

Some Star Bases: A Profile

Condensed From the Pages of *Ports Illustrated*,
The Space-Traveller's Most Valued Magazine.

Star Base Three: Actually the second Star Base to be built (Four was first), Star Base Three was a serendipitous choice for a site. It was built on a Class M world so much like Terra that the Federation spent a month on intensive ground surveys making sure no developing intelligent life-forms were present. There was even a memo of protest sent to the High Council, complaining that so colonizable a world should not be used only for a Star Fleet base; this memo opened the door to co-settlement of Star Base-bearing worlds by civilians.

The actual base was constructed from Stardate 0/8908 to 0/9004 on a fertile plain near a large body of water which was named the Sea of Serenity. The base occupied low-lying land, leaving the rest of the plain for agriculture. Its original area was only 65 square kilometers, with a total population of 8,900. At the time it was built, Star Base Three was far beyond the frontier. It took a typical vessel of the day, travelling at slightly more than Warp 2, nearly eight months to reach it from Terra.

The history of Star Base Three has been peaceful and placid. Later Federation settlements nearby made it attractive to colonists, and after the scare of the Romulan War, the High Council decided it was foolish to keep people from a habitable world so close to the Federation's vital trade routes. Basetown (later called Halina,

after the major salt-mine nearby) was founded 20 km. from the Star Base. It had a population of 640.

Over the years Star Base Three has served as a major jumping-off point for colonial expeditions to nearby worlds. The development of many prosperous colonies and the lack of a hostile foe to face has lent Star Base Three the title of 'Star Fleet's Pearl Harbor'; a peaceful frontier outpost waiting to be taken by surprise. This Star Base has been so trouble-free that even the joke has faded.

Nowadays Halina, with a population of 2.3 million and an excellent spaceport, is the capital of a world-state with a total population of 96.8 million people on two continents, seven major islands, and with plenty of room to grow. The Star Base has been dwarfed by the civilian expansion, though it now takes up some 150 square kilometers and has 29,000 personnel, two orbital facilities, and eight space drydocks. Star Base Three's application for Federation membership is expected to be approved within the year, making it the first Star Base world so honored.

Star Base Five: One of the more unusual Star Bases, first to be built in a totally hostile environment; the interior of an asteroid.

The system at the intended point of construction was found to contain only a couple of massive gas giants and several rings of asteroidal debris.

After some hasty engineering surveys, one of these with a high metal content and unfractured, was selected as the site of Star Base Five.

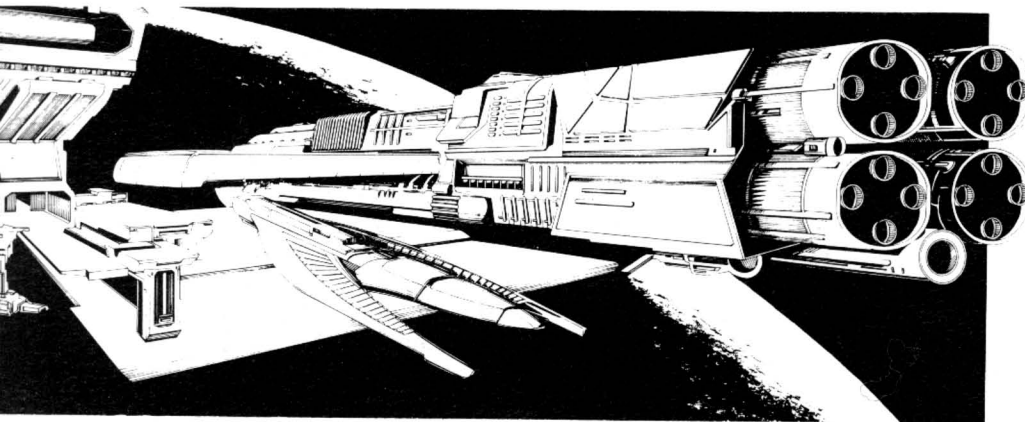
A net of fusion reactors was tethered around the asteroid and made to spin, generating a huge magnetic field. Through induction the interior of the asteroid was slowly melted away; a robotic drill then sent a hollow tube into the asteroid's interior and pumped millions of decaliters of neon gas into it, literally blowing the asteroid into a bubble ultimately 8.1 kilometers across. When it cooled, an access was cut into the asteroid's side and construction began on the first pure-space Star Base.

