TERRAN EMPIRE

JAMES CAMBIAS

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A WORD OR TWO OF APPRECIATION

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INTRODUCTION

Running a *Star Hero* campaign presents a major challenge for many GMs: they have to create an entire universe! At the very least, they've got to detail a galaxy, or a significant chunk of one, so they know where the PCs can go and what they can do. That's a lot of work — more than some potential GMs have time for.

Terran Empire presents an entire, detailed universe for *Star Hero* GMs. Covering the period 2400-2700 AD, when Humanity first became a major power in the Milky Way Galaxy, it offers an intriguing setting with enough scope for just about any sort of campaign: exploration, trading, military, political intrigue, espionage, rebellion against galactic tyranny, you name it. At the same time, this book leaves enough places and subjects vaguely defined (or undefined) so creative GMs can put their own stamp upon the setting by creating worlds, alien species, and technologies of their own.

Chapter One, *Three Centuries In Space: The History Of The Terran Empire,* reviews and describes the history of this period, beginning with Humanity's recovery from the Xenovore Wars, through the rise of the Empire, to the eventual defeat of the oppressive Imperial forces at the hands of brave and dedicated rebels. It provides a broad overview, thus allowing you to tailor the history to your own campaign, or insert additional events to set up the stories you want to tell.

Chapter Two, *Peoples Of The Milky Way: Species Of The Galaxy,* takes a look at the major species of the Terran Empire setting. The Galaxy contains hundreds of sentient species, of course, so this chapter can't cover them all, but it hits the high points. In addition to reviewing each species's biology and history, it provides a Species Package Deal in case you want to choose that species for your character.

Chapter Three, *Powers And Pawns: The Galaxy Of The Imperial Era,* provides a detailed look at not only the Terran Empire and its institutions, but at its competitors and allies on the galactopolitical stage: the Ackálian Empire; the Perseid Empire; the Mon'dabi Federation; the Conjoined Civilizations Republic; and more.

Chapter Four, *Life Among The Stars: Galactic Society,* describes what it's like to live and work in the twenty-seventh century. Among other subjects, it covers travel, communications, trade, religion, the rights of automatons, and crime.

Chapter Five, *Citizens Of The Empire,* delves into the topic of character creation. In addition to notes about how various Skills, Perks, Talents, and Powers work in the Terran Empire setting, it provides Professional Package Deals for dozens of careers, information about psionic powers, and guidelines for personal augmentation with cybersystems or bioware.

Chapter Six, *Treasures From The Technicians: Equipment And Technology,* tells you about the technology of the Terran Empire period, both Human and non-Human. If you need a blaster pistol, a survival suit, or a medical kit, look here.

Chapter Seven, *Chariots Of The Spacelanes: Starships,* does for space vehicles what Chapter Seven does for equipment in general. Whether you're looking for a Terran warship, an Ackálian scout, or a Se'ecra science vessel, you'll find it here.

Chapter Eight, *Stories Of Empire: Terran Empire Campaigns,* is for the GM. In addition to the GM's Vault (see below), it contains suggestions for campaigns set in the Terran Empire period, dozens of potential plot hooks, and more.

HISTORICAL SCOPE

The Terran Empire period of history spans three centuries. Where possible and relevant, this book attempts to cover events, people, and objects from the entire period. However, keeping the book a reasonable size means it's not possible to list all the stages of development of every weapon, or to provide dozens of NPC writeups for each decade of the Empire's existence. Where necessary, the book typically focuses on the reign of Empress Marissa III, from 2633-2651. During this period, the Empire was well-established but beginning to slide into corruption and oppression, and thus offers scope for a wide variety of campaign and adventure types. If you prefer to set your campaign during some other period, you can easily adapt many of the NPCs, ships, and devices to that time.

THE GM'S VAULT

Chapter Eight includes an important part of the book: the *GM's Vault,* which contains all the secret, GM's-eyes-only information about the universe of the Terran Empire. As much as possible, the first seven chapters of the book take the "player's perspective": they describe what players and their characters should know about the setting. They do include some "secret" information where it's not convenient to separate it out — such as some parts of the history in Chapter One. (The GM can, of course, forbid certain players to read certain parts of the book.)

However, there are other types of information players clearly should *not* know about. It's one thing to provide them with character sheets for NPC

DUPLICATION; HERO GAMES TEXT ONLY (-2)

Terran Empire contains some text reprinted from *Star Hero,* since some of the examples in that book were drawn from this setting, and it would be inconvenient for players and GMs to have to refer to both books during a game. In a few cases, minor changes in points of detail were made in this book so the material printed in *Star Hero* would fit better into the Terran Empire setting as it was developed and detailed here. Where such differences occur, the material printed in this book is the "correct" or "official" version; consider the *Star Hero* version an example provided for the sake of discussion.

heroes, for example; those can inspire and help them. But they shouldn't have access to neutral or adversarial NPCs' character sheets, or secret information about what's *really* happening in the hidden caverns of Mars, or the like. That's what the GM's Vault contains — information only the GM should know about. If you only intend to play in a Terran Empire campaign, *don't read the GM's Vault!* You'll learn things you shouldn't, and thus spoil your enjoyment of the game.

WHERE ARE THE SUPERHEROES?

The Terran Empire is a part of the *Hero Universe* meta-setting, which you can read more about by going to http://www.herogames.com/FreeStuff/freedocs.htm and downloading the free document describing it. As such, it's a part of the reality in which the Champions Universe setting once existed, and in which the Galactic Champions setting will exist in another few centuries. So, why aren't there superhumans in the Terran Empire?

Briefly put, the existence of superhumans (and super-Velarians, super-Perseids, and so forth) in the Hero Universe depends on the existence of magic. Though most people aren't aware of it, in the Hero Universe, magic exists, just like gravity or any other natural force. When the level of ambient mystic energy rises to sufficient levels, people can cast spells, and the manifestation and existence of superhuman powers becomes possible. (So does the creation of technology centuries ahead of its time.) When the level of ambient magic diminishes, these things become impossible, or possible only with much greater effort and difficulty.

In the Hero Universe, the level of ambient magic rose to high levels during the ancient past (the "fantasy" eras). It dropped to a much lower level as time went on, reaching a very low ebb in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. (Since Humans can't really study this phenomena scientifically, it's hard to say precisely how magic ebbs and flows; it may even rise and fall differently in different parts of the universe.) It began to rise a little in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In 1938, arcane experiments conducted by Nazi mystics on Earth unintentionally "boosted" the level of ambient magic — or, perhaps more accurately, opened the floodgates of mystical energy a little wider. This resulted in the creation of the universe's first known true superhuman, and many more followed (as did some amazing, and otherwise impossible, technological advances). Superhumanly powerful beings arose not only on Earth, but on many other worlds as well (though by no means all). However, this unusually high level of ambient magic couldn't last forever.

Thereafter, records become a little spotty, due in large part to the destruction Humanity's infrastructure, archives, and databases suffered during the Xenovore Wars of the twenty-fourth century. Apparently, sometime in the early twenty-first century — around 2017-2020, most likely — the level of ambient magic dropped again, precipitously in most places. Superhumans were no longer born

or created, and those who still existed found their powers weaker or nonfunctional. Super-technological advances proved unworkable or faulty after all. In short, reality returned to what the average person would consider "normal," and the progress of technology resumed its ordinary, wholly scientific, pace. The level of ambient magic remains low (at its lowest point ever, in fact) from about 2020 to the year 3000, at which point it rises again and the era of Galactic Champions begins.

During the time of the Terran Empire, attitudes toward "superhumans" are mixed. Most people (including almost all scientists) regard them as a myth, much the same way twenty-first century Humans dismiss Elizabethan-era Humans' belief in spirits and magic as superstitious nonsense. Nonbelievers can easily dismiss "evidence" of superhumans, including video clips and the like, as fake (or, at best, misunderstood). However, some people do believe superhumans once existed. They can point to the records in Hzeel databases of combat against Human "superheroes" in the early twenty-first century, and other forms of proof, to support their claims. The debate mostly occurs in the fringe media, since the average individual couldn't care less what Earth was like six hundred years ago.

While Humans may lack reliable records, other species do not. The superhuman phenomena did not affect every species, but it affected more than just Humans — though Humans seem to have been blessed with a much higher percentage of superhumans among their population than most other species. Databases maintained by, among others, the Perseids, Toractans, Mandaarians, and Malvans provide clear evidence of the existence of superhumans... assuming that evidence has not been fraudulently created. The Terran Empire, and most other governments, keep this information secret, since they'd rather study it on their own and analyze the implications.

Of course, if you're running a campaign in the Hero Universe, you can set the level of ambient magic wherever you want it. If you like, you can create a Terran Empire in which every starship has its own wizard, the enigmatic Thane remain powerful sorcerers, and enchanted blasters make ordinary technological ones seem weak and ineffectual. The official take on the Terran Empire is that it has no magic at all, but don't let that stop you if you have a great idea for a game.

Three Centuries in Space
THE HISTORY OF THE TERRAN EMPIRE

The Imperial period of Human history showcases much of what is best about Humanity. It's a time when the peoples of Earth, nearly defeated and wiped out in a war with the most hostile of enemies, rose from the ashes of their civilization to not only rebuild it, but to make it into one of the most powerful political and social entities in the Galaxy. But it displays much of the dark side of Humanity as well: the seemingly inevitable descent of societal and political institutions into oppression, corruption, and decay. But even then, at the end, Humanity redeems itself through rebellion and reform — actions crucial to the establishment of the utopian Galactic Federation to come.

2397-2454: CONSOLIDATION

The Terran Empire was born in blood. In the twenty-fourth century Humanity found itself battling a terrifying enemy: the Xenovores. Deadly predators who viewed all other sentient life as nothing but food and slave labor, the Xenovores had attacked Humanity without provocation or warning, precipitating a century-long war. Their attacks cost Humanity dearly — they ravaged or destroyed hundreds of planets, and even Earth itself suffered millions of casualties in Xenovore raids. The Human worlds scrambled to build defenses, but the Xenovores had the advantage in both technology and numbers.

A hundred years of fighting saw Humanity pushed back year after year until many predicted the extinction of mankind. But to the surprise of many other species, Human determination and ingenuity prevailed. A suicidal attack on the Xenovore home system by the Combined Fleet in 2396 finally turned the tide, but at great price. The Fleet destroyed the Xenovore homeworld and two major colony planets, killing billions of Xenovores and crippling the enemy's industrial base, but only a handful of Human ships survived the assault. News of the attack caused a wave of uprisings among Xenovore slave species that ensured the end of the Xenovores' role as a galactic power.

2397-2434: The Anarchic Period

Unfortunately, the Humans couldn't follow up this deadly blow with an occupation to claim Xenovore space as their own. Too many ships were lost, too many planets devastated and exhausted. Some worlds pulled out of the Human Alliance to concentrate on self-defense; others took the opportunity to settle old scores or pursue old ambitions. For decades near-anarchy reigned throughout both Human and Xenovore space. Individual planets struggled to defend themselves or conquer neighboring systems, while ships and squadrons on both sides turned pirate. The Ackálians and Thorgons took the opportunity to annex border regions. It was a time of chaos and uncertainty.

MARISSA DeVALIERE

In 2426 Admiral Marissa DeValiere assumed command of the Sol System Defense Fleet. At that time, Earth controlled half a dozen systems in its vicinity, as well as the Sol System itself, in a governmental entity called the Terran Union. DeValiere believed Humanity needed unity to survive, but it was not until 2428 that she obtained the support of the Union's acting President, Wu Zhang, to begin a program of expansion and reunification. (During the Imperial era, Wu Zhang was virtually erased from history by the DeValiere propaganda machine. It was not until the formation of the Galactic Federation that Humanity honored him as the "Father of Terran Reunification.")

With support from home and a powerful fleet, DeValiere began the work of reunifying Human space. Her methods were simple: show up with overwhelming force and demand surrender. Most of the small-time warlords, self-appointed "provisional governments," and newly-formed confederations she faced had little stomach for fighting a real war, and the pace of reunification was swift. In the first five years, DeValiere brought numerous worlds back under central control.

2434: THE CAPAC INCIDENT

Post-Imperial historians agree that the Capac incident was what put DeValiere on the road to the Imperial throne. Capac was a Human colony world which survived the ravages of the Xenovores
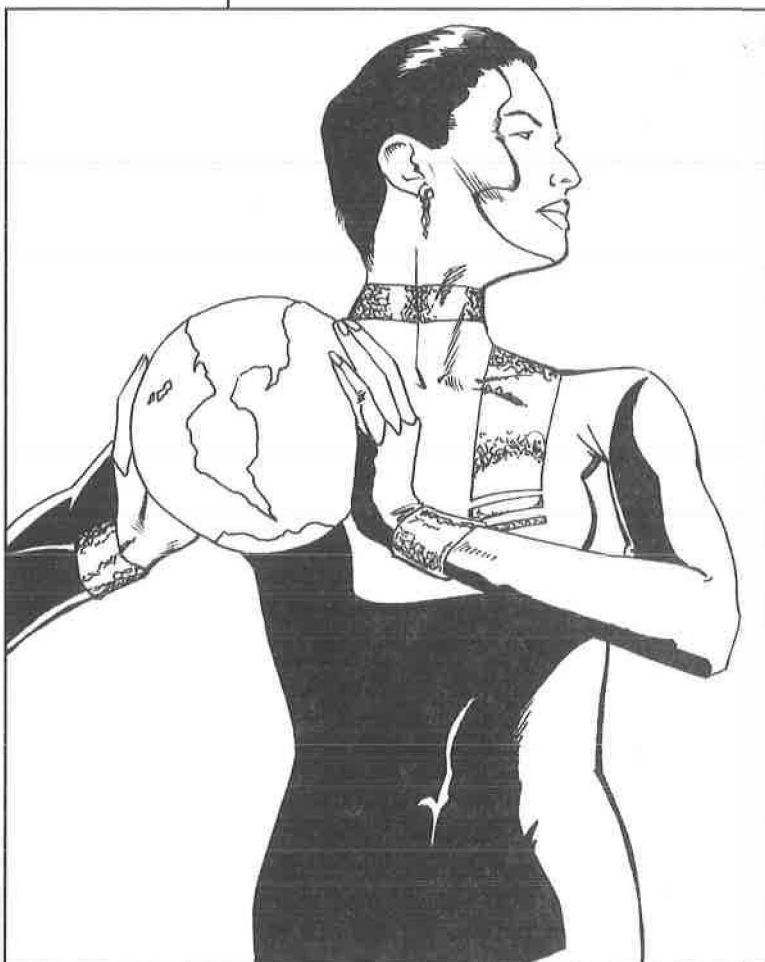
and fought off raiders and pirates for a generation with no help from Earth. The people of Capac had a stable democratic government and only wanted to remain free and independent. Admiral DeValiere refused to accept this. In her opinion, too many worlds like Capac would leave Humanity disunited and vulnerable. When the planet would not accede to her demand to surrender and join the Terran Union, her fleet destroyed Capac's defenses. A brigade of Earth assault troops seized the capital.

This outrage provoked a storm of resentment back on Earth. President Wu demanded DeValiere's resignation (some historians believe he may have been looking for a pretext to remove her as a political rival). She ignored him and continued her campaign. In 2434 Wu sent a squadron with loyal commanders to arrest DeValiere. She refused to give up her command, and in the brief battle that followed her forces wiped out the loyalists.

2435-2454: PRESIDENT DEVALIERE

News of DeValiere's mutiny reached Earth only hours before the leading elements of her fleet. She denounced Wu as a traitor to Human-

ity and broadcast propaganda suggesting he was planning to dissolve the Terran Union's Senate and make himself dictator. DeValiere was very popular on Earth, she had a battle fleet in orbit, and may already have been in contact with some of Wu's leading opponents in the government. The coup was swift and successful, and DeValiere took over as Acting President in 2435. A year later her position was made a life-long appointment, and although Marissa DeValiere never actually used the title "Empress" herself, historians date the Terran Empire from 2436.

With her new, unchallenged authority, DeValiere hoped to complete the task of reunifying Humanity and pacifying the region. It was not to be. Her coup led several other commanders to attempt the same maneuver, and a number of Human colony planets refused to recognize her authority. The years 2436 through 2454 were occupied in stabilizing DeValiere's regime, quashing rebellion, and creating the administrative structure of the new Empire.

2455-2609: POWER

Marissa DeValiere died in 2455; during her final illness she ensured a smooth transfer of power to her nephew Esteban. Upon her death he was officially crowned Esteban I, Terran Emperor and Permanent President of the Union. Esteban lacked his aunt's tactical brilliance and personal charisma, but was himself a tireless administrator with a good grasp of economics and Galactic diplomacy. Esteban resumed the process of reuniting all Human colony worlds, peacefully if possible, by force when necessary.

Under Esteban the Empire's administrative structure took its final form: most of the worlds which Admiral DeValiere had reconquered for the Terran Union (and a few important worlds which rejoined voluntarily early on) came under the governance of the Union Senate. Conquered planets and frontier districts were under the control of the Emperor, who could react quickly and decisively to revolts or incursions. However, as the Empire expanded, Esteban (and his successors) were unwilling to surrender any more power to the Senate. The core remained under Senate control, but all the Empire's expansion increased the Emperor's share of power.

2473-2490: EMPEROR GREGORIO

Esteban's chief military commander was his cousin Gregorio. Though not a genius by any definition of the term, Gregorio DeValiere was a competent commander and had a certain dogged persistence

which eventually wore down obstacles. The combination of Esteban's adroit diplomacy and Gregorio's methodical campaigns nearly doubled the size of the Empire during Esteban's reign. In 2465 Esteban formally nominated Gregorio as his successor, and had the nomination easily confirmed by the Senate.

Esteban died in 2472, and Gregorio reigned from 2473 until 2490. His reign continued Imperial expansion, though the direction changed somewhat. Under Esteban Terran space had grown in almost every direction. Gregorio preferred to concentrate on capturing regions of the former Xenovore empire, and so most Imperial expansion in the 2470s was in that direction. Former Xenovore slave species inhabited several worlds in that region. Some accepted Imperial rule willingly out of gratitude to the Humans who had saved them from extinction at Xenovore hands. Others fought desperately, sure the Humans would be no better than the Xenovores they had defeated. Emperor Gregorio had little patience for diplomacy or economic warfare; species that resisted him, were smashed, as hard and as often as required. In 2482 the Terran Empire almost completely exterminated the Dasmaa, a subterranean species resembling pangolins, after their fourth uprising against Terran rule. The Emperor's reaction was blunt: "Three tries should be enough for anyone."

Gregorio voluntarily resigned his position in 2490 due to declining health and nominated his son Ricardo as his successor. Surprisingly, the
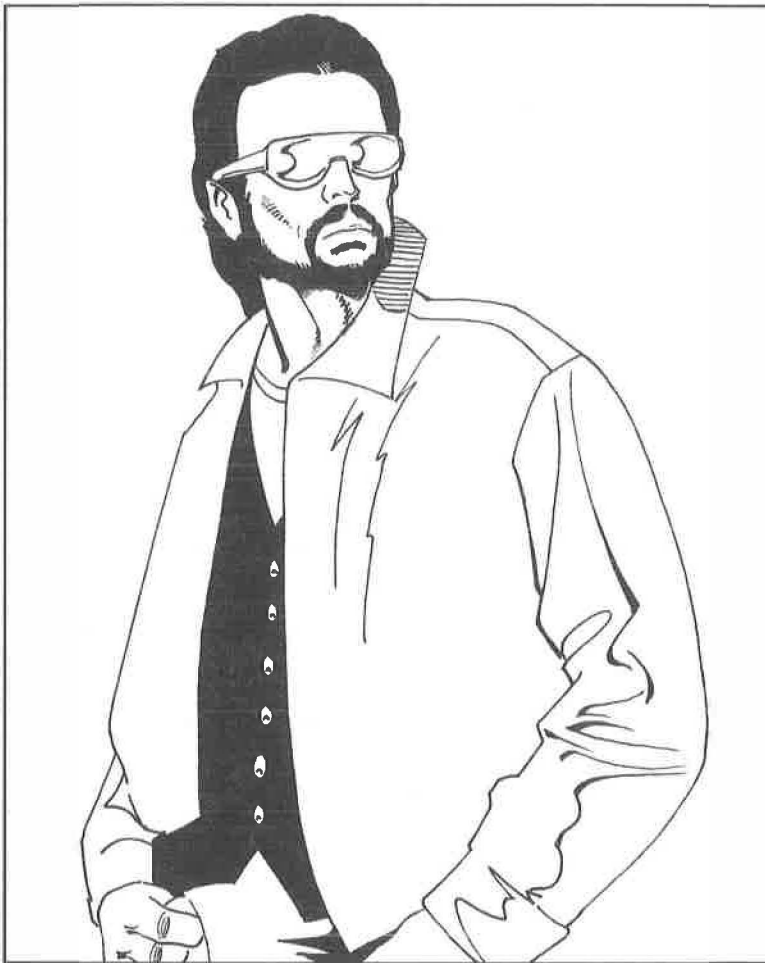
Senate refused to confirm Ricardo (due to his notorious irresponsibility) and the old Emperor did not press the point, substituting his daughter Ximena instead. She took the throne in 2490 and devoted herself to integrating and developing her father's conquests.

2505-2509: THE FIRST THORGON WAR

Unfortunately, the Thorgons interrupted this process in 2505 when they invaded two border provinces and destroyed a Terran fleet sent to hold them off. Empress Ximena had little military experience herself, and most of her senior commanders were veterans of her father's campaigns — very good at surgical strikes against planetary warlords and rebels, but tentative and easily panicked in large fleet actions against a powerful enemy. For two years Ximena sacked admiral after admiral, looking for one who could take the fight to the enemy. Meanwhile she devoted her own energies to rebuilding the Imperial fleet and expanding production facilities in safe regions.

By 2507 the Empire's fleet was back up to full strength and Ximena had found a commander who could use it effectively. Toshiro Kanagawa had been a starship captain at the outbreak of the war, and his impressive string of victories in single ship and small squadron actions brought him to the attention of the Empress. She promoted him directly from Captain to Admiral (and gleefully accepted the resignations of every senior officer who refused to serve under him), then told him to beat the Thorgons.

Kanagawa did so. Bypassing Thorgon fleets in contested sectors, he took a large force directly into Thorgon space, blasting shipyards, bases, supply depots, and industrial facilities in dozens of systems. Since a number of his ships had the new Class Eta-VI Hyperdrive and Type 3 Displacer drive, he had superior strategic mobility and could evade Thorgon elements sent to stop him. As his fleet approached their core systems, the Thorgons panicked, pulling back everything to defend the homeworld and suing for peace.

The Treaty of Kapteyn cost the Thorgons dearly (something they've never forgotten). The Imperial border moved dozens of parsecs closer to the rim, transferring to the Empire systems over which the Thorgons had once exercised exclusive influence. The final agreement also established a belt of neutral systems between the Empire and the Hegemony.

2518: The Ackálian Border War

The Ackálians failed to learn from the Thorgon experience. They made their own test of Imperial strength in 2518. This time the Empire was ready, and the invasion force was efficiently cut off and destroyed while Imperial task forces seized key Ackálian border systems. The other Galactic powers could dismiss the Thorgons as "Rim barbarians," but the Ackálians were a recognized major power. The swift Imperial victory served notice that the balance of power had changed — that the Terran Empire was a force to be reckoned with.

2548-2554: THE GALACTIC WAR

Empress Ximena died in 2524, and was succeeded by her daughter Feodora. The new Empress's father was Admiral Kanagawa, though he and Ximena had never been romantically involved and Kanagawa was happily married — Ximena decided the Admiral's genes would make a good addition to the Imperial bloodline and used artificial conception.

Feodora was only 16 years old at the time of her accession and relied heavily on the advice and authority of the Senate. The first two decades of her reign marked the high point of senatorial power in the history of the Empire. Her political mentor in her youth was Senator Dermond of Alpha Centauri, and upon his retirement Senator Yang of Procyon became her chief advisor. Ackálian agents assassinated Yang in 2548, and two days later the Galactic War broke out.

Having individually suffered defeated at the Empire's hands, the Thorgons and Ackálians formed an alliance and prepared for a joint offensive. Huge fleets surged across the Imperial border on two sides, intending to link up and cut off the entire antispinward half of the Empire.

Empress Feodora had little experience in military matters... and none of her commanders had fought a major war in thirty years. What she did have was remarkable courage and determination. Ravaged Imperial squadrons fell back before the onslaught, buying time and doing what damage they could, forming a defensive line to keep the antispinward corridor open. Reserve ships, moth-

balled vessels dating back to the Xenovore Wars, and even armed merchantmen filled holes in the order of battle until the Empire's industrial might could make up the losses.

The first offensives wound down in 2550, as the Ackálian and Thorgon fleets fought themselves to exhaustion against stiffening Terran resistance. The Antispinward Corridor remained open — barely — and a host of Imperial raiders and privateers interfered with enemy supply lines and communications from the flanks.

In 2551 the Ackálians (without informing their Thorgon allies) made a radical shift in strategy. Instead of pressing forward to complete the pincer movement and menace Earth, they shifted their most battle-worthy fleets and replacement units to maximize their own gains from the war and to keep the Thorgons from grabbing some important systems first. This shift gave the Terrans the chance to begin some tentative counter-offensives against the Thorgons, and alarmed the Mon'dabi enough that they agreed to an alliance with the Terrans. The rag-tag squadrons of the frontier defense forces were reinforced by Mon'dabi battlecruisers, and the Ackálians had to scramble to guard their own antispinward borders.

The climax of the war came in early 2552, with the massive Thorgon assault on the Tetsuo system. Tetsuo was a key junction on the Antispinward Corridor, and the Thorgons threw everything they had into the attack. However, the Terrans were done falling back and retreating, and chose Tetsuo as their stronghold. The result was a three-month bloodbath in which both empires hurled entire fleets and armies into the maelstrom. By the time it was over, all six planets in the system had seen heavy fighting, the terraformed world Tetsuo II was uninhabitable, and two million Imperial soldiers and crewmembers were dead. But the Thorgons had lost twice as many, and the massive effort had utterly exhausted their forces. The Terrans began pushing the Thorgons back out of Imperial space. By the end of the year Imperial units were crossing the prewar border into Thorgon territory.

The Ackálians hoped for a negotiated peace, and when that was not forthcoming they evacuated the Imperial systems they had occupied, as well as a considerable section of coreward space they had controlled, and prepared to defend their primary borders. The Mon'dabi were unwilling to wage an offensive war, and the Empress Feodora eventually agreed to an armistice in 2553 after seizing some of the regions of space abandoned by the enemy. The Empire never signed a peace treaty with the Ackálians, and the border remained tense for decades.

The Thorgons fared worse — abandoned by their ally and on the verge of collapse, they finally surrendered in early 2554. The Empire moved the frontier further into Thorgon space and imposed a huge indemnity aimed at crippling the Thorgons economically for generations. (As it happened, the Thorgons discovered several systems rich in high-value resources and paid off the indemnity in less than a decade.)

The war was not without cost to the Empire.

Millions of lives and quadrillions of credits were lost. Perhaps more importantly, the Empire itself changed. The ongoing "cold war" situation along the Ackálian border and growing fears of potential Thorgon attacks or Perseid expansion increased the power of Imperial security agencies. Imperial reaction to dissent and opposition became more brittle and paranoid. The Senate never recovered the level of influence it had enjoyed early in Feodora's reign.

2561-2597: THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

Worn out by the stress of the war, Feodora died unexpectedly in 2561 without nominating an heir. Fearing the effect of a succession struggle, the Senate quickly recognized Feodora's cousin Ibrahim as Emperor. Ibrahim was the grandson of Gregorio's son Ricardo, and had a respectable (if unimpressive) record as a commander of ground troops in the Galactic War. He reigned from 2561 to 2570, and did as little work as possible while Emperor, spending his time attending endless parties and keeping a platoon of mistresses. Under Ibrahim the Imperial bureaucracy grew considerably in size and influence as he let senior ministers make policy themselves. The inflow of wealth from the Thorgon indemnity made up for the resulting waste and inefficiency. Despite his flaws, Ibrahim was a very popular emperor, and the pleasure-loving Imperial court was reflected in a period of exceptionally lax public morals on many worlds.

Ibrahim's one lasting legacy was the creation of an Imperial nobility. The original idea was to
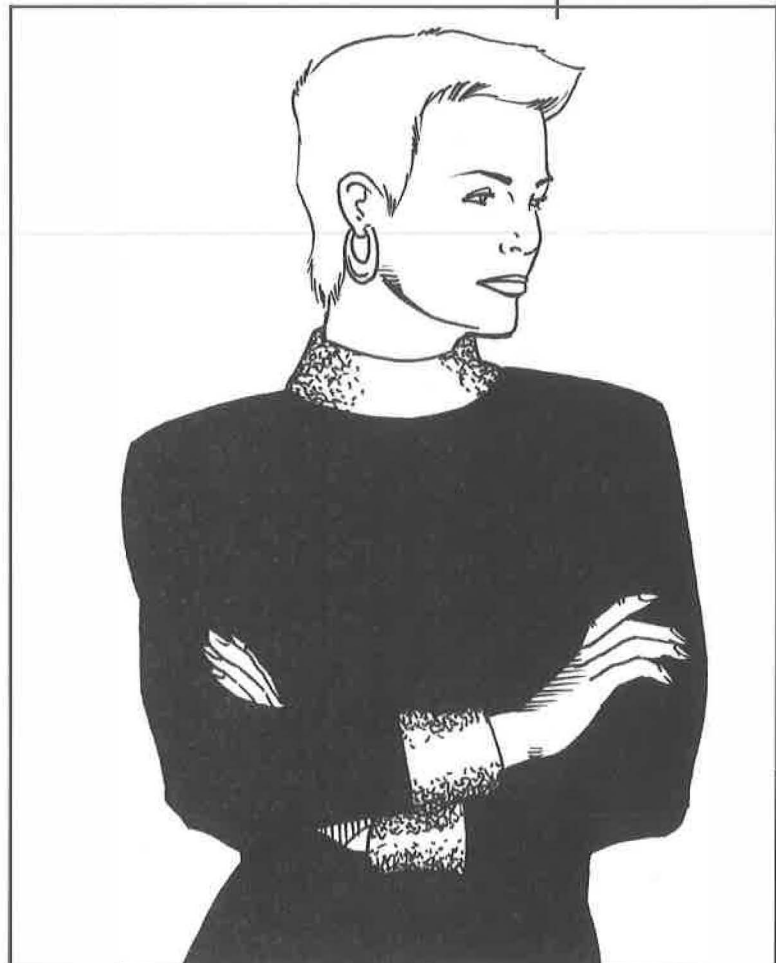
THE ANTISPINWARD CORRIDOR

Fighting in several of the Terran Empire's wars has occurred in and around an important Imperial trade and travel route known as the Antispinward Corridor. After passing through one of the most heavily-inhabited regions of the Heartworlds, the Corridor travels in a roughly straight line through the antispinward regions of the Empire to terminate at the world Polyphemus. From there various other trade routes lead into Mon'dabi space through the Varšan Expanse.

Thousands of space stations both publicly and privately owned line the Antispinward Corridor, offering shelter and resupply for galactic travelers. They range from some of the most luxurious and expensive resorts found in Terranspace to barely-refurbished tramp freighters with the engines removed and the cargo holds replaced with "staterooms." Millions of people — merchants, con men, Imperial military and diplomatic personnel, tourists, and more — travel the Corridor every day, offering many opportunities for profit and adventure to those who know how to exploit such situations... or who find themselves caught up in events beyond their control.

reward leaders and heroes of the Galactic War with hereditary titles. The Emperor also awarded titles to his mistresses and illegitimate offspring, and after 2570 all Senators automatically gained the title of Count upon taking office.

Ibrahim's successor was his son Kemal, who took the throne in 2570. Kemal was ambitious, and conducted a series of aggressive wars against small neighboring states and independent systems. He took an increasingly high-handed tone in diplomatic matters, and succeeded in driving the Se'ecra and Perseids into a short-lived defensive alliance in 2582. During his reign Kemal built up the Imperial military to near-wartime levels and gave his field commanders a great deal of autonomy. To his credit, Kemal did bring about useful reforms of the Imperial administration and completed the work of reconstruction neglected during his father's reign.

2598-2602: THE IMPERIAL CIVIL WAR

Emperor Kemal died in 2597. He had three potential heirs, and at various times during his reign had named each as his successor. Grand Duke Richard, his son, was the obvious candidate and had strong popular support, but had disagreed strongly with his father on several matters of policy in the 2580s and was living in virtual exile as the governor of the extreme spinward provinces. Richard's sister, the Grand Duchess Marissa, was Kemal's favorite at the time of his death, and had strong backing in the Senate and the Imperial bureaucracy. Finally, the Emperor's nephew Count Ivan was a well-respected military commander, serving as Admiral of the fleet guarding the Thorgon Neutral Zone.

The First Phase

Marissa was on Earth at the time of Kemal's death and quickly got the Senate to confirm her as Empress. Richard and Ivan refused to abide by the decision, and advanced on Earth with the Spinward Frontier and Thorgon Border fleets. In early 2598 the two rivals appeared before the Senate to plead their respective cases; their fleets were positioned at Sirius and Alpha Centauri to avoid the impression they were attempting a coup. The Senators heard the two but refused to reconsider the vote of confirmation. That might have ended it, but Marissa chose the disastrous step of having her rivals arrested as they left the Senate chamber in Brussels. Both resisted; Richard was killed and Ivan escaped. For a month Marissa believed she had secured her throne, then Ivan reappeared in command of his fleet and declared war.

The Civil War was a complex affair. The first phase (2598-99) pitted Ivan against Marissa. Because Ivan refused to directly attack Earth, most of the fighting was in the outer Solar System and nearby star systems as Ivan attempted to blockade the capital while Marissa summoned provincial garrisons and border fleets to her aid. Public opinion on Earth itself turned against Marissa and she had to devote almost as much effort to maintaining order as to fighting her cousin. In late 2599 an

assassin drone tunneled into the gardens of the Imperial Palace at Lyons and killed Marissa along with several Senate leaders having a breakfast meeting outdoors.

Ivan declared a truce and asked the Senate to confirm him. But the Senators were strongly opposed to Ivan for various reasons (including the death of their colleagues with Marissa). While they deliberated a new claimant appeared: Richard's son Antonio. Since Antonio was only nineteen, the Senate probably would not have taken him seriously — but his chief advisor and supporter was General Hei Feng, commandant of the Imperial Marines. Feng and Antonio had the loyalty of Richard's fleet, and the young man inherited much of his father's charm and popularity. As much to spite Ivan as any other reason, the Senate voted to make Antonio the next Emperor, and the second phase of the war got under way.

The Second Phase

The second phase (2600) saw fighting in the Antispinward Corridor region as Ivan sought to cut off Antonio from his power base on the frontier. Antonio held Earth with the help of the Senate and the Imperial Marines, but the heavy-handed measures General Feng adopted to suppress dissent quickly soured popular support for the young Emperor.

Count Ivan was killed in 2601 at a meeting Antonio had called promising a peaceful end to the war. One of Antonio's ambassadors had a bomb concealed in his skull (apparently unknown even to himself). The explosion killed Ivan and several of his key advisors.

The third phase of the Civil War (2601-02) saw three more factions arise in opposition to Antonio's rule. Ivan's younger sister Countess Elena gained the support of his forces and resumed the war; a coalition of military and business leaders trotted out Marissa's five-year-old son Feodor as her rightful heir; and twelve Senators gathered the planetary defense fleets of several core systems to support a Terran Republic.

Antonio wiped out the Republicans in short order, putting the rebel systems under military rule and absorbing all other planetary defense space forces into the Imperial Fleet. He began a campaign of attrition against Elena's forces, since he had the shipyards to replace losses which she could not afford. In early 2602 she surrendered, accepting Antonio's promise of safe conduct to exile in Perseid space. But Antonio had no intention of letting her go, and killed her personally on the bridge of his flagship, strangling her with his bare hands.

Emperor Antonio's increasingly erratic behavior alarmed his patron General Feng, and now the General saw his chance. While Antonio's courtiers and officers were still stunned by the murder, Feng drew his laser pistol and shot the Emperor, proclaiming his loyalty to the young Feodor.

2602-2668: DECLINE

Because of Feodor's youth, the Senate appointed Feng to act as Regent until the young Emperor reached adulthood. Feng's regency lasted until 2614, and was occupied with pacifying rebellious systems, ending the piracy and raiding which had become epidemic during the civil war, and thwarting a Perseid attempt in 2604 to "restore order" to the Empire. Feng reduced the privileges of the Senate-governed worlds, citing the Republican uprising as justification. He expanded military garrisons on all Imperial worlds, and vastly increased the size and authority of the Terran Security Service.

General Feng died in 2614, assassinated by a group of Feodor's personal friends. It was said they uncovered evidence of a plot by Feng to remove Feodor and take the throne himself, but the truth has never come to light. Feodor knew nothing of government or military affairs, and spent the rest of his reign in wild self-indulgence. A series of aides and favorites ran the government; they all did their best to get rich through bribery and corruption. Some retired wealthy; Feodor executed others during his occasional fits of "reform."

2633-2651: EMPRESS MARISSA III

Feodor's daughter Marissa succeeded him in 2633, taking the throne as Marissa III. Her father's numerous affairs and mistresses created a score of illegitimate half-siblings who might have caused problems for Marissa. She prepared for this by establishing close ties with the Terran Security Service during her father's reign. In the month between her father's death and her formal coronation, her relatives fell victim to numerous deadly accidents and sudden fatal illnesses.

On the throne, Marissa III was extremely intelligent and extremely ruthless. Interested in science and space exploration, she authorized expeditions that sent Imperial scout ships venturing out as far as Varanyi space — usually with a Terran Intelligence Command officer on board. The Terran Empire reached its greatest extent under her with a final burst of new colonization in antispinward and rimward systems. She disliked the unpredictability of war, and so relied on clever diplomacy, bribery, and assassination to achieve her goals. She detached the Psi Division from the Terran Security Service and made it into a separate agency, the Mind Police. After the chaos and inefficiency of her father's reign, Marissa's smooth-running tyranny seemed like a golden age to many... though it definitely foreshadowed evils to come.

Marissa lavished attention on the creation and training of her successor. She had genetic engineers create a male clone of herself, and brought in the Empire's leading scholars and educators to raise her son Stephen. The result was not what she hoped. He grew up resentful, spoiled, suspicious, and with enough of his family's legendary willpower to resist all attempts at molding his character. As he reached adulthood, his mother began to speak openly of Stephen as a "failed experiment" and made plans to create a better heir in his place.

2651-2663: EMPEROR STEPHEN

Stephen wasn't about to let his mother cast him aside. In 2651 he secretly hired a band of Thorgon mercenaries to assassinate the Empress during her tour of the frontier provinces. Equipped with security codes and a detailed schedule of Marissa's movements, the assassins evaded her tight security and completed their mission. Stephen took power immediately, and his first official act was the execution of his mother's murderers. The true story didn't come out until after the fall of the Empire.

The young emperor reigned from 2651 to 2663. He hated the work of government and left most of the decisions to his advisors. Seeking "revenge for my mother's death," he waged a brief and utterly inconclusive war with the Thorgons in 2653. The chief effects of this war were to move the Thorgon Neutral Zone back slightly — the first time Humanity had ever permanently lost ground to the Hegemony — and to make the Thorgons expand their military forces and begin a policy of destabilization in the Empire's border regions.

The one thing Stephen did concern himself with was his personal safety. As his paranoia increased from year to year, he isolated himself from the public and the Senate, constructing fortified underground palace-bunkers in Switzerland, Tibet, and Mons Pavonis on Mars. He kept his movements secret even from his closest advisors. For his bodyguards he used either robots or Human soldiers fitted with brain implants to make disloyalty impossible.

The flip side of his concern for safety was a terror of revolt. During Stephen's reign the security forces became ever more intrusive. The TSS considered every organization not under Imperial control a potential focus for opposition, and every political leader as a possible usurper. Arrests on trumped-up charges and deaths attributed to "mysterious accidents" became all too common among the Empire's governing class. Naturally, this had the effect of generating real conspiracies to overthrow the Emperor among people who feared for their lives. Yet when Stephen did die it was not the result of any rebel plot but his own carelessness and para-

noia. His sleeping quarters were an armored vault with a voiceprint lock. To foil assassins Stephen changed the code phrase every day. In 2663 he forgot the code overnight and could not get out of his bedroom. His guardian robots refused to allow anyone to approach the door with drills or cutting torches, and the Emperor died of thirst and starvation in his own room.

2663-2668: EMPRESS SOPHIA

Stephen's death provoked a succession crisis. He had no children of his own and no siblings. His nearest relatives were a pair of second cousins, the grandchildren of Ivan DeValiere: Count Vincent, a starship captain in the Exploration fleet; and Vincent's younger sister Lady Sophia, a student in Tokyo. As soon as the government announced Stephen's death, Sophia presented herself at the Senate chamber in Brussels, accompanied by the Minister of Security, Dr. Marcus Stone. The Senate confirmed Sophia quickly. Vincent disappeared.

Historians have debated how much power Sophia actually had as Empress. Some view her as an equal partner with Dr. Stone, whom she used as the scapegoat for any unpopular measures so she could present herself to the public as naive and good-hearted. Others portray her as Stone's puppet and victim. Sophia's reign continued the heavy-handed methods of Stephen's. To counter possible disloyalty in the Imperial forces, Sophia (or Dr. Stone) began to employ mercenaries — mostly Ackálians and even some Thorgons — as body-guards and garrison troops on Earth.

Rebel movements in the Empire, which hadn't constituted a significant political force for most of the 2600s, increased during Sophia's reign. In 2665 four planets in the spinward frontier declared themselves an independent republic and held out until 2667 against the Imperial fleet sent to arrest their leaders. On dozens of other worlds rebel cells began organizing, making contact with one another, and working to resist the Empire's growing tyranny.

Sophia's reign ended in 2668 when her brother Count Vincent appeared on Earth. Apparently he had spent several years a prisoner on a distant world, guarded by Dr. Stone's Security goons. With the help of a devoted band of Exploration Service veterans, Vincent escaped and avoided patrols on the way to Earth. Vincent told the Senate he would serve his sister as a loyal officer, but demanded Stone's arrest.

The Empress refused to dismiss Stone and claimed Vincent was an impostor. Ministry of Security troops placed all of Earth under a security lockdown and began mass arrests of anyone who might support Vincent. This goaded the armed forces into open mutiny — most commanders loathed Stone and the rise of the Ministry of Security, and in Vincent they saw a leader they could respect. The security troops were no match for the Imperial Marines, and after a week-long siege Vincent's supporters took the palace at Lyons. Sophia died by poison; no one could tell if she committed suicide or Stone murdered her. Doctor Stone was never found. Emperor Vincent took the throne in early 2669, a sad, bitter man.

WARS OF THE TERRAN EMPIRE

Consolidation Campaign (2436-2451)

Reunification Campaigns (2457-2485)

First Thorgon War (2505-2509)

Ackálian Border War (2518)

Galactic War (2548-2554)

Rimward Campaign (2580-2583)

Civil War (2598-2602)

Pacification Campaign (2602-2612)

Perseid War (2604)

Second Thorgon War (2653)

Spinward Revolt (2665-2667)

Rebellion Campaigns (2675-2703)

2669-2703: REVOLT

Vincent's brief reign (2669-2674) was marked by doomed attempts to reform the bureaucracy and reduce the role of the security ministries. The Emperor's health was poor as a result of his time in prison, and he was bedridden by 2671. During the last three years of his reign Vincent could do little, and the Empire drifted rudderless. Local governors and commanders ran things to suit themselves. Rebel activity in this period mostly focused on corrupt governors and brutal military leaders, and some still dared hope for a just and strong Emperor to restore the Empire to its old glory.

That hope faded in 2674 when Vincent died and his son Sandor, age 22, succeeded him. Sandor had spent much of his youth in exile in Perseid space, or in hiding. Pleasure-loving, easygoing, and not very bright, as Emperor he was a cipher. His ministers ran the government while he spent his days and nights in a drugged haze with a startling variety of sexual partners. The real ruler of the Empire during Sandor's reign was Grand Admiral Leonard Karlov. The Admiral kept up the fight against the rebel forces, even threatening planets with orbital bombardment if they sheltered rebels. In 2677 he personally ordered the sterilization of the planet Rand IV as an example to other worlds.

Sandor died in 2681; his brother Sigismund followed him on the throne. Sigismund possessed all his brother's vices, none of his good nature, and a viciousness verging on the psychopathic. He saw the campaign against the rebels as a wonderful opportunity to indulge his taste for cruelty, and enjoyed personally interrogating captives. Few survived, and none gave out any useful information, but Sigismund didn't mind.

In 2684 Sigismund abolished the Senate — for years it had been filled with yes-men and nonentities, and any Senator with either competence or a conscience soon found himself accused of treason. Sigismund shut it down completely after a lone Senator, Natalie Kyle of Tau Ceti, introduced a measure calling for his resignation on the grounds he was unfit for the position of Emperor. Kyle herself fled and soon emerged as a leader in the growing rebellion.

THE TERRAN REBELLION

Although numerous rebellions arose, sputtered, and were eventually crushed during the latter half of the 2600s, the one credited with finally bringing about the destruction of the Terran Empire began in the late 2670s in the coreward regions of space, not far from the former territory of the Mandaar-

ians. Sparked by the atrocities of Narushima Taniko, Imperial governor of the planet Malagar IV, it was led by a charismatic young soldier named Allen Traynor. After learning of Narushima's arrest and execution of his parents, sister, and every other inhabitant of the village of Wrenton for "refusal to pay taxes" (an allegation trumped up by Narushima to justify the elimination of a town politically opposed to her), he defected from the Imperial Army and returned home to inspire several other towns and cities to revolt against the governor.

After overthrowing Narushima, Traynor decided he couldn't stop there — Imperial functionaries whose cruelty exceeded their incompetence oppressed too many other planets. Carefully making contact with nascent rebellions on several other coreward and antispinward planets, he forged the widespread groups into a network of guerrilla warriors and saboteurs.

Over several years, Traynor's successes against Imperial officials became so stinging, and so well-
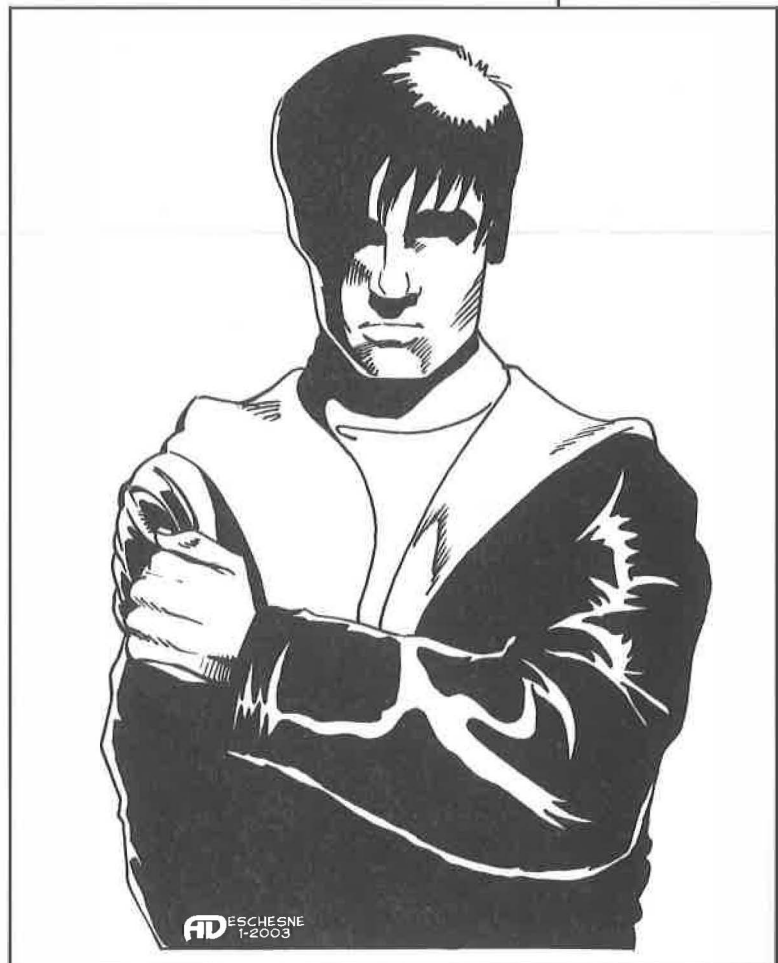
TERRAN EMPERORS

Marissa I (2436-2455)

Esteban (2455-2472)

Gregorio (2473-2490)

Ximena (2490-2524)

Feodora (2524-2561)

Ibrahim (2561-2570)

Kemal (2570-2597)

Marissa II (2597-2599)

Antonio (2600-2602)

Hei Feng (Regent 2602-2614)

Feodor (2614-2633)

Marissa III (2633-2651)

Stephen (2651-2663)

Sophia (2663-2668)

Vincent (2669-2674)

Sandor (2674-2681)

Sigismund (2681-2703)

known across the Empire, that he was one of the most wanted men in the Galaxy. Only the protection of several powerful patrons who supported his cause, including Senator Kyle, allowed him to evade the Imperial dragnet. By the 2690s, he was by far the best-known and most-feared rebel against the Empire.

END OF EMPIRE

In the 2690s, Emperor Sigismund and his military leaders adopted harsher and harsher measures to quell the rebellion — measures that only provoked more unrest and weakened the Empire. In 2691 Sigismund created a "Vengeance Corps" of Xenovore soldiers, specially trained and brainwashed for uncontrollable savagery. The Emperor loved to watch recordings of the Corps turned loose against helpless civilian populations. Military officers who protested such atrocities risked accusations of treason.

In 2698 a cabal of mid-level officers in the Ackálian Border Fleet decided they could no longer ignore the Empire's crimes. They defected to the side of the rebellion with twenty starships, giving the rebels the break they'd hoped for. Instead of hiding out and fleeing from planet to planet, now they could meet Imperial forces in space and do something to protect the planets suffering the Emperor's brand of vengeance.

The rebel fleet won its first victory against Imperial forces in 2699 when it intercepted a task force sent to punish the planet Oparnia after that world failed to meet its annual quota of traitors arrested. The Battle of Oparnia attracted more Imperial defectors, including virtually the entire Exploration Service. After a hair-raising voyage past Sigismund's blockade, Senator Kyle persuaded the Conjoined Civilizations Republic to support the rebellion with supplies. By 2700 open civil war engulfed the Empire. Dozens of worlds flocked to the rebel banner as the Imperial forces grew ever more brutal.

The rebels established a haven in the coreward portion of the Empire, with other groups of friendly planets far to spinward and antispinward. From there they launched raids against Imperial forces. The strategy adopted by Sigismund and his commanders actually helped the rebels — the Emperor insisted the military quash uprisings quickly wherever they appeared, and consequently split his fleets into dozens of small task forces spread across the Empire. The rebels had the luxury of choosing when and where to strike, and so could engage the Imperial fleet piecemeal.

By 2702 the Imperial government was tottering. More than half the worlds of the Empire were in revolt. The Se'ecra and Mon'dabi had recognized the rebel government, and Se'ecra warships were now fighting alongside rebel vessels. Sigismund abandoned Earth late that year when the planetary defense commanders refused to bombard cities rebelling against him.

Emperor Sigismund consolidated his fleet into a single massed armada and began a last offensive against the rebel worlds to spinward. He bombarded and ravaged every planet he encountered. At the Trovatore system the rebels assembled their own fleet for battle. The Imperial fleet outnumbered the rebels two to one, despite the presence of large Se'ecra squadron to aid them. Most rebel ships were low on supplies and needed maintenance and repairs. The two sides met on January 9, 2703.

The battle was long, hard-fought, and frequently in doubt; historians agree Sigismund could easily have won. Two key events tipped the day in favor of the rebels. First, a team of rebels slipped aboard the battleship *Colossus* to give an Imperial admiral a message from his daughter, who fought on the rebel side. Admiral Panatic led his squadron out of the battle at a key moment, opening the Imperial flank to a rebel counterattack. The second event was a prisoner revolt aboard the Imperial flagship, the *Imperator*. Some rebel captives freed themselves and a dozen others from Sigismund's torture chamber, then sabotaged the *Imperator*'s power plant before escaping aboard a shuttle. With the flagship disabled, the Imperial command structure disintegrated, and the rebels broke up the Imperial fleet.

By the time a rebel boarding party took control of the flagship, Emperor Sigismund's troops had shot both him and his Xenovore guards. The last of the DeValieres was dead, and the Empire died with him. A period of chaos followed, as the rebel leaders and their allies debated the future and drew up plans for what would one day become the Galactic Federation.

Peoples of the Milky Way
The Species of the Galaxy

The Terran Empire exists in a Galaxy full of sentient life. Explorers estimate the Milky Way contains about 20,000 inhabited worlds (plus many more potentially inhabitable worlds), home to some 20 trillion sentient beings. Of the several hundred known intelligent species, at least 50 have interstellar travel capability. And, given how little of the Milky Way Humans and other species have thoroughly explored, hundreds more may also exist. The diversity of intelligent life in the Galaxy is an eternal source of hope, wonder, and frustration.

This chapter reviews the major Galactic species, providing Package Deals where appropriate. None of the Package Deals has the *Distinctive Features* Disadvantage, since in this sort of multi-species society, having an unusual appearance rarely hinders a character. You may also want to look at pages 23-32 of *Star Hero* for other Package Deals (such as Cultural or Environment packages) you can apply to a character.

HUMANS

"HUMAN" VERSUS "TERRAN"

Most people use the term "Human" to refer to the species itself, or one of its members. They reserve the term "Terran" mostly for things or institutions associated with Humanity — the Terran Empire, Terran technology, Terran military tactics, the Terran influence on galactic politics. Some people use "Human" for such things, though.

The Human species, known also as Terrans or Earthlings, comes from the planet Earth. As the founders of and dominant species in the Terran Empire, they're one of the most powerful species in the Galaxy.

Humans have a fairly common body structure — bipedal, upright posture, two manipulating hands, a head containing the brain and sense organs, and an internal skeleton. In fact, scientists throughout the Galaxy widely use the term "humanoid" to refer to the general body shape of many species.

In Galactic society, Terrans are known for blindingly rapid technological and social change and their ability to adapt to an enormous number of environments and situations. However, many aliens also regard them as capricious, powermongering, and violent. Many species hope the Terran Empire's relatively long period of dominance indicates Humans have finally "settled down" to a more stable social pattern.

Ordinary Humans do not have a Package Deal. They are the default from which other Package Deals derive.

VARIANT HUMAN TYPES

Most Humans come from unmodified Earth stock, but a few groups have altered the genes of their children to create variant subspecies. Four of those variant types have become successful enough to number in the millions or billions during the Imperial era.

Variant Humans are still Human. They can have children with different variant types or unmodified Humans, although with a greater chance of miscarriage or birth defect than normal (and many only find "their own kind" sexually appealing). Abilities tend to "average out" in halfbreeds — the child of a Martian and an unmodified Terran would probably have greater strength than most Martians, but less ability to withstand low air pressure or function in low gravity.

HEAVIES

Adapted for life on high-gravity worlds, Heavies (or "Heavyworlders") are thick-set, muscular Humans with strong bones, high-pressure circulatory systems, and lungs able to handle dense atmospheres. Tougher and stronger than normal Humans, they make good soldiers, barroom brawlers, miners, engineers, and heavy laborers. In normal Human society, they often have difficulty fitting through doors, using equip-

ment designed for standard-size Human hands, and so forth (the GM may impose Skill Roll penalties for the use of some tools, if appropriate). The Empire has about 5 billion Heavies on a dozen planets.

HEAVY PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+5 STR	5
+4 CON	8
+3 BODY	6
Heavy: Knockback Resistance -1"	2
High Gravity Training: Environmental Movement (High-G)	1
Used To High G: Armor (2 PD/0 ED); Only To Protect Against G Force Damage (-1)	1

Disadvantages	Value
-1 DEX	-3
Physical Limitation: Large (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)	-5

Total Cost Of Package: 15

MARTIANS
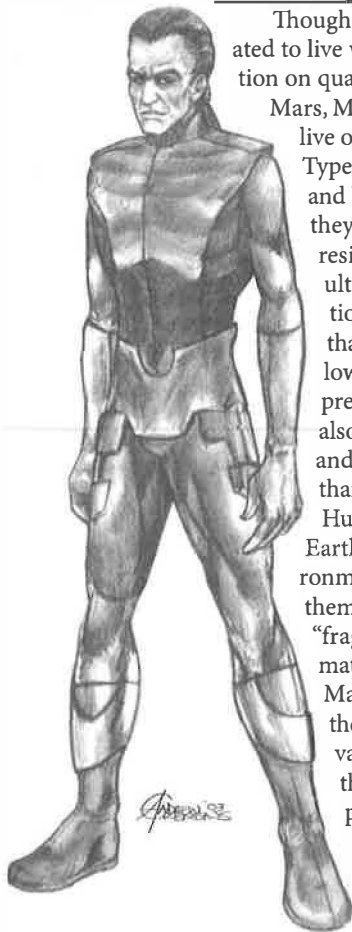
Though originally created to live without protection on quasi-terraformed Mars, Martians now live on many other Type 3 worlds. Tall and barrel-chested, they have increased resistance to ultraviolet radiation and lungs that function at low atmospheric pressure. But they also have bodies and bones weaker than those of Humans from Earth-normal environments, making them somewhat "fragile." Approximately 10 billion Martians live in the Empire on various worlds; the largest single population is on Mars itself.

The designation "Martian" should not be confused with "Native Martian," the term xenologists use when discussing life-forms that evolved naturally on Mars.

MARTIAN PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Adapted To The Martian Environment: Life Support (Expanded Breathing: can breathe normally in thin atmospheres)	1
Low Gravity Training: Environmental Movement (Low-G)	4

Disadvantages	Value
-2 STR	-2
-1 CON	-2
-1 BODY	-2

Total Cost Of Package: -1

SELKIES

Selkies (also known as Merfolk, Sea People, and Tritons) live on many water worlds in the Empire (not to mention the oceans of Earth). They can't literally breathe water (attempts to create Humans with true gills have met with only limited success), but their enhanced lung capacity allows them to stay underwater as long as seals. Their large, rounder-than-normal eyes help them to see without difficulty when they're deep underwater, but are also sensitive to bright light (such as direct sunlight). An insulating fat layer helps them
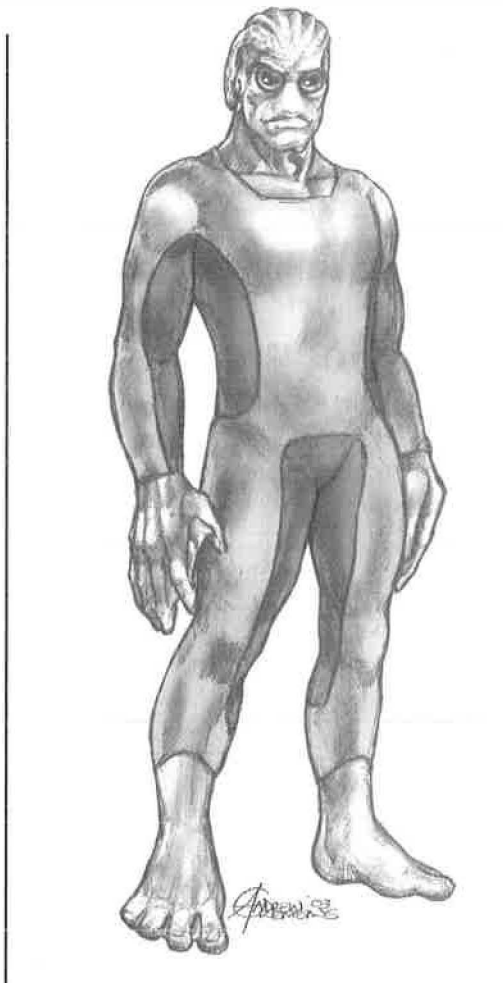
SELKIE PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Water-Breathing: Life Support (Extended Breathing: 1 END per Minute; Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Cold)	5
Webbed Hands And Feet: Swimming +3"	3
Nightvision	5
Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement	3

Disadvantages	Value
Physical Limitation: Light-Sensitive Eyes (-2 Sight PER Rolls in bright light) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)	-10
Vulnerability: 2 x Effect from Sight Group Flashes based on bright light (Common)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: -14

withstand the effects of living in frigid waters, and their webbed hands and feet allow them to move through those waters with ease. The Empire has some 6 billion Selkies among its population.

SPACERS

First bred in orbiting space habitats before the invention of Hyperdrive, Spacers (also called Belters) continue to thrive in space stations, asteroid colonies, orbital habitats, and other zero-G environments. The Spacer population in the Empire is just under 10 billion.

Created and trained to spend their entire lives in space, Spacers have bones and muscles engineered not to weaken in zero gravity, increased resistance to radiation, lungs designed to handle low pressures, and toes as dextrous as fingers. However, their bodies do not handle normal gravity well; to a Spacer, walking on the surface of a planet feels like dragging himself through a thick, soupy atmosphere.

SPACER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Spaceborn: Life Support (Expanded Breathing: can breathe normally in thin atmospheres; Safe Environment: Low-Intensity Radiation)	2
Feet As Useful As Hands: Extra Limbs (2), Inherent (+¼)	6
Zero-G Training: Environmental Movement (Zero G)	4

Disadvantages	Value
-2 STR	-2
-1 CON	-2
Physical Limitation: Has Difficulty In Normal Gravity (-2 to all DEX and STR Rolls) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)	-10

Total Cost Of Package: -2
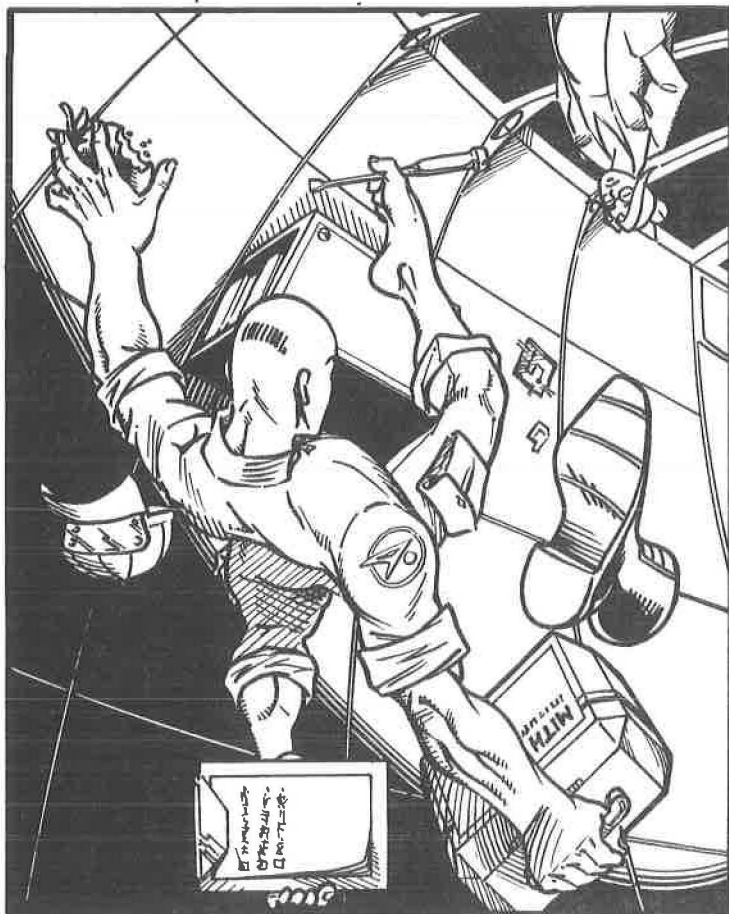
SPECIES OF THE EMPIRE

Although Humans founded and rule the Terran Empire, several other species live under the Earth-and-eagle Imperial banner. Some accepted Human protection gladly after the Xenovore Wars, others were conquered and nurse grudges against their overlords. Humans have accepted a few as "junior partners" in the running of the Empire.

Fex

Fex (the term is singular and plural) resemble humanoid terrestrial cats, with swift, graceful bodies, keen senses, and sharp claws. They have a short, downy coating of fur all over their bodies, ranging in color from a grey so dark it's nearly black to a light, tawny shade. The hair on their heads (often called a "mane") is thick and luxurious; the fur on their backs and lower legs also tends to be thicker.

Fex Biology

Bipedal like Humans, Fex have bodies optimized for fast sprinting rather than endurance running (they evolved from a hunting cat roughly similar to the cheetah of Earth, though they never have spotted fur). Their feet and four-fingered hands have large retractable claws, good for use not only as weapons, but to help with tasks like climbing. They have large, sharp teeth compared to Humans, but not large enough to qualify as "fangs." Their large, sensitive eyes work well in low light.

Fex subsist on a primarily carnivorous diet — they can even eat raw meat without difficulty, though almost all Fex prefer cooked food. Various types of fish and the *orsec,* a type of small domestic animal similar to a pig, are their favorite foods.

Fex come in the standard two genders and bear live young after a three-month gestation. The kittens remain in a pouch on the mother's stomach for a year after birth. When large enough, they leave the pouch and switch from a diet of milk to one of meat. The law considers them adults when they reach age 15.

Fexao, The Fex Homeworld

The Fex come from Fexao, an Earthlike world lying within the former territory of the Xenovores. The Xenovores easily conquered the Fex during the mid-2200s, making them a slave/food species. When Humanity began to defeat the Xenovores and push into their space, fierce battles raged around Fexao; Xenovore attacks devastated the planet's surface. Despite this, the Fex willingly allied with Humanity.

After the Xenovore Wars ended, the Fex enjoyed a brief period of independence, but the Terran Union later "convinced" them to join it. In truth, the Fex needed little "convincing"; they weren't foolish enough to think they could stand up to Humanity, and knew they'd be better off with them than against them. Most modern Fex are happy Terran subjects and generally prosper as part of the Empire, though periodic rebel movements carry out occasional attacks against Imperial officials.

Smaller than Earth, Fexao has a gravity of 0.9 G. Overall, it has a dry climate — oceans cover only half the surface, and much of the land is desert. The northern hemisphere has the most fertile land, with several small continents and large island groups suitable for agriculture. The Fex have done much to roll back the deserts and increase the proportion of arable land. Today, Fexao has a population of 8 billion.

Fex Society And Culture

Fex society is surprisingly peaceful, given their predatory ancestry. Scrupulously polite and honest, Fex try to remain calm and unruffled at all times. Xenosociologists attribute this restraint to the fact that angry Fex can inflict serious damage on each other with their claws; if they were prone to anger or fighting, the result would be a society of maimed, scarred individuals.

The government of Fexao combines democracy and meritocracy — the Fex vote on candidates to fill all the important government posts, but candidates must meet a very strict set of requirements and pass examinations to become eligible to run. Recently the media has accused the Terran Security Service of meddling in the qualification process, trying to make loyalty to the Empire a key factor in eligibility. If true, such actions would likely cause a huge upsurge in anti-Terran sentiment among the Fex.

Intellectually, the Fex have made important contributions to philosophy and law, but seldom have much interest in the sciences. A high demand for their sculpture and textiles exists throughout the Empire, and Fex dancers are famed for their grace.

Beyond their homeworld, Fex are most often encountered as traders, Imperial soldiers, and entertainers. A small number of Fex have risen to high positions in the Imperial military and judiciary, and the Mind Police have recruited a few of the relatively rare Fex telepaths. Fex have spread to many worlds in the Empire, and a few all-Fex colonies exist. The total Fex population is about 16 billion.

Fex technology was stable at the pre-industrial (ATRI 3) level when the Xenovores conquered Fexao. Using captured technology they advanced quickly to atomic and early spaceflight capability

FEX PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 DEX	6
Running +2"	4
Claws: HKA 1d6 (up to 2d6 with STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)	12
+2 to Climbing	4
Nightvision	5
Lightsleep	3

Disadvantages	Value
-2 CON	-4

Total Cost Of Package: 30

(ATRI 7), but the devastation of war prevented further progress. Under the Empire, technology-sharing and development programs have given Fexao an overall tech rating of 9 on the ATRI scale, and the inhabitants seem content with that. A couple of Fex colony planets have ATRI ratings of 11.

BUT CAN THEY...?

Can Humans interbreed with aliens? The scientific answer is "of course not," but that's not the default assumption for the Hero Universe. Human and alien crossbreeds commonly occur in Space Opera stories, so they're entirely appropriate for the Terran Empire setting.

Typically, any "humanoid" species can breed with Humans. "Humanoid" means any alien species a Human actor could portray with the help of some makeup and simple latex attachments. Zurites, Perseids, Malvans, Varanyi, Thorgons, Mandaarians, and Velarians all qualify. Some scientists see this as evidence that ancient starfarers planted colonies across the Galaxy. Others point to the utter lack of solid evidence supporting this theory, preferring instead the Occam's Razor explanation that "life identifies with other life" — something about the concept of "life" makes most life-forms genetically compatible, at some level, with similar species.

Similarly, most insectoid species (like the Se'ecra and Tkaki) can interbreed among themselves, as can most ichthyoid species, reptilian species, and so forth. Sometimes two species not derived from the same basic stock can crossbreed, provided certain basic compatibilities exist (like humanoid form) — for example, Humans have successfully sired children with Mon'dabi.

If you want to create a crossbreed character, take a few features from each of the parental Package Deals, but usually at less than full strength or effect. The GM should review what you come up with to ensure it fits his campaign and doesn't cause game balance problems.

Toractans

Known throughout the Empire for their work as mine laborers and heavy troops in the Imperial Army, the Toractans have thick skin, usually in tones of green or grey, and no hair.

Toractan Biology

Standing a bit more than 1 meter tall, Toractans are heavily muscled, virtually hairless humanoids who weigh more than 50 kilograms as adults. Their tough skin has armor plates on the back, forearms, and shins. Although often thought of as ponderous and slow, in truth they're every bit as agile as Humans. They have two fingers and a thumb on each hand.

Though warm-blooded, Toractans lay eggs in clutches of four. Throughout their history, most Toractans died in childhood or adolescence, victims of the many vicious predators on Toracta. Today, thanks to animal-control technology, the Toractan population has exploded — currently 13 billion live on Toracta, and another 7 billion off-world.

Toracta, The Toractan Homeworld

Much larger than Earth, the planet Toracta has a gravity of 1.4 standard G. Oceans and large inland seas cover eighty percent of the surface; the landmasses are mostly in the tropics, and have several large rainforest basins. The Toractans evolved in one such region. The planet is well-known among galactic tourists for its majestic stretches of cloud forest, which the Toractans preserve as a genetic
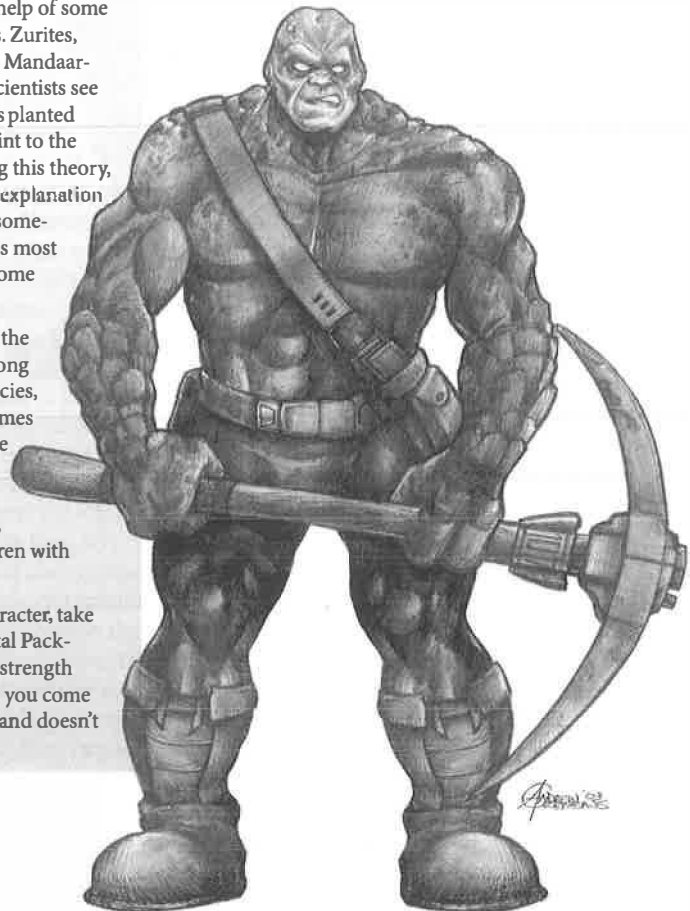
Toractans

TORACTAN PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 STR	2
+2 CON	4
+2 PD	2
Tough Skin: Damage Resistance (2 PD/2 ED)	2
Armored Plates: Armor (3 PD/1 ED); Activation Roll 11- (-1)	3
Acute Hearing: +3 PER with Hearing Group	6
Acute Hearing: Ultrasonic Perception (Hearing Group)	3

Disadvantages	Value
-2 PRE	-2
Running -2"	-4
Physical Limitation: Toractan Eyes (color blind and extremely nearsighted; -2 Sight PER in appropriate situations when corrective lenses/medications not used) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)	-5

Total Cost Of Package: 11

and economic resource.

Toracta's animal life tends to be big, comparable to Earth's dinosaurs, and includes several huge and terrifying species of predator. The largest such creature, the *rostanac* ("Eater of Forests") has a mass of 70 tons and stands 12 meters tall. Even today, fear of these predators remains high; the Toractans build their cities underground, or heavily fortify them against marauding animals. Hunting is a popular sport among daring Toractans and tourists alike.

Toractan Society And Culture

Toractans primarily live underground, and most of their modern communities consist of immense tunnel complexes. They discovered agriculture early by growing fungi and raising large grubs in piles of waste and compost. Sound is their primary sense; Toractans are color-blind and extremely nearsighted. They have elaborate, complex music and poetry that appeals to many other species.

During Marissa III's reign, the Toractans are at the center of a major controversy over non-Human rights. While Toractans are Imperial citizens, corporations recruit large numbers of them as miners under contracts amounting to virtual slavery. So far, the Imperial government seems more interested in keeping the mines productive than in protecting the rights of the Toractans. The traditional Toractan stoic endurance and fatalistic acceptance of harsh conditions only complicates the issue.

The Toractans had ATRI 4 technology when Terran explorers discovered them in 2467. Exposure to Imperial technology has rapidly advanced them to ATRI 9.

THE OSATHRI

The Osathri (singular Osath) are an ocean-dwelling species resembling catfish, with specialized fins for manipulating objects. They have six eyes — two on the sides of the head, two on top forward, and two downward-looking just in front of the mouth.

Osathri do not mingle much with Humans or other aliens. Many Osathri consider their conquest and rule by the Terran Empire intolerable; their large homeworld, Soolasha, remains a hotbed of rebellion and discontent. Loyalist Osathri typically emigrate, and often serve in the Empire's Sea Forces.

Because they can only live in water and have no legs, Osathri require watersuits and hover platforms when they visit air-dwellers. On colony worlds with significant Human settlements such things are as common as automobiles; Osathri on the homeworld shun anyone who has such devices as a "walker lover."
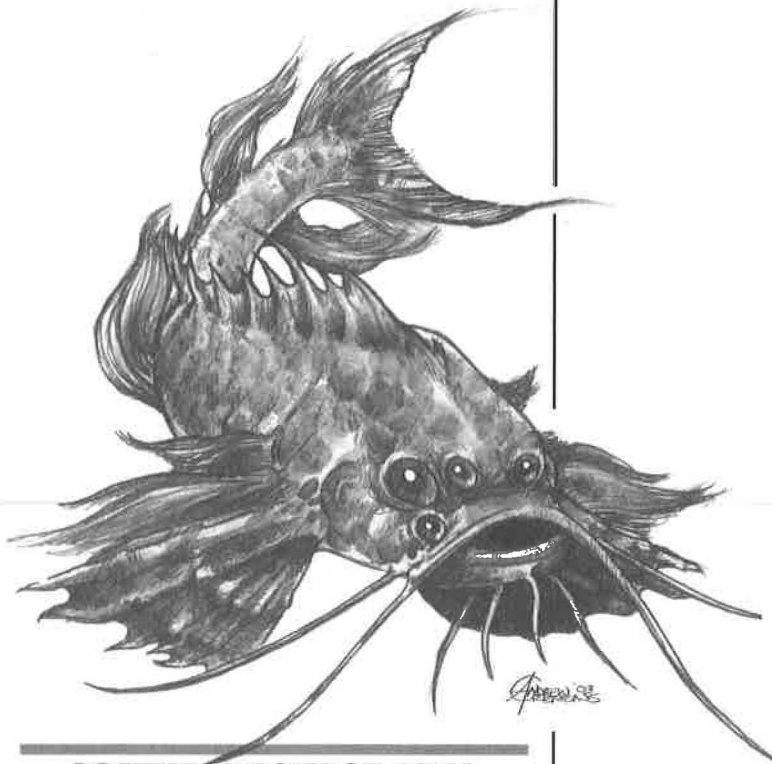
OSATHRI PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Water-Breathing: Water is their default environment	0
Life Support (Safe Environment: Intense Cold)	2
Aquatic Form: Swimming +4"	4
Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement	3
Six Eyes: Increased Arc Of Perception (240 Degrees) for Sight Group	5

Disadvantages	Value
Running -6"	-12
Physical Limitation: No Legs (cannot walk) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)	-10

Total Cost Of Package: -8

ACKÁLIANS

One of the most aggressive species in the Galaxy, well known as a threat to both the Terran Empire and the Mon'dabi Federation, the Ackálians (uh-KALE-ee-uns) rule an empire located antispinward and "north" of the Terran Empire.

ACKÁLIAN BIOLOGY

The Ackálians are large, powerful carnivores, the top predators in their native environment. Physically, an Ackálian looks like an ogreish monster from Human myth, with a burly humanoid body, two powerful legs ending in clawed feet, two strong arms (not clawed), a long tail, and a covering of sparse hair. They have particularly disturbing faces, with four all-black eyes set above a mouth full of teeth. Two small limbs flanking the mouth terminate in killing fangs. A noticeable sexual dimorphism exists: female Ackálians average about 10 percent more mass than males (with proportionately greater strength), while males have greater agility. Both genders prefer tight-fitting clothing; males often wear only pants during warm weather.

Ackálians live on meat alone, preferably still warm. They consider cooked food absolutely unpalatable, but can tolerate slightly rotted flesh. Other species find Ackálian cuisine dull because the Ackálians don't use spices or flavorings (just about any plant products give Ackálians terrible indigestion).

Ackálian females give birth to live offspring, usually one at a time. They do not nurse their young, however, feeding them pre-chewed meat and animal blood instead. Young Ackálians grow up slowly; society does not consider them full adults until they reach nearly 30 standard years. The combination of an all-meat diet and slow maturation means Ackálian worlds have low populations by

Human standards. In all, the Ackálians number only about 80 billion out of an empire with 300 billion subjects.

ACKÁL, THE ACKÁLIAN HOMEWORLD

The homeworld of the Ackálian species, Ackál is a large planet with a surface gravity 10 percent greater than Earth's. Warmer and drier than Earth, it has large deserts and no icecaps (the deserts appear to have resulted from overgrazing and chemical warfare by the Ackálians). It has a population of 2 billion Ackálians (actually a bit more than it can comfortably support). Ackál depends on food imports from subject worlds.

ACKÁLIAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Thanks to the greater size and strength of the female gender, the Ackálians have always had a matriarchal society. Women hold all positions of importance (including Empress) and dictate how the Empire conducts governmental and social affairs. (Ackálian males living in Ackálian space may take a Social Limitation, *Ackálian Male,* to reflect this; it's Very Frequently, Minor, and worth 15 points.)

Ackálian culture has long emphasized war, individual achievement, and the submission of the weak to the strong. No matter what the arena — military, political, social, creative — Ackálians constantly struggle with each other for advantage. They consider this fierce competition a good thing: the perpetual infighting improves the species, they say. At their best, Ackálians are fearless, confident, adventurous, clever, and meritocratic. At their worst they are brutal, combative, cruel, reckless, and overbearing.

This constant competitiveness makes it difficult for other species to interact with Ackálians — the Ackálians always try to achieve dominance, even in situations where it's not necessarily appropriate. For example, if a Human merchant has an

Ackálian in his starship crew, he must be able to defeat the Ackálian in combat (to keep him in line) *and* constantly remain on his guard (in case the Ackálian tries a sneak attack to seize command). Most species solve the problem by avoiding Ackálians as much as possible.

Oddly, connoisseurs hold Ackálian art in high regard. It often displays a raw, primitive, stark quality many people find evocative, though it's also capable of surprising sophistication and depth. Many of the Ackálians best known to other species are artists or entertainers.

In Ackálian society, science and engineering are just another arena of competition, and consequently technological progress is often rapid but uneven. Their most successful developments come from individual researchers or small teams; any large research project quickly becomes a welter of backbiting, bureaucratic empire-building, and credit-stealing. Currently, the Ackálians enjoy an ATRI rating of 11 in most fields.

ACKÁLIAN PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+3 STR	3
+1 DEX	3
+2 CON	4
Running +2"	4
+1 Sight Group PER	2
Ackálian Bite: HKA 1 point; No STR Bonus (-½)	3

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 19

For male Ackálians: reduce STR to +1, increase DEX to +2. Total cost: 20 points

For female Ackálians: increase STR to +5, remove DEX bonus. Total cost: 18 points

THE NALOTH

Resembling large, tentacled slugs, the Naloth live in coastal swamps on the planet Lothan in Ackálian space. Air-breathers, they can survive in the oxygen-poor swamp water thanks to their efficient lungs. All Naloth have mild psionic powers, which they evolved to communicate and to lure prey; today they use it almost solely to "speak" to each other and to aliens.

Naloth have Swimming +4", Life Support (Extended Breathing: 1 END per Minute), Telepathy 4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Running -4", and -2 DEX (total cost: 22 points).

THE SHISEKI

A crab-like species with a society based on "castes" biologically specialized for different tasks (such as warriors with large fighting pincers), the Shiseki are one of the economic mainstays of the Ackálian Empire due to their willingness to work hard at jobs the Ackálians themselves dislike. Their importance derives in part from their hive mind, which allows them to communicate instantly over vast distances and increase their collective intelligence — a single Shiseki has almost no INT, but a large group of them usually has a prodigious gestalt intellect. Additionally, their homeworld, Sekra, lies on a main trade route to Mon'dabi space.

The Shiseki have Extra Limbs (4), 1 PD/1 ED Armor, a Mind Link that works with any group of up to 1,000 other Shiseki, +10 INT that only works when Mind Linked with enough other Shiseki, and Life Support (Diminished Sleep: 8 hours per week). However, they also suffer from -8 INT, -4 EGO, -2 PRE, -2 DEX, and have a *Loyalty To The Hive* Psychological Limitation (-20 points).

Zurites

One of the most intriguing of the Ackálian subject species is the Zurites. Enigmatic and often philosophical, the Zurites are a species divided. The vast majority of them live in peaceful contemplation on their homeworld, while those who rejected the pacifistic way of life have become space nomads.

Zurite Biology

Tall, slender, nearly immortal blue-skinned humanoids, Zurites have large, grey, pupil-less eyes and no hair. All Zurites possess limited psionic abilities; some possess stronger powers, or more powers.

Zurite reproduction, which rarely occurs, involves a two-stage process. Young Zurites are live-born and spend several years as burrowing grub-like creatures attached to the roots of certain trees. When the young Zurite has finally grown to about 30 kilograms in mass, it undergoes a metamorphosis into a preadult Zurite and emerges. Its parents then take it in and educate it. Zurites living away from Zur have developed special "gestation chambers" to take the place of the trees.

Zur, The Zurite Homeworld

An old and dying world, Zur is a small planet, once Earthlike but now becoming increasingly cold and dry. Compared to Earth, it has large landmasses and small oceans; land covers nearly half of Zur's surface. The Ackálians are systematically looting Zur, hoping to discover ancient relic technology or at least some items of value, but the Zurites apparently went to great trouble to return their world to a completely pretechnological state.

Zurite Society And Culture

An ancient species with a history going back over a hundred thousand years. the Zurites at one time they were a galactic power on about the same scale as the Mandaarians. But approximately ten thousand years ago, as a species they decided to return to a simpler way of life. After scouring their planet of all advanced technology, they began a life of contemplation, creativity, and philosophy at ATRI 3.

Not all Zurites accepted this change. They chose to abandon not their technological way of life, but their homeworld. Known as "nomad Zurites," they now travel throughout the Galaxy as traders, mercenaries, explorers, scientists, and diplomats. They enjoy working with other species and learning new things. As a group, they possess ATRI 12 technology, which they guard carefully.

Homeworld Zurites follow a code of total pacifism. They did not resist Ackálian conquest of their world and refuse to rebel against them. They do practice a kind of passive resistance, however: Zurites don't obey Ackálian orders unless they choose to, and if the Ackálians use executions and torture to try to enforce their will, the Zurites bear it calmly.

ZURITE PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+5 INT	5
+5 EGO	10
Life Support (Longevity: Immortality)	5
Mental Defense (2 + EGO/5)	2
20 points' worth of psionic powers (typically Telepathy 4d6)	20

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 42

Cultural Additions	
Homeworld Zurite	Value
-2 STR	-2
Psychological Limitation: Zurite Pacifism (Common, Total)	-20
Total cost: 20	

Nomad Zurite	Value
Advanced Tech (ATRI 12 in a mostly ATRI 11 campaign)	15
Total cost: 57	

MON'DABI

The founders and dominant species of the aptly-named Mon'dabi Federation, the Mon'dabi are one of the most influential and widespread species in the Milky Way. Their powerful stardrives and territorial instincts have allowed them not only to reach and occupy many star systems, but to hold them against the likes of the Xenovores and Ackálians.

MON'DABI BIOLOGY

The Mon'dabi are large humanoids (with males averaging about 1.9 m tall) superficially resembling Terran reptiles. They have scaly skin, eyes more mammalian than reptilian, teeth strong and sharp enough for painful (though not deadly) bites, and long, heavy tails. They walk upright on unclawed feet. Despite their fearsome appearance, the Mon'dabi consume only leaves, young plants, fruit, and other vegetation.

Unlike Terran reptiles Mon'dabi bear live young. Mon'dabi sexual dimorphism is pronounced — males are considerably larger and stronger than females, and the customary family structure involves one male and several wives.

MON'DA, THE MON'DABI HOMEWORLD

Mon'da is a pleasant and temperate world, home to (among others) more than a few expatriate Humans who enjoy the pleasant climate. The largest cities, including the capital Heshar, are clustered in the tropical and temperate zones, since Mon'dabi, though warmblooded, dislike cold weather.

Unlike Earth or Ackál, where the largest and most successful creatures are almost all mammals, on Mon'da reptilian animals rule — in fact, mammals did not even evolve there, reptiles and insects fill their ecological niches. For example, the Mon'da hunting lizard (*HERO System Bestiary*, pages 203-04) is renowned for its speed, ferocity, and willingness to attack humanoids.

MON'DABI SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The Mon'dabi evolved from reptilian creatures similar in many ways to the apes and monkeys of Earth. Their herbivorous diet led them naturally to agriculture and the beginnings of civilization, with greater social complexity becoming necessary as growing populations required more extensive farming projects. Mon'dabi cuisine essen-

MON'DABI PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 CON	4
Mon'dabi Bite: HKA 1 point; No STR Bonus (-½)	3
Mon'dabi Skin: Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED)	1
Mon'dabi Senses: +1 PER with all Sense Groups	3
Tail: Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	5

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 16

Mon'dabi Males: add +2 STR. Total cost: 18 points.

Mon'dabi Females: for games taking place primarily in Mon'dabi space, add Social Limitation: Mon'dabi Female (Very Frequently, Minor; -15 points) (if appropriate, the GM may allow the character to take this Disadvantage at a reduced value for campaigns taking place outside Mon'dabi space). Total cost: 1 point.

tially amounts to an endless variety of salads flavored with complex combinations of spices and herbs. They also brew many types of alcoholic beverages. Mon'dabi spices and liquors are major exports to Terran space.

The Mon'dabi have a markedly sexist society — both law and custom require females to defer to males in all matters, and some members of the Federation do not allow women to vote or hold office. Many of the Mon'dabi living outside Federation space are feminists seeking greater equality.

Territorial and possessive, the Mon'dabi still consider land the most important form of wealth. A male who does not own any land at all is unlikely to attract even one wife. One who owns land (or any other thing of value) fights fiercely, even to the death, to protect it. The authorities impose severe penalties for theft and related offenses, up to and including maiming or execution.

The large surplus of single male Mon'dabi poses a problem for the Federation, and occasionally the government engages in aggressive policies simply as a safety valve. However, the Mon'dabi are skilled negotiators and traders, especially when they can bluff or posture, and sometimes provoke a crisis simply to get other civilizations to the bargaining table. Their only true enemies are the Ackálians, with whom they have gone to war on four separate occasions.

Science among the Mon'dabi has been a matter of constant slow improvement rather than great revolutions. For most of their history mathematics has been a particularly important area of study; it isn't clear whether this reflects some innate ability or just a cultural tradition, but Mon'dabi mathematicians are often considered the Galaxy's best. Generally, Mon'dabi technology is ATRI 10, verging into 11. They have been at that level for some time, and neighboring civilizations have now surpassed them — a fact which worries Mon'dabi military leaders. The Federation is negotiating joint research programs with other governments (including the Conjoined Civilizations Republic) to keep from being left behind. The only field in which the Mon'dabi excel is stardrive technology; their drives are slowly but surely approaching ATRI 12.
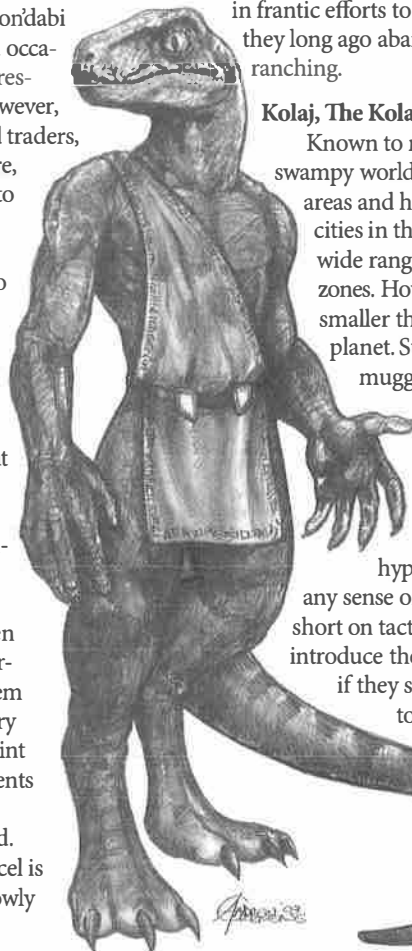
OTHER SPECIES OF THE FEDERATION

Of the dozens of species affiliated with the Mon'dabi, two are particularly noteworthy: the Kolajik Pack and the Qedustiers.

The Kolajik Pack

The other major reptilian species in Mon'dabi space, the Kolajik Pack waged two fierce wars against the Mon'dabi, but the two eventually learned to tolerate each other. When the Mon'dabi Union began organizing what would become the Mon'dabi Federation, it invited the Pack to join as full members.

Kolajik Biology

The Pack evolved from a reptile superficially similar to ancient Terran velociraptors. Individual Kolajik are 1.5 meters tall, with long tails, lean runners' bodies, and long, pointed faces. Highly intelligent, they use telepathy as well as voice to communicate among themselves.

Kolajik lay eggs in large communal hatcheries and care for the young as a group. They love the company of other people (especially their own kind) and cannot stand long periods of solitude. Their gregariousness appears somehow instinctive/biological; no known "loner" Kolajik exist. (A Kolajik isolated for longer than a day quickly becomes agitated, and as more time passes he eventually starts hurting himself in frantic efforts to rejoin the Pack.) Carnivores, they long ago abandoned hunting in favor of ranching.

Kolaj, The Kolajik Homeworld

Known to most other species as a rainy, swampy world (since the Kolajik favor such areas and have built their most prominent cities in them), Kolaj actually features a wide range of climatic and ecological zones. However, its polar regions are smaller than normal for an Earthlike planet. Summers tend to be hot and muggy, winters chilly (but not freezing) and foggy.

Kolajik Society And Culture

In person Kolajik are friendly, boisterous, and hyperactive. They seem to lack any sense of shyness (often seeming a tad short on tact as well), and don't hesitate to introduce themselves to complete strangers if they sense an opportunity to add to their circle of friends. They make good salesmen, traders, and diplomats; a few Kolajik spies have scored major intelligence coups by getting close to

KOLAJIK PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+3 DEX	9
+2 CON	4
+1 SPD	7
Running +3"	6
Telepathy 2d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Communication Only (-¼)	12
Kolajik Bite: HKA ½d6 (up to 1d6+1 with STR)	10
Tail: Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	5
Talons: 1 pip HKA (½d6 with STR)	5

Disadvantages	Value
-2 BODY	-4
Psychological Limitation: Hates Being Alone (Common, Moderate)	-10

Total Cost Of Package: 45

sensitive targets through disarming friendliness.

It's rare to see a Kolajik anywhere without the company of at least one other Kolajik, or at the very least one or two close friends from other species. All Kolajik entertainments are group activities — playing or watching team sports, attending or playing in symphonies, communal creation of artwork, and so on. They even go in groups to vote!

On their own world the Kolajik had only reached ATRI 4 when the Mon'dabi first came to their planet, but after contact they advanced quickly. With the help of the Thorgons they matched the Mon'dabi at ATRI 9 for military technology during their period of warfare. As members of the Federation they now have ATRI 10, though many Kolajik make do with less advanced technology.

Qedustiers

Once a primitive species slowly working their way up the technological ladder, the Qedustiers (kay-DOO-stee-ay) had the misfortune to evolve on a world between the Mon'dabi and the Ackálians. The Mon'dabi annexed their world as a protectorate, largely to keep them out of Ackálian hands, and despite their resentment over this they have gone on to become members of the Federation.

Qedustier Biology

Humanoids, Qedustiers average about 1.6-1.8 m tall, with skin tones ranging from light ochre to dark brown. Their heads are long and narrow, with furrowed ridges and sparse hair on top; males have a pair of horns projecting downward from the top of the skull to frame the head. (These horns, while fairly sharp at the tip, aren't positioned for use as weapons; they're a secondary sexual characteristic of males.) Their noses are flat and broad, and they have four fingers on each hand. As omnivores, they have a diet that includes fruit, eggs, sea creatures, and small birds.

Qedusti, The Qedustier Homeworld

The planet Qedusti is an Earthlike world on the spinward edge of Mon'dabi space. Where once it had many broad, beautiful plains and forests of towering *chelbara* trees, today it has become heavily urbanized. Small cities have grown together to form urban megaplexes, and over 80% of Qedustiers live in them.

Qedustier Society And Culture

The Qedustiers evolved on the plains and prairies of Qedusti from a mammalian creature mixing features of antelopes and bears. Naturally somewhat aggressive, they experienced numerous wars in their early history which eventually damped down on their fighting tendencies. As the wars died away, large city-states evolved.

When the Mon'dabi first made contact with them, the Qedusti has not yet passed beyond the city-state stage of political and social development, and were ATRI 3. They had no hope of thwarting the invaders, but fought fiercely anyway; the Mon'dabi had to kill several thousand of them before they capitulated and the Mon'dabi could complete the annexation.

At first many Qedustiers resented the Mon'dabi bitterly. However, decades of raids by the Ackálians have taught them they were better off joining the Federation than the Empire, and the raising of their civilization to ATRI 8-9 has also helped ease the transition from independent, balkanized world to a unified state under Federation control. Despite this, deep divisions remain in Qedustier society, bringing with them all the problems such a situation creates.

Qedustiers encountered off their homeworld are usually aggressive, adventurous types taking advantage of their status as Federation citizens to leave Qedusti and experience what the greater galaxy has to offer. Many have become mercenaries, using their experiences fighting Ackálian raiders to earn some money for themselves. Others engage in free trading, exploration, or similar professions.

QEDUSTIER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 STR	2
+2 CON	4

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 6

PERSEIDS

Phi Cassiopeia is a bright young star which inexplicably has a lifebearing planet circling it. Since the system contains several much younger worlds still forming, astrophysicists believe the fourth planet is a captured world — a suspicion supported by its relatively eccentric orbit. Dorvala would be just an astronomical curiosity except that it's home to an advanced and powerful species, the Dorvalans — better known to the Galaxy by the Human name for them, Perseids.

PERSEID BIOLOGY

Like Humans, Perseids arose from an ape-like species. The extreme seasons and intense radiation of their environment strongly affected their evolution: their bodies became resistant to all forms of energy and to extremes of temperature; their eyes can withstand bright light.

Relatively typical humanoids, Perseids are notable for their all-black skin which protects them from radiant energy, and for bony rows of knobs on the head and shoulders. As omnivores, they have a strong urge to store up fat during times of abundance (which today just means most Perseids struggle to keep from putting on too much weight). Oddly, Perseids and Humans have a high degree of biochemical compatibility. They can eat each other's foods without harm, though vitamin deficiencies may result in the long term.

The Perseid reproductive cycle relates to Dorvala's seasons. The lower light levels of late fall trigger the breeding season, so all children are born during the spring when the vegetation starts to bloom. Traditional festivals, important religious observances, and many private celebrations mark both occasions. Perseid culture and customs encourage the formation of large families; as a result, the total population of Perseids throughout the Galaxy is over 500 billion.

DORVALA, THE PERSEID HOMEWORLD

Dorvala is a harsh world beset by seasonal extremes which have given rise to many unusual forms of energy-resistant life (about half of which engage in some form of hibernation to survive the winter). Although it's sufficiently tectonically stable to allow for the rise of sentient life, it suffers from a higher-than-usual rate of vulcanism and quakes, especially during the summer when it's closer to the gravitational pull of Phi Cassiopeia.

Over half of Dorvala's land is in one super-continent, Tharangia. Varksos, the capital of the Perseid Empire, occupies the western tip of Tharangia.

PERSEID PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+5 ED	5
Perseid Physiology: Damage Resistance (2 ED)	1
Perseid Physiology: Life Support (Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat)	6
Perseid Eyes: Sight Group Flash Defense (5 points)	5

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 17

An enormous mega-metropolis, it's a diverse and cosmopolitan city rivaling Boswash or Calipolis on Earth for its wealth, glamour, and non-stop pace of activity.

PERSEID SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The need to survive the harsh environment of Dorvala encouraged the Perseids to form powerful states to promote cooperation and prevent theft and raiding. Initially they joined together in tribes and clans, but these quickly evolved into city-states, then nation-states, and, at a far earlier period in their history than Humans, a unified world government.

The Perseids have strong traditions of duty, respect for authority, and altruism, though they manifest in ways Humans find odd. For instance, the Perseid Empire derives from the notion that Perseid civilization has a duty to "rescue" less powerful cultures and bring them into the Empire's benevolent fold. The Perseids treat their foes with implacable resistance, but their defeated enemies with mercy and consideration. Aging, crippled, or chronically ill Perseids usually commit *nathar*, a form of ritual suicide, rather than burden others or society. Perseids are devoted, loyal, disciplined, and principled — but also conformist, stubborn, and unquestioning.

