SKYMARSHAL 11

The Armageddon War

Chapter 22

The attack through the Rajasthan warp point came suddenly and was devastating. The Pan-Sentient Navy (PSU) had only a few dozen warships picketing the entry to the Gujarat System and the war against the Hre'Daak had gone catastrophically wrong: nearly every single capital warship pin the Beijing Chain had been destroyed in recent fighting. Senior admirals worried that soon half the human galaxy would end up an ecological or radioactive or nova seared waste because of the genocidal efforts of the Hre'Daak and their overwhelmingly advanced weaponry.

The two dozen PSU heavy cruisers and destroyers guarding the warp point couldn't stop the nearly three hundred transphase pods that the Hre'Daak launched unexpectedly through the warp point. Not even the enormous (and only slightly mobile) Ian warstation that stood defensive picket nor the three dozen advanced Melfan gunboats could stop the enemy onslaught that suddenly materialized without warning. The Hre'Daak pods went for the largest ships, phasing in and out of reality while firing their deadly weapons, covering the sun-destroying phase torpedo that the defenders had missed during the initial attack. To the Hre'Daak, the attack on the ships was unimportant; the nova bomb weapon had gotten through and streaked towards the Gujarat sun. It would arrive in a mere 6 hours, starting a deadly chain reaction within it that would devastate the system and kill off all its defenders and their warships. The torpedo raced away from the fighting at high speed, undetected and all alone...

Back at the warp point, the brutal fight continued. The stupendous Ian warstation, ten times larger than a standard battlecruiser, bristled with supremely powerful weapons. Being an ancient race, the firepower of the Ian warstation was literally unthinkable; enough to destroy an entire solar system completely by itself if necessary. The Ians were also a newly discovered race that had offered to help humanity in its most desperate hour against an unstoppable enemy, bringing their Melfan client race to the fight as well. But the Hre'Daak were even much older than the Ians, and the Ians had never discovered transphase weaponry and thus had no defense against it. When the Hre'Daak battlepods made their final attack run against the warstation, it fought back valiantly and viciously: incredibly destructive beams of antimatter swept the perimeter, destroying several dozen battlepods as they phased back into our reality from wherever they had been hiding. Nearly three dozen more were suddenly swallowed up by the two singularity points the warstation fired for nothing could withstand the powerful drag of a naked micro-black hole. But then it was the Hre'Daaks' turn to fire and transphase beam lashed out at the defenders, passing instantly through both shields and armor and cutting deep into the interior of the immense Ian warstation. Caught by the beams, hundreds of living Ians disappeared into another realm, a vacuum realm that is soundless and filled with untamed energy. There they instantly died by the scores, floating in a strange sub-universe, never to be seen again. The warstation was pounded by dozens of gigaton antimatter warheads as well and finally died, taking several defending PSU warships with it in the massive explosion that could be seen for a trillion miles. The Hre'Daak battlepods quickly turned on the other defenders and in a few moments only two fifth-generation Melfan gunboats remained, both screaming away at incredible speeds to the safety of the inner system and away from the newly occupied enemy warp point.

More coming…

The Poorgl

HISTORY

The Poorgl race (also known as “the Gumby People” by humans) are a remarkable race who have grown from a single world into a vast interstellar group of planets under the leadership of the bat-like Crucian race who lead the Crucian Union. The early history of the Poorgl was pastoral and when their scientific prowess grew enough to look out at the planets of their solar system, they discovered they inhabited a small Earth-like moon orbiting a gas giant. Two of the innermost planets in the system were also habitable! No radio emissions or other transmissions of any kind were picked up by the Poorgl in their home system. Eventually they surveyed both of the inner worlds and were shocked to find them inhabited by two different alien species. Both of these races (the Ku and the Pu) were “low tech” and the Poorgl decided on a strict non-intercourse policy for both races. The Poorgl believed that this would allow them to grow and “evolve” in their own way, without outside influence. The discovery of alien races fueled the exploratory nature of the Poorgl, and they reached out to the stars within 20 years of launching their first spacecraft, finding a warp point to their second star system: Plyrana. It was in this system that the Poorgl discovered the Crucians, who were “merely passing through”. Contact went well between the two races and the Poorgl agreed to join the Union shortly thereafter. Under the protection and guidance of the Crucians, the Poorgl now make up nearly 20% of the Unions total population and they have vigorously supported the ongoing campaign against “the Bugs”. They did not, however, support humanity during the Armageddon War and the Union itself has closed its borders to outsiders even before that devastating war ended.

