

TRAVELLER

S O L O M A N I F R O N T



S C I E N C E F I C T I O N A D V E N T U R E I N T H E F A R F U T U R E

TRAVELLER

THE SOLOMANI FRONT

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Printed in China



T R A V E L L E R INTRODUCTION



The Solomani are descended from the humans left behind on Earth when the Ancients transplanted populations throughout what is now Charted Space. Eventually the people of Earth developed the jump drive and ventured out into the wider cosmos. There, they discovered other humans already among the stars. The greatest power encountered by the spacefaring Terrans was the Vilani dominated Ziru Sirka. To the rulers of the Vilani Empire, the upstart Terrans initially appeared to be just another minor race of Humaniti from a backwater planet.

In some ways they were correct but the Vilani were unprepared for the energy and determination of the Terrans. Conflict was inevitable and in time cracks in the structure of the Vilani Imperium were exposed. The collapsing Ziru Sirka was conquered but the resulting Second Imperium has been called the Ramshackle Empire for good reason. The collapse was slowed but not prevented and after the fall of the Second Imperium there was no major power to fill the vacuum.

Some small interstellar powers survived what became known as the Long Night, including an enclave centred on Earth. However, it was far away, in the Sylean Confederation, that interstellar civilisation finally began to flourish on a large scale. The result was the Third Imperium, which was heavily influenced by Solomani culture and traditions. There were enclaves of Solomani living on many worlds as a result of settlement during the Second Imperium period. It was natural that the Solomani of the region around Earth felt kinship with the expanding Third Imperium.

Solomani individuals and Solomani culture were highly influential in the early years of the Third Imperium but eventually Imperial society moved in a different

direction. Many citizens of Solomani ancestry resented the gradual decline of their traditions and influence. Inspired by their heritage as original humans and seeking a return to the glory days of Terran hegemony, the Solomani Movement pressed for the creation of a Solomani Autonomous Region. Although this was granted, tensions continued to rise until the Solomani seceded from the Imperium.

The resulting Solomani Confederation was initially successful in the war that followed but once the tide turned defeat was inevitable. An extremely stubborn defence of Terra itself made the idea of completely crushing the Solomani unpalatable to the Imperials, resulting in a peace settlement that has remained in place until the present. Although diminished, the Solomani Confederation endures. The border region between the Confederation and the Imperium is of strategic importance to both powers, with economic and political gambits threatening to escalate into a military confrontation. Intelligence services are highly active, exacerbating some situations and defusing others according to the policy of the day.

The situation is further complicated by the many factions involved. The Solomani Front – the Solomani Rim and Alpha Crucis sectors – is home to many non-aligned factions as well as those within the Imperium and the Solomani Confederation. Imperial megacorporations and Solomani shipping lines are players in the game of politics, along with independence movements, religious groups and individual world governments. Amid this confusing whirl of cross-cutting agendas there are those trying hard to prevent another war and those seeking to win one.

OVERVIEW OF THE SOLOMANI FRONT

The Solomani Front is a term loosely used to describe the border region between the Third Imperium and the Solomani Confederation but is normally considered specific to the Solomani Rim and Alpha Crucis. It is in these two sectors that any future war is likely to start and may well be fought and won there. Both the Imperium and the Solomani Confederation are highly active in seeking advantages in the region and nullifying those of their potential opponents.

Most of the Solomani Front is within the territory of the Solomani Confederation. The remainder is almost exclusively under the control of the Third Imperium. The Vegan Autonomous District is part of the Imperium but largely self-governing. At any given time there may be one or more worlds that claim to be independent, although whether they can remain so depends greatly on the attitude of the great powers.

PEOPLE OF THE SOLOMANI FRONT

Humans are by far the commonest race in the Solomani Front region and can be subdivided into three broad groups. Solomani are pure-blood members of the Solomani race or those who share their political values. Vilani are descended from the people of Vland, the masters of the old First Imperium. Most of the population, on the majority of worlds at least, are mixed-blood humans.

These racial subdivisions do not necessarily reflect political leanings. There are pure-blood Solomani who identify as Imperials and non-Solomani (even some non-humans) who are aligned with the Confederation. For the most part, however, an Imperial citizen is likely to be a mixed-blood human or a pure Vilani; Confederation citizens are likely to be pure or mixed Solomani.

Other races are represented in the Solomani Front. The Vegans have their home territory in The Solomani Rim and there are populations of uplifted creatures such as

Apes and Dolphins throughout the region. A few small enclaves of Aslan have been established here and there, and there are numerous low-tech races who may have been transplanted to various worlds. No nonhuman starfaring races have homeworlds in Alpha Crucis sector, although Hive Federation traders are occasionally seen in the trailing regions of the sector.

HUMANITI

The vast majority of people in the Solomani Front are humans of one sort or another. Some belong to a genetically pure group – Solomani, Vilani or one of the minor human races – whilst most are of mixed blood. Race does not always equate to culture, although there is a strong correlation in many cases. Thus a person might be racially a Solomani but not subscribe to Solomani culture. It is also possible to be, say, culturally Vilani whilst not sharing any blood relationship to the Vilani people. Indeed, there are many non-humans who consider themselves to be culturally Vilani. The same is not true for the Solomani culture, whose ‘Solomani humans are better than everyone else’ attitude is not attractive to those who do not share the heritage of Old Earth.

Solomani

Pure-blood Solomani make up the majority (or sometimes even the whole) of the population on many worlds, particularly in the region around Sol. In most cases the population is partially made up of mixed-blood humans. Since high office in the Solomani Confederation is exclusive to those of pure Solomani blood, great attention is paid to maintaining the purity of the bloodline. In these mixed societies the pure-blood Solomani are a sort of nobility, with higher status than mixed-blood ‘commoners’. This does not necessarily mean that pure Solomani are any better off financially – it is possible to be part of this ‘noble class’ yet be broke. However, being a pure-blood opens doors that will slam shut if a mixed-race partner is taken. Intermarriage is usually possible but tends to be socially or even legally discouraged.

Solomani society is racist in this regard, with laws and customs geared to favouring pure-blooded Solomani over anyone else and barriers to advancement in the way of non-Solomani. This does not necessarily translate to hate or xenophobia, however. A pure-blood Solomani from most societies will be polite and gracious to non-Solomani and will respect their achievements. However, he knows that he is just a little bit better than a non-Solomani, in the same way an Imperial noble knows they are better than the commoners who can aspire only to be important among their servants.

On some worlds there is rampant xenophobia and all the nastiest forms of racism but this is usually due to historical incidents rather than being a feature of

Solomani society in general. Imperial propaganda has for many years painted the Solomani as haters of anything that is not pure Solomani but this is a gross distortion of the facts. Most Solomani will happily share a meal with mixed-blood humans or aliens and would be proud to call them friends. However, there is a streak of superiority that runs through Solomani psyche that can turn to contempt or hate under the right circumstances. On the whole, however, Solomani are snobs rather than haters.

Vilani

The Vilani are descended from the dominant race of the Ziru Sirka. They were the first settlers in much of Alpha Crucis and parts of the Solomani Rim. Some worlds have populations established nearly 1,000 years before the Terrans arrived. Traditional Vilani society and bloodlines have both been diluted through contact and intermarriage with Solomani during the Rule of Man and early Imperial period, and pure Vilani are quite rare in the Solomani Front. Culturally, however, Vilani influences are strong. The rise of the Solomani Movement ironically saw a flowering of Vilani cultural consciousness as people of diluted Vilani ancestry denied full participation in Solomani society instead reconnected with their roots.

Vilani culture tends to be conservative and cooperative in nature, emphasising group over individual, and preferring stability to progress. This often results in Vilani under Solomani rule living in close-knit ghettos where they can follow their own traditions under their own local leaders. Vilani will often stoically accept life under a moderately repressive but otherwise well-organised regime but when a Vilani community is pushed to the brink they will usually react as a united group – general strikes, mass protests or large uprisings – rather than through individual acts of terrorism or violence.

Communities tend to be crowded but bustling and well ordered. The cultural emphasis on tradition means old buildings, archaic styles of language and traditional art, architecture and clothing stand out in contrast to the Solomani areas that surround them. Vilani are also distinguished by their community spirit and industriousness. On some worlds the Vilani population may be segregated but more commonly there are areas where people of the same culture naturally gravitate together. These areas sometimes become disadvantaged, and occasionally degenerate into nasty ghettos, but for the most part they are simply an area with a different cultural flavour.





Imperial and Starfaring-Culture Humans

In many areas there is no over-arching Vilani or Solomani society and what anthropologists call a generic-starfaring culture prevails. This will have local influences, especially within the Confederation, but is subject to ideas and fashions carried from distant worlds aboard the starships that pass through. The strongest influence is usually termed 'Imperial' or 'Imperial Standard' and is reinforced by what people see in entertainment vids and what they are offered for sale in shops. The culture of the Imperium is anything but monolithic but the dominance of the markets by megacorporations and the existence of Imperium-wide

armed services tends to create a starfaring-standard culture that can seem a bit bland and generic to those from more varied societies.

As a general rule, busy starports tend to move towards a starfaring-generic culture, with influence spreading out from there. A backwater world, or a region of a world that has little contact with the area around the starport, will experience more cultural drift or retain its original culture. This can be observed as Travellers move away from areas with extensive offworld contact. Architecture, food and clothing all gradually change, with regional accents becoming more pronounced and local customs becoming ever more different.

SELENITES

The selenites were genetically engineered from humans but are sufficiently different to be considered an entirely separate species. They are humanoid but very lightly built and adapted for life on low-gravity worlds. Significant populations are present on Velscur, Brookwall, Duncan, Fairday, Faro, Iamir, Wiseman and Ychanon in Alpha Crucis.

The Selenites were created during the early colonisation of the Sol system, at a time when artificial gravity was not available. Their initial 'homeworlds' were Luna and Ceres in the Sol system but enclaves were established wherever there was a low-gravity environment in need of personnel. By the time artificial gravity was widely available the Selenites had spread to many systems, although their population reconcentrated on a few worlds over time.

Today, the Selenites consider Velscur in Alpha Crucis to be their homeworld. Velscur is one of a dozen paraterraformed worlds in the sector with a large Selenite population. Paraterraforming does not change the environment of a barren planetoid or moon so much as overlays it; a climate-controlled environment is created over the entire surface by surrounding it with airtight structures or coverings.

These low-gravity, precisely controlled environments are ideal for Selenites and naturally attracted those who had settled less hospitable – to a Selenite – worlds. Today, most Selenites are deeply uncomfortable outside an environment that can be so neatly controlled. Starships and installations are fine but being outdoors on a 'wild' planet is unsettling. Nevertheless, Selenites can be encountered all across the region. Most that leave their homeworlds work in space industries and rarely, if ever, set foot on a planet.

CREATING SELENITE TRAVELLERS



Selenites are essentially long-limbed and lightly-built humans. They stand out among other humanoids but can undertake the same activities. Equipment intended for more bulky (and stronger) humans can be awkward to use but this is not a huge impediment.

Characteristics

Selenite Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: DEX+2, In addition, STR is rolled on 2D3+1 and END is rolled on 1D+1.

Traits

Selenite Travellers all possess the following traits:

Great Indoors: Selenites prefer a carefully controlled climate and more importantly they need to know that the environment is subject to control. When outdoors on a planet, a Selenite will be uncomfortable at best. Whenever there is evidence of an uncontrolled environment – such as sudden rain or even a strong gust of wind – a Selenite must make a Routine (6+) INT check or become disturbed. This exhibits as hunkering down in fear or making panicky demands for reassurance that there is no serious threat. Dangerous phenomena such as lightning or a hurricane may be subject to a more difficult check and the Selenite may completely freak out if it is failed.

Low-G: Selenites are naturally adept at operating in low gravity and microgravity environments. They receive DM+2 to all checks connected with physical activity, such as springing from one handhold to another when moving quickly through a low-gravity area. In addition, a Selenite will not lose orientation when operating in a complex 3-dimensional space. They can find their way through a derelict starship and out again without effort and have an uncanny knack of knowing just where a colleague is despite them having been out of sight behind debris for some time.

Careers

All careers from the *Traveller Core Rulebook* are suitable for Selenites, although space-related careers are ideal.



AQUAMORPH HUMANS

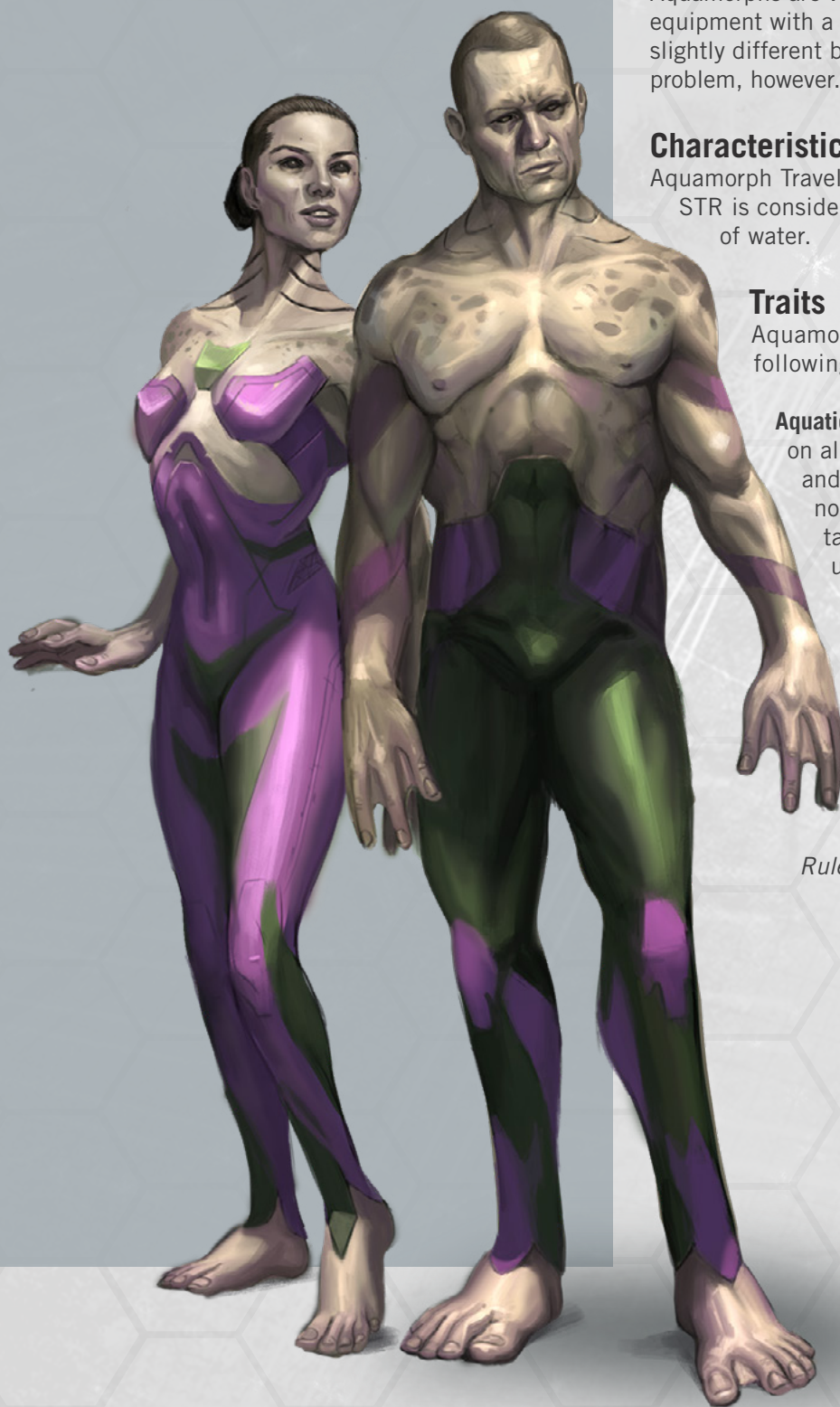
Aquamorph humans are the result of genetic experiments undertaken at differing times. Some produced no useful results, others were badly flawed, but eventually a viable aquamorph was created. The majority of aquamorphs alive today come from late experiments and can be considered 'stable'. Throwbacks are rare and horrific mutations almost unknown. The same is not true of aquamorphs resulting from earlier experiments. A few enclaves of these tragic creatures still exist, typically hiding away from other sentients.

Aquamorphs are land creatures adapted for a water environment rather than truly aquatic people. They use modified gill/lung apparatus that allows indefinite breathing underwater and safe dives to depths of 30 metres or so. Beyond this, aquamorphs begin to risk nitrogen narcosis and other problems associated with a change in pressure but can operate unaided down to 100 metres or so without severe danger.

They resemble normal humans in many ways but are easily distinguishable. Hands and feet are enlarged and webbed, with long fingers and toes. Limbs are longer and have lighter bones but are powerfully muscled for swimming. Aquamorphs also have a fine but dense layer of body fat, which insulates them against cold water but can lead to overheating on land. In the water, they are fast and graceful but on land they are awkward and can seem a little flimsy.

An aquamorph can function indefinitely on land so long as their gill/lungs are kept wet. This can be done by inhaling a large amount of water in a manner that will alarm any land-dwellers observing the act. The skin needs to be kept hydrated too but this can be accomplished simply by pouring water over the aquamorph or using clothing impregnated with a hydrating gel. An aquamorph can deal with both problems by walking into a fresher, standing under the shower and breathing in as much of the water as possible. Installations where aquamorphs interact with humans often have rehydration booths at convenient intervals.

CREATING AQUAMORTH TRAVELLERS



Aquamorphs are variant humans and can operate all equipment with a little alteration to accommodate their slightly different build. Getting shoes that fit can be a problem, however.

Characteristics

Aquamorph Travellers roll characteristics as normal but STR is considered to be halved when operating out of water.

Traits

Aquamorph Travellers all possess the following traits:

Aquatic Adaptation: Aquamorphs gain DM+2 on all checks associated with swimming, and do not suffer penalties that a normal human would when attempting tasks underwater. They can breathe underwater indefinitely and dive safely to 30 metres.

Underwater Hearing: Aquamorphs gain DM+2 to Recon checks when underwater and DM-2 on Recon checks when operating on land.

Careers

All careers from the *Traveller Core Rulebook* are suitable for Aquamorphs.

NON-HUMANS

The most common non-humans in the Solomani Front are Vegans, who are described in the section on the Vegan Autonomous Region. The Vegans are the only significant power located entirely in the Solomani Front, although their polity is part of the Third Imperium. Most other non-humans in the Solomani Front are members of low-tech species commonly referred to as 'prindigs' – a contraction of 'primitive indigenous' – which are native to some worlds of the region. Enclaves of starfaring races not native to the region are present and there are some non-human species created by uplifting Terran animals.

Aslan

During the Long Night, a few adventurous Aslan i hatei made the perilous journey through the Magyar sector to settle worlds in the spinward subsectors of the Solomani Rim. Tonopah and Sarmaty, both now within the Imperium, have Aslan enclaves. In the Solomani era these enclaves were tolerated as long as they acknowledged Confederation hegemony and supplied mercenaries. A unit of Aslan i hatei even fought against the Imperium during the Invasion of Terra.

The Aslan governments reluctantly compromised with Solomani hegemony, although many individual Aslan considered it dishonourable. A few minor clans engaged in active resistance and guerrilla warfare, escalating in the run up to the Solomani Rim War. Although Aslan mercenaries fought for the Confederation, others were involved in anti-Solomani rebellions and these 'resistance clans' were rewarded with positions of leadership after the Imperial victory. In the Alderamin subsector, a loyalist Aslan was elevated to the position of subsector duke. Today, all Solomani Rim worlds with significant Aslan enclaves are under Imperial rule.

Droyne

Droyne are present on one world – Kilennur – in the Imperial-controlled Harlequin subsector and have been there since before anyone else can remember. The Vilani and Terrans both originally believed the people of Kilennur were just another obscure minor race; they were not identified as Droyne until well after the Long Night. The Droyne in the Rim keep to themselves and discourage visitors. The Kilennur oytrip (community) has a few small starships and Droyne may be encountered on rare occasions visiting other worlds in the Harlequin subsector. Their business may be obscure and they rarely offer anything that resembles an understandable explanation.

Hivers

Visiting Hivers and various client races from the Hive Federation are uncommon but some traders, diplomats, scholars or tourists can be encountered in both the Imperium and Confederation. The best place on the Rim to meet Hivers is Terra, as they are fascinated with the Solomani homeworld and enjoy exploring its rich history to better understand – and perhaps manipulate – Humaniti. Now that Solomani rule is over, the Hive Federation is negotiating to establish a permanent consulate and enclave on Terra.

Vargr, K'Kree and Zhodani

The Vargr Extents lie far to coreward and spinward, so sheer distance has made Vargr infrequent visitors to the Imperial territories of the Solomani Rim. However, a few hundred Vargr tourists and scholars make their way to Terra every year to investigate the world that gave birth to their pre-sapient ancestors. Occasionally, Vargr in the Imperial bureaucracy or military may be posted to the Solomani Rim. Few Vargr ever visit the Solomani Confederation.

Sightings of K'kree or Zhodani in the Solomani Rim are extremely rare. These aliens have home regions very far away and are uncomfortable within both Imperial and Solomani society. Any visitors are likely to be members of diplomatic or scholarly missions.

Vegans

The Vegans are described in the section covering the Vegan Autonomous District, on page 69.

Minor Races and Uplifted Animals

The most important minor race in the sector are the Vegans of Muan Gwi. A less significant, but still notable, minor race native to the Rim are the aquatic Gurungan, who are important in the Ultima subsector. Significant populations of Dolphins and small populations of Apes exist on Solomani worlds, in both cases artificially uplifted to sentience by humans.

On some worlds populations of Dolphins and Apes are self-governing or have semi-autonomous enclaves. It is rare, although not unknown, for Dolphin and Ape populations to be integrated with humans. In the case of Dolphins this is due to environmental necessity. With Apes it has more to do with preferences; conditions favoured by uplifted Apes tend not to be to the liking of most city-dwelling humans.

Apes

Uplifted Apes are rare in the Solomani Rim today, although a few scattered communities exist on worlds in the Albadawi, Sol and Capella subsectors. Uplifted Apes are usually second-class citizens, since their communities are under-represented at the governmental level. This is not all bad; Ape communities are

generally left to their own devices and little troubled by wider affairs. However, if there is a dispute the Ape community will almost always lose out. The discovery of resources in an Ape-settled area is more likely to make them homeless than rich. Those Apes living in the Imperium are usually treated as just another exotic minor race of Humaniti.

CREATING APE TRAVELLERS



Uplifted Apes are best described as an artificial species; a transgenic hybrid of gorilla, chimpanzee and some human genes. First developed late in the Interstellar Wars period, they were perfected by Old Earth Union genetic engineers on Terra and today there are several million uplifted Apes living on Solomani worlds. There are two distinct subtypes; those resembling chimpanzees and those resembling gorillas. Both groups are interfertile.

Characteristics

Ape Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: STR+1, END+1, SOC-1.

Traits

Ape Travellers all possess the following traits:

Heightened Senses: Apes have better senses of hearing and smell than humans and gain DM+1 to any Recon and Survival checks they have to make.

Small (-1): Chimpanzees are short in stature and present a difficult target. Attack rolls made against a chimpanzee suffer DM-1.

Strong: Gorillas are much stronger than humans and gain the Athletics (strength) 2 skill.

Careers

All careers from the *Traveller Core Rulebook* are suitable for Apes, however those in the Solomani Confederation are more likely to be found in Army, Marine or Navy service.

Dolphins

The Solomani Rim has the oldest uplifted Dolphin populations in Charted Space, dating back to the era of the Terran Confederation, although Dolphins do not control any planetary governments. Most of these colonies are now under Imperial rule.

Dolphins raised under Solomani Confederation society or serving in its military forces often believe in the Solomani Cause and see themselves as partners in

that endeavour. Dolphins tend to be apolitical outside matters relating to their own communities and are happy get along with humans regardless of race or politics. Both the Imperium and Solomani Confederation treat Dolphins as people.

Rules for Dolphin Travellers can be found on page 35 of *Behind the Claw*.



Gurungan

The Gurungan are a minor race native to Ugarup. They are a deep sea aquatic race resembling a blind octopus with six tentacles and sharp teeth instead of a beak. Their primary sense is sonar with a secondary chemical sense and, like most fully aquatic species, they cannot survive for long out of water. Gurungan exhibit extreme sexual dimorphism and only females are sophonts; males are tiny parasitic creatures that are absorbed into the female during mating.

The Gurungan mentality is quite alien to Humaniti. They are sometimes considered a 'hive race' as they have little sense of their own identity but a strong sense of duty toward their planetary community and species as a whole. Gurungan do not have biological castes and individuals differ among themselves in personality and ambition; they are just far more willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of their community in general and their species as a whole than the typical Human.

Gurungan do not perceive other beings or races as having importance, value or significance outside of their impact upon Gurungan. In their view, the universe revolves around the Gurungan; aliens may be useful or dangerous, much like other natural phenomena, but that is all. Gurungan have an infuriating habit of refusing to directly address aliens, out of solipsism or arrogance, instead talking to one another and leaving it to listeners to parse the meaning. Despite, or because of, such behaviour they tend to be patient and cunning negotiators.

Little is known of Gurungan society, although they appear to have evolved from aquatic carnivore/pouncer stock, originally living in deep-sea caves and now in

towns and cities on the sea floor in what seems to be a hybrid feudal technocracy and oligarchy controlled by a single planetary rule family. Xenologists have found some Vilani elements, likely the result of early contact with the First Imperium while the Gurungan were still in a pre-technological state

The Gurungan were discovered by the First Imperium while still at TLO. With nothing to gain from trade the Vilani mainly ignored them, preferring to simply establish outposts to exploit Ugarup's abundant sea life. The Gurungan learned from the Vilani and slowly improved their technology but got along better with the Terran Confederation who concluded a favourable treaty and also provided technology to allow them to hold their world against Vilani counterattacks. The only sore spot were Terran Dolphins, whose sonar used frequencies that irritated the Gurungan. In turn, Dolphins found the Gurungan both unpleasant and unattractive.

Like most other Vilani client races, the Gurungan were casually integrated into the Rule of Man and then largely ignored. They colonised one nearby world but lost contact with it during the Long Night and were re-contacted by the Imperial Scout Service and later by Easter Concord traders. They eventually joined the Imperium, establishing a large trading enclave on an island and accepting a non-resident noble as their representative. During the Solomani era, commercial and political relationships with the Confederation soured and the Gurungan retreated underwater, closing their enclave. They resurfaced to renew their relationship with the Imperium after the Solomani Rim War.

CREATING GURUNGAN TRAVELLERS



Gurungan resemble an octopus, with a bulbous central body and six tentacles. They have no internal skeletal structure, instead using internal pressure to maintain shape and form. This makes them vulnerable out of the water; a lack of moisture can kill them within an hour.

They have two sexes but males live as parasites on the body of a female. Gurungan have no eyes or other visual sensors, having evolved in deep oceans. Instead, they have a sophisticated sonar, which doubles as a speech system.

Characteristics

Gurungan Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: DEX+2.

Traits

Gurungan Travellers all possess the following traits:

Aquatic: Gurungan are fully aquatic and can breathe underwater naturally. However, when out of water, they are reduced to a speed of two metres and must pass an END check every minute or suffer 1D damage. This END test is Easy (4+) to begin with but increases one step in difficulty every minute. Being fully moisturised will stop the difficulty increasing but it will not reset back to Easy (4+) until the Gurungan has been fully immersed in water for at least five minutes.

Bite: All Gurungan have sharp teeth that make for an effective close combat weapon. This bite uses the Melee (natural) skill and does 1D damage.

Deep Diver (1,000m): Gurungan can dive deep underwater, to a depth of 1,000 metres without risk.

Sonar (120m): Gurungan use a highly sensitive sonar sense to navigate their environment, effectively allowing them to 'see' underwater or in complete darkness to a range of 120 metres.

Swimmer (8m): Gurungan are good swimmers and can move through water at a speed of eight metres.

Careers

All careers from the Traveller Core Rulebook are suitable for Gurungan.

Weeven

The Weeven are a minor race native to the world of Weeven in the Oriah subsector of Alpha Crucis. They are also known as Sundowners or 'Lampshades' by humans; their own term for themselves is untranslatable. The Weeven are one of the strangest sentient races native to

this region of space. They are organic and carbon-based but their lives and thought processes are extremely slow. Weeven can live for thousands of years but at such a slow pace their experienced lifespan would not seem any longer than that of a human.

WEEVEN

Weeven resemble flat-topped cones, or steep-sided barnacles. Their outer 'shell' is actually quite thin and flexible but sufficient to protect them from vacuum. Normally they creep slowly around leaching minerals from the Regolith but at need they can perform huge jumps powered by a form of organic rocket fuel produced internally. It is presumably the sight of a conical creature atop a ball of incandescent gas that earned the Weeven their nickname 'lampshades'.

Weeven are generally peaceable and do not interact much with humans. There is a small human population on their homeworld and some Weeven have been persuaded to farm minerals for local businesses. However, interaction is difficult due to the slow thought processes of these creatures. The usual method is to leave an interpretation device near a Weeven, broadcasting its message as a radio wave that can be perceived by the creature. Delivering a message in this manner can take weeks, followed by a period of deliberation and equally slow response. To a Weeven this is a quick chat; to a human it is months of waiting around for a response.

Characteristics & Traits

Weeven do not have characteristics meaningful to humans. An adult Weeven is about the size of a grav car and typically has 3D+30 hits.

Vacuum-Adapted: Weeven can survive indefinitely in vacuum or trace atmospheres.

Flexible Shell: Weeven have a tough outer shell that protects them from their environment. Against direct attacks it is equivalent to Protection +10.

Rocket Jump: A Weeven can jump up to 250 metres in its slight homeworld gravity, with a degree of control

provided by additional gas bursts. On a normal-gravity world Weeven might only be capable of short hops of a metre or two.

Eats Rocks: Weeven can survive on a diet of loose rock or dirt. They do not need air or water.

- Weeven are not suitable for Travellers -



Ladybugs

'Ladybugs' are a minor race native to Amiens in Alpha Crucis. They are slender humanoids with multifaceted eyes, feathery ears, and shimmering blue-violet skins. Ladybugs are serial hermaphrodites but spend most of their time as female or neuters. When discovered by humans, Ladybugs were at a primitive level and showed

no signs of progressing past TLO. However, they had little difficulty in adapting to the deliberate low-tech conditions chosen by the human settlers of Amiens, and now operate at TL4. Whether the Ladybugs could maintain this Tech Level or would want to is an open question; no independent enclaves are known to exist.

CREATING LADYBUG TRAVELLERS



Ladybugs can function quite happily in human society, wearing the same clothes and using the same furniture. Their limited intellect and docility may make them unsuitable as Travellers but exceptions do exist.

Characteristics

Ladybugs generate their STR, END and SOC using 1D+2. INT and EDU are generated on 2D3. Ladybugs roll 2D+3 for DEX.

Traits

Ladybug Travellers all possess the following traits:

Gentle Soul: Ladybugs are gentle and docile creatures. All checks involving combat or confrontation (including activities such as leadership or bargaining) are subject to DM-2.

You Beautiful Thing: Ladybugs are considered examples of nature's beauty by almost all sentient species. Whenever one asks for help or looks like they need it, they receive DM+2 on all checks to obtain assistance. In addition, any time one is targeted for an attack the Ladybug may roll 2D. On a straight 12+, the attacker hesitates, snatches their weapon off target or otherwise refuses to destroy such a beautiful thing.

Careers

Ladybugs can in theory join any human career. However, they are ill-suited to careers that involve violence or confrontation. DM-2 applies to all checks to join and progress in a military career (Army, Marines, Navy or similar) or any field requiring confrontation. A Ladybug might be an excellent legal scholar but would find a confrontational courtroom situation difficult to handle.

Ladybugs wear human clothes and speak Anglic with a lisping accent. The majority of human-run farms on Amiens have Ladybug domestic and farm workers, who appear to accept their status as subordinate beings without rancour. Their docility and propensity for hard work have made them popular beyond Amiens as domestic servants throughout the Confederation of Turin and exponents of the more extreme Solomani-above-all philosophies use them as an example for the integration of aliens into Confederation culture. Amiens' Solomani Party also arranges for surplus Ladybugs to emigrate to jobs on other Confederation of Turin worlds and sometimes as stewards or cargo hands aboard starships. The race has proven quite adaptable; a few can be found on high Tech Level worlds where they operate advanced machinery without the slightest idea how it works.

Ladybugs are lightly scattered throughout Alpha Crucis, often as fashionable servants for social elites. It is not clear whether they are truly able to understand complex concepts; it may be that their intellect is similar to that of a human child. Attempts to educate Ladybugs have generally failed, although their lack of interest might be due to social conditioning rather than innate limitations.

MAJOR LANGUAGES

Anglic is the dominant language in both the Solomani and Imperial subsectors of the Rim. The major dialect spoken is Rim Anglic, mostly differing from other forms in having fewer Vilani loan words and pronunciations closest to that used during the Terran Confederation era. Many Solomani consider Rim Anglic the 'purest' form of Anglic.

A variety of old Terran languages survive in some regions of Terra and on worlds in the Solomani Rim that were settled by specific ethnic groups. The most widespread are French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish. Contrary to some Imperial propaganda, people in the Solomani Confederation do not speak a Babel of different tongues: Rim Anglic is taught in Confederation schools and is the primary language on most worlds.

Vilani is still spoken on some old-Vilani settled worlds in the Rim. It was often suppressed by the Solomani Movement and sometimes forbidden from being taught in schools even to Vilani. It has been revived on several worlds due to post-war nationalism and the influence of the Authentic Movement. The language is also very important for historians and archaeologists who study the early history of the Rim.

The Aslan language Trokh is spoken on the handful of worlds in the Solomani Rim that have Aslan populations but few humans have mastered it.

The most important alien language in the Rim is Vegan, spoken throughout the Vegan Autonomous District and its close neighbours. Despite the diversity of Vegan tuhuir today, most Vegans speak the same primary language although dialects can differ from world-to-world. Many Vegan tuhuir have created and continue to create artificially constructed languages to better express particular philosophical or aesthetic concepts. Most of these are known only to members of the specific tuhuir and linguistic scholars.



IMPERIAL TERRITORY

The majority of the Solomani Front has a starfaring culture, with influences, fashions and trends arriving on every starship. This is particularly true of worlds within the Third Imperium, which are heavily influenced by Imperial-standard culture. Even those worlds with strong Solomani cultural traditions are inevitably moving in an Imperial direction. The traditional Solomani distaste for an Imperial nobility is still common on Imperial worlds in the region but is gradually fading.

Perhaps the most obvious difference between the Solomani Confederation and the Imperial parts of the Solomani Front lies in the number of non-humans a Traveller might encounter. The Imperial subsectors of the Solomani Rim are quite cosmopolitan. Merchants, tourists and those employed by megacorporations or serving in the Imperial bureaucracy or military could conceivably come from any of the many minor races living within the Imperium. It is not uncommon to run into merchants from minor races of Humaniti like the squat Geonee or hairy arboreal Suerrat, to find a newt-like Bwap behind an office desk in an Imperial ministry or corporation, or to meet an entire melting pot of races within an Imperial Marine regiment on occupation duty.

The Imperial currency, the Imperial Credit (or just 'Credit' to most people throughout the region) is used almost exclusively in Imperial territory. There are exceptions but these are mostly backwater areas that have retained their traditional medium of exchange for whatever reason. Even here, the Credit is likely to be accepted and may be highly desired as a more stable currency than the local one.

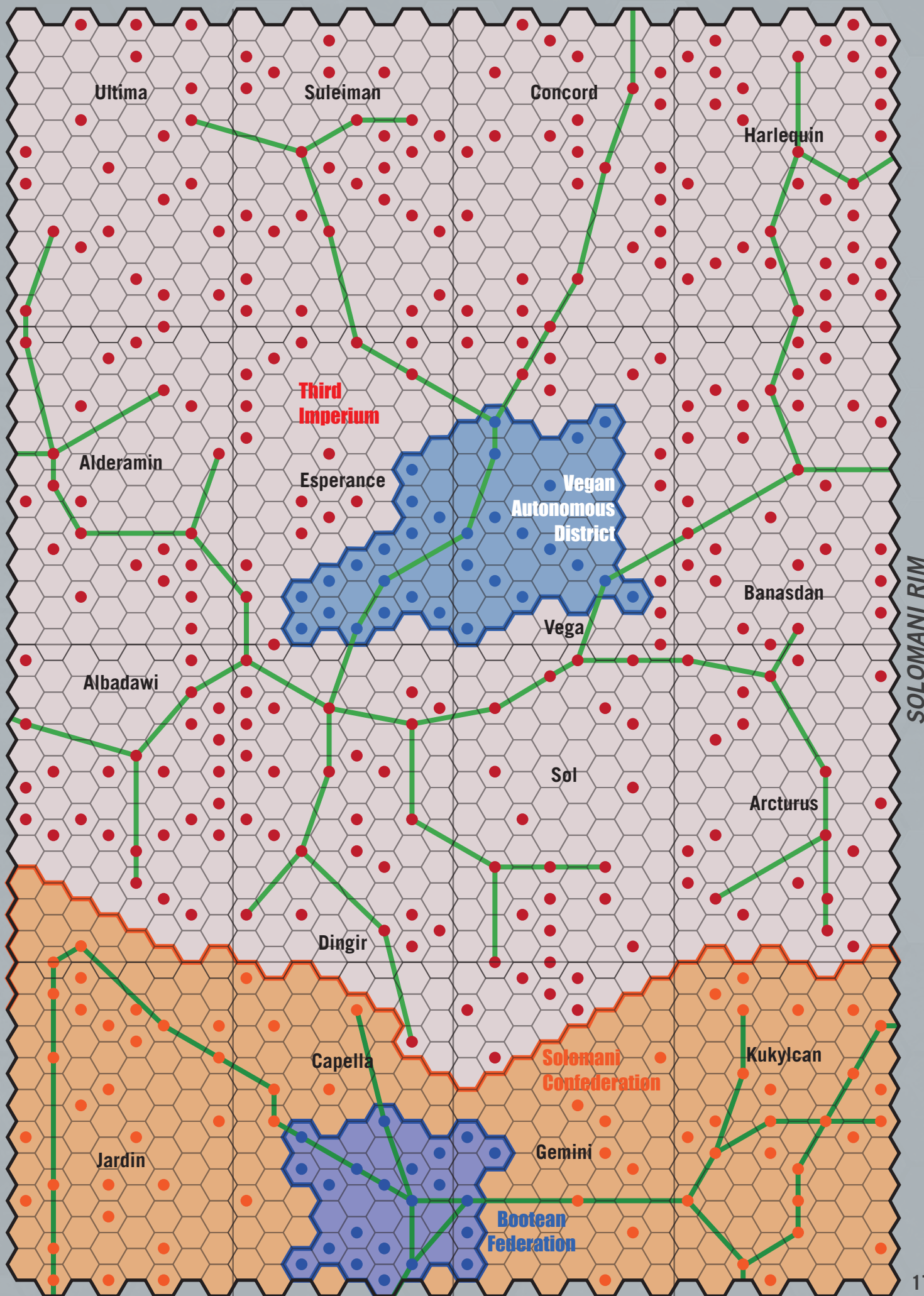
IMPERIAL PRESENCE

The greater part of the Solomani Rim – approximately 12 of its 16 subsectors – is ruled by the Third Imperium. Within the Imperial-dominated territory lies the Vegan Autonomous District, a nominally independent two-subsector region under control of the alien Vegans. It is a client state allied to the Imperium.

The Imperium controls about one-sixth of the worlds in Alpha Crucis, most of them concentrated in the Ximenes and McKenzie subsectors, in the coreward region. The Imperial portions of Alpha Crucis are part of the Domain of Sol, which also includes the Solomani Rim, Diaspora and the Old Expanses. The emperor's representative is the new Archduke Kieran Adair (appointed in 1102) whose seat is presently in Diaspora, although there are rumours he may move it to the Solomani Rim. A friend of Emperor Strephon, Archduke Adair comes from a background in the Imperial Diplomatic Corps. He is known for his reformist ideas, careful study of the Solomani ideology and willingness to work hard to better the lives of all those living within his Domain. These activist policies have not been appreciated by more conservative elements in the nobility.

One of these nobles is the Sector Duke of Alpha Crucis, the hard-minded Duchess Karima Delgado, who has held that position since 1095. The Imperial portion of Alpha Crucis is small enough that Delgado is not only sector duke but also administers all other Imperial territories as well as the Duchess of Ximenes and McKenzie. Her title of sector duke and the corresponding position is not hereditary; it will be passed to whomever the Emperor designates. Duchess Delgado is a conservative who believes the only proper role of the nobility is the preservation and defence of the Imperium. In recent years she had increasingly spoken and acted against what she sees as Solomani provocations and believes a hard line is needed to ensure that continued peace is maintained.

The Solomani Front has the usual system of Imperial nobility in place. Individual worlds are represented by barons or marquises and larger groupings by an Imperial count, with each subsector having a subsector duke. Worlds under military rule do not have resident nobles though they may have non-resident members of noble houses in waiting.



Other sectors in the Imperium have one duke for each of its 16 subsectors. One of these dukes typically rises to prominence and takes the position of sector duke, dealing directly with the archduke and exercising executive authority over the senior echelons of the sector's Imperial military and bureaucracy. There are only nine subsector dukes in the Solomani Rim, fewer than the usual 16 due to five subsectors falling largely under Solomani Confederation or Vegan Autonomous District control and one subsector, Ultima, having a vacant ducal seat. Alpha Crucis has only two subsector dukes and no sector duke.

The present Solomani Rim duke is the aging Duke Robert haut-Beaudoin of Dingir. Until the planned movement of Archduke Kieran Adair's capital from Diaspora takes place, Duke Robert is the ranking Imperial noble resident in the Solomani Rim. He is more conservative than Archduke Kieran and sceptical of the latter's activist agenda. Should the archduke move his court to the Solomani Rim this may diminish Duke Robert's own autonomy.

The Imperial portions of the Solomani Rim are part of the powerful Domain of Sol, which also includes parts of Alpha Crucis, most of Old Expanses and all of Diaspora.

THE ARCHDUKE OF SOL

The emperor's viceroy for the Domain is the Archduke of Sol, Kieran Langos Adair, who ascended upon the death of his father in 1102. His seat is Libert in Diaspora.

Archduke Kieran's racial background is Solomani but his family has a history of loyalty to the Imperium and he traces his ancestry to Baroness Arielle Adair, the Grand Admiral who served as supreme commander of Imperial forces during the Solomani Rim War. She was named Archduchess of Sol by Emperor Gavin in recognition of her service at the end of the war and ably supervised the Imperial occupation and restoration throughout the Domain and the creation of the Vegan Autonomous District.

Although Archduke Kieran lacks his great-grandmother's military prowess he has enjoyed a distinguished career in the Imperial Diplomatic Corps in Dark Nebula and Reaver's Deep, where he became familiar with both the culture and politics of the Solomani Confederation and the Aslan. The Archduke is considered to be close to Emperor Strephon and something of a moderate and reformer. It is believed he supports continued détente with the Solomani Confederation and sees the Imperium as taking a more active role in improving the lives of its citizens. He is presently unmarried.

Archduke Kieran has spent the last two years dealing with diplomatic and economic affairs in Diaspora and the Old Expanses; he now intends to turn his focus on the Solomani Rim. The capital of the Domain of Sol has been in Diaspora for over two centuries but the Archduke is now contemplating moving the capital to the Solomani Rim. This is a move that can be seen as an expression of his own and the Imperium's confidence in the stability and prosperity of the region but intrigue swirls around the choice of a new capital location. Whichever world and subsector are selected will experience a significant economic boom, so enormous influence is being brought to bear on the matter.

STRATEGIC STANCE AND DOCTRINE

The Imperium does not want renewed war with the Solomani Confederation. The expense of taking then controlling the captured areas has been enormous and continues to be a significant drain on Imperial manpower and budgets. Indeed, there are those who believe winning a war against the Solomani would be as bad as losing one. Given that the Imperium also faces threats on many other fronts there is no real incentive to seek conflict.

Many pro-war Solomani groups claim the Imperium is planning a war of conquest. This is not true, as such, but there are groups within the Imperium that want to crush the Solomani Confederation for various reasons. Some advocate armed conflict or urge a pre-emptive strike to prevent the Confederation from retaking Terra but the majority are willing to take the long view. Economic and cultural conquest will bring Solomani worlds into the Imperium more slowly than warfare but without bloodshed and economic disruption within the Imperium. The Imperium as a whole is happy with the status quo, especially since it favours long-term gains at the expense of the Confederation.

The Imperium is not complacent, however. The Solomani Front is a potential hotspot that must be monitored by patrols and less overt means and the Imperium must be ready to fight a war if need be. Where possible problems are headed off by diplomacy or covert action but fleets and armies are available to make a show of force that might escalate into open conflict.

In the event of war, the projected Imperial strategy is generally defensive in the early stages. Defeats would be politically embarrassing and must be avoided, but the strategy overall is to preserve the forces until they are heavily reinforced, then drive on strategic targets in overwhelming force. Raiding and counter-raiding

are to be expected away from the main battle zones and the Imperial Navy fully expects to be chasing down commerce raiders for the duration of the conflict. Ultimately, however, the plan is to swat the Solomani pinpricks, take a deep breath and stomp the Confederation flat.

The Imperium knows that the tide is on the turn. The Solomani Confederation would need to perform incredible feats of arms to win a war, whilst the Imperium needs only to avoid defeat until its forces are massed in overwhelming strength. Similarly, its economic and political influence will gradually wear down the Solomani Confederation and assimilate it world-by-world. The only likely scenario for the long-term survival of the Confederation is a spectacularly successful war. Thus a large part of Imperial strategy is aimed at ensuring the Confederation cannot win one and perhaps more importantly making sure the Solomani know it.

IMPERIAL MILITARY RULE

During and at the end of the Solomani Rim War, all conquered worlds were theoretically placed under military rule. For worlds that rose up against the Solomani Party or who welcomed the Imperials as liberators, military rule was a bare formality. In many cases the only 'occupation' consisted of an Imperial garrison at the starport, an assigned military liaison to work with the planetary government and perhaps a cruiser or escort in orbit. Often, Imperial forces were tasked with helping restore essential services, providing humanitarian relief and securing Solomani Confederation military bases and weapons.

On other worlds, the end of the war did not mean the end of military operations and Solomani guerrillas remained active well after the retreat or surrender of regular Confederation forces. Sometimes every level of civil society, from schools and universities to the justice system and the civil bureaucracy, were dominated by the Solomani Party and managed in accord with its dogma. The only way to bring these worlds back into the fold was via wholesale replacement of planetary authority with that of the Imperium through the imposition of a multigenerational period of military rule.

Imperial forces rarely engaged in full-scale nation building activities. Instead, the policy was to use whatever force was necessary – and no more – to crush Solomani organisations that supported armed resistance to the Imperium. The instruments of Confederation control, such as SolSec, were to be rooted out and

society quietly guided in the right direction. Over time, the nobility's place as intermediaries between planetary governments and the emperor was to be restored.

This slow-but-steady process is still ongoing. The 12 subsectors of the Solomani Rim held by the Imperium were conquered 103 years ago and while the majority of worlds conquered or liberated in the sector have long since transitioned to civilian rule, military rule continues on 27 worlds that have strongly pro-Solomani populations. Most are in the Sol and Dingir subsectors – the former heart of the Solomani Movement – or located near the Confederation border. In addition, military rule is also in place on two other worlds – Xiwa and Depot – for different reasons.

The day-to-day business of military rule is the responsibility of the Imperial Army even if the first impression of any visitor is likely to be watchful Imperial Marines guarding the starport. On most worlds, the senior Imperial Army officer serves as the military governor. Worlds under military rule are under martial law; civil liberties are suspended and Army patrols and military police assist or replace civilian law enforcement. Suspects can be detained for lengthy periods with little or no evidence and without trial. Military tribunals replace regular courts.

There are many other restrictions. Worlds under military rule are not permitted to possess planetary military forces. Imperial Army units are garrisoned throughout the planet and often patrol in military vehicles. Membership in certain anti-Imperial political organisations such as the Solomani Party is prohibited. Global computer, media and communication networks and educational institutions are monitored. Limits are imposed on free speech to oppose inciting violent resistance to Imperial control. Certain planetary industries, including arms manufacturing, may be prohibited. The security at starports is tight on persons or cargo entering or leaving the port. Checkpoints and no-go areas restrict internal travel near sensitive installations or in regions of known resistance activity. The private operation of grav vehicles and other aircraft are often tightly regulated, especially near cities or military bases. Weapons are strictly controlled.

The transition from military to civil rule is an ongoing and dynamic process, sometimes interrupted or turned back by anti-Imperial uprisings, counter-insurgency operations, and terrorist attacks. The Imperial military is authorised to use all force necessary to retain order and suppress rebellion. Imperial troops are highly disciplined but there have been occasional incidents where military occupational forces have been accused of,

and occasionally charged with, excessive use of force or sophonts-rights violations. Somewhat more common than direct incidents involving Imperial troops are instances where civilian security forces under nominal Imperial control have been engaged in excessive brutality or the torture of suspects, perhaps as a result of using their status to settle local scores. As these lapses provide considerable fodder for anti-Imperium propaganda, Imperial Army policy is to aggressively investigate and punish anyone responsible for such incidents. There have been cover-ups and whitewashes over the last century but, in general, the Imperial occupation can be characterised as tough rather than brutal.

The ultimate goal of military rule is a society that supports, or at least accepts, Imperial sovereignty. So far the Imperium appears to be succeeding. Over time, the Imperial military has generally been able to show a steady reduction in guerrilla and terrorist activity, with a gradual increase in popular support for Imperial rule. Imperial policy is to reduce restrictions and lower military presence as the situation permits. When military rule was first imposed on Terra, the Imperial Army policed the streets in armoured grav vehicles and incidents were dealt with by troops wearing combat armour; today that level of force is only likely to be seen if the military needs to respond to a major incident.

On most Solomani Rim worlds under military rule there is now some degree of civilian government. Although the military governor and martial law is still in effect, there will be a civilian-run civil service, local or municipal government and civilian police force. The military authorities try to ensure key positions in these organisations are held by Imperial loyalists. Where anti-Imperial sentiment remains strong, these people risk being denounced by Solomani supporters as puppets or collaborators and targeted for assassination by terrorists or guerrillas. Imperial Army soldiers may also be tasked with training local security forces and assigned to perform joint operations. There is always a risk that civilian officials or the police may contain secret sympathisers of Solomani resistance groups. A more common problem is that Imperial occupation forces have often found themselves inadvertently taking sides in longstanding planetary disputes by supporting a slightly more pro-Imperial faction against another faction and it can be tempting for opposing groups to brand opponents as anti-Imperial insurgents.

IMPERIAL INTELLIGENCE

The Intelligence branch is a small part of the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service that correlates and analyses data gathered by thousands of scouts, including former

scouts on detached duty. A smaller part of that branch is the Espionage division, which is engaged in performing active espionage and counter-espionage missions, including occasional black operations. Collectively, the Intelligence branch of the IISS and especially its elite Espionage division are known as Imperial Intelligence.

Imperial Intelligence maintains small offices on most Imperial, and some Vegan, worlds in the Solomani Rim and has covert agents in Solomani space. Its number of agents is quite small in comparison to those fielded by SolSec but they are superbly trained and equipped with the most advanced (TL15) Imperial equipment. They can also count on cooperation – albeit sometimes reluctantly given – from other Imperial services, the Ministry of Justice and the police and security apparatuses of planetary governments. Perhaps more useful are the large number of retired scouts on detached duty and their associates who provide both information and semi-deniable assets for covert operations.

The Imperium does not normally intervene in domestic political activities but those involving the Solomani Party are a special case due to their connection with a foreign state, the Solomani Confederation. Imperial Intelligence's primary effort in the Solomani Rim involves thwarting the efforts of SolSec to manipulate pro-Solomani politics on Imperial-occupied worlds. It also focuses on detecting and neutralising Solomani guerrillas and terrorists with a particular emphasis on those receiving external support from SolSec or Solomani Party militants in the Confederation.

Yuri Blackwell is the cunning 'old man' of the IISS's Solomani Rim division of Imperial Intelligence and a master player in the game of espionage. He has twice resisted attempts to transfer him to the Spinward Marches; he prefers dealing with opponents who cannot read his mind. He is a close friend of the Duke of Dingir.

IMPERIAL NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

Naval Intelligence may have a larger budget and more personnel in the Solomani Rim than Imperial Intelligence but its focus is far narrower.

Naval Intelligence is chiefly concerned with predicting Solomani Confederation Navy capabilities and intentions, as well as those of the Home Forces of border worlds. Some of this involves assimilating and evaluating open source information from Solomani media but Naval Intelligence also gains information from spies, many recruited from academics, merchants, tourists or business people whose legitimate activities take them into Solomani space and give them a chance to observe

bases or warships. Another primary source of information are defectors from the Solomani Confederation military or corporate community. Naval Intelligence's most striking coups have involved securing the defection of entire Solomani Confederation Navy vessels and in some cases making the vessels and their crews 'disappear' so they appear to have been lost to misjump or other accidents.

The counter-intelligence branch is focused on countering infiltration of the Imperial Navy and its many civilian contractors. The foundation of this involves careful background checks to identify and monitor individuals with connections or sympathies that link them to the Solomani Confederation or Solomani Movement. Counter-intelligence is also concerned with identifying Solomani agents who may be undercover working as civilians at starports and startowns on worlds with Imperial Navy bases. Such individuals – such as a startown broker, bartender, hotel clerk or prostitute – may be fixtures of the local community who use regular interactions with military personnel to gather intelligence on fleet deployments or attempt to suborn or blackmail navy officers, crew or marines. Since the starports are Imperial territory, Imperial Naval Intelligence has jurisdiction to identify and eliminate – or turn – these foreign agents.

Naval Intelligence also engages in highly classified missions that send its own personnel into Solomani Confederation space. This can involve sending individual operatives or teams on missions to gain information about Solomani military programs or extract would-be defectors. More often it involves stealthy reconnaissance vessels operating in the outer reaches of Confederation star systems and using long range passive sensors to monitor naval traffic and signal emissions. Since a lengthy presence can be dangerous, the Navy will sometimes simply emplace unmanned sensor stations but these require visiting every few months to retrieve any recorded information. The Solomani Confederation's own covert reconnaissance vessels do the same in Imperial space.

THE IMPERIAL NAVY

The Imperial Navy maintains sector fleets in both the Solomani Rim and Alpha Crucis. The former is a powerful force tasked with defending the large expanse of Imperial territory in the sector, whereas the Alpha Crucis sector fleet is little more than an administrative apparatus controlling a modest force that mainly undertakes border patrol work. Its administrative staff is much larger than it needs, enabling the sector fleet to be brought up to strength in minimal time.

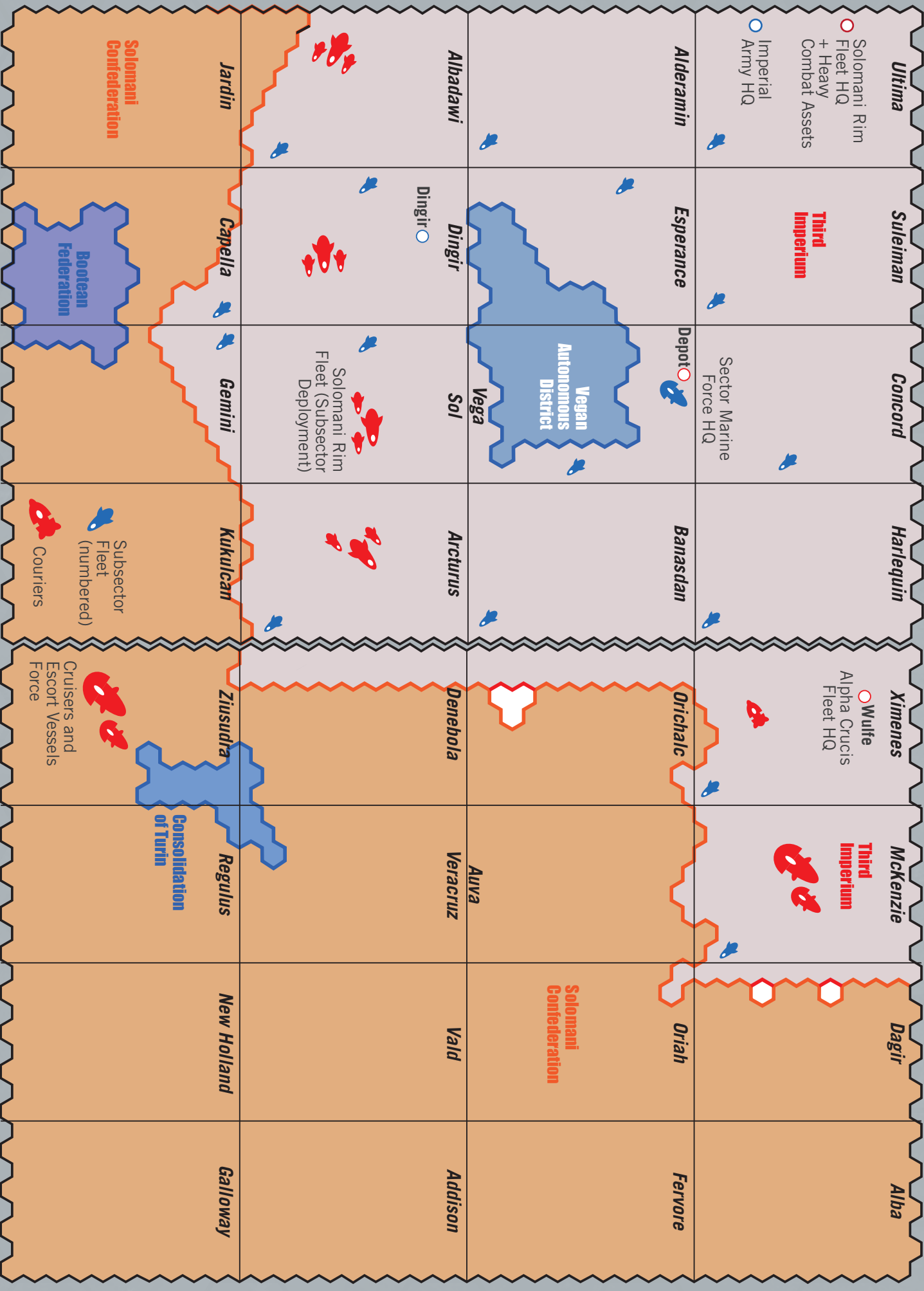
The Alpha Crucis fleet, whilst a distinct formation, is normally under the jurisdiction of the Solomani Rim admiral. If a full complement of ships were to be assigned a flag officer would be chosen to command them but at present the posting would be a waste of an admiral. Thus both fleets are presently under the command of Sector Admiral Shana Ashran.

The Alpha Crucis fleet has its headquarters at Wulfe in the Ximenes subsector. Its handful of capital ships are concentrated there, under the command of a subordinate admiral who receives his orders from Depot in the Solomani Rim. A force of cruisers and escort vessels is delayed across Imperial territory within the sector, whilst couriers maintain close links with the Old Expanses fleet. In the event of hostilities, it is planned that reinforcements will come from that fleet rather than being transferred from the Solomani Rim.

The Solomani Rim fleet's headquarters and around half its heavy combat assets are located at Depot in the Solomani Rim. The remainder of the battle forces and most of the lighter units are deployed in the Albadawi, Dingir, Sol and Arcturus subsectors. The sector's marine forces are also headquartered at Depot and are in theory kept concentrated to act as a war reserve. In practice, requests for marine assistance with occupation and counter-insurgency operations mean the central marine force is often under strength.

In the event of an unexpected outbreak of war the Solomani Rim fleet is expected to contain Confederation advances and secure key systems, making only local counterattacks until reinforcements can arrive. Additional forces would be available or at least en route if conflict was expected or planned, in which case the sector fleet would implement one of the war plans formulated at Depot. These are kept constantly updated, with local contingency plans distributed to forward-deployed forces whenever a plan is changed. In many cases fleet elements would need no detailed orders, merely an authentication code and instructions to implement one of the existing plans.

The Solomani Rim fleet has the additional responsibility of reinforcing the small Imperial-held territory in Magyar and Alpha Crucis should be threatened, and is in theory available to assist if other sectors were seriously threatened. This is only likely in a large-scale rebellion or civil war, whereas reinforcement of the Solomani Rim fleet with forces from Diaspora is part of most war plans. This has been practiced on a limited scale but only after alerting the Solomani Confederation that such an exercise was underway. If Confederation agents detected such a full



IMPERIAL FORCES IN THE SOLOMANI RIM AND ALPHA CRUCIS

Imperial Warship Dispositions

The Imperial Navy operates on the principle that 'sector fleets fight wars, subsector fleets keep the peace'. A subsector fleet usually has a cruiser or carrier as its flagship; all other permanently assigned vessels are destroyers or smaller. However, a subsector fleet will often be 'loaned' a few vessels from the sector fleet to assist in dealing with problems. In the case of the Solomani Front these deployments are near-permanent.

Thus the most likely encounter with a single Imperial ship or small task force is with vessels under local (subsector fleet) control. If elements of the sector fleet are encountered they are likely to be concentrated, such as a squadron of battleships with supporting cruisers and a heavy escort force. However, sometimes a lone capital ship will be placed in a system as a guardship or a powerful reminder of the Imperium's naval might. Such deployments are temporary but leave a lasting impression.

mobilisation – which would be difficult to hide – the Confederation would deploy its own forces and war might be difficult to avert.

Each subsector with Imperial worlds has a numbered subsector fleet assigned to it. Like other subsector fleets these forces are geared to security and patrol work. They are not intended to be capable of resisting a major attack by the Solomani Confederation but do contain more vessels than a typical subsector fleet. These are mainly patrol ships for customs and security work along the borders. There are also intelligence-gathering vessels and some rapid-reaction forces attached to the subsector fleets. These are sector fleet assets made available to the subsector commander partly to bolster local security and partly to disguise their movements by making them seem like any other subsector fleet patrol vessel.

The subsector fleets in the Dingir, Albadawi and Sol subsectors are also responsible for supporting Imperial Army-led occupational duties and are assigned additional transport and assault ships used to working with army rather than marine units. The subsector fleets in the Solomani Rim also handle duties ordinarily assigned to planetary navies on worlds under military rule, resulting in the unusual step of the Imperial Navy procuring and operating system defence boats for worlds such as Terra. As there is some institutional opposition

to this, the SDB wings are understrength and naval fighter squadrons are also assigned to perform system defence patrols.

THE IMPERIAL ARMY

The Imperial Army maintains local headquarters in each subsector, with its sector headquarters located at Dingir. Large army forces, including aerospace and wet navy units, are deployed to worlds under military rule and key border worlds that lack sufficient planetary defences of their own. Smaller Imperial Army forces engage in various missions throughout the sector, ranging from disaster relief to counter-insurgency against Solomani guerrillas.

The ongoing military occupation of some 30 worlds – many with high populations – represents the largest single ongoing commitment of Imperial Army personnel in the Imperium. For nearly a century a not-insignificant portion of the budget and doctrinal thinking of army units in the Domain of Sol has been devoted to managing the Solomani Rim Occupation Force. Except on a few worlds like Scaramouche or Kidashi, the insurgent threat is low and occupation duty on a civilised world like Terra or Prometheus is far more pleasant than some backwater hellhole in the Reaver's Deep or Ley sectors. Officers have found they have had to serve as military governors and policemen rather than soldiers, and proficiency in fighting has often taken a back seat to mastery of civil affairs. Some analysts have expressed concern that this long-term focus may have diminished the assigned forces' ability to perform large-scale military operations such as planetary invasions.

COLONIAL AND PLANETARY ARMED FORCES

The Imperium has traditionally used the term 'colonial' for the armed forces of its member worlds, despite the word ceasing to be accurate centuries ago – if ever it was. By convention, Planetary Armed Forces are under the direct control of the owning government whereas those operating in conjunction with the Imperial armed forces are designated as 'colonial'. This is a useful distinction, although in fact both terms can be used interchangeably.

The proximity of the Solomani Confederation has led most Imperial-controlled systems that can afford planetary navies to concentrate on building wings of system defence boats or monitors. The emphasis on non-starships ensures that defensive assets cannot be easily 'borrowed' by the Imperial authorities to protect other systems or naval bases.



Two notable exceptions to this rule are the Ultima and Dingir subsectors. Ultima lacks a fully functional Imperial subsector government, allowing several worlds to build up their interstellar fleets for nationalist reasons. Dingir has a strong naval tradition dating back to the old Dingir League and worlds not under military rule often purchase patrol ships or even cruisers.

As worlds under military rule are not permitted planetary navies, the Sol subsector in particular lacks much in the way of colonial and planetary naval forces. The Imperial Navy and Army are forced to shoulder the burden of local defence, which has diluted the available strength and created a convenient dumping-ground for 'plodder' officers. Command of the defensive forces assigned to a medium-importance world sounds like a good posting for an ambitious officer but in practice the best are considered wasted on such deployments. Local

commanders are usually mediocre or promoted-out-of-the-way types and even good units assigned to their command can lose their edge over time.

Huscarles

Huscarles are the household forces of the Imperial nobility. Most Solomani Rim marquises, counts and dukes maintain only modest huscarle formations that rarely exceed platoon or company strength. These are mainly trained for bodyguard and security duty. A force this size can easily protect against most terrorist or insurgent threats and larger private armies are considered a bit uncivilised – and also redundant given the sizable Imperial Army, Navy and Marine forces committed to the sector. A few exceptions exist to this rule; the Dukes of Albadawi, Alderamin and Dingir maintain well-equipped household forces at brigade or greater strength.

CONFEDERATION TERRITORY

The Solomani Confederation controls about a quarter of the Solomani Rim and most of Alpha Crucis. The Solomani claim to this region is by right of colonisation and self-determination. Most of its worlds either never joined the Imperium or were colonised when the Solomani Autonomous Region was outside the Imperium's control.

The political organisation of worlds under Confederation control is typical of the Confederation as a whole. Most worlds have a single government, and whilst multi-world governments are not common they are accepted to have jurisdiction over their whole territory. Thus many less developed worlds are administered from elsewhere. Member governments send representatives directly to the Secretariat that governs the entire Confederation. This means there are no sector or subsector capitals as would be found in the Imperium. All Confederation member governments are equally independent member states.

The Confederation Navy, Army, SolSec and the various ministries of the Solomani Party-dominated Confederation bureaucracy maintain headquarters and coordinating offices in each significant region. In the Solomani Rim – unlike some other sectors of the Confederation – these offices are centralised on a particular world. Imperial maps refer to these as 'subsector capitals' but that term is not used by the Solomani.

The Confederation worlds along the Imperial border, which are profiting most from trade with the Imperium, are those which are most in favour of the continuation of peaceful relations. Further in from the border, where trade with the Imperium is not as important, there is greater militant sentiment. Inhabitants of the rimward frontier feel that peace with the Imperium will result in more attention being paid to their economic development.

The majority of the Confederation's people want peace with the Imperium. In spite of this, a fair portion of the citizens of the Solomani Confederation support

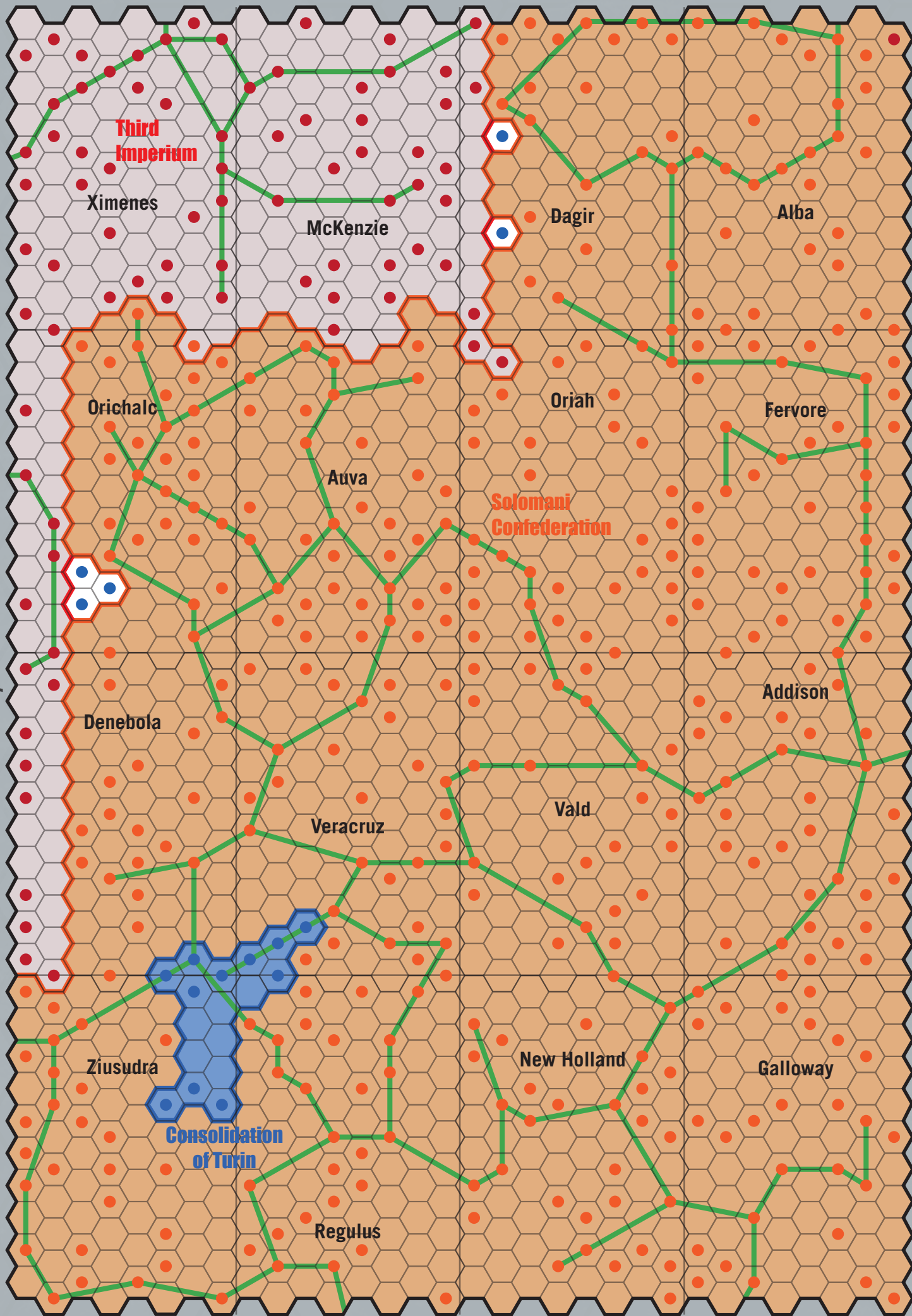
anti-Imperial organisations, some of which make raids across the border into the Imperial portions of the Rim. This is a cause for significant internal conflict, pitting pro-peace groups against those who are rocking the boat too much.

STRATEGIC STANCE AND DOCTRINE

In the years since the creation of the Solomani Autonomous Region, some Imperial practices have been modified or eliminated entirely. Of these, most were re-implemented in the areas lost at the end of the Solomani Rim War. Within the Confederation these Solomani practices have long become the norm. In particular, doctrines and equipment design philosophies for military forces have a distinctly 'Solomani' flavour. Rather than sector and subsector fleets, the Confederation has a centralised naval administration with fleets assigned to regions – typically a cluster of stars or an area likely to be used as an axis of advance – as they are required. Warship designs and the doctrines surrounding their use are also different, reflecting the lack of a gigantic resource pool such as that enjoyed by the Imperial Navy.

In general, the Confederation's stance is strategically defensive but based upon tactical offence. That is, it does not want a war and will not precipitate one but should conflict occur the Confederation plans to defend its territory across the border in Imperial space. Part of this strategy is the highly controversial Iron Gate doctrine.

Under Iron Gate, heavily fortified bases were to be created on the borders to support and protect strong battle fleets. These would meet an Imperial advance well forward and carry the war into Imperial space. In the event, the cost of the bases meant that the ambitious ship-building project that would have provided the new fleets was curtailed. This leaves the Confederation with a number of expensive and



prestigious bases but few ships to use them. The loss of these bases would be a severe blow to morale, so defensive assets have to be assigned to protect bases that are essentially useless until the warships to operate from them are available.

Under the Modified Iron Gate strategy, these bases have been redefined as defensive strongholds protected by a mix of local and Confederation fleet elements. The Iron Gate bases are used by small reconnaissance and fast-reaction forces, most of the time, but stand ready to receive large fleets transferred from elsewhere if a crisis develops. Those who favour a resumption of hostilities criticise this defensive mindset as an abandonment of the territory lost to the Imperium, whilst those who prefer peace worry that the strategy might be inflammatory. Naval analysts are more concerned about the huge cost of constructing and maintaining a set of bases that do nothing more than tie down additional defensive forces where the Imperium could conveniently smash them.

In the event of war, Confederation strategy is based around a combination of rapid strikes by the Confederation Navy and a stubborn defence by Home Forces, reinforced by elements of the Confederation armed forces. The intent is to force the Imperials to the negotiating table by making the war – and occupation of any gains – far too expensive to continue. The possibility of economic conquest is countered by strengthening belief in Solomani culture, hopefully leading to a rejection of Imperial consumerism and its creeping influence.

SOLOMANI SECURITY (SOLSEC)

SolSec is by far the most powerful and influential agency in the Solomani Rim. In most regions of the Confederation the most important branch of SolSec is the Internal Directorate but this is not the case within the Solomani Rim. Here, the External Directorate commands an equal share of budget and influence.

The External Directorate may have even more assets in the Imperial subsectors of the Rim than Imperial Intelligence does and it is deeply involved in attempts to prop up and manipulate the various Solomani Party and Solomani extremist groups in the Rim. It is involved in funding, supporting, infiltrating and creating legitimate non-violent Solomani Party political organisations – such as pro-Solomani student organisations – and extremist guerrilla and terrorist groups. It is also engaged in military, industrial and political espionage. SolSec has a



particular interest in the activities of sector nobles and border world governments, high-technology industrial processes and Imperial military deployments, procedures and equipment.

The External Directorate maintains an extensive network of spies and sympathisers within the Solomani Rim, most of Solomani ancestry and some with high positions in Imperial nobility, bureaucracy and military. Most are ideologically motivated individuals who support or were converted to the Solomani Cause or who hold other anti-Imperial or anti-Vegan ideologies. The Directorate is known for its long-term planning; a SolSec agent may try to befriend or seduce someone from an influential or noble family while they are a young student.

The External Directorate also engages in deniable black operations aimed at causing trouble not directly traceable to the Solomani Movement. Imperial Intelligence suspects, but cannot prove, that the External Directorate may have had a role in manipulating the outbreak of nuclear war on Xiwa and Vegan-human conflicts in the Esperance subsector. The goal of these operations would be to weaken the Imperium's hold on the Solomani Rim and divert military and political attention from pro-Solomani border areas.

The coordinator general of the Solomani Rim section of the External Directorate is Manfred Esterhazy. He enjoys an unusually close relationship with, and understanding of, the Confederation Navy, due to a lengthy period undercover as a covert agent within the Capella subsector fleet where he rose to the position of executive officer on an *Independence*-class cruiser.

The agency's Internal Directorate exerts pervasive influence on the Solomani Confederation worlds and is concerned with the rise of radical versions of the Solomani ideology such as the Brotherhood of Earth, expending significant effort on infiltrating and monitoring these groups. However, in the Solomani Rim the Internal Directorate's main concern is its ongoing attempt to monitor and manage political rivalries in a way that strengthens the Solomani Cause. The Directorate are concerned that the increasingly bitter multi-world dispute in the Kukulcan subsector may escalate into military confrontations or destabilise pro-Solomani governments. SolSec has responded with very low profile covert operations in support of centrist politicians, as overt action may trigger a backlash that gives ammunition to planetary nationalists. At present, SolSec is uncertain which factions in the dispute represents the greatest risk.

The Internal Directorate's secondary but still important focus is counter-espionage against Imperial Intelligence operations, keeping an eye on companies engaged in joint ventures with the Imperium such as Thinking Machines Incorporated and Solomani Shipping. It also carefully watches the millions of Solomani who now travel to and from the Imperium every year from Solomani subsectors for business, education or tourism. It sees them as potential avenues for Imperial infiltration of Confederation society, both in terms of espionage and as carriers of ideological contamination.

SOLOMANI CONFEDERATION NAVY

The Solomani Confederation Navy is organised differently to its Imperial equivalent. Rather than being disposed on a sector and subsector basis it is organised as regional fleets and flotillas based on astrographic and political realities. Relatively few heavy battle units are deployed in the Solomani Rim, although forces are rotated through the sector on a semi-regular basis in an attempt to conceal their exact numbers and locations. Alpha Crucis has a stronger complement of battle units.

The reason for this disparity is a simple correlation between distance and time, or rather lack of time. Heavy units placed close to the border could be attacked

before orders to commence hostilities arrive, so unless an attack is expected at a particular point – or one is to be made imminently – battle forces are held back from the border. With only a subsector or so of strategic depth, the Solomani Rim is an unsafe deployment for major combat units, as are the border subsectors of Alpha Crucis. These areas have some defensive units and patrol elements but heavy formations sighted in the area are typically 'showing the flag' and will return to more distant bases afterward.

Naval forces are administratively grouped into fleets and flotillas, and deploy on a flexible basis. The term 'squadron' is used differently than in Imperial space. In the Confederation a squadron is a naval force comprising primarily a single ship type, although it may include escorts and support vessels. For example, three battleships with a supporting missile cruiser and some destroyers would be referred to as a battle squadron. Commonly, multiple ships of different types are grouped to carry out a mission. This formation is temporary and would be referred to as a task force. Thus a light carrier, a light cruiser, two destroyers and a troop carrier would be a task force; five troop carriers and their escorting vessels would be a squadron.

Each sector has a commanding admiral who assigns forces to regional fleets whilst retaining control over the bulk of the forces. This is little different from the arrangement of Imperial sector fleets and indeed is a holdover from the days when Confederation space was part of the Imperium. Subordinate fleets are arranged quite differently, however. There is no equivalent to the Imperial subsector fleet. Instead, each naval base has an allocation of forces deemed suitable for its mission. Normally this is patrol and security work in the surrounding area plus communications duty.

These local formations tend to be small and are named for their home base. The Barsoom Flotilla is a mixed force of patrol vessels tasked with patrolling the local cluster and maintaining communications throughout the rimward end of the Jardin subsector. The Skanderbeg Flotilla is responsible only for a single system and is concerned mainly with border security. It also supports covert intelligence-gathering missions into Imperial space using vessels assigned temporarily from the pool of ships available to Naval Intelligence.

Flotillas are usually commanded by a rear-admiral, with multi-ship task forces placed under the hand of a commodore. To be considered a fleet, a force must have sufficient major vessels to be able to form multiple task forces. A regional fleet is normally commanded by a vice-admiral and responsible for operations in whatever area it is assigned. This is normally a cluster or group of

clusters, adding up to less than a subsector in total, but a regional fleet could in theory be given a very large area of operations. This would be the case in undeveloped areas with many empty systems, or where a fleet has a specific purpose. For example, specialist naval intelligence ships are grouped into an administrative fleet with a huge area of operations. Vessels might be deployed under command of the fleet or passed to a regional flotilla as required.

Fleet designations are, in theory, temporary but most have existed for many years and will continue for the foreseeable future. This is due to an ongoing need for a fleet in that region, which is unlikely to change. Each fleet or flotilla has a designated role, which may be broad or very specific depending upon its individual circumstances.

The Pilgham Cluster Fleet is tasked with the security and defence of the Pilgham Cluster, located in the Jardin subsector. It was to be assigned a powerful force of battle riders and specialist cruisers – mainly missile-heavy designs – as part of the Iron Gate strategy. In the event, few of these forces became available. The fleet does possess a modest cruiser force and a handful of battlecruisers whose task is mainly to be seen by Imperial informants, serving as a ‘fierce face’ to remind the Imperials of Confederation naval strength.

The Kukulcan Border Fleet is normally tasked with a similar role to the Pilgham Cluster Fleet and was also scheduled to receive heavy defensive assets as part of Iron Gate. These never materialised but the fleet has been assigned a considerable number of additional vessels, including capital ships and carriers, due to the tensions around Kukulcan. Heavy warfighting assets are scheduled to be returned to the central reserve once the situation has been resolved, although in practice local commanders will do everything in their power to hang on to at least some of their ‘borrowed’ vessels.

The main concentration of warfighting assets in the Solomani Rim is around Vantage, in the Near Boötes Cluster. Vantage is the headquarters of the Solomani Rim Strategic Fleet Reserve. This is a primarily defensive force, intended to deploy within the Near Boötes Cluster to blunt an Imperial advance. The protection of the cluster is important for strategic reasons – it lies on the obvious route of an Imperial advance towards the Confederation capital at Home in the Aldebaran sector – and also due to economic and political factors.

The Strategic Fleet Reserve does contain some forces capable of offensive action outside the cluster. Some of these are currently deployed near Kukulcan but at need

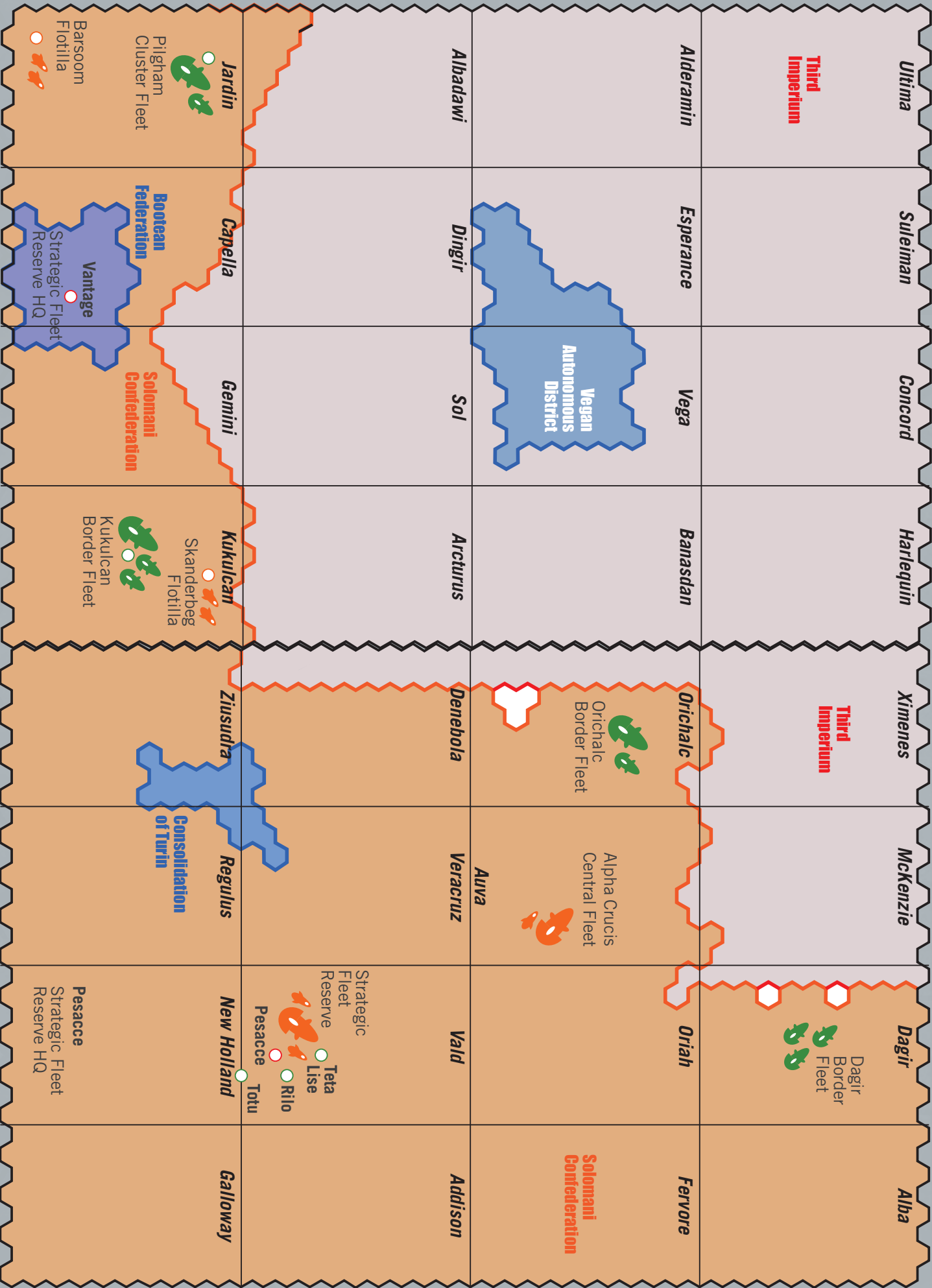
the fleet reserve could put together a powerful rapid-reaction force built around battlecruisers and carriers. More commonly it detaches heavy task forces to assist local patrol assets when necessary. Other Confederation naval forces in the sector are grouped as flotillas or task forces and mostly composed of light vessels such as frigates and escorts.

Overall command of the Solomani Rim rests with Admiral Terra Delacroix. She comes from a working-class belter family in Capella and has the traditional Solomani disdain for the Imperial nobility. Although a native of the Rim, for most of her career Delacroix served elsewhere in the Confederation. Delacroix demonstrated her prowess as a ‘fighting admiral’ in the Dark Nebula sector on the Aslan frontier, where she also displayed impressive ability as a diplomat.

A similar arrangement of small fleets-in-being and a large fleet reserve is used in other sectors. In Alpha Crucis, the Strategic Fleet Reserve is based out of the Vald Naval Complex, a cluster of four naval bases in the Teta Lise, Pesacce, Rilo and Totu systems. Fleet headquarters is at Pesacce, which is home to most of the battleships, fleet carriers and logistics vessels as well as troop ships and assault vessels. Pesacce also has a huge military base and training facilities for planetary assault formations. Sufficient escort vessels are also housed at Pesacce that an intervention fleet can be formed without bringing in ships from other bases.

In overall command is Admiral David Kent, who comes from an ‘old navy’ family. His relatives include notable diplomats and business owners as well as naval officers. Born and raised to excel, Kent is an example of the best and the worst aspects of the Solomani superiority complex. He is a member of a family that considers itself superior to other Solomani and other Solomani to be superior to everyone else. David Kent naturally competes with his siblings to be the most superior of them all. Whilst this has driven him to excel, it has also fostered an almost cruel, harsh edge to his personality. Kent is known for his angry outbursts over trivialities such as a misplaced comma in a report and most of the fleet’s captains live in fear of him.

Kent does not lead by example and show others how they can be their best; he simply demands that everyone around him meets whatever standard he sets. He will publicly ridicule and browbeat a captain who does not have every minor detail of his ship’s supply complement to recall, or an intelligence officer who cannot clearly explain the function of a complex power plant component. This is one way Kent ‘proves’ his superiority – by demanding that others function perfectly outside



CONFEDERATION FORCES IN THE SOLOMANI RIM AND ALPHA CRUCIS

their area of expertise. Morale among the crews of the Alpha Crucis Sector Strategic Fleet Reserve is not good but oddly seems to improve wherever the admiral is not.

The naval base at Teta Lise is variously known as 'battlecruiser country' or 'destroyer central'; it is the home port of much of the sector's strike forces. The majority of destroyers based there are strike rather than fleet types, optimised for the rapid delivery of heavy firepower rather than a more general 'fleet' role. Rilo plays host to the battle tender force and its riders, both combat and logistics. In any major conflict these forces would be moved to bolster the defences of threatened systems, possibly in several waves as tenders returned to pick up another group of riders. The Totu naval base has a wider range of vessels than other Fleet Reserve bases. These include battleships and cruisers as well as most of the fleet destroyer complement.

In addition to the Fleet Reserve, Alpha Crucis has several smaller fleets-in-being. The Orichalc Border Fleet is quite strong, with an allocation of battleships and battle tenders to permit it to resist an initial strike in some force. The Alpha Crucis Central Fleet acts as a rapid-reaction reserve for the whole sector, receiving ships from the strategic reserve on a rotating basis. The Central Fleet can put together task forces capable of dealing with most problems but has only a few capital ships – it is a fly-swatter to the strategic reserve's hammer.

The Dagir Border Fleet, in contrast to the Orichalc fleet, has been pared down to the bone in recent years. A small force of overworked fleet destroyers is all that is available to show the flag and deal with incidents too serious for the patrol vessels assigned to the region. Repeated requests for additional ships have produced only platitudes or promises to look into the possibility of assigning some more capable forces.

The rest of the sector has small forces assigned to its naval bases as local reserves but these are greatly outnumbered by patrol vessels assigned to regional commands. Typically a patrol flotilla has responsibility for an area smaller than a subsector; either a large cluster of worlds or multiple smaller groupings. Patrol forces are part of the Alpha Crucis Fleet and sometimes co-opted into 'fleet' roles but are not well suited to combat against a 'straight' combatant vessel of similar size.

SOLOMANI CONFEDERATION ARMY AND MARINES

In the Solomani Rim the Confederation Army's main bases are mostly co-located with naval installations, with a large proportion of army units assigned to them.

Confederation Warship Deployments

The Solomani Confederation has a different naval doctrine to the Imperium but the underlying philosophy is similar – heavy units are concentrated in warfighting formations, whilst patrol and security work is carried out by lighter forces. Unlike the Imperium, the Confederation makes considerable use of specialist patrol vessels. These are generally cheaper than a front-line warship of the same size and much less capable.

Encounters with Solomani warships will usually be with patrol assets of this sort or with similar vessels operated by the Home Forces of a major world. SolSec also has warships used for 'security and reassurance' patrols. These are crewed by SolSec rather than naval personnel and are generally less effective combatants than an equivalent naval ship but their crews are experts at spotting fake ship's papers or a discrepancy in the cargo manifest.

Army assets are more concentrated than naval forces; a small naval base might be home to a very significant army contingent. Other forces are deployed to deal with trouble spots or to assist in disaster-management.

In addition, significant army forces are deployed on many worlds close to the Imperial border, in what is unofficially termed the 'speed bump doctrine'. An army adage – greatly disapproved of by senior officers and other services – holds that since the navy has left the Iron Gate wide open, the army will be expected to hurl itself onto the road to act as a speed bump. Cynical as this is, it is not far from the truth.

The Home Forces of worlds along the border are augmented by Confederation Army formations, some of whom man aerospace defence fortresses. Officially, these formations are intended to make capturing the border worlds as difficult as possible and holding them almost as costly. This is true but in addition the deployed Army commanders have another responsibility – to prevent an early surrender by the world's armed forces. Since a border world can hardly surrender whilst aerospace defence units are still shooting at targets in orbit, the deployed army units ensure local forces put up a good fight. The heavy defences around their bases will protect against an invasion force trying to silence the aerospace weapons from ground level – or local ground troops trying to do the same. These deployed units are integrated into the member world's command structure but remain separate from Home Forces, primarily to maintain the security of their installations.

HOME FORCES

The ground and naval forces of a member government are termed 'Home Forces', whilst those equipped and trained to an equivalent standard to Confederation forces are given the title Home Guard. All Confederation worlds are required to spend a minimum percentage of their GDP on Home Forces and given a set of roles these forces must be able to fulfil. The exact nature of Home Forces is up to the government, as is the decision to spend additional funds. Strategic worlds are granted a subsidy to augment their defences and may be assigned Confederation Navy or Army units on a long-term-temporary basis.

Member governments are expected to maintain a force capable of enforcing interstellar law and protecting orbital traffic from piracy, assuming they have a sufficient level of technology or can buy the necessary assets. Most member governments are satisfied with this plus a reasonable ground force and most of those with additional capabilities limit themselves to in-system patrols. However, the Home Forces of some worlds include significant naval assets, sometimes including capital ships. Home Forces units can be transferred to Confederation Army or Navy command but usually operate under the control of their home government. The ability of some worlds to project power over interstellar distances can be problematical for the Confederation government but it is an integral part of the Confederation's structure.

CONFEDERATION CULTURE

The Solomani Confederation is much less diverse than the Imperium in terms of people encountered but much more so in terms of local culture. Many worlds stubbornly cling to their unique traditions – be they derived from Old Earth or from the world's history after being colonised. Accents, dress styles and figures of speech are considered precious relics of a glorious history. Often, two Solomani from different worlds will delight in their differences – a far cry from the terrified xenophobia depicted far too often in Imperial media.

Friction can occur when both societies have common roots but different takes on their ancient traditions. For example two worlds colonised by people of French descent might encounter very different influences in their later history. Discovering that another group 'gets traditional French cuisine wrong' can lead to problems as Solomani tend to be very proud of their traditions. A suggestion that someone's homeworld makes a traditional dish wrongly or has forgotten how to correctly pronounce some words can be taken as an attack on

national pride. However, for the most part their common origins on Old Earth will unite Solomani against outsiders no matter what aspects of traditional culture they are wrong about.

Thus it is quite common to find worlds with a distinct flavour. One might embrace a mix of traditional West African cultures, another be more influenced by South-East Asia. This does not mean an attempt to replicate the parent culture but influences will be seen in patterns, colour schemes and design philosophies. Many Solomani are deeply proud of the way their worlds retain their individual flavour and lament the way the occupied worlds – especially Terra – are being slowly turned into Imperial-standard clones.

This 'delight in differences' applies to other Solomani cultures but not, for the most part, to outsiders. The Solomani belief that their way is better than anyone else's leads to a lack of interest in external cultures. This is usually passive, in that the individual has no real interest but will not actively disparage a non-Solomani culture. However, there are many who will denigrate anything not invented on Terra no matter who they offend. A small proportion of those will do it specifically to offend outsiders but for the most part the Solomani are simply proud of their own culture. The exception to this rule is 'consumerist Imperial blandness', which is generally despised for what it is rather than what it is not. In other words, Imperial culture is offensive to some Solomani for the way it has eroded the traditional culture of some Solomani worlds rather than because it was 'not invented here'.

Except for uplifted Apes and Dolphins, encounters with minor races will be rare in Confederation-controlled subsectors. Vegans are not uncommon in some areas but their relations with the Confederation are so poor that it is dangerous for Vegans to visit many worlds. The primitive indigenous races, or 'prindigs', are rarely encountered away from their homeworlds, although occasionally some are recruited for a project and might be working far from home.

The Imperial Credit is usually accepted within the Confederation but there are some places where it will be rejected on general principle. 'You take their money, they take your way of life' is a common mantra in these areas. The Confederation Credit (or 'see-see') is almost identical in value to the Imperial one but comes in a variety of designs celebrating various Solomani cultures. See-sees are used throughout the Confederation, although many backwater worlds retain their own currencies. Conversion is occasionally necessary but for the most part Confederation Credits are entirely acceptable.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Imperial x-boat service has been gradually replaced by two parallel courier systems and what an Imperial citizen would take for x-boat routes on star charts are actually the main courier arteries. The fleet of express boats inherited by the Solomani Confederation when it declared independence has not entirely worn out but the remaining craft have been kept in service only by cannibalising others. Today, there are few worlds served by an x-boat service. Instead, information moves by way of the Confederation Courier Service (CCS), a network of contracted vessels capable of carrying mail in the same manner as an x-boat but not requiring tenders and pickup tugs.

The Confederation Courier Service makes use of a great variety of vessels. Huge superfreighters, humble trade ships and specialist courier vessels are all tied into the network. Some are operated by the Confederation government but most are privately owned commercial vessels or are the property of a member government. This system requires extensive bureaucratic oversight but it does save money. Its other benefit is an open secret – SolSec has inserted a number of vessels into the mix and uses them for covert intelligence operations. Sometimes this means springing a trap on raiders

who think they are about to raid a mail ship; on other occasions the 'mail ship' is actually carrying a strike force sent to eliminate a threat to the Confederation.

Information thus moves between the Confederation's major worlds at an average speed of two parsecs per week. Busy systems will have a mail ship every few hours from other major ports, whereas backwaters may not receive CCS vessels on a regular basis at all. Instead, whatever minor traffic is headed in and out of the system carries electronic mail and physical items to a larger port that does have a CCS connection. The CCS operates a flotilla of small 'backwater boats', which serve the minor ports on an as-often-as-possible basis.

This civilian courier network is paralleled by the Naval Communications Office, a specialist division of the Confederation Navy that provides high-jump couriers to the fleet and for official internal communications. Communications Office vessels typically carry a liaison officer and a team of bodyguards, delivering information directly to on-station naval commanders and world governments without transmitting it in any form. The 'comms case' carried by the liaison officer is typically expected to contain all manner of secret information but its data is mostly dull statistics and reports on mundane matters across the Confederation. Still, it is never possible to say for certain whether a courier's arrival is business-as-usual or the delivery of orders to start a war.

Why Solomani Humans are the Best Humans

At the heart of Solomani philosophy is the idea that humans who developed on Earth are better than those who did not. Many Solomani have no idea why this should be but are adamant it is so. Those who do offer a reason will typically say something like this:

Humans evolved on Earth, where conditions are right for the proper development of humans as they are supposed to be. Those transplanted to other worlds developed under different conditions that were not quite right and thus cannot fulfil the full potential of the species. Even those that were not genetically fiddled-about-with by the Ancients still developed under different conditions to those who matured in the cradle of the Earth.

What then of those who are pure-blood Solomani but were born on Home, or one of the many other Confederation worlds? What of those who have received genetic modification? The latter is a

controversial topic for many Solomani but the same argument is used to counter both questions: The Solomani race matured on Earth until it was ready to move naturally onto the cosmic stage. Other human races can be compared to fine wine that has not been aged properly. Wine should not be bottled until it is ready and likewise the human race was taken from Earth before it was ready.

Others will point at what they perceive as the generic consumerism of Imperial society, where aesthetics and anything else that might make something interesting are subordinated to efficiency in parting citizens from their Credits. Playing up this stereotype allows them to contrast with the multicultural influences inherited by the Solomani from Old Earth societies. By this argument those who remained on Earth flowered into a myriad of fascinating societies whose art and philosophy informs modern Solomani culture, whilst those who were taken off to the stars learned only how to be bland.



ASTROGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL FACTORS

The Confederation is, officially at least, an alliance of member governments rather than a super-state with solid jurisdiction over its entire territory. Member governments administer their territories and in turn owe allegiance to the Confederation government as a whole. They are bound by some rigid laws and encouraged to follow a much broader body of practice but on the whole it is ideology and the diplomatic efforts of the Confederation's officials that keep member governments aligned. The neat distinctions of subsector borders are far less important than the ease of travel between systems; astrographic regions are defined by clusters, mains and rifts, and by the influence of the major local economies.

Most member governments control a single main world and its associated star system, although there are some multi-world governments or regions that are the territory of an important world. In addition, a number of alliances exist within the Confederation. The right to make such an alliance is enshrined within the Confederation's constitution, although occasionally the actions of an alliance threaten the Confederation as a whole and action must be taken to break it. This is more commonly by means of economic and diplomatic

pressure than military action but sometimes force is required to back up sanctions. This typically occurs when a Confederation embargo is ignored and the navy is deployed to enforce it.

Pilgham Economic Security Zone

The blandly named Pilgham Economic Security Zone (PESZ) is an artificial alliance of worlds in the Jardin subsector that are connected to Pilgham by a jump-1 cluster. It is an artificial alliance in the sense that the member governments of the zone were induced (and in some cases, coerced) into creating a close defensive and economic alliance. The cluster is one of the obvious invasion routes in the event of a renewed conflict with the Imperium and is a pivotal region in the controversial Iron Gate strategy. Members of the PESZ are required to contribute part of their Home Forces to protect the huge and under-used naval bases at Krypton and Jardin.

Jardin-Cluster Systems

The dominant world of the Jardin subsector is a harsh Solomani Party-run dictatorship whose ruler would like to exert a greater hegemony. One obstacle to this is the hard-line policies of the world government, which is one of the few examples of the stereotypical militarised, alien-hating culture depicted in Imperial propaganda. Ships from the Imperium passing through Jardin's highport encounter racism, xenophobia and all the

things their media have told them to expect. Indeed, it may be that the 'Nasty Racist Sollie Bad Guys' depicted in Imperial propaganda and entertainment media are based upon impressions gained at Jardin.

The society of Jardin, with its extreme emphasis on racial purity and superiority, is considered too extreme for most Solomani worlds. Jardin has considerable influence as a leader of militant 'purist' anti-Imperial factions in the Secretariat and interstellar Solomani Party, and as a major trading centre thanks to its importance as sector headquarters of Transstar, but few friends. Its dictator enthusiastically supports the Iron Gate strategy as a demonstration of strength and jumping-off point for the eventual liberation of the whole sector and continually demands to know why the projected fleet has not been deployed to 'his' naval base.

The wider region around Jardin is known as the Jardin-Cluster Systems and extends into the Cluster subsector of neighbouring Magyar. Many of these systems are of modest value and importance, and the dictator of Jardin routinely claims to be their protector and de facto overlord. There is some truth in the former, as Jardin stands in the path of an Imperial advance into the region, but whilst Jardin and other nearby major worlds exert some influence there is no coherent alliance within the Jardin-Cluster Systems.

Boötean Federation

Spanning parts of the Capella and Gemini subsectors, the Near Boötes Cluster is home to the Boötean Federation, a historical remnant of the ancient Near Boötes League. A large cluster of star systems with strong internal links, the Boötean Federation is not a formal alliance but comes close to it. The agendas of most of its member governments align strongly on the majority of matters. This makes it a potent force in Confederation politics.

The cluster has only two convenient jump-2 routes into other regions. One runs rimward by way of Bleak in the Aldebaran subsector and links the cluster to the markets of the rest of the Confederation. The other goes spinward-coreward into the Jardin subsector and provides a link to Imperial space. The governments of the cluster are strong advocates of peaceful trade with the Imperium and a powerful force in maintaining the current atmosphere of détente.

Gemini Rift

The Gemini Rift separates the Near Boötes Cluster from Kukulcan Economic Zone and creates a barrier to trade and information flow. This also has implications for strategic fleet deployments, as there is no easy

transit between these regions for forward-deployed vessels. Movement can be facilitated by tanker support of course but this is a significant undertaking involving the commitment of considerable resources. Forces deployed to the Kukulcan Economic Zone and the Near Boötes Cluster are not considered mutually supporting and fleet command is well aware that a force drawn into one region by a feint could be bypassed through the other. The Gemini Rift also creates a jump-3 barrier to movement in and out of Imperial space; the Kukulcan Economic Zone does far less trade with the Terra region than the Near Boötes Cluster.

Kukulcan Economic Zone

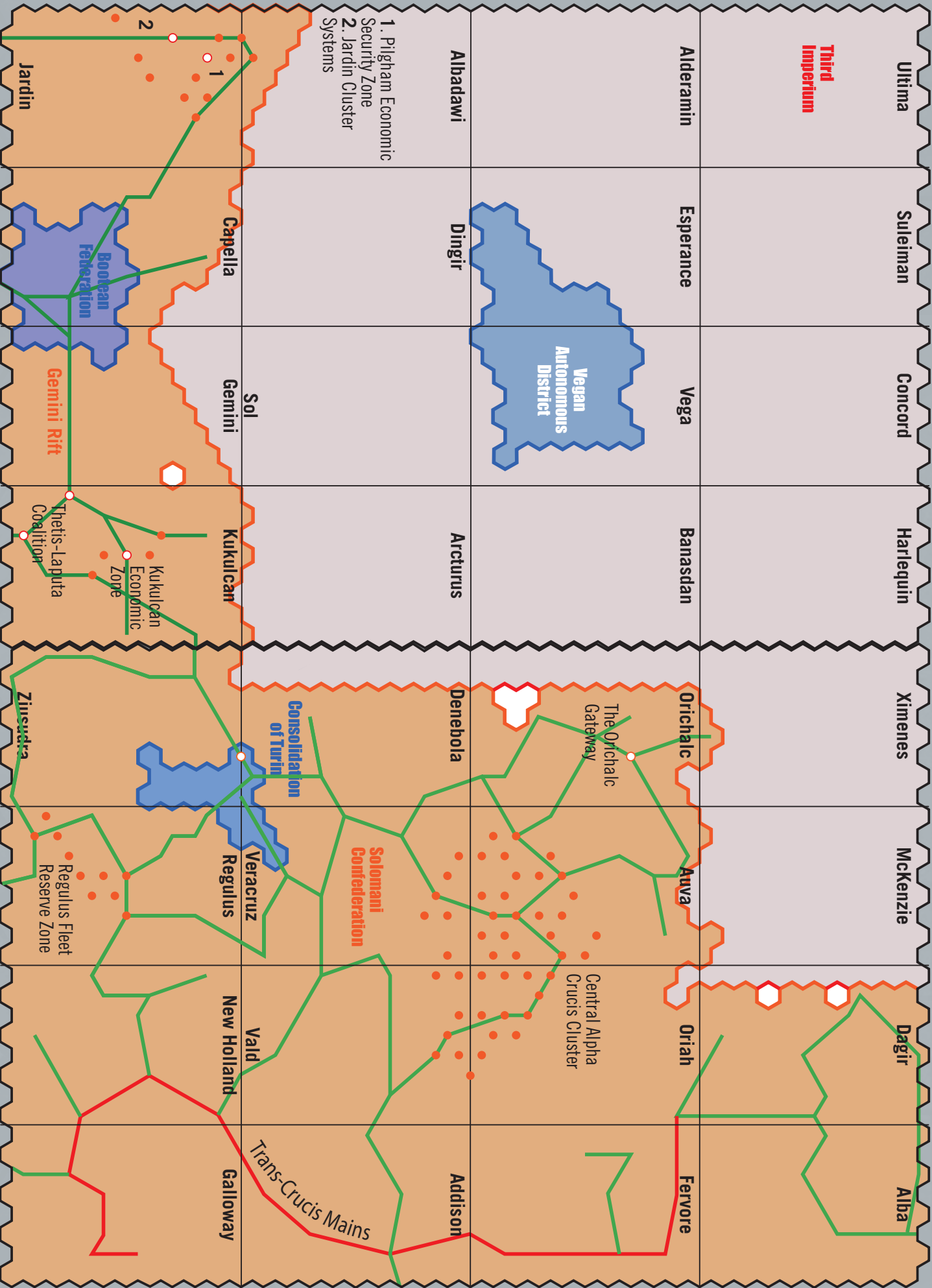
Kukulcan is the most populous Confederation world in the Solomani Rim and exerts enormous influence over the neighbouring systems. Its large trade fleet vies with those of Thetis and Laputa for dominance of the subsector and almost outnumbers both combined. The power of Kukulcan was for many years counterbalanced by the Thetis-Laputa alliance but the recent disruption of that alliance has allowed Kukulcan to gain ever stronger control over the region. This has led to a conflict of interests and Kukulcan is currently embroiled in a number of legal and economic disputes. Some are local and of little wider consequence but Kukulcan is directly at odds with the Confederation Secretariat over a number of matters.

The Kukulcan Economic Zone contains small clusters of systems plus a large main snaking coreward into Imperial space. This route also provides jump-2 access to Confederation territory to Coreward-Trailing and Trailing and is of enormous economic importance. As Kukulcan's influence grows, the political landscape of the region has been thrown into flux.

Thetis-Laputa Coalition

Thetis and Laputa are both (sometimes singly, sometimes as a coalition) highly influential in the surrounding systems. Until recently the long-standing alliance between these worlds was a powerful force in Confederation politics. However, deteriorating relations between the two eventually resulted in an open war that drew in Confederation forces and continues to generate controversy. Relations have been normalised and in theory the coalition still exists but a lack of consensus between the main parties has drastically curtailed its influence.

Thetis conducts considerable trade with the Imperium, mainly by way of the Thetis-Scandia jump-2 trade route. Ships from Laputa typically head for the same destinations but go by way of Santorini and Kukulcan, joining the primary route at Trapezus. However,



ASTROGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL FACTORS

The Near Boötes Trade War

The series of conflicts generally known as the Near Boötes Trade War is misnamed, although the beginnings of the open-conflict phase can be traced back to a dispute between the economic powers of the Kukulcan subsector and the Boötean Federation. In the hope of reducing Kukulcan's control over merchant shipping in their subsector, the allied worlds of Thetis and Laputa came to an arrangement whereby they would support vessels from the Boötean Federation. This made routes into and through Kukulcan viable and for a time the shipping lines of the Boötean Federation reaped the benefits.

Kukulcan responded with increasing harassment of Boötean ships, which escalated into a full-scale trade war. The Boötean Federation responded in kind but eventually pulled out of the subsector, leaving Thetis and Laputa to continue the dispute. They were generally successful, greatly weakening Kukulcan's economic power, but a series of setbacks drove the allies apart. The third stage of the conflict was directly between Thetis and Laputa with little

involvement by either Kukulcan or the Boötean Federation. The trade war became an actual shooting war, eventually drawing in Confederation forces.

By this time the 'Near Boötes Trade War' did not involve any governments or corporations from the Near Boötes Cluster but continued to be reported under the original name of the dispute. Some historians treat the three phases of the conflict as separate but there is no clear point where the first phase, which did involve the Boötean Federation and saw some trade-war operations in its territory, is separate from the second. The third phase is notorious for the Santorini Incident, in which Confederation Navy ships fired on their squadron-mates in defence of Laputan troop carriers that had surrendered but were leaving the system with their full troop complement aboard. The Santorini Incident has been the subject of several inquiries but no acceptable verdict was reached. Ultimately the matter was declared closed and discussion discouraged. The matter remains controversial, however.

troubles between Kukulcan and the Confederation have made this route more arduous and caused economic difficulties for Laputa. As a result, although the coalition is officially neutral in the Kukulcan-Coalition dispute Laputa is starting to apply pressure for a quick resolution. This is accompanied by an aggressive strategy to impede Kukulcan's access to markets, severely damaging its economy.

Despite tactics that verge on piracy, the coalition has been able to muster enough votes in the Secretariat to prevent effective intervention by the Confederation government. However, Laputa has more at stake in Kukulcan than Thetis, which has begun threatening to pull out of the endeavour to coerce its former partner.

The Orichalc Gateway

The Orichalc Gateway is a large cluster of star systems lying close to the Confederation-Imperial border. Whereas on the whole the Secretariat prefers to discourage the creation of multi-system governments, in this region it has given its blessing to their creation. Diplomatic moves are underway to strengthen local bonds and create formal alliances between member governments. In this way, Home Forces will be made more effective through better cooperation both in terms of operations and procurement.

The Orichalc Gateway was an integral part of the Iron Gate strategy, with huge sums poured into the construction and upgrade of naval installations. As elsewhere, the expected fleet expansion never took place, leaving the region with forlorn, mostly-disused naval facilities that drained the economy for little strategic benefit. One novel solution to this problem was the '99% Lease' of facilities to other users. So far only one installation has been leased in this manner, to a subsidiary of the Transstar corporation. The base remains officially navy property and has a small liaison and security staff but is otherwise owned and operated by TransBorder Shipping. As the name suggests, TransBorder operates across the Imperial border, benefitting from close cooperation with its parent Transstar on the Imperial side.

Consolidation of Turin

The Consolidation of Turin is a 'close association' of member governments centred on Turin in Alpha Crucis. It functions as a military and political alliance and is highly influential outside its official borders. The Consolidation's member governments are under constant pressure to assist with the 'hardening' of systems to spinward-coreward but generally choose to invest money and forces in their own cluster. Their block-voting has skewed Confederation naval deployments in favour of their own local cluster, leaving other areas less well patrolled.

Central Alpha Crucis Cluster

The Central cluster is a large grouping of star systems with easy access to other clusters and mains. This is one of the primary cross-border trade zones, although Imperial ships tend not to venture deeper into the Confederation than the Orichalc subsector. The area has multiple powerful economies but no dominant political grouping, making local politics rather turbulent at times.

Trans-Crucis Mains

The Trans-Crucis mains run through the Galloway, New Holland, Addison and Fervour subsectors, and into the surrounding space. Each is considered a separate political, economic and military area of interest by the Confederation government. Hive Federation ships are occasionally sighted on these mains and there is a fair amount of trans-border trade. Various member governments have local prominence but there is no overall power bloc to dominate political and military decisions. This is a double-edged sword; on one hand local governments are free to pursue their own agendas but attempts to block one another from gaining an advantage will sometimes result in investment or additional military forces being assigned elsewhere.

Regulus Fleet Reserve Zone

The central cluster of the Regulus subsector is the 'home territory' of Confederation naval forces in Alpha Crucis. The Fleet Reserve is based here and conducts most of its exercises in this cluster. With extensive patrol operations constantly ongoing this makes the Central Regulus Cluster one of the most secure parts of the sector. Reaction forces stand ready to respond to any incursion, with smaller task forces frequently deployed to other parts of the sector as needed.

The presence of the Fleet Reserve is a huge boost to the local economy, providing employment in all manner of secondary industries as well as supporting industries. This makes the Confederation Navy very popular on most worlds of the cluster but creates some resentment elsewhere.

CONFEDERATION PARTY FACTIONS

The Solomani Party holds sway to a lesser or greater extent on all Solomani Confederation worlds. There are also branches of the Party on most non-aligned and many Imperial worlds, although these may be operating covertly or illegally.

The Solomani Party is relatively weak in the Solomani Rim due to the strength of member governments and regional associates like the Near Boötes Cluster worlds. It is divided into dozens of powerful and hundreds of local factions. A few of these factions are strong enough to exert significant influence on many Solomani worlds. The Party is generally stronger in Alpha Crucis but has just as many internal divisions.

Rim Hawks

Also nicknamed the Black Swans, this faction is dominated by those with anti-Imperial views who advocate a strong Confederation military capable of either deterring Imperial attack or engaging in offensive action if the correlation of forces and events make that possible. The Rim Hawks support a strong central government and increased Confederation military spending on the navy and army. They are very wary of Imperial intentions and nervous of the increasing economic and military potential of the Vegan Autonomous District. Black Swan is an ironic name assigned to the faction by critics who have accused them of harping on the need to be prepared for sudden events that may lead to upheavals in the Imperium, that could either trigger Imperial attack or present an opportunity for Confederation military action. The faction has since embraced that name as their own. The Black Swan has strong support in Jardin, some elements of the navy and on some worlds close to the Solomani-Imperial border.

Rim Purists

This faction believes maintenance of racial purity is of vital importance. The loss of the Solomani Rim War was not a disaster from the Purist point of view as it resulted in many of the mixed-race, Vilani, Aslan and Vegan worlds being left behind in the Imperial sphere. The largely pure-Solomani makeup of the remaining worlds held by the Confederation in the Solomani Rim means Purists have few racial problems to worry about. Their goal is to keep it that way by preventing mixed-race or non-Solomani arriving from other parts of the Confederation. They do not object to continued trade with the Imperium but fear close contact may be corrosive to the Solomani Cause and lead to the rise of factions like the hated Embracers. Rim Purists emphasise strong Home Guard forces, stringent genetic testing and laws that prevent and control the immigration of non-Solomani.

Rising Phoenix

The Rising Phoenix, also called Terra First!, believes priority should be given to using all means – diplomatic, military or through supporting resistance groups

– to force or negotiate the return of Terra to the Confederation. They actively support resistance groups in the Sol subsector.

Vega First

These are a minority faction within the Black Swans who advocate a military strike against Vegans before the Vegans can attack the Confederation. Not to be confused with the mostly defunct Vegan Faction who once advocated special status for Vegans.

Eschatonic Accelerationists

The Accelerationists believe the Solomani Cause will achieve its ultimate expression when Humaniti's technology exceeds that of the Ancients and man becomes like unto gods. They advocate the use of cybernetics and artificial intelligence to achieve this goal.

Rim Federalist

Also called the Peace Faction, the Rim Federalists want to reduce bureaucracy and central control by the Confederation. They argue for ongoing détente with the Imperium to ensure trade and economic growth, and allow lower military spending and so reduced Confederation taxes. To this end, they favour a smaller Confederation Navy, drastic reductions in the manpower of the Confederation Army and greater emphasis on local Home Guard forces. The Rim Federalists are highly influential in the Near Boötes Cluster and among many low-population worlds in the Jardin subsector. They are also popular on Kukulcan.

Pure Federalist

This faction is similar to the Rim Federalists but do not favour closer relations with the Imperium. They want a devolution of more power to local Solomani Parties so they can get on with the important business of creating the perfect Solomani society. They are influential on higher population worlds in the Jardin subsector.

Solomani Solidarity

This is a widespread faction found on most Solomani worlds but which has limited political power. It advocates active support for Solomani Parties and guerrillas in the occupied systems and continued support of the Solomani Cause.

Pan-Earthers

The Pan-Earthers are a radical Party faction who believe that all races that originated on Earth, including all of Humaniti as well as uplifted Dolphins, uplifted Apes and Vargr – are really Solomani and should be granted the same rights. They would like to see a unified Imperium. Generally considered dangerous fanatics in the Confederation, they have growing strength on some worlds in the Imperium, including Terra.

The Brotherhood of Man

Also called the Embracers, the Brotherhood accepts the notion that humans are the master race of Charted Space but rejects the idea of any distinctions between different races of Humaniti, at least those who can still interbreed with Solomani. It accepts the idea that Terra has a special place in the origin of Humaniti but the Brotherhood of Man is popular among mixed-race Solomani and also among some religious groups that look toward Terra and Sol with special reverence. The Brotherhood of Man sees the major enemies of the Solomani as the Vegans and the Aslan; they are also very distrustful of Hive Federation races. In the Solomani Rim they are apt to conspiracy theories involving various Vegan tuhuir and many consider them a dark power that secretly manipulated the Imperium and Confederation into war. Extremist factions in the Brotherhood of Man engage in actions like protecting mixed blood humans or Vilani from discrimination and plotting terrorist attacks against Vegans and Aslan.

Sirius Rising

A recent uprising in the Jardin subsector resulted in declarations of independence by rebels who claimed to speak for nine worlds and several naval vessels. All used the phrase 'Sirius Rising' or 'Sirius Has Risen' and there is clear evidence of a conspiracy. The rising was quickly suppressed by loyal naval and SolSec forces, although unrest continues in some systems. Sirius Rising is a mysterious movement, which may be nothing more than a common rallying cry for anti-Confederation dissent. The phrase is heard at protests or in riots all over the Solomani Front, from groups probably not affiliated with one another. Imperial involvement has been proved in some cases, although this is limited to funding and some agitation by covert operatives. It remains to be seen whether Sirius Rising is an organised threat to the Confederation or simply a popular phrase demonstrating disaffection.

SHIPS OF THE SOLOMANI FRONT

Most of the Imperial designs in use in the Solomani Front are standard and likely to be encountered elsewhere. This applies to civilian as well as naval traffic. The Solomani Confederation Navy has a different design and operational philosophy, which has diverged from that of the Imperium since the creation of the Solomani Autonomous Region.

Among the key differences between the two are the near-total absence of express boats from Confederation space. The young Confederation inherited large numbers upon leaving the Imperium but as these wore out they were replaced by a network of contracted mail ships and naval couriers. Warship design is slightly different, too. Solomani designs are normally geared to one of three broad roles – patrol, strike and fleet. Patrol vessels tend to be inexpensive and of generally low overall capability for their size but are optimised for long independent patrols. Strike vessels are generally heavily armed but lightly protected. Their designation refers to an ability to get maximum firepower on target rather than being an indicator of strategic mobility. Fleet platforms are intended mainly for warfighting operations or support of them.

Where the Imperium requires jump-4 capability from all its major warships, the Solomani Confederation typically accepts a lower standard. Its vessels have smaller distances to cover so can devote more space to weaponry and combat systems rather than fuel. Patrol ships require jump-2, fleet mobility is specified as jump-3 and vessels intended for rapid-reaction or long-range raiding missions typically have jump-4 or higher mobility.

Battleships are front-line fleet elements, intended to engage other capital ships and soak up punishment if necessary. Battleships are almost always fleet elements.

Battlecruisers mount weaponry that can overpower a cruiser and seriously threaten a capital ship but are lightly protected. Most battlecruisers serve in a strike or rapid-reaction role and designed to be capable of chasing down raiders or conducting an effective raiding voyage without an escort.

Fleet Carriers are designed to provide fighter cover for planetary combat forces or to protect capital ships from small craft threats. They are fleet assets but sometimes encountered on security duty – a fleet carrier can swamp a star system with sensor platforms and armed craft. Carriers serve a wider role in the Confederation than the Imperium, acting as platforms for the deployment of marines and routinely carrying disaster-relief equipment.

Heavy Cruisers are differentiated from light cruisers by their armament rather than size or protection. A heavy cruiser carries a spinal weapon, a light cruiser does not. Most heavy cruisers are fleet types but specialist designs include bombardment vessels and high-jump raiders.

Light Cruisers are mostly optimised for the escort role, with weaponry best suited to dealing with destroyers and small craft. Patrol cruisers also exist; these are low-cost vessels with sufficient capabilities to deal with most security threats. Strike cruisers are typically armed with large numbers of torpedo launchers and may be assigned to a destroyer flotilla as a flagship.

Light Carriers are typically oriented towards patrol operations and often have only jump-2 capability. Light carriers are intended to cover a wide range of roles and may be encountered as the flagship of a task force dealing with a localised incident or on a roving patrol. They are also sometimes included in the escort force for a major troop movement or logistics effort. Higher-jump carriers are sometimes repurposed for exploration work.

Fleet Destroyers are general-purpose combatants with a balanced armament. They are capable of escorting heavy warships but are a little wasted in this role. A fleet destroyer is a significant combat asset in its own right and in a flotilla can threaten much larger warships.

Strike Destroyers are optimised for the sudden and rapid application of heavy firepower. Armament is typically torpedo-heavy. Strike destroyers are not intended to operate solo, although sometimes this is necessary.

Escort Destroyers are typically a little smaller than their fleet equivalents and more lightly armed. They are fleet rather than patrol craft but often used for internal security patrols. Escort destroyer flotillas are assigned to all capital ship formations and also protect logistics ships.

Frigates are inexpensive multirole vessels optimised for long patrols. They are the backbone of patrol forces and are effective in the correct role. However, frigates are often co-opted as escorts for fleet assets and routinely under-perform when expected to fill in for a destroyer.

Corvettes are warships of under 1,000 tons displacement. They are used for local patrol, security and escort work for the most part, although some Home Forces operate strike corvettes that can inflict significant damage on a larger warship – but only at great risk.

Monitors are non-jump-capable vessels with significant combat capability. The largest are termed Battle Monitors and pack a capital ship's firepower into a much smaller hull. They are used by many worlds' Home Forces and by the navy to protect important installations. A force of battle monitors may be moved to a threatened area by tender, allowing the defences to be quickly reinforced. Various sizes of monitor are deployed for system defence purposes, including cruiser and destroyer equivalents. A combat craft under 1,000 tons is considered a system defence boat (SDB) rather than a monitor.

Barges are equivalent in size to a battle monitor but fulfil other roles. Most are supply and logistics vessels but troopships are not uncommon. Carried to a trouble spot by a tender, a troop barge can remain on-station to provide support and act as a mobile headquarters.

Army-Navy Joint Operations

The Confederation's armed forces have evolved a unique style of operation using troop barges rather than groundside bases. The barge is dropped off by a tender and remains in-system, usually but not always in orbit over the target world. Troops are landed from the barge using shuttles, which also provide logistics support and tactical mobility. Units may be withdrawn to orbit after some operations but normally a portion of the force takes control over key areas and holds them. The remainder tackles other objectives by 'bouncing around' using the shuttles rather than conventional vehicles.

This style of highly mobile warfare requires solid control of orbital space and the ground/space interface but can be accomplished by any ground troops – specialist training is not needed, although most Confederation Army units undergo a period of familiarisation from time-to-time in case they are called upon to 'bounce around'. A unit with a lot of experience in this kind of warfare is inevitably referred to as 'bouncy', although some prefer a different term of unknown but definitely archaic origin. As a result of this reference the campaign medal for a conflict characterised by a lot of bouncing is colloquially known as a 'space hopper'.



KESTREL AEROSPACE FIGHTER

STANDARD MODEL

| TL14 | | TONS | COST (MCr) |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Hull | 15 tons, Streamlined | — | 0.9 |
| Armour | Bonded Superdense, Armour: 12 | 1.44 | 0.864 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 9 | 1.35 | 2.7 |
| Power Plant | Fusion (TL12), Power 30 | 2 | 2 |
| Fuel Tanks | 1 week of operation | 0.05 | — |
| Bridge | Dual Cockpit | 2.5 | 0.015 |
| Computer | Computer/15 | — | 2 |
| Sensors | Military Grade | 2 | 4.1 |
| | Countermeasures Suite | 2 | 4 |
| Weapons | Single Turret (pulse laser) | 1 | 1.2 |
| Armoured Bulkheads | Cockpit, Power Plant, M-drive | 0.585 | 0.117 |
| Systems | Aerofins | 0.75 | 0.075 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/0 | — | — |
| | Fire Control/2 | — | 4 |
| Cargo | Configurable Space | 1 | — |
| TOTAL: MCr 21.971 | | | |

CREW

PILOT,
SECOND CREWMEMBER

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Cr1830.917/month

PURCHASE COST
MCr21.971

POWER REQUIREMENTS

14

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

3

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

—

SYSTEMS

—

JUMP DRIVE

2

SENSORS

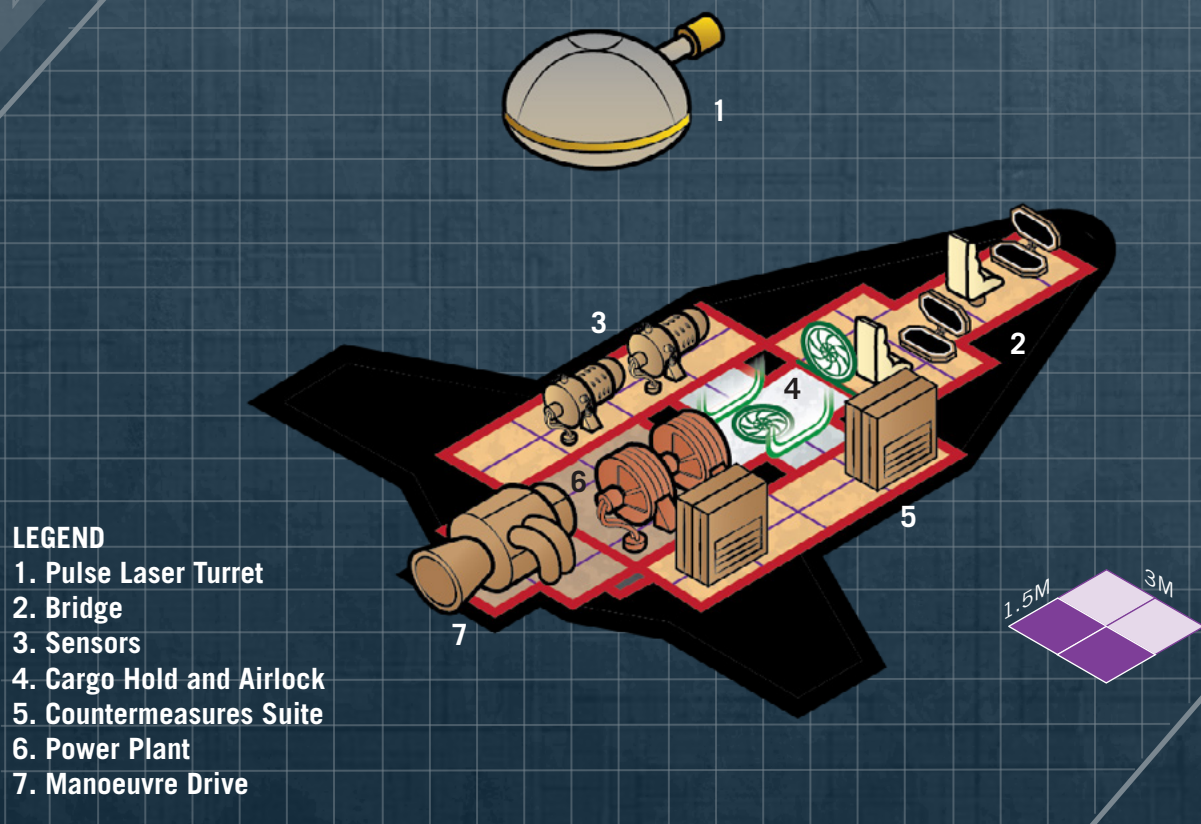
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WEAPONS

6

HULL POINTS





The *Kestrel* is the latest in a series of designs intended to operate within and above an atmosphere. Whilst not as efficient as a pure space fighter, the *Kestrel* offers its operators advantages in logistics and procurement. A single design can be produced in bulk to fulfil many needs from ground-based orbital interception to protection of a planetary assault force. It is also reasonably effective in the pure space combat role. *Kestrels* are thus extremely common. They may operate alongside other, specialist, designs or may be the only type present.

