LANCER
BATTLEGROUP

*FROM A DISTANCE IT IS ELEGANT. IT HAS BEEN DAYS
SINCE THE FIRST VOLLEYS HAVE BEEN FIRED.*

*CARCASSES OF GREAT SHIPS DRIFT,
AND THE DEAD HANG IN THE VOID.*

*KILL-CLOUDS GLITTER ACROSS THE NIGHT,
SPLIT BY THE FLARING LIGHT OF LINAC BEAMS
AND ROCKET TORCH DRIVES.*

*FROM A DISTANCE, IT IS ELEGANT;
UP CLOSE, IT IS HELL.*

LANCER: BATTLEGROUP

By Kai Tave and Miguel Lopez

Editing

Melody Watson

Layout

Minerva McJanda

Playtesting

Cover

Nicolas Vallet

Illustration

Conner Dodd, Peyton Gee, Ronan Le Fur, Juan Gee Tan, Nicolas Vallet, Gwen Williamson

Safety tools

The X Card - John Stavropoulos

Script Change Toolbox - Beau Jágr Sheldon

Ttrpg Safety Toolkit - Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk

INTRODUCTION

Lancer: Battlegroup is a standalone rules system for mass space combat in the *Lancer* setting, designed for digital or tabletop play with no need for a grid or hex map. Blending *Lancer*'s deep unit customization and emergent story with a new frontier of tactical narrative action, *Battlegroup* casts the players as pilots and officers in a fleet deployed to the front line of a naval campaign. Their missions may vary, but their goals remain the same: win, survive, and return home.

Battlegroup is both a standalone game and a large-scale space combat module for *Lancer*. Whether you want to play out a naval campaign or add new dimensions and scale to your existing *Lancer* campaign, you can use *Battlegroup* to expand your group's library of storytelling options.

Battlegroup features:

- Detailed naval combat and narrative-tactical play that doesn't require a grid. Command a battlegroup using the gyre, a relative positioning system that depicts the movements of capital ships and attack wings across the tremendous distances and myriad trajectories of space.
- Fleet and ship customization – from a ship's hull through to its systems, weapons and escorts, the way you build your ships determines how you play.
- Everything you need to know about naval warfare in *Lancer's* universe. From boarding actions with mounted chassis, to demisolar long-spool weapons shattering capital ships with a single shot, and ontologic warfare conducted by fleet legions in dimensions uncanny, *Battlegroup* continues to expand the playable theaters of *Lancer*.
- Key information on the Dawnline Shore and the major powers vying for control of the region, including campaign beats, plot hooks, and more.

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PLAYING BATTLEGROUP

Fleet Commander Conrad Schuyler paced his private deck on the Colossal Promise, his battleship and the flagship of the Armory's 5th Dawnline Fleet. He wore his battlesuit, helm held behind his back. Under thrust, he could walk without the aid of mag boots. The marble surface wouldn't have accepted them anyways. Alone, he paced the walk, a solitary figure against the stark black of a starless void.

Outside, the enemy's ships no doubt matched the trajectory and burn of his battlegroup, their torpedo tubes open, their long guns fixed on where they thought he was going to be. They were likely correct – not much room to maneuver in this empty space above New Creighton – and besides, that was the essence of naval combat: one could not hide when one is the only thing in a void.

If Schuyler so desired, he could open a line to the Colossal Promise's command deck and have the course of the enemy fleet cast to the panorama wall. He could stand before the Counters' fleet in wireframe miniature and hold it in his hand. Schuyler did not want that; he was not interested in paper boats. He wanted a baron, and Invictus had quietly informed him that there were none in the Counters' fleet.

Schuyler reached the end of his walk, turned, and paced back. The Preludes and their minor keys echoed over his footfalls. He was nervous, to be sure – as any sane person before an engagement – but confidence and the piano tempered his nerves. This was not his first duel. God willing and with proper planning, it would not be his last. The closing notes of the final Prelude boomed across the deck. Time, then.

"Invictus," Schuyler's voice echoed across the otherwise empty space. He didn't wait for a response: he knew the legion listened to its commander. "Ready my post in the CIC." With that, Schuyler pulled on his helm, securing it to his suit. All indicators save for heart rate showed well within nominal ranges. "Let us begin."

Your character in *Battlegroup* is a commander – a ranking naval officer tasked with leading a group of ships and those who crew them into combat. Command decisions, and their consequences, fall to your commander, and the orders they give will determine whether you achieve victory or suffer defeat. But your commander is only one part of the story. The ships they lead into battle – their battlegroup – reflect their personality and command style. A commander and their battlegroup are two parts of the same whole.

BOOK STRUCTURE

This section, the **Introduction**, lays out the core rules of the game and gives a brief look at some key elements of the setting.

The second section of this book, **Characters** (p. 16), talks you through creating a commander and choosing a Background that will shape their story.

The third section, **All Vessels Engaged** (p. 30), presents the full, detailed rules for naval combat.

The fourth section is **The Battlegroup** (p.60), in which all options for choosing and outfitting ships can be found.

The fifth section is the *Battlegroup* **Game Master's Guide** (p. 138), which offers advice for tweaking rules, creating non-player characters (NPCs), and running engagements.

The sixth section is **The Dawnline Incident** (p. 196), an in-depth look at a key point of conflict occurring at the timeframe in which *Battlegroup* is set.

The seventh and final section, **Setting & Worldbuilding Tools** (p. 216), contains information on shipwrights, fleet organizations, naming conventions, and comms formatting, which can be used to add more detail to your games.

WHAT YOU NEED

This game uses two sorts of dice: twenty-sided dice (d20) and six-sided dice (d6). You'll roll these dice to determine the outcome of uncertain situations, such as firing weapons, engaging in electronic warfare, or undertaking critical maneuvers. When the rules call for you to make a roll, they will also tell you how many dice to roll. For example, 1d20 means you need to roll a single d20, whereas 2d6 means you need to roll two d6s.

Sometimes the rules will call for you to roll 1d3. That's just a shorthand way of saying you should roll 1d6 and halve the results (rounded up). When you're called on to roll 1d3, a result of 1 or 2 on a d6 equals 1, 3 or 4 equals 2, and 5 or 6 equals 3.

Battlegroup is best played with 3–6 players, but can be played with as little as two or as many as you feel comfortable with. Each player needs at least one d20, a number of d6s, and some paper or a character sheet to write down information. Players may also want tokens of some kind to keep track of various abilities and effects.

Unlike *Lancer*, this game does not use a grid for tactical combat. Instead, it uses a tool called the gyre (p. 44) to track the relative positions of fleets as they engage in combat. You don't need square or hex maps to play the game, nor do you need miniatures; however, you may wish to use a gyre map and tokens or miniatures to make combat easier to visualize.

Most of the players take on the role of commanders – these are the player characters, or PCs – but one player is the Game Master, or GM. The GM acts as a narrative guide, facilitator, and the arbitrator of the game's rules. They help create the story and narrative your group will explore and portray all of the NPCs. For more information on the GM role and a list of rules, tips, and tools for GMs to use, refer to the Game Master's Guide on p. 138.

THE GOLDEN RULES

There are two golden rules to remember when playing *Battlegroup*.

I: SPECIFIC RULES OVERRIDE GENERAL STATEMENTS AND RULES.

For example, certain attacks may not typically be avoidable; however, some abilities or systems make it possible to attempt to evade those attacks. Because these latter abilities are specific rules, they supersede the general rules concerning those attacks.

II: ALWAYS ROUND UP (TO THE NEAREST WHOLE NUMBER).

ATTACKS, CHECKS, AND INTERDICTION

In *Battlegroup*, there are three main types of dice rolls: attacks, checks, and interdiction.

Attacks are any offensive actions made against other ships or battlegroups, like firing weapons or directing a fleet legion to disrupt an opponent's systems. When you make an attack roll, you roll 1d20 and add any relevant bonuses. For an attack to be successful it needs to equal or exceed the target's Defense. Successful attacks are described as "hits" – so if the rules tell you that an effect happens "on hit", that means it takes place when you make a successful attack. For certain weapons, a result of 20+ is a critical hit, an especially effective blow that deals double damage and sometimes triggers other effects.

The next type of roll is a check. Checks are handled the same as attacks: you roll 1d20 and add bonuses, but the target you're attempting to equal or exceed isn't based on an enemy's Defense. The target number will typically be stated in the description of the check itself.

Uptime checks are a specific type of check that only take place in the narrative moments between and before fleet battles. These checks are also made as part of various uptime actions (see p. 48). The target number, and the consequences of the check, are usually defined by the action you're performing.

INTERDICTION is a special type of roll that occurs only during combat. Certain weapons and abilities can deal damage without attack rolls, and a battlegroup's Interdiction rating lets it defend against some of these attacks. When you make an interdiction roll, you roll a target's Interdiction and then subtract that amount from the incoming damage. For more information on INTERDICTION, see page 56.

MODIFYING ROLLS

There are several ways rolls can be modified. The first of these is with a static modifier – a simple bonus that you add to the result of the roll. Static modifiers are represented with a plus symbol followed by a number: +1, +2, +3, and so on. If you're rolling with +2, you just need to add 2 to whatever you rolled to determine the final result. For example, a particular upgrade might add +2 to a battlegroup's INTERDICTION.

Rolls can also be modified by two kinds of bonus dice: ACCURACY and DIFFICULTY. These modifiers represent momentary advantages or disadvantages gained and lost in rapid, chaotic moments of action.

Boarding actions, electronic warfare, and advanced targeting systems are examples of things that might apply them during combat. They work as follows:

- Each point of Accuracy adds 1d6 to a d20 roll.
- Each point of Difficulty subtracts 1d6 from a d20 roll.
- Accuracy and Difficulty cancel each other out on a 1:1 basis.

If you're lucky enough to roll several of the same bonus dice when attacking or making a check, whether Accuracy or Difficulty, you don't add them together to determine the result. Instead, find the highest number rolled and apply it to the final result. Because of this, no roll can ever receive more than –6 or +6 from either Accuracy or Difficulty.

For example:

For an attack with 2 Accuracy, roll 2d6 and choose the highest of the two dice, then add that number to your attack roll. If you roll 3 on one die and 4 on the other, you add +4 to the roll, not +7.

For an attack with 2 Accuracy and 1 Difficulty, you only add 1d6 to your attack roll as 1 Difficulty and 1 Accuracy cancel each other out.

For an attack with 1 Accuracy and 1 Difficulty, you don't add anything to the roll – the dice cancel each other out.

DEALING DAMAGE

The durability and structural integrity of ships and other targets are represented by their Hit Points (HP). When a target reaches 0 HP, it is destroyed.

When an attack (or other ability) hits a target, it reduces that target's HP by an amount equal to its damage. Damage values are listed either as a flat number, a dice roll, or a dice roll plus a modifier. In cases where an attack deals damage to multiple targets at once – such as a powerful area attack – you roll damage only once and apply the result to all affected targets.

Some special systems and effects call for values like damage to be halved. Halving does not stack, even from multiple sources. If something causes an attack to deal half damage, then halving its damage again doesn't make it deal quarter damage.

ENGAGEMENTS, NARRATIVE PLAY, AND SCENES

Ongoing campaigns of *Battlegroup* are usually divided into engagements, each of which is a single naval battle, separated by periods of narrative play.

Engagements have specific goals or parameters that must be completed in order to succeed. this usually involves destroying all enemy forces, but engagements can incorporate other goals as well, such as extracting VIPs or defending crucial objectives. Each engagement also includes some preparation time, in which you can discuss goals, set stakes, and outfit the ships in your battlegroup as you see fit.

If your character isn't actively participating in combat (or preparing for it), you're in narrative play (also referred to as uptime, see p. 10–11). Narrative play encompasses the space between engagements, in which moment-to-moment action matters less and roleplaying matters much more. During this time, you can progress plots, projects, or personal stories, moving the clock forward as much or as little as you want. Days, months, and even years can pass in this narrative time, depending on the pace of your game.

While engagements are a single battle from start to finish, narrative play may be divided into scenes. A scene is a period of continuous dialogue, action, or activity that has a discrete starting and stopping point. They're called scenes because it's helpful to think about them in cinematic terms: as long as the focus (or "camera") is on the players and their action, a scene is happening. When the focus cuts away from the current scene, or the current action naturally ends, that's when the scene should end too.

A single dramatic encounter or a dialogue between characters are both great examples of scenes, but a scene can also be something like a montage. It's important to pay attention to the beginning and end of scenes, as some narrative abilities might only be usable once during a scene, the way some combat abilities might only be usable once per combat.

WHAT BATTLEGROUP IS

Battlegroup is designed to evoke the experience of fleet battles in the *Lancer* universe: the hum of long-spool weapons charging up, the shifting of battle lines inexorably leading to a deadly clash, pitched boarding actions and wings of strike craft hurtling through defense curtains to deliver their payloads. Your decisions will influence these pivotal moments and help turn the tide of battle; however, *Battlegroup* isn't necessarily "about" the individuals – heroic though they may be – involved in the battles it depicts. It is about large, collective actions and the price of success.

The main way to play *Battlegroup* is to create and follow a single commander across successive engagements; however, the game does not require that you strictly focus on one officer, pilot, or crewmember. Over the course of a session or campaign, you might develop a rotating cast of individuals whose exploits you follow throughout their careers, or you might create new characters each time you establish the stakes of a conflict, playing out one of the most important moments in their lives. Your table might use *Battlegroup* to play out battles taking place across an entire sector of space like the Dawnline Shore, zooming in on different theaters, fronts, or even periods of time.

Nor is *Battlegroup* built around the assumption that play will take the form of a single, ongoing campaign. This book offers guidance for running campaigns – including numerous plot hooks and additional information about the contested region of space known as the Dawnline Shore and *Lancer*'s setting in general – but it can also be used for one-shot games, ongoing narratives with rotating player groups, and short-term arcs.

And of course, *Battlegroup* can also be used as a way to add some extra tactical and narrative depth to a *Lancer* tabletop campaign. The outcome of these large-scale fleet battles are likely to create numerous flashpoints ripe for a squad of mech pilots to engage with, whether in space or on the surface of a planet, and you'll find a number of tools to help you create a narrative that crosses back and forth between games.

A NOTE ON PLAYER SAFETY

Space combat in the *Lancer* galaxy is a tense and deadly affair. Thousands of lives hang in the balance of each engagement, and while life is never treated as though it was cheap, it is nonetheless a fragile thing next to the cataclysmic power unleashed by fleets as they clash among the stars. Commanders make difficult decisions in the heat of battle, ordering ships into danger knowing they may not survive and that such sacrifices are necessary in the pursuit of victory. Errant volleys fired too close to inhabited worlds result in harrowing devastation and casualties on a massive scale. Spacers are separated from their homes not just by stellar distance, but by the ever-widening dilation of time that comes with relativistic travel and alienates them from the people and places they once knew.

Battlegroup is a game about war, but this does not mean a GM should force their players to encounter scenarios or content that could be triggering or harmful. If any canon assumptions might cause you or your players to feel unsafe or distressed, they can be discarded. Likewise, you may wish to use tools like the X-Card (http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg), the Script Change Toolbox, (https://briebeau.com/thoughty/script-change/), and the RPG Safety Toolkit (http://bit.ly/ttrpgsafetytoolkit) to help facilitate this in play.

NARRATIVE PLAY AND UPTIME CHECKS

Narrative play is distinct from naval combat and much less structured. In narrative play, rolls tend to accomplish more, scenes cover various stretches of time, and the outcome of individual rolls is more important. Unlike naval combat, narrative play doesn't have turns, and NPCs don't get to act on their own initiative; instead, their actions are decided by the outcome of player rolls.

Something to note is that narrative play in *Battlegroup* is even more freeform and abstract than it is in *Lancer*. This game focuses primarily on engagements between fleets, using the outcomes of those battles to shape an overarching narrative. Your game might not even need narrative play; you might decide to play *Battlegroup* as a purely tactical combat game, on its own or as a module for *Lancer*. Should your games call for narrative play, however, these rules should provide you with everything you need.

In narrative play, uptime checks are used to determine the outcome of complicated situations and actions. They are only required in tense narrative situations and when making a roll will move the story forward. It can be assumed that your commander will generally always succeed in mundane tasks, especially if they relate to their background. You don't need to make an uptime check to open a door, cook a meal, or talk to a superior officer – unless there's something complicating your attempt, or the outcome might further a situation in an interesting way, build on a relationship, or answer a question.

Uptime checks can cover activities as broad or specific as the narrative requires. For example, an uptime check might cover a week's worth of noncombat operations to leash and harvest fresh ice for water from a nearby comet. You might also roll for individual moments of action – plotting a new jump at a terminal, negotiating with a specific supply officer while docked at a station, or similar.

MAKING UPTIME CHECKS
Let's break down the process of making an uptime check:

First, you'll name your goal and describe your approach to achieving it. This helps set the context for the GM to decide what the likely outcomes and consequences of this check will be.

The GM then decides the consequences of failure (e.g., losing time, being arrested, getting shot, etc). If there are no consequences, which occurs when there are no real stakes to what it is you're attempting, then you automatically succeed.

You may then determine which traits you want to apply to the roll, if any (adding Accuracy or Difficulty).

Roll 1d20 and add any relevant modifiers:

- On a 9 or less, you fail to accomplish your goal and suffer the established consequences.
- On a 10+, you accomplish your goal.

A check is only a single roll, and once made the result stands, whether you succeeded at your goal or failed. For example, a check made to sneak into an officer's quarters won't consist of multiple checks to see whether you can do so undetected, the goal and its outcome are all handled by a single check.

CONSEQUENCES
Before a roll is made, the GM must outline the consequences of failure. These are the only consequences they can inflict. The severity of the consequences depends on the situation: the higher the implied difficulty, the more complex or dangerous the scenario and the more costly failure is likely to be.

When you roll 9 or less on an uptime check, you suffer the established consequences. Since NPCs don't act on their own in narrative play, these complications and consequences are the main tools the GM has for responding to player action.

For example: if you're attempting to maintain good fleetwide cohesion and temporal sync through a series of complicated navigational maneuvers with fleet legion support, it's unlikely that failure will immediately cause the loss of ships. But if you're maneuvering through a series of complex course changes while being pursued by an enemy or with damaged systems, the possibility of dramatic, costly failure is much higher.

Here are some examples of consequences or complications that might apply to a roll:

HARM: Damage, injury, or bodily harm. If you fail to take control of the gun someone has pointed at you, you're probably going to get hurt.

GETTING HURT
Battlegroup characters don't have HP, the trait used in Lancer to represent the health and hardiness of characters. Because of this, the severity of potential harm is a narrative, contextual matter that should be established before a roll is made; failure shouldn't result in instant death unless the circumstances clearly call for such a possibility.

Time: The action takes longer than usual. In a calm environment, you can hack any console – and this one is no exception – but under fire and half-dressed, it's going to take a lot longer.

Resources: Something must be used up, lost, or temporarily exhausted. This could be something concrete like running out of ammunition, losing a map, or your gun jamming, or it might be a social resource – reputation, political power, favor, and so on – that you need to spend in the process of completing your objective.

Collateral: Someone or something other than yourself or your intended target takes harm or injury, or is put in danger. This could be an innocent bystander, an ally, your ship's crew, or an organization you belong to.

Position: Your actions put you in a worse position: right in the line of fire, clinging to the edge of a cliff, in the bad graces of the baron, or under a spotlight.

Effect: Your action is less effective than intended. If you're trying to kill someone, you merely injure them. If you're trying to sneak away undetected, you make a lot more noise than you hoped. If you're fixing a damaged reactor, it only stabilizes temporarily.

ADVANCED NARRATIVE PLAY RULES

The narrative play rules in *Battlegroup* are adapted from those found in *Lancer*, stripped down and streamlined for ease of use. If your group wants an even deeper narrative play experience, you can include additional rules like teamwork; Difficult, Risky, and Heroic rolls, and pushing it, which are discussed below.

Some of *Lancer*'s other, more detailed rules aren't included here, although they could potentially be adapted for use in *Battlegroup*. These include triggers, skill challenges, and downtime actions.

While the rules for both games share many similarities, it is important to note that there are some important differences as well. Because commanders in *Battlegroup* don't have license levels, for instance, they don't gain scaling bonuses to their rolls over time. This means that the odds of success and failure remain more constant, so a Risky roll may might be just as difficult for a character who's been through numerous sessions of play as it is for one just embarking on their first mission. The absence of license levels also means that if you wanted to adapt something like triggers, you would need to decide on a different method of awarding new triggers.

TEAMWORK

If someone want to help another character carry out an action, there is still only one roll made. The character making the uptime check gains +1 Accuracy (no matter how many people are helping), but everyone helping suffers any complications or consequences of failure.

DIFFICULT, RISKY, AND HEROIC ROLLS

Before you roll an uptime check, the GM can decide that the action you're attempting is **Difficult** or **Risky** (or both). A Difficult roll is harder than usual, adding +1 Difficulty. A Risky roll is one that has clear and obvious complications, even on a success. When rolling a Risky uptime check, the character always suffers the consequences (or a lesser version of them) on any result under 20. A Risky skill check still succeeds as usual on 10+, but the character suffers consequences anyway. For example, if a commander is trying to sneak past a group of alert, heavily armed marines, the GM might decide the roll is Risky. Even if the commander manages to sneak past them, the marines may grow suspicious and call for additional patrols, complicating the commander's exit strategy or placing them under a strict time limit to act before they're discovered.

If an action is so hard that success seems outlandish, the GM can make it **Heroic**. A Heroic roll is only successful on a result of 20+, and the character making the attempt also suffers consequences if the result is less than 20. If the GM wants to push things even further, a Heroic roll can also be Difficult. Commanders that accomplish such tasks are the stuff of legend.

The GM may always declare that an uptime check can't be made under the current circumstances. After all, no matter how accomplished your commander is or what traits they have, they probably can't punch through a starship hull with their bare hands.

TRYING AGAIN AND PUSHING IT

An unsuccessful uptime check doesn't necessarily equate to outright failure, but it does mean that you have failed to accomplish your goal. If you do fail a check, you cannot attempt the same activity again until the narrative circumstances have changed (e.g., time has passed; you have new gear, a different approach, or additional help; etc.) or you push it.

As long as an uptime check isn't Risky, you can push it to make a second attempt to achieve the goal of a failed check in the same circumstances; however, if you do this, the skill check immediately becomes Risky. If the situation is already Risky, you can't push it further unless the GM allows it, in which case the skill check becomes Heroic. A Heroic check can never be pushed further.

THE SETTING

Lancer: Battlegroup is set some 15,000 years in the future from the present day. In that time, humanity has fallen and risen, seen the rule of multiple different states and regimes, and has spread itself across much of the Orion Arm of the Milky Way. This is a utopia in the making: the capital worlds of the galaxy are post-scarcity and post-capital, but the peripheries do not yet enjoy the same privilege. Union, the galactic administration, is working to change that, though many stand in their way. The world of *Battlegroup* is one where technology has advanced far beyond that of our modern day, but unevenly. This section summarizes the most important conceits of the setting to help orient players. More detail can be found in *Lancer*.

THE CURRENT DAY

The year is 5021u. This is the point in history when your characters enter the spotlight. The command decisions they make will determine not only whether the crews they lead into battle live or die, but will shape the course of history through their victories and defeats.

TRAVEL AND TIME

Starships are – with rare exceptions – outfitted with a drive system called a nearlight drive, which allows them to rapidly accelerate close to the speed of light, but not beyond. Starships cannot break the superluminal barrier (i.e., they can't go "faster than light", or FTL) on their own, though FTL travel does exist. The only widely known method of FTL travel involves moving through blinkspace, a parallel space that is poorly understood, but manipulated and traversed by humanity all the same. Blinkspace travel is facilitated by a far-reaching network of interconnected blink gates, which allow ships to journey from gate to gate all but instantaneously. The interstellar administration known as Union controls the blink gate network. This control is a key pillar of Union's socioeconomic and military power, and one of the guarantors of its galactic hegemony. Because of this, Union works to expand the network through the creation and installation of new blink gates, reuniting the forgotten worlds of the populated galaxy once more.

When they aren't using the blink, ships must travel between the stars using their subluminal nearlight drives. This is conventional travel, of a sort. Even close to the speed of light, humans traveling through space are subjected to relativistic time dilation, which results in a divergence between their subjective time (time as they personally experience it) and realtime (time as it passes on Earth and is recorded by Union). Most nearlight interstellar ships travel around .995 c, which translates to time ratio of around 1:10 – that is to say, for every

subjective year spent in transit at .995 c, roughly ten years pass in realtime (or for every day in transit, ten pass back home; for every hour, ten; and so on). Time dilation may not be a part of your game, but it is a key assumption in *Lancer*'s setting. Anyone who enlists, follows tradition, or volunteers for naval or logistical service knows this cost before they sign, and does so anyway.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

This bifurcation of time has led to the rise of three major galactic cultures: the Cosmopolitans, the Metropolitans, and the Diasporans. Cosmopolitans are people who have spent most of their lives in interstellar space, whether in transit for a purpose or because of nomadic cultural preferences and organization. Cosmopolitans usually operate in tight-knit family groups or other small communal organizations, working and living in single ships or cohesive groups of many. Though they may be divorced from the "normal" flow of time that the rest of humanity operates in, they are together with each other in their own time. Metropolitans are those who live rooted in the Galactic Core. Though they may enjoy an interstellar cruise once in a while or be deployed on an interstellar naval campaign, their lives are tied to their homeworlds. Being Core worlds, these places are post-scarcity and post-capital, integrated into Union and actively participating in galactic politics under its umbrella (though likely with their own global governments and internal politicking). Diasporans – still the majority of humanity – live outside of the Galactic Core, populating worlds settled under the First and Second Committees of Union then abandoned to history. Union itself, now organized under its Third Committee, works to peacefully recontact and reintegrate the Diaspora once more.

COMMUNICATIONS

As ships can utilize the blink to travel faster than light, so too can information be transmitted through blinkspace across the omninet. The omninet allows for stable lag-free communication ignorant of distance. Although omninet access remains tied to necessary broadcast infrastructure, it forms the backbone of Union's efforts to affect cultural, economic, and military cohesion across the vastness of space. Ships traveling at nearlight speeds periodically need to slow to more normal velocities to allow data transfers to sync with realtime, but the omninet also grants them the ability to communicate near-instantly with other vessels and worlds. Other conventional methods of communication exist – radio, light-based technologies, and so on, but unlike the omninet they are subject to the normal constraints of physics as science understands them.

GRAVITY

Stable, constant artificial gravity remains elusive. Gravitic technologies exist, but they are only capable of manipulating or producing artificial gravity for short durations. As a result, spaceships and stations must rely on other methods to provide gravity for their inhabitants. Most spaceships utilize thrust gravity, using steady acceleration to provide stable and consistent artificial gravity, while stations often use spin gravity to achieve the same effect. When ships can't maintain steady acceleration, their crews either use magnetic boots or simply maneuver in zero-gravity, strategies that most ships are designed to accommodate. Despite these limitations, ships equipped with powerful nearlight drives capable of quickly accelerating to a significant fraction of lightspeed do employ one vital gravitic technology: kinetic compensators. K-comps, as these systems are often called, generate bursts of artificial contragravity to offset the tremendous acceleration forces applied to a ship's crew by nearlight bolts, or the much more sudden and dangerous nearlight ejections used to escape dangerous situations, performed by these drives. Without k-comps, such maneuvers would be lethal to all those aboard.

WAR AND CONFLICT

Regrettably, war remains part of human history and events, from small-scale terrestrial conflicts within the confines of a single planet to massive battles between naval powers ranging across the stars. The state of naval warfare is such that the development of newer and more deadly weapons has swiftly outpaced improvements in defensive technologies. Contemporary naval doctrines exist with this differential in mind. Ballistic weapons using chemical and electromagnetic propellant systems, directed-energy weapons, guided missiles, torpedoes, and drones are all in regular use, along with exotic paracausal technologies that defy conventional science. Many larger ships mount long-cycle (also called long-spool) weapons, tremendously powerful main cannons that necessitate significant charging times but cause unimaginable devastation when fired. These cannons can overwhelm even the most effective active defenses, from projected energy shields through to electromagnetic screens and stasis barriers. Carriers also play an important role, launching wings of fighters, bombers, and mounted chassis – mechs outfitted with external drives and hardpoints for use in naval combat – to make precision strikes against enemy vessels while boarding troops are sent to attack enemy ships from within.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND NON-HUMAN PERSONS

Limited artificial intelligence exists in the form of companion/concierge systems, or comp/cons, mass-produced artificial intelligences. But as advanced as comp/cons may be, they are not truly sentient. The same cannot be said of non-human persons, or NHPs, advanced AI-equivalent, noncorporeal entities that provide the foundation upon which the infrastructure of human power has been built. From civil infrastructure management to warfare, NHPs operate at all levels of human organization. They are especially important on naval vessels, where they carry out a variety of tasks from gunnery to navigation. Each capital ship in a battlegroup, as well as the larger subline vessels, has its own individual NHP with a personality as unique and variable as any other person and similarly capable of independent, novel thought. Existing at the cutting edge of paracausal science, the blinkspace-derived nature of NHPs grant many of them even more incredible capabilities still.

Every ship with an NHP has an NHP core, a module containing the NHP's digital containment system (known as a casket) which allows them to interface with human technological systems, alongside other hardcopy data banks. NHP cores are generally inaccessible by design, with various access-limiting features built in. On Union ships, they can be reached via a monitored access shaft large enough to admit a single person crawling up a ladder, but too small for anyone to extract the NHP's casket; on Harrison Armory ships, multiple hardcopy keys must be turned simultaneously in the CIC to open the module's doors; on Baronic ships, one must turn sideways and shuffle through a narrow passageway; and so on.

Difficult as most NHP cores are to access, there are options in an emergency. For example, when the order is given to abandon ship, the NHP casket can usually be jettisoned or removed and evacuated along with the rest of the crew. Such measures typically require authorization from the ship's captain or other senior officers.

Although most people in the galaxy see NHPs as no more than next-generation AI systems, their true origins and nature are rather more complicated (see *Lancer*, p. 381 for more information). NHPs must periodically undergo a restoration process known as cycling in order to prevent a gradual process of increasing instability known as cascade.

ROBOTICS AND DRONES

Drones and robots are regularly used for a variety of industrial, logistical, and military tasks, though they do not completely supplant the need for humans to remain in the loop. One of the most notable types of drones to be encountered in a naval context are subalterns, a common sight across many worlds in and around Union space. Unlike other drones, subalterns tend to be humanoform in design, which allows them to interface with vehicles and tools already adapted for human use. As a result, while they may not have the advanced capabilities of more specialized, single-purpose drone models, they are extremely flexible platforms. Subalterns can be directed by either basic comp/con systems or NHPs, the latter of which sometimes use subalterns as physical avatars for moving around realspace and interacting with people directly. Subaltern designs vary tremendously in terms of aesthetic and functional considerations. They range from near-human models with synthetic skin, musculature, and faces that lift them just out of the uncanny valley through to military models stripped of nonessential cosmetics in favor of robust superstructures, armor plating, hardened electronics, and aggressive postures.

Aboard many naval vessels, subalterns are regularly employed to supplement crew numbers in a multi-function capacity, assigned to handle a variety of dangerous but critical tasks such as damage control, emergency medical response, and hazardous engineering duties. They require no oxygen, can withstand physical trauma that would otherwise kill or incapacitate a human, and can safely operate in areas of a ship which have been exposed to hard vacuum or lethal radiation levels. Another area in which subalterns see frequent use is boarding actions. Boarding actions are some of the most statistically deadly engagements personnel can undertake, with casualties of at least 30% expected even by the winning side. Combat subalterns are often used to spearhead such actions in order to help minimize these casualties, utilizing their strengths in the tight, airless corridors of ships and stations both offensively and defensively.

Despite these many benefits, subalterns remain vulnerable to electronic warfare and have difficulty responding to novel situations when not under direct human/NHP control, leaving them firmly in a supplementary rather than primary shipboard role.

FLEET LEGIONS AND LEGIONSPACE

While most ships in a fleet have their own NHPs, during the lead-up to engagements these NHPs network together with each other to form a gestalt entity known as a fleet legion, granting them incredible power for the duration. The networking of NHP minds is not permanent; fleet legions typically only exist before, during, and in the immediate aftermath of battles. If a fleet they serve is deployed on a long campaign, then it will tend to be the same legion gestalt appearing each time a fleet calls upon them to assist in the battle.

Fleet legions allow for near-instant communication and coordination between their component minds and the comp/cons and organics aboard a fleet's many ships. These collective minds also have the ability to do battle against opposing legions within legionspace. From a human perspective, legionspace is an ontological cosubjective environment in which multiple individuals, humans and NHPs alike, can confer among themselves in realtime within a virtual space. Tactical discussions between individual ship captains and NHPs often take place in a legionspace environment prior to combat to allow the quick and efficient visualization and distribution of information, and the shape these environments take can vary wildly from the conventional to the fantastic.

During combat, however, legionspace becomes a battleground unto itself, a realm where opposing fleet legions clash with terrifying, esoteric thought-weapons and anticausal powers beyond comprehension. The battle between fleet legions occurs on a level that the human crew have little direct interaction with, though some naval weapons and systems are designed to augment a fleet legion's capabilities. At all stages of a naval engagement the battle between fleet legions goes unseen, but its consequences are felt in every jammed signal, every counterfactual evasive pattern, and every perfectly timed shot.
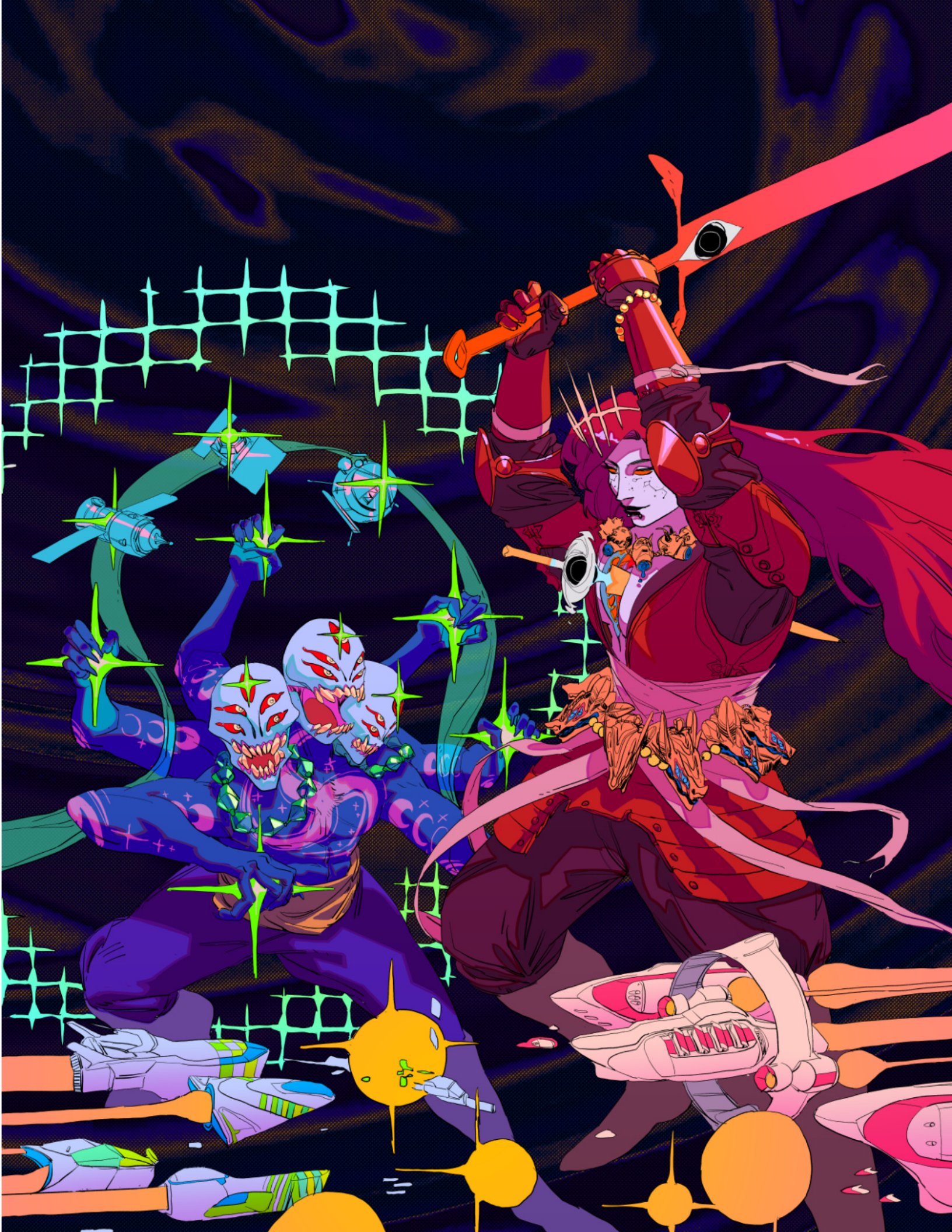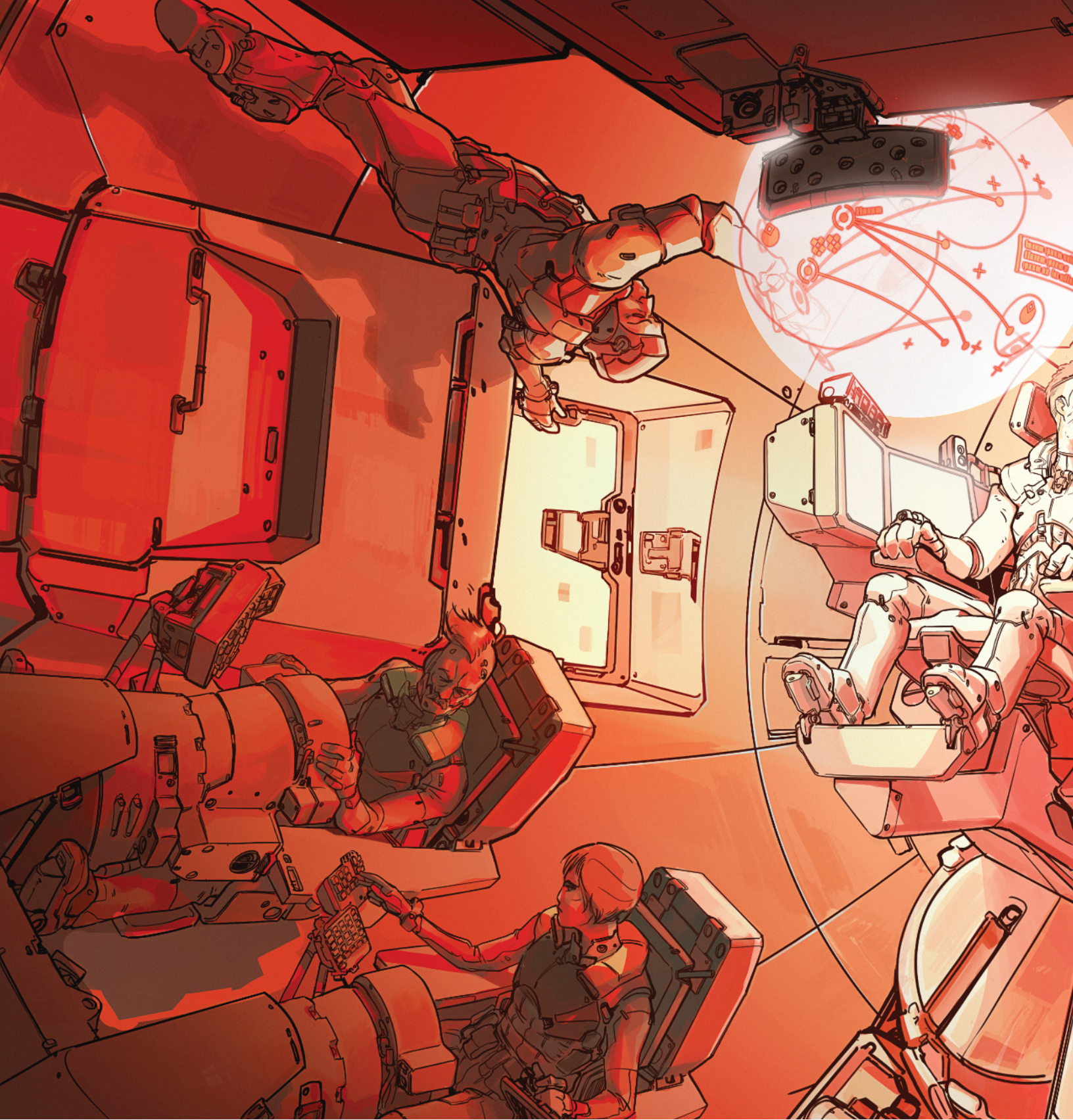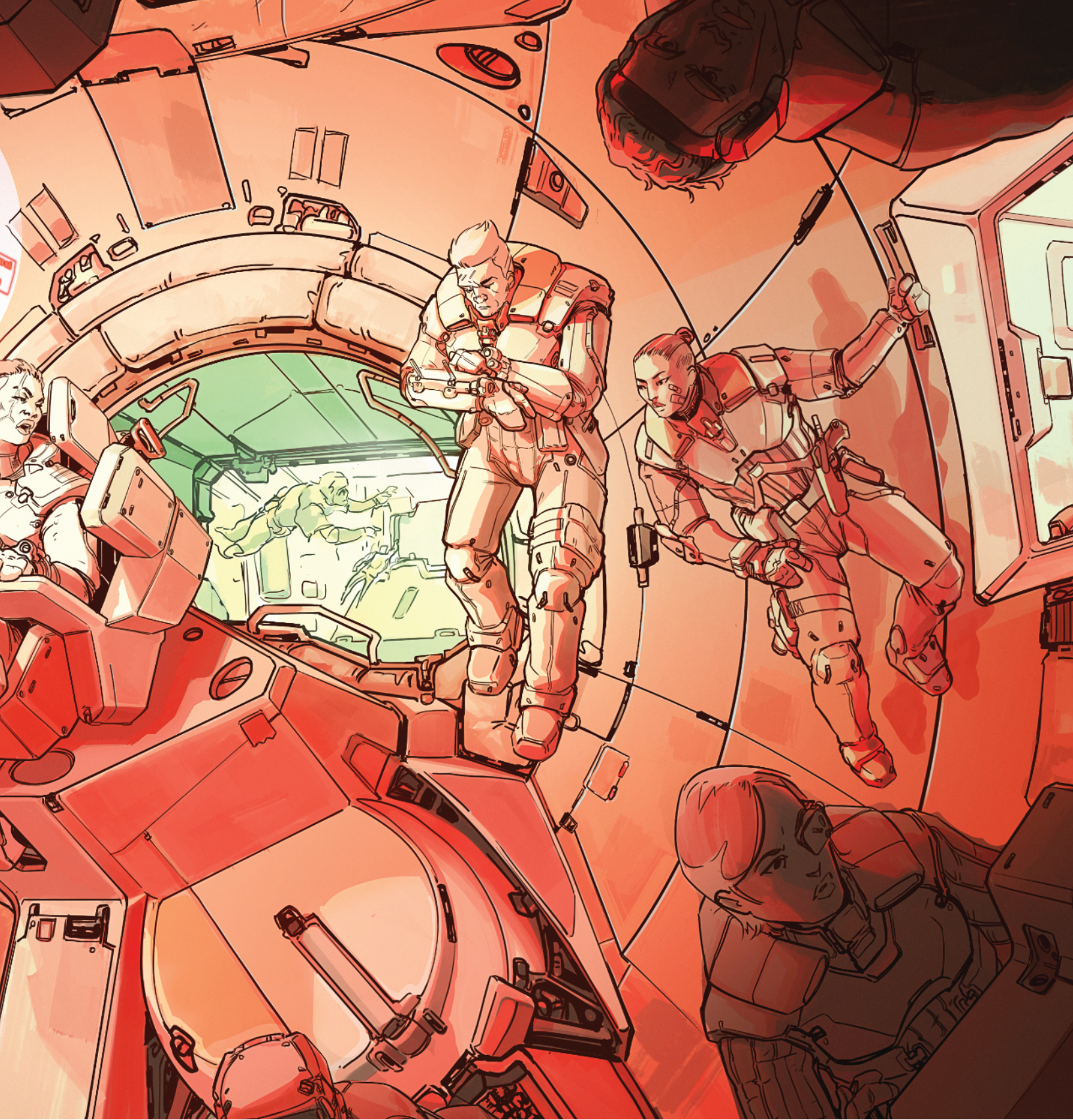
Battling in the void of space requires coordination and discipline. Ships often fire at targets a great distance away, visible only by the waste heat, radiation, outbound fire, and comms signatures they throw off – rarely do capital ships find themselves within organic visual range of one another. Hard cover and concealment are just as hard to find; naval combat is, generally, won by those who land the first hit.

These conditions require intense discipline. Aboard a capital ship, your foes are only glowing indicators on a terminal screen and the blow that strikes you down may only be telegraphed by a handful of seconds – if at all. Fighters and subline vessels, tangling with each other in the killbox between mighty ships of the line, might flash within visual range of the enemy, but this merely requires discipline of a different sort: that of seeing the enemy and killing them quickly, before they have a chance to retaliate in kind.

The realities of boarding actions, bombing runs, battery fire – even legionspace engagements – often instill in the people who engage in this warfare a rigidity unfamiliar to ground soldiers. A sailor (or "spacer", "cosmonaut", "astronaut", "suit", "crew", and so on) has an immediate relationship to death that ground-pounders do not. The very environment they operate in, if they were ever to be exposed to it, would kill them; likewise, the vessels that they crew – even in the course of normal maneuvering! – can easily turn them into paste if they aren't careful. Even the otherwise "normal" procedures required for interstellar travel – stasis-holds for long burns between worlds and gates – might be ventures from which they won't return. Death is close for the sailor and officer: discipline, regular order, triple-checking systems, and routine are what get them through each deployment.

Crashing against this regular-order impulse are the new weapons of naval warfare and the engagements in which they are employed. After the Deimos Event introduced NHPs (non-human persons; uncanny beings that fill the role once occupied by machine-mind AIs) to the galaxy and the First Interest War rewrote the facts – if not yet the rules – of naval combat, states and empires have not fully caught up to the changing nature of combat. This is precisely where *Battlegroup* sits: in the conflict between old strategies and new technologies; the struggle between established doctrine and tactical adaptability; and the clash between the experience of line officers, pilots, and crew against the demands of rear-echelon brass.

As players, you will need to sit in this tension. From your vessel's combat information center (CIC), you command not only your own ship, but the other ships in your section – distributing orders to one or more capital ships in order to win the day, rather than the moment. You might not be the one pulling the trigger, but the effect is the same.

By the nature of the game's setting and conceits, characters in *Battlegroup* are likely to have less freedom in their mission portfolios than characters in *Lancer*. The discipline to which these sailors, pilots, and officers are subject is much more present, the field of battle much more conventional, and their commanding officers more used to – and reliant on – established doctrine. Your characters should interact with these realities, pushing against them or accepting them, rejecting or relishing this paradigm. Most all characters will wrestle with dual truths: that their strategies and defenses do not match the weapons they wield and face, but in order to win and survive they must face and defeat the enemy.

WAR AMONG THE STARS

If you're coming to *Battlegroup* already a fan of *Lancer*, you should know that the two games are intended (mechanically and in terms of scope) to be very different windows into *Lancer*'s setting. Unlike *Lancer*, in which characters can range from members of a formal military to mercenaries or other independent actors, the characters you make in *Battlegroup* are likely members of an established fighting force in regular order and supply. The structure that they are a part of – be it private or state – is assumed to be at least stable enough to manage and support a fleet of ships, to direct them across the Orion Arm, and to keep the cosmonauts and officers aboard healthy, motivated, and competent.

Within this context – and despite the constraints on their actions that come from active military service – your character is assumed to be an actor with some agency. Your character is likely a commissioned officer or person of equivalent rank, someone who volunteered or chose this profession and who will begin their on-screen life motivated (despite their own fears or misgivings) to participate in the battles depicted here. They know that their work is dangerous but see it as necessary. Whether they throw this perspective aside or cling to it as their career progresses will only be discovered through play.

Characters in *Battlegroup* are under threat in a way that characters in *Lancer* are not: pilots in their mechs are fearsome, singular warriors, with many tools and strategies to ensure they can survive extended, costly fights. By contrast, even the most decorated officer aboard a battleship can be killed in a single shot and a sudden death is never far away. While your group may decide to adopt a less lethal narrative approach – perhaps by allowing important characters to make it to escape pods in time – the Kill Table on page 53 illustrates just how dangerous naval combat is. Be aware of this if you intend to import your *Lancer* characters into *Battlegroup* and be sure that the other players are okay with this danger.

In addition to the knowledge of their sudden and evident mortality, your character must also deal with time. Except for instantaneous transit through blinkspace, space travel occurs at varying degrees of relativity, across shifting horizons, with multiple observers and local experiences of time. This results in an unfortunate but unavoidable consequence of interstellar travel: time dilation. From the perspective of those left behind, someone traveling through space at a rate approaching lightspeed begins to slip forward in time.

This means that someone traveling through space – whether awake and on duty or held in stasis – will drop further and further out of sync with the "normal" progression of time on their homeworld. Should they ever return, they will have only experienced a fraction of the time lived by everyone else back home. For some on shorter deployments or those having to travel shorter distances, the effect could be negligible – a trip to the edge of local space might mean only a matter of minutes or hours – while a journey to distant stars might result in a difference of decades.

These are the realities facing characters in *Battlegroup*: In combat, they face sudden death aboard their ships. In peacetime and transit, they face something amounting to a social or temporal death, as the friends and family they leave behind may die of old age by the time they return. These immutable facts haunt travelers through the stars, either as tragedy, as a harsh truths, or as blessed relief.

CREATING A COMMANDER

There are two steps in creating your commander: assigning **traits** and choosing a **background**. The following section explains the process. It discusses traits, provides examples of the backgrounds you might use to define your character, and points toward further questions you might want to consider when roleplaying these far-flung cosmonauts.

TRAITS

Unlike in many RPGs, creating a commander in *Battlegroup* doesn't involve assigning stats or skills. Their personal strength or perceptiveness is of limited importance given the scope and scale of the action taking place. Commanders are defined more by traits stemming from their background, personality, characteristics, flaws, and foibles. When you create a commander, choose three traits that define them – two positive traits and one negative trait that complicates, disadvantages, or influences them in some way.

What sorts of traits might you choose to create your commander? Maybe they're a brilliant tactician with a keen eye, but who is arrogant to a fault. Or perhaps they're steadfast and courageous in their drive to protect humanity, but reckless in their actions, often endangering their battlegroup as a result. Traits can be physical or mental qualities, particular aptitudes, something they're especially known for, and other similar aspects of that nature. Whoever your character is, make sure they have something that defines them. It doesn't have to be something big or grand, just something that humanizes them. Heroes are more compelling if they're human.

Example positive traits: bold, brilliant, calculating, courageous, daring, disciplined, empathetic, forceful, honorable, idealistic, inspiring, iron will, keen eye, levelheaded, scholarly, steadfast, thick-skinned, unorthodox, unrelenting, well-traveled.

Example negative traits: aloof, arrogant, blunt-spoken, callous, disciplinary record, demanding, frail, guilty conscience, hidebound, impatient, infamous, obsessive, overzealous, prideful, reckless, ruthless, self-centered, stubborn, quick-tempered, uncoordinated.

As a central character in the story, your commander will have moments when their history, training, and personality shine through. These moments are called uptime checks. You'll make uptime checks during narrative play and when you're attempting specific uptime actions. When one or more of your character's positive traits are relevant to an uptime check, you get **+1 Accuracy** for each relevant trait you call upon. Once a positive trait has been called

on in this fashion, mark it off. Traits that have been marked off remain part of your commander, but can't be used again until they're regained.

You regain the use of all marked-off traits when one of your commander's negative traits comes into play. There are two ways this can happen:

- you make an uptime check that is influenced solely by your negative trait, receiving **+1 DIFFICULTY** for the roll; or
- the GM brings your negative trait into play in a way that complicates matters for your character.

If the GM introduces a complication, work together to discuss and flesh out what form it might take. It should always be something that drives the story forward even as it makes things more difficult for you. Additionally, if the GM determines that sufficient time has passed, they can declare that everyone regains their positive traits.

Traits are almost always used in narrative play and uptime. Unless otherwise specified, they never apply in combat. Traits are usually fairly open-ended, allowing you to apply them in creative ways. That said, the GM is responsible for arbitrating outlandish claims: be prepared to justify how your commander's aggressive personality helps them gather vital intelligence, for example.

Through the course of a character's story, events may occur that leave a lasting impression on them and change who they are as a person. During the narrative play between engagements, you may choose one of your character's traits and change it to another. This can't be used to change one type of trait (positive or negative) to another, and changing a trait that was marked off doesn't regain the use of it.

BACKGROUNDS

Below are example backgrounds you can take for your character. Backgrounds are short summaries of who your character used to be and how they've come to be where they are now. Backgrounds have no mechanical effect, and are solely for contextualizing your commander's backstory. These backgrounds aren't the only possibilities in a universe as vast and diverse as that of *Battlegroup*, and you can always create your own should you wish. By default, characters have one background of their choice.

As a group, you may decide to choose an additional shared or similar background to represent a particular common history in addition to choosing a personal history for each of your commanders. For example, all of your characters might be promising graduates of a particular naval academy.

NAVAL FAMILY

Born into tradition, you are the child of a family with a long history of naval service. Your parents may both have been or are currently in the same (or different!) naval force as yourself, as were their parents, and their parents, and so on down the line. From when you were a child, you knew you would one day pin the silver bars of an officer on your collar, and step to the stars...

This background can be taken along with any other background.

UNION NAVY

The workhorse departments of Union's armed forces and logistics projection, the Union Naval Corps manages the single largest school and training program for sailors and officers in the galaxy. From its core campuses in Cradle to its most distant satellite facilities in the Dawnline Shore, the Union Naval Corps can turn even the most downwell ground-pounder into a competent cosmonaut. You are one shining example of this institution. A volunteer from a Core world or Diasporan world known to Union, you joined the navy and have trained for years, reorienting from a woefully two-dimensional perspective to the z-ax view that separates naval personnel from the soldiers they transport. Your world may be where you were born, but the stars are your home; under Union's banner, you head out to make the galaxy safe and whole.

Graduates of the Union Naval Corps (UNC) include regulars and auxiliaries, all of whom are well aware and generally in favor of Union's mission. UNC graduates typically go on to serve for five years (subjective time) before being given the option to either rotate into a reserve unit local to their homeworld or extend their service in their branch. All naval personnel, whether auxiliary or regular, undertake a basic course of training at the most proximal UNC campus to them. Most train for a year or two depending on their specialization and need.

The UNC is a massive organization that draws its personnel from nearly every world known to Union, Core and Diasporan both. Most cosmonauts and officers serve for a period of about ten years – five active and five on reserve – though many decide to join up for life. As a pilot, cosmonaut, or officer in the UNC, you may be a lifer or someone on a limited tour. In your time on the 'lists, you've met people from every type of world, of every culture, and of every background.

1   Your life was comfortable; the opposite of everything you heard about the Diaspora. Out there, billions were doomed to live from birth under the boots of kings or damned to suffer at the altar of the market. Life in the Diaspora left behind by the Second Committee was not meant for living. Instead, it was structured to squeeze wealth from the many and funnel it to a powerful, greedy few. Your whole life you believed that needed to change, and your heart ached for the people of the Diaspora – your brothers and sisters but for time and distance. When you were of age, you talked with your family and told them of your decision. They wept, some sad, all proud, and gave you their blessing. You would join the navy, you would train as an officer and be posted to a ship, and then you would say goodbye to your family and your loves, your home and your world, and head out to the stars. The galaxy needed your action more than your sympathy. *How long has it been (realtime) since you left your Metropolitan world? Have you seen combat, watching your ideals crash into reality? Have you killed, or just ordered others to fire? Do you ever want to return home, and if so, how long until you can? Who did you leave behind?*

2   Your education in the ways of life outside the Core was clarifying. Though you grew up in comfort, you recognized early on that it was a comfort that not everyone in the galaxy enjoyed. After a tour in the Liberators – following in the footsteps of your parents – you transferred to logistics, and from there to orbital/interstellar support. Now on the CIC of your frigate, you have at your command some of the hardest power Union can bring to bear: ownership of the stars, and a mandate to right the most terrible wrongs. *What was the clarifying experience that sent you to enlist in the Liberators? As a ground-pounder, did you ever see combat before your transfer? Has your faith in Union's mission ever been shaken? What do you bring to naval combat that you learned on the ground?*

3   Once an enlisted crew, you rose from the pack to become a commissioned officer in the Union Navy. You've been on multiple interstellar cruises and seen combat once or twice. You know your ship from stem to stern. Now, in command for the first time, you'll have to learn not only your crew, but the other ships under your command. *How has it gone so far? Have you endeared yourself to the other ships as you have your crew? Among the other captains, is there one with whom you are particularly close with? If things get desperate, will you sacrifice other ships to preserve your own?*

4   When Union liberated your world, you resolved to return a debt you felt you owed. For every friend lost before the red banner flew above the capitol, for every child who toiled in misery, for every comrade whose backs could never stand straight, you decided to take the black and enlist. Ending centuries of injustice against your own people was only the start: the galaxy roiled with cruel tyrants who immiserated their people for want of gold. Though it may never end, your struggle is that of the oppressed everywhere. Union's flag flies above your world now, but this is just the beginning. One day, the galaxy will be free. *How long has it been since you left your home, and do you ever receive communications from your family there? Are there any others from your world in your unit? Have you engaged the enemy yet, or are you just out of training? When will you return, or is your fight not a deployment but a crusade?*

5   Your name carries weight in the navy – much to your chagrin. Your ancestors were some of the last holdouts of the Second Committee, naval personnel who defected or mutinied and steered their ships to bolster Harrison Armory's Cradle reclamation force. Interdicted and destroyed by the Karrakin fleets in the First Interest War, they never did strike Cradle, though the role they played was enough to earn your name a black mark. Now, you work to repair that reputation. *How does this desire manifest in your actions? Are you repentant or rash? Do you wear your name on your sleeve or do you suppress your identity? How do others receive you, and has this history gotten in the way of your progress in the navy?*

6   Joining the UNC was only ever meant to be a rung on the political ladder – a way to ingratiate yourself to the system that could make you powerful. Union, you learned, spanned more than just your world, but thousands of worlds. This was a kingdom larger than a single mind could comprehend, but not so large that a single mind couldn't covet it. And so you joined, you trained, you pledged, you served. *But then, over time, you found that your priorities had… changed. How?*

KARRAKIN NAVAL ACADEMY

As a child or young adult, you gained admittance to the famed Karrakin Naval Academy, matriculating to one of the campuses across the core of Baronic space, the Baronic Concern. The Karrakin Academy system was founded in the wake of the Baronies' terrible twin defeats at the hands of Union and Harrison Armory. Since then, the Karrakins have gone on to adopt, hone, and expand upon the strategies that once left them defeated and exposed. They have redefined the modern doctrines of space combat, producing some of the finest officers and crew in the known galaxy – you included. Each world of the Concern has a campus of the Academy with its own traditions, colors, and specific histories; the campus on Karrakis itself is generally considered the flagship school and is often referred to specifically as the Royal Academy. Graduates of the KNA tend to be Baronic, with roughly a sixty-forty split leaning ignoble (included in this ignoble category are students sent to the Academy on diplomatic exchange with the Union Navy).

Now graduated and posted to your command, your words carry weight: regardless of which specific campus you studied at, you're from "The Academy. You are likely younger than the officers you serve with who didn't attend. The simple bronze globe-and-crown pinned to your lapel sets you apart, marking you as a graduate of the Academy system for good or for ill. Graduates may further personalize their pins to indicate which campus they graduated from, whether they graduated with distinction, and – one of the highest honors – if they won the Inter-Academy Wargame, a ceremonial final test that pits the best officers from each campus against each other to determine who is the greatest commander of that year's graduating class.

Alongside your background note, answer the following: How did your school fare in the Wargame? Were you a part of it, or did you watch from the observation decks?

Karrakin Background Notes	Roll 1d6

1   The child of an ignoble family, your admittance to the KNA by lottery was celebrated by the whole village. You were not the first in your village to win the lottery, but you were the first to win in many decades. Overnight, you became the pride and the hope of your village. *You left determined to make them proud – have you done so? Did you ever return to your parents, your siblings and cousins? How high have you climbed since you left your little village – or have you fallen?*

2   **The hard part wasn't getting accepted to the KNA, since its noncom school takes any ignoble that can pass a background check and marks the "enlist" box on the intake form. The hard part wasn't even proving yourself on your quals and being promoted to the far more exclusive and demanding officer course. The hard part was getting off Sanjak with a clean ID. The hard part was passing on every shred of information you could to your handlers without getting caught.** *What are you after, and how deep is your cover willing to go? Now that you've graduated and been posted to a ship, what are you waiting for? What are you seeking in your work to aid Free Sanjak, and how do you balance that mission with your cover story?*

3   Always a hard worker, you were promoted from the enlisted course at your local KNA outpost to the main campus on your homeworld. There, in mixed noble and ignoble company for the first time, you found the experience difficult and exciting. When the walls of social class crack even a little bit, it's like seeing light for the first time after a life of darkness. *Who are the friends you've made at the KNA, regardless of class or nationality? Have you encountered them while deployed? Despite your rank in the navy, outside of it (and when dealing with house companies) you are still seen as ignoble – how does this sit with you? How have you been changed by the integrated force structure of the navy?*

4   The heir to a baron, you shocked the family by eloping with an endowment to join the navy and be schooled in the KNA. *Your family may have disowned you, publicly shamed you in an attempt to get you to drop out and come home, cut off your allowance, or sent assassins and hired mercenaries to come and forcibly take you back – have they? How have you resisted the pull to head home, and why? What is it that draws you to the naval life?*

5   A noble child far from your house's throne, your dream to attend the KNA was never in doubt; the only question was how high you would climb. Maybe you could have made it into the Academy based on your own merits, but you'll never know: your parents' healthy donation to the local campus will always be a chip on your shoulder. *How do you carry that chip now that you're deployed? Does it make you hesitant when you should be decisive, or is it not a big deal at all – just the way that it works in the Concern? How does being a noble in an integrated fighting force sit with you?*

6   The flight to Karrakis was uneventful – most of it was spent in stasis anyways – and only added a year and change to your temporal slip by the time it was done. A Metropolitan from a capital world of Union's Galactic Core, your time on Karrakis confirmed some things you feared and surprised you in many other ways. *How was it to train alongside both Baronic scions and Karrakin ignobles? Did you make friends, or were you a loner? Do you choose to wear the Bronze, or have you hidden it (placed it in storage, or thrown it away)?*

ORBITAL DEFENSE FORCE

Your world asked, and you answered: for years you have served in the orbital defense force of your state, arcing high above the land you call home in small shuttles and modest subline ships, spending years aboard orbital cannons and missile batteries. You have always known that the purpose of your work is to defend the world below from threats above. Now, posted to an interstellar ship, you keep that feeling close – that place might be farther away, but it is always there, just below your heart, your home to defend.

Veterans of orbital defense forces (ODF) run the gamut in training, experience, and competency; they can be graduates of a premier naval college or locally trained cosmonauts.

Your character fought (or currently fights) in their homeworld's (or home station's) orbital defense force. They are likely well versed in the operation of ships, as even officers in ODF units are called to square away their vessels before, during, and after flights.

ODF Backgrounds	Roll 1d6

1 During battle against orbital pirates (or during a training mishap) your ODF vessel was split open above your world. Many of your comrades died either instantly or in the moments that followed as you were scattered out across the high-orbit sky. *You were rescued; what did you see of your world as you flew? Why did you reenlist? Who did you lose during that engagement, and who saved you?*

2 Your world's ODF is quite active, though not against conventional targets: for the past decade, the planet has been repeatedly bombarded by the potentially catastrophic remnants of a one-in-a-million-years comet that passed far too close. Now, on-world scientists have confirmed that your homeworld will likely be under threat of collision for a century at least. The ODF, once a sleepy post for high-flyers, has been forced to shape up into ready and agile pilots and gunners: their task – yours, once – is to shoot down or deflect any projectiles large enough to threaten your home with death. *How long were you posted to "sky shield" duty? Did you ever slip up and let a rock through? What took you from ODF Sky Shield to where you are now?*

3 Your world received its first orbital defense vessels, training, and initial officer corps through its interactions with Union. *You were one of the first of your world to crew these ships, possibly among the first people to have left your world and seen it from above; how did you get from your ODF to where you are now?*

4 You loved to fly. You grew up working the pads at your world's uplift station, doing every job that needed doing. You hauled luggage from arriving travelers, loaded fuel cores onto outbound shuttles, sprayed down antifreeze on dimpled booster tanks, even flew as a porter on orbital cruises. *Joining the ODF when you were of age was a no-brainer; how high did you want to fly? Did you join to leave your world, or serve it? What of the family you left behind?*

5 You remember the fear, and how heavy the dread sat in your belly as you burned for the firing line. You were a gunner aboard one of your world's few ODF capital ships – an old vessel but serviced well and plenty spaceworthy – that saw action during the last years of the last war that gripped your world. You fired your ship's main gun, scoring a killing blow on the enemy's flagship, effectively ending the war to resist unification. *How do people receive you back home? Are you a celebrated hero? Anonymous? Or was your action unnecessary? Why did you choose to take to the stars once more?*

6 Your world developed its own ODF, stringing up its own geosynchronous orbital platforms and developing its own training system. *Did it help when the invaders came?*

PURVIEW INTERSTELLAR COLLEGE

Fresh faces from an equally fresh institution, the first cadet corps out of the Purview Interstellar College have much to prove – you included. Despite a history of iconoclastic, daring naval exploits, the naval forces of Harrison Armory never had a formal educational pipeline for naval officers: previously, enlisted crew and officers trained together, with commissions granted through purchase or promotion. Now, the Purview Interstellar College has been established to formally inaugurate the foundations of an Armory combat doctrine, to set Armory's officer corps apart from what high command sees to be rival schools in Union and the Baronies.

In line with many of the Armory's other state-managed institutions, campuses of the Purview Interstellar College (PIC) are startlingly cosmopolitan – for the Armory – with healthy representation from both Purview citizens and students from the colonies. Like legion service, the Interstellar College is a popular choice for young people from the colonies: graduation and service grants citizenship in the Armory. As the Armory's frontier is contested and space is far more unforgiving than atmospheric environments, the bar for admittance to the PIC is high; one cannot simply purchase their spot – they mustfirst prove a certain level of aptitude.

The Armory's formalized fleet doctrines are new compared to those of Union and the Baronies, and the frontier is active: unlike some legion posts, commissions in the Armory's naval branch are all but guaranteed to see action. To prepare for this, cadets undergo a mix of campus-based learning on Ras Shamra and at least one rotation to the front prior to graduation.

THE HONEST TRUTH

Whatever your past life, you were born again in space, graduating from IPS-N's officer training school, the *Honest Truth*.

The *Honest Truth* is a massive, multitoroid station that orbits Argo Navis once every three Cradle-standard years. A cohort of IPS-N's officers are said to be "born" after one revolution – the time it takes for most candidates to complete their training. The Honest Truth began, like most IPS-N facilities, as a merchant-cosmonaut training school meant to better acquaint and equip the corpro's pilots with the necessary skills for navigating the stars and moving three-dimensionally through space. With the advent of space piracy and IPS-N's subsequent upscaling and consolidation of the interstellar freight and transportation sectors, the Honest Truth was expanded into one of the largest orbital stations in the galaxy in order to train and equip sufficient personnel.

Now, with a permanent population in the millions and students hailing from around the galaxy, the Honest Truth is a buzzing hive of activity. Civilian students, naval cadets, and security trainees learn side by side the rigors of null-atmosphere maintenance, zero-gee movement, high-gee movement, and z-ax combat – every piece of knowledge necessary to crew, pilot, and command ships in space.

With everything from lectures on Cosmopolitan culture and atemporal existence through to courses in naval history, a sling-grav racing league, and ensign postings with Northstar's GALCOMM Corps, the Honest Truth produces some of the finest all-round cosmonauts in the galaxy, whether civilian or military. Graduates from the Honest Truth tend to be steadfast, dependable crewmembers and levelheaded officers, with little time for the pageantry of the Karrakin Naval Academy or the nationalistic fervor of the PIC. Many go on to serve as pilots in respected private security firms, in vital, long-haul freight companies, and aboard line ships in the Union Navy. Most, though, decide to keep close to home, joining up with IPS-N's Trunk Security or Northstar GALCOMM.

1 The wealth of the Purview was never free. Whether taken from her colonies or squeezed from her citizens, the gold that built Ras Shamra has always, always been squeezed from blood. Yours, in this case. Born on Ras Shamra or one of the Armory's other core Purview worlds, you and your family have always been behind. Behind either in the socials – the Armory's social credit system – or in debt, life was never quite comfortable in the heart of the empire. For someone in your position, studying at the PIC simply made social and financial sense: socially, the prestige upgrades were appealing; financially… well, it's hard to argue with a debt-wipe when you're in so deep. *How deep are you in? How long will you have to serve to wipe your debt? Who is threatened as collateral if you skip your service or fail to meet the Armory's rigorous standards?*

2 The Purview must be expanded, and it will take brave youths like yourself to expand it. Hailing from deep in the Purview, you and your comrades are descended from some of the first settlers on Ras Shamra – you bleed Armory aubergine and have never known life outside of the Purview. Trained in the PIC, you are now posted to a ship – are you eager for combat? *What do you know of Union and the Baronies? How far have you traveled within the Purview? What do you hope to gain from naval service: Adventure? Titles? Land? Glory?*

3 Your commission assigned and your docket assured, you headed off to the PIC with the rest of your friends. College was a grand time – the sport, the people, the air of the place – and your early years in the navy were much the same. Your first command now awaits, and there is talk of war in the Dawnline. Your chums make up the bulk of the officer corps in this fleet, and now you're back together it feels like college all over again. You're invincible, assured, and headed for glory. But do you really believe this to be true? *Do you have bad blood with anyone from the old college gang? Is there someone among them for whom you care deeply? You've been in the navy for a while now, but have you seen combat, or will this be your first taste?*

4 The Armory liberated your world decades ago, building your towns and villages into glittering modern cities. Your grandparents may have labored under a tyrant, and your parents in the fire of war, but you have grown up in what feels like a golden age. As part of the first generation to enjoy the fruits of the Armory's efforts, your parents and grandparents pushed you to give back: serve in the navy, see the liberators' homeworld, and send your pay home – such is the road to prosperity, and if it means wearing their flag and learning their language, then so be it. You will climb as high as you can, prove your peoples' worth in the Purview, and never again knuckle under the crown of a tyrant. *How far have you traveled from your homeworld to the PIC? What of the time-slip between your parents, friends, and family back home – how many years have you fallen behind? Are there others from your world in your class or on your ship? What was the development level of your world? Did you know of Union, or learn of it after enlisting? Do you plan to return home, or are you committed to the naval life?*

5 After your home was attacked by the Barons and defended by the Armory, your world's government formally recognized the Armory as an ally and integrated their armed forces with those of their defenders. Though you initially enlisted in your world's ODF, you quickly found yourself seconded to the Armory's naval forces. Now, you fight for the Armory – how do you feel about this? *Did you volunteer to extend your service, or are you still compelled to finish your current tour before decommissioning? Do you consider the Armory an ally or just another distant power? Did you lose anyone to the Baronies, or has your family made it through unscathed?*

6 Father made sure your accounts were squared and debts paid before you purchased your commission: lieutenant, junior grade, with an easy route to senior status if you proved a quick study at the PIC. With a suite rented in the famous Terminus House and your staff set up next door, your time at college was rather invigorating. Networking, sports, tactics, and strategy – you exceeded in them all, well aware that you would employ this practical knowledge in your eventual billet. Those who perform admirably at the PIC are sure to rise not just in the navy's ranks, but those of society. *Are you excited for combat? Did you remain aloof through college, or did you make any friends? Did Father really square your debts before school? Which is more important to you – the Armory, or your rank within it?*

1 **The Honest Truth is many things: A trade school. A talent pool for freighters and private security companies. A certificate program for crew from orbital and interstellar private escort outfits. For you, it was the way offworld. On your home, there was nothing but dead ends. You could toil in the factories or in the offices (or go build a factory or an office), but none of that was for you. You wanted the stars, and IPS-N offered them to you. The Honest Truth was the culmination of that promise and more. Your education there earned you a posting – do you ever want to go home?** *The Honest Truth collects all types – did you make friends or enemies with someone who you'll face on the opposite side? Was your time in the Honest Truth above board, or did you mix it up with the spacers on the metro decks? Do you have debts left to repay, or debts to collect?*

2 **You were born on the Honest Truth – a spacer through and through. The downwell life has never appealed to you, and from the time you learned to navigate null-gee you've dreamed about crossing the stars. Space – all of its depth and breadth – holds far more wonder and promise than any one world. A tour in the navy will get you the pay and certifications you need – do you plan to stay for long?** *Will you return to the Honest Truth? Did anyone from your block or deck wind up going to the Truth's flight school? Before your enlistment, did you work private? When you finally muster out, where will you go?*

3 **Your downwell life was a rough one. Raised in the Diaspora, you scrapped and worked for what was yours. At fifteen you enlisted in a private mercenary company that hired anyone and everyone who wanted a ticket offworld – all you needed to know how to do was sign your name and state that you were of age. You hit the stars soon after, slinging short-pattern guns as a marine in your PMC's naval security ops. In time, you led your section and started to look for more: the Honest Truth was more. You earned yourself an officer commission, but what happened to your old PMC?** *In your "old" life, did you make any friends? Did you lose any? Did any come with you to the Honest Truth? Does anything from your old life haunt you?*

4 **You were born on the Honest Truth – a spacer through and through, though your life was a comfortable one compared to most who call the metrodecks home. Raised in one of the nicer spin-grav sections, your parents were IPS-N officers, assigned to the Honest Truth from fair Carina herself. They always told you of the gentle world – her archipelagos and warm, still seas; the white sand beaches and the skiffs that pole between islands; their home back on that sapphire sphere – and since you could fly and bound you've always wanted to go. Only, life and your calling have got in the way.** *Have your parents passed on, or have they retired to Carina? Do you see a route to the world, or are you afraid it will always be a dream? As the child of well-positioned executive officers, did you engage at all with people from the metrodecks? Was your education private, or did your parents send you to one of the Honest Truth's metrodeck public education centers? IPS-N's executive dynasty programs, while largely bloodless, are deeply competitive – do you have any rivals?*

5 **From Argo Navis straight to Trunk Security, you were born in the Company and will die for the Company – and you wouldn't have it any other way. Union was built by IPS-N, and you mean to continue the tradition.** *Were you posted to the Honest Truth or born there? Has your loyalty or belief in the Company ever been tested? Do you have a grand design in mind, or are you happy to serve? As a Company Person through and through, what is your view of Union and its project? Do you see yourself as part of it, or apart from it?*

6 **The Honest Truth taught you how to be more than just a cosmonaut on a long-haul freighter. In its curved gravity halls and metrodecks you learned to walk, talk, and bound like a spacer. In its vac-spheres and 1:1 simulation chambers, you learned to fly like you were born in the void. When your charter company asked you back, you refused – your lot was not hauling ice and chunks of rawmat, but to follow a new dream: flying under your own banner.** *Will your old company send people after you? What of your old crew – any entanglements there? What dream do you hold most dear – stability, or exploration?*

SENIOR PETREL

You are a member of an aged, interstellar order with roots dating back to Union's First Committee. Lauded as selfless heroes or chastised as irresponsible glory-hunters, deputized by Union or hunted as enemies of the hegemony, the Albatross have played many roles in the long and storied history of their organization. You step into your command during an age of mounting strife. The call for help will echo across the stars – hunted or cheered, you and your cohort will answer.

In contrast to the other officer corps depicted here, those of the Albatross operate under a far more informal system of command. Their ranks are limited – Senior Wing, Honored Wing, Loyal Wing, Wing, Senior Petrel, and Petrel – and particular distinctions in command and seniority beyond those of rank are determined by close-knit, contextual social obligations and community agreement. Some Senior Wings may be younger than the Wings or Petrels they command – a quirk made possible through the complexities of time dilation and the Albatross's preference for skill over age. In a culture and organization exposed to and familiar with the brutality of time, communal decision-making, shared histories, and record keeping take precedence. One aspect of this shared history is that of the Petrel, the role in which all Albatross begin their service.

Each Albatross makteba trains its Petrels differently, following centuries of local doctrine coupled with shared records from the Albatross's long history of interstellar travel and all-theater combat. Petrels – cadets – train in tight-knit groups of no more than a dozen, organized under their senior Loyal Wing and a retinue of advisers. The Petrel's course is set from the moment they don their cadet garb: a shorn head, simple clothing, and unadorned hardsuits mark one as a Petrel, a squire destined to be a Wing once their training is complete. These Petrels learn together how to crew Albatross assault carriers, light cruisers, light and heavy strike-ships, and other vessels. The bravest – though also the most likely to die in service – are schooled in the maintenance and support of their Loyal Wing's mechanized chassis, learning with the goal to one day pilot their own.

Albatross Petrels tend to be young, ranging from early teens to early twenties, though older Petrels are not uncommon, as anyone joining the order must begin at this rank. Petrel crew and officers do not have formal ranks like conventional stellar navies – instead, they lean on deeply ingrained systems of cultural seniority and camaraderie, in which command roles not occupied by Loyal Wings are designated to the most qualified Petrel for the job. As a general rule, only Petrels near the end of their training – around their early twenties – ever serve on the line. These Senior Petrels command subline ships, act as executive officers for Loyal or Honored Wings in command of capital ships, or fly spearships of their own in support of mounted Wings.

COSMOPOLITAN SECURITY CLUSTER

Time. This is what you've learned of naval service: it's all time. Distance is useless unless you measure it in the hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades – centuries , even – you'll spend ferrying between ports of call. This is terrifying to some. To you, it's just life. You're an officer in a Cosmopolitan security cluster, a time-aligned security force in charge of defending other Cosmopolitans while in transit, a friendly face who knows the language, culture, and conventions of the era – the "cluster" - you serve.

Like those who come up through planetary defense forces and the Albatross' makteba system, many Cosmopolitans undergo a combination of formal and informal training in z-axis navigation and null-grav maneuvering. Indeed, most Cosmopolitan children are schooled from a young age in all aspects of interstellar life, from donning and doffing hardsuits, to starship maintenance, to nearlight calculations, and orbital dynamics. Theirs is a life removed from the "normal" time of the rest of the galaxy, lonely to some but rich in parallel histories, stories, and legends – Cosmopolitans know the void of space, the worlds that dot the stars, and the families that trek across time.

Though they may seem mysterious or anachronistic to Diasporans and Metropolitans, Cosmopolitans occasionally decide to apply their considerable skills and comfort with interstellar travel and spatial navigation to the navies and security forces of non-Cosmopolitan states and entities. As humans who live in "normal time" make a great sacrifice in stepping out of sync with their families, so too do Cosmopolitan crew and officers – only in the opposite direction. As they age in "normal" time, their families – should they ever encounter them again – never seem to have aged beyond the time that they left them. This is a comfort to some, and a great tragedy to others.

Cosmopolitans often need to translate their "realtime" age to their subjective age, but few who step from their families young have reasons other than tragedy. Most desynced Cosmopolitans would place themselves in middle age – often old for their ranks, but with tremendously valuable experience and competency.