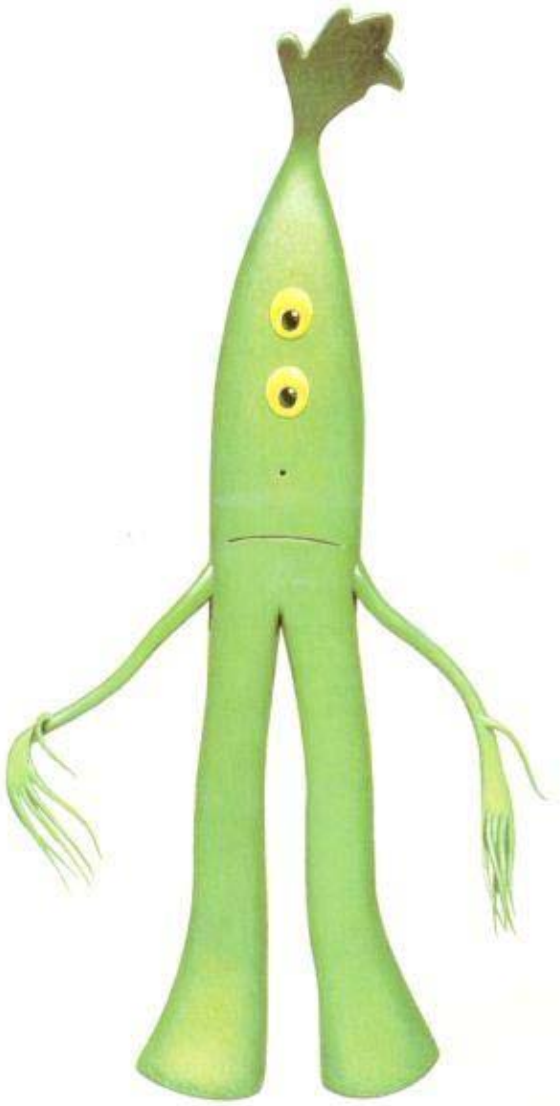
HABITAT

The homeworld of the Poorgl is a small Earth-like moon that orbits a gas giant. Room for expansion within their solar system was blocked by the discovery of two other low-tech races so the Poorgl have always been very expansionistic in their outlook, colonizing T and ST worlds with ease. Poorgl can survive atmospheric pressures and various different atmosphere types that would kill a normal human so their colonization range of worlds is much higher than most races, although they prefer jungle-type worlds when given the chance. The only known Poorgl world near human space is the Yuillip System at the edge of the Fringe border nearby Qatral.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Since the Poorgl's homeworld is a Earth-like moon orbiting a nearby gas giant, the Gumby people have been continually bombarded by the gas giants' radiation, thus they are immune to most forms of radiation. Being a plant-based lifeform, the Poorgl have a wider range of survivability than most other races; heat that would kill a human are only a minor inconvenience to Poorgl, atmosphere poisonous to most races only slightly bothers the Poorgl (who only have to breathe once every few minutes if necessary). They make excellent diplomats to non-humanoid races since their way of thinking of very flexible and they can adapt to new languages very easily. They have various abilities, including the ones listed below:

Expert linguists
Odorless
Plant based
Racial Salesmen
Radiation Immune



RACIAL STATS
The Poorgl are a fairly friendly race, with a low racial chauvinism (31 out of 100). They are a average determined people as well (RD49). They also have a low militancy (RM34). Their psychology in protecting the Ku and the Pu shows great compassion towards other races and the Poorgl have gotten along well with most other Union races, except the Tygokor whom they dislike for their destructive war-like natures.

SOCIETY
Poorgl society is unique in that it in incredibly fluid, adapting from one situation to another very easily. Inactions with other races is easy for the Poorgl. Their over-all society is freedom-based and they despise coercive governments with a passion and strongly believe in the capitalist processes in their economy. Individual rights are also strongly protected within their laws and government. The Poorgl have allowed the Crucians to take the lead in diplomatic affairs and are comfortable with their secondary (but prominent role) within the diplomatic corps of the Union. Their linguistic skills and salesmen-like manners make them excellent friends, allies, and diplomats of those friends and allies.

Overall, Poorgl society is very compassionate and giving, and stranger-friendly. This is probably because of the low population of most of their worlds; Poorgl breed slowly. Greeting strangers is a very important part of Poorgl society, one of the most critical aspects of this race. They even have a half dozen words relating to the greeting of a guest (several are listed below as examples):

Namus
Namus (nah-MOOS), meaning "support" or the "ability to give", lies at the heart of the unwritten moral code of the Poorgl people. A person with *namus* is generous, reliable, affable, compassionate, and conscientious. For any Poorgl, *namus* is an ideal to pursue and a concept that forms the cornerstone of family and community life.

Poorgl have always treated marriage with the utmost seriousness. Traditionally, young people do not leave their parents him before they get married.

Yag
Yag' (YAKH), or masculinity, is a concept that stands at the core of the ethical code of Poorgl men. This notion comprises courage, fortitude, and diligence. A man is not expected to complain about thirst and hunger, cold and heat. He is also not allowed to show signs of tiredness when talking to an elder. A man is also discouraged from showing his fear.

The elderly are accorded a special place in society. They are the first to be served food and the first to speak. Their advice is considered of the utmost importance and is usually heeded by those seeking council and direction.

Mealtimes and Table Manners
Mealtimes on Poorgl are social events. Food and drink seem to be secondary---it is the people that matter most. Certain table manners are important to known before visiting Poorgl. Because Poorgl love guests, an outsider is offered food as soon as he or she enters the house. Poorgl view the serving of guests as an honor. Drunkenness is commonplace.

As one popular Poorgl expression states, "Even if a guest comes unexpectedly, he is never unexpected, because we are waiting for a guest always, every day, every hour, and every minute." With such a sentiment it comes as no surprise that hospitality and the ability to be a welcoming and gracious host are values highly prized in Poorgl society. The best bed, the best food, and the best seats at the table are reserved for the guests. Moreover, is a guest expresses his or her fondness for an object in the house, he or she is typically given it as a present. On Poorgl, a special term exists to describe a guest--*kounakh* (koo NAKH). A traveler of any origin and religious background, no matter whether he or she comes from a friendly community or a rival faction, a *kounakh* is always received with the highest honor and dignity. He or she is unquestioningly offered an overnight stay, food, and personal safety; and the visitor's belongings are always ensured protection. A *kounakh* maintains close contacts with the family, and if he stays repeatedly at the same house, he becomes an honorary *kounakh*. Such a person then has the opportunity to become even closer than a family member. An honorary *kounakh* is invited to the most important family events and participates in making important decisions. Choosing to stay overnight with other people subsequently becomes an insult to the host family.

NEW TECH

Inter-System Anti-Matter Missile (ISAMM): The Inter-System Anti-Matter Missile (or ISAMM for short) is also formally known as the Minuteman X and is the last in its class of planetary defense missiles. Max range 15 system hexes, speed 12, cost 500 MCr csp size 1,000, damage: heavy antimatter, 150 pts of damage.

Survey Drone, First Generation (DroneR1): The long-range survey drone (DroneR1) was developed at the Novi Said Technical Center in 2260 for use onboard human vessels, primarily research and survey craft. Mounted on an XO rack because of its large size, the DroneR1 can travel up to 20 star systems away, delivering messages and surveying new star systems far more effectively than its predecessors. Endurance is 30 days, cost is 90Mcr, size is 50 csp, dev cost 15,000.

Survey Drone, Second Generation (DroneR2): Fired from internal missile launchers, missile tubes, or drone launchers the DroneR2 is a more capable version of the first generation survey drone, with 50% more endurance and computer capability. The DroneR2 can also be used my military vessels as a scouting force by tying its sensors into a warship. This capability was developed on the fly during the outbreak of the Armageddon War. The DroneR2 cost 50Mcr, is 5 csp in size, and costs 20,000 to develop.

