure later in the issue.

Tom Verreault continues the starship theme with an article about starship computer systems. He also gives us a couple of alternate rule systems for beginning character skills and backgrounds.

A second theme for this issue is cadres and organizations which we get across three articles by three different authors: Tom Verreault, Ken Wang, and Oscar Rios.

We also have an article from Oscar that was supposed to go in the last issue, but we missed due to a communication mix-up. The issue ends with a planetary brief by Oscar and the first installment of a fiction piece by Rod McDonough.

I want to take the rest of this column and talk about the future. As I said above, this is the 10th year for the magazine and we are coming up on nine full years of issues. We'd be at ten but the hiatus year due to the trademark issues with Evil Hat back in 2018 threw us off. Interestingly, the current trademark drama hasn't caused Wizards to contact me at all. I guess they have their ducks in a row this time.

This is the 10th year of the magazine, but I think it is also going to be its last. At least in its current form. The truth is that I'm completely burnt out on producing the magazine and find it harder and harder to get started on each issue. At the very least, I need a break again. So I'm announcing that, unless something significantly changes, issue 36 will be the last issue of the Frontier Explorer.

I'll admit that that last paragraph was awfully hard to write. I've loved doing the magazine and am very glad Tom V talked me into starting it a decade ago. But I've

been thinking long and hard about this over the last six months and I think the time has come to move on. I love the idea of there being a fan magazine. I'm just not the one to do it anymore.

What happens with the magazine depends on what other community members decide to do. The ideal scenario would be for someone else to decide they want to produce a new fanzine. If that decision is made before early April 2022, issue 36 will look like any other issue, I'll hand off any unpublished articles in our queue to the new magazine, along with our artist and writer contact information, and the new magazine can pick up right where the Frontier Explorer leaves off. I'll give the new editor as much support as I can in getting setup and getting the word out for their first few issues. And I'm sure Tom V will be happy to help as well.

If no one wants to start a new magazine, I'm planning on making issue 36 a mega issue and publishing everything I have in the queue at that point. And it could be pretty big. I think I have enough articles for two full regular issues right now.

A third option would be to shift to completely on-line format with the articles just published on the magazine website but not doing the quarterly PDF and physical magazine. I'd want to redesign the magazine website for that but I'm looking at a redesign anyway, this would just give the redesign some direction.

Regardless of how the magazine's future plays out, there are a few things I'm planning on doing. First, I'm going to create some omnibus print editions of the magazine bundling up eight issues into each volume, making them about 400 pages each. Second, I want to get the fiction anthology, that we've been sitting on since issue 1 done and out the door. Third, I want to get the articles for all the back issues, from issue 7 onward, online like the earlier articles. There's more, including projects not related to the 'zine, but I'm out of space.

Feel free to contact me if you have ideas about the above but for now, sit back and enjoy the issue.

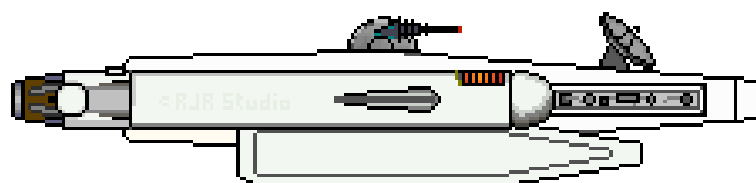
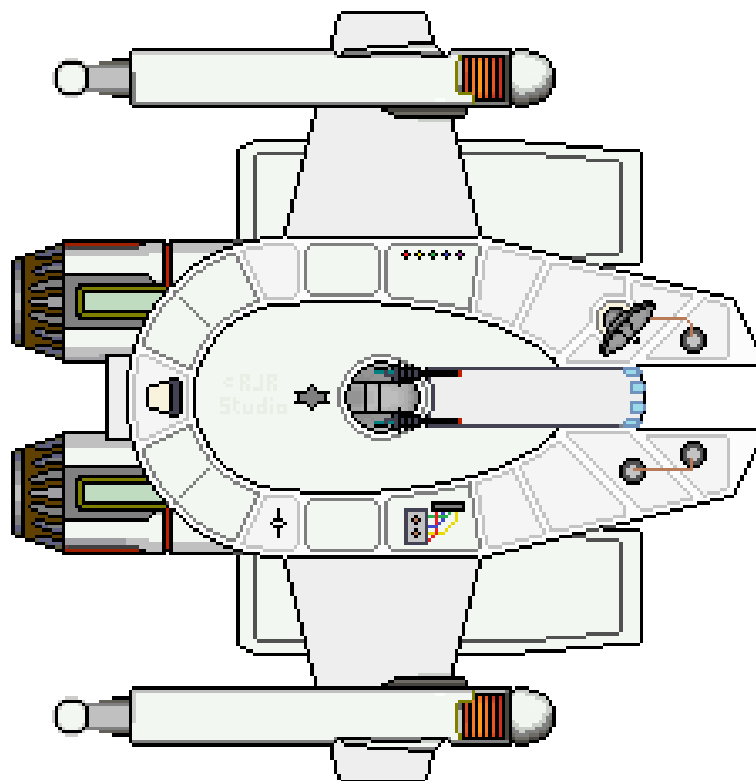
- Tom Stephens
Senior Editor

STARLING CLASS LIGHT TRANSPORT

BY RICHARD "SHADOW SHACK" ROSE

Author's Note: Way back in merry old 1982 when Star Frontiers debuted, I house ruled ship designs from the get-go by "reverse engineering" some Traveller deck plans I had courtesy of Supplement 7 – Traders & Gunboats. While those house rules quickly faded into obscurity a year later when Knight Hawks debuted, I still have many of those original decks-parallel designs. The Starling was my first ship design back then, and while I never got around to converting it to KH specifications I did recycle it as a system ship in more recent years.

For the 40th Anniversary of the game I wanted to convert that first ship to a KH design, both as a tribute to the game itself as well as to my old house rules for star-ship creation. The ship got a lot of mileage in several campaigns, both in my house rules and as a system ship in more recent times...as such it's a labor of love to perform this conversion. I hope you enjoy this at least a fraction as much as I have in the past four decades!



STREEL LT/A-401 STARLING CLASS LIGHT TRANSPORT

KNIGHT HAWKS STATS

HS: 4 **HP:** 24

Powerplant: 2 Ion A + 2 chemical A

ADF: 1 **MR:** 4 **DCR:** 40

Weapons: LB

Defenses: RH

Communications/Detection: subspace radio, radar, intercom

Misc. Equipment: streamlined, light hull armor

Computer: Level: 4 FP: 108 Mass/SP: 100

Programs: Alarm 4, Analysis 4, Astrogration 4, Bureaucracy 2, Commerce 1, Damage Control 4, Drive (Chemical A) 1, Drive (Ion A) 3, Industry 1, Information Storage 1, Laser Battery 1, Life Support 1 (cap:22), Maintenance 4, Transportation 1

Cargo Capacity: 3

Crew Accommodations: Captain's Suite + 4 dbl. cabins

Passenger Accommodations: 1 First Class Cabin, 4 Journey Class Cabins (all double occupancy)

Ships Vehicles: none

Price: 900,050Cr @ Class I SCC
1,140,050Cr @ Class II SCC

DESCRIPTION

The Starling class light transport is a vintage design dating back a century before the formation of the UPF. Strele, Incorporated (before they dropped the silent "e" and became a mega-corp) originally designed and constructed this ship in pf-100

with the first one serving as a privateer to disrupt the Mining Guild established by Pan-Galactic at the time.

The Ion Drives are supplemented by a pair of over-sized Chemical Thrusters along with detachable external fuel tanks. This arrangement permits planetary landings and take-offs as per a system ship of the same size, whereas ion drives alone would not be possible for such tasks. The external tanks hold 20 loads of fuel (5,000Cr to fill), plus a load in the drives themselves. This allows 21 planetary take-offs and landings, or 1 take-off and 20 turns worth of acceleration that adds +1 ADF to the existing Ion Drives for a total

of ADF:2, or 10 turns worth of +2 ADF for a total of ADF:3. Note that after exhausting this fuel supply, the Ion Drives can still decelerate for an atmospheric landing with the reserve Chem Drive fuel supply for re-entry.

The external cargo pods each hold 1.5 units of cargo for a total of 3 units. There is no direct ship-to-hold access, once loaded the crew won't see the inside of the hold until reaching the destination. The cargo pods can be ejected to increase the Ion Drive performance by +1 ADF, and this boost is cumulative with the temporary Chem Thruster boost allowing a maximum ADF of four. The pods cost 75,000 credits each to replace and will require 45 days each for construction... there was a time

when these pods were more common and readily available, but those days are long gone.

While the external fuel tanks can be detached as well, there is no performance gain, this is merely a safety feature should the tanks get ruptured in combat. Replacing the tanks costs 20,000 credits and requires 30 days of construction time (cost and time is for both tanks).

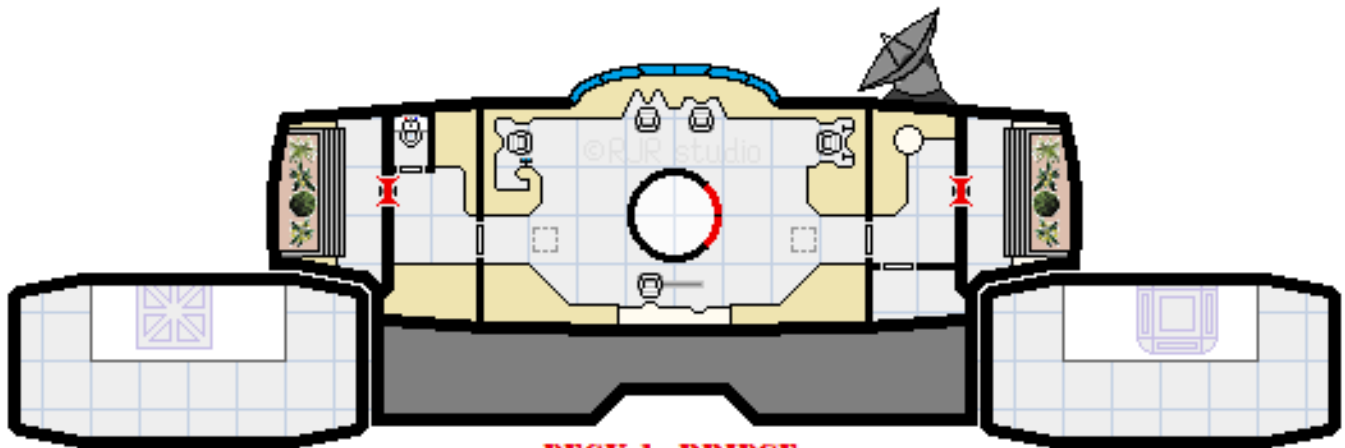
The ship is a paramilitary design boasting light hull armor and increased weaponry and defenses; however, it only comes standard with a laser battery. A single charge Masking Screen and a pair of forward firing Laser Pods (for two 1d10 shots or one 2d10 shot per turn) can be added with no performance penalty.

Because this is a vintage design, there can be used samples to be had that are over 100 years old. While the current design has been updated a few times since inception, some of these older ships may still be utilizing vintage hardware and/or software... feel free to offer sub-standard components for such craft, such as a laser battery with a shorter range, an oversized mainframe computer that takes up more space than a modern design, or life support equipment that by original design only lasts half as long.

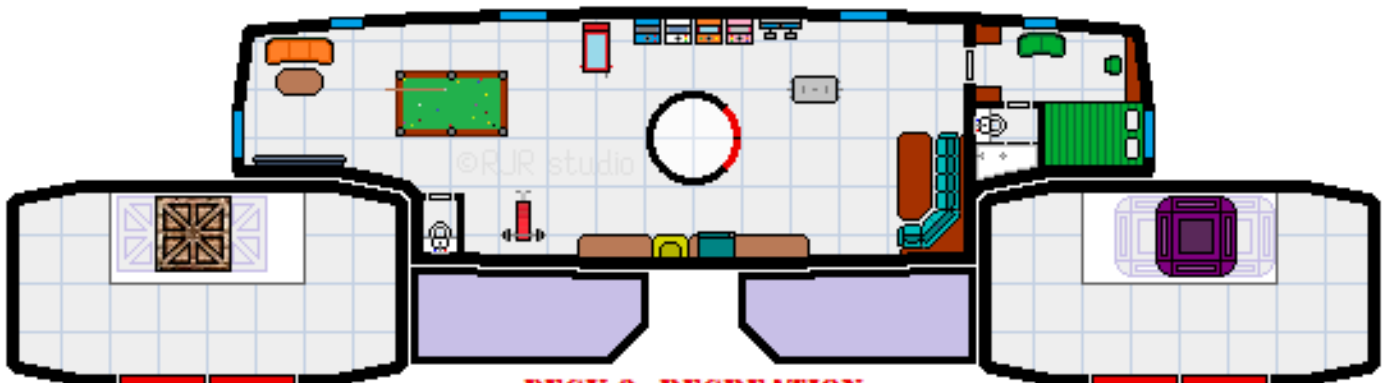
DECK PLANS

The deck plans for the original ship are presented below.

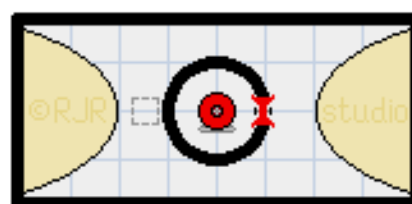
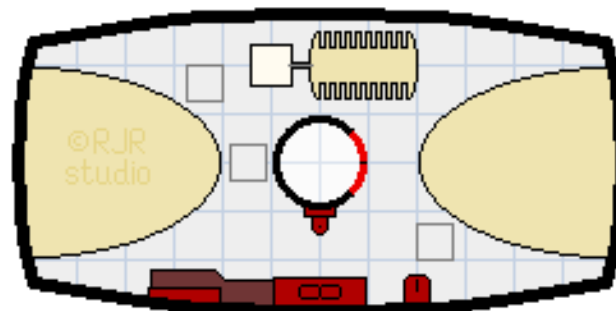
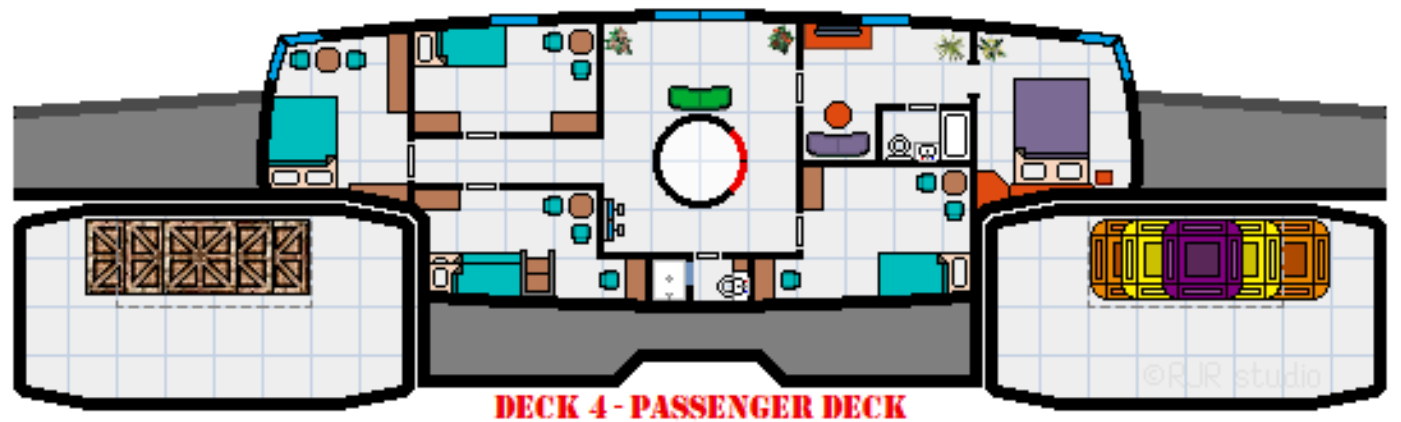
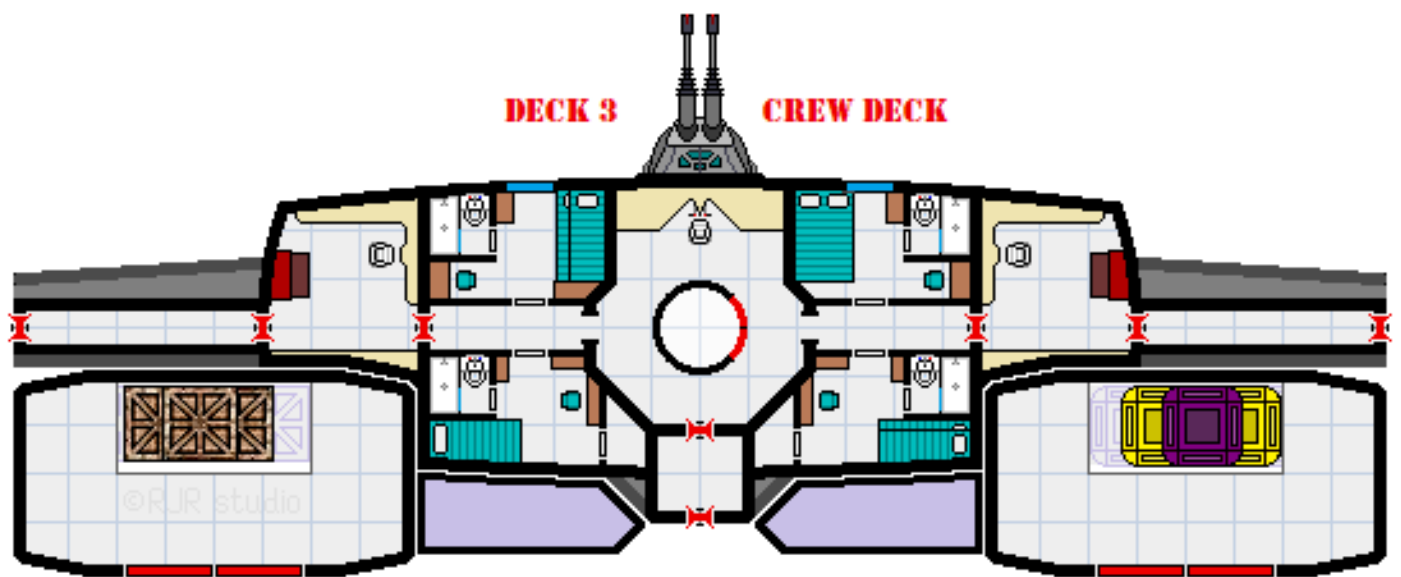
DECK 1A - AVIONICS



DECK 1 - BRIDGE



DECK 2 - RECREATION



SS AQUILIAN STARLING

Starling Class Light Transport Serial#001

KNIGHT HAWKS STATS

HS: 3 **HP:** 18

Powerplant: 2 Atomic A

ADF: 5 **MR:** 3 **DCR:** 30

Weapons: LB

Defenses: RH

Communications/Detection: SubSpace Radio, VideoCom, Radar, Energy Sensor, Intercom, WNB

Misc. Equipment: Streamlined, Light Hull Armor

Computer: Level: 4 FP: 163 mass/SP: 100

Programs: Alarm 2, Analysis 4, Astrogration 4, Bureaucracy 3, Commerce 1, Computer Lock-Out 4, Computer Security 4, Damage Control 2, Drive (Atomic A) 4, Industry 1, Information Storage 1, Installation Security 4, Laser Battery 1, Life Support 1 (cap:20), Maintenance 2, Robot Management 4, Transportation 1

Cargo Capacity: 3

Crew Accommodations: Captain's Suite + 4 dbl. cabins

Passenger Accommodations: 1 First Class Cabin, 3 Journey Class Cabins (all dbl. occupancy)

Ships Vehicles: none

DESCRIPTION

The Aquilian Starling has a rich history, dating back before the founding of the UPF. She was the first of her series, dubbed "Starling class light transport" for future renditions. Streele, Inc. commissioned the vessel as a privateer to help ward off the aggressive Mining Guild that was disrupting what otherwise could have been a self-sufficient Truane's Star, taxing mining and trade between Pale and New Pale.

Streele, Inc. hired former Lonely Knights pirate Robert 'Razor' Kitridger under contract with specific instructions to disrupt the Mining Guild and "confiscate" any valuable loads from their craft. Kitridger and his crew were quite efficient at that task, spending the next twenty years acquiring generous amounts of reappropriated minerals and supplies... enough to pay off the ship and then some. Once the Mining Guild folded and left the system, Streele,

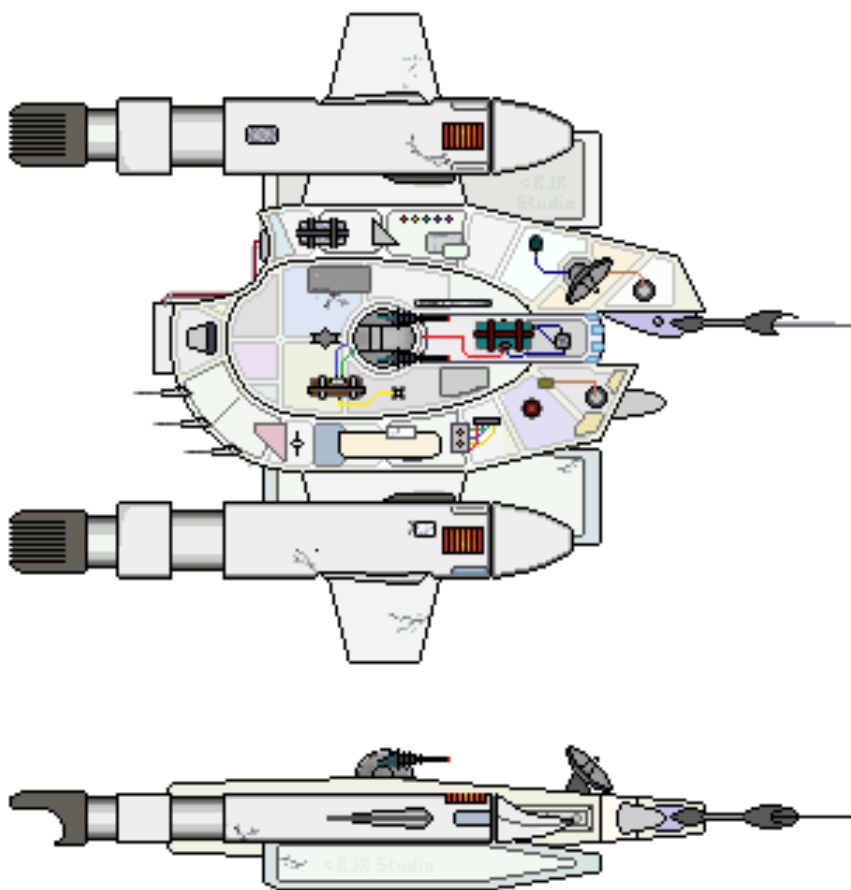
Inc. awarded Kitridger full ownership of the craft and their attorneys were able to change his name, thus erasing his past as a pirate. Robert spliced his nickname and part of his former faction's name to become Captain John Knightrazor, he was a free man and had a means of travel.

Knightrazor enjoyed a prosperous career as a tramp freighter captain over a handful of decades, dealing with the typical ups and downs of independent ship owners. He developed a fair reputation as a hauler while the mega-corporations grew. While he favored working for his former employer (then simply known as Streele after attaining mega-corp status), he still took jobs from other corporations.

Eventually the hardest knock came, the ship required major renovations after a near fatal encounter during the First Sathar War. The ill-fated vessel unknowingly dropped out of the void into a UPF system that the Sathar Battle Fleet had already entered, and the Starling took a severe beating. It would have no doubt been destroyed if not for the timely

intervention of Admiral Morgaine's fleet, who arrived and made the unfriendly types feel most unwelcome. The Starling was taken in tow and its crew began redesigning what they had left to work with.

When the war was officially over the Starling's crew finally secured the adequate docking space for reconstruction. The entire chemical engine compartment had been destroyed, as well as a portion of the forward starboard side. Supplies were short and in demand so rebuilding the missing sections became a timely and costly operation, the crew instead opted for sealing up those sections and relocating the salvageable equipment. The chemical thrusters were ditched, and the ion drives were sold at salvage value to help pay for a pair of rebuilt/refurbished atomic drives. Much of the replacement equipment that was destroyed in the fore section ended up on the port side of the forward hull, making both mandible sections nearly impassible areas to work in. Finally, the auxiliary chemical fuel tanks were sold



for salvage as there was no longer a need for them, thus further lightening the load.