A square door, .75 by .5 kilometers, gives access to the inside of the nearly spherical, almost natural-looking planetoid. Within the Star Base are three long axial support shafts meeting at right angles at the center of the docking space, where 24 ships can be moored without crowding. The tubes give access to the ships and to the opposite sides of the Star Base, which is built in concentric layers of decking with 'up' towards the center of the asteroid. These decks contain not only the Star Base and its complement of 12,000 but the hydroponic systems needed to keep Star Base Five self-supporting. Power comes from six reactors spaced throughout the planetoid shell; water and air are nearly perfectly recycled, requiring only slight replenishment every year. Building this engineering marvel took only three years.

Incredibly, Star Base Five has a civilian settlement inside it. Technically the private tunnels are only rented, having been built by the Corps of Engineers to Star Fleet specs, but a non-Star Fleet population of almost 17,000 lives there. The major civilian

industry is offbase entertainment, which is reported to be the best in the Federation.

Star Base Seven: Star Base Seven's sun is a Type B blue-white giant star, its world a Class G desert planet with a very limited biosphere. Like Star Base Five, it is self-supporting only through hydroponics and life-support. Most of it is buried; sunken into solid rock in a low range of hills to protect it against extremes of temperature (a change of as much as 50° C). Its simple and few surface structures, rounded and low to reduce sandstorm abrasion damage, make it appear to be a minor outpost. Only the orbital drydocks and the larger-than-expected landing field betray its status. Some 11,000 personnel live and work here, a relatively low number, as settlement in Star Base Seven's district is still spotty and small.



Civilian colonization near Star Base Seven is limited. Near the Star Base is a small city called Seventown, with a population of 1200 or so; no one seems interested in finding out exactly how many live there. A minor spaceport handles what little civilian traffic there is, mostly spare parts and luxuries for local and district consumption. Seventown's residents tend to be human and Orion, with a scattering of Vulcans and other hot-planet types. Evaporator farming is the norm here, making extensive use of moisture traps and transparent film to grow about 60% of the settlement's food, the rest being shipped in. Scrap yards, salvage companies, and private shipping firms are the major local industries. The area is generally poor and unattractive; even the offbase is depressing, and the incidence of robberies and criminal assaults in Seventown is higher than on many frontier worlds.

Some 25 years ago a colony ship with as many as 250 Sufi religious

fanatics made a landing in the high desert far from any habitation. A rescue team found that the ship had landed safely, and then been burned. No trace of the Sufis was ever found, but now and again an outlying farm or ground-truck is ambushed by raiders and stripped of food and survival items, so Star Fleet believes they are still alive and living as nomads.

Star Base 16: Class N (pelagic) worlds are not as common as they could be, but, as one disgusted seafarmer of a 100% hydrosphere planet has said, "one is more than enough." They are very productive planets for hydrologic agriculture, but the costs are high, weather is usually uncontrolled, and construction costs are unbelievable. Star Base 16, in being built, ran up the highest per-site cost in the Star Base construction program: 790 billion credits!

To reduce later maintenance costs,

the Star Base was placed mostly underwater, in a region known as the Conat Shallows on Alpha Shelf; a continent too short to break the waves. Like a vast single building, the Star Base stands above the world-ocean floor on massive pillars sunk nearly 500 meters into bedrock. Its surface installations, antennas, the landing fields, surface transportation, and some recreational facilities, are actually above the surface on massive airy lattice towers reaching almost 100 meters above the waves. The result is one of the most spectacular single constructs in the Federation, a massive 20 square kilometer roof standing on stilts 200 meters above an even larger submerged structure.