Survey Drone, Third Generation (DroneR3): This version of the survey drone was developed after the Armageddon War by the Fringe for long-range surveying and to watch for Hre'Daak movements along the entire border region. The DroneR3 is a long-endurance sensor that can literally wait for years before it must be recharged. It is semi-intelligent and can be tied directly into a military warships computer net to add additional range to any friendly vessel. DroneR3 can land and take off from planetary atmospheres, making them popular with many star nations survey commands. In the Federation and the League, the DroneR3 has completely replaced the survey shuttles of those nations. They can also launch survey micro-sats and guidance beacons as well, making them very valuable to most planets and commercial corporations seeking to expand travel routes within known space. The DroneR3 can be fired from most internal launchers (like Rca and Wca) costs 175CMcr each, is 8 csp in size and is 30,000 to develop.

Defenses of the Terran Federation: “The Line”

For an interstellar empire spanning more than 1,500 light years to have "border defenses" is almost a contradiction in terms, but stellar geography and relations with alien neighbors forced the Terran Federation from its earliest days to create and build a large network of system defenses to defend itself. Unfortunately, none were useful in the final conflict with the Hre'Daak Empire that ended the Federations' existence.

Numerous papers and defense articles have been written about "the Line": the strategic corridor of systems that guarded the homeworld of humanity and their core systems from the aggressive and war-like Khanate of Orion as the human race began its expansion into the galaxy. Immediately after the First Interstellar War (between humanity and the cat-like Orions) the Terran Federation Navy began looking at star systems that could be defended against attacking fleets, and thus "the Line" was born. Strategically centered on a few major star systems with significant populations, these forward bases became the center of defense planning for the Terran Navy. Trillions of credits were spent emplacing permanent orbital bases, fleet yards, and massive asteroid fortresses in these key systems. Fortunately, several of these heavy system defenses also blocked the genocidal rampage of the Rigelians at the outbreak of the Third Interstellar War but a dozen human systems weren't so lucky, and their own local system defenses could not hold back a massive attack that these interstellar wars created. Over the centuries (and several major conflicts), the Line was continually updated with new technologies and weapons that kept them mostly up to date with current enemy fleets, and major systems like

Redwing, Luzon, the Pelee System, and Wayfare also continued to receive significant funding even after the "Orion threat" dropped off in the late 2300s. The border defenses before they were finally mothballed in 2459, and this paper covers their history.

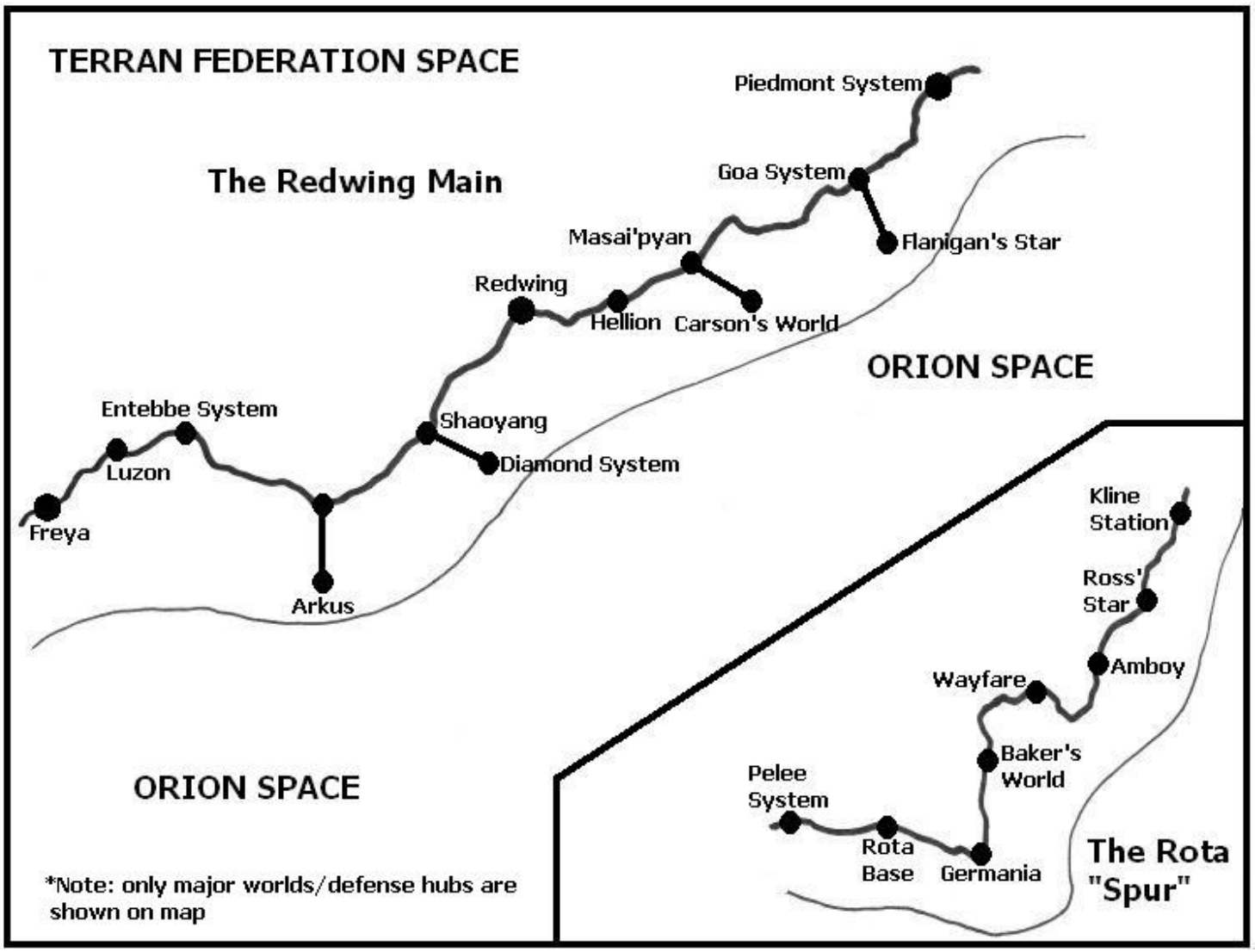
By the Treaty of Tycho (signed in 2212 by the Terran Federation and the Khanate of Orion), “the Line” of human fortresses and bases could not be built within 3 star systems of the Orion border, unless a system was a "dead end" one; where the local warp point only went to one star. This happenstance only applied to four systems in the Line; Arkus, Carson's World, Masai'pyan, and the Danzig System. Fortress Command ran and continually updated the defenses of the Line, however the military leader of the Terran Federation (the Skymarshal) has only nominal control over these bases. Most are under the command of the star systems in which they are built. Typical warp point defenses in the Line included lasers built into BS2 and BS3 orbital bases but radical changes occurred when the Terran Federation developed both the capital missile launcher (Rc) and the heavy weapons platform (BS4). Hundreds of these BS4 bases were added to the Line over the next 80 years and updates for these bases were added at least 50% of the time when new shields or armor became available over the next 200 years. Additionally, Fortress Command developed the BS5 orbital base in 2254, numbers of fighter launchers were built into them, creating a devastating strikeforce that could literally take out dozens of warships by itself. Huge wings of deadly fighters were based on the 310 BS5/V that were built within the Terran Federation and many continue to be used to this day. These BS4/BS5 combination formed the core of the Line defenses and were updated whenever possible.