Perseid religion evolved in much the same way as its government — the varying belief systems that sprang up among the early inhabitants of Dorvala were slowly but surely pared down and eliminated until only one remained. Today, virtually all Perseids subscribe to this religion, a six-god polytheistic faith called Sal Garath Sal. The Main Temple of the faith, in Varksos, is considered one of the most beautiful and impressive buildings in the Galaxy. In recent years, the Chet'rar faith has made some inroads in Perseid communities near the Conjoined Civilizations Republic, causing concern among devout Salgars.

The Perseids have a very rigid and stratified society. People expect individuals to follow the same careers as their parents, and Perseids usually regard the idea of social mobility as an unsettling attack on the social order. Even worse, the large number of Perseids, and the fast rate at which they breed, allows them to utterly dominate their empire, relegating other species to an entirely secondary status (even moreso than aliens in Terran space). The Perseid social system does have its benefits: experience gets handed down from generation to generation, and centuries of custom usually provide a ready solution to problems. But talent often goes unrecognized, and society adapts very slowly to new situations.

SPECIES OF THE PERSEID EMPIRE

Some of the prominent species of the Perseid Empire include the two listed below. Members of these two species, and other species within the Perseid Empire, typically take the Social Limitation *Perseid Minority* (Frequently, Minor; 10 points). This represents their secondary status within Perseid society. Player characters from the Perseid Empire should only take it as a Disadvantage if they spend at least half their time in Perseid space.

Nan

A humanoid species from the planet Nao, the Nan have a distinctive arrowhead-shaped head and no visible eyes or ears. A Nan can use the sharp front and edges of his skull to deliver a deadly slashing attack. Powerful psionics, the Nan use psi to sense the world and communicate. As predators, Nan relish the terror of a fleeing prey animal. The Perseids prevent them from hunting sentient beings, but a lucrative underground trade exists to supply victims for Nan hunts. Nan enthusiastically serve as Perseid "Mind Cops" for the fun of sensing a panicky fugitive.

Nan have an HKA headbutt, Spatial Awareness, and a minimum of about 70 points' worth of psionic powers (including Telepathy 6d6, bought to 0 END cost). They have no senses of Sight, Hearing, or Smell.

Shar'een

Short (1.6 m tall), ochre-skinned humanoids native to the planet Shartaru, the Shar'een actively participate in galactic society as traders, explorers, mercenaries, and more. Although most of them would prefer independence from the Perseids, belonging to the Empire has increased their society's prosperity enough to keep them too content to give serious thought to rebellion... most of the time.

Shar'een have no particular special abilities or attributes; they're remarkably like Humans in many ways. In fact, a few of the more rebellious Shar'een suggest seeking aid from the Terran Empire in their struggle for freedom.

THE SE'ECRA

The Se'ecra, and the other species of the Conjoined Civilizations, are a major force for unity and tolerance in the Galaxy.

SE'ECRA BIOLOGY

Se'ecra strongly resemble large sentient beetles (some Humans call them "scarabs"), though with just two legs and arms. They evolved from gathering herbivore ancestors, but occasionally eat meat products as exotic flavorings. They cannot fl y, thoughthey do have vestigial wings used for heat regulation and signaling. Their tough shells give them good protection, and they have a keen sense of smell.

Se'ecra cannot speak; they communicate by wing flutters, gestures, and scent combinations. The name "Se'ecra" (singular, Ecra), bestowed on them by the Se-lag, means approximately "wing-speakers." Most Se'ecra use Se-lag names when dealing with beings who speak. Among aliens, Se'ecra carry portable computers that translate their methods of communication to speech.

Se'ecra are hermaphrodites and lay eggs in large clusters. Doting parents, they tend their young carefully through a ten-year larval stage in which they are nothing but mindless eating machines. Despite their best efforts, only a few larva survive to maturity. Off Ecra-shen, they fertilize and incubate single eggs artificially.

Adult Se'ecra have a relatively short lifespan — originally only 30 years after the change to adulthood, though advanced medicine has extended that to 50 years. This tends to make them reluctant to waste time, so they maintain an exhausting pace of activity. They are extremely curious, and under their leadership the Conjoined Civilizations carries on an ambitious program of interstellar exploration. They have highly advanced technology (late ATRI 11, verging into 12 in some fields) and excel at pure research.

ECRA-SHEN, THE SE'ECRA HOMEWORLD

The Se'ecra come from the planet Ecra-shen, a warm, Earthlike world with extensive forests and an impressive ring system (early Se'ecra believed the rings were the homes of the gods; today, they simply admire them for their beauty). They have settled in many other star systems, favoring ambitious terraforming projects and large space habitats rather than colonizing lifebearing planets.

SE'ECRA SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The Se'ecra are the dominant species of the Conjoined Civilizations Republic, which makes them major players in galactic politics. They regard themselves as among the most advanced and virtuous species in the Galaxy, which

SE'ECRA PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Se'ecra Shell: Armor (1 PD/1 ED)	3
Se'ecra Senses: Discriminatory for Normal Smell/Taste	5
Se'ecra Senses: Tracking for Normal Smell	5
Se'ecra Senses: +3 PER with Normal Smell/Taste	3
Advanced Tech (access to some ATRI 12 tech in a mostly ATRI 11 campaign)	10

Disadvantages	Value
Running -1"	-2
Physical Limitation: Se'ecra Eyes (color blind and nearsighted; -1 Sight PER in appropriate situations when corrective lenses/medications not used) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)	-5
Physical Limitation: Mute (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)	-5

Total Cost Of Package: 14

leads to a sort of arrogance that often grates on other species.

Se'ecra have a not-undeserved reputation as meddlers in the affairs of others. They consider other species as so many helpless grubs they must protect and guide to "adulthood." They have no doubt their own ways are the best and most enlightened, and believe it would be highly immoral to deny others the benefit of their knowledge and help. Some of their "projects" — including the creation of the religion Chet'rar — have undoubtedly benefitted many worlds and species; the results of others are mixed.

Thanks to their advanced technology and sophisticated society, most Se'ecra enjoy a life of ease. They work at creative or scientific pursuits, leaving the manufacturing and heavy labor to robots, automated facilities, or other species. Because they have such highly-developed senses of taste and smell, they've developed a varied and elaborate cuisine. Se'ecra restaurants exist throughout the Galaxy (even in Varanyi space!), attracting patrons from all walks of life.

OTHER INSECTOID SPECIES

Besides the Se'ecra and the Shiseki, the Galaxy has several species which resemble Terran insects, including:

Krsst: The Krsst are hive-minded like the Shiseki, but evolved from creatures more like army ants or bee swarms. Each hive effectively constitutes a single organism, usually covering 1 or 2 hexes. Unlike the Shiseki, Krsst hives communicate by direct transmission of nerve impulses from individual to individual, along with a battery of scent cues. They are sensitive to poisons and drugs, and a good dose of soapy water can disrupt the swarm's scent communication. The Krsst inhabit a planet Humans call Elcara VII, located between CCR and Varanyi space, but travel extensively. Their fiercely libertarian civilization possesses ATRI 9 technology.

Tkaki: Roughly Human-sized, Tkaki look like a nightmarish combination of praying mantis, scorpion, and grasshopper. They have a long segmented body with a prehensile tail tipped with a sting. Six long multijointed legs support the body, and four arms (two with heavy fighting claws, two with small manipulators) allow a Tkak to perform many tasks efficiently. The head is small (a Tkak's brain is in its body), with complicated mouthparts and large faceted eyes. Tkaki are native to a world in Mon'dabi space, !ral, and belong to the Federation.

Zmm: One of the smallest sentient species known, the Zmm come from a low-gravity world with an atmosphere somewhat thicker than Earth's. Winged flyers rather like giant wasps, they are about one meter tall and have sharp mandibles. Pack hunters by nature, the Zmm developed a civilization based on herding and trade. Their world, Zmma, lies near Thorgon space, though it does not belong to the Hegemony; with the help of the Terran Empire and the Mon'dabi, the Zmm have built a small but effective space fleet; many Zmm have a natural talent for piloting. Zmm technology is a surprisingly advanced ATRI 11, though many of their devices are too small for Human-sized persons to use.

SPECIES OF THE CONJOINED CIVILIZATIONS

The following species include some of the most important members of the Conjoined Civilizations.

Mostreen

The Mostreen (singular, Mostree) come from a planet not far removed from Ecra-shen, and were one of the Se'ecra's first "improvement projects." They've become valued members of the Conjoined Civilizations.

Mostreen Biology

Mostreen are tall, agile beings descended from avian ancestors. Covered with feathers, they have an elaborate and colorful crest of plumes on their heads. Instead of wings, they have long arms and long-fingered hands optimized for catching fish and small animals (and today useful for many tasks requiring deftness). Their beaks, which have serrated edges, can inflict serious biting damage. Mostreens lay eggs and care for their young with great affection and attention.

Tan'raa, The Mostreen Homeworld

Tan'raa was once a world of lush jungle lowlands, large forested plateaus, and sweeping deserts reminiscent, to Humans, of Arizona. Unfortunately, during their lengthy industrialization period, the Mostreen exploited Tan'raa's natural resources too heavily, causing significant ecological damage. Had the Se'ecra not contacted and "rescued" them, they would probably have starved to death in the next two centuries because they'd crippled their food production capabilities. With the help of the Se'ecra, the Mostreen have repaired much of the damage, but many scars remain.

THE JARUMA

Unusual, powerfully-built fluorosilicone beings from the Venusian world Umara, the Jaruma breathe a mix of carbon dioxide and fluorine which is deadly to most other species. They stand more than two meters tall on three stumpy legs and have three arms, each of which ends in a mouth/hand surrounded by three eyes. They frequently colonize Type 8 worlds that other species cannot live on.

Jaruma society evolved from a tribal culture, and family and clan influence remains a major part of almost every Jaruma's life. This has led to a robust educational system, as well as strong trading ties between their various worlds that keeps them united even over great distances. They're also well known for their skills in the fields of prospecting, mining, and genetic engineering, all of which make them valuable members of the Conjoined Civilizations Republic.

Jaruma have Extra Limbs (2 — one extra arm and leg), +3 STR, +3 CON, 1 PD/1 ED Damage Resistance, Life Support (Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Heat), and Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees) for the Sight Group.
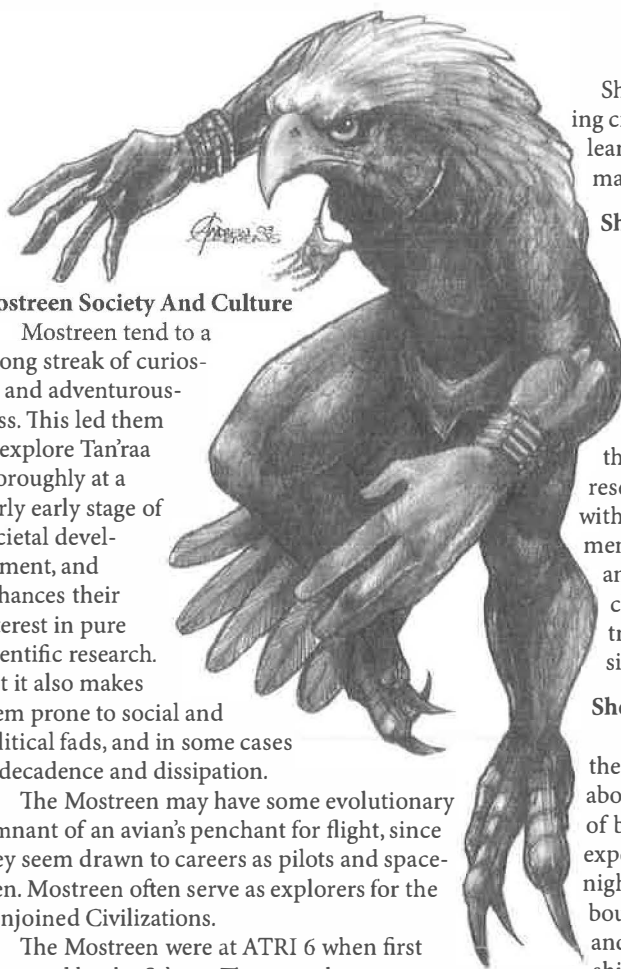
Mostreen Society And Culture

Mostreen tend to a strong streak of curiosity and adventurousness. This led them to explore Tan'raa thoroughly at a fairly early stage of societal development, and enhances their interest in pure scientific research. But it also makes them prone to social and political fads, and in some cases to decadence and dissipation.

The Mostreen may have some evolutionary remnant of an avian's penchant for flight, since they seem drawn to careers as pilots and spacemen. Mostreen often serve as explorers for the Conjoined Civilizations.

The Mostreen were at ATRI 6 when first contacted by the Se'ecra. They now have a mature ATRI 11 technology, like most of the rest of the Republic.

MOSTREEN PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 DEX	6
Running +1"	2
Mostreen Beak: HKA ½d6 (up to 1d6+1 with STR)	
Talons: 1 pip HKA (½d6 with STR)	5

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 23

Sholarron

Sholarron are strange and somewhat disturbing creatures — psionic parasites who have learned to control host animals so they can manipulate objects.

Sholarron Biology

The parasitic Sholarron feed on the blood of host animals and incubate their young in living host bodies. They use their ability to control minds to ensure an ongoing supply of docile hosts. To many members of other species, they seem like horrifying psychic vampire creatures, and their appearance doesn't help: a Sholarron resembles a giant caterpillar or centipede, with dozens of tiny legs supporting a long, segmented body. The body is mostly brain tissue, and a Sholarron spends most of its time clinging to the spine of a host animal, controlling its movements, using its senses, and siphoning off blood.

Shola, The Sholarron Homeworld

Other species know very little about Shola, the home planet of the Sholarron. Something about the place, or perhaps just the presence of billions of Sholarron, causes outsiders to experience psychic disturbances, headaches, nightmares, and in some cases even prolonged bouts of insanity. As a result, visitors are few and far between, and usually bring psychic shielding technology with them for temporary protection.

What is known is that the Sholarron tend to spread out. They rarely build large cities, preferring small towns or even to live by themselves. Shola is much less developed than most comparative worlds, partly due to Sholarron preferences and partly so the Sholarron can harvest biological resources.

Sholarron Society And Culture

Despite their creepy biology, the Sholarron have developed an advanced civilization and are peaceful and valued members of the Conjoined Civilizations. They don't prey on sentient beings (and never have, for that matter) — they carefully raise and tend host animals. Many simply have one host (almost always a large creature like a Terran gorilla with tool-using paws); others have multiple hosts they can use: large flyers, fast-running organisms similar to antelopes, and so forth.

Sholarron science and technology specializes in advanced biology and biotechnology. At first contact they had ATRI 8 tech in those areas, but only 6 otherwise. Since joining the Conjoined Civilizations they've progressed to an overall rating of 10, with 12 in biotechnology.

The Sholarron have a few colony worlds and live on other Republic planets as well. Outside Republic space they are rare because of the fear and revulsion they so often cause.

SHOLARRON PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 EGO	4
Host Body: Follower (use the Gorilla from page 165 of the *HERO System Bestiary*; character may select another host of equal value if desired, or buy multiple hosts)	15
Sholarron Control: Mind Control 8d6 (Telepathic, 0 END, No Range)	47
Sholarron Communication: Telepathy 4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END)	30
Easily Hidden: +2 to Concealment (4 Active Points); Self Only (-½)	3
Hard To Perceive: +2 to Stealth	4
Hard To Hit: +2 DCV	10
Sholarron Legs: Extra Limbs (thousands of legs), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	5

Disadvantages	Value
-8 STR	-8
-5 PRE	-5
Running -3"	-6
Physical Limitation: Small (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)	-5
Physical Limitation: Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)	-10

Total Cost Of Package: 84

THE SE-LAG

A leading species in the Conjoined Civilizations Republic, the Se-lag are water-dwelling mammals with six limbs, in some ways similar in appearance to Terran otters or beavers. Known for their playful, good-humored attitudes and their remarkable skill at languages and communication, they're most often encountered outside of Republic space as merchants and diplomats.

A leading species in the Conjoined Civilizations Republic, the quasi-amphibious Se-lag are 1.4-meter tall water-dwelling mammals with six limbs (four arms, two legs), in some ways similar in appearance to Terran otters or beavers. The first alien species encountered by the Se'ecra, they come from the planet Losai, only a few light-years "north" of Ecra-shen. Losai, almost a water-world, has oceans, inland seas, and lakes covering 84% of its surface, and more of its land mass in islands and subcontinents than true continents. Like the Tarmin, the Se-lag live in canal-cities, and even incorporate artificial streams and ponds into their

SE-LAG PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Life Support (Extended Breathing: 1 END per Turn; Safe Environment: Intense Cold)	3
Aquatic Form: Swimming +4"	4
Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement	3
Six Limbs: Extra Limbs (2 — two more arms), Inherent (+¼)	6

Disadvantages	Value
-2 STR	-2

Total Cost Of Package: 11

architecture. As of 2640, they comprise approximately five percent of the Republic's population.

Se-lag accompanied Se'ecra on their early voyages of exploration, and were key players in the formation of the Conjoined Civilizations Republic. Known for their playful, good-humored attitudes and their remarkable skill at languages and communication, they're most often encountered outside of Republic space as merchants, diplomats, and interpreters. Playful and gregarious, they often have a fondness for jokes and trickery that makes them devilishly effective jackers, spies, and covert operatives. They tend to oppose military action, preferring "indirect means" of dealing with adversaries.

THE THORGONS

The Thorgon Hegemony controls a large volume of space but relatively few habitable worlds. The Thorgons themselves try to mold their subject species into willing slaves, specialized for different tasks, even as they mold themselves into rulers.

Thorgon Biology

The Thorgons are typical humanoids with orange-yellow skin on the front and bold deep red stripes running from the spine to the sides (Terran military personnel often call Thorgons "Stripeys"). Their eyes are translucent red orbs with no visible pupils. Thorgons are distinguished from their ancestor-species the Ergons by their greater height, darker stripes, smaller ears, and superior physical abilities.

The Thorgons relentlessly improve their genome, and have given themselves a number of useful traits — better night vision, greater strength, faster reflexes, resistance to disease, and so on. This has come at some cost, as the Thorgons appear to be less creative and inventive than their Ergon forebears.

While Thorgons can reproduce sexually, it seldom happens. Instead, they gestate groups of artificially-created embryos in womb tanks and then raise them in large nurseries. Their education is geared entirely toward producing soldiers and commanders intensely loyal to the Hegemony. Thorgons form passionate romantic attachments (the genetic planners have tried to weed out that instinct without success), though government propaganda constantly reminds citizens duty comes before love.

Ergath, The Thorgon Homeworld

Ergath, the homeworld of both the Ergons and the Thorgons, is slightly larger than Earth, with a gravity of 1.1 standard G and a generally warm climate. It has large oceans and 11 small continents with a great variety of ecosystems. The Thorgons exercise rigid control over every city and town, restricting the movement and activities of the populace. Every important inhabited area includes at least one planetary defense installation of some sort.

Thorgon Society And Culture

Many centuries ago, the Ergons were an advanced civilization with similarly advanced technology. Particularly skilled at bio-engineering, they eventually bred clone-races from their basic genetic stock to handle jobs they found distasteful: heavy labor; fighting; deep space exploration.

Unfortunately, they did their work a little too well. One of their slave races, the Thorgons, bred for soldiering, came to regard their masters as weak and cowardly. Eventually their aggressiveness and drive to conquer overcame the loyalty the Ergons had tried to breed into them, and they turned on their creators. In the space of a few weeks, they reduced the Ergons from master to slave — and the Thorgons didn't make the same mistakes when they force-bred docility and obedience into the Ergons.

Thorgons are humorless, pitiless, and cruel. Compared to them even Ackálians seem cultured, sophisticated, and reasonable. They deal with others on a "friendly" basis only when they have no means to enforce their will or can't get what they want any other way. Bred for war, conquest, and loyalty to the Hegemony, they take a hard-nosed, militaristic approach to almost everything they do.

Technology is a high priority for the Thorgons, but science is not. They channel research into "practical" studies guaranteed to bring tangible rewards. Unfortunately, this means the Thorgons can make incremental improvements on existing technologies, but the great leaps which open up whole new technologies rarely occur. They try to keep up by stealing from other civilizations. The Hegemony as a whole is ATRI 10, but beyond that in the study of genetic engineering (mid-to-late ATRI 11), and Thorgon spies and assassins have stolen or borrowed enough tech from the Humans and Ackálians to have ATRI 11 ships, weapons, and defense systems.

About fifty thousand Thorgons and Ergons live outside the Hegemony, either in the Mon'dabi Federation or in small enclaves among the neutral worlds.

THORGON PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 STR	2
+2 DEX	6
+2 CON	4
Nightvision	5
Ultrasonic Hearing	3
Life Support (Immunity: to viral infections)	4

Disadvantages	Value
Psychological Limitation: Aggressively Loyal To The Thorgon Hegemony (Common, Strong)	-15

Total Cost Of Package: 9

They refer to themselves as Ergons even though many come from Thorgon birth factories. These exiles have, through various means, broken the effect of Thorgon genetic engineering, achieving a less aggressive (though not wholly unaggressive) personality (for Thorgons) or greater will to control their own affairs (for Ergons).

THE KALISHARI

The Thorgons have virtually exterminated many of the species they have encountered and conquered, or in some cases used genetic techniques to pacify and/or sterilize them. One species spared itself these unpleasant fates by realizing it could not withstand the Thorgons and therefore should not even try. The Kalishari negotiated a surrender that preserved some sliver of their autonomy. They pay a heavy tribute to the Hegemony and supply Thorgon fleets and armies, but retain the right of self-governance on internal matters, and are not subject to Thorgon genetic manipulation, though they suffer from the same travel restrictions as other "citizens" of the Hegemony.

Kalishari Biology

Attractive, slender humanoids with tails, the Kalishari have skin that changes color from deep purple to luminous yellow-green in shifting patterns determined by the individual's mood. Glowing green indicates pleasure or attraction, red anger or frustration, blue for "neutral" feelings, and dark purple for dangerous situations. The change is subconscious; an

KALISHARI PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 DEX	6
+1 SPD	8
Nightvision	5
Tail: Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	5

Disadvantages	Value
Physical Limitation: Light-Sensitive Eyes (-2 Sight PER Rolls in bright light) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)	-10
Social Limitation: Color-Changing Skin (gives away current mood and attitude) (Frequently, Minor)	-10

Total Cost Of Package: 4

individual can't control it. As a result, the Kalishari tend toward scrupulous honesty, since they can't hide their feelings from each other. They have learned not to take offense at many uncontrollable reactions; a good-looking Kalishari doesn't consider it demeaning or insulting if the person speaking with him displays colors of romantic attraction, for example.

One of the few nocturnal sentient species known, the Kalishari have sensitive vision and cannot tolerate bright sunlight. Naturally very stealthy, they move quickly and gracefully. They live in enormous, well-defended cave complexes on Kalisha (one reason the Thorgons were reluctant to try to conquer the planet by force).

Kalisha, The Kalishari Homeworld

Kalisha orbits its star a little closer than most humanoid-inhabitable planets, giving it hot surface temperatures (especially in the summer) and driving most of the animal life (including the Kalishari) underground into vast natural cave complexes. The Kalishari long ago expanded many of these complexes, becoming master delvers and engineers in the process, and continue to do so as the needs of the population require. The Kalishari allow caves unsuitable for themselves to remain natural, and a thriving underground ecosystem has developed in them, featuring life ranging from tiny spores and fungi to packs of fierce wild cave-dogs. Some of the Galaxy's most spectacular cave-formations exist here, but the Thorgon regime forbids geologists from other governments to visit the planet.

Kalishari Society And Culture

Kalishari society evolved amid the underground cave complexes, where one powerful or clever individual assumed a leadership position and bound the others in his cavern complex to him with oaths both secular and religious. This created a sort of feudalistic, hierarchical society where one's ability to get things done depends partly on one's social position, and partly on one's personal connections with important people. Technological and social advances ameliorated this system somewhat, but the basic **structure remains**.

Until the Thorgons took over, the Kalishari were ruled by a planetary overlord, the *Ingaladi* ("Emperor"), to whom all other leaders swore oaths. When it became apparent his world must surrender to the Thorgons, Ingaladi Borasu IV fled into exile along with the remnants of the Kalishari space fleet. Although Kalisha seems calm and productive to a casual observer, in truth it seethes with intrigue and carefully-hidden dissent as the Kalishari scheme to repel the Thorgon conquerors and bring the Ingaladi back to rule them.

At the time of the Thorgon conquest, the Kalishari had ATRI 8 technology. Captured Thorgon vessels allowed them to adapt a small part of their space fleet for FTL travel, and Thorgon improvements to the infrastructure have increased the technology level to 9 in some parts of the planet.

ERGONS

Physically much like the Thorgons, Ergons have red-striped skin and red eyes, but smaller, paler-colored bodies. The Thorgons have manipulated the Ergon genome to make them less aggressive and more willing to obey orders. Though the Thorgons refer to the Ergons as a separate species, the Thorgons derive directly from the Ergon genome, making the two highly genetically compatible.

Ergons have EGO -3 and Ultrasonic Hearing (total cost: -3 points).

THE VARANYI

One of the most powerful and feared species in the Milky Way, the Varanyi rule a large region of space on the opposite side of the Galaxy from the Terran Empire, directly to spinward of the Velarian Confederation. And if the Varanyi have their way, the amount of space they control will continue to expand.

VARANYI BIOLOGY

Physically, the Varanyi are a brown-skinned race who tend to be tall: 2.0 meters is the average height, and Varanyi up to 2.5 meters tall are not unknown. Most Varanyi are thin, with similarly slender limbs and digits.

The Varanyi have minimal facial features: their ears are barely noticeable, their noses equally small, and they have no feature corresponding to the lips on a Human. They have no hair (the Varanyi evolved from a warm-blooded reptilian sort of creature, not a mammal). However, each Varanyi has from zero to five symmetrically-placed bony ridges, known as "crests," running the length of his scalp from front to back. The crests meet at a point between the eyes, immediately above the nose. The number of crests a Varanyi has determines not only his psionic powers, but his

position in Varanyi society: the more crests, the more powers and the higher rank (see Package Deal).

VARAN, THE VARANYI HOMEWORLD

The Varanyi homeworld, Varan, is a lush planet slightly smaller than Earth. It orbits a type F star and has a generally warm climate. Ocean covers 80 percent of the planet's surface, and all 14 continents are quite small by Terran standards. This creates a warm climate due to the preponderance of coastal land. Belts of swamps, anchored and supported by a native species resembling the Terran mangrove tree, surround most of the continents. Varan has a population of only four billion, but the other planets in the system raise the total to 12 billion for the entire Varan system.

VARANYI SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The Varanyi empire is ruled by its most powerful psionics, who form a single dynasty that has held power for ten thousand years. The *Sh'garothayn,* or Emperor, and his relatives are the unquestioned masters of Varanyi society, with authority descending from them hierarchically. There's a place for every Varanyi, and every Varanyi has his place... and each of them knows it.

The main division in Varanyi society relates to their head-crests. The more crests one has, the better one's *t'illk. T'illk* combines some of the meaning of the human terms "mental serenity," "class," "status," and "face"; it's a hard concept for non-psionics to grasp fully, particularly since it's possible for a Varanyi to lose (or more rarely, gain) *t'illk* and thus effect some change in his status.

Ties of *ey'vidra*, or "clan," hold great importance in Varanyi society; a Varanyi writes his clan name before his personal name. As a result, nepotism runs rampant, and large clans or alliances of clans wield significant social and political power. The Varanyi have a total of 357 Varanyi clans — one for the entirety of the *Ks'lch,* and 356 for the crested Varanyi. Crested males may marry crested females with fewer crests, but crested females never marry

VARANYI DEMOGRAPHICS

Number Of Crests	Percent Of Population
0 (*Ks'lch*)	50%
1 (*Ch'pereth*)	20%
2 (*Chvorsq*)	12%
3 (*Ch'ggeli*)	10%
4 (*Ch'yuuk*)	7%
5 (*Al'gari*)	1%
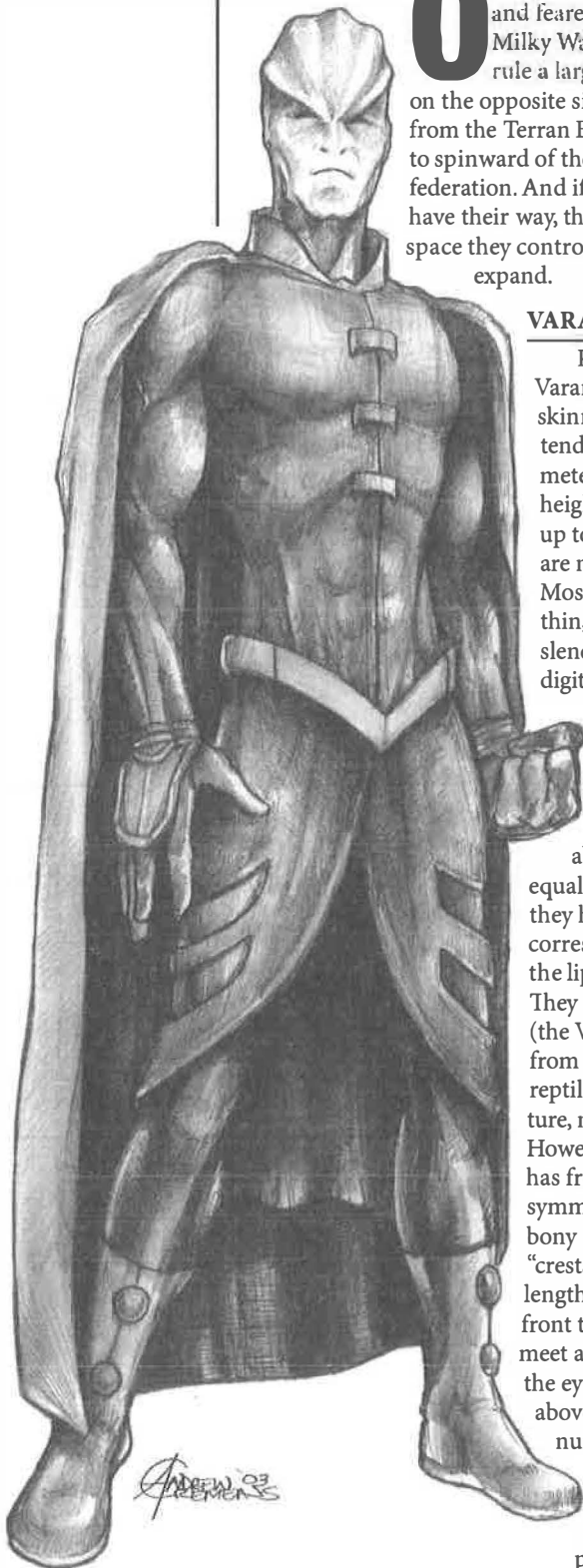
VARANYI PACKAGE DEAL

All Varanyi have the following abilities:

Ability	Cost
+1 INT	1
+3 EGO	6
Advanced Tech (ATRI 12 in a generally ATRI 11 setting)	15

Disadvantages
None

Total Cost Of Package: 22

male who don't have as many or more crests as they do.

Despite their societal stratification, the Varanyi consider even the lowest of their kind far superior to any other species. Varanyi culture emphasizes the Varanyi destiny to rule the Galaxy, just as the Emperor rules the Varanyi. Their tremendous psionic power, ATRI 12 technology, and mighty empire make them one of the Galaxy's supreme powers.

As befits a civilization with many millennia of history, the Varanyi have well-developed, highly sophisticated art forms. Varanyi literature, which runs to multi-volume epics and similar grand stories, is read throughout the Galaxy, and students of literature often mention the name of the ancient Varanyi playwright Tlanith in the same breath as Shakespeare of Earth or Jakara Daan of Dorvala.

Because all crested Varanyi can communicate mentally and have a largely telepathic language, they rarely use audible speech. The important places of Varan — the palaces, courts, and so forth — are as quiet as an Earth library. Only the *Ks'Ich* must communicate with voices, so the Varanyi regard the use of the voice as crude, unrefined, and often insulting. A Varanyi who wishes to express the deepest sort of scorn, sarcasm, or insult towards someone uses his voice instead of his telepathic abilities.

Some scientists believe the Varanyis' psionic powers have slowly weakened over the past millennia. If so, this may hint at a chink in the Varanyi Empire's armor, and any concrete data on the subject is probably kept as secret and secure as possible.

VARANYI CREST PACKAGE DEAL

A Varanyi without crests, a **Ks'Ich**, has no mental powers at all. The lowest of the low, Ks'Ich perform menial and degrading tasks. They have no additional abilities, but do have the Social Limitation Ks'Ich (Frequently, Minor; -10 points). Total cost: 12 points.

A Varanyi with one crest **(a Chpereth)** has the following additional abilities:

Chpereth Ability	Cost
Fringe Benefit: Chpereth	1
Mental Defense (5 points plus EGO/5)	5
Mind Link (any Varanyi, up to four minds at once); Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1)	10
Telekinesis (4 STR)	6
Total Cost Of Package: 44	

A Varanyi with two crests **(a Chvorsq)** has the following additional abilities:

Chvorsq Ability	Cost
Fringe Benefit: Chvorsq	2
Mental Defense (8 points plus EGO/5)	8
Mind Link (any Varanyi, up to eight minds at once); Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1)	12
Multipower	20
1) Telepathy 4d6	2
2) Telekinesis (10 STR)	1
Total Cost Of Package: 67	

A Varanyi with three crests **(a Ch'ggeb)** has the following additional abilities:

Ch'ggeb Ability	Cost
Fringe Benefit: Ch'ggeb	3
Mental Defense (12 points plus EGO/5)	12
Mind Link (any Varanyi, up to 16 minds at once); Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1)	15
Mind Scan 6d6	30
Multipower	30
1) Telepathy 6d6	3
2) Telekinesis (20 STR)	3
3) Ego Attack 3d6	3
Total Cost Of Package: 121	

A Varanyi with four crests **(a Ch'yuuk)** has the following additional abilities:

Ch'yuuk Ability	Cost
Fringe Benefit: Ch'yuuk	4
Mental Defense (18 points plus EGO/5)	18
Mind Link (any Varanyi, up to 32 minds at once); Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1)	17
Mind Scan 8d6	40
Multipower	40
1) Telepathy 8d6	4
2) Telekinesis (24 STR)	4
3) Ego Attack 4d6	4
4) Mental Illusions 8d6	4
5) Mind Control 8d6	4
Total Cost Of Package: 161	

A Varanyi with five crests **(an Al'gari, which is to say, a member of the Imperial Household)** has the following additional abilities:

Al'gari Ability	Cost
Fringe Benefit: Al'gari	5
Mental Defense (22 points plus EGO/5)	22
Mind Link (any Varanyi, up to 64 minds at once); Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1)	20
30 points' worth of Mental Powers	30
Mind Scan 10d6	50
Multipower	50
1) Telepathy 10d6	5
2) Telekinesis (32 STR)	5
3) Ego Attack 5d6	5
4) Mental Illusions 10d6	5
5) Mind Control 10d6	5
Total Cost Of Package: 224	

All of these represent the standard abilities possessed by the average Varanyi. Some Varanyi have additional abilities, or slightly different abilities.
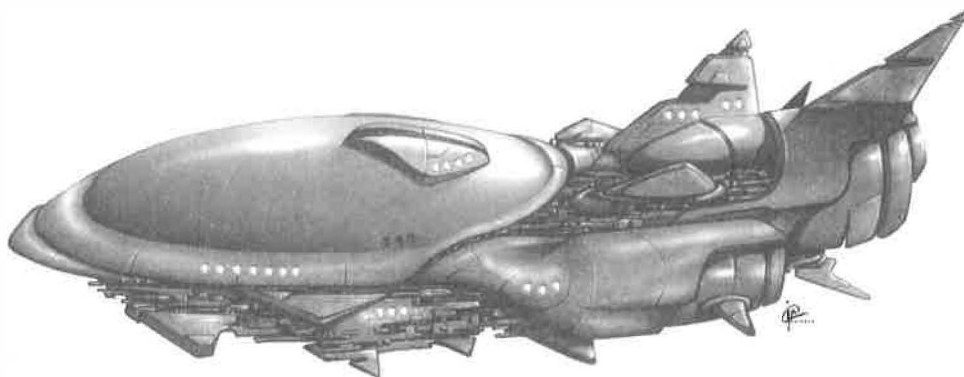
THE VELARIAN CONFEDERATION

As of Marissa III's reign, the Velarian Confederation, a political entity on the other side of the galactic core from the Terran Empire, contains 26 intelligent species. Besides the Velarians themselves, other important Confederation species include the Catavalans, the Quagi, the Fassai, and the Donburil. All Confederation worlds have ATRI 10 or 11 technology; those still classified at level 10 are swiftly advancing toward 11 with help from their fellows.

The Velarians

Founders and leaders of the Confederation, the Velarians are a humanoid species of many accomplishments. Although they come from a slightly more restrictive environment than Humans, and don't share Earthlings' penchant for altering their own DNA, they adapt easily to many diverse settings and situations.

Velarian Biology

The Velarians come from a world tidally locked to its giant moon, giving it a day so long that most animal life on Velarius evolved the need to go without sleep for long periods. Velarius VII also has a somewhat thinner than normal atmosphere, so its creatures have more efficient lungs. Other than that, Velarians physically resemble Humans in many ways. The chief visible differences include their skin (which is a bluish-green color) and their wide, ribbed ears (which allow them to hear in the thin air of their planet). Velarians tend to be deep-chested and short-legged by Human standards.

Reproduction among the Velarians is also similar to the Human norm. Velarian mothers bear twins much more often than Human mothers — more than half of all Velarians are born as twins. These are usually fraternal twins, one male and one female; identical twins are as rare on Velarius as on Earth.

Velarius VII, The Velarian Homeworld

Velarius VII is the single richest and most advanced world in the Confederation, and also its capital. It's almost a double planet, with a giant moon nearly half the size of the planet itself. The two are tidally locked; Velarius has a day almost 10 standard days long.

Velarius is densely populated, with nearly 10 billion people. A space elevator provides easy access to shuttles linking Velarius with its moon Andarion, which is itself home to another 600 million Velarians. The energetic and adaptable Velarians have also settled on many other worlds, making them the most numerous people in the Confederation.

Velarian Society And Culture

The religion Scomaru Shaan (see page 101) strongly influences Velarian society. The teachings and doctrines of the Avatars hold as much importance for most Velarians as any government edict, and in fact secular laws often derive from or relate to religious laws. The unifying effect of the faith brought Velarius VII under a single state centuries ago.

Velarian government is an aristocratic republic: members of the hereditary nobility vote for members of the Legislative College. The College in turn selects two of its members as the Regents, or chief executives, who serve until one of them dies, at which point the College appoints another pair. Traditionally, one Regent is male and the other female.

While hereditary aristocrats totally dominated the original republic, some liberalization has occurred since the development of interstellar travel. The Regents have adopted a policy of granting noble status to a large number of talented commoners each year. Military leaders, scientists, artists, and scholars routinely get added to the class of Electors. Business leaders who amass large fortunes usually get into the Electorate by marrying nobility.

Despite the unity brought about by Scomaru Shaan, the Velarians are as culturally and artistically diverse as Humans. They take great pride in preserving as many of their cultural practices and artistic forms as possible.

VELARIAN PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+1 CON	2
Velarian Ears: +1 PER with Hearing Group	2
Velarian Wakefulness: Life Support (Diminished Sleep: sleeps 8 hours per Month)	2
Velarian Lungs: Life Support (Expanded Breathing: can breathe normally in thin atmospheres)	1

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 7

The Fassai

Members of a proud and ancient culture, the Fassai have fallen on hard times in recent centuries. While still powerful, they lack the influence and authority they once had in the Confederation, and seek to reclaim it.

Fassai Biology

Humanoids with dark skin (usually a sort of dull brown, but in some races shading to more of a grey), the Fassai have heads with furrowed ridges and little (if any) hair. Over half the males are completely bald, and while females tend to have more hair than males, they still have very high foreheads, with the hair arranged more as a fringe around the sides of the head.

Fassai children are born after a five-month gestation period that leaves the mother virtually helpless. As a result, she must rely on the father, relatives, and/or friends to help her with basic necessities during this period. In the distant past, this led to the formation of large "family" groups that today provide the basis for the Fassai government and social structure.

Kadrigar, The Fassai Homeworld

Kadrigar, the Fassai homeworld, is slightly larger than Earth, with 1.2 G standard gravity. Water covers about two-thirds of the planet, leaving a full third of it for land — four large continents and a plethora of large islands. Each of the Hundred Houses controls a particular region of the planet, so traveling Fassai take care to avoid the territories of rival Houses.

Accustomed to living with others, the Fassai prefer to cluster together in cities. Fassai mega-cities, clearly visible from space, dominate the planet — but have large, mostly unsettled wilderness areas between them, criss-crossed by roads.

FASSAI PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 STR	2
+1 PD	1

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 3

Fassai Society And Culture

Millennia ago, the Fassai created a society based on oligarchic leadership systems deriving from their extended families, or "Houses." Referred to as the Hundred Houses (though there are actually slightly more than 100 of them), these institutions are enormous extended families descended from an ancestor (as often mythic as not). Within each House, the leaders of important sub-families rule as the House Council; each House Council sends a representative to the Planetary Council that governs the Fassai as a whole. Some Houses choose their leaders democratically, others by heredity, others by merit. The only constant is that each House considers its method superior to the others'.

Historically, fighting between Houses occurred frequently. One House would clash with another over trading rights, farmland, or some other resource or privilege, and they'd settle the matter with arms. Over time, the Fassai have more or less grown out of this behavior, preferring to settle their intra-species differences with negotiation and other peaceful methods.

One reason the Fassai so often came to bloodshed in the past is their elaborate code of honor. To the Fassai, a House's or person's honor is paramount; insults to him or it must be avenged, and all conduct must take honor into account. Fassai honor largely boils down to this principle: a Fassai must not settle for less than he deserves. While this has some beneficial effects — it prevents a Fassai from accepting pay for a job he didn't do, and makes gambling virtually non-existent among them — it also leads to a lot of conflict when two Fassai both feel they "deserve" the same thing, or when a person feels he's getting less respect or consideration than he's due. (Most Fassai take *Fassai Code Of Honor* as a 15-point Psychological Limitation; it's not listed in the Package Deal because some Fassai, particularly those who've left Confederation space, scorn such "foolish" notions.)

Since their Pyrrhic victory over the Renghadi, another Confederation species, in a protracted war during the twenty-third century, the Fassai have seen their influence in Confederation society weaken. They have spent centuries trying to rebuild to their former heights of power, with only limited success, and remain ever alert for ways to increase their importance on the galactic stage.

Quagi look rather like a humanoid frogs, with bulging eyes set atop flat heads, wide mouths, webbed feet, and slick skins. Unlike frogs they are warm-blooded and bear live young. They have gill-like breathing organs that function equally well in air and water. They frequently travel from Quagaro, their homeworld to fellow Confederation worlds and out into the greater Galaxy to work as biologists, artists, underwater laborers, traders, diplomats, and assassins (they have a well-developed science of poisons).

Quagi have Swimming +4" and Life Support (Expanded Breathing: breathe underwater).
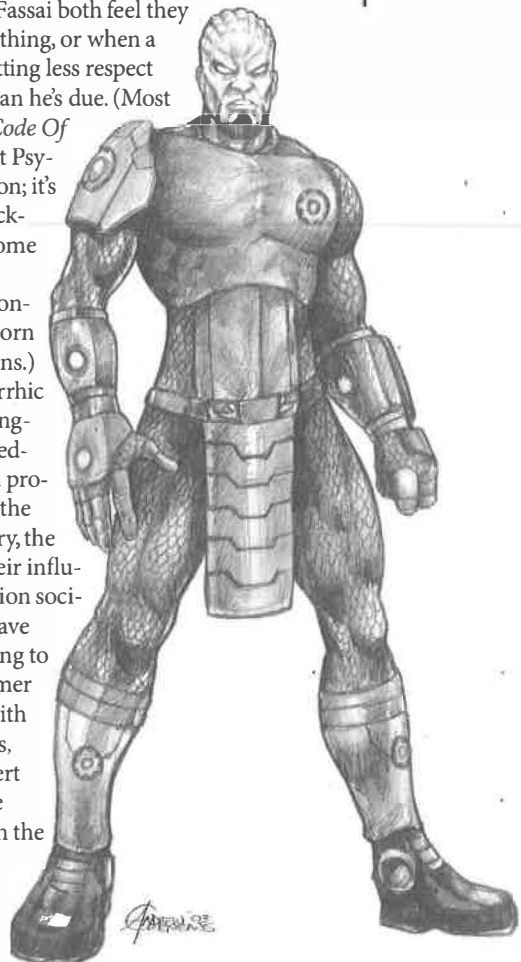
THE DONBURIL

Tall humanoids with shiny gold skin, Donburil have an odd metabolism. Their tissue and bone contains a high proportion of metals, and the food they eat is lethal to most other beings.

Society on Donbur is matriarchal, with a government consisting of a council of the female leaders of the approximately 800 clans. (The total Donburil population is only 600 million.) Politics on Donbur is a constantly-shifting tapestry of coalition-building, negotiation, and dealmaking that confuses anyone but a Donburil.

At present an ice age afflicts Donbur, so most Donburil have left the homeworld for one of their 23 colony worlds. All but two of the colonies belong to the Confederation; the remaining two are separatist societies experimenting with sexual equality.

The Donburil have long been the most adventurous explorers in the Confederation, leading expeditions into the Galactic core and venturing as far as the Galactic halo. The Donburil Amazons, an elite army unit, are a key part of the Confederation military.

Donburil have +5 STR, +1 PD, +1 ED, 1 PD/1 ED Damage Resistance, Knockback Resistance -1", Life Support (Immunity to various metallic poisons), and a Physical Limitation reflecting their average weight of 300 kilograms (-5 points).

The Catavalans

The first non-Velarian members of the Confederation, the Catavalans are a curious blend of modern advancements and ancient customs. Highly regarded for their quick wit, even tempers, honest dealing, and steadfast loyalty to Confederation principles, they have few enemies among other species.

Catavalan Biology

The inhabitants of Cataval are four-armed humanoids who stand about seven feet tall. Their skin tones range from a stony gray to a sandy brown. Although almost completely hairless, they are true mammals. Catavalans have naturally long lives and are patient, thoughtful beings.

Cataval, The Catavalan Homeworld

Cataval is a large, dry world, with relatively small oceans, large deserts, and several extensive mountain ranges. Since their planet has proportionately less arable land than other worlds its size, the Catavalans traditionally imposed strict population controls so they didn't outgrow their ability to feed themselves. Centuries ago, when technological advancements overcame their food shortage problem, they lifted these restrictions. As a result, the Catavalan population has increased dramatically.

The Catavalans have a few colony planets, mostly inhabited by freethinkers and dissidents who oppose the divine monarchy. Although some
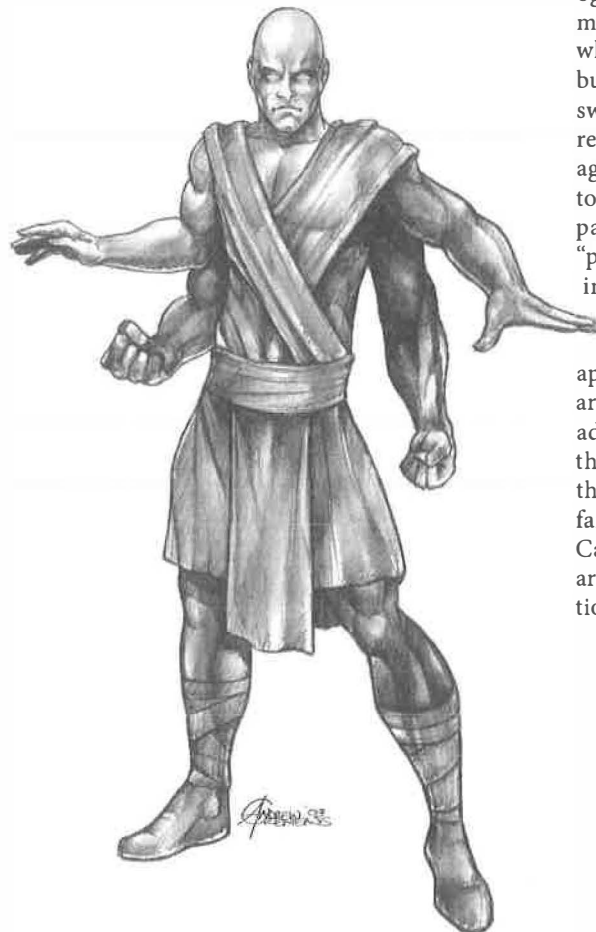
CATAVALAN PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Extra Limbs (2 — two more arms), Inherent (+¼)	6
Catavalan Longevity: Life Support (Longevity: 200-year lifespan)	1

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 7

of these worlds assert their independence, they all remain so culturally and economically tied to Cataval that any such claim amounts to little more than wishful thinking.

Catavalan Society And Culture

Society on Cataval has followed the same pattern for a very long time, since Catavalan longevity gives them a strong streak of conservatism and reliance on tradition. A divine emperor known simply as the Monarch rules the entire planet and all Catavalans. Because the Catavalans consider the Monarch a god, his priests run the government. Orders of priests act as soldiers, tax collectors, teachers, judges, and bankers. The newest order of clergy, the science priests, perform all research on Cataval. As one might expect, progress is slow.

Cataval is technically an ATRI 10 society, but with many curious survivals of earlier technology; Catavalans don't adopt new tech if an older method serves them well. They use steam power where most other civilizations use internal combustion or gas turbines, their soldiers fight with swords as well as energy guns, and they keep records on paper as much as on electronic storage media. Other species often find it frustrating to deal with them because of this; "Catavalan paperwork" has become a galactic slang term for "pointless procedures caused by backward thinking or practices."

When the Velarians and their colony worlds organized the Confederation, Cataval applied immediately for membership. The Monarchs accepted the faith of Scomaru Shaan, but added the reigning Monarch and his dynasty to the ranks of the Avatars. Technically this makes the Catavalan branch of the faith a heresy, but so far nobody wants to make an issue of it, since the Catavalans are valuable allies. Catavalan forces are a small but significant part of the Confederation's defense structure.

OTHER GALACTIC SPECIES

A few significant species aren't directly associated with a particular galactic government. Some simply can't co-exist easily with other species due to odd physiologies or customs; others long ago isolated themselves from galactic society for reasons of their own.

The Hzeel

Whenever Galactic idealists speak of the brotherhood of sentient life and the vision of a future when all species live together in harmony, someone eventually mentions the Hzeel. That makes the idealists change the subject in a hurry.

Hzeel Biology

Hzeel (the term is both singular and plural) are small humanoids with bluish-grey skin and large red eyes. Average stature is about 1.2 meters, with a few giants as tall as 1.5 meters. Despite their size they can be quite strong and are remarkably quick. Their skeletons tend to put out numerous small spurs and nodules, giving many of them a gnarled appearance.

Hzeel are warm-blooded, but not mammals. They lay eggs in clutches of two to four, feeding their infants regurgitated food. They have a relatively short lifespan; few Hzeel live past 60 standard years. They do heal rapidly from injury, and can even regenerate lost limbs.

Zeel, The Hzeel Homeworld

Once an Earthlike world slightly smaller than Earth itself, Zeel today is a scarred ruin of its former self. Devastated by the Perseids, Zeel is little more than a ball of rock incapable of supporting most forms of life. Hzeel still live in the Zeel system in orbital habitats or domed surface colonies.

Hzeel Society And Culture

Ancestral Hzeel were scavengers on the home planet, living off the kills of powerful predators. The modern Hzeel continue that way of life in technological society. The most honest Hzeel live as salvagers and scrap dealers, recovering derelict spacecraft and abandoned colonies. The definition of "derelict" or "abandoned" can get stretched pretty far, with some Hzeel assuming anything not in use is free for the taking. Other Hzeel don't even bother with the pre-

tense, becoming outright pirates and thieves.

In their defense, the Hzeel are a homeless species. A little over 600 years ago, they had a small but thriving empire and were poised for even greater things. The chief obstacle to Hzeel dreams of conquest was the nascent Perseid Empire, located to spinward of Hzeel space. Hoping to outflank the Perseids, the Hzeel pushed aggressively coreward. They soon encountered a planet, Earth, which seemed perfect as a staging base from which to launch further assaults on Perseid space. All they had to do was conquer it — and it possessed what the Terran Empire would call ATRI 7 technology.

What happened next is not entirely clear, due to the fragmentary nature of Human records and the downfall of the Hzeel. According to the most reliable Hzeel reports, their attempted invasion of Earth was thwarted by the efforts of dozens or hundreds of superpowerful (possibly psionic) Humans, some armed with technology not only more advanced than ATRI 7, but also far better than the Hzeel ATRI 9 technology of the time. These Humans utterly destroyed the Hzeel invasion fleet, crippling the Hzeel military, and according to some accounts even conducted a few raids against Zeel itself.

The Humans apparently left the Hzeel to lick their wounds. But a few months later the Perseids, recognizing opportunity when they saw it, swept in to obliterate the remnants of the Hzeel fleet. Although not able to extend their empire into Hzeel space itself, the Perseids killed billions of Hzeel, completely disrupted their society, and freed all of the client species in the Hzeel Empire. The result was the end of the Hzeel as a galactic power and the virtual extinction of their culture.

Today, six centuries later, only about 20 million Hzeel live in space stations and domed colonies in or near the old Zeel system. An equal number are scattered through Perseid, Mon'dabi, and Terran space, and small enclaves of Hzeel exist as far off as Ackálian and Velarian territory. They have no overall government; the wealthiest member, known simply as "the Boss," usually rules most Hzeel communities.

Technology is one of the Hzeel strong points. They had a respectable ATRI 9 when they tried to

DON'T MESS WITH EARTH

The Hzeel isn't the only species that tried to conquer Earth during its pre-interstellar era and lived to regret it.

The first would-be ruler of Humanity, the Sirians, tried to invade Earth in 1938 and failed; a later effort also failed. In 1976, the Sirians made an ambitious attempt to invade part of Malvan space and steal Malvan technology, possibly to gain weapons with which to make another effort to conquer Earth. The Malvans utterly destroyed the invaders with ease. Today, the Sirians are a minor species supposedly living in a single system rimward of former Malvan space.

The second species, the Qularr, tried to use its advanced biotechnology to conquer Earth in 1965 with an army of gigantic monsters. After Humanity's super-powered defenders captured the monsters and imprisoned them

HZEEL PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 DEX	6
Hzeel Eyes: Nightvision	5
Hzeel Eyes: +2 PER with Sight Group	4
Hzeel Regeneration: Healing 1d6 (Regeneration, 1 BODY per Week), Can Heal Limbs, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Self Only (-½), Extra Time + Increased Time Increment (1 BODY/Week; -3)	7

Disadvantages	Value
-2 BODY	-4

Total Cost Of Package: 18

conquer Earth, and eagerly adopt new technologies, even if they are not fully perfected or entirely safe. Their dispersed existence makes it hard for Hzeel to do much research, but their few scientists make up for their lack of resources with enthusiasm, daring, and a disregard for both safety and ethics. Hzeel are also skilled at adapting alien tech to their own use; their ships and stations often incorporate bits from a dozen other civilizations. Hzeel have aggressively excavated (or rather, looted) Mandaarian ruins in search of relic tech. Today most Hzeel remain ATRI 9, but those encountered in higher-tech civilizations use whatever equipment is the local standard.

The Korundar

One of the strangest species in the Galaxy, the silicoid Korundar live in conditions which would kill most humanoids quickly, and so have escaped conquest and exploitation. They're admired for their skills as prospectors, miners, metallurgists, and engineers.

Korundar Biology

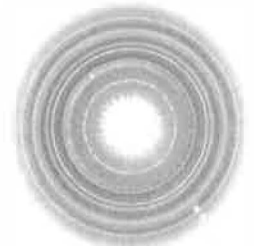One of the few known silicoid species, the Korundar evolved from gathering herbivores. To Humans, their bodies/flesh resemble a rock like smoky quartz, but not faceted or crystalline. Vaguely centauroid, with four legs and two arms, they're huge (6-8 m tall), powerful beings by the standards of most carbon-based life. They live on radioactive crystalline "plants." Hermaphroditic, they lay eggs that look like silver-painted bowling balls.

Korun, The Korundar Homeworld

The Korundar live deeper in the Galactic core than any other solid species. Korun is a dense, massive world wrapped in a superheated atmosphere and constantly churned by volcanic activity. A thriving silicon-based ecology evolved there, using volcanic vents as the chief energy source. Complex crystalline "plants" grow around the vents, sending metallic tendrils into the molten rock in search of heavy metals.

Korundar Society And Culture

Most other species find Korundar society and culture maddeningly slow. The Korundar take a day to do what most sentient beings can do in an hour. Their religious ceremonies, which last for days and involve worship of their homeworld via rituals performed near lava vents, are perhaps the best example of the Korundar tendency to perform tasks cautiously and with an eye toward perfection.

Unlike most starfaring species, the Korundar do not have a unified world government. Korun remains balkanized into nearly one hundred nations, mostly democratic republics or constitutional monarchies. These nations generally enjoy peaceful relations; despite their size and strength, Korundar are calm, deliberate, and difficult to anger. Disputes sometimes arise over food sources or the like, however.

Korundar don't colonize, simply because few

KORUNDAR PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+20 STR	20
+8 BODY	16
Radioactive Form: Drain CON ½d6, NND (defense is LS (Safe Environment: High Radiation) or lead shielding; +½), Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Always On (-½)	13
Silicoid Body: Armor (6 PD/8 ED)	21
Silicoid Body: Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Heat)	15
Heavy: Knockback Resistance -6"	12
Extra Limbs: 4 legs	5
Long Legs: Running +12"	24
Reach: Stretching 2", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Always Direct (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), No Velocity Damage (-¼)	9

Disadvantages	Value
-1 SPD	-10
Physical Limitation: Enormous (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)	-15

Total Cost Of Package: 110

worlds exist that can support their type of life, but they often travel to other planets to work as miners, engineers, or even mercenaries. Since they don't have to breathe, Korundar can get by on most planets with nothing but cold-weather gear, usually incorporating a layer of lead foil to protect fragile organic beings from their mildly radioactive bodies.

The Korundar have ATRI 10 technology, though most devices are unusual crystalline sorts of things almost completely incompatible with other species' technology. They are particularly adept at metallurgy and the construction of fission power plants based on biological models.

The Malvans

Once the rulers of an immense empire, the Malvans even today are more powerful than their small numbers suggest. Their history goes back almost a million years, but many people (both Malvan and non-Malvan) consider the Malvans a dying species doomed to extinction in no more than a few millennia.

Malvan Biology

Typical humanoids, the Malvans have skin tones ranging from dark bronze to light golden. Just above their large eyes Malvans have feathery eyebrows which are part of their sense of smell. Their hair is usually some shade of red or violet, and both genders tend to wear it long and elaborately styled. Cosmetic body modifications, tattoos, and exotic clothing are common. The Malvan birthrate has dropped to almost nothing in the past millennia. All Malvans live to great ages, and most receive immortality treatments.

Malva, The Malvan Homeworld

Malva is the most technologically advanced planet known, and its cities perhaps the oldest still in existence. Everything about the world speaks of perfection — the buildings are tall, elaborately crafted, and in perfect repair; legions of slaves keep the streets immaculately clean; the numerous preserved natural areas are uniformly beautiful. For those who can afford it, Malva is a wondrous vacation destination. Most Malvans live on Malva, which has a population of only 80 million Malvans and an equal number of slaves, servants, and guest workers from other worlds. Only a few Malvans live on their species's few remaining colonies.

Malvan Society And Culture

Society on Malva defines decadence in the Galaxy. Malvans concern themselves only with the pursuit of pleasure, and their jaded tastes are ever desperate for novelty. A thriving entertainment industry operates on Malva — in addition to satisfying the Malvan urge for diversion, it caters to thousands of aliens who come in search of amusements

MALVAN PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+3 PRE	3
Malvan Longevity: Life Support (Longevity: 800 year lifespan)	3
Malvan Mind: Mental Defense (3 points + EGO/5)	3
Advanced Tech (ATRI 14 technology in a mostly ATRI 11 campaign)	45
Disadvantages	**Value**
None	
Total Cost Of Package: 54	

unavailable or illegal elsewhere. Great artists and performers from every civilization flock to Malva hoping to attract the Phazor's lavish patronage (he once gave a singer a million Terran credits for singing one song that moved him deeply).

One of the most famous spectacles on Malva is the arena, where gladiators, mercenaries, and alien beasts battle. Many of the gladiators are slaves or professionals, but one of the arenas remains open to all comers. Anyone may walk into the open arena and fight against the deadliest professional fighters on Malva; the prize is a gem worth ten million Terran credits. Only two walk-ons have won the gem in the past 400 years, but desperate people from all over the Galaxy still come to risk it.

The *Phazor,* or High King, rules Malva and its few surviving colonies. Though it's lasted eighty thousand years so far, the monarchy is just the latest in a long series of governments the Malvans have tried. They have come to believe all states ultimately fail, and that any system of government represents a temporary solution to problems, not a permanent institution. Few Malvans have any degree of patriotism; other than a vague sense of solidarity with close relatives, Malvans have no real loyalties at all.

Law on Malva allows alien slavery, and many Malvans own dozens of sentient beings — mostly captured by pirates or kidnapped by slavers. Less affluent Malvans have robot servants. The law protects slave sales, so friends or relatives of aliens carried off to Malva can only try to buy their freedom. Attempts to free a slave directly have never succeeded; the Malvans may have given up conquest and imperialism, but they still retain weapons and security systems capable of obliterating entire alien fleets with ease.

The Malvans have ATRI 14 technology, allowing them to create objects seemingly out of thin air and move ships via drives incomprehensible to Human science. Few (if any) of them have much interest in engineering, so further progress is unlikely.
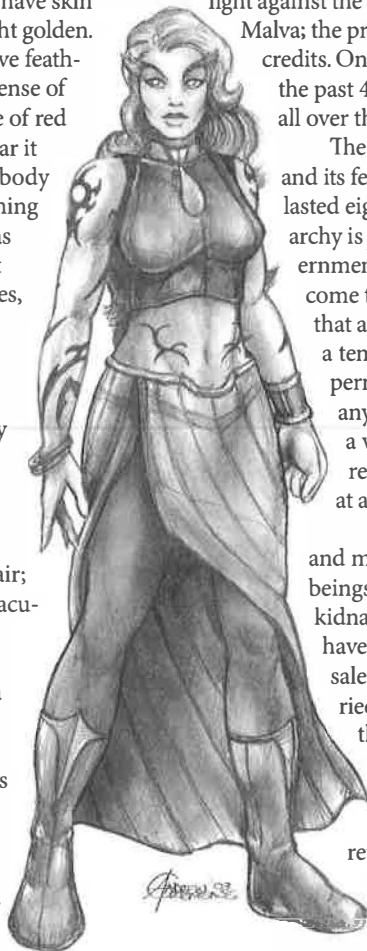
on an island, the Qularr fled. A repeated attempt in the early twenty-first century met with similar results and convinced the Qularr to give up their dreams of conquest. The Thorgon Hegemony has since absorbed them; they traded their knowledge of genetic techniques to obtain self-rule privileges similar to those of the Kalishari.

A third species, the greenish-skinned Gadroon, sought a planet to terraform into a new homeworld for themselves. Earth's superhuman protectors fended off the Gadroon invasion force after several fierce battles. A second invasion attempt, in 1984, was much more easily defeated. The remnants of the Gadroon became a nomadic species, traveling through space as traders and mercenaries. As of the 2600s, they're virtually extinct, existing only in small enclaves on various planets in Mon'dabi and Ackálian space.

THE THANE

Around the turn of the millennium, a strange, powerful race of aliens appeared in the Milky Way. Calling themselves the Thane, they claimed to possess arcane secrets and mystic might. Most species scoffed, attributing the Thanes' abilities to advanced technology. But no one denied that even a single Thane was a threat to be reckoned with, if angry.

The origins and homeworld of the Thane were, and remain, a mystery; the Thane themselves refuse to divulge any of their secrets. Many species speculated that the Thane came from a Rim world fairly close to Earth, but no one ever offered any proof or discovered any such world. In 2446, a reporter surreptitiously recorded a conversation between the renegade Malvan adventurer Qarnos Chaile and an unknown Mandaarian in which Chaile described the Thane as "spawn and servants of the Elder Worm," though what he meant by this and who the Elder Worm might be remains unknown.

After a brief flurry of activity in the decades following their appearance, the Thane virtually disappeared from the Galactic stage. Periodically over the course of the next several centuries, reports surfaced of a Thane seen on some distant world, or one who supposedly met with a disreputable figure in a space station bar, but the authorities could only confirm a few of these reports. The reason for the Thanes' disappearance are as mysterious as everything else about them.

The Mandaarians

The Mandaarians, one of the most advanced and powerful civilizations in the Milky Way, once controlled a small volume of space antispinward and "north" of the Terran Empire.

In 2574 virtually the entire Mandaarian species — some 100 billion individuals — packed up their possessions and left the Galaxy aboard a fleet of FTL hibernation ships. Their destination remains unknown (when last detected, they were headed in the direction of the Magellanic Clouds). Even more mysteriously, so does their reason for leaving. Theories range from an impending invasion of the Milky Way from some other galaxy, to the imminent explosion of the Galactic core. (As of 2640, the Terran Intelligence Command has a permanent office devoted to investigating the Exodus and other matters Mandaarian, but in all its existence, the office has made no significant progress.)

Humans and Ackálians moved swiftly to take over chunks of the former Mandaarian Union. Explorers found entire colonies abandoned. There was no sign of damage or haste — the Mandaarians had carefully removed everything of value, cleaned up waste, and left the shells of buildings to stand unchanging. They similarly stripped their homeworld, Mandaar. On some of the former Mandaarian colonies, lucky explorers have found small caches of advanced technological devices; it's unclear whether the Mandaarians deliberately left these behind or simply forgot them. A thriving business in "tech scavenging" has grown up on old Mandaarian worlds, attracting shady characters in search of the magic artifact which will make a fortune.

Not all the Mandaarians left in the Exodus. A few hundred remained behind, either because they chose not to go or because their fellows abandoned them. They won't say, attempts to coerce the information have failed, and efforts to find out what happened via telepathy run

MANDAARIAN PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Mandaarian Mind: Mental Defense (3 points + EGO/5)	3
Telepathy 4d6	20
20 additional points' worth of psionic powers	20
Advanced Tech (ATRI 13 tech in a mostly ATRI 11 campaign)	30

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 73

into impenetrable mental barriers.

Sightings of Mandaarians have taken on an almost supernatural quality on many worlds: they're credited with prophecies of doom, selecting certain Humans for mysterious quests, and giving out amazing technological items for seemingly trivial favors. These may all be legends, or they may not. What is known is that the Mandaarians have evaded fairly intense efforts by the security services and espionage agencies of the Galaxy to find them, not to mention less professional but more obsessive searches by various crackpots, fortune-hunters, mystics, and xenobiologists.

Mandaarian Biology

Mandaarians are humanoid, with a range of skin and hair tones almost identical to those found in Humans, but more unusual eye colors (typically golden or silver, with slit-pupils something like those of cats). They have Human-like ears, usually with a slight point at the top. Both genders normally wear their hair short and with little or no styling. The average Mandaarian is shorter and slighter than the average Human, but has comparable strength and durability.

A high proportion of Mandaarians before the Exodus were psionic — nearly 40% according to Malvan records — and all Mandaarians examined since the Exodus have possessed psi powers. Most Mandaarians psionics qualify as at least Epsilon-level psis; some have much more power.

Mandaar, The Mandaarian Homeworld

Before the Exodus, Mandaar was as close to Utopia as any known planet in the Milky Way. Thanks to their ATRI 13 technology and enlightened social views, the Mandaarians established a society where no Mandaarian was impoverished or sick, and everyone pursued whatever interests he wanted instead of having to work for a living. Everything functioned perfectly, and everyone seemed happy — or at least content.

The Exodus changed all that. Mandaar now lies abandoned, with nothing but thousands of buildings to show that a thriving civilization once lived there. Now squatters, explorers, and rogues infest the place, each hoping to stumble across a vault full of forgotten Mandaarian technology. It has become a lawless world, dangerous to visit.

Mandaarian Society And Culture

Social philosophers frequently think of Mandaarian society and culture as the epitome of what humanoids can expect to achieve. Peaceful yet vigorous and dynamic, powerful yet altruistic, motivated by curiosity and a love of learning rather than a desire to conquer or enslave, the Mandaarians built a civilization most other species could only envy.

Diverse and sophisticated, Mandaarian art,

music, and literature have always been popular among starfaring species. Since the Exodus, the price for original Mandaarian works of art has skyrocketed, often into the billions of Terran credits. An explorer who found new original artworks would become rich overnight.

Although sometimes willing to make contact with pre-interstellar civilizations (including, in the late twentieth century, Humans), the Mandaarians maintain a strict non-interference policy. They neither hurt nor harm other species (unless there's no way to avoid doing so), and do not give away their technology or "uplift" less advanced sentients. The Mandaarians who have remained behind seem less inclined than their brethren to obey the "Mandaarian Doctrine" scrupulously, but still follow it on almost all occasions.

The Thrínú

Descended from creatures resembling Terran birds, the Thrínú (THREE-noo) come from the low-gravity world Thar. They are one of the few flying sentient species.

Thrínú Biology

Impressive and beautiful people, Thrínú have broad wings, colorful feathers, and claws for perching. Unlike Terran birds Thrínú have teeth rather than beaks, and six limbs (two legs, two arms, and two wings). They can fly in low gravity, and consequently prefer to terraform low-gravity worlds rather than colonize lifebearing planets. On worlds with gravity greater than 0.75 G, Thrínú often wear antigravity packs to compensate. A substantial portion of their population lives in space habitats.

Thrínú reproduce by laying eggs. Their ancestors constructed great nest-towns on cliffs and large trees. Modern Thrín architecture runs to dizzyingly tall towers. Gregarious and talkative, they gather daily to gossip and discuss events. While Thrínú can tolerate being alone, they don't enjoy it.

Thar, The Thrínú Homeworld

The Thrínú homeworld, Thar, is located near the Velarian Confederation, but Thrínú traders and tourists travel widely. It's got only .75 G, making it a little uncomfortable for most species, though the Thrínú do their best to accommodate visitors' needs. Tourists come to see the planet's many spectacular natural sites, including the Gínari Cliffs, Malla Falls, and the Shrínas Forests.

THRÍNÚ PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Wings: Flight 12", Not in Gravity above 0.75 G (-½), Restrainable (-½)	12
Talons: 1 pip HKA (½d6 with STR)	5

Disadvantages	Value
-2 STR	-2
-2 BODY	-4
Running -1"	-2

Total Cost Of Package: 9

Thrínú Society And Culture

The government of Thar is a universal democracy. Every Thrín can vote, without limit of age or even capacity. They discuss issues in a series of virtual forums, and these discussions can last a very long time indeed. In practice, the Thrínú system means most citizens accept the recommendations of professional civil servants or a few "politics geeks" whose opinions they respect. During times of crisis, popular enthusiasm leads to rapid and sometimes unwise decisions.

Easily bored, Thrínú prefer to skip from one thing to another rather than working on a single task for a long time. This gives them a not entirely deserved reputation as scatter-brained and silly. A Thrín really can fly a starship, play a game on his pocket computer, chat with the navigator, and eat lunch at the same time. He may not complete any one task as quickly as a Human or Perseid would, but he gets them all done soon enough.

The Thrínú have a permissive, hedonistic culture. Thrín philosophers determined centuries ago that the capacity for enjoyment distinguishes living beings from machines, so there's no higher purpose than simply having fun. Visiting Malva is almost a pilgrimage for Thrínú, though they avoid the arenas, since they consider bloodsports barbaric.

Their feckless attitude is one reason the Thrínú have not colonized more widely or conquered other worlds. They certainly have the ability — the planet Thar has close to 10 billion inhabitants, and the few Thrín colonies have another billion combined. Their technology is at or near the Galactic standard (ATRI 10-11), and the Thrín spacefleet has good ships and well-trained crews. They're simply content the way things are. Thar does, however, have loose defensive alliances with the Conjoined Civilizations and the Velarian Confederation.

According to existing records, the average Thane is about 1.8 meters tall with disproportionately long arms and fingers. His moist, leathery skin is a disturbing brownish-purple shade, and his glowing orangish eyes bulge from their sockets (and, on close examination, are faceted like those of an insect). His mouth is a mass of large cilia or small tentacle-like appendages, rather than a jaw with teeth; no one knows what he eats, or how. He typically wears a hooded brown robe.

The Xenovores

The name "Xenovore" still makes people shudder throughout the Terran Empire. They nearly destroyed the Humans during the Alien Wars era, but were ultimately reduced to a remnant of homeless wanderers after the destruction of their homeworld.

Xenovore Biology

Xenovores appear to derive from chasing hunters, but many Terran scientists believe they are the product of genetic engineering because of their ability to digest almost any kind of protein and their extremely tough physiology. Scholars have suggested both the Mandaarians and the Malvans as possible creators, but nothing in the history of either civilization supports this idea, and no one has ever satisfactorily explained why either species would want to breed such "pets." Xenovores have both a chitinous shell and an internal skeleton, two hearts, and a deadly tail sting.

The Xenovore Homeworld

Virtually nothing is known of the Xenovore homeworld, since their xenophobia and aggression kept visitors away. The Human Combined Fleet destroyed it in 2396. All that's left now is rubble, which daring explorers and prospectors sometimes pick through in the hopes of finding lost Xenovore technology.

Xenovore Society And Culture

Traditional Xenovore society is based on a pack structure — small groups with intense personal loyalty to a leader. On a large scale this functioned as a kind of feudal system, giving tremendous unity and direction to their crusade to conquer other sentient species. Surviving Xenovore packs have no loyalty to anything beyond their group, and fight each other as viciously as they fight aliens.

In their heyday the Xenovores attacked in all directions, motivated both by simple predator aggression and a violently xenophobic philosophy. Because Xenovores can digest anything they developed the notion that they are the highest form of existence in the Universe and everything else was merely food for them. When they encountered alien intelligence, the Xenovores reacted with fury and revulsion — fury at the aliens who dared consider themselves equal to Xenovores and revulsion at food which dared to think. Their crusade resulted in the extinction of six species and the deaths of billions.

Since the destruction of their homeworld and the final mopping-up by the Terran fleet, the Xenovores have become little more than a nuisance. The total population now is less than 5 million, mostly in small shipboard groups or enclaves on a few worlds. They have no government; the remaining bands get by as mercenaries, pirates, and smugglers. A few hundred have overcome their innate

XENOVORE PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+3 STR	3
+3 DEX	9
+5 CON	10
+3 BODY	6
Xenovore Claws: HKA ½d6 (up to 1d6+1 with STR)	10
Xenovore Sting: HKA 1d6, Armor Piercing (+½); No STR Bonus (-½)	15
Tail: Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	5
Xenovore Skin: Armor (3 PD/1 ED)	6
Xenovore Digestion: Life Support (Diminished Eating: can digest any type of protein)	1

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 65

xenophobia (which most Xenovores take as a Psychological Limitation) and earn relatively honest livings as bounty hunters or safari guides. Two of the most successful gladiators in the Malvan arena are Xenovores.

Xenovore technology was ATRI 9 at its peak (ATRI 10 for biotechnology). Today their packs either use old gear from that level, or alien equipment purchased or stolen. On some of their devastated colony planets, surviving Xenovores have reverted to a primitive, pre-technological state.
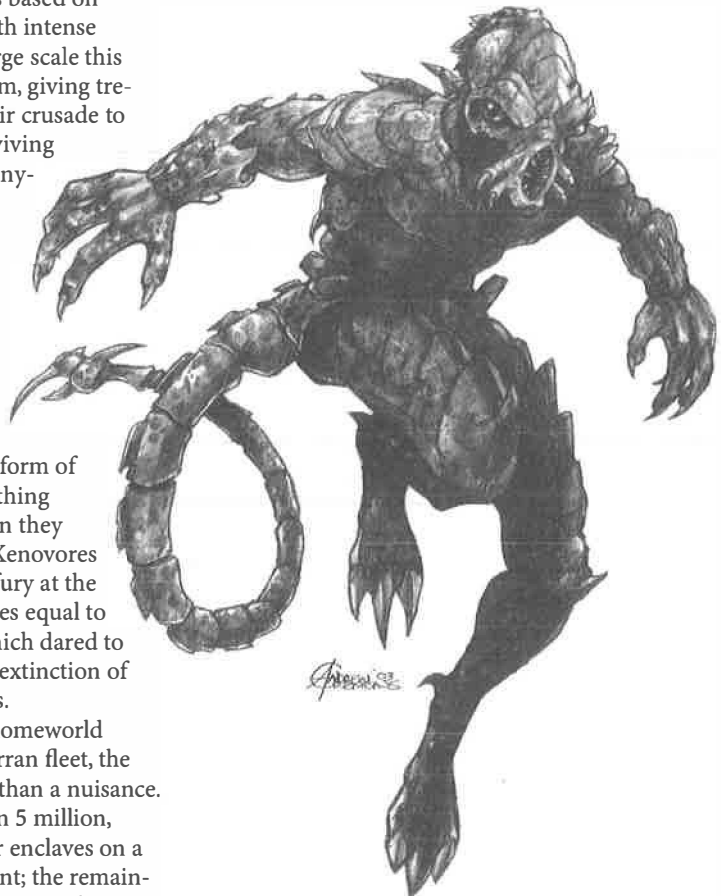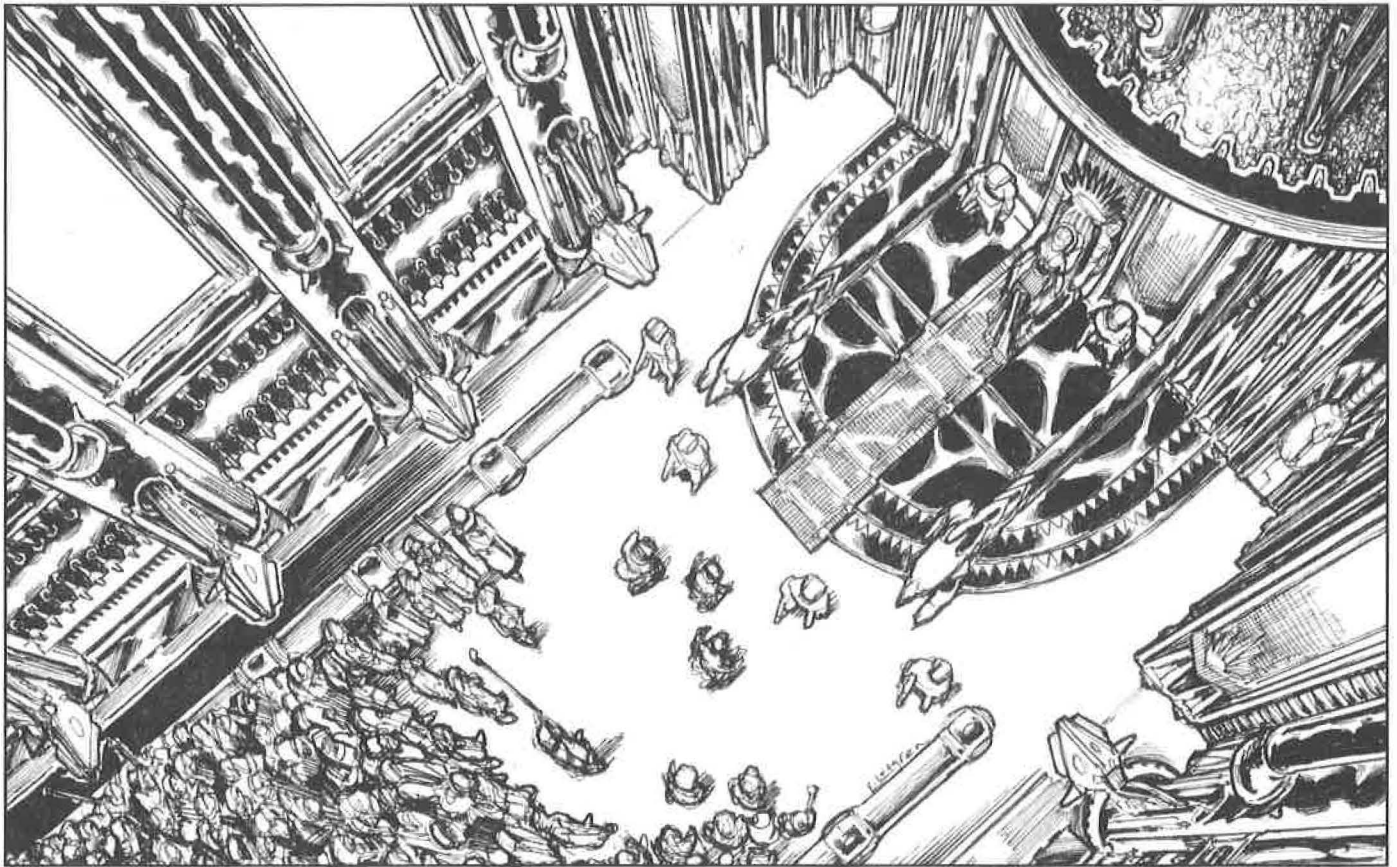
Powers and Pawns
THE GALAXY OF THE IMPERIAL ERA

It's a big Galaxy out there, filled with all sorts of opportunities for adventure, profit, romance, intrigue, and excitement. Before you venture out in it, you'd better have some idea of who's in charge — or at least, who *thinks* they're in charge....

Since the Terran Empire period spans about three centuries, this book doesn't have enough room to cover every decade in detail. This chapter, and most of the rest of this book, focuses on the period 2633-51, the reign of Empress Marissa III. During that time, the Empire was still strong, and in some ways even still admirable, but the decline into decadence, oppression, and corruption had begun. For characters in search of adventure, it's a good — or at least interesting, to paraphrase the old Chinese saying — time to be alive.

And of course, Humans aren't alone in the Galaxy. Beyond the borders of Imperial space are a host of other empires — some friendly, some hostile, and some utterly mysterious.

THE TERRAN EMPIRE

AN IMPERIAL GLOSSARY

Here's a quick-reference guide to the acronyms used for the various agencies of the Imperial government.

IPF: Imperial Psionics Foundation

ISP: Imperial Security Police

MCD: Ministry for Colonization and Development

SOD: Special Operations Division (a department of the Mind Police)

TDC: Terran Diplomatic Corps

TES: Terran Exploration Service

TIC: Terran Intelligence Command

TSS: Terran Security Service

Other important abbreviations:

CCC: The Central Command Council, the Thorgon governing body.

CCR: The Conjoined Civilizations Republic

FI: Federated Intelligence, the Mon'dabi espionage agency

The Terran Empire contains more than a thousand inhabited worlds and a trillion inhabitants. It rules almost 20% of the Milky Way Galaxy (though as with every other interstellar state, it hasn't necessarily explored every system under it's control — space is very, very big). Humans (or variant subspecies) constitute just under half the population of the Empire (460 billion). Another 480 billion come from 51 intelligent species native to Imperial space, and 60 billion emigrated into the Empire.

The Empire has three main regions. In the region nearest the rim are the old Human colony worlds within 5,000 light-years of Earth — the *Heartworlds* (or "Imperial core worlds"), the richest and most developed part of the Empire. At the anti-spinward end is territory formerly belonging to the Xenovores and Mandaarians — the *Frontier* region, an important trade corridor with Mon'dabi space and under threat from the Ackálians and Thorgons. Although prone to instability and rebellion, the Frontier is the fastest-growing part of the Empire.

Between the Heartworlds and the Frontier, and to spinward of the Heartworlds, lies the *Outer Core,* a relatively stable region home to both Terran colonies and other species absorbed into or conquered by the Empire. The Outer Core region saw heavy fighting in both the Galactic War and the Civil War, which retarded development on many worlds. The region serves as an important link between the Heartworlds and the Frontier, and also spans the trade routes to the Perseids and Conjoined Civilizations.

As shown by the accompanying map, the Empire has mostly expanded coreward and anti-spinward. It has refrained from pushing too far rimward or spinward for fear of antagonizing the Perseids, CCR, and Thorgons. Some factions within the military and Exploration Service object to this, and want to push further rimward into the old Hzeel-controlled regions, but so far Empress Marissa has not agreed.

THE IMPERIAL COURT

The Empire is governed from Earth, specifically from the cities of Lyons, Brussels, and Lagos. Brussels is the seat of the Terran Senate, Lagos the home of the Imperial bureaucracy, and Lyons the site of the main Imperial palace and the court of the Empress. The Imperial family has dozens
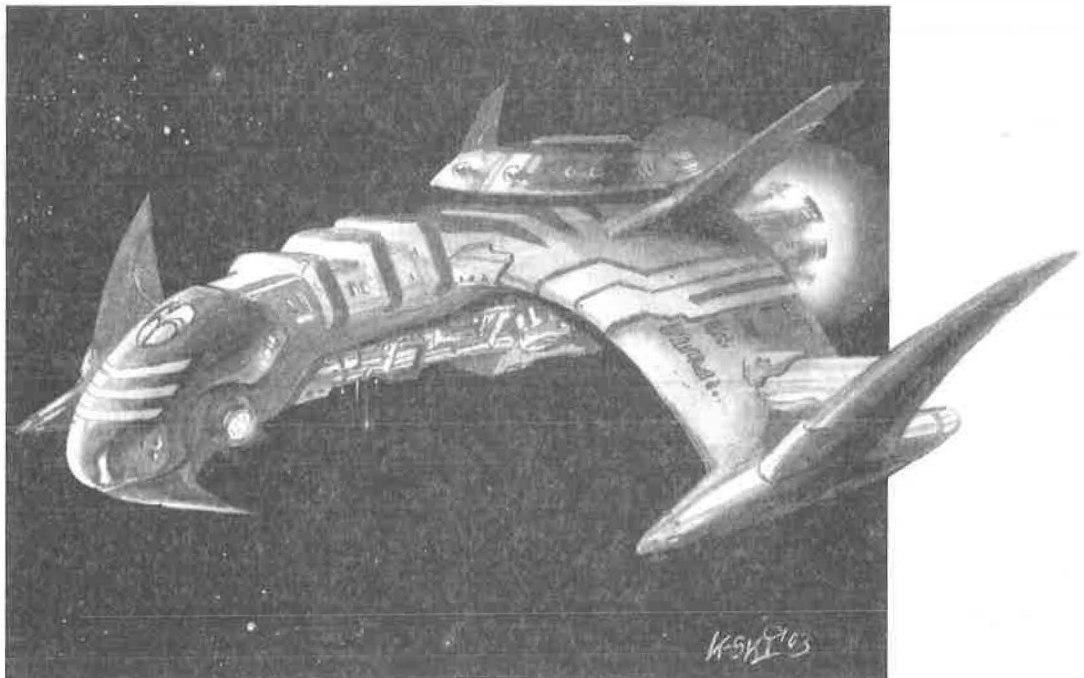
of other palaces scattered across Earth and other worlds — the Summer Palace in North America, the Winter Palace in Africa, the Water Palace on the coast of Australia, and many others. But Lyons was the home of the first Empress Marissa, and during the centuries of Imperial rule the palace complex has sprawled for miles east of the city. By Imperial decree the population of Lyons remains fixed at the level it was when Marissa I established her headquarters there, and the region's vineyards likewise enjoy the protection of Imperial law. As a result, Lyons real estate has become staggeringly expensive; a small apartment in the capital rents for approximately 100,000 credits a month.

The Empress

Marissa III DeValiere is the absolute ruler of a thousand planets and a trillion beings. Her main tool of government is hyperactivity — she maintains a breakneck pace of activity twenty hours a day, wearing down opponents and overcoming problems by sheer exhaustion.

As a girl, Marissa was ignored by her father the Emperor Feodor and her mother, the media star Sankara Singh; an odd assortment of tutors, servants, bodyguards, and bureaucrats handled her upbringing. She spent most of her childhood at the Summer Palace at Yellowstone in North America. She revealed a precocious intelligence early in life, and soon took charge of her own education, studying widely and unsystematically.

At age 16 Marissa entered the Imperial Military Academy; she spent four years there. Bored by the assigned curriculum, she barely graduated (no professor wanted to fail a potential future Empress). At her request she took her cadet cruise aboard an Exploration Service vessel rather than a Navy ship. Thereafter she lived on Earth, developing a keen interest in security and intelligence operations. She spent much of her free time visiting the headquarters of the Terran Security Service and Terran Intelligence Command. At first she was a tolerated nuisance, then an interested observer, and finally a respected advisor. She began spending time with the Emperor, lobbying him (and the advisors who actually made policy) to increase the resources devoted to foreign and internal information-gathering.

When Feodor died, Marissa was not the only possible heir: the Emperor had 11 other children. Most of them, typical idle young nobles of the court, partied constantly and showed little interest in government. But several had patrons in the Navy and Army who hoped to play kingmaker in the style of General Feng. Determined to avoid the chaos of another civil war, Marissa, with the help of the TIC and TSS, neutralized or removed her potential rivals. Five of her half-siblings who showed signs of desiring power suffered sudden fatal accidents, overdoses of recreational drugs, or bouts of rare and swift-acting diseases. The military leaders who had attached themselves to the younger claimants experienced a similar epidemic of weapon malfunctions, vehicle crashes, and apparent suicides.

The Senate confirmed Marissa as Empress in 2633. She immediately unleashed a whirlwind of administrative reforms and new policies to correct the drift and rot of her father's reign. Many saw this as the natural flurry of change at the start of a new reign and waited for things to calm down. They're still waiting.

A small, slender woman, Marissa uses longevity treatments and high-tech body modifications to remain youthful-looking and attractive (right up to her death in 2651). Curious about nearly everything, she devours all the reports from the TIC, TSS, and TES. She hates boredom, so she spends her time "multitasking" — conducting Imperial business while enjoying herself. Her favorite activities include mountaineering, riding, and painting. One often finds the Empress simultaneously exercising with a Perseid athlete, listening to an Exploration Service captain report on stellar anomalies in the galactic halo, arguing with a Varanyi ambassador, and bombarding her team of secretaries with orders for action and requests for information.

The Empress enjoys an equally active personal life. She has no permanent partner, but instead cycles among a group of lovers. To win her favor, one must be interesting and able to keep up with her hectic pace. She likes lovers with opinions and ideas, but any hint of trying to meddle in Imperial business is the surest way to lose her favor permanently.

Marissa loves novelty and information, and people with interesting experiences or new discoveries to report may find themselves summoned to an audience with Her Majesty. Since the Empress is always on the lookout for talented help, an audience can lead to a sudden appointment to an important post — governor of a new colony, envoy to an alien civilization, or commander of an exploration mission. Usually these appointments work out well, since Marissa is a shrewd judge of people. But when she errs, she does so spectacularly, as when she put the pacifist Exploration captain Vima Pinel in charge of an anti-piracy campaign in the Paragon system. Pinel attempted to solve the problem by offering the pirates amnesty and an Imperial pension; soon, all the pirates in the Galaxy were flocking to Paragon.

The Court And The Ministries

The Empress's court consists of high-level ministers and military commanders, distant DeValiere relatives, some favored Senators, and a varied group of people the Empress finds interesting.

Marissa's eleven ministers handle most of the details of government. Each heads an Imperial department:

    Colonization and Development
    Evolution
    Exploration
    Intelligence
    Interstellar Affairs
    Justice

Security
Trade
Treasury
Unity
War

Past Emperors have had a Prime Minister, but Marissa acts as her own executive. The Ministry for Exploration runs the Exploration Service. The Minister for Intelligence is in charge of the Terran Intelligence Command. The Minister for Interstellar Affairs leads the Terran Diplomatic Corps. The Minister for Security controls both the Terran Security Service and the Mind Police. The Minister for War commands the Imperial armed forces. All of those services and the Ministry of Justice (which runs the Imperial Security Police) are described later in this chapter.

THE MINISTRY FOR COLONIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Minister for Colonization and Development oversees the settlement of new planets, promotes growth and development on existing worlds, and assists poor worlds with grants of aid. The MCD's power varies considerably depending on the mood of the current Emperor. Some sovereigns view it as an important investment in the future, others as a useless waste of resources. Marissa favors new colonization, and during her reign the Minister of Colonization and Development is a prize position. The Minister from 2635 to 2644 is Dr. Walden Durham (some attribute the growth of the Ministry to the personal relationship between the Empress and Dr. Durham); Scylla Rodos serves as Minister after 2644.

The MCD works closely with the Exploration Service, although they sometimes come into conflict when the Explorers want to preserve a world for study but the MCD wants to open it to settlement. Under Marissa, the colonists usually win. Colonization and Development has a small space fleet of its own — six giant "colony transports" and a few dozen civilian freighters used as support ships for new colonies. The Ministry usually hires crews from among merchant crewmembers or Exploration Service veterans.

THE MINISTRY FOR EVOLUTION

The Minister for Evolution, a new position, resulted from Marissa's interest in improving the Human genome and exploring the potential of psionic powers. The Ministry absorbed the old Ministry of Health, and remains responsible for preventing the spread of disease and dangerous organisms from planet to planet. The Ministry for Evolution also controls Imperial genetic engineering research and administers the Imperial Psionics Foundation, which conducts research into psionics, evaluates potential psis, and trains them in the use of their powers. The Ministry for Evolution has a large "black budget" for secret research projects, and works closely with the TIC and the Mind Police on biological warfare and psi-technology development. Liberals in the Senate refer to the

Ministry for Evolution as the "Ministry of Mad Science." During the reign of Marissa III Dr. Constanz Moro, a scientist noted both for brilliance in the field of Human genetic engineering and for complete disregard of ethical matters, serves as Minister for Evolution.

THE MINISTRY FOR TRADE

The Minister for Trade regulates and promotes trade among Imperial worlds and beyond the borders. The Ministry licenses all spacecraft and enforces strict standards for operating safety. It maintains navigation beacons, often cooperating with the Exploration Service's Astrogation department. The MfT sets standards for planetary spaceports and operates spaceports on worlds too poor or primitive to run their own. The Ministry protects its turf jealously; it's notorious for its lack of cooperation with the Exploration Service, Ministry of Colonization and Development, and Ministry of the Treasury.

The Minister for Trade from 2630 to 2640 is Nawar Boron, a career bureaucrat who started as a spaceport landing-control officer. From 2640 to 2646 Lady Salissa Varam, whose family is majority shareholder in the starline company InStarCo, holds the position. In 2647, Admiral Berool Orati, a Navy officer brought in to fight corruption and tighten standards on starship licensing, replaces her and serves until the end of Marissa's reign.

THE MINISTRY OF THE TREASURY

The Ministry of the Treasury gathers taxes and prepares the Imperial budget. The Empress draws money from a variety of sources: direct taxes on planets (usually 1 percent of gross planetary product); tariffs on goods entering Imperial space; voluntary contributions by Senate worlds; a direct tax on interplanetary businesses; and a large number of user fees for Imperial services. The total Imperial budget equals about 300 trillion credits per year. The Ministry of the Treasury also mints the Imperial Credit, the official currency of the Empire.

During the first half of Marissa's reign, Serge Madoc, a colorful shipping tycoon, serves as Minister of the Treasury. Though the ISP never proved any wrongdoing against him, he increased his personal fortune more than a hundredfold while in office, and the Empress finally had him assassinated. His successor is the Se'ecra economist N'Hrnvn, whose theories of Trans-Chaotic Modeling allow for very subtle long-range manipulation of the Galactic economy.

THE MINISTRY FOR UNITY

The Ministry for Unity dates back to the time of Marissa I's coup against the Terran Union government. Originally it was supposed to integrate all the worlds of Human space into a single community, resolve disputes among them, and encourage common standards and cooperation. But it became the Empire's chief propaganda agency, endlessly reminding citizens about Imperial peace and prosperity, the threats lurking just beyond the Imperial borders, and the wickedness of dissent and rebel-

lion. The Ministry concentrates most of its efforts on worlds populated by non-Humans, persuading the aliens they're better off under Human rule.

For generations the Ministry for Unity has functioned as an appendage of the Security Ministry, and often the same individual occupies both positions in the cabinet. During Marissa's reign the Minister for Unity is Jetow Glinnar, a successful creator of children's media. In her first year as Minister she created the wildly popular vidshow *Imperial Star Base 5,* shown on every world in the Empire. It even has fans in Thorgon space.

The Nobility

The Imperial aristocracy, including the far-flung DeValiere clan, are almost as important as the ministers. While most aristocrats hold some position in the government, their ties of blood to the Empress are what really give them power. Each of them is a potential Imperial heir (since the Empress, at least in theory, chooses who succeeds her), and nobody can ignore the chance that today's young upper-class twit might become absolute ruler tomorrow. In addition, many of the other major powers in the Galaxy are monarchies, and protocol often demands that envoys or negotiators be of noble birth. The most ambitious or paranoid aristocrats maintain residences around Lyons, so they can constantly attend on the Empress. Those who can't afford to buy a chateau or a vineyard near the Palace content themselves with elegant old homes in Paris or Marseilles. Masters of social warfare, nobles receive schooling from birth in protocol and manners. When an Imperial noble does something rude, it's on purpose.

Imperial nobles come in three varieties: old families; new families; and the Imperial house. The old families descend from the wealthy and powerful people who first supported Marissa I and formed the nucleus of her court. This group includes some aristocrats who can trace their ancestry back to pre-Imperial royal families on Earth — Windsor, Hapsburg, and Yamato, for example. Old families pride themselves on being "real nobles" and sometimes even look down on the Empress if they think she's not watching. She keeps them under control with the possibility of marrying into the Imperial house and the threat of banishment from court.

The Imperial house includes DeValiere relatives and the descendants of Marissa I's officers during her campaigns as admiral. They are probably the busiest aristocrats, since many of them want to gain experience in government on the off chance the crown might land in their laps. Marissa keeps her DeValiere relatives in line by working them hard — they often serve as her personal representatives, and she doesn't tolerate inefficiency.

The new families include those ennobled in the past couple of centuries — mostly military officers or the heads of interstellar corporations granted noble title by grateful or manipulative emperors. Old families look down on them, but they have more money and often more ability.

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THE SENATE AFTER MARISSA III

The Senate has a grim future. After Marissa's death, the Senate began losing privileges and power. Emperor Stephen ordered the arrest of several Senators who opposed him, and also undermined the Senate's right to legislate for Senatorial worlds by shifting the Imperial government to a system of secret orders and decrees instead of laws. Under Empress Sophia Senatorial immunity from arrest disappeared completely, and she abolished the right of the Senate to tax and budget for the Senatorial worlds, citing "inefficiency" and the need to maintain order. Emperor Vincent tried to respect some of the Senate's old authority, but Sandor and his handlers abolished the old privileges and persecuted all Senators who aspired to anything beyond rubber-stamp status. Sigismund closed down the Senate completely.

Marissa controls the new families with promises of better titles, threats of being busted back to the middle class, and appointments to difficult frontier jobs.