1 **You trained with your Loyal Wing until they were killed in combat. Nearly ready yourself, you took up their command and successfully completed a desperate objective. This was proof enough for your Honored Wings back home – they promoted you then, and you have served with distinction ever since.** *Who was your Wing, and what does their family (and your fellow Petrels) think of you? Do you serve in the shadow of your Wing, or on their shoulders? Who killed your Wing, and do you seek to avenge them?*

2 **After a terrible injury and many years of recovery, your Loyal Wing lent their skills to the Albatross's theater command. When offered the chance to learn under a more combat-focused Wing, you alone among your fellow Petrels declined. Your education has been cerebral, focused on the logistics and big-picture strategy of how an Albatross makteba actually works when deployed. When your Loyal Wing passed, they passed their responsibilities on to you.** *What happened to the other Petrels you once served with? What did you learn of the galaxy, watching it from a bird's eye view? What secrets of the Albatross do you know? What do you feel about Union, the Baronies, and the Armory after watching them from afar? Have you negotiated with IPS-N, your nominal backers, and what do you think of them?*

3 **You fought many years as a Petrel, earning your rank as Wing through courage, loyalty, and sacrifice. Now you have your own clutch of young Petrels to guide, and it is with pride and comradely love that you seek to teach them to be strong, swift, and brave.** *Who are your Petrels? What are their hopes, dreams, loves, and worries? How do you teach them, and how do your fellow Wings see you as a teacher? Have you lost any of your Petrels in combat?*

4 **As a child you displayed a proclivity for three-dimensional navigation, besting children many years your senior in spheregames. You were fast-tracked for a command position, learning advanced techniques for space combat and Albatross naval doctrines alongside Petrels and Wings. Your brilliance was never in question – only the heights to which you would rise.** *Did you live up to this potential? Did you make any rivals along the way? You likely have a clutch of Petrels that you train – how does that responsibility sit with you?*

5 **The Albatross rescued you from a stranded space ship left in a desperate state by pirates, privateers, or a hostile navy. With your family dead, you were raised in the makteba as one of the Albatross. You chose the route of the Petrel, serving under the tutelage and command of a Wing until it was your time to step into that same rank.** *What of your family's killers – will you track them down and get your revenge, or has it been so long that you've forgotten (or otherwise moved on)? Is your Wing still alive, or have they perished? Who were the other Petrels in your clutch, and how did you get along with them? Who became your family among the Albatross? How did you heal, or have you never healed from that horrible day?*

6 **Once, you served Union as a Liberator. In Union's stiff, formal structures, you found yourself lost; the Department of Justice moved too slow for you, arrived too late. You still did your job, as it was in the service of the Three Pillars, but you saw too many worlds ruined by the echoes of the Second Committee and the tender approach of the Third. You quit. You wandered. You plummeted lower than you thought possible, but down there you found the Albatross. Now you're a Wing, and you have a galaxy to save.** *How low did you go? Who do you know back at the DoJ, and are you on good terms or bad? Who was your Wing when you were a Petrel, and why did they advocate (or not!) for you to be allowed in? Does anyone push back on your desire to take the action to (who you define as) the bad guys?*

1   **You were born at nearlight, aboard a goodship as it burned at the edge of realspace on its way to the next world that would host it. You grew up among your family's decks, learning the proper way to fly in null-gee the way a child downwell would learn to walk. Your grace and lithe strength found you placement as one of your goodship's security officers, escorting traders and decklords when they went downwell or docked up on a station. You've seen scraps and learned to pilot for yourself.** *What drew you away from this comfortable, normal life? Does your home still fly the stars, or has a terrible fate befallen it? Do you keep in contact with others from your goodship, or are you on your own? Your goodship dealt in trade and travel – did you ever escort someone to a unique or dangerous location? Did you ever encounter los Voladores, or other strange things in deep space?*

2   **You were taken by raiders, made Cosmopolitan by their abduction. Freed and returned home, you found your life – your work, friends, family, even your home and familiar surroundings – gone, paved over and transformed in the time you were gone. Relativity is cruel in this way: you expected to lose a year or so, nothing more, and instead you lost decades. For a while you scraped out an existence on your homeworld, but even with a small group of others who had been pulled from their time, it was lonely. You decided that your life was up there, out among the stars – the you that was loved on this world died in space, and a new "you" took their place.** *With so much lost, do you fight for others or for yourself? Do you search for the raiders or entity that took you? Do you have any physical reminders of your home and family, or have you thrown those away (or never had them to begin with)? Do you maintain the customs of the time that once was yours, or are you able to adapt to the new temporality?*

3   **You have become Cosmopolitan by action, though you still hold your homeworld dear. You joined a long-haul ship as crew, eager for a new start offworld, and found that time-slip was a small price to pay to see the full scope of humanity.** *How long have you been flying? Why did you leave the homeworld of which you have such fond memories? How did you come to work security, and how did you learn to fly? Did you ever have your own ship, or is this your first posting?*

4   **Out from the edge of known space, you have made your way into the core and back. There is a galaxy of wonders and terrors, and you want to see them all. Hailing from a long line of Cosmopolitans, you don't feel the same tension and unease as those who merely dip a toe in the time-slip. You're a true onanon, and your goodship time is your anchor; the onanon fellows and families you meet again and again are your community. You may be few on the galactic scale, but as a group you're almost eternal.** *What drew you to the realtime struggle? Why fight when you had found a kind of timeless, wandering peace – who or what threatened that, and when will you feel safe enough to stop fighting?*

5   **How many years has it been? You stopped paying attention to time outside of your own conical reference some time ago. When people ask, you just tell them you're onanon – a Cosmopolitan concept that means outside of "normal" time, but not outside of time. Some might think you're free. Others might think you're lost. You might agree with them, but either way you know this: you're alive, and forward is the only way to move.** *Who were you before you became a Cosmopolitan? What happened to the life and world you left behind? Were you running from something? Was your time-slip an accident, or the consequence of a necessary journey? What drives you to keep flying? Do you even remember your old home? Do you have a desire to return there some day?*

6   **Death is out there, waiting for you. As long as you fly, you can run from it. Right? If you keep flying, maybe you'll find a time in which you can divorce the mind from its container.** *The question is this: how far are you willing to go?*

SECTION 2
ALL VESSELS ENGAGED

"Orientation. Orientation is going to kill you or save your life, depending on how fast you understand it," said Fleetmaster Lecuyer-Orion. He paced the lecture floor, addressing the assembled cadets. *"Combat and navigation in a three-dimensional environment is antithetical to our primate brain. We're not fish; our natural impulse is to orient visually, to seek an immutable horizon and draw our orientation from that. 'Up', 'down' – these are empirical things to us, a species that evolved with its feet on the ground. In space, this primate desire to see the horizon will get you killed."*

Mayura Song took notes – she drew spheres, shading them with cross-hatching. The Fleetmaster continued.

"As pilots and officers in command of ships, remember this – especially you born down a well. For you, there is no horizon. Do not attempt to orient by static visual reference – 'up' and 'down' changes constantly. So, how do you orient? Which way is 'up', and which way is 'down'?" Lecuyer-Orion crossed his arms and dropped his lecture voice. *"Not a rhetorical question, cadets, I'll need an answer before we move along."*

Song finished shading. It was an easy question – Baronic decorum led the others to hesitation, which is why the silence remained. She didn't bother to raise her hand. "Fleetmaster," Song's voice cut the silence. *"You can orient by your gut. 'Down' is always paired to thrust. 'Down' is always behind you."*

The Fleetmaster smiled. "Good. Correct, Cadet Song, and well said. The rest of you, remember this: 'down' is always behind. When you are in space, you only ever head one direction: up. Orient yourselves accordingly."

The Fleetmaster continued, and Song started sketching a new sphere.

Battlegroup is all about the engagement. Pre-battle positioning, acceleration and deceleration, chasing down enemy fleets, navigation from one's deployment zone to the battle line – all of that is assumed to have already happened by the time the first dice are rolled. *Battlegroup* is about the moments just before the unpredictability gap closes – and the climax when it does.

There can be any number of reasons for two naval powers to engage in combat, a myriad of tactical and strategic concerns or narrative events which have let to this moment, but ultimately all engagements will come down to a deadly clash between fleets as commanders order their ships into battle against the enemy.

The enemy is out there, somewhere. Your instruments place them around a hundred thousand kilometers distant – give or take a few hundred, as their sensor bafflers fight your own. Not yet visible on optics, but certainly within range. Radiation and comms interceptors light up, and long-range suites highlight their ships in wireframe, their hulls stark, unnatural crimson boxes against the starless black.

The chase is done. The enemy is sighted. Battle is engaged.

KEY GAMEPLAY ASSUMPTIONS

Assume the following statements are true during each engagement:

The field of battle is set and the enemy fleet will not continue to flee or maneuver away (at least to begin with). If you are defending, you either cannot outrun the enemy ships or abandon your objective. Your orders are clear: engage the enemy and defeat them.

Any movement is – on balance – going to be blueshift movement (or movement toward a target). As players, you of course have the opportunity to determine the best way to approach the enemy, but overall, these movements will take you closer to the enemy or the battle's objective.

Movement is player-directed and relative to the enemy: the gyre's range bands (see p. 46) describe not objective placement, but your battlegroup's relative position to the enemy.

Positioning along the X, Y, and Z axes of space is important narratively, but the only movement that impacts gameplay is when battlegroups move between range bands.

STRUCTURE OF A BATTLE

"Good morning, commander," the ship's NHP greets you. "I trust you slept well. Shipboard time is 0800 Cradle. I've taken the liberty of compiling a strategic overview for your perusal, it's waiting for you on your personal terminal. Estimated time to terminal contact is 36 hours. Crew reactivation is at 43% and proceeding on schedule, weapons systems are undergoing precombat diagnostics, and I've had coffee sent to your quarters. Do you need anything else?"

Before the actual fighting begins, one must plan. Once they're cycled up from stasis, commanders join their fellow officers in legionspace or on the flight deck to discuss their objectives in a battle that has already begun.

Going into combat, players will lead their own personal battlegroups into the fray. Constructing a battlegroup, selecting the various ships, weapons, and upgrades which comprise it, is detailed on page 62. This usually takes place prior to beginning a game and embarking on a mission.

A battle is made up of five stages – briefing, forecast, preparation, engagement, and aftermath. The first three stages, which happen before the fighting begins, are important for establishing the stakes and grounding the battle in a broader narrative context, as fleets rarely engage each other without a reason. They are also important opportunities for the GM to provide players with information and for players to prepare. It is highly recommended that you do not skip any of these steps without consulting the rest of your group first.

In some special circumstances – say, a surprise attack catches the players' battlegroup off guard or some esoteric weapon yanks them from cruising speed – you might skip the first three stages, jumping directly to Stage 4: Engagement. Even in a case like this, you'll likely want to do a little out-of-character run through the briefing, forecast, and preparation. This ensures that everyone is on board with the situation as players and can start to figure out how their characters will respond to such a sudden engagement.

STAGE ONE: BRIEFING

In the briefing, the GM tells the players anything and everything that they need to know going into the fight. This can include:

- enemy force strength, composition, and direction
- environments and obstacles
- the presence or absence of allied forces
- any complications.

The length and detail of the briefing may vary, but as long as the parameters of the battle are clearly laid out (for the players, not necessarily their characters!) then it's complete.

The GM's overall responsibility in the briefing is to provide the players with some information they can use when planning their fleet construction and strategies. The most important part of this is that you should never lie to the players. You don't necessarily have to tell them every single detail of the enemy forces' composition or environmental complications – holding some information close to your chest is fine and even expected. If a player finds themselves wanting more detailed information about upcoming engagements, there are ways they can obtain it such as pre-battle uptime actions (p. 48). But the GM shouldn't, for example, inform the players to expect a heavy presence of carriers and strike craft, then include no carriers or strike craft whatsoever. The information provided to the players here, as detailed or vague as it might be, should always be truthful.

Things to consider in terms of information that might be useful include:

- the number of enemy battlegroups they will be facing. Are their forces evenly matched, or are they outnumbered?
- the presence or absence of a certain strategy or armament, such as certain weapons, payloads, or wings
- whether the enemy forces are predisposed toward combat within certain ranges, or are well-equipped to defend against certain forms of attack
- whether the enemy fleet has any particularly unusual units that stand out among the rest. Will they be facing notable recurring antagonists, experimental superweapons, or anomalous hull configurations that have baffled their intelligence?

As part of the briefing, the GM must also inform the players – or perhaps even work with them to define – the success condition for the impending battle. Is

their objective to utterly eliminate the enemy fleet? Or is it to escort a VIP through a blockade? Is it to board and capture a certain number of ships or defend a station from attack? To defeat a network of planetary defenses or to repel an invasion fleet? Some examples are presented below, and sitreps on page 152-157 can be used in conjunction with these objectives to create more complex and detailed engagements with various tactical objectives.

At the end of the briefing, as long as the parameters of the mission have been clearly laid out and the win conditions of the engagement explained and agreed upon, then you've established the plan before the action. Next, you'll need to establish or agree upon the stakes of the engagement in Stage 2: Forecast.

BRIEFING EXAMPLES
There are several possible approaches to the briefing. As the GM, you might simply tell the players what modifiers and types of enemies you're going to put in play. Some groups appreciate a forthright approach like this, but it's also possible (and sometimes preferable) to convey this information in a more narrative fashion as well. The level of information and detail provided is something to discuss with your group. Some players prefer more open information while others may enjoy a more narrative presentation that prompts them to piece together actionable intelligence from context clues.

RULES-FIRST
"We're going to play the upcoming engagement using the Defensive Emplacements battle modifier. The enemy fleet commander's flagship is a Breakwater, a type of NPC carrier, with the Den Mother template. I've been wanting to try this NPC for a while."

NARRATIVE-FIRST
"The Laguna shipyards represents a highly fortified target objective, as well as a vital link in the enemy's logistical capabilities. Recon pickets indicate that local-space anti-ship defense batteries have been established on a nearby moon, providing the shipyards with effective support fire from all optimal approach vectors. Avoidance isn't an option here. You'll just have to weather the storm. In addition, an enemy supercarrier we've identified as the Ardent Spirit has been tasked with providing additional security for Laguna at this time. NAVCOMM anticipates heavy strike craft activity in the AO and recommends adjusting secondary armament loadouts accordingly."

EXAMPLE OBJECTIVES   ROLL 1D20

1-2	"[Enemy faction battlegroup] is inbound on a HIGH-CONFIDENCE intercept trajectory. Has not responded with CLEAR/OK to our hails and is HOSTILE. Looks to be a stand up fight, just waiting for your go."
3-4	"[Allied faction ship] has issued a coalition-wide call for assistance, and reports [enemy faction battlegroup] bearing and blue on their coordinates. Our task is to intervene and rescue the allied ship."
5-6	"FLEETCOM has pushed an immediate NL-STOP order to your battlegroup: [enemy faction] in local bubble have diverted assets to bomb [allied ground forces] from orbit. Reorient and proceed to break the orbital forces."
7-8	"Nearing SAFELAND; as predicted, [enemy faction] has dispatched a number of ships to attempt an intercept. This was a fight you expected: now it's time to square up."
9-10	"VIP ship reports multiple hostile actors aboard their vessel and requests aid; complicating things, [enemy faction] ships have just realigned and launched torpedoes, targeting your ships – It's going to be a brawl over the VIP."
11-12	"You'll be realigning to realspace within two light seconds of [Dawnline Shore world]; [enemy faction] has ships in orbit preparing to bombard. Remove them."
13-14	"BREAK BREAK BREAK CONTACTS <1ls DISPERSE AND REALIGN – TOO MANY ON SCOPE – JUMP WHEN ABLE TO COBALT-ELM-GREEN – ORIENT ON MY RADIAN AND PUNCH THROUGH THIS LINE!"
15-16	"At 0900 hours our long-range monitoring stations detected HOSTILE INTENT ACTORS on a HIGH-CONFIDENCE intercept trajectory toward [friendly station]; multiple heavyweight contacts bearing dead on, multiple lightweight contact indicate low-choke k-clouds inbound. Fire interdiction and prepare to defend the station."
17-18	"Reports of a [known enemy ship or group] have been confirmed by system-local monitoring stations. Proceed with caution and intent: [known ship or group] is hostile, dangerous, and appears to be moving with a specific objective in mind."
19-20	"This will be a stand up fight: [enemy faction]'s fleet is traveling well within predicted trajectories along a known radian – engage and eliminate. Win the day, captain."

STAGE TWO: FORECAST

The forecast is when you ask what happens if the engagement goes well. What happens if it goes poorly? Before any action begins, be sure to take time to establish, as a group, clear consequences for the positive, negative, or neutral outcomes of what is about to happen. What are the consequences if the players fail to protect the VIP ship against the enemy fleet? What about if the players fail to board and capture the target ship? If they can't buy enough time for civilian ships to evacuate a world ahead of an enemy invasion fleet, what happens?

In *Battlegroup*, the stakes of a single fight can be appreciably significant – greater, even, than in *Lancer*. The players are up against the strength of states and corpros. They aren't just a single squad of powerful mechs, but a battlegroup of ships that could, if their weapons were turned toward terrible ends, destroy worlds. The consequences of failure may mount, or they may be isolated to the sector of space that they occupy, but in most cases they should be known and agreed upon out of character before heading forward.

Once the players are informed on the engagement to come, know what their objective is, and know what could happen as a consequence of the battle (i.e., they know the strategic big picture), they can begin to plan their tactical approach.

STAGE THREE: PREPARATION

Captains confer and plan in legionspace, matching their ship's tunings to those of their compatriots, sharing information on hardcopy munitions, printing schedules and specifics data from their group comps. Pilots on flight decks bid farewell to friends with promises of drinks and downtime after the fight – if they make it back – and hurry to their ships for preflight checks.

During the preparation stage, players may, if they like, make modifications to the battlegroup they've constructed – swapping weapons, systems, and ordnance – and making any relevant decisions about "narrative" considerations (e.g., ordering onboard marines to certain modules of their ship, describing the general orientation or formation of their fleet, describing where their commander is and what they're doing, and so on). Players can continue adjusting their battlegroup composition throughout this stage, up until everyone has finished preparing and the engagement is ready to begin.

If the framing of the engagement is such that the fleet is already en route to the target location, the GM may decide that players can't wholly change the hulls they already have equipped. But the GM could just as easily allow them to do so – perhaps this group is a division of a much larger fleet, with moving printers or a nearby shipyard, or they might be able to rendezvous with elements from another fleet, allowing them to reorganize their battlegroup as they see fit. Alternatively, you might opt to handle such changes using flashbacks, declaring them to be actions taken at an earlier point and only now revealed in the present.

This stage is also when the players choose whether to select a posture (see p. 48) or take uptime actions (see p. 49-51). Postures let them determine the starting position of their fleet, while uptime actions are unique actions that allow them to better prepare for the coming battle. The results of these actions can further influence the construction of their battlegroups as well. Commanders might gather additional information about enemy forces or gain bonuses for their ships.

STAGE FOUR: ENGAGEMENT

Once everyone has had a chance to prepare and is ready to begin the battle, it's time for the engagement. This is when the players will have their battlegroups and strategies put to the test as they make contact with enemy forces.

Engagement starts with the GM setting the scene and describing the situation as the commanders arrive at the initial staging area. Perhaps the enemy fleet has been engaged in battle with other forces prior to their arrival and the wreckage of destroyed ships is slowly drifting across local space, endlessly broadcasting automatic emergency beacons on repeat. The battle may take place in a unique region, perhaps blanketed by nebulas or in the heart of an asteroid belt. Comms officers may begin picking up panicked distress calls from refugee vessels fleeing ahead of approaching forces. Whatever the situation, now is the time to man action stations and prepare for combat.
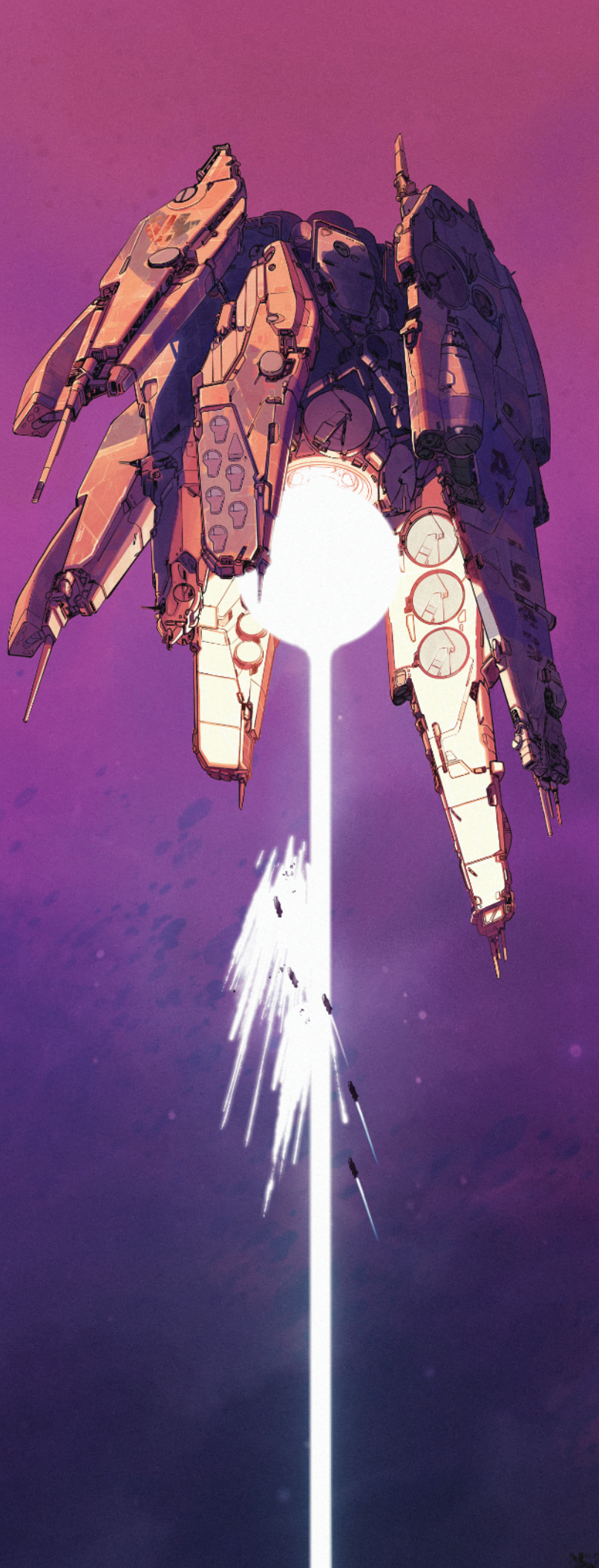
STAGE FIVE: AFTERMATH

When the final ships have fled, surrendered, or been destroyed, the battle is over. Now comes the unenviable task all commanders must face: assessing losses and tallying the fallen. Naval combat is a destructive and deadly affair, and even the winning side often emerges bloodied.

After each combat engagement, commanders have earned a chance to rest, repair, and refit their ships as needed. Even a single battle between fleets is a monumental affair, and players should not be expected to enter battle more than once without a chance for repairs; pitting a heavily damaged fleet against a fully stocked enemy force is likely to result in the complete annihilation of the players' ships.

Narratively, the time spent between engagements can range from weeks to even months spent undergoing repairs at a shipyard, restocking munitions, and taking on replacement crew. Printers – advanced matter processor/fabricator systems – make the task of repairing and refitting even massive capital ship hulls much easier than it might otherwise be, but these systems can only expedite the process so much. The logistics of ship repair is, thankfully, something which the players can leave to others to handle while their own characters reflect on recent events, enjoy much needed R&R, pursue personal goals, and prepare for their next assignment.

Although not essential, it can be helpful for players (and their characters) to discuss the recent engagement and think about what worked and what didn't. If there were any notable moments that were fun, interesting, or exciting, this is a good time to bring them up. Not only is this feedback useful for the GM but its also a great way to encourage your fellow players. If you're going to take this step, remember to be respectful – every session has the potential to be someone's first, or their first experience with a situation, encounter, or decision. *Battlegroup* is a collaborative game, not a competitive one.

THE ENGAGEMENT

The engagement itself begins after all briefings and preparations have been completed. Engagements take place over several rounds of play, each of which is split into a **Logistics Phase**, an **Impact Phase**, an **Action Phase**, and a **Boarding Phase**.

Combat in *Battlegroup* gives a bird's-eye view of battles between fleets of powerful warships. Where *Lancer* captures the immediacy and chaos of fast-paced combat between elite mech pilots, *Battlegroup* seeks to capture the sense of planning and inevitability that defines engagements between capital ships. Decisions are often made well in advance. Some weapons take multiple rounds to reach full charge or to hit their targets, building to a destructive climax in which both sides may ultimately wind up battered and bloodied. Long-spool lances and torpedoes crash into the flanks of opposed frigates, kill-clouds blow through wings of fighters, boarding actions slowly crawl up the spinal corridors of carriers and battleships, and so on.

PHASES

1 **LOGISTICS PHASE:** During this phase, players and the GM count down the timers on powerful, ponderous **CHARGE** weapons and **PAYLOAD** attacks; restock and resupply depleted systems; and activate some special abilities.

CHARGE weapons and PAYLOADS are some of the most devastating weapons used in naval combat, and their use frequently decides battles all by themselves.

2 **IMPACT PHASE:** During this phase, any Charge weapons and Payload attacks that have finished counting down can finally be fired.

3 **ACTION PHASE:** This is where individual battlegroups maneuver, trade blows, launch fighters and order subline ships to perform attack runs, and so on.

4 **BOARDING PHASE:** Boarding actions are resolved in this final phase. Marines, combat subalterns, and mechs fight their way through cramped corridors, disrupting and disabling enemy ships in the hopes of turning the tide of battle in their favor.

After the Boarding Phase, the round ends, and the next round begins with the **LOGISTICS PHASE**.

ORDER OF EVENTS

Players decide the order in which they act, with a player acting first during every phase. After this player has acted, the GM chooses a hostile NPC battlegroup to act, after which players and hostile battlegroups continue to alternate until everyone has acted. At this point, the next phase begins.

PHASE 0: PRE-ENGAGEMENT
Before the engagement begins, players must determine their battlegroup's starting positions. They can do this by either choosing a posture or using uptime actions.

If the players aren't performing uptime actions for this engagement, they simply choose a position and posture for their battlegroup as the fleet heads toward combat (see p. 48).

If the players are performing uptime actions, they can either use the **Set a Posture** uptime action to choose a position or they can use **Plot a Course** to perform another action and then roll to find out where their battlegroup drops out of nearlight (see p. 51).

ROUND SUMMARY
1: LOGISTICS PHASE

2: IMPACT PHASE

3: ACTION PHASE

4: BOARDING PHASE

COMBAT BASICS

SHIPS

Naval combat isn't about characters so much as it's about ships, of which there are several types:

- **CAPITAL SHIPS:** Large, powerful vessels that typically comprise the central core of a battlegroup.
- **ESCORTS:** Smaller ships performing specific support duties.
- **WINGS:** Strike craft, including fighters, bombers, and mounted chassis.

Some attacks, abilities, and effects can only be used against certain ship types, as noted in their descriptions.

Ships can be either hostile or allied depending on their attitude toward you (rather than your attitude to them). Your battlegroup and your own ships never count as allied to themselves.

TURNS

During the **Action Phase**, battlegroups take turns performing maneuvers, attacks, and so on. Each battlegroup takes one turn unless otherwise specified. The phase ends when every battlegroup capable of taking a turn has taken a turn.

> In the rules, "turn" always refers to turns taken by battlegroups in the **Action Phase** and "next turn" always refers to the relevant battlegroup's turn in the next **Action Phase**. For example, an effect that lasts until the beginning of a battlegroup's next turn will last until that battlegroup takes a turn in the next **Action Phase**.

Turns represent activity, not the passing of a specific amount of time. Action at the naval scale can vary greatly in terms of how much time passes. The precise maneuvers performed at the outer edge of a battle might take days, while action within the deadly confines of point-blank rage might be resolved within hours or minutes.

Players always get to act first. When the **Action Phase** begins, the players agree on a player (or an allied NPC battlegroup) to take the first turn. If the players can't agree on someone, the GM chooses.

Next, the GM chooses a hostile battlegroup to act, followed by a player (or allied NPC) nominated by the player who acted previously. This is followed by another hostile battlegroup of the GM's choice, then another player, and so on, alternating between hostile and allied battlegroup until everyone has acted. If all battlegroups on one side have acted, the remaining battlegroups take their turns in an order decided by either the GM or the players, as relevant.

When everyone has taken a turn, the **Action Phase** ends and the next phase begins.

Some systems, weapons, and abilities can be used once per round, turn, or battle. In their rules, this is written as "1/round", "1/turn", and so on.

If there's any uncertainty about when certain actions or effects take place or resolve, effects caused by other characters always the first thing to resolve during a character's turn. For example, a character starts their turn in a zone created by another character that causes them to take damage – this resolves before any other effects take place. Otherwise, characters can always choose the resolution order of actions or effects that they take on their turn (for example if they have two effects that trigger at the start of their turn, they can choose which resolve first). If there's any additional clarity needed, the GM adjudicates.

> Some effects, abilities, and systems trigger in phases other than the **Action Phase**. For example, **CHARGE** and **PAYLOAD** attacks are resolved in the **Impact Phase**. Likewise, some special systems allow players and NPCs to trigger effects or attack enemies in the **Logistics**, **Impact**, and **Boarding Phases**. In these instances, the order in which actions and effects take place is decided in the same fashion as in the **Action Phase**: a player acts first, followed by an NPC, then another player, another NPC, and so on. As always, the players choose the order in which they act and the GM resolves any disagreements.

DETAIL OF A ROUND

The following section provides a detailed, step-by-step look at each phase of play during a round of combat.

LOGISTICS PHASE

During the **Logistics Phase**:

- all **CHARGE** weapons remove 1 Charge Counter
- all active **PAYLOAD** attacks remove **1 Flight Counter**
- all **RELOADING** weapons and systems that have previously been used remove **1 Refresh Counter**
- all exhausted **ESCORTS** and **WINGS** are readied for use
- once all of these other steps have been performed, any other systems, maneuvers, or other abilities that are used or triggered during the **Logistics Phase** may now be done.

Some effects and abilities may specify that they must be used at a particular time during the **Logistics Phase**. For example, some abilities are used at the start of the **Logistics Phase**, and are therefore done before anything else such as removing counters.

This phase is a great opportunity to make sure everyone is on the same page – it offers plenty of narrative "free time" for players to communicate in character, describe their commanders' movements inside their ships, and zoom in on other nontactical character moments. Players can also ask questions of the GM and other players here. If you want, these questions and their answers can be explained in the narrative as commanders consulting with their NHPs and other officers in the fleet legion.

Note that the three major types of counters handled during this step – **Charge**, **Flight**, and **Refresh** – all count down to 0. This is to make it easier for everyone to see at a glance which of these significant weapons and systems are close to being ready to use. If a **Charge** weapon has **2 Charge Counters** remaining, then that tells you exactly how many rounds remain before it can fire.

If there's ever a question of what order various effects and abilities happen in during this phase, such as multiple effects which occur at the start of it, resolve them like you would during any other phase by letting a player resolve their effects first, followed by an NPC, and alternating until all effects are resolved.

RETREAT
At the beginning of the fifth round of play (before the **Logistics Phase**), every player needs to decide whether their battlegroup will continue the engagement. By this point, their ships' nearlight drives have cooled down and charged back up, their crews are well prepared and ready to take the necessary actions, and the likely tactical outcomes of the engagement should be clear. Each commander must choose whether to jump away from the fight or to stay engaged.

If a commander makes the call to jump, their battlegroup retreats from the combat, punching out via nearlight ejection. If they do so:

- any **Payload** attacks still heading toward them are left behind by the speed of their acceleration, self-destructing harmlessly
- any **Payload** attacks launched by the retreating battlegroup also self-destruct in the absence of coordinating telemetry – commanders can't simply order a mass torpedo salvo and then flee from battle while their weapons do all the work
- all of their accompanying vessels, such as **Escorts** and **Wings**, are also removed from play, retreating alongside them, surrendering, or being destroyed.

SURRENDER
Similarly, commanders can choose to surrender at any time. As with the decision to retreat, this decision must take place before the **Logistics Phase** begins. When a commander surrenders, their ship is boarded, their crew captured, and the remainder of the ships in their battlegroup either scuttled or salvaged at the end of the combat (assuming their side loses, disengages, or some combination therein). Surrender effectively removes that battlegroup for the remainder of the fight, immediately powering down any and all weapons and systems, including any active **Payload** attacks under their control, and any effects their ships or upgrades were providing immediately cease.

IMPACT PHASE
During the **Impact Phase**:

- Charge weapons that have reached **0 Charging Counters** may fire now, resetting their counters, or hold their attack for later. Attackers roll to hit but do not yet roll damage. Decide the order of this similar to how you would decide turn order (i.e., a player with a readied weapon may elect to fire or hold, then an NPC with a readied weapon, and so on).
- Payload attacks that have reached **0 Flight Counters** automatically hit
- damage is rolled for any successful **Charge** or **Payload** attacks and the incoming damage from the two types of attacks are separately assigned to the relevant ships and/or battlegroups

if it is possible to interdict any incoming Payload or Area damage, Interdiction is rolled for the relevant battlegroups and the results subtracted from that damage. During this phase, Interdiction is only rolled once against all incoming attacks, which means that coordinating the timing of multiple salvos so they arrive simultaneously is a powerful strategy for ensuring damage gets through.

ACTION PHASE

During the **Action Phase**:

- active battlegroups take turns to perform **maneuvers** and **tactics**, alternating between allied and hostile battlegroups. On their turn, players can perform either one **maneuver** and one **tactic** or two **tactics**.
- any attacks are resolved immediately
- effects or conditions that occur or are cleared at the end of the turn happen when a player or NPC concludes all actions they wish to perform
- boarded ships may now attempt to repel boarding units by rolling against their Tenacity.

All players have access to a standard set of maneuvers and tactics, and can gain new ones from various upgrades, abilities, and effects.

MANEUVERS

Attacks performed as a part of a maneuver occur immediately. The following rules apply:

- Single-target attacks are made against the target ship's **Defense**, and deal their listed damage on hit.
- **Area-target** attacks require no roll to hit.
- **Payload** attacks, whether single- or area-target, begin their flight toward their designated targets, with their progress tracked during the **Impact Phase**.
- Some abilities simply deal damage to a target directly and do not count as attacks.

All player battlegroups have access to the same set of basic maneuvers:

All Ahead Full
Maneuver

Your battlegroup may advance forward by one range band, and you may fire one **Primary** weapon before or after moving.

Open Fire
Maneuver

Your battlegroup remains in its current range band, devoting all extra power to its weapons: you may attack with one **Superheavy** weapon or up to two different **Primary** weapons.

Ramming Speed
Maneuver

You may only use this maneuver at **Close Range** or **Point-Blank**, and only if your battlegroup is able to move. Advance your battlegroup to **Point-Blank**, then choose one of your **Capital Ships** and a hostile **Capital Ship**: both ships take **2d6 damage** that cannot be prevented in any way.

Ramming is not considered a standard combat doctrine by any major naval power and capital ships are never designed with such actions in mind, but desperate times may call for desperate measures.

Retrograde Burn
Maneuver

Choose one:
- Your battlegroup falls back one range band.
- Until the end of your next turn, you may ignore the next hostile effect that would force it to move.

Either way, your battlegroup becomes **Bolstered** until the end your next turn, gaining **+1d6 Interdiction** and granting **+2 Defense** to each ship in the battlegroup.

TACTICS

All player battlegroups have access to the same basic tactics:

CAREFUL SHOT
Tactic

By adjusting weapon power outputs or ordering your gunnery crews to carefully place their fire you can launch an attack intended to disable an enemy ship without annihilating it outright. Until the end of your next turn, your battlegroup's attacks, including damage dealt by **AUXILIARY** weapons, cannot reduce hostile ships below **0 HP** and cannot **critically hit**. **SUPERHEAVY**, **CHARGE**, and **PAYLOAD** weapons ignore this effect, as they are too powerful; even a glancing blow from a long-spool weapon is enough to cause catastrophic damage.

When you reduce a ship to **0 HP** using this tactic, you may choose to disable it instead of destroying it; it is dead in the water, unable to flee or attack.

The main purpose of the **Careful Shot** tactic is to avoid the more destructive results on the **Kill Table** (p. 53), should a commander wish to capture an enemy ship more or less intact for in-character reasons. Be aware, however, that even "careful" shots with naval weapons are still massively destructive. Although ships targeted by this tactic may not be destroyed, there may still be narrative effects: the attack may have struck critical components, caused a breach in the starboard fusion chamber, or exposed compartments to hard vacuum.

LOCK FIRING SOLUTION
Tactic

You focus legion processing power on lining up a perfect shot or tracking an especially wily target, sharing the revised telemetry data with the rest of the fleet. Nominate a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT**; that ship gains a special status called **LOCK ON**. Any battlegroup making a single-target attack against a ship with **LOCK ON** may choose to gain **+1 ACCURACY** on its attack roll and then clear the **LOCK ON** status after the attack resolves (hit or miss). This is called "consuming **LOCK ON**".

LOCK ON lasts until it is consumed or until the end of the next **Impact Phase**, at which point ships are assumed to have maneuvered enough to render the targeting data obsolete. **LOCK ON** does not stack; a ship either has **LOCK ON** or it doesn't.

EMERGENCY MANEUVERS
Tactic, Limited 1

Advance or fall back one range band.

This tactic is **Limited 1**, which means each player can only use it once per engagement. It represents the battlegroup undertaking taxing or daring maneuvers to reposition itself at a crucial moment, and so it should only be used when it is of the utmost importance to do so.

DEFENSIVE SCREEN
Tactic

Smaller ships are often tasked with providing a defensive screen for larger vessels, supporting and protecting them while they coordinate fighter-tier activities or bring devastating weapons to bear. This tactic can only be used by a battlegroup that contains at least one active **FRIGATE**; **CARRIERS** and **BATTLESHIPS** are too ponderous to provide effective screening.

Choose a **FRIGATE** under your command and assign it to screen for another **CAPITAL SHIP** in your battlegroup or for an allied **CAPITAL SHIP** within the same range band. Until the start of your next turn, all attacks and abilities targeting the screened ship have a 50 percent chance of being intercepted. Roll a die or flip a coin to determine this. Abilities or attacks that are intercepted must either be aborted (wasting the action) or target the screening **FRIGATE** instead. If the attacker cannot target the screening **FRIGATE** for some reason, it may then choose another valid target, not including the screened ship. Once assigned to protect a ship, a **FRIGATE** cannot be ordered to screen for another vessel until the start of your next turn.

FRIGATES cannot be assigned to a defensive screen if they've also attacked on the same turn, and **FRIGATES** on protective duty cannot use weapons except for **AUXILIARY** weapons as they must concentrate on intercepting incoming threats. If the screening **FRIGATE** is destroyed, all effects it was providing to screened ships immediately end. Only a single **FRIGATE** can screen for another ship at a time, and **FRIGATES** cannot screen for other Frigates that are also screening.

BOARDING PHASE

Once every battlegroup has taken a turn in the **Action Phase**, the round ends with the **Boarding Phase**. Boarding actions are grim, bloody affairs. Section by section, corridor by corridor, through every redlight-dim compartment, marines, chassis, and subalterns fight to wrestle control of a ship from its crew. Casualties are assured, and combatants receive no quarter. To commit to a boarding action is to commit to an all-or-nothing engagement in some of the most brutal, claustrophobic conditions possible, where stray fire can tear a ship in half, oxygen is scarce, and inertia itself can become a weapon.

Battlegroups that include an **Escort** or **Wing** (or some other upgrade or ability) with **Boarding** gain the following additional tactic:

Deploy Boarders
Tactic

Assign an **Escort** or **Wing** with **Boarding** to board a hostile **Capital Ship** within range. Once assigned to board a ship, a boarding unit can no longer be used for any other purposes until that boarding action ends. It cannot be damaged, targeted by attacks or effects, or repair **HP** unless specifically noted.

Certain weapons or systems also grant the ability to initiate boarding actions separate from this tactic.

During the **Boarding Phase**:

- all **Boarding** units or systems that were launched in the **Action Phase** arrive at their targets
- boarders are given commands and roll to see if they successfully carry them out
- commanders may recall boarders, disengaging them from the ship they're on and freeing them up for use during later rounds.

Unless otherwise specified, all boarders arrive at their destination and become active during the **Boarding Phase**. The boarders automatically reach the enemy ship and make contact, without the need for a roll. While it's true that such actions are extremely dangerous from the moment they launch, the most interesting and exciting part isn't the approach, it's the boarding action itself. With this in mind, while you may wish to describe the losses taken as breaching pods and landers hurtle across an airless no-man's-land to reach their objective, it's assumed that sufficient boarders survive to make contact with the enemy and contest the ship.

ISSUING COMMANDS

During the **Boarding Phase**, players that have initiated boarding actions issue commands to those units. If multiple boarding rolls occur during this step, resolve their order as you would for anything else: a player rolls first, then an NPC, and so on.

Choose a command and roll 1d20 against the boarded ship's internal defenses of 8:

- On 7 or less, the boarders fail to make progress.
- On 8+, the boarders successfully carry out your command.

COMMANDS

Unless otherwise specified, all player-controlled boarding units can attempt the following commands:

- **Sabotage Fire Control:** The boarded ship's battlegroup makes all single-target attack rolls with **+2 Difficulty** until the end of their next turn.
- **Sever Comms:** The boarded ship's battlegroup cannot use **Tactics** until the end of their next turn.
- **Assault CIC:** The boarded ship's battlegroup cannot move player battlegroups with actions or abilities until the end of their next turn.

The ship's defenders will fight back every step of the way, but a successful roll here gives your units a foothold for a few precious moments. As long as a boarding unit remains on the enemy ship, they can automatically attempt a new command each Boarding Phase, rolling as normal.

REPELLING AND RECALLING

A ship that has been boarded has two options for attempting to repel active boarders:

Internal Defenses: At the end of its battlegroup's turn, the player of a boarded ship automatically rolls 1d20 to represent its internal defenses (e.g., automated systems, subalterns, crew, marines, etc.) fighting back. It rolls against the boarding unit's Tenacity, listed in its description. If the boarded ship succeeds, then it ejects the boarders, inflicts casualties sufficient to force them to fall back, or otherwise drives them off back to their own ship. This does not destroy the boarding unit (unless specified), but it does free it up to be used again in later turns.

Purges: If a battlegroup wants to be thorough, it can institute a deck-by-deck purge and repel all boarders from its ships as a maneuver during the **Action Phase**. As before, this doesn't automatically destroy the boarding units, but it does buy the besieged ships some breathing room.

Commanders can also choose to manually recall boarders during the **Boarding Phase**, disengaging them from the ship they're on without a roll and freeing them up for later use during the following rounds.

If a boarding unit's own ship is destroyed, the unit remains aboard the target vessel and continues to be active, but is destroyed when successfully repelled. If the ship they are boarding is destroyed, they are automatically ejected and recalled.

MULTIPLE BOARDERS

A ship can be boarded by multiple units, though the effects of any given command do not stack unless specified otherwise. For example, you can't attempt Sabotage Fire Control multiple times on one ship to give additional Difficulty penalties.

When attempting to repel boarders at the end of its turn, the player of a boarded ship rolls once per unit boarding it, but using a maneuver to purge all decks repels all boarders at once.

NPC BOARDERS

NPCs can also attempt boarding actions against player Capital Ships. Those boarding actions have unique effects, but otherwise work identically to player boarding actions. Likewise, players repel NPC boarders the same way – either by each boarded vessel succeeding on a roll against the boarding party's Tenacity at the end of its turn or by its battlegroup committing to a maneuver to clear all boarders from all Capital Ships in the battlegroup.

Boarding actions also represent an ideal place to take a break from *Battlegroup* and play out a mission in *Lancer* if your group wants to get into the action with their own mechs and pilots. If that is the case, you may, of course, disregard the rules for boarding actions and simply play them out using *Lancer*'s rules. The rest of the naval battle may be placed on hold, or continue in the background, be played out in alternating turns or at natural breaks in the boarding action, or similar.

After the **Boarding Phase** has been resolved, the round concludes and play moves on to the next round with the start of the **Logistics Phase**.

TURN ORDER QUICK REFERENCE

Battlegroups that wish to surrender or retreat (if able) must do so at the start of the round, before the **Logistics Phase**.

1. LOGISTICS PHASE

Remove counters from CHARGE weapons, PAYLOAD weapons, and expended RELOADING weapons and upgrades.

Exhausted ESCORTS and WINGS are readied for use.

Resolve any upgrades, abilities, or effects that take place during the **Logistics Phase**.

Make sure everyone is on the same page and ready to move on.

2. IMPACT PHASE

CHARGE weapons that have reached **0 Charge Counters** may either fire, rolling to hit, or hold their attacks.

PAYLOAD weapons that have reached **0 Flight Counters** automatically hit.

Roll damage for any CHARGE and PAYLOAD weapons that have hit.

Battlegroups may roll **Interdiction** and reduce the result from relevant attacks.

3. ACTION PHASE

Battlegroups take turns using **Maneuvers** and **Tactics**, alternating between player and NPC battlegroups.

Non-CHARGE, non-PAYLOAD attacks made during this step resolve immediately.

Commanders roll to repel boarders from each boarded ship at the end of their turn.

4. BOARDING PHASE

Boarding actions launched during previous phases arrive at their destinations.

Boarders are given commands, rolling to determine if they succeed or not.

THE WINDING GYRE

Battery Three on the FKS Sanspeur was locked down for combat. As of ship-morning, the battlegroup was engaged; now, the enemy was in scope range, and Battery Three's shift was about to begin.

Dim red safelights illuminated the soft corners and padded walls of the battery, blunting the grain and grit of every surface. Under thrust, Battery Three had gravity; combat speed pushed the weight of Lance Gunner Fisher's hardsuit onto himself. Even with the structural and internal aids, Fisher had to force air in and out of his lungs in order to stay conscious, tensing his legs and gut to keep the blood in his head.

"How long till we engage?" Gunner Parson's voice hissed in Fisher's ear, deformed by the intense gees.

Fisher could only move his eyes – enough to see the subtext chatter flying across the Sanspeur's open channels. "Thirty minutes. You ready?"

Parson hissed an affirmative around the gees.

"Good, load Starkill belts – CO wants us on fly-swatting duty," Fisher said.

"A-firm." There was a muffled clunking through the bulkhead as Parson called up his ammunition racks.

Fisher did the same. "How many belts you got before we hit printer feed?"

"Twelve."

Fisher grimaced. "Let's hope it's a short fight." He settled into his control seat, and counted down the clock. Thirty minutes before engage, and the helm still had this boat burning hard for the assumed horizon.

Parson hissed again. "Hey, Fish–"

"Yeah?"

"I hit more Purv flies than you, you're buying my coffee for the rest of the week. Deal?"

Fisher would've laughed, but for the gees. Instead, he chirped a-firm, and keyed his cannons into precycle warmup.

Thirty minutes to go.

Space combat is both chaotic and tightly controlled. At the outset, battlegroups begin spooling up long-cycle weapons and launching low-confidence volleys of missiles and torpedoes meant to probe enemy defensive capabilities. fleet legions similarly jab at one another across the vastness of space, using blinkspace channels, ontologic weapons, and esoteric defenses in battles far removed from human perception. However great the distances involved at first, the engaged fleets will gradually begin to wind their way toward each other as they seek out more advantageous positions and look to bring more weapons to bear.

Shorter distances open up new avenues of attack as carriers launch squadrons of fighters, bombers, and mounted chassis on combat sorties and main batteries open fire with greater confidence and accuracy. Wolfpacks of subline ships prowl the flanks looking for targets of opportunity, and boarding landers are sent on perilous journeys across a deadly no man's land to strike at the enemy from the inside.

Inevitably, like a wire drawn tighter and tighter, something has to give.

THE GYRE

Unlike many tactical combat games, *Battlegroup* doesn't use a grid map to note the position of units. The nature of naval combat in three dimensions is too complex to track in such a manner without requiring a significant amount of work, and so combat is tracked along an abstract representation of space called the gyre. The gyre visualizes the battle space in two dimensions, as a series of six concentric range bands.

Of course, combat doesn't actually take place on a 2D plane. Commanders are constantly exploiting every axis of movement as they plan their engagement angles, plot counterfactual evasive maneuvers, and line up salvos on enemy ships, but at *Battlegroup*'s scale, these movements are too "minor" to worry about tracking in detail. They can simply be assumed to be occurring throughout the course of a battle.

All player battlegroups, unless otherwise noted, start play in a range bands determined by their pre-engagement posture or uptime actions, typically somewhere between **Extreme Range** and **Scope Range**. More details on selecting a starting range can be found on page 51.

Extreme Range

Long Range

Scope Range

Collapsing Range

Close Range

Point Blank Range
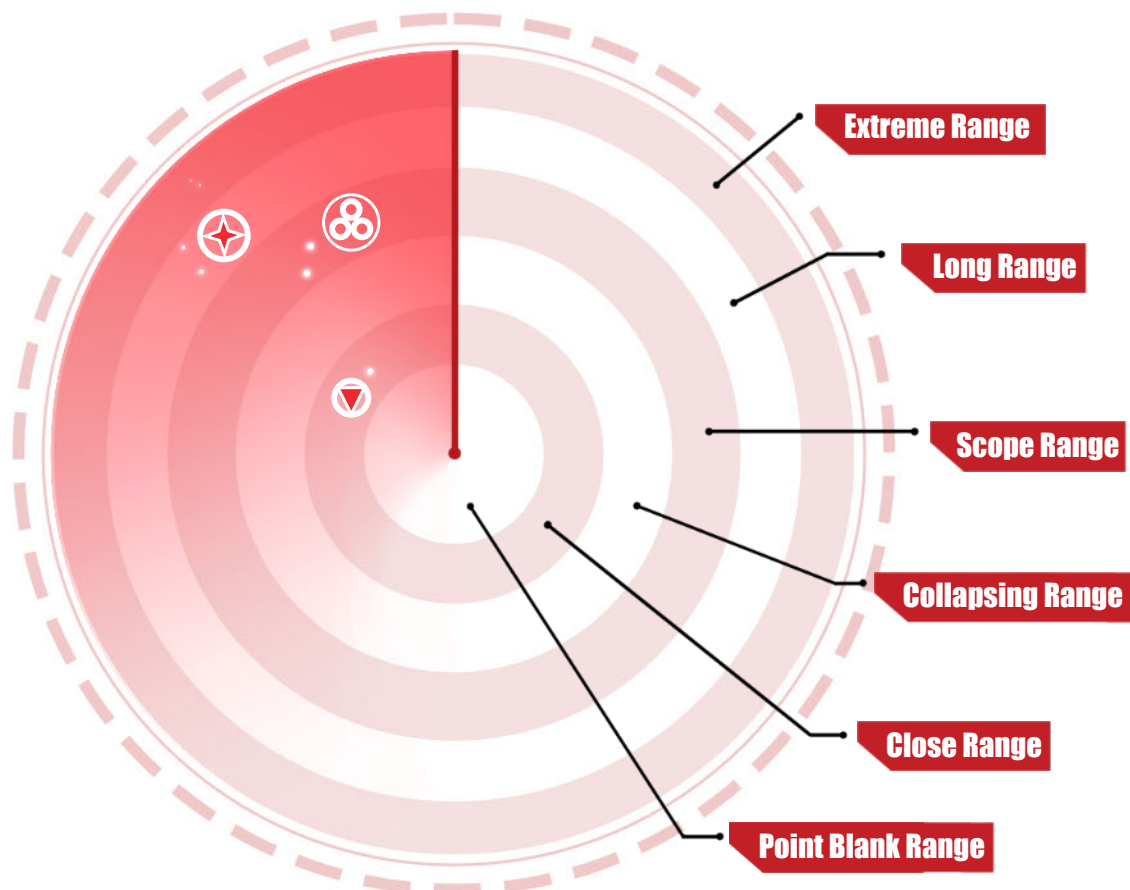
Range bands are only used to note the position of player battlegroups. NPC positions are not tracked on the gyre; their spatial relationship to the players' battlegroups is measured entirely by the position of the players and the range of their weapons. Each battlegroup moves as a single cohesive unit, but individual battlegroups can move independently of one another. One commander may prefer to operate from long range while another will want to close the distance and engage enemies in closer quarters. Every range band save for **Scope Range** – the effective "midpoint" of the gyre – confers bonuses and conditions that reflect the changing proximities of the engaged forces.

Unless a commander calls for their battlegroup to disengage and flee, all movement is done in service of engaging the enemy in combat. Players may get to decide the tactics they will use in the battle to come, but there will be a fight – movement in *Battlegroup* takes this as a core assumption.

As the engagement continues, engaged ships slowly begin to draw nearer to each other, circling around the gyre and working to close the unpredictability gap in a way that gives them the most advantageous position from which to fire their most devastating weapons. As a result, engaged fleets push up against a point of no return as the battle draws on. Seasoned veterans and experienced commanders refer to this as the tipping point.

THE TIPPING POINT

The tipping point occurs at the beginning of the fifth round of play. Before the **Logistics Phase** begins, battlegroups must decide whether to retreat or stay engaged. By this time, they have sufficient nearlight power available to make ejection a possibility. From then on, at the start of every successive round they'll make the same determination – retreat or remain engaged.

Over the course of these subsequent rounds, the gyre begins to collapse with the following effects:

Round 6: All ships at **Extreme Range** move to **Long Range**. It is no longer possible to fall back to **Extreme Range**.

Round 7: All ships further than **Collapsing Range** move to **Collapsing Range**. It is no longer possible to fall back further than this range.

Round 8+: All ships move to **Point-Blank Range**. From here on, battlegroups can no longer retreat: they can only survive, surrender, win, or die.

Extreme Range — 5

Long Range — 4

Scope Range — 3

Collapsing Range — 2

Close Range — 1
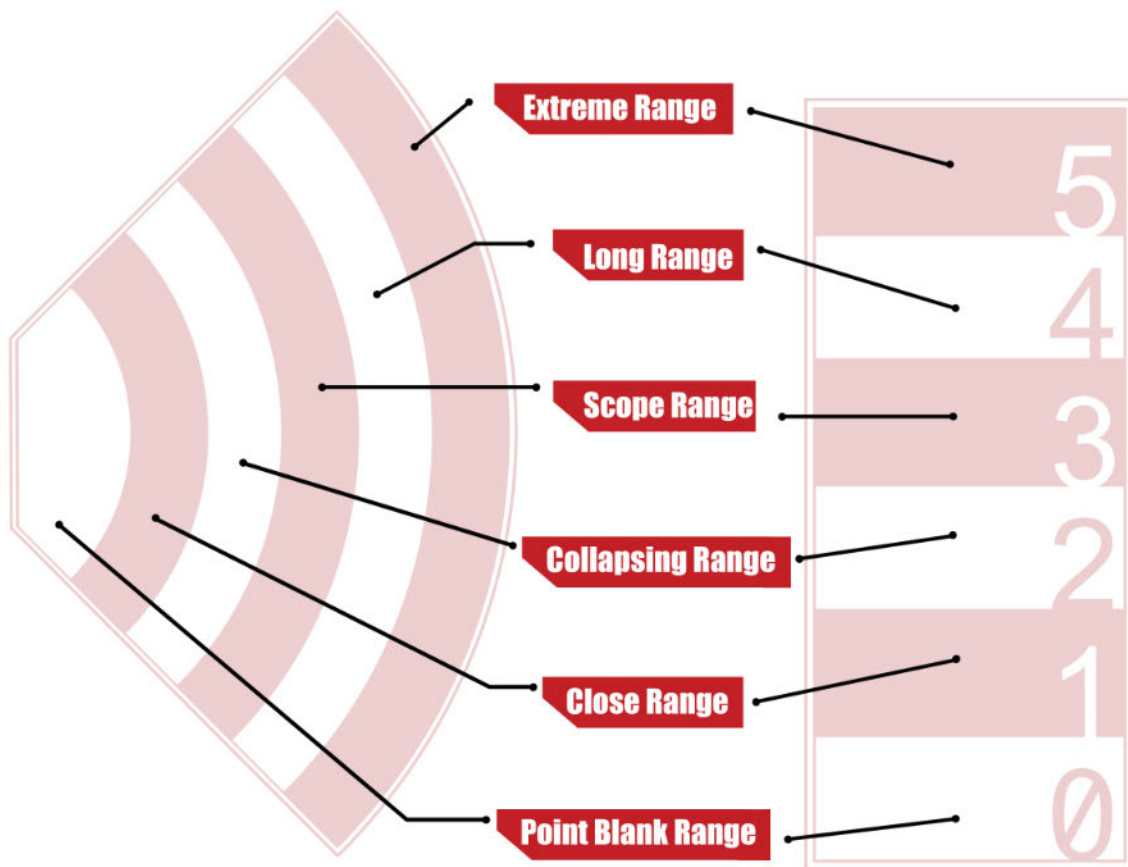
Point Blank Range — 0

Battlegroups at **Point-Blank** range beginning on Round 6 and beyond cannot choose to retreat; they are far too close to the enemy, and the preparations for a nearlight ejection would conflict with the main objective of staying alive. If a battlegroup at **Point-Blank** range wishes to retreat from combat at this point, they first need to fall back to a more distant range band while they still have time to do so before the gyre collapses completely.

Remember also that commanders can decide to surrender at the start of any round. Surrender is a difficult decision, but should a battle be going poorly it can be a necessary one to prevent the loss of more lives. Surrendering is most likely to occur prior to the tipping point, before a battlegroup is ready to eject, but even after that point a commander may opt to surrender rather than risk further casualties from a nearlight ejection.

RANGE BANDS

The gyre's range bands and their effects are outlined below. Movement between range bands is accomplished via the use of certain maneuvers, tactics, abilities, weapons, and systems.

BAND 5: EXTREME RANGE

At Extreme Range, the primary engagement between fleets takes the form of long-flight payloads and optimistic shots from main cannons. At this range, ships and their commanders must work in conjunction with the fleet legion to track and predict target locations, flinging shots and directing missiles toward trajectory-derived locations one or more Cradle-standard days away.

At Extreme Range:
- all weapons can be used, but:
- attacks with CHARGE weapons gain **+1 ACCURACY**
- all other single-target attacks receive **+1 DIFFICULTY**
- PAYLOAD attacks are fired with **5 Flight Counters**
- AREA-TARGET attacks from and against battlegroups in this range band deal half damage before interdiction.

BAND 4: LONG RANGE

At Long Range, ships continue to engage with large-caliber, high-wattage weapons, tracking targets with marginally more confidence than they did at Extreme Range. Here, commanders can use long-range sensor and modeling suites to see their enemies for the first time, allowing them to identify with high confidence the capabilities and equipment they may face as the gyre tightens and the unpredictability gap closes. With anywhere from hours to a Cradle-standard day between fleets, subline crews and fighter pilots begin their preflight checks, briefings, and assembly.

At Long Range:
- all weapons can be used, but:
- attacks with **Charge** weapons gain **+1 Accuracy**
- all other single-target attacks receive **+1 Difficulty**
- **Payload** attacks are fired with **4 Flight Counters**.

BAND 3: SCOPE RANGE

The middle-confidence range for engagements between fleets, Scope Range is where the effectiveness of long-spool weapons begins to fall off compared to faster cycling, quicker tracking weapons batteries. Not only are many weapons systems and legionspace defenses are calibrated for scope distance, but enemy forces are also identifiable and their trajectories are well within nominal predictive cones. Travel time between fleets is half a Cradle-standard day at most; subline vessels and longer-range strike craft wings launch for their first sorties; and marines hurry to their posts, making preparations for the grim deployments to come.

At Scope Range:
- **Payload** attacks are fired with **3 Flight Counters**.
- There are no additional modifiers. Attack rolls for **Charge** weapons are performed without advantage; the benefits of closer range are counterbalanced by the increased difficulty in tracking targets.

BAND 2: COLLAPSING RANGE

As battlegroups drive toward the heart of the enemy fleet, Collapsing Range is when the pressure of an engagement begins to turn up. The time between firing and impact reduces to mere hours. Friendly and enemy subline vessels and fighter or bomber wings begin their attack runs on their counterparts or, if they have broken through, on enemy capital ships. Area denial weapons – typically kinetic-kill-clouds – become more difficult to avoid, and primary weapons batteries have their pick of targets. Flak and point-defense cannon screens are visible using optical scopes, as are the enemy vessels they shroud.

At Collapsing Range:
- **Payload** attacks are fired with **2 Flight Counters**.

BAND 1: CLOSE RANGE

At Close Range, the distance between fleets is reduced to no more than an hour of travel time for payloads. Light-based weapons hit their targets near-instantly and there is little room for captains to avoid impacts from kinetic or particle-based energy weapons. Flight decks are roiling, busy platforms, with strike craft landing, loading, and deploying constantly. The enemy can be seen without the aid of scopes – star-bright drive signatures and PDC screens visible to the naked eye – as can subline vessels and wings.

At Close Range:
- single-target attacks (excluding **Charge** weapons) gain **+1 Accuracy**
- **Payload** attacks are fired with **1 Flight Counter**
- **Area-Target** attacks made from and against battlegroups in this range band deals **+2 damage**.

BAND 0: POINT-BLANK

At Point-Blank, capital ships find themselves in a rare and deadly engagement. Few commanders push their captains and vessels to this point, as casualties – even among the victors – are sure to be terrible. At this range, capital ships are in danger of colliding with each other, subline vessels and squadrons slip under PDC screens to attack without fear of reprisal, and boarders engage in bloody corridor-to-corridor brawls. Here, there is little chance to miss, as one could nearly fire without targeting assistance and still score a devastating hit.

At Point-Blank:
- single-target attacks (excluding **Charge** weapons) gain **+1 Accuracy**
- **Area-Target** attacks made from and against battlegroups in this range band deal **+4 damage**
- **Payload** attacks hit instantly, but also deal half damage to the attacker (or to their battlegroup in the case of area-target attacks) that cannot be reduced in any way
- attacks made from and against this range cannot be interdicted.

POSTURE AND UPTIME ACTIONS

Prior to an engagement, commanders have an opportunity to navigate within the strategic bounds of the battle and make decisions that will influence their fleet's starting position and capabilities before the first shots have even been fired. During the preparation stage (see p. 35), the players can choose to either set a posture or perform uptime actions. This should be a group decision, as it is binding on all players. Either everyone sets a posture, or everyone performs uptime actions.

Setting a posture is a quicker and simpler form of pre-engagement preparation that requires no additional rolling and allows the players to jump straight into combat. In some cases, GMs might also restrict preparation to setting a posture in order to represent the constraints of a more time-critical mission. Uptime actions are more complex, allowing players to choose which aspect of their battlegroup's preparations they wish to focus on. They also provide additional narrative opportunities for exploration of activity aboard one or more ships as commanders take on supplies, consult with officers and crew, and draw up battle plans.

POSTURE

When opting to set postures instead of performing uptime actions, each player chooses a posture for their battlegroup during preparation. This determines the starting deployment of the ships under their command. There are three postures available:

CONSERVATIVE POSTURE
Posture

"CIC to helm: drop our burn by 20% and push corresponding velocities to all escorts. Reroute power to forward shielding, and keep our wings spread – we're going in slow."

Your ships spread out and adopt a more defensive, cautious posture for this battle, tempering their speed and directing the saved power to forward shielding, additional systemic redundancies, and boosted processing power for your legion. Your ships deploy at **Extreme Range**. You may use one additional tactic during the first round of combat.

NOMINAL POSTURE
Posture

"Helm, steady on. By the books and as the admiral orders for this one – we engage as planned."

The tactical situation matches the strategic parameters as outlined in your briefing; you order your ships to their nominal trajectories and prepare to engage. Your ships deploy at **Long Range**.

AGGRESSIVE POSTURE
Posture

"Engineering, narrow our shielding and dump all excess power to our drives! Gunnery, skip-cycle your batteries! Legion, find a way through that flak screen – we're ending this now!"

You command your ships to adopt an aggressive posture. With wings and escorts screaming ahead at maximum speed and your batteries hammering away, your battlegroup punches straight for the core of the enemy fleet, seeking to strike a death blow in defiance of accepted doctrine and old strategies. Your ships deploy at **Scope Range**. During the first round of combat you may only use one maneuver or one tactic.

UPTIME ACTIONS

Before any planned battle, most fleet doctrines recommend that personnel be decanted from stasis to begin training, maintenance, and pre-theater operations (navigation, weapons checks, screening maneuvers, NHP interaction, and so on). This post-stasis time is generally called "uptime" and is what most cosmonauts refer to when they talk about time debts, "subjective time", and so on.

When using this pre-engagement preparation option, players select specific uptime actions prior to a battle. These actions allow them to acquire specific strategic and tactical benefits before combat begins. For example, they may want to drill their gunnery crews and calibrate their weapons to ensure optimal performance, or they might use their time gathering additional intelligence on enemy forces to better plan their next moves.

When using uptime actions, all player battlegroups begin play at **Extreme Range** with no specific bonuses or effects. If a commander wants to begin play at a different range band or with additional bonuses, they need select an appropriate uptime action.

Uptime provides an opportunity to focus on the personal and interpersonal – zoomed-in scenes that show what your character and their close circle are doing. The framing of uptime actions should be informed by narrative context: if the players' commanders are docked at a station or shipyard then they may have different opportunities to pursue their goals than if they begin preparations already in transit to a staging area aboard their flagship. Whatever the framing, however, the overall outcome of the actions they take will ultimately remain the same.

Each commander can attempt one uptime action of their choice prior to an engagement. To take an uptime action, a player chooses the action from the list below and rolls 1d20, the result of which may be modified by a character's traits and other sources of Accuracy and Difficulty. The final result determines the action's effect, although any given result represents countless options for narrative outcomes:

- A result of 9 or less has a limited effect, though most uptime actions still give commanders something when they roll poorly.
- A result of 10–19 provides a greater benefit or selection of outcomes.
- A result of 20+ is an exceptional success that provides powerful benefits.

Importantly, these rolls aren't like regular uptime checks; they can't be **Risky** or **Heroic**, you can't use teamwork on them, and you can't push them to try again.

There are diminishing returns to repeatedly choosing the same action over multiple engagements; there's only so hard you can push your crew in a given direction before they fail to return exceptional improvements, and part of effective command is understanding these limits. Whenever a commander attempts the same uptime action two or more battles in a row, they treat results of 10–19 as if they were 9 or less instead.

Note that some uptime actions grant players powerful benefits such as the ability to equip upgrades at a reduced cost. That being the case, players should always have the opportunity to adjust and finalize their battlegroup construction after uptime actions have resolved to take advantage of this. Battlegroup construction is detailed on page 62.

ACTIONS
SET A POSTURE
Textbook naval engagement doctrine involves approaching battle from a conservative position, granting ample time to optimize counterfactuals, analyze enemy forces, and respond to unforeseen developments. Some commanders, however, prefer a more aggressive approach, seeking to overwhelm the enemy before they can coordinate their forces in response.

Unlike other uptime actions, setting a posture does not require a roll – you may simply choose the effect you want. This uptime action allows you to set a posture (see previous page). Since this action does not require a roll, you can choose it in subsequent battles without penalty.

More ambitious commanders may wish to choose their starting position while also benefiting from other uptime actions. This requires them to **Plot a Course** instead.

CONSULT GUNNERY AND ENGINEERING
Ships of the line are useless if they can't hit their targets. Officers, ship NHPs, and crewmembers cycled up pre-engagement often stress-test their systems, perform routine maintenance, and so on, to ensure they are ready for the fight to come.

When consulting gunnery and engineering, you might practice at your station or in a virtual environment, negotiate with your battlegroup's head fabrication officer for ordnance priority in print orders, check in on engineering to see the progress they've made on in-flight upgrades and maintenance, consult with your ship's NHP on their latest enemy counterfactual predictions, brief gunnery crews with the most up-to-date NAVINT, and so on.

Describe your actions, and roll:

On a 9 or less, your current capacity remains largely unchanged despite your best efforts. This might mean that your gun teams or engineers, while competent, don't improve their skills; that you fail to secure additional or specialized ordnance; or that you make no special breakthrough in the analysis of your enemy's defensive patterning. You begin the upcoming battle with a banked Accuracy die. You may spend this banked die to add **+1 Accuracy** to one of your single-target attack rolls during play.

On 10–19, your gunnery or engineering teams show measurable improvement in their performance. Once during the upcoming battle, you may reroll one of your attack or damage rolls but must keep the second result.

On 20+, efforts meet with significant success. This might mean your gunnery teams show dramatic improvement, engineering makes a significant breakthrough, you make a key discovery about the enemy fleet's defenses, you are able to route long-flight torpedoes via an unconventional flight path, or similar. During the upcoming battle, you may choose one of the following benefits:

- Reroll any one attack or damage roll you make during play but must keep the second result.
- During the first Logistics Phase, remove an additional **1 Charge Counter** from a Charge weapon in your battlegroup.
- Add or remove **1 Flight Counter** from any one Payload attack you make.

CONSULT NAVIGATION AND INTELLIGENCE

Gunnery is only the business end of navigation and intelligence: if you don't know where your target is, or what it is, your chances of scoring a mission-critical kill are, essentially, zero.

When consulting navigation and intelligence, you might maintain relative speed and distance from the other ships in your battlegroup, assign patrol orbits to defend against known-unknown attack vectors, review NHP updates on thrust control and ETAs relative to local stations and worlds, initiate long-range surveillance on known and predicted enemy movements, run specific deep scans on sighted enemy vessels, and so on.

Describe your actions, and roll:

On 9 or less, NAVINT is a mess and it takes far longer than normal to sort signal from noise. You fail to glean much more useful intel, though your efforts may still identify some tactical advantages that you can exploit. You gain both of the following benefits:

You begin the upcoming battle with a banked **DIFFICULTY** die. You may spend this banked die to add **+1 DIFFICULTY** to any single-target attack roll made against you during play.

You may ask the GM one question about the upcoming battle. This question may be about the enemy's fleet's composition or the combat area (e.g., whether the enemy forces include a specific type of **FLAGSHIP**, the number of **CHARGE** weapons they have, whether there are any notable environmental hazards that weren't noted during the briefing, etc.), or it may have a more narrative focus (e.g., morale among the enemy forces, the stakes for the enemy forces or their interests in the outcome of the battle, the personality and tactical deportment of a notable enemy commander, etc). The GM must answer truthfully to the best of their abilities.

On a 10–19, all systems are nominal and the report you requested arrives on your desk promptly. You gain both a banked **DIFFICULTY** die and you may ask the GM three questions about the upcoming battle, which they must answer truthfully as outlined above.

On a 20+, you make key, critical discoveries regarding the enemy fleet's composition, heading, and posture. In addition to asking three questions about the upcoming battle, you may also choose one option from the **RESERVES** table (p. 52) to bring with you into the upcoming engagement.

CONSULT SENIOR OFFICERS

Maintenance of a ship is about more than mechanics. A commander must engage with their direct subordinates – their officers – to provide counsel, command, and direction.

When consulting senior officers, you might catch up on the status of the ship and crew with the officers who were on watch while you were under, gossip about or discuss officers who have not yet been cycled out of stasis, get the latest reports from the various departments and modules of your ship, get the latest rumors about other captains and officers in the battlegroup (who to look out for, who to trust, etc.), brag or compare ship compositions and flight tactics, bet on kill numbers, or similar.

Describe your actions, and roll:

On 9 or less, your consultations with senior staff are less productive than you'd hoped. While nothing seems particularly out of order, no one has any special insights to share regarding the upcoming engagement. You begin the upcoming battle with your choice of a banked **ACCURACY** or a banked **DIFFICULTY** die. You may spend this banked die to add **+1 ACCURACY** to one of your single-target attack rolls or **+1 DIFFICULTY** to a single-target attack roll made against you, as relevant.

On 10–19, astute tactical analysis or canny leveraging of available resources helps you and your officers to formulate an effective plan of attack. You may choose one option from the **RESERVES** table (p. 52) to bring with you into the upcoming engagement.

On 20+, a flash of insight or a sudden windfall gives you just what you need to exploit a critical weakness in the enemy's defenses or capitalize on an unexpected advantage. You may both choose an option from the **RESERVES** table to bring with you into the upcoming engagement and grant one of your allies a banked **ACCURACY** die or a banked **DIFFICULTY** die.

PLOT A COURSE

Some commanders feel daring enough – though some might say reckless enough – to try and engage the enemy from a completely unexpected vantage, tasking the helm with plotting a course to drop out of nearlight in the perfect position to strike while they themselves make preparations elsewhere.

This uptime action is for players that wish to both set their position at the start of an engagement and attempt other actions as well. Selecting it allows you to use one other uptime action of your choice at the same time. This carries some risks, though – it divides the crew's attention and may result in dangerous navigational errors. Additionally, this action cannot be repeated in consecutive engagements; too many daredevil maneuvers in a row may leave your superiors questioning your tactical judgment.

When your battlegroup make its entrance, roll:

On 9 or less, disaster! You realign directly into the enemy line, your battlegroup colliding with an enemy element. As warning klaxons howl and automated systems struggle to balance damage control protocols with life support mandates, you take stock of the situation. This fight is going to be a mess. Your battlegroup and an enemy battlegroup of your choice collide, both suffering an immediate, unavoidable **2d6 damage**. You may distribute this damage among your Capital Ships as you wish; the GM, likewise, distributes the damage taken by the NPC battlegroup as they see fit among its **Capital Ships** and **Escorts**. Next, roll 1d3 to determine exactly where you begin play:

- **On 1,** you begin at **Long Range**.
- **On 2,** you begin at **Scope Range**.
- **On 3,** you begin at **Collapsing Range**.

Whatever the result, during the first round of combat, choose one: you act after everyone else has acted, or you act first during the round but the only action you can take on your turn is **Retrograde Burn**.

On 10–19, the bolt was well-plotted, but failed to account for some critical variable. Roll 1d3 to determine exactly where you begin play:

- **On 1,** you begin at **Extreme Range**.
- **On 2,** you begin at **Long Range**.
- **On 3,** you begin at **Scope Range**.

Use the same starting position modifiers as **Set a Posture** for the first round of combat.

On 20+, navigation just won themselves a round in the ship's mess – your battlegroup realigns exactly where it was meant to: you may choose to begin at **Extreme Range**, **Long Range**, or **Scope Range**, using the same starting position modifiers as **Set a Posture** for the first round of combat.

POWER AT A COST

Some aspects of your commission's portfolio are best left unsaid. Anything to win an advantage, right? This uptime action covers activities that are off-book or otherwise outside of regulations, both mundane and esoteric. Anything not covered by the previous uptime actions can fall into this category. Context permitting, your GM might also allow you to use this in addition to another uptime action, though this decision will doubtlessly influence the cost you have to pay as well.

When seeking power at a cost, you might have a private audience with your ship's NHP to ask questions about the strange dreams you had while you were under; spacewalk alone on the hull of your ship, free of disturbances as you plan your next move; triple-check the provisions and functionality of the CIC's lifeboat, as you've got a bad feeling about this one; slip into the gestalt and spend time in legionspace, enjoying an approximation of "home"; participate in a high-stakes game of chance with other commanders, putting everything on the line; or similar.

Name what you want or what you're attempting to do. You'll get it before the engagement begins, but depending on the nature of the ask, the GM may choose one or two consequences:

- It's going to have repercussions for future engagements.
- It's going to affect your chances at promotion.
- You'll have to give something up or leave something behind.
- You're going to piss off someone or something important and powerful.
- Obtaining it will disrupt other plans.
- Enemy forces won't remain idle during this time.
- Whatever you receive will be of lesser quality, falling apart, or malfunctioning.

RESERVES

Seasoned commanders take every advantage they can get going into battle, and one form these advantages can take are reserves. These bonuses take the form of additional supplies, gear, support, advanced intel, and old-fashioned grit and luck – anything that might make a difference in the fight ahead.

Uptime actions are one way for commanders to secure reserves for themselves. GMs may also decide to award them directly as part of an ongoing campaign. Reserves can be used for the duration of the next engagement only, after which they are lost whether expended or not.

RESERVES

ROLL 1D10

#	Name	Description
1	WHITEWASH DECON	*Expanded stores of specialized whitewash utility nanites are held as a countermeasure against nanotech warfare, helping to mitigate casualties without the need to employ more destructive methods of decontamination.* 1/engagement, during the **Logistics Phase**, you may automatically clear all **Greywash** from one of your ships.
2	CRACK PILOTS	*They're some of the best in the service – all they need now are orders.* You may either add a **WING** slot to one of your ships or reduce the cost of any equipped **WING** upgrade by 2.
3	SECONDED VESSEL	*On loan from another fleet, or perhaps the last surviving ship of an otherwise wiped-out battlegroup, the crew of this vessel is nonetheless eager to return to the fight.* You may either add an **ESCORT** slot to one of your ships or reduce the cost of any equipped **ESCORT** upgrade by 2.
4	VETERAN MARINES	*The best thing to do with a ship full of marines is point them toward the enemy.* You may equip a **Marine Lander** (p. 111) to one of your ships without using an upgrade slot. 1/engagement, when this unit fails a boarding roll, you may instead declare that roll a success, then destroy this unit.
5	TERRAIN ADVANTAGE	*Knowing where and when to fight is just as important as knowing how to fight.* You may either choose an appropriate effect from those listed under **The Field of Battle** (p. 149–151) to be present in the upcoming battle or replace a previously established effect with a new one of your choice. Your choice should be appropriate to the engagement as outlined during the briefing. For example, if the engagement is taking place in deep space, it might not be appropriate to choose an effect that represents proximity to a populated world. Discuss your choice with the GM to reach a satisfactory agreement.
6	UNCOMMON FORTUNE	*Sometimes the difference between a good commander and an exceptional commander is a bit of the right luck at the right time.* You begin the upcoming battle with a banked **ACCURACY** die and a banked **DIFFICULTY** die. You may spend these banked dice to add **+1 ACCURACY** to one of your single-target attack rolls or **+1 DIFFICULTY** to a single-target attack roll made against you, as relevant.
7	FIRE SHIP	*A decommissioned hull can still find new life, if only for a brief, brilliant moment.* You may equip a **THROUGHLINE SKIP DRONE** (p. 102) to your battlegroup at no cost.
8	CHAPERONE PAYLOAD	*Launched far in advance of initial contact, these munitions provide additional fire support during major engagements.* At the start of the battle, just before the first **Logistics Phase**, you may launch a **DARKSTAR MULTIPLE-WARHEAD TORPEDO** (p. 102) at a hostile battlegroup of your choice. It starts with **5 Flight Counters** regardless of where your battlegroup begins play, and it counts as belonging to your battlegroup for the purpose of effects and abilities.
9	LEGIONSPACE PRIORITY HOST	*The fleet legion has taken a particular interest in your ships for reasons known only to themselves and/or high command.* You may choose a single hostile battlegroup at the start of the engagement: during the first round, you may act first during each phase and that battlegroup must act last. If multiple hostile battlegroups suffer from this disruption effect at once, or if some other effect or ability sets a battlegroup at a specific turn, they choose a viable turn order as needed among themselves. Player battlegroups have priority over NPC battlegroups in turn order.
10	ENHANCED SHIELDING	*A little extra power to defense systems can spell the difference between victory or defeat.* 1/engagement, you may reroll any number of **Interdiction** dice, choosing the best result.

DAMAGE AND DESTRUCTION

No matter how much damage a ship takes, it remains operational as long as stays above **0 HP** – with even just **1 HP** remaining, the officers, crew, and automated systems can keep the ship in the fight. At **0 HP**, however, a ship is considered destroyed; any lower, and you begin to see more and more catastrophic levels of destruction. A destroyed ship is no longer a valid target for attacks and abilities. Use the **Kill Table** below to determine the degree to which a ship has been removed from the fight, and how many – if any – members of the crew manage to escape.

A note about player safety: while *Battlegroup* assumes that peoples' lives are fragile in the context of space combat, we never want players to be placed in situations that they find unsafe. To that extent, clear it with your players whether or not they are comfortable with the (very high) chance that their character could die in a session. If they are, play on as written. If not, make sure to leave some wiggle room for characters to live.