The second invention that helped the effectiveness of the Line was the development of the Inter-System Anti-Matter Missile, or ISAMM for short. These large ballistic missiles were used as powerful system defenses based on planets that didn’t normally have planetary defense centers (PDCs). The ISAMM was a side-effect of the *Ypres*-class dreadnought design, which incorporated the cutting edge technology of the time into a tried and true vessel design based around a carrier flight deck. The most important of these were the designs for miniaturized antimatter warheads for the new “fighter rocket” designs with which the ISAMM missile body was built around. By 2249, both of these technologies were being placed in far more ambitious programs. In 2250, the TFN military put in for a new ballistic missile design to replace the aging fleet of Minuteman VIII planetary defense missiles, which had been severely downsized since the Minuteman Treaty in 2174. In 2252, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, in conjunction with Boeing Aerospace and Northrop-Grumman came back with the designs for the Inter-System Warp Capable Ballistic Missile or ISWCBM for short. The initial ISWCBM’s suffered from severe design flaws, ranging from faulty antimatter injectors, to problems with the detonation of the antimatter warheads. By 2255, most in the weapons design bureaus were about ready to abandon the entire ISWCBM project and move onto a more conservative design replacement for the now completely obsolete Minutemens. However, in 2256, a Polish man named Wadyslaw Warutetyz came up with a radical new design for the ISWCBM, fixing the serious problems of the missile and allowing it to come to full production.

Warutetyz worked for the weapons division of Northrop-Grumman based on New Philadelphia for 15 years prior to working on the ISWCBM program. In 2257, he and Doctor Alvin Kellerman, descendant of Admiral Kellerman, came up with radical new design parameters for the ISWCBM. Taking from Kellerman's ancestors innovations, they made the drive pods retractable, bringing them back into the missile for a conventional chemical launch on the ground, then switching to the drive field for inter-system flight, or orbital strikes. In addition, the drive field was tied into the antimatter warheads, greatly strengthening the overall destructive capabilities of the ISWCBM.

On January 1, 2258, Warutetyz and Kellerman unveiled the new and improved designs to the Terran military and civilian bureaucracy. Most had completely given up on the idea of the ISWCBM, however they were prepared to look at the new designs. Field tests had proven Warutetyz and Kellerman's design upgrades to be correct and by 2263 (after five years of intense testing) the Federation Navy, Fortress Command, and the Terran Congress all approved the designs for the ISWCBM, or Inter-System Anti-Matter Missile (ISAMM for short). Until 2290, the ISAMM was the only long range, inter-system strategic missile in the inventory of any major power. However, by 2295, the weapons designs had been stolen by the Russian mafia, who in turn sold the

designs to a few Fringer isolationists, and by 2301, had given the designs for the Warutetyz-Kellerman ISAMM to the Ophiuchi, from there is spread even further.



Major systems within the Terran Federation that received the ISAAM were Redwing, Freya, the Entebbe System, Flanagan's Star, the Piedmont System, Hellion, and the Goa System (all major Line star systems). Unfortunately, no forward bases in the Rota Spur received ISAMM upgrades because relations with the Orions had substantially warmed after Interstellar War Three and the Federation Congress sought to save every credit possible by slashing the military budget after the final calamitous battles of ISW3 wound down. In all, only three of the Line' system defenses were ever reduced to ineffectiveness by combat: once during the Dreel Crisis of 2336 (when quadrillions of microscopic intelligent viruses seized control of the system and were finally wiped out by joint human/Orion naval vessels), the Battle of Rota (ISW3), and the Destruction of Neuvo Amboy by Bug forces in the Lighting Raids of 2452 AD against the Parallel Colonies.

After Interstellar War 4, fighting within the admiralty broke out over adding gunboats to the Line. It was a complicated issue within the tradition-bound Terran Federation Navy (TFN) and dickering took place for decades after the decision was finalized. During ISW4, the Bugs had used the gunboats very effectively during naval combat, inflicting critical losses against the TFN naval ships in nearly every fight in which they dominated. However, Terran fighters were still proven to be superior so only a few gunboat squadrons were added to the Lines' defenses in a half dozen systems, starting with Redwing in 2458. Their record against

piracy, the occasional Tangri raid, and maintaining the status quo in their operating areas was exemplary. Now, only Baker's World and Kline Station currently operate wings of gunboats for system defense, mostly because fighters (and fighter jocks) are given priority production whenever a "situation" arises.

Finally, most of the defenses of "the Line" have fallen into the hands of the New Human League after the break-up of the Pan-Sentient Union have been mothballed. However, substantial system defenses are still maintained by the leaders of a few wealthy or heavily populated planets near Orion space and Zephrain. Most smaller star systems have had their defensive bases, forts, and space stations mothballed and towed to long-term storage sites. These sites are mainly around a star systems' gas giants as a security precaution since the end of the Armageddon War; after the Chandler Doctrine was passed there were no more centralized depots exist in human space. Fixed fortifications by the surviving human empires now ranges widely from heavy to non-existent, with the most extensive being generally located in strategic warp nexii like New California or the Deuteronomy System. The largest numbers of bases and forts remain in heavily-populated gateway system of Alpha Centauri, the highly valuable Olympus System (with its eight habitable planets circling its four stars), and at Urbanos (the new capital planet of the FAW).