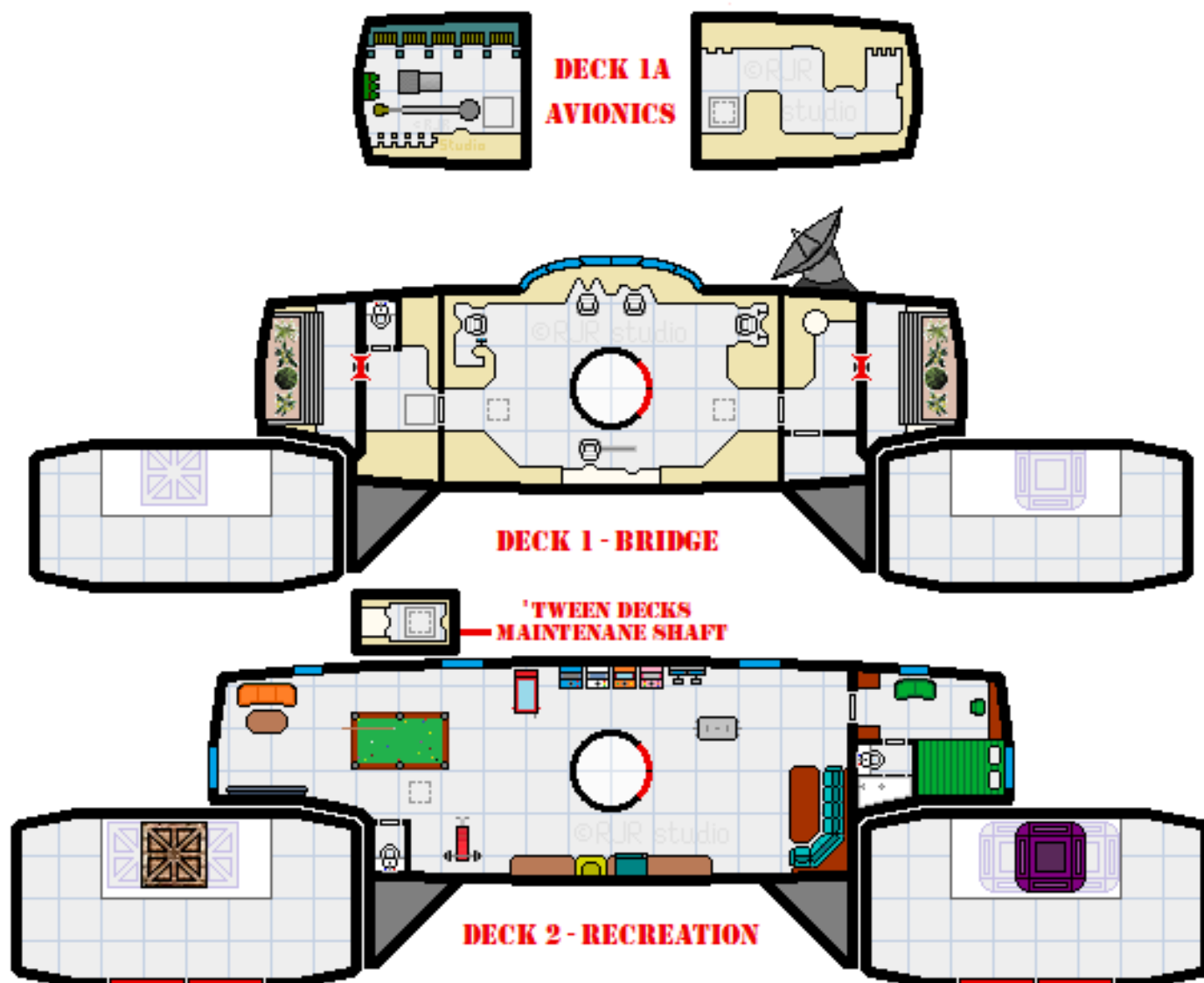
As a result of the salvage/reconstruction, the actual hull displacement ended up dropping from HS:4 to HS:3. Through clever restructuring of the interior along with no need to alter the external cargo pods, the cargo capacity remained the same. One additional benefit comes with the smaller size, with Class A atomic drives designed to power a size 4 hull now powering smaller displacement size 3 hull, the ship performs better.

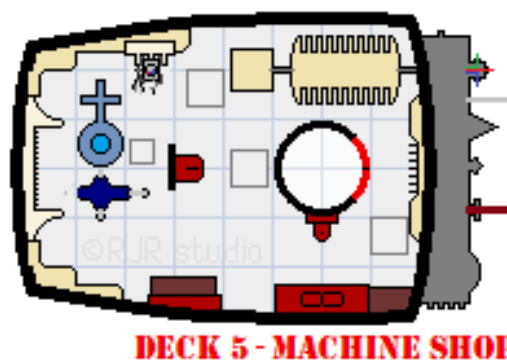
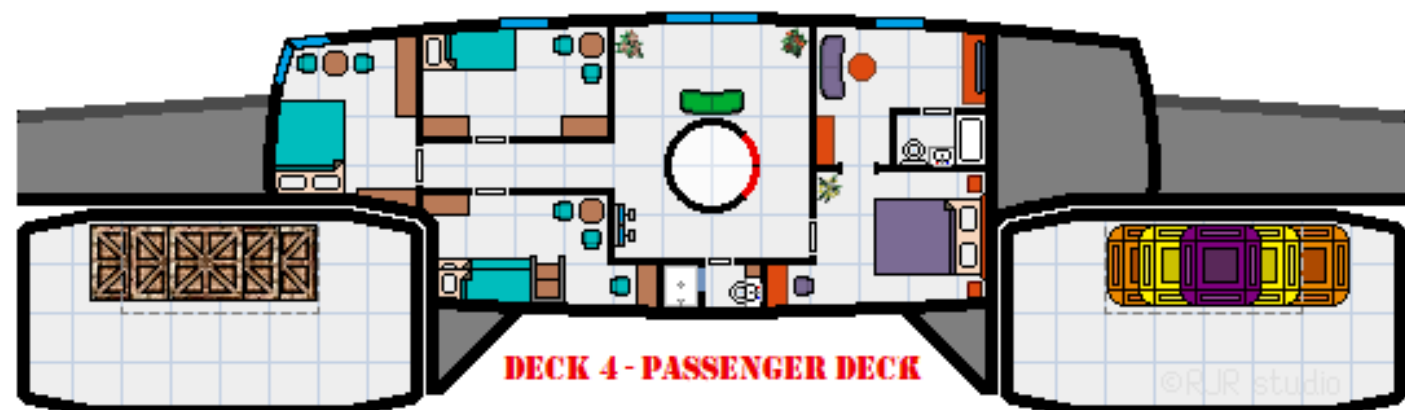
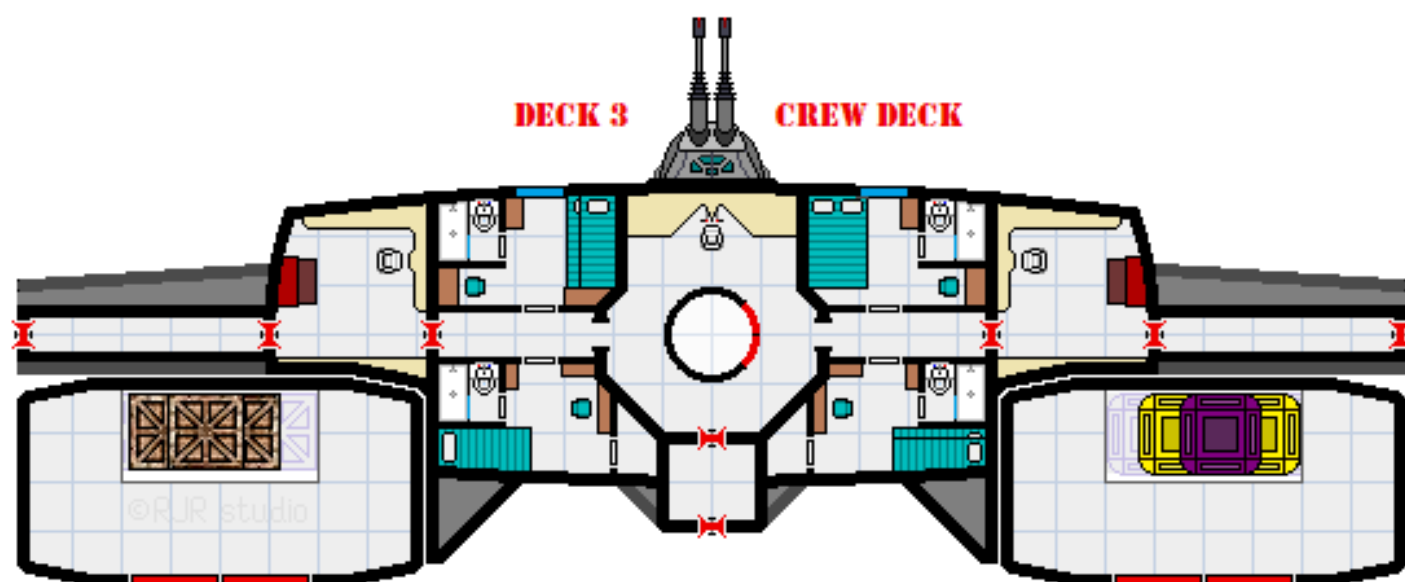
John eventually gifted the salvaged vessel to his son Stephen who utilized it for nearly ten years of freight hauling, and when John passed of old age Stephen, sold the craft in favor of subcontracting a new

class-V RT model freighter. The current owner, adventurer Richard Sterling, bought it from Knightrazor and still owns and operates it today. Eventually cyber-slave circuits were also installed so that Sterling's bionic/cybernetically enhanced wife could control and operate multiple systems from one location, thus allowing for a reduced crew. Current owner Sterling has logged some very respectable times in the Zebulon Run with "the Clunker" (as he affectionately calls her). Unfortunately, that fame comes with a price for Silver, who prefers to avoid any interstellar attention...

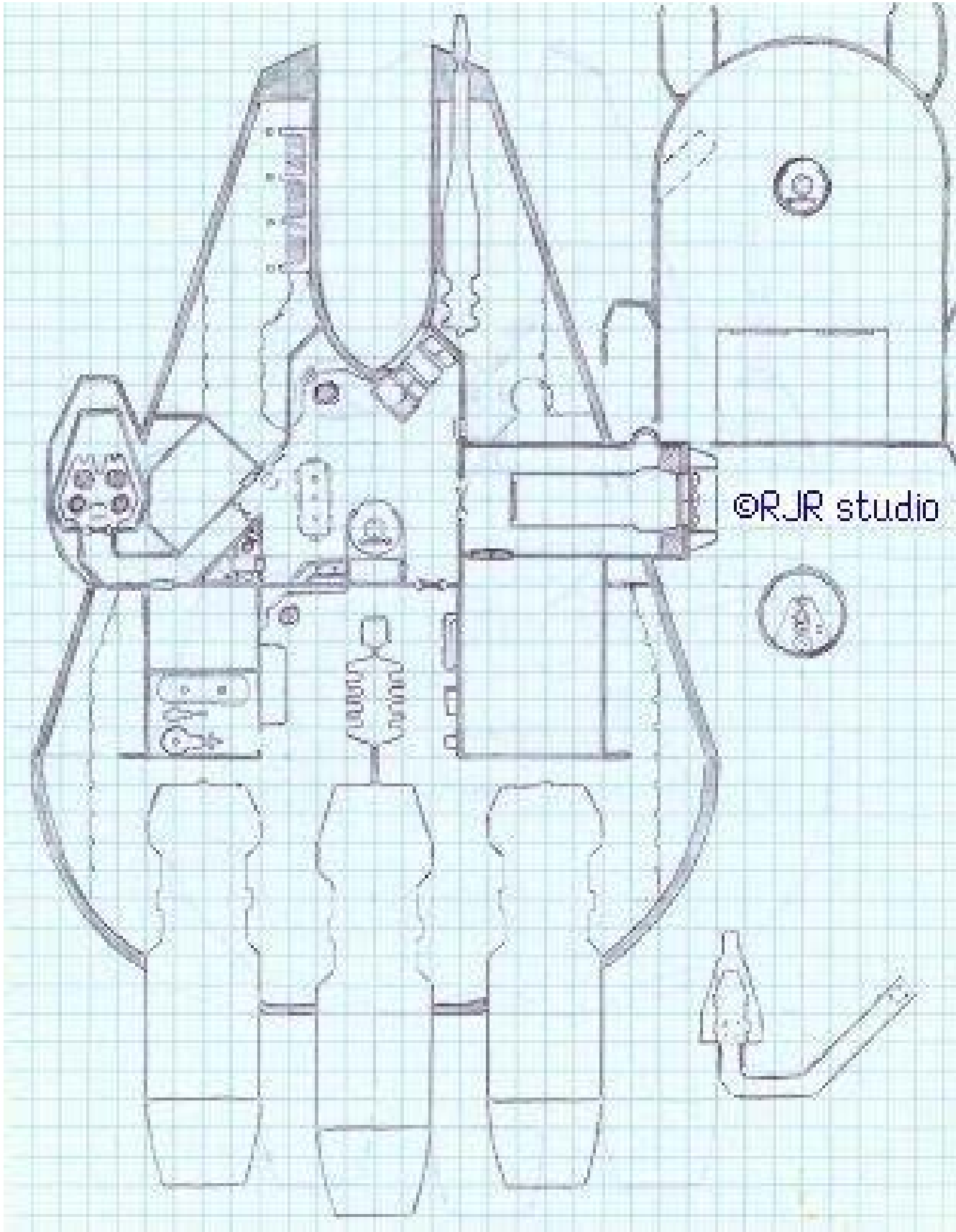
DECK PLANS

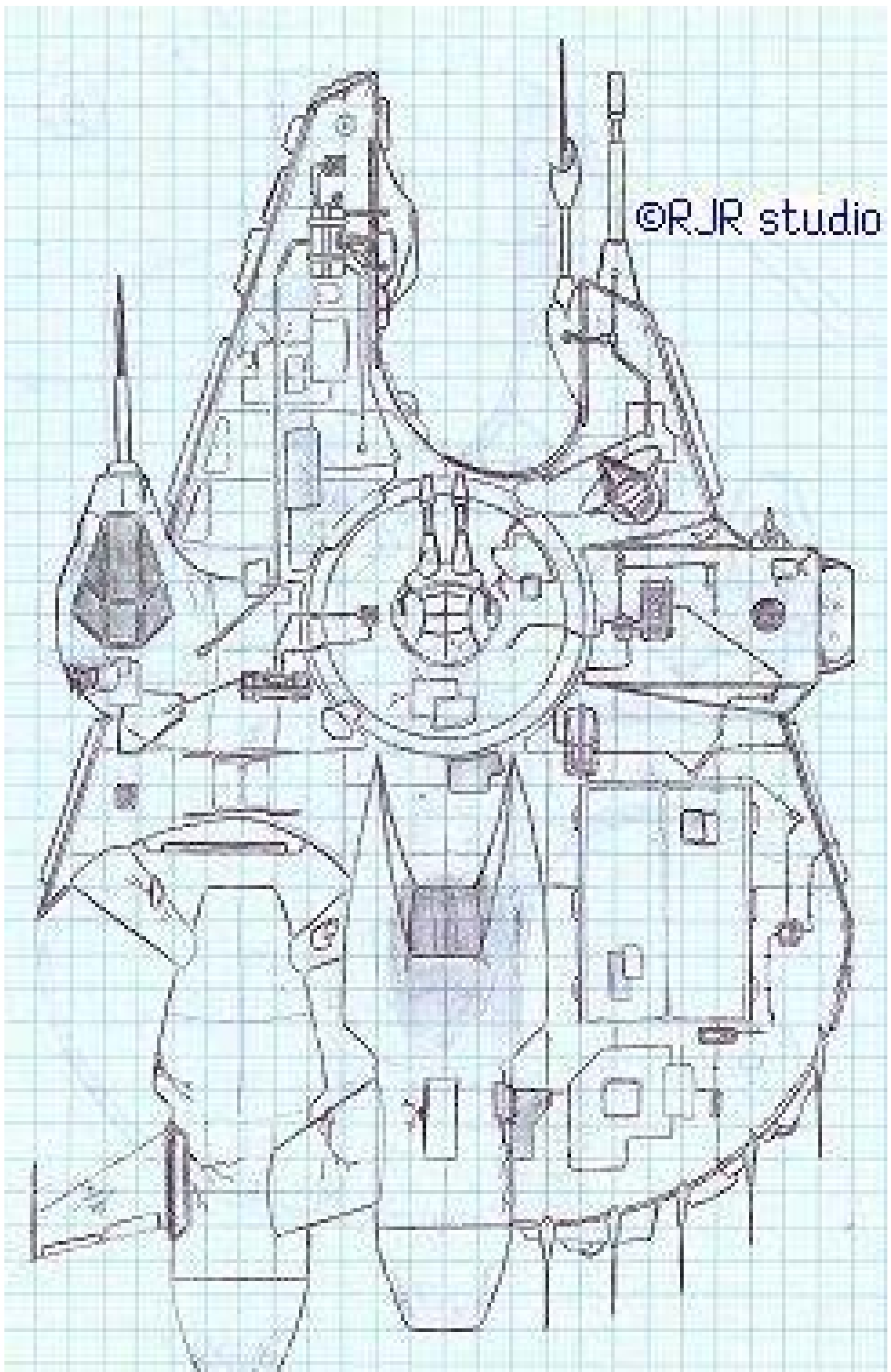
Below are the deck plans for the SS Aquilian Starling after its repairs.

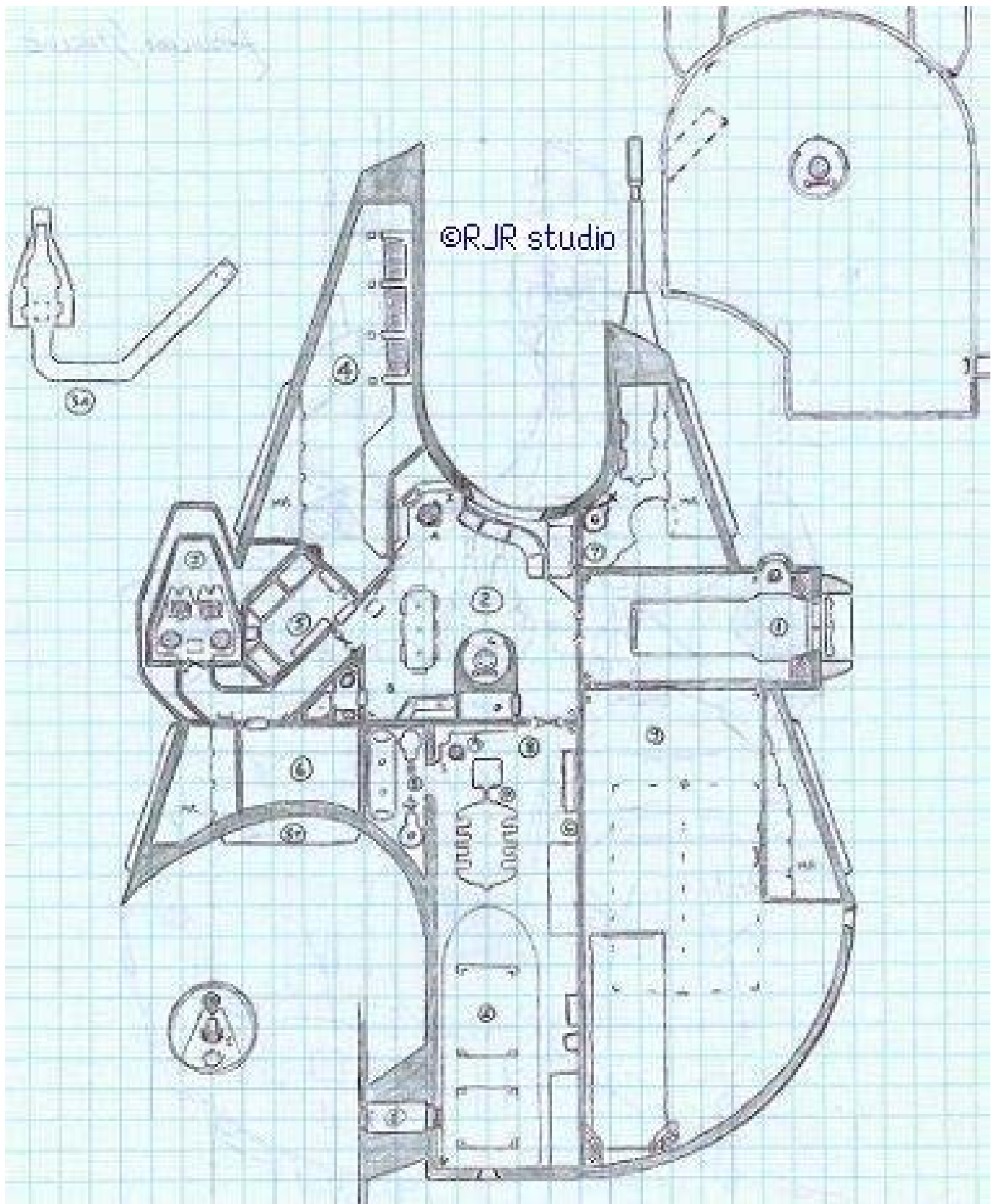




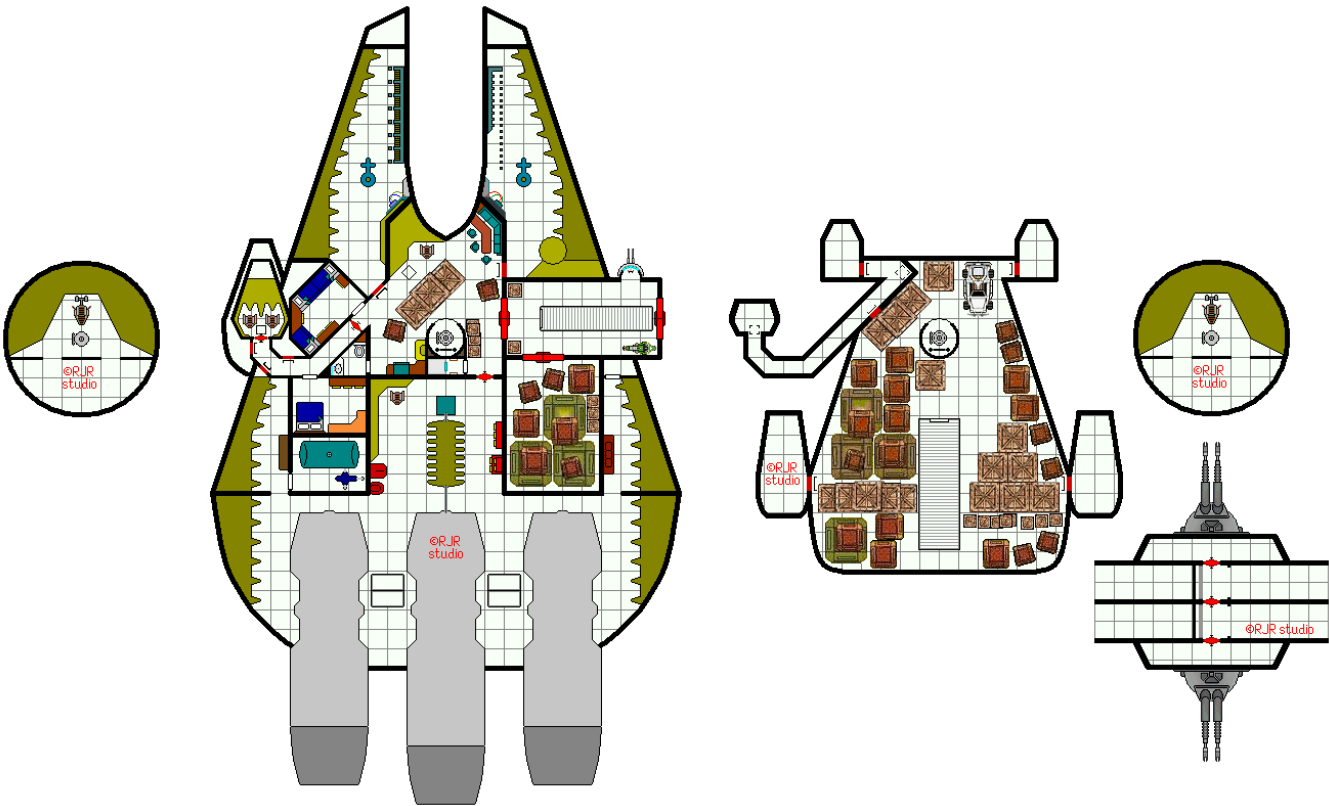
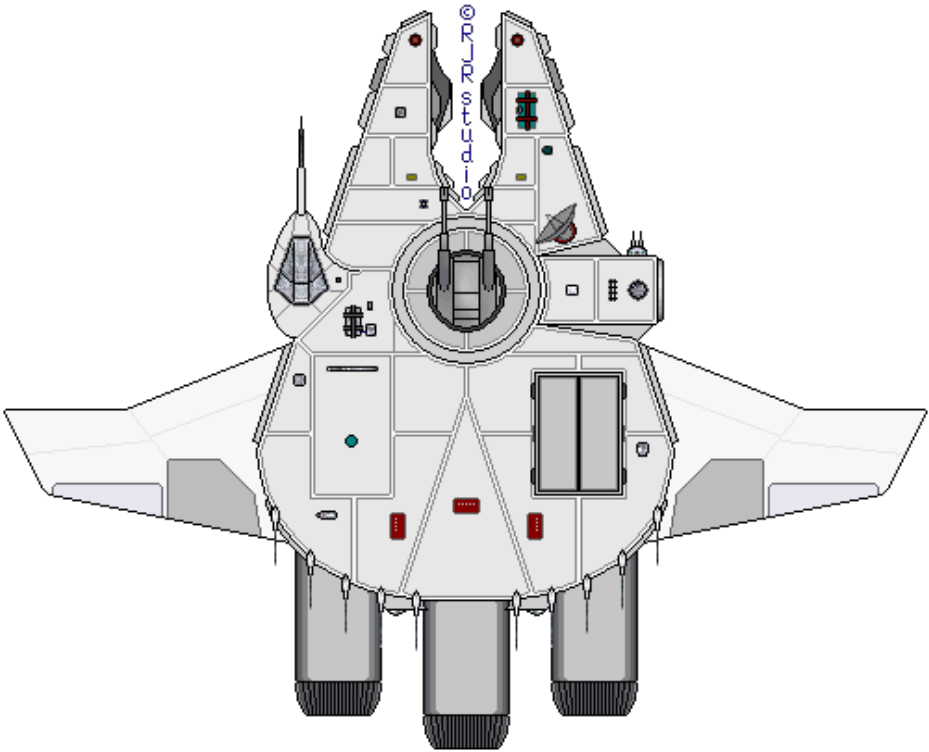
**ORIGINAL 1982 HAND
DRAWN VERSIONS**