KILL TABLE

REMAINING HP	OUTCOME	DETAILS
0 to -4	MISSION KILL	The ship is "mission-killed": its drive section is holed, life support systems and reservoirs ruptured, navcomm and weapons systems rendered ineffective, or it drifts uncontrolled through space. Whatever the specifics, a ship in this condition is unable to continue the fight in an effective manner. Fortunately for those aboard, the crew and passengers of a mission-killed ship have time to escape via conventional systems (e.g., escape pods and lifeboats) if they so choose, although they can grab only those personal effects, supplies, critical hardcopy intelligence, and so on, that they can carry.
-5 to -9	SUNDERING HIT	The ship suffers a sudden and catastrophic blow, shattering its hull and causing irreconcilable damage to its superstructure. The damage at the point of impact likely causes a section of the ship to shear off, boiling all proximal modules to slag in a catastrophic rupture. Crew are killed outright or, worse, spaced. Some of the lucky ones manage to escape on lifeboats, but they are few.
-10 to -14	TOTAL DESTRUCTION	The ship is immediately destroyed by the attack. The brief, catastrophic explosion (or series of explosions) as critical systems rupture immediately kills nearly everyone on board. Survivors of the blast are limited to the single digits – of these, few live longer than a handful of moments after the initial explosion. The ship is not salvageable, having been reduced both by the weapon impact and drive rupture to a glittering plume of slag and debris.
-15 or less	ANNIHILATION	The ship is immediately destroyed as its nearlight drive, magazines, or long-spool capacitors suffer a direct, penetrating hit. The resultant explosion is so massive that it blanks nearby ships' sensors for a moment, and little remains save for an expanding cloud of plasma. All hands are lost; no one can survive an explosion like that.

NEARLIGHT EJECTION

Ships can also suffer catastrophic effects as a result of sudden emergency nearlight maneuvers away from an unfavorable battle, a process referred to as nearlight ejection. Much like ejection from the cockpit of a mech or fighter, nearlight ejection from combat isn't without its risks. Without the luxury of ample time to prepare for such brutal acceleration, both damage to the ship and danger to the crew are to be expected. That said, much like when ejecting from a cockpit, such dangers are often still preferable to the alternative.

When a player performs a nearlight ejection, you may roll on the following table to determine the consequences, if any. These consequences are entirely optional and largely narrative in effect; they have no additional bearing on the state of an engagement or a player's battlegroup, as ejection is already an undesirable outcome. You might roll on this table once for each Capital Ship remaining in your battlegroup, or simply roll once and apply the results broadly to all ships.

NEARLIGHT EJECTION TABLE   ROLL 1D6

1	CREW CASUALTIES	During ejection, the ship's kinetic compensators fail to properly engage across all decks, resulting in numerous casualties. Roll 1d20: the result is the percentage of the ship's crew that are killed as a result of the ejection, crushed to death by unprotected exposure to sudden, massive acceleration.
2	INTERNAL EXPLOSION	Whether due to existing battle damage or critical overloads caused by sudden nearlight acceleration, an internal explosion occurs aboard the ship immediately after it realigns to realspace. The ship suffers **1d6 damage** immediately and without mitigation. This damage cannot reduce a ship below **0 HP**, but may still prompt the remaining crew to evacuate in order to avoid further danger.
3	MISALIGNED JUMP	Due to a navigational error or hardware malfunction, when your ship finally retranslates back to nominal velocity you discover that your ejection has placed you far off course. This could also place you dangerously close to stellar bodies, a gravity well, or other hazardous conditions.
4	DEAD IN THE WATER	The jump was successful – on target, with no injuries – but massive power surges have pushed the ship's reactors into an automatic shutdown sequence. The ship is now operating on emergency power to essential systems only. It will take several days or more for the reactors to fully cycle down and then be brought back online – the larger the vessel, the longer it takes. Until then, you're adrift in space.
5-6	JUMP SUCCESSFUL, ALL CLEAR	Despite the desperate circumstances, your ejection from battle is handled without error. You retranslate on course, and while the ship and her crew may suffer minor systems damage and treatable injuries in the aftermath, this is nonetheless a textbook example of a successful jump.

GAME TERMS

ALLY/ALLIED: Some effects and abilities refer to allied battlegroups and ships. Your own battlegroup's ships do not count as allied for these purposes; if something can affect your own ships, it will say so.

ATTACK: An attack in *Battlegroup* can take several different forms: it refers to any action or effect – most often a maneuver like **Open Fire** – that calls for an attack roll with a weapon against a target's **DEFENSE** value, or that launches a **PAYLOAD** attack of some sort. If something prohibits you from making attacks, then you cannot perform these actions. Weapons, upgrades, and abilities that do damage automatically, such as strike craft and certain **AUXILIARY** weapons do not count as attacks.

BATTLEGROUP(S): A battlegroup is the group of ships commanded by a player or an NPC.

BOLSTERED: Battlegroups that are **BOLSTERED** have taken additional measures to avoid or mitigate incoming damage, such as shunting additional power toward their defensive systems or rerouting power to thrusters, shields, electronic countermeasures, and point defenses. When a battlegroup is **BOLSTERED**, it gains **+1d6 interdiction** and all ships in the battlegroup gain **+2 DEFENSE** until the end of its next turn. A battlegroup can only benefit from one instance of **BOLSTERED** at a time; it doesn't gain additional benefits.

CAPITAL SHIP: CAPITAL SHIPS are some of the largest vessels in modern naval fleets, and are the central ships of any battlegroup. Players have access to three types of **CAPITAL SHIPS**: **FRIGATES**, **CARRIERS**, and **BATTLESHIPS**. NPC **FLAGSHIPS** are also **CAPITAL SHIPS** and form the core of NPC battlegroups. Some weapons, upgrades, and abilities can only target or affect **CAPITAL SHIPS**.

COUNTERS: The status of various gameplay elements are tracked with counters, including the readiness of powerful weapons and the time until a self-propelled strike reaches the enemy. You can use actual tokens or a d6 for this purpose, or just mark them on a piece of paper. Among other types of counters, **CHARGE** weapons use **Charge Counters**, **PAYLOAD** weapons use **Flight Counters**, and **RELOADING** abilities use **Refresh Counters**. Some weapons and effects also apply **Greywash Counters**, which deal persistent damage over time.

CRITICAL HIT: A result of 20+ on an attack roll using weapons with the **CRITICAL** tag causes a critical hit, doubling all damage from that attack.

FLEET: A fleet is an organized force of trade or military spaceships, composed of a mix of ships of the line, subline vessels, fighters, bombers, and mounted mechanized chassis. In *Battlegroup*, it refers to the collective forces of the player group and the assembled NPC forces. Fleets typically give a single capital ship the honor of being the fleet's flagship, usually the one led by the most senior officer present, though other structures are acceptable and found across various naval powers.

FLAGSHIP: Each player has one **FLAGSHIP** that represents the center of their battlegroup's command structure. This is generally the ship carrying their commander. Each NPC battlegroup is also formed around a **FLAGSHIP**.

HIT POINTS (HP): HP represents the health, cohesion, and morale of a battlegroup and the structural integrity of individual ships and their pilots. When a ship's **HP** is reduced to 0 by damage or other effects, that ship is destroyed (see p. 53).

Some systems or abilities cause ships to take damage as a cost or allow them to take it in place of another target. Unless otherwise specified, when such an effect reduces a ship to 0 **HP**, it is destroyed after carrying out its command or effect. If a particular upgrade doesn't have a **HP** value then it can't take damage and can't be used for effects such as these. Likewise, an upgrade that doesn't have **HP** can't benefit from effects that restore it.

HOSTILE: Some effects and abilities refer to hostile battlegroups and ships. Hostile targets are always designated as such from the perspective of the user; for players, NPC battlegroups and ships are hostile, and for NPCs player battlegroups and ships are hostile.

INTERDICTION: A battlegroup's **INTERDICTION** score represents its ability to shoot down or neutralize incoming attacks using a range of electronic, kinetic-projectile, or directed-energy countermeasures. **INTERDICTION** is an abstract value that comprises numerous defensive systems all working in concert. It can just as easily represent point-defense guns as it can a fleet legion's anti-incursion protocols. A battlegroup's **INTERDICTION** is the sum of all dice and bonuses within it, including those from individual ships, weapons, upgrades, and abilities. Ships don't have **INTERDICTION** – battlegroups do.

A battlegroup's **INTERDICTION** reduces damage from incoming **PAYLOAD** attacks and damage from area-target attacks. This is primarily useful during the **Impact Phase**, during which it is rolled once each round to defend against all relevant incoming damage; however, **INTERDICTION** can also be rolled during the **Action Phase** when battlegroups are hit by certain attacks and abilities (e.g., those that deal area-target damage or that specifically state the damage can be interdicted). When defending against such an attack, you roll your battlegroup's **INTERDICTION** and reduce the damage of incoming attacks by an amount equal to the result. If the damage from an attack or effect is reduced to 0, it is completely neutralized and has no effect on the target, including any secondary effects it might otherwise have.

For example, a torpedo salvo (an area-target attack) might strike a battlegroup, dealing 8 damage. The targeted battlegroup has 1d6 Interdiction. The player rolls a 1d6, getting a 3, which they subtract from the incoming damage, meaning every Capital Ship and every Escort in the battlegroup takes 5 damage (Wings ignore area damage). If the defender had 8 Interdiction instead, they would have neutralized the attack entirely and none of their ships would take any damage.

LOCK ON: During naval engagements, ships are constantly vying for a clean firing solution. Powerful sensor suites and networked NHPs work in concert to analyze, predict, and acquire positive locks on their targets when they can, setting up devastating attacks before their maneuvers and countermeasures are inevitably disrupted. **LOCK ON** is a status that ships can be given by certain maneuvers or tactics. When attacking a target with **LOCK ON**, the attacker can consume the status to gain **+1 ACCURACY**. Certain weapons, systems, and abilities also have additional effects that require inflicting or consuming **LOCK ON** to activate. **LOCK ON** does not stack with itself, and disappears at the end of the **Impact Phase** if not used.

MANEUVER: Maneuvers are a type of action that players and NPCs can perform during the **Action Phase**. They are typically actions that involve a full battlegroup, such as attacks or movements, or require a significant investment of time and attention. Each player can make one maneuver during their turn.

MOVEMENT: A movement is when a battlegroup changes its position on the gyre, either advancing forward (toward **Point-Blank**) or moving back (toward **Extreme Range**). Some upgrades and abilities enable or force battlegroups to move or prevent them from moving.

TACTIC: Alongside maneuvers, tactics are the other type of action can be taken by players and NPCs in the **Action Phase**. Tactics tend to be less demanding of time and resources, involving more specialized systems and abilities intended to enhance a fleet's performance. Each player can use one tactic and one maneuver during their turn, or they can forego their maneuver and use two tactics instead.

TURN: A battlegroup's turn takes place during the **Action Phase**, during which it performs maneuvers and uses tactics to move through the gyre, launch attacks and boarding actions, or activate various upgrades. Once a battlegroup has performs all actions that it can or that it wishes to, its turn is over and any effects that trigger or clear at the end of its turn do so then.

UPTIME: In naval parlance, uptime refers to the minutes, days, hours, weeks, or – rarely – months when a ship's crew are awake and active but not necessarily engaged in combat. This time is usually filled with drills and training, maintenance, intelligence-gathering, resupply and replenishment, sensitive navigation, and so on. "Downtime", by contrast, refers to the time the crew spends in stasis. What other branches would call downtime – recreational activities, non-stasis rest, and any generalized blowing off steam – is instead referred to as "R&R" or "shore leave" (often shortened to just "leave", and in many cases not on a literal shore) in the navy.

WEAPON TYPES

There are three main classes of weapons that can be mounted on **Capital Ships**. Only weapons of the proper class can be equipped to a ship's weapon slots.

SUPERHEAVY WEAPONS

The most powerful and devastating weapons mounted on capital ships, **Superheavy** weapons draw down enormous power or launch volleys of powerful munitions. Unless otherwise noted, **Superheavy** weapons without the **Charge** tag can only be used as part of the **Open Fire** maneuver.

Superheavy weapons receive **+1 Difficulty** on all attack rolls against NPC **Escorts**, as they aren't optimized for use against such small, nimble targets.

PRIMARY WEAPONS

Primary weapons are the large, main battery weapon systems that form the backbone of a fleet's armament.

AUXILIARY WEAPONS

Auxiliary weapons are smaller, secondary weapon systems that can be fired alongside other weapons. They often enhance or augment other weapons or provide additional firepower against subline- or fighter-tier targets. When you attack with a **Primary** weapon, you may also fire an **Auxiliary** weapon. These weapons do not have to be equipped on the same ship.

Each **Auxiliary** weapon can only be used once per **Primary**-weapon attack. For example, if you're performing a maneuver that allows you to attack with two **Primary** weapons, you couldn't use fire the same **Auxiliary** weapon twice, but you could use two different ones.

SINGLE-TARGET

Attacks from single-target weapons must be against individual targets. If they hit, then they deal damage; if they miss, they don't. Single-target attacks cannot be interdicted unless they are from **Payload** weapons.

AREA-TARGET

Area-Target attacks do not require an attack roll. Instead, they automatically hit the target battlegroup and roll damage, which can then be reduced by **Interdiction**.

When making an **Area-Target** attack, the attack's damage is rolled, then the total **Interdiction** of the target battlegroup is rolled and the result subtracted from the damage. Whatever damage remains is then applied to all ships in the battlegroup except for **Wings**, which are small and nimble enough to evade them automatically.

WEAPON & UPGRADE TAGS

The weapons and upgrades available to commanders include powerful weapons, electronic warfare systems, enhanced command-and-control capabilities, and also things like accompanying subline vessels or wings of fighters and bombers housed aboard carriers.

Tags are specific terms that describe how a weapon, upgrade, or ability functions and what sort of rules are attached to it. Remember that specific rules override general rules. That means that if an upgrade has different rules to the ones outlined here, you should use the specific rules given for that upgrade.

TAGS

Accurate: Attacks with this weapon gain **+1 Accuracy**.

Boarding: This weapon or upgrade can take part in boarding actions. Many **Escorts** and **Wings** can perform boarding actions alongside other actions. While boarding a ship, units are removed from play and can't regain **HP**, take damage, or be targeted by attacks or effects unless specifically noted.

Charge X: This weapon begins play with **X Charge Counters**, which indicates how close they are to being fully charged. During each **Logistics Phase**, all **Charge** weapons automatically remove **1 Charge Counter**. **Charge** weapons that have reached **0 Charge Counters** can be fired during the **Impact Phase**, which resets their counters to X. Firing a **Charge** weapon does not require a **maneuver** or **tactic**.

RUNNING WITH SCISSORS

Students often ask naval academy instructors why fleets don't simply maintain long-spool weapons at firing charge before entering a battle's outer perimeter. Wouldn't it make sense to approach a fight as ready as possible?

There are countless answers to this question. Some focus on wear and misalignment of critical weapon components, others highlight the unacceptable levels of electromagnetic interference, but the most immediate concern is simple: fully charged long-spool weapons are incredibly volatile. The outputs of these weapons can carve holes through moons, shatter space colonies, and upend continental ecosystems. On top of that, nearlight travel and battlespace realignment is also a volatile endeavor, with dozens of ships moving close to lightspeed before attempting to safely decelerate to combat velocity while remaining on target for optimum positioning.

Mixing the two, therefore, is highly inadvisable. To satisfy their curiosity, cadets are often invited to view after-action recordings of engagements where reckless commanders have attempted such maneuvers with spectacularly catastrophic results.

CRITICAL: This weapon is especially devastating or capable of penetrating a target's defenses to strike vulnerable components with careful aim and a bit of luck. Its attacks can critically hit, dealing double damage when 20+ is rolled on an attack roll.

ESCORT: This upgrade represents a group of subline vessels that occupy the middle ground between massive capital ships and smaller fighter-tier craft. Corvettes, destroyers, cruisers, and other specialized ships fall under this category. Certain ships are outfitted with the necessary command-and-control infrastructure and supply reserves to utilize subline groups, allowing them to take **ESCORT** upgrades, which give them access to special tactics and abilities. Player **ESCORTS** may have **HP**, but cannot be targeted by regular attacks and can only be affected by weapons and abilities that specifically affect **ESCORTS**.

By contrast, NPC **ESCORTS** can be attacked and interacted with both as normal and also by weapons or abilities that specifically affect **ESCORTS**. **SUPERHEAVY** weapons receive **+1 DIFFICULTY** to attacks against these **ESCORTS** as they are not optimized for such small targets.

GREYWASH: This insidious weapon or munition infests targets and gradually breaks them down. **GREYWASH** weapons often make use of destructive nanotech swarms, but they can take a range of similar forms as well, such as drones or lingering munitions. **GREYWASH** upgrades inflict their targets with **Greywash Counters**. At the end of the **Impact Phase**, ships take damage equal to the number of **Greywash Counters** they currently have (ignoring **OVERSHIELD**) and then remove **1 Greywash Counter**. These counters can stack. Battlegroups can automatically clear all **Greywash Counters** from their ships as a maneuver.

INACCURATE: Attacks with this weapon take **+1 DIFFICULTY**.

LEGIONSPACE: This weapon or upgrade is connected to the fleet legion in some way. It can be used to disrupt enemy vessels or to unleash systemic, paracausal attacks upon opposed fleet legions, which, in turn, affects targets in realspace. **LEGIONSPACE** weapons, systems, and upgrades function as normal, but can be uniquely bolstered or hindered by some effects.

LIMITED X: This weapon or system can only be used X times before it is fully expended. To use the system, the user expends a use. **LIMITED** weapons expend uses when used to attack.

OVERKILL: When rolling for damage with this weapon, any damage dice that land on a 1 are immediately rerolled. Additional 1s continue to trigger this effect.

OVERSHIELD: This weapon, system, or effect grants a ship X temporary **HP** on top of its base **HP**, the amount of which is noted in the ability itself (for example, **5 OVERSHIELD**). This **OVERSHIELD** cannot be regained by things that restore **HP**, but otherwise works like normal **HP** for purposes of damage, damage reduction, and so on. **OVERSHIELD** can put a ship above its normal **HP** total. Damage is dealt to a ship's **OVERSHIELD** first, then its **HP**. Ships retain only the highest value of **OVERSHIELD** applied; it does not stack.

PAYLOAD/PAYLOAD X: This weapon does not require an attack roll to hit its targets. Instead, there is a delay between when they're fired and when they hit their target; the longer the distance, the longer the flight time. When fired, **PAYLOAD** attacks start with a number of **Flight Counters** based on the attacker's range band (see p. 46–47 for flight times). **Flight Counters** are removed during the **Logistics Phase** of each round. Once the final **Flight Counter** is removed, impact is imminent and the attack hits its target in the **Impact Phase**. Most **PAYLOAD** attacks can be interdicted.

PAYLOAD X weapons are slower or faster than usual, adding or subtracting **X Flight Counters**. A weapon with **PAYLOAD –1**, for example, starts with 1 less **Flight Counter** than usual. Some abilities and effects can also increase or decrease the flight time of **PAYLOAD** attacks, down to a minimum of **1 Flight Counter** – a **PAYLOAD**'s **Flight Counters** cannot be reduced to 0 before the **Logistics Phase**.

Once fired, **PAYLOAD** weapons can't be fired again until the previous attack has impacted; however, if a **PAYLOAD**'s target is destroyed or flees from battle before it reaches them then automatic failsafes detonate it early, allowing you to attack again without having to wait. You may also choose to manually detonate any of your **PAYLOAD** attacks during your turn, allowing you to fire a new salvo.

By contrast, **PAYLOAD** attacks do not automatically detonate or shut down when the ship that fired them is destroyed – they can continue to present a threat over the course of an engagement. But if the battlegroup responsible for them surrenders or ejects from battle, or if they and their entire fleet are defeated and the engagement ends, then the absence of coordinating telemetry renders them useless and they are effectively destroyed without harm.

RELIABLE X: This weapon always deals some amount of unavoidable damage, whether due to sheer volume of fire, collateral thermal bleed, or exceptional course-correction capabilities. It always deals X damage, even if you roll lower, the attack is interdicted or avoided, or it otherwise misses its target.

RELOADING X: Although this weapon or upgrade doesn't necessarily require literal reloading, it does have to refresh, recharge, or cool down between uses. After use, gains X Refresh Counters, with one counter removed in each subsequent Logistics Phase. When the last Refresh Counter is removed, it is ready to be used again.

SYSTEM: This specialized upgrade can only be installed on ships with free system slots. This represents the command structure, electronics architecture, power surplus, or extra cargo space needed to effectively utilize it.

TENACITY: All units capable of boarding an enemy vessel have a Tenacity rating that represents how difficult it is to dislodge them once they are aboard. Boarded ships roll against a boarding unit's Tenacity to repel them if they do not perform a maneuver on their turn to do so automatically.

UNIQUE: This weapon or system is especially rare or unconventional and cannot be assigned casually – each battlegroup may only equip a single instance of it at a time.

WING: This upgrade represents a flight of fighters, bombers, drones, or mounted chassis that grant a ship access to special tactics and abilities. Individually, these craft may pose little threat to a capital ship, but in numbers their tactical flexibility and anti-capital ordnance allows them to punch well above their weight. Certain ships – particularly Carriers – are outfitted with the landing bays required to house and launch these strike craft, as denoted by the Wing slots listed in their descriptions. Wings are too nimble to be attacked directly by most naval weapons; they can only be affected by weapons and abilities that specifically state they can do so, and they are unaffected by area-target attacks.

SECTION 3
THE BATTLEGROUP

BUILDING A BATTLEGROUP

Each battlegroup is comprised of one or more CAPITAL SHIPS supported by subline ESCORT squadrons and WINGS. As a player, you'll build your battlegroup by selecting ships and upgrades before leading them into battle.

Battlegroups often follow an organizational structure derived from contemporary naval doctrines: a flagship carrying the battlegroup's commander, several other capital ships, and a greater number of subline ships, corvettes, gunboats, and fighter or bomber wings, though what constitutes a battlegroup or its equivalent can vary widely from navy to navy. As long as you follow the requirements given below, though, you can structure your battlegroup however you'd like.

The following section contains all the rules players need to build their own battlegroups, from selecting capital ship hulls to outfitting and equipping their ships with a variety of weapons, systems, subline vessels, and strike craft. It also contains rules for advancements that players might earn through play, such as accolades for outstanding service, ship legacies, and narrative reputations.

When building a battlegroup, you have **20 points** to spend. These points can be spent to buy hulls for CAPITAL SHIPS, weapons, and other upgrades. CAPITAL SHIPS are the heart of the battlegroup, so keep track of each one that you build – their hulls (including slots, **HP**, **DEFENSE**, and unique abilities) and the upgrades with which you load it out. Different hulls have different point costs, with some being more costly and others more efficient. Balancing these costs while retaining enough points to outfit them is an important part of constructing your battlegroup.

Player battlegroups must have at least two CAPITAL SHIPS of any type. Designate one of these as the battlegroup's FLAGSHIP. This is the vessel from which your character will command their battlegroup and the one that will – should it be destroyed – result in the death of your character (unless they make it to an escape pod). Your FLAGSHIP gains **+3 HP**, **+1d6 INTERDICTION**, and **+1 SYSTEM** slot. These bonuses represent the customizations that have gone into making this your command vessel. Any type of CAPITAL SHIP can serve as a FLAGSHIP; while battleships are the most popular choice, many commanders prefer to oversee matters from the bridge of a frigate or carrier. Note that losing your FLAGSHIP during an engagement does not prevent you from continuing to fight on with the remainder of your forces.

While hulls are manufactured by a variety of shipwrights and each one has its own history within the setting of *Battlegroup*, there are no restrictions on building a battlegroup based on hull manufacturer. These ship designs are sold, traded, captured, and copied widely enough that they can find a home in any commander's fleet. Your ship's physical appearance is also up to you as well. While illustrations provide an example of what each ship might look like, a ship's overall look, structure, and layout have no bearing on gameplay.

There are also no restrictions on taking multiple copies of the same ship, but each battlegroup may only have a certain number of hulls of any particular type. A battlegroup may only have up to **3 FRIGATES**, up to **2 CARRIERS**, and/or only **1 BATTLESHIP**.

Once you've selected the hulls in your battlegroup, your remaining points buy weapons and upgrades to equip them with. All ships, unless otherwise specified, are considered to have sufficient life support systems, food and water supplies, crew and quarters, nearlight and sublight drives, necessary basic systems (targeting control, a CIC, navigation, etc.), and so on.

LEFTOVER POINTS

Based on the loadouts you choose, you might wind up with some leftover points you can't spend because you run out of space. Unspent points can be used to:

- **Set a Posture:** If you're setting a posture prior to an engagement, you may convert up to 2 unspent points into banked ACCURACY dice. You may spend a banked die to add **+1 ACCURACY** to one of your single-target attack rolls during play.
- **Boost Uptime Actions:** If your group is using uptime actions, then you may convert up to 2 unspent points into ACCURACY dice that can be used for your uptime action rolls. This can help you secure advantages such as reserves or other benefits going into a battle.

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

Until an engagement has begun, a battlegroup's loadout is never set in stone. Between engagements, it's assumed that players will have access to the necessary repair and refit facilities to make alterations and experiment with different combinations of hulls, weapons, and upgrades. You may have a particular battlegroup loadout that you favor and that you only tweak slightly based on the demands of upcoming engagements, but the option is always available to you should you decide you wish to try something different.

Adjustments can also be made during pre-engagement preparation, influenced by briefings, additional intelligence, and the results of certain uptime actions that grant various upgrades and bonuses. Once battle begins, however, all choices are set until the engagement concludes.

HULL STATISTICS

CAPITAL SHIP hulls have several important statistics to note when selecting and outfitting them.

POINTS

This indicates how much a given hull costs as part of a battlegroup. This cost represents only the hull itself, not any weapons or other upgrades.

HIT POINTS (HP)

A hull's **HP** represents its physical durability. When it reaches **0 HP**, it is destroyed along with all of its upgrades, including weapons, systems, and any **ESCORTS** or **WINGS** it was carrying; however, some ongoing effects provided by these upgrades persist. For example, a destroyed ship's **Payload** attacks will continue their last flight, and any boarders they've deployed will continue fighting until the bitter end.

DEFENSE

This is an abstract representation of a ship's structural integrity, defensive countermeasures, and maneuverability. When someone makes a single-target attack against a ship, they roll against that ship's **DEFENSE** to see if they hit or not. An attack roll that equals or exceeds a target's **DEFENSE** is a hit. Some effects may modify a ship's **DEFENSE**, but it can never go below 6 or above 20.

WEAPONS

This shows how many weapons of each size (**SUPERHEAVY**, **PRIMARY**, and **AUXILIARY**) can be equipped onto a ship. Some highly specialized ships don't have any weapon mountings.

SYSTEMS

This shows how many upgrades with the **SYSTEM** tag a ship can equip.

ESCORTS/WINGS

This shows how many upgrades with the **ESCORT** or **WING** tags a ship can equip.

TRAITS, MANEUVERS, AND TACTICS

In addition to its unique profile, each ship also offers one or more traits, maneuvers, or tactics. **Traits** are passive modifiers with their triggers listed in the ship's profile. They don't need to be activated unless stated. **Maneuvers** and **Tactics** work like normal and can be used during the Action Phase.

STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A BATTLEGROUP

With so many options available for constructing a battlegroup, you might feel a little overwhelmed at first until you become more accustomed to the system. For newer and less experienced players, here are some guidelines to help you get started:

Take note of the strengths and weaknesses of your chosen ships. Some ships are better in close-up fights, while others are better at hanging back and acting from a distance. Choosing ships that complement one another (and complement the other players) is a good start.

Many NPCs have ways to move player battlegroups along the gyre, representing their ability to shift the lines of battle in their favor. It's unlikely that you will be able to remain in a single range band uncontested for an entire engagement. With this in mind, it's a good idea to try to avoid creating a battlegroup that can only act effectively at one specific range band. Note, however, that some systems and upgrades allow you to mitigate these movement effects to some extent.

Make sure you always have something to do during your turns. While it's possible to create a battlegroup without any **PRIMARY** weapons, for example, doing so would mean that during your turn you wouldn't be able to make attacks using maneuvers like **All Ahead Full** and **Open Fire**. Of course, this doesn't mean you need to have any one type of weapon or system in your battlegroup – there are plenty of options available, including weapons, support systems, fighters and subline vessels, and boarding actions.

There are 0-point options available for all weapon and upgrade types, so spending all of your points before you've fully outfitted your ships doesn't mean you won't be able to finish the job. There's no need for you to let any weapon or upgrade slot go unused, so don't be afraid to indulge in some more expensive choices that you'd like to try out.

Taking a look at other battlegroups can help you find opportunities for coordination and teamwork. If someone's battlegroup benefits from consuming **LOCK ON**, you might take something that can help them by locking onto targets. If another battlegroup is focused on **PAYLOAD** attacks then you might instead choose options that work well alongside that such as upgrades that help coordinate their salvos for greater effect.

EXAMPLE: UDOJ/HR LIBERATOR BATTLEGROUP

Let's build a battlegroup!

To start with, you know you want to play a pack of bruisers – big ships that can take hits and dish them out. Some of the other players in your group are going with lighter builds – a range of quick carriers with plenty of wings and subline squadrons – and planning to chip away at enemies, but you want to hit them with the knockout punch. You have 20 points to spend on ships and upgrades.

So, off the bat, you're going to buy three CAPITAL SHIP hulls: two **GMS Caspian Sea–Class Frigates** (3 points apiece) and one **GMS Thoreau-Class Battleship** (7 points), for a total of 13 points. You decide to designate the Thoreau as your FLAGSHIP, granting it **+3 HP, +1d6 Interdiction**, and an additional system slot.

The **Thoreau** has several abilities that complement a heavy-hitting play style, including a powerful maneuver called **Unleash Hell** that allows you to fire a SUPERHEAVY weapon alongside two PRIMARY weapons or up to four PRIMARY weapons all at once. It also has plenty of weapon slots so you can cover both possibilities. Meanwhile, the Caspian Sea–class frigates are effective at screening since they can LOCK ON to enemies when assigned to a defensive screen and also give your allies rerolls, making them very versatile and flexible ships.

With your remaining 7 points, you'll outfit your hulls with weapons and upgrades; any slots you don't have points to spend on, you can simply fill with 0-point weapons or systems.

Your flagship is going to be the big damage-dealer of your battlegroup, so you want to make sure it really slings fire. Although you have plenty of weapon slots between the battleship and your two frigates many of the SUPERHEAVY weapon options don't fire like normal. Instead, they build up charges or launch payloads that have to travel to their targets. There is, however, an option that's perfect for this sort of playstyle: the **3x3 Block Short-Spool Cannon**. Equipping that costs you 2 points.

In addition to its new cannon, the Thoreau has two PRIMARY weapon slots, two AUXILIARY weapon slots, and (because it's your FLAGSHIP) it also has a SYSTEM upgrade slot. For its PRIMARY and AUXILIARY weapons, you choose a pair of **Heavy Kinetic Batteries** and **Secondary Turrets**. The **Heavy Kinetic Batteries** cost 1 point each, and the **Secondary Turrets** cost 0 points, leaving you with 3 points remaining. For the system slot, you decide you want to make sure your big guns hit when you unleash hell, so you install the 0-point **Fire For Effect** upgrade on your battleship.

Now we come to outfitting the FRIGATES, which have one PRIMARY and one AUXILIARY weapon mount each. For another 2 points, you purchase another pair of **Heavy Kinetic Batteries** to give your battlegroup even more firepower. You could simply take another set of **Secondary Turrets**, but the mission briefing suggested that enemy forces may have carriers in the area of operations, so instead you give each frigate a set of **Flyswatter Missiles** for 0 points apiece.

One point remains. Unfortunately, you don't have any free weapon or upgrade slots left, but that just means it gets converted into a banked ACCURACY die for you to spend during the upcoming battle.

With everything set, you make note of the weapons and systems equipped to each ship, their traits and any special abilities they have, and each ship's **HP** and **DEFENSE**, and then you go about naming them accordingly. This particular battlegroup is being portrayed as a strike force under the command of **Union's Department of Justice and Human Rights**, and is designated **Battlegroup Pullman**. This battlegroup will be accompanied by those of the other players, and together, all of the battlegroups you command make up a fleet.

BATTLEGROUP PULLMAN	[20]
Thoreau Battleship	**[7]**
Flagship	[0]
3x3 Block Short-Spool Cannon	[2]
Heavy Kinetic Battery	[1]
Heavy Kinetic Battery	[1]
Secondary Turrets	[0]
Secondary Turrets	[0]
Fire For Effect	[0]
Caspian Sea Frigate	**[3]**
Heavy Kinetic Battery	[1]
Flyswatter Missiles	[0]
Caspian Sea Frigate	**[3]**
Heavy Kinetic Battery	[1]
Flyswatter Missiles	[0]
Banked Accuracy	**[1]**

CAPITAL SHIP CLASSIFICATIONS

FRIGATE

Frigates are the backbone of any navy worth its salt. A broad-tonnage class, frigates are the jack-of-all-trades ship that no admiral would want to go without. Encompassing everything from sturdy ships of the line to cutting-edge, highly focused specialists, frigates are the most common and diverse ships of capital designation.

A battlegroup can have up to 3 Frigates.

CARRIER

Carriers sacrifice weaponry and specialized systems to increase command ability and the portfolio of potential scenarios to which a battlegroup can respond. Entertainment media often depicts the "classic" flagship carrier: a large vessel crewed by thousands of enlisted and officers, its hangars home to wings of fighters, bombers, and – in some cases – light subline ships. The carriers fielded throughout the Orion Arm, though, tend toward low and middle tonnage, adopting frontline and gyre-proximal positions where they can better manage their wings in aggressive midrange combat.

A battlegroup can have up to 2 Carriers.

BATTLESHIP

A common wartime flagship, battleships are the pure realization of raw destructive power. Most ships that fit the "battleship" role are built around massive spinal cannons – kinetic accelerators or linear-beam projectors ("lances") – meant to deal a killing blow to enemy capital ships in a single shot. Charging these titanic weapons takes time, however, and during that time these great ships must be protected by their escorts. Some battleships sacrifice raw ordnance to carry wings of fighters with them, or robust defensive systems meant to ensure they remain unmolested as they prepare to fire.

A battlegroup may only have 1 Battleship.

MANUFACTURERS

GENERAL MASSIVE SYSTEMS

One of the oldest and most ubiquitous of the galactic manufacturers, GMS has designed ships for Union's navy for centuries, through the fall of the anthrochauvinist Second Committee and into the rise of the modern-day Third Committee. With standardized designs that are as easy to maintain as they are to operate, countless spacers have cut their teeth aboard a GMS ship.

GMS hulls tend to be well balanced and focused on combined-arms tactics, supporting and supplementing other ships and battlegroups during combat.

HARRISON ARMORY

A corpro-state founded following the dissolution of the Second Committee, Harrison Armory is the galaxy's premier manufacturer of weapons and weapons platforms. An expansionist polity, the Armory maintains its own navy, which benefits from its advancements in next-generation technologies. Armory ships are often equipped with directed-energy weapons, advanced shielding, and paracausal weaponry.

Armory hulls tend to be dedicated specialists outfitted with experimental systems that require careful battlegroup composition for maximum efficacy.

FEDERAL KARRAKIN SHIPYARDS

The Karrakin Trade Baronies is a federation of the largest and most powerful monarchies in known space. Its barons claim to represent the oldest unbroken civilization in human history, one seeded prior to the Fall and the foundation of Union. The byzantine politics and power struggles of the Baronies are reflected in the naval forces of the Baronic Unified Command, which are subject to the competing design interests of various factions. The KTB is also extremely wealthy, and is known to regularly establish contracts for ships, chassis, and weapons from designers like Smith-Shimano Corpro.

While FKS ships tend to be powerful on an individual basis, they pay for this with higher costs and other drawbacks commanders must contend with.

IPS-NORTHSTAR

One of the oldest major corpro-states is Interplanetary Shipping-Northstar, a shipping and transport conglomerate that has existed since the invention of nearlight drives first made interstellar commerce possible. While not a state military power in the conventional sense, IPS-N Trunk Security operates in defense of civilian and commercial shipping against piracy and raiders, and the company is happy to sell mil-spec vessels and weapons to anyone who can afford them.

IPS-N ships are durable and robust, with an emphasis on commanding Escorts and Wings as well as boarding actions.

FRIGATES

FRIGATES are the workhorses of any battlegroup. With decent defenses and structural integrity, their strength lies in their versatility. FRIGATES often occupy a support role in battlegroups, enhancing a fleet's tactical and strategic capabilities, escorting heavier vessels, and providing additional firepower as needed.

Battlegroups must have at least one active FRIGATE to use the Defensive Screen tactic.

GMS CASPIAN SEA-CLASS	A tried-and-true frigate that can share targeting data with its allies.
GMS HURON-CLASS	An anti-fighter frigate capable of protecting battlegroups with barrages of flak.
GMS SUPERIOR-CLASS	An advanced frigate boasting a complement of emergency repair drones.
HA CREIGHTON-CLASS	A dedicated superheavy weapon frigate, optimized for longer ranges.
HA HOUSTOUN-CLASS	A specialized logistics frigate that enhances its battlegroup's capabilities.
HA TURENNE-CLASS	A defense frigate outfitted with advanced defensive systems to protect its allies.
FKS CIRSIUM-CLASS	A prestigious frigate capable of supporting and commanding subline vessels.
FKS ONOPORDUM-CLASS	An inexpensive frigate that can turn the tides of battle in a commander's favor.
FKS TOLUMNIA-CLASS	A heavily armed frigate capable of mounting multiple weapons.
IPS-N BAKUNAWA-CLASS	A "pocket carrier" frigate that can house and deploy strike craft.
IPS-N LAHO-CLASS	A frigate built to rapidly launch salvos of missiles and torpedoes.
IPS-N MINOKAWA-CLASS	A patrol frigate that specializes in boarding and counterboarding operations.

GMS
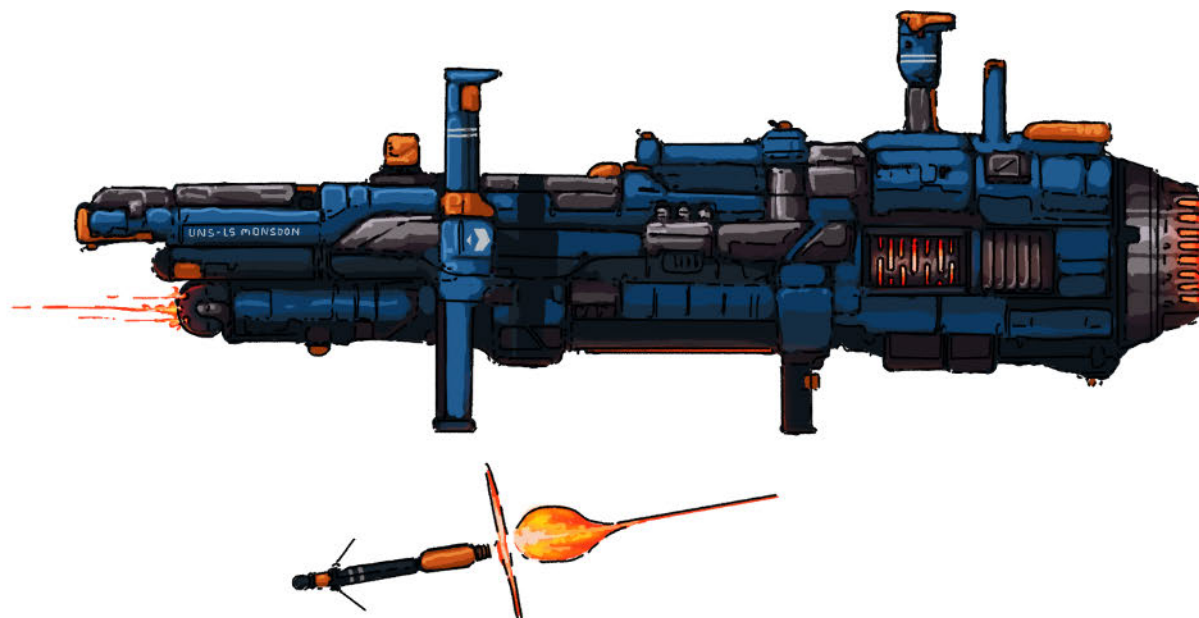
CASPIAN SEA–CLASS FRIGATE

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
3	16	10	1 Primary, 1 Auxiliary

The GMS Caspian Sea is the backbone of Union's fleets. Built upon a base pattern outfitted with overlapping primary and secondary batteries, Caspian Sea–class frigates are tough and flexible multirole vessels that can hold their own both in a battle line and on solo patrol. Developed by GMS under the Second Committee during the Second Expansion Period, the Caspian Sea class has been in use for centuries thanks to ongoing platform modernization regimes. It was one of the few hulls not to be scrapped during the Third Committee's ground-up reworking of the Union Naval Department, and these frigates remain a common first posting for both regular and auxiliary navy personnel. Union naval doctrine typically designates Caspian Sea–class frigates as fire-coordination platforms and "mainline"-tier ships of the line.

FIRE CONTROL NETWORKING
Trait

1/round when an allied battlegroup in your range band consumes LOCK ON as part of an attack, it may reroll that attack but must keep the second result.

Additionally, when this ship is assigned to a **Defensive Screen**, it may LOCK ON to a hostile CAPITAL SHIP or ESCORT.

GMS
HURON-CLASS FRIGATE

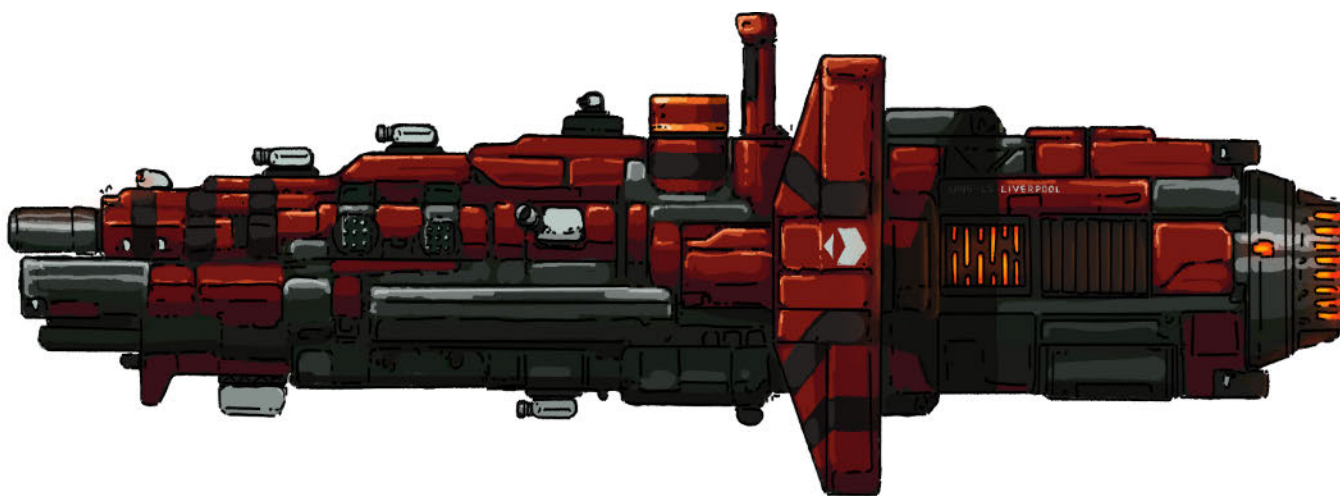| POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
3	16	10	1 Primary, 1 Auxiliary

The Huron-class frigate is a dedicated weapons platform most often stationed at the perimeters of friendly fleets, where it patrols the flanks as a deterrent to hostile fighters and subline ships. Able to distribute withering curtains of fire along multiple approach vectors, Huron-class frigates are stalwart defensive support units rarely encountered outside of combat deployments. In the Union Navy, there's an old axiom: "If you can see a Huron, prepare for a storm."

FLAK SCREEN
Trait

Whenever a hostile ESCORT or WING makes an attack roll against or deals damage to any of your CAPITAL SHIPS, ESCORTS, or WINGS during the Action Phase, roll 1d20.

On 10+, the attacker first takes 3 damage. If this damage is enough to destroy it, it is destroyed before it can carry out its attack or action and any effects are negated.

When this FRIGATE is assigned to a **Defensive Screen**, this trait applies to the battlegroup it is screening for and the roll automatically succeeds.

This trait does not stack. Instead, whenever multiple ships with this trait are part of or are screening the same battlegroup, choose one to use this trait and increase its damage by +1 for each additional ship with this trait beyond the first.
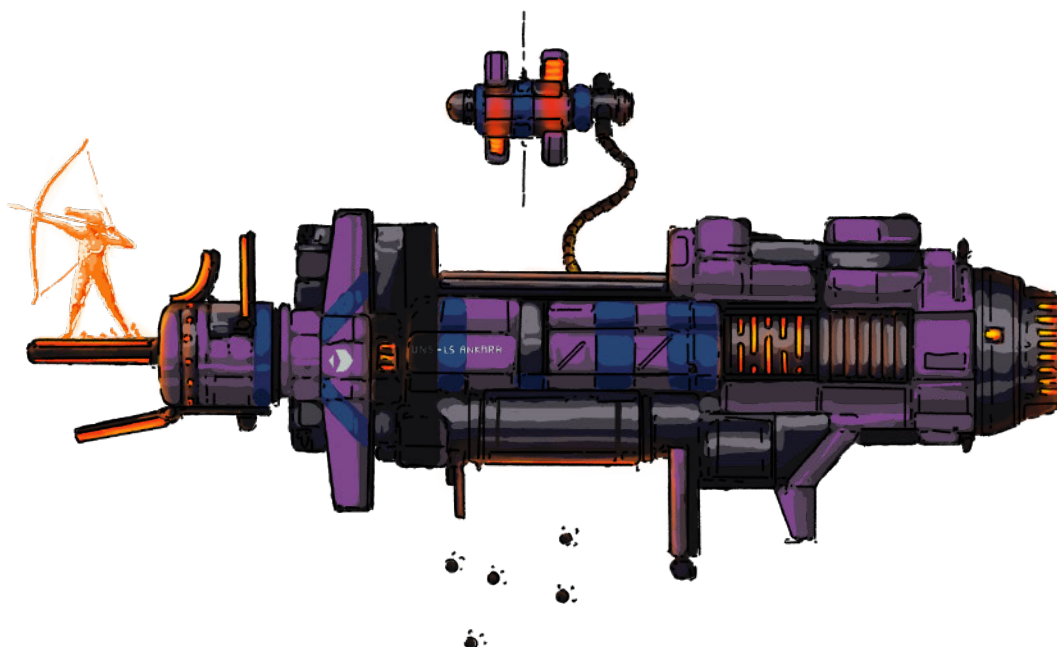
GMS
SUPERIOR-CLASS FRIGATE

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
3	16	10	1 Primary, 1 System

A new hull design produced by GMS under the Third Committee, Superior-class frigates mount top-of-the-line naval weapons and advanced systems. In the Union Navy, assignment to a Superior is considered a prestigious posting for new officers, as there are still relatively few ships in this class compared to its older cousins. Standard UN outfitting sees Superior-class frigates equipped with bays of repair drones to supplement fleetwide damage control, EWAR/command-and-control suites, legionspace coordination modules, and myriad other offensive supplements.
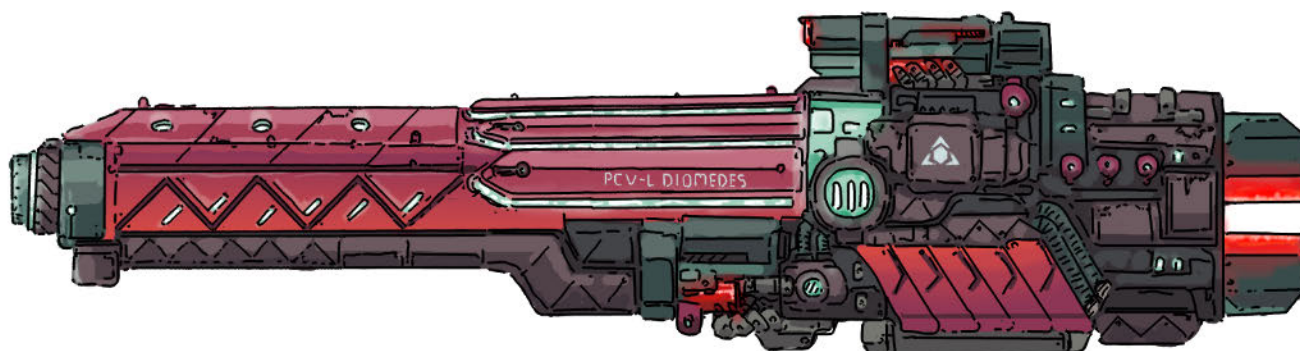
REPAIR DRONES
Trait
When this **FRIGATE** is assigned to a **Defensive Screen**, the ship it is screening for repairs **2 HP**.

FLEET TRIAGE
Tactic, Limited 1
One of your **CAPITAL SHIPS** or **ESCORTS**, or an allied **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT** in your range band, repairs **5 HP**.

HA
CREIGHTON-CLASS FRIGATE

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
3	12	10	1 Superheavy

In true Harrison Armory fashion, the Creighton-class frigate is an experiment in firepower maximization — an attempt to see whether the Armory's engineers could mount one of the largest naval guns available on the smallest hull possible without catastrophic failure. The resulting frigate is less a ship carrying a gun than it is a gun with a ship built to support it. Designed for deployment as a second-line, over-horizon platform, the Creighton excels when it has the time and distance to engage targets downrange without proximity pressure. There are currently two main patterns of the Creighton in active service: the Creighton/OVERSEER, which employs an advanced predictive-modeling and hull-stabilization array optimized for ranges typically considered low-confidence, and the Creighton/VEGA, which trades this system out for a high-powered "hot" targeting laser matrix by the same name, suitable for engagements in which the battle lines are more fluid.

PURPOSE-BUILT
Trait

This ship can only equip **SUPERHEAVY** weapons with the **CHARGE** tag. **SUPERHEAVY** weapons equipped to this frigate cost 1 point less, to a minimum of 0.

This ship also has either the **VEGA-Pattern Targeting Laser** trait or the **Calibrated Firing Platform** trait.

VEGA-PATTERN TARGETING LASER
Trait

This ship is equipped with an integrated long-range "hot" targeting laser matrix that counts as a **PRIMARY** weapon with the following profile:

VEGA-PATTERN TARGETING LASER
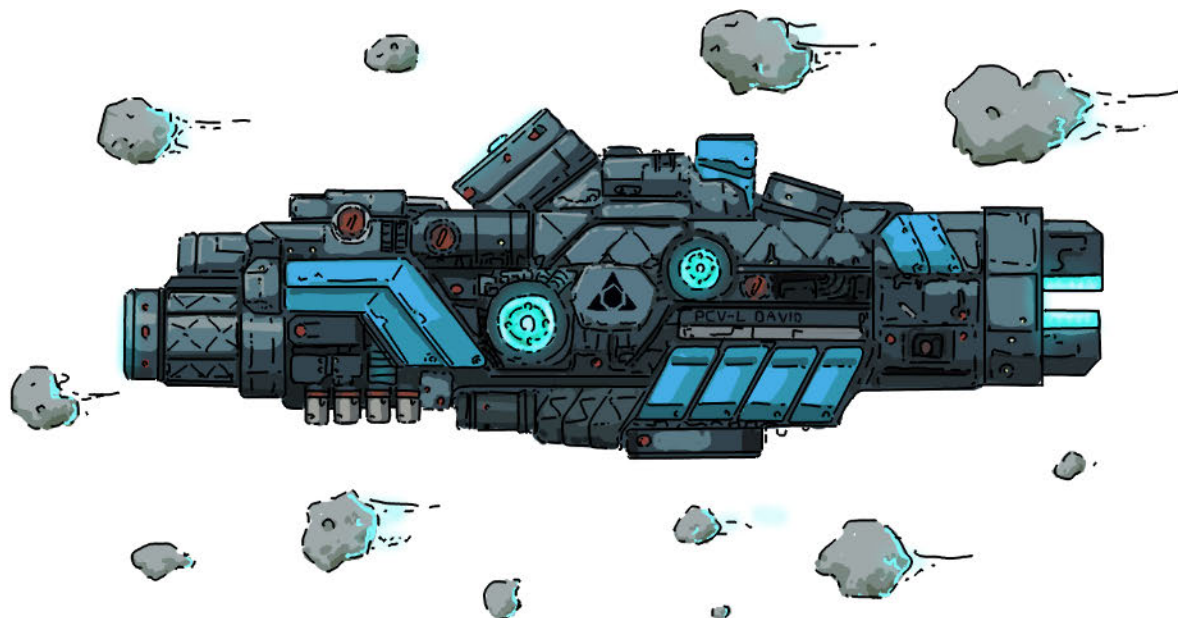Primary Weapon, Single-Target, Reliable 2
[Range 5-2][2 Damage]

On hit, **LOCK ON** to the target.

CALIBRATED FIRING PLATFORM
Trait

When at **Extreme Range** or **Long Range**, this ship gains a flat **+1** to its attack rolls and its attacks gain **+3 RELIABLE**.

Additionally, 1/engagement, you may reroll one attack this ship makes from **Extreme Range** or **Long Range**, but must keep the second result.

HA

HOUSTOUN-CLASS FRIGATE

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
4	14	12	2 Systems

Harrison Armory's fleet-tier strategic doctrines are structured around the use of highly specialized frigates, each designed from the ground up to fulfill a particular role at the expense of individual tactical flexibility, each ship operating as one component of a large and cohesive fleet organized from the top down. Houstoun-class frigates are designed to enhance their battlegroup's systemic and logistical capabilities, forming the backbone upon which other fleet combat elements rely. Minimally armed, Houstoun-class ships are nonetheless critical components of any black sky or orbital fleet on long deployment. Assignment to a Houstoun is often granted to commanders with a keen eye for big-picture strategy but minimal combat experience, and is occasionally, though incorrectly, seen as a dead-end posting by those officers who would prefer to fight the enemy directly.

ENHANCED LOGISTICS
Trait, Limited 2

1/round, you may expend a use of this trait during the **Logistics Phase** to remove **1 Refresh Counter** from any **RELOADING** weapon, upgrade, or ability in your battlegroup or an allied battlegroup in the same range band. That weapon, upgrade, or ability can only have a single counter removed this way between uses.
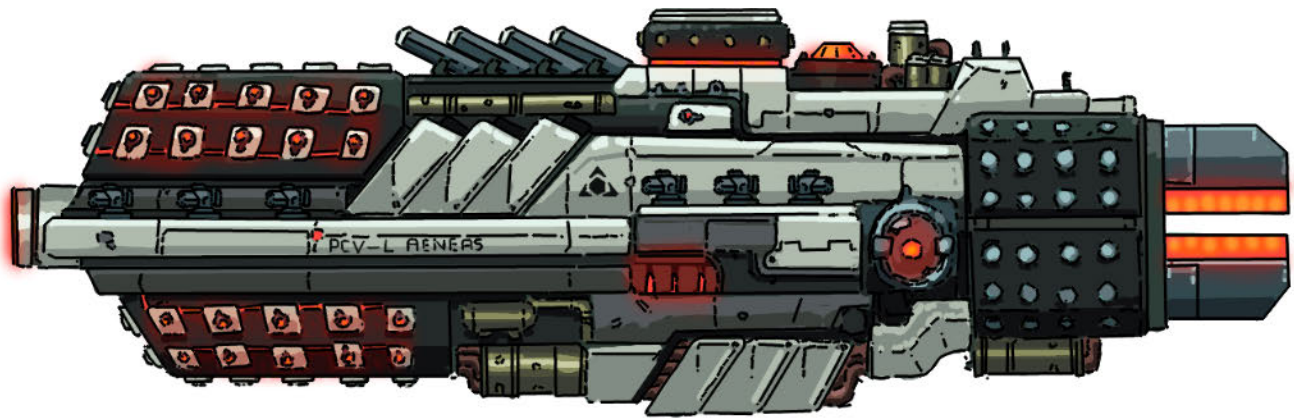
HA
TURENNE-CLASS FRIGATE

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
4	14	12	2 Auxiliary, 1 System

The Turenne-class frigate is another specialized design, this one built to serve as a protective escort for other vessels through a combination of conventional point-defense systems and the Armory's advanced projected-shield technologies. Equipped with high-output reactors for uninterrupted defensive system uptime while screening, the Turenne nonetheless only carries light armaments as the bulk of its power is reserved for demanding electromagnetic/wave-scatter screens, complex realspace envelopes, and experimental hardlight barriers. Even with such a surplus of power, these defensive systems can only do so much to mitigate the titanic forces of naval weaponry; nonetheless, a Turenne in the right place at the right time has more than once meant the difference between survival and destruction for Purview forces.

ACTIVE DEFENSE
Trait
When this ship is assigned to a **Defensive Screen**, that battlegroup gains **+3 Interdiction**.
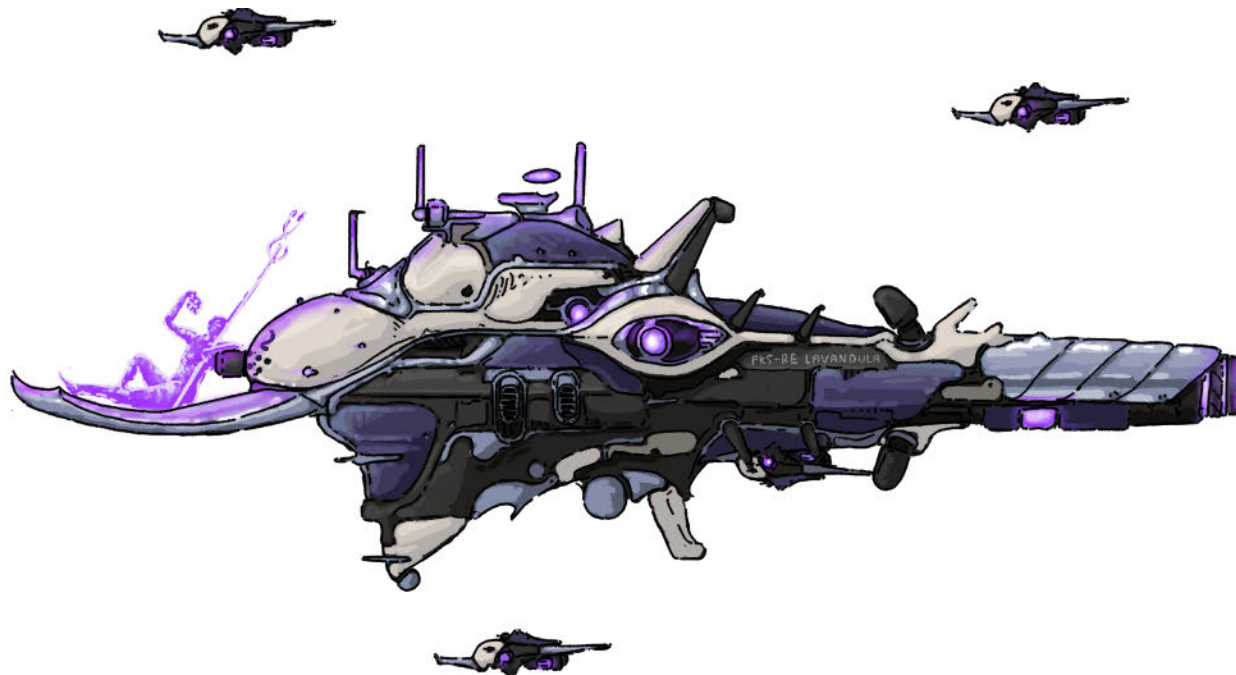
FKS

CIRSIUM-CLASS FRIGATE

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
3	14	10	1 Primary, 1 Escort

A newer Baronic hull design from the Federal Karrakin Shipyards, any officer fresh from the Academy knows that an assignment to a Cirsium-class frigate (or, as they are called in the Baronies, rasées) indicates that someone in command has taken a liking to them. Standard doctrine for a Cirsium sees the vessel accompanied by a subline escort, harnessing the larger ship's tactical command-and-control infrastructure to maintain combat readiness. This grants Cirsium commanders the ability to coordinate multipronged offensive actions on their own and has given the class a reputation as "tactician's vessels", though many Baronic commanders are known to order their escorts into dangerous situations in an effort to reap the resulting glory for themselves.

HONOR GUARD
Trait

1/round when this ship takes damage from any source while it has an ESCORT equipped, it instead takes **0 damage** and the ESCORT takes that amount of damage instead.
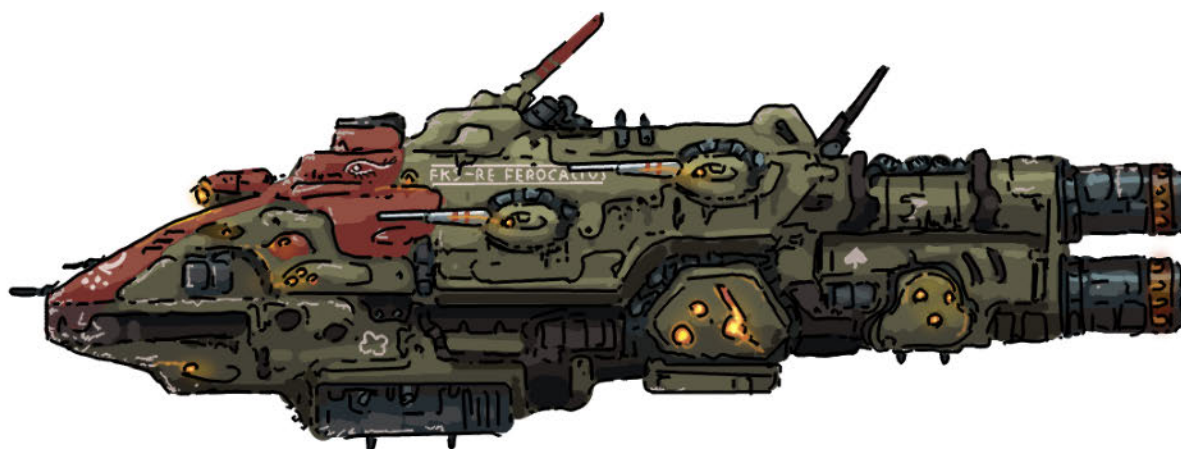
FKS

ONOPORDUM-CLASS FRIGATE

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
2	14	10	1 Primary

One of the oldest classes of Baronic ships still in active service, and in fact one of the oldest still in service anywhere, the Onopordum-class frigate is underpowered and undergunned by contemporary standards. This weakness is outweighed by one simple, but vital, fact: there are more Onopordums in service than almost any other vessel. What was once the backbone of the Baronic navy is now merely a holdout from a bygone era, sold and licensed to minor Diasporan powers, used as training ships and system patrol boats, but nonetheless still pressed into service as needed to fill gaps in a battlegroup's line. Cramped and boasting poor amenities, the Onopordum is not a glorious ship in the slightest, but their crews tend to develop an inordinate, superstitious attachment to them, going as far as to consider them lucky vessels – those that survive battle, anyway. Following a series of mutinies and live-fire incidents, Baronic Unified Command has instituted regular periodic rotations of Onopordum crews to maintain "acceptable levels of morale and combat readiness".

STEALING LUCK FROM THE DEVIL
Trait

1/engagement, you may add or subtract **1d3** from any d20 roll (yours, an ally's, or an enemy's) after seeing the result. Each roll can only be modified in this way once, even if you or your allies have more than one ship with this trait.

Additionally, when this ship is assigned to a **Defensive Screen**, **Interception** is determined by a d20 roll – on a result of 10+, **Interception** succeeds.
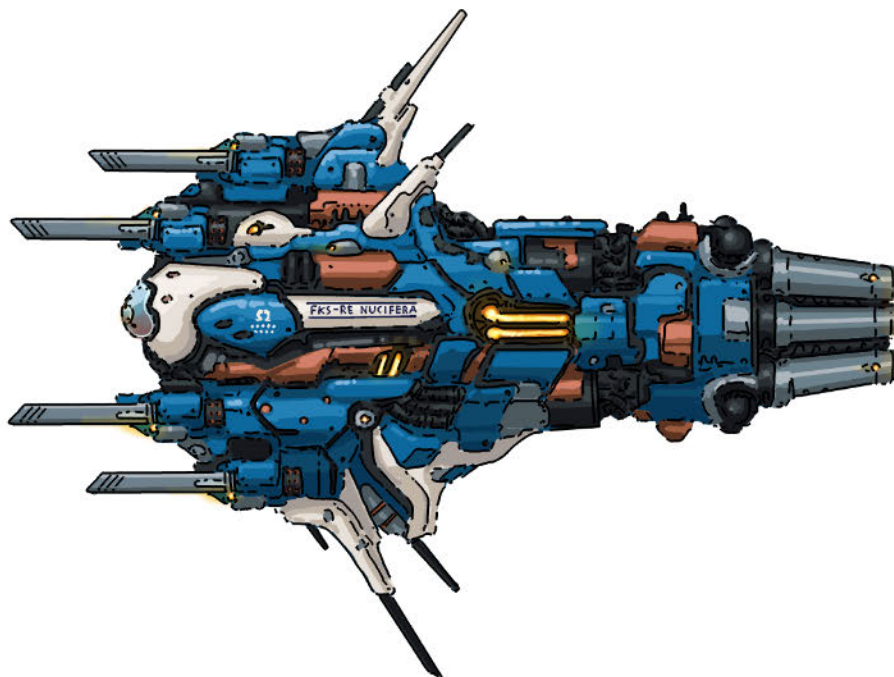
FKS

TOLUMNIA-CLASS FRIGATE

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
5	16	10	2 Primary

A heavily armed hull designed to support an aggressive doctrine of overwhelming firepower, the Tolumnia class was intended to phase out the aging Onopordum. Unfortunately, teething issues with the design and interminable political squabbling have resulted in countless delays and an uneven distribution across Baronic fleets. The Tolumnia's greatest strength is its ability to mount significantly above-standard firepower while maintaining the effective tonnage of a frigate, but this advantage is also one of the ship's biggest drawbacks; its advanced autoloading and power cycling systems are only compatible with specific armament types, resulting in a notable lack of flexibility in loadout capabilities. Plans for a revised design that aims to address this shortcoming have been submitted to the Baronic Chamber of Naval Strategy, which continues to deliberate over the relative merits of the current production version.

SYNCHRONIZED BATTERIES
Trait

1/round when this ship consumes LOCK ON as part of an attack with one of its PRIMARY weapons, it may forego the usual bonus from LOCK ON; instead, it may make an additional attack at +1 DIFFICULTY against the same target with its other PRIMARY weapon.

SPECIALIZED MOUNTINGS
Trait

This ship cannot equip PAYLOAD weapons.
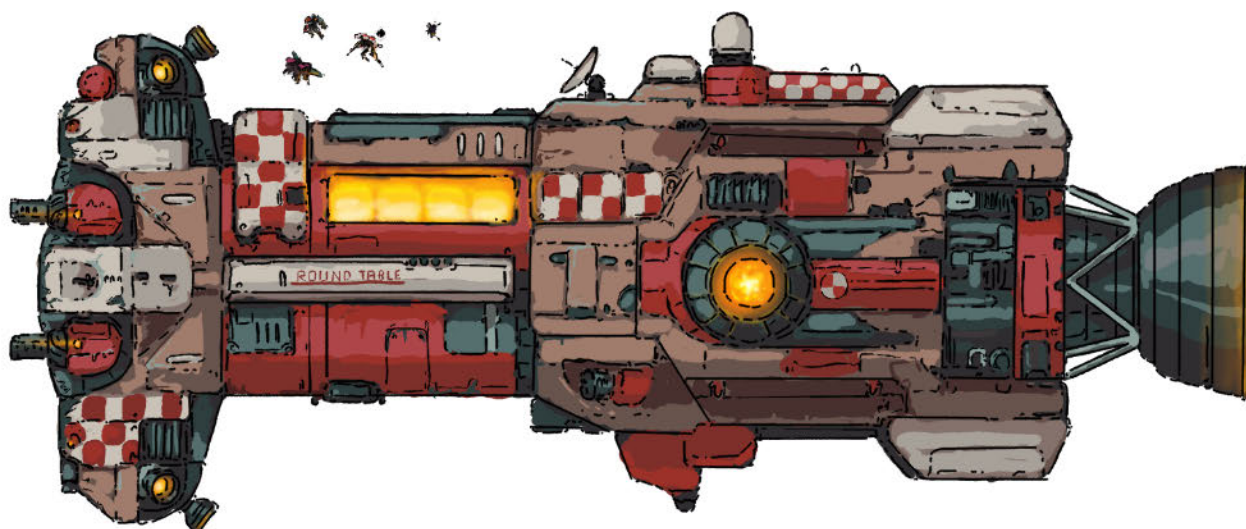
IPS-N

BAKUNAWA-CLASS FRIGATE

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
4	18	8	1 Primary, 1 Wing

IPS-N's ships have a far-reaching reputation for robust construction, efficient layouts, and high-capacity storage holds that can be turned to a variety of purposes. One of the corpro's more iconic designs, the Bakunawa-class frigate is a flexible multirole vessel that uses this additional space to house a fully functional flight deck and launch bay suitable for a range of fighter-tier craft, including mechanized chassis. The Bakunawa is a common sight among Trunk Security anti-piracy patrols and, somewhat ironically, among the better equipped pirates themselves. In truth, its combination of firepower and lightning-strike capabilities make it a valuable asset for virtually any fleet.

POCKET CARRIER
Trait

Each **Logistics Phase**, one of this ship's **WINGS** may repair **2 HP**.

Additionally, when this ship is assigned to a **Defensive Screen**, you may also issue a command to one of its **WINGS** for free.

IPS-N
LAHO-CLASS FRIGATE

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
4	18	8	1 Primary, 1 System

The Laho-class frigate is an unusual offering: it is one of the few IPS-N hulls designed with a specific tactical doctrine in mind, serving as a dedicated "torpedo boat" built to launch long-flight munitions accurately and efficiently. As a result, the Laho sees markedly more use as part of many navies' combined-arms strategies than it does as patrol or escort vessels, tasks at which IPS-N ships typically excel. Focused solely on deploying salvos of anti-ship torpedoes and missiles, which it can quickly do thanks to a rapid-cycling rotary launch system, the Laho is vulnerable on its own and often relies on other ships to defend it against more immediate threats.

ROTARY LAUNCH TUBES
Trait
You may choose to reduce the starting **Flight Counters** of any **PAYLOAD** weapon equipped to this ship by 1, to a minimum of 1.

TORPEDO BOAT
Trait
This ship can only equip **PRIMARY** weapons with the **PAYLOAD** tag.
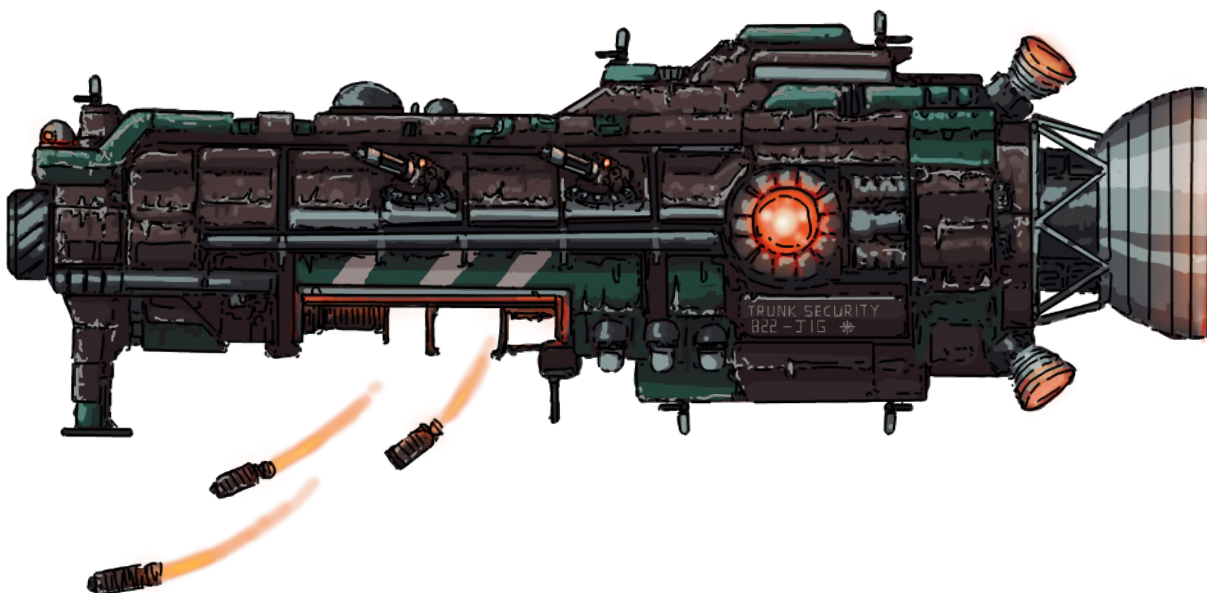
IPS-N

MINOKAWA-CLASS FRIGATE

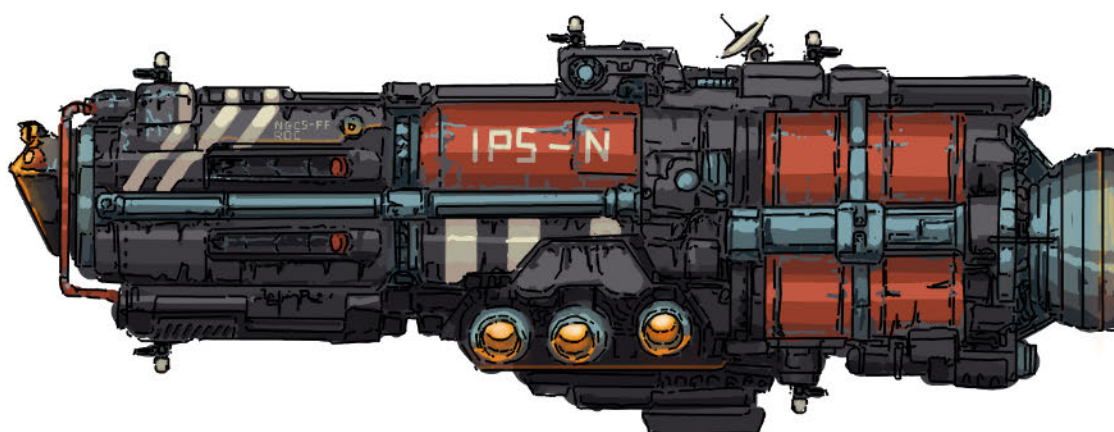| POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
4	18	8	1 Primary

Based on the Bakunawa hull, the Minokawa trades out its counterpart's flight deck and strike craft launch capabilities for expanded marine crew capacity, mechanized chassis bays, and an integrated array of short-range ship-to-ship transfer vehicles. While it is typically employed by IPS-N Trunk Security as a well-armed boarding/counter-boarding vessel capable of operating independently on long patrols, the Minokawa also functions capably as part of larger fleet actions. With close-up actions in mind, the Minokawa's internal layout is designed to be as hostile to invading forces as possible. Overlapping automated defense systems and reinforced bulkheads funnel intruders into chokepoints and kill boxes, where sizable contingents of marines and counter-boarding chassis can efficiently and effectively dispatch them.

RAPID REACTION FORCE
Trait

This ship rolls to repel boarders with **+1 ACCURACY**. Additionally, when it is assigned to a **Defensive Screen**, all boarding actions made against it and the ship it is screening receive **+1 DIFFICULTY**.

PATROL CUTTER
Trait

This ship has a special modular slot that can be used to equip either an **ESCORT** or **WING**. It can only equip **ESCORTS** and **WINGS** with the **BOARDING** tag.

CARRIERS

CARRIERS are the linchpins of a fleet. With minimal armaments, decent defenses, and middling structural integrity, their main strength lies in their ability to command frontline wings and squadrons. Unlike in terrestrial theaters where carrier-type vessels often serve as long-range force multipliers, carrier doctrines designed for the extreme distances of space combat often invert this strategy, using them as mid- to close-range strike platforms.

All CARRIERS have an additional 3 points that can only be spent on ESCORTS or WINGS.

GMS AMAZON-CLASS	A classic naval carrier, equipped with rapid onboard printers to replenish combat losses.
GMS TONGASS-CLASS	A versatile carrier for coordinating both strike craft and subline vessels, with fleetwide command-and-control integration
HA FARRAGUT-CLASS	A carrier with modular equipment bays that enhances its battlegroup's tactical flexibility.
FKS TAGETES-CLASS	A prestigious, if expensive, carrier that boasts equally prestigious strike craft.
SSC APEIRON-CLASS	A carrier with advanced teleportation launch systems that expand the range of any strike craft it deploys.
IPS-N TAWA-CLASS	A sturdy, flexible carrier that excels at launching boarding actions with strike craft or landers.
IPS-N MASAUWU-CLASS	A powerful carrier focused on subline operations, able to command multiple units at once.
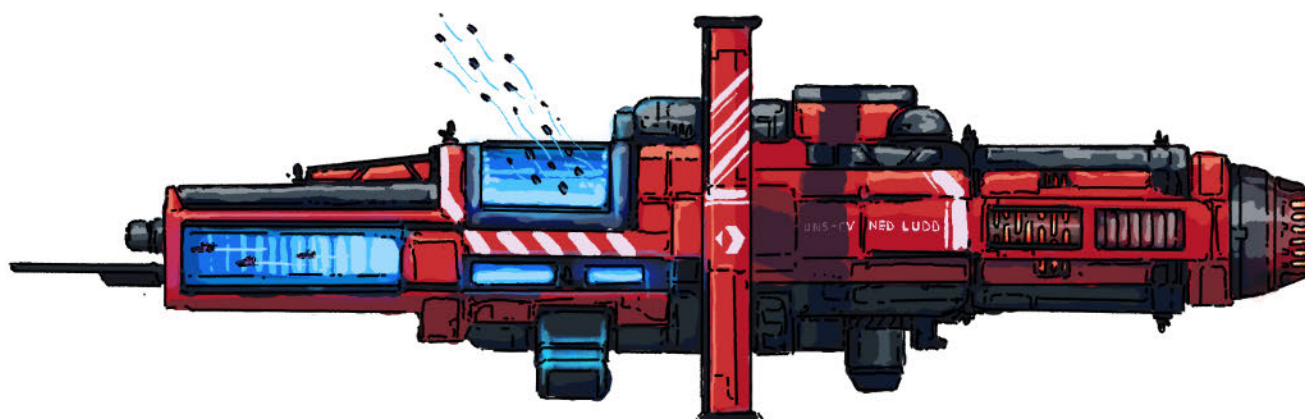
GMS

AMAZON-CLASS LINE CARRIER

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
4	14	14	4 Wings

The Amazon-class line carrier is the standard by which other carrier designs are measured. Used by dozens of navies across Union space, the Amazon is a dedicated example of conventional carrier doctrines in action, launching and maintaining multiple wings of strike craft or mounted chassis in support of fleet actions. The Amazon serves as GMS's testbed platform for advances in carrier design, and so remains up to date despite its long history of service. The current version uses cutting-edge printer technology that allows it to return damaged strike craft to service more quickly than other ships of its type and even fabricate new craft from stores of raw material to replace losses during combat.

RAPID PRINTING
Trait

Instead of the additional 3 points CARRIERS get to spend on ESCORTS or WINGS, this ship has an additional 4 points.