Consorts

The Empress's romantic partners form a select group at court. At any given time about half a dozen are on "active duty," with about twice that many former paramours honorably retired from service. Another dozen made the mistake of lobbying the Empress, for which she exiled them to distant frontier posts. At least one met with a sudden accident that had "Terran Security Service" written all over it. Her current lovers include Count Francisco Tarascon, Dr. Walden Durham, Robin Udelle, Dr. Li Fu, and Commodore Cham Xien. Marissa doesn't mind if her partners disagree with her — her arguments with Walden Durham often become loud enough to wake the whole Palace — but they mustn't bore her and should never try to tell her what to do.

Prince Stephen

Marissa cloned her child, the Prince Stephen, in 2635. Marissa planned Stephen's education with the help of experts from all over the Empire, with the goal of preparing him perfectly to take the throne when she decides to retire. Using Imperial bio-engineering she had him aged artificially,

making him 12 in 2640.

As the designated heir, Stephen attracts a small court of his own when he reaches his teens. His set of hangers-on consists mostly of youthful members of new noble families angling to improve their social position by getting on good terms with the next sovereign. Stephen has next to no interest in politics, preferring to focus on the perks of being heir.

Politics And Factions

Political parties as such don't exist in the Empire. Within the Senate and the court some rough groupings exist based on common interest. The most important factions at present include the liberals (who favor civil rights, more democracy in government, equality for all species, and galactic peace), the conservatives (who support business, trade, a stronger Senate, and imperial expansion), the expansionists, and the aristocrats. Marissa balances the factions against each other; she has some basis for agreement with all of them. Like the liberals she wants to integrate non-Humans into the mainstream of Imperial society and prefers peace to war. Like the conservatives she wants a healthy economy and an expanding empire. She favors expansion like the expansionists (but prefers to do it by colonization and voluntary annexation of inhabited worlds rather than conquest). The aristocrats share her interest in maintaining the status quo and the power of the Imperial house.

THE TERRAN SENATE

The role of the Senate in the Empire depends on who you ask. Imperial officials consider the Senate a relic which does nothing but interfere in the administration of the Empire and meddle in affairs it doesn't understand. Reformers see the Senate as the only way to restrain the Empress's absolute power and protect the liberties of citizens. Radicals dismiss the Senate as puppets and yes-men of the Empress herself. Nobles treat the Senate as a glorified social club. Ordinary citizens don't quite know what the Senate does. The Security Service considers the Senate a focus for dissent. The Empress Marissa thinks of the Senate as useful when its members agree with her and support

her policies, and maddening when they don't.

SENATORIAL WORLDS

The Imperial Senate has 98 members, each representing one star system. The systems with Senators are mostly the old Terran Union member systems, with a few exceptions: Emperor Gregorio shifted nine systems from Imperial to Senate administration; and under Feodor II twelve systems whose Senators proclaimed a republic during the Civil War were deprived of their seats and placed back under Imperial rule.

The Senatorial systems have many privileges denied the rest of the Empire. They can maintain their own ground forces (though not space fleets) and Imperial Army or Marine units must get the permission of the planetary government to operate there. Senatorial systems pay no direct taxes to the Imperial administration; instead the worlds make voluntary contributions to the Imperial budget (typically a fixed percentage of gross planetary product). This means most of the Empire's large corporations choose to headquarter themselves on Senatorial worlds, since doing so decreases their tax burden. Systems under Senate control are not subject to Imperial conscription in wartime (though they may have their own draft). They can charge customs duties on imported goods. Finally, Senatorial worlds have their own courts, and participants in a lawsuit cannot appeal the decisions of judges on those worlds to a higher Imperial court.

Despite this, in practice little difference exists between Senatorial worlds and Imperial ones. Senate planets usually adopt laws and regulations compatible with the Imperial code, and honor "requests" of the Empress as quickly as Imperial planets obey her commands. The Empress can influence Senate planets in a variety of ways — rewarding them with lucrative Imperial projects and financial aid, or punishing them by withholding money and business. The TSS often takes a short cut past questions of jurisdiction by abducting or assassinating dissidents on Senatorial worlds, and few local law enforcement agencies dare to interfere.

SELECTION OF SENATORS

Senatorial planets choose their Senators in various ways. Just under half are directly elected by the citizens, planetary governments select a roughly equal number, and about a dozen get their job in other ways (hereditary position, purchase, appointment by predecessor, lottery, and so forth). Elected Senators serve a ten-year term (with no term limits); the others typically remain in office for life. By custom the Empress grants all Senators the title of Count, but occasionally she can express her disapproval of a newly-elected or appointed Senator by refusing to do so.

SENATORIAL AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senate has little actual authority. Senators can decide how to spend the voluntary contributions of their planets — a considerable sum, but only 12 percent of the total Imperial revenue. In most years the Senate simply votes it to the Empress in a lump sum, but when relations with the Crown worsen, the Senate can try to micromanage how she spends it. The Senate invites alien civilizations to send ambassadors to Earth (but cannot break off relations), and makes laws affecting the Senatorial planets themselves. In theory, the Senate appoints the Emperor, but has always done so simply by voting to confirm whoever the previous Emperor designated as heir. During the Civil War the Senate showed some courage by refusing to confirm Ivan, but since then has allowed kingmakers like General Feng to dictate who it should pick.

While the Senate cannot directly make Imperial policy, it can (and does) vote on memoranda to the Empress offering Senatorial advice and suggestions. She can (and does) ignore these freely when she wants to. But Senate votes and resolutions affect public opinion, and can bring matters to the attention of the Empress she might not otherwise hear about.

SENATORIAL PRIVILEGES

Senators themselves have certain interesting privileges. They can speak in the Senate chamber on any subject at any length. Only the Senate itself can order their arrest (though the TSS has its own ideas on that score), and no Imperial authority can prevent them from traveling to Earth to attend the Senate or from entering the Senate chamber in Brussels. A Senator has the right to meet in person with the Empress on no more than 24 hours' notice — and in practice Senators can usually get in to see the Empress right away; whether she ignores it or not, Marissa likes to maintain at least the appearance of cordial relations with the Senate.

Notable Senators 2633-2651

While every Senator has power and privilege, a few also have reputations or records of public service that make them stand out.

Edoan Edoas Of New Alexandria
(served 2625-38, 2641-47, and 2649-50)

Senator Edoas's first name isn't "Scandal-plagued," but readers of most interstellar news services might think otherwise. The Senate's most openly corrupt member, Edoas was expelled in 2638, got re-elected on New Alexandria (under very suspicious circumstances) 2641, was expelled again in 2647, got the vote overturned on a technicality in 2649, and finally failed to win re-election in a closely-monitored contest in 2650. Within the Senate he usually votes with the Imperial faction unless someone has paid him otherwise. Empress Marissa finds Edoas amusing, and her security agencies have strict orders not to investi-

gate any of his misdeeds — she likes to watch him embarrass the Senate.

Safira Harmon Of Earth (served 2630-2650)

Known to many as the "conscience of the Senate," Safira Harmon is one of the best-known leaders of the liberal faction. She strongly supports equality for non-Humans in the Empire, espouses democratic government, and favors cooperation with alien civilizations whenever possible. But she differs from other liberals in supporting a strong defense for the Empire and favoring Terran intervention against tyrants and oppressors. Senator Harmon comes from a wealthy old Terran family and has excellent social connections at court.

Camilla Kosami Of Alpha Centauri (served 2630-2648)

As the only openly psionic member of the Senate (a Gamma-rated telepath), Senator Kosami acts as the chief advocate for pro-psionic issues for the entire Empire. She initially opposed the growth of the Mind Police, fearing it might lead to a backlash against psionics, but once the agency was in place she became its staunchest advocate. This usually puts her in opposition to the liberals, though she otherwise supports much of their agenda — equal rights for all, limits on Imperial power, greater autonomy for member worlds. Anti-psionic agitators sometimes depict Senator Kosami as the mastermind of a vast conspiracy of psis, aliens, and who-knows-what plotting to topple the Empire and enslave Humanity.

Dorian Kyle Of Tau Ceti (served 2625-2645)

Senator Kyle heads the Senate's conservative faction. He wants the Imperial government to be more like the old days, when the Senate and the Emperor were equal partners. He favors business and trade, supports expansion and colonization, and believes in running the Empire by and for Humans instead of aliens. Empress Marissa's new Mind Police give him the creeps, and consequently the liberal and conservative factions have become more closely allied during Marissa's reign than any time before.

Sergei Mohac Of Rusalka (served 2637-2647)

Generally recognized as the Empress's voice in the Senate, Senator Mohac reflexively supports all her policies, opposes everything she dislikes, and keeps his mouth shut on other issues until he hears from the palace. What mystifies his opponents is that he's not in it for personal gain — he rabidly supports the Empress as a matter of principle. Like many Humans and colonials, Senator Mohac sincerely believes Imperial rule is the only way to keep order and defend Humanity against dangerous aliens.

Karl Windsor-Hapsburg Of Europa Nova (served 2619-2644)

The younger brother of King Otto of Europa Nova, Prince Karl became Senator-for-life in 2619 at age 27. He leads the aristocratic party in the Senate, which mostly just opposes things: democratic government, Imperial expansion, rights for non-Humans, and the growth of multiplanetary corporations. Although small, the aristocratic faction has a great deal of influence because of its members' position in court social life. Prince Karl (he hates the title "Senator") is the center of a lively set of rich young courtiers and nobles, including several distant relatives of the Empress. He hears all the court gossip and probably stays as well-informed about Imperial politics as the Empress herself.

OTHER BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

The Justice Ministry

Since the Terran Empire contains a thousand planets and dozens of intelligent species, Marissa I and her successors wisely decided to leave much of the legal system in the hands of planetary governments. Each world has its own legal system and courts, and laws vary considerably from planet to planet.

To keep this from turning into complete chaos, the Empire has adopted two important legal principles. The first is the *right of Imperial appeal and review* — citizens can appeal the decisions of planetary courts to the Imperial district courts, whose decisions override planetary law. (This does not apply to Senatorial worlds.) Over time this tends to make laws and legal systems more uniform across the Empire. Planetary laws vary the most in areas Imperial judges consider unimportant — social laws, "victimless" or "lifestyle" crimes, religious law, and respect for individual rights. Laws are most uniform in matters the Empire considers important — tax law, business and trade regulations, and so forth.

The highest court in the Empire is the Imperial Court of Supreme Justice, located in Boswash on Earth. The 21 High Justices of the Court have the power to make decisions and issue rulings only the Empress herself can overrule — something she rarely does.

If criminals flee to space or to another world, the authorities extradite them if their crime is against the law in the place where they seek refuge. A murderer always gets sent home for trial (every planet considers murder a crime), but a religious dissident who violates the strict code of conduct on New Canaan would not be extradited from an Imperial space station or a planet like Emerald which emphasizes religious tolerance.

The other important principle of Imperial justice is *Imperial space*. Everything beyond the limits of planetary atmospheres (or an altitude of 20 kilometers for airless worlds) is Imperial territory and subject to Imperial law. All spacecraft must meet Imperial licensing requirements and obey Imperial operating rules. Almost all space stations qualify as Imperial territory. Even in Senatorial star systems, the planets (and some space stations) are planetary territory but the vacuum between them belongs to the Empire.

As a result, the "rules of the road" for interstellar travelers and merchants remain the same throughout Imperial territory, and the laws governing interaction with customers and suppliers are much the same on every planet. On the other hand, when the deal is done and the spacers go out for entertainment, local customs and laws can be shockingly different.

Civil Rights In The Empire

The Ministry of Justice, as the Imperial body most closely associated with the law and law enforcement, sometimes finds itself embroiled in civil rights issues. The Empire has a mixed record on the subject. During the reign of Marissa III (and her predecessors), Imperial citizens enjoy many legally-protected rights, including the rights of free speech, press, assembly, religion, and jury duty. (They do not have the right of legal representation — they can only have an attorney if they hire him themselves — or of freedom from cruel and unusual punishments.)

However, the principle of "reasonableness" governs all these rights — and only the Empire and its courts interpret what's "reasonable" and what's not. In practice, for example, "reasonable free press" means "you can print whatever you want... but if it really angers some Imperial official, you'll end up in prison." Most officials apply the reasonableness requirement with a fairly liberal hand, since they know cracking down too hard can cause significant unrest, but anyone who openly and sharply criticizes high government officials risks serious punishment.

Alien citizens of, or visitors to, the Empire enjoy slightly less protection than Humans, though no law or legal precedent specifically says so. The simple fact of the matter is that Imperial officials don't take complaints from non-Humans as seriously, don't investigate their complaints as stringently, almost always take Humans' side in Human-versus-alien disputes, and in other ways favor Humanity over other sentient species. Although not as severe on native alien worlds, such as Fexao, this problem still exists there.

Sentient machines have no rights whatsoever. As discussed on page 97, Imperial law regards them as property. While a vocal "Machine Rights" lobby protests this, in the many years of its existence its demonstrations and petitions have accomplished nothing.

Civil rights become even weaker during the reign of Marissa III's successors, who slowly but surely strip away the peoples' rights in an effort to "maintain order" and shore up their own regimes. For example, by Sigismund's time, anyone who openly criticizes the government in print or at a public assembly is arrested... if not simply shot on the spot while "resisting arrest."

THE IMPERIAL SECURITY POLICE

Naturally, someone has to enforce all these laws. Planetary police forces handle most law enforcement, and the Imperial Navy enforces the rules of spacecraft operation and trade. But that leaves a lot of gaps in the law enforcement net. That's where the Imperial Security Police (ISP) come in.

The ISP, a small interstellar police force under the Justice Ministry, has an unusual jurisdiction. Most of its officers do little but paper-pushing — they coordinate the efforts of planetary law enforcement agencies and track the movements of fugitives. They also provide a variety of other services, such as a top-notch forensics laboratory, to Imperial worlds.

The ISP gets directly involved with investigations only in certain circumstances, such as (a) when the criminals are too dangerous or powerful

From highest to lowest, the ranks in the Imperial Security Police are:

Director

Assistant Directors (heads of various major departments)

Commander (chief ISP officer for a planet or territory)

Colonel

Major

Captain (head of a local ISP station)

Lieutenant (investigators all hold this rank, but are referred to as "Detective")

Lieutenant JG

Sergeant

Corporal

Officer

for planetary authorities, (b) when a criminal operation spans multiple planets or star systems, or (c) when a crime takes place on or involves Imperial property or territory (including most space station). In those situations, the ISP may, if it wishes, take complete control of the investigation — and in that case, its powers are broad and far-reaching. For example, it can, if necessary, take command of any Imperial military unit and use it to assist in an arrest or investigation (though the military often responds to ISP officers' orders with aggravating slowness). However, in most cases, ISP officers prefer to tackle the Galaxy's most dangerous criminals on their own. They have a reputation for hard-nosed efficiency and "always getting their man" (or Toractan, Osathri, Ackálian...).

During the reign of Marissa III, Baron Franz von Zach, a former Imperial judge, serves as the Director of the Imperial Security Police. A stiff, elderly man, Baron von Zach struggles constantly to keep his agency independent of the Terran Security Service. The Empress openly favors the TSS, and has adopted the rather cruel tactic of starving the ISP of the money and resources it needs to accomplish its mission, then using its failures as an excuse to shift more of the responsibility for interstellar law enforcement to the TSS. Baron von Zach and his cops have responded with increased dedication, working miracles on a shoestring.

The ISP uniform is dark grey and dark red — dark red undertunic, and dark grey tunic-jacket, pants, and boots with dark red piping, plus an equipment belt worn outside the tunic-jacket. The uniform also provides some protection to officers in the field (Armor (2 PD/2 ED; OIF, Activation Roll 14-, Real Armor). When entering a dangerous situation, ISP officers wear heavier body armors.

The Terran Diplomatic Corps

The Terran Diplomatic Corps maintains or establishes relations with other Galactic powers. Cynics say that fact alone explains the level of conflict and hostility in the Galaxy.

The Diplomatic Corps trains consuls and ambassadors for service on sovereign neutral worlds and small empires beyond Imperial space. Diplomatic Corps personnel staff the embassies on the capital worlds and other important planets of major Galactic powers. Significantly, the Imperial ambassadors to major powers tend to be personal appointees of the Empress, not Diplomatic Corps professionals.

The Diplomatic Corps long ago gained a reputation as a bunch of unimaginative, protocol-obsessed drones who prefer endless negotiations to action. Defenders of the Corps point out that when one deals with alien civilizations, strict adherence to rules is often the only way to avoid misunderstanding — better lengthy negotiations than war.

Most Diplomatic Corps professionals come from the Imperial nobility — both because many alien cultures refuse to deal with low-status individuals and because it gives the nobles something to do. The best professional diplomats have a good grounding in xenology and Galactic history, and

adapt quickly to unusual societies and situations. The worst view all aliens as "xeno-scum" they can bully and overawe. Sadly, the ongoing hostility between the TES and the TDC means the worst diplomats are a growing majority in the Corps, while the good ones gradually shift over to Exploration or retire.

There is a third type of diplomat whose numbers are also increasing: the Terran Intelligence Command agent with a Diplomatic Corps cover identity. The Empress Marissa has made it clear to Lord Deng Zhu, the Minister of Interstellar Affairs, that diplomats should consider themselves subordinate to Intelligence agents in all matters. On most worlds that don't have one of Marissa's personal appointees as ambassador, the TIC station chief holds at least as much power within the embassy as the ambassador, and often functions as the *de facto* head of the mission.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER POWERS

During Marissa III's reign, the following state of affairs generally prevails in Terran intergalactic politics:

The Terran Empire treats both the Ackálian Empire and the Thorgon Hegemony warily. Eyeing these potential enemies cautiously across the respective neutral zones, the Empire hopes to keep the peace but prepares for armed conflict. A few expansionistic or militaristic officials would rather solve the problem by invading and conquering these states, but so far calmer heads (including the Empress's) prevail.

Relations with the Mon'dabi Federation remain good, particularly in the area of trade. Humanity remembers the help the Mon'dabi provided during the Galactic War, and the Mon'dabi undoubtedly expect to establish a firm military alliance with the Terran Empire if they get involved in another war with the hated Ackálians. The two governments have conducted several joint military exercises.

The Terran Empire maintains diplomatic relations with the Perseid Empire, as well as extensive trade. Some tension exists due to the fact that each empire has found its ambitions to expand thwarted by the other, but no serious incidents have occurred since the 2604 "Perseid War," when the Perseids attempted to "restore order" to the Terran Empire during the post-Civil War period. The Imperial Army and Navy well remember that short-lived conflict, and have developed numerous strategies and tactics to cope with the Perseid military if another war breaks out.

The Terran Empire and the Conjoined Civilizations Republic trade with each other. While they have exchanged ambassadors and remain courteous to one another, they do not have close ties — the CCR remains suspicious and wary of Imperial ambitions, while Marissa doesn't trust the CCR's supposed "beneficence" toward other civilizations.

The Terran Republic does not have anything more than token diplomatic relations with the Velarian Confederation and the Varanyi Empire, since they're tens of thousands of light-years from the nearest Imperial border.

The Terran Security Service

The fastest-growing department of the Imperial bureaucracy under Marissa III, the Terran Security Service (TSS) was established by Emperor Esteban as a simple bodyguard service for the Imperial family. Until the start of the Galactic War, the TSS had only a few dozen operatives. The war changed that — the Ackálians employed a large number of assassins, saboteurs, and infiltration teams, and local authorities in the Empire couldn't find or stop them. To fill the void, Empress Feodora used her trusted bodyguards as field agents, granting them broad powers to investigate and arrest threats to the Empire.

The TSS remained a relatively small but important agency until the Civil War, when Marissa II, Antonio, and finally Regent Feng used it extensively to root out dissidents and conspirators. During this era the TSS organized its Psi Division, which later became the Mind Police.

Empress Marissa III uses the Terran Security Service as her private espionage and covert-operations agency to suppress dissent and neutralize opposition within the Empire. With her support the TSS has more than doubled its size and expanded its operations to every inhabited world. The Empress has enough sense to keep her security force on a tight leash, but she considers their sinister and frightening reputation an asset.

Structure And Operations

The Terran Security Service has a fairly simple and flexible organizational structure. Each world has a field office (heavily-populated or unrest-prone planets may have more) which acts as a center for investigations and information-gathering. Offices have about one agent for every million inhabitants of a planet, though worlds with a history of dissent may have as many as one agent per ten thousand citizens. No one except Marissa and a few top agents know the full strength of the agency; most people believe it includes at least a million agents, if not more.

TSS officers gather information by sifting through media reports and public information, collating reports from other offices, eavesdropping on communications, and listening to informants. Field agents usually have a dozen or more informants feeding them reports on dissident activity. When the TSS decides someone's either actively planning overt criminal acts or is in contact with others who are, they bring him in for an interview.

TSS interviews have two purposes: the security agents hope to gain more useful information from the citizen; and the whole process provides an intimidating reminder that the TSS is watching. Unless the TSS believes the subject has knowledge of a serious or violent action, the interview remains polite and peaceful, though still somewhat harrowing. Interviewees spend several hours in a windowless room answering questions from TSS agents, all the while being scanned by hidden cameras and sensors.

About half the time an interviewed citizen has no further contact with the TSS — the agents determine he poses no threat or has no information of value. Of the remainder, the TSS offers about

half the chance to become regular informants by passing reports back to the TSS for a small fee. The others it subjects to heightened surveillance, "coercive interviews," or arrest. "Coercive interviews" is the TSS euphemism for harsh interrogation. Agents use truth drugs, psis on loan from the Mind Police, or hypnotic brainwashing. During the reign of Empress Marissa, the TSS does not use torture.

The TSS can hold persons it arrests indefinitely without trial. Many Imperial planetary governments protest this, to no avail. The Empress Marissa prefers to have public trials of dissidents her prosecutors can prove are involved in dangerous terrorist activities. If the Justice Ministry can't arrange a showy trial and certain conviction, the TSS releases (and then closely monitors) a dissident, or sends him to one of its prison planets (such as Tartarus, page 73). However, prison is for opponents of the regime the TSS considers basically harmless; it kills anyone regarded as a serious threat.

The current director of the TSS is Jaime Angelo, a quiet little man who wears drab suits and speaks in whispers. Intensely loyal to the Empress, he views everyone else at court as a possible threat to her (a not entirely unreasonable perspective).

Terran Security's duty uniform is a black armor bodysuit similar to the Army's (see page 66), usually worn with a black cap. Officers wear a long overcoat of the same material over civilian clothing. On formal occasions TSS personnel wear a black tunic in the Army design. Both uniforms provide the same protection as ISP uniforms.

The Mind Police

The Mind Police are a new service, created by the Empress Marissa from the former Psi Division of the TSS. She did this for two reasons: to allow the psionics to concentrate on the Varanyi threat; and to create a counterbalance to the excessive power of the TSS.

Structure And Operations

The Mind Police has several components. The *Intelligence Division* cooperates with Terran Intelligence Command to provide psionic support for espionage operations. The *Protection Division* works to uncover alien psi-agents within the Empire and to guard the Empress and other high officials against psionic espionage. The *Recruitment Division* seeks out new psis for the organization (often when they're just children), and trains them to become agents; it often works with the IPF. The *Enforcement Division* uses psionic agents to uncover criminals and rebels within the Empire; although it's independent of the ISP, the two often work closely together. The *Special Operations Division* deals with unusual psionic phenomena, powerful rogue psis, and any other tasks the Empress assigns it. Popular rumor claims the SOD has a team of high-powered "Omega Agents" who deal with threats even the Navy can't handle.

With the tacit encouragement of the Empress, the Mind Police have an arm's-length relationship with the TSS. The two agencies don't cooperate unless directly ordered to do so. The Mind Police works closely with the Ministry for Evolution, and has surprisingly good ties with the military — most Army and Navy officers prefer even creepy Mind Cops to those greasy TSS meddlers. Relations with the Terran Intelligence Command are wary, as the TIC resents the semi-independent status of the Mind Police intelligence arm, and TIC analysts remain skeptical of information gained by psionic espionage.

According to the best estimates, the Mind Police contains approximately 100,000 agents, all psionics rated Gamma or higher (SOD agents must be at least Epsilons). Unlike the TSS, the Mind Police accepts non-Human agents if they have the necessary psionic power level. The Mind Police don't maintain offices on every world; instead they have district headquarters in key sectors and dispatch agents as required. The Mind Police has its headquarters on Charon, at the edge of the Solar System. The exact location and extent of the complex are top secret.

Doctor Li Fu, one of the most powerful clairvoyants known in the Empire, serves as Director of the Mind Police during Marissa's reign. Dr. Li insists on rigorous training for all Mind Police recruits, and requires new agents to undergo careful mental screening by a high-rated telepath. Gossip hints that the telepaths test agents more for loyalty to Dr. Li and the Mind Police than to the Empire or the Empress.

The Mind Police has a simple rank structure. From highest to lowest, the ranks are: Director, Assistant Director, Commander, Special Agent, Agent. All members of the organization wear a uniform similar in style to the ISP, but in black and gold instead of dark grey and dark red, with rank indicated by a cluster of one to five Greek letters *psi* on the collar. The uniform provides the same protection as ISP uniforms.

THE IMPERIAL MILITARY

When all's said and done, it's force — sheer military might — that keeps the Empire's worlds safe (and, where necessary, prevents them from breaking away). The Imperial Navy, Marines, and Army supply that force; the Terran Exploration Service supports and assists them.

The Imperial Military Academy

The Empire trains its soldiers, crewmembers, and explorers at the Imperial Military Academy, which has four branches — one for each branch of the military. Each has a four-year program that begins with basic training and physical fitness and progresses up to advanced training in various fields.

The Imperial Star Academy, a large space habitat orbiting Proxima Centauri, graduates thousands of Naval cadets a year. However, it supplies only the advanced training crewmembers receive during their final two years; cadets get their basic training at a dozen different camps and schools around the Empire.

Marine recruits get their basic training on Mars, at Hellas Planitia Marine Base. Soldiers destined to become officers also attend the Navy's Star Academy and then the Marine Officer School in Rio-Buenos on Earth. Since the Marines are a smaller force than the Army they can recruit more selectively and devote more time to training. The Marines have a fairly high proportion of officers drawn from the enlisted ranks compared with other services, and also a large number of "old families" with generations in uniform. The Marines encourage this; unlike all other Imperial services the Marines allow close relatives to serve in the same unit. Additionally, the average Marine tends to serve longer than other military personnel — he's seen ten years of active duty.

The Imperial Army provides all training for its enlisted men and officers on Bragg's World, a planet devoted to nothing but Army training, logistics, and supply. The harsh environment of Bragg's World toughens soldiers and provides plenty of opportunities for them to practice small unit tactics and enemy suppression strategies.

Unlike the strictly military branches, the Exploration Service actively recruits skilled civilians, especially veteran merchant crewmembers and scientists. This means Exploration personnel tend to be older and better-educated than comparable Army or Navy ranks. It also means they take the whole business of ranks and authority less seriously; they think experience and scientific publications tell them more about a person's qualifications than the metal doohickey on his collar. The Exploration Service has a small academy on Mars for training new recruits, but no separate schooling for officers — Exploration Service personnel must rise through the ranks (although skilled applicants often start above basic Crewmember rank as Specialists or Petty Officers).

The Imperial Navy

The ships of the Imperial Space Navy are the Empire's shield and mighty fist. Ever since Marissa I made herself President-for-Life of the Terran Union, the rule of the Emperors has depended on the strength of the fleet. The Imperial battlefleet is a very economical weapon — ships can remain in service up to a century with appropriate upgrades, and squadrons can easily move about to project force, patrol borders, intimidate restive worlds, suppress pirates, and repel invaders.

The Navy has several important duties. It maintains battle fleets to deter aggression and attack whoever the Empress wants attacked. It supplies and supports those fleets. It escorts merchant shipping in pirate-infested regions. It "shows the flag" beyond the Imperial borders. It gathers intelligence on potential enemies. Through its research division, it develops and tests new space weapon systems. Naval security troops and Imperial Marines keep order on some frontier worlds.

Politically, the Navy's sheer size and importance actually hinders it in many ways. Navy Grand Admirals seldom present a united front in political battles, which means the Marshal of Marines, the Army's Grand Marshals, and the Director of Exploration can often outmaneuver them.

NAVY BRANCHES

The Navy organizes all of its personnel, regardless of Fleet or posting, into seven branches:

Command: Responsible for administration, leadership, and related duties. Members of the Command branch often ascend the ranks relatively quickly; it's regarded as a route to political power as well.

Flight: Pilots, helmsmen, and the like. Flight branch personnel navigate and steer ships.

Lifesystems: Personnel responsible for maintaining life support systems, overseeing the ship's personnel needs (food, entertainment, waste disposal), and keeping morale high. The Medical service belongs to this branch as well.

Propulsion: Also known as Engineering or Maintenance, the Propulsion branch sees to the maintenance and proper functioning of starship systems not cared for by some other branch. It also ensures the ship has enough power and allocates it as efficiently as possible.

Science & Sensors: "S&S" officers operate a ship's sensors and communications systems, conduct experiments, and apply their scientific expertise to problems confronting their vessel.

Security: Security personnel maintain security aboard ship. They escort visitors (particularly those regarded as a potential threat), repel boarders, and so forth.

Tactical: Responsible for operating a ship's weapons and defensive systems during battle, Tactical personnel also plan strategies and tactics for future conflicts, help develop and test new weapons, and perform similar duties.

MERCENARIES

The Empire does not allow its subject worlds to make war on each other, nor does it permit private citizens to raise armies. Nevertheless, situations arise where Imperial authorities at least tacitly ignore the use of armed force by private interests. For example, even civilian starships can carry weapons for protection against piracy, and when Imperial forces don't want to take down a pirate base, merchant leagues sometimes hire "security firms" to do the job. Similarly, colonies without an Army garrison may need some extra protection from raiders — although on a few worlds the mercenary guards turn out to be just as bad as the pirates the colony hired them to fight. Traders operating outside Imperial space sometimes take along guards.

Mercenaries in the Empire come in two sorts. The most reliable work for large security firms like Guardian Services or Fousheng Security. These companies have well-paid and well-trained troops, hire out as guards for interstellar corporations, protect colonies, and occasionally go on offensive missions against pirates and bandits in lawless areas. Slightly shadier outfits sometimes work as company goons in labor disputes. The other kind of mercenaries hire themselves out individually or in small bands; many people have difficulty distinguishing some of these groups from pirates or bandits. Most are Imperial military veterans bored by civilian life and willing to take no-questions-asked jobs.

For more information about the branches, see the Imperial Navy Package Deals on pages 114-16.

THE FLEET COMMANDS

The Empire divides the Imperial Navy into five Fleet commands, each under the direction of a Grand Admiral. (The Empress, as Supreme Admiral, commands the Grand Admirals.) Each Fleet command operates with complete independence from the others — it has its own logistic support and bases (though all Fleets use the same spare parts, weapon systems, and so forth). In wartime they can each function on their own, even if the enemy breaks their lines of communication with Earth.

The Frontier Fleet

The Frontier Fleet occupies most of the Frontier region, including the borders closest to Mon'dabi space and some parts of the Thorgon Neutral Zone (the Ackálian border is the responsibility of the Core Fleet). It maintains its headquarters in Triumph, one of the first Xenovore systems conquered by Humanity centuries ago.

During the reign of Marissa III the commander of the Frontier Fleet is Duke Ernesto Calderano, an elderly officer who requires the assistance of a large corp of aides and adjutants. His chief concerns are maintenance of order in the sometimes-chaotic Frontier and suppression of piracy. To these ends his Fleet has a larger than usual complement of light warships for escort and patrol duty. The Frontier Fleet includes approximately five super-dreadnoughts; 50 battleships, 100 heavy cruisers, ten heavy carriers, 200 light cruisers, 50 light carriers, 400 destroyers, 1,000 frigates, and 500 patrol craft. Support ships include approximately 20 assault

transports, ten tenders, 50 supply ships, five hospital ships, 90 couriers, and ten special operations and intelligence vessels.

The Rimward Fleet

The Rimward Fleet commands most of the Thorgon border, and has its headquarters at the planet Angenar (Rohendra III). The Grand Admiral, Theodora Campbell, has so many cybernetic replacements and augmentations that people sometimes call her the Robot Admiral (but not to her face). A straightforward officer and a bit of a martinet, Admiral Campbell remains content to build up her forces and respond to incursions. Her Fleet includes a large number of carriers, including approximately eight super-dreadnoughts, 56 battleships, 96 heavy cruisers, 24 heavy carriers, 128 light cruisers, 64 light carriers, 320 destroyers, 240 frigates, and 80 patrol craft. Support vessels consist of approximately 32 assault transports, 16 tenders, 40 supply ships, eight hospital ships, 80 couriers, and 16 special operations ships.

The Core Fleet

The Core Fleet patrols both the Ackálian border, and the antispinward Outer Core in general; since the latter stays peaceful most of the time, the bulk of the Fleet remains on the border, poised to counter Ackálian aggression. It's headquartered well back from the edge of Imperial space at the Adamant system. The commander, Vraor, is one of the few Fex senior officers in Imperial service and a staunch proponent of bringing more non-Humans up through the ranks. Renowned as a shrewd and canny commander, he came up through the Navy's intelligence arm and so tends to prefer espionage

and covert operations (like the Empress herself).

The Ackálian border is a continual chess-game of spying, political maneuvering, and bluff. To back up his bluffs, Grand Admiral Vraor has a strong force emphasizing heavy units, including approximately eight super-dreadnoughts, 64 battleships, 128 heavy cruisers, eight heavy carriers, 128 light cruisers, 16 light carriers, 160 destroyers, 160 frigates, and 240 patrol craf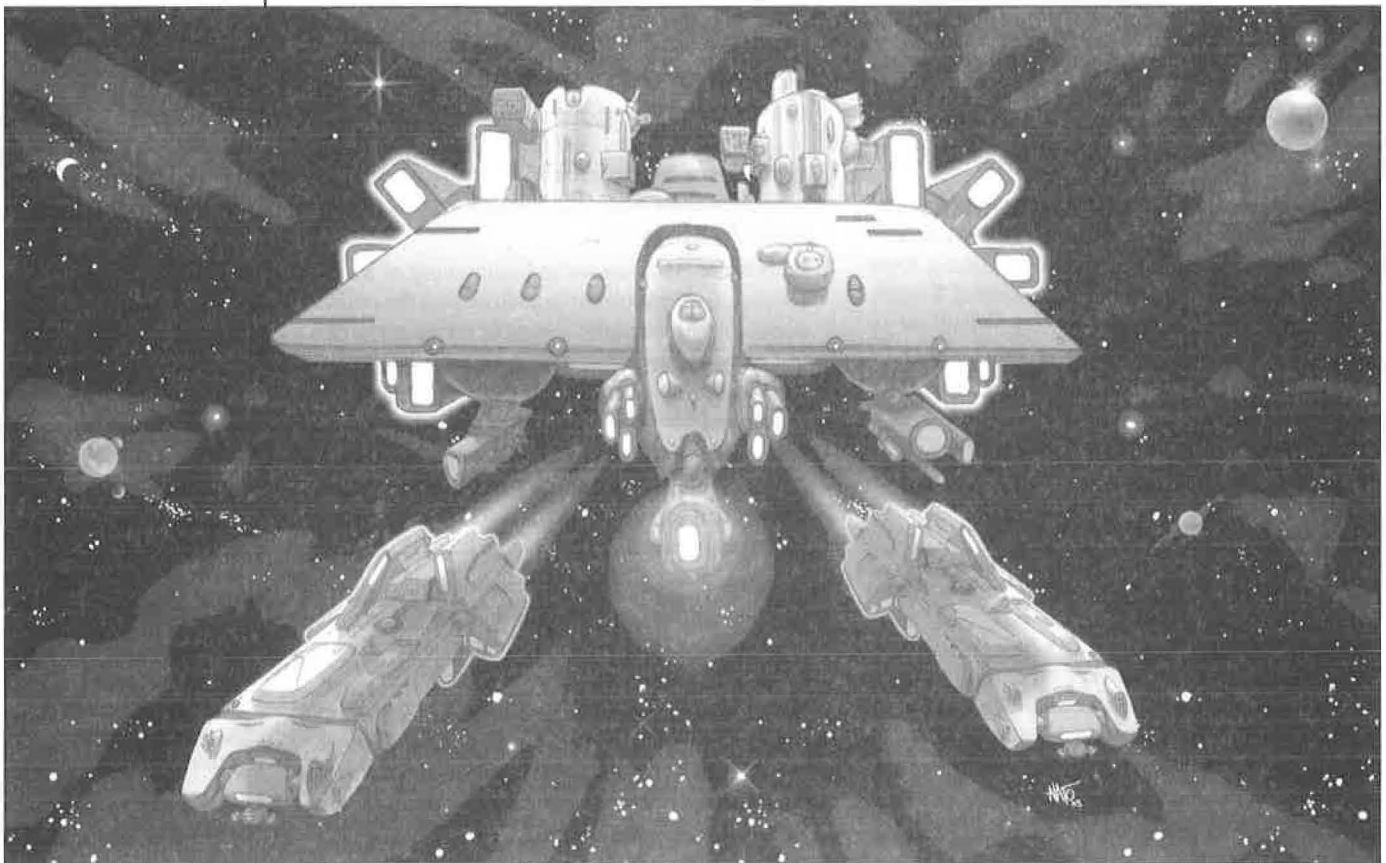t. The support elements include approximately eight assault transports, 40 tenders, 48 supply ships, eight hospital ships, 96 couriers, and 40 special operations and intelligence ships.

The Home Fleet

The Home Fleet is one of two fleets headquartered at Earth itself. It's responsible not only for the defense of Earth itself, but the Heartworlds, the spinward Outer Core, and the frontiers along the Spinward Territories. Officers consider command of the Home Fleet a plum position, since the duties are relatively light and the commander can enjoy society in the Solar System.

During Marissa's reign, Duke Wu Feng, a distant relative of General Feng the Regent, serves as Grand Admiral of the Home Fleet. Duke Wu is politically adept, but his colleagues have a low opinion of his military skills. He does whatever he thinks pleases the Empress and improves his social position.

Small and oddly organized, the Home Fleet has lots of glamorous ship types and a dire lack of workhorse units. It consists of approximately eight super-dreadnoughts, 42 battleships, 90 heavy cruisers, ten heavy carriers, 150 light cruisers, 20 light carriers, 300 destroyers, 180 frigates, and 300 patrol vessels. Support craft include approximately five assault transports, five tenders, eight hospital ships, ten supply ships, and 50 couriers.

The Battle Fleet

The Empire's main expeditionary force is the Battle Fleet, also headquartered at Earth. The Battle Fleet reinforces other Fleets when necessary and acts as a mobile strike force against the Empire's enemies. Its Grand Admiral, Earl George Drax, is a complex man — an innovator who has bucked naval tradition in the past and relies on his close personal ties to the Empress for support. (Some have hinted he and she are romantically involved.) This often puts him at odds with Duke Wu. Admiral Drax is a strong proponent of force concentration, and his fleet consists of approximately 12 super-dreadnoughts, 60 battleships, 24 heavy carriers, 24 light cruisers, 120 destroyers, and 60 frigates. Support ships include approximately 12 assault transports, ten hospital ships, 60 supply ships, and 60 couriers.

SQUADRONS AND TASK FORCES

Below the fleet level, the Navy organizes itself into temporary squadrons and task forces, commanded by Admirals and Fleet Admirals. Some squadrons are little more than administrative fictions — ships like cruisers or frigates which perform solo independent missions may spend years without ever meeting another ship in the same squadron.

The Imperial Marines

The Imperial Marines are actually an older service than the Army. Elements of several forces from Earth and well-established colony worlds comprised Earth's first spaceborne infantry force, and during the Xenovore Wars became the fast-reaction elite units. Marines specialize in space combat, orbit-to-surface assaults, and commando missions. In action on planetary surfaces they need the support of ships in orbit for heavy firepower — though they hate to admit it, a force of Marines can't really stand up against a well-equipped Army unit of comparable size. On the other hand, the Army can't field special operations elite squads as skilled and effective as the Marines'. And because the Empire uses the Marines more often in peacetime operations, they have more actual combat experience as well. (There's an old joke among Imperial Marines: "What's the difference between war and peace? If the Marines are fighting, it's peacetime." The Army takes the same view: a conflict isn't a real war unless it's involved.)

Unlike Army soldiers, who wear standard military protective gear but have access to powerful military vehicles, Marines fight as battlesuited infantry. Since the Navy covers their transport and logistical needs, Marine units consist entirely of combat troops. All Marines get extensive zero-gravity combat training, and are the acknowledged masters of ship assaults, space station boarding actions, and orbit-to-surface drop assaults.

On paper, the Imperial Marines consist of one corps of 250 divisions. In practice, the basic unit of Marine organization is the company, of 100 soldiers. Most large Navy ships carry a Marine company, and *ad hoc* Marine battalions or regiments guard Navy bases. Super-dreadnoughts and assault transports carry a full regiment each; smaller vessels like destroyers and frigates carry one or two 20-man platoons. The Marines garrison some regiments on frontier worlds under direct Navy administration; the service uses garrison duty as a working-up period for new units or as recovery periods for battle-mauled troops.

A Marshal who answers directly to the Supreme Admiral (*i.e.*, the Empress) commands the Marines. Even before General Feng played kingmaker and acted as Regent to the young Emperor Feodor, the Marshal of Marines was a major player in the highest levels of Imperial politics. To balance rivalries between the Army and Navy, Emperors often chose the Marshal of Marines as Supreme General or Minister of War. Sir Charles Kenet, a well-respected officer who started as a private and earned a field commission during the Perseid War, serves as Marissa's Marshal during her entire reign. Sir Charles wants to restore the prestige and influence of the Marines, but his lack of experience in political maneuvering and subtle social intrigues handicaps him.

The Imperial Army

The Imperial Army is less glamorous than the Navy, but no less important. Where the Navy's strength lies in offense and strategic range, the Army's metier is planetary defense and small-scale operations. A Navy task force can sterilize a planet, but it takes an Army division to occupy a world and keep it loyal.

ARMY STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

The basic unit of the Imperial Army is the *division,* commanded by a Lieutenant-General. The Army has many divisions — at least 5,000 in service during the Empress Marissa III's reign. The bulk of Army divisions perform garrison duty; most planets outside the Senatorial worlds have at least one Imperial division present. In some frontier regions a single division may cover a dozen sparsely-populated worlds, while troublesome planets get more troops to maintain order. An Army division usually has 10,000-20,000 troops in 8 regiments, plus headquarters and support personnel. The exact composition of a division depends on what kind of planet it garrisons and the conditions there. See the accompanying sidebar for a list of Imperial Army division types.

Soldiers in each division belong to one of seven branches:

Air Forces (piloting aerospace fighters, ground-attack planes, or hoppers)

Armor (driving hovertanks or juggernauts)

Artillery

Infantry

Medical

Sea Forces (both surface and submarine crews)

Special Forces (elite troops and unconventional warfare)

Imperial divisions don't move around much. Many divisions are based on the same worlds they garrisoned under previous Emperors. For offensive operations, the Empire usually draws only a brigade or two from a given world, grouping them into *ad hoc* formations in the field. Veterans often settle on the world where they served, but the Empire has a policy of not assigning recruits from a given planet to that world's garrison. This tends to encourage an Imperial identity and discourage "nativist" feelings among Army personnel.

The Army organizes its divisions into *Corps* (under a full General), *Armies* (under a Marshal), and *Army Groups* (under a Grand Marshal). There are 11 Army Groups, denoted by letters. Spread through the Empire, each Army Group has the responsibility for defense of about 90 planets. (The worlds under Senate control in the core of the Empire have their own planetary defenses rather than Imperial garrisons; in wartime those forces form a 12th Army Group.)

The chief of the Army is the Supreme Marshal (unlike the Navy, the Empress does not take the supreme position for herself). Under Marissa the Supreme Marshal is Count Horst Weidenheig, an old-fashioned officer who distrusts technology. He pays great attention to training and doctrine, but cares little about weapon development. Under his direction the Army has soldiers who are often highly skilled in the use of weapons a generation out of date. The Supreme Marshal believes Navy and Intelligence Command estimates of the threat from the Thorgons and Ackálians are nothing but justifications for increased budgets; he considers the Empire's main threat to be from within. Count Weidenheig cooperates closely with Director Angelo of the TSS to suppress rebellion and root out dissent.

ARMY OPERATIONS

The Army performs numerous missions, but the most important include peacekeeping, suppressing unrest, and planetary defense. In wartime the Army conducts ground operations on contested worlds, arriving in force after the Imperial Marines have secured a landing zone. For peacekeeping and monitoring rebellious worlds, the Army uses light, mobile forces like rangers or infantry, with some armor for support. On worlds where the main threat is attack from space, the Army stations heavy armor divisions and builds hardened defenses — bunkers, underground surface-to-orbit weapon emplacements, and submarines.

One Imperial Army unit of

IMPERIAL RANK AND INSIGNIA

Army/IM/TSS	Navy/TES	Collar Insignia
Private	Astronaut	none
Specialist	Specialist	△
Corporal	Petty Officer	▲
Sergeant	Chief Petty Officer	◆
Lieutenant	Ensign	●
Captain	Lieutenant	●●
Major	Lt.-Commander	●●●
Lt.-Colonel	Commander	●●●●
Colonel	Captain	●●●●●
Major-General	Commodore	★
Lt.-General	Vice-Admiral	★★
General	Admiral	★★★
Marshal	Fleet Admiral	★★★★
Grand Marshal	Grand Admiral	★★★★★
Supreme Marshal	Supreme Admiral	♛

particular importance is the Imperial Guard, the Emperor's personal bodyguard and the Army's most prestigious unit. It's the only Imperial military force allowed on the surface of Earth itself. Each division in the Army sends four soldiers to the Imperial Guard for a two-year hitch; service in the Guard indicates a soldier is either very good at soldiering or very well-connected politically. The Army also attaches senior staff officers and the Empress's military advisors to the Guard division.

The Terran Exploration Service

The Terran Exploration Service predates the Empire, and proudly traces its organizational history back to the old national space agencies of pre-starflight Earth. Although technically a part of the Imperial military, it often doesn't act much like a military organization, and sometimes even clashes with the other three branches of service.

People often refer to members of the TES as "scouts," regardless of their actual duties.

ORGANIZATION AND DUTIES

Over the centuries, the Service has acquired several areas of responsibility, some of which conflict with each other. The oldest and most glamourous job of the Exploration Service is, unsurprisingly, exploration — venturing beyond charted space to explore new planets, encounter new species and cultures, and bravely go where no Human has gone before. All Exploration Service officers want to serve on the long-range scout and expedition ships that range across the Galaxy.

Equally old and almost as exciting is the Service's science mission, which generations of Service chiefs have preserved against the inroads of budget-cutting governments. Exploration Service research vessels study stars and astrophysical phenomena, watch planets form, and sample and investigate life forms on thousands of worlds.

The Contact section studies intelligent species, including how alien societies evolve and how best to establish peaceful relations between Humans and other species. After years of turf battles and arguments, the Exploration Service and the TDC have worked out a rough division of labor — the TES handles contact with pre-spaceflight cultures, while spacefaring societies become the responsibility of the Diplomatic Corps. The diplomats frequently ignore TES advice about alien societies and thought processes, and often complain that Exploration Service contact missions disregard Galactic political realities and strategic concerns.

The least exciting task of the Exploration Service is to maintain accurate and up-to-date navigation charts of Imperial space and neighboring regions of the Galaxy. Astrogation Survey officers travel from system to system, making careful measurements of stellar positions and planetary motions. Most of the job consists of simply collecting, organizing, and interpreting

TERRAN EMPIRE PLANETARY CLASSIFICATION

The TES uses a planetary classification system geared mostly toward determining a planet's suitability for colonization or economic exploitation. It denotes different planetary types by numbers on a scale indicating usefulness:

Type	Description
1	Earthlike planets with compatible native life
2	Lifebearing worlds requiring life support for Humans
3	Planets suitable for terraforming (Mars)
4	Icy dense-atmosphere worlds (Titan)
5	Airless rocky worlds (Moon, Mercury)
6	Airless icy worlds (Pluto, Europa)
7	Asteroids (Phobos, Ceres)
8	Greenhouse planets (Venus)
9	Small gas giant planets (Uranus, Neptune)
10	Large gas giant planets (Jupiter, Saturn)

information provided by planetary governments.

The Exploration Service has traditionally been a hotbed of anti-Imperial sentiment. Outsiders who mistakenly refer to it as the *Imperial* Exploration Service risk either a disdainful snort, a lengthy explanation, or a brawl. Talented but politically unreliable officers whose Navy careers have stalled often transfer to the Exploration Service instead. The Empress tolerates this as a "safety valve" for discontented personnel. (During the final phase of the Empire, under the Emperors Sandor and Sigismund, loyalty investigations and purges virtually gut the Service; most of the Exploration Service defects to the Rebellion by 2700.)

COMMAND STRUCTURE

Ranks in the Exploration Service are the same as those in the Navy up to Commodore. The Exploration Service has no Admirals; the equivalent positions are called Directors. The Minister of Exploration heads the entire service.

Under the Empress Marissa Dr. Suleiman Pemba serves as Minister of Exploration from 2633 to 2639, followed by Commodore Joanna Walker from 2639 to 2651. Doctor Pemba, a close friend of the Empress, began his career as a linguist with the TIC. As Minister of Exploration he encourages cooperation between the Exploration Service and Intelligence Command — a move that provoked some opposition from veteran explorers. Having Intelligence officers riding shotgun aboard exploration missions yielded a generous harvest of data on alien civilizations, but many personality clashes arose, and both sides complained that the other withheld information. After taking over, Commodore Walker calmed much of this strife by scaling back the program and arranging for Exploration Service crews to get Intelligence cross-training so they could do the job themselves.

1 special forces regiment (800 infantry, 40 hoppers)

1 artillery regiment (50 missile launchers, 20 laser cannon, 20 railguns)

Infantry Division (garrison on an ordinary world)

1 armor regiment (50 hovertanks)

3 infantry regiment (800 infantry and 40 armored personnel carriers each)

1 air regiment (50 attack planes, 50 fighters)

1 artillery regiment (50 missile launchers, 20 laser cannon, 20 railguns)

Ranger Division (garrison on a frontier world)

1 armor regiment (50 hovertanks)

4 light infantry regiments (800 infantry and 40 hoppers each)

1 air regiment (20 fighters, 40 attack planes, 40 combat hoppers)

Sea Force Division (garrison on a water world)

1 air regiment (20 fighters, 40 attack planes, 40 combat hoppers)

2 armor regiments (50 hovertanks and 50 hydrofoils each)

2 infantry regiments (800 infantry and 40 transport hovercraft each)

2 submarine regiments (2 submarines each)

1 diver regiment (500 underwater infantry and 20 minisubs)
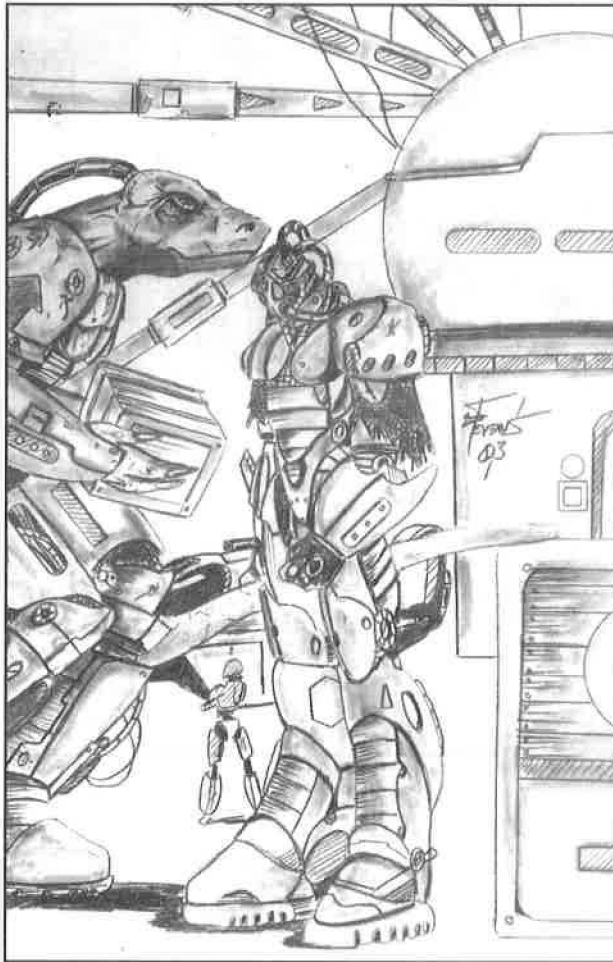
SHIPS AND RESOURCES

In 2640 the Exploration Service operates approximately 4,000 starships. The backbone of the fleet includes approximately 3,000 light utility starships, used for scouting, courier duty, short-range exploration, small scientific missions, transport, and survey. Larger ships include five special interstellar explorers, 12 long-range exploration cruisers, 12 large exploration support vessels, 153 research ships, 158 planetary expedition ships, 211 medium scouts, 25 supply ships, and 11 cultural observation and contact ships. The Exploration Service arms its vessels, especially long-range explorers that operate beyond the protection of the Imperial fleet.

In wartime the TES struggles to preserve itself in the face of demands from other Imperial services — the Navy wants ships and bases, the TIC wants the Service's alien contact data and translation experts, and so on. Traditionally the TES takes on much of the Navy's internal law-enforcement and patrol function during major wars, which means scientists and explorers can suddenly find themselves serving as "cops on the beat" in pirate-infested systems.

Imperial Uniforms

The Emperor Gregorio standardized Imperial military uniforms; they change in only minor details until the fall of the Empire.

ARMY UNIFORMS

The Imperial Army standard duty uniform consists of a rugged camouflage jumpsuit made of light carbon-fiber armor, plus a beret in different colors depending on the wearer's unit: green for infantry, blue for sea forces, red for armor, white for medical, black for special forces, brown for artillery, gold for air forces, and purple for the Imperial Guard division. Non-Human troops wear clothing tailored to their anatomy. Commanders issue troops on active battlefield duty heavier personal armor and helmets; see page 144.

Imperial Army Uniform: *Armor (4 PD/4 ED) (12 Active Points); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 15- (-¼), Real Armor (-¼). Total cost: 6 points.*

The Army dress uniform is a high-collared gray tunic worn over black trousers and high boots. Officers in full dress have silver epaulettes and a sash in their unit color.

EXPLORATION SERVICE UNIFORMS

Exploration Service personnel wear a simple and practical outfit much like the standard garb of merchant starship crews: brown trousers and utility vest with a white shirt. When planetside, scouts add a cap and a lightly-armored jacket. Most commanders are not very particular about regulation uniforms; crews often wear what they please.

TES Scout Jacket: *Armor (3 PD/3 ED) (9 Active Points); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 11- (-1), Real Armor (-¼). Total cost: 3 points.*

The Exploration Service's rarely-seen dress uniform is a variant on Navy dress: a light blue coat and trousers with a peaked cap and a gold cravat.

MARINE UNIFORMS

The Imperial Marines wear a duty uniform similar to the Army's, the chief difference being that Marines all wear grey berets. The Marine dress uniform is a variant on the Navy's: a grey coat and trousers with a peaked cap and a brown cravat. The Marine dress uniform is the only one which specifically includes a sidearm, so even high-ranking Marine officers at social events may carry a pistol.

NAVY UNIFORMS

The Imperial Navy's duty uniform consists of a white, open-collared, short-sleeved coverall worn over a long-sleeved turtleneck shirt colored according to the wearer's duty specialization: red for propulsion; bronze for science and sensors; burnt orange for weapons; green for lifesystems; blue for command; grey for security; and black for flight. Naval dress uniform is a blue coat and trousers with a peaked cap, worn with a cravat in the branch color. Officers have a longer coat with sleeve stripes in the branch color. Planetary defense and customs patrol personnel wear uniforms closely resembling the Naval pattern.

THE TERRAN INTELLIGENCE COMMAND

The TIC — the Empire's intelligence, counterintelligence, and covert operations service — predates the Empire itself; the original Terran Intelligence Command combined all the various competing intelligence services under one directorate during the Xenovore Wars. The TIC's primary task is to gather information about other Galactic powers and potentially hostile civilizations; its covert operations wing undertakes secret missions outside Imperial space.

During Marissa's reign the TIC has grown in power and influence, but many old intelligence hands are disturbed by the way the Empress keeps blurring the service's mission. Increasingly, Marissa uses TIC assets for domestic spying and "dirty tricks" against her enemies.

INFORMATION GATHERING

The basic mission of the TIC is gathering information. It does this in four main ways.

The first is simply research — TIC analysts study alien news media and public information, analyzing it to figure out what's true, what's disinformation, and what conceals a secret. Although the most boring of TIC's duties, it's also by far the most fruitful.

The second method is observation. Specially-equipped starships monitor alien communications, spy on planets from orbit, and track ship movements. In these two tasks the TIC works closely and relatively smoothly with the Exploration Service.

The third method of information-gathering is "Alien Source Intelligence" — hiring spies. Most Terran embassies, trade missions, and consulates have an Intelligence Liaison Officer who pays local agents for information. Although often wrong or garbled, "alint" is sometimes the only way to collect genuinely secret material alien governments try to keep quiet.

The most exciting and dangerous form of intelligence gathering, "direct retrieval," requires Terran agents to penetrate foreign security and steal information. The Empire doesn't do this nearly as often as shown in vids, and only the failures ever reach the ears of the public. TIC often conducts direct retrieval operations in cooperation with the Imperial Navy and Marines, using stealthy Special Operations ships and highly-trained commandos. TIC leaders only authorize direct retrieval in situations involving (a) high demand for the information, and (b) little or no chance of tracing the operation back to the Empire. One unusual form of direct retrieval, the salvaging of ancient alien technology from abandoned worlds, usually requires the cooperation of the Exploration Service.

COVERT OPERATIONS

The TIC employs many of the same assets used for direct retrieval in covert operations. The Empire uses such operations to destabilize planetary governments, either to install a more friendly regime or to prepare a world for conquest or annexation by the Empire. Other covert ops include economic sabotage against alien business interests operating in the Terran sphere of influence, direct action against alien espionage operations, and strikes against criminals or rebels who have found sanctuary outside Imperial territory.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

The Empire deliberately keeps the command structure of the TIC secret. A committee of five, the Directorate, advises the Empress on intelligence matters and runs the agency. The Empire does not make the names of the Directors public; word only gets out when a Director dies. Directors use their titles rather than personal names on all internal communications and orders.

While nobody knows the precise size of the TIC, it's small compared to the military services or the TSS. The best estimate is approximately 50,000 employees, mostly analysts, technicians, and field liaison officers. The covert operations wing includes no more than a few hundred agents. The agency has a small fleet of ships, mostly merchant vessels converted for eavesdropping and covert operations.

The TIC has no official duty uniform, although dark-colored civilian suits in fashions ten years out of date might qualify. When Marissa III took the throne she assigned Intelligence a dress uniform so people wouldn't mistake high-ranking TIC officials for waiters at official functions. The TIC dress uniform derives from the Navy's, but it's black instead of dark blue and has no insignia.

WORLDS OF THE EMPIRE

The Empire has more than a thousand inhabited worlds. Describing them all is beyond the scope of this book, but a few deserve special mention.

Solar System Worlds

Since the Terran Empire arose on and is governed from Earth, naturally Earth itself and the other useful planets of her system — the Solar System in Imperial parlance, the capitalization indicating the Imperial home star system — are heavily developed.

EARTH

The homeworld of Humanity and the capital of the Empire, Earth is rich, sophisticated, and cosmopolitan. In the wake of the Xenovore Wars, Humans rebuilt many of Earth's cities as planned urban complexes artfully interspersed with and surrounded by parkland and managed wilderness. Though megacities like Atlanta-New Orleans, Chicago-Indianapolis, Boswash, Calipolis, London-Berlin, Nihon, Shanghai-Beijing, Delhi-Bengal, and Rio-Buenos may hold billions of people, the most important city on Earth is probably tiny Lyons, home to the Imperial court.

The Moon

Humans have lived in domed installations on their Moon since 2075. Most of the facilities there are industrial (such as mines), but several cities exist. The largest of these, Serenity, is known for its gigantic towers and other spectacular architecture.

JUPITER

Humans, even genetically-modified ones, cannot live on Jupiter, but they can still make use of the planet. Numerous space stations, including Jupiter One and Copernicus Station, orbit the planet, siphoning off its atmosphere to make fuel and other substances.

Other inhabited objects also orbit the Solar System's largest planet. Several of its moons have Human habitations on them. For example, Europa has several underwater installations, and explorers and biologists traverse its waters in special submarines; and Ganymede has several domed cities.

MARS

Other than Earth, Mars is the most heavily-settled planet in the Solar System. Over two billion Martians (Humans genetically adapted for the thin air) and another two billion normal Humans live there; the latter normally stay inside sealed dwellings and must use breathing apparati if they remain outside for more than a minute or two.

Humans established their first permanent colonies on Mars in 2093. Rather than undertake the massive, centuries-long effort needed to make the planet easily habitable by normal Humans, the people of Earth decided to partially terraform Mars to thicken the atmosphere enough to increase the planet's temperature and allow altered Humans to live there without significant difficulty. They completed the project in 2256, and the population has increased steadily ever since.

Settlements on Mars mostly cluster in the Chryse, Utopia, Elysium, and Hellas Planitias, but every region of the planet has at least a domed
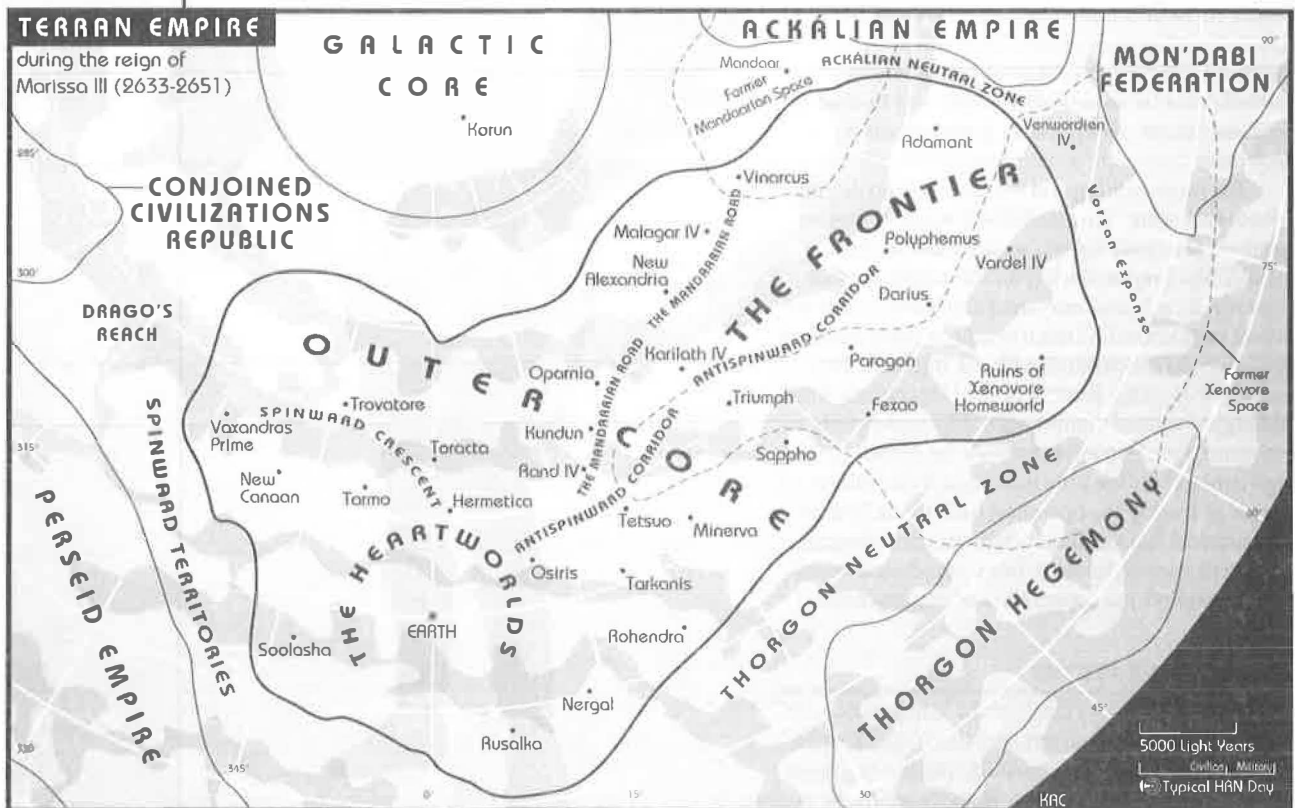
science station, a Martian house, or a few other habitations. Chryse City, the largest urban area on and capital of the planet, occupies the site where the Viking I probe touched down. Most Martians are scientists, workers in heavy industry (mining, manufacturing, and the like), or involved in commercial concerns.

Though not as comfortable as life on Earth, life on Mars is not without its benefits; many natives say they wouldn't live anywhere else. Known for its active night life, intense native sports competitions, and cultural attractions, Mars has something to offer everyone from the casual tourist to the dedicated immigrant.

SATURN

Although it has a few fuel collection/refinery facilities, Saturn is best known for its orbital hotels and spas. A popular vacation destination due to the spectacular views of its majestic rings, Saturn is visited by thousands of wealthy tourists every year. The less affluent have to content themselves with watching Saturn and its rings pass by as they travel to some more affordable place.

VENUS

Due to its dangerous environment, Venus has only a few Human settlements — heavy-duty domes inhabited by scientists and a few people involved in commercial exploitation of the planet. Periodically some official tries to start a project to terraform Venus, but so far none of the suggested plans for doing this have raised enough public or governmental interest to get anywhere.

Other Worlds

Despite the importance of the Solar System, the vast majority of Imperial territory lies light-years — often hundreds or thousands of them — away from Earth.

ADAMANT

Located deep in the Frontier, Adamant is the biggest industrial and trading center in that area. Resources from thinly-developed systems flow to Adamant where they become goods for shipment to the Heartworlds or export beyond the Imperial borders. Adamant trades as much with the Ackálians and Mon'dabi as it does with Earth, and consequently Adamant's government favors better relations with other civilizations. The fact that the Core Fleet has its headquarters in the Adamant system shows the importance the Empire places on keeping Adamant peaceful and productive.

A small, Earthlike world with a mass about half that of Earth, a breathable atmosphere, and large, shallow oceans, Adamant has an eccentric orbit about its star, giving it very extreme seasons. (Changes in solar energy swamp the effects of the planet's minimal axial tilt.) During fall and spring the global climate is moderate, but summer temperatures can reach 50° Centigrade (120° Fahrenheit) in the equatorial regions and approach 10° C (50° F) at the poles. In winter the tropics average

-4° C (25° F), with the poles a brutal -43° C (-45° F). Consequently most of the inhabitants migrate to polar cities for the summer and return to the equator at the end of autumn.

ALPHA CENTAURI

The closest star system to Sol, Alpha Centauri was settled early, by colonists who ventured outside the Solar System using the first Hyperdrives. It has three inhabited worlds. The first two circle Alpha Centauri A. Balder (Alpha Centauri III) is a terraformed planet now home to a billion people. It's relatively egalitarian and has an elected government, though the large landowners who claim most of the usable territory have immense power. Since the climate on Balder has not stabilized enough for farming, the Centauri use much of the land for raising mutant cattle.

Loki (Alpha Centauri IV), a Type 3 planet, has 200 million inhabitants in domed cities. Society on Loki involves rigid social classes. An aristocracy of hereditary nobles and wealthy industrialists controls the government and other important social institutions. The lower classes live an existence that's at best spartan, at worst oppressive; only those who can scrape together enough money to cover emigration fees and the cost of a starship ticket have any hope of finding a better life.

The planet Hoder, an icy world with subsurface oceans home to 100 million people (mostly Selkies), circles Alpha Centauri B. The Selkies formerly worked under "life service contracts" held by various corporations, effectively making them slaves. This state of affairs ended during the Civil War when Count Ivan supported a rebellion against the pro-Antonio masters. Attempts under Feodor to restore the old system failed. Marissa has worked hard to end unrest and integrate the Selkie population into Imperial society. Currently a council of elected representatives rules the planet; slightly over half of them are loyalists willing to carry out Marissa's agenda almost without question.

The Centauri system has a Senator, chosen by the three planetary governments meeting in council. During most of Marissa III's reign, the highly-regarded telepath Camilla Kosami represents the Centauri.

BARNARD

Barnard's Star, the second-closest star system to Sol, has five small icy planets plus an asteroid belt. Initial attempts to reach it failed, but Humanity settled it early in the interstellar period. The Barnard system became a center for heavy industry, and in 2592 construction began there on the Empire's first major antimatter production facility. The antimatter facility consists of a set of huge solar generators orbiting close to the star, powering giant particle accelerators to manufacture antimatter. Due to the dangers antimatter poses, a squadron of powerful Imperial warships from the Home Fleet guards Barnard at all times.

Barnard's five planets (known simply as Barnard I-V) have a single government, the Barnard System Authority. Barnard's industrial corporations

include some of the Empire's biggest, with interests across the Galaxy.

EMERALD

Emerald got its name from its lush green appearance: forests cover the land masses, and copper salts and algae mats turn the oceans green. First settled as a scientific colony, it became the home of numerous leading scientists; today scholars consider the Emerald Institute one of the Empire's top universities and research centers. Science is practically a spectator sport on Emerald, and research other worlds consider dangerous or blasphemous easily gets funding and lab space there.

Because Emerald attracts inquiring minds from across the Empire and beyond, it's a very cosmopolitan place, with citizens of almost every known species. Emerald's famously tolerant society adheres to the principle that "all minds are equal." Non-Humans and even some classes of intelligent machines have full citizenship. The planet also allows experiments in genetic modification, and so has many Human variant types.

EUROPA NOVA

A cool, dry planet with large icecaps and extensive deserts, Europa Nova was settled by Europeans, all from hereditary noble families or families with significant wealth, during the mid-2500s. A non-Human "underclass" — a mix of aliens and robots — does all the actual work needed to keep society functioning smoothly. The lords and ladies live a luxurious existence and staunchly oppose any attempt to recognize their servitors as equals. The fact that Humans constitute only 10 percent of Europa Nova's population doesn't seem to make them nervous.

HERMETICA

A thorn in the Empire's side, Hermetica is an old Human colony world just outside the Heartworlds region on the coreward side. The planet has an unusual environment: most of the water exists in vast cave complexes beneath the planet's surface. Oases dot the desert landscape where sinkholes allow plants to reach the subsurface water. Most of the inhabitants and native life live in the cave systems.

Hermetica has a population of about 10 million, including more than 2,000 high-powered psionics. The psionics have established themselves as the rulers of Hermetica by using their powers to maintain their regime and oppress the "controls" who lack psi abilities. Public opinion in the Empire favors intervention to remove the psi oligarchy, but the Imperial authorities seems curiously unwilling to get involved. The whole issue has become a divisive element in Imperial court politics.

KAPTEYN

A very bright red dwarf (but still much dimmer than Sol), Kapteyn's Star has eight planets, one of which (Kapteyn IV) is a Type 1 world. Two others (Kapteyn III and V) are Types 2 and 3, respectively, and have small colonies living in domed communities. Imperial citizens normally refer to Kapteyn IV simply as "Kapteyn"; they call the third planet Rossendrol, and the fifth Arctos (due to its large polar ice caps).

Kapteyn suffered extensive damage during the Xenovore Wars, and has struggled in the ensuing centuries to rebuild (the colonies on Rossendrol and Arctos were founded in part to provide raw materials for reconstruction projects). As of Marissa III's reign, the Kapteynians have mostly completed their reconstruction work and begun expanding once again; currently, the population exceeds one billion. A Senatorial world, it governs itself through representative democracy.

MARGRAVE'S WORLD

Referred to in planetary catalogs as Epsilon Indi III, Margrave's World is better known to citizens of the Empire by the name derived from its discoverer, the early space explorer Alexander Margrave. A bit larger than Earth, with slightly stronger gravity (1.1 G), it's a remarkably Earthlike world in most respects, and as a result attracts many colonists eager for an easy environment in which to make their new home. As of 2640, it has a population of over two billion; ten percent of them are non-Humans.

Thanks to an unpleasant incident early in its history when several psionically-powerful individuals tried to take over the colonial government edent, Margravites often have a reflexive suspicion about any psionic. By law, any psionic living there for more than a

year (or whose powers manifest while living there) must be marked with a purple square moline cross tattoo on the inside of each wrist. (Characters with this tattoo may take it as a 5-point Distinctive Feature.)

NEW ALEXANDRIA

New Alexandria is a dry but habitable planet; its continents are mostly desert but the coastlines and islands remain quite pleasant. The original settlers hoped to create a new center for education and philosophy, and the planet has a first-class university in the capital, Pharos City. But shortly after they established the initial colony, prospectors found large deposits of radioactive organic crystals in the interior of the largest continent. Thousands of miners and prospectors flocked to New Alexandria, changing the academic society of the founders into a wide-open boom-town atmosphere. Though the initial crystal rush ended long ago, New Alexandria still has a reputation as a place where making a profit take precedence over everything, and a person can have *anything* for money. The ISP advises casual tourists not to visit New Alexandria's entertainment havens.

NEW CANAAN

A barely-habitable world, New Canaan was deliberately selected for its harsh conditions by its original settlers. Motivated by religious faith, they sought to create a society that met the most exacting requirements of all religions. The original settlers were Christian, Jewish, and Muslim, but since then settlers from dozens of other religious groups have immigrated to New Canaan. Under New Canaan's constitution, all citizens must obey the tenets of all religions represented on the planet. In cases where practices directly conflict, a citizen can choose, but otherwise he has to follow all the rules. New Canaanites eat no meat, drink no alcohol or caffeine, may not divorce or use contraception, and wear robes and veils. They use only the minimum technology necessary to support life. Needless to say, the planet's not exactly a tourist destination.

OPARNIA

A hot, nearly airless planet circling a bright type F star, Oparnia has 300 million inhabitants living in underground complexes. The original settlers wanted to set up an ideal society based on the ideals of Plato: they gestate all children artificially, and conduct government via an extremely advanced and incorruptible artificial intelligence computer system. Unfortunately the passage of time and some ill-advised upgrades and program changes have made the computer system slightly eccentric, while the people have become xenophobic and culturally paranoid about the "corrupting" influences of outsiders — most of them view visitors from off-world with suspicion and hostility.
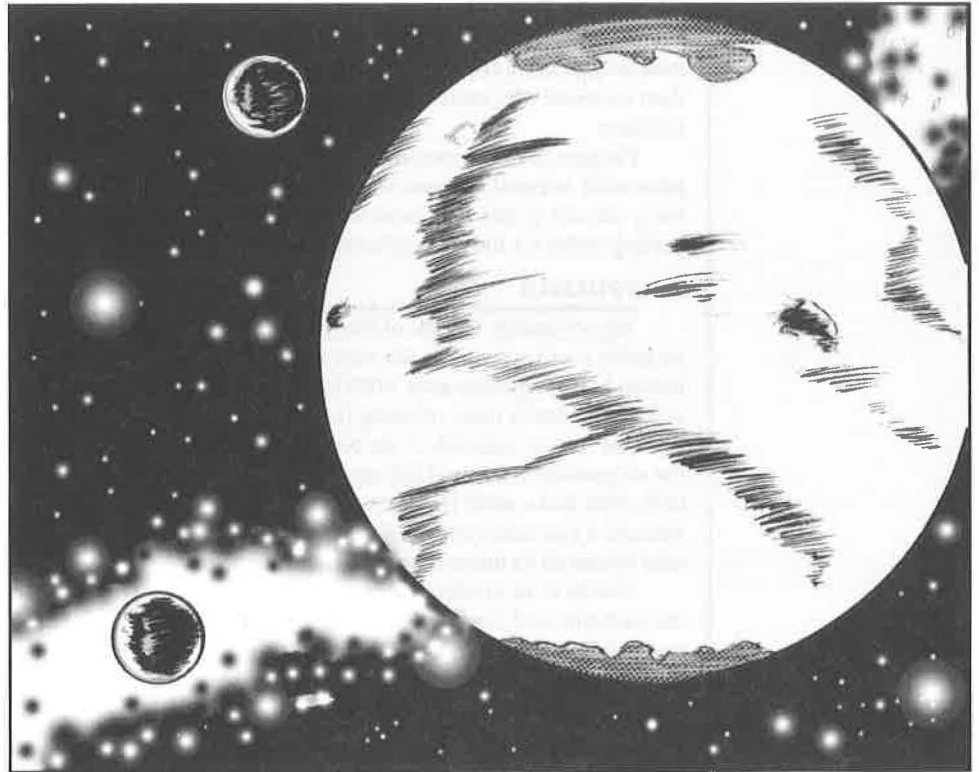
OSIRIS

A barely Earthlike planet desperately short of water, Osiris has two small oceans at the polar regions, but desert covers two-thirds of the surface. The native species, the Elpadens, are gaunt humanoids adapted to desert conditions. They apparently once had a highly advanced civilization, with technology at least as advanced as current Imperial science. Explorers and archaeologists sometimes find mysterious Elpaden artifacts both on the surface of Osiris and on other worlds in the system. What destroyed their civilization remains unknown.

The Humans on Osiris were initially scientists, but today the planet has a thriving colony with 400 million people (plus approximately 30 million Elpadens, who have full rights as citizens). Osiris occupies a strategic location on the approaches to the Heartworlds of the Empire, and was the scene of two major battles and numerous raids during the Galactic War. Its people (including the Elpadens) are strong Imperial loyalists, and the Imperial Army has a desert-warfare training center on the planet.

PARAGON

One of the most successful Human colony worlds, Paragon was once a marginal Type 2 world. Terraforming made it lush and habitable, and it has become one of the Empire's centers for cutting-edge technology in all fields. Planetological engineers must constantly monitor the planet's climate and biosphere to ensure the terraforming remains in place; if the balance tips too far in any direction, Paragon could become a Type 2 world again in just a few decades.

Paragon has an unusual government: a universal meritocratic democracy. Individual citizens must pass exams to vote, and the electoral computer system weights their votes on issues according to how well they score on certain sections of

the test. Thus, someone knowledgeable about energy systems gets more votes on energy-related issues than someone who scored well on interplanetary relations.

Paragon has an unusually large proportion of psionically talented Humans in its population. It's more tolerant of psis than most worlds, making it a leading center for the study of mental powers.

POLYPHEMUS

Approximately the size of Mars, Polyphemus probably could not sustain life were it not for a huge impact basin, approximately 3,000 kilometers across and 10 kilometers deep, resulting from an ancient collision with an asteroid. At the bottom of the crater the air pressure becomes high enough for Humans to breathe, and a small ring-shaped sea exists. Because it has such a small habitable area, Polyphemus locates all its industries up on the crater rim.

Thanks to its location at the terminus of both the Antispinward Corridor and some major trade routes from Mon'dabi space, Polyphemus has a thriving economy. Many interstellar corporations have large offices there, and merchants selling or buying cargos come from thousands of light-years around to make deals.

Polyphemus is a republic — only landowners can vote, but citizens can purchase otherwise worthless land up in the highlands just to get a vote. A total of 280 million people live on Polyphemus, mostly Martian subspecies Humans.

PROCYON

Procyon, a bright star near Sol, has Human colonies on three of its planets. Procyon IV and V, both similar to Earth in size and mass, are now in the final stages of long and successful terraforming projects. Procyon V already has a breathable atmosphere and a population approaching 1 billion; the 20 million inhabitants of Procyon IV still require oxygen masks on the surface, but the planet already exports agricultural produce.

The third planet, Procyon IX, is a huge icy ball with a dense methane atmosphere. An industrial powerhouse, it produces all kinds of complex organics and manufactured goods. The industrial operations on Procyon IX paid for the terraforming of the other two worlds, and its population is now dropping as its citizens take their promised homesteads. In some cases non-Humans step into the abandoned jobs; in other cases automation takes up the slack.

PROXIMA CENTAURI

The small red dwarf companion of Alpha Centauri A and B, Proxima Centauri has no planets of its own, but does have a belt of asteroids and comets. The Proxima system was settled by inhabitants of orbital space colonies, and today nearly fifty habitats and stations circle Proxima (mostly inhabited by Spacers). Among them is the Imperial Star Academy, a huge complex where all the officers of the Imperial Navy and Marines receive advanced training. Because of the Academy's presence, the Imperial military guards the Proxima system *very* well.

RAND IV

The Rand system lies along one of the main trade routes through the Outer Core section of the Empire. As an important shipping and trading center along the Mandaarian Road, trillions of credits' worth of goods pass through its high ports, orbital space stations, and planetary facilities each year.

Rand IV is a Type 2 world where Humans must wear oxygen masks and cold-weather clothing when they venture outdoors. The Empire began a terraforming project in 2620, but it will take more than a century before Rand has a breathable atmosphere. It can support some forms of Terran plant life already, though.

Rand IV was settled by several groups of political idealists devoted to the concept of minimal government. It only has three actual planetary laws: no one may touch another person or cause any physical harm without permission; no one may violate a contract; and no one may steal any physical object. Everything else depends on private agreements between citizens. As a result, the average Randite knows as much about contract formation and interpretation as lawyers on other worlds... and Randite lawyers are renowned throughout the Galaxy for their acumen. Maxim Jabi, the Senator from Rand IV, has a well-deserved reputation as a critic of Imperial rule, but he's so radical his only offworld support comes from students and fringe journalists.

ROHENDRA

A marginally Earthlike world, Rohendra has ice caps covering about half its surface; much of the rest is desert. It does have a spectacular system of rings, thought to be the debris of a shattered moon.

Rohendra's 40 million inhabitants govern themselves with a neo-feudal system in which individuals pledge their loyalty to a local lord, who in turn pledges fealty to the planetary King. Contracts carefully spell out the terms of the loyalty pledges, and a lord's subjects can remove him from office if he fails to abide by his word or keep his oaths.

Conflicts occur frequently among the lords of Rohendra; it's one of only a few planets where people can settle legal disputes with duels. The Rohendrans take great pride in their dueling traditions; most other Imperial citizens consider the whole idea pretentious at best, foolish at worst.

The Rohendra system serves as the headquarters of the Rimward Fleet, though the Navy locates most of its facilities on the airless icy planet Angenar (Rohendra III). The Rohendrans appreciate the boost the Navy's presence gives their economy, though their impressions of the often-rowdy crewmembers who visit their world on leave is less favorable.

RUSALKA

Rusalka, a large Earthlike planet, has a surface gravity just under 2 standard G. A native form of dense seaweed laces its oceans, making most of the planet's surface a vast bog. The highly arable boglands make the planet a major agricultural exporter,

while the small, mineral-rich continents support numerous mines and refineries.

The people of Rusalka, almost all Heavies, unfortunately do not have a stable government. Most planetary presidents sweep into office as part of a *coup d'etat,* and leave office as the victim of another such armed uprising. Since Rusalka is a Senatorial world, it has no Imperial garrison to interfere. However, the Diplomatic Corps maintains a constant presence here to negotiate treaties and agreements between various factions.

SAPPHO

Sappho, an oversized moon of a gas giant, is tidally locked to the planet it circles, giving it a local day four standard days long. An archipelagic world, it has hundreds of volcanic islands but no continents. Approximately a quarter of the planet's 500,000 inhabitants are Selkies.

A group of "gyno-separatists" who wished to establish an all-female society settled Sappho in the late 2400s. The inhabitants conceive children artificially, and men may not become permanent residents. The government consists of a worldwide participatory democracy of all women over 39 years of age. After more than a century of separate life, the women of Sappho face a divisive political situation: the older citizens want to preserve Sappho as a separatist colony, but the younger generation doesn't see the point and wants to open the planet to immigration by both genders.

SIGMA DRACONIS III

Settled early in Earth's interstellar period, Sigma Draconis III houses a thriving colony of nearly three billion Humans. It's one of the Empire's major centers for manufacturing, scientific research, and military procurement; the Dracon battlesuits worn by the Imperial Marines were developed here. "SD3" (as it's often called) also has extensive arable land and exports agricultural products; Draconian beef enjoys a stellar reputation throughout the Empire.

A Senatorial world, Sigma Draconis III lacks a united planetary government. Its inhabitants live in over four dozen nations, each with its own leadership. Every nation chooses a representative to a planetary conclave that selects the Draconian senator.

TARTARUS

The Terran Security Service's prison planet, Tartarus is an airless world circling a dim red dwarf star well away from the main trade routes. No publicly-available Imperial star chart marks its location; only TSS pilots know its location, and the TSS impounds or destroys unauthorized vessels entering the system.

Tartarus has about 2 million inmates guarded by 20,000 Imperial Army soldiers and TSS troops. The prisoners operate the hydroponic farms and light industry that keeps them alive; conditions are drab and spartan but generally bearable. Most prisoners serve sentences of about ten years (long enough for whatever organization they belonged to

to dissolve), though some inmates remain for life. The TSS also has research facilities, training centers, and equipment stockpiles on Tartarus, so it can continue to operate even if it loses its headquarters on Earth.

TAU CETI

The Tau Ceti system rivals Sol itself for wealth and influence in the Empire. Tau Ceti II was one of the first habitable worlds discovered by Human explorers, and today has a population of 2 billion. The planet Tau Ceti III and the large moon Tau Ceti V-A also have thriving colonies; the system has a total population of 5.5 billion.

The contrast among the Tau Ceti worlds is striking. The inhabitants of lush Tau Ceti II ardently protect their planetary environment; they live in small, self-governing settlements based on renewable power and sustainable industries. An oligarchy of hereditary techno-aristocrats controls airless Tau Ceti III; they own the domed cities and vital life-support systems. Tau Ceti V-A's people live in vast underground complexes tunneled out of the planet's many mountain ranges and have a notoriously corrupt democracy. The Cetians chose their Senator by letting each planet pick one in turn, so the Tau Ceti seat cycles regularly through the political spectrum: Liberal when II gets the selection, Aristocratic on III's turn, and Conservative when V-A makes the choice.

TETSUO

Tetsuo was once a showpiece colony, with a terraformed planet (Tetsuo II) and a couple of industrial sub-colonies. Then the Galactic War broke out, and the system was the scene of some of the bloodiest campaigning in the history of the Empire. Of the system's 200,000 inhabitants at the start of the fighting, only 60,000 survived, and in the decades following the war half of those emigrated to other colonies. The Empire made some sporadic attempts to spur rebuilding, including a showy new orbital spaceport above Tetsuo II, but the destruction was simply too great. Today Tetsuo II is the only inhabited world, a chilly Mars-like planet (its terraforming having reverted due to the failure to maintain it) with 20,000 people. Outside the capital city, gangs of scavengers and bandits control the surface; they live by recovering wrecked military equipment and stealing from each other.

TRIUMPH

Triumph was once one of the most important worlds controlled by the Xenovores. But in the late 2300s, when Humanity began pushing the Xenovore invaders back, Triumph was their first major conquest (hence their new name for it). The attack was thorough: saturation bombing with more than a hundred nuclear and ten thousand kinetic warheads, accompanied by orbital laser strikes. For decades the planet was a radioactive wasteland, slowly dying.

After Humanity stabilized politically, the Empire spent trillions to make Triumph a showpiece world. It sponsored a massive terraforming

oligarchy, often has difficulty keeping track of all the criminals in or passing through the Vaxandros system. The enormous Vaxandros High Port in particular has a reputation as a haven for criminal activity.

VINARCUS

Sometimes known as Plateau, Vinarcus is an enormous world with an atmosphere far too dense for Humans to breathe or survive in at surface level. Three gigantic, towering plateaus reach up through the atmosphere to regions where the air pressure decreases to habitable levels, and it's on these plateaus that Imperial colonists built their settlements. As of 2640, there are about 20 million Vinarcans, most engaged in the manufacturing or mining trades. Over half of them are Heavies, or the alien equivalent — Vinarcus welcomes non-Human colonists, and thus has an unusually cosmopolitan culture for its size.

Other Regions

Lying just outside Imperial space are several regions closely associated with Terran rule.

ACKÁLIAN NEUTRAL ZONE

A narrow band of space, ranging from about one light-year wide at its closest point to well over a dozen at its farthest, separates the Terran Empire from the Ackálian Empire. Both sides patrol this region constantly, often sending stealthy "scouting patrols" into the Zone itself in blatant violation of various treaties and less formal agreements. To make matters worse, Mandaar, homeworld of the Mandaarians, lies within the Zone, attracting explorers, scientists, and rogues from all over the Galaxy. Technically it's a violation of both Terran and Ackálian law for a citizen of either regime to enter the Zone, but neither seems particularly intent on enforcing those regulations.

DRAGO'S REACH

Wedged in between Terran, Perseid, and Conjoined Civilizations space is a region claimed by none of those governments. Known as "Drago's Reach" after an infamous (and probably mythical) space pirate of the twenty-fourth century, this is lawless territory where an unusual mix of explorers, renegade scientists, daring traders, cocky smugglers, and ruthless criminals mingle freely without having to worry (much) about the ISP or other such organizations.

The Reach contains several inhabitable worlds, some of them already the home of native species unaffiliated with any major Galactic government. There are also supposedly several independent space stations where "space scum" come together to do business and plan jobs.

and decontamination project and established the planet as a major fleet base. Results were mixed. As of 2640, Triumph has a thriving colony of more than 10 million people, many Navy veterans or military families, and almost all clustered in the region around the spaceport. However, vast portions of the planet remain uninhabitable. Settlers in the wilderness report strange mutant creatures and bands of crazed, half-bestial Xenovores.

TROVATORE

Trovatore, an oceanic planet with a great many lovely island chains and archipelagoes, is a popular tourist destination and resort. The pleasant climate and hedonistic culture have also attracted a great many artists and musicians, and a large contingent of Osathri lives in its many lagoons. It's gained a reputation across the Empire for political radicalism and sensuality. Imperial authorities don't consider Trovatore a trouble spot — even the TSS and the Mind Police dismiss the political rhetoric emanating from the planet's artistic community as nothing but talk.

VAXANDROS PRIME

Located in the spinward regions of the Outer Core, Vaxandros Prime is the first of five planets orbiting the yellow dwarf star Vaxandros. Discovered in the late 2400s, it's a pleasant, Earthlike world that's attracted over 200 million settlers in about a century and a half. Most live in one of the planet's five major cities, but a few have struck out into the wilds to establish homesteads.

Unfortunately, the planet's relative proximity to Drago's Reach makes it a convenient stop for smugglers and other ne'er-do-wells traveling to or from that lawless region of space. The Intelligence Bureau, a combination law enforcement and espionage agency under the control of the planet's ruling

SPINWARD TERRITORIES

The Terran Empire calls the region of space between itself and the Perseid Empire the "Spinward Territories," as if they were somehow a hinterland belonging to Humanity. In fact, the Territories are nothing of the sort; they're just a large, informally-established "neutral zone" between the two empires. Few Terran leaders have any desire to go to war with the powerful Perseid Empire, so the Empire long ago stopped any further growth in that direction (the Perseids, for their part, feel the same way). The space between the two Galactic powers remains ungoverned; criminals and rebels sometimes flee there, and a few native species take advantage of their location to trade heavily with both governments.

THORGON NEUTRAL ZONE

Another "buffer zone" established between Terran space and the territory of a hostile power, the Thorgon Neutral Zone is larger than the Ack-álian — at least three light-years wide at its narrowest, and up to 20 in some places. Its exact boundaries have shifted periodically, based on the victories and relative strength of the two governments, but Humans now control numerous systems once possessed by the Thorgons... a fact not forgotten by the grateful inhabitants of those worlds, or the hawkish and revenge-minded Thorgons.

THE VORŜAN EXPANSE

In between Terran, Mon'dabi, and Ackálian space lies a narrow corridor of space known as the Vorŝan Expanse, a name supposedly deriving from a Xenovore word meaning "uninhabitable." The Expanse was once part of Xenovore territory, but the Xenovores established few successful colonies there and left even fewer ruins. It remains a lawless place, often used as a source of refuge by pirates and smugglers because it allows them to reach nearby inhabited regions easily, then escape back over the border.
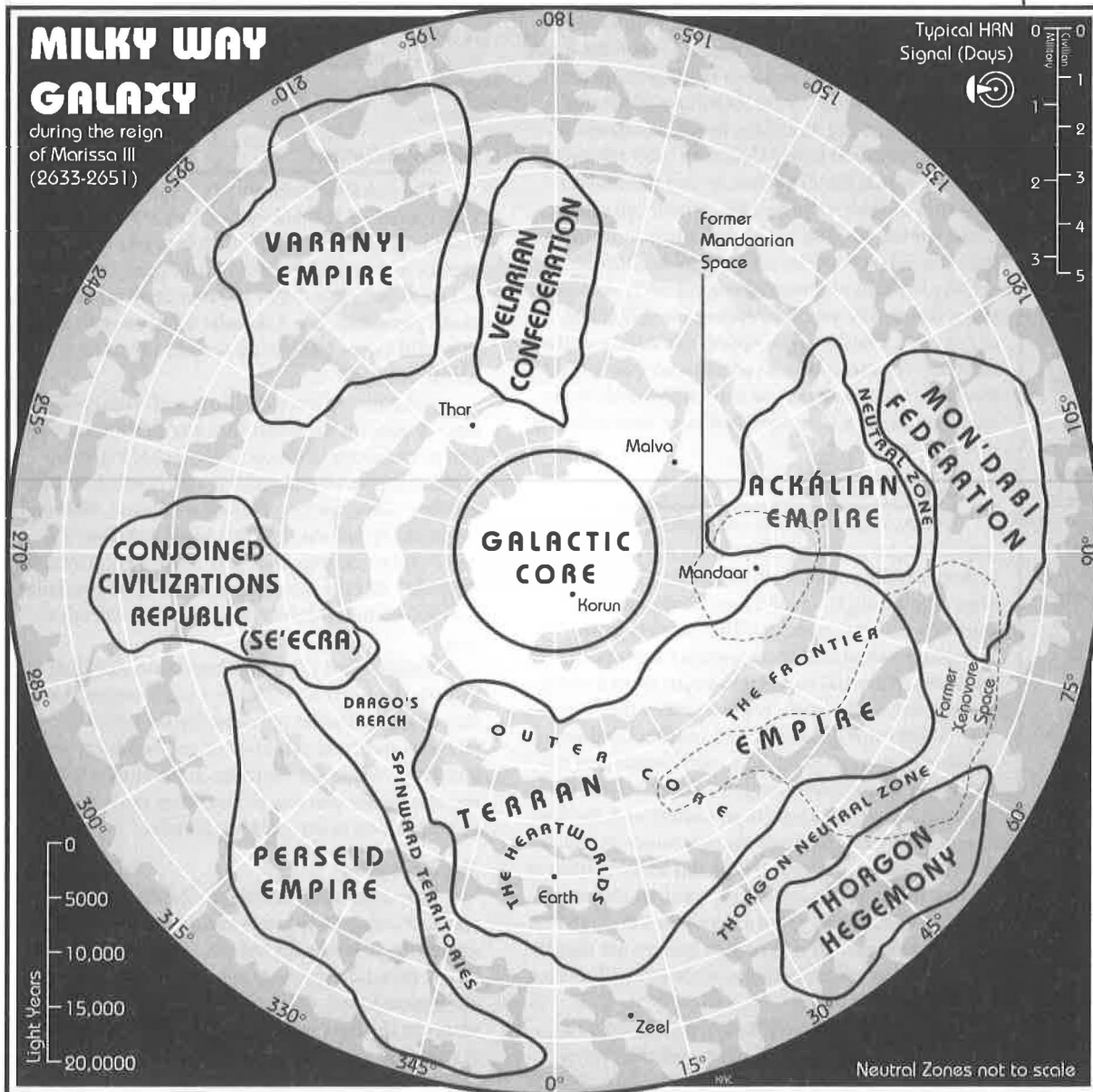
OTHER POWERS

THE MALVANS

A very old species, the Malvans have a recorded history nearly a million years long. Although they're not willing to make most of their historical records public knowledge for reasons they won't reveal, they have stated they achieved space flight in 664,332 BC by the Terran calendar, and by approximately 650,000 BC ruled an empire covering about a quarter of the Galaxy. By around 330,000 BC the Malvan Empire had attained its peak, with nearly half of the Galaxy under its control, but thereafter it shrank slowly but steadily, due in large part to growing Malvan societal malaise and individual Malvans' focus on personal pleasures and diversions instead of the loftier goals of their ancestors. Subject species rebelled, bored colonists abandoned their worlds to return to Malva, and the Malvan population declined. Today the Malvans "rule" nine star systems, only two of which have inhabited worlds. Most Malvans now live on their home planet Malva (page 45).

A *Phazor* ("High King") rules as the absolute, unquestioned monarch of the Malvan civilization. The current Phazor, Valzad XIII, has reigned for 741 years as of 2640. Like his predecessors, Valzad devotes most of his time and resources to entertainment. He has a large harem (with

While the Terran Empire is unquestionably one of the largest and most powerful political entities in the Milky Way Galaxy, it's not the only one. Several other known governments, some benevolent and some not, control significant regions of space or make themselves forces to be reckoned with in other ways. And who knows what may lurk in the as-yet uncharted regions of the Galaxy....

THE ACKÁLIAN EMPIRE

The Ackálian Empire lies to antispinward and "northward" of the Terran Empire. It contains many rich planets and several dozen intelligent species, all under the control of the Ackálians. Powerful and aggressive, the Ackálians have a carnivorous diet and territorial habits that keep their numbers low. As a result, the Ackálians spread themselves very thin in their empire, with virtually all adults of the species serving in the government or the military. Subject species conduct all economic activity, science, and new development in Ackálian space (under the watchful eyes of the Ackálians, of course!). Thanks to the oppressive nature of the Ackálian regime, rebellion remains an ever-present threat, so the Ackálians use extremely harsh measures to maintain the peace and keep their subjects under control.

ACKÁLIAN GOVERNMENT

The Ackálian Empress (the ruler and all other important government officials are always women) is theoretically an absolute monarch. In practice she must rule through a coalition of ambitious lesser warlords and commanders. The position is not hereditary; when an Empress shows signs of age or weakness, potential successors begin maneuvering for support, and a brief civil war settles the issue.

While other galactic states see the Ackálian succession as a symptom of societal weakness, the Ackálians themselves disagree — they believe the constant infighting keeps their culture and species strong. They conduct their foreign policy in much the same way, using subversion and assassination as routine tools. Advancement in Ackálian society is very Darwinian, requiring a combination of ability and ruthlessness. Thus, Ackálian leaders are usually highly competent individuals, without much mercy or sympathy for others.

Shairaka, the current Empress, maintains a policy of avoiding open conflict with the Terran Empire. She believes the Terrans will eventually fall before Ackálian might, but now is not the time.

Hemmed in by the Mon'dabi Federation, the Terran Empire, and the galactic core, she prefers to expand into former Malvan territories. In the meantime, border incidents between Terrans and Ackálians, and between the Ackálians and their hated enemies the Mon'dabi, occur with depressing regularity. While she's not willing to give up spying on other species, Shairaka fears one of these incidents could go too far and put her Empire in jeopardy.

Some of the Empress's rivals have seized on her "displays of weakness" to put out feelers about deposing and replacing her. Chief among these are Taakamra, a prominent starship commander in the *Ackorsha,* who openly refers to Shairaka as a weakling and a fool; and Ulshara, a distant relative of the Empress's who governs the important Tengali system.