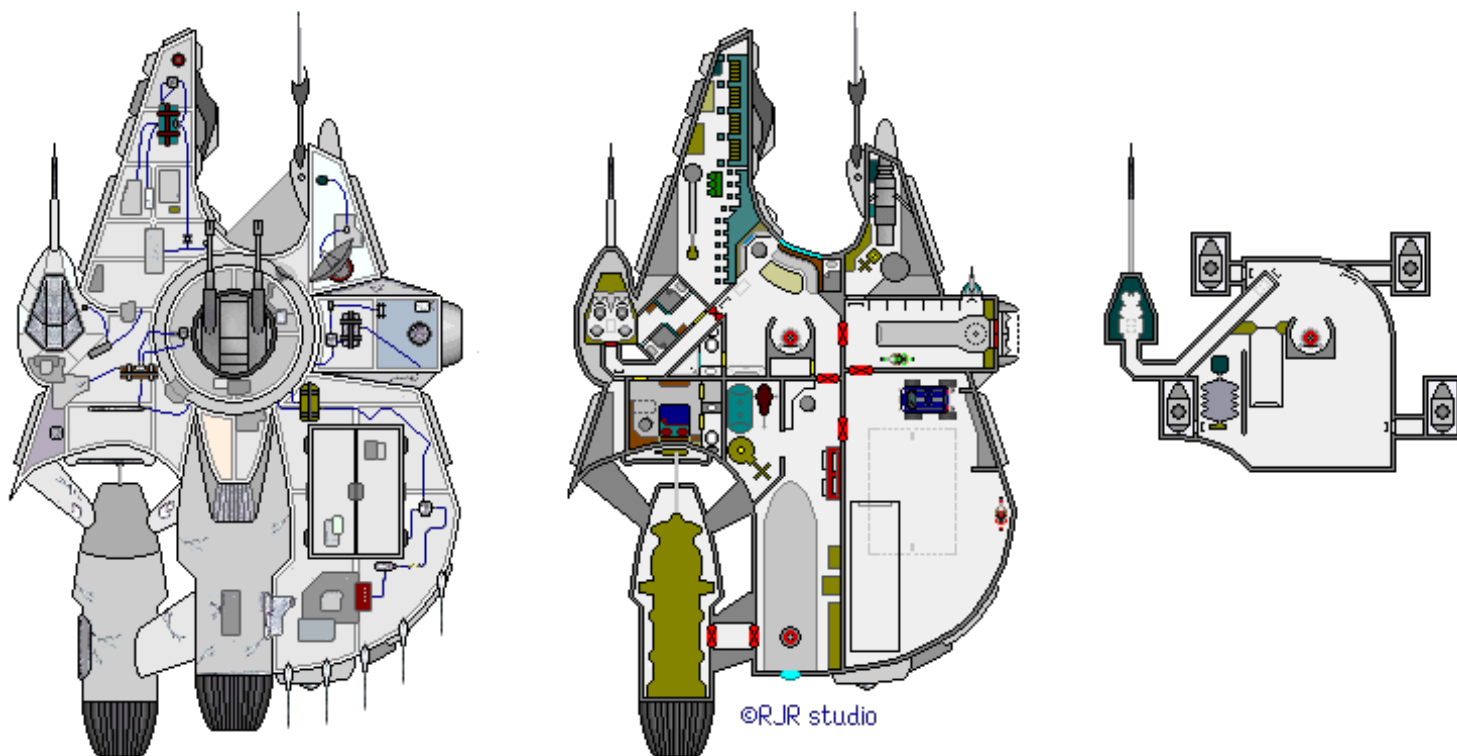






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DESIGNS





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We love making the magazine and will continue to do so regardless of the outcome of this endeavor. However, the production and maintenance of the magazine and website have costs and that's where you can help.

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I want to say thanks to our patrons for their contributions.

The money raised will be used to improve both the Frontier Explorer and Star Frontiersman magazines in various ways including improved web hosting, improved software and hardware for production, website upgrades and improvements with the magazine itself.

We'd love to have your support to help make the magazines the best that they can be. Jump on over to the Patreon site (<https://www.patreon.com/FrontierExplorer>), read all the details, and consider becoming a patron.

DEMYSTIFYING STARSHIP COMPUTER SYSTEMS

IN STAR FRONTIERS KNIGHT HAWKS

BY TOM VERREAU

These days no one wants long and complicated game prep. And there is nothing more complicated in the Star Frontiers Game than determining the level of a starship's computer. However, it's actually important if a character will be doing skill checks with the computer.

Figuring out a computer's level is complicated by the fact that the original Knight Hawks rule book did not provide a chart with the function points for the Alarm, Computer Lockout and Damage Control programs [Editor's Note: Actually, it did. But it was tucked away in the back of the book in the Equipment Lists summary table on page 61]. When Bill Logan produced the Digitally Remastered Knight Hawk rules, he addressed that by creating the chart below [Editor's Note: Bill's chart matches the one in the back of the KH book everywhere except for the level 1 Damage Control program. Bill's is half the cost and half the function points], however the Digitally Remastered rules were pulled from the internet when WotC put the original rules back in print. Unless you have access to the Digitally Remastered rules you have a hurdle to overcome if you're designing a ship and trying to figure out its computer level.

Even if you have the chart from the Digitally Remastered rules that I just shared, you then have the complication created by the Computer Lockout Program rules. The level of the Computer Lockout program is determined by the level of the computer. This means you have to total up the function points of all the other programs to determine the level of the computer to determine the level of Lockout program and

hope that its number of function points doesn't push the computer to a higher level. All the while you are flipping through dozens of pages in the Knight Hawks rules looking for stats that can be difficult to find then switching to the Alpha Dawn rules which has the chart that tells you the level of computer based on the number of functions.

After doing a spreadsheet to compute computer levels by hull size and type of drive, I've developed a quick and dirty rule for computer levels. Its not perfect but close enough. For the purposes of this rule small ships are all those with size A engines, cruisers are all ships with size B, and capitol ships are all those with size C engines. This quick and dirty computer level by ship class closely follows what the spreadsheet revealed. Also, the complicated way that Knight Hawks rules determines the level of the Computer Lockout program is unnecessary. Determine its level by the chart at lower right and move on.



The spreadsheet doesn't take account of any computer programs for weapons or auxiliary programs like Excavation for mining ships. Neither does it take account for computer programs from the Alpha Dawn rules like a Communication program for all ships or Commerce program for freighters. This means that the spreadsheet represents a minimal computer level and number of functions points for that hull size.

On the other hand, if you'd like to design a ship to the Nth degree you can use the tables on the following pages to save yourself some time.

COMPUTER PROGRAM CHART

Level	Alarm		Computer Lockout	Damage Control	
	FP	Cost	FP	Cost	FP
1	1	1,000Cr	1	1,000Cr	1
2	2	2,000Cr	2	2,000Cr	4
3	4	4,000Cr	4	4,000Cr	8
4	8	8,000Cr	8	8,000Cr	16
5	16	16,000Cr	16	16,000Cr	32
6	32	32,000Cr	32	32,000Cr	64

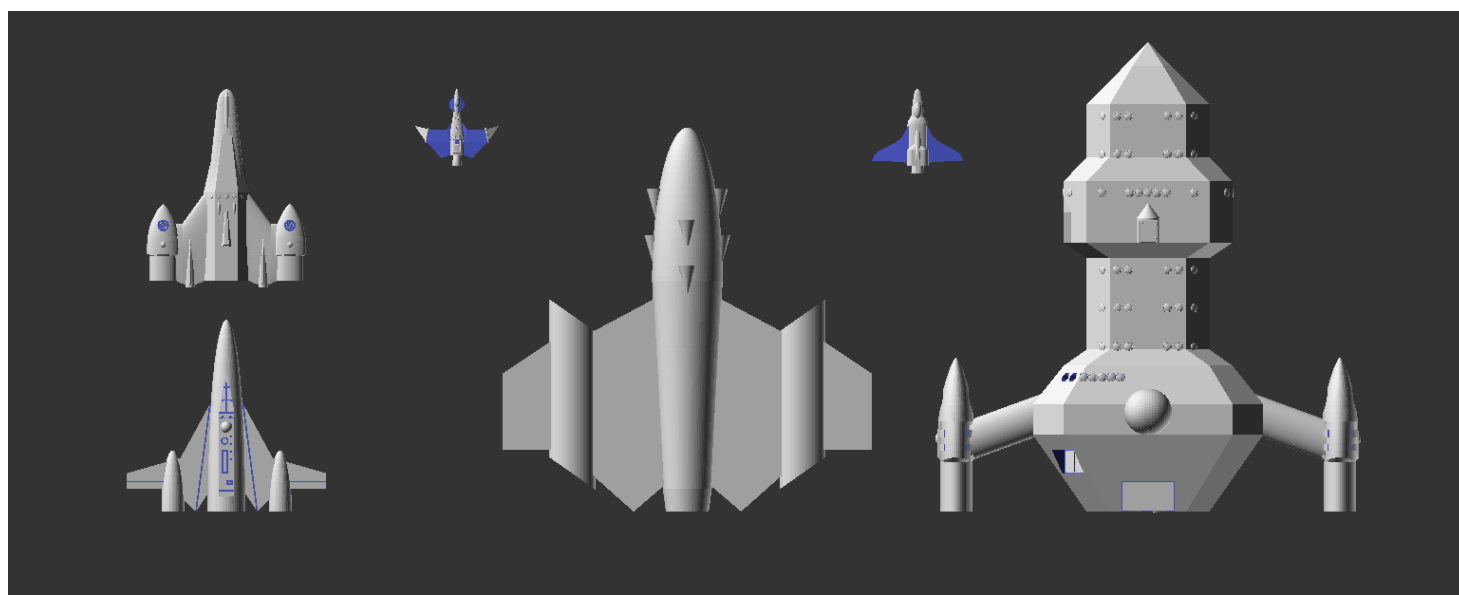
From the remastered rule set

TYPICAL SHIP COMPUTER LEVEL BASED ON SIZE AND DRIVE TYPE

COMPUTER LEVEL	CHEMICAL AND ION DRIVE SHIPS	ATOMIC DRIVE SHIPS
2	All Small Ships	-
3	All Cruisers	All Small Ships
4	All Capitol Ships	All Cruisers
5	-	All Capitol ships

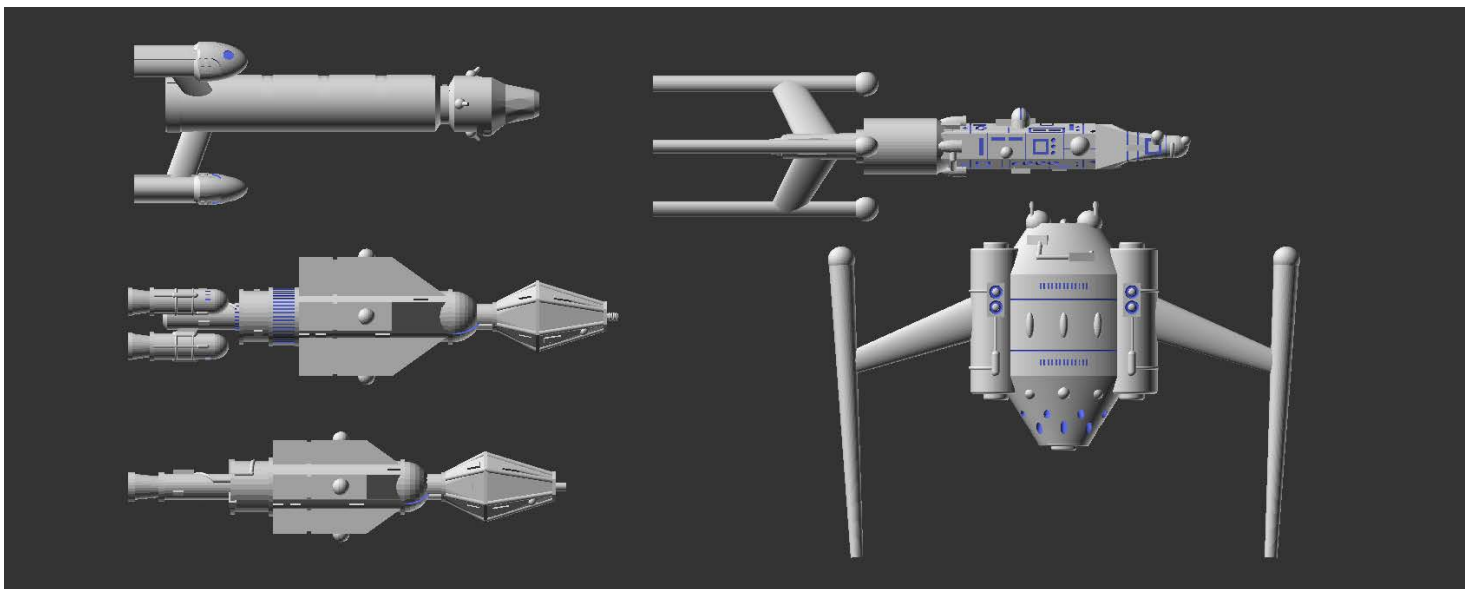
SMALL SHIPS, HULL SIZES 1-4

PROGRAMS	HULL SIZE 1	HULL SIZE 2	HULL SIZE 3	HULL SIZE 4
Alarm	1(1)	1(1)	2(2)	2(2)
Damage Control	1(1)	1(1)	2(4)	2(4)
Life Support	1to 2(2)	1to 2(2)	1to 2(2)	3(3)
Back Up Life Support	1to 2(2)	1to 2(2)	1to 2(2)	3(3)
Subtotal FP	6	6	10	12
CHEMICAL DRIVE SHIPS				
Chem Drive	1(3)	1(3)	1(3)	1(3)
Astrogation	1(3) Shuttle	1(3) Shuttle	2(6) System	2(6) System
Computer Lockout	2(2)	2(2)	2(2)	2(2)
Total FP	14	14	21	23
Computer Level	2	2	2	2
FP till Next Level	16	16	9	7
ION DRIVE SHIPS				
Ion Drive	3(12)	3(12)	3(12)	3(12)
Astrogation	1(3) Shuttle	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship
Computer Lockout	2(2)	3(4)	3(4)	3(4)
Total FP	23	46	50	50
Computer Level	2	3	3	3
FP till Next Level	7	34	30	30
ATOMIC DRIVE SHIPS				
Atomic Drive	4(32)	4(32)	4(32)	4(32)
Astrogation	1(3) Shuttle	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship
Computer Lockout	3(4)	3(4)	3(4)	3(4)
Total FP	45	66	70	72
Computer Level	3	3	3	3
FP till Next Level	35	14	10	8



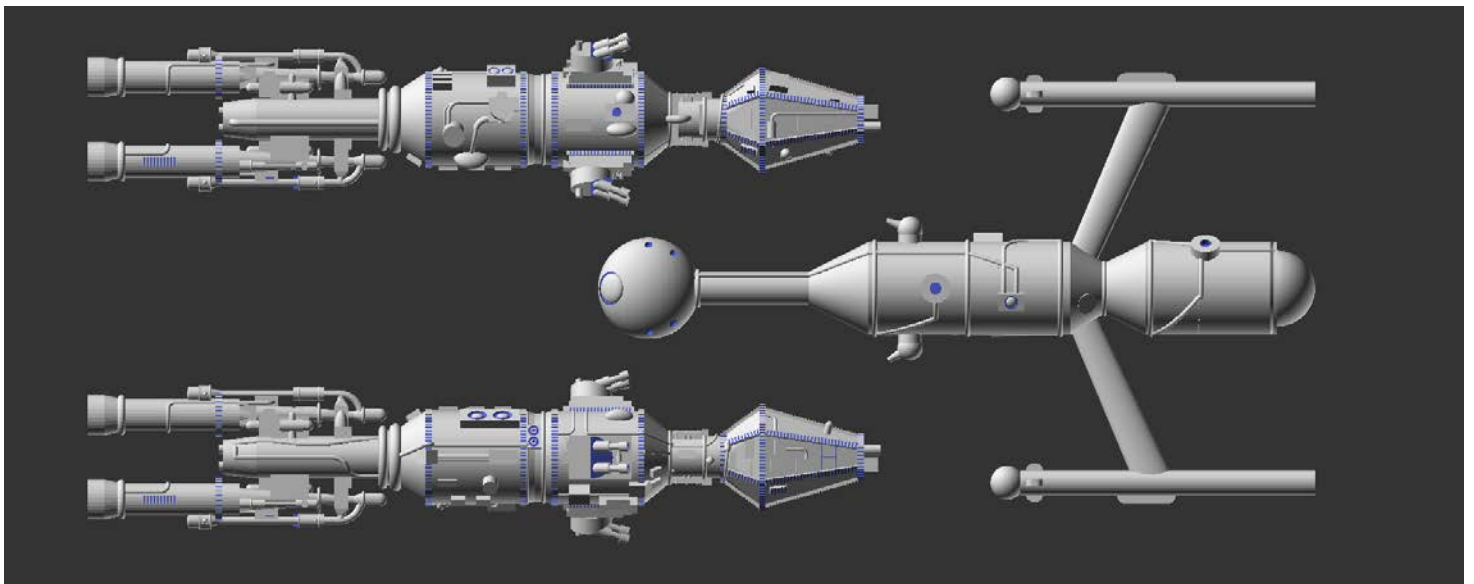
CRUISERS, HULL SIZES 5-9

PROGRAMS	HULL SIZE 5	HULL SIZE 6	HULL SIZE 7	HULL SIZE 8	HULL SIZE 9
Alarm	3(4)	3(4)	2(2)	2(2)	2(2)
Damage Control	3(8)	3(8)	2(4)	2(4)	2(4)
Life Support	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)
Back Up Life Support	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)
Subtotal FP	18	18	12	12	12
CHEMICAL DRIVE SHIPS					
Chem Drive	2(6)	2(6)	2(6)	2(6)	2(6)
Astrogation	2(6) System	2(6) System	2(6) System	2(6) System	2(6) System
Computer Lockout	3(4)	3(4)	2(2)	2(2)	2(2)
Total FP	34	34	26	26	26
Computer Level	3	3	2	2	2
FP till Next Level	46	46	4	4	4
ION DRIVE SHIPS					
Ion Drive	4(24)	4(24)	4(24)	4(24)	4(24)
Astrogation	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship
Computer Lockout	4(8)	4(8)	3(4)	3(4)	3(4)
Total FP	92	92	64	64	64
Computer Level	4	4	3	3	3
FP till Next Level	108	108	16	16	16
ATOMIC DRIVE SHIPS					
Atomic Drive	5(64)	5(64)	5(64)	5(64)	5(64)
Astrogation	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship
Computer Lockout	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)
Total FP	114	114	108	108	108
Computer Level	4	4	4	4	4
FP till Next Level	86	86	92	92	92



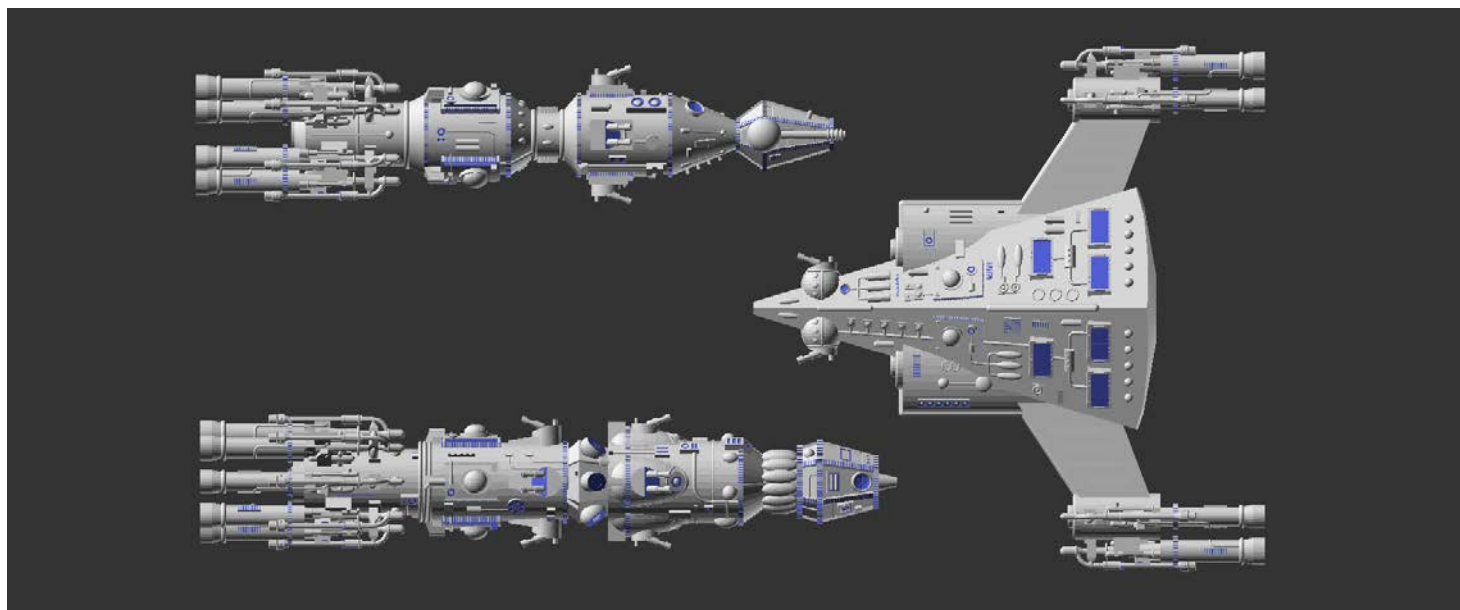
CRUISERS, HULL SIZES 10-14

PROGRAMS	HULL SIZE 10	HULL SIZE 11	HULL SIZE 12	HULL SIZE 13	HULL SIZE 14
Alarm	3(4)	3(4)	4(8)	4(8)	6(32)
Damage Control	3(8)	3(8)	4(16)	4(16)	6(64)
Life Support	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)
Back Up Life Support	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)
Subtotal FP	18	18	30	30	102
CHEMICAL DRIVE SHIPS					
Chem Drive	2(6)	2(6)	2(6)	2(6)	2(6)
Astrogation	2(6) System	2(6) System	2(6) System	2(6) System	2(6) System
Computer Lockout	3(4)	3(4)	3(4)	3(4)	4(8)
Total FP	34	34	44	44	122
Computer Level	3	3	3	3	4
FP till Next Level	46	46	36	36	78
ION DRIVE SHIPS					
Ion Drive	4(24)	4(24)	4(24)	4(24)	4(24)
Astrogation	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship
Computer Lockout	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)
Total FP	92	92	86	86	158
Computer Level	4	4	4	4	4
FP till Next Level	108	108	124	124	42
ATOMIC DRIVE SHIPS					
Atomic Drive	5(64)	5(64)	5(64)	5(64)	5(64)
Astrogation	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship
Computer Lockout	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)
Total FP	114	114	126	126	198
Computer Level	4	4	4	4	4
FP till Next Level	86	86	74	74	2



CAPITOL SHIPS, HULL SIZES 15-20

PROGRAMS	HULL SIZE 15	HULL SIZE 16	HULL SIZE 17	HULL SIZE 18	HULL SIZE 19	HULL SIZE 20
Alarm	4(8)	6(32)	6(32)	6(32)	6(32)	6(32)
Damage Control	4(16)	6(64)	6(64)	6(64)	6(64)	6(64)
Life Support	4(4)	4(4)	4(4)	4(4)	4(4)	4(4)
Back Up Life Support	4(4)	4(4)	4(4)	4(4)	4(4)	4(4)
Subtotal FP	32	104	104	104	104	104
CHEMICAL DRIVE SHIPS						
Chem Drive	3(12)	3(12)	3(12)	3(12)	3(12)	3(12)
Astrogation	2(6) System	2(6) System	2(6) System	2(6) System	2(6) System	2(6) System
Computer Lockout	3(4)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)
Total FP	54	130	130	130	130	130
Computer Level	3	4	4	4	4	4
FP till Next Level	26	70	70	70	70	70
ION DRIVE SHIPS						
Ion Drive	4(24)	4(24)	4(24)	4(24)	4(24)	4(24)
Astrogation	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship
Computer Lockout	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)	4(8)
Total FP	80	152	152	152	152	152
Computer Level	4	4	4	4	4	4
FP till Next Level	120	48	48	48	48	48
ATOMIC DRIVE SHIPS						
Atomic Drive	6(128)	6(128)	6(128)	6(128)	6(128)	6(128)
Astrogation	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship	4(24) Starship
Computer Lockout	4(8)	5(16)	5(16)	5(16)	5(16)	5(16)
Total FP	192	272	272	272	272	272
Computer Level	4	5	5	5	5	5
FP till Next Level	2	228	228	228	228	228



SECTION 13

BY KEN WANG

Do you need a clandestine organization in your campaign? Do you need an organization to help the party? Or hinder the party? Or just be an actor that makes a cameo? Perhaps Section 13 could be useful for your campaign to provide an adventure hook, pull the party out of a difficult situation, or a glimpse into the cloak and dagger world that is Section 13. In the description below, you will find some details as well as some subtle acknowledgment towards fictional clandestine organizations.