The *Kestrel* is tough and fast, and armed with a turreted pulse laser. This is effective only against small or lightly armoured targets but can be used in a point defence role to protect a parent craft from missile or small-craft attack. The *Kestrel* also has a significant electronic warfare capability included in its standard design configuration but many variants do not carry this. Indeed, the standard or baseline model is less common than some of the variants.

Kestrel Standard Model: Two-seat multirole fighter capable of operating in space or atmosphere. The second crewmember may be a gunner or an electronic

warfare operator, in which case the weapon is normally locked and fired by the pilot, or instructed to engage automatically on a pre-selected pattern.

Kestrel Fighter: The commonest variant of the *Kestrel*, the fighter variant has no countermeasures suite and is MCr4 cheaper, at MCr17.971.

Kestrel Leader: The leader variant adds a third crew station in the vessel's configurable space, for the use of a squadron leader, and mounts Improved sensors. This adds MCr0.2 to the cost and draws a little more power but is well within the capabilities of the craft. The leader is otherwise similar in capability to the standard model. Operators who choose the fighter variant often include a number of leaders among their force to provide electronic warfare and battle coordination support.

Kestrel Trainer: The trainer variant has a third crew station, equivalent to a single cockpit, in the configurable area. This is used by an instructor to monitor the crew or salvage a situation that has gone badly wrong.

STRIKE BOAT

SCORPION-CLASS

TL14

TONS

COST (MCr)

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Hull | 75 tons, Standard | — | 3.75 |
| Armour | Bonded Superdense, Armour: 14 | 8.4 | 4.2 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 9 | 6.75 | 13.5 |
| Power Plant | Fusion (TL12), Power 120 | 8 | 8 |
| Fuel Tanks | 4 weeks of operation | 0.8 | — |
| Bridge | Standard Bridge | 6 | 0.5 |
| Computer | Computer/25 | — | 10 |
| Sensors | Military Grade | 2 | 4.1 |
| | Countermeasures Suite | 2 | 4 |
| Weapons | Torpedo Barbette | 5 | 3 |
| | Single Turret (pulse laser) | 1 | 1.2 |
| | Nuclear Damper | 10 | 10 |
| Ammunition | Torpedo Storage (6 torpedoes) | 2 | — |
| Armoured Bulkheads | Bridge, Power Plant, M-drive, Torpedo Stowage | 2.275 | 0.455 |
| Systems | UNREP System (20 tons/hour) | 1 | 0.5 |
| Staterooms | Standard x1 | 4 | 0.5 |
| | Cabin Space | 6 | 0.3 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/0 | — | — |
| | Fire Control/2 | — | 4 |
| Cargo | Configurable Space | 9.775 | 0 |

TOTAL: MCr 68.005

CREW

CAPTAIN/PILOT, GUNNER,
TECHNICIAN, ENGINEER

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Cr5667.08/month

PURCHASE COST
MCr68.005

POWER REQUIREMENTS

68

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

15

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

—

SYSTEMS

—

JUMP DRIVE

2

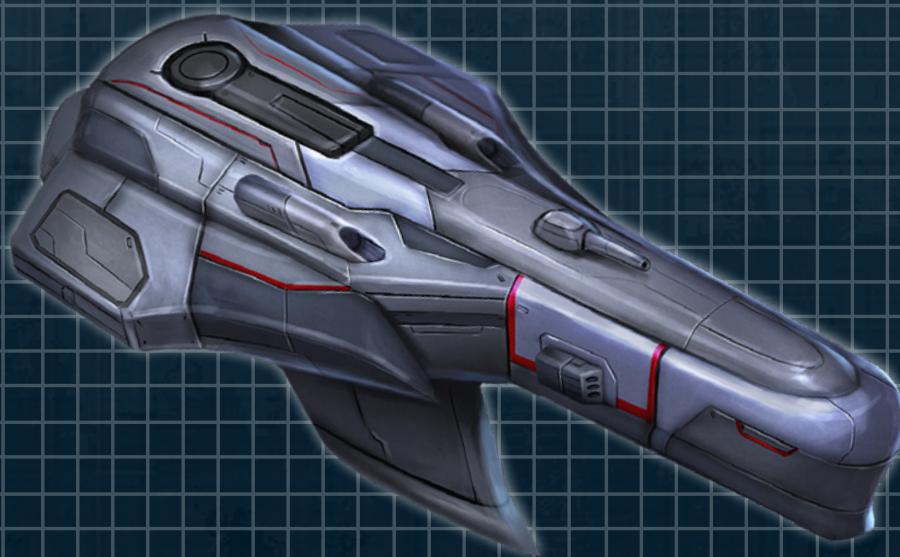
SENSORS

26

WEAPONS

30

HULL POINTS





The *Scorpion*-class is in common use with Home Forces as well as the Confederation Navy. It is, first and foremost, a torpedo delivery system. Fast and well armoured, the *Scorpion* is reasonably survivable in this role and can cause serious damage when deployed en masse. The turreted pulse laser is primarily used for self-defence against fighters.

The *Scorpion*-class is not intended to make long patrols; it is a strike platform deployed shortly before contact with the enemy. A small area of cabin space and a single stateroom allow the crew to rest, with two crewmembers using the cabin at a time on a 'hot bunking' arrangement. This does allow the vessel to be prepositioned to ambush an intruder but is wearying for the crew.

The standard variant has a crew of four. Usually the pilot is in charge of the craft, supported by a gunner, an engineer and a technician who runs the nuclear dampers and electronic countermeasures. A security variant exists, which adds a second crew cabin and some living space in the configurable area, along with a 'ready room' where a boarding party can be prepared. This is still an overcrowded design for long patrols, since additional personnel must be carried. Nevertheless, the high acceleration of the *Scorpion* makes it useful as an interceptor. It can chase down contacts that may try to slip through a blockade or get to a planetside landing area before a customs ship can catch them. Vessels purchased for this role usually do not have nuclear dampers and may trade the torpedo barquette for a second pulse laser turret.

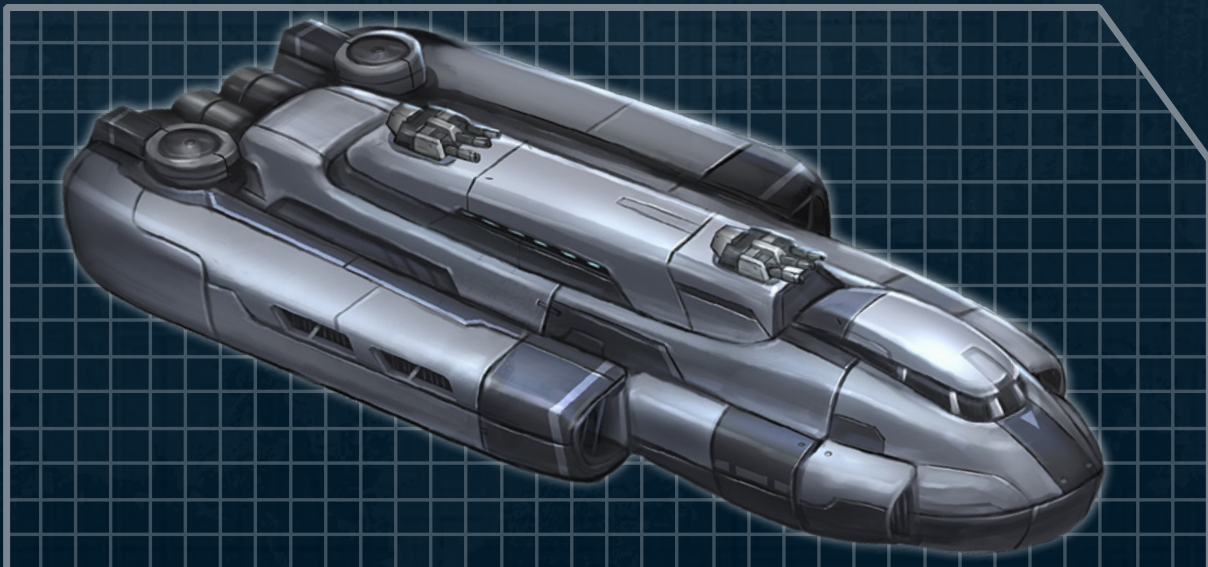
COURIER VESSEL

MERCURY-CLASS

| TL14 | | TONS | COST (MCr) |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Hull | 300 tons, Standard | — | 15 |
| Armour | Bonded Superdense, Armour: 2 | 4.8 | 2.4 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 6, (very advanced, energy efficient x2) | 18 | 45 |
| Jump Drive | Jump-4 (advanced, energy efficient) | 35 | 52.5 |
| Power Plant | Fusion (TL12), Power 330 | 22 | 22 |
| Fuel Tanks | J-4, 4 weeks of operation | 122.2 | — |
| Bridge | Holographic Controls | 20 | 1.875 |
| Computer | Computer/30 | — | 20 |
| Sensors | Improved | 3 | 4.3 |
| | Countermeasures Suite | 2 | 4 |
| | Enhanced Signal Processing | 2 | 8 |
| Weapons | Triple Turrets (pulse lasers, sandcaster) x2 | 2 | 5.5 |
| Systems | Armoury | 1 | 0.25 |
| | Vault | 12 | 6 |
| | Briefing Room (in vault) | (4) | 0.5 |
| | Library (in vault) | (4) | 4 |
| | Mail Distribution Array (TL13) | 20 | 10 |
| Staterooms | Standard x8 | 32 | 4 |
| Common Areas | | 4 | 0.4 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/0 | — | — |
| | Jump Control/5 | — | 0.5 |
| | Library | — | — |
| Cargo | (in vault) | (4) | — |
| TOTAL: MCr 223.425 | | | |

120

HULL POINTS



CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOT, ASTROGATOR,
ENGINEERS X3, GUNNERS X2

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr18618.75/month

• • • • •

PURCHASE COST

MCr223.425

POWER REQUIREMENTS

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| 90 | 60 | — |
| MANOEUVRE DRIVE | BASIC SHIP SYSTEMS | SYSTEMS |
| 90 | 4 | 68 |
| JUMP DRIVE | SENSORS | WEAPONS |

The *Mercury*-class has been described as a set of drives with a bridge bolted on, which is a reasonable description. It is capable of a single 4-parsec jump and has very impressive in-system mobility. Combined with light armour and a modest weapons fit the *Mercury* is survivable in its intended role but is certainly not cheap.

The *Mercury* is intended to fulfil the roles of a fleet courier for naval operations and to provide secure transport for sensitive information and items between installations and member governments. Most examples are in service with the Confederation Navy but significant numbers are operated by governments and corporate bodies that wish to be ahead of the general distribution of information. The vessel is equipped with a mail distribution array.

Hull form is a 'humped cylinder', with fuel tanks surrounding the aft part of the main hull. The large drive and power plant chambers are located aft, with the bridge and electronics suite forward. Between these are the small living quarters. An armoured vault containing the ship's computer and a library/office/working space forms a small upper deck accessed from the living area. Part of the vault space is configurable, allowing the ship to carry a small amount of cargo or to expand the working area as required.

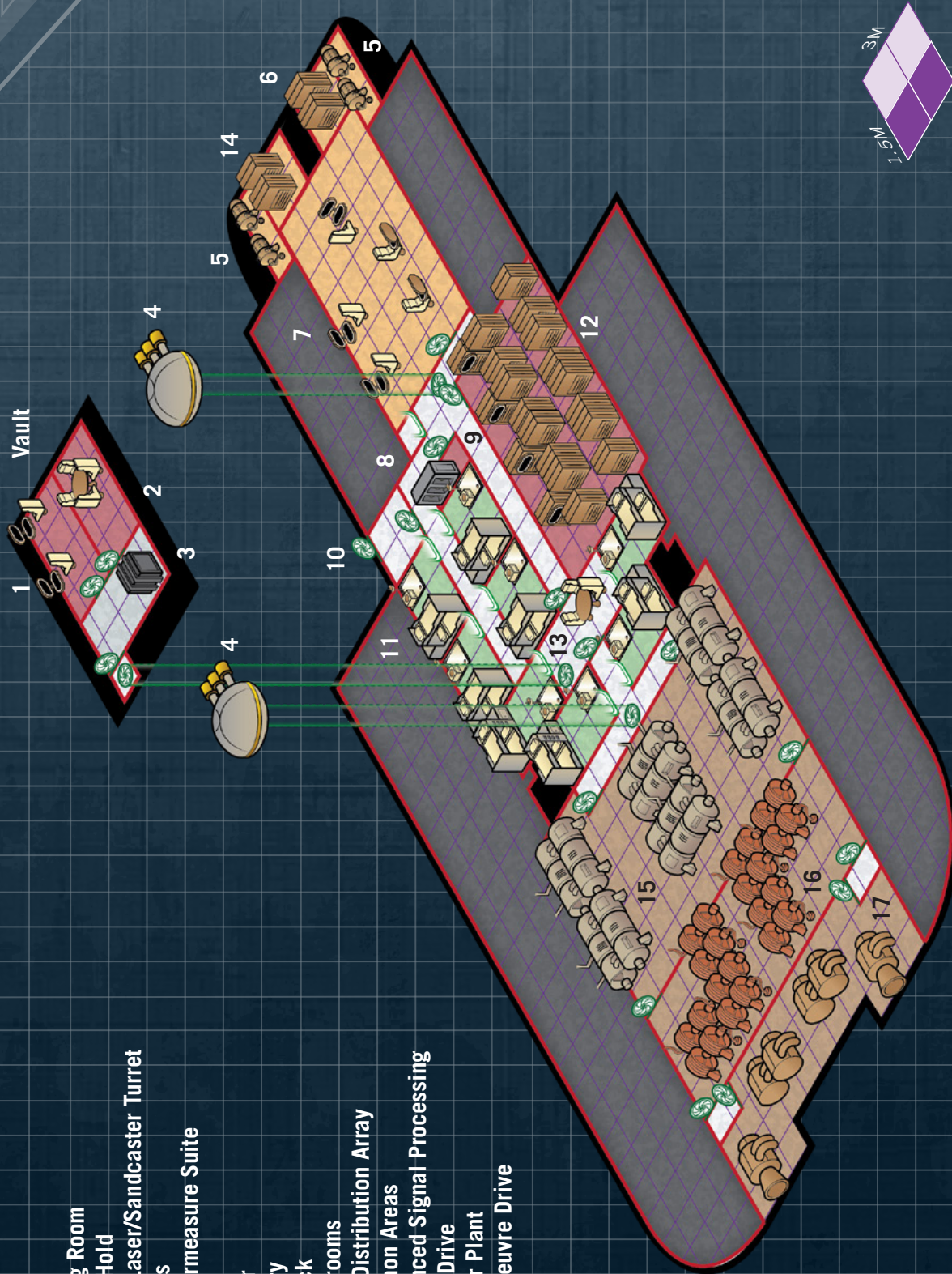
Nominal crew is eight but a *Mercury* will normally carry 11 to 12 personnel. The ship's commanding officer is typically a naval lieutenant or sublieutenant

— couriers rarely undertake any sort of independent mission but instead ply back and forth between installations and task forces. A liaison officer, typically also of lieutenant or sublieutenant rank, is also carried. This officer officially has no shipboard role but will assist where necessary. Both officers have a cabin each. This leaves six cabins for the crew and additional personnel. Two gunners are normally carried, along with a pilot and three engineers to run the oversized drives. The commanding officer normally serves as astrogator and a great many capital ship astrogators cut their teeth plotting jumps for a *Mercury*.

If no additional personnel are assigned, it is possible for the crew to have their own cabins. However, more commonly the liaison officer will have two, or sometimes more, bodyguards and an electronic warfare or communications technician might also be carried. Maximum complement is considered to be 14 — two officers with a cabin each and 12 enlisted personnel in shared cabins. This makes for a crowded ship, especially if access to the vault is restricted as regulations require. Nevertheless, fully-loaded Mercuries are common, as are examples that have been repurposed to act as transports for specialist officers. Naval Intelligence makes extensive use of the class, mainly for mundane communications duties but also as a fast utility vessel, which blends in with other routine naval traffic.

LEGEND

1. Library
2. Briefing Room
3. Cargo Hold
4. Pulse Laser/Sandcaster Turret
5. Sensors
6. Countermeasure Suite
7. Bridge
8. Fresher
9. Armoury
10. Airlock
11. Staterooms
12. Mail Distribution Array
13. Common Areas
14. Enhanced Signal Processing
15. Jump Drive
16. Power Plant
17. Manoeuvre Drive



FLEET DESTROYER

DARING-CLASS

| TL14 | | TONS | COST (MCr) |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Hull | 50,00 tons, Standard | — | 250 |
| Armour | Bonded Superdense, Armour:14 | 560 | 280 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 7 (very advanced, energy efficient x2) | 350 | 875 |
| Jump Drive | Jump 3 (very advanced, fuel efficient x2) | 380 | 712.5 |
| Power Plant | Fusion (TL12), Power 3,900 | 260 | 260 |
| Fuel Tanks | J-3, 8 weeks of operation | 1,402 | — |
| Bridge | Standard Bridges (holographic controls) x2 | 120 | 62.5 |
| Computer | Core/50 | — | 60 |
| Sensors | Improved | 3 | 4.3 |
| | Countermeasures Suite | 2 | 4 |
| | Enhanced Signal Processing | 2 | 8 |
| | Deep Penetration Scanners | 50 | 50 |
| Weapons | Large Particle Accelerator Bay | 500 | 120 |
| | Medium Missile Bay | 100 | 25 |
| | Small Torpedo Bay | 50 | 3 |
| | Fusion Gun Barbettes x8 | 40 | 32 |
| | Triple Turrets (pulse lasers, sandcaster) x30 | 30 | 97.5 |
| | Point Defence Batteries (type III) x2 | 40 | 40 |
| | Nuclear Dampers x2 | 20 | 20 |
| Ammunition | Missile Stowage (576 missiles) | 48 | — |
| | Torpedo Stowage (144 torpedoes) | 48 | — |
| | Sandcaster Canister Stowage (20 canisters) x15 | 15 | — |
| Armoured Bulkheads | Power Plant, Jump Drive, Manoeuvre Drive, Bridge, Particle Accelerator Bay | 161 | 32.2 |
| Systems | Armouries x4 | 4 | 1 |
| | Brig | 4 | 0.25 |
| | Medical Bays x2 | 8 | 4 |
| | Briefing Room | 4 | 0.5 |
| | UNREP System (100 tons/hour) | 5 | 2.5 |
| | Workshop | 6 | 0.9 |
| | Repair Drones | 50 | 10 |
| | Training Facilities | 20 | 4 |
| | Fuel Processor (600 tons/day) | 30 | 1.5 |
| | Docking Space (150 tons) | 165 | 41.25 |
| Staterooms | High x2 | 12 | 1.6 |
| | Standard x70 | 280 | 35 |
| | Barracks x10 | 20 | 1 |
| Common Areas | | 200 | 150 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/0 | — | — |
| | Jump Control/2 | — | 0.2 |
| | Advanced Fire Control/3 | — | 18 |
| | Anti-Hijack/3 | — | 10 |
| | Electronic Warfare/2 | — | 24 |
| | Launch Solution/3 | — | 16 |
| | Point Defence/1 | — | 8 |
| | Screen Optimiser | — | 5 |
| | Virtual Gunner/1 | — | 10 |
| Cargo | | 11 | — |

TOTAL: MCr 3280.7

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOTS X3,
ASTROGATOR, ENGINEERS X28,
MAINTENANCE X10, MEDICS X2,
GUNNERS X48, STEWARDS X4,
ADMINISTRATORS X5,
OFFICERS X10

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Cr273391.67/month

• • • • •
PURCHASE COST
MCr3280.7

POWER REQUIREMENTS

1,000

**BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS**

—

SYSTEMS

500

**MANOEUVRE
DRIVE**

1,500

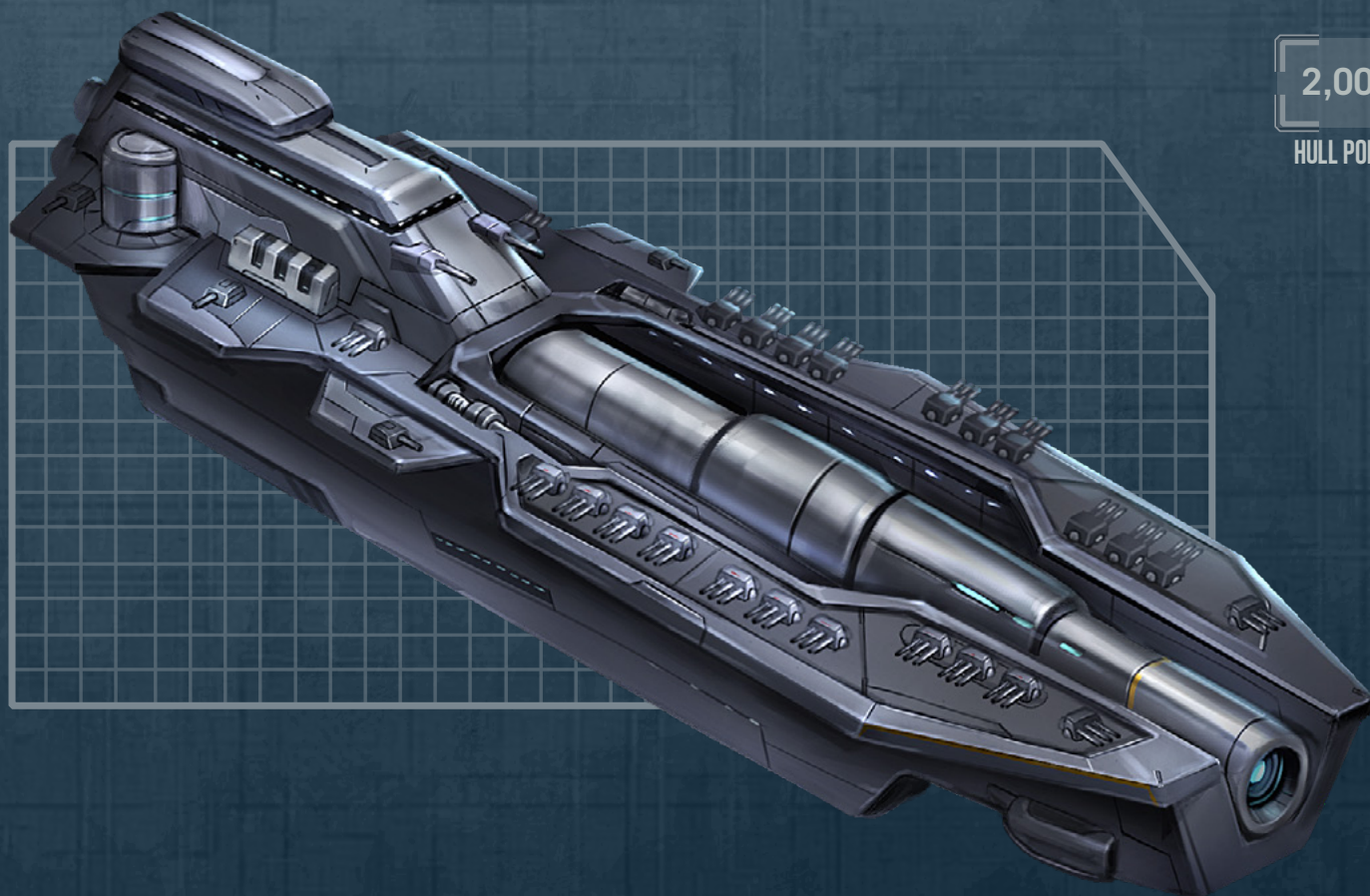
JUMP DRIVE

4

SENSORS

682

WEAPONS



2,000

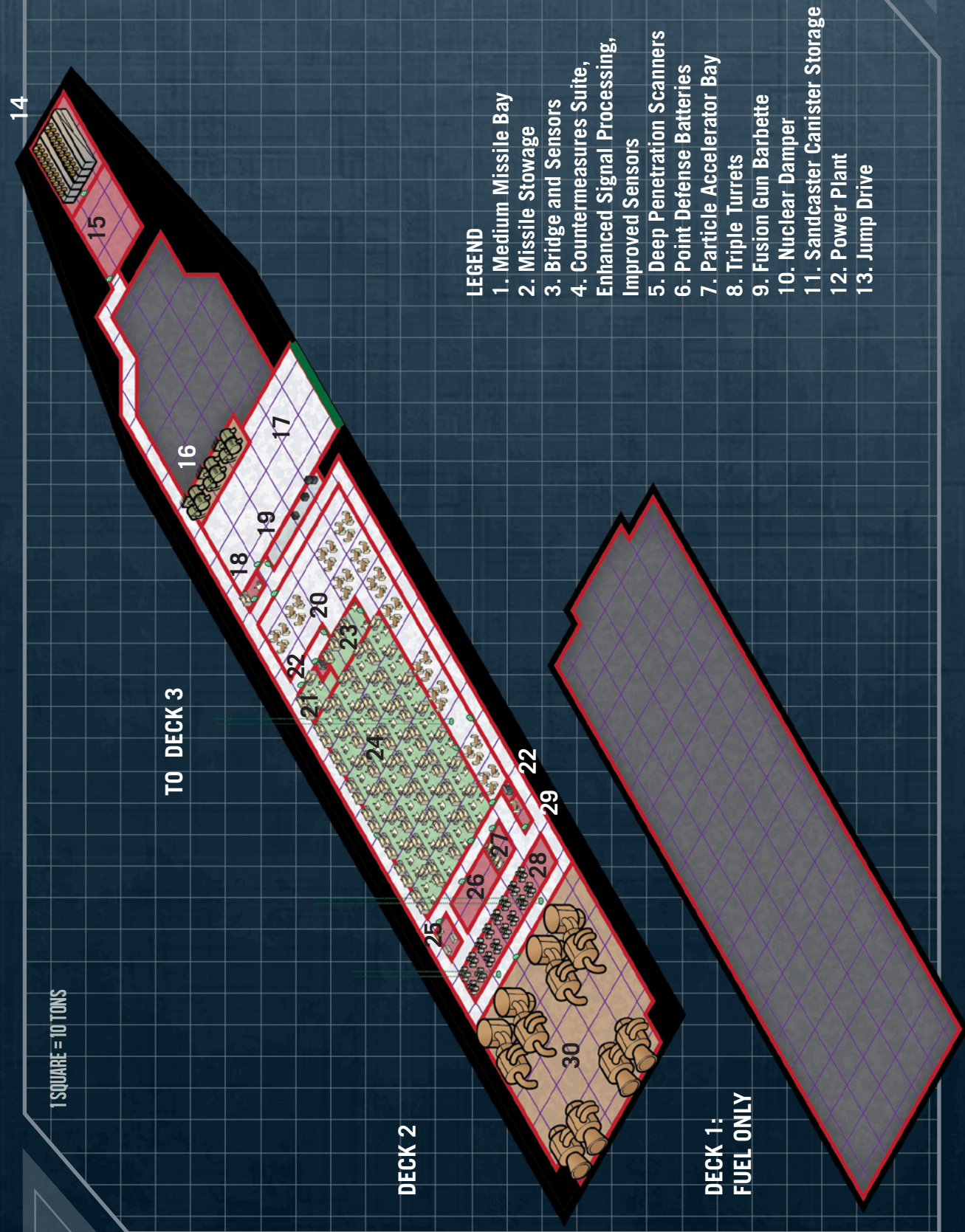
HULL POINTS

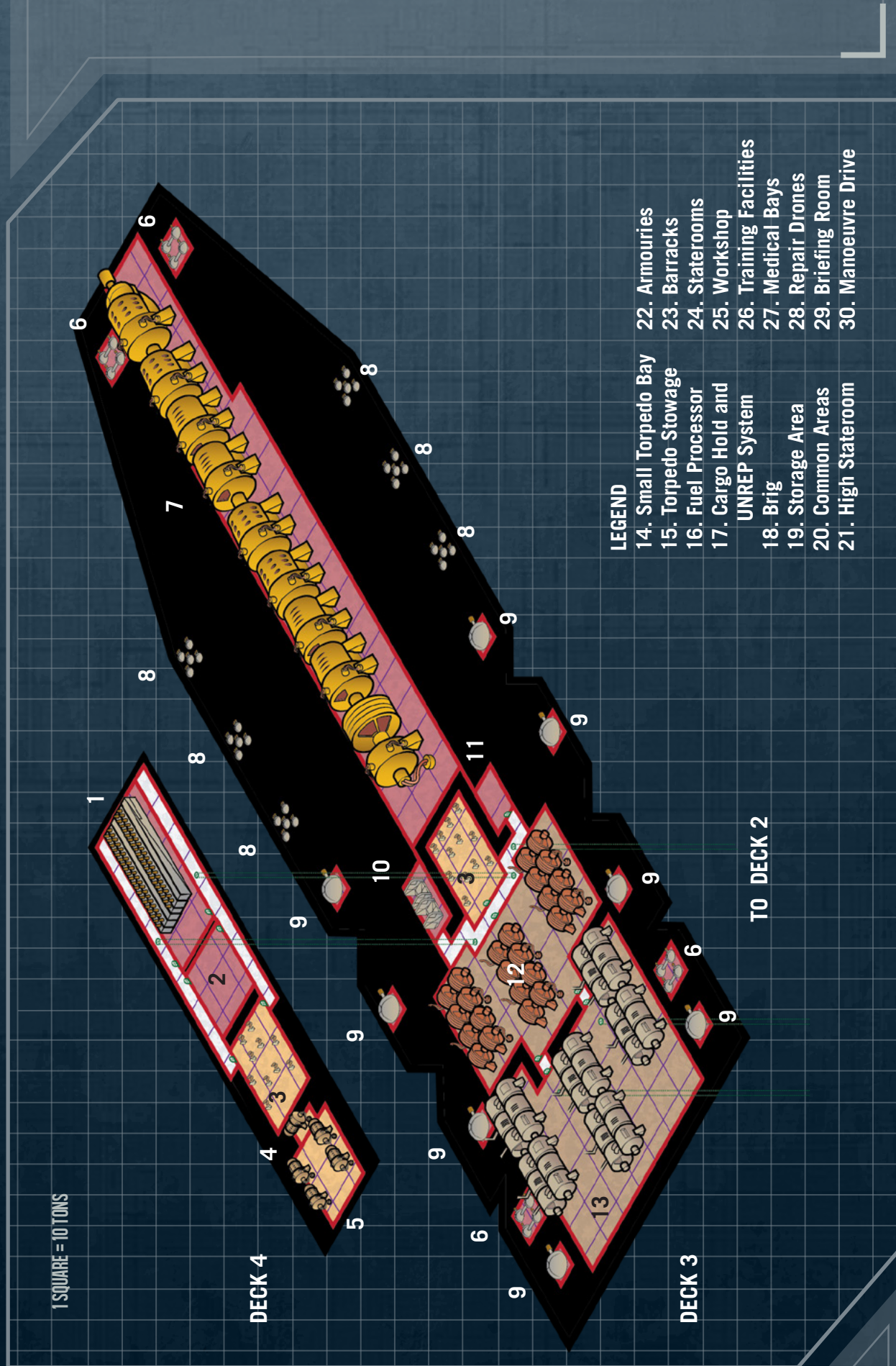
The *Daring*-class is named for famous destroyers throughout history. For this reason, it includes a proportion with distinctly 'Imperial' names, since these ships passed into the Confederation's history whilst the Solomani people were part of the Imperium. Like many other classes, the *Darings* are constructed at TL14 in order to maximise production. The design is used extensively by the Confederation Navy but also forms the backbone of many Home Forces navies.

The *Daring* is a fleet vessel, capable of offensive operations, solo or as part of a task force. It can serve as an escort to a major warship but would normally be considered part of an offensive team led by the major ship rather than a mere protector. Escort destroyers do exist but they tend to be of lower performance. The *Darings* are 'fleet-mobile', in that they can match the jump-3 performance of the main combat units and are fast enough to act as scouts and support vessels even when operating with a battlecruiser.

Primary armament is a large particle accelerator bay arranged as a 'pocket spinal mount', with a missile bay mounted in a dorsal hump and a smaller torpedo bay under the 'chin'. A secondary battery of fusion guns gives heavy close-range firepower, with defensive weaponry arranged in standard fashion. This takes the form of 15 two-turret batteries, each turret mounting a pair of pulse lasers and a sandcaster.

The *Daring* carries a platoon of marines on many of its deployments, either to secure a disabled enemy vessel or undertake small-scale groundside operations. In-keeping with Solomani Navy practice it also carries a team of dedicated stewards. These personnel can undertake other duties such as damage control and general maintenance but the Confederation Navy believes its personnel perform better with regular meals prepared by experts rather than reheated ration packs for months on end.





BATTLE MONITOR

MURAT-CLASS

| TL15 | | TONS | COST (MCR) |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Hull | 100,000 tons, Standard | — | 5000 |
| Armour | Bonded Superdense, Armour: 14 | 11,200 | 5600 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 6 (energy efficient x3) | 6,000 | 18000 |
| Power plant | Fusion (TL15), Power 54,000 | 2,700 | 5400 |
| Fuel Tanks | 40 weeks of operation | 2,700 | — |
| Bridge | Standard Bridges (holographic controls) x2 | 120 | 1500 |
| Computer | Core/90 | — | 120 |
| Sensors | Improved Countermeasures Suite | 3 2 | 4.3 4 |
| Weapons | Spinal Meson Gun (TL15, 8DD) | 24,000 | 10400 |
| | Large Particle Accelerator Bays x12 | 6,000 | 1440 |
| | Large Missile Bays x12 | 6,000 | 1500 |
| | Fusion Barbettes x 60 | 300 | 240 |
| | Triple Turrets (pulse lasers, sandcaster) x400 | 400 | 1300 |
| | Point Defence Batteries (type III) x12 | 240 | 240 |
| | Nuclear Dampers x40 | 400 | 400 |
| | Meson Screens x20 | 200 | 400 |
| Ammunition | Missile Stowage (5,760 missiles) x12 | 5,760 | — |
| | Sandcaster Canister Stowage (20 canisters) x400 | 400 | — |
| Armoured Bulkheads | Power Plant, M-Drive, Spinal Mount, Particle and Missile Bays, and Ammunition | 5,176 | 1035.2 |
| Systems | Armouries x25 | 25 | 6.25 |
| | Brigs x8 | 32 | 2 |
| | Medical Bays x10 | 40 | 20 |
| | Briefing Rooms x12 | 48 | 6 |
| | UNREP System (5,000 tons/hour) | 250 | 125 |
| | Workshops x 20 | 120 | 18 |
| | Repair Drones | 1,000 | 200 |
| | Recovery Deck (500 tons) | 5,000 | 2500 |
| | Hangar (2000 tons) | 4,000 | 800 |
| Staterooms | High x12 | 72 | 9.6 |
| | Standard x500 | 2,000 | 250 |
| Common Areas | | 1,000 | 100 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/0 | — | — |
| | Advanced Fire Control/3 | — | 18 |
| | Anti-Hijack/3 | — | 10 |
| | Electronic Warfare/2 | — | 24 |
| | Launch Solution/3 | — | 16 |
| | Point Defence/1 | — | 8 |
| | Screen Optimiser | — | 5 |
| | Virtual Gunner/1 | — | 10 |
| Cargo | | 14,812 | — |

TOTAL: MCR 56711.35

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOTS X3,
ASTROGATOR, ENGINEERS X105,
MAINTENANCE X75, MEDICS X16,
GUNNERS X275, STEWARDS X12,
ADMINISTRATORS X40,
OFFICERS X55

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
MCR4.73/month

• • • • •
PURCHASE COST
MCR56711.35

POWER REQUIREMENTS

20,000 **—**

**BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS**

SYSTEMS

15,000 **—**

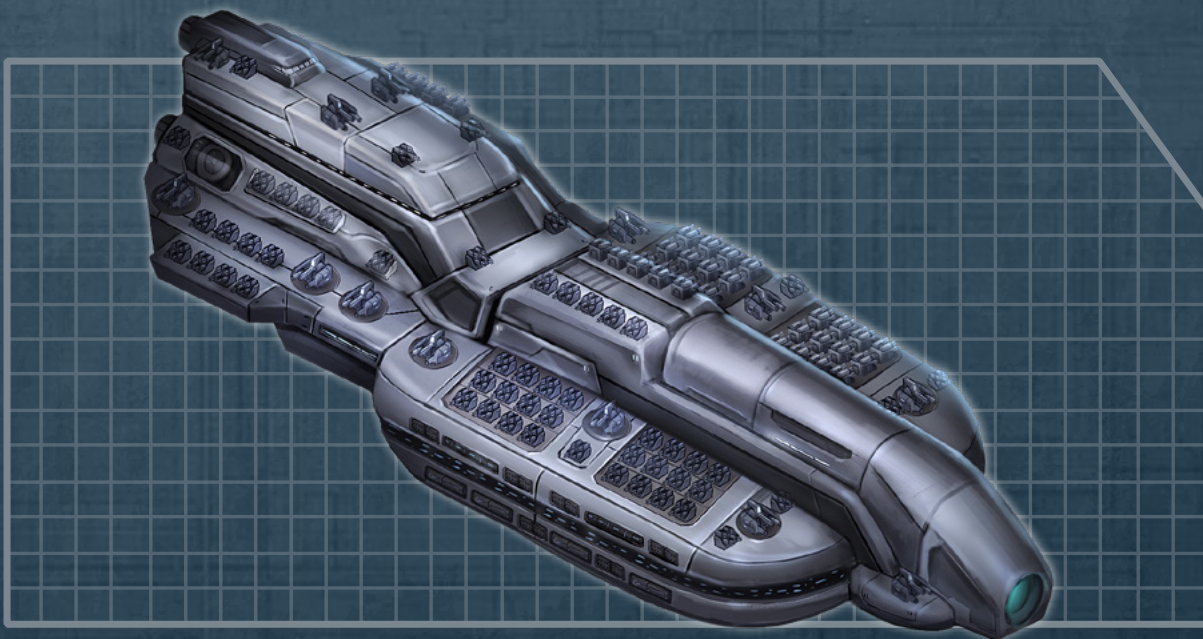
**MANOEUVRE
DRIVE**

JUMP DRIVE

4 **12,960**

SENSORS

WEAPONS



66,666

HULL POINTS

The *Murat*-class was designed from the outset to outgun an Imperial battleship in the 200,000-ton range. Requiring no jump fuel or expensive jump drive, it is entirely given over to weapon systems and defences. Few Home Forces formations can afford such a powerful ship; the *Murats* are typically deployed as defensive assets by the Confederation Navy. They defend major naval bases and can be moved by Carnot tenders to cover a threatened system. In the event of a rebellion, a Carnot could drop off a pair of *Murats* then go back to base for more monitors or a logistics package to support them. This system is flexible but slow, requiring good intelligence to get monitors where they need to be.

The *Murat*-class is named for prominent cavalry commanders, including those that led armoured and grav forces throughout Solomani history. It is fast for such a large ship and well-armoured. Unlike its supporting tenders and many other Confederation warships, it is built at TL15, which limits the number of yards that can produce the *Murat*. Most ships are built at TL14 to allow a wider availability of spares and the capability of undertaking construction and repairs closer to the combat area.

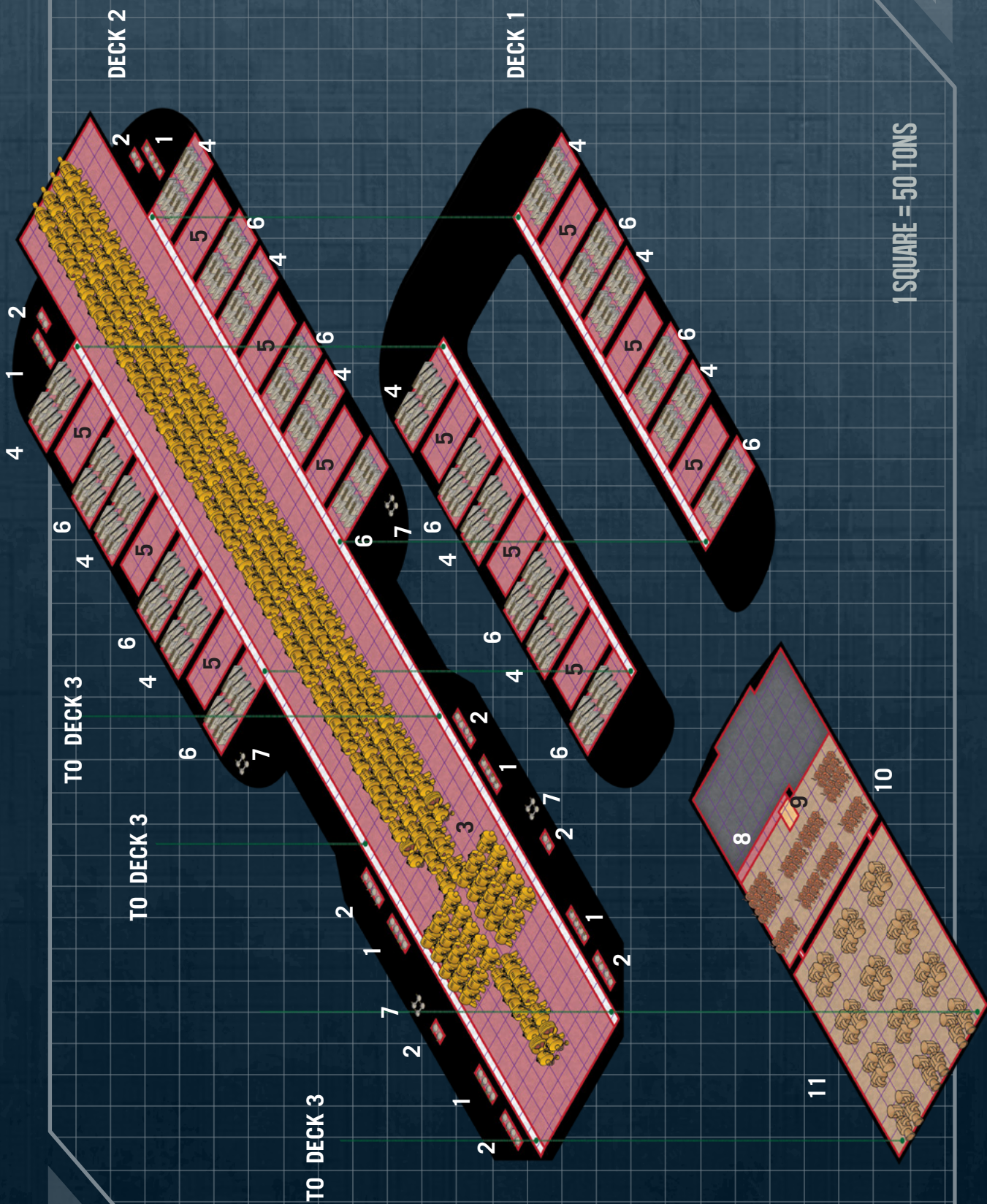
Primary armament is a huge (nominally 30,000-ton but built in a compact manner using very high-technology techniques) meson gun running the length of the cylindrical main hull. This is backed up by a secondary armament of particle accelerators and missile bays. Twelve large particle accelerator bays are mounted, six each side, along the hull. They are interspersed with

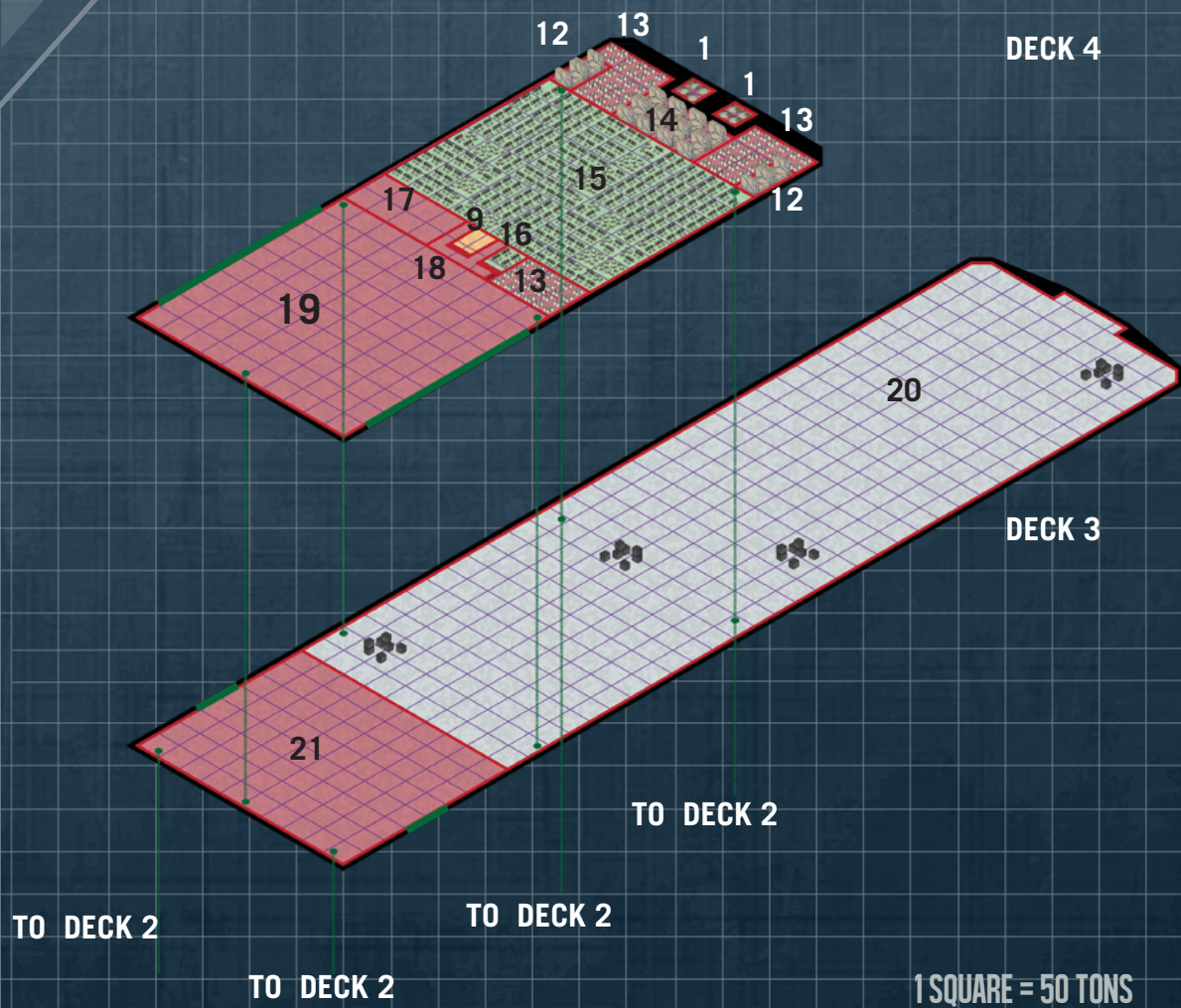
12 large missile bays, also mounted six each side. The missile bays each have a dedicated magazine containing four complete reloads for the bay.

A tertiary armament of fusion gun barbettes, grouped into 20 batteries of three, is primarily intended for close-in defence against destroyers and similar light combatants. The defensive armament follows current Confederation Navy practice and consists of multirole sandcaster/laser turrets in batteries of four. Point defences and screens are heavy and as a last-ditch defence the hull is heavily armoured and well compartmentalised with armoured bulkheads.

The *Murat* is transported from system-to-system by a tender but once there it is expected to be self-sufficient for long periods of time. Crew accommodation is relatively generous and the design includes an allocation of configurable space. Some of this is always retained as stowage for supplies but depending on the intended deployment the vessel may gain additional accommodation or systems. The main cargo area is adjacent to the hangars, permitting some of it to be converted to small craft maintenance and docking areas.

Small craft capacity is 2,000 tons without using any configurable space. The *Murat* is not intended to operate wings of fighters, so for the most part its hangars will contain shuttles and couriers, possibly with a few armed small craft as escorts for them. Those governments that operate these vessels sometimes convert them into in-system flagships, using the configurable space for a much larger complement of fighters and shuttles as well as luxurious facilities for the local forces' high command.





LEGEND

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Triple Turrets | 13. Repair Drones |
| 2. Fusion Barbettes | 14. Nuclear Damper |
| 3. Spinal Meson Gun | 15. Staterooms and Common Areas |
| 4. Large Missile Bay | 16. High Staterooms |
| 5. Missile Storage | 17. Sandcaster Canister Storage |
| 6. Particle Accelerator Bay | 18. Armouries, Brig, Medical Bays, Briefing Rooms |
| 7. Point Defense Batteries | 19. Recovery Deck |
| 8. Workshops | 20. Cargo Hold and UNREP System |
| 9. Bridge, Sensors, Countermeasures Suite | 21. Hangar |
| 10. Power Plant | |
| 11. Manoeuvre Drive | |
| 12. Meson Screens | |

LOGISTICS BARGE

MOUNTAIN-CLASS

| TL14 | | TONS | COST (MCR) |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Hull | 100,000 tons, Standard | — | 5000 |
| Armour | Bonded Superdense, Armour: 4 | 3,200 | 1600 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 2 | 2,000 | 4000 |
| Power Plant | Fusion (TL12), Power 54,000 | 3,600 | 3600 |
| Fuel Tanks | 40 weeks of operation | 3,600 | — |
| Bridge | Standard Bridges (holographic controls) x2 | 120 | 1500 |
| Computer | Core/90 | — | 120 |
| Sensors | Improved | 3 | 4.3 |
| | Countermeasures Suite | 2 | 4 |
| Weapons | Large Missile Bays x4 | 2,000 | 500 |
| | Fusion Barbettes x36 | 180 | 144 |
| | Triple Turrets (pulse lasers, sandcaster) x120 | 120 | 390 |
| | Point Defence Batteries (type III) x2 | 40 | 40 |
| | Nuclear Dampers x10 | 100 | 100 |
| | Meson Screens x4 | 40 | 80 |
| Ammunition | Missile Stowage (1,440 missiles) x4 | 480 | — |
| | Sandcaster Canister Stowage (20 canisters) x30 | 30 | — |
| Systems | Armouries x200 | 200 | 50 |
| | Brigs x8 | 32 | 2 |
| | Medical Bays x20 | 80 | 40 |
| | Briefing Rooms x12 | 48 | 6 |
| | UNREP System (20,000 tons/hour) | 1,000 | 500 |
| | Workshops x 20 | 120 | 18 |
| | Repair Drones | 1,000 | 200 |
| | Launch Tubes (15 tons) x24 | 3,600 | 1800 |
| | Launch Tubes (75 tons) x8 | 6,000 | 3000 |
| | Recovery Deck (500 tons) | 5,000 | 2500 |
| | Recovery Decks (75 tons) x4 | 3,000 | 1500 |
| | Hangars (6,000 tons) | 12,000 | 2400 |
| | Hangar (4,000 tons) | 8,000 | 1600 |
| Staterooms | High x12 | 72 | 9.6 |
| | Standard x300 | 1,200 | 150 |
| | Barracks x600 | 1,200 | 60 |
| Common Areas | | 1,000 | 100 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/0 | — | — |
| | Advanced Fire Control/3 | — | 18 |
| | Anti-Hijack/3 | — | 10 |
| | Electronic Warfare/2 | — | 24 |
| | Launch Solution/3 | — | 16 |
| | Point Defence/1 | — | 8 |
| | Screen Optimiser | — | 5 |
| | Virtual Gunner/1 | — | 10 |
| Cargo | | 40,933 | — |

TOTAL: MCR 31108.9

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOTS X3,
ASTROGATOR, ENGINEERS X60,
MAINTENANCE X75, MEDICS X16,
GUNNERS X60, STEWARDS X24,
ADMINISTRATORS X40,
OFFICERS X12

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
MCR2.5924/month

• • • • •
PURCHASE COST
MCR31108.9

POWER REQUIREMENTS

20,000 **—**

**BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS**

SYSTEMS

20,000 **—**

**MANOEUVRE
DRIVE**

JUMP DRIVE

4 **2,380**

SENSORS

WEAPONS

66,666

HULL POINTS



66,666

HULL POINTS

The *Mountain*-class was developed to fit the same tender attachments as a *Murat*-class battle monitor. It is not a combat ship, although it carries a reasonable defensive armament. Originally, the *Mountain* was to be purely a logistics vessel, carrying fuel and supplies for a task force. It has been widely modified, creating several sub-classes optimised for different roles.

The ground operations support variant has additional recovery decks and an enlarged hangar to accommodate assault shuttles and a fighter escort. The usual mix is a 75-ton shuttle and 15-ton *Kestrel*-class aerospace fighters. This variant can carry a battalion sized ground operations force, often converting part of the cargo hold into a training and equipment-maintenance area. A *Mountain*-class is not much of a warship but is entirely sufficient to support a small peacekeeping force for a long period. If dropped off by a tender to carry out this role the barge would normally be protected by a small warship or two.

Armament is essentially defensive. A *Mountain* can deliver a strong enough missile salvo to deter most small combatants and up close its 12 batteries, each

of three fusion gun barbettes, can be deadly. The remainder of the armament is intended to stop missiles and fighters; hull armour is not sufficient to withstand attack by any significant warship.

Despite its limitations the *Mountain* is a highly valued workhorse of the Confederation Navy. It is common for a pair of *Carnot* tenders to drop off three battle monitors and a supporting logistics barge if a threatened system has insufficient facilities to protect the combat units. Where a base is available, such as when the defences of a major world are being augmented, a full four-monitor squadron is deployed and the logistics barge is used elsewhere.

These vessels can also be encountered in systems with a heavy naval presence, engaging in resupply of ships in outsystem station or remote outposts. Some governments have acquired and converted *Mountain* barges to in-system patrol units with a heavy fighter and strike boat complement or as mobile munitions caches that can support a guerrilla campaign by system defence boats if necessary.

1 SQUARE = 50 TONS

TO DECK 4

TO DECK 4

DECK 3

DECK 2

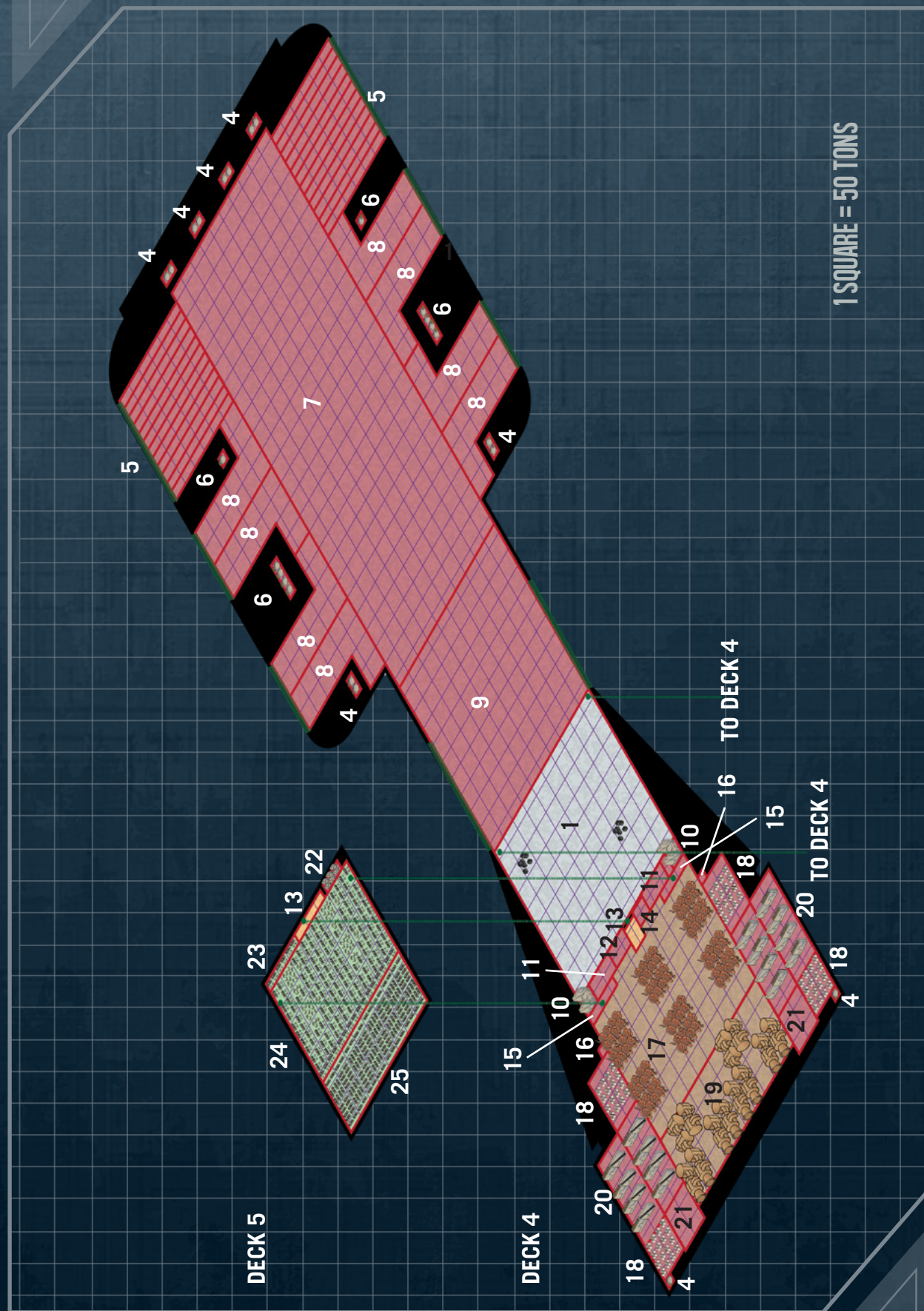
DECK 1

LEGEND

- 1. Cargo and UNREP System
- 2. Hangar
- 3. Recovery Deck
- 4. Fusion Barbettes
- 5. Launch Tubes (15 Tons)
- 6. Triple Turrets
- 7. Hangar

- 8. Launch Tubes (75 Tons)
- 9. Recovery Deck
- 10. Nuclear Damper
- 11. Armouries
- 12. Medical Bays
- 13. Bridge
- 14. Briefing Room
- 15. Workshops

- 16. Sandcaster Canister Stowage
- 17. Power Plant
- 18. Repair Drones
- 19. Manoeuvre Drive
- 20. Missile Bays
- 21. Missile Storage
- 22. Meson Screens
- 23. High Staterooms
- 24. Staterooms and Common Areas
- 25. Barracks



LIGHT CARRIER

ZUIHO-CLASS

| TL14 | | TONS | COST (MCR) |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Hull | 25,000 tons, Standard | — | 1250 |
| Armour | Bonded Superdense, Armour: 4 | 800 | 400 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 4, (very advanced, energy efficient x2) | 1,000 | 2500 |
| Jump Drive | Jump-3 (very advanced, fuel efficient x2) | 1,880 | 3525 |
| Power Plant | Fusion (TL12), Power 30,000 | 2,000 | 2000 |
| Fuel Tanks | J-3, 12 weeks of operation | 7,350 | — |
| Bridge | Standard Bridges (holographic controls) x2 | 120 | 312.5 |
| | Command Bridge | 80 | 187.5 |
| Computer | Core/80 | 0 | 95 |
| Sensors | Improved | 3 | 4.3 |
| | Countermeasures Suite | 2 | 4 |
| | Enhanced Signal Processing | 2 | 8 |
| | Deep Penetration Scanners | 50 | 50 |
| Weapons | Medium Missile Bays x2 | 200 | 50 |
| | Fusion Gun Barbettes x 16 | 80 | 64 |
| | Triple Turrets (pulse lasers, sandcaster) x 400 | 400 | 1300 |
| | Point Defence Batteries (type III) x4 | 80 | 80 |
| | Nuclear Dampers x10 | 100 | 100 |
| | Meson Screens x2 | 40 | 20 |
| Ammunition | Missile Stowage (576 missiles) x2 | 96 | — |
| | Sandcaster Canister Stowage (20 canisters) x100 | 100 | — |
| Systems | Armouries x12 | 12 | 3 |
| | Brigs x4 | 16 | 1 |
| | Medical Bays x20 | 80 | 40 |
| | Briefing Rooms x8 | 32 | 4 |
| | UNREP System (400 tons/hour) | 20 | 10 |
| | Workshops x4 | 24 | 3.6 |
| | Repair Drones | 250 | 50 |
| | Training Facilities | 50 | 10 |
| | Fuel Processor (2,000 tons/day) | 100 | 5 |
| | Launch Tubes (15 tons) x16 | 1,800 | 900 |
| | Recovery Decks (120 tons) x2 | 2,400 | 1200 |
| | Hangars (1,000 tons) x2 | 4,000 | 800 |
| | Docking Space (150 tons) | 165 | 41.25 |
| Staterooms | High x4 | 24 | 3.2 |
| | Standard x250 | 1,000 | 125 |
| | Barracks x120 | 240 | 12 |
| Common Areas | | 400 | 40 |

TOTAL: MCR 15289.55

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOTS X3,
ASTROGATOR, ENGINEERS X50,
MAINTENANCE X20, MEDICS X8,
GUNNERS X220 STEWARDS X12,
ADMINISTRATORS X 5,
OFFICERS X16

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
MCR1.274/month

• • • • •
PURCHASE COST
MCR15289.55

POWER REQUIREMENTS

10,000

**BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS**

SYSTEMS

5,000

**MANOEUVRE
DRIVE**

7,500

JUMP DRIVE

SENSORS

WEAPONS

100

**FUEL
PROCESSOR**

TL14

TONS

COST (MC_R)

Software

Manoeuvre/0

—

—

Jump Control/2

—

0.2

Advanced Fire Control/3

—

18

Anti-Hijack/3

—

10

Electronic Warfare/2

—

24

Launch Solution/3

—

16

Point Defence/1

—

8

Screen Optimiser

—

5

Virtual Gunner/1

—

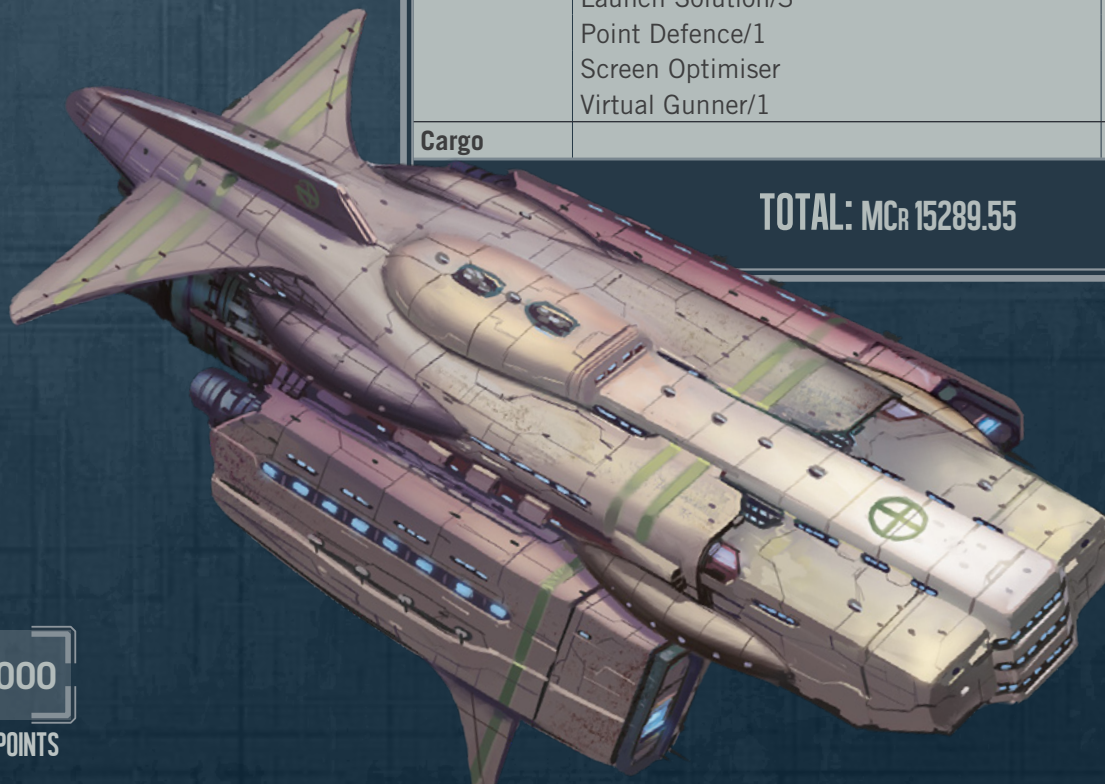
10

Cargo

4

—

TOTAL: MC_R 15289.55



10,000

HULL POINTS

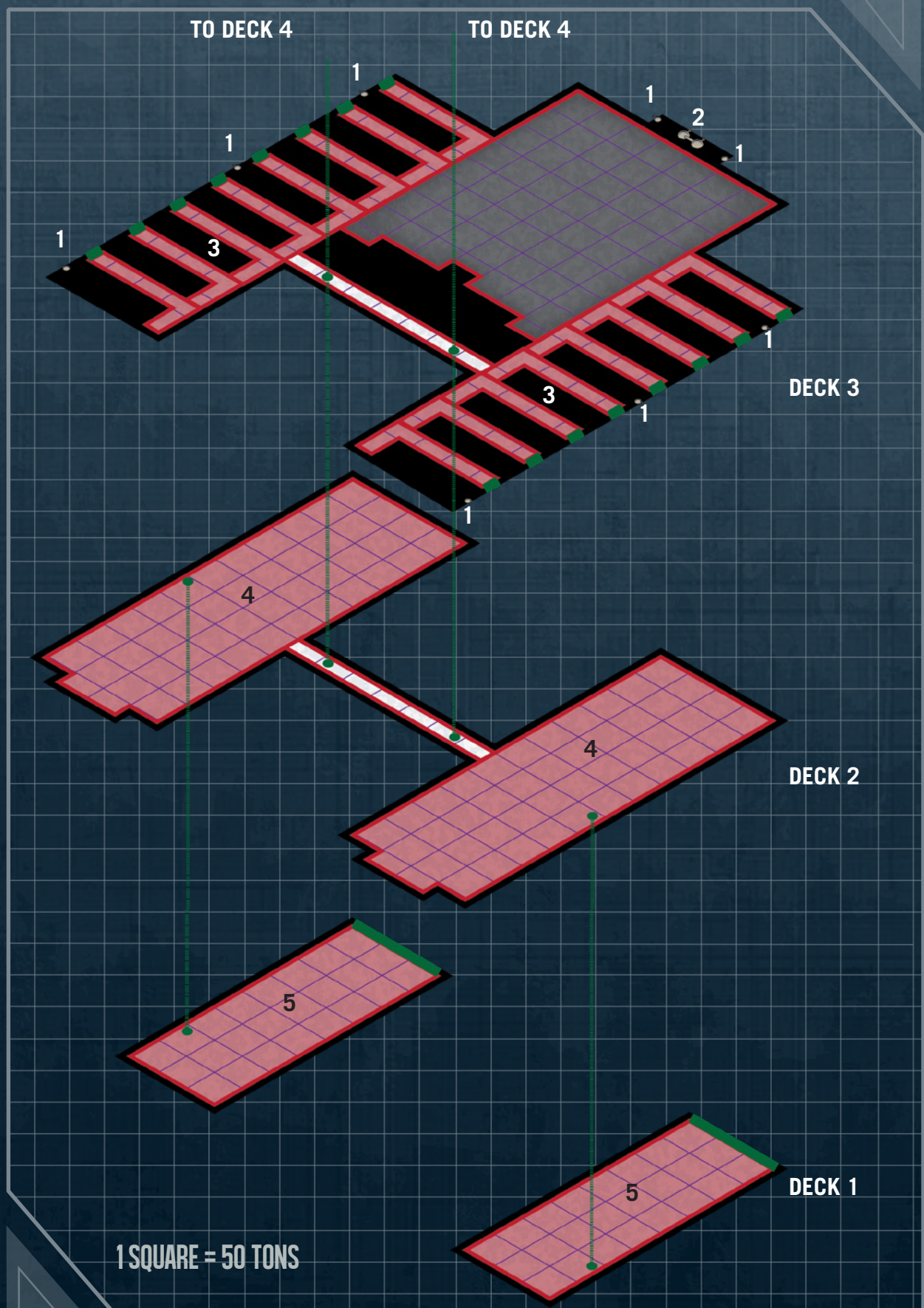
The *Zuiho*-class was designed for fleet operations and thus has the standard 3-parsec jump capability. However, it was envisaged from the outset to be capable of independent operations or acting as the flagship of a task force. As a result compromises were made in terms of the amount of small craft that could be carried.

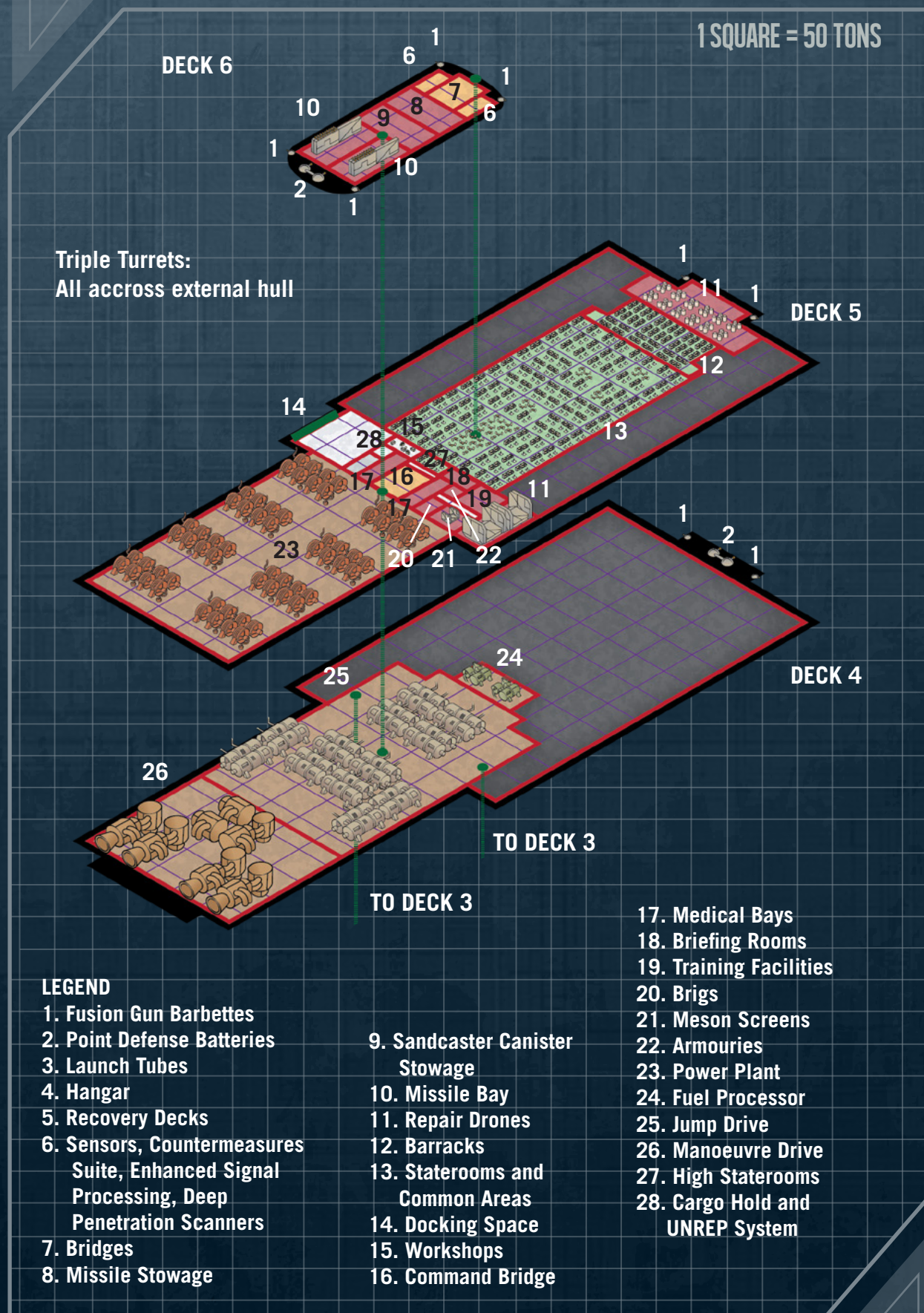
Layout is standard, with a central cylindrical/rectangular main hull and two flight modules offset 'down' and to the sides. Each of these has hangar space for 1,000 tons of craft. Typically this is two wings of three squadrons of eight Kestrel fighters or equivalent, totalling 720 tons in each hangar unit, plus additional shuttles and utility craft. The recovery decks and launch tubes can only accommodate craft up to 15 tons, so shuttle operations are carried out at a slower pace than fighter launches – each hangar unit can launch a squadron of eight fighters simultaneously whilst recovering other craft or carrying out direct docking to the hangars.

When on communications-support duty, it is not uncommon for a *Zuiho* to carry a single wing of fighters in each hangar module plus two 300-ton couriers. Other missions may require greater conversion; a jump-2 model with increased craft capability is in service with the patrol forces and SolSec has its own version optimised for specialist missions. *Zuihos* are also used as exploration support vessels, mainly in a rimward direction.

Like many Solomani Navy vessels the *Zuiho* has a main and secondary bridge. The latter is located just forward of the engineering spaces and acts as a damage control or emergency conning centre. A command bridge is also fitted. It normally directs flight operations but can act as a commodore's command suite when the carrier leads a task force. A barracks for ground troops or other personnel is also shipped. Typically no more than a company of marines or other troops are carried but there is sufficient accommodation for up to 300 personnel. *Zuihos* are commonly used as training ships, with cadets serving aboard one as part of their advanced training.

Armament is defensive in nature, with a pair of missile bays carried in a dorsal hump and four batteries of four fusion gun barbets along the dorsal and flank surfaces of the main hull. Four hundred dual-purpose laser/sandcaster turrets are mounted in groups of four over the whole hull, with point defences as a backup. As the flagship for a force of destroyers, the *Zuiho* can be an effective battle platform but its primary role is to protect logistics ships and other assets, or deal with non-warfighting problems that require a naval presence. Thus it is more likely a *Zuiho* will be encountered enforcing a blockade or supporting ground forces on a captured world than striking against enemy fleets. It is however a potentially effective raider, capable of causing mayhem with fighter strikes against enemy shipping then retiring to a safe location.





NAVAL TENDER

CARNOT-CLASS

| TL14 | | TONS | COST (MCR) |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------|------------|
| Hull | 250,000 tons, Close Structure | — | 11250 |
| Armour | Bonded Superdense, Armour: 12 | 24,000 | 1800 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 2 (very advanced, energy efficient x2) | 5,000 | 1250 |
| Jump Drive | Jump 3 (very advanced, fuel efficient x2) | 33,755 | 63290.625 |
| Power Plant | Fusion (TL12), Power 225,000 | 15,000 | 15000 |
| Fuel Tanks | J-3, 16 weeks of operation | 127,500 | — |
| Bridge | Standard Bridges (holographic controls) x2 | 120 | 5625 |
| | Command Bridge (holographic controls) | 80 | 4218.75 |
| Computer | Core/90 | — | 120 |
| Sensors | Improved | 3 | 4.3 |
| | Countermeasures Suite | 2 | 4 |
| Weapons | Large Missile Bays x4 | 2,000 | 500 |
| | Particle Accelerator Barbettes x30 | 150 | 240 |
| | Triple Turrets (pulse lasers, sandcaster) x600 | 600 | 1950 |
| | Point Defence Batteries (type III) x6 | 120 | 120 |
| | Nuclear Dampers x20 | 200 | 200 |
| Ammunition | Missile Stowage (1,440 missiles) x4 | 480 | — |
| | Sandcaster Canister Stowage (20 canisters) x150 | 150 | — |
| Systems | Armouries x50 | 50 | 12.5 |
| | Brigs x4 | 16 | 1 |
| | Medical Bays x10 | 40 | 20 |
| | Briefing Rooms x16 | 64 | 8 |
| | Docking Clamps Type V x2 | 100 | 16 |
| | UNREP System (200 tons/hour) | 10 | 5 |
| | Workshops x 20 | 120 | 18 |
| | Repair Drones | 4,500 | 900 |
| | Launch Tubes (15 tons) x8 | 1,200 | 600 |
| | Launch Tubes (75 tons) x2 | 1,500 | 750 |
| | Recovery Deck (300 tons) | 3,000 | 1500 |
| | Recovery Decks (75 tons) x4 | 3,000 | 1500 |
| | Hangar (4,000 tons) | 8,000 | 1600 |
| Staterooms | High x12 | 72 | 9.6 |
| | Standard x750 | 3,000 | 375 |
| Common Areas | | 1,500 | 150 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/0 | — | — |
| | Jump Control/2 | — | 0.2 |
| | Advanced Fire Control/3 | — | 18 |
| | Anti-Hijack/3 | — | 10 |
| | Electronic Warfare/2 | — | 24 |
| | Launch Solution/3 | — | 16 |

TOTAL: MCR 113128.975

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOTS X3,
ASTROGATOR, ENGINEERS X550,
MAINTENANCE X150, MEDICS X12,
GUNNERS X194, STEWARDS X20,
ADMINISTRATORS X150,
OFFICERS X70

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
MCR9.427/month

• • • • •
PURCHASE COST
MCR113128.975

POWER REQUIREMENTS

50,000 **—**

**BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS**

SYSTEMS

25,000 **135,500**

**MANOEUVRE
DRIVE**

JUMP DRIVE

4 **6,430**

SENSORS

WEAPONS

183,333
HULL POINTS



TL14

TONS

COST (MCr)

Software

Point Defence/1
Screen Optimiser
Virtual Gunner/1

—

8

—

5

—

10

Cargo

14,668

0

TOTAL: MCr 113128.975

10,000

HULL POINTS

The *Carnot*-class is named after one of the most famous fortress designers of all time; individual vessels are named for fortresses, fortifications and fortified cities. The *Carnot* is not a warship yet not an auxiliary; it is a multi-role platform that can carry battle monitors to their station or transport logistics barges. At times, *Carnots* have been used as interdiction or ground-combat support assets, switching their battle monitors or barges for troop-carrying and support modules.

The *Carnot* is lightly armed for self-defence but not intended to engage in direct combat. Under Confederation doctrine, battle monitors are deployed to a threatened system at which point the tender withdraws; other support operations are carried out behind the protection of an escort force. *Carnots* are administratively deployed in pairs, such that if battle monitors are carried each supports a division of two monitors with the four making a standard squadron. A project to up-gun the *Carnot*-class for use as a command and support platform was eventually abandoned, although occasionally one is encountered carrying a 100,000 ton missile module in place of one of its monitors.

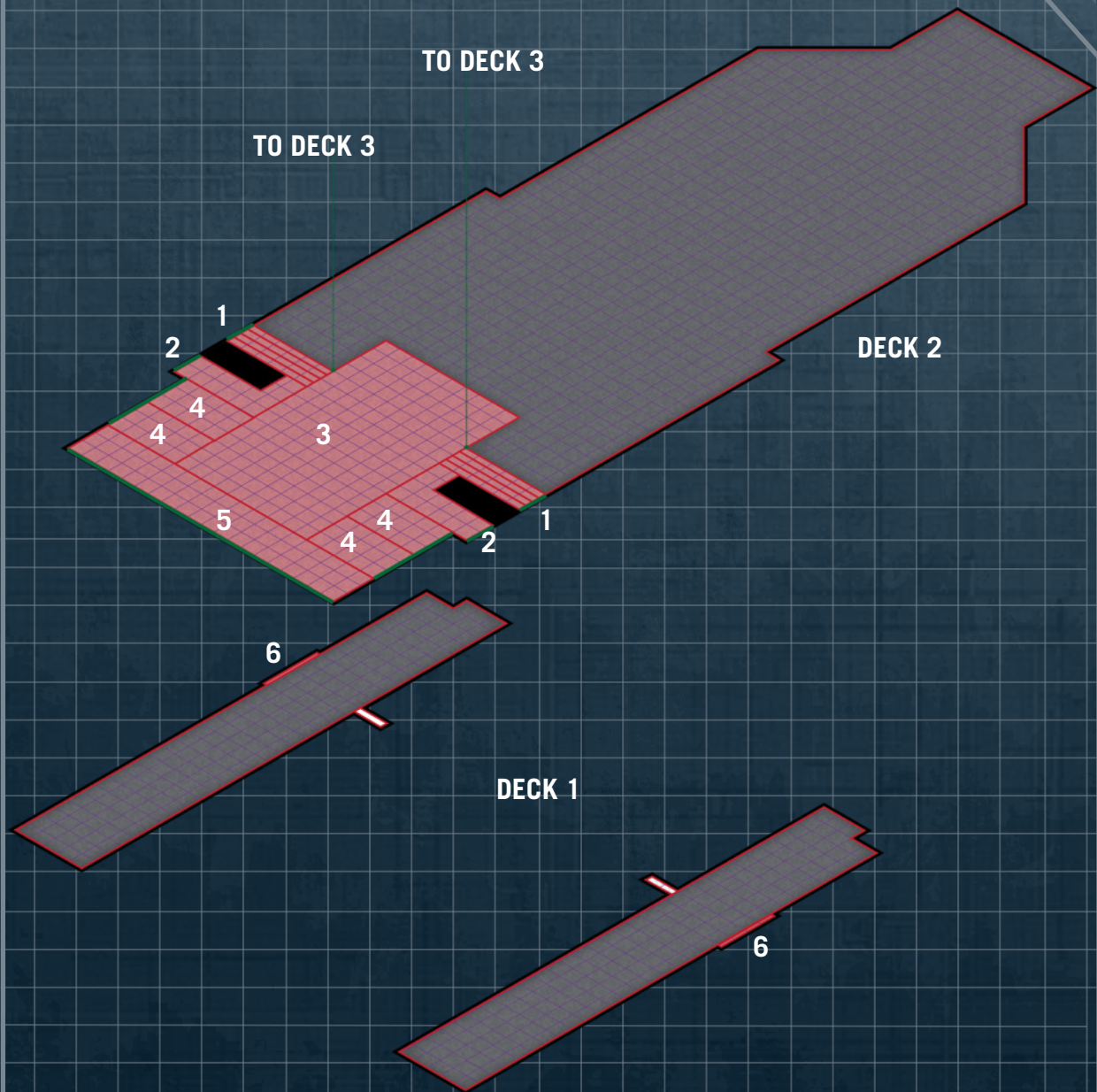
Hull configuration is typically Solomani, with the mountings for the two carried craft offset 'downward' on either side of the main hull. Primary armament is mounted on the dorsal surface of the roughly rectangular main hull, with fighter-defence weapons scattered over the whole surface. The design is configured on the assumption that two 100,000 ton monitors, barges or other modules are attached, although these need to have their own power plants and manoeuvre drives slaved to that of the parent ship. Jump drive capacity is sufficient to cover the whole assembly and still make a 3-parsec jump. The power plant is more than sufficient for all operations, since the jump drive cannot be engaged whilst small craft are being recovered. It is possible that unpowered modules could be carried in place of the two monitors but typically modules are self-powered and have sufficient manoeuvre drives to retain 2g acceleration.

Armament is relatively light for a naval ship of this size but the *Carnot* is not a warship. Its primary combat capability rests with four large missile bays located two on each side of the main hull. Each has a dedicated magazine containing one complete reload for the bay. Additional long-range fire is provided by 10 batteries of three particle accelerator barbettes arranged along the dorsal surface of the main hull. Defensive armament consists of 600 dual-purpose turrets mounting a pair of pulse lasers and a sandcaster. These are grouped as batteries of four turrets across the hull surface, with each battery having a dedicated sandcaster magazine. Close-in defence is provided by six point defence batteries.

As originally envisaged, the *Carnot*-class is an interstellar tractor unit intended to move a pair of 100,000-ton battle monitors from system-to-system. It was never meant to deliver or recover monitors under battle conditions, although *Carnots* have done so from time-to-time. The monitor-transport role has expanded into a wide range of applications, mostly along the lines of logistics and support. Fuel or munitions barges are often carried in place of monitors, enabling support of a task force. Bulk system defence boat modules are also in use, capable of transporting a large force to its end user or reinforcing the defences of a vulnerable system.

The *Carnot* also has a small hangar and launch/recovery unit, located in a bulge on the ventral surface. This is designed to allow a fleet courier to be recovered aboard at speed along with a covering fighter force, and has a total capacity of 4,000 tons of small craft. Typically a *Carnot* will carry a composite small craft group suited to its role. This is usually two wings, each of three squadrons of eight 15-ton fighters plus a wing of three squadrons of eight 75-ton strike craft, plus a few shuttles in the 75-ton class. The fighter and strike wings come to a total of 1,520 tons, with the remaining hangar space available for shuttles, visiting vessels and naval couriers.

1 SQUARE = 50 TONS

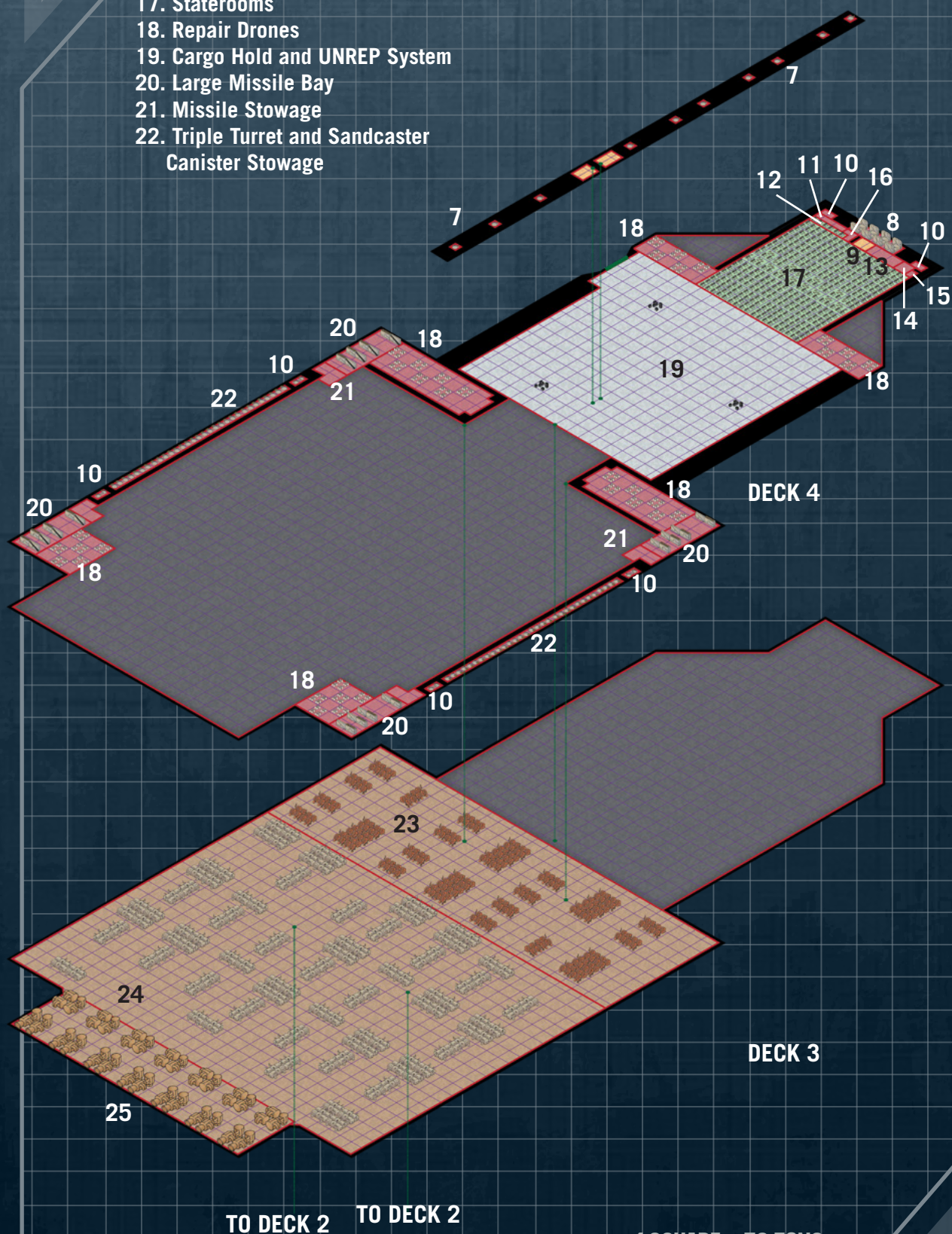


LEGEND

- 1. Launch Tubes (75 Tons)
- 2. Launch Tubes (15 Tons)
- 3. Hangar
- 4. Recovery Deck (75 Tons)
- 5. Recovery Deck (300 Tons)
- 6. Docking Clamps Type V
- 7. Particle Accelerator Barbettes
- 8. Nuclear Dampers

- 9. Bridge
- 10. Point Defense Battery
- 11. Briefing Rooms
- 12. High Staterooms
- 13. Workshops
- 14. Armouries
- 15. Brigs
- 16. Medical Bays

- 17. Staterooms
- 18. Repair Drones
- 19. Cargo Hold and UNREP System
- 20. Large Missile Bay
- 21. Missile Stowage
- 22. Triple Turret and Sandcaster
Canister Stowage



THE VEGAN AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT

The Vegan Autonomous District was created after the Solomani Rim War in an effort to counterbalance Solomani influences in the region. It is dominated by the Vegan race and self-governing, although it lies within and is answerable to the Third Imperium.

THE VEGANS

The Vegans are an alien race native to Muan Gwi in the Vega subsector, named after the bright star near their homeworld. They call themselves Tyui but prefer the popular term Vegan when interacting with others. A Vegan is roughly humanoid in shape but very nonhuman in appearance. They have two legs, two arms and a head but completely nonhuman in detail. Their bodies are upright, bipedal and bilaterally symmetrical, towering over an average Solomani or Vilani with an average height of 2.2 metres.

Vegans are bisexual, homeothermic oxygen breathers with an average lifespan of over 200 years. Because of their low-gravity origin, they are physically no stronger than a Solomani or Vilani despite their size. Vegans are uncomfortable on worlds with greater than 0.5g surface gravity and completely unable to live unprotected on high gravity worlds. As they evolved in a hot desert region of Muan Gwi they prefer warm, arid climates but will settle other environments so long as they have low gravity.

A Vegan's head serves both as braincase and sensory appendage. Auditory organs are located in a collar-like structure around the neck. Despite external appearances to the contrary, Vegans have two eyes located inside the hood-like fleshy structure that dominates the head. The paired eyes are covered by a transparent eyelid-like membrane that acts as a polarised light filter, protecting the eyes from glare like built-in sunglasses. It also serves to keep windblown dust out of the eyes and can be retracted when not needed. The eyes are large and pick up radiation well into the infrared portion of the spectrum, an adaptation to Muan Gwi's small red sun. A Vegan's skull is fixed solidly in place so it cannot turn its head but the fleshy hood containing the eyes can turn through a large arc providing reasonably good

peripheral vision. The mouth is a vertical slit in the upper thoracic region, with paired breathing/vocal slits on either side of it. Two mandibles are located inside the upper chest, grinding food between their opposing sets of teeth.

A Vegan's arm terminates in three tentacles that provide manipulation ability similar to fingers. Its legs end in broad, splayed feet, an adaptation that prevents them from sinking into soft sand. Their tall, thin bodies are designed for maximum radiation of heat. The Vegan torso is covered with a thick integument, whose convoluted surface is richly supplied with blood vessels. By increasing or decreasing the supply of blood to the integument, heat radiation from the torso can be regulated to optimum effect, obviating the necessity for sweating and consequent water loss. Their urogenital opening is a vertical slit located ventrally in the lower abdomen and there are no external differences between sexes. All orifices of the body can be sealed to prevent unnecessary moisture loss.

Vegans appear relatively emotionless compared to Humaniti; anger, fear and other strong passions rarely affect them, a result of biochemical differences. They rarely seek power or wealth for its own sake and can be suspicious of those, including a minority of their own race, drawn to it; their long lifespan gives them patience. They possess plentiful curiosity, a strong sense of self-preservation but only a mild territorial sense.

A Vegan's greatest passions are aesthetic and philosophical. They delight in learning, in finding a particular aspect of universal truth and, once they have done so, helping others explore and discover it. Vegan humour is subtle and intellectual. They are uncomfortable with discussions of interpersonal intimacy; mating is an instinct and matter of personal compatibility. Vegans care for their young but more in the way that a teacher does for school children.

Almost all Vegans dislike committing violence against sapient beings. Many Vegans are pacifists or disturbed by violence but police, soldiers and adventurers do exist. They prefer keeping the peace but will fight when

necessary. In such situations their calm fearlessness can make them formidable opponents. A Vegan may not fight for money, anger or a desire for revenge but will fight to protect beauty, an important abstract ideal such as freedom or peace, or to preserve the lives of themselves and comrades.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The Vegans have been civilised for at least 10,000 years, having a single interstellar government but remaining culturally diverse. Society is divided into hundreds of different *tuhuir*, a term that roughly translates as culture, or perhaps philosophy. Each *tuhuir* has its own customs, traditions and interpretation of the proper way to live. Some are associated with particular occupations, such as government, military or business, and others with specific philosophies, artistic schools or political ideologies. Archaeological studies reveal *tuhuir* were once separate societies, each associated with a particular geographic location, like nations on ancient Terra. Now, however, they are mixed in complex patterns with very little territoriality.

Tuhuir are not hereditary. Once a Vegan nears sexual maturity, around age 50, they enter a period of search or pilgrimage, called *irrishtyoshun*, which may last for many years. Eventually, the individual chooses a *tuhuir*. Once this choice is made it is normally retained for life. In practice, about half of all Vegans enter the *tuhuir* of their parents; the exact percentage varies with each *tuhuir*. About 0.5% find they enjoy the search as a way of life and never join a *tuhuir*.

The foundation of the *tuhuir* system and Vegan society is the Vegan Covenant, a written ethical and philosophical system. In simplistic terms, the Covenant establishes a very broad system of rights and freedoms, and lays down legal mechanisms aimed at peacefully resolving friction between *tuhuir*. Where both parties accept its conventions, which almost every Vegan *tuhuir* does, it treats crime and violence as anathema. The Covenant is a secular document but one treated with great reverence by nearly all Vegans. It forms the basis of Vegan legal systems and governmental practices and has been expanded upon by thousands of years of interpretation, commentary and case law.

A *tuhuir* may have resources equivalent to a nation and own significant property but does not have a territorial basis. A *tuhuir* is a distinct entity under Vegan law with similarities to both a corporation and religion. Its leadership is typically bureaucratic, selected by seniority, merit, accomplishment or sometimes patronage, and a healthy *tuhuir* has several million

members but some can be as small as a few hundred. Some *tuhuir* are set in their ways but most change with time or split to follow different paths and *tuhuir* can also eventually die out due to lack of members or poor financial decisions. They are theoretically independent under law but can form contractual relationships with other *tuhuir* who may function as patrons, clients or subordinates. It is not uncommon for large *tuhuir* to serve as patron of multiple smaller but more specialised *tuhuir*.

A *tuhuir* is probably best imagined as the secular equivalent of a religion, although a few do have some religious or mystical elements, advocating a way of life that members believe is correct and possessing a rich cultural tradition. Many *tuhuir* engage in various forms of charitable and public works aimed at helping Vegan society and civic-inclined *tuhuir* run public services and utilities ranging from legal services to sanitation to hospitals; other *tuhuir* may subscribe to them. Some are run for profit and function in ways similar to corporations but most expect members to donate a portion of their income to sustain their funding.

Vegan attitudes toward private property vary by *tuhuir*. Some follow communal approaches where almost everything is owned collectively while others do not. The intellectual property of a Vegan is typically shared with their *tuhuir* during a lifetime and then reverts entirely to it after death. Many larger *tuhuir* have their own holdings. Heretical, criminal and rebellious *tuhuir* exist but they are very rare.

GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY

The Vegan Autonomous District is a single, centralised government, with state power held by a civil service selected and promoted by competitive examination. This is a *tuhuir* whose role is to oversee and it mediates among all other *tuhuir*. Its name translates as Guardians of the Sacred Covenant or Guardian *tuhuir* for short. The Guardian *tuhuir* includes police and some planetary defence forces but the Vegan Navy and its marine units are a separate *tuhuir* with their own distinct culture, subordinate to the Guardian *tuhuir*. The Vegan equivalent of a scout service is another distinct *tuhuir*.

HISTORY

Vegans trace the beginning of their modern civilisation to between -8900 and -9100, a dynamic time in their TL4 period that also saw the writing of the Sacred Covenant that defined the rights of individual Vegans, forbade war between *tuhuir* and set the stage for eventual planetary unification under the Guardians.

The Vegans began space travel for scientific, poetic and philosophical reasons; the *tuhuir* responsible for that achievement, Irrishia *Tuhuir*, still exists in the form of the Vegan Scout Service.

Commercial development of space was slow but with the eventual discovery of gravitic manoeuvre drives and fusion reactors the Vegans created an interplanetary civilisation and began launching generation ships to nearby stars. As they were in the process of doing so they were contacted by Geonee traders in -5723, who provided jump drive technology.

The Vegans colonised several nearby worlds before being absorbed by the First Imperium. They resisted integration into the rigid Vilani culture and refused to serve in combat roles within the Ziru Sirka's military forces.

The Vegans cautiously welcomed the advent of Terran Confederation. After it became clear that Terrans had a chance of victory, they rose against the First Imperium and became Terra's first major allies fighting alongside them in the final Interstellar Wars. Unlike the Terrans, they did not settle or colonise Vilani worlds and were content to return home and did not welcome the military coup that created the Rule of Man but accepted a place within it as a self-governing polity in the Solomani Rim.

During the Long Night the Vegans, like many other nonhuman races, actually prospered. The Vegan Polity slowly expanded to provide protection to nearby human worlds while occasionally trading with the Easter Concord and Old Earth Union.

Relations between Vegans and the Third Imperium got off to a bad start. Unlike most of their neighbours, the Vegans were unwilling to dissolve their polity and join the Imperium. However, the Imperium was unwilling to leave a powerful alien state inside its borders. Facing isolation, embargo and a possible war, the Vegans eventually acceded into being broken into individual planetary states by the Third Imperium, which tolerated no threats to its sovereignty.

Relations with the Solomani Autonomous Region were initially positive; the Vegans had the same interest in greater local autonomy as did Solomani worlds and benefited from their historical status as the legendary Terran Confederation's first allies with a shared disdain of both Imperium and Vilani. Over the first century of the Solomani Autonomous Region's existence, the Vegan *tuhuir* exerted significant political influence in its councils. Solomani from worlds positively influenced by Vegan culture during the Long Night formed a small bloc within the Solomani Party itself – the so-called Vegan

Faction – that advocated a broader definition of the Solomani Cause. This would have granted special status to the Vegans as the Solomani's first interstellar allies.

The Vegans' fall from grace came during the series of general congresses that met to write the Solomani charter and create the Confederation's body of constitutional law. Although the Vegan Faction had support from delegates from some Solomani Rim worlds, it met fierce opposition. A strident 'purist' faction pointed to worlds in the Esperance and Vega subsectors that had actually adopted Vegan's *tuhuir* system during the Long Night and drummed up overblown fears of Vegan 'cultural contamination' spreading throughout Solomani worlds.

The purists postulated that the Vegans' pacifist ideals – if given a platform within the Secretariat – would weaken the Confederation. They received tactical support from centrists who feared the Vegans would form a unified polity in the Rim that would weaken the Confederation's central government and from xenophobic delegates in Magyar and the Dark Nebula whose innate distrust of aliens resulted from centuries of warfare with the Aslan. In the end, the Vegan Faction failed. No amendment granting nonhumans rights survived voting and attempts to secure special status for the Vegans died in committee, victim of a compromise with the purists that instead secured that same status for genetically-altered humans.

With no Vegan representation in the Confederation and too few human allies in the Secretariat, the Vegan Faction collapsed. Over the next few decades, Vegan resistance to heavy-handed attempts to install Solomani Party majority governments on worlds with joint Vegan and pro-Vegan Solomani grew. The growing power of SolSec rooted out 'radical' Solomani Parties that supported the Vegan faction and by the 900s the Vegan *tuhuir* came to the conclusion that their only hope for freedom lay in appealing to the Imperium – a path that led them into a direct confrontation with the Solomani Confederation government.

Like the Imperium before it, the Solomani Confederation would not tolerate an alien power in their midst. Demonstrations of Solomani Confederation naval power forced the Vegans to back down and governors and military bases were installed on all Vegan worlds. The Vegans were allowed no armed warships, their economic *tuhuir* were forced into subordinate relationships with Solomani corporations and Vegan emigration was strictly limited while some of their own colonies were opened up to Solomani settlement.

The Solomani Rim War led to a positive change in Vega's status. The Imperial Diplomatic Corps had long advocated a plan that involved granting greater freedoms and a measure of home rule to the Vegans in exchange for active cooperation. From the beginning, a key objective of the Imperial war plan was the liberation of Vegan worlds and using them as a base for the final assault on the Confederation's heartland.

In the immediate post-war era the heavy Imperial losses sustained during the invasion of Terra made Vegan cooperation even more vital. The present Vegan Autonomous District was formed in 1004 as a counterweight to the remnants of the Solomani Confederation within the sector. To build up the district's military strength the Imperium also transferred quantities of war materiel including numerous older Imperial warships. The Vegans were given complete internal control over their district, in return for a guarantee of free passage for Imperial citizens and goods.

Although many factors have contributed to the present stability along the Solomani Rim, it is undeniable that the creation of the Vegan Autonomous District has been a success. In the century since the Solomani Rim War, the Vegan Autonomous District has blossomed economically and culturally. Vegan art, culture and products have been embraced by the wider Imperium and Muan Gwi, the Vegan homeworld, has begun to eclipse Terra and Dingir as the heart of the Solomani Rim. The Vegans remain Imperial clients but have begun to take a much more active role in the politics of the Rim.

CREATING VEGAN TRAVELLERS

The following rules can be used to create Vegan Travellers.

Characteristics

Vegan Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: EDU+2, SOC-2.

Traits

Vegan Travellers all possess the following traits:

Eye Membrane: The eye membranes of a Vegan provide eye protection sufficient to keep out dust and small particles of grit. Vegan vision extends into the infrared, effectively providing the same capabilities as a set of IR goggles.

Heat Tolerance: When encountering conditions hot enough to cause damage, a Vegan can tolerate (and therefore ignore) a number of points of damage equal to their END each hour. Thus most Vegans can operate

indefinitely in a very hot desert where a human would suffer 1D damage per hour and can even withstand the heat of a welding torch for a few seconds.

High Gravity Intolerance: Vegans double the penalties associated with operating in High Gravity environments and can never acclimatise to it.

Careers

A Vegan *must* choose Drifter as their first career. This represents the initial period of search that all Vegans



participate in as they seek a *tuhuir* to commit to. Vegan Drifters are usually wanderers or sometimes scavengers. They may not begin as barbarians.

A Vegan who is a Drifter is searching for a *tuhuir*. After each term as a Drifter the Vegan may attempt to qualify for another career as usual; qualifying for a career also represents the completion of the search. A *tuhuir* is not synonymous with a single occupation but it is assumed that a Vegan who finds their *tuhuir* finds employment in a career associated with it. Upon qualification, the Vegan gains SOC+2, reflecting the increase in status gained after a Vegan finishes searching and is considered a full adult.

Vegans do not have a military draft. A Drifter who fails to qualify for another career will remain as a Drifter in the next term.

Terms

Vegans age slowly compared to most races and their lives follow a slower, more deliberate pace. A Vegan term therefore represents 16 years rather than a four-year term and they start their first term at the age of 50.

Aging rolls should begin after the Vegan reaches 178 years of age.

Vegan Terms

| Terms | Age after Term Ends |
|---------|---------------------|
| 1 | 66 |
| 2 | 82 |
| 3 | 98 |
| 4 | 114 |
| 5 | 130 |
| 6 | 146 |
| 7 | 162 |
| 8 | 178 |
| 9 | 194 |
| 10 | 210 |
| +1 term | +16 |

Benefits and Retirement

Despite the greater length of a Vegan's terms, their benefits and retirement pay are equivalent to humans. This represents their less materialistic outlook and the common Vegan practice of sharing financial gains with their *tuhuir*.

Life Events

The standard Life Events table in the *Traveller Core Rulebook* is suitable for Vegans, with one minor modification.

Vegans do not mate until they have found a *tuhuir*. If a Vegan is still a Drifter, any birth or death event should not be construed as them having produced a child and any type of relationship event should not be romantic in nature. Instead, the relationship should refer to the forging or dissolution of close platonic bonds with a friend or mentor.

Changing Careers

Vegans may change careers but rarely do so. If a Vegan leaves a career other than Drifter for any reason they must roll 10+ on 2D or be unable to start a new career.

Choice of Careers

Agent, Citizen, Drifter, Entertainer, Merchant, Scholar and Scout careers are possible without modification.

Rogue: Heretical Vegan *tuhuir* that support criminal occupations exist but they are rare. Apply DM-2 on rolls to qualify for a Rogue career.

Noble: This represents membership in the diplomatic or administrative branches of the Guardian *tuhuir*. Vegans who choose this career may not take the Dilettante assignment.

Vegans use the normal rules for the Noble career but have their own Mishap and Event tables to reflect the non-aristocratic nature of the Vegans.

Vegan Administrator and Diplomat Mishaps

| 1D | Mishap |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Injured. Roll on the Injury table. |
| 2 | A political scandal forces you out of your position. Lose SOC-1. |
| 3 | You are caught up in a riot, insurgency or disaster for which you are partially blamed. Roll Diplomat or Deception 8+ to escape unhurt. If you fail, roll on the Injury table. |
| 4 | Political manoeuvring usurps your position. Increase Diplomat or Advocate by +1 and gain a Rival. |
| 5 | Human assassins connected with an anti-Vegan extremist group attempt to end your life and force you into hiding. Roll END 8+. If you fail, roll on the Injury table. You are not ejected from this career. |
| 6 | Your unusual zeal leads rivals in your <i>tuhuir</i> to paint you as ambitious and power hungry. These insinuations end your career. To avoid conflict, you resign. Gain Leadership +1 but add a Rival. |

Vegan Administrator and Diplomat Events

| 2D | Events |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from the career. |
| 3 | You are challenged to a series of critical policy debates over your interpretation of the Sacred Covenant. You can back down or accept. If you refuse, suffer DM-1 on your next promotion roll. If you accept, roll Advocate or Philosophy 8+. If you succeed, gain SOC+1 and a Rival. If you fail, lose SOC-1. Either way, acceptance also gains you one level in Advocate, Diplomat or Philosophy. |
| 4 | Your time as a diplomat or administrator gives you a wide range of experiences. Gain one of Language (Anglic) 1, Art (any) 1 or Streetwise 1. |
| 5 | You are embroiled in a lengthy legal case. Gain one of Advocate 1, Admin 1, Diplomat 1 or Investigate 1. |
| 7 | Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table. |
| 8 | You serve on a government mission to a non-Vegan world. Increase Language (Anglic or Vilani) by one level and add Science (sophontology) 1 or Survival 1. |
| 9 | You are recognised with a prestigious prize or honour for your service. Gain DM+1 on any one Benefit roll. |
| 10 | You publish a well-received article in a journal of economics, foreign relations or public affairs. Gain DM+1 to your next promotion roll and gain one level in either Art (writing) or Science (any). |
| 11 | You make an alliance with a powerful Imperial noble with an interest in Vegan affairs who becomes an Ally. Either gain one level of Leadership or gain DM+2 on your next Advancement roll and add an extra Benefit roll due to their patronage. |
| 12 | Your aesthetically pleasing implementation of the Sacred Covenant is recognised by the Guardian <i>tuhuir</i> . You are automatically promoted. |

Army, Navy, or Marine: Vegans may have Army, Navy or Marine careers within a military *tuhuir* associated with or subordinate to the Guardian *tuhuir*. The Army is part of the Guardian *tuhuir*. The Navy is part of a separate *tuhuir* subordinate to but not synonymous with the Guardian *tuhuir*. The Marines are another part of the Navy's *tuhuir*.

Vegans have a long military tradition and will fight if necessary, although they prefer non-violent conflict resolution. Army, Marine and Navy Travellers in the Vegan Autonomous District have their own Mishap and Event tables.

Vegan Military Mishaps

| 1D | Mishap |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Severely injured in action. Roll twice on the Injury table and take the lower result. |
| 2 | Unfortunate circumstances such as captivity, shipwreck or military necessity result in you being stranded in a high gravity environment for a lengthy period of time. Reduce STR or END by -1 due to ongoing degeneration. |
| 3 | Your aggressive tactics inflict severe casualties on opposing forces. Receiving a reputation as overly aggressive, you are forced out of the Vegan military. Gain an Enemy among the Vegan military or diplomatic service but add a Contact in the Imperial military – a liaison officer who appreciated your initiative. |
| 4 | You are offered promotion but at this stage in your life you feel unworthy of the burden of power. You resign from the service to follow another path within your <i>tuhuir</i> . |
| 5 | You face difficulties adapting to the psychological stresses of serving in combat. If you continue with another career it may not be Army, Marine or Navy. |
| 6 | Injured. Roll on the Injury table. |

Vegan Military Events

| 2D | Events |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | Disaster! Roll on the Mishap table but you are not ejected from your career. |
| 3 | With no immediate prospect of action you are assigned to organise morale-boosting artistic activities such as landscaping the base grounds or redecorating your ship or vehicles. Add Art (any) 1 and roll INT 8+. If you succeed, gain an extra Benefit roll from this career. |
| 4 | You take part in joint operations with the Imperial forces. Gain an additional level of Language (Anglic) or Advocate. In addition, roll END 7+ to gain one of Gun Combat 1 (any), Electronics (sensors) 1, Mechanic 1 or Gunner (any) 1. If you are commissioned, you may instead choose Diplomat or Tactics (any) 1. |
| 5 | You are given advanced training in a specialist field. Throw EDU 8+ to gain one level in any skill you already have. |
| 6 | To prepare yourself for the possibility of action, you devote yourself to studying your <i>tuhuir's</i> writings on the philosophy of conflict, military history and just-war theory. Gain one level of Science (history) or gain EDU+1. |
| 7 | Life Event. Roll on the Life Events table. |
| 8 | You participate in a diplomatic or military liaison mission to the Imperium. Gain one level in Language (Anglic) and one of Recon 1, Diplomat 1, Steward 1 or a Contact in the Imperium. |
| 9 | The Imperial military transfers obsolete vehicles or warships to the Vegan military. Readyng them for Vegan service requires creative improvisation and extra maintenance. Gain either Electronics (computers) 1, Engineer (any) 1 or Jack-of-All-Trades 1. |
| 10 | You participate in an ugly engagement against insurgents, pirates, terrorists or Solomani raiders. After the fighting your well-meaning superiors relieve all members of your unit or crew and subject them to intensive examinations to ensure they have not suffered mentally. Suffer DM-1 on your next Promotion roll but add one level to one of Gun Combat (any), Gunner (any), Heavy Weapons (any), Melee (any) or Tactics (any). |
| 11 | Your commanding officer takes an interest in your career or mentors you in the art of leadership. Gain either Leadership 1 or DM+3 on your next Advancement roll thanks to their aid. |
| 12 | Your actions defuse a hazardous encounter successfully averting bloodshed. You gain your next promotion or commission automatically. |

VEGAN GLOSSARY

The Vegans generally prefer to use Anglic or Vilani terms when dealing with Humaniti and usually refer to themselves as Vegan. The following are examples of specific Vegan words or phrases.

Dhuar (suffix): Quality of being; -ness.

Dzim: White.

Ewmiak: Covenant.

Gwi: A world or planet.

Issler: Mountains or a mountain range.

Irrizhia: Space exploration.

Irriszhia Tuhuir: The Vegan Scout Service.

Irrishtyodhuar: A drifter.

Irrishtyoshun: Searching spiritually or mentally (for a *tuhuir*).

Muan: Beautiful, perfect, bright.

Muandhuar: The most beautiful.

Muanduar Ewmiak: The sacred covenant.

Muisstagz Zhia Tuhuir: The Vegan Navy.

Muisstagz: Guardian or protector.

Muisstagz Muan Ewmiak: The Vegan civil service.

Muyui Shia Tuhuir: A popular genre of Vegan poetry and related multimedia superficially similar to love poems but expressing emotional attachment to one's *tuhuir*.

Shia: Expression or language.

Tuhuir: Culture.

Tyui: The Vegan race; also a colony of Vega.

Tyudhuar: Sapient; wise; sophont.

Zhia: Star.

HIGHGUARD: VEGANS

Vegan spacecraft and starships are for the most part conventional but their design philosophy varies from that of humans in some regards. Vegans do not favour small starships; it is extremely rare to encounter a vessel of under 1,000 tons displacement. This is partly due to social factors; Vegans tend to undertake their endeavours in larger groups than humans might. Vegan crew and passenger accommodation is laid out differently to that of humans, making a trip aboard a Vegan ship less comfortable than it might be. Another

peculiarity is the 'endeavour chamber' carried aboard most ships. These are tailored to the interests of the operating *Tuhuir* and are often heavily customised.

Vegan ships tend to be expensive for their capabilities, due to a habit of using energy-efficient or size-reduced modifications wherever possible. Often these provide relatively little benefit but are incorporated out of what might be described as 'regard for the worthiness of the vessel'.

Vegan Accommodation Unit

Various designs of accommodation unit exist. This example is standard aboard many smaller vessels, providing communal accommodation, some general-use space and small private areas for six to eight Vegans. The unit is designed to be comfortable for six and acceptable for eight. An accommodation unit includes enough shared space for all occupants to sit or stand and hold a discussion or debate, with supporting audio-visual aids. A VAU seems to an outsider to be part classroom or lecture theatre, part cooking and dining area, with sleeping cubicles added as an afterthought.

A VAU capable of housing 6–8 Vegans or equivalent creatures consumes 24 tons and costs MCr4.

It confers no bonus to any activity but a Vegan crew that does not have the correct kind of accommodation – such as one using a human ship – suffers DM-1 on whole-crew activities such as trading, cargo handling or research work. Individual tasks such as piloting are not affected.

Endeavour Chamber

An Endeavour Chamber is dedicated to the function of a *tuhuir*. For a commercial ship it might contain specialised market-analysis equipment and a discussion/briefing area. A scientific vessel might have scientific equipment instead. However, the endeavour chamber is not a laboratory or a broker's office in the sense a human would use those terms. It is a place where members of a *tuhuir* can work together and share ideas towards a common goal.

A 12-ton endeavour chamber costs MCr1.5 and allows four people to work together.

A Vegan ship with one aboard does not suffer the usual DM-1 on whole-crew activities and one that has sufficient endeavour chambers to accommodate half the ship's complement or 30 Vegans, whichever is smaller, gains DM+1 on all whole-crew activities connected with the *tuhuir*'s field of interest.

Small Craft Recess

Vegan small craft are typically constructed as 60, 120 or 240-ton vessels shaped like a round-ended cylinder. A recess allows such a craft to completely enter the parent vessel and aligns its deck with that of the parent. Rails along the side of the recess grip the craft tightly once in place, making it essentially a part of the parent ship separated by an airlock. Indeed, many Vegan ships are built in such a way that their small craft are part of the vessel's capabilities. For example, a freighter might carry multiple 120-ton cargo craft, with their contents remaining aboard the craft throughout the interstellar voyage. A small craft recess has a light outer covering and can be used as additional space if no craft is present but its cylindrical shape is awkward and inefficient. A recess must be built to accommodate one specific category of Vegan small craft, such as a 60-ton interface craft and cannot accommodate any other craft.

A recess requires the tonnage of the craft to be accommodated plus 5% and costs MCr0.1 per ton. Thus a recess capable of accommodating any 60-ton Vegan interface transport consumes 63 tons aboard ship and costs MCr6.3.

Craft Control Chamber

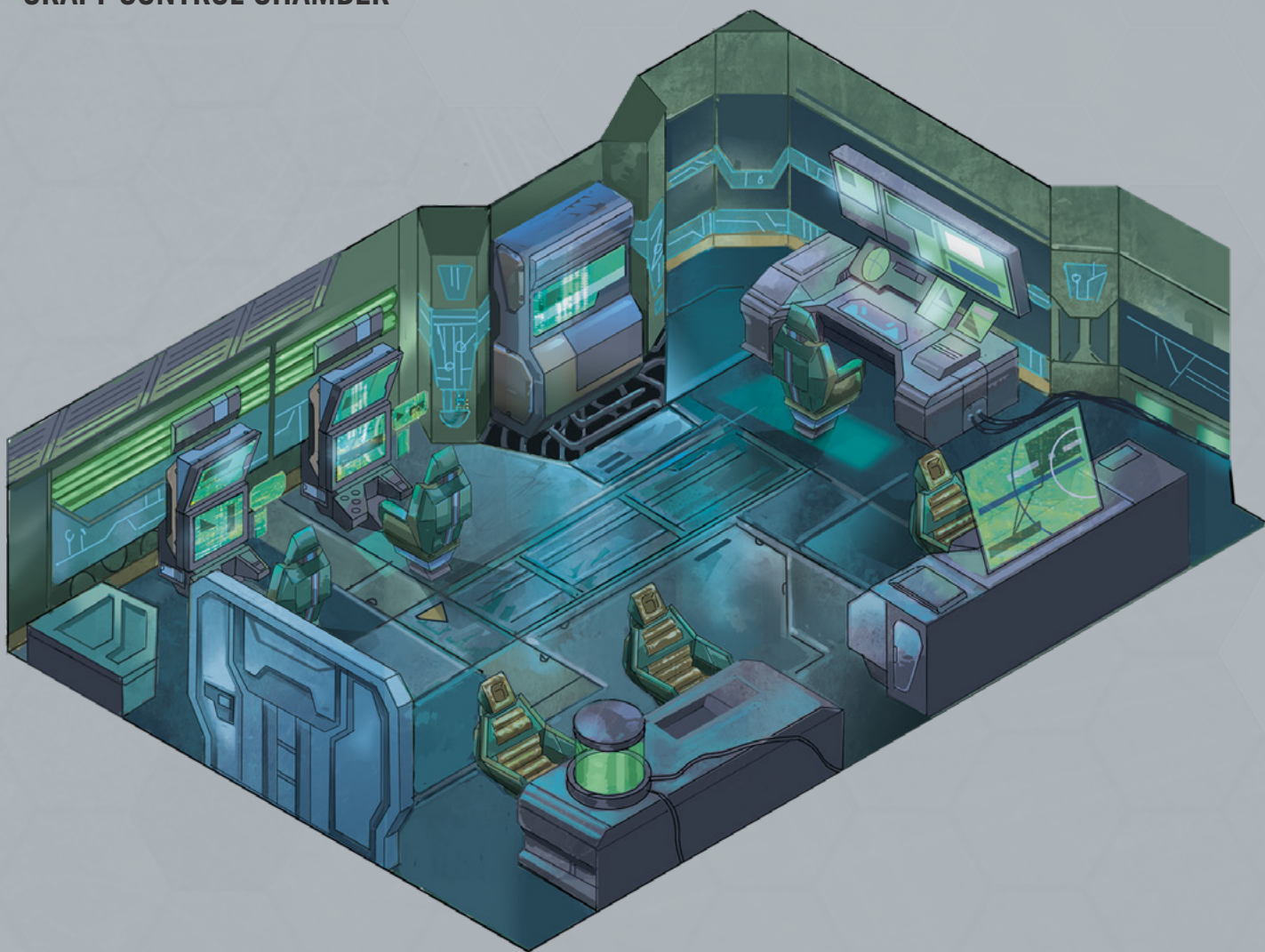
A craft control chamber is somewhere between a tiny version of a starship bridge, a mission-planning area and a passenger cabin. It has control positions for a pilot and another crewmember – an engineer or co-pilot plus configurable positions for four more people. These can be used for entertainment or work unrelated to running the craft and in some cases Vegan pilots have been known to communicate with the port authority whilst crewmates were conducting a geology experiment or market analysis and briefing around them. ‘Around’ is the part that alarms a lot of non-Vegans; the control

positions have no specific orientation and are not segregated from the rest of the chamber. Humans consider crewmembers walking around the pilot’s seat to present an analysis somehow strange; Vegans do not.

A craft control chamber can accommodate six people, two of whom will usually be crewmembers. It is not uncommon for a chamber to be used for a meeting when the craft is aboard its parent vessel, however.

The chamber consumes 4 tons and costs MCr0.5.

CRAFT CONTROL CHAMBER



VEGAN INTERFACE TRANSPORT

[XX]

| TL13 | | TONS | COST (MCR) |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------|------------|
| Hull | 60 tons, Standard | — | 3 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 2 (advanced, energy efficient) | 1.2 | 2.64 |
| Power Plant | Fusion (TL12, advanced, size reduction), Power 30 | 1.8 | 3.3 |
| Fuel Tanks | 8 weeks of operation | 0.4 | — |
| Bridge | Craft Control Chamber | 4 | 0.5 |
| Computer | Computer/10 | — | 0.16 |
| Sensors | Civilian | 1 | 3 |
| Staterooms | Cabin Space | 12 | 0.6 |
| | Acceleration Seats x8 | 4 | 0.24 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/O | — | — |
| | Library | — | — |
| Cargo | | 35 | — |
| TOTAL: MCR 13.44 | | | |

CREW

PILOT

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr1120/month

• • • • •

PURCHASE COST

MCR13.44

POWER REQUIREMENTS

9

12

—

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

SYSTEMS

—

1

—

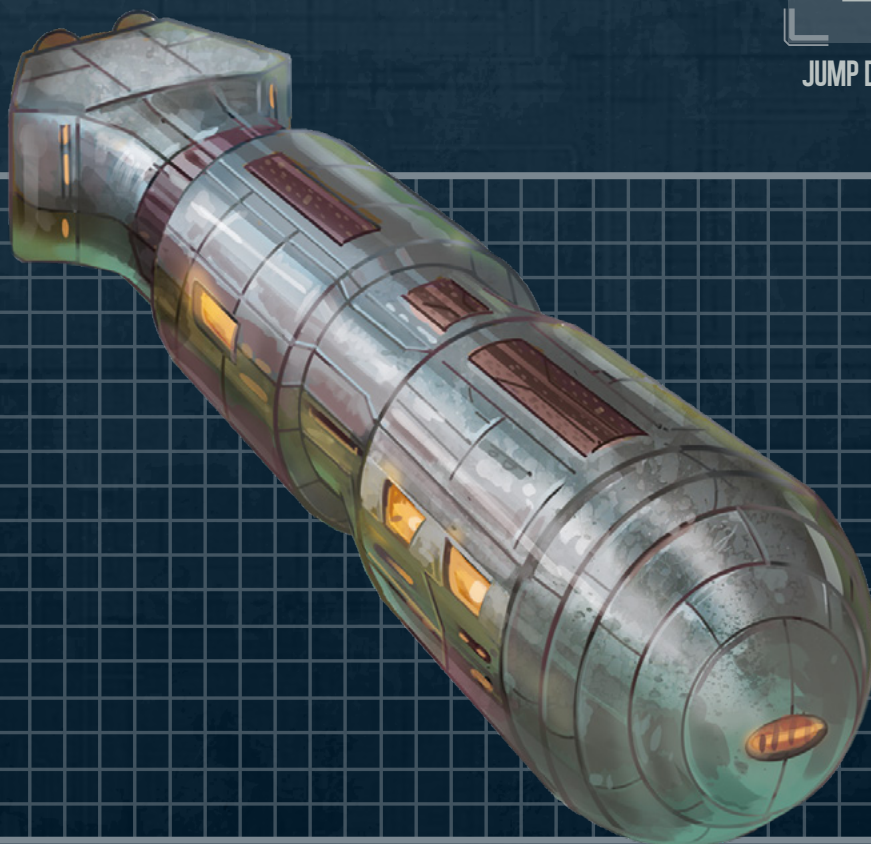
JUMP DRIVE

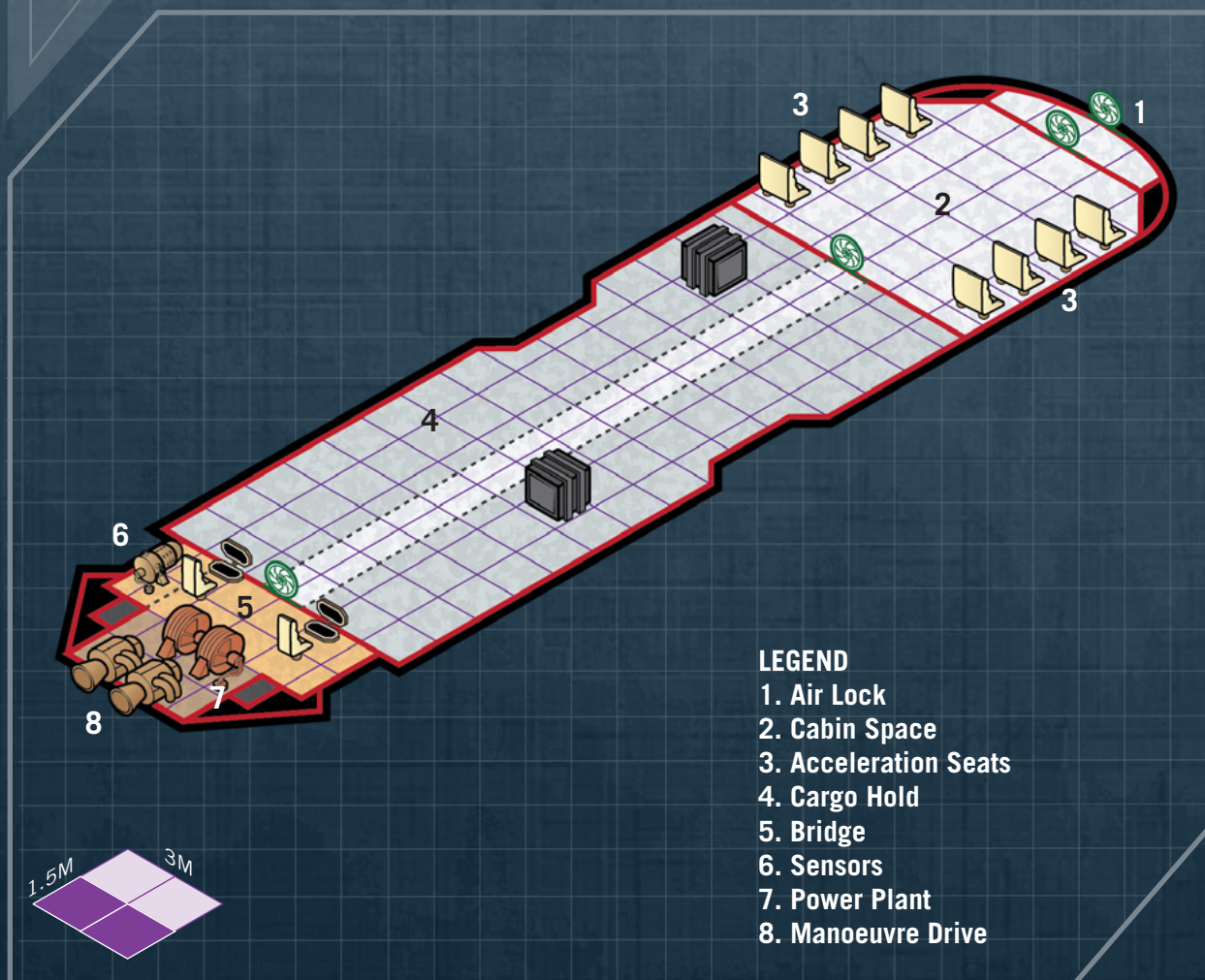
SENSORS

WEAPONS

24

HULL POINTS





The Vegan word for these craft translates as ‘shuttle’, so they are normally referred to as Vegan Interface Transports, or VITs, by non-Vegans. The VIT is a simple craft, typically outfitted to carry either just cargo or passengers and cargo between an orbital vessel and a station or planetary surface. Some VITs use a conventional design with the cockpit and crew area sealed off from the passenger compartment by a bulkhead but those intended for use by a *tuhuir* often have a common crew/passenger area where members of the *tuhuir* can mingle and exchange ideas whilst the craft is in flight.