Since the mothballing of the Line, a half dozen local shipyards have shifted production to smaller warship construction but there has been serious funding problems, as well as technological setbacks within human space. To a casual observer, the recent drumbeat of negative news about Terran naval shipbuilding must make it sound as though the entire fleet modernization program is in disarray, and some of it is. The FAW Navy Secretary of the Udall Administration has canceled contracts for a new class of smaller combat ships designed to operate on its borders and also wants to change the way the warships are being bought. After spending billions of dollars to develop the next-generation *Republic*-class of destroyers, the FAW Navy says it intends to build only three vessels and then revert to production of the earlier *Justinian*-class destroyer. And even though future carriers and superdreadnought ships promise to be the best ever built, media coverage of those programs tend to be dominated by concerns about costs and technical challenges. There is one FAW naval shipbuilding program, however, that is not just meeting but exceeding all its objectives in terms of time and cost. This is the newly-fielded *Mauna Loa*-class heavy cruiser.

Although only three *Mauna Loa* have been built, the program already is delivering them three months ahead of schedule while reducing costs by a half billion dollars per warship. The efforts to reduce costs have led to innovative design work that improved both the way the *Mauna Loa*-class is being built and the capabilities of the finished product. This program has been so successful that, starting in fiscal year 2470, the FAW Navy can afford to build twelve ships every fiscal cycle.

What makes this story even more amazing is that each new vessel is being built at two shipyards: at Great Ships in the Quaylor System and at Kline Station. The ships are built in several large segments and then joined together. The teaming arrangement between the two shipbuilders is working well and contributing to the cost reductions. The *Mauna Loa*-class is so well built that they are fully mission-capable upon leaving the shipyard, something unheard of with previous classes of attack cruisers.

The *Mauna Loa* is the first new ship class delivered with post-Bug requirements. It's primary weapon is a spinal capital forcebeam which runs the length of the ship and this ship is designed to support Special Operations forces as well. It has a more robust sensor suite than its predecessors and has two new generic drone launchers; all of the drones are mission configurable. Even now, the *Mauna Loa*-class carries weapons for a variety of missions including a significant anti-fighter missile suite and advanced missile defense systems. Additionally, in the near future this could include unmanned long-range and warp-capable drones and other exotic weaponry. The *Mauna Loa*-class is the right ship for an era of strategic uncertainty and these ships will be added to the system defenses of the newly forming human empires that are arising from the ashes of the old Pan-Sentient Union.

Overall, system defenses have proven only slightly effective against marauding interstellar fleets but their high costs make most interstellar states use them only in critical star systems, a situation which may one day come back to haunt humanity....

RACES IN THE TERRAN FEDERATION

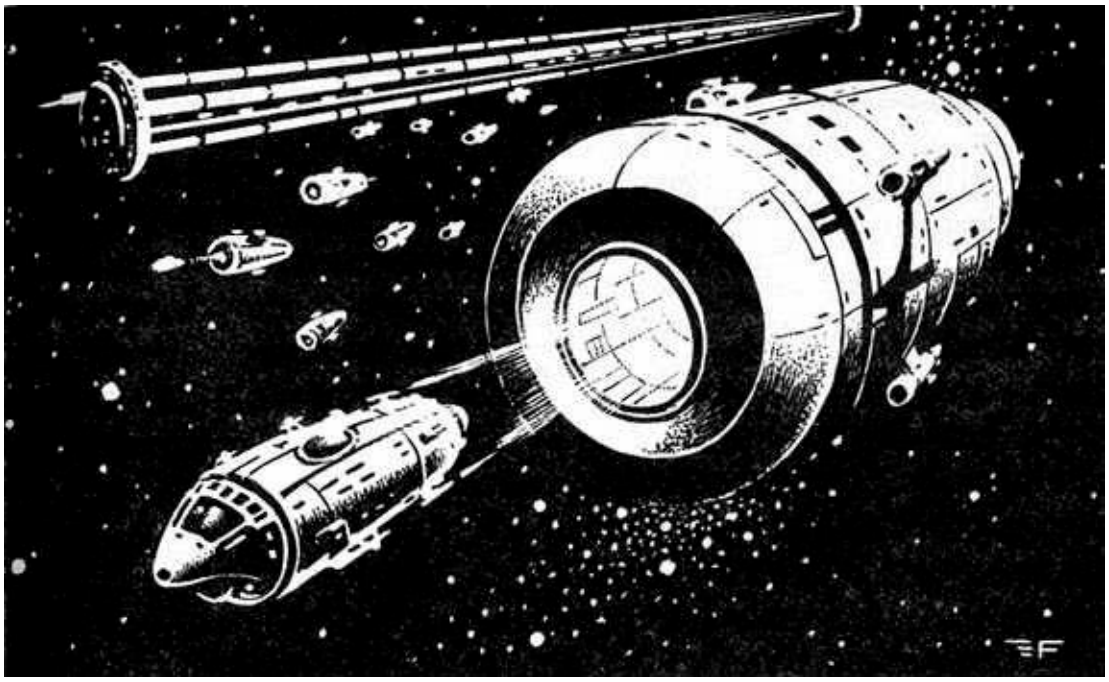
The Bureau of Domestic Extraterrestrials (BD&E) was created shortly after humanity left their homewolrd and began exploring the stars. Nearly a half-dozen alien races, all of them extremely low-tech, were discovered within a few years of the revelation of warp points, the first being on the planet Epsilon Eridani (the Mikilaks). Government officials within the Terran Federation knew that more aliens would likely be found so an entire new branch of the government was created, solely under the jurisdiction of Senator Lisa'a Alexandra of Xyannis. The early BDE was entirely Senator Alexandra's personal fiefdom while she was alive and the vast majority of rules and regulations come from that era; being occasionally updated when needed. The half dozen alien races discovered before 2205 were non-technological, but in that year the BDE took a back burner to the regular diplomatic corps when an aggressive interstellar power (the Khanate of Orion) was discovered. Relations between the humans and Orions quickly soured and turned into war, but in the follow centuries a total of 26 intelligent species (19 pre-industrial, 7 industrial) were discovered within Terran space and all were immediately placed off-limits, their home planets permanently safe-guarded against colonization by humans. The Bureau of Domestic Extraterrestrials currently oversees all patrols, updates, and incidents regarding these aliens and has a staff of 18,000 people, with an annual budget of 5 billion credits. The BDE has nearly complete autonomy when it comes to aliens within the borders of Terran space; it has no power within Orion space since the merging of the two nations into the Pan-Sentient Union (PSU). While the humans have treated the aliens they have run across during their expansion fairly and equitably, the Orions have not, attacking and genociding alien races at will during their rise to power. These facts caused a major diplomatic and political row during the amalgamation to the Federation and Khanate, but has been now effectively buried. The BDE will continue to rule the growing alien races as a virtual fiefdom within the government of the PSU, now currently under the command of Vice Admiral Maximilian Krawic. Listed below are the aliens under BDE jurisdiction and their homeworlds within the Terran Federation:

Apex Minor: the Jiuzu
Borannis III: the Hornak
Dekkovar: the Yun
Doralus System: the Leka
Epsilon Eridani IV: the Mikilaks
Epsilon Indi III: the Jaro
Goranni III: the Goszul
Haberrite IV: the Shun
Invernia: the Xenex
Ipallaa II: the Masters of the Iron Star
Kalanna Minor: the Nixies
Kelleruun: the Xuni
Kish: the Yom
Korgan IV: the Brotherhood of the Night
Legoba V: the Lirpan
Novotny: the Teth
Ossulus: the Tarleen
Pallomar: the Yisheng
Pinter Homerworld: the Pinter
Rokasa Prime: the Rokasans
Shreen: the Shreen
Tobermory: the Kortes
Togalis System: the Ranong
Tragor'r Prime: the Canaba
Uruwaddy's System: the Wei
Uvala III: the Nybberites
Veralla: the Shwebo
Xu Prime: the Xu

ALIEN DISCOVERY DATES: FIRST HUMAN CONTACT

Arachnids	2360
Civilization	2501
Crucians	2364
Dionii	2498
Gorm	2248
Hre'Daak	2463
Im'kek	2470
Kren	2470
Mechanoids	2499
Ophiuchi	2224
Orions	2205
Rao	2462
Rigelians	2241
Sime/Gen	2250
Tangri	2355
Thebans	2298
Tolats	2436
Vestrii	2460
Wanderers	2478

2205	Orions
2224	Ophiuchi
2241	Rigelians
2248	Gorm
2250	Sime/Gen
2298	Thebans
2355	Tangri
2360	Arachnids
2364	Crucians
2436	Tolats
2460	Vestrii
2462	Rao
2463	Hre'Daak
2470	Kren
2470	Im'kek
2478	Wanderers
2498	Dionii
2499	Mechanoids
2501	Civilization



THE SYSTEM WHICH MUST BE CONCEALED (SWMBC)

The Deuteronomy System and its highly valuable warp point nexus was discovered in 2271 by the Terran Federation. Nearby systems had already been colonized by a rapidly expanding pacifist religious faction known as the Reformation Group and the warp nexus drew additional colonists to the region. The strategic importance of the Deuteronomy Nexus was not lost upon the Terran Federation Navy, who emplaced a large fleet yard in the system in 2278 with 30 shipyards installed. A large Fleet presence was also stationed in Deuteronomy when the yards came on line in 2279. As the local populations grew and the Terran Federation continued to expand into the area, the Toricelli Naval R&D Center was added to the Jehovah Fleet Yards (named for the local Reformers). Toricelli was large, new facility that focused primarily on researching new types of armor and engines. Deuteronomy was also selected as *"**the Boneyard"*** in 2289. The Boneyard was set up by the Federation Navy as a long-term storage facility to hold out-of-date warships for refitting or scrapping. It was placed in the Fringe region because Corporate World interests would never waste a dollar by sending the technologically and/or mechanically outdated ships back to the core worlds of the Federation for disposal. Finally, significant asteroid forts and orbital bases were added to the system defenses in 2280, including twelve heavy weapons platforms armed primarily with missile weaponry: both short and long-ranged, including capital missiles.

As the Reformation Group grew into a full-fledged outworlds polity, the Deuteronomy System (which is part of the Group) became a major shipping hub and transit center in to three different regions in the Fringe. During the outbreak of the Insurrection, a TFN battleship accidentally ignited the highly volatile atmosphere on the fourth planet in the Deuteronomy System, killing the Reformation inhabitants and fleeing the following justice. This outrage sparked an angry revolution within the Reformation Group citizenry, who rose up and captured the Jehovah Fleet Yards and nearby Boneyard during the revolt. They seized the military facility with over 100 smaller vessels in storage (most in the heavy cruiser to destroyer range). Ships captured were from the following classes and numbers:

Bellisle-B BB x6
Wolfhound CV x6
Shokaku CVL x7
Dunkerque BC x3
Swiftsure CA x8
Bulwark CA x11
Indianapolis CL x9
Atlanta CL x12
Johnston DD x23
Frigates x42

These outdated vessels formed the core of the new Reformation Navy and their alien allies (the Tolats) also ensured their independence from their former masters (the Terran Federation). In time the Reformers were able to build more capable warships but their limited population has made them focus on vessels that were smaller than most standard interstellar navies, with only a few capital ships in their line-of-battle. Unfortunately the relatively small size of the Reformation Navy led directly to the crisis of the Second Bug War in 2450.

When the Arachnids were defeated at the end of the First Bug War in 2370, they hid part of their population behind a closed warp point in the System Which Must Be Concealed (SWMBC). This action saved a portion of their empire from destruction, even though the rest of the Home Hive worlds (and hundreds of billions of Bugs) were mercilessly slaughtered by revenge-seeking humans and their allies. The SWMBC grew enormously over the next eighty years and expanded slowly and silently down a small chain of warp points until it reached the Killeen System, a star system that was infamous for its six asteroid belts (and no solid planets). These rogue asteroids kept anyone from fully exploring the system and discovering its warp points but the Reformation

troopship RNS *Oriskany* (a *Roughneck*-class vessel) was on zero-G maneuvers in the system when the Bugs finally stumbled onto them on April 27th, 2450. Typical of the Bugs, they shot first and asked no questions, destroying the *Oriskany* and stranding over 1,000 space marines on an orbital rock in the asteroid belt. When the Reformation Navy noticed she was overdue, additional fleet units scoured the system and recovered the marines safely, only to discover that the Bugs were still alive and back in force when a enemy task force moved into the system a few days later.