BACKGROUND

Article 10 of the Galactic Federation Concord (GM's replace with appropriate foundational document in your setting; e.g. UPF Charter) provides for the establishment of an intelligence community with the goal of conducting intelligence collection, processing, analysis, and dissemination in order to provide timely and accurate intelligence products to the Federation Conclave, Conclave's supporting staff, Intergalactic Law Enforcement Agency, the Concord Armada, the Concord Army, Federation member worlds, and allies and partners across the Frontier. This intelligence community is composed of several intelligence services and composed of personnel from all member worlds, each service specializing on an aspect of intelligence.

Article 10 Section 9 provides for the establishment of a strategic special services office for the detection, identification, and neutralization of external threats to the Galactic Federation and its member worlds. The Strategic Special Services Office (S3O), as its formally known, is the manifestation of Section 9 of Article 10 of the Galactic Federation Concord. It is informally known as "Section 9" by insiders and as rumors and hearsay by the general public. Section 9 answered directly to the Conclave and its authority was quite broad. Section 9 was publicly disbanded after the last major conflict when it was discovered that a spy had penetrated the organization and caused the death of

millions through the spy's disinformation and espionage. The spy, of course, was publicly executed. However, public knowledge, through strategic information leaks by the spy before his execution, led ultimately to the public outcry for disbanding the group. The wise, or maybe unwise, Chancellor of the Conclave thought that Section 9 was too valuable and useful to do away with. So, while Section 9 was publicly dismantled, a new group was formed under the Chancellor called Section 13.

MISSION

Section 13's mission is the detection, identification, and neutralization of external threats in order to protect the Federation, its member worlds, and its allies and partners.

FINANCIAL FUNDING AND RESOURCING

Using the Chancellor's own discretionary funds, former Section 9 operatives and support staff were reinstated under Section 13. While the Chancellor's resources were adequate, it was soon realized that significant additional funding would be required to expand its operations, influence, and effectiveness. So, Section 13, with the support of the Chancellor, created a front company called Universal Trading, a shipping and trade company.

Universal Trading not only provided a steady source of resources and funding but provided a legitimate cover for expanding Section 13's network all across the galaxy. In the years since its beginnings, Universal Trading has done very well for itself and has grown into a legitimate large corporation. So well, in fact, the Chancellor has been able to discontinue direct resourcing of Section 13 and this has given the Chancellor a level of disassociation and plausible deniability. The head of Section 13 also serves as the CEO of Universal Trading. Section 13 personnel are listed as

executives and employees under Universal Trading.

ORGANIZATION

The following is the general departmental organization of Section 13 and Universal Trading along with some of the alternate names the departments are known by.

SECTION 13 AKA "THE CROWN"

1. Department 1 aka "The Signet"
 - a. Division 1 Administration
 - i. Administration
 - ii. Documents/Archival Service
 - iii. Recruitment
 - iv. Training
 - b. Division 2 Logistics
 - i. Logistics
 - ii. Maintenance
 - iii. Procurement
 - iv. Transportation
 - c. Division 3 Informatics
 - i. CyberOps
 - ii. PsyOps
 - iii. Diplomats
 - iv. Media Management
 - v. Strategic Communications
2. Department 3 aka "The Sceptre"
 - a. Division 1 Intelligence
 - i. Collection
 - ii. Analysis
 - iii. Dissemination
 - iv. Counter Intelligence
 - b. Division 2 Operations
 - i. Covert Ops
 1. Space Ops
 2. Planetside Ops
 - ii. Clandestine Ops
 1. Covered Ops
 2. Source Management
 - c. Division 3 Defensive Operations
 - i. Counter-Terrorism
 - ii. Counter-Insurgency
 - iii. Interdiction
3. Department 9 aka "The Tower"
 - a. Division 1 Research and Development

- i. Basic Research
- ii. Applied Research
- b. Division 2 Xeno/Archeo Research and Development
 - i. Xeno-Archeology/Neo-Archeology
 - ii. Basic Xeno/Archeo Technology Research
 - iii. Xeno Material Acquisition
 - iv. Applied Xeno/Archeo Technology Research/Reverse Engineering
 - v. Xeno Threat Research and Development
 - 1. Specimen Collection
 - 2. Research & Analysis
 - 3. Testing, Experimentation, & Evaluation
- c. Division 3 Production, Fielding, and Sustainment
 - i. Production and System Engineering
 - ii. Production and Manufacturing

- iii. Fielding and Deployment
- iv. Sustainment and Training

UNIVERSAL TRADING (FRONT CORPORATION) "THE COFFERS"

- 1. Corporate Suite
- 2. Administration Department
 - a. Administration
 - b. Finance
 - c. Marketing
 - i. Advertisement
 - ii. Customer Relations
 - d. Legal
 - i. Contracts & Legal Matters
 - ii. Insurance and Claims
 - e. Human Resources
 - f. Technical Services
 - g. Archival Services
- 3. Market Research and Analysis
 - a. Data Collection
 - b. Data Analysis
- 4. Trade Management
 - a. Acquisition

- i. Vendor Management
- ii. Vendor Business Development
- b. Sales
 - i. Customer Management
 - ii. Customer Business Development
- 5. Fleet Management
 - a. Operations and Scheduling
 - b. Technology and Engineering
 - c. Quartermaster
 - d. Crew Management
- 6. Shoreside Support
 - a. Business Offices, Port Offices and Support Facilities
 - b. Husbanding Services
 - c. Repair and Maintenance Support



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THE SISTERS OF CHARITABLE RETRIBUTION

A NEW STAR FRONTIERS CADRE

BY TOM VERREULT

In a galaxy of injustice, suffering and death, where all that is evil and darkness will spread until they greedily consume all that is good and light, there is a call for torch bearers to stand in the gap and say to the darkness, “No!”

The Sisters of Charitable Retribution have answered this call. Working in the slums of Maze, Port Loren, and Lake Vast you can find them performing acts of charity and kindness with the poor and down trodden. When they fight, they fight to to clean up their cities for good people to live without fear. They do not seek to kill believing the divine spark to reside in every living creature although there comes a time when they have been known to cry, “Retribution!” and let slip the nuns of war.

Theologically, the sect is pantheistic, believing the divine spark is the spark of life and resides in all creatures great and small. They believe that life, light, and good are in an endless battle with death, darkness, and evil and in the end, the scales of justice will weigh your life and you will join with either light or darkness in the hereafter.

Their mission is to promote light, life, and goodness. However, sometimes evil, darkness, and death, in its greed to consume everything, threatens to extinguish the feeble light of life and goodness. This is when the sisterhood may bring retribution and cause the death of evil doers.

THEIR CREED

“Life has no meaning without death; Light is revealed by the presence of darkness, and Goodness has value because of evil. Service gives life meaning, the highest service is to the greater good. We bear a torch to illuminate the darkness in the hearts of the lost, we stand in the gap when darkness, evil, and death grow so great that they threaten to extinguish all light, life, and goodness. It is then that we bring retribution and balance the scales of justice but moderated by charity for the being that will turn from darkness to the light.”

THE THREE SAINTLY PERSONIFICATIONS

- Saint Charity, she that grows goodness and spreads light
- Saint Justice, she that will weigh us all
- Saint Retribution, she that stands against the darkness

The saintly personifications are venerated by the order as guiding principles. They are given female aspects but are purely the embodiment of an idea.

PRACTICES

In keeping with their pantheistic world view, the sisters practice a form of vegetarianism that allows them to eat animal products like milk and cheese. They avoid “death” in their diet.

They practice celibacy for the sake of their mission and a life of service. However, any sister that cannot remain celibate is allowed to leave the order as she will then be answering the “call of life”. Generally, active recruitment is focused on older females that have their child bearing years behind them.

Meditation is a key practice of their daily life. A sister will forgo an hour or more of sleep to meditate and will suffer no ill effects from the loss of sleep. It is said that some of the nuns can sleep as little as 1-2 hours and spend the balance of their rest period in meditation, never showing any signs of sleep deprivation.

Once a year, on the first day of the year, the nuns practice a Procession of Light. In major cities with a convent this involves an actual procession bearing lights, candles, or torches. Anyone (male or female) who has been helped by the nuns or wish to show their turning from light to dark may

light a candle or torch from a nun and join the procession. The procession ends with a communal prayer and silent meditation. A solitary nun may mark the occasion by lighting a candle and meditating.

Any female (female is defined as the gender that produces offspring) of any sapient species can join. Dralasites must be in their neuter phase as their female phase is fertile and likely to result in offspring which would require separation from the sect. All humma who have given birth and all osakkar are welcomed into the sect.

Calls of “Retribution” require all sisters in an area to answer the call. These calls are made only for vengeance on great evil or if a member of the order was specifically targeted. The one hard and fast rule is that attacks on the nuns or killing of a nun will result in an extreme response from the sisterhood. They will not tolerate their members being singled out and attacked.

It’s not uncommon for a nun to wear an all-black military skein suit under her loose-fitting robe. The robe has pockets sewn into the inside that can accommodate about 6 small items. Another common item they carry is a 1-liter canteen on a strap over their shoulder as they will never deny a thirsty being a drink of water. Their symbol is a swirl design like the “yin-yang” symbol but surmounted with a torch and its generally worn about the neck on a chain under their robe.



The focus of the sisterhood is martial arts training but they are also skilled in the use of all sorts of weapons. Unless retribution has been called for they will limit themselves to non-lethal weapons.

Finally, the nuns live simply. Money is a means to living out the ideal of charity. In the rules, half of a character's income is taken up with the cost of living plus any taxes and fees. A nun, because of her simpler life style saves 10% of her cost of living which she gives to charity along with another 20% of her disposable income for a 40% to cost of living, 30% to charity and 30% for her to spend.

BENEFITS OF THE SISTERHOOD

The sisterhood maintains convents on the planets Minotaur, Gran Quivera, Triad, Terledrom, Hargut, Pale, Osaka, and Clarion. Any sister can find free lodging, food, and medical attention in these convents. Any savings on cost of living by staying in the convent is generally given back to the convent for charitable works.

The sisterhood has a close relationship with the Capellan Free Merchants. The reason behind this is unknown and neither the sisters nor the CFM will comment. Speculation is that the sisterhood did a service to the CFM at some point and the Council of Twelve that runs the CFM has handed down a mandate to all members to aid the sisterhood whenever possible. What this translates to is that the CFM will automatically sell to the nuns at cost, generally a 15% savings, and without haggling. This is providing a nun locates a CFM merchant. That merchant may not have everything she wants or needs but what is available is at a savings. This benefit does not translate to compatriots of the nun who are not members of the sisterhood and a nun will not use this benefit to defraud a CFM merchant of earning just profit from her compatriots.

In addition, a nun can get free passage on any CFM vessel. She will work the passage providing any service or labor required but the CFM captain will not take money for the passage. In fact, when the sisterhood was founding a convent on

Osaka the CFM sent a ship just to help them transport personnel and supplies from Pale.

The study of martial arts is universal with the sisterhood. A being may join without knowing martial arts skill but must learn it at the first opportunity. This means a player character joining the sisterhood without martial arts skill will learn it at the earliest opportunity before learning any other skill. Because the sisterhood does not wish to kill, their nerve combat subskill in martial arts is doubled and they will not allow for someone they have knocked out to be killed or tortured. Their only compromise on this point is that they will allow for the knocked-out individual to be awakened and questioned with Telol.

Example of doubling the knockout range of the nerve combat subskill: The base knock out is a roll of 01-02. To this is added 2% per level of martial arts skill. Thus, a first level nun will knock someone out with nerve combat on a roll of 01-04. Also, any martial arts skill roll that ends in a "0" or a "5" and hits also knocks out the opponent. Thus, a nun with 1st level martial arts and 40 DEX will knock out an opponent on a 01-04, 10, 15, 20, 25, and a 30.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is a fine line a nun must walk when it comes to violence. Her desire is to bring light even to hearts shrouded in darkness. Thus, she does not desire to kill unless the scales of justice call for the removal of a great evil. She must also be mindful of how vengeance and retribution might play out with civil authorities as it does not look good for a member of a religious order to be charged with a crime or jailed.

Some sisters answer the call "to bring the light to the 'verse". These individuals wander the Frontier sector taking jobs where and when they can to earn their passage and give to charity but above all looking for opportunities to share the light. Players who opt for their character to join this cadre will be of this type. It is surprising how many individuals with questionable morals will hire a "battle nun" simply because they know she, above any other henchmen, can be trusted absolutely

providing they do not offend her sense of justice.

NEW EQUIPMENT

CANTEEN

This 1-liter capacity bottle or canteen is worn over the shoulder on a strap.

Cost: 1 Cr **Weight:** 1 kg (full)

HOLY SYMBOL

Metal medallion on a chain that is worn about the neck.

Cost: 10-20 Cr depending on material

Weight: n/a

STANDARD NUN HABIT

These working robes identify members of a religious order either by their cut, color, or material. In the case of the Sisters of Charitable Retribution, the robes are black with wide white trim and accents. Most come with internal pockets to hold 6 small items. A skeinsuit can be easily worn underneath.

Cost: 15 Cr **Weight:** n/a

VESTMENT SKEINSUIT

After the limited success of Starplay marketing the combat Gi as seen in their recent martial arts' holographic extravaganzas, the sisterhood had a vestment skeinsuit developed for the order. This is an all-black, military-grade skeinsuit with elements of cloth added to suggest a nun's outfit.

There is no mistaking that an individual wearing this is outfitted for combat. However, it threads the line of still identifying its wearer as a nun and maintains the specific modesty standards of the species it was designed for, whether human, yazirian, or etc. Admittedly, some sapient species have no modesty standards, like dralasites, but the vestment skein suit was designed for those that do with adjustments made to the various body frames of all the known sapient species. It otherwise functions exactly like a military skein suit.

Cost: 300 Cr **Weight:** 1 Kg

GRUB ACROSS THE STARS

AN INTERGLACTIC DRALASITE CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

BY OSCAR RIOS

While Dralasites can find humor in almost anything, there is one topic few Dralasites find funny – Hunger. For all their love of philosophy and debate, no Dralasite ever supported the position that any sentient beings in a civilized society should suffer from the ravages of hunger, malnutrition, or starvation. To Dralasites, it is hunger, not money, which is the root of all evil, because as members of their race like to say, “You can’t eat credits, but you can eat croutons.”

Back to before Dralasites arrived in the Frontier, there has been a single massive charitable organization dedicated to ending hunger wherever it was encountered. Once called Grub Across the World, the name changed to Grub Across the Stars when Dralasites mastered interstellar travel. Today, the organization has offices on most civilized worlds, operating free soup kitchens, or as Dralasites call them “Grub Hubs”. However, their members are more than just charity workers, for among their ranks are diplomats, lawyers, lobbyists, agricultural specialists, commodities trades, freight haulers, scientists, fundraisers, entertainers, and soldiers.

Let’s take a look at this unique organization.

MEMBERSHIP

Members of Grub Across the Stars are called Pilgrims. They work in a variety of fields within the organization, doing everything from raising crops in a field, baking bread, making soup, serving meals in grub hubs, or teaching people how to raise livestock. Pilgrims can also be found driving trucks, flying transport, fixing the drives on AG-ships, security in warzones, doing research in laboratories to create new varieties of crops, or developing methods of food preservation. Only Dralasites can become pilgrims and considered true members of the organization. Other races can, and do, work for and with Grub Across the Stars, as freelance employees or associates.

TOUR OF SERVICE

Pilgrims sign up for a 5-year tour of service, which can then be renewed. Many Dralasites use this as a way to build their reputation and social standing during their early adult years. It is also a wonderful opportunity for young Dralasites to see the galaxy. For many Dralasites, the trip to their initial mission posting as a pilgrim is the first time they leave their home world. Many older Dralasites join or rejoin the order after finishing their professional careers, to retire into a life of service. Service as a pilgrim is a mark of honor among Dralasites, opening social opportunities to them for the remainder of their life. Nearly all Dralasite political figures have served in Pilgrims with Grub Across the Stars.

Pilgrims are paid minimal wages, but the organization provides room and board and supplies necessary equipment to their members during their tours of service. In addition, all serving pilgrims are required to maintain a neutral gender during their tours. Violations of this rule typically result in an immediate expulsion from the order (although the offender may continue serving as an “associate”).

LEADERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

Pilgrims are ranked by their tours of service and their years, marked by letters and numbers. The letters mark the years on their current tour, while their numbers mark the numbers of tours they have served. A pilgrim in the third year of their first tour would be ranks a Pilgrim rank C1, while another serving the second year of the fourth tour would be a Pilgrim rank B4. The Pilgrim in charge of a posting is called the Commander, the highest-ranking Pilgrim assigned to a planet is called the High Pilgrim of [Name of Planet], while the highest-ranking Pilgrim in a star system is

called the Grand Pilgrim of [Name of System].

For example, the star system of Fromeltar has two High Pilgrims; Jaysarlu, High Pilgrim of Groth, and Kunolo, High Pilgrim of Terledrom. Both serve under Gordo, Grand Pilgrim of Fromeltar. The highest rank in the entire organization is that of Bellringer, the bell being a symbol to signal that a meal is ready to be served. The current leader of Grub Across the Stars is Bellringer Opplo, a C-12 rank pilgrim, who is currently serving a tour in Anker, in the Zebulon system.

DIVISIONS

There are many ways to serve in Grub Across the Stars. Below are a few divisions within the organization and the sort of duties they perform.

RIGHTS AND RELATIONS

Since the organization has postings on various worlds, rights to establish missions must be negotiated. This requires skillful diplomats, with a knack for maintaining a favorable image with the intergalactic media. Pilgrims serving in relations are journalists, lobbyists, lawyers, and diplomats. Many great Dralasite philosophers and debaters got their start serving as Pilgrims, and many of them return to the organization in their twilight years.

CREATORS

These are the pilgrims that actually grow and raise the food used to feed those in the organization and the communities they serve. They are farmers, ranchers, fishermen, butchers, and fishmongers growing crops, raising livestock, and catching fish. Nearly all fish used are raised in fish farms. Pilgrims only hunt or fish creatures born in the wild in times of emergency. Some creators work on space stations and ag-ships, in hydroponic farms or algae plants, creating high tech foodstuffs far from the sea or soil of a terrestrial planet.

ACQUISITIONS

These pilgrims are among the shrewdest negotiators of the Dralasite race. They work with farmers, companies, and governments across the Frontier to purchase goods used in the organization's efforts. Grub Across the Stars cannot produce as much food as required to end hunger, so most of it must be acquired from outside sources.

TRANSPORT

The transport department is the logistical arm of the organization. It is their job to transport goods from where they are produced to where they are needed. They transport pilgrims to and from their postings as well. They are also responsible for the maintenance of the organization's vehicles and the establishment of supply depots and warehouses. They are the mechanics, pilots, navigators, sailors, drivers, clerks, and stock workers that keep the organization moving.

RESEARCH

The smallest branch of the Pilgrims are the researchers. They work in labs to find new ways to store, preserve, and produce food for not just the organization, but the Frontier as well. Any and all discoveries

made by the research division of Grub Across the Stars are shared with the public free of charge. Members of the research division also travel far and wide, meeting with sentient peoples all over the Frontier and beyond, in an effort to discover new foods, spices, recipes, and cooking techniques.

TREASURY & FUNDRAISING

This division of the organization functions as an accounting system for the group and is also in charge of raising money to support the group's efforts. Grub Across the Stars has restaurant, media, and publishing departments as subdivisions of Treasury and Fundraising division. While donations account for a large portion of the group's income, the largest producers are the organization's high-end restaurants and fundraising shows. Some of the greatest Dralasite chefs across the Frontier either are, or were, pilgrims for Grub Across the Stars. Many of them have high-end restaurants set up on various worlds in which the proceeds go directly to the organization.

Another major source of income is the production of food-related shows and festivals. Grub Across the Stars hosts annual dinner/comedy shows on various worlds, where guest see some of the greatest comics in the Frontier (who donate their time to support the group) while being served a multi-course dinner prepared by the organization's top chefs. There are also Federanium Chef competitions, where local chefs challenge the organization's rising stars in cooking competitions to raise money for the group. On many worlds, Grub Across the Stars hosts food truck festivals as well. These events sometimes grow to become local holidays, with planetary governments granting their workers the days off to attend.

Lastly, each year Grub Across the Stars produces a cookbook of 25 recipes, and 25 food related puns. Calls "Cheap Grub and Cheaper Jokes", there are currently over 200 editions of this book in circulation. The theme of this series is the production of amazing meals, at low costs, with a



minimal skill level necessary to prepare. These cookbooks are always top sellers and must have items in a majority of households (especially Dralasite ones) across the Frontier.

DEFENDERS

Pilgrims often operate in hostile territory. A posting may be located in wilderness areas at the edge of civilization, where dangerous animals are a constant threat. At other times, pirates and bandits target the organization's shipments of food. In other cases, megacorps, governments, and renegade warlords use hunger as a weapon, withholding supplies from their enemies in an effort to starve them into submission. Pilgrims can, and do, face lethal threats while serving the organization, and that's where the Defender Corps comes in. These are the organization's security forces, who are often well armed and expertly trained. Many are skilled in hand-to-hand combat, as well as search and rescue operations, and wilderness pathfinding. While the Defender Pilgrims can be deadly, they kill only when necessary. All Defender Pilgrims have at least one weapon which has non-lethal options, such as electric and sonic stunning, anesthetic needler rounds, gyrojet with doze and tangler ammunition, and various forms of non-lethal grenades.



BEGINNING CHARACTER BLUES

BY TOM VERREAULT

New characters are challenged by limited number of starting skills. In the Alpha Dawn rules a new character has two 1st level skills. In “A Skilled Frontier” (Star Frontiersman #9) a new character has three 1st level skills. This can make for some tough choices at character creation.

Now, the rules allow for guns to be fired without the requisite skill for that gun. This means the check is simply done at ½ of the ability score (DEX). It's likely to be an exercise in wasting ammunition when you consider all of the potential negative modifiers in combat like range, size of target, target moving and etc. However, its possible and the character might get lucky. Referee's will allow for some skills to be attempted unskilled with a penalty for doing so; usually -20. Thus, it can feel like a beginning character is extremely limited if not close to useless sometimes.

ZERO LEVEL SKILLS: A NEW TUNE

At character creation, with the referee's approval, a player may split a first level skill into two zero level skills. This simply means that the character has the most rudimentary training in that skill. He won't be penalized for trying it unskilled. He will have double the number of actions he can attempt with a small chance of success and the useless factor of a beginning character is greatly diminished. The drawback is skill checks are strictly at ½ of the ability score with no bonus for skill level. After all, 10% times zero is zero.