The standard form for a VIT is a cylinder with the airlock positioned in the rounded frontal surface. The crew area is usually right aft, forming a combined piloting/engineering space where a multiskilled crew can work. Between the crew area and the main chamber is an internal bulkhead and ‘secure’ boats – those intended to permit non-*tuhuir* members aboard often have a second bulkhead creating a passenger area at the very front of the vessel.

This example follows that format. Entry is by way of the forward airlock, into a passenger space. Past the forward bulkhead is the payload bay, which can carry cargo or mission-specific equipment, and behind that is a large crew area. The design is wasteful of space but suits the Vegan mindset. Vegan ships and stations will usually have a cylindrical recess designed to allow the craft to be carried with its airlock in direct contact with an entry point to the parent vessel. Crewmembers can simply walk in and out through the front of the craft, with its deck aligned with that of the parent vessel. A set of landing feet on the ‘belly’ of the craft allows landing outside a recess, in which case a short ramp is extended from below the airlock doors. Loading cargo in this configuration is more laborious than in a recess.

Depending on its role, this craft could be set up with laboratory equipment, mining gear, additional passenger accommodation or other equipment in the cargo/configurable space. Alternatively, it might be simply used as a cargo carrier.

VEGAN VESSEL

KHYLDUAR-CLASS

| TL13 | | TONS | COST (MCr) |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------|------------|
| Hull | 1,600 tons, Standard | — | 80 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 2 (advanced, energy efficient) | 32 | 70.4 |
| Jump Drive | Jump 2 (advanced, energy efficient) | 85 | 140.25 |
| Power Plant | Fusion (TL12, advanced, size reduction), Power 900 | 54 | 99 |
| Fuel Tanks | J-2, 8 weeks of operation | 332 | — |
| Bridge | Holographic Controls | 20 | 8 |
| Computer | Computer/25 | — | 10 |
| Sensors | Military Grade | 2 | 4.1 |
| Weapons | Single Turrets (pulse laser) x4 | 4 | 4.8 |
| | Point Defence Battery (type II) | 20 | 10 |
| Systems | Small Craft Recesses (60 tons) x14 | 882 | 88.2 |
| | Endeavour Chambers x4 | 12 | 6 |
| Staterooms | Vegan Accommodation Units x6 | 144 | 24 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/O | — | — |
| | Jump Control/2 | — | 0.2 |
| | Library | — | — |
| Cargo | | 13 | — |
| TOTAL: MCr 544.95 | | | |

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOT, ASTROGATOR,
ENGINEERS X5, MAINTENANCE X1,
GUNNERS X5

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Cr45412.5/month

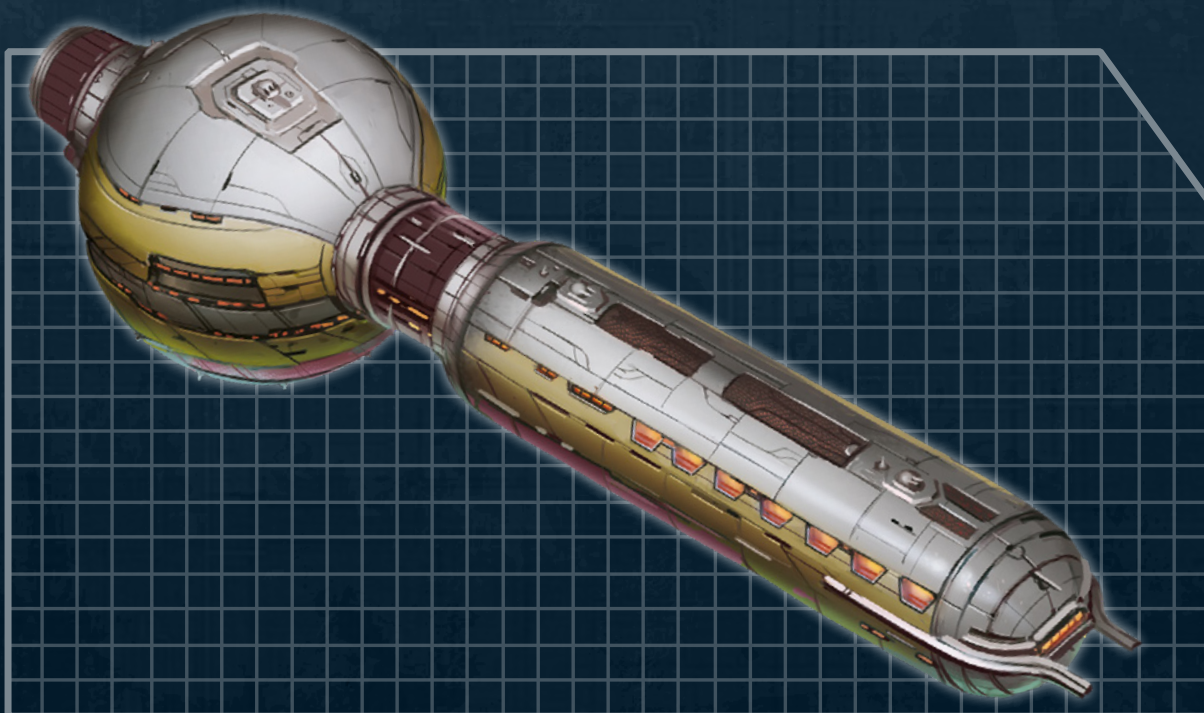
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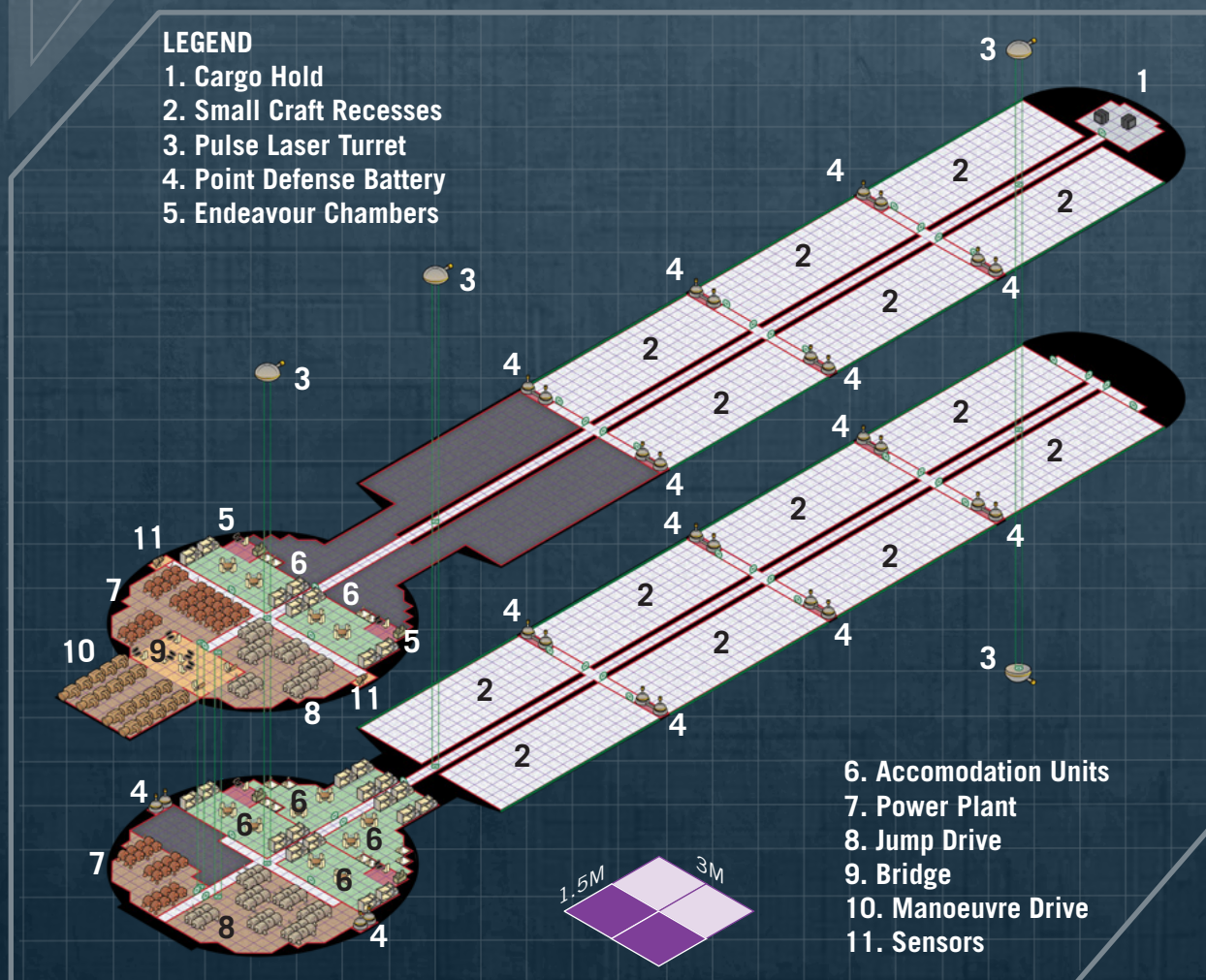
PURCHASE COST
MCr544.95

POWER REQUIREMENTS

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| 240 | 320 | — |
| MANOEUVRE DRIVE | BASIC SHIP SYSTEMS | SYSTEMS |
| 240 | 2 | 40 |
| JUMP DRIVE | SENSORS | WEAPONS |

640
HULL POINTS





The *Kyldhwar* is one of many standardised Vegan designs. It is notable primarily as one of the most commonly encountered vessels outside the Vegan Autonomous Region. Built on a cylindrical hull form, the *Kyldhwar* is not intended to land on a planetary surface; it carries subordinate craft for that purpose. However, it is capable of a planetary landing if necessary.

Internal arrangements are typically Vegan, with a combined drive control chamber and bridge located aft. The crew accommodation area is forward of this, with a capacity of 36–48 personnel and the endeavour area. Accommodation and endeavour spaces are mixed in a way that would infuriate most humans but is pleasing to a *tuhir* member. The endeavour areas are set up for whatever the *tuhir* owning the ship finds most suitable.

Forward of the accommodation and working area is a corridor with a series of access points to the craft recesses. Airlocks from the craft bays open directly into this central corridor, which also has stowage lockers

and some general storage space. Depending on the mission of the ship, craft may be specialised or used as general transports. Tonnage and performance of the vessel have been calculated on the assumption the craft are present in their bays but their purchase price has not been included in the cost of the ship. A small configurable space is located at the fore end of the ship. On some vessels this area is used for small cargo but more commonly it is tailored to the ship's mission. An additional endeavour chamber would add MCr1.5 to the ship's purchase price.

The ship's craft complement is tailored to its mission. Most vessels require at least some cargo or personnel shuttles but the 14 available craft can carry a number of mobile laboratories or several mining and prospecting platforms. In some cases vessels of this type convert their small craft to living spaces and act as liners, with the passengers quite possibly never leaving their craft for the whole duration of the flight.

CORPORATE BODIES AND NON-STATE ORGANISATIONS

Some large corporations are associated with the Imperium – such as the megacorporation Sharurshid – or with the Solomani Confederation – such as the shipping line Transstar. However, whilst these organisations are active in politics they are distinct from the governments of the region and may have their own agenda. Typically this is profit and the well-being of the local economy but in some cases large corporate bodies have been the instigators of wars or long-running political disputes.

Non-state organisations are the opposite side of this coin. They may have large commercial interests but, as with governments, these are not the primary field of activity for the organisation. A corporate body will often engage in political action to further its economic goals; a non-state organisation or a government will typically engage in commercial activity to fund its political or social agenda. In some cases an organisation operates more or less equally on both sides of the line and may become the de facto power in a region whether or not it intends to.

MEGACORPORATIONS

The great Imperial megacorporations dominate commerce within the Imperial subsectors of the Solomani Front. Except for Transstar, the megacorporations have a relatively small presence within the Solomani Confederation, which has various legal barriers restricting their operations. Transstar, on the other hand, is very much a Solomani organisation and has relatively little penetration into Imperial markets.

Megacorporations were active in the Solomani Rim between 500 and 750 but their activities were constrained when the sector became the Solomani Autonomous Region and then the Solomani Confederation. Solomani Parties restricted their ability to hire non-Solomani employees and imposed a burdensome climate of taxation and regulation. Many

megacorporations pulled out of the region in favour of local subsidiaries. In the years leading up to the Solomani Rim War those megacorporations who stayed often had their assets seized and nationalised by Confederation regimes.

In 1004 the Imperium's military victory gave it back control over most of the Solomani Rim but it was a sector that had been devastated by over a decade of all-out war. Imperial policy was to win hearts and minds, and reintegrate the captured systems through a massive program of development aid. Imperial megacorporations were key to financing the rebuilding effort and they returned with a vengeance.

The Solomani Confederation had often demonised megacorporations, especially those claiming descent from the Vilani bureaux, as instruments of Imperial hegemony. Upon their return, most megacorporations did their best to counter this through strong partnerships with planetary governments and existing corporations. Coordinated public relations offensives emphasised the megacorporation's role in rebuilding from the ravages of war and providing jobs for planetary populations. Generous corporate sponsorship and charitable donations were used to win goodwill in major centres. Today, many large cities in the Rim boast, for example, a General Products Sports Arena or a Sternmetal Horizons Opera House. Thousands of students throughout the Rim will attend science or business programmes in college on Naasirka or Sharurshid scholarships. Other companies have been less enlightened in their approach.

Delgado

Delgado's recent ascent to megacorporation status – it was founded in 997 – can be traced to profits made in military contracting during and following the Solomani Rim War. Over the last few decades Delgado's military division has profited from a multi-trillion-Credit defence contract to provide nuclear damper and meson screen technology to the Vegan Autonomous District, although



recent problems in quality control have endangered this contract. Delgado senior executives are doing everything they can to prevent the lucrative next phase of Vegan contracts going to rivals LSP and Instellarms.

Delgado's growing portfolio of non-military businesses includes significant involvement in antiquities trading centred both on Terra and older Vilani worlds. Many Terran antiquities were taken off the planet during the Solomani Rim War and vanished into the Confederation. Delgado has a network of agents operating quietly, attempting to acquire these for well-placed and well-funded clients.

General Products

General Products took the lead in opening new markets in the sector in the wake of the Solomani Rim War. The company is known here for cheap but reliable industrial products and is the mainstay of starship production. Its Rim operations were aided by a strategic partnership with electronics giant Naasirka, which often provides computers and avionics for its starships and industrial robotic system for its shipyards.

General Products' heavy industrial divisions in the Solomani Rim have been free of the problems that have plagued it elsewhere in the Imperium. After facing public relations problems in sectors like the Spinward Marches, General Products has devoted considerable effort to building up its reputation in the Rim as a good corporate citizen. Managers and employees transferred to the Rim offices find the company runs a much tighter ship here and no hint of scandal is tolerated. General Product's Rim division even hires freelance operatives in order to investigate its own operations to root out corruption or mismanagement. The Rim branch of General Products enjoys a close partnership with Naasirka. The megacorporation's largest Rim facilities are on Dingir, Khiirshag and Shululsish.

GSbAG

Despite a claimed historical origin on Terra, the company headquarters is actually located well outside the Rim. GSbAG nevertheless has yards in many Class A starports throughout the Solomani Rim and is the builder of choice for luxury yachts and couriers; GSbAG is developing plans to build a new civilian yard at one of Terra's starports after military rule is lifted there. Terran ships were once known for their high quality and GSbAG believes that 'made on Terra' will provide cachet among elite Imperial clients of Solomani descent. GSbAG agents are presently studying which of Terra's three ports would be the best location and selecting Terran firms to serve as subcontractors or provide workers. In the meantime, GSbAG's main starship production facilities are in the Ximenes subsector.

Hortalez et Cie

This banking and investment megacorporation specialises in loans to planetary governments and the underwriting of large-scale projects of all sorts. Hortalez et Cie was a major player in financing post-war reconstruction throughout the Solomani Front and continues to dominate the financial sphere within the sector with branches on all high-population Imperial and Vegan worlds. Residual prejudice against Vilani megacorporations on the many Solomani-inhabited Imperial worlds have given Hortalez et Cie a slight edge over Zirunkariish with many Rim clients.



Instellarms

Instellarms' major coup after the Solomani Rim War was an Imperial contract to purchase vast stocks of captured surplus TL10-13 Solomani Confederation Army small arms, ammunition, supplies and combat vehicles. These weapons were refurbished, stripped of Solomani identifiers and eventually resold to planetary defence forces, mercenary units and security formations across the Imperium and beyond. Ironically, the high quality of Solomani Army gear has now created a demand among purchasers for both spares and new weapons built to the same pattern. Instellarms originally began manufacturing its own copies of Solomani weapons to fill this demand and as trade relations with

the Confederation have improved it has found it to be cheaper to simply contract with firms in the Near Boötes Cluster than import actual Solomani weaponry.

Instellarms finds it easier to operate in the Solomani Confederation than some other megacorporations as, unlike the others, the Imperial family does not directly own shares in Instellarms. This allows the company to avoid certain anti-Imperial Solomani Confederation regulations that impose extra restrictions on corporations with financial links to the Iridium Throne.



Ling Standard Products

This highly diversified manufacturing and mining company has been highly active in the Solomani Front in the post-war era. LSP prefers to establish relations with local strongmen, oligarchs and dictators using bribes and military contracts to ensure access to resources and markets. Often targeted by civilian protests and direct attacks, many new LSP facilities have come to resemble fortresses largely staffed by off-world employees and protected by large and unfriendly mercenary security forces. Ling Standard Products lawyers have also aggressively pursued legal actions against Rim worlds to regain property – and sometimes even entire regions or planets – that was seized centuries ago by Solomani Party governments. LSP is engaged in vigorous competition with Sternmetal Horizons for domination of the mining and ore processing sectors in the region. The Alpha Crucis branch of LSP also has an ongoing feud with the Solomani Confederation corporation Erosional AG.

Makhidkarun

This megacorporation's gourmet food division has been trying to crack the monopoly enjoyed by rival Sharurshid on the export of rare expensive foods, wines and delicacies from the garden worlds of Terra and Gaea. Makhidkarun's recent attempts to take direct control of the Solomani Rim's electronics consumer goods market have backfired. Its heavy-handed approach to vertical integration has alienated planetary retail outlets throughout the Rim.

Naasirka

This electronics and information firm has been steadily expanding its influence in the Solomani Rim and the company has a major robotics research-and-development facility on Shululsish. The company is a prime subcontractor for General Products on the Rim and to facilitate this many Naasirka installations are located adjacent to General Products shipyards. Naasirka electronics are sometimes sold under the General Products label in regions where anti-Vilani sentiment exists – and vice versa.

In addition to operating its own corporate research centres Naasirka's Rim division directly funds a great deal of university research in the fields of computing, mathematics, information theory and artificial intelligence. The company has donated generously to institutions of higher learning throughout the Solomani Rim in order to enhance its access to the pick of their graduates. The new Naasirka Engineering Centre at the University of Terra is one example of their largesse. A more recent initiative by Naasirka is its drive to recruit young Vegan scientists and engineers to work for the company; to this end they have cultivated ties with Vegan tuhuir known for their scientific expertise and opened new joint venture facilities on Muan Issler.

Sharurshid

This is the nominal descendent of the great Vilani trade and speculation bureaux that once controlled the Solomani Rim, although its interests there are no longer any greater than those in other parts of the Imperium. It nevertheless has a strong presence on the Rim and a particular interest – going back thousands of years – in the foodstuffs and luxury goods of Terra itself. The majority of rare Terran beverages, wines and spirits are transported in the holds of Sharurshid starships. An exception to this are a few rare and extremely expensive vintages reserved exclusively for the Imperial table. Sharurshid is involved in their selection but they are carried on Scout Service cruisers.

Sternmetal Horizons

Sternmetal – along with its rival Ling Standard Products – is the largest mining corporation in the Solomani Rim, both on planets and in planetoid belts. The company's industrial division is also the primary supplier of fusion power plants, food synthesis and life support equipment. Many of the region's high population worlds and giant arcology cities rely on Sternmetal equipment and technical support for their very survival. The company has worked hard to earn this trust by emphasising reliability and excellent service – advertising paints 'Uncle Sternmetal' as the dependable megacorporation that keeps the lights on,

the protein flowing and the air pure. Due to the elevated risk of terrorist attacks on critical infrastructure in the Solomani Front, Sternmetal's local divisions also operate a mercenary force who provide and train security guards and emergency response teams that protect critical power and life support facilities. Sternmetal's sterling reputation as a straight shooter has also helped the company secure lucrative mining deals which might otherwise have gone to Ling Standard Products.

SuSAG

SuSAG's presence in the Rim dates from its acquisition of Inidu from the world's original owners in 425, just before the Easter Concord joined the Imperium. The planet is still a major regional headquarters. SuSAG's pharmaceutical, medical and surgical products, industrial chemical, geneering, chemical and bacteriological weapons and research divisions are all active in the Rim. SuSAG offices are found in all Class A and B starports in Imperial space.

SuSAG has also acquired a few smaller Imperial corporations in the Rim that it allows to continue to function as semi-autonomous entities, the largest being Seaharvester, LIC. SuSAG's subsidiaries are sometimes involved in businesses only peripheral to the company's core interests. For example, SuSAG may acquire a company that manufactures vacc suits and combat armour simply to ensure it has prime direct access to its innovative line of high-quality chemical protective outfits.

Its extra-Imperial division operates in the Vegan Autonomous District where, among other activities, it quietly engages in psi drug development, which is illegal within the Imperium.

SuSAG has no open presence within the Solomani Confederation worlds and psi drugs are illegal there, as in the Imperium, so no manufacturing takes place. However, SuSAG's extra-Imperial division has used various shadowy front companies and subsidiaries to establish installations on dozens of worlds within the Confederation. In addition to expanding the megacorporation's market share, this helps ensure access to Solomani Confederation biotechnology research, which is often considered to be on par or superior to the Imperium in certain areas, notably genetic engineering. SuSAG's relationship with these subsidiaries is kept hidden to avoid public relations problems and legal issues caused by an Imperial company owning Solomani corporations. The public relations problems faced by SuSAG cuts both ways, as the corporation's subsidies are rumoured to supply Solomani regimes with chemical weapons used against dissidents or racial minorities and perform research using Solomani political prisoners as subjects.

Transstar

The largest transportation line in the Solomani Sphere, Transstar is a subsidiary of the interstellar Solomani Party, serving as a source of income for, and benefitting from, the Party's influence and power. Operations in the Solomani Rim are supervised out of Jardin and the Alpha Crucis sector headquarters is at Turin, although Transstar's head office is on Home in the Aldebaran sector.

Interstellar shipping is extremely competitive and heavily politicised in Confederation-controlled subsectors of the Solomani Front. Transstar's political connections have helped it dominate shipping in the Jardin subsector and it holds a second-place position in the Capella, Kukulcan and Gemini subsectors due to the strength of Saxe Transport and Crown Lines, both of whom benefit from close associations and subsidies from member governments.

The corporation also has interests in shipping and freight brokerage and development of new trade routes. It operates mainly in the rimward regions of the Solomani Front but some of its vessels also trade in the Hive Federation. The company is known for its liberal hiring policies, employing Apes as cargo hands and a few Dolphin pilots and astrogators.

Tukera Lines

Since the Rim War, Tukera Lines has struggled to gain monopoly control of the highly lucrative passenger and freight routes in the Imperial subsectors of the Solomani Rim. This has placed it in direct conflict with Sharurshid and local shipping lines such as Solar Shipping and Ewm Shao Gwi. Tukera has used both its connections with the Imperial family and its ruthless intelligence arm, the Vemene, to gain any advantage.

Zirunkariish

This Vilani investment banking and investment house is often demonised in Solomani Confederation history texts as being the sinister power responsible for the decline of Solomani fortunes in the Imperium that forced the creation of a separatist Solomani Movement. This was due to the marriage between the heir of its founding noble family, Antiama Shiishuginsa, and the Solomani Emperor Zhakirov. Solomani Movement conspiracy theorists, especially those living on occupied worlds outside the Confederation, claim that the Vilani megacorporation is still a covert puppet master that manipulates the Imperium. They produce literature drawing tenuous connections between Zirunkariish activities and money to Imperial public figures or policies.

FREIGHTLINER

STELLA POLARIS

| TL13 | | TONS | COST (MCR) |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Hull | 1,000 tons, Standard | — | 50 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 2 | 20 | 40 |
| Jump Drive | Jump 2 | 55 | 82.5 |
| Power Plant | Fusion (TL12), power 660 | 44 | 44 |
| Fuel Tanks | J-2, 4 weeks of operation | 204.4 | — |
| Bridge | Standard Bridge | 20 | 5 |
| Computer | Core/40 | — | 45 |
| Sensors | Improved (rapid-deployment extended arrays) | 9 | 21.5 |
| | Sensor Station x4 | 4 | 2 |
| | Improved Signal Processing | 1 | 4 |
| | Life Scanner | 1 | 2 |
| | Shallow Penetration Array | 10 | 5 |
| Weapons | Dual Turrets (pulse lasers) x4 | 4 | 6 |
| | Dual Turrets (sandcasters) x4 | 4 | 3 |
| Systems | Cargo Crane (450 tons) | 4 | 4 |
| | Mail Distribution Array | 10 | 20 |
| | Conference/Briefing Rooms x2 | 8 | 1 |
| | Library | 4 | 4 |
| | Medical Bay | 4 | 2 |
| Staterooms | High x2 | 12 | 1.6 |
| | Standard x34 | 136 | 17 |
| Common Areas | | 120 | 12 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/0 | — | — |
| | Jump Control/2 | — | 0.2 |
| | Library | — | — |
| Cargo | | 315 | — |
| TOTAL: MCR 371.8 | | | |

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOT, ASTROGATOR,
ENGINEERS X4, MAINTENANCE,
MEDIC, GUNNERS X8, STEWARDS X2

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Cr30983.33/month

• • • • •

PURCHASE COST
MCR371.8

POWER REQUIREMENTS

200

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

—

SYSTEMS

200

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

200

JUMP DRIVE

12

SENSORS

40

WEAPONS



400

HULL POINTS

The *Stella Polaris*-class is common throughout the Solomani Rim and indeed the whole of the Confederation. The design was developed by Transstar but has been built under license for a great many operators. Although Transstar has a number of luxury vessels, the *Stella Polaris* is not counted among them. It was designed to provide relatively low-cost freight and passenger services throughout the Confederation and has been described as 'ubiquitous by design'. This is intentional. Transstar derives a great deal of income from license fees to build this proven design and a subsidy from the Confederation itself.

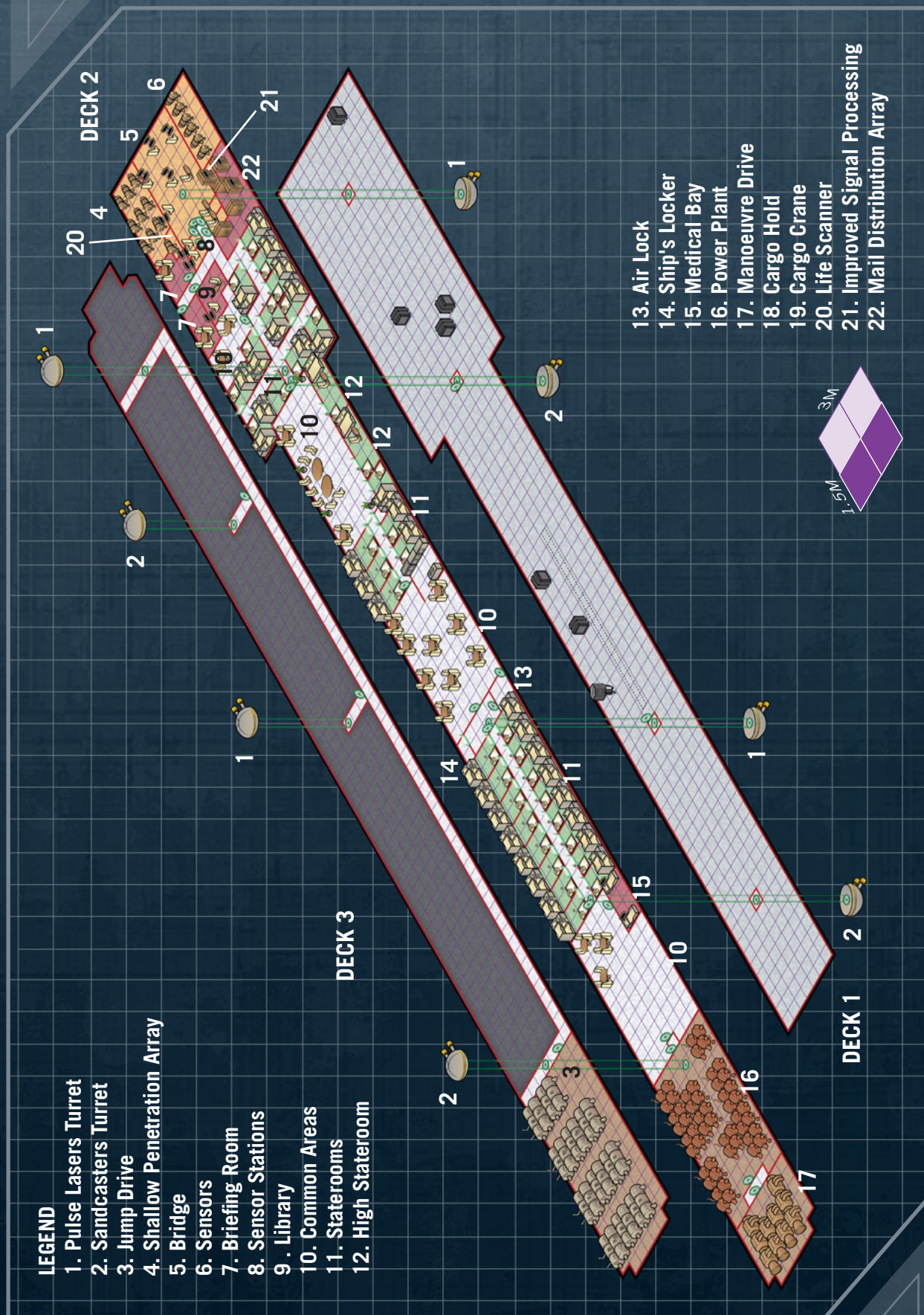
The class was designed from the outset to serve as a fleet auxiliary at need under the STUFT (Ships Taken Up From Trade) agreement. The class is thus a success both commercially and politically, gaining Transstar advantages in other areas. A variant of the *Stella Polaris* is operated covertly by SolSec and possibly some other intelligence services. This version of the design carries an intelligence gathering suite and typically poses as an innocent merchant ship. The fact that the basic design is well armed is useful, allowing the operators to carry significant weaponry without arousing suspicion.

Outwardly, the intelligence gathering variant is almost identical to the standard version of the *Stella Polaris*. It uses the same cylindrical hull form and general layout, with concealed mountings for extended sensor arrays. All variants have the same internal segregation on the passenger deck, crew/high/standard, and most ships carry a mail distribution array. Some users choose not to include this expensive piece of equipment but the mail-carrying role typically comes with a subsidy that more than pays for the equipment over the life of a vessel.

The crew segment contains a small common area and 12 cabins for crewmembers, most of whom are accommodated two to a cabin. This is a change from the standard version of the vessel, which has more crew cabins. The lost space is taken up by additional sensor equipment and an analysis chamber. Since passengers are never allowed in crew spaces on ships of this sort the difference is unlikely to be noticed even if the vessel carries passengers as a cover.

The other passenger areas are unchanged. The 'high' area contains the two premium cabins and six others, plus a luxurious lounge for the use of high passengers only. Sixteen more cabins are located aft of this area, with their own lounge and recreation spaces on the far side of the dining hall. High passengers are given a keycard that grants access throughout the passenger area; middle passengers can access only the standard facilities. If the ship carries more high passengers than can be accommodated in the high passage area, access to the lounge and its attendant steward is granted but the passenger may have to accept a cabin next door to someone paying for mid passage.

Not all *Stella Polaris* ships carry weaponry but many do. The class has a good reputation for security as well as comfort and safety, and is not surprisingly one of the most common freight/passenger designs in Solomani space. Many more have been converted to other roles, including permanent service, as naval auxiliaries or government transports. This ubiquity allows the intelligence gathering version to hide in plain sight all over the Confederation and beyond.



SMALLER CORPORATIONS

Many corporations operate across multiple subsectors of the Solomani Front but do not yet aspire to megacorporation status. The larger ones are influential in politics, at least at the local level, and some are suspected of being fronts for projects undertaken by the Confederation government. In reality, this probably reflects the close relationship between politics and commerce in the Confederation rather than a formal relationship.

ConTech

Consolidated Technologies is a Solomani biotechnology firm originally based in the Dark Nebula sector but now with major holdings in the Rim, especially on Jardin and Laputa. Its main business is agricultural, creating high-yield food crops that thrive in diverse planetary ecosystems. It also has close ties with the Confederation's Ministry of Genetics. It has been involved in various controversial programmes aimed at creating 'perfect' Solomani.

Crown Lines

This new Solomani merchant corporation serves all of the Kukulcan subsector. It was formed from the merger of several smaller merchant lines headquartered on Thetis, Ochre, Skanderbeg, Trapezus and Laputa, forming a cartel to shut out their rival world Kukulcan. Crown Lines controls the major trade routes out of the subsector and intends to achieve a monopoly over the region's commerce. Kukulcan has been feeling the pinch and retaliated with its own countermeasures in support of its own national transport lines. These began with government-subsidised price cuts and legal manoeuvring aimed at undercutting Crown Lines but desperation is leading it toward supporting covert 'trade war' operations. This in turn has led to Crown Lines reinforcing its own security, including hiring large numbers of military veterans for ship and port security.

Ereshkigal AG

Ereshkigal AG is a Solomani terraforming and mining corporation. In the 870s the firm used Solomani Party connections to inexpensively acquire Ling Standard Product's mining operations that had been nationalised by Solomani Party governments following the creation of the Confederation. This included leases on dozens of asteroids and a few planets, with an estimated worth of over 600 billion Credits. This prompted LSP to pursue a mix of legal and paramilitary action against Ereshkigal, which only came to an end after the Solomani Rim War. There remains bad blood between the two companies. LSP has done its best to sabotage efforts of Ereshkigal AG and its trading partners to do business

in the Imperium until these issues are resolved to its satisfaction. Ereshkigal AG is partially owned by the Solomani Parties of Cthonia and Summit.

Ewm Shao Gwi

A single corporation dominates Vegan merchant operations in the Solomani Rim. That company is no mere business; Ewm Shao Gwi is also a Vegan *tuhuir* or culture in its own right, with a line of tradition running back thousands of years into pre-starflight history. Ewm Shao Gwi is a Vegan philosophy akin to capitalism, focused on the profitable distribution and redistribution of resources. The support of a trade fleet is a natural outgrowth of this. Although it originated on the Vegan homeworld in their age of sail, the corporation is currently based out of Muan Issler, serving the entire Vegan Autonomous District and most destinations within six parsecs of its border.

Lamarck Minerals, LIC

Lamarck is an important player in mining and ore processing within the Arcturus, Banasdan and Sol subsectors, manufacturing mining and hostile environment equipment and also running mining facilities in hostile environments and asteroid belts. Lamarck has a somewhat shady reputation; bribery and strong-arm tactics are often used to eliminate competitors and independent miners. Over the last 40 years the company has suffered a series of reverses including a labour dispute with independent belt miners within the Arcturus system in 1078 that escalated to sabotage of some its facilities. However, its declining profit picture has been reversed in the last two years thanks to the efforts of its new president, Ringiil Urshukaan, the controversial former governor of Scaramouche.

Macrogenesis

Macrogenesis is one of several large Solomani biotechnology firms specialising in genetic engineering and agricultural production, claiming a convoluted descent from legendary Terran Confederation-era firms involved in the creation of the Selenite and uplifted Dolphin programs. The earliest confirmed records of its operation date back to 227 on Tino. Macrogenesis is a leader in the production of low-cost genetic testing kits used throughout the Confederation.

Recent documents of uncertain veracity exposed by a Solomani dissident group and published in the Imperium by TAS News suggest Macrogenesis may have also been working on joint projects for the Ministry of Genetics and Solomani Confederation Army. Over 50% of Macrogenesis is owned by the Solomani Party and senior company executives often transition to high posts in the Solomani Confederation bureaucracy.

Panstellar

Panstellar is a leading specialist in high-technology heavy industrial goods and electronics. The corporation is also known for its production of starships, expert computer systems, automated machinery and robots. One successful product line is autonomous construction robots designed for operations in extremely hostile environments such as deep oceans, high temperature worlds and planets with corrosive atmospheres. Panstellar is a major supplier of atmosphere processing and terraforming equipment. With many contracts on the rimward frontier, Panstellar supports Party factions that favour continuous expansion. Panstellar has regional headquarters at Caprice and Balboa, and also does considerable business in the Aldebaran sector.

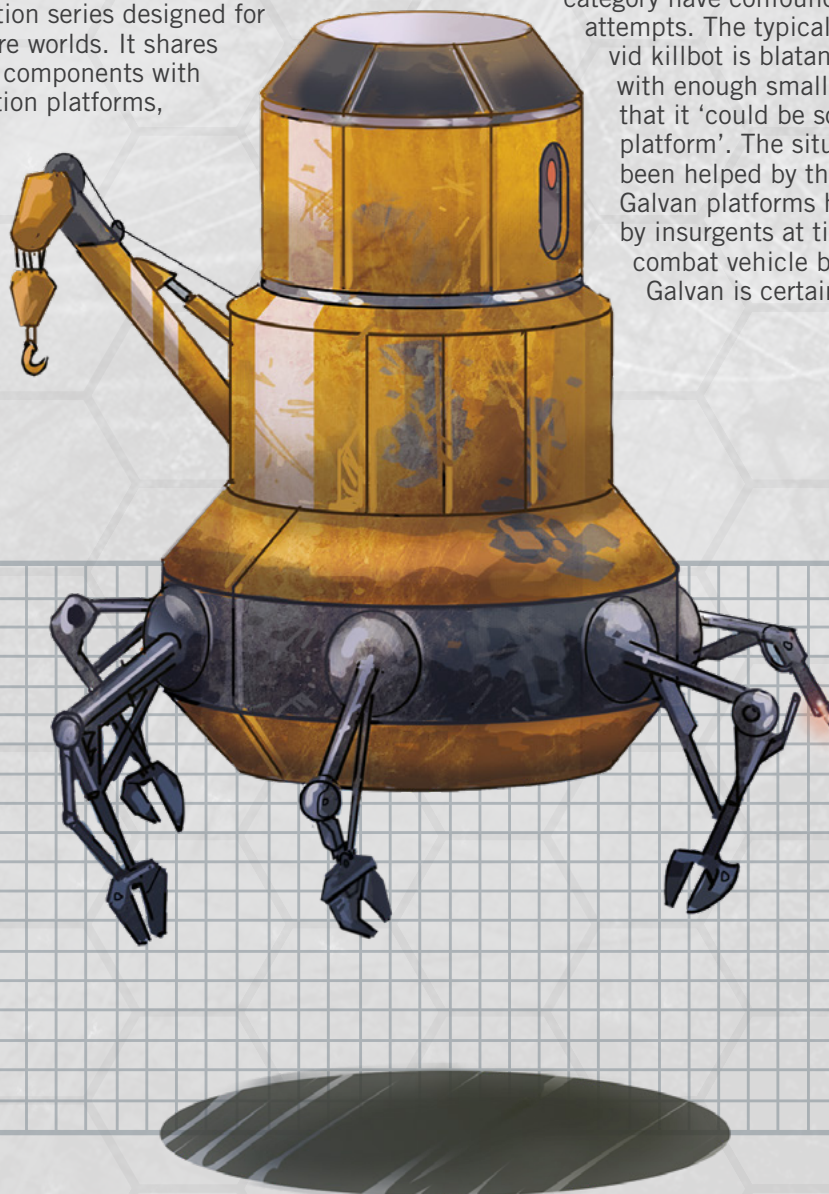
PANSTELLAR GALVAN-TYPE ROBOTIC CONSTRUCTION PLATFORM

The Galvan robotic platform is a variant on Panstellar's large construction series designed for use on corrosive atmosphere worlds. It shares a general layout and many components with other specialised construction platforms, built on a heavy grav

platform and designed to operate autonomously for an extended period. It does have a small personnel space accessed by way of an airlock but this is primarily intended for emergency or respite use rather than to support a crew. Nevertheless, the robot can be operated manually as needed.

The outer hull is heavily armoured and treated to protect against corrosive atmospheres and fluids. The highly dextrous manipulator arms are augmented by a heavy-lift crane and digging equipment, with plasma cutters fitted as standard. These are optimised for cutting and smoothing rock or vaporising materials to be collected by other platforms. The combination of cutters, near-unlimited power, armoured hull and a robotic brain has intrigued so many vid-makers that the Galvan has become an entertainment trope representing the ubiquitous 'crazed malfunctioning kill-bot'. Panstellar's legal department has successfully challenged many of these representations but standard entertainment industry techniques in the 'vagueifying' category have confounded recent attempts.

The typical entertainment-vid killbot is blatantly a Galvan but with enough small details changed that it 'could be some other robotic platform'. The situation has not been helped by the fact that actual Galvan platforms have been used by insurgents at times. Whilst not a combat vehicle by any means, the Galvan is certainly formidable.



ARMOUR

FRONT 28

REAR 28

SIDES 28



GALVAN CORROSIVE ENVIRONMENT CONSTRUCTION PLATFORM

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| TL | 12 |
| SKILL | FLYER (GRAV) |
| AGILITY | +2 |
| SPEED (CRUISE) | FAST (HIGH) |
| RANGE (CRUISE) | UNLIMITED |
| CREW | 0 |
| PASSENGERS | 0 |
| CARGO | 500KG |
| HULL | 120 |
| SHIPPING | 30 TONS |
| COST | — |

TRAITS

EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Airlock, Autopilot (advanced), Communications System (advanced, satellite uplink, encrypted, increased range, meson communicator), Computer/3, Control Systems (basic), Corrosive Environment Protection, Crane (heavy), Cutting Tool, Digger Blade, Fire Extinguishers, Fresher, Fusion Plant (advanced), Life Support (short term), Manipulator Arms (advanced) x4, Navigation System (improved), Robot Brain (very advanced), Sensors (advanced, hardened, increased fidelity, increased range)

No weapons

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Autopilot (skill level) | 3 |
| Communications (range) | 10,000km |
| Navigation (Navigation DM) | +2 |
| Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM) | +3 |
| Camouflage (Recon DM) | — |
| Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM) | — |

Saxe Transport

The Solomani Confederation's Near Boötes Cluster is a group of worlds that dominates commerce in the Capella and Gemini subsectors and Saxe Transport, based on Saxe, is the largest of the cluster's merchant lines. Unlike some Solomani companies, its management strives to maintain good relations with the Imperium and its routes operate across the Solomani Rim on both sides of the border.

Saxe is somewhat controversial within the Rim for the 'professional sensitivity' training programs its elite ship's officers and stewards are required to attend. These are designed to weed out more extreme proponents of the Solomani Cause who might cause embarrassing and costly incidents when dealing with Imperial, Vegan or other non-Solomani passengers. Employees who do not meet the high standards of these courses are rarely fired but may find themselves transferred from service on prestigious cross-border passenger routes to bulk haulers shipping ore between industrial worlds and asteroid belts.

The 'progressive' attitudes of Saxe Transport's management have not endeared the corporation to more militant Solomani Party factions, particularly those openly hostile to the Imperium and all its citizens. The company's security force is aware of this and warn captains to be alert for threats from Solomani Movement extremists as well the usual pirates and hijackers.

Seaharvester

Seaharvester specialises in exploiting the natural resources of oceans in the Solomani Rim. The company was founded 175 years ago and pioneered advanced techniques for aquaculture, deep seabed mining and seawater metals reclamation. Its biological division is also involved in extracting useful pharmaceutical, nutritional and cosmetic compounds from numerous species of marine organisms. To this end, Seaharvester has negotiated numerous contracts with planetary governments that provide the hunting, harvesting, breeding, farming or even cloning of various aquatic species. Seaharvester was recently acquired by the megacorporation SuSAG, although the company continues to operate as a mostly-independent subsidiary. This allows SuSAG to secure monopoly control over the biological sources of several important pharmaceuticals, notably PDPT-beta, a broad spectrum antibiotic.

Solar Shipping

Solar Shipping provides major trade route passenger and freight service within the Imperial territory of the Solomani Rim. The corporation originally served the entire sector but was forced to abandon its routes in Solomani territory after the end of the Rim War. The

abandoned routes became Solomani Shipping, and Solar Shipping maintains transshipment agreements with that company. In many respects, although the two companies are now distinct commercial entities, they operate as if still one. Solar Shipping is based out of Terra.

Solomani Chemicals (SolChem)

SolChem is descended from the Alpha Crucis branch of Schunemann und Sohn, AG (SuSAG), the Imperial chemical and pharmaceuticals giant. SuSAG was slow to abandon its holdings in the Solomani Confederation and paid the price when several of its major corporate facilities in Alpha Crucis were nationalised. These were amalgamated and formed into the present Solomani Party-owned corporation in 902. SolChem has a similar corporate culture to SuSAG and continues to be involved in everything from medical drugs to biochemical weaponry. It has a close relationship with the Solomani Ministry of Justice and SolSec, which permit it to run 'voluntary' human trials and medical research programs at some Confederation prisons and detention facilities. Similar relationships exist with many planetary governments. SolChem also find these regimes a significant market for its range of riot-control agents.

SolChem also has contracts with the Solomani Army where it is known to have developed race-specific biochemical agents possessing enhanced effects against various nonhuman races such as Aslan, Ithklur, Vegans or Hivers. Research into tailored plagues targeting specific races of Humaniti has likely occurred as well but such pathogens are generally considered far too likely to mutate to be worth deploying.

Solomani Military Industries

This is one of the several names under which the arsenals and navy yards of the Solomani Confederation military engage in commercial business. SMI employs both serving military personnel and civilian contractors. The 'corporation' is quite diversified including sales of military electronics, small arms, body armour and powered armour, grav vehicles, heavy weapons, combat starships and even survival gear and rations.

Solomani Shipping

This company operates the abandoned routes of Solar Shipping in Solomani Confederation territory. Solomani Shipping benefits from the relationship with its partner company but its close ties with an Imperial corporation have also left it vulnerable to insinuations that it is unpatriotic or politically unreliable. Most of these claims have been attributed to propaganda put about by Transstar but they have cost the company a significant amount of business. Solomani Shipping has its homeport at Teucer.

Solomani Strategic Technologies (SST)

This is one of the several names under which the Solomani Confederation military do business. SST's operations in the Solomani Rim specialise in the production of military software and electronics, combat grav vehicles and high-energy weapons. They are a jointly owned corporate subsidiary of the Solomani Confederation Army and Navy, with headquarters on Twylo.

Star Core

Star Core is the largest manufacturer of fusion reactors, hydrogen fuel processing systems and power distribution systems in Alpha Crucis. It also provides technicians to lower-TL worlds to assist in maintaining modern power systems. A subsidiary of the company, Nova Directed Energy, designs, sells and manufactures plasma weaponry.

Thinking Machines Incorporated (TMI)

TMI is an electronics and software giant that specialises in the manufacture of advanced household, commercial and industrial robots, and the software that operates them. It also has an extensive line of intelligent interface software, notably TL13+ expert systems, agents and intellect programs. TMI is one of several Near Boötes Cluster firms that have prospered due to the recent détente with the Imperium and it owes much of its success to technology licensing agreements with Imperial firms and universities. These have given it exclusive access to proprietary TL15 technology that it adapts for Solomani consumers. The company's recent growth has been impressive; already the largest robotics manufacturer headquartered in the Solomani Rim, most observers predict it will soon become the Confederation's leading manufacturer of robotics and AI systems.

What is less well known is that TMI is, for all practical purposes, a foreign subsidiary of the Imperial megacorporation Naasirka, established to give the latter company a legal back door into the large and somewhat xenophobic Solomani Confederation market.

TMI's status violates the spirit of several Solomani Confederation laws intended to ensure domestic control of major corporations. However, Naasirka has greased the palms of enough Solomani Party officials in the Near Boötes Cluster to enable them to get away with it. SolSec is, of course, aware of the situation but willing to tolerate this fiction. So far, TMI executives and Secretariat delegates from the Near Boötes Cluster worlds have presented a convincing case that the under-the-table arrangement has seen more Imperial technology being transferred to the Solomani Rim than vice versa. However, despite its best attempts at lobbying, TMI has found it difficult to gain Confederation government and military contracts for its products due to nativist factions in the

Secretariat and concerns that subtle 'back doors' or viruses may be installed in its products. TMI, of course, dismisses such fears as paranoia.

The company is based on Polyphemus.

Tsyasha Kwa

This is a Vegan engineering *tuhuir*. In addition to teaching a particular design aesthetic and operating its own engineering academy, Tsyasha Kwa builds small civilian and military starships to order for particular clients. It is known for innovative designs and high production quality. GSbAG is investigating the possibility of acquiring it as a subsidiary but the company has so far resisted integration. Its headquarters is at Hsuishlesh but Tsyasha Kwa has shipyards throughout the Vegan Autonomous District.

Utarek

This shipping line is a subsidiary of the megacorporation Tukera. It functions as a sector line within Imperial territory, connecting with feeder routes in the Solomani Rim and Old Expanses. The name is an anagram of Tukera. Utarek has its headquarters on Menaf in Alpha Crucis and, in general, operates autonomously within general guidelines.

Valkyrie Technologies

A manufacturer of consumer and military vehicles noted for its propensity to cut corners in pursuit of the bottom line, Valkyrie Technologies was at the heart of a major military scandal during the Solomani Rim War. It was caught using a combination of influence peddling and bribery to sell vast numbers of the massively overweight Crusader fusion-powered tracked tank, a vehicle eventually nicknamed the 'Triceratops' by disgusted Solomani tankers. In 1005 the firm's senior executives were arrested by SolSec. The new management team successfully turned the company's military products division around and in 1020 it was once again trusted to receive Solomani Confederation military contracts.

The consumer division of Valkyrie Technologies continues to be plagued with controversy, with several hundred deaths in 1070–80 blamed on faulty fuel cells in its inexpensive but popular line of high-performance grav speeders. The incidents prompted a sector wide recall, although careful legal manoeuvres avoided major litigation. The latest scandal involves the Imperial megacorporation Ling Standard Products, who have alleged that the corporation used industrial espionage to pirate proprietary grav module designs from its own 1100 line of consumer air/rafts.

Valkyrie Technologies has its headquarters on Point in Alpha Crucis. Its military division makes sales throughout the Confederation but the consumer division is largely restricted to its home sector.

CRUSADER SUPERHEAVY TANK

The Crusader was originally marketed as a 'super-heavy breakthrough tank' capable of smashing holes in enemy formations and assaulting any known fortification. It was ordered in large numbers based upon a demonstration variant whose specification greatly exceeded that of the production variant. After a period of trying to make the Crusader work somehow, the Solomani Confederation Army cancelled its order and dumped the thousands of Crusaders already delivered at extremely low prices. As a result a number of Home Forces acquired an armoured capability they would not otherwise have had and at an affordable price. The Crusader remains a badly flawed design, however. It is nicknamed the Triceratops by many of its users, although it also gets called a variety of less pleasant names.

In theory, the combination of heavy armour, good defences and an unlimited operating radius should make the Crusader effective. However, its rated speed and agility exist only in the 'doctored' demonstration variant. Production-model Crusaders are slow, cumbersome and have a tendency to either shed tracks or damage their own suspension. The transmission is also suspect, requiring frequent field repairs.

Although the armour performs more or less as advertised, the Crusader is a big, slow target with a tendency to become stuck on obstacles or otherwise

immobilise itself. Its armament is respectable on paper but hampered mainly by the vehicle's lack of tactical mobility. As originally envisaged the plasma gun would be mounted on a limited-traverse front-hull mounting, with the missile system on the rear hull and the defensive autocannon in side-mounted sponsons. This proved entirely unworkable, so a redesigned version gained a huge slab turret mounting the main gun. Autocannon were moved to small remote-controlled turrets on the sides of the main turret, with the missile system remaining on the rear of the hull between the tracks.

This configuration allows one or both of the autocannon to fire in most arcs and mounting them higher allows a much better field of fire. It is, however, possible to damage the autocannon by traversing the main turret with the defensive guns at the wrong angle, either snapping the barrel or levering the mounting off the main turret. The missile system is turret-mounted to allow tracing of fast targets but its rear-mounted position means it can only do this if the target is in the rear arc. Airborne targets can be engaged at greater distances without difficulty.

The fact that the vehicle has a heavily armoured front with three 'horns' pointing forward gave it its nickname. However, like the Triceratops it is a dinosaur – huge, cumbersome and obsolete.



ARMOUR

FRONT 170 (+30)

REAR 140 (+30)

SIDES 145 (+30)



CRUSADER SUPERHEAVY TANK

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| TL | 12 |
| SKILL | DRIVE (TRACKED) |
| AGILITY | +1 |
| SPEED (CRUISE) | MEDIUM (SLOW) |
| RANGE (CRUISE) | UNLIMITED |
| CREW | 4 |
| PASSENGERS | 0 |
| CARGO | 0 |
| HULL | 247 |
| SHIPPING | 37.5 TONS |
| COST | MCR1095.8 |

TRAITS

AFV

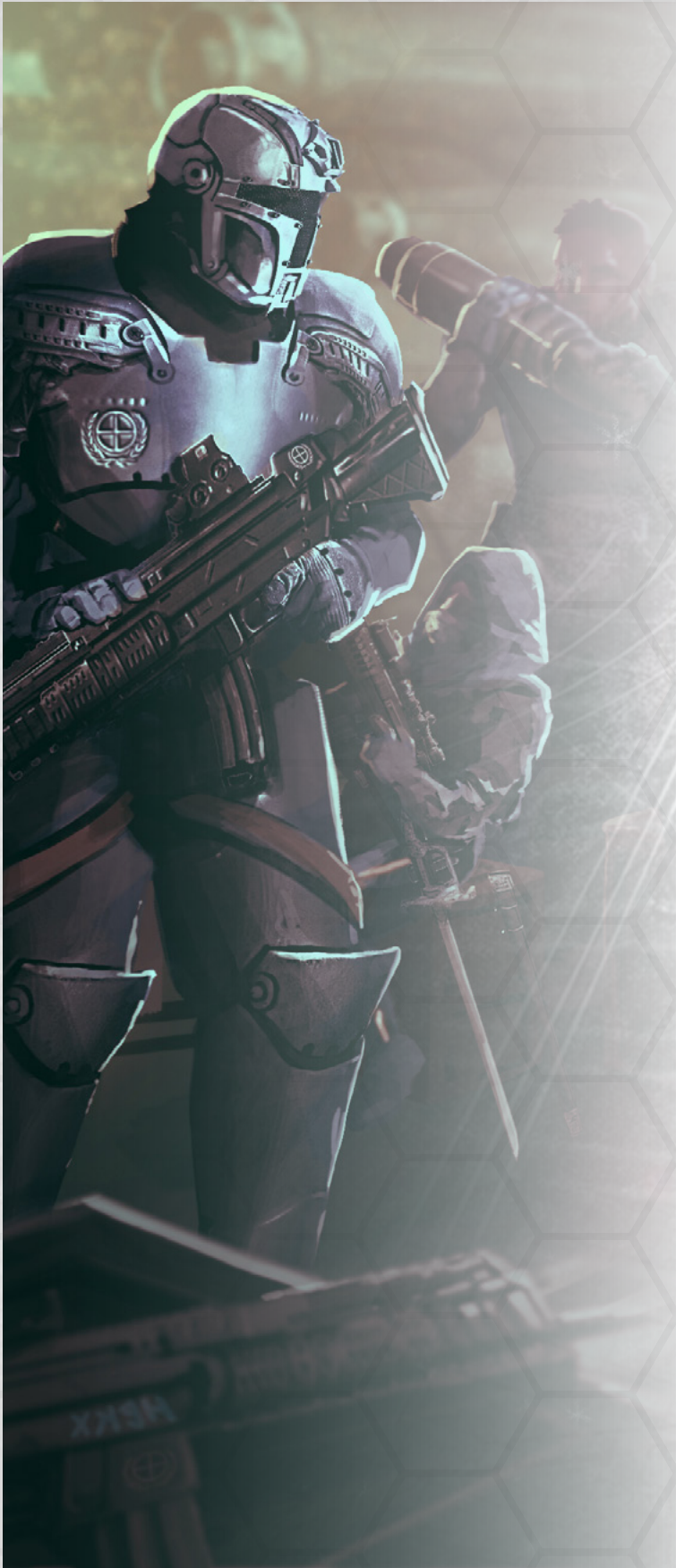
Airlock, Anti-Missile System (gauss), Autopilot (advanced), Communications System (advanced, encrypted, increased range, tightbeam), ECM (advanced), Navigation System (improved), Control Systems (advanced), Decoy Dispenser, Fire Extinguishers, Fusion Reactor (advanced), Hostile Environment Protection, Life Support (basic), Nuclear Damper, Reactive Armour (advanced), Sensors (improved, hardened, increased fidelity, increased range), Smoke Discharger, Tracks

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Autopilot (skill level) | 3 |
| Communications (range) | 10,000km |
| Navigation (Navigation DM) | +2 |
| Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM) | +2 |
| Camouflage (Recon DM) | — |
| Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM) | — |

EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Large Turret (plasma-c gun)
Small Turrets (anti-air missile) x4
Small Turrets (rotary autocannon) x2

| Weapon | Range | Damage | Magazine | Magazine Cost | Traits | Fire Control |
|--------------------|-------|--------|----------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Plasma Gun-C | 10 | 2DD | — | — | AP 30 | +4 |
| Anti-Air Missile | 8 | 8D | 1 | Cr120000 | One Use, Smart | +4 |
| Rotary Autocannon | 1 | 6D | 500 | Cr1200 | Auto 5 | +4 |
| Anti-Missile Gauss | 1 | 3D | 300 | Cr2000 | Auto 6 | — |



TORBELLINO GRAV SPEEDER

The Torbellino grav speeder was marketed as 'performance and style on a budget', which is reasonably accurate. However, the marketing materials made no mention of safety; in this regard the Torbellino underperformed rather badly. In addition to an unstable fuel-cell system it is alleged to be prone to 'glitchy' electronics. In a high-speed grav vehicle this is extremely dangerous.

One reason for these problems is the origin of the Torbellino design. It was initially conceived as a high-speed reconnaissance vehicle for military users, then went through a series of alterations before finally emerging in its final form. By that time it was clear the design was unworkable, so it was tweaked again and given a good working over by the marketing department. Modifications upon modifications were included in the final design, which made use of components intended for other projects as a way of keeping costs down. Despite most of these being proven systems, inevitably when they were put together there were teething problems that were largely ignored during the final rush to market.

The notorious fuel cells are derived from a military prototype designed to produce very high output at the price of frequent maintenance and recalibration. If lovingly cared for by a well-equipped team they are safe enough to use but the typical fly-and-forget civilian owner will soon find that power output becomes erratic or the cells generate excess heat... or both. Internal fires are not common but have happened; more commonly the vehicle's safety systems make an emergency landing and shut down the power system. In the event that an overheat incident coincides with a glitch in the monitoring system the cells can potentially become hot enough to explode.

As an originally military design the Torbellino has better protection in its forward arc, which is marketed as a safety feature. However, its light construction means its structure is likely to collapse on the occupants even if the frontal plate remains intact. The cheap electronics fit also makes a crash more likely; not only is it not up to the standards required for a hypersonic vehicle its integration issues can cause unexpected interactions and the occasional complete shutdown. As the marketing campaign says – piloting a Torbellino is certainly an experience!

ARMOUR

FRONT 7

REAR 3

SIDES 3



TORBELLINO GRAV SPEEDER

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| TL | 13 |
| SKILL | FLYER (GRAV) |
| AGILITY | +3 |
| SPEED (CRUISE) | HYPERSONIC (SUPERSONIC) |
| RANGE (CRUISE) | 4,000 |
| CREW | 1 |
| PASSENGERS | 1 |
| CARGO | 450KGS |
| HULL | 9 |
| SHIPPING | 3 TONS |
| COST | CR318000 |

TRAITS

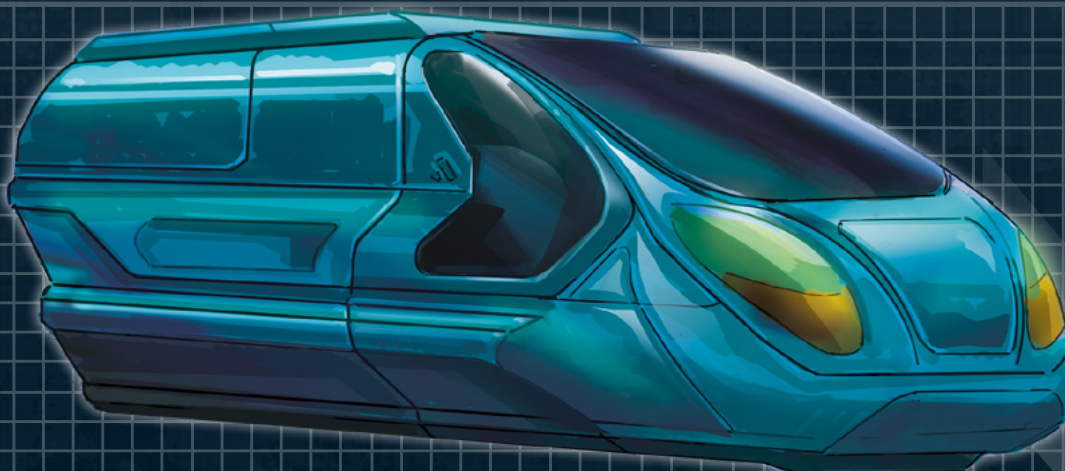
Streamlined

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Autopilot (skill level) | 1 |
| Communications (range) | 1,000km |
| Navigation (Navigation DM) | +2 |
| Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM) | +1 |
| Camouflage (Recon DM) | — |
| Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM) | — |

EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Autopilot (improved),
Communications System
(advanced), Control System
(improved), Ejection Seats x2,
Fire Extinguisher, Navigation
System (improved), Sensors
(improved)

no weapon



POLITICAL AND CULTURAL MOVEMENTS

In addition to the Imperial nobility and Solomani Party, many other factions and organisations have a significant presence in the Solomani Front.

Alpha Hawks

This is an anti-Imperial organisation that advocates increased military presence on the Alpha Crucis-Imperial border, higher military spending and active support of Solomani guerrillas in the occupied systems. It also argues that it is important to keep resistance alive in order to ensure the Imperium cannot assimilate the occupied worlds and use them as bases for future conquest. Alpha Hawks are divided as to whether to support terrorist operations against civilian targets but believe it is important to keep hope alive in the occupied systems and a patriotic duty to support Solomani Party guerrillas who continue resistance. Cthonia and its allies lead this faction in the Secretariat and the Alpha Hawks are strong in the Confederation Navy and SolSec's external directorate.

Anti-Solomani Activists

Many worlds with mixed race, Vilani or Vegan populations suffered repression or injustice – real or perceived – during the Solomani Rim War. Although Imperial post-war policy was to encourage reconciliation, the Imperium had limited ability to control the actions of its planetary governments. Measures succeeded in some cases but in others were poorly implemented or half-hearted, with the result that many worlds had citizens who thirsted for revenge.

The most virulent anti-Solomani world in the sector is Iddamakur, in the Ultima subsector. Iddamakur was used as a prison for 'undesirables' during Solomani rule. Although many of the former inmates were dissident Solomani rather than racial minorities, the inhabitants have an understandable dislike for the Solomani Cause.

Militant Vilani nationalist movements exist on a few worlds that had Vilani populations who suffered under Solomani rule but that were restored to power or parity following the Imperial victory. Examples of nationalist movements that encourage anti-Solomani discrimination are the governments of Arkiirkii and Darrukesh and Khedish.

The nations of Easter are divided between nationalist Vilani and Solomani factions. The Vegans suffered under Solomani rule but are not by nature a vengeful people. Vegan anti-Solomani activities are limited to measures such as imposing restrictions on Solomani organisations or individuals that directly promote anti-Vegan activity.

Asteroid Miners of Alpha Crucis (AMAC)

AMAC is ostensibly a union representing the rights of migrant belters and zero-g construction workers, known for their militant support of belter rights during labour conflicts with major corporations and governments. In the 1090s the senior leadership of AMAC was partially controlled by Solomani for Social Justice, a Party faction attempting to spread into Imperial space by unionising Imperial belt workers of Solomani racial heritage and taking over existing labour organisations. They are looking to spread a socialist version of Solomani philosophy that pits the microgravity working class against perceived abuses engineered by megacorporations and the nobility. Although legitimate rabble-rousers in their own right, some AMAC members have sympathies with Solomani guerrilla groups and provide them with tacit support. Recently the IFG criminal syndicate has attempted to infiltrate AMAC in order to be able to shake down both the union and management for its share of asteroid mining profits, although only a small fraction of AMAC organisations have fallen under the IFG's control. The Solomani Confederation's Ministry of Justice and SolSec have both launched investigations at the behest of Party factions that wish to keep AMAC 'clean' so it can serve their own purposes.

The Authentic Movement

This back-to-one's roots social movement was founded by Johann Kramm, a Solomani Imperial whose extremely popular book *The Authentic Experience* encouraged people to rediscover and recreate the best elements of their ancestral cultures in order to give meaning to their own lives. Kramm found value in all cultures and encouraged a fellowship of diversity rather than ethnic separatism. The Authentic Movement that his work spurred originated in the Imperial Core where Kramm lived but spread to the Solomani Rim just after the Rim War in 1010.

The 'Authenticism' message resonated with war-weary segments of the population. Despite initial fears that it would serve as a cloak for Solomani nationalism it seems instead to have encouraged greater diversity and tolerance among the minority who practice it. The Imperium now approves and many nobles – especially those from the exiled houses – organise lavish Authentic balls or festivals. Even under the constraints of military rule Authentics make up a significant percentage of tourists visiting historical worlds like Terra and Dingir. In recent years some aficionados claim the movement has become too commercialised, removing the element of personal research. Corporations like Makhidkarun now have entire branches devoted to providing pre-packaged Authentic Experiences for all major strains of Humanity.

Dolphin Embracers

These are a mix of human and Dolphin advocates of increased civil rights and full Solomani Party membership for uplifted Dolphins. The movement is powerful on several water worlds in Alpha Crucis, notably Vogar, but has limited wider influence. The faction's aims were memorably attacked by Purist leader Joshua Nass in a televised speech at the 1102 Solomani Party General Congress, in which he denounced the moral degeneration of the Confederation should factions like 'those slimy dolphinists' ever achieve significant power. Nash's slander has since become part of Confederation popular culture and is a popular schoolyard insult.

Free Monitors

In the Solomani Confederation the Monitors are SolSec's volunteer undercover informers. On many occupied worlds in the Rim the monitor network survived the war and military rule but has now morphed into something quite different, becoming a loose fraternity of anti-Imperium hackers and whistle blowers dedicated to publicly exposing the secrets of the Imperial nobility, military and megacorporations. The Monitors turn the information they uncover over to journalists or post them on anonymous networks. Most Free Monitors are simply dedicated to freedom of information but a small number have old ties to SolSec's network. If the latter discover sensitive data that could benefit the Confederation, such as Imperial military secrets, they may attempt to contact SolSec operatives instead of publicly releasing the information.

The Free Monitors are most popular in the Sol and Harlequin subsectors. The movement may have originated among information activists on Prometheus.

Imperial Solomani Parties

The Imperial control of the Solomani Rim is resented by many citizens who still cling to the ideals of the Solomani Movement or feel they were better off living in the heart of a great interstellar power instead of the outlying and occupied outer province of an even larger one. In the Imperial area of the Rim pro-Solomani agitation is widespread.

Wherever political freedom is tolerated there is generally at least one, and sometimes several, rival Solomani Party. Under Imperial military rule – and on some worlds without military rule that have strongly anti-Solomani planetary governments – the actual Solomani Party is banned. Local organisations or political parties may instead operate under other names as part of the general Solomani Movement.

The Solomani Movement inside the Imperium generally adheres to the basic tenets of the Solomani Cause where its members see the Imperium as an illegitimate occupying power. Like the Solomani Parties in the Confederation, it is divided into factions whose views range from moderate belief in the superiority of Solomani culture to a rigid doctrine of Solomani supremacy and sole fitness to rule the universe. Some members are resigned to Imperial control but seek to work within the system and ultimately restore Solomani leadership of the Imperium. Others advocate ongoing passive or active resistance in the hope of driving the Imperium from their worlds or future liberation by the Confederation. The latter groups often function as the open 'political wings' of militant groups that seek the violent overthrow of Imperial control over the Solomani Rim.

The majority of pro-Solomani organisations on Imperial worlds within the Rim are non-violent parties working to obtain independence from the Imperium or promote the Solomani Cause by peaceful means. Their main activities include distributing pro-Solomani propaganda, demonstrating against continued military rule and anti-Solomani discrimination, keeping Solomani sentiment alive inside the Imperium and conducting parades on Solomani holidays. Many also attempt to work within the power structures of planetary governments in order to restore or preserve pro-Solomani policies. As long as they do not call for violent anti-Imperial revolution or receive direct support from the Solomani Confederation, these organisations tend to be tolerated by the Imperium. Such pro-Solomani parties exist throughout the Rim with a few adherents on almost every human world.

Pro-Solomani sentiment is not evenly distributed over the Rim. It tends to be strongest on worlds with long-standing Solomani habitation where economic or political conditions have caused the people to look upon the period of Solomani rule as a happier time. The Solomani Movement is strongest on worlds of the old Terran Confederation, which consisted mostly of the Dingir and Sol subsectors. Solomani sentiment also runs high in the Albadawi subsector, whose current economic problems are blamed by many on the Imperial government and rimward portions of the Arcturus subsector, which was largely settled under the Solomani Autonomous Region. Most worlds of this region were occupied by the Imperial military after the war.

ManFirst Party

This organisation was founded in 1067 by Gustav Murphy, an Esperance political activist. It is a militant human supremacist political organisation that opposes Vegan influence on worlds with mixed Vegan and human

populations. The main focus of ManFirst is attempting to block Vegan populations on Ludmilla and Esperance from joining the Vegan Autonomous District. The movement is also active on some worlds with human populations in the Vegan Autonomous District. There it opposes the longstanding use of Vegan legal and government systems based on tuhuir concepts by human communities and attempts to promote the virtues of 'pure' Solomani or Vilani culture.

ManFirst shares a similar ideology to the Solomani Party, but no direct links have been proven, and is known to accept members of any human race. The ManFirst Party has been careful not to officially support the Solomani Confederation, although some individual members have been known to express personal sympathy with the Solomani Cause. The official platform of ManFirst Party is that human-settled worlds in the Vegan Autonomous District should be permitted to re-join the Imperium.

In 1104 ManFirst won its first election, on Ludmilla, and has begun legislating to put its separatist ideas into practice. The party does not itself support terrorism or racist attacks but supporters of ManFirst have often been involved in anti-Vegan violence.

Pan-Galactic Friends of Life

This is an ecological activist group with chapters throughout the Imperial worlds of the Solomani Rim. Their goal is to save endangered species and fragile ecosystems through fund-raising, investigations, media campaigns, boycotts and protests. They were formed in 1073 on Lagash; once considered a lunatic fringe group, their successful defence of the threatened dawnsinger herds on Phireene in the 1090s earned them respect and greatly increased their membership. The Pan-Galactic Friends of Life rely on raising public awareness rather than violence but are willing to confront world governments, megacorporations and even the Imperium. They will hire experienced adventurers or investigators for help in high-risk situations, although their budget is somewhat limited.

Purists

The Purists are concerned with maintaining the racial purity of Solomani worlds and ensuring the ethnic Solomani retain their dominance over other human or alien races. Their interests are focused on domestic rather than foreign policy and want Purist planetary Solomani Party factions to be in power who will pass or strengthen laws that ensure the pre-eminence of pure Solomani over any other. Purists from worlds that already have pure Solomani populations are concerned with control of immigration and migrant workers. They are also opposed to granting any additional political power to Confederation mixed race Solomani, variant human and uplifted animal populations.

The inhabitants of the Consolidation of Turin tend toward the Purist position. Purists also have significant support in the SolSec internal directorate, the Ministry of Genetics and the Ministry of Economics. They usually tolerate Solomani variant races with minor adaptations, such as the Selenites; the Purists even have some adherents among the Selenites, who prefer to keep their own 'worldhouse' planets free of non-Selenite humans. Many Purists are also Realists, allowing them to be seen as patriotically supporting the Solomani Cause by cracking down on non-Solomani without harming relations with the Imperium. A current policy goal involves funding a Ministry of Genetics outreach program to ensure low Tech Level worlds throughout Alpha Crucis have full access to standardised genetic testing. One leader of note is Drydock Solomani Party planetary chairman Joshua Nass, who recently inaugurated a large-scale program requiring non-Solomani to accept sterilisation if they wished to receive social benefits.

Realists

This faction argues that the Confederation must accept the current situation with the Imperium and that a policy of 'peace through strength' and mutual détente is best. They wish to maintain a calm border with the Imperium in order to improve trade and prevent the risk of more destructive war and seek to discourage active support of Solomani terrorists and guerrillas as bad for business. The Realists suffer politically from being easily characterised as unpatriotic by the Hawks but benefitted greatly from the general war-weariness that followed defeat in the Solomani Rim War. Moderate sentiment is strong in the Alba, Denebola and Veracruz subsectors.

Rimward Expansionists

The Rimward Expansionists want the Confederation to settle more lightly populated subsectors to rimward, also supporting efforts by Alpha Crucis-based corporations to expand Confederation influence and establish new colonies within the Newworld, Spica and Langere sectors. They tend to be more concerned with the diplomatic and economic power of the Hive Federation than the Imperium. Their main focus is attempts to control the Ministry of Economics and influence the Navy to support exploration missions and expand the communications network.

Society of Sovereignty of Man Over Machine (SSMM)

This Solomani Confederation non-governmental organisation seeks to ensure that autonomous robots and artificial intelligences are designed with proper safeguards to prevent them running amok or being

misused. Their main goal is to educate the public and Solomani Party members, especially academics and policy makers, of the potential risks associated with highly intelligent machines and to regulate or prevent their creation. SSMM was formed on Thetis in the Solomani Confederation but has supporters on numerous other worlds. A small radical wing exists who are willing to use violence to carry out their goals.

Society for the Protection of Terra

An Imperial patriotic organisation formed in the Sol subsector in 1050 by a retired Imperial Navy Admiral and supported by many loyalist Solomani members and conservative sector nobles, SPOT advocates the continuation of military rule on Terra to ensure it never again threatens the Imperium. It emphasises the sacrifices made by Imperial forces to take the planet and the risk of the Solomani Party regaining power there. SPOT supporters often clash with peace movement or pro-Solomani demonstrators.

Solomani Freedom Party

An opposition movement devoted to reforming the Confederation into an interstellar republic with true human rights for all citizens at the planetary level. Originally known as the Reform Chartists, they were a faction of the Solomani Party that gained significant influence in Alpha Crucis and parts of Aldebaran before being purged by SolSec in the 880s. SolSec claims to have moved against the Reform Chartists due to connections between their leadership and the Hive Federation, although the Solomani Freedom Party denies this.

The Solomani Freedom Party is now an underground dissident movement with members inside some world Solomani Parties and the governments of other non-aligned worlds. They believe in the Solomani Cause but seek to institute the Reform Charter, a package of democratic reforms that would have fundamentally altered the way the Secretariat is elected. It would also give the Ministry of Justice supervisory power over SolSec and the authority to intervene to protect human rights. The Solomani Freedom Party seeks the peaceful overthrow of the Solomani Party and SolSec's domination of the politics of the Solomani Confederation but does not oppose the Confederation itself.

Solomani Inter-Faith Development Partnership of Alpha Crucis (SIPAC)

SIPAC is an association of Solomani worlds with significant populations of adherents to the traditional religions of Old Earth. SIPAC was formed to provide a cooperative framework to coordinate economic and

technological development aid in less developed but devout regions. It has since grown into a forum that meets to discuss trade, religious and immigration policy of the more religiously-orientated member governments and to coordinate the voting of their representatives within the Solomani Party's General Congress and the Secretariat. SIPAC members do not always see eye-to-eye but stand united against other regional blocs.

The Vegan Truth

This is an activist group, popular among many non-Solomani, who deny that Humaniti originated on Terra. They also teach that Terrans are a minor race who stole jump drive technology from a lost Vegan survey vessel that crashed on Earth in Terra's early atomic era. They have gathered a complicated body of proof that suggests the Terran claim to have independently developed the jump drive was a hoax perpetrated by the Solomani Movement to prop up lies of racial superiority and undermine the self-esteem of the rest of Humaniti.

Vegan Truth activities are mostly confined to production of publications and videos, as well as preaching the 'secret truth of Solomani lies' in seminars to would-be true believers. In addition to the Solomani Rim, it has spread to some Imperial worlds in the Old Expanses. Actual Vegan scholars do not support the organisation's thesis but there is some documentary evidence that Vegan starships may have ventured into the Sol subsector in the period in question. The group operates openly in the Imperium but in the Solomani Confederation SolSec persecutes their activities.

CRIMINAL, PARAMILITARY AND INSURGENT GROUPS

These are organisations with interstellar scope that operate outside Imperial or Solomani Confederation law.

Black Phoenix

During the Solomani Rim War, Black Phoenix paramilitary units patrolled mixed-race and Vilani neighbourhoods in the McKenzie and Dagir subsectors, terrorising them into submission. After the war they formed the nucleus of guerrilla groups in McKenzie. Most original cells were suppressed or destroyed by Imperial Marine commando counter-terrorist operations in the 1010s but the group emerged again in the 1090s under new leadership. Black Phoenix generally operates on worlds with a mixture of Solomani and non-Solomani populations and often chooses targets intended to incite racial violence.

Isazii Feruu Guaankarundn (IFG)

The Isazii Feruu Guaankarundn (IFG) is an organised crime syndicate found in cultural Vilani and mixed-race communities throughout Alpha Crucis, the Old Expanses and the Solomani Rim. Their Vilani name is often mistranslated as 'the charity' and reflects their original involvement in interstellar mail fraud before branching into smuggling and racketeering. Their power increased as a result of the black markets, rationing and economic disruption during and after the Solomani Rim War, which allowed them to get their tentacles into many legitimate organisations. They are stronger in the Imperium but active on some Solomani Confederation worlds with significant Vilani or mixed-race populations. The IFG is especially active in people-smuggling operations engaged in cross-border trafficking of Vilani, and other oppressed minorities, to 'freedom' or better jobs in the Imperium or non-aligned worlds where the Solomani Movement does not hold sway.

Kidashi Liberation Front

The KLF are one of the best-organised Solomani guerrilla organisations on Kidashi. Due to the strength of Imperial counter-insurgency forces on Kidashi, the group has established off-world cells and these have taken to striking targets elsewhere in the Albadawi and Dingir

subsectors. Their preferred targets are members of the Imperial nobility and megacorporations that possess sizable investments on Kidashi.

Knights of the First Cross

The First Cross is both a religious monastic order and a regimental-sized mercenary unit. Its members, often military veterans, take holy vows of poverty and obedience to the Turin Church and Solomani Cause. They are fanatical believers in the Solomani Cause and the racist Solomani supremacist theology of the Church of the First Cross. They have been hired by planetary governments, individuals and corporations for various 'crusades' where the enemy are non-Solomani humans, aliens or their supporters, as well as the occasional unbeliever. The group functions legally in the Solomani Confederation and several allied states but appears on a number of watch-lists for extremist organisations.

The Knights of the First Cross operate in small units under various aliases in the Imperium where the Imperial Ministry of Justice has designated them a terrorist group due to alleged involvement in atrocities. The Knights of the First Cross are based on Cluny where they serve as part of the Home Forces.



Jardin Syndicate

This is a criminal syndicate that originated in the Jardin subsector but has since spread throughout the sector on both sides of the Solomani border. They are involved in a wide range of ventures on different worlds including interstellar trafficking, counterfeiting goods and money laundering. Their largest racket involves preying on non-Solomani humans suffering from persecution by purist regimes on Jardin, Krypton and a few other hard-line Confederation worlds located near the Imperial border.

They pose as interstellar employment agencies or members of human rights organisations, collecting large payments from members of oppressed minorities in return for promises to arrange low-cost transport via low berth to 'freedom' and jobs in the Imperium, or to moderate Confederation worlds where the Solomani Movement is less doctrinaire. On some worlds the Jardin Syndicate work in concert with local Solomani Party interests eager to remove 'undesirables' from their worlds.

Unfortunately, many migrants are forced to pay additional charges for bribes, identity papers and life support, and end up in debt and forced into sweatshop labour or prostitution. Others are caught by Imperial or local authorities attempting to cross starport extralimity zones where they end up in legal limbo. The Imperium is generally sympathetic regarding the plight of refugees fleeing Solomani persecution but cannot force worlds to take undocumented immigrants as citizens. Processing refugee claims and finding worlds willing to take in individuals can take months or years, although able-bodied adults may be offered an option to enlist in the Imperial military.

Mercenaries

There are hundreds of units, large and small, for hire in the Solomani Rim. Most troops serving in mercenary units will be human. Vegans are rare in mercenary units but Aslan are reasonably common, thanks to a few Aslan worlds in Imperial territories that maintain the ihatei traditions. The largest majority Aslan unit is the Kaiear Legion. A few uplifted Dolphins and Apes may also serve, mainly in Solomani units. For example, the Carthaginian Marines of Hamilcar, who specialise in amphibious commando operations, have a Dolphin detachment supporting each of their three companies.

One odd tradition of mercenary units in the Solomani Rim is to claim some tenuous line of descent from various antique Terran or Vilani forces, whether they call themselves the Sacred Band, Samurai, Landsknechts, Spetsnaz or Shigniit Dia Ugkin (the Vilani empire's

foreign legion). In a few cases, there may be a vague connection but more often it is the result of a few veterans watching too many Authentic Movement videos.

Most mercenary units are composed almost entirely of ex-Imperial or ex-Confederation military veterans, tend to be patriots and stick to one side or the other of the border. This is especially true on the Confederation side, where mercenaries are often part-time members of their respective Home Forces and subject to reserve call up and where a unit's political reliability is often more important than combat capability when finding tickets. However, an Imperial unit that has taken jobs fighting pro-Solomani guerrillas is not going to get a warm reception if it decides to cross the border and start looking for tickets in the Solomani Confederation. Any Confederation government or corporation trying to hire such a unit would face harassment from Party militants and SolSec.

A very few units are completely apolitical, with leaders who are good enough diplomats to have friends in high places in both the Confederation and Imperial governments. This is often handled through Instellarms, one of the only Imperial megacorporations that can legally operate in the Solomani Rim. The personnel of such a unit may include a mix of Imperial and Confederation veterans acquired on both sides of the line. There are also units small enough that they generally elude political scrutiny or which have been forced by circumstances to change allegiance and hope for the best. This was the case with several mercenary units employed by the Confederation who changed sides when it became convenient to do so late in the Solomani Rim War.

In the Solomani Rim most mercenaries are employed by governments or corporations to bolster forces in the many small wars and insurgencies that simmer on both sides of the border or as security forces for repressive regimes that distrust the loyalty of their own troops. Mercenaries in Imperial territories also try to avoid being hired by rebel groups that may have connections with the Solomani Movement, to avoid ending up facing Imperial troops. Trade war tensions and pirate trouble in the Jardin and Kukulcan subsectors mean many merchant lines are hiring mercenaries with shipboard experience as gunners and security guards, or to protect docks and warehouses.

Phoenix Project

The Phoenix Project was a widespread covert guerrilla command, training and logistics network on Terra intended to sow the seeds of a future armed uprising. It was detected and eliminated in a major Imperial military intelligence operation in the 1040s. The destruction

of the Phoenix Project is believed to have eliminated the last serious Solomani guerrilla threat on Terra and after its eradication popular support for anti-Imperium resistance gradually declined. Small terrorist groups like Rule of Terra continue to operate and inflict occasional casualties but are not considered a serious threat to Imperial rule.

Pirates of the Rim

Piracy has a long history in the Solomani Rim. During the dark times of the Long Night entire pirate fleets menaced the Albadawi and Ultima subsectors. In the troubled years leading up to the Rim War, the Solomani Confederation used privateers to harass shipping of worlds attempting to secede from the Confederation with Imperial help. After the Rim War there was a spate of piracy involving rogue Solomani military forces; although the Confederation Navy had agreed to an armistice the situation was less clear for planetary navies and Solomani mercenary units. Some of these were Solomani loyalists who hailed from worlds whose governments had switched side and declared for the Imperium. Unwilling to accept this betrayal, they fought on or tried to escape. It took years for the last of these outlaws to be hunted down or escape across the Solomani border.

In the current post-war environment piracy is rare in the Imperial and Vegan subsectors of the Rim. A strong naval presence aimed at the Solomani Confederation and careful customs checks intended to counter arms smuggling to guerrillas make it difficult for pirates to operate. The high populations, Law Levels and Tech Levels of many worlds in the sector equate with sophisticated police regimes and powerful planetary navies that further create an inhospitable environment for interstellar outlaws. The only exceptions are the Ultima and Albadawi subsectors where a combination of political and economic factors has sometimes permitted successful pirate attacks.

Piracy is more common in Confederation-controlled subsectors, as the Confederation Navy's patrol forces in the Solomani Rim are overstretched. Military budgets and the focus of planning has gone to fleet squadrons intended to face the Imperial Navy and the creation of heavy planetary defences such as large monitors, deep meson gun sites and planetary armies. Keeping the peace between somewhat fractious planetary governments in the Kukulcan subsector has further diverted Confederation attention. The combination of increasing interstellar trade and a navy busy with strategic commitments has created gaps in coverage. In the Jardin subsector in particular, naval patrols are generally limited to the main trade routes lines, creating opportunities for lawlessness.

The popular image of pirates is of independent freebooters but this is rarely the case in this region. In the Confederation subsectors of the Solomani Rim most pirate attacks appear to be the result of escalating trade war disputes by armed merchant vessels associated with rival corporations and supported by friendly planetary governments attempting to disrupt their rival's trade. A few independent pirates are the casualties of these disputes; ships from smaller trading lines who stole their own ships and turned to piracy after their companies went bankrupt.

Solomani Freedom Army

This early pan-Solomani resistance group was founded in 1002 on Terra and Luna and was active in early guerrilla operations. They took heavy casualties and were mostly suppressed by the 1020s, although offshoots of the group later sprouted on Solomani worlds elsewhere in the Rim. In the 1060s the organisation took a stand against indiscriminate civilian attacks, preferring to see themselves as soldiers rather than terrorists. The survivors are often stereotyped as old men and women in rural bars singing patriotic songs and dreaming of better days. Militant groups claiming to be brigades or companies belonging to the Solomani Freedom Army appear from time-to-time but there appears to be no significant interstellar organisation or coordination amongst them.

Solomani Liberation Front (SLF)

The SLF were founded in 1050 from survivors of the defunct Solomani Resistance Army, which was suppressed by the Imperium and elements of Black Phoenix. They have a strong anti-Imperial political ideology and generally target Imperial nobility, especially the 'new noble houses' that the Imperium has created in the occupied systems. The SLF is the best-equipped anti-Imperial guerrilla organisation in Alpha Crucis, with groups on Imperial occupied worlds. The SLF are also known for assassinating Solomani politicians and business leaders they feel are collaborating with the Imperium.

Rule of Terra

Rule of Terra is a terrorist organisation active in pockets of the Solomani Rim. They were founded in 1068 by Solomani student radicals on Terra and Prometheus, among them a few violent splinter cells of the Solomani Freedom Army. Their stated goal is to free the Imperial occupied system through a programme of armed resistance. In practice, their actual strategy is to wage a terrorist campaign in the hope that the Imperium will be forced to maintain unpopular policies of military rule or be provoked into indiscriminate reprisals.

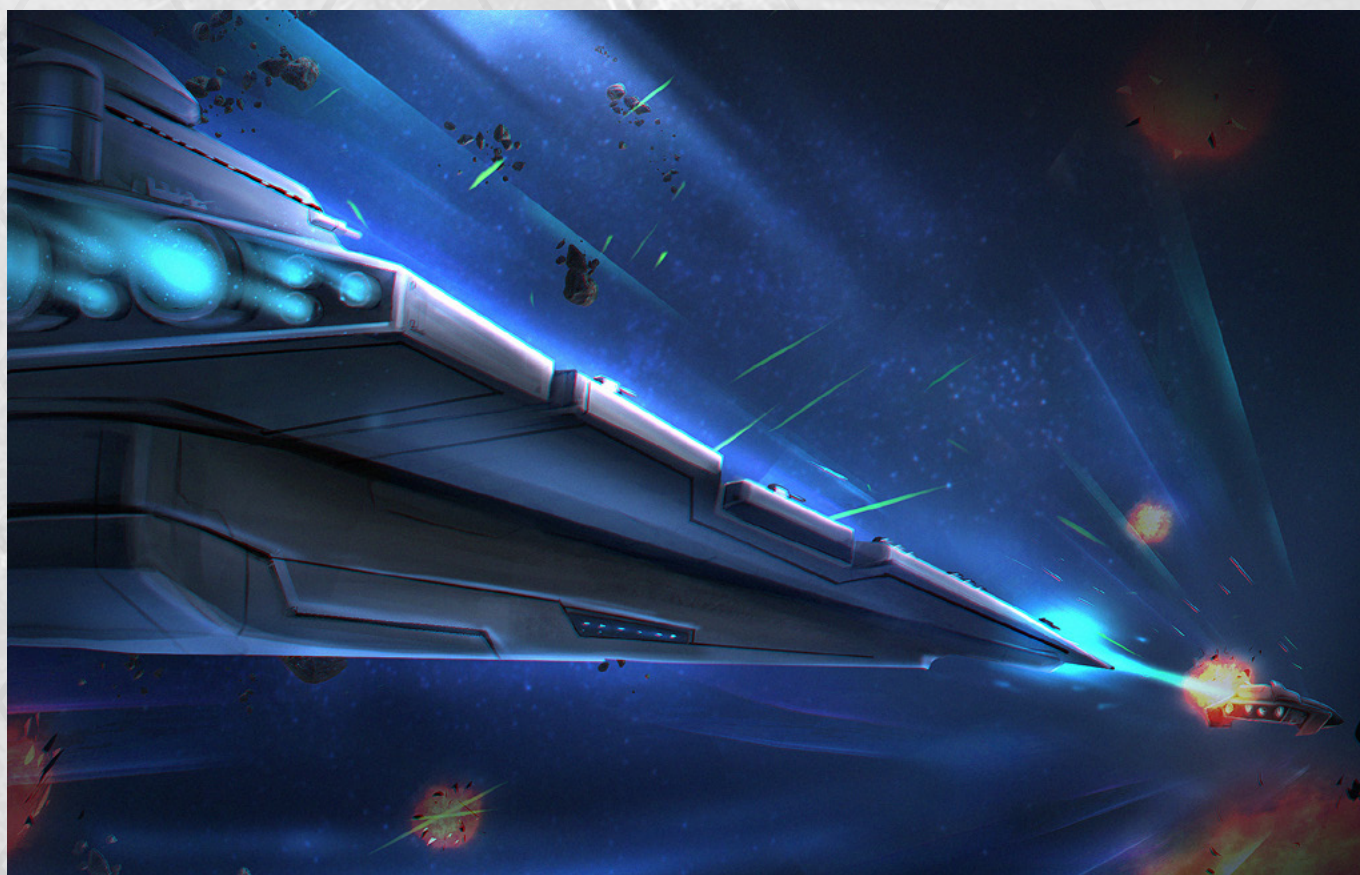
against Solomani civilians. Rule of Terra believe that a sustained insurgency will eventually wear down the Imperium's will and force a withdrawal from Solomani space. The organisation is interstellar in scope but relatively small. Some of its claimed attacks have been proven to be accidents while others may be the result of unconnected dissident individuals or organisations influenced by its propaganda.

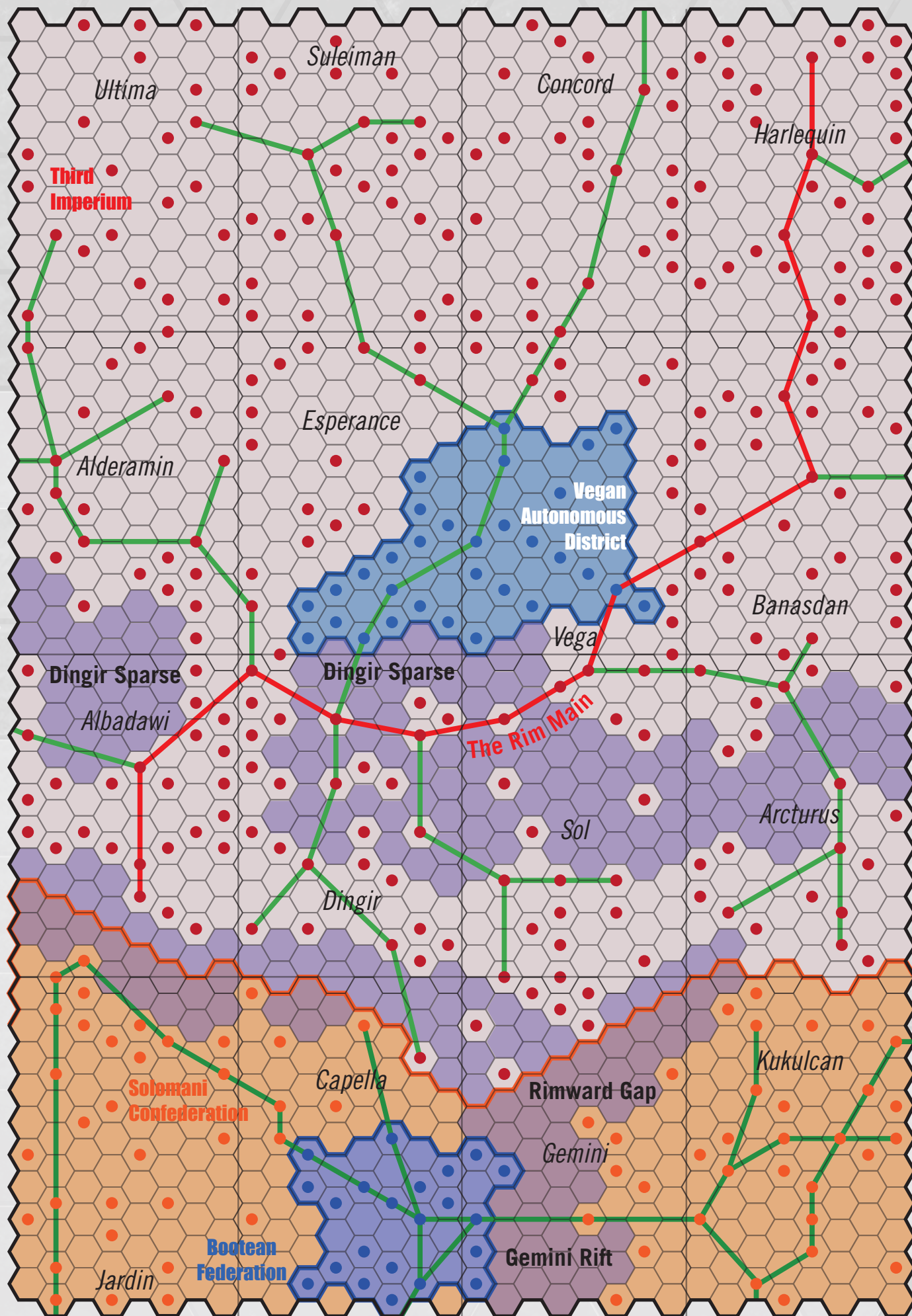
Rule of Terra's main targets are Imperial troops and bureaucrats, megacorporations, off-world tourists and local businesses or leaders that supply or support the military occupation. Its usual tactics include bombings, kidnapping, hijackings, assassination, information warfare and the reprogramming of civilian robots as weapons. Its cells have been responsible for over 700 terrorist incidents in the last 30 years, most on Terra, Fenris and Prometheus. In 1098 some 52 Imperial Army soldiers and several civilians died after a hacked robotic tanker truck full of liquid hydrogen was smashed into a military nightclub at LaGrange startown in Australia. This led to renewed effort by Imperial authorities that paid off in 1101 when the Imperial Navy intercepted a freighter carrying Rule of Terra's deputy leader Jack Bowman on his way to Fenris. Following this success, the Imperium has become

increasingly adept at infiltrating the organisation's cells, as well as anticipating and countering its operations. The group has failed to cause any mass-casualty incidents since 1098 and over 200 members or associates are now serving lengthy sentences on Imperial prison planets.

Rule of Terra continues to operate in independent cells with little centralised control. Although its attacks have failed to engender broad popular support, a minority of Solomani see its members as heroes or sympathise with its armed struggle against the Imperium. This has helped keep it alive with new recruits, safe houses and continued funding. Rule of Terra appears to receive sporadic external support and funding from militant non-governmental factions of the Solomani Party, although there is no evidence it is actively being supported by SolSec's external directorate or by the Confederation itself.

Its acts, although not its goals, have been disavowed by most moderate Solomani groups, including the Confederation government. In retaliation, Rule of Terra has attacked Solomani targets stating that 'all who do not contribute to the Manifest Destiny of the Race are not worthy to be part of the Race'.





C H A P T E R - 7 THE SOLOMANI RIM

The Solomani Rim is a long-settled and important sector on the frontier of the Third Imperium. It has been a border province, a birthplace of empires and a battlefield that has twice shaped the destiny of Charted Space. Its worlds include many that have made history. Chief among them is Terra, the cradle of Humanity and homeworld of the Solomani. It is also the home of another important alien race; the enigmatic Vegans, who have been, at times, close allies and hated enemies of the Solomani for over 3,000 years.

Once a frontier, today the Solomani Rim is one of the wealthiest and most densely populated sectors in Charted Space with 400 settled worlds and 1.3 trillion inhabitants. A century ago the sector was torn asunder by a bitter war between the Third Imperium and the rival Solomani Confederation. Uneasy peace now prevails but the scars of Solomani Rim War still remain, including an ongoing Imperial military occupation of many worlds, racial tensions, a cold war and a border patrolled by two great battle fleets.

In the year 1105 the Solomani Rim is divided between three powers; 12 subsectors are ruled by the Third Imperium, including a two-subsector client state, the Vegan Autonomous District. The remaining four subsectors are governed by the Solomani Confederation.

ASTROGRAPHY OF THE RIM

The Solomani Rim has certain astrographical features that have been significant to the course of interstellar history. They continue to impact navigation, trade and space warfare.

The Rim Main

The Rim Main is a chain of worlds that link the entire Imperial-controlled portion of the Solomani Rim. The main is usually said to begin in the Harlequin subsector where it connects to the neighbouring Diaspora sector, providing a route the Imperial core. It extends rimward through the Vegan Autonomous District and multiple Imperial subsectors before reaching its farthest extent in the Albadawi subsector, mere parsecs from the Solomani border. A smaller arm of the main extends into the Orichalc subsector, providing an important trans-border trade route.

As the major trade route through the sector, the Rim Main played a significant part in the region's prosperity and long history of civilisation. After technology declined in the Long Night to levels that no longer supported significant manufacture of jump-2 or jump-3 vessels, the Rim Main still provided a route by which many worlds could trade with one another. The efficiency of jump-1 ships operating on a main of this sort is widely understood and jump-1 'mainfreighters' are manufactured at Imperial ports across the sector. Some Solomani political economists consider the loss of control of the lucrative Rim Main trade route as a disaster equal to or greater than the fall of Terra itself.

The Rimward Gap

The Rimward Gap is a curving band of starless space two to three parsecs wide that begins in the rimward end of the Albadawi subsector, stretching across most of the sector. It has helped insulate the four rimward subsectors – Jardin, Gemini, Capella and Kukulcan – from the rest of the Solomani Rim. It also provided a convenient ceasefire line at the end of Solomani Rim War. The central part of the gap is generally referred to as the Gemini Rift, although that term is normally reserved for the wide gap between the Near Boötes Cluster and the trailingward side of the Gemini subsector. Exactly where the two overlap is a matter for debate but the rule of thumb is that the Rimward Gap lies between the Imperial border and the worlds of the Solomani Confederation whilst the Gemini Rift lies between worlds of the Confederation.

The Dingir Sparse

More correctly named the Trans-Dingir Zone Of Low Stellar Density, the Dingir Sparse begins in the coreward end of the Albadawi subsector and runs trailingward to Arcturus. Other than a jump-1 'bridge' where the Rimward Main crosses it, the Sparse creates a significant barrier to trade and complicates naval operations. The Terrans took advantage of the relative isolation of many systems in the Sparse during their war with the Vilani and the war plans of both the Imperium and the Solomani Confederation must account for the fact that Terra and her neighbours lie in the Sparse. Astrography suggests that the Imperium would have a harder time supporting or reinforcing operations around Terra than the Confederation, which in turn leads to pressure from vocal advocates of the 'Sparse Strategy'.

Bases

This book uses several different base codes in its descriptions of system profiles, summarised here.

| Base Code | Base Type | Description |
|-----------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| N | Imperial Navy Base | Naval bases vary in size from small installations supporting a few patrol ships to huge complexes that may have shipyards. Some are specialist facilities for intelligence operations, training and the like. |
| D | Imperial Navy Depot | Depots are the central command and supply bases for the Imperial naval forces in an entire sector. They are heavily defended and house the sector command staff. |
| F | Confederation Military Base | Solomani Confederation bases support both naval and ground forces. They can vary considerably in size and importance. |
| S | Imperial Scout Base | Scout bases support the operations of the Scout Service. Some are general installations whilst others specialise in repairs, training, reserve and replacement pools or some other task. |
| W | Imperial Waystation | A waystation is a large Scout base supporting the x-boat routes and can also serve as a marshalling point for a major project such as an exploration or survey mission. |
| R | Imperial Research Station | Imperial research stations are highly secure facilities operated by the Imperial government. Each has a focus such as pharmaceuticals, high-energy physics and so forth but may have diversified or secret projects. |
| M | Military Base | A military base supports ground forces only, although it may have facilities for transport and assault vessels. |

Within the Vegan Autonomous District all Imperial Navy, Scout and Waystation facilities are jointly operated by the Vegan Navy or Scout Service.

This comes down to a rather simplistic view that all the Confederation needs to do is to grab Terra, clear the Sparse and sue for peace.

A HISTORY OF THE SOLOMANI RIM

The Solomani Rim is one of the richest regions of Charted Space, with approximately a sixteenth of the entire productive wealth of the Third Imperium but its economic power is insignificant compared to its role in the history of the Solomani and Vilani races.

The Ancients are known to have been visited the region as early as -300000, where they collected samples of early Humans and canines from Terra. Their other activities in the sector remain mysterious. A few ruined Ancient bases, all apparently little more than rubble, have been found but there are no signs of the destroyed planets or the megastructures that mark their presence in more distant sectors like the Spinward Marches or Hinterworlds.

Rise and Fall of the Vegans

The first race native to the sector to develop space travel was not the Terrans but rather the Vegans, a humanoid race from Muan Gwi/Vega. They ventured into space around -6200 and then sent sublight ships to colonise the nearby world of Muan Issler. A mere century later the Vegans met merchant adventurers from the Geonee, a Vilani-influenced minor race of Humaniti. From these the Vegans purchased jump drive technology and by -5700 were building their own starships.

Like the Vilani, the Vegans were a conservative race. They expanded slowly but deliberately, building each colony up before moving to the next. Over 600 years the Vegans settled several worlds within five parsecs of Muan Gwi. Their first and largest colony, on Muan Issler, reached a population of over 100 million. In -5122 these worlds formed the Vegan Polity – the first interstellar society in the Solomani Rim.

Even as the Vegans were exploring their immediate neighbourhood, the First Imperium of the Vilani was in the midst of their great period of expansion. Around -5000 the First Imperium's fleets reached the Solomani

Rim, a region they referred to as the Kushuggi or 'rim worlds' sector. The Vilani established their first outpost at Karpaty, then called Lakish. Their initial progress was slow but in -4467 they made contact with the Vegan Polity. Initial relations were tense. The Vegans had received disturbing reports of the First Imperium's aggression from traders and initiated a military build-up, attempting to re-establish their long-dormant military traditions by building warships and planetary defences.

The Vilani established an advanced base at Shulgiasu in -4450. Attempts by the Vegan Polity at diplomatic negotiations came to naught due to the inflexibility of Imperial policy. In -4445 the Vilani suddenly attacked. The Vegan Consolidation War was a short but fierce affair, as the Vegans proved adept at space battle but far less skilled in ground combat. Once planetary defences were breached, their colonies rapidly fell to the Vilani and their allied troops. Even so, the steadfastness and depth of Vegan defences threatened to make the war far more costly than the Vilani Imperium could afford. To force a Vegan surrender the Vilani fleets launched massed nuclear strikes against the 'second Vegan homeworld' of Muan Issler, eventually overwhelming the defences and devastating the planet. Faced with the prospect of a similar attack on Muan Gwi and virtual genocide for their race, the Vegan Polity surrendered.

The Vilani Rim Province

The Sharurshid bureau of the First Imperium – specialising in interstellar trade – was given authority over the Vegan worlds and the region beyond. Exploration and development were slow as the Sharurshid was focused on integrating the stubborn Vegans. Their initial expeditions convinced them there were no major interstellar cultures rimward of Vegans and thus limited opportunity for further profit, so they instead began a slow process of identifying and settling the more promising worlds in the sector.

Initial Vilani settlement proceeded from the Harlequin and Vega subsectors into the Esperance subsector by -4300. This was followed by a slow but steady spread of outposts and settlements across the rest of the coreward half of what is now the Solomani Rim.

In -4038 the Sharurshid formally organised the worlds under their control into Kushuggi Province. At this point the 'Rim Worlds' province consisted of these subsectors: Harlequin (then Arkiirkii), Vega (then Duuskirka), Esperance (then Urima), Banasdan (then Nisinasha), Ultima (then Darrukesh), Suleiman (then Ishnar), Concord (then Ikaakur) and Alderamin (then Shululsish), along with the coreward region of the Albadawi subsector (then Apishlun). Its first capital was Shulgiasu in Vega.

It was not long after this that further Vilani expansion gradually slowed and then ceased entirely, not just in the Rim Worlds Province but across the entire Vilani Imperium. The empire had grown too large to easily govern and what may have started as a finite period of slowdown and consolidation became permanent. Steady growth was replaced by a policy of consolidation and internal development. With no significant threats on the borders there was no impetus to push out and eliminate them.

Not everyone in the Vilani Empire agreed with these conservative ideals. The frontier of the Rim Province attracted a dissident progressive Vilani faction known as the Kimashurgur or 'Virtue of the Foremost.' Refugees from persecution elsewhere in the empire, they established their own colonies beyond the Ziru Sirka's borders on the fringes of the Rim Province in Albadawi. Around -3500 the Kimashurgur pocket empire spread into the Dingir and then Sol subsectors. Its farthest extent terminated a mere three parsecs from Terra – the as yet undiscovered and still primitive homeworld of the Terrans.

The Vegans, while still militarily cowed, continued to worry the Ziru Sirka due to their stubborn unwillingness to adopt Vilani culture. The rise of a Kimashurgur empire a mere subsector away from the Vegan worlds created the unpleasant possibility that these dissidents might make common cause with them. In -3400 the First Imperium bestirred itself. The provincial governor launched a military campaign that crushed the Kimashurgur pocket empire and absorbed Dingir, Albadawi and the coreward portion of the Sol subsector into the Rim Province. With these actions the Vilani Empire reached its greatest extent.

At the time the Vilani Empire was crushing its dissidents, human civilisation on Earth – or Terra – was entering the Middle Ages. As progress in the First Imperium slowed down and then stopped, Terrans had their Renaissance, Industrial Revolution and first Space Age. Once gravitics and fusion power were developed, Terran nations and corporations rapidly colonised their own solar system. Their first sublight ships were launched to both near and distant stars. Terran scientists invented the jump drive and in -2424 their first jump capable ship visited the Barnard system.

Interstellar Wars

Far from exploring virgin territory, the mission to Barnard's Star found a small Vilani outpost there. The scale of the outpost gave no impression of the power of the Vilani Imperium or the huge technological disparity the Terrans faced. Tensions increased until open conflict began and despite some successes the disorganised forces of the Terran nations were defeated. This was the impetus to unite Earth and her first offworld colonies. In -2398 the Terran Confederation came into being.

In an on-again, off-again series of wars the Terrans slowly increased the size of their Confederation at the expense of the Ziru Sirka. Long-range Terran colonisation expeditions – some even using sublight technology – crossed two and three parsec gaps to settle worlds to rimward of the Sol subsector that the Vilani had ignored. Terrans were the first to establish colonies in the Arcturus, Gemini, Capella and Kukulcan subsectors.

The major battlefields of the First through Eighth Interstellar Wars were in the Sol and then Dingir subsectors. As the Terran Confederation won victories it not only established settlements but also conquered and colonised Vilani-occupied worlds. In the Eighth Interstellar War the Terrans conquered the remainder of the Dingir subsector and reached Vega. The Vegans revolted against the First Imperium in -2275 and the Vegan Polity was restored in -2284. Terra and its Vegan allies controlled over half of the Solomani Rim including all territory rimward of Vega. By that time Terran technology surpassed that of the Vilani Empire.

The Ninth Interstellar War saw the final conquest of the Solomani Rim by the Terran Confederation and its allies. Through most of the unnumbered conflicts that followed – known as the Nth Interstellar Wars – the Solomani Rim ceased to be a battleground and became a home front, its worlds increasingly distant from the fighting.

In some ways this was the golden age of the Solomani Rim. The resources from hundreds of conquered worlds poured into Terra and the old colonies in the Sol subsector. Massive industrial facilities were established to build warships and merchant vessels that supported Terra's continued victorious campaigns. The old ravages of war in the sector were repaired and on many worlds the desperate struggle could be forgotten amid new prosperity. The population on Terra itself grew increasingly distant from the war as the fleet headquarters was relocated to Dingir and the burden of the conflict fell increasingly on its ever-expanding colonial populations who dwelt elsewhere in the Solomani Rim.

The populous mother world remained a source of immigrants to other worlds but in this era they would often colonise conquered Vilani planets rather than carving out new frontiers. Terrans and Vilani blended together on some worlds and intermarried. On others worlds – especially those closest to Terra itself – successive waves of Terran immigrants achieved demographic dominance, utterly swamping the Vilani populations. The ancient Vilani cultures and populations were submerged in the Terran tide.

The Rule of Man

The First Imperium was effectively defeated by -2219 but this victory contained the seeds of the Terran Confederation's own downfall. The Terran military shouldered responsibility for administering the shattered Vilani Empire but political and social differences between mother Terra and its far-flung fleets and colonists came to a head. After a military coup by senior echelons of the Terran Navy, the Terran Confederation was dissolved in -2204 and replaced with the Second Imperium. This empire was also known as the Rule of Man and has been remembered less kindly as the Ramshackle Empire.

Terra was deliberately stripped of political power in this coup and, bereft of the institutions of the Terran Confederation, power reverted to that world's old national governments. These proved unable to maintain a united front with each other or their colonies; Terra retreated from interstellar politics. The Vegans also found their political independence once again subordinated to another human empire, albeit one whose policies were less onerous than those of the First Imperium.

The Rule of Man's first capital was established at the Terran Navy's fleet headquarters at Dingir but its bureaucratic heart became the Vilani capital of Vland. In -2176 the difficulty of maintaining two distinct capitals saw all government functions moved to Hub in the Massilia sector. The Solomani Rim was returning to what it had been under the Vilani; a distant provincial region, albeit one that was now freer, far more heavily populated and dominated by Solomani and Vegans.

It was in the Rule of Man that the term Solomani first came to refer to Terrans, since its rulers aimed to distance themselves from Terra itself. At the same time, with new settlement underway of even more distant rimward territories, the old term 'Rim Province' ceased to be applicable and the name Solomani Rim came to be gradually accepted across Charted Space. It first appeared on Rule of Man maps around -2100.

Dingir remained an important provincial capital of the Solomani Rim throughout the Rule of Man. Terra in particular and the Solomani Rim in general remained an important industrial, commercial and cultural hub and a continued source of emigrants.

The Rule of Man's Second Imperium was essentially a hybrid of Solomani and Vilani society, with greater Vilani influence the further one got from the Rim and toward the capital. Rule of Man culture was strong in Dingir, thanks to the influence of the capital, and in the coreward subsectors of the Solomani Rim – Concord,



Ultima and Esperance – where the greater residual Vilani populations remained. Most of the older Terran-settled worlds in the sector stubbornly resisted the importation of new Rule of Man social, political and cultural mores. Beyond the immediate sphere of Dingir, many residents of the Rim, Solomani or Vegan, recoiled at the very idea of a ruling Imperial aristocracy – even one led by former Terran naval officers. This independence was to stand them in good stead in the coming dark age.

The Long Night

The autocratic-bureaucratic regime of the Rule of Man proved unable to revive the glory of the moribund Vilani Empire. It fell into economic decline and political disorder, splintering into successor states that fought devastating wars for control of the old Imperial core. The Rule of Man degenerated into banditry and piracy.

Due to its position on the periphery, the Solomani Rim lost contact with central government as early as -1850. Despite this, the Rule of Man maintained its authority from the provincial capital at Dingir until -1695 when the government could no longer afford to maintain its own fleet. More and more power devolved to individual worlds.

Thanks to the Solomani Rim's distance from the Imperial core it escaped the worst factional fighting and true darkness never fell. There were several worlds

within the sector that maintained pockets of high technology and continued local interstellar trade. The many Solomani worlds of the Rim were also less reliant on central planning and foreign imports than in other sectors of the Second Imperium, which had never fully shaken off tightly integrated Vilani bureaucracy. Thus, while many worlds suffered a significant technological and economic decline, few collapsed entirely. The presence of two major racial home worlds – Terra and Muan Gwi – helped ensure the sector remained a bastion of civilisation.

The Vegans regained their independence during the Long Night and took responsibility for their own defence from the Rule of Man around -1650. The Vegans did not engage in military expansion but took several human-settled worlds – such as Bellerophon – under their protection and in the process introduced them to Vegan culture.

Although stripped of its military strength, Terra itself developed a large merchant fleet. In -1690, soon after the collapse of the provincial government on Dingir, Terra formed a trade alliance with its oldest colonies. This became known as the Terran Mercantile Community (TMC). As the Rule of Man ceased, TMC merchant ships served as the glue that held the Solomani Rim together. They took up patrol duties and mounted long-range expeditions that brought much needed supplies

to distant Terran colonies. Over time, interstellar trade contracted and around -1200 the TMC began to pull back into the Sol subsector. Now more concerned with defence and unity than trade, the TMC began to take on the trappings of an interstellar state.

The collapse of central authority and the naval patrols it supported made way for warlords and pirate leaders to prey on the remnants of interstellar civilisation. Some groups operated on both sides of the law, accepting payment to 'become' a navy for a major world or small polity. When hunting pirates was more profitable than being one, these groups protected their clients but the lure of easy booty tempted many to move into the vacuum left by those they had brought to justice. Some of the most prominent figures from that time are famous both as raiders and protectors.

When the pirates operated in numbers large enough to plunder entire worlds they became known as Reavers. Most were based in what became known as Reaver's Deep, with other bands in the Dark Nebula and Magyar. Between -1500 and -1100 fleets out of Magyar raided into the Solomani Rim, as did land-hungry Aslan ihati. The Reavers terrorised worlds in the Ultima, Alderamin and Albadawi subsectors, and threatened to penetrate deeper into the sector. Fear of this menace and contraction of the TMC's area of influence to Sol catalysed the creation of other interstellar alliances. These became known as the Rim States.

Dingir had been the provincial capital of the Solomani Rim under the Rule of Man but was unable to sustain its control over the entire territory. Its military aristocracy still remained strong enough to exert hegemony over much of the Dingir subsector and in -1136 this relationship was formalised as the Dingir League. The League directly controlled all worlds within five parsecs of Dingir and exerted significant influence beyond. For many centuries in the Long Night, the Dingir League was a trading partner and political rival to the other Rim States and also mounted military expeditions to protect the Rim against the pirate fleets that ventured into it.

Several worlds in what are now the Concord and Suleiman subsectors had retained interstellar technology. As the TMC gradually withdrew to the Sol subsector they organised a coalition for mutual defence and trade, and in -1115 this became a loose federation, the Easter Concord, named after its leading world. The Concord included worlds with both Solomani and Vilani cultures, unlike the more homogenous Dingir League and TMC. It evolved into a strong, stable and pluralistic polity that kept the flame of civilisation burning in the coreward regions of the Rim throughout the Long Night and into the Dawn.

Due to the strength of the Easter Concord, Reaver fleets began bypassing the coreward regions of the Solomani Rim. In -1118 a large raiding fleet was defeated at Jaroslav by the Dingir League aided by ships from the Terran Mercantile Community. This victory marked the end of major threats to the organised Rim states, although small scale raids and piracy continued throughout the Long Night.

The TMC's failure to sustain a mutual trade pact with the Easter Concord and the growing strength of the rival Dingir League pushed Terra into a stronger and more effective political federation with its oldest colonies. This new polity, the Old Earth Union, was formed in -1110 and directly controlled most of the Sol subsector along with a few worlds in the Dingir and Gemini subsectors.

The Union traded with the Dingir League, Vegan Polity and Arcturus Federation but it also considered itself the true heir to the old Terran Confederation and this hubris occasionally led its leaders into military adventurism. The democratic governments and populist leaders of Terra were prone to occasional spasms of popular nationalism and martial sentiment. The Union sent small expeditionary forces to spinward into Magyar and beyond, where they intervened on behalf of Solomani threatened by Aslan expansionism. In -574 the Old Earth Union became embroiled in a brief but bloody war with its former ally, the Dingir League, over the border world Lilike. It was indecisive and Lilike became a neutral buffer state but Sirius station was destroyed, leaving a 'Sirius Gap' that persisted for centuries.

With its expansion into Dingir checked, the Old Earth Union turned its attention to rimward, attempting to take control of a rich group of independent worlds in the Gemini subsector in the Near Boötes Cluster. These were a dozen closely spaced habitable worlds straddling the border of what is now the Capella and Gemini subsectors, discovered and settled by colonials from the Sol subsector early in the Rule of Man but cut off during the Long Night. Around -450 the Old Earth Union reopened trade but this soon turned into an effort to establish its own colonial presence in the Cluster. Not wanting to become a mere appendage of Terra, the worlds of the cluster forged their own commercial and military alliance – the Boötean League – between -430 and -400, and instituted protectionist policies that insulated them from Terran traders while fostering links with nearby independent worlds. The Old Earth Union's militaristic period ended in -420 when a civil war on Terra forced militarist leaders into exile. After that, the Union followed a less belligerent path.

The Arcturus Federation was the least technologically advanced of the Rim States, a pocket empire that sprawled across the borders of the Banasdan and Arcturus subsectors. Originally consisting of colonies owned by Banasdan, it reorganised into a true interstellar state in 242. The Arcturus Federation traded with the Vegan Polity and various independent worlds. As it expanded into the Arcturus subsector it made contact with worlds trading with the Old Earth Union. From -100 onward the two polities developed ever-closer relations.

Dawn on the Rim

The establishment of the Third Imperium did not initially affect the polities of the Solomani Rim but by around the year 100 missions led by the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service began to enter the region. Over the next few decades they entered into diplomatic and trade relationships with the Easter Concord, Dingir League, Old Earth Union, Arcturus Federation and Vegan Polity. The Imperium also indirectly helped to persuade the Boötean League to end its isolationist period. Relations between the Boötean League and the Old Earth Union thawed; the League used its Terran neighbours to gain access to Imperial technology without becoming an Imperial client.

The peaceful incorporation of the proud, technologically developed, populous and wealthy Rim States into the Third Imperium required a delicate diplomatic dance. Contact with the far larger Imperium, with its more advanced technology, produced culture shock and socio-economic stresses; in the Arcturus Federation this may have been the underlying cause of a brief civil war in 200. However, the Imperium could afford to move slowly. The Rim States were a tremendous prize but they had become used to their own independence. Adding the Solomani homeworld of Terra and the old military capital of Dingir would grant legitimacy to the claim that the Third Imperium was the true heir to the old Rule of Man. Successor emperors – although occasionally distracted by problems elsewhere in the empire – chose to woo the Rim States through a slow policy of patient diplomacy and gradual economic integration rather than conquest.

The Easter Concord was the first Rim State to be contacted by the Third Imperium and also the first to agree to membership. The Concord worlds found the Imperium shared a broadly similar culture to their own. Both had a mix of Vilani and Solomani social systems overseen by an interstellar aristocracy, while giving individual planets considerable independence within a larger framework. After a lengthy period of commercial and military cooperation the Concord dissolved their polity and joined the Third Imperium in 426. The ruling aristocracy of the Easter Concord were granted titles of Imperial nobility.

The Vegan Polity, Dingir League, Arcturus Federation and Old Earth Union were less willing to accept formal membership in the Third Imperium. They remained sceptical of the stability of the Imperium autocratic system and feared the loss of their own institutions. All had political systems quite distinct from interstellar feudalism; the Imperium seemed to have unfortunate echoes of both the Vilani empire's rigidity and the disorganised autocracy of the Ramshackle Empire. The remaining Rim States had been happy to accept the benefits of renewed trade and technology but were reluctant to give up their independence. In fact, they were doing quite well on their own. Between 300 and 400 the Old Earth Union and Arcturus Federation, now recovered from its turmoil, had begun spreading into the Arcturus subsector and bringing worlds they contacted back into interstellar civilisation.

In 550 the Vegan Polity and in 582-583 the Dingir League and Arcturus Federation, all succumbed to intense economic and diplomatic pressure and joined the Imperium, the Vegans doing so with great trepidation. The Old Earth Union's strong republican traditions and sense of cultural identity made its population equally reluctant. Old Earth Union leaders even flirted with the idea of forming their own confederation in consort with the Boötean League or independent polities in nearby Alpha Crucis. The risk such a move might lead to hostilities with the Imperium and lack of any unifying ideology that could bind together the disparate Solomani states ended that dream. In 588 a sustained public relations offensive in combination with substantial economic inducements convinced the Old Earth Union's worlds to vote to join the Imperium.

The Old Earth Union was the last of the Rim States to join the Imperium. The Boötean League and several independent worlds to rimward of Terra considered membership. Events far from the Solomani Rim would soon validate their desire for independence while making many of the former Rim State populations regret their membership.

Civil Wars

The Imperium had expanded too quickly; it had outgrown communications and strained its own institutions. Far from the Solomani Rim, in the distant Spinward Marches, the Imperium fought its First Frontier War against the Zhodani. Angry at the lack of support his fleets received, Grand Admiral Olav hault-Plankwell turned against the empress, ushering in a period of Civil Wars that tore the Imperium asunder.

Beginning only 16 years after the Old Earth Union joined the Imperium, the Civil Wars lasted nearly two decades. With 18 emperors claiming the throne in as

many years, the wars disrupted commerce and delayed the economic improvements that had induced the Rim States to join the Imperium. Although the Rim itself was never part of the fighting, two claimants to the throne drew upon its resources, ships and troops, some of whom never returned. As the Civil Wars raged there was a sense in the Solomani Rim that the promised security, prosperity and stability under the Imperium was a lie.