THE *ACKORSHA*

The Ackálian military is a single unified service, known as the *Ackorsha* ("Victory Force"). The Ackálians make no distinction between space and surface forces, and for this reason most of their starships have the ability to enter atmospheres and make planetfall. The Ackorsha is big enough and powerful enough to pose a serious threat to the Terran military.

Ackálian military doctrine and social policy rests in part on the belief that any Ackálian is competent to fill any position in the Ackorsha — be it ground-pounding infantryman, combat medic, artillery officer, or commanding admiral. Although they usually fall short of this ideal, Ackálian soldiers' cross-training does give them a great deal of flexibility. On the other hand, the lack of specialization sometimes inhibits the Ackorsha's effectiveness.

Unlike most other institutions in Ackálian society, the Ackorsha (and to a lesser extent the Kairensha) offers an opportunity for males to advance and hold positions of responsibility and authority. While the topmost commanders are all females, males can rise to any other rank, and even give orders to lower-ranking females.

The *Kairensha*

The fearsome *Kairensha* ("Scout Force") conducts diplomatic, exploration and intelligence-gathering missions for the Ackálian government. Other galactic espionage agencies consider Kairensha agents tough, disciplined, clever, and willing to resort to the most vicious or ruthless practices to accomplish their goals. If necessary, a Kairensha officer will plant a bomb that destroys an entire ship to kill one passenger.

ACKÁLIAN EMPIRE

5000 Light Years

Civilian, Military

Typical HAN Day

Lothan

Malva

ACKÁLIAN EMPIRE

Valagár VII

Tengali

ACKÁL

Kardaghel

Damrath

Sekra

Zur

Mandaar

Former Mandaarian Space

NEUTRAL ZONE

Venwordien IV

Former Xenovore Space

TERRAN EMPIRE

MON'DABI FEDERATION

NEUTRAL ZONE

Kairensha ships explore new systems, spy on rival powers, and sometimes even conduct scientific research. Kairensha operatives are also skilled at political warfare and assassination, doing to rival states what Ackálian factions do to each other during succession crises. The TIC and TSS have captured more than a few Kairensha operatives in Terran space; they wage a constant shadow war with the Ackálian spies in the border sectors of both empires.

WORLDS OF THE ACKÁLIAN EMPIRE

Xenophobic and suspicious, the Ackálians don't welcome outsiders into their space. Merchants who want to trade in Ackálian space journey to outposts established on the Empire's borders and conduct business there. From there an Ackálian trader takes the goods deeper into Ackálian space if necessary. Aliens caught entering or traveling in Ackálian space without permission (which is extraordinarily difficult to obtain) are summarily executed, often without even a chance to explain themselves.

For these reasons, information about Ackálian space is limited — but the Mon'dabi, Humans, and other species aren't entirely ignorant of places and events inside Ackálian borders. Besides Ackál itself (page 25), Ackálian space contains some important or interesting worlds, such as:

Damrath

Located in a system only three light-years from Ackál itself, Damrath is an atmosphereless fortress planet dedicated to the defense of the Ackálian homeworld. In addition to its numerous ground-based planetary defense weapons, it has several powerful orbital military bases (as well as similar facilities elsewhere in the system). An entire Ackálian fleet makes its home in the Damrath system, ready to respond to any threats at a moment's notice. Any enemy seeking to assault Ackál must first pass by Damrath — a difficult task at best.

Kardaghel

An Ackál-like world with only primitive native plant and animal life, Kardaghel was one of the Ackálians' first colony worlds. Today it has a population of 2 billion Ackálians, plus an equal number of slaves. It's a key manufacturing and scientific research center for the Ackálian Empire, with both groundside and orbital facilities. The Kardaghel Orbital Shipyards are a major Ackálian military asset.

Lothan

The oceanic planet Lothan is home to the amphibious Naloth (page 25). Rumor has it the Naloth loathe the Ackálians, and would love to obtain their freedom somehow, but they have no forces able to take on the entire might of the Empire.

The Naloth live in Lothan's extensive coastal swamps. Since they have no use for the deep ocean or the dry continental interiors, the Ackálians have taken over those areas and established numerous facilities to exploit their natural resources.

Valagar VII

The only inhabitable world in a system of nineteen planets, Valagar VII is cold and mountainous, with a relatively thin atmosphere. Ackálians who live there have hermetically sealed houses with independent air supplies, and wear breathing gear when they go outside. Despite these difficulties, Valagar VII is a popular vacation destination for Ackálians who enjoy mountain sports. Climbing Mount Thargelshain, the tallest mountain in the Empire and one of the tallest in the Galaxy on an inhabitable world, is regarded as one of the most significant accomplishments an Ackálian can achieve in his lifetime; dozens of Ackálians die every year while attempting to beat the record for the fastest ascent.

members from almost every oxygen-breathing species in the Galaxy), an unrivaled collection of artwork from a million civilizations, and chefs who can prepare any food he demands. Valzad especially enjoys the gladiatorial combats in the Arena of Death and Glory. Each day a hundred of the mightiest warriors in the Galaxy do battle in the Arena, and half of them die. For variety, occasional shows pit deadly animals, giant robots, or fully-equipped mercenary units against each other.

The Malvans have a fleet of 30 gargantuan ultra-dreadnoughts, plus hundreds of ancient ships in storage near Malva. Each ultra-dreadnought can take on a fleet of Terran or Varanyi ships and decimate it single-handedly. But the fleet is mostly for show; the Malvans have not fought a war for millennia. Few people or governments are stupid enough to take on so powerful an enemy. Moreover, since the planet would be such a prize of advanced technology, none of the major Galactic powers can allow a rival to conquer it, so the Malvans can always find allies willing to protect them.

THE CONJOINED CIVILIZATIONS REPUBLIC

Located to spinward and slightly "north" of Terran space, the Conjoined Civilizations Republic is a multi-species democracy dominated by the insectoid Se'ecra. Imperial propaganda paints the CCR as nothing but an empire controlled by the Se'ecra, and most Terrans tend to use "the Se'ecra" to refer to the entire republic. As of Marissa III's reign, the CCR includes 128 inhabited systems with a total population of some 568 billion (18% Se'ecra, 82% from 29 other species).

CONJOINED CIVILIZATIONS GOVERNMENT

Membership in the Conjoined Civilizations is voluntary, and member worlds can vote to leave. To join, a world or species must apply for membership, then undergo a review process during which the CCR evaluates the applicant's fitness for membership and compatibility with existing members.

A three-tiered legislature governs the CCR. The lower house (the Assembly) has 822 members, each elected from a district of 250 million beings (some districts span multiple planets, but where possible the CCR tries to avoid this). The middle house (the Council) has 180 members, six from each member civilization/species. The upper house (the Cabinet) has 39 members, elected at large by the citizens of the Republic from among the membership of the Assembly. Cabinet members also administer the Republic's government bureaux. The system gives the Council the most power, but a combined vote of the Assembly and Cabinet can overrule it.

The CCR puts its method of government forth as a model for others to follow, but while it has many benefits, the lack of a single chief executive makes it difficult for the CCR to respond quickly and decisively to problems requiring an immediate response. Furthermore, the endless legislative wrangling within and among the various houses causes the machinery of government to creak along with maddening slowness.

Exploration is a primary goal of the CCR, yet the Conjoined Civilizations has no analogue to the Terran Exploration Service or the Kairensha. Instead, an Exploration Board acts as a clearinghouse and funding agency for hundreds of private expeditions each year. Many merchant ships have a scientific party aboard, and nearly every military mission beyond the Republic's borders includes researchers. The CCR seems to have a boundless curiosity, and enjoys funding pure research just to find out the results. Many scientists from all over the Galaxy have immigrated to CCR space due to the generous grants available.

External Relations

Although dedicated to peaceful coexistence both internally and externally, the CCR (primarily the Se'ecra) cannot resist the urge to meddle in the affairs of other species. Sometimes they do so directly, as when Republic teams provide training and technical assistance to low-tech civilizations, or when the Guards overthrow a tyrannical regime. At other times, the CCR meddles more subtly: Se'ecra merchants offer discount prices on goods to cultures they approve of; Sholarron bio-technicians only give life-extension drugs to alien leaders who support Republic ideals. Since too much of this sort of thing would quickly make enemies of every neighboring civilization, the Council has a subcommittee called the Uplift Board to oversee all overt and covert efforts to improve alien societies. The Board works with the Republic's diplomatic, military, and intelligence services, and numbers among its advisors many leading experts on psychosocial manipulation, xenology, and memetics. Any CCR citizen engaging in "uplift" activities without the Board's approval risks severe legal consequences.

The Conjoined Civilizations' chief concern on the galactopolitical front is the Varanyi Empire, whose "southern" borders creep ever closer to CCR space as the years pass. The Republic stations the bulk of its military forces along its "northern" border, just to be safe. Diplomatic relations with the Varanyi remain polite, but suspicious, and the CCR has taken steps to strengthen its ties with the Velarian Confederation.

The CCR maintains good diplomatic and trade relations with its nearest neighbor, the Perseid Empire; it also trades extensively with Terran space. It has relatively little contact with the far-away Thorgon, Ackálian, and Mon'dabi regimes, but Se'ecra traders filled with wanderlust find their way into just about any viable market.

CONJOINED CIVILIZATIONS REPUBLIC

CONJOINED CIVILIZATIONS REPUBLIC (SE'ECRA)

Shola · Umara · Ach'arjhath · Losai · Varesha IV · Tan'raa · ECRA-SHEN · Ixendria · Lregh

GALACTIC CORE

DAAGO'S REACH

PERSEID EMPIRE

SPINWARD TERRITORIES

TERRAN EMPIRE

5000 Light Years
Civilian, Military
Typical HRN Day
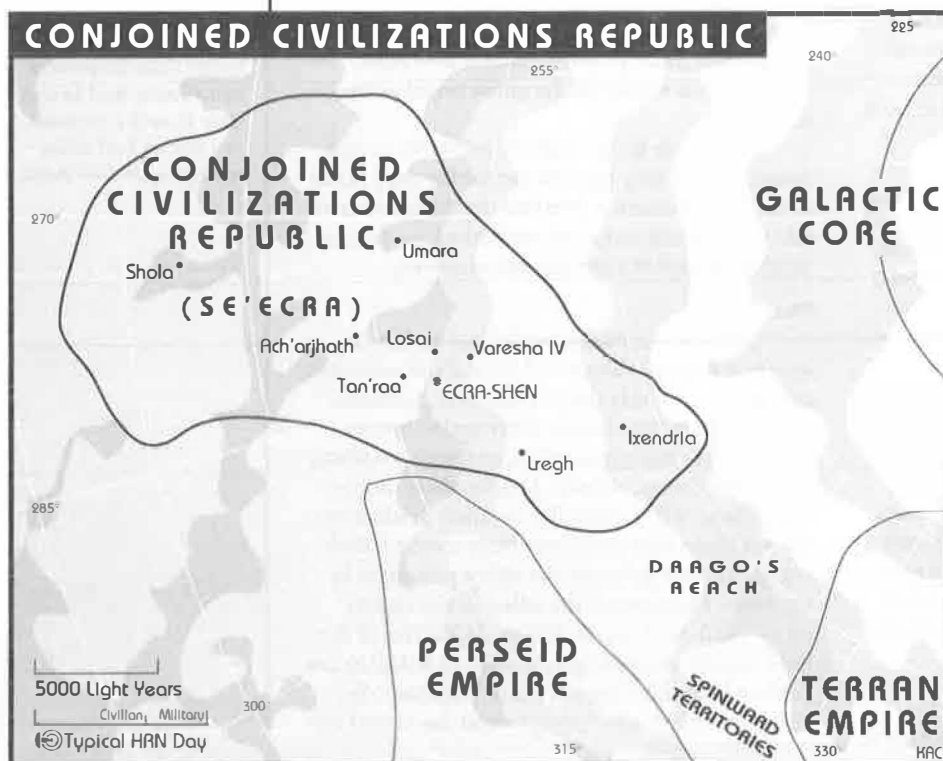
THE GUARDS

The Conjoined Civilizations organizes its military forces, the Guards, according to where they operate. The Planet Guards fights on planetary surfaces and orbital space; it has land, sea, air, and space units, as well as its own interstellar transports. Against a foe without starships, the Planet Guards need no help from its rival, the Star Guards. The Star Guards, the Republic's interstellar space navy, fights in deep space; it has starships, support craft, and spaceborne troops. Its ships, all ATRI 12, are more than a match for comparable Terran Empire ships. The two services have a long history of rivalry, and prefer to operate independently when possible.

REPUBLIC CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The CCR has an extensive espionage and covert operations network, reflecting the Se'ecra desire for knowledge and urge to meddle. Intelligence Command oversees these efforts plus internal counterespionage, all under the supervision of the legislature's Espionage Board. As with the TIC, the bulk of RCI's information comes from electronic eavesdropping, analysis of public sources, and peaceful observation. However, it does make use of well-trained "live assets" who have a high degree of loyalty because they're typically motivated by a sincere belief in the Republic's ideals. On the other hand, agents sometimes question or refuse orders they believe violate the Republic's ideals, which can cause problems in the chain of command.

WORLDS OF THE CONJOINED CIVILIZATIONS

The CCR includes a wide diversity of species, attitudes, and planets, all united by a common interest in peaceful coexistence among themselves and with other civilizations. Some of the more interesting or important worlds include:

Ach'arjhath

A large, Earthlike world with 1.3 G gravity, Ach'arjhath has a small mixed colony of various CCR species. It's the home of the Republic Academy, a university for training members of the Guards and the CCR's diplomatic corps. An intense three-way rivalry exists among Planet Guards cadets, Star Guards cadets, and diplomats-in-training. Each year the three groups keep track of their members' achievements, noting them with red tokens placed on a large board in the Academy cafeteria; at year's end, the group with the most "reds" gets two days off from class and bragging rights.

Ixendria

Ixendria is a planetopolis, its gigantic towers and glittering buildings known throughout the Galaxy as the epitome of urban quality and sophistication. The world-city engulfs even the seas via sturdy "platform neighborhoods." Elaborate planetological monitoring and control systems prevent weather, unusual tidal phenomena, quakes, or the like from wreaking too much damage to the planetary infrastructure.

The most advanced species in the Conjoined Civilizations, the humanoid Ixendar have ATRI 12 technology, with some research projects beginning to verge into ATRI 13. However, they guard their technology jealously, believing each species must make its own breakthroughs (an attitude that often puts them at odds with the Se'ecra on uplift issues).

Lregh

A world once wracked by clandestine warfare in which city-states sent squads of ta'hrevk assassin-saboteurs to inflict casualties upon enemy cities, Lregh centuries ago rejected warfare in favor of peaceful prosperity. Lord Esagai, the reformer who persuaded his people to renounce killing and destruction, is today a divine figure so revered that the planet's inhabitants refer to themselves as Esagites.

Although they scorn conflict, the Esagites aren't pacifists. They realize not everyone shares their ideals, so they prepare for war while avoiding it if at all possible. Rather than maintain a standing planetary military, they kept the tradition of the ta'hrevk alive, relying upon a small group of assassin-saboteurs to protect their society. Ta'hrevk also serve in the Guards as an elite force. Other soldiers, not to mention the CCR's enemies, look on their skill and discipline with awe.

Varesha IV

One of the oldest Se'ecra colony worlds, Varesha IV boasts a population of over three billion and an intriguing culture that blends the best of traditional Se'ecra cultural forms with new ones developed by the early colonists. Vareshan botanart, sculpture-like objects incorporating beautiful native flowers, decorates homes and offices throughout the Republic. The Vareshans breed some of the best racing nygasi (a domestic mammal roughly analogous to a horse) in Republic space; many of the most skilled nygas jockeys come from Varesha IV as well.

THE MON'DABI FEDERATION

An advanced species that has possessed starfaring capability since the twenty-first century, the Mon'dabi long ago realized they could not, by themselves, stand against the violently aggressive Ackálians — and neither could any of their neighbors, all of whom were potential slave races for the Ackálians. Seeking protection from a powerful enemy, as well as expanded trade, the Mon'dabi Union (their homeworld, Mon'da, plus several Mon'dabi colonies) negotiated with 42 other species, worlds, and governments. After three standard years of diplomatic exchanges, they all joined together in the Mon'dabi Federation in 2205.

MON'DABI GOVERNMENT

Although Federation politics can become highly contentious, no dispute has ever reached the point of violent conflict or secession (which the Compact of Federation allows). The economic, military, and scientific benefits accruing to each member species remain too great for any minor disagreement to sever the Federation. Federation members range from individual nations on Mon'da (which has never had a unified world government), to numerous unified worlds, to the Rim League (which con-

MON'DABI FEDERATION

5000 Light Years
Civilian Military
🕐 Typical HAN Day

120°

MON'DABI FEDERATION

Z E U T R A L   Z O N E

The Union of An'barna

Irai

105°

Nine Worlds Kingdom

Kolaj

ACKÁLIAN EMPIRE

The Rim League

MON'DA

Former Mandaarian Space

Qedusti

90°

Venwordien IV

Kdathar

TERRAN EMPIRE

Vorsan Expanse

Former Xenovore Space

75°

KAC
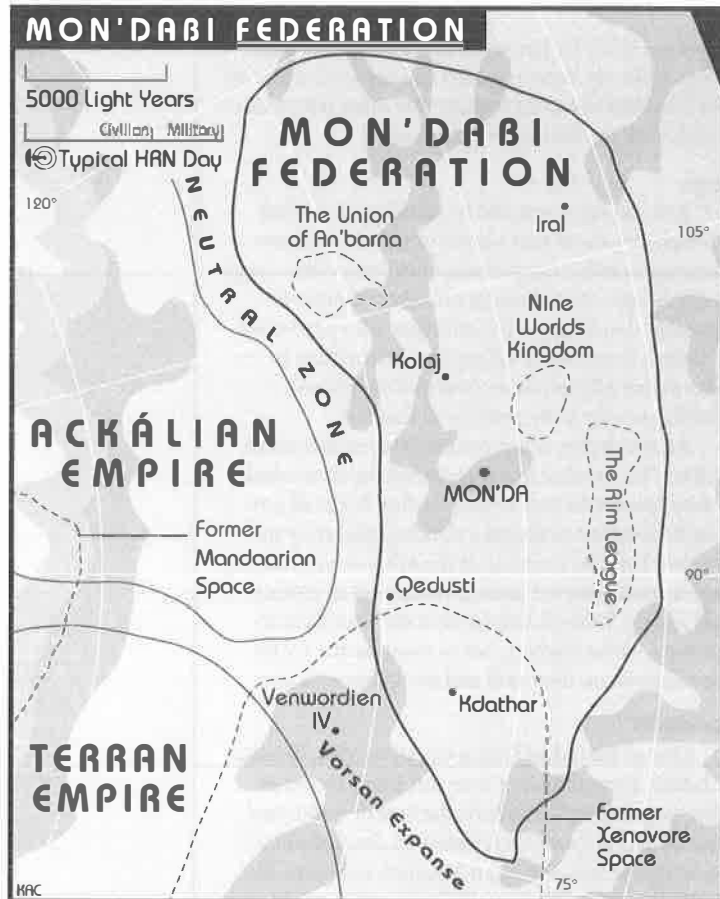
trols two dozen star systems). Long ago the Federation established limits on membership, so potential members must place themselves under the control of one of the original 42 member states.

Under the Compact of Federation, the Federation has relatively little control over the actions of any given member. The Compact concerns itself more with mutual matters of trade and defense. In most cases federal law cannot override local planetary law. Member worlds cannot unilaterally declare war, but can conduct covert campaigns of destabilization and economic warfare against non-Federation entities.

To govern the Federation as a whole, the Compact establishes a *Federation Parliament.* Each member state sends one Delegate to the Parliament, and the Delegates elect from among their number a President (as of 2640, Krodel Stenur) who fulfills the executive function. The Parliament also establishes and appoints personnel to various branches of the government, such as the Department of Trade, Department of Internal Relations, Department of Military Affairs, and Department of Justice.

External Relations

Although personally often aggressive, the Mon'dabi as a species have little desire to rule over aliens. They have never conquered anyone, and the many non-Mon'dabi members of the Federation all joined willingly. But they and many other Federation members like to expand through colonization, and often compete (in a more or less friendly fashion) among themselves to see who can find and colonize a planet first. (The Federation has established extensive and elaborate regulations on this subject to prevent disputes.)

As aggressive traders as they are explorers, the Mon'dabi do a lot of business in Terran space. Always looking for new markets and sources of supply, they prefer to secure a monopoly in the areas where they trade. The less scrupulous among them may use threats of force, arranged "accidents," and "random pirate attacks" to achieve commercial dominance in a region, though of course they don't try those tactics in Terran space.

The Mon'dabi Federation and the Terran Empire maintain strong relations thanks to their alliance during the Galactic War, their mutual interest in opposing the Ackálian Empire, and extensive trade ties.

FEDERATED COMMAND

Under the terms of the Compact, Federation member states cannot operate military forces except during times of war as declared by the Federation Parliament. To patrol the entire Federation and react to external threats, Parliament established the Federated Command. Each member species or world contributes funds to maintain the Federated Command, which the Department of Military Affairs allocates as it sees fit.

Federated Command favors cruisers and other light, long-range starships. Primarily tasked with piracy suppression, border patrol, search-and-rescue, and exploration, these ships often accompany trade missions as "escorts" — which gives the Mon'dabi crews experience at operations beyond Federation space and lets them scout out other governments' defenses. Within Mon'dabi space, one also encounters ships of the member states, typically short-range heavy combat units or police patrol vessels

Federated Command has a spaceborne army unit analogous to the Imperial Marines — the *Sheh'kar Vylyr,* or "Starborn Warriors." Equipped with sophisticated battlesuits and powerful plasma weapons, they're a match for any elite force in the Galaxy.

FEDERATED INTELLIGENCE

For centuries the Mon'dabi Federation resisted organizing a centralized intelligence-gathering agency, preferring to leave espionage and covert operations to the spy agencies of the member states. During the Galactic War the inefficiency and confusion of multiple agencies sometimes working at cross-purposes finally convinced the Federation to change course. Federation members still operate their own counter-espionage services, but Federated Intelligence controls all intelligence-gathering and officially-sanctioned covert operations. FI agents work closely with Mon'dabi business interests in a mutually profitable partnership — FI passes along trade secrets and economic data to businesses, and in exchange traders file reports with FI and agents about things they learn while conducting business.

MON'DABI MEMBER STATES

Some of the more important or interesting of the 42 members of the Mon'dabi Federation include:

An'dona

The smallest member of the Federation is the Republic of An'dona, a nation of 80 million on

Mon'da. Despite its size, An'dona ranks among the richest of member states thanks to its relentlessly pro-business laws and policies. Nearly all the Federation's large interstellar corporations have their headquarters in An'dona, and the republic aggressively supports economic expansion in all directions.

An'dona's government consists of a single Chieftain and a legislature known as the Board of Governance. All of these officials gain their positions by purchase; essentially, An'dona eliminates corruption by institutionalizing it. Corporations and political syndicates raise vast sums every eight years to make the winning bids, and the money goes into the national treasury, thus keeping taxes low.

Kdathar

A large Earthlike world once controlled by the Xenovores, Kdathar joined the Federation about a century ago. The Kadathari, a humanoid species descended from pack felines, have become valued members of the Federation due to their adventurous spirit and willingness to work with others. Many of them join the Federated Command or participate in exploratory or colonization missions.

The Nine Worlds Kingdom

The Nine Worlds Kingdom, a hereditary monarchy spanning three densely-settled star systems, has the greatest population of any Federation member. Although located near the heart of Mon'dabi space, the Nine Worlds lag behind other members economically, thanks partly to the social needs of the populace and partly to government policies. The King, an isolationist, wants to restrict trade beyond the Federation's borders.

The Rim League

The largest member state in size as of 2640, the Rim League includes 26 star systems on the rimward side of the Federation with a total of 49 settled planets. It has five different sentient species within its sphere of influence. A republic governed by an elected President who appoints legislators for life, the League has a vigorous economy and continues to create new colonies in key rimward systems. The current President, Huçagli Ttegha val ni Ch'dac of the Hlaboth species, favors stronger ties and greater cooperation with the Terran Empire.

The Union Of An'barna

The Union of An'barna, a group of relatively young Mon'dabi colonies, spans 11 star systems on the coreward side of Mon'dabi space. The most militarily aggressive member of the Federation due to its proximity to the Ackálian Empire, An'barna contributes large sums of money to the Federated Command and requires all citizens ages 16-24 to serve in its planetary military (one of the largest in the Federation).

The Imperial Destiny Party, a group that believes the Mon'dabi should emulate the Ackálians and Terrans in conquering other species and establishing an empire, rules An'barna. It has numerous intelligence operatives active in Terran space, despite the efforts of both the TSS and Federated Intelligence.

THE PERSEID EMPIRE

Founded approximately 800 years ago when the Dorvalans (or Perseids, as Humans call them) first used their early spacecraft to reach and colonize another planet in the Phi Cassiopeia system, the Perseid Empire has established an enviable record for both stability and growth. During the reign of Marissa III and her successors, it's something of a thorn in the Terran Empire's side, since it prevents spinward expansion... but the Perseids think of the Terran Empire the same way.

Harsh conditions on Dorvala created a society that values order, discipline, and responsibility. When the early Perseid FTL explorers returned with stories of other worlds and species — species living in primitive conditions or wracked by war and instability — the Perseids decided it was their duty to bring "civilization" to such species. For their own good, the Dorvalans conquered and annexed them, building the Perseid Empire.

The Perseids likewise believe each species belonging to their Empire has its own duty and place in the grand scheme of things. Perseids typically rule, administrate, and bring civilization to less fortunate species; another species might contribute its skill as traders, or soldiers, or agricultural technicians. Individual citizens also have a duty to contribute to the good of all; one person might do this by joining the military, another by assisting the authorities with an investigation.

While the Perseid attitude is undoubtedly arrogant, it's not oppressive. Once the Perseids consider a conquered or annexed species sufficiently "civilized," they grant its members full citizenship and privileges in the Empire, allowing them to hold any office or attain any other benefit they can earn. (Discrimination often still occurs, of course.) While Perseid society lacks the full openness and equality of the Conjoined Civilizations, it's a far cry from the despotism of the Ackálians or Thorgons.

PERSEID GOVERNMENT

The Perseid Empire is a monarchy... technically. For the past several centuries the monarch has served a purely ceremonial role while two bodies, an elected legislature known as the Advisory Council and an elected corps of magistrates called the Council of Judges, hold the real power in society.

The Advisory Council chooses several of its members to fill the executive positions of Chief Minister and the heads of the various ministries (Justice, Defense, Commerce, Culture, and so forth). When a monarch takes a particular interest in politics (as does the current ruler, Jogaro VI), the Advisory Council accords his opinions and pronouncements great respect, but they have no binding authority. The Council can, and frequently does, ignore the King's desires. However, the King has the power to appoint Advisory Council committee heads and fill various key bureaucratic positions, and can often use the leverage this gives him to push his own agenda.

The Council of Judges hears cases based on the laws the Advisory Council passes. As the body

empowered to interpret the law, it has nearly as much power as the Advisory Council. By both law and tradition, only persons who have held certain jobs (attorney, social worker, police officer, or any military service of two years or more) can run for election to the Council of Judges.

Any citizen of the Empire can run for either Council, though Perseids hold the majority of the positions. In recent decades, non-Perseids have increasingly clamored for a greater role in governing the Empire; so have the business and scientific communities. Unless reform occurs, the situation could become volatile.

External Relations

In Galactic affairs, the Perseids tend toward conservativism, caution, and a patronizing attitude. Unable to expand antispinward due to the Terran Empire, it takes a neutral stance, sometimes partnering with the Terrans and sometimes (as in the 2604 "war") deciding they need a little "civilizing." The Perseids maintain surprisingly good relations with the CCR; they share with the Se'ecra an interest in "improving" other species.

Thanks to its location "behind" the Terran Empire and the Republic, the Perseid Empire doesn't have to worry about immediate attack from any of the Galaxy's known hostile powers. It keeps a wary eye on them, especially the Thorgons, but knows any invader would have to fight its way through another regime's territory before reaching Perseid space.

PERSEID EMPIRE

CONJOINED CIVILIZATIONS REPUBLIC

DRAGO'S REACH

285°

Otanin

TERRAN EMPIRE

PERSEID EMPIRE

Shartaru

SPINWARD TERRITORIES

THE HUNDRED WORLDS

300°

DORVALA

THE HEARTWORLDS

Earth

Selvi

THE RIMWARD CORRIDOR

Nao

330°

5000 Light Years

Civilian Military

HRN Day

Shendara III

345°

0°

MILITARY FORCES

Unlike other galactic powers, the Perseid Empire has two entirely separate space services, both of which trace their heritage back to pre-spaceflight armed services on Dorvala. The *Space Navy* was originally part of the "wet navy" on Dorvala, and still prefers water-landing spacecraft. The *Space Corps,* once a branch of the army, focuses on in-system warfare and planetary assaults rather than deep space battles. The two services have an intense rivalry, and the competition helps keep them well-trained and efficient. The Empire's high command avoids mixing the two — currently the Space Navy serves in the antispinward and coreward regions (opposite Terran and Se'ecra space) while the Corps has the rimward and spinward sectors.

The Perseids split their ground forces similarly. The Space Navy has the Space Marines, a small but skilled force used primarily to board enemy starships and the like. The Space Corps partners with the Army, a much larger group of soldiers adept at occupying and conquering worlds.

The Perseids have no direct analog to the Terran Exploration Service. When the Perseid government wishes to send out an exploring mission or a scientific expedition, it either charters merchant shipping or sends a ship of the Space Navy (or, more rarely, the Space Corps). The explorers report their findings through an unofficial network of scientists, which circulates the data freely.

THE PERSEID INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

The Intelligence Division handles espionage and counter-espionage. As with exploration, the Perseids take a rather *ad hoc* approach to intelligence-gathering. A small but clever group of full-time agents recruits volunteers — merchants or adventurous tourists who report back anything interesting they discover while traveling in alien space. The results vary in quality; what keeps the whole system from falling apart entirely is that enemies have great difficulty infiltrating or countering the "organization."

WORLDS OF THE PERSEID EMPIRE

The Perseids count several hundred worlds among their Empire. In addition to alien homeworlds they've conquered or annexed, they've colonized dozens of planets suitable for Dorvalan life (it helps that few other species want Dorvala-like worlds). Some of the more interesting or important Perseid possessions include:

Nao

Homeworld of the Nan (page 31), Nao is a large moon orbiting the gas giant Vigar'kel. Tidally locked to Vigar'kel, it has a day 120 standard hours long. Local technology has not yet exceeded ATRI 5, except for Nan who go offworld and bring back technological devices for their own use; Nao's cities are large and smoky. During the long nights, when the face of the gas giant floods the landscape with dim golden light, the Nan hunt, chasing prey animals and savoring their terror. Few outsiders visit, since the Nan like to frighten them as well, and the Empire has not yet found a way to establish "order." The Nan have not yet attained Perseid citizenship.
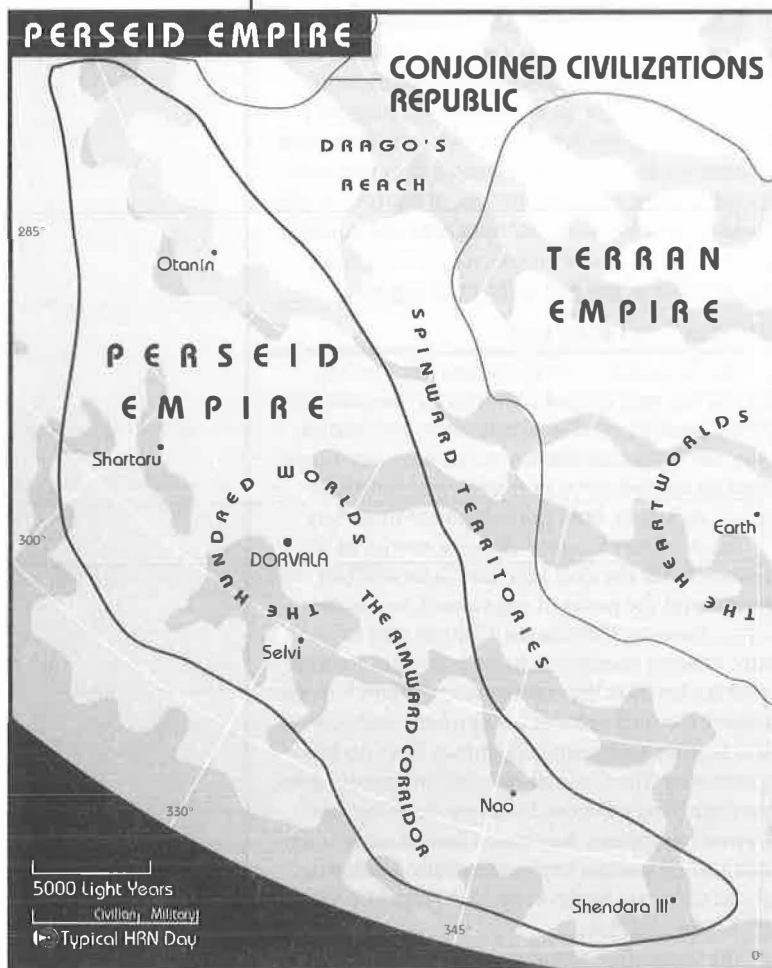
Otanin

A hot, 1.3 G world with air pressure a crushing 70 standard atmospheres and an average temperature of about 800 degrees Celsius, Otanin nevertheless has numerous domed settlements because its conditions are perfect for the formation of certain rare crystals with important uses in blaster weapons and Displacer drives. Miners from half the Galaxy crowd onto Otanin, and they in turn attract gamblers, crooks, merchants, entertainers, and profiteers. The Perseid government tries to maintain order, but a handful of Space Marines can't control a growing population of desperate miners and the desperate people who prey on them.

Selvi

A small, chilly world orbiting its star at a relatively far distance, Selvi possesses rich deposits of many minerals. Several major Perseid corporations built refineries and manufacturing facilities there and erected entire pre-built towns to house workers. After several centuries, this system created a quasi-feudal sort of government with important corporation officials commanding the loyalty of groups of workers in exchange for providing them with benefits.

Thirty standard years ago, this potentially volatile situation exploded when a badly-injured worker was denied expensive medical benefits his "lord" was legally obligated to provide him. A full-fledged insurrection broke out, the rebels slaughtered several hundred corporate officials, and the workers briefly took over until the Perseid military put down the revolt. However, stopping a rebellion and pacifying justifiably angry citizens are two different things. Numerous underground dissident groups remain active on Selvi, striking back at the corporations and the Imperial government whenever the opportunity arises.

Shendara III

Located in the rimward tip of the Perseid Empire, Shendara III is a thriving, bustling world, inhabited by over a billion people from a dozen species. It trades extensively with various non-aligned species living in worlds to rimward of the Terran Empire, as well as many Terran planets.

Since it's so far from the centers of Perseid society and government, Shendaran society has a sort of rough-and-tumble feel. While the local authorities remain loyal to the Empire and don't tolerate dangerous lawless behavior, they usually look the other way when Shendarans commit "victimless" crimes like running gambling dens or smuggling goods into Imperial space.

THE THORGON HEGEMONY

Many Terran strategic analysts consider the Thorgons the greatest threat to the security and existence of the Empire. Controlled by a genetically-bred soldier species, it's an aggressive, expansionist government that's attacked the Terran Empire on more than one occasion. Only the skill, dedication, and fighting spirit of Humanity has kept the Thorgons at bay — and next time, even that may not be enough.

Thorgon control of the Hegemony (actually an empire, pure and simple) depends on two things: military might and genetic engineering. The Thorgons themselves have a monopoly on armed force within their empire; they're as aggressive against discontented subject species as they are against external foes. The Thorgons have also embraced the idea of biological manipulation. They constantly upgrade the Thorgon genome, incorporating useful traits from newly-discovered species, and find new ways to breed desirable traits (greater lifting strength, docility, obedience) into their subjects. According to some Terran scientists, the Hegemony's long-range goal is to breed all conquered species to fit specific societal niches.

THORGON GOVERNMENT

The Thorgons govern their "Hegemony" in the fashion of a military bureaucracy — a Central Command Council (CCC) consisting of high-ranking military chiefs, genetic planners, and economists makes all major policy decisions, passing directives designed to ensure the enforcement of those decisions down to lower-ranking government functionaries. Individual Thorgons advance through the hierarchy according to ability, as measured by tests. (Terran Intelligence Command has obtained some evidence indicating the scientists in charge of testing skew the results to ensure the CCC favors their views.) Most conquered planets have a military governor appointed by the CCC; a few native governments that quickly capitulated to the Thorgons have maintained some degree of home rule.

Highly rigid and regimented, Thorgon society has a place and a purpose for everyone. The authorities eliminate persons without an important job to do. Worlds the Thorgons rule through native puppet governments, such as Kalisha, generally enjoy better conditions, though the threat of a total Thorgon takeover always exists. Over time most subject governments become as paranoid and repressive as the Thorgons themselves, forcing rebels to contend with both local and Thorgon security forces.

While Thorgon culture emphasizes efficiency and ability, in practice things don't work nearly as well as they might wish. Innovations rarely occur and take hold only slowly. Most scientific research (aside from genetics and weapons development) receives little support. Industrial production wastes staggering amounts of raw materials and finished goods because factory managers only want to maximize output. Due to the lack of environmental safeguards, many Thorgon worlds are slowly but surely becoming uninhabitable. Expansion keeps the system going — the Hegemony settles or conquers new planets each year — but eventually that won't be enough.

The Hegemony's expansionism poses particular problems because the Thorgons (like their Ergon forebears) are experts at terraforming and biosphere engineering. With a fraction of the effort they put into military preparations, the Thorgons could make many of their worlds into lush para-

THORGON HEGEMONY

TERRAN EMPIRE

Former Xenovore Space

Zmma

TERRAN NEUTRAL ZONE

THORGON HEGEMONY

•New Patagonia

•Locatha

•Kalisha

•Qularr

◎ERGATH

•Razarka

60°

45°

•Urlaru

5000 Light Years

Civilian | Military

(◉)Typical HRN Day

KAC

30°

world. If possible, they overwhelm opponents with large forces of fighters and light attack craft from their carriers while capital ships make short work of comparable (but often less heavily-armed) enemy vessels. Interestingly, Thorgon spacecraft often have non-Thorgon technicians and specialists aboard to do jobs the Thorgons themselves don't train for. In at least two cases the non-Thorgon crews have successfully mutinied, defecting to Terran or Mon'dabi space.

The Thorgons have no exploration service. The Army garrisons border systems and sends missions outward to reconnoiter nearby worlds, but the notion of ongoing research and exploration for its own sake strikes the CCC as incredibly wasteful — especially since the Secret Police can steal scouting reports from civilizations foolish enough to do it themselves.

THE THORGON SECRET POLICE

Almost a separate military service, with its own starships, troops, and fighting vehicles, the Thorgon Secret Police strikes fear into the heart of anyone who even thinks about rebelling against Thorgon rule. Tasked with ensuring that Thorgon society follows the CCC's glorious plans for the future evolution of the species, the Secret Police also effectively functions as the "private army" of the Hegemony's genetic planners and scientists.

Within the Thorgon Hegemony, Secret Police officers have unlimited access — no one, not even CCC members, may conceal information from them if they have a valid reason to request it. Only foreign diplomats have some semblance of privacy (but the Secret Police monitors them covertly). The Secret Police don't have a separate psi division, but as the Thorgon geneticists improve the overall psionic potential of the species, the best results of their experiments automatically find themselves assigned to Police duty.

Unfortunately, espionage tactics that work in Thorgon space aren't always as successful among aliens. Some Secret Police intelligence-gathering operations have been truly comical — like their attempt to use remote-controlled robot duplicates of key Imperial officials to gain access to sensitive data.

WORLDS OF THE THORGON HEGEMONY

The Thorgons view the worlds of their empire as sources of raw material and slave labor, so they rarely bother to take any sort of proper care of them. A few of the more interesting or important ones include:

Lokatha

Located in the coreward regions of Hegemony space, Lokatha is a key military outpost. It lacks an atmosphere, so the inhabitants live in domed cities, but that means no air or cloud cover to interfere with orbital-range emplaced weapons, planetary shipyards, and other facilities. Human analysts predict that if the Hegemony launches another assault on Terran space,

dises. But terraforming takes time — decades or centuries — and does nothing to satisfy the ferocity that dominates the Thorgon soul.

External Relations

The Thorgons have uniformly poor relations with all neighboring societies. They consider weaker states ripe subjects for conquest, and stronger states potential threats they must neutralize and destroy. They have cooperated with the Ackálians in the past, but only because they find the *bLshoth* ("Four Eyes") useful tools. Their aggressive stance toward foreign affairs lacks subtlety; they make little use of covert operations and propaganda.

THE THORGON ARMY AND NAVY

The Thorgons were created as soldiers, and their military remains the most important public institution. Configured for offensive action, with an emphasis on combat hovercraft and a fearsome vehicle called a *warstrider,* the Thorgon Army is one of the best in the Galaxy at planetary assault, raids, and pitched battles. They enjoy less success when fighting guerrillas, or when they must go on the defensive. To stop guerrillas, they usually hold civilian populations hostage — or just sterilize large regions which might shelter insurgents. On the defensive against well-equipped troops, the Thorgons keep trying to counterattack, even when they should retreat.

Compared to many galactic powers' fleets, the Thorgon Navy is relatively small, with an emphasis on dreadnoughts (and similar large ships), carriers, and transports. The Terran Empire estimates the Hegemony possesses roughly two-thirds of the ships and naval personnel of the Imperial Navy. By Terran standards the Thorgons waste starships with a shocking casualness; since they view the space fleet as an auxiliary to the ground forces, they seem perfectly willing to lose a squadron to gain a foothold on a target

there's a 60% chance it will come from Lokatha.

New Patagonia (The Razarka Captives)

A perennial sore point in Terran-Thorgon relations, New Patagonia was once a far-flung Human colony world. The Thorgons captured it during the Galactic War, and by the time the Imperial Navy retook it, they had moved all residents to another world and used orbital bombardment to reduce all of its facilities to rubble. According to the scraps of data the TIC has gathered on the subject since then, the Thorgons took the former New Patagonians to an unnamed world in the Razarka system and used them for genetic experimentation. The reports describing what the Thorgons did to the New Patagonians are so shocking the Empress had them sealed.

Urlaru

A recent conquest, Urlaru lies on the very rim of the Galaxy. An old world, drying and cooling as its atmosphere gradually becomes too thin to breathe, it's inhabited by a morose species resembling large, hairy spiders. These beings reportedly accepted Thorgon rule with fatalistic resignation.

That fact, in and of itself, would interest only xenobiologists and xenosociologists. What makes the Terran military and quite a few explorers prick up their ears are rumors of a huge complex of ruins half-buried by sand in a large desert basin in the planet's southern hemisphere. According to some garbled reports from agents in the Hegemony, Thorgon scientists have dated some the materials from the complex to about two billion years ago, far before the current inhabitants of Urlaru (or most other life in the Galaxy, for that matter) evolved. Naturally the Thorgons want to keep any ancient technical secrets hidden in the ruins for themselves, but plenty of other governments and people (including the Terran Empire) may be willing to take the risk of sending covert archaeology teams to study the ruins.

THE VARANYI EMPIRE

By most indices of sheer power, the *Sh'garoth Varanyi* — the Varanyi Empire — is the predominant state in the Milky Way Galaxy. Large, technologically advanced, rich, and ruled by some of the Galaxy's most powerful psionics, it poses a threat not only to nearby states, but to the Terran Empire and other distant realms.

VARANYI GOVERNMENT

House Al'gari, the most powerful psionics in a psionic species, has ruled the Varanyi Empire (and its nation-state predecessors) for ten thousand years. Chegath, Unquestioned Master of the Crested Ones, Shining Light of the Varanyi, has ruled as *Sh'garothayn*, or Emperor, for the past twenty-four years, and due to his relatively young age and excellent health seems likely to retain his throne for several more decades. He resides in the vast and impregnable palace Voum Vathcersajz in the capital city Bvarog on Varan.

The Emperor holds absolute power; his word is law. However, the Varanyi emperors long ago realized no one person could singlehandedly rule such a vast empire. Over the centuries they created a large aristocracy to help them govern. They chose nobles from the four-crested Varanyi and gave them power over a defined region... subject, of course, to their continuing loyalty and obedience. A noble may, in turn, appoint others to help him, creating a feudalistic system that functions efficiently because Varanyi mental powers make truth-reading and long-distance communication easy.

An advisory council, the *Uthiriom Vaan*, or "House of Notables," provides the Emperor with sound advice on matters of policy. Any Varanyi other than a *Ks'lch* can become a member through Imperial appointment or election by the current Notables. The Uthiriom usually advises the Emperor adequately, but its Byzantine rules hamper it, and feuds, vendettas, and even assassination often mar its internal relations.

Only males of House Al'gari can become Emperor, but all other positions in the Imperial government remain open to both genders. Sometimes, the Empress wields more influence and power than her husband (though not during Chegath's reign).

External Relations

The Varanyi Empire has no allies. Centuries of aggressive and arrogant behavior have made them feared but not liked. Even distant states like the Terran Empire suspect the Varanyis' every move, and nearby states take whatever measures they can in anticipation of a Varanyi invasion. (One neighbor, the Velarian Confederation, formed primarily as a defensive alliance against the Varanyi.) Over the past two centuries, this general level of Galactic paranoia has hindered Varanyi trade, leading to some economic malaise within the Empire and resulting social unrest. To counter this problem, the Emperor has deployed part of his military to potential "hot spots" — and with so many troops on garrison duty, the Empire has not continued expanding at its former rate.

The Empire takes the most interest in other psionic species. They have conquered several planets which were home to life with advanced psi potential, with the intent of ensuring no other species can have powers equaling theirs. The Varanyi believe that by maintaining a "monopoly" on powerful psionic abilities, they guarantee their ultimate triumph over other states.

PLANETARY AND INTERPLANETARY FORCES

The Varanyi divide their military into two branches: the Planetary Force and the Interplanetary Force. Planetary corresponds to the Terran Imperial Army — land, air, sea, and low-orbit forces. Interplanetary, the space arm, resembles the Terran Imperial Navy.

Of the two, the Interplanetary Force is by far the largest, most powerful, and most feared. A single mighty *g'u'radic*, or "Star Galleon" — a large warship designed for long-term independent operation — is more than a match for a Terran super-dreadnought. They carry troops, conduct explora-

tion, and defend Varanyi space. Even the smaller, less capable Varanyi vessels present a problem for comparably-sized starships fielded by other species.

The Interplanetary Force includes a group of elite spaceborne troops — the *Hrewinth H'vaar*, or "Thrice-Blessed Space Commandos." All members are three-crested Varanyi trained in a wide variety of combat arts; they also wear battlesuits and carry powerful assault blasters. Supposedly a squad of Space Commandos can fight its way through an entire division of enemy soldiers and emerge unscathed.

VARANYI INTELLIGENCE

The Varanyi intelligence services relies heavily on its members' psi powers. The main spy agency, the *Vashyyl V'hanic* ("Noble Gatherers of Knowledge"), consists almost entirely of three- and four-crested Varanyi who gather intelligence information via telepathy, mind-control interrogation of captured enemies, and clairvoyance.

While psionics makes many espionage-related chores easily, the downside is that Varanyi spies have relatively poor tradecraft compared to other species — since they don't usually need mundane intelligence-gathering skills, they receive little training in them. When they confront psi-shielded enemies, their conduct often borders on the amateurish. Furthermore, since the Noble Gatherers can only recruit from the upper castes, it lacks the size and diversity it often needs.

WORLDS OF THE VARANYI EMPIRE

The Varanyi rule hundreds of planets, ranging from old colony worlds to newly-conquered alien civilizations. Some of the more important or significant among them include:

Barsan

A Varanyi colony world settled over 400 years ago, Barsan has recently experienced an upswelling of social discontent. A charismatic *Ks'lch* named Mrunar Fhaath has rallied significant support for his doctrine that all Varanyi should have equal rights under the law. Eager to crush this sort of dissent, the Emperor and House of Notables has assigned a large military force to keep the Barsanian peace, forcing Mrunar into hiding.

Goloba

Another problem world for the Varanyi, Goloba is a chilly planet with a surface 83 percent ocean. Its single land mass, a large arctic continent covered by icecap, tundra, and vast cold swamps, nevertheless gave rise to a sentient species, the Golo — small, emaciated-looking humanoids with webbed hands and feet.

Goloba presents a problem due to an unintended side effect of the Varanyi conquest. When the Varanyi first took over Goloba, it possessed very little technology (ATRI 2 to 3) and had a balkanized government (dozens of petty kingdoms, all constantly squabbling with their neighbors). The Golo branded anyone exhibiting psionic powers a witch and killed him. The Varanyi put a stop to the persecution of psionics — and then discovered the Golo may have an even larger proportion of natural psionics than they do. Moreover, the most powerful Golo could possibly outmatch an Al'gari. The Varanyi don't know what to do — they fear if they integrate Goloba into their empire it may become the Golo Empire instead, but at the same time they can't bear to throw away or destroy such a source of psionic might.

Kadilia

One of the earliest Varanyi conquests, this huge desert planet has a gravity of 1.4 G and oceans covering less than 20 percent of the surface. The native Kadilians have no psionic abilities whatsoever, but possess great physical power, toughness, and fortitude. The Varanyi use Kadilians as labor on dozens of planets, and consider them naturally servile and inferior.

T'granash

Although Varan itself remains the true heart of Yindrism, the Varanyi's monotheistic faith, T'granash has become the center of the clergy. A colony settled almost entirely by priests and monks (including the *Gyuki-ani* sect of ascetics), it possesses some of the most magnificent religious architecture in the Galaxy. The Great Temple of Yinda'r in Red'ashqa Len, the planet's capital, covers dozens of acres and can seat twenty thousand worshippers for a single service. The *Htas'lur* (the "chief archbishop" who wields most of the ultimate religious authority in the church) visits T'granash frequently.
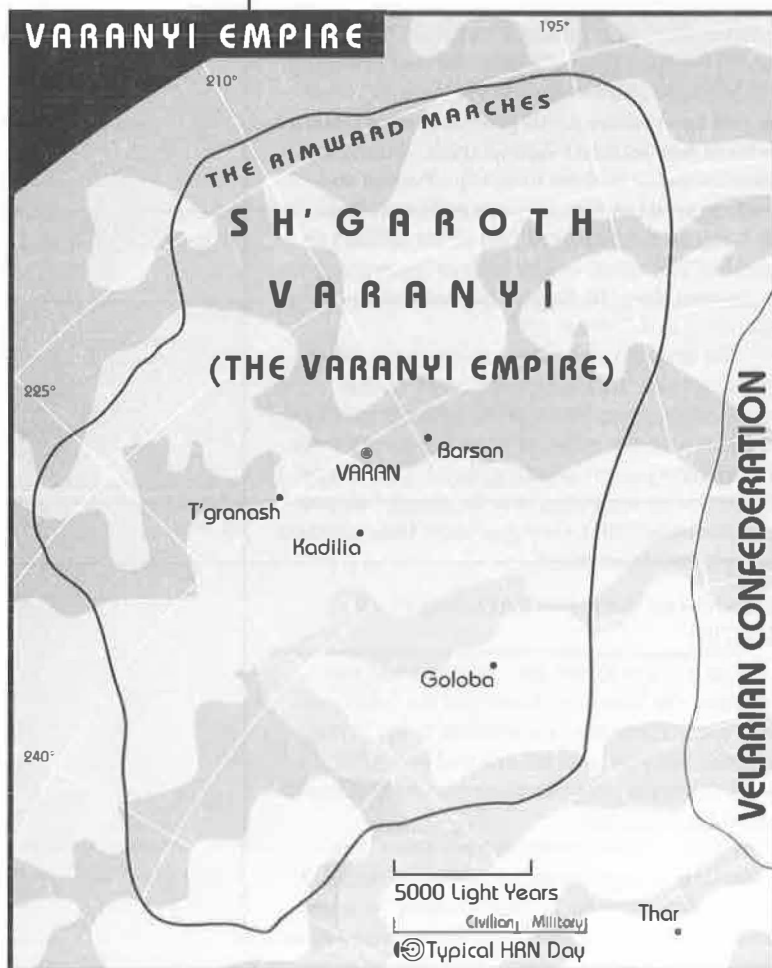
THE VELARIAN CONFEDERATION

The Velarian Confederation lies on the far side of the Galactic core from Terran space, so the two don't have a great deal of contact aside from some long-range traders dealing mostly in luxury goods. However, they do have a potential mutual enemy — the Varanyi — and that may eventually bring them closer together diplomatically.

CONFEDERATION GOVERNMENT

A fairly loose alliance of 26 smaller states and species, including the Fassai, the Catavalans, the Donburil, the Cm Tava, the Renghadi, the Quagi, the Rhendatha Alliance, the MBelH'gari, and of course the Velarians, the Velarian Confederation occupies a moderate-sized region of space to antispinward (as the Confederation perceives it) of the Varanyi Empire. The Velarians founded and dominate the Confederation; they supply about two-thirds of its military force and slightly less than half of its officials, administrators, and bureaucrats.

The Confederation government consists of a single Council with one representative for each member government or species. Under the terms of the Treaty of Confederation and the charters deriving from it, the Confederation Council must make all decisions unanimously, which leads to prolonged debate and a lot of bargaining and threats among council members. Getting any significant Council business accomplished often takes a long time.

Less unified than the Mon'dabi Federation, the Confederation lacks almost all authority over local matters. It cannot interfere with or supercede member states' laws, or in most cases force a member state to do something. It may *request* that a member state take some action, and the member state usually does, but the Confederation has no way to enforce its requests in most cases. The Confederation has significant power in just two areas. First, it controls all member states' conduct in certain internal matters involving multiple members, such as inter-Confederation economic laws and the extradition of criminals from one member world to another.

Second, and more importantly, it controls the member states' conduct of foreign affairs. Pursuant to the Treaty of Confederation, member species and states cannot enter into their own agreements with alien powers, and members cannot make war or peace with nonmembers independently. (They can, however, fight with *each other*, though such conflicts rarely occur anymore.)

Besides the omnipresent fear of Varanyi aggression and expansion, and certain economic interests, what ties the members of the Confederation together is the Scomaru Shaan religion (page 101), practiced by about 80% of all beings within the Confederation. On most matters the leaders of the faith probably exert as much power within the Confederation as any political figure. The College of Avatars includes members from several species, and has tremendous influence as well. Though it cannot make policies or laws, the College can affect public opinion, and no official of the Con-

federation or a member state would defy it lightly.

External Relations

The Confederation maintains fairly strong relations with the Conjoined Civilizations Republic (its nearest large neighbor other than the Varanyi), and also has strong trade ties with the Mon'dabi Federation. It approaches the Varanyi Empire with respect, simultaneously trying not to antagonize the Varanyi but not appear weak. It has exchanged ambassadors with other major Galactic powers, but has relatively little contact with them.

CONFEDERATION FORCES

The Confederation has no military of its own; each member contributes forces as it sees fit (subject to certain minima established by the Treaty). It relies heavily on the Velarian Space Force for space-based defense, though the smaller and less advanced Quagi Spacefleet and navies from various Fassai houses often participate in greater-than-mandated proportions. Fantastic-looking craft, sculpted to resemble giant sea creatures and decorated with elaborate hull art, Velarian starships possess both beauty and power. The backbone of the Velarian fleet, 150 powerful Fortress Ships which function as both battleships and carriers, serve as the main line of defense in the event of a Varanyi invasion.

Confederation ground forces are more mixed; besides Velarian Army and Quagi Militia, they can also include elements of the Donburil Amazons, the

VELARIAN CONFEDERATION

195°

VARANYI EMPIRE

210°

Renghadi Station

Donbur

VELARIAN CONFEDERATION

VELARIUS VII

Cataval

Quagaro

Kadrigar

Kerashka

5000 Light Years

Civilian| Military|

Typical HAN Day

225°   Thar   180°   KAC
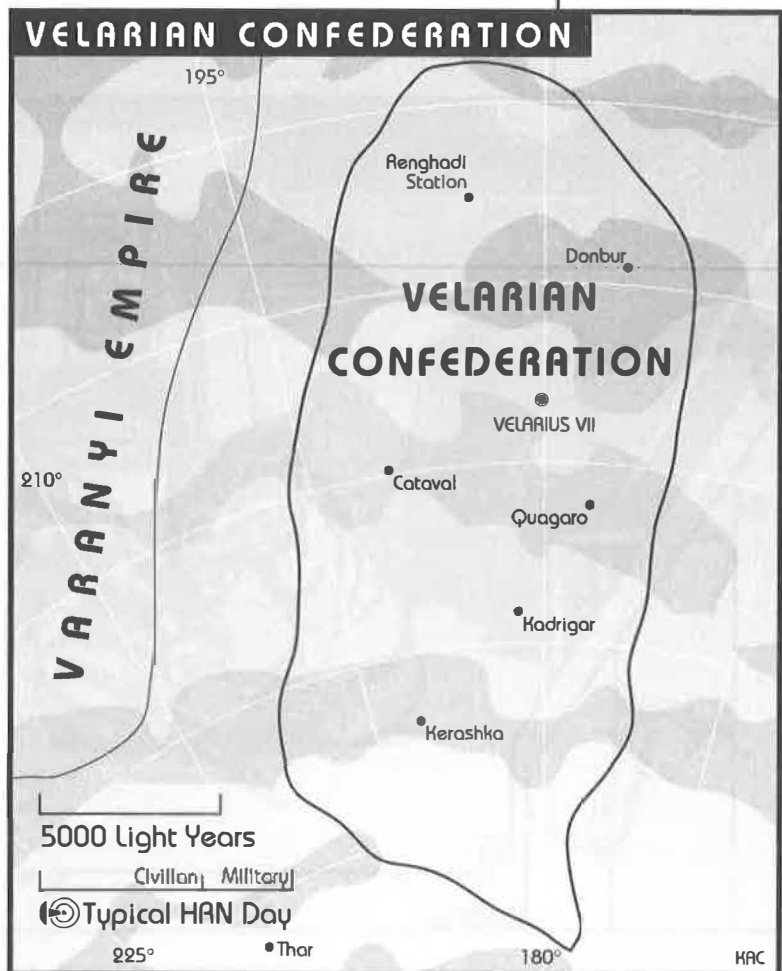
KERASHKA OPALS

In game terms, a typical Kerashka opal acts as an Aid Psionic Powers 2d6 for a user to whom it is "attuned." To attune a gem, a psionic must wear it on his person for a week and "speak" with it telepathically every day. This requires an EGO Roll at -1 per two days; failure means the character has "said" something "upsetting" to the gem, and it "refuses" to attune to him. Most opals burn out after a while (they have 1d6 x 10 Charges which Never Recover), but some remain potent for much longer.

Catavalan Legion, Renghadi mercenaries eager to "advertise" their services while simultaneously discharging their peoples' obligations, and troops from various Fassai houses. The Amazons typically serve as spaceborne troops and commandos, which means they work outside Confederation space more than the Velarian Army. The amphibious Quagi specialize in underwater operations.

CONFEDERATION INTELLIGENCE

The premier intelligence service of the Confederation is the large and well-funded Velarian Intelligence Branch, although the older Catavalan Secret Order sometimes teaches the Velarians a trick or two. Geared almost entirely toward information-gathering, especially through eavesdropping and research, the IB works well with the Secret Order's shadowy spy-priests, who perform spectacular covert operations.

WORLDS OF THE VELARIAN CONFEDERATION

Compared to many other major Galactic powers, the Confederation controls relatively few worlds, but several of them include features of interest.

Kerashka

A hellish Type 8 world, Kerashka is the Galaxy's only source of Kerashka opals, fantastically beautiful crystals which, in their purest form, amplify psionic powers. The Varanyi would love to get Kerashka away from its owner, the Velarian Opal Trading Company, but the Velarians claim they can and will destroy the crystal deposits if the Varanyi try anything. Meanwhile, traders from all over the Galaxy venture to Ker-

ashka to buy gems, and prospectors roam the deadly surface, hoping to find new deposits and retire rich.

Quagaro

A small, Earthlike world with shallow seas, Quagaro is home to the batrachoid Quagi (page 41). After an environmental catastrophe generations ago, the Quagi have gradually moved all manufacturing and energy production off the surface of Quagaro to orbital facilities and other worlds in the system. Allowed to revert to wilderness in many regions, Quagaro now only provides a place for the Quagi to live. They build cities on artificial reefs, or in underground complexes below the forests.

The Quagi govern themselves through a federation of clans. Each clan chooses a "chief" to speak for it in the planetary council, and the council in turn elects a "monarch" who represents all Quagi to the rest of the Galaxy.

Renghadi Station

After losing their homeworld in the war against the Fassai, the Renghadi used rubble from their planet and a nearby asteroid belt to construct Renghadi Station, the largest known space station in the Milky Way. Big enough to house all the Renghadi plus millions of transients, it's become not only a source of pride to the Renghadi, but a major Galactic trading port. Far-traveling Renghadi traders bring goods from all over the Galaxy to the shops and warehouses of Renghadi Station, and their opposite numbers from other species travel there to buy from them in one convenient location. Whatever a person wants, he can find somewhere on Renghadi Station — even if it's not entirely legal....
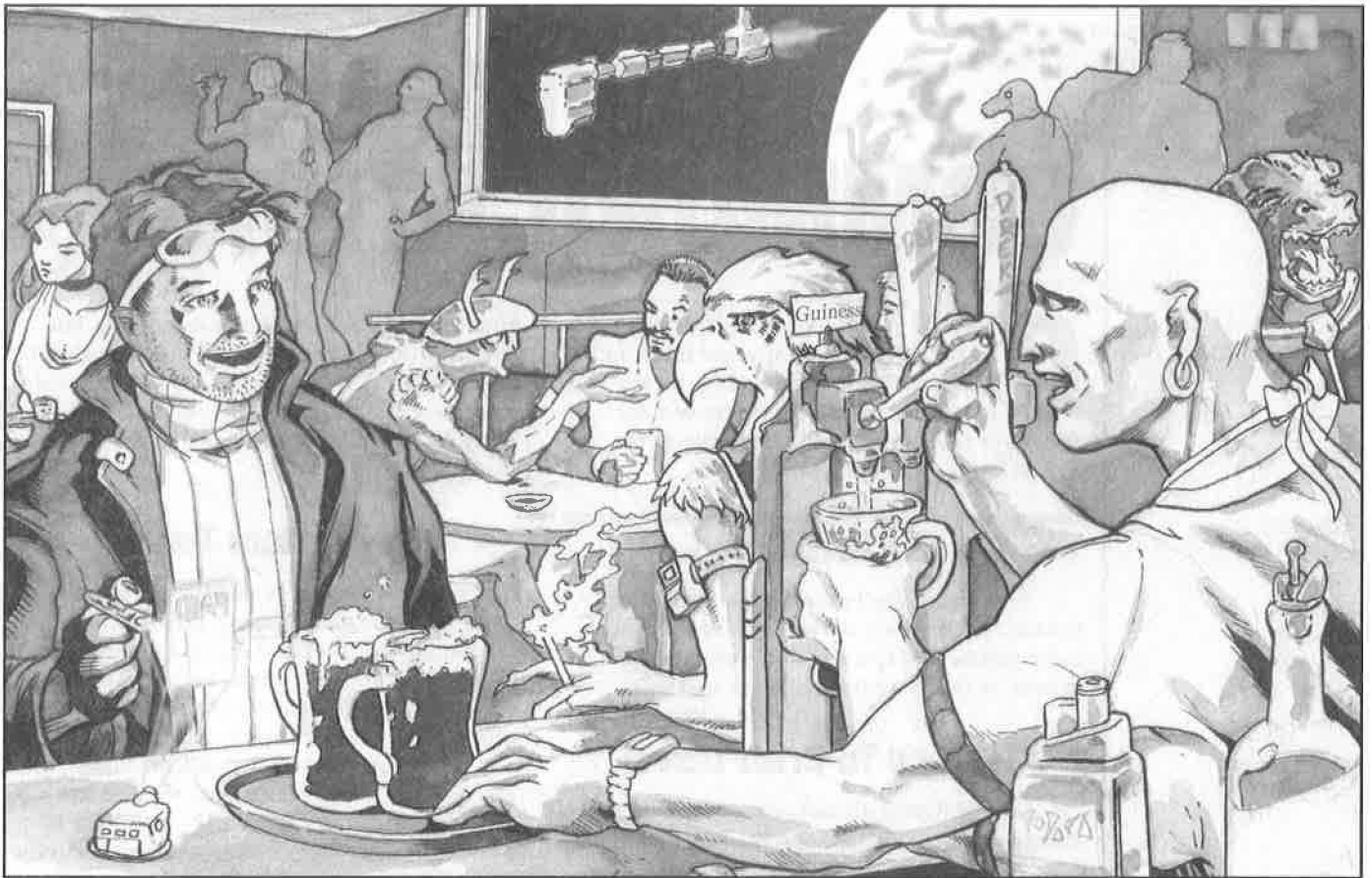
Life Among the Stars

galactic society

lthough each planet, civilization, and species has its own distinct culture, certain social constants tend to exist throughout the Terran Empire. This chapter reviews some of them, including travel, crime, communications, trade, and religion. (For technology and price lists, see Chapter Six.)

Although this book doesn't have enough room to provide the same amount of data for every major Galactic civilization, you can assume that states similar to the Terran Empire — ATRI 11, relatively open and unoppressed — address these subjects in roughly similar ways. For other states (such as the Ackálian, Thorgon, and Varanyi regimes), you can extrapolate from the data provided here to derive reasonable parameters for things like trade, travel costs, and crime.

The information provided pertains primarily to the reign of Empress Marissa III. Gamemasters running campaigns set during other periods of the Empire should make any changes they consider necessary. For example, during later decades, technological improvements might reduce the cost of travel slightly, but the instability in the Empire and the need for greater protective services for travelers might more than counterbalance that effect, leading to overall higher prices.

TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATION

O f crucial importance to any interstellar society are the subjects of travel and communications. Without the means to journey from solar system to solar system, or talk to people on other planets, the Terran Empire could not exist.

TRAVEL

Travelers in the Terran Empire and other Galactic civilizations can journey from a planetary surface into space, within a single solar system, or from one star system to another.

Surface To Orbit Travel

Getting from a planet's surface to space takes energy, and that costs money. The Terran Empire has five ways to reach space from a surface:

■ an orbital elevator

■ a rocket, typically a high-efficiency chemical booster or a fusion rocket designed to minimize radioactive exhaust

■ a ramjet spaceplane (usable only on worlds with an atmosphere rated as Thin or thicker)

■ antigravity or reactionless spaceships (very common in the densely populated regions; typically the only method used in ATRI 12 or better societies)

■ electromagnetic launchers (usable only on airless planets, and only for cargo, since the high acceleration kills passengers)

See the accompanying text boxes for typical prices for each method. On Terran worlds, most shippers favor rockets and reactionless thrusters.

Getting down from space is as hard as getting up. On planets with a Thin or better atmosphere, spacecraft can use aerobraking — shedding velocity in the atmosphere by converting kinetic energy to heat. This costs nothing, but does require vehicles equipped with heat shielding or armor (5 DEF or better). On airless worlds, ships have to brake using their motors, making the price to land a payload equal to the launch cost.

In-System Travel

Travel within star systems uses a mix of methods. Some older systems still have *cycler stations* — large, comfortable space stations traveling in "resonant orbits" between two planets — linking inhabited worlds. Passengers live aboard the cycler for months at a time, but the cost (which includes food, drink, breathing gases, and standard accommodations) remains low and communications links make it possible to work during the voyage. Many cyclers effectively become huge space colonies with large permanent populations.

Many systems, including heavily-inhabited ones, use high-speed shuttles — spacecraft with antimatter rockets or reactionless drives designed for fast transit between worlds in a system. (The fanciest of them also have surface-to-surface transport ability, and add the cost of surface-to-orbit travel to the price of a ticket.) Some, particularly the larger or more luxurious models, cost nearly as much as a starship, so only wealthy travelers use them. Larger, slower, cheaper "space ferries" carry large numbers of passengers from one world to another in systems with a lot of in-system travel.

Some worlds move in-system freight by automated lightsails on long flights taking months to complete. Naturally, this only works for items able to survive spending the better part of a year, or more, in vacuum. Piracy remains a threat; hijackers can sometimes rendezvous with the slow, hard-to-maneuver cargo sails to loot the cargo.

The accompanying table lists prices for standard methods of in-system travel. For more luxurious accommodations, private shuttles, or the like, increase the cost appropriately. On the other hand, persons qualified and willing to work as part of the crew, or who accept sub-par accommodations, can often reduce their travel costs proportionately.

PRICE TO ORBIT

Spacecraft Type	Credits per Kg Of Cargo	Credits per Passenger
Orbital Elevator	10 x G squared	1,000 x G squared
Rocket Booster	50 x G squared	5,000 x G squared
Ramjet Spaceplane	40 x G squared	4,000 x G squared
Antigrav/Reactionless	30 x G squared	3,000 x G squared
Electromagnetic Launcher	5 x G squared	Not recommended

G squared is local gravity (in Earth gees) squared — for Mars, with a surface gravity of .38, G squared is .144. The price per passenger includes life support and a baggage allowance of 50 kilograms (additional baggage costs more).

Interstellar Travel

During the reign of the Empress Marissa, Terran scientists know two ways to evade the limits of Relativity and go faster than light. More advanced civilizations understand a third.

Humanity developed its first stardrive, the Hyperdrive, at the beginning of the twenty-third century. Navigation in Hyperspace was difficult, and early voyages took weeks just to reach star systems near Earth. Steady improvements continued throughout the first era of interstellar colonization and the Xenovore Wars, but the journey to the frontier was still a one-way trip for most people.

Early in the history of the Empire, Human engineers developed a new drive. Scientists had long speculated that the same technology which transposed a starship into Hyperspace might also allow instantaneous jumps between points in normal space-time, but this remained mere theoretical speculation until a chance discovery of some partial Mandaarian drive system readouts provided the data needed to make a critical breakthrough. The Imperial Navy tested a crude "Displacer drive" in 2480, but for decades Displacer engines were unreliable and limited in range. By 2530 Displacers could make short interstellar jumps, and Displacer-ships began competing with Hyperdrive vessels.

Today, the Empire uses Displacer-ships mostly for passenger transport, courier ships, and time-sensitive freight. Other cargo goes by slower and cheaper Hyperdrive ships. Military vessels often have both systems for maximum tactical flexibility.

Beyond Displacer drive lies the Spacewarp Drive, an ATRI 12 technology that bends space to allow easy, cheap FTL movement. Several other civilizations in the Galaxy already use Spacewarp ships; the technology derives from STL reactionless propulsion flight systems.

See Chapter Seven for further information on drives and other ship technology.

COSTS OF TRAVEL

First-class passage on a large luxury starship, such as a Terran Grand Liner, costs about 1,000 credits per light-year and rivals service in a top hotel on Earth. The traveler gets a private suite, a large baggage allowance, and the services of a steward on board. But more modest passenger accommodations also exist — second-class passage costs 150 credits per light-year for a double-occupancy cabin, shared bathroom, and meals in a less fancy dining room. At the bottom of the scale, steerage passengers get a bunk, access to a communal toilet, and a daily ration of protein bars for as little as 50 credits per light-year.

Accommodations on smaller ships cost proportionately less. A good stateroom on a merchant ship goes for a luxury liner's second-class rate, and many ships have a couple of extra bunks available for steerage prices. A person willing to tolerate cramped, uncomfortable, and possibly dangerous conditions can travel fairly cheaply.

Work For Passage

Travelers can also work for passage — take a job on a starship in exchange for passage to another world. To do this, a traveler must have some useful skill, and the ship must need an extra hand on that run. For example, appropriate skills on a small merchant ship would probably include Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Electronics, Mechanics, Navigation, or Systems Operation. Larger ships might require service staff (High Society), entertainers (Acting, Acrobatics, PS: Musician), medics (Paramedics), or extra security (PS: Law Enforcement, Security Systems, or Criminology). While on board the traveler gets steerage-style accommodations and works a daily 8-hour shift.

When a character searches for this sort of trade, the GM rolls once per week against the character's qualifying skill to find a berth. The GM applies modifiers based on where and how

INSYSTEM TRAVEL TIMES AND COSTS

Method	Time	Cargo (per kg)	Passenger
Cycler Station	200 days x D	50	2,000 + (50 x D)
Shuttle	50 hours x D	300	8,000 + (800 x D)
Surface-to-Surface	+4 hours	+100	+1,200
Fast Shuttle	20 hours x D	500	15,000 + (1,500 x D)
Surface-to-Surface	+4 hours	+100	+2,000
System Ferry	100 hours x D	200	4,000 + (600 x D)
Cargo Sail	500 days x D	20	Not recommended

D = orbital separation between the two planets in AU.

Listed prices are for orbit-to-orbit transport, except for surface-to-surface shuttles.

PLAYER CHARACTERS AND DATANETS

The datanets in the Galaxy of the Terran Empire give characters roughly the same ability to retrieve information as the players have in modern America (but for a much broader range of subjects, of course). However, the datanets can only provide publicly-available information. Private information — building plans, individuals' Imperial Identification Codes, financial information, and corporate or government secrets — are not generally available over the datanet. At the very least, finding that kind of data requires time and a Computer Programming roll.

If the PCs spend too much time in the game trolling the local datanet rather than getting out and talking to NPCs, the GM has several ways to speed things along. First, cut out the research step by simply giving the players whatever information they could find with a quick search. "Your meeting is with a trader named Willem Sung. According to the local datanet he's a big dealer in Mandaarian artifacts, alleged to have ties with an Hzeel crime syndicate."

The second method, useful when the GM wants to make the PCs do their own legwork, is to make most private data confidential. "You can't find out if Sung has a family; there's no personal information available."

Finally, no datanet works perfectly or allows for universal access. Between missing files, system crashes,

the character looks for work (crowded starports deserve a bonus, backwater colonies a significant penalty). Characters with a criminal record or a well-known Hunted or *Reputation* Disadvantage won't get the job without some fancy Persuasion rolls.

COMMUNICATIONS

Within star systems, messages travel by radio and laser for relatively low cost — an interplanetary signal costs one credit per minute. Hardcopy mail moves as freight aboard fast shuttles at a price of around 1d6 x 10 credits per page.

Interstellar messages either go as mail aboard starships at the subsidized Imperial Mail rate of 2 credits for a first-class letter, or are transmitted by radio through Hyperspace. A Hyperspace broadcast goes fast — a million times the speed of light — but has limited range. In practice a radio signal can travel for about half a light-day (roughly 1,400 light-years) in Hyperspace until it degrades to the point where the receiver cannot understand it. Thus, governments such as the Terran Empire establish *Hyperspace relay networks* (HRNs) of unmanned beacons which receive and re-broadcast signals to maintain their coherence. (Important communication nodes often have manned communications stations as well.) HRNs are vulnerable; invaders and enemy spies often target them to disrupt communications.

Given the limitations of Hyperspace relay, a message typically travels at the rate of about 7,000 light-years per standard day on the military HRNs, or 5,000 light-years per day on civilian networks. It takes a message from Earth about a week to reach an outpost on the border of the Ackálian Neutral Zone, so the Empire picks and chooses its military and diplomatic command personnel carefully to ensure they can operate independently... but still in the best interests of the Empire.

Of course, some distant worlds, such as newly-established colonies, don't necessarily have a local HRN established to tie into the Empire's overall network. Those worlds can only communicate with the rest of the Galaxy by sending recorded messages back and forth in starships to the nearest communications node.

It costs 2 credits per minute times the number of beacons the message passes through to send a message on the civilian HRNs. Since the Terran Empire is about 45,000 light-years wide at its widest point, the most it could cost to send a message across Imperial space is 64 credits per minute.

Tapping into a civilian HRN is difficult, but not impossible — a character needs the proper equipment and must succeed with a Systems Operation (Communications Systems) roll at -3. However, finding the data he's looking for amid the flood of comm traffic is another matter entirely; that usually requires a lot of time and more rolls. Tapping into the heavily-encrypted military HRNs is impossible... or at least, no one has yet succeeded and lived to tell about it.

Datanets

Because of the relatively slow communications time between planets, both in normalspace and via HRNs, most data networks are planetary in scale. A datanet can send a query to another in-system world's datanet and receive an answer in no more than a couple of hours; data requests to other star systems travel via HRN and usually take at least a day.

Datanet use costs almost nothing. On most worlds it factors into an individual's comm and data service bill, usually about 10 credits a month total. Visitors can get temporary service for one credit per day, or sign up for a month at the standard rate. Inquiries to another planet's database usually cost about 1 credit for in-system requests, and up to 10 credits for a request from another system (the user does not incur additional communications fees unless he sends an actual transmission with his request for data).

With access to a planetary datanet, a character can tap into nearly the sum total of Human knowledge. Except on brand-new frontier colonies, the local datanet has a compressed version of the Imperial Library, with copies of nearly every book or video up to about a year before. Consulting older works costs nothing, but accessing new items may incur additional modest fees. As a general guideline, a datanet has KS: Everything This Society Knows 50- and SS: Every Science This Society Knows 30-, but the penalties listed in the sidebar on page 43 of *Star Hero* apply to rolls at the GM's discretion. The datanet can answer a simple question in just 1-3 Segments; more complex questions take longer (up to several hours, plus any relay time if the datanet must contact other datanets).

JACKING AND TRACING

Because planetary datanets remain open to any Imperial citizen, for the most part there's no need to "jack" them (break into them to access or steal data). Some criminals jack the datanet simply so they don't have to pay for it at all. Others try to gain access to restricted or classified information — a difficult and time-consuming task. Robust encryption protects even private civilian messages, and governmental/military encryption has so far proven unbreakable. The Empire stores most truly important or dangerous information on computer systems not hooked up to the datanet at all.

Anyone who uses the datanet leaves traces of his searches and activities. Government officials can find out the who, what, where, and when of any datanet use automatically; jackers can find out whether a particular person (or, more accurately, computer system) has conducted a particular search, and when, with an unmodified Computer Programming roll once they gain access to a system.

The Terran Empire datanet offers no anonymity; Imperial officials want total access to all user information if necessary for law enforcement or the suppression of dissent. It has no "anonymous forwarding" system or the like... at least not legally. Some jackers have established such systems, which they sell access to for large sums, and some systems outside the Empire allow this as well.

TRADE AND THE ECONOMY

The Se'ecra philosopher Anza'rhl once said, "Trade and finance do more to bring different species together than all the diplomats in the Galaxy combined." No one has ever bothered to disagree with so fundamental a truth. The desire to prosper materially seems to be nigh-universal among sentients.

Money

Money doesn't just make the world go 'round — it keeps the Galaxy spinning, too.

The Imperial Credit

The official currency of the Terran Empire is the *credit*. A handful of Senatorial worlds have their own currency, but even there credits constitute legal tender, but only credits are valid for Imperial taxes and interstellar trade. Credits have no physical form, but citizens can store them on *credisks* — thin disks of nearly indestructible plastic with a liquid crystal holographic display showing the value stored on the disk. The holder of a credisk can plug it into any standard bank or commercial exchange terminal to add or subtract value from it; that's how he buys goods and services, receives his pay, and so forth. People also exchange credisks directly.

A credisk's built-in data crystals keep a record of every transaction conducted, which means Imperial authorities can trace the disk's use. Criminals, rebels, and others who wish to keep their dealings hidden often avoid credisks for this reason.

Other Species

Other governments have different monetary systems. The Perseid Empire uses synthetic jewels called *vorads* ("stars"). The Conjoined Civilizations Republic has the Republic Trade Unit (RTU), similar in most respects to the Imperial credit. The Velarian Confederation uses Velarian *lhendi* ("rings"); the Ackálians use *halku* ("marks"). All these currencies exist in both physical and electronic form — except for the RTU, an entirely electronic type of money. Surprisingly, neither the Mon'dabi nor the Thorgons use money as such.

The Mon'dabi never evolved the idea of a government-backed currency; instead, all transactions involve the barter of goods and services or promissory notes signed by individuals and banks. Among themselves, Mon'dabi use individual notes for small-scale transactions and bank or corporate notes for interstellar commerce. With aliens or someone whose personal note they cannot trust, they only barter. This means almost all business transactions require extensive haggling as the two parties find some combination of promissory notes and objects each considers an acceptable exchange. Most Mon'dabi households have an odd stockpile of items acquired in barter, awaiting use in future trades.

The Thorgons have such a planned and centralized society they don't need money. People do their jobs because they must, and they get the supplies they need, with bonuses for good performance. Only the government can conduct trade with outside entities, and it only barters (but does stockpile foreign money for use in bribes and purchases). A thriving underground economy using a mix of Perseid, Terran, and Ackálian money exists on most Thorgon worlds.

The Varanyi use their own currency, the *she'mra,* only within their empire. When they buy from or sell to others, they always use the other person's native currency. Where they come by their stocks of currency remains unknown.

Exchange Rates

In most campaigns, the easiest thing for the GM to do is assume all Galactic currencies are roughly equal in value. Gaming groups desiring more "realism" and complexity can use the accompanying Exchange Rate Table to determine the relative value of currencies. It indicates the average exchange values during the reign of Marissa III, though the GM may adjust the rates slightly from game to game to represent standard fluctuations in the Galactic economy. Gamemasters who set their campaigns during other times may want to alter the rates. In troubled areas or worlds far from the centers of Galactic life, exchange rates may vary... but almost never in the PCs' favor.

Trade Goods

What do interstellar merchants trade to make money? Launching cargoes off planets costs money, even with antigravity and reactionless drives. Interstellar cargo transport costs at least a credit per kilogram just for energy alone. Adding in the cost of highly skilled labor to operate starships, life support for the crew, amortizing the cost of starships, and various port fees and handling charges makes the price come out in the neighborhood of at least 100

delays caused by Hyperspace eddies, and wilderness areas where the party's pocket computers can't link with the datanet, the PCs can't always count on getting information whenever they want it. The GM can even use this as a source of dramatic tension: "There's a reference to Sung's country house being located on the site of an ancient Mandaarian prison for psionic criminals; unfortunately the incoming storm scrambles your connection to the nearest data link before you can learn more. Ahead of you, the house looms on a hilltop."

EXCHANGE RATE TABLE

| 1 Unit Of This Currency...	Is Worth This Many...				
	Terran Credits	Perseid Vorads	CCR RTUs	Velarian Lhendi	Ackálian Halku
Terran Credit	1	.8	.5	1	1.4
Perseid Vorad	1.25	1	1.6	1.25	1.75
CCR RTU	2	1.6	1	2	2.8
Velarian Lhend	1	.8	.5	1	1.4
Ackálian Halk	.7	.6	36	.7	1

credits per kilogram. Any interstellar cargo must have a price difference of more than 100 credits per kilo between source and destination to be worth shipping at all, and merchants naturally seek out items which pack the most value into the least weight.

Thus, interstellar trade resembles maritime trade on Earth during the Age of Sail — starships carry high-value cargoes on risky speculative voyages. The few steady profitable routes through Terran space (like the Antispinward Corridor, the Mandaarian Road, and the Spinward Crescent) were long ago taken over by the Imperial government, which regulates who can use them and taxes accordingly. Established trade routes in other governments' territory are usually the same, though the CCR outlaws monopolies and enforces those regulations strictly.

TRADERS AND TRADING

Within the Terran Empire, most traders are Humans or Fex. The most commonly encountered alien merchants are Se-lag, Mon'dabi, Mostreen, or Jaruma, though this may vary based on location; Perseids show up frequently in the spinward parts of Imperial territory, for example, and traders from Velarian space aren't uncommon at major ports.

Interstellar travelers within the Terran Empire can arrange interplanetary money transfers via large banking companies or the Imperial Bank, using the Hyperspace repeater network to complete transactions. Since this may take a while,
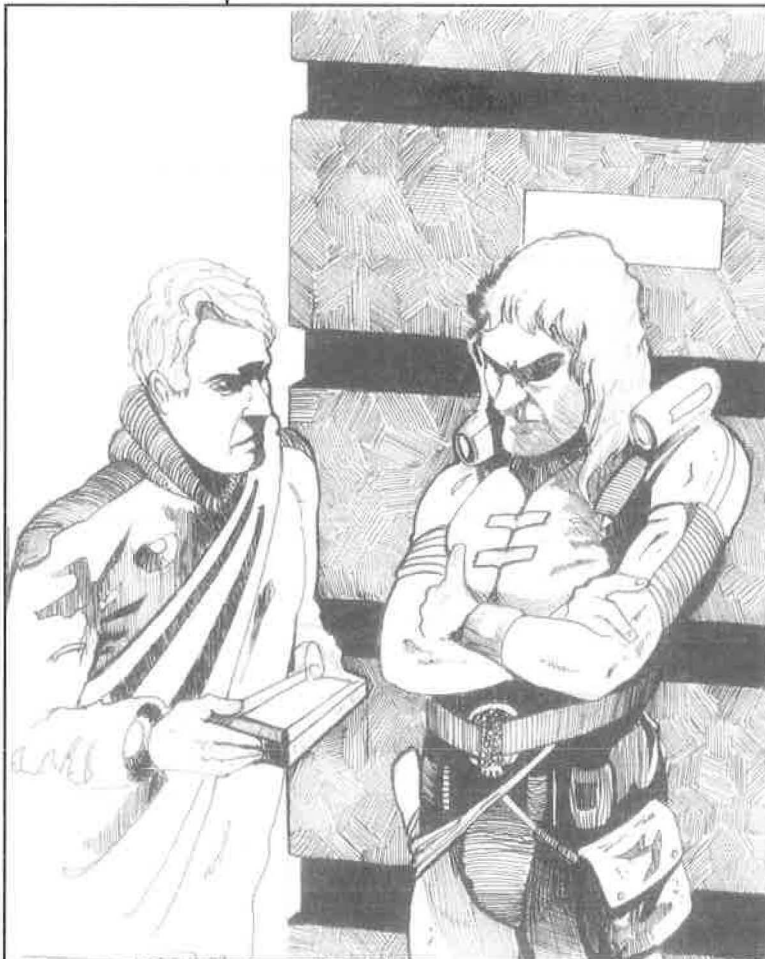
many traders prefer to carry relatively large amounts of cash so they can transact business on the spot and keep moving.

Trade by Imperial merchants outside Imperial space usually involves exchanging cargoes for local currency, then spending the money right away on items to sell back in Terran space. In established markets (like Perseid space or the Conjoined Civilizations) traders can spend Imperial credits with a small conversion fee, and can exchange those alien currencies back home with little difficulty. In the case of more remote markets like the Velarian Confederation, or societies without money like the Mon'dabi Federation, all deals involve barter.

MERCHANT SHIPS

Merchant starships come in many different sizes and types. The biggest operate on regular routes, carrying freight and passengers on long-term contracts with predictable profits. Too expensive for any but the largest corporations to run, they typically cannot make planetfall; smaller ships must meet them and ferry goods to planets' surfaces. In Imperial space, the Grand Liner represents the pinnacle of luxury. Flying palaces carrying hundreds of passengers in style and comfort, Grand Liners link the most important worlds of the Empire.

Smaller merchant ships serve smaller colonies, or carry irregular cargoes when bigger ships experience delays or run out of room. Daring traders also use them to seek out new markets, engage in speculative trading, and the like. Small merchant ships tend to have crews of no more than half a dozen, often partners in the venture or part of a family. They're rarely larger than Size 12, and often significantly smaller.

CARGOES

The following are all common cargoes carried by Galactic merchants. Suggested prices are guidelines only; the GM should vary them as appropriate to his campaign and the current scenario. Use the rules on page 130 of *Star Hero* to determine what the merchant pays when he buys the cargo, and what price he receives for it when he reaches his destination.

Antimatter

Although crucial for generating power in most ATRI 11 societies, antimatter is difficult and dangerous to manufacture. Many planets and space stations prefer to buy their antimatter instead of making it. Merchants transport it in large, magnetically-shielded containers weighing 1,000 kg. A single container sells for an average of 100,000 credits.

Artwork

Art is a highly speculative cargo: if the demand exists, prices often soar to incredible heights; if not, it's so much junk. The price of artwork varies from 100 to 10,000 credits per kilogram (roll 1d6: 1-3, 100 credits per kilogram; 4-5, 1,000 credits; 6, 10,000 credits). Any inhabited planet can produce art.

Computers And Electronics

Electronic goods or other high-tech gear always fetch a good price on less advanced worlds. Computer technology must come from a source of ATRI 6 or better, and the market must have the same or lower tech rating (but at least ATRI 6). Price is 100 credits per kilogram, with a +10% modifier on the sale price for each ATRI level by which the source exceeds the market.

Datadisks

When it doesn't have to be there overnight, the cheapest way to ship information is to put it on a high-density storage media and move it as freight. The price is a standard 200 credits per kilogram (and a kilogram of storage media holds a *lot* of data!). Any world of ATRI 6+ can produce datadisks in various forms.

Genomes

Bioengineering firms, drug companies, and scientists often find genetic material from new species of plants and animals useful. Easily obtained on new colonies or unexplored worlds, genetic material may command prices of up to 1000 credits per kilogram (100 sample tubes) at the source; the resale price depends on the value of the genomes (some are worth fabulous sums, some are worthless) and the negotiating skills of the merchant.

Luxury Foods

Rare foodstuffs are often valuable, but the price depends on fashion and they do sometimes require special handling. Rare foods cost up to 1,000 credits per kilo when purchased for resale, and merchants can only obtain them on lifebearing worlds. New colonies seldom produce luxury foods, though an enterprising group might establish a settlement to exploit a native supply.

Pharmaceuticals

Drugs, whether legal or illicit, natural or synthetic, often make worthwhile cargo — though many of the most valuable constitute "controlled substances" requiring a special license to transport and trade (lest the merchant run the risk of arrest, confiscation, and imprisonment). Local laws vary considerably; a drug outlawed on one world may be perfectly legal on another.

Pharmaceutical production typically requires either a lifebearing planet, or a world with both ATRI 6+ and a population greater than 10 million. The market requires a species with biochemistry compatible with the inhabitants of the place of manufacture (or that the manufacturers knew about the customers' biochemistry and designed the drugs for it). Drugs typically cost 100 x 2d6 credits per gram when purchased for resale, but this varies based on demand and legality.

Precious Metals And Gems

The oldest and still one of the most dependable ways to move wealth is in the form of rare metals like gold, silver, platinum, or iridium — or, even better, precious gems such as diamonds, emeralds, Dorvalan *joratha,* or Mon'dabi coruscating sapphires. Both occur most frequently on dense, rocky planets. Most such cargoes go to well-established merchants with heavily-guarded ships (or convoys), not to independent traders, though this may depend on circumstances. Precious metals typically cost 200 + (1d6 x 10) credits per gram, and gems 1,000 + (1d6 x 100) credits per carat, when purchased for resale, but demand or other factors may change this.

Precision Machinery

Nearly every world can manufacture most of the machinery necessary to sustain its civilization, but certain devices require extremely specialized equipment or highly-skilled technicians to make. Examples include starship drives, stealthy submarine propellers, and many of the machines used to make other machines — lathes, drill presses, robots, and the like. Heavy and expensive, precision machines often command prices of 1 million credits per ton or more when purchased for resale. Demand is inelastic — a planet tends to need machines either desperately or not at all — so a failed Trading roll often means the price at the destination is 0 credits.

Radioactives

Although even more valuable than precious metals, radioactive elements require special handling. Typically traders can buy radioactives for around 1,000 credits per gram, but they must make a Skill Roll (KS: Hazardous Materials, or SS: Chemistry) to avoid contaminating the cargo bay with low-level radioactivity.

Like precious metals and drugs, radioactives typically get shipped via well-known mercantile firms with high-security trading vessels, and strict legal controls govern their transport and sale. Small, independent traders may have to make Skill Rolls (using Bribery, Bureaucratics, Streetwise, or Trading, as appropriate) just to find some for sale.

Spices

"Spices" refers to any kind of plant product containing complex chemicals sold as a flavoring or consumer goods, including some perfumes, cosmetics, pharmaceutical feedstock, and the like. They often wholesale for about 1,000 credits per kilogram on the lifebearing worlds that produce them, making them a good commodity for interstellar freight. Some may require special handling or other precautions, however — and a few seemingly innocuous ones have such unusual effects on certain alien physiologies that some governments classify them as drugs or poisons!

Weapons

Weaponry — especially advanced systems — always fetches a good price. See Chapter Six for suggested costs of weapons. Bulk deals usually involve reducing the price per unit by some degree, whereas special orders, or orders placed by a customer who obviously needs the weapons quickly, increase the cost. Typically, the price goes up by at least 10% for every ATRI level by which the weapons exceed the local ATRI.

Every government in the Galaxy imposes strict controls on the manufacture, sale, and possession

VALUABLE GOODS

Here are a few special commodities produced in Imperial space.

Hracta: A spice whose taste hints of both heat and salt, *hracta* comes from the ground buds of a flower that grows only on Karilath IV. Valued throughout the Empire and by the Mon'dabi, it typically wholesales for about 50 credits per gram and retails for twice that. Three corporations control most of the supply, making it difficult for independent traders to get involved — though it's said organized crime controls the corporations.

Trildi: *Trildi,* translucent teal-colored gemstones found on Polyphemus, give off an alluring glow when cut and polished, making them ideal for many types of jewelry. Prospectors sell an average-quality *trild* for about 350 credits per carat; a clever merchant can sometimes get three times that from a jeweler or corporation.

Xenovore Fertility Statuettes: These small, exceedingly ugly figurines are found here and there throughout former Xenovore space, often in small caches far away from any current or former habitation. Most people find them disturbing to look at, but others — including many art connoisseurs — consider them fascinating. Collectors call them "Fertility Statuettes" even though no art expert or archaeologist can definitively say what the Xenovores used them for or what cultural significance they had or have (and all Xenovores refuse to talk about them). Free for the finding, they usually sell for 1,000 credits apiece (more for particularly fine specimens).

of weapons. The authorities scrutinize arms sales closely; a trader without the proper documentation can easily find himself under arrest and his valuable cargo confiscated. This drives a certain percentage of arms deals to the black market, though conditions there don't necessarily favor the trader to any greater degree.

Big Business

In the Terran Empire, large corporations, trading combines, cartels, and guilds handle most commercial activity. They have the capital, accumulated knowledge, and contacts, and can operate on a large enough scale to make a profit even in risky markets. Most corporations in Terran space establish their headquarters on the Senatorial worlds to avoid the higher Imperial tax rate; most choose Earth, Tau Ceti, or Barnard, though Kapteyn has seen an upswing in corporate registrations in recent years.

Large corporations in the Empire must abide by local laws on planet surfaces; in space, Imperial regulations govern their conduct. However, the sheer size of many companies allows them to bend both planetary and Imperial laws with impunity.

MAJOR IMPERIAL CORPORATIONS

The corporations registered in the Ministry for Trade's database number in the millions, if not billions. A few of the more prominent, influential, or intriguing among them include:

Centaur Stage Studios

A major media company based in the Alpha Centauri system, Centaur Stage produces video and holo programs, interactives, books, and music. Its productions all have a strong pro-Imperial tone, which has drawn criticism from various groups. Some people believe the TSS and the Ministry for Unity both have operatives within the company.

Draconis Defenseworks

Founded and headquartered on Sigma Draconis III, Draconis Defenseworks specializes in all sorts of military systems short of full starships. It builds infantry weapons, ship weapons, ground vehicles, and more; it's particularly well known for its "upgrade kits" for various standard weapons and military systems. In addition to several lucrative contracts with the Imperial military, it does a lot of business with local planetary militias and similar forces; rumors floating around for years claim it illegally does

business with other major governments.

GBG Pharmatica

The Empire's biggest biomedical firm, GBG Pharmatica develops new drugs and medical technologies. Based on Earth, the company has laboratories on several other worlds. A dispute with the Ministry for Evolution in 2640 caused GBG to lose some important Imperial medical contracts.

InStarCo

A large and diversified conglomerate, InStarCo began as a space transport company and remains one of the Empire's biggest spacelines. The firm works closely with the Ministry for Colonization and Development to establish new colonies — which then depend on InStarCo for contact with the rest of the Galaxy. The company also encourages colony development by investing in colonial industries, and now has large holdings on several worlds. Although it's based on Tau Ceti, its liners and cruisers travel throughout half the Galaxy.

King Arsenal

Located on Mars, King Arsenal makes personal energy weapons. The company's biggest claim to fame is the legendary Mark II laser pistol, which helped energy weapons replace slugthrowers in general use. The King Mark II (in various incarnations) and the more powerful Mark V remain among the most popular weapons in Terran space. An important military supplier, KA makes lasers of all sizes for the Imperial Army and Navy.
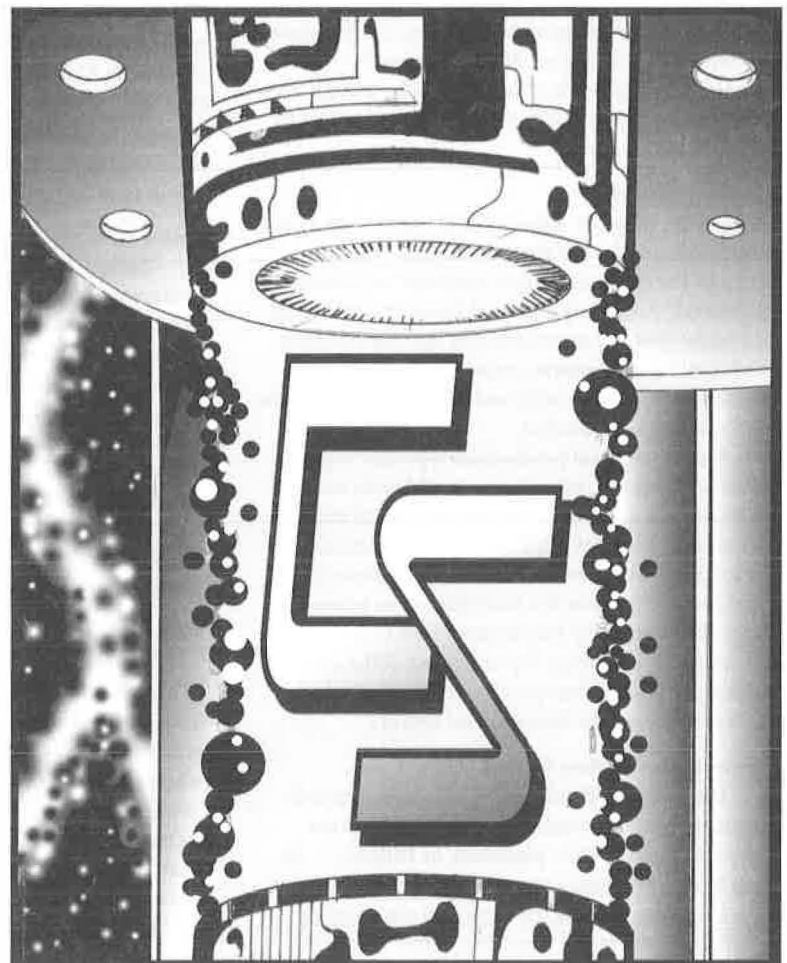
Kronos-Dynatronicas

A leading designer of small spacecraft and personal transport vehicles, K-D has its headquarters in Mexico City. In addition to its fine line of civilian starcraft, it's a major military contractor, with plants in dozens of systems across the Empire to produce ships and ship systems for the Imperial Navy.