To raise a zero-level skill to 1st level simply play ½ of the experience points required, rounding up normally required to acquire the skill at level 1 from an unskilled state. Neither hypno-training nor a teacher are required for this move from Zero to 1st level. The character had rudimentary instruction and through practice of the basics, some things have begun to “click” for him. New characters will progress rapidly in the early sessions as these skills can be bumped up for half experience

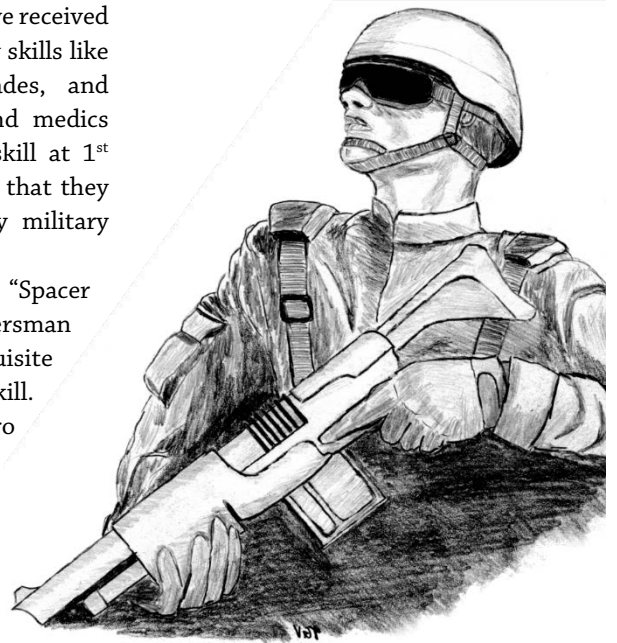
points to 1st level. A referee might also require a player to buy up first level for his zero level skills before purchasing any new skills.

This optional rule could greatly facilitate a military or mercenary game where you would expect a raw recruit to have received basic training in several military skills like martial arts, throwing grenades, and shooting skills. Technicians and medics might have their job specific skill at 1st level but split the other skill so that they have at least two rudimentary military skills and so on.

If you are using the fan rules “Spacer Skill's Revisited” (Star Frontiersman #10) the progressive prerequisite skills can never be a zero-level skill. Only the spacer skill can be zero level at character creation.

This is a simple rule. It effectively mimics the situation in the Alpha Dawn rules of a character firing a gun unskilled. Therefore, it doesn't break the

system, overpower beginning characters, or introduce an entirely new rule mechanic to the system. Characters and players will be less constrained at character creation and the game can be more fun in the first few sessions.





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HIDDEN HORRORS OF STAR FRONTIERS

BY OSCAR RIOS

Editor's Note: This article was written to be in the previous issue. Due to a communication mix-up I didn't receive it until after the issue was published. So we are including it here.

Exploration is a key component of the culture of the Star Frontier setting. Every year ships head out into the vast expanse of space. A few return after making valuable discoveries, most return having catalogued nothing by empty space and barren worlds circling distant stars. Some exploration vessels never return, being lost the in unforgiving reaches of cold, deep space.

There are a very small number that return with something more, something sinister lurking within the bodies of the explorers. Sometimes a ship returns filled with the sick, the dead, and the dying. Other times a crew of explorers returns seemingly fine, but within they are ticking time bombs of contagion, death, and horror. Typically, without their knowledge and against their will these infected individuals return to their home worlds, their families, and friends with a deadly force lurking within. These forces don't stay dormant for long.

There is a reason returning exploration ships are often placed in quarantine upon their return to Frontier space, and their crews subjected to medical examination. One such case, The Blue Plague, rampaged unchecked for seven years until a vaccine was discovered, and then took another three years to eradicate. In the end, the plague claimed 17 million lives and caused the permanent quarantine of four previously settled star systems. But the Blue Plague was only the beginning as darker horrors lurked in space waiting their turn. Below are detailed two such horrors, specific to Vrusk and Dralasites.

PURPLE DEATH FUNGUS (VRUSK)

This fungal infection affects only Vrusk and is transmitted by the inhalation of the spores. The spores then take hold in the

Vrusk's body, spreading through the body via the nervous system and eventually reaching the brain. Once there, the fungus takes control, robbing the Vrusk of its higher cognitive function, its identity, and its free will.

At this point the Vrusk is so brain damaged as to be considered legally dead. However, all biological functions continue, with the Vrusk's body under the direct control of the fungus. At this stage, victims of Purple Death Fungus appear run down to the point of exhaustion, move in a clumsy and uncoordinated fashion, are rendered mute, and have purple splotches appearing across its carapace.

The fungus has access to the infected individual's memories (such as ship or settlement layouts and access codes), and uses this knowledge to its advantage. The fungus then directs the Vrusk's body in find a hiding place in close proximity to as many other Vrusk as possible. Once there the body stops moving as the Purple Fungus reaches maturity. At this point the purple death fungus reaches the end of its life cycle by germinating.

When this occurs, the fungus bursts upwards through the Vrusk's carapace along the central nerve stem and brain to form between three and seven 1-meter-tall purple branches. These are topped with spore emitting sphericals which function for the next 10d10 hours. The Purple Death Fungus produces spores that travel outwards in a 250-meter radius, although this is subject to the physical environment and the movement of air around the germinating corpse.

In some cases, entire Vrusk starships, trade houses, and even cities have fallen to Purple Fungus outbreaks. The Vrusk's culture of cooperation and community within a company means that they unusually live in close proximity to one another and outbreaks tend to spread very quickly. It is not uncommon for Vrusk emergency response teams to carry a flamethrower, acid sprayer, and a few incendiary or acid grenades to deal with possible outbreaks (see below).

IN GAME

Vrusk exposed to Purple Death Spores must make a STA check. If a Vrusk currently has an open wound this check is made with a -20% penalty. If they are within 50 meters of the source of the germinating spores, the victim suffers an additional -10% to their STA check. Those protected by a gasmask, and without open wounds, are immune. Anyone treated with Omnimycin within 1 hour of exposure to Purple Death Spores are also protected against infection.

Should the Vrusk fail the STA check, they are infected by the fungus and lose 1d10 LOG points every 10 days. They may notice they are feeling more distracted and unfocused, and feelings of extreme fatigue. At this point, if medically treated, the infection can be cured with a successful Medical: Treat Infestation roll, with 50% of the lost LOG points being permanently lost due to brain damage. If the victim reaches zero LOG their minds are destroyed by the Purple Death Fungus and they become a Carrier Zombies.

Carrier Zombies have all the same physical statistics the Vrusk did when alive, but with an effective DEX/RS of 25/25. They cannot speak and have a 20% penalty to



using any of their previous skills. While a Carrier Zombie can defend itself, move about, and do most simple things it was able to do when alive, it is not truly capable of reasoning nor is it fully sentient. Referees should consider Carrier Zombies to be creatures of deep cunning and powerful instinct, driven by a single overriding goal – completing its life cycle.

At this point the Carrier Zombie’s only concern is finding a hiding spot to complete its germination. It must accomplish this within the next 2d10 hours, at the end of this period, hidden or not, germination occurs. While a carrier zombie can be “killed” by normal means, this does not stop it from germinating. The only way to safely destroy a colony of Purple Death Fungus is with the use of fire or acid. When the 2d10 hours are up, the fungus germinates, whether the Carrier Zombie is active or its body rendered inoperative. The only way to destroy the fungus without spreading it further is to destroy the body with acid or fire. Vrusk corpses holding a germinating Purple Death Fungus typically have 50 STA.

While the Purple Death Fungus only germinates for 10d10 hours, it remains dangerous for centuries. Even after germination ends and the Carrier Zombie’s body withers away to a brittle carapace, the branches and spiracles remain loaded with spores. When such remains are disturbed they disintegrate into a cloud of spores, covering a 5d10 meter radius. These spores, now a fine dust covering this area, remain a threat until the area is properly sanitized.

SHADOW STALKER VIRUS (DRALASITE)

If a Dralasite can be thought of as a large one celled organism, with its brain forming the cell nucleus, then a Shadow Stalker can be thought of as a virus evolved to pray on such a cell. It is basically a protoplasmic organism that enters a Dralasite’s body, seizes control of its nucleus, and then alters its body chemistry and composition. It does this for two reasons: to hunt and feed on other Dralasites and to reproduce.

A Shadow Stalker begins its life as a small creature, about 20cm across. Called a Shadow Stalker Nymph, it is shaped something like a stylized star, with five limbs, and the top of its body is covered in cilia, which it uses to both see, hear, smell, and detect heat (effective infrared vision). Once born it has just a few days (1d10+2) to find and infect a host before it starves to death, as in this stage of its life cycle it is unable to take in sustenance. It has but once chance to survive, find, attack, and successfully enter a Dralasite’s body.

These creatures are very stealthy, can leap up to two meters, and can emit a potent substance which is toxic to Dralasite physiology. They shun bright places, as their eyes are quite sensitive, so tend to lurk in the shadows. They are quite stealthy and can stick to nearly any surface. Once they come within range of a lone Dralasite, the creature attempts to leap onto the target (65% chance to hit) and once in contact with a victim, it emits a powerful paralytic poison. Victims get a STA check to resist the poison’s effects. Should they fail, the victim becomes paralyzed. The creature then extrudes an enzyme that triggers the Dralasite’s swallowing reflex, forcing the victim to ingest the Shadow Stalker Nymph.

Once inside the Dralasite, the Shadow Stalker quickly attacks the victim’s nucleus. It then spends the next 2-6 hours (1d10/2+1) rooting itself into the nucleus, damaging it irreparably, and making drastic and horrific changes to the Dralasite’s physiology. If discovered before this period ends, victims can be medically treated and saved, which requires massive doses of anti-toxins and major surgery. If untreated at the end of this period, the Dralasite, as a sentient individual entity, is essentially dead. The thing that rises in its place is an adult Shadow Stalker.

Shadow Stalkers look like normal Dralasites, although they shun bright lights and are nearly unable to vocally communicate. At best, they can utter short, typically bad jokes, a strange quirk of the Dralasite brain which remains intact. They have access to the full range of skills, abilities, and memories of the Dralasite whose body they’ve taken over. This helps it blend into Dralasite communities without drawing much

DARK STALKER NYMPH	
Type:	Tiny Carnivore
Number:	1
Move:	Fast
IM/RS:	+7/65
Stamina:	5
Attack:	65
Damage:	None
Special Attack:	Exudes paralytic poison (STA or paralyzed for 3d10 hours, Dralasites only)
Special Defense:	Stealthy, moves undetected through dark areas 65%
Native World:	Unknown
Description:	A small five limbed creature that resembles a star, with one side covered in cilia, the other an enzyme secreting adhesive pad.

attention to itself. It’s goal now becomes to feed on other Dralasites, to both survive and mature enough to reproduce itself. To achieve this, it is both cunning and patient, choosing victims with care in order to avoid detection whenever possible.

These creatures hunt with a combination of mimicry, producing highly potent spores, and horrific body modifications. When hunting, a Dark Stalker finds a dark secluded spot near where Dralasites can be found. When they detect a lone Dralasite



DARK STALKER (MATURE)	
Type:	Medium Carnivore
Number:	1
Move:	Medium
IM/RS:	+5/55
Stamina:	100
Attack:	70%
Damage:	3D10 (slashes, stabs, bites and claws), two attacks per round.
Special Attack:	Pheromone Spores (25-meter range, STA check to resist or enthralled, lasts 2 hours or until neutralized, Dralasites only) Paralytic Poison Spray (STA or paralyzed 1 hour, Dralasites only)
Special Defense:	Immune to electrical attacks and stunning
Native World:	Unknown
Description:	A creature that looks exactly like a Dralasite, until it attacks. Then it appears as a protoplasmic being which forms claws, teeth, spikes and blades with which to quickly dispatch its victims.

the creature emits a powerful version of a Dralasite's pheromone spores. These spores have a 25-meter range, and the target must make a STA check to resist. If they resist, they detect the spores of a Dralasite of the opposite gender, or either gender if they are currently in a neutral sexual phase. While they find the scent attractive, and maybe a bit aggressive, they are not compelled to investigate. However, if they fail their STA check they become enthralled and compelled to approach the source, ensnared by their own hijacked biology for the next 2 hours.


When the victim reaches the Dark Stalker the creature then sprays them with a mist of their paralytic poison, forcing them to make another STA check. If the poison is effective they are rooted in place and unable to speak for the next hour. Whether they are paralyzed or not, this second toxin neutralizes the effects of the pheromone spores, and the Dralasite is no longer enthralled. At this point the Dark Stalker reveals its true form and attacks.

Dark stalkers can form appendages tipped with very hard and sharp objects, which can take the form of a blade,

multiple smaller claws, spikes, or even a ring of sharp teeth. It attempts to use these weapons to quickly kill and devour their victims, in a flurry of slashes, stab-bings, claws, and bites. Dark Stalkers attack twice per round (70% chance to hit), doing 3d10 points of damage. Once a victim is killed, the Dark Stalkers quickly devour the victim's body (2d10 minutes)

Maturation to its final stage of development typically requires a minimum of 2d10 days, and requires ingesting 5-14 victims (1d10+4). Once maturation occurs, a Shadow Stalker finds a dark place to cocoon itself, its skin becoming leather hard and its body contracting to 1/3 of its regular size. After 3-7 days (1d10/2+2) the cocoon hatches and unleashes between 2-6 Dark Stalker Nymphs (1d10/2+1).

Dark Stalkers are solitary and territorial. They don't cooperate or share hunting grounds, and seek to distance themselves from others of their kind. This causes them to spread, much like the virus they mimic, across Dralasite cities, planets, and systems.



STAR FRONTIERS GAMER

A YOUTUBE CHANNEL WITH MORE PUNCH THAN A VRUSK WITH BRASS BALLS

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Alpha Dawn to Zebulon**

SPACE BATTLEFIELDS: INTERACTIVE QUANTUM RADAR MAP ASSETS

A REVIEW

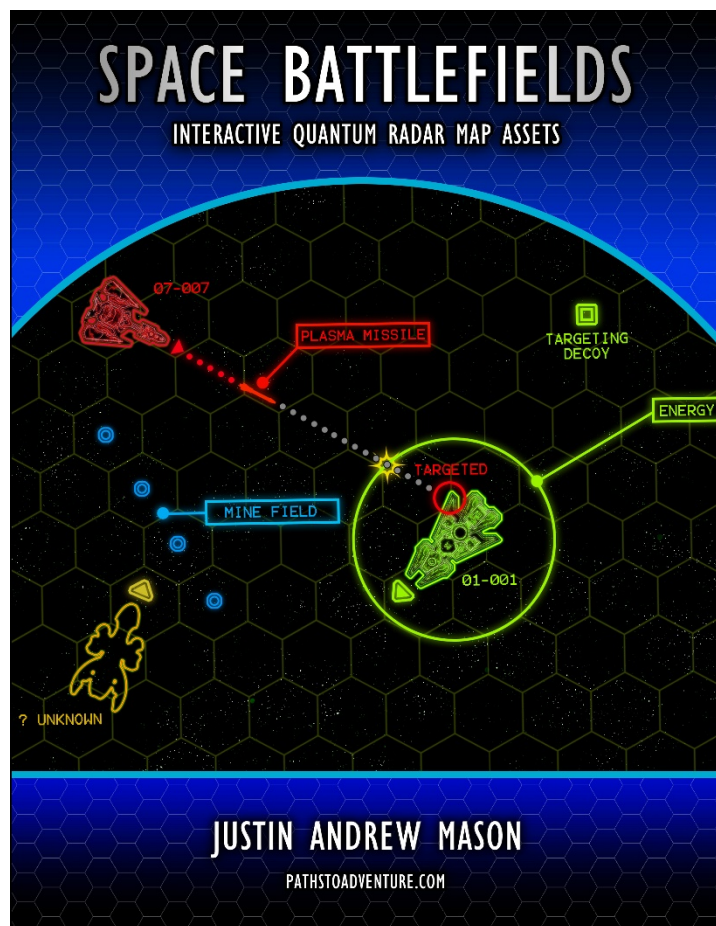
BY TOM VERREAULT

This is a review of a pay what you want DrivethruRPG product by Justin Andrew Mason, the **Space Battlefields: Interactive Quantum Radar Map Assets**. It is a set of map assets for VTT gaming but equally could be used to create handouts of the tactical radar in a non-virtual tabletop game to present players with a tactical situation requiring them to make decisions. The suggested retail price is \$4.95.

There are 289 assets including a starfield and a hex overlaid starfield. The art is perfect for presenting a tactical display which can aid with verisimilitude in gaming as the experience of the character will be that of a tactical display in combat. The product is not really required for sci-fi gaming but certainly expands your options if you are not going to be playing with miniatures.

The company puts out numerous map sets for sci-fi gaming. The deck plans are for horizontal decks with artificial gravity but the deck plans for a saucer ship would easily work for a vertical deck arrangement and simulated gravity of Star Frontiers, The Expanse RPGs, or FrontierSpace RPGs. They have some truly massive mega station maps for those interested in a classic dungeon crawl kind of game or a Metamorphosis Alpha style crawl through the Starship Warden.

I find the Space Battlefield product useful and give it three dralasite thumbs up out of five. I recommend supporting the artist and the company.



THE HEIST

BY RICHARD "SHADOW SHACK" ROSE

This adventure can take place on any world that doesn't have a UPF base and limited Streel presence (Clarion would be one such ideal location). The PCs should have basic spaceship skills at level 2, and their own ship although this is not mandatory as an NPC owned ship can be provided in the game.

THE SETUP

The group is approached by a rugged female human with an interesting proposition. Malika Landok claims that a disabled Streel-chartered vessel, the *SS Courtney*, is carrying valuable cargo and is presently orbiting the local gas giant without a crew. Allegedly the crew departed via launch and recently touched down at the starport where she overheard the dilemma. The crew immediately dispatched their situation to both Streel and the local government (or militia if applicable). With no Streel support base present at the starport and minimal concern on behalf of the planetary government, time is limited for anyone wishing to secure some free loot. With no one aboard, this promises to be an easy job with a lucrative payoff.



Malika, despite not possessing an adequate freight hauler for the mission, insists upon taking first dibs of the cargo as a finder's fee. Everything after that will be first come/first serve. She will provide grappling equipment to enable transfer of cargo containers from the disabled ship to the group's hold in the near-vacuum state of orbit.

While there is a trace of atmosphere where the *Courtney* is presently orbiting, it is predominantly hydrogen so allow the party an opportunity to purchase any Zero-G gear needed, such as spacesuits, rocket packs, additional life support, etc.

MALIKA LANDOK

(fH)

STR/STA: 40/50

DEX/RS: 50/45

INT/LOG: 60/50

PER/LDR: 65/45

Skills (PSA-Tech): Pilot 2, Astrogator 1, Engineering 1, Technician 6, Computer 6, Robotics 2, Beam Weapons 2, Melee Weapons 1

Equipment: Skeinsuit, Laser Pistol w/5 spare Powerclips, Electric Sword

Malika is aggressively ambitious, always looking for a new angle to get rich quickly. Her loyalty is minimal (if even detectable) towards anyone as she constantly looks to gain the upper hand of any potential deal. She has no qualms selling out her fellow teammates, whether it can save her skin or earn a larger profit. Occasionally, she will meet someone who works out well over the course of time, constant shared success gains some semblance of loyalty...however brief it may be. As such she is also quite a smooth talker.

Her ship is detailed below, while it will not be utilized in this adventure it can be used with Malika in future encounters.

SS JAINDO

Modified Courier Scout

HS: 2 **HP:** 12

Engines: 2 **Atomic A**

ADF: 4 **MR:** 4 **DCR:** 26

Crew: 1-4

Weapons: Laser Pods, Laser Pod Turret

Defenses: RH

Communication/Detection: SubSpace Radio, VideoCom, Radar, Intercom

Misc Equipment: Streamlined, Light Hull Armor

Computer - Level: 4 **FP:** 110 **SP/mass:** 100

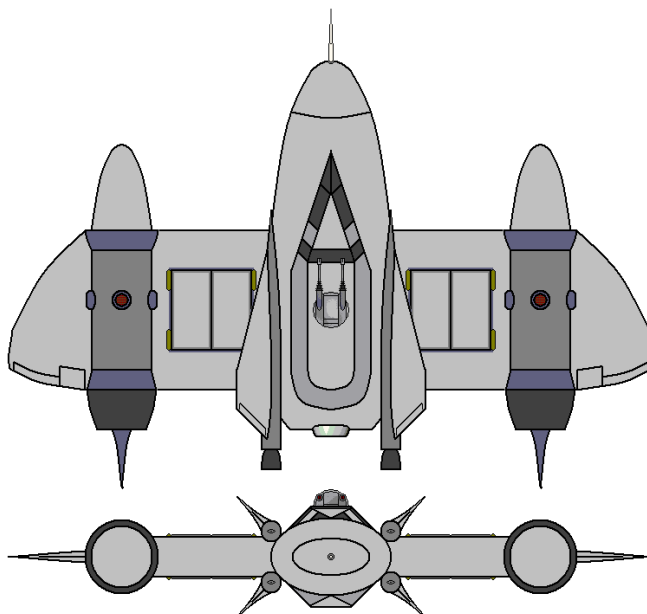
Programs: Alarm (2), Analysis (4), Astrogation (4), Commerce (1), Communication (1), Computer Lockout (3), Damage Control (2), Drive: Atomic A (4), Industry (1), Information Storage (1), Installation Security (3), Laser Battery (1), Laser Cannon (1), Life Support, cap:4 (1), Maintenance (2)

Cargo Capacity: 0.5 (two 0.25 holds)

Crew Accommodations: 2 convertible single/double cabins

Passenger Accommodations: n/a

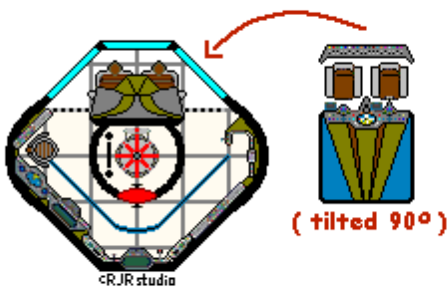
Ship's Vehicles: none



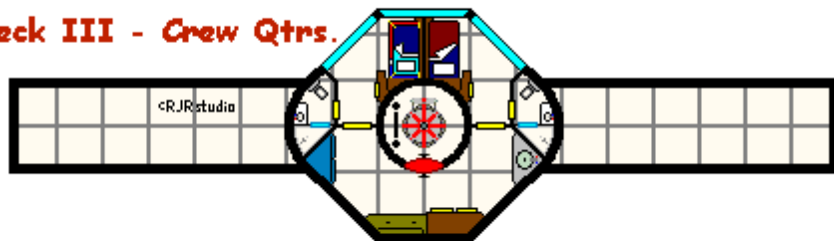
Deck I - Avionics



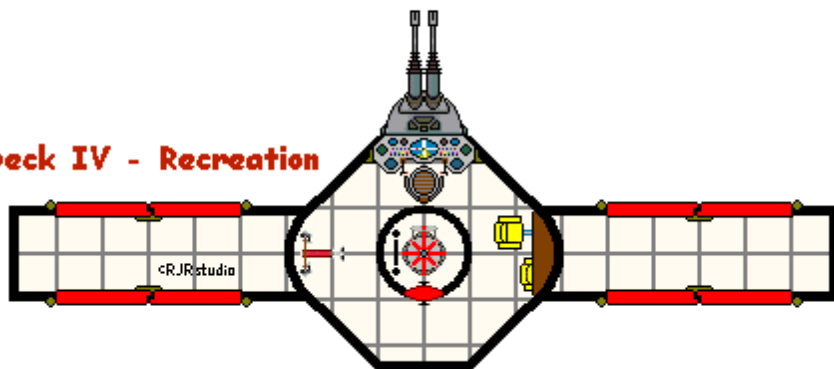
Deck II - Bridge



Deck III - Crew Qtrs.