Solomani Revolution

In the period during and after the Civil Wars political discontent in the Solomani Rim became unified under a powerful new ideology: the Solomani Cause. It combined populist disdain for Imperial power with the idea that the Solomani race of Terra was culturally and genetically superior and had a manifest destiny to rule others. The Solomani Cause began as a reaction to the growing power of Vilani industrialists within the Third Imperium and the threat they posed to entrenched Solomani interests. It gained strength after the emperor married a Vilani, ending the previous domination of the throne by Solomani emperors.

In the eyes of many, if the emperor was no longer Solomani then the legitimacy of the Imperial system itself was called into question. The populist, anti-aristocratic leanings of many in the Rim States fused with an ideology that proclaimed their own superiority. Instead of an emperor and nobility ruling through their bloodline, the Solomani Movement considered that every Solomani was a noble.

Where the Imperial government argued, after the lesson of the Civil Wars, for slow and managed growth, the Solomani Movement demanded expansion. As late as 675 the rimward subsectors of the Solomani Rim were still undeveloped. Pressure for expansion into these areas – and beyond – grew into small-scale local exploration and development programmes. Opposition to these endeavours was painted as an attempt to prevent the Solomani from achieving their destiny.

In its embryonic phase diverse Solomani Movement factions formed on Terra and other Rim worlds. Solomani Movement political theorists at the University of Terra developed the political and philosophical basis for the Solomani Cause and for an independent state. Solomani Movement-inspired political parties ran for office on several worlds. The original Solomani Party came to elected power on Terra in 680.

There was no unified interstellar Solomani Party at first. Different 'grassroots' factions supporting the Solomani Causes existed throughout the Rim and beyond; in the Solomani Rim these included the highly politicised Solomani Student movement centred on the University

of Terra and its many affiliates. It also included regional corporate groups like the embryonic merchant line Transstar that was struggling against competition by Imperial megacorporations and the influential Near Boötes Business Association who wished to use the Solomani Movement to support rimward expansionism. It included diverse members of the aristocracy and military who believed in the manifest destiny of the Solomani, as well as the League of Solomani Veterans who represented families of Rim soldiers lost fighting in the Civil Wars.

At the other end of the spectrum there were anti-Imperial factions like the Citizens for a New Terran Union who wanted to replace the Imperium with something new. Together, these factions and thousands of others representing interests both inside and outside the Rim formed a single political movement. The first all-Solomani Party congress was held on Terra in 685, forming a unified interstellar political party without prior precedent in the Imperium.

The Solomani Movement grew quickly. In the Rim the first Solomani Parties were voted into power on democratic worlds like Terra and Prometheus, laying the groundwork for a separatist state that might leave the Imperium entirely. In an effort to prevent this, Empress Margaret I came together with Solomani Movement moderates and agreed to their demands for a charter that formed a Solomani Autonomous Region. It covered a sphere 50 parsecs across centred on Terra, hence the region's alternate name: the Solomani Sphere. This gave the Solomani Movement control of a region that extended somewhat beyond the current bounds of the Imperium and included many worlds that had yet to accept the Solomani Party. Within the Sphere the Solomani Party largely supplanted the authority of the sector and subsector dukes. Governance was exercised through its executive, the Committee of the Solomani Autonomous Region Congress (COMSARC) based on Terra.

The Solomani Era

For two centuries the Imperium ignored its rimward frontier as the Solomani asserted their quasi-independence. Initially, COMSARC included representatives of both nobles and planetary governments and many nobles in the Rim sympathised with the Solomani Cause. As the Solomani Movement took an increasingly anti-Imperial position nobles found themselves forced to choose between the Solomani Cause and their oaths of fealty. Pro-Imperial nobles began fleeing the Rim to escape persecution. Among them was as the Count of Jael in the Arcturus subsector, who preferred exile to becoming a puppet of the Solomani Party. Other nobles were pressured into supporting Solomani policies or voluntarily joined the Party.

In 716 the position of Archduke of Sol was allowed to lapse after the death of the incumbent left no heirs who were not associated with the Solomani Party. This was initially an exceptional action but after the heir to the Duke of Albadawi joined the Solomani Party in 735 it became a firm Imperial policy to refuse to recognise the transfer of such titles to any heirs taking these actions. Many pro-Imperial nobles who remained began going into hiding or fleeing the Rim to escape persecution. Among the first to do so was the Count of Jael in 719. The aristocracy began to die out within the Solomani Rim, almost completely vanishing by 760.

Despite such sanctions, the Solomani Movement continued to spread throughout the Rim and beyond. The worlds of the Boötean League in Capella and Gemini, long reluctant to join the Imperium, were early supporters of the Solomani Movement. Much of the popularity of the Solomani Cause with businesses and ordinary citizens came from its advocacy of an expansionist, pro-growth agenda and a new frontier spirit. The Solomani Party sponsored settlement of many undeveloped or unexplored worlds on the rimward frontier. Starting in the early 700s several worlds in undeveloped frontier subsectors like Arcturus began accepting the Solomani Party.

With the creation of the Solomani Autonomous Region, the Solomani Party now had control of colonial naval forces within the Rim. When the government of Jardin began engaging in military adventurism, other worlds in its subsector appealed to COMSARC for assistance. In 706 a joint multi-world force defeated Jardin's navy and replaced the regime with one controlled by the Solomani Party. The rest of the region followed and soon the Jardin subsector was brought under Solomani Party control.

Worlds that had been independent since the Long Night became part of the Autonomous Region including Thorwald (joining in 730) and Scandia (joining in 740). In 751 the Solomani Party government on Banasdan, capital of the old Arcturus Federation, initiated a well-funded effort to open the Kukulcan subsector for rapid settlement. A major new colony was established on Caprice and development of the rest of the subsector followed. Sometimes these colonial adventures were supported by the Party establishment on major worlds as a safe way of ridding themselves of fringe elements of the Solomani Movement. One such example was the subsidised colonisation of Laputa by radical Solomani Party scientific utopians in 800.

The Solomani Movement also began to show its more radical, racist side. Solomani militants attained power on Nusku in 750 and immediately began restricting

rights of all citizens who were not pure Solomani. On Easter the federal system was overthrown by a Party-run coup and a purge of Vilani influences began. A few years later a popular Solomani Party revolution toppled the corporate government on Quaver. Similar revolutions occurred throughout the sector.

The Solomani Autonomous Region encompassed many established worlds that did not have majority Solomani populations. Those worlds with Vilani, mixed race, Aslan or Vegan populations had little use for the Solomani Cause. Within the Rim this included many worlds within the Concord, Suleiman, Esperance, Ultima and Vega subsectors, and scattered worlds elsewhere. These populations came under increasing pressure to subordinate themselves to the Solomani Party. By 860 the Solomani Autonomous Region's government controlled nearly all worlds within the Rim.

Solomani Party control was further tightened after the Solomani Autonomous Region reorganised itself as the fully independent Solomani Confederation in 871, shedding the last vestiges of Imperial authority. Efforts by moderates in the Solomani Party – or radicals by Solomani standards – to write protections for minority races into the new Confederation charter failed. Dominated by a 'purist' and 'centralist' agenda, the now centralised and invigorated Solomani Confederation government proved reluctant to tolerate the existence of independent and alien polities within it. In the Solomani Rim that meant an increasingly harsh policy toward the Vegans, stripping them of the vestiges of self-government they had enjoyed under Imperial rule.

The Imperium had never recognised the Solomani Confederation and in its view the worlds of the Rim were still under its protection. With petitions for help reaching the Imperial court from Vegans in the Rim, the Vilani in the Old Expanses and other oppressed minorities, the emperors felt compelled to deal with the new power that had grown on its rimward flank. In the early 900s, the Imperium tried to reduce Solomani power by diplomacy. Where border worlds petitioned to be removed from Solomani rule their pleas were granted, with the new order enforced by the Imperial Navy. In support of beleaguered worlds, large Imperial Navy task forces crossed from Imperial-controlled portions of Diaspora and entered coreward subsectors of the Solomani Rim including Concord and Vega. They did not risk deeper penetration into the Rim.

The Solomani Confederation initially avoided a major confrontation but minor incidents and skirmishes were common. Solomani privateers in the Concord, Harlequin and Banasdan subsectors harassed Imperial merchants delivering goods to blockaded Vegan worlds.

In response to growing Solomani defiance of Imperial sovereignty and growing violence in the nearby Old Expanses, Margaret II officially dissolved the Solomani Autonomous Region in 940. The Solomani refused to comply and reinforced their border defences.

This was a period of massive military expansion in the Solomani Rim. Naval bases were established everywhere, shipyards expanded and volunteers called into Confederation service. War was now inevitable but for several years only border incidents occurred as both sides built up their strengths. In the late 970s, the Imperium was prepared to attack when the onset of the Third Frontier War on its opposite border forced a diversion of resources. The Solomani tried to profit from Imperial weakness by reclaiming lost territory. The Imperium considered this a declaration of war and the Solomani Rim War began in 990.

The Solomani Rim War

The Solomani Rim was originally well behind the lines with the Imperial front stretching across a border that ran through Diaspora, Daibei and the Old Expanses. Despite this, there were a few Imperial task forces operating deep within the Confederation in an effort to support rebellious pro-Imperial worlds and intimidate Solomani governments. The first clash between Imperial and Solomani forces was one such action in the Vega subsector. Imperial Navy Task Force 54 was escorting a humanitarian supply convoy to Muan Kwoyen – a show of force intended to break a Solomani blockade of that Vegan world. At the sudden outbreak of war it was caught by surprise and annihilated by elements of the Solomani 2nd Fleet. Only a single cruiser escaped. That vessel – the fleet intruder Ischiatic Portent – escaped to begin an epic odyssey across Solomani space, destroying 23 Solomani merchant vessels and 13 escorts before being finally run down and defeated by the Solomani heavy cruiser Minsk in a battle off Zapuushar.

The Solomani Confederation was more prepared for war than its opponent and hit hard in the early months. Some Imperial forces were overwhelmed before they had received orders and even when the orders arrived Imperial war plans proved inadequate to deal with the flexible and aggressive strategy of the Confederation. Attempts to concentrate naval forces in forward systems resulted in disaster as the Solomani Confederation Navy ambushed part of the assigned force en route then fell on the rest whilst it was understrength. The early stages of the war reinforced everything the Solomani Movement believed – the people of Old Earth were just plain better than the complacent, lazy Imperials. The string of victories was eventually broken, however, and the tide began to turn.

Initial Solomani military successes in Diaspora and the Old Expanses gradually turned into stalemate as the Imperium built up its forces and learned from its mistakes. From 998 onward the Solomani Rim became the central theatre of war as the Imperial Navy pursued a strategy aimed at liberating Vegan and other pro-Imperial worlds and then striking at the heart of Solomani power on Terra. Imperial fleets began a steady advance along two lines converging on Terra, with the design of surrounding a huge pocket of Solomani space. It was theorised, correctly, that the Solomani would be unwilling to withdraw from Terra. When the Vegan worlds were liberated in 1001, the Imperium gained an industrial base close to the fighting.

Despite the heavy fighting that followed, most worlds in the Solomani Rim suffered less than other war-torn regions. Worlds in neighbouring sectors were often targeted for devastating hit-and-run raids by Imperial cruiser squadrons; in contrast, the Solomani Rim was in the direct path of Imperial fleets with sufficient resources to take and hold worlds. This would not have spared planets in their path had it not been for the decision of the Confederation's Solomani Rim commanders to switch from a strategy of defending each world to the end – which they had used in the Old Expanses – to one of staking everything on a few decisive battles.

The Solomani Confederation gathered its naval forces in the Rim into a single grand fleet and concentrated ground forces for the defence of a few key industrial centres. As a result, the Solomani Rim saw the greatest fleet engagements of the war. The Confederation Navy's veteran squadrons won battles at Kagukhasaggan and Aggida only to have their Grand Fleet outmanoeuvred, defeated and forced to retreat after the Battle of Dingir.

The Confederation strategy of decisive battle had an unintended side effect that further mitigated the destruction of the war. Individual worlds within the Solomani Rim were stripped of ships to reinforce the Grand Fleet and of ground troops to reinforce defences on key worlds like Kidashi, Gashidda, Dingir and, most of all, Terra. When the Solomani strategy failed and the Grand Fleet was forced to fall back, there was little left in individual systems to seriously oppose the Imperial Navy.

In consequence, when the Imperium's follow-up forces arrived to consolidate their victories many Confederation world governments made the pragmatic decision to surrender as soon as the navy jumped into their systems or, failing that, immediately after their system defence boats and monitors were defeated. With a few exceptions in Sol, Dingir and Albadawi, the



Imperium rarely needed to capture worlds by assault or bombardment so their populations were spared the worst horrors of war. An unfortunate corollary was that it also left in power planetary governments of dubious loyalty to the Imperium who had a history of doing whatever they needed to retain power.

On several worlds the Solomani regimes were sufficiently unpopular that the Imperial advance triggered anti-Solomani coups and popular uprisings. Examples of this occurred on Muan Gwi and other Vegan worlds, among the Aslan on Sarmaty and between the subjugated Vilani and mixed race populations of Nisinasha and Darrukesh. These sometimes, as on Darrukesh, led to strong anti-Solomani governments coming into power and sometimes anti-Solomani pogroms or reverse-racism in the post-war years. In a few instances, civil wars erupted between pro- and anti-Imperial factions or between political, racial or ethnic factions whose unity had been artificially sustained by Solomani Party rule.

The worst examples of this strife took place on Easter and Xiwa in the Concord subsector. When a civil war had no clear pro-Imperial faction, the Imperial forces usually chose to impose peace on a balkanised planet rather than becoming embroiled in choosing sides. Occasionally, this resulted in regimes coming to power that were more authoritarian or repressive than the Solomani governments they overthrew or laid the seeds of future tragedy – as on Xiwa.

The fighting in the Solomani Rim ended in 1002, soon after the fall of Terra. The Imperial forces had advanced up to an approximate line that stretched along

the coreward edge of the Albadawi subsector, bulging slightly into Capella and Gemini, and ran across the Kukulcan border. Aside from exhaustion, there were two reasons for the Imperium to halt at this point. First, this approximately matched the astrographical feature known as the Rimward Gap, a starless region a few parsecs across. While Imperial warships could easily jump across it the region provided a natural, sparsely populated border. Second, and more importantly, the Rimward Gap loosely marked the original extent of Imperial territory. The worlds beyond the Gap, such as those of the Near Boötes Cluster, were ones that had never voluntarily joined the Imperium or exclusively colonised by pure Solomani after they became autonomous. By halting at the Rimward Gap the Imperium made the statement they would take back what had once been theirs but nothing more.

In practice, such gestures were moot. The Imperial forces were all but exhausted. Their high command decided to negotiate a temporary armistice with the Solomani, who were themselves grateful for the respite. The temporary armistice became permanent, as neither side felt capable of continuing the war.

Post-War Reconstruction

In the Solomani Rim the Imperium faced the Herculean task of occupying hundreds of worlds. Some had welcomed the Imperium as liberators but many considered them foreign conquerors. Although the Imperial forces were usually strong enough to dissuade open revolt they still faced hostile populations and sporadic guerrilla or terrorist attacks.

Worlds that had resisted the Imperium were garrisoned by the Imperial Army and Marines, and direct military rule was imposed. The occupation forces worked to restore order, dismantle the institutions of the Solomani Party and SolSec regimes, disarm or co-opt local military forces and re-establish the old system of Imperial nobility. Surviving nobles houses that had either loyally resisted the Solomani Movement or been driven into exile were restored. Where this was not possible new noble houses were created or lesser nobility promoted. Rivalry still exists between the so-called 'resistance' and 'exile' houses.

After major Imperial counter-insurgency operations – notably the eradication of the Phoenix Project network on Terra between 1040 and 1045 – the Imperial government was confident it had solidified its hold over the Solomani Rim. Most major guerrilla groups on Terra and other strongly pro-Solomani worlds had been defeated by 1045, save a few exceptions on the sector's periphery like the Kidashi insurgency. In 1048 Emperor Paulo III was sufficiently pleased by this progress that he instructed the Archduke of Sol to begin restoring political liberties where they would not compromise security. Worlds would even be allowed to form Solomani Parties, provided these groups renounced violent revolution and accepted Imperial sovereignty.

Over time, these concessions also helped thaw relations with the Solomani Confederation, allowing moderate factions such as the Rim Federalists to gain influence in the Secretariat and over the Confederation military. This led to a general easing of border tensions and resumption of commerce. Merchant starships of both sides could now routinely cross the border without harassment by warships or intrusive inspections. As the economies recovered from the war the spirit of détente began to prevail; trade picked up, bringing with it a sense of renewed prosperity to the Solomani Rim.

Other than the small number of worlds that suffered either a full-scale assault or post-war civil war, the Rim's planetary infrastructure survived relatively intact. This stood in marked contrast to neighbouring sectors like the Old Expanses where many worlds had been devastated by invasions and counter-invasions early in the war. This enabled the Solomani Rim to become the centre for Imperial and Solomani post-war reconstruction and allowed the sector to quickly rise once again to its former glory.

The post-war century was particularly advantageous for the Solomani-controlled subsectors of the Rim: Capella, Gemini, Jardin and Kukulcan. During the majority of the Solomani Rim War, these subsectors were safe behind the Confederation's lines and while some border worlds such as Smade's Planet were devastated by raiding

Imperial cruisers, most survived untouched. As a result, the four Solomani subsectors of the Rim recovered quickly from the war's devastation and saw their economies flourish in the post-war era. Another reason for their prosperity was the rimward shift in the axis of the Solomani economy.

Before the war the Solomani Confederation's economic heartlands were the worlds on the Rim Main trade routes such as those of Harlequin and the old Solomani worlds of the Sol and Dingir subsectors. In the decades after the war, political and economic power shifted rimward. Once relations with the Imperium improved, the worlds in Capella, Gemini and Kukulcan subsectors in particular found themselves perfectly placed to benefit from the trade that now began to flow between the Imperium, the border worlds and the younger but rapidly-expanding economy of Aldebaran, which now housed the new Solomani capital of Home.

The rimward Solomani worlds in the Capella, Gemini and Kukulcan subsectors also benefited from another unintended outcome of Solomani Rim War; the exodus of the merchant fleets. During the fighting in late 1001–1002 the majority of surviving Solomani merchant vessels from Sol, Dingir and Arcturus fled these subsectors to avoid capture or destruction by the Imperial Navy. They were largely absorbed into the merchant fleets operating in Capella, Gemini and Kukulcan, greatly augmenting their pre-war tonnage. This left these subsectors well placed to dominate trade with the Imperium as relationships thawed after the war. Jardin subsector did not benefit as much as its neighbours, as a large part of the Albadawi subsector merchant fleet had been caught and destroyed attempting to evacuate Kidashi.

The newfound prosperity of Capella, Gemini and Kukulcan were magnified by other changes in Solomani Confederation policy. Secretary-General Ivan Wolfe's post-war reforms provided greater political autonomy and military strength – in the form of subsidies for Solomani Home Forces – to border systems. The decline in the prestige of the interstellar Solomani Party after the war also saw power shift from the bureaucracy toward that of individual world governments and multi-world alliances. All of these factors helped transform the Capella, Gemini and Kukulcan subsectors from important but somewhat underdeveloped regions on the periphery of the Confederation to one of its most productive areas. It also created a region where national and commercial rivalries increasingly trumped the Solomani Cause.

Nevertheless, the continued support for the Solomani Cause among many Imperial citizens is a problem that has not been resolved. Although military rule was removed on those worlds where the population proved

cooperative, on other worlds hostility continues. There have been occasional nasty surprises such as a nuclear crisis on the world of Xiwa, the appearance of the insurgent group Rule of Terra and the sudden anti-Imperial uprising on Scaramouche in 1098. Tensions between humans and Vegan separatists are also causing trouble; these might or might not be linked to Solomani Party radicals. On the most pro-Solomani worlds, including Solomani strongholds like Terra, Gashidda and Kidashi, military rule still remains, even a century after the end of hostilities. On Terra at least, overt acts of resistance are declining and military rule is scheduled to be lifted between 1109 and 1011.

The Solomani Confederation continues to generate a great deal of propaganda regarding the future liberation of Terra, support for patriot insurgents on Kidashi and elsewhere, and the reconquest of its lost territories. This

plays well with the more hawkish factions of its own populace but border incidents in the Solomani Rim are becoming rare. Détente prevails, largely thanks to the moderating influence of vested commercial interests on both sides of the line. In public at least, the Solomani Confederation seems to have transferred its real attention to its rimward frontier and handling political problems and internal rivalries. The main risk to peace is that if these divisions worsen, some factions in the Solomani Confederation may see stirring up conflict with the Imperium as a way to restore unity.

For now an uneasy peace still holds, perhaps because the Solomani Rim is one of the wealthiest and most productive sectors in Charted Space. Neither side wishes to risk that prosperity without good cause. One mark of this is that the Archduke of Sol's seat, presently located in Diaspora, may soon be moved into the Solomani Rim.

Timeline

| Date | Events |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -315000 | Ancients visit Terra and take Humaniti to over 100 worlds |
| -15000 | Rise of modern Homo Sapiens subspecies on Terra |
| -9000 | Creation of the Vegan Covenant on Muan Gwi |
| -6000 | Vegan space age; early interplanetary and sublight travel |
| -5723 | Geonee traders provide Vegans with jump drive |
| -5122 | Formation of the Vegan Polity |
| -5000 | The Sharurshid bureau of the First Imperium reaches the Rim Province |
| -4520 | Fixed point of 1 AD in the calendar on Terra |
| -4467 | First contact between the First Imperium and Vegan Polity |
| -4445 | Vegan Consolidation War |
| -4100 | Vilani contact the Gurungan and integrate their world into the Rim Province |
| -3500 | Vilani Kimashurgur dissident empire in Dingir and Albadawi subsectors |
| -3400 | First Imperium conquers Kimashurgur; the empire halts 3 parsecs from Terra |
| -2559 | Space flight begins on Terra |
| -2510 | Archimedes Base established on Terra's moon Luna |
| -2468 | Titan Conflict over control of the resource-rich gas giant moon |
| -2438 | Megacorporation GSbAG allegedly founded on Luna |

| Date | Events |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -2431 | Terrans develop jump drive |
| -2427 | Terran starship contacts Vilani at Barnard |
| -2408 | Interstellar Wars begin between Terra and the First Imperium |
| -2398 | Terran governments and off-world colonies form Terran Confederation |
| -2395 | Mars admitted to the Terran Confederation |
| -2275 | Formation of the Terran-Vegan Alliance |
| -2266 | Ninth Interstellar War ends and Terran forces conquer Solomani Rim |
| -2219 | End of Interstellar Wars era and defeat of the First Imperium |
| -2204 | Military coup replaces Terran Confederation with the Rule of Man |
| -2204 | Dingir becomes capital of Rule of Man and Terra loses its political power |
| -2200 | Term 'Solomani' is coined and soon comes to refer to the Rim |
| -2176 | Rule of Man's capital moved from Dingir in the Solomani Rim to Hub in Massilia; The Solomani Rim is now just a province in the Rule of Man |
| -1850 | The Long Night begins in Solomani Rim as contact is lost with the capital on Hub |
| -1695 | Rule of Man authority in the Solomani Rim as the Provincial capital on Dingir can no longer afford to support the fleet |
| -1690 | Terran Mercantile Community (TMC) formed |
| -1650 | Vegan Polity achieves independence |

| | | | |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -1500 | Reaver fleets begin menacing the Solomani Rim | 871 | Solomani Confederation founded with its capital on Terra and Imperial Naval Intelligence discretely takes control of the Psionics Institute on Terra |
| -1200 | Terran Mercantile Community pulls back to Sol subsector | 876 | Palace of the Secretary-General constructed in the Andes on Terra |
| -1136 | Dingir League formed from remnants of the old Rule of Man government | 900 | Oppressed Vegans and Vilani in the Solomani Rim seek Imperial aid |
| -1118 | Large Reaver fleet defeated at Jaroslav by Dingir League and TMC forces | 975 | Emperor Styryx begins planning a Vegan Autonomous District |
| -1115 | The Easter Concord is formed | 989 | Solomani re-assert claims to full control over the entire Solomani Sphere |
| -1110 | TMC becomes the Old Earth Union | 990 | Solomani Rim War begins |
| -574 | Lilike-Sirius War fought between Old Earth Union and Dingir League | 1001 | Fighting in the Solomani Rim as Imperial fleets drive into the sector |
| -450 | Old Earth Union attempts expansion into Capella and Gemini | 1002 | Kidashi falls with massive civilian casualties. Solomani commanders consolidate a Grand Fleet under Ivan Wolfe. Despite early victories the Grand Fleet are defeated but not destroyed at the Battle of Dingir. The Imperium captures Terra but suffers heavy losses. An armistice is signed ending the war |
| -430 | Several worlds in Capella and Gemini subsectors form the Boötean League | 1004 | Vegan Autonomous District formed as a counterweight to any potential renewal of Solomani ambitions in the Solomani Rim |
| -420 | Civil War in the Old Earth Union | 1020 | Imperial University opens on Muan Gwi |
| -242 | Arcturus Federation formed | 1032 | Lagash made capital of Sol subsector, displacing the traditional role of Terra |
| 0 | Dawn: Foundation of the Third Imperium | 1040 | Massive counter-guerrilla effort mounted on Terra against the Phoenix Project |
| 100 | Imperial scouts reach the Solomani Rim | 1045 | Ostensible destruction of Phoenix Project on Terra |
| 200 | Civil War in Arcturus Federation | 1052 | Solomani and Imperial Navies allow for improved commerce, period of détente |
| 300 | The Old Earth Union and the Arcturus Federation explore Arcturus subsector | 1059 | Growing piracy problem in Jardin subsector is officially acknowledged and Solomani Ministry of Justice refers to 'Jardin Syndicate' by name |
| 305 | Easter Concord petitions to become an Imperial client state | 1060 | Ancients site discovered on New Greenpernt by Solomani archaeologists |
| 426 | Easter Concord is absorbed into the Imperium | 1065 | Easing of military rule on Terra |
| 450 | Jardin subsector colonised | 1080 | Thetis-Laputa alliance threatens power of Kukulcan |
| 550 | Vegan Polity pressured into joining the Imperium | 1095 | Military rule further eased in Terra system; Solomani Party legalised there. Nuclear war on Xiwa |
| 582 | Dingir League joins the Imperium | 1098 | Unity Uprising on Scaramouche crushed by Imperial forces |
| 583 | The Arcturus Federation joins the Third Imperium | 1102 | Etienne Adair, Archduke of the Domain of Sol, dies of natural causes; his son Kieran succeeds him |
| 588 | Old Earth Union joins the Imperium | 1104 | Kukulcan government blames a pirate attack on Thetis-Laputa trade war |
| 604-622 | Civil Wars in Imperium | | |
| 680 | First Solomani Party government elected on Terra | | |
| 704 | Solomani Autonomous Region, also called the Solomani Sphere, is formed | | |
| 705 | Jardin forcibly integrated into the Solomani Autonomous Region | | |
| 706 | Boötean League joins the Solomani Autonomous Region | | |
| 716 | The Archduchy of Sol lapses | | |
| 750 | Solomani Party becomes more radical | | |
| 760 | The Imperial nobility are effectively extinct within the Solomani Rim | | |
| 800 | The entire Vegan region comes under Solomani Movement rule | | |
| 850 | Solomani political theory becomes more and more racist and chauvinistic | | |

ULTIMA

Ultima subsector gets its name from its position as a backwater of the Solomani Rim. It is the furthest from the major trade routes and lacks many attractive worlds but does contain the homeworld of a minor alien race. The Gurungan (see page 12) are a vaguely octopus-like aquatic species native to Ugarup who also have a colony on Morgana. Human relations with them have been proven difficult due to their alien mentality and inherent xenophobia.

Ultima was originally colonised under the First Imperium around -4200, under its original name of Darrukesh. Even after the Terran conquest, the region still retains a couple of Vilani-majority worlds. During the Long Night the isolated worlds of Ultima were preyed upon by reavers and pirates from neighbouring Magyar. The region suffered the worst economic and technological collapse of the Solomani Rim and has yet to fully recover. In the Solomani era development continued to be neglected thanks to the sizable Vilani and nonhuman populations on many worlds. One world was even turned into a planetary

prison. The situation has improved under the Imperium but Ultima remains an undeveloped subsector. It even lacks a subsector Duke.

The old ducal line died out and the position fell vacant late in the Solomani era. In a region of such low importance there was no pressing need to install a new Imperial representative. This in turn led to even lower investment in the subsector. With no high-ranking noble to speak for them the worlds of the subsector are routinely overlooked in favour of those whose high nobility have the ear of the archduke and the emperor.

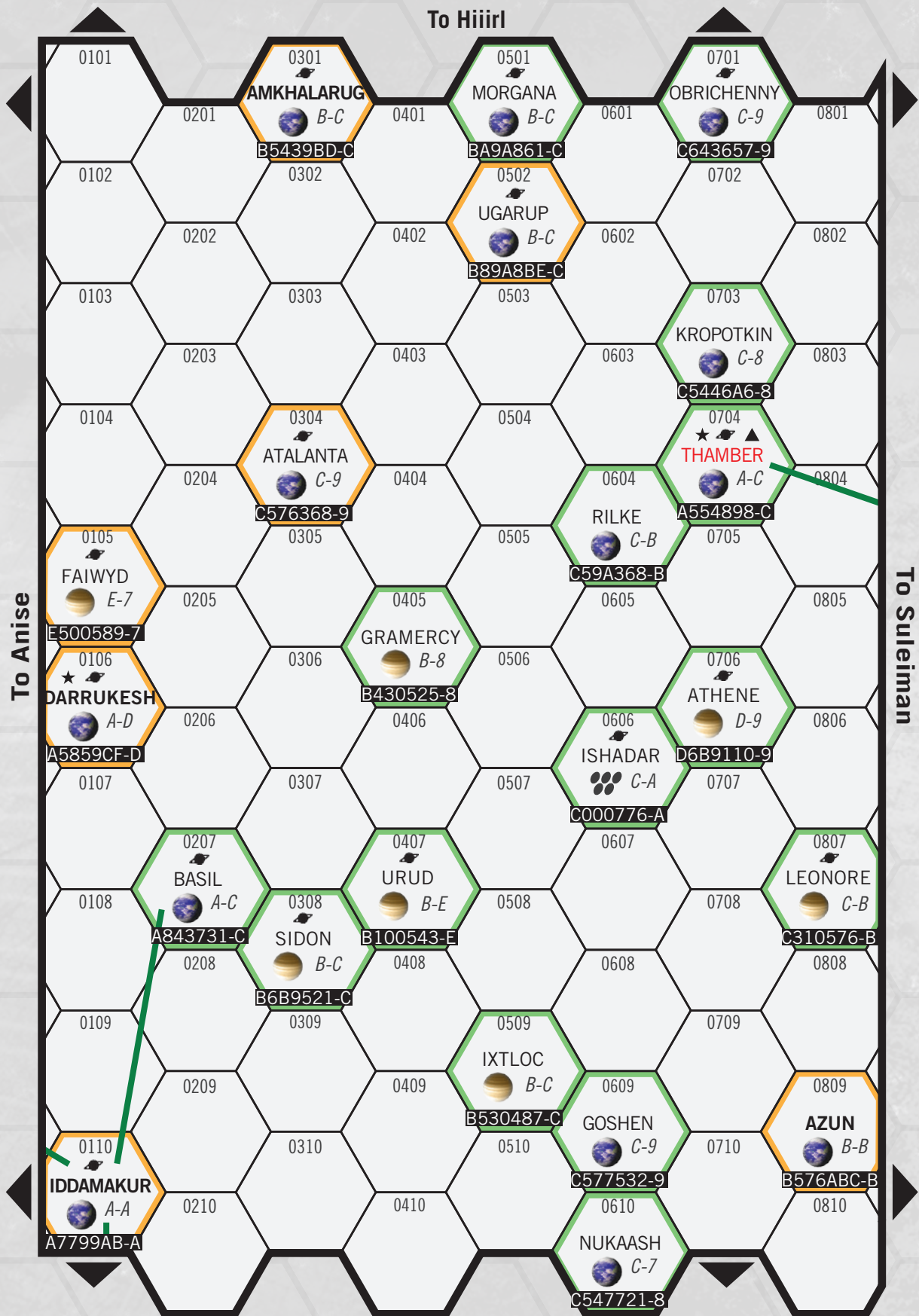
Similarly, Imperial administration in Ultima is patchy. Thamber stands in for a subsector capital but is merely the home of the Imperial bureaucracy and seat of the Count of Thamber. Executive decisions affecting the entire subsector are made in the sector duke's court in distant Dingir, if they are made at all. The Archduke of Sol is known to be seeking a suitable candidate for the duchy and is expected to select someone with an

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Amkhalarug | 0301 | | B5439BD-C | Hi Ht In Po | A | Imperium | G |
| Atalanta | 0304 | | C576368-9 | Ga Lo | A | Imperium | G |
| Athene | 0706 | | D6B9110-9 | Fl Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Azun | 0809 | | B576ABC-B | Ga Hi In | | Imperium | |
| Basil | 0207 | | A843731-C | Ht Po | | Imperium | G |
| Darrukesh | 0106 | N | A5859CF-D | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Faiwyd | 0105 | | E500589-7 | Ni Va | A | Imperium | G |
| Goshen | 0609 | | C577532-9 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | |
| Gramercy | 0405 | | B430525-8 | De Ni Po | | Imperium | |
| Iddamakur | 0110 | | A7799AB-A | Hi In | | Imperium | G |
| Ishadar | 0606 | | C000776-A | As Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Ixtloc | 0509 | | B530487-C | De Ht Ni Po | | Imperium | |
| Kropotkin | 0703 | | C5446A6-8 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | |
| Leonore | 0807 | | C310576-B | Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Morgana | 0501 | | BA9A861-C | Ht Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Nukaash | 0610 | | C547721-8 | Ag Ga | | Imperium | |
| Obrichenny | 0701 | | C643657-9 | Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Rilke | 0604 | | C59A368-B | Lo Wa | | Imperium | |
| Sidon | 0308 | | B6B9521-C | Fl Ht Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Thamber | 0704 | N W | A554898-C | Ga Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Ugarup | 0502 | | B89A8BE-C | Ht Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Urud | 0407 | | B100543-E | Ht Ni Va | | Imperium | G |

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Solomani Rim

ULTIMA SUBSECTOR



economic or corporate background who can attract development. There are also rumours that a missing heir to the old Ultima line may exist. So far these appear unfounded and the subsector nobility in Ultima and adjacent subsectors are presently manoeuvring to put forward their own candidates. So too is the megacorporation Zirunkariish whose executives see plentiful opportunities in this subsector, particularly for expanded trade with the Gurungan. Other factions – such as Vilani nationalists on Amkhalarug and Darrukesh – prefer to see the current power vacuum continue for their own benefit.

Despite these problems, support for the Solomani Movement is tepid. The populations of most worlds in the subsector appreciate even the halting efforts of the Imperium to support economic development. A few worlds with large Vilani populations such as Amkhalarug and Darrukesh are more actively anti-Solomani. Bringing unity of purpose to the subsector will be a major challenge for whomever is appointed as duke.

Although not far from the nearest border with the Solomani Confederation, Ultima is considered to be an 'internal' subsector by the Imperial Navy and of low priority for ship deployments. As a result its subsector fleet is understrength and equipped mostly with small or old vessels. The sector fleet has a minimal presence in the area, although occasionally a cruiser or two is sent to show the flag.

Ultima contains 22 worlds with a population of 44 billion. The highest population is 26 billion at Azun.

AMKHALARUG

The First Imperium settled Amkhalarug, a small world orbiting a hot, bright F class star. Vast deserts and windy, treeless steppes dominate its bleak surface. Originally settled for its extensive tantalite deposits, it first came to prominence in -2364 when it was selected by the energetic Vilani governor Sharik Yangila as a new heavy industrial centre. Located far behind the front lines of the war, it was part of an effort to quietly build up the Rim Province's military strength for renewed conflict with the Terran Confederation.

Amkhalarug grew rapidly during the twilight of Vilani power, only to eventually fall early in the Ninth Interstellar War. However, this grim industrial planet on the fringes of the Solomani Rim did not appeal to Terran settlers who, in the wake of victory, found far more attractive worlds to colonise. Although managed for a time by Terran Navy-appointed bureaucrats, Amkhalarug was able to preserve its majority Vilani population into the Rule of Man and, despite enduring hardships in the Long Night, into the early Imperial era that followed.

Like most worlds with a Vilani culture in the Rim, its population did not willingly join the Confederation but were instead coerced into accepting Solomani political and economic hegemony. Between 850 and 950 Solomani Party-backed companies joined by the power of the Confederation took over many of the planet's industrial combines and environmental controls were relaxed in the name of greater profits. The planet's industrial output rose and the region became a leading centre for military grav vehicle manufacturing and crystaliron alloy production. However, many inhabitants were little better than serfs labouring for off world masters and the world's atmosphere became increasingly tainted by industrial pollutants, leading to significant health problems.

In 1000 the impending victory of the Imperium brought problems. The leaders of the world's small underground resistance group overestimated their own strength and underestimated SolSec infiltration of their movement. An attempted uprising was brutally put down by SolSec paramilitary forces and corporate mercenaries, giving corporate overlords time to execute over 3,000 rebel leaders and their supporters, evacuate their personnel, and remove several key factories before the Imperial Navy arrived.

In the wake of the Solomani Rim War, Amkhalarug's population has shown a desire to have as little to do with the Confederation as possible. Mazun Nirkra, a former historian and schoolteacher whose parents had been resistance leaders before their execution, has led this resurgence. In the post-war years, Nirkra worked with the Imperial military government and after the removal of military rule established a popular political organisation, the kiduunuuzziani, aimed at restoring a Vilani-centric culture. Following an economic crisis in 1046 he and his followers, aided by political and financial support from like-minded Vilani reactionaries on Darrukesh, overthrew the existing coalition government and established a new regime built around traditional Vilani values.

Under Nirkra, who styled himself the world's governing leader (the iishakku), his party has established a 'stable and traditional' society that recreates the corporate-bureaucratic structure of the old Vilani Empire. The old Vilani caste system has been restored and outside the starport all vestiges of Solomani culture are actively discouraged. Even traders or tourists are disdained unless they speak the 'civilised' Vilani language.

To ensure the old ways are followed, the kiduunuuzziani monitors all aspects of a person's life. Everything from the clothes and hairstyles citizens wear to the names they select for their children must follow classical Vilani



models and mass media is censored to avoid 'Solomani cultural contamination'. Imports of foodstuffs of Terran origin such as coffee or bananas are banned in favour of meals synthesised using traditional Vilani ingredients and techniques. Buildings constructed under the Rule of Man, Third Imperium or the Confederation have been torn down and replaced by 'proper' Vilani architecture.

Ishakku Nirkra is now 82 years old but still hale thanks to a regular anagathic regime. Under his rule the martial values of the Vilani empire are also celebrated and his government has been spending considerable sums to expand and equip the planetary army, navy and internal security forces. This build-up was initially used to crush a few minor insurgencies and with absolute control over their world achieved, the regime has continued to give their forces' combat experience – and help pay for them – by making units available for mercenary service to support worlds or causes that share their values. Its army presently supplies mercenary striker, commando and cadre units to Vilani nations on Easter and in support of Darrukesh's own similar Vilani regime.

To help prop up the regime, the dictatorship continues to stoke resentment against Solomani. State controlled media routinely report on racism and other barbarities the Solomani Confederation commit even as it rails against perceived cultural decadence in the Imperium itself. The people are nonetheless sensitive to charges that they are racists and prefer to say they are

traditionalists and conservatives who believe in the preservation of the values of the oldest and greatest empire to rule the stars.

AZUN

This is a densely populated and heavily industrialised world and to comfortably house its high population Azun, like many similar worlds, makes extensive use of arcologies. The majority of Azun's arcologies are towers that rise as high as three kilometres, emerging from square bases kilometres across. Each arcology houses one to two million persons, along with all the necessary amenities of urban life.

Azun society is tightly regimented with a professional governing class of arcology managers and bureaucrats forming a ruling oligarchy. The safety of the arcology trumps individual freedoms and foreigners, whether from off world or other Azun arcologies, tend to be distrusted. Arcology managers are aware that illness or social disorders can spread rapidly in an arcology due to the high population density; visitors must undergo screening interviews and medical exams before being allowed entry. The wisdom of these procedure was demonstrated in 1088 when an undiagnosed case of Catanian White Fever, carried by a visitor into the arcology of Halizar, started an epidemic that killed 290,000 before it was finally isolated and controlled. Although accidental, this crisis reinforced the latent xenophobia that characterises Azun society.

Catanian White Fever

First diagnosed on Catania in the Banasdan subsector, White Fever is colloquially described as an ‘arcology disease’. It is primarily associated with areas with high population density, which rely on large amounts of life-support and quality-of-life machinery. This includes most high-technology cities but especially arcologies. Orbital installations and starships are also prone to outbreaks.

Symptoms are caused by a fungal infection of the respiratory tract, which generally takes days to weeks to develop. The fungus goes through three stages – incubation, infectious and symptomatic – and can be detected by standard testing at all stages. Routine health screening at starports and in large cities will usually detect the infection but occasionally a false negative is generated by non-specialised equipment. Those who evade the screening process – smugglers, stowaways and the like – are the usual cause of a new outbreak.

Once spores mature into an infection, there is a short period during which the patient is infectious. Spores are spread simply by breathing and can survive in ventilation ducts or similar places for days or even weeks if conditions are right. Regular cleaning will remove them, so the greatest risk is in older arcologies and spacecraft or where maintenance is

skipped for whatever reason. The infectious phase lasts for 24–36 hours, after which the fungus begins to die. It is toxins released by the dying fungus that cause symptoms.

Once a patient becomes symptomatic they quickly become incapable of spreading the disease but the damage is already done in most cases. Symptoms include raised body temperature, blurred vision and headaches, often accompanied by nausea. The patient also suffers a drop in blood pressure, creating the characteristic ‘white zombie’ appearance associated with the disease. Low blood pressure can result in fainting and sometimes secondary effects in those whose health is already poor.

Untreated, Catanian White Fever is about 12% fatal to most human species. General treatment of symptoms roughly halves the mortality rate and specific treatment generally brings mortality down below 1%. This can still result in very high casualties under the right circumstances – crowded cities with improperly maintained ventilation equipment.

| Disease | END check Difficulty | Damage | Interval |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|----------|
| Catanian White Fever | Difficult (10+) | D3 | 2D Hours |

With arcologies consuming only a few square kilometres, the greater part of the land area of Azun is free for agriculture, resource exploitation and ecological preserves. On Azun much of the work outdoors is done by robots, as the emphasis on arcology living has created an inward-looking society. Many of Azun’s people never leave their tower-cities and are uncomfortable in more open settings, although a small exile population exists outside.

IDDAMAKUR

During the Solomani era Iddamakur was administered by the Confederation’s Ministry of Justice as a planetary prison for undesirable elements of the sector. Different populations of dissidents were distributed among the planet’s 12 small continents and numerous archipelagos. Use of technology higher than TL4 was forbidden, as was sea travel between regions.

The Solomani Rim War liberated the prisoners and the planet has transitioned to self-rule under the Imperium, although some of the regimentation of its previous incarnation remains. Iddamakur remains a poor world that

struggles to purchase advanced technology required for economic development. The planet’s main resource is its location on one of the few x-boat routes leading into Ultima and its primary source of income is a newly constructed Class A starport built with Imperial development funds and loans from Zirunkariish, which links the more prosperous worlds of Basil and Darrukesh to the rest of the subsector. It also serves as a gateway into the Imperium-occupied portion of neighbouring Magyar.

THAMBER

The subsector capital is a small, very cold world just barely worthy of the description ‘habitable’. The atmosphere is breathable but surface temperature is very low. Most of the inhabitants prefer to remain in domed cities to escape Thamber’s climate. Many of its native life forms spend almost all of their lives in hibernation and produce natural antifreeze-like compounds in their bodies.

Thamber has a complex history. The world was settled by Terrans but the colony could not be sustained in the Long Night and was abandoned. It was resettled around

200 by Solomani colonists from the Easter Concord. These pioneers built a thriving democratic society that later willingly joined the Third Imperium. The population's most unusual feature is a high propensity for violence and blood feuds. In recent centuries this has increasingly been channelled into violent competitive sporting events, neighbourhood gangs and rowdy sports hooliganism. Despite this, the planet has a tradition of strict government control of weapons so most violence involves fistfights or use of improvised weapons like hockey sticks and hard-frozen snowballs.

The Solomani Movement gradually achieved power and by 750 had established a rigid Solomani Party-dominated bureaucracy. Although unpopular with the population, the leaders of the 'Progressive Alliance' were skilled at maintaining a grip on power. As soon as Solomani defeat appeared imminent in the Rim War, the Party militants and planetary army mounted a quick coup against local SolSec and Confederation loyalists, repudiated the Solomani Cause and declared their allegiance for the Imperium. This allowed them to avoid more than a cursory period of military rule.

Thamber's conversion from Solomani Movement values may be more cosmetic than real. While Thamber is cosmopolitan by Solomani standards, the majority of government and public posts and most of the planet's high society remains closed to those who lack ties with the dominant Party bureaucracy. That bureaucracy is still open only to people with appropriate Solomani ethnicity. There is some suspicion that senior SolSec agents may not have been deposed in the coup but simply changed their stripes and identity, and currently occupy high posts in the government's security and police services.

The present Count of Thamber, Reginald Parson, is distantly connected to an old Imperial noble house that once held the fief of Thamber. His recent marriage to the daughter of a senior Progressive Alliance leader has enmeshed the youthful count within Thamber's internal politics. Something of a dilettante, the count has often become lost in the coils of the complex bureaucracy and recent advice received from Imperial Intelligence about possible SolSec infiltration has shaken his nerve rather than encouraging him to greater vigilance. His wife and her associates are pressuring him to lobby for position as sector duke. If he succeeds, there is a possibility he may end up a puppet of local interests or the Solomani Movement.

UGARUP

Most of Ugarup's surface is covered by water and the planet is tidally locked to its primary star with a hot day face and a freezing night face. Constant storms form in

the twilight band that lies between. With conditions poor on the surface despite its standard atmosphere, most life evolved underwater.

The ocean depths of Ugarup are the home of the enigmatic Gurungan. After centuries of interdiction by the Solomani Confederation this aquatic race has emerged as a growing political and economic power in Ultima subsector. The Gurungan have a matriarchal and collectivist society. Most live in vast underwater city and factory complexes that burrow deep beneath the ocean floor. They are ruled by a cohesive world government presided over by a queen – the All-Mother – and a ruling tribunal that exercises routine legislative and executive power.

Non-Gurungan are restricted to the Human Enclave located on an island city on the planet's day face that houses the starport. 140,000 Imperial citizens live and work there, mostly transients involved in trade and joint industrial ventures with the Gurungan. Ugarup's rich ocean ecology provides an abundance of unique luxury foodstuffs and natural pharmaceuticals that find a ready off world market, while the Gurungan import high-technology industrial goods adapted to their form and environment that are difficult to manufacture underwater.

Over the last century, the Gurungan have purchased deep-water robotic construction equipment, fusion reactors of all sizes and Gurungan-adapted system defence boats and starships. The canny Gurungan have avoided exclusive contracts with single megacorporations, preferring instead to foster a highly competitive atmosphere. Gurungan law does not apply in the Enclave so as long as business continues and the planetary government imposes few restraints on inhabitants.

Among the long-term residents of the Enclave are many self-proclaimed 'old Gurungan hands' that parlay their own experience in dealing with the secretive race into lucrative consulting deals with companies eager to land a contract with the aliens. This has facilitated many fraudulent scams but so long as the Gurungan themselves suffer no harm the Ugarup government has little interest in what anyone else gets up to. The starport is under Imperial administration but no resident Imperial nobility live on planet. Within the rest of the Enclave a modicum of order equivalent to Law Level 1 is maintained by a Gurungan-hired human mercenary battalion and its colonel is the effective governor of the Enclave. The current garrison has been there for more than a decade and quietly collects its own 'taxes' – essentially protection money – as the price of doing business with Ugarup.

MODIFIED ADDUMSA SYSTEM DEFENCE BOAT

XX

TL13

TONS

COST (MCR)

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| Hull | 300 tons, Standard Deepwater Aquatic Environment | — 32 | 15 16 |
| Armour | Crystaliron, Armour: 18 | 43.2 | 48 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 4 | 12 | 24 |
| Power plant | Fusion (TL12), Power 300 | 20 | 20 |
| Fuel Tanks | 4 weeks of operation | 1 | — |
| Bridge | | 20 | 1.5 |
| Computer | Computer/15 | — | 2 |
| Sensors | Improved | 3 | 4.3 |
| Weapons | Fusion Barbette | 5 | 4 |
| | Triple Turrets (pulse lasers) x2 | 2 | 8 |
| | Nuclear Damper | 10 | 10 |
| Armoured Bulkheads | Power Plant, M-Drive, Bridge | 5.2 | 10.4 |
| Staterooms | Standard-equivalent x6 | 24 | 3 |
| Common Areas | | 40 | 4 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/0 | — | — |
| | Virtual Gunner/1 | — | 5 |
| | Library | — | — |
| Cargo | | 19 | — |

TOTAL: MCR 175.2

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOT, ASTROGATOR,
ENGINEER, GUNNERS X4

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr14600/month

• • • • •

PURCHASE COST

MCR175.2

POWER REQUIREMENTS

120

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

60

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

—

SYSTEMS

—

JUMP DRIVE

4

SENSORS

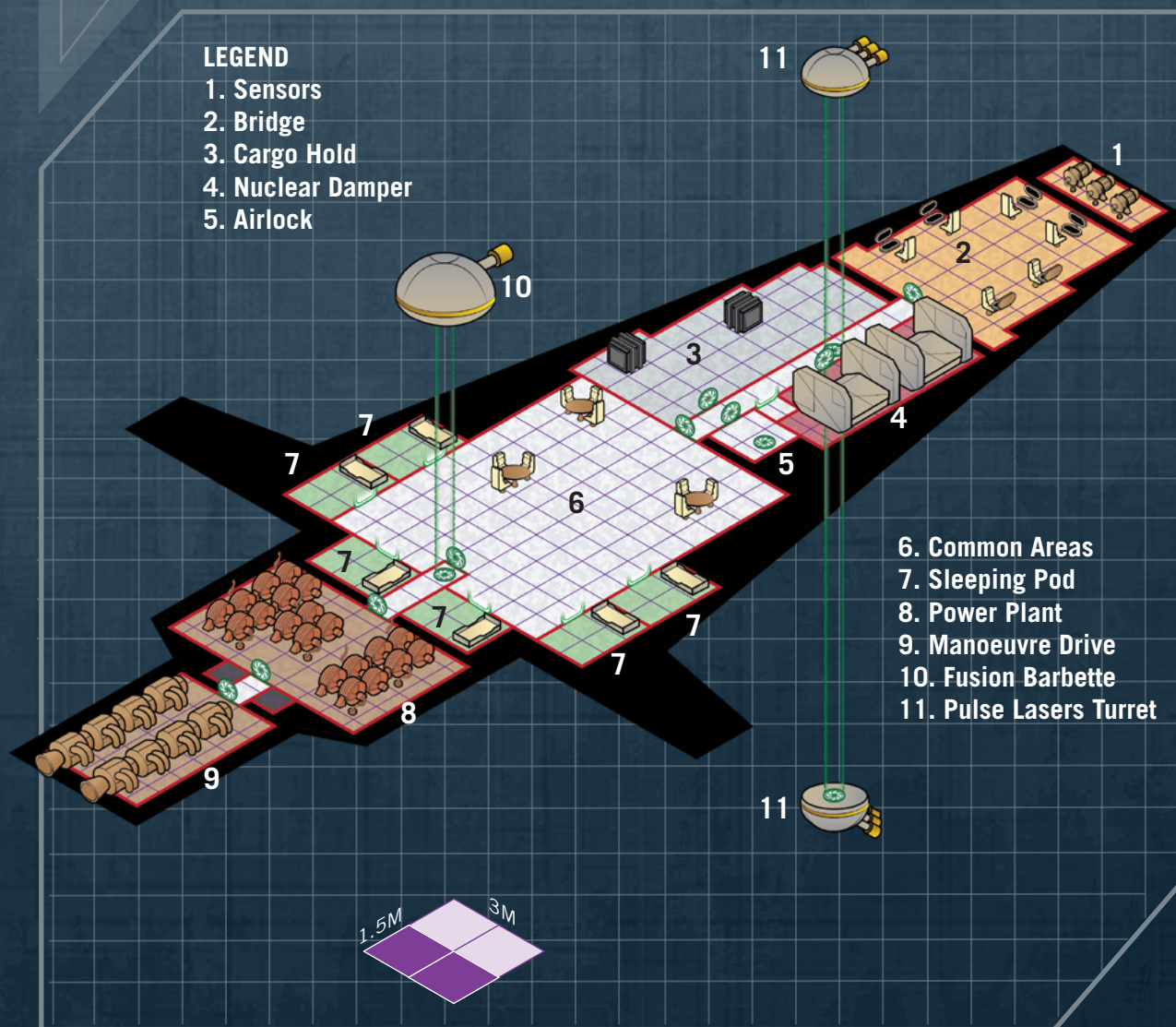
66

WEAPONS

120

HULL POINTS





The *Addumsa*-class system defence boat is a common design throughout the rimward parts of Imperial space. Built on a 300-ton wedge-shaped hull the *Addumsa*-class is intended to carry out security and customs work in addition to providing a defensive capability close to its parent world. Produced at TL12 using a high proportion of commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) components the *Addumsa* was developed to have the widest possible appeal. It is in service with a great many world governments and some corporate bodies needing security for their orbital installations. It is not used by the Imperial Navy.

A number of variants on the basic *Addumsa* have been produced. Most are minor variations intended to suit the needs of individual governments but in some cases major redesign of the internal spaces are required. Thus it is with the variant produced for the Gurungan. This version required considerable internal modification, losing some of its useable tonnage in the process. Standard

Addumsas can carry a boarding party and have a brig for detaining suspects, along with other equipment for the security-patrol role. These items were inappropriate for a deepwater-environment ship so were deleted when the conversion was developed.

Crew complement is nominally eight but the modified *Addumsa* can operate without some or all of its gunners. The inclusion of a virtual gunner system was more to ensure the vessel can keep firing in the event of casualties than to reduce complement. This emphasis on sustained combat effectiveness is reflected in the heavy armour and internal bulkheading, which are standard on almost all versions of this common craft.

Crew accommodation takes the form of individual sleeping pods in a large common chamber. It is entirely unusable by other species even if the ship is drained of water and the controls are only operable by a Gurungan.

HIGHGUARD: AQUATIC SPECIES

Converting a starship, or part of one, for the use of an aquatic species requires more than waterproofing the vessel's systems and filling it up with water. This is especially true for deepwater creatures who need a high level of water pressure. Not only does this place the seals and joins of a craft under far more strain than the usual standard atmosphere but creating artificial water pressure is a difficult undertaking. Water is not compressible, so the inside of the ship itself must be set up to push inward on the contents. This causes the occupants to be squeezed by force transmitted through the water, creating a similar effect to being at depth.

The cost of modifying a ship for an aquatic species includes controls and displays suitable for that creature. In some cases a non-aquatic creature can operate the controls either by using a diving suit or draining the water out but where a ship is adapted for aquatic creatures with a physiology very different to that of land-dwelling races the vessel may be inoperable by anyone but its intended users.

Internal Aquatic Environment

An internal aquatic environment is relatively easy to create and is suitable for creatures that dwell in shallow water. A vessel can be entirely filled with water or have an air/water mix suitable for air-breathing aquatic creatures such as dolphins. This modification requires 1% of the hull displacement to be assigned to environmental equipment and system modifications, at a cost of MCr0.1 per ton.

If the vessel is to have a partial aquatic environment, such as a ship designed to be crewed by Dolphins and humans working in separate compartments, the displacement requirement is 2% of the tonnage devoted to aquatic environment and costs increase to MCr0.2 per ton. Thus a 1,000 ton ship with a 400-ton aquatic area requires 8 tons of specialist equipment and modifications, at a cost of MCr40.

Internal Deepwater Environment

A ship designed to support deepwater creatures must devote 8% of its hull tonnage to specialist equipment at a cost of MCr0.5 per ton. A shared-environment ship requires 12% of the tonnage devoted to the deepwater space at a cost of MCr0.8 per ton.

Aquatic Living Space

Aquatic living space takes up the same tonnage and costs the same as conventional cabins and common areas but is configured quite differently. A cabin-equivalent for one or two people costs the same as a stateroom – additional costs are included in the calculation for converting the whole ship. Often, especially in the case of creatures like the Gurungan, the actual living space is very small and the remainder of the tonnage is dedicated to an open-water area used by all crewmembers.

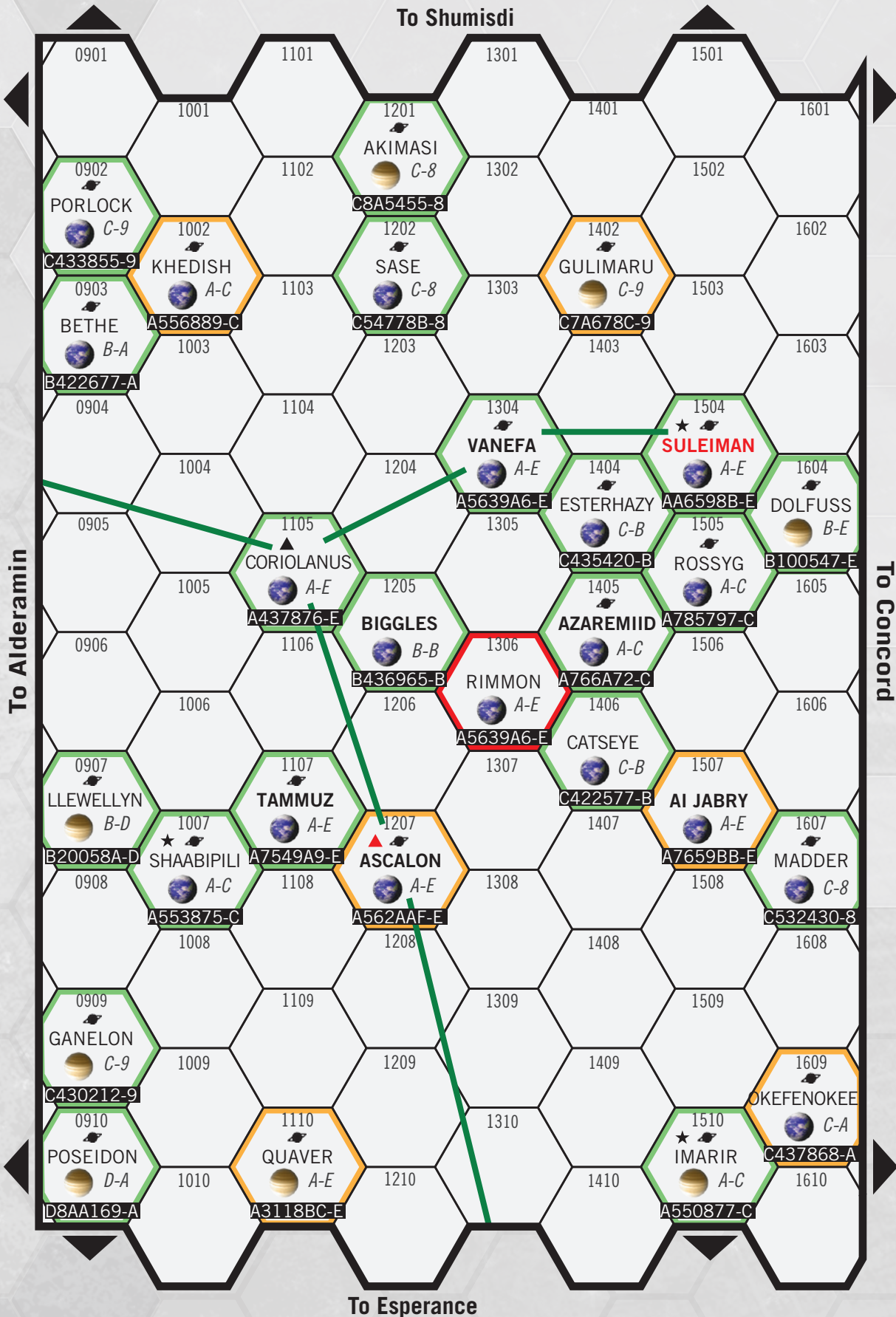
SULEIMAN

The Suleiman subsector was lightly settled by the Vilani during the First Imperium, although at that time it was known as Ishnar. It is stable and relatively prosperous, largely due to internal trade in the Azaremiid Cluster. Jump-2 trade routes come into the cluster at various points, the most important of which runs through the Tammuz Cluster and into the Esperance subsector. This route gives access to the Alderamin subsector, the Vegan Autonomous District and ultimately, by way of a transit through Vega or Concord, to the Rim Main.

The economics and politics of the subsector are dominated by a group of populous high-tech worlds within the Azaremiid Cluster; Ai Jabry, Azaremiid, Dolfuss, Rossygy, Suleiman and Vanefa. Once part of the old Easter Concord they have avoided the economic and

social malaise that befell Easter itself. The Cluster's mutual ties, which had faded somewhat after the fall of the Easter Concord, renewed themselves during the Solomani Confederation due to that polity's toleration of multi-world alliances. Most of the worlds in the Cluster had moderate Solomani populations who only gave lip service to the Solomani Cause but nonetheless recognised the value of trade pacts and industrial alliances established during the Solomani era and retained them after they re-joined the Imperium. The Cluster governments often negotiate as a group when signing major contracts with sector level corporations or megacorporations; these tactics are unusual in the Imperium whose ideology tends toward open markets and unrestricted interstellar trade.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Ai Jabry | 1507 | | A7659BB-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | |
| Akimasi | 1201 | | C8A5455-8 | FI Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Ascalon | 1207 | W | A562AAF-E | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Azaremiid | 1405 | | A766A72-C | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Bethe | 0903 | | B422677-A | Na Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Biggles | 1205 | | B436965-B | Hi | | Imperium | |
| Catseye | 1406 | | C422577-B | Ni Po | | Imperium | |
| Coriolanus | 1105 | S | A437876-E | Ht | | Imperium | |
| Dolfuss | 1604 | | B100547-E | Ht Ni Va | | Imperium | G |
| Esterhazy | 1404 | | C435420-B | Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Ganelon | 0909 | | C430212-9 | De Lo Po | | Imperium | G |
| Gulimaru | 1402 | | C7A678C-9 | FI | | Imperium | G |
| Imarir | 1510 | N | A550877-C | De Ht Po | | Imperium | G |
| Khedish | 1002 | | A556889-C | Ga Ht | A | Imperium | G |
| Llewellyn | 0907 | | B20058A-D | Ht Ni Va | | Imperium | G |
| Madder | 1607 | | C532430-8 | Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Okefenokee | 1609 | | C437868-A | | A | Imperium | G |
| Porlock | 0902 | | C433855-9 | Na Po | | Imperium | G |
| Poseidon | 0910 | | D8AA169-A | FI Lo Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Quaver | 1110 | | A3118BC-E | Ht le Na | | Imperium | G |
| Rimmon | 1306 | | X422000-0 | Ba Lt Po | A | Imperium | |
| Rossygy | 1505 | | A785797-C | Ag Ga Ht Ri | | Imperium | G |
| Sase | 1202 | | C54778B-8 | Ag Ga | | Imperium | G |
| Shaabipili | 1007 | N | A553875-C | Ht Po | | Imperium | G |
| Suleiman | 1504 | N | AA6598B-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Tammuz | 1107 | | A7549A9-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Vanefa | 1304 | | A5639A6-E | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |



| B | | |
|---|--|--|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Solomani Rim

SULEIMAN SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- Imperial Naval Base
- Imperial Scout Base
- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- X-Boat Route
- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Imperial Scout Way Station

There has been grumbling from other worlds and megacorporations against what the Marquis of Ascalon once angrily referred to as 'the Azaremiid pocket empire'. So far, the Cluster's nobles have deflected criticism and remain steadfast in their support of Imperial interests, their efforts having been helped by a wave of popular sympathy toward Suleiman's new Duchess Ariana hault-Karalan. She was suddenly thrust into the spotlight after the untimely death of her father. Despite being the youngest subsector duke in the Solomani Rim at only 21, the Duchess Ariana's grace under pressure, innocent charm and quirky fashion sense have endeared her to media and citizens alike. It remains to be seen whether her political skills match her popularity.

Suleiman is considered an internal area by the Imperial Navy and has a small subsector fleet. However, its colonial forces are larger than usual, largely due to the worlds of the Azaremiid Cluster. Typically, powerful worlds build impressive in-system defences but spend only a little on starships but the strong trade links between these systems have prompted considerable spending on interstellar capability. The Suleiman subsector fleet is one of the few that can field battleships, old vessels forming part of the colonial fleet and owned by worlds of the Azaremiid Cluster rather than the navy itself but they represent a potent force to be wielded by the subsector admiral. Conversely, they give the Azaremiid Cluster's worlds considerable influence with the admiral.

The Suleiman subsector contains 27 worlds with a population of 80.9 billion. The highest population is 21 billion at Ascalon.

KHEDISH

The Vilani settled Khedish during the First Imperium. The planet has an eccentric orbit around its primary, which results in radical temperature changes and violent weather. Despite this it has evolved a complex ecosystem, especially in the oceans. Some local plants and animals are edible but the world's harshly variable conditions mean foreign crops and animals have little chance of adapting. This discouraged Terran and later Solomani settlement. Even today most of the population are Vilani.

During the Long Night, the Vilani population became followers of the way of Sagashkhar, a local philosophy combining stoicism and pacifism. Their way was severely tested during the Solomani era as Khedish was ruthlessly exploited by Solomani Party-run corporations backed by the Confederation military. Despite significant provocations and reprisals, the Khedishi drove their

occupiers to distraction with a stubborn campaign of passive resistance that persisted until the world's liberation by the Imperial Navy.

Unfortunately, decades of resistance left an indelible stamp on the population's character. Today a paradoxical combination of xenophobia and non-violence have become equally strong components of the cultural mindset on Khedish; police carry only non-lethal weapons and the small planetary navy is composed exclusively of mercenaries. Outsiders do not face much in the way of physical risk but the hostile population is famous for swindling, cheating, harassing and robbing visitors. The Khedish government and law enforcement bodies rarely stir themselves to investigate crimes perpetrated against outsiders.

OKEFENOKEE

Okefenokee is a small world with a very thin atmosphere but extensive ice caps. For approximately two-thirds of its decade-long-orbital period the majority of the planet's water is locked into the polar ice caps. For a small part of each planetary year Okenfenokee's eccentric orbit takes it closer to its sun, warming the world but flooding much of the planet. This also results in a temporary increase in oxygen to almost breathable levels.

Okenofokee's was originally a Terran scientific colony established during the Rule of Man. Settlements were mostly underground with a few surface facilities for use during the habitable periods. Run as a scientific technocracy, Okenofokee's was a loyal if moderate member of the Solomani Confederation until the mid-900s. Bad economic planning led to recession and forced the local Solomani Party to borrow heavily from financial institutions in neighbouring Mudge to support its social programs. This proved a fiscally unsound and ultimately unpopular move and led to the fall of the government. The new regime chose to repudiate its debt, claiming that prior officials had been bribed. Mudge declined to accept this and took the dispute to the Solomani Confederation secretariat who ruled in Mudge's favour, awarding economic control of nearly the entire planet as compensation for unpaid debts. Mudge's government took this as a license to colonise Okefenokee.

The Solomani Rim War interrupted Mudge's colonial operations but despite ending up on the losing side the Mudge regime was as adept as ever at playing politics. The Imperium confirmed Mudge's claim that Okefenokee was its legal colony and in 1050 Mudge sent both settlers and troops to establish a colonial government. In the face of overwhelming force, Okefenokee's own planetary defence forces quickly

surrendered and attempts at non-violent passive resistance were brushed aside as Mudge's government simply flooded the planet with new colonists. These now outnumber the original inhabitants and dominate Okenofokee's politics and economy.

A small rebel movement, the New Okefenokee Army (NOA), has inaugurated a guerrilla war and operates against the Mudge colonials from bases in the rough terrain of the planet's outback. Outnumbered and outgunned, the insurgents have failed to make any significant gains against the planetary army forces that Mudge dispatched to protect their colony. So far, the leadership of NOA has resisted using terrorist tactics to draw attention to their plight although some radicals in the movement have begun to advocate this. Meanwhile, betrayed by both the Solomani Confederation and the Imperium, the original Okefenokee 'government in exile' continues to desperately search for noble patrons, corporate backers, mercenary commanders willing to work on commission or even radical Solomani who offer some hope of winning back their world.

SULEIMAN

Suleiman is a large but not especially dense world with a breathable atmosphere and generally pleasant conditions. Under the name Ishnar it was subsector capital during the First Imperium and during the Rule of Man it was a destination for mass Terran immigration from Turkey and Central Asia. The new immigrants integrated well with the Vilani, creating a culturally and ethnically mixed population although pockets of pure Terran or Vilani culture remained in some regions. Suleiman's melting pot was further spiced by the arrival of wandering Aslan *ihatei* during the Long Night. Against all odds the Aslan successfully integrated into the Terran-Vilani population and absorbed many human customs.

Suleiman's cosmopolitan attitude and industrious population made it a natural fit for membership in the Easter Concord and later the Third Imperium, and it became the seat of the subsector duke. However, its pluralism proved a liability during the Solomani era. Although there was support for the Solomani Movement it was never a majority ideology on Suleiman and the Solomani Party seized power through a combination of subversion and rigging elections paid for with the financial backing of off-world Party interests and Transstar. Once the Party was in control, it established a police state backed up by imported mercenaries.

Citizens who could not prove direct Solomani ancestry were disenfranchised and systematically stripped of rights and property.

The Solomani regime remained in power for centuries but its grip was never absolute. A resistance movement was supported by many citizens of Solomani ancestry who nevertheless had nothing but disdain for the excesses of the world government. Prominent among their leaders were the Dukes of Suleiman who formed an underground 'resistance house' that served as a rallying point for rebellion. They worked with mixed-race, Vilani and Aslan minorities to lay the groundwork for a revolution. During the Solomani Rim War, the rebels formed an active guerrilla movement that tied up three Confederation Army regular divisions and numerous SolSec paramilitary units. Enduring brutal reprisals against suspected rebel areas, the resistance held out until a small Imperial force arrived in 1001. Aided by marine commando units and naval fire support, a mass uprising overcame the remaining Solomani forces and established an Imperial regime.

The heroic resistance of the Suleiman people forged a potent narrative that helped sustain the population during the painful process of economic and civil reconstruction. Although the world was one of the hardest hit during the war, Suleiman's loyalty made it a natural focus for Imperial economic aid. It regained its prominence as sector capital and was chosen as the site of a naval base and General Products shipyard.

Centuries of repression have nevertheless left their mark on the planet and there are lingering racial tensions between Solomani, Vilani and the Aslan minority, which makes up 10% of the population. Flare-ups of racial and political violence in the 1040s and again in the 1090s forced the governing bureaucracy to take action with ever more severe restrictions on the personal ownership of weapons, increased surveillance of public spaces, crackdowns on membership of groups seen as sponsoring violence and most recently 'civility laws' that have criminalised all forms of prejudice and hate speech. The latter are enforced through electronic monitoring and censorship of the global computer and communication network. Despite their intent of encouraging racial harmony, these measures have proven controversial. The bureaucracy's methods have proven especially unpopular with the Aslan minority, especially males, who have begun turning away from their accommodation with human culture to embrace traditional Aslan values.

CONCORD

Vilani immigrants settled Concord during the First Imperium when it was known as Ikaakur, after its local capital. The usual wave of Terran colonists arrived in the late Interstellar Wars and subsequent Rule of Man but relations were for the most part harmonious. During the Long Night, the major worlds established a strong union for mutual defence in -1101. This developed into an interstellar state with its capital at Easter, known as the Easter Concord. It survived the Long Night and was one of the first Rim states to be offered membership in the Third Imperium. The Easter Concord was formally dissolved upon the admission of its member worlds to the Imperium in 426. Emperor Martin III granted a petition to name the subsector Concord in honour of that union's distinguished history.

The Easter Concord had been a cosmopolitan federation that blended Solomani and Vilani culture and governmental systems. This made it a good fit for Third Imperium society but also helps explain the decline of the subsector's fortunes after the Rim fell completely under Solomani rule. Existing outside the mainstream of Solomani thought, the moderate Party governments in Concord commanded little political influence within the Confederation. Those that were deemed too liberal were periodically subjected to economic and political sanctions or SolSec interference. The restoration of the Imperium has generally been welcomed in the Concord subsector, particularly by those benefiting from new trade routes opened to coreward, but severe problems traceable to the Solomani era persist on worlds such as Easter and Xiwa.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|--------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Aspidistra | 1909 | | B2009CB-E | Hi Ht In Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Cambria | 2407 | | B0009BF-E | As Hi Ht In Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Charuth | 2004 | | A786988-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Easter | 1802 | | AAE7977-F | Hi Ht | A | Imperium | G |
| Eleusis | 2109 | N | A789831-D | Ht Ri | | Imperium | G |
| Ephemir | 2308 | | A675999-E | Ga Hi Ht In | | Imperium | G |
| Eshellim | 1901 | | A76A8BB-E | Ht Ri Wa | A | Imperium | G |
| Estigarribia | 2402 | | A566ABC-D | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | |
| Gunashnan | 2105 | N | A854996-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Hiroshi | 2001 | | A558774-C | Ag Ga Ht | | Imperium | |
| Ikaakur | 2205 | | A5569B8-E | Ga Hi Ht | A | Imperium | G |
| Inidu | 2406 | | C6BA413-C | FI Ht Ni Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Jackoyo | 21 02 | | B000510-B | As Ni Va | | Imperium | |
| Khiirshag | 2010 | W | A79A9BC-F | Hi Ht In Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Mekashish | 1707 | | B6766BE-9 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Mudge | 1710 | | A563ACB-D | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Mushiddun | 2403 | | C61188D-9 | Ie Na | | Imperium | G |
| Nasu | 2405 | | C434368-B | Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Nuugashur | 1910 | | A535726-D | Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Ogier | 2106 | | B10088A-C | Ht Na Va | | Imperium | |
| Shazam | 1705 | | C411266-B | Ie Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Sishera | 2104 | | B433854-D | Ht Na Po | | Imperium | G |
| Xiwa | 2408 | | C300568-B | Ni Va Mr | A | Imperium | G |
| Jeremyh | 1804 | | A5207BF-D | De Ht Na Po | | Imperium | G |
| Zapuushar | 2303 | S | A858997-D | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |

For more than 70 years, the subsector has been ruled by the firm hand of Duchess Noriko Ikiush Delacruz, her skilful diplomacy often credited with keeping the nations of Easter from collapsing into all-out civil war during a crisis in 1092. With her anagathics now failing and senility creeping closer, the duchess is confined to her sickbed or gravchair. Due to the recent and somewhat mysterious death of her favoured heir, Jacqueline, in a hunting accident on Eleusis there is uncertainty as to who in her large family will succeed her. One prospect is her grandson William, an outgoing and likeable Imperial Navy captain with a keen interest in the people of the subsector.

Concord is for the most part stable and secure. Its subsector fleet is average in size and composition, with few elements of the sector fleet based in the subsector. This is largely due to the presence of Depot just rimward of Concord subsector's boundary. The naval base at Eleusis is primarily a staging post for vessels moving across the subsector, although it does support an ongoing deployment to the troubled Xiwa system. The primary subsector fleet base is at Gunashnan, from where most systems can be reached quickly by jump-4 naval vessels.

The Concord subsector contains 25 worlds with a population of 107.4 billion. The highest is 32 billion at Mudge.

EASTER

Easter is the sole moon of the brown dwarf Eshkarun, a huge gas giant several times larger than Jupiter. When Easter was forming, extreme tidal forces sculpted it into a flattened egg shape. Easter's atmosphere and oceans, by the nature of fluids, are roughly spherical. This creates a very thin atmosphere and desert conditions at the poles, overly dense pressure and deep ocean at the equator and two habitable bands of pressure varying from thin to standard to dense in between.

Like many worlds in Concord, Easter was initially settled by the Vilani (in 4800), followed by Terran immigrants in the late Interstellar Wars and early Rule of Man era. The moon's unusual geography compartmentalised settlement, resulting in less ethnic blending than usual but Easter was not initially balkanised. Instead, it developed a robust federal system. During the Long Night Easter's institutions provided the model for the government of the Easter Concord, establishing a multi-world federation that held civilisation together in the coreward subsectors of the Rim. This was Easter's golden age, which lasted until it peacefully joined the Imperium in 426.

Easter failed to reap all the expected benefits of Imperial membership. No longer the hub of its own interstellar state, it experienced slow economic and

cultural decline. This malaise was exploited by the Solomani Party, who came to power first in ethnic Solomani regions and then in 750 seized control of the entire planetary federal government. Sporadic resistance by Vilani nationalists and federalist Solomani continued for centuries until the end of the Solomani Rim War. As Imperial forces entered the Solomani Rim but well before they reached Easter the planet exploded into a confused civil war between multiple Vilani and Solomani factions. Alliances shifted, with some Solomani provinces declaring for the Imperium and others remaining loyal to the Confederation.

The end result was the final collapse of Easter's federal system. Although the planet agreed to a global ceasefire under the guns of the Imperial Navy, they could not agree on a united government. Over the last century the world has fragmented into dozens of rival Vilani and Solomani nation states, many with unstable or populist governments driven by nationalist and racist demagoguery, resentment at Easter's situation and memories of outrages committed by their neighbours. None of the Solomani governments are 'officially' ruled by Solomani Parties but several follow the philosophy in all but name. Easter's compartmentalised geography and Imperial diplomacy have prevented a major war from breaking out but frontier conflicts, brushfire wars and insurgencies are common. The fractious situation has been exploited by the more predatory Imperial megacorporations. Ling Standard Products, Delgado and Instellarms are all active and Easter's nations make extensive use of mercenary forces to augment their own armies. Most recently mercenary 'volunteer' contingents subsidised by the Vilani government of Amkhalarg have been arriving to assist anti-Solomani nations.

Despite the twin scourges of war and economic decline, Easter has still managed to hang onto some of the glory of its storied past and only a few nations are actively engaged in conflicts at any one time. In addition to the natural oddities of the world, including the vast brown dwarf that dominates its sky, there are many old cities and towns on Easter that still retain vestiges of the customs, dress, arts and architecture of the old Concord. Economic depression also makes for favourable exchange rates and tends to lure adventurous tourists from other Imperial worlds to visit the planet's unique sights.

INIDU

The megacorporation SuSAG purchased Inidu from the Easter Concord shortly after it joined the Imperium. At present, Inidu is still owned by the research and development division of the megacorporation and the populace consists entirely of SuSAG employees. SuSAG maintains three major R&D complexes at dispersed locations on the planet.

Inidu's corrosive atmosphere and acidic world-ocean provides additional security for SuSAG activities, as well as serving as a natural barrier to eliminate any biohazards that escape its labs.

MUDGE

Mudge originally had an even number of Vilani and Solomani inhabitants. During the early Solomani era the Party government embarked on a policy aimed at achieving demographic superiority through the subsidy of large Solomani families. This was supported by large and ongoing grants from the Ministry of Genetics and Information and proved a great success, as did a program of rapid industrial development that made Mudge a key exporter. Unfortunately, short-sighted and corrupt agricultural and resource-management practices failed to keep up with the increasing population and industrialisation, and Mudge never properly invested in the arcology system used by more successful high-population worlds like Azun. Overcrowding and violence are common in many cities, despite draconian penalties aimed at curbing crime and restricting weapon ownership. Land usage and water distribution problems are particularly acute and the problems have become more severe since the end of the Solomani era. A period of military rule after the Imperial conquest simply allowed the problems to fester. The removal of SolSec led to a significant increase in government corruption, despite the occupying Imperial Army's efforts to curb it.

The current government is a coalition of oligarchic enterprises and syndicates that came to power after the end of Imperial Military Rule by promising a decisive action to end Mudge's problems and clean up corruption. The ruling oligarchs have failed at the latter endeavour but successfully initiated an ambitious environmental remediation effort involving importing gas giant ring and comet ice from the outer system. They have also renewed an ongoing military and political effort to colonise Okefenokee in the Ultima subsector, a programme first begun in the Solomani era but interrupted during the Imperial occupation. The ostensible goal is to relieve population pressure but in reality the intention is to distract the populace from other issues. Although Mudge stands little chance of significantly reducing its population through emigration, the very existence of the effort provides a social safety valve. Placement in the colonisation project is available by lottery to any citizen and for veterans of planetary government and military service.

XIWA

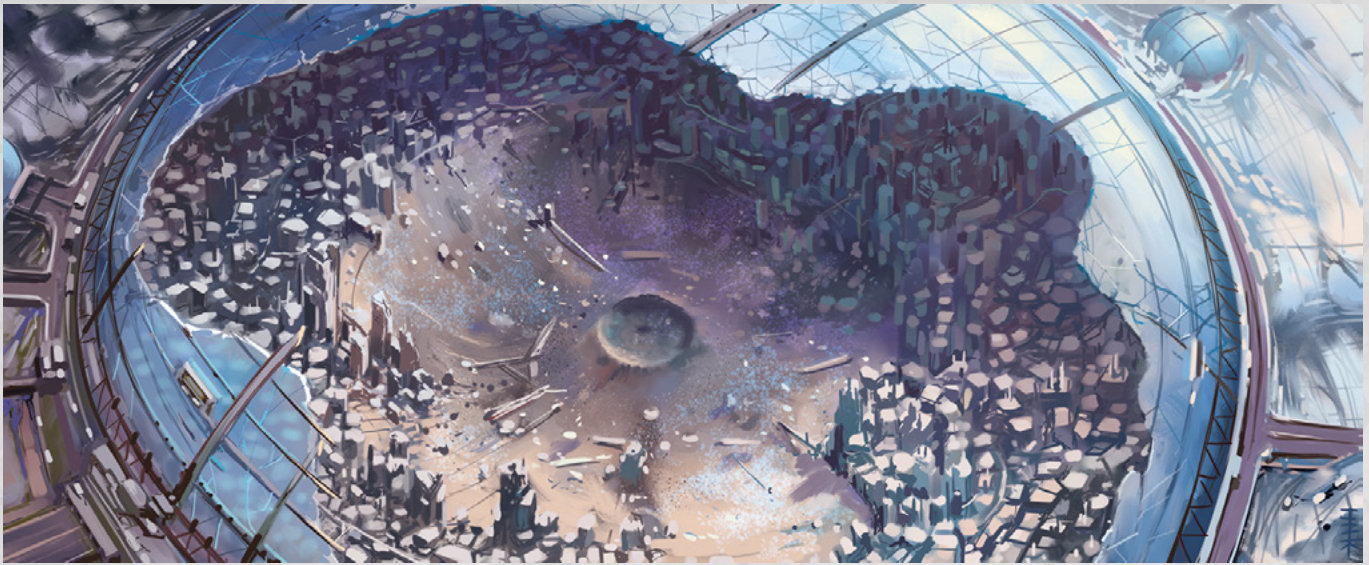
Xiwa is a small, very cold vacuum world orbiting a dim red star. It was overlooked by both the First Imperium and Terran Confederation and for three millennia was

little more than a refuelling stop. In the 550s Solomani prospectors discovered extensive deposits of Zuchai crystals useful for jump drive manufacturing. Rapid economic development followed. By 650, Xiwa was divided into competing corporate mining fiefdoms and also enjoyed the beginnings of a jump drive manufacturing industry. In the mid-700s a series of Solomani Party-sponsored socialist revolutions unified five of these mining and industrial syndicates under the auspices of the Xiwa Technum Collective. In self-defence, other corporate fiefdoms formed the Xiwa Freedom League and then, fearing off world Solomani revolution, became subsidiaries of Zuchai Drive Technologies, a company owned by a rival Solomani Party faction with economic connections to Transstar.

Despite their ideological differences, the two blocs coexisted uneasily under the umbrella of the Confederation until the end of the Solomani Rim War. The defeat of Solomani forces in Concord during late 1001 triggered a brief civil war as each bloc attempted to seize control of remaining Confederation Army bases, planetary defences and highports. The appearance of the Imperial Navy halted the war, with both governments proclaiming steadfast loyalty to the Imperium while denouncing the other as a cesspool of pro-Solomani agitation. With no troops to spare for occupation duty due to major engagements in Albadawi and Sol, the Navy accepted the planet's balkanised status.

In 1053 the Imperium decided to place the planet's major starport and baronial seat on Xiwana, a domed city in the Xiwa Freedom League. This caused economic suffering in the rival Collective and led to an ongoing sense of grievance. Skirmishes over disputed border lines and the free movement of labour became common. In 1087 the Collective's civilian government fell to a military coup and was replaced by a junta that advocated unification of the entire planet under Collectivist rule. As tensions escalated, both sides massed forces that included tactical nuclear weapons secretly looted from wartime Solomani arsenals. In 1095 a planned coup against the Collectivist government led to its leader pushing the button and the planet exploded into nuclear war.

The war was short but devastating. Most of Xiwa's six million citizens lived in domed cities and all were breached by tactical nuclear strikes. The exchange lasted for only a few hours but by then over 80% of the population was dead. Imperial Marines arrived three weeks too late to do anything more than lead a relief and rescue operation, and arrest the few surviving members of the governments for violations of the Imperial rules of war.



Today, the surviving population of Xiwa huddle in small settlements that are mostly converted outback crystal-mining camps. Some have resumed operation thanks to investments from Sternmetal Horizons, LIC. The megacorporation also made generous donations of life support machinery and other supplies in the immediate wake of the disaster. Xiwa remains under Imperial military rule with a military governor based at a new starport the marines have constructed near Zuchai Dorsa, the largest surviving mining town. The remaining population are widely scattered so, despite the ostensibly high Law Level, actual policing is sporadic beyond Imperial garrison enclaves.

Most Xiwa citizens have put aside nationalistic hatreds in the interests of recovery but riots or revenge killings between hardcore supporters of the former factions still give the Imperial Marines occasional cause for intervention. Although the Imperium's relief effort was welcomed, a decade of occupation by the marines has raised tensions and there are regular calls for a reversion to civilian rule. Leading the anti-Imperial protests are Solomani Party agitators who blame the disaster on the Imperium's policies and a conspiracy by Sternmetal Horizons to steal Xiwa's resources.

The major Imperial focus is the ongoing effort to rebuild the planet's cities and economy, and get the Zuchai crystal mines working to full capacity. Now that radioactivity has died down, the military government is still supervising the slow process of decontaminating sites struck by nuclear weapons, removing and identifying bodies – many mummified in vacuum after domes were cracked – and the reclamation of still-useful mining facilities. Another concern is the survival of hidden military stockpiles or command bunkers that may have survived total destruction. Many records were lost during the war and

in 1099 a Sternmetal Horizons team reopened what was marked on a map as a mining complex only to discover a hidden nuclear command bunker protected by lethal automated security systems. After the Imperial Marines dealt with the robots they found low passage berths containing three senior Xiwa military officers. Two were safely revived and turned over to the Imperium to stand trial for their role in the Xiwa war.

In the last few years rumours of further underground military bases and the few additional discoveries of weapon caches have attracted treasure-seekers to the planet, posing as legitimate relief workers or prospectors. In 1103 TAS News published an interview with an anonymous Xiwa Collective military officer who had apparently escaped the Imperial net. She referred to a Sternmetal Horizons open source study of strike patterns and blast crater damage on the surface, which she claimed indicated some of her nation's missiles had neither been fired nor been destroyed on the ground. She also claimed senior Xiwa junta leaders were likely still alive in undiscovered bunkers with access to control codes to arm any surviving nuclear weapons.

Imperial authorities have publicly cast doubt on the veracity of the TAS News story and stated they have intelligence that no unlaunched Xiwa nuclear weapons survived the war. However, in 1104 the Imperial Marines headquarters at Depot quietly assigned additional specialised combat engineering and mobile nuclear damper teams to Xiwa, as well as enhanced security at Xiwa's starport. The military authorities obviously want to avoid miners or treasure hunters digging up a warhead on Xiwa and selling it to Rule of Terra or some other extremist faction.

The world is classified as an Amber zone.

HARLEQUIN

Like most coreward subsectors of the Rim, Harlequin was settled by the Vilani but developed a Solomani majority as a result of immigration. During the era of Solomani hegemony that lasted from 700 to 1001, the Harlequin subsector was highly important, linking Terra with the prosperous regions of Alpha Crucis and the Old Expanses. War damage suffered by these sectors' worlds and the Solomani defeat turned Harlequin from a major avenue of trade to something of a backwater. The subsector economy has been stagnant or in moderate recession since the war ended in 1002.

Many of the inhabitants blame the Imperium for the downturn in their fortunes. Solomani parties remain strong on many worlds in Harlequin but only on Scaramouche has a longing for 'the good old days' given rise to rebellion. Unfortunately for the Solomani Cause, the subsector is sufficiently distant from the Confederation border that there is little chance of rebels receiving external assistance. The Solomani Confederation publicly expresses solidarity with local Solomani movements but gives tacit support to the status quo. Imperial military occupation gradually ended throughout Harlequin between 1047 and 1100, as hardcore Solomani Movement supporters were either eradicated by the Imperial Army and Marines or signed accords that committed them to non-violence and surrendered hidden arms.

Aside from occasional isolated attacks by individual fanatics and a few outbreaks of rioting, peace has generally prevailed. It was broken on Scaramouche in 1098 with the assassination of the governor a subsequent rebellion. The 'Unity Uprisings' were brutally crushed by the new acting governor and Imperial Marines. Harsh military rule was re-imposed, only to be lifted recently amid controversy over excesses committed by security forces during the revolt's suppression.

The aging subsector duke, Dmitri hault-Fionbrea, has long supported the reconciliation process and was said to be shocked and paralysed by the violence of the Unity Uprising and its suppression. He has been accused of being too soft by anti-Solomani nobles

including many in the subsector capital Arkiirkii, a hotbed of Vilani nationalism. Perhaps his harshest critic is his mixed-blood wife Commnena, who lost a beloved grandparent in the Rim War and whose noble house was rendered all but extinct under prior centuries of Solomani rule. The duke's son and heir Enkidu is said to be influenced by his mother's views but these may change by the time he achieves majority.

Much of Harlequin lies on the Rim Main, with enormous amounts of interstellar trade passing through its ports. However, the economic downturn after the Solomani Rim War created conditions for business interests based outside the subsector to force exploitative contracts on local firms and port operators. This has undermined attempts to climb out of the economic hole and perpetuated the situation. Appeals to the Imperial administration have produced mixed results. Favoured individuals and companies have been assisted to get out of this predicament, typically with investment on favourable terms but most entreaties have been ignored. The result is that supporters of the subsector duke tend to do better than those who oppose him. This promotes stability or at least reduces the capability of troublemakers to rock the boat, so the situation is acceptable to Imperial authorities.

The Imperial Navy maintains an average-strength subsector fleet, which patrols the mains and inspects traffic coming into the subsector by way of the Harlequin-Ximenes-Orichalc spur of the Rim Main. The colonial fleet is particularly weak and many systems have inadequate defences due to their poor economies. Harlequin is considered a weak link by the sector fleet's planners but rather than deploy forces there, they have instead drawn up plans to use Harlequin as a strategic battleground. Its weakness may invite a Solomani attack in any future war, drawing out forces where they can be conveniently destroyed. This strategy is controversial and not at all to the liking of those who live in the subsector.

The Harlequin subsector contains 33 worlds with a population of 67.1 billion. The highest population is 17 billion at Aosta.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|-------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Alpher | 2703 | | A866997-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Aosta | 2902 | | A553A56-F | Hi Ht Po | | Imperium | G |
| Arkiirkii | 2905 | N W | A66A8AD-E | Ht Ri Wa | | Imperium | |
| Azure | 2708 | | B4348CF-B | | A | Imperium | G |
| Beatus | 2608 | | A688989-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Cambyses | 3108 | | B546988-A | Ga Hi In | | Imperium | G |
| Carlyle | 3101 | | B9B5865-B | FI | | Imperium | G |
| Champa | 3109 | S | A6629B9-9 | Hi | | Imperium | G |
| Gadden | 2506 | | D893200-8 | Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Gashurzid | 2602 | | A6568A8-C | Ga Ht | | Imperium | |
| Huy Braseal | 2910 | N | A555989-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | |
| Iipshidan | 3107 | | C544534-9 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Irashnar | 3203 | | B431438-D | Ht Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Jade | 2502 | | C5758BF-8 | Ga | | Imperium | G |
| Janosz | 3008 | S | A564978-B | Ga Hi | | Imperium | G |
| Karpaty | 3001 | | A583954-F | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Kesirisu | 2906 | | A59A502-B | Ni Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Khiggun | 3102 | | B8A3643-B | FI Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Kilennur | 3208 | | B5958BE-A | Ga | | Imperium | G |
| Kirillishur | 3010 | | C7A4543-A | FI Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Miskatonic | 2603 | | A587863-9 | Ga Ri | | Imperium | G |
| Okotah | 2704 | | D425103-A | Lo | | Imperium | |
| Opar | 3202 | | E5AA267-A | FI Lo Wa | | Imperium | |
| Pagliacci | 3209 | | C754733-6 | Ag Ga | | Imperium | G |
| Palnu | 3201 | | A584999-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Phireene | 2807 | | A569895-D | Ht Ri | | Imperium | G |
| Rann | 3106 | | A664988-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | |
| Rith | 3204 | | C536875-9 | | | Imperium | G |
| Scaramouche | 2509 | | A7C6503-A | FI Ni | A | Imperium | |
| Shapam | 3009 | R | C432533-B | Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Syzygy | 3006 | | C100721-8 | Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Ukarin | 2601 | | B433742-C | Ht Na Po | | Imperium | G |
| Uمبر | 2808 | | B777464-B | Ga Ni | | Imperium | |

ARKIIRKII

This water world is Harlequin's capital and seat of Duke Dmitri hault-Fionbrea. The majority of the population live in underwater or floating cities. Civilisation on Arkiirkii dates back almost 6,000 years to its early settlement by the Vilani Empire (-4900) and has retained a fundamentally Vilani character ever since. The world never developed a native Solomani Party, although the Confederation military insisted on establishing bases across the planet.

During the Solomani Rim War, the planet was heavily taxed and some industries taken over by the Confederation to provide for war production. Imperial

nobility – the Marquises of Arkiirkii – remained in residence throughout the Solomani period, albeit in obscurity. As the Solomani grip slackened, the Marchioness of Arkiirkii emerged to declare the planet's loyalty to the Imperium. In recognition of the Marchioness' steadfastness and the planet's loyal opposition to the Solomani, she was granted the Duchy of Harlequin and the planet made subsector capital. Due to their Vilani background, Arkiirkii's population had not served during the Solomani Rim War and so the planet had a large reserve pool of military manpower. The Duchess soon recruited a large force of household troops and pledged them to assist in occupation and reconstruction duties on other planets within the subsector.

Arkiirkii society is a rigid and highly disciplined class-based system that grew up as a result of the safety requirements required for living in relatively fragile underwater cities. Today, almost every aspect of a person's life is governed by formal rules that all but mandate courtesy. The planet's uncompromising legal code, large human and robotic police force, and extensive public surveillance system is intended to ensure a clean, quiet and crime-free world. Even minor offences like public rudeness, drunkenness or disorderly conduct are punished by heavy fines and prison terms combined with hard labour. Punishments for serious offences often extend not just to the criminal but also those around them if shown to have failed to alert authorities of deviant tendencies. The death penalty is liberally applied to serious crimes against persons or property, with convicts often having their bodies sold to organ banks or medical research. In all cases, any proceeds are used to reimburse victims or their families.

In the century since the war Arkiirkii's citizenry have been unwilling to forget or forgive their humiliation under the Solomani hegemony. The planetary government – an absolute monarchy – has extended its legal traditions to enact racial laws that mirror in reverse the Solomani Confederation's own discriminatory policies. Genetic testing is required and citizens of pure Solomani blood face legal sanctions that limit the property they can own and positions they can hold within the world's society. Similar sanctions are applied to offworld visitors outside the extrality zone, although these restrictions do not apply at the ducal court, which is located at the starport. Nevertheless, these measures are out of step with sentiment in the rest of Harlequin and deeply offensive even to pro-Imperial Solomani nobles. Arkiirkii claims its policies are merely the natural expression of justice and there to ensure that centuries of pro-Solomani discrimination are reversed.

Archduke Kieran Adair considers the attitude of Arkiirkii to be unacceptable and provocative for a subsector capital in a region as politically delicate as Harlequin. He and the diplomatic corps have been attempting to pressure Duke Dmitri to use his influence to get Arkiirkii to moderate its policies. Duke Dmitri has been reluctant to do so, claiming his house owes Arkiirkii a debt of honour for having sheltered his line. In this he has been backed by Sector Duke Robert of Dingir, who firmly believes the Imperium should not intervene in the domestic affairs of loyal member worlds.

GADDEN

Gadden is a dry world with a dense tainted atmosphere and little liquid water. It has a population of less than 1,000, no formal government and no manufacturing.

The only settlement is a small independent mining operation exploiting an easily accessible wolframite deposit for tungsten metal. Most of the surface has not been surveyed except by basic orbital sweep.

Unknown to the miners, Gadden has additional unexploited resources. The local ecology has produced several species of plants that provide base chemicals useful for combat drug production. University xenobiology students from Huy Braseal are scheduled to do a commercial botanical survey of Gadden as a graduate school project and if they discover the compounds the information would be of great value to a company like SuSAG who might wish to acquire title to the planet. Naturally, this would be much less expensive if the botanical discovery was suppressed rather than publicised in an academic journal.

JANOSZ

Janosz is an attractive but somewhat arid terrestrial world. Its population is slightly in excess of one billion, divided into 32 sovereign states with populations ranging from only a few million to over 100 million. Only 29 of these states are officially members of the Imperium; three others remain autonomous having successfully overthrown Solomani Confederation rule on their own during the Rim War, yet indicate a lack of desire to re-join the Imperium. One of these holdouts, Cloralie, maintains its tenuous hold on independence by brutally suppressing all signs of the Solomani Movement within its borders, thus avoiding any Imperial charge that they are harbouring rebels. This attitude contrasts to some of the more stable nations that are part of the Imperial bloc. Among them is Intanevac, whose capital Argon is also the world's starport. Due to the influence of the large population of starfarers in the city, the local Law Level of Argon is actually 4. Intanevac is a representative democracy enjoying a high degree of personal freedom and widely known for its political and religious tolerance. The Solomani Party there has foresworn violence and been legalised, competing with pro-Imperial parties in elections.

The complexity of Janosz politics, its high population and industrial potential have made it a target for manipulation by megacorporations and foreign interests. Imperial Intelligence suspects SolSec may be attempting to subtly manipulate the political process on some of the nations on Janosz to better further the interests of the Solomani Party there.

In late 1104 beltlers working the system's outer planetoid belt stumbled on a wrecked Solomani Confederation Navy lifeboat left over from the war. The lifeboat held two corpses and one person preserved in

a low passage berth. The occupant, a Confederation Army officer, disappeared from the scout base at Argon Down starport before his identity could be confirmed but was later identified as the notorious Colonel Henryk Salvadori, late of the Confederation Army Commandos. Salvadori was nicknamed 'the Butcher of Inthra' for his role leading an operation on the Old Expanses world in 1102 that compromised crucial life support, causing many millions of deaths. Salvadori is believed to be still somewhere on Janosz. The Imperial Ministry of Justice considers him a war criminal and is offering Cr500000 reward for his capture or information leading to his arrest. It is possible that Solomani Party sympathisers on the planet are aiding him.

KILENNUR

This world is governed by the Marquis Valkenburg of Kilennur, who is an Imperial noble, the planet's hereditary monarch and leader of its sole legal political party, the Imperial Royalists. This sort of combination – much denounced by Solomani activists – often leads to abuse. Kilennur is no exception, with the monarch and his ruling family enforcing a tyranny even more absolute than the harshest Solomani Party dictatorship.

The Marquis and his inner circle have cut lucrative deals with the megacorporations Sharurshid, Ling Standard Products and Delgado, giving them exclusive trading, resource extraction and market development contracts in exchange for substantial kickbacks. Some of this income has been ploughed back into security and arms purchases and the Marquis boasts well-equipped household forces backed up by divisions of paramilitary constabulary and secret police. Kilennur's regime is also loud in its expressions of loyalty to the Imperium and a strong supporter of the Duke of Harlequin, who is a very distant cousin. The government is disliked by the mass of the populace but all serious dissent has been crushed. The main opposition is confined to a few exiled anti-Imperial dissidents and activists attempting to rally off-world support. There have been a few rumours of a shadowy 'Free Republic' opposition movement dedicated to toppling the tyranny but these remain unsubstantiated with the regime maintaining an iron grip.

Kilennur is notable for having a Droyne community, or oytrip, located in an isolated reserve in the planet's southern continent. The Droyne are known locally as the Nugiiri, a Vilani name that predates understanding of their relationship to other scattered Droyne colonies throughout Charted Space, and is still used by many inhabitants of Kilennur. As this name suggests, the Droyne of Kilennur were initially contacted by the

Vilani when the colony was at TL8–9 levels during the First Imperium. They submitted to the Ziru Sirka and granted control of their southern enclave. After the First Imperium fell, they were mostly ignored throughout the Rule of Man and Long Night as everyone assumed they were yet another minor Vilani subject race. They were not identified as Droyne until early in the Imperial period. In 523 the Duke of Harlequin established a treaty with them, formalising their control of the southern region of the planet through a new charter.

The oytrip's precise size is unknown, as many live indoors or underground and visitors are discouraged. As is typical for Droyne, usually only the Leader and Sport castes have any interaction with outsiders. There appears to be at least 10,000 Droyne but the enclave could be several times larger, as it includes farms, factories and a small Class C starport of its own. The Droyne themselves operate a few starships.

Those humans on Kilennur who share the southern continent with the Droyne have a long folklore tradition that suggests they have legendary powers and abilities, similar to the ancient Terran legends of elves and faeries, and probably representing an obscure cultural survival from Solomani settlement. There are stories of how unwary human developers, settlers, xenologists or even children encroached upon Droyne territory and were never seen again. A few Droyne Sports have established rapports with Imperial merchants who trade with them and the Droyne relationship with the Marquis of Kilennur is cordial but distant. The Droyne are required to pay taxes to the Imperial authority, which they tend to do in kind, delivering yearly to Kilennur's starport. Problems could occur if dissidents or rebels pursued by the government were to flee into a Droyne area as the Droyne do not recognise the planetary government's right of pursuit.

SCARAMOUCHE

Scaramouche's corrosive atmosphere is a witches' brew of free chlorine, hydrochloric acid vapours and other toxic chemicals; its acidic oceans have been compared to industrial-strength bleach. The planet boasts a few hardy native species of chlorine metabolising bacteria and plants but no higher animals have been discovered.

The world was completely ignored by the Vilani but believed to have been colonised during the Long Night. Local legend claims the first settlers were a hardy band of Solomani corsairs who preyed upon Easter Concord, Vegan and Dingir League shipping, and later founded their own independent republic. Regardless of their origins, the current inhabitants are known for

their hardiness, independent spirit and self-sufficiency. Despite their world's lack of resources, the planet can provide its own food and power, thanks to the mechanical skills of its population. Many citizens live in largely self-sufficient underground towns with their own fusion reactors, hydroponics gardens and even mines. The planet's starport and only city, Tiberio, on the shores of a hydrochloric acid sea, has been the homeport for locally owned and crewed free traders for generations.

Scaramouche's population are almost all of pure Solomani descent. With an ingrained distaste for the aristocratic rulers of the Imperium, they were early and enthusiastic supporters of Solomani Cause. Representatives from Scaramouche were instrumental in establishing the 'district' system in the Solomani Confederation that allowed low-population worlds to pool economic and political power to give them a voice within the Secretariat. The world's free traders were also leaders of the Solomani Traders League, an association that often crossed swords with the mighty Solomani Party-run Transstar line. During the Solomani Rim War, almost 15% of the adult population were volunteers patriotically serving in the Solomani Confederation's Navy, Army or merchant marine fleet.

At the end of the Solomani Rim War, Scaramouche's small squadron of system defence boats refused to surrender to an Imperial cruiser squadron and was wiped out to the last craft. An Imperial Marine battalion, backed up by an Army brigade, seized and occupied the starport to begin a lengthy period of military rule. The population were never reconciled to Imperial occupation. Anti-Imperial agitation, sabotage and minor terrorist attacks were common. The planet's unforgiving environment was also hard on offworlders unused to it and often made it difficult to tell if various 'malfunctions' or 'accidents' that befell occupying authorities were bad luck or the work of insurgents.

Due to the hostility of the populace and suspicion of ongoing resistance activity, Scaramouche was one of the few worlds in Harlequin that continued under military rule into the 1090s. Popular resistance to the presence of a foreign Imperial governor and a brigade of Marines garrisoned at Tiberio boiled over in 1098 in the so-called Unity Uprisings. These guerrilla attacks by an alliance of diverse resistance and popular groups were suppressed through the decisive action of Acting Governor General Ringiil Urshukaan, whose uncompromising measures crushed the rebel organisation, collapsing after Urshukaan's capture of its leader, Moradeyo Davis Atiyah. Despite his success, Urshukaan was later investigated and publicly censored for using excessive

brutality although his supporters among the nobility credit him as having prevented the Uprisings from flaring up into a subsector-wide Solomani rebellion.

The post-conflict administration of Governor Baronet Rosa Demetriou made attempts at reconciliation, including additional investigation of the charges against Urshukaan, resulting in his formal censure by the Imperial military. Following this, it was decided that the Imperial presence on Scaramouche would be greatly reduced provided no further rebel activity took place. Government was formally turned over to the citizens of the planet in 1102 and the post of governor dissolved. The majority of the garrison was withdrawn at that time in the hopes that this would reduce tensions.

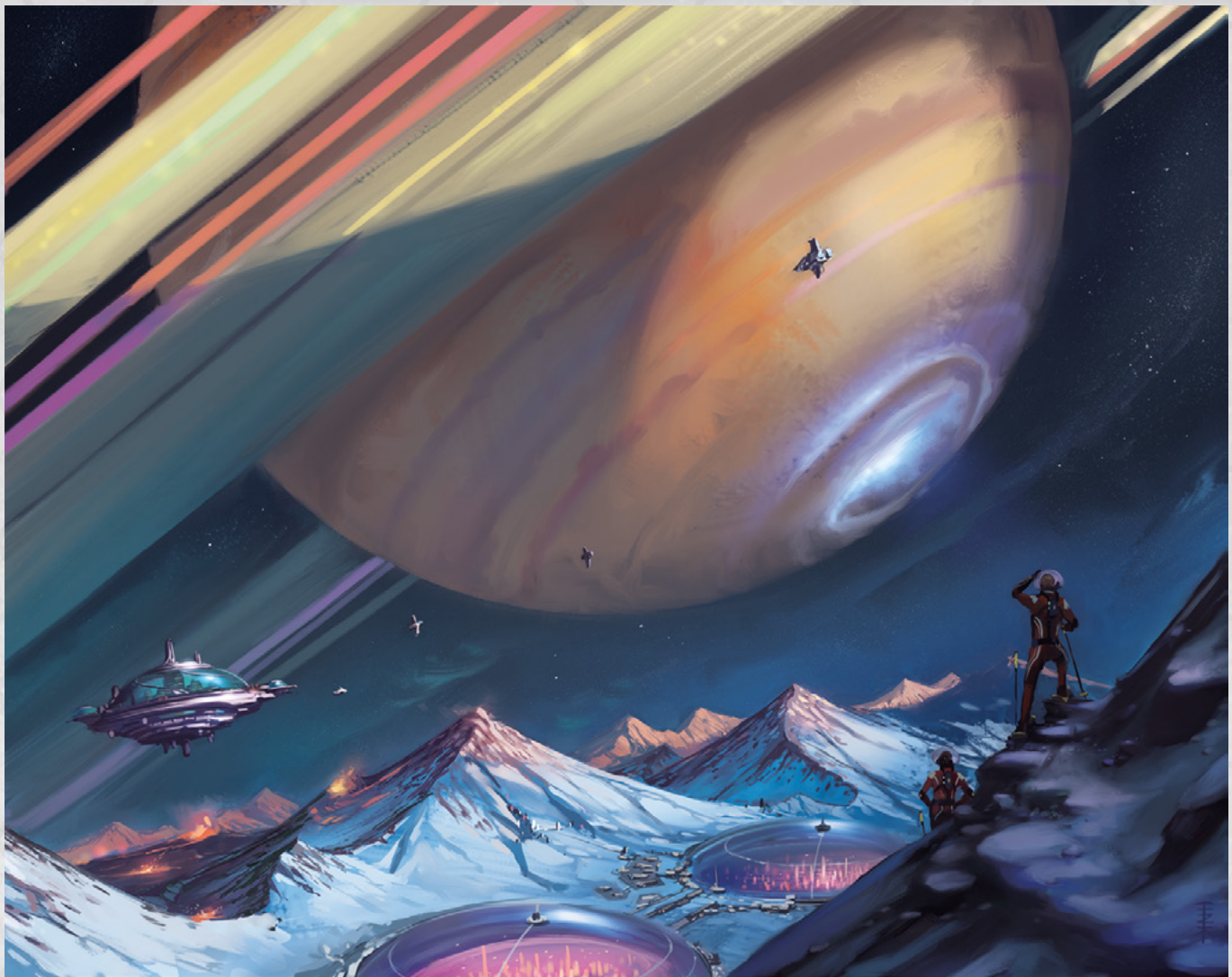
That has not proven entirely successful. Since the Imperial withdrawal the government on Scaramouche has varied from unstable to non-existent. The local Solomani Party had most of its more dynamic leaders killed or imprisoned during the Unity Uprisings and fragmented into multiple splinter groups consumed by internal infighting. No other political force has emerged. Factional violence and crime are commonplace and the world has been designated an Amber zone.

Although it appears that no organised anti-Imperial guerrilla forces presently exist, Imperial Intelligence fears that in the future offworld Solomani terrorist groups or SolSec agents may use the chaos as an opportunity to establish a base or training camp there. This advice has not been taken seriously due to Harlequin's distance from the Solomani border. At present, the subsector nobility and military have little interest in committing further Imperial or colonial troops to what they have reclassified as a planetary problem.

SHAPAM

Originally colonised by refugees from an anti-aristocratic revolution on nearby Champa, this planet is famous as a luxury resort world for the Solomani Rim's elite, whether they are nobles, interstellar celebrities, megacorporation executives or planetary heads of state.

Shapam itself is a small moon orbiting a beautiful ringed gas giant. Most of the population live in Xanadu et Shanapour, the largest of its three domed cities, although some of the better resorts are located inside a half-dozen grav-supported castles that tour the moon. Except for some cut-rate spacers lodging in startown, prices on Shapam are astronomical with quality to match, boasting some of the best luxury hotels, restaurants, casinos and entertainment facilities in the subsector. The world itself is barren but its icy



mountains, craters and volcanoes possess a stark beauty. A noted attraction is the Shapam Drift, a spectacular low-g ski trail whose slopes are packed with youthful skiers in skin-tight tailored vacc suits. Shapam starport also offers excursion craft for a gas giant ring tour that includes a view of the ongoing creation of the Flying Emperors. These are mammoth sculptures of the Imperium's former rulers being carved in ring ice using ship-mounted beam lasers by a celebrated team of artists.

For many tourists, the reason for visiting Shapam has nothing to do with the scenery, luxury hotels or the cuisine but because Shapam's planetary authorities tolerate and even subsidise all manner of activities regarded as vices on other worlds. High-stakes gambling, narcotics, prostitution, erotic and gladiatorial sports events, pleasure robot sale or rentals, extreme biological and cybernetic modification... the list goes on. Provided a recreational activity is consensual, profitable and does not violate

Imperial High Law, it is certainly legal and normally available on Shapam; Law Level 1 is only for these purposes. Shapam security maintain a low profile, focused on keeping the streets and resorts safe for visitors, restricting illegal weapons, dealing with crimes of passion and enforcing privacy laws intended to keep foreign paparazzi away from visiting Imperial celebrities. Indeed, the most serious threat that anyone faces is the risk of blackmail or exposure should a VIP's debaucheries be recorded and publicised.

Aside from its lucrative resort business, Shapam's ruling oligarchy also leases land to Imperial Research Station Alpha, founded in 1043 and located on an island in an icy sea on the opposite side of the moon from Xanadu et Shanapour. The nature of the station's research is classified and an elite IISS security detachment patrols the 20 kilometres exclusion zone around the facility. The residents of Research Station Alpha have a small private starport for their sole use. They are not permitted to fraternise at the resort.

ALDERAMIN

This subsector is named for the bright white A class star Alderamin – also called Alpha Cephei – that is orbited by the Stralsund planetoid belt. The first settlers were Vilani, arriving at Shululsish in 3900 but few other worlds were settled until the Rule of Man, when Solomani colonists arrived. Their isolation in the Long Night was broken by sporadic trade from the Dingir League, Vega and the Easter Concord. The region was vulnerable to reaver raids from neighbouring Magyar and at times troubled by Aslan ihatei who settled Sarmaty in exchange for an agreement to help defend the world. Alderamin's worlds began trading with the Third Imperium circa 350; most of the subsector became Imperial by 550.

Dissatisfaction with the Imperium during the civil wars and their immediate aftermath gradually turned most of worlds with majority Solomani populations toward moderate factions of the Solomani Movement. Worlds with Vilani populations were initially offered limited

self-government under Confederation hegemony and as time went on Solomani interference increased, prompting localised resistance on worlds like Sarmaty and Shululsish.

The Alderamin subsector escaped the worst of the bloodshed of the Solomani Rim War. Most Solomani worlds gave only token resistance after the Confederation Navy retreated from the subsector. The post-war Imperial occupation turned the tables; Vilani-dominated Shululsish was made the subsector capital and an Aslan clan lord and rebel leader from Sarmaty was appointed subsector duke. Putting their past history behind them, the Aslan duke and his successors followed an enlightened policy of reconciliation similar to that employed in Harlequin but with greater focus on achieving subsector-wide unity and economic redevelopment. Military rule was lifted as early as 1060 on most Solomani worlds. Today, the Solomani Party is usually legal but has minority support.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|------------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Arukhur | 0518 | | E200365-9 | Lo Va | | Imperium | G |
| Bemidshii | 0317 | | A567988-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Desdemona | 0215 | | A76999C-E | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Diomedes | 0411 | | A8777A8-C | Ag Ga Ht | | Imperium | |
| Finnegans | 0316 | | C579533-A | Ni | | Imperium | |
| Furioso | 0717 | | A9C5761-D | FI Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Glaucas | 0612 | S | A8869A9-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Grendel | 0111 | | A96A98B-E | Hi Ht Wa An | | Imperium | G |
| Hayt | 0313 | | B4219AF-E | Hi Ht In Na Po | | Imperium | |
| Hoatzin | 0617 | | A967986-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Ippuraash | 0718 | | C200612-A | Na Ni Va | | Imperium | G |
| Omsk | 0713 | | B511547-A | IC Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Purdishi | 0116 | | D611168-8 | IC Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Sarmaty | 0217 | | A889877-D | Ht Ri | | Imperium | G |
| Seym | 0319 | N | A1009CB-C | Hi Ht In Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Shululsish | 0214 | W | A584A52-F | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Stralsund | 0618 | | B0007BE-D | As Ht Na Va | | Imperium | |
| Thars | 0710 | | B7A7797-B | FI | | Imperium | G |
| Upirzanu | 0814 | N | A9B5752-E | FI Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Weipu | 0719 | | X543000-0 | Ba Lt Po | R | Imperium | G |
| Yrsai | 0511 | | A663A9B-F | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |

Economically, the subsector is not of great importance. Its economies are dependent on trade with the Vegan Autonomous District and Azaremiid Cluster as well as the dense worlds of Kline, to spinward. Interstellar trade through the subsector is channelled by astrography, which also provides a 'strategic firebreak' in the event of a major war. The Alderamin subsector fleet has relatively few very small vessels such as corvettes and escorts; its tonnage is mostly composed of fleet destroyers. Most of these are older and less capable types but they are better suited to chasing down Solomani Confederation raiders than smaller vessels would be. The Imperial Navy plans to make the relatively sparse astrography of the subsector dangerous for raiders, shielding Imperial territories further from the border, until a large-scale response can be mounted. These larger ships are also better suited to long patrols than small corvettes. This facilitates operations into the Esperance subsector.

The Alderamin subsector contains 21 worlds with a population of 86.1 billion. The highest population is 34 billion at Yrsai. The subsector Duke is an Aslan; Duke Iwoaharko is the grandson of the original Aslan rebel leader on Sarmaty who overthrew Solomani rule there. He is a respected politician and skilled diplomat who understands Humaniti thanks to a stint in the Imperium Marines during his youth. His son is also a marine serving in a commando unit.

FURIOSO

Furioso is a large frozen world rich in heavy metals with industrial applications, with an insidious atmosphere and unusual biosphere; its higher life forms have evolved bizarre hybrid carbon-silicon biochemistry. The exotic menagerie includes three-metre long multi-legged armoured ice crawlers who actually metabolise rocks and pack-hunting ice spiders that prey upon them. Both are aggressive enough to attack humans or machines and powerful enough to menace someone in an armoured vacc suit. Ice spider hunting behaviour is highly social and some scientists believe they may be proto-sentient at the level of non-uplifted chimpanzees or dolphins. The aggressiveness of native life and the difficulty of keeping specimens alive outside their unusual environment has impeded efforts to study them.

SARMATY

This world has a warm climate with long growing season and rich ocean ecosystem but its land area is limited and most nations are crowded island city-states. Fishing and shipping – both ocean going and starship – are significant parts of the economy.

Sarmaty was settled by Solomani around -2100, during the Rule of Man. During the Long Night the colonists broke up into separate city states, making it impossible for them to say no to a wave of Aslan immigrants who arrived from Magyar starting in -1663. The Aslan chose to settle several unclaimed islands rather than fight for occupied territory.

Even today, Sarmaty's political geography is divided between Solomani nations and Aslan clans. The two races have a lengthy history of cooperation, beginning with a shared defence of the world against reaver attacks during the Long Night. This relationship frayed during the Solomani era as the Party's insistence on human supremacy caused friction. Although open war never occurred, individual Aslan clans instigated revolts or periods of guerrilla raiding that generally subsided once the possibility of intervention by the Confederation armed forces took place.

Anti-Solomani resistance mainly took the form of aggressive minor clans tacitly supporting ocean piracy and fending off similar reprisals against them. This grew into a full-scale rebellion after the Solomani military withdrew from Aldebaran and Imperial forces were on hand to support them. In recognition of Sarmaty's resistance and self-liberation, Imperial titles were granted to the clan leaders and since the minor clans had taken the lead in the revolt, this has created a situation where the Aslan duke is actually more respected and powerful offworld than he is at home.

With the dukes of Alderamin now hailing from Sarmaty, the planet has enjoyed the benefits of political patronage and corporate development, including upgrading the starport to Class A status with a new General Products shipyard and a large investment in the fishing industry by Seaharvester, LIC. The economic boom has helped smooth Aslan-human relations but grudges from the Solomani era still remain. Most of the city states – human or Aslan – have spent part of their new wealth in increased wet navy forces. The larger Solomani island-states and Aslan clans nevertheless work together to keep the peace but divisive territorial disputes continue to smoulder. Skirmishes between wet navy forces or corporate privateers over underwater mines, ecosystem management and fisheries protection still flare up from time-to-time.

SHULULSISH

Shululsish has a large ethnic Vilani and mixed Vilani-Solomani population but it has been strongly influenced by the Solomani society and abandoned all but the more superficial aspects of traditional Vilani culture. The government is unusual; it is a participatory

ICE CRAWLER

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|-------------|------------------------------------|-------|
| Ice Crawler | 16 | 4m |
| SKILLS | Melee 0, Recon 1, Survival 1 | |
| ATTACKS | Claws (2D) | |
| TRAITS | Armour (+4) | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Filter | |



Ice Crawler

The Furioso ice crawler is an example of a descriptive but not particularly imaginative name coming into common use and never being replaced by something more scientific. In this case it is entirely apt. The ice crawler has a caterpillar-like body and extremely long legs, much like a spider. These end in splayed claws that can penetrate the surface of an icefield to both grip and spread out the creature's weight. A shorter set of limbs is used to dig edible materials out of the ice surface or to prize them free of a loose area.

The ice crawler typically proceeds across a surface in a seemingly haphazard manner, guided by an ability to 'taste' the presence of edible minerals. These are usually gained by ingesting small chunks of rock but at need an ice crawler can swallow a much larger lump. This will take far longer to metabolise, so gobbling up gravel is the most efficient way to feed.

Ice crawlers are not interested in humans as food but will attack and sometimes eat people for other reasons that are not always clear. It may be that they

are attracted to materials in tools and equipment or the crawler may be able to 'taste' a mineral it craves in dust on a Traveller's vacc suit. Territorial protection is also a possibility, although this does not explain why victims are eaten.

An Ice Crawler typically attacks with a swipe of the claws on one of its legs but it may grab with its feeding-limbs. If it does so, no damage is done but the Traveller is firmly held and may be pulled into the crawler's maw. An Average (8+) STR check will prevent the Traveller from being swallowed but will not free them; for this an Effect of 3+ is required. Other Travellers can assist but may be attacked with claws whilst doing so. Anyone swallowed suffers 1D damage per round from grinding, rock fragments and highly caustic digestive fluids. Armour will protect against this until dissolved and once breached a vacc suit offers no protection from the corrosive atmosphere of Furioso.

ICE SPIDER

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Ice Spider | 14 | 8m |
| SKILLS | Recon 1, Melee (natural) 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1 | |
| ATTACKS | Claws (3D) | |
| TRAITS | Armour (+4), Camouflage | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Carnivore, Pouncer | |



Ice Spider

The Furious ice spider is smaller and nastier than the ice crawlers it normally preys upon. It has a similar outer skin, with what are apparently crystalline projections. These are in fact chitinous plates that can be fanned out or retracted to regulate intake of atmosphere-borne particles to gill-like openings on the creature's underside. The ice spider's body is shorter and rounder than the crawler and its legs are even longer. It has very similar gripper/claws and there are suggestions the two species might be related.

One theory holds that the ice crawlers are a feeder/breeder caste and the spiders are more intelligent hunter caste. This implies a complex arrangement whereby sometimes an ice spider pack will kill and eat a crawler; on other occasions they will mate with it then leave it alone until eggs are laid. If this is the case, it is probable that the crawler is then killed to provide food for the young, which are cared for by the spider pack. Presumably the majority of young are crawlers and enough survive to produce a new generation.

This theory explains why ice spider packs are sometimes extremely aggressive. They are always willing to attack personnel or even vehicles but on occasion a pack will try to tear a vehicle to pieces. Perhaps they are protecting an egg mass or there is a breeder-crawler nearby. At present, this theory remains unproven due to the difficulty of conducting research.

Ice spider packs normally include between four and six individuals but even this is hard to confirm as the creatures are well camouflaged for their environment and adept at using ground cover. An ice spider can leap up to ten metres from a low elevated position such as a boulder and often commence their assault by springing onto then off objects they have been hiding behind. Prey that are ambushed in this fashion will be hit from all sides by spiders that cling with their savage claws and rake at the victim with their feeding-limbs.

democracy on a high population world. Each of the world's 30 billion citizens carries a terminal connected to the global computer network and all eligible voters are polled regularly and important laws enacted in this fashion, with executive officials elected for one-month terms. This form of government places a heavy burden on the individual and the average citizen spends an hour a day in government-related activity, both in voting and researching information needed to reach a decision. This governmental system is made possible only because of the leisure time available to workers at this world's Tech Level; many citizens become government buffs, devoting most of their time to voting on issues and proposing new topics for discussion.

STRALSUND

Stralsund is the asteroid belt orbiting Alderamin, a brilliant white main sequence class A star that is evolving into a subgiant. Like many massive stars, Alderamin has no planets but the Stralsund asteroid belt is a rich source of commercially valuable elements. The harsh regime of its dictator, Truman Chang, is propped up by security forces that use techniques derived from SolSec and by mercenaries paid for by Ling Standard Products who received an exclusive contract to run mining and ore refining operations. Despite the system's mineral wealth, foreign beltlers are not welcome. The regime's system defence boats chase off seeker ships not operating under Ling Standard Products' aegis.

WEIPU

Weipu is a cool, arid world with a thin atmosphere, scraggly forests, scattered lakes and small seas. Despite its semi-habitable conditions, it has never been

successfully colonised nor even explored by robots, as its environment is tainted by metal-consuming bacteria that evolved within mineral-rich springs. The bacteria are a fundamental part of the planetary ecology, integral to the biology of the native life forms.

Initial plans made by Hoatzin to colonise the world during the Rule of Man were abandoned after explorers found their survey probes corroding away. The world was declared a hazard zone. During the Long Night the warning satellites wore out and were not replaced. Pirates unaware of the plague attempted to establish a base there with catastrophic results and survivors who fled to nearby Stralsund inadvertently discovered the bacteria, while not directly pathogenic, could live within animal intestines. Those exposed died of iron, copper and zinc deficiencies. One planetary station in Stralsund was quarantined and eventually exposed to vacuum to eradicate the plague. Weipu has been off limits ever since.

The Solomani Confederation established a well-protected bioresearch facility on the planet in 820. The plague proved too slow acting to effectively weaponise, but a tamed version of the bacteria showed potential for certain industrial processes. This project came to an end when the Ministry of Genetics laboratory was destroyed by SolSec as the Confederation abandoned the planet. The world is presently an Imperial reservation and under Navy interdiction enforced by periodic patrols. SuSAG and a research division of Sternmetal Horizons have petitioned the last two Dukes of Alderamin for permission to re-establish scientific laboratories to replicate the Solomani era research but pressure groups on nearby worlds oppose this out of fear that the bacteria may escape.