Recreation on Star Base 16 is unlike that on any other Star Fleet base. There are the expected surface and submarine craft to be rented, sport fishing and rec-diving, even surfing on the beaches of nearby Welter's Island, but there is also the Star Base 16 Bathhurst Memorial Golf Tourna-

ment held yearly in mid-summer (weather permitting). With the aid of a few raised astroturf pads and some imaginative if not outlandish woods, hazards, and traps, a corner of the landing surface hosts teams from the local personnel and several visiting starships. Last year's events included an officers vs. enlisted men tourney, Life Support Technician 2nd Class Ernestine McCullough leading her team to a thrilling two-stroke victory over the department heads of the Kongo, Cerebus, and Ramses.

On nearby Welter's Island, connected to the Star Base by subsurface tube, is the town of New Ft. Myers, population 1,562. A bustling, busy little place, it is the largest fixed civilian habitation on the planet, matched only by the town of Malibu halfway around the equator, and boasts the only spaceport, a small facility handling foodstuffs going out and many products, mostly luxuries and manufactured goods, coming in. The great majority of Star Base 16 inhabitants live and work on floating seafarms, tethered or circulating (not drifting!), and on factory ships doing the major processing and packaging. Altogether, aside from the Star Base proper, the world has some 14,000 people who call it home.

Star Base 27: The nearest major Federation installation to Klingon space is Star Base 27. When this establishment was designed (before the Four Year's War) it was intended to be a little larger than normal, being situated on the trade routes between the Orion worlds and the original Federation planets. There were pirates operating in the area, the Orion slave trade was in full bloom, and Andorian/Orion clashes were almost weekly occurrences. Star Fleet wanted some muscle in the region.

Star Base 27 was only a hypothesis when the Klingons were first encountered. It was only a happy accident that the Base was nearing completion when the Four Year's War erupted. It was only 86% complete, and in spite of great demands closer to home, Star Fleet rushed to finish the Base even though the Klingons were approaching at a frightful rate. It was Star Fleet's hope, as then-Captain Garth of Izar later said, that "the Klingons would miss it, and we would finish it in time to use it, and we would have enough of Star Fleet left to make the cost worthwhile. We never had three more desperate chances rolled up into one." The only

reason all three chances came through was because the base had been started too late for Klingon intelligence to find out about it. They never knew the Base was there until they literally stumbled over it, long after they had suffered from Federation ships they thought were out of action that had been repaired and sent back to pummel the invader afresh. Diversion of badly-needed men and ships from their campaign to secure Axanar harmed the Star Base little and hindered their own over-extended operations. By the margin of one Base with its concrete still raw from the mixer the Klingons were halted. The Federation has labored since to make sure that it does not happen again.

The actual size of Star Base 27 is classified. In area, it is a little more than 195 square kilometers, the largest Star Base in the Federation. It was enlarged greatly after the war and has an on-base population of somewhere over 40,000, making it twice the size of normal Star Bases. It is also said to have extensive underground tunnels and galleries equaling the size and volume of the surface structures. Curiously, even its orbital facilities are wrapped in mystery. The Federation says only six drydocks and three support stations are in orbit, but as many as ten docks and six stations have been reliably accounted for, and one report claims 15 docks and ten stations! Significantly, the Federation maintains a Marine Corps Command presence here of at least two divisions, but admits only to "forces in excess on one brigade".