Mind Designs

A successful Tau Ceti computer software company, Mind Designs leads the industry in the creation of artificial intelligence computer systems. The company strongly favors machine citizenship, and contributes to organizations advocating machine rights.

Red Star Industries

A huge industrial combine based in the Barnard system, RSI specializes in large-scale space construction, starship manufacturing, and power systems. Red Star built the Barnard antimatter facility, and is a primary contractor for the Navy on other antimatter-related projects. The Sarro family of Barnard hold a solid majority share of RSI, and treats the Barnard seat in the Senate as a family possession.

Stella Importage

Stella Importage is a successful trading firm dealing in luxury foods, wines, and spices from dozens of planets. Because the luxuries market remains ever-vulnerable to changes in fashion, Stella constantly follows trends (or tries to set them) and stays on the lookout for lucrative new products. An independent trader who discovers a new product can often sell out to Stella for a handsome profit. On the other hand, independents who try to compete head-to-head with Stella often discover just how jealously the company guards its business.

Automatons

Robots and androids have been a part of Human society for centuries. They do most factory work, they labor in mines and hazardous environments without complaint, and nearly all middle-class homes have a domestic 'bot. Only a few possess true intelligence, but even less-than-sentient ones often seem remarkably "alive." They have no civil rights in Terran society.

Only recently has the role of robots in society become a divisive subject. Some progressive Humans argue sentient machines should have full civil rights, just like any other sentient being. On the other hand, some people worry organic life has potentially made itself obsolete by creating a stronger, more durable machine life as its successor — and that the government should therefore strictly regulate and "keep down" the theoretical "replacement." The conflict between the two viewpoints creates political tension and increasingly hostile feelings.

Marissa III, and thus her administration, views robots as tools — highly adaptable and useful tools, but nothing more. She has no intention of extending civil rights to machines; the only way the "machine rights" advocates could succeed would be to make some major political deals... which they're not in a position to do now, and probably never will be.

Robots In Other Societies

The Conjoined Civilizations has a slightly more "enlightened" attitude than the Terran Empire. Sentient machines can get citizenship with the Somon (a species of cyborgs who keep their major biological organs encased in a spherical metal shell), and must abide by the Somon laws regarding upgrades, reproduction, and so on. Obtaining citizenship requires the machine to pass a fairly strict test of autonomy (and to repay the cost of its construction, usually via a bank loan, if it were manufactured in CCR space). A few Terran-built machines have escaped to CCR space to take advantage of this situation.

Other civilizations impose restrictions on sentient machines similar to those of the Terran Empire. In Ackálian, Perseid, Thorgon, and Varanyi space, machines have absolutely no rights no matter what degree of sentience they possess, and can never become citizens.

Both the Mon'dabi Federation and the Velarian Confederation forbid the construction of artificial intelligence machines. They strictly regulate and watch any brought into their space by outsiders.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

OTHER TERRAN BELIEFS

"Humans," said the Perseid social commentator Faretha Ghel, "certainly have some unusual beliefs." Nothing proves the truth of this statement more than the unusual religions some Humans practice.

The Church Of The Infinite Dark: This disturbing cult first appeared among colonists and space travelers in the early 2400s. "Darkers" claim the black interstellar void houses a host of powerful godlike beings who grant good fortune and power to those who worship them. The Church's strange, voodoo-like rituals often include the sacrifice of various animals. Most people dismiss the Darkers as a bunch of cranks, but some Imperial authorities seem to regard the Church as a serious problem.

The Temple Of Willis: A moderately popular entertainer during the reign of Feodor, in 2620 Willis Erron decided he was God and deserved worship and adoration. Remarkably, the Divine Willis has attracted millions of followers, whose donations allow him a life of unchecked self-indulgence and excess. Several worlds have exiled Willis for various offenses against morals laws, and Imperial authorities have investigated him closely, but so far nobody has proved him guilty of

Even in the twenty-seventh century, when Science seems to reign supreme and give Humankind (and Mon'dabi-kind, Se'ecra-kind, Varanyi-kind...) vast powers, many sentient beings still find solace in the thought that a Higher Power watches over and guides them. A thousand million religions permeate the Galaxy, most claiming at best a few thousand adherents. But a few have become so large and powerful one must consider them Galactic powers in their own right.

RELIGIONS OF THE TERRAN EMPIRE

Humanity's religious history dates back at least four thousand years, and shows no signs of abating. Some of the prominent religions practiced in Terran space during the Imperial period include:

The Galactic Church Of The Creator

The spread of Humans onto hundreds of new worlds brought great changes in religion. On some worlds, like New Canaan or Kundun, believers sought to maintain old faiths. But elsewhere, new worlds and contact with aliens changed Human beliefs, and new churches arose. Born in the dark days of the Xenovore Wars, when many people feared the end of Humanity was at hand, the Galactic Church of the Creator attracted converts and spread slowly during the period of recovery following the destruction of the Xenovores.

The Church made a great leap in prominence when the Emperor Gregorio converted on his deathbed. Thereafter the members of the House of DeValiere were

all adherents of the Church — though few call the Emperors truly devout. The prestige of the DeValieres helped the Church spread rapidly through the Imperial military and bureaucratic classes, and Imperial garrisons brought the faith to scores of new worlds.

By Marissa's reign the Church is the largest single faith in Terran space, though its believers total no more than 30% of the Imperial population. As the Imperial family's religion it has a great deal of prestige and influence — but it's not an official "state religion" and neither the government nor the Church leaders want to see the two combined.

Church Doctrine

The theology of the Galactic Church derives from Earth's old Abrahamic religions — Christianity, Islam, and Judaism — and has for its sacred book the *Logos*. The *Logos* includes portions of the Torah, the Gospels, and the Koran, along with writings of the Church founders and some other major
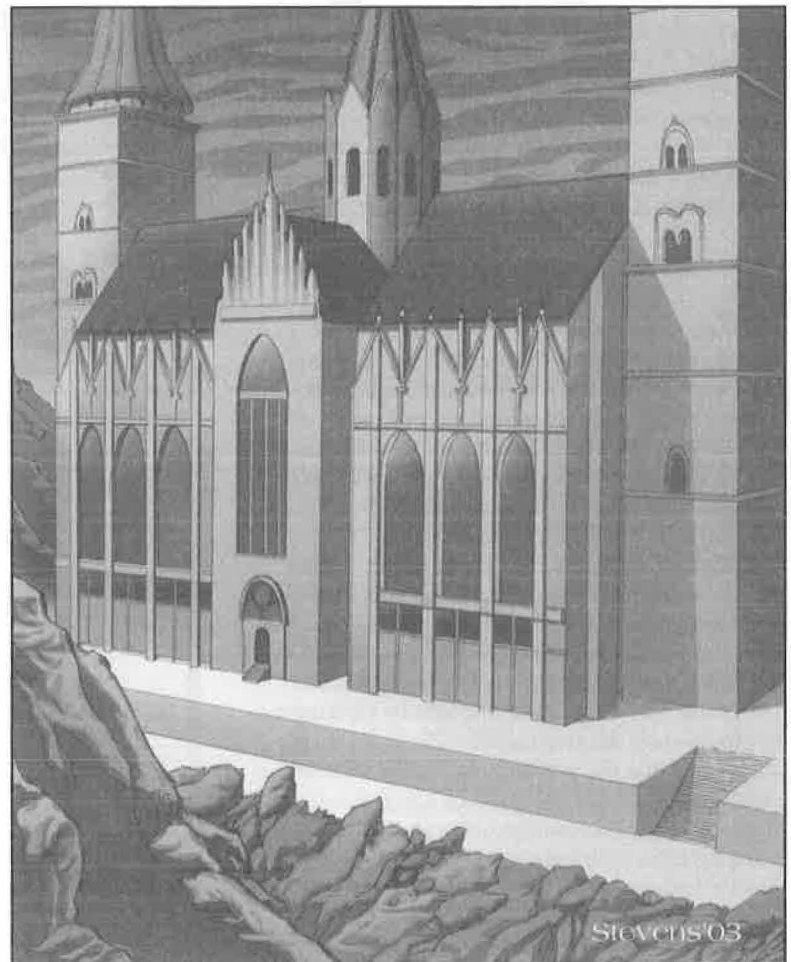
Stevens '03

Human writers and philosophers.

Church doctrine claims God chose the Human species to bring His message to all other intelligent life, that all beings who accept the Church's covenant become equal before God, and that at the final collapse of the Universe God will judge the actions of all beings who ever lived and allow the virtuous to live again in a new cosmos. Those who belong to the Church must participate in five *observances:* baptism; daily prayer at dawn and dusk; pilgrimage to Jerusalem; fasting during the Week of Purification; and observing the weekly Sabbath. Church ethical teachings emphasize cooperation, charity, protection of Humanity and Earth, and the continuing mission to spread the word.

Church Hierarchy And Politics

Leadership of the Church vests in the College of Precentors, an oligarchy of twenty-one high religious officials. Originally the College had the often-thankless task of determining what writings belonged in the *Logos.* Later the College took on the responsibility of devising a statement of Church doctrine, and in the process it became the Church's governing body. Below the College the religious hierarchy has three levels: Archimandrites (officials in charge of a planet, who as a body elect members to the College of Precentors); Lectors (in charge of a district, or *see,* on a planet), and Priests (in charge of a single local church).

The Church remains strongly loyal to the Empire. The Precentors believe God ordained the reunification of Humanity and the expansion of the Empire. (A minority among theologians even urge the Church to honor Marissa I as divinely inspired.) However, the Church can and does object to certain Imperial policies, and in the past has criticized Emperors directly. The Church and Empire differ most strongly on the issue of alien citizenship: the Church accepts alien converts as equals and believes the Empire should automatically accord them the rights of citizens.

Teleology

Less a religion than a common philosophy, one especially popular among scientists and psionics, Teleology holds that intelligent beings have a destiny to spread life through the Universe and evolve to a state at which they become, in effect, gods. Some adherents of Teleology believe time-traveling gods from the future designed the Universe, so the teleological purpose becomes predestined.

Teleologists advocate terraforming, new colonization, and exploration. They don't seek out converts, but they find Teleology itself so compelling they sometimes use it as the basis of works of art or literature, thereby spreading the concept.

Because it has such a cosmic scope, Teleology has little influence over Imperial politics. It counts both liberals and conservatives among its followers, and a large contingent of Mind Police consider themselves devoted Teleologists. The Empress Marissa finds the ideas of the Teleologists intriguing, but she keeps her actual beliefs secret.

RELIGIONS OF OTHER SPECIES AND CIVILIZATIONS

No species, it seems, has gained the prize of sentience without developing at least one or two bodies of religious philosophy along the way. Some of the major religions popular outside Terran space include:

Maldarianism

When the Thorgons conquered their parent species, they abolished the dominant religion of the Ergons, a polytheistic faith based on star worship. For a time the Hegemony was strictly secular, but after a few generations spiritual longings arose even among the hyper-disciplined Thorgons. The great military hero Maldar formulated the religious teachings which bear his name today. Maldarianism combines ideas of reincarnation with a hefty dose of evolutionary competitiveness. The basic doctrine states that the Gods created the Universe as a testing-ground for the most worthy, and victory pleases them. Those who serve well and triumph over their enemies receive rewards in the afterlife, while they condemn the weak to rebirth for another round of struggle.

Priests of Maldarianism are all soldiers, and religious services resemble a drill sergeant's rantings at green troops; a Maldarian's customary blessing is "Fight well!" The faith has gained some adherents beyond Thorgon space — a few Mon'dabi follow Maldarian teachings, and on the rimward Terran colony world Nergal it has become the majority religion. A somewhat more refined and less brutal form, Neo-Maldarianism, teaches that one need not achieve victory in warfare, but that internal and spiritual triumphs matter as well; the Thorgons hunt Neo-Maldarianists as heretics.

Engaliru

The Fex have only one religion of importance, an exceedingly ancient faith dating back to the earliest known Fex civilizations. Engaliru posits that each person has a patron god or *Galir* (plural Galiru), one of the infinite number of divine beings who created the world. A person's Galir watches and judges his life, and sometimes protects him from harm or bad luck. Misfortune and harm come about when a person doesn't heed his Galir's advice, or he angers it with wrong behavior.

Among the Fex, individuals treat their Galiru with easy familiarity, like a close friend or a kindly relative. Many Fex turn difficult decisions into a dialogue with their Galiru, which Humans sometimes find a little strange. Artists and creative types often credit their Galiru with the inspiration for new works, and sometimes thank their Galiru publicly after performances.

Engaliru has attracted a substantial number of Human converts, especially on planets with large Fex populations. It often coexists as a kind of

any serious wrongdoing. He says he's God and people give him money, but that's not a crime. As he's aged, the Divine Willis has become more erratic, and has given his followers some bizarre commandments ("thou shalt not wear fuschia" being one of the more coherent). The majority of the faithful only see this as proof of Willis's divine ineffability.

benign superstition among people who officially belong to another religion. Merchant spacers and asteroid miners seem particularly fond of the idea of a personal guardian divinity.

Rhigasa

Rhigasa, the Sacred Fire Temple of the Mon'dabi, originated about five thousand years ago on Mon'da. At its heart it involves the worship of fire; Temple doctrine describes the soul as a type of fire inhabiting and empowering the body. The discovery of respiration, the power of atomic energy, and the knowledge that the stars are balls of cosmic fire only seemed to confirm the basic truths of Rhigasa, so devout Rhigasans see no conflict between Religion and Science.

Each Rhigasan household has its own sacred fire which it must keep burning; a house without a fire must get a new one from one of the temples on the homeworld. The Temple considers fires kindled by lightning especially sacred, and the starting-point of a forest fire becomes a shrine, tended and kept burning forever. The death of an eternal fire results in great mourning.

Sacrifice plays a key role in Rhigasa. Worshippers scatter drops of their blood into their sacred fires every day, and during high holy days also burn great sheaves of food plants and distilled alcohol. Extremely devout Rhigasans sometimes bleed themselves pale sacrificing blood; a few unintentionally committed suicide-by-bloodletting every year during episodes of religious ecstasy. Charity — the symbolic "sacrifice" of one's worldly possessions — also occurs frequently.

Rhigasa has a great many splinter cults and variants (most Mon'dabi nations have their own particular form, for example). However, despite Mon'dabi aggressiveness, few religious wars mar Mon'da's history. Adherents seem to think that as long as they agree on certain basic tenets, individual variations don't matter much. They view Rhigasa as a unifying philosophy, not a divisive one.

Rhigasa has no separate priesthood. Rather, all adult male Mon'dabi serve as the priests of their household's sacred fire, and municipal officials also function as priests of the temple fires. Some xenosociologists attribute the relative paucity of religious wars to the lack of an organized priesthood.

Within the Mon'dabi Federation many aliens follow the practices of Rhigasa. The Sacred Fire Temple also has some adherents in Ackálian space. Few Humans have converted to Rhigasa; many regard it as quasi-superstitious nonsense.

Chet'rar

The Se'ecra created the belief system called *Chet'rar* ("Moral Algorithms") shortly after they encountered other intelligent species. They designed Chet'rar to be a philosophy and ethical guide independent of an individual's biology, instincts, society, or culture. From formal logic and some simple axioms — the value of life, the importance of freedom, the need to coexist with others, and the limits of physical law — its philosophers derive a robust and practical set of ethical guidelines.

Chet'rar has three main variants. The first, *Chet'rar Efesh-na* ("Materialist Moral Algorithms") focuses on observable natural phenomena and some ethical axioms. Xenosociologists call it the "atheist form" of Chet'rar, although it allows for the possibility that beings equivalent to gods may exist or come to exist at a future time. The second, *Chet'rar Feshtu-na* ("Divine Moral Algorithms"), presupposes the existence of a deity or deities, though it also states that existing religious systems do not accurately represent divine will. Feshtu-nans find all forms of religious thought intensely interesting, although their habit of analyzing and critiquing religions irritates believers in those faiths.

The third form, *Chet'rar Ak'sha* ("Transcendent Moral Algorithms"), attempts to reconcile the other two with a system of ethics unaffected by the existence of God and which applies equally to mortal beings and deities. By far the most complex and recondite form of Chet'rar, Ak'sha has followers with a reputation for eccentric behavior.

The Se'ecra are the most numerous followers of Chet'rar, favoring the materialist form. A large minority of Se-lag practice Chet'rar, divided evenly between materialist and transcendental versions. A fair number of Sholarron and Mostreens practice the theistic version, but the Jaruma consider Chet'rar nonsensical. Beyond the CCR, Chet'rar has attracted a few converts in Perseid space, and even among Thorgon renegades who have renounced their own civilization's beliefs.

OTHER CONJOINT CIVILIZATIONS BELIEFS

Chet'rar, isn't the only faith in the Conjoined Civilizations. Two others with large bodies of followers are Kurnam and E-feshtura.

Kurnam: Kurnam, the Jaruma traditional faith, claims that a hereditary Oracle, part of a dynasty descended from the religion's founder, receives instructions from the gods. The Oracle utter cryptic messages that believers interpret as divine messages. Kurnamish priests are relatives of the Oracle, so doctrines change slowly, if at all. The faithful believe what the priests and Oracles tell them to believe, period; there's no complex theology or moral ambiguity.

E-feshtura: Devised by some Se-lag as a deliberate prank, E-feshtura explains the absurdity of the Universe by saying it's a joke. One of the Gods created it to relieve the other Gods' boredom and make them laugh.

E-feshturans do their best to keep the Gods entertained. Believers insist the originators were actually divinely inspired — the fact they think they were parodying religion is all part of the Divine Jest. Others suspect they're all joking; the

faithful agree and say that's the whole point.

E-feshtura has a handful of converts outside CCR space — except in Velarian territory where the people consider the whole idea a deliberate ploy by the forces of evil. E-feshturans tend to avoid Velarian space; some lynching incidents have occurred.

Scomaru Shaan

Many people consider Scomaru Shaan the chief source of unity of the Velarian Confederation. The basic belief of Scomaru Shaan is that there are 17 gods, each represented at all times by living Avatars who may not even know about their true nature as divine beings. When one of the Avatars dies, the others seek out a replacement using a mix of detective work, divination, and psionic brainwave-pattern matching.

Early in the history of Velarian space travel, omens indicated the College would find the next Avatar on Cataval. That set a precedent, and currently the College of Avatars contains eight Velarians, two Catavalans, two Quagi, four Donburil, and one Mostreen. There's no requirement that Avatars come from the Confederation — the Mostreen Avatar was born in the Conjoined Civilizations. The next Avatar might be Human, or Mon'dabi, or even Thorgon.

Followers of Scomaru Shaan (known as Scomaru, singular Scomar) worship the living Avatars and follow their teachings on proper ritual and behavior. The faith establishes specific practices for believers to follow: Scomaru must be charitable to one another, offer no violence to other believers, and only marry within the faith. Rituals mostly involve readings from the teachings of the Avatars and group prayer. A brisk trade exists in hair clippings, loose scales, clothing scraps, and other artifacts from the Avatars; many Scomaru carry an amulet containing such relics.

Scomaru Shaan has a simple clergy with two ranks. The lower-ranking priest is called a Speaker. He runs a single church, and may join with other Speakers to form an administrative body for all the churches on a given planet. The higher-ranking priest is an Intercessor. Each Avatar chooses his Intercessors (he can have as many as he wants). The Intercessor's role is to speak with the Avatar in private, carrying messages to him from the outside world and returning his messages to supplicants and followers. Some Avatars have entire corps of Intercessors; others have none, preferring to interact directly with worshippers.

Scomaru Shaan has the most adherents among the Velarians — nearly 90% of the population. Among Catavalans and Donburil the proportion is more like 50%, among Quagi only 30%. A number of aliens are Scomaru, including some Ackálians and several thousand Mon'dabi.

THE UNDERWORLD

Crime has remained part of life even as Humanity spread to the stars and became one of the Galaxy's leading civilizations. Some of the crimes have changed, but the very existence of rules governing society inevitably means some people try to gain advantage by breaking them.

CRIMES

Since the Empire handles all law enforcement between planets, it mostly concerns itself with crimes in space. Naturally, people living in space commit many of the same ancient wrongs people everywhere perpetrate — murder, theft, assault, fraud. The Empire devotes most of its law enforcement efforts to preventing three space crimes: piracy, smuggling, and quarantine violations. Imperial security services also spend a lot of time fighting treason, which they define as any attempt to undermine the Empire's power or authority. And finally, organized crime groups have found ways to bring the old vice of slavery into the starfaring Galaxy.

PIRACY

The most colorful and famous interstellar crime is piracy. Space pirates usually operate along major trade routes with good pickings. Typically they lurk in remote systems the Navy doesn't patrol, preferably not far from an interstellar border, and dash out to seize ships and cargo passing by. The Imperial Navy broadly classifies pirates into two types: hijackers and classic pirates.

Hijackers don't have ships of their own. Instead they board starships as passengers, take crew positions, or sometimes have themselves shipped in a cargo container with its own life-support system. Once the ship gets far away from help, the hijackers strike. They capture or kill the crew, confine the passengers, and steer the ship to a friendly star system where they can sell it and its cargo. (Some more savvy hijackers park the ship in a hidden location for a few months until the owner gives it up for lost, then discover the "abandoned" ship and sell it back to the insurers or the former owner.) Many hijackers have a well-deserved reputation for viciousness. They don't want to leave witnesses, so they murder everyone aboard the ships they steal (typically by ejecting them into space). Some have connections to slaver rings and sell their captives alive.

Classic pirates use armed starships to intercept merchants in space. They rely as much on bluff as on actual combat ability, threatening their victims with destruction unless they surrender. Since classic pirates prefer for their victims to surrender without a fight, they treat captives much more humanely than hijackers. Most pirates simply loot the prey ship and let it go, thus encouraging future captives to play along. But they treat merchant captains who don't surrender with extreme savagery, to make an example of them.

Piracy survives only when pirates have places to resupply their ships and sell their cargoes. The Empire has done a pretty good job of cracking down on pirate ports within Imperial space, but a few neutral systems outside the borders turn a blind eye to ships bringing in obviously stolen "salvage." Besides Drago's Reach in general, the most notorious such port is the Venwordien system, located in the Vorxan Expanse. A hot planet with extensive jungles, Venwordien IV is inhabited by a mix of Mon'dabi, Humans, rascals from across the Galaxy, and the occasional Malvan. Venwordien's law enforcement ignores complaints of piracy as long as visiting raiders pay a stiff fee to register their ship with the local government. Unregistered pirates get arrested and extra-

dited back to wherever wants them. The local government plays the Humans, Ackálians, and Mon'dabi off against each other diplomatically, and so far that's kept the pirates free of interference from hostile fleets.

SMUGGLING

As old as trade itself, smuggling thrives in the Galaxy. Like pirates, smugglers fall into two broad types, one much more vicious than the other. Some smugglers buy goods which are legal on some worlds and take them to planets which ban or heavily tax them. These smugglers often see themselves as fighting for freedom of trade, and are usually quasi-honest merchants most of the time. If caught, they can try to plead ignorance or insist the goods were destined for a world where they're legal. The Imperial Navy doesn't waste much time hunting these smugglers, since they violate planetary laws rather than Imperial ones.

The second type of smuggler deals in goods illegal throughout the Empire — slaves, controlled substances, military weapons, fugitives from justice, brain-control implants, and the like. This kind the Navy pursues; they fight viciously when cornered. Many of these smugglers have substantial bounties on their heads.

Both kinds of smugglers use the same methods to move goods: secret cargo compartments, false containers, fake invoices and permits, and bribery or blackmail of customs officials. The most daring ones actually try "stealth insertions," landing in remote areas to offload contraband before the authorities arrive.

QUARANTINE VIOLATIONS

A planetary biosphere is a fragile thing, especially on a carefully-tended terraformed planets. An unplanned-for alien organism can wreak ecological havoc, so all planets maintain a biological quarantine. Usually quarantine procedures barely slow travelers down: customs officials scan new arrivals and irradiate their baggage to kill potentially harmful organisms; travelers who show symptoms of disease get a broad-spectrum antivirus/antibiotic cocktail injection.

Unfortunately, it's not always that simple. Some people like to have exotic pets or foodstuffs, while others think they know more about ecological engineering than the professionals and want to introduce new species. Deliberate eco-sabotage allows corporations or even planets to weaken rivals.

Imperial Navy security forces on orbital spaceports handle quarantine enforcement in conjunction with planetary customs officials. On the ground local authorities handle it by themselves. The ISP hunts persistent violators and organized rings, while the Ministry for Evolution monitors the spread of dangerous organisms.

TREASON

The Terran Empire legally defines "treason" as aiding and abetting enemies of the Empire, or performing acts that could harm the Empire or its citizens. In practice the Empire defines it as "anything the TSS doesn't like." Marissa is sufficiently secure, and has enough of a sense of humor, not to punish criti-

cism or mockery of her regime — but anyone actively advocating the overthrow of the Empire attracts TSS attention. Just talking won't get someone thrown in jail or killed, but it may lead to an uncomfortable interrogation and a warning. "Overt acts of treason" — helping rebels either directly or by concealing them from the authorities, conspiring with foreign governments or would-be usurpers, and any direct action against the Empress, the Empire, or its agencies — merits the death penalty.

The TSS has an ugly tendency to use treason as a catchall crime to accuse anyone Marissa doesn't like or who has opposed her too successfully. The Empress keeps this to a minimum (chiefly because she understands it could lead to a backlash), but it happens.

SLAVERY

The slave trade has come back into existence in the twenty-seventh century for a variety of reasons. First, many societies do not consider aliens "people," so they have no rights and citizens can treat them as property. Second, psionic and neurochemical methods of mind control make it possible to erase memories and control behavior. Finally, significant demand exists: hostile worlds need workers; wealthy perverts want playthings; the Malvan arena always needs more gladiators.

Under Imperial law, no one can hold a member of a recognized sentient species in slavery. Even on a libertarian world like Rand IV, a person must sign a contract agreeing to work on some terms. But a couple of dodges exist: on many worlds "labor agree-

ments" can effectively enslave individuals. Other planets don't recognize certain alien species as sentient, or deny that genetically modified Humans qualify as people. Finally, psionic mind control or memory-erasing drugs can lock a victim into slavery without his even knowing it.
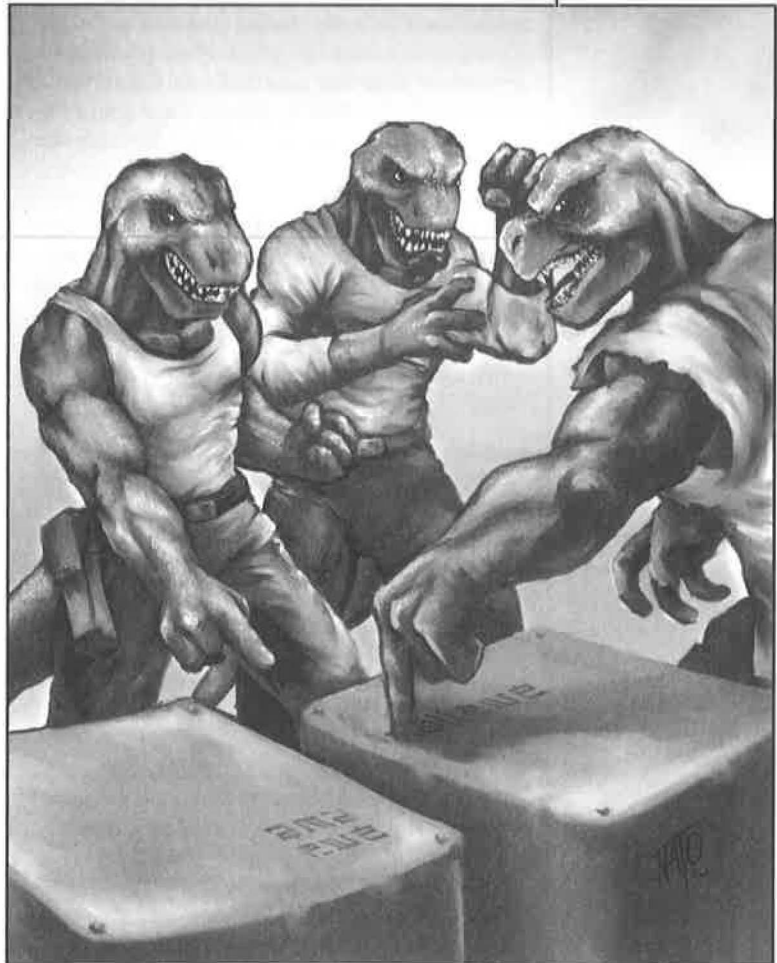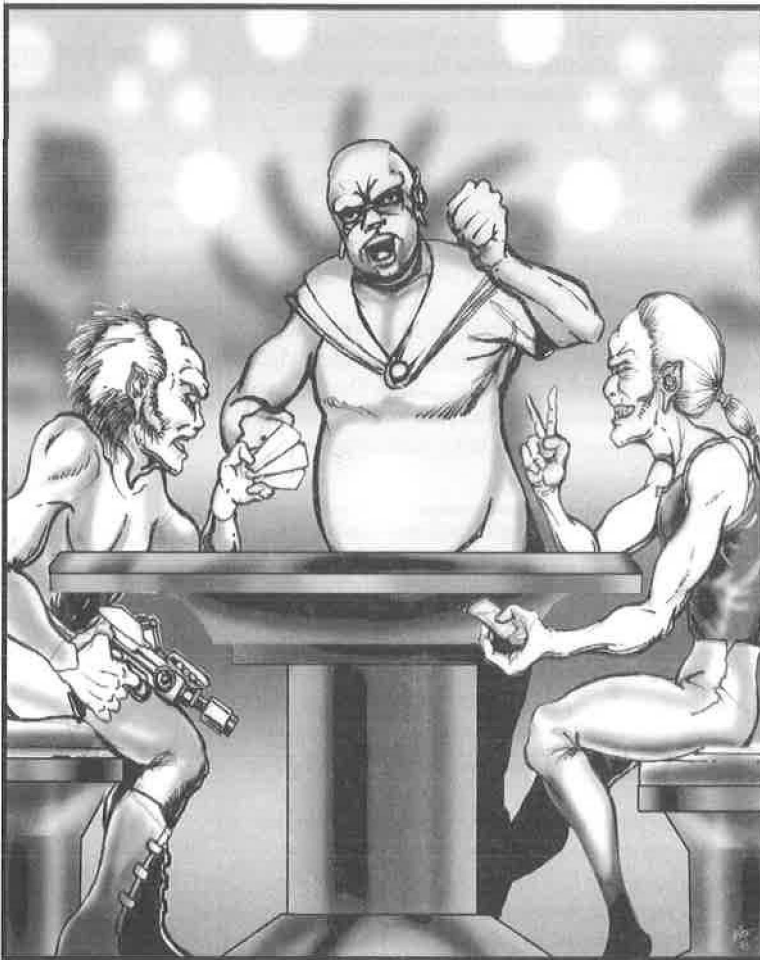
Enforcement of anti-slavery laws remains spotty (one reason the trade thrives). The ISP interprets the law strictly and investigates any reports of slavery. The Navy and TSS don't consider it a problem unless it involves Human victims (including modified Humans). The ISP calls in the Mind Police when a slavery incident involves psionics, but many Mind Cops are reluctant to bust fellow psis.

CRIMINAL GROUPS

Crime, like most businesses, works best when a large organization allows for specialization and economies of scale. In the Terran Empire many criminal organizations exist, mostly planetary or system-wide in scale. But three organized crime groups operate throughout the Empire (or the Galaxy).

THE CLONE MOB

Established shortly after discovery of Hyperdrive and still going strong, the Clone Mob was founded by Jax Maljek, an innovator in the creation of new illegal drugs and biopiracy in the early twenty-third century. Maljek built up a thriving criminal empire and wanted to see it continue, so he began creating clones of himself and training them for his organization. For six centuries, the clones have continued Maljek's work. Terran authorities estimate that as of 2640, the Clone Mob has at least half a million members, all as alike as brothers.

The Clone Mob specializes in slavery (especially the creation of illegal clones of media stars), prostitution, the manufacture and sale of designer drugs, and ecological sabotage for hire. What makes the Clone Mob so durable is the remarkable trust and cooperation among its members. No clone has ever betrayed the organization, and if the ISP arrests the senior leaders, or they get killed in gang warfare, other clones can take over smoothly. The organization has one major weakness, though — its members are easily recognized.

Currently the Clone Mob operates mainly in the older Terran colony worlds and on Earth. The ISP has received disturbing reports that the clones have established safe houses and front organizations in Perseid space.

THE HZEEL OUTFIT

When the Hzeel failed to conquer the Earth and lost their civilization, they scattered; many became criminals. Today, the Hzeel have spread across the Galaxy and run a powerful criminal organization.

Loosely organized — so loosely it's sometimes questionable whether it actually constitutes a unified organization — the Outfit consists of small system- or sector-dominating gangs operating mostly autonomously. The umbrella organization provides funds, specialized resources, and refuges for members fleeing the law. Each gang has a leader known as a Boss, who obeys only orders issued by the organization's supreme boss, the Overboss. No one outside the top echelons of the Outfit knows where the Overboss lives.

The Outfit's activities include smuggling, fencing stolen or pirated goods, illegal gambling, and slave trading. It also has a thriving line in faked archaeological artifacts, prostitution, and blackmail. It prefers to avoid violence, and makes a point of gathering as much information as possible. It sometimes trades this information to Galactic intelligence services in exchange for assistance dealing with troublesome legal authorities, and helps the authorities rid it of rival crime groups by passing on incriminating information.

THE XENOVORE FLEET

The most fearsome pirates in the known Galaxy are the remnants of the Xenovore battlefleet. They mostly operate in Terran space, though their ships sometimes venture into Mon'dabi territory. Everyone still calls it "the Xenovore fleet," but by Marissa's reign more than half the crewmembers are Humans, Ackálians, Hzeel, and Fex.

The Xenovore Fleet has no central headquarters or commander, but ships and captains cooperate, pass on information, and occasionally join forces for a big operation. In addition to piracy, Xenovore Fleet ships also get involved in smuggling, mercenary service, and slaving.

Citizens of the Empire
CHARACTER CREATION

very *Star Hero* campaign setting has its own particular special features and quirks that make the characters and adventures created for it unique. The Terran Empire is no different; in addition to the setting-specific species covered in Chapter Two, it has plenty of governments characters can work for, organizations they can belong to, and jobs they can do which aren't like governments, organizations, and jobs in other campaign settings. It also uses some Skills, Perks, Talents, Powers, and Disadvantages in unique ways. This chapter provides Package Deals, game element descriptions, and other information to help you design just the right character for the campaign.

PACKAGE DEALS

This section has Package Deals appropriate to a Terran Empire campaign during the reign of Marissa III. It divides them into two sections — Imperial and Government Packages, and Civilian Packages — and each of those groups in turn subdivides into categories. Gamemasters should create additional Packages specific to their own campaigns, or alter these Packages to suit the style of campaign they have in mind.

Most of these Packages work perfectly well for games set in other periods of the Imperial era. You can also adapt them for use by characters from various alien civilizations. For example, a Perseid diplomat could easily take the Diplomat Package Deal.

In addition to these Package Deals, you should also consider the ones on pages 33-38 of *Star Hero*. Be sure to check with the GM before taking one, though, since they're not setting-specific.

IMPERIAL AND GOVERNMENT PACKAGES

These Packages represent jobs or social positions related to the Imperial government in some way, such as courtiers or military personnel. You can adapt many of them to represent the officials, agents, and soldiers of other Galactic governments.

Imperial Court And Bureaucratic Package Deals

At the top of the Imperial political food chain is the court — the nobles, ministers, courtiers, diplomats, and other hangers-on who have somehow obtained a position at court or the favor of someone in power. Below them in the hierarchy, but often wielding more practical power, are the countless millions of Imperial bureaucrats, officials, and regulators.

BUREAUCRAT

This Package Deal represents the low- and mid-level officials who do the actual work of running the Empire. Marissa can issue edicts and the Senate can vote, but these people turn formal pronouncements into day-to-day policy. The Empire has thousands of bureaux, from the Abandoned Property Office to the Zurite Trade Commission. Most bureaucrats have routine and boring jobs, but from time to time Imperial officials have to leave their desks and go into the field. Bureaucrats make natural investigators (or conspirators for shady dealings) because they know the rules and

BUREAUCRAT PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Bureaucratics	3
KS: Imperial (or local) Law 11-	2
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list:	6
Bribery, Computer Programming, Conversation, Deduction, High Society, Persuasion, any Background Skill	
Contact: Government Agency 11-	6
Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance 1	1

Disadvantages	Value
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Frequently, Minor)	-10

Total Cost Of Package: 8

the loopholes. Officials investigating potential wrongdoing, or just on fact-finding missions, may uncover anti-Imperial plots, sinister alien operations, or the work of Galactic crooks.

COURTIER

Though they have little power of their own, courtiers have access to powerful and influential people, whom they serve in various unofficial ways — running confidential errands, intriguing against rivals, and passing on information. Courtiers can trade on their access, accepting fees from corporations, major Imperial officials, or even alien embassies to drop the occasional good word in a well-placed ear. Courtiers naturally spend most of their time at court (access and influence disappear if not cultivated), but from time to time a high noble (or even the Empress) may send a courtier on a mission — typically a delicate matter he can't handle through normal channels. Success means big rewards, but failure ends a courtier's career.

COURTIER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
High Society +2	7
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list:	6
Bribery, Conversation, Gambling, Lipreading, Oratory, Persuasion, Seduction, Shadowing, Streetwise, any Background Skill	
Contact: Important figure at court 11- (Contact has extremely useful resources)	5
Fringe Benefit: Lower Nobility	2

Disadvantages	Value
Rivalry: Professional (with one or more other courtiers)	-5

Total Cost Of Package: 15

The Perseid, Ackálian, and Varanyi Empires have their own courts and courtiers, and some monarchical member states of the Velarian and Mon'dabi federations do, too. The Thorgons and Se'ecra consider them useless relics. For a higher-power courtier, add the *Well-Connected* Skill Enhancer, more Contacts, and more Interaction Skills.

DIPLOMAT

When the Empress wants to send a message to an alien empire, an Imperial diplomat delivers it. Diplomats represent the Empire on alien worlds, make first contact with newly-discovered alien species, handle minor negotiations, cope with minor crises before they turn into major ones, report on local conditions, and get involved in plots and intrigues wherever they are posted.

In theory diplomats work closely with the Exploration Service, but the two have a long tradition of hostility toward each other that sometimes hinders the smooth implementation of Her Majesty's wishes. Diplomats must also cooperate with the intelligence agencies, and if they want to stay healthy, they do so.

Diplomats make obvious targets for rebels and terrorists. Alien security services often watch them closely (the Package doesn't include this as a Disadvantage since a diplomat PC might not have any such problem; characters should take it if appropriate).

Higher-level diplomats have a better Security Clearance, and may have the *Linguist, Traveler,* or *Well-Connected* Skill Enhancers. In either case, you can also use this Package Deal for various types of politicians.

DIPLOMAT PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
AK: Galaxy 11-	2
AK: Current posting 11-	2
Bureaucratics	3
High Society	3
Language (local alien language, completely fluent)	4
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list Bribery, Conversation, Oratory, Persuasion, Seduction, Shadowing, Streetwise, Trading, any Background Skill	6
Fringe Benefit: Diplomatic Immunity	5
Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance	3

Disadvantages	Value
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Frequently, Major)	-15

Total Cost Of Package: 13

NOBLE

Titled aristocrats who have power and influence of their own, nobles (unlike courtiers) don't have to suck up to the Empress or anyone else — though most do, if only because they hope to gain even more wealth and power. Nobles' wealth and prominent social position give them freedom; they seldom have to do anything unless they want to. One significant exception to this: when the Empress has a really important job, she usually gives it to a noble. A noble who succeeds advances himself; one who fails often finds himself consigned to social obscurity.

This Package Deal represents a young noble from a wealthy family. For an older or more powerful character, add more Money, the *Well-Connected* Skill Enhancer, and/or some Followers.

NOBLE PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
High Society +2	7
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Acting, Bribery, Conversation, Gambling, Oratory, Persuasion, Seduction, Transport Familiarity, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill	6
Fringe Benefit: Member of the Aristocracy	5
Money: Well Off (500,000 credits per year)	5

Disadvantages	Value
Rivalry: Professional (with one or more other nobles)	-5
Social Limitation: Famous (Frequently, Minor)	-10

Total Cost Of Package: 8

SENATOR

The members of the Terran Senate are some of the shrewdest politicians in the Galaxy. Just getting elected or appointed requires a lifetime of maneuvering and preparation, and once in power a Sena-

tor must carefully leverage the small authority of his position, building temporary alliances and long-term coalitions to accomplish his personal goals. Senators have several unique abilities — including access to the Empress, the right to use the Senate's database (which connects to most Imperial databases), and the ability to travel freely within the Empire. They can poke their noses into just about anything that interests them.

SENATOR PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Bureaucratics	3
High Society	3
KS: Imperial Law 11-	2
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Bribery, Conversation, Cramming, Deduction, Persuasion, Oratory, Seduction, any Background Skill	6
Well-Connected	3
Computer Link: Senatorial Database	8
Contact: Empress Marissa III 11- (extremely useful resources, access to major institutions, significant Contacts of her own)	6
Contacts: 6 more points' worth of Contacts (player's choice)	6
Fringe Benefit: Senator	8
Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance	7

Disadvantages	Value
Hunted: TSS 8- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)	-5
Hunted: News Media 8- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)	-5
Social Limitation: Famous (Frequently, Minor)	-10

Total Cost Of Package: 32

SENATORIAL GUARD

Technically part of Earth's planetary militia, the Senatorial Guards are recruited from across the Empire. They protect the Senate and Senators both on Earth and wherever a Senator may happen to

SENATORIAL GUARD PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Bureaucratics	3
High Society 8-	1
KS: Imperial Senate 11-	2
PS: Security Officer 11-	2
Security Systems	3
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms	4
Computer Link: ISP and Earth planetary law enforcement databases	9
Fringe Benefit: Planetary Police Powers	5
Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance	3

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 7

travel. Trained for courtesy, discretion, and bravery, Guards often conduct delicate semi-covert fact-finding missions for Senators, which sometimes bring them into conflict with the Terran Security Service. The Senatorial Guards have a good-natured rivalry with the soldiers of the Imperial Guard division, and a hostile relationship with the TSS.

Law Enforcement And Intelligence Package Deals

Player characters frequently come from the ranks of, or run afoul of, law enforcement officers. Others once worked as spies, or somehow attract the attention of the TIC.

IMPERIAL SECURITY POLICE OFFICER

The hard-working and overburdened enforcement arm of the Ministry of Justice, the Imperial Security Police investigates crimes against Imperial law. In recent years the ISP has lost bureaucratic ground to its rivals, the Terran Security Service and the Mind Police, but it still does its best to uphold the rule of law in Terran space. Other empires have their own police agencies, but without the Rivalry.

ISP OFFICER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Bureaucratics	3
Criminology	3
Deduction	3
KS: Imperial Law (INT Roll)	3
KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-	2
Streetwise	3
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Bribery, Bugging, Conversation, Disguise, Interrogation, Shadowing, Tracking, any Background Skill	6
Computer Link: ISP database	8
Fringe Benefit: Interstellar Police Powers	8

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Rivalry: Professional (with TSS and the Mind Police)	-10
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 6

MIND POLICE OFFICER

Officers of the Mind Police find themselves in a strange position. They work for a powerful Imperial agency, have paranormal abilities, and get to wear cool black berets. But they also belong to a minority hated and feared by many Imperial citizens. For some, the fear of bigotry means they must strictly abide by the law and work for the public good; for others, the memory of discrimination makes the exercise of both official and psionic power a chance to get revenge.

MIND POLICE OFFICER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Analyze Psi Powers	3
KS: The Psionic World (INT Roll)	3
Power: Psionics	3
SS: Psionics 11-	2
Streetwise	3
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list Bribery, Computer Programming, Electronics, Persuasion, Seduction, Shadowing, any Background Skill	6
Computer Link: Mind Police database	9
Fringe Benefit: Psionic Police Powers	3
Fringe Benefit: Psionics License	1
30 points' worth of psionic powers	30

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Hunted: Mind Police 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)	-10
Social Limitation: Minority (Very Frequently, Minor)	-15
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 15

PLANETARY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

The ISP has only limited jurisdiction on most worlds. When planetside, it usually ends up working with the local cops, who know the territory, the people, and the local laws much better than it does. Planetary law enforcement officers run the gamut from naive rookies, to dedicated renegades, to cynical, corrupt veterans, and everything in between. Many eventually get out of police work and go into

PLANETARY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Bureaucratics	3
Criminology	3
KS: Planetary Law 11-	2
KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-	2
Streetwise	3
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list Bribery, Bugging, Conversation, Deduction, Disguise, Forensic Medicine, Interrogation, Shadowing, Tracking, any Background Skill	6
Computer Link: Planetary law enforcement database	7
Fringe Benefit: Planetary Police Powers	5

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 8

TIC FIELD AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Computer Programming	3
High Society	3
KS: The Espionage World 11-	2
Stealth	3
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms	4
15 points' worth of Skills from the following list Acting, Bribery, Bugging, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Disguise, Conversation, Cryptography, Electronics, Forgery, Gambling, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Persuasion, Security Systems, Seduction, Shadowing, Streetwise, Systems Operation, WF, any Background Skill	15
Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance	3

Disadvantages	Value
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 13

private investigation, security, or adventuring.

TERRAN INTELLIGENCE COMMAND (FIELD AGENT)

Not strictly a spy, a field agent usually spends his time recruiting and getting information from undercover agents and informers. Typically attached to an embassy or military mission, he has to satisfy not only his TIC bosses, but whoever he "works for" locally. However, a few (such as the ones represented by this Package Deal) receive more training and participate in a wide variety of covert operations with much greater freedom of operation.

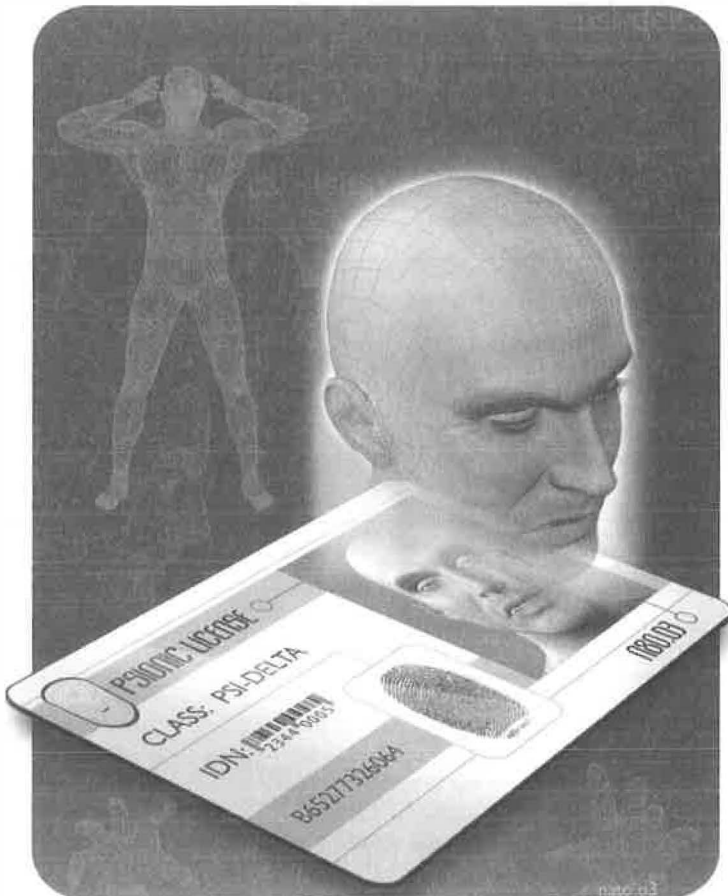### TERRAN INTELLIGENCE COMMAND (UNDERCOVER AGENT)

Undercover agents have the most dangerous jobs in espionage. They live on a neutral world or in an alien civilization, often with a job that gives them access to secret information. They pass secrets to their TIC field agent contacts, risking arrest and death to enhance the security of the Empire. Their motives vary: many serve Imperial interests out of loyalty, others want the pay, the TIC blackmails a few into working for it, and some just like the excitement of being a spy.

TERRAN SECURITY SERVICE OFFICER

The agents of the Terran Security Service protect the Empress and the Empire. They think of themselves the ultimate guardians of order and stability in Terran space.

TSS officers investigate crimes against the Empire, which includes anything the Empress or the Minister consider worth investigating. Their missions don't usually take them out of Terran space, but they do sometimes have to work semi-covertly to avoid scandal. A TSS agent's biggest asset is the dread his position evokes, and he uses that advantage as much as possible.

This Package Deal represents a corporal of the TSS. Higher-ranking officers have higher *Membership* and *Security Clearance* Fringe Benefits.

TIC UNDERCOVER AGENT PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Acting	3
Disguise +1	5
KS: The Espionage World 11-	2
Language (one alien language, idiomatic)	5
Mimicry	3
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms	4
9 points' worth of Skills from the following list	9
Bribery, Bugging, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Conversation, Cryptography, Electronics, Forgery, Gambling, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Persuasion, Security Systems, Seduction, Shadowing, Stealth, Streetwise, Systems Operation, WF, any Background Skill	
Deep Cover	2

Disadvantages	Value
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20
Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Frequently, Severe)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: -7

TSS OFFICER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Bureaucratics	3
KS: Imperial Law 11-	2
KS: The Espionage World 11-	2
KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
PS: Security Officer 11-	2
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms	4
12 points' worth of Skills from the following list	12
Bribery, Bugging, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Criminology, Disguise, Conversation, Cryptography, Electronics, Forgery, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Persuasion, Security Systems, Seduction, Shadowing, Streetwise, Systems Operation, WF, any Background Skill	
Computer Link: TSS database	10
Fringe Benefit: Interstellar Police Powers	8
Fringe Benefit: Membership (TSS corporal)	3
Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance	5

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Rivalry: Professional (with ISP and the Mind Police)	-10
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 20

Military Package Deals

Military careers can lead characters into adventure. Ex-military personnel sometimes wind up leading active and exciting lives after their tour(s) of duty end.

Unless otherwise noted, each of the Military Package Deals assumes a character with a *Membership: Military Rank* Fringe Benefit worth 3 points (a Corporal or Petty Officer, depending on the service). Characters may increase or decrease this if appropriate by adjusting a Package's cost.

IMPERIAL ARMY (AIR FORCES)

The Air Forces conduct military operations in the zone between a planet's surface and orbital space. They operate a mix of supersonic fighters, vertical-takeoff hoppers, and gunships. Their biggest rivals are not any other Army branch but the fighter pilots of the Imperial Navy. Air troops wear a gold beret.

IMPERIAL ARMY (AIR FORCE) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Combat Piloting +1	5
KS: The Imperial Army 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
Navigation (Air) +1	4
PS: Soldier 11-	2
Survival (choose one category)	2
Systems Operation (choose one category)	2
TF: Combat Aircraft	1
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Corporal)	3
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 4

IMPERIAL ARMY (ARMOR)

Armor divisions drive the hovertanks, juggernauts, self-propelled artillery, and other heavy vehicles that are the backbone of the Army's fighting strength. Armor troops have no doubt about their importance, and tend to have excellent morale. They wear a red beret, and typically carry only a sidearm.

IMPERIAL ARMY (ARMOR) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Combat Driving +1	5
KS: The Imperial Army 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
Mechanics	3
Navigation (Land)	2
PS: Soldier 11-	2
Survival (choose one category)	2
Systems Operation (choose one category)	2
Tactics	3
TF: two points' worth (player's choice)	2
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Corporal)	3

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 5

IMPERIAL ARMY (ARTILLERY)

The Artillery gets to shoot the really big guns — intercontinental missiles, surface-to-space lasers, and so on. Other Army branches mock the Artillery for never even seeing the enemy in combat, but Artillery boasts, "If we see you, you're already dead." They wear a chocolate brown beret and carry sidearms.

IMPERIAL ARMY (ARTILLERY) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Combat Driving +1	5
KS: The Imperial Army 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
Mechanics	3
Navigation (Land)	2
PS: Soldier 11-	2
Survival (choose one category)	2
Systems Operation (choose one category)	2
Tactics	3
TF: two points' worth (player's choice)	2
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Corporal)	3

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 5

IMPERIAL ARMY (IMPERIAL GUARD)

Chosen from the best of the best among the other branches of the Army, the Imperial Guard serves as the elite ceremonial guard force for the Empress. The only Imperial troops allowed on Earth itself, they wear purple berets.

Characters who serve in the Imperial Guard take this Package *in addition to* the Package for their standard branch of service.

IMPERIAL ARMY (IMPERIAL GUARD) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
High Society	3
AK: Imperial Palace Complex 11-	2
KS: Imperial Court Politics 11-	2
Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance	1

Disadvantage	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 8

IMPERIAL ARMY (INFANTRY)

The largest branch of the Imperial Army, the poor, bloody infantry fights on planets throughout Imperial space, and beyond. The light infantry formations of the Army see more action in peacetime than heavy units like Armor or Artillery, and often participate in counter-insurgency operations or search and rescue missions. They wear a green beret and arm themselves with energy rifles (and sometimes more).

IMPERIAL ARMY (INFANTRY) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+1 OCV with weapon of choice	2
Concealment	3
Demolitions	3
KS: The Imperial Army 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
Navigation (Land) 8-	1
Paramedics	3
PS: Soldier 11-	2
Survival (choose one category)	2
Tactics	3
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms, Blades	5
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Corporal)	3

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 8

IMPERIAL ARMY (MEDICAL)

Underfunded and underappreciated in peacetime (except when they help local authorities cope with natural disasters and epidemics), the Army's Medical section fills a vital need in wartime. Medical personnel serve as field medics, staff Army hospitals, and are the Army's biowarfare defense experts. A few receive commando cross-training and join the elite Special Rescue Teams. All hold the minimum rank of Lieutenant, though few of them are stupid enough to try to command troops.

Medics wear white berets. By the interstellar conventions of war, they cannot transport military supplies (they don't even wear or use weapons), but enemy soldiers must not fire on them. Unfortunately, governments observe both these rules as much in the breach as in obedience... though few soldiers who fire on Medics ever get taken prisoner.

IMPERIAL ARMY (MEDICAL) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
KS: The Imperial Army 11-	2
Paramedics +2	7
PS: Combat Medic 11-	2
PS: Soldier 11-	2
SS: Biology 11-	2
SS: Medicine (INT Roll)	3
Survival (choose one category)	2
Systems Operation (Medical Systems)	2
TF: 1 point's worth (player's choice)	1
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Lieutenant)	5

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 3

IMPERIAL ARMY (OFFICER)

Army officers take one of the branch Packages, then add the abilities listed in the accompanying Package. You may increase the cost of the *Membership* Fringe Benefit to create higher-ranking officers, if necessary.

IMPERIAL ARMY (OFFICER) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+3 PRE	3
Bureaucratics	3
Persuasion	3
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Lieutenant)	+2

Total Cost Of Package: 11

IMPERIAL ARMY (SEA FORCES)

The Sea Forces control the oceans and waters of Earthlike planets and patrol the ammonia and methane seas of icy worlds. They typically use either hover watercraft or submarines. On poorly-explored worlds, the Sea Forces does many of the same things the Imperial Navy does in space, and sometimes refer to itself as the *original* Navy. Sea Forces personnel wear blue berets and carry side-arms.

IMPERIAL ARMY (SEA FORCES) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Combat Piloting or Combat Driving	3
KS: The Imperial Army 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
Mechanics	3
Navigation (Marine)	2
PS: Soldier 11-	2
Survival (Marine)	2
Systems Operation (choose one category)	2
TF: Human Large Military Ships, Human Small Military Ships, Human Submarines	3
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms, Vehicle Weapons	3
Environmental Movement (no penalties underwater)	3
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Corporal)	3

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 5

IMPERIAL ARMY (SPECIAL FORCES)

The elite of the elite, Special Forces tackles the missions other troops can't handle. They operate behind enemy lines, conduct rapid assaults or daring infiltration missions, perform psychological and political warfare, and conduct various other unconventional operations (sometimes in conjunction with the TIC or TSS). The Special Forces and Imperial Marines have a longstanding rivalry for the title of "the ultimate tough guys;" the IASF claims it wins because its men are so tough they don't need battlesuits. Special Forces wear black berets.

IMPERIAL ARMY (SPECIAL FORCES) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 STR	2
+1 DEX	3
+2 CON	4
Armorskin (see page 132)	6
Radio Implant (see page 132)	8
Running +2"	4
Swimming +1"	1
+1 with All Combat	8
+2 OCV with weapon of choice	4
Computer Programming	3
Demolitions	3
KS: The Imperial Army 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
Martial Arts: Commando Training (10 points' worth of Maneuvers and Weapon Elements; player's choice	10
Navigation (Land)	2
Paramedics	3
PS: Soldier 11-	2
Survival (choose two categories)	4
Stealth	3
Systems Operation (choose two categories)	4
Tactics	3
WF: Human Common Melee Weapons, Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms	6
9 points' worth of Skills from the following list Bugging, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Concealment, Cryptography, Electronics, Lockpicking, Security Systems, Shadowing, Tracking, WF, any Background Skill, additional categories for Survival or Systems Operation	9
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Corporal)	3

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20
Rivalry (Marines)	-5

Total Cost Of Package: 69

IMPERIAL MARINE (ENLISTED)

As the Empire's rapid-deployment offensive force, the Imperial Marines get sent into danger more often and with less preparation than any other service. Trained to adapt to and overcome any situation, with an ethos of "get the job done, then ask permission," they often come into conflict with high-ranking officers and the more rule-bound services... but no one can argue with results.

Marines fight as battlesuited infantry, specializing in orbital drops and space boarding actions. Out of their armor they wear gray berets and carry energy rifles.

IMPERIAL MARINE (ENLISTED) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Radio Implant (see page 132)	8
Running +1"	2
Swimming +1"	1
+2 with All Combat	16
Breakfall	3
Demolitions	3
KS: The Imperial Marines 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
PS: Marine 11-	2
Survival (choose one category)	2
Stealth	3
Systems Operation (choose one category)	2
Tactics	3
TF: 1 point's worth (player's choice)	1
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms, Dracon Battlesuit	5
12 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Bugging, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Concealment, Electronics, Lockpicking, Mechanics, Security Systems, Shadowing, Tracking, WF, any Background Skill, additional categories for Survival or Systems Operation	12
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Corporal)	3

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20
Rivalry (IASF)	-5

Total Cost Of Package: 44

IMPERIAL MARINE (OFFICER)

Marine officers take the Enlisted Package, then add the abilities listed in the accompanying Package. You may increase the cost of the *Membership* Fringe Benefit to create higher-ranking officers, if necessary.

IMPERIAL MARINE (OFFICER) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Bureaucratics	3
Navigation (Land, Space)	3
+2 with Tactics	4
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Lieutenant)	+2

Total Cost Of Package: 12

IMPERIAL NAVY (COMMAND)

Command crewmembers lead the Navy's ships and units — other branches keep the ships running, Command decides what to do with them. They administrate, determine strategy, and perform other leadership tasks.

Most people consider Command the most aristocratic branch of all the Imperial military services, since high Navy rank usually leads to political power. Command personnel wear a blue shirt (usually very neatly pressed). The lowest officer rank is Ensign; higher-ranking officers have a better *Membership* Fringe Benefit (and usually some Skill Levels and additional abilities as well).

IMPERIAL NAVY (COMMAND) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Bureaucratics	3
Computer Programming	3
High Society	3
AK: The Milky Way Galaxy 11-	2
KS: The Imperial Navy 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
PS: Navy 11-	2
SS: Astronomy 11-	2
SS: Physics 11-	2
Tactics +1	5
TF: Human Space Vehicles	2
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms, Vehicle Weapons (for two Vehicles)	4
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Ensign)	5
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 16

IMPERIAL NAVY (FLIGHT) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Combat Piloting +1	5
Navigation (Space, Hyperspace, Displacement)	4
AK: The Milky Way Galaxy 11-	2
KS: The Imperial Navy 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
PS: Navy 11-	2
SS: Astronomy 11-	2
SS: Physics 11-	2
Systems Operation (choose one category)	2
TF: Human Space Vehicles	2
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms, Vehicle Weapons (for two vehicles)	4
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Petty Officer)	3
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 11

IMPERIAL NAVY (FLIGHT)

Flight personnel pilot and navigate Imperial ships. The helmsman aboard a capital ship, the pilot of a shuttle or fighter, and the chartmakers of the Navigation Office all belong to the Flight branch. Flight personnel wear black shirts, which gives them a strangely sinister appearance at odds with their devil-may-care thrillseeker reputation.

IMPERIAL NAVY (LIFESYSTEMS) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Computer Programming	3
Electronics (choose one category)	2
KS: The Imperial Navy 11-	2
Mechanics or Paramedics	3
PS: Navy 11-	2
SS: Biology 12-	3
Systems Operation (Environmental Systems, Medical Systems) +2	8
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Petty Officer)	3
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 7

Option: Medical Officer

Ability	Cost
Choose Paramedics	0
SS: Medicine (INT Roll)	3

Total cost: +3 points

IMPERIAL NAVY (LIFESYSTEMS)

The Lifesystems branch maintains life support aboard Navy ships and stations. It also includes the Medical section, the personnel responsible for crew entertainment and morale, and crewmembers who handle waste-reclamation and food services duties. Lifesystems tends the hydroponic farms aboard large ships, maintains the air tanks on smaller craft, and staffs the sickbays. For some reason, Lifesystems crewmembers tend to be clannish and don't associate much with other crewmembers. They wear green shirts.

IMPERIAL NAVY (PROPULSION)

The Propulsion branch, also known as Engineering or Maintenance, builds, repairs, and maintains powerplants, engines, stardrives, and any other ship systems some other branch doesn't take care of. In peacetime, Propulsion crewmembers suffer more casualties than any other branch of the Navy. They wear red shirts.

IMPERIAL NAVY (PROPULSION) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Computer Programming +1	5
Electronics (choose one category) +1	4
KS: The Imperial Navy 11-	2
Mechanics +1	5
PS: Navy 11-	2
SS: Physics (INT Roll)	3
SS: Starship Engineering (INT Roll)	3
4 points' worth of additional SSs	4
Security Systems	3
Systems Operation (choose three categories)	6
TF: Human Space Vehicles	2
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Petty Officer)	3
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 23

IMPERIAL NAVY (SCIENCE AND SENSORS) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Computer Programming +1	5
Deduction	3
Electronics (choose one category)	2
KS: The Imperial Navy 11-	2
Mechanics 8-	1
PS: Navy 11-	2
SS: Astronomy (INT Roll)	3
SS: Physics (INT Roll)	3
5 points' worth of additional SSs	5
Systems Operation (Communications Systems, Sensor Systems) +2	8
TF: Human Space Vehicles	2
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Petty Officer)	3
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 20

IMPERIAL NAVY (SCIENCE AND SENSORS)

Science and Sensors ("S&S" in naval parlance) operates the ship's sensors (a vital role in many combat situations), studies scientific phenomena, conducts research, performs experiments, and as necessary assists the Propulsion branch. They also handle the ship's communication requirements. Its members wear bronze-colored shirts.

IMPERIAL NAVY (SECURITY) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Computer Programming	3
Criminology	3
Interrogation	3
KS: The Imperial Navy 11-	2
KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
PS: Navy 11-	2
Security Systems	3
Streetwise	3
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms	4
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Petty Officer)	3
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 9

IMPERIAL NAVY (SECURITY)

The Imperial Navy's Security branch handles ship and station security, including repelling actions against boarders. The Navy established the branch to replace the Imperial Marines, since experience proved that training Marines for offensive operations in battlesuits did not necessarily make them good at security. To this day, Security personnel and Imperial Marines don't mix.

Security troops essentially serve as Navy police, and many of them wind up going into law enforcement or bounty hunting upon retirement. They wear grey shirts.

IMPERIAL NAVY (TACTICAL)

If Science & Sensors serves as a starship's eyes and ears, Tactical branch is a ship's fist. Its members operate a ship's weapons (but not ECM/ECCM, which Science & Sensors handles), shields, and stealth equipment. During quiet times they participate in practice drills, maintain weapons, and develop new tactics and strategies for dealing with the enemy. They wear burnt orange shirts.

IMPERIAL NAVY (TACTICAL) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Computer Programming	3
Electronics (choose one category)	2
KS: The Imperial Navy 11-	2
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
KS: The Thorgon or Ackálian Military 11- (player's choice)	2
PS: Navy 11-	2
Systems Operation (Weapon Systems) +2	6
TF: Human Space Vehicles	2
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms, Vehicle Weapons (for two vehicles)	4
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Petty Officer)	3
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 7

TERRAN EXPLORATION SERVICE (CREWMEMBER)

Crewmembers in the TES pilot starships and spacecraft. They handle exploration in space and transport mission specialists and scientists to study new worlds and phenomena.

This Package Deal represents a young TES officer who trained at the Academy. However, many Exploration Service crewmembers come to the TES after a career as a merchant or the like, in which case they may have better Skill Rolls, more Skills, or Skill Enhancers such as *Jack Of All Trades* or *Traveler*.

IMPERIAL NAVY (TACTICAL) PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Computer Programming	3
Electronics (choose one category)	2
AK: The Milky Way Galaxy 11-	2
KS: The TES 11-	2
Mechanics	3
Navigation (Space, Hyperspace)	3
4 points' worth of SSs	4
Systems Operation (choose two categories)	4
TF: Human Small Military Spacecraft	1
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Petty Officer)	3
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Frequently, Major)	-15

Total Cost Of Package: 13

TERRAN EXPLORATION SERVICE (MISSION SPECIALIST)

Mission specialists are the Exploration Service's experts on planetary exploration, alien contact, and science. They lack the high levels of specialized knowledge civilian scientists have, but they can do a little of everything. More skilled Mission Specialists have the *Scientist* Skill Enhancer.

TES MISSION SPECIALIST PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Computer Programming	3
Electronics (choose one category)	2
KS: The TES 11-	2
Navigation (Land)	2
Paramedics	3
6 points' worth of SSs	6
Survival (choose two categories)	4
Systems Operation (choose one category)	2
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
Fringe Benefit: Membership (Petty Officer)	3

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Frequently, Major)	-15

Total Cost Of Package: 9

CIVILIAN PACKAGES

Only a few hundred billion citizens of the Empire join the armed forces or work for the government. The rest are civilians... but they can get into just as much trouble as any Imperial functionary.

Criminal Careers

Crime may not always pay, but it does sometimes lead characters into interesting adventures. Even non-criminals may come into contact with crooks as adversaries.

ASSASSIN

In the Byzantine world of Imperial politics, some people use assassins to dispose of their adversaries. In some circles, a well-planned, well-executed assassination leads to feelings of admiration... and fear... among those who learn of it.

The most successful assassins tend to work for interstellar crime cartels. They get sent in, kill their target, and then leave; they're usually light-years away when the planetary police start trying to figure out who did it. Some have murky underground connections to the TSS and TIC, trading occasional "wet work" for a little covert help suppressing evidence and interfering with interstellar law enforcement.

A very few assassins work as freelancers. Incredibly lucky or incredibly skilled (or both), they have to rely on their wits and abilities to not only get the job done, but stay clear of the ISP, enemy assassins, and the countless other threats they encounter every week.

ASSASSIN PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
+2 OCV with weapon of choice	4
Acting	3
Disguise	3
Fast Draw (choose one category)	3
Stealth	3
Streetwise	3
WF: 4 points' worth (player's choice)	4
9 points' worth of Skills from the following list Bribery, Bugging, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Concealment, Demolitions, High Society, Lockpicking, Persuasion, Security Systems, Seduction, Shadowing, Sleight Of Hand, any Background Skill (such as SS: Pharmacology/Toxicology)	9

Disadvantages	Value
Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Major)	-15

Total Cost Of Package: 17

JACKER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Analyze Computer Systems & Software +1	5
Computer Programming +2	7
Cryptography	3
Electronics or Systems Operation (choose one category)	2
AK: Computer Networks (INT Roll +2)	5
KS: The Jacker World 11-	2
Security Systems (INT +1); Computer Security Only (-½)	3
Streetwise	3

Disadvantages	Value
Hunted: some police or security organization (player's choice)	-15
Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Major)	-15

Total Cost Of Package: 0

JACKER

People refer to criminals who work by remote control over computer networks *jackers*. The term comes from "Data Hijacker," but also refers to the way many jackers use neural interfeace jacks to "jack in" to computer systems to speed up their access and response time.

Most jackers are thieves. They either steal money by arranging false electronic transfers, or they steal valuable information or software they can sell through a fence. Given the ever-increasing quality of computer security software, jacking is a dangerous, merciless occupation — a jacker either stays on the "bleeding edge" of computer tech, or he's likely to find himself bleeding in a much less pleasant way. And of course, anyone peddling black-market information can run into some black-market goons hired to get it back....

PIRATE

Genuine scourges of the spaceways, pirates take advantage of the huge scale and political fragmentation of the Galaxy to rob starships and sell the cargoes elsewhere. See page 102 for more information about them. This Package Deal works best for the less violent, more "rogue with a heart of gold." type of pirate.

PIRATE PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Combat Piloting	3
AK: The Milky Way Galaxy 11-	2
Navigation (Space, Hyperspace)	3
Security Systems	3
Streetwise	3
Systems Operation (choose one category)	2
TF: Human Space Vehicles	2
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms, Vehicle Weapons (for two vehicles)	6
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list Bribery, Computer Programming, Demolitions, Electronics, Forgery, Gambling, Persuasion, Shadowing, Stealth, Trading, any Background Skill	6
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
Hunted: some police or security organization (player's choice)	-15

Total Cost Of Package: 19

REBEL

While revolts don't occur as frequently during Marissa III's reign as they do over the fifty years after it, rebels do exist. Most operate in small groups on single worlds; the vast networks of rebel activity that so bedeviled Sandor and Sigismund have not yet arisen.

At this point in history, people become rebels after engaging in some ordinary career, so characters should take this Package Deal in addition to one representing some other occupation. For later-period rebels, who may have been nothing but rebels all their lives, use either the Pirate or Rogue Package Deals for the "starting occupation."

REBEL PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Streetwise	3
Systems Operation (choose one category)	2
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list	6
Acting, Bribery, Computer Programming, Cryptography, Demolitions, Disguise, Electronics, Forgery, Persuasion, Security Systems, Shadowing, Stealth, Trading, TF, WF	

Disadvantages	Value
Hunted: ISP, TSS, or TIC 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture/Kill)	-25

Total Cost Of Package: -14

Option — Inexperienced Rebel: Reduce Streetwise to 8- (1 point). Total Cost Of Package: -16

ROGUE

"Rogue" is a catch-all term for planet- or station-bound criminals and ne'er-do-wells: thieves, con men, gamblers, dealers in illegal goods, and so on. Unlike assassins or pirates, they don't often commit acts of violence, if only because Imperial law enforcement comes down hard on killers. They can usually defend themselves, but they mainly just want to separate people from their money by various illicit means.

ROGUE PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Stealth	3
Streetwise +1	5
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms	4
9 points' worth of Skills from the following list	9
Bribery, Bugging, Climbing, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Concealment, Electronics, Forgery, Gambling, High Society, Lockpicking, Persuasion, Security Systems, Seduction, Shadowing, Sleight Of Hand, Trading, any Background Skill	

Disadvantages	Value
Hunted: some police or security organization (player's choice)	-15

Total Cost Of Package: 6

SMUGGLER

Smugglers exist in the grey area separating honest traders from thieves. They carry illegal cargoes and passengers, and sometimes deal in stolen goods, but they usually don't steal the cargo themselves. Smugglers typically have a cover operation as legitimate merchants, and conceal their illegal cargo with hidden compartments and faked records — after all, it gets difficult to do business when you have to hide what you do but still advertise that you have illegal goods for sale.

This Package Deal does not include a ship (since individual GMs may have different rules about how characters should buy Vehicles), but virtually every smuggler has his own small space vessel.

SMUGGLER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Bribery	3
Combat Piloting	3
Concealment	3
Forgery (choose one category)	2
Streetwise	3
Trading +1	5
TF: Human Space Vehicles	2
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms, Vehicle Weapons (for two vehicles)	4
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list	6
Bugging, Bureaucratics, Computer Programming, Conversation, Electronics, Gambling, High Society, Lockpicking, Persuasion, Security Systems, Seduction, Shadowing, any Background Skill	
Fringe Benefit: Starship License	1

Disadvantages	Value
Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Frequently, Severe)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 12
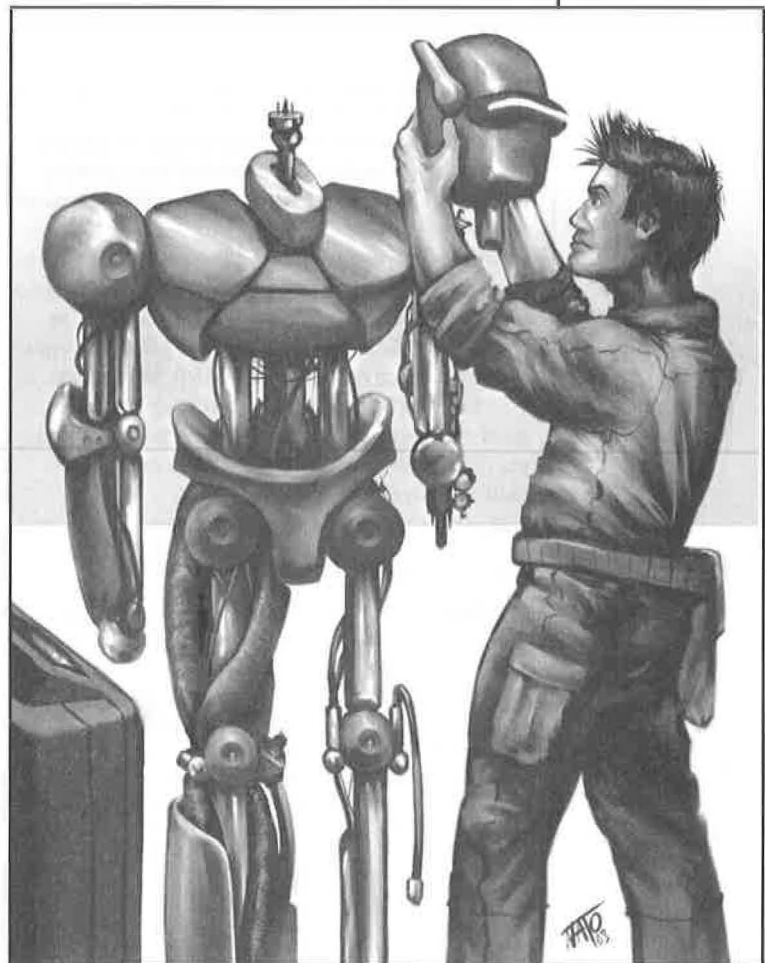
Space Careers

Characters' career possibilities in space are nearly as infinite as space itself. In an environment where even small mistakes can lead to death or disaster, many occupations teach skills and abilities adventurers find useful.

EXPLORER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Navigation (Space, Hyperspace)	3
4 points' worth of SSs	4
Survival (choose two categories)	4
TF: Human Small Industrial/Exploration Spacecraft	1
WF: Human Advanced Small Arms	2
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list	6
Bureaucractics, Computer Programming, Electronics, Mechanics, Systems Operation, Tracking, Trading, any Background Skill	
Fringe Benefit: Starship License	1

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 21

EXPLORER

Freelance explorers do the same things the Terran Exploration Service does, only for money. They want to locate worlds suitable for colonization, or lifeless planets with abundant resources, so they can file a claim with the Ministry for Colonization and Development and then sell the rights to someone with the ability to exploit the planet. Since they can't afford starship sensors as elaborate as those of the TES, civilian explorers prefer to roam a planet's surface rather than probe it from orbit.

Like the Smuggler, this character typically needs his own small starship. Experienced explorers often have the *Jack Of All Trades* or *Traveler* Skill Enhancers.

PILOT PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Combat Piloting	3
Navigation (Space, Hyperspace)	3
SS (player's choice) 8-	1
Systems Operation (choose one category)	2
TF: Human Space Vehicles	2
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list	6
Computer Programming, Electronics, Mechanics, Tracking, Trading, WF, any Background Skill	
Fringe Benefit: Starship License	1
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 22

PILOT

Pilots fly spacecraft ranging from orbital shuttles to interstellar merchant ships. They tend to have fast reflexes, good vision, and an intuitive grasp of Newtonian physics. They often have a well-deserved reputation as daredevils, renegades, risk-takers, and thrillseekers. Civilian pilots often bring Navy experience to the job; veterans should use the Imperial Navy (Flight) Package, adjusted for being off active duty.

PROSPECTOR/SALVAGER

Some people make a good living poking around in space looking for valuable stuff. Those who specialize in searching out mineral deposits on planets or asteroids are *prospectors,* while those who collect and sell space junk are *salvagers,* but the basic skills involved in each job are the same. Since they spend long periods of time traveling in obscure regions and sometimes come back with valuable items, salvagers naturally make good cover identities for pirates and smugglers.

This Package Deal does not include a ship (since individual GMs may have different rules about how characters should buy Vehicles), but virtually every prospector or salvager has his own small space vessel.

PROSPECTOR/SALVAGER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Demolitions	3
AK: player's choice 11-	2
SS: Geology or Archaeology or Salvaging 11-	2
Trading	3
TF: Human Small Industrial/Exploration Spacecraft	1
Fringe Benefit: Starship License	1
Environmental Movement (no penalties in zero gravity)	4

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 16

TRADER

While large corporations handle most commerce in Imperial space, it takes daring entrepreneurs — independent traders — to find new markets, open up new trade routes, and exploit the opportunities the major commercial firms overlook. Most go bankrupt, but a few become immensely rich.

This Package Deal represents a trader who keeps moving rather than running a trading post — either a spacefaring trader in a beat-up starship or an itinerant merchant on a planet with an equally beat-up truck or small ship. In either case, the character should also buy an appropriate Vehicle. For a stay-put merchant, substitute a Base (his shop or place of business) and remove the Fringe Benefit.

TRADER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Bureaucratics	3
AK: trading area 11-	2
Trading +3	9
Transport Familiarity (2 points' worth)	2
High Society or Streetwise	3
Fringe Benefit: Starship License	1

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 20

Other Careers

Many civilian careers don't involve going into, or journeying through, outer space on a regular basis. Some folk prefer to ply their trades planetside or on a space station.

ADEPT

Not everyone with psionic talent joins the Mind Police. Many go into private practice in various fields — psychotherapy, private investigation, security, and counterpsi work. Private psionics don't face as much fear and mistrust from the public as Mind Police officers, but they don't have a powerful Imperial bureau to protect them, either. The Imperial Psionic Foundation licenses all adepts and requires them to have their license documentation with them at all times. Most adepts prominently display the "IPF Licensed" logo on their clothing and working papers so no one can accuse them of concealing the fact that they have psi abilities.

basis, often making up for any lack of income with oversized egos.

ADEPT PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Analyze Psi Powers	3
KS: The Psionic World 11-	2
Power: Psionics	3
SS: Psionics 11-	2
Fringe Benefit: Psionics License	1
30 points' worth of psionic powers	30

Disadvantages	Value
Hunted: IPF 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)	-10
Hunted: Mind Police 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)	-10
Social Limitation: Minority (Very Frequently, Minor)	-15

Total Cost Of Package: 6

ARTIST/ENTERTAINER

The creative arts are big business in the Imperial era. Entertainers in old and new media have a potential audience of trillions of beings, so even relatively obscure artists can attract a large enough fan base to make respectable money. Besides the older forms like painting and writing, many new forms have come into existence: zero-gravity kinetic liquid sculpture, genetic art, interactive virtual game design, holofilm, cyberspace dance. Artists and entertainers usually work on a freelance

ARTIST/ENTERTAINER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
High Society 8-	1
KS: The Artistic World 11-	2
KS: art form of player's choice (Characteristic-based Roll)	3
PS: relevant to type of art performed/created (Characteristic-based Roll +2)	5

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 11

BOUNTY HUNTER

Freelance law enforcement agents, bounty hunters specialize in bringing back fugitives who have fled across interstellar distances or political borders. Spaceship crews who have skipped out on their bank loans are among the most common quarry. Most bounty hunters abide by the law and the regulations governing their profession, but a highly visible minority of trigger-happy goons creates bad publicity for them, and may pose an even greater danger to the public than the fugitives they hunt.

BOUNTY HUNTER PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
KS: Criminal Law 11-	2
Streetwise	3
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms	4
9 points' worth of Skills from the following list	9
Bribery, Bugging, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Criminology, Deduction, Interrogation, Lockpicking, Persuasion, Security Systems, Shadowing, any Background Skill	
Fringe Benefit: Private Investigator's License	2

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 20

MERCENARY

Mercenary soldiers occupy a curious position in Imperial society. The Empire doesn't like its citizens or corporations hiring private armies, but at the same time the Navy can't guard every planet against raiders, and sometimes the inhabitants of a corporate-ruled planet get rebellious. As a result, the Empire has a number of licensed "special security" companies, also known as "defense consultants," working legally within its territory. They have large staffs of well-equipped military veterans and the heaviest weapons the Empire allows private citizens to own. They typically fight as light infantry in standard Army armored fatigues.

MERCENARY PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-	2
PS: Soldier 11-	2
Streetwise	3
Survival (choose one category)	2
Tactics	3
WF: Human Small Arms, Human Advanced Small Arms, plus two more points' worth (player's choice)	6
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list	6
Bugging, Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, Computer Programming, Concealment, Criminology, Interrogation, Paramedics, Persuasion, Navigation, Security Systems, Shadowing, any Background Skill	
Fringe Benefit: Mercenary License	1

Disadvantages	Value
Distinctive Features: Uniform (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)	-5
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 0

SCIENTIST

Although scientific research in the Empire has slowed compared to the pace of earlier, freer centuries, Imperial space contains millions of professionals in the sciences. To some extent, Terran science is still coping with the staggering influx of data provided by interstellar travel — instead of studying a handful of planets and one world's life, Humans now have thousands of lifebearing worlds and an uncounted number of types of technology to learn about. Imperial-era researchers stay busy classifying and describing thousands of new life forms, planetary structures, stars, and technologies; only a few do theoretical research. Private-sector and government researchers study technologies with military or commercial applications.

SCIENTIST PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Computer Programming	3
Deduction	3
KS: The Academic World 11-	2
11 points' worth of SSs (player's choice)	11
3 points' worth of Skills from the following list	3
Electronics, Mechanics, Systems Operation, any Background Skill other than SS	

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 22

TECHNICIAN

It's a high-tech world out there, and the Empire depends on billions of technicians, engineers, and tinkerers to keep things running. Many have corporate jobs or comfortable lives on colony worlds. A few live more independently as freelancers.

TECHNICIAN PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Science Skill(s) (2 points' worth)	2
15 points' worth of Skills from the following list	15

Bugging, Computer Programming, Demolitions, Electronics, Inventor, Lockpicking, Mechanics, Security Systems, Systems Operation, WF, Weaponsmith, any Background Skill

Disadvantages	Value
None	

Total Cost Of Package: 17

Robot Player Characters

In the Terran Empire setting, players can have robot PCs, built using the rules on page 165-66 of *Star Hero*. However, robot characters in Imperial society are not people but things. They're valuable things — damaging someone's robot constitutes a serious vandalism offense incurring a heavy fine or jail time — but things nonetheless. No "free robots" exist, just as twenty-first century Earth has no "free automobiles." By law, a robot's owner is responsible for anything it does. Robot PCs must take a Social Limitation (page 129) to reflect their status.

However, a small number of robots and AI computers, aided by Machine Rights activists, have found ways around some of these problems. Robots (just like cars or buildings) can belong to corporations — so a handful of dummy corporations registered on worlds like Rand IV or on neutral worlds beyond the border own sentient machines but have no Human owners themselves. This is blatantly ille-

gal, so a robot PC owned by a dummy corporation should have the Social Limitation *Harmful Secret* (if the authorities find out about him, they must, by law, capture and demolish him). The fake corporation system works as long as no anti-robot activists know about it; if it ever comes to light, it would create a tremendous outcry at the sinister machine plot to conquer Humanity.

GAME ELEMENTS

When you create characters for a Terran Empire campaign, you can use most of the game elements — Skills, Perks, Talents, Powers, Power Modifiers, Power Frameworks, and Disadvantages — as they're described in the *HERO System* rulebook. Some use the rules in *Star Hero* for science fiction campaigns, and a few require special rules just for the Terran Empire setting.

SKILLS

Pages 39-48 of *Star Hero* discuss special rules for Skills in science fiction campaigns. Except as noted below, the *Star Hero* rules for Skills apply in Terran Empire campaigns. The Terran Empire is a "Space Opera" setting for Skills which have particular rules for how they apply to Space Opera games (including the Everyman Skill list on page 42 of that book). See also page 135 for rules regarding technology-oriented Skills and alien tech.

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING

Characters don't need this Skill to operate most computers during the Terran Empire era Friendly interfaces and expert systems make it possible for just about anyone who can speak or read to use a personal computer. Computer Programming represents a character's ability to build computers, program them, get them to do out of the ordinary things, establish or penetrate computer security, correct malfunctions, and the like. It's a Skill for professional technicians, engineers, and similar people, not everyday citizens.

ELECTRONICS

Because electronic devices are both omnipresent and extremely important in the Terran Empire setting, characters must buy Electronics by categories, using the rules for Systems Operation (see below). Otherwise, characters could accomplish too much with it.

GAMBLING

Many of the traditional Human gambling games (poker, craps, horse racing) remain popular in the Terran Empire, but people have invented new ones, or imported games from alien cultures. The accompanying sidebar lists some of the more common, including the Perseid dice game Shuran (in which players try to get equal or below one another's rolls while increasing the number of dice rolled) and the Se'ecra board game Chaotic Effects (in which the board changes in response to player moves).

HIGH SOCIETY

For Humans, High Society applies by default to Imperial society and Earth's culture. On Human worlds with unusual cultures, characters suffer a -1 penalty to all rolls unless they have an appropriate Culture Knowledge and succeed with a roll. On alien worlds, they suffer a minimum -2 penalty, which increases to -3 or more in complex social situations. Again, an appropriate Culture Knowledge negates these penalties if the character succeeds with a roll. (Aliens of course suffer these same penalties among unusual worlds of their own, or when in Terran space.)

A character may define his High Society as applying by default to some species or society other than his own. For example, a Human raised on Fexao might buy High Society as if he were a Fex. Any alien species defines the Skill as working with his own culture, not Terran culture.

LANGUAGES

Relatively few persons from starfaring civilizations learn to speak other languages; translation technology makes it unnecessary. A few study languages as a hobby.

Almost all species in the Galaxy communicate using spoken language. There are three important exceptions. The first is the Se'ecra, whose language involves wing flutters, gestures, and scent combinations. Other species cannot learn or understand it; the Se'ecra use voice synthesizers to speak to aliens or communicate over long distances without video.

The second is the Varanyi, who use a partly telepathic language; non-telepaths other than *Ks'lch* Varanyi cannot learn it. Other species that primarily use telepathy to communicate, such as the Naloth and the Nan, have the same restrictions.

The third is the Az'arc'a. They cannot "speak" with other species unless they have a radio receiver/transmitter handy.

No language spoken by a species has any degree of similarity to any language that species would consider "alien." For example, no Human language has any similarity with any language from any other species. In fact, characters must spend a minimum of +1 point to learn any alien language. Some languages cost +2, +3, or more points instead; see the accompanying sidebar.

For simplicity, the GM can assume each species or civilization has a single language. This may occur because of the nature of the species, or because cultural and historical factors eventually lead to one language dominating all others (as English does among Humans by the early 2100s). Gamemasters desiring greater realism and com-

plexity can create multiple languages for each species, and possibly species-specific Language Familiarity Charts as well.

In the Terran Empire campaign setting, literacy is the default for all species of ATRI 5 or better. Those from more primitive civilizations must pay +1 point for the ability to read.

TERRAN EMPIRE LANGUAGE COSTS

Species	Language Cost Modifier
Any not specifically listed	+1 Character Point
Jaruma	+2 Character Points
Korundar	+2 Character Points
Krrst	+2 Character Points
Osathri	+2 Character Points
Shiseki	+2 Character Points
Tkaki	+3 Character Points
Xenovore	+2 Character Points
Zmm	+2 Character Points

NAVIGATION

Pages 159-60 mention Navigation (Hyperspace) and Navigation (Displacement), used to operate Hyperdrives and Displacer drives, respectively. A pilot with Navigation (Space) (used for normalspace flying with STL drives) can use it to navigate Hyperspace at a -4 Skill Roll penalty, but not to navigate with a Displacer drive.

To operate a Spacewarp drive, characters need Navigation (Spacewarp). A pilot with Navigation (Space) can use it to navigate while moving at superluminal speeds at a -2 Skill Roll penalty.

PARAMEDICS

For Humans, Paramedics and other medical Skills apply by default to Humans, but they can use them to treat aliens. They can treat variant forms of the Human species (Martians, Selkies) without penalty. Treating basically humanoid or mammalian beings (such as Perseids, Se-lag, Ackálians, Zurites, Fex, or Thorgons) imposes a -1 penalty. Treating non-humanoid or non-mammalian vertebrates (for example, Mon'dabi, Xenovores, Mostreen, Osathri, and Quagi) entails at -2 penalty. Treating invertebrates (like Se'ecra, Shisheki, or Zmm) involves a -3 penalty. For truly exotic life-forms such as Az'arc'a, a character must have a separate form of the *Paramedics* Skill. A character may define his Paramedics as applying by default to some species other than his own. For example, a Human raised on Toracta might buy Paramedics as if he were a Toractan. Any alien species defines the Skill as working with his own species, not Humans.

SYSTEMS OPERATION

Like Electronics, Systems Operation becomes extremely important in Terran Empire campaigns due to the frequency with which characters use devices such as sensors, communications systems, and advanced weapons. The rules and breakdown for the Skill on page 47 of *Star Hero* apply.

TRANSPORT FAMILIARITY

In the Terran Empire setting, characters buy TFs not only by category, but by species. Use the categories in the table on page 52 of the *HERO System 5th Edition,* but with species appellations: Human Common Motorized Ground Vehicles; Mon'dabi Air Vehicles; Ackálian Water Vehicles; Osathri Water Skiing. (Ground-based hovercraft are a subcategory of the Ground Vehicles category.) Space Vehicles are an exception. For them, use the table on page 126.

A character who has a TF for a given species can operate the vehicles of a closely-related species (*i.e.,* one governed by the same galactic government) at a -2 penalty, but all actions involving the vehicle (moving, maneuvering, and the like) require a minimum of a Half Phase (or a Full Phase for actions that ordinarily take a Half Phase). A character who has a TF for a given species can operate the vehicles of species not closely related to that species at a -4 penalty, but all actions involving the vehicle require a minimum of a Full Phase (or an Extra Phase for actions that ordinarily take a Full Phase).

At the GM's option, a character who wants to use his Combat Driving/Piloting with a type of Vehicle for which he has no TF can do so, but at a -4 penalty on every roll (or -6 for other species's vehicles).

TERRAN EMPIRE WEAPON FAMILIARITIES

Common Melee Weapons
Mon'dabi *Cha'shur*
Mon'dabi Mace
Osathri *Yoolab*

Uncommon Melee Weapons
Ackálian Sickle
Se'ecra Wrist-Blades

Small Arms
Gauss Guns
Rocket Pistols
Rocket Rifles

Advanced Small Arms (may be purchased as a group)
Electron Beam Weapons
EMP Weapons
Ion Blaster Weapons
Laser Weapons
Particle Beam Weapons
Plasma Weapons
Sonic Weapons

Battlesuits (must be purchased individually)
Dracon Battlesuit

Characters purchase categories or subcategories *by species*; thus, a character might have Human Advanced Small Arms, Ackálian Common Melee Weapons, Mon'dabi Laser Weapons, or the like.

If a character has a WF that covers a group or type of weapons for a particular species (such as Blades, Common Melee Weapons, or Advanced Small Arms), he may use another species's weapons from that category for only a -2 unfamiliar weapon penalty, instead of the usual -3.

TERRAN EMPIRE SPACE VEHICLES

Space Vehicle Subcategories
Small Personal-Use Spacecraft
Large Personal-Use Spacecraft ("Space Yachts")
Small Commercial Spacecraft
Large Commercial Spacecraft
Small Industrial/Exploration Spacecraft
Large Industrial/Exploration Spacecraft
Small Military Spacecraft
Medium Military Spacecraft
Large Military Spacecraft
Mobile Space Stations

Characters must buy the entire Space Vehicles category, or any given subcategory, *by species*. Thus, a character who spends 2 points for TF: Human Space Vehicles doesn't known how to operate Ackálian Space Vehicles or Perseid Small Military Spacecraft. (At the GM's option, characters can interpret "species" to mean "government or civilization," so that they would buy Terran Empire Space Vehicles, CCR Space Vehicles, and the like.)

Note that these subcategories do not differentiate between methods of propulsion — a character with Human Space Vehicles can fly an Apollo rocket, a fusion-rocket-driven merchant ship, a Hyperdrive space yacht, or the most advanced Displacer drive ship available. Gamemasters who want greater realism and precision should divide each species's Space Vehicles category into three categories: Early Space Vehicles (chemical, thermal, ion, and plasma rocket-drive ships, solar sails); Standard Space Vehicles (fusion and anti-matter rockets, reactionless thrusters, Hyperdrive, Displacer drive); and Advanced Space Vehicles (Spacewarp drive and everything beyond). Each category still costs 2 Character Points; that way, characters who know how to use the typical starships of the twenty-seventh century can't necessarily operate a chemical rocket. A character cannot buy a TF for a type of space vehicle his species does not yet possess; for example, during the Terran Empire era, there's no such category as Human Advanced Space Vehicles, since Humans have not yet invented or acquired the Spacewarp drive.

WEAPON FAMILIARITY

As with Transport Familiarity, the rules for the Terran Empire setting arrange WFs by species to better simulate the appropriate "Space Opera" feel — characters can use a wide variety of weapons without too much difficulty. See the accompanying sidebar for details.

PERKS

Most Perks apply to Terran Empire characters normally, but a few require special rules or expansions.

COMPUTER LINK

Most people automatically have access to planetary datanets, as described on page 92. This Perk gives a character access to a secured or isolated system he couldn't normally use (including access to related Hyperspace relay networks, if appropriate or necessary). See the accompanying table for costs.

TERRAN EMPIRE COMPUTER LINKS

Computer System	Cost
Local law enforcement database	5
Planetary law enforcement database	7
ISP's database	8
Mind Police's database	9
TIC's database	9
Imperial military branch's computers (Navy, Marines, Army, or TES)	10
TSS's database	10

DEEP COVER

For 1 Character Point, a character may buy a restricted form of Deep Cover: an anonymous datanet persona or mailing address. This allows him to send datanet messages or otherwise use a data network without revealing his true identity, when he used the network, or the like. Of course, as with any Deep Cover, a character can lose this Perk (and the points he paid for it) if the authorities "blow his cover" during the course of game play.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Besides the standard Fringe Benefits (including the expanded Head Of State, Police Powers, and Starship Master's License on pages 49-50 of *Star Hero*), Terran Empire characters can buy the following Fringe Benefits:

Membership: Merchant Adventurers Society (1 Character Point)

Characters who want to belong to the Merchant Adventurers Society must pay for a 1-point Fringe Benefit.

Membership: Military Rank (cost varies)

The accompanying table lists the Perk costs for the ranks in the Terran Empire military. You can use these to derive the cost for ranks in other governments' militaries, if necessary.

FRINGE BENEFIT: IMPERIAL MILITARY RANK

Army/Marine/TSS Rank	Navy/TES Rank	Cost
Private	Crewmember	1
Specialist	Specialist	2
Corporal	Petty Officer	3
Sergeant	Chief Petty Officer	4
Lieutenant	Ensign	5
Captain	Lieutenant	6
Major	Lt. Commander	7
Lieutenant Colonel	Commander	8
Colonel	Captain	9
Major General	Commodore	10
Lieutenant General	Vice Admiral	11
General	Admiral	12
Marshal·	Fleet Admiral	13
Grand Marshal	Grand Admiral	14
Supreme Marshal	Supreme Admiral	15

Membership: Psionic League (1 Character Point)

Membership in the Psionic League (see sidebar, page 131) costs 1 point.

Membership: Religious Position (cost varies)

The accompanying table lists the Perk costs for various positions in Galactic religious organizations. You can use these to derive the cost for positions in other religions, if necessary.

FRINGE BENEFIT: RELIGIOUS POSITION

Position	Cost
Galactic Church of the Creator	
Priest	2
Lector	5
Archimandrite	8
Preceptor	10
Maldarian Priest	2
Kurnam	
Priest	3
Oracle	20
Scomaru Shaan	
Speaker	2
Intercessor	5
Avatar	30

Psionics License (1 Character Point)

A psionic character must have a Psionics License from his government to use his powers subject to the laws governing them. For example, the license allows him to speak to someone telepathically, but not to read a person's mind without permission or to commit psychic assault.

A license granted by one government doesn't necessarily mean anything to another. However, the Terran Empire, Mon'dabi Federation, Perseid Empire, and CCR all have mutual psionic recognition treaties; a license granted by one of these governments functions in the others' territories as well.

The Varanyi do not require psionic licenses.

VEHICLES AND BASES

In a Terran Empire campaign, the GM should let characters acquire Vehicles and Bases with either money or Character Points (though he may prefer to make some starships points-only, to prevent characters from acquiring too much powerful hardware that could too easily unbalance the game). In either case, even a small starship can become expensive quickly, so the GM may need to provide a helping hand in the game to ensure the PCs get the starship he wants them to have.

TALENTS

In the Terran Empire setting, many Talents (including Absolute Range Sense, Bump Of Direction, Combat Sense, Danger Sense, and Universal Translator) can be low-grade psionic abilities. Characters with some trace of psionic potential, but not enough to have true psi powers, may manifest one of these abilities (as may a full-fledged psi). Of course, characters can buy them (or other Talents appropriate to the game) with other special effects instead, if they prefer.

Humans who have to work in zero gravity routinely learn Environmental Movement for zero G. Universal Translator is used in the Terran Empire setting to create translation devices.

POWERS

Humans can purchase some Powers to reflect body modifications, innate abilities, or psi powers — or, of course, as weapons or gear they don't want to buy with money. Other species may have specific abilities (like a Fex's claws) bought as Powers through their Species Package Deal.

EVERYMAN POWERS

Page 52 of *Star Hero* discusses the concept of "Everyman Powers" — abilities, usually technological in nature, that every character in a science fiction setting possesses. In the Terran Empire setting, characters typically have the following Everyman Powers:

Chronometer (virtually everything, including clothes, has a timekeeper implanted in it) (Absolute Time Sense)

Immunity Treatments (vaccinations against common

colds, flus, and other trivial but annoying diseases) (Life Support [Immunity]: 1 point)

Characters cannot sell back the Chronometer, except with the GM's permission (if so, they get 1 Character Point); it's omnipresent in most civilized societies. Characters can sell back their Immunity Treatments for 1 Character Point, but that means they're susceptible to a host of annoying native and alien viri and bacteria. The GM should roll 1d6 every time the character visits a new planet, space station, or the like; on a 1, the character catches a disease that reduces his STR, DEX, or CON by ½d6 points for the adventure.