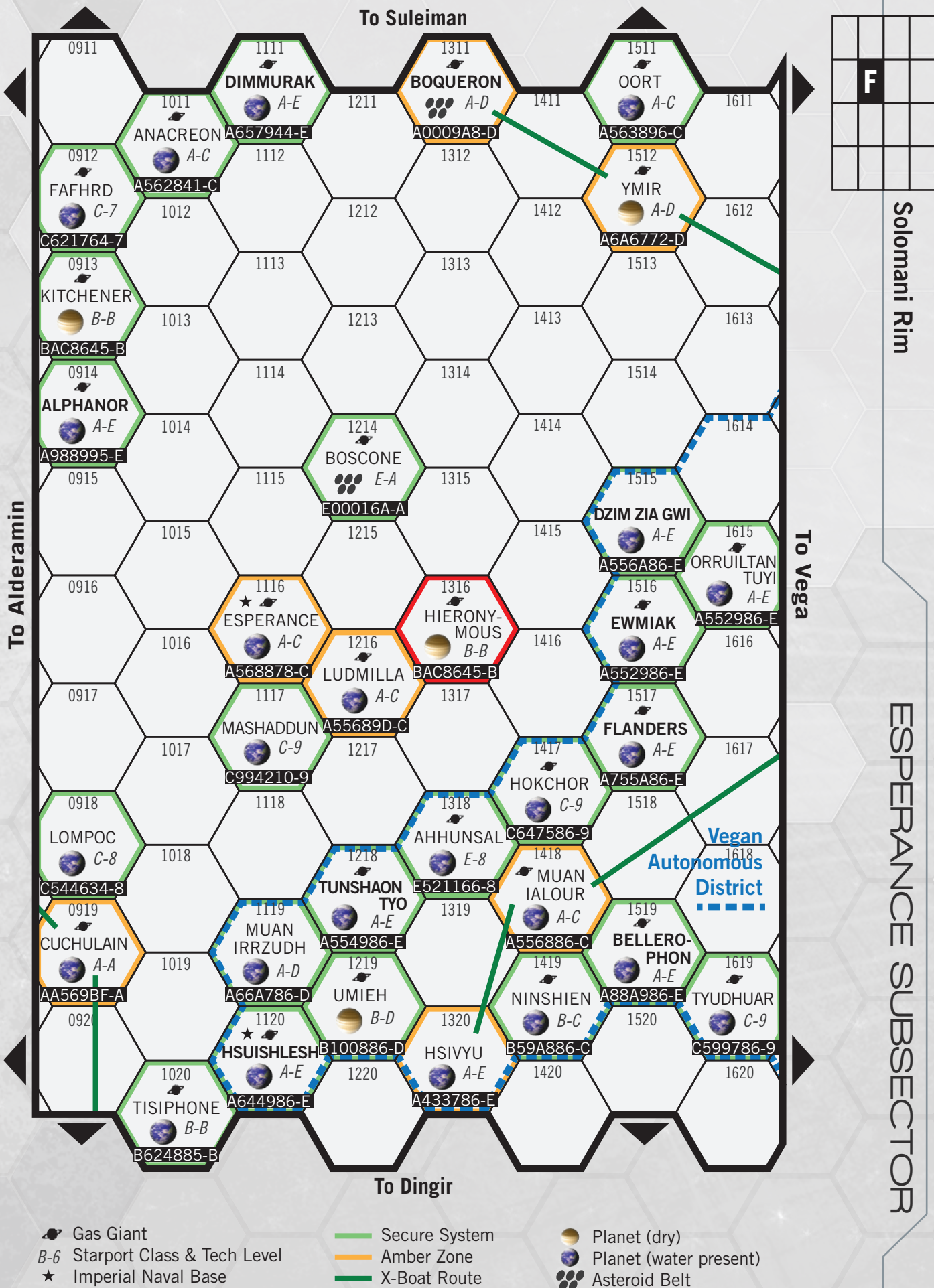


ESPERANCE

The Esperance subsector is not a governmental unit and has no subsector duke of its own. Roughly half its worlds are Imperial and under the administration of the Duke of Alderamin. The other half is part of the Vegan Autonomous District. Imperial worlds lying close to the Vegan border are more heavily influenced by Vegan politics than the more distant ducal seat but the Vegan authorities are forbidden to intervene outside their territory. Attitudes to this situation are mixed but Solomani dissidents find the situation useful as it can delay or dissipate measures to disrupt their activities.

Initial Vilani and Solomani colonisation was followed by a period of Vegan expansion during the Long Night. The Vegans settled directly on low-gravity worlds and brought others under their hegemony. Vegan power declined under the Third Imperium and in the Solomani era but their cultural influence remained. With the present Imperial-Vegan alliance, the Vegans have reclaimed much of the subsector as part of the Vegan Autonomous District.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|----------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Ahhunsal | 1318 | | E521166-8 | Lo Po | | Vegan | G |
| Alphanor | 0914 | | A988995-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Anacreon | 1011 | | A562841-C | Ht Ri | | Imperium | G |
| Bellerophon | 1519 | | A88A986-E | Hi Ht Wa | | Vegan | G |
| Boqueron | 1311 | | A0009A8-D | As Hi Ht In Na Va | A | Imperium | G |
| Boskone | 1214 | | E00016A-A | As Lo Va | | Imperium | G |
| Cuchulain | 0919 | | AA569BF-A | Ga Hi | | Imperium | G |
| Dimmurak | 1111 | | A657944-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Dzim Zhia Gwi | 1515 | | A556A86-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Vegan | |
| Esperance | 1116 | N | A568878-C | Ga Ht Ri | A | Imperium | G |
| Ewmiak | 1516 | | A552986-E | Hi Ht Po | | Vegan | G |
| Fafhrd | 0912 | | C621764-7 | Na Po | | Imperium | G |
| Flanders | 1517 | | A755A86-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Vegan | G |
| Hieronymus | 1316 | | X530622-6 | De Na Ni Po | R | Imperium | G |
| Hokchor | 1417 | | C647586-9 | Ag Ga Ni | | Vegan | G |
| Hsivyu | 1310 | | A433786-E | Ht Na Po | A | Vegan | |
| Hsuishlesh | 1110 | N | A644986-E | Ga Hi Ht In | | Vegan | G |
| Kitchener | 0913 | | BAC8645-B | FI Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Lompoc | 0918 | | C544634-8 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | |
| Ludmilla | 1216 | | A55689D-C | Ga Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Mashaddun | 1117 | | C994210-9 | Ga Lo | | Imperium | |
| Muan Ialour | 1418 | | A556886-C | Ga Ht | A | Vegan | G |
| Muan Irrzudh | 1119 | | A66A786-D | Ht Ri Wa | | Vegan | |
| Ninshien | 1419 | | B59A886-C | Ht Wa | | Vegan | G |
| Oort | 1511 | | A563896-C | Ht Ri | | Imperium | G |
| Orruiltan Tyui | 1616 | | B421686-C | Ht Na Ni Po | | Vegan | G |
| Tisiphone | 1020 | | B624885-B | | | Imperium | G |
| Tunshaon Tyo | 1218 | | A554986-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Vegan | G |
| Tyudhuar | 0809 | | C599786-9 | | | Vegan | G |
| Umieh | 1219 | | B100886-D | Ht Na Va | | Vegan | G |
| Ymir | 1512 | | A6A6772-D | FI Ht | A | Imperium | G |



Several worlds in the subsector have mixed Vegan and human populations and two balkanised Imperial worlds – Ludmilla and Esperance – have Vegan populations petitioning to leave the Imperium and join the Vegan Autonomous District. They are receiving diplomatic and economic support from tuhuir on nearby Vegan worlds.

The human population is divided between Solomani, Vilani and mixed-race origins. More unusually, it includes human – mostly Solomani – worlds that adopted elements of Vegan culture during the Rule of Man and Long Night. These societies formed the radical Vegan Faction of the Solomani Party and were themselves distrusted by the Confederation majority and subjected to interference by SolSec. Those living on Imperial worlds tend to support joining the Vegan Autonomous District.

The many more recent Solomani immigrants who settled in the subsector in the 800s and 900s opposed that goal. Many were hard-core Solomani Party loyalists and today some support outlawed Solomani Party groups while others see loud demonstrations of support for the Imperium as the only way to ensure they are not swallowed by the alien Vegans. They have been joined by some Vilani and mixed-race factions who also prefer living under the Imperium to gradual Vegan assimilation.

These tensions in the subsector are beginning to boil over. On some worlds – especially within the Vegan Autonomous District – they are still being resolved

peacefully, if noisily, through political compromise and Imperial-Vegan diplomacy. Elsewhere, they are accelerating the rise of extremist militant groups and parties and igniting street violence, racial attacks and insurgency. On balkanised Esperance there is now risk of civil war.

The Esperance subsector does not have a subsector fleet as such. In theory the quota of vessels proportional to the number of imperial worlds in the subsector were assigned to the neighbouring Alderamin subsector fleet, which has responsibility for security in Esperance. In reality a reduced complement of ships was assigned and most of those never go anywhere near Esperance. Meanwhile the Vegan Autonomous District has a powerful navy of its own but is not permitted to operate outside its borders without consent and approval from the appropriate authority. In the case of naval patrols and operations in the subsector this is the Duke of Alderamin. Permission is often granted but typically naval forces have their hands tied by regulations and agreements or must wait for permission from a distant ducal capital. Meanwhile, the Imperial systems of Esperance are under-patrolled and sometimes dangerous.

The Esperance subsector contains 31 worlds with a population of 94.4 billion. The highest population is 31 billion at Flanders.



BELLEROPHON

Bellerophon is a human-populated water world within the Vegan Autonomous District. Its large moon Antiea is responsible for strong daily high tides which can rise and fall 20–30 metres on a normal day. This large rise and fall exposes 'daily islands' and reef-flats which disappear again within a few hours. This makes shallow waters hazardous for the unwary; the few small areas above average sea level can become much larger over the course of a day. Although fusion power is available, this huge tidal variation is a ready source of power and favoured by most communities.

Bellerophon's climate is on the whole pleasant and moderate due to the effects of its world-ocean. Seasonal storms can build up to awe-inspiring size as they cross thousands of kilometres of ocean but are easy to predict. Thus they are dangerous only to craft that fail to heed warnings or somehow get caught too far from inhabited regions to find shelter.

Bellerophon has abundant and varied sea life and its seawater is rich in dissolved metals and minerals. The basis for the planetary ecology are vast free-floating colonies of photosynthetic marine plant life that accumulate in tangled multi-species 'greenmats' hundreds of kilometres across, thick enough to impede the movement of all but the largest ships. Greenmats draw nutrients directly from seawater and are supported by their own flotation bladders.

The next major level in Bellerophon's ecology is the skreekers, a prolific species of pseudo-crustaceans that live on and around the greenmats and feed upon them. The most impressive of Bellerophon's native sea creatures are the daghadasi. These 'mountain islands' are gigantic marine grazers that over several centuries can grow in excess of two kilometres in length. They travel in herds of one great elder and several dozen smaller creatures, and are inhabited by their own complex ecosystems.

The ecosystems of these living islands include marine, land and avian creatures, many of which are preyed upon by juvenile daghadasi and the voracious whale-sized daghsharks that can easily destroy a good-sized boat. Another notable life form is the chimearoc, a fierce flying hunter with a four metre wingspan and needle-sharp teeth. These flyers play a significant role in daghadasi reproduction as the chimearoc feed their young on a protein-rich liquid secreted by fertile adult daghadasi; the same liquid also carries daghadasi reproductive cells, which helps spread their genes around the herd.

Bellerophon was first established as a naval base of the Terran Confederation during the Interstellar Wars and civilians settled on the planet to provide food and raw materials to support the base. Many initial settlers were immigrants of Greek and Turkish backgrounds who fished the greenmats and harvested skreekers for food. Some of the more adventurous established a nomadic society that followed and hunted daghadasi herds and eventually developed its own unique traditions. Others developed an urban culture initially centred on the planet's tiny islands but eventually built free-floating raft-cities and underwater seabed complexes. By the time the naval base closed, Bellerophon had a successful aquaculture industry and export trade with nearby Vegan worlds.

The world suffered the usual privations during the Long Night but its economic links to the Vegans helped it maintain advanced technology as well as enriching its own culture with Vegan traditions. Transplanted Vegan attitudes toward cultural pluralism also helped preserve many Greek and Turkish linguistic and cultural elements.

The planet's exports were initially based around the skreeker and, to a lesser extent, daghadasi harvests but a seawater metal extraction process was also introduced. The dissolved metals and minerals in the planet's seawater were naturally absorbed by the floating greenmats, concentrated by plant-eating skreekers and further concentrated in the tough skeletons that support the huge daghadasi. Study of how this worked in nature led Bellerophon's engineers to build efficient seawater metal reclamation processors, providing metals needed for civilisation without the expense of importation or the complexity of deep sea mining.

Today, most of the population lives in chains of pylon cities anchored to the seabed. These tower out of ocean shallows and are surrounded by huge accumulations of greenmat material. A marine equivalent of the arcologies of high-population worlds like Azun, they are magnificent constructs rising two or more kilometres above the seabed. Many have their own distinct cultures.

The pylon cities house most of the planet's two billion citizens. Each is largely self-sufficient with its own power, industry and food production. Automatic nets and subsurface pressure funnels harvest skreekers, which are conveyed to processing areas in the bowels of each pylon city and converted into a thick paste high in nutritional value. Thus serves as the basic element of the planetary diet, although flavoured in numerous ways and augmented by other seafood.

In addition to the urbanised culture of the pylon city dwellers, the 'sea nomads' of Bellerophon form a distinct society with as many as 10 million people. The

nomads who roam the planet's world ocean live aboard large fusion-powered city ships big enough to plough through the greenmats. Their economy is based around hunting ship-sized daghadasi, a dramatic process conducted using squadrons of two-man 'hunterfoil' attack craft armed with missiles and laser cannon. Despite their high technology, the nomads are careful to take only those daghadasi they need to survive and let nothing go to waste. The mountain-island's meat is eaten, the fats rendered into plastics and lubricants and fibrous tissues used for textiles and paper products; even metals can be harvested from their skeletons.

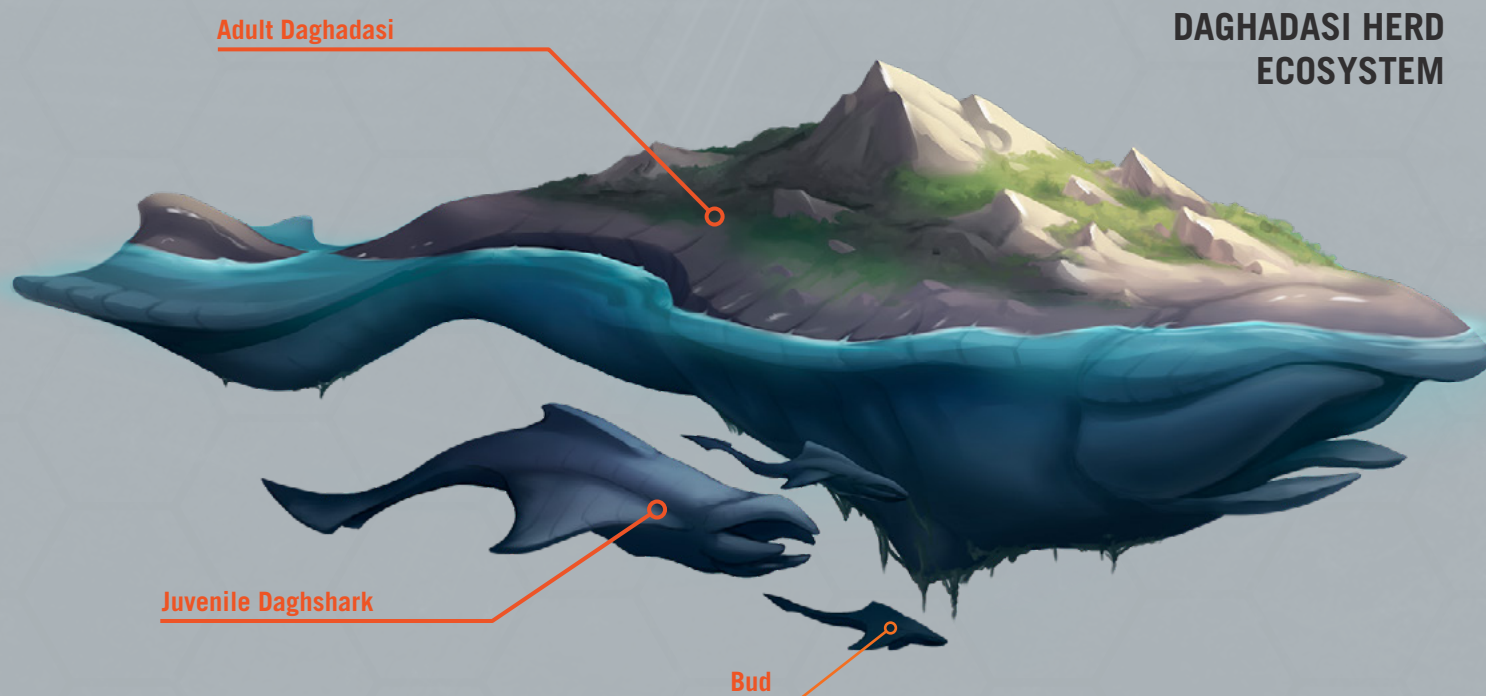
The rise of the Third Imperium and then the period of Solomani rule had little effect on daily life in Bellerophon. Bellerophon's mostly pure Solomani population allowed it to fit into the Confederation but its economic and cultural ties with the Vegans meant that more extreme tenets of the Solomani Cause never took root. Bellerophon was a leading supporter of the so-called Vegan Faction within the Solomani Party, which advocated for greater rights of Vegans within the Confederation. Their political defeat led to the world losing influence in the Confederation government and receiving little in the way of economic assistance or patronage.

Consequently, Bellerophon offered only tepid support for the Solomani Cause and few of its citizens volunteered to fight in the Solomani Rim War. After the war, the population accepted their inclusion in the Vegan

Autonomous District and only the highest levels of government changed; a Vegan civil service replaced the previous Solomani party bureaucracy. Each pylon city arcology and the sea nomad culture are treated by the Vegan government as a separate human tuhuir.

The interstellar corporation Seaharvester researched the daghadasi and discovered that young adults in their pre-reproductive phase produce a unique biological compound, PDPT-beta, which can serve as the basis for an advanced and highly effective broad spectrum antibiotic that can be 'tuned' to wipe out bacterial, viral and cancerous growths. Seaharvester purchased a license from the planetary government to operate a small fleet of factory ships to harvest the daghadasi. Although Seaharvester has agreed to strict quotas in recent years there have been allegations by sea nomad communities and off-world ecological activist groups that it is exceeding them and potentially threatening the viability of the daghadasi stocks and sea nomad society.

Bellerophon has no real military forces other than local constabulary. Although weapons are discouraged in the pylon cities, nomads and corporate harvest fleets have licences to carry heavy weaponry for hunting daghadasi. In recent years, rising tension between armed sea nomad city-ships and Seaharvester factory vessels has led to violent confrontations on the oceans. Seaharvester denies exceeding quotas and blames the problems on a faction of nomad insurgents with a reactionary disdain for offworlders.



DAGHSHARK

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-------|
| Daghshark | 175 | 14m |
| SKILLS | Melee (natural) 2, Recon 1 | |
| ATTACKS | Bite (8D) | |
| TRAITS | Armour (+8), Large (+6) | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Carnivore, Killer | |

The Daghadasí Herd Ecosystem

The daghadasí themselves are named from an ancient Turkish word translating as 'mountain-island', and these creatures do indeed resemble land masses from a distance. Lengths of two kilometres or more are common and there have been unverified reports of daghadasí over 10 kilometres in length. Daghadasí travel in herds, creating a mobile ecosystem in which other creatures thrive. Many move between daghadasí within the herd or range out from it to seek food in the open ocean.

Some of the creatures living within the herd-ecosystem are actually immature daghadasí. Their life cycle begins as what are normally referred to as 'buds' growing in recesses on the sides of adult daghadasí. Once large enough, typically around 2–3 metres, buds detach and join others swimming close to the adult. As these young grow they develop into a form originally thought to be a separate species; the daghshark. Daghsharks are voracious predators that prey on the other creatures of the herd ecosystem as well as one another. Relatively few survive but those that do are typically 15–20 metres long during this phase of their lives.

As daghsharks mature and grow they eventually become too large for others of their kind to attack. At the same time their voracity is gradually muted and their skin thickens until they become small versions of the adult daghadasí. From chasing down and killing anything in their path, adolescent daghadasí move to filter-feeding, ploughing lazily through shoals of skreekers around and under the great floating greenmats.

An adult daghadasí may reach a length of 200 metres or so, then stops growing. It has entered its reproductive phase, producing thousands of buds over a period of a century or more. Eventually the daghadasí stops budding and begins to grow again, becoming effectively a slow-swimming island. A 'grandfather' daghadasí of this sort will become the centre of a large expanse of greenmat, with other sea-creatures living on its flanks and underside. It is essentially the food provider for the herd, creating an environment for all other creatures associated with it to flourish.

CHIMEAROC

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------|-------|
| Chimearoc | 10 | 4 m |
| SKILLS | Melee (natural) 1, Recon 1, Survival 2 | |
| ATTACKS | Bite (2D) | |
| TRAITS | Flyer (slow), Small (-1) | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Carnivore, Hunter | |

Chimearoc

The chimearoc is one of the symbiotic creatures of the daghadasí herd. Like some other flying creatures, it nests among the plants growing in an adult or grandfather daghadasí. The chimearoc has a 4-metre wingspan and a curiously crocodile-like head at the end of a long neck. It is a fearsome looking beast that normally feeds by gliding along just above the ocean surface, striking at small creatures as it passes.

The chimearoc's relationship with the daghadasí is symbiotic. The daghadasí secrete a protein-rich liquid in hollows on their surface, which the chimearoc gather to feed their young. At the same time reproductive cells from the daghadasí attach themselves to the chimearoc. Since secretions are small and occur on different individuals at different times, the chimearoc are encouraged to move between daghadasí. In this way genetic material is passed around the herd.





HUNTERFOIL

A variety of hunterfoil variants are used by the nomads of Bellerophon. Most are relatively small and all are agile. Hunting adult daghadasi the size of an ocean-going ship, among similar creatures, is extremely hazardous at the best of times. An attack on one will agitate others and it is not uncommon for other creatures dependent on the daghadasi to turn on the hunters as well. As a result, crews must deal with swooping chimearoc's as well as daghsharks and the target itself.

Although Bellerophon's Tech Level is listed as 14, this applies to the pylon cities. The nomads have some TL14 equipment but for the most part rely on lower-tech items, which are easier to manufacture and maintain. The example hunterfoil presented here is Tech Level 10, although this represents very simple systems produced at a higher Tech Level and crude in-the-field repairs that have become permanent.

The hunterfoil typically runs with a crew of four, although there is room for more if they do not move around too much. Some groups like to use shoulder-

fired anti-tank rockets as part of their hunt and will carry two to four additional crewmembers to use these. In most cases the weaponry of the craft is considered adequate. A light laser cannon is mounted on the foredeck in a low 'zareba', which provides cover only if the gunner leaves his post and hunkers down. Similarly, the six-barrelled cluster mortar mounted aft is on an open mount. These weapons have dedicated gunner positions, whilst the four missiles are mounted in container-launchers on the sides of the bridge area and controlled by the vessel's commander. The pilothouse is open-topped but has an awning that can be erected in bad weather.

The belowdecks area is small, containing a tiny living space with minimal food preparation and sanitary facilities and a stowage area for munitions and other supplies. Hunterfoils do not commonly operate far from their parent craft but can range over a wider area at need. Top speed using the advanced hydrofoil system is around 150 kilometres per hour or 80 knots. However, controlling the craft at this speed is tricky and a bad wave impact can snap the front hydrofoils right off. Top speed with the hull in the water is still an impressive 40 kilometres per hour, or about 21 knots.

| Weapon | Range | Damage | Magazine | Magazine Cost | Traits | Fire Control |
|--------------------|-------|--------|----------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Light Laser Cannon | 2 | 8D | — | — | AP 5 | +0 |
| Cluster Mortar | 1 | 2D | 6 | Cr4000 | Artillery, Blast 5 | +4 |
| Anti-Tank Missile | 6 | 8D | 1 | CR18000 | AP 30, One Use, Smart | +0 |

ARMOUR

FRONT 3

REAR 3

SIDES 3



HUNTERFOIL

| | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| TL | 10 |
| SKILL | SEAFARER (PERSONAL) |
| AGILITY | 0 |
| SPEED (CRUISE) | HIGH (MEDIUM) |
| RANGE (CRUISE) | 1,000 (1,500) |
| CREW | 4 |
| PASSENGERS | 0 |
| CARGO | 1.25 TON |
| HULL | 60 |
| SHIPPING | 14 TONS |
| COST | CR637500 |

TRAITS

Hydrofoil

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Autopilot (skill level) | 0 |
| Communications (range) | 500km |
| Navigation (Navigation DM) | +1 |
| Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM) | +1 |
| Camouflage (Recon DM) | — |
| Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM) | — |

EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Autopilot (basic), Control Systems (enhanced), Communications System (improved), Decoy Dispenser, Fire Extinguishers, Fresher, Mini-Galley, Navigation System (basic), Sensors (improved)

Large Open Turret (light laser cannon)
Small Open Turret (cluster mortar)
Hardpoints (anti-tank missile) x4



OPEN TURRET

An open turret contains the traverse mechanism for a weapon that might otherwise be mounted in a turret. It may have some protection such as a metal 'zareba' around the base of the weapon but this is considered to be part of the vehicle's hull armour rather than specifically protecting the weapon and its crew. Any associated electronics will be enclosed but is considered effectively unarmoured. Open mounts are sometimes used for weapons unlikely to face direct attack, such as artillery guns or long-range aerospace defence weapons or where enclosing the weapon in armour is not appropriate. Open mounts are often used aboard small maritime combat craft to reduce topweight.

A small open turret consumes one space inside the craft and can carry up to four Spaces of weapons plus a dedicated gunner, although it can usually be remotely controlled. It costs Cr2,000 per Space of weapon mounted.

A large open turret consumes one space inside the craft, plus one for every four Spaces of weaponry carried. It contains enough room for its weapons plus one dedicated gunner and costs Cr10000 for every Space of weapons carried.

CLUSTER MORTAR

A cluster mortar is essentially a multi-tube breechloading version of the infantry mortar (see page 127 of the *Central Supply Catalogue*). Its baseplate is normally fixed to a vehicle or vessel in a permanent arrangement that allows elevation and traverse. Cluster mortars are occasionally found as towed weapons in the field but are too bulky to be carried by infantry personnel as a support weapon. Elevation is limited to a range of 20°, from +60° to +80°, and firing from a rolling craft in a heavy sea is inadvisable. Hydrofoils such as those used by the nomads of Bellerophon make sufficiently stable firing platforms that a mortar can be used accurately even at speed, providing trajectory calculation equipment is available.

The six barrels of the cluster mortar rotate, presenting each in turn to the loading chamber. Loading is thus a laborious process, though one barrel can be rapidly loaded and fired without rotating. The firer can select which of the barrels fires, and any combination can

be fired at once. This creates the capability to drop a barrage on a single target or to select a barrel with the correct ammunition for a given task.

On Bellerophon, cluster mortars are a primarily defensive weapon for hunterfoils. Airburst fragmentation rounds will scatter and perhaps kill chimearocs and high-explosive rounds can be dropped into the water behind a fleeing foil. The pressure wave from an explosion will not harm an adult daghadasi but may discourage it from following and the explosion will kill or injure small creatures. The nomads prefer not to do this unless they have to and typically use concussion rounds instead. These will disorientate and stun small creatures in the water, allowing the hunterfoil to attack the main target unmolested. Some less scrupulous hunters use high-explosive rounds to attack adult daghadasi but this is indiscriminate and would only be done by most hunters in a dire emergency.

| Weapon | TL | Range | Damage | Tons | Spaces | Cost | Magazine | Magazine Cost | Traits |
|----------------|----|-------|--------|------|--------|---------|----------|---------------|--------------------|
| Cluster Mortar | 9 | 1 | 2D | 0.5 | 2 | Cr28000 | 6 | Cr4000 | Artillery, Blast 5 |

ESPERANCE

Esperance is a balkanised world with a mixed human and Vegan population. In 720 a war on Esperance fought between Solomani nations and the Vegan-dominated nation of Waothan resulted in the latter's occupation and reduction of Vegans to second-class citizens. Waothan was liberated during the Solomani Rim War and today has a third of the planet's population. About 95% of its citizens are Vegan. Waothan's governing tuhur has petitioned the Duke of Alderamin, the Archduke of Sol and the emperor for permission to join the Vegan Autonomous District. Other nations oppose the idea of a foreign-controlled nation on Esperance and have been championing the rights of human minorities within Waothan.

Esperance is also famous as the home of Doc Xocolatl, the largest independent chocolate company in the Solomani Rim. It was founded by Alfred Zhang, the great-grandfather of SolSec coordinator Rachel Zhang, a notorious architect of the Solomani Rim War. In 1007 a rumour that SolSec-controlled guerrilla cells were using the enormous factory complex for chemical weapons manufacture resulted in a raid by Imperial Marine commandos. The factory reopened in 1030 under new management and has regained its former glory, especially after trade reopened with Solomani subsectors. In 1103 Doc Xocolatl's boxed Chocolate

Coyns become the latest fad to sweep the entire Domain of Sol after Archduke Kieran Adair was observed by paparazzi enjoying them during his accession reception.

LUDMILLA

Ludmilla has a large Vegan minority population and attempts to integrate the world into the Vegan Autonomous District have long been a source of tension. In 1104 the ManFirst party came to power on Ludmilla, advocating human-supremacist policies. ManFirst has organised confrontational protests that have turned violent and refused to condemn anti-Vegan terrorist actions. It has studiously avoided any direct advocacy of armed resistance or terrorism but has intentionally inflamed tensions between Vegans and humans.

It is not clear how long this situation will be tolerated by the Imperial authorities. Despite a general non-intervention policy regarding the internal affairs of member worlds, the Imperium does get involved when conflicts threaten to affect large numbers of citizens – cynics would phrase that as 'when significant economic disruption occurs'. The success of ManFirst in pushing their agenda on Ludmilla may inspire groups on other worlds, which the Imperial authorities would prefer to avoid. It may be that they are waiting for a rock-solid pretext to go in and remove the government of Ludmilla rather than becoming embroiled in a complex situation that is probably insoluble without major upheaval.

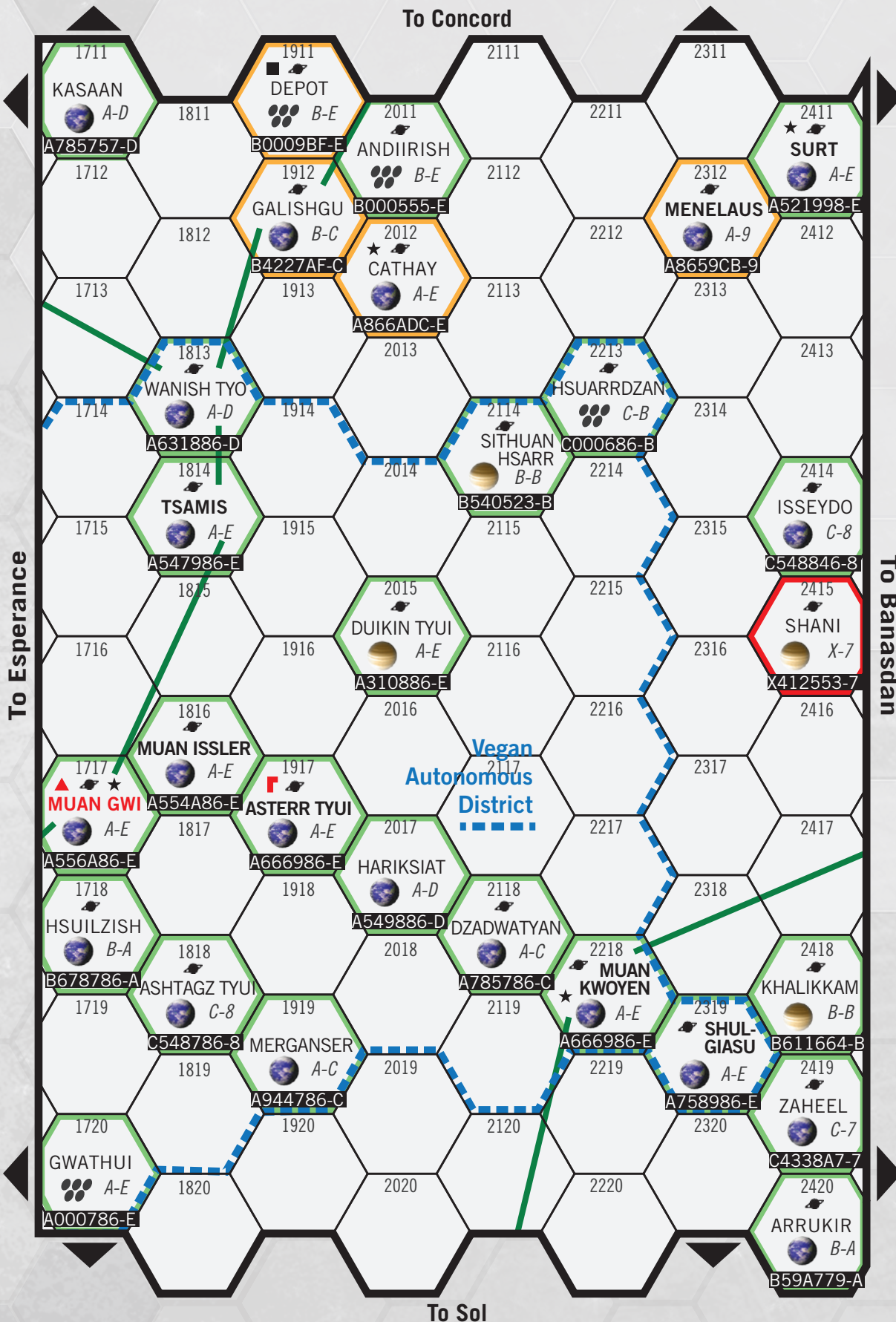


VEGA

The Vega subsector is named after one of the most brilliant stars in Terra's night sky. It is also the Anglic name for the alien race that originated in Muan Gwi. Much of this subsector and neighbouring Esperance are under the control of the Vegan Autonomous District, the latest successor of the old Vegan Polity. Most worlds in the District are inhabited almost entirely by Vegans except for Shulgiasu in this subsector and Bellerophon and Flanders in Esperance. Vegans are unable to live on these high-gravity worlds, although humans find them habitable. Merganser, important for its resources, also has a human population. Sithuan Hsarr is a recent experimental colony, worked by Vegans living under artificial gravity.

Administration of the Vegan Autonomous District is centralised on Muan Gwi under the control of the guardian *tuhuir*. The best-known Vegan political leader over the last few decades has been Emtyan Satowy, the *dziehkar tyantyu* – supreme justice – of the Guardian *tuhuir*. Before her current position as Vega's chief interpreter of the Covenant, she was the second Vegan ambassador to the Imperium and the first to widely grant interviews for TAS News and similar outlets. She is also famous as the co-founder of the Vegan Free Press and a passionate advocate for the rights of oppressed or imprisoned journalists, regardless of their race. Satowy cautiously supports Vegan and human nations inside the Imperium who seek membership in the Vegan Autonomous District.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|---------------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Andiirish | 2011 | | B000555-E | As Ht Ni Va | | Imperium | G |
| Arrukir | 2410 | | B59A779-A | Wa | | Imperium | |
| Ashtagz Tyui | 1818 | | C548786-8 | Ag Ga | | Vegan | G |
| Asterr Tyui | 1917 | | A666986-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Vegan | G |
| Cathay | 2012 | N | A866ADC-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Depot | 1911 | D | A00066B-F | As Ht Na Ni Va | | Imperium | G |
| Duikin Tyui | 2015 | | A310886-E | Ht Na | | Vegan | G |
| Dzadwahtyan | 2118 | | A785786-C | Ag Ga Ht Ri | | Vegan | G |
| Galishgu | 1912 | | B4227AF-C | Ht Na Po | | Imperium | G |
| Gwathui | 1718 | | A000786-E | As Na Pe Va | | Vegan | |
| Hariksiat | 2017 | | A549886-D | Ht | | Vegan | |
| Hsuarrdzan | 2213 | | C000686-B | As Na Ni Va | | Vegan | |
| Hsuilzish | 1718 | | B678786-A | Ag Ga | | Vegan | G |
| Isseydo | 2414 | | C548846-8 | Ga | | Imperium | G |
| Kasaan | 1711 | | A785757-D | Ag Ga Ht Ri | | Imperium | |
| Khalikkam | 2418 | | B611664-B | Ie Na Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Menelaus | 2312 | | A8659CB-9 | Ga Hi | | Imperium | G |
| Merganser | 1919 | | A944786-C | Ag Ga Ht | | Vegan | |
| Muan Gwi | 1717 | N W | A556A86-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Vegan | G |
| Muan Issler | 1816 | | A554A86-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Vegan | G |
| Muan Kwoyen | 2218 | N W | A666986-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Vegan | G |
| Shani | 2415 | | X412553-7 | Ie Ni | R | Imperium | G |
| Shulgiasu | 2319 | | A758986-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Vegan | G |
| Sithuan Hsarr | 2114 | | C8B6486-A | FI Ni | | Vegan | G |
| Surt | 2411 | N | A521998-E | Hi Ht In Na Po | | Imperium | G |
| Tsamis | 1814 | | A547986-E | Ga Hi Ht In | | Vegan | G |
| Vega | 1110 | | A000786-E | As Ht Na Va | | Vegan | |
| Wanish Tyo | 1813 | | A631886-D | Ht Na Po | | Vegan | G |
| Zayeel | 2419 | | C4338A7-7 | Na Po | | Imperium | G |



Solomani Rim

To Banasdan

VEGA SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Asteroid Belt
- Imperial Naval Base
- Imperial Scout Way Station
- Starport Class & Tech Level
- Amber Zone
- X-Boat Route
- Research Station
- Secure System

Perhaps the most important non-Vegan in the subsector is Baron Anthony Kaza, Imperial Ambassador to the Vegans, who currently resides on Muan Gwi. He is an ally of Archduke Kieran Adair and was one of his mentors in the Imperial Diplomatic Corps. Baron Kaza has a difficult task, although not an unpleasant one. His unstated but obvious role is to ensure the Vegan Autonomous District remains an effective counterweight to the Solomani Confederation in the sector. Persuading the Vegans to put Imperial interests ahead of their own – at least sometimes – can be tricky but is essential to Imperial policy in the region.

With the exception of Depot, Imperial worlds in the Vega subsector are administered from the adjacent Banasdan subsector with Countess Diamanto of Menelaus acting as their representative. Depot itself is controlled by the Imperial Navy. There is no subsector fleet but its role assumed – in some systems – by the Depot/Vega Approaches Security Force. This formation has responsibility for the worlds of the cluster around Depot and the group of systems at the four subsector corners to Spinward. Its commanders also have certain jurisdiction in Vegan territory but only in four systems. These are Wanish Tyo, Tsamis, Sithuan Hsarr and Hsuarrdzan.

The Depot Approaches Security Force operates under the orders of the sector admiral and undertakes normal patrol and security duties. However, its vessels are mostly cruisers and destroyers, with smaller warships undertaking normal patrol and commerce-protection operations within its area of operations. The Imperial worlds on the trailing side of the subsector are the responsibility of the Banasdan subsector fleet.

The Vega subsector contains 28 worlds with a population of 149.2 billion. The highest population is 41 billion at Muan Gwi.

DEPOT

Depot has a dim red star and white dwarf companion, with two gas giants. It has no asteroid belts but hundreds of planetoids cluster at the gas giants' Trojan points. The entire system is devoted to an Imperial Navy depot and its population consists entirely of navy personnel or their dependents. Most of the Imperial Navy facilities are spread across or buried under the six icy moons of Depot One, the inner gas giant. Additional sensor posts, refuelling facilities and target ranges are located in the Trojan asteroids and at Depot Two.

Depot is the home port of the sector fleet's heavy battle squadrons and most of its specialist ships. At any given time a proportion of these vessels are undergoing maintenance, refits or extended crew

training but the fleet as a whole maintains a high state of readiness. Squadrons are frequently detached for duty elsewhere but lessons learned in earlier wars ensure the main battle force is kept concentrated and rapid communications are maintained at all times. This means that when the battle squadrons take part in exercises with colonial or allied units these are hosted at Depot or within a single jump for a fleet courier.

Depot is also home to the sector's Aggressor Formation. This is a force of ex-Solomani vessels obtained by various means as well as Imperial ships modified to resemble Solomani warships in appearance and performance. The Aggressor Formation studies Solomani doctrine and attempts to replicate it in exercises. Its officers also provide input into strategic planning sessions attempting to determine what the Solomani might do in a future war.

Due to their constant practice, the Aggressor Formation is one of the best-trained formations in the Imperial Navy, intimately familiar with every area of Depot system and an integral part of its defence in the event of attack. Although the Imperium does not advertise this capability, the squadron's ships and crews are also available to Naval Intelligence and Imperial Intelligence should they need a faux 'Solomani' ship or group of ships for special operations beyond Imperial borders.

In addition to support and training, Depot is also a research and development centre. A variety of new weapons and techniques are tried out here and demonstrated to the top brass and high nobility. These senior personnel often arrive in powerful flagships escorted by significant naval forces, although nothing quite compares to the arrival of the Imperial Bodyguard Squadron when the Emperor himself visited Depot.

KASAAN

Kasaan is one of the breadbaskets of the subsector. It is sparsely populated, with an agreeable climate and high-tech farming industry making use of agricultural robots. Kasaan's wilderness is also the home of the great crested jabberwock, a cunning, highly-territorial 400 kilograms quadruped carnivore that delights in stalking and killing large prey including humans. One of the most fierce predators in the Solomani Rim, it is noted for its magnificent rainbow crest, deadly claws and fangs, and extreme resilience, the latter due to its four hearts. However, its numbers are declining; Kasaan's farmers have killed many to protect their homes and livestock, and others have been killed by big game hunters as its crest is a particularly valued trophy. Pan-Galactic Friends of Life have launched a campaign to have it protected it but with little success – the beasts still kill several people and many farm animals every year.

THE GREAT CRESTED JABBERWOCK

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Great Crested Jabberwock | 22 | 10 m |
| SKILLS | Melee (natural) 3, Recon 1, Stealth 3, Survival 1 | |
| ATTACKS | Claws and Bite (3D) | |
| TRAITS | Armour (+3), Heightened Senses, Large (+1), Death's Door | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Carnivore, Hunter | |



The Great Crested Jabberwock

The jabberwock is a solitary predator, with males and females displaying equal aggression and cunning. Females are considered slightly less dangerous as their behaviour is predictable when protecting young but there are no guarantees when hunting jabberwocks.

Jabberwocks are temporarily territorial, in that an individual will inhabit an area for a few years and defend it against all comers then suddenly move away and show no interest in its former territory. This is one of the problems facing conservationists – jabberwocks will not be restricted to a reservation and cannot be relied upon to shun any given area. Once a jabberwock has moved into a territory it will create what are thought to be territorial markers – smashed trees and uprooted bushes, plus dug in the ground with the creature's powerful front claws. No pattern has been discerned to these 'markers' and it may be that jabberwocks just like destroying the countryside.

This penchant for destruction extends to buildings, livestock, and even people. A jabberwock will attack herds to feed but if a response materialises it will begin to target specific people. Jabberwocks are cunning and will observe human activity from a distance before sneaking in to eliminate individuals. These are often the leaders or protectors of a community. It is assumed that jabberwocks are not waging war on a society by doing this – they are clever but not that clever. It is far more likely they simply recognise the primary hunters of a group and take them out in order to make the rest more vulnerable.

Jabberwocks are hard to bring down. Even a direct hit to one of the hearts is unlikely to stop an angry jabberwock. Individuals have been examined that were functioning with one or even two of their hearts out of action and in a few cases it seems that the organs had healed and resumed function. Even when a jabberwock

goes down it is not necessarily dead – individuals have been known to lash out at unwary humans or even get up and stagger away after lying 'dead' for over an hour.

Destroying the brain would prevent this but jabberwocks have a phenomenally tough skull. Getting close to administer a coup de grace can be dangerous with such a creature. Thus the rule of thumb for taking out a jabberwock is 'bring it down any way you can, then decapitate it. Keep the head well away from the body – you just never know!' This is excessive and in part a produce of grim humour but everyone on Kasaan knows a tale about someone who thought they had won and brought the carcass home on an agricultural robot only to have it lurch back into life and cause mayhem.

New Trait: Death's Door

Some creatures have an ability to collapse just before the damage they have taken becomes fatal, then to enter a state of near death where they rally their last resources. A creature of this sort reduced to zero hits appears to die and have extremely low vital signs that could be mistaken for death even with medical instruments. After 2Dx30 minutes the creature may make a Difficult (10+) check. If this is failed, the creature finally expires. If it is made, the creature regains 10% of its hits plus 10% more per point of Effect. It will be able to act more or less normally at this point, although its instinct will be to fight clear of the area and find a place to heal up. Typically this burst of activity will be no longer than the period between reaching zero hits and reviving, after which the creature will be exhausted and need to rest for an extended period. Dismembering the creature or delivering catastrophic damage will prevent the revival, of course.

ACL-202 AGROBOT

| ROBOT | HITS | SPEED | TL | COST |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------|----|----------|
| Agrobot | 200 | 4m | 12 | Cr350000 |
| SKILLS | Profession (farmer) 0 | | | |
| ATTACKS | None but various pieces of machinery could be lethal | | | |
| TRAITS | Armour (+2), Large (+6) | | | |
| PROGRAMMING | Basic | | | |



ACL-202 Agrobot

The ACL-202 is a large agricultural machine running on four huge wheels. Most are set up for vegetable or cereal crops, with interchangeable planting, tending and harvesting equipment. In between the big jobs of the year such as ploughing and harvesting, agrobots are programmed to patrol the fields reporting on problems such as dry areas or outbreaks of blight and can be assigned to apply water or fertiliser as needed.

The ACL-202 Agrobot has a small personnel cabin for use when manually monitoring its operation or programming a complex action. This can be done

remotely but many operators like to be physically present when the task is set up and first run. Programming is fairly basic, so halts to request instructions are common until the machine has ‘learned’ the task and standard responses to the usual problems. This can take several repetitions, so for a seasonal task it can be years before an Agrobot graduates from ‘finicky new piece of junk’ to a respected farmhand. The apparent sentimental attachment some farmers have to their agrobots is sometimes genuine but is often more a reluctance to go through the learning process with another expensive but aggravating piece of machinery.

MERGANSER

Merganser is a marginally habitable planet but its high gravity makes it especially uncomfortable for Vegans. The planet possesses unusually accessible surface deposits of industrial metals and radioactives, and was originally colonised and developed by Merganser Mining Corporation (MMC), a company based on Dingir that had close ties to the Solomani Party. After the Solomani Rim War, MMC's assets were nationalised and transferred to the Vegan Autonomous District as war reparations. Merganser is now operated directly by the Guardian tuhuir.

Merganser is not an attractive planet. Conditions are overly hot and dry. The thin air is high in carbon dioxide and sulphur compounds and unbreathable without a filter mask. Many regions are tectonically active, with chains of volcanoes regularly spewing clouds of ash. There are no bodies of water larger than a few small inland seas and great lakes. The dominant life consists of several varieties of green algae-like slime that grows almost everywhere, while the most developed land animals are a plethora of unappealing worms and mites.

The majority of the population are still Solomani. Most work for Vegan mining corporations or in various service industries; normally this could have been a recipe for racial agitation but the unwillingness of Vegans to settle on Merganser in significant numbers and the consequent high wages paid for work in a 'hostile' environment have smoothed relations. About a third of the population are permanent residents and the rest transient workers including Imperials from outside the Vegan Autonomous District. The cities are mostly utilitarian housing affairs mixed with mass-market food and entertainment complexes that cater in assembly-line fashion to the world's workers.

MUAN GWI

This is the homeworld of the Vegans and capital of the Vegan Autonomous District. The planet has been civilised for thousands of years and is highly urbanised to support its 41 billion inhabitants. There is no wilderness left on Muan Gwi; all of it, including the oceans, is carefully managed for food production and climate control. The majority of its Vegan population live in towering arcologies, as with no more room for development on the planet surface most construction in the last two centuries has taken the form of grav-supported superdense towers that stretch for many kilometres into the sky, along with floating cities that hover over the world's oceans.

Muan Gwi sits astride the major trade route through the Rim and boasts the busiest starport in the sector. The planet is encircled with five vast orbital highports, with a sixth now under construction. The Vegan homeworld is among the most productive worlds in the sector and, freed of the chauvinistic constraints that impeded trade under the Solomani Confederation, Vegan industrial combines now export goods to worlds in the Rim, Diaspora and beyond.

Archduke Kieran Adair's office has floated proposals to move the domain capital to Muan Gwi in the next decade, recognising both the historic importance of the Vegans and their growing influence in the Rim. It is almost unprecedented for an Imperial capital to be located within a client state, especially one dominated by aliens. The plan has been bitterly denounced as a betrayal of Humaniti by both Solomani and Vilani activists and condemned by more traditional noble families who had expected a capital to be established on a cosmopolitan human world such as Dingir, the old regional capital. This tradition-shattering move is typical of Archduke Adair's style of government.

About 300 million humans live on or above Muan Gwi, most Imperial expatriates and guest workers engaged in commercial, academic, government or military business. In addition to Vegan military facilities, Muan Gwi boasts the sector's busiest x-boat waystation and a gigantic jointly-operated Imperial Navy and Vegan Navy base. Another major facility is the recently founded (in 1020) but highly-regarded Imperial University of Vega, devoted to intercultural studies, with a mixed human-Vegan faculty and student body. This is also the home of the highly regarded Vegan Free Press. If Archduke Kieran's plans come to fruition, the non-Vegan population is likely to double as the domain's Imperial bureaucracy – humans, Bwaps and others – transfer here.

Since the Solomani Rim War, the Vegans have devoted the greater portion of their military budget to improving the system defences of Muan Gwi and its sister world, Muan Issler. This has included large wings of system defence boats, buried meson guns and surface laser point defences, as well as an interlocking grid of nuclear damper projectors and recently installed meson screens in major arcologies. The ultimate goal is a defence grid that will provide protection for the entire populated surface.

Although much of the defence spending has been domestic, trillions of Credits have gone to Imperial defence contractors. The prime contractor was originally Delgado but in 1102 a Delgado nuclear damper



installation failed two quality control tests. Muan Gwi's Guardian tuhuir is now considering opening up the contract for new bids, something that Delgado and its lobbyists are fighting to avoid. Ling Standard Products and Instellarms have partnered with Vegan corporations and are pushing to secure the lucrative 'second stage' of the Muan Gwi contract. Hundreds of billions in defence spending may ride on the outcome of another series of competitive system trials scheduled for next year.

Muan Gwi's defence-oriented posture is frustrating for the Imperial strategists, who would prefer the Vegans spend more Credits on naval squadrons that can augment Imperial fleet strength. However, the knowledge that the planet is heavily defended has proven comforting to those in the Imperial bureaucracy who support moving the sector capital to Muan Gwi, as well as providing the Vegans with an additional sense of security.

MUAN ISSLER

Muan Issler has been called the 'second Vegan homeworld', and it resembles Muan Gwi in many respects, including its low gravity, thin atmosphere

and extensive deserts. It was the first major Vegan interstellar colony, colder than Muan Gwi, with major habitable regions confined to an equatorial belt and seas that are frozen much of the year. It has a long history of high-tech civilisation; when the Roman Empire was at its peak on Terra, Muan Issler was a thriving TL10 world with two billion citizens.

Then came the arrival of the Vilani Empire and the Vegan Consolidation War. The struggle between Vilani and Vegan was a bitter one. After several failed attacks against the defences of both Muan Gwi and Muan Issler, the Ziru Sirka decided that attempting a full-scale assault on both Vegan capitals would be too costly. Instead, after defeating the main Vegan fleet, the Vilani navy stood off and launched salvo after salvo of nuclear missiles at Muan Issler. Most were intercepted by the defenders but the Vilani had deep magazines. They continued until civilisation on Muan Issler was turned into radioactive rubble. Almost two billion Vegans died; only a few thousand in deep shelters or isolated wilderness areas survived. Recordings of this atrocity were broadcast to Muan Gwi and it was made clear that they would be next. The Vegan government surrendered.

Under the eye of the Vilani, the conquered Vegans gradually resettled Muan Issler, repairing its ravaged ecosystem and rebuilding civilisation on the planet. At the time of the Interstellar Wars it still had lingering pockets of radioactive contamination and was only sparsely settled, a stark monument to what the old First Imperium was capable of when its will was thwarted. The example of Muan Issler was one reason the Vegans were initially slow to join the Terran Confederation, yet did so enthusiastically once it appeared clear they were winning. Throughout the Rule of Man and the Long Night the major project of the Vegan polity was restoration of Muan Issler to its former glory.

They have more than succeeded. The scars of the bombardment have long since faded and today Muan Issler boasts a population of 12.5 billion, greater than it held before the bombardment. The planet is noted in particular for its concentration of Vegan industries and its bustling commercial character. There is a Vegan expression that translates as 'Muan Gwi imagines it, Muan Issler builds it' that conveys this spirit of industry.

Muan Issler, like Muan Gwi, now boasts some of the most formidable planetary defences in the Imperium. The Vegans do not forget.

VEGA

The blue-white class A star Vega is the fifth brightest in Terra's sky. Its solar system has no planets but possesses a large debris disc of dust and a double asteroid belt rich in exploitable minerals. The outer belt is composed of carbon and ice rich planetoids.

The star system is known as Gwathui to the Vegans and has long been a prime source of mineral resources for their worlds. The economy is diversified but the

major industries are ship construction, mining and superdense metal production. The inhabitants live in asteroid habitats with several thousand inhabitants each; there are 244 such stations scattered throughout the twin belts. The largest Vegan station and capital is Adzon Dzi.

During Solomani rule the rapacious Vega Industrial Collective, a Solomani Party-run corporation, oversaw Gwathui. Since liberation, the system has been administered by the commercially-oriented Gyo Ashui tuhuir who have managed asteroid mining and ore processing businesses for over 1,000 years.

99% of the population are Vegan but a few human beltters also work in the system, most itinerant Imperials but a few thousand are stubborn Solomani descendants of beltters loyal to the old Vega Industrial Collective regime. They maintain a subsistence existence in rundown stations on the fringes of the system, mostly trading with each other and the occasional visiting free trader. The largest surviving Solomani settlement is Orihime in the outer belt.

On occasion, Vegan mining vessels and merchant ships have detected mysterious vessels jumping into the outer system, where icy asteroids can be used for refuelling in the absence of gas giants. In 1104 one such craft was intercepted by Vegan system defence boats and tentatively identified as an *Independence*-class Solomani patrol cruiser. Shots were exchanged before it jumped away. Gyo Ashui security forces fear there may be collusion between disaffected Solomani beltters and these intruders. The Vegan Navy are less concerned, deeming these to be isolated long-range probes merely aimed at provoking a response to gather data on Vegan Autonomous Region readiness.



BANASDAN

Early Vilani settlement of what is now the Banasdan subsector focused on the coreward region on and around Nisinasha. The remaining systems were undeveloped until Terran colonists arrived after the Eighth Interstellar War, settling rimward worlds such as Murphy, Ganesh, Catania and Banasdan.

In the Long Night most worlds retreated into isolationism. One that did not was Terran-settled Banasdan, whose inhabitants carved out a small pocket empire known as the Arcturus Federation. The smallest of the original Rim States, the Arcturus Federation was based on Banasdan and included Altiplano, Noricum, Nyarlathotep and Aqilat in this subsector, and Arcturus and four other worlds in the neighbouring Arcturus subsector. It traded with the

Vegan Polity and Old Earth Union and weathered the Long Night intact. The federation's worlds reluctantly joined the Imperium in 583.

The Solomani Movement was popular in the Terran-settled worlds of the subsector. Murphy and Banasdan were leading centres for the Rim Foundation, a charity formed by the Solomani Party and Transstar that encouraged Solomani facing prejudice on coreward worlds in the Imperium to relocate to the Solomani Rim. During the early Solomani era the Rim Foundation encouraged true believers in the Solomani Cause to emigrate to and settle on several 'under-populated' worlds that had large mixed-race populations.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|--------------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Altiplano | 3017 | | A8D8864-D | Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Aqilat | 2810 | | B000630-D | As Ht Na Ni Va | | Imperium | G |
| Ariel | 3011 | | B514735-B | Ie | | Imperium | G |
| Banasdan | 2910 | | A653A54-F | Hi Ht Po | | Imperium | G |
| Catania | 2618 | | A56898B-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Cephesa | 3217 | | B422431-D | Ht Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Dipuska | 2513 | | A662AB8-E | Hi Ht | | Imperium | |
| Ganesh | 2518 | S | A766A57-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | |
| Imkhammash | 2617 | | A55588A-C | Ga Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Immir | 2816 | | C000530-A | As Ni Va | | Imperium | G |
| Khugi | 2713 | | X000000-0 | As Ba Lt Va | R | Imperium | |
| Lakamsal | 3218 | | C545786-8 | Ag Ga | | Imperium | G |
| Ludovic | 3213 | | A665977-D | Ga Hi Ht | A | Imperium | G |
| Mandrake | 2514 | | A566AA9-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Mimiis | 2612 | | B200789-C | Ht Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Murphy | 2517 | | A5449BE-E | Ga Hi Ht In | | Imperium | G |
| Newcomb | 2913 | | D541443-6 | Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Nisinasha | 2812 | W | A9EA987-E | Hi Ht Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Noricum | 2918 | N | A58A7CC-E | Ht Ri Wa | A | Imperium | G |
| Nyarlathotep | 2710 | R | C000267-C | As Ht Lo Va | | Imperium | G |
| Onathy | 3219 | | C5218A7-9 | Na Po | | Imperium | |
| Pajang | 2915 | N | A573772-C | Ht | | Imperium | |
| Pinnashdug | 2714 | | B578888-A | Ga | | Imperium | G |
| Rild | 2912 | | XAC7774-9 | FI | R | Imperium | G |
| Sashingun | 3113 | | A653865-C | Ht Po | | Imperium | |
| Sathyos | 2911 | | A579726-D | Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Uku | 3015 | | B636794-B | | A | Imperium | G |
| Urizen | 2516 | | C8C8430-A | FI Ni | | Imperium | G |



BANASDAN SUBSECTOR

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Asteroid Belt
- Imperial prison

The subsector was spared the worst of the fighting but late in the war a bloody revolt broke out against the Solomani Confederation on Nisinasha. After the end of hostilities, the majority of the population of Banasdan thoroughly repudiated their Solomani Movement ideology and proved remarkably cooperative under Imperial rule. Banasdan was selected as subsector capital in a decision that is still bitterly resented by the present Vilani-dominated government of Nisinasha.

Today, most worlds in the subsector have little pro-Solomani Movement sentiment. An exception is Ludovic, where many of the rival governments are rather nasty dictatorships that, despite nominally renouncing the Solomani Cause, have managed to preserve brutal one-party racially intolerant regimes supported by SolSec-inspired secret police.

Most of the systems in Banasdan are on the Rim Main, with endless streams of jump-1 commercial shipping trundling through their ports. The few worlds not on the main see much lower volumes of traffic, although regular jump-2 services are maintained. Jump-2 and higher ships have a degree of choice regarding which ports they stop at and the option to leave the main – such as using the jump-2 crossing into the Vega subsector – but most vessels are confined to a single route.

This has strategic implications, since disruption of this important trade artery would be felt right across the sector and beyond, and as a result the subsector fleet is more powerful than usual. The naval bases at Pajang and Noricum are heavily fortified and not home to capital units – they are too close to Confederation territory. They do have a large cruiser and destroyer complement, most of which is assigned to subsector fleet control. Standing deployments are maintained in the border systems such as Ludovic but most vessels spend their time patrolling the Rim Main. The subsector fleet has responsibility for Imperial worlds in neighbouring Vega but this is very much secondary to the protection of traffic on the Rim Main.

The other implication of all this commercial traffic is that starports on the main tend to be very similar. All are competing for business from passing ships and their operators and even the ‘unique angles’ used to make certain ports stand out are based on the same principles every other port operator is using. As a result the starports of Banasdan are prime examples of what the Solomani Confederation refers to as ‘consumerist Imperial blandness’ and indeed whose subsector is routinely referred to as ‘Blandasdan’. This infuriates many citizens of the worlds in the subsector, who are naturally proud of their long and rich culture. However, few starfarers venture away from the orbital starports of the main, so all they see is near-identical starports all trying to be as close as possible to the economically perfect norm.

The Banasdan subsector contains 28 worlds with a population of 152.3 billion. The highest population is 30 billion at Banasdan.

KHUGI

Khugi is one of two Red Zoned systems on this section of the Rimward Main. The other is Shani, in Vega. Both represent a barrier to jump-1 trade along the main. In the case of Khugi this is solved by the presence of In-System Refuelling Station Khugi, more commonly known as Khugi Station, in orbit over one of the system’s rockball worlds. The installation is little more than a collection of fuel tanks held together by a framework. Services are deliberately minimal to discourage ships from loitering in the system, which is off-limits other than the immediate environs of Khugi Station. Descent to the planetary surface is also forbidden, although there is no indication anything sensitive – or anything at all – is located there.

Khugi Station is operated by the Scout Service, which maintains several vessels in the system to enforce the interdiction. As is common, the databases do not give a reason why the system is Red Zoned. It is widely supposed the interdiction was imposed at the behest of one of the megacorporations – LSP or Sternmetal Horizons are usually assumed to be responsible – in order to secure the system’s extensive mineral wealth. This suggests high-level influence was brought to bear but actions of this sort are not uncommon and the allegation may well be true.

There are three planetoid belts in the system, including the primary belt that is designated a mainworld. Khugi Prime Belt was once settled, albeit in a minor way, but the colony was withdrawn soon after the Solomani Rim War. According to some sources it was rendered unviable by an atrocity committed by one side or the other – accounts vary – but in fact the colony was economically unviable and in decline as a result of the war. A plan to re-settle was delayed on several occasions, largely due to the very considerable investment required and in the late 1050s the system was suddenly Red Zoned without a reason being given. The remains of the colony and its outposts are still in the ‘mainworld’ belt, with various salvage companies competing for the rights to dismantle the surviving equipment.

NEWCOMB

Newcomb is a marginally habitable world. The planet is mostly desert, with a thin, tainted atmosphere that is breathable with the aid of a filter mask and has seven small natural satellites. Most of the planet’s population live on Circle City, a small provincial town with a population of 12,000 and a Class D starport. The planet

is also home to an Imperial prison, once a pitchblende mining camp owned by the now-defunct Orion Metallurgy Corporation, which went out of business nearly 100 years ago. Originally established to house Solomani guerrillas and terrorists, the facility now handles common criminals. The prisoners still work in the mines and the camp is operated at a modest profit as convicts are not paid for their labour. Many safety regulations are ignored with the prisoners exposed to unhealthy levels of radiation and airborne rock dust. Security in the prison itself is light since the site is surrounded by thousands of kilometres of uninhabited desert that is home to dangerous animals. Ore mined at the prison is taken to Circle City to await transshipment off world.

NISINASHA

Much like the very similar Easter, this large moon is egg-shaped, distorted by tidal forces far in the past when it was much closer to its gas giant primary. Its atmosphere, however, is nearly spherical, producing near vacuum at the ends, high pressure at the equator and two habitable bands between these extremes.

During the time of the First Imperium, Nisinasha was the capital and gave its name to the entire subsector. Its original Vilani population became diluted over time during the Rule of Man and in the Solomani era the planet's government was taken over by an unpopular hard-core Solomani Party regime that attempted to eradicate all vestiges of Vilani culture. The mostly mixed-race population eventually revolted during the Solomani Rim War and then began a long process of reconstruction. The planet's professional civil service is a model of efficiency within the subsector – even if it effectively controls the relatively powerless elected legislature – and the world is also famed for its educational system, in particular the University of Nisinasha.

The world's nobles, the venerable house of Gamarkhiddun, have a long-running feud with the Dukes of Banasdan. The counts of Nisinasha believe their world should have been made sector capital to reward its revolt against the Solomani Confederation. At a recent reception on Dingir, Duke Robert pressured both parties to consider a marriage alliance between their respective heirs to end the feud.

NORICUM

Thanks to an unusual combination of low gravity and thick atmosphere, Noricum is a water world that boasts an abundant aerial ecology. Its native life forms evolved directly from aquatic into avian forms analogous to flying fish and rays. Both its oceans and its skies are rich with life, with over a million distinct species of aerial animals. Floating forests cover parts of its ocean,

extending several metres into the air while their hanging root systems act as a counterweight to hold them upright. Noricum's sole land animals – small insect-like creatures and crustaceans – live among them.

Noricum's people, the Akalif, are ethnic Solomani, descended from an early Rule of Man-era colony, probably of Australian origin. Like the planet's ecology, the inhabitants spend an equal amount of time in the air and underwater, with hybrid submersible grav vehicles the most common form of transport. Their culture places an unusual emphasis on early education, with most citizens being streamed into particular fields while still children, a process facilitated by a regime of genetic, intelligence and personality testing. This is a relic of the Solomani period, where Noricum was a subsector headquarters for the Solomani Confederation's Ministry of Genetics. Another holdover is a sense of racial superiority, bordering on xenophobia, which is held by most citizens. This takes the form of open disdain for non-Solomani and blatant hostility toward foreign visitors. Numerous violent incidents against would-be non-Solomani immigrants, tourists and academics have led to the world being posted as an Amber Zone, although it is generally quite welcoming toward those visitors who appear to be Solomani.

Apart from these xenophobic attitudes, Noricum's culture is an unusually open one. The ruling oligarchy maintains a flamboyant lifestyle avidly followed in soap opera fashion by the middle and lower classes. This may be another legacy of the period of Confederation rule; despite SolSec having long since vanished from the planet, some of the infrastructure of its Monitor programme remains in place, now run by anonymous networks and serving as an important populist check on government and business.

NYARLATHOTEP

The Arcturus Federation mined out this asteroid belt's exploitable planetoids long ago. The oligarchy on Aqilat, which colonised Nyarlathotep, maintains a legal claim to the system. At present, very little traffic passes through Nyarlathotep and what does mostly comes to skim fuel at the gas giant. This splendid isolation may be why one of its larger asteroids, Nyarlathotep 1237, was chosen as the site of Imperial Research Station Beta in 1085. The station was assembled from modular sections of the 60,000-ton fleet intruder Acheron High Lightning, which suffered irreparable damage during the Solomani Rim War. The station is engaged in classified long-range communication research and while the station's port is open to visitors, the research station itself is off limits and protected by personnel from the Scout Service's Security branch.

SUBMERSIBLE PERSONAL TRANSPORT

A variety of hybrid vehicles exist on Noricum, filling niches from bulk transport to racing and luxurious personal transportation. The typical mid-price craft is designed with safety and ease of operation in mind, but comes with a choice of trim and interior fittings ranging from utilitarian to luxurious.

The standard personal transport vehicle consists of a crew pod entered via a watertight door at the rear, with two long, cylindrical drive pods connected to the crew pod by way of a curved, aerodynamic body shell. Movement in water is usually slow, far below the threshold for supercavitation, but the craft can travel almost as fast underwater as above the surface. The Flyer (grav) skill can be used to control the vehicle in either environment as its controls are set up to provide similar responses whether the craft is airborne, supercavitating or moving slowly underwater. The Seafarer (submersible) skill can only be used when operating the vehicle as a conventional submersible and may be necessary if complex tasks are undertaken in deep or turbulent water.

The moment of crossing the surface can be hazardous. A craft travelling at high speed from air to water might as well smash itself into a rock face; the effects will be similar. Typically the pilot will slow and land on the surface, then gently submerge before accelerating to high speed. However, daredevils may prefer to make a fast insertion. This requires a Seafarer (submersible) check – Flyer cannot be used – to make an insertion without damaging the craft. Difficulty is Routine (6+) and DM-1 applies for every 25 kilometres per hour of vehicle speed. If the check is failed the vehicle takes damage equal to

10% of its normal Hull per point of negative Effect. An insertion under 25 kilometres per hour might be rough but will not harm the craft.

It is possible to go from water to air at any speed, although control loss is possible. An Average (8+) Flyer (grav) check is necessary – Seafarer cannot be used. DM-1 applies for every 100 kilometres per hour of speed. A bad exit inflicts one point of Hull damage per point of negative Effect and may result in a control loss.

These craft are intended for small-scale transportation rather than major underwater work and do not have the facility to launch divers as they lack airlocks. They convey personnel or a small amount of cargo to one underwater installation or vessel to another and to above-water locations in the manner of a standard grav vehicle. Prices are astronomical due to the cost of the drive but so many middle-class citizens want these vehicles that specialist mortgage packages are available. The base model is quite comfortable but for those who want to show off a bit more there are upgrade packages ranging from Cr100000 to millions.

SUPERCAVITATING GRAVITIC DRIVE SYSTEM

A normal supercavitating drive system for a submarine uses water-jet propulsion, whose machinery is very bulky. This is not much of a problem in large submersibles but for personal transport such a system is impractical. The engineers of Noricum and a few other worlds have solved this problem by creating what is essentially a grav vehicle with a submarine's hull. All propulsion, underwater or above the surface, uses this drive. It is expensive and bulky, but permits relatively small 'flying submarines' to be constructed.

| TL | Spaces | Minimum Spaces | Speed | Range | Cost per Space |
|-------|--------|----------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 12-13 | 50% | 6 | Subsonic | 1,200 | – |
| 14-15 | 25% | 4 | Subsonic | 1,500 | +150000 |

SUBMERSIBLE PERSONAL TRANSPORT

ARMOUR

FRONT 4

REAR 4

SIDES 4



| | |
|----------------|----------------------------------------|
| TL | 14 |
| SKILL | FLYER (GRAV) OR SEAFARER (SUBMERSIBLE) |
| AGILITY | +1 |
| SPEED (CRUISE) | SUBSONIC (VERY FAST) |
| RANGE (CRUISE) | 1,500 (2,250) |
| CREW | 1 |
| PASSENGERS | 3 |
| CARGO | — |
| HULL | 36 |
| SHIPPING | 6 TONS |
| COST | MCR2.5 |

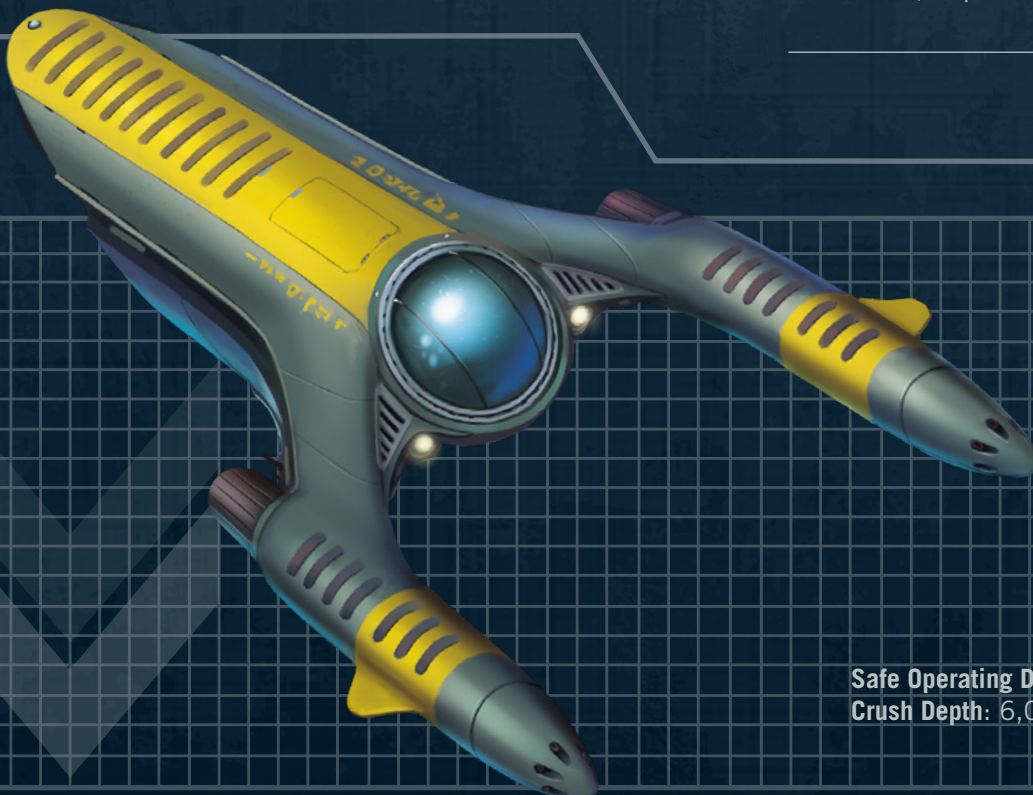
TRAITS

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Autopilot (skill level) | 3 |
| Communications (range) | 5,000km |
| Navigation (Navigation DM) | +4 |
| Sensors (Electronics (sensors) DM) | +2 |
| Camouflage (Recon DM) | — |
| Stealth (Electronics (sensors) DM) | — |

EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Autopilot (advanced), Communications System (advanced), Fire Extinguishers, Life Support (short term), Navigation System (advanced), Sensor System (advanced), Supercavitating Gravitic Drive System, Wet Bar

No weapons



Safe Operating Depth: 2,000m
Crush Depth: 6,000m

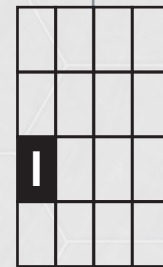
ALBADAWI

The Albadawi subsector – then known as the Apishlun – marked the limit of Vilani expansion in the era of the Ziru Sirka, originally settled by Kimashurgur Vilani who opposed the rigid systems of the Vilani Empire and were open to Terran culture. The present population is mostly mixed race and pure Solomani. Many worlds in Albadawi have had thousands of years in which pure Solomani were the dominant class with a mixed blood Vilani underclass; others have a more harmonious mix of cultures.

The subsector is named after the Terran admiral of the Eighth Interstellar War who conquered it from the Vilani after the fall of Dingir, forcing the Ziru Sirka to cede all territory rimward of Vega to the Terrans. After Albadawi's victory, Terran immigration gradually changed the demographics. Today, most of the population are mixed or pure Solomani.

During the Long Night there was sporadic trade along the Rim Main with worlds of the Dingir League and Old Earth Union, but there were also reaver raids from

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|-------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Akhamin | 0721 | | B662765-A | Ri | | Imperium | G |
| Albrecht | 0626 | | B742747-A | Po | | Imperium | G |
| Alizarin | 0230 | | A566987-C | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | |
| Bajavanang | 0628 | | A5898CA-D | Ht Ri | | Imperium | G |
| Basse Terre | 0527 | | A6699AC-E | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Beal | 0126 | N | A5577CD-C | Ag Ga Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Colmar | 0822 | | B427832-B | | | Imperium | G |
| Duriim | 0825 | N | A588AA7-C | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | |
| Edaazun | 0729 | | A56A969-E | Hi Ht Wa | | Imperium | |
| Eneldun | 0326 | | A31498A-E | Hi Ht le In | | Imperium | |
| Eyck | 0426 | | B430879-C | De Ht Na Po | | Imperium | G |
| Gaea | 0722 | | A986986-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Gustav | 0424 | | B798534-B | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Halo | 0726 | | C000679-B | As Na Ni Va | | Imperium | G |
| Irashdaa | 0524 | S | A689869-D | Ht Ri Mr | | Imperium | G |
| Jaroslav | 0123 | N | A8879A9-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Kidashi | 0528 | N | A557A69-E | Ga Hi Ht | A | Imperium | G |
| Kishakhpap | 0125 | | X410000-0 | Ba Lt | R | Imperium | G |
| Krypton | 0330 | F | A9A49BC-D | FI Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Limerick | 0226 | | C579634-9 | Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Munilgan | 0826 | | A55499D-D | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Oz | 0121 | | A553887-C | Ht Po | | Imperium | G |
| Ranulf | 0824 | | B6429CB-C | Hi Ht In Po | | Imperium | G |
| Shaalgar | 0224 | | A666769-B | Ag Ga Ri | | Imperium | |
| Shiranshar | 0823 | | BAA5453-D | FI Ht Ni | A | Imperium | G |
| Tonopah | 0723 | | A866ADB-D | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| York | 0624 | | C8A3263-A | FI Lo | | Imperium | G |



ALBADAWI SUBSECTOR

- 177

Magyar. Despite occasional military forays – mainly Dingir League strikes into the subsector to destroy reaver or pirate bases – the region remained an isolated frontier until around 250 when regular trade resumed. Most worlds here established commercial ties with the Old Earth Union and joined the Imperium after it was dissolved.

The subsector's economy suffered greatly in the Solomani Rim War. Although most of the fighting was elsewhere, its resources were heavily drained to support the Solomani Confederation war effort. The Imperium has been slow to aid in recovery and partly as a result of this Solomani sympathy remains strong on so many worlds. Today, Albadawi lies on the Imperial-Confederation border and is a hotbed of political machinations and covert operations.

The present Duchess of Albadawi is Alexandra Stephanos of Gaea. Although popular, she has been more concerned with Imperial politics and Solomani and pirate threats cross the border in Jardin than with the local economy. She has recently become very ill and may soon abdicate. Her preferred successor is her like-minded son Ivan, presently serving with the Imperial Navy in the distant Corridor sector. Many at court are pressuring the Duchess to instead nominate her daughter Irena, an able administrator who has served on the board of Galactic Arbitrations, a financial subsidiary of Sharurshid.

Most of Albadawi's worlds are on the Rim Main within jump-1 of each other, making the region a valuable trade route. The Rimward Gap isolates two worlds – Alizarin and Krypton – from the rest of the subsector. They are part of the Solomani Confederation and politically aligned with the worlds in Jardin.

As is typical with border regions, the subsector has an enlarged fleet. At its core is a composite cruiser squadron comprising one heavy and two light cruisers, plus two cruiser-sized carriers. This force is based out of the subsector fleet's headquarters at Durim, with other bases supporting a large destroyer and escort complement. Systems closest to Confederation space are quite heavily patrolled but there is little sector fleet presence. In the event of a major conflict Albadawi might receive heavy reinforcements from fleet elements forward-deployed at Dingir but is more likely to be a battleground than a fortress.

Albadawi contains 27 worlds with a population of 136.4 billion. The highest population is 34 billion at Kidashi.

GAEA

Gaea is a garden world with an old and highly sophisticated biosphere. Life forms here adapt with breath-taking speed to changing conditions, yet manage to do so in a way that apparently supports symbiosis with Humaniti. This was first noticed when the Vilani colonists began clearing poisonous native plants and planting imported crops. Soon many native plants began changing and becoming more like the offworld species. Within a few generations, they were proving edible and even tasty. Less dramatic but similar adaptations occurred as other species rapidly integrated foreign plants and animals or resisted and thrived in areas of industrial pollution.

The world appeared nearly magical to the Vilani settlers. To the Terrans who came after and had a greater understanding of genetic engineering, it has proved an enduring puzzle. The world's Terran name reflects the idea that the planet is in some ways a single giant organism that exhibits low level sentience. Studies of genetic material have revealed a level of complexity dwarfing life forms of other systems and the world has proven a bonanza for genetic and pharmaceutical research, functioning as a form of living bioreactor. On the other hand, the complex and poorly understood symbiotic links between the world's diverse life forms has made it nearly impossible for Gaea's plants or animals to thrive offworld and the ever-changing nature of Gaea's products have made it difficult, although not impossible, for companies seeking to establish stable commercial varieties of crops.

Gaea – originally named Apishlun – was the first world settled by the Vilani within the subsector and the most heavily populated. Unlike most of the worlds of Albadawi, it still has a strong Vilani culture to this day. Indeed, many of the ethnically diverse Terran subcultures that emigrated to it were influenced by the Vilani rather than the other way around. This caused no difficulties during the Rule of Man or Long Night but Gaea's population was reluctant to fully embrace the Solomani Movement.

In 913 a moderate Solomani Party government was overthrown by a SolSec-sponsored coup and replaced by a more doctrinaire Purist faction. The new administration devoted much of its energies to futile attempts to suppress Vilani cultural influence and disenfranchise those with a mixed race background. Gaea was also home to a large Ministry of Genetics laboratory. Although primarily devoted to studying the unusual ecosystem during the 950s, Doctor Karla Vauxman used the laboratory

GAEANS

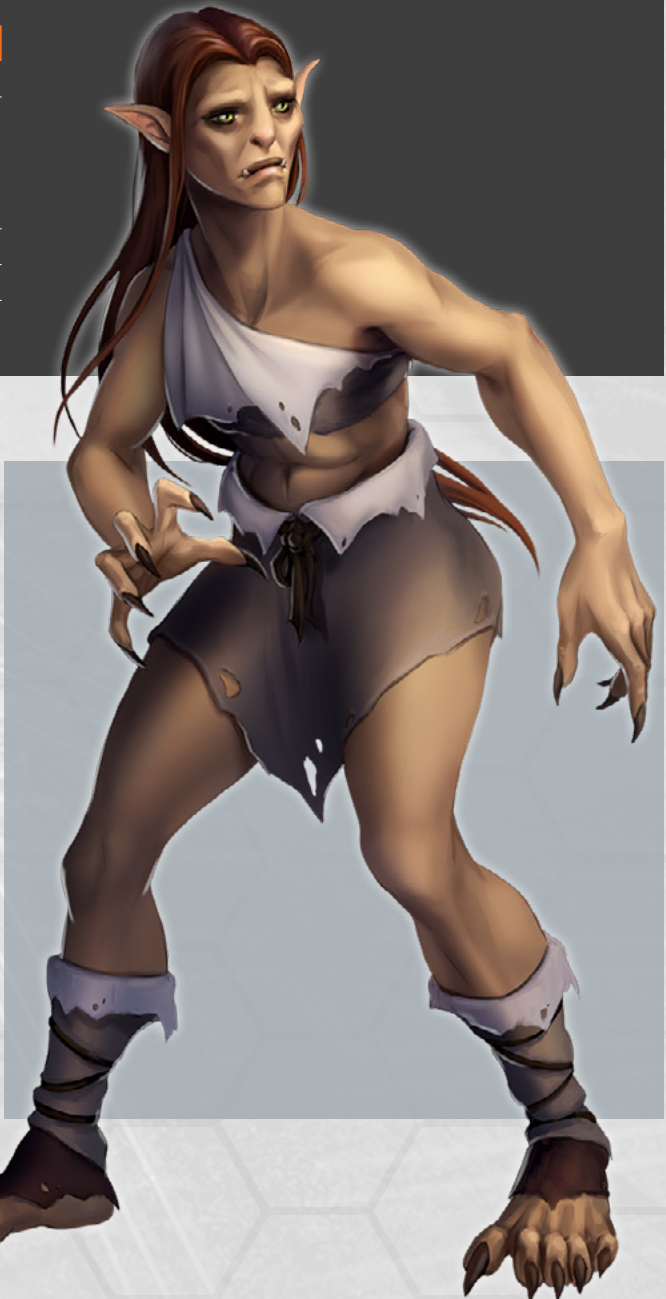
| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Gaeen | 25 | 6m |
| SKILLS | Melee 0, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1 | |
| ATTACKS | Claws (1D) or Spear, Axe or Knife | |
| TRAITS | Heightened Senses | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Omnivore, Hunter/Gatherer | |

Gaeans

Enclaves of what are now known as Gaeans exist in remote areas of the planet, descended from human/animal hybrids that proved viable and escaped destruction by various means. Some groups were saved by conservationists, others were seen as a possible source of cheap labour. All are plagued by a variety of disorders, with around 75% of births showing serious defects. Few of these defective young survive long and in many cases they are killed by their parents. It is possible that some of these defects were engineered into the Gaeans' DNA in an attempt to create fanciful creatures. Other problems are apparently due to the complex and unstable nature of their genetic makeup. However, the instance of defects is gradually falling and numbers are increasing. Perhaps the Gaeans are being adapted to survive by the same mechanism that guides the planetary ecosystem.

Gaeans are humanoid and can be mistaken for a human at a distance. However, they have a heavier bone structure and denser musculature, and possess nails strong enough to be considered claws. Facial features are heavy and deep-set, providing protection to the eyes and giving the Gaeans a disturbingly bestial appearance. They live in extended family groups of 6–10 adults and are smart enough to make basic tools, clothing and weapons. Stone axes, spears with fire-hardened points and a variety of knife/scrapers are in common use. Gaeans have also been sighted using manufactured tools, although whether they were given these or stole them remains unknown.

Gaeans are adept at surviving in rough or close terrain where humans rarely go and are generally fearful of non-Gaeans. They will melt away into the countryside if at all possible, leaving virtually no trace of their existence but are able to launch a sophisticated ambush if required. They are in tune with their environment to



an almost uncanny level and will sometimes react to the presence of strangers long before they could possibly have detected them. It is possible that numbers have been underestimated for this reason or because groups are being sheltered and concealed by local human communities. This may be misguided – Gaeans are not sentient and do not share any sort of bond with humans. They will kill intruders if they feel threatened, so perhaps the well-meaning conservationists are creating a serious problem for themselves.

complex for experimentation on Vilani dissidents. One of the most bizarre of these programs involved creating genetically altered humans modified with genes taken from Gaea's higher animals, the hybrids carried to term in Vilani host mothers 'recruited' from dissidents. Vauxman's experiments were eventually shut down by SolSec. The research data – and hybrids – were supposedly destroyed but rumours persist that some may have survived.

Late in the Solomani Rim War, the purist Party government was overthrown by a popular front that declared for the Imperium. Imperial troops were diverted from the Siege of Kidashi to support the uprising and liberate the planet. As a reward for its loyalty, Gaea was made subsector capital and quickly transitioned to civilian rule. A small Solomani loyalist movement continues to exist but has little popular support, but insurgents associated with Solomani radicals on Kidashi have occasionally launched attacks against targets on Gaea to protest its 'collaborationist regime.'

IRASHDAA

Irashdaa is a comfortable world with large oceans that cover most of the planet's surface. The people live in densely populated arcologies on the world's three major island chains, evenly divided between Vilani, Solomani and mixed race humans, along with a small colony of uplifted Dolphins. They have well-run social-democratic society under a veneer of Imperial military rule. Taking advantage of the high standard of living possible at TL13, all citizens receive a guaranteed minimum income and generous social benefits. Under the Confederation these benefits were less evenly distributed, with wealth concentrated in the hands of the Solomani who maintained their position through racially discriminatory policies. Under Imperial military rule these laws have been rescinded and Solomani are no more equal than anyone else. The loss of their privileged position has sparked resentment and interracial violence but so far Imperial authorities have been careful in co-opting reformist elements with the Solomani Movement and are reasonably confident that reconciliation will be achieved in the next decade. The Authentic Movement – with its tenets of multi-cultural appreciation – has been gaining ground among the youth, especially young Vilani.

KIDASHI

This large gas giant moon was originally a Vilani outpost, colonised by Terrans after the Eighth Interstellar War and now nearly pure Solomani in character. Under the Solomani Confederation, the system's mineral-rich asteroid belts were used to support extensive industrialisation and the population rapidly increased due to large-scale immigration. Kidashi became a major shipbuilding centre but this also made it a primary military objective of the Imperium. The system was besieged in late 1001 and Kidashi was taken by a massive planetary assault.

Casualties were heavy on both sides. Over half a million soldiers and eight million civilians died in the bombardment and brutal city fighting that followed and another two million were killed when the occupying garrison – weakened by troops sent to reinforce other fronts – resorted to nuclear weapons to suppress an uprising in early 1002. Imperial forces learned valuable lessons they put to good use the following year during the Invasion of Terra.

Kidashi is presently one of the most militarised Imperial worlds in the Solomani Rim. More than a million Imperial Army and Navy personnel and as many civilian contractors and mercenaries are stationed there. The Kidashi shipyards have been repaired and are now part of a massive Imperial Navy base. Thanks to the nearby Solomani border and the present détente, Kidashi sees much Solomani as well as Imperial merchant traffic. As the world is still under military rule it has no planetary navy of its own so the Navy also has the task of handling customs enforcement and traffic control.

The population resent the Imperium and support for the Solomani Movement remains high. Although the Solomani Party is outlawed, supporters continue to organise anti-Imperial strikes and demonstrations. Terrorists associated with the Solomani Freedom Army and Black Phoenix groups are also active. The starports and most large cities are reasonably secure thanks to relentless counter-terrorist sweeps but low-level guerrilla insurgencies fester in rural and wilderness areas, and remote parts of the asteroid belt. Even in New Kovac – Kidashi's own capital – there are neighbourhoods where Imperial troops will only venture in force.

DINGIR

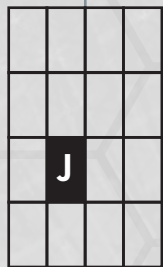
Dingir was the primary battleground for the Second through Seventh Interstellar Wars. Conquered and colonised by the Terran Confederation thousands of years ago, its population is now heavily Solomani in composition and sympathy, especially on the old worlds of Ilike, Shulimik and Gashidda. Today, the subsector lies on the Imperial-Confederation border but is wholly Imperial territory.

The Dukes of Dingir were originally the Counts of Sebastia, their proud lineage dating back to the entry of the Dingir League into the Imperium in

582. They remained steadfast in their support of the Imperium throughout the Solomani period; Duke Robert's grandfather died in battle while serving with the Imperial Navy during the Solomani Rim War. In recognition, his heirs were confirmed as Dukes of Dingir and now hold the position of sector duke, first among equals within the Solomani Rim.

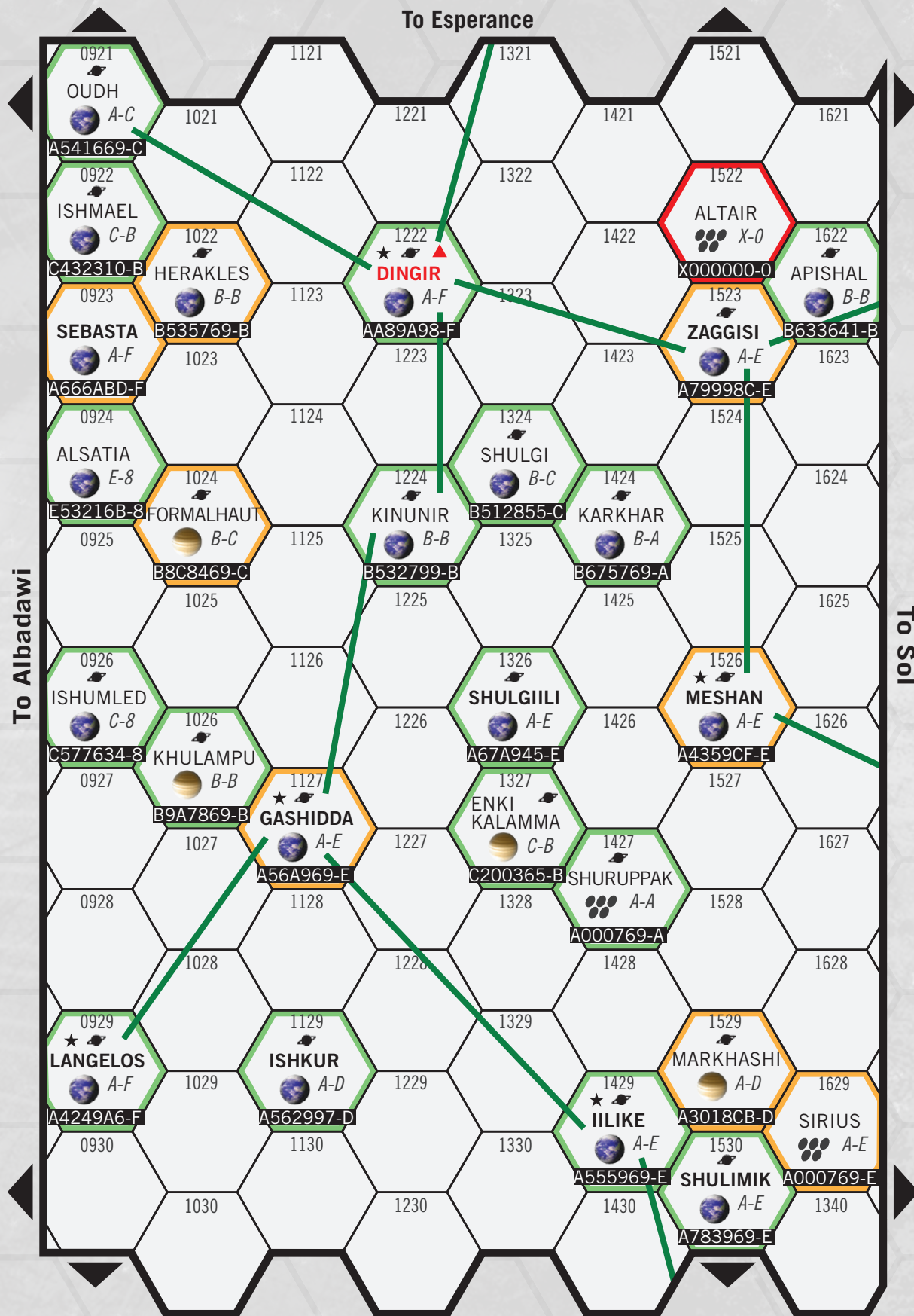
The present Duke Robert haut-Beaudoin of Dingir, 66 years old, is the second to hold the title. Like his father and grandfather, he is conservative with a navy background. He has so far survived three assassination

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|--------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Alsatia | 0924 | | E53216B-8 | Lo Po | | Imperium | |
| Altair | 1522 | | X000000-0 | As Ba Lt Va | R | Imperium | |
| Apishal | 1622 | | B633641-B | Na Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Dingir | 1222 | N W | AA89A98-F | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Enki Kalamma | 1327 | | C200365-B | Lo Va | | Imperium | G |
| Fomalhaut | 1024 | | B8C8469-C | Fl Ht Ni | A | Imperium | G |
| Gashidda | 1127 | N | A56A969-E | Hi Ht Wa | A | Imperium | G |
| Herakles | 1022 | | B535769-B | Mr | A | Imperium | G |
| Ilike | 1429 | N | A555969-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Ishkur | 1129 | | A562997-D | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Ishmael | 0922 | | C432310-B | Lo Po | | Imperium | G |
| Ishumled | 0926 | | C577634-8 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Karkhar | 1424 | | B675769-A | Ag Ga | | Imperium | G |
| Khulampu | 1026 | | B9A7869-B | Fl Mr | | Imperium | G |
| Kinunir | 1224 | | B532799-B | Na Po | | Imperium | G |
| Langelos | 0929 | N | A4249A6-F | Hi Ht In | | Imperium | G |
| Markhashi | 1529 | | A3018CB-D | Ht le Na Va | A | Imperium | G |
| Meshan | 1526 | N | A4359CF-E | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Oudh | 0921 | | A541669-C | Ht Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Sebastia | 0923 | | A666ABD-F | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | |
| Shugiili | 1326 | | A67A945-E | Hi Ht In Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Shulgi | 1324 | | B512855-C | Ht le Na | | Imperium | G |
| Shulimik | 1520 | | A783969-E | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Shuruppak | 1427 | | A000769-A | As Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Sirius | 1629 | | A000769-E | As Ht Na Va | A | Imperium | |
| Zaggisi | 1523 | | A79998C-E | Hi Ht In | | Imperium | G |



Solomani Rim

DINGIR SUBSECTOR



Gas Giant

B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level

Imperial Naval Base

Imperial Scout Way Station

Secure System

Amber Zone

Red Zone

Planet (dry)

Planet (water present)

Asteroid Belt

X-Boat Route

attempts by Solomani sympathisers. Duke Robert has been a strong proponent of a carrot-and-stick approach, insisting that military rule remain until the population's loyalty can be assured. He is privately somewhat sceptical of plans to lift military rule on Terra in 1110 but has been unable to dissuade the archduke or Emperor Strephon from this path. This stems from a gut feeling that the Solomani Movement is stronger than it appears.

Duke Robert believes there should be minimal interference by the Imperium in the affairs of individual worlds for any reason other than the safety of the realm. He has no sympathy with the goals of those reformers who seek to remake the Imperium into a force for social justice, believing that a slippery slope leading into chaos and the sort of ideological struggles that gave birth to the Solomani Confederation. He is also nervous of the ever-growing political and economic influence of the Vegan Autonomous District and concerned that Imperial policy may be tilting too strongly in a Vegan direction at the expense of other interests in the sector.

Duke Robert's views have been increasingly out of step with the younger nobles and diplomats who support Archduke Adair but believes his views will eventually prevail once the 'young archduke' becomes more acquainted with political realities in the Solomani Rim. Duke Robert is popular on Sebasta and respected rather than loved on Dingir, where significant Solomani Movement support still exists.

Duke Robert's current heir is his daughter Erika haut-Beaudoin, who is presently a commander in the Imperial Navy with the Diaspora Sector Fleet. Unusually for the family of a high noble, she turned aside from the usual starship-command path. Instead, Erika has a background in Naval Intelligence with a particular study of Solomani affairs. She will soon take a position as military liaison on Archduke Kieran Adair's staff.

The subsector fleet is the usual mix of escorts and small destroyers, augmented by a powerful non-jump-capable defensive force at Dingir itself. Elements of the sector fleet regularly visit the Dingir subsector, typically in squadron strength. Thus is it not uncommon to encounter a squadron of battleships or heavy cruisers plus their escorts and supporting vessels, especially at Dingir or along the frontier. No capital units are assigned to the subsector fleet, however.

Dingir contains 26 worlds with a population of 89.1 billion. The highest population is 29 billion at Sebasta.

DINGIR

Dingir has an important place in history. It has been, in turn, capital of the Kimashurgur Empire, a provincial capital of the First Imperium, headquarters of the Terran Confederation Fleet, for a brief time capital of the Rule of Man, sector capital under the Rule of Man, independent world and capital of the Dingir League during the Long Night, subsector capital under the Third Imperium and the Solomani Confederation, and once again sector capital under the Imperium following the Solomani Rim War.

Dingir is a huge planet, although much is covered by water. It has a warm climate moderated somewhat by the oceans and abundant sea life and there are numerous tropical islands, although imported Terran flora and fauna have supplanted many indigenous forms. Due to Dingir's high gravity, take offs and landings by 1g starships are problematic although the planet has three very large and busy highport facilities that are virtual cities in their own right. All are newly constructed in the last century; the original highports were destroyed with significant loss of life during the Solomani Rim War.

The population are Solomani with a large mixed Solomani-Vilani minority. The latter suffered discrimination, although not persecution, during the Solomani era but a century of Imperial rule has equalised their status. Dingir was initially pro-Solomani but intensive Imperial intelligence and counter-guerrilla operations in the first half of the century eliminated most extremist cells and violent Solomani activism is now rare. Minority support for the Solomani Cause does exist but Solomani Party activity is mostly channelled into populist protests against government inefficiency and corruption or complaints about the level of non-human immigration allowed under the Imperium.

The local government is a federal system of provinces and countries, some of diverse ethnic character, that serves as a false front for an unresponsive bureaucracy. Much as it was during the Solomani era, this is dominated by patronage and a degree of institutional corruption. Despite this, Dingir has enjoyed continued prosperity under Imperial rule thanks to its position as sector capital and home of much of the sector bureaucracy. All Imperial megacorporations also have major offices here. Due to the high gravity, which is uncomfortable for non-natives, many of these facilities are in the highports. The high gravity also limits the world's appeal to tourists but for those used to it or willing to acclimatise, the world's cities have much to offer including many monumental public buildings in both early Vilani and Solomani architectural styles, a few of them over 4,000 years old, and some of the sector's

most impressive museums and art galleries, notably the Museum of Interstellar Wars whose vast dome is actually the upper half of the gutted and partially buried hull of a Rule of Man-era battleship.

Dingir has a long military tradition and was headquarters of the Terran Navy during the later Interstellar Wars. Military service, especially in the navy, is highly respected by the citizens. Seven Grand Admirals of the Solomani Confederation Navy were born on Dingir, more than any other world besides Terra. Dingir continues that legacy as it is presently the operational headquarters of the Solomani Rim fleet. There is also a large scout base, located on Sarmuu, Dingir's moon, which is the location of the sector headquarters of Imperial Intelligence.

HIGH-G LANDINGS AND TAKE-OFFS

It is relatively easy to put a starship down on a landing pad in still air and normal gravity conditions, especially if the pilot has time to make a leisurely approach. This is not always possible – weather conditions can be unpredictable and busy ports expect vessels to clear the approach lanes in as short a time as possible. In the event that a ship has less thrust available than the planetary gravity there are other considerations. It is still possible to land and take off but the ship cannot hover or lift vertically.

The normal difficulty of a check to make a clean take-off or landing is Average (8+). This increases to Difficult (10+) if the vessel has less thrust than the planet's surface gravity. Thus a 1g ship landing on Dingir, with

around 1.4g surface gravity, suffers this penalty whereas a 2g vessel does not. In addition, a ship that does not have enough thrust for a hover-and-settle landing must use a 'hot' landing or take-off method. There are two possible methods: aerodynamic and overthrust.

Aerodynamic Methods

Aerodynamic methods require the presence of at least a thin atmosphere and make use either of atmospheric lift or the cushioning effect of displaced air against the ground. Only ships that are at least slightly aerodynamic can do this. Streamlined vessels and those with aerofins can use lift for a rolling take-off or landing. The check is still Very Difficult but the pilot gains DM+1 for a thin atmosphere, DM+2 for a standard atmosphere and DM+3 for a dense atmosphere, with an additional DM+1 for aerofins. Success indicates a rolling take-off or landing that is only a little rougher than usual. Standard configuration hulls with a somewhat aerodynamic shape can gain the atmosphere bonus when making a hard flare-and-drop landing but cannot use lift for a rolling take-off. In this case the pilot 'flares' the craft at the last moment to create a cushion of air under it, spilling some of the ship's downward velocity. If done well this is only a little rougher than a hover-and-settle landing but it looks impressively dramatic from the outside and may upset passengers and crew who are not strapped in when the ship suddenly raises its nose.

Overthrust Methods

It would seem that a 1g ship landed on a 1.4g world is stuck there if it cannot generate enough aerodynamic lift to augment its drives but this is not the case. A ship with inadequate drive power cannot hover or



climb vertically but it can produce enough thrust to brake a take-off or make a launch. Doing so requires overcharging the ship's thrust system in order to generate a few moments of increased power. Where the difference is minimal, such as a 1g ship on a 1.03g world, the automated systems that run the drive will do this automatically and the effects are unlikely to be felt by passengers. Anything over a 0.05g difference requires the manual intervention of a skilled pilot.

This overthrust is only generated for a few moments. Once the drive 'relaxes' back to its normal thrust level the process cannot be repeated for 2Dx5 minutes. On take-off this means the ship bangs back down onto the pad; in the case of a landing the ship fails to slow enough and comes in hard. The effects of this 'unscheduled terrain interaction' are determined by the Severity table.

Take-off with inadequate thrust is an unpleasant business. The vessel must generate enough overthrust to make a near-horizontal take-off and get far enough from the ground that a (very shallow) climb can be maintained. Whereas a high-thrust ship can go more or less straight up, one with insufficient thrust can only accelerate in a direction just above the horizontal, slowing gaining enough speed to reach orbital distance. Essentially this ship is using thrust to flatten its fall enough that the curvature of the planet increases its altitude above the surface. Terrain may make this sort of take-off impossible or channel low-thrust craft into a narrow clear lane. A take-off of this sort requires a Difficult (10+) Pilot check, with an additional DM-1 for every 0.1g the planet's gravity exceeds the vessel's normal Thrust.

Landing with inadequate thrust can be accomplished one of two ways. The pilot can set up a normal landing and hope for the best or use overthrust to provide last-second additional braking. In the first case the pilot must make an Average (8+) Pilot check. The result is automatically

a hard landing (see below) but may be mitigated by good piloting. Alternatively the pilot may engage a burst of overthrust at the last second, resulting in rapid and possibly alarming deceleration but hopefully putting the ship on the pad without damage. If this check is made the touchdown is not considered to be a hard landing and the pilot does not need to roll on the Severity table.

In both cases a DM applies, equal to -1 per 0.1g the planet's gravity exceeds the ship's normal Thrust.

Combining Methods

If a pilot chooses to be clever and combine both overthrust and aerodynamic methods, check difficulty remains at Difficult (10+). The pilot may claim atmosphere DMs if applicable. If this check is failed the pilot can salvage the situation by making an immediate Very Difficult (12+) Pilot check. If this second check is successful the crisis is averted but if not the vessel hits the ground even harder. This is represented by adding 1D to the severity of the crash.

Hard Landings and Crashes

In the event that a pilot fails the check upon landing, the ship makes a hard landing. A hard landing also occurs if a pilot makes a conventional touchdown where he does not have adequate thrust. If an aerodynamic or overthrust take-off is attempted and the pilot fails the check, what happens might be a hard landing or a crash, depending on perspective and damage done.

Severity of Impact

The severity of any hard landing or failed take-off determined by rolling 1D plus 1D for every point of negative Effect. If two checks were made, such as in a combination aerodynamic/overthrust take-off, only the worst result is counted but an additional 1D is rolled for severity. In addition, DM+1 applies for every 0.1g surface gravity exceeds the normal Thrust of the ship.

Hard Landings and Crashes

| Action | Difficulty of Check | Result |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Non-overthrust landing with inadequate thrust | Average (8+) | Automatic hard landing |
| Overthrust landing | Difficult (10+) | Hard landing if check failed |
| Aerodynamic landing | Difficult (10+) with atmosphere DM | Hard landing if check failed |
| Combination landing | Difficult (10+) with atmosphere DM, Very Difficult (12+) | Hard landing if both checks failed |
| Aerodynamic take-off | Difficult (10+) with atmosphere DM | Hard landing if check failed |
| Overthrust take-off | Difficult (10+) | Hard landing if check failed |
| Combination take-off | Difficult (10+) with atmosphere DM, Very Difficult (12+) | Hard landing if both checks failed |

The Personnel Outcome column on the Severity table indicates the difficulty of an Athletics check to avoid being bounced off something or struck by a loose object. Failure results in the indicated damage being taken. Success reduces damage by 1D+Effect, which for minor impacts means no damage is taken. Personnel strapped into proper seats or crash frames (good quality stateroom beds have one) do not need to make this check and reduce damage by 2D.

Where an automatic hard landing occurs, this is mitigated by the Effect of the Pilot check.

For example, the Travellers forget about the 1.4g surface gravity at Dingir and begin an approach in their 1g ship. Realising the error at the last second their pilot tries to make an overthrust landing. This requires a Difficult (10+) Pilot check with DM-4 for the high gravity and low thrust. The Pilot check comes out a reasonable 9 but this is not enough to prevent a rough landing. The severity of the crash is determined by the roll of 1D plus 1D per negative Effect, +4 for the gravity-thrust imbalance. The Travellers roll a total of 10, suffering a minor crash-landing. Damage to the ship is slight but there are some busted internal fittings and injured

passengers. The Travellers start trying to pacify them whilst the pilot ponders how she is going to get the ship back into orbit.

GASHIDDA

Gashidda is a small water world with a cool climate. Most of the population live on the few islands and in hundreds of underwater cities located in a ring around the equator. The abundant sea life includes many species that are edible, notably the large eel-like gikhi whose eggs have become a delicacy throughout the subsector. The large starport at the island-capital of New Mondulkiri hosts one of the subsector's largest Imperial Navy bases and an associated Ling Standard Products shipyard.

The system was originally settled by *Kimashurgur* dissidents circa -3500 and became an important regional capital under the First Imperium. Like most of the subsector's worlds, Gashidda gradually lost its Vilani character thanks to heavy Terran immigration after its conquest in the Interstellar Wars, with many settlers coming from South Asia. Over the Rule of Man and Long Night the society became almost entirely Solomani in character and demographics. After a period

Severity

| Severity | Outcome | Personnel Outcome |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 0 or less | Rough but tolerable landing | No check required; no damage. |
| 1–3 | Very rough landing. Loose objects fall over or roll about, passengers stumble | Easy (4+), no damage but possibly some inconvenience |
| 4–6 | Extremely rough landing, possibly sufficient to cause unrestrained passengers to fall over. Some minor internal mess such as lockers spilling their contents. No damage to the ship. | Routine (6+), D3 damage |
| 7–9 | Minor crash-landing. 1 Hull point is lost and personnel are thrown around, possibly causing significant injuries. All unsecured objects are spilled, some may be broken. | Average (8+), 1D damage |
| 10–12 | Minor crash-landing. D3 Hull points lost, personnel are severely thrown around. Some internal damage to fittings, partition doors and the like. | Difficult (10+), 1D damage |
| 13–15 | Major crash-landing. 1D Hull points lost, personnel are severely thrown around. Internal damage to many light components. No threat to functionality. | Difficult (10+), 2D damage |
| 16–18 | Crash. As 13–15 above but 3D Hull points lost. 1 component suffers the effects of a critical hit | Very Difficult (12+), 2D damage |
| 19–21 | Major crash. As 13–15 above but 3D Hull points lost. D3 components suffer the effects of a critical hit. | Very Difficult (12+), 3D damage |
| 22–24 | Serious crash. Ship loses 2Dx3% of its Hull and takes 1D critical hits. | Formidable (14+), 3D Damage |
| 25+ | Severe crash. Ship loses 2Dx6% of its Hull and takes 2D critical hits. | Formidable (14+), 4D Damage |

of cultural and economic malaise as a minor member of the Dingir League came the 'new awakening' under messianic Solomani Movement philosopher Vanthara Noy. The Gashidda Solomani Party promoted planetary industrialisation and also a near-mystical reverence for both Terra and Solomani manifest destiny. A newly energised Gashidda exported Solomani revolutions throughout the subsector and produced several influential Confederation leaders. Its population were patriotic supporters of the Solomani Cause throughout the Rim War.

When the tide of war turned, Gashidda refused to surrender to advancing Imperial forces and was taken by assault after a lengthy campaign and bombardment.

The scars of war have since been repaired and Gashidda has regained some of its prosperity, yet has not reconciled with Imperial rule. The Imperial Army's counter-insurgency efforts neutralised all active guerrilla units on Gashidda by 1030 but the Imperium remains deeply unpopular. 160,000 Imperial Army nautical force command troops remain on occupation duty with no date set for their removal. Much of the population continues to express support for the banned Solomani Party and attempts to create alternative pro-Imperial institutions have failed. Instead, many citizens belong to mystical societies such as Vanthara Truth and Wheel of Earth that promote a spiritual understanding of the Solomani Movement and reverence for Terra as the birthplace of original Humaniti. This movement has become too widespread for the occupation to effectively outlaw and has a fanatical core linked to militant violence and terrorism. Imperial attempts at suppression have only succeeded in creating martyrs. In 1090 Imperial attempts to arrest Vanthara Master Tenzin in the Makara undersea arcology sparked massive riots that saw Solomani militants seize control of the city's university, fusion reactor and submarine docks. The Imperial Army's Operation Sea Dragon, which retook the city with minimal loss of civilian life was a model of underwater special operations but Tenzin's death led to further bloody riots.

Organised crime in Gashidda's startown and major underwater cities has also come under control of Solomani groups, apparently linked to survivors of the old SolSec network. They use proceeds from enterprises like illegal drug distribution, cargo submersible hijacking and startown protection rackets to finance resistance activities. Imperial troops make regular raids in major cities aimed at taking out suspected insurgent cells or suppressing criminal organisations. Ongoing unrest and high risk of terrorist attack has led to Gashidda being classed as an Amber Zone.

SIRIUS

Sirius is the brightest star in Terra's sky. The system is actually a binary consisting of a white A class star and a nearby white dwarf companion orbiting about 20 Astronomical Units apart. Neither has planets or asteroid companions. The belt at Sirius is actually made up of dozens of artificial satellites and habitats, including ice-rich planetoids moved from other nearby systems, intended to fill what was once referred to as the Sirius Gap. The position of Sirius makes it important as a way station for commercial traffic. With refuelling stations in place, a stop at Sirius creates a jump-2 communications route between Lillike and Fenris, connecting two important subsectors.

Commercial activity on Sirius is entirely devoted to starship operations. In addition to refuelling and maintenance operations, the habitats include shipyards. Today, the major focus on Sirius is not shipbuilding but ship breaking. In the aftermath of the Solomani Rim War, hundreds of warships and merchant vessels that were operational but too badly damaged or obsolete to be worth keeping in service were taken to Sirius to be scrapped. Some hull metal plates were used to construct habitats or newer vessels within the belt and others resold to merchants. A few ships are refurbished and resold. Sirius is still one of the best places in the sector to find dealers in old parts or used starships, especially old military or scout vessels. In the vacuum of space, ships can remain in good condition for a very long time.

The Imperium maintains a tight lid on Sirius due to its strategic importance and the system is still under military rule. Unusually, this is maintained by the navy and marines rather than the army, with a marine regiment in permanent garrison. Prior to the Solomani Rim War, the Sirius habitats were operated by companies connected to the Confederation Navy and many of the inhabitants had a strong pro-Solomani attitude, especially among space yard workers and shipbreakers. The Imperium has transferred management of the major refuelling station and military shipbreaking operation to Ling Standard Products. In 1100 the military government blocked a unionisation drive due to justified fears it was controlled by Solomani Party agitators. However, this has led to an intensification of anti-Imperial sentiment, including several 'accidents' that have befallen LSP executives, sabotage and attacks on off-duty corporate and military personnel. The system has been classed as an Amber Zone as a result.

SOL

When the Terrans first began exploring other systems, the immediate discovery of Prometheus, a habitable planet around Alpha Centauri, seemed as momentous as the discovery of fire. Soon after, the first jump drive-equipped expedition discovered the First Imperium's base at Barnard's Star, bringing the realisation that most of the universe was already owned by someone else. Conflict between Terran expansionism and the Vilani desire for stasis soon sparked the Interstellar Wars. The hardest fighting of the early Interstellar Wars occurred in the Sol subsector, as the two sides fought for control of the crossroads systems of Fenris and Barnard.

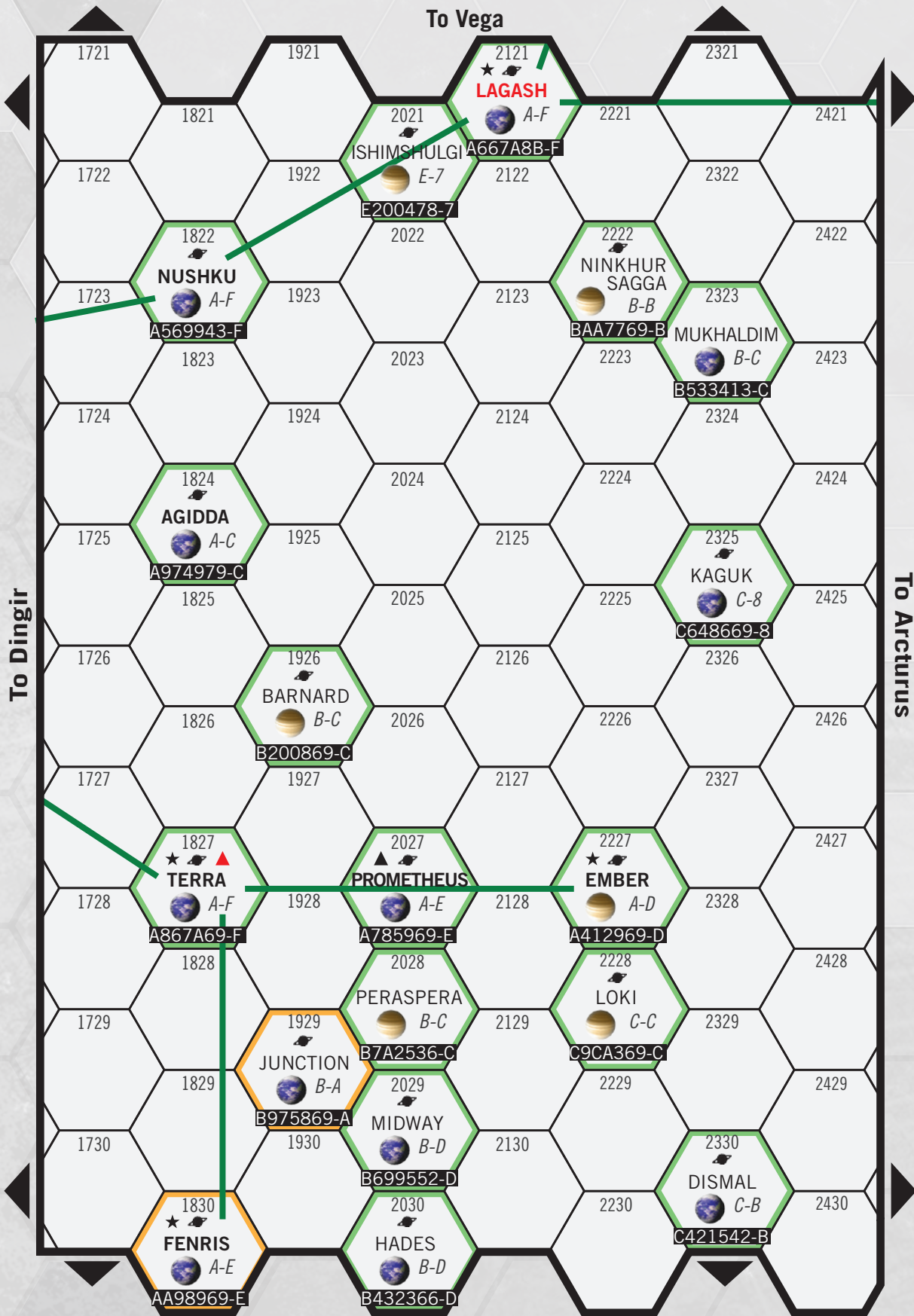
After the Interstellar Wars the Sol subsector gradually lost importance. Terra had been the capital of the Terran Confederation but at the beginning of the Rule of Man, the capital was moved to Dingir. During the Long Night, Terra became the capital of the Old Earth Union, which included most of the early Terran colonies from Barnard to Forlorn and from Dismal to the refuelling stations at Sirius.

Although the Old Earth Union was dissolved and joined the Imperium, its citizens proved loath to give up their independence. Terra and the other Old Earth Union worlds in the subsector were the womb of the Solomani Movement and its spiritual centre. Terra became its capital in 704 and for almost 300 years governed the Solomani Autonomous Region and its successor the Solomani Confederation.

Support for the Solomani Cause was both wide and deep in the Sol subsector. Rather than surrendering at the first sign of an Imperial fleet many worlds resisted to the end, none more so than Terra. Civilian casualties were heavy. After the war, most worlds in the subsector came under Imperial military rule.

Several worlds were troubled by ongoing Solomani insurgencies up through 1050 but all were eventually put down. The large Imperial military commitment to Sol has allowed the Imperial Army and Marines to avoid overreacting and focus on targeting violent groups and maintaining security, rather than enacting

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|---------------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Agidda | 1824 | | A974979-C | Ga Hi Ht In | | Imperium | G |
| Barnard | 1926 | | B200869-C | Ht Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Dismal | 2330 | | C421542-B | Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Ember | 2227 | N | A412969-D | Hi Ht le In Na | | Imperium | G |
| Fenris | 1820 | N | AA98969-E | Ga Hi Ht In | A | Imperium | |
| Hades | 2030 | | B432366-D | Ht Lo Po | | Imperium | G |
| Ishimshulgi | 2021 | | E200478-7 | Ni Va | | Imperium | G |
| Junction | 1929 | | B975869-A | Ga Mr | A | Imperium | G |
| Kaguk | 2325 | | C648669-8 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Lagash | 2121 | N | A667A8B-F | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Loki | 2228 | | C9CA369-C | Fl Ht Lo Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Midway | 2029 | | B699552-D | Ht Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Mukhaldim | 0703 | | B533413-C | Ht Ni Po | | Imperium | |
| Ninkhur Sagga | 2222 | | BAA7769-B | Fl Mr | | Imperium | G |
| Nusku | 1822 | | A569943-F | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Peraspera | 2028 | | B7A2536-C | Fl Ht Ni | | Imperium | |
| Prometheus | 2027 | S | A785969-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Terra | 1827 | N W | A867A69-F | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |



indiscriminate reprisals. Military rule has also featured social reforms aimed at overturning endemic racial discrimination. To this end, freedom of speech is limited with both anti-Imperial sedition and racist 'hate speech' outlawed, supported through widespread monitoring and censorship of computer networks. A bitter joke among some civil liberties supporters who remember SolSec is 'well, at least the hats are different'.

The Sol subsector is quite sparse, other than the Prometheus Cluster. The rimward side of the subsector is thus something of an economic unit, linked to the rest of the Imperium by a long route running initially spinward-coreward through Dingir. There is a real danger that the Sol-Fenris-Prometheus region might develop a culture of its own, drifting away from Imperial norms and whilst many see this as entirely acceptable there are those who foresee trouble in the future. Cultural drift is opposed by economic and social means for the most part, sometimes in a heavy-handed manner. Media channels are filled with dramas about the great old days of the Imperium, many of them sponsored by Imperial agencies.

The subsector fleet is slightly overstrength in terms of patrol craft but has responsibility for part of the Gemini subsector as well as its own territory. In terms of capital ships it is one of the strongest subsector fleets in the Imperium. Fenris, Terra and Prometheus all have heavy defences, with many non-jump-capable monitors in the battleship class. In addition, the subsector fleet possesses two BatRons and two CruRons. The former are intended to augment the defences of any threatened system whilst the latter are more likely to be dispersed chasing down raiders. Of course, the Solomani Confederation paints these deployments in a more aggressive light, repeatedly condemning the use of Terra as a 'base from which to threaten renewed aggression'. These heavy units would not be sufficient to hold the subsector in the event of renewed hostilities but they are a broad hint that it would be hard contested, with reserves just a few weeks away at Depot.

The Sol subsector contains 18 worlds with a population of 73.7 billion. The highest population is 21 billion at Lagash.

LAGASH

Although a Solomani dominated world, Lagash's government was one of the supporters of the Vegan Faction of the Solomani Party, thanks to lucrative trade links with its alien neighbours. Considered a hotbed of radical ideology and subject to SolSec purges under the Solomani Confederation, it was rewarded for its moderate views by the Imperium with an early lifting of military rule. In 1032 it was designated subsector capital.

Thanks to its status, Lagash has been the beneficiary of much Imperial immigration and megacorporate development. Modern Lagash is bustling and cosmopolitan and has become a key centre for trade with the Vegan Autonomous District. In recent years it has also developed a vibrant music scene, in which genuine creative talent vies with manufactured mass-market hit-of-the-week fodder. Accusations have been repeatedly made that the Lagash music scene is controlled by Imperial intelligence agencies seeking to insinuate certain messages into the general consciousness.

NUSKU

A pleasant garden planet with a warm climate, Nusku was colonised by the First Imperium and has the dubious honour of being the first major Vilani world to be conquered by the Terran Confederation. Most of its population has long been of mixed Vilani-Solomani ancestry. Beaten down for centuries by a minority Solomani Party, most of the population welcomed Imperial rule, although it took nearly 50 years to erase the socio-economic scars left by the Confederation. Drawing on the work of a dissident intelligentsia that had existed in the shadows before liberation, Nusku has now created a progressive and egalitarian society. The only vestige of Confederation rule that survives does so in the form of the Free Monitor movement, which is quite popular.

PROMETHEUS

Prometheus, a planet in the Alpha Centauri system, was the earliest Terran colony. It is not dissimilar to Earth but has a thicker, although still breathable, atmosphere, several smaller seas rather than large oceans and a warmer climate. Tropical rainforests extend even into higher latitudes and a belt of desert covers most of the equatorial regions. The initial colonists were Europeans who arrived by generation ship but extensive immigration from many Terran nations and groups followed after the development of jump drive. Rather than a balkanised world the result was a tolerant multi-ethnic society. Prometheus was the first Terran colony to develop a true sense of its own identity as an extra-terrestrial world and is popularly known both ironically and proudly as 'Terra's (younger) brother.'

From an early stage, Prometheus was also a centre of technical and scientific innovation. Indeed, it was at the University of Prometheus in -2302 that Geneva Mazzi made her crucial breakthrough in physics that underpinned the invention of meson weapons. Early during the Rule of Man, Prometheus temporarily displaced Terra as the political capital of Sol, a status it retained until the rise of the Terran Mercantile

Community and Old Earth Union in the Long Night. Even then it remained Terra's steadfast partner. During the Solomani era, Prometheus was a wellspring of both the anti-aristocratic confederalist and the radical eschatonic utopian wings of the Solomani Party. The planet was a major industrial and scientific centre, including the Mazzi Institute of Physics and the Prometheus Naval Base. The latter facility would have been classed as a major scout base in the Imperium as it was devoted to administering and planning Confederation Navy explorations operations on the rim frontier, designing survey equipment to be carried by naval vessels and training officers in scientific disciplines and first contact procedures.

Prometheus lost political influence after the purist and militant manifest destiny factions in the Secretariat gained in strength during the century before the Solomani Rim War. In the 880s purist factions tried to break up the dominant Solomani Party coalition by reviving long-dormant ethnic divisions under the guise of a program called 'micro-culturalism'. The resultant conflicts badly strained Promethean society, turning cultural pride into bitter rivalry. Despite these social tensions, Prometheus remained loyal to the Confederation to the end, surrendering only after the Imperial Navy shattered the planetary defences.

The fiercely independent Prometheans engaged in a lengthy anti-Imperial insurgency that was only disrupted after the Imperial Army and Imperial Intelligence began to exploit the planet's existing political quarrels to turn one regional or ethnic resistance group against another. Although successful in preventing an organised insurgency, these efforts may have gone too far. The Imperium has come to realise that it will be difficult to put together a legitimate planetary government after military rule is lifted. Blaming factions in the IISS's Imperial Intelligence, the army's governor has washed its hands of the problem and turned the issue over to the Scout Service to resolve, who are sending sociological experts to help paper over the cultural fissures. They have also been encouraging the Authentic Movement in the hope that it will reduce ethnic conflict.

Even with these problems, Prometheus remains an important world. Economically, it and Terra are still each other's major trading partners with a massive flow of trade between them. The Scout Service has taken over Prometheus Base and continues to operate both it and the prestigious Mazzi Institute, long since purged of its more politicised instructors, reopened in 1078. The institute still attracts students and faculty from across the Rim, including nonhuman students who would have never been admitted under Solomani rule.

MESON GUNS

The weapon almost universally known today as a meson gun does not shoot mesons and cannot really be considered a gun. Its name resulted from a habit of secrecy and misdirection among Terrans working on sensitive projects and is as appropriate as referring to an armoured combat vehicle as a 'tank'. As is the way of things, the cover name stuck and the true nature of the weapon remains obscure to most people.

This is no bad thing. Without dismantling a meson gun or at least deciphering its maintenance manual it is not possible to take more than an educated guess about what it is and how it works. All most people know is that a meson gun causes a burst of particles to decay at a precisely determined spot. Anything beyond this is into the realms of need-to-know and military secrets. A civilian physicist could take an educated guess at how this might be achieved but it would still be necessary to begin with first principles. This was the original intent of the cover name and it is just as applicable today as in the Interstellar Wars era.