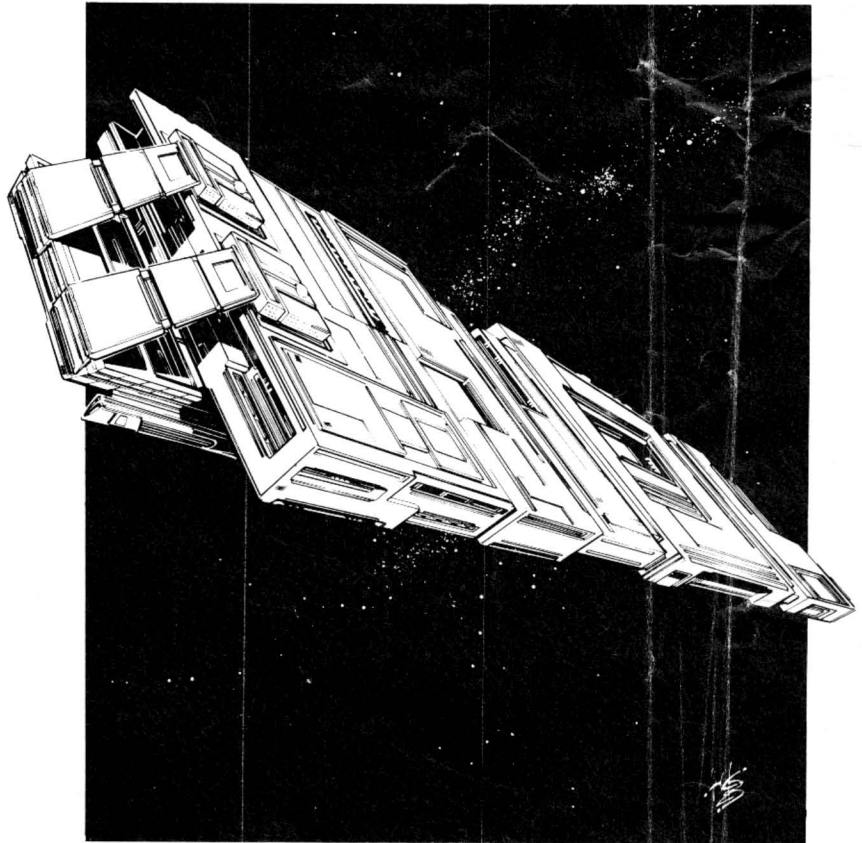
For all its secrecy and armament Star Base 27 is one of the most cosmopolitan and beautiful of Federation worlds. It is a dry and rocky Class M planet, a little cool, but with the charm of Terra's Scotland. Out of deference to the nearby Orions, and to leaven the prairies and rockfields, many of the Star Base's structures were built gently swelled, bulbed, bulged, and fluted in the Orion style. The result has been so striking that Star Fleet has given up prohibiting tourists from taking pictures. It was easier, says one Security Department chief who wishes to remain anonymous, to simply camouflage the buildings.

It is illegal to photograph or scan the Star Base from space. Aggressive patrols by manned and unmanned vehicles insure that no object larger

than a golf ball even approaches sensor range without approval. This is most impressive considering the Star Base's large civilian population of 65,000, including a larger-than-expected proportion of which is Orion, not known for their love of Star Fleet. Actually, the Star Base 27 settlements are the most carefully planned communities next to any other base in the Federation; their economies, macro, micro, and even underground, have been meticulously scrutinized and regulated. In any other sort of circumstances this degree of control would be intolerable to free people, but Star Base 27 serves a unique district of space. Few say that the penalty is too onerous for the reward.

The reward is in the hefty flow of trade between the Federation homeworlds and the Orion colonies, a flow that has grown over the cen-

Base itself to defend this prosperous and endangered region; more than 300 other outposts with military purposes, more than in any other Star Base's district, monitor the Klingon and Romulan Neutral Zones, keep an eye on Orion movements, and support smaller Star Fleet detachments behind the frontier. These range greatly in purpose and secrecy, from the great series of deep space stations that are open even to Klingons on our side of the frontier, to the new and sophisticated Epsilon series of monitoring posts, to the heavily-armored and defended outposts on the Romulan Neutral Zone. And these are not all; from scattered reports comes word of secret Star Fleet emergency depots and communications centers in case mighty Star Base 27 is ever destroyed. For, after all, its location is no longer any secret to the Klingons, nor, presumably, to



turies in spite of wars, revolutions, and pirates. The legitimate trade alone is worth some 650 billion credits per year, and the value of smuggled and undervalued or unreported goods and services may be twice that. It has been boasted that a major smuggler of Romulan ale himself lives on Star Base 27, although no one knows if this is really true.

Star Fleet does not rely on the Star

their erstwhile allies, the Romulans.

Visitors to this Star Base should not miss the War Memorial on nearby Zeddies's Peak; the hulk of a Klingon destroyer is preserved there as it looked the day it crashed during a raid. It is surrounded by 7.31 kilometers of black marble on which are inscribed the names of all those, Star Fleet and civilian alike, who died in the Four Year's War. ★