LIFE SUPPORT

The Species Package Deals use three variant forms of Life Support GMs may wish to incorporate into other Package Deals they create.

Expanded Breathing (Thin Atmospheres) is a 1-point version of Expanded Breathing that makes it possible for a character to take in oxygen more efficiently. He can breathe without difficulty on worlds with Thin atmospheres, at high elevations (such as when climbing tall mountains), and so forth.

Diminished Eating (Any Protein) is a 1-point form of Diminished Eating that allows a character to obtain nutrition from any type of protein — even types most species cannot ingest or digest.

Safe Environment (Low-Intensity Radiation) is a 1-point Safe Environment allowing a character to withstand low-intensity radiation (such as would frequently bombard a person in an unshielded spacecraft), but not high radiation.

DISADVANTAGES

Most Disadvantages function normally in Terran Empire campaigns, though some (such as Accidental Change) rarely apply. Normal Characteristic Maxima restrictions automatically apply to all characters for no points.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Because Terran Empire campaigns are usually Space Opera-style games featuring hundreds of sentient species, only species with truly bizarre appearances who find themselves at a distinct disadvantage because of them take this Limitation. The GM may, however, allow it more often in campaigns restricted to worlds or sectors where only one species lives, or in like situations.

HUNTED

"The Empire" never Hunts a character (neither does any comparable government). It's too large, diverse, and diffuse an organization to devote all its resources to such a task, and different branches of the Imperial government have different goals and agendas. A character who attracts the unfavorable attention of the Empire should choose a particular part of it as his Hunted — the ISP, TSS, TIC, Imperial Navy, Mind Police, or the like. All of these organizations count as More Powerful Hunteds with Non-Combat

Influence; in a game ranging over the entire Galaxy they cover a Limited Geographical Area (Imperial space).

In many cases, the Empire simply Watches characters. It keeps a close eye on licensed psis, Mind Police agents, mercenaries, and many aliens. For example, any Varanyi with two or more crests automatically becomes Watched by the Mind Police, the TSS, or both while in Imperial territory.

Criminal organizations such as the Hzeel Outfit usually count as More Powerful; weaker ones (like a single band of pirates) are probably As Powerful. Organized crime groups usually have Non-Combat Influence; other criminals do not. Most cover a Limited Geographical Area, though a few (such as the Xenovore Fleet) could appear anywhere in the Galaxy.

PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

This Disadvantage rarely occurs in Terran Empire games. Advanced medicine, pre-natal treatments to correct genetic defects, cybernetic and vat-grown "replacement parts," and the like make it possible to correct or compensate for most physical deficiencies. However, the *Size/Weight, Gravity Adaptation,* and *Alien Physiology* Physical Limitations described on pages 63-64 of *Star Hero* could affect Terran Empire characters.

RIVALRY

Several Imperial bureaux and services have long-standing rivalries with other agencies, as indicated in the Professional Package Deals earlier in this chapter. Any individual character can decide to forego the Rivalry and replace the Disadvantage with something else, but he may still suffer some effects of generalized harassment from the rival group.

SOCIAL LIMITATION

The Terran Empire campaign features several setting-specific Social Limitations for characters in addition to standard ones such as *Harmful Secret*.

Feared Alien (Varies)

In some societies, people regard one or more types of aliens with suspicion and fear. Typically this imposes a -2 penalty on Interaction Skill rolls, and it may cause many other difficulties, such as the police arresting aliens of feared species on a mere pretext.

Of course, characters should only take this Limitation if belonging to a particular species actually hinders them in some way. Usually it applies only in campaigns taking place only in a specific government's space; if the PCs can travel wherever they want, the Disadvantage either does not apply, or applies at a reduced frequency.

The value of the Limitation varies depending on the severity of the fear. In Terran Empire space, Ackálians take it as Occasionally, Minor (5 points), and Xenovores and Varanyi take it as Very Frequently, Minor (15 points). In Ackálian space, any species not ruled by the Ackálians takes it as Frequently, Minor (10 points); the same applies in Thorgon space to any species the Thorgons regard with hostility (such as Humans or other Terran Empire species).

Points)

In Perseid space, species and worlds not yet accorded full civil rights have a difficult time in society — they cannot vote, hold office, acquire certain jobs, or live their lives without a certain level of condescension (and even fear) from others (this may result in a -1 penalty on some Interaction Skill rolls). In campaigns set in Perseid space, this constitutes a Social Limitation.

Species that have received civil rights still suffer discrimination. They take the *Perseid Minority* Social Limitation (Frequently, Minor; 10 points).

Robot (Very Frequently, Major; 20 Points)

In the Terran Empire, and most other states, the law regards sentient robots as property, not free-willed beings, and denies them any civil rights. This Social Limitation represents that.

Secret Psi (Occasionally, Major; 10 Points)

Terran law requires all individuals with psionic powers to register with the government and obtain a license to use them. (Most other states have similar laws; the Varanyi Empire is a notable exception.) Some psis refuse to do this; instead, they hide their powers and try to live a normal life (or take advantage of their psi abilities in secret). If found out, these people face fines, imprisonment, and possibly even forced conscription into some branch of the Terran government.

PSIONICS

Humans have known about psi powers for several centuries — the first verifiable Human psis emerged in the late solar exploration period — but they remain somewhat uneasy about psionics and those who use them. Faced with fully-functional psionic civilizations like the Varanyi, Terran society has increased the pace of accepting psionics and integrating them into daily life, but many people wish for even more rapid change. Empress Marissa, recognizing the extent of the potential Varanyi threat, has established many policies to help "mainstream" psionic individuals, and wants to find ways to increase the proportion of psis in the Human species.

Regulations

By law, all psionics must register with the Imperial Psionics Foundation and obtain a Psionic License (a 1-point Fringe Benefit; see page 127). A Psionic License permits the character to use his powers subject to the law. The Mind Police pursue unlicensed psis; if captured, an unlicensed psi faces fines, imprisonment, forced injection of psi-suppression drugs, or even forced conscription into government service.

The basic laws regarding the use of psionics on others resemble the laws governing physical contact between Humans: no use of powers on another person without his consent; no property damage; and so forth. Standard defenses to crimes (like self-defense) apply. Even when a psi can legally use his powers, the law requires him to use the minimum "force" or telepathic contact necessary to accomplish his objective. Commercial Adepts use pocket computers with thumbprint or retina scanners to obtain written authorization to use their powers on someone.

The law forbids telepathic or clairvoyant snooping, but of course the authorities have a hard time proving it happened. Normal Terran laws regarding invasion of privacy apply.

The Imperial and planetary legal systems don't currently allow the use of psionics (or telepathically-obtained evidence) in court trials, although defendants who really are innocent usually demand a telepathic probe by a licensed Adept, and the results of that test are admissible in court. Imperial security agencies, on the other hand, make lavish use of psi scanning, both consensual and forced. To avoid public outcry, they usually do this only when they have strong additional evidence the subject did something wrong... even if it isn't the crime he's accused of.

Power Ratings

Since the Terran Empire is a Heroic-scale campaign, most psi powers fall in the 15 to 50 point range. A few individuals have stronger powers, and a handful are very powerful indeed, but in most campaigns those people are NPCs.

The IPF and Ministry for Evolution classify psionics by Greek letters depending on how powerful they are:

Psi-Alpha: Persons with no known psionic abilities. The vast majority of Imperial citizens are Psi-Alphas.

IMPERIAL PSIONIC TECHNOLOGY

Here are a few examples of Terran psionic technology.

Booster Helmet: Aid 5d6, any Psionic power one at a time (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (87 Active Points); Activation Roll 14- (-½), Burnout (-¼), OAF Fragile (-1¼). **Total cost: 29 points.**

ESP Static Generator: Darkness to Mental Group 5" radius, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (37 Active Points); OF Fragile (-1¼). **Total cost: 16 points.**

Inhibitor Collar: Drain Telepathy 1d6, Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (25 Active Points); OIF (-½). **Total cost: 17 points.**

Continued from last page

Psi-Damper Drug: Drain Mental Powers 4d6, all Mental Powers simultaneously (+2), Delayed Return Rate (5 points per Day; +1½) (180 Active Points); OIF Fragile (-1¼), 4 Charges (-1), Gradual Effect (20 Minutes, 1d6 per 5 Minutes; -1). **Total cost: 42 points.**

Psi-Detector: Detect Psionic Powers, Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), Range, Sense (17 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Range (10"; -¼). **Total cost: 7 points.**

Psi-Shield Helmet: Mental Defense (20 points + base points from EGO) (20 Active Points); OIF Fragile (-¾), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replenished with a new power cell; 20 Minutes; -¼). **Total cost: 10 points.**

Telepathic Static Generator: Suppress Telepathy 5d6, Explosion (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (50 Active Points); OAF Fragile (-1¼). **Total cost: 22 points.**

Psi-Beta: Betas have detectable but low-level powers. Typically this means *HERO System* Talents or Powers worth no more than 10 Active Points. In any event, a Beta cannot have more than 30 total Active Points' worth of psi abilities; if he does, the law classifies him as a Psi-Gamma (Provisional).

Psi-Gamma: Gammas can have up to 20 Active Points in a single power. However, a Gamma cannot have more than 40 total Active Points' worth of psi abilities; if he does, the law classifies him as a Psi-Delta (Provisional).

Psi-Delta: Deltas, the most common "professional" psionics, with powers up to 30 Active Points. However, a Delta cannot have more than 60 total Active Points' worth of psi abilities; if he does, the law classifies him as a Psi-Epsilon (Provisional).

Psi-Epsilon: Epsilons can have up to 40 Active Points in a single psionic power. However, an Epsilon cannot have more than 90 total Active Points' worth of psi abilities; if he does, the law classifies him as a Psi-Zeta (Provisional).

Beyond Psi-Epsilon the rating system becomes a little sketchy, since very few psionics of such power exist.

Psi-Zeta: Zetas can have up to 60 Active Points in a single psionic power (though at least half have powers in only the 50 Active Point range). However, a Zeta cannot have more than 120 total Active Points' worth of psi abilities; if he does, the law classifies him as a Psi-Eta (Provisional).

Psi-Eta: Etas can have up to 80 Active Points in a single psionic power. However, an Eta cannot have more than 150 total Active Points' worth of psi abilities; if he does, the law classifies him as a Psi-Theta (Provisional).

Psi-Theta: Any psi who has one or more powers with 80 Active Points or more is a Theta.

Psi-Omega: Although many psis scoff at the possibility, a few people claim the Empire has *Psi-Omegas* — people with one or more psi powers with 100 or more Active Points. Some rumors say the Empire has a secret team of "Omega Agents" to deal with threats even the Imperial battlefleet can't handle.

Organizations that train and employ psionics actively recruit psis of Delta grade or better. Most Mind Police agents (and psis working for other branches of government) are at least Psi-Epsilons.

Rarity

Psionic powers are rare among Humans and most other species. According to Imperial statistics, the Human population includes approximately one Beta per million people in the Empire, and half as many at each increment of 10 Active Points above that. So a planet with a population of 6 billion Humans would have no more than 12,000 psionics, half of them low-powered Betas.

Some psi powers manifest much more frequently in Humans. Half of all Human psionics are telepaths, with Telepathy, Mind Scan, Mind Control, or similar powers. The remainder divide evenly between those with ESP and those with telekinesis, plus a tiny percentage of wild talents.

Psionic talent manifests itself randomly, although scientists believe an hereditary component exists. As a result, any character can have psi-powers, but there's still plenty of fun opportunities for someone to turn out to be the lost child of a rogue Theta, or the product of a secret breeding program. The Empire does not have a simple genetic test for the psi-gene; instead, psionic organizations must locate and test potential psionics — which means mysterious strangers from different groups may visit a young psi to try to win him over as a new apprentice.

PSIONIC TECHNOLOGY

Psionic technology remains tricky and unreliable at the Empire's ATRI 11 (it gets much better at ATRI 12); building or modifying it requires the Science Skill *Psionic Engineering*. The Empire has experimental psi-amplifiers, but they're classified technology not available to the public. Psi-drugs, available only by prescription, can boost, suppress, or alter psionic abilities. They cannot give powers to a non-psionic, or new powers to an existing psi, but rumors of miracle substances that can make anyone an Omega often crop up. Due to fears of telepathic spying, psi-shielding is widespread and publicly available.

Social Issues

The Empire considers psis both potentially dangerous and tremendously useful, so it controls them (or attempts to) but does not exterminate them. Imperial citizens with psi powers must register with the Imperial Psionics Foundation (as must psionic visitors to Imperial space). In addition to maintaining an extensive database on psis and psi powers (which the Mind Police has unrestricted access to), the IPF identifies and trains new psis. The Foundation also conducts research on psionics and psi technology.

The Empire itself employs many psionics above Beta grade, mostly in the Mind Police. The Imperial Security Police has a Psi Division; agents counter psionic threats and use their powers for covert operations. The military intelligence services have their own psi agents. The Foundation employs some high-rated psis, often veterans of Imperial service.

The sheer scale of the Empire means even the IPF can't spot everyone with psi powers. Some grow up ignorant of their abilities, others hide deliberately. Rogue psionics who don't want to serve the Empire tend to wind up as rebels or criminals.

Buying Psionic Powers

The three main psi powers among Humans are Telepathy, ESP (a catchall for various forms of clairsentience), and Telekinesis (see *Star Hero,* pages 244-46, for more information). If there are teleporters, they're so rare no records of them exist and no one has studied them. "Wild Talents" sometimes manifest (but in game terms, this requires the GM's consent and input on power design). Since the IPF has little experience with wild talents or unusual powers, starting characters should have little or no skill using them (unless they teach themselves or secretly learn from non-official teachers).

Terran Empire characters may not buy psionic powers in Power Frameworks without the GM's permission. The GM should typically grant permission if a Multipower or other Framework would represent different aspects or uses of one power (for example, a Multipower with three slots: Ego Attack, Ego Attack Armor Piercing, and Ego Attack Continuous). But characters should buy different powers separately, even if they all fall into the same category of psi abilities (such as ESP). Characters often apply the Limitations discussed on page 249 of *Star Hero* to their psi powers.

In the Terran Empire setting (and all other "future history" settings in the Hero Universe), all psionic powers work equally well across species, so a Varanyi telepath can read Human minds and vice versa. Thus, PCs don't have to worry about the Alien class of minds, and can take a Limitation on powers that only affect one or two species. Characters must still use the classes of mind rules to affect Animals or Machines with Mental Powers.

BODY MODIFICATIONS

Genetic and cybernetic technology has made it possible for Humans to transform themselves. Besides the various modified Human Package Deals described in Chapter Two, individuals can also buy "off the shelf" improvements. Most Humans choose not to do this; records of the mid-twenty-first century indicating how much "improvements" to the Human body contributed to the chaos and violence of the times have made people leery of modifications.

Use of any modification to attack or harm another person constitutes aggravated assault. Imperial authorities take a *very* dim view of such conduct... especially if they are the targets of the attack!

THE MODIFICATION PROCESS

Acquiring cybersystems or bioware is not an easy process (if only because it requires surgery in an advanced medical facility). A character who wants a modification must acquire a license for the modification; this costs half the cost of the system itself. (Possession and use of unlicensed cybersystems or bioware is a felony in the Terran Empire [and all other major Galactic governments] carrying a minimum penalty of three years in prison.) He must also submit to annual "maintenance checks" of his modifications at a government-run clinic; this costs ten percent of the cost of the modification.

Characters who want to avoid these restrictions must turn to the black market. There the price of any modification increases by 300-1000%, and the character often has no guarantee of quality, or any assurance the "doctor" can perform the surgery properly. The GM is encouraged to be fiendish.

BUYING MODIFICATIONS

In game terms, characters must pay Character Points for modifications *in addition to* the listed monetary cost. Unless the GM specifically permits it, they cannot put modifications in Power Frameworks; a character must buy each "mod" individually.

Cybersystems

Cybernetic systems are actual machines attached to or hidden in a person's body to enhance, augment, or supplement the functioning of his body. They show up automatically on security scans, and any competent physician can remove most of them (though it takes a highly-trained surgeon to install them).

Replacement limbs and sensory organs are the most common forms of cybersystems. However, soldiers, criminals, and adventurers in need of an "edge" sometimes have more esoteric systems, such as armorskin or an internal oxy supply, installed.

Legal cybersystems (such as the examples listed below) have the Limitation *Restrainable* (-¼) to represent their built-in security safeguards. They're vulnerable to specific electromagnetic pulse frequencies... and of course, law enforcement agencies have special EMP weapons tuned to short them out (a Drain or Dispel of all cybersystems a character has at once). Characters who buy black market cybersystems, or who have the proper technical expertise, can remove the safeguards; this increases the Real Point cost the character must pay for the system.

LIMB REPLACEMENTS

Artificial Arm: +5 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (7 Active Points); Only With One Arm (-¼), No Figured Characteristics (-½) Restrainable (-¼). Total cost: 3 points.

Artificial Leg (Single): +5 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (7 Active Points); Only With One Leg (-½), No Figured Characteristics (-½) Restrainable (-¼). Total cost: 3 points.

Artificial Leg (Both): +5 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (7 Active Points); Only With Legs (-½), No Figured Characteristics (-½) Restrainable (-¼) (total cost: 3 points) **plus** Running +3" (6 Active Points); Restrainable (-¼) (total cost: 5 points). Total cost: 8 points.

SENSORY IMPLANTS

Chemanalyzer: +2 PER with Smell/Taste Group (4 Active Points); Restrainable (-¼). Total cost: 3 points.

Cochlear Implant: Ultrasonic Perception (3 Active

Points); Restrainable (-¼) (total cost: 2 points) **plus** +2 PER with Hearing Group (4 Active Points); Restrainable (-¼) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 5 points.

Cybernetic Eyes: Choose one or more of the following.

Flare Compensation: *Sight Group Flash Defense (6 points) (6 Active Points); Restrainable (-¼). Total cost: 5 points.*

Sight Enhancement: *+2 PER with Sight Group (4 Active Points); Restrainable (-¼). Total cost: 3 points.*

Telescopic Eyes: *+8 versus Range for Sight Group (12 Active Points); Restrainable (-¼). Total cost: 10 points.*

Thermal Vision: *Infrared Perception (Sight Group) (5 Active Points); Restrainable (-¼). Total cost: 4 points.*

UV Vision: *Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group) (5 Active Points); Restrainable (-¼). Total cost: 4 points.*

Radio Implant: Radio Perception/Transmission (10 Active Points); Restrainable (-¼). Total cost: 8 points.

MISCELLANEOUS CYBERSYSTEMS

Armorskin: This cybersystem replaces much of the character's skin with artificial, partly bulletproof epidermis. It looks like ordinary skin, though anyone touching it can tell it's not normal.

Armor (3 PD/1 ED). Total cost: 6 points.

Computer Implant: A character can buy a Computer and define it as an implant, linking it to his visual cortex (or cybernetic eyes) so it can display its data for him. Apply *Restrainable* to the cost of the Computer.

Neural Interface Jack: Jackers and some office workers use this implant (also called a "dataport") to connect their cerebral cortex directly to a computer, making it easier to manipulate data, operate software, and use computer systems.

Mind Link (Machine group of minds), any Machine mind one at a time (15 Active Points); No Range (-½), Visible (-¼), Restrainable (-¼) (total cost: 7 points) **plus** *+3 with Computer Programming (6 Active Points); Visible (-¼), Restrainable (-¼), Only On Computer With Which Character Is Mind Linked (-½) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 10 points.*

Internal Oxygen Supply (Intox): Life Support (Extended Breathing: 1 END per 20 Minutes) (4 Active Points); Restrainable (-¼). Total cost: 3 points.

Smart Hair: By installing special nanobots in one's hair, or replacing normal hair with microfiber and chameleon cell-laced synthetics, one can alter the color, length, and style of one's hair in seconds.

Shape Shift (Sight Group, any shape of hair), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (30 Active Points); Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Hair Only (-2). Total cost: 7 points.

Bioware

The pace of biotechnology has lagged during the Imperial era due to a distaste for subjects associated (to whatever degree) with the Xenovores and the Empire's emphasis on hardware like battlesuits and better energy rifles, but bioware can still do incredible things. Grown from living tissue (ideally the customer's own cells, or at the very least cells genetically compatible with his), it can only be detected with a full medical examination. Some types of bioware require ongoing maintenance and regular specialized medical treatments (a -0 Limitation, unless characters routinely spend months away from civilization, in which case it becomes a -¼).

Blood Filter: A kind of extra or enhanced kidney made of high-tech membranes which remove poisons from the bloodstream, rendering the user immune to many toxins and drugs. It shows up on medical scans as a thickening of the major blood vessels in one thigh, with a tiny duct to the bladder.

Life Support (Immunity: alcohol, zootoxins, phytotoxins, and microbe toxins) (10 Active Points); Activation 14- (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

Gilgamesh Treatment: These highly expensive treatments add decades to a Human's life. Most aristocrats and leaders get the Gilgamesh treatment as soon as they can afford it. The Gilgamesh process cannot reverse any aging effects the character has already suffered, but does slow future aging.

Life Support (Longevity: age at half normal rate) (1 Active Point). Total cost: 1 point. Price: 100,000 credits for initial treatment, 10,000 credits for annual update treatments (failure to get updates for two years in a row results in loss of effect and the Character Point spent).

Immune Assist: A cocktail of nanobots and immunobooster drugs, this treatment dramatically improves the character's resistance to natural and artificial diseases.

Life Support (Immunity: all diseases and biowarfare agents) (10 Active Points); Activation Roll 14- (-½). Total cost: 7 points. Price: 10,000 credits for initial treatment, 1,000 credits for annual update treatments (failure to get updates for two years in a row results in loss of effect and the Character Points spent).

Technological Treasures
equipment and technology

Technology plays an important part in any *Star Hero* campaign setting, and the Terran Empire is no exception. Each government's or species's technology — from weapons, to computing systems, to survival gear, to vehicles — does a great deal to determine its strength in relation to other states or species, its ability to accomplish its goals, and its capacity to make an impact on the campaign universe.

The information in this chapter focuses mainly on Terran technology, with a few examples of other species's devices. You can easily create lots of tech for other species simply by adapting, or slightly altering, Terran tech.

This chapter covers only personal technology — the sort characters might carry or wear in a game. For starship systems and tech, see Chapter Seven.

GENERAL TECH ISSUES

The following general information and rules about technology applies to the Terran Empire setting as of the reign of Marissa III (2633-51). Gamemasters may wish to adjust things slightly for campaigns set before or after that time.

TECHNOLOGY RATING: THE ATRI SCALE

The Terran Empire rates planets and civilizations according to the Available Technical Resources Index (ATRI). Military planners and traders created the ATRI scale, so it focuses on transportation and power sources. Since it uses fairly broad classification categories, two civilizations at the same ATRI level may look very different. Similarly, some species or states advance more rapidly in some fields than in others — for example, the Varanyi mostly have ATRI 12 technology, but lag behind in some areas.

At the end of the Xenovore Wars period and during the formation of the Empire, Humanity was ATRI 10 on the most advanced planets, though many worlds only had ATRI 8-9 technology due to the devastation of the war and being cut off from the mainstream of Terran civilization. As the Terran Empire expanded, encounters with more species, analysis of Mandaarian technology, and other developments helped Imperial science reach a solid ATRI 10 throughout the Empire. Thereafter, the pace of development slowed as Imperial secrecy rules and monopolies stifled innovation. The Empire reached ATRI 11 in the mid-2500s (spurred on in part by the Ackálian Border War and the Galactic War), but after that progress slowed considerably. As of Marissa III's reign, the Empire remains firmly within ATRI 11. (Humanity achieves ATRI 12 early in the Galactic Federation period [*i.e.,* after 2703]).

Current Galactic Technology

During Marissa III's rule, most starfaring species are ATRI 10 or 11 (the Varanyi, the Malvans, the Zurites, the Mandaarians, and in some respects the Conjoined Civilizations Republic have ATRI 12 or better technology in at least some fields). Certain civilizations specialize in specific areas of technology, giving them an edge in those fields.

Ackálian technology and Imperial technology tend to stay in lockstep, as each side quickly steals the other's innovations and both societies stifle scientific progress. The Ackálians generally have ATRI 11 tech, but they lag behind in biology and nanotechnology. However, they have developed better protective force fields and radiation-hardening for systems and electronics — all of which contributes to the famed toughness and durability of Ackálian starships. Terran technicians joke that Ackálians like their machinery "big and dumb — just like them."

The Malvans have ATRI 14 technology (in fact, most Imperials simply use ATRI 14 as a shorthand for "Malvan tech"). They may once have had even more advanced science. Since robots handle much of their research and industrial production, the Malvans themselves may not understand their own technology any better than other species do.

The Mon'dabi have kept up a steady pace of scientific progress; they're a mainstream ATRI 10, verging into 11, civilization in 2640. They have particularly advanced stardrive technology. Mon'dabi hyperspace and Displacer drives are better than Imperial designs, and intelligence reports suggest they may have some military craft equipped with experimental ATRI 12 Spacewarp drives.

The Perseids have ATRI 11 technology through most of the Imperial era. Their power and energy-control technology lags slightly behind comparative civilizations. Their antimatter generators are large and primitive compared with Imperial

THE ATRI SCALE

Level	Power Sources	Transportation	Weapons/Miscellaneous
0	No Technology		
1	Fire		Melee weapons, bows
2	Animal Power	Riding Animals/Boats	Melee weapons, bows, crossbows
3	Wind Power	Sailing Ships/Balloons	Matchlocks, flintlocks
4	Steam Power	Steamships/Railroads	Early percussion firearms
5	Electric Power	Submarines	Early percussion firearms
6	Internal Combustion	Automobiles, aircraft	Advanced percussion firearms
7	Atomic Power	Jet Aircraft/Orbital Spacecraft	Advanced percussion firearms, atomic weapons
8	Solar Power	Interplanetary Spacecraft	Early gauss and laser weapons
9	Fusion Power	Hyperdrive	Advanced gauss and laser weapons
10	Cold Fusion	Displacer drive	Antigravity; plasma weapons and blasters
11	Antimatter Power	Reactionless Thrusters	Force fields, tractor beams
12	Zero Point Energy	Warp drive	
13		Teleportation	Displacer weapons, disintegrators
14		Probability Drive	Interdimensional travel

designs, and their spaceships sometimes run into power-usage problems.

Se'ecra curiosity and interest in scientific discovery keeps the pace of technological progress brisk in the CCR. They invented the Displacer drive and cold fusion power shortly before Humans did, and during Marissa's reign are transitioning from ATRI 11 to ATRI 12. By the end of the Imperial era they have ATRI 12 tech across the board and continue to progress steadily.

The Thorgons have never appreciated science for its own sake; all their research focuses on practical matters (primarily technologies with obvious military applications). This means they tend to miss many basic discoveries and progress slowly through the ATRI scale. They make up for this lack by stealing technology and data from others, so they barely lag behind the Empire in many respects. Their weapons and ships definitely involve ATRI 11 technology. In non-military tech Thorgon society is much worse, with factories and farms sometimes no better than ATRI 8-9 (or even lower).

The Varanyi have always possessed technology comfortably ahead of Terran science. At the founding of the Empire the Varanyi were already a mature ATRI 10 society making the shift to ATRI 11. In Marissa's reign they have ATRI 12 technology. However, the prevalence of psionic powers in Varanyi society retards the development of communications and robotics technology — the former because Varanyi don't need them, and the latter because they find (semi-)intelligent beings whose minds they can't read disturbing. Varanyi non-psionic communication systems are ATRI 11, and their computers and robot brains are ATRI 10-11.

With the advanced and aggressive Varanyi for neighbors, the Velarians have had to scramble for every edge they can find to remain unconquered. This has led to a habit of investigating all kinds of fringe sciences and unexplained phenomena. As a result, the Confederation has mostly mature ATRI 11 technology in 2640, but with an overlay of weird discoveries and applications that don't easily fit on the standard ATRI scale. They even claim to have an unstoppable doomsday device based on self-sustaining zero-point energy release.

The Xenovore empire at its height was a mature ATRI 10 (slightly ahead of Humanity, particularly in biotechnology), but the destruction of their industrial base left the surviving worlds at ATRI 9 or below. After the rise of the Terran Empire, most Xenovore raiders and mercenaries simply use off-the-shelf Terran and Ackálian technology.

PROTECTING TECHNOLOGY

Every species and government guards its technology jealously, and with good reason: advanced technology is one of the keys to power and influence in the Galaxy. Every major power has at least a few important technological secrets other powers lack, and they want to keep it that way to retain the strategic and tactical edge this gives them.

Since most powers find it easier to steal technology than to spend huge amounts of money and time on research and development, industrial espionage remains commonplace throughout the Galaxy. To protect against this, states use their best security devices and personnel, and often confine advanced research to isolated space stations and similar locations where no one can approach unnoticed or gain access without permission. The fact that a state with a higher ATRI rating has better security technology than the less-advanced people who want to steal its secrets just makes protecting those secrets all the easier. Persons caught stealing technological secrets invariably suffer severe penalties — execution in most societies, long-term imprisonment in maximum-security facilities in "merciful" states.

In the game, the GM should not let PCs simply waltz onto Malva or Varan and steal all the advanced technology they want. If it were that easy, dozens of species would have done it many years ago. Player characters who want higher-ATRI technology than their overall species/government should buy the *Advanced Tech* Perk and/or acquire it in the game after a *lot* of difficulty, danger, and effort.

Technology Compatibility

The general rules for using advanced and obsolete technology on pages 143-44 of *Star Hero* apply in the Terran Empire setting. Characters should incur penalties for using technology from ATRI levels higher or lower than that of their current society. One general exception to this is technology from earlier ATRI levels still in everyday use. In many cases a society finds a type of technology worth preserving, but does not find it possible or profitable to continually refine it. For example, the Terran Empire's military and police forces still use laser weapons, which are generally ATRI 9-10 technology. Characters should not suffer a penalty when firing or repairing them, even though they're one level behind the Empire's general ATRI 11 ranking, because they remain in common use. The GM determines when penalties apply, and their severity.

The accompanying table indicates the general compatibility of different major species's technology. The GM can use this to extrapolate results for the tech of other species, such as the Osathri, Fex, and Se-lag.

Some species find it difficult to use other species's technology. Fingered species suffer a -3 Skill Roll penalty for using Osathri tech; the Osathri suffer a -2 when using "fingered" tech. Many Catavalan, Se-lag, and Jaruma devices require more than two hands (making use of them by two-handed aliens impossible, or imposing a -5 penalty at best). Mostreen devices require such long fingers most other species cannot use them (or use them only at a -4 penalty).

TERRAN EMPIRE TECHNOLOGY COMPATIBILITY

Species	Ackálian	CCR	Mon'dabi	Perseid	Terran	Thorgon	Varanyi	Velarian
Ackálian	FC	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	BC	PC
CCR	PC	FC	MC	MC	MC	PC	PC	MC
Mon'dabi	PC	MC	FC	MC	MC	PC	BC	PC
Perseid	PC	MC	MC	FC	MC	PC	BC	PC
Terran	PC	MC	MC	MC	FC	PC	BC	PC
Thorgon	PC	PC	PC	PC	PC	FC	BC	PC
Varanyi	BC	PC	BC	BC	BC	BC	FC	BC
Velarian	PC	MC	PC	PC	PC	PC	BC	FC

FC: Fully Compatible; MC: Mostly Compatible; PC: Partly Compatible; BC: Barely Compatible. See *Star Hero*, page 144, for a description of these terms and their game effects.

WEAPONS

The number of types of weapons used throughout the Galaxy sometimes seems to equal the number of stars in the Milky Way! Every species and government has its own preferences regarding types, technologies, and other factors that go into choosing a weapon, which leads to the creation of an almost infinite variety of weapons. This section details some of the more common and/or interesting, but GMs should feel free to create as many more as they wish (keeping the restrictions of ATRI in mind).

TERRAN EMPIRE RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Year	ATRI	Price	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUNx	STR Min	Shots	A/R	Notes
Terran Laser Weapons											
Mark V Laser Rifle	2598	10		+1	+2	3d6	0	13	40	135/33	AF5, AP, IMR (2,800"), 2H
Mark VII Laser Rifle	2638	10		+2	+2	3½d6	+1	12	64	181/45	AF5, AP, IMR (3,775"), 2H
Mark II-K Laser Pistol	2479	9		+1	+1	2d6	0	10	12	38/10	
Mark II-Q Laser Pistol	2555	10		+1	+2	2½d6	0	8	16	51/16	
Mark II-T Laser Pistol	2630	10		+1	+2	3d6	0	8	24	67/20	
Other Laser Weapons											
Ackálian Laser Rifle	2640	10		+2	+2	3d6	+2	15	60	151/36	AF5, Pen, 2H
Mon'dabi Laser Pistol	2633	10		+2	+2	2½d6	0	8	30	66/20	
Perseid Laser Pistol	2638	10		+1	+2	3d6-1	0	7	20	84/24	Pen
Thorgon Laser Rifle	2636	10		+2	+2	3½d6	+1	12	64	195/48	AF8, AP, 2H
Terran Plasma Weapons											
M49 Plasma Rifle	2550	10		0	0	11d6 N EX	—	17	20	110/23	AF2, Bulky, 2H
M90P Squad Plasma Rifle	2612	11		0	0	12d6 N EX	—	14	40	150/37	AF5, 2H
M1T Plasma Tube	2590	11		0	0	15d6 N EX	—	10	1	112/14	NR, 2H
Other Plasma Weapons											
Ackálian Plasma Rifle	2618	11		0	0	13d6 N EX	—	15	32	146/34	AF5, 2H
Varanyi Plasma Rifle	2587	12		+1	+1	15d6 N EX	—	10	60	195/50	AF5, 2H
Terran Ion Weapons											
MI-31 Ion Rifle	2569	11		+1	+1	3d6/10d6 N	0	13	36	Text	AF5, 2H
MI-66 Ion Rifle	2616	11		+2	+2	3d6/12d6 N	0	11	50	Text	AF5, 2H
MIP-162 Ion Pistol	2638	11		+1	+1	3d6/10d6 N	0	9	30	Text	AF2
Grenades											
Concussion	2543	10		0	0	10d6 N EX/ 6d6 Fla	—	N/A	10	118/41	RBS
Fragmentation	2543	10		0	0	3d6+1 EX/ 6d6 Fla	0	N/A	10	118/41	RBS
Plasma	2629	10		0	0	12d6 N EX	0	N/A	4	120/34	RBS
Grenade Launcher	2543	10		0	0	Text	—	N/A	—	60/13	

WEAPON NOTES

Year: The year the weapon first becomes available.

ATRI: The weapon's Available Technical Resources Index rating.

OCV: A modifier applied to all attacks made with the weapon. See page 333 of the *HERO System 5th Edition*.

RMod: The modifier to the weapon's accuracy at Range. See page 333 of the *HERO System 5th Edition*. RMod can never raise a character's Base OCV, it can only negate penalties.

Damage: The damage the weapon does; see Notes for any abbreviations used.

STUNx: The STUN Multiplier for Killing Damage weapons (0 indicates a normal 1d6-1 multiplier).

STR Min: STR Minimum. See the *HERO System 5th Edition*, pages 327-28, for rules.

Shots: The standard amount of ammunition or power in the gun's magazine or battery.

A/R: Active Point/Real Point cost.

Notes: Any information not listed elsewhere, often using the following abbreviations:

  2H: Two-Handed Weapon

  Act: Activation Roll

  AF: Autofire (the number indicates the number of shots)

  AP: Armor Piercing

  Bulky: A Bulky Focus other than a bipod-mounted weapon

  EX: Explosion

  Fla: Flash

  IMR: Increased Maximum Range (distance indicated in parentheses)

  N: Normal Damage (all other weapons do Killing Damage)

  NR: Charge is Not Recoverable

  Pen: Penetrating

  RBS: Range Based On STR

  Text: See text for information

RANGED WEAPONS

Ranged weapons predominate on the battlefields of the twenty-seventh century. While lower-tech weapons such as slugthrowers, gauss guns, and even bows and crossbows remain available for those who want them, the vast majority of soldiers, law enforcement agents, spies, and adventurers rely on energy weapons.

The accompanying Terran Empire Ranged Weapons Table provides game information for numerous Ranged weapons.

Weapons Development And Improvement

Star Hero characters often like to improve standard weapons, or find ways to build or obtain standard weapons years before they're commonly available. If the GM wants to allow this, he can use the following rules as guidelines. A character must have a good in-game rationale for how he obtains a weapon ahead of its time, or improves it. Perhaps he built it himself, stole a prototype, or bought a stolen prototype on the black market. The GM must approve both the reason and the early acquisition. A character who wants to avoid some of these difficulties should consider buying the *Advanced Tech* Perk (*Star Hero*, page 48) instead.

Obtaining Weapons Early

Sometimes a character wants to build or acquire a weapon before the date of availability indicated in its description and/or weapon table. If the GM wants to permit this, for every year (or fraction thereof) prior to the date of public availability he must apply ¼ worth of Limitations to the weapon *in addition*

to whatever Limitations it already has. Some of the most appropriate Limitations for this include Activation Roll (or worsening an existing Activation Roll), Bulky, Charges (decreasing the weapon's existing amount of them), Concentration, Extra Time, Fragile, Requires A Skill Roll, and Side Effects. For example, a character could acquire a Mark VII Laser Rifle in 2633 (five years prior to its normal date of availability, 2638) by applying another 1¼ worth of Limitations to it. Perhaps it's bigger and less reliable (Bulky, Activation Roll 14-) and harder to use (Concentration ½ DCV). In the case of weapons bought as Multipowers, the Limitations must apply to all slots and the reserve (unless the GM permits otherwise).

Improving Standard Weapons

If a character wants to improve a weapon, he has three options. First, he can buy the weapon with Character Points; that way he can build it to whatever specifications he desires (subject to the GM's approval and standards of common sense). Second, he can use money to purchase one of the standard "upgrades" listed in this chapter.

Third, he can increase a weapon's power or performance by making it less reliable or efficient. This represents building a weapon that's "ahead of its time," and thus doesn't function as well as comparable future models. For every +10 Active Points (or fraction thereof) the character wishes to add to the value of the weapon, he must apply ¼ worth of Limitations to it *in addition to* whatever Limitations it already has (such as the Limitations listed above). In the case of weapons bought as Multipowers, the extra Active Points increase the reserve and slots, and the Limitations must apply to all slots and the reserve (unless the GM permits otherwise).

Lasers

Generally, lasers work as described on pages 151-52 of *Star Hero*. Although they qualify as ATRI 9 and 10 technology, they remain the most popular weapons throughout the Galaxy during the 2600s, since ATRI 11 doesn't include any major new weapons development (nor does ATRI 12 initially). Their main drawbacks include the inability to widen the beam, the fact that smoke or steam blocks the beam, and the lack of a non-lethal setting.

MARK V LASER RIFLE

Effect: RKA 3d6, Autofire (5 shots), Armor Piercing
Shots: 40
Combat Modifier(s): +1 OCV, +2 RMod
STR Minimum: 13
Range: 2,800"

Description: Improvements to previous models of Terran laser rifle resulted in a slimmer, lighter-weight weapon that assured the laser's dominance on the battlefield. Improved armor-penetration capabilities, a more efficient power pack, and enhanced rangefinding equipment make this a potent weapon indeed.

Game Information: *RKA 3d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Autofire (5 shots; +½), Increased*

*Maximum Range (2,800"; +¼), 40 Charges (+½) (124 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (13; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Beam (-¼), Blocked By Smoke Or Steam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 29 points) **plus** +1 OCV (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points) **plus** +2 versus Range Modifier (6 Active Points); OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points). Total cost: 33 points.*
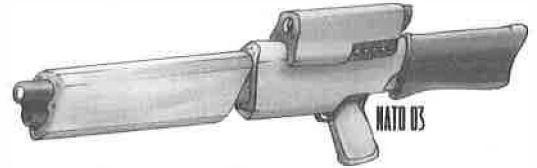
MARK VII LASER RIFLE

Effect: RKA 3½d6, Autofire (5 shots), Armor Piercing, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier
Shots: 64
Combat Modifier(s): +2 OCV, +2 RMod
STR Minimum: 12
Range: 3,775"

Description: First available to Imperial soldiers as a mass-production weapon in 2638, the latest version of the Terran laser rifle incorporates more improvements and upgrades than ever before. Onboard targeting computers make it more accurate both in general and over long distances, and the increased size and power of the beam inflict more painful wounds on the foe.

Game Information: *RKA 3½d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Autofire (5 shots; +½), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Increased Maximum Range (3,775"; +¼), 64 Charges (+½) (165 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (12; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Beam (-¼), Blocked By Smoke Or Steam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 39 points) **plus** +2 OCV (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 4 points) **plus** +2 versus Range Modifier (6 Active Points); OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points). Total cost: 45 points.*

MARK II-K LASER PISTOL

Effect: RKA 2d6
Shots: 12
Combat Modifier(s): +1 OCV, +1 RMod
STR Minimum: 10
Range: 150"

Description: During the Reunification Campaigns, the Imperial Army commissioned the development of this weapon. Greater cutting power, accuracy, and most of all reliability made it a significant improvement over earlier models.

Game Information: *RKA 2d6 (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (10; STR*

Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Beam (-¼), Blocked By Smoke Or Steam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼) (total cost: 7 points) **plus** *+1 OCV (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points)* **plus** *+1 versus Range Modifier (3 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 1 point). Total cost: 10 points.*

MARK II-Q LASER PISTOL

Effect: RKA 2½d6
Shots: 16
Combat Modifier(s): +1 OCV, +2 RMod
STR Minimum: 8
Range: 200"

Description: Ordered by the Imperial military to improve the troops' firepower during the Galactic War, this weapon only saw general release in 2555, a year after the War ended, due to problems with the development process. Although still considered a viable weapon today, it suffers from a small power supply when compared to later pistols.

> **Game Information:** *RKA 2½d6 (40 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (8; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Beam (-¼), Blocked By Smoke Or Steam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 16 Charges (-0) (total cost: 11 points)* **plus** *+1 OCV (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points)* **plus** *+2 versus Range Modifier (6 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 16 points.*
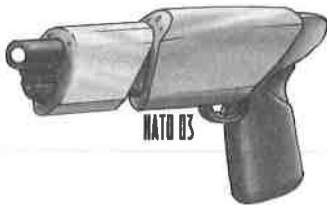
MARK II-T LASER PISTOL

Effect: RKA 3d6
Shots: 24
Combat Modifier(s): +1 OCV, +2 RMod
STR Minimum: 8
Range: 280"

Description: Issued to both the Imperial Army and Navy in 2630, the Mark II-T represents the most advanced Terran laser pistol yet developed. Its powerful beam, coupled with its targeting function and large power supply, make it the favorite not only of military personnel, but of underworld figures who've gotten their hands on one.

> **Game Information:** *RKA 3d6, 24 Charges (+¼) (56 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (8; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Beam (-¼), Blocked By Smoke Or Steam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 15 points)* **plus** *+1 OCV (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points)* **plus** *+2 versus Range Modifier (6 Active Points); OAF*

(-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 20 points.
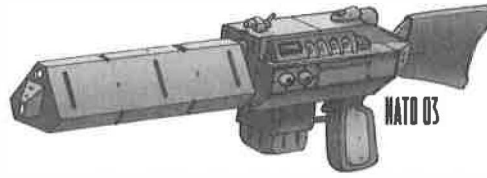
ACKÁLIAN LASER RIFLE

Effect: RKA 3d6, Autofire (5 shots), Penetrating, +2 Increased STUN Multiplier
Shots: 60
Combat Modifier(s): +2 OCV, +2 RMod
STR Minimum: 15
Range: 675"

Description: The standard Ackálian laser rifle during Marissa III's reign lacks the range of the Terran model, and has more bulk to boot, but hits almost as hard and creates painful wounds.

> **Game Information:** *RKA 3d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), +2 Increased STUN Multiplier (+½), Penetrating (+½), 60 Charges (+½) (135 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (15; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1¼), Two-Handed (-½), Beam (-¼), Blocked By Smoke Or Steam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 30 points)* **plus** *+2 OCV (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 4 points)* **plus** *+2 versus Range Modifier (6 Active Points); OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points). Total cost: 36 points.*
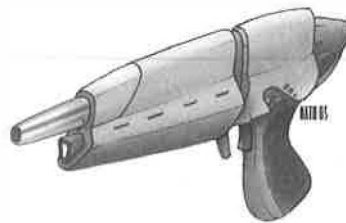
MON'DABI LASER PISTOL

Effect: RKA 2½d6
Shots: 30
Combat Modifier(s): +2 OCV, +2 RMod
STR Minimum: 8
Range: 250"

Description: Similar to the Terran Mark II-Q, but more accurate, the Mon'dabi laser pistol represents an excellent choice for shooters who favor an increased chance of hitting rather than improving the sheer raw power of the beam. Its power cell has enough energy for significantly more shots than Terran models.

> **Game Information:** *RKA 2½d6, 30 Charges (+¼) (50 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (8; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Beam (-¼), Blocked By Smoke Or*

Steam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 13 points) **plus** *+2 OCV (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 4 points)* **plus** *+2 versus Range Modifier (6 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 20 points.*

PERSEID LASER PISTOL

Effect: RKA 3d6-1, Penetrating
Shots: 20
Combat Modifier(s): +1 OCV, +2 RMod
STR Minimum: 7
Range: 365"

Description: The typical sidearm of the Perseid military, this weapon also achieves great popularity with the underworld from 2640 on, due to the successful theft of a cargo of 20,000 units by the infamous Dorvalan pirate Grenta Shal. However, many civilian owners don't know how to care for the pistol properly, which often results in cancelling out the weapon's inherent OCV bonus.

> **Game Information:** *RKA 3d6-1, Penetrating (+½), 20 Charges (+¼) (73 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (7; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Beam (-¼), Blocked By Smoke Or Steam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 19 points)* **plus** *+1 OCV (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points)* **plus** *+2 versus Range Modifier (6 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 24 points.*

THORGON LASER RIFLE

Effect: RKA 3½d6, Autofire (8 shots), Armor Piercing, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier
Shots: 64
Combat Modifier(s): +2 OCV, +2 RMod
STR Minimum: 12
Range: 895"

Description: The standard Thorgon laser rifle resembles the Terran Mark VII in many particulars — so many the TIC suspects Thorgon operatives stole early prototypes and plans for the weapon and rushed it into production to beat the Imperial Army to the punch. However, the Thorgon weapon trades off a greater rate of fire for significantly reduced range.

> **Game Information:** *RKA 3½d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Autofire (8 shots; +1), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), 64 Charges (+½) (179 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (12; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Beam (-¼), Blocked By Smoke Or Steam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 42 points)* **plus** *+2 OCV (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 4 points)* **plus** *+2 versus Range Modifier (6 Active Points); OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points). Total cost: 48 points.*

LASER MODIFICATIONS

Characters can apply the following general modifications to Terran laser weapons (other species often have similar technology). The fact that people can modify lasers this way is one reason lasers maintain their popularity.

Energy Booster (ATRI 10): This multi-part device, which attaches to a Terran laser weapon at various points on the body and barrel, allows the shooter to "juice up" the blasts, draining the weapon's power cell more quickly to fire more powerful beams. The Imperial Military frowns on these devices in most circumstances, but many soldiers like them and find ways to acquire them even when the brass forbids them. This writeup fits the Mark VII Laser Rifle, but characters can obtain Energy Boosters suitable for other laser weapons as well.

> *Convert Mark VII's 64 Charges to Boostable Charges (14 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 6 points*

Sustained-Beam Energy Pack (ATRI 10): The SBEP fits onto the barrel, trigger assembly, and handle of a Terran laser weapon (such as the Mark VII rifle, which this writeup works with). It provides the modifications necessary for the shooter to project a sustained laser beam.

> *Continuous (+1) for Mark VII Laser Rifle (55 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 24 points.*

Range Augmentation System (ATRI 10): One advantage lasers have over many other weapons is their ability to fire at far-away targets with relatively little loss of accuracy. The Terran Empire has created several devices to exploit this fact.

> **Range Augmentation System (Mark VII Laser Rifle):** *No Range Modifier for Mark VII Laser Rifle (27 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 12 points.*

> **Range Augmentation System (Mark II-T Laser Pistol):** *Increased Maximum Range (1,400"; +¼) and No Range Modifier (+½) for Mark II-T Laser Pistol (34 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 15 points.*

UV/X-Ray Conversion (ATRI 11): In addition to standard lasers, the Terran Empire fields UV- and X-ray-based lasers as well, indicating the variants with the -UV and -X suffixes to the weapon's designation. The UV conversion adds a level of Armor Piercing; the X-Ray conversion adds damage, Armor Piercing, and Penetrating. Here are two examples using the Mark VII rifle:

> **Mark VII-UV Laser Rifle:** *Add another level of Armor Piercing (+½) to Mark VII Laser Rifle (27 Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 12 points.*

> **Mark VII-X Laser Rifle:** *Add RKA +1d6, another level of Armor Piercing (+½), and Penetrating (+½) to Mark VII Laser Rifle (115*

Active Points); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 51 points.

Plasma Weapons

Plasma guns shoot fusing hydrogen at the target. Favored by many soldiers and species for their power, they suffer from a relatively short range and poor accuracy. They come only in rifle or larger form. The Terran Empire uses them mainly as infantry support weapons, but the Ackálians and Thorgons employ them almost as much as lasers, and the Varanyi have ATRI 12 plasma weapons that put anything those three species have to shame.

M49 PLASMA RIFLE

Effect: EB 11d6, Autofire (2 shots), Explosion
Shots: 20
Combat Modifier(s): None
STR Minimum: 17
Range: 30"

Description: Developed by the Imperial Navy to give its troops extra firepower during the Galactic War, the M49 is credited with turning the tide on a number of crucial battlefields. The first Human plasma weapon carryable and fireable by one soldier, it provides a significant boost to a squad's offensive capabilities.

> **Game Information:** *EB 11d6, Autofire (2 shots; +¼), Explosion (+½), 20 Charges (+¼) (110 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), STR Minimum (17; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1¼), Two-Handed (-½), Limited Range (30"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 23 points.*
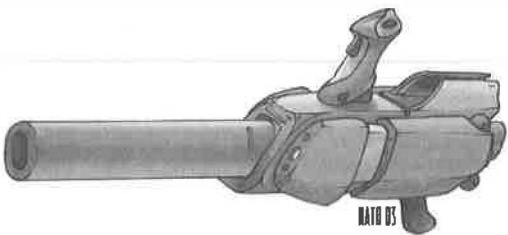
M90P SQUAD PLASMA RIFLE

Effect: EB 12d6, Autofire (5 shots), Explosion
Shots: 40
Combat Modifier(s): None
STR Minimum: 14
Range: 30"

Description: Developed after the brief "Perseid War," the M90P has become the standard plasma weapon of the Terran armed forces. Typically each infantry squad carries at least one. While nowhere near as bulky or difficult to use as its predecessors, it makes the Mark VII Laser Rifle look small and streamlined by comparison.

> **Game Information:** *EB 12d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Explosion (+½), 40 Charges (+½) (150 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (14; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1),*

Two-Handed (-½), Limited Range (30"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 37 points.

M1T PLASMA TUBE

Effect: EB 15d6, Explosion
Shots: 1, Never Recovers
Combat Modifier(s): None
STR Minimum: 10
Range: 50"

Description: This one-shot weapon fires a large plasma blast. Used to devastate groups of soldiers, it provides a good way to improve a squad's firepower without loading the troops down too much. Characters need WF: Shoulder-Mounted Weapons to fire it properly.

> **Game Information:** *EB 15d6, Explosion (+½) (112 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (10; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Limited Range (50"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 1 Charge which Never Recovers (-4). Total cost: 14 points.*

ACKÁLIAN, THORGON PLASMA RIFLES

Effect: EB 13d6, Autofire (5 shots), Explosion
Shots: 32
Combat Modifier(s): None
STR Minimum: 15
Range: 35"

Description: The Ackálians and Thorgons both use large, heavy plasma rifles with slightly greater power and range than Terran models (but slightly less efficient power cells). The primary difference between the two is cosmetic; in game terms, they function identically.

> **Game Information:** *EB 13d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Explosion (+½), 32 Charges (+¼) (146 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (15; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1¼), Two-Handed (-½), Limited Range (35"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼). Total cost: 34 points.*

VARANYI PLASMA RIFLE

Effect: EB 15d6, Autofire (5 shots), Explosion
Shots: 60
Combat Modifier(s): +1 OCV, +1 RMod
STR Minimum: 10
Range: 50"

Description: The standard Varanyi plasma rifle, an ATRI 12 weapon, has greater power, accuracy, and range than Terran models, and is lighter and more easily carried to boot. The Terran military would love to acquire some to study, but so far all its efforts in this regard have failed.

Game Information: *EB 15d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Explosion (+½), 60 Charges (+½) (187 Active Points); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (10; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Limited Range (50"; -¼), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 47 points)* **plus** *+1 OCV (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 2 points)* **plus** *+1 versus Range Modifier (3 Active Points); OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) (total cost: 1 point). Total cost: 50 points.*

Ion Blasters

Although ATRI 10-11 civilizations can (and do) make a wide variety of blasters, including electron beams and particle beams, in the Galaxy of the Imperial era ion weapons remain the blaster of preference. Although a few soldiers and adventurers favor custom-made particle guns because they penetrate armor well, most choose ion blasters because they have lethal and non-lethal settings and are cheaper to manufacture.

Weapons experts more accurately refer to the "non-lethal" setting on an ion weapon as "less lethal." It can still kill an unprotected person or cause significant property damage, even though it's much more likely to simply knock a target out than the lethal setting.

MI-31 ION RIFLE

Effect: RKA 3d6 or EB 10d6, Autofire (5 shots)
Shots: 36
Combat Modifier(s): +1 OCV, +1 RMod
STR Minimum: 13
Range: 335" (Lethal setting)/375" (Non-Lethal setting)

Description: Issued to millions of Terran troops during the mid-twenty-sixth century due to the influence of (and extensive bribes paid by) its manufacturer, Heldean Industries of Margrave's World, the MI-31 nevertheless proved an effective battlefield weapon. Had the TSS not uncovered the corrupt officers who approved its issuance, ion blasters might have supplanted laser rifles as the Imperial Army's preferred weapon.

Game Information:

Cost	MI-31 Ion Rifle
30	*MI-31 Ion Rifle:* Multipower, 75-point reserve, 36 Charges for entire reserve (+½); all OAF (-1), STR Minimum (13; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)
2u	1) *Lethal Setting:* RKA 3d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (13; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)
2u	2) *Non-Lethal Setting:* EB 10d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (13; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)
2	*Accuracy:* +1 OCV; OAF (-1), Two-Handed

(-½), Real Weapon (-¼)

1	*Rangefinding:* +1 versus Range Modifier; OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)

Total cost: 37 points
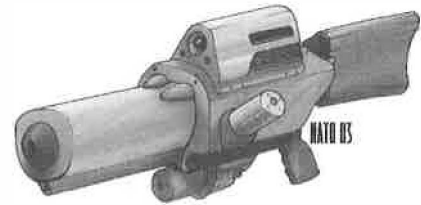
MI-66 ION RIFLE

Effect: RKA 3d6 or EB 12d6, Autofire (5 shots)
Shots: 50
Combat Modifier(s): +2 OCV, +2 RMod
STR Minimum: 11
Range: 335" (Lethal setting)/450" (Non-Lethal setting)

Description: The latest Terran ion rifle, the MI-66 has a shorter, boxier body than previous models. The designers concentrated on improving the weapon's accuracy, carryability, and non-lethal settings at the expense of its lethal setting, a decision many Army officials still complain about.

Game Information:

Cost	MI-66 Ion Rifle
36	*MI-66 Ion Rifle:* Multipower, 90-point reserve, 50 Charges for entire reserve (+½); all OAF (-1), STR Minimum (11; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)
2u	1) *Lethal Setting:* RKA 3d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (11; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)
3u	2) *Non-Lethal Setting:* EB 12d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (11; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)
4	*Accuracy:* +2 OCV; OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)
2	*Rangefinding:* +2 versus Range Modifier; OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)

Total cost: 47 points
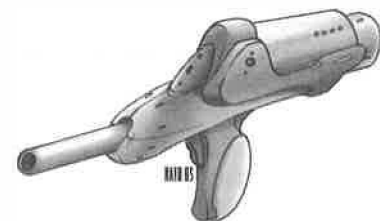
MIP-162 ION PISTOL

Effect: RKA 3d6 or EB 10d6, Autofire (2 shots)
Shots: 30
Combat Modifier(s): +1 OCV, +1 RMod
STR Minimum: 9
Range: 60"

Description: The MIP-162 is what most Imperial citizens mean when they say "blaster." Commonly

used throughout the Empire as a law enforcement weapon or military sidearm, it features a longer range, higher power output, and greater accuracy than any previous Imperial ion pistol.

Game Information:

Cost	MIP-162 Ion Pistol
22	*MIP-162 Ion Pistol:* Multipower, 62-point reserve, 30 Charges for entire reserve (+¼); all OAF (-1), STR Minimum (9; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Range (60"; -¼)
2u	1) *Lethal Setting:* RKA 3d6, Autofire (2 shots; +¼); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (9; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Range (60"; -¼)
2u	2) *Non-Lethal Setting:* EB 10d6, Autofire (2 shots; +¼); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (9; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1), Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Range (60"; -¼)
2	*Accuracy:* +1 OCV; OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
1	*Rangefinding:* +1 versus Range Modifier; OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

Total cost: 29 points

Grenades

Terran Empire soldiers use a wide variety of grenades, only a few of which are described here. Some are not necessarily significantly more effective than their twenty-first century counterparts — just much smaller, lighter, and easier to use. The Imperial Army typically issues them to soldiers in packs of ten.

Concussion Grenade: This grenade detonates with a powerful, deafening explosion that's as likely to knock someone out as kill them (a valuable effect for urban fighting or taking prisoners). They have a mass of about .05 kg.

EB 10d6, Explosion (-1 DC/2"; +¾) (87 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 10 Charges (-¼) (total cost: 32 points) plus Hearing Group Flash 6d6, Explosion (-1 die/2"; +¾) (31 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), Linked (-½), 10 Charges (-¼) (total cost: 9 points). Total cost: 41 points.

Fragmentation Grenade: This grenade sprays deadly shrapnel throughout the burst zone, making casualties more likely. It also weighs about .05 kg.

RKA 3d6+1, Explosion (-1 DC/2"; +¾) (87 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 10 Charges (-¼) (total cost: 32 points) plus Hearing Group Flash 6d6, Explosion (-1 die/2"; +¾) (31 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), Linked (-½), 10 Charges (-¼) (total cost: 9 points). Total cost: 41 points.

Plasma Grenade: A fairly recent development, this much larger, heavier grenade (.35 kg) creates a large, devastating plasma explosion.

EB 12d6, Explosion (-1 DC/3"; +1) (120 Active Points); OAF (-1), Range Based On STR (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 34 points.

Grenade Launcher: This weapon, designed to function either independently or as an underslung attachment for any Imperial military rifle, provides a much greater range for grenades. If attached to a rifle with OCV or RMod modifiers, those modifiers apply to it.

40 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); OAF (-1), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Only To Throw Grenades (-2), Does Not Add To User's STR (-0). Total cost: 13 points.

Firearms Accessories

In the Imperial era, lasers and other personal ranged weapons often come equipped with various optional accessories to improve their performance, make them easier to use, or provide the shooter with additional tactical options. Some of the most common include:

TARGETING SYSTEMS

Weapons manufacturers often design weapons so that a gun's configuration, technology, or onboard targeting systems make it exceptionally accurate (*i.e.*, so that it has OCV or RMod bonuses). However, shooters willing to tolerate some additional weight and expense can invest in even better targeting computers and other accuracy enhancers that attach to any Terran ranged weapon. The accompanying table details the most common models.

TERRAN EMPIRE TARGETING SYSTEMS

Accessory	Year	ATRI	OCV	RMod	A/R Cost	Price
Type 1 Targeting Computer	2302	9	+0	+1	3/1	200
Type 2 Targeting Computer	2313	9	+1	+1	8/3	400
Type 3 Targeting Computer	2371	9	+1	+2	1¼	600
Type 4 Targeting Computer	2460	10	+2	+2	16/6	800
Type 5 Targeting Computer	2534	10	+2	+3	19/8	1,000
Type 6 Targeting Computer	2577	11	+3	+3	24/10	(1,200)
Type 7 Targeting Computer	2630	11	+3	+4	27/11	(1,400)
Type 8 Targeting Computer	2644	11	+4	+4	32/13	(1,600)
Mark I Rangefinder	2286	9	—	+2	9/3	100
Mark II Rangefinder	2323	9	—	+4	15/6	200
Mark III Rangefinder	2485	10	—	+6	21/8	300
Mark IV Rangefinder	2552	11	—	+8	27/11	400

All targeting systems are built with the Limitations *OAF, Real Weapon, Only Works With Terran Weapons* (-¼), and *Not Cumulative With Inherent Weapon Bonuses* (-0). They do not include the Limitation *Two-Handed* since they can attach to pistols.

Rangefinder bonuses are cumulative with Targeting Computer RMod bonuses, and also include the Talent *Absolute Range Sense* with the Limitation *OAF*.

Bonuses provided by an added targeting computer (or like system) are *not* cumulative with a weapon's innate bonuses — the shooter only gets the better of the two bonuses. If a weapon has negative modifiers, add them to the targeting system's bonus to determine the system's effect.

FLASHLIGHT

In addition to providing illumination for the user, this flashlight can also project blindingly bright pulses when the user presses an activation button.

Cost	Firearm-Mounted Flashlight (ATRI 10)
15	*Firearm-Mounted Flashlight:* Multipower, 30-point reserve; all OAF (-1)
1u	1) *Illumination:* Sight Group Images, 1" radius; OAF (-1), Only To Create Light (-1), No Range (-½)
1u	2) *Blinding Pulse:* Sight Group Flash 6d6; OAF (-1), 4 Charges (-1)

Total cost: **17 points**

DEFENSES

Terran technology offers two types of personal protection: various forms of body armor (tried-and-true technologies that until recently were thought to have reached the point of maximum development); and force fields (a relatively new form of technology). The accompanying table provides details for various forms of protection.

Composite Armors

Composite armors consist of highly-advanced cloths, ceramics, polymers, and laminates offering varying degrees of protection. Thanks to Terran materials science, these armors only become uncomfortably heavy when they're especially thick and protective (*i.e.,* in military-grade armors). Lighter armors, such as Armored Clothing and various uniforms, feel and act more or less like cloth. For the most part, Terran science has reached the limit of what armorers can do with "suits of armor."

Other species have armors similar to the Terran suits. They often look quite different, and due to the many sizes and shapes of aliens may not fit a Human at all, but in game terms they provide the same protection.

BATTLE ARMOR

The Imperial military protects its soldiers (and, when applicable, other personnel) with special forms of *battle armor*. It consists of the heaviest possible armored cloth, ceramic plates, and polymer linings arranged in a way that protects almost the entire body and weighs remarkably little. In addition to its protective function, battle armor serves as a communications platform and sensory enhancement system for the wearer.

TERRAN EMPIRE PERSONAL DEFENSES

Name	Year	ATRI	Price	PD/ED	A/R	Notes
Composite Armors						
Armored Clothing, Basic	2437	9	120+	2/2	6/2	Act. 13-
Armored Clothing, Improved	2478	10	250+	4/4	12/5	Act. 13-
ISP Uniform	2437	9	N/A	2/2	6/3	Act. 14-
Imperial Military Uniform	2478	10	N/A	4/4	12/6	Act. 15-
TES Scout Jacket	2455	10	N/A	3/3	9/3	Act. 11-
Light Battle Armor	2313	10	N/A	12/12	Text	Half Mass, Act. 14-
Medium Battle Armor	2551	10	N/A	15/15	Text	Half Mass, Act. 14-
Heavy Battle Armor	2587	10	N/A	18/18	Text	Half Mass, Act. 14-
Armor Additions						
Ablative Plating	2320	9	(350)	+6/+6	18/5	Text
Anti-Laser Foam	2398	9	100	0/+12	18/4	Text
Reflective Coating	2431	9	300	0/+6	9/4	Text
Superconducting Layer	2616	11	N/A	—/—	60/40	75% E Dam Red
Force Fields						
Type 1 Force Field Belt	2592	11	2,500	4/4	8/4	1 Fuel Charge, SE
Type 2 Force Field Belt	2601	11	4,000	8/8	16/8	1 Fuel Charge, SE
Type 3 Force Field Belt	2618	11	(6,000)	12/12	24/12	1 Fuel Charge, SE
Type 4 Force Field Belt	2633	11	N/A	16/16	32/16	1 Fuel Charge, SE
Battlesuits						
Dracon Battlesuit	2598	11	N/A	22/22	Text	Half Mass

All composite armor has the *Real Armor* (-¼) Limitation. The Notes section indicates the *Mass* Limitation (if not listed, it has No Mass) and the Activation Roll (which defines how much of the body the armor covers; see page 334 of the *HERO System 5th Edition*).

Cost	Light Battle Armor
13	*Protective Armor:* Armor (12 PD/12 ED); OIF (-½), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼), Activation Roll 14- (-½)
6	*Communications System:* HRRP (Radio Group); OIF (-½), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)
8	*Closed Radio Link:* Mind Link, any group of up to four willing targets; OIF (-½), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-½)
3	*Sight Augmentation Systems:* Infrared Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)
3	*Sight Augmentation Systems:* Nightvision; OIF (-½)
3	*Sight Augmentation Systems:* Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)
6	*Sight Augmentation Systems:* +6 versus

Range Modifier for Sight Group; OIF (-½)

5   *Sensory Protection:* Sight Group Flash
     Defense (8 points); OIF (-½)

5   *Sensory Protection:* Hearing Group Flash
     Defense (8 points); OIF (-½)

Total cost: 52 points

Cost	Medium Battle Armor

16   *Protective Armor:* Armor (15 PD/15 ED);
     OIF (-½), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼),
     Activation Roll 14- (-½)

6   *Communications System:* HRRP (Radio
     Group); OIF (-½), Affected As Sight And
     Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)

10   *Closed Radio Link:* Mind Link, any group
     of up to eight willing targets; OIF (-½),
     Only With Others Who Have Mind Link
     (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing
     Groups, Not Mental Group (-½)

3   *Sight Augmentation Systems:* Infrared
     Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)

3   *Sight Augmentation Systems:* Nightvision;
     OIF (-½)

3   *Sight Augmentation Systems:* Ultraviolet
     Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)

8   *Sight Augmentation Systems:* +8 versus
     Range Modifier for Sight Group; OIF (-½)

8   *Sensory Protection:* Sight Group Flash
     Defense (12 points); OIF (-½)

8   *Sensory Protection:* Hearing Group Flash
     Defense (12 points); OIF (-½)

7   *Oxy Supply:* Life Support (Self-Contained
     Breathing); OIF (-½)

Total cost: 72 points

Cost	Heavy Battle Armor

20   *Protective Armor:* Armor (18 PD/18 ED);
     OIF (-½), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼),
     Activation Roll 14- (-½)

6   *Communications System:* HRRP (Radio
     Group); OIF (-½), Affected As Sight And
     Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)

12   *Closed Radio Link:* Mind Link, any group of
     up to 16 willing targets; OIF (-½), Only With
     Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected
     As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental
     Group (-½)

3   *Sight Augmentation Systems:* Infrared
     Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)

3   *Sight Augmentation Systems:* Nightvision;
     OIF (-½)

3   *Sight Augmentation Systems:* Ultraviolet
     Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)

10   *Sight Augmentation Systems:* +10 versus
     Range Modifier for Sight Group; OIF (-½)

10   *Sensory Protection:* Sight Group Flash
     Defense (15 points); OIF (-½)

10   *Sensory Protection:* Hearing Group Flash
     Defense (15 points); OIF (-½)

7   *Oxy Supply:* Life Support (Self-Contained
     Breathing); OIF (-½)

Total cost: 84 points

ARMOR ADD-ONS

Characters who wear body armor have a number of options for improving its performance. In addition to the equipment listed below, they can also attach other devices (such as a flight pack of some sort) to it.

Ablative Plating: This series of plates attaches to any normal suit of armor with at least 8 PD or ED worth of protection; the user must remove them before he can remove the armor itself. The plates boil or chip away when hit, providing an extra layer of defense.

Armor (6 PD/6 ED) (18 Active Points); OIF (-½), Ablative (-1), Activation Roll (15- maximum; only covers the parts of the character's body also protected by his worn armor; -¼), Extra Time (takes 1 Minute to apply; -¾). Total cost: 5 points.

Anti-Laser Foam: Characters who need to obtain some temporary extra protection against lasers quickly can cover their armor with ablative foam. Packaged in tubes with enough foam to coat one person, it soaks up a few laser beams — and that's often all the edge a clever soldier needs. Unfortunately, it washes away quickly when exposed to water, and degrades over time.

Armor (+12 ED) (18 Active Points); OIF (-½), Ablative (-1), Activation Roll (15- maximum; only covers the parts of the character's body also protected by his worn armor; -¼), Extra Time (takes 1 Minute to apply; -¾), Only Works Versus Lasers (-1), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Hour (removed by water or being shot off; -0). Total cost: 4 points.

Reflective Coating: Sometimes applied to battle armor or battlesuits, this is a layer of thin mirror-finish plastic that reflects some of the energy of laser, ultraviolet laser, and plasma attacks. If the armor has an Activation Roll, that Limitation should apply to the Reflective Coating as well. The shiny coating is obvious to the eye; in fact, many soldiers don't want to use reflective coatings, because they're too likely to give away the user's position.

Armor (+6 ED) (9 Active Points); OIF (-½), Only Works Versus Lasers And Plasma Guns (-½). Total cost: 4 points.

Superconducting Layer: Armors can apply this system to any suit of armor that provides at least 14 PD or ED worth of protection. It's a coating made of a material that instantly conducts electricity and heat with almost no resistance. This spreads the effect of energy attacks over the entire suit of armor, allowing it to radiate away without causing much harm to the wearer.

Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75% (60 Active Points); OIF (-½). Total cost: 40 points.

Force Fields

Although first developed for starships in 2540, force fields were not practical for personal use for many decades after that, due to power requirements and other technological restrictions that long stymied Imperial engineers. A brilliant researcher, Dr. Per Thorvaldsson, solved the remaining problems over the course of the 2580s, and the Terran Empire added the first personal force field to its armory in 2592. Although they do not (yet) offer as much protection as body armors, force field devices seem to improve slowly but surely, and most technicians predict they will replace armor altogether within a century.

Currently the Empire has four models of force field belt available. Civilians can buy the weakest two if they obtain a license from the local authorities; the stronger two remain classified, usable only by the Imperial military. Technicians can, for a substantial increase in price (200-400% higher), build a Type 1 or 2 force field generator into another object the size of a belt or larger (such as a full suit of clothes or a briefcase, but not a brooch or bracelet).

Whatever its shape, a Force Field Belt comes equipped with a rechargeable battery good for one hour of continuous use. When activated, the force field looks like a shimmering silver-gold field of color surrounding the wearer; this interferes slightly with his vision (mandatory Minor Side Effect — -1 to Sight Group PER Rolls).

Type 2 Force Field Belt: *Force Field (8 PD/8 ED) (16 Active Points); OIF (-½), Side Effects (-1 to Sight Group PER Rolls, automatically occurs; -½), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Hour (removed by anything which drains the battery or 2" or less proximity to strong magnetic fields; -0). Total cost: 8 points.*

Battlesuits

While the Imperial military has used suits of unpowered battle armor for centuries, only since the invention of force field technology and improved power systems has it become feasible to design and mass-manufacture a true battlesuit — a suit of strong armor that not only protects the user, but enhances many of his abilities as well. Debuting in 2598, the Dracon Battlesuit has made the Imperial Marines one of the most feared military forces in the Galaxy.

By incorporating an internal force field with the best materials the Empire has, the Dracon's designers built a battlesuit far tougher than any personal armor ever worn by Humans before. But the Dracon does more than just protect its wearer. It also augments his strength and reflexes so he can carry more and bigger weapons and use them more accurately. It allows him to leap long distances, and even fly for brief periods. It enhances his senses, letting him see all around him and in spectra he normally cannot use; it even has an onboard radar system. It comes equipped with a special enlarged

and improved version of the Mark VII Laser Rifle (anyone not wearing a Dracon who tries to use the Mark VII-Dracon must treat it as Bulky and as imposing a mandatory -2 OCV Side Effect). Wearers can also attach other systems and weapons as necessary or desirable; shoulder-mounted rocket packs and wrist-mounted grenade launchers are quite common.

After the time of Marissa III, Imperial battlesuit technology improves slowly but steadily. By Sigismund's reign, the Dracon VI Battlesuit turns an individual infantryman into a walking behemoth equipped with enough weaponry to devastate a planet. Fortunately, these terrifying weapons fall out of favor in the post-Imperial era, when force field technology and disintegrator weapons render them largely obsolete.

Cost	**Dracon Imperial Marine Battlesuit**
16	*Protective Armor:* Armor (10 PD/10 ED), Hardened (+¼); OIF (-½), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼)
16	*Protective Armor:* Armor (+12 PD/ +12 ED); OIF (-½), Half Mass (-½), Real Armor (-¼)
5	*Musculature Enhancers:* +10 STR; OIF (-½), No Figured Characteristics (-½)
4	*Reflex Enhancers:* +3 DEX; OIF (-½), No Figured Characteristics (-½)
42	*Mark VII-Dracon Laser Rifle:* RKA 4d6-1, Armor Piercing (+½), Autofire (5 shots; +½), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Increased Maximum Range (3,925; +¼), 64 Charges (+½); OAF (-1), STR Minimum (20; STR Minimum Doesn't Add To Damage; -1½), Two-Handed (-½), Beam (-¼), Blocked By Smoke Or Steam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) **plus** +2 OCV; OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) **plus** +2 versus Range Modifier; OAF (-1), Two-Handed (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)
7	*Leap-Servos:* Leaping +10"; OIF (-½)
11	*Flight Pack:* Flight 10"; OIF (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 20 Minutes (-¼)
6	*Communications System:* HRRP (Radio Group); OIF (-½), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)
12	*Closed Radio Link:* Mind Link, any group of up to 16 willing targets; OIF (-½), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-½)
3	*Sight Augmentation Systems:* Infrared Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)
3	*Sight Augmentation Systems:* Nightvision; OIF (-½)
3	*Sight Augmentation Systems:* Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)
12	*Sight Augmentation Systems:* +12 versus Range Modifier for Sight Group; OIF (-½)
7	*Surroundview System:* Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees) for Sight Group; OIF (-½)
14	*Radar Unit:* Radar (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees); OIF (-½), Affected As Sight Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼)
10	*Sensory Protection:* Sight Group Flash Defense (15 points); OIF (-½)
10	*Sensory Protection:* Hearing Group Flash Defense (15 points); OIF (-½)
8	*Sensory Protection:* Radio Group Flash Defense (12 points); OIF (-½)
28	*Sealed Protective System:* Life Support: Total (except for Diminished Eating); OIF (-½)
11	*Mag-Boots:* Clinging (normal STR + 21); OIF (-½), STR 30 Maximum (-0)

Total cost: 228 points

COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONICS

Human technology seems to have developed computers faster than other species, but by the Imperial era, the field has reached a plateau of sorts. Humans can build artificially intelligent computers (and robots), but doing so costs a *lot* of money, and so far it has proved difficult to create a machine smarter than Humans.

COMPUTERS

In general, computers' INT and DEX depend on the current ATRI level — at best, a computer can have an INT or DEX equal to ATRI x 3, and most have ATRI x 2 or less. The skills and programs listed for the computers described below are common for consumer models, but characters can freely substitute others at the same point value.

All of the computers below are "pocket computers" — handheld computers such as characters might carry on their adventures. By converting a pocket computer from an OAF to an OIF, characters can build them into helmets, suits of armor, clothing, and the like.

Cost Pocket Computer (ATRI 10)

5   *Communications Function:* HRRP (Radio Group); OAF (-1), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)

11   *Computer:* Computer (see below); OAF (-1)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
				Total Characteristic Cost: 14

Cost Skills

3   Computer Programming 12-
3   Cryptography 12-
9   AK: Milky Way Galaxy 18-
5   KS: Archived Recent News 14-
5   KS: Current News 14-
6   KS: Contact Information 15-
9   KS: Known Sentient Species 18-
3   KS: Literature Database 12-
3   KS: Movies Database 12-
3   KS: Music Database 12-
5   PS: Personal Assistant 14-
2   Systems Operation (Communications Systems) 12-

Programs

1   Alert Owner Regarding Scheduled Appointments
1   Prioritize Incoming Calls According To User Preferences
1   Search Reference Material For Information On A Topic
1   Send Communication To Recorded Identicode On Spoken Cue
1   Send Emergency Call To Emergency Authorities If Specified Protocols Are Not Met

Talents

3   *Clock:* Absolute Time Sense
3   *Compass:* Bump Of Direction
5   *Memory:* Eidetic Memory
3   *Calculator:* Lightning Calculator
3   *Instant-On Feature:* Lightsleep
20   *Translator:* Universal Translator 12-

Total Abilities Cost: 112
Total Computer Cost: 112/5 = 22
Total cost: 16 points

Cost Pocket Computer (ATRI 11)

5   *Communications Function:* HRRP (Radio Group); OAF (-1), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)

14   *Computer:* Computer (see below); OAF (-1)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
17	INT	7	12-	PER Roll 12-
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
				Total Characteristic Cost: 27

Cost Skills

5   Computer Programming 13-
5   Cryptography 13-
11   AK: Milky Way Galaxy 20-
5   KS: Archived Recent News 14-
5   KS: Current News 14-
7   KS: Contact Information 16-
9   KS: Known Sentient Species 18-
4   KS: Literature Database 13-
4   KS: Movies Database 13-
4   KS: Music Database 13-
6   PS: Personal Assistant 15-
4   Systems Operation (Communications Systems) 13-

Programs

1	Alert Owner Regarding Scheduled Appointments
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1	Send Emergency Call To Emergency Authorities If Specified Protocols Are Not Met

Talents

3	*Clock:*	Absolute Time Sense
3	*Compass:*	Bump Of Direction
5	*Memory:*	Eidetic Memory
3	*Calculator:*	Lightning Calculator
3	*Instant-On Feature:*	Lightsleep
20	*Translator:*	Universal Translator 12-

Total Abilities Cost: 138
Total Computer Cost: 138/5 = 28
Total cost: 19 points

Cost MPC-12 Military Pocket Computer (ATRI 11)

5	*Communications Function:* HRRP (Radio Group); OAF (-1), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)
6	*Closed Radio Link:* Mind Link, any group of up to two willing targets; OAF (-1), Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio And Hearing Groups, Not Mental Group (-½)
6	*Sensory Protection:* Radio Group Flash Defense (12 points); OAF (-1)
18	*Self-Destruct Mode:* RKA 3d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Explosion (+½), Trigger (+½); OAF (-1), 1 Charge which Never Recovers (destroys computer; -4), Range Based On STR (-¼)
12	*Sensor Systems:* Detect Electromagnetic Radiation And Physical Objects 15- (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Range; OAF (-1), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)
16	*Computer:* Computer (see below); OAF (-1)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
				Total Characteristic Cost: 42

Cost Skills

7	Computer Programming 15-
7	Cryptography 15-
9	AK: Milky Way Galaxy 20-
4	KS: Archived Recent News 14-
6	KS: Arms & Military Equipment Of The Galaxy 16-
4	KS: Current News 14-
8	KS: Known Sentient Species 18-
6	KS: Military Forces Of The Galaxy 16-
6	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 16-
6	KS: Starships Of The Galaxy 16-
4	PS: Personal Assistant 14-
8	Systems Operation (Communications Systems) 16-
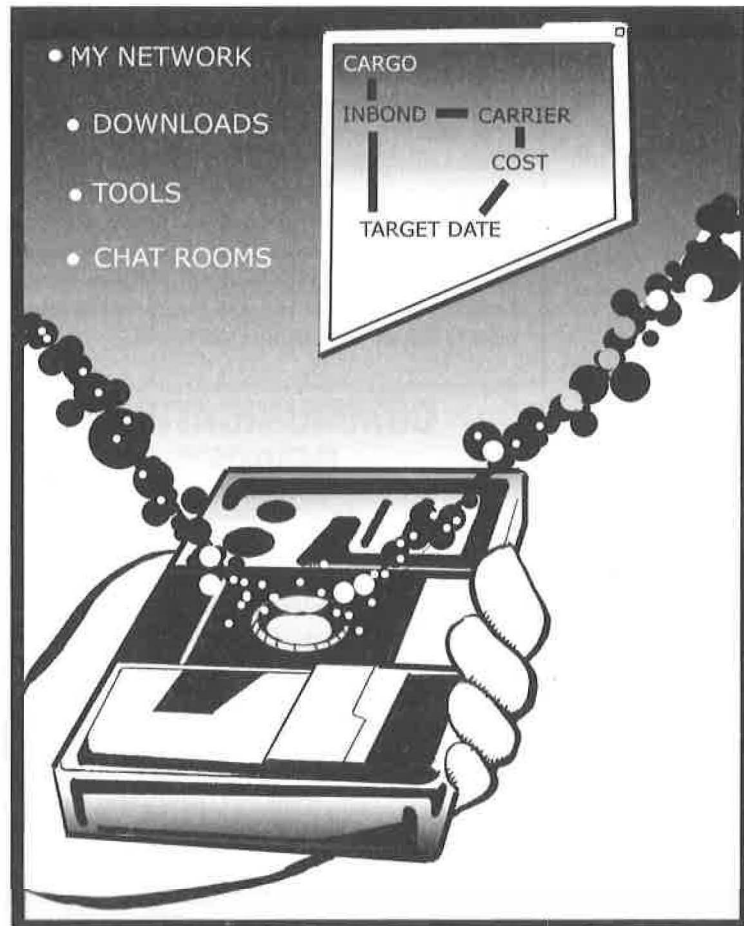
Programs

1	Alert Owner Regarding Scheduled Appointments
1	Prioritize Incoming Calls According To User Preferences
1	Search Reference Material For Information On A Topic
1	Send Communication To Recorded Identi-code On Spoken Cue
1	Send Emergency Call To Emergency Authorities If Specified Protocols Are Not Met

Talents

3	*Rangefinder:*	Absolute Range Sense
3	*Clock:*	Absolute Time Sense
3	*Compass:*	Bump Of Direction
5	*Memory:*	Eidetic Memory
3	*Calculator:*	Lightning Calculator
3	*Instant-On Feature:*	Lightsleep
3	*Rangefinder:*	Absolute Range Sense
20	*Translator:*	Universal Translator 13-

Total Abilities Cost: 165
Total Computer Cost: 165/5 = 33
Total cost: 63 points

Description: The Imperial armed forces often issue military pocket computers to troops in the field. In addition to providing a way for troops to store and analyze data (including information about enemy forces and equipment), the MPC-12 provides an additional communications link and sensory device. If necessary, it has a self-destruct mode (triggerable in numerous ways, including a radio command from another location), and can even function as a grenade (Imperial soldiers sometimes refer to this as "information warfare").

COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES

Ruling a territory as vast as the Terran Empire, conducting interstellar business, or staying in touch with loved ones on a nearby planet all require sophisticated communications systems. Without them, the Empire would break down into a thousand smaller governmental entities. (See page 92 for more information about Imperial communications networks.)

CommTab (ATRI 9): This common personal communicator, about the size of a twenty-first century nickel, attaches to a person's clothes; it comes in thousands of colors and shapes for perfect accessorizing. It contains a sensitive microphone and voice-activated controls that permit the wearer to communicate instantly with anyone on a planet by linking into the planetary communications grid (assuming it has one — otherwise the device has a relatively short range). CommTabs don't require maintenance; if one stops working, it's cheaper just to buy another one.

Radio Perception/Transmission (10 Active Points); IAF (-½), Affected As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-¼) (total cost: 6 points) plus MegaScale (1,000 km per Active Point; +¾) (7 Active Points); IAF (-½), Requires Access To Planetary Communications Grid (-½) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 9 points.

Orbital Communicator (ATRI 10): This portable comm unit, frequently issued to TES personnel, allows rapid communication not only planetwide, but with ships in orbit. The standard ATRI 10 model is about the size of a softball; ATRI 11 versions are smaller and lighter.

HRRP (Radio Group) (12 Active Points); OAF (-1), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½) (total cost: 5 points); plus MegaScale (1,000 km per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +1) (12 Active Points); OAF (-1) (total cost: 6 points). Total cost: 11 points.

Translator (ATRI 9): This device, a small, dedicated computer with audio reception and broadcast capability, "hears" a language not understood by its possessor and translates it for him, also translating his speech in return so the other person can understand him. This slows down conversation a little (even a soliloquy should take at least a Full Phase), but it's better than not understanding someone at all.

The translator's database includes millions of Human and alien languages. The GM should assume it can translate any known language without significant difficulty (*i.e.,* no need to make a roll), unless the speech involves unusual or highly technical concepts. However, when it encounters a language unknown to it, it must "sample" the language as much as possible and then hazard a translation (this requires a roll). The more exposure it has to a new language, the quicker it picks the language up, and the better its translations.

The basic device described here is ATRI 9. For each additional ATRI level, add +1 to the roll.

Hand-Held Version: *Universal Translator 12- (23 Active Points); OAF (-1), Extra Time (minimum of a Full Phase; -½). Total cost: 9 points.*

Wearable Version: *Universal Translator 12- (23 Active Points); OIF (-½), Extra Time (minimum of a Full Phase; -½). Total cost: 11 points.*

SENSORS

Although not as commonly carried by the average person as communications devices, sensors serve many important functions in society — and particularly in the lives of adventurers. Some of the more common types of personal sensors found in the Empire include:

Electronic Binoculars (ATRI 8): Serious vision aids used by soldiers, scientists, and explorers, these binoculars not only magnify, they provide both light-amplification and infrared vision. For each ATRI level beyond eight, characters can buy electronic binoculars with another +4 Telescopic. Some versions also add rangefinding (Absolute Range Sense) and image amplification (Enhanced Perception) capabilities.

Cost	Electronic Binoculars
2	*Thermal Sight:* Infrared Perception (Sight Group); OAF (-1)
2	*Light Amplification:* Nightvision; OAF (-1)
6	*Magnification:* +8 versus Range Modifier for Sight Group; OAF (-1)

Total cost: 10 points.

Nightsight Glasses (ATRI 9): As light and comfortable as a pair of thick sunglasses, these vision aids adjust automatically to ambient light, providing both night vision and glare protection.

Cost	Nightvision Glasses
2	*Light Amplification:* Nightvision; OAF (-1)
2	*Glare Protection:* Sight Group Flash Defense (5 points); OAF (-1)

Total cost: 4 points

Nightsight Contacts (ATRI 10): More advanced and much less conspicuous than nightsight glasses, contacts can only amplify ambient light. They need no care but only last a year before the microelectronics break down and the user has to replace them.

Nightvision; IIF (-¼). Total cost: 4 points.

Personal Sensor Unit (ATRI 10): Carried by explorers, scientists, detectives, and anyone who needs to gather information from a locale, this handy device includes spectrographic scanners to analyze materials, a battery of electromagnetic radiation detectors, and a powerful built-in analytic computer. Scanning takes some time, but the user can record the results and study them later. For each additional ATRI level, characters can buy PSUs with +1 to the PER Roll. PSUs can have holographic screen projection installed as well.

*Detect Electromagnetic Radiation And Physical Objects 13- (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Range (34 Active Points); OAF (-1), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½) (total cost: 11 points) **and** Eidetic Memory (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Requires A Systems Operation Roll (-½), Only To Remember Things Detected (-½) (total cost: 2 points). Total cost: 13 points.*

Holoprojector (ATRI 10): A standard device used to projects visual images (either realtime feeds from a camera, or recorded footage). Entertainers, advertisers, public speakers, and people who like to play pranks often carry them. By late ATRI 10, characters can buy models with a 2" Image radius; during ATRI 11 this increases to 4".

Sight and Hearing Group Images, 1" radius, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (22 Active Points); OAF (-1), Set Effect (recorded or broadcast images only; -½). Total cost: 9 points.

Holographic Camera (ATRI 10): A camera which takes three-dimensional images. It consists of three wirelessly-linked units that the photographer must space evenly around the area he wants to film; they can take both still shots and footage. The units have molecular adhesion pads, making it easy to attach them to just about any surface. During ATRI 11, holography tech advances to the point where the device becomes a single unit.

Eidetic Memory (5 Active Points); OAF (-1), Visual And Audio Images Only (-¼), Only To Remember Things Detected (-½), Extra Time (minimum of 1 Turn to set up; -½). Total cost: 1 point.

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

Here are a few useful pieces of equipment that don't fit into any of the categories described above.

GRAVITIC GEAR

The science of gravitics, first developed by Humans in 2355 when it became possible to build ships that didn't have to spin to generate internal gravity, makes a variety of antigravity devices possible.

Antigrav Lifter (ATRI 11): An antigrav lifter combines an antigrav generator and a strong clamp. The user attaches it to the load and then switches it on, making it much easier for him to lift and carry large, heavy objects. If necessary multiple workers can attach multiple lifters to a single object.

> *+20 STR (20 Active Points); OAF (-1), Only To Lift (-1), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 6 Hours (removed by anything which drains the battery or 2" or less proximity to strong magnetic fields; -0). Total cost: 7 points.*

Personal Antigrav Pack (ATRI 11): Worn by low-gravity aliens on planets with normal G, frail or infirm individuals, and morbidly obese people, this device allows the wearer to float above the ground (or other surfaces, such as reasonably calm water) but not fly.

> *Flight 6" (12 Active Points); OIF (-½), Only Within 1" Of A Surface (-¾), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 6 Hours (removed by anything which drains the battery or 2" or less proximity to strong magnetic fields; -0). Total cost: 5 points.*

Flight Pack (ATRI 11): This device combines a personal antigrav pack with thrusters powerful enough to allow the wearer to actually fly. Unlike a normal jetpack, a flight pack works in any type of gravity and on airless planets.

> *Flight 10" (20 Active Points); OIF (-½), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 6 Hours (removed by anything which drains the battery or 2" or less proximity to strong magnetic fields; -0). Total cost: 13 points.*

MEDICAL GEAR AND DRUGS

Soldiers, adventurers, and explorers have a tendency to get hurt on the job. That makes quality medical gear a must in many situations. See page 125 under *Paramedics* for rules and further information about medical procedures for aliens.

Hibernation Bunk (ATRI 9): An outgrowth of technology originally developed to allow for "cold sleep" during long interstellar voyages, a hibernation bunk puts an injured person in a state of suspended animation until medical treatment becomes available.

> *Life Support (Longevity: age at one-eighth normal rate; Diminished Eating: no need to eat) (6 Active Points); OIF Immobile (-1), Costs Endurance (-½). Total cost: 2 point.*

Grit (ATRI 10): A medical drug often issued to battlefield troops or rescue workers, Grit temporarily allows an individual to ignore injuries. In the end the user drug just injures himself more, but sometimes that's a worthwhile risk to take.

> *Aid BODY 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½) (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), Only Restores To Starting Values (-½), Side Effect (user automatically takes KA 1d6 when drug's effects fade; -½), 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 7 points.*

Regeneration Treatment (ATRI 10): With a fully-equipped hospital and medical tech of ATRI 10 or better, Imperial doctors can regrow a patient's severed arms or legs, or most lost organs.

> *Healing BODY 3d6, Can Heal Limbs (35 Active Points); OIF Immobile (-1½), Extra Time (1 Month; -5), Requires An SS: Medicine Roll (-¼). Total cost: 4 points.*

MA-7 Field Medkit (ATRI 11): The current medical kit issued to Imperial military doctors, rescue workers, and explorers, the MA-7 is also available to civilians. It contains smart bandages (which stitch up wounds and time-release appropriate medications on their own once applied), "Schweitzers" (smart mini-autosyringes containing multiple premeasured doses of important drugs such as painkillers, coagulants, anaesthetics, wide-spectrum poison antidotes, and so forth), a small set of basic surgical tools, and similar equipment.

Cost	MA-7 Field Medkit
7	*Basic Medkit Supplies:* Simplified Healing 2d6, 30 Charges (+¼) (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Requires A Paramedics Roll (-½)
22	*Painkillers:* Aid STUN 4d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½) (60 Active Points); OAF (-1), 6 Charges (-¾)
29	*Wide-Spectrum Poison Antidote:* Healing 7d6, any four Poison-affected Characteristics

simultaneously (+1) (140 Active Points); OAF (-1), Only Counteracts Upcoming Poison Damage (-2), 6 Charges (-¾)
Total cost: 58 points.

SURVIVAL GEAR

The universe contains many dangerous environments, and intelligent beings have devised a number of ways to protect themselves from hostile conditions.

Space Survival Gear

Spacesuit (ATRI 7): Anyone venturing into Trace atmospheres or outer space needs a spacesuit. This version represents early twenty-first century Human designs, still used by many manufacturers due to their simplicity and inexpensive cost. The suit has a rigid chest section for easy access to controls. It provides pressure and temperature support indefinitely, and oxygen for up to six hours.

Cost   Spacesuit

3   *Environment Protection:* Life Support (Safe Environments: Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum) (4 Active Points); OIF (-½)

7   *Breathing Gases:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing) (10 Active Points); OIF (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily obtained; 6 Hours; -0)

2   *Protection:* Armor (2 PD/2 ED) (6 Active Points); OIF (-½); Activation Roll 11- (-1)

Total cost: 12 points

Armored Spacesuit (ATRI 8): For environments like the atmosphere of Jupiter, explorers and workers need a space suit designed to keep pressure *out*, and to provide more protection in general. This particular suit resists up to 90 atmospheres of pressure, enough to allow the wearer to walk on the surface of Venus. It also works fine as a deep-diving suit in the oceans of Earth or Europa.

Cost   Armored Spacesuit

5   *Environment Protection:* Life Support (Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/ Vacuum) (7 Active Points); OIF (-½)

7   *Breathing Gases:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing) (10 Active Points); OIF (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily obtained; 6 Hours; -0)

14   *Protection:* Armor (8 PD/6 ED) (21 Active Points); OIF (-½)

22   *Protection:* Armor (+22 PD/+14 ED) (54 Active Points); OIF (-½), Only To Resist Atmospheric Pressure/Damage (-1)

Total cost: 48 points

Skinsuit (ATRI 9): As space travel became more common in the twenty-second century, explorers wanted less bulky suits that allowed more freedom of movement. Human scientists eventually developed the skinsuit to resolve the problem. Instead of wearing a pressurized balloon, the user wears a suit that hugs the skin, turning his own skin into a "spacesuit." The clear-bubble helmet allows a wide field of view, and the backpack provides oxygen for up to a day. (Use the first two powers for the standard Spacesuit, above, but the Breathing Gases last for 1 Day.)

Magnetic Boots (ATRI 7): Boots with magnetic plates in the soles, worn by space workers so they can walk on the hulls of spacecraft or stations without the need for tethers.

> *Clinging (normal STR + 15) (15 Active Points); OIF (-½), STR 20 Maximum (-0). Total cost: 10 points.*

Space Thruster (ATRI 8): A small thruster backpack used for maneuvering in space. It carries an hour's supply of fuel. For every ATRI level beyond 8, characters may buy Space Thrusters with +2" of Flight and an additional hour's supply of fuel. At ATRI 10, the unit no longer counts as a Bulky Focus.

> *Flight 3" (6 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Only Works In A Vacuum (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily obtained; 1 Hour; -0). Total cost: 2 points.*

Miscellaneous Survival Gear

Impeller Pack (ATRI 8): A slim backpack-style device that augments the wearer's swimming speed. They're as common on water worlds as bicycles are on terrestrial planets.

> *Swimming +8" (8 Active Points); OIF (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily obtained; 6 Hours; -0). Total cost: 5 points.*

Stealth Suit (ATRI 10): Originally stealth suits were restricted to the military and espionage agents. But the specs for them were accidentally released over the datanet, and now stealth suits are widely available on the black market. In Imperial space and most other jurisdictions, possessing, owning, or using one constitutes a felony carrying severe penalties. Users include hunters, zoologists, journalists, and of course criminals.

The stealth suit adapts to match its surroundings, but the effect is not perfect. It only works if the wearer moves stealthily or remains motionless.

> *Invisibility to Sight Group, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (30 Active Points); IIF (-¼), Variable Limitations (Requires A Stealth Roll or Chameleon only; -¼). Total cost: 20 points.*

PRICE LIST

Since Terran Empire campaigns are Heroic campaigns, characters can buy most forms of technology and equipment with money. This section contains a price list for the equipment described in this chapter, as well as other common services and items.

Year: The year the item first becomes available.

ATRI: The item's ATRI rating.

Price: The price for the item in Imperial credits as of the year 2640. If the item is available in earlier years, it's typically more expensive at that time; in later years, it becomes cheaper. A price in parentheses indicates the item is not legally available for sale

to civilians (typically because it's m⋯ equipment), so the listed price is a black market price and may fluctuate upward. Items not listed are not available for sale even on the black market.

The prices listed apply in well-settled regions of core Imperial worlds (such as throughout the Heartworlds region). In less populous regions, such as the Frontier and parts of the Outer Core, prices may rise significantly; they also rise in times of high demand. As a general guideline, increase prices by up to 150% in the Outer Core, and 200% or more in the Frontier region or on any marginally-inhabited world. The GM determines the final price for any item.