TERRA

Terra, once called Earth, is the homeworld of the Solomani race and genetic source of all Humaniti. In its long history it has been the capital of the Terran Confederation, Terran Mercantile Community, Old Earth Union, Domain of Sol, Solomani Autonomous Region and the Solomani Confederation. It is now a conquered planet under Imperial military rule, although in recent decades the population have become reconciled to this situation.

In the three and a half millennia since Terrans first ventured into space the planet has seen many changes, both natural and the result of mega-engineering projects. The largest of these include the warming of Siberia and greening of the Sahara desert and vast systems of dykes protecting many heavily populated coastal regions and historical sites from elevated sea levels.

Terra has a population of 40 billion with considerable ethnic diversity. Terra's first city is Rio de Janeiro. South America, the Caribbean and southern Africa are the most urbanised and industrialised regions, the population living in a mix of giant arcologies and more traditional cities and towns. There are many underwater cities and a large population of uplifted Dolphins. Genetic uplift has also brought back several extinct



species and created new ones such as miniphants (see page 16 of the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society Volume 1*). Terra has a solid TL15 industrial base and is a major source of high quality, high tech products – especially electronics and consumer goods.

The old ethnic and national divisions have long since faded. Anything resembling a pre-starflight Terran culture is far more likely to be found in an isolated world in the Spinward Marches or Reft sector, thanks to long-range generation ships or colony missions, than on Terra itself. However, large cultural theme parks exist, many on the sites of old cities, for the benefit of both Solomani and Authentic Movement tourists. These are sufficiently well implemented that they have convinced gullible visitors that, for example, French, Japanese, Middle English or Latin are all still spoken. Outside of theme parks and academia just about everyone speaks only Anglic, albeit with a strong 'Rim Anglic' or Terran accent. The rising popularity of the Authentic Movement has begun to challenge this uniformity a little but most regional accents and customs are an affectation rather than a tradition.

Despite occasional neglect, periodic struggles with overpopulation, a nuclear bombardment during the Third Interstellar War, invasion and a few brushes with

ecological catastrophe in the pre-starflight era and Long Night, Terra remains a beautiful and ecologically diverse world. In the Solomani era the central Confederation government spent lavishly on Terra to make it a showpiece. Huge tracts of private land were acquired and transformed into public parks and extensive wildlife preserves were created. A major effort was spent getting the global weather control system properly harmonised. Museums were well funded and historical sites like the Pyramids, the Great Wall of China, the Pentagon, the TMC Tower and ancient cities like Rome and New York were restored, preserved and some encased in giant domes. This historical reconstruction was distorted to fit the narrative of Solomani exceptionalism but, in general, Terra was treated with respect. Ironically, the major beneficiary of this has been the Imperium, who inherited a Terra already dressed for its post-war role as the beautiful but powerless captive princess, now trapped in an arranged marriage.

Terra is under military rule with an appointed Imperial governor managing a civil service bureaucracy backed up by a substantial Imperial Marine garrison. General Stanislav Gasai of the Imperial Army has been governor of Terra since 1103, a general in the Imperial Army whose main battlefield has been political as he struggles to ready the world for self-rule in six or seven years. He

NAME: Terra (1827/ Solomani Rim)

UWP: A867A69-F



- | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|--------|---------|----------|-------------|----------|
| City | Starport | Mining | Farming | Industry | Power Plant | Military |
| | | | | | | |

| | | |
|-----------|---------------|----------------------|
| Hex Scale | World Gravity | Mean Equatorial Temp |
| 1143 km | 1.0 G | 30 C |

has been heard to remark that he would like to go back to something simple, like hunting insurgents in 'ambush alley' on some nasty backwater where everyone is an enemy sympathiser but the rules of engagement prohibit effective action.

Local police forces are permitted but Terra has no planetary army. Massive counter-guerrilla efforts in 1002–1005 and again in 1040–1050 have broken the back of most organised resistance. Two generations have now grown up knowing little but Imperial rule, although some citizens are still old enough to have traumatic memories of the mass arrests and raids during the 'Phoenix Eradications'. There are plans to lift military rule in 1109 if Terrans remain quiet. The oppressive Law Level 9 means that weapon ownership is almost totally prohibited.

The physical and emotional scars of the Solomani Rim War have been mostly repaired. Since the 1050s, political parties have been gradually allowed more power and much of Terra is under the control of a non-military bureaucracy with elected municipal and regional governments organised by continent. Embryonic planetary political parties exist, including a neutered, moderate Solomani Party linked philosophically to the Pan-Earther faction and a growing Terran peace movement advocating normalisation of relations between the Imperium and Confederation.

Terra has three huge starport complexes. LaGrange Starport in north-eastern Australia is now mainly a military port although there is some civilian traffic for destinations in Asia and Oceania. Phoenix-Mesa Starport in south-western North America is the largest civilian port followed by AECO (African-European Cooperative Organisation) Starport in North Africa. Each of the starport complexes has a large associated orbital highport.

Military rule has led to very strict traffic controls and laws limit manual operation of vehicles to private property. All aircraft – mostly grav vehicles – are limited to specific 'gravway' paths under regional remote traffic control. Exceptions exist for police and emergency services vehicles but military authorities can override all traffic control. Mobile robots are also tightly regulated on Terra to an even greater degree than normally required by the Shudusham Accords. All have strict requirements for redundant safety, tracking and override systems far more stringent than on most Imperial worlds. This is a reaction to the Rule of Terra's use of modified household and delivery robots for assassinations and terror attacks.

Unknown to the general public, a psionic institute remains active on Terra. The Psionics Suppressions (800-826) revoked Imperial charters under which the 65 psionic institutes in the Imperium operated legally and they were supposedly shut down. Unknown to the general public – although a matter of historical record – the revocations of two institutes were later reversed. One of these institutes is located on Terra. In 833, just a few decades before the Solomani Confederation was founded, the institute was taken over by Imperial Naval Intelligence. It operated secretly for the next 70 years. The institute's staff probably used their psionic abilities to avoid infiltration by SolSec and were able to provide a source of recruits who could engage in high-level espionage in the Solomani capital.

These operations were disrupted during the Invasion of Terra but after the war moved to the grounds of the Imperial Navy base. The institute has operated under various covers such as an Imperial Marine commando special warfare training facility or the Naval Psychological Warfare Institute. Its graduates may have been involved in the exposure of the Phoenix Project families in 1040. Most faculty and students are associated with Naval Intelligence but the agency also has students connected with the Scout Service's Imperial Intelligence branch, the Imperial Marines and the Ministry of Justice. The most valued students are those with strong telepathic abilities who are often assigned to counter-intelligence operations aimed at locating suspected Solomani moles in the Rim's intelligence services or vetting high-placed individuals such as nobles or senior military officers under suspicion of being undercover Solomani agents or sympathisers.

THE SOL SYSTEM

The Terran system, sometimes still referred to as *The Solar System* by its residents, is unusual in that many marginal worlds that would be ignored in other systems have been colonised. In the early years of space exploration, colonies were established throughout the system. Every rocky planet and satellite was at least superficially explored and expeditions even ventured into the depths of Jupiter's atmosphere.

Today, the major settlements are located on Terra and its moon Luna, on Mars and in the Asteroid Belt. Smaller settlements exist on Mercury, Ganymede, Rhea and Pluto, and outposts on Venus and a few satellites have been established for scientific or commercial purposes. Luna's Copernicus Down Spaceport handles traffic control for Terra. Traffic in the outer system is controlled from Rhea.

Planetary Bodies

| World | Orbital Distance (AU) | Satellite | Statistics | Bases |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------|
| Mercury | 0.4 | | D30046A-E | |
| Venus | 0.7 | | D8B0168-E | |
| Terra | 1 | | A867A69-F | |
| | | Luna | C20076C-F | N R |
| Mars | 1.5 | | C43056A-F | |
| | | Phobos | XS0026A-F | |
| Asteroid Belt | 2.8 | | C00066B-E | |
| Jupiter | 5.2 | | Large Gas Giant | |
| | | Ring System | XR00000-0 | |
| | | Io | X210000-0 | |
| | | Europa | E200000-0 | |
| | | Ganymede | C300468-F | |
| | | Callisto | X30016A-F | |
| Saturn | 9.5 | | Large Gas Giant | |
| | | Ring System | XR00000-0 | |
| | | Janus | XS00000-0 | |
| | | Mimas | XS00000-0 | |
| | | Enceladus | DS00268-F | |
| | | Tethys | XS00000-0 | |
| | | Dione | XS00000-0 | |
| | | Rhea | E100468-E | S |
| | | Titan | X3A0168-E | |
| | | Hyperion | ES00000-0 | |
| | | Iapetus | E100000-0 | |
| | | Phoebe | E100000-0 | |
| Uranus | 19.2 | | Small Gas Giant | |
| | | Ring System | XR00000-0 | |
| | | Miranda | XS00000-0 | |
| | | Ariel | X100000-0 | |
| | | Umbriel | ES00269-E | |
| | | Titania | E100168-E | |
| | | Oberon | X100000-0 | |
| Neptune | 30.1 | | Small Gas Giant | |
| | | Ring System | XR00000-0 | |
| | | Triton | X210169-E | |
| | | Nereid | XS00000-0 | |
| Pluto | 39.5 | | C10046C-F | N |
| | | Charon | XS00000-0 | |

Tiny Worlds

The Size code in world profiles goes down to 0 to represent asteroid belts that orbit a star but much smaller bodies are possible. The following additional codes can be used to represent these objects.

Tiny Worlds

| Size Code | Diameter | Example |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| R | Multiple objects less than 1km | Planetary Ring |
| D | One or more objects less than 200km | Debris |
| S | Less than 1,600km | Very small planetary body |

The Planetary Bodies table only lists major satellites. The gas giants all have additional tinier moons. The most important world in the solar system besides Terra is its moon Luna, which orbits Terra at an average distance of 384,000km.

Luna

Luna, the moon of Terra, has a political status equivalent to a continent. Like Terra, it is under military rule although a native bureaucracy has been given responsibility for almost all operations of government save legislation and security. As with Terra, a graduated transition to civilian rule – in this case a representative democracy – is expected to take place between 1109 and 1111. Political parties are already forming.

Originally a colony of the old United States, several other national enclaves were later established on Luna before they unified as a single independent nation in 2433. Luna became a scientific and industrial centre used for astronomical research, mining and spacecraft design and manufacturing. Even before the Terran Confederation lunar companies – possibly a consortium that was a distant ancestor of the megacorporation GSbAG – were instrumental in the development of the jump drive.

Luna was a major Terran Confederation military shipyard in the Interstellar Wars. The end of the wars and dissolution of the Terran Confederation led to an economic depression. Luna kept its shipyards but converted them to civilian production as well as diversifying its economy to include other industrial areas. During the Long Night, the shipyards of Luna returned to military production, assembling first the armed merchant cruisers of the Terran Mercantile Community and then warships of the Old Earth Union.

Luna lost ground during the early Imperial era but regained it following the creation of the Solomani Confederation. The Solomani Party achieved power with promises to reinvigorate Luna's economy and followed through by establishing major military and research facilities, including the Clavius particle research complex. At the height of the Solomani era, Luna was home to several different military and civilian shipbuilders including Panstellar and Solomani Military Industries.

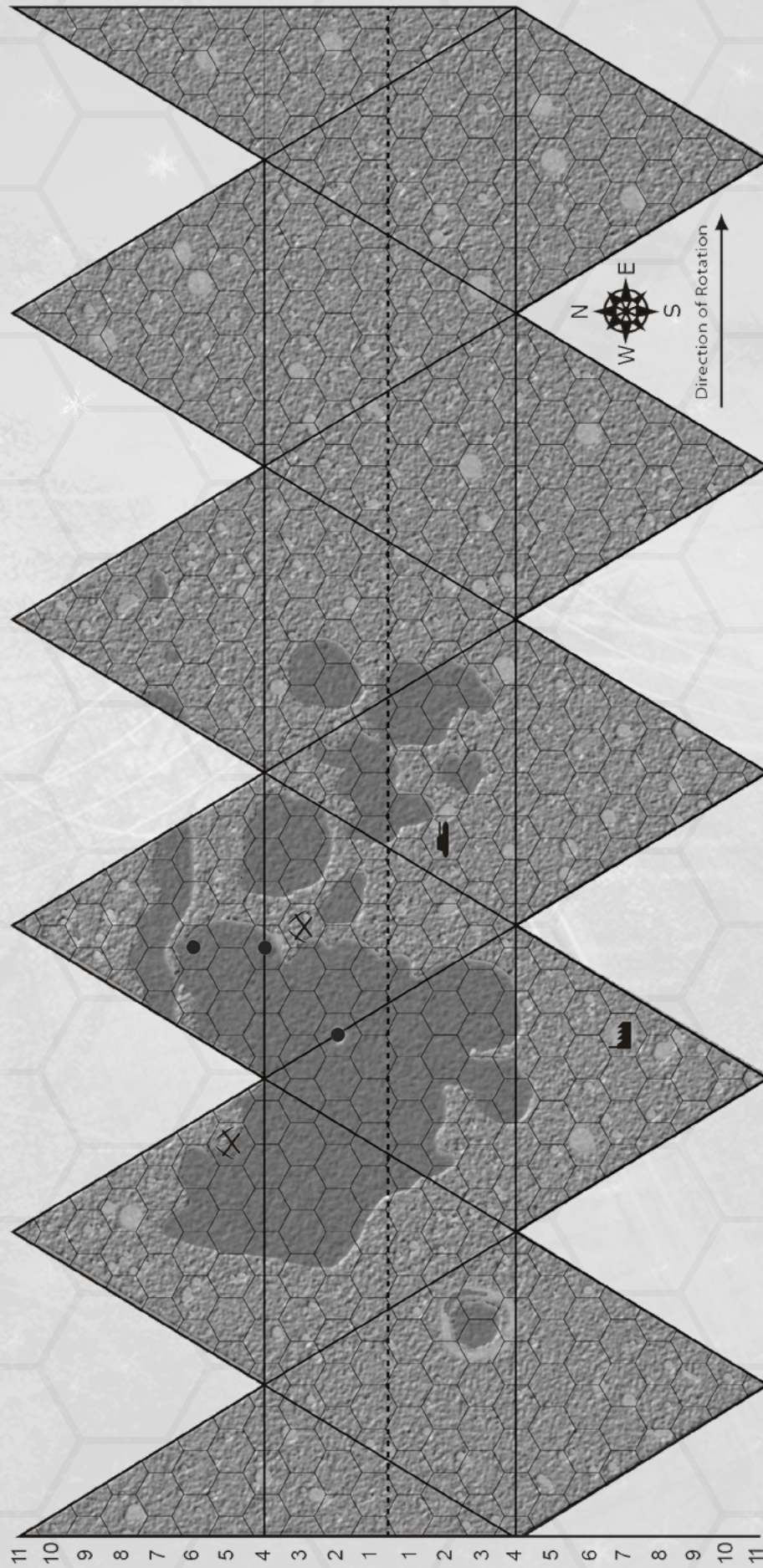
The space around Luna was the scene of fierce battles between Confederation and Imperial naval forces in the days before the assault on Terra. Once the Imperium achieved space superiority, Luna's defenders quickly surrendered. The lack of atmosphere meant troops and domed cities on its surface were completely exposed to orbital bombardment and the Imperial firepower mustered was overwhelming.

Despite the concentration of military industry, Luna's population has always had a democratic bent and support for the more extreme elements of the Solomani Party was low. Except for a few early and ineffectual outbreaks of violence by the Solomani Freedom Army in the 1010s and a 'secret Solomani guerrilla base' panic scare in 1080 – which turned out to be a hoax – it has given the Imperium little trouble.

Today's lunar economy is based around mining, ore processing and scientific research. Ship construction was once significant but has now declined, although there are plans to reverse this. Luna is a traditional destination for Terran honeymooners, with several resort complexes at Copernicus catering to tourists and vacationers.

Luna's eight million people are concentrated in three population centres – Copernicus, Archimedes and Plato. Each includes domed and underground cities linked by monorails and gravitic highways. Archimedes is the oldest settlement and main mining and industrial centre, with some ancient mine shafts running kilometres under the moon's surface. Plato is an academic and cultural centre and site of the main campus of the University of Luna, regarded as one of the top schools for high-energy physics and astronomy in the system. Copernicus is the seat of government, the centre of trade and travel, and location of Copernicus Down Starport. Before the Solomani Rim War, the facility was once one of the busiest in the entire Confederation. With the reduction in Luna industry and military traffic in the post-war era, two-thirds of terminals, landing pads, bays and warehouse facilities remain unused although in vacuum they have suffered little decay. These spaces have sometimes been commandeered and renovated by criminal elements or squatters. In 1103 a Naval Intelligence investigation

UWP: F20066C-F



312 km

0.16 G

-23 C



uncovered an entire illegal factory complex based in a disused bay that was making pirate copies of Ling Standard Products goods.

Another 80,000 people live and work in the mines at Sinus Iridium and Montes Apenninus, the radio observatory Farside Station, the Imperial research laboratory at Clavius, and the Imperial Naval Base at Theophilus.

Clavius is a modern, high-technological industrial park with production facilities for electronic and gravity chips, vacuum-process equipment and thin-film devices. Since the Rim War, the prime operator for the industrial park is GSbAG.

The most unusual feature is the experimental atmospheric containment field; instead of a dome, a network of focused grav modules that retard the escape of gasses, with leakage constantly replaced. The

Imperial Navy and Naasirka megacorporation also jointly operate a state of the art high-energy particle research laboratory at Clavius. Located in a former Solomani Ministry of Technology facility, the lab houses the Rim's largest experimental particle beam system and was once used for military meson beam research. Current research is highly classified but may involve antiparticle beams or ultra-high-velocity baryon generation.

Farside Station is a scientific research base that is today operated as a branch of the University of Luna at Plato. The facility has been operated and regularly expanded for more than 3,400 years and its vast distributed arrays now cover thousands of square kilometres of lunar surface on the opposite side of Luna from Terra to avoid light and energy pollution. More important than the hardware – some of which is thoroughly obsolete – is the institutional knowledge gathered from centuries of experience in radio astronomy, cosmology and cosmic

ray research and the development of sensitive passive sensor systems for civilian and military purposes. Development and travel on the far side of Luna is restricted to avoid interfering with the operations of Farside Station.

Luna was riddled with Solomani military installations, some of which were later occupied by the Imperium. Most are now abandoned, including a former Marine Protected Forces training base in Mare Crisium. The sole active facility is the busy Imperial Navy Base Luna located in Theophilus crater, located on the site of a 300-year old Solomani Confederation base. There are rumours of scattered Solomani bases across the lunar surface but a thorough search of the lunar surface by the Imperial Navy in 1080 failed to find any bases not already charted.

Mercury

The innermost planet has the most extreme temperatures in the system, ranging from 400°C during the day to -180°C at night. In the interplanetary era, Mercury's face was once covered with a giant solar array used to power mining facilities and energise lasers that drove early solar sail vessels. Today, only a small fraction of the solar power array remains and most of the old mining shafts are empty. The main settlement is built into the Chao Meng-Fu crater on the southern pole, where water ice deposits once existed in the shadow of the crater walls. The remaining settlements include a small spaceport, mining operation and the very old Syuki solar observatory, now operated mainly as an astrophysical school. In 1030 a researcher claimed to have found archival evidence that an Ancient site on Mercury was discovered by Old Earth Union miners in 340. If so, all trace of the site at the location specified is now gone; it may have been a hoax.

Venus

The second planet from the sun is a barren world with a super dense carbon dioxide atmosphere. Greenhouse effects result in a surface pressure of over 90 atmospheres and a hellish average temperature of 425°C. In spite of these hostile conditions, an expedition in -1688 launched to explore a geological anomaly uncovered Ancients ruins. They were badly weathered due to the climate, mostly empty and held few clues as to their purpose, although various theories exist. One suggests that after the Final War broke out, Ancients engaged in long-term projects involving Terra constructed the Venus base as a hidden bunker. Another holds that Venus may have been a terraforming project intended to create a second Earth to house variant strains of Humaniti or Vargr. In 962, the University of

Terra's archaeology department and the Confederation's Ministry of Science and Technology initiated a detailed kilometre-by-kilometre densitometer grid search for deeply buried sites. The project was also intended to gather geological data to test the terraforming theory. Although interrupted by the Solomani Rim War, it has recently been restarted with Imperial Scout Survey support and University of Terra and Scout Service scientists monitor it from a station in Venus orbit.

Mars

The fourth planet from Sol has had a chequered history of settlement. During Terra's interplanetary period, a large scientific and later industrial colony was established on Mars. It thrived during the early Interstellar Wars period, reaching a population of 25 million and achieving the status of an independent state within the Terran Confederation in -2395. A terraforming project aimed at improving conditions on the surface was also initiated. Mars – along with Terra – was besieged and bombarded by a Vilani fleet during the Third Interstellar Wars and Mars never fully recovered, although the economy briefly improved after a major military base was established on the moon Deimos in -2222. The coup that established the Rule of Man and which stripped Terra of its political power also saw Mars decline in importance and by -2200 the base had been virtually abandoned. In fact, much of Deimos was eventually hollowed out and stripped by belters over the next four centuries. Mars itself lost population and industry until it was virtually abandoned in the Long Night. Its fortunes did not revive until around 400 when the Old Earth Union used newly acquired Imperial technology to revive the old terraforming program.

Under successive governments, the plan survived the dissolution of the Old Earth Union and continued under both the Imperium and Solomani Confederation. Although it may be thousands of years before Mars approaches a thin but breathable atmosphere – if it ever does – the original trace atmosphere is now rated as very thin. Economic revitalisation and resettlement proceeded in parallel with the terraforming. The Confederation also restored the core of Deimos as a major naval base. During the Invasion of Terra, the base on Deimos valiantly resisted the Imperial fleet for nearly two weeks until a squadron of battle tenders used towed planetoids as 'nutcrackers' to break it open. The government on Mars surrendered quickly and the capital at Candor Chasma was occupied, although cleaning up the orbital debris ring left by the destruction of Deimos took 15 years. Mars has been under military rule ever since, with the Ministry of Colonisation taking responsibility for the terraforming project until Terra achieves self-rule. An Imperial Marine garrison

is stationed at the former Solomani Army base on the Elysium Plateau, with responsibility for responding to off-Terra incidents throughout the solar system.

Asteroid Belt

The belt was settled as early as -2430 for mining and scientific research and its location far beyond any planetary gravity well provided the necessary environment for the Terran invention of the jump drive. Today, 2.3 million live in a dozen major asteroid habitats, including over 100,000 nomadic belters. The largest settlement is on Ceres and there is even a small enclave of uplifted Dolphins living in a humid zero-gravity environment.

Jupiter

During the early stages of the Solomani Rim War Jupiter's upper atmosphere and dark rings were the site of fierce battles between Imperial ships and Solomani system defence boats. Ganymede, the largest moon in the solar system, was once a major Terran colony and an abandoned underground city dating back to the late Confederation and early Rule of Man continues to interest archaeologists. Ganymede also houses the Zeus Institute, a branch of the University of Terra devoted to gas giant studies. Over the millennia, giant Jupiter has been one of the most-studied gas giants in Charted Space and is often used as a baseline for comparison of other gas giants.

Callisto contained a major Confederation military research laboratory deep beneath its ice. It was captured intact by a Marine Commando raid during the invasion of Terra but has since been sealed off. Naval Intelligence operates it now. Callisto is also an Imperial Navy fighter and system defence boat base that patrols the space around Jupiter and, to a lesser extent, the other gas giants.

Saturn

Known for its beautiful ring system, this gas giant's moons also house several research bases on its frozen moons. Enceladus is home to the Huygens Astrophysical Outpost that engages in classified work, while Rhea has the underground Cassini base, currently used by the Scout Service but with spaceport facilities dating back to First Interstellar War. Titan is the largest and most exotic of Saturn's moon and the second largest in the system. It has a dense nitrogen atmosphere,

lakes of liquid hydrocarbons and an average surface temperature of -179°C . Titan was once the location of a large colony involved in chemical processing, exporting atmospheric nitrogen to Luna, Mars and asteroids for use in agricultural fertiliser and life support. During Terra's pre-stellar era a short war, the first fought in space, took place around Titan, fought between a pan-Asian combine and multinational corporate forces. The exact motivations are lost to history. As on Mercury, there have long been conspiracy theories suggesting an Ancient base was found, predating Terra's contact with the Vilani, only to be destroyed in or after the fighting. With its dense atmosphere and low gravity, Titan does resemble some worlds inhabited by Droyne, who are often found in proximity to Ancients sites but no sites have yet been discovered. The old nitrogen-mining stations on Titan have long since been abandoned but one small domed habitat remains, a scientific station studying the phenomena of methane-based bacteriological life evolving in its lakes. Rather than being native to Titan, these seem to have been the result of contamination from industrial processes dating back to the abandonment of the original Titan colony in the Long Night. Millions of years in the future, when the sun increases in size to become a red giant, Titan will likely be warm enough to support Terran-style life.

Uranus and Neptune

The two outer gas giants both have city-sized installations on their largest moons. These are underpopulated at present, having been built as part of a recent project to support mining operations and other activity in the moon systems. A few small scientific and prospecting firms have shown interest but the expected influx of people and investment has not materialised. There are rumours that the Neptune installation may be bought out – at a very low price – by a scientific research foundation or set up as a specialist space and planetary sciences university.

Pluto

The Imperial Navy has taken over a Solomani Confederation military research laboratory on Pluto. Its purpose is unknown but rumours suggest jump drive navigation or long-baseline sensor technology, possibly coordinated with another, unknown, base elsewhere in the solar system. Pluto also once held a Confederation military prison.

ARCTURUS

The coreward portion of the Arcturus subsector was settled by Vilani during the First Imperium, although the present population is mostly of mixed stock. Racial problems were common under Solomani Party rule and in the post-war years these worlds have often been ruled by strongly anti-Solomani governments both at the local and Imperial levels. Michael hault-Shalimkakur, the present Duke of Arcturus, is one such; a fervently anti-Solomani leader of the exiled noble houses that returned to the Solomani Rim.

The region rimward from Lamarck is separated by a three-parsec gap from the rest of the worlds in Arcturus and has a very different character. It was first surveyed by a Terran fleet soon after the Ninth Interstellar War, following the Terran invention of the jump-3 drive. After the war some colonists arrived but most preferred to settle on more comfortable newly

conquered Vilani worlds. As a result, this part of the subsector remained a backwater throughout the Rule of Man and the Long Night. Some colonisation took place under the Old Earth Union around the year 300 but full settlement did not occur until after the creation of the Solomani Autonomous District and the pioneering spirit the Solomani Movement encouraged. As a result, the rimward population are almost entirely pure Solomani. Most are a hardy, independent lot, not given to extremism and contemptuous of the institution of Imperial nobility. Even so, they are not fanatical believers in the Solomani Cause and in the post-war era have mostly come to accept Imperial rule.

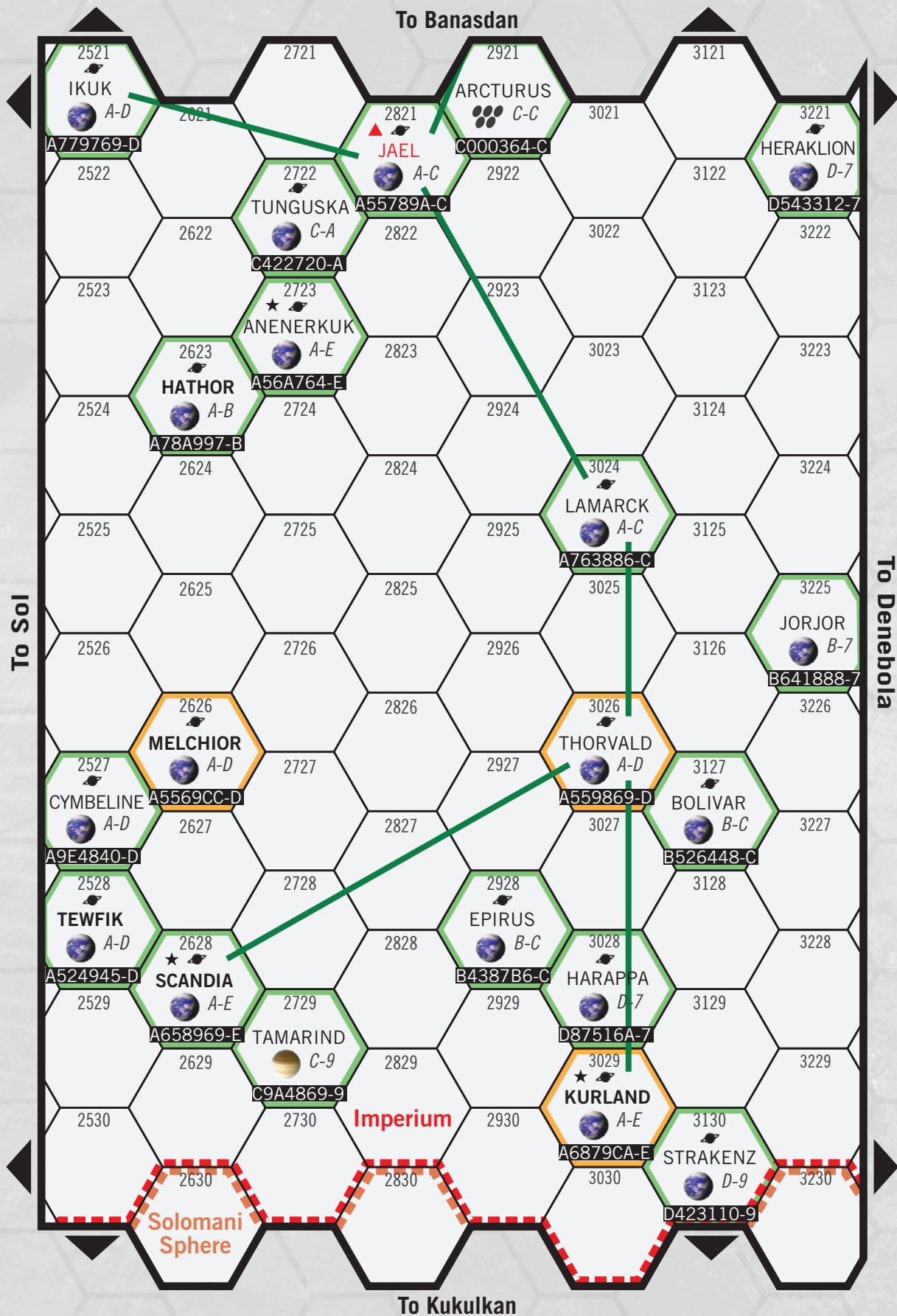
Cross-border trade with the Solomani Confederation is common, mostly involving free traders, often with crews of Solomani ethnicity but mixed Imperial and Solomani citizenship. Most are legal but some are

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|-----------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Anenerkuk | 2723 | N | A56A764-E | Ht Ri Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Arcturus | 2921 | | C000364-C | As Ht Lo Va | | Imperium | |
| Bolivar | 3127 | | B526448-C | Ht Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Cymbeline | 2527 | | A9E4840-D | Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Epirus | 2928 | | B4387B6-C | Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Harappa | 3028 | | D87516A-7 | Ga Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Hathor | 2623 | | A78A997-B | Hi Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Heraklion | 3221 | | D543312-7 | Lo Po | | Imperium | G |
| Ikuk | 2521 | | A779769-D | Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Jael | 2821 | W | A55789A-C | Ga Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Jorjor | 3225 | | B641888-7 | Po | | Imperium | |
| Kurland | 3029 | N | A6879CA-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Lamarck | 3024 | | A763886-C | Ht Ri | | Imperium | G |
| Melchior | 2626 | | A5569CC-D | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Scandia | 2628 | N | A658969-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Strackenz | 3130 | | D423110-9 | Lo Po | | Imperium | G |
| Tamarind | 2729 | | C9A4869-9 | FI Mr | | Imperium | |
| Tewfik | 2528 | | A524945-D | Hi Ht In | | Imperium | G |
| Thorwald | 3026 | | A559869-D | Ht Mr | A | Imperium | G |
| Tunguska | 2722 | | C422720-A | Na Po | | Imperium | G |



Solomani Rim

ARCTURUS SUBSECTOR



Gas Giant

B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level

Imperial Naval Base

Imperial Scout Way Station

Secure System

Amber Zone

X-Boat Route

Planet (dry)

Planet (water present)

Asteroid Belt

involved with the smuggling of arms or militants to support Solomani insurgents in other subsectors. The subsector fleet expends considerable effort on trying to suppress this trade but has not been particularly successful. The subsector fleet is roughly average in composition but more active than most, with generally better officers than would be assigned to a backwater subsector. The subsector fleet also has responsibility for the Imperial worlds in the Denebola subsector. In theory the 'Denebola Flotilla' is a self-contained command subordinate to the admiral at Anenerkuk but in practice whatever ships can be spared are sent trailingward into the Denebola subsector. 'Surges' are made when cross-border smuggling becomes particularly bad but otherwise the border region is under-patrolled.

The Arcturus subsector contains 20 worlds with a population of 35.6 billion. The highest population is 9.6 billion at Kurland.

ARCTURUS

The Arcturus Belt is a comparative backwater system with a small population of about 8,000. Most are miners employed by one of the mineral exploitation firms that operate in the belt. Licences to mine the belt are granted by representatives of the government of Banasdan, based in a government enclave at Wainwright Starport. Mining licenses have been restricted to larger corporations such as Lamarck Minerals and Triple-G Resources, which has caused resentment among locals, including riots in the belt's Station Two in 1061 and a recent outbreak of sabotage in 1098, but these activities seem strictly local and unrelated to any Solomani Movement activism. Order is maintained by the Banasdan Port Authority Police Patrol. So far the Banasdan authorities have been able to handle local problems, although they were made foolish for a time by the activities of a flamboyant pirate called Jon Eastern who raided company-owned ships and stations from 1069–71. Eastern and most of his men were killed in a gun battle with police as they left a brothel in Station Three but he remains an infamous figure in local folklore. Rumours of an undiscovered and abandoned planetoid base somewhere in the Arcturus Belt containing missing loot continue to draw the occasional treasure hunter to the system.

CYMBELINE

Cymbeline is a massive planet with a paradoxically thin atmosphere. Topography dominated by highlands with some mountain ranges and small seas and an

intricate network of canyons girdle the world near the equator, with branches running to large icecaps that cover each pole. There are clusters of volcanoes in the northern hemisphere and volcanic gases are important in replenishing the atmosphere; local bacteria have evolved that metabolise the components of these gases to release oxygen.

Because of the world's high gravity, the breathable portion of the atmosphere is concentrated in regions near or below sea level, as the air on Cymbeline at higher elevations is too thin to support human life. Most of the population lives below sea level in the capital Findor and in other cities in the canyon valleys or low-lying coastal areas. Local industries include mining, some light manufacturing and agriculture on the sunlit canyon slopes. There is also tourist trade and gas harvesting industry near the icecaps.

Cymbeline's bacteria include life forms capable of selectively metabolising compounds such as selenium, arsenic and gallium. Some controversial computer simulations have suggested elements in the volcanic gases can interact with silicon in the highlands to produce natural solar-powered semi-conductor circuits that could be harvested as a form of organic computer chip and might possess other electrical properties.

HERAKLION

The harshness of life on this poor non-industrial world has given its population a strong sense of self-reliance but also contributed to considerable violence and high levels of alcoholism and drug abuse. The major business here is mining, mixed with subsistence agriculture including a strong local whiskey. Heraklion is currently owned by Lamarck Minerals who operate most mining camps and own much of the planetary infrastructure.

Heraklion is a rough, poorly policed world inhabited by a mix of transients and permanent residents. Local males are famous as brawlers while the women of Heraklion are famous for carrying – and knowing how to use – distinctively shaped daggers. A woman of Heraklion caught without her dagger in public or deprived of it against her will is subjected to considerable shame and humiliation. This has been the source of some friction between local natives and transient female employees of Lamarck Minerals.

THE HERAKLION DAGGER

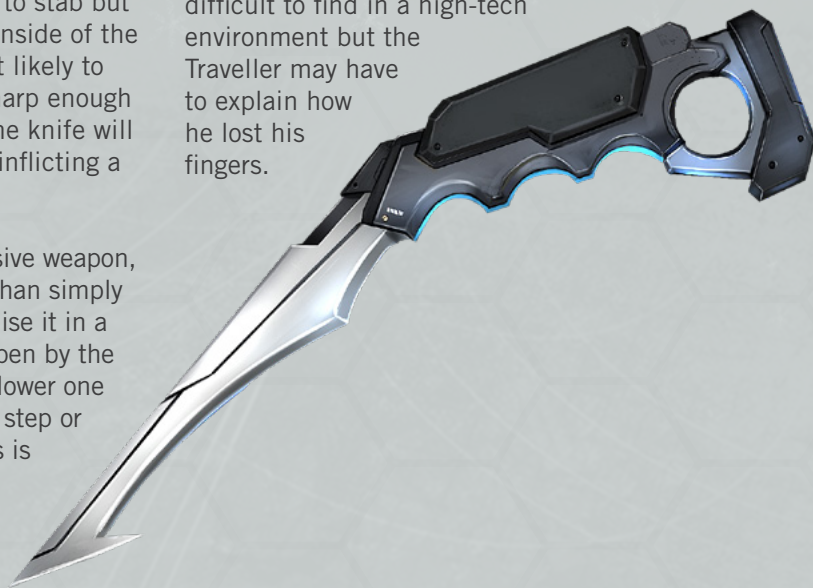
The Heraklion dagger is unusual in that it has a 90-degree hooked tip, much like some cargo knives, and is sharp on the 'false edge' rather than the usual primary cutting edge. When held in the hand, the sharp blade faces upward, towards the user's thumb. This is a secondary edge, sometimes used for outward 'flicking' cuts but primarily intended to prevent the knife blade from being grabbed in a fight.

The primary cutting edge is on the inside of the hooked tip, which curves downward when the knife is held. A Heraklion dagger cannot be used to stab but can make vicious slashing cuts with the inside of the curved blade. The hooked shape makes it likely to catch fingers or wrists and the point is sharp enough to enter a target's neck or face. Pulling the knife will lay the target open to the bone, possibly inflicting a fatal injury if the neck is targeted.

The Heraklion dagger is primarily a defensive weapon, designed to inflict horrific wounds rather than simply kill the target. Grabbing at one to immobilise it in a fight means risking having the hand cut open by the top blade and the fingers removed by the lower one but all the opponent needs to do is take a step or two back to be safe from the weapon. This is

precisely what it is designed for – it is a tool to punish aggression rather than a 'fighting knife'. That said, there are those who can artfully kill with it.

A Heraklion dagger is unlikely to be sold to an outsider – especially if they are not female. Any attack that rolls a natural 6 for damage also inflicts one point of damage to DEX on a permanent basis. This represents lost sections of tendon, severed fingers and other injuries that will not heal without restorative surgery or some form of replacement. This is not tremendously difficult to find in a high-tech environment but the Traveller may have to explain how he lost his fingers.



| Weapon | TL | Range | Damage | Kg | Cost | Magazine | Magazine Cost | Traits |
|---------------------|----|-------|--------|----|-------|----------|---------------|--------|
| Heraklionian Dagger | 2 | Melee | 1D+2 | 1 | Cr200 | — | — | — |

SCANDIA

Scandia has a thin but breathable atmosphere and shallow seas. An Imperial garrison of 150,000 troops has enforced military rule since the Solomani Rim War. Considerable cross-border trade exists but crews of Confederation-registered ships are restricted to the highport unless they can obtain special permission to visit the surface.

Scandia has two main industries: aquaculture and gravitics. Its oceans' rich fish stocks are managed by high-tech farming methods that use underwater signals to lure fish, rather than relying on conventional fishing fleets. Scandian fish are not very tasty but are highly nutritional. Processed Scandian fish and seaweed are

used in various staple foods by Scandia's population, with the excess exported to help feed the large populations of nearby Melchior, Tewfik and Kurland.

Scandia is also a centre for research, development and production of grav modules used in vehicles, robots and starships. For centuries its planetary corporations were key subcontractors for major Solomani Confederation consortiums, such as Panstellar, and during the Solomani Rim War the world was a major source of gravitics components for Confederation Army and Navy military equipment. The loss of Scandia during the Solomani Rim War adversely affected the Confederation gravitics industry – especially in the Capella and Kukulcan subsectors – often forcing suppliers to substitute components of lower TL. This has helped give Confederation gravitic vehicles a bad reputation.

The Imperium has taken care to nurture Scandia's gravitics industry with General Products in particular arranging contracts with planetary companies. Scandia's manufacturing and research facilities were and still are the largest employer on the planet. Certain components are subject to high tariffs when exported to the Solomani Confederation, which has been a bone of contention for some time. Clever redirection of exports is common, sometimes in a semi-legal manner and more commonly by false purchases and illicit trans-shipping.

Scandia has a nearly pure Solomani population and the majority still sympathise with the Solomani Cause. The strategic importance of Scandia as a gravitics component producer and food exporter, combined with its proximity to the border, leaves it vulnerable to Confederation infiltration. The Imperium maintains a sizable garrison that enforces military rule and so far stability has been maintained but the population are restive.

THORWALD

The densely forested tropical islands on this small but otherwise Earth-like world are home of one of the most unusual plant forms known: the Leyden tree. The planet

is prone to extremely violent storms and, to survive, the tree grows an internal metal lightning rod. When lightning strikes, the charge is deflected through a net of filaments into cellular capacitors where it is used to convert organic molecules from low to high energy forms, supplementing photosynthesis as an energy source. An electric storm over a Leyden forest is a spectacular sight but one best viewed from a safe distance.

Thorwald has large manufacturing, fishing and underwater mining industries. Leyden wood, if correctly harvested, is also a major export and has been used as a substitute for exotic composite materials due to its ability to carry and store electrical charges.

The world's population are pro-Solomani and still remain under military rule with an Imperial Army garrison. The people resent the occupation but there have been no mass rebellions, although underground Solomani Party activity and passive resistance are common. A few guerrilla bands continue a desultory armed struggle, striking targets under the cover of Leyden storms but they are more pirates and bandits than serious rebels.



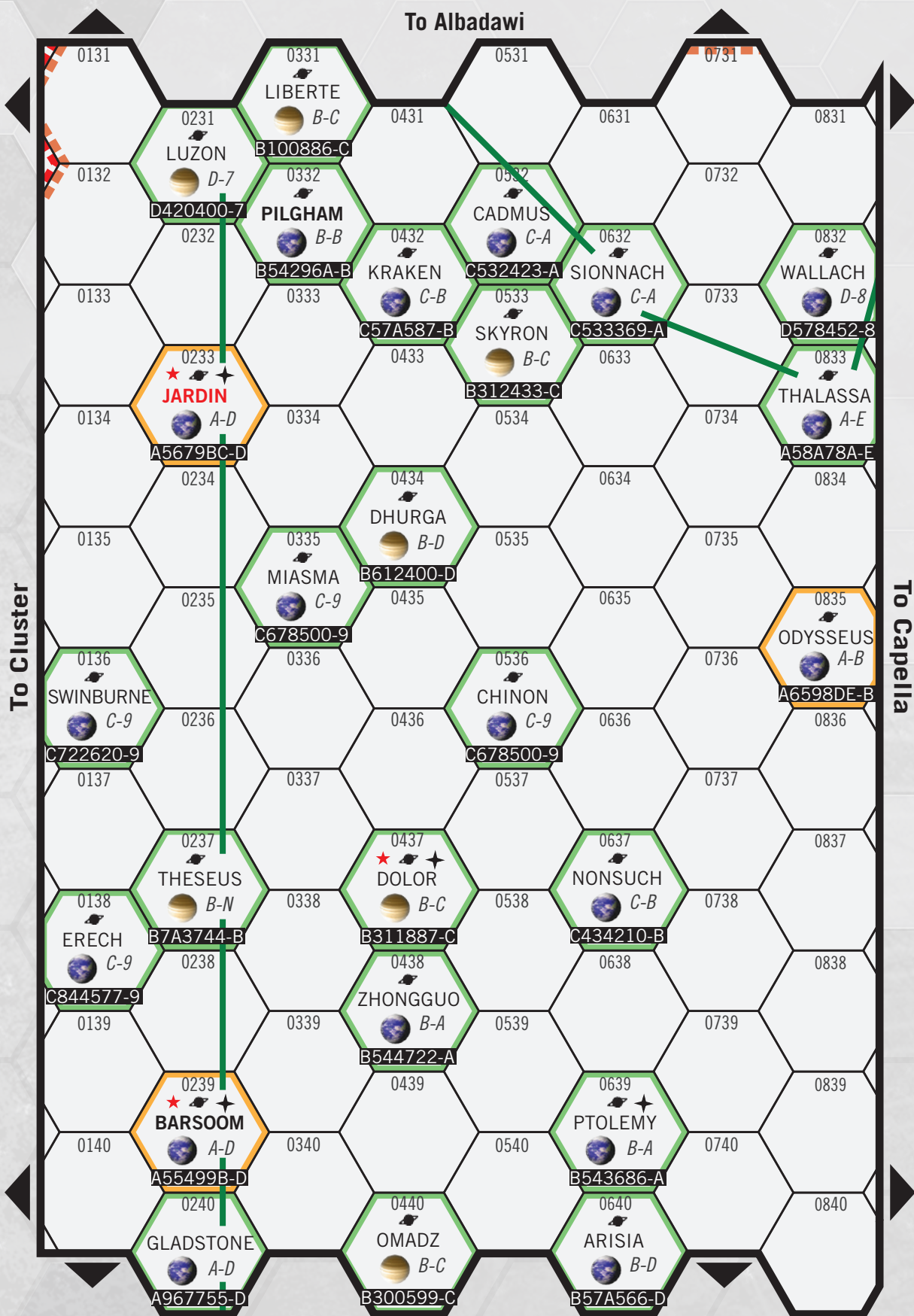
JARDIN

Settlement of Jardin came late, due to its paucity of habitable worlds. Most systems were settled by independent Solomani from the Sol, Albadawi and Capella subsectors between 450 and 850. Colonisation was carried out in a haphazard manner, resulting in some worlds suffering from under-investment and others becoming subject to conflict as rival powers emerged and vied for control of resource-rich areas. The scattered nature of the star systems in Jardin meant that local trade groupings never really emerged and the region remains a backwater to this day. The exception

to this is the cluster around Pilgham, which has seen significant investment in the hope of strengthening its Home Forces against Imperial aggression.

The subsector is named after the planet Jardin, one of the first worlds to be colonised. Jardin has always attempted to dominate the region and even after its military ambitions were thwarted by integration into the Solomani Autonomous Region it has continued to attempt to dominate less populous worlds both politically, as in the case of its colony at Pilgham, and

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|-----------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Arisia | 0640 | | B57A566-D | Ht Ni Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Barsoom | 0239 | F | A55499B-D | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Cadmus | 0532 | | C532423-A | Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Chinon | 0536 | | C696846-8 | Ga | | Solomani | G |
| Dolor | 0437 | F | B311887-C | Ht le Na | | Solomani | G |
| Durgha | 0434 | | B612400-D | Ht le Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Erech | 0138 | | C844577-9 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | |
| Gladstone | 0240 | | A967755-D | Ag Ga Ht Ri | | Solomani | |
| Jardin | 0233 | F | A5679BC-D | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Kraken | 0432 | | C57A587-B | Ni Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Liberte | 0331 | | B100886-C | Ht Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Luzon | 0231 | | D420400-7 | De Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Miasma | 0335 | | C678500-9 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Nonsuch | 0637 | | C434210-B | Lo | | Solomani | |
| Odysseus | 0835 | | A6598DE-B | | | Solomani | G |
| Ormadz | 0440 | | B300599-C | Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Pilgham | 0332 | | B54296A-B | Hi In Po | | Solomani | G |
| Ptolemy | 0639 | | B543686-A | Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Sionnach | 0632 | | C533369-A | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Skyron | 0533 | | B312433-C | Ht le Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Swinburne | 0136 | | C722620-9 | Na Ni Po | | Solomani | |
| Thalassa | 0833 | | A58A78A-E | Ht Ri Wa | | Solomani | |
| Theseus | 0237 | | B7A3744-B | Fl | | Solomani | G |
| Wallach | 0832 | | D578452-8 | Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Zhongguo | 0438 | | B544722-A | Ag Ga | | Solomani | G |



Solomani Rim

To Capella

JARDIN SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Military Base/Garrison
- Starport Class & Tech Level
- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- X-Boat Route
- Other Naval Base

economically. The other worlds of the subsector resent Jardin's attempts at hegemony but Secretariat votes are based on economic strength.

Worlds in the rimward end of the subsector are considered to be part of the Jardin-Cluster region and are of little importance. Lack of investment and disaffection with a variety of policies has simmered for years, finally boiling over into full-scale rebellion. Rebel groups and worlds all used the rallying cry 'Sirius Rising' but it is still not clear how much cooperation there actually was between the rebel worlds and a cabal of Confederation Navy officers who took the lead in attempting to secure the naval base at Barsoom. The rebellion was narrowly defeated by loyalist naval forces and unrest continues to simmer.

There may or may not be a connection between this abortive uprising and the 'Jardin Syndicate' whose members include organised crime groups and pirates. Investigation into both the Sirius Rising movement and the Jardin Syndicate continues, with SolSec and other agencies making slow progress in dismantling some of the larger crime rings.

The Pilgham Economic Security Zone dominates the coreward end of the subsector. It has seen significant investment in recent years, although this came with strings attached. Local governments were required to increase their Home Forces, by spending in proportion to the investment received, and to create a central command structure for a local defensive force they would all contribute to. This measure has worked reasonably well; the Pilgham Economic Security Zone is militarily stronger than previously. However, the dictator of Jardin continues to insist that he should lead this initiative as his is the most important world in the area – indeed, Pilgham itself is a colony of Jardin. This is not desirable to the Secretariat but Jardin's influence is powerful and the dictator cannot be prevented from lobbying for control of the defensive force.

The Jardin subsector contains 25 worlds with a population of 10.2 billion. The highest population is 4.2 billion at Jardin.

JARDIN

Jardin is an unusually small garden world, colonised in 450 by a coalition of military adventurers and entrepreneurs from the Old Earth Union who wished to escape assimilation into the Third Imperium. Their well-funded colony quickly established a large industrial base and developed imperialist ambitions. By 705 Jardin had conquered four nearby worlds and was well on its way

to establishing a pocket empire. Worried neighbours petitioned the newly formed government of the Solomani Autonomous Region for military assistance which, eager to flex its muscles, assembled a powerful fleet – led by contingents from Kidashi, Krypton and Alizarin – and brought the Jardinese to heel. A Solomani Party government was installed.

Over time, Jardinese resentment faded and the population came to enthusiastically support the Solomani Cause. Ultimately, Jardin took the lead in integrating the rest of the subsector into the Solomani Movement under its leadership and partially fulfilled its dreams of hegemony. Only Pilgham has remained under the direct control of Jardin but several other worlds had periods of Jardinese overlordship under various guises. These ranged from 'assistance programmes' that essentially dictated to the world government to direct rulership, which came to an end due to economic or political factors.

Despite a few tries at democracy, a militaristic and authoritarian streak has persisted in the culture of Jardin. The world went through several increasingly totalitarian Solomani Party governments between 705 and 850 and stability was eventually achieved under the regime of Marine Cartier whose *faction perfectionniste eugénique* gained control after the violent Solomani Party congress of 844. Its obsessive quest for the Perfect Solomani Human eventually succeeded in abolishing the family unit itself. Today, all Jardinese except a self-described 'already-perfect' elite have mates chosen for them via the government's Eugenics Bureau and children are raised in state-run crèches. It is a measure of the skill of Jardin's social scientists that they have managed to keep this system functional for nearly 200 years.

Jardin's security services – known as Social Solidarity – keeps a close eye on those of its citizens who work or serve elsewhere in the Confederation, lest they bring back counter-perfectionist ideas. The eugenics programmes on Jardin are assisted by the Solomani Confederation's Ministry of Genetics, which has used its vast database to regulate and monitor the programme without taking position on its overall value. It is widely rumoured that the ministry views Jardin as a long-term experiment, allowing it to learn about the consequences of such a programme without taking responsibility for them.

Supreme President Leo Duprey is the dictator of Jardin, a former head of its Ministry of Social Solidarity. Imperial media have demonised him as the stereotypical Solomani Party dictator, a role he appears to enjoy living up to. He is a leader of the Solomani Party's Purist

faction and cordially disliked by Rim Federalists. He seems more than usually fervent in his desire to become a subsector-wide ruler; not only does he demand control over the Home Forces of the Pilgham region but he also campaigns endlessly for 'his' allocation of warships due to be built under the Iron Gate programme to be assigned to 'his' naval base and to be permitted to use his forces to eradicate the Sirius Rising movement from the subsector. There are those who wonder if success in that area might be leveraged into control over the whole region on a permanent basis.

KRYPTON

Krypton is the site of an extremely restrictive dictatorship, although one that accepts some input from the citizenry. A dictator is elected every 10 years by a straight vote among all Solomani Party members. In practice there is a small ruling class of high-level officials; no dictator has ever been elected from outside this group. However, a hard-working and dedicated young Party member can dream of becoming a member of the elite and might achieve high office before retirement. This, and strong social control programmes, ensures widespread support of the dictator and the Solomani Cause. The presence of Imperial battleships juts over the horizon – or so local media would have everyone believe – also creates a 'better us as we are, than them' attitude.

Krypton has large and well-equipped Home Forces, with several units equipped to Home Guard status. These are generously loaned to nearby worlds or placed at the disposal of Confederation commanders and have an excellent reputation for professionalism and political reliability. Elsewhere the epithet 'more like SolSec than SolSec' might seem like a slur but it is a badge of honour to the soldiers of Krypton. The announcement, in 1099, that Krypton Home Forces would no longer be required to maintain political officers, was greeted with wild celebration. Such a demonstration of loyalty rewarded by trust is virtually unheard-of.

The combination of location and unshakable loyalty to the cause made Krypton the obvious choice as a base for a regional fleet. The dictator of Jardin disagreed but despite vigorous lobbying was unable to persuade the Secretariat to base the local fleet at Jardin. He did manage to get his homeworld designated an Iron Gate base along with Krypton, which absorbed funds intended for warships. The regional designation was another minor triumph. At the time it seemed petty to want the region designated as the Pilgham Economic Security Zone but the dictator of Jardin now gets to refer to its fleet as 'his', as it is named for his colony at Pilgham.

On the face of it this is of little consequence but a habit is being built of assuming the dictator of Jardin controls the Pilgham fleet.

The Pilgham Economic Security Zone fleet itself is a typical border force. The naval base at Krypton is assigned a modest amount of patrol vessels including frigates and a couple of light carriers. These patrol the cluster and the worlds just to trailing of it. The fleet has a warfighting element that is, for the most part, kept concentrated and is used to deal with major problems or to 'show the flag' along the border. At need the fleet's commanding officer can co-opt patrol elements to assist but they are not well suited to the role. Home Forces warships are more commonly seen operating with the Confederation Navy's destroyers and cruisers than the frigates of the patrol force. This clear split between security and warfighting elements is repeated in most areas of the Confederation.

ODYSSEUS

The population figures of this small world are somewhat deceptive as two-thirds of the citizens are not active but rather in cryogenic sleep. They belong to the Church of the Sleeping Saints – the 'Frozen Chosen', as they are derogatively referred to by unbelievers. Believers enter suspended animation on their 38th birthday, known the 'age of spiritual maturity', as part of a process that cleanses them of their sins. Church dogma holds that during a future apocalypse these Sleeping Saints will arise to lead the Armada of the Awakened against unbelievers. Since the 800s the Church has been dominated by the Solomani Party and teaches that the Awakening will be triggered by the collapse of the Imperium. Despite these unusual beliefs, Odysseus is quite productive. The world is known for its high-grade superconductor and jump drive manufacturing industries, with much of what other societies would spend on care for their elderly and sick going into creating and supporting the vast, beautifully decorated subterranean galleries that house the sleeping faithful. These are open to properly respectful visitors and are an awe-inspiring sight.

PTOLEMY

This poor non-industrial world possesses native life including a few hundred species of exotic mammals, birds, insects and fish, and several thousand species of reptiles. Oddly enough, a few species of higher mammalian life has a different morphology – four limbs rather than six – and genetics suggestive of extra-Ptolemaic origin.



Ptolemy was colonised in -2392 by the Terran Confederation and has existed quietly for most of its history. During the Solomani Rim War it was the site of a Confederation Army rear-area hospital and rest-and-recuperation centre. A few veterans have since returned and established businesses that invigorated the local economy. There are numerous small to mid-sized businesses that can trace their history back to a programme of subsidies for the ventures of veterans and not all of them can prove their origins. Indeed, there are many businesses whose past is suspiciously vague, yet the world government does not seem inclined to investigate too closely. This has led to accusations the world government is supporting or harbouring organisations connected to the Jardin Syndicate, although no clear evidence has ever been presented.

A century ago, prospectors discovered ruins of two cities deeply buried under the equatorial desert sands. Initially believed to be of Vilani origin, they have been dated back 50,000 years, making them too young to be of Ancients origin yet too old to be Vilani. Fossil evidence for a native sophont race on the planet is lacking. One theory has proposed the Builders, as they are known, were an unknown race that originated beyond the Aldebaran sector. Archaeological digs are proceeding slowly, as Confederation funding dried up after it appeared the site was not of Ancients origin. Few functional relics have been recovered; those that have suggest the Builders were a TL9 race at the time they created the cities.

CAPELLA

This subsector is named for the bright quadruple star system Capella, consisting of two yellow giants and two red dwarfs in close proximity, the sixth brightest star in Terra's night sky. It is dominated by the Near Boötes Cluster, one of only a few groupings to be known as a cluster despite there being a one-parsec gap through it. The term is more commonly applied to a grouping of star systems that can be navigated by a jump-1 vessel. The Near Boötes Cluster is an exception in other ways, too. Most of the rimward quarter of the Solomani Rim remained unsettled until relatively recent times but this unusually rich group was settled immediately upon their discovery early in the Rule of Man.

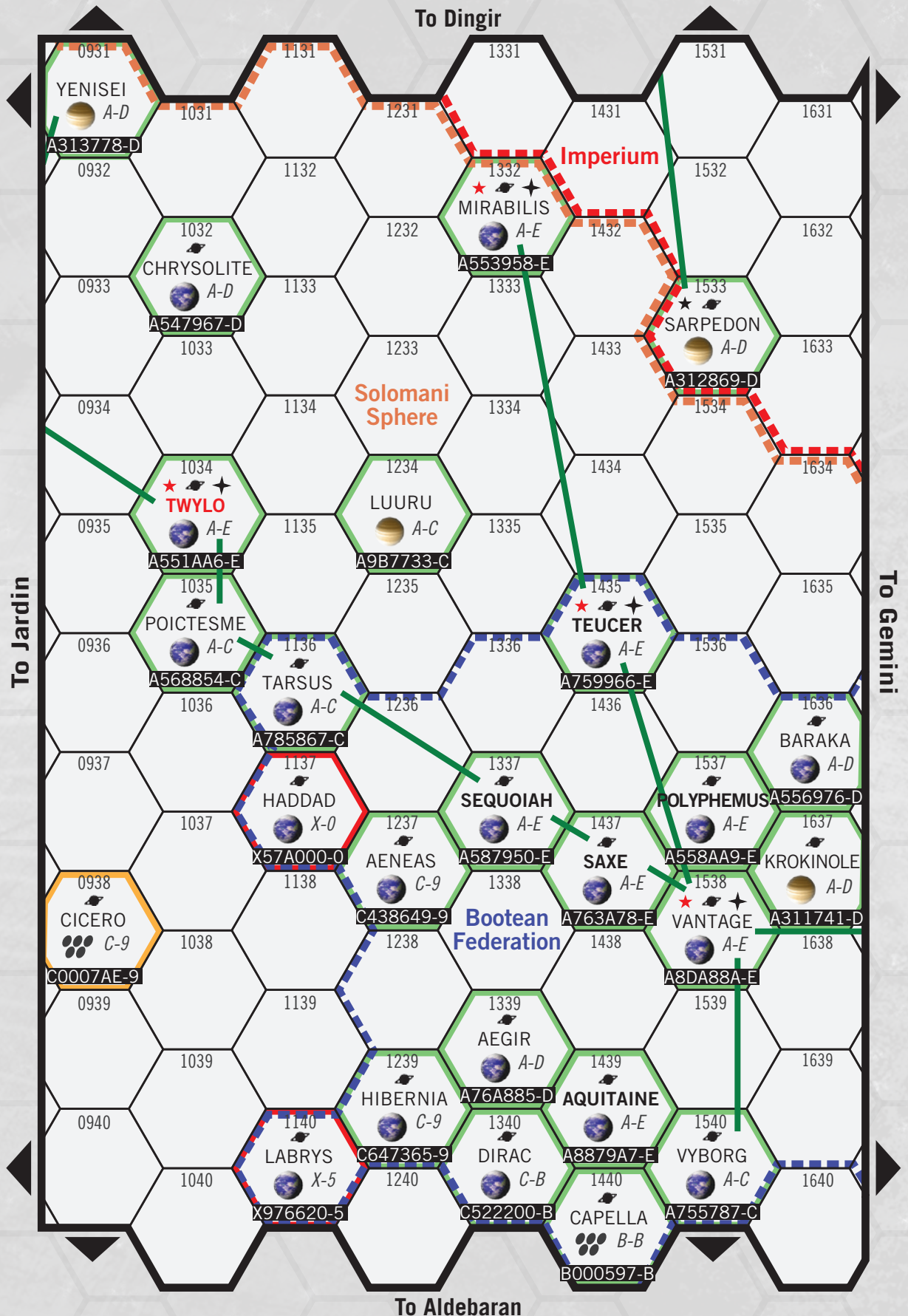
The worlds of the cluster dominate the Capella and Gemini subsectors both economically and politically. Boötean merchant interests have considerable influence in the Confederation government, which does much to account for the present unofficial détente. The prevalent local attitude places trade, stability and economic well-being ahead of other political agendas and is viewed with suspicion in areas where relations with the Imperium are less cordial. At times the Near Boötes Cluster is referred to as the 'consumerism conduit' through which Imperial cultural imperialism floods into the Confederation.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Aegir | 1339 | | A76A885-D | Ht Ri Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Aeneas | 1237 | | C438649-9 | Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Aquitaine | 1439 | | A8879A7-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Baraka | 1636 | | A556976-D | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Capella | 1440 | | B000597-B | As Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Chrysolite | 1032 | | A547967-D | Ga Hi Ht In | | Solomani | G |
| Cicero | 0938 | | C0007AE-9 | As Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Dirac | 1340 | | C522200-B | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Haddad | 1137 | | X57A000-0 | Ba Lt Wa | R | Solomani | G |
| Hibernia | 1239 | | C647365-9 | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Krokinole | 1637 | | A311741-D | Ht le Na | | Solomani | G |
| Labrys | 1140 | | X976620-5 | Ag Ga Lt Ni | R | Solomani | G |
| Luuru | 1234 | | A9B7733-C | Fl Ht | | Solomani | |
| Mirabilis | 1332 | F | A553958-E | Hi Ht Po | | Solomani | G |
| Poictesme | 1035 | | A568854-C | Ga Ht Ri | | Solomani | G |
| Polyphemus | 1437 | | A558AA9-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Sarpedon | 1433 | N | A312869-D | Ht le Na | | Imperium | G |
| Saxe | 1437 | | A763A78-E | Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Sequoyah | 1337 | | A587950-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Tarsus | 1136 | | A785867-C | Ga Ht Ri | | Solomani | G |
| Teucer | 1435 | F | A759966-E | Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Twylo | 1034 | F | A551AA6-E | Hi Ht Po | | Solomani | G |
| Vantage | 1438 | F | A8DA88A-E | Ht Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Vyborg | 1440 | | A755787-C | Ag Ga Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Yenisei | 0931 | | A313778-D | Ht le Na | | Solomani | |



Solomani Rim

CAPELLA SUBSECTOR



- Gas Giant
- Starport Class & Tech Level
- Imperial Naval Base
- Other Naval Base
- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- Red Zone
- X-Boat Route
- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Asteroid Belt
- Military Base/Garrison

All worlds in Capella except Sarpedon belong to the Solomani Confederation. The most influential politician in the subsector is Andromeda Djones, leader of the Rim Federalist faction within the Secretariat and member of the Vantage delegation. She is a protégé of Regina Rogachova, the current Confederation High Council Minister of Economics, and considered likely to succeed her in the event of retirement. Djones has crafted the policy that kept the Near Boötes Cluster worlds out of the Thetis/Laptua/Kukulcan dispute, while at the same time working quietly for better trade relations with the Imperium. She has also narrowly survived two assassination attempts by militant Solomani Movement fanatics who consider her overly pro-Imperial.

Responsibility for defence of the subsector officially rests with the Home Forces of the Boötes Federation, backed up by forward-deployed assets of the Confederation Navy if any are available. In practice, Vantage is home to the primary Confederation naval base for the Solomani Rim. Its forces are primarily defensive in nature, including a significant force of battle rider/monitors intended to deploy to threatened systems as needed. In any major conflict, the Capella subsector would be strongly held and used as a jumping-off point for raids into Sol and Dingir.

The Capella subsector contains 25 worlds with a population of 122.3 billion. The highest population is 30 billion at Twylo.

SAXE

Saxe is a pleasant terrestrial world with a dense atmosphere. A member of the Near Boötes Cluster, it was originally colonised during the Rule of Man by ethnic European immigrants from Germany and Spain. Early struggles against a deadly species of near-invisible forest beasts, known as waldgeists, enliven the planet's colonial folklore, although today they are only found in a few wilderness regions. During the Long Night, cultural divisions led to the balkanisation of the planet into seven different nations; the largest and most powerful are Mondragon and New Bavaria.

The planet's major starport, Weishaupt Down, is located in New Bavaria. It is the headquarters of Saxe Transport, the subsector's largest merchant firm and the self-proclaimed home of the best beer in the Solomani Confederation. Mondragon is the least stable of the major nations, bitterly divided between secularists and supporters of the Solomani Catholic Church, a religious group that originated in Alpha Crucis but established itself on Saxe in 940. Diplomats from Polyphemus and Teucer, and SolSec agents, have been busy on the world attempting to avert a civil war that might seriously harm the interests of the Confederation but the implication

of SolSec in the assassination of a radical Solomani Catholic Church bishop seems to have done more harm than good.

VANTAGE

Vantage is one of the worlds in the Near Boötes Cluster. Its atmosphere, too thick for humans near the surface, is breathable at high altitudes. However, unlike most such worlds, Vantage has no mountains of sufficient height to create a habitable area. As a result the population lives almost entirely in the air, in impressive cloud cities supported by grav generators.

Vantage was settled early in the Rule of Man, around -1800. It is a generally peaceable place, perhaps due to the unusual living circumstances of the population. The citizenry are a pleasant, self-reliant lot who enjoy aerial sports such as ballooning, sky hunting and grav belting. Given the dangers inherent in these activities, it is not surprising that the people of Vantage favour teamwork and mutual trust even among those who have just met.

The planetary government is a loose confederation of independent sky cities, most of them corporate or democratic in nature, organised under a planetary civil service that regulates wider matter such as traffic control and ecological management. Over 99% of the population are pure Solomani and an adult who so wishes can automatically join Vantage's Solomani Party and vote or run for office, or apply for a position within the civil bureaucracy. About a third of the adult population are Party members – an unusually high percentage. Vantage's delegates to the Confederation Secretariat are chosen by planet-wide election by all Party members. They are leaders among the moderate Near Boötes Cluster and the Rim Federalist faction within the Secretariat.

Vantage boasts a complex and diverse aquatic ecosystem but even more impressive is its free-floating aerial ecology. A wide variety of creatures live at different altitudes but most are natural aerostats rather than winged flyers. These creatures trap hydrogen gas to produce buoyancy and range from floating sky-plankton to giant kilometre-long cloud beasts. Vantage's economy is based around exploitation of this ecosystem. The aerial plankton and animals are harvested, farmed or hunted for food and many of them also produce exotic biochemical secretions that have proven useful as the basis for valuable pharmaceuticals, from broad-spectrum anti-cancer and antiviral drugs, to psi drugs and even anagathics – and also narcotics illegally produced by local criminal organisations. Vantage is a focus of the Confederation's biochemical industry and a major exporter of both raw biochemicals and refined drugs. In addition to biologicals, Vantage is also a major technological centre

WALDGEISTS

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------|-------|
| Gaeon | 20 | 8m |
| SKILLS | Melee 0, Recon 1, Stealth 3, Survival 1 | |
| ATTACKS | Knife (1D+3) or stick (2D) | |
| TRAITS | Camouflaged, Heightened Senses | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Omnivore, Hunter/Gatherer | |



The Waldgeist is native to Saxe. It has mistakenly been referred to as having chameleon-like abilities but this is not quite the case. Waldgeists are best described as 'feathered primates' who can fluff up their feathers or sleek them down at will. This softens the outline of a Waldgeist to the point where the human eye has trouble finding a reference point. Coupled with their pale grey-green colouration, this ability allows a Waldgeist to be extremely obvious to the eye one second then virtually invisible, vanishing into the background much like a human in a ghillie suit. Their light grey-green colouration is easily visible in good lighting but in twilight or the dimness of a forest it disappears into the background at surprisingly short distances. This is also possible in some forms of artificial light. Small wonder, then, that the early human settlers on Saxe compared these creatures to forest spirits or ghosts.

Waldgeists are not aggressive creatures but will fight when frightened or cornered. They are also prone to stealing objects from human settlements, whether they can use them or not. Typically an object will be investigated, an attempt made to eat it or use it as a tool and then it will be discarded. The Waldgeists' curiosity will soon be piqued by something else, however. Thus these creatures are forever intruding into nearby settlements, with occasionally violent results.

Attempts to run groups of them off have gone badly awry, leading to an undeserved reputation for violence.

Standing around 1.5 metre tall, with long human-like limbs and a narrow head featuring large eyes and even larger ears, Waldgeists resemble something out of Terran mythology. They are omnivorous but prefer small prey and are smart enough to make traps to catch them. This has led to nervous humans believing they are being hunted, especially since Waldgeists will happily steal food from human traps, farms or even the unlocked larder of a frontier farmstead.

with a particularly well-developed computer industry. However, it is a heavy importer of raw materials due to the difficulty of sustaining economically viable mining operations on or under the ocean.

The 'ground' forces of Vantage are organised as security and airspace-defence units on a city-by-city basis, whilst the naval Home Forces are a unified force with contingents from all sky-cities serving aboard system defence boats and fighters. Vantage also has a force of jump-capable warships, which typically operate within the local cluster, and it cooperates closely with both the Confederation Navy and other Near Boötes Cluster worlds in matters of defence. Its citizens, brought up from birth to think three-dimensionally, have produced many famous pilots and military tacticians. The world is also known for its dramatic and colourful annual New Year's Day balloon race.

Vantage Naval Base

The Vantage system is home to the Confederation's strategic reserve force for the Solomani Rim. This includes a modest rapid-reaction force consisting mainly of battlecruisers and destroyers plus a heavy defensive force of rider/monitors that can be deployed by tender as needed. At least a portion of this force will be held back in the Vantage system to defend the naval installations there, which are also protected by forts and system defence boat squadrons.

The system's four gas giants are heavily mined, although the minefields are normally in monitoring-only mode and routinely patrolled by vessels operating out of orbital installations or bases on the giants' moons. Small bases exist across the system, some of them concealed. These are intended as shelters and repair installations for system defence boats that would harass the enemy in the event of a system-wide siege. Small raiding craft could also use these bases to attack Imperial shipping in other systems. There are also several asteroid

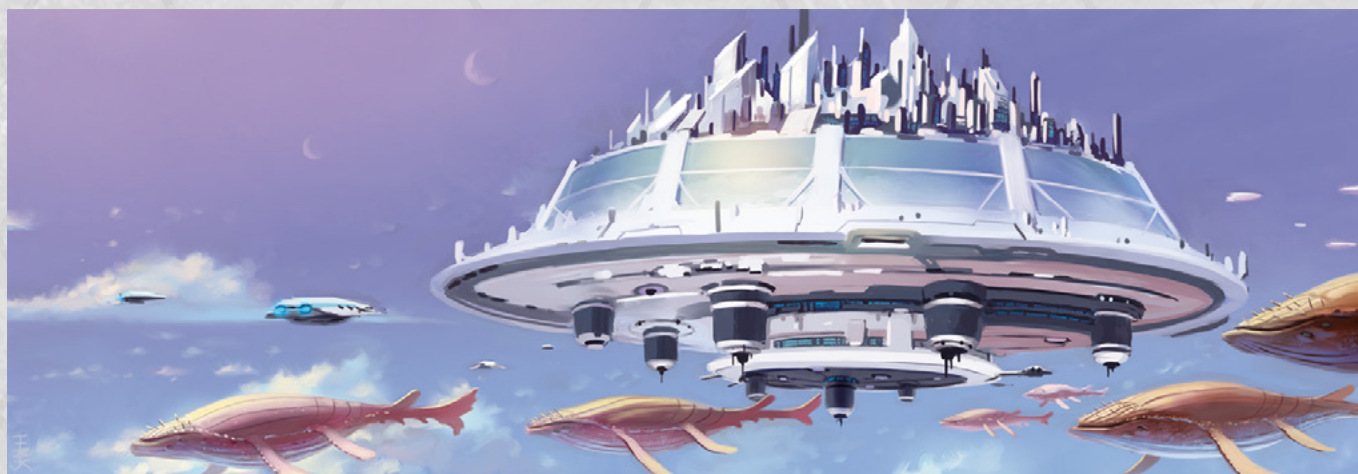
fortresses, fitted with sufficient manoeuvre drive capability to be able to move slowly across the system, which mount their own heavy weapons and act as bases for yet more fighters and SDBs.

The defences of the Vantage system are sufficiently heavy that it is known as one of the Twelve Great Forts, however this use of the term is inaccurate. In fact, Great Fort status applies only to Solomani Confederation Navy Naval Installation Vantage, Primary Site. This vast asteroid fortress is more typically known simply as Vantage One.

Vantage One is possibly the largest mobile asteroid fortress in the Solomani Confederation. It mounts multiple deep-site meson gun systems and the largest missile battery known to exist, along with docking cradles for vessels up to the size of a battleship. Its fighter and gunboat complement is enormous and includes the Naval Strike Forces' torpedo school and fighter combat centre of excellence. Unsurprisingly, many of the instructors and top graduates come from Vantage itself. It is a measure of the regard with which the Vantage One training programme is held, that graduates traditionally cannot be censured for adding the unofficial third line to the Strike Forces' motto:

**In Fast
Strike Hard
Out is Optional**

The grim humour of the last line is frowned upon by the powers that be and is 'unofficial, unauthorised and to be discouraged'. It is in common use, unofficially and among friends, but someone who has passed the notoriously difficult advanced training programme at Vantage can get away with saying it in front of the brass. Or at least, there is an unspoken 'no official censure' rule in place. It would take a brave pilot to chance it but only the bravest are accepted for the strike training programme at Vantage.



GEMINI

The Gemini subsector, named for the bright stars Castor and Pollux, is split between the Imperium and the Solomani Confederation. Early settlement came from the Sol subsector during the late Rule of Man era and focused on the Near Boötes Cluster worlds of adjacent Capella. These already-settled worlds colonised others during the Solomani period. The population of the Gemini subsector is almost completely pure Solomani; the main exceptions are a few worlds like Hamilcar and Calgary, which also have uplifted Dolphins.

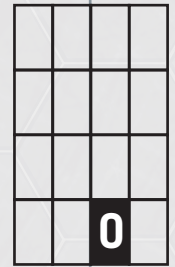
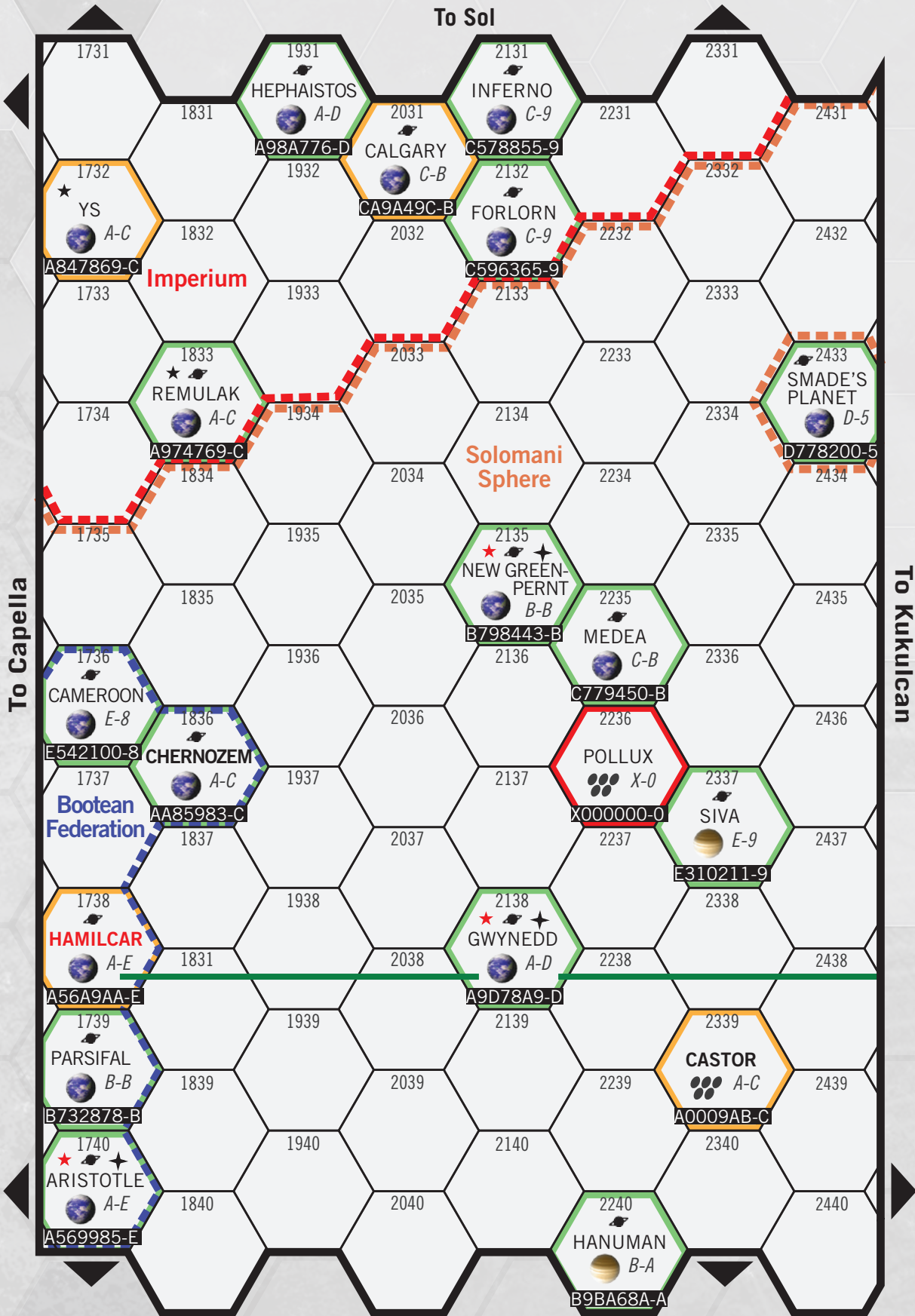
The Imperial portion is a political appendage of the Sol subsector, with the Imperial Navy wielding significant influence. Military rule is unlikely to be lifted on Ys or Remulak any time soon due to their importance as naval bases and the presence of a strong Solomani Party-sponsored underground resistance movement. The Sector Duke of Dingir has been encouraging Imperial

immigration into worlds of Gemini, particularly Inferno and rich but under populated Hephaistos, in order to bind them more closely to the Imperium.

The Solomani portion of the subsector is split by the Gemini Gap, which makes communications between the Near Boötes Cluster and the important worlds of Kukulcan subsector troublesome. As a result those worlds on the far side of the Gemini Gap from the Near Boötes Cluster are heavily influenced by worlds of Kukulcan subsector, notably Thetis and to a lesser extent Laputa. Those on the Capella side of the gap are part of the Boötean Federation.

There are no significant Confederation Navy forces based in Gemini. The naval base at Gwynedd is primarily concerned with communications across the Gemini Gap, although it has a secondary function as an intelligence

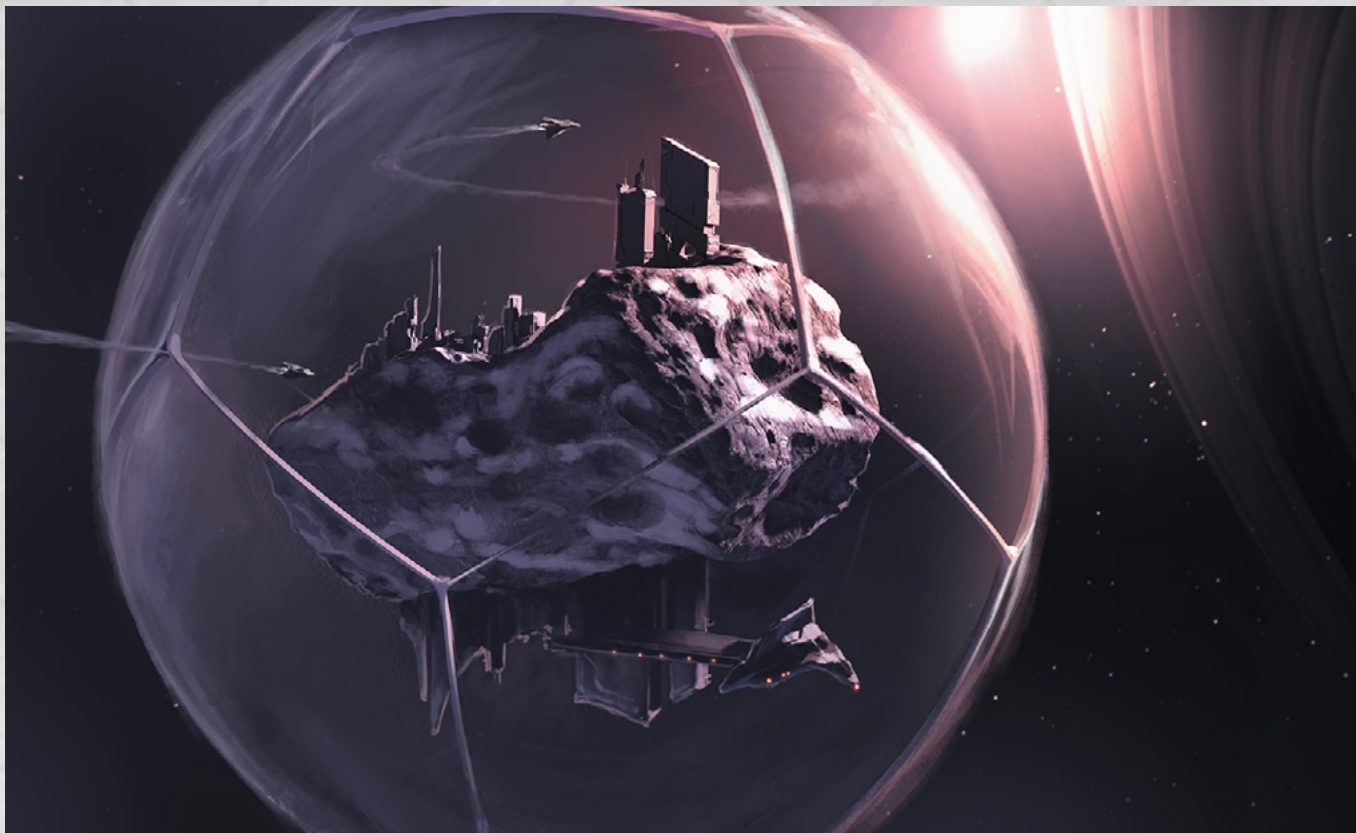
| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|----------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Aristotle | 1740 | F | A569985-E | Hi Ht | | Solomani | |
| Calgary | 2031 | | CA9A49C-B | Ni Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Cameroon | 1736 | | E542100-8 | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Castor | 2339 | | A0009AB-C | As Hi Ht In Na Va | | Solomani | |
| Chernozem | 1836 | | AA85983-C | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Forlorn | 2132 | | C596365-9 | Ga Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Gwynedd | 2138 | F | A9D78A9-D | Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Hamilcar | 1738 | | A56A9AA-E | Hi Ht Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Hanuman | 2240 | | B9BA68A-A | Fl Ni Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Hephaistos | 1931 | | A98A776-D | Ht Ri Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Inferno | 2131 | | C578855-9 | Ga | | Imperium | G |
| Medea | 2235 | | C779450-B | Ni | | Solomani | G |
| New Greenpernt | 2135 | F | B798443-B | Ga Ni An | | Solomani | G |
| Parsifal | 1739 | | B732878-B | Na Po | | Solomani | G |
| Pollux | 2236 | | X000000-0 | As Ba Lt Va | R | Solomani | |
| Remulak | 1833 | N | A974769-C | Ag Ga Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Siva | 2337 | | E310211-9 | Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Smade's Planet | 0833 | | D778200-5 | Ga Lo Lt | | Imperium | G |
| Ys | 1732 | N | A847869-C | Ga Ht | A | Imperium | |



Solomani Rim

GEMINI SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- Imperial Naval Base
- Other Naval Base
- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- Red Zone
- X-Boat Route
- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Asteroid Belt
- Military Base/Garrison



collation and analysis centre. At any given time a handful of frigates may be based there, conducting patrols across the subsector, and of course the base could support a larger force if one were deployed. It was not, however, selected to be part of the Iron Gate strategy and has not been updated in decades.

The Gemini subsector contains 19 worlds with a population of 26.4 billion. The highest population is 9.8 billion at Chernozem.

HAMILCAR

The water world of Hamilcar was the first planet in the Near Boötes Cluster to elect a Solomani Party government. Its primitive oceans were seeded with Terran sea life, which are now dominant species. A few of the human inhabitants dwell on small islands but most live in underwater domes or mobile semi-submersible cities. However, about 13% of the population are uplifted Dolphins; their representatives enjoy associate status in the planetary government. Hamilcar is a major governmental centre and the subsector headquarters of several Confederation ministries, as well as SolSec.

The iconic children's science-fantasy video series *Plastic Bag Planet* (Boötes Productions, 782) created by native Dolphin author Elele Naravas, was set on a strangely

re-imagined version of Hamilcar as modified by the Ancients. A bootleg edition of the video series became popular in the Imperium; tourists still arrive asking where the 'plastic bag that holds the air in' has gone or if there are Gurungan pirates in the ocean. Such was the popularity of this series that in 1092 the dictator of Hamilcar ordered the world's new highport be built on a similar model; an asteroid with an atmosphere held in by a transparent ultra-high-strength polymer bag. It was completed in 1100; Hamilcar Naravas Highport, or Bagport as the locals refer to it, has since become a popular tourist destination and convention centre, also hosting the world's Solomani Party congress.

HEPHAISTOS

Hephaistos is one of the few completed terraforming projects in the Imperium. Begun during the Interstellar Wars, the project was abandoned and resumed several times. More recently the project was taken up by the Hephaistos Company, which was created in 632 for the purpose of completing the terraforming operation. This has, officially at least, been done and the world was opened up in 835. In fact, the Hephaistos Company is still engaged in work to remove taints from the oceans and atmosphere and it is probable that without ongoing efforts Hephaistos may begin to revert to its former conditions.

Since 832 sections of the planet have been sold to a number of groups. Some enclaves are quite small, providing a homeland for religious or cultural groups. Others are city-states with a specific purpose, such as housing the headquarters of a business group. There are some proto-nations on Hephaistos, typically with a population of a million or so, but overall the world is of minor importance.

INFERNO

Inferno was one of the earliest colonies established in the subsector, due to its proximity to Terra. The world resembles a primordial Earth, with an atmosphere filled with thick clouds and unbreathable levels of carbon dioxide. A resultant greenhouse effect produces unbearably hot surface temperatures that can reach up to 70°C along the equator, so most of the world's civilisation clusters around the more temperate poles. Native animal life has not evolved past insect-equivalents but Inferno is covered by a dense dark-green jungle, which thrives in the carbon-dioxide rich environment. The forest canopy can be thick enough that very little light penetrates to the floor below and native insects are blind and rely on sound or smell rather than vision, to hunt.

Inferno's trees and vines need to grow tall to reach sunlight. Many plants and the native flying insects leech metals from the soil, incorporating them for structural support. The metal-laced natural fibres that can be harvested from the trees were the original basis of the planet's exports, although the present economy is now well diversified. Local industries often use powdered metals extracted from plant fibre; the concept of 'logging' and 'mining' on Inferno can blur together.

The population of Inferno are almost entirely pure Solomani, descended directly from Terran and Promethean colonists who settled the planet during the early Interstellar Wars. During the Long Night, the government assumed a semi-feudal character with hereditary syndicates controlling various services and industries. Later, in the Solomani era, the Party achieved control and added an overlay of representative democracy. The Imperium has lately been encouraging immigration to Inferno from outside the sector through Ministry of Colonisation grants and subsidies. There is some prejudice against new immigrants, especially those of non-Solomani blood, but so far no violence has occurred.

After Inferno fell to the Imperium, many Solomani loyalists kept fighting. Solomani guerrillas held out on Inferno for over a decade after the end of the Rim War. The major cities on Inferno – mostly located in

SYLEAN RANGERS

The Sylean Rangers trace their ancestry back to the years immediately before the founding of the Third Imperium. As the Sylean Federation – which would become the Imperium – expanded its ground forces, a need was perceived for troops capable of operating without extensive technological support. Ranger units were raised and trained for a variety of environments including jungle, mountain and urban terrain, and whilst personnel were quite capable of using advanced equipment they were taught not to rely on it.

This tradition has never been lost and whilst Ranger units can fight alongside the regular army they can also disappear into trackless jungle or mountains with nothing more than a rifle, knife and canteen. Where an army unit would be calling for resupply in two days and sending kit back to the workshops soon afterwards, a Ranger force would expect to be in the field with only its own resources for weeks at a time. The Sylean Rangers specialise in small-unit infiltration, reconnaissance and sabotage but are often deployed to find and capture or kill a specific individual who thinks they are safe on home terrain.

the polar regions – gave the Imperium little trouble but insurgents based in outback mining and logging camps proved a constant nuisance. This was less due to their tenacity and more to the difficulty of fighting in terrain where visibility under the forest canopy rarely exceeded a few metres and grav vehicles could not easily land. Eventually, an elite Imperial Army unit of Sylean Rangers were deployed and with assistance from army regulars suppressed the rebels. The last organised resistance ended in 1023. The Imperial Army continued military rule until 1065, before restoring civilian government under the leadership of the old aristocracy. Despite the end of military rule there is still a small Imperial Army base located on Inferno, dedicated to jungle warfare training for elite units.

NEW GREENPERNT

New Greenpernt was settled by Solomani colonists from Chernozem in the 880s and granted self-rule in 980 just before Solomani Rim War. It was a sleepy backwater planet, mostly noted for its logging industry until the war, when it found itself on the front line

facing the Imperium. Several hundred refugees, many of them Solomani Party members fleeing from Remulak and survivors of the disaster at Smade's Planet, were settled there. The small local naval base at Brooklyn Down Starport was expanded into a forward base for the Gemini subsector fleet of the Confederation Navy, standing guard against Imperial aggression. Today, the naval base is the planet's single largest employer. Descendants of the refugee population make up a sizable voting bloc in New Greenpernt politics and are known for their strident anti-Imperial views.

In 1060 geologists surveying the Wossamotta Plateau on the north pole discovered mysterious ruins and both the Confederation Navy and Solomani Security quickly moved in to take possession of the site. The Confederation government did not publicly acknowledge the ruins' existence until 1096 and then only after leaks of an Imperial Intelligence report on Ancients sites in the Confederation were published in TAS News on the other side of the border. After this revelation, articles began to appear in Solomani Confederation archaeological journals confirming it is an Ancients site. However, aside from photos of weathered, vaguely tower-like structures and highly technical notes on dating procedures based on geological sampling, little concrete information has been revealed.

SMADE'S PLANET

The captain of a Terran Confederation survey ship named Smade's Planet after a world in a classic science-fiction novel he was fond of. Its relative isolation and lack of significant mineral resources delayed settlement until after the Eighth Interstellar War, when a small Terran colony was founded with Mormon backing. It grew slowly during the Rule of Man only to suffer isolation and die out – possibly from plague – in the Long Night. No serious attempts at resettlement were made until 714, when a Solomani Party-organised consortium based out of Junction established a small agricultural colony.

Despite its position well off the main jump routes, the colony slowly grew to 150,000 people by the time of the Solomani Rim War and housed a major Ministry of Genetics agricultural research project aimed at engineering animals to better tolerate its pollen-rich tainted atmosphere. Unfortunately for Smade's Planet, a catastrophic intelligence failure led to the Imperial Navy identifying this as a biological weapons programme. In early 1002 the strike cruiser *Flamboyant Sunrise* and its escorts slipped past the weakened Solomani lines. A saturation nuclear missile and meson gun bombardment

eradicated the starport, all suspected biowar stations and – incidentally – the farming communities clustered around them. By the time the Solomani Navy arrived, the Imperial raiders were long gone and all that was left were a few hundred traumatised survivors. With Imperial fleets advancing and no way to protect what was left of the colony, the Confederation decided to evacuate the survivors to nearby New Greenpernt.

Smade's Planet had one more role to play in the drama of the Solomani Rim War. As the war ended, Solomani Grand Admiral Wolfe and his Imperial counterpart Admiral Adair decided to hold face-to-face negotiations in one of the border systems. Their flagships met in orbit over Smade's Planet, its ruins providing a symbolic background to the signing of the armistice that ended the war. As part of the negotiations, Smade's Planet – empty, too close to either border to be easily defended or colonised, and with its starport reduced to rubble – was designated a closed neutral world.

The planet lay fallow until 1009 when a few dozen drifters – including some of the original refugee families – chartered a free trader to Smade's Planet. Ignoring Imperial and Solomani Confederation warning beacons, they landed and took up residence. The Confederation Navy eventually noticed and dispatched a patrol ship to tell them to move, which they did, only to quietly return two years later with more supplies and seeds. The squatters have been there ever since and neither the Confederation nor Imperium has felt it worthwhile to disturb them. Now established for nearly a century, the locals call themselves the Smade Family and have established a communal society based around farming, fishing and pearl diving. Their tiny startown – named Demeter – is the only significant community on the planet. It usually has a stockpile of local foodstuffs and handicrafts available to trade, including some surprisingly good liquor. Eager for news and offworld goods, the Smades welcome any visitor willing to make the jump.

For the Confederation's part, as the squatters are of Solomani origin they serve to reinforce their *de facto* claim to the world. The Imperium is unwilling to raise more than pro-forma protests as long as the world is not officially claimed as part of the Confederation and no large scale colony or military bases are established. Occasional visits by free traders with ties to Imperial Intelligence or SolSec are used by each side to confirm the world remains neutral. The minor armistice violation stands ready as a useful argument if the diplomatic corps need something to protest.

KUKULCAN

The Kukulcan subsector is named for its most populous world, which was the only system settled before the creation of the Solomani Autonomous Region in 704. Even today more than half the subsector's population lives on Kukulcan. The population is almost entirely pure Solomani and many worlds were settled directly from Terra. Kukulcan was among them, although other systems in the subsector were colonised by a variety of groups out of the 'old Solomani worlds'.

Kukulcan traditionally dominated the subsector's economy and politics but its influence has begun to

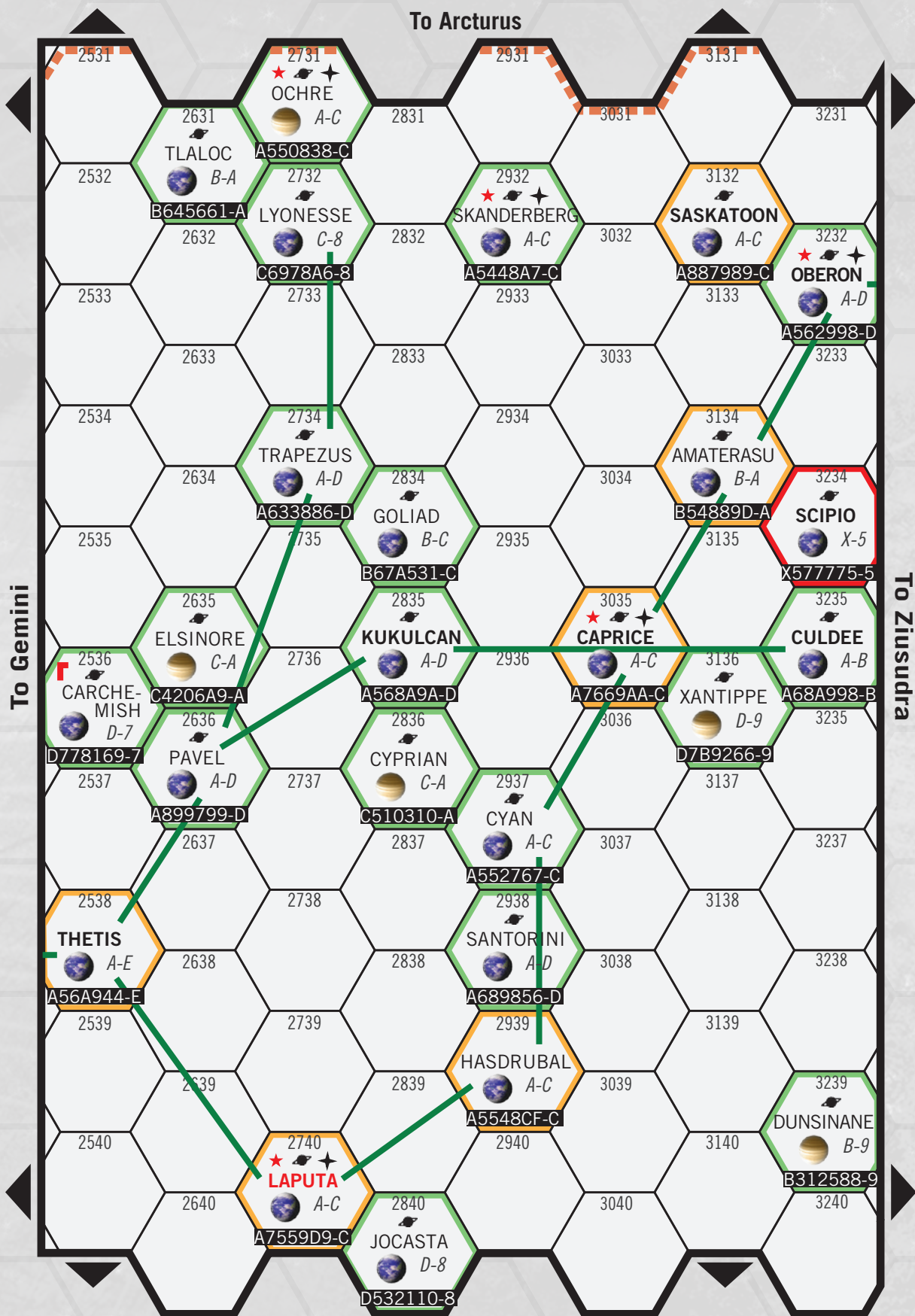
wane as a result of the growing power of other worlds, notably Laputa and Thetis. What began as a dispute between the great economic powers of Kukulcan subsector and those of the Boötean Federation escalated into a trade war between Kukulcan and her former allies. This greatly weakened Kukulcan and might have broken her economic power but for a rift between Thetis and Laputa, which became open warfare for a time. That conflict is over and the disruption has largely ended but the regional economy has suffered greatly as a result.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Amaterasu | 3134 | | B54889D-A | Ga | | Solomani | G |
| Caprice | 3035 | F | A7669AA-C | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Carchemish | 2536 | | D778169-7 | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Culdee | 3135 | | A68A998-B | Hi Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Cyan | 2937 | | A552767-C | Ht Po | | Solomani | G |
| Cyprian | 2836 | | C510310-A | Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Dunsinane | 3139 | | B312588-9 | Ie Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Elsinore | 2635 | | C4206A9-A | De Na Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Goliad | 2834 | | B67A531-C | Ht Ni Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Hasdrubal | 2939 | | A5548CF-C | Ga Ht | | Solomani | |
| Jocasta | 2840 | | D532110-8 | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Kukulcan | 2835 | | A568A9A-D | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Laputa | 2740 | F | A7559D9-C | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Lyonesse | 2732 | | C6978A6-8 | Ga | | Solomani | G |
| Oberon | 3132 | F | A562998-D | Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Ochre | 2731 | F | A550838-C | De Ht Po | | Solomani | G |
| Pavel | 2636 | | A899799-D | Ht | | Solomani | |
| Santorini | 2938 | | A689856-D | Ht Ri | | Solomani | G |
| Saskatoon | 3132 | | A887989-C | Ga Hi Ht | A | Solomani | G |
| Scipio | 3134 | | X577775-5 | Ag Ga Lt | R | Solomani | G |
| Skanderbeg | 2932 | F | A5448A7-C | Ga Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Thetis | 2538 | | A56A944-E | Hi Ht Wa | A | Solomani | |
| Tlaloc | 2631 | | B645661-A | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Trapezus | 2734 | | A633886-D | Ht Na Po | | Solomani | G |
| Xantippe | 3136 | | D7B9266-9 | Fl Lo | | Solomani | G |

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Solomani Rim

KUKULCAN SUBSECTOR



- Gas Giant
- Starport Class & Tech Level
- Research Station
- Other Naval Base

- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- Red Zone
- X-Boat Route

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Asteroid Belt
- Military Base/Garrison

In addition to the powerful Home Forces of the great economies present in the subsector, the Kukulcan Border Fleet of the Confederation Navy has its headquarters at Caprice and smaller bases across the subsector. The Border Fleet has been assigned a force of carriers and battlecruisers. Imperial diplomats occasionally raise objections to what they call inflammatory fleet movements but in truth, the heavy vessels are present more to keep a lid on local tensions than to confront the Imperium.

The Kukulcan subsector contains 25 worlds with a population of 62.5 billion. The highest population is 36 billion at Kukulcan.

KUKULCAN

The garden world of Kukulcan was settled during the Long Night by South and Central American political refugees escaping turmoil in the Old Earth Union. According to official histories it was the only world in this subsector to be colonised before the creation of the Solomani Autonomous Region. Although the population of Kukulcan are pure Solomani, they differ culturally from many of the other worlds in the subsector and have less commitment to the Solomani Cause or to Terra.

Kukulcan has struggled with a variety of problems caused by its sheer size, such as waste disposal, deforestation, unemployment and resource depletion. Most or all of these were solved by trade; trade generated the money to buy necessary resources, and Kukulcan's trade fleet carried them. This naturally led to a dependence on interstellar commerce and the expansion of the merchant fleet to meet increasing needs.

Until the rise of Thetis and Laputa as first partners then rivals, Kukulcan's dependence on interstellar commerce was not a problem. It was the dominant force in the markets of dozens of worlds and its ships generated enormous revenue transporting goods and passengers. Even the poorest of Kukulcan's citizens were well-off by the standards of other worlds; the state could afford to look after them and provide a good standard of living. Now, the generous social budget is a drain on a shrinking economy but cutting it risks widespread disaffection.

The rot started when ships from the Boötean Federation began undercutting Kukulcan's commercial spacing companies in the local markets. A sharp drop in profits led to reduced investment in replacement ships and refurbishment of older ones. The savings looked good at the time but Kukulcan was reducing its long-term ability to produce sufficient revenue. Undertaking trade war operations against the Boötean Federation was ill-advised, producing only a few ship losses but costing a vast sum.

Kukulcan faced ruin and was saved only by the outbreak of war between its two main rivals, Thetis and Laputa. The situation has improved somewhat but Kukulcan is left with an ageing merchant fleet that is unable to produce the revenue required to update it. To counter this vicious spiral, large numbers of vessels have been sold off. Most have gone to small shipping lines, creating additional competition for the remaining ships, and some have been bought by dubious clients. The result is the stabilisation of Kukulcan's economy at the expense of disruption in the local commercial shipping sector. Kukulcan has plans to climb back to its lofty position someday but it will be a slow process if it is achievable at all.

Although the shooting has stopped, the subsector is still suffering disruption caused by the conflict with Thetis and Laputa. These worlds continue to impede trade from Kukulcan into the Near Boötes Cluster and Firdausi subsector, to rimward. Harassment of shipping elsewhere also continues. A series of incidents culminating in the 1104 destruction of the Kukulcan-registered megafreighter *Guatemala* in what was ostensibly a botched 'pirate' attack has led the government to vow retaliation. Kukulcan's bloc of delegates in the Confederation's Secretariat are demanding a full investigation.

Although Kukulcan has a theoretically unified planetary government under the Solomani Party, in practice it is divided into dozens of factions all offering their own solutions to the issues facing the world. The planetary Solomani Party maintains a theoretical representative democracy but is dominated by a permanent bureaucracy. Party loyalty and political patronage trumps ability and promising initiatives suffocate and die in red tape. Chairman Reynaldo Escobar is the aging chairman of Kukulcan's Solomani Party and leader of the Kukulcan delegation to the Secretariat.

As on many high-tech high-population worlds, much of Kukulcan's population lives in arcology cities, some badly in need of renovation. Lack of funds and political inertia has limited the ability to repair infrastructure. There is growing social unrest and crime in some of the older arcologies but, despite these problems, Kukulcan still has billions of productive citizens committed to doing what they can to keep society functioning.

In the last century significant progress has been made in the aquatic construction and underwater mining sectors. Innovative biotechnology programmes have reversed declining ocean stocks damaged due to pollution and dozens of gigantic sea-floor underwater tower habitats – similar to those of Bellerophon in the Imperium – have been built to help deal with overpopulation on land.

Kukulcan's moon, Awilix, has been another region of economic growth, now heavily industrialised with a population of 300 million and a busy starport. A new shipyard is under construction there at considerable – some would say unjustifiable – expense. It is hoped that a new generation of trade ships can be launched in time to replace the existing fleet.

Riots and out-of-control crime in some of the arcologies over the last decade have also driven an increase in the size of Kukulcan's Home Forces. The new units are mostly cheaply equipped internal security formations designated 'light infantry' but not well suited to a warfighting role. These formations are largely officered by retired veterans who served in the Confederation Army in peacekeeping duties on other worlds. Although considered rather sinister at first, the internal security units have demonstrated their professionalism in handling everything from dispute mediation to the elimination of heavily armed gangs. Kukulcan's army is now more highly respected than the civilian-run Party government and police or SolSec. This could prove destabilising in the long term.

LAPUTA

Laputa was colonised around 820 by a splinter faction of the same scientific utopian group that first settled Thetis. The two worlds are ideologically similar, with the same emphasis on cybernetics but on Laputa the pursuit of transcendence through technological advancement has become a near-religion. The governing Solomani Party is synonymous with an academic elite that controls cradle-to-grave education and rules the state under scientific principles. Unlike Thetis, where networked computer systems and neural implants are widely used for work and education, on Laputa they also serve as instruments of social control, with the government ultimately moving toward a vision where everyone will share in a single networked reality; a global super consciousness.

Despite the differences in their approaches, Laputa has a history of cooperating closely with the government of Thetis on both trade and scientific programmes. A major area of shared research is the Omega Intelligence project. Laputa's Solomani Party have long seen this programme as the first step toward the creation of a super being that will become a true god, uniting man and machine in a single godlike consciousness.

Since the Solomani Rim War, the Laputa government has made little progress in achieving its ultimate goals, partly due to the loss of regular academic contact with partners on Prometheus, Terra and other advanced worlds now controlled by the Imperium, and partly because it must focus on more practical technologies to ensure a good

balance of trade. This lack of progress has seen Laputa's Solomani Party become increasingly defensive and dogmatic, especially under the influence of its current leader, Master Academician Dr. Pazu Yokazawa.

Those citizens who oppose the government's vision for society or, lately, even scientists that express scepticism toward the practicality of particular lines of research, tend to disappear. It is known that at least some have been quietly arrested by the Party's security agencies, diagnosed with mental illnesses such as technophobia or overwork-induced stress and confined to state hospitals. Rumours persist that they are treated with sensory deprivation and virtual reality-aided brainwashing, or even 'put to use' in neurological experiments.

A faction of the Society for Sovereignty of Man Over Machine also operates on Laputa. The organisation here functions as an underground resistance movement rather than an open protest group, although it still professes its own loyalty to the Solomani Cause. On Laputa, members are treated as dangerous terrorists. Ironically, SolSec has not made any significant effort to cooperate with the Laputa regime in suppressing the society on this world, perhaps regarding it as a useful check on Laputa Solomani Party's own radical tendencies.

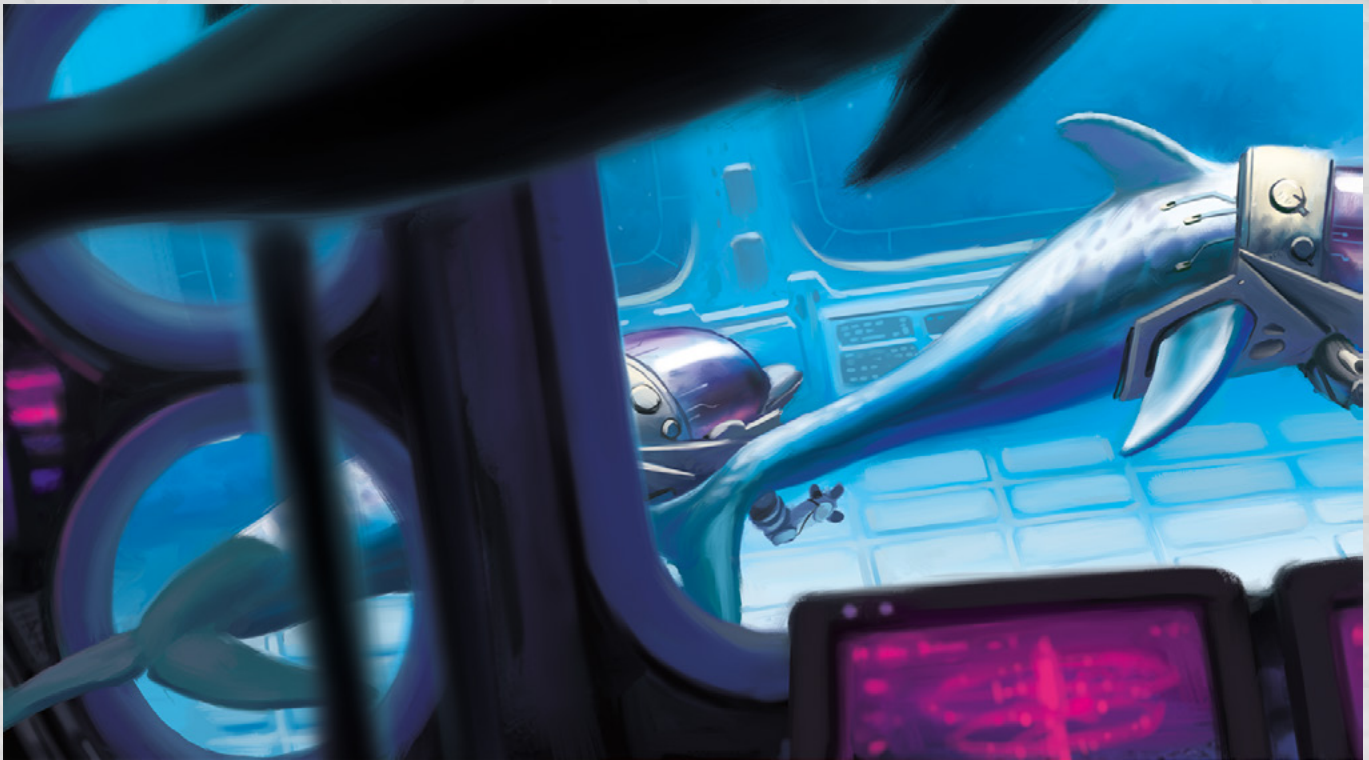
SCIPIO

Scipio is a self-interdicted colony of Solomani anti-technologists, who have banned all technology except that known on Terra before space flight and consider it a mistake for true humans to have ever left Terra. Finding no means of isolating themselves from the universe on Terra itself, they were forced to choose a less inviting world.

The population is scattered across dozens of small cities, most of which are self-governing. There are a few alliances and even proto-nations made up of several cities but for the most part each group goes its own way. With only 20 million people on a planet there is little need to compete for resources, especially in a society that makes little use of advanced technology.

THETIS

The water world of Thetis was settled in 780 from the Sol subsector by well-funded human and Dolphin colonists from Prometheus and Terra. The settlers were members of the eschatonic accelerationist faction of the Solomani Party. Originally intended as a utopian scientific and academic colony, Thetis was selected in 825 as the subsector headquarters of the Ministry of Science and Technology. This was due to the rise of Thetis native Karina Laestadius to prominence in the Confederation's Ministry of Science and Technology and



her eventual appointment to the High Council. Over Laestadius' 24 year period at the head of the ministry, trillions of Credits of Confederation funding flowed into her homeworld, founding the underwater 'Science City' of Metis and the Achilles Institute devoted to military computer and cybernetic technology.

Thetis is presently governed by a mixed academic-corporate-democratic system in which technological growth and scientific progress are prioritised. The preferred ideology is a forward-looking optimism toward a bright future. Members of the Solomani Party organisations within academia, corporations, employee unions and the planetary bureaucracy all elect representatives to the governing Political Science Council. As usual, Solomani Party membership is automatic for all pure Solomani citizens who make up about 91% of the population. Dolphin megapods send representatives to the world's Solomani Party congress and have limited voting rights there with a special Associate Membership in the Party.

The Solomani Party of Thetis holds that the true greatness of the Solomani race is found in their aptitude for science and technology, pointing to the great advances made in technological fields. They believe the ultimate purpose of the Solomani Cause is for the race to become successors to the Ancients as technological gods mastering the entire galaxy. The Party believes the Ancients attempted this only to fail by following a misguided programme whose emphasis was on biological and psionic development.

In contrast, Thetis believes success follows a different path – one focused on the creation of strong artificial intelligence and its integration and partnership with humans through cybernetics.

Thetans believe the true path to the Solomani Cause involves a symbiosis of mind and machine. On Thetis, augments such as neural comms are ubiquitous – all children are fitted with them from an early age, subsidised as part of educational policies, with costlier wafer jacks and intelligence augmentation signs of status among the professional elite. Thetis augmented technology and software is now verging on TL15.

Thetans are strong believers in progress, with an optimistic vision that all technology will continue to advance and eventually solve all problems. Anyone with severe medical problems or who is approaching advanced age will usually be placed in cryogenic suspension rather than struggle for decades with treatments that may or may not work. Those who can afford it freeze themselves rather than face death from natural causes.

About 8% of the population are uplifted Dolphins, who are significant players in the planet's secondary fishing, tourism and recreational software industry, and are also over-represented in the Home Forces and merchant fleet. Relations between humans and Dolphins on Thetis are typical or perhaps somewhat better than usual in the Solomani Rim, with Dolphins treated as valued junior

partners. Many Dolphins live and work in their own space stations in the Thetis asteroid belt and serve in the Naval Home Forces. Almost all Dolphins on Thetis also make extensive use of cybernetics and neural implants to better integrate with humans. Many own their own small robots or drones that they use to conduct business on land or which serve as auxiliary hands.

Only a fraction of the world's citizens are directly involved in advanced research projects aimed at achieving the world's utopian scientific goals but computer, information, software and robotics industries dominate the planetary economy. Even citizens who do not have 'productive' jobs are expected to be involved in activities like playtesting advanced virtual reality games. Thetis is a major provider of software and computer technology for the Confederation government, military and SolSec, and it also provides a large number of recruits for nautical force command units within the Confederation Army.

The world's Solomani Party spends lavishly on its citizen's education and ongoing research and development. To pay for this, foreign trade is vital and Thetis has striven to dominate the subsector's economy. Its main commercial competitor is populous Kukulcan but since the Solomani Rim War the technocrats of Thetis have done their best to forge alliances against this rival in order to ensure they control their future.

The Thetis vision of a techno-utopia has broad popular support but not everyone on the planet agrees with it. As technology approached TL15 levels, a group of academics and students at Metis, involved in artificial intelligence development, grew concerned over the philosophical implications of their research and formed the Society of Sovereignty of Man Over Machine. This organisation is aimed at establishing stronger protocols intended to prevent the accidental development of an out-of-control computer intelligence. This position is fully compatible with the Solomani Cause but some radicals in the society called for a halt to all advanced research. The move triggered a SolSec warning due to the agency's concern that such a moratorium would impair Confederation technological development. Since then, the society has moderated its position on Thetis. Despite persecution, student radicals associated with splinter cells of the society continue to be involved in disruptive protests and occasional sabotage of artificial intelligence and robotics labs.

OCHRE

Ochre takes its name from the dull red soil that covers most of the world. It is a small desert world with a thin atmosphere. Ochre's cities are concentrated around the temperate polar regions, although several million people

THETIS AND LAPUTA

Thetis and Laputa have a long history of cooperation and need one another to maintain their progress. Although their approaches differ, there was enough common ground to bring the two worlds back together after their war. The conflict was not desired by either side but escalated rapidly out of mutual blame for setbacks against Kukulcan. Both sides feared the other would impose its agenda on their society in the event of a victory. This threat to ideology, way of life and sacred goals was enough to make the short Thetis-Laputa war a bloody one.

inhabit the desert and mountain areas. Ochre is ruled by a supreme council – the Council of Seven Citizens – which draws its members from leading figures in local industry and business. The pro-business, anti-labour government is heavily aided and influenced by the Solomani Confederation government.

Ochre is a primary port of entry for Imperial goods and has a significant security flotilla based out of a naval installation in orbit over the innermost gas giant. It is not uncommon to see a battlecruiser from the Kukulcan Border Fleet over the mainworld, where it can be seen and admired by visiting Imperial citizens. The Ochre Guardship deployment is dull for the most part but prestigious; selection for the duty implies the approval of the naval authorities for the ship, her crew and her captain. Most captains will find any excuse to put on a show, racing out of orbit to assist a stray merchant ship where a port cutter could do the job just as well, or mounting a parade at the starport to welcome some Z-list celeb who once did something vaguely positive in connection with the navy. Flimsy as the excuses may be, the pageantry and showing-off is always well executed.

Ochre's starport sees a considerable amount of jump-3 merchant traffic headed for Scandia and thence other Imperial worlds. The most prestigious route is to Terra by way of Prometheus and Ember but other runs exist that can justify the commercial inefficiency of a jump-3 merchant ship. Perhaps not surprisingly, the logs of all such ships are routinely forwarded to the naval base and thence to fleet headquarters. In previous years most of these vessels were owned and operated by firms from Kukulcan but other operators are moving into the field – some of them using ships sold off by Kukulcan. The trip does not have to be profitable to justify making it; having a ship on the Terra Run is a selling point when marketing the services of a merchant line.

ALPHA CRUCIS

Alpha Crucis is located directly to trailing of the Solomani Rim. The majority lies within the Solomani Confederation but two entire subsectors and sections of three others were captured by the Imperium in the Solomani Rim War. These worlds remain under Imperial occupation. Active Solomani guerrilla movements supported by factions in the Solomani Confederation have prevented their full integration into Imperial society and the presence of many non-aligned worlds and the nationalistic aspirations of former pre-Solomani Confederation states further complicate sector politics.

A HISTORY OF THE SECTOR

Alpha Crucis was first visited by the Vilani circa -4500. They named it Amkarim, an archaic name meaning 'lonely duty'. The great mercantile Sharurshid bureau of the Ziru Sirka had responsibility for exploiting the sector, although little urgency was perceived. Sharurshid established outposts and later colonies, the earliest at Umkarguu in the Ximenes subsector. Eventually the Vilani would explore and establish further colonies in the subsectors later known as McKenzie and Orichalc. A few outposts were also established in the Auva, Denebola, and Dagir subsectors but the rest of the sector was more or less unexplored. In -4100 the Vilani made contact with a minor alien race, the Grkaadudgaagii. Their balkanised early atomic-era civilisation adjusted poorly to the shock of first contact and destroyed itself in a nuclear spasm. The scandal induced Sharurshid to halt further exploitation of Amkarim, although it would likely have ground to a halt in any event as the Ziru Sirka's expansionist period was nearly at an end.

In -2424 Terra made first contact with the Vilani. At the time Amkarim was viewed by the Vilani as a barbaric frontier and hardship posting. The Terran Confederation saw their opportunity and dispatched survey missions into the sector as early as -2300. Terran traders ventured into the Vilani-settled regions of Denebola during lulls in the Interstellar Wars but most Terran exploration was concentrated on the rimward region of the sector where they correctly believed no Vilani settlement had taken place. Their goal was to find

habitable or resource-rich worlds that could expand the Terran population and industrial base and keep its culture alive if the Confederation lost to the Ziru Sirka.

At least five long-range colonisation expeditions are known to have been launched by the Terrans into the sector between the First and Ninth Interstellar Wars, part of a lengthy series of missions loosely known as the Phoenix Expeditions. Each was a convoy of starships and a few small military escorts. They followed chains of jump-1 and later jump-2 routes on long odysseys across poorly charted space, always with the risk of encountering disaster far from any chance of rescue. The military escorts were often required to return afterward to report that the mission reached its destination, leaving the colonists to fend for themselves. Many of these expeditions were sleeper ships carrying several thousand passengers and livestock travelling in cryogenic suspension. Limited availability of reliable jump drives and refuelling stops in the early years of the Interstellar Wars period even saw a few expeditions travelling at sublight speed.

The most important single factor in the Terran settlement of Alpha Crucis was the absence of any major competitor. Except for the six coreward subsectors where a Vilani presence endured, the Terran explorers were true pioneers, often the first sentient beings to set foot on the worlds they visited. The Terrans found no starfaring races and encountered no alien or human minor races possessing significant technology. While the Terrans were not really the first to venture into the sector – Ancients ruins were later discovered on the world of Jedda – most of the sector's history largely began with Terran colonisation.

After the Terran Confederation's great victories in the Ninth Interstellar War the motivation for colonisation changed from strategic expansion to serving as a social safety valve. Terran society was being irrevocably altered by the political and cultural adaptations required to maintain unity and strength in the long war against the Vilani and not everyone was happy with such changes. Some tightly knit ethnic and religious groups that wished to preserve their traditions and independence chose to do so by emigrating to distant

PARATERRAFORMING

The first expeditions preferred to colonise Earth-like garden worlds but with Terra's frantic desire for expansion other worlds were also targeted. A major initiative in Alpha Crucis during the late Terran Confederation period was the development of so-called 'paraterraforming' techniques. Since Terra was desperate to expand its population and conventional terraforming took many centuries, alternative methods were often used to settle otherwise undesirable worlds. Where star systems had abundant resources but only barren vacuum worlds, Terrans refined techniques they had pioneered prior to the invention of the jump drive when settling the less-promising bodies of the Solar System.

Paraterraforming involved covering the entire surface of a small barren moon or large planetoid with a pressurised habitat. These worlds then served as the capital of a self-sustaining system-wide industrial civilisation. Oxygen, water, nitrogen and other volatiles were mined from regolith, frozen asteroids and gas giant moons. Individual domed habitats were gradually built as the population expanded and finally linked into a single world-city with a living area comparable to a larger terrestrial planet. Fusion reactors provided heat and light, while giant greenhouses and fish farms fed the growing

population. When the domed habitats covered enough of the small moon or planetoid they were often roofed over and given an atmosphere, using a transparent membrane supported by air pressure and pillars. In addition to providing significant space, these 'worldhouses' provided the opportunity for novel forms of recreation and architecture, such as personal flight with strap-on wings.

In Alpha Crucis, the colonists of many worldhouse planets were often variant humans from spacer cultures that had evolved during the early years of Terran colonisation of the solar system, before the widespread introduction of gravitic technology. Most tended to be of the willowy genotype known as the Selenites, who had been adapted for early Terran colonies on Luna and Ceres. They possessed subtle genetic modifications that adapted them to thrive in low or micro-gravity environments.

Selenites used paraterraforming to settle a dozen worlds in Alpha Crucis sector. The highly self-sufficient nature of these worldhouse societies meant that many of them ended up turning inward and developing a somewhat xenophobic attitude. Many Selenites, used to carefully managed worlds, found 'wild' planets strange, dangerous and frightening.

worlds, accepting the hardship of settling a sub-optimal environment far from Terra as the price of their freedom. The Terran Confederation government tacitly supported this as a way of removing possible dissidents and further outflanking the Vilani Empire. Much of the funding for these cultural émigrés came from private organisations that wished to establish colonies with particular ethnic, political or religious characters.

One of the largest-scale efforts came from a coalition of religious organisations. The Alpha Crucis Foundation was a Christian colonial and missionary coalition that sponsored some of the first private expeditions into the rimward regions of the Ziusudra, Veracruz and Denebola subsectors. It was this organisation that gave the sector its Terran name of Alpha Crucis, a Latin phrase translated as 'First Cross'. Their colonies – such as Turin and Lourdes – were among the most successful of the émigré settlements. With the majority of former the Amkarim sector now colonised by Solomani, the Confederation considered it inappropriate to retain a Vilani name for the sector. Colonial representatives from Turin and its neighbours succeeded in petitioning

the Terran Confederation to make the Turin system the sector's regional capital and formally assign the name Alpha Crucis to the sector in Terran star charts.

In -2252 the Terran Navy broke out of the Solomani Rim and began an offensive into the remaining Vilani-held subsectors of Alpha Crucis. Auxiliaries from some of the longer-established Terran colonies supported the Navy. Terran forces defeated the small Vilani garrisons in Denebola and Orichalc in a brief and relatively bloodless world-hopping campaign. Heavier fighting took place in -2249 to -2245 as the Amkarim Fleet defended the few high population Vilani worlds in Ximenes. The last massed Vilani squadrons in Alpha Crucis were smashed by the Terran Navy at the Battle of Shurregaa in -2249, which ended all organised resistance. Remaining scattered Vilani outposts fell one after another, almost as soon as Terran Navy vessels appeared in their skies. Some even surrendered to armed merchants or belters from local Terran colonies.

The collapse of the Amkarim's sector authority mirrored similar collapses occurring throughout the Ziru Sirka. Alpha Crucis' proximity to the Solomani Rim also

made Vilani worlds in Ximenes attractive to Terran entrepreneurs and settlers who wanted to emigrate to more civilised and cosmopolitan planets than the frontier colonies. Garrison troops and administrators were followed by colonists.

Toward the end of the Interstellar Wars, and well into the Rule of Man, mass immigration by Terrans and intermarriage with the Vilani led to many of the old Vilani worlds in Ximenes, Orichalc and McKenzie developing multi-racial Solomani-Vilani populations. In contrast, other Terran-colonised subsectors in Alpha Crucis retained mostly pure Solomani populations and continued to be settled by ethnic and religious minorities. The last major wave were European and South Asian immigrants who settled parts of Galloway circa -1900.