Deck IV - Recreation



Deck V - Engineering



Deck VI - Storage



JAINDO DECK PLANS

The deck plans to the left are rendered in 1-meter squares

IF THE PLAYERS DO NOT HAVE A SUITABLE SHIP

If the players do not have a capable freight hauling ship (or any ship for that matter), Malika will be able to “appropriate” the use a small freighter. This will deduct 3 hours from the Encounter time, nonetheless the opportunity still remains. Captain William Carlisle just happens to be looking for a crew for the freighter *Light Wave*, and Malika managed to smooth-talk the captain into a share for the use of his ship. As such the captain gets “second dibs”.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CARLISLE

STR/STA: 40/50

DEX/RS: 50/45

INT/LOG: 60/50

PER/LDR: 65/45

Skills (PSA-Tech): Pilot 3, Technician 6, Computer 2, Beam Weapons 2, Medic 1

Equipment: Skeinsuit, Laser Pistol w/50SEU Power Beltpack, Medkit

SS LIGHT WAVE

TT-505 Freighter

HS: 5 **HP:** 25

Engines: 2 Ion class-B

ADF: 1 **MR:** 3 **DCR:** 35

Crew: up to 6

Weapons: Laser Pod Turret*

Defenses: RH

Communication/Detection: Subspace Radio, Videocom, Radar, Intercom

Computer: Level: 4, FP: 92, SP/mass: 100

Programs: Alarm (2), Analysis (4), Astro-gation (4), Commerce (1), Computer Lock-Out (3), Damage Control (2), Drive, Ion-B (4), Industry (1), Laser Battery (1), Life Support (1, capacity:8), Maintenance (2)

Cargo Capacity: 5

Crew Accommodations: Captain's Suite
(double occupancy)

2 convertible single/double/triple cabins

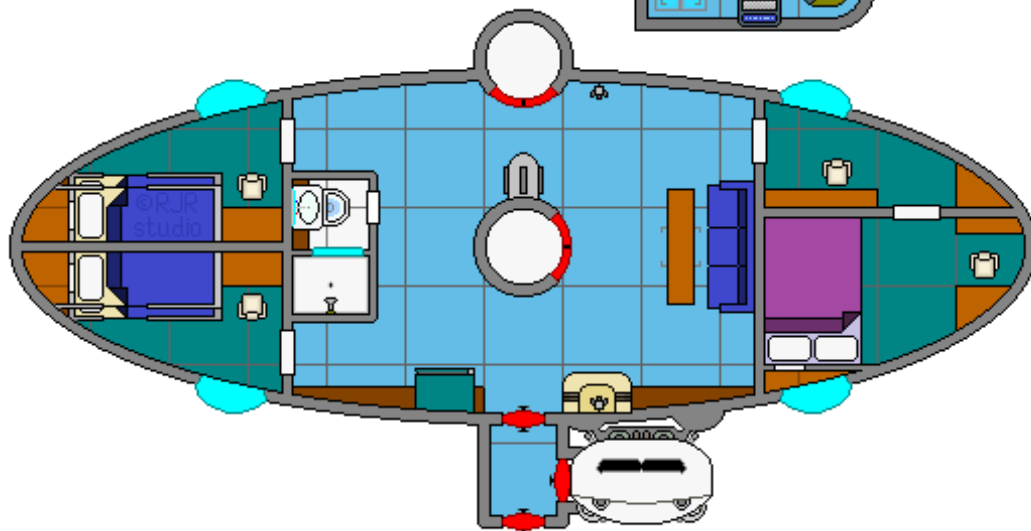
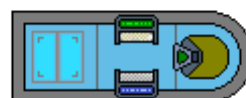
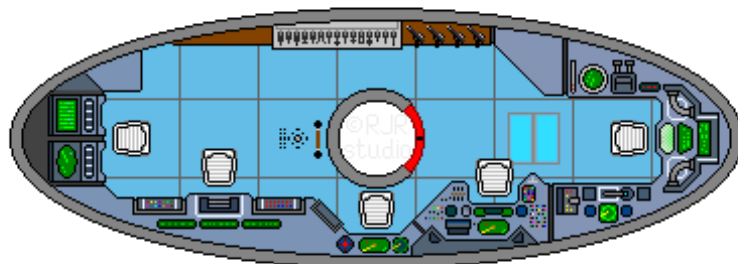
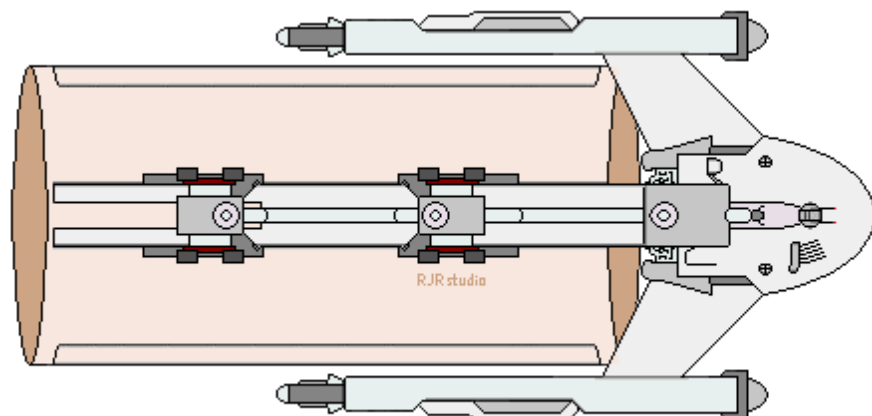
Passenger Accommodations: n/a

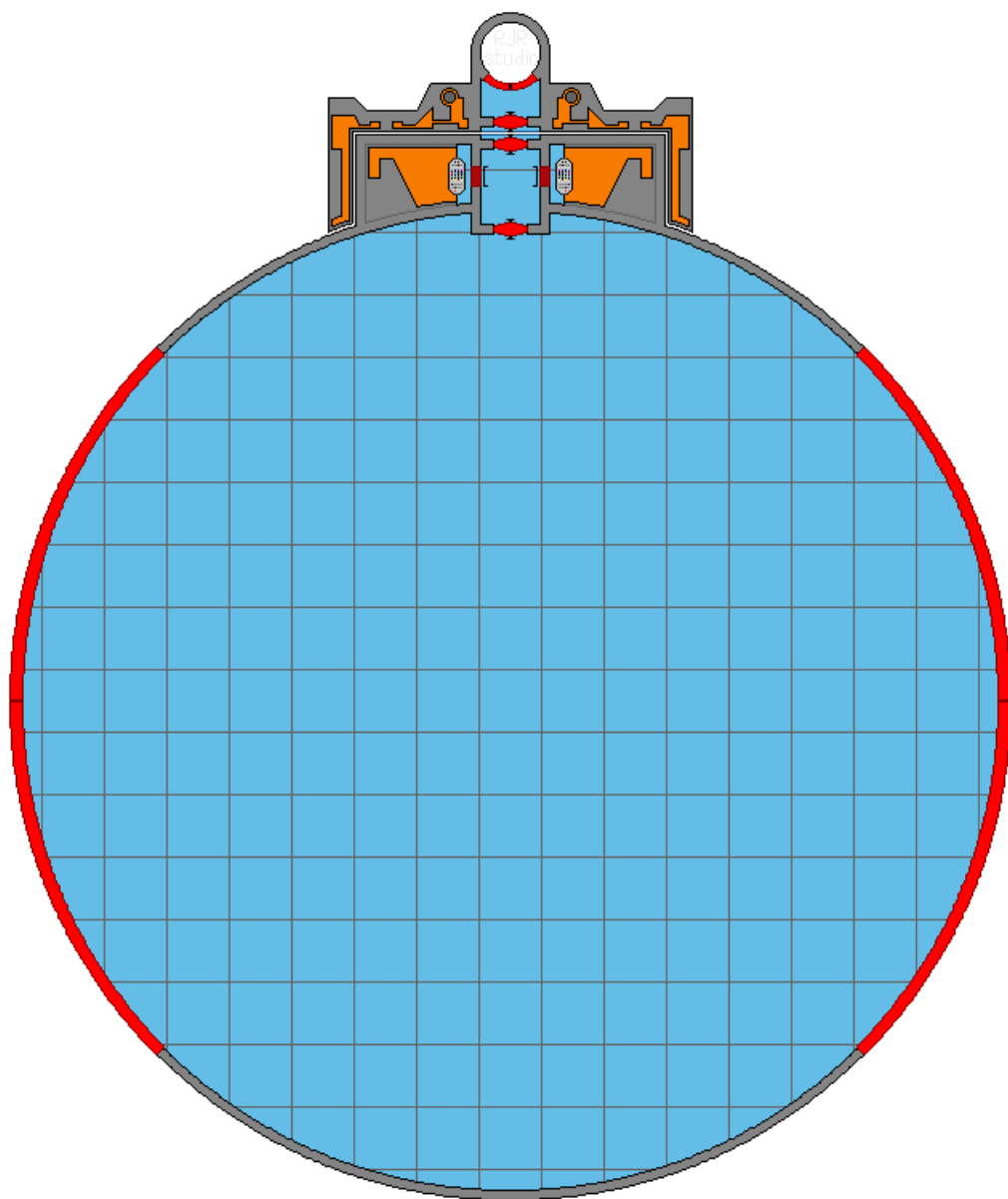
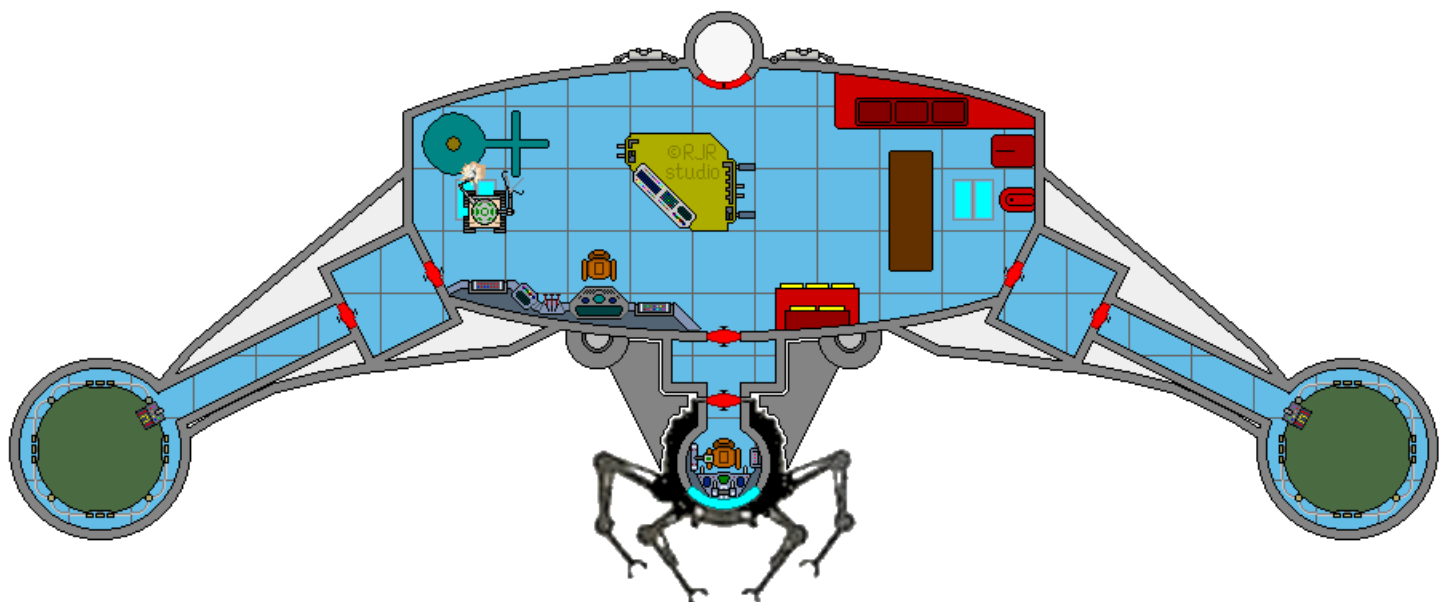
Ship's Vehicles: Lifeboat, Workpod

*Laser Pod Turret (Range:40K km
DMG:1d10)

LIGHT WAVE DECK PLANS

Deck plans are rendered in 1-meter squares





THE ENCOUNTER

The Steel-subsidized freighter *Courtney* is presently orbiting the local gas giant, although said orbit is decaying as gravity is slowly winning over the crippled vessel. The ship was carrying a prototype advanced jump-capable fighter craft along with other valuable material destined for a secret testing base. While refueling her Ion drives at the gas giant, she suffered a catastrophic failure in the maneuver thrusters which affected the main drives as well. During the fiasco, a brief moment of uncontrolled thrust forced the ship to lose orbit, where she was snared by the gas giant's gravity well. The ship's crew took the launch to the local orbital station (or starport) to acquire parts. Unknown to the players (at least until they can discover it onboard), within 24 hours this decaying orbit will progress to an uncontrollable free fall.

Also unknown to the group: the ship is not vacant. A small contingent of MerCo troops remain onboard, having been ferried in the frozen class berths. They are awaiting a repair crew and guarding the valuable cargo. At present five mercs are watching over the ship, with another seven in frozen berths (including a reserve gunnery officer).

Despite her disabled drives, the *Courtney's* emergency power plant is functioning at full power. The players' ship may make its approach along either of the cargo bay doors of any cargo module, where Malika's grappling equipment can be utilized to "connect" the craft for a near-zero-G transfer (a slight 0.05G force will be noticeable once the craft are in tandem orbit). Once the connection is made, the group will have 23 hours (minus 3 if Malika had to procure transport) to overcome the marines and retrieve any cargo. It is essential to keep track of time utilized in clearing the ship of MerCo crew, as what time is left over will determine how much cargo can be safely transferred. Of course, if the party simply wishes to tether onto the *Courtney's* container modules without entering the ship, they will eventually be met by the MerCo crew.

Note that Malika's grappling equipment is not the same as KH ship grapples, rather

it is merely tethers and anchors so the group can zip-line back and forth between the ships and ferry the cargo containers as well. Unless the players safety-tether themselves to the zip-lines, they must make a DEX check at the halfway point for any maneuver, back and forth, with or without cargo. Failure results in loss of grip and floating in free-fall, at which point a second DEX check will be required to grab onto the desired destination with a second failure resulting in bouncing off the hull or missing it completely. If the crew lacks any rocket packs, that player will be out of the game but can be picked up later when the ships detach.

The referee may allow additional time for offloading once the *Courtney* begins the freefall state, with a base 40% plus 5% per ten-minute KH combat turn for the rigging to break (two hour maximum where it will automatically break). Once breakage occurs, characters with rocket packs may reunite with their host ship and the host ship may power out of the gravitational field. A character with a rocket pack may carry one non-rocket equipped character. If breakage occurs within one hour, a rocket pack equipped character may retrieve one more non-rocket equipped character. Otherwise, anyone else left behind in the *Courtney* will be lost.

SS COURTNEY

HS: 8 **HP:** 40

Engines: 2 Ion class B

ADF: 1 **MR:** 3 **DCR:** 44

Crew: up to 8

Weapons: LB

Defenses: RH

Communication/Detection: Subspace
Radio, Radar, Intercom

Computer: Level: 4 FP: 101

SP/mass:100

Programs: _Alarm (2), Analysis (4), As-trogation (4), Commerce (1), Communication (1), Computer Lock-Out (3), Computer Security (3), Damage Control (2), Drive, Atomic-B (4), Industry (1), Installation Security (3), Laser Battery (1), Life Support, cap:8 (1), Maintenance (2)

Cargo Capacity: 8 (one 4U module + two 2U modules)

Crew Accommodations: 4 double bunk cabins

Passenger Accommodations: N/A

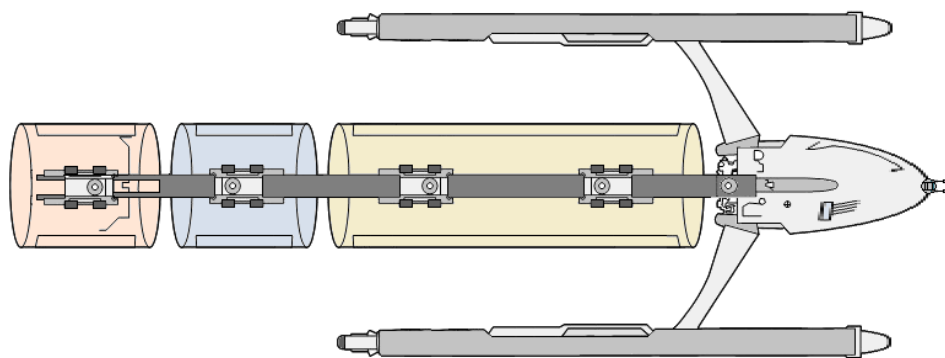
Ship's Vehicles: N/A (Large Launch)

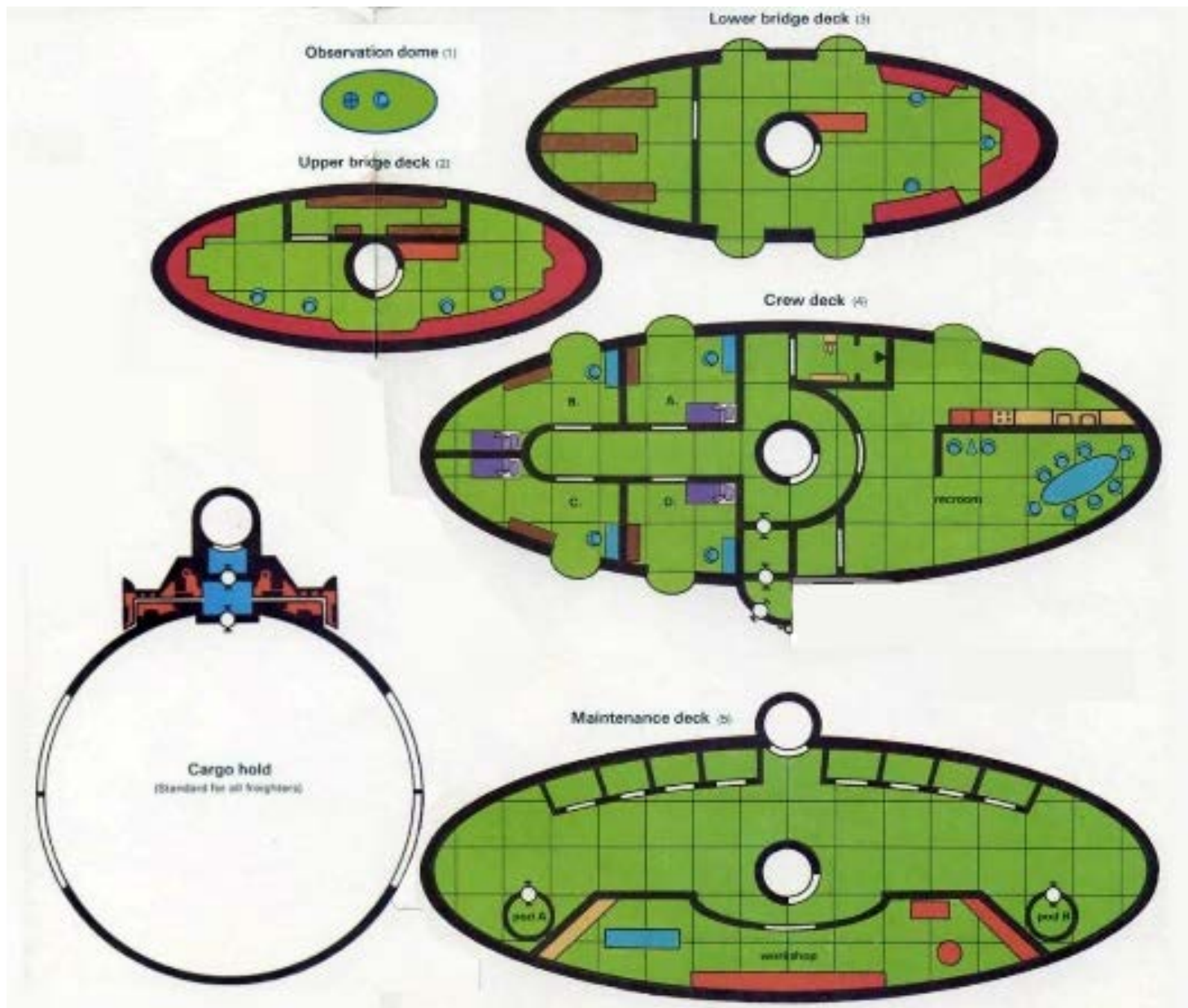
COURTNEY DECK PLANS

The deck plans for the *SS Courtney* (following page) are rendered in 1.5-meter squares and based on the freighter deck plans from the Knight Hawks boxed set.

THE MERCENARIES

The MerCo captain is posted at the crew deck galley. The lieutenant is posted on the upper bridge monitoring the radar. The sergeant is posted at the lower bridge monitoring the computer. Two mercs can be randomly encountered along the rest of the ship on a 1-in-10 chance per area. The lieutenant will spot approaching ships on a roll of 50% given 1d5 opportunities as the group's craft approaches. Once detected the captain will be notified and make his way to the frozen berths (two berths per chamber) on the Maintenance Deck to begin reviving the frozen watch. He will start with the reserve gunner in order to effectively defend the *Courtney* if she is attacked, then he will begin reviving the rest of the mercs in the order as listed. It takes one minute to revive, and three minutes for the revived person to become functional. In terms of KH board game time,





once the party's ship is detected, the gunnery officer will arrive at the laser battery on the next turn.

If the party manages to avoid detection and begins ransacking the cargo modules before searching the ship for crew, the sergeant will eventually spot them via the surveillance cameras in the holds. This will happen 50% of the time, check once per 10-minute KH combat turn as the party rummages through the holds. Once discovered, the sergeant will alert the captain and he will begin thawing out the frozen watch (if he hasn't already begun doing so via radar detection). After notifying the captain, the sergeant will also dispatch the two mercs to the hold. Spacesuits for the MerCo crew are stored on the Maintenance Deck. Also noteworthy, the cargo

modules cannot be detached as they are fused to the main cargo rail.

MERCO TROOPS

CAPTAIN (MH)

STR/STA: 50/50

DEX/RS: 50/50

INT/LOG: 50/50

PER/LDR: 55/60

Skills (PSA-Military): Beam Weapons 4, Melee Weapons 2, Martial Arts 2, Technician 1, Medical 1

Equipment: Military Skeinsuit, Laser Pistol w/50SEU Power Beltpack, Vibroknife

LIEUTENANT (MV)

STR/STA: 35/45

DEX/RS: 65/65

INT/LOG: 50/50

PER/LDR: 50/50

Skills (PSA-Tech): Technician 3, Computer 1, Projectile Weapons 2

Equipment: Military Skeinsuit, 2 Automatic Pistols w/4 spare Bulletclips

SERGEANT (MH)

STR/STA: 35/40

DEX/RS: 50/50

INT/LOG: 60/60

PER/LDR: 50/50

Skills (PSA-Tech): Computer 3, Technician 1, Gyrojet Weapons 2

Equipment: Military Skeinsuit, Gyrojet Pistol w/3 spare Jetclips

MERC #1 (MD)**STR/STA:** 55/55**DEX/RS:** 40/40**INT/LOG:** 60/60**PER/LDR:** 45/45**Skills** (PSA-Military): Beam Weapons 2, Melee Weapons 1**Equipment:** Military Skeinsuit, Laser Rifle (setting:5) w/3 spare Powerclips, Nightstick**MERC #2 (MV)****STR/STA:** 55/55**DEX/RS:** 40/40**INT/LOG:** 45/45**PER/LDR:** 50/50**Skills** (PSA-Military): Gyrojet Weapons 2, Melee Weapons 1**Equipment:** Military Skeinsuit, Gyrojet Rifle w/3 spare Jetclips, Nightstick**FROZEN WATCH****GUNNER (MY)****STR/STA:** 50/50**DEX/RS:** 55/55**INT/LOG:** 40/40**PER/LDR:** 35/35**Skills** (PSA-Military): Beam Weapons 6, Melee Weapons 3, Martial Arts 2, Energy Gunnery 1**Equipment:** Military Skeinsuit, Laser Pistol (setting:10) w/50SEU Power Belt-pack, Sonic Sword**MERC #3 (MH)****STR/STA:** 70/75**DEX/RS:** 55/55**INT/LOG:** 40/40**PER/LDR:** 30/30**Skills** (PSA- Military): Projectile Weapons 2, Melee Weapons 1**Equipment:** Military Skeinsuit, Automatic Rifle w/3 spare Bulletclips, Nightstick**MERC #4 (MD)****STR/STA:** 60/60**DEX/RS:** 40/40**INT/LOG:** 45/45**PER/LDR:** 45/45**Skills** (PSA- Military): Beam Weapons 2, Melee Weapons 1**Equipment:** Military Skeinsuit, Sonic Disruptor w/3 spare Powerclips, Vibroknife, Brass Knuckles**MERC #5 (MV)****STR/STA:** 50/50**DEX/RS:** 50/50**INT/LOG:** 40/40**PER/LDR:** 35/35**Skills** (PSA- Military): Gyrojet Weapons 2, Melee Weapons 1**Equipment:** Military Skeinsuit, Grenade Rifle w/4 frag bullets, Nightstick**MERC #6 (MY)****STR/STA:** 30/30**DEX/RS:** 70/70**INT/LOG:** 50/50**PER/LDR:** 60/60**Skills** (PSA-Military): Gyrojet Weapons 2, Melee Weapons 1**Equipment:** Military Skeinsuit, Gyrojet Rifle w/3 spare Jetclips, Nightstick**MERC #7 (MH)****STR/STA:** 40/45**DEX/RS:** 50/50**INT/LOG:** 55/55**PER/LDR:** 45/45**Skills** (PSA- Military): Beam Weapons 2, Melee Weapons 1**Equipment:** Military Skeinsuit, Laser Rifle w/3 spare Powerclips, Nightstick**MERC #8 (MY)****STR/STA:** 50/50**DEX/RS:** 45/45**INT/LOG:** 45/45**PER/LDR:** 55/55**Skills** (PSA-Military): Projectile Weapons 2, Melee Weapons 1**Equipment:** Military Skeinsuit, Automatic Rifle w/3 spare Bulletclips, Nightstick**THE CARGO**

Once the mercenaries have been eliminated, the group may begin exploring the hold and/or retrieve the manifest from the ship's computer. Malika will make a bee-line for the emeralds. This has been her goal all along. If captain Carlisle is present, he will claim a half a cargo unit of emeralds

with Malika claiming the other half, either way the emeralds will not be claimed by the party.