TERRAN EMPIRE PRICE LIST

Item	Year	ATRI	Price
WEAPONS			
Terran Laser Weapons			
Mark V Laser Rifle	2598	10	1,500
Mark VII Laser Rifle	2637	10	(1,800)
Mark II-K Laser Pistol	2479	9	500
Mark II-Q Laser Pistol	2555	10	750
Mark II-T Laser Pistol	2630	10	(900)
Other Laser Weapons			
Ackálian Laser Rifle	2640	10	(3,000)
Mon'dabi Laser Pistol	2633	10	800
Perseid Laser Pistol	2638	10	(900)
Thorgon Laser Rifle	2636	10	(3,000)
Laser Modifications			
Energy Booster	2554	10	250
Sustained-Beam Pack	2568	10	400
Range Augmentation	2547	10	300
UV/X-Ray Conversion	2597	11	(1,000)
Plasma Weapons			
M49 Plasma Rifle	2550	10	(2,100)
M90P Squad Plasma Rifle	2612	11	(2,800)
M1T Plasma Tube	2590	11	(1,200)
Ackálian Plasma Rifle	2618	11	(4,000)
Terran Ion Weapons			
MI-31 Ion Rifle	2569	11	1,150
MI-66 Ion Rifle	2616	11	(1,500)
MIP-162 Ion Pistol	2638	11	(900)
Grenades			
Concussion	2543	10	(100)
Fragmentation	2543	10	(100)
Plasma	2629	10	(200)
Grenade Launcher	2543	10	(350)
Firearms Accessories			
Type 1 Targeting Computer	2302	9	200
Type 2 Targeting Computer	2313	9	400
Type 3 Targeting Computer	2371	9	600
Type 4 Targeting Computer	2460	10	800
Type 5 Targeting Computer	2534	10	1,000
Type 6 Targeting Computer	2577	11	(1,200)
Type 7 Targeting Computer	2630	11	(1,400)

Item	Year	ATRI	Price
Type 8 Targeting Computer	2644	11	(1,600)
Mark I Rangefinder	2286	9	100
Mark II Rangefinder	2323	9	200
Mark III Rangefinder	2485	10	300
Mark IV Rangefinder	2552	11	400
Firearm Flashlight	2447	10	100
DEFENSES			
Composite Armors			
Armored Clothing, Basic	2437	9	120+
Armored Clothing, Improved	2478	10	250+
Armor Additions			
Ablative Plating	2320	9	(350)
Anti-Laser Foam	2398	9	100
Reflective Coating	2431	9	300
Force Fields			
Type 1 Force Field Belt	2592	11	2,500
Type 2 Force Field Belt	2601	11	4,000
Type 3 Force Field Belt	2618	11	(6,000)
PERSONAL EQUIPMENT			
Computers			
Pocket Computer	2415	10	200
Pocket Computer	2560	11	400
MPC-12 Military Computer	2628	11	(3,000)
Holographic Screen	2478	10	80
Communications			
CommTab, standard	2181	9	5
CommTab, decorative	2181	9	10+
Orbital Communicator	2333	10	230
Translator-9	2159	9	50
Translator-10	2398	10	75
Translator-11	2561	11	100
Sensors			
Electronic Binoculars-8	2020	8	30
Electronic Binoculars-9	2182	9	50
Electronic Binoculars-10	2354	10	80
Electronic Binoculars-11	2544	11	100
Nightvision Glasses	2138	9	50
Nightsight Contacts	2430	10	80
Personal Sensor Unit-10	2518	10	200
Personal Sensor Unit-11	2594	11	400

TERRAN EMPIRE PRICE LIST

Item	Year	ATRI	Price
PERSONAL EQUIPMENT			
Sensors			
Holoprojector-10a	2451	10	400
Holoprojector-10b	2522	10	600
Holoprojector-11	2590	11	800
Holographic Camera-10	2490	10	225
Holographic Camera-11	2567	11	500
Gravitic Gear			
Antigrav Lifter	2544	11	200
Personal Antigrav Pack	2572	11	400
Flight Pack	2580	11	800
Medical Gear			
Hibernation Bunk	2154	9	600
Grit (1 dose)	2366	10	15
Regeneration equipment	2514	10	20,000
MA-7 Field Medkit	2550	11	150
Field Medkit refill	2550	11	30
Survival Gear			
Spacesuit	1968	7	270
Armored Spacesuit	2044	8	1,000
Skinsuit	2180	9	400
Magnetic Boots	1968	7	80
Space Thruster-8	2053	8	120
Space Thruster-9	2207	9	160
Space Thruster-10	2480	10	240
Space Thruster-11	2535	11	400
Miscellaneous			
Impeller Pack	2051	8	200
Stealth Suit	2525	10	8,000
BODY MODIFICATIONS (1)			
Cybersystems			
Armorskin	2497	10	400
Artificial Arm	2058	8	700
Artificial Leg (x1)	2058	8	700
Artificial Leg (x2)	2058	8	1200
Chemanalyzer	2112	8	500

	Year	ATRI	Price
Cochlear Implant	2089	8	750
Computer Implant	2066	8	2,000
Cybernetic Eyes	2060	8	200/mod
Internal Oxygen Supply	2082	8	300
Neural Interface Jack	2043	8	750
Radio Implant	2048	8	600
Smart Hair	2193	9	300
Bioware			
Blood Filter	2073	8	2,000
Gilgamesh Treatment	2488	10	100,000 + 10,000/year
Immune Assist	2163	9	10,000 + 1,000/year
SERVICES (2)			
Accommodations, Per Day			
Hotel room, poor	N/A	N/A	30
Hotel room, average	N/A	N/A	60
Hotel room, luxurious	N/A	N/A	200
Hotel room, ultra-luxurious	N/A	N/A	500+
Food And Drink			
Meal, poor	N/A	N/A	5
Meal, average	N/A	N/A	25
Meal, gourmet	N/A	N/A	100+
Liquor, drink	N/A	N/A	5
Liquor, bottle	N/A	N/A	25+
Other Services			
Doctor's visit, poor	N/A	N/A	30
Doctor's visit, average	N/A	N/A	50
Doctor's visit, quality	N/A	N/A	80
Doctor's visit, high quality	N/A	N/A	150+
Psionic scanning, per hour	N/A	N/A	100+
Regeneration of limb	N/A	N/A	3,500

1: Price of body modifications does not include cost of license or surgery (see page 131).
2: For the cost of space travel, see pages 90-91.
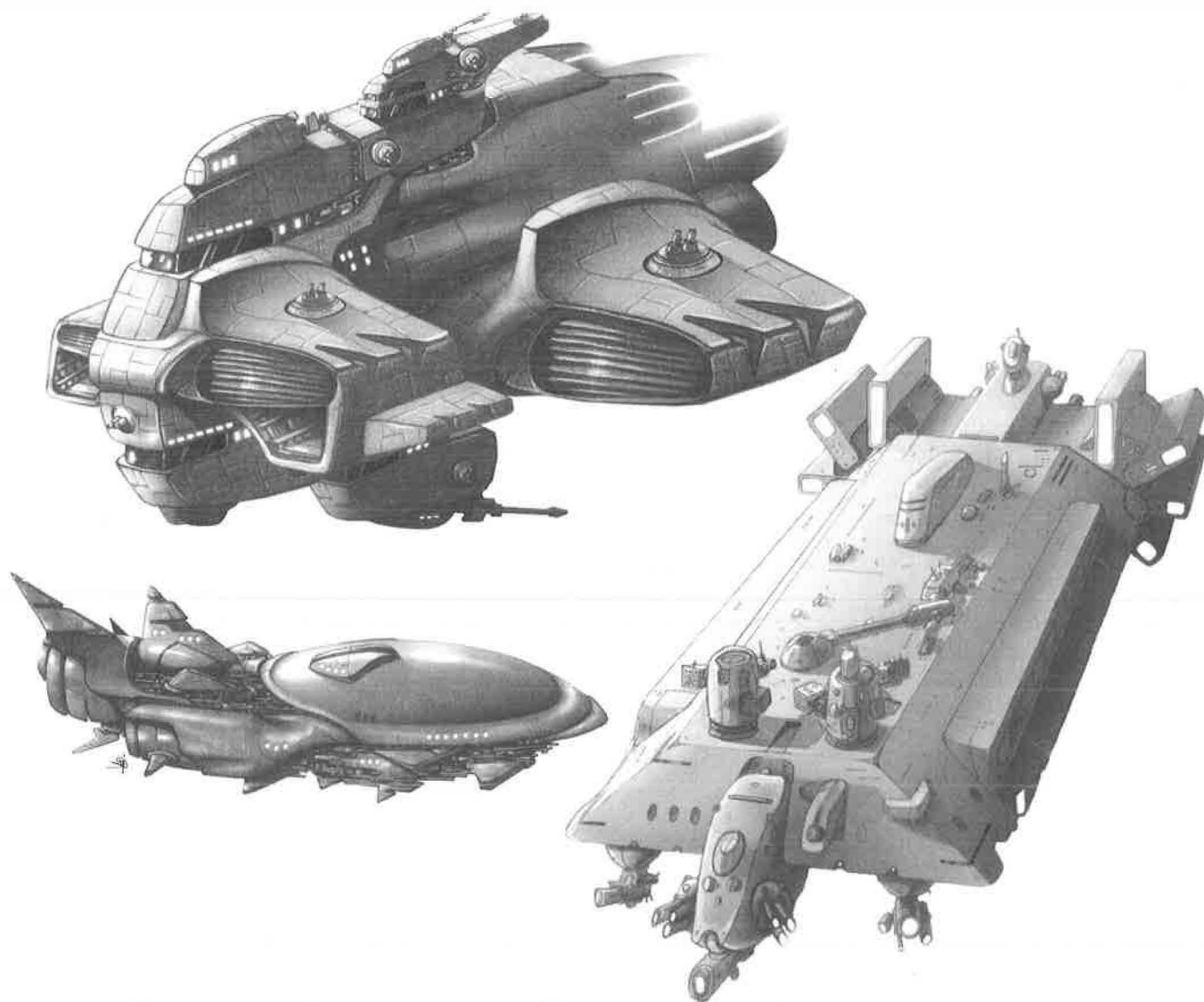
Chariots of the Spacelanes

STARSHIPS

The Terran Empire and the other species and governments of the Milky Way Galaxy have created tens of thousands, if not millions, of different types of vessels to carry people from one planet or star to another. In many game campaigns, the characters' ship plays almost as important a role as they do, becoming the "primary NPC" they interact with in the game. Therefore it's important to give some thought to their ship, both in terms of how it fits into the setting and how it functions in the game.

This chapter reviews the major forms of ship technology available to characters in the Terran Empire setting, focusing as usual on the period during which Marissa III rules (2633-51). It also provides several example ships.

IMPERIAL STARSHIP TECH

During the early-to-mid twenty-seventh century, Terran starship technology is among the most powerful in the Galaxy. A solid ATRI 11, it makes the Imperial fleet a force for most other civilizations to reckon with (though a few, such as the Malvans, Varanyi, and to some extent the CCR, can out-perform it).

POWER SYSTEMS

The table on page 158 summarizes some of the power systems commonly used by Imperial starships. These are just typical examples; engineers can build other sizes and configurations if necessary, but they usually cost more. Individual backup, auxiliary, and reserve power systems usually provide 5-20% of the power of a ship's main power plant.

Fusion plants typically have fuel in quantities to last for ten years (barring disaster, the need to use the deuterium for something else, or the like). Cold fusion plants have enough fuel for a year; antimatter plants for six months.

BUYING STARSHIPS

In many Terran Empire campaigns, the GM allows PCs to buy spacecraft with money instead of Character Points. You can apply the following general guidelines, but the GM should adjust the prices of ships to suit his own campaign and preserve game balance.

■ Ships without FTL capability cost 800 to 1,200 Imperial credits per point of Total Vehicle Cost.

■ Ships with FTL capability cost 3,000 to 5,000 Imperial credits per point of Total Vehicle Cost.

■ For military ships, or ships with significant combat capability, it they're available at all, calculate the cost using the methods above, and then multiply it by two or more.

The following table provides suggested cost in Imperial credits for the starships described in this chapter; costs in parentheses are black market prices (N/A indicates not available for any price). Used vessels cost less — sometimes as little as half the listed price. Characters may also get a better price going straight to the manufacturing source.

Listed ship prices include all equipment on the ship's character sheet. Prices listed elsewhere in this chapter for individual ship systems are provided for purposes of adding them to an already-purchased ship, retrofitting an existing vessel, or the like.

IMPERIAL SHIP CLASSIFICATION

The Terran Empire has a standardized ship classification system to aid in regulation and traffic control. Each ship has a three-letter identifying prefix: the first denotes range; the second role; and the third size.

First Letter	Type	Notes
O	Orbiter	Vehicles limited to planetary orbit
S	Spaceship	Vehicles capable of interplanetary flight
I	Starship	Vehicles capable of interstellar travel

Second Letter	Type	Notes
A	Attack	Warship to attack planets or bases
B	Battle	Warship to attack other space vehicles
C	Carrier	Vessel carrying smaller ships
E	Exploration	Scout or explorer ships
F	Freighter	Freighter or containership
H	Heavy Lift	Tugs or boosters
I	Intelligence	Espionage or intelligence-gathering
L	Lander	Surface-to-orbit transport
M	Merchant	Passenger liner or passenger-cargo ship
P	Patrol	Patrol ship or cruiser
Q	Covert	Covert-operations or decoy ship
R	Research	Scientific ships
S	Support	Support ships or tenders
T	Transport	Bulk transport or tanker
U	Utility	General-purpose vehicle
X	Experimental	Experimental ship
Y	Yacht	Personal vehicle

Third Letter	Type	Notes
P	Personal	Approximately 100 cubic meters; single pilot
S	Small	Approximately 1000 cubic meters; 10 crew
M	Medium	Approximately 10,000 cubic meters; 50 crew
L	Large	Approximately 100,000 cubic meters; 500 crew
V	Very Large	One million cubic meters, or more

Thus, an IMS is a small merchant starship, an SBL is a system-defense monitor, and an OBP is a space fighter. Other common ship types are OHS (orbital tugs), OLS (standard orbital shuttles), SMM (common interplanetary liners), SPS (in-system Customs cutters), STL (large interplanetary tankers), IBS (commerce escorts), IBV (super-battleships), ICL (carrier starships), IES (scouts), and so on. Individual vessels follow this prefix with a unique registry or hull number. Often a class of ships gets numbers in series.

Starship	Price
Terran Ships	
Empress	N/A
Gagarin	3,650,000
Peregrine	N/A
Wasp	(7,000,000)
Other Ships	
Ackálian Intruder	(18,000,000)
Ackálian Prowler	N/A
CCR Knowledge Addict	6,000,000
Thorgon Colossus	N/A
Thorgon Attack Fighter	(10,000,000)
Velarian Swift Hand	2,300,000

TERRAN EMPIRE POWER SYSTEMS

Power Plant	Year	ATRI	END	REC	A/R Cost	Price
Small Fusion Plant	2149	9	150	150	165/60	22,500
Medium Fusion Plant	2149	9	175	175	193/70	31,000
Large Fusion Plant	2149	9	200	200	220/80	40,000
Small Cold Fusion Plant	2348	10	180	180	198/72	40,000
Medium Cold Fusion Plant	2348	10	210	210	231/84	53,000
Large Cold Fusion Plant	2348	10	240	240	264/96	73,000
Small Antimatter Plant	2584	11	200	200	220/80	62,500
Medium Antimatter Plant	2584	11	250	250	275/100	90,000
Large Antimatter Plant	2584	11	300	300	330/120	122,500

All power systems are built as Endurance Reserves with the Limitations *OIF Immobile* (-1½) and *Only Powers Electrical Devices* (-¼). Species with technology based on other forms of power change, or do not apply, the latter Limitation. When first introduced, a power plant may have other Limitations as well, such as *Activation Roll* or *Requires A Skill Roll*.

The indicated sizes (Small, Medium, Large) are relative. When Humans first develop a type of power technology, the plants tend to be bigger than later models; a Large Antimatter Plant from 2584 is larger than one from 2630. As a general guideline, assume a Large power plant occupies a number of cubic hexes equal to as much as its ATRI x 10 when first introduced. It then experiences a reduction in current size of 2d6% per decade (down to a minimum of a number of cubic hexes equal to the plant's ATRI x 2 for small plants, ATRI x 3 for medium, and ATRI x 4 for large).

PROPULSION SYSTEMS

Aside from the power plant, the most important part of a ship is its propulsion system. Terran ships use rockets (chemical, fusion, antimatter), reactionless-thrust drives, Hyperdrives, and Displacer drives to journey from one place to another; more advanced civilizations have Spacewarp drives. The accompanying table lists some of the standard drive types available during Marissa III's reign; many other configurations, designs, and speeds are possible within the ceilings imposed by the best systems listed.

ROCKETS

The Terran Empire commonly uses rocket technology for surface-to-space ships and some interplanetary ships, as well as for maneuvering thrusters on some ships.

Chemical rockets can attain speeds of up to 180" per Turn for manned flights or 420" per Turn for unmanned flights (*e.g.*, cargo drones). After 2540, when force fields become available for ship defenses, some ships come equipped with *inertial compensation fields* (ICFs), special internal force fields that counteract the effects of acceleration so that even manned rockets can attain speeds up to 420" per Turn.

Fusion rockets can attain speeds of 180" per Turn for manned flights prior to the invention of force fields. They can attain speeds of 570" per Turn after the invention of the ICF, or for unmanned flights prior to that.

Antimatter rockets, which first become available in the early 2600s, use microscopic quantities of antimatter to "boost" the power of fusion rockets. They require the use of an ICF due to the tremendous accelerations involved. They can attain speeds

of 720" per Turn.

Example Rocket Technology

Here are some examples of rocket technology. All assume a ship with SPD 3. Rockets technically suffer from the "dangerous exhaust" Side Effect described on page 31 of *The Ultimate Vehicle*, but this so rarely hinders a space vehicle that it is not applied (the GM should simply keep it in mind).

Chemical Rocket (Manned, Pre-2540): *Flight 30" (60 Active Points); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easy to obtain; 1 Month; -0). Total cost: 60 points.*

Fusion Rocket (Post-2540): *Flight 42", x4.5 Noncombat (190" per Phase maximum) (94 Active Points); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easy to obtain; 1 Month; -0). Total cost: 94 points.*

Antimatter Rocket: *Flight 60", x4 Noncombat (125 Active Points); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (difficult to obtain; 1 Week; -0). Total cost: 125 points.*

Inertial Compensation Field: *Force Field (22 PD) (22 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Protect Occupants Against G Force Damage (-1). Total cost: 7 points. (Price: ship's Size times 300 credits.)*

REACTIONLESS DRIVES

An outgrowth of antigravity technology, reactionless drives function just like rockets, but without the need to project energy out the back. They can attain speeds of 600" per Turn (this requires an ICF, of course), but do not require fuel, just power from the ship's power plant.

HYPERDRIVE

A Hyperdrive shifts a spacecraft and all its contents into a parallel universe known as Hyperspace (called Space-Beta or Infraspace by cosmologists). The universe of Hyperspace evidently formed with a great deal less matter and energy than the "normal" universe — it has no visible stars or galaxies and a density of gas much lower than normal space. The lack of energy also means Hyperspace expanded less swiftly than the normal universe did. But although it's about one-millionth as large, each point in normal spacetime ("normalspace") corresponds to a point in Hyperspace. Thus, if a starship shifts into Hyperspace, travels one kilometer, and then shifts back, it's a million kilometers away from its starting position.

Travel within Hyperspace depends on two things: first, a ship's normal propulsion (since the ship has to propel itself through Hyperspace); second, its Hyperdrive shunt, the part of the Hyperdrive that makes it possible for a ship to transition from normalspace to Hyperspace and back again. The power and efficiency of the shunt dictates how long a ship can remain in Hyperspace (and thus how far it can travel using Hyperdrive); the maximum distance indicated for Hyperdrive travel represents the shunt's limit (at which point it

automatically shifts the ship back to normalspace). If damaged or shut off in mid-journey, the shunt automatically stops working, immediately thrusting the ship back into normalspace at an unintended destination (in some rare cases, a malfunctioning shunt can strand a ship in Hyperspace instead, a far worse fate). Since velocity carries over from one universe to the other, Hyperspace travel gets faster as both it and propulsion technology improve. With reactionless drives Hyperspace travel becomes almost as fast as Displacer drive jumps. Scientists wonder if a ship could use a warp drive in Hyperspace (which would make intergalactic travel possible), but so far all experimental vessels used to test this theory have vanished.

Hyperspace travel has its limits, though. First, it requires a lot of power and preparation time. Second, because Hyperspace has no stars to navigate by, ships rely heavily on a system of beacons — a ship that gets lost in Hyperspace can emerge in normalspace far off course. By unspoken agreement, no species (not even the Ackálians or the Thorgons) attacks the Hyperspace beacon network; losing it would be disastrous for any pre-ATRI 12 civilization. Third, a few ships somehow fail to make the shift between normalspace and Hyperspace (or back again); one theory claims they enter some other universe as yet unknown to science.

Fourth, making the shift requires a relatively "flat" zone of space free of gravitational and other distortions. The accepted safety limit is about 1 AU from a star the size of Sol and a distance of 100,000 kilometers from an Earth-sized world. For habitable worlds orbiting in a star's biosphere, this means ships must leave orbit and spend a long time (often days or weeks) getting to the safe distance. Smaller worlds in the outer system pose fewer problems, so in many systems the busiest port is a space station or asteroid out past 2 AU, linked to the inner planets by fast shuttles and cycler stations.

Piloting a Hyperdrive ship requires the *Navigation (Hyperspace)* Skill. Since Hyperspace has no

TERRAN EMPIRE PROPULSION SYSTEMS

Propulsion System	Year	ATRI	Movement	A/R Cost	Price
Rockets					
Chemical Rocket	2572	7	Flight 30" (180"/Turn)	60/60	4,000
Fusion Rocket	2590	9	Flight 42" (570"/Turn)	94/94	8,000
Antimatter Rocket	2632	11	Flight 60" (720"/Turn)	125/125	16,000
Reactionless Drives					
Type 1	2537	11	Flight 30" (360"/Turn)	65/65	20,000
Type 2	2571	11	Flight 38" (450"/Turn)	81/81	35,000
Type 3	2608	11	Flight 45" (540"/Turn)	95/95	50,000
Type 4	2640	11	Flight 50" (600"/Turn)	105/105	70,000
Hyperdrives					
Class Alpha	2203	9	1.2 LY per year	38/3	50,000
Class Beta	2280	9	36 LY per day	31/3	80,000
Class Epsilon	2348	10	71 LY per day	52/5	118,000
Class Theta	2558	10	107 LY per day	84/10	165,000
Class Lambda	2606	11	180 LY per day	136/18	200,000
Class Nu	2629	11	480 LY per day	44/5	N/A
Displacer Drives					
Type 1	2480	10	4 AU per day	55/5	90,000
Type 5	2530	10	16 LY per day	85/11	165,000
Type 7	2548	11	80 LY per day	19/2	210,000
Type 12	2589	11	160 LY per day	38/4	270,000
Type 17	2615	11	400 LY per day	95/13	325,000
Type 20	2635	11	600 LY per day	142/22	N/A

Year: The year the propulsion system in question is first available. For rockets, it indicates the year the standard Terran model commonly used in the early twenty-seventh century was invented; obviously, more primitive chemical and fusion rockets are available centuries earlier.

Movement: This assumes starships have SPD 3. For Displacer drives, it assumes four jumps per day.

Price: The price of the system in Imperial credits. "N/A" indicates the system is not commercially available to civilians (usually because it's military technology). The military develops most propulsion systems first, and they usually remain classified technology for about 2d6+3 years.

FTL ACCURACY TABLE

Margin Of Success	Distance To Target
Made by 5+	Exact intended point of emergence
Made by 2-4	1d6 x 100 kilometers
Made by 0-1	1d6 x 1,000 kilometers
Failed by 1	1d6 x 10,000 kilometers
Failed by 2	1d6 x 100,000 kilometers
Failed by 3	1d6 x 1,000,000 kilometers
Failed by 4-5	1d6 x 1 AU
Failed by 6-7	1d6 x 10 AU
Failed by 8-9	1d6 x 100 AU
Failed by 10+	1d6 light-years

The GM should interpret the results of the FTL Accuracy Table so that failure inconveniences the character making the roll. Rarely, if ever, should a character find himself in a better position for failing his Navigation roll than he would be for making it. On a few occasions ships have emerged from Hyperspace into another physical object (resulting in the immediate destruction of both in a tremendous explosion) or so close to a star the ship could not escape its gravity well and was destroyed.

stars, pilots must take bearings on the local beacon array. Navigating in regions lacking a beacon network (areas where beacons have gone offline for some reason, or unexplored area of Hyperspace where no one has set up any beacons yet) imposes a -3 Skill Roll penalty. Using knowledge of how to navigate normal space imposes a -4 penalty on Navigation rolls, even if functioning beacons exist. The pilot makes his Navigation roll when the ship exits Hyperspace. How close he comes to his intended point of emergence depends on how well he does with the roll (see the FTL Accuracy Table).

Two ships in Hyperspace can interact with each other normally. They can maneuver, fight, dock, or the like, just the same as they could in normalspace.

Example Hyperdrives

Here are some example Hyperdrives from the pre-Imperial days to the late Imperial period. The level of MegaScaling varies to simulate defined flight times.

Class Alpha Hyperdrive: Teleportation 4", MegaScale (1" = 3 trillion km, can scale down to 1" = 2,000 km; +3¾) (36 Active Points); Activation Roll 11- (-1), Extra Time (1 Year for a full journey, or 1.2 LY per year; -6), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x8 END; -3½), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -½). Total cost: 3 points.

Class Beta Hyperdrive: Teleportation 3", Mega Scale (1" = 100 light-years, can scale down to 1" = 2,000 km; +4¼) (31 Active Points); Activation Roll 14- (-½), Extra Time (1 Week for a full journey, or about 1.5 LY per hour; -4½), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x8 END; -3½), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -½). Total cost: 3 points.

Class Epsilon Hyperdrive: Teleportation 5", MegaScale (1" = 100 light-years, can scale down to 1" = 2,000 km; +4¼) (52 Active Points); Extra Time (1 Week for a full journey, or about 3 LY per hour; -4½), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x7 END; -3), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -½). Total cost: 5 points.

Class Theta Hyperdrive: Teleportation 8", MegaScale (1" = 100 light-years, can scale down to 1" = 2,000 km; +4¼) (84 Active Points); Extra Time (1 Week for a full journey, or about 4.5 LY per hour; -4½), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x4 END; -1½), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -½). Total cost: 10 points.

Class Lambda Hyperdrive: Teleportation 13", MegaScale (1" = 100 light-years, can scale down to 1" = 2,000 km; +4¼) (136 Active Points); Extra Time (1 Week for a full journey, or 7.5 LY per hour; -4½), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x3 END; -1), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -½). Total cost: 18 points.

Class Nu Hyperdrive: Teleportation 4", MegaScale (1" = 1,000 light-years, can scale down to 1" = 2,000 km; +4½) (44 Active Points); Extra Time (1 Week for a full journey, or about 1 LY per 3 minutes; -4½), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x7 END; -3), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To

Activate (see text; -½). Total cost: 5 points. (Price beginning in 2657: 300,000 credits.)

DISPLACER DRIVE

Displacer drive applies the same method which shifts a starship from a point in normalspace to a point in Hyperspace to connect two points in normalspace, thus allowing a ship to "displace" (or "jump") from one place to another in the blink of an eye. Early Displacer drives can make jumps measured in AUs or single-digit light years; modern Terran ones make single jumps of up to 400 light-years.

Using The Displacer Drive

Displacer ships normally make four jumps per day (a courier with a crack crew could probably manage six jumps per day for a few days). The end result is a form of travel faster than Hyperdrive. For example, a ship using a Type 20 Displacer drive moves at a rate of 600 light-years per day, and could cross the Milky Way in about six months (allowing for occasional rest stops and the like); one with a Class Nu Hyperdrive moves at a rate of 480 light-years per day, taking about eight months to cross the Galaxy. But even with the Type 20 Displacer drive, it would take a century to reach the Andromeda Galaxy.

A crew can use a Displacer drive more than four times a day, but this poses risks and violates Imperial safety protocols. For each use beyond four in a twenty-four hour period, the chief engineer in charge of the drive must make a PS: Operate Displacer Drive roll with a cumulative -3 penalty. (Alternately, the GM can have the PC with the best Skill Roll make the roll, or use the Crew Skills rules from page 175 of *The Ultimate Vehicle.*) If the roll succeeds, the drive operates normally.

If the roll fails by 1-3, the drive breaks, requiring 2d6 hours of repair and maintenance. If the roll fails by 4 or more, a catastrophic explosion occurs, destroying the drive and inflicting an additional 2d6 Killing Damage to the ship (no defense applies). The ship cannot Displace until it replaces the drive.

Until the ship "rests," the penalties and requirement for making rolls remains. Each four-hour period of rest removes -3 worth of penalty.

Drawbacks

Displacer drives have their own drawbacks, just like Hyperdrives. First, they suffer from the same gravitic distortion restrictions as Hyperdrives, but to a lesser degree. The accepted safety limit is approximately half that of a Hyperdrive.

Second, Displacer drives require staggering amounts of energy. Even worse, a ship can't use its Displacer drive continuously from second to second; after one use, it must recharge the Displacer coil for another jump, and this takes time and delicate effort. That's why military ships carry Hyperdrives in addition to Displacer drives — Displacer drives let them travel faster, but Hyperdrives allow for quick escapes.

Third, pilots find it harder to navigate Displacer ships than Hyperdrive ships. Doing so requires the Skill *Navigation (Displacement);* pilots

COMPARISON: DRIVE SPEEDS

Hyperdrive	Year	ATRI	LY Per Week	LY Per Day
Class Alpha	2203	9	23 billion km	3.3 billion km
Class Beta	2280	9	250	36
Class Epsilon	2348	10	500	71
Class Theta	2558	10	750	107
Class Lambda	2606	11	1,260	180
Class Nu	2629	11	3,360	480
Displacer Drive	**Year**	**ATRI**	**LY Per Week***	**LY Per Day***
Type 1	2480	10	28 AU (.5 LY)	4 AU
Type 5	2530	10	112	16
Type 7	2548	11	560	80
Type 12	2589	11	1,120	160
Type 17	2615	11	2,800	400
Type 20	2635	11	4,200	600
Spacewarp Drive	**Year**	**ATRI**	**LY Per Week**	**LY Per Day**
Varanyi Type II	2550s	12	5,000	720
Varanyi Type VII	2630s	12	10,000	1,440

*: Assumes a crew makes four jumps per day.

cannot use Navigation (Space) as a substitute. The pilot makes his roll and consults the FTL Accuracy Table, but when making the roll must apply a penalty equal to the number of light-years jumped divided by 100 (any jump of 55 light-years or less incurs no penalty; jumps of 56 light-years and above count as 100 light-years; apply standard rounding rules for other odd distances). For example, if a pilot made a 60 light-year jump, he'd suffers a -1 penalty on his Navigation (Displacement) roll. Older model Displacer drives, drives in poor repair, and damaged drives may suffer an additional -1 to -3 penalty.

Displacing In Hyperspace

While a ship can, theoretically, activate a Displacer drive in Hyperspace to achieve very high-speed travel, the navigation problems make this almost impossible. If a character uses a Displacer drive while in Hyperspace, apply a penalty of -3 to his Navigation (Displacement) roll (in addition to any other penalties). If the roll fails, multiply the distance off-target by one million to find out how from the destination in normalspace the ship emerges. (For reference purposes, a light-year has approximately 64,000 AU or 9.5 trillion kilometers.)

> **Example:** *Captain Trompette uses his Displacer drive in Hyperspace to beat an Ackálian armada to his base 20 light-years away. He jumps 6 light-years, rolling against his Navigation (Displacement) 14-. He rolls a 13, but there's a -3 penalty for Displacing in Hyperspace, so he fails by 2. Thus, he emerges 1d6 x 100,000 km off. The GM rolls a 2, making it 200,000 km. But when he shifts from Hyperspace into normal space, that gets multiplied by 1 million to 200 billion kilometers. Trompette's still trying to zero in on the base when the Ackálian fleet destroys it.*

Example Displacer Drives

Here are several example Displacer drives, built as MegaScaled Teleportation. Displacer drives require Extra Time, but in this case that represents the time needed to charge and prepare the Displacer engine — when the drive activates, the displacement to the destination point takes a single Segment. The distances given in the reference tables indicate how far a given Displacer drive can carry a ship in a day, assuming an average crew operating at average efficiency makes an average of four jumps per day. If a crew works hard and makes more jumps, the ship can go further (use the individual drive specifications to determine how far).

Type 1 Displacer Drive: Teleportation 10", MegaScale (1" = 1 million km; +1 ¾) (55 Active Points); Activation Roll 11- (-1), Extra Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼). Total cost: 5 points.
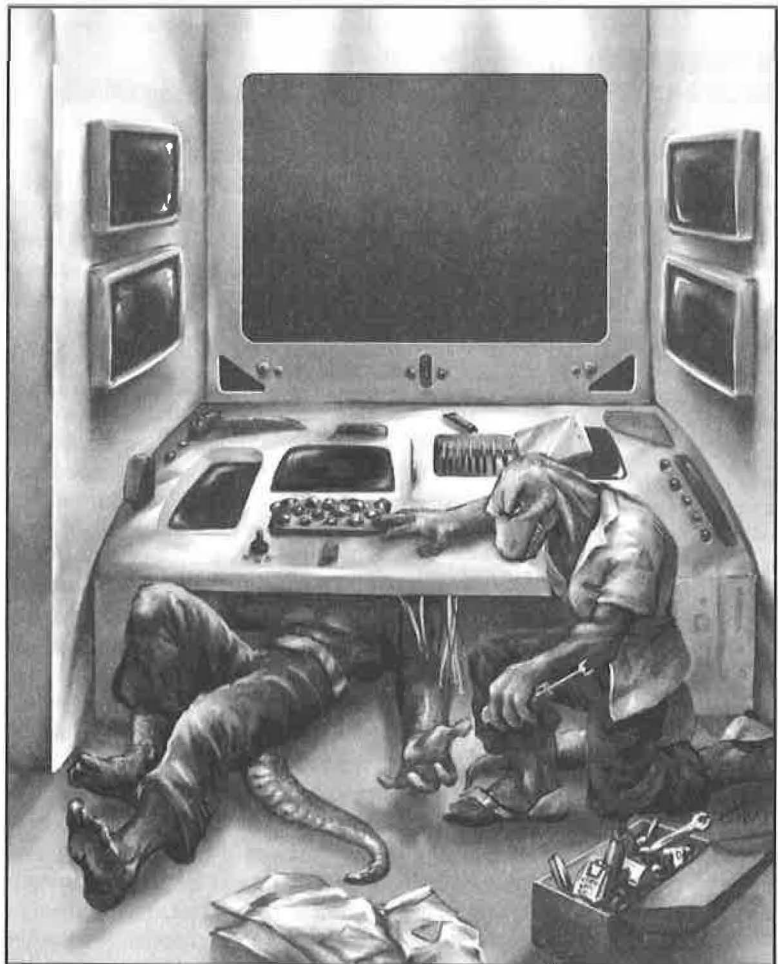
Type 5 Displacer Drive: Teleportation 10", MegaScale (1" = 1 trillion km; +3¼) (85 Active Points); Activation Roll 15- (-¼), Extra Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x6 END; -2½), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼). Total cost: 11 points.

Type 7 Displacer Drive: Teleportation 2", MegaScale (1" = 10 light-years; +3¾) (19 Active Points); Extra Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼). Total cost: 2 points.

Type 12 Displacer Drive: Teleportation 4", MegaScale (1" = 10 light-years; +3¾) (38 Active Points); Extra Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼). Total cost: 4 points.

Type 17 Displacer Drive: Teleportation 10", MegaScale (1" = 10 light-years; +3¾) (95 Active Points); Extra Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x6 END; -2½), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravi-

MAINTAINING AND FUELING A SHIP

Starships require regular upkeep, just like any other machine. General maintenance expenses typically amount to the ship's Size times 100 credits per month. Anything extraordinary — such as repairing combat damage — costs extra.

Fuel for rocket engines costs the following (assuming routine use):

Chemical Rocket: 400 per month

Fusion Rocket: 800 per month

Antimatter Rocket: 2,000 per month

Fuel for a power plant costs the following (assuming routine use):

Fusion Plant: 12,000 for a 10-year supply

Cold Fusion Plant: 20,000 for a year's supply

Antimatter Plant: 15,000 for a six-month supply

tational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼). Total cost: 13 points.

Type 20 Displacer Drive: Teleportation 15", Mega-Scale (1" = 10 light-years; +3¾) (142 Active Points); Extra Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x4 END; -1½), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼). Total cost: 22 points. (Price beginning in 2651: 450,000 credits.)

SPACEWARP DRIVE

Terran science does not yet have the Spacewarp drive, but more technologically advanced civilizations (such as the Varanyi and Malvans) do. Terran efforts to obtain warships for study (and, hopefully, duplication) have always failed.

Spacewarp drive actually folds space around the starship, squeezing the distance in front as the ship moves so it can move faster than light relative to the rest of the Universe without exceeding it locally or using Hyperspace.

Spacewarp drives derive partly from reactionless drive technology, and function as reactionless thrusters when used at extremely low levels of effect. Therefore, warships don't need another drive system. However, they do lose some efficiency in gravity wells. The maximum acceleration, in gees, of a warp drive is 4/G, where G is the local gravity in gees. This means a warship can move at maximum speed in interstellar space, accelerate briskly in interplanetary space where the local gravity is minimal, and lift off most planets, but doesn't dare approach too close to a star. It also means a warship can't move at warp speeds through a system; it has to slow down to STL outside a system and move into it using its drive as a reactionless drive.

Cost	Spacewarp Drives
70	*Varanyi Type II Spacewarp Drive:* Multipower, 105–point reserve, all Costs Endurance (-½)
2u	1) *FTL Mode:* FTL Travel (1 LY per 2 minutes); Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x5 END; -2) 30
4u	2) *STL Mode:* Flight 50", x4 Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x3 END; -1) 30
	Total cost: 76 points
73	*Varanyi Type VI Spacewarp Drive:* Multipower, 110–point reserve, all Costs Endurance (-½)
3u	1) *FTL Mode:* FTL Travel (1 LY per minute); Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x3 END; -1) 18
5u	2) *STL Mode:* Flight 50", x8 Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½) 22
	Total cost: 81 points

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Terran Empire ships of the twenty-seventh century generally use lasers, plasma cannons, and missiles when attacking; all have existed for centuries and are known for their reliability and power. Ships also frequently use their tractor beams for offensive purposes.

Starship Lasers

The most common weapon on starships is the trusty laser, which has existed as a ship-mountable system since 2224. Even starships that don't carry "weapons" often have a single laser mounted forward so they can destroy space debris and perform other utilitarian functions. Most lasers come with both beam, sustained beam, and pulse modes, and can fire at close and distant targets. The maximum range for the far-targeting slots is capped at the range for far-targeting beam mode for ease of game play. Lasers firing at targets over 300,000 kilometers away must account for lightspeed lag (*Star Hero*, page 217).

None of these lasers has the *Limited Arc Of Fire* Limitation, since it's possible to mount them in hardpoint turrets offering a virtually unrestricted field of fire. However, a ship designer can certainly add that Limitation if he wants to.

MARK I STARSHIP LASER

Effect: RKA 4d6, RKA 3½d6 Autofire (3 shots), RKA 3d6 Continuous
Shots: 40
Range: 600,000 kilometers

Cost	Mark I Starship Laser
83	*Mark I Starship Laser:* Multipower, 124-point reserve, 40 Charges for entire Multipower (+½); all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
3u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 4d6, Increased Maximum Range (1,500"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
5u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 4d6, MegaRange (1" = 100 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
4u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 3½d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Increased Maximum Range (1,725"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
5u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 3½d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), MegaRange (1" = 100 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
5u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 3d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (2,250"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
	Total cost: 105 points

MARK IV STARSHIP LASER

Effect: RKA 5d6, RKA 4d6 Autofire (3 shots), RKA 3½d6 Continuous

Shots: 45

Range: 75,000 kilometers

Cost	Mark IV Starship Laser
100	*Mark IV Starship Laser:* Multipower, 150-point reserve, 45 Charges for entire Multipower (+½); all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
4u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 5d6, Increased Maximum Range (1,875"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
7u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 5d6, MegaRange (1" = 100 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
4u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 4d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Increased Maximum Range (1,875"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
6u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 4d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), MegaRange (1" = 100 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
5u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 3½d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (2,750"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

Total cost: 126 points

MARK VIII STARSHIP LASER

Effect: RKA 6d6, RKA 5d6 Autofire (3 shots), RKA 4d6 Continuous

Shots: Depends on ship's power

Range: 90,000 kilometers

Cost	Mark VIII Starship Laser
80	*Mark VIII Starship Laser:* Multipower, 180-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
5u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 6d6, Increased Maximum Range (2,250"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
8u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 6d6, MegaRange (1" = 100 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
5u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 5d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Increased Maximum Range (2,350"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
7u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 5d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), MegaRange (1" = 100 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
6u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 4d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (3,000"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

Total cost: 111 points

TERRAN EMPIRE STARSHIP WEAPON SYSTEMS

Weapon System	Year	ATRI	Effect	A/R Cost	Price
Starship Lasers					
Mark I Starship Laser	2224	9	RKA 4d6	Text	20,000
Mark IV Starship Laser	2352	10	RKA 5d6	Text	80,000
Mark VIII Starship Laser	2476	10	RKA 6d6	Text	160,000
Mark XII Starship Laser	2552	11	RKA 8d6, AP	Text	240,000
Mark XV Starship Laser	2594	11	RKA 9d6, AP	Text	N/A
Mark XX Starship Laser	2635	11	RKA 10d6, AP	Text	N/A
Plasma Cannons					
Type 1 Plasma Cannon	2362	10	RKA 7d6, Accurate	210/70	25,000
Type 3 Plasma Cannon	2444	10	RKA 8d6, Accurate	240/80	75,000
Type 6 Plasma Cannon	2553	11	RKA 10d6, Accurate	300/100	150,000
Type 8 Plasma Cannon	2630	11	RKA 12d6, Accurate	405/135	N/A
Missiles					
Space Nuke	2149	9	RKA 20d6 EX	Text	N/A
Class 1-A Antimatter Missile	2606	11	RKA 25d6 EX	Text	N/A
Tractor Beam Generators					
Type A Tractor Beam	2590	11	Telekinesis (40 STR)	60/22	15,000
Type C Tractor Beam	2610	11	Telekinesis (60 STR)	90/33	45,000
Type E Tractor Beam	2628	11	Telekinesis (80 STR)	120/44	N/A
Type I Tractor Beam	2655	11	Telekinesis (100 STR)	150/54	N/A
Self-Destruct System	2050	8	Destroys ship	Varies	Varies

MARK XII STARSHIP LASER

Effect: RKA 8d6 Armor Piercing, RKA 6d6 Armor Piercing Autofire (3 shots), RKA 5d6 Continuous

Shots: Depends on ship's power

Range: 1,650,000 kilometers

Cost	Mark XII Starship Laser
147	*Mark XII Starship Laser:* Multipower, 330-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
8u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
15u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
7u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 6d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
12u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 6d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)
7u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 5d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (3,750"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

Total cost: 196 points

MARK XV STARSHIP LASER

Effect: RKA 9d6 Armor Piercing, RKA 7d6 Armor Piercing Autofire (5 shots), RKA 6d6 Continuous

Shots: Depends on ship's power

Range: 1,855,000 kilometers

Cost	Mark XV Starship Laser
165	*Mark XV Starship Laser:* Multipower, 371-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

9u 1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 9d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

16u 2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 9d6, Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

9u 3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 7d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

15u 4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 7d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

9u 5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 6d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (4,500"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

Total cost: 223 points (price after 2640: 300,000 cr.)

MARK XX STARSHIP LASER

Effect: RKA 10d6 Armor Piercing, RKA 8d6 Armor Piercing Autofire (5 shots), RKA 7d6 Continuous
Shots: Depends on ship's power
Range: 2,060,000 kilometers

Cost Mark XX Starship Laser

183 *Mark XX Starship Laser:* Multipower, 412-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

10u 1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 10d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

18u 2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 10d6, Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

11u 3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 8d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

17u 4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 8d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

10u 5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 7d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (5,250"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

Total cost: 249 points (price after 2659: 400,000 cr.)

Plasma Cannons

Available for starships since 2362, plasma cannons pack more offensive punch than lasers, but have shorter ranges. Due to their weight and size, ship designers typically mount them along a ship's centerline, or attach them to major starship support struts; as a result, they have a much more limited field of fire than lasers.

TYPE 1 PLASMA CANNON

Effect: RKA 7d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate)
Shots: 20
Range: 9.2 kilometers

Type 1 Plasma Cannon: RKA 7d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), Increased Range Modifier (4,600"; +¼), 20 Charges (+¼) (210 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (60 degrees in one direction, only on same horizontal level; -¾). Total cost: 70 points.

TYPE 3 PLASMA CANNON

Effect: RKA 8d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate)
Shots: 20
Range: 10.5 kilometers

Type 3 Plasma Cannon: RKA 8d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), Increased Range Modifier (5,250"; +¼), 20 Charges (+¼) (240 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (60 degrees in one direction, only on same horizontal level; -¾). Total cost: 80 points.

TYPE 6 PLASMA CANNON

Effect: RKA 10d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate)
Shots: 30
Range: 13.1 kilometers

Type 6 Plasma Cannon: RKA 10d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), Increased Range Modifier (6,550"; +¼), 30 Charges (+¼) (300 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (60 degrees in one direction, only on same horizontal level; -¾). Total cost: 100 points.

TYPE 8 PLASMA CANNON

Effect: RKA 12d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate)
Shots: 40
Range: 18 kilometers

Type 8 Plasma Cannon: RKA 12d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), Increased Range Modifier (9,000"; +¼), 40 Charges (+½) (405 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (60 degrees in one direction, only on same horizontal level; -¾). Total cost: 135 points. (Price after 2670: 200,000 credits.)

Missiles

Missiles play an important role on the twenty-seventh century battlefield. Able to move and act independently, they greatly expand a ship's tactical options. The drawback to them is their vulnerability; point defense systems or enemy missiles can shoot them down before they get close enough to inflict damage.

The variety of missiles used by Terran Empire ships defies complete description. Until 2606, when Humanity develops its first antimatter explosive missiles, missiles armed with nuclear explosives were the primary heavy missile of choice (see *Star Hero*, page 195, for a character sheet for this missile). Lower-yield nukes, as well as weaker missiles armed with conventional explosives, exist and are still used in appropriate circumstances.

The Class 1-A Antimatter Missile resembles the Space Nuke in most respects, including size; the two use the same magnetic launching systems. However, the Class 1-A replaces the nuclear warhead with a packet of matter and a packet of antimatter contained in a magnetic field. At the point of impact the magnetic field shuts off, resulting in a tremendous matter-antimatter explosion. Use the Space Nuke's character sheet, but increase the damage to RKA 25d6.

As a rule of thumb, in a Phase a ship can launch a number of missiles equal to half its Size (round up). Depending on the design of the ship, it may fire all of them from a single launcher, or one each from multiple launchers. For each +10 Character Points, a ship can double its per-Phase missile-firing capacity.

Tractor Beam Generators

First invented in 2590 as an outgrowth of antigravity technology, tractor beam generators allow a ship to project a beam of gravitic force that can move objects.

TYPE A TRACTOR BEAM

Effect: Telekinesis (40 STR)
Range: 300"

Type A Tractor Beam: Telekinesis (40 STR) (60 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼). Total cost: 22 points.

TYPE C TRACTOR BEAM

Effect: Telekinesis (60 STR)
Range: 450"

Type C Tractor Beam: Telekinesis (60 STR) (90 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼). Total cost: 33 points.

TYPE E TRACTOR BEAM

Effect: Telekinesis (80 STR)
Range: 600"

Type E Tractor Beam: Telekinesis (80 STR) (120 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼). Total cost: 44 points. (Price after 2656: 75,000 credits.)

TYPE I TRACTOR BEAM

Effect: Telekinesis (100 STR)
Range: 750"

Type I Tractor Beam: Telekinesis (100 STR) (150 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼). Total cost: 54 points. (Price after 2703: 135,000 credits.)

Self-Destruct System

Many ships, including all military ships, have a self-destruct system to prevent the ship from falling into enemy hands. The SDS sometimes serves as a last-ditch weapon, since its tremendous explosion can easily damage nearby ships. You should design a ship's SDS so it does enough damage, based on the Standard Effect Rule, to destroy the entire ship (which requires the SDS to do twice the ship's standard BODY). Since the damage occurs internally, do not apply any of the ship's exterior defenses (hull, armor plating, force fields) to protect it (the GM may, in his discretion, apply the ship's defenses to reduce the damage caused to nearby ships and objects).

Here's an example of an Imperial SDS for a ship with 60 BODY:

Self-Destruct System: RKA 40d6 (standard effect: 120 BODY), Explosion (+½), Trigger (spoken command authorization; +¼) (1,050 Active Points); No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Extra Time (once activated, takes 1 Minute to arm and detonate; -1½), 1 Charge Which Never Recovers (-4). Total cost: 145 points.

DEFENSE SYSTEMS

Starships need ways to defend themselves against the weapons described above. The accompanying table lists some of the standard Imperial defense technologies.

Protective Systems

For most of Human history, starships have had just one way to defend themselves: armor. The protection provided by the hull was all that stood between the crew and the vacuum of space. Of course, the size and sturdiness of the ship offered some protection as well, and as a result, Humans built (and still build) rugged ships (an average of 5-10 BODY per Size category, and often more).

In 2540, breakthroughs in energy field physics made it possible to protect ships with a technology long possessed by the Varanyi and the Se'ecra: force fields. Although not initially as effective as armor, in the past century they have advanced steadily. Starship engineers have begun designing new vessels that take advantage of the new technology — sleeker, lighter, faster ones that replace the protective bulk of older ships with strong force fields.

Most modern Terran ships have a four-layer defensive system. From outermost to innermost layer, they have an outer force field, hull force field, ablative armor plating, and hull armor. Although all Ablative defenses are "on top" and get hit first under the standard rules, in a Terran Empire campaign, a ship's defenses should get hit in order from outermost to innermost, so that an attack must penetrate the ship's outer force field and hull force field before it blows away any of the ship's ablative armor plating.

Here are examples of several standard "defen-

TERRAN EMPIRE STARSHIP DEFENSE SYSTEMS

Defense System	Year	ATRI	Effect	A/R Cost	Price
Protective Systems					
Defense Package 1	2430	10	+21/+10 DEF	Text	180,000
Defense Package 2	2540	11	8/5 FF, +27/+12 DEF	Text	290,000
Defense Package 3	2580	11	15/10 FF, +30/+15 DEF	Text	360,000
Defense Package 4	2610	11	20/12 FF, +35/+18 DEF	Text	425,000
Defense Package 5	2640	11	25/15 FF, +38/+20 DEF	Text	N/A
Point Defense Systems					
Basic Point Defense	2253	9	Missile Deflection	Text	35,000
Advanced Point Defense	2368	10	Missile Deflection, +4	Text	48,000
Elite Point Defense	2585	11	Missile Deflection,+8	Text	72,000
Stealth Systems					
Stealth Hull Type I	2183	9	-4 to Radar PER	42/17	(90,000)
Stealth Hull Type II	2361	10	-5 to Radar PER	46/18	(110,000)
Stealth Hull Type III	2502	10	-6 to Radar PER	50/20	(130,000)
Stealth Hull Type IV	2576	11	-7 to Radar PER	54/22	(150,000)

sive packages" used on military starships at various times during the Imperial era. Ship designers can, and often do, vary the amounts of each type of defense based on a ship's perceived mission and needs; civilian starships usually have significantly less protection.

Cost	**Defense Package 1**
36	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +21 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)
24	*Hull Armor:* +10 DEF; Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼) 0

Total cost: 60 points

Cost	**Defense Package 2**
2	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (8 PD/8 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)
2	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (5 PD/5 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)
46	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +27 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)
29	*Hull Armor:* +12 DEF; Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)

Total cost: 79 points

Cost	**Defense Package 3**
5	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (15 PD/15 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)
3	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (10 PD/10 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)
51	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +30 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)
45	*Hull Armor:* +15 DEF, Hardened (+¼); Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)

Total cost: 104 points

Cost	**Defense Package 4**
6	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (20 PD/20 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)
4	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (12 PD/12 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased

Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)

60	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +35 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)
54	*Hull Armor:* +18 DEF, Hardened (+¼); Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)

Total cost: 124 points

Cost	**Defense Package 5**
8	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (25 PD/25 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)
5	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (15 PD/15 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)
65	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +38 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)
60	*Hull Armor:* +20 DEF, Hardened (+¼); Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)

Total cost: 138 points (price after 2660: 530,000 cr.)

Point Defense Systems

Point defense systems use lasers (or sometimes gauss guns) to shoot down missiles and other physical projectiles. Their usefulness depends largely on how frequently a ship's opponents use missiles.

Cost	**Basic Point Defense System**
14	*Basic Point Defense System:* Multipower, 34-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)
1u	1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)
1u	2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1), MegaRange (1" = 1 km; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)

Total cost: 16 points

Cost	**Advanced Point Defense System**
14	*Advanced Point Defense System:* Multipower, 34-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)
1u	1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)
1u	2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1), MegaRange (1" = 1 km; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)
8	*Missile Tracking System:* +4 with Missile Deflection

Total cost: 24 points

Cost	**Elite Point Defense System**
14	*Elite Point Defense System:* Multipower, 34-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)
1u	1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)
1u	2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1), MegaRange (1" = 1 km; +¼); OIF Bulky

(-1), Costs Endurance (-½)

16   *Missile Tracking System:* +8 with Missile Deflection

Total cost: 28 points

Stealth Systems

Other than electronic warfare (which the Imperial Navy considers a function of sensors and communications), Terran ships use one type of defensive stealth system: the Karvanski stealth hull. Shaped and constructed to make it difficult (at best) for Radar to detect the ship, a Karvanski hull also has some drawbacks. First, a stealth hull doesn't hide a ship from another ship's ability to detect its electromagnetic radiation or the like with sensors other than radar (assuming an enemy ship thinks to scan for such things). Second, a ship with one cannot have DEF (including Ablative DEF or DEF limited to specific systems) greater than 18 minus the Radio Group PER Roll penalty the hull provides (for example, a ship with a Type III hull couldn't have greater than 12 DEF). Third, the ship cannot have any force fields (either outer or hull-based) active; if so, the ship immediately loses all benefits from the stealth hull for as long as the force field is active.

Stealth hulls are bought as Change Environment to impose penalties on Radio Group PER rolls to detect the ship. The ship must buy the Change Environment to a sufficient size to cover the Vehicle's largest dimension (typically Length), with the Limitations *No Range* (-½) and *Self Only* (-½) if appropriate. In this case, the Power remains confined to the Vehicle; the area does not expand outside the Vehicle to fill its normal area. Also unlike normal area-affecting Powers, in this case the area of effect moves with the Vehicle at all times.

The hulls described below assume a small ship (no more than 4" long), since most stealth vessels are small couriers, scouts, and the like. If you want one for a larger ship, just increase the size and cost of the Change Environment as appropriate. Stealth hulls are not available for civilian ships; they're illegal for all non-military vessels in the Terran Empire (and most other governments as well).

Stealth Hull Type I: Change Environment 4" radius, -4 to Radar PER Rolls, Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (42 Active Points); Always On (-½), No Range (-½), Self Only (-½), Use Of Force Field Negates Effect (-0). Total cost: 17 points.

Stealth Hull Type II: Change Environment 4" radius, -5 to Radar PER Rolls, Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (46 Active Points); Always On (-½), No Range (-½), Self Only (-½), Use Of Force Field Negates Effect (-0). Total cost: 18 points.

Stealth Hull Type III: Change Environment 4" radius, -6 to Radar PER Rolls, Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (50 Active Points); Always On (-½), No Range (-½), Self Only (-½), Use Of Force Field Negates Effect (-0). Total cost: 20 points.

Stealth Hull Type IV: Change Environment 4" radius, -7 to Radar PER Rolls, Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (54 Active Points); Always On (-½), No Range (-½), Self Only (-½), Use Of Force Field Negates Effect (-0). Total cost: 22 points.

OPERATIONS SYSTEMS

Although not necessarily as important in a combat situation as weapons or defenses, operations systems are crucial for the smooth day-to-day functioning of a ship. Some of them (such as the sensors and communications systems) even have tactical applications.

Computers

Spacecraft have so many complex systems, and require such precise in-flight adjustments, that they cannot function without computers. Most ships have multiple computers networked together (though in game terms characters usually simulate this by buying one Computer to represent the Vehicle's overall computer capabilities).

Presented below are two computers — one for ATRI 10, and one for ATRI 11. Each is a "basic" starship model, ready for just about any vessel. Included with each are three "packages" (Commercial, Exploration, and Military), representing additions to the computer for trading, exploration, and military ships.

TERRAN UX-8311 STARSHIP COMPUTER (ATRI 10)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
3	SPD	2		Phases: 4, 8, 12
				Total Characteristic Cost: 36

Cost	Skills
3	Combat Piloting 13-
3	Computer Programming 13-
3	Cryptography 13-
3	Electronics 13-
8	AK: Milky Way Galaxy 18-
4	KS: Archived Recent News 14-
4	KS: Current News 14-
5	KS: Contact Information 15-
8	KS: Known Sentient Species 18-
3	KS: Literature Database 13-
3	KS: Movies Database 13-
3	KS: Music Database 13-
3	Mechanics 13-
4	Navigation (Space, Hyperspace, Displacement) 13-
4	PS: Personal Assistant 14-
8	Systems Operation (Communications Systems, Environmental Systems, Medical Systems, Sensor Systems) 13-
1	WF: Ship's Weapons

COMPUTER PRICES

UX-8311	Price
Commercial	125,000
Exploration	137,500
Military	(500,000)

D-5200	Price
Commercial	165,000
Exploration	200,000
Military	(800,000)

Programs

1	Diagnose Ship Malfunctions
1	Monitor Internal Monitor System, Report Anomalies
1	Monitor Communications System, Report Anomalies
1	Monitor Vehicle Functions, Report Anomalies
1	Open/Lock Accessways
1	Operate Sensors To Scan For Designated Phenomena/Object
1	Pilot Vehicle From Location A To Location B
1	Scan And Enter Data
1	Schedule Vehicle Events/Use Of Vehicle's Resources
1	Search Reference Material For Information On A Topic
1	Send Emergency Call If Operator Incapacitated/Killed
1	Send Emergency Call If Specified Protocols Are Not Met

Talents

3	*Clock:* Absolute Time Sense
3	*Galactic Navigation Data:* Bump Of Direction
5	*Memory:* Eidetic Memory
3	*Calculator:* Lightning Calculator
3	*Instant-On Feature:* Lightsleep
20	*Translator:* Universal Translator 13-

Total Abilities Cost: 119

Cost	Commercial Computer Package
6	KS: Trading/Financial Data 16-
15	15 points' worth of Science Skills
1	Program: Obtain Latest Market/Financial Data Via Communications System

Total Cost: 177/5 = 35

Cost	Exploration Computer Package
4	+2 to Navigation
25	25 points' worth of Science Skills
2	+2 to Universal Translator

Total Cost: 186/5 = 37

Cost	Military Computer Package
3	+3 INT (23 total; increase all INT-based rolls by 1)
9	+3 DEX (21 total)
4	EGO 12
4	+2 to Computer Programming
4	+2 to Cryptography
6	KS: Arms & Military Equipment Of The Galaxy 16-
6	KS: Military Forces Of The Galaxy 16-
6	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 16-
6	KS: Starships Of The Galaxy 16-
18	18 points' worth of Science Skills
2	Add Weapon Systems to Systems Operation
4	Programs: Attack Target; Engage In Evasive Maneuvers; Locate Target; Obtain Latest Tactical Data Via Communications System
6	*Scanner:* Speed Reading (x100)
-25	Disadvantage: Psychological Limitation: Utterly Loyal To The Terran Empire (Very Common, Total)
-15	Disadvantage: Psychological Limitation: Follows Chain Of Command (Common, Strong)

Total Cost: 193/5 = 39

TERRAN ALPHA-D-5200 STARSHIP COMPUTER (ATRI 11)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll 14-
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
				Total Characteristic Cost: 53

Cost	Skills
3	Combat Piloting 14-
3	Computer Programming 14-
3	Cryptography 14-
3	Electronics 14-
7	AK: Milky Way Galaxy 18-
3	KS: Archived Recent News 14-
3	KS: Current News 14-
4	KS: Contact Information 15-
7	KS: Known Sentient Species 18-
3	KS: Literature Database 14-
3	KS: Movies Database 14-
3	KS: Music Database 14-
3	Mechanics 14-
4	Navigation (Space, Hyperspace, Displacement) 14-
3	PS: Personal Assistant 14-
8	Systems Operation (Communications Systems, Environmental Systems, Medical Systems, Sensor Systems) 14-
1	WF: Ship's Weapons

Programs

1	Diagnose Ship Malfunctions
1	Monitor Internal Monitor System, Report Anomalies
1	Monitor Communications System, Report Anomalies
1	Monitor Vehicle Functions, Report Anomalies
1	Open/Lock Accessways
1	Operate Sensors To Scan For Designated Phenomena/Object
1	Pilot Vehicle From Location A To Location B
1	Scan And Enter Data
1	Schedule Vehicle Events/Use Of Vehicle's Resources
1	Search Reference Material For Information On A Topic
1	Send Emergency Call If Operator Incapacitated/Killed
1	Send Emergency Call If Specified Protocols Are Not Met

Talents

3	*Clock:* Absolute Time Sense
3	*Galactic Navigation Data:* Bump Of Direction
5	*Memory:* Eidetic Memory
3	*Calculator:* Lightning Calculator
3	*Instant-On Feature:* Lightsleep

20   *Translator:* Universal Translator 14-

Total Abilities Cost: 113

Cost	Commercial Computer Package
5	KS: Trading/Financial Data 16-
18	18 points' worth of Science Skills
1	Program: Obtain Latest Market/Financial Data Via Communications System

Total Cost: 190/5 = 38

Cost	Exploration Computer Package
2	+2 INT (25 total)
3	+1 DEX (21 total)
4	+2 to Navigation
30	30 points' worth of Science Skills
2	+2 to Universal Translator

Total Cost: 207/5 = 41

Cost	Military Computer Package
5	+5 INT (28 total; increase all INT-based rolls by 1)
15	+5 DEX (25 total)
10	EGO 15
4	+2 to Computer Programming
4	+2 to Cryptography
6	KS: Arms & Military Equipment Of The Galaxy 17-
6	KS: Military Forces Of The Galaxy 17-
6	KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 17-
6	KS: Starships Of The Galaxy 17-
21	21 points' worth of Science Skills
2	Add Weapon Systems to Systems Operation
4	Programs: Attack Target; Engage In Evasive Maneuvers; Locate Target; Obtain Latest Tactical Data Via Communications System
8	*Scanner:* Speed Reading (x1,000)
-25	Disadvantage: Psychological Limitation: Utterly Loyal To The Terran Empire (Very Common, Total)
-15	Disadvantage: Psychological Limitation: Follows Chain Of Command (Common, Strong)

Total Cost: 223/5 = 45

Communications And Sensors

Even the smallest fighters need electronic "eyes" and "ears" so the pilot and other crewmembers can perceive space around them. The accompanying table provides summary data on standard sensor and communications systems.

Sensors and communications systems in normalspace cannot perceive/transmit into Hyperspace, and vice-versa.

TERRAN EMPIRE STARSHIP SENSOR SYSTEMS

System	ATRI	Effect	A/R Cost	Price
Sensor Package I	9	60-point Sensor VPP	Text	35,000
Sensor Package II	10	80-point Sensor VPP	Text	75,000
Sensor Package III	11	100-point Sensor VPP	Text	100,000
Sensor Enhancements 1	9	+2 to Systems Operation	4/2	1,000
Sensor Enhancements 2	10	+4 to Systems Operation	8/4	3,000
Sensor Enhancements 3	11	+6 to Systems Operation	12/6	6,000
Internal Monitors (Small)	9	Clairsentience x4 in ship	45/15	1,000
Internal Monitors (Medium)	9	Clairsentience x8 in ship	55/18	2,000
Internal Monitors (Large)	9	Clairsentience x8 in ship	60/20	3,000
Electronic Warfare I	9	60-point EW VPP	Text	N/A
Electronic Warfare II	10	80-point EW VPP	Text	N/A
Electronic Warfare III	11	100-point EW VPP	Text	N/A

"Effect" represents the best possible performance for the system in question for the designated ATRI. Many ships have less powerful systems.

BASIC SENSOR SYSTEMS

These systems represent a ship's basic sensor and communications systems. As discussed on pages 200-01 of *Star Hero,* they're built as Variable Power Pools.

Cost	Sensor Package I
69	*Sensor Package I:* Variable Power Pool, 60 base + 30 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)
52	*Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any Sensor Pool Sense of up to 30 Active Points; OIF Bulky (-1)
9	*Long-Range Sensors:* +12 versus Range for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)

Total cost: 130 points

Cost	Sensor Package II
91	*Sensor Package II:* Variable Power Pool, 80 base + 40 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)
70	*Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any Sensor Pool Sense of up to 40 Active Points; OIF Bulky (-1)
12	*Long-Range Sensors:* +16 versus Range for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)

Total cost: 173 points

Cost	Sensor Package III
114	*Sensor Package III:* Variable Power Pool, 100 base + 50 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)
87	*Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any Sensor Pool Sense of up to 50 Active Points; OIF Bulky (-1)
15	*Long-Range Sensors:* +20 versus Range for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)

Total cost: 216 points

INTERNAL MONITORS

All but the smallest starships have internal sensor systems that allow the crew to observe parts of the ship remotely.

Internal Monitors (Small Ship): Clairsentience (Sight And Hearing Groups), Mobile Perception Point, Multiple Perception Points (up to four at once) (45 Active Points); OAF Immobile (-2), Perception Point Cannot Move Through Solid Objects (-0). Total cost: 15 points.

Internal Monitors (Medium Ship): Clairsentience (Sight And Hearing Groups), 2x Range (up to 500"), Mobile Perception Point, Multiple Perception Points (up to eight at once) (55 Active Points); OAF Immobile (-2), Perception Point Cannot Move Through Solid Objects (-0). Total cost: 18 points.

Internal Monitors (Large Ship): Clairsentience (Sight And Hearing Groups), 4x Range (up to 1,000"), Mobile Perception Point, Multiple Perception Points (up to eight at once) (60 Active Points); OAF Immobile (-2), Perception Point Cannot Move Through Solid Objects (-0). Total cost: 20 points.

ELECTRONIC WARFARE SYSTEMS

The Empire classifies all electronic warfare and related systems (such as chaff dispensers) as part of the sensors and communications systems, thus placing them under the control of Science & Sensors personnel rather than Tactical officers. The Empire outlaws EW systems for any ships but its own military vessels; owning such systems (even if they're not installed or working) leads to severe penalties.

In game terms, you can represent Imperial EW systems with a dedicated Variable Power Pool. Use some of the sample systems from *Star Hero*, or create your own, when a ship activates its Pool. Some ships buy additional EW systems (such as Radio Group Flash Defense) separately from the Pool.

Electronic Warfare I: Variable Power Pool, 60 base + 30 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Electronic Warfare (-1). Total cost: 70 points.

Electronic Warfare II: Variable Power Pool, 80 base + 40 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Electronic Warfare (-1). Total cost: 93 points.

Electronic Warfare III: Variable Power Pool, 100 base + 50 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Electronic Warfare (-1). Total cost: 117 points.

Flight Control

Every ship needs basic flight control systems, and obtains them through its computer and other such systems. But a few starships have better-than-average systems for enhanced maneuvering and navigation. The systems described in the accompanying table represent just a few of the possible performance-enhancing modifications characters could install on their starships; see *The Ultimate Vehicle* for other ideas and examples.

PERSONNEL SYSTEMS

While the powerful engines and deadly weapons tend to earn the most attention from most crewmembers and the public, anyone who's intimately familiar with spacefaring vessels knows the personnel systems — life support and gravity generation, primarily — are actually the most important ones aboard. If the crewmembers lack air and heat, they die regardless of how impressive the ship's weapons are.

TERRAN EMPIRE FLIGHT CONTROL SYSTEMS

System	ATRI	Effect	A/R Cost	Price
Flight Package I	9	+2 with Flight	4/4	10,000
Flight Package II	10	+4 with Flight	8/8	15,000
Flight Package III	11	+6 with Flight	12/12	25,000
Navigation Computer I	9	+2 with Navigation	4/2	3,000
Navigation Computer II	10	+4 with Navigation	8/4	6,000
Navigation Computer III	11	+6 with Navigation	12/6	10,000

Life Support

Life support keeps the crew breathing, warm, protected from radiation, and fed. Life support systems accomplish this through a combination of hull shielding, breathing gas supplies, food stores and processors, and heaters. Larger Imperial ships also have hydroponic farms on board, which both generate oxygen and supply fresh food.

Since Life Support is so crucial to a ship, most have one or more backup life support systems protecting designated areas on the ship. If general life support fails, crew and passengers head for the nearest backup life support center so they can remain reasonably safe and comfortable until the technicians make repairs.

The cost of a standard life support system, such as the one described below, is the ship's Size times 1,000 credits.

Cost	Life Support Systems
12	*Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Costs Endurance (-½)
6	*Backup Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Only Within Affected Area (2.5" x 1.25" chamber; -2), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Month; -0)
10	*Backup Life Support:* 3 more Backup Life Support chambers (total of 4) (the larger the ship, the more Backup Life Support areas it has)
3	*Food Supplies:* Life Support (Diminished Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Year; -0)

Total cost: 31 points

Gravity

Prior to 2355, Humans generated gravity aboard their ships by spinning them along a central axis. Although crude, this method allowed ships' crews to move around with relative ease and comfort. Older ships still in use, and a few other types of simple or cheap ships, still use this spinning gravity generation today.

In 2355, Dr. Lawrence Thibault, a scientist working as part of the anti-Xenovore war effort, finally unlocked the secret of artificial gravity generation. His "Thibault gravity plates" revolutionized starship design, and according to some experts played a major role in helping Humanity defeat the Xenovores. Since then the Thibault family has become fabulously rich, and their Thibault Gravitics Laboratories, Inc. a leader in the ever-evolving science of gravitics.

For both spinning gravity and artificial gravity generation, use the write-ups on pages 203-04 of *Star Hero*. The cost of a gravity system is the ship's Size times 4,500 credits.

Escape Pod

When the call comes to "abandon ship!", crew and passengers alike head for the escape pods. Able to carry one or two people in relative comfort, and up to four to six in crowded conditions, they help characters get away from a ship that's about to crash or explode. An escape pod costs 8,000 credits.

ESCAPE POD

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
3	Size	15	2" x 1"; -3 KB; -2 DCV
25	STR	0	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 HTH [0]
8	DEX	-6	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
10	BODY	0	
3	DEF	2	
2	SPD	2	Phases: 6, 12
			Total Characteristic Cost: 13

Movement:	Ground: 0"/0"
	Flight: 10"/320"

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
32	*Fusion Thrusters:* Flight 10", x32 Non-combat; Limited Maneuverability (-¼)	0
-12	*Only Flies:* Ground Movement -6" (0" total)	
-2	*Only Flies:* Swimming -2" (0" total)	
44	*Distress Beacon:* Radio Group Images, +8 to PER Rolls, 1" radius, MegaScale (1" = 10 light-years; +3¾), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF Bulky (-1½), No Range (-½), Set Effect (-1)	0
18	*Communications System:* HRRP (Radio Group), MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½); OAF Bulky (-1½), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)	0
12	*Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the pod; 1 Month (120 man-days); -0)	[1cc]
3	*Food Supplies:* Life Support (Diminished Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the pod; 1 Month (120 man-days); -0)	[1cc]

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 95
Total Vehicle Cost: 108

Value Disadvantages
None

Total Disadvantage Points: 0
Total Cost: 108/5 = 22

Description: This is a simple starship escape pod, able to support four people for a month (or more for less time). It includes a supply of breathing gases, food, and drink, a standard communications system (including dedicated distress beacon), and possibly a simple computer with minor entertainment programs.

TERRAN EMPIRE STARSHIPS

Terran starships are obviously the most common in the Empire, but merchants and explorers bearing the Imperial symbol (a stylized globe of Earth surmounted by a golden eagle) journey all around the Galaxy. Terran ship aesthetics vary wildly; some vessels have a sleek, streamlined look (often based on a wedge- or arrowhead-shaped main body to which designers attach superstructures), while others are asymmetrical and ugly. In most designs, the engines and power plant occupy the aft sections of the ship, and the command center (the bridge) has its own special section located dorsally and/or forward. Quarters, laboratories, and various operations facilities fill the central and dorsal parts of the ship; cargo holds and the like are placed ventrally. Designers mount weapons to whatever points on the hull seem most tactically useful; most armed ships have at least one weapon (often the ship's largest) pointing forward. Turrets provide most weapons with large arcs of fire.

Costs for the starships in this book do not include the cost of the ship's Computer (see page 167).
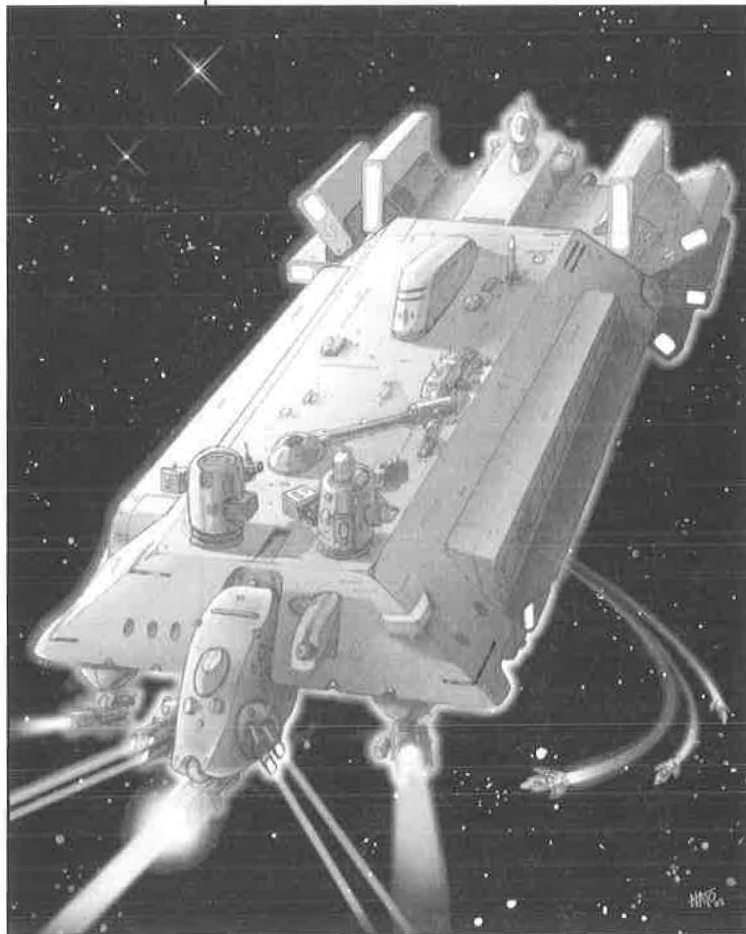
IMPERIAL NAVY IBV EMPRESS (ATRI 11)

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
24	Size	120	250" x 125"; -24 KB; -16 DCV
130	STR	0	Lift 1.6 mtons; 26d6 HTH [0]
18	DEX	24	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
200	BODY	166	
20	DEF	54	See Tactical Systems
3	SPD	2	Phases: 4, 8, 12
			Total Characteristic Cost: 366

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
Flight: 42"/168"
Teleportation: 150 LY Displacement
Teleportation: 4,000 LY Hyperdrive

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END

Power Systems

140 *Antimatter Power Plant:* Endurance Reserve (350 END/350 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)   0

40 *Auxiliary Power:* Endurance Reserve (100 END/100 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)   0

Propulsion Systems

22 *Type 20 Displacer Drive:* Teleportation 15", MegaScale (1" = 10 light-years; can scale down to 1" = 2,000 km; +4); Extra Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x4 END; -1½), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼)   56

5 *Class Nu Hyperdrive:* Teleportation 4", MegaScale (1" = 1,000 light-years; +4¼); Extra Time (1 Week for a full journey, or about 1 LY per 3 minutes; -4½), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x7 END; -3), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -½)   28

59 *Type 2-C Reactionless Drive:* Flight 42", x4 Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½)   9

7 *Inertial Compensation Field:* Force Field (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Protect Occupants Against G Force Damage (-1)   2

-12 *Spaceflight Only:* Ground Movement -6" (0" total)

-2 *Spaceflight Only:* Swimming -2" (0" total)

Tactical Systems

135 *Type 8 Plasma Cannon:* RKA 12d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½),

Increased Range Modifier (9,000"; +¼), 40 Charges (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (60 degrees forward, only on same horizontal level; -¾) [40]

100 *Type 6 Plasma Cannons:* RKA 10d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), Increased Range Modifier (6,550"; +¼), 30 Charges (+¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (60 degrees starboard, only on same horizontal level; -¾) [30]

10 *Type 6 Plasma Cannons:* 3 more Type 6 cannons (port, aft, and dorsal) (total of 4) [30]

183 *Mark XX Starship Laser:* Multipower, 412-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)

10u 1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 10d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) 22

18u 2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 10d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Mega Range (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) 41

11u 3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 8d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) 24

17u 4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 8d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½), Mega Range (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) 39

10u 5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 7d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (5,250"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼) 24

10 *Mark XX Starship Lasers:* 3 more Mark XX lasers (total of 4) var

7 *Outer Force Field:* Force Field (23 PD/ 23 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4) 50

5 *Hull Force Field:* Force Field (14 PD/ 14 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4) 30

62 *Ablative Armor Plating:* +36 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼) 0

54 *Hull Armor:* +18 DEF, Hardened (+¼); Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼) 0

14 *Elite Point Defense System:* Multipower, 34-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)

1u 1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½) 3

1u 2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1), Mega Range (1" = 1 km; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½) 3

16 *Missile Tracking System:* +8 with Missile Deflection 0

44 *Type E Tractor Beam:* Telekinesis (80 STR); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼),

Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼) 12

485 *Self-Destruct System:* RKA 134d6 (standard effect: 402 BODY), Explosion (+½), Trigger (spoken command authorization; +¼); No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Extra Time (once activated, takes 1 Minute to arm and detonate; -1½), 1 Charge Which Never Recovers (-4) [1nr]

Operations Systems

114 *Sensor Package III:* Variable Power Pool, 100 base + 50 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½) var

87 *Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any Sensor Pool Sense of up to 50 Active Points; OIF Bulky (-1)

15 *Long-Range Sensors:* +20 versus Range for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1) var

117 *Electronic Warfare Systems:* Variable Power Pool, 100 base + 50 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Electronic Warfare (-1) var

20 *Electronic Warfare Defense:* Radio Group Flash Defense (20 points) 0

6 *Sensor Enhancements:* +6 to Systems Operation; OIF Bulky (-1) 0

18 *Internal Monitors:* Clairsentience (Sight And Hearing Groups), 2x Range (up to 500"), Mobile Perception Point, Multiple Perception Points (up to eight at once); OAF Immobile (-2), Perception Point Cannot Move Through Solid Objects (-0) 5

4 *Navigation Computer:* +4 to Navigation roll; OIF Bulky (-1) 0

Personnel Systems

12 *Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Costs Endurance (-½) 2

6 *Backup Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Only Within Affected Area (2.5" x 1.25" chamber; -2), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Month; -0) [1cc]

40 *Backup Life Support:* 250 more Backup Life Support chambers (total of 4) [1cc]

3 *Food Supplies:* Life Support (Diminished Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Year; -0) [1cc]

15 *Thibault Gravity Plating:* Telekinesis (20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Pull Objects Straight Down To The Floor (-1) 3

Skills/Laboratories

20	*Tactical Systems:* +6 with Ranged Combat; Costs Endurance (-½)	3

13	Computer Programming 14-	
13	Cryptography 14-	
13	Demolitions 14-	
13	Electronics 14-	
13	Mechanics 14-	
15	Weaponsmith (Firearms, Missiles & Rockets, Incendiary Weapons, Energy Weapons) 14-	
100	Other laboratories (defined by GM or player)	

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 2,109
Total Vehicle Cost: 2,475

Value Disadvantages

|	
25	Distinctive Features: Imperial military vessel (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [abject fear])
10	Physical Limitation: Cannot Enter Atmospheres (Infrequently, Greatly Impairing)

Total Disadvantage Points: 35
Total Cost: 2,440/5 = 488

Additional Vehicles

Cost	
283	Imperial Navy SBP Wasp (page 174)
20	15 more Wasps (total of 16)
22	Escape Pod
45	499 more Escape Pods (total of 500)
76	Antimatter Missile
35	124 more Antimatter Missiles (total of 125)

Description: The *Empress* class, named for Marissa herself, is the Terran Empire's newest and most powerful battleship, having formally entered the fleet in 2638. In addition to heavy guns and missiles, it also carries a squadron of fighters; they increase its offensive reach and defend it against enemy fighters. For a main weapon it mounts a Type 8 plasma cannon forward, complementing it with various lasers and other plasma weapons mounted elsewhere on its frame. It also carries a large quantity of antimatter missiles.

An *Empress*-class battleship has a crew of 684, and also carries a detachment of 100 Imperial Marines under standard circumstances.

Physically, the *Empress*-class battleship looks like a large, flat slab with a trapezoidal cross-section. A bridge module mounted forward contains the ship's command center and its Type 8 plasma cannon. Other weapons are placed in other strategic locations, typically on universal mounts that allow them to fire at virtually any angle. If necessary, the ship's tactical computers can track a target using multiple weapons, with the second picking up the attack where the first's angle of fire ends. The Hyperdrive and Displacer drive both occupy the aft section, with its distinctive multi-vaned structure.

IMPERIAL NAVY SBP WASP (ATRI 11)

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
5	Size	25	3.2" x 1.6"; -5 KB; -3 DCV
35	STR	0	Lift 3.2 tons; 7d6 HTH [0]
24	DEX	42	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
25	BODY	10	
8	DEF	18	See Tactical Systems
4	SPD	6	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
			Total Characteristic Cost: 101

Movement:	Ground:	0"/0"
	Flight:	40"/160"

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
	Power Systems	
40	*Fusion Power Plant:* Endurance Reserve (100 END/100 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
8	*Auxiliary Power:* Endurance Reserve (20 END/20 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
	Propulsion Systems	
57	*Type 4-A Reactionless Drive:* Flight 40", x4 Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½)	8
7	*Inertial Compensation Field:* Force Field (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Protect Occupants Against G Force Damage (-1)	2
-12	*Spaceflight Only:* Ground Movement -6" (0" total)	
-2	*Spaceflight Only:* Swimming -2" (0" total)	
	Tactical Systems	
147	*Mark XII Starship Laser:* Multipower, 330-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	
8u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	18
15u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	33
7u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 6d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	16
12u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 6d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	27
7u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 5d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (3,750"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	17
180	*MAME Launcher (Starboard):* RKA 12d6, Explosion (+½), Increased Maximum Range (22,500", or about 45 km; +½), Indirect (always launches forward from Wasp, but can attack target from any angle; +½), No Range Modifier (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), 5 Charges (-¾), Extra Time (reaches targets within 2 km the same Phase, takes +1 Segment per addi-	

tional +2 km; -0) [5]

5   *MAME Launcher (Port):* Another MAME
    Launcher (total of 2) [5]

5   *Mark XII Starship Lasers:* Another
    Mark XII laser (total of 2), located aft var

2   *Outer Force Field:* Force Field (8 PD/8 ED);
    Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1),
    Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4) 20

2   *Hull Force Field:* Force Field (5 PD/5 ED);
    OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased
    Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4) 10

46 *Ablative Armor Plating:* +27 DEF; Ablative
    (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼) 0

29 *Hull Armor:* +12 DEF; Limited Coverage
    (hull only; -¼) 0

14 *Basic Point Defense System:* Multipower,
    34-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1),
    Costs Endurance (-½)

1u 1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection
    (all physical projectiles), Range (+1); OIF
    Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½) 3

1u 2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection
    (all physical projectiles), Range (+1),
    MegaRange (1" = 1 km; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1),
    Costs Endurance (-½) 3

61 *Self-Destruct System:* RKA 17d6 (standard
    effect: 51 BODY), Explosion (+½), Trigger
    (spoken command authorization; +¼); No
    Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Extra Time
    (once activated, takes 1 Minute to arm and
    detonate; -1½), 1 Charge Which Never
    Recovers (-4) [1nr]

Operations Systems

57 *Sensor Package:* Variable Power Pool, 50
    base + 25 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1),
    Only For Senses And Communications
    (-1), Costs Endurance (-½) var

52 *Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-
    year per Active Point, can scale down to
    1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any
    Sensor Pool Sense of up to 30 Active
    Points; OIF Bulky (-1) var

7   *Long-Range Sensors:* +10 versus Range
    for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)

47 *Electronic Warfare Systems:* Variable
    Power Pool, 40 base + 20 control cost;
    OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Electronic
    Warfare (-1) var

Personnel Systems

12 *Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained
    Breathing; Safe Environments: High
    Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low
    Pressure/Vacuum); Costs Endurance (-½) 2

15 *Thibault Gravity Plating:* Telekinesis
    (20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1),
    Only To Pull Objects Straight Down To
    The Floor (-1) 3

Skills/Laboratories

7   *Tactical Systems:* +2 with Ranged
    Combat; Costs Endurance (-½) 1

12 *Highly Maneuverable:* +6 with Flight

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 823
Total Vehicle Cost: 924

Value Disadvantages

25 Distinctive Features: Imperial military
    vessel (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme
    Reaction [abject fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 25
Total Cost: 899/5 = 180

Cost   Additional Vehicles
22   Escape Pod
76   Antimatter Missile
5   1 more Antimatter Missiles (total of 2)

Description: The development of reactionless drives
makes fighter craft much more effective in space
combat. The *Wasp* is the Imperial Navy's standard
fighter during Marissa III's reign. A simple two-
seat, atmosphere-capable design armed with several
lasers (for battling other fighters and medium-sized
ships), two antimatter missiles (for use against
larger targets), and two five-shot MAME (Min-
iature Antimatter Missile, Explosive) launchers,
the *Wasp* also comes in variants armed with more
lower-powered missiles but fewer lasers. The typical
crew consists of a pilot and a sensor operator, but a
single person can operate the vehicle if necessary.
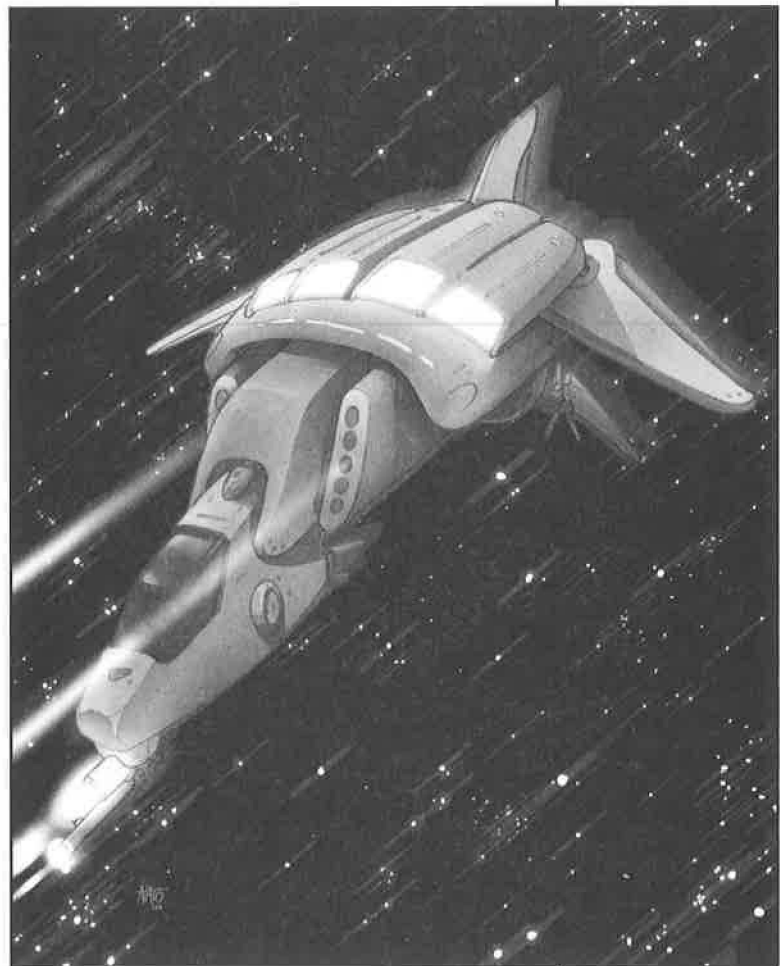
IMPERIAL EXPLORER IES GAGARIN (ATRI 11)

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
10	Size	50	10" x 5"; -10 KB; -6 DCV
60	STR	0	Lift 100 tons; 12d6 HTH [0]
15	DEX	15	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
68	BODY	48	
10	DEF	24	See Tactical Systems
3	SPD	5	Phases: 4, 8, 12

Total Characteristic Cost: 142

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
Flight: 38"/152"
Teleportation: 800 LY Hyperdrive

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
	Power Systems	
60	*Antimatter Power Plant:* Endurance Reserve (150 END/150 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
16	*Auxiliary Power:* Endurance Reserve (40 END/40 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
	Propulsion Systems	
10	*Class Theta Hyperdrive:* Teleportation 8", MegaScale (1" = 100 light-years; can scale down to 1" = 2,000 km; +4¼); Extra Time (1 Week for a full journey, or about 4.5 LY per hour; -4½), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x4 END; -1½), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -½)	32

54	*Type 2 Reactionless Drive:* Flight 38", x4 Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½)	8
7	*Inertial Compensation Field:* Force Field (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Protect Occupants Against G Force Damage (-1)	2
-12	*Spaceflight Only:* Ground Movement -6" (0" total)	
-2	*Spaceflight Only:* Swimming -2" (0" total)	

Tactical Systems

80	*Mark VIII Starship Laser:* Multipower, 180-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	
5u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 6d6, Increased Maximum Range (2,250"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	11
8u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 6d6, MegaRange (1" = 100 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	18
5u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 5d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Increased Maximum Range (2,350"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	11
7u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 5d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), MegaRange (1" = 100 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	17
6u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 4d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (3,000"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	13
33	*Type C Tractor Beam:* Telekinesis (60 STR); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼)	9
2	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (8 PD/8 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	20
2	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (5 PD/5 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	10
46	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +27 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)	0
29	*Hull Armor:* +12 DEF; Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)	0
166	*Self-Destruct System:* RKA 46d6 (standard effect: 138 BODY), Explosion (+½), Trigger (spoken command authorization; +¼); No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Extra Time (once activated, takes 1 Minute to arm and detonate; -1½), 1 Charge Which Never Recovers (-4)	[1nr]

Operations Systems

103	*Sensor Package II-G:* Variable Power Pool, 90 base + 45 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	var
87	*Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any Sensor Pool Sense of up to 50 Active Points; OIF Bulky (-1)	var

15   *Long-Range Sensors:* +20 versus Range for
      Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)   0
4   *Sensor Enhancements:* +4 to Systems
      Operation; OIF Bulky (-1)   0
15   *Internal Monitors:* Clairsentience (Sight
      And Hearing Groups), Mobile Perception
      Point, Multiple Perception Points (up to
      four at once); OAF Immobile (-2),
      Perception Point Cannot Move Through
      Solid Objects (-0)   4
4   *Navigation Computer:* +4 to Navigation
      roll; OIF Bulky (-1)   0

Personnel Systems

12   *Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained
      Breathing; Safe Environments: High
      Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low
      Pressure/Vacuum); Costs Endurance (-½)   2
6   *Backup Life Support:* Life Support (Self-
      Contained Breathing; Safe Environments:
      High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense
      Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Only
      Within Affected Area (2.5" x 1.25"
      chamber; -2), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge
      (easily replaced from sources outside
      the ship; 1 Month; -0)   [1cc]
10   *Backup Life Support:* 3 more Backup
      Life Support chambers (total of 4)   [1cc]
3   *Food Supplies:* Life Support (Diminished
      Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel
      Charge (easily replaced from sources
      outside the ship; 1 Year; -0)   [1cc]
15   *Thibault Gravity Plating:* Telekinesis
      (20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1),
      Only To Pull Objects Straight Down To
      The Floor (-1)   3
11   *Medical Facilities:* Paramedics 13-
4   *Medical Facilities:* SS: Medicine 13-

Skills/Laboratories

13   Computer Programming 14-
13   Electronics 14-
13   Mechanics 14-
80   Other laboratories (defined by GM or player)

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 930
Total Vehicle Cost: 1,072

Value Disadvantages

20   Distinctive Features: Imperial TES vessel
      (Not Concealable; Causes Major Reaction
      [fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 20
Total Cost: 1,052/5 = 210

Cost   Additional Vehicles

22   Escape Pod
10   3 more Escape Pods (total of 4)

Description: The *Gagarin*-class explorer is a small
scout ship used by the Terran Exploration Service
for many different purposes. *Gagarin* crews conduct
surveys and first-in exploration of new star systems,
support science expeditions, carry emergency sup-
plies, and map the spacelanes. At times they do some

discreet intelligence work, and during war the Navy
presses them into service on anti-piracy patrol or
covert ops. Some private research institutions also use
Gagarins for scientific expeditions.

   The *Gagarin* can enter atmospheres and land
on planets to facilitate research missions. It typically
has a crew of five (commander, pilot, sensor operator,
engineer, technician), with quarters for up to four pas-
sengers or mission specialists.

IMPERIAL NAVY IPS PEREGRINE (ATRI 11)

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
11	Size	55	12.5" x 6.4"; -11 KB; -7 DCV
65	STR	0	Lift 200 tons; 13d6 HTH [0]
16	DEX	18	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
80	BODY	59	
10	DEF	24	See Tactical Systems
4	SPD	14	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
			Total Characteristic Cost: 170

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
                 Flight: 30"/120"
                 Teleportation: 100 LY Displacement
                 Teleportation: 800 LY Hyperdrive

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
	Power Systems	
100	*Antimatter Power Plant:* Endurance Reserve (250 END/250 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
32	*Auxiliary Power:* Endurance Reserve (80 END/80 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0

Propulsion Systems

13   *Type 17 Displacer Drive:* Teleportation
      10", MegaScale (1" = 10 light-years; can
      scale down to 1" = 2,000 km;+4); Extra
      Time (requires four hours to
      prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs
      Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance
      Cost (x6 END; -2½), Requires A PS:
      Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼),
      Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free
      Zone To Activate (see text; -¼)   54
10   *Class Theta Hyperdrive:* Teleportation 8",
      MegaScale (1" = 100 light-years; +4);
      Extra Time (1 Week for a full journey, or
      about 4.5 LY per hour; -4½), Costs Endur-
      ance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x4
      END; -1½), Requires Gravitational Distor-
      tion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -½)   32
43   *Type 2 Reactionless Drive:* Flight 30", x4
      Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½)   6
7   *Inertial Compensation Field:* Force Field
      (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Protect
      Occupants Against G Force Damage (-1)   2
-12   *Spaceflight Only:* Ground Movement -6"
      (0" total)
-2   *Spaceflight Only:* Swimming -2" (0" total)

Tactical Systems

147   *Mark XII Starship Laser:* Multipower,

	330-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	
8u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	18
15u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	33
7u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 6d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	16
12u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 6d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	27
7u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 5d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (3,750"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	17
2	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (8 PD/8 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	20
5	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (5 PD/5 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	10
41	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +24 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)	0
24	*Hull Armor:* +10 DEF; Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)	0
14	*Basic Point Defense System:* Multipower, 34-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	

1u	1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	3
1u	2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1), MegaRange (1" = 1 km; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	3
22	*Type A Tractor Beam:* Telekinesis (40 STR); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼)	6
199	*Self-Destruct System:* RKA 55d6 (standard effect: 165 BODY), Explosion (+½), Trigger (spoken command authorization; +¼); No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Extra Time (once activated, takes 1 Minute to arm and detonate; -1½), 1 Charge Which Never Recovers (-4)	[1nr]

Operations Systems

96	*Sensor Package II:* Variable Power Pool, 80 base + 40 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	var
70	*Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any Sensor Pool Sense of up to 40 Active Points; OIF Bulky (-1)	var
12	*Long-Range Sensors:* +16 versus Range for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)	0
15	*Internal Monitors:* Clairsentience (Sight And Hearing Groups), Mobile Perception Point, Multiple Perception Points (up to four at once); OAF Immobile (-2), Perception Point Cannot Move Through Solid Objects (-0)	4
100	*Electronic Warfare Systems:* Variable Power Pool, 80 base + 40 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Electronic Warfare (-1)	var
2	*Navigation Computer:* +2 to Navigation roll; OIF Bulky (-1)	0

Personnel Systems

12	*Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Costs Endurance (-½)	2
6	*Backup Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Only Within Affected Area (2.5" x 1.25" chamber; -2), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Month; -0)	[1cc]
10	*Backup Life Support:* 3 more Backup Life Support chambers (total of 4)	[1cc]
3	*Food Supplies:* Life Support (Diminished Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Year; -0)	[1cc]
15	*Thibault Gravity Plating:* Telekinesis (20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Pull Objects Straight Down To The	

	Floor (-1)	3
13	*Medical Facilities:* Paramedics 14-	
5	*Medical Facilities:* SS: Medicine 14-	

	Skills	
10	*Tactical Systems:* +3 with Ranged Combat; Costs Endurance (-½)	1

13	Computer Programming 14-
13	Cryptography 14-
13	Electronics 14-
13	Mechanics 14-
15	Weaponsmith (Firearms, Missiles & Rockets, Incendiary Weapons, Energy Weapons) 14-
30	Other laboratories (defined by GM or player)

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 1,175
Total Vehicle Cost: 1,345

Value Disadvantages
25	Distinctive Features: Imperial military vessel (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [abject fear])
10	Physical Limitation: Cannot Enter Atmospheres (Infrequently, Greatly Impairing)

Total Disadvantage Points: 35
Total Cost: 1,310/5 = 262

Cost   Additional Vehicles
22	Escape Pod
15	7 more Escape Pods (total of 8)
76	Antimatter Missile
10	3 more Antimatter Missiles (total of 4)

Description: An upgrade of the old and dependable *Hawk*-class frigate, *Peregrine*-class frigates have a variety of uses. During peacetime they conduct patrol and anti-piracy operations, transport Imperial officials or prisoners, show the flag at neutral worlds, and occasionally do intelligence gathering or covert ops. In wartime they do all the above plus raiding, commerce escort, and sometimes fighting in the battle line.

A *Peregrine* normally has a crew of eight (commander, pilot, three gunners, sensor operator, engineer, technician), and the ship has additional quarters for up to six passengers, troops, or mission specialists.
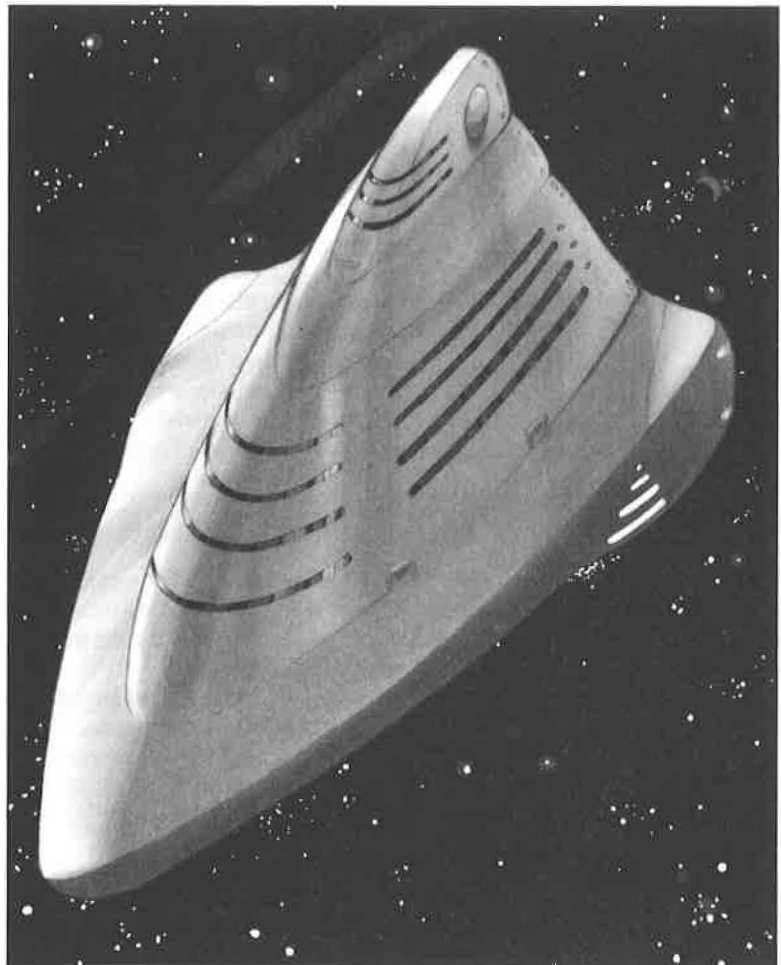
OTHER IMPERIAL SHIPS

Military Ship Classess
IAV Victorious (ATRI 11 super-dreadnought)
IBM Firebrand (ATRI 11 heavy cruiser)
IBS Toracta (ATRI 11 destroyer)
IBV Kanagawa (ATRI 11 battleship)
IBV Seraphim (ATRI 11 battleship)
ICL Africanus (ATRI 11 heavy carrier)
IQS Nebula (ATRI 11 covert operations ship)
SPS Sentinel (ATRI 11 system patrol ship)

Civilian Ship Classes
IFL Atlas (ATRI 10 freighter)
IML Aquarius (ATRI 11 cruise liner) (shown above)
IMS Natchez (ATRI 10 merchant ship)
IMS Zodiac (ATRI 11 merchant ship)
IRS Hawking (ATRI 11 research/survey ship)
IYP Aspen (ATRI 10 personal cruiser)
IYS Shamrock (ATRI 11 personal yacht)
OLS Shengdai (ATRI 10 orbital transport)

OTHER STARSHIPS

Here are a few examples of vessels used by other species. Terran military and legal officials use standard Terran terms to refer to other species's ship technology, so they can better understand the comparative power and efficiency of the systems, instead of native terms.