The Rule of Man saw widespread reorganisation of administrative regions as the military government struggled with the seemingly impossible task of keeping the Second Imperium functioning. The slow breakdown of order in the Twilight of the Rule of Man was mirrored by a gradual decline in interstellar trade, living standards and technology in Alpha Crucis. The independent, isolationist nature of many of the colonies in Alpha Crucis allowed the region to weather the Twilight years better than some regions more dependent on trade. Even so, few of the colony worlds of the sector possessed an industrial base capable of maintaining TL11 or TL12 civilisation when cut off from trade, meaning they could not build drives capable of jump-2 or jump-3. Unlike some sectors, Alpha Crucis lacked a jump-1 'main' providing access to the entire sector, so when the number of jump-2 merchant ships declined, many parts of the sector grew more-and-more isolated. Small pockets and clusters remained in contact with one another but for the most part individual worlds developed their own distinct societies.

As Twilight deepened into the Long Night, the ramshackle Rule of Man fragmented into pocket empires and independent worlds. Alpha Crucis was no exception, with a dark age that lasted from about -1500 to 200. However, interstellar travel never entirely ceased. Where jump drive technology was retained a few multi-world pocket empires held tenuous sway over immediate neighbours. The most important of these were the Consolidation of Turin centred on the former sector capital in Denebola, the Protectorate of Alba based around White in Alba, the Islamic High Republic in Galloway, the short-lived Agryx Dominion in Auva and the fractious League of Orichalc. The latter disintegrated around -400 in a lengthy civil war only to remerge later as the Protectorate of Cthonia. Most of these pocket states retained at best TL8-10 technology and all lacked jump-2 starships.

Alpha Crucis' location adjacent to the densely populated Solomani Rim also meant the sector was not entirely cut off from outside contact even during the darkest periods of the Long Night. There was fleeting contact with Terra, thanks to a few adventurous traders from the Terran Mercantile Community and its successor the Old Earth Union. Despite these efforts many worlds were cut off from contact for centuries and some collapsed into barbarism or died out entirely. It was left to the young Third Imperium to bring the sector back into interstellar civilisation.

In 130, and again in 134, Imperial scouts ventured into the coreward regions of Alpha Crucis and made initial contact with individual worlds. In 198 serious negotiations began with Solomani worlds in the Alba Protectorate and a number of older Vilani worlds in Ximenes to join the Imperium as client states, although it would be many decades before they achieved full membership. From the year 300 most pocket empires in the sector had been contacted by the Imperium or traders from other starfaring states, had built or purchased jump-2 and jump-3 vessels and were trading with one another again. Some even began fighting one another. The nastiest of these conflicts was the Santa Maria Crusade (411–415), one of a series of conflicts in which the Consolidation of Turin fought to establish a sphere of influence against 'heretical' outsiders.

The peace treaty that concluded the Santa Maria Crusade was brokered through Imperial diplomatic intervention. This manoeuvre was characteristic of the skilful diplomatic and mercantile offensive that the Imperium undertook between 400 and 600. Its goal was gathering the majority of the civilised worlds and multi-world states in Alpha Crucis into its fold as client states or full members of the Imperium. Much of the impetus for this came from the powerful Solomani aristocracy who dominated the Imperial nobility in that era as the integration of this mainly-Solomani sector further increased their power. They worked to make common cause with the Solomani ruling classes of those worlds in the sector that, like them, claimed descent from the Rule of Man's military aristocracy. In the process they established the basis for acceptance of Imperial rule.

In the 500s, a vibrant three-way trade was underway between major worlds in Alpha Crucis, the Old Expanses and the Solomani Rim but neither of the two large rimward sectors had fully accepted Imperial hegemony. The economic and political advantages of joining the Imperium were clear but the old Solomani colonies had traditions of independence that left them wary of the aristocratic nature of Third Imperium society. Plenty of worlds in Alpha Crucis had been settled by émigrés who had deliberately left the ossifying Rule of Man in search

of their own freedom. The centuries of isolation in the Long Night often hardened these attitudes. The various pocket empires and client states were reluctant to join the Imperium if it meant harnessing themselves to yet another Ramshackle Empire ruled by military dictators – but they also realised independence was no longer an option.

These anti-Imperial sceptics – both in Alpha Crucis and the neighbouring the Solomani Rim – were strong enough to form a significant opposition party who argued against Imperial membership. For a time in the late 500s there were even ongoing diplomatic talks between a coalition of Alpha Crucis leaders from Cthonia, Turin and the Old Earth Union over a potential political alliance outside the Imperium. These broke down after the Imperium offered various political and economic sweeteners. In the end the Old Earth Union voted to dissolve itself and join the Imperium, following the lead of other Solomani Rim states that had already done so. With the entirety of the Solomani Rim now in the Imperial orbit, the worlds of Alpha Crucis also fell into line. The last holdout – the Protectorate of Cthonia – was disbanded and incorporated into the Imperium in 595. Many individual frontier worlds on the rimward and trailing fringes of the sector – some still in a primitive state after collapse during the Long Night – remained independent.

The scepticism some Solomani citizens of Alpha Crucis expressed toward the Imperium appeared justified by the eruption of the Civil Wars in 604. Although the main axis of conflict was many sectors distant, the economic and political turmoil spread far beyond the war zone. The major repercussions felt in Alpha Crucis were delays in the benefits of Imperial membership that newly incorporated worlds had expected to receive. Investment was slower to materialise, navy bases, scout bases and starports intended to have been built with Imperial assistance were not constructed, and Imperial Navy squadrons that were to suppress piracy and keep the peace between former states were off fighting one another.

There was a renewal of optimism with the end of the Civil War and the stable regime of Arbellaatra but this collapsed after the marriage of Emperor Zhakirov to his Vilani wife Antiama Shiishuginsa. The reduction of Solomani power in court was offensive among the predominantly Solomani nobility of Alpha Crucis and the Solomani Rim. These events also coincided with economic dislocations that affected many ordinary citizens besides the nobility. The end of the Civil Wars and restoration of peace saw Alpha Crucis fully integrated into the Imperial economy. While the overall result was positive there were losers as well as winners, as planetary and subsector businesses were forced to adapt or die in an interstellar economy

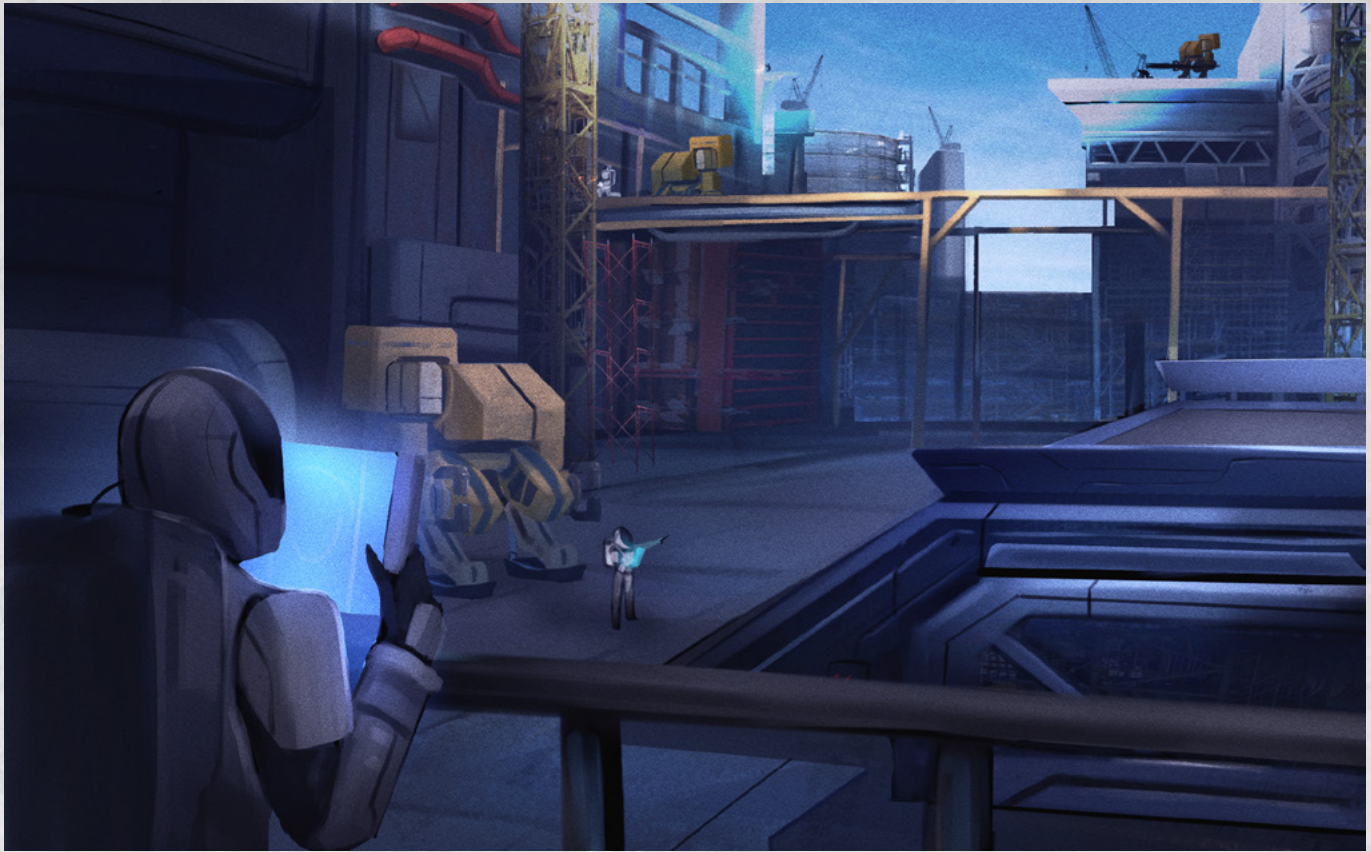
dominated by vast corporate entities whose interests were Imperial rather than local. Those that fell by the wayside often found it politic to lay the blame on megacorporations, loss of Solomani power and rising Vilani influence in the Imperial court for their own economic woes.

Alpha Crucis was thus a fertile incubating ground for the nascent Solomani Movement with its triple-braided strands of Terran exceptionalism, racial pride and populist resentment of Imperial power. When in 685 delegates representing the Solomani Movement first met on Terra, they included political and business leaders from key Alpha Crucis worlds including large delegations from Cthonia, Turin, Summit, Drydock, Cyan, Water, White and Arsenal. One of the largest non-governmental groups, the Church of the First Cross, was from the Alpha Crucis region, a growing and militant neo-Christian sect with billions of followers in the Consolidation of Turin and the worlds around it.

The next two centuries saw Alpha Crucis continue to be a significant player in the Solomani Party's growth. During this era many worlds in the Alpha Crucis region still followed Terran Confederation traditions and held some form of republican or representative government at the planetary level, even as they served as seats for Imperial noble families. Ironically it was this democratic tradition combined with the improved communication links the Imperium had belatedly provided that facilitated the spread of Solomani ideology. By 704 – when Empress Margaret I created the Solomani Autonomous Region – over a third of the worlds in the sector boasted a powerful Solomani Party serving either as their government or a power behind the government. In most instances the Solomani Party had either won by popular election or achieved control through a popular revolution.

Ideology-driven counterrevolutionary and anti-Imperial organisations formed under the auspices of planetary Solomani Parties. To coordinate them at the sector level, interstellar organisations sprouted within the Solomani Party. These included groups like the militant community-organising group ACCESS (Alpha Crucis Committee for Establishing Solomani Society) and the Solomani Watch, one of several precursor 'citizens watchdog' organisations that melded into SolSec. These were supplemented by planetary police and security forces controlled by Party loyalists and military intelligence agencies of subsector fleets that owed allegiance to Solomani Autonomous Region governments.

Solomani Party policies were aimed at eliminating layers of Imperial bureaucracy – especially those that protected non-Solomani rights – while at the same time tightly regulating those megacorporations and institutions



whose interests were aligned with the greater Imperium rather than the Solomani Sphere. The movement's success within Alpha Crucis created a power vacuum that planetary and subsector-sized companies, in alliance with Solomani Party-run governments, raced to fill. Buoyed by a new spirit of pan-Solomani patriotism, the networked Party leadership of Alpha Crucis sector worked with ideologically compatible business interests to exploit the new possibilities and opportunities in the Solomani Autonomous Region.

A primary goal was to open up the underdeveloped trailing-rimward regions of Alpha Crucis. Between 704 and 870 the Solomani Party and its allies vigorously promoted colonisation and immigration initiatives aimed at creating new 'pure-Solomani' colony worlds throughout the interior of the sector. This sparked a land rush along with a boom in property development and land speculation. It also led to collisions with those remaining Imperial institutions that still attempted to assert prerogatives within the Solomani Sphere. The most famous example was the Red Zone Affair, a perceived link between the Imperial Scout Service's policies regarding interdiction of worlds with primitive indigenous populations and their unwillingness to approve a planned expansion of the x-boat network and trade routes into rimward subsectors.

In Alpha Crucis the expansion took the form of a multi-trillion Credit 40-year plan to open up the fallow Vald, New Holland and Galloway subsectors to economic development. This was supported by the creation of starports, interstellar communications infrastructure and naval bases. The refusal of the Imperial Scout Service administration to support the funding of their part of the programme delayed the project by decades and alienated Solomani interests throughout the sector. It also contributed to a decade-long recession that blighted the Vald and Galloway subsectors.

These and other problems with the Imperium helped galvanise support for the Solomani Sphere's declaration of independence. Although controversial, the formation of the Confederation in 871 was met with general approval throughout most of Alpha Crucis sector. The main exceptions were in Ximenes and McKenzie, which had many worlds with majority non-Solomani or mixed-race populations. Despite their disapproval, the late 800s and early 900s were a time of rapid growth and development.

Encouraged by the relatively smooth transition between Imperial and Solomani rule, Imperial financial institutions and investors readily supported the new Solomani polity. Projects that had been bogged down in battles between Imperial and Solomani levels of government now moved forward. The Solomani

Confederation Navy and the growing merchant line Transstar both embarked on major shipbuilding programmes with industrial centres in Alpha Crucis receiving a large share of the contracts, second only to the Solomani Rim. Although much of the navy's program was military in nature, it also included the long-awaited expansion of communication links. A planned expansion into Vald and New Holland was followed by aggressive development programmes aimed at settling Solomani citizens on under-populated or fallow worlds.

During this era of optimism and growth the interstellar Solomani Party exerted far more influence over local planetary governments than it would in the post-war years. Throughout Alpha Crucis, ordinary citizens flocked to joined Party cells and youth groups. Party-influenced artists created new mythologies that blended the strands of their own ancestors' colonial experiences and struggles in the Long Night into a tapestry of Solomani triumph. A patriotic belief in the manifest destiny of their new-made Solomani Confederation energised militant Party cadres and they worked tirelessly via groups like ACCESS to promote a vision of a single united Solomani super-state whose citizens fervently believed in the Solomani Cause. That meant doing their best to ensure that all worlds within the Confederation's boundaries accepted Solomani Party traditions, whether through peaceful proselytising, political pressure or armed revolution.

The ideology of the Solomani Movement meant that individuals of non-Solomani ancestry stood to lose out if their world fell under the influence of the Party. Conflict was inevitable. The troubles in Alpha Crucis were not as severe as those in the Old Expanses, Diaspora or occupied Vegan worlds in the Solomani Rim. However, the racial problems in Ximenes and McKenzie were bad enough. From the 800s to the 990s civil unrest, coups, race riots and terrorist campaigns rocked those worlds where the Solomani Party's agenda was thwarted. When non-Solomani or mixed-race populations proved unwilling to quietly submit or where non-aligned worlds refused to join the Confederation, militant groups attempted to force them. The worst violence in Alpha Crucis was on Shurregaa in Ximenes during 989, where beleaguered Confederation Army forces resorted to nuclear weapons to break a mass uprising.

These and other conflicts eventually triggered Imperial intervention. The Solomani Rim War broke out in 990. Initially, and indeed throughout most of the war, Alpha Crucis was a relatively safe home front, parsecs behind the lines in the Old Expanses and Diaspora. Some anti-Solomani guerrilla activity and protests continued in

Ximenes and McKenzie but until the last year of the war, there were sufficient SolSec paramilitary and Solomani Army forces available to crush opposition. Also, for the most part, Solomani worlds in Alpha Crucis were patriotic supporters of the war effort. They contributed millions of soldiers and naval personnel and hundreds of trillions of Credits' worth of military production.

As the war began to turn against the Solomani in 998, the rapid collapse of their position in the Old Expanses pushed Confederation commanders in Alpha Crucis to launch Operation Hegira. One of the largest mass evacuations in recorded history, it moved a billion loyalist Solomani civilians and millions of tons of TL13 industrial plant from threatened worlds in the Old Expanses to safety in Alpha Crucis. A footnote to Hegira is that many of the same super-transports were used to carry the new and superbly equipped 124th 'Alpha Crucis' Lift Infantry Corps and its supporting elements to defend Terra. Recruited almost entirely from Solomani Party youth organisations in Veracruz, Regulus and New Holland, they were among the last offworld troops to reinforce the mother planet before the Imperial advance cut off the Sol subsector. Surrounded in the brutal Spanish Pocket, less than half of the corps returned alive to Alpha Crucis and only after years in Imperial prison camps. The experience of returned veterans and their families had a radicalising influence on Solomani Party politics in the immediate post war years.

The full fury of the Solomani Rim War reached Alpha Crucis in 1001 when an Imperial cruiser squadron slipped past the remnants of the Confederation Navy's fleets and bombarded Kedin in the Ximenes subsector, triggering a catastrophe that killed 20 million civilians. Further raids took place throughout 1002, inflicting heavy casualties among merchant shipping, disrupting interstellar communications and striking vulnerable worlds, orbital highports and space industry.

Later that year Imperial fleets attacked simultaneously from two directions at once, striking from both the Old Expanses and the Solomani Rim into Ximenes and McKenzie. There was neither time nor sufficient shipping left to evacuate loyal Solomani civilians on the same scale as had earlier occurred in the Old Expanses. The weakened Alpha Crucis fleets – many of their battle squadrons having been stripped to reinforce the Solomani Grand Fleet in the Solomani Rim – relied on planetary defences and system defence boats to slow the invasion. Most of the remaining heavy units were destroyed in scattered engagements in the McKenzie subsector. The navy blamed political meddling as its admiral had been removed by SolSec immediately

prior to the Imperial invasion for an alleged 'defeatist' attitude. On some Vilani and mixed ethnicity worlds in Ximenes the Imperial invasion forces were assisted by large-scale popular uprisings.

The Imperial Navy was under orders to move swiftly and avoid being delayed by lengthy blockades or sieges of Solomani worlds. With so many assault ships and ground forces diverted to support the invasion of Terra, the Imperial fleets in Alpha Crucis relied on the naked threat of orbital bombardment to force Solomani worlds to surrender. Even at this stage of the war many Solomani leaders were so convinced of their side's ultimate victory – or so afraid of SolSec – that they refused to surrender until their worlds were battered into submission. Although the Imperial Navy attempted to target command and control bunkers and planetary defence sites, severe collateral damage was inflicted. The Imperial invasion of Alpha Crucis killed over five million civilians, mostly through orbital bombardment. Extensive damage was also inflicted on many worlds' high-tech infrastructure, especially starports, power generation facilities and orbital stations.

At the end of 1002 the victories in the Solomani Rim had opened up a much broader front. As news of the fall of Terra reached Alpha Crucis, Imperial squadrons began probing into Denebola and Orichalc. Imperial command decided to avoid the well-defended Consolidation of Turin worlds in Denebola and instead made Cthonia in Orichalc its objective. The over-stretched Imperials and hard-pressed Confederation Navy's Provisional Alpha Crucis Fleet were both concentrating their for a decisive battle when couriers arrived from the Solomani Rim announcing an armistice had been declared. The war was over.

The post-war years were chaotic. The Imperium held McKenzie and Ximenes, imposing military rule on the worlds it occupied in order to quash the type of guerrilla resistance it was already experiencing on Terra and other worlds in the Solomani Rim. At the same time the Imperium also expended trillions of Credits in reconstruction to clean up the war's devastation, prevent famines and disease, and rebuild shattered industries.

In Alpha Crucis the Solomani Confederation had the advantage that the worst devastation had been inflicted against worlds now occupied by the Imperium; these were no longer the Confederation's responsibility. Despite this, the outcome of the war caused many to doubt both the rightness of the Solomani Cause and the politicians who

had led it into defeat. If the Imperium spent the next two decades cleaning up the debris of war and winning hearts and minds, it is fair to say the Solomani Confederation spent the same period and longer struggling with the political fallout of its defeat.

Solomani governments and populations in the 'front line' border subsectors – Dagir, Auva, Orichalc and Denebola – generally retained their stability and remained loyal to the Solomani Party. This was not accidental. The Solomani Party and Ministry of Information emphasised their role as the bulwark of the Confederation. To ensure that these worlds remained stable, financial and military aid was provided, aimed at establishing Home Forces that could both strengthen border defences and ensure fragile Party governments remained in power.

Millions of refugees were also resettled on Alpha Crucis worlds in the border subsector regions. This fervently patriotic and anti-Imperial group were considered loyal but would also prove to be something of a headache for the Solomani Confederation in the years to come, as the displaced refugees and their descendants provided many recruits for Solomani Party militants. These funded and supported guerrilla and terrorist groups like Black Phoenix and the Solomani Liberation Front on 'occupied worlds' along the Imperial border. They were ideologically supported by the Solomani Party but their actions often threatened to derail the policies of more pragmatic factions in the Secretariat. This often suited the interests of SolSec and the Confederation military. In 1051 a leaked study by Imperial Naval Intelligence estimated 65% of 'independent' Solomani guerrilla groups operating on Imperial worlds in the Alpha Crucis region were actually under control of SolSec or the Solomani armed forces. All of these groups had ties to militant Solomani Party factions.

Mindful of the revolts that had sapped Solomani strength, SolSec and the Ministry of Economics also collaborated to deport non-Solomani deemed potentially disloyal and resettle them on worlds further from the Imperial border. In the lean post-war years when commerce was in decline, such 'resettlement' contracts helped many merchant lines make ends meet. Over nearly 50 years, at least 40 million and possibly more border citizens – many of mixed blood – were subject to this 'strategic resettlement' programme. The programme provided cheap labour for many planets in the sector's hinterland but also created non-Solomani enclaves on worlds that had previously only had pure Solomani populations.

Timeline of Major Events

| Date | Event |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -300,000 | Ancient base established on Jedda. |
| -4500 | Vilani scouts first visit Amkarim (Alpha Crucis), exploring parts of Ximenes. |
| -4300 | Sharurshid bureau explores and establishes outposts in Ximenes, Orichalc, and McKenzie. |
| -4200 | Sharurshid establish outposts in Orichalc, Auva and Dagir. First full colonies in Ximenes. |
| -4150 | Minor outposts established in Auva and Oriah. |
| -4100 | A failed first contact with the alien Grkaadudgaagii results in genocide. Vilani halt further exploration and development of Amkarim. |
| -2305 | First Terran scout ships enter Amkarim's Denebola subsector. |
| -2296 | First of several long-range colonisation missions launched into Alpha Crucis. |
| -2290 | Major colony established on Cthonia in Denebola. |
| -2277 | Founding of Alpha Crucis Foundation to support colonisation efforts. Large-scale civilian emigration begins. |
| -2270 | Alpha Crucis foundation places colony on Turin in Denebola. |
| -2265 | Large-scale civilian emigration into rimward subsectors of Alpha Crucis. |
| -2267 | First Dolphin colony in Alpha Crucis placed on Summit in Orichalc. |
| -2255 | Sector renamed Alpha Crucis. |
| -2252 | Terran Confederation navy begins offensive into the Vilani-occupied regions of Alpha Crucis. The objectives are Ziru Sirka naval bases in Orichalc and Ximenes. |
| -2249 | Battle of Shurregaa. Defeat of Vilani fleet elements in Alpha Crucis. |
| -2245 | Ximenes, Orichalc, McKenzie and Alba conquered by Terran Confederation. |
| -2222 | First of several Selenite colony in Alpha Crucis established on Velscur in Veracruz. |
| -2204 | Beginning of the Rule of Man sees increased Terran immigration into Alpha Crucis. |
| -2000 | Scattered Terran colonies now well-established throughout Alpha Crucis. |
| -1970 | Paraterraforming of Velscur completed. |
| -1900 | Last major wave of ethnic and religious migration. Islamic colonists from Terra settle in Galloway. |
| -1690 | Terran Mercantile Combine established in the Solomani Rim. |
| -1500 | Long Night deepens in Alpha Crucis. |
| -1353 | League of Orichalc founded. |
| -1110 | Old Earth Union founded in the Solomani Rim. |
| -954 | Islamic High Republic founded in Galloway. |
| -876 | Church of the First Cross arises on Turin. |
| -677 | Collapse of the Islamic High Republic in civil war. |
| -364 | Declaration of the Consolidation of Turin unites several worlds near Turin under the banner of the Church of the First Cross. |
| -200 | Consolidation of Turin missionaries contact the Ladybugs, a race native to Amiens. |
| -127 | Economic depression causes fragmentation of League of Orichalc. Founding of Protectorate of Cthonia. |
| 0 | Formation of the Third Imperium. |
| 33 | Founding of the Protectorate of Cthonia. |
| 130 | First Imperial scouts reach Alpha Crucis. |
| 198 | Protectorate of Alba becomes Imperial client state. |

| | |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 250 | Ximenes, Dagir, Alba and McKenzie absorbed into Imperium. |
| 411 | Consolidation of Turin launches Santa Maria Crusade against heretics in Veracruz. |
| 415 | Imperial diplomacy halts Santa Maria Crusade. |
| 501 | Unification talks between Consolidation of Turin, Protectorate of Cthonia and Old Earth Union. Talks collapse over sovereignty issues. |
| 520 | Consolidation of Turin joins Imperium. Noble titles granted to leading citizens, with the Archbishop of Turin invested as Duke of Denebola. |
| 550 | Most other major states in Alpha Crucis have joined the Imperium. No sector duke is appointed at this time and five subsectors remain unnamed districts without subsector dukes. |
| 676 | Alpha Crucis Committee for Establishing Solomani Society founded to unite diverse Solomani Movement factions in the sector. |
| 685 | Alpha Crucis Solomani Movement organisations send delegates to Terra. |
| 740 | Alpha Crucis becomes part of the Solomani Autonomous District. |
| 742 | Commonwealth of Gadjick founded. |
| 857 | Red Zone Affair causes anti-Imperial resentment in Alpha Crucis. |
| 871 | Solomani Confederation founded. |
| 954 | X-boat links finally extended throughout all of Alpha Crucis. |
| 989 | Confederation Army resorts to nuclear weapons to quell civil war on Shurregaa. |
| 990 | Solomani Rim War begins. |
| 993 | Invasion force launched from Alpha Crucis into the Old Expanses. |
| 998 | Confederation Navy begins Operation Hegira, a mass evacuation of civilians and industry from the Old Expanses to Alpha Crucis. |
| 1001 | Imperial Navy warships perform deep raids into Alpha Crucis. 'Massacre of Kedin.' Most of the Confederation's Alpha Crucis Fleet is destroyed. |
| 1002 | Imperial Navy fleets invade McKenzie and Ximenes from the Old Expanses and the Solomani Rim. Imperial squadrons penetrate into Orichalc and Denebola. Fall of Terra. Solomani Rim War ends in armistice. |
| 1004 | Vera Ricasoli of Turin, the Confederation Minister of Justice, runs for Secretary General, losing to Grand Admiral Ivan Wolfe. |
| 1005 | Guerrilla uprisings begin on Imperial-occupied worlds. |
| 1008 | Solomani guerrilla movement on Wulfe is crushed by Imperial troops. |
| 1011 | 'Strategic Reemployment' policy begins deportation of large numbers of non-Solomani from border worlds in Alpha Crucis to interior subsectors. |
| 1037 | Suppression of a Solomani guerrilla insurgency on Leng marks temporary end to initial period of anti-Imperial resistance. |
| 1050 | Cthonia is the first world in Alpha Crucis to reach TL14. |
| 1063 | Solomani Confederation's Ministry of Justice orders end to mass deportations of non-Solomani in Alpha Crucis. |
| 1086 | Duni War (Operation Black Swan) between Solomani Confederation and Commonwealth of Gadjick. |
| 1101 | Zimmerist crisis on Brookwall leads to civil war. |
| 1102 | Solomani Confederation military launches Brookwall police action. |
| 1105 | Incipient super volcano eruption on Ziusudra triggers Confederation aid. |

XIMENES

The Ximenes subsector contains 35 worlds, all but one within the borders of the Imperium. The region was captured from the Solomani Confederation in 1002, the last year of the Solomani Rim War. Even after more than a century, Solomani resistance still smoulders on Harran, Ninmah, Menaf, Phlegethos and Leng. The subsector capital is Wulfe, which is transitioning to home rule, although progress has been delayed by an insurgent campaign orchestrated by the Solomani Liberation Front. Faro and Iamir are isolationist Selenite worlds whose genetically modified populations appear as happy to be in the Imperium as they were within the Confederation.

Duchess Karima Delgado is the Duke of Ximenes and Imperial sector duke of the rump sector of Alpha Crucis. She is known for both her collection of antique robots and her long-winded speeches peppered with historical and literary allusions. Although an unimaginative administrator and diplomat, Delgado is fiercely loyal to the Imperium and a strong supporter of the Imperial Navy. A former Imperial Navy officer, Delgado lost the chance to command a warship after the sudden death of her elder brother Gideon led to her ascent to the ducal throne. She resents the loss of her navy career and prefers to spend time with Naval and Imperial Intelligence personnel rather than on economic or political policy. In 1102 her close friend and trusted seneschal Sir Simon Hale committed suicide when an Imperial Intelligence investigation exposed his fiancée Mia Knox as a SolSec spy. Since that tragedy the Duchess has grown short-tempered, seems to trust fewer people and has taken an increasingly belligerent attitude toward the Solomani Confederation who she referred to as a 'venomous nest of vipers' in one recent speech. This has not endeared her to the Diplomatic Corps or Archduke Adair.

The subsector fleet is slightly overstrength compared to a typical ship allocation, largely because it is charged with controlling cross-border smuggling and intelligence-gathering intrusions. The fleet also has a supposedly temporary allocation of vessels to support counter-insurgency operations on several worlds. These forces were passed to subsector control in order to ensure greater responsiveness to a changing situation and are often required to flit between trouble spots. One tactic that has worked well is the practice of suddenly

flooding a system with vessels and inspecting every ship that passes. Arms shipments to insurgent groups and the movement of coordinators and advisors, have been seriously curtailed in recent years.

KEDIN

This arid but habitable planet lost almost its entire population of 20 million during the Solomani Rim War. A deep penetration raid led by the Imperial fleet intruder *Vilani High Lightning* unleashed a nuclear bombardment that targeted the planet's military-industrial centres. The bombardment also hit the giant Ostrich River Dam hydroelectric complex, triggering a catastrophic flood that inundated low-lying populated agricultural regions and drowning almost all those who survived the initial strike. The 'Massacre of Kedin' has thus been a staple of Solomani Party propaganda for the last century.

In 1086 the Imperial Colonial Office announced plans to resettle the world with colonists from neighbouring Umkarguu. The fact that a Solomani world would be resettled largely by non-Solomani immigrants has upset Solomani activists in the subsector and led to threats by the Solomani Liberation Front to target the effort. Various settlement and scientific teams are planetside but facing protests from pro-Solomani activists and squatters who claim descent from the original survivors. Full-scale resettlement plans are now on hold pending a security review by Duchess Karima's office. Meanwhile, the publicity has led to the macabre underwater ruins of Kedin's inundated capital city becoming a minor tourist attraction for thrill-seeking divers.

MINAURUS

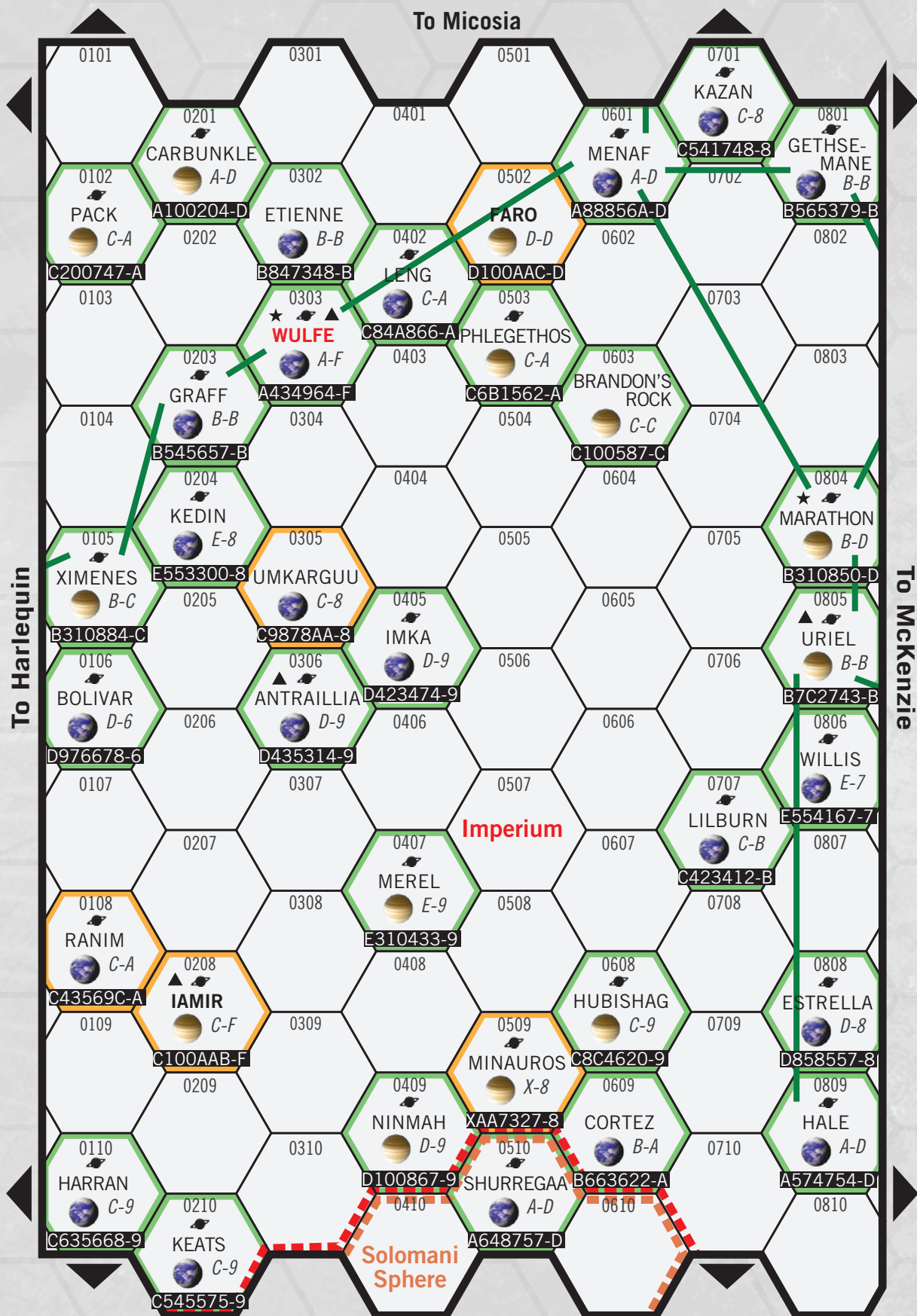
This is a large, icy planet covered with a dense nitrogen-methane atmosphere and seas of liquid hydrocarbons. The average surface temperature is -180° . During the Solomani Rim War Minaurus was the site of a major refinery complex and biochemical weapons facility run by SolChem. An invasion by Imperial Marines was fiercely resisted by the Confederation Army's 52nd Lift Infantry Division. The Imperium won the battle but a false report of an approaching Solomani battle fleet made them decide not to hold the world. The marines destroyed the complex and evacuated,

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|----------------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Antraillia | 0307 | S | D435314-9 | Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Bolivar | 0106 | | D976678-6 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | |
| Brandon's Rock | 0603 | | C100587-C | Ht Ni Va | | Imperium | |
| Carbuncle | 0201 | | A100204-D | Ht Lo Va | | Imperium | G |
| Cortez | 0609 | | B663622-A | Ni Ri | | Imperium | |
| Estrella | 0808 | | D858557-8 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Etienne | 0302 | | B847348-B | Ga Lo | | Imperium | |
| Faro | 0502 | | D100AAC-D | Hi Ht In Na Va | | Imperium | |
| Gethsemane | 0801 | | B565379-B | Ga Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Graff | 0203 | | B545657-B | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Hale | 0809 | | A574754-D | Ag Ga Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Harran | 0110 | | C635668-9 | Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Hubishag | 0608 | | C8C4620-9 | FI Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Iamir | 0208 | S | C100AAB-F | Hi Ht In Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Imka | 0405 | | D423474-9 | Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Kazan | 0701 | | C541748-8 | Po | | Imperium | G |
| Keats | 0210 | | C545575-9 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Kedin | 0204 | | E553300-8 | Lo Po | | Imperium | G |
| Leng | 0402 | | C84A866-A | Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Lilburn | 0707 | | C423412-B | Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Marathon | 0804 | N | B310850-D | Ht Na | | Imperium | G |
| Menaf | 0601 | | A88856A-D | Ag Ga Ht Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Merel | 0407 | | E310433-9 | Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Minauros | 0509 | | XAA7327-8 | FI Lo | R | Imperium | G |
| Ninmah | 0409 | | D100867-9 | Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Pack | 0102 | | C200747-A | Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Phlegethos | 0503 | | C6B1562-A | FI Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Ranim | 0108 | | C43569C-A | Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Shurregaa | 0510 | | A648757-D | Ag Ga Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Umkarguu | 0305 | | C9878AA-8 | Ga Ri | | Imperium | |
| Uriel | 0805 | S | B7C2743-B | FI | | Imperium | G |
| Willis | 0806 | | E554167-7 | Ga Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Wulfe | 0303 | | A434964-F | Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Ximenes | 0105 | | B310884-C | Ht Na | | Imperium | G |

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Alpha Crucis

CAPELLA SUBSECTOR



- Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- Imperial Naval Base

- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- X-Boat Route

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Imperial Scout Base

taking several hundred prisoners and their own dead with them. However, in their hasty retreat they left behind thousands of Solomani Army corpses along with hundreds of wrecked grav vehicles, scattered across thousands of square kilometres of frozen terrain. Normally, grave registration teams would have arrived later to clean up the battlefield. However, a bureaucratic error meant that clean up teams never arrived and the barren planet lay fallow, visited only by occasional scientists and prospectors.

In 1099 a planetary geologist reported spotting what he thought was a ship's boat buried in ice. This lured scrap dealers from nearby Keats, who were shocked to find hundreds of wrecked vehicles and thousands of armoured corpses partly buried under the hydrocarbon snow. They began a quiet but profitable black market salvage operation. Then, in 1104, Confederation Army helmets turned up in an Imperial militaria auction on Ximenes. The event was attended by some Solomani military historians who were able to identify the helmets and insignia as belonging the 'lost 52nd'. They reported to the press that perhaps 12,000 forgotten Solomani war dead lay abandoned on Minaurus, igniting a small media frenzy on both sides of the border.

Families of Solomani veterans are now attempting to visit the site and identify remains for return to their great-grandchildren. The Imperium has declared the region a war grave but has so far done little to protect it. Although there are no working combat vehicles or weapons – these were removed by Imperial forces – there is still a fortune in valuable superdense scrap metal. There are also thousands of examples of repairable war-era suits of combat armour and other minor military equipment that remains to be salvaged.

SHURREGAA

Shurregaa was the scene of terrible ethnic conflict between Vilani and Solomani prior to and during the Solomani Rim War. A shaky government attempted

to balance the rights of Imperial, Vilani and mixed-race citizens but in 973 reports of a possible military coup led the ethnic Vilani political leadership to abandon these policies and ban the Solomani Party. This triggered a campaign of Party-inspired insurgency that escalated into civil war with brutal ethnic cleansing practiced by all sides. The Solomani Confederation dispatched 'peacekeeping' forces that blatantly favoured the Solomani minority but were unable to halt the violence. As the Confederation poured in additional ground troops the desperate Vilani faction – still technically the legitimate planetary government of Shurregaa – petitioned for assistance from the Imperium. In this it was joining its voice to those of numerous other non-Solomani worlds in the Old Expanses, Solomani Rim and Diaspora that were attempting to resist Solomani hegemony.

The Shurregaa Civil War claimed more than 11 million lives and fighting continued into the opening years of the Solomani Rim War in 990. Fearful of a major conflict behind their lines at the start of the war, the Confederation Army received Secretariat authorisation to deploy low-yield tactical nuclear weapons against pro-Imperial government forces. This was followed by a massive SolSec-led purge of the Vilani political class, most of whom were deported to offworld prison camps. As a known trouble spot, Shurregaa was heavily reinforced by the Confederation military throughout the Solomani Rim War and also used to resettle Solomani refugees from Old Expanses sector.

Continued repression continued for several years after the end of the war and has ensured Solomani control. Tensions have eased somewhat in the last 30 years but Vilani and mixed race people have little political power. Shurregaa's border location and busy starport has made it a significant centre for human trafficking and arms smuggling, with both the Solomani Liberation Front and Isazii Feruu Guaankarundn operating from the planet.

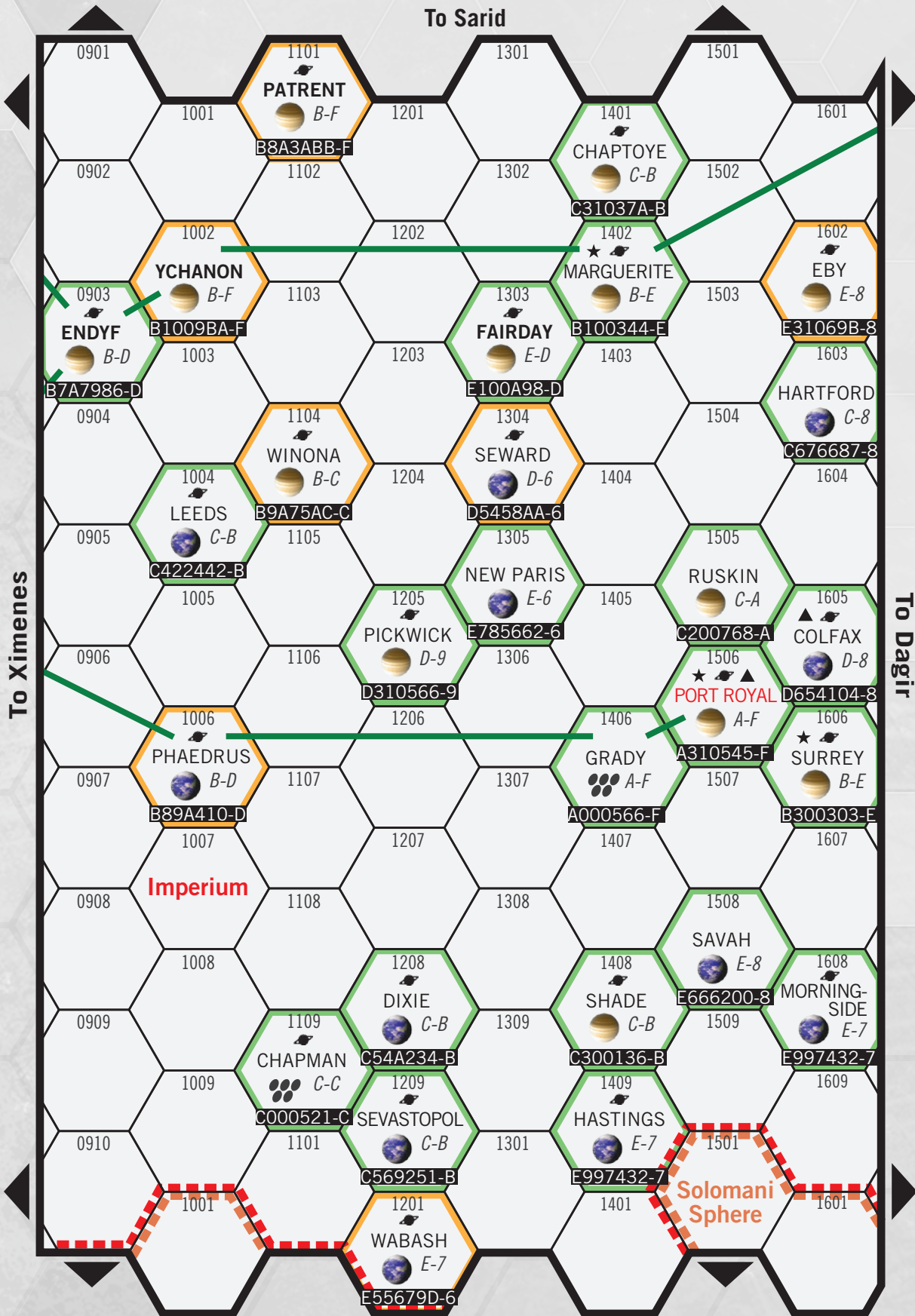


McKENZIE

The McKenzie subsector contains 27 worlds, all lying within the borders of the Imperium, although Solomani opposition remains strong on Pickwick, New Paris, Ruskin and in the Grady asteroid belt. Ychannon, Fairday, Faro and lamir are all self-sufficient worldhouse planets (see page 228) with Selenite populations. Never fully comfortable in the Confederation, they readily accommodated themselves to Imperial rule. Ychannon

and lamir in particular integrated well with Imperial society, while the others are more isolationist. Some of these have bizarre, inbred cultures forged during the Long Night and labyrinthine politics nearly impenetrable to outsiders. Faro still has a popular Solomani Party, one whose Purist faction simply considers all other races to be unclean and inferior without attempting to impose those beliefs on the universe.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|-------------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Chapman | 1109 | | C000521-C | As Ht Ni Va | | Imperium | G |
| Chaptoye | 1401 | | C31037A-B | Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Colfax | 1605 | S | D654104-8 | Ga Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Dixie | 1208 | | C54A234-B | Lo Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Eby | 1602 | | E31069B-8 | Na Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Endyf | 0903 | | B7A7986-D | Fl Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Fairday | 1303 | | E100A98-D | Hi Ht In Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Grady | 1406 | | A000566-F | As Ht Ni Va | | Imperium | |
| Hartford | 1603 | | C676687-8 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | |
| Hastings | 1409 | | E997432-7 | Ga Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Leeds | 1004 | | C422442-B | Ni Po | | Imperium | G |
| Marguerite | 1402 | N | B100344-E | Ht Lo Va | | Imperium | G |
| Morningside | 1608 | | E792000-0 | Ba Lt | | Imperium | G |
| New Paris | 1305 | | E785662-6 | Ag Ga Ni Ri | | Imperium | |
| Patrent | 1101 | | B8A3ABB-F | Fl Hi Ht | A | Imperium | G |
| Phaedrus | 1006 | | B89A410-D | Ht Ni Wa | A | Imperium | |
| Pickwick | 1205 | | D310566-9 | Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Port Royal | 1506 | N | A310545-F | Ht Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Ruskin | 1505 | | C200768-A | Na Va | | Imperium | |
| Savah | 1508 | | E666200-8 | Ga Lo | | Imperium | |
| Sevastopol | 1209 | | C569251-B | Lo | | Imperium | G |
| Seward | 1304 | | D5458AA-6 | Ga | | Imperium | G |
| Shade | 1408 | | C300136-B | Lo Va | | Imperium | G |
| Surrey | 1606 | N | B300303-E | Ht Lo Va | | Imperium | G |
| Wabash | 1210 | | E55679D-6 | Ag Ga | | Imperium | G |
| Winona | 1104 | | B9A75AC-C | Fl Ht Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Ychanon | 1002 | | B1009BA-F | Hi Ht In Na Va | | Imperium | |



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Alpha Crucis

MCKENZIE SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- B-6* Starport Class & Tech Level
- ★ Imperial Naval Base
- ▲ Imperial Scout Base

- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- X-Boat Route

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Asteroid Belt

The subsector fleet has responsibility for a few worlds in Dagir and Oriah but has not received additional forces to support the deployments. It is a well-known 'opportunity deployment', as Imperial Navy officers politely call it. Many of the subsector fleet's officers are 'plodders' or controversial characters who have been side-lined. Others are related to someone important and have been given a senior position to keep them out of the way or in return for favours. Whilst this creates a dangerously weak and unreliable subsector fleet, it also gives rising stars a chance to shine.

A hard-working but poorly connected officer might not stand out elsewhere but those with some talent and guts stand far above the average in this region. This, combined with the troubles of a border subsector, is the 'opportunity' referred to in one of the navy's traditional toasts: 'To opportunity, boldness and a bit of luck.' Thus whilst most of the sector fleet is going through the motions in an unimaginative manner, it is possible to encounter a warship with an active, bold commander keen to show what they can do. This does not mean their decisions will be correct but they will certainly be vigorous.

COLFAX

Colfax was a garden world with a TLO native primitive indigenous race, the hexapodal burrowing Mockmoles. These prindigs were ruthlessly exploited as labourers by a small elite of Solomani settlers who used them to sustain a luxury neo-feudal lifestyle. The first rebellion in 888 was ruthlessly crushed by well-armed Colfax settlers and Solomani Army troops. During the Solomani Rim War Imperial agents made contact with remaining Mockmole clans and began smuggling in weapons for a second rebellion. SolSec learned of the operation and warned local Party authorities who pre-empted the rising. In a ruthless campaign of genocide, Colfax militants and militia used chemical weapons to exterminate the entire Mockmole population.

Late in the Solomani Rim War, Colfax fell to the Imperial advance. Evidence of the atrocities was soon discovered and an Imperial Ministry of Justice investigation was launched. In 1012 nearly the entire surviving adult Solomani population, 27,000 men and women, were found collectively guilty of genocide in their extermination of the Mockmoles. They were shipped off to Imperial prison planets or deported to other worlds for hard labour.





Today, Colfax is a world of ghosts. The majority of the tiny population are scientists at a base established by the Imperial Scout Service to document the remains of the extinct alien culture for posterity. No natives appear to have survived but a few Solomani 'survivalist' families who escaped the Imperial purge are thought to still remain in the wilderness. Not all of those responsible for the Colfax Genocide were brought to justice; some of the planet's leaders and certain SolSec officials escaped offworld. Imperial Ministry of Justice agents eventually hunted down some of them while others fled into the Solomani Confederation.

GRADY

Grady is a mineral-rich asteroid belt controlled by Solomani asteroid mining companies and belter families. Although generally of pure Solomani blood, the majority of the belter population had little love for the Solomani Cause and gave the Imperial occupiers minimal trouble. Grady was originally scheduled to revert from Imperial military rule to civilian administration in 1104.

This all changed when the Imperial megacorporation Sternmetal Horizons moved into the belt in 1099. Sternmetal's heavy-handed approach to competition caused conflicts with local mining interests, triggering labour disputes and claim-jumping accusations. Sternmetal's own security forces – offworld mercenaries – were used for strike breaking and were also accused of harassing independent miners. The dispute has since been exploited by members of the AMAC interstellar union and Solomani Party agitators; anti-Imperial sentiment is now on the rise. The reversion to civil rule has been postponed repeatedly over 'security concerns', triggering further violent protests against

'military occupation'. Ongoing Imperial plans to invest a respected local celebrity as Baron Grady are proceeding but she is now beginning to balk, afraid of being branded a collaborator.

Grady's proximity to key Imperial Navy bases and the Solomani border have the Imperial Navy command at Port Royal nervous that the belt may become a point of entry for infiltrating Solomani warships or guerrillas. Imperial Navy vessels have increased their patrols of the belt and the small marine garrison in the belt's main asteroid station is trying to keep the peace. The local Imperial Navy admiral at Port Royal has sided with the Grady miners, believing the system was peaceful until Sternmetal moved in. He does not enjoy the headache of having to mediate a rock war on his doorstep when the Navy should be watching Solomani Confederation forces across the border.

PORT ROYAL

To reduce the risk of attacks on its defence installations by infiltrators, the Imperial Navy decided to place its McKenzie subsector bases on barren moons with little or no local Solomani population. Port Royal is one such fortress-world. It is little more than an Imperial naval base with a small repair yard and a bustling startown that caters to the needs of thousands of naval personnel and dockworkers. The installation is burrowed deep into the bedrock rather than sheltering under vulnerable domes. The inhabitants of Port Royal are a carefully screened mix of military families and trusted civilian contractors, and even those who work in the startown dives and red light districts tend to be from non-Solomani worlds deep in the Imperium. Although local laws are not oppressive the ease of control and small size of its populations allow Imperial Naval Intelligence to keep very close track of who is on the planet.

SUBSECTOR DAGIR

The Dagir subsector contains 26 worlds, most of which lie within the boundaries of the Solomani Confederation. A narrow strip of systems on the spinward fringe are under Imperial occupation or have successfully broken free of both polities and remain non-aligned.

In the last months of the Solomani Rim War the worlds of Dagir, Cloudia and Gemstar, all of which were dominated by Radical Embracer factions of

the Party, attempted to jointly secede from the Solomani Confederation. They may have hoped that the Imperial Navy would support them but if so, they mistimed their insurrection. The Armistice halted the war with the Imperial Navy three parsecs away and strong Confederation Navy squadrons occupying their systems. However, the Confederation did not have enough fighting strength left to reduce Dagir's heavy planetary defences and Cloudia's fortified asteroids,

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|---------------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Arcadia | 1804 | | C567478-9 | Ga Ni | | | |
| Azure | 2405 | | B989302-D | Ht Lo | A | Solomani | G |
| Batavia | 1807 | | D7628AF-6 | Ri | | | G |
| Berasberg | 1710 | | C100644-B | Na Ni Va | A | Imperium | |
| Bootrosi | 2106 | | E555000-0 | Ba Ga Lt | A | Solomani | G |
| Churchill | 2101 | | B000883-D | As Ht Na Va | | Solomani | |
| Clarity | 2108 | M | B553655-B | Ni Po | | | G |
| Clavis Nine | 2305 | M | A436468-E | Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Cloudia | 2401 | | A31099A-E | Hi Ht In Na | | | G |
| Conterolla | 2301 | | B668220-B | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Dagir | 2201 | | C56498B-A | Ga Hi | | | G |
| Gemstar | 2001 | M | B100203-E | Ht Lo Va | | | G |
| Hallom | 1909 | | D5749A7-8 | Ga Hi In | | Solomani | |
| Harland | 2408 | | A599427-E | Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Heaven's Belt | 1904 | | C000201-D | As Ht Lo Va | | Solomani | G |
| Isdirra | 1703 | | C10078A-B | Na Va | | Imperium | |
| Ke-Ady | 2404 | | C555632-8 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | |
| Killbrouha | 1907 | | B423965-E | Hi Ht In Na Po | A | Solomani | G |
| Occam | 1701 | | B87A999-E | Hi Ht In Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Peodein | 2103 | | C100355-D | Ht Lo Va | | | G |
| Perstein | 2009 | | B559476-C | Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Valhalla | 2410 | | E785675-6 | Ag Ga Ni Ri | | Solomani | G |
| Waypoint | 1903 | | C000322-C | As Ht Lo Va | | Solomani | G |
| Weiwei | 1901 | | C73767A-9 | Ni | | Solomani | |
| Yellowknife | 1803 | | B775887-A | Ga | | Solomani | |
| Zephir | 1801 | | C591651-9 | Ni | | Solomani | G |

so instead the Confederation signed a separate peace, the Treaty of Gemstar. This established both worlds as Solomani client states with guaranteed internal self-rule but restrictions on planetary naval forces and foreign policy. It also provided for a Confederation Navy base to be permanently established at Gemstar and for Confederation forces to perform all military space patrols within their systems.

In 1103 Cloudia began building a class of high-performance merchant ships that some observers believed could be converted to warships. A nationalist movement exists in Cloudia that wishes to repudiate the Treaty of Gemstar but so far they do not have sufficient political power. SolSec is likely investigating but the treaty restricts it from operating openly on any of the hundreds of asteroid stations in the Cloudia belt.

The Dagir Border Fleet has responsibility for defence of the entire cluster from the Imperial border at Zephir to Antairtic in the Spica sector, to trailing. The cluster and its associated systems form a loop, which simplifies strategic mobility for the handful of fleet destroyers tasked with patrolling the area. This force would be inadequate in the face of any significant attack but Home Forces could put up a fight. Calls for reinforcement have gone unheeded and the situation is not likely to improve. That is not to say the region is lawless; assignment of patrol vessels is adequate. Indeed, there are several light carriers operating along the border in addition to the many patrol frigates. These are sufficient to deter or catch smugglers, which at present is the primary concern of the Confederation authorities.

CLOUDIA

Cloudia is a small rockball world, which would be of no consequence but for rich reserves of minerals both on-planet and in the system's planetoid belt. Its status is unusual, in that along with Dagir and Gemstar it concluded a separate peace treaty with the Imperium. As a result, Cloudia lies within the Confederation but is not a member government. It has a nebulous

client status which allows the Confederation to operate warships in the system but does not require Cloudia to pay taxes to the Confederation. At the same time, Cloudia has a free trade agreement with the Confederation and its ships are subject to less scrutiny than those of other Confederation worlds when entering the Imperium.

This situation has greatly benefited Cloudia. What would have been its tax contribution to the Confederation has for many years been spent on an expanded trade fleet and home defences. These were strong at the end of the Solomani Rim War and have been increased ever since. Many outsiders do not see the need, since treaties with both the Imperium and the Confederation should guarantee security without any significant defensive outlay. However, Cloudia's determination to chart her own path requires the ability to repel an assault or at least make one too costly to contemplate.

Defences in the system rely mostly on asteroid forts. Most have only minimal drives, although these can be used to make small orbital changes on a frequent basis to prevent a stealthy attack by 'silent' kinetic weapons. Asteroids are selected from the belt, outfitted in place then moved to strategic locations in orbit around the mainworld and the gas giants. The planetoid belt also has camouflaged forts at intervals. These semi-mobile fortresses are backed up by conventional system defence boats and monitors.

Since 1103, Cloudia has been engaged in a rapid expansion of her trade fleet. This would normally be of no consequence but the design of the new vessels has caused alarm in some quarters. Whilst Cloudia's treaties preclude the construction of jump-capable warships, armed merchant craft are permitted. The new designs are well armed for a commercial starship and include a number of features that suggest they are intended to be rapidly converted to paramilitary vessels. This would give Cloudia a power projection capability she has thus far lacked.



VIGILANT MAGNATE COMMERCIAL VESSEL

The *Vigilant Magnate*-class is phenomenally expensive for a commercial ship, mainly due to its powerful manoeuvre drives and military-grade sensor package. It can carry a reasonable number of middle and high passengers – notably, there are no low berths – and a fair amount of cargo but is incapable of competing with humble ‘main trundler’ designs in the bulk cargo role. This is entirely acceptable, since its role – at least according to the designers and operators – is as a prestige freightliner offering the highest level of security.

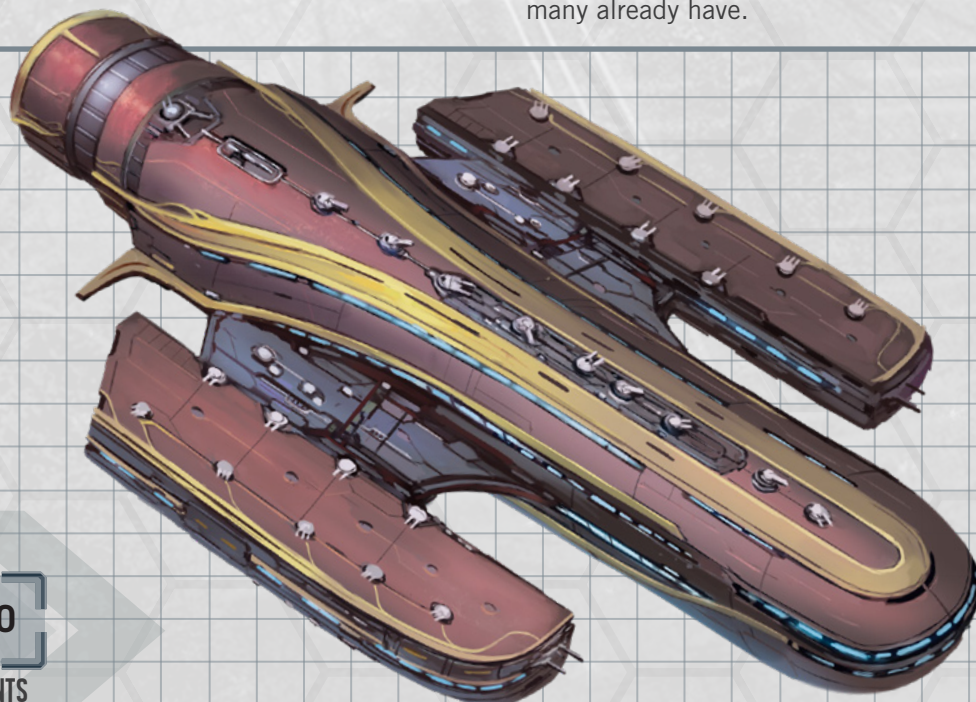
The *Vigilant Magnate* is intended to operate highport-to-highport. It lacks the ability to land on a planet and carries no small craft. Hull form is a central cylinder/rectangle, with two secondary hulls located slightly ‘down’ on each side of the main hull. These contain the cargo holds and some fuel and have a scattering of defensive sandcaster/beam laser mountings on their outer surfaces. The pulse laser fit, consisting of dual turrets grouped into five batteries of four, is located on the dorsal and ventral surfaces of the secondary hulls with the fifth battery spaced along the dorsal main hull. This is interspersed with the six particle accelerator barbettes, which fire independently.

Astute observers have noted that the outer surfaces of the secondary hulls contain two 100-ton ‘auxiliary cargo bays’ on each side, which have heavy power fittings. These – coincidentally or otherwise – happen to fit most

standard 100-ton bay weapons. There are also no less than 40 ‘secure stowage lockers’ across the main and secondary hulls, which could be quickly fitted with additional turrets. Combined with a state-of the-art software suite, nuclear dampers and a complement of security personnel, the *Vigilant Magnate* is certainly well suited to the prestige commercial role. Its high thrust also makes it a potential raider or paramilitary vessel, although the designers deny this was the intent.

Crew accommodation is on the upper deck of the main hull, with high staterooms for the captain and senior officers separated from the ordinary crew cabins by the galley and mess. A second crew common area lies aft of the cabins, providing relatively generous recreation spaces. The remainder of the high cabins are grouped on the passenger deck, again with their own lounge and four ordinary cabins for the use of stewards. Although official complement is two stewards and a medic, many ships run with more stewards and a fully qualified doctor. On some vessels the steward-cabins are used as temporary accommodation for the on-call steward or may be converted into a ship’s office or a shop.

The standard cabins are located aft of the high passage lounge, with their own recreation and dining spaces. These are large enough to permit even middle passengers to travel in relative luxury and vessels of this class have an excellent reputation for quality of service. Cloudia’s government points to this as proof that all it is doing is filling a market niche but all the same the intelligence services are concerned about how quickly these vessels could be turned into warships – and how many already have.



3,520

HULL POINTS

COMMERCIAL VESSEL

VIGILANT MAGNATE

| TL14 | | TONS | COST (MCr) |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Hull | 8,000 tons, Close Structure | — | 360 |
| Armour | Bonded Superdense, Armour: 4 | 256 | 115.2 |
| M-Drive | Thrust 4 (size reduction, energy efficient x2) | 288 | 960 |
| Jump Drive | Jump-2 (decreased fuel x2, energy efficient) | 405 | 607.5 |
| Power Plant | Fusion (TL12), Power 6,000 | 400 | 400 |
| Fuel Tanks | J-2, 12 weeks of operation | 1,560 | — |
| Bridge | | 60 | 40 |
| Computer | Core/60 | — | 75 |
| Sensors | Improved | 3 | 4.3 |
| | Countermeasures Suite | 2 | 4 |
| Weapons | Particle Barbettes x6 | 30 | 48 |
| | Dual Turrets (pulse lasers) x20 | 20 | 80 |
| | Triple Turrets (sandcasters, beam laser) x20 | 20 | 40 |
| | Point Defence Batteries (type III) x2 | 40 | 40 |
| | Nuclear Dampers x2 | 20 | 20 |
| Systems | Cargo Crane | 17.5 | 17.5 |
| | Repair Drones | 80 | 16 |
| | Mail Distribution Array | 10 | 20 |
| | Medical Bays x4 | 16 | 8 |
| | Armouries x4 | 4 | 1 |
| Staterooms | High x24 | 155 | 19.2 |
| | Standard x120 | 480 | 60 |
| Common Area | | 360 | 36 |
| Software | Manoeuvre/0 | — | — |
| | Jump Control/2 | — | 0.2 |
| | Advanced Fire Control/3 | — | 18 |
| | Anti-Hijack/3 | — | 10 |
| | Broad Spectrum EW | — | 14 |
| | Electronic Warfare/2 | — | 24 |
| | Point Defence/1 | — | 8 |
| | Screen Optimiser | — | 5 |
| | Virtual Crew/1 | — | 10 |
| | Virtual Gunner/1 | — | 10 |
| Cargo | Library | — | — |
| | | 3,333 | — |
| | 'Secure Stowage Locker' x40 | 40 | — |
| | 'Auxiliary Cargo Bay' x4 | 400 | — |

TOTAL: MCr 3070.9

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOT,
ASTROGATOR,
ENGINEERS X16,
MAINTENANCE X6,
MEDIC,
GUNNERS/SECURITY X20,
STEWARDS X2

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Cr255908 /month

PURCHASE COST
MCr3070.9

POWER REQUIREMENTS

1,600

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

4

SENSORS

1,600

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

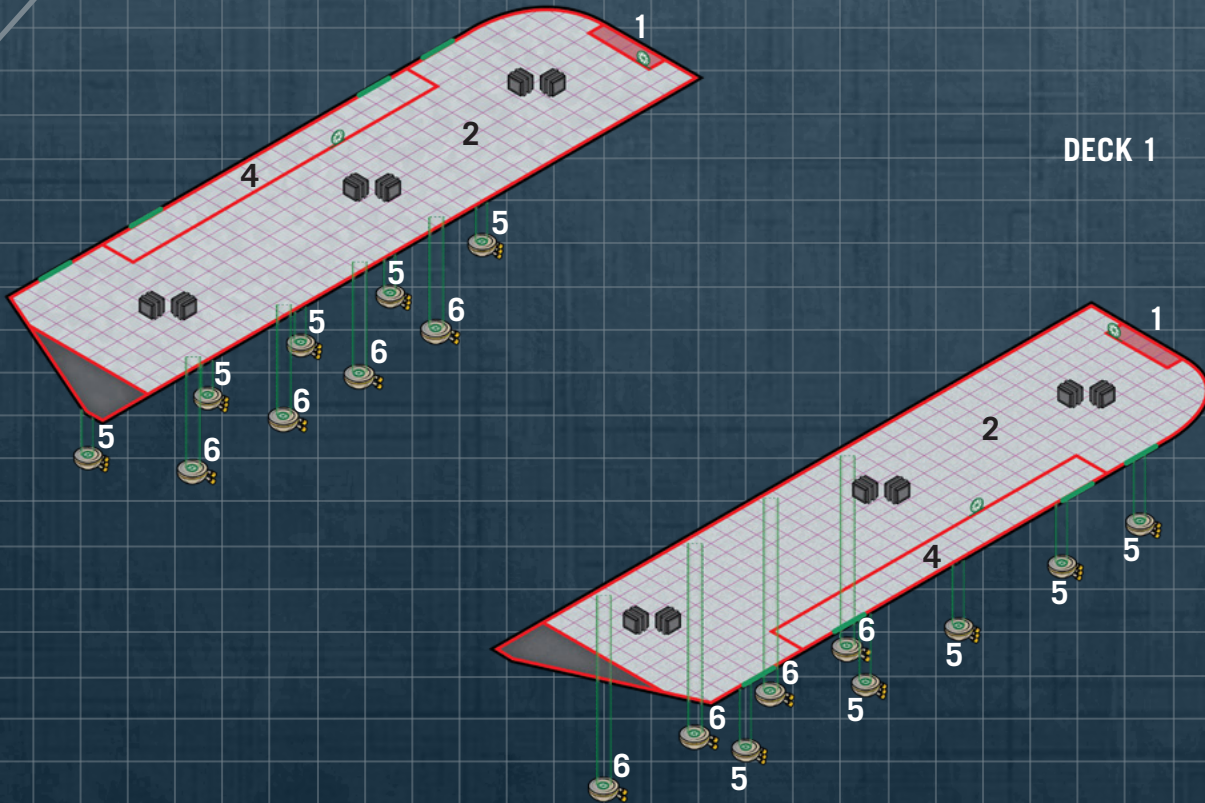
1,200

JUMP DRIVE

550

WEAPONS

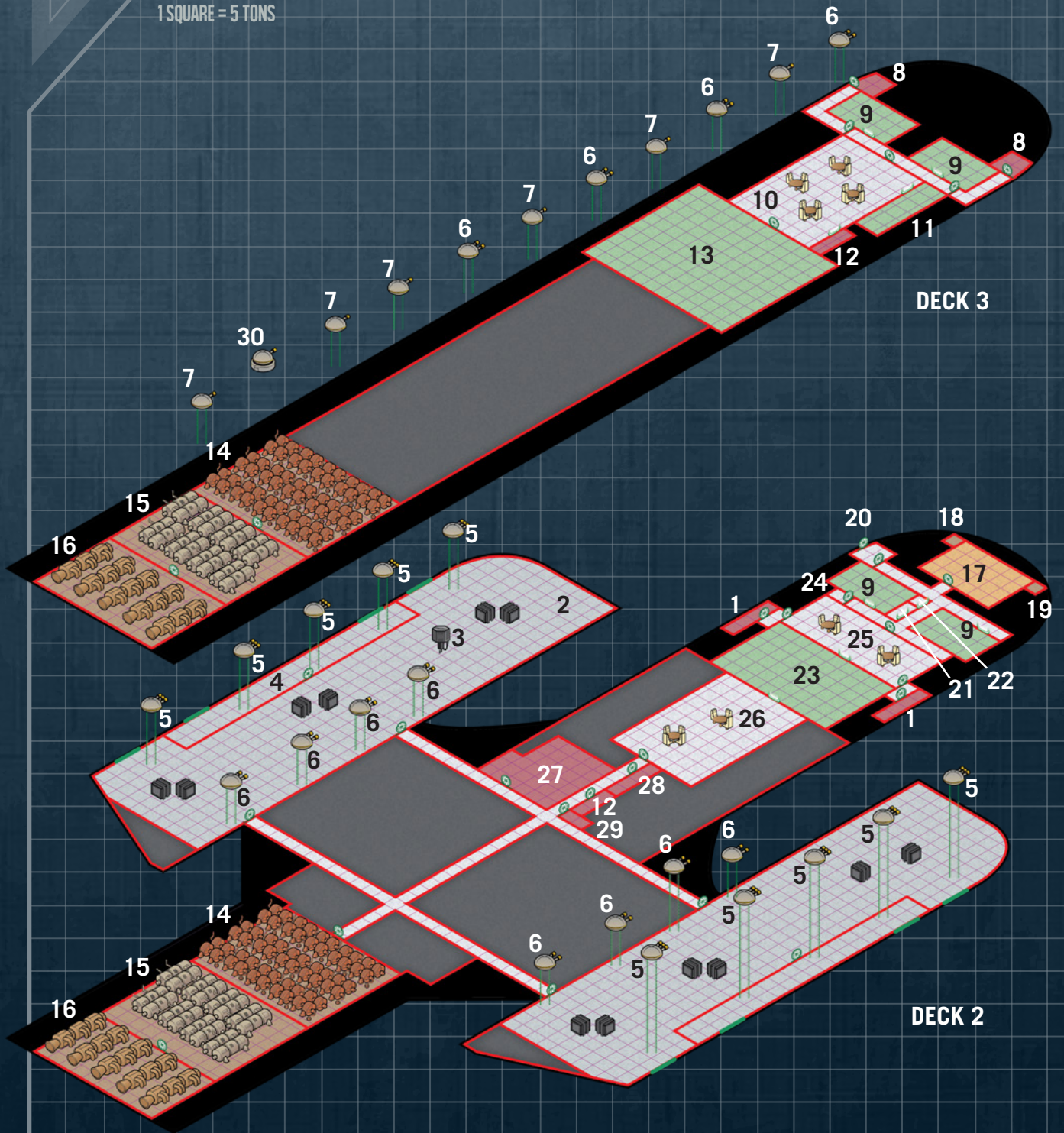
1 SQUARE = 5 TONS



LEGEND

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Lockers | 16. Manoeuvre Drive |
| 2. Cargo Hold | 17. Bridge |
| 3. Crane | 18. Sensors |
| 4. Auxiliary Cargo Bay | 19. Countermeasures Suite |
| 5. Triple Turret | 20. Airlock |
| 6. Dual Turret | 21. Storage |
| 7. Particle Barbette | 22. Fresher |
| 8. Nuclear Damper | 23. Crew Quarters |
| 9. High Stateroom | 24. Ship's Locker |
| 10. Passengers Lounge | 25. Common Area |
| 11. Crew Cabins | 26. Recreation Area |
| 12. Medical Bays | 27. Repair Drones |
| 13. Staterooms | 28. Mail Distribution Array |
| 14. Power Plant | 29. Armouries |
| 15. Jump Drive | 30. Point Defense Battery |

1 SQUARE = 5 TONS





OCCAM

Occam is a Solomani world occupied by the Imperium, a rich ocean world with a mixed population of uplifted Dolphins, variant aquamorph humans and Solomani. The oceans are known for exotic, large and colourful sea life, making Occam a major tourist destination prior to the Solomani Rim War. Most humans inhabit mobile floating island-cities buoyed up by gravitics, some of which are capable of limited free flight to avoid storms. Prior to the war, Occam was controlled by a moderate faction of the Solomani Party who surrendered quickly in the face of Imperial forces. The economy suffered from reduced trade in post war years but benefitted from extensive investment as a result of readily accepting Imperial control. Occam achieved home rule relatively quickly, with Imperial troops being withdrawn in 1062.

The price of Occam's cooperation has been the enmity of off-world Solomani activists and guerrillas who denounce its 'collaborationist' government. Recently the world has been selected as a target by Solomani Liberation Front militants based on Weiwai; their acts have included the assassination of the head of the world's Economic Planning Bureau in 110 and the scuttling the floating resort city of Green Ray in 1104. The government of Occam has responded in characteristically bureaucratic fashion. Tightened regulations have effectively raised the local Law Level from 7 to 9 and a new ministry has been founded to focus on planetary security. They have also petitioned the Imperium to do something about the situation on Weiwai.

WEIWAI

Although theoretically ruled by a unified Solomani Party, the planetary government and citizenry of this Confederation border world have been bitterly divided since 1096. In that year a moderate faction of the Solomani Party finally achieved power with an agenda to reform corruption in old Party bureaucracy. Flushed with success, they pushed through a plan to grant additional freedoms to the planet's mixed-blood minority hoping such liberalisation would lead to improved trade relations with neighbouring Occam.

The new government overestimated the degree of popular support for their agenda. A wave of racial violence from Purist and Anti-Imperial factions shook the planet and attempts to forge unity in a new Party Congress broke down with the involvement of foreign Party militants. The Party splintered on geographic as well as ideological grounds with different 'bubbleplexes' and agro-domes controlled by rival local factions. Over the last few years the anti-Imperial factions have attracted off-world Solomani Liberation Front fighters. These were welcomed at first as they supplied hardened street fighters but the price for their assistance has been the establishment of Solomani Liberation Front guerrilla training camps on Weiwei, which is now a base for cross-border operations which will attract retaliation sooner or later.

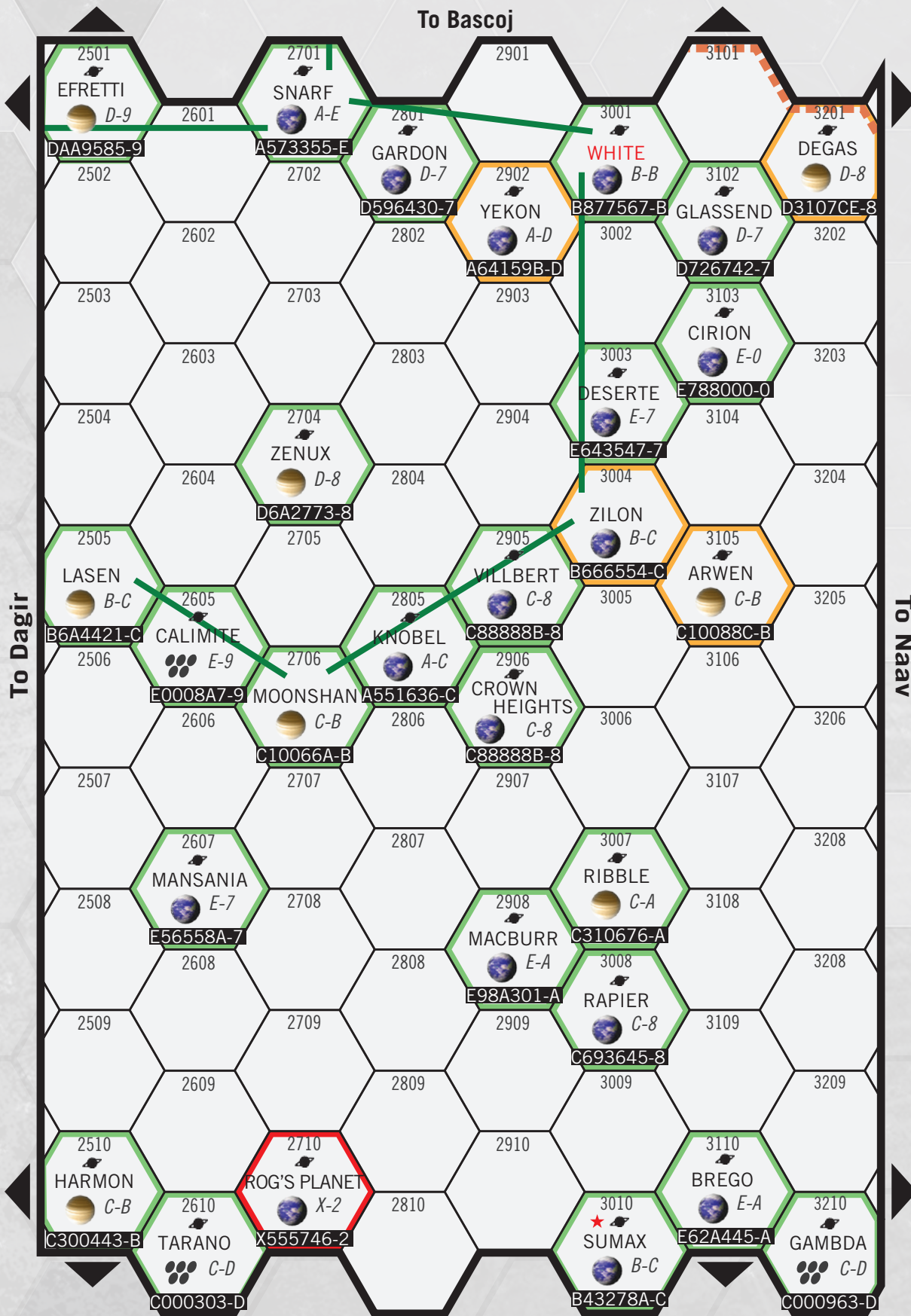
S U B S E C T O R

ALBA

This subsector was entirely colonised by the Solomani. The first colonists began arriving during the late Interstellar Wars, settling Gardon, Villbert, Rog's Planet and Mansania. A trickle of small colonial expeditions continued to arrive throughout the Rule of Man. All of the colonies suffered some degree of technological collapse during the Long Night, although the worlds

of Alba eventually formed a protectorate under White's leadership that lasted until they joined the Imperium. The third and largest wave of immigrants came from Solomani colonies in the Old Expanses during the troubled run up to the Solomani Rim War. During the early Imperial period the worlds of Alba formed their own polity.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|---------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Arwen | 3105 | | C10088C-B | Na Va | A | | G |
| Brego | 3110 | | E62A445-A | Ni Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Calimite | 2605 | | E0008A7-9 | As Na Va | | | G |
| Cirion | 3103 | | E788000-0 | Ba Ga Lt | | Solomani | |
| Crown Heights | 2906 | | B581323-B | Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Degas | 3201 | | D3107CE-8 | Na | | Solomani | G |
| Deserte | 3003 | | E643547-7 | Ni Po | | | G |
| Efretti | 2501 | | DAA95859 | FI Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Gambda | 3210 | | C000963-D | As Hi Ht In Na Va | | | G |
| Gardon | 2801 | | D596430-7 | Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Glassend | 3102 | | D726742-7 | | | Solomani | G |
| Harmon | 2510 | | C300443-B | Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Knobel | 2805 | | A551636-C | Ht Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Lasen | 2505 | | B6A4421-C | FI Ht Ni | | Solomani | |
| Macburr | 2908 | | E98A301-A | Lo Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Mansania | 2607 | | E56558A-7 | Ag Ga Ni | | | G |
| Moonshan | 2706 | | C10066A-B | Na Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Rapier | 3008 | | C693645-8 | Ni | | | G |
| Ribble | 3007 | | C310676-A | Na Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Rog's Planet | 2710 | | X555746-2 | Ag Ga Lt | R | Solomani | G |
| Snarf | 2701 | | A573355-E | Ht Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Sumax | 3010 | M | B43278A-C | Ht Na Po | | | G |
| Tarano | 2610 | | C000303-D | As Ht Lo Va | | Solomani | G |
| Villbert | 2905 | | C88888B-8 | Ga Ri | | | G |
| White | 3001 | | B877567-B | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Yekon | 2902 | | A64159B-D | Ht Ni Po | | | G |
| Zenux | 2704 | | D6A2773-8 | FI | | Solomani | G |
| Zilon | 3004 | | B666554-C | Ag Ga Ht Ni | A | | |



Alpha Crucis

ALBA SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- B-6** Starport Class & Tech Level
- Other Naval Base

- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- Red Zone

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Asteroid Belt
- X-Boat Route



Sumax, Rapier and Gambda are members of the Union of Sumax, an independent polity that has so far resisted joining the Solomani Confederation but which maintains cautious trade relations with it. Policies towards Confederation vessels and goods have varied over time but the member governments of the Union are well aware their position is tenuous and tread carefully in dealings with major shipping lines or other entities with significant political power.

The Union also has internal troubles. The many independent asteroid stations in the prosperous Gambda Belt resent Summax's colonial domination and an independence movement has been gaining strength. It is entirely possible the Confederation has been quietly assisting this move, as it would eventually drive these worlds into joining the Confederation.

Alba is in the unusual position of having no Confederation naval bases. It was long ago declared that the subsector was adequately shielded by the border fleet based in Dagir and that since most star systems are connected to mains that have bases on them, patrols would be mounted from those. The latter is reasonable, although it does mean that some systems are far better patrolled than others. The drawing-down of the Dagir Border Fleet has alarmed some member governments in the subsector but thus far the only response has been the offer of a token Home Forces subsidy, which came with an obligation to mount patrols across the subsector.

MANSANIA

Mansania was colonised during the Interstellar Wars from Terra's Central America region. The planet was an attractive garden world, except for hostile and unappetising plant life and mobile carnivorous fungi. Early attempts to seed the planet with Terran life failed. The colonists who tried to settle Mansania have fought a long war against the encroaching native life during which they declined to TL5 and retreated into a small, heavily fortified island city. Over time they became bound by a caste system with a maze of rules and customs.

The colony survived, against the odds, but was generally ignored as it lay off the main. From 700 onwards there has been increased contact, much of it sponsored by universities wanting to study the unique ecosystem. Solomani Party non-governmental organisations and diplomats have also been active, attempting to prepare the people of Mansania for membership in the Confederation.

NELLARATIN

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Nellaratin | 30 | 1m |
| SKILLS | — | |
| ATTACKS | Spores, Digest | |
| TRAITS | Large (+4), Slow Metabolism (-4) | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Carnivore, Reducer | |

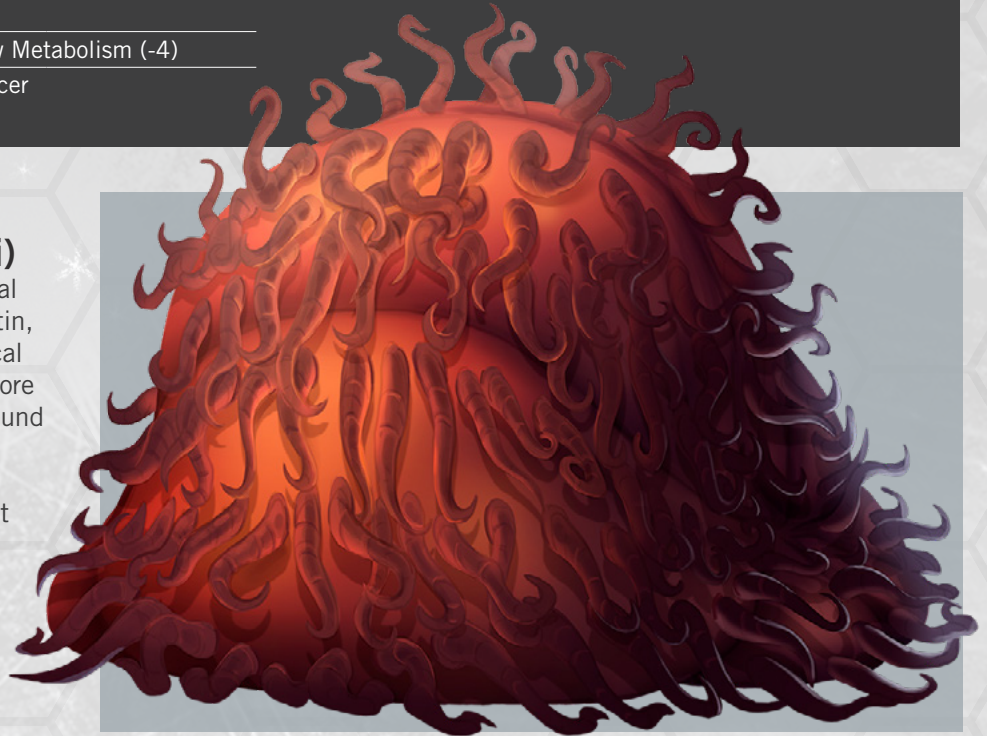
Nellaratin

(Carnivorous Mobile Fungi)

Among the most dangerous of fungal species on Mansania is the Nellaratin, whose name translates from the local dialect as ‘worst of them all’. The core of the creature is a fungal mass around the size of an elephant, which is surrounded by a mass of tentacle-like growths. These can dig into soft ground for anchorage but generally drag the creature around at a slow walking pace. The normal mode of feeding is for the Nellaratin to drag itself over a downed victim and remain there until it is partially digested. Once the corpse is broken up sufficiently, parts of it are moved to pockets on the outer surface of the fungal blob and the creature continues to consume the victim whilst it goes in search of more.

Its slow pace of movement might make a Nellaratin seem like a minor threat, but its spores have a disorientating and sometimes soporific effect. Anyone exposed to a spore cloud may be affected. Typically this means being within 10 metres of a Nellaratin but a windy day can carry spores over much greater distances. Respiratory protection is generally sufficient but it is possible to become intoxicated by way of mucous membranes such as the eyes. Decontamination is also necessary or people nearby may be affected when the Traveller returns from contact with the Nellaratin.

To resist exposure to Nellaratin spores requires a Very Difficult (12+) END check, reduced to Average (8+) if the Traveller has basic respiratory protection such as a damp cloth over the face. Anyone affected will be severely disorientated and unable to stand or walk properly. They will stagger around and probably fall



repeatedly, all the while breathing more spores as the fungal blob moves closer. An Effect of -6 or worse results in unconsciousness for 2D minutes.

Contact with any part of the fungal mass releases flesh-eating toxins that do one point of damage per round. A Traveller fully enclosed in a vacc suit or similar is immune but will still be enveloped by the fungal blob and will require rescue. The Nellaratin is slow but relentless and able to exert significant force against barriers or structures. It may also intoxicate creatures that then flee from it, perhaps wandering into a human work party or band of Travellers who may not perceive the threat until they have already suffered secondary intoxication.

Most weapons do little damage to a Nellaratin. Impact is absorbed and impaling weapons pass straight through. These weapons, including firearms, do one point of damage per dice they would normally roll. Cutting implements replace normal damage dice with D3s. Fire- and energy-based weapons do normal damage.

ORICHALC

The Orichalc subsector contains 37 worlds, many of them clustered within jump-1 distance of one another. In the last months of the Solomani Rim War five worlds in the subsector fell to the Imperial Navy and a two-parsec wide strip on the spinward border is still under Imperial control. The remaining worlds belong to the Solomani Confederation or are neutral.

Orichalc's proximity to the Solomani Rim has made it one of the longest-settled regions of Alpha Crucis. Light Vilani settlement during the Ziru Sirka was followed by much greater Solomani emigration at the end of the Interstellar Wars period and during the Rule of Man the centrally located world of Cthonia grew to prominence as a trading hub and industrial centre. Cthonia retained its influence even during the Long Night, establishing a protectorate over nearby worlds.

Today, Cthonia's influence persists in the form of the Orichalc Regional Defence Association (ORDA). Founded in its present form in 1014, this is a mutual defence alliance consisting of 13 Orichalc worlds near the Imperial border, along with Water in neighbouring Auva. Its members agree to coordinate Navy Home Forces procurement, training and patrols, and provide mutual support in times of disaster or crisis. The organisation was founded and is led by wealthy and populous Cthonia, which has also used its position of leadership to gain economic and political advantages. ORDA members tend to organise their Home Forces following the Cthonian model, train at its military academy and use equipment designed by it.

The naval component of ORDA's Home Forces has a much higher proportion of jump-capable vessels equipped to Home Guard standard than most member-state navies. These forces regularly exercise with Confederation Navy formations and are known for their discipline and tactical skill.

Most worlds that belong to ORDA are also advocates of the Solomani Cause. There is evidence ORDA has provided covert tactical support for Solomani guerrillas operating over the Imperial border. Even within the Confederation, the growing political and military capabilities of Cthonia have made neighbour worlds

uneasy. Some worlds in ORDA were once part of the pre-Imperial era pocket empire known as the Protectorate of Cthonia and ORDA can be seen as a continuation of Cthonia's lengthy hegemony over its neighbour worlds; rivals often refer to the pact as the 'new Cthonian Protectorate'.

Cthonia is the unofficial 'second home' of the Orichalc Border Fleet. There are no Confederation Navy bases in the subsector other than Gustav but Cthonia's well-equipped Home Forces base is entirely sufficient to support a Navy task force on a near-constant basis. Not coincidentally this makes Cthonia vital to the defence and security of the region and gives her additional political leverage when necessary.

CTHONIA

Cthonia is one of the earliest Terran colonists, a multiracial colony established by the Terran Confederation and remaining civilised throughout the Long Night. Cthonia is famous for its educational system, which uses a combination of sophisticated psychological analysis and comprehensive testing – including neural-activity scans – to channel children into those fields they are most likely to excel in. Cthonian corporations, government bureaus and military forces are often directly involved in education from infancy onward and candidates for leadership tend to be selected before they even reach adolescence. Similar neuro-psychological techniques are used in many other aspects of Cthonian society – people often find mates through services that analyse detailed if anonymous neuro-psych profiles; neural scanning is also used in the court system.

Cthonian Educational System

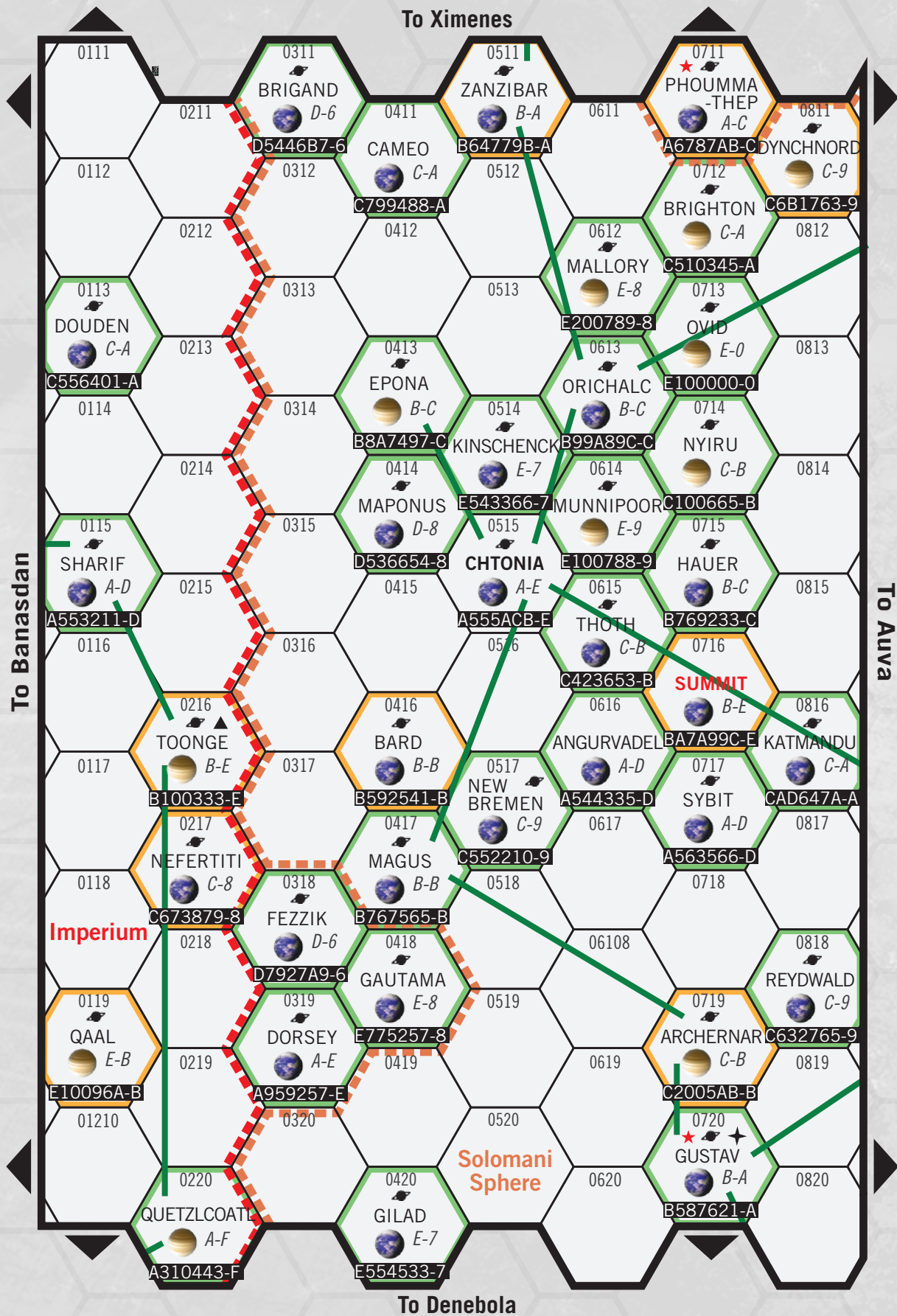
Travellers from Cthonia who successfully graduate a pre-career option can specify a single career that the Cthonian educational system has optimised them for. They receive DM+1 on all rolls for advancement within that career but suffer DM-1 to advancement rolls in all other careers.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|-------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Angurvadel | 0616 | | A544335-D | Ga Ht Lo | | | |
| Archernar | 0719 | | C2005AB-B | Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Bard | 0416 | | B592541-B | Ni | A | | G |
| Brigand | 0311 | | D5446B7-6 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Brighton | 0712 | | C510345-A | Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Cameo | 0411 | | C799488-A | Ni | | | |
| Cthonia | 0515 | | A555ACB-E | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Dorsey | 0319 | | A959257-E | Ht Lo | | | G |
| Douden | 0113 | | C556401-A | Ga Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Dynchnord | 0811 | | C6B1763-9 | Fl | A | Solomani | G |
| Epona | 0413 | | B8A7497-C | Fl Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Fezzik | 0318 | | D7927A9-6 | | | | G |
| Gautama | 0418 | | E775257-8 | Ga Lo | | | G |
| Gilad | 0420 | | E554533-7 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Gustav | 0720 | F | B587621-A | Ag Ga Ni Ri | | Solomani | G |
| Hauer | 0715 | | B769233-C | Ht Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Katmandu | 0816 | | CAD647A-A | Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Kinschenck | 0514 | | E543366-7 | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Magus | 0417 | | B767565-B | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Mallory | 0612 | | E200789-8 | Na Va | A | | G |
| Maponus | 0414 | | D536654-8 | Ni | | | G |
| Munnipoor | 0614 | | E100788-9 | Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Nefertiti | 0217 | | C673879-8 | | A | Imperium | G |
| New Bremen | 0517 | | C552210-9 | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Nyiru | 0714 | | C100665-B | Na Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Orichalc | 0613 | | B99A89C-C | Ht Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Ovid | 0713 | | E100000-0 | Ba Lt Va | | Solomani | G |
| Phoummathep | 0711 | M | A6787AB-C | Ag Ga Ht | | | G |
| Qaal | 0119 | | E10096A-B | Hi In Na Va | A | Imperium | G |
| Quetzlcoatl | 0220 | | A310443-F | Ht Ni | | Imperium | |
| Reydwald | 0818 | | C632765-9 | Na Po | | Solomani | G |
| Sharif | 0115 | | A553211-D | Ht Lo Po | | Imperium | G |
| Summit | 0716 | | BA7A99C-E | Hi Ht In Wa | | Solomani | |
| Sybit | 0717 | | A563566-D | Ht Ni | | | G |
| Thoth | 0615 | | C423653-B | Na Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Toonge | 0216 | S | B100333-E | Ht Lo Va | A | Imperium | G |
| Zanzibar | 0511 | | B64779B-A | Ag Ga | | Solomani | G |

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Alpha Crucis

ORICHALC SUBSECTOR



DORSEY

At the start of the Solomani Rim War Dorsey declared its intent to remain neutral from both the Solomani Confederation and the Imperium, announcing it was an open port. So far neither polity has disputed this and the High Dorsey Orbital Station has become a key transshipment point for cross-border Solomani and Imperial commerce. It has also emerged as fertile ground for meetings between corporate and government agents. In contrast to the bustle of the highport with its shipyards, hotels and warehouses, the world itself is lightly populated. Except for its polar regions there are no large landmasses and Dorsey's islands are either volcanically active or swept by fierce storms. The planet's tiny population is mainly involved in harvesting the delicious pseudo-molluscs found in the immense reefs around its major equatorial archipelago. One of these species also produces the iridescent Dorsey pearls highly prized by Confederation jewellers.

ZANZIBAR

Zanzibar is famous as the beginning (or end) of the local arm of the Rim Main. This is not astrographically accurate but from the point of view of interstellar trade Zanzibar is the terminus or turn-around for most starships. A few Imperial-registered vessels continue coreward into the edge of Ximenes but for the most part goods destined farther into the Confederation are transshipped to Confederation vessels. Jump-2 vessels can proceed into the Confederation, usually by way of Cameo and Epona since the Zanzibar-Mallory route is impractical for vessels needing a highport. It is, for the most part, simpler and cheaper to swap goods to a jump-3 vessel heaved for Cthonia by way of Orichalc or Epona.

This dislocation in the easy trade route is valued by the Solomani Confederation as it provides an economic barrier to Imperial trade and therefore cultural imperialism. It also provides a unique opportunity for companies operating jump-3 vessels, which might be unviable elsewhere. On the other hand, it does not prevent access to the Jump-1 Rim Main for Confederation-registered vessels providing they can be positioned on it. Again, there are specialist companies which, will convey a jump-1 freighter to Zanzibar for a suitable fee.

Zanzibar itself is a borderline habitable world with a thin, tainted atmosphere and rather sparse ecosystem. Its 90 billion inhabitants dwell in what might be

termed proto-arcologies; large cities formed of environmentally-controlled buildings in clusters, with high-level monorails and tubed roadways between them. Open spaces between the clusters are roofed over in transparent material, creating parklands and recreational facilities. Society is tightly restricted but generally accepts the situation; there is very little crime on Zanzibar and standards of living are good. However, this comes at a price – visitors can easily fall foul of the many laws, which are enthusiastically enforced by a paramilitary police force.

Zanzibar's highport is long overdue for refurbishment. Funds were offered by the Secretariat but then deferred when opponents of the scheme – who wanted the funding for their own programmes – discovered (or invented) irregularities in the accounts of the government-run highport. The port brings in an enormous amount of revenue as the turnaround point for the Rim Main, although a high proportion of this is spent on the lavish in-system and planetary defences.

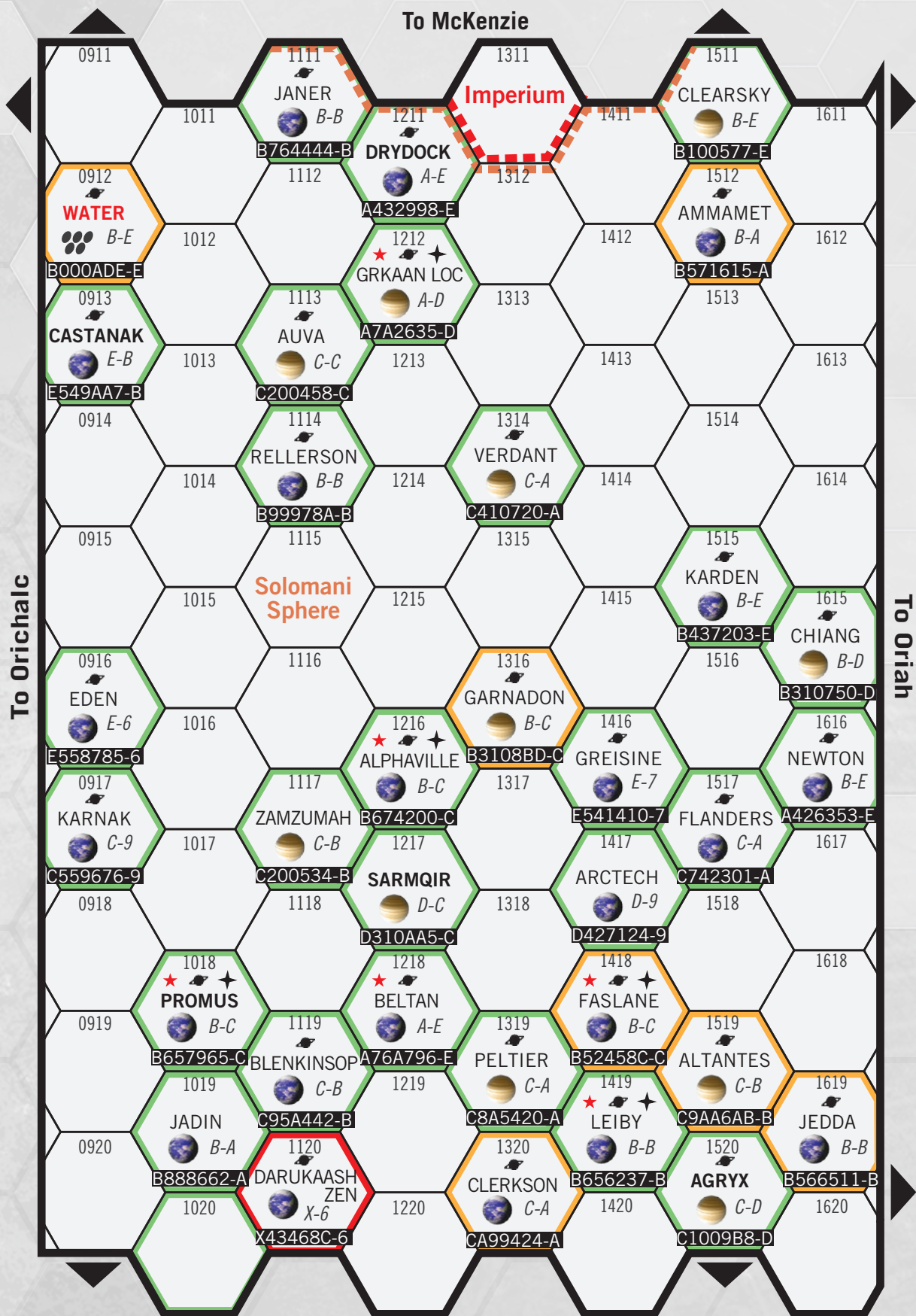
Zanzibar is the site of one of the Twelve Great Forts. It was originally established as a small defensive installation in the days of the Solomani Autonomous Region and has grown ever since. The Great Fort itself, Fortress Zanzibar, is manned by the Confederation Army. It is a cluster of underground installations housing deep-site meson guns, huge batteries of surface-to-orbit missile launchers and many wings of aerospace interceptors. The Great Fort is maintained by the Confederation Army but its supporting installations are paid for by the government of Zanzibar.

Every city has a fort of some kind, typically mounting missile batteries as well as formidable ground defences and there are additional forts all across the planetary surface. In addition, the cities are defended by the planetary army, elements of which are equipped to Home Guard standards, and by a planet-wide militia including the police and other emergency services. The enthusiasm of the populace for defence against the lurking Imperial threat cannot be overstated. Many see themselves as the breakwater upon which an Imperial assault would break and the deterrent that keeps one from happening. This attitude spills over a little to the personnel at the starport, creating a politely hostile atmosphere towards Imperial traders. This may be a factor in the decision of many not to go further into the Confederation and certainly contributes to the Imperial stereotype of Confederation citizens.

S U B S E C T O R

AUVA

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|----------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Agryx | 1520 | | C1009B8-D | Hi Ht In Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Alphaville | 1216 | F | B674200-C | Ga Ht Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Ammamet | 1512 | | B571615-A | Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Arctech | 1417 | | D427124-9 | Lo | | Solomani | |
| Atlantes | 1519 | | C9AA6AB-B | FI Ni Wa | | Solomani | |
| Auva | 1113 | | C200458-C | Ht Ni Va | | | G |
| Beltan | 1218 | M | A76A796-E | Ht Ri Wa | | | G |
| Blenkinsop | 1119 | | C95A442-B | Ni Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Castanak | 0913 | | E549AA7-B | Hi In | | Solomani | G |
| Chiang | 1615 | | B310750-D | Ht Na | | Solomani | G |
| Clearski | 1511 | | B100577-E | Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | |
| Clerkson | 1320 | | CA99424-A | Ni | A | Solomani | G |
| Darukaash Zen | 1120 | | X43468C-6 | Ni | R | | G |
| Drydock | 1211 | | A432998-E | Hi Ht Na Po | | Solomani | G |
| Eden | 0916 | | E558785-6 | Ag Ga | | Solomani | |
| Faslane | 1418 | F | B52458C-C | Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Flanders | 1517 | | C742301-A | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Garnadon | 1316 | | B3108BD-C | Ht Na | | | |
| Garner's World | 1618 | | D310133-9 | Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Greisine | 1416 | | E541410-7 | Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Grkaan Loc | 1212 | F | A7A2635-D | FI Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Jadin | 1019 | | B888662-A | Ag Ga Ni Ri | | Solomani | |
| Janer | 1111 | | B764444-B | Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Jedda | 1619 | | B566511-B | Ag Ga Ni | A | Solomani | G |
| Karden | 1515 | | B437203-E | Ht Lo | | | G |
| Karnak | 0917 | | C559676-9 | Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Leiby | 1419 | F | B656237-B | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Newton | 1616 | | A426353-E | Ht Lo | | Solomani | |
| Peltier | 1319 | | C8A5420-A | FI Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Promus | 1018 | F | B657965-C | Ga Hi Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Rellerson | 1114 | | B99978A-B | | | Solomani | G |
| Sarmqir | 1217 | | D310AA5-C | Hi Ht In Na | | Solomani | |
| Verdant | 1314 | | C410720-A | Na | | | G |
| Water | 0912 | | B000ADE-E | As Hi Ht In Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Zanzumah | 1117 | | C200534-B | Ni Va | | Solomani | |



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The Auva subsector contains 35 worlds, all within the boundaries of the Solomani Confederation. The Vilani explored the region but few permanent colonies were established before their expansion was halted by the tragedy of Grkaan Loc. The majority of the inhabitants are of Solomani ancestry, a mix of Interstellar Wars-era Terran colonies and Rule of Man-period emigration; even so, many worlds are not pure Solomani.

About 10–15% of the population are of mixed race Solomani-Vilani ancestry, the result of general immigration in the Rule of Man and early Imperial eras. The Solomani Rim War did not hurt the Auva subsector too badly, although a few Imperial Navy raiding vessels penetrated into the subsector to bombard military and industrial targets. The most famous battle took place at Drydock in 1002, when a reinforced wing of Confederation system defence boats drove off a small Imperial task force. Drifting wrecks can still be found around Drydock's largest gas giant. These are designated as war graves and unauthorised salvage carries stiff penalties. Standard practice when a new wreck is discovered is to make it safe and remove bodies if possible, then to place the wreck on a waiting list for dismantling – a list that never seems to get any shorter.

The Auva subsector has a good complement of naval bases, each housing a patrol and security flotilla. Forces at Grkaan Loc are primarily concerned with cross-border security whilst bases deeper in the subsector are mostly patrol-support installations for internal security. The exception is Beltan, which is home to the larger patrol assets and any warfighting elements currently assigned to the subsector.

AGRYX

Agryx is the third moon of a ringed gas giant. A few miles beneath its icy surface is a deep ocean warmed by geological processes. The ocean has a complex ecology including a primitive indigenous squid-like species with a caste-based society known as the Agryxani, who have successfully domesticated several other aquatic life forms. The unique environment has largely kept this race from assimilation by Solomani, despite them still living at TLO. About 100,000 work for human corporations and have mastered some tools. The world's listed TL is that of these foreign settlements: 50,000 humans and Dolphins who live on the surface and in three underwater settlements, harvesting organic products from the world's exotic biosphere.

DARUKAASH ZEN

Late in the Rim War, the oppressive Solomani regime of Darukaash Zen stripped its Home Forces and sent a large contingent to support the war effort in the

Solomani Rim. The oppressed Vilani and mixed race majority of Darukaash Zen rose up against the remaining security forces. After gaining control of the world and massacring some two million Solomani citizens, the rebels declared independence. Unfortunately, the Imperial fleet they thought would rescue them was defeated by Confederation reinforcements. Four months after the war ended, the Confederation Navy demanded the planet's unconditional surrender. When it refused, nuclear weapons were used on major population and industrial centres, killing 23 million people and devastating the planetary infrastructure.

The action has been declared an atrocity and the commanders of the expedition cashiered but no criminal charges were brought. Since then, the Confederation has simply written the planet and its people off, maintaining a distant blockade from Promus. Conditions have been deteriorating over the last century. Famine and disease are common and the sustainable Tech Level has dropped from TL11 to TL6. Some relief occasionally reaches Darukaash Zen from blockade-runners or human rights activists operating out of neutral Beltan.

The world has in some ways become a giant prison or refugee camp. It has occasionally also served as a recruiting ground for anti-Solomani militants. 1047, 1071 and again in 1101 the Confederation Navy and Marines raided the planet to destroy military and industrial facilities they claimed were being used to train offworld Vilani insurgents.

GRKAAN LOC

Grkaan Loc contains alien ruins dating back to the First Imperium, monuments to the Grkaadudgaagii, a xenophobic methane-based race that destroyed itself with nuclear and biological weapons in the shock of first contact with the Vilani. Most of the world's unusual methane-based ecology has recovered in the last few millennia. The world is governed by the Grkaan Loc Institute for Xenological Studies, a highly politicised Solomani Party-controlled academic institution devoted to studying and exploiting the world's odd organic products and the ruins of its alien TL8 civilisation.

The human population on Grkaan Loc is entirely contained in a single high-tech city, with a very good standard of living. Only a fraction of the population are directly involved in research but supporting industries provided employment for tens of thousands more. The effort and cost of setting up the research installation on Grkaan Loc was offset by combining the construction with the creation of a naval base in orbit. This is today a heavily fortified station with a 'civilian quarter' that serves as the mainworld's starport. It is common for

AGRYXANI

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|-----------|----------------------------------------|-------|
| Agryxani | 18 | 8m |
| SKILLS | Survival 2, Profession (aquaculture) 1 | |
| ATTACKS | Tentacle (1D) | |
| TRAITS | Armour (+2) | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Carnivore, Hunter | |

Agryxani

The Agryxani are somewhere between sentient beings and very smart animals. They can work alongside humans or Dolphins, and seem to like doing so, but their relationship is more like a trained animal than an intelligent co-worker. The relationship has been compared to a rancher and an experienced horse, or a shepherd and dog team, but this sells the Agryxani a little short. They can understand basic communication and convey meaning with sign language.

Physically, Agryxani resemble large, almost human-sized squid. They are 'mostly-carnivores' but will consume various seabed plants from time-to-time. This is assumed to be in order to obtain trace minerals that may have been lacking from their meat diet. Agryxani do not appear to have any natural predators and lack much in the way of weaponry. Their skins are thick and tough, however.

The Agryxani are native to deep, cold water but can tolerate lower pressures and warmer temperatures for a considerable length of time. Their home society has obvious worker, hunter and young-protector roles and also other individuals whose function is harder to define. These have been provisionally described as leaders but there is a possibility that at least some fulfil a ritualistic function. If this is the case, the Agryxani may be more intelligent than is currently thought.



CHIRPERS

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Chirper | 9 | 9m |
| SKILLS | Athletics (dexterity) 2, Melee 0, Recon 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1 | |
| ATTACKS | Claws (1D) | |
| TRAITS | Small (-1) | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Omnivore, Gatherer | |

Chirpers are small bird-like humanoids with vestigial wings and a reptilian tail, massing about 25kg and omnivorous in nature. They are semi-intelligent and capable of learning a few simple Anglic phrases, although they mangle pronunciation horribly. Among themselves they communicate with bird-like chirps, hence their human name.



dependents to be housed on-planet rather than in the orbital installation, artificially increasing the population of Grkaan Loc with transients who are replaced every few months or years by another group of navy families.

JEDDA

Jedda has a small human corporate outpost of 40,000 and an untamed wilderness that is home to some 160,000 Chirpers living in TLO conditions. The Chirpers are small enough and difficult enough to catch that they have been largely ignored by the Solomani. In 1103 fossil-hunting students found an Ancients site near a dead sea bed and this was followed by the discovery of a widely dispersed second site in the same region the next year. Treasure hunters have flocked to the planet, overwhelming the local authorities' ability to control them. A lawless gold rush atmosphere now prevails as different groups have been staking claims to various parts of the region.

Ownership of the planet is itself in dispute. The governing Solomani Party of neighbouring Agryx has recently used some legally questionable manoeuvres to purchase controlling stock in Cai Cun Industries, the interstellar pulp and paper company that owns and administers the planet. Agryx has threatened to send its Home Forces to take control of Jedda, a position that Jedda's representative in the Solomani Confederation Secretariat is challenging. Jedda is seeking to hire a small mercenary force to provide security in the dead sea region but they have yet to arrive. Meanwhile, the Solomani Confederation Navy has deployed vessels to the system to monitor the situation. SolSec and the Ministry of Technology have both dispatched teams of agents to ensure any artefacts with strategic importance end up in Solomani Confederation hands rather than being sold on the black market.

S U B S E C T O R

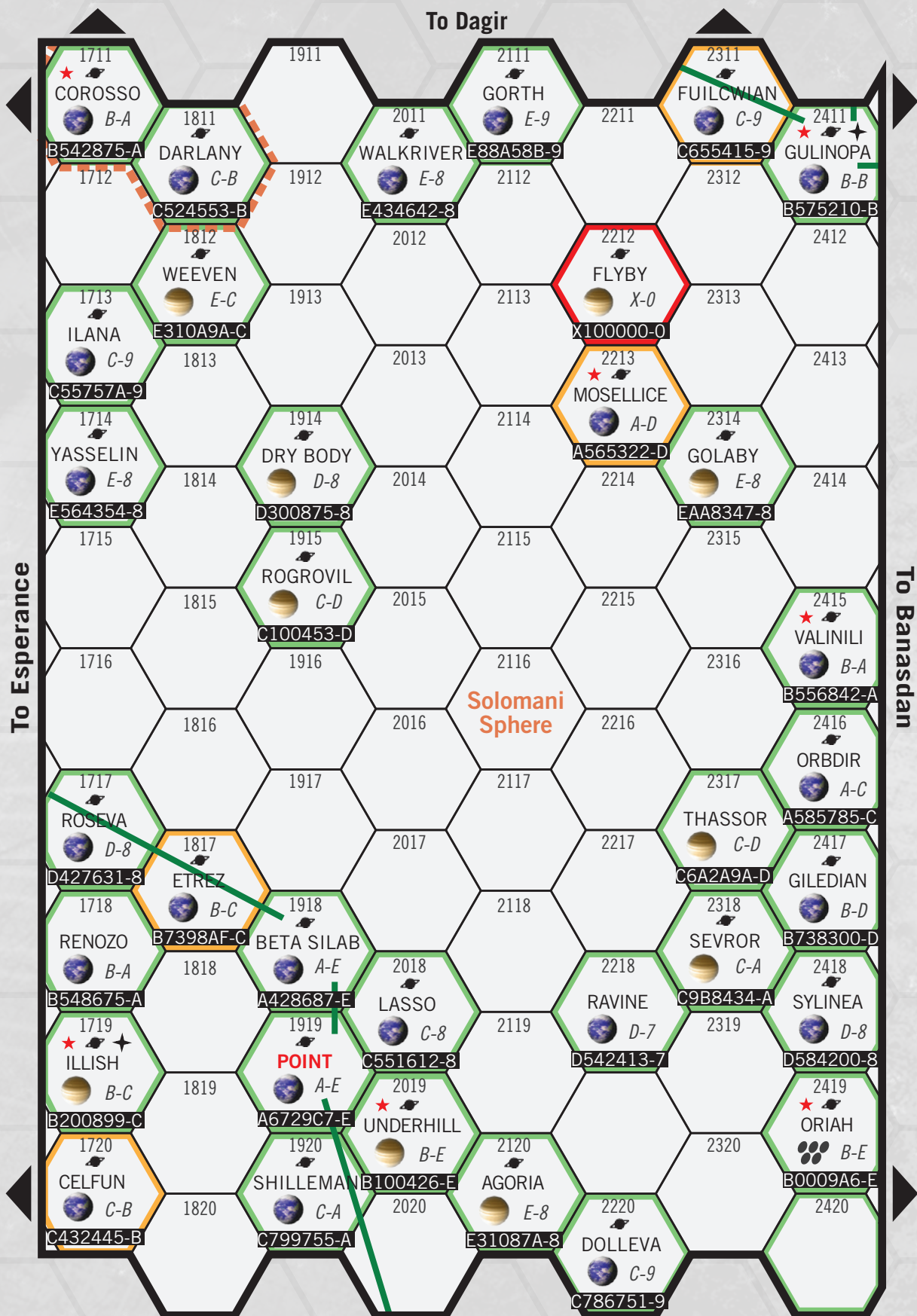
ORIAH

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Agoria | 2120 | | E31087A-8 | Na | | Solomani | |
| Beta Silab | 1918 | | A428687-E | Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Celfun | 1720 | | C432445-B | Ni Po | A | Solomani | G |
| Corosso | 1711 | F | B542875-A | Po | | | G |
| Darlany | 1811 | | C524553-B | Ni | | | G |
| Dolleva | 2220 | | C786751-9 | Ag Ga Ri | | Solomani | |
| Dry Body | 1914 | | D300875-8 | Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Etrez | 1817 | | B7398AF-C | Ht | | | G |
| Flyby | 2212 | | X100000-0 | Ba Lt Va | R | Solomani | G |
| Fuilcwian | 2311 | | C655415-9 | Ga Ni | A | Solomani | G |
| Giledian | 2417 | | B738300-D | Ht Lo | | | G |
| Golaby | 2314 | | EAA8347-8 | FI Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Gorth | 2111 | | E88A58B-9 | Ni Wa | | | G |
| Gulinopa | 2411 | F | B575210-B | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Ilana | 1713 | | C55757A-9 | Ag Ga Ni | | | G |
| Illish | 1719 | F | B200899-C | Ht Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Lasso | 2018 | | C551612-8 | Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Mosellice | 2213 | F | A565322-D | Ga Ht Lo | A | | G |
| Orbdir | 2416 | | A585785-C | Ag Ga Ht Ri | | Solomani | G |
| Oriah | 2419 | M | B0009A6-E | As Hi Ht In Na Va | | | G |
| Point | 1919 | | A6729C7-E | Hi Ht In | | Solomani | G |
| Ravine | 2218 | | D542413-7 | Ni Po | | Solomani | |
| Renozo | 1718 | | B548675-A | Ag Ga Ni | | | |
| Rogrovil | 1915 | | C100453-D | Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Roseva | 1717 | | D427631-8 | Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Sevrer | 2318 | | C9B8434-A | FI Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Shilleman | 1920 | | C799755-A | | | Solomani | |
| Sylinea | 2418 | | D584200-8 | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Thassor | 2317 | | C6A2A9A-D | FI Hi Ht | | Solomani | |
| Underhill | 2019 | F | B100426-E | Ht Ni Va | | | G |
| Valinii | 2415 | M | B556842-A | Ga | | | G |
| Walkriver | 2011 | | E434642-8 | Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Weeven | 1812 | | E310A9A-C | Hi Ht In Na | | Solomani | G |
| Yasselin | 1714 | | E564354-8 | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |



Alpha Crucis

ORIAH SUBSECTOR



Gas Giant

B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level

Other Naval Base

Military Base/Garrison

Secure System

Amber Zone

X-Boat Route

Planet (dry)

Planet (water present)

Asteroid Belt

The Oriah subsector was colonised during the early and middle Rule of Man period, with most settlers coming from older Terran colonies in Alpha Crucis or the Solomani Rim. The majority of the subsector is under Solomani Confederation control but over the last century anti-Solomani Party sentiment has been on the rise, fuelled by a loss of confidence in the Party after defeat in the Solomani Rim War.

The local economy benefits from a pair of lengthy jump-1 shipping routes that connect with Auva and Fervore subsectors, although the sparsity of the Coreward region limits trade in that direction. Similarly movement into and from the Vald subsector, to rimward, is impeded by astrography. As a result the rimward end of Oriah is something of an economic microcosm. Trade does come in and go out but along only a few viable routes. This has permitted certain governments to influence local politics by controlling the trade routes and has led to more than one trade war.

The subsector's naval bases are logically positioned to support border patrols and internal security operations. In addition, Underhill Naval Base is a forward marshalling point for the sector's Strategic Fleet Reserve. Its extensive facilities include repair yards that see little use in peacetime but would be vital to keeping a forward-deployed fleet in action. To offset the cost of these facilities, refits and rebuilds are offered to civilian clients, subject to naval needs. Underhill is also the sector's disposal site. Surplus ships are stripped of their sensitive systems and offered for sale to reputable clients and those that do not sell are 'mothballed' for possible future activation. Persistent rumours claim that some ships are not demilitarised and left unsecured among the mothballed hulks and that more than a few might be... 'missing'.

COROSSO

The 13 states of the United Nations of Corosso belie their own name. After the collapse of the Solomani government during the Rim War, they became divided into pro-Solomani, neutral and pro-Imperial power blocs, with a couple of failed states that are fast sliding from civil war into anarchy. The three largest nations on Corosso maintain a policy of détente but espionage and proxy wars regularly flare up on their peripheries.

Over the last few decades, the competing nations of Corosso have become regular customers for Imperial and Confederation arms dealers, as well as mercenary units. Foreign diplomats and intelligence agents are also active; a unified Corosso would be a significant prize if it could be persuaded to join either the Imperium or Confederation. Each of the blocs maintains their

own naval forces and starports. The United Nations of Corosso also have a trade agreement and mutual defence pact with neighbouring Darlany, a thriving now-independent former colony that is still effectively a 14th nation in Corosso's politics.

ETREZ

Etrez was colonised by Europeans from the Consolidation of Turin. In 1088 a corrupt and ossified bureaucracy was overthrown by a revolution led by Dr. Gary Allen, a charismatic dictator whose concept of the 'Solomani Scientific Society' promised to create a utopia based upon scientific principles and personal realism. Dr Allen soon established a potent cult of personality and a secret police force whose levels of paranoia exceeded those of SolSec.

Among the goals of the Solomani Scientific Society is the eradication of all forms of superstition, which includes religion. The regime has focused its ire on the major religion of Etrez, the Church of the First Cross. Churches have been destroyed, sacred scripture banned and followers are said to have been imprisoned in mental institutions. However, while First Cross has little power on Etrez, it is the dominant religion of the powerful Consolidation of Turin worlds, the people of whom are enraged at the treatment of their coreligionists. For several years they have waged a political struggle against Etrez government, including covert support for dissident groups that wish to overthrow Dr. Allen's regime and a diplomatic offensive in the Solomani Confederation's Secretariat aimed at expelling Etrez from the Confederation.

Between 1090 and 1102 the Consolidation of Turin gathered enough support in the Confederation to pass multiple Secretariat resolutions that have condemned the Etrez regime for violating human rights, recommending the High Council impose sanctions and requesting formal Ministry of Justice investigations. In response, the Etrez regime denounced Turin for intervening in their affairs, in violation of the Confederation charter. Their delegates announced they would not accept the Secretariat resolutions and were withdrawing from the Solomani Confederation – but not the Solomani Party – in protest. At present, the interstellar Solomani Party has still not agreed on whether to sanction the Etrez regime; should it do so, there is a strong likelihood that the High Council will attempt to placate Turin and head off any unilateral action by authorising deployment of peacekeeping forces. Meanwhile, the dictatorship's secret police has launched a major purge, ostensibly aimed at removing 'Turinese agents' but likely intended to ensure the loyalty of its Home Forces and pre-emptively disrupt SolSec operations.



ORIAH

The Oriah asteroid belt was once a major industrial Solomani Confederation industrial and mining centre but its governing Solomani Party was badly discredited during the Solomani Rim War. During the post-war years a succession of governments rose and fell, and amid political and labour unrest the system's shipyards – once major producers for Transstar and the navy – lost business due to crippling strikes and debts. During the 1070s aggressive debt collection policies by the offworld Unified Development Bank increased anti-Confederation feelings. In 1098 a popular uprising led by engineer Fiona Snow and Home Forces Wing Commander Byron Balthoi seized power and began purging the Solomani Party. Balthoi was assassinated by SolSec sleeper agents but Snow survived two similar attempts and a coup, developing a legend of invincibility and remaining in power. Oriah was sanctioned by the Solomani Party in 1100 and later expelled from the Confederation. In 1103 Oriah signed a treaty with fellow non-aligned world Valini and sent military forces to help protect Valini's colony Oglin against a Solomani Party-sponsored insurgency.