Fore to stern, the cargo containers have the following loads:

MODULE 1 (4U MODULE):

- Strel prototype starfighter (unarmed, no computer)
- Laser Pod weapon system for fighter
- Assault Rocket launcher for fighter
- Laser Pod Turret weapon system for fighter
- 2 Solar/Atomic class-A drives for fighter
- Insulated container with 4 Uranium Fuel Pellets
- Level:4 Computer (see fighter description for programs)
- 24 pallets of Assault Rockets (3 rockets per pallet)
- 1 cargo unit of Emeralds (intended to barter for privacy while testing)
- ½-cargo unit of Medicinals (35K Cr @ source/62.5K Cr @ destination, see Rare Wines & Ready Cash in Dragon #93)

MODULE 2 (2U MODULE):

- 1 cargo unit of Target Drones
- 1 cargo unit of Parabatteries (16 Type-4 parabatteries)

MODULE 3 (2U MODULE):

- 1 cargo unit of Tools (24 crates each w/Techkit, Robcomkit, & Engineer Toolbox)
- 1 cargo unit of Generators (8 type-2 generators)

TIME REQUIRED TO OFFLOAD ITEMS

Fighter Hull: 2 hours via Cargo Arm/6 hours via four crew*

Each Weapon System: 1 hour/2 crew

Fighter Drives: 1 hour/2 crew per drive

Fuel Pellet Container: ½-hour/2 crew

Computer: 1 hour/2 crew

Assault Rocket Pallets: 10 minutes per pallet/2 crew

Emeralds: 2 hours/2 crew

Medicinals: ½-hour/2 crew

Drones: 2 hours/2 crew

Parabatteries: 10 minutes per battery/2 crew

Tools: 10 minutes per crate/2 crew

Generators: ½-hour per generator/2 crew

*This merely ejects the craft into orbit, an equal amount of time is required to secure it in the host ship's hold. All other times assume half crew on the *Courtney* zip-lining items to awaiting crew on the host ship. Doubling the crew will halve the time for each item.

Note that the fighter components are not counted towards the cargo capacity, as they *could* be included on the fighter that allocates two cargo units of hold space, although technically the entire batch can be considered an additional one-half cargo unit if tallied separately. They are merely separated to make it more challenging for the party when it comes time to pick and choose what is taken and what gets left behind...

If the group attempts to retrieve the prototype fighter, they will most likely have to set it adrift as it may not fit in their hold. Anything else is up for grabs within the remaining time constraints and available hold space before the *Courtney* meets her free-falling fate. Stats for the prototype fighter, once assembled (assuming all components are acquired, Engineer-2 or better to assemble), are as follows:

S-4HF "ORCA"

prototype heavy fighter

HS: 2 **HP:** 14

Engines: Twin Streel "Big Bang" Solar/Atomic A

ADF: 5 **MR:** 4 **DCR:** 40

Crew: 3

Weapons: Laser Pod*, Assault Rocket (x2), Laser Pod Turret**

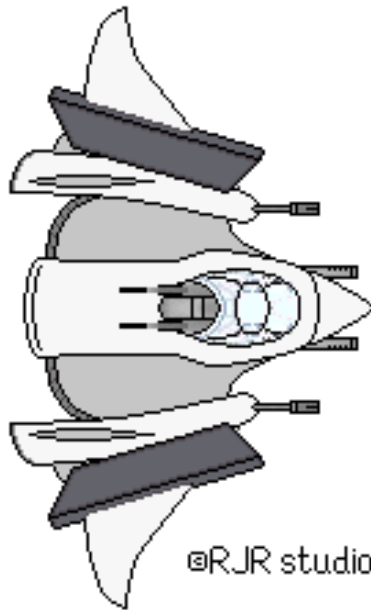
Defenses: RH

Communication/Detection Equipment: Subspace Radio, Radar, Video-com, Auto-Eject Module, Streamlined

COMPUTER: Level:4 FP:101

SP/Mass:100

Programs: Alarm (2), Analysis (4), Assault Rocket (1), Astrogation (4), Auto Eject (2), Computer Lockout (4), Damage Control (2), Drive, Atomic-A (4), Information Storage (1), Laser Cannon



(1), Laser Battery (1), Life Support (1), Maintenance (2)

* Laser Pod - as detailed in Polyhedron #19 (Range:50K km, DMG:1d10, FF)

** Laser Pod Turret (Range:40K km, DMG:1d10)

The S-4 is still in the prototype stage but has been seen more than once performing test flights in the Truane's Star system. This particular example was intended for a private operational performance to a discreet client. Streel wanted to go with a long range interstellar capable fighter, thus mandating life support and a larger fuel capacity. To this end the standard fuselage was widened in order to accommodate the extra equipment and small crew galley/quarters.

The cockpit seats three, two side by side up front and one in the rear. The pilot and astrogator/gunner reside up front while an additional engineer/gunner may occupy the rear, although the rear turret may be remote operated by the astrogator/gunner, in which case the A/G may not assist the pilot with the forward firing guns and rockets.

It is not yet known when or if these will be released. Streel's basic principle in the Star Fighter campaign is that they don't need to be interstellar capable, as that's what carriers and external docking platforms (AKA 'fish hooks') are for. At the same time, they also refuse to sit on the sidelines in any market...hence the design.

EPILOGUE

The party may opt to stay on as crew under Captain Carlisle if they do not have a ship of their own. He will pay fair wages and take minimal risks for freight ventures. Note the ship is slow and lightly armed, so it is relatively easy prey should any ne'er do wells be encountered. Carlisle will most likely prefer a room to himself while the other two cabins can be doubled up for a party of six or less, unless a comely female human is among the group, he may share his cabin with her.

The Light Wave is a bare bones basic freighter with basic necessities. An observation dome is the uppermost/fore deck, followed by the hydroponics and forward RCS thrusters. These two decks see very little traffic. The bridge is the next deck down with stations for a pilot, astrogator, engineer, and gunnery officer. The next deck is the crew deck with a galley and minimal recreation equipment along with four cabins. The airlock and launch pen are located along the ventral side. Below that is the maintenance deck with monitoring equipment for the drives, drive access, life support, machine shop, and power relay station with recharging ports. Carlisle keeps a single level-2 maintenance robot here to assist an engineer. Finally, a five-unit cargo module is situated on the cargo rail. It can be removed and replaced with several smaller modules; however, this is rare as Carlisle does not like the possibility of dropping modules at a station with no ready modules to go. It's always best to have a less than full hold versus no hold.

If the party opts to take possession of the fighter (fully assembled or otherwise), it chews up two cargo units of space. Optionally, the group can acquire an external docking platform ('fish hook') at any Streel manufacturing facility for 20,000 Cr and attach it outside the craft's airlock, where the fighter can be accessed at any time for launch or recovery. Of course, Streel would pay handsomely to get their prototype design back, with a negotiated price somewhere between 500K and 1M Cr.

Malika can always be encountered in the future as well, either with a scheme as a protagonist or antagonist to the party, or both...

RAISED BY WOLVES?

NEW CHARACTER BACKGROUND OPTIONS FOR STAR FRONTIERS

BY TOM VERREULT

Raised by wolves, an expression of speech that most likely dates back to the founding of Rome with its legend of Romulus and Remus being nursed by a she-wolf. The idea was to promote or explain why certain qualities of the wolf were expressed in the character of the Roman citizen. Something similar is seen in modern times when someone of a particular race is brought up in or immersed in a different culture and that individual has, as they say, “gone native” adopting the culture he or she has matured in. I had a friend in college who went to Australia to live and work in the ‘90s and he has assimilated so much to the culture that its difficult to understand his Aussie accent on the phone sometimes.

The following rules are about adding the option for a character raised by a different species and culture to have some element of that culture in their character makeup. This would simulate a human raised by dralasites and having lie detection ability, etc. The ability cannot be strictly part of the parent specie’s biological makeup like gliding for yazirians, regeneration of severed limbs for vrusk or elasticity for dralasites. These abilities that have an element of learned skill like comprehension, lie detection, and possibly even battle rage would be potential candidates for this optional rule. For example, a human, dralasite, or yazirian raised and immersed in vrusk society would pick up on the vrusk

comprehension ability. By sacrificing one of their species abilities, they become able to comprehend like a vrusk.

The player must craft a background where the character is immersed in a society alien to his species. It could be that they were orphaned and raised by an alien species. Alternately they may have had a single parent who was a diplomat posted to an alien colony. During the character’s formative years, he was closer to and saw more of his alien nanny than his biological parent. It’s up to the player to decide this crucial backstory although the referee can veto all or part of a background they thinks is too outlandish for their game.

The character will sacrifice an ability that is a normal part of their heritage (see below) and then gain the ability of the alien culture. The new ability starts at 5%. Because some elements of these abilities are biological, the character must pay double to improve his alien ability. Finally, this can only be done for one alien ability, not two. Example: a player cannot claim that his human character was raised on Terledrom, a vrusk and dralasite colony, and has learned both lie detection and comprehension.

Human characters sacrifice their “training and education” ability which gives them 5 points to add to any one ability score. They may gain lie detection (dralasite), comprehension (vrusk), or battle rage (yazirian).

Vrusk characters sacrifice their comprehension ability. They may gain lie detection (dralasite), training and education (human), or battle rage (yazirian). Note: the usual disdain by humans for bug like creatures should factor into a back story involving a vrusk raised by humans.

Dralasite characters sacrifice their lie detection ability. They may gain comprehension (vrusk), training and education (human), or battle rage (yazirian). Note: the usual disdain by yazirians for dralasites should factor into a back story involving a dralasite raised by yazirians.

Yazirian characters sacrifice battle rage. They may gain lie detection (dralasite), training and education (human), or comprehension (vrusk). Note: a yazirian not raised win a clan will carry a stigma from the rest of yazirian clan-based society if his being raised in an alien culture is known.

Additionally, the character will learn the language of their adopted society. They are able to speak and understand the new language with the exception that only vrusk can speak Vrusk but other species can certainly learn to understand it but cannot speak it. Vrusk can learn other languages but can only speak Vrusk. This may have little impact on the game because of the presence of the polyvox translator and a universal trade language called Pan Gal. However, it is a logical development in the proposed immersion in an alien culture and it might impact role play or impart flavor.

It is possible for the character, through the normal course of game play, to encounter individuals of his own species and observe the lost ability in action. This would naturally make the character curious and maybe cause them to explore their own biological roots and culture. This would lead to an awakening of the lost ability. The rule for managing this is that the player must spend 15 exp to regain their biological and cultural heritage that they sacrificed at character creation. They gain their lost ability at 5%. Even if the character is a vrusk regaining comprehension, it is still only 5% not the 15% that is normal to vrusk characters at character creation. This ability will remain a bit alien to them so they must also pay double to increase it.

In pure game terms, human characters will not bother to try to regain their “training and education” ability. It makes no sense to spend 15 exp points to gain 5 points to an ability score when they can spend 5 exp points to raise an ability score 5 points. However, the player is free to role play this search for the character’s biological and cultural roots.



This is not a way for a power gamer to rack up “racial abilities” as gaining an ability from an alien culture at character creation and recovering their lost cultural ability later means they have two racial abilities they must pay double XP to increase. There is very much a cost for using this option. There is a cost to the character and player. The cost to the player is that he is forced to invest effort to create a background that explains taking the option and it is expected to show up in his role play of “a stranger in a strange land” or “fish out of water” type character due to having matured in an alien culture. Not all players invest the effort to ground their character in the setting and a referee should not relent on this point with the player. If the player is at a loss on how to do this then the referee can suggest ideas or even collaborate with the player. Non player characters that represent the primary relationships to the character in the alien culture should get a short paragraph write up. If the referee ever draws those NPCs into the game the stats for them can be created at that time.

This option will seem silly if all characters in the RPG party opt for it at character

creation. For that reason, it is probably best if it's limited to one character. If more than one player wants it, then have them flip a coin or play meteor, plastic, sonic cutter for it (rock, paper, scissors). You could allow for two players to take this option but require that they both have the exact same background: both were raised as siblings by alien parents and both of them get the same alien ability. Note: this creates a familial relationship that the players should honor during role play.

UNDERSTANDING ALIEN CULTURES

It can be a challenge for a player to understand an alien culture. These cultures don't exist and are purely the product of imagination. The player at a minimum should read the one page species descriptions in the Alpha Dawn rules which has paragraphs about society, customs and attitudes.

There have also been numerous articles written about the alien cultures of the dralasites, yazirians, and vrusk in fan

magazines over the years and a player committed to playing this kind of character should delve into that material.

Lastly, a player can create aspects of dralasite, yazirian, or vrusk society, customs and culture not explicitly covered by the rules. There are corners of the Frontier of which very little is known and these places can be fleshed out by a creative player.

ALIEN WORLDS

The following list contains the worlds inhabited by the various species in the Frontier.

- **Dralasite Colonies** - Inner Reach, Groth, Terledrom (w/Vrusk)
- **Human Colonies** - Rupert's Hole, Laco, Kdikit, Morgaine's World, Minotaur, Lossend, New Pale, Clarion
- **Vrusk Colonies** - Terledrom (w/Dralasites), Ken'zah Kit, Zik-it, Kwadl-kit
- **Yazirian Colonies** - Hentz, Yast, Hargut, Histran, Hakosoar
- **Mixed Colonies** - Triad, Outer Reach, Gran Quivera, Pale

FANZINE CULTURAL REFERENCES

TITLE	AUTHOR	DESCRIPTION	ISSUE
DRALASITE CULTURE			
Dralasite Facts			Star Frontiersman 10
Traditional Dralasite Debate	Eric Winsor	Alex Stone Fiction	Star Frontiersman 15
The Dralasite Creed	Thomas Verreault	A look at what the Dralasite Creed might be	Frontier Explorer 1
New Player Primer: Dralasites	Thomas Verreault & Eric Winsor	Essential information for the new player to play a dralasite	Frontier Explorer 21
YAZIRIAN CULTURE			
Yazirian Clans	Shadowshack	Tables to roll your yazirian clan by planet	Star Frontiersman 8
Yazirian Literature or The Art of Writing Fluff	Thomas Verreault	Advice on writing fluff for your RPG plus some examples of Yazirian Literature	Star Frontiersman 15
The Yazirian Files	Thomas Verreault & Eric Winsor	Yazirian honor code and Legend of the first clan	Star Frontiersman 18
The Family of One	Thomas Verreault	Fleshing out this famous Yazirian religion	Frontier Explorer 2
New Player's Primer: Yazirians	Thomas Verreault	A 1 page primer to help the new player understand Yazirians	Frontier Explorer 7
A Survey of Yazirian Literature	Thomas Verreault	Examples of yazirian literature with plot hooks	Frontier Explorer 8
Adha and the Brother Hunters	Eric Winsor	Ancient Yazirian Legend	Frontier Explorer 9
VRUSK CULTURE			
A Vrusk Life in Song	Bradley McMillian & Thomas Verreault	A look at vrusk culture and society	Frontier Explorer 5
New Player Primer: Vrusk	Tom Verreault & Tom Stephens		Frontier Explorer 20
An Industrious Life	Oscar Rios	A look at the life of an average vrusk	Frontier Explorer 32

PLANETARY BRIEF - CIRCE

BY OSCAR RIOS

Planet Name: Circe
Star System: Solar Minor System
Diameter: 14,487 km
Gravity: 1.137g
Length of Day: 28 hours, 14 minutes
Atmosphere: 72% Nitrogen, 23% Oxygen, Carbon Dioxide 5%.
Climate Range: From sub-polar to humid subtropical, with most of the planet being monsoon\subtropical. The majority of population live in coastal areas, which fall in an Oceanic zone. Most areas have warm to hot summers, cooler winters, broken by seasons of heavy rain.
Average Surface Temperature: 30°C (interior equatorial region), 20°C (most coastal regions), -2.5°C (polar region)
Moons: Ulysseus – *Military Complex*
Space Stations: Kauber Station – *Rest and Relaxation Station*
Fort Haplon – *Armored Space Station*
Colonizers: Human / Vrusk

THE EARLY YEARS

Circe was discovered in FY66, by the independent exploration vessel Nirvana (See System Brief – Solar Minor) during its exploration of the Solar Minor system. After being purchased by Synthcorp, Circe was developed as an agricultural production planet, due to its lush subtropical climate and fertile soil. It was settled primarily by Vrusk and Human colonists recruited from three nearby star systems; K'aken-Kar, Madderly's Star, and Clarion.

Vrusk settlers were drawn from the planet Ken'zah-kit, a moderately well populated industrial and agricultural world in the K'aken-Kar system. Human settlers came from the planet Kdith, in the Madderly's Star system, and the planet Clarion, in the White Light system.

However, there were still labor shortages, so Synthcorp also recruited settlers from the heavily populated resource mining planet of Clarion. Many of these colonists were paroled prisoners, whom Synthcorp "purchased" by donating to the

government of Clarion. These individuals were contractually obligated to help establish the colony of Circe for five years. Some considered this a simple business arrangement, while others accused it of being a form of indentured servitude. A few asserted this to be nothing less than institutionalized slavery.

The early years of the colony were tough. There were some cultural growing pains as the settlers found their footing on a new world. The Vrusk settlers from Ken'zah-kit and Human colonists from Kdith started off with much in common already, as they both came from worlds with a similar population and agricultural economies. The humans from Clarion learned fast and worked hard, slowly gaining acceptance, and then respect, from their fellow colonists.

Soon all three groups bonded over mutual goals, shared toil, the pride of bringing in crops, and carving a civilization out of the wilderness. Soon the Kenzahs, Kad-dies, and Wogs (as the three groups referred to one another, the latter being a referenced to the derogatory nickname for Clarion, Gollywog) became one people. They proudly dubbed themselves Circers (pronounced "sir-sirs"). They would soon bond over something new, a common enemy.

THE DISCORD

Working and living conditions were hard on Circe. Most of the crops produced during this time were exported to the system's corporate headquarters on Kir'-Kut, to feed its growing population and for export out of Solar Minor. Barely enough remained for the people of Circe to sustain themselves, with none left over for profit or building emergency stores.

Synthcorp poured a lot of money into building the factories and settlements on Kir'-Kut, due to the harsher environmental conditions there. On Circe, development was slow, with settlers having to live in substandard pre-fab housing units for years at a time. Promises to improve

conditions were made and broken many times with set schedules endlessly delayed by Synthcorp executives. The Circers grew more and more frustrated.

Eventually, a black market developed as Circers bartered with smugglers for the supplies they needed to survive, effectively cutting Synthcorp out of the equation. This led to a crackdown with mass arrests and sentences of hard labor by the mega-corporation. The settlers of Circe responded with widespread protests, boycotts, production slowdowns, and general strikes. Synthcorp saw their profits dip, as food flowing out of Circe slowed to a trickle. In an effort to break the resolve of the Circers, the mega-corporation landed a massive security force to restore order. The force was mostly made up of Kir'-Kut militia, augmented by combat robots and detachments of private contractors (i.e. – professional mercenaries).

What followed would become known as "The Discord of 79". A popular human labor leader, Juanita DeLaCarta, was arrested and later died in militia custody. Her husband and children were jailed and shipped to Kir'-Kut, on charges of inciting rebellion. When planet-wide protests followed, Synthcorp ordered the crowds be dispersed. Hundreds of unarmed protesters were killed by the corporate militias. Synthcorp claimed the incident was sparked by the actions of renegade contractors and glitches in the programming of the supporting combat robots, but the damage was done and things escalated quickly.

The citizens of Circe armed themselves and began fighting back against the Synthcorp militias. The conflict came to a head when the Synthcorp corporate headquarter on Circe was bombed, by Circer settlers from Clarion. Many of these colonists had intimate knowledge of working with explosives as they had previously been miners. The building was completely leveled, and 273 people (mostly private contractors hired by Synthcorp) were killed in the blast.

At this point the situation came to the attention of the Council of Worlds. Synthcorp was ordered to withdraw all troops and await a mediation team. The mega-corporation complied but began recruiting a larger force of private contractors in preparation to renew hostilities. Circers, on their end, began to prepare for a second invasion by training troops, building hidden underground bunkers, and stockpiling weapons. A blockade of Circe followed, as Synthcorp attempted to isolate its rebellious colony. However, the same smugglers who ran the black market easily penetrated the blockade, running guns and military hardware in exchange for various agricultural commodities. However, the imminent Solar Minor civil war never got the chance to ignite, as the Second Sathar War began.

THE SECOND SATHAR WAR

Sathar Fleet #1 launched a diversionary attack on Volturnus in FY 80 which drew the bulk of UPF's Spacefleet to that region. This feint left the systems along the edge of the White Light Nebula dangerously exposed and vulnerable, which is exactly what the Sathar had hoped for. A year later the major thrust of their assault begins, as

Sathar fleets #2 and #3 attacked an undefended Solar Minor. Their advance was so swift and the assault so fierce that Solar Minor fell before any alarm could be raised.

During the assault Synthcorp consolidated all of its military strength on defending Kir'-Kut, abandoning Circe to its own defenses. With their stockpiles of weapons and trained partisan bands, Circe was able to resist the Sathar invasion for three days. There was ground fighting in most of the major cities, as the people of Circe attempted to hold out long enough for UPF Spacefleet to arrive and drive off the Sathar fleets.

On the third day, Sathar commanders, frustrated by the stubborn resistance, unleashed an orbital bombardment on the Siandonnie Archipelago and Nova Hollancia, two of Circe's five continents. With major cities destroyed and 40% of its surface uninhabitable due to radiation, this effectively ended organized resistance. The Sathar forces took control of Solar Minor and landed a sizable occupation force on both planets. However, small groups of partisans, mostly hiding in the wilderness and struggling to survive, mounted a resistance which continued to harass the Sathar invaders for two more years. The last of these groups were pacified in FY 82, at the Battle of Tal'Dashion Vale (located

in the mountains of Morlowvia, which is now a national heritage park).

In FY 83, as the war turned against the Sathar, they abandoned Solar Minor. They did not leave empty-handed. The people of Circe and Kur'-Kut were rounded up and transported to the Sathar's forward operating base, the star system they named Outpost #1. Here they were used as slave labor and exploited as human shields. The prisoners endured nightmarish conditions, with many worked to death in Sathar factories and mines. Others were used as test subjects in various Sathar weapons programs, dying horrible, painful deaths. The people of Circe and Kir'-Kut endured this for seven long years. Finally, in FY 90, Spacefleet and the UPF's newly minted ground army, Landfleet, manage to conquer Outpost #1, after a bloody protracted 2-year campaign.

POST WAR

From FY 90 – FY 91 the citizens of Circe, along with those from Kir'-Kut, were cataloged, medically treated, and interrogated by Landfleet intelligence. Many were suffering from radiation and toxic poisoning from their working conditions. Others, the victims of Sathar medical experiments, were disfigured and had cybernetic implants removed. Many died within a few weeks of liberation, their poor medical conditions too advanced to do more than make them comfortable. It is estimated that 40% of those taken captive by the Sathar died and did not survive to leave Outpost #1.

Once they recovered their strength, the survivors from Solar Minor asked be returned to their home system, but learned they were being detained on Outpost #1. There was a debate within the Council of Worlds on whether Solar Minor should be abandoned or resettled, due to security and financial concerns. Nearby systems refused to accept refugees from Solar Minor, fearing the security risk, as it was discovered that hidden among the survivors were a number of Sathar collaborators and agents. As tensions began to rise on Outpost #1, the UPF relented and allowed the people of Solar Minor to return home. They were transported back to Solar



Minor, with minimal support, and attempted to rebuild both their lives and home worlds.

THE RECONSTRUCTION

As Circe was resettled, starting in FY 92, the returning citizens decided to abandon most of its former cities in favor of building new ones. Synthcorp attempted to reestablish control over Circe, taking on a more conciliatory posture with the population. They offered Circe more representation on their board of directors, and financial assistance in the rebuilding and recovery efforts. These overtures prove disastrous and failed in spectacular fashion. Riots broke out and many Synthcorp representatives were physically attacked (although none were killed). Circers accused Synthcorp executives of being Sathar agents, and in several cases Star Law investigators prove such accusations to be true. Circe began arming civilian spacecraft to form a makeshift planetary militia, and Spacefleet issued a stern warning to Synthcorp to back down. In the end, Synthcorp withdrew all claims to Circe, leaving them to sort out reconstruction on their own.

Circe, now independent, faced an uneasy future without the support of any of the mega-corps. The mega-corporations refused to invest in Circe's reconstruction efforts, in a show of solidarity with Synthcorp. This sparked a 5-year period of deep economic depression. However, the Circers found help from three unexpected places.

First were the Rim veterans who'd fought in the space and ground battles at Outpost #1. War weary, and many dreading the long trip back home, they found settling in Solar Minor an attractive

proposition. Flush with money from their long terms of military service, Circe welcomed them. While still primarily a Human/Vrusk system, nearly 5% of Circe's population are Humma (1%), Osakar (3%) and Ifshnits (1%).