Luckily, ten years after the Terran Civil War the Reformation Group Navy was in good condition and by then had 100+ vessels in its inventory. Dozens of older naval ships had been revived from the nearby Deuteronomy "Boneyard" and updated, and the two other minor TFN naval bases in the region (Kodiak Base and Newport News) were handed over to the Reformers at the end of the war, their shipyards intact. Moreover, the Deuteronomy System and its fabulous warp point nexus lay at the heart of the Reformers system defenses and strategic planning, with the Tolats providing a few hundred automated platforms to cover the defenses at the 12 scattered warp points as well. Six mothballed *Wolfhound*-class carriers formed the 1st Squadron of the Reformation Fleet and was comprised of the following ships:

Wasp
Hornet
Lexington
Saratoga
Enterprise
Yorktown

These newly modified vessels (the *Wolfhound-D* class) were commanded by Admiral Craig Labuda and they have also permanently stationed in Deuteronomy to cover the warp points and protect the vastly productive Jehovah Fleet Yards. The Reformers also knew that if they ever lost control of the Deuteronomy nexus they would be destroyed, so they engaged in heavy construction of orbital bases and asteroid fortresses around several of the most important warp point entrances, and the system had a full compliment of a half dozen fleet tugs to move the other bases around to reinforce any threatened warp point. Also, two full gunboat wings were also stationed in Deuteronomy and were used to cover the static system defenses, including hundreds of minefields.

During this transition time, Fleet Admiral Xifo had his command set up at the Jehovah Yards and enforced local religious laws by discharging all females under his command, according to Reformer tradition and rules. This led to a serious problem in the RN as the Reformers had very few military personnel to begin with, but a universal draft for men was initiated over the protests of many Reformer leaders who still believed in the pacifist ways of the old religion. This draft proved enormously unpopular and fleet morale in the Reformation Navy plummeted during the following decade after it was implemented.

Of the twelve warp points orbiting Deuteronomy (the primary binary white star, not the red dwarf component), only one remained unexplored by 2450. Remote probes had been sent over a dozen years but none ever reported back until on January 23rd, a probe sent back from the hazardous warp point showed an asteroid field had been preventing the probes from surviving the transit. Reformer fleet units entered and scanned the system, which was then named Killeen and when no warp points were found it was left alone, except for the occasional naval training foray. The destruction of the *Oriskany* quickly led to heavy fighting as the first Bug fleet was smashed to ineffectiveness against the Deuteronomy warp point defenses during its first attack. The Reformation Navy then seized the opportunity and pushed hard into Bug Space, seeking strategic depth away from the important Deuteronomy System and the extensive shipyards located there. Admiral Labuda was able to push the Bug forces down the chain using his carrier squadron, the bulk of the Reformation fleet, and three-heavily armed *New Testament*-class supermonitors. These vessels were able to pack an enormous punch as they were equipped with the latest Tolat long-ranged weapons: the ERBM. Using this multi-stage missile and titanic antimatter warheads, the Reformers fought the Bugs back to the system they named Masada, but they could do no more as

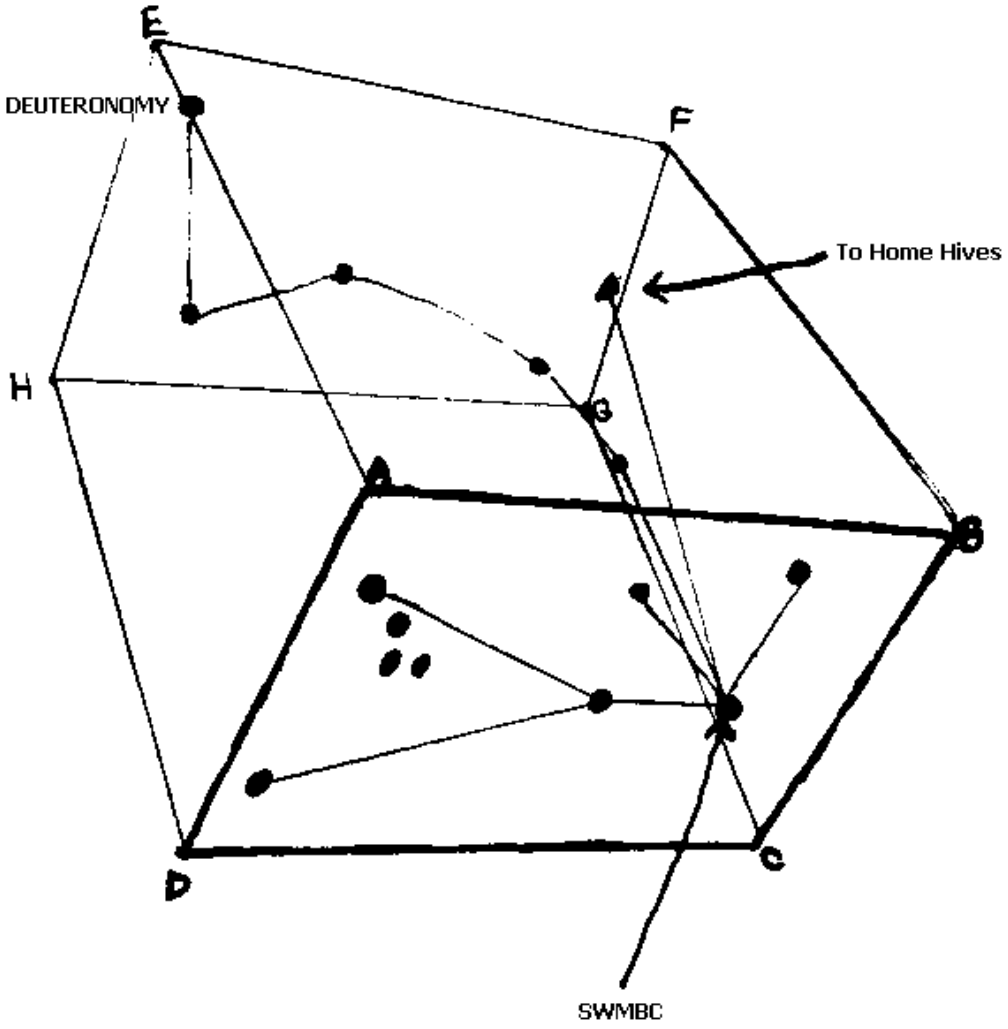
personnel and fleet reserves ran out at the end of the first year of fighting and the war ground to a halt near the Masada warp point.