WEEVEN

99% of the population of Weeven are not Solomani but a sedentary vacuum-adapted minor race, the Sundowners or 'Lampshades'. They are sentient but very slow thinkers, leaching light metals and oxygen from the world's regolith, which they convert into a form of rocket fuel used to migrate. Some Weeven have been induced to perform resource extraction tasks for the Solomani population.

There are billions of Weeven trundling ever so slowly around the surface of their homeworld, making the occasional jet-powered leap of hundreds of metres to cross an area of inedible or merely unappetising bedrock. These jumps are made as if in slow motion, taking several minutes from take-off to landing. Weeven could apply more thrust and make a faster leap but they cannot think fast enough to make a course correction. Such a jump would be performed only in the direst emergency.

The Tech and Law Levels listed for Weeven refer to the human population, which numbers a few tens of millions. These people mostly dwell in small cities and a great many minor settlements, mostly connected with mining or resource-extraction. There is an overall government, which enforces laws as best it can, but the fragmented human society of Weeven means it is impossible even to operate a central starport. Communities have their own landing facilities that vary from primitive to basic.

SUBSECTOR FERVORE

This subsector is named after one of the earliest major Terran colonies in Alpha Crucis, a long-range settlement project dating back to the late Interstellar Wars period. The subsector contains 26 worlds, all lying within the boundaries of the Solomani Confederation, although a number of worlds remain stubbornly independent. Fervore is highly accessible to jump-1 shipping and is one of the most densely populated areas of Alpha Crucis sector. Two of its high-population worlds, Duncan and Wiseman, are paraterraformed Selenite worlds. Cyan and Drimgir are the most important Solomani Confederation worlds in the subsector.

In recent years, the Republic of Valinii has been attempting to squeeze the trade routes through its neighbouring system of Latelu with tariffs and confiscations for violations of dubious local laws. Inevitably, this activity crossed the threshold for intervention and triggered what has been termed a 'SolSec Invasion'. Confederation Navy vessels are also present but the overwhelming majority of personnel involved in the Valinii Intervention are SolSec. Ground-based security units protect investigative teams whilst SolSec-crewed warships observe all interactions between Home Forces and passing traffic.

Charges have been brought in a few cases but the intervention seems more about identifying where 'the line' is and demonstrating what happens if it is crossed. Overall, SolSec seems more interested in making a demonstration to other world governments of what they can and cannot do than punishing individuals for infractions. This may be due to weariness at the repetitive situation – no sooner has one trade dispute in the region been resolved but others begin to emerge.

DRIMGIR

Drimgir was originally colonised by émigrés from Terra's northern European countries. The world joined the Solomani Movement in 783, following a lengthy period of civil war that ended with a purge of Imperial supporters. Although classed as a religious dictatorship, Drimgir is actually a secular state in which the Purist faction of the Solomani Party has achieved total control. All adult members of the population are expected

to attend Party meetings and, since advancement in society is impossible without membership, compliance reaches over 80%.

The planet's high Law Level represents near-omnipresent SolSec surveillance with as much as 25% of the population being actively involved in the Monitor programme. Despite this repressive atmosphere, Drimgir is reasonably productive and also a prime source of recruits for the Confederation military and bureaucracy within the sector. Drimgir once had a mixed-race minority but, demonised as a potential fifth column, they were forcibly deported to other worlds during and after the Solomani Rim War. Their place at the lower end of society has been taken by imported primitive alien guest workers and Apes, whose subordinated status is clear from their appearance.

FERVORE

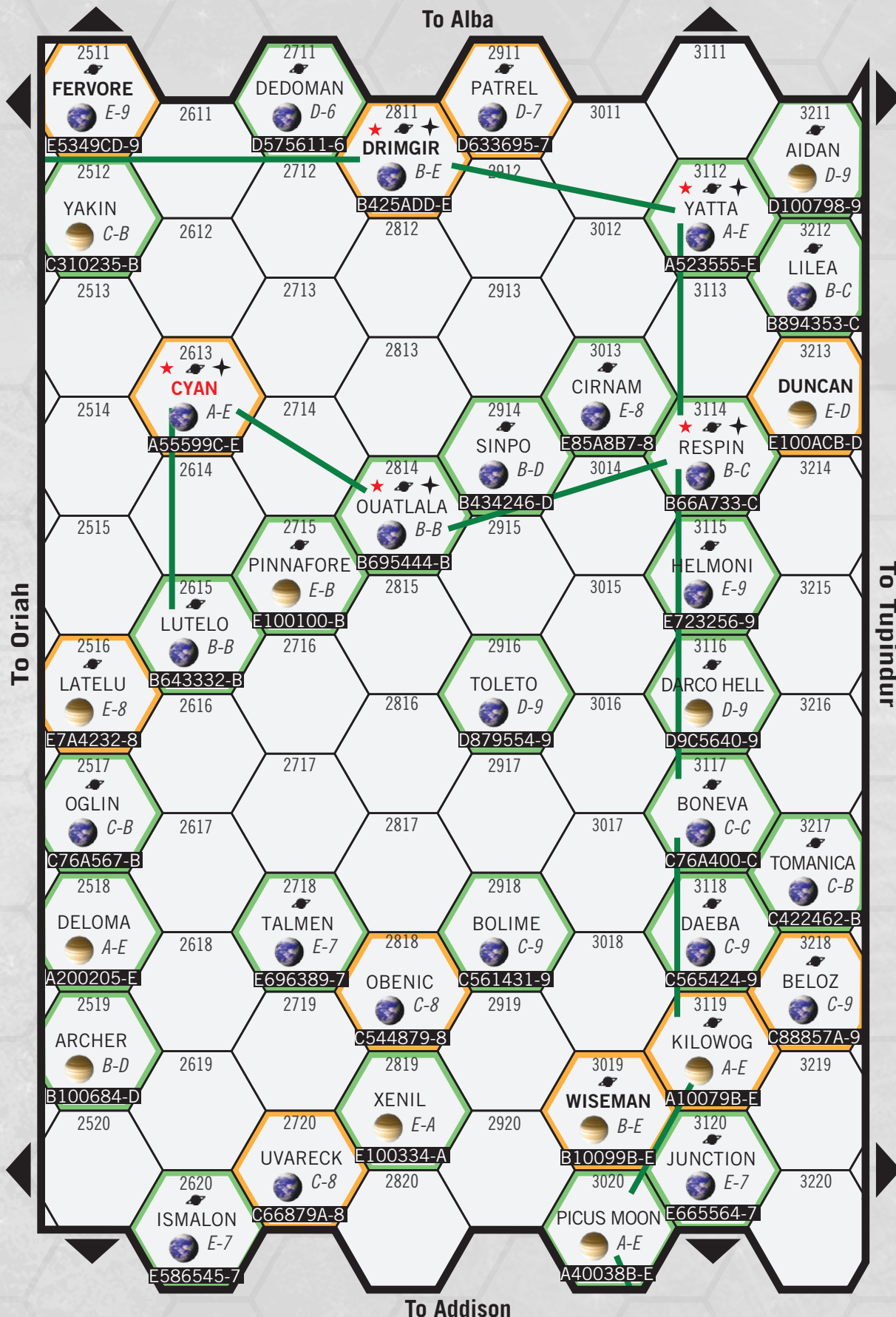
Fervore was colonised by genetically altered Terrans during the late Interstellar War period. The genetic adaptations were minor, aimed at adapting the citizens to Fervore's tainted atmosphere. There is no physical difference between a human from Fervore and any other mainstream human but those with Fervore blood have an immune response to some potentially toxic compounds. This is a mixed blessing, since one of the side effects is increased sensitivity to other chemicals. Notably, most non-Fervore seafood tastes extremely bad and will cause nausea if the individual persists in eating it.

During the 700s the rulers of Fervore began to perceive the Solomani Party as a threat to their own power. Their efforts to eradicate Party influence and keep out SolSec and Party agitators gradually transformed the society into a rigid nationalist police state whose primary motivation became the total rejection of Solomani ideology. This has become so extreme that Fervore's population are now taught that they are a native race, the Fervoriani, who evolved on their own world, and that Terrans and Solomani are aliens. All of history and science have been reshaped to create this new reality; contact with outsiders and free traders is carefully controlled, especially in regard to foreign media.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|------------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Aidan | 3211 | | D100798-9 | Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Archer | 2519 | | B100684-D | Ht Na Ni Va | | Solomani | |
| Beloz | 3218 | | C88857A-9 | Ag Ga Ni | A | Solomani | G |
| Bolime | 2918 | | C561431-9 | Ni | | | |
| Boneva | 3117 | | C76A400-C | Ht Ni Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Cirnam | 3013 | | E85A8B7-8 | Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Cyan | 2613 | F | A55599C-E | Hi Ht Ga | | Solomani | G |
| Daeba | 3118 | | C565424-9 | Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Darco Hell | 3116 | | D9C5640-9 | FI Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Dedoman | 2711 | | D575611-6 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Deloma | 2518 | | A200205-E | Ht Lo Va | | Solomani | |
| Drimgir | 2811 | F | B425ADD-E | Hi Ht In | | Solomani | G |
| Duncan | 3213 | | E100ACB-D | Hi Ht In Na Va | | Solomani | |
| Fervore | 2511 | | E5349CD-9 | Hi | | | |
| Helmoni | 3115 | | E723256-9 | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Ismalon | 2620 | | E586545-7 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Junction | 3120 | | E665564-7 | Ag Ga Ni | | | G |
| Kilowog | 3119 | | A10079B-E | Ht Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Latelu | 2516 | | E7A4232-8 | FI Lo | A | Solomani | G |
| Lilea | 3212 | | B894353-C | Ga Ht Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Lutelo | 2615 | | B643332-B | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Obenic | 2818 | | C544879-8 | Ga | A | Solomani | |
| Oglin | 2517 | | C76A567-B | Ni Wa | | | G |
| Ouatlala | 2814 | F | B695444-B | Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Patrel | 2911 | | D633695-7 | Na Ni Po | A | | G |
| Picus Moon | 3020 | | A40038B-E | Ht Lo Va | | Solomani | |
| Pinnafore | 2715 | | E100100-B | Lo Va | | Solomani | G |
| Respin | 3114 | F | B66A733-C | Ht Ri Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Sinpo | 2914 | | B434246-D | Ht Lo | | | G |
| Talmen | 2718 | | E696389-7 | Ga Lo | | | G |
| Toleto | 2916 | | D879554-9 | Ni | | Solomani | |
| Tomanica | 3217 | | C422462-B | Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Uvareck | 2720 | | C66879A-8 | Ag Ga Ri | A | | |
| Wiseman | 3019 | | B10099B-E | Hi Ht In Na Va | | | G |
| Xenil | 2819 | | E100334-A | Lo Va | | Solomani | |
| Yakin | 2512 | | C310235-B | Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Yatta | 3112 | F | A523555-E | Ht Ni Po | | Solomani | G |

Offworld Solomani Party ideologues in the Confederation's Ministry of Information support covert operations aimed at overthrowing what they refer to as the 'insane' Fervore regime. A small minority of dissidents and a significant offworld exile community

support these efforts. However, while Fervore lacks an effective navy it does possess powerful aerospace and orbital defences, along with a large army. So far, the Solomani Confederation has not found it worthwhile to try to force regime change.



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Alpha Crucis

FERVORE SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- Other Naval Base

- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- X-Boat Route

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Military base/Garrison

DENEbola

This subsector is named after a bright white star visible with the naked eye on Terra. Another large, bright star in the subsector is Beta Pictoris, first settled by settlers from Terran Confederation after the Ninth Interstellar War. The coreward region of the

subsector was settled by Christian immigrants from the Alpha Crucis Foundation that settled on Turin and its neighbour worlds. During the Long Night they formed the Consolidation of Turin, a commonwealth of worlds united by strong belief in a shared religion. The majority

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|-----------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Arreguin | 0130 | | B43387A-C | Ht Na Po | | Imperium | G |
| Arsenal | 0725 | | C4249BA-C | Hi Ht In | | | G |
| Assisi | 0830 | | B74336A-B | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Ayling | 0326 | | D5738BD-6 | | A | Solomani | G |
| Bali | 0524 | | A988788-C | Ag Ga Ht Ri | | | |
| Baughba | 0527 | | E434457-A | Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Baytapik | 0125 | | B200442-D | Ht Ni Va | | Imperium | G |
| Dassano | 0529 | | C633523-A | Ni Po | | Solomani | |
| Denebola | 0129 | | B83A333-E | Ht Lo Wa | | Imperium | G |
| Geetus | 0526 | | E535321-8 | Lo | A | | G |
| Gersh | 0727 | | B435854-D | Ht | | Solomani | |
| Haimrl | 0430 | | D89A411-9 | Ni Wa | | | |
| Herbig | 0421 | | E100245-A | Lo Va | | Solomani | G |
| Keith | 0626 | | E796987-8 | Ga Hi In | | Solomani | G |
| Kottke | 0822 | F | B543420-B | Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Koz | 0230 | | D786787-6 | Ag Ga Ri | A | Imperium | G |
| Leisz | 0121 | | A000130-F | As Ht Lo Va | | Imperium | G |
| Lifson | 0723 | | C662543-9 | Ni | | | G |
| Lourdes | 0730 | | A67668B-C | Ag Ga Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Lundvall | 0124 | | E9A457C-8 | FI Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Muhoberac | 0424 | | CA99120-A | Lo | | | G |
| Panunzio | 0123 | | C000723-B | As Na Va | | Imperium | G |
| Phoenix | 0221 | | C565ACH-C | Ga Hi Ht | | Imperium | G |
| Piersa | 0821 | | E100840-9 | Na Va | | | G |
| Piltch | 0327 | | D200244-9 | Lo Va | | Solomani | G |
| Salcedo | 0427 | | A100596-E | Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Sikken | 0528 | | C554200-A | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Sturken | 0128 | | C645620-8 | Ag Ga Ni | | Imperium | G |
| Tennen | 0425 | | E52A422-A | Ni Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Turin | 0630 | F | A623A99-E | Hi Ht In Na Po | | Solomani | G |

of its population are pure Solomani but about 10% are of mixed or Vilani blood due to immigration in the early Imperial period.

In the 700s and 800s the rise of a militant human supremacist-version of this faith – the Solomani Catholic Church – brought Turin into the forefront of the nascent Solomani Movement and gave it significant influence in the Solomani Confederation. During the Solomani Rim War, Denebola's population – mostly pure ethnic Solomani – were among the most dedicated in furnishing troops and industrial capacity to support the war effort. The Imperium's advance into Denebola halted partly due to their fear that they would be faced with increasingly fanatical Solomani resistance as they approached the Turin worlds. Nevertheless, nine of the worlds in the subsector were conquered by the Imperium during the Solomani Rim War, forming a narrow strip of occupied territory along the spinward border. The remaining worlds are within the Solomani Confederation's boundaries, although not all are member states.

Most of the worlds in this subsector lie in the Central Denebola Cluster. It is something of an economic backwater, with no naval bases. Patrols are the responsibility of Home Forces in the region alongside navy vessels out of Turin and Kottke. In practice this means that Bali and Gersh provide most of the anti-piracy and law-enforcement capability in the region, which gives them significant political leverage. Salcedo is home to a multi-world government claiming jurisdiction over Sikken. Thus far the claim has not been challenged, although Salcedo has done little to develop its secondary possession.

CONSOLIDATION OF TURIN

This organisation is based on Turin and dates back, in various forms, to the Long Night. The membership consists of the secular heads of state and the religious leaders – archbishops and bishops – of 10 Christian-dominated worlds within the Denebola, Ziusudra and Veracruz subsectors. The majority of their citizens follow one of the Turin rite churches: Turin Church, Solomani Catholic Church and Church of the First Cross. The Consolidation is a forum for religious, social, economic and political discussion among worlds with shared values. Its member worlds are close trading partners and tend to vote together within the Secretariat.

ARSENAL

Arsenal was a major naval base during the Rule of Man whose last admiral also became its first dictator during the Long Night. The capital city is Warspite, built

around the ancient hulk of a gutted Rule of Man-era battleship that still houses the presidential palace, many government offices and army barracks. Arsenal has an extensive military-industrial complex and a highly regimented culture. Most inhabitants live in crowded labyrinth-cities where the government enforces cradle-to-grave discipline on all aspects of life, from choice of occupation to entertainment to reproduction. The present population is pure Solomani, 'genetic undesirables' having long since been weeded out.

Although supportive of the Solomani Cause, the government – the Solomani Republic of Arsenal – has actually been independent of the Confederation since 1005 when its somewhat unstable dictator declared independence to protest Secretary-General Wolf's willingness to make peace with the Imperium. The dictator died in 1057 but the ruling oligarchy that succeeded him has proven unable to abandon his policies. Currently, Arsenal enjoys some status as a leader of other 'non-aligned states' in the subsector but its military forces, while ostensibly independent, routinely engage in joint exercises with Confederation units. Mercenaries raised in Arsenal's military crèches have been used by hard-core factions of the Solomani Party to intervene in situations where regular Confederation troops would be politically undesirable.

BAYTAPIK

Baytapik is a rocky moon of a large hot gas giant orbiting the bright young A6 star Beta Pictoris. The system is still in the process of forming planets and violent planetoid collisions have haloed the system with a pair of dusty debris disks containing mineral and carbon-rich asteroids, in-falling comets and embryonic planets. The planet is now the base for competing asteroid mining and refinery operations operated by Ling Standard Products and Sternmetal Horizons and there is also a scientific station studying planetary formation.

Piracy is a problem in the system as Baytapik's debris belts offer plenty of places for ships to hide. Some of these 'pirates' may actually be Confederation Navy infiltrators using the system as a waypoint in support of raids into the Imperium. The Imperial Arcturus subsector fleet, which has responsibility for the fringe of Imperial worlds along the spinward edge of Denebola, has made repeated 'surges' into the system to root out the problem but cannot maintain a sufficient ongoing presence.

PHOENIX

One of the earliest Terran colonies in the subsector, Phoenix was a Solomani loyalist world that only surrendered to the Imperial Navy under the threat of orbital bombardment against its giant arcologies. A



harsh Imperial military rule transitioned into a quisling puppet government that was forced to enact increasingly repressive measures to avoid pro-Solomani revolts. In 1032 a major revolt was put down with the help of the Imperial Marines and mercenary striker units. The cost of maintaining the large security establishment has hampered economic growth but provided a substantial market for Imperial megacorporation Ling Standard Products. LSP has sold billions of Credits of worth of arms to the increasingly corrupt ruling oligarchy over the last 80 years.

In 1076 an attempted coup by a segment of the security force was discovered; a 'quiet war' of interrogations, tortures and executions that resulted in the purging of 90,000 officers in the security forces. This frightened the regime's secret police into dismantling most of the planetary army and replacing it with a 'total autonomous security solution' developed by LSP's planetary subsidiary. The population is sufficiently hostile to the government that the regime relies on naked oppression through fear of an omnipresent surveillance state.

The majority of the army and police force has been largely replaced by networked remote-control drones operated by carefully screened loyalist officers. Almost all computers, apartments and personal consumer electronics are built with devices that allow governmental monitoring. The regime operates all clinics and hospitals; many citizens who go in for treatment are implanted, without their knowledge, with augments that turn them into remote 'eyes' of the regime by allowing the police to see and hear everything they observe. Huge ultra-secure computer complexes have been built to gather and store this information.

The extreme and highly efficient nature of Phoenix's governing autocracy's surveillance culture – a shadowy cabal of officers, bureaucrats and security officials –

has led a few conspiracy theorists to speculate that the ruling cabal has been guided by rogue SolSec personnel or their descendants. The question some Imperial authorities have been asking is this: what if they are not rogues and Phoenix is actually a massive SolSec black operation designed to sabotage Imperial efforts at assimilating its population?

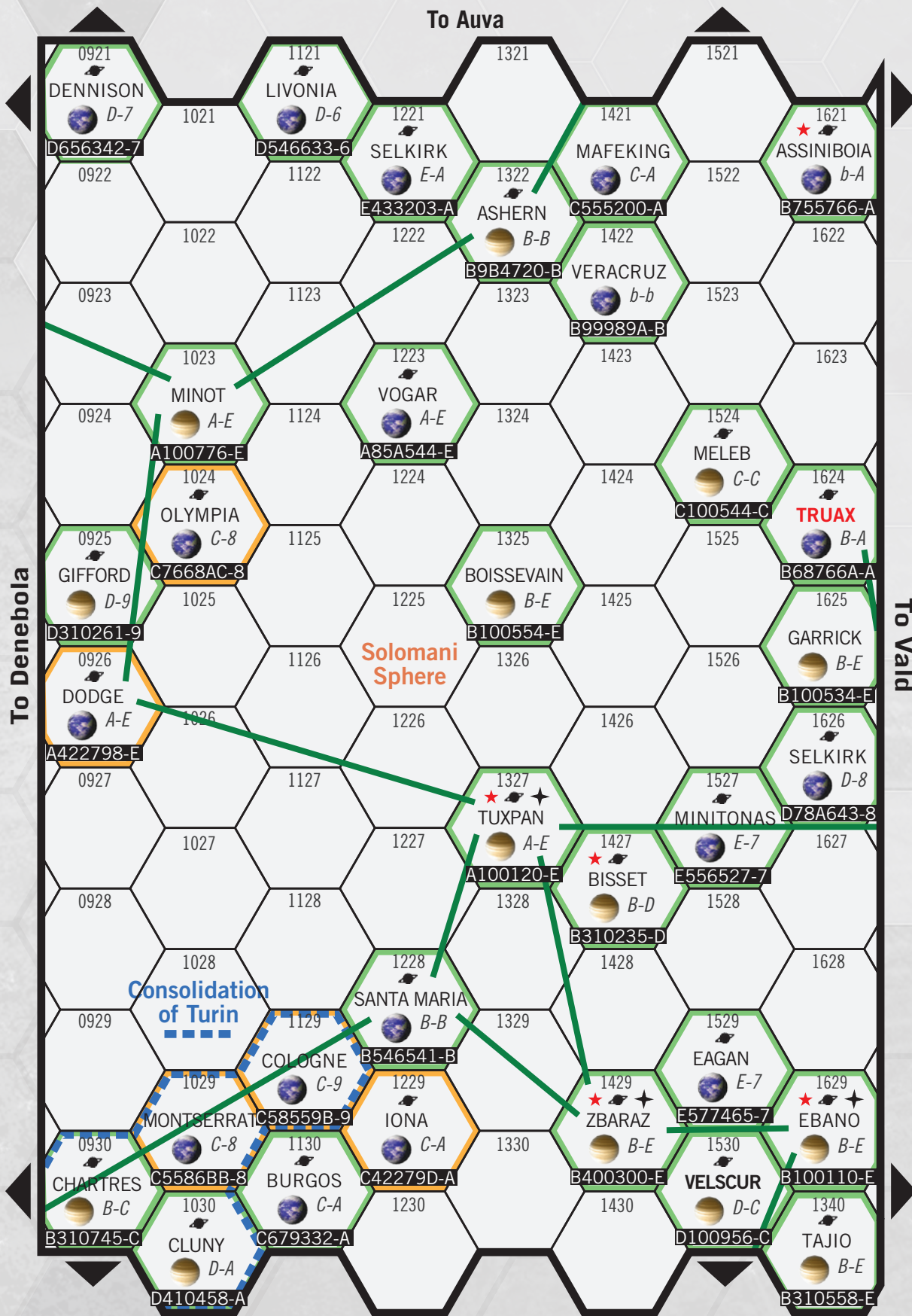
TURIN

Turin is a harsh desert world, somewhat resembling a wetter and slightly more habitable version of Mars. The planet is known for its domed cities, large families and the ornate 'Iridium Baroque' style of art and architecture that dominates its oldest buildings. A major tourist attraction are the 12 giant anti-gravity supported cathedrals of the Solomani Catholic Church that drift in stately pilgrimage between major centres. Although not a theocracy by any means, religion is a major part of daily life and politics.

Turin was originally settled by Roman Catholic religious émigrés from Europe who left Terra just prior to the Third Interstellar War, largely over a doctrinal split with the Vatican in regard to the salvation of non-human aliens. Their faith only grew stronger during the tribulations of the Long Night, even as their church slowly altered into its own distinct denominations, of which the most significant are the Church of the First Cross and the Solomani Catholic Church. Despite some conflict centuries ago, both are now on friendly terms. Differences are slight but sufficient to require periodic synods to discuss practices and interpretation of holy scriptures. The Solomani Catholic Church uses the New Solomani Bible and tends to greater involvement in missionary work and political affairs, while the Church of the First Cross is more militant in converting the unfaithful and its doctrines strongly advocate Solomani racial supremacy.

VERACRUZ

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|-------------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Ashern | 1322 | | B9B4720-B | Fl | | Solomani | G |
| Assiniboia | 1621 | M | B755766-A | Ag Ga | | | G |
| Bisset | 1427 | M | B310235-D | Ht Lo | | | G |
| Boissevain | 1325 | | B100554-E | Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | |
| Burgos | 1130 | | C679332-A | Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Chartres | 0930 | | B310745-C | Ht Na | | Solomani | G |
| Cluny | 1030 | | D410458-A | Ni | | | |
| Cologne | 1129 | | C58559B-9 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | |
| Dennison | 0921 | | D656342-7 | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Dodge | 0926 | | A422798-E | Ht Na Po | A | Solomani | G |
| Eagan | 1529 | | E577465-7 | Ga Ni | | | G |
| Ebano | 1629 | F | B100110-E | Ht Lo Va | | Solomani | G |
| Garrick | 1625 | | B100534-E | Ht Ni Va | | | |
| Gifford | 0925 | | D310261-9 | Lo | | | G |
| Iona | 1229 | | C42279D-A | Na Po | | Solomani | G |
| Livonia | 1121 | | D546633-6 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Mafeking | 1421 | | C555200-A | Ga Lo | | | |
| Meleb | 1524 | | C100544-C | Ht Ni Va | | | G |
| Minitonas | 1527 | | E556527-7 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Minot | 1023 | | A100776-E | Ht Na Va | | Solomani | |
| Montserrat | 1029 | | C5586BB-8 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | |
| Olympia | 1024 | | C7668AC-8 | Ga Ri | | Solomani | G |
| Santa Maria | 1228 | | B546541-B | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Selkirk | 1221 | | E433203-A | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Selkirk | 1626 | | D78A643-8 | Ni Ri Wa | | | G |
| Tajio | 1630 | | B310558-E | Ht Ni | | | G |
| Truax | 1624 | | B68766A-A | Ag Ga Ni Ri | | Solomani | G |
| Tuxpan | 1327 | F | A100120-E | Ht Lo Va | | Solomani | G |
| Velscur | 1530 | | D100956-C | Hi Ht In Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Veracruz | 1422 | | B99989A-B | | | Solomani | |
| Vogar | 1223 | | A85A544-E | Ht Ni Wa | | | G |
| Zbaraz | 1429 | F | B400300-E | Ht Lo Va | | Solomani | G |



Alpha Crucis

VERACRUZ SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
- ★ Other Naval Base

- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- X-Boat Route

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Military Base/Garrison

The Veracruz subsector contains 32 worlds, all of them within the bounds of the Solomani Confederation. Its settlement dates back thousands of years and includes worlds colonised by the legendary Alpha Crucis Foundation under the Terran Confederation. Almost all of the subsector's inhabitants are pure Solomani, most of European, North African and American ancestry. Chartres, Montserrat and Cologne are members of the Consolidation of Turin, which is influential on nearby worlds. The Church of the First Cross is quite popular in the rimward regions and the Solomani Catholic Church in the coreward areas.

The presence of a sparse area in the centre of the subsector impedes communications and trade, ensuring that Vogar and Boissevain benefit from forming a crossroads for trade in all directions. The Veracruz Gap, whilst relatively small, also features in strategic planning. In the event of a sudden Imperial invasion the gap would pose an obstacle to Imperial forces. It could easily be crossed, of course, but vessels on the 'inner' side would be at the end of a long supply line

SWORD AND SHIELD

Confederation strategy for a major war is based around the 'sword and shield' and 'well-aimed thrust' principles. This stance is made necessary by communications lag. It is not possible to predict with certainty where a major offensive will be launched. Despite some axes being obvious, the enemy may feint on some axes and advance a major force along another. It is simply not possible to have the perfect defensive disposition in place ahead of time.

A forward-deployed heavy force could be overwhelmed before reinforcements reached it and other formations could be taken out of the equation by committing to a counterattack against what turned out to be a feint. The only answer is to hold back the 'sword' – the heavy battle formations of the Confederation Navy – for a well-aimed thrust once the enemy's main line of attack has been identified. In the interim, the 'shield' – Home Forces plus defensively-oriented elements of the Confederation Navy – wears down and blunts the enemy advance where it is strong and stops it cold where it is weak. The 'shield' also serves to identify the real axis of attack, allowing the 'sword' to concentrate at the point of decision.

until forward bases could be established. Contingency planning for 'Situation One' – an Imperial attack launched without any warning whatsoever – expects that the Home Forces of the Consolidation of Turin would form a strategic bastion whilst the Confederation Navy assembled at Tuxpan and Bisset.

The subsector has a normal allocation of patrol vessels scattered among its naval bases and a Forward Defensive Group built around battle monitors and their tenders. This is based at Tuxpan and might move forward if sufficient warning were available. If not, the worlds between the Veracruz Gap and the Imperial border would have to rely on their Home Forces until a counterattack developed. This strategy is the only viable option but that does not make it popular with the worlds in front of the Veracruz Gap.

BISSET

Bisset is a rockball significant only as a jump-2 link to Santa Maria and Zbaraz. Its orbital starport was, until recently, run by a wholly independent corporation. The same business group remains in charge of the port but the local political situation has changed considerably. In 1092 the overthrow of a dictatorship on Santa Maria prompted a squadron from the prior regime's well-equipped Naval Home Forces to flee the system. In what has been described as a 'mutually beneficial deal made at gunpoint', the squadron's commanders proposed a bold venture to the port operators. As a result, Bisset Starport Incorporated now owns a navy and a planet.

A tiny enclave was set up on the surface to present a territorial claim and the corporation declared ownership of the world. This was accepted without trouble, as there were other urgent matters elsewhere and a dispute might mean conflict with the newly-homeless naval squadron. There are plans to exploit the world's resources but these are a long way from bearing fruit. In the meantime Bisset charges tariffs on trade passing through, enforced by its navy, and hires out some of its ships to other governments. One of its best clients is the Solomani Confederation itself, which feels that keeping the rogue squadron gainfully employed is a better option than leaving its commanders to plot further adventurism.

This creates the unusual situation that the world of Bisset is technically independent, being as it is a possession of a corporation rather than a world with a government. However, since Bisset Starport Incorporated is a registered business entity within the Solomani Confederation, its possessions are Confederation territory without being Confederation members. This distinction is mostly of interest to lawmakers and those who come to Bisset to trade. The planetary enclave

is becoming known as a neutral venue for summit meetings and business negotiations. Its small, largely automated docks have seen many cargoes change ships outside Confederation jurisdiction, creating a fascinating loophole for those involved in the shadier side of interstellar commerce.

VELSCUR

First settled in -2222, Velscur was the first Selenite colony to undergo Paraterraforming. Its worldhouse was completed by -1970. Once the seat of a small pocket empire, Velscur's ambitions were thwarted long ago by the Consolidation of Turin. Today it is a high-population Selenite world ruled by a feudal technocracy steeped in ritual and tradition, and has long since retreated into isolationism.

Like other Selenite planets, it is a 'world city' tunnelled underground with levels placed every seven or eight metres. The world began with a few thousand people and some mining colonies but has grown over the centuries, adding deeper and deeper levels. It is not especially crowded; most apartments are 100 square metres or more in size. Different sections are linked by high-speed underground railways and hundreds of thousands of underground farms grow different vegetables and raise microgravity-adapted livestock, while enormous aquaculture tanks support huge volumes of fish, shrimp, algae and other seafood. A

few Zimmerist agitators from Brookwall have recently appeared on Velscur seeking refuge and allies against the Confederation.

VOGAR

Vogar is one of the few worlds in Alpha Crucis to have an uplifted Dolphin majority that possesses political power. The planetary parliament is dominated by the elected leaders of Dolphin megapods, although its constitution requires that certain cabinet positions always go to humans. Vogar's Solomani Party belongs to the radical Dolphin Embracer faction and it serves in an advisory role, acting as an upper house that rubber-stamps decisions of the popular parliament. It also serves as an important interface between the government and Confederation bureaucracy.

Vogar's orbital port is run by an independent consortium registered on Vogar. Its officials answer to the government but are separate from it; there is little interference or even oversight so long as the books balance and there are no scandals. Occasionally a party of Dolphins from the world government will visit the port, which has excellent facilities for aquatic people. Indeed the aquatic/land interfaced conference centre, set up specially to accommodate government figures, is renowned across the sector. It has been parodied as 'the galaxy's most expensive waterpark' but is in reality a sober and professional installation.



S U B S E C T O R VALD

This subsector is sparsely populated, containing 24 worlds. Those of the coreward end are more closely associated with Oriah than others in Vald; likewise the worlds at the spinward and trailing edges are part of mains running through other subsectors and are part of the local economic and political landscape. Only the clusters around Pesacce and Teta Lise can be considered part of Vald in any way other than astrographical convenience.

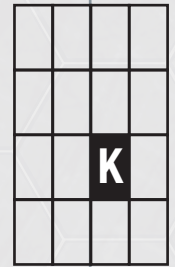
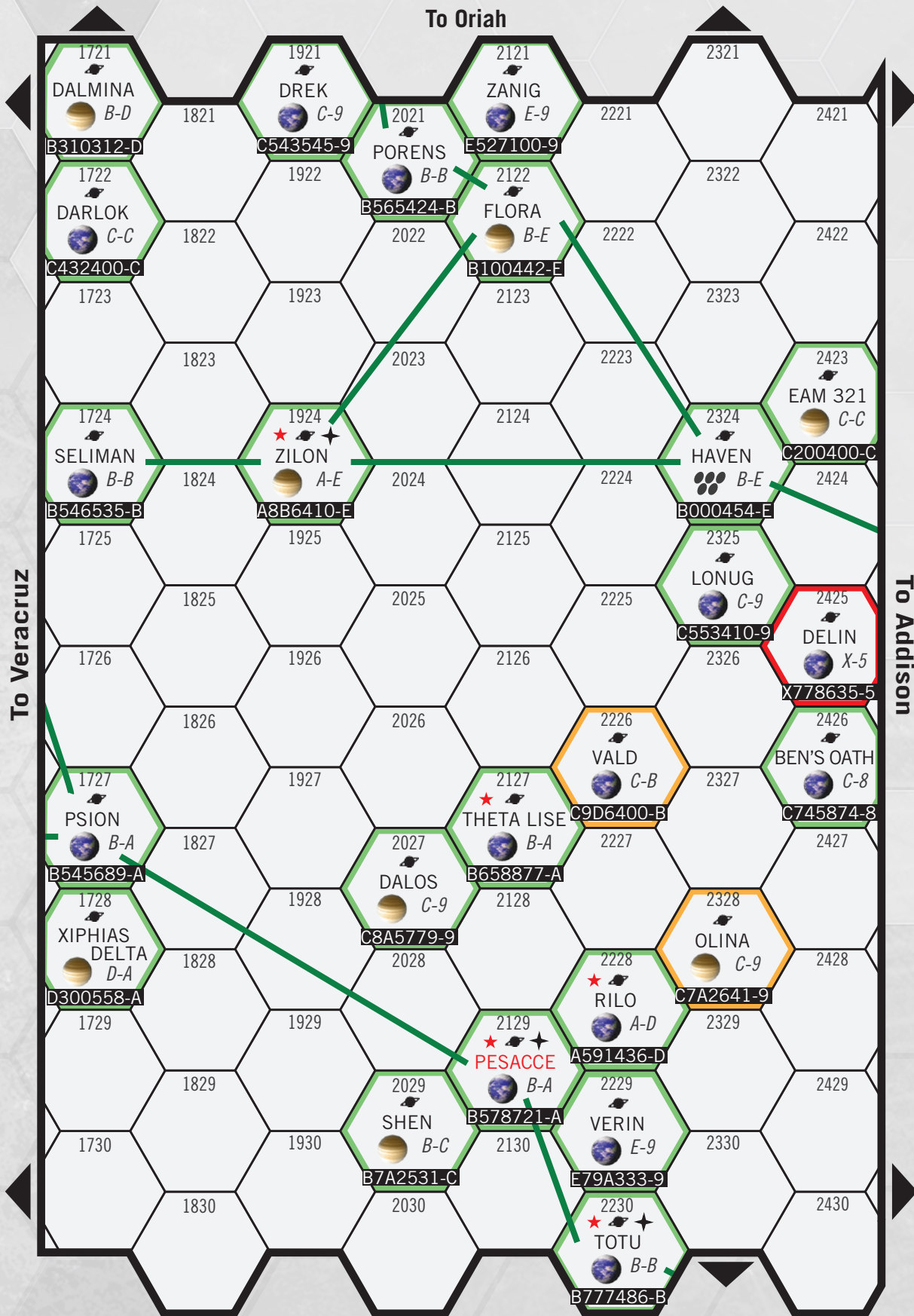
Despite this, the 'Vald Worlds' are important. Pesacce is an important administrative centre for the Confederation and home to the sector's largest naval

base. Along with bases at Teta Lise, Totu and Rilo, this creates the 'big four' that house the sector's allocation of major fleet assets. Naval contracts are important to the economies of many local worlds and shipments of supplies and components come in by contracted freighter on a regular basis.

The naval base at Zilon is a communications and intelligence-analysis station, housing the Confederation Navy's Alpha Crucis Sector Intelligence School as well as some logistics assets to assist movement across the subsector. Patrol forces from Zilon cover the trailing side of Veracruz but most other worlds outside the

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|---------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Ben's Oath | 2426 | | C745874-8 | Ga | | Solomani | G |
| Dalmina | 1721 | | B310312-D | Ht Lo | | | |
| Dalos | 2027 | | C8A5779-9 | FI | | | G |
| Darlok | 1722 | | C432400-C | Ht Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Delin | 2425 | | X778635-5 | Ag Ga Lt Ni | R | Solomani | |
| Drek | 1921 | | C543545-9 | Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Eam 321 | 2423 | | C200400-C | Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Flora | 2122 | | B100442-E | Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Haven | 2324 | | B000454-E | As Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Lonug | 2325 | | C553410-9 | Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Olina | 2328 | | C7A2641-9 | FI Ni | A | | G |
| Pesacce | 2129 | F | B578721-A | Ag Ga | | Solomani | G |
| Porens | 2021 | | B565424-B | Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Psion | 1727 | | B545689-A | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | |
| Rilo | 2228 | M | A591436-D | Ht Ni | | | G |
| Seliman | 1724 | | B546535-B | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | |
| Shen | 2029 | | B7A2531-C | FI Ht Ni | | | G |
| Teta Lise | 2127 | M | B658877-A | Ga | | | G |
| Totu | 2230 | F | B777486-B | Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Vald | 2226 | | C9D6400-B | Ni | A | Solomani | G |
| Verin | 2229 | | E79A333-9 | Lo Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Xiphias Delta | 1728 | | D300558-A | Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Zanig | 2121 | | E527100-9 | Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Zilon | 1924 | F | A8B6410-E | FI Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |

Vald Subsector



Alpha Crucis

Pesacce/Teta Lise region are covered by forces based outside Vald. The exception is the Trans-Vald Patrol, a significant force of frigates and a light carrier based at Teta Lise. This force is responsible for the spinward/coreward part of the Addison Main. Since most patrol vessels are jump-2 capable, transits at the beginning and end of every patrol are via Vald, making it one of the most frequently visited systems – by the navy at least – in the region.

DELIN

Delin was apparently colonised by accident, when a sleeper ship crash-landed there around -2400. Most of the citizens are descended from just four families, emigres from a Terran region called Wales. Delin's tiny population grew during the Long Night but regressed to a minimal level of technological sophistication. When rediscovered in the 850s the population had regained TL3.

Today Delin is probably the only location in the Solomani Confederation where the nearly extinct Terran language of Welsh survives. The limited gene pool of the colonists has also made them extremely susceptible to offworld diseases. Despite some lobbying in the Secretariat to open the world for settlement, Delin has been interdicted by request of the Solomani Confederation's Ministries of Information and Genetics in order to protect a unique Terran culture and language of the inhabitants and to better preserve its genetic heritage.

Delin remains open to properly-immunised scholars and navy contact personnel. Every few years a cadre of medically-screened youths are allowed offworld to attend Confederation schools or institutions. They are quietly indoctrinated with Solomani ideology and reintroduced into Delin's society as educators and Party leaders. Through this slow-but-sure approach the planet has gradually reached TL5 without undue cultural stress.

Delin is a barrier to jump-1 traffic on the Delin Main, especially since the system has no gas giants. The problem has been solved – ostensibly on a temporary basis – by firms operating refuelling stations in orbit over planets other than the mainworld. Most of these stations started life as naval tankers and offer little but fuel – which is of course sold at a truly astronomical price.

PESACCE

Established in 942, Pesacce is the one of more successful Solomani colony worlds in this sector. Its inhabitants are noted for their optimistic frontier spirit, disdain for red tape and entrepreneurial zeal. Pesacce is a hub for further economic development in the sector. By custom, all adult citizens automatically

join Pesacce's Solomani Party, which uses regular polling, town meetings and online plebiscites to vote on most issues.

One of the more unusual organisations to set up on Pesacce is the Maria-Varda Timer's Club, built on a secure mountaintop resort. The club is an association of futurists, romantics and adventurers dedicated to experiencing the sweep of Solomani history via cryogenic suspension. Founded in 757 by a noted author and Solomani Party philosopher, it provides both a comfortable meeting place for like-minded chrononauts and, for a modest Cr100000 fee, services such as investment banking, expert medical care and monitoring of ultra-high quality low berths. Its most famous member is probably the pugnacious retired Confederation Marine Colonel Roland Armstrong, whose last line before his suspension was 'wake me up when we're ready to take back Terra'.

Pesacce Highport is the de facto subsector capital, in so much as any such thing exists in the Confederation. It is home to offices and facilities run by all major ministries along with many of the sector's larger business groups. Pesacce is widely known as the place to go to get a deal or raise an issue. There is a well-travelled 'backstairs route' to the offices of the mighty, through a series of fixers and favour-for-favour dealings with figures notorious and obscure. The 'backstairs politics' of Pesacce is more widely publicised than the formal route to the top, and many honest petitioners are surprised to find that the conventional approach is actually quite effective.

VALD

Vald's very dense oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere makes its surface uninhabitable. However, a rich ecosystem has developed on a few high mountain plateaus and in the upper airways, where the pressure is equivalent to a standard atmosphere. Its most advanced native life forms are the floating blimp-like zephyr hives and the myriads of smaller flyers that nest amongst them, including the fierce winged valrocs, whose flocks seem to exist in a symbiotic relationship with the zephyr reefs. Although not truly sentient, zephyr hives are a form of colony organism that exert rudimentary psionic control over the species living on them, even using valrocs as soldiers to fight the 'air forces' of rival reefs.

In the 600s documentaries on the planet's exotic wild life and the romance of living among the clouds and mountain peaks made the world an attractive destination for hunters and adventure tourists. Vald soon became a favourite vacation site for Imperial nobility and dozens of impressive hunting lodges were built among the mountain peaks. The Solomani Party's suppression of the nobility ended Vald's resort culture in the 800s.

However, several noble families that lost titles and planetary estates but chose to continue to stay within the Confederation elected to relocate here with their retainers and what remained of their fortunes. They established permanent mountaintop eyries where they could dream of better days.

This comfortable exile was interrupted in the 1060s when a team of MacroGenesis xenologists studying the zephyr hives made a major discovery. A particular exotic hormone within valroc brains is responsible for their sensitivity to psionic control and could be used as a natural psi-drug. In recent years the fortunes of Vald's

families have become tied to licensing valroc hunting, initially through exclusive contracts with MacroGenesis, with careful quotas to ensure the continued viability of the valroc and zephyr hive populations. However, a substantial black market for psi drugs has grown. Over the last decade poachers connected to criminal syndicates have also been operating on Vald – some independently, others through secret alliances with the greedier families. Under the pressure of the drug profits, mansions have turned into fortresses and inter-family feuds and violent skirmishes between retainers and armed poachers have become common.

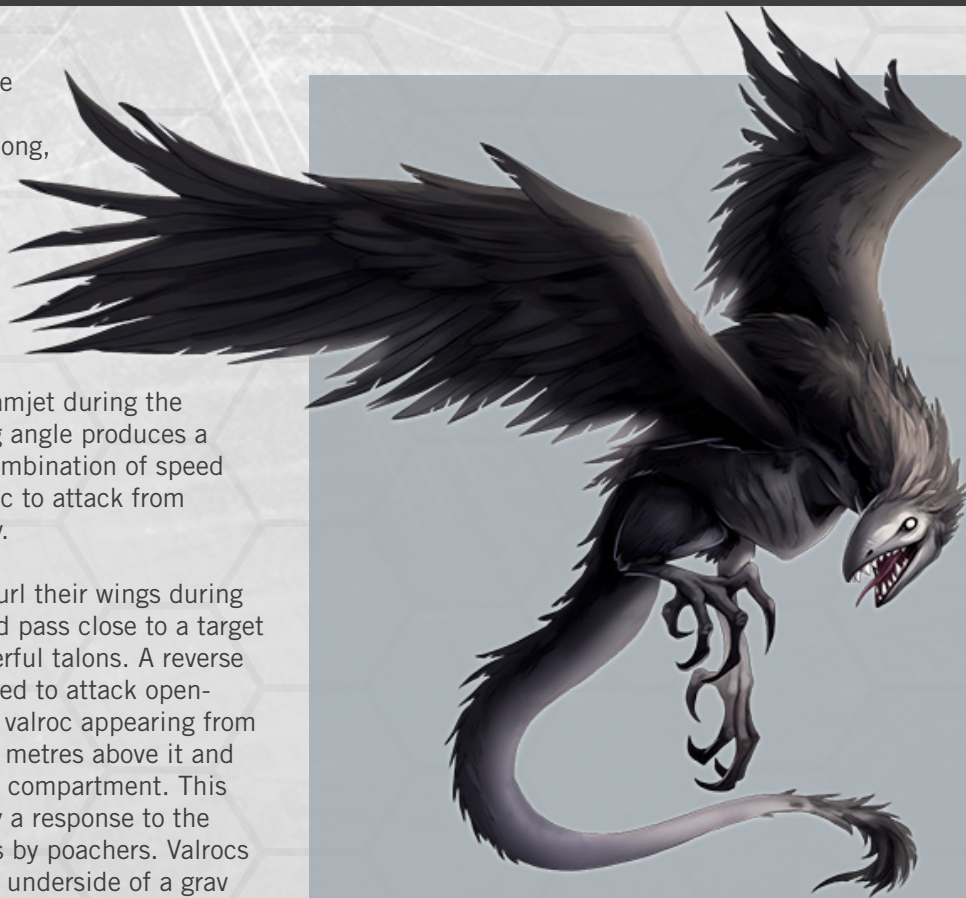
VALROC

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Valroc | 16 | 4m |
| SKILLS | Melee (natural) 2, Recon 1 | |
| ATTACKS | Claws (1D), Stopping Claw (3D) | |
| TRAITS | Flyer (Slow), Fast Metabolism (when hyper-oxygenated) +6 | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Flying Carnivore, Hunter | |

Valroc

The valroc is a large flying creature somewhere between a bird and a reptile in appearance. They have long, broad wings that can be furled surprisingly quickly, allowing a valroc to stoop at enormous speeds. Their fine sense of air pressure allows valrocs to dive deep into the lower atmosphere, hyper-oxygenating themselves by using their beak as a natural ramjet during the stoop. A small adjustment of wing angle produces a huge increase in lift due to the combination of speed and air density, enabling the valroc to attack from beneath its target at great velocity.

Some valrocs have been seen to furl their wings during this 'reverse stoop' manoeuvre and pass close to a target for a raking attack with their powerful talons. A reverse stoop-and-stall tactic has been used to attack open-topped air/rafts at times, with the valroc appearing from underneath the craft, stalling just metres above it and dropping talons-first into the crew compartment. This is a relatively new tactic, probably a response to the use of open-topped grav platforms by poachers. Valrocs will also slam themselves into the underside of a grav vehicle to tip it up, often inflicting such self-injuries that they cannot remain airborne. This is presumably done under the influence of the zephyrs.

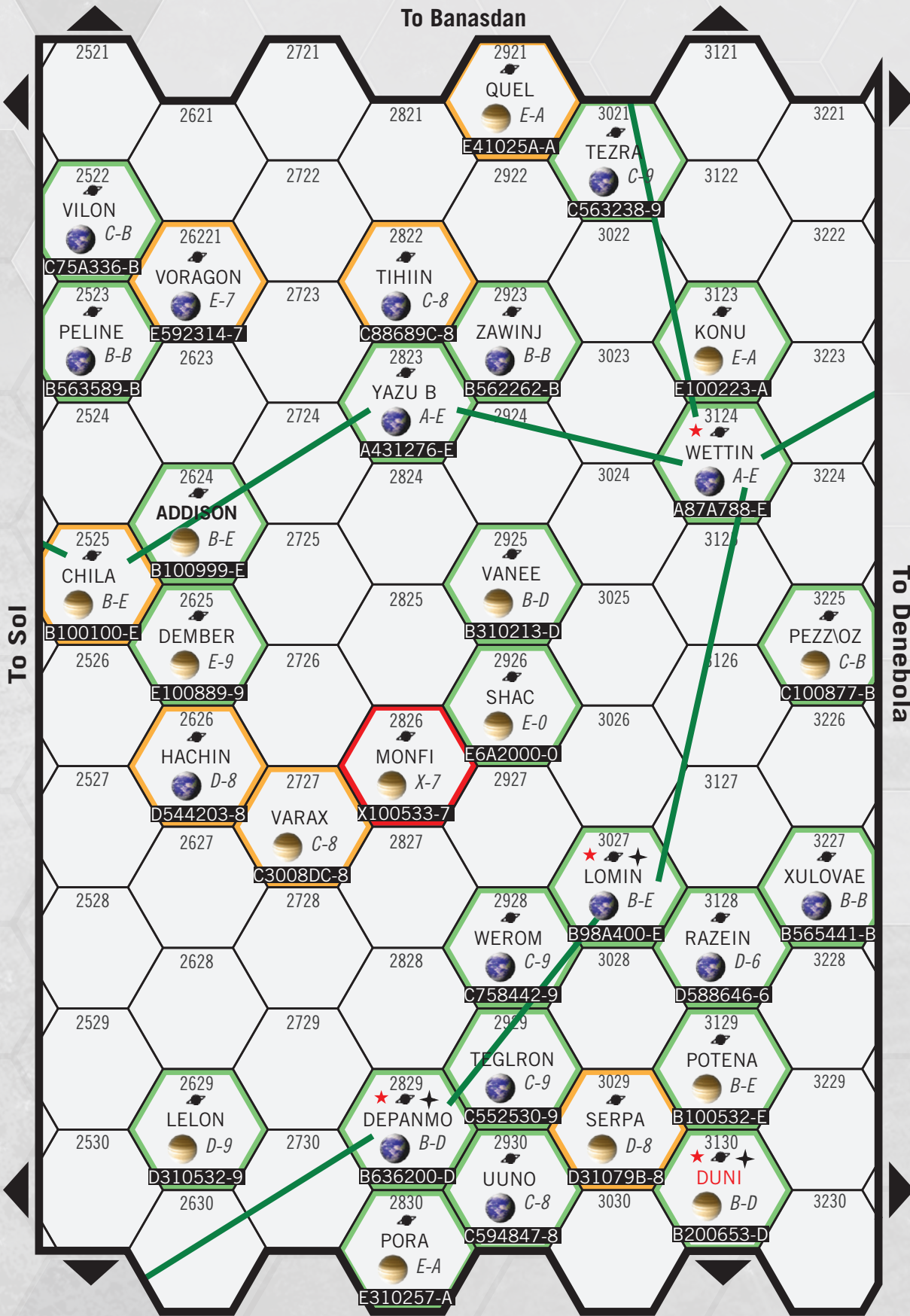


ADDISON

The Addison subsector contains 31 worlds, all within the borders of the Solomani Confederation. Much of the subsector was colonised after the formation of the Solomani Autonomous Region but a few settlements date back to earlier expeditions. All but nine worlds are

Confederation member states; the independents include some of the older and richer planets. The Commonwealth of Gadjick, based in the Galloway subsector, claims sovereignty over Potena, Serpa and Razein, and disputes the Solomani Confederation's claim to Duni.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|----------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Addison | 2624 | | B100999-E | Hi Ht In Na Va | | | G |
| Chila | 2525 | | B100100-E | Ht Lo Va | A | Solomani | G |
| Dember | 2625 | | E100889-9 | Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Depanmo | 2829 | F | B636200-D | Ht Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Duni | 3130 | F | B200653-D | Ht Na Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Hachin | 2626 | | D544203-8 | Ga Lo | A | Solomani | G |
| Konu | 3123 | | E100223-A | Lo Va | | Solomani | G |
| Lelon | 2629 | | D310532-9 | Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Lomin | 3027 | F | B98A400-E | Ht Ni Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Monfi | 2826 | | X100533-7 | Ni Va | R | | G |
| Peline | 2523 | | B563589-B | Ni | | | G |
| Pezzoz | 3225 | | C100877-B | Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Pora | 2830 | | E310257-A | Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Potena | 3129 | | B100532-E | Ht Ni Va | | | G |
| Quel | 2921 | | E41025A-A | Lo | A | Solomani | |
| Razein | 3128 | | D588646-6 | Ag Ga Ni Ri | | | G |
| Serpa | 3029 | | D31079B-8 | Na | | | G |
| Shac | 2926 | | E6A2000-0 | Ba Fl Lt | | Solomani | G |
| Teglrion | 2929 | | C552530-9 | Ni Po | | Solomani | |
| Tezra | 3021 | | C563238-9 | Lo | | | G |
| Tihiin | 2822 | | C88689C-8 | Ga Ri | | Solomani | G |
| Uuno | 2930 | | C594847-8 | Ga | | Solomani | G |
| Vanee | 2925 | | B310213-D | Ht Lo | | | G |
| Varax | 2727 | | C3008DC-8 | Na Va | | Solomani | |
| Vilon | 2522 | | C75A336-B | Lo Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Voragon | 2622 | | E592314-7 | Lo | A | Solomani | |
| Werom | 2928 | | C758442-9 | Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Wettin | 3124 | M | A87A788-E | Ht Wa | | | G |
| Xulovae | 3227 | | B565441-B | Ga Ni | | Solomani | |
| Yazuz B | 2823 | | A431276-E | Ht Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Zawinj | 2923 | | B562262-B | Lo | | Solomani | |



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Alpha Crucis

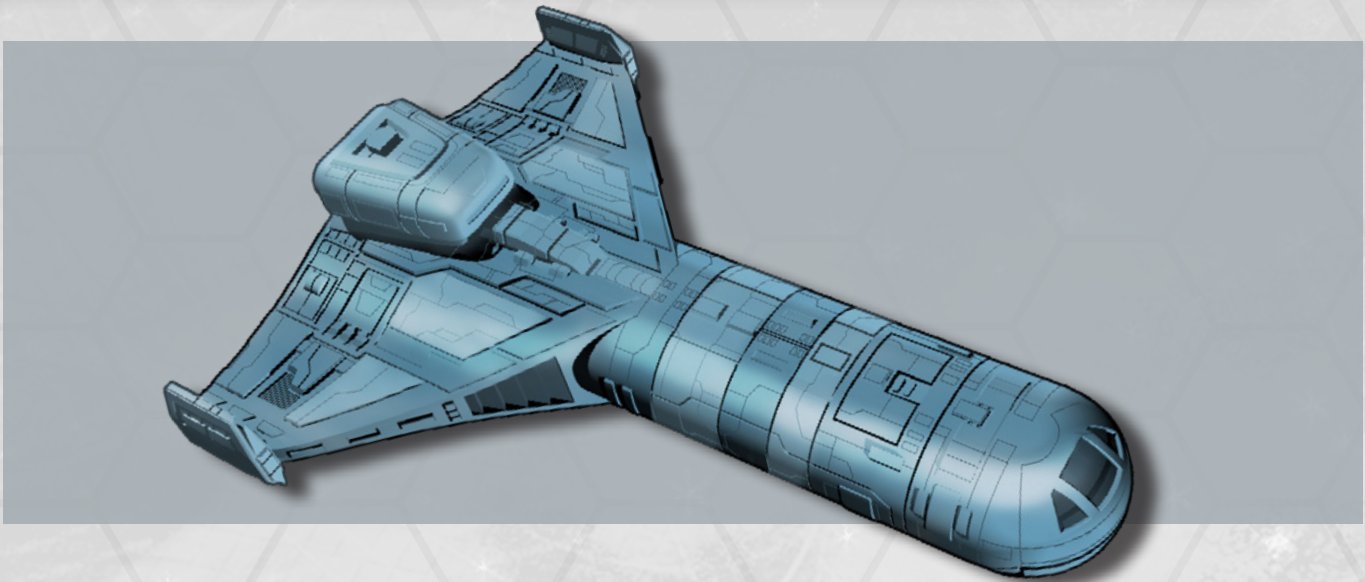
To Denebola

ADDISON SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- Starport Class & Tech Level
- Other Naval Base

- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- X-Boat Route

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Military base/Garrison



The centre of the subsector is dominated by the Addison Main, which has easy jump-2 access to other mains and clusters. Commerce in the region generally follows a typical 'short-and-link' model, with jump-1 ships plying the mains and internal routes of cluster, and jump-2 ships providing a link between mains. Jump-2 ships have a great many options in Addison and the surrounding subsectors, so most free trader and speculative-commerce vessels are jump-2 capable. The commonest small commercial starship on the mains and clusters is the humble subsidised merchant, adopted almost without change by Solomani crews after being developed in the Imperium. Indeed, there are those who claim the design actually originated on Terra in the distant past. There is no evidence either way.

No major naval assets are based in the subsector. The base at Wettin is used by patrol vessels operating on the Addison Main and in the clusters coreward of it. Lomin's patrol force is responsible for patrols to trailing into Boreal subsector, whilst Depanmo and Telgar protect commerce in their local regions. The base at Duni is a temporary affair made permanent. It was set up to support a long-term 'deterrent deployment' in the Duni system consisting of mid-sized monitors and gunboats, freeing jump-capable warships for other operations. Occasionally a capital ship from the sector reserve is sent to show the flag but local facilities cannot support such vessels on an ongoing basis.

ADDISON

Addison is a small, highly industrialised vacuum world settled in -2020, with a population known for its strong work ethic and communal social system. Government is theoretically a multi-party democracy but is actually run by a nearly hereditary bureaucracy.

Most of the inhabitants are Selenites, who have never strongly identified with the Solomani Movement; this has been reciprocated with Purist factions in the Solomani Party resisting the world's membership. However, Addison has generally been a solid trading partner with the Solomani Confederation. About 2% of the population belong to a moderate faction of the Solomani Party and a sizable fraction of the population favour membership in the Confederation.

DUNI

Duni was colonised by the Commonwealth of Gadjick in 761 but the colony was mismanaged and abandoned around 780. In the 890s the world was resettled by Solomani colonists from Yazuz B who established mining and spaceyard industries. After some time as a protectorate, Duni began the process of becoming a Confederation member in 1060. This this provoked the ire of the Commonwealth of Gadjick who had never renounced their old claim. Encouraged by an apparent lack of interest on the part of the Confederation, Gadjick launched a surprise invasion in 1085

The assault quickly overwhelmed Duni's small Home Forces contingent. However, Gadjick had underestimated the resolve of the Confederation. In 1086 Confederation naval and ground forces launched Operation Black Swan, retaking Duni and smashing the Commonwealth's naval base at Potena from where the invasion had been launched. The brief Duni War cost 10,000 lives – mostly on the Gadjick side – and made a war hero of task force commander Admiral Elijah Drummond. He would later be elevated to the Solomani High Council. Since the Duni War, the Solomani Confederation has established a defensive presence at Duni which shows no sign of being withdrawn.

ZIUSUDRA

This subsector contains 30 worlds, all of them within the borders of the Solomani Confederation. According to local legend Ziusudra itself was used as a staging post for exploration during the Seventh Interstellar War, although the current Solomani population arrived in the

Rule of Man era. Balboa and Scathe, a pair of densely populated highly industrialised systems, are the main economic and political powers in the subsector. Their agendas diverge widely, causing frequent reversals of policy and competition for centrally-assigned resources.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|-----------|----------|-------|------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Amiens | 0731 | | D6888DE-4 | Ga Lt Ri | | Solomani | |
| Balboa | 0240 | F | B573987-C | Hi Ht In | | Solomani | G |
| Bokhoro | 0332 | | E10077A-9 | Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Dashpot | 0340 | | D557584-7 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Ducain | 0540 | F | B555338-B | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Fantasy | 0834 | | B58A477-D | Ht Ni Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Fermi | 0334 | | B898652-B | Ag Ga Ni | | | |
| Fogo | 0233 | F | B100659-E | Ht Na Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Garabel | 0638 | | B79A678-C | Ht Ni Wa | | | |
| Ica | 0136 | | C865588-9 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Kermadec | 0734 | | C100577-C | Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | |
| Kirchkoff | 0636 | | A7B4461-E | Fi Ht Ni | | | G |
| Luebo | 0137 | F | A643566-D | Ht Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Lusaka | 0139 | | B98A658-D | Ht Ni Ri Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Maxwell | 0436 | | C3107AF-A | Na | | | |
| Mcmanuss | 0632 | | E98A110-9 | Lo Wa | | | G |
| Nin | 0339 | | E9E4546-8 | Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Palawan | 0335 | | C874204-A | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Potose | 0133 | | E546200-8 | Ga Lo | A | Solomani | G |
| Rartonga | 0435 | | D422431-9 | Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Rosaro | 0131 | | C000430-C | As Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Sala | 0634 | | C310664-A | Na Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Scathe | 0231 | | A000A97-E | As Hi Ht In Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Sucre | 0135 | | C686687-8 | Ag Ga Ni Ri | | | G |
| Tomsk | 0236 | | D9C4325-9 | Fi Lo | | | G |
| Torrens | 0639 | F | A679798-D | Ht | | | G |
| Walvis | 0232 | | A572779-C | Ht | | Solomani | G |
| Wisniak | 0437 | | C564320-9 | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Xiamen | 0840 | | B766336-D | Ga Ht Lo | | | G |
| Ziusudra | 0234 | F | B555797-A | Ag Ga | A | Solomani | G |

Scathe lies right on the Imperial border and only remained part of the Confederation due to a stubborn defence of its asteroid belt by local forces. Scathe is the port of entry for many Imperial ships headed into the Confederation and profits greatly from cross-border trade. Its government constantly reminds the Secretariat about just how much the people of Scathe sacrificed in the Solomani Rim War and how much is being spent on defences. The line taken by the government is that Scathe is willing to be the bastion other worlds shelter behind – again – but deserves subsidies or Confederation Navy deployments. Scathe was not singled out to be part of the Iron Gate strategy and her government seems to have taken the decision rather personally.

Balboa, on the other hand, lies at the rimward end of the subsector and is more interested in obtaining investment in its local cluster of systems. This extends rimward into the Splendour subsector and Balboa's gaze is typically drawn in that direction rather than towards the Imperium. Notably, Balboa seeks funding to develop Dashpot, which is governed by a local administration answering to the government of Balboa. Whilst not explicitly a multi-world government or a colonial possession, Dashpot is part of Balboa's territory in all but name.

Ziusudra has a higher than average deployment of patrol vessels, although these are flip-flopped from border patrols to commerce protection as Balboa and Scathe gain and lose support from other member governments. Ziusudra is the only naval base to permanently have a deployment of 'warfighting' units. These are mostly cruisers but occasionally capital ships are added to the mix. The base at Fogo was for a time home to a forward-deployed battle monitor and its associated tenders but these have been rotated elsewhere.

AMIENS

Amiens was chosen as the new homeworld for a sect of the Solomani Catholic Church. Adopting a monastic lifestyle based around church-owned farms, the immigrants turned their backs on technology and seem entirely content with their choices. However, although there is one culture on Amiens only about half the population are human.

Amiens is the homeworld of a race known to humans as Ladybugs; slender humanoids with multifaceted eyes, feathery ears and shimmering blue-violet skins. When the colonists arrived they were living in a contented TLO state and integrated happily with the new arrivals. Their

pre-existing culture is now extinct and all Ladybugs on Amiens – as far as anyone knows – are part of mixed human/Ladybug communities.

The Ladybugs took readily to the gospel preached by the newcomers and embraced their religion wholeheartedly. Indeed, Ladybugs find delight in elements of church ritual considered tedious even by the most fervent human worshipper. They are happy to work slowly through a long service, taking infinite care to get every nuance of practice and ritual exactly right. This pleases church officials and their praise pleases the Ladybugs.

Ladybugs are thought to be simple creatures of limited intellect, although there are a few researchers who suggest they might be socially conditioned into this state. They are gentle souls who dislike violence, rather than being afraid of it, and have immense empathy with other creatures. The Church generally considers the Ladybugs as perfect worshippers – docile, pious and diligent. For their part, the Ladybugs seem entirely happy with the situation.

SCATHE

Scathe is a rich asteroid belt with 23 large asteroid habitats and several hundred outlying mining stations. It is a major industrial centre and, since the Solomani Rim War, an important border trade port. During the war, Scathe was raided multiple times by Imperial strike cruisers and earned a reputation as a dangerous place to go looking for trouble.

Despite little assistance from the Confederation Navy, Scathe's Home Forces were able to inflict heavy casualties on the raiders and a campaign to crush its defences was considered too costly to implement. Thus, despite serious economic damage and thousands of civilian casualties, Scathe remained in Confederation hands. Perhaps because of these experiences, the mostly pure-Solomani population are patriotic supporters of the Solomani Cause. Home Forces are powerful and the system is a prime recruiting area for the navy.

The rather ossified Party bureaucracy takes every opportunity to demonstrate its patriotism and call for additional funds from the Secretariat to build even more asteroid forts and system defence monitors. Although the wheels of government turn slowly these days, the administration is generally popular. Many officials are descended from old war veteran families and there is a feeling that they have earned their place at the top. Scathe is also a major financial supporter for Solomani guerrilla groups and the Solomani Liberation Front openly maintains fundraising and recruiting offices here.

ZIUSUDRA

Ziusudra's oceans and major islands were seeded with genetically engineered Terran life, replacing the primitive native ecology. The process of creating an Earth-like garden world was begun during the Rule of Man but not completed until 900, however now there are fears it may all come to ruin. In 1103, geological sensors began to indicate the planet's Mavinga mega-caldra region is once again active.

The Mavinga mega-caldra lies on the heavily-populated northern continent. It is predicted to have an 85% or greater likelihood of erupting as a 'super volcano' within a matter of years. This will produce hundreds of earthquakes, cover thousands of square kilometres with poisonous ash and disrupt the climate for years, devastating agricultural production and likely upsetting the delicate balance of the world's imported ecosystem.

At the Ziusudra government's request, the Secretariat has declared the planet a disaster zone. Home Forces, Confederation Navy and Army formations are moving in to aid the evacuation of millions of citizens from the most threatened regions. Transstar and the navy are

both shipping in food supplies, filter masks and filtration units, and taking the most vulnerable citizens – primarily the elderly and children – to offworld refugee camps.

Seventeen major cities and dozens of smaller towns are being abandoned as local citizens try to escape the danger zone but ground and grav vehicles are clogging roads, public transits and airways. The problem is exacerbated by what at the time seemed like a viable policy; Ziusudra's Solomani Party had previously banned most private ownership of vehicles to better subsidise its state-run public transit system. This is now breaking down under the stress and was never intended to be used this way.

The non-Solomani minority – about 13% of the population – are coming to realise they are at the bottom of the list for evacuation and receipt of filter masks, and their unrest is growing. Home Forces units are being diverted from evacuation duty to security in the cities in order to prevent looting and control civil disorder. Rumours are spreading that purist elements in the Solomani Party and Navy are willing to let the minorities be trapped in the cities when the super volcano erupts. The racial situation may explode before the volcano does.



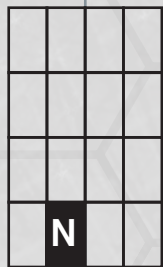
SUBSECTOR REGULUS

The Regulus subsector contains 26 worlds, all inside the boundaries of the Solomani Confederation. Regulus is an under-developed region of the sector, on the edge of the rimward frontier. The most influential world is Tino, a highly-polluted industrial planet. Tino is an economic powerhouse but also a major importer of food and luxury goods. Over the last decade, Tino's Solomani Party and financial sector have been dominated by Rimward Expansionists who are funding

aggressive planetary development and colonisation programs on several worlds in Regulus and the neighbouring Newworld sector.

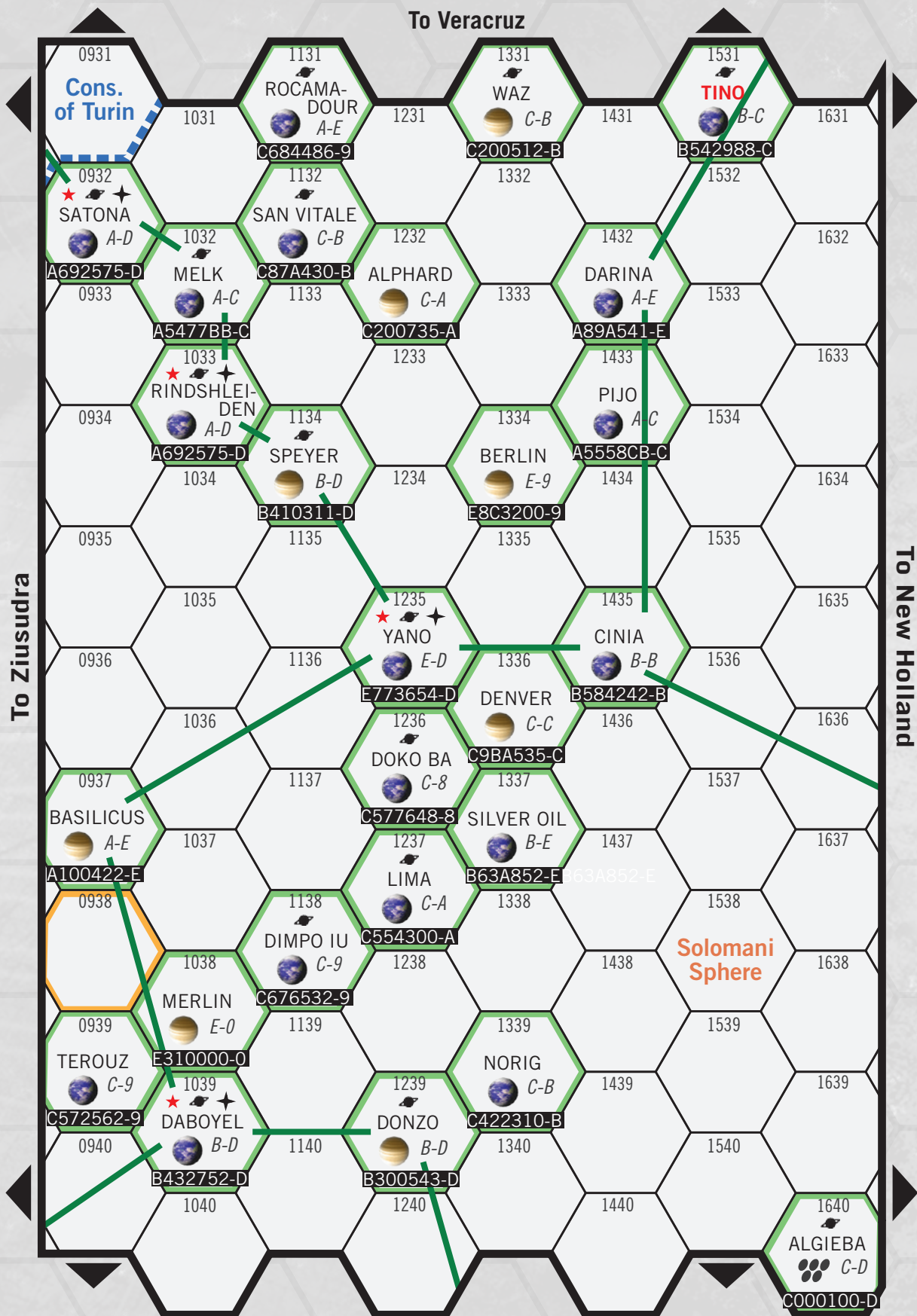
The central Regulus Cluster is separated from the subsectors to rimward and trailing by areas of sparse stars and a three-parsec rift. Most of the cluster's trade goes through Daboyel or coreward, typically by way of Tino. This gives Daboyel far greater importance than its economic output would indicate. A request for

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|---------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Algieba | 1640 | | C000100-D | As Ht Lo Va | | Na | G |
| Alphard | 1232 | | C200735-A | Na Va | | Na | |
| Basilicus | 0937 | | A100422-E | Ht Ni Va | | So | G |
| Berlin | 1334 | | E8C3200-9 | FI Lo | A | Na | |
| Cinia | 1435 | | B584242-B | Ga Lo | | So | |
| Daboyel | 1039 | F | B432752-D | Ht Na Po | | So | G |
| Darina | 1432 | | A89A541-E | Ht Ni Wa | | So | |
| Denver | 1336 | | C9BA535-C | FI Ht Ni Wa | | So | |
| Dimpo lu | 1138 | | C676532-9 | Ag Ga Ni | | Na | G |
| Doko Ba | 1236 | | C577648-8 | Ag Ga Ni | | So | G |
| Donzo | 1239 | | B300543-D | Ht Ni Va | A | So | G |
| Lima | 1237 | | C554300-A | Ga Lo | | So | G |
| Melk | 1032 | | A5477BB-C | Ag Ga Ht | | So | G |
| Merlin | 1038 | | E310000-0 | Ba Lt | | So | |
| Norig | 1339 | | C422310-B | Lo Po | | Na | |
| Pijo | 1433 | | A5558CB-C | Ga Ht | | So | |
| Rindschleiden | 1033 | F | B431898-C | Ht Na Po | | So | G |
| Rocamadour | 1131 | | C684486-9 | Ga Ni | | Na | G |
| San Vitale | 1132 | | C87A430-B | Ni Wa | | So | G |
| Satona | 0932 | F | A692575-D | Ht Ni | | So | G |
| Silver Oil | 1337 | | B63A852-E | Ht Wa | | Na | |
| Speyer | 1134 | | B410311-D | Ht Lo | A | So | G |
| Terouz | 0939 | | C572562-9 | Ni | | Na | |
| Tino | 1531 | | B542988-C | Hi Ht In Po | | So | |
| Waz | 1331 | | C200512-B | Ni Va | | So | G |
| Yano | 1235 | F | E773654-D | Ni | | So | G |



Alpha Crucis

REGULUS SUBSECTOR



- Gas Giant
- Starport Class & Tech Level
- Other Naval Base
- Military Base/Garrison

- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- X-Boat Route

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Asteroid Belt

central funding to improve Daboyel's starport to Class A received a surprising level of support but ultimately failed. As a result the government of Daboyel is seeking to secure backing from private investors.

The subsector's patrol and security forces are conventionally arranged, with the bases at Daboyel and Yano supporting patrol operations in the central cluster and Rindschleiden taking responsibility for the coreward end of the subsector. The base at Satona houses a Confederation Army rapid-response force and associated naval assets. These are mainly transport vessels and their escorts but a force of cruisers and a light carrier or two will usually be deployed there.

DOKO BA

Doko Ba is famous for its warm climate, the beautiful sandstone buildings of its starport and the quiet faith of its population. Like several worlds in Alpha Crucis, it was settled by religious émigrés from Terra. The Doko Baists follow a mystical faith descended from Buddhist and Sufi roots that teaches the value of all sophont life. Although a member of the Solomani Confederation, Doko Ba's Solomani Party belongs to a radical embracer faction that believes the Solomani people are destined to lead the universe through their spread of Doko Baist spiritual enlightenment and pacifism to all races.

For three centuries Doko Baists have stood up to mainstream Solomani Party pressure to alter their doctrines to a more acceptable form. The world is believed to have provided refuge for dissidents from less tolerant Solomani worlds and the population, although law-abiding, has an unusually low incidence of participation in SolSec's Monitor programme. This resistance has had its price. In 1007 soon after the end of the Solomani Rim War a group of 'pirates' raided Doko Ba, killing 2,736 believers and looting their sacred Cathedral of Sentience. The perpetrators were never captured.

The raid may have been a SolSec black operation aimed at sending a message that tolerance could only go so far but it is also possible that Solomani militants associated with the Knights of the First Cross carried out the raid. Several religious art objects valued at a total of MCr40 are still missing. Despite these trials, the inhabitants continue to preach their gospel of universal harmony and send missionaries out into the Confederation and beyond to win hearts and minds.

PIJO

Pijo is one of the few worlds in Alpha Crucis where a ruling monarchy established in the Long Night continued to hold sway even after the rise of the

Solomani Movement. However, in 1104 the last King of Pijo died without leaving an adult successor. His designated heir is Bryony, an 11-year old girl. An uneasy coalition of relatives, courtiers, party leaders and generals hold the regency and vie for influence within her court. Despite this troubled succession, the regency has emboldened populist factions in the local Solomani Party who wish to replace the royalists with a Solomani People's Republic.

Pijo also has a large population of Apes and almost every well-to-do Solomani family employs one as a groundskeeper, labourer or servant. The Apes on Pijo have a tradition of service to the monarchy and aristocracy, and their numbers include an elite Lifeguard regiment within the Pijo Home Forces. Unusually, Pijo maintains a number of mixed human/Ape formations equipped to Home Guard standards. These are company-sized units, rather than battalions or brigades, and are routinely deployed by the Confederation Army to deal with odd jobs that do not require a larger force. Occasionally, virulent Solomani supremacists object to seeing pure-blooded Solomani humans taking orders from an Ape sergeant or officer, but on the whole the arrangement serves as an example of cooperation between the people of Old Earth. This may well have been the intent.

YANO

Yano's small population was almost entirely wiped out by a comet impact in 983. Plans to resettle the planet were delayed for many years. This was partly due to a dispute in the Secretariat regarding which member states and corporations should take the lead in resettlement and partly because adequate funding was not available on the occasions a consensus was reached. Ultimately it was the construction of a naval base that brought about re-colonisation.

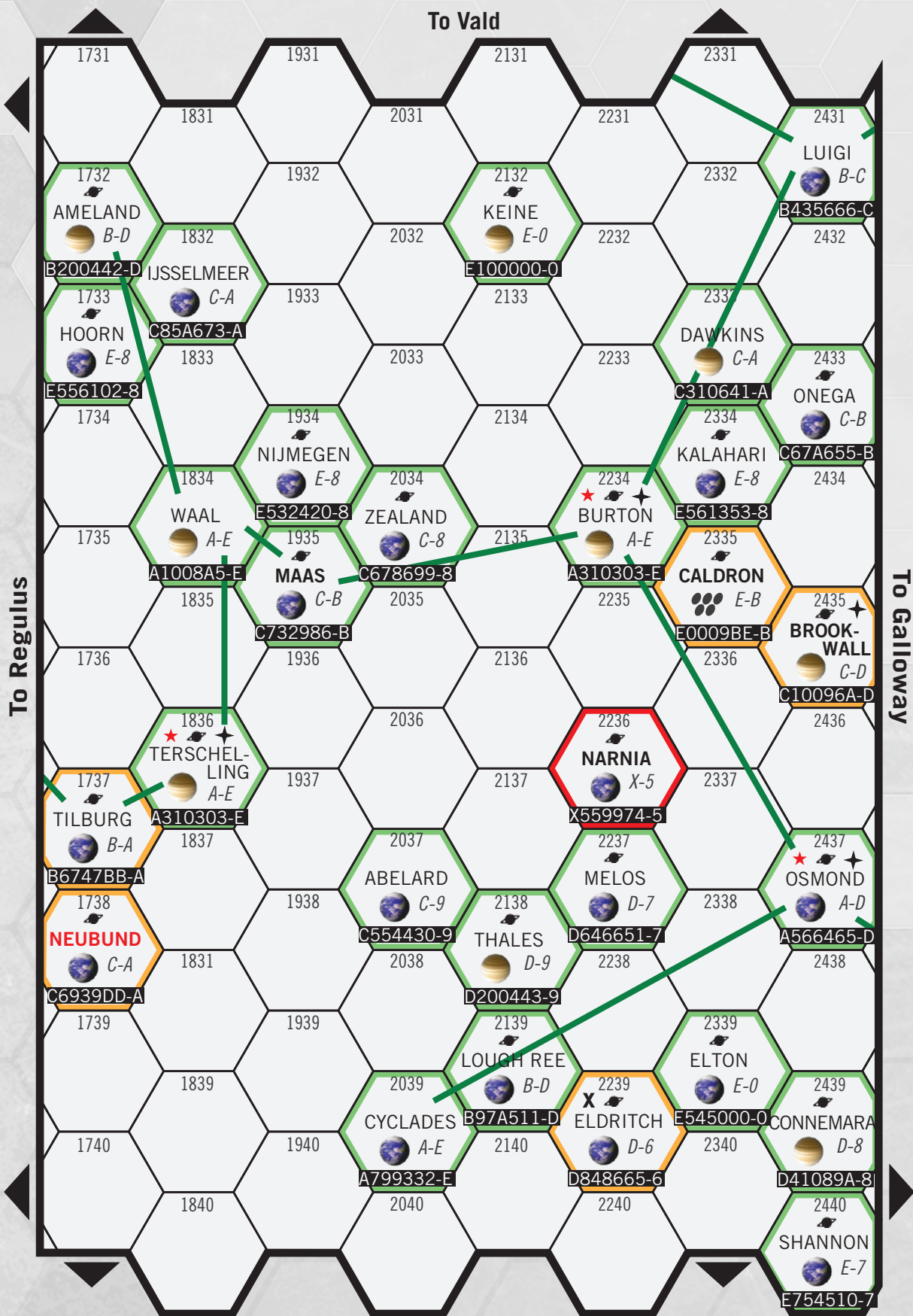
As part of a cost-offsetting deal, the consortium building the naval base were also required to construct a starport and the larger components of the world's cities. With the primary cost of resettlement covered out of navy funds, recruiting suitable colonists was a simple matter. Preference was given to pure-blood Solomani but ultimately Yano ended up with a mixed-blood minority skewed towards high-paying occupations. This was an unintended result of the preference rules – an unskilled position could be filled by any Solomani off the street but where high-end professionals were needed the skillset had to come first. This has attracted some negative comment from Solomani purists, who have accused the Yano Project's administrators of giving preferential treatment to non-Solomani. The planetary population seem content, however.

NEW HOLLAND

New Holland contains 29 worlds, all within the borders of the Solomani Confederation. Like neighbouring Galloway, the region has long been a backwater. The three small clusters on the spinward side of the subsector form an interstellar economic community dominated by firms operating out of Waal, whilst the two small mains on the trailing side both run into Galloway.

The New Holland-Galloway Main, running from Burton to Westen in Galloway, is considered from a political and economic standpoint to be most closely associated with New Holland. There are no economically significant worlds on this main in Galloway. Brookwall was the dominant power on the New Holland-Galloway Main until recently but is now embroiled in a vicious conflict

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|--------------|----------|-------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Abelard | 2037 | | C554430-9 | Ga Ni | | | |
| Ameland | 1732 | | B200442-D | Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Brookwall | 2435 | | C10096A-D | Hi Ht In Na Va | A | Solomani | G |
| Burton | 2234 | F | A310303-E | Ht Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Caldron | 2335 | | E0009BE-B | As Hi In Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Connemara | 2439 | | D41089A-8 | Na | | Solomani | G |
| Cyclades | 2039 | | A799332-E | Ht Lo | | Solomani | |
| Dawkins | 2333 | | C310641-A | Na Ni | | Solomani | |
| Eldritch | 2239 | | D848665-6 | Ag Ga Ni | A | Solomani | G |
| Elton | 2339 | | E545000-0 | Ba Ga Lt | | | |
| Hoorn | 1733 | | E556102-8 | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Ijsselmeer | 1832 | | C85A673-A | Ni Wa | | Solomani | |
| Kalahari | 2334 | | E561353-8 | Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Keine | 2132 | | E100000-0 | Ba Lt Va | | Solomani | G |
| Lough Ree | 2139 | | B97A511-D | Ht Ni Wa | | | G |
| Luigi | 2431 | | B435666-C | Ht Ni | | Solomani | |
| Maas | 1935 | | C732986-B | Hi Na Po | | Solomani | G |
| Melos | 2237 | | D646651-7 | Ag Ga Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Narnia | 2236 | | X559974-5 | Hi Lt | R | Solomani | |
| Neubund | 1738 | | C6939DD-A | Hi In | | Solomani | G |
| Nijmegen | 1934 | | E532420-8 | Ni Po | | Solomani | G |
| Onega | 2433 | | C67A655-B | Ni Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Osmond | 2437 | F | A566465-D | Ga Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Shannon | 2440 | | E754510-7 | Ag Ga Ni | | | G |
| Terschelling | 1836 | F | B100436-E | Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Thales | 2138 | | D200443-9 | Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Tilburg | 1737 | | B6747BB-A | Ag Ga | | Solomani | G |
| Waal | 1834 | | A1008A5-E | Ht Na Va | | Solomani | |
| Zealand | 2034 | | C678699-8 | Ag Ga Ni | | | G |



Alpha Crucis

NEW HOLLAND SUBSECTOR

- Gas Giant
- Starport Class & Tech Level
- Other Naval Base
- Military Base/Garrison

- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- Red Zone
- X-Boat Route

- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Asteroid Belt
- Prison/Exile Camp

that has drawn in Confederation forces. The Brookwall Police Action, as the conflict is now known, wrecked the world's starport and crippled its economy. This has created something of an economic vacuum, with all manner of businesses and starship operators competing in an unregulated free-for all.

The Galloway Reach, lying to rimward of the New Holland-Galloway Main, is generally considered to be associated with Galloway despite the fact that most of its systems are within New Holland. It is the responsibility of naval ships based at Shockley, in Galloway, and rarely sees vessels from bases in New Holland. Likewise, the naval bases at Druze and Telgar support patrol operations on the local mains. The base at Terschelling houses patrol forces for the spinward side of the subsector whilst Burton is an under-used fleet base whose small force of destroyers and light carriers are committed to supporting the Brookwall Police Action.

BROOKWALL

Brookwall is a typical paraterraformed Selenite 'world city' whose linked domed structures cover most of the tiny gas giant moon they were built upon. The planet was well-integrated into Solomani Confederation society and at one time boasted a Class A starport. In 1099 it fell under the control of Tobias Zimmer, whose own writings had proclaimed the superiority of genetically-upgraded Solomani in general, and Selenites in particular, as the ultimate expression of the Solomani Cause.

After Zimmer and his followers achieved power on Brookwall they began attracting followers among the Solomani Parties on other Selenite worlds in the sector. Having been appointed to the Secretariat in 1104, Zimmer was on his way to Home when he was assassinated by a bodyguard. Many claimed that a SolSec or Church of the First Cross conspiracy was ultimately behind his death and anti-Confederation sentiment grew among the Zimmerists. Rioting followed and escalated into civil war between Zimmerists and anti-Zimmerists.

Fearing the rise of a pan-Selenite nationalist movement if the Zimmerists emerged victorious, the Secretary General and High Council declared an emergency and sent a peacekeeping force to Brookwall. Ostensibly neutral in the conflict, the force was instructed to ensure the Zimmerists did not win. However, in the event the Zimmerists played into the hands of the Secretariat. An attempt to prevent the landing of Confederation ground troops using Home Forces naval vessels under Zimmerist command was easily brushed aside and incidentally permitted the Confederation to declare the Zimmerist faction hostile.

No pretence of neutrality was now needed and the Brookwall Peacekeeping Deployment became the Brookwall Police Action. Suppressing the Zimmerists has been difficult, largely due to the nature of the terrain. The civil war has become a nasty insurgency, fought through the tunnels of Brookwall's underground cities. It is characterised by ambushes, sneak attacks and furious small-unit firefights.

The Confederation military has imposed an interim government made up of some local officials deemed trustworthy, plus many more administrators brought in from outside the conflict. It has not placed the system under military rule – not quite – but many aspects of martial law are in place. Whilst the Army concentrates on 'defence and protection', which often means rooting out insurgent strongholds, SolSec operatives are working to identify insurgents and their supporters. It is widely rumoured that SolSec is pursuing a campaign of intimidation and harassment towards civilian supporters of their insurgency.

CALDRON

The utopian society of the Caldron asteroid belt is in some ways one of the more invasive police states in the Solomani Confederation. It is also one of the strangest, for the only freedom its extreme Law Level restricts is the privacy of the individual. In other respects, such as controls of weapons, drugs or information, Caldron is



actually Law Level 1. Citizens and visitors are free to do as they wish so long as they do not violate Confederation law, although they must allow every other citizen full access to everything they do.

Every room in every asteroid habitat or Caldron-registered ship must have audio-visual feeds that are publicly accessible to data networks. Every citizen must be implanted from infancy with a neural comm monitor that allows any other citizen to tune in on them at all times. Even wearing clothing indoors is regarded with suspicion as nudity is the norm.

Society is based around gift-giving and the 'free' exchanges of favours, assistance and other services. However, people and organisations use computerised social networks to track and rate personal reputations, especially for reciprocal favours, socially-useful activity, gift giving and communal service. Those with negative ratings are ruthlessly excluded from participation in Caldron society, while respect for Solomani ideology and participation in the Party and politics are highly valued. Unusually for most modern Solomani Worlds, Party membership is close to 60% of all citizens. However, while Caldron's government is technically a participatory democracy, in practice the system is rigged and controlled by a secretive cabal descended from its original utopian founders. They have enough knowledge of the system to exploit holes and are the only ones with true privacy.

ELDRITCH

Eldritch is a prison planet for political undesirables, managed by the Ministry of Justice from a high-security orbital facility. All prisoners are sterilised and tagged with transmitters before being taken down to the surface. Security is moderate on the planet itself but very heavy at the starport. Most inmates live in agricultural prison-farm communes and prisoner gangs harvest the deep indigo-coloured local plants, some of which have commercially valuable pharmaceutical properties.

A high proportion of political dissidents from widely varying factions and races means most communes are dominated by feuding gangs who have strong racial and political ideologies. Non-ideological prisoners usually join these gangs if they wish to survive. Some prisoners have chosen to escape into the wild but this is rarely a viable option. Whilst no large predators exist, there are several deadly poisonous insects and only expert survivalists tend to last long. Also, an edible native fungi, if eaten raw, has toxic effects that induce a gradual but severe deterioration of the language and reasoning centres of the brain. This has given rise to stories of cannibalistic 'human apes' living in the wild.

Several hundred Zimmerist prisoners from Brookwall have been sent to Eldritch. They tend to adjust poorly to the higher gravity and rarely live long.

IJSSELMEER

Although designated a water world, Ijsselmeer in fact has a significant amount of land above sea level. Little of it is useful; the majority is steep-sided mountain-tops that see little erosion due to the thin atmosphere. They are undercut by sea currents; occasionally a mountain-top will tumble into the sea causing huge waves to race out in all directions. There is little for them to damage other than inundating the bare rock of surrounding peaks.

Ijsselmeer was settled by Dutch colonists from Terra, who made their homes in underwater cities. These were constructed on saddles between underwater peaks, creating safe 'islands' surrounded by deep ocean. Today there are two large cities and a scattering of smaller settlements, plus many independent tribes of Dolphins. Relations have generally been cordial despite a lack of formal government but the recent discovery of Zuchai crystals in the territory of a minor Dolphin tribe has raised tensions.

NARNIA

Narnia is an old Terran colony cut off during the Long Night. Its population managed to maintain a TL4 civilisation and have since advanced a little. Development was hampered by a lack of organisation and the difficulty of coordinating efforts between widely separated population clusters; a situation that continues to this day.

There are 17 distinct nations on Narnia, each located on an island group or small subcontinent with vast tracts of open ocean in between. Aquaculture is vital to the economy and most nations have extensive undersea petroleum industries focused on domestic consumption. The population is unusually peaceful, with a very low incidence of violence despite the crowded conditions and balkanised government.

Narnia was contacted in 640 and was on track to join the Imperium until Scout Service scientists began noticing the unusual relationship between the world's colonists and a native animal, the furry winged mouse-like reep. Ostensibly house pets that controlled native vermin, every single Narnian had a reep as a pet, which was treated with great affection; natives refused to be separated from them and became agitated and angry without them. Further research revealed that 98% of the population was infected by a native parasitic protozoa, *Exoplasma Narnia* that was spread by the reeps and

also transmitted by mothers to children. It produced neurological changes in host brains so they became addicted to their pets and also became more sociable, peaceful, even sensual.

The accidental addiction of several scouts and traders led to the Imperium Red Zoning Narnia to prevent the

spread of the reep parasite. The Solomani Confederation has maintained the interdiction. Despite this, on a few occasions blockade-running smugglers have accidentally or deliberately transported reeps or infected people offworld. The Confederation Navy, Ministry of Genetics and SolSec have acted ruthlessly to contain and eradicate all such outbreaks and punish those responsible.

REEP

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|-----------|---------------------------------|-------|
| Reep | 1 | 6m |
| SKILLS | Recon 1 | |
| ATTACKS | Tiny nip, adorably angry squeak | |
| TRAITS | Small (-4) | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Carnivore, Pouncer | |

Reep

The Narnian reep was undoubtedly named by the same fan of ancient Terran fantasy fiction as the world it inhabits. It is a small, cute and apparently harmless creature which lives on a diet of smaller nuisance creatures such as the stinging fersepede. Even when killing something the reep manages to be adorable; standing up on its hind legs to sniff out its prey then launching itself into the air for a strike from above. Reeps never bite humans, make themselves useful and take little looking after. They are the perfect pets and would be popular even if they did not infect their owners with mind-controlling parasites.

Reep Parasite

The reep parasite, or *Exoplasma Narnia*, only reproduces in the reep but can infect most warm-blooded species. It produces no symptoms in most people, other than a strong emotional connection with infected reeps. Infected individuals who are separated from their reeps display heightened aggression and impaired judgement, leading to risk-taking behaviour and hostility towards others.

It is not clear how, or even if, the reep and its associated parasite may be connected to the generally peaceable and friendly society on Narnia. In all probability the parasite produces a calming effect and proximity to an infected reep is pleasant; the combination of social and chemical factors makes Narnians more content than they otherwise would be.

The reep parasite is not a disease in the conventional sense. A Traveller is either infected or they are not and once infected they will remain so. Treatment is lengthy



but not difficult; any TL10+ hospital can deliver a course of treatment lasting several weeks, with near-certainty of eliminating the parasite. Without such treatment the Traveller will not eliminate the parasites from their system but can only infect any reeps they may encounter. Those reeps may infect other humans thereafter.

The END check is made to avoid infestation during a period where the Traveller is significantly exposed to reeps. A fleeting contact is unlikely to result in infestation, so the Referee may apply a DM or waive the check. A Traveller who passes the check is then immune to infestation until the end of the Interval period. The parasite does not cause any damage but anyone who is infected and deprived of a reep's companionship suffers DM-2 on all interpersonal actions – diplomacy, bargaining and the like – unless they would actually benefit from being irritable.

| Disease | END check Difficulty | Damage | Interval |
|---------------|----------------------|--------|----------|
| Reep Parasite | Routine (6+) | N/A | 2D days |

SUBSECTOR GALLOWAY

Galloway contains 26 worlds, all lying within the borders of the Solomani Confederation but some are not members. Five of these worlds belong to the neutral Commonwealth of Gadjick, a state with poor relations to the Confederation. The Confederation enforces a limited trade embargo with Gadjick, restricting sale of TL11+ weapons and industrial products. There are also five independent non-aligned worlds and the remaining 16 are Confederation member states.

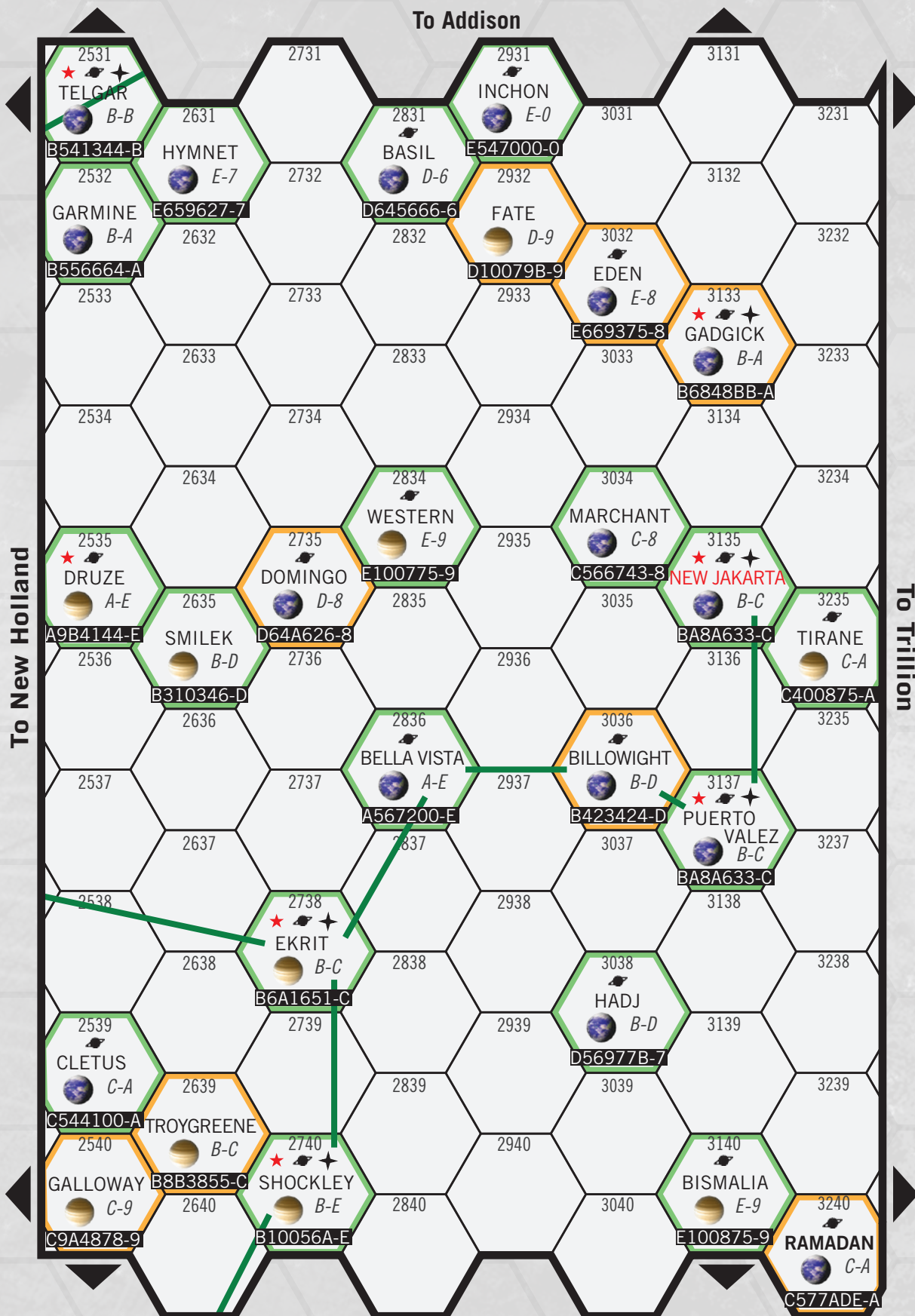
The earliest colonists arrived during the Rule of Man era, including Terran émigrés from Islamic nations in Europe and Asia-Pacific. However, Galloway remained a backwater until the 1020s, when a new communications route was established. Central investment in starports attracted trade to the region, mainly along the jump-2 route leading away to trailing through neighbouring the Trillion subsector.

| Name | Location | Bases | Statistics | Trade Codes | Travel Code | Allegiance | Gas Giants |
|--------------|----------|-------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Basil | 2831 | | D645666-6 | Ag Ga Ni | | | G |
| Bella Vista | 2836 | | A567200-E | Ga Ht Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Billowight | 3036 | | B423424-D | Ht Ni Po | A | Solomani | G |
| Bismalia | 3140 | | E100875-9 | Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Cletus | 2539 | | C544100-A | Ga Lo | | Solomani | G |
| Domingo | 2735 | | D64A626-8 | Ni Wa | A | Solomani | G |
| Druze | 2535 | F | A9B4144-E | FI Ht Lo | | | G |
| Eden | 3032 | | E669375-8 | Lo | A | | G |
| Ekrit | 2738 | F | B6A1651-C | FI Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Fate | 2932 | | D10079B-9 | Na Va | | | |
| Gadjick | 3133 | F | B6848BB-A | Ga Ri | | | G |
| Galloway | 2540 | | C9A4878-9 | FI | A | Solomani | G |
| Garmine | 2532 | | B556664-A | Ag Ga Ni | | | |
| Hadj | 3038 | | D56977B-7 | Ri | | | G |
| Hymnet | 2631 | | E659627-7 | Ni | | Solomani | |
| Inchon | 2931 | | E547000-0 | Ba Ga Lt | | | |
| Marchant | 3034 | | C566743-8 | Ag Ga Ri | | Solomani | |
| New Jakarta | 3135 | F | BA8A633-C | Ht Ni Ri Wa | | Solomani | G |
| Puertovaldez | 3137 | F | A561500-E | Ht Ni | | Solomani | G |
| Ramadan | 3240 | | C577ADE-A | Ga Hi In | | Solomani | G |
| Shockley | 2740 | F | B10056A-E | Ht Ni Va | | Solomani | G |
| Smilek | 2635 | | B310346-D | Ht Lo | | | |
| Telgar | 2531 | F | B541344-B | Lo Po | | Solomani | G |
| Tirane | 3235 | | C400875-A | Na Va | | Solomani | G |
| Troygreene | 2639 | | B8B3855-C | FI Ht | A | | |
| Westen | 2834 | | E100775-9 | Na Va | | Solomani | G |

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Alpha Crucis

GALLOWAY SUBSECTOR



- Gas Giant
- Planet (dry)
- Planet (water present)
- Starport Class & Tech Level
- Secure System
- Amber Zone
- X-Boat Route
- Military Base/Garrison

Despite most of its worlds lying in New Holland, the Galloway Reach is considered to be associated with the Galloway subsector itself. This reflects a looser attitude to lines on the map in Confederation space to the Imperium, where a subsector border is considered more important than an economic or local-political region. The Reach is an important jump-2 link to Newworld, to rimward, and also one of the routes into Spica. The other is by way of the New Holland-Galloway Main, with both converging at Bella Vista. Alternative routes are available but going through Bella Vista avoids low-quality starports. This has brought a great deal of trade into Bella Vista; sufficient that it is one of the few locations where traders from the Hive Federation can reliably be found.

The coreward end of the subsector is considered hazardous for Confederation traders, although conditions can vary depending on relations with the Commonwealth of Gadjick. Not surprisingly, the naval bases of Galloway subsector have an enlarged complement of patrol vessels and a fleet deployment is maintained on a near-constant basis. This is usually several destroyer groups and a few cruisers, though it is not uncommon to see a capital ship and escorts prowling the systems near Commonwealth space as a broad hint that Gadjick is seriously outgunned by the Solomani Confederation.

BELLA VISTA

Bella Vista appears at first glance to be a lovely garden world ripe for settlement. In reality it is a nightmarish hell-world full of death-traps. The diverse flora and fauna are, almost without exception, highly toxic to Humanity. Almost every form of life is poisonous to one degree or another and even many grasses and flowers induce lethal allergic reactions in anyone who breathes their pollen. Despite this, Bella Vista is very beautiful and has become popular for adventure safaris, while its strategic location has resulted in the construction of a sizable orbital highport. It has also attracted collectors of rare and deadly exotic animals or plants.

SolChem has a large bioresearch facility on Bella Vista. Most of its operations involve extracting pharmaceutical products from native life forms. It is also developing a wide variety of drugs that would protect future colonists against the most common native toxins. Most of those passing through the highport care little for this of course; they have either come to trade in the vibrant markets or are on their way somewhere. Wise Travellers heed the discreet warning notices scattered throughout all information sources, however, since occasionally something toxic is accidentally brought up from the planetary surface. These hazards are almost always caught by careful screening at points of entry but 'almost' is a dangerous word somewhere like Bella Vista.

Ways to Die on Bella Vista

The very air is dangerous on this world, as it carries a variety of toxic pollens. The worst of these occur in the springtime, when hundreds of plant species release a lethal cocktail of particles. In spring, DM-2 is applied to the check to avoid intoxication, which assumes the Traveller is taking sensible precautions. Someone who just wanders outside with no protection will die for certain. Those who use a filter mask should be safe enough providing they follow careful decontamination procedures upon re-entering a safe area. Mistakes can be personally fatal and may result in others receiving indirect exposure.

| Disease | END check Difficulty | Damage | Interval |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---------------|
| Bella Vista Pollen (direct exposure) | Difficult (10+) | 1D | 1D minutes |
| Bella Vista Pollen (basic protection) | Routine (6+) | 1D | 3D minutes |
| Bella Vista Pollen (indirect exposure) | Easy (4+) | 1D | 5D minutes |

DRUZE

Druze is the 'homeworld' of Druze Chemicals Incorporated, which maintains an extraction and processing plant on the surface but operates out of the starport. The world is officially listed as non-aligned as it has no formal government to which Confederation membership could be granted. In reality, the entire system is a Confederation protectorate, governed when necessary by an assigned officer at the naval base.

Druze naval base exists primarily to support operations on the New Holland-Galloway Main. It is a small facility, totally unprepared for the influx of vessels supporting the Brookwall Police Action. As a result, naval operations have spilled out into the highport, creating a security problem for the navy and endless headaches for the port's operators.

The Port of Druze was set up by an independent consortium as a home base for companies like Druze Chemicals and houses several large business groups. It is also the home port for a great many merchant ships and made much of its profits from refits and new construction. At present more than half the repair and maintenance capacity is on contract to the Confederation Navy. This brings in large amounts of money as a result of 'government contract pricing structures' and it means that independent ship operators are having to wait for refit and maintenance slots. In the long term the 'navy boom' may cause serious harm to the Port of Druze economy.

SQUELCH

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|-----------|------------------------|-------|
| Squelch | 2 | 1m |
| SKILLS | N/A | |
| ATTACKS | Spines (1D) plus venom | |
| TRAITS | Small (-4) | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Carnivore, Reducer | |

Squelch

One of the nastiest, or at least the most gross, hazards is the squelch. This 'slug-worm' creature is about 10 centimetres long and is named for the sound it makes when stepped on. Squelches have an internal structure made up of bony spines, causing them to act like nature's caltrop. A squelched squelch does 1D damage to a Traveller's foot. Ordinary footwear is worth Protection 1–2, good boots are worth Protection 4. If the damage dealt exceeds this armour the Traveller has impaled their foot on a squishy mass of squelch... which is toxic. For each point of damage that gets through footwear, the Traveller takes 2D damage from a cocktail of toxins. Someone who grabs a squelch or sits on one must apply damage against whatever armour they have on the contact area.



SPITSTAG

| ANIMAL | HITS | SPEED |
|-----------|---------------------------|-------|
| Spitstag | 18 | 6m |
| SKILLS | Gun Combat (natural) 1 | |
| ATTACKS | Spit (1D, 2D if eyes hit) | |
| TRAITS | Poison (see description) | |
| BEHAVIOUR | Herbivore, Grazer | |

Spitstag

Among the creatures prized by hunters is Marigen's pseudo-venomous grazer, better known as a 'spitstag'. Spitstags have a vaguely deer-like body with a small head atop a snake-like neck. They are covered in iridescent scales that are quite beautiful, although the animal itself is considered rather unattractive by

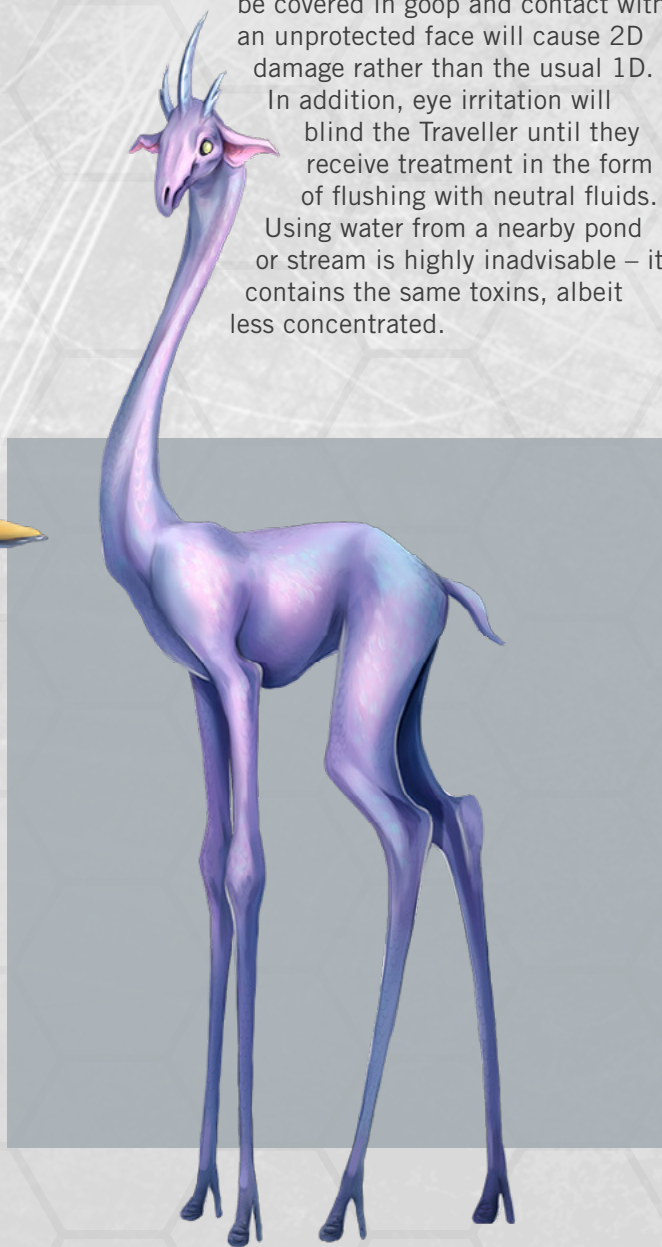
most observers. Spitstags travel in herds of up to 50 individuals, grazing on bushes and ground vegetation. In so doing they take up large quantities of toxins, which make their spit highly dangerous to humans. Spitstags react to threats by either fleeing or spitting; sometimes a whole herd will spit nasty gobbets of toxic goop at a human who gets too close.

It is not clear whether these creatures know their spit is toxic or whether they simply spit out of spite but either way their aim is good. Contact with skin causes blistering, doing 1D damage; tough outdoor clothing will act as Protection 2 against this damage but will need to be carefully removed and cleaned to avoid secondary contact. Spitstags will spit at the eyes of a threatening creature, which may mean goggles become covered in goo. On a straight 12 on an attack roll, the Traveller has been hit in the face. Eye protection will

be covered in goop and contact with an unprotected face will cause 2D damage rather than the usual 1D.

In addition, eye irritation will blind the Traveller until they receive treatment in the form of flushing with neutral fluids.

Using water from a nearby pond or stream is highly inadvisable – it contains the same toxins, albeit less concentrated.





GADJICK

Gadjick dominates the Commonwealth of Gadjick, a small pocket empire founded by independent Solomani of Asian and Pacific ancestry. While anti-Imperial, Gadjick's population never accepted the Charter of the Solomani Confederation or the absolute primacy of the Solomani Party. Despite this, Gadjick succumbed to pressure to provide a volunteer military contingent in support of the Confederation during the Solomani Rim War. The high losses they suffered, and the Confederation's own defeat, triggered a purge of Solomani Party influences and a rising tide of Gadjick nationalism.

Once a democratic republic, the constant struggle against Solomani Party and SolSec subversion has transformed Gadjick into a police state as ruthless as any within the Confederation. In 1086 Gadjick fought and lost a limited war with the Confederation over its control of Duni and was forced to sign a humiliating peace treaty. The current dictator relies on anti-Confederation rhetoric to justify repressive

policies and uses his large military and police forces to enforce them. The Solomani Freedom Party and the Solomani Party form two distinct blocs of illegal dissidents on Gadjick and the worlds under its control; the Freedom Party seeks a return to democratic ideals while the Solomani Party itself wants unification with the Confederation.

HADJ

The garden world of Hadj was colonised by Islamic settlers early during the Rule of Man era. During the Long Night its society gradually collapsed to TL3 levels and splintered into feuding nation-states. The world was contacted by traders from the Islamic High Republic in 502 and has spent the last half-millennium slowly climbing back to a TL7 pre-stellar civilisation. Today, its major nations are the Federation of Osmani and the Solomani Islamic Republic, rivals of one another. The governments of New Jakarta and Ramadan frequently attempt to intercede and influence affairs on Hadji through economic aid, cultural missions and arms sales.

ADVENTURES IN THE SOLOMANI FRONT

The Solomani Front region is not a 'wild frontier' of unknown worlds waiting to be explored. This does not mean it is impossible to run an exploration-and-discovery campaign in the area but rather than exploring great swathes of territory and being the first to see wonders, the Travellers are likely to be exploring a backwater world or an area bypassed by previous expeditions. With high-population worlds nearby, the Travellers will rarely be far from help – or consequences, depending on their actions.

The Solomani Front has other kinds of frontiers; a meeting of two great powers and regions subject to influence from small neutrals. The two major power blocs are not monolithic, of course. Internal politics in both can be complex, especially where political figures try to use external events to their advantage in the internal arena. This happened repeatedly, in many forms, during the Interstellar Wars. Had the Vilani Imperium's officials maintained a more outward-looking mindset they might have done what it took to crush the upstart Terrans. Instead they complacently assumed that would happen and concentrated on the effects on their career, the local economy and other internal matters.

The opposite can also happen; a short and glorious war might be just the thing to alter the internal political landscape or to give a political figure an advantage over their rival. It is entirely possible that all-out war between the Solomani Confederation and the Third Imperium might come about as a result of a minor internal powerplay. Neither great power wants a war but some political figures on each side are willing to risk one in order to get what they want – which might have nothing to do with defeating the other power.

Depending on the circumstances at the time, the overall political situation between the Imperium and the Confederation might be anything from friendly with some tension to a serious war scare – and the level of tension can vary at different points along the frontier.

If the Travellers are moving quickly they may find themselves going from a peacetime environment to one in which political figures are posturing and rattling their sabres... and the folks 10 parsecs away do not yet know about it.

The all-out war scenario is possible but a conflict between two major powers will have a significant effect on the history of Charted Space. It will also change the setting in major ways, so should not be entered into without careful forethought by the Referee. If a war scenario does seem attractive, there will be a period of building tension and the chance for some tense pre-war adventures before conflict explodes – unless the Referee wants to launch a new campaign against the backdrop of a major conflict. It is important to keep in mind that once there is a war on, there is a war on. The whole setting will be affected.

Short of a war scenario, tension and incidents that might lead to one will provide endless adventure ideas. Perhaps pro-war militants intend to attack an Imperial diplomatic mission in the hope of provoking a conflict, or the leaders of a wavering world need to be persuaded not to petition to join the other major power – but without taking overt action that might escalate the situation. The need to avert a conflict is a powerful motivating factor for Travellers and their patrons, and reckless actions by the Travellers themselves might bring the region right to the brink of war.

Whether or not the Referee wants to go down the open-warfare route, the Solomani Front lends itself to many styles of adventure and campaign.

IN THE NAVY

A naval campaign revolves around naval Travellers, although members of other services may be involved too along with civilian specialists. A 'straight' naval campaign can be run using the *Naval Campaigns*

Handbook in the *Element Class Cruisers* box set, with the Travellers crewing a small or medium-sized warship. They may have to be diplomats more often than warriors, defusing situations on the worlds they visit and resolving problems using less force than they would like. A naval campaign gives the Travellers considerable power – especially if they are in charge of a cruiser or carrier – but subjects them to tight control and scrutiny. Loose cannons will be quickly removed from a situation where they could cause a major conflict... unless of course the powers that be are relying on them to stir the pot.

A naval campaign might revolve around the command crew of a Solomani warship, including the Political Officer who acts as a 'second captain' and can veto any order. A good partnership can be highly effective, whereas a captain and political officer who are at odds can derail the simplest mission. If the Travellers want to do some fighting, there are plenty of opportunities that do not involve starting a war with the Imperium. There are numerous neutral powers and the possibility of internal revolt as well as the usual pirates and smugglers to deal with.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

Just as with naval campaigns there are plenty of opportunities for military and mercenary operations within the Solomani Front. In such a large area it is inevitable there will be major conflicts ongoing at any time. Travellers with a taste for straight combat operations can find plenty to do but there are other options besides. Both the Imperium and Confederation are quite willing to use deniable assets to hamper one another and there are many factions, corporations and noble houses that do the same. Travellers operating a large mercenary force will generally be hired for overt operations – it is quite hard to smuggle an armoured division onto a planet and off again – but small units may find themselves involved in covert missions.

A military or mercenary campaign might focus on people at the sharp end of policy decisions. A mercenary unit suddenly disavowed and stranded in hostile territory might have many adventures on its way to safety. Likewise, a small team of mercenaries might be called upon to clean up the loose ends after peace has broken out, quietly eliminating support for a renewed conflict by any means necessary. A variant on this might be a SolSec troubleshooting team dealing with threats to internal or external security. That might mean arresting a prominent or popular politician with the minimum of fallout or tackling a heavily armed crime gang that has political connections.

STARTING FIRES

A SolSec or covert military force could be used to cause trouble rather than heading it off but stirring the pot is also the province of rabble-rousers, saboteurs, militants and assorted other troublemakers. This might be for noble reasons, such as a justified campaign against oppression by a government or a corporate body – or an attempt to destabilise worlds belonging to another major power. Less patriotic reasons for causing a ruckus include pushing an agenda such as Solomani racial purity. This is potentially awkward territory, however. A campaign of harassment against members of a particular racial group or those that accept them may wander into unpleasant territory. Whilst it might be an interesting experience to play a group of militant racist haters, these Travellers would most definitely be the villains of their campaign rather than the heroes.

A more wholesome version of this concept could still raise some difficult questions. There is a point where insurgency becomes terrorism; the use of fear for a political end. Travellers who valiantly carry on the resistance to Imperial occupation with an insurgent movement and political agitation can be seen as heroes by one side at least; those who murder civilians to make their point are terrorists. To put that another way: sabotaging starport docks to cause economic damage is a legitimate act of resistance but blowing up a liner full of innocent people is terrorism. Travellers who want to fight a 'clean' insurgency may have to deal with allies who will do anything to further their cause – and indeed those who are willing to resort to terrorism may have their own side turn on them. They will also be high-priority targets for the intelligence and security services.

MERCHANT SHIPPING

In a civilised region like the Solomani Front there are many powerful economies and hungry markets between them. Money can be made on commercial freighting between the major ports but the larger shipping firms command the bulk of the marketplace. Speculative trade along these routes tends to produce relatively poor results since there are centuries of data available about supply and demand. Merchant lines typically employ a commercial intelligence staff to monitor trends and predict shifts in their patterns of trade. Those relying on publicly available data or intuition tend to arrive just after an expanding market has been glutted by the big players.

As elsewhere, smaller ship operators typically feed off the scraps left behind by the superfreighters. That can still be a significant amount of cargo by the standards of a 400-ton trader but there are other opportunities for

small ships. The commercial intelligence divisions of the big shipping lines may operate a fleet of small traders but they are also willing to hire independent spacers to test out the local market. This may mean offering the independent a low price on certain goods in order to gauge the reaction of whatever market they sell in or simply paying a small subsidy in return for a regular flow of information on market conditions.

Opportunities for smaller ship operators are better in the backwaters. The big lines tend to operate between the busiest ports, with vessels shifted to serve mid-sized markets if conditions seem favourable. The ships used by these companies are optimised for high-bulk operations and are not as profitable on the smaller routes. That is not to say these routes are unviable but the major shipping firms go where the most money is to be made.

THE SOLOMANI FRONT CAMPAIGN

All of these elements can feature in a Solomani Front campaign, whether the Travellers are crewing a naval cruiser or slinking about the backstreets dodging SolSec patrols. Politics and military operations cost money, which comes at least in part from interstellar trade. Political operations might be directed at improving trade or weakening another group by harming their interstellar commerce. A local war might be fought over control of trade or economic assets and can harm the local economy whilst causing a boom in arms sales. These factors all interplay with one another and are further complicated by the cross-cutting agendas of the local factions and powers.

A campaign in the Solomani Front will be set against this complex backdrop and it may seem that a typical band of Travellers has little chance of making a real difference. This is not necessarily so, however. A group of Travellers is unlikely to wrest Terra away from the Imperium but they might manage to induce a border world to change allegiance, with much effort. The Travellers could of course take whatever jobs are on offer but if they have an agenda of their own they might instead generate their own adventures.

The Travellers might have a cause they want to work towards or they may be befriended by advocates of one. This will require the Travellers to start asking if they should take a given job or not. Will this action advance their cause or hinder it? Once the Travellers start thinking like this they have become players in the complex game of Solomani Front politics.

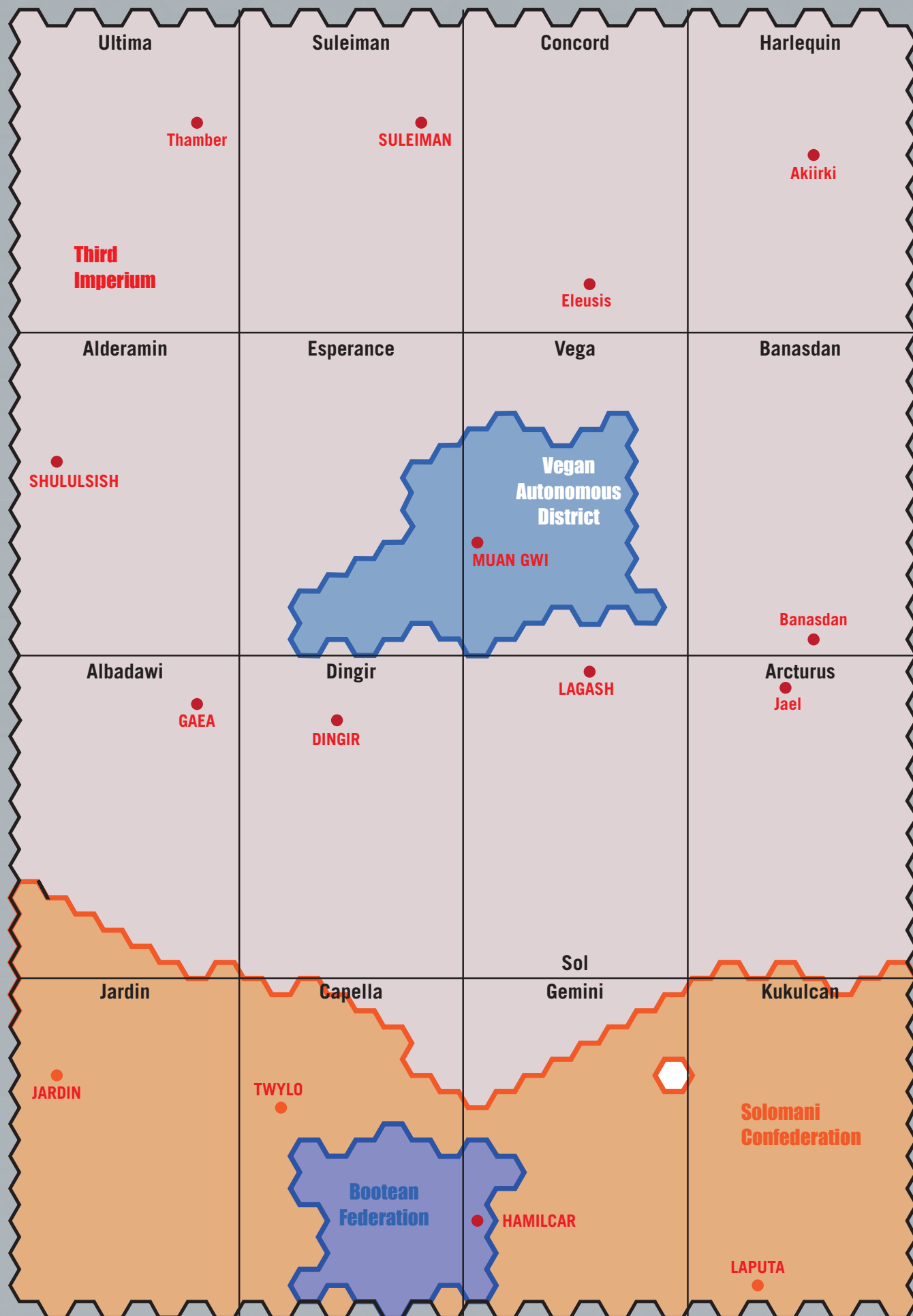
There is much the Travellers can do at the grassroots level, some of it direct and some subtle. Their willingness to smuggle guns to a struggling rebellion might keep it alive, which in turn disrupts the construction of a new starport. The corporation building the port has a great deal of its capital tied up in the project. If it fails to deliver on time, it may go out of business. The resulting market gap creates new opportunities for the Travellers and their allies, and so it goes on.

The Travellers might also become inspirational figures to one or more faction – whether they like it or not. Indeed, the Travellers might find themselves in trouble with SolSec through no fault of their own. A high-profile action might have the unintended effect of inspiring protestors or causes a few more insurgents to rally to the cause. The first thing the Travellers know about it is when they are surrounded by a heavily armed SolSec arrest-and-investigate detachment, who want to know what the Travellers' connection to that faction might be.

Not everything has to be political, of course. There is plenty of room for typical Traveller adventures, especially on backwater planets or the dark recesses of overcrowded cities on a high-population world. Some of the less developed planets in Alpha Crucis contain unexpected dangers and opportunities. After the murky politics of the more civilised regions, an old-fashioned scramble through the jungle or search for a downed vessel on some remote moon may be a welcome change. A campaign set in the Solomani Front offers the chance to see the sights of Old Earth and the pageantry of a Rim War memorial event. From there the Travellers can head out into the backwaters to join rebels – or crush them – or subtly manipulate the interstellar shipping marketplace to weaken their rivals.

There are opportunities at every level; it is up to the Travellers to find and exploit them.







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TRAVELLER

SOLOMANI FRONT

The scene of bitter fighting in the Solomani Rim War, tensions still run high in the Solomani Front. In the Solomani Rim, hard-liners agitate for a campaign to retake Terra from the Imperials whilst dissidents plot secession from the Solomani Confederation. In Alpha Crucis, independent worlds seek to chart their own course despite interference from the Confederation.

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MGP 40051

ISBN 978-1-913076-39-9



US \$59.99