Additionally, this ship features an enhanced flight decks with LIMITED 2 rapid printing systems. 1/round during the Logistics Phase, you may expend a use to repair one of this ship's WINGS to full HP, even if it has been destroyed.
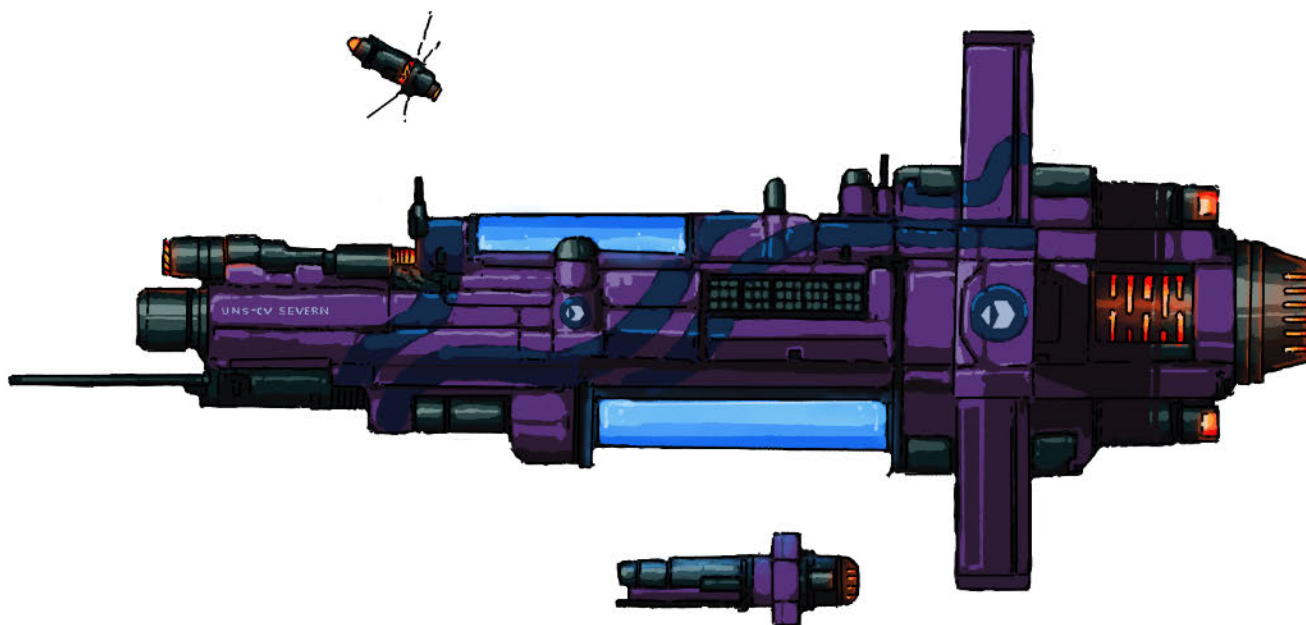
GMS
TONGASS-CLASS LINE CARRIER

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
4	14	14	2 Auxiliary, 2 Escorts

Contemporary doctrines recognize two distinct uses for carriers in naval combat: launching strike craft and supporting subline vessels. Subline ships, those smaller than so-called "ships of the line", typically require additional logistical support to maintain effective combat readiness. Carriers built to support squadrons of low- to mid-tonnage subline combat vessels do so not necessarily by housing them in launch bays, but by transporting them and their crews to deployment areas, then providing tactical coordination and a base for resupply and rearmament once engaged. The Tongass-class line carrier is Union's mainstay subline support vessel, and both its dorsal and ventral umbilical berths and streamlined logistics suites allow it to maintain its escorts on fire-support missions without returning to second- or third-echelon shipyards.

CLOSE SUPPORT
Trait

Allied battlegroups in your range band may use tactics granted by this ship's **ESCORTS** as if they were under their control.
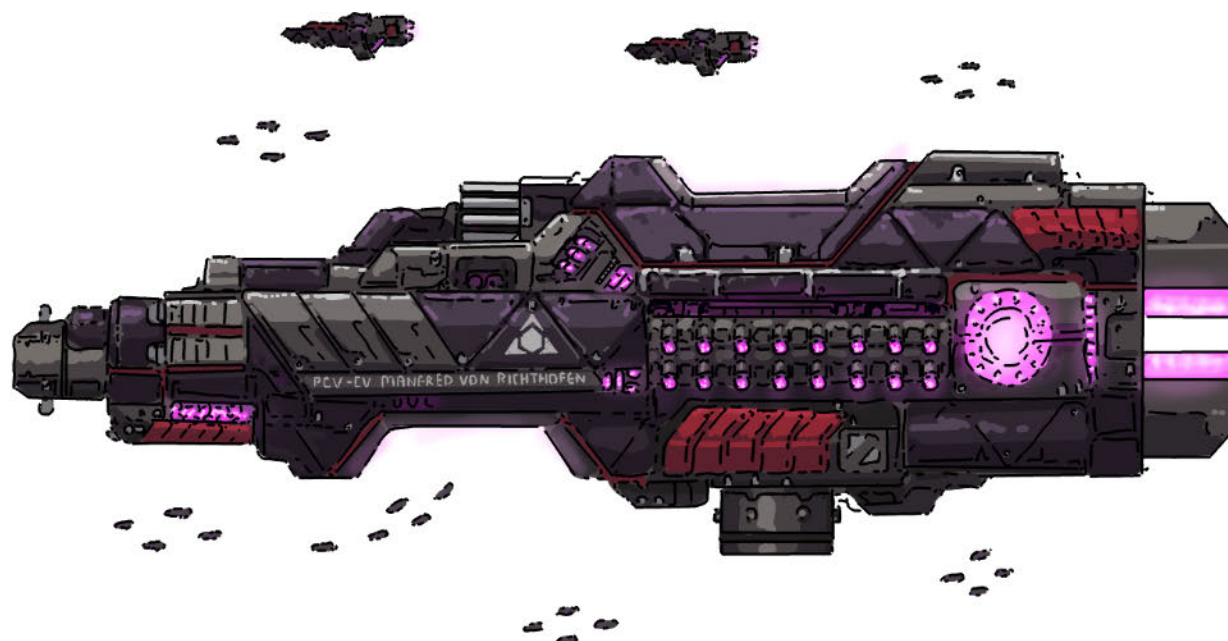
HA

FARRAGUT-CLASS STARFIELD CARRIER

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
5	16	13	1 Primary, 2 Wings

In contrast to its more specialized frigates, Harrison Armory's carrier design philosophy is one of flexibility. The Armory's carriers are built with the intention of establishing centralized command-and-control/support hubs around which whole battlegroups can operate. The Farragut-class starfield carrier is perhaps the most distinct example of this philosophy, and one of the most widely known Armory carrier designs. The hull of the Farragut is robust and equipped with both launch bays and the sorts of armaments typically carried by frigates, allowing it a greater degree of independence, but its most unique feature is its modular housing bays. Engineered directly into its structure, these bays make it possible to quickly and effortlessly refit the Farragut for a variety of tactical and strategic purposes. It can be modified for everything from advanced systems implementation to increased offensive capability, additional flight decks, and enhanced subline capacity.

More conservative naval commanders occasionally find the Farragut difficult to incorporate within standard deployment doctrines, and as a result it sees less widespread use outside of Purview forces.

MODULAR DESIGN
Trait

This ship has a special modular slot that can be used to equip an **AUXILIARY** weapon, a **SYSTEM**, an **ESCORT**, or a **WING**.

FLEET COORDINATOR
Trait

When you assign a **FRIGATE** to a Defensive Screen, it may screen for up to two ships at once.
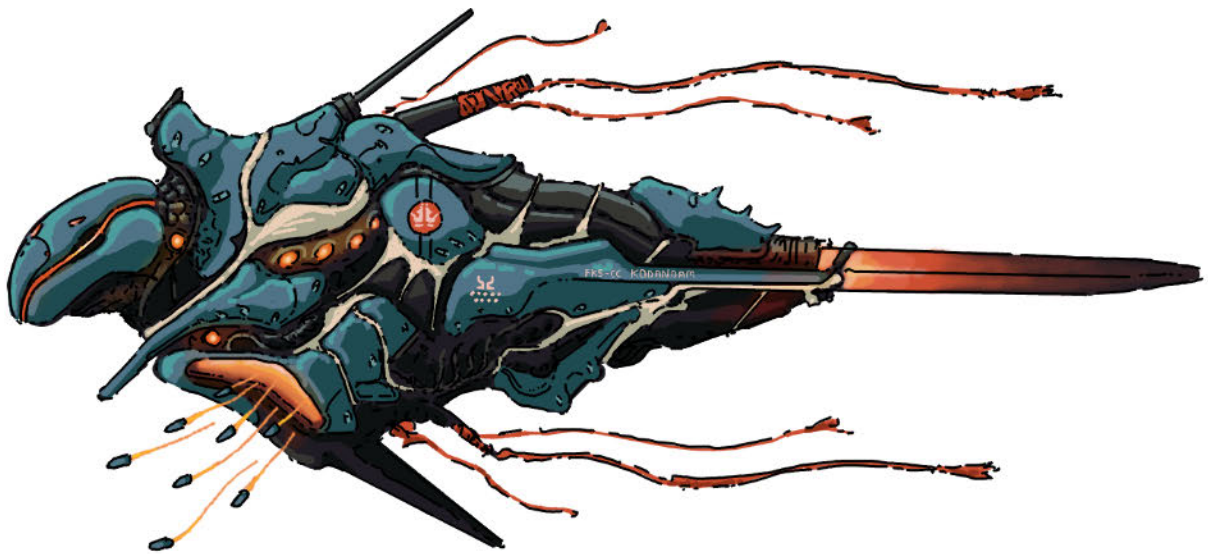
FKS
TAGETES-CLASS AGILE CARRIER

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
6	14	15	3 Wings, 1 System

In Baronic naval tradition, fighter and bomber pilots are some of the few that can achieve anything like the personal glory of a chassis pilot. Consequently, the competition for postings aboard a carrier is fierce. The Baronic United Command takes special care to ensure that their carriers live up to this reputation, and the Tagetes-class agile carrier is one of the premier ships in the Baronic navy. No corners are cut and no expenses are spared, ensuring these carriers are fit to carry the noble sons and daughters of the Baronies into battle, and these ships frequently boast lavish amenities to go along with their superior maneuverability and defensive systems. This care and attention to detail also extends to the launch decks of the Tagetes, which are equipped to outfit the strike craft aboard with the most advanced munitions and defensive countermeasures available, the better to help pilots make a name for themselves in combat. All of this luxury comes at a price, however; the material and monetary costs involved in the construction of a single Tagetes are enough to purchase several other capital ships, which, though less richly appointed, are no less combat capable.

LEAD DANCER
Trait

This ship's **WINGS** deal **+1 damage** with all non-Boarding damage effects, and all damage they take from hostile sources is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 0.
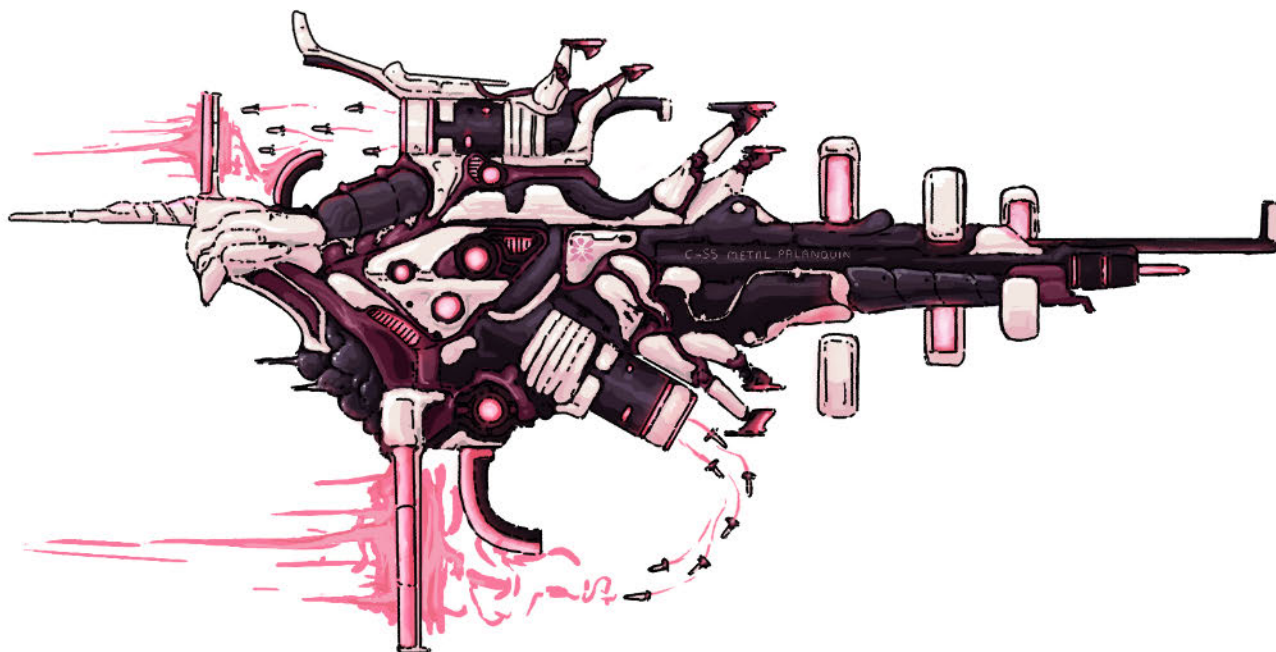
SSC
APEIRON-CLASS STRIKE CARRIER

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
6	14	15	4 Wings

Smaller than the Skyhook-class carriers utilized by Smith-Shimano Corpro's Constellar Security forces, the Apeiron-class strike carrier is a more conventional vessel, albeit one designed with SSC's exacting standards for engineering, aesthetics, and cutting-edge technology in mind. Apeiron-class carriers are manufactured for a variety of stellar powers and Diasporan states by commission, though generally only wealthier states like the Karrakin Trade Baronies can afford to do so. The Apeiron incorporates advancements first developed as part of the LUX-Iconic line's Mourning Cloak combat chassis, utilizing experimental gravitic power plants and singularity motivators to act as a novel fighter-tier launch system capable of quickly teleporting strike craft over great distances. A series of strict minimum launch distance failsafes are in place to prevent the risk of catastrophic comaterialization.

SINGULARITY CATAPULTS
Trait

WINGS equipped by this ship increase both the maximum and minimum ranges of all of their effects and abilities by 1. For example, a WING that would usually have **Range 2–0** is instead **Range 3–1**.
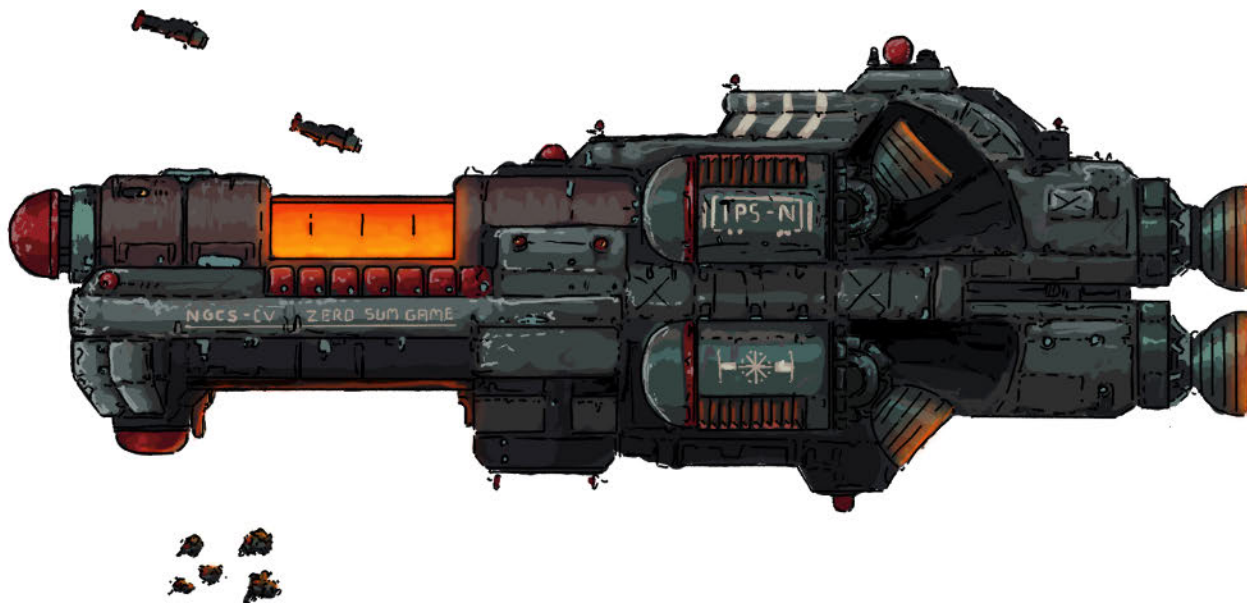
IPS-N

TAWA-CLASS MEDIUM CARRIER

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
4	16	12	2 Wings, 1 Escort, 1 System

One of the most popular carriers in IPS-N's portfolio, the Tawa-class medium carrier is a favorite of both larger and smaller state navies that appreciate its durability and simple layout. The Tawa is a no-frills design built for ease of maintenance, fully compatible with IPS-N's own ANVIL line of automated engineering subalterns, and capable of fielding strike craft as well as subline vessels for complete-package strategic coverage. One of the Tawa's strengths is its comparatively compact profile, which allows it to adopt postures unsuitable for other carriers. This is most notable when the ship is used as a staging point for boarding actions, a role in which it excels.

AWAY TEAMS
Trait
This ship's **BOARDING** upgrades gain **+2 TENACITY**.

IPS-N

MASAUWU-CLASS HEAVY CARRIER-FRAME

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
6	16	12	2 Wings, 2 Escorts

Unlike the Tawa, the Masauwu-class heavy carrier-frame is an outsized design, bulky and ungainly. Built to support mixed subline/bomber/chassis tactics, the cavernous housing bays of the Masauwu are large enough to carry even subline ships, granting them an additional layer of protection during transport. Once engaged, the ship's robust command-and-control systems allow it to coordinate its deployed vessels with remarkable efficiency. As a result, it tends to be a priority target for enemy commanders and the focus of attempted decapitation strikes, and some commanders have learned to exploit this tendency by baiting opponents into overextending themselves before cutting them off and destroying them, often with the help of the Masauwu itself.

WOLFPACK TACTICS
Trait

1/round when you use a tactic to command one of this ship's ESCORTS, you may also issue a command to another of its ESCORTS or WINGS for free.

BATTLESHIPS

BATTLESHIPS are the heaviest production ships a commander could expect to encounter in battle lines. With rare exception, they are the only ships able to field superheavy long-spool weapons and capital-killer torpedoes, capable of destroying lesser ships in a single blow. Battleships often serve as the centerpieces for whole fleets, and the legacies of specific battleships frequently achieve a mythic status.

BATTLESHIPS do not have any special rules, but each one boasts powerful abilities that can define how your battlegroup operates. It is not required to take a BATTLESHIP when building a battlegroup.

GMS MURIE-CLASS	A battleship suitable for a variety of command styles, able to provide critical support to its allies when it counts.
GMS THOREAU-CLASS	An aggressive battleship bristling with guns, capable of unleashing barrages of devastating firepower.
HA LOUIS XIV-CLASS	A battleship outfitted with cutting-edge shields that can weather the strongest blows.
HA MICHEL NEY-CLASS	A secretive battleship equipped with experimental blinkspace technology, able to slip around the battlefield.
FKS CALENDULA-CLASS	A siege battleship carrying overlapping superheavy weapons, supremely destructive if temperamental.
FKS HESPERIS-CLASS	A battleship built to direct salvos of guided ordnance, accompanied by powerful independent munitions.
IPS-N GREENLAND-CLASS	A battleship which combines the power of superheavy-grade weaponry with the strike capability of a carrier.
IPS-N EILAND-CLASS	A massive battleship that acts as a mobile shipyard for the subline vessels it commands and supports.

GMS
MURIE-CLASS BATTLESHIP

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
6	25	12	1 Superheavy, 1 Primary, 2 Auxiliary, 1 System

The Murie is GMS's standard battleship design comprising a well-rounded hull armed and outfitted for a variety of scenarios across multiple theaters and doctrines. Although it is most often employed by the Union Navy as a heavy ship of the line, the Murie can be found in virtually every major naval force (and more than a few minor ones), including those of Harrison Armory and the Karrakin Trade Baronies. A posting of note for any commander to be proud of, the Murie has a storied history and a long line of famous names in its pedigree. Considered by many to be an iconic battleship design, it features prominently in numerous omninet dramas and games.

PARAGON
Trait
1/round, you may add **+1 ACCURACY** to any roll made by you or an allied battlegroup in the same range band. 1/engagement, you may add **+3 ACCURACY** instead.

GMS
THOREAU-CLASS BATTLESHIP
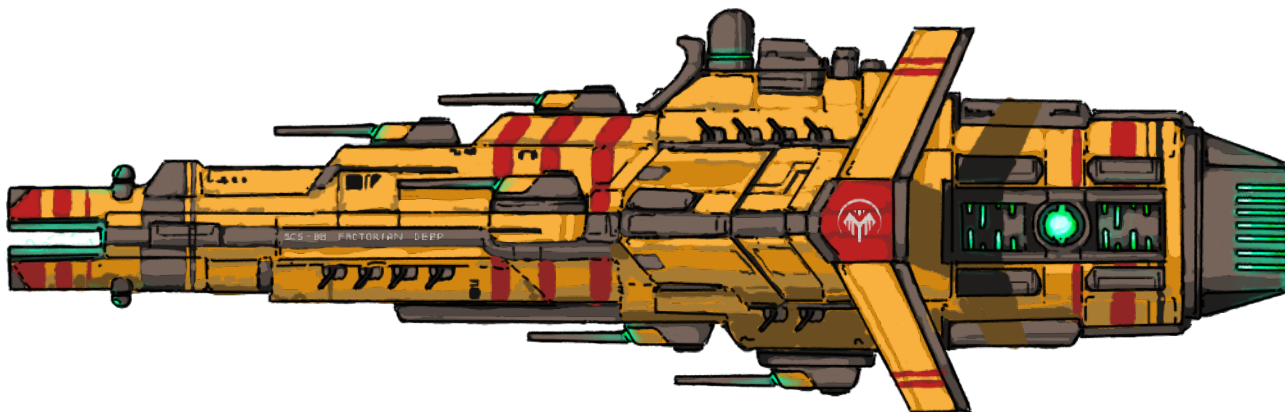
POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
7	25	12	1 Superheavy, 2 Primary, 2 Auxiliary

A ship with origins that can be traced back to the late Second Committee, the Thoreau exists today as a tangible reminder of an earlier and more imperialistic period in Union's history. Updated for the modern era, the Thoreau is a veritable fortress built to enhance a fleet's offensive capabilities with a combination of advanced fire-control systems, aggressive NHP deportment, and robust power reserves, all supporting a hull bristling with weapons. With the sheer amount of firepower at its disposal, it isn't unheard of for a single Thoreau to be assigned as a "fleet of one" to the defense of a polity under Union's umbrella. Some critics within ThirdComm argue that the ship should be retired as part of the ongoing reorganization of Union's navy, citing its prominent role in SecComm's frequent use of "battleship diplomacy", but the Thoreau simply remains too useful to mothball entirely.

BARRAGE DOCTRINE
Trait
When you fire a **PRIMARY** weapon as part of **All Ahead Full**, you may use two **AUXILIARY** weapons alongside it instead of one.

UNLEASH HELL
Maneuver, Limited 1
You may fire one **SUPERHEAVY** weapon and up to two **PRIMARY** weapons, or up to four **PRIMARY** weapons. You cannot use this maneuver if you have already moved this turn.

HA
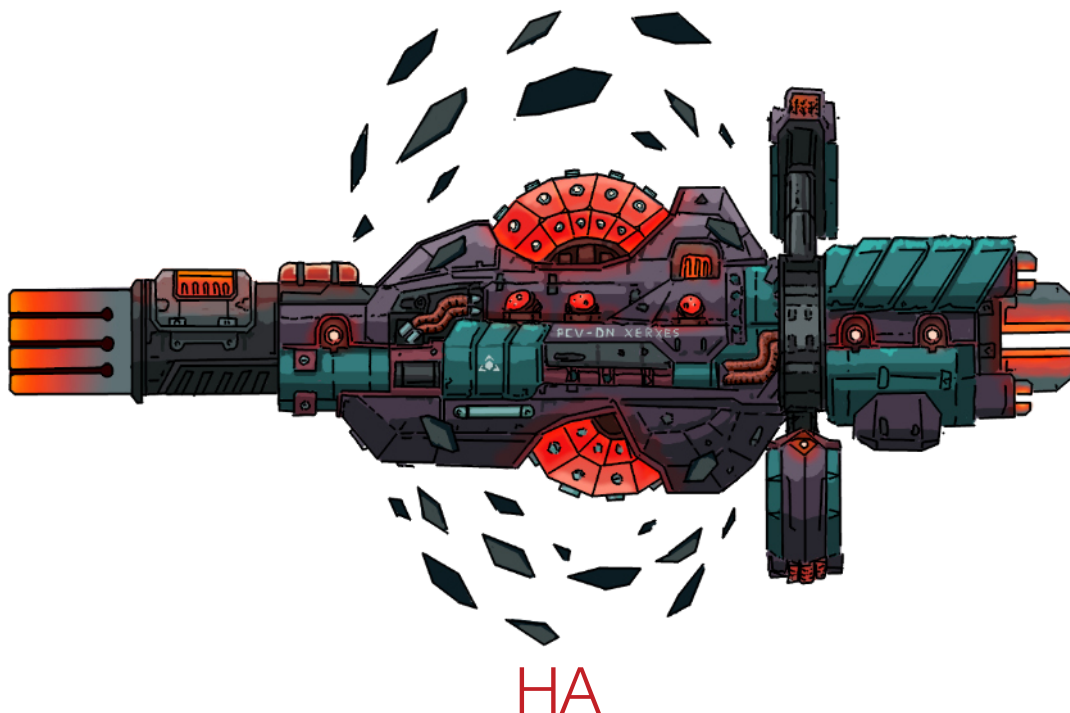
LOUIS XIV–CLASS DREADNOUGHT

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
7	15	13	1 Superheavy, 1 Primary, 2 Systems

Unusually for a battleship, the Louis XIV-class dreadnought is comparatively fragile, but only because it foregoes raw structural integrity for a novel array of advanced projected defense systems and high-powered blinkfield shielding that can reliably deflect or disperse even the heaviest firepower. It is the result of a tireless effort on the part of naval engineers and the Armory's Think Tank research and development amalgam to address one of the most pressing strategic problems in contemporary naval warfare: the extreme degree to which firepower outstrips defensive technologies. The Louis XIV is the most advanced product of this research to date, and while it fails to completely address this problem, it is nonetheless viewed as a tangible sign of progress, with optimistic futurists touting it as the shape of things to come. To further broaden its portfolio among Armory commanders, the ship's shield arrays can also be tuned for remote projection, enabling it to extend its protection to other nearby vessels as well.

PINPOINT AEGIS
Trait

Your battlegroup gains **+1d6 Interdiction**. Additionally, this ship begins each engagement with **5 OVERSHIELD** and gains **5 OVERSHIELD** at the start of each Logistics Phase. While this ship has **OVERSHIELD**, it gains **+2 DEFENSE**.

PROJECTED BLACKSHIELD
Tactic, Limited 1

Your battlegroup or an allied battlegroup of your choice gains **+3d6 Interdiction** and a ship of your choice in that battlegroup gains **+4 DEFENSE** until the end of the next **Impact Phase**. While this effect is active, the chosen ship is also immune to **critical hits**.
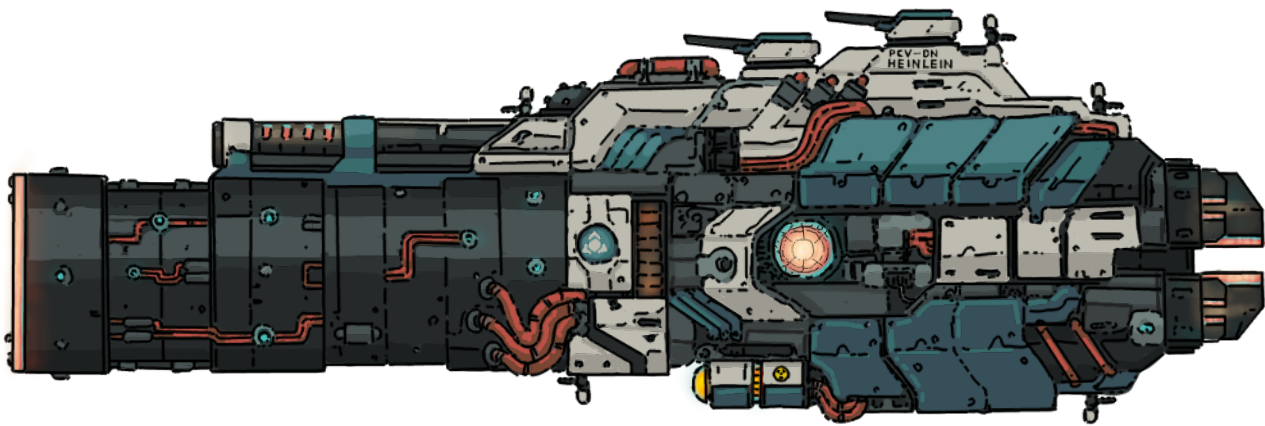
HA
MICHEL NEY–CLASS DREADNOUGHT

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
7	25	12	1 Superheavy, 2 Primary, 1 System

The Michel Ney–class dreadnought represents one of Harrison Armory's most advanced technological developments, and one of its most closely guarded secrets. Originally nothing more than a modified variant of the GMS Murie, the latest version of the Michel Ney is actually an augmented retrofit currently being used as a testbed platform for a highly experimental, highly classified form of nonlocal blinkspace transit. A potential paradigm-shifting development in naval warfare, the Union Intelligence Bureau and Union Naval Intelligence have both confirmed that the ship's distinct emission signatures are consistent with those observed in the Armory's Sunzi chassis, itself believed to have been developed with stolen Volador technology. This is the first known attempt by Armory engineers to incorporate this technology into a capital ship and the results are striking, granting commanders a battleship-class vessel capable of hit-and-run maneuvers unanticipated by a ship of its tonnage. With the escalation of conflicts in the Dawnline Shore, it appears that the Armory is using the opportunity to gather live combat data, leaving other forces operating in-theater scrambling to assemble a response. Commanders assigned to a Michel Ney operate under strict orders from the highest level of the Purview Directorate to never allow their vessel to fall into enemy hands, no matter the cost.

BLINKSPACE CARVER
Trait

When you use the **Retrograde Burn** maneuver, you may also fire a **PRIMARY** weapon. This may be done before or after moving.

TACTICAL BLINKTUNNELER
Maneuver, Limited 1

Your battlegroup may fall back or advance one range band, and becomes **BOLSTERED** until the end of your next turn. You may also fire one **SUPERHEAVY** weapon or up to two **PRIMARY** weapons either before or after moving.
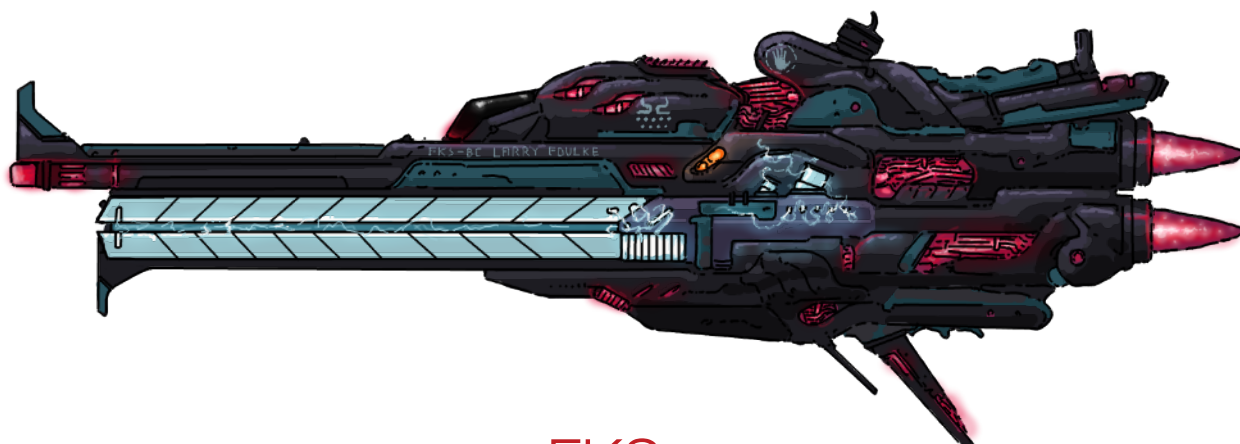
FKS
CALENDULA-CLASS BATTLECRUISER

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
7	23	13	2 Superheavy, 1 Primary, 1 System

Sometimes referred to as a "siege cruiser", the Calendula-class battlecruiser is an ostentatious Baronic design that makes numerous sacrifices all in order to mount multiple, overlapping superheavy weapons within a single hull. Most ships – even battleships – can only bear the engineering stresses and power demands of a single one of these devastating armaments, but some elements within Baronic Unified Command are more than happy to sacrifice as many practical considerations as necessary for the sake of an overwhelming show of force. Even equipped with multiple high-output, capital-grade reactors along with an array of deployable heat sinks to manage them, the power consumption requirements necessary to support the Calendula are staggering – even the most well-maintained example is likely to experience frequent overloads and runaway discharges as excessive power is shunted directly into weapon systems at rates other navies would deem unsafe. Nonetheless, this danger cuts both ways; the Calendula can unleash firepower that other vessels simply cannot hope to match, annihilating enemies before the ship's own flaws catch up with it.

LAST ARGUMENT OF KINGS
Trait

This ship must have at least one SUPERHEAVY CHARGE weapon.

OVERCHARGE CAPACITORS
Trait

This ship can pour more power into its long-spool weapons than is strictly advisable. Whenever you remove a **Charge Counter** from one of its SUPERHEAVY weapons, you may choose to take 1 damage and give that weapon an **Overcharge Counter**, up to a maximum of **4 Overcharge Counters**. This damage cannot be prevented in any way, but cannot reduce the ship below **1 HP**. When you fire a weapon with **Overcharge Counters**, remove all **Overcharge Counters** from it and deal an additional **+1d3** DAMAGE on hit for each counter removed this way.

MAXIMUM POWER
Tactic, Limited 1

One of this ship's SUPERHEAVY weapons with the CHARGE tag immediately removes all **Charge Counters** and gains **4 Overcharge Counters**, up to a maximum of **4**. The next attack made with that weapon gains **+4 RELIABLE**, but afterwards is destroyed and cannot be used again for the rest of the battle. When you use this tactic, this ship immediately takes **4 damage** that cannot be prevented in any way, but which cannot reduce it below **1 HP**.
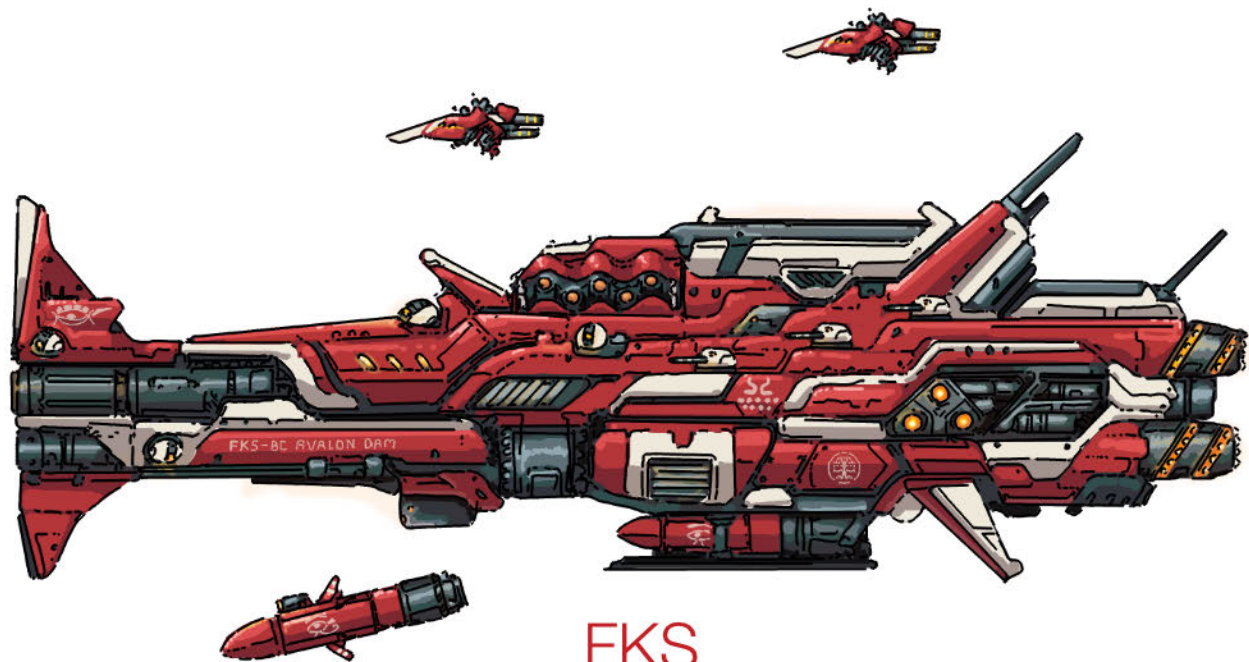
FKS
HESPERIS-CLASS BATTLECRUISER

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
7	23	13	1 Superheavy, 2 Primary, 1 Escort

A special project spearheaded by those within Baronic Unified Command who firmly believe that missiles and torpedoes are the dominant future of naval warfare, the Hesperis-class battlecruiser was designed as a proof-of-concept testbed for a new form of payload-focused strategic doctrine. In addition to advanced targeting and munition coordination systems, the Hesperis also serves as a command-and-control platform for the Crosier Self-Contained Kill Vehicle, an enormous munition that straddles the line between ordnance and independent vessel. The Hesperis has yet to see much in the way of live combat, given the newness of its design and the exorbitant cost of each SCKV, but both the Chamber of Naval Strategy and the project's detractors are eager to see how well it fares in action.

IMPACT-ASSURANCE TARGETING
Trait

1/round, you may choose one:
- During your turn, remove **1 Flight Counter** from one of your active **PAYLOAD** attacks.
- During the **Impact Phase**, consume a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP'S LOCK ON** when it rolls **Interdiction** against one or more of your **PAYLOAD** attacks to force it to reroll **1 Interdiction** die and keep the worse result.

SELF-CONTAINED KILL VEHICLES
Trait

This ship begins combat accompanied by a pair of **Self-Contained Kill Vehicles** – massive independent munitions large enough to carry their own defenses. While unlaunched, each SCKV counts as a **CAPITAL SHIP** for the purpose of attacks and abilities, with **10 HP**, **10 DEFENSE**, and an **AUXILIARY** weapon slot. SCKVs cannot be boarded. If this ship is destroyed, its unlaunched SCKVs are harmlessly destroyed as well.

You may launch one or both SCKVs as a maneuver during your turn. Treat them as **SUPERHEAVY SINGLE-TARGET PAYLOAD −1** attacks that deal **12 damage** and can be launched at one or two targets, tracking them each individually. SCKVs are also automatically launched whenever you move into **Range 1-0** during your turn or whenever you begin your turn there. Once an SCKV is launched, it is considered destroyed and cannot be recalled. Whenever you take the **All Ahead Full** maneuver during your turn, each unlaunched SCKV under your control permanently increases its damage by **+2** for the rest of the engagement to a maximum of **+8**, and you may also assign one unlaunched SCKV to a **Defensive Screen** as though it was a **FRIGATE**.

Whenever a hostile ship destroys an unlaunched SCKV, that ship's battlegroup takes **1d6+1 AREA-TARGET** damage. If an SCKV is destroyed while assigned to a **Defensive Screen**, then the ship it was screening takes **1d6 damage** and the hostile ship's battlegroup takes **2d6 AREA-TARGET** damage instead.
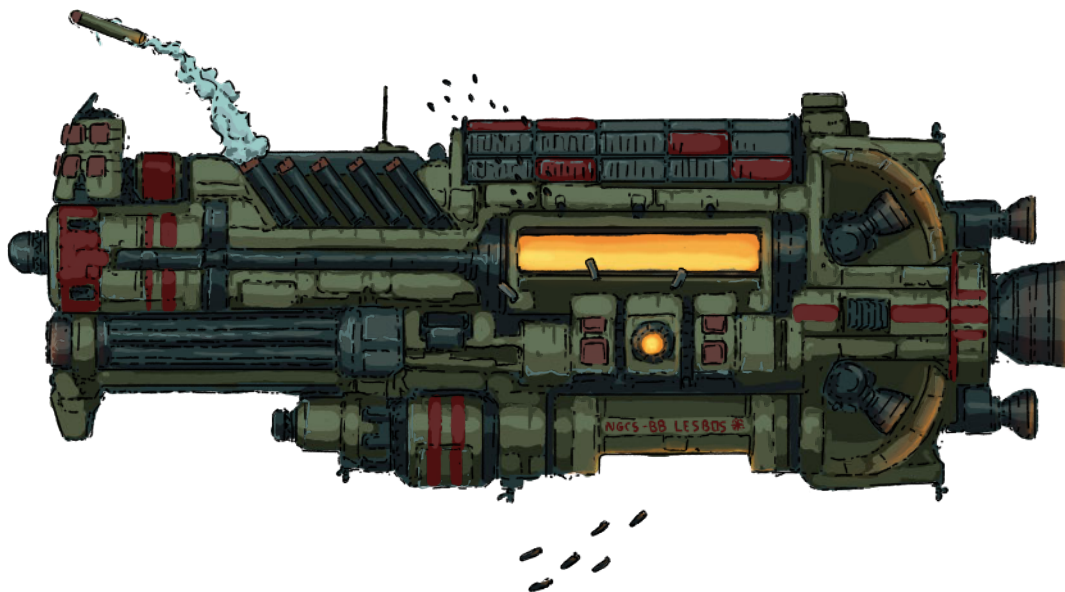
IPS-N

GREENLAND-CLASS BATTLECARRIER

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
6	30	10	1 Superheavy, 1 Primary, 3 Wings

The "battlecarrier" is an unusual hybrid ship classification hearkening back to Cradle's ancient past that attempts to marry the firepower of a battleship with the flexible force projection of a carrier. And ever since those ancient days, admirals and strategists have argued over the usefulness of the design with no end in sight. It is, however, generally agreed that IPS-N manufactures the most successful ships of this type, and the Greenland-class battlecarrier is the foremost example in its class, projecting fighter-tier superiority backed by superheavy ordnance. Most comfortable in close to medium ranges where its armaments can support its fighters and vice versa, the Greenland demands a careful balancing of priorities so as not to find itself outmaneuvered and exposed. Despite the contentious reputation of its ilk, the Greenland also enjoys the devoted and loyal favor of numerous commanders who view its idiosyncrasies as unique strengths.

HOOK-JAB
Trait

1/round whenever a **CAPITAL SHIP**, **ESCORT**, or **WING** in your battlegroup consumes **LOCK ON** as part of a single-target attack, you may also issue a command to one of this ship's **WINGS** for free.

BODY BLOW
Maneuver, Limited 1

Repair one of this ship's **WINGS** to full **HP**, even if it has been destroyed, and fire one **SUPERHEAVY** weapon or up to two **PRIMARY** weapons. You may then issue commands to all of this ship's **WINGS** for free.
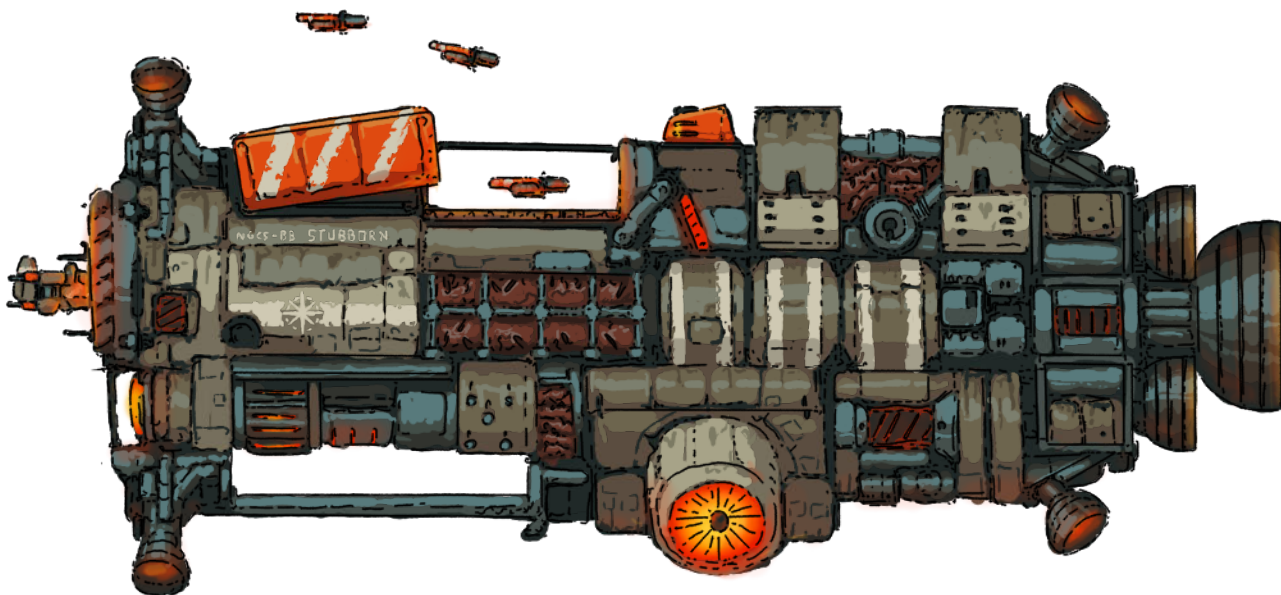
IPS-N
EILAND-CLASS COMMAND CARRIER

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
6	30	10	1 Superheavy, 3 Escorts, 1 System

Technically classified as a fleet-level subline command-and-control vessel, the Eiland-class command carrier is on par with most battleships in terms of overall tonnage if not absolute firepower. Virtually a mobile shipyard, the Eiland's massive bulk is given over to logistical infrastructure, including vast stores of ordnance and supplies, companies of utility subalterns, and automated fabrication and repair systems capable of restoring even critically damaged ships to nominal fighting condition; there are multiple recorded instances of Eiland commanders taking advantage of lulls in battle to restore entire disabled escort groups to combat readiness. A number of Diasporan fleets are known to use Eilands as orbital docking stations and defense platforms, well-armed enough to ward off pirates or aggressive neighbors, while larger navies use them as the centerpieces of large-scale subline fleet operations.

SUPERIOR LOGISTICS
Trait
This ship has an additional 3 points that can only be spent on **ESCORTS**. This ship's **ESCORTS** begin each battle with **2 OVERSHIELD**.

COMBAT REFIT
Tactic, Limited 1
Repair up to three **ESCORTS** in your battlegroup or allied battlegroups in the same range band to **full HP**. One of these **ESCORTS** may be repaired even if it has been destroyed. You may then issue commands to up to two of this ship's **ESCORTS** for free.

CAPITAL SHIP SUMMARY

FRIGATES

HULL	POINTS	HP	DEF	WEAPONS SUPERHEAVY	PRIMARY	AUXILIARY	UPGRADES WINGS	ESCORTS	SYSTEMS
GMS Caspian Sea	3	16	10		1	1			
GMS Huron	3	16	10		1	1			
GMS Superior	3	16	10		1				1
HA Creighton	3	12	10	1					
HA Houston	4	14	12						2
HA Turenne	4	14	12			2			1
FKS Cirsium	3	14	10		1			1	
FKS Onopordum	2	14	10		1				
FKS Tolumnia	5	16	10		2				
IPS-N Bakunawa	4	18	8		1		1		
IPS-N Laho	4	18	8		1				1
IPS-N Minokawa	4	18	8		1				

CARRIERS

HULL	POINTS	HP	DEF	WEAPONS SUPERHEAVY	PRIMARY	AUXILIARY	UPGRADES WINGS	ESCORTS	SYSTEMS
GMS Amazon	4	14	14				4		
GMS Tongass	4	14	14			2		2	
HA Farragut	5	16	13		1		2		
FKS Tagetes	6	14	15				3		1
SSC Apeiron	6	14	15				4		
IPS-N Tawa	4	16	12				2	1	1
IPS-N Masauwu	6	16	12				2	2	

BATTLESHIPS

HULL	POINTS	HP	DEF	WEAPONS SUPERHEAVY	PRIMARY	AUXILIARY	UPGRADES WINGS	ESCORTS	SYSTEMS
GMS Murie	6	25	12	1	1	2			1
GMS Thoreau	7	25	12	1	2	2			
HA Louis XIV	7	15	13	1	1				2
HA Michel Ney	7	25	12	1	2				1
FKS Calendula	7	23	13	2	1				1
FKS Hesperis	7	23	13	1	2			1	
IPS-N Greenland	6	30	10	1	1		3		
IPS-N Eiland	6	30	10	1				3	1

WEAPONS AND UPGRADES

WEAPONS

Each weapon lists all relevant information in its profile, including:

- point costs
- required slots
- any tags it has (e.g., CHARGE, PAYLOAD, and RELOADING)
- whether it makes single-target or area-target attacks
- its range and damage
- other any additional effects or unique features.

When constructing their battlegroup, players have access to all weapons. The weapons listed here are assumed to be ubiquitous enough that they (or equivalent versions) can be found anywhere and everywhere in the galaxy.

A weapon's range rating indicates the maximum and minimum ranges at which it can be used, determined by counting the range bands it can be fired in starting from the outermost band of the gyre and working inward. For example, a weapon with a range of 4–1 can be used anywhere from **Long Range** (4) to **Close Range** (1) but cannot be used at all from **Extreme Range** (5) or **Point-Blank** (0).

SUPERHEAVY WEAPONS

LONG-CYCLE PRIMARY LANCE
Superheavy, Single-Target, Charge 3, Critical, Reliable 3
[Range 4–0][12 damage][0 points]

The galactic standard armament for any heavyweight ship of the line, the LCPL encompasses a wide range of directed-energy cannons and particle beams, all of which share an outcome: the immediate and total destruction of the enemy on a square hit. With balanced spool times and high output, an LCPL is a reliable main gun for any ship that can field it.

3x3 BLOCK SHORT-SPOOL CANNONS
Superheavy, Single-Target, Reliable 2
[Range 4–1][6 damage][2 points]

When you attack with this weapon, you may also fire an **AUXILIARY** weapon.

Additionally, 1/round when you use a maneuver that allows you to attack with a **PRIMARY** or **SUPERHEAVY** weapon, this weapon gains a special **Volley Counter**, up to a maximum of **2 Volley Counters**. Attacking with this weapon automatically expends all **Volley Counters**, dealing **+6 damage** on hit and gaining **+2 RELIABLE** for each counter. When it has **2 Volley Counters** this weapon also gains the **CRITICAL** tag. This weapon cannot gain counters and attack as part of the same action.

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A fearsome battery composed of three racks of three vertically aligned short-spool spinal guns. Firing in sequence, in oppositional tempo, or all at once, block cannons represent a movement away from massive single-shot spinal guns in favor of lighter kinetics. Thanks to a faster firing cycle, an equivalent effect can be achieved via accumulated damage, rather than single-tap kill shots.

SPEARTIP ANTI-CAPITAL TORPEDOES
Superheavy, Single-Target, Payload –1
[Range 5–4][25 damage][2 points]

Designed around an upscaled version of Union's standard two-stage ACT system, Speartip torpedoes are long-range anti-capital payload delivery systems typically carried by the heaviest missile ships in any navy. These large, powerful torpedoes are launched in tight-spread salvos to maximize effective damage against single capital-tier targets.

SPINAL LINAC COHERENT BEAM CANNON
Superheavy, Single-Target, Charge 2, Critical
[Range 4-1][8 damage][2 points]

An old workhorse, the linear accelerator coherent beam cannon once marked the pinnacle of energy weapon development. Reliable at middle-confidence ranges and, with modern power systems, capable of rapid-cycling main battery fire, a LinAc CBC is a formidable weapon favored by captains who prefer more traditional strategies.

SPINAL PETAJOULE KINETIC
Superheavy, Single-Target, Accurate, Charge 3, Critical
[Range 5-2][15 damage][2 points]

Hit or miss, while assigning damage after firing this weapon during the **Impact Phase**, it deals **5 damage** to a different **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT** in its target's battlegroup. If there are no other targets in the battlegroup to choose from, this ability has no effect.

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The PJK spinal cannon is a tremendous kinetic main gun typically carried by heavy, long-range fire-support platforms. PJKs hurl a single, shaped solid-state projectile at their targets, a clean hit from which will knock any vessel out of commission. It is not uncommon for hits on underarmored or low-gross vessels to overpenetrate; under ordinary circumstances, it would be nearly impossible to strike successive targets with one shot, but the phenomenal processing power of fleet legions makes such impossible feats achievable.

SPINAL TACHYON LANCE
Superheavy, Single-Target, Charge 4, Critical, Reliable 10
[Range 5-3][20 damage][3 points]

First developed by Harrison Armory, STL main guns were introduced to the Union Navy and Baronic Unified Command by GMS's Department of Systems Normalization. Adapted from a now stagnant branch of theoretical research into faster-than-light travel, the tachyon lance is a devastating weapon best used at extreme to long ranges.

CO-CONSCIOUSNESS LANCE
Superheavy, Area-Target, Legionspace, Reloading 3
[Range 4-2][2d6+2 damage][3 points]

This devastating systemic attack shatters an enemy fleet legion's cohesion and deals **+2 damage** for each non-**TEMPLATE ESCORT** in the target battlegroup. After taking damage from this weapon, that battlegroup chooses one:

- They must take the first NPC turn in the next **Action Phase**, but all rolls they make receive **+1 DIFFICULTY**.
- They must act last in the next **Action Phase**, after everyone else.

If multiple battlegroups suffer from this disruption effect at once, they choose a viable turn order as needed.

. . . .

Your fleet legion shapes a shared thought into a powerful anticausal weapon and hurls it at the enemy's gestalt. On a clean hit, the target legion is briefly torn asunder – time enough to trigger potentially catastrophic systemic crises in realspace. Any networked system is vulnerable to sabotage until the affected legion can recompose itself: smart payloads detonate in their launch bays, drive systems fire unpredictably, atmosphere is vented, reactors overload – chaos, for fleeting moments, reigns supreme.

NEARLIGHT KILL-PACK
Superheavy, Single-Target, Overkill, Reloading 2
[Range 4-3][4d6 damage][3 points]

This weapon cannot be used during the first round of combat as it requires preparatory calibration. Additionally, attacks made with this weapon closer than **Range 4** gain **INACCURATE**.

. . . .

An NKP is essentially just a bundle of nearlight drives packed behind a dome-shaped micrometeorite shield. While some frigates can equip single-use skip drones, only battleships can fit NKPs into existing torpedo tubes or accelerator bays without substantial modification. NKPs are devastating – if crude and temperamental – weapons favored by states and navies with limited access to more advanced navspec ordnance.

PRIMARY WEAPONS

CONICAL KINETIC PROJECTORS
Primary, Single-Target, Critical
[Range 2–0][1d3+5 damage][0 points]

Attacks with this weapon from further than **Range 1** receive **+1 DIFFICULTY**.

. . . .

Old, reliable, and perfected systems, conical kinetic projectors are simple close-quarters weapons. The naval equivalent to a shotgun, CKPs fire adjustable-spread clouds of microprojectiles intended to blanket areas, rather than target specific points. At speed, the "kill-clouds" fired by CKPs can ruin incautious ships. While devastating, these weapons rapidly lose effectiveness at range, requiring commanders to risk closing to unsafe distances in order to make the most of them.

DORSAL RAZORBACK MISSILES
Primary, Single-Target, Payload
[Range 4–0][1d6+6 damage][0 points]

You may consume **LOCK ON** as part of firing this weapon to add or remove **1 Flight Counter** from it.

. . . .

Typically dorsally mounted in 4x10 racks, HA's Razorback-pattern missiles are designed to be used by line vessels as broad-trajectory denial weapons, avoiding enemy point-defense weapons via target-neutral tracking, positioning, and overwhelming numbers.

PINAKA SHIP-TO-SHIP MISSILES
Primary, Area-Target, Payload
[Range 3–0][1d6+1 damage][0 points]

You may consume a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**'s **LOCK ON** when firing this weapon at its battlegroup to gain **+3 damage**, but it also gains **+1 Flight Counter**.

. . . .

SSC's Pinaka missile system was adapted and upscaled from an older ship-to-ship design for use in terrestrial theaters by the corpro's Monarch ordnance platforms. Its performance in that regard has proven so successful that SSC revived the Pinaka system for its LIMITD line of naval weaponry.

PRIMARY KINETIC BATTERIES
Primary, Single-Target, Reliable 1
[Range 3–0][1d6+1 damage][0 points]

Ships of virtually every classification carry primary kinetic batteries – clusters of kinetic cannons that fire shaped projectiles accelerated chemically, electrically, or otherwise. Reliable in any engagement, kinetic weapons grouped into batteries have been a mainstay of stellar combat since the first guns were strapped to a ship. Most rely on saturation fire to score hits on their targets, though some especially finely tuned systems adopt a more economical approach.

PRIMARY SINGLE-STAGE TORPEDOES
Primary, Single-Target, Payload -1
[Range 4–2][8 damage][0 points]

A mainstay in stellar and wet-navy combat for millennia, single-stage torpedoes are simple, reliable ordnance delivery systems composed of an explosive payload stacked atop a single-stage rocket body. Though powerful by any measure, an individual torpedo is rarely enough to seriously threaten a capital ship owing to the prevalence of defensive countermeasures; standard naval doctrine recommends launching torpedoes in salvos in order to guarantee an effective kill.

SHORT-CYCLE LANCE BATTERIES
Primary, Single-Target, Accurate, Critical
[Range 3–0][3 damage][0 points]

Quick to hit, slow to kill, and demanding on power reserves, early energy weapons were once found only on specialized vessels until the creation of the GMS Grand-1 cyclical catalyst reactor. Miniaturization, standardization, and effective logarithmic power scaling transformed ship-scale energy weapons from temperamental "paint to kill" weapons into single-punch weapons reliable enough to earn the trust of even the most skeptical commander. Tuned and perfected over subsequent centuries, the cyclical catalyst reactor, or "cycle" power plant, can be sized and tuned for either "long" or "short" spool weapons.

TANDEM-SPREAD TORPEDOES
Primary, Single-Target, Payload -1
[Range 4-2][6 damage][0 points]

This weapon can attack two targets at a time, firing separate **PAYLOAD** attacks that are tracked individually.

- -

Tandem-spread torpedoes are larger than classic "primary" torpedoes, bundling multiple warheads into payloads that split and track multiple targets, overwhelming defensive systems through sheer volume.

GEMINI LASER ARRAY
Primary, Single-Target
[Range 3-0][4 damage][1 points]

You may spend a **Tactic** during your turn to set this weapon to track incoming threats. Your battlegroup and an allied battlegroup in the same range band both gain **+2 Interdiction** until the end of your next turn. You may not attack with this weapon in the same turn as you use this ability.

- -

Harrison Armory's Gemini Array utilizes a series of networked beam emitters capable of either synchronous fire for single-point amplification or independent tracking. These dual capabilities allow commanders to flexibly assign the Gemini to proximal interdiction or single-target prioritization as necessary.

HEAVY KINETIC BATTERIES
Primary, Single-Target, Reliable 2
[Range 4–1][5 damage][1 points]

A simple upscaling of traditional battery-mounted kinetic weaponry, heavy kinetics achieve increased effect on target through a combination of greater projectile size, mass, payload, and material composition. Representing the upper bounds of conventional naval weapons, in sufficient numbers, these batteries can approximate the destructive power of even a long-spool weapon. As with their smaller cousins, heavy kinetics are produced in numerous calibers and makes according to a wide range of doctrines and by most major manufacturers.

LAMPREY BOARDING TORPEDOES
Primary Weapon, Single-Target, Boarding, Payload –1
[Range 4-1][8 damage][Tenacity 11][1 points]

When you damage a **CAPITAL SHIP** with this weapon, that ship is immediately boarded by subalterns and suffers the effects of a successful **Sabotage Fire Control**, **Sever Comms**, or **Assault CIC** boarding action of your choice (p. 42); however, if this torpedo's damage is reduced to 0 or otherwise negated then this effect is negated as well. You may make multiple boarding actions with this weapon at a time.

- -

IPS-N's Lamprey torpedoes are a combination of munition and single-use boarding lander. These torpedoes are simple vessels, more akin to ancient local-orbit rockets than weapons: a crew compartment sits atop a drive, capped by a solid-state impact shield that protects the assault payload from the deleterious effects of its shaped breaching warhead. This warhead detonates milliseconds before impact, tearing open the bulkhead of its target ship to create an opening through which the Lamprey's payload – crash-secured subaltern boarding parties – can infiltrate.

LONG-FLIGHT ACTIVE CONTROL MISSILES
Primary, Single-Target, Payload
[Range 5–1][1d6+8 damage][1 points]

You may consume a hostile ship's **LOCK ON** at any point during your turn to change the target of any active **LONG-FLIGHT ACTIVE CONTROL MISSILE PAYLOAD** attacks under your control to that ship. Additionally, if this weapon's current target is ever destroyed or flees the engagement before its payload impacts, you may choose to have that payload remain active and continue to remove **Flight Counters** instead of self-destructing. If it reaches **0 Flight Counters** without a target it automatically self-destructs without any effect.

- -

While most guided naval munitions employ standard 1+n copy drive or comp/con system architecture, LFAC missiles maintain an ongoing fleet legion link from launch to impact, enabling direct control for agile target reprioritization as circumstances dictate.

DARKSTAR MULTIPLE-WARHEAD TORPEDOES
Primary, Area-Target, Payload –1
[Range 4–2][6 damage][2 points]

After firing this weapon, onboard systems begin calibrating its multiple warheads for dispersal which takes until the start of your next turn. After calibration is complete, if this weapon's damage is not completely interdicted, it deals **+1d6 damage** after **Interdiction**.

. . . .

Powerful, modern torpedoes, Darkstar MWTs pack delayed-firing payloads into long warheads that trigger at randomized intervals to avoid enemy interdiction and point-defense screens. Warhead detonation patterns can be assigned to onboard guidance and targeting systems or delegated to fleet legion control for optimal saturation.

LEGIONSPACE SCHISM
Primary, Single-Target, Accurate, Legionspace
[Range 4-2][3 damage][2 points]

On hit, choose one:

- An allied battlegroup may advance one range band or ignore all hostile effects that would force it to move until the end of its next turn. Each battlegroup can only benefit from this effect 1/round.
- If the target's battlegroup has any active **PAYLOAD** attacks in transit, it must choose one: take an additional **5 damage** or add **1 Flight Counter** to an active **PAYLOAD** attack of your choice.

. . . .

Conventional electronic warfare occurs at the sublegion level throughout every stage of naval combat, but some vessels also equip powerful narrowband omnitransmitter arrays designed to enhance their fleet legion's ability to take direct, aggressive action against enemy ships, disrupting coordination and creating advantageous openings for allied battlegroups to exploit.

MASS ACCELERATOR TURRETS
Primary, Single-Target, Overkill, Reliable 3
[Range 2-0][1d6+1 damage][2 points]

When you attack with this weapon, you may also deal 3 damage to a hostile **ESCORT** (which cannot be the same target as the attack) or up to two hostile **WINGS**.

. . . .

Mass accelerators are kinetic weapons that operate on simple magnetic principles, using atmosphere-ignorant catalyzation to accelerate projectiles in furious "storms" of metal. Faster-tracking than conventional kinetic weapons, mass accelerator turrets are capable of engaging multiple simultaneous targets including fighter-tier threats with no effective loss of accuracy.

THROUGHLINE SKIP DRONE
Primary, Single-Target, Charge 2, Limited 1, Overkill, Unique
[Range 4-3][2 points]

This weapon does not automatically begin removing **Charge Counters**. It begins charging when you choose a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** at the start of the **Logistics Phase**. Unlike other **CHARGE** weapons, this weapon must fire as soon as it is fully charged – it cannot be held. Instead of attacking normally, roll 1d20:

On 10+, this weapon hits, dealing **3d6 damage** to the target and dealing **1d6+1 damage** to all **ESCORTS** in its battlegroup.

On 9 or less, or if your battlegroup is outside this weapon's effective range when it finishes charging, this weapon misses its optimal delivery window and only deals **1d6+1 damage** to the target.

This weapon's attack roll, damage, and range cannot be modified in any way, and **Charge Counters** cannot be added to or removed from it by other effects.

. . . .

The skip drone hangs, still, drifting alongside the great bulk of the frigate. With a flash, it is gone; moments later, three hundred thousand kilometers away, a new star erupts. A clean hit.

AUXILIARY WEAPONS

FLYSWATTER MISSILES
Auxiliary
[Range 3–0][0 points]

When fired alongside any **PRIMARY** weapon, this weapon deals 2 damage to up to two **WINGS** in the target's battlegroup.

- -

Under the big guns of any ship of the line are auxiliary weapons, tasked with managing threats a captain would be wise not to ignore: enemy strike craft.

MESSENGER LEAD LASER
Auxiliary
[Range 4–2][0 points]

This weapon cannot be fired alongside other weapons. Instead, whenever your battlegroup is within this weapon's range during the **Logistics Phase** you may choose one of your **PAYLOAD** attacks that has reached **0 Flight Counters**. That attack deals **+1 damage** for each instance of this weapon in your battlegroup, to a maximum of **+4 damage**.

- -

Lead and confidence lasers are "hot" targeting lasers, bundled comms and data arrays tuned to weapons-tier wattages. Messenger lead lasers ensure on-target accumulation damage via thermal energy pumped in from a ship's main drive.

HARBINGER CONFIDENCE LASERS
Auxiliary
[Range 5–3][1 point]

This weapon cannot be fired alongside other weapons. Instead, 1/round when your battlegroup is within this weapon's range and you remove a **Charge Counter** from a weapon, you may automatically deal **2 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT** of your choice for each instance of this weapon in your battlegroup, to a maximum of **4 damage**.

- -

Harbinger confidence lasers, like Messenger lead lasers, are "hot" targeting lasers. The difference lies in the mechanism by which they generate spare thermal energy: while the Messenger draws exclusively from a ship's main reactor, the Harbinger may also pump its wattage up by siphoning bleed-heat produced by cycle generators as a ship's main gun charges.

SECONDARY TURRETS
Auxiliary
[Range 3–0][0 points]

When fired alongside any **PRIMARY** single-target weapon targeting a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT**, this weapon deals **1 damage** to that same target.

- -

All great compositions are the work of first and second strings.

NEARSPACE DIRECTED-ENERGY PERFORATORS
Auxiliary
[Range 2–0][1 points]

When fired alongside any **PRIMARY** single-target weapon targeting a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT**, this weapon deals **1 damage** to that same target and **2 damage** to a hostile **WING**. In addition, while your battlegroup is within this weapon's effective range, it gains **+1 Interdiction** for each instance of this weapon in the battlegroup, to a maximum of **+4 Interdiction**.

- -

NDEPs are auxiliary laser weapon systems, typically automated or delegated to a legion partition, tasked with ensuring nearspace defense against projectiles, missiles, inbound kinetic weapons, and fighter-tier vessels.

CLOUDKILL KINETICS
Auxiliary, Limited 2   [2 points]

When fired alongside any **PRIMARY** weapon, you launch a kill-cloud of kinetic projectiles that threatens enemies attempting to approach you along predicted routes. Choose your own battlegroup or an allied battlegroup in the same range band: until the end of your next turn, each time a hostile **ESCORT** or **WING** makes an attack roll against or deals damage to the selected battlegroup during the **Action Phase**, it automatically takes **1d6+1 damage**. If this damage is enough to destroy the attacker, it is destroyed before it can carry out its attack or action and its effects are negated. Each battlegroup can only benefit from one kill-cloud at a time.

- -

Cloudkill kinetics use auxiliary-tier conical projectors to defend against subline vessels and strike craft by filling high-confidence enemy trajectories with deadly flights of microprojectiles, adjusting for density and coverage radius as necessary with each firing.

SYSTEMS

Systems represent a wide variety of upgrades that commanders might take with them into battle, including advanced equipment modules, tactical doctrines, and specialized training. They can only be equipped to ships with one or more system slots. When a player creates a battlegroup, their **Flagship** has **+1 system slot**, allowing them some degree of customization no matter what ships they chose for their force.

Like weapons, each system lists all relevant information in its profile, including its points cost, any tags it has, and how its unique features work. Some systems feature passive benefits, while others need to be activated or grant your battlegroup additional tactics and maneuvers.

AGGRESSIVE COMMANDERS
System, Unique   [0 points]

All single-target attacks made by and against you at **Range 2-0** gain **+1 ACCURACY**. Additionally, 1/engagement, you may choose one:

• When a hostile effect or ability forces your battlegroup to move forward any number of range bands, one of your **CAPITAL SHIPS** gains **5 OVERSHIELD**.
• When a hostile effect or ability forces an allied battlegroup to move forward any number of range bands, your battlegroup moves instead. If this prevents a hostile ship from targeting the allied battlegroup with an attack or ability as part of that same action, it may target you instead.

Your battlegroup's combat doctrine emphasizes aggressive movement, closing gaps and plotting courses that more timid commanders would eschew. This impetus is not without sacrifice, often requiring defensive positioning and predictability to be traded for a chance to take the fight directly to your enemies.

BRACE FOR IMPACT
System, Limited 1, Unique   [0 points]

Choose one when you use this system:

• You may activate this system during the **Impact Phase** after attacks have been rolled and damage has been assigned: all damage taken by ships in your battlegroup is reduced by half until the end of your next turn. You may not use any tactics or perform any maneuvers during your next turn except for **All Ahead Full** or **Retrograde Burn**.
• You may use the **Brace for Impact** tactic below during your turn.

The order that every commander dreads to give.

BRACE FOR IMPACT
Tactic, Limited 1
Your battlegroup becomes **BOLSTERED** until the end of your next turn.

BULWARK REDUNDANCIES
System   [0 points]

This ship gains **+3 HP**. This system can only be taken once per ship.

Extensive superstructural modifications and endo/exo uparmoring can help a ship survive hits that would otherwise kill a stock version of the same vessel.

CLEARED TO LAND
System, Unique   [0 points]

Gain the **Cleared to Land** tactic.

A deckie has one job: keep the deck clear, planes loaded, bombers crewed, marines in their pens, subalterns packed, wounded cleared, fires suppressed, munitions clean…

CLEARED TO LAND
Tactic, Limited 1
All of your **ESCORTS** and **WINGS** or all **ESCORTS** and **WINGS** belonging to an allied battlegroup in the same range band as you repair **2 HP**. One **ESCORT** or **WING** of your choice in that battlegroup may repair **4 HP** instead.

FIGHTER LAUNCH CATAPULTS
Unique, System   [0 points]

This ship gains **+1 WING** slot.

While dedicated carriers have an uncontested place in conventional naval doctrine, many commanders value the versatility of carrier tactics enough to modify other ships modified so they can maintain and launch a modest complement of fighter-tier strike craft or mounted chassis. This can involve either internal retrofitting or the addition of externally mounted hangar bays affixed to a ship's hull.

Section 3 // Weapons and Upgrades

FIRE FOR EFFECT
System, Unique   [0 points]

Gain the **Fire for Effect** tactic:

Bracketing is satisfactory and trajectories are true: all guns, fire for effect.

FIRE FOR EFFECT
Tactic, Limited 1

Nominate a hostile battlegroup as a priority target. Until the start of the next **Logistics Phase**, all single-target attacks made against that battlegroup gain **+1 Accuracy**.

INSIGHTFUL COMMANDERS
System, Unique   [0 points]

1/round, when a hostile effect or ability forces you to move back or forward any number of range bands, your next single-target attack gains **+1 Accuracy**, or **+2 Accuracy** if you are attacking from **Range 5-4**. This effect lasts until the end of your next turn and does not stack.

Additionally, 1/engagement when moved by a hostile effect or ability, you may instead attack with a single **Primary** weapon of your choice before or after the hostile movement.

Through hard-won experience, advanced predictive modeling, or simply a keen sense of tactical intuition, your battlegroup's commanders are adept at reading the shifting tides of battle and responding accordingly.

PIPER DRONES
System, Limited 1, Unique   [0 points]

During the **Logistics Phase**, you may choose one:

- Add **1 Flight Counter** to an active hostile **Payload** attack targeting one of your ships or your battlegroup.
- Redirect an active hostile **Payload** attack toward one of your ships or your battlegroup.

Piper drones are defensive, single-use drones fired from ships under threat from guided missiles. Once launched, piper drones emit like-signatures cloned from their parent ship, diverting incoming missiles via signal spoofing.

PREDICT/OVERLAY SHIELD PROJECTOR
System, Limited 1, Unique   [0 points]

During the **Impact Phase**, you may reduce incoming damage assigned to a **Capital Ship** in your battlegroup from a **Superheavy** weapon by **6**. At **Range 5**, this damage reduction is increased to **10** instead.

P/OS projectors flash-layer alternating fields of magnetics, kinetics, coherent particles, and shimmering waveform shields over friendly ships under threat. These layered systems, flashed for a moment, can precisely dismantle, deflect, and defray incoming fire against critical targets, turning what might otherwise have been a kill shot into something more survivable, if only just.

SINGLE-PLANE SHIELD
System, Limited 1   [0 points]

During the **Impact Phase**, you may reroll your **Interdiction** roll and take the best result.

Many ships of the line use strong-energy systems to supplement fleetwide point defenses. More effective against slower forms of ordnance than against high-velocity and directed-energy munitions, these shields nonetheless serve as excellent additional protection against massed salvos of missiles or torpedoes.

STEADY... NOW!
System, Unique   [0 points]

Gain the **Steady... Now!** tactic:

The key is balance: never fire too early, and always before it is too late.

STEADY... NOW!
Tactic, Limited 1

Choose a weapon in your battlegroup with the **Charge** tag. Your next attack with that weapon gains **+1 Accuracy** and **+X Reliable**, where **X** is based on your range band (i.e., **Extreme Range** grants **+5**, **Long Range** grants **+4**, etc).

VETERAN CREWS
System, Limited 1   [0 points]

You may reroll one of your attack rolls but must keep the second result. On a reroll result of 20+, you do not expend this system's **Limited** use.

....

Veteran crews have been through the tense dance of interstellar combat before and are well prepared to handle the stress and chaos each new engagement brings.

ECHOPRAXIC IMAGO
System, Boarding, Legionspace, Unique
[Tenacity 10]   [1 points]

This electronic warfare system can only be used to perform the **Echopraxic Imago** tactic:

....

Conventional systemic attacks are largely ineffective at the scale of most fleet legions. To engage enemy legionspace gestalts requires more powerful – and more esoteric – methods of electronic/ontologic warfare.

ECHOPRAXIC IMAGO
Tactic
[Range 5-3]

You introduce a viral logic bomb into the systems of a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**, which is treated as a boarding action. This bomb takes hold during the **Boarding Phase**, attempting one of the following commands (your choice):

- **Induce Nostalgic Loop:** Until the end of its next turn, the boarded ship's battlegroup rolls twice for **Interdiction** and takes the worse result. While this effect is active, if any of the affected battlegroup's final **Interdiction** rolls result in a 1 on any die, the affected ship takes **3 damage**.

- **Inflict Ontological Parasite:** Choose a range band. Until the end of its next turn, the boarded battlegroup's attack rolls against targets in that range band have a 50 percent chance to miss outright before the attack is made. Roll a die or flip a coin to determine if the attack misses. This does not stack with **Defensive Screen**; the defender chooses which effect to apply. Additionally, the boarded battlegroup cannot choose that range band for abilities that affect or target specific ranges.

SUBLINE BERTH
Unique, System   [0 points]

This ship gains **+1 ESCORT** slot.

....

The primary limiting factor in deploying subline vessels is one of logistics. These ships frequently sacrifice all but the bare essentials in order to maximize their effective firepower, restricting their maximum deployment range and limiting the time they can remain combat effective without resupply. These restrictions can be overcome through the incorporation of additional supply holds, hull upgrades, and logistical infrastructure, allowing any ship of the line to manage and maintain their own escorts for extended durations.

IMPOSSIBLE DODGE
System, Legionspace, Reloading 3, Unique
[1 points]

During the **Logistics Phase**, you may choose one of your ships. The use of sudden counterfactual positioning "removes that ship from play" until the end of your next turn. While removed from play it:

- can't be targeted by attacks and effects or take damage
- can't use any weapons, upgrades, or traits
- doesn't provide any other benefits to your battlegroup, including **INTERDICTION** bonuses
- automatically evades all active **PAYLOAD** attacks that reach **0 Flight Counters** during the same **Logistics Phase** as this system was used.

AREA-TARGET PAYLOAD attacks deal damage to the other ships in the battlegroup as normal.

....

No ship can move like that!

POWER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS
System, Unique   [1 points]

Gain the **Divert Power to Defenses** and **Divert Power to Weapons** tactics:

Advanced PD systems are managed by officers working in concert with a legion partition to distribute power across an active ship far more efficiently than purely automated systems. The benefits allow for greater moment-to-moment prioritization of ship power as needed, whether for offensive or defensive purposes.

DIVERT POWER TO DEFENSES
Tactic, Reloading 2

Add **1 Charge Counter** to a CHARGE weapon in your battlegroup. The ship equipped with that weapon gains **+2 Defense** and your battlegroup gains **+1d6 Interdiction** until the end of your next turn.

DIVERT POWER TO WEAPONS
Tactic, Limited 1

You shunt power from a ship's defenses straight into weapon systems. Remove **1 Charge Counter** from a CHARGE weapon in your battlegroup, but all attacks against the ship equipped with that weapon gain **+1 ACCURACY** and damage reduction from **Interdiction** applied to that ship is only half as effective (requiring **2 Interdiction** to prevent **1 damage**) until the end of your next turn.

SUBJECTIVE SYZYGY
System, Legionspace, Reloading 3, Unique
[1 points]

When a hostile ship makes a single-target attack roll against a ship in your battlegroup or an allied ship in your range band, you may force them to reroll the attack and take the worst result.

A subjective syzygy is a crude but effective legionspace attack, smashing through ontological defenses like a hammer and sending enemy legions recoiling from the assault against their very sense of self. In layman's terms, the syzygy momentarily forces a target gestalt to be overlaid by and aligned with an attacker's own systems-bolstered legionspace, blanking out the target's legion for brief but precious seconds.

ANTICOGNITION HYPERFRACTAL
System, Legionspace, Reloading 3, Unique
[2 points]

During the **Logistics Phase**, you may add **1 Flight Counter** to up to two active hostile PAYLOAD attacks. A hostile battlegroup with PAYLOAD attacks affected by this may ignore it by taking **3 AREA-TARGET** damage per **Flight Counter** negated. This damage cannot be interdicted. If the effect on one or both PAYLOAD attacks is ignored, immediately remove **1 Refresh Counter** from this system.

Your fleet legion pierces the enemy legion's manifold ego barriers, implanting a germ of anticognitive thought. It blooms and grows endlessly, disrupting simul-neural pathways and creating excited hyperfractal redundancy loops. With the right effort, the enemy gestalt will begin to fragment and cascade – just as planned.

LEGIONSPACE COORDINATOR
System, Legionspace, Unique
[2 points]

Gain the **Exploit Positioning** maneuver.

A legionspace coordinator is an organic human officer that acts as a liaison between the fleet legion and battlegroup commanders, distributing the legion's recommendations to their commanding officers as quickly as possible. Such coordinators tend to have extensive backgrounds in NHP research, engineering, and sociology.

EXPLOIT POSITIONING
Maneuver, Reloading 3

Nominate an allied battlegroup. It may take an additional maneuver on its player's next turn.

AURORA STEALTH SHROUDING
System, Unique [3 points]

Whenever your battlegroup moves or is moved two or more range bands during a round, you immediately become **BOLSTERED** until the start of the next **Action Phase**. If you are already **BOLSTERED**, you may clear **LOCK ON** from a **CAPITAL SHIP** in your battlegroup instead. Additionally, gain the **Whiteout** maneuver and **Thermal Spoofing** tactic.

"Stealth" in a naval context is largely a matter of inverse thermal concealment; combat-ready ships simply cannot hope to conceal their heat signatures from enemy detection, and attempting to minimize heat emissions through internal sink storage results in crews being cooked alive. As such, effective concealment involves the emission of thermal plumes via ejected waste heat mediums or the unfurling of enormous spools of conductive nanocarbon filaments to act as radiator arrays. This massive heat output prevents enemy sensors from maintaining positive-target identification and allows shrouded vessels to effectively maneuver while masking their true positions.

WHITEOUT
Maneuver, Limited 1

Your battlegroup may fall back or advance one range band and is then obscured by a massive flare of thermal energy that blinds enemy sensors. While obscured, your battlegroup and its ships:

- can't be targeted by attacks and effects or take damage
- can't use any weapons, upgrades, or traits
- don't provide any other benefits

Your battlegroup continues to add and remove counters during the **Logistics Phase** as normal. Payload attacks targeting your battlegroup or ships during this time cannot go below **1 Flight Counter** by any means.

Your battlegroup reappears during the next **Impact Phase** after all other battlegroups have chosen targets and rolled to hit. You may then choose targets and roll to hit with any ready **CHARGE** weapons. The damage from your **CHARGE** weapons is applied before any other damage is rolled. If this is enough to destroy a hostile ship, it is destroyed before it can fire its own **CHARGE** weapons and its damage and any other effects are negated. The ship equipped with this upgrade then takes **1d6 damage** from thermal overload that ignores **OVERSHIELD** and cannot be prevented in any way.

THERMAL SPOOFING
Tactic, Limited 2, Reloading 2

Choose up to two of the following effects:

- Clear **LOCK ON** from a **CAPITAL SHIP** in your battlegroup or from an allied **CAPITAL SHIP** in the same range band.
- Add **1 Flight Counter** to an active **PAYLOAD** attack targeting your battlegroup or any of your ships.
- All single-target attacks against a single **CAPITAL SHIP** in your battlegroup receive **+1 DIFFICULTY** until the end of your next turn.

SUBALTERN COMBAT CREWS
System, Reloading 3, Unique [2 points]

You may use an additional **Tactic** during your turn.

A certain percentage of most naval crews are comprised of subalterns by default, their resilient nature, immunity to hazards like decompression and hard vacuum, and NHP platform-compatibility making them valuable additions to any vessel. A much more significant portion of your fleet's crew consists of subalterns, however, increasing the speed and efficiency of all combat operations. Such crews have a noted tendency to be more vulnerable to command chain disruption and systemic attacks, drawbacks that keep the practice from being more widely standardized.

SMARTSCREEN
System [1 points]

This ship is orbited by a screen of baffler drones. The first single-target attack made against it each round receives **+1 DIFFICULTY**.

Smartscreens use physical-presence spoof and baffle drones to interrupt enemy smart and guided weapons along with hostile targeting systems, layering additional defensive measures to ensure vessel survival. Repeated assaults are capable of overwhelming the screen's defensive countermeasures, forcing commanders to remain mindful of the system's limitations.

Section 3 // Weapons and Upgrades

Battlespace CIC
System, Legionspace, Unique   [3 points]

When you assign **Frigates** to a **Defensive Screen**, you may assign them to allied battlegroups in the range band either directly ahead of you or directly behind you. Additionally, gain the **Adjust Bearing** maneuver and **Coordinated Impact** tactic:

....

Developed as a joint venture between Harrison Armory's Think Tank and Smith-Shimano's Ontologics & Cosubjectivity Research Campus, Battlespace is a next-generation command information center architecture that allows for more efficient and agile information flow between fleet legions and human bridge elements. Though complete 1–1 human/legion cosubjectivity remains an as yet elusive goal, this development represents a significant step forward in full-spectrum fleet command capability.

Adjust Bearing
Maneuver, Reloading 2

Your battlegroup may fall back or advance one range band, and you may move an allied battlegroup back or forward one range band. If you use this maneuver at **Range 5-3**, you may also **Lock On** to a hostile **Capital Ship** or **Escort**.

Coordinated Impact
Tactic, Limited 2, Reloading 2

Choose one:

- Add or remove **1 Flight Counter** from up to two of your active **Payload** attacks or those belonging to allied battlegroups.
- Choose two weapons belonging to you or allied battlegroups and extend their maximum and minimum ranges by 1 for their next attack (for example, a weapon with **Range 4-2** would have **Range 5-1**). This effect does not stack.

"Sandstorm" Vanguard
System, Unique   [3 points]

Your battlegroup gains **+2 Interdiction**, and the **Slingshot** maneuver and **Lithoscreen** tactic:

....

An unorthodox (but not unheard of) naval combat tactic is the use of shepherded asteroids and other loose debris as both improvised weapons and defensive measures. There are certain advantages to employing such "unsophisticated" armaments, namely complete immunity to electronic/systemic subversion as well as a minimal sensor profile. When sufficiently accelerated, even asteroids can cause as much damage as conventional munitions. Such tactics are more commonly employed by smaller or less advanced naval powers as a cost-effective substitute for capital-grade ordnance and shielding, but larger polities have also been known to utilize them from time to time.

Slingshot
Maneuver, Limited 1

Your battlegroup may advance one range band forward, after which you lob a group of asteroids at a hostile **Capital Ship**. This counts as an attack using the following profile:

Superheavy, Single/Area-Target, Payload

Range 3–0, 10 single-target damage + 4 area-target damage

Interdiction against this attack is applied to its **Area-Target** damage first. This attack ignores hostile effects and abilities that add or remove **Flight Counters** or destroy **Payload** attacks.

On hit, this attack erupts into a dangerous cloud of debris that lasts until the start of the next **Logistics Phase**. For this duration, the next time the target battlegroup would use an ability or effect that forces you or an allied battlegroup to move, it takes **2d6 Area-Target damage** and all of its single-target attack rolls receive **+1 Difficulty** until the end of its next turn.

Lithoscreen
Tactic, Limited 2, Reloading 2

One Capital Ship in your battlegroup gains **5 Overshield**. The next time a hostile **Capital Ship**, **Escort**, or **Wing** reduces this **Overshield** to **0** during the **Action Phase**, the attacker takes **3 damage**.

ESCORTS AND WINGS

Battlegroups are not composed of capital ships alone. Around the flanks of the great ships of the line fly escorts and fighter screens, wings of bombers and groups of subline vessels built to strike fast, hard, and often. These ships – cruisers, destroyers, and corvettes on the large end, fighters, bombers, drones, and mounted mechanized chassis on the smaller end – are critical components of a battlegroup's tactical readiness.

While capital ships duke it out at long range, sortie combat occurs in the no man's land of the gyre. Here, packs of subline ships and wings of strike craft engage enemy forces in an effort to win the midrange battle and disrupt incoming fire. Sortie combat is the field of young officers and pilots eager to make a name for themselves. Smaller ships, debris, and kill-clouds make for a crowded and deadly field, where survivors become heroes and the dead are numerous..

USING ESCORTS AND WINGS

ESCORTS and WINGS are upgrades for CAPITAL SHIPS that grant your battlegroup additional tactics and abilities to use during your turn. These smaller ships don't need to be manually launched – they're always assumed to be deployed during engagements, ready and at your command. Narratively, they may move back and forth between battle lines before returning to their carrier or command ships for repairs and resupply, but in gameplay terms they're always considered "on the board".

Each ESCORT and WING can only be commanded once in a given round before its payloads are exhausted and it needs to rearm and refresh, which happens during the **Logistics Phase**. This restriction applies whether it is being commanded through tactics or other abilities. For example, if a tactic allows you to command up to two FIGHTER WINGS, then you can't use the same WING twice, and once both have been used then they can't be commanded again until readied once more. You may want to note which ESCORTS and WINGS you've used with tokens or markers of some sort. Abilities granted by ESCORTS and WINGS that don't require tactics to use, such as passive or triggered effects, can still be used even if that unit is exhausted.

Some ESCORTS and WINGS also have their own **HP** and can be targeted and damaged by attacks or effects. Some attacks and effects target ESCORTS and Wings specifically, while others damage them as part of affecting other ships in the battlegroup. Player-controlled ESCORTS and WINGS don't have DEFENSE scores, which means weapons and abilities either damage them directly or give specific instructions as needed.

When a ship is destroyed, all ESCORTS and WINGS equipped to it are also considered destroyed. They may have physically survived their parent craft's destruction, but without its protection and ability to resupply them they are no longer a factor in play.

As upgrade types, ESCORTS and WINGS can only be equipped to ships with the appropriate upgrade slots. You cannot put ESCORTS in a WING slot or vice versa.

MECHS AND CHASSIS MOUNTS

While mechs are among the most powerful weapons on the modern terrestrial battlefield, even the largest and most heavily armed mech is unlikely to be more than a minor threat in a naval theater. The scale of conflict is simply far too great for conventional frame designs and weapon loadouts to influence. The chassis mount was developed to bridge that gap.

A chassis mount is more than the simple uparmoring/EVA packages intended to allow mechs maneuverability in null/microgravity environments. Chassis mounts are, broadly, the same drive system, powerplant, and hardpoint mounts of a standard-pattern fighter, but built to accept a mechanized chassis as the central flight control system instead of a conventional cockpit. When installed, these mounts allow mechs to keep pace with other naval strike craft and operate independently of cumbersome lander modules, wielding weapons and systems that make them a flexible asset in naval combat.

Contemporary naval doctrine still prioritizes fighter and bomber wings; however, properly deployed by canny commanders, mounted chassis wings offer a multispectrum tactical portfolio encompassing everything from payload escort and interception, to combat sorties and precision strikes against capital ships. Additionally, with the ability to jettison their mounts, mechs can even undertake boarding actions, a capability fighters and bombers both lack.

ESCORTS

MARINE LANDERS
Escort, Boarding
[Range 3-0][Tenacity 10][0 points]

The design of marine boarding vessels has changed little in the last 100 years of naval warfare. Minimally armed and moderately armored, built for speed and carrying capacity, these craft are solely designed to make contact with enemy ships and breach their outer hulls to allow their passengers to begin the perilous task of boarding actions. Veteran marines have a wealth of colorful nicknames for these ships, few of which are fit for polite company.

DESTROYER ESCORT
(GMS Custodio, IPS-N Bowsprit, FKS Tui, HA Sam Barber)
Escort   [8 HP][2 points]

The pulse lances, kinetic guns, or missile batteries carried by this **ESCORT** count as an **AUXILIARY** weapon for your battlegroup. When fired alongside any **PRIMARY** single-target weapon targeting a **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT** within **Range 3–0**, these weapons deal **2 damage** to that same target. Additionally, gain the **Destroyer Command** tactic.

Sleek, fast, and outfitted with powerful weapons sufficient to threaten both capital ships and other subline vessels alike, destroyer designs often sacrifice as many nonessential functions as possible to maximize their effective firepower. Destroyers typically operate in wolfpacks, prowling the perimeter of engagements on the lookout for opportunities to strike at a fleet's exposed flanks.

DESTROYER COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 3-0]

Choose one **DESTROYER** assigned to your battlegroup and give it one of the following commands:

- **Cannonade:** Deal **3 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**.
- **Snapflight Torpedoes:** Deal **6 damage** to a hostile **ESCORT**.
- **Encirclement (Limited 1):** Advance or fall back one range band. You may not use this command if you have used an effect or ability to move this turn, and after using it you may not move again this turn.

CORVETTE ESCORT
(GMS Combahee, IPS-N Barracuda, FKS Charlemond, HA Wagner)
Escort   [6 HP][1 point]

Designating targets for close fire support allows these escorts to rapidly track and engage them. 1/round when you **LOCK ON** to a ship within **Range 3–0** you may deal **1 damage** to it for each of these **ESCORTS** in your battlegroup, to a maximum of 4 damage. Additionally, gain the **Corvette Command** tactic:

Corvettes operate in small squadrons, fulfilling lighter-than/heavier-than duties that some fleet commanders prefer for versatility. The smallest subline vessels in use, corvettes are often tasked with fire support and targeted strike operations in a gunship-equivalent role.

CORVETTE COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 3-0]

Choose one **CORVETTE ESCORT** assigned to your battlegroup and give it one of these commands:

- **Trade Blows:** Deal **2 damage** to a hostile Wing, or deal **4 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** and take **2 damage** in return.
- **Defensive Formation:** Gain **+2 Interdiction** until the start of your next turn.
- **Gun Run (Limited 1):** Deal **2 AREA-TARGET** damage to a hostile battlegroup. Consuming **LOCK ON** from **CAPITAL SHIPS** or **ESCORTS** in that battlegroup increases this to **4 damage** against those specific ships. This damage cannot be interdicted.

SUBLINE PICKETS
Escort   [2 points]

These special ships are tasked with scouting the battlefield, and have already taken up their position prior to the engagement. 1/round, you or an ally of your choice may add **+1 ACCURACY** to a single-target attack.

Sleek, fast, and minimally armed, subline picket ships scout the predicted battlefield days before capital ships arrive, running silent and cold to avoid enemy sensors. Picket postings are lonely and seldom comfortable, operating on minimal power and under communications blackout protocols for extended durations, but once combat begins the data they feed captains on enemy positioning, numbers, direction, and trajectory can be crucial to a fleet's success.

PAYLOAD OUTRIDER ESCORT
Escort   [2 points]

This special **ESCORT** accompanies launched munitions, clearing the way for them to safely and accurately strike their targets. When you or an allied battlegroup in the same range band makes a **PAYLOAD** attack, you may assign this squadron to accompany that attack. If more than one **PAYLOAD** attack is fired at a time, choose one to accompany. Each **PAYLOAD** attack can only be accompanied by a single **PAYLOAD OUTRIDER ESCORT**.

An accompanied **PAYLOAD** attack cannot have **Flight Counters** added to it from hostile effects or abilities. During the **Impact Phase**, add **+1 damage** to that attack for each **Flight Counter** removed from it before impact. You may also force the target battlegroup to reroll 1 Interdiction die of your choice and take the worst result; however, if this attack's damage is completely interdicted, then this **ESCORT** is destroyed as well.

- -

Subline outriders are frequently tasked with escorting payloads across space, ensuring their uncontested delivery to the target. These units provide a mixture of physical point-defense coverage as well as immediate-response electronic protective measures and adaptive course corrections to both safeguard payloads in transit and help guarantee optimal impact, though this often places them in harm's way far from the protection of other ships in their fleet.

PGR_GOURD LIMPETS
Escort, Boarding, Greywash
[Tenacity 10][2 points]

These limpet pods can only be used to perform the **PGR_Gourd Command** tactic.

- -

PGR_Gourd limpets are terribly cruel nanite weapons, likely created and propagated by HORUS cells. After attaching to an enemy vessel, the limpets disgorge liters of "greywash" into their targets. These nanite washes tear through the open spaces inside of capital ships, consuming organic and soft inorganic material, eliminating the enemy without firing a shot. All that is left after a greywash burnout is a brownish-red slurry of processed waste material, empty hardsuits, and dead nanites.

PGR_GOURD COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 3-0]

You deploy PGR_Gourd Limpets toward a hostile Capital Ship as a boarding action. During the Boarding Phase, these limpets disgorge their contents into the ship and you give them one of the following commands:

- **CONSUME:** Apply **3 Greywash Counters** to the boarded ship on a successful boarding roll, or **1 Greywash Counter** on a failure. Spending a maneuver to clear **Greywash Counters** also repels this unit as well. This boarding action can stack with itself.
- **SURGE (Limited 1):** Double the number of **Greywash Counters** on the boarded ship. If this boarding action fails, you do not expend this command's **LIMITED** use.

MINELAYERS
Escort, Reloading 2   [2 points]

This special **ESCORT** is tasked with deploying minefields. During the **Logistics Phase** you may order it to deploy minefields in the range band either directly ahead of you or directly behind you. Until the start of the next **Logistics Phase**, the first time a hostile battlegroup forces you or an allied battlegroup to move into or out of that range band, the mines detonate and the hostile battlegroup takes **10 AREA-TARGET damage**. Due to sheer saturation, this cannot be reduced below 2 area damage by **Interdiction**. Minefields cannot stack with themselves.

- -

The term "mines" is a bit of a misnomer in the context of naval combat operations. Rather than stationary defensive emplacements, naval mines are more akin to missiles, seeded in clouds across anticipated approach vectors to maximize the odds of terminal contact. Mines loiter in a low-power state until their sensors detect hostile vessels in proximity, at which point they activate and home in on the nearest target at full burn. Most naval vessels do not carry mines as part of their standard ordnance loadout, delegating minelaying duties to specialized subline vessels instead.

PIPECLEANER Subalterns

Escort, Boarding
[Range 3-0][Tenacity 12][2 points]

These fearsome combat subalterns can infiltrate and sabotage areas of a ship that would be hazardous or inaccessible for humans, such as the power storage systems for long-spool weapons. When this unit succeeds on **Sabotage Fire Control** against a ship with one or more **Charge** weapons, that ship must also choose one: add **1 Charge Counter** to a **Charge** weapon of your choice or take **5 damage**. A boarded ship can only suffer from this effect 1/round.

Whenever a boarded ship fails a roll to repel this unit, the ship takes **2 damage**.

- -

PIPECLEANER subalterns, part of IPS-N's Warfighter line, are commonly inserted into enemy ships at dangerous, unconventional breach-points. They can be remotely controlled by a human handler but are more often commanded by a projected NHP partition controlling a networked squad as a single unit. Humanoid in appearance, they are built with many more points of articulation along with secondary bladed appendages for activity in close, low or null-g environments. In combat, they act with frightening, uncanny speed and movements.
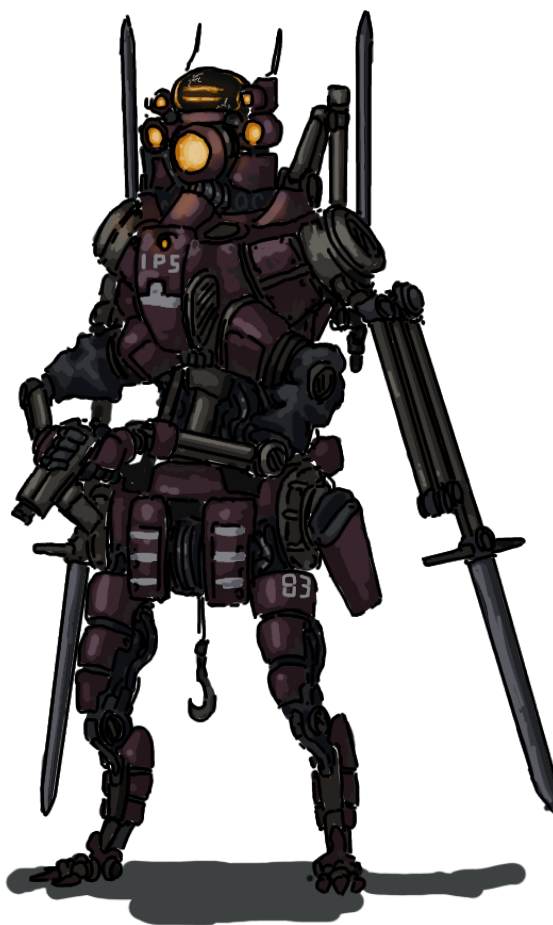
CRUISER ESCORT

(GMS Blair Mountain, IPS-N Carina, FKS Khayradin, HA Chopin)
Escort   [10 HP][3 points]

When a hostile battlegroup forces your battlegroup or an allied battlegroup in the same range band to fall back or move forward any number of range bands, you may have this **Escort** deploy a field of seeker mines that deal **4 damage** to a **Capital Ship** or **Escort** of your choice in that battlegroup. You may use this ability 1/round for each **Cruiser Escort** in your battlegroup, but only once per instance of hostile movement. Additionally, gain the **Cruiser Command** tactic.

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The largest subline ships, only a step below frigates, cruisers mount a wide array of offensive and defensive systems that allow them to flexibly and robustly reinforce a fleet's threat envelope as circumstances dictate. Relatively independent for subline vessels and often used for in-system patrols or local planetary defense, the command of a cruiser is often seen as a vital step in a naval officer's career.

CRUISER COMMAND

Tactic
[Range 3-0]

Choose one **Cruiser** assigned to your battlegroup and give it one of the following commands:

- **Fire at Will:** Deal **4 damage** to a hostile **Capital Ship**. You may also deal **2 Area-Target damage** to all **Escorts** in that ship's battlegroup and take **2 damage** in return. This damage cannot be interdicted.
- **Defensive Gunnery:** Gain **+3 Interdiction** until the start of your next turn.
- **Local Kill Screen (Limited 1):** Deal **5 damage** to a hostile **Capital Ship** or **Escort**, deal **2 damage** to all of that ship's **Wings**, and that ship makes all single-target attacks with **+1 Difficulty** until the end of its next turn.

WINGS

LEGION DRONE NEXUS
Wing   [4 HP][0 points]

1/round, you may order a **LEGION DRONE NEXUS** in your battlegroup to interpose itself between friendly units and incoming fire. Reduce hostile damage dealt to an **ESCORT** or **WING** in your battlegroup or an allied battlegroup in the same range band by 1. This **WING** then takes **2 damage**. Additionally, gain the **Legion Command** tactic.

Remotely piloted drone fighters controlled as appendages of a fleet legion are a simple and cost-effective method of force projection that also serves to minimize overall casualties during engagements. Despite this, susceptibility to electronic interference and systemic attacks prevents them from ever fully replacing manned strike craft. Fully integrated fleetwide tactical networking allows all battlegroup commanders to coordinate drone operations to and from any ship as necessary.

LEGION COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 3-0]

Choose one **LEGION DRONE NEXUS** assigned to your battlegroup and give it the following command. As part of this, you may assign another unused **LEGION DRONE NEXUS** from your battlegroup to join the sortie, giving them the same command. Allied battlegroups in your range band may use this tactic to command your **LEGION DRONE NEXUSES** as if they were under their control:

- **Hunt/Kill:** Deal **1 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**, **ESCORT**, or **WING**, or deal **2 damage** to a hostile **ESCORT** or **WING** and take **2 damage** in return.

FIGHTER WING
(GMS Peregrine, IPS-N Walleye, FKS Passacaglia, HA Mahler)
Wing   [5 HP][1 points]

Gain **+1 Interdiction** for each **FIGHTER WING** as they maintain combat patrols within your fleet's perimeter, up to a maximum of **+4 Interdiction**. Additionally, gain the **Fighter Command** tactic.

Fighters are small, multi-purpose, single-pilot ships with a wide combat portfolio, ranging from combat patrols, to subline escort, to ordnance interception. Fighter wings, though outclassed by the raw power of larger ships, are integral units in any battlegroup for their versatility alone.

FIGHTER COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 2-0]

Choose one **Fighter Wing** assigned to your battlegroup and give it one of the following commands. As part of this, you may assign another unused **Fighter Wing** from your battlegroup to join the sortie, selecting the same or a different command:

- **Strafing Run:** Deal **1 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT**.
- **Engage and Eliminate:** Deal **3 damage** to a hostile **WING**.

NEARLIGHT LEASHING
Many strike craft are equipped with a system called a nearlight leash. When their parent ship spools up for an emergency nearlight jump, strike craft with such a system installed are automatically recalled back to that ship. This occurs even if the pilot is injured or disabled and unable to respond to calls to retreat. In this way, commanders who eject from a battle can do so with greater confidence that their pilots will not be left behind. Of course, these systems can become damaged in the course of battle, but for the most part if a player opts to eject from an engagement their **WINGS** will still come with them. By contrast, subline vessels are large enough to carry long-range nearlight drives of their own, and can eject alongside the rest of their battlegroup should the need arise.

BOMBER WING
(GMS Payloader, IPS-N Swordfish, FKS Anaxandron, HA Holst)
Wing   [5 HP][2 points]

Gain the **Bomber Command** and **Active Countermeasures** tactics.

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Bombers are larger vessels crewed by two to four crewmembers and loaded with anti-capital ordnance that lets them punch far above their weight class. If ignored, a wing of these ships can be as dangerous as a single ship of the line. Bombers are also frequently outfitted with large reserves of defensive countermeasures to help screen their carrier's advance and during strike operations, including pulse-flares, EMP charges, and decoy signal emitters.

BOMBER COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 2-0]

Choose one **BOMBER WING** assigned to your battlegroup and give it the following command:

- **Torpedoes Away:** Deal **4 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**. You may assign another unused **BOMBER WING** from your battlegroup to assist, dealing an additional **+2 damage**.

ACTIVE COUNTERMEASURES
Tactic
[Range 4-0]

Choose one **BOMBER WING** assigned to your battlegroup and give it the following command:

- **Deploy Chaff (Limited 1):** Choose a **CAPITAL SHIP** in your battlegroup or an allied battlegroup in the same range band. Until the end of your next turn, the next time that ship takes damage reduce it by **1d3**. This effect does not stack.

MOUNTED CHASSIS WING
(GMS Everest, IPS-N Raleigh, SSC Metalmark, HA Sherman)
Wing, Boarding
[5 HP][Tenacity 11][2 points]

Gain the **Chassis Command** tactic.

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Chassis mounts are exterior-mounted frames that allow mechs them to operate in deep space. With a mount installed, mechs rocket toward enemy capital ships, dogfight, and maneuver in space with far more agility than conventional mech-tier EVA units would otherwise allow.

CHASSIS COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 3-0]

Choose a **MOUNTED CHASSIS WING** in your battlegroup and give it one of these commands:

- **Toe-to-Toe:** Deal **1d3** damage to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**, **ESCORT**, or **WING**.
- **Breach and Clear:** Assign this unit to board a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**. Each time it succeeds on a boarding roll, the boarded ship takes **2 damage**.

BALOR CHASSIS WING
Wing, Boarding, Greywash, Unique
[8 HP][Tenacity 12][3 points]

The Balor's nanoswarm construction allows it to hellishly regenerate physical damage sustained during combat. During the **Logistics Phase**, this unit repairs **2 HP**.

Additionally, gain the **Balor Command** tactic.

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One of the more infamous HORUS pattern-groups, the Balor is a highly resilient chassis that employs frame-integrated, neurosynced "hellswarms" of greywash nanites in both offensive and defensive capacities. First encountered during the latter days of the Sanjak Rebellion under the command of the Maw, a Baronic Free Company turned decentralized hive-being, the Balor enjoys a grim reputation as persistent and intractable danger within Baronic space and beyond, but some ambitious Karrakin commanders in the Dawnline Shore have developed an appreciation for the unique tactical advantages they offer as horrifyingly effective boarding units.

BALOR COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 3–0]

Give the **BALOR CHASSIS WING** one of these commands:

- **Nanocomposite Munitions:** Deal **2 damage** to a hostile **ESCORT** or **WING**, or consume **LOCK ON** from a **CAPITAL SHIP** to deal **2 damage** to that ship, give it **2 Greywash Counters**, and take **2 damage** in return.
- **Hive Frenzy:** Assign this unit to board a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**. Each time it succeeds on a boarding roll, the boarded ship gains **2 Greywash Counters**. Ships do not remove **Greywash Counters** during the **Impact Phase** while this **Wing** is aboard them.

BARBAROSSA CHASSIS WING
Wing, Unique
[8 HP][3 points]

The integrated flak launchers and anti-aerospace munitions carried by this **WING** count as an **AUXILIARY** weapon for your battlegroup. When fired alongside any **PRIMARY** single-target weapon targeting a **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT** within **Range 3–0**, these weapons deal **1 damage** to that same target and **3 damage** to a hostile **WING** in the same battlegroup. Additionally, gain the **Barbarossa Command** tactic.

- -

Harrison Armory's Barbarossa heavy siege chassis is an artillery/anti-air frame designed to engage targets in both terrestrial and low-gravity operations. Equipped with an integrated LGC-04 "Apocalypse Rail" gravitic catapult, the Barbarossa can capably engage subline vessels, and in massed volleys can even threaten capital ships. The additional power plants and stabilizers provided by a chassis mount help mitigate the drawbacks of the famously temperamental Apocalypse Rail, allowing for more consistent output while still permitting full zero-g maneuverability.

BARBAROSSA COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 3–0]

Give the **BARBAROSSA CHASSIS WING** one of these commands:

- **Siege Cannons:** Deal **3 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT**.
- **Charge Apocalypse Rails (Reloading 2):** This Wing begins charging its integrated Apocalypse Rail weapons. During the next **Impact Phase**, you may order it to open fire on a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT** within range. Make a single-target attack roll, dealing **2d6 damage** on hit with **OVERKILL** and **RELIABLE 4**.

MONARCH CHASSIS WING
Wing, Unique
[8 HP][3 points]

The integrated SSC-30 High-Penetration Missile Systems carried by these mechs allow them to coordinate reactive volleys of Avenger micromissiles with other strikes. 1/round whenever a weapon in your battlegroup or an allied battlegroup in the same range band critically hits a target within **Range 3–0**, even if it doesn't have the **CRITICAL** tag, you may use these micromissiles to deal **2 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**, **ESCORT**, or **WING**. Additionally, gain the **Monarch Command** tactic.

Smith-Shimano's Monarch is a highly versatile all-theater combat chassis, part of the company's BELLA CIAO line, created to serve as a multirole missile launch platform. Rigorously designed to exacting standards and surprisingly agile for its size, Monarchs are equipped with advanced targeting systems capable of coordinating multiple simultaneous weapon launches for optimal effect. Though not originally intended as a naval combat chassis, the Monarch's responsive controls and ability to equip a wide variety of missile payloads have led to its increasing adoption by pilots who value its combination of speed and firepower.

MONARCH COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 3–0]

Give the **MONARCH CHASSIS WING** one of the following commands:

- **Seeking Payloads:** Deal **2 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT**, or consume **LOCK ON** from a **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT** to deal **4 damage** to that ship and either deal **2 damage** to all of its **WINGS** or remove **1 Flight Counter** from one of your active **PAYLOAD** attacks.
- **Gandiva Missiles:** This Wing launches a salvo of advanced Gandiva missiles. This is a **PRIMARY** single-target **PAYLOAD** attack that deals **1d6+3 damage** and can be fired at up to two targets at a time, tracked individually. When using this command, you may consume **LOCK ON** from the target to add or remove one **Flight Counter** from that **PAYLOAD**.

TORTUGA CHASSIS WING
Wing, Boarding, Unique
[8 HP][Tenacity 12][3 points]

Gain the **Tortuga Command** tactic.

IPS-N's Tortuga is one of the corpro's most iconic and widespread chassis designs, offered in whole-fleet line contracts to numerous clients and states. The Tortuga is purpose-built to operate in deep space; though it makes for an adequate strike unit with the addition of a chassis mount, the Tortuga is primarily meant to breach and clear carrier decks, hostile station environments, and the spinal columns of capital ships. With its heavy, angular hull it serves as both battering ram and bulwark, clearing a path for allied boarders as it advances. An integrated WATCHDOG co-pilot system provides pilots with additional full-spectrum response capability under even heavy fire.

TORTUGA COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 3–0]

Give the **TORTUGA CHASSIS WING** one of the following commands:

- **Heavy Gunner:** Deal **1d3 damage** to a hostile **ESCORT** or **WING**. Until the end of your next turn, the next time the **TORTUGA CHASSIS WING** or the ship it is equipped to takes damage from an **ESCORT** or **WING** while within **Range 3–0**, you may deal **3 damage** to it in response.
- **Decksweepers:** Repel a boarding unit from a ship in your battlegroup or in an allied battlegroup in the same range band, then deal **3 damage** to that unit.
- **Daisy Cutters:** Assign this unit to board a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**. Each time it succeeds on a boarding roll, the boarded ship takes **2 damage**. 2/engagement, you may increase this to **1d6+1 damage** instead.

ACE SQUADRONS

ACE SQUADRONS are specialized WINGS that players can take to represent particularly renowned and skilled pilots operating under their command. These can take the form of a diverse range of strike craft, including advanced fighters and bombers, and they can also serve to represent *Lancer* characters within the context of *Battlegroup*, allowing players to incorporate their mech pilots directly into the action as they lead a squadron of mounted chassis into battle. They are purchased with points and equipped to ships normally like other WINGS.

ACE SQUADRONS possess both more autonomy and greater capabilities than other Wings. Unlike WINGS, ACE SQUADRONS are not destroyed when the ship they are equipped to is destroyed; instead, assign them to another ship, even one without a WING slot. From that point forward, the ACE SQUADRON is considered to be equipped to that ship for the purpose of effects and abilities. If an ACE SQUADRON's entire battlegroup is destroyed, it can be reassigned to a ship belonging to another allied battlegroup, turning control of it over to that player. In this way, ACE SQUADRONS remain in the fight until the bitter end.

If the ship an ACE SQUADRON is equipped to grants benefits to its WINGS, these benefits also apply to its ACE SQUADRONS. This only lasts while the ACE SQUADRON is assigned to that ship; if it is reassigned, it doesn't retain any benefits from the former ship.

ACE SQUADRON PROFILE
All Ace Squadrons have the following base profile:

ACE SQUADRON
Wing, Unique
[6 HP][3 points]

Gain the **Ace Command** tactic.

ACE COMMAND
Tactic
[Range 3-0]
Give the **Ace Squadron** the following command:

- **Strike Package:** Deal **1d3+1 damage** to a hostile CAPITAL SHIP, ESCORT, or WING.

ACE SQUADRON UPGRADES
You may personalize your Ace Squadron with three of the following options, some of which make new commands available. Each upgrade can only be taken once.

AGGRESSIVE PICKETS
(SCYLLA-Class NHP, Networked Autoguns, Hivemine Seeders)
Whenever a hostile battlegroup forces your battlegroup to fall back or move forward any number of range bands, you may deal 2 damage to an ESCORT or WING in that battlegroup.

- -

When they aren't occupied with other missions, ace units are often tasked with maintaining regular active nearspace patrols during ongoing battles. Though these patrols can be both mentally and physically taxing, they allow pilots to swiftly respond to enemy maneuvers at a moment's notice.

CASQUE ARMOR
(Corregidor Group Advanced Composite/Laminate Hull, GMS Type-4 Projected Shield Array, IPS-N HyperDense Armor)
This ACE SQUADRON gains **+4 HP**.

- -

This strike craft or mounted chassis is tucked inside a hardened shell: with no canopy, portholes, or view slits to fall back on, the pilot relies entirely on screens, projections, or subjectivity sync to view and interact with realspace.

GOALKEEPER
(Needleye Outbound Defense Projector, NOAH-Class NHP, PRISM Array)
Any battlegroup this ACE SQUADRON is assigned to gains **+2 INTERDICTION**.

- -

At the scale of an individual strike craft, naval ordnance is often on par in terms of size and signature with other subline ships: incoming munitions can thus be engaged accordingly.

INSTINCT PODS

(GMS Mk10 EWAR/ECM System, Howler Probes, Syngin-Dyat Loudspeaker Active Jammer)

Ace Command gains the following command option:

INSTINCT PODS (LIMITED 2, RELOADING 2): Choose a hostile battlegroup within range. Until the end of your next turn that battlegroup cannot benefit from **ACCURACY** on its attack rolls except to cancel out **DIFFICULTY**, and ships in that battlegroup take **3 damage** any time they miss an attack roll.

. . . .

Fighter-tier electronic warfare is primarily defensive in nature, meant to provide protection against subcapital munitions and interdiction screens. By employing temperamental INSTINCT paracode derived from HORUS invasion rig architecture or other similar technologies, strike craft pilots are able to perform more aggressive EWAR actions against fleet legions.

JETTISON RAM

(SEKHMET-Class NHP, Hullcutter Charges, Titan-Enceladus Quick-Breach Mounting)

This Ace Squadron gains **BOARDING** and **TENACITY 13**. Whenever a boarded ship fails a roll to repel it, the ship takes **4 damage**. Ships that it boards take **2 damage** if their battlegroup spends a maneuver to **Repel Boarders**.

. . . .

One of the primary tactical advantages of mounted chassis in naval theaters is their ability to transition directly from strike operations to boarding actions by shedding their mount. Early, less advanced mounts required explosive decoupling to dismount, necessitating resupply between missions, but newer models allow pilots to dismount and remount at will.

MICROBURST DRIVES

(GMS Advanced Nearlight Package, Atelier Celeste Singularity Drives, Armada Shipyards Vanquisher Boost Frame)

The range of **Ace Command** increases to **4–0**.

. . . .

An advanced form of miniaturized nearlight drives, these enhanced drive systems allow pilots to engage in repeated "microburst" jumps without undue risk of terminal pilot injury. This extends a squadron's effective operational range, allowing it to maneuver and engage targets further from its home carrier.

NHP CO-PILOT

Reloading 3

(TLALOC-Class NHP, SISYPHUS-Class NHP, ASURA-Class NHP)

You may use an additional tactic during your turn, but it must be **Ace Command**.

. . . .

Apart from the fleet legion gestalt, many veteran pilots opt to employ individual NHP co-pilots to enhance their combat performance, often turning over weapons targeting and electronic systems operations to them so that they can focus on maneuvering across the battlefield.

REDLINE OPERATION

(Titan-Enceladus SURTR Reactor, FABI Modifications, Overpower-Caliber Munitions)

This **ACE SQUADRON** may take **2 damage** to deal **+2 damage** with any non-boarding damage effect.

. . . .

Ace pilots are known for making unsanctioned modifications and enhancements to their craft, overclocking weapons and systems beyond conventional tolerances. Many commanders are willing to overlook this practice since it gets results, though just as many flight deck chiefs rather wish they wouldn't.

SHIPKILLER

(GMS BRIGHTSKY Particle Cannon, Anti-Capital Railgun, Titan-Enceladus Haymaker Conical Nuclear Warheads)

Ace Command gains the following command option:

SHIPKILLER (LIMITED 1): Deal **5 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**. If it is at half **HP** or less (not counting **OVERSHIELD**), deal **7 damage** instead. If this destroys the target, do not expend this command's **LIMITED** use. You may use this ability as a **maneuver** during your turn to increase its damage by **+2**. Otherwise, this command's damage cannot be increased in any way.

. . . .

Shaped-charge nuclear warheads, relativistic kill javelins, coherent particle beam cannons; devastating weapons such as these allow suitably equipped pilots to strike killing blows against even capital ships.

TAC/COMM Scout Package

(ATHENA-Class NHP, Integrated Omnihook Relay, Syngin-Duat Panopticon Suite)

Ace Command gains the following command option:

TAC/COMM Scout Package (Reloading 2): Lock On to two **Capital Ships** or **Escorts**.

. . . .

Some ships are equipped with advanced sensor clusters and communication relays, tying them into the fleet legion, and by extension into every ship in the fleet, allowing pilots to relay forward information all the way up the line.

Ticket Puncher

(Blaze of Glory, The Final Run, Desperate Measures)

Ace Command gains the following command option:

Ticket Puncher: Choose a hostile **Capital Ship** or **Escort**. Your **Ace Squadron** sets a collision course with them. During the next **Impact Phase**, deal **1d6+6 damage** to the target ship and then destroy the **Ace Squadron**. This damage ignores **Overshield** and cannot be prevented or increased in any way. Your pilots will not survive; an **Ace Squadron** destroyed using this command cannot be brought back to the battle by any means.

. . . .

Seeing no other option, you steer your ship toward the great bulk of the enemy. You send your telemetry on to the legion and unplug from the battlenet. The hiss of air through your helmet is overwhelming. You dive toward the heart of the enemy, driving your ship into your target in one final, desperate act…

ADVANCEMENT
COMMENDATIONS, LEGACIES, AND REPUTATIONS

There are three different forms of advancement that can be awarded to players and their battlegroups as a result of successful missions and ongoing campaigns:

- **Commendations** are decorations and citations given to characters for exemplary skills and actions during battle.
- **Legacies** are traits and qualities that ships acquire throughout their history of service.
- **Reputations** are significant archetypes that commanders grow into over time and by which they come to be defined.

Advancement has both narrative and rules effects. Receiving a medal for valor both grants players additional abilities to draw on in battle and influences how people see a character. Similarly, the acquisition of a legacy shows that a ship is developing its own stories and superstitions with mechanical effects that reflect this.

Unlike *Lancer*, *Battlegroup* doesn't grant characters experience points or have a system of levels. This means that the question of when to award advancement is a matter for each group to decide. That said, a good guideline is to award advancements once every couple of missions. Advancements are also optional to use – if you're playing a single engagement or using *Battlegroup* as a supplementary module for *Lancer*, you might not need them at all.

Commendations and legacies provide direct bonuses in combat, while reputations are specifically relevant to narrative play. You should never make players choose between being stronger in combat or having more narrative options, so when advancements are awarded choose one of the following:

- All players gain either an commendation or a legacy.
- All players gain a reputation (or reputation advance).
- All players gain both of these advancements at once.

In addition to this, players may also take this opportunity to change one of their commander's traits to a different one if they wish. Perhaps they're no longer satisfied with it, or maybe it's more narratively interesting for their commander to trade out an older trait for a newer one.

Because characters may die in the course of play or you might shift perspectives between different characters throughout the course of a campaign, it's recommended that new characters be allowed to enter play with the same number of advancements as the rest of the group in order to keep everyone on equal footing.

COMMENDATIONS

Commendations are granted in recognition of meritorious service and noteworthy acts of bravery or skill. They are awards bestowed upon characters in players' battlegroups, granting those battlegroups bonuses they can call on in battle. The recipients of commendations are usually commanders, but they can be awarded to other characters as well.

While the GM can award commendations on their own, your group might prefer to decide together if someone has earned one based on particularly memorable moments or pivotal actions. Commendations are generally awarded for specific reasons – keep this in mind when deciding which one best suits both the story and the player's preferences.

The commendations listed here are specific to the Union Navy, but they are just examples. Other navies might have different names for these awards, but you can assume the effects are the same. For example, instead of being awarded the **Olduvai Cross**, a Harrison Armory naval commander might be awarded the **Hero of the Temperate Throne** decoration, while a Baronic commander might instead receive the **Order of Karrakis**.

Unless specified otherwise, a player can only be awarded any given commendation once over the course of a campaign.

AZURE STAR

The Azure Star is awarded to all Union naval personnel upon retirement after 30 or more years, death, or "the suffering of grievous injury sufficient to prevent further honorable completion of one's service." Countless children and spouses across equally countless worlds have received this medal to commemorate the loss of a loved one many light years away, and to receive it while still living is an achievement viewed with a mix of great respect and somber recognition.

The Azure Star is a commendation available to any character who dies while on deployment or is otherwise (honorably) discharged. Few active-duty personnel pin this decoration to their uniform, though it is not unheard of for some personnel to have come back from retirement to serve once more.

Unlike other commendations, the Azure Star is generally only awarded in the event of a character's death. Should a player's commander be killed in battle, then they're eligible to receive this commendation. Despite the character's death, the commendation and its benefits stay with the battlegroup in which they served. Note down when and how they were killed in action.

> During an engagement, players with this commendation may automatically convert a successful attack into a critical hit or convert a hostile critical hit into a normal hit after seeing the result. This benefit can only be used once, after which it is permanently expended and cannot be used again.
>
> The **Azure Star** may be awarded to a player multiple times, refreshing the ability to use its effect again, but the benefit does not stack with itself.

COMMUNAL ORDER RIBBON

Informally known as the "Lifeline", the Communal Order Ribbon was one of the first new naval service decorations to be officially created by Union's Third Committee. Awarded for courage and selflessness in rendering protection and aid to those in need at great personal risk, this service ribbon is granted for search and rescue operations following battles as often as it is for defensive or support actions undertaken during combat. The commendation's scope extends even to providing aid to enemy combatants. More than one commander has received the Communal Order Ribbon for saving lives regardless of which side they might have been fighting on.

Those with the Communal Order Ribbon are generally viewed with great respect and many cosmonauts consider it auspicious to serve under a commander with this award. These commanders can generally expect a free round of drinks in any port and are even certain to be treated courteously by their captors should they be taken prisoner during battle.

Characters awarded the Communal Order Ribbon have earned it through selflessness and sacrifice, whether it be in defense of their comrades or a commitment to saving lives, even those of their enemies.

> 1/engagement, players with this commendation may reduce the damage taken by an allied CAPITAL SHIP in the same range band to 0; however, their own FLAGSHIP then takes that much damage. This ability cannot be used if their FLAGSHIP has already been destroyed.

GALLANTRY CROSS

A medal given for "honorable conduct befitting the finest traditions of naval service", the Gallantry Cross is typically awarded to naval personnel at the completion of at least two tours of duty without any significant disciplinary infractions or court-martial offenses, but it can also be granted at other times for noteworthy displays of skill and excellence both during and outside of combat. Performing critical repairs that prevent a ship's destruction, successfully plotting a pinpoint nearlight realignment that grants a decisive tactical advantage, and commanding a ship in battle with minimal losses are all acts worthy of this commendation.

A spotless service record and a noteworthy display of tactical brilliance are two very different things, but both speak to a commander that's meticulous, thoughtful, and detail-oriented. Those with the Gallantry Cross often have reputations for running tight ships and expecting (or demanding) the same sort of excellence from those serving under them. Others, however, are prodigies thrust unexpectedly into positions of great responsibility and even greater expectations.

When a player with this commendation rolls 9 or less on an uptime action (excluding **Plot a Course**), they may perform a second, different uptime action. They must still accept the results of the first roll.

INTERSTELLAR EXPEDITIONARY CROSS

This award is granted to those who have, in the course of their service, displayed great valor and courage in combat across three or more "foreign theaters". The Union Navy generally defines a foreign theater as the generally recognized borders of a territorial sphere, polity, or star system from which the individual did not originate. Despite the seemingly simple prerequisites, this medal is granted less often than many people imagine, as most cosmonauts see little enough combat upon "foreign shores" to qualify. As conflicts within the Dawnline Shore region escalate, however, more and more personnel have begun to qualify for this award.

Those with the Interstellar Expeditionary Cross are recognized as seasoned veterans with a wealth of experience. Whether they want it or not, others look to them for guidance and advice during difficult times.

Characters awarded the Interstellar Expeditionary Cross have participated in battles in multiple theaters, generally as part of an ongoing campaign. They've traveled further and seen more combat than many cosmonauts, and this undoubtedly colors their character in some way. How has this experience affected them? What places have they seen, and what stories do they have to share?

1/engagement, players with this commendation who are forced to move by a hostile effect or ability may choose to ignore that movement.

LIBERATOR'S SHIELD

There can be no doubt that one of the most important organs within Union's Third Committee is the Department of Justice and Human Rights (DoJ/HR). This body is tasked with critical missions including first-contact scenarios, humanitarian aid, and direct interventions against those who would violate the rights and well-being of others. While not part of the Union Naval Department's organizational structure, the DoJ/HR often works together with the navy, and more than one liberator team has been saved by timely orbital fire support or extraction from a hot zone courtesy of an orbiting naval patrol. Those naval personnel that participate in missions alongside the DoJ/HR are eligible to receive this award for their service.

Whether they feel they deserve the title or not, those with the Liberator's Shield are recognized as heroes by those who know of the DoJ/HR. Representatives of the DoJ/HR are likely to look upon them favorably, vouching for them or even providing favors.

Characters awarded the Liberator's Shield are generally recognized as part of Union's ideological spearpoint, having served alongside or embedded with DoJ/HR liberator units either in a combat or universe-building capacity.

1/engagement, players with this commendation may immediately end any one ongoing effect on one of their ships, such as an effect from a boarding action, **Greywash Counters,** an effect imposing a **Difficulty** penalty, and so on.

MARINE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL

Among the many lethal aspects of naval combat, boarding actions stand out as some of the grimmest affairs. Even victors are likely to suffer significant casualties in the course of duty. Marines who participate in major combat operations – either in defense of their vessel or as part of a boarding action – are eligible to receive this medal, posthumously or otherwise. Among Union marines, earning one's MDSM is considered a rite of passage, a marker dividing the fresh from the salt.

Those with the Marine Distinguished Service Medal are known to be tough as nails, lucky as hell, or more likely some combination of the two. When breaching charges detonate and bullets start flying, others will count on them to take point. The MDSM is also a sign that someone can back up their bravado, or at least hold their own in a bar fight.

Characters awarded the Marine Distinguished Service Medal have been through the hell of boarding actions and come out the other side bloodied but victorious. It isn't a question of whether they've seen friends die, but how many. Who have they lost in the corridors and spinal passageways of an enemy ship? What scars have they collected?

1/engagement, players with this commendation may reroll one boarding roll they make, but must keep the second result.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE BAR

The Meritorious Service Bar, typically awarded alongside a theater-specific medal, is granted to commanders in recognition of noteworthy acts of courage and prowess against the enemy while under fire. Decisively scoring a kill on an enemy flagship while avoiding return fire is generally seen as the key to earning this commendation, though it isn't strictly necessary, but as hostilities between major naval powers continue to increase some young commanders have begun to take greater risks in hopes of making names for themselves. While the MSB is specifically awarded to a ship's commander, all personnel serving aboard that ship at the time are entitled to wear the bar.

The MSB, as with the Marine Distinguished Service Medal, is another "gatekeeper" award, viewed by officers and personnel as marking a clear line between those who have seen and survived combat, and those who don't know what they're talking about outside of a sim.

Those with the Meritorious Service Bar have a story to tell of how they earned it. Depending on how long they serve, the details of that story can grow more outlandish as time goes by.

1/engagement, players with this commendation may reroll any single-target attack roll they make, but must keep the second result.

OLDUVAI CROSS

The Olduvai Cross is the most prestigious decoration that can be awarded to Union naval personnel for acts of singular devotion and valor above and beyond the call of duty. It is granted to fleet admirals and junior enlisted personnel, to humans and to NHPs alike. As a result, it is most often awarded posthumously; living recipients of the Olduvai Cross number in the dozens, if that. Each of these medals is formally awarded at a special ceremony held on Cradle, though given the constraints of interstellar travel, it can be months or even years before a recipient (or their next of kin) is officially decorated in person.

Those with the Olduvai Cross are recognized as heroes and known by name and reputation by everyone in their fleet. As such, any doors closed to them by rank or station can be opened, within reason.

Characters awarded the Olduvai Cross are among a rarefied few. The criteria for receiving the award are as noted in its commendation: peerless valor. Your table decides what that means, keeping in mind the extreme rarity of the commendation.

> Prior to a battle, players with this commendation may roll two d20s before any engagement and record the results: 1/engagement, they may, at any time, use one of those results in place of any d20 roll they would make. This must be decided before rolling.

SILVER CRESCENT

While strike craft and chassis pilots are eligible for a variety of special medals and decorations, the Silver Crescent is given to fleet commanders who have displayed exemplary skill while leading carrier operations during combat. This honor marks a commander as a canny tactician, but it speaks to more than just combat performance metrics. Devotion and dedication to the pilots under one's command are the marks of a Silver Crescent candidate, and many recipients have extensive experience in the cockpit of a strike craft themselves.

Silver Crescent recipients are universally well-regarded commanders in the Union Navy. It is a commendation afforded to consummate, compassionate, courageous officers, usually following a collective nomination from their crew; for this reason, the Crescent is seen as one of those rare awards given from enlisted personnel to their commanding officers, even if the official presentation is from the nominated officer's own executive.

Those with the Silver Crescent tend to share a camaraderie with the strike craft and chassis pilots under their command that's perhaps a bit more personal or familiar than the relationship between other commanders and their subordinates. Maybe they like to reminisce about the "glory days" when they were in the cockpit, but it's undeniable that their firsthand experience makes them an excellent commander.

> 1/engagement, players with this commendation may issue a command to a Wing equipped to their battlegroup for free during their turn.

LEGACIES

Legacies are acquired by ships over the course of their service, through the numerous battles and actions they take part in. Over time, crews start to anthropomorphize their ships (i.e., they might start thinking of it as "indomitable", "cursed", or "lucky"). Although these characteristics are immaterial, they can have dramatic effects on the morale of the crew, staff, and enemy forces, and contribute to the history of the vessel besides.

Like commendations, legacies can be granted during advancement by the GM (or the group) based on memorable events that occurred during a battle or throughout the course of a campaign. Unlike commendations, however, legacies aren't granted to characters. Instead, they are granted to individual **Capital Ships**. This doesn't just mean players' **Flagships**, either. Legacies grant bonuses to the ships they're assigned to and often have narrative consequences, too; crew serving aboard a ship with a legacy may develop little customs or superstitions over time, such as touching a certain picture for good luck, leaving hull scars unpainted, or warning new crew members not to venture into the maintenance shafts between certain times.

Each ship can have up to two legacies at a time. If deemed appropriate, legacies can be exchanged for others during advancement; however, the same legacy cannot be applied to the same ship twice.

BLOODTHIRSTY

At the start of each battle, one of this ship's weapons gains the **CRITICAL** tag.

This ship invariably finds itself in the thickest of fights, and its hull has the scars and the kill markers to show for it.

CURSED

The first time each battle this ship would be destroyed, it survives with **1d6 HP** remaining. You may sacrifice its weapons and upgrades (excluding **LIMITED** weapons and upgrades that have been fully expended) to increase this amount by **+2 HP** per weapon or upgrade sacrificed. This cannot leave a ship with more than its maximum **HP**.

This ship always seems to bear the brunt of the enemy assault, often at the cost of its systems and crew. The more superstitious of the fleet personnel regard it as cursed, and assignment to the ship is never well received.

HEADSTRONG

1/round during the **Logistics Phase**, you may pick one:

- Remove **1 Flight Counter** from an active hostile **PAYLOAD** attack targeting this ship or your battlegroup
- Redirect an active hostile **PAYLOAD** attack toward this ship or your battlegroup, and then remove **1 Flight Counter** from it.

Often acting against doctrine, this ship's crew win with more victories than not – and a steep butcher's bill.

INDOMITABLE

This ship begins each engagement with **5 OVERSHIELD**.

Despite everything thrown at it, this ship and her crew somehow always manage to make it through a fight.

LUCKY

This ship gains **+2 DEFENSE**. You begin each battle with a banked **ACCURACY** die which you can spend to add **+1 ACCURACY** to one of your single-target attack rolls during play.

This ship and her crew always seem blessed with good luck, from winning cards on shore leave to avoiding – only just – the spinal cannons of her foes. Others may shirk at the idea of serving on a lucky ship – to be lucky, you must be in danger – but her crew wouldn't trade their berths for the world.

MIGHTY

This ship may reroll damage dealt by any of its weapons on hit, but it must keep the second result.

This ship is known to friend and foe alike as a powerful ally and fearsome foe. Her crew is proud and competent, and will fight as such.

NO PASARÁN

Boarding actions made against this ship only succeed on a result of 10+. Units assigned to board this ship first take **2 damage**. If this damage is enough to destroy a boarding unit, it is destroyed before it can carry out its command and its effects are negated.

A line ship that has been boarded, but never taken. Her crew will never give up the ship.

PHOENIX

This ship gains 2 points that can be only spent on weapons or upgrades. When destroyed, this ship is always salvageable regardless of how much damage it took (see the **Kill Table**, p. 53), though the crew may not fare as well.

This ship was once destroyed in combat or it was scuttled, rendered inoperable either to prevent its capture or as a bloodless logistics decision. After being salvaged and repaired, it now once more flies in the line, carrying with it a long history.

SELFLESS

1/engagement, choose one:

- When a ship in your battlegroup is destroyed, you may repair one of its **ESCORTS** or **WINGS** to full **HP** and reassign it to this ship.
- When this ship is destroyed, you may repair one of its **ESCORTS** or **WINGS** to full **HP** and reassign it to another ship in your battlegroup.

Those that serve aboard and alongside this ship know it as a protector and safe harbor, ready to weather any storm in order to see those under its care make it through the fight.

REPUTATIONS

A commander's reputation comes from more than just endless fighting. It's something that's earned both on and off the battlefield. The lessons leaders learn and the choices they make become as much a part of them as any scar, and speak to their character as much as any medal.

Reputations are archetypes that represent pivotal moments in a commander's past and grants said commander special abilities and permissions for use in narrative play when playing to those archetypes. Reputations can be earned and upgraded as advancements during play. Alternatively, if your group agrees, then each commander can begin play with a reputation selected already. Each player can only have one reputation at a time.

When you gain a new reputation, choose two new traits for your character (one positive and one negative), and then choose one advance from the reputation's list.

The two new traits from a Reputation bring a commander's total number of traits up to five, with three positive and two negative. Having additional positive traits gives players more potential sources of ACCURACY for uptime checks and having another negative trait gives both the player and the GM more choices when it comes to refreshing traits that have been marked off.

Choosing a reputation also gives you your choice of one of that reputation's advances, and each time you gain advancement for your reputation you can select another. Each reputation has five advances, which you can select them in any order you like. You may also take a sixth advance, selecting it from a reputation other than your own, but only after taking three or more advances in your own reputation first.

Note that the abilities and permissions that reputations grant can be quite powerful. Some of them can only be used once in any given scene while others only refresh only after a longer period – after the next engagement has passed, for example. These limits on their use may prove less effective if the amount of narrative play involved is short and succinct. It's recommended that you consider how much narrative play you plan on including in your games before deciding whether to use reputations or not.

Unless otherwise specified, commanders can't use the abilities granted by reputations to affect engagements, including pre-battle uptime actions (p. 48). Additional traits apply as usual.

BEACON
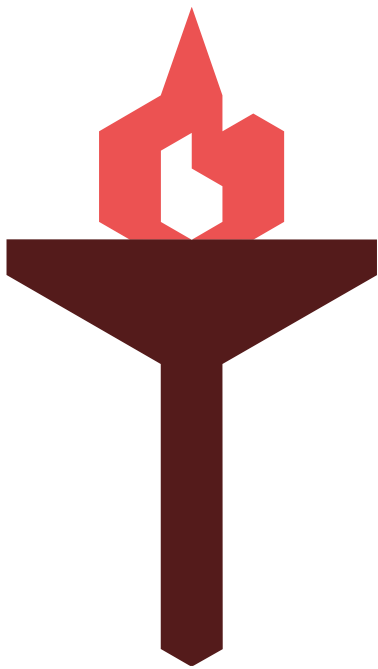
Even judged by the rigorous and exacting standards of naval command, you stand out as a leader of conviction and determination. You never hesitate in the face of danger, nor do you waver even in the face of overwhelming odds, and this resolve draws others along in your wake. Your crew would follow you into the jaws of hell if you gave the order, and you would find a way to lead them back out again.

What was the pivotal moment that cemented your reputation? How has the story of it been warped or exaggerated in the telling, and what parts are true?

ADVANCES

Eye of the Storm: You are immune to fear and intimidation, and while you're present in some fashion (including talking one-on-one over comms, though giving a general address isn't sufficient) those around you are similarly fearless. This doesn't override their sense of self-preservation, nor will it lead them to take obviously foolhardy or reckless actions if they otherwise wouldn't, but it can prevent them from panicking and keep them alert and focused on the task at hand.

Renowned: When you enter a scene, the GM chooses an NPC. They know of your reputation. Upon meeting you for the first time, they'll do one of the following:

- come to you with a concern that's been weighing on them.
- offer to assist you with a problem.
- guarantee no violence will come to you and your allies at this time and in this place (unless you choose to break the peace yourself, that is).

Voice of Authority: Any time you raise your voice in command, speech, or protest, everyone present stops to hear what you have to say. They look to you with rapt attention for around a minute. They may continue to pay attention to you after that, depending on what it is you're saying and how you're saying it. You can exclude people from this effect if you so choose. The effect breaks if violence of any kind breaks out, and people cease to be affected if anyone tries to interfere with them. You can only use this ability once between engagements.

Stand Sentinel: When you stand in defense of something or someone, it cannot be damaged or harmed while you remain conscious and within arm's reach. You can't take any other action or concentrate on anything else while defending this way.

Honorbound: When you strike a deal, your word is as trustworthy and valuable as any contract or collateral. As long as you uphold your end of the bargain, so will the other party (more or less); however, you suffer immediate consequences (see Consequences on p. 10) if you go back on your word for any reason. You can only make one deal like this at a time, and you can't use this ability again until your current deal is either completed or falls through.

BUTCHER

Rightly or wrongly, you've been saddled with a reputation for death and destruction that clings to you like a stain. An incident in the past, perhaps, or a history of bloody engagements. Others may revile you for this, but they fear you as well.

Do you struggle against this to try and restore your good name, or do you embrace it instead? What was the incident that earned you this reputation? Was it your fault? What details of it refuse to leave your mind?

ADVANCES

Grim Specter: When you enter a scene, choose an NPC. They know of your reputation. When they see you for the first time, you may lock eyes with them and name something you need. They either give you what you want, right now, or they choose one:

- They flee the scene with all haste (they always get away).
- They escalate the situation (resort to physical violence, call in backup, raise the stakes, etc).

Inner Demons: With a few moments of conversation, an examination of their correspondence, or simply a discomforting stare down, you can always tell what it is that someone fears most. You can also decide that those fears include you.

Pale Rider: When you decide it's time for someone to die, you can kill them without rolling as long as they're within arm's reach. This doesn't necessarily provide you the means to get close to them or to avoid the consequences, but once you have them cornered all they can do is offer you anything you want to not go through with it.

Collateral Damage: 1/scene, if you would take physical harm or be killed and there's another NPC close by, you can decide that they take the brunt of it instead. This doesn't necessarily have to be deliberate on your part – people just have a tendency to get hurt around you. Someone will blame you for this nonetheless.

Blood Debt: When you need something badly and all other options have failed, you can call in a marker you earned in the past for performing a task best left unspoken. Give a few vague and unsettling details about what it was you did for them. The person you contact isn't happy to hear from you but they'll honor their debt to the best of their abilities, and then they never want to see you ever again. You can only call upon one of these markers between each engagement.

MUSTANG

You didn't rise through the ranks in typical fashion. Instead, you used to be a fighter pilot, and a damn good one at that. Your superior skills and aptitude for leadership earned you an uncommon chance to "jump tracks". Your razor-honed instincts serve just as well in the commander's chair as they did in the cockpit, though sometimes you still miss the g-force punch of afterburners and the solar winds howling across your hull.

How has your command style, which some might call impulsive, caused friction with more traditional, conservative commanders? What happened one time those same fighter pilot instincts turned a battle around in your favor?

ADVANCES

Situational Awareness: You get an itch, tick, or bad feeling when you or anyone you consider close to you is in immediate danger. You always get an opportunity to act before something bad happens to you, even if you were surprised or ambushed, and in any situation (life-threatening or otherwise) where it becomes important to know who acts first, you always act first ahead of anyone else. If someone else has this advance or a similar ability, roll a die or flip a coin to see which one of you manages to pull ahead of the other.

Full Throttle: You can expertly drive, pilot, operate, and maintain any sort of personal vehicle or riding animal with only a few moments of familiarization. This affinity doesn't necessarily extend to vehicular combat, just piloting.

Pathfinder: You possess a perfect sense of direction and spatial orientation, even by cosmonaut standards. You always know which way is "up" for whatever relative value you care to use, and with a few moments of orientation you can always determine which way is north or the local equivalent. You can never get lost, and a quick glance at a map is enough for you to commit the entire layout to memory. You're capable of effortlessly retracing your steps, even blindfolded, and you never struggle to maintain your balance, no matter how precarious the situation. This applies even while intoxicated, a handy skill for any spacer on shore leave.

Gut Check: 1/scene, you can describe a course of action to the GM that you plan to take in the same scene. Your intuition gives you an accurate (if unclear) feeling for how that course of action will play out. The GM must respond with one of the following: Boon (good outcomes), Bane (bad outcomes), or Chaos (a mix of good and bad outcomes). You have a chance to change your mind after listening to your gut.

Hotwire: Whenever you need to fix, activate, or bypass an electronic or mechanical device, you can use your accumulated knowledge of unorthodox and highly inadvisable engineering workarounds to make it work exactly once. This repair might last just long enough to get through a malfunctioning airlock or it might allow you to stabilize a damaged transfer shuttle and turn a fatal collision into a controlled stop. After that, however, it's now broken for good and no amount of field repairs will get it working again. Fixing the damage is going to take a serious overhaul, some replacement parts, and an exasperated engineer or two.

OPERATIVE
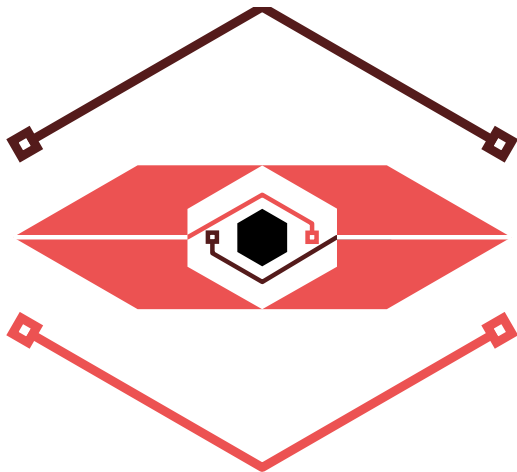
You serve two masters. You lead ships and execute strategies, yes, but you also act at the behest of an intelligence organization, an assignment in which the lines of battle aren't so clearly drawn. Perhaps you were recruited straight out of the academy, or maybe your particular skills caught the eye of someone in a high place. Either way, you share dual loyalties: an overt one to your naval organization, and a covert one to an intelligence organization. This intelligence organization could be that of an adversary (i.e., you're a double agent) or internal (i.e., you're an asset for an internal intelligence agency within the same state as the navy in which you serve).

Which agency do you serve, and how openly are your affiliated with it? Do you resent the double life you're forced to lead, or do you consider it simply another part of your duty?

ADVANCES

Threat Assessment: Whenever you enter a scene, ask the GM one or both of the following and receive a truthful answer:

- Who's really in charge here?
- What's the biggest danger here?

Hidden Agenda: When you take this advance, the GM must hand you a special hidden note with a particular objective on it for you to fulfill. This objective shouldn't be anything excessively complicated; it can involve spying on someone, gathering information, making or retrieving a dead drop without notice, and so on. When you complete this objective, the GM must grant you a reward proportionate to its difficulty. Objectives don't have to be completed in a single scene, but you can only ever have one such objective assigned to you at a time. If you share information about your objective with anyone else, for any reason, the mission is compromised and aborted, and you receive no reward. Between engagements, if you have no outstanding secret objectives left to complete, the GM must assign you a new one.

Covert Ops: With sufficient time to prepare (about 15–30 minutes) you can completely change your physical appearance with a blend of masterful disguise skills and advanced technology (e.g., prosocollars, voice modulators, and mimic masks), making you look and sound like an entirely different person in terms of your height, weight, build, hair, clothes, and/or sex. If you're trying to pass yourself off as someone specific, you can pass at a distance, but trying to impersonate them up close may still require checks of some sort. With a bit more time, an hour or two, you can also falsify identification credentials that will pass most casual inspections without a second glance.

Authorized Access: Your affiliation with an intelligence service acts as a crude but powerful set of credentials that can get you access to virtually any place or thing, no matter how high the security or how confidential the information. Using your affiliation in this fashion is guaranteed to raise red flags and send people in high places scrambling for answers, and you can count on a dressing-down from your superiors or handler over your lack of discretion. You'll need to wait until after the next engagement to pull this off again.

Deep Cover: The next time you would die, you may instead choose not to. If so, then your death is faked as part of a clandestine mission that requires you to go off the grid. Whether the people responsible for your apparent death are aware you are still alive or not is up to you. This commander is removed from play for one or more engagements and may be replaced temporarily with another character. When you decide it's time for to return, you do so at a suitably dramatic time, though your mission (which you are not at liberty to disclose) has left you indelibly changed by the experience. Cross this advance out and replace it with an advance from another reputation of your choice. When you take this advance, you may die if you wish.

OUTSIDER

The galaxy is a big place, but even so you manage to stand out. There is something unusual about you: perhaps you're an independent NHP tasked with responsibilities above and beyond, the product of a clandestine super soldier program, or maybe you are a member of an isolated order new to the conventional world. Maybe you hail from a far-distant region of space outside your navy's dominant cultural sphere.

Who and what are you? What brought you to command a battlegroup, and where will you go from here?

ADVANCES

Cultural Exchange: When you enter a scene, you may choose an NPC or a small group of people. They've never met someone like you. They're sure to be fascinated and have questions, which you can answer as you see fit. You can use this as a social icebreaker and a way to make friends as well as establishing facts about your background, culture, and so on, but it can also serve as a handy distraction or a means to draw attention away from something else.

Native Tongue: You possess a unique form of communication that can pass undetected or is indecipherable by those who aren't familiar with it. Your allies have an imperfect familiarity with it, enough to communicate simple concepts. With time and effort, you can teach it to others or help improve their fluency.

A New Logic: When someone else has tried and failed to solve a problem relying on logic or intuition, you know just how to solve it. Your solution may be unorthodox, and you'll have a difficult time explaining how you arrived at it to those unaccustomed to thinking like you do, but the GM must accept your solution.

Lash Out: Calling upon intensive training or some innate ability, you unleash a wave of incredible power in an area around you. This ability is extremely unsubtle, and is destructive to nearby objects and people (or both at once), depending on the precise form it takes. Choose this form when you select this advance. You don't always have fine control over the exact outcome, but those close to you (e.g., other PCs or dear friends) are unaffected, and you can always pick one person or object to destroy and one person or object to spare. Using this ability is exhausting, and you'll need to wait for at least another engagement to pass before you can use it again.

Fish Out of Water: Once a scene, you can play off any unintended social gaffe, awkward interpersonal moment, or embarrassing diplomatic incident as a "cultural misunderstanding", defusing the consequences of a failed social check or negating them altogether. You've also learned how to deliberately take advantage of this to get away with saying things that others might face consequences for, such as speaking bluntly, even insultingly, during formal negotiations or social functions ("One must forgive the vice admiral for his regrettably narrow-minded approach, he is, after all, only human. Is that not how that expression goes?"). When you do this, some may suspect that you're doing so on purpose, though they won't be able to prove it.
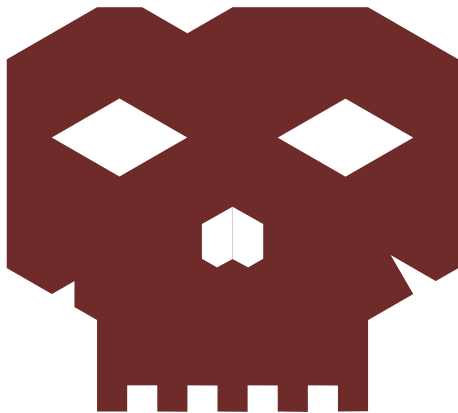
Your service stretches across centuries – maybe even millennia in the rarest and most exceptional cases. Maybe you are a Cosmopolitan onanon, a career naval officer who's refused to muster out despite their age, or a recently decanted and reintegrated soldier kept in stasis since the Second Committee's expansion period. The effects of stasis and/or time dilation brought about by extensive nearlight travel have inexorably distanced you from the world you once knew; you could retire, but where would you go and what would you do when you got there? No, this is the path you've chosen – or the path that has been forced upon you.

How old are you, in both realtime and subjective years? What moments in history have you borne witness to, or perhaps even participated in?

ADVANCES

Old Scars: When all your positive traits are exhausted, you can use one of your negative traits to gain ACCURACY on a roll instead of it adding DIFFICULTY. If you do this, you automatically suffer consequences in addition to any other consequences imposed by the roll.

Bullshit Detector: You can always tell when someone is lying. You don't necessarily know the precise details of the lie, but you know that they're bending, omitting, or outright fabricating something. You also happen to be familiar with every con or scam there is, and never fall for these things. 1/scene when you're face-to-face with someone, you can demand that they give you a straight answer to a question. They can either answer truthfully or they can refuse, but refusing means they have to give up something to do it (another piece of information, an advantage, etc).

Cosmopolitan: Whenever your travels take you somewhere new, it turns out you've actually been there before, a long time ago. Pick something you remember from your time there, such as a place or a person, and describe three things about it or them. For example, a bar you used to frequent might have been run by someone with a lot of smuggler contacts, be considered neutral ground among the local gangs, and have a couple of secret bolt-holes that you know about. The GM picks one of these things and decides how it's changed since the last time you were here, though you won't know which or how until you go and find out for yourself.

Carry That Weight: Whenever an ally fails and suffers consequences, you can share with them a story from your past experiences about a time something similar happened to you. If they take this advice to heart and act on it in the future, they gain a bonus or advantage related to your advice in some fashion. This could be +1 Accuracy on a future roll, or it could be something like sudden insight, helpful answers, discovering a previously unknown opportunity, or similar. Opening up about your past in this way is difficult for you, and you can only do so once between engagements.

Last Stand: When you decide your long journey has come to an end, you can solve an immediate problem at hand at the cost of your own life. For example, you might buy time for others to escape a dangerous situation by holding off a corridor of enemy troops, undertake critical emergency repairs in a rapidly depressurizing room, or take a dangerous foe with you when you go. You can use this ability proactively or in response to suffering consequences that would cause you to die, granting you a last chance to go out heroically. Your death has a profound impact on those who knew you, and all other players may both immediately refresh one of their positive traits and change that trait to something else if they wish.

SCION
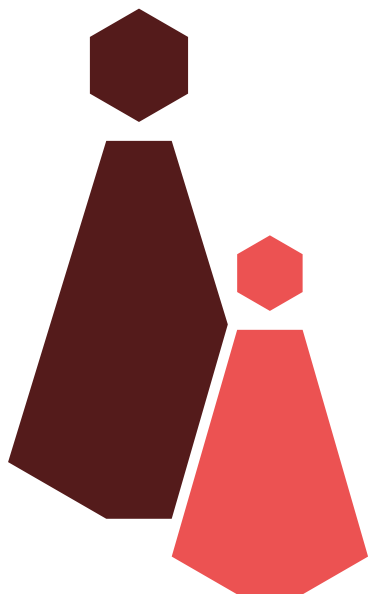
You are the heir to a great and powerful legacy, a noble lineage that stretches back for generations or more. Perhaps your family line is intertwined with one of the great Karrakin houses, or perhaps your family name appears on the first lists of Harrison Armory. There are also corpro-state dynasties to consider, and even within Union's sphere of influence some rare polities continue to cling to the older traditions. Duty, honor, and service mean different things for you, though mastery of command remains the same regardless of where you hail from.

What exactly is your noble line, and where does its history lie? Is your naval posting simply one step on the path to assuming your rightful place, or have you instead been pushed out of the way to make room for a more favored successor?

ADVANCES

Aide-de-Camp: You have a servant of some sort in your employ, an aide, valet, or majordomo. They are unflappable, unwaveringly loyal if not mistreated, and proficient in a variety of noncombat tasks and duties. Pick one task at which they display exceptional skill (e.g., cooking, organizing social functions, navigating bureaucracies, managing your daily affairs, administering first aid, etc). Their exact naval rank is loosely defined but they nonetheless accompany you aboard your flagship, and outside of combat they can be tasked with any number of errands on your behalf. They can only die if you allow it, but should the worst come to pass a replacement will eventually be found sometime between engagements.

Measure of a Man: With a few moments of conversation, some time spent in observation over drinks, or simply an appraisal of their bearing and demeanor, you can always tell what someone's true price is. If that price is money, you can always pay it without difficulty.

On the List: There is no social function, no matter how exclusive or tightly restricted, that you cannot attend. You can even bring guests if you like, though not many (exactly as many as there are other players plus one), as long as they try to be on their best behavior. If you want, you can flip a coin when you crash a party in this fashion. Heads, someone is delighted to see you and you simply must come and meet their friends. Tails, someone takes exception to your presence and drama ensues.

Demand Satisfaction: Whenever someone slights you, your honor, or anyone you hold in high regard, you can challenge them to a formal duel. You set the terms for the duel and the form it takes, though it won't be a duel to the death (as most navies tend to frown on such things). Regardless, a certain degree of potential bodily harm is acceptable. When you issue this challenge, the offending party has only two choices: they can agree to the duel, or they must immediately back down and suffer the loss of something important (e.g., honor, someone's respect or admiration, an opportunity, etc). Issuing too many challenges will invariably attract disciplinary attention, so this can only be done once between engagements.

Noble Mien: You have a certain bearing about you that leads people to assume you're in charge, even when you aren't. In the absence of a clear leader, people who look to authority will look to you first, and if anyone wants to know who's in charge of something and you declare that you are, they believe it. When you deliver short, sharp, concise orders to someone, they'll automatically hasten to obey them. These orders can't be obviously harmful or against their own interests, and the duration of this effects depends on how "subordinate" they are to you in terms of rank, social status, and so on. Someone far beneath you is more likely to continue carrying out these orders than someone closer to you in rank or status, and trying this on someone of equal or greater status is guaranteed to fail and result in unpleasant consequences.
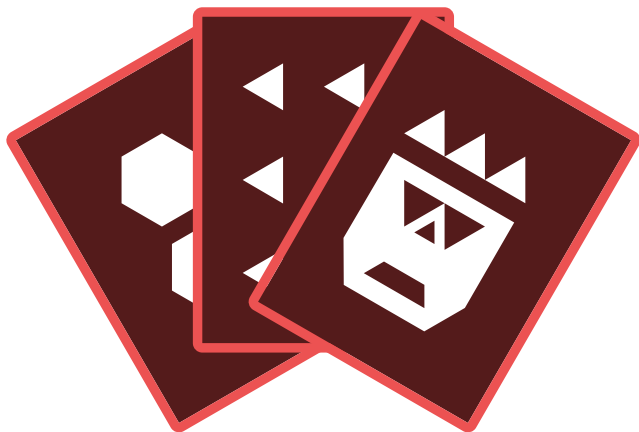
Not every commander has a spotless background. While a criminal history is usually disqualifying for command promotions, who's to say you did anything wrong? Is there any evidence? Was there ever a conviction? Did they ever find that shipping container, anyway? Sometimes these things simply get blown out of proportion. Other times, command isn't something that you're awarded so much as something that's thrust upon you; more than one pirate or privateer has been given a choice of either naval service or a criminal sentence, and sometimes even a former pirate can rise through the ranks.

What was the boldest, most daring plan or scheme you ever embarked on, and how did it backfire horribly? Did you manage to keep any souvenirs, or just some scars to go with your stories?

ADVANCES

Poker Face: No one, no matter how perceptive, can tell whether you're bluffing or not. When you tell a wild and outlandish lie, anyone who listens will wholeheartedly believe it for a minute. If it's merely unbelievable, an hour. If it's plausible, a day. If they want to believe it, a week. After this, they realize it was a lie.

Ace in the Hole: 1/scene, you can produce a single item that could conceivably be hidden on your person or planted somewhere nearby in advance (e.g., a personal weapon, a small cache of money, a bottle of contraband alcohol, a playing card, etc). This object can't be detected until you reveal it.

Friends in Low Places: When dealing with pirates, criminals, or other underworld figures, choose an NPC. The two of you have a history. The GM will determine the exact nature of this history, but they probably won't want to kill you. Yet. If you want, you can also flip a coin. Heads, they owe you one. Tails, you owe them one.

Plan B: When you and your allies need to escape a bad situation right now, name your escape route and what you're taking with you. You all always escape, as long as you (GM's choice):

- leave something behind (a weapon, a friend, evidence)
- end up somewhere perilous or uncomfortable (a garbage chute, a ship's exterior, a seedy bar)
- pick something up on your way out (a hanger on, pursuers, a bullet)

You can back out when you learn this and name another escape route (the GM might answer differently).

Perfect Alibi: 1/scene, when an NPC with whom you're acquainted takes blame or faces personal fallout for something illegal or insubordinate, you can offer to take it for them instead. If they accept, you take the consequences and they owe you a favor that you can cash in later. Similarly, if you would take blame or face personal fallout for something illegal or insubordinate you can decide that an NPC with whom you're acquainted takes the brunt of it instead (you don't need their permission), but you'll owe them a favor afterward. This ability can't be used again until your debts are squared one way or another.
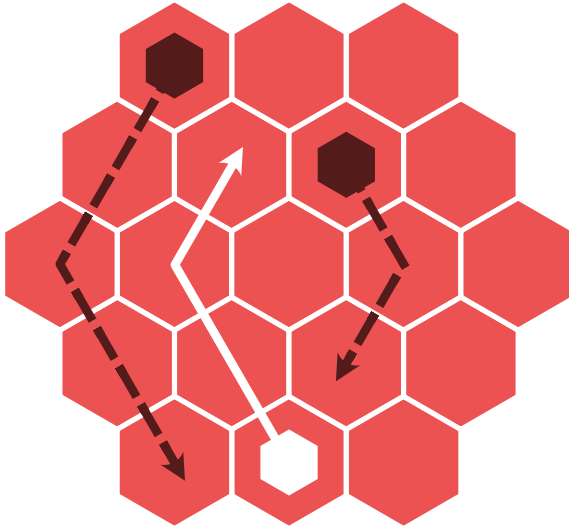
STRATEGIST

You think in terms of moves ahead and probable outcomes, of strategies and tactics. Perhaps your scores at the academy set a new standard, but it's just as likely that you clashed with conventional doctrines and showed more than one of your instructors up along the way. Is it really arrogance if you were actually right, though? Now you command a battlegroup, and all of your academy training is about to be put to the test.

What was one of the pivotal moments of your commander's naval education? Was it an unexpected victory against overwhelming odds, or was it a bitter defeat that taught them a valuable lesson?
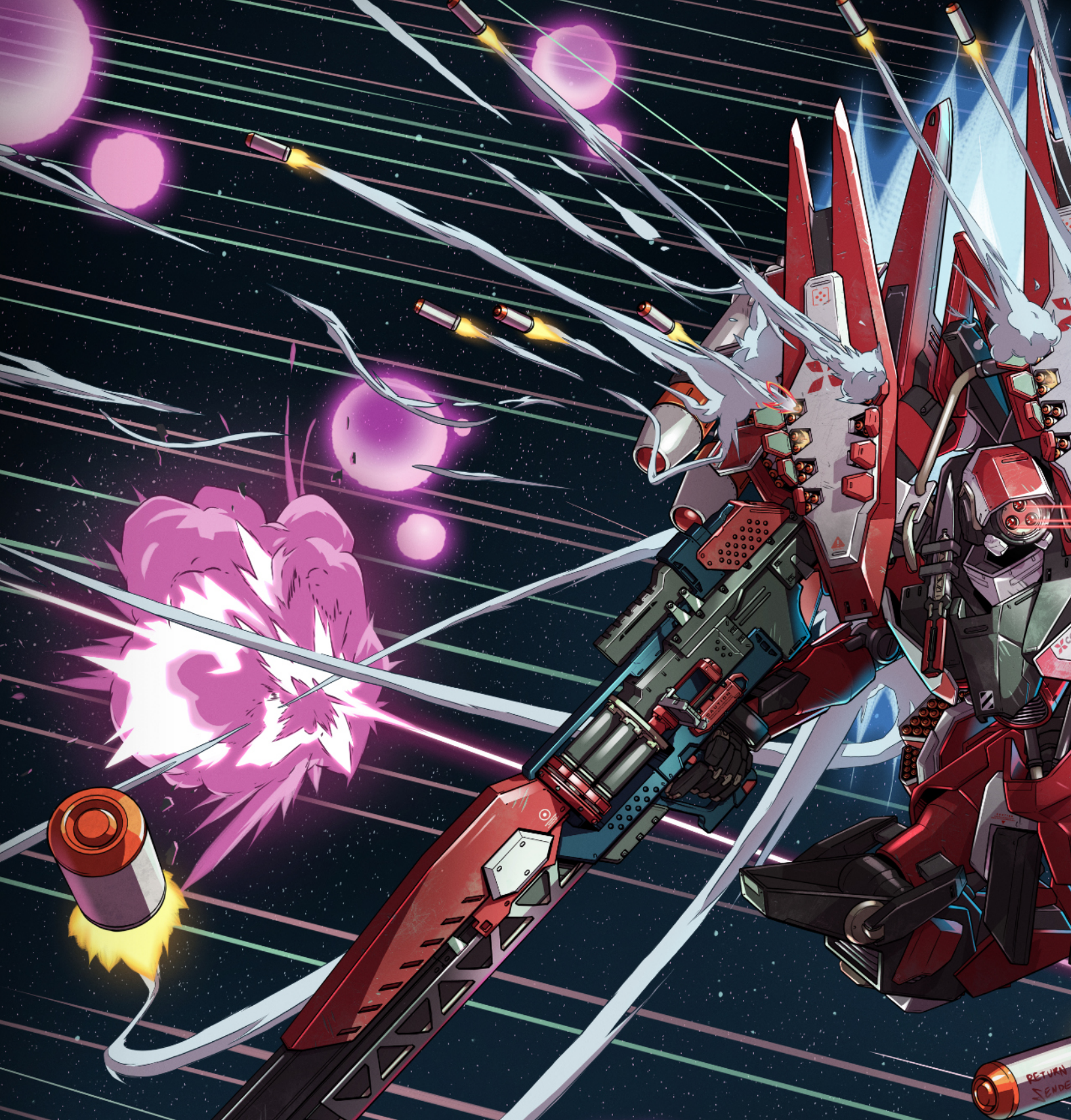
ADVANCES

Eye for Detail: When given the chance to study someone's work in detail – a process that can take anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours – you're able to glean insights into their thoughts and character. This could include reviewing the records of their prior battles, speeches they've made, their writing, the way they play a game, or even their art. Afterwards, you can ask the GM three yes-or-no questions about that person, which they must answer as truthfully as possible. This answer can't provide you with information you have no way of knowing. "Did they murder this person?" is harder to evaluate than "are they capable of murdering this person?", for example.

Two Steps Ahead: When you attempt some sort of action that requires an uptime check, you may do so through "flashbacks", framing your attempt as the result of insightful preparation and planning for just this situation. These flashbacks can't undo anything that's already happened, but they allow you to approach problems using methods that you couldn't actually attempt in the present moment, such as retroactively having hacked into a computer or delivering a message to someone in advance.
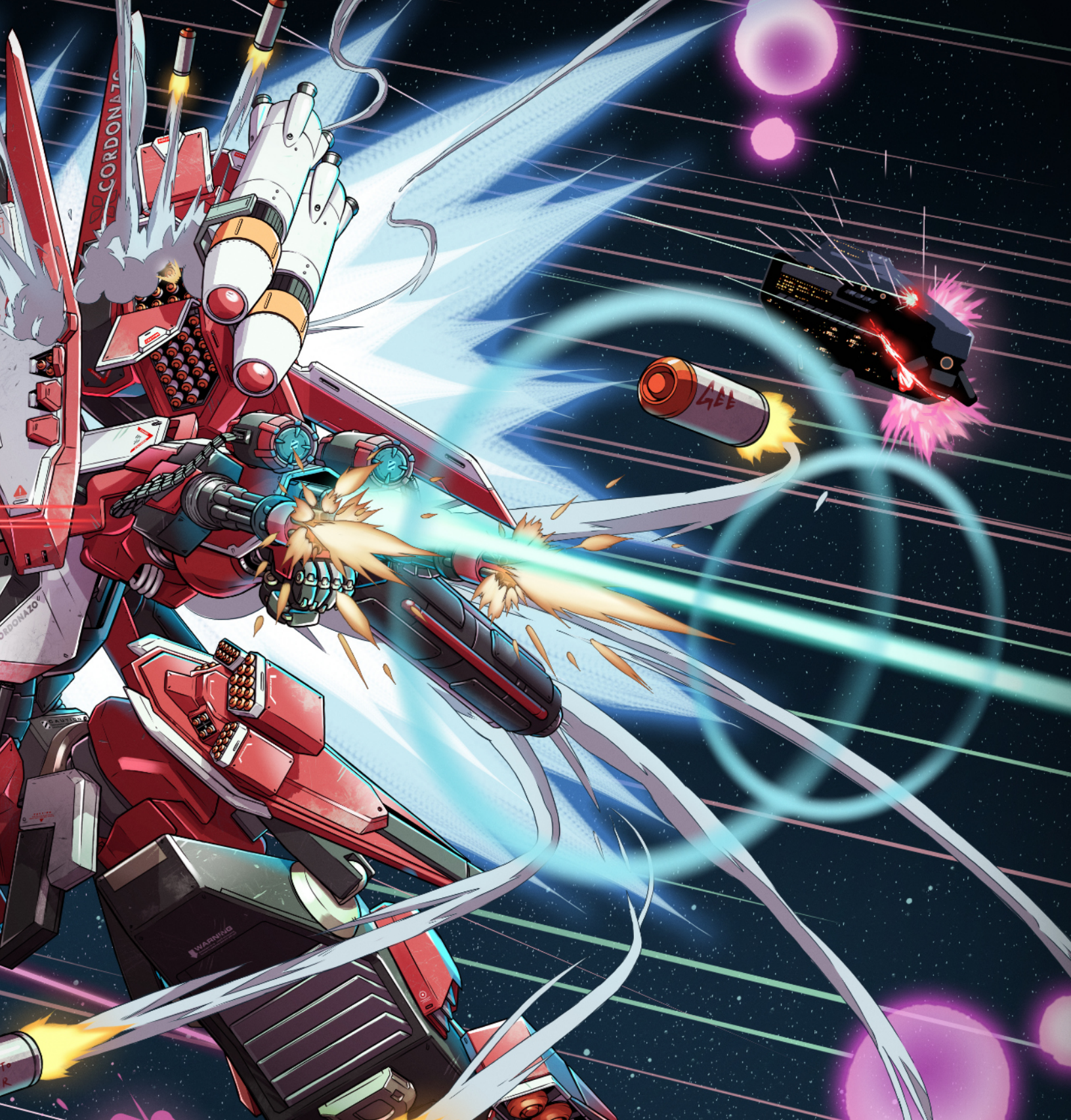
Pattern Recognition: You're capable of quickly and effortlessly sifting signals out of noise, making connections other people miss. You can speak and understand any language and read any text or code (encrypted or otherwise) without specialized tools, though you are a little slower than a native speaker, and you can instinctively piece together connections other people miss. When you enter a scene, you may ask the GM to tell you the relationships between any NPCs present, if there is one. This can include information that might otherwise be hidden.

Wheels Within Wheels: 1/scene, when you fail an uptime check, you may describe how this failure actually furthers one of your plans by providing an advantage, opening, or opportunity that didn't exist before. You still take any consequences that are a result of failing this uptime check, and the advantage you gain as a result of failing the check can't be used to minimize those consequences.

Fool's Gambit: 1/scene, when someone nearby fails an uptime check, you can spring into action with a plan to salvage the situation. You can attempt the same check, but this time it's double or nothing. If you succeed, neither of you suffers consequences. If you fail, the other person doesn't suffer any consequences, but you suffer twice as many for yourself. This affinity for daring and unorthodox plans extends itself to things like games of chance or skill; you're always able to handily beat players less skilled than you, and at worst you can always play to a draw (or another similarly frustrating outcome) when pitted against players more skilled than you.

RUNNING BATTLEGROUP

Like many tabletop games, *Battlegroup* requires a GM. The GM is responsible for setting the stage, outlining the stakes, assembling NPC fleets, and challenging the players.

This section of the book is for the GM. It dives into greater detail about how to run games and campaigns of *Battlegroup*. This includes advice on setting up games, whether they be one-shots or ongoing campaigns; hazards and mission objectives you can add to engagements to create more challenging battles; a guide for creating NPC fleets; and ways in which you can incorporate the outcomes of *Battlegroup* into a *Lancer* campaign (and vice versa).

As the GM, you, like the others at the table, are a player in this game. Your role is not to play a character, but to facilitate, to describe the world in which your players' characters exist, and to give voice to NPCs. To dip into both sport and analogy, it is best to consider yourself more a goalkeeper than a referee: like a goalkeeper on a soccer team, you are an individual with a unique role and access to tools that only you can use. You're there to help your team – the players at your table – not to adjudicate their play. Yes, you are the tiebreaking vote on rules questions, and yes you at least provide the framework of a narrative for your players to interact with, but that does not make you the referee. Unlike a ref, you should be invested your players' success; establish shared goals, make the game fun, play as a team, and you're sure to be a good GM.

GM PRINCIPLES

FACILITATE FUN
As the GM, your job is to facilitate, arbitrate, and make rulings, and to adapt your notes, world, and narrative in response to your players' choices.

Your job isn't to defeat your players. Although your role includes setting the tone and facilitating play, your mission isn't to ensure your players' characters wind up dead and defeated – you're there to make sure everyone is having a good time and engaged in the collaborative story. That said, you should still challenge your players – failure is rich narrative and roleplaying territory.

RENOUNCE CONTROL
As the GM, accept that the story you tell may not be the one that you outlined.

Your players will kill important NPCs before they become important. Your players will not go to that colony where they could find an important data log. Your players may not bite the hook you want them to bite. Your players' characters – with their backstories that are perfectly integrated into your campaign – might die, forcing you to revise your notes. Ultimately, it's important to go with the story that you're telling with your players at the table rather than try to stick to the one you originally envisioned.

Engagements are costly and a commander's life can end in the blink of an eye, but this doesn't mean you can't have recurring enemies for your players to face. There are plenty of narrative possibilities for such nemeses to escape death and return later, but you shouldn't make plans in advance based on how you predict a battle to go. The same goes for all the players. *Battlegroup* works best when exploring the consequences of the aftermath rather than attempting to force the narrative you had in mind.

CONSIDER YOUR PLAYERS

As the GM, try to set expectations and ensure that everyone at the table feels comfortable and gets a chance to contribute.

Make sure that your players are comfortable with the tone and expectations of your game, both in terms of content and the type of game you're running. If you're planning to grapple with a sensitive subject, ask yourself if it's really important to include it in your game and clearly talk through your intentions with your players. If they don't feel safe and included at the table, that's on you – it's your job as the facilitator of the game to reach out to them.

Additionally, remember that different players might enjoy different kinds of stories. Some players love combat-heavy games, others prefer sessions with more politics and intrigue. *Battlegroup* is first and foremost a game of naval combat, and much of its play centers around this; however, it's still possible to dive into the interpersonal relations between characters and what these mean for the setting during the scenes between engagements. You shouldn't try to satisfy everybody, but be clear about what kind of game you're running so players can set their expectations.

SAY YES

As the GM, try to say "no" as little as possible.

While some things will always be impossible – whether that's due to the rules, your judgment, or common sense – it's almost always better to say "yes, and…", "yes, but…', or 'yes, however…", than it is to say "no". Instead of outright denial, give players new options or other (more difficult, perhaps) ways of accomplishing their goals, offer them lesser outcomes, or just let them attempt it anyway. The outcome will usually be the same, but handing the choice over to players empowers and rewards them, as well as keeping the story moving. Remember, players can carry some of the storytelling weight – if they ask whether they can do something, one of the best responses is to turn the question back on them, asking how they'd attempt it.

At its heart, *Battlegroup* is a collaborative game in which pitched battles and the moments between come together to create a shared narrative. You should want your players laughing, crying, serious, and silly. You should want them writing fictional vignettes about their characters, or ordering takeout to eat as they discuss the impact their latest engagement had upon a war-torn system. The GM isn't the reason the players show up: they show up for their characters and your world. Without protagonists in your drama, you have no game and no story.

INEVITABILITY, FATALISM, AND HOPE
CHARACTERS IN NARRATIVE PLAY

Battlegroup demands the players acknowledge a certain truth: every character will engage in fights that they might not survive. Though the focus is primarily on these battles, there should always be space allowed for nontactical roleplay before and after an engagement. This section offers some guidance for how you, as the GM, might want to structure narrative play.

BEFORE THE ENGAGEMENT

Naval battles in *Battlegroup* are usually deliberate affairs, not opportunistic skirmishes. Compared to the concerns of hotshot fighter jocks and chassis pilots, which tend to be much more immediate, the role of commander calls for time spent in preparation and planning. Narrative play prior to a naval engagement might cover a window of anything from several minutes to several weeks before the first shots are fired. The amount that characters can accomplish in this time should be constrained by how long they have before the next engagement begins.

WEEKS BEFORE
Commanders and their crews may be docked at a station or shipyard when they receive orders, or battlegroups may be on patrol or in transit with most hands in stasis. Once orders are received and crews are activated, the period of preparation that follows is one of controlled chaos: supplies are loaded and accounted for, critical systems checked and calibrated, strike craft prepped and tested (or fabricated on the spot utilizing onboard printers), and a thousand other necessary tasks, great and small, are seen to with military efficiency. Outside of the direst emergency circumstances, nothing is too trivial to skip. Space is a hostile environment, naval combat even moreso, and a completed pre-combat checklist can spell the difference between life and death for everyone aboard.

DAYS BEFORE
At the center of all this, captains and commanders strategize, consulting with each other and the fleet legion. Simulations are run, strategies discarded and reformulated, and probabilities measured. No plan, however carefully calculated, ever survives contact with the enemy; nevertheless, some few variables can be accounted for and fallback contingencies established for worst-case scenarios. A seasoned commander understands that some percentage of the crew serving under them will be dead by the end of even the most rigorously strategized engagement. The goal, then, is to minimize that percentage as much as possible while maximizing it for the enemy.

HOURS BEFORE
In the brief window after departure or activation but before the engagement begins, commanders and crew alike catch what sleep they can and find ways to enjoy themselves before contact with the enemy. People write letters or make recordings for distant friends and family, to be automatically delivered in case the worst comes to pass. Regulations concerning alcohol and narcotics are typically quite strict during combat preparations, but veteran crews are known to stash a bottle away for a pre-battle toast, and veteran commanders usually look the other way when this happens.

MINUTES BEFORE
On the cusp of engagement, once initial contact has been made and verified, it isn't uncommon for commanders to hail their counterparts on the other side via legionspace channels to establish their positions and offer terms of surrender. In most cases, it isn't expected that these terms will be accepted, but on rare occasions, if a commander plays their cards right, an opponent will be convinced to stand down before the fighting begins – and it costs nothing to try. These negotiations can be as brief as a few terse exchanges of threats and bluster, or they might involve days of desperate bargaining. Even negotiations that prove fruitless provide canny commanders with a chance to assess the enemy's disposition and morale, forming a clearer picture of which captains may be more likely to surrender or eject from the battle should things turn against them and which will fight until the bitter end.

DURING THE ENGAGEMENT – NOTHING BUT THE FIGHT

The opening days of an engagement are difficult ones for commanders: hard maneuvers, pre-firing, anticipation of initial interdictions, making sure crews stay focused and ready, and considerable gestalt time in the fleet legion are all taxing on a person.

Commanders are likely to spend most of their time having the final say in decisions presented to them by officers and the ship's NHP. Between the sudden need to interdict or hard burn to avoid low-confidence incoming fire, the stress never really lets up. Between difficult decisions, they might spend time in legionspace virtualities to clear their heads, practice meditation, take anti-anxiety cocktails, or even spend time in stasis while delegating command to their executive officers. The urge to micromanage and oversee every aspect of a battlegroup's operations is one that experienced commanders invariably grow out of, as such a desire, while understandable, is a desire for something impossible. To lead effectively, they must learn to put their trust in their officers and crew.

The tempo of battle is one of inexorable acceleration. The early stages of an engagement can be measured in days as low-confidence salvos are launched, recon pickets established, and long-cycle weapons store up devastating amounts of energy. Even during this period, which may seem relaxed by comparison, crews will be fully engaged and on combat footing at all times. There are no more letters or toasts, only shifts between action stations, hasty meals, and furtive sleep. In some high-intensity conflicts, combat stims may be administered by the ship's medical personnel to maintain alertness.

As the gyre begins to collapse, the time between action and outcome collapses along with it. What took days before may now only take a single day, then hours, and then if the battle has not yet been won comes the brutal close-quarters fighting during which ships move within visual range of one another and weapons are virtually guaranteed to hit instantly. Once this stage has been reached, engagements tend to not last much longer. One way or another, a victor will be decided.

AFTER THE ENGAGEMENT

Whether an engagement was successfully won or narrowly escaped, the immediate aftermath is a time of relief and bone-deep exhaustion for commanders and their crews. Celebration (or mourning) will come later, but for now they've passed through the worst of things and come out the other side.

But their job isn't finished just yet. Once fighting has concluded comes damage control, search and rescue, and medical triage. These moments are just as critical as any counterfactual evasion or firing solution in the battle and are just as dependent on well-honed skill and swift action. Then and only then, when the hull breaches have been sealed and all distress calls have been accounted for, can everyone begin to relax as best they can. Weapon systems power down while nearlight drives prepare for controlled exit from the area of operations, and the fleet legion gradually disincorporates back into its constituent subjectivities following data archival.

WHAT COMES NEXT

A naval engagement is a momentous event for everyone involved, and once the firing stops things may never again be the same. Lives are lost, borders and lines of control redrawn, and legacies made. As your group brings the fight to a close, you and the players may wish to explore the consequences in detail, addressing questions and looking to the future. There are several ways your group may choose to frame this, ranging from formal ceremonies to more intimate personal moments of reflection. You may even choose to shift focus onto other characters, letting them briefly take the spotlight as they react to everything that's occurred and reveal how it has affected them.

Unlike the uptime actions that commanders undertake in preparation for an engagement, post-battle uptime doesn't necessarily involve specific rolls or actions. The aftermath of an engagement is instead an opportunity for everyone to decompress and take stock of what's happened, as well as to explore the reactions of their characters to the events that have unfolded.

Here are some examples of post-battle vignettes you may decide to highlight following an engagement.

AFTER-ACTION REPORT

Captain Salazar sighed and rubbed her eyes as she looked over the preliminary damage assessment, feeling the combat stims fade from her system. The Luzon had taken a direct hit that had cored her from bow to drives, no survivors. One minute there'd been a frigate hanging in space, the next there was nothing but a distant flash and a cloud of plasma. Two other ships had suffered significant damage, but at least they were still operational after a fashion. Half of the Aotearoa's fighters had been downed and the Rakahanga was still operating on minimal power as technicians purged ontologic payloads from her systems.

On the other side of the battle, a half dozen enemy ships had been disabled or destroyed. Search and rescue teams were making their way through the debris now in search of survivors, though estimates weren't optimistic. It was cold comfort knowing that however many spacers under her command she'd lost here, the enemy had suffered tenfold.

A victory that tasted like ash was a victory nonetheless.

When FLEETCOM issues the all-clear and the legion spins down, you're left with the aftermath of what happened. Damage control teams and medics hustle between the decks of the ship. Distress calls and positioning beacons flood the CIC. Your NHP, unflappable, informs you how much the engagement has cost in lives, time, and capacity.

An after-action report is the formal or informal summary of what occurred during the engagement, what was learned, the status of one's forces in the engagement's wake, and a look at what comes next. There are immediate questions that must be answered: Who was lost? Who made it through? How is the ship? Your group might want to explore the answers to these questions, or you might want to avoid them. If the players' side "won", they'll likely have this information at hand or available within the hour; if their side lost, they probably won't have the necessary data, as their commanders (assuming they're still alive) are likely busy trying to survive the retreat. This information might not make it through to the PCs for hours or days after the fight – maybe never, depending on the degree of the loss and the events that follow.

If you do decide to zoom in on the after-action report, you might also look at the characters' internal monologues as they start to take mental and emotional inventories. You might want to explore the following questions:

- Was the outcome a victory or a loss?
- Did any enemy forces escape? Do you know now who they are? What did you learn of their tactics, and how soon will you give chase?
- As the fleet regroups and heads on, how are you? Furious and seeking vengeance, or broken but inexorable? In high spirits and eager for the next fight, or steady on, resolute to see the mission done?

HONOR THE VICTORS

The great hall was packed for the occasion, attendees smartly clad in their dress uniforms, or in the case of Eudora – the ship's NHP – her finest subaltern chassis. The flock of camera drones flitting about from all angles only added to the intense feeling of scrutiny that Gabe was feeling at the moment, dressed in his own freshly pressed uniform. Had the collar always been this tight?

The murmurs of conversation died down as Admiral van Rijn took the stage, uniformed personnel snapping to attention before he waved them at ease. "Captain Gabriel Anderson, step forward."

Gabe did his best not to squint against the flurry of camera flashes that followed him as he stepped up to the admiral, and for a brief moment he found himself wishing he was trading fire back on the bridge of the Midwinter's Sovereign. Then again, that's how he'd wound up here in the first place.

"Captain," the admiral said, holding the medal in his hands. "The Olduvai Cross is awarded to those who have demonstrated the utmost bravery and devotion in the face of overwhelming danger, and to those who exemplify what it means to command…"

Medals and decorations are more than pretty pieces of metal and ribbon to wear on a dress uniform – they serve to commemorate great deeds and accomplishments. More importantly, perhaps, they serve to inspire. Not every commander seeks personal glory, though many begin their careers dreaming of accolades, but these ceremonies aren't just for their own benefit. Instead, they stand as tangible reminders to all those that serve that their deeds will be recognized and remembered.

The nature of these ceremonies varies widely depending on naval traditions and local cultures, but they're rarely casual affairs. Dignitaries, politicians, diplomats, and high-ranking naval personnel are often invited to attend, as are members of the press; events like these are frequently broadcast throughout the fleet and even across settled worlds for morale or propaganda purposes. There are obvious questions to ask: What commendations are being awarded and who is receiving them? What deeds are being commemorated?

When zooming in on one of these scenes, it's also important to explore how characters feel about being awarded these honors (or missing out on them). Is this a celebratory moment following a triumphant victory? Or is it a bittersweet occasion? Do they even feel as though they deserve these commendations?

VIEW FROM THE GALLERY

CPO "Mack" Macallen's eyes moved from their cards to the deckhand sitting across from them. Going strictly by regs, they knew Storage Bay 12 wasn't really supposed to be used for recreational purposes, but being the Rubicon's deck chief had its perks.

"Fi, you ever gonna quit stalling and ask Whistler out on that date or not?" Whistler was Lieutenant Kadyrovna, one of the Rubicon's top pilots, and Fiona's crush on her was maybe one of the worst kept secrets on the ship. "You can't keep finding excuses to tinker with her ride forever, y'know."

"Fuck off, Mack," Fiona said, blushing as she signaled for a pair of cards from the janitorial subaltern that was temporarily serving as dealer. "Her bird had a sluggish RCS thruster, it needed the work. Besides, you know she's started seeing Lieutenant Rios, right?"

"Nah, that ain't true." Carter was a sensor tech, recently assigned to the Rubicon's CIC after a stint running recon pickets. "She and Rios both have a thing for some old sim-game is all. They asked me if I could help get it running for them. Thing needed like a half dozen compatibility patches." Carter looked at his hand, looked at the pot full of chits with various chores and favors scribbled on them, and folded. "Hate to break it to you Fi, but it turns out our badass ace is a huge geek after all."

"Speaking of geeks, you guys know anything about our VIP?" That was Imani, comms NCO, matching the bet. "Everything's been all hush-hush since we brought them aboard, but you can really tell the captain's on edge. I heard they're some kind of scientist, and Vikram told me he thinks they must be a defector. Remember last month, all that high-level comms traffic? Something big is about to go down… I can feel it."

Another option you might like to explore following engagements (or even during pre-battle uptime) is zooming in on NPC action and larger "scenes" involving more than just the players' commanders. As with any episodic series, the camera doesn't simply focus on the main character (the "A plot"); a setting's world is enriched by focusing on side characters and other developing stories that add context to the main story – these are the B and C plots of the narrative.

There are many people aboard a ship, and while PCs might not have access to their inner lives, the players themselves certainly do. In these sorts of expanded scenes, you can – as players – zoom in on action and actors that the PCs might not participate in or be wholly ignorant of. Use this space to flesh out life on your ships in a way that is compelling and builds additional context around your character and your battlegroup.

These scenes might include strike craft and chassis pilots returning to their carriers, deck hands or gunners at work after the engagement, harried engineers working to repair damage to the ship, NHPs reorienting to individuality after exiting legionspace, and so on.

DYING OF THE LIGHT

Commander Espinoza regained consciousness to the worst sound a spacer could hear: the hiss of air escaping her suit.

There was no time to take stock of her surroundings yet. She grabbed the patch kit without thinking, emergency stims pumping through her system as she chased down the leaks and plugged them one by one, working as if on autopilot from countless emergency drills. At last the hissing stopped, crisis averted for the moment. One crisis, anyway.

The Yushan, her ship, had been destroyed. She hung suspended in the wreckage of the ship's shattered hull, and for the first time since enemy contact she was alone with her thoughts. No voices flowed into her helmet, no tactical updates or status reports. Dead air. Weightlessly, she grabbed a nearby chunk of debris that had once been the Yushan's commencement plaque and pivoted herself around. In the distance, ships burned. Hers or the enemy's, she couldn't tell.

Her O2 reserves were down to half and a comms check showed that either they were inoperable or there was nobody out there listening. Espinoza was alone, floating in the void with only the remains of her ship for company. It was a naval tradition dating all the way back to old Cradle – even before the Fall they said – that the captain always went down with the ship. It seemed fitting, then, for things to end this way.

Amid the darkness and the silence, Commander Espinoza drifted among the stars and waited for whatever was to come.

For many, the post-engagement experience is a grim one. A player's commander, their crew, might even not survive the battle. Maybe they drift alone (or one of very few) aboard the ruins of their ship, watching the dial on their oxygen reserves dip ever lower, waiting for anyone to come and rescue them.

What do they do in the time they have left?

LETTERS FROM HOME

In the lulls between engagements, while the crew rotated in and out of stasis, Isaac's thoughts were of Fortuna. Its blue skies and verdant fields, the hum of ag-drones, the fragrant scent of orange blossoms. His thoughts were also of the family he'd left behind a lifetime ago.

He'd never married or had children of his own; how reckless it would have been to leave them like that as he joined the navy and ventured out among the stars, never knowing if or when he might return. He had a brother and a sister, though. He had his parents. He had his aunts and uncles, and he loved them all, but where he'd gone they couldn't follow. Some of them had understood his need to spread his wings and venture beyond Fortuna's gravity well, some of them tried to understand but never would, but they'd all supported him, and they all promised to write.

And so whenever the ship slowed to normal speeds to synchronize the omni, briefly touching the normal flow of time like a leaf settling atop a lake, he settled in to read the letters and messages that were always waiting for him, telling him about birthdays and holidays, new nephews and nieces, the harvests and the winter frosts. In those unfurling moments, as he drifted across the vastness of space, there was a part of him that stood upon Fortuna once more, to feel the warmth of the sun on his skin and smell the orange blossoms in the air.

For cosmonauts, "home" often means two things: the ship they serve on, and the world they left behind. The effects of time dilation from stasis and nearlight travel mean that they find themselves caught between the subjective and the objective, the world outside their fleet slipping inexorably ahead in time while they remain ageless. Such a life isn't for everyone, and the ranks of long-serving naval personnel are frequently comprised of those without temporal roots, content to travel the stars until retirement or death.

Still, some sailors, notably auxiliaries and those serving limited terms, have anchors out there in the galaxy beyond their ships. Friends, family, loved ones, a homeworld they fondly remember. Even career spacers may maintain contact with their families over the years and generations that pass for them on the other side, a distant figure maintaining a presence in their lives through the omninet.

While some post-battle vignettes take more collective approaches, involving multiple characters and looking at things from a big-picture perspective, this offers a much more personal and intimate window into the backstory and personality of individual characters. Everyone comes from somewhere, after all. Where does your character call home? Who's waiting for them there? A spouse? Children? Parents? What events have been happening in their absence?

Bear in mind that, as presented in *Battlegroup*, the conflict in the Dawnline Shore only lasts for a few realtime years – from 5019 to 5021u – though of course this may vary in your own campaigns. The effects of time dilation on those participating in this war are therefore likely to be minimal in and of themselves, but other conflicts may involve a much more pronounced difference, to say nothing of the cumulative effects for career spacers. This can be something to explore in a campaign taking place over a longer stretch of time, giving you opportunities to look in on pivotal moments across multiple systems.

REMEMBER THE FALLEN

The main flight decks were still under repair, hull compromised and exposed to hard vacuum, so they'd held the service in the mess hall instead. They only needed room for the one coffin anyway.

No one was inside of it, of course. It was just a symbol. If they'd had a coffin for everyone who'd been lost there wouldn't be any room left for the living to stand. One of the walls had been covered with pictures of the deceased, a mosaic of still moments in time, along with notes and mementos left by those who were still here. Offerings for the absent dead. Even the injured had come to pay their respects, their uniforms carefully tugged on over bandages and slings.

They could tend to their wounds in the days to come. For now, this moment belonged to the fallen.

For all those who serve aboard a ship, the specter of death is a constant companion. The blinding flash of a long-spool weapon, the megaton detonation of a torpedo salvo, the slow hiss of a punctured suit – these are the ways a spacer dies.

For these brave souls, then, remembering the fallen is a comforting and necessary ritual. They know that when their time comes there likely won't even be a body let alone a grave – their physical form transmuted to dust or left to drift among the stars – and so these rituals serve to imbue the memories of the departed among those who still live, preserving something of their essence. They provide a chance for closure, a moment to reflect and to say final farewells.

Much like award ceremonies, funeral rites are different from navy to navy, and even then, they differ greatly depending on the customs of the crew and the departed, their native homeworlds, and the necessities of war. If a fleet has recently suffered significant losses or been forced to retreat, funerals may be sparse and brief simply out of practical necessity. In many cases, given the number of casualties taken during an engagement, these ceremonies may be held in honor of the fallen as a group rather than as individuals, though some – such as ranking officers – are likely to receive more personal consideration.

If you're exploring one of these scenes, ask the following questions: Whose funeral is this? Was it someone under the command of a player's character? A close friend? Or was it a players' character who gave their life in the line of duty? What cultural or religious rites are being observed?

Players may want to go around the table to say a few words about the departed (particularly if it was someone's character, or someone their characters knew), recounting memorable events from an engagement or campaign as a send-off. If morale in the fleet is low, the right words here could grant the survivors the resolve they need to finish the fight in the name of those who gave their all.

REST AND RELAXATION

Wynne Guzman glanced at the clock. A quarter past 1500 meant they'd be here soon. Amato Station was a waypoint between the local blink gate and the front lines, situated far enough away from the conflict to not be in any danger but close enough that it had become a regular stopover for ships on their way to and from the hot zones.

The commanders didn't stick to any sort of schedule, of course, but Wynne knew people who knew people, who also happened to know other people. That was why he'd been busy making quiet preparations while the other bars aboard the station were blissfully unaware that a Union battlegroup was en route to Amato with R&R in mind. He'd swapped out the regular snacks for extra-spicy varieties to cut through the muted taste buds that stasis tended to leave behind, rented out a couple extra subalterns to keep up with the workload, made sure the first aid kit was freshly stocked and prophylactic dispensers were topped off, bolted down the tables and chairs, and raised all his prices by 20 percent.

By the time all the other shops on the station figured out what was happening, he'd already be seating the first rotation fresh off their ship with a smile and a bottle in hand, ready to pour. Wynne had never been a navy man himself, but he and all those spacers did have one thing in common at least: they both took shore leave very seriously.

Whether they're on campaign or not, all cosmonauts engage in either sanctioned or unsanctioned rest and relaxation to recover from the rigors of naval service. After an engagement, amid the grim tally or the rapid chase, most people find some time to relax, whatever that looks like on deployment.

What does the PCs do to decompress? Do they hurry back into stasis for short sleeps? Do they catch up on old media packets, finally resynced after so much time at relative burn? Do they exercise, play games, or find a quiet space to read? Drinking and gambling are the classic pastimes of soldiers everywhere, though rules and regulations aboard a ship might restrict these activities somewhat (not that this always stops determined spacers, of course).

More raucous, then, is shore leave, though it may not involve setting foot on an actual planet. The stresses of naval combat are great, and even the sternest commanders understand that allowing their crew to blow off steam is necessary to prevent burnout. Ships coming in for shore leave are often viewed by locals with a mix of excitement and apprehension. Spacers on leave are rarely stingy with their money, but along with a shipful of rowdy sailors comes an uptick in drunken reveling, bar brawls, and petty crimes.

If the PCs are taking leave, where are they going Are they docking at stations or rotating down to a planet's surface? What do they plan to do when they arrive, and what sort of trouble do they expect to get in along the way? Shore leave is an excellent chance to explore new locales, and also presents a good opportunity to bring in some mech-scale action with *Lancer* should the war follow them there.

RULES OF WAR

War usually has rules, at least in theory. In practice, these rules are fluid things, only enforceable insofar as someone is able and willing to enforce them, often ignored or circumvented as the opportunity presents itself. There are several galactic treaties and conventions within and between the major stellar powers, if not necessarily shared among the Disaporan powers, concerning the conduct of war. These treaties represent attempts to regulate and minimize the horrors of an already horrific endeavor, and while they vary in the finer details, the broader concepts – such as those outlined below – remain largely the same.

Spacers take some of these rules very, very seriously. There are the rules learned at various academies, yes, but there is a further, unofficial consensus between naval commanders that certain rules of conduct are to be strictly followed, even far from prying eyes. No commander, regardless of their allegiance, wants to break one of these rules, because doing so would open floodgates that would be exceptionally difficult to close again. The intense bonds of loyalty produced by the stresses and rigors of naval combat span even across nationalities and great powers; abiding by them gives spacers a sense of comfort and purpose.

SURRENDER

In the minds of most commanders, the first rule is to always accept a surrender offered in good faith. While it's rare for fleets to surrender prior to engagement, it's not uncommon for fleets to surrender as the battle turns against them. A "good faith" surrender, in such a situation, means powering down weapons and disarming in-flight ordnance, recalling strike craft, and preparing to be boarded. Surrendered ships will be taken into custody along with their crews, to be processed as the spoils and prisoners of war. Such prisoners are to be treated fairly and humanely. In instances where only some elements of a fleet surrender while others continue to fight, surrendered ships are still expected to power down their weapons and retreat to a safe distance until the battle concludes. Even if their own forces manage to turn the tide, for a surrendered vessel to rejoin the fight would be considered a violation of surrender terms and looked upon exceptionally poorly.

The corollary to this rule is that deceptive or false offers of surrender are generally met with no quarter given once the deception is revealed. Should a deceitful commander survive, word is sure to get around, and the brief tactical advantages gleaned in the moment are unlikely to be worth the long-term stain on their reputation. A navy with a reputation for false surrender is a navy whose legitimate offers of surrender will invariably be ignored.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Next, all reasonable efforts must be made in the aftermath of a battle to search for and rescue spacers in distress, including both allies and enemy combatants. What constitutes "reasonable efforts" can vary depending on circumstances, as sometimes even the victors of engagements are in critical shape, but if search and rescue can be attempted, then it must be. Deliberately opening fire on lifeboats, escape pods, or stranded vessels is also strictly prohibited and guaranteed to result in a court martial if not outright mutiny. Rescued enemy combatants are to be rendered medical assistance and treated as prisoners of war.

LEGITIMATE TARGETS

Lastly, naval ordnance is not to be turned against civilian targets or populations. Military installations such as shipyards, anti-orbital defenses, and naval waystations are valid targets, but turning the monstrously powerful weapons of a ship against neutral civilian stations or planetary targets is equivalent to unleashing weapons of mass destruction. It is unfortunate enough that this might happen incidentally, but to do so deliberately would be an escalation of hostilities so severe that it simply could not be ignored. Intervention and retribution would surely be swift and thorough, and even allies would distance themselves from a power that allows such acts. For these reasons, all of the major powers involved in the Dawnline Shore conflict follow strict rules of engagement concerning the use of naval weaponry within effective proximity of civilian targets. If any one of them were to deliberately break these rules, then the war would quickly spill beyond the borders of that region.

SHIPS IN DISTRESS

In addition to these and any other rules observed during the course of warfare, most spacers – military, commercial, or private – observe a code of conduct that obliges them to respond to distress calls if at all possible. Such calls are automatically logged in most flight recorder systems, and deliberately ignoring an SOS hail is sufficient grounds for legal repercussions and severe penalties unless it can be demonstrated that responding to the signal would have imperiled the responders as well. Private and commercial captains may lose their licenses or face demotion and reassignment, while military commanders might be demoted and even court-martialed if the dereliction is severe enough. By the same token, falsifying distress signals is a serious crime, one commonly employed by pirates but occasionally used by deniable, state-sponsored privateers to set up ambushes for unwary enemy fleets as well.

THE FIELD OF BATTLE

Battlegroup assumes that by the time an engagement begins, both fleets have already made their initial maneuvers and fired their first volleys: there is no active hunting for enemy signatures, no skillful concealment of one's waste heat in the proximity of a neutral station, no baiting an exposure attack via deft feint – the only thing left to do is fight.

That is not to say, however, that there is no room for skillful maneuvering: though the field of battle is the cold void of space, naval combat is not always fought in empty environments – ships may engage above worlds under assault, or be caught as they try to slip through an asteroid field, or hide their heat signatures in the long trail of a comet. While commanders try to engage the enemy far from the worlds, stations, and strategic objectives they seek to capture or defend, some engagements cannot be avoided; one must then take into account the proximity of other bodies.

This section of the book presents a range of environmental conditions and optional modifiers you might choose to implement in your engagements. Modifiers might be chosen based on the narrative framing of a particular encounter, such as whether the engagement is taking place near a populated world, or perhaps because of the tactical challenges they present. Obvious environmental factors should be noted during pre-engagement briefings – proximity to a populated world probably won't come as a surprise to the commanders, for example – but some modifiers, such as ambushes or obstacles likely to cause unexpected difficulty retreating from a crowded battlefield may be things the players only discover once engaged. Trying to learn more about the effects of various environmental modifiers is a good way to use the **Consult Navigation and Intelligence** uptime action (p. 50).

Be careful not to overwhelm engagements with too many additional conditions or modifiers, as doing so can make things difficult for both you and your players to keep track of in the heat of battle. As GM, you will also need to keep an eye on how the chosen modifiers are likely to affect your players' battlegroups, as some conditions will affect them more harshly than others depending on their loadouts and preferred tactics.

Note that environmental modifiers may not necessarily cover the entirety of the gyre. The scale of even the smallest naval battles is still enormous, and it is unlikely that an asteroid field would blanket the entire battlefield with densely packed rocks. Regardless, you can assume that these environmental factors have enough of a presence to play a measurable role in the battle to come, whether that is in the form of battlegroups maneuvering toward nearby stellar bodies for cover, using nebulae to baffle enemy sensors, or something else entirely.

Some of these modifiers assume that one side is the "attacking" side and one is the "defending" side, and may affect both sides differently or only modify things for one of them. The narrative context at the outset of the battle determines which is which, and this distinction should be made clear to the players during pre-engagement briefings.

TERRESTRIAL BODIES AND CROWDED AIRSPACE

Combat near populated worlds, moons, stations, and other bodies with crowded airspace (e.g., the orbital rings and platforms of developed worlds, constellations of populated stations, heavily trafficked transit corridors, etc.) is a nightmare. Even a single missed shot has the potential to shatter a station or other critical infrastructure; a miss with a long- or short-spool gun might devastate not just cities, but whole continents. To reflect these challenges and the strategies commanders adopt to mitigate the potential for catastrophic collateral damage in such environments, the GM may apply any of the following modifiers to an engagement.

COLD CALCULUS
If the players are defending, this engagement puts them in a defensive position ahead of civilian traffic or population centers such as stations or settled worlds. During each **Impact Phase**, after attacks have been rolled and damage has been assigned, players may choose to reduce incoming damage against ships in their battlegroup by half. The remaining damage is dealt (narratively) to the terrestrial object or crowded space beyond, with the GM describing the effect.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE
If the NPCs are defending, their own battle lines place them in a position where area-target attacks made against them may impact the terrestrial body or populated airspace beyond. Hundreds to thousands of civilians and garrisoned soldiers may die and there may be minor, though widespread, damage to facilities, infrastructure, and the natural environment. Players may avoid this by reducing the damage that their area-target attacks deal by half after Interdiction. This reflects gunners trimming the area of effect in order to avoid causing collateral damage.

DANGER CLOSE

This engagement's battlespace is unavoidably crowded or unusually close to a populated world or habitat, complicating matters for both sides. All single-target attacks receive **+1 DIFFICULTY**.

In addition, any time a single-target attack roll misses, it represents captains calling off the shot or ordering their ships to hold their fire at the last moment. The trajectory showed that the shot had a high likelihood to miss its target and impact the world, station, or traffic beyond, and they were unwilling to risk collateral damage. If this was a **LIMITED** attack, it is not expended, and if it was **RELIABLE**, it does not deal **RELIABLE** damage. A commander (players or NPC) may choose to overrule this decision and deal Reliable damage on a miss anyway, but if they do so then the attack causes proportional civilian casualties as well.

DEFENSIVE EMPLACEMENTS

If the NPCs are defending, their fleet is bolstered by the presence of defensive emplacements established throughout the area of operations. All NPC Capital Ships gain the following maneuvers to choose from:

ANTI-SHIP MISSILES
Primary, Single-Target, Payload –1
[Range 4–2][1d6+6 damage]

Deep-space defenses are effective in reinforcing zones of control in and around highly contested regions. Perimeter defense platforms, typically unmanned, network with fleet legions to coordinate firing solutions against encroaching threats. Some DSD platforms seeded under the Second Committee have waited centuries for activation – dormant until now.

ANTI-ORBITAL DEFENSES
Primary, Single-Target, Reliable 2
[Range 3–1][6 damage]

On hit, deal 2 damage to up to two **ESCORTS** or **WINGS** in the target's battlegroup.

Anti-orbital defenses are frequently found around population centers. In peacetime, they primarily track and engage the occasional natural threat such as errant asteroids. In wartime, they are tasked with engaging hostile ships. A variety of surface-to-orbit and satellite-based kinetic, directed-energy, and missile systems provide additional coverage against proximal threats.

Battlegroups affected by the **Sever Comms** boarding action cannot use these maneuvers.

OCCUPIED EXIT VECTORS

Players ignore 1s when rolling on the **Nearlight Ejection Table** (p. 54). They may either abort and remain in the battle, or proceed and roll again. If they roll another 1, one of their ships makes a terrible error and ejects into the terrestrial body or crowded airspace. The ship is utterly destroyed, along with everything onboard, and the terrestrial body or crowded airspace suffers catastrophic, region-affecting damage.

NPCs that wish to eject from battle have a 50 percent chance of doing so successfully. If they fail, they abort the ejection and surrender instead.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

The crews of vessels that are scuttled, foundered, destroyed, or otherwise taken out of combat in non-catastrophic manners have much higher chances of being rescued – or their bodies recovered – than in most engagements. This is due to the proximity of emergency services, civilian ships, terrestrial gravity, and rapid system-local search and rescue responses.

THREADING THE NEEDLE

All **CHARGE** weapons increase the value of their **CHARGE** tag by +1 (i.e., a **CHARGE 2** weapon becomes **CHARGE 3**) to reflect commanders holding fire until they are absolutely sure they won't hit an unintended target. If a shot is missed, it flies harmlessly into empty space.

However, a commander may choose to use a weapon's standard Charge value when it begins a charging cycle. On a miss with such a weapon, roll 1d20: on a result of 1–5, your attack hits the terrestrial body or plows through the crowded airspace beyond your target, causing untold catastrophic damage and killing tens to hundreds of thousands of civilians.

NATURAL STELLAR BODIES

More than engagements in the proximity of populated terrestrial bodies and crowded space, canny commanders tend to prefer combat in unpopulated system space and deep space. In the void, up against not only dangerous physical environments, but confusing and frustrating natural phenomena that play hell with even the most hardened systems, adaptable pilots and commanders can win themselves powerful tactical advantages.

When speaking of natural stellar bodies, think of the various phenomena, fantastic and mundane, found in the depths of outer-system and interstellar space: asteroid fields, nebulae, titanic comets and their long tails, debris fields left in the wake of old battles, the crowded rings of gas giants, the moonfields of colossal gas giants, and so on. This section lists some modifiers that the GM may choose to apply when fighting in these sorts of environments.

AMBUSH

If the NPCs are defending, they can lure the players' fleet into an ambush by taking advantage of local conditions to conceal their exact position and launching a counterattack from unexpected angles. In this engagement, NPCs always go first each round (with turn order alternating between NPCs and PCs as usual).

DEBRIS FIELDS

The engagement takes place in an area with an unusually high concentration of debris (e.g., asteroids, planetary rings, wreckage, etc). Certain sections of the gyre are marked by hazardous debris fields. Player battlegroups that end their turn within these debris fields have a 50 percent chance of colliding with debris, taking **2d6 area-target damage** and making all single-target attack rolls with **+1 DIFFICULTY** until the end of their next turn. Roll a die or flip a coin to determine this.

As the battlefield shifts, so does the relative density and concentration of the debris. During the first round of play, there are debris fields at **Range 1-0**. During the start of the second **Logistics Phase**, the debris fields move to **Range 3–2**; during the start of the third **Logistics Phase**, they move to **Range 5-4**; next round, they move back to **Range 1-0**; this process repeats until the battle concludes.

Hostile battlegroups that force player battlegroups to enter a debris field must immediately check to see if they themselves collide with debris in the process, using the same rules as above.

GRAVEYARD

The remains of previous battles can be found throughout the area, from derelict ships to the shattered wreckage of space stations. Quick-thinking commanders can take advantage of these conditions during lulls in the action to conduct salvage operations, gathering discarded munitions or raw materials to bolster their battlegroup. All battlegroups gain the following maneuver:

SALVAGE OPS
Maneuver, Limited 1

Choose one:

- A **CAPITAL SHIP** in your battlegroup gains **5 OVERSHIELD**.
- You may remove a **Refresh Counter** from a **RELOADING** weapon or system of your choice.

GRAVITATIONAL PULL

The intense gravity of a nearby stellar object or some other phenomenon exerts enough force which, while not inescapable, is enough to draw battlegroups into a deadly spiral. The gyre begins to collapse at the start of Round 4 instead of Round 6 (see The Tipping Point, p. 45). Nearlight drives charge as normal, only permitting ejection beginning on Round 5, and battlegroups at Point-Blank beginning on Round 4 and beyond will first need to fall back to a more distant range if they wish to retreat when the brief window for doing so opens. From Round 6 onward, retreat is no longer possible for any battlegroup.

RUNNING SILENT

Nebulae, cometary tails, or some other environmental condition provides battlegroups with a rare chance to engage in stealth maneuvers, hiding in blind spots and damping their signatures to minimize detection. Battlegroups that end their turn without attacking or taking actions that targets a hostile battlegroup clear **LOCK ON** and all attacks against them are made with **+1 DIFFICULTY** until the end of their next turn.

POWER SURGES

Energized nebulae, power discharges from shattered wreckage, and similar conditions cause fluctuations in high-capacity power storage systems, necessitating additional safety protocols to prevent catastrophic overloads. All **CHARGE** weapons increase the value of their **CHARGE** tag by **+1** (i.e., a **CHARGE 2** weapon becomes **CHARGE 3**), but 1/round during the **Logistics Phase**, commanders may push their weapon systems past safe levels and remove an additional **1 Charge Counter** from a weapon of their choice. If they remove a counter this way, that ship takes **1d6 damage** that ignores **OVERSHIELD** and cannot be prevented in any way.

SENSOR FLARES

High levels of electromagnetic interference, solar flare activity, derelict IFF transponders, or other such phenomena make the use of guided weapons more difficult as they waste time tracking phantom signals. Each time a ship fires a **PAYLOAD** attack roll 1d6. On a 1, add **1 Flight Counter** to it.

The airless hall of the Counters' ODF carrier was dark, lit only by weak amber panel lights. The padded walls were yellowed with smoke — there had been a fire, likely because of the scoring hits the Ignominer had landed in the opening volleys.

"Okay, beyond this door is the main corridor to drive control," The Major's voice cracked in Cortez's aurals. He bit on his buccal pad to drop the broadcast volume. "Teams One and Two are engaged already — you are weapons free on breach."

The legionnaires stacked up on either side of the door, Cortez third from the front behind Gracie and Rios, who fixed a cutter charge onto the door. Cortez checked his subcompact again, only because he had time, and waited for the cutter charge to finish burning out. There hadn't been much fighting yet — only a few crew that surrendered, one who tried to fight but was dropped faster than he could draw his pistol — but he knew that was about to change.

The charge glowed along its cutlines, flaring bright light into the dim hallway. Cortez's job as the ranking marine was to watch back down the hall and make sure no one jumped the breach team. Sweat dripped into his eye and he blinked it away — couldn't wipe on account of the facemask. His heart rate flared red in the corner of his vision — high end of nominal.

"Take a breath, Cortez," the Major muttered on Alto's private channel. The Major watched them from his terminal in the Ignominer's CIC. He had access to all of their vitals, guncams, and reams of suit data — everything he needed to command from his office aboard the Ignominer. "Blueprints say there's one more chamber beyond this door. You keep your head on, keep your shots grouped tight — Gracie and Rios are counting on you."

"Aye sir," Cortez replied. He watched the hall, and counted down. The charge beeped. Cortez's faceplate dimmed at the moment that the charge blew the door open, nearly silent in the all-but-airless corridor.

Rios was first in, low over his gun, firing at the defending marines down the hall. Gracie led Cortez, not two steps before he jerked and fired a wild burst, body blooming with red puffs. Cortez tucked low, letting Gracie's corpse take the defenders' fire and then roll over him. He slid behind a cooling slice of blast door, reloading as he hunched into as small a profile as he could.

The fight was here. In the weak amber light of an airless hall, Cortez and Rios traded fire with dark silhouettes not thirty meters away. The Major in their aurals, reassuring them that he had tasked Team 3 to make for their corridor, that he had fired four more pods of Pipecleaner subalts. Five minutes until support — three magazines until dry, then five with his sidearm. Suit Needle if things got too close.

Five minutes might as well be five years. Cortez fired blind over his cover, stopped, keyed on his guncam, and stuck his gun back out to fire by wire. One silhouette flopped backwards, clutching its chest, but more returned fire.

Five goddamn minutes to go.

Many fleet battles are straightforward affairs, with two sides facing off against each other until one is broken or destroyed. But sometimes you might want to add additional complexity or depth to a combat scenario. That's where sitreps come in.

Sitrep is the military abbreviation of "situation report". In *Battlegroup*, sitreps are tools that help you create specific combat scenarios featuring objectives that must be captured or controlled. They also allow for enemy reinforcements, increasing the challenge of an engagement beyond that of a fight to the death. This adds additional complexity to the naval combat experience, requiring new tactics and approaches in order to succeed.

There are six sitreps outlined here, each of which can be used as-is or adjusted to fit your narrative: **Defense**, **Escort**, **Extraction**, **Hijack**, **Holdout**, and **Intercept**.

Each sitrep assumes a standard setup on the gyre. They also give specific instructions regarding objectives and how to fulfill them. You're free to combine these with environmental modifiers to add even more challenge and complexity to the battlefield.

Some sitreps require player battlegroups to perform nearlight ejections to leave the battlefield with their objective in tow. When using these sitreps, players who eject from the engagement do not need to roll on the **Nearlight Ejection Table** unless otherwise noted, as preparations for this dangerous maneuver are assumed to have been underway from the beginning of the battle.

REINFORCEMENTS

Many sitreps call for reinforcements. Reinforcements are additional NPC battlegroups that are brought in to replace losses incurred during combat, adding additional pressure as the players strive to complete their objectives. Sitreps outline how many reinforcements should be prepared. In terms of pre-mission briefings and intelligence-gathering, the players only have information on the initial enemy fleet. Any reinforcements remain unknown until they enter the battle.

Reinforcements arrive following the destruction of an NPC **Capital Ship**, which are also referred to as **Flagships** (see Non-Player Character Battlegroups, p. 164). At the start of the next **Logistics Phase**, the destroyed ship is replaced by a reinforcement battlegroup consisting of a **Capital Ship** accompanied by 1–2 **Escorts** or 1 **Escort** and 1 **Ace**. Reinforcement battlegroups may act as usual during the round in which they arrive, following the normal rules for turn order.

You can also bring reinforcements in if an NPC battlegroup surrenders at the beginning of a round. In this case, they do not enter play until the start of the next round's **Logistics Phase**.

Of course, you can also use reinforcements during regular, non-sitrep engagements if you want to add an additional challenge for your players. To do this, simply prepare reinforcement battlegroups equal to half the number of player battlegroups, remembering to round up (i.e., for a group of three players, you would create two reinforcement battlegroups), and deploy them into combat whenever NPC **Capital Ships** are destroyed, as normal.

SITREPS AND BOARDING ACTIONS

Some sitreps include special boarding actions that must be performed to achieve mission objectives, ranging from extracting a VIP to securing an objective aboard an enemy vessel. Importantly, boarding units do not need to leave the boarded vessel to successfully perform these objectives, and after doing so they may continue attempting additional boarding actions until repelled as normal. If a battlegroup (player or NPC) possesses no abilities or upgrades that allow it to undertake boarding actions, it may still attempt one of these special boarding actions by spending a maneuver to dispatch a hastily assembled away team. This ability has **Range 2-0**, does not leave behind boarding units when used (and therefore has no Tenacity), and can only be used to attempt special sitrep boarding actions. It has no effect otherwise.

In sitreps that involve sending boarding units to seize and retrieve an objective, that objective is typically transferred to specified **Capital Ship** (such as a battlegroup's **Flagship**). If the relevant **Capital Ship** is destroyed before the boarding units have a chance to secure the objective and transfer it there, then the objective can be transferred to another **Capital Ship** (chosen by the player or the GM, as relevant). If there are no valid ships to transfer an objective to, then it cannot be transferred and attempts to do so automatically fail.

DEFENSE

Defense missions require the players to defend a space station or shipyards, vital assets necessary for the infrastructure of any naval force.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Player Victory: The players have the highest score by 2 or more points at the start of Round 5 and the Installation is intact, or the players protect the Installation until the start of Round 7.

Enemy Victory: The enemy force has the highest score at the start of Round 5 and the Installation is intact.

No Victor: The Installation is destroyed.

OBJECTIVE

At the beginning of the mission, place an Installation on the gyre at **Scope Range** (3). The players must protect this facility from both capture and destruction. It counts as a player-allied **Capital Ship**, has **30 HP**, **10 Defense**, and **1d6 Interdiction**, and it gains **5 Overshield** at the start of every **Logistics Phase**. The Installation cannot be moved beyond **Range 4-2** by any abilities or effects other than the collapse of the gyre, but otherwise counts as a battlegroup for the purpose of movement effects and abilities. Player battlegroups in the same range band as the Installation may spend a tactic during their turn to do one of the following:

- Move the Installation one range band forward or back.
- Give the Installation **Bolstered** until the start of the next **Action Phase**. While **Bolstered**, hostile boarding actions succeed on a roll of 10+, instead of 8+.
- (Limited 2) Repair **5 HP** to a **Capital Ship** in their battlegroup.

The enemy forces do not wish to destroy the Installation. Instead, they want to board it and seize it for themselves, which they can do by succeeding on a special boarding roll. If this roll succeeds, the enemy has seized the station and players can no longer spend a tactic to perform any of its actions. Player battlegroups in the same range band as the Installation can take back control in only one of two ways:

- 1/round as a tactic, roll 10+ on a d20.
- Repel boarders as a maneuver, which automatically reclaims the station.

SCORING

At the end of each round, whichever side controls the Installation gains 2 points. They also gain 1 point for every hostile Flagship (player or NPC) they destroy or force to surrender. If the enemy forces have the highest score by the start of Round 5, then the players have failed and the mission is over. If the players have the highest score by the start of Round 5 or if the score is a tie, however, then they have successfully held the station and proximal space around it long enough to secure it.

Should the players succeed, their margin of victory determines if the engagement continues from here. At the start of Round 5, if the players have won by 2 or more points then any remaining enemy forces will eject from the battlefield. If the players have only won by 1 point or tied, enemy forces may instead shift their focus to attempting to destroy the Installation to deny the players a total victory. If the Installation is destroyed, then neither side wins; however, at the start of Round 7, the opportunity to destroy the Installation is lost and any remaining enemies must either eject or surrender, leaving the players victorious.

ENEMY FORCES

Prepare initial enemy forces as normal. Make sure to include some Capital Ships and Escorts that can use boarding actions. Additionally, prepare reinforcement battlegroups equal to the number of players. If the engagement has the chance of continuing beyond Round 5, decide based on the state of the NPC forces at that time whether or not they should retreat or continue fighting.

ESCORT

Escort missions require the players to safeguard a VIP until their fleet can disengage from combat.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Player Victory: The players eject from the battle with the VIP aboard one of their ships.

Enemy Victory: The VIP is in enemy control at the beginning of Round 7.

No Victor: The VIP is killed.

OBJECTIVE

Before setting postures or performing uptime actions, select a player at random: there is a VIP aboard one of the CAPITAL SHIPS in their battlegroup. The players must survive until the start of Round 5, at which point they will be able to perform a nearlight ejection. When a battlegroup with the VIP aboard one of its ships ejects from battle, the objective is successfully completed.

Enemy forces can abduct the VIP by boarding the ship and successfully performing a special boarding action. If they succeed, the VIP is extracted and held captive aboard that hostile battlegroup's FLAGSHIP. Players can rescue an abducted VIP by boarding the FLAGSHIP on which they're held and succeeding on a special boarding action, transferring them back to the original CAPITAL SHIP. If the ship the VIP is on is destroyed, they are killed and there is no victor. When this happens, the players remain locked in combat until Round 5 when they can eject as normal.

ENEMY FORCES

Prepare initial enemy forces as normal. Additionally, prepare reinforcement battlegroups equal to the number of players.

EXTRACTION

Extraction missions ask the players to identify an enemy flagship carrying a high-value target, successfully extract them, then retreat.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Player Victory: The players eject from the battle with the VIP aboard one of their ships.

Enemy Victory: The VIP is in enemy control at the beginning of Round 7.

No Victor: The VIP is killed.

OBJECTIVE

The players must first identify the enemy FLAGSHIP carrying the VIP. Scanning an NPC FLAGSHIP can only be done within **Range 4-0**, and requires spending a tactic. Scans made at **Long Range** (4) have a 50 percent chance to reveal whether the VIP is aboard the target ship. Scans made at closer ranges automatically succeed. The players cannot attempt to extract the VIP until they have determined their location.

Once the VIP's location has been identified, the players can extract them by boarding the relevant FLAGSHIP and succeeding on a special boarding action. If they succeed, the VIP is extracted and relocated to a CAPITAL SHIP in that player's battlegroup of their choice. Enemy forces can attempt to rescue the VIP by boarding the ship on which they're held and succeeding on a special boarding roll. If this roll succeeds, the VIP is extracted and held captive aboard that battlegroup's FLAGSHIP. If the ship that the VIP is on is destroyed, they are killed and there is no victor. When this happens, the players remain locked in combat until Round 5 when they can eject as normal.

Once the VIP has been extracted, the players need to survive until the start of Round 5, at which point they can perform a nearlight ejection.

ENEMY FORCES

Prepare initial enemy forces as normal and secretly choose one of the NPC CAPITAL SHIPS to house the VIP. Additionally, prepare reinforcement battlegroups equal to the number of players.

HIJACK

Hijack missions see the players making daring attempts to infiltrate, disable, and gain control over an enemy FLAGSHIP, which is designated the Target Ship.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Player Victory: The players disengage from battle in control of the Target Ship.

Enemy Victory: The players have not disengaged from battle in control of the Target Ship by the beginning of Round 7, or it is destroyed after being hijacked.

No Victor: The Target Ship is destroyed before being hijacked.

OBJECTIVE

To successfully hijack the Target Ship, the players must succeed on three boarding action rolls against it. These rolls can be from any combination of players, they do not need to be consecutive, and they can be for any boarding command, but they must be rolls and must be successful – effects that automatically apply successful boarding results don't count. Once the players succeed at hijacking the Target Ship, it is removed from enemy control and placed on the gyre at **Scope Range** (3). It retains its **HP**, **DEFENSE**, and **INTERDICTION**, but cannot use any maneuvers or tactics of its own and all of its traits and abilities are disabled. **ESCORTS** that were assigned to the Target Ship are treated as if it was destroyed.

Once the Target Ship has been hijacked, any player may spend a maneuver during their turn to move it one range band forward or back and **BOLSTER** it until the beginning of the next **Action Phase**.

When it becomes possible to eject from battle, a player in the same range band as the hijacked Target Ship can disengage from battle with the ship by performing a nearlight ejection, completing the objective.

As an alternative to hijacking the target ship with successful boarding rolls, you may instead choose to have players play out the infiltration and hijacking as a mission using *Lancer*'s rules, with players taking on the role of mech pilots. Success will allow players to hijack the ship. If this attempt fails, the players may continue using board rolls to hijack the ship.

ENEMY FORCES

Prepare initial enemy forces as normal. Identify the target ship to the players either during the pre-mission briefing or at the beginning of the engagement, before anyone has acted. Additionally, prepare reinforcement battlegroups equal to the number of players.

HOLDOUT

Holdout missions place the players in a grim and unenviable position with only one objective – surviving as long as possible.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Player Victory: The players have a score of 1 or more at the beginning of Round 7.

Enemy Victory: The players reach 0 points.

OBJECTIVE

The sole objective is for the players to survive as best they can for as long as they can. This mission can only be won by standing fast against a seemingly endless wave of enemy reinforcements while holding the line: if they survive long enough, they will have won a costly but important victory.

SCORING

The players begin the engagement with 5 points. At the end of each round, if they have not destroyed or forced the surrender of at least one enemy **CAPITAL SHIP**, they lose 1 point. The players also lose 1 point if, at the beginning of Round 7, their fleet has less than 25 percent of their starting **CAPITAL SHIPS** remaining.

The players win if they still have 1 or more points after this, as remaining enemy forces break away at the last moment or allied reinforcements arrive and tip the scales. No ejection from battle is necessary.

If the players ever have less than 1 point, they can no longer hold out and the mission is lost. Their only remaining option is a last-ditch chance to escape, rolling on the **Nearlight Ejection Table**.

ENEMY FORCES

Prepare initial enemy forces as normal. Additionally, prepare several reinforcement battlegroups. Reinforcements for this sitrep are effectively limitless. The enemy cannot be completely destroyed – the only option is to survive.

INTERCEPT

Intercept missions require the players to act swiftly to destroy or disable a high-speed target.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Player Victory: The Objective is destroyed before Round 5 or it is disabled and successfully extracted (as relevant).

Enemy Victory: The Objective is intact at the start of Round 5.

No Victor: An Objective is destroyed that was meant to be disabled.

OBJECTIVE

At the beginning of the engagement, place an Objective on the gyre at Long Range (4). During the briefing, the GM must declare whether the purpose of this mission is to destroy it or to disable and capture it.

The Objective counts as an NPC Capital Ship, has **30 HP**, **8 Defense**, **1d6 Interdiction**, and acts during the **Action Phase** each round, always acting last. The only action it takes is to advance one range band; otherwise, it cannot move or be forced to move.

If the Objective has not been destroyed or disabled at the beginning of Round 5, it leaves the gyre and the players fail the mission. The enemy forces do not wish to destroy the Objective and will not attack it. Player battlegroups may target it with weapons and abilities that have ranges matching its current position on the gyre (i.e., weapons that can attack from **Range 4** may attack the Objective while it is at **Range 4**, etc). NPC Capital Ships may spend a maneuver on their turn to **Bolster** the Objective until the start of the next **Action Phase**.

There are two variations of this sitrep: In the first, the players simply need to destroy the Objective by reducing it to **0 HP** or less. If they accomplish this before the beginning of Round 5, their mission is a success. In the second, the Objective needs to be disabled and captured. The Objective is disabled when it is reduced to between **0** and **–4 HP**. Once it has been disabled, a player battlegroup must move into the same range band and perform a nearlight ejection when that becomes available. If the objective is reduced to **–5 HP** or less, it is destroyed completely and neither side succeeds.

ENEMY FORCES

Prepare initial enemy forces as normal. Reinforcements aren't necessary, especially if the mission is to destroy the objective rather than disable and capture it; however, you may prepare reinforcement battlegroups equal to the number of players if desired.

CAMPAIGN PLAY

In many cases, winning a naval engagement is all but equivalent to winning a war; however, in conflicts between great galactic powers – for example, if the Karrakin Trade Baronies were engaged in a multifront campaign against Harrison Armory – or when one side has retreated without insurmountable losses, it is likely that additional battles will need to fought before a clear winner can be decided. If your story has more battles in its future, the following guidelines can help you organize these engagements into an ongoing narrative campaign.

A naval campaign is a series of linked engagements fought to either a strategic end point that signals the end of a campaign or the total military defeat of one or more parties, leaving them unable to continue fighting in a meaningful sense.

In *Battlegroup*, there are two types of campaign: abstracted campaigns and grounded campaigns. Advancement in an abstracted campaign is primarily narrative – instead of using any particular system or framework, outcomes can simply be agreed upon by the table depending on narrative context and how they decide the story should progress.

By contrast, advancement in a grounded campaign is informed by a simple system for framing engagements and tracking progress that places more of an emphasis on the particular outcomes of engagements, such as how many ships are lost during a battle, or at which point during a campaign a particular victory or defeat occurs. This section provides a framework for playing grounded campaigns and tracking the state of affairs at various points, which can in turn inform the fiction as it continues until the end.

BATTLEFRONTS

A campaign is more than just a series of clashes that take place in a set location. War has a tempo, beginning with early battles as one side attempts to secure an advantage over another, then moving on to attempts to capture territory, seize strategic objectives, and ultimately secure total victory.

Whether the players are the attackers or the defenders, various battlefronts such as the examples listed below can be zoomed in on over the course of a war, charting pivotal moments during a campaign and setting the stakes for engagements, as well as tracking the overall state of affairs for both sides. A campaign might not necessarily touch on every battlefront: you might decide to gloss over the establishment of a beachhead, starting things off at a later point, or you might choose to skip over the expeditionary front if it feels more appropriate to do so based on how things have progressed so far. Different types and arrangements of battlefronts can be used to create a campaign as well, depending on the scope of the narrative.

BEACHHEAD

This is where any campaign begins, whether offensive or defensive. The establishment of a beachhead is likely a large affair, during which the attacking side attempts to overwhelm the enemy's defenses and establish a series of forward bases, supply lines, and operational zones from which they can launch further attacks.

If the attackers fail to establish a beachhead, there are several ways a campaign might still progress. The attackers may launch another, more desperate assault to try and secure a foothold before their momentum falters, or the force that was on the defensive may try to turn the tables and launch a counterattack, placing the former aggressors on the defense instead.

EXPEDITIONARY FRONT

A campaign's expeditionary front represents advancement beyond initial contact. Whether the players are attacking or pushing back against enemy aggression, the first probes into enemy territory after the establishment of a beachhead are always expeditionary: not a fleet's full forces but its vanguard and scouts, attempting to find the path of least resistance. The battles here are likely smaller than those in the beachhead phase, as they are exploratory in nature.

Engagements at this stage of a campaign are likely to be more cautious affairs for both sides, with defenders making probing assaults and feints to try and find ways to break the enemy advance while the attackers consolidate their forces following the establishment of a beachhead.

ADVANCING LINES

Following the initial expeditionary engagements, the attacking force commits itself to advancing lines using a route that will take it as far and fast as possible without outrunning its supply lines. By this stage, the advancing force is attempting to take advantage of its initial momentum while the defenders try to stem the tide. The battles here are likely to be larger than those in the expeditionary front.

In this stage of a campaign, the momentum is firmly on the side of the attacking force. That's not to say that the defenders are staring down defeat, but defensive actions at this stage are likely to be reactive in nature. Commanders on the attacking side will be on the lookout for opportunities to continue this forward momentum by securing critical objectives and scattering the defensive lines, while defenders will be tasked with quickly reinforcing positions and slowing the enemy's advance long enough for their own forces to rally.

SECOND LINE

The second line is the time and/or place at which the defending side has gathered its strength enough to resist the advancing enemy en masse. The battles at this point in the campaign are probably on par with or larger than the battles that take place during advancing lines. They are generally less mobile than previously, more focused on breaking through, bypassing, or neutralizing key strategic locations.

At this stage, the defenders have rallied and are presented with a major opportunity to bring the campaign to a decisive end on their terms. If the attackers have suffered significant losses reaching this point, then successful defensive actions here may mean they can no longer continue fighting, bringing the campaign to a close as both sides withdraw to deal with the fallout; an immediate counterattack is unlikely, as being pushed to this point will have cost the defenders greatly as well. If the attackers can press on, however, then the defenders may begin to rout.

ROUT

Once the attacker has broken through, the defending force is in rout – fighting on the back foot. The defense is not yet shattered, but is probably wavering; the next line is far too close to home (or another critical objective) and the attackers were meant to be stopped at the last one.

The battles fought during this phase should be smaller than before. If the players are on the defending side, they are likely to focus on detached units engaged in fighting retreats and delaying actions, falling back to safety when possible. The attackers are most concerned with hunting down and taking critical objectives and VIPs, paving their way toward the defending side's home front.

HOME FRONT

Here, the attackers meet a stiff, well-defended, defensive line: the home front. In most cases, the defending side will always have had contingency plans for making a stand here, though this may well be the first time it has been necessary. Old ships join new ones, defensive systems and emplacements are brought online, and the defenders fight bitterly and with all the strength they can muster to repel the invaders.

Battles at this stage are large in scale, befitting the importance of this battlefront for both sides. The attacking side will likely not achieve total victory just yet, but success here does put such victory within their grasp. Meanwhile, the defenders can, with a heroic effort, stymie the push toward their most desperately guarded territories. If they can withstand the emboldened offense then the campaign may reach its conclusion here as well, though the losses they suffered reaching this point will still be felt for generations.

LAST STAND

The final gasp of the defending side, the last chance anyone has to resist the advance of the enemy forces – the last stand. Every ship that can defend is organized along the final line of battle. There is no retreat from this – only victory, relief at an ally's hand, surrender, or death.

There may be a handful of smaller engagements to set the stage, but should a campaign reach this battlefront then everything will ultimately come down to one final large-scale battle. While all hope may seem lost for the defenders at this point, they nonetheless fight with the desperate courage of those backed against a wall. The attackers shouldn't be overconfident either; their lines are stretched thin reaching this point, and an unexpected defeat here could throw those lines into disarray, giving the defenders a chance to drive them back. Whatever the result, a campaign that's reached this point has likely reached its end. History will remember what happens here.

AFTERMATH

A campaign ends when one side achieves what it set out to achieve or has gone as far as it can before attrition and mounting losses make further engagements impractical or impossible to continue with. In the aftermath, both the victors and the defeated will take stock of territory gained and lost, the establishment of new stellar borders, and pivotal moments that stand to alter the balance of power on the galactic stage.

Importantly, the conclusion of a campaign does not mean the end of the war. The players' faction might continue on, but their characters might not. Those who survive a naval campaign from start to finish are members of a rare class; do they continue in that life, or do they retire? Do they even have a choice?

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

For naval commanders, victory is more than simply a matter of destroying the enemy. They have phenomenally powerful weapons at their disposal, and massive destruction is all but assured. What truly marks a naval engagement as a decisive victory is the achievement of strategic objectives while minimizing losses. Capital ships are tremendous investments in terms of both training of personnel and material resources, and the loss of even one is a significant blow to a polity's ability to project power and defend itself.

With this in mind, it can be important to determine not only if a particular battlefront within a campaign was ultimately a victory for the players, but to determine how successful or costly each individual engagement was within those battlefronts. A campaign in which the player fleet achieves victory by the skin of their teeth, becoming progressively more battered and bloodied in the process, will have a different tone than one in which the players score decisive victories, and this can also influence the stakes that are set, the sorts of missions they're assigned, or even determine how quickly a campaign might be brought to an end.

One of the key factors in determining the outcome of an engagement is the proportion of the players' ships that survived intact, if not undamaged. Of course, there is some leeway in determining the severity of losses. For example, ships that are reduced to between 0 and –4 HP may be considered destroyed, but are nonetheless largely salvageable and many of their crew are likely to survive. If the battle was a victory overall, such a loss might not be as punishing as it otherwise might.

It is also important to consider the death or destruction of key ships and commanders. A commander overseeing maneuvers from the bridge of their battleship is a much more significant target than the captains of the three frigates accompanying them, and the loss of their ship is likely to be much more keenly felt even if it only comprises a fraction of that battlegroup's overall numbers. Enemy forces can and will pursue high-value targets, either as part of an overall military strategy, for honor and glory, or simply for revenge. The loss of a commander and their flagship can be enough to tip a battle in the enemy's favor.

There are five types of outcomes, based on whether the players were victorious or not and how many of their ships survived: **decisive victory**, **strategic victory**, **Pyrrhic victory**, **strategic loss**, and **decisive loss**.

DECISIVE VICTORY

The group – including players and GM – determines whether a victory is decisive based on the specific narrative context of their campaign and the engagement that was just fought. A decisive win usually sees the enemy utterly defeated, any survivors either captured or escaped in numbers too small to be meaningful. If at least 75 percent of player ships survive, it's probably a decisive victory.

A decisive victory allows significant strategic progress. If you're tracking the progress of a campaign across battlefronts, this could mean a major step toward victory within a particular front, if not securing victory outright, but it might also mean the defeat of a notorious admiral and their fleet, a decisive defense that breaks an enemy advance, or similar. Next time the players meet the enemy, their foes will be at a disadvantage – perhaps one of their heroes has been killed in action, their supply lines have been destabilized, or their defenses remain unprepared for the next battle.

STRATEGIC VICTORY

As with decisive victories, the group decides whether an engagement ended in a strategic victory. These are generally outcomes in which the players have taken some losses but come out the victors nevertheless, taking or defending the objective, routing the enemy, or achieving some other clear – though not crushing – victory condition. Enemy fleets might withdraw having lost a capital ship or with significant damage to their ships but escaping total annihilation. If around 50 percent of player ships survive, it is likely to be a strategic victory.

A strategic victory allows some progress on a campaign front. It accomplishes a desired strategic outcome, but won't determine the course of a war in and of itself. The enemy will meet the players in the next battle with normal strength, organization, and morale.

PYRRHIC VICTORY

On balance, a Pyrrhic victory is little better than a loss. While the players may have achieved a necessary victory and sent the enemy to flight, their side has likely been terribly bloodied. If the players ultimately won but with only 25 percent or less of their ships remaining, it's a Pyrrhic victory.

After a Pyrrhic victory, it's important to take stock and determine as a group how to proceed with the ongoing campaign. Depending on the narrative context, it could be that the battlefront remains unchanged for now, requiring further engagements to reach a point where significant progress or loss occurs, but a Pyrrhic victory should nonetheless present players with a greater freedom to decide their next step than would an outright loss. Taking the opportunity to press forward will mean overextending forces and supply lines, but it might be necessary to secure an advantage that would otherwise be lost. Maintaining position and consolidating forces is prudent, but risks losing any momentary advantage that might have opened up.

If the players choose to try and seize the initiative, any ships not able to participate in the advance due to significant damage must drop back for repairs – they simply do not have the capacity or structural integrity to continue on. This doesn't mean players will go into battle with fewer points to spend on their battlegroup, but it means that they may need to narratively borrow reinforcements, which gives them a chance to try new builds and tactics as well as introduce new characters.

If the players choose to maintain their current position, they'll be able to ensure that all of their ships (assuming their fleet has sufficient supply lines) are resupplied, rearmed, and repaired. However, they'll lose any advantage they may have had going into the next engagement, as the enemy will have enough time to repair their own ships and reestablish their line.

STRATEGIC LOSS

A strategic loss is one in which a fleet fails to achieve its objectives but does not suffer unsustainable losses in the process, either retreating from battle or holding out with significant – though survivable – casualties. If the players fail to achieve their primary objectives but at least 50 percent of their ships survive, or if 50 percent or more of player battlegroups eject from the engagement before its conclusion, it is probably a strategic loss.

A strategic loss does not necessarily mean the end of an advance, much less the end of a campaign, but multiple losses in a row likely spell doom. Nonetheless, prudent commanders may prefer a strategic loss over a Pyrrhic victory if it means preserving more of their fleet to employ at a later point.

In the aftermath of a strategic loss, enemy forces will be emboldened. Their lines will be reinforced, their morale will be higher and they will be less likely to surrender in upcoming engagements.

DECISIVE LOSS

A decisive loss constitutes a significant blow for any naval power. Failure to achieve strategic objectives alone is not enough to constitute a decisive loss; fleet destruction must be near absolute, as well, with 10 percent or less of player ships surviving. Further, such a loss will almost certainly claim a staggering number of lives. If this is their first loss in the campaign, the losing side might have their resolve hardened for the next battle; if it is the second or third in a series, they might be broken or pushed to the brink of desperation. They may consider pulling back to consolidate their remaining forces and protect their borders, or even open diplomatic channels to negotiate a ceasefire.

A decisive loss also shakes individuals to their core. The survivors will have watched many of their comrades die in battle and may even bear wounds themselves. Unfortunately for them, a decisive loss does not necessarily mean the end of the war, though it might set the stage for a climax of some sort.

THE CAMPAIGN TREE

You don't need to plan out every step of your campaign in advance, and in many cases you shouldn't try to plan too far ahead. After all, neither you nor the players know how any given engagement will go until the shooting starts. That said, if you want to visualize the stakes of each engagement while also keeping an ongoing record of a campaign that you can look back on later, you can create a campaign tree to chart this out.

A campaign tree is a simple set of branching outcomes that can show the stakes for an engagement and help lay the groundwork for future engagements. While planning out your campaign tree, there are three types of outcomes you'll want to have in mind for each engagement:

• The players achieve **victory**.
• The players achieve a **Pyrrhic victory**.
• The players suffer a **loss**.

The consequences of a victory or defeat are generally clear, though you're certainly free to add some wrinkles here and there. A Pyrrhic victory, on the other hand, is one in which the outcome is less than desirable for both sides. The players may have accomplished their primary objectives, but have also suffered significant losses that will cause them as many complications as they caused for the enemy.

For an example of what outcomes might look like, imagine a mission that tasks the players with securing a strategically located shipyard while enemy forces attempt to do the same. If the players win, they gain control over the shipyard; if the players lose, then the enemy does. A Pyrrhic victory for the players might mean that they prevented the enemy from seizing control over the shipyard, but the shipyard itself took significant damage during the fight, rendering it inoperable without significant repairs. Alternatively, both sides might have wound up too battered and bloodied to prevent a third faction from seizing control of the shipyard instead. These are still victories of a sort – the players did indeed prevent the enemy from achieving their goals – but these complications will doubtlessly shift the course of the campaign in an unforeseen direction.

After each engagement, you can follow the outcome to the next engagement and repeat the process, sketching out a new set of possible outcomes and consequences, playing to see what happens, and so on, all the way to the end of the campaign.

Once a campaign has concluded, the campaign tree that you created serves as a historical record of sorts for future campaigns in both *Battlegroup* and *Lancer*. To flesh this out further, you might go back over the campaign tree at the conclusion of the campaign and give a denouement to the events that took place. After all, even the smallest naval campaign is impactful enough that its consequences will be felt long after the players' involvement has ended.

For each engagement that took place during the campaign, go around the table and decide what lasting consequences it had. For engagements where the players succeeded, one of the players can decide. For engagements where the players were defeated, the GM gets to decide. For Pyrrhic victories, you can randomly determine who gets to establish consequences first and then allow the other side to add their own details. If the GM gets to determine the initial consequences, a player then gets to add to it, or vice versa. Try to avoid simply ignoring or overruling the consequences established by the other party. Both sides should be allowed to have their input stand – instead of "no", think more "yes and" or "yes but".

BATTLEGROUP AND LANCER

Battlegroup isn't just a standalone game – it also serves to broaden the scope of action within the *Lancer* setting. While both *Battlegroup* and *Lancer* are designed to be played on their own, they can also be woven together, the outcomes and consequences of one game serving to inform the direction that the other takes.

Bringing *Lancer* into *Battlegroup* can be as simple as zooming in to follow a squad of mech pilots tasked with a critical naval mission, such as boarding an enemy ship. At a suitable moment during an engagement, the action can shift from commanders giving orders to their battlegroups to pilots breaching the enemy's hull and advancing through the corridors toward their objective. Once the mech pilots have completed (or failed) their mission, gameplay might zoom out once more to *Battlegroup*'s perspective and resume from there, with the outcome of the mission affecting the remainder of the engagement.

Note that it would be somewhat impractical to play out full-fledged tactical mech combat each time a boarding action is undertaken; a single combat encounter in *Lancer* can take several hours to complete, and *Battlegroup* can involve numerous boarding actions in the course of a single engagement. Such a thing is best reserved for special objectives with equally special outcomes, such as those found in sitreps.

Perhaps a group of mech pilots have been tasked with spearheading an assault to commandeer an enemy vessel, with a successful assault turning the ship against its allies. Fail, and the enemy battle lines will be reinforced. Or maybe some pilots are sent in to acquire command codes that will allow their allies to deactivate the local defensive installations protecting a critical target, or to steal intelligence vital to future operations, which can influence the environmental modifiers used in upcoming engagements. Whatever the mission objective, it should be significant and impactful within the context of either *Battlegroup* or an ongoing *Lancer* campaign.

Other examples of potential objectives for *Lancer* pilots within a naval engagement and their effects could include (but aren't limited to):

- Infiltrating an enemy ship to disable a powerful long-cycle weapon, adding **Charge** counters to it or even destroying it outright.
- Being tasked with engaging and eliminating an enemy **Ace**, fighting through their wingmen before confronting the ace pilot themselves, removing that unit from play if successful.
- Joining a boarding action with orders to plant demolition charges in a ship's magazines or reactor systems, causing significant damage to, if not destroying, an enemy **Escort**.

Playing out boarding actions in *Lancer* is a great opportunity to make use of that game's own sitreps (*Lancer*, pp. 267–273), including **Control**, **Gauntlet**, and **Holdout**. The interiors of capital ship interiors might be large enough for mechs to board them, but quarters are likely to be cramped, with plenty of chokepoints, cover, and obstructions to navigate, as well as potential hazards like power storage systems, ordnance magazines, automated internal defenses, and even stray weapons fire from other ships. Other sitrep types can be used as well. With a bit of creativity, an **Escort** sitrep could easily involve players retrieving a damaged shuttle or escape pod with a critical VIP aboard, for example. You may even choose to adjust the scale of the map and measurements involved in such a mission to account for the vastly different scale of naval combat as opposed to terrestrial combat (*Lancer*, p. 59).

The same principles apply when using *Battlegroup* to add another dimension to a *Lancer* campaign. The outcomes of major naval battles are significant, pivotal events that can establish the backdrop and tone for an entire series of missions, and playing these out using *Battlegroup* is one way to provide your group with a stepping-off point for determining the shape of things to come.

For example, the successful establishment of a secure beachhead in orbit around a planet would have a dramatic effect not just on the sorts of missions mech pilots will be tasked with, but also their opportunities to acquire reserves like fire support, satellite recon, and orbital insertions. Enemy forces will probably be operating on the defensive, with their own supply lines and orbital assets contested by blockades, and their strategic objectives may involve taking control of anti-orbital defenses to try and punch a hole in fleet coverage, or striking at port facilities to deny the players reinforcements and resupply.

Conversely, if the players suffer setbacks during the initial naval battle then pilots on the ground might find themselves essentially operating behind enemy lines. Their options for reserves will be limited until they achieve key objectives and enemy forces will have the benefits of orbital superiority. Missions may have to be timed carefully around gaps in fire-support coverage while enemy reinforcements will arrive via reentry shuttles or drop pods.

Of course, naval battles can do more than set the stage. They also make for suitable climaxes for mission arcs. As the players progress through their missions, they may have the opportunity to lay the groundwork for a naval battle meant to decisively secure victory within the theater. Sabotaging defenses, gathering intelligence, and participating directly in the final engagement can all be critical steps necessary to tip the odds in their fleet's favor.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTER BATTLEGROUPS

NPC battlegroups are composed of two main parts: the **Capital Ship**, which is the centerpiece of its battlegroup, and its **Escorts,** which are the attendant ships under its command. Optionally, NPC battlegroups may also incorporate an **Ace**, a powerful and unique **Wing**.

Battlegroup doesn't provide a predefined catalog of NPCs. Instead, there are a number of basic NPC ship archetypes including **Capital Ships**, **Escorts**, and **Aces**. These archetypes can be combined to build a wide range of fully customized battlegroups. A brief summary of what each archetype does and their role in combat is included in their description.

Creating enemy fleets for players to face is a three-step process:

1. Decide on the ratio of NPC battlegroups to player battlegroups (with a default ratio of 1:1, or one NPC battlegroup per player, for an "even" match).
2. Choose one **Capital Ship** to be the centerpiece of each NPC battlegroup.
3. Choose one to three **Escorts** to accompany each **Capital Ship**. One **Escort** is a somewhat easier challenge, two provides a solid mix of additional capabilities and is a good "default" choice, and three represents a more significant threat.

Optionally, you may assign **Aces** to one or more of these battlegroups.

ACTIONS AND TURNS

Like a group of player battlegroups, multiple NPC battlegroups are considered a fleet. Individual NPC battlegroups alternate with player battlegroups in the turn order, with the first NPC battlegroup acting after the first player has acted (unless otherwise stated).

NPC battlegroups act along the same lines as player battlegroups: on their turn, they may perform one maneuver and use one tactic, or they can trade out their maneuver to use a second tactic. Where NPCs differ is that they don't have a standardized list of maneuvers and tactics to choose from the way players do. Instead, each ship (or group of ships, in the case of Escorts) has a unique set of maneuvers and tactics listed on its profile. The one maneuver and one tactic (or two tactics) that each battlegroup starts with can only be used for the maneuvers and tactics listed in the **Capital Ship**'s profile.

Then for each **Escort** or **Ace** assigned to a **Capital Ship**, that battlegroup may perform one additional maneuver or use one additional tactic during its turn. This additional maneuver or tactic can only be spent on a maneuver or tactic granted by that **Escort** or **Ace**. If the **Escort** or **Ace** doesn't have a maneuver or tactic associated with it, then it does not grant additional actions. **Escort** and **Ace** attacks and abilities are considered to have come from that ship for the purpose of systems and effect triggers. Other abilities granted by **Escorts** or **Aces**, such as traits, **Charge** weapons, and **Systems**, can be used whenever they would normally be used.

NPC battlegroups may surrender or retreat from battle following the same guidelines as players: they can surrender at any time in the round before the **Logistics Phase**, while the decision to eject from battle or not is made beginning from the start of Round 5, also before the **Logistics Phase**. They do not have to worry about moving out of **Point-Blank** range to do so (because NPC battlegroups do not occupy range bands the same way as PC battlegroups do), but from Round 8 onward, any NPC battlegroups that remain in the fight may no longer retreat.

POSITION AND MOVEMENT

Unlike player battlegroups, NPC battlegroups do not have positions on the gyre. Although they are considered to be within the scope of the active battle, their exact positioning is abstracted. The GM doesn't need to worry about whether an NPC battlegroup is at **Extreme Range** or **Scope Range** because the player's position determines whether their battlegroup can attack an NPC and whether an NPC can attack their battlegroup. To put it a different way, the range bands on the gyre indicate the position of player battlegroups in relation to the NPC fleet.

Similarly, NPC battlegroups do not move along the gyre as player battlegroups do. Instead, NPC battlegroup movement is represented by abilities that force player battlegroups to move, representing the way that the lines of battle shift throughout combat. An NPC battlegroup that aggressively moves toward a player battlegroup may pull them forward into closer range, while an NPC battlegroup that wants to put more distance between themselves and hostile forces will do so by pushing player battlegroups back.

Note that NPC battlegroups do not have access to generalized maneuvers or tactics such as those that players do. This means that the only way they can move player battlegroups is through the specific abilities unique to them. Keep this in mind when constructing NPC fleets to challenge your players. If none of the battlegroups in an NPC fleet have ways of pushing player battlegroups back, for example, then there may be little to discourage close-range ships from simply remaining within their optimal range throughout the entire engagement. Look at how the various components of an NPC fleet complement each other and how they might respond to player battlegroups at various ranges.

NPCS AND INFORMATION

It's important to provide some information about your NPCs to players. Specifically, no matter what their custom name, the archetypes of all ships in an NPC battlegroup should always be public knowledge, available to players upon request. By sharing this, players are encouraged not just to learn the game, but also to learn the specific capabilities of different NPC ships and the tactics against them. The result is that the capabilities of certain NPCs feel fairer.

Other information, such as the details of specific weapons, systems, and abilities, can be hidden from the players to begin with, given out during briefings, learned using certain pre-battle uptime actions, or simply be public knowledge, depending on how you want to run your game.

You should also notify players whenever an NPC ship is reduced to half HP or less, or in the case of some **Escorts** that represent multiple ships at once, half of their effective fighting strength.

NPC PROFILES

Like player ships, NPC ships have **HP** and **Defense** values that function in the same way. When an NPC ship is reduced to **0 HP** or less, it is destroyed. NPC **Capital Ships**, much like player **Flagships**, also have Interdiction that applies to their battlegroup.

When a trait, maneuver, or tactic in an NPC archetype's profile refers to "enemies" or "allies", it is from that ship's perspective. Players are their enemies and other NPC ships are their allies.

NPCs use many of the same rules and tags that players do, though some may work slightly differently:

Traits: These are passive qualities or abilities that most NPCs possess based on their archetype. Traits are always in effect and do not require activation.

Systems: These abilities require active use on the part of NPC battlegroups. A system's profile tells you how and when it can be used and what it costs, if anything.

Range: When an NPC weapon or system lists a range, it refers to the range bands that it can affect. For example, an NPC weapon with **Range 3–1** can fire at player battlegroups between **Scope Range** (3) and **Close Range** (1), but cannot attack battlegroups outside of those range bands. Put another way, players attack from range bands, while NPCs attack toward range bands. NPC attacks are affected by range band modifiers as well, determined by the position of their target. For example, an NPC battlegroup firing at a target that is at **Close Range** (1) will receive the benefits of that range band.

Payload: Because NPCs do not occupy specific range bands, the flight times of their Payload attacks are based on the range band occupied by their target at the time they're fired. For example, a normal **Payload** attack fired at a target in **Scope Range** (3) will start with **3 Flight Counters**.

Boarding: NPCs use special boarding rules and actions instead of the ones granted to players. These are described in the relevant systems and abilities. NPC boarding actions can target any Capital Ship under player control.

Charge/Reloading: These weapons and abilities work the same as they do for player battlegroups.

Wings: Some NPC ships carry a complement of **Wings** and have special command abilities they can use to order them into battle. These commands can only be used on the fighters, bombers, or mounted chassis equipped to that particular ship. A **Capital Ship's** ability to give commands to its **Wings** can't be used to give a command to the wings carried by one of its accompanying **Escorts**, for example.

Boarders/Greywash: NPC **Capital Ships** may either purge all boarders or clear all **Greywash Counters** from their battlegroup by spending a maneuver to do so.

SHIP ARCHETYPES

CAPITAL SHIPS

The **CAPITAL SHIP** is the "featured" or "face" enemy – the main thing the players should be targeting or hunting, the vessel on which important NPCs are stationed, the target of boarding actions, and so on. All NPC **CAPITAL SHIPS** are considered **FLAGSHIPS** for in regards to rules and effects that specifically count or affect those, such as sitreps.

BREAKWATER

Capital Ship

HP	25	DEF	10*	INTERDICTION	1D6*

See Launch Bays

Breakwater carriers are designed as bastions around which middle-gyre lines can form. With their wide, three-tiered landing decks, multiple fuel and ammunition routing corridors, and overlapping PDC screens, they perform this task admirably. One of the most popular naval carriers in active service, with dozens of variations, the Breakwater is a common sight in navies great and small.

TACTICS

The Breakwater deals reliable damage at close to medium ranges with its fighter/bombers while also keeping them repaired and ready for subsequent sorties. As these Wings are destroyed, it loses defensive capabilities and becomes more vulnerable to attacks of all sorts, but it gains more aggressive abilities in the process. The Breakwater is vulnerable to anti-fighter weapons and long-range opponents, but Escorts that allow it to reposition hostile battlegroups can help it keep the right targets in the right ranges.

LAUNCH BAYS
Trait

The **Breakwater** carries a complement of four long-range heavy fighter/bomber **WINGS** (**5 HP** each, **Range 3–0**). During the **Logistics Phase**, it may repair one of these **WINGS** to full **HP**.

Additionally, the **Breakwater** gains **+1 INTERDICTION** for each of these **WINGS** that remains and gains **+2 DEFENSE** as long as at least one remains.

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The flight deck never stops, never sleeps. Launching fighters, though crucial to combat operations, is merely one small part of a deck crew's job. Receiving incoming craft, repairing damage, conducting maintenance, managing supplies, fuel, and ammunition, each and every step a vital one on the path to victory.

FLAK BATTERIES
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target, Accurate [Range 2–0][4 damage]

On hit, deal **2 damage** to all of the target ship's **ESCORTS** and **WINGS**. If the **Breakwater** has one or fewer fighter/bomber **WINGS** remaining, it may attack up to two targets with this maneuver.

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Flak screens play a similar role in the naval context to the one they play in terrestrial, in-atmosphere contexts, simply scaled up. Overlapping batteries fire salvos of explosive shells set to detonate not on impact but upon proximity to enemy units or within preset saturation zones. While larger vessels can weather the resulting clouds of shrapnel without much difficulty, subcapital craft caught within the kill zone risk far greater damage.

REFUEL AND REARM
Maneuver, Reloading 2

The **Breakwater** pushes up to two hostile battlegroups back one range band, then repairs up to two of its fighter/bomber **WINGS** to full **HP**. If the **Breakwater** has one or fewer fighter/bomber **WINGS** remaining, it may advance a hostile battlegroup one range band instead.

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Fuel, ammo, combat stims, coffee, and no-c smokes: wars are won during R&R.

CORNICEN
Capital Ship

HP	25	DEF	10	INTERDICTION	1D6

The Cornicen is a "solid-state" ship: a naval vessel operating without organic personnel, with limited compartment space outside of what is strictly necessary for heat and energy management, maintenance, and ammunition storage. Each of these ships is managed by a cogent mind, a new and dramatically more powerful type of comp/con produced by the Janus Combine, a conglomerate of scientific foundations devoted to the development of parasubjective strategic solutions. The Janus Combine is based on Umara, the homeworld of the Karrakin House of Water, and is one of that house's many private/public development ventures devoted toward the expansion of parallel-track "mind" systems.

TACTICS

The Cornicen saturates its targets with corrosive greywash, steadily eating away at them over the course of an engagement. It possesses a uniquely powerful weapon in the form of **Achiral Abolition**, which allows it to selectively disable ships. This has numerous applications, including preventing ships from manually clearing **Greywash Counters**. The Cornicen's lack of particular defensive strengths make it a priority target for enemies hoping to remove it from play before it does irreparable harm, meaning it benefits from more protective **Escorts**.

COGENT MIND
Trait

The Cornicen is a solid-state ship: critical hits against it count as normal hits instead, and boarding actions against it only succeed on a 10+. Whenever the Cornicen repels boarders, each ship those boarders belong to gains **2 Greywash Counters**.

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The Janus Combine developed the Cornicen as a vehicle for its "cogent mind" warprocessors. Distinct from NHPs, cogents are more conventional – though still incredibly powerful – machine minds akin to the end-state evolution of comp/cons. Coupled with some of the more unique interpretations of legacy machine-mind design, their freeform processing without fear of cascade provides a window, then, into what humanity could have become.

ALL WINGS, ATTACK!
Tactic

The **Breakwater** scrambles up to two of its fighter/bomber **Wings** and assigns them each one of the following commands (either the same or different):

- **Dogfight:** Deal **1 damage** to a hostile **Wing**, or deal **3 damage** to a hostile **Wing** and take **2 damage**.
- **Bombing Run (Reloading 2):** Deal **1d3+1 damage** to a hostile **Capital Ship** or **Escort**.v
- **Close Support:** This **Wing** provide close fire support to an allied force, disrupting and confounding their target's defenses. Choose an allied battlegroup and a hostile battlegroup. Until the end of its next turn, the allied battlegroup gains **+1 Accuracy** to all single-target attacks against ships in the hostile battlegroup. This command does not stack with itself.

When the **Breakwater** is reduced to its last remaining fighter/bomber **Wing**, its pilots push themselves to the limit in a desperate last stand. The remaining **Wing** is automatically repaired to full **HP**, and it commands are replaced with the following:

- **Dogfight:** Deal **3 damage** to a hostile **Wing**.
- **Bombing Run (Reloading 2):** Deal 4 damage to a hostile **Capital Ship** and to an **Escort** in its battlegroup.
- **Close Support:** Choose a hostile battlegroup. All single-target attacks against ships in that battlegroup gain **+1 Accuracy** until the end of their next turn.

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```
>//[CPT.RAO_1.SABER]:: ALL SABER ELEMENTS
BE ADVISED, MULTIPLE HOSTILE CONTACTS IN
AO+++1SQ+2SQ PROVIDE COVER FOR 3SQ, ENGAGE
AND INTERCEPT+++3SQ TARGET HOSTILE BC
DESIGNATED ALPHA, MARKED FOR PAYLOAD
DELIVERY+++ALL ELEMENTS PROCEED WEAPONS
FREE, CONFIRM
>//[1SQ]:: AFFIRM
>//[2SQ]:: AFFIRM
>//[3SQ]:: AFFIRM
>//[CPT.R]:: GOOD HUNTING SABER
```

No-Repro Munitions
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target, Greywash
[Range 3–0]

Before or after making this attack, the Cornicen advances an enemy battlegroup that has no **Greywash Counters** one range band.

On hit, the target gains **3 Greywash Counters**.

No-repro munitions are simply projectiles packed with canisters of no-reproduction "greywash" nanites. Inert until impact, NRM shells detonate inside target ships, releasing their nanite payloads to continue disruptive, malignant consumption of inorganic vessel matter along with any incidental organic materials encountered.

Achiral Abolition
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target, Legionspace, Reloading 3
[Range 4–2]

This maneuver deals no damage; instead, on hit, it unleashes a potent systemic attack that disrupts a ship's fleet legion connections: until the end of the target's next turn, its CHARGE weapons do not gain any **Charge Counters** and it cannot use any maneuvers, tactics, weapons or upgrades. If the disrupted ship's battlegroup spends a maneuver to repel boarders or clear **Greywash Counters**, it does not benefit from that effect (though it may repel boarders as normal by rolling against their Tenacity). It can still be targeted by attacks and abilities, and its active PAYLOAD attacks continue to gain **Flight Counters** as normal.

Chirality makes individuals from otherwise identical things: Cornicen cogents force amphichiral alignment upon their targets, erasing them via the obliterating whole. Oneness without equivocation, the cogent determines, is death.

Excite
Tactic, Reloading 2

This tactic must be used on a target with **Greywash Counters**, and its effect depends on their counters:

- **1–5:** Double the target's **Greywash Counters** or push its battlegroup back one range band.
- **10+:** The target clears all **Greywash Counters** and must choose one: take 1 damage for each counter cleared this way or the Cornicen may choose one of that ship's weapons or upgrades and destroy it.

Greywash is not intelligent. It exists for one purpose and one purpose only: to consume. The only command it understands, then, is to consume even more.

CORSAIR
Capital Ship

HP	25	DEF	10	INTERDICTION	1D6

While many pirate groups are limited to maintaining and mustering subline vessels, it isn't unheard of for larger and more ambitious organizations to field capital ships, typically frigates that have been captured or salvaged and repurposed. These vessels pose a significant threat to well-armed merchant marine crews and can even hold their own against naval warships. Although independent pirates prefer to avoid open battles whenever possible, some polities and corpro-states have been known to employ naval assets acting under the guise of piracy to conduct operations against merchant shipping, to sow chaos and terror, and to perform clandestine activities while maintaining plausible deniability.

TACTICS

The **Corsair** is an aggressive close-range attacker that drags its opponents close and mauls them before they can muster a response. Despite being average fighters, its WINGS are deadly boarders that can be sacrificed in a pinch to bolster the **Corsair's** own defenses. The **Scrapcaster** is an ungainly weapon but quite powerful when it lands, while **Demolition Charges** provide a reliable source of damage.

Motley Crew
Trait

The **Corsair** carries a complement of four mounted chassis WINGS (**5 HP** each, BOARDING, **Tenacity 12**, **Range 3–0**). 1/round, it may destroy one of these WINGS during the **Logistics Phase** to gain **5 OVERSHIELD**.

While mounted chassis have found a welcome role within the ranks of virtually every naval power, pirates in particular are known to favor them due to the simple fact that they are the only fighter-tier craft suited for the boarding actions these outlaws rely upon. As such, a wide array of nonstandard launch decks, converted cargo bays, and external hangars can be used to convert any ship into one that can carry a complement of mounted chassis into battle, regardless of its original function.

SCRAPCASTER
Maneuver, Superheavy, Single-Target,
Inaccurate, Overkill, Reloading 2
[Range 2–0][4d6 damage]

Hit or miss, all single-target attacks against the **Corsair** receive **+1 DIFFICULTY** until the end of its next turn.

This particular configuration of heavy mass driver is frequently employed by pirates and navies with limited manufacturing bases. A comparatively unsophisticated weapon, the aptly named "scrapcaster" is a wide-aperture, spinal-mounted magnetic accelerator that launches enormous volleys of ferromagnetic material ranging from shaped kinetic penetrator bundles to loose debris and even clouds of micrometeorites. Crude and cumbersome but devastatingly effective at closer ranges, this weapon is capable of severely damaging or even destroying other ships outright in a single blast of high-velocity shrapnel.

LEGIONSPACE SIREN
Maneuver, Legionspace

The **Corsair** advances a hostile battlegroup one range band forward. That battlegroup must then choose one:

- Until the end of its next turn, it cannot take or benefit from actions or effects that would move it back any number of range bands.
- A **CAPITAL SHIP** in that battlegroup's range band, chosen by the **Corsair**, takes 1d6 damage.

Not every legionspace attack has overtly dramatic effects. Overlaying false signals and navigational overrides onto a legion's subjectivity allows operators to surreptitiously adjust a target's heading without immediately alerting it, drawing ships and even entire battlegroups off course. Frequently used to lure merchant vessels into ambushes, such systems have obvious military applications as well.

RAIDING PARTY
Tactic

The **Corsair** scrambles up to two of its mounted chassis **WINGS** and assigns them each one of the following commands (either the same or different):

- **Marauders:** Deal **1 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**, or deal **1d3 damage** to a hostile **ESCORT** or **WING** and take that much damage in return.
- **Uninvited Guests:** This **WING** boards a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**. During the **Boarding Phase**, issue it one of the following commands and then roll 1d20, succeeding on an 8+:
  - **Deploy Targeting Beacons:** All single-target attacks against the boarded ship gain **+1 ACCURACY** until the end of its next turn.
  - **Plant Demolition Charges:** The boarded battlegroup must use a maneuver to repel boarders during its next turn or this ship takes **1d6 damage** that ignores **OVERSHIELD** and cannot be prevented in any way at the end of that turn. This boarding command can be stacked up to a maximum of **3d6 damage**.
  - **Disable Life Support:** The boarded ship cannot remove **Refresh Counters** from **RELOADING** weapons or upgrades during the next **Logistics Phase**.

If this boarding roll doesn't succeed, it may be attempted each **Boarding Phase** until it either succeeds or the boarded ship repels the boarders.

The challenge of boarding a ship begins immediately upon contact with a hostile vessel, as the task falls to boarders to find a way to inside. While a variety of tools can be useful, from fusion cutters to electronic systems overrides, the most expedient (if least subtle) approach is the use of high-explosive breaching charges, a method that works best when capturing the ship intact is merely a secondary objective rather than a primary one.

HIGHLINE

Capital Ship

HP	20	DEF	10	INTERDICTION	1D6+4

An Armada Shipyards stalwart, the Highline frigate bristles with multiband point-defense systems and omnidirectional thrust points built directly into its superstructure. Maneuverable and low-heat, Highlines are popular among Diasporan interstellar fleets. These fleets deploy them as the centerpieces of rapid-response forces and fast-attack groups, taking advantage of their ability to spearhead attacks straight into enemy midlines while shielding themselves and accompanying ships from incoming ordnance and strike craft.

TACTICS

Highlines are close- to medium-range ships that excel at deterring and destroying enemy **ESCORTS** and **WINGS**. Their low base **HP** is offset by their perpetually regenerating **OVERSHIELD**, and their abilities are tuned to shred any subline vessels or strike craft unfortunate enough to be pitted against them. While **Highlines** are relatively safe from **PAYLOAD** attacks, they're more vulnerable to direct fire and **CHARGE** weapons, and fare poorly against long-range opponents and those that don't rely on **ESCORTS** or **WINGS**.

CURTAIN CALL PROACTIVE DEFENSE SCREEN
Trait

The **Highline** or an allied **CAPITAL SHIP** of its choice gains **5 OVERSHIELD** at the start of the **Logistics Phase**. **OVERSHIELD** granted to allied ships by this trait lasts until the start of the next **Logistics Phase**.

Additionally, while a ship has any amount of **OVERSHIELD** from this trait, any **ESCORT** or **WING** that damages it or other ships in its battlegroup takes **2 damage**.

Proactive defense systems like the Curtain Call multi-point defense network provide unparalleled interdiction defense against tidal firing patterns. When combined with the functionality and rapid processing of a fleet legion, the Curtain Call PDS is unparalleled in its protective capabilities.

CLOUDKILL BATTERIES
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target, Reliable 2
[Range 3–0][7 damage]

Attacks made with this maneuver against targets further than **Range 2** gain **INACCURATE**. On hit, the target's **ESCORTS** and **WINGS** take **2 damage** each.

"Kill-cloud at .4 conical density. Good choke, good density. Impact expected and assured."

AGGRESSION WALL
Maneuver, Reloading 2

Advance a hostile battlegroup forward one range band, then deal 2 damage to all **ESCORTS** and **WINGS** equipped to one hostile battlegroup within **Range 2–0**.

Aggressive linebreaking maneuvers are a hallmark of Highline doctrine, using their speed and maneuverability to exploit weaknesses in enemy formations. Once a course has been laid in, Curtain Call systems can be retasked to serve as forward firepower, preemptively saturating nearby approach vectors as enemy commanders scramble to reorient.

FIREWALL
System, Reloading 2

The **Highline** launches a spread of burnout directed-energy munitions that rapidly track targets and fire until depleted. During the **Logistics Phase**, choose one range band from 3–2. Until the start of the next **Logistics Phase**, any hostile battlegroup that ends its turn in the chosen range band takes **3 AREA-TARGET damage** that cannot be interdicted, and any hostile **ESCORTS** and **WINGS** issued commands from within the chosen range band first take **3 damage**. If this damage is enough to destroy an **ESCORT** or **WING**, it is destroyed before it can carry out its command and its effects are negated.

Woe to the creatures that fly through hell, for none escape with unburnt wings!

HIVEQUEEN

Capital Ship

HP	30	DEF	8	INTERDICTION	2D6

Another component of the Janus Combine's cogent mind-oriented naval combat paradigm, the Hivequeen functions as a command-and-control platform for numerous maniples of combat drones. A distributed intelligence network allows the central ship to coordinate these appendages across several fronts at once with unerring, and unsettling, precision.

TACTICS

The **Hivequeen** specializes in applying and taking advantage of LOCK ON. **Infestation** allows it to quickly begin applying LOCK ON to enemies, which it can then take advantage of by launching a **K-Drone Pack** to deal damage and push enemies further back. This places those enemies in a difficult situation if the outer range bands have been seeded with **Sapper Drones**. The **Hivequeen** has good all-round defenses, but the damage it deals tends to be delayed. Because this can make it difficult to secure kills, it benefits from being paired with **ESCORTS** that can supply it with more conventional firepower.

ROYAL PALACE
Trait

The **Hivequeen** is a solid-state ship: critical hits against it count as normal hits instead, and boarding actions against it only succeed on a 10+. Whenever the **Hivequeen** repels boarders, it may LOCK ON to each ship those boarders belong to. If a ship already has LOCK ON, it takes **2 damage** instead.

. . . .

"The idea of 'chaos' – disorder, openness of systems, novel eruption and manifestation – rules the cogent mind. Contrary to the strict order of the NHP as understood by cognitive programmers, NHP engineers, solipsticians, and other professionals in the field, the cogent mind (that is, 'a mind that thinks of itself') revels in the chaos of many meanings, unconstrained sampling, and ecstatic utterance; if the NHP and the fleet legion are the apotheosis of an ordered, wholly controlled (i.e., non-entropic) system, every siloed-off cogent mind is the apotheosis of entropy bottled in a vessel of silicon and rare metals, given life through thundering current and potential energy, and loosed upon the worlds. The entropic being, a chaos consciousness; there is no end to the roads that our cogent minds will wander."
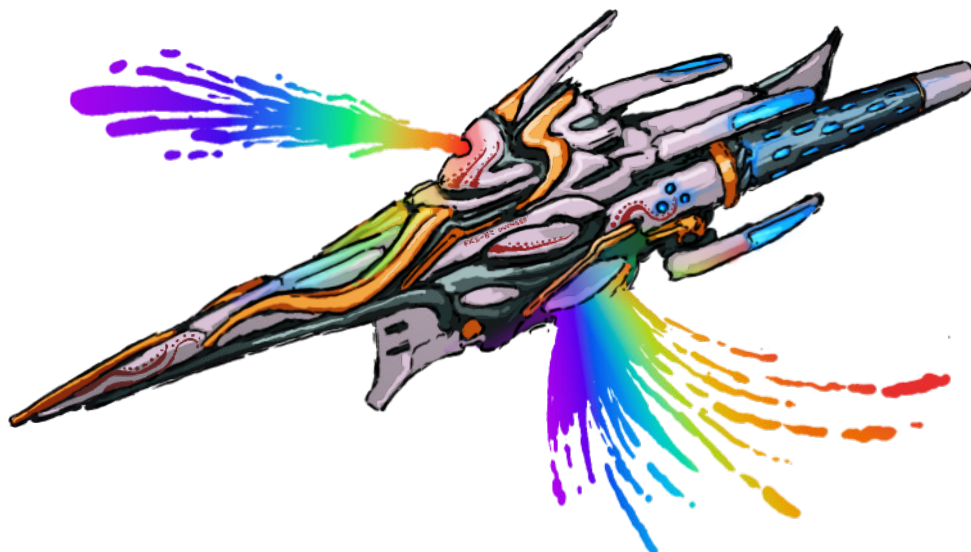
K-Drone Pack
Maneuver, Primary, Payload
[Range 4–2]

When this spread of weaponized drones is fired, choose its configuration:

- A single-target attack that deals **1d6+6 damage**.
- An area-target attack that deals **1d6+3 damage**.

The **Hivequeen** may also choose to add or remove **1 Flight Counter** from it.

While this **Payload** attack is in flight, the **Hivequeen** may (as a maneuver) deal **2 damage** to a hostile **Capital Ship** with **Lock On** and push that ship's battlegroup back one range band.

The difference between a drone and a missile is measurable only in end-states.

Infestation
Tactic, Boarding
[Range 4–0][Tenacity 11]

The **Hivequeen Locks On** to a hostile **Capital Ship** and then launches a breaching pod that disgorges a drone swarm into that ship's interior. During the **Boarding Phase**, roll 1d20: on 8+, the target takes **3 damage** and automatically gains **Lock On** at the start of the next **Action Phase**. On 7 or less, this boarding action may be attempted in subsequent **Boarding Phases** until it succeeds or the boarders are repelled. The **Hivequeen** may board up to three ships this way at one time.

Similar in principle to the Cornicen's special munitions, the Hivequeen's seemingly endless breaching pods pack hundreds of tiny drones aboard solid-state payloads. Upon penetration of the target vessel, the drones deploy from the initial point of impact, broadcasting sabotage protocols while simultaneously providing allied units with real-time targeting data.

Sapper Drones
System, Reloading 2

The **Hivequeen** launches a spread of long-flight drones that remain powered down until they detect nearby enemy vessels. During the **Logistics Phase**, choose one range band from 5–4. Until the start of the next **Logistics Phase**, any hostile battlegroup that ends its turn in the chosen range band takes **1d6+1 Area-Target damage**, and all ships in that battlegroup receive **+1 Difficulty** to single-target attacks until the end of their next turn.

Long-loiter sapper drones are often seeded in volleys across predicted approach vectors, operating on minimal power until targets come into range. Once activated they quickly home in and affix themselves to ships, injecting viral attack code directly into compromised systems, which triggers cascading malfunctions until the code can be purged by damage control teams.

MAN O' WAR

Capital Ship

HP	30	DEF	6	INTERDICTION	2D6

Tyrants of the gyre, Man o' Wars are massive ships with equally large weapons, built out of the Corregidor Group's Titanyards. Crewed by hundreds to thousands of cosmonauts and officers (depending on the ship's size, age, and level of automation), Man o' Wars are rarely anything other than the flagship of their fleet. A warship above all others, the Man o' War dominates the battlefield.

TACTICS

The **Man o' War** is a well-rounded, robust ship that can be the centerpiece of a variety of battlegroup compositions. Its **Demisolar Lance** is slow to charge but acts as an impending threat that grows as the fight goes on. While the lance is charging, the **Man o' War** can lay down **Counter-Battery Fire** and blanket the battlefield with **Pulse-Pack Missiles**, steadily damaging and disrupting enemies and preventing them from launching coordinated counterattacks.

DEMISOLAR LANCE
Charge, Superheavy, Single-Target, Accurate, Charge 4, Critical
[Range 5–3][20 damage]

Each time this weapon removes a **Charge Counter**, deal **2 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** within **Range 5-3**.

....

Despite the name, demisolar lances don't literally draw half of a star's energy; however, they demand and output truly staggering wattages. Even a demisolar's targeting laser can devastate a ship: a square hit will take anything out of the sky.

COUNTER-BATTERY FIRE
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target, Reliable 2
[Range 4–0][6 damage]

On hit, the target's single-target attack rolls all receive **+2 DIFFICULTY** until the end of its next turn.

....

Commanders on great ships know that they are unlikely to avoid incoming fire, so they adopt different strategies instead. Counter-battery fire is one such aggressive defensive measure: by destroying the guns that threaten your ship, you thus ensure you will not be hit by them in turn.

INEXORABLE ADVANCE
Maneuver

The **Man o' War** gains **5 OVERSHIELD**. Advance a hostile battlegroup forward one range band.

....

The feint, the parry, maneuver and deception, these are the strategies of the frail. There is only one way to advance – straight toward the enemy.

PULSE-PACK MISSILES
System, Reloading 2

The **Man o' War** launches a massive volley of multi-warhead missiles that blanket an area in devastating explosions and deadly radiation. During the **Logistics Phase**, choose one range band from 4–3. Until the start of the next **Logistics Phase**, any hostile battlegroup that ends its turn in the chosen range band takes **2d6 AREA-TARGET damage**.

....

Pulse-pack missiles detonate in stages after release from a single warhead, blanketing an area spanning hundreds of kilometers with nuclear radiation. Ships without sufficient shielding face immediate lethal consequences for their personnel, and even those hardened against that degree of radiation struggle to withstand proximal detonations.
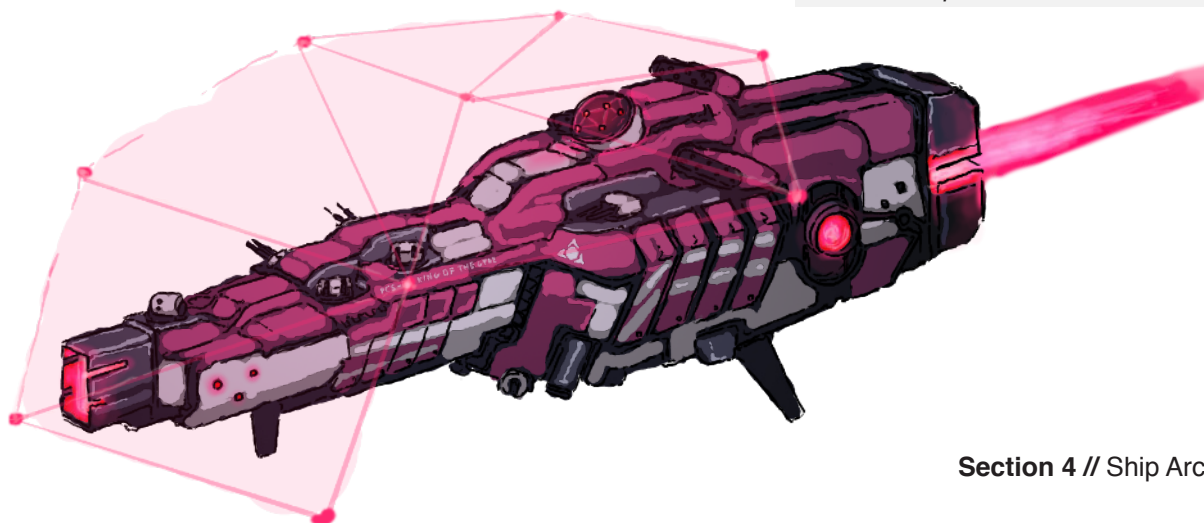
NARCISSUS

Capital Ship

HP	16	DEF	10*	INTERDICTION	1D6*

*See Lagoon Shielding

Narcissus vessels are produced at limited order from SSC's stock of decommissioned Constellar Security cutters. Refurbished by designers from Atelier Celeste's Apiary School for fleet purchase, Narcissus are agile, fearsome attack ships, notable for their limited crew requirements and cutting-edge electronic/ontologic warfare systems, which are able to subvert both hostile networks and munitions with ease. In the Dawnline Shore, Narcissus are rare – few having made it into the region before Union's embargo on military ships – and are typically only encountered among professional outfits.

TACTICS

The **Narcissus** seizes enemy resources (particularly **Payload** attacks) and turns them against their users. Its **VEIL Cannon** allows it to consume **Lock On** from any ship to enhance its accuracy, even friendly ones, while **Outbound Inbound** seizes control of torpedoes and missiles and redirects them. Between this and the powerful, if limited, options provided by **Legionspace Shrike**, the **Narcissus** is more than capable of defending both itself and allies against numerous volleys of munitions, though its defenses against other forms of attack are less effective.

LAGOON SHIELDING
Trait

The **Narcissus** begins the engagement with **10 Overshield**, **+2 Defense**, and **+1d6 Interdiction**. When the **Narcissus** is first reduced to **0 Overshield**, it loses these **Defense** and **Interdiction** bonuses and this trait is permanently disabled.

....

SSC's Lagoon shielding system strings a reactive network of defensive rockets around the Narcissus' hull; if any projectiles slip through, the Lagoon triggers, firing waves of shaped, proximity-detonation shells as a last defense, preventing incoming impacts.

VEIL CANNON
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target, Critical
[Range 3-0][5 damage]

When attacking with this maneuver, the **Narcissus** may consume **Lock On** from any ship, hostile or allied, gaining the bonus for doing so against its target. Before or after making this attack, the **Narcissus** may advance a hostile battlegroup forward one range band.

....

Utilizing upscaled VEIL-pattern weapons, Narcissus-type ships hurl coruscating bolts of pulsed particle energy at their targets. The systemic and superstructural damage has a compounding effect: the uncanny signature of VEIL weaponry throws off hostile targeting systems as it damages enemy ships in realspace.

LEGIONSPACE SHRIKE
Tactic, Legionspace, Limited 3

Choose one of the following effects. Each effect can only be chosen 1/engagement:

- The **Narcissus** redirects an active hostile **Payload** attack toward an allied **Capital Ship** or battlegroup of its choice, including itself or its battlegroup.
- The **Narcissus** or an allied **Capital Ship** of its choice gains **+1d6 Interdiction** and single-target attacks against that ship receive **+1 Difficulty** until the end of its next turn.
- A hostile **Capital Ship** of the **Narcissus'** choice must choose: take **2 damage** for each of its active **Payload** attacks or one of its active **Primary Payload** attacks (chosen by the **Narcissus**) is immediately destroyed.

- -

Using information gleaned from the DHIYED excursion, SSC engineers have expanded upon and upscaled the broad-spectrum memetic code-attacks that were engineered for smaller-scale use into a more esoteric format suitable for naval warfare contexts.

OUTBOUND INBOUND

Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target, Payload
[Range 4–1][1d6+2 damage]

The **Narcissus** hacks and redirects incoming payloads back toward enemy ships, creating a salvo of hijacked munitions under its control. This maneuver can only be used if there are hostile **PAYLOAD** attacks active, and it deals **+2 damage** for each one active when it is fired (**+4 damage** for **SUPERHEAVY PAYLOADS**). After firing, the **Narcissus** may add **1 Flight Counter** to any active hostile **PAYLOAD** attack, or if there are four or more hostile **PAYLOADS** active, may instead immediately destroy one active hostile **Primary PAYLOAD** attack.

The **Narcissus** may consume the target's **LOCK ON** as part of this maneuver to add or remove **1 Flight Counter** from it.

....

The Narcissus harnesses its powerful sensor suite to rapidly hack the flight control systems of inbound missiles and guided weapons. By orienting its own targeting computer as the projectile's main unit, it can reroute some incoming missiles to targets of its own choosing.

NEEDLESHIP

Capital Ship

HP	25	DEF	12	INTERDICTION	1D6

Tapering to thin points, Needleships are most often found among spacefaring Diasporan states – which, it should be noted, are rare. Records of their construction were lost during Union's First Committee Period, though their shared longevity and characteristic tapered silhouettes suggest they were built from a shared pattern, if not by a single, long-gone manufacturer. Those Needleships that remain have since been upgraded, retrofitted, and refurbished for modern spaceflight and combat. Despite this extensive modernization, Needleships are still examples of divergent capital ship design from contemporary standards. They are marvels of longevity, with unique defensive and thrust systems poorly understood by Union's engineers. Each ship is a discovery, and a pity to see destroyed.

TACTICS

The **Needleship** is a disruptive area-controller that manipulates enemy positions to its advantage. Though lacking in toughness, **Assess Reality** gives it several options for repositioning enemy battlegroups and bolstering its own defenses, while **Spatial Distortion** creates even more opportunities for it to control the gyre itself. Both **Ancient Star** and **Shattered Reflection** are powerful offensive tools in the right situations, but on its own the **Needleship** isn't particularly well suited to head-to-head fights and may require additional support to take full advantage of its unique capabilities.

ASSESS REALITY
Trait

At the start of the **Needleship's** turn, roll 1d6:
- **On 1–3,** the **Needleship** may push a hostile battlegroup back one range band.
- **On 4–6,** the **Needleship** may advance a hostile battlegroup forward one range band.

If it doesn't move a hostile battlegroup, it gains **+2 DEFENSE** and **+1D6 INTERDICTION** until the end of its next turn.

....

Cogent minds developed by the House of Water's Janus Combine are the only systems capable of interacting with the strange computers and cognizants that power Needleships. Thanks to a combination of ancient coding libraries, modern user interfaces, and evolutionary codices, cogent minds and cognizant Needleship "ghosts" partner to chart strange, unpredictable trajectories, forcing fleet legions to imagine alternate modes of approaching reality.

ANCIENT STAR
Maneuver, Superheavy, Single-Target,
Payload -1
[Range 5-2][10 damage]

This weapon deals **+1d6 damage** when launched at targets at **Range 3**, or **+2d6 damage** when fired at targets at **Range 2**. When fired at targets within **Range 5-4**, remove **1 Flight Counter** from it.

So-called "ancient star" torpedoes are unique to Needleships. Each weapon represents millennia of potential energy, held in containment, waiting to meet its explosive, terrible end. Firing even one ancient star means the end of a journey many thousands of years long.

SHATTERED REFLECTION
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target,
Accurate, Legionspace
[Range 4-1][3 damage]

This disruptive systemic attack has different effects depending on its range from the target:

- **Range 4–3:** On hit, the target must choose one: take an additional **5 damage**, or it cannot gain **ACCURACY** on attack rolls until the end of its next turn except to cancel out **DIFFICULTY**.
- **Range 2–1:** On hit, the target must choose one: take an additional **5 damage** or all of its attacks and abilites deal half damage until the end of its next turn.

The Needleship steers itself toward you, opening comms, and for a moment it's your own fleet you see on the scopes looking back at you.

SPATIAL DISTORTION
System, Reloading 2

The **Needleship** briefly warps space in a localized area. During the **Logistics Phase**, choose one:

- **Collapse:** Hostile battlegroups at **Range 5-4** at the beginning of their turn are advanced one range band forward; hostile battlegroups at **Range 2–0** at the beginning of their turn are pushed one range band back. Battlegroups at **Range 3** are unaffected. A battlegroup may spend a tactic to ignore this effect.
- **Shunt:** Until the start of the next **Logistics Phase**, hostile battlegroups cannot enter **Range 3**. Whenever they move into it, they "skip" it and move to the next furthest or closest range band based on the direction of their movement. A battlegroup may ignore this effect and move into **Range 3** by taking **1d6+1 AREA-TARGET damage**. Battlegroups already in **Range 3** are unaffected by this until they leave that range band.

Are these strange systems the end result of some abandoned experiment in pre-blink FTL propulsion? Were they meant to be a weapon? Whatever the case, the effect is undeniable as invisible waves render mass and inertia mere suggestions rather than constants.

PALADIN

Capital Ship

HP	25	DEF	8	INTERDICTION	2D6

The Paladin is a modern ironclad built out of the Corregidor Group's flagship campus, the Purview Starworks. These vessels are the svelte cousins of the Man o' War. With advanced systems and weapons, they compose, hold, and dominate the battle line – assuming one can afford their equally impressive cost.

TACTICS

The **Paladin** is a "jousting" ship that excels at crossing lances with other ships. Enemies hit with the **Paladin's RED GIANT Solar Lance** during the **Impact Phase** will be forced to make a difficult decision even before they've had a chance to make any attacks of their own, which can disrupt their window of opportunity for firing **Charge** weapons. Meanwhile, **Low-Albedo Plating** provides an enhanced defense whenever incoming fire is expected. While the **Paladin's** main armaments both operate on a delay, **Coordinated Advance** allows it to serve in a support role while it waits for the **RED GIANT Solar Lance** to charge and its **Supernova Multi-Stage Torpedoes** to hit.

RED GIANT Solar Lance

Charge, Superheavy, Single-Target, Charge 3, Critical, Reliable 5
[Range 5–2][15 damage]

Whenever the **Paladin** fires this weapon during the **Impact Phase**, it always rolls to hit first, before any other attacks. On hit, the target suffers catastrophic ionization and must choose one: receive **+1 Difficulty** on all of its single-target attack rolls and have all of its **System** upgrades disabled until the end of its next turn, or this attack deals **+5 damage**.

The successor to the demisolar lance, the RED GIANT is a large-format pulsed particle beam designed for modern ship-to-ship combat. Trading "paint" damage for impact and ionization effects, the RED GIANT runs cooler than the demisolar, though its effect on target is no less impressive than its older sibling.

SUPERNOVA MULTI-STAGE TORPEDOES

Maneuver, Primary, Area-Target, Payload
[Range 3–0][8 damage]

If this weapon's damage is not completely interdicted, the target battlegroup takes **2d6 Area-Target damage** if it remains in the same range band at the end of its next turn.

The latest in close- to mid-range naval munitions, these advanced torpedoes employ a staggered payload delivery sequence that unleashes multiple waves of warheads against targets, overwhelming close-in defense screens with successive barrages.

COORDINATED ADVANCE

Maneuver

Choose one of the following effects. The **Paladin** may not choose the same effect twice in a row:

- The **Paladin** targets a hostile battlegroup, which must choose one: advance one range band forward, or the Paladin gains **5 Overshield**.
- An allied **Capital Ship** of the **Paladin's** choice gains **5 Overshield**.
- **Lock On** to up to two hostile **Capital Ships**.

The Paladin's advanced systems and robust CIC design allow its fleet legion to coordinate multipronged offensive advances across the entire theater.

LOW-ALBEDO PLATING

System, Reloading 2

During the **Logistics Phase**, the **Paladin** may expose its low-albedo armor stripes, confounding active targeting systems and gaining **+4 Defense** until the start of the next **Logistics Phase**.

Borrowing from Ras Shamra's library of passive defensive systems, Paladin-type vessels are outfitted with low-albedo, antiphoton OVERPLATE sheaths designed to absorb direct and background light, as well as confound conventional laser targeting systems.

PHANTASM

Capital Ship

HP	20	DEF	15	INTERDICTION	1D6

Phantasms are equipped with a suite of antiphoton systems and armor. Coupled with massive heat sinks surrounding core modules, rapid-coolant cycling systems, and microflaking heat panels, these vessels hide themselves behind spiraling, blooming clouds of waste heat. Their stealth is less a factor of "invisibility" than it is hypervisibility: the thermal "noise" they produce obscures their "signal", creating a wave of overwhelming input to confound enemy targeting systems.

TACTICS

The **Phantasm** is a stealthy ship that confounds single-target attacks, with its **Caloric Plume** trait making it difficult for enemies overcome its high **Defense** with **Reliable** damage. Most comfortable at longer ranges, its **High-Precision Railgun** allows it to keep enemies from closing on it while it waits for its **Killdart Coherent Nuclear-actuated Laser** to charge. The Phantasm is weaker against **Payload** attacks, **Escorts**, and **Wings**, so allies that can help cover for those gaps in its defense are welcome additions.

CALORIC PLUME
Trait

The **Phantasm** is wreathed in obfuscating clouds of waste heat, purposefully hiding its hull from enemy scopes and weapon systems. Single-target attacks against the **Phantasm** receive **+1 Difficulty** and **Reliable** attacks that miss the **Phantasm** deal no damage.

Heat. In space, that's how you're seen. You can't hide in the cold, so the Phantasm doesn't try to hide in the cold: it vents a combination of waste and intentionally-generated heat to wreathe itself in an obfuscating plume many orders of magnitude larger than its silhouette. Hidden in this caloric plume, the Phantasm is incredibly difficult to target.

KILLDART COHERENT NUCLEAR-ACTUATED LASER
Charge, Superheavy, Single-Target, Charge 3, Critical, Reliable 5
[Range 4–1][15 damage]

The final attack roll for this attack can never be affected by **Difficulty**.

The Killdart CNAL is a hybrid munition: a long-cycle tier laser projector mounted atop a specialized torpedo that, after launching and accelerating to a safe distance, detonates a high-yield nuclear charge. This eruption is then directed into the single-use lasing system, which acts as a devastating directed-energy weapon able to engage targets from unanticipated angles.

HIGH-PRECISION RAILGUN
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target, Accurate, Critical, Reloading 2
[Range 4–2][5 damage]

Before or after making this attack, the **Phantasm** pushes a hostile battlegroup within **Range 2-0** back one range band. On critical hit, the **Phantasm** may push a hostile battlegroup within **Range 2-0** back one range band.

Phantasms maintain their flight patterns inside of their caloric plumes, stuttering through microfracture nearlight bursts that make it even more difficult for enemy ships to land a clean hit. These erratic movement patterns require Phantasms to use specialized weapons, including stabilized, independently tracking railguns optimized for short- to mid-cycle precision fire.

SIGNAL TO NOISE
Tactic

The **Phantasm Locks On** to a hostile **Capital Ship**, and may then clear **Lock On** from itself or an **Escort** in its battlegroup. If **Lock On** is cleared in this way, it may also advance or push back a hostile battlegroup one range band.

Shooting into a Phantasm's caloric plume may as well be throwing your ordnance away. Even if you were to score a hit, you wouldn't know a positive impact from the Phantasm's intentional off-gassing – all by design, as you can't hit what you can't see.

STARKILLER

Capital Ship

HP	25	DEF	10	INTERDICTION	1D6

Long and knife-edged, the profile of this task-focused supercapital ship elides its fearsome strength. One of the few hulls fabricated by Syngin-Duat, each Starkiller is a staggering work of artisanship; a scale model of each ship produced hangs in the grand arcade of the manufacturer's main campus.

TACTICS

The **Starkiller** is a sniper, taking advantage of its **Long-Range Targeting Array** and **Kill-Point Targeting Laser** to secure critical hits with its **Starkiller Cannon**. While **Reroute Spinal Charge** provides it with some additional protection in an emergency, it's otherwise fairly vulnerable and so benefits from the presence of **Escorts** that can enhance its survivability.

LONG-RANGE TARGETING ARRAY
Trait

The **Starkiller** gains **+1 Accuracy** on single-target attacks against ships within **Range 5-4**.

- -

Combat at extreme distance, within the so-called low-confidence ranges, is usually a matter of probing fire, long-flight payloads, and opportunistic attacks, but some ships are designed to engage more comfortably at these ranges. The targeting systems necessary for combat at a distance rely on advanced predictive modeling facilitated by fleet legion processing capabilities as much as they do sensor acuity; as such, specialized vessels can much more reliably and regularly place effective fire on distant targets.

STARKILLER CANNON
Charge, Superheavy, Single-Target, Charge 2, Critical
[Range 5–3][15 damage]

On critical hit, this weapon deals **10 damage** to another **Capital Ship** in the target's battlegroup. If there are no other **Capital Ships** in the battlegroup, this ability has no effect.

- -

Starkiller Cannons are large-bore, solid-state spinal cannons representing the top end of kinetic ballistics. Titanic weapons, Starkillers are simple in theory and application: there are no clever maths beyond the conventional or paracausal axioms involved in their operation. They are simply huge, accurate cannons with a wide library of projectiles for commanders to choose from, any one capable of scoring a kill-hit against a ship of the line.

KILL-POINT TARGETING LASER
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target
[Range 5–1]

The **Starkiller** deals **2 damage** to a hostile **Capital Ship** and **Locks On** to it. The **Starkiller** also gains **+1 Accuracy** to attacks with the **Starkiller Cannon** against that target until the end of its next turn.

- -

Kill-point targeting lasers are popular additions to vessels that mount superheavy spinal canons. Ship designers, acknowledging the ordered and exposed nature of fleet combat, often see to the installation of "hot" targeting lasers. While normal (or "cold") targeting lasers may score their targets with superficial thermal damage, "hot" lasers are designed to operate at higher outputs. With extended time on their target, they can deal much more significant damage to painted ships prior to main-gun impact.

REROUTE SPINAL CHARGE
System

Each time the **Starkiller Cannon** begins charging, the **Starkiller** may choose to treat it as **Charge 3** instead of **Charge 2**. If so, the **Starkiller** gains **+1D6 Interdiction** and **+2 Defense** until it reaches 0 Charge Counters.

As a **Reloading 2** ability, if the **Starkiller Cannon** has at least **1 Charge Counter** remaining at the start of the **Starkiller's** turn, it may add **1 Charge Counter** and push up to two hostile battlegroups back one range band.

- -

The energy load required to charge a long- or short-spool spinal cannon is tremendous. Canny ship captains can take advantage of excess charge by shunting stored potential energy into emergency shielding, energetic PDCs, reactive wave-armor systems, or even maneuvering thrusters. The tradeoff – a longer charge time – is worth the benefit: survival, at all costs.

TRITON

Capital Ship

HP	30	DEF	6	INTERDICTION	3D6

More mobile defense platforms than proper capital ships, Triton MDPs modified to protect vulnerable spin sections are common among Diasporan orbital defense fleets. Typically assigned to protect strategic high-value targets or as supplementary logistics hubs for extended combat maneuvers, these platforms serve as rallying points for other ships within the fleet, sheltering them within the expansive coverage of their proximity-defense systems.

TACTICS

Highly protected against **PAYLOAD** attacks, **ESCORTS**, and **WINGS**, the **Triton** is a support ship that can lend even more protection to its allies. Its lack of significant offensive capabilities means that it relies on **ESCORTS** to provide its battlegroup with additional firepower. While the **Triton** is well protected against a range of weapons and abilities, it's much more vulnerable to **CHARGE** weapons and boarding actions, and once it drops below half **HP** it becomes much easier to finish it off. **Damage Control Teams** can help keep it above that critical threshold while cycling its **Overlapping Armaments** as needed.

DEFENSIVE CONSTELLATION
Trait

1/round, the **Triton** or an allied **CAPITAL SHIP** may reroll one of its **INTERDICTION** dice, but must keep the second result.

Additionally, as long as the **Triton** is above half **HP**, it takes half damage from **ESCORTS** and **WINGS**. This effect does not apply to damage dealt by boarding actions.

....

Defensive constellation systems are common counter-missile, battery, and kinetic-projectile (C-MBKP) weapons used by large-frame ships and stations to defend against both hostile actors and debris strikes.

DAMAGE CONTROL TEAMS
System, Limited 2, Reloading 2

During the Logistics Phase, the **Triton** may dispatch damage control teams to repair **5 HP** to itself, an **ESCORT** in its battlegroup, or an allied **CAPITAL SHIP**.

....

If a Triton survives its first hit, organic and automated damage control teams hurry to patch, weld, and reinforce: one hit means another will surely follow.

OVERLAPPING ARMAMENTS
Maneuver, Primary
[Range 4–1]

Choose one of the following effects. The Triton may not choose the same effect twice in a row:

- **Missile Batteries (Single-Target, PAYLOAD, 1d6+4 damage):** Up to two of these **PAYLOAD** attacks may be active at a time. Track these **PAYLOADS** individually.
- **Guidance Lasers (Single-Target):** The **Triton** deals **2 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** and **LOCKS ON** to it. It may then remove **1 Flight Counter** from any allied active **PAYLOAD** attack (including its own) targeting that ship or its battlegroup.
- **Asteroid Defense Cannons (Single-Target, Accurate, 6 damage):** On an attack roll of 20+, the Triton may destroy one active hostile **PRIMARY PAYLOAD** attack.

....

Triton defense platforms bristle with layered defenses, presenting a formidable threat to any ships that dare approach them. Missiles, cannons, and other armaments provide safe harbor for those under their protection.

CHAPERONE CLOUD PROJECTOR
Tactic, Reloading 2

The **Triton** fires a chaperone cloud ahead of an allied **CAPITAL SHIP**. This acts as a screen for the ship's trajectory, giving its battlegroup **+1D6 INTERDICTION** and giving **+1 DIFFICULTY** to all single-target attack rolls made against the ship itself until the end of its next turn. The **Triton** then forces a hostile battlegroup to choose one: be pushed back one range band or take **1d6+1 AREA-TARGET damage**.

....

Chaperone clouds are conventional kinetic-kill clouds launched ahead of friendly ships. Flying silent before deployment in long, simple rockets, they split open when activated to reveal broad, quick-spreading clouds of shaped flechettes and impact panels. These chaperone clouds shred incoming projectiles and missiles, countering hostile kinetics with enough of their own opposed energy that they render the debris ineffective against allied armor.

TURTLEBACK

Capital Ship

HP	35	DEF	6	INTERDICTION	1D6

The Turtleback is a heavy battleship, uparmored with additional plating across its dorsal and ventral surfaces, as well as a hardened citadel guarding its core systems. On the scope, it appears solid and imposing: not hard to hit, but hard to kill. More of a rough silhouette and armament designation than a particular hull made by any one shipyard of note, Turtleback-style vessels are common across the galaxy.

TACTICS

The **Turtleback** is a heavily armored ship that is particularly resilient against long-range weapons and capable of providing additional protection to the **ESCORTS** under its command. It's content to trade blows at long range using its **Heavy Kinetic Batteries** and **Swarm Missiles**, but commanders that close the distance will be able to tear into its exposed underbelly. Use **Priority Target** to push aggressive players back so that it can enjoy the protection offered by its **Reinforced Hull**.

REINFORCED HULL
Trait

The **Turtleback** takes half damage from single-target attacks and abilities made from **Range 5-3**.

Of the contemporary approaches to naval defensive measures, armor is perhaps the easiest to employ both strategically and technologically, but the hardest to employ well. Any shipwright can layer additional armor onto a vessel's hull, but such a thing is unlikely to matter much against the cataclysmic forces in play. To truly protect a vessel requires substantial engineering prowess, from the design of the hull's innermost structure to the advanced ablative composites used to encase critical sections. Such protection often comes at the cost of maneuverability, which in turn makes it even more vital that the armor does its job well. In the end, should all of this time, effort, and material expenditure mitigate nothing more than a single long-cycle weapon, then it can be considered well worth the cost.

HEAVY KINETIC BATTERIES
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target
[Range 4-0][6 damage]

This maneuver can attack up to two targets at a time.

Any captain worth their brass knows that space combat is won through trajectories: to defeat your target, fill their flight path with fire.

SWARM MISSILES
Maneuver, Primary, Area-Target, Payload
[Range 4-1][1d6+2 damage]

This maneuver can attack two battlegroups at a time, firing separate **PAYLOAD** attacks that are tracked individually.

Those who say missiles have no place in space combat have never seen how hard they hit.

PRIORITY TARGET
Maneuver

The **Turtleback** pushes a hostile battlegroup within **Range 2-0** back one range band. Until the end of the **Turtleback's** next turn, attacks or abilities targeting its **ESCORTS** have a 50 percent chance of being intercepted. Roll a die or flip a coin to determine this. If an attack or ability is intercepted, the attacker must either abort its attack or ability, wasting its action, or target the **Turtleback** instead (even if the attack or ability could not originally target **CAPITAL SHIPS**).

Quite often, the easiest and most effective way to ensure that enemy commanders prioritize your ship over another during an engagement is to simply interpose your vessel between the two. A commander who hesitates too long to fire is a commander who risks defeat, and so given a choice between firing with high confidence against a less optimal target and holding fire until a more optimal angle presents itself, most will prefer to simply take the shot.

ESCORTS

On their own, **Capital Ships** usually aren't sufficient to truly challenge players. To increase the difficulty of NPC battlegroups and flesh out their capabilities, you should also choose up to three **Escorts** to accompany each **Capital Ship**. A **Capital Ship** may take multiple **Escorts** of the same archetype (e.g., two **Diluvias** or two **Stalwarts**) unless otherwise noted.

Unlike player **Escorts**, NPC **Escorts** have their own **Defense** values, meaning they can be attacked directly with conventional weapons, much like the **Capital Ships** they accompany. Each one also brings some mix of additional attacks, abilities, and systems to their battlegroup. Note that **Superheavy** weapons receive **+1 Difficulty** on attacks against NPC **Escorts**.

Narratively, NPC **Escorts** are generally framed as various types of subline vessels in line with player options, but they can always be reflavored if you wish. For instance, the **Brothers in Arms Escort** could easily be reflavored as a strike frigate accompanying its battlegroup's flagship. However, this reflavoring does not affect the targeting requirements and restrictions of attacks and abilities that affect (or do not affect) **Escorts**.

ESCORT GROUPS

Some **Escorts** are made up of multiple ships. In these cases, their profile lists the **HP** of each ship (i.e., X/Y/Z). **Area-Target** damage is assigned to all ships in an **Escort** group, while single-target damage is assigned to a specific ship in the group, chosen by the attacker. As long as a single ship within a group remains intact, all benefits from that **Escort** persist, including traits, additional maneuvers, and so on, although some will suffer reduced performance if parts of the group are destroyed.

*For example, the **Brothers in Arms Escort** has **8/8 HP**, indicating that it's a pair of destroyers accompanying their **Capital Ship**. If a player deals **3 damage** to the **Escort** with a single-target attack, they choose which one of the two ships takes the damage. Now the **Brothers in Arms** have **8/5 HP**.*

*Later, that same **Escort** takes **5 damage** from an **Area-Target** attack that slips through. This damage is applied to both of the ships' **HP** pools, leaving the **Brothers in Arms** with **3/0 HP**. One of the destroyers has fallen, but the other remains intact and continues to grant its bonuses and abilities to its **Capital Ship** and battlegroup.*

DESTROYED CAPITAL SHIPS

When a **Capital Ship** with multiple **Escorts** is destroyed, one of its **Escorts** is also destroyed (chosen by the attacker). Perhaps it was caught in the explosion, or perhaps it simply flees the battle. Then the other remaining **Escorts** are reassigned to other **Capital Ships** as you see fit. If a **Capital Ship** only has a single **Escort** when it's destroyed, that **Escort** takes **1d6 damage** assigned however you like among the ships in its group, after which you may reassign it to another **Capital Ship**. If all **Capital Ships** are destroyed, all remaining **Escorts** surrender or flee.

SPECIAL TAGS

Some **Escorts** are **Templates**, a special type of **Escort** that directly enhances its **Capital Ship**, modifying that ship's **HP** and **Defense** value directly. **Templates** cannot be targeted or destroyed independently, and cannot be reassigned if their **Capital Ship** is destroyed, as they are essentially a part of that ship. Outside of this, **Templates** still follow the usual rules for **Escorts**, granting the battlegroup they're a part of additional attacks, abilities, and systems (which count as coming from the **Capital Ship**), and an additional **maneuver** or **tactic** each turn in which to use them. Each **Capital Ship** can only ever have one **Template**.

Some **Templates** also come with their own **Wings**, but their commands can still only be used to give orders to the strike craft that come equipped with that specific **Template**. A **Capital Ship** that already has **Wings** can't use the commands that come with those **Wings** to give orders to the **Wings** carried by its **Template**, and vice versa.

Several **Escorts** are also **Unique**, which means there can only be one per battlegroup.

BATTLETHREADS

Escort

HP	10/10	DEF	8	TAGS	UNIQUE

They move alongside the flagship in perfect unison, matching the slightest changes in its course with unerring, inhuman precision. From a distance you could mistake them for just another part of the ship itself, and in a sense that's exactly what they are.

TACTICS

Battlethreads are a good choice for battlegroups looking for more support and control options, especially thanks to **Fleet Appendage** and **Local-Legion Gestalt**. Damaged ships from a **Battlethread** group can be launched at enemies as a powerful **PAYLOAD** attack, though doing so reduces the utility of **Local-Legion Gestalt**. Deciding whether to set one of the ships on a terminal collision course depends on whether you can hang on long enough to squeeze extra value out of it before it is destroyed completely.

FLEET APPENDAGE
Trait

Battlethreads are solid-state ships: critical hits against them count as normal hits instead. Whenever the **Battlethreads**' **CAPITAL SHIP** consumes **LOCK ON** as part of an attack, it gains **+2 ACCURACY** instead of **+1**.

....

The Janus Combine's Battlethread solid-state escorts are "appendage" vessels, meant to pair with a Cornicen solid-state flagship to create a holistic strategic ecosystem – a group of ships that function as a single inorganic mind. Though Battlethreads can be paired with a wide variety of capital ship, the Janus Combine is sparing with their distribution, and so they remain an uncommon sight in most fleets.

LOCAL-LEGION GESTALT
Tactic

Choose one of the following effects for each ship remaining in this **ESCORT** group. Each effect cannot be chosen more than once per use of this tactic:

- **LOCK ON** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**.
- Advance or push back a hostile battlegroup one range band.
- Choose a range band. Until the end of the next **Impact Phase**, hostile battlegroups do not gain any gyre bonuses to **ACCURACY** or damage from being in that range band. The same range band cannot be chosen twice in a row.
- With the rest of its tactical options exhausted, one of the **Battlethreads**' paired units dumps its onboard data to its host ship and sets itself on a collision course. Choose a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**: a ship from this group that has been reduced to half **HP** or less flies straight into the enemy vessel. This counts as a **SUPERHEAVY PAYLOAD** attack **(Range 4-0, 12 damage)**. Once this attack has been launched, the ship chosen from this group is considered destroyed and cannot be recalled.

....

Local-legion gestalt systems allow for partitioned, sublegion networks of NHP- or cogent mind-commanded drones distinct from their parent gestalt. Although there is some command lag between the main legion and its partition, the distributed processing power allows for tactical decision-making many steps ahead of conventional command structures.

BROTHERS IN ARMS
Escort

HP	8/8	DEF	8	TAGS	-

In a well-ordered line, a pair of destroyers slip along the starfield with guns hot and charging, occluding all light behind their sturdy silhouettes.

TACTICS

Brothers in Arms are a simple but effective way to enhance a battlegroup's performance both offensively and defensively during the **Impact Phase**. They have no maneuvers or tactics, which makes them more of a threat that ticks away in the background, forcing players to deal with them or face repeated fire from their **Short-Spool Spinal Guns**. **Tender Comrade** allows them to blunt the damage of CHARGE weapons headed for their CAPITAL SHIP, giving their battlegroup an advantage when exchanging fire.

TENDER COMRADE
Trait

When the **Brothers in Arms' CAPITAL SHIP** is hit by a CHARGE weapon during the **Impact Phase**, one ship from this ESCORT group can intervene. Apply damage from the attack to the intervening ship first. The CAPITAL SHIP then takes any remaining damage.

- -

Will you say that we were brave?

SHORT-SPOOL SPINAL GUNS
Charge, Superheavy, Single-Target, Charge 2
[Range 4–1][12 damage]

If there is only one ship remaining in this ESCORT group, this weapon does **6 damage** instead of **12**.

- -

Reliable as the sunrise and tuned for a quick charge, minimal maintenance, and decent punch, GMS 3SG cannons are the galactic standard for subline escorts and low-gross ships of the line.

DAGGERFLIGHT
Escort

HP	6/6/6/6	DEF	10	TAGS	-

Breaking from the signature screen of their flagship, a squadron of low and fast corvettes flit toward your line. Like daggers, they angle directly for the heart of your fleet.
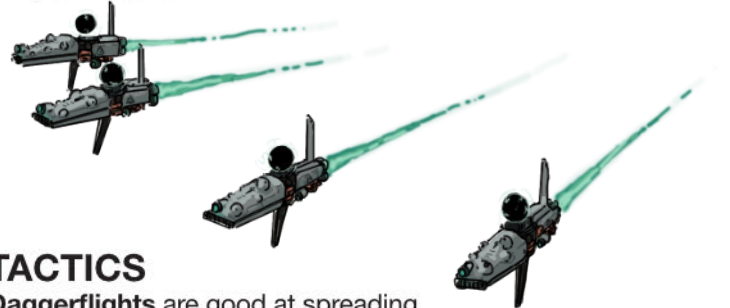
TACTICS

Daggerflights are good at spreading damage around. When used in concert with other **Daggerflights**, their **Battery Fire** can pose a serious threat to enemy forces. For that reason, care should be taken not to overuse them, though their firepower does diminish as ships in their ESCORT group are destroyed. **Draw Fire** is a potent defensive option that sacrifices the **Daggerflight's** future offensive capabilities in exchange for taking hits meant for the CAPITAL SHIP.

BATTERY FIRE
Maneuver

For each ship remaining in this ESCORT group, deal **2 damage** to a different CAPITAL SHIP or ESCORT within **Range 3–0**.

- -

There is no replacement for the power of massed guns, only refinement upon sound principle.

DRAW FIRE
Tactic

The **Daggerflight** group takes up a formation to draw incoming fire away from its battlegroup. Until the end of its next turn, all non-CHARGE single-target attacks made against the battlegroup must target the **Daggerflight** as long as it has ships remaining. During the next **Impact Phase**, one ship from this ESCORT group may be sacrificed to reduce the incoming damage from a single-target PAYLOAD attack targeting another ship in the battlegroup by an amount equal to the **HP** of the sacrificed ship. If the **Daggerflight** is completely destroyed, this effect immediately ends.

- -

The dagger draws the eye; the killer strikes from elsewhere.

DEN MOTHER
Escort

HP	+5	DEF	+0	TAGS	TEMPLATE

It's a beast of a ship, the hangar nacelles on either side giving its hull a predatory look. At its command flights of mounted chassis streak from its decks, ready to rain fire down on its enemies before ripping them apart from the inside.

TACTICS

The **Den Mother Template** turns any CAPITAL SHIP into a carrier, giving it a mix of midrange offensive capabilities and punishing boarding options. The mounted chassis wings granted by **External Flight Decks** may not last long, particularly if they perform the **Detonate Ship's Magazines** command, but when enough of them have been destroyed the **Den Mother's** CAPITAL SHIP gains a second wind that can help carry it through the rest of the fight.

EXTERNAL FLIGHT DECKS
Trait

The **Den Mother** carries a complement of four mounted chassis WINGS (**5 HP** each, BOARDING, TENACITY 11, **Range 3–0**). When the **Den Mother** is reduced to one or fewer WINGS, its CAPITAL SHIP gains **5 OVERSHIELD**.

. . . .

The addition of externally mounted flight decks is a common modification for many capital-tier hulls, granting any such ship the ability to house and launch strike craft. Such modifications can also, in extreme circumstances, be put to use as an additional layer of ablative armor.

SCRAMBLE ALL PILOTS!
Tactic

The **Den Mother** scrambles up to two of its mounted chassis WINGS and gives them each one of the following commands (either the same or different):

- **Shipbreakers:** Deal **1d3 damage** to a hostile CAPITAL SHIP or ESCORT.
- **Can Opener:** This WING boards a hostile CAPITAL SHIP. During the **Boarding Phase**, issue it one of the following commands and then roll 1d20, succeeding on an 8+:
  - **Eliminate HVTs:** The boarded ship cannot use or benefit from any weapons, systems, or abilities that grant additional maneuvers or tactics to itself or its allies until the end of its next turn, and its battlegroup can only use one maneuver or one tactic during its next turn. These effects immediately end when this Wing is repelled.
  - **Detonate Ship's Magazines:** The boarded ship takes damage equal to the WING's remaining HP and makes all single-target attack rolls with **+1** DIFFICULTY until the end of its next turn. This WING is then immediately destroyed.

If this boarding roll doesn't succeed, the **Den Mother** may attempt it each **Boarding Phase** until it either succeeds or the boarded ship repels the boarders.

. . . .

"All pilots, all pilots, report to your flight decks and prepare for immediate launch. This is not a drill, repeat, this is not a drill. Enemy contact imminent. All pilots, all pilots, report to your flight decks and prepare for immediate launch…"

DILUVIA

Escort

HP	18	DEF	8	TAGS	-

A seething, boiling mass spills across your CIC. Your legion hurries to particularize the signatures – within moments, it returns what was already clear: it is a flood, a diluvian wave of drones heading toward your fleet.

TACTICS

The **Diluvia** is a drone swarm that trades its **HP** to make use of a potent assortment of abilities. While not difficult to hit, it is difficult to damage with single-target effects, forcing opponents to waste additional time whittling it down to reduce the number of times it can be used.

ENDLESS TIDE
Trait

The **Diluvia** takes half damage from single-target attacks and abilities.

How can you fight the ocean?

DRONE CONTROL
Tactic

The **Diluvia** takes **3 damage** and performs one of the following commands:

- **Swarm Wall:** The **Diluvia** produces a line of defensive drones that orbit its **CAPITAL SHIP** or an allied **CAPITAL SHIP**. Until the end of that ship's next turn, single-target attacks against it receive **+1 DIFFICULTY**.
- **Engulf:** Apply **3 Greywash Counters** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP** within **Range 4-0**.
- **Lashing Storm:** Deal **1d6 damage** to a hostile **ESCORT** within **Range 4-0**.

Alone, they're too small to be picked up by anything other than specialized sensors; together, they can blot out the stars.

GIANT

Escort

HP	+20	DEF	-2	TAGS	TEMPLATE

It is colossal, a ship that may as well be a world. You order all of your guns to target the behemoth – there is nothing else to do but fire and hope.

TACTICS

The **Giant Template** is ideal for turning a **CAPITAL SHIP** into a titan that serves as the centerpiece of a fight. Its penalty to **DEFENSE** is offset by a significant **HP** increase, and while the **Giant** provides no maneuvers or tactics, **Impossible Power** allows its **CAPITAL SHIP** to make up for it with additional actions during its turn. Meanwhile, the **Tyrant Cannon** hangs over the battle like a sword, capable of outright destroying even undamaged battleships in a single blow once it finally finishes charging, forcing enemies to consider their target priorities carefully.

IMPOSSIBLE POWER
Trait

1/round, this **CAPITAL SHIP** may use an additional maneuver or tactic during its turn. At the start of the **Logistics Phase**, it can permanently disable this trait for the remainder of battle to remove **1 Charge Counter** from the **Tyrant Cannon** and **1 Refresh Counter** from all maneuvers, tactics, and systems belonging to this **CAPITAL SHIP**.

This ship is capable of powering continents – if only its great reactors and engines could be used for such a peaceful endeavor.

TYRANT CANNON
Charge, Superheavy, Single-Target, Charge 4, Critical, Reliable 10
[Range 5–4][30 damage]

There is no beast more terrible than the tyrant who knows their own power.

LOYAL GUARDIAN

Escort

HP	20	DEF	8	TAGS	UNIQUE

Like a mirror in motion, the two ships arc across the edge of your scopes. Identical heat signatures, identical silhouettes – the only differences between the enemy flagship and its guardian are superficial. In every way that matters, they function as one.

TACTICS

The **Loyal Guardian** is a unique bodyguard designed to accompany a **Capital Ship** and protect it with its life. **Pavise Formation** helps mitigate the impact of critical hits by spreading damage out between the **Loyal Guardian** and its **Capital Ship**, and should the **Capital Ship** be destroyed prematurely then the **Loyal Guardian** takes over, essentially becoming the **Capital Ship** to continue the fight. **Retribution Salvo**, meanwhile, is a fearsome deterrent against directly attacking the **Capital Ship**, forcing enemies to either focus their fire upon the **Loyal Guardian** or risk significant damage in return.

PAVISE FORMATION
Trait

Whenever the **Loyal Guardian's Capital Ship** is critically hit, divide the attack's damage evenly between it and the **Loyal Guardian**. When the **Loyal Guardian's Capital Ship** is destroyed, set its **HP** to the **Loyal Guardian's** remaining **HP** and destroy the **Loyal Guardian** instead.

- -

No shield more gallant than one's own body.

RETRIBUTION SALVO
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target, Accurate
[Range 4–1][3 damage]

When the **Loyal Guardian's Capital Ship** takes damage from a hostile source, the next attack with this maneuver deals **+5 damage** on hit. When the **Loyal Guardian's Capital Ship** is critically hit, the next attack with this maneuver gains the **Critical** tag.

. . . .

No sword more deadly than one's own wrath.

MASTERMIND

Escort

HP	+0	DEF	+0	TAGS	TEMPLATE

They saw this battle coming. They planned for it, simulated it, a thousand variables all accounted for before the first shot is even fired. All that remains now is the satisfaction of witnessing everything unfold as predicted.

TACTICS

The **Mastermind Template** puts an especially canny commander in command of a **Capital Ship**, granting it a variety of special tactics to pit against its enemies. **Strategic Insight** is a flexible tactic that can be used to disrupt enemies or enhance allies, but **Perfect Timing** is perhaps its most impactful ability, allowing the **Mastermind** to summon reinforcements directly into battle. Unlike other **Templates**, **Mastermind** doesn't grant any additional **HP**, which means its **Capital Ship** may require additional defensive measures to continue leading and coordinating its battlegroup effectively.

STRATEGIC INSIGHT
Tactic, Reloading 2

Choose one:

- Add or remove **1 Flight Counter** from any active allied **Payload** attack, including those of this battlegroup.
- Until the end of this **Capital Ship's** next turn, it or an allied ship may reroll one attack, but must keep the second result.
- A hostile battlegroup of this **Capital Ship's** choice must choose one: be advanced or pushed back one range band or a **Capital Ship** of this ship's choice in that battlegroup takes **1d6 damage** and gains **Lock On**.

. . . .

"All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when we are able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must appear inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near."
– Sunzi, The Art of War, Massif-A Reconstruction

PERFECT TIMING
Tactic, Limited 1

This **Capital Ship** or an allied one immediately gains any one non-**Template**, non-**Unique Escort**, which emerges from a hidden position or arrives from nearlight. That **Escort** may act as normal on the same turn it enters play, and it may also immediately use one maneuver or tactic chosen by its assigned **Capital Ship** for free.

- -

"Checkmate."

ROUGHNECKS

Escort

HP	8/8	DEF	10	TAGS	-

A pair of boarding barges – subcapital ships loaded with troops. Say a prayer for the poor souls waiting to take that long ride across the airless gap, but be ready to meet them once they carve their way through your hull.

TACTICS

**Roughnecks** are a general-purpose boarding Escort that launches wave after wave of marine landers to disrupt and disable enemy ships from the inside. **Point-Defense Kinetics** help protect them from targeted attacks while granting their battlegroup an additional layer of Interdiction, but the **Roughnecks** main strength is their ability to inflict debilitating effects on opposing ships using **First On, Last Off**. Remember that as long as both ships in this Escort group remain intact, you can use one tactic to launch boarders against two targets at the same time.

POINT-DEFENSE KINETICS
Trait

The **Roughnecks** grant their battlegroup **+2 Interdiction**. Whenever an Escort or Wing damages the **Roughnecks**, deal **2 damage** to the attacker.

- -

Fast-tracking point-defense cannons on gimbaled mounts provide total coverage from all angles of approach, blanketing proximal space with unrelenting barrages of fire.
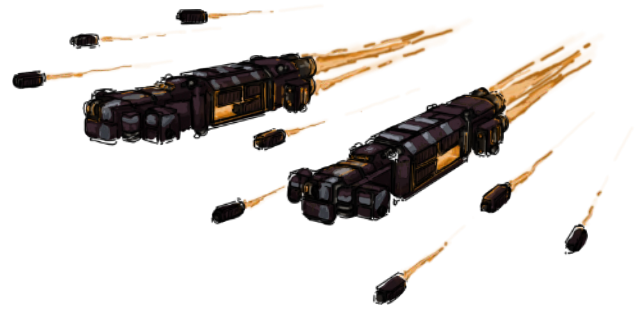
FIRST ON, LAST OFF
Tactic, Boarding
Range 3-0, Tenacity 10

The **Roughnecks** launch boarding landers, targeting one hostile Capital Ship for each ship remaining in this Escort group. During the **Boarding Phase**, issue each lander one of the following commands and then roll 1d20, succeeding on 8+:

- **Disable Primary Drives:** The boarded ship's battlegroup cannot voluntarily move or benefit from allied effects that would allow it to move until the end of its next turn. Hostile effects which force it to move – such as those belonging to this battlegroup and its allies – continue to work.
- **Sabotage Fire Control:** The boarded ship's single-target attack rolls receive **+2 Difficulty** until the end of its next turn.
- **Deploy Ontologic Payload:** Choose one: the boarded ship cannot use or benefit from any Legionspace weapons, upgrades, or abilities until the end of its next turn or the boarded ship's Escorts and Wings are disabled until the end of its next turn (deployed boarders may continue to operate as normal). At the start of its next turn, the affected ship may ignore this effect by taking **5 damage** that ignores Overshield and can't be prevented in any way.

If this boarding roll doesn't succeed, the **Roughnecks** may attempt it each **Boarding Phase** until it either succeeds or the boarded ship repels the boarders.

The **Roughnecks** may have one ship boarded at a time for each ship remaining in its Escort group.

- -

For marines, the order to commence boarding operations is a grim inevitability. Boarding actions have a steep casualty rate, even for the victors, but by seizing control of an enemy ship they have a chance to prevent even greater casualties as a result.

STARFIELD FURIES

Escort

HP	10/10	DEF	8	TAGS	-

Your battlescape blooms with contacts and torch signatures. Confirmed, a moment later: a pair of escort carriers fly in formation with the flagship, disgorging dozens of strike craft.

TACTICS

Starfield Furies are a flexible, no-nonsense carrier **Escort** option. Suited for close-range engagements, their fighters and bombers provide a versatile selection of tactics to choose from, and while both ships in the group remain intact they can administer repairs to their strike craft as needed. To increase the chances of **Nuclear Option** doing significant damage, it is best used against ships in battlegroups with limited Interdiction. Meanwhile, **Interceptor Screen** can prove invaluable when defending against incoming **Payload** attacks.

WING COMMANDER
`Tactic`

The **Starfield Furies** scramble their **Wings** and give one of the following commands. Each command specifies which type of **Wing** – fighters or bombers – are sent to carry it out, and if those **Wings** have been destroyed then those commands can't be used:

- **Fast Movers (fighters only, Range 2-0):** Up to two fighter **Wings** deal **2 damage** each to a hostile **Escort** or **Wing** and take **2 damage**. Different targets can be chosen for each.
- **Interceptor Screen (fighters only):** The **Starfield Furies'** battlegroup gains **+1 Interdiction** until the end of its next turn for each fighter **Wing** remaining in this **Escort** group.
- **Tactical Strike (bombers only, Range 2-0):** Deal **2 damage** to a hostile **Capital Ship** for each bomber **Wing** remaining in this **Escort** group.
- **Nuclear Option (bombers only, Reloading 3, Range 2-0):** Deal **1d6+1 damage** to a hostile **Capital Ship** for each bomber **Wing** remaining in this **Escort** group, and each bomber **Wing** takes **3 damage**. This command's damage can be **Interdicted**.

"Preflight checks are green across the board, mag cats locked and set. All pilots, tower advises caution due to heavy enemy presence, multiple capital ships and strike craft. Watch for debris. Launching in 3... 2... 1..."
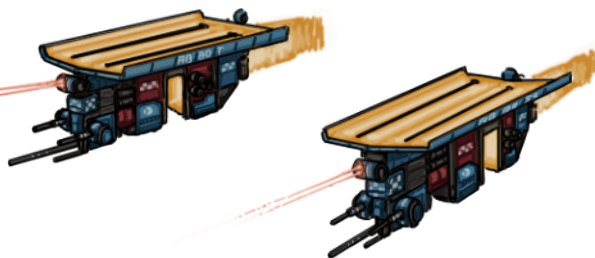
ANGELS OF DEATH
`Trait`

Each ship in the **Starfield Furies Escort** group carries two fighter **Wings** (**5 HP** each) and one heavy bomber **Wing** (**6 HP**). 1/round when the **Starfield Furies'** **Capital Ship** performs a maneuver, repair **3 HP** to one of this **Escort's** **Wings**. This ability can only be used as long as both ships in this **Escort** group remain active.

Wings upon wings of fighters and bombers dive toward your ship. Some erupt, caught in your PDC screen, but enough break through and begin their gun run...

STALWARTS

Escort

HP	10/10	DEF	8	TAGS	-

Aged and ironed, these cruisers burn bright against the night's backdrop. They may not be as modern, but their hulls are sturdy and their weapons are still fearsome enough to present a significant threat.

TACTICS

Stalwarts are a well-rounded **Escort** option that adds several attack actions to battlegroups that otherwise lack them. **Forward Kinetic Batteries** is a basic single-target attack with some movement to go along with it, while **Longbow Torpedoes** provide any **Capital Ship** the ability to launch **Payload** attacks. This pairs well with other **Payload** weapons, allowing battlegroups to coordinate volleys meant to overwhelm enemy defenses.

FORWARD KINETIC BATTERIES
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target
[Range 3-0][5 damage]

While both ships remain in this **Escort** group, it may advance a hostile battlegroup within **Range 5-4** one range band forward before or after making this attack.

Fixed forward kinetic batteries lack the punch of long-spool weapons or the coverage of turreted designs, but their stable housing allows for continued fire even while approaching the enemy at speed.

LONGBOW TORPEDOES
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target, Payload –1
[Range 4-2][6 damage]

While both ships remain in this **Escort** group, this weapon can attack two targets at a time, firing separate **Payload** attacks that are tracked individually.

Fired in volleys designed to overwhelm enemy point defenses through sheer numbers, subcapital torpedoes frequently trade the sheer killing power of capital-grade munitions for speed and maneuverability, allowing them to more quickly achieve positive effect on targets.

WARDOGS

Escort

HP	8/8	DEF	10	TAGS	-

They bolt on to your battlescape from an uncharted trajectory, sending your escorts scrambling to reorient. Two destroyers, sleek and slim, their weapon ports open and charging. Your blood runs cold – they have you flanked.
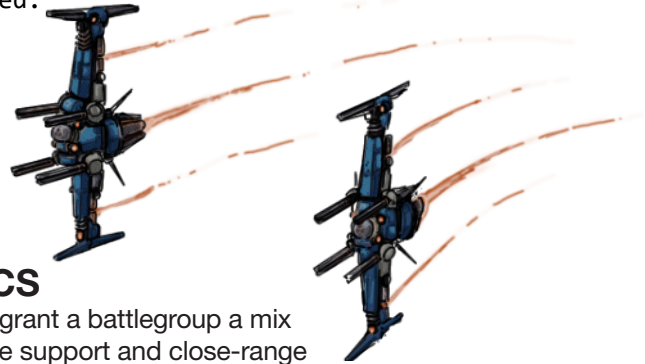
TACTICS

Wardogs grant a battlegroup a mix of all-range support and close-range firepower. At longer distances, **Relay Target Data** allows a battlegroup to **Lock On** to multiple targets at once, while up close their **Rapid-Fire Mass Drivers** make them a powerful weapon against ships of all types.

RAPID-FIRE MASS DRIVERS
Maneuver, Primary, Single-Target, Accurate, Critical
[Range 2-0][5 damage]

The **Wardogs** can either attack with this weapon normally or automatically deal **2 damage** to up to two **Escorts** or **Wings**.

Within closer ranges, volume of fire begins to overtake single-shot accuracy as the primary approach to gunnery. Conical kinetic projectors and kill-cloud munitions are common tools for achieving projectile saturation, but just as common are rapid-fire weapons such as magnetically accelerated mass drivers, capable of tracking and engaging multiple targets without interruption.

RELAY TARGET DATA
Tactic

The **Wardogs** act as a relay for their **Capital Ship's** targeting systems. **Lock On** to one hostile **Capital Ship** for each remaining ship in this **Escort** group.

Telemetry, trajectory, and triangulation are the foundations upon which all effective firing solutions are built.

[UNKNOWN]
Escort

HP	+5	DEF	0	TAGS	-

The only designation your sensors can give you is a single word: UNKNOWN. Silhouette analysis returns an 87 percent match but the broadcast blisters and unfamiliar weapons lining its hull make its purpose, if not its exact capabilities, clear.

TACTICS

A **CAPITAL SHIP** with the **UNKNOWN Template** is outfitted with strange and unfamiliar paracausal technologies. **Metafold Breach** is a potent repositioning tool that allows you to not only move enemies but swap their positions, which can disrupt and disorient carefully planned battle lines, while the **Naophoros Omnigun** scales up in damage as the fight goes on. This weapon's output begins low and seemingly unthreatening, but as ships take more damage over the course of a fight it becomes harder and harder for them to operate without being destroyed by it.

NAOPHOROS OMNIGUN
Charge, Superheavy, Single-Target,
Charge [ERROR]
[Range 5–0]

This weapon is a piece of experimental hardware so advanced that it defies physics. Unlike a normal **CHARGE** weapon, it doesn't have **Charge Counters**. Instead, it adds an **Omnigun Counter** each **Logistics Phase**. During the **Impact Phase**, it deals damage to a **CAPITAL SHIP** or **ESCORT** equal to the number of **Omnigun Counters** it has, to a maximum of **6 damage**. This doesn't count as an attack, hits automatically, and its damage can't be prevented or ignored in any way. No rule in this book or any other supersedes this.

. . . .

The blackness of the sphere stands out even against the backdrop of the void, dark and hungry. It coruscates, contracts, and with terrifying certainty a ship winks out of existence.

METAFOLD BREACH
System

This system can be activated after the **Impact Phase**, but before anyone takes a turn in the **Action Phase**. Choose one: advance or push back a hostile battlegroup one range band or pick two hostile battlegroups up to two range bands apart from one another and force them to switch range bands. Switching range bands this way does not count as movement for the purposes of any effect and does not trigger effects that are triggered by movement.

This system may only be used during even-numbered rounds (i.e., round 2, round 4, etc).

. . . .

Space lurches and twists around you, folding in upon itself. The impossible, however improbable, is briefly made possible, and the lines of battle are suddenly redrawn.

ACES

Another way to increase the power of a **Capital Ship's** battlegroup is to assign it an **Ace**. **Aces** are powerful, specialized **Wings** that enhance a battlegroup's capabilities and present memorable threats for players. Like **Escorts**, **Aces** have their own **HP** and their own selection of maneuvers, tactics, traits, and/or systems, which are added to their assigned battlegroup's overall pool of options. Unlike NPC **Escorts**, **Aces** don't have **Defense** values. They can only be affected by weapons and abilities that specifically affect **Wings**; capital-tier weapons simply aren't capable of effectively tracking such nimble targets. **Aces**, like all **Wings**, are also immune to area-target damage.

A **Capital Ship** with an **Ace** assigned to it may make one additional maneuver or use one additional tactic during its turn, which must be one of the ones granted by that **Ace**. Attacks and abilities granted by an **Ace** are considered to have come from it for the purpose of systems and effect triggers. Other abilities, such as traits and systems, can be used whenever they would normally be used. Aces are considered to belong to the **Capital Ship** they're assigned to for the purpose of effects and abilities, but can't be used with any commands that ship might give to its own complement of **Wings**; **Aces** stand apart from the rest.

Each **Capital Ship** can only have one **Ace** assigned to it, and each NPC fleet can only have one instance of each **Ace** at a time. If one **Capital Ship** has a **Solar Valkyrie**, for example, then it cannot take any other **Aces**, and no other battlegroup in its fleet may take another **Solar Valkyrie**. **Aces** do not count toward a **Capital Ship's Escort** limit.

If an **Ace's Capital Ship** is destroyed, reassign it to another **Capital Ship** that doesn't have one assigned. If there are no remaining **Capital Ships** without assigned **Aces**, or if all **Capital Ships** have been destroyed, then the **Ace** surrenders or flees instead.

ALBEDO CAVALIER

HP	10

Wing
Like a spark dancing atop a flame.

TACTICS

The **Albedo Cavalier** is a volatile **Ace** that gradually builds power in order to unleash devastating attacks against enemy **Capital Ships**. Firing the low-powered **0-Beam** builds up **Heat Counters** that can be used to fire the **1-Beam**. When the **Albedo Cavalier** drops below half **HP**, both of these attacks deal even more damage. A fully charged **1-Beam** from an **Albedo Cavalier** at half **HP** or less can hit as hard as a long-spool weapon, so a damaged **Albedo Cavalier** presents a looming threat if it isn't finished off in time. **Zero-Point Shunt** gives this ace a special place in battlegroups with **Charge** weapons, where it can either borrow some of their power to enhance its survivability or sacrifice itself to rapidly charge them instead.

0-BEAM
Maneuver

The **Albedo Cavalier** deals **1 damage** to a hostile **Capital Ship** or **Escort** within **Range 3–0**, then adds **1 Heat Counter** to **1-Beam**.

Nothing colder.

1-BEAM
Maneuver

This maneuver can have up to **3 Heat Counters** at any one time. The **Albedo Cavalier** deals **3 damage** to a hostile **Capital Ship** within **Range 3–0** for each **Heat Counter** this maneuver has, then clears all **Heat Counters**.

Nothing hotter.

HIGHWIRE ACT
Trait

While the **Albedo Cavalier** is above half **HP**, it reduces all damage it takes from hostile sources by 1, to a minimum of 0. At half **HP** or less, it gains **+2** to all damage it deals.

Deep Well cooling systems, caloric converters, reactor superchargers, aggressive thermal exchangers. Heat is life, and you've never felt more alive.

ZERO-POINT SHUNT
System, Limited 1

At the start of the **Logistics Phase**, if the **Albedo Cavalier** is at half **HP** or less, choose one:

- Add **1 Charge Counter** to a weapon in the **Albedo Cavalier's** battlegroup to repair **5 HP** on the **Albedo Cavalier** and add **1 Heat Counter** to **1-Beam**. If the battlegroup has no **Charge** weapons, its **Capital Ship** may take **5 damage** that ignores **Overshield** and cannot be prevented in any way instead.
- Remove **1 Charge Counter** from a weapon in the **Albedo Cavalier's** battlegroup and destroy the **Albedo Cavalier**.

First developed for use in IPS-N's SMOKESTACK deployable heat sink technology, Titan-Enceladus's zero-point energy transfer systems utilize stable pinhole generators to facilitate the transfer of accumulated waste heat from within a system and deposit it elsewhere. This system can also be used to transfer other forms of energy as well in significant quantities, though doing so runs the risk of catastrophic destabilization.

ENDLESS COSMONAUT

HP 6

Wing

`It does not want to die, and so it does not.`

TACTICS

The **Endless Cosmonaut** is unique in that it cannot ever permanently be destroyed, returning to play each time thanks to its **ASSURE: PERSIST** trait. All of the **Endless Cosmonaut's** other abilities end or reset when it's destroyed, providing incentive to do so but also forcing players to spend time and resources if they wish to keep those abilities in check. This presents a dilemma: should players devote time to destroying it, knowing that it will inevitably return and deal damage to them or their allies in the process, or do they ignore it and allow it to freely use its potent disruptive abilities?

ASSURE: PERSIST
Trait

When the **Endless Cosmonaut** is destroyed, it returns to play at the start of the next **Logistics Phase**. When it returns to play in this fashion, deal **2 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**, **ESCORT**, or **WING** within **Range 4-1**.