THE SWMBC

At the beginning of the second year of the conflict with the Reformation Navy on the ropes, the Tolats began deploying some truly unique military forces in support of the Reformers. The first was a "brain ship", which in fact was only 14 meters in length and thus should actually be called a pod. This ship was capable of moving through a warp point and maneuvering at high speeds, so in most peoples' minds it was a ship. However, the Tolat craft was actually a housing for an advanced battle-hardened artificial intelligence which communicated to the rest of the fleet through the various long, thin spikes that protruded from its surface. This sentient battle computer worked alongside the Reformers, deciding how to best employ the armada it was at the core of and it became the nerve center of the Reformer/Tolat fleet. It also had its own slew of automated defense drones that accompanied it. The abilities of the AI and its vast experience that it brought to the battlefield enabled the Reformers (who were badly outnumbered) to hold their own in battle after battle with the Bugs. Eventually the Tolats had to bring several of their *Grysmos*-class juggernauts into the fighting but the Bugs pressed on, destroying the joint fleet base at Masada Station and and forcing the Reformers to eventually fall back to the Deuteronomy System itself.

In the fourth year of the war, the combined forces of the Reformation Group and the Tolats again halted the advance of the Bugs but the PSU Navy was finally alerted to the Bugs presence and called in by a divisive vote of the Reformation Council, many of whom believed the conflict could not be ended without outside assistance. Fortunately, several PSU battlefleets were on maneuvers nearby and during the next twenty-two months the joint PSU/Reformation forces utterly crushed the Bugs, destroying the last of their race when the SWMBC was annihilated in late 2454 AD.

Below is a historical picture of Admiral Pol's hand-drawn map of the region when the SWMBC was first discovered, and its location compared to the Deuteronomy System.



NEW SMALL CRAFT by David Ternes

Type	Code	Bb Points	Tac Speed	Inter/ Syst. Speed	Crew Only Days	Full Load Days	Personnel Load	Cargo Points	PCF-a Airdrop	Pt. Defense Equiv	fXO rack Points	Sensor Range	MC Cost
Cargo Cutter	ctc	1	6	3	2	2	none	40	no	no	0	6	6
Cargo Shuttle	stc	2	7	4	12	12	none	150	no	none	0	20	18
Cargo Pinnace	pnc	4	7	4	24	24	none	300	no	D	0	20	40
2nd Gen. Cargo Pinnace	pnc2	6	7	4	24	12	0.50 Q	300	no	Dx	0	20	55

Cargo Cutter Tech Level 1 co-developed at no cost with regular cutter
Cargo Shuttle Tech Level 1 co-developed at no cost with regular shuttle
Cargo Pinnace Tech Level 7 co-developed at no cost with regular pinnace
2nd Generation Cargo Pinnace Tech Level 10 Development cost 1300 MC

This quartet of cargo-carrying small craft can unload one item (such as a deep space bouy, missile pod, or minefield pattern) in one tactical turn as long as they spend the entire tactical turn at speed 0 in the same tactical hex.

If in a boatbay in a unit that has a CHS/CHS2, these small craft can take advantage of those systems as well, though at 1/5 the rate. Example, a cargo shuttle is in a boatbay in a ship that has 12 holds and a CHS. The cargo shuttle can be loaded/unloaded at a rate of 24 cargo space points per tactical turn. If it was a CHS2, then the rate would be 36 cargo space points.

TL 8

Pinnace Liner

Type	Code	Bb Points	Tac Speed	Inter/ Syst. Speed	Crew Only Days	Full Load Days	Personnel Load	Cargo Points	PCF-a Airdrop	Warp Capable	Pt. Defense Equiv	fXO Rack Points	Sensor Range	MC Cost
Pinnace Liner	pnl	5	7	4	30	15	3 Q	50	no	yes	D	0	20	55

Development cost is 2500mc.

TL 9

Escort Shuttle

Type	Code	Bb Points	Tac Speed	Inter/ Syst. Speed	Crew Only Days	Full Load Days	Personnel Load	Cargo Points	PCF-a Airdrop	Warp Capable	Pt. Defense Equiv	fXO Rack Points	Sensor Range	MC Cost
Escort Shuttle	ste	3	8	4	12	8	0.5 Q	0	no	no	Di	2	20	50

Escort shuttles are unable to use fXR packs. Development cost is 3900mc.

The Asteroid Axis, spurred by the Commonwealth's use of armed pinnaces, not only created their own version but also a new craft to serve as a supplement. It was a torturous exercise, for the AFC wanted a new craft that could utilized an equivalent of improved point defense and be just 50% larger than an assault shuttle. When it proved impossible to have two point defense systems (the resulting craft would've been the size of a pinnace) the designers used the leftover space for two fighter ordnance racks and some passenger carrying capacity. Only the Axis made use of the escort shuttle since the Commonwealth and its allies found no compelling need to copy it. Carrier-based fighters proved to be better escorts and armed pinnaces were more flexible since they could transit warp points. Where the escort shuttle proved to be of moderate effectiveness was in the long-range interception of fighter strikes and in suicide attacks. Planet-based swarms of escorts shuttles became a familiar sight to Commonwealth fleets in the closing years of the Axis War.

TL 12

Utility Shuttle

Type	Code	Bb	Tac	Inter/	Crew	Full	Personnel	Cargo	PCF-a	Warp	Pt.	fXO	Sensor	MC

		Points	Speed	Syst. Speed	Only Days	Load Days	Load	Points	Airdrop	Capable	Defense Equiv	Rack Points	Range	Cost
Utility Shuttle	stu	3	7	4	12	8	0.5 Q	50	yes	no	Dx	0	fXR	40

Development cost is 1400mc

A private development of the Crajen Small Craft Guild, the utility shuttle fulfilled a recognized need for a craft that could supplement or even replace the *Street Vendor* class system maintenance ships in low-population systems. The stu was used for deploying and maintaining navigation buoys, system patrol, search and rescue, customs inspections, carry and land troops, and transporting cargo and passengers to distant intra-system instillations.