ACKÁLIAN STARSHIPS

The Shiseki build most Ackálians ships. Humans think the Shiseki's preference for curved, organic-looking hulls makes many of their ships look vaguely like horseshoe crabs.

The Ackálians have a whole fleet of large war-ships, most comparable to the *Empress* class, but in Imperial space the most commonly-encountered Ackálian vessels are the "Intruder" class intelligence ship and the "Prowler" class patrol cruiser.

ACKÁLIAN IIS "INTRUDER" (ATRI 11)

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
11	Size	55	12.5" x 6.4"; -11 KB; -7 DCV
65	STR	0	Lift 200 tons; 13d6 HTH [0]
18	DEX	24	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
110	BODY	89	
10	DEF	24	See Tactical Systems
4	SPD	12	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
			Total Characteristic Cost: 204

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
Flight: 45"/180"
Teleportation: 100 LY Displacement
Teleportation: 500 LY Hyperdrive

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
	Power Systems	
80	*Antimatter Power Plant:* Endurance Reserve (200 END/200 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
16	*Auxiliary Power:* Endurance Reserve (40 END/40 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
	Propulsion Systems	
5	*Class Epsilon Hyperdrive:* Teleportation 5", MegaScale (1" = 100 light-years; can scale down to 1" = 2,000 km; +4¼); Extra Time (1 Week for a full journey, or about 3 LY per hour; -4½), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x7 END; -3), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -½)	35
13	*Type 17 Displacer Drive:* Teleportation 10", MegaScale (1" = 10 light-years; +3¾); Extra	

Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x6 END; -2½), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼) | 54

63	*Ackálian Reactionless Drive:* Flight 45", x4 Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½)	9
7	*Inertial Compensation Field:* Force Field (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Protect Occupants Against G Force Damage (-1)	2
-12	*Spaceflight Only:* Ground Movement -6" (0" total)	
-2	*Spaceflight Only:* Swimming -2" (0" total)	

	Tactical Systems	
147	*Mark XII Starship Laser:* Multipower, 330-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	
8u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	18
15u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	33
7u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 6d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	16
12u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 6d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	27
7u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 5d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (3,750"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	17
33	*Type C Tractor Beam:* Telekinesis (60 STR); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼)	9
5	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (15 PD/15 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	30
3	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (10 PD/10 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	20
14	*Advanced Point Defense System:* Multipower, 34-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	
1u	1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	3
1u	2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (all	

physical projectiles), Range (+1), Mega-Range (1" = 1 km; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)   3

8   *Missile Tracking System:* +4 with Missile Deflection

20   *Stealth Hull Type III:* Change Environment 4" radius, -6 to Radar PER Rolls, Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Always On (-½), No Range (-½), Self Only (-½), Use Of Force Field Negates Effect (-0)   0

217   *Self-Destruct System:* RKA 60d6 (standard effect: 180 BODY), Explosion (+½), Trigger (spoken command authorization; +¼); No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Extra Time (once activated, takes 1 Minute to arm and detonate; -1½), 1 Charge Which Never Recovers (-4)   [1nr]

Operations Systems

114   *Sensor Package III:* Variable Power Pool, 100 base + 50 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)   var

87   *Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any Sensor Pool Sense of up to 50 Active Points; OIF Bulky (-1)   var

15   *Long-Range Sensors:* +20 versus Range for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)   0

93   *Electronic Warfare Systems:* Variable Power Pool, 80 base + 40 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Electronic Warfare (-1)   var

6   *Sensor Enhancements:* +6 to Systems Operation; OIF Bulky (-1)   0

15   *Internal Monitors:* Clairsentience (Sight And Hearing Groups), Mobile Perception Point, Multiple Perception Points (up to four at once); OAF Immobile (-2), Perception Point Cannot Move Through Solid Objects (-0)   4

4   *Navigation Computer:* +4 to Navigation roll; OIF Bulky (-1)   0

Personnel Systems

12   *Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Costs Endurance (-½)   2

6   *Backup Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Only Within Affected Area (2.5" x 1.25" chamber; -2), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Month; -0)   [1cc]

10   *Backup Life Support:* 3 more Backup Life Support chambers (total of 4)   [1cc]

3   *Food Supplies:* Life Support (Diminished Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Year; -0)   [1cc]

15   *Artificial Gravity System:* Telekinesis (20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1),

Only To Pull Objects Straight Down To The Floor (-1)   3

11   *Medical Facilities:* Paramedics 13-

4   *Medical Facilities:* SS: Medicine 13-

Skills/Laboratories

10   *Tactical Systems:* +3 with Ranged Combat; Costs Endurance (-½)   1

13   Computer Programming 14-
13   Cryptography 14-
13   Demolitions 14-
13   Electronics 14-
13   Mechanics 14-
15   Weaponsmith (Firearms, Missiles & Rockets, Incendiary Weapons, Energy Weapons) 14-
80   Other laboratories (defined by GM or player)

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 1,233
Total Vehicle Cost: 1,437

Value Disadvantages

25   Distinctive Features: Ackálian military vessel (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [abject fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 25
Total Cost: 1,412/5 = 282

Cost   Additional Vehicles
22   Escape Pod
20   15 more Escape Pods (total of 16)

Description: Humans have difficulty pronouncing
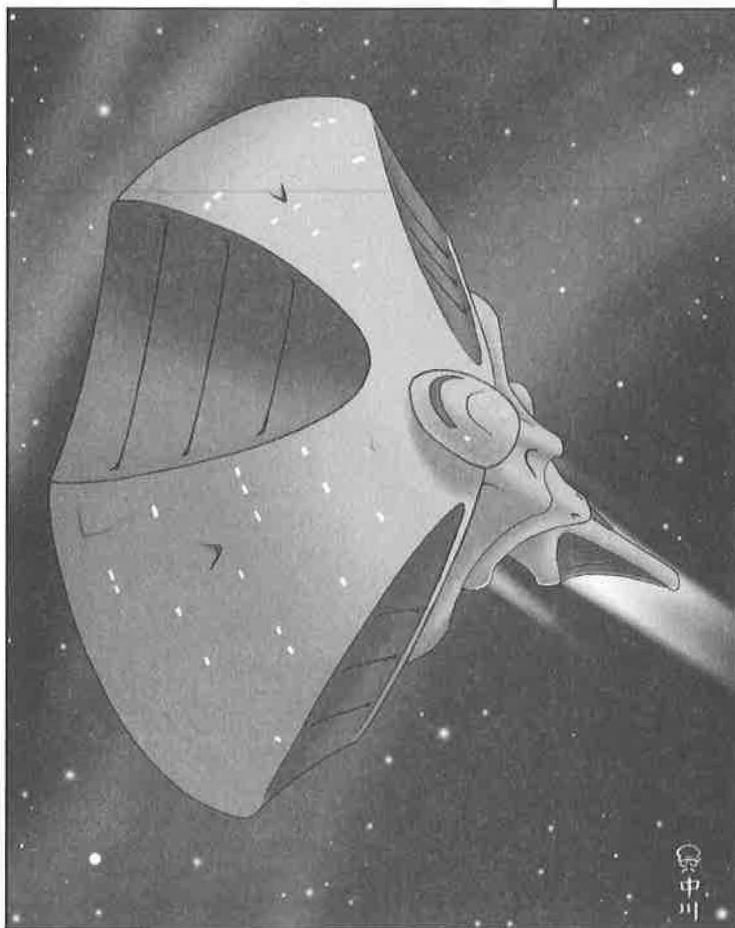
the Ackálian name for this class of ship (a place name from Ackál), so Terran military intelligence has designated it the "Intruder." A small merchant-type hull equipped with powerful sensors and a light weapons array, it's used by the Kairensha for exploration, espionage, and covert operations. Its stealth hull makes it particularly difficult to detect, but relatively easy to damage in battle.

An Intruder has a basic crew of 25, with space for twelve commandos, mission specialists, or spies.

ACKÁLIAN IPS "PROWLER" (ATRI 11)

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
19	Size	95	80" x 40"; -19 KB; -12 DCV
105	STR	0	Lift 50 ktons; 21d6 HTH [0]
14	DEX	12	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
200	BODY	171	
18	DEF	48	See Tactical Systems
3	SPD	6	Phases: 4, 8, 12
			Total Characteristic Cost: 332

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
Flight: 45"/180"
Teleportation: 110 LY Displacement
Teleportation: 3,000 LY Hyperdrive

Abilities & Equipment
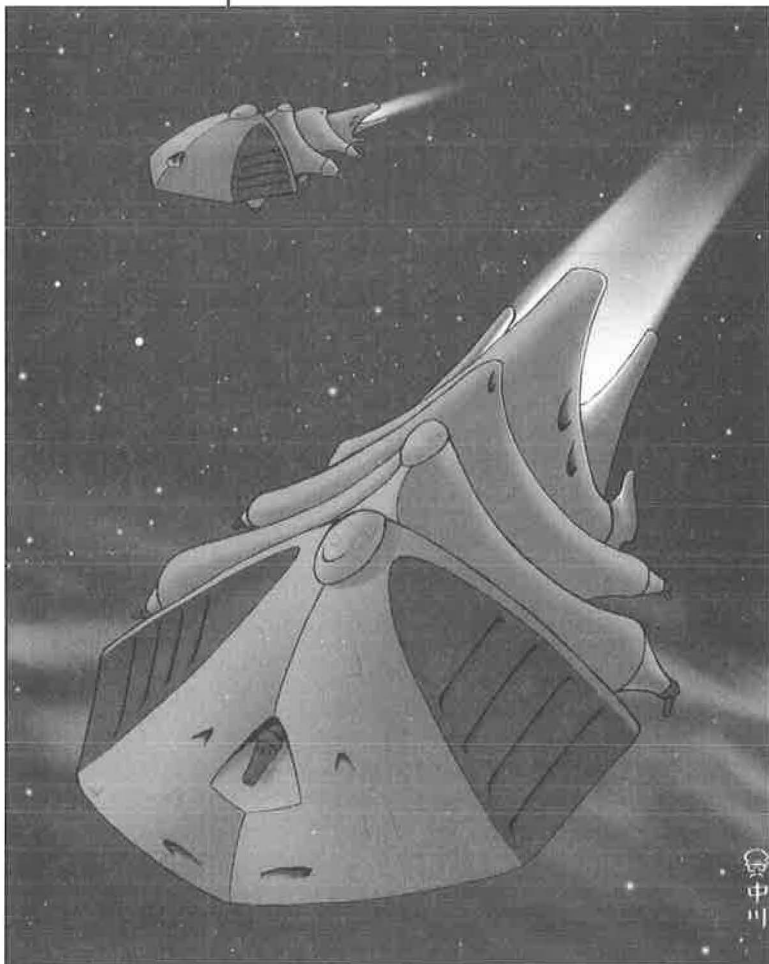
Cost	Power	END
	Power Systems	
80	*Antimatter Power Plant:* Endurance Reserve (200 END/200 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
24	*Auxiliary Power:* Endurance Reserve (60 END/60 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0

Propulsion Systems

3	*Class Lambda-V Hyperdrive:* Teleportation 3", MegaScale (1" = 1,000 light-years; can scale down to 1" = 2,000 km; +4½); Extra Time (1 Week for a full journey, or about 1 LY per 3.3 minutes; -4½), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x7 END; -3), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -½)	21
14	*Type 17-A Displacer Drive:* Teleportation 11", MegaScale (1" = 10 light-years; +3¾); Extra Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x6 END; -2½), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼)	60
63	*Ackálian Reactionless Drive:* Flight 45", x4 Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½)	9
7	*Inertial Compensation Field:* Force Field (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Protect Occupants Against G Force Damage (-1)	2
-12	*Spaceflight Only:* Ground Movement -6" (0" total)	
-2	*Spaceflight Only:* Swimming -2" (0" total)	

Tactical Systems

165	*Mark XV Starship Laser:* Multipower, 371-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	
9u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 9d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	20
16u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 9d6, Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	37
9u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 7d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	21
15u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 7d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	34
9u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 6d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (4,500"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	20
15	*Mark XV Starship Lasers:* 7 more Mark XV lasers (total of 8)	var
110	*Type 7 Plasma Cannons:* RKA 11d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), Increased Range Modifier (6,550"; +¼), 30 Charges (+¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (60 degrees forward, only on same horizontal level; -¾)	[30]
5	*Type 7 Plasma Cannons:* Another Type 7	

	cannon (total of 2; this one aft)	[30]
6	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (20 PD/ 20 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	40
4	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (12 PD/ 12 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	20
60	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +35 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)	0
54	*Hull Armor:* +18 DEF; Hardened (+¼); Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)	0
14	*Advanced Point Defense System:* Multipower, 34-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	
1u	1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	3
1u	2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1), MegaRange (1" = 1 km; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	3
8	*Missile Tracking System:* +4 with Missile Deflection	
44	*Type E Tractor Beam:* Telekinesis (80 STR); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼)	12
460	*Self-Destruct System:* RKA 127d6 (standard effect: 381 BODY), Explosion (+½), Trigger (spoken command authorization; +¼); No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Extra Time (once activated, takes 1 Minute to arm and detonate; -1½), 1 Charge Which Never Recovers (-4)	[1nr]

Operations Systems

103	*Sensor Package III:* Variable Power Pool, 90 base + 45 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	var
70	*Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any Sensor Pool Sense of up to 40 Active Points; OIF Bulky (-1)	var
15	*Long-Range Sensors:* +20 versus Range for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)	0
93	*Electronic Warfare Systems:* Variable Power Pool, 80 base + 40 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Electronic Warfare (-1)	var
6	*Sensor Enhancements:* +6 to Systems Operation; OIF Bulky (-1)	0
15	*Internal Monitors:* Clairsentience (Sight And Hearing Groups), Mobile Perception Point, Multiple Perception Points (up to four at once); OAF Immobile (-2), Perception Point Cannot Move Through Solid Objects (-0)	4
4	*Navigation Computer:* +4 to Navigation roll; OIF Bulky (-1)	0

Personnel Systems

12	*Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Costs Endurance (-½)	2
6	*Backup Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Only Within Affected Area (2.5" x 1.25" chamber; -2), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Month; -0)	[1cc]
20	*Backup Life Support:* 15 more Backup Life Support chambers (total of 16)	[1cc]
3	*Food Supplies:* Life Support (Diminished Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Year; -0)	[1cc]
15	*Artificial Gravity System:* Telekinesis (20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Pull Objects Straight Down To The Floor (-1)	3
13	*Medical Facilities:* Paramedics 14-	
5	*Medical Facilities:* SS: Medicine 14-	

Skills/Laboratories

17	*Tactical Systems:* +5 with Ranged Combat; Costs Endurance (-½)	2
11	Computer Programming 13-	
11	Cryptography 13-	
11	Demolitions 13-	
11	Electronics 13-	
11	Mechanics 13-	
15	Weaponsmith (Firearms, Missiles & Rockets, Incendiary Weapons, Energy Weapons) 14-	
50	Other laboratories (defined by GM or player)	

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 1,699
Total Vehicle Cost: 2,031

Value Disadvantages

25	Distinctive Features: Ackálian military vessel (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [abject fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 25
Total Cost: 2,006/5 = 401

Cost	Additional Vehicles
22	Escape Pod
35	124 more Escape Pods (total of 125)
76	Antimatter Missile
35	49 more Antimatter Missiles (total of 50)

Description: The Ackorsha uses the heavily-armed "Prowler"-class cruiser (a Terran designation) to guard the borders of the Ackálian Empire and to show the flag in neutral systems. On occasion a Prowler stumbles into Terran space due to a "navigation error," which means two or three equally powerful Imperial Navy ships must escort it home.

A Prowler has a crew of 318 (plus a squad of six troops) and berths for sixteen passengers.

SE'ECRA (CCR) STARSHIPS

The Se'ecra build most Conjoined Civilizations starships. Their typical design features numerous pods and secondary hulls joined together in vaguely aerodynamic arrangements which seem strange to other species' eyes. Ship class names (such as the *Civilization At Gunpoint* heavy cruiser) are Se-lag translations of Se'ecra glyphs.

Se'ecra ships during Marissa's reign use multi-phased particle beam projectors as their main weapons. As effective as the Empire's most powerful lasers, but requiring less power or space, they give even small CCR vessels potent offensive capability.

SE'ECRA IRM KNOWLEDGE ADDICT (ATRI 11-12)

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
16	Size	80	40" x 20"; -16 KB; -10 DCV
90	STR	0	Lift 6.4 ktons; 18d6 HTH [0]
18	DEX	24	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
100	BODY	74	
10	DEF	24	See Tactical Systems
3	SPD	2	Phases: 4, 8, 12
			Total Characteristic Cost: 204

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
Flight: 42"/168"
Teleportation: 150 LY Displacement

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
	Power Systems	
80	*Antimatter Power Plant:* Endurance Reserve (200 END/200 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
20	*Auxiliary Power:* Endurance Reserve (50 END/50 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
	Propulsion Systems	
22	*Type 20 Displacer Drive:* Teleportation 15", MegaScale (1" = 10 light-years; +3¾); Extra Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x4 END; -1½), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼)	56
59	*CCR Reactionless Drive:* Flight 42", x4 Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½)	9
7	*Inertial Compensation Field:* Force Field (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Protect Occupants Against G Force Damage (-1)	2
-12	*Spaceflight Only:* Ground Movement -6" (0" total)	
-2	*Spaceflight Only:* Swimming -2" (0" total)	
	Tactical Systems	
183	*Se'ecra Multi-Phased Particle Beam Projectors:* Multipower, 412-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	
10u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 10d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	22
18u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 10d6, Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	41
11u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 8d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	24
17u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 8d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	39
10u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 7d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (5,250"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	24
10	*Se'ecra Multi-Phased Particle Beam Projectors:* 3 more Projectors (total of 4)	[100]
5	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (18 PD/18 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	40
4	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (12 PD/12 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	20

57	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +33 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼) 0
48	*Hull Armor:* +16 DEF, Hardened (+¼); Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼) 0
14	*Basic Point Defense System:* Multipower, 34-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)
1u	1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½) 3
1u	2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1), MegaRange (1" = 1 km; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½) 3
44	*Type E Tractor Beam:* Telekinesis (80 STR); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼) 12

Operations Systems

114	*Sensor Package III:* Variable Power Pool, 100 base + 50 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½) var
87	*Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any Sensor Pool Sense of up to 50 Active Points; OIF Bulky (-1) var
15	*Long-Range Sensors:* +20 versus Range for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1) 0
15	*Internal Monitors:* Clairsentience (Sight And Hearing Groups), Mobile Perception Point, Multiple Perception Points (up to four at once); OAF Immobile (-2), Perception Point Cannot Move Through Solid Objects (-0) 4
6	*Navigation Computer:* +6 to Navigation roll; OIF Bulky (-1) 0

Personnel Systems

12	*Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Costs Endurance (-½) 2
6	*Backup Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Only Within Affected Area (2.5" x 1.25" chamber; -2), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Month; -0) [1cc]
15	*Backup Life Support:* 7 more Backup Life Support chambers (total of 8) [1cc]
3	*Food Supplies:* Life Support (Diminished Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Year; -0) [1cc]
15	*Thibault Gravity Plating:* Telekinesis (20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Pull Objects Straight Down To The Floor (-1) 3
13	*Medical Facilities:* Paramedics 14-
5	*Medical Facilities:* SS: Medicine 14-

Skills/Laboratories

2	*Maneuverability:* +1 with Flight
13	Computer Programming 14-
13	Cryptography 14-
13	Electronics 14-
13	Mechanics 14-
120	Other laboratories (defined by GM or player)

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 1,087
**Total Vehicle Cost: 1,291**

Value Disadvantages

10	Physical Limitation: Cannot Enter Atmospheres (Infrequently, Greatly Impairing)

Total Disadvantage Points: 10
Total Cost: 1,281/5 = 256

Cost	Additional Vehicles
22	Escape Pod
20	15 more Escape Pods (total of 16)

Description: *Knowledge Addict*-class science ships travel all over the Galaxy investigating stellar anomalies, interesting planetary ecospheres, and the ruins of ancient civilizations. In times of war they function as intelligence-gathering platforms.

The Se'ecra learned the hard way that science ships poking into unknown areas need protection, so the *Knowledge Addict* packs strong weapons and shields. However, most of its systems focus on the gathering and processing of knowledge. Its sensors are extremely acute, and its numerous labs are part of a "configurable module" system that allows the crew to easily re-arrange (or in a spaceport, switch) the laboratory facilities.

A *Knowledge Addict*-class ship has a crew of 35, with space for ten researchers or other passengers. Its large and comfortable quarters make even extended voyages tolerable. Its enormous cargo holds let the crew indulge its desire to collect and classify, or allow the ship to carry prefabricated bases for long-term expeditions or special vehicles for planetary exploration.

A *Knowledge Addict*-class vessel consists of three main sections. The forward section, with a crescent- or wedge-shaped hull, contains the bridge, most of the major sensor and communications equipment, and laboratories. The aft section, a roughly rectangular prism, contains other labs, cargo space, and the engines and power plant. Linking the two is a connecting interhull that contains some other quarters and the recreation facilities.

THORGON STARSHIPS

The Thorgons win no design awards for starship elegance. Their vessels display a certain brutal functionality that makes their purpose — intimidation, death, and destruction — blatantly clear. Most are boxy, slab-like affairs, or wedges heavy with armor. Hegemony military doctrine centers on control of planets, so most Thorgon ships — even large ones — can enter atmospheres and land troops on a planet or launch fleets of fighters and land vehicles.

The Thorgons don't name individual ships or classes, preferring simple numerical designations. The Terran Intelligence Command assigns code names to the major Thorgon ship types to make them easier to study.

THORGON ICL "COLOSSUS" (ATRI 11)

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
25	Size	125	320" x 160"; -25 KB; -16 DCV
135	STR	0	Lift 3.2 mtons; 27d6 HTH [0]
12	DEX	6	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
235	BODY	200	
20	DEF	54	See Tactical Systems
3	SPD	8	Phases: 4, 8, 12
			Total Characteristic Cost: 393

Movement:	Ground: 0"/0"
	Flight: 30"/120"
	Teleportation: 90 LY Displacement
	Teleportation: 1,300 LY Hyperdrive

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
	Power Systems	
80	*Antimatter Power Plant:* Endurance Reserve (200 END/200 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
20	*Auxiliary Power:* Endurance Reserve (50 END/50 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
	Propulsion Systems	
17	*Class Lambda Hyperdrive:* Teleportation 13", MegaScale (1" = 100 light-years; +4); Extra Time (1 Week for a full journey, or 7.5 LY per hour; -4½), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x4 END; -1½), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -½)	52
12	*Type 17 Displacer Drive:* Teleportation 9", MegaScale (1" = 10 light-years; +3¾); Extra Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x7 END; -3), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼)	63
32	*Type 1 Reactionless Drive:* Flight 30", x4 Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½)	12
7	*Inertial Compensation Field:* Force Field (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Protect Occupants Against G Force Damage (-1)	2
-12	*Spaceflight Only:* Ground Movement -6"	
	(0" total)	
-2	*Spaceflight Only:* Swimming -2" (0" total)	

Tactical Systems

127	*Linked Twin Forward Plasma Cannon:* RKA 11d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), Increased Range Modifier (9,275"; +¼), 40 Charges (+½); OIF Bulky (-1),Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (one hex row forward, only on same horizontal level; -1)	[40]
147	*Type 8 Plasma Cannons:* RKA 12d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), Increased Range Modifier (9,000"; +¼), 40 Charges (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 degrees starboard, only on same horizontal level; -½)	[40]
15	*Type 8 Plasma Cannons:* Four more Plasma Cannons (one each port, dorsal, ventral, and aft) (total of five)	[40]
165	*Mark XV Starship Lasers:* Multipower, 371-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	
9u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 9d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	20
16u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 9d6, Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	37
9u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 7d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	21
15u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 7d6, Autofire (5 shots; +½), Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	34
9u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 6d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (4,500"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	20
15	*Mark XV Starship Lasers:* Five more Mark XV lasers (total of 6)	[70]
8	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (25 PD/ 25 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	50
5	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (15 PD/ 15 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	30
65	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +38 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)	0
60	*Hull Armor:* +20 DEF, Hardened (+¼); Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)	0
14	*Advanced Point Defense System:* Multipower, 34-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	
1u	1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	3
1u	2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1), MegaRange (1" = 1 km; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	3

8   *Missile Tracking System:* +4 with Missile Deflection

44   *Type E Tractor Beam:* Telekinesis (80 STR); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼)   12

568   *Self-Destruct System:* RKA 157d6 (standard effect: 471 BODY), Explosion (+½), Trigger (spoken command authorization; +¼); No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Extra Time (once activated, takes 1 Minute to arm and detonate; -1½), 1 Charge Which Never Recovers (-4)   [1nr]

Operations Systems

91   *Sensor Package II:* Variable Power Pool, 80 base + 40 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)   var

70   *Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any Sensor Pool Sense of up to 40 Active Points; OIF Bulky (-1)   var

12   *Long-Range Sensors:* +16 versus Range for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)   0

4   *Sensor Enhancements 1:* +4 to Systems Operation; OIF Bulky (-1)   0

15   *Internal Monitors:* Clairsentience (Sight And Hearing Groups), Mobile Perception Point, Multiple Perception Points (up to four at once); OAF Immobile (-2), Perception Point Cannot Move Through Solid Objects (-0)   4

93   *Electronic Warfare Systems:* Variable Power Pool, 80 base + 40 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Electronic Warfare (-1)   var

2   *Navigation Computer:* +2 to Navigation roll; OIF Bulky (-1)   0

Personnel Systems

12   *Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Costs Endurance (-½)   2

6   *Backup Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Only Within Affected Area (2.5" x 1.25" chamber; -2), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Month; -0)   [1cc]

30   *Backup Life Support:* 63 more Backup Life Support chambers (total of 64)   [1cc]

3   *Food Supplies:* Life Support (Diminished Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily replaced from sources outside the ship; 1 Year; -0)   [1cc]

15   *Thorgon Gravity Generators:* Telekinesis (20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Pull Objects Straight Down To The Floor (-1)   3

13   *Medical Facilities:* Paramedics 14-

5   *Medical Facilities:* SS: Medicine 14-
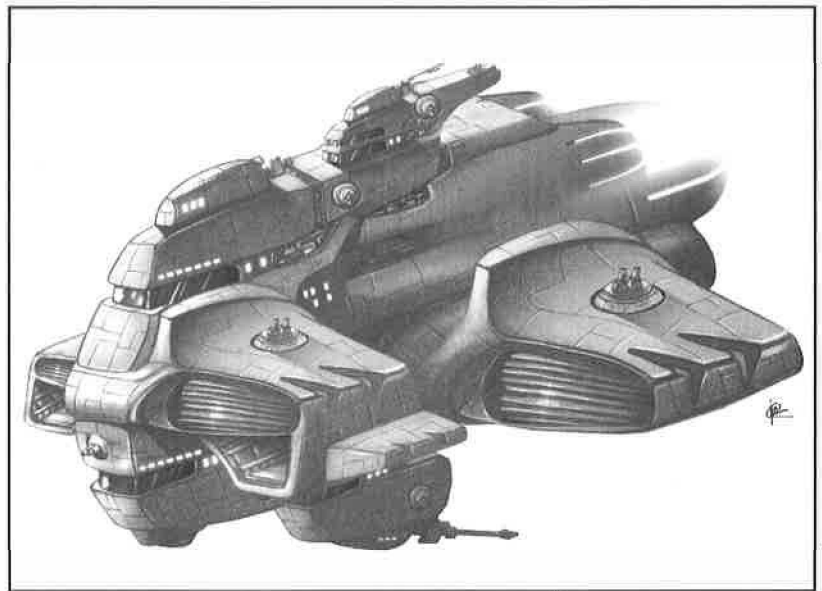
Skills/Laboratories

20   *Tactical Systems:* +6 with Ranged Combat; Costs Endurance (-½)   3

11   Computer Programming 13-
11   Cryptography 13-
15   Demolitions 15-
11   Electronics 13-
11   Mechanics 13-
17   Weaponsmith (Firearms, Missiles & Rockets, Incendiary Weapons, Energy Weapons) 15-
40   Other laboratories (defined by GM or player)

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 1,962
Total Vehicle Cost: 2,355

Value Disadvantages

25   Distinctive Features: Thorgon military vessel (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [abject fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 25
Total Cost: 2,330/5 = 466

Cost   Additional Vehicles
274   Thorgon Attack Fighter
25   31 more Thorgon Attack Fighters (total of 32)
22   Escape Pod
30   59 more Escape Pods (total of 60)
76   Antimatter Missile
30   39 more Antimatter Missiles (total of 40)

Description: The Terran Empire refers to the biggest Thorgon ship class, the K-800 series, as the *Colossus* class for reasons obvious to anyone who's ever seen one. Heavy carriers with four wings of Attack Fighters and four full companies of troops, the *Colossus* can either hang back from the front lines and serve as a mobile command post and rallying point for a fleet, or it can get right into the thick of the action.

Armed to the teeth with plasma cannons, lasers, and antimatter missiles, the *Colossus* embodies the axiom that "the best defense is a good

offense." *Colossus* captains usually take an aggressive approach to confrontations and battles.

Terran intelligence has not uncovered proof of the crew complement or cargo capacity of the *Colossus* class. Its best estimates claim the ship carries a crew of 300, 200-400 troops and 5-20 passengers (usually an admiral and his staff).

THORGON SBP ATTACK FIGHTER (ATRI 11)

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
5	Size	25	3.2" x 1.6"; -5 KB; -3 DCV
30	STR	-5	Lift 1.6 tons; 6d6 HTH [0]
21	DEX	33	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
30	BODY	15	
10	DEF	24	See Tactical Systems
4	SPD	9	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
			Total Characteristic Cost: 101

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
Flight: 36"/144"

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
	Power Systems	
36	*Fusion Power Plant:* Endurance Reserve (90 END/90 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
8	*Auxiliary Power:* Endurance Reserve (20 END/20 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
	Propulsion Systems	
51	*Type 3-C Reactionless Drive:* Flight 36", x4 Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½)	8
7	*Inertial Compensation Field:* Force Field (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Protect Occupants Against G Force Damage (-1)	2
-12	*Spaceflight Only:* Ground Movement -6" (0" total)	
-2	*Spaceflight Only:* Swimming -2" (0" total)	
	Tactical Systems	
108	*Type 3 Plasma Cannons:* RKA 8d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), Increased Range Modifier (6,000"; +¼), 40 Charges (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real	

Weapon (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 degrees forward; -¼) [40]

Cost	Power	END
147	*Mark XII Starship Lasers:* Multipower, 330-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	
8u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	18
15u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	33
7u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 6d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	16
12u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 6d6, Autofire (3 shots; +¼), Armor Piercing (+½), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	27
7u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 5d6, Continuous (+1), Increased Maximum Range (3,750"; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	17
5	*Mark XII Starship Lasers:* Another Mark XII laser (total of 2), located aft	[60]
2	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (8 PD/8 ED); Ablative (-½), OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	20
3	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (10 PD/10 ED); OIF Bulky (generator; -1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)	20
51	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +30 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)	0
45	*Hull Armor:* +15 DEF, Hardened (+¼); Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)	0
14	*Basic Point Defense System:* Multipower, 34-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	
1u	1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	3
1u	2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (all physical projectiles), Range (+1), MegaRange (1" = 1 km; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	3

72   *Self-Destruct System:* RKA 20d6 (standard effect: 60 BODY), Explosion (+½), Trigger (spoken command authorization; +¼); No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼), Extra Time (once activated, takes 1 Minute to arm and detonate; -1½), 1 Charge Which Never Recovers (-4)   [1nr]

Operations Systems

57   *Sensor Package:* Variable Power Pool, 50 base + 25 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)   var

43   *Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-year per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +3½) for any Sensor Pool Sense of up to 25 Active Points; OIF Bulky (-1)   var

7   *Long-Range Sensors:* +10 versus Range for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)

47   *Electronic Warfare Systems:* Variable Power Pool, 40 base + 20 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Electronic Warfare (-1)   var

Personnel Systems

12   *Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Costs Endurance (-½)   2

15   *Thibault Gravity Plating:* Telekinesis (20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Pull Objects Straight Down To The Floor (-1)   3

Skills/Laboratories

7   *Tactical Systems:* +2 with Ranged Combat; Costs Endurance (-½)   1

8   *Highly Maneuverable:* +4 with Flight

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 756
Total Vehicle Cost: 857

Value Disadvantages
25   Distinctive Features: Imperial military vessel (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [abject fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 25
Total Cost: 832/5 = 166

Cost	Additional Vehicles
22	Escape Pod
76	Antimatter Missile
10	3 more Antimatter Missiles (total of 4)

Description: The Thorgon Attack Fighter, the standard one-man fighter of the Thorgon forces, looks like a broad flying arrowhead to Human eyes. The resemblance does not end with appearances, for the Attack Fighter is as deadly as any arrow. Equipped with a forward plasma cannon, two Mark XII lasers, and four antimatter missiles, it causes concern among even the most heavily-armored capital ships. The fact that its pilots often commit kamikaze attacks using the ship's self-destruct device only makes matters worse.

VELARIAN CONFEDERATION SHIPS

VELARIAN IMM SWIFT HAND OF THE AVATARS (ATRI 11)

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
13	Size	65	20" x 10"; -13 KB; -8 DCV
75	STR	0	Lift 800 tons; 15d6 HTH [0]
14	DEX	12	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
50	BODY	27	
7	DEF	15	See Tactical Systems
3	SPD	6	Phases: 4, 8, 12
			Total Characteristic Cost: 125

Movement:	Ground: 0"/0"
	Flight: 45"/180"
	Teleportation: 40 LY Displacement

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END

Power Systems

40   *Antimatter Power Plant:* Endurance Reserve (100 END/100 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)   0

10   *Auxiliary Power:* Endurance Reserve (25 END/25 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)   0

Propulsion Systems

4   *Type 12 Displacer Drive:* Teleportation 4", MegaScale (1" = 10 light-years; can scale down to 1" = 2,000 km; +4); Extra Time (requires four hours to prepare for a displacement; -3), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4), Requires A PS: Operate Displacer Drive Roll (-¼), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone To Activate (see text; -¼)   40

63   *Type 3 Reactionless Drive:* Flight 45", x4 Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½)   9

7   *Inertial Compensation Field:* Force Field (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only To Protect Occupants Against G Force Damage (-1)   2

-12   *Spaceflight Only:* Ground Movement -6" (0" total)

-2   *Spaceflight Only:* Swimming -2" (0" total)

Tactical Systems

31   *Ablative Armor Plating:* +18 DEF; Ablative (-½), Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)   0

19   *Hull Armor:* +8 DEF; Limited Coverage (hull only; -¼)   0

33   *Type C Tractor Beam:* Telekinesis (60 STR); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180 Degrees; -¼)   9

Operations Systems

69   *Sensor Package I:* Variable Power Pool, 60 base + 30 control cost; OIF Bulky (-1), Only For Senses And Communications

(-1), Costs Endurance (-½)   var

52   *Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 light-
      year per Active Point, can scale down to
      1 km per Active Point; +3 ½) for any
      Sensor Pool Sense of up to 30 Active
      Points; OIF Bulky (-1)   var

9   *Long-Range Sensors:* +12 versus Range
      for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)   0

15   *Internal Monitors:* Clairsentience (Sight
      And Hearing Groups), Mobile Perception
      Point, Multiple Perception Points (up to
      four at once); OAF Immobile (-2),
      Perception Point Cannot Move Through
      Solid Objects (-0)   4

3   *Navigation Computer:* +3 to Navigation roll;
      OIF Bulky (-1)   0

Personnel Systems

12   *Life Support:* Life Support (Self-Contained
      Breathing; Safe Environments: High
      Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low
      Pressure/Vacuum); Costs Endurance (-½) 2

6   *Backup Life Support:* Life Support (Self-
      Contained Breathing; Safe Environments:
      High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense
      Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum); Only
      Within Affected Area (2.5" x 1.25"
      chamber; -2), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge
      (easily replaced from sources outside the
      ship; 1 Month; -0)   [1cc]

25   *Backup Life Support:* 31 more Backup
      Life Support chambers (total of 32)   [1cc]

3   *Food Supplies:* Life Support (Diminished
      Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel
      Charge (easily replaced from sources
      outside the ship; 1 Year; -0)   [1cc]

15   *Thibault Gravity Plating:* Telekinesis

(20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1),
Only To Pull Objects Straight Down To
The Floor (-1)   3

7   *Medical Facilities:* Paramedics 11-

2   *Medical Facilities:* SS: Medicine 11-

Skills/Laboratories

9   Computer Programming 12-
9   Electronics 12-
9   Mechanics 12-
20   Other laboratories (defined by GM or player)

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 458
Total Vehicle Cost: 583

Value Disadvantages

10   Physical Limitation: Cannot Enter Atmo-
      spheres (Infrequently, Greatly Impairing)

Total Disadvantage Points: 10
Total Cost: 573/5 = 115

Cost   Additional Vehicles

22   Escape Pod
25   31 more Escape Pods (total of 32)

Description: Velarian merchant ships occasionally
visit Terran space; they show up even more often
in Mon'dabi and CCR territory. The *Swift Hand
Of The Avatars* class, despite its somewhat antago-
nistic-sounding designation, is one such trading
vessel. Equipped to carry a crew of 23 and up to
40 passengers, it also makes a good transport for
travelers not too concerned with creature comforts.
It mounts no weapons or powerful tactical systems,
preferring to defend itself with speed more than
lasers or armor.
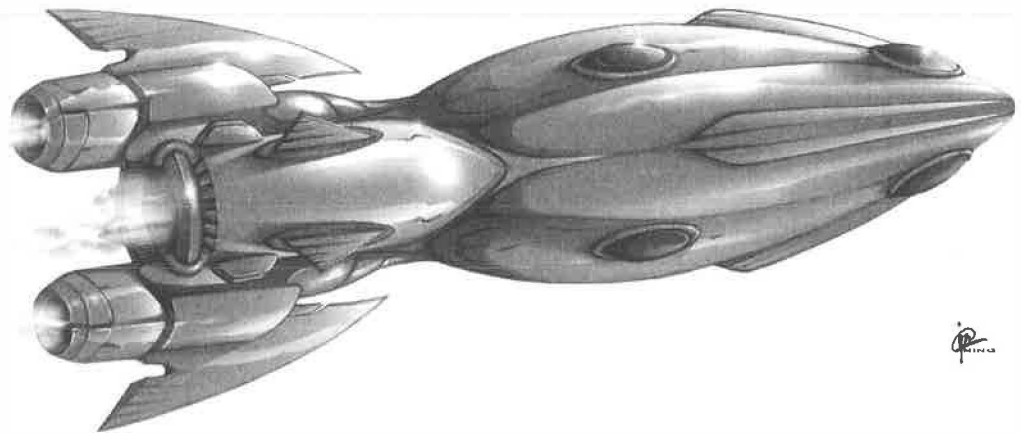
Stories of Empire
TERRAN EMPIRE CAMPAIGNS

Gamers interested in running games set in the Galaxy of the Terran Empire era not only have know what's in the previous seven chapters, they have to consider a wide variety of other issues — where and when to set a campaign, how many points players can build PCs with, plots and story arcs, and many more. This chapter reviews those issues to help prospective GMs organize their thoughts. You should also consult the GMing chapter of *Star Hero,* which has plenty of general GMing suggestions not repeated here.

If you plan to play in a Terran Empire campaign, *do not read this chapter* unless you get your GM's permission. In particular, do not read the *GM's Vault* section, which contains information for the GM alone. If you read it, you'll spoil your enjoyment of the campaign.

CAMPAIGN GUIDELINES

Almost every GM likes to alter details of published settings to make them fit better with his own tastes and style of play. Go ahead! This is a sourcebook, not a strait-jacket. Change anything you want to.

For rebellion-oriented campaigns, you may want to make the Empire the only government in the Galaxy, so no other major powers exist who could help the rebels. But removing the alien civilizations affects the rest of the setting. Without external enemies, why does the Empire have a Navy, an Army, the TIC, and the Diplomatic Corps? A bigger Empire may need faster FTL travel to make it easier to reach distant worlds.

Gamemasters who want a more benevolent Empire could make the Senate the true rulers, with the Empress as a hereditary executive or even an elected official. But that changes things, too — would a republic have Mind Police? Would the TSS have more limited powers? Political parties and media organizations become more important, nobles and courtiers less so.

The key point to remember: changes beget other changes. If you want to alter the setting, think carefully about the effects your

This section contains suggested guidelines, campaign subject advice, and other material to help you get your Terran Empire campaign going (see also *Star Hero*, Chapter Eleven, for general GMing advice and tips). However, each GM has his own preferences regarding *Star Hero* games, so you can always ignore this advice, or change it, to suit your own style of GMing or your players' style of playing.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

In most Terran Empire campaigns, the PCs are Heroic-level characters — typically Standard Heroic, with 75 Base Points and up to 75 points from Disadvantages. If you want a more "over the top," swashbuckling style of play, consider Powerful or Very Powerful Heroes. The point total you choose depends on the type and scale of the campaign you have in mind: Galactic-level campaigns need Galactic-scale heroes; smaller-scale games may not require quite that level of competence.

Normal Characteristic Maxima restrictions automatically apply to all Terran Empire characters for no Disadvantage points.

Equipment

As Heroic-level characters, Terran Empire PCs get their equipment by spending money for it in the game — they don't have to spend Character Points on it unless they want to. This sometimes causes problems if the PCs start walking around armed to the teeth, using technology instead of personal initiative and abilities to solve their problems. See the sidebar on pages 146-47 of *Star Hero* for some suggestions about keeping tech from becoming too much of a problem.

You should evaluate characters who have the *Advanced Tech* Perk with particular care. Handled properly, tech from ATRI 12 and above can contribute to the game and make things fun; handled poorly, it can destroy game balance and diminish everyone's fun. Make sure the player(s) whose characters have Advanced Tech know how to cope with the responsibility.

AVAILABLE POWERS

Since the Terran Empire is a science fiction setting, characters don't have magical or superhero-style powers. But it's Space Opera science fiction, so unusual abilities — weird powers resulting from alien physiology, technological and biological modification of characters' bodies, psionics — could exist.

Player characters who want to start the game with unusual powers or abilities can do so, but they

must pay Character Points for them. You may wish to limit how many points characters can spend on innate powers — a flying alien can perhaps improve his flight speed a little by exercise, but physics imposes some fairly hard limits you probably don't want to violate. Otherwise, the "realism" boundary for the setting starts to crumble. Similarly, psis should improve in skill and clever applications of their abilities, rather than simply by pumping up raw power. Reworking a single ability like Telekinesis into a Multipower of telekinetic applications is more appropriate than just getting stronger; so is buying off Limitations rather than increasing Active Points.

You should consider all psionic "wild talents" like time-jumping, reality alteration, teleportation, or player-invented abilities as "stop sign" abilities, and disallow them if you're not comfortable with them. At the very least, PCs with powers unknown to conventional psionics should take Social Limitation: Harmful Secret or a Hunted: Mind Police to reflect peoples' reaction to such abilities.

Body modifications — cybersystems and bio-engineered abilities — differ from psionics in that they provide a routine way for characters to gain new powers during game play without any previous justification. To keep your Terran Empire game from turning into a *Cyber Hero* campaign, you should impose restrictions on this process. First, make PCs pay both money and Character Points for any modifications. Second, impose in-game restrictions, such as lengthy healing times, periods of "adjustment" when the modifications aren't yet fully reliable, and so forth. If necessary, you can simply forbid characters to obtain body modifications.

CAMPAIGN SUBJECT

Campaign subject describes what the PCs actually do. Do they cruise around in a starship making deals, try to settle an untamed alien world, lead military missions, commit crimes? In an Empire of a trillion beings, you can find an almost infinite variety of campaign "framing devices." Some of the more common types from Space Opera fiction, and how they fit into the Terran Empire milieu, include:

The Art Of The Deal: Space merchants venturing from star to star provide a great structure for a campaign. The heroes' mobility lets them blunder into many different situations and dangers. They don't have much military power at their disposal, so they have to solve problems with wits and courage rather than firepower. Since they need to make a profit, you can easily create adventure hooks by having people hire them for jobs or presenting them with unusual money-making

opportunities. Potential problems include the PCs getting so rich they have no motive for adventuring, or the campaign bogging down in economic minutiae; both require you to carefully structure the adventures you create to avoid them.

Blasters For Hire: Mercenaries are technically illegal in the Empire, but millions of beings still make their livings as blasters for hire. They include "security consultants," bands of mercs little better than pirates, illegal "militias" on distant worlds left unprotected by the Imperial Navy, and the like. Bounty hunters also sometimes fall into the "blaster for hire" category. Player character mercs probably are, or belong to, a small band of "freelance security consultants" perpetually flirting with legal trouble from Imperial officials who don't trust them but can't muster enough evidence to arrest them quietly. The freelance route works well for PCs because it leads to more eclectic employment — a wide range of clients hires them directly, usually during meetings in seedy spaceport bars. They most commonly serve as bodyguards or security officers on small starships, but many other chores may fall their way. They frequently wind up on the shady side of the law, though most draw the line at outright robbery or assassination.

The Empire Wants You!: A large military empire naturally lends itself to military campaigns. Characters in the Imperial services have to follow orders and go where their superior officers tell them to. This makes for a very manageable campaign: higher-ups provide adventure hooks with every order and the heroes can't really refuse. When the PCs need special equipment, they can just trot down to the quartermaster and sign out the Really Big Guns — but when the scenario's over they have to return them. That avoids a campaign arms race between players and GM, but can create the problem of giving the PCs ready access to too much firepower.

The Empire Wants You... Dead!: The rebel campaign resembles both military and mercenary campaigns in certain ways. Characters have more freedom of action, but still remain subject to orders, and have far less access to the Really Big Guns (because rebels don't usually have such weaponry). During Marissa's reign relatively few dissident groups exist, and most are limited to a single planet and concern themselves with changing local conditions rather than overthrowing the Empire, leading to "Robin Hood"-like games. In later periods, the Emperors get meaner and crazier and the rebellion grows in strength and support, making a rebel campaign more like a military game.

Exploration Service: Exploration Service campaigns strongly resemble classic science fiction television: the heroes belong to the crew of a starship that operates far from home (usually they're the ship's senior officers) and often encounters strange beings and situations. They get orders from Earth, but can't usually depend on help. Each adventure tends to be self-contained, leading to an episodic campaign — once they solve the problem and wrap up the loose ends, the heroes fly off to the next world.

On Her Majesty's Secret Service: Characters engaged in espionage can work for the Terran Intelligence Command, the Navy's intelligence service, the Mind Police, private interests, or even the Exploration Service. Espionage has an old and hallowed place in science fiction, and makes an excellent frame for Terran Empire games. For realistic games, concentrate the action in a single city, nation, or planet; for less realistic, more James Bond-style escapades, the Galaxy is your playground — one populated by fiendish spies from rival empires, master villains with hidden lairs and plans to take over the Universe, and other such colorful campaign fodder.

changes would have. Some changes make certain campaign frames different or impossible... or open up possibilities for frames that don't work in the "official" Terran Empire setting.

THE GM'S VAULT

HISTORICAL PLOT SEEDS

Here are some plot seeds you can use for games that don't take place during the reign of Marissa III. Some of them may even have repercussions in, or originate during, the 2633-51 period.

Raiders Of The Lost, uh, Thing (Gregorio's Reign): As the Terran Empire expanded into former Xenovore territory, Human scientists discovered scores of depopulated or abandoned worlds, some with puzzling alien relics. The heroes join an Exploration Service mission sent to one such world. Perils abound: Xenovores in hiding, unethical freelance tech salvagers, and various lethal and mysterious alien devices.

Thorgon Dawn (2549): As the Imperial forces reel back from the combined Ackálian-Thorgon offensive, the Empire needs every ship and pilot to defend planets and shipping. The heroes attach some heavy-weapon pods to their starship and take their place in the line of battle.

The Backup (Stephen's Reign): Marissa III didn't create just one heir — she had a pair of twins. She raised Stephen at the Palace under her supervision, but left Enrico in the care of a loyal veteran on a remote frontier world.

This section contains additional and/or secret information about the Terran Empire setting that is for the GM's eyes alone. *If you're not a GM running a Terran Empire campaign, do not read this section!!!*

The GM's Vault organizes its information by chapter and page number. If you do not let players read your copy of *Terran Empire,* you can also make notes in the appropriate parts of the main text to remind you the GM's Vault has information associated with a particular section of the book.

If the GM's Vault doesn't comment on some part of the main text, it's usually safe to take what's written there as accurate — though you're free to change anything in this book to suit your own preferences or campaign. And of course, there are questions or hints in the main text that this section doesn't address because they're left open for you, and possibly future Hero Games products, to explore....

CHAPTER TWO

PAGE 21 — THE FEX GOVERNMENT

As hinted in the main text, the TSS has engaged in some covert interference with the Fex candidate qualification exams. It hopes to skew the results to make the winner more pro-Empire. However, the agents involved have done a remarkably good job covering their tracks; almost no clues regarding the tampering exist (the editorials in the media derive from journalists' suspicions and personal anti-Imperial animosity, not solid fact). It would take a lot of digging to get at the truth... and the TSS would probably try to put a stop to any such investigations.

PAGE 39 — VARANYI POWERS

Scientists' suspicions about the gradual waning of Varanyi powers is correct, though no one (not even the Varanyi, who have *all* the data and keep it top secret) can explain why. The strength of the average Varanyi's psionic powers has declined about 1-3 Active Points' worth of effect per century for the past millennia or so. The Varanyi would pay handsomely for the solution to this mystery — and even more handsomely for a way to stop the degradation from occurring.

PAGE 45 — THE MALVANS

The Malvans' loss of the will to achieve and gradual descent into dissipation is not entirely natural. It results mostly from a terrible curse cast upon them by the Elder Worm (see below), a spe-cies with whom the Malvans warred approximately 200,000 years ago. (Most Malvans, caring nothing about their own history, don't even know about this war.) Despite the waning of magic in recent centuries, the effects of the curse have gone too far to reverse, even if a wizard of sufficient power existed to attempt such a spell.

PAGE 46 — THE MANDAARIAN EXODUS

The Mandaarians have left the Milky Way headed not for the Magellanic Clouds, but for a galaxy beyond it; they still have several decades to go before they get there. A massive psionic cry for help from one or more species unknown to them prompted the Exodus. The cry was directed at Mandaarian psis specifically (that's why no one else heard it, though some Varanyi may have caught echoes). It concerned a threat of unclear nature but unquestionable intensity. As a species, the Mandaarians voted to go to the aid of the people who contacted them, for they believe the threat is headed for the Milky Way — the galaxy calling for help represents merely a resting-place on its staggeringly long journey to this Galaxy. They decided not to tell anyone what they were doing partly to prevent panic, and partly because they fear that if large numbers of people in the Milky Way know about this threat, it may sense their distress and arrive all the more quickly.

Mandaarians who chose to remain behind did so for two reasons. Some disagreed with the decision and preferred to stay in the Milky Way. Others were assigned to stay, to act as a "rear guard" should the unknown threat defeat or bypass the Mandaarians and continue its progress toward their home galaxy. For all these Mandaarians, powerful psis established mental blocks to make it impossible for anyone to read the truth in their minds, or compel them to explain the situation. You should consider all Mandaarians remaining in the Milky Way Galaxy to have +50 points of Mental Defense with a -2 Limitation, *Only To Protect Against Attempts To Uncover The Truth About The Mandaarian Exodus.*

Concerned that any technology they left behind might fall into the wrong hands, the Mandaarians packed everything up and took it with them. The caches that remain were either overlooked, or material some of them deliberately hid as a prank (or in the event the Mandaarians who remained behind need it).

The Mandaarians who remained behind as guardians occasionally hire right-minded adventurers to perform missions for them, often missions they hope will strengthen the Milky

Way in case this unnamed threat makes its way here. They usually reward these adventurers with money, but sometimes valuable bits of Mandaarian technology instead (but only after making them swear not to reproduce or sell it).

PAGE 46 — THE ELDER WORM AND THE THANE

The Elder Worm is a horrifying and malevolent species whose origins are unknown to any other species, even the Malvans. Some speculate they come from a dark world orbiting a Rim star, while others claim they're from another Galaxy altogether. Although humanoid, they possess flexible, slimy, annelidoid bodies; most species find the sight, never mind the touch, of one revolting. Lacking true mouths, the Elder Worm communicate via telepathy; many have other psionic powers as well. Mighty sorcerers, they command a raw, powerful magic from the dawn of Time itself. The Slug (*Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks,* pages 198-200) is a member of the Elder Worm (he's also pictured on page 116 of *Champions*).

Hundreds of thousands of years ago, the Elder Worm ruled a large part of the Galaxy, subjugating many early species and cruelly exploiting them. Eventually they clashed with the Malvans, and a centuries-long war resulted. Despite their mystic might, psionic powers, and arcane technology, the Elder Worm were bested and nearly destroyed. The few who survived and escaped from the Golden Hunters of Malva fled to the furthest reaches of the Milky Way to hide.

A small but powerful group of Elder Worms made their way to Earth, at that point still a primitive world inhabited by the earliest Humans. There they enslaved many Humans, using them both as labor and food, and at times foully commingling with them. But eventually their time on Earth passed, too, as struggles with other Elder Races and the resistance of the increasingly powerful Humans sapped their strength. Some left Earth; others hid in the deepest, darkest places of the planet. (The Slug and his followers belong to the latter group, and were resurrected in the late twentieth century for a time.)

But Humans were not the only slave race the Elder Worm had. Many others they conquered, and some they created with sorcery. The greatest of their servitor species was the Thane, whom the Elder Worm created toward the end of their struggle with the Malvans in the hope they would turn the tide of the war. They did not, and when the Elder Worm were annihilated, so were the Thane... for the most part. Like their masters, of whom they were now freed, the Thane fled and hid, mostly along the Rim.

By the late twentieth century, the Thane felt powerful enough to re-assert themselves and attempt to establish an empire of their own. Fortunately for the Galaxy, their powers did not prove up to the task of defeating superhumans from Earth and other worlds; eventually, their

will for conquest broken, they retired once again to the shadows. But though shattered, their lust for power did not disappear, and from time to time they launch various schemes that the heroes of the Galaxy must defeat, lest innocent people suffer the consequences of Thane rule.

The Thane once commanded powerful sorceries, though at their greatest height their magics never matched those of the Elder Worm. Today, with the long waning of magic, their sorcery no longer exists as anything more than fading lines in crumbling grimoires and quasi-religious rituals performed solely to maintain tradition. But their bizarre technology, which originally derived partly from magic, still works, and may once again allow them to threaten Humanity, or even the Galaxy itself.

As Stephen becomes increasingly unstable, can a group of heroes secretly switch his (eminently more suited to rule) clone-brother for the Emperor?

Conspiracy (2698): A group of military officers can no longer tolerate Sigismund's atrocities. How can they plan a defection to the rebel side without attracting the attention of the TSS? Who can they trust?

EMPRESS MARISSA PLOT SEEDS

Prince Stephen dies due to undiscovered genetic flaws. Unwilling to risk a repeat of this tragedy, the Empress decides to have herself artificially inseminated to breed an heir with genetic material other than her own. A scan of Imperial medical records reveals that a male PC has all the genetic traits she's looking for in a father....

Intensely curious about TES reports she's received regarding new archaeological discoveries on a Rim world, Marissa insists on going to see the ruins first-hand... and undercover, so no one else finds the site. The PCs somehow get tapped to act as her bodyguards, and the lethal implications of failing to perform perfectly are quite apparent.

Marissa seems oddly taken with the new Perseid ambassador, and begins a torrid love affair with him. Even for her, this seems awfully sudden and unusually public. The PCs have to investigate — could the Perseid be manipulating her psionically? If not, what happens to the PCs who poked their noses into her private business?

CHAPTER THREE

PAGE 51 — EMPRESS MARISSA

Here's a character sheet for the Empress, in case you need to bring her into one of your games.

EMPRESS MARISSA III DE VALIERE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [x]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
12	CON	4	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
19	INT	9	13-	PER Roll 13-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
23	PRE	16	14-	PRE Attack: 4½d6
12	COM	1	11-	
3	PD	1		Total: 3 PD (6 rPD)
2	ED	0		Total: 2 ED (6 rED)
3	SPD	7		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4	REC	0		
24	END	0		
21	STUN	0		**Total Characteristics Cost: 63**

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END
1	*Gilgamesh Treatments:* Life Support (Longevity: age at half normal rate)	0
1	*Boundless Energy:* Life Support (Diminished Sleep: only needs to sleep 3 hours per night)	0
8	*Immune Assist:* Life Support (Immunity: to known terrestrial diseases and bioweapons); Activation Roll 15- (-¼)	0

Perks

5	Access (secret entry to the Imperial Palace)
10	Computer Link: all Imperial computer systems
250	Contacts: Well-Connected and 247 points' worth of Contacts
25	Fringe Benefit: Head Of State (absolute ruler of a large interstellar society)
15	Fringe Benefit: Supreme Admiral
10	Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance
15	Money: Filthy Rich
9	Reputation: ruler of Humanity (throughout the Galaxy) 14-, +3/+3d6
9	Reputation: ruthless politician (throughout the Galaxy) 14-, +3/+3d6

Talents

3	Lightsleep
4	Speed Reading (x10)

Skills

10	+1 Overall
5	+1 with Interaction skills
3	Acting 14-
7	Bureaucratics 16-
3	Climbing 12-
7	Conversation 16-
5	Deduction 14-
1	Electronics 8-
7	High Society 16-
5	AK: Imperial Palaces 15-
4	AK: Terran Empire 14-
3	AK: The Milky Way Galaxy 13-
2	Navigation (Space) 13-
3	Oratory 14-
5	Persuasion 15-
3	PS: Administration 14-
2	PS: Painting 11-
3	Riding 12-
2	SS: Astrophysics 11-
2	SS: Planetology 11-
2	SS: Xenobiology 11-
3	Seduction 14-
1	Systems Operation (Communications Systems) 8-
3	Tactics 13-
3	Trading 14-
7	TF: Human Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Human Space Vehicles, SCUBA, Snowmobiles, Snow Skiing
4	WF: Human Common Melee Weapons, Human Advanced Small Arms
3	Linguist
2	1) Language: Chinese (completely fluent; English is native)
1	2) Language: Fex (fluent conversation)
1	3) Language: French (fluent conversation)
1	4) Language: Mon'dabi (fluent conversation)
1	5) Language: Perseid (fluent conversation)
1	6) Language: Russian (fluent conversation)
3	Scholar
2	1) KS: Aliens Of The Milky Way Galaxy 13-
1	2) KS: Art History 11-
2	3) KS: The Espionage World 13-
2	4) KS: Galactic History 13-
4	5) KS: Imperial Government 14-
2	6) KS: Imperial History 13-
4	7) KS: Imperial Law 14-
2	8) KS: Imperial Nobility 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 502
Total Cost: 565

75+	**Disadvantages**
15	DNPC: Prince Stephen (her son) 14- (Slightly Less Powerful)
5	Hunted: various assassins 8- (Less Pow, Kill)
25	Psychological Limitation: Dedicated To Maintaining Her Power (Very Common, Total)
10	Psychological Limitation: Impatient (Common, Moderate)
10	Psychological Limitation: Curious (Common, Moderate)
20	Social Limitation: Public Identity (Frequently, Severe)
405	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 565

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Armored clothing (Armor [6 PD/6 ED])
Psionic defense shield (Mental Defense [15 points total])
Pocket computer
Translator

Background/History: See page 51.

Personality/Motivation: See page 51 for general information. Marissa is clever, calm, calculating, and if necessary ruthless. She rarely loses her temper or displays extreme emotions in public, preferring to vent her rage and frustration in private. She has the mind of a chessmaster; one can never know exactly what her motivations, thoughts, or plans are.

Quote: "Admiral Jurril is to attend upon us immediately. And I need answers from Ambassador H-shub'a regarding our proposed trade initiative. And I want the latest TES and TIC reports on my computer at once. And schedule a mountain outing for tomorrow in the Rockies."

Powers/Tactics: Marissa has no real combat skills to speak of… other than the ability to command millions of troops and associated weapons and military vehicles. She's never without enough guards and other forms of protection to handle any anticipated threat to her person.

In the social arena, the Empress needs no one's protection. A witty conversationalist and insightful judge of character, she has a knack for coming up with turns of phrase that seem complimentary but actually contain biting insults, barbed comments, or deft probes for information.

Campaign Use: The most obvious uses for the Empress in any Terran Empire campaign are as patron or adversary. As the former, she's known for her generosity and willingness to give her favorites a great deal of leeway; as the latter (especially a Hunted), she's deadly, and not just because of the vast resources at her command. The fact that she

gets by on just three hours of sleep a night means she can wear down most of her opponents (not to mention her staff) through nonstop activity.

You should not adjust Marissa's power level up or down. She's meant for you to use just as she is; ruling a trillion people does carry with it certain benefits and responsibilities, after all.

Appearance: A small, slender woman, Marissa uses longevity treatments and high-tech body modifications to remain youthful-looking and attractive (right up to her assassination in 2651). She has black hair that reaches down to her mid-back (though it's usually so elaborately coiffured that one cannot tell its exact length), green eyes that flash when she gets angry, and an inquisitive look. She dresses in the finest of (armored) clothing appropriate to the situation.

PAGE 54 — CURRENT AFFAIRS

Campaigns centered on the Imperial Court typically include lots of intrigue and horse-trading as various factions attempt to advance their own interests at the expense of others. The following paragraphs detail some of the important issues during Marissa III's reign. The GM's Vault contains this material in case none of the PCs should know about such things; if that's not the situation (for example, if they're nobles, courtiers, or high-ranking Navy officers), let them read this section.

Colonization Versus Development

Should the Empire devote its resources to settling new worlds or improving conditions on the planets it already controls? The Empress and the Expansionist faction prefer colonization, the Liberals want to develop Imperial worlds, and the Conservatives want to promote Imperial business interests and expand by annexing rich, inhabited worlds. Every failure or setback to a colony project provides ammunition for the Liberals and Conservatives, but every report of waste or corruption within the Empire helps the Expansionists.

The Hermetica Question

The planet Hermetica (GMs, see also page 200) lies just outside the Heartworlds to coreward. Its government consists of a psionic oligarchy that acts like something out of the crudest anti-psionic propaganda. Not only do the rulers mistreat their subjects, but they have made Hermetica a haven for pirates and fugitives. Normally, the Empire would move in and conquer the place, but for some reason no action has been taken. Speculation runs rife as to why. The most plausible explanation is that the Hermetican rulers have established some sort of relationship or alliance with the Varanyi Empire, and that any effort to move against them could spark a Terran-Varanyi conflict — and of course, the Terrans, while powerful and often confrontational, aren't eager to take on an ATRI 12 civilization of psionics.

For once the Liberals favor action while the Conservatives urge caution. The Expansionists don't have a unified voice on the subject, and the Empress and her top aides remain curiously silent on the subject.

MARISSA LIGHT/ MARISSA DARK

This character sheet presents a fairly neutral and objective portrait of the Empress Marissa III. Although highly competent and dedicated to her job, she's also ruthless and cynical. Depending on the tone of the campaign, you may wish to adjust her personality.

To make her a good empress, suitable as a patron for a group of galactic heroes, change Marissa's *Dedicated To Maintaining Her Power* Psychological Limitation to the more benevolent *Dedicated To The Good Of Her Subjects,* and perhaps improve her COM to 16. The Good Marissa does her job from a sense of duty and speaks wistfully from time to time about reestablishing the old Terran Union and stepping down to pursue a scientific career. Under Good Marissa, the security services are either stern but incorruptible agents of justice, or corrupt officials misleading the Empress to increase their own power.

To make Marissa into an evil Galactic Tyrant, give her the additional Psychological Limitation *Paranoid* and possibly an *Enraged* (when she doesn't get her way). Evil Marissa isn't as smart as she thinks she is, and many of her policies lead the Empire to disaster — reduce her INT to 12 and adjust all INT-based Skills accordingly. Her security services are bands of sinister thugs, her romantic partners depraved playthings. Evil Marissa's interest in research includes experimenting on living subjects and dabbling in "mad science" with unpredictable results.

Non-Human Rights

Humans run the Terran Empire, and most of its policies favor Humans over non-Human species. Liberals want equality for all species. Marissa wants to reduce unrest among her non-Human subjects without surrendering any power over them. Conservatives and aristocrats think giving aliens more power could destroy the Empire. Any dissent or revolt involving aliens helps the Conservatives, while revelations of Humans mistreating aliens or heroic acts by loyalist aliens helps the Liberals. To complicate matters, many of the Empire's non-Human species want better conditions for themselves but either (a) don't want to harm the Empire, and/or (b) are perfectly happy for other species to remain second-class citizens.

Machine Rights

Also high on the civil rights agenda is the issue of rights for sentient machines. Are intelligent machines people, and if so, should they have rights? This problem cuts across normal faction lines. A few Liberals favor machine rights, but most support the status quo. Meanwhile, a minority among the Conservatives also support machine rights because sentient machine citizens could help businesses counter the efforts of labor groups. Marissa herself finds the whole idea ridiculous, but the possibility of building super-intelligent computers (which would require the willing help of many advanced sentient machines) to help run the Empire intrigues her. Whenever a robot malfunctions and harms a Human it hurts this cause, while evidence of moral sense or artistic ability in machines supports the machine rights position.

Transit Tariffs

The Terran Empire sits across almost all of the main trade routes to Thorgon space, and also several major routes connecting what the Empire refers to as "spinward" and "antispinward" civilizations. Merchant shipping passing through Imperial space must pay transit tariffs even if the ships don't call at any Imperial ports. The Thorgons and other Rim worlds constantly campaign for reduced tariffs, as do the Perseids and the Mon'dabi. On the other hand, Imperial shipping interests and Expansionists want them raised. This issue actually unites the Liberals and the aristocratic faction, since both oppose expansion and the business interests. Marissa sides solidly with the Conservatives in favor of high tariffs.

The Thorgons are their own worst enemy on this issue — every time their ambassador blusters about war he strengthens the pro-tariff bloc — but more rational Perseid and Mon'dabi officials could easily make some leeway on this issue, especially given significant leverage (*e.g.*, the Empire's need of an alliance against the Ackálians or Varanyi). Rumors claim the Thorgons have spread around a lot of bribe money to sway key Senators and courtiers against tariffs.

PAGE 54 — SENATE LIGHT/SENATE DARK

As described, the Imperial Senate has good points and flaws. You can adjust the Senate to make it more unambiguously good or blackly evil, if that suits your campaign better.

For a Good Senate, downplay the factional struggles and petty intrigues, and emphasize the Senate's role as brake on the power of the Empress. Good Senators remain dedicated to restoring republican government, but their idealism puts them at a disadvantage against the Empress and her supporters.

For an Evil Senate, two possibilities exist. If the campaign has a Good Empress Marissa, then the Evil Senate contains nothing but crooks, fools, and paid agents of other Galactic powers. The corrupt Senators happily sell out the Empire and all Humanity for a big enough bribe from the Ackálians, and the few idealists favor peace at any price. If you make Marissa the Evil Empress, she can have an Evil Senate working with her; in that case the Senators are just as greedy and corrupt, but in the pay of Imperial business interests and the military services instead. They won't oppose the Empress because they like the status quo — reform is a dirty word.

PAGE 58 — THE FAR SIDE OF THE GALAXY

While, as the main text notes, the Empire only has token diplomatic relations with the Varanyi and the Velarians, everyone in the upper echelons of the Imperial government and military recognizes the threat the Varanyi present regardless of distance. The military has established numerous well-funded

research projects focusing on ways to neutralize the Varanyi threat (psionic static generators, for example). Marissa wholeheartedly supports these efforts (as do her immediate successors). She has also entered into some ultra-top-secret high-level negotiations with the Velarian Confederation regarding a mutual alliance against the Varanyi. So far the Velarians remain receptive, but wary; they doubt the Empire would come tens of thousands of light-years to their aid... and even if it did, could it ever arrive in time to stop the Star Galleons from ravaging key Confederacy worlds?

PAGE 59 — THE TERRAN SECURITY SERVICE

Most guesses as to the size and extent of the TSS miss the mark by a considerable margin. Thanks to Marissa's support, the TSS now includes approximately *three* million agents, plus all the equipment it could possibly need.

PAGE 60, 130 — THE MIND POLICE

The Mind Police actually has a little more than 80,000 members; opponents and people fearful of it tend to overestimate its strength (a fact it uses to its advantage). The gossip concerning Dr. Li is untrue; while some "Mind cops" hold more loyalty to the organization or their fellow psis than to the Empire, Dr. Li serves Marissa III faithfully and would gladly root out such corruption if he could.

The so-called "Omega Agents" of the Special Operations Division of the Mind Police are more than just rumor. The section contains approximately half a dozen agents with staggeringly powerful psionic abilities and absolute loyalty to the Empress. Marissa uses them for a wide variety of delicate but important tasks.

PAGE 63 — GRAND ADMIRAL DRAX

Grand Admiral Drax is not one of Marissa's paramours; he's deeply in love with and totally devoted to his wife. Anyone who even hints that he and the Empress are having an affair will make himself an implacable enemy.

PAGE 67 — THE DIRECTORATE

As of 2640, the Directorate consists of the following persons:

Col. Howard Grushenkov: Formerly a high-ranking officer in the Imperial Navy's intelligence branch, "the Colonel" (as he's known) brings to the job a keen, insightful mind coupled with a decisive personality. He's a big believer in covert ops, and frequently recommends them to solve the various problems the TIC encounters.

Patricia Tarleton: A Martian from an old, distinguished, and very wealthy family with extensive mining and manufacturing interests, Tarleton attracted the interest of the Empress after the TIC tumbled to a clever industrial espionage operation she masterminded against her family's chief rival. Intrigued, Marissa brought Tarleton to Earth for a private audience, and a few years later appointed her to fill a Directorate vacancy. The other Directors correctly suspect Tarleton of using TIC
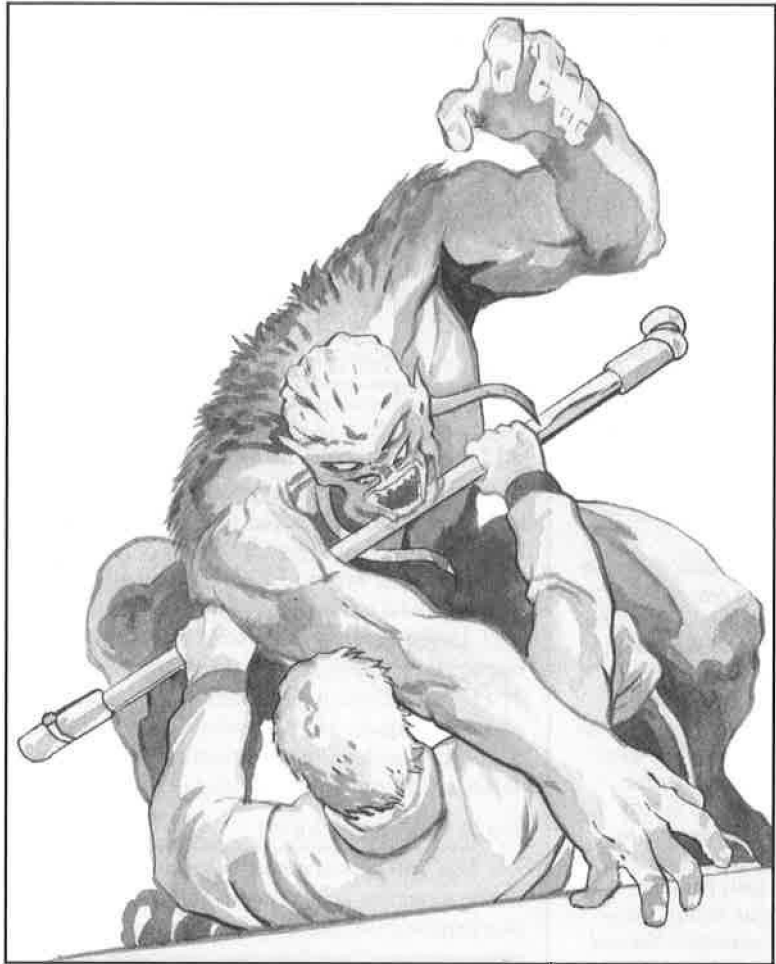
resources to aid her family's businesses, but can't prove anything yet.

Jason Wu Chen: Wu Chen's background remains a mystery to his fellow Directors. Marissa's most recent appointment to the Directorate, he seems to have done an excellent job covering up his past. He was once a TSS assassin and secret bodyguard for Marissa who discovered, and stopped, several serious plots against her life. His discretion, wide knowledge of espionage and the espionage community, and competence earned him his job, and he intends to live up to Marissa's expectations.

Nelgaz Tren: Half Perseid, but wholly loyal to the Empire, Tren worked his way up through the TIC bureaucracy. He well remembers his days as a lowly analyst, and constantly looks for ways to improve the agency's job conditions. He favors analysis and careful evaluation of data over field operations, which often puts him at odds with Grushenkov.

Richard de Valiere-Rodriguez: A distaff cousin of the Empress, Richard serves as Marissa's eyes and ears among the upper echelons of the TIC. Loyal to her more than the Empire (and rumored, incorrectly, to have once been her lover), Richard reports to Marissa on a daily basis. Those who earn his favor, or his contempt, usually earn hers as well... and vice-versa.

The TIC does, in fact, have about 50,000 employees.

TERRAN EMPIRE PLOT SEEDS

Here are three plot seeds relating to Imperial life and politics.

Gauntlet: The Thorgons launch a surprise assault on a frontier sector, cutting off and overwhelming the Imperial forces there. The PCs, either Imperial Navy personnel or just in the area at the time, must reach safe territory and get word to the Imperial authorities.

Just The Facts: The TSS hauls in one of the PCs for a grueling interview. The agents know about all the character's past brushes with the law. Several times during the questioning they show the PC holographic images of an elderly man and demand to know about him. The character has never seen the man before. But a few hours after the end of the session, while he's recovering from his ordeal, the PC encounters the man from the holos! Is this some kind of a set-up? Should the PC warn the man the TSS wants him? Who is he and why is he so important?

Senator's Privilege: By law, no Imperial authority can prevent a Senator from traveling to Earth — and one Senator needs to get there right away. The PCs have the only starship in port that isn't down for repairs, so they suddenly enter the Senator-transport business. Of course, all those mysterious breakdowns weren't accidental: someone wants to stop the Senator from arriving in time for a key vote. That someone might just be the Empress....

PAGES 70, 197 — HERMETICA

The Imperial authorities leave Hermetica alone because it's all part of a vast Mind Police experiment that has the Empress's stamp of approval. The Mind Police want to find out how useful psionic powers can be in controlling a large non-psionic population. In the end, they expect the Hermeticans to revolt and tear the members of the psionic oligarchy to shreds, but before that happens they hope to learn something useful.

PAGE 71 — OSIRIS

Elpaden civilization came to an end for no sinister reason — just simple over-exploitation of the environment. The Elpadens went too far too fast, ravaged Osiris's ecosystem, and were helpless to prevent the crash of their civilization. The barbarism and savagery that followed, as brother fought brother for food, only made matters worse. Today, almost a thousand years later, the survivors don't even remember what things were like before the collapse, though a few legends speak of a former "Golden Time" and prophesy that it shall come again. Most Elpadens see the arrival of Humans as heralding the return of the Golden Time; others remain suspicious of them.

PAGE 73 — TARTARUS

The TSS prison planet is surprisingly close to Earth, in an unnamed system about 3,000 light-years rimward of the Sol. The system has twelve planets, none inhabitable by Humans. The TSS maintains a low profile to avoid detection, but the mere fact one does not see the guards and barriers doesn't mean they don't exist.

PAGE 73 — TRIUMPH

The strange mutant creatures and bands of primitive Xenovores on the planet result from the biowarfare agents used as part of the conquest of the planet, and from later biowarfare experiments conducted there by the Imperial military. Some the Navy and Army have simply forgotten, others they want to observe and so allow to run free regardless of the damage they cause.

PAGE 74 — TROVATORE

Trovatore's innumerable islands and deep ocean bottoms make ideal places to hide out from Imperial authorities. As Marissa's security agencies crack down on dissent elsewhere, anti-Imperial rebels have quietly moved to Trovatore, where they may eventually do more than just talk. Ironically, the Osathri settlers are among the most loyal inhabitants.

PAGE 74 — DRAGO'S REACH

The rumors about independent space stations where criminals and their ilk can meet to do business free from the threat of arrest are true. Two of the most prominent are: Drago's Retreat, a junkpile built up over the centuries from discarded ship hulls and the like, and kept running thanks only to the dedicated efforts of a corps of talented (and well-paid!) engineers; and Morgathri Station, built 30 years ago by a mysterious patron who supposedly gets a cut of every deal made there.

PAGE 76 — ACKÁLIAN AMBITION

The Ackálians want to expand, but find themselves hemmed in by the Mon'dabi, the Terran Empire, and the Galactic Core. That leaves only one direction to go: into former Malvan territory, which as of 2640 lacks any sort of centralized authority. With the Mon'dabi preferring to focus on trade and the Terran Empire increasingly paralyzed by internal difficulties, the Ackálians can stop worrying so much about their rimward and spinward borders and concentrate on antispinward conquest. By the beginning of the Galactic Federation period, the Ackálian Empire is much larger — and thus much more of a threat to Humanity.
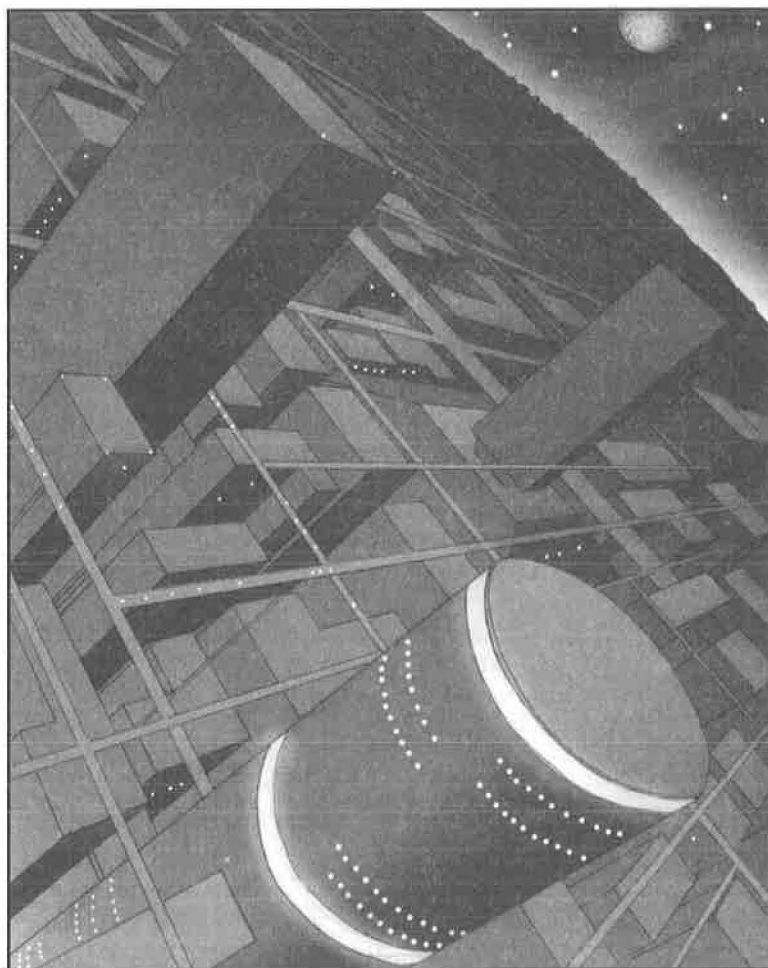
PAGE 77 — LOTHAN

Rumors that the Naloth want to become independent of the Ackálians are untrue. Anyone who goes to Lothan hoping to foment unrest will soon find himself in an Ackálian prison.

PAGE 78 — THE UPLIFT BOARD

The Uplift Board favors the growth of democracy within the Terran Empire, and has covertly used its resources to further this goal. It has donated technology and other services to democratically-inclined planets and species within Imperial space (and over the next 50 years becomes the chief support of the rebel forces trying to overthrow the Emperor). If the Empire found out about this, a serious diplomatic incident — and under later Emperors, possibly even war — would result.

PAGE 79 — IXENDRIA

The TIC has tried repeatedly to establish a spy network on Ixendria in the hopes of acquiring technological secrets. So far, these efforts have met with little success, in part because it's difficult for people with ATRI 11 technology to avoid or counteract security measures based on late ATRI 12 technology. However, all it would take would be one major acquisition to justify the entire effort; the right piece of tech or software could revolutionize Human engineering.

PAGE 80 — FEDERATED INTELLIGENCE

In Terran space Federated Intelligence often hires Human agents. They either select Mon'dabi sympathizers or use "false flag" recruitment methods so their agents actually believe they work for the TSS or Terran Intelligence Command. The Imperial government would take a *very* dim view of this practice, should it discover what's going on.

PAGE 83 — THE THORGONS

Terran scientists' belief that the Hegemony has a long-range plan to control the breeding and development of conquered species is correct. The Thorgons want everything to run as smoothly as possible within their sphere of influence, and they believe pigeonholing species into various jobs — one bred with strong muscles and dim wits so it can do heavy labor, one bred for intelligence but physical weakness so it can do analytical jobs, and so forth — contributes to this goal.

Just as the TIC suspects, Thorgon scientists *do* skew the tests used to measure individual ability within the Hegemony so that persons who favor their views score better and thus advance further. As a result, the scientists wield much more power in the Hegemony than a casual observer would believe — and they prefer to keep that fact a secret. If the CCC or the military found out, a bloody purge, and possibly even a civil war, would result.

The Thorgons currently have no specific plans to invade Terran or Mon'dabi territory, but they always have contingent plans ready in case a significant opportunity presents itself. They're content to push the boundaries of the Neutral Zone with the Terran Empire, testing the Imperial Navy's resolve and readiness, until the time comes to strike.

To compensate for the ineffectiveness of the Secret Police, the Thorgon Navy has quietly expanded its reconnaissance and intelligence-gathering operations. In addition to stealthy spy ships and long-range sensors, the Thorgon Navy now has a small corps of agents, mostly Humans and Mon'dabi traitors working for pay. A major intelligence-gathering coup by one of these agents could be the strategic "break" the Thorgons are waiting for before launching another invasion of Terran space.

PAGE 85 — URLARU

Urlaru is one of the worlds the Elder Worm (see above) once controlled, and where remnants of that species hid after the Malvans obliterated them. The ruins in question, while not nearly as old as initial reports indicate, are quite ancient, and may even contain some long-slumbering Elder Worms whose awakening would likely not prove beneficial to the Thorgons... or anyone else.

PAGE 85 — THE VARANYI EMPIRE

Some military leaders of the three-crest and four-crest castes have secretly begun planning to reduce the Emperor to a mere figurehead and hand the government over to a military-controlled council. Motivated more by the desire for personal power than any patriotism or altruistic feelings, they could end up weakening the Varanyi Empire... or making it an even more dangerous threat to Humanity.

PAGE 86 — KADILIA

The Kadilians are not, as the Varanyi believe, servile and inferior. They simply follow a code of absolute pacifism that prevents them from striking back at their tormentors (not that a revolt would have much chance of success). But eventually the Varanyi will press the Kadilians too far, and they will turn on their crested masters in what could easily become a costly, messy problem for the Varanyi.

PAGE 88 — KERASHKA

The Velarians' claim that they can, and will, destroy the Kerashka opal deposits if the Varanyi take aggressive action toward the Confederation is no bluff. The Velarians view this as an "ace in the hole" for many reasons — including the fact that their scientists claim the destruction of the planet would send out a "psionic pressure wave" that would cause any psionic Varanyi to suffer agonizing, debilitating pain for a week or more.

CHAPTER FOUR

PAGE 92 — JACKING

No jacker has yet succeeded in jacking the military HRNs undetected. Network security personnel detected the three who actually got into the military communications network and dispatched covert teams to kill them and steal all data related to their work. In game terms, anyone who tries to jack the military HRNs must spend a minimum of one hour and win a Skill Versus Skill Contest using Computer Programming; network security counts as Computer Programming 30- for purposes of the Contest.

Jacking the civilian datanets is much easier. Gaining free access requires success in a Skill Versus Skill Contest using Computer Programming; the datanet has Computer Programming 14- for these purposes. Uncovering restricted, encrypted, or classified information typically takes a long time and more Contests; the datanet's Computer Programming roll increases proportionally to the security in place to protect a particular item of information.

PAGE 93 — CREDISKS

The PCs may come up with the idea to try "hack" a credisk and increase its value or remove tracing data. Many criminals have tried this, none have ever succeeded. Assume all credisks

and commercial exchange terminals have Computer Programming 60- for purposes of foiling such attempts.

PAGE 93 — VARANYI CURRENCY SUPPLIES

The Varanyi Empire's stocks of alien currency come from a single source: forgery. Using their ATRI 12 technology, they can easily create currency that ATRI 11 methods cannot distinguish from the real thing. They do this in moderation to minimize the chance of discovery.

PAGE 96 — XENOVORE FERTILITY STATUETTES

The Xenovore statuettes actually are a form of creature in a hibernation state so profound even ATRI 12 sensors can't detect that it's a living thing. The creature awakens on a 32-year cycle, ravenous and ready to spend a month feeding on as much flesh as it can and mating before it goes back to sleep. And it's just about time for the 32-year cycle to end....

PAGE 96 — CORPORATIONS

Suspicions of TIC and Unity plants within Centaur Stage are accurate. In fact, after years of the government filling job vacancies with Imperial loyalists, the entire business amounts to little more than a front for these organizations.

Draconis Defenseworks *does* secretly conduct business with other governments, including the Perseids and the Mon'dabi Federation. It sells them whatever they want out of its catalog, regardless of Imperial trade regulations, and uses a network of reliable and close-mouthed freelance smugglers to get the goods across the border.

Mind Designs favors machine rights partly because two of its most important directors, Emmet Reynolds and Winston M'bala, are actually sentient androids! Although they've spent years carefully building up their false identities and concealing their true nature from the Galaxy, they'd willingly sacrifice everything they've gained if they could make the Empire a better place for AIs.

PAGE 98 — THE CHURCH OF THE INFINITE DARK

The Church is more than a simple, if somewhat bizarre, religion. Its worship ceremonies sometimes include the sacrifice of intelligent beings, and cultists speak of a coming Great Offering in which the void beings will feast on and destroy entire worlds, sparing only the cult. A small group of researchers and investigators within the Mind Police believe the Cult may have some basis in fact — the void beings actually exist, and Cult intends to somehow break down whatever barriers keep them exiled to interstellar space.

The Mind Police have good reason to be concerned. The "void beings" the Cult propitiates are actually some of the Kings of Edom, mind-blastingly horrific entities from the Qli-

phothic Realms (see *Champions Universe*, pages 96, 124, 129, and 133 for more information). If released into this reality, the Kings would ravage it, leaving alive only those beings they chose to keep as slaves and playthings. Obviously, anyone who destroyed or weakened the Cult would do Humanity (and everyone else) a big favor.

PAGE 104 — THE OVERBOSS

The Overboss resides on Malva, where he has a cover identity as an honest trader dealing in spices.

PAGE 104 — THE PSINDICATE

One of the most powerful crime groups in the Galaxy is largely unknown even to the authorities. For decades, local criminal organizations have come under the control of a powerful cabal of psionic criminals known among themselves as the Psindicate. The Psindicate includes a mix of Humans, Varanyi, Nan, and Velarians. They keep an extremely low profile, preferring to work through mind-controlled or blackmailed mundane crime bosses.

The Psindicate mostly involves itself in gambling, smuggling, and the slave trade. Its operations extend through the Perseid and Terran Empires, Mon'dabi and Ackálian space, and the Velarian Confederation. They do not appear to operate at all in Varanyi or Thorgon space, and the Conjoined Civilizations Republic's Space Law Authority has had more success than any other enforcement agency at uncovering and combating the Psindicate, but has kept its findings secret for fear of creating an anti-psionic backlash should the information become public.

Terran authorities still dismiss the Psindicate as a rumor. Ironically, the agency best situated to combat it, the Mind Police, believes the Psindicate is nothing but an anti-psionic urban legend. The ISP knows some new force has arisen in organized crime, but hasn't learned much about its nature or extent.

Within the Psindicate, leadership goes to the most psionically powerful, and members get positions based on their talents and tastes. Nan often work as Psindicate hit men, while telekinetic Varanyi serve as elite thieves, and Human telepaths handle brainwashing and psionic blackmail. The upper leaders of the Psindicate, a council known as the Seven, includes four Varanyi; a few members of the group wonder if the real leader of the Psindicate sits on a golden throne on Varan.

CHAPTER FIVE

PAGE 131 — THE CHAMPIONS

The Champions do, in fact, exist, and are much as described in the text. The group has typically numbered from three to 20, with varying levels of psionic power but an unwavering commitment to truth, justice, and compassion. The current group includes seven members (four Humans, one Fex, one Toractan, and one Kalishari), though it's always on the lookout for new recruits.
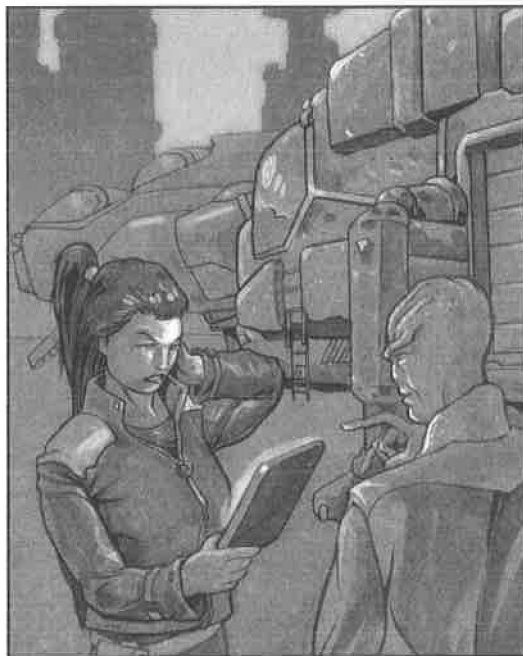
CHAPTER SIX

PAGE 134 — CURRENT GALACTIC TECHNOLOGY

As hinted in the main text, the Malvans have little understanding of their own technology. So durable and well-automated it can operate for millennia without needing maintenance, it has worked as instructed as long as any living Malvan can remember. If enough of it broke down or were destroyed, the Malvans would have difficulty replacing it.

The Mon'dabi have begun experimenting with Spacewarp drive, but so far their work in that field has barely progressed beyond the realm of the highly theoretical. Still, it seems likely the Federation will have the Spacewarp drive before Humanity does, which may have a significant effect on Empire-Federation relations.

The Velarians do not possess a zero-point energy weapon. They're just bluffing to keep the Varanyi nervous and inside their own border.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PAGE 159 — HYPERSPACE

The rules for the Terran Empire setting design Hyperdrives using Teleportation with Extra Time because Hyperspace could contain things of significant interest — extra-dimensional monsters, temporal eddies, threats that would disrupt a voyage. Therefore, ducking into Hyperspace to avoid dangers in normalspace may not help a ship much; Hyperspace could present its own dangers, so it doesn't just serve as a foolproof escape route. However, characters should encounter Hyperspace threats and difficulties rarely, if ever; for the most part, Hyperspace is just a special effect justifying FTL travel.

Warp Drive In Hyperspace

Contrary to some scientists' beliefs, ships cannot use Spacewarp drive in Hyperspace. Vessels implode if they activate their Spacewarp engines in Hyperspace; this also distorts the sensor readings (and normal sight), making it seem as if the ship simply "vanished."

Failed Hyper-Shifts

Ships that fail to make the shift between normalspace and Hyperspace (or back again) end up in another dimension. If Hyperspace is infraspace, scientists might call this other dimension "ultraspace" (though neither term reflects an accurate understanding of the structure of the Multiverse). Ships that end up in ultraspace find themselves trapped there — or at least, none of them have yet found a way to get home again.

Unlike Hyperspace, ultraspace is not empty; it contains some strange worlds and equally strange — even horrifying — beings. It's actually a weak Qliphothic World, one of a series of dimensions "behind" the normal Multiverse where horrific entities reside. (See *Champions Universe,* pages 96 and 133, for more information.) Therefore it's unlikely any ship ending up there could survive long enough to devise a way to return to normalspace.

PAGE 167 — VARANYI CLOAKING DEVICES

The Varanyi *do* have cloaking technology, similar to the system described on page 199 of *Star Hero.* However, it doesn't present as much of a threat as Terran military strategists assume. First, Varanyi cloaks work best on small ships; for ships above Size 8, getting a cloak to work without difficulty causes problems, even with ATRI 12 technology. The Varanyi don't have cloaked Star Galleons flying around in Terran space. Second, the cloaking device works poorly at FTL speeds (typically it's about half as effective). Third, a cloaking device uses up enormous amounts of power.

Cost	Varanyi Cloaking Device
9	*Varanyi Cloaking Device:* Multipower, 64-point reserve; all OIF Bulky (-1), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)
1u	1) *STL Stealth Mode:* Invisibility to Sight and Radio Groups, No Fringe (40 Active Points); OIF Bulky (-1), Extra Time (Extra Phase to activate; -¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4)
1u	2) *FTL Stealth Mode:* Change Environment 7" radius, -5 to Radio Sense Group PER Rolls; OIF Bulky (-1), No Range (-½), Self Only (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4) plus Change Environment 7" radius, -5 to Sight Sense Group PER Rolls; OIF Bulky (-1), No Range (-½), Self Only (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x10 END; -4), Linked (-½)

Total cost: 11 points.

TERRAN EMPIRE INDEX

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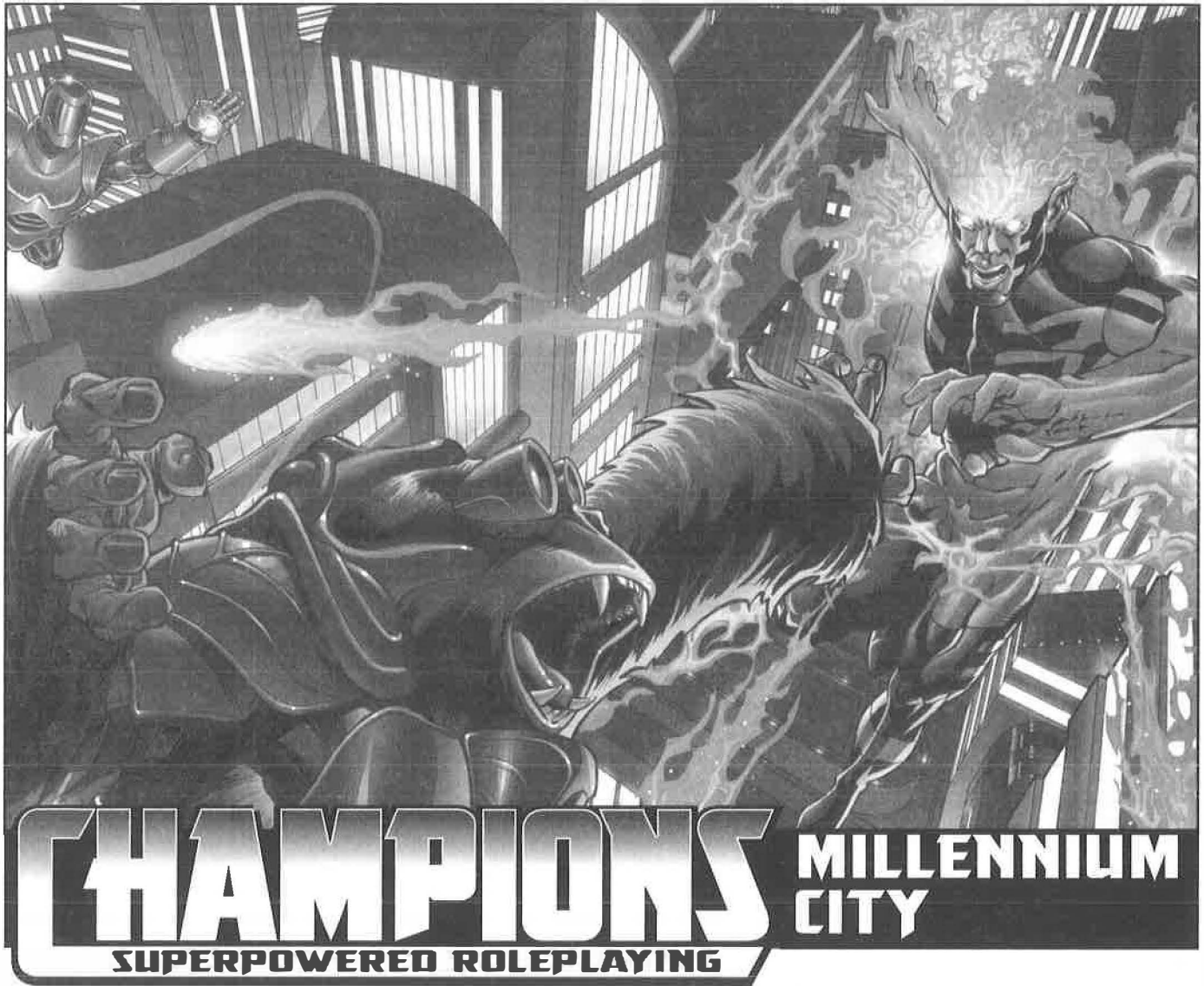
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