```
RUNNING SILHOUETTE ANALYSIS…
RUNNING BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS…
RUNNING COMBAT PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS…
MATCH PROBABILITY: 99.9%
ANOMALY FLAGGED: PRIOR ENGAGEMENT RECORDS
ON FILE
KIA 10.13.4996, KIA 3.25.4998, KIA 3.27.4998,
KIA 7.18.4999, KIA 9.6.4999, [CONT]
```

IMPERATIVE: ATTACK
Maneuver

Deal **1 damage** to a hostile **CAPITAL SHIP**, **ESCORT**, or **WING** within **Range 4-1**. Each time this maneuver is performed, permanently increase its damage by **+1** for the rest of the engagement. All damage increases are lost when the **Endless Cosmonaut** is destroyed.

```
7777777^%&?::I SEE YOU
```

IMPERATIVE: PACIFY
Tactic

Choose a hostile battlegroup within **Range 4-1**: until the end of its next turn, that battlegroup cannot consume **LOCK ON** and cannot use or benefit from **LEGIONSPACE** systems or abilities. This effect ends immediately if the **Endless Cosmonaut** is destroyed.

```
WE'VE DONE THIS DANCE BEFORE::DON'T YOU
REMEMBER::I WILL SHOw7777777 YOU ALL THE STEPS
```

COMMAND: INTERVENE
Tactic

Choose an active hostile **PRIMARY PAYLOAD** attack. If the **Endless Cosmonaut** has not been destroyed by the beginning of the next **Impact Phase**, then both it and the **PAYLOAD** attack are destroyed.

```
IT DID, IN FACT, HAVE TO END THIS WAY::IT'S
ONLY A SEQUENCE OF EVENTS, AFTER ALL::DON'T
WORRY, I'LL SEE YOu7777777 AGAIN SOON^%&¿
```

SOLAR VALKYRIE

HP 10

Wing

In blinding light, unconquered.

TACTICS

The **Solar Valkyrie** is a powerful, straightforward ace best suited for CAPITAL SHIPS and battlegroups that contain other WINGS it can protect with its **Guardian Angel** trait and lead into battle with **Squadron Leader**. **Tactical Missiles** gives CAPITAL SHIPS an additional way to use LOCK ON, while **Last Dance** is a powerful but unpredictable ability that locks the **Solar Valkyrie** and a chosen opponent into a frantic duel with no easy escape.

GUARDIAN ANGEL
Trait

While there are three or more other WINGS remaining in its battlegroup, the **Solar Valkyrie** reduces all damage it takes from hostile sources by 1, to a minimum of 0.

All other WINGS in the **Solar Valkyrie's** battlegroup reduce all damage they take from hostile sources by 1 to a minimum of 0.

Additionally, 1/round, the **Solar Valkyrie** may repair **2 HP** whenever another WING in their battlegroup either repairs **HP** or is destroyed.

....

All for one.

SQUADRON LEADER
Maneuver

The **Solar Valkyrie** deals **3 damage** to a hostile WING within **Range 3–0**. Additionally, up to two WINGS in the **Solar Valkyrie's** battlegroup may perform commands for free.

....

What is a champion without their followers?

LAST DANCE
Maneuver

The **Solar Valkyrie** chooses a hostile CAPITAL SHIP, ESCORT or WING within **Range 3–0** and both parties roll 1d20. CAPITAL SHIPS gain a flat **+1** to this roll. Whoever rolls higher is the winner, and the loser takes **4 damage**. The loser may instead take **2 damage** that cannot be reduced in any way to force this contest to be rerolled. On a tie, the contest immediately ends and both parties take **2 damage**.

....

Every ace pilot knows the moment they call "the last dance". It's that moment when you see your opponent on the scope and they see you, and in that split second you understand that only one of you is flying home. You know it when it happens, and you know there's no turning back from it. All you can do is spin up your guns, open the throttle, and greet your partner with open arms.

TACTICAL MISSILES
Tactic, Reloading 2

Consume LOCK ON from up to two CAPITAL SHIPS within **Range 3–0** and deal **3 damage** to each.

....

"Target is in range, good tone. Missiles away."

Section 4 // Ship Archetypes

[194]

VIGILANT SHEPHERD

HP 10

Wing

Where they fly, death follows close behind.

TACTICS

The **Vigilant Shepherd** escorts and guards PAYLOAD attacks while helping screen its battlegroup against incoming PAYLOAD attacks in turn. **Aggressive Escort** punishes enemies that attempt to deflect and delay your incoming attacks, which can include the **Vigilant Shepherd's** own **MSAC Torpedoes**. The **Sunlighter Targeting Laser** can grant more LOCK ON capability to a battlegroup while accelerating PAYLOADS towards impact, and **Kinetic Clusterguns** provide a blend of offensive firepower and additional Interdiction when necessary.

AGGRESSIVE ESCORT
Trait

1/round, when a hostile battlegroup would add 1 or more **Flight Counters** to an active PAYLOAD attack belonging to the **Vigilant Shepherd's** battlegroup or an allied battlegroup, the **Vigilant Shepherd** may deal **2 damage** to a CAPITAL SHIP of its choice in that hostile battlegroup unless they choose not to add **Flight Counters** to that attack.

. . . .

The good shepherd tends to their flock.

KINETIC CLUSTERGUNS
Maneuver

The **Vigilant Shepherd** deals **2 damage** to a hostile ESCORT or WING within **Range 3–0**, and the **Vigilant Shepherd's** battlegroup gains **+2 INTERDICTION** until the end of its next turn.

. . . .

Light, rapid-firing clusters of kinetic distributors are favored as point-defense systems on larger ships, but can easily be repurposed as trajectory-facing offensive weapons on strike craft.

MSAC TORPEDOES
Maneuver

The **Vigilant Shepherd** consumes LOCK ON from a hostile CAPITAL SHIP within **Range 4-2** to launch a powerful anti-ship torpedo at it. This counts as a PRIMARY single-target PAYLOAD attack that deals **8 damage**. While this PAYLOAD attack is active, the **Vigilant Shepherd** reduces all damage it takes from hostile sources by 1, to a minimum of 0.

. . . .

Multi-stage anti-capital torpedoes are among the most powerful ordnance that strike craft can carry. After using the strike craft's own thrusters as a primary ferrying and positioning stage, MSAC torpedoes are then decoupled and launched on their own power, using a series of high-performance boosters to rapidly accelerate toward their target.

SUNLIGHTER TARGETING LASER
Tactic

The **Vigilant Shepherd** LOCKS ON to a hostile CAPITAL SHIP within **Range 4-2** and removes **1 Flight Counter** from an active PAYLOAD attack belonging to its battlegroup or an allied one. It may deal **1 damage** to that ship as well.

. . . .

Similar to other "hot" targeting lasers employed by capital ships, the Sunlighter is a more compact, strike craft–mounted version favored by forward reconnaissance and scouting elements who use it to help guide munitions onto target while also scoring additional cumulative damage of their own. The laser's output can also be modulated to avoid triggering reactive countermeasures while still providing accurate targeting data as needed.

SECTION 5
THE DAWNLINE INCIDENT

PLACES, EVERYONE

The Dawnline Shore is a proximal expansion zone of densely packed habitable worlds. A rich prize coveted by the Karrakin Trade Baronies and Harrison Armory – two rival interstellar powers nominally subject to Union's hegemony – the Dawnline Shore has previously been a site of conflict, but under Union's Third Committee, the Shore has largely remained a region of peaceful development and colonization. However, as terrestrial states have grown over the centuries, local power struggles have fed into galactic appetites and ambitions. Just as Union prepares to activate the Dawnline Shore's first blink gate, a long-simmering local conflict seems poised to draw the galaxy into its first war between major powers…

There are twelve habitable terrestrial worlds in the Dawnline Shore. Among these is New Creighton, a world long torn between loyalties as it has, at various times, been ruled by either the Karrakin Trade Baronies or Harrison Armory.

In 5016u, a group of Karrakin-aligned states on New Creighton allied together to create a power-sharing bloc called the Concordant Administration. This alliance is comprised of many developing nations and two major second-power nations seeking to create a single world government, which would be able to join Union under the protection of the Karrakin Trade Baronies. In opposition to the Concordant Administration is New Creighton's sole superpower, the Perfect Ministeriat, and its various territories and protectorates on the world. The Perfect Ministeriat also seeks a unified world, but one unified under its banner as a Purview state of Harrison Armory.

In late 5019u, vanguard forces of the Concordant Administration mounted a surprise attack on key installations belonging to the Perfect Ministeriat and its satellite nations. The move drew sharp condemnation from Harrison Armory, which had personnel present in the territories that were attacked, and an immediate rebuke in the form of a series of surgical strikes on Concordant military targets. These strikes killed dozens of Baronic personnel. The Karrakin Trade Baronies responded with its own retaliatory attacks on Ministeriat installations. Diplomatic channels on both ends closed; war began on New Creighton.

Union responded quickly, shutting down the recently activated (and as yet unnamed) Dawnline Shore blink gate to all traffic save for Union-flagged naval ships. Grim forecasts from GALSIM (Union's secret, galaxy-level forecasting and predictions department) noted that the momentum behind this conflict could not be stopped; the war on New Creighton was bound to spiral out into the whole of the Dawnline Shore unless Union immediately intervened. When tasked with predicting the outcome of war across the Dawnline Shore, GALSIM's choir of bicameral artificial intelligences, the Five Voices, entered a state of protective calculation. This was an answer, of a sort: the variables were too complex to model, the outcomes too myriad. Action was necessary. Left with no other choice, the Union Navy dispatched a fleet to a distant front, prepared for war.

Immediately, Harrison Armory and the Karrakin Trade Baronies raced to position their Shoreside forces for maximum advantage while engaged in hot conflict across and above New Creighton from the end of 5019 through 5020u.

The year is now 5021u. Both the Armory and the Baronies have multiple fleets engaged in open combat across the sector as they maneuver to annex worlds they have long desired. In the shadow of their navies, local powers fight along multiple tangled lines of loyalty. Some are pledged to the aubergine banner of the Armory, some to the Baronies, others to Union, and the rest to themselves. Only now does Union arrive in strength, seeking to stop the conflict from growing beyond the stellar borders of the Dawnline Shore.

THE ROAD

The seeds for this latest iteration of an old conflict were planted well before the present day – in the 4600s, when a young Harrison Armory clashed with the expanding Karrakin Trade Baronies. This was the First Interest War: a colonial expansion rush triggered by Union's growing blink network that turned into open conflict between the two powers in the early years of the Third Committee's administration. The war was quick and brutal, ending in a settlement negotiated by Union – negotiations the modern committee views as a misstep, a hurried series of concessions and mollifications made to end a war and enter a peace-through-gritted-teeth, not a just end.

With the First Interest War concluded and Union's attention focused on the inner rings, a second war began, quieter and longer than the first. The Armory and the Baronies, not content with the modest holdings awarded to them by a hegemon whose authority they did not yet recognize, carved up the Dawnline Shore between them. They annexed whole worlds with little more than pledges and assurances made to ThirdComm that they would be stewards, comporting to the standards of this new Union, rather

than colonial masters. While their representatives on Cradle negotiated terms of incorporation, both Harrison Armory and the Baronies oversaw proxy conflicts across the Shore; their diplomatic overtures did not match the reality. To guarantee claims over the worlds they desired, the two powers identified sympathetic local factions and cultivated them as allies using common colonial manipulation tactics: exploitation of local power divisions, massaging of existing factional interests, cultural conditioning through favoritism, granting material rewards to collaborators and sympathizers, and so on.

Union, for its part, was not ignorant of these events for long. Reports from forward-observation probes across the human-inhabited galaxy flowed into the Central Committee, proving what the corpropessimists among the revolutionaries feared: across the galaxy, their utopian revolution had failed. Like a king tide raging inland and then receding, their revolution made a utopia only of the Galactic Core. The Diaspora – the vast majority of humanity – was not yet liberated. Even worse, the Core enjoyed the fruits of Union's labor and gave nothing back. This had to change. Motivated and clear-eyed, ThirdComm began the long, attritional work of reconnecting the galaxy, building a new practice of liberation from the inside out.

In the Dawnline Shore, the Union Administrative Department, acting on orders from CentComm, embarked on a massive infrastructure and administrative integration plan, seeding the populated worlds of the Shore with Union personnel. At first, this was limited to administrative attaches, auxiliary trainers, and various engineering and bureaucratic personnel, then later representatives of the Department of Justice and Human Rights, staff and engineers from the Union Omninet Bureau, and so on. The tide, once recessed, was now creeping back in. The ocean would soon follow.

However, the sudden explosion of hostilities in 5019u threaten everything that ThirdComm has worked so long to repair. Turning from its ancestors in the Second Committee, ThirdComm built a connected galaxy on the back of strict non-interventionist practices and the slow work of offering something better than what came before. Though its beginning was bloody, the ideologues of ThirdComm prioritized stubborn adherence to a distanced approach to reconnection with the rest of the galaxy, assured that the Utopian Pillars would see worlds returned to the fold when they were ready. It has been a long and imperfect process, but one that CentComm's leading parties believe has worked.

The Dawnline Incident threatens to upend that largely peaceful work of integration-by-acceptance. Seeing thing, the Union Navy was dispatched following a contentious, narrow vote orchestrated by a coalition opposed to CentComm's core non-interventionist wing. Union ground, air, and orbital elements in the Dawnline Shore engaged Armory and Baronic targets in combat almost immediately. Union's mandate – to be the "good" tyrant, the kind hegemony, the utopia – is chipped away with each bullet fired. The Central Committee must find an end to this crisis in the Dawnline Shore, and fast: war, horrible though it is, may not be the worst outcome of this conflict.

TRAVEL TIME

If one were to flatten the Dawnline Shore onto a piece of paper, the twelve worlds of the shore and their stars would be arranged roughly in a line, numbered one to 12, from left to right. Though it isn't the Shore's astronomical "center", New Madrassa (DS4) the entry point for most people coming from Union space as it is the beneficiary of the sector's only blink gate. However, it is not uncommon for ships to arrive at the ports of San Simeon (DS9) and Arkady II (DS2) from longer-haul trips across the Long Rim. Though construction of another blink gate isn't planned to begin until the completion of the current gate above New Madrassa, San Simeon will likely be host to the next blink gate, significantly reducing travel times end to end.

Of the worlds in the Dawnline Shore, DS1–DS6 are in closest proximity to one another, with an average subjective travel time of three months between worlds at .9 c nearlight speeds. Between DS6 and DS7 is a gulf of space known as the Palisade Strait, a largely empty sector of space that takes about six months (realtime) to cross before reaching the next cluster of worlds, DS7 through DS12.

End-to-end travel across the Dawnline Shore (departing DS1 and burning for DS12) takes an average of three to four years, realtime, depending on stops, course adjustments, and so on.

PORT OF CALL: DAWNLINE SHORE

It is the early days of 5021u. The Dawnline Shore has gone hot, and the next few months of maneuvering and engagements will decide whether or not the conflict spreads out to the rest of the galaxy.

With the outbreak of fighting on and above New Creighton, Union has shuttered the Shore's sole blink gate, isolating the sector from the rest of the galaxy. The Armory and the Baronies have each sent a fleet to the Shore; if they aren't called off, these fleets will arrive toward the end of 5022u. Meanwhile, ships already traveling through the Long Rim continue to arrive daily. As the gridlock around the blink gate grows more and more desperate, Union struggles to contain the steady flow of ships. Both the Armory and the Baronies have begun using this to their own advantage: omninet comms are still online, and both powers have tapped their contacts in the Rim – pirate groups and Enterprises both (see *The Long Rim* for more information) – to smuggle equipment, personnel, and even ships into the Shore.

This flow of partisans, private security forces, and ordnance is steady, but alone it is not enough to give either side the edge. For the forces of the Baronies, the Armory, and – to a lesser degree – Union already in the sector, their major lifelines are their home ports: heavily defended worlds with established infrastructure and supply lines capable of supporting naval groups.

This section lays out some of the key ports and worlds in the Dawnline Shore that are relevant to this conflict. It includes a brief summary of the primary ports of interest to each faction, some detail on the world itself, and a short list of the defenses in place at the beginning of the campaign.

WORLDS OF THE DAWNLINE SHORE

The table below lists the worlds of the Dawnline Shore (detailed later in this section) and provides a broad overview of their affiliations. These affiliations will help you decide what naval forces are likely to appear where in the course of a campaign.

DESIGNATION	LOCAL/UNION NAME	ARMORY NAME	BARONIC NAME	AFFILIATION
DS1	Wali	Harrison's World	Rosegift	HA
DS2	Barr	Arkady II	Underthrone	HA
DS3	Hadii	Cruz's Landing	Stone Harbor	HA
DS4	New Madrassa	New Madrassa	New Madrassa	Union
DS5	Verdevilla	Emerald Harbor	Viridian	KTB
DS6	Lluvilla	Langley	Longmont	KTB
DS7	Jabal	Montcalhoun	Crowngarden	KTB
DS8	Upper Laurent	Upper Laurent	Upper Laurent	KTB
DS9	San Simeon	San Simeon	San Simeon	KTB
DS10	Maseca	Dosantos	Crossland	KTB
DS11	Mesa	Legionrest	Gloria	KTB
DS12	Odeland	New Creighton	Odeland	HA
R1	Terminal	Solar 3	Solar 3	KTB

DS = Dawnline Shore; **HA** = Harrison Armory; **KTB** = Karrakin Trade Baronies; **R1** = Ring 1. Ring 1 is a partial-ring habitat located at New Madrassa Lagrange 4 and providing power for New Madrassa. It is a KTB mega-engineering project that has been underway since the Second Expansion Period and is currently an independent polity under protection of the KTB.

KEY ARMORY PORTS

HARRISON'S WORLD (DS1)

Harrison's World was the Armory's first territory in the Dawnline Shore. Taken during the First Interest War, it has since been transformed from a failed, desolate colony into a bustling industrial center with a population numbering around 1.2 billion souls. Harrison's World is a common recruitment site for Dawnline Shore–local colonial legions and naval groups, and features one of the only large-scale chassis fabrication facilities in the Shore. DS1 is known as Rosegift by the Karrakin Trade Baronies and Wali by Union. The capital city of Harrison's World is Orontez, and its chief officer is Executive Director Augil deCosta.

LOCAL POWER

Harrison's World is guarded by two defensive satellite (DefSat) constellations located at its northern and southern lines of latitude. DefSat constellations are series of orbital, networked defense platforms built to shield a world from natural threats (debris, asteroids, etc) and hostile forces.

Two Hippolyta-class DefSat constellations:
- Northern Constellation – Tropic of Industry
- Southern Constellation – Tropic of Grit

Harrison's World is defended by two naval battlegroups:
- 1st Harrison's World, Planetwatch
- 2nd Harrison's World, Planetwatch

Harrison's World has three legions on the ground:
- Legion I Orontez
- Legion II Maquinera Industrial
- Legion III Antiomenes

WORLD BRIEFING

Harrison's World has a dominant biome defined by tropical and subtropical grasslands, prairies, savannas, and broadleaf forests. Its cities are mostly clustered around the equator, which enjoys consistent rainfall and off-year monsoons. The Armory's major military presence on Harrison's World is relegated to the southern pole, where desolate high-altitude plains allow for quick shuttle flights between orbit and the world's surface.

Orontez, the capital city of Harrison's World, is a dense metropolis built into and between the columnar islands and islets of a titanic equatorial bay. A popular destination for in-sector naval officers and legionnaires, Orontez is known for its gambling, nightlife, and unique local cuisine, which features bioluminescent dishes sourced from the crustaceans native to Harrison's World's equatorial oceans.

Harrison's World's most important feature is the Maquinera, often just called the Maq, a sprawling, largely automated factory complex as big as a city. The Maq produces roughly 50 percent of all Armory chassis in the Dawnline Shore; as well, it is the primary storage site for the Armory's dormant, in-system NHP cores. It is heavily defended by orbital platforms and ground-based security forces. The Maq is located in the northern hemisphere and is serviced by the nearby city of Antiomenes.

ARKADY II (DS2)

Like its sisters, Harrison's World and Cruz's Landing (DS3; a largely non-industrial center for commerce and diplomacy), Arkady II considered to be fully within the Purview. Much of Arkady II outside of its capital city, Arkady, is a derelict rock dotted with meteorological monitoring stations, power plants, and communication relays. However, Arkady II's poles are rich with water ice; because of this, the world is an important fueling and freshwater site for both Armory vessels arriving from the Long Rim and in-sector naval groups. Arkady II is known as Underthrone by the Karrakin Trade Baronies and Barr by Union. Its capital city is Arkady, and its chief officer is Executive Director Blythe Beck.

LOCAL POWER

As a portable water supply world, Arkady II enjoys a healthy defensive network and a steady stream of naval groups:

- **One Hippolyta-class DefSat constellation**: Ogmios Equatorial
- **One battlegroup-strength detachment on permanent patrol:** 1st Arkady, Planetwatch
- **Additionally, there is a local legion garrison:** Legion I Arkady II.

WORLD BRIEFING

Arkady II's capital city is Arkady, a socket arcology built into and above the world's northern pole. Vast water-ice mining operations spread out from the arcology, reaching deep into the crust ice of the terrestrial poles. This critical endeavor guarantees Armory ships and legions in the Dawnline Shore have a reliable supply of potable water. The city's stepped domes are large enough to modestly increase Arkady II's geometric albedo.

The interior of Arkady proper is primarily residential and urban – it is where the permanent population and those on shore leave live, spend their leisure time, trade, raise new generations, study for their socials, and engage in non-extractive, service, and other professional industries. This is also where the planetary administration keeps its offices, and where the Armory legion keeps its barracks.

Arkady II is one of the few ThirdComm-era worlds built with land-anchored space elevators. The Armory's mission on the world demands industrial commitment, and the installation of heavy-lift elevators was necessary to meet the logistical demands of the Armory's plans for the Dawnline Shore. Both of Arkady's elevators, Polar North and Polar South, link to the Ogmios Equatorial constellation.

KEY BARONIC PORTS

UPPER LAURENT (DS8)

DS8 is the primary Dawnline Shore campus of the House of Stone. Around the size of Cradle, DS8 features a mix of biomes and a rich indigenous history stretching back to the First Expansion Period, well before it was colonized by the Baronies. Now, DS8 hosts the local capital of House di Khayradi, of the House of Stone, and the main garrison of its military force, the Boulder Company. Upper Laurent's population has surged in recent years owing to the significant social, civic, and military investment that the House of Stone has poured into the world, and is now home to a staggering 10 billion. The BUC's main secondary campus is located on Upper Laurent, as are a number of the Federal Karrakin Monarchy's shipyards.

Outside of rawmat and industrial goods, Upper Laurent's primary exports are foodstuffs, spices, textiles, inks, and precious luxury minerals. The House of Stone considers its most important export to be personnel and cultural capital.

All powers active in the Dawnline Shore acknowledge Upper Laurent as the formal name for DS8. Upper Laurent's capital city is Canopy City, and its planetary governor is Stonelord Hermine Atlia, of House Atlia.

LOCAL POWER

Upper Laurent is covered by two polar canopy statites (canopy-style defensive installations unique to the Baronies, often deployed in permanent orbit over polar caps) and an equatorial defense constellation:
- Northern Pole Statite – Canopy Lombard
- Southern Pole Statite – Canopy Constantine
- Equatorial Defense Constellation – EDC I, colloquially called "Le Mur"

Additionally, Upper Laurent has three light-proximity defense installations with picket groups in rotation:
- Cabaret LP1
- Theater LP1
- Opera LP1

Upper Laurent is protected by four battlegroup-strength detachments:
- Naval Group 1 Canopy City
- Naval Group 2 Lombard
- Naval Group 3 Constantine
- Naval Group 4 Laurentine

Upper Laurent is home to the Boulder Company's main garrison in the Dawnline Shore. The company doctrine of the Boulder Company mandates that seven centuries be garrisoned on Upper Laurent at all times, unless a greater mobilization is necessary.

As one of the BUC's major Dawnline Shore campuses (second only to San Simeon), Upper Laurent also has a standing guard of roughly 1 million soldiers, with another 2–3 million in reserve through ignoble readiness programs.

WORLD BRIEFING

In many ways, Upper Laurent is the opposite of the House of Stone's homeworld, Khayradin. Lush and not yet picked over by centuries of extractive resource harvesting, Upper Laurent enjoys a healthy flow of tourists and pleasure craft in addition to military traffic.

Canopy City, in the north, is the primary garrison for the Boulder Company. It also serves Canopy Lombard, Upper Laurent's northern statite.

Constantinopolis, in the southern hemisphere, serves Canopy Constantine and houses the primary BUC garrison on Upper Laurent.

Laureline is an autonomous commune spread across an archipelago of hundreds of islands in Upper Laurent's equatorial sea. It is one of the few vassal-states in the Baronies that retains its own governors and limited sovereignty.

SAN SIMEON (DS9)

San Simeon is the center of Baronic power in the Shore, a Core-status world with a single state, the self-styled House of Promise, which is currently in the process of becoming the Baronies' newest major house. The House of Promise is comprised of minor houses founded in the Dawnline Shore during the first Baronic expansion into the sector along with a minority of recent immigrant houses.

With a population of around 6 billion on a world only 90 percent the diameter of Cradle, San Simeon is a densely populated planet, heavily trafficked by Baronic personnel from all major houses. The bulk of the Baronic naval forces in the sector count San Simeon as their home port, and its orbital structures are heavily defended by layers of gun platforms, orbital defense ships, and BUC naval groups on rear-line duty.

DS9 is known as San Simeon by all powers active in the Dawnline Shore. Its capital city is Ignatius, and its planetary governor is Governor Gaizka Otxoz. As Governor Otxoz is a Karrakin Republican, they do not belong to any minor house but are an elected representative of the House of Promise.

LOCAL POWER

San Simeon is protected by multiple layers of orbital defenses. Two canopy statites cover the poles and a mobile statite orbits the equator. Five light-proximity defensive installations patrol the world's orbital space (three at LP1 and two at LP2)

Three canopy statites:
- Northern Pole Statite – Canopy Promise
- Southern Pole Statite – Canopy Fortune
- Mobile Equatorial Statite – Canopy Singer Equatorial

Five light-proximity installations:
- Antzerkia LP1
- Dantza LP1
- Aretoa LP1
- Kluba LP2
- Kluba 2 LP2

San Simeon is protected by four battlegroup-strength detachments:
- Naval Group 1 Ignatius
- Naval Group 2 Baliza
- Naval Group 3 Ruia
- Naval Group 4 Baratzeak

San Simeon is a common R&R stop for house company forces rotating in and out of the Shore. At any given time, it plays host to several centuries from any of the house companies deployed to the Dawnline Shore.

San Simeon is not just a second-line deployment site for BUC ground and naval forces in the Shore, but the BUC's single largest recruitment base in the sector. Around 1 million active-duty BUC soldiers – a mix of local troops and those on deployment from the Concern – are garrisoned on San Simeon, with another 3–4 million reservists within reactivation windows.

WORLD BRIEFING

San Simeon's capital city is Ignatius. Located in the world's southern hemisphere, Ignatius is known for its ten peaks and its wide bay. The governing bodies of the House of Promise keep their main administrative buildings in Ignatius.

The other major cities on San Simeon are Baliza, Euria, Zuhaitz Altuak, and Baratzeak. Most cities are located between the world's tropics; Zuhaitz Altuak is the only major city in San Simeon's northern hemisphere.

San Simeon's major civilian spaceports are stationed above Ignatius and Euria. The BUC has a heavy presence in Baliza, where it keeps the majority of its chassis and armor fleets. Representatives of the major houses can be found in all of San Simeon's cities.

A loose ring of BUC airdocks and shipyards encircle San Simeon; military personnel use these stations as their primary starports.

GLORIA (DS11)

Gloria is the Shoreside capital of the House of Remembrance and a popular destination for representatives of the minor houses looking to curry favor with House Alexander, the minor house that rules the House of Remembrance back on Arrudye. Once a burgeoning trade capital in proximity to the Long Rim, Gloria was bitterly contested during the First Interest War. The series of battles fought across and above Gloria were some of the first to pit early Armory legions against pre-chassis house companies. The world was devastated by these battles, its indigenous populations and rich biomes scoured by long, attritional ground warfare. In the wake of the First Interest War, Gloria has been rebuilt, but scars remain, and its position as a strategically important source of fresh water and air has only been heightened by the BUC's campaign of militarization on the world.

Gloria has a population of 1.2 billion, and is known to the Armory as Legionrest, and to Union as Mesa. Gloria's capital city is Riyya, and its planetary governor is High Lord Vysia Alexander, of House Alexander.

LOCAL POWER

San Simeon is protected by multiple layers of orbital defenses, screening the world from high orbit to low. These static installations are bolstered by a high rotation of inbound Karrakin fleets, as well as four local native battlegroups and plentiful ground forces.

Three canopy statites:
- Northern Pole Statite – Canopy Gloria
- Southern Pole Statite – Canopy Alexander
- Mobile Equatorial Statite – Canopy Crimson Orbital

Six light-proximity installations:
- Casilda LP 1
- Oriol LP 1
- Didacus LP 2
- Isidore LP 2
- Theodemer LP 3
- Olegarius LP 3

Gloria is protected by four battlegroup-strength detachments:
- Naval Group 1 Riyya
- Naval Group 2 Riyya
- Naval Group 3 Aumberjede
- Naval Group 4 Aumberjede
- Naval Group 5 Hannagloria

Gloria is home to the main base for the House of Remembrance's house company, the Crimson Memory, as well as the BUC's primary shipyard, central armory, and NHP repository in the Dawnline Shore. As such, it is heavily defended by the BUC, with many layers of orbital defense platforms and planetside hardened bunkers.

WORLD BRIEFING

Gloria bears the scars of an old war and the industry of the next. Its population is concentrated in three major cities: Riyya, Aumberjede, and Hannagloria, all founded by House Alexander after the First Interest War. House Alexander's main campus on Gloria is in Riyya. The federal Karrakin government maintains offices and war colleges in Aumberjede and Hannagloria.

Deconstruction continues in Gloria's old capital, Mesa City, which was all but leveled during the war. Much of the continent is still crossed with old trench lines and crater lakes; salvage is a thriving industry, though dangerous. Those ruins not scheduled for deconstruction and salvage have been converted to BUC mock-fire training and acclimatization grounds for recruits from the Dawnline Shore and new arrivals to the region.

KEY UNION PORTS

DLS BLINK GATE (BLINK 1)

The Dawnline Shore's newly completed blink gate awaits a formal name: for now, it is informally called Blink 1. The blink gate is a ThirdComm standard pattern: a stack of toroid habitats built around a realspace anchor, which is tethered to a stabilized dyson panel. The toroid habitats are known collectively as "Beachhead Station". The functional components are the realspace anchor and the dyson panel, the latter of which powers the station and its blink infrastructure. Blink 1 has sufficient capacity to transit thousands of ships per day, if it were active. Likewise, its skyscraper-stack toroid habitat rings could house roughly twenty million souls at capacity. Its local population currently numbers in the low millions (not counting military personnel), with only one of the six toruses active. The civil director of Blink 1 is Colette Saunier.

Blink 1 and its immediate environs represent Union's zone of control in the Dawnline Shore. With access to the gate limited only to Union vessels and the facility itself under Union command, it is a constant, active terminal for all auxiliary and regular personnel in transit between their gates of origin and the Shore; it is heavily defended by both dedicated patrols and whatever battlegroups happen to be in local space.

Despite the isolation of the gate from the greater blink network, non-Union ships still arrive at Beachhead almost daily via conventional travel. Transit corridors through the Long Rim aren't "closed" – it is, essentially, impossible to close space – but Union attempts to track and intercept all ships inbound to the Shore. This steady accumulation of civilian and corpro vessels at Beachhead is a logistical nightmare for Union, and some ships, inevitably, break through the blockade. The Armory and the Baronies both use this to their advantage, directing friendly elements in the Long Rim to smuggle supplies, personnel, ordnance, and ships into the Shore.

LOCAL POWER

Blink 1 features a robust defensive suite tasked with covering incoming Union and civilian ships, as well as a number of battlegroups and a persistent legion. The commanding officer of Union's naval forces in Dawnline Shore is Vice Admiral Noe Estienne. The gate has the capacity to dock and support two more battlegroup-strength forces, and to transport at least two more battlegroups per day into the Dawnline Shore. Local defenses include:

- **Portcullis Garrison:** A network of three free-orbit defense platforms, which provide additional firepower alongside forward coordination and guidance for station-mounted batteries.
- **Spikenet EWAR Installation:** Spikenet installations are Union signals intelligence and electronic warfare facilities, commanded by a persistent legion and a corps of synthetic and organic operatives.

Additionally, Blink 1 has two battlegroups assigned to the station:
- Battlegroup Griffon
- Battlegroup Thunder

WORLD BRIEFING

Blink-1 is a self-contained station, and as such has few (siloed-off) biomes. The bulk of the station's mass is given over to the maintenance, generation, and day to day running of the blink station; its habitable area is miniscule in comparison.

The population centers of the station are the habitable, spin-gravity toroids built around the station's realspace anchor. There are six toroids stacked on top of each other, numbered one through six. These habitats hold the entirety of the local and transient population of the station, as well as all maintenance, administrative, commercial, logistical, and infrastructural facilities. There are two ports on the station: one on Toroid 1, the currently populated toroid, and another at Toroid 6, which has recently been opened to handle the influx of refugees and military personnel from all sides.

NEW MADRASSA (DS4)

New Madrassa is a fulcrum world in the Shore and the closest world in proximity to Union's new blink gate, Blink 1. New Madrassa's capital city, Avicenna, is home to around 21 million people. New Madrassa's sovereign government is called New Madrassa United (NMU), a metagovernment that acts as a high-level legislative body for various constituent states across the globe.

Before the outbreak of hostilities on New Creighton, New Madrassa was in the process of petitioning for Core status. As such, it hosts diplomatic and military representatives from both Harrison Armory and the Karrakin Trade Baronies on opposite sides of Avicenna. The Armory has carved out a walled "green zone" across parts of Avicenna's Alhambra and Old Town districts. The Baronies have an embassy in Avicenna's Averroe district, on the opposite side of the city.

Union, the Armory, and the Baronies all know DS4 by the name New Madrassa, and it is governed by Premier Adham Radi.

ORBITAL DEFENSES

New Madrassa is defended by a constellation of defense platforms and skyhooks strung around the equator and cap stations at its north and south pole. Additionally, New Madrassa is defended by a planetary defense force with a small navy, as well as a Union battlegroup.

- The NMU Dayside Defense Fleet (DDF) is New Madrassa's first-line "lightsky" orbit fleet, tasked with defense of the world in low, medium, and high orbits, as well as limited local-space patrol. The DDF fields a battlegroup-equivalent force of GMS ships comprising frigates, two carriers, one battleship, and a number of subline squadrons.
- The NMU Nightside Defense Fleet (NDF) is New Madrassas's reserve force, made up largely of older subline ships, heavy fighter wings, and mil-spec civilian vessels. Old but operational, NDF units either operate in support of DDF ships engaged in low- to medium-orbit operations or on their own as a low- to medium-orbit police and search and rescue force.
- Battlegroup Palladium, a Union battlegroup, is currently assigned to the defense of New Madrassa.

WORLD BRIEFING

The Armory's main foothold on New Madrassa is Green Zone Alhambra, an eight by eight kilometer block across the Alhambra and Oldtown districts of Avicenna. It is centered around the Grand Stupa Royal Hotel, an Armory-owned luxury resort near the city's bay, and access is prohibited to anyone not cleared by the Armory's legionnaires or internal security forces. Citing a responsibility and right to protect Armory personnel from attack, the Armory has begun to dispatch "counterterrorism" patrols out into New Madrassa. This has prompted widespread protests and calls for NMU to respond with force.

Green Zone Alhambra's checkpoints are under constant pressure from permanent protest camps set a few hundred meters back from the gates. The situation is steadily deteriorating as the Ungratefuls and other local resistance groups have become more brazen in their attacks on Armory personnel and the green zone itself. Likewise, Armory patrols have become far more aggressive, and there have been some instances of Armory legionnaires trading fire with ground troopers from the Boulder Company – House of Stone security forces employed by the Baronic embassy. Union has yet to mount a ground campaign beyond peacekeeping and civil support forces, but speculation assumes that some measure of intervention is imminent.

The primary Baronic presence on New Madrassa is in Baron Hardy Plaza, a quiet, open campus in Avicenna's Averroe district, almost on the opposite side of the city from Green Zone Alhambra. Baron Hardy Plaza is a public park in the wealthy Khamseen neighborhood, overlooked by the historic Plaza House estate, which now serves as the Baronic embassy on New Madrassa. Unlike the embattled Green Zone Alhambra, Baron Hardy Plaza and the embassy are both heavily, peacefully trafficked by Madrassans and Baronic personnel both. Viceroy Hardy-Alto is the Baronic ambassador on New Madrassa; he keeps Plaza House as his ambassadorial residence.

Madrassa Uplift is New Madrassa's main spaceport, located around 100 km outside of Avicenna. Madrassa Uplift also hosts Camp Crown, the main BUC base on New Madrassa. Camp Crown is a joint base, hosting NMU security forces, BUC soldiers, and dragoons from the Boulder Company. Despite hosting Camp Crown, Madrassa Uplift is not a military spaceport.

NMU is led by Premier Adham Radi, who is serving his second term in that role. Radi is tolerated by the people of New Madrassa, who see him as trying to navigate a third path when sides must be chosen in the street battles between the Armory, the Baronies, various New Madrassan independence movements, and local factions affiliated with the great powers. He keeps a close correspondence with Administrator Park Jun-seo, Union's highest-ranking civil representative in the Dawnline Shore. Prior to the current hostilities, NMU was petitioning Union for Core status.

OTHER ENTITIES IN THE DAWNLINE SHORE

The Dawnline Shore is a dense bit of space. Territories are well defined and interests clearly staked, but there is still room for other actors to get involved – those looking to carve the stars for their own gain, and those who cross space with different missions.

LOS VOLADORES

There have been several sightings of a group of los Voladores crossing New Madrassa's orbital plane. Their ship, the Ojala, is a conventional Volador vessel: part market-station, part traveling home. It measures just over a thousand meters in length and seven hundred meters in width. Incapable of atmospheric flight, the Ojala can be accessed via chaperoned shuttle when it is in-system and los Voladores are accepting trades. Specifics around trade goods and rituals can be found in *The Long Rim* (pp. 26–27). The Ojala's suite of weapons is unknown. If attacked, it will carve away.

THE ALBATROSS

Also present in the Dawnline Shore are forward elements of an Albatross makteba, MK Siha. Following the outbreak of hostilities between the Armory and the Baronies, MK Siha dispatched two patrol-strength groups of corvettes and mounted mechs to act as a rapid-response force to monitor and, if necessary, intervene in the fighting to protect civilians. These patrols can be combined into a single battlegroup-strength force. Their commander is Loyal Wing Farda Baia-4990.

ENTERPRISES

Two of the Long Rim's enterprises, Mastodon and the Brigade Legion, are operating in the Dawnline Shore in small numbers. Mastodon units have been sighted providing security for Baronic personnel at Beachhead, while Brigade Legion security personnel have been seen doing the same for Armory executives.

IPS-N

IPS-N has also recently established a single starbase in the Dawnline Shore: Lighthouse Station, a trade port that caters to resource haulers and Cosmopolitans serving the Dawnline Shore. It is open to all who dock there (with clearance from the harbormaster, of course) but it is not a luxury getaway.

CAMPAIGN ARCS

Below are three parallel campaign arcs that take place in the Dawnline Shore from 5019u to 5022u. These arcs outline the scope of the conflict between Harrison Armory and the Karrakin Trade Baronies in the Dawnline Shore, plus Union's efforts to quell the conflict before it spirals out of control. Each arc represents one faction's point of view of this conflict and contains a series of story beats that move player groups through the course of the crisis. As these campaign arcs are intended to run in parallel, whichever one you and your players decide to run is the "canon" campaign.

The simplest way to play through this story is to choose one campaign arc and play through it with your group, mapping each beat of the one campaign your group plays to missions your GM draws up.

BEATS
Each arc is broken into five beats – story moments that mark a "before" and "after" in the course of a campaign. These campaigns are intended to run in parallel; thus,

each beat examines the same basic events from the point of view of the players' faction. These beats can serve as battlefronts (see Campaign Play, p. 158) containing one or more engagement, and together they can serve as a framework for a campaign running from the beginning of the Dawnline Shore conflict to its ultimate conclusion, determined by your group.

Beats may also include suggested sitreps to use during combat (see Sitreps, p. 152), environmental modifiers (see The Field of Battle, p. 149), or other unique objectives and engagement parameters.

BEGINNINGS
Each of the campaign arcs provided here assume that the players' commanders are officers present in the Dawnline Shore before the first beat occurs. Depending on which campaign arc you choose, they will be officers of either Union ("Controlled Burn", p. 209), Harrison Armory ("A More Perfect Union", p. 212), the Karrakin Trade Baronies ("A New Throne", p. 214), or the local allies of one of these powers.

RANKS
Use the table below as a reference for ranks across the different navies. The asterisk (*) next to some Armory ranks indicates commissions that can be purchased, avoiding the lengthy meritorious or "time-in" progression otherwise necessary to attain them. Union ranks are identical across regulars and auxiliaries.

UNION NAVAL DEPARTMENT	ARMORY NAVAL COMMAND	BARONIC UNIFIED COMMAND
RING ADMIRAL	EXECUTIVE*	ARMADIER
ADMIRAL	LORD DIRECTOR	FLEETMASTER
VICE ADMIRAL	DIRECTOR*	VICE FLEETMASTER
FLEET COMMANDER	LORD COMMANDANT	LORD CAPTAIN
LINE COMMANDER	GROUP CAPTAIN*	LINE CAPTAIN
COMMANDER	STRIKE CAPTAIN	LANCE COMMANDER
CAPTAIN	COMMANDANT	COMMANDER
CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER (4-5)	CHIEF PETTY OFFICER (5)	MASTER CHIEF (5)
WARRANT OFFICER (1-3)	PETTY OFFICER (1-4)	CHIEF (1-4)
LIEUTENANT	LIEUTENANT	LIEUTENANT
LIEUTENANT, JR.	LIEUTENANT, JR.*	ATTACHÉ
ENSIGN	DECK OFFICER*	ENSIGN
ENLISTED (1-6)	ENLISTED (1-6)	ENLISTED (1-6)

CONTROLLED BURN
UNION AND NEW MADRASSA UNITED

Union knows that both Harrison Armory and the Karrakin Trade Baronies have devised flimsy legalistic justifications for the hostilities following the flare-up on New Creighton. However, in the interest of preserving galactic peace, CentComm demands a measured approach to address this conflict. Documentation, peacekeeping, prioritizing the protection of local states, and so on, will ensure Union's position is as strong as possible when high-level negotiations conclude. The only acceptable outcome is a cessation in hostilities, a drawdown of forces, and reconciliation – not the elimination of the Armory or the Baronies, despite what some elements in CentComm desire. Achieving this peace will take time – though it can be achieved.

Until then, it's the Union Navy's job to put a stop to, in the words of Vice Admiral Noe Estienne, "this bullshit" as fast and professionally as possible. This is going to be a hard job, as the Navy faces down a plethora of complicating factors: with only a handful of battlegroups in the system, their people will need to stop two large, technologically advanced, strategically competent, and tactically sound antagonists with robust in-system ground and naval strength, supply lines, and personnel from burning down twelve populated worlds in their attempts to conquer them. Mission success in this theater is going to be a balancing act involving peacekeeping, dispersal, evacuation, deterrence, and the precise application of force. The first step in achieving this occurs prior to the first beat of the campaign: Union orders the Dawnline Shore blink gate shuttered. Save for comms via the omninet (which Union decides against closing, as that would negatively affect the unaffiliated states in the Shore alongside the Armory and the Baronies), Union's forces in the Shore are on their own.

Union's only administrator currently in the Dawnline Shore is Administrator Park Jun-seo, who is assigned to New Madrassa. Union's top naval commander in the sector is Vice Admiral Noe Estienne. There are three Union battlegroups in the Dawnline shore in addition to the player groups: *Battlegroup*s Griffon, Thunder, and Palladium, which together make up the 1st Dawnline Response Fleet. Union's strongest local ally is New Madrassa United, the metagovernment of New Madrassa, a world in the Shore that is nearing Core status and is in close proximity to Union's blink gate.

BEATS
BEAT 1: OPERATION CORRIDOR GOLD – LATE 5019U

Vice Admiral Estienne tasks her frontline battlegroups to establish and hold an evacuation corridor off of New Creighton for civilians and Union personnel to evacuate the world. While the Armory and the Baronies fight on and above the world, Union works to protect New Creighton's people. Union's rules of engagement prohibit its forces from launching preemptive or hostile attacks; they can, however, fight defensively. Right now, the plan is to observe engagements between the Armory and the Baronies, gather data, and ensure the evacuation corridor is established and held; it is very likely that this conflict will, regardless of what Union does here or back in Core space, spiral out of control. It is in this context that, as Union ships hold the corridor open, an Armory battlegroup approaches with a demand to intercept a shuttle: the vessel holds hostile targets of interest, ones Armory command wishes to capture and interrogate. Union refuses, and the Armory ships open fire…

The PCs will be the only battlegroups around New Creighton for this beat, arriving after the world has burst into war, and their orders require them to hold an evacuation corridor open for personnel evacuating New Creighton. Treat this as a normal combat engagement, but due to the proximity of civilian traffic as well as the planet itself, both the **Collateral Damage** and **Threading the Needle** environmental modifiers are in play.

BEAT 2: OPERATION WINGCLIPPER – EARLY 5020U

Sparks flare up across the Dawnline Shore, combining into a conflagration. This is a war. Union needs to respond in the interest of local forces and escalate its advantage: the Navy decides to launch a surgical strike against the Armory's major chassis fabrication facility located on Harrison's World – the Maquinera. The Maq is a massive, largely automated factory complex run by Harrison Armory; a targeted strike against it will massively slow down the Armory's ability to produce mechanized chassis and reinforce existing ground units, as well as destroying a major supply of NHP cores. It is heavily defended by local naval patrols and geosynchronous orbital defenses and is nestled far behind enemy lines: the last place anyone would expect a hit-and-run strike…

The objective of this special sitrep is to strike the Maquinera from orbit and then eject. To accomplish this, they'll need to punch a hole through its orbital defenses in order to have a unimpeded shot at the facility on the ground. Prepare enemy forces as normal, and then add an additional NPC battlegroup consisting of a Triton with the **Giant** template, along with 1-2 additional **Escorts** and/or 1 **Ace** accompanying it to represent a portion of the Maquinera's defenses.

At the beginning of the 5th round, if the Triton has been reduced to half **HP** or less, then the PCs have achieved a strategic victory; though unable to decisively hold an orbital bombardment position for long, the Maq still suffers significant damage in the resulting strike and the Armory's production will suffer major setbacks as a result. If the Triton has been destroyed then the victory is a decisive one, with the PCs shutting down the Maquinera completely. They are then able to eject from the engagement without needing to roll on the **Nearlight Ejection Table**.

Losses of PC ships may adjust these victories somewhat depending on how costly the operation was. Failure is defined by dealing insufficient damage to the Triton before the beginning of the 5th round or being defeated altogether.

BEAT 3: OPERATION SUNRUNNER – LATE 5020U

A rapid communique from the Union Intelligence Bureau to Vice Admiral Etienne sees Union forces dispatched to Terminal, a ring station above New Madrassa, arriving just in time to catch Harrison Armory and the Karrakin Trade Baronies engaged on and above the station's habitable band. With Battlegroup Palladium held in reserve, Union attempts to strike and recover a VIP hunted by both the Armory and the Baronies. The vice admiral is adamant that this VIP must be recovered, but is not allowed to tell her officers why this person is so important…

The PCs are ordered to intercept and rescue a critical VIP that is being pursued by both Armory and Baronic forces. Choose one of these forces to be holding the VIP when the PCs arrive, and treat this as an **Extraction** sitrep.

Under the rules of engagement for this operation, death of the VIP is not an acceptable outcome regardless of circumstances, and will constitute a failure. Should this happen, the PCs can expect to be seriously reprimanded, but the developing situation in the Dawnline Shore is too critical to relieve them of command. Nonetheless, it will remain a black mark on their records.

BEAT 4: FULL CONTAINMENT NECESSARY – EARLY 5021U

Union's long-range stations detect incoming Armory and Barony reinforcements nearlighting in via multiple documented routes across the Long Rim. Vice Admiral Etienne reserves Battlegroup Palladium for the defense of New Madrassa and Blink 1, and dispatches Battlegroups Griffon and Thunder to stop the encroaching Armory forces at the Long Rim nadir beachhead. A tense wait plays out as representatives from the two forces meet with the relevant Union admirals in the no-man's-lands between them, negotiating entry into the Shore past the Union fleets; meanwhile, Baronic forces arrive at the Long Rim apex beachhead, where they are promptly engaged by Armory forces. Union forces there step in to stand both sides down, and the first three-way battle of the Dawnline Incident begins.

Treat this as a **Holdout** sitrep to represent the sheer volume of ships that the PCs must stand against during this chaotic three-way battle. Narratively the Armory and Baronic forces will also be engaging each other in addition to attempting to break past the Union blockade.

Failure in this beat means the players will face stronger resistance during the next beat.

BEAT 5: OPERATION GUILLOTINE – LATE 5021U

The Armory launches a "liberation" attack on New Madrassa, seeking to secure Green Zone Alhambra by pacifying the NMU government and the Baronic forces there, both of which the Armory sees as hostile combatants targeting their legally occupied land. The BUC counterattacks, deploying the banner companies of the Houses of Stone, Remembrance, and Promise to the world, with naval forces engaging Armory ships above. Union must now fight on three fronts: on the ground, supporting the NMU against the Armory and against the house companies, and above New Madrassa, against the clashing fleets of the Armory and the Baronies. This battle might produce odd allies: either way, the sovereignty of New Madrassa is paramount.

This is the final engagement of the Dawnline Incident. The Armory nominally seeks to relieve its ground forces on New Madrassa, which are encircled in an 8x8 km "green zone" by a mix of local and Baronic ground forces. The Baronies cannot let them do this: New Madrassa, owing to its immediate proximity to the Dawnline Shore's blink gate, is the most critical world in the Shore. To let the Armory claim it, directly or indirectly, is to let it own the Shore. Union does not want either faction to have command over New Madrassa, so they are operating in support of the NMU. Union's targets are the Armory's invasion orbitals and Baronic fleet command; the fight on the ground is, for now, out of the Navy's control.

To begin with, the PCs will face a normal combat engagement to establish theater control within proximity of New Madrassa. A failure during **Beat 4: Full Containment Necessary** will mean the PCs will be harder pressed to deal with the freshly reinforced Armory and Baronic forces, represented by the Ambush environmental modifier. Other environmental modifiers may be brought into play as well.

Success here begins to stem the tide of battle. Following hasty repairs and resupply, the PCs are then ordered to reinforce the NMU defensive line in orbit, supporting their orbital defenses against Armory naval forces seeking to punch a hole through them. Treat this as a **Defense** sitrep. If the PCs failed or only achieved a Pyrrhic victory during the previous engagement of this beat, the situation becomes increasingly unstable and an emergency evacuation of critical personnel is ordered. The PCs are charged with securely evacuating one of these VIPs ahead of the Armory's ground invasion of New Madrassa. Treat this as an **Escort** sitrep.

An overall defeat here will mean that the Armory is able to begin their invasion of New Madrassa in earnest. With their orbital dominance above the planet, Union and Baronic forces have no choice but to retreat. A brutal ground campaign ensues, with the defenders facing overwhelming odds until reinforcements can be mustered. Should success be achieved, however, both the Armory and the Baronic navies withdraw, routed or standing down. Union is then free to turn its attention directly towards the ground war on New Madrassa, awaiting naval reinforcements due within months via Blink 1…

A MORE PERFECT UNION
HARRISON ARMORY & THE PERFECT MINISTERIAT

At the outbreak of hostilities in 5019u, Harrison Armory rushes to defend its ally, the Perfect Ministeriat. Though the overt cause is the defense of their ally, some elements deployed to the Shore act with a more predatory purpose: the frontier is ripe for the taking, and the chance to outmaneuver the Baronies is too great an opportunity to ignore.

The Armory's push is prompted by the machinations of the Steward Council. Immediately following the flare in hostilities on New Creighton, the Council calls upon the legal power of per nomen Dei to declare the Dawnline Shore a protected region of the Purview - the Armory's sovereign territory, essentially - citing the treaties and obligations won after the end of the First Interest War, a conflict fought centuries ago between the Armory and the Baronies.

Union immediately calls upon the Armory to cease its maneuvers in the shore. The Steward Council drags its feet, pointing to absence of the current leader of the Armory as a barrier to negotiations with Union. This engagement in the Dawnline Shore, the Council argues, is internal politics, not something Union needs to worry about. As the Council sees the Dawnline Shore as part of the Purview, aggression by Baronic proxies is well within the Armory's rights to police; any escalation is evidence of Baronic guilt.

As negotiations continue, Armory forces in the Dawnline Shore begin their campaign under the direction of Lord Director Angel Bernal.

BEATS

BEAT 1: NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM – LATE 5019U
Harrison Armory and its local ally, the Perfect Ministeriat, begin their campaign on and around the world of DS12 (New Creighton). Here, the Armory's fleet, the 1st Dawnline Shore, engages the Karrakin forces, Naval Group 1 & 2 Riyya (dispatched from DS11) in orbit above the world. As New Creighton burns with widespread conflict on the ground and in low orbit, the Armory attempts to win a decisive early victory by defeating the Baronicc naval forces above New Creighton, ensuring victory on New Creighton below…

Treat this as a normal combat engagement. Success in this beat is not determined by victory condition; the next beat will occur regardless of whether or not the players achieve a victory, Pyrrhic victory, or defeat. Outcomes here may set the tone for later beats, however, as commanders that struggle to establish a solid foothold early can expect heightened pressure from above.

BEAT 2: HOMELAND SECURITY – EARLY 5020U
After the Battle of New Creighton, both sides hurry to activate their reserves in the Shore. There is little room for stealth in deep space; within days of the Armory firing up its shipyards on DS1 (Harrison's World), the Shore is cut off as Union halts blink access to the sector. Immediately following this development, the Armory's monitoring stations detect a Baronic fleet on approach. A defense is necessary or vital shipyards will be destroyed, Union's calls for peace be damned…

To succeed in this beat, the players will need to defend the shipyards above Harrison's World from the attacking Karrakin forces. Treat this as a **Defense** sitrep: Defeat in this beat quiets the Armory for months, and should find the players facing stiffer opposition from the Baronies in in **Beat 3: Terminal Engagement**.

BEAT 3: TERMINAL ENGAGEMENT – LATE 5020U
An Armory strike force realigns into realspace from nearlight travel above R1 (Terminal), far from the current battle lines, and launches landing vessels crowded with Armory legionnaires. This strike force is in a hurry: they're hunting a key target of interest on Terminal. Terminal is under Baronic command, and soon Baronic naval forces are tasked to intervene…

While Armory ground troops fight across Terminal, Armory naval forces must keep Baronic ships from providing ground support to their own soldiers. Additionally, once the legionnaires have completed their objective, the players must escort them and their captive off the installation and cover the strike force until it bolts away. Treat this as an **Escort** sitrep. Baronic forces will stop at nothing to retrieve the VIP, and have diverted some of their most advanced solid-state ships to intercept the PCs. Treat this as an NPC battlegroup comprised of a **Cornicen** accompanied by **Battlethreads**, along with 1-2 additional **Escorts** and/or 1 **Ace** accompanying it. This can be in addition to the standard number of NPC battlegroups if an additional challenge is desired.

Defeat in this beat sees the Karrakins rescuing the VIP. The PCs will be reprimanded for this failure, but the ongoing fight is desperate, and their battlegroups will continue to be first on the line. Success, however, will be an intelligence coup for the Armory's further efforts in-system.

BEAT 4: SO BELOW – EARLY 5021U
The Armory's 2nd and 3rd Expeditionary Fleets arrive via the Long Rim nadir transit route, encountering Union's blockade at the termination shock line before DS2 (Arkady II). Union orders the ships to turn back; Lord Director Bernal orders them forward. The Armory engages Union's Battlegroups Griffon and Thunder directly in order to defend the 2nd and 3rd Fleets as they warm up from their long stasis. These are key reinforcements, so defending them from Union interdiction is critical; dealing Union a bloody nose to remind the hegemony of its limits is a nice bonus…

Treat this as a **Holdout** sitrep. The PCs are tasked with defending the inbound Armory Expeditionary Fleets from the Union blockade. Success in this beat means that the allied ships are bought enough time to shake down from stasis and bolt to safety. Failure in this beat means the players will face stronger resistance during the next beat.

BEAT 5: ANNUIT COEPTIS – LATE 5021U
With the bulk of Union's naval forces in the Shore beaten back and the 2nd and 3rd Expeditionary Fleets at their full operational strength, the Armory decides to launch a strike on New Madrassa (DS4). Though this is nominally to liberate the Armory's embattled green zone on the world, it is clear that it is an attempt to take the world. Union and the Karrakins join forces against the Armory. This is the final battle of the war: the winner will control New Madrassa, pushing their foes off the world and holding the Dawnline Shore under their command – until Union can muster a response, if its leaders dare…

This is the final battle of the Dawnline Incident. Armory high command seeks to relieve its besieged forces inside Green Zone Alhambra, an 8x8 km, walled-off complex built into the heart of New Madrassa's capital city; once relieved, the Armory plans to establish orbital and aerial command over the world and begin a campaign to defeat the local opposition forces. New Madrassa is the most important world in the shore, as it is the closest to Union's blink gate: after this resumption of hostilities, it is unacceptable that the Baronies be the dominant force there.

The Armory's fleet is massive, composed of multiple battlegroups operating in support of numerous legions as they gear up for a ground invasion. To begin with, the PCs will face a normal combat engagement to establish theater control within proximity of New Madrassa. A failure during **Beat 4: So Below** will mean the PCs face stiffer resistance from Union and/or Baronic forces as well as the **Defensive Emplacements** environmental modifier. Other environmental modifiers may be brought into play as well.

A success here rallies Armory forces, and word is handed down that the PCs are, after hasty repairs and resupply (or in the case of destroyed ships, reinforcements), ordered to spearhead a bold and decisive decapitation strike to remove an enemy fleet commander from the picture, preferably alive in order to secure diplomatic concessions. Treat this as a **Hijack** sitrep against the naval commander of either the Union or Baronic forces, whichever one is currently in the strongest narrative position. Should the PCs have failed or only achieved a Pyrrhic victory during the previous engagement of this beat then a more conservative approach is adopted, and they are instead tasked with protecting Armory orbital platforms as they work to drop soldiers and armor into GZ Alhambra while holding off enemy forces. Treat this as a **Defense** sitrep.

Overall failure of this beat results in the Armory withdrawing from New Madrassa, given no choice but to abandon its ground forces to fight unsupported against the combined strength of local opposition and BUC soldiers. The Steward Council resumes active negotiations, sensing that they