The next were the Mhemne, the natives of FS30, now dubbed the Liberty star system. They became a prime market for Circe's rebuilding agriculture products. As the Mhemne had little in the way of capital, being recently liberated from the Sathar domination themselves, most of these early trade deals were handled by barter. What the Mhemne did have were refurbished Sathar dry-docks, shipyards, and experience building spacecraft, as they'd been forced to do in support of the Sathar war effort. The Mhemne traded spacecraft for shipment of food, desperately needed by their recovering population. Now equipped with vessels to transport their goods, Circe recovered and resumed supplying food to systems across the Frontier.

The third supporter was Spacefleet and Landfleet. It was decided that with Solar Minor as the new frontline against the Sathar, a permanent military presence was required. The Council of Worlds and the UPF was committed to restoring confidence in its ability to protect its member planets, erase the shame of Solar Minor's unchallenged conquest, and atone for its failings. Kir'-Kut, heavily influenced by the board of Synthcorp, attempted to stall the establishment of a permanent military presence in the system, claiming it would make Solar Minor a target for future attacks. The people of Circe saw this as part of a Synthcorp plot to re-take control of Circe by force at some point, and that they didn't want UPF military forces caught in the crossfire.

Circe on the other hand welcomed Spacefleet and Landfleet with open arms. Fort Haplon, an Armored Space Station, was constructed in orbit above Circe by Spacefleet. Circe's only moon, Ulysseus, was leased to both Starfleet and Landfleet for 75 years, who turned it into a massive lunar military complex. It is not known just how many troops and ships are hidden away on Ulysses, but it is thought to be considerable. Wings of system-based

fighter craft are often seen patrolling and training around Ulysseus, and military personnel on leave are a common sight on on Kauber Station, a rest and relaxation station also in orbit above Circe.

TODAY (FY 111)

Currently Circe is one of the best defended planets in the Frontier. Its economic strength continues to grow as it expands agricultural production to include foodstuffs, spices, and potable specialty of races across the Frontier. Tensions with Kir'-Kut are greatly reduced, and cultural ties are being strengthened between the two worlds, greatly enhanced by a major regime change within Synthcorp's board of directors. The future looks bright for Circe, but many challenges remain, even as they approach the 20th anniversary of resettlement.

GEOGRAPHY

Circe has five major land masses, three of which are currently inhabited. These are:

KAW'ZAH-TSI

A large continent with a low coastal areas, a horseshoe like mountain range that dominates the interior, and a wide central region dominated by rolling plains, rivers, and rainforests.

ASTRA-DOMINICA

The largest continent, once where most of population lived and home to the old capital. It was heavily damaged during SWII, but most of the urban centers have been rebuilt at new locations, with the abandoned ruins of the old ones slowly being reclaimed by the wilderness or dismantled to be restored as farmland.

MORLOWVIA

A massive oblong island continent stretching nearly from one pole to the other. It is dominated by a massive mountain range running down the center, which still includes a number of active volcanoes.



THE SIANDONNIE ARCHIPELAGO

A collection of over 800 islands, ranging from as small as Kai-Hai, at 670 square km, to massive Zit-Xik'tip at 765,185 square km. Unfortunately, this area received a great amount of radioactive fallout from orbital bombardment, and is currently a restricted zone. But, for portions of this region, especially those around the island of Ventura, this may soon change.

NOVA HOLLANCIA

A large island continent, once home to millions of residents. Like the Siandonnie Archipelago this area is now an irradiated restricted zone. The western coast of Nova Hollanica, which faces the seismically active Morlowvia, has also been victim to tsunamis. It is thought to be completely depopulated, but rumors abound claiming that survivors remain living here from the day before the resettlement.

MAJOR CITIES

There are only five major cities on Circe.

K'ATEN KIST

(located on Kaw'Zah-Tsi)

The new capital of Circe, it is one of the cleanest and most modern cities in the Frontier. It is a testing ground for new agricultural technologies, with a focus on low environmental impact. It is a gleaming city of tall silver towers, glass domes, and green garden spaces flowing seamlessly into one another. K'aten Kist is also the home of the planet's primary spaceport, Van Bryant Station.

DEMETER CITY

(located on Kaw'Zah-Tsi)

This city was moderately damaged during the attack, and is slowly being restored. The new buildings are much more modern and in line with the sensibilities of the K'aten Kist's architecture. However, an equally powerful movement has been made to restore and rebuild the city as it once appeared, leading to certain sections having an "old city" feel.

AVENA SATIVA

(located on Astra-Dominica)

This city, the former capital of Circe, was damaged during WWII. The choice was made to quickly rebuild, rather than modernize. This gives Avena Sativa a more run-down and utilitarian esthetic than the other settlements on Circe. While it is no longer the capital, the city remains a hub of industry and commerce. It is home to Circe's second spaceport, Nurrudiss Space Port. Unfortunately, the city has a long, dark reputation for gang activity, smuggling, black market activity, and political corruption, stemming from the earliest days of the planet's resettlement.

KAR'ZAH-KEN

(located on Astra-Dominica)

The manufacturing hub of Circe, this is where the planet's few factories and industrial complexes are located. Most of the food exported off world is processed here, especially live proteins. The city has a rail system linking it to Avena Sativa, allowing products produced here to be shipped off world from Nurrudiss Space Port. It is also a port city, with a shipping lane to the capital, and Van Bryant Station. Competition between those two cities for export rights to Kar'zah-Ken goods is fierce.

PUNICA

(located on Morlowvia)

Reachable only by air and sea with no sub-orbital port facilities, is the port city of Punica. This city has a slower pace than the rest of Circe, and home to many Vrusk Tranquility Houses. It is a popular vacation spot, due to some of the most beautiful geography in the system. Most of the buildings here flow seamlessly into nature, which reflects Morlowvia's reputation for having the highest ecological standards on the planet. The farms surrounding the city are smaller here, producing far fewer quantities of consumables, but what they do produce is always of the highest quality found anywhere in the Frontier. Race spices, fine wines and spirits, and flowers are its major export.

ECOLOGY AND RECOVERY

With much of Circe scarred from WWII, those who resettled the planet had a lot of work to do. To this day, huge areas of the

planet are ruled "restricted zones" due to high radiation and dangerous conditions. Even the areas that have been resettled took years of clean up before becoming habitable and agriculturally productive again. Even before the war, Synthcorp stressed profits over the planet's environmental concerns, and did considerable harm to the planet's ecosystem. Because of this, the Cicers work tirelessly to be benevolent caretakers of their planet.

CULTURE

The people of Circe are an odd lot, a mix of contradictions flowing seamlessly together. They are group oriented, doing their best when working together, but also fiercely independent, unwilling to be subject to outside rule. They are peace loving people, who enjoy nature and cultivating the land, but also require two years of mandatory military service to every citizen when they come of age. This makes Circe a planet of citizen soldiers who eagerly return to their farms during times of peace.

It is required by law that every abled bodied adult keep and maintain a functioning weapon for self-defense. It is extremely rare to find a Cicer unarmed, with most strapping on a weapon as comfortably as a chronocom. A strange quirk of Cicers is that, due to having to rebuild their population, they consider all life to be important. Thus, they are far more likely to subdue an enemy rather than kill one. Due to this, Cicers possessed the highest number of non-lethal weapons (such as needlers with anesthetic ammunition, gyrojets with tangler and doze ammunition, electrostunners, sonic stunners and stunsticks) per-capita in the Frontier.

Citizens of Circe enjoy gardening, the arts, and outdoor activities. They are almost always foodies, tend to be good cooks, generous hosts, and gracious neighbors. However, they are also known for holding grudges, being distrustful of mega-corporations, and deeply paranoid about Sathar infiltration. The Anti-Satharian league has many active cells on Circe, and agents trained here hunt down Sathar agents and collaborators hiding on Circe, within Solar Minor, and across the entire Frontier.

INVASION OF GRAN QUIVERA

BY ROD MCDONOUGH

PREFACE

Frontier year 111 or 111 f.y. as it is written in calendars of the United Planetary Federation. Sentient races had lived in this sector of space for many decades prior to this date but most citizens of the Frontier used the modern UPF calendar now. It was going to be an exciting year, The Grand Celebration, commemorating 111 years of the UPF treaty is planned for the entire year. Gala social functions, parades, and celebrations are planned on every planet in the United Planetary Federation and even some in The Rim. At least that is what was supposed to happen...

Every citizen of Gran Quivera, indeed every citizen of the Frontier and the Rim, remembers exactly where they were when they heard the news of the wormhole opening near Port Loren and the Alien Horde's arrival. Until that moment the races of the Frontier had only ever encountered other races that could travel through space using ships that could navigate through the Void. The technology to manipulate and travel through wormholes was considered to be the stuff of science fiction holo-novels. No more!

The Horde had arrived and the future of Gran Quivera, perhaps the entire Frontier was in jeopardy. An enemy more horrific than even the Sathar had arrived and brave souls from all walks of life would be fighting for survival on the planet that had come to define the values of the UPF.

CHAPTER 1

General Kasar smiled to himself as he observed the final preparations for his invasion force, yes it was *his* invasion force. Years of scheming and planning were about to reach fruition. He had spent a small fortune in bribes, assassinations, and blackmail to get to where he was today. His rivals were dead, imprisoned, exiled, or worse as he rose through the ranks to become one of the highest ranked generals in the Harangi army. Kasar had dreamed of leading an invasion to a new

world where he could secure the riches and glory he would need if he were ever to challenge the Emperor. As one without a royal lineage, his only path to rule was via conquest and that journey began today.

The Harangi scientists operating the Gates of Light had discovered a new target world and over the past year had refined their calculations to the point they were confident they could now open their portal on the surface of the planet, allowing his vanguard to establish a bridgehead. A squadron of heavily armed fighter bombers would lead the way, followed by gunships carrying his Special Forces troops and then an Umen of troops from the penal services would be used as shock troops. Once the bridgehead was established, then his trained regular troops would take the field in the second wave.

Kasar was not happy about having to use the penal troops, he considered them unreliable, but it was one of the concessions he had made in order to gain overall command of the invasion force. There were always multiple factions within the Harangi military vying for control or influence, it was through playing these factions off against each other that had created the opportunity for Kasar to be where he was today. General Zartak was in control of the penal system, he was part of Kasar's factional manoeuvring to take command today and would be in nominal command of the first wave. If he was unsuccessful or too successful in his endeavours, the battlefield was a dangerous place and he could become a casualty and take the blame for any failures or be removed to ensure there was no competition to share the glory with.

With a nod to his adjutant Colonel Juma, the order was given to the scientists to begin powering up their devices to open the Gates of Light. As the power levels rose, pulses of energy began to surge from the ring of emitters embedded into the structure built to house the Gates of Light. At almost 100 meters in diameter, they allowed the invasion column to fly, drive or march directly through the Gates to the

bridgehead. Over the next 15 minutes the pulses became a steady glow and then finally focused into a powerful beam of energy, piercing the space/time barrier until it seemed there was a river of liquid light pouring through the portal.

The roar of the energy flow almost drowned out the sound of the approaching aircraft as the first elements of the airborne strike force jetted through the Gates. Twenty fighter bombers led the way, disappearing into the river of light followed minutes later by squadrons of rotary winged aircraft carrying the Special Forces troops. In the lead vehicle of the ground assault column, General Zartak saluted his commander then slapped the hatch of his armoured vehicle signalling to the driver to take the column through the Gates.

Zartak was a typical example of his race, two and a half meters tall, his body covered in coarse black hair and his brutal features set in a grim, grinning visage as he imagined the glorious victory he would enjoy this day. Like all his men, he wore his camouflaged combat fatigues but as an officer, he wore a sidearm instead of carrying an assault rifle and, balancing his combat load, he wore the traditional scimitar of a General on his opposite hip. He looked forward to whetting his blade in alien blood this day!

Within the hour the entire first wave had transited the Gates and the scientist began powering down their emitters, recharging their power generators and preparing for the second wave. Kasar smiled again as he turned, heading back to his headquarters and then frowned as he remembered the stack of paperwork on his desk that needed to be completed before he could lead the second wave through the Gates. There was no glory in paperwork, but these were the sacrifices he had to make if he was ever to realize his lofty goals.

110.217 F.Y.

The entire Frontier and the Rim were in overdrive as the end of the year

approached. Celebrations commemorating 111 years of the UPF treaty were being planned for every community, no matter how large or small. Even though there was still almost half a year before the celebrations began, for many, each day felt like a New Year's Eve as the date got closer and closer.



The Harangi aircraft exploded out of the swirling mass of light over the outer, northern suburbs of Port Loren. Almost immediately their sensors detected local civilian aircraft, aircars and jetcopters mostly, commuters on their way to and from work. Automated weapons systems immediately identified alien aircraft and the Harangi machine guns opened fire.

The first victims of the war were a Yazirian family heading north out of Port Loren on a day trip when the leading pair of Harangi jets exited the Gates and detected their aircar. Eager to be the first to claim a kill, both pilots opened fire and the aircar was shredded in mid air, the flaming wreckage tumbling out of the sky. With target alerts lighting up their displays, the Harangi pilots went to work and within the first few minutes of the war, more than a dozen civilian aircars and jetcopters were shot out of the sky, exploding in mid-air or smashing into residences on the ground.

Ten pairs of Harangi jets circled the bridgehead quickly eliminating any aircraft before strafing the ground around the immediate vicinity of the Gates of Light. This was what their training referred to as a target rich environment and the aircraft targeted any and all vehicles

indiscriminately. Commuter vehicles, ground transports, school buses, and emergency vehicles, the targeting computers did not differentiate; if it was not of Harangi manufacture then it was a legitimate target. Six pairs of aircraft continued to lay waste to the immediate area while four other pairs of aircraft began patrolling to the four points of the compass seeking their secondary targets.

No sooner had the civilian aircraft been wiped from the skies than the Harangi rotary wing aircraft arrived through the gates. Again, their machine guns opened fire on any vehicles or pedestrians in the immediate vicinity of the Gates, rapidly securing the arrival zone for the ground forces.



Within half an hour of the beginning of the invasion, the Harangi forces had secured their bridgehead. The Gates of Light had opened onto a lightly grassed parkland with well tended gardens interspersed with ancient crumbling stone walls and other structures. Members of four distinct species were scattered about the parklands and were easily captured or slain if they attempted escape. Troops from the Special Forces contingent quickly neutralised a handful of local security personnel and then captured or killed everything within several hundred meters of the Gates of Light. The perimeter rapidly expanded with the arrival of armoured vehicles and infantry from the penal forces that were quickly deployed across the parklands.

"General Zartak," Colonel Bakkth, the Special Forces commander, addressed the

General as his armoured vehicle drew up alongside a hastily established command and control centre. "We have several prisoners and samples are being prepared for shipment home to assess suitability for foraging. There appear to be several species co-existing in this city. We have identified two different species of humanoids less than two meters tall, there is also what appears to be some sort of insectoid and another species that we are yet to identify as sentient. It appears to be amorphous!"

As the Colonel gave his report a group of captured locals were being bound and corralled by troopers in fatigues that towered over the frightened, pathetic locals.

Zartak grunted in response seemingly ignoring the report from the Colonel as he cast his gaze about the bridgehead. He could see there was quite a variety of structures in the immediate vicinity.

"It seems the Science Division has found us a suitable target, the level of technology seems reasonably advanced, I saw a number of downed aircraft. What about their military? Any resistance?"

"None so far sir, it seems we caught them completely off guard." Bakkth replied.

"Good." Zartak nodded at the shorter, stockier officer. "Deploy the communications jammers, let's keep them blind and expand the bridgehead as quickly as possible." Zartak looked closer at the surrounding structures. "What is this place? There is a definite mix of technologies in this construction, those buildings and walls are nothing more than stone he says pointing across the open grassy parklands. "Yet those appear more like some of ours back home." He says pointing toward the skyscrapers to the south.

"Until Intelligence can translate their languages, we can only guess." Their conversation is interrupted by radio reports from the jets overhead. "It appears the air force has located several enemy airfields to the south."

General Zartak smiled evilly, "Prepare the atomics."

Fifteen minutes after the Harangi jets had located the Port Loren Airport and Port Loren Starport, the Special Forces troops under Colonel Bakkth had finished assembling their mobile missile launch



platform. The officer in charge of the missile system punched in the co-ordinates supplied by the aircraft pilot.

"Launch." Zartak commanded.

The atomic warhead tipped missile was fired and minutes later the Port Loren Starport was vaporised and a radius of several kilometres of the surrounding city was completely destroyed.

Zartak turned to his Special Forces commander,

"Have your machines transport some of my penal troops to the secondary airfield and secure it for our aircraft."

"Yes sir!" Bakkth saluted and began issuing orders to the pilots of his assault copters.



The force of the explosion from the Port Loren Starport to the east of the city smashed buildings flat and incinerated almost everything for several kilometres around the starport and the shock wave

rapidly spread, causing more damage for several more kilometres. Even at the outer edge of the blast radius most buildings had the glass shattered from the windows and the occupants of almost the entire city were driven from their homes and workplaces.

It was obvious to everyone that emergency services were going to be completely overwhelmed. There was not a city in the entire Frontier that would be prepared for the number of casualties arising from such an event. Fire brigades, law enforcement, and paramedics across the city rushed to their emergency stations. Military personnel begin reporting for duty immediately and communications networks were suddenly overloaded with the volume of data being transmitted.

At the Port Loren office of Star Law there was organised chaos. Though nothing like this had ever been experienced in UPF history, there were an extraordinary number of contingency plans drawn up for all manner of disasters. There were no plans for a planetary invasion via a wormhole, nobody had even speculated that such technology existed, but there were plans for nuclear strikes on cities and those plans were being activated now.

Star Law Commander Edward Byrne strode out of his office, heading towards the operations centre for Star Law on Gran Quivera, keying his chronocom again and getting the same static response as everyone else in the building.

"Damn it, someone get me a signal to UPF Fleet Command!" He said to his trailing staff as he entered the Ops Centre. "Report!" He snapped at the Yazirian duty officer.

"Still nothing from the site north of the city and the space port is gone. Definitely a nuke, sir."

"Sathar?"

"Not likely, sir, this doesn't fit their MO and there has been nothing indicating an imminent threat from any of our usual sources." Deputy Agent Hart replied. "This is something new."

"Ya think?" Byrne quipped, then thought better of his response. "Sorry Joe, you didn't deserve that." Byrne apologised. He gazed around the Op Centre at the half dozen Star Lawmen on duty, all

had turned from their computer monitors to listen to their commander.

"Speculations?" He asked his team.

"Without more data sir, I am afraid I cannot speculate." Vrusk Deputy Agent K'llii replied. "We need more intel from the Alpha site."

"Do we have any assets on site?" Commander Byrne asked the Dralasite Deputy Agent monitoring the status of Star Law personnel planetside.

"We have a Ranger en-route to the Alpha site now, sir." DA Toom answered, "She changed transport modes as soon as we learned all aircraft around the site had been shot down. Ranger Sharon D'arth should be onsite within 15 minutes."

At that moment one of Commander Byrne's Vrusk staffers poked his head through the doorway,

"I have Mayor Curnow for you now, sir."

"Put him onscreen." Byrne gestured toward one of the communications monitors.

"Aah he's here in person, sir." The aide replied.

"Hmm, OK put him in the conference room with the emergency response team, I'll be right there." Byrne turned back to the room full of Star Lawmen, "Keep trying to get through to UPF Fleet Command and activate all of our assets across the planet."

Commander Byrne left the Op Centre and headed down the hallway to the conference room that was already full of overflowing with representatives of the various emergency services and reporters from every major news service doing their best to get into the room.

Security officers held back the reporters allowing Commander Byrne into the conference room where he immediately took his place at the head of the conference table and presented an imposing figure, the left sleeve of his uniform pinned up reminding everyone present of the circumstances surround the loss of his arm.

"I am declaring martial law and taking command of all military forces on the planet." Byrne opened the meeting.

"You can't do that!" Interrupted Mayor Curnow

"I can and I have." Byrne declared, giving Curnow a long hard stare. The Mayor of Port Loren visibly melted under Byrne's

gaze. "I am activating all retired Star Law assets as well as the Port Loren Militia. First priority for emergency services is to seal off the area around the Port Loren Starport, nobody goes in except emergency services and we get out everyone we can."

Nods from the heads of the various department heads greeted Byrne's announcement, they then passed on messages to aides who departed the conference room to issue orders to the people in the field.

"Second order of business is to seal off the site north of the city, now designated Alpha Site and to evacuate the area ASAP. We have confirmed that as the launch site of the nuclear weapon detonated at the space port."

"Is it the Sathar?" Mayor Curnow asked the question on everyone's lips.

"No." Byrne answered, "we have nothing to indicate this is a Sathar attack or domestic terrorism, they don't have the capability for this type of attack."

"Then who is it?" Curnow asked.

"I can't answer that yet. We have a Ranger enroute and I hope to be able to answer that question very soon. In the meantime, the Port Loren Airport is the next best facility to receive support from Morgaine's World." Byrne continued, referring to UPF Fleet and Star Law forces on that planet. "We need to secure that airport immediately."

"I have a SWAT team heading there now." The Port Loren Police Commissioner said.

"Good, keep me posted." Byrne looked over at the local Land Fleet Commander. "What does Landfleet have ready to deploy."

"Only a cadet training unit planetside." The Dralasite Commander shook his head. "As you are aware we essentially just have a recruiting presence here on Gran Quivera, most of our forces are on Morgaine's World."

"Do you have any anti-aircraft capability?" Byrne asked.

"Half a dozen missile platforms in storage." Commander Boomberg offered.

"Deploy those and half your cadet unit to the airport immediately, hold the others in reserve. I assume they are vehicle mounted?"

"Yes sir!" Boomberg stood, saluted, and left the room, his staff trailing behind.

"You all know your jobs; we will reconvene here this evening. Get to work."

As the room emptied Byrne turned to his own staff. "Prepare a press release. We need the area around the Alpha Site and the Starport evacuated, get on it now."

Commander Byrne left the conference room and headed back to the Ops Centre.

In the suburbs north of Port Loren, a beat up hovercycle came to a stop in an alleyway a kilometre from the Alpha Site. Ranger Sharon D'arth dismounted and checked her helmet and her holster before peering out onto the main road. There were civilians running in most directions, generally away from the direction of the Alpha Site. The Alpha Site was actually a Port Loren historical park that contained some of the oldest known relics of the past, the ruined remains of an ancient civilization dating back more than 2000 years. Long before the UPF was created, humans had established a city in the river delta where Port Loren now was.

Sharon slipped across the road to the opposite alley way and sticking to the smaller, less well-travelled streets and alleys, she made her way closer to source of the enemy incursion. A couple of hundred meters north of where she left her hovercycle, Sharon heard gunfire, automatic weapons not beam weapons. Looking around she saw a fire escape leading up to a warehouse roof and opted for climbing to get a better lay of the land. Being a Yazirian, climbing for Sharon was like walking for a human and less than a minute later she was on the rooftop and scanning for the source of the gunfire, it didn't take long to pinpoint.

Focusing on the humanoids firing their assault rifles, Sharon activated the omnocular visor in her helmet to get a closer look at the shooters and almost wished she hadn't. They were ugly looking beasts by just about any Frontier standard. Definitely humanoid, two arms, two legs, and a head with brutal features covered in hair, of particular note were lots of sharp teeth. And big, very big. Three meters tall, some were even taller and not slim like a Yazirian, solid, more like a human who had

been pumping Federanium all their life. They all wore a form of combat fatigues and what looked like an ordinary metal helmet and carrying assault rifles, which they were using ruthlessly on anyone or anything that moved, civilians or robots or vehicles. Sharon activated her electromagnetic optics but there was no sign of any kind of energy fields, no fields or shields anywhere she could detect.

She tried her chronocom again but got more interference, she had lost her commlink several kilometres south of the alpha site and the level of interference just increased the further north she had come.

"Looks like we have to do this the old-fashioned way." She said to herself and began recording video and what audio she could pick up with her directional microphone. Over the next ten minutes she watched the alien soldiers shoot up several vehicles and then at least a dozen civilians get mown down by the heavy calibre assault rifles while trying to escape, as well as a couple of service robots get ripped apart. The aliens ignored the vehicles and robots but dragged all the bodies into a heap at the side of the road. Several minutes later she filmed an alien vehicle approach, apparently their version of a ground transport. The massive truck pulled up at the pile of bodies and the alien soldiers threw the bodies into the back of the massive truck then turned back the way it came.

In the distance, probably 500 meters from her location, Sharon was also able to get footage of what looked like a ring of bright, white light perhaps 100 meters in diameter. It was like nothing she had ever seen before and was at the centre of all the alien activity. Suddenly, without any warning, the light just vanished, like someone had thrown a switch and turned off a light bulb.

"Time to leave." She said to herself and climbed back down the fire escape, made her way back to her hovercycle and drove south until she reached a location far enough away from the Alpha Site to re-establish a commlink with her HQ and upload the recordings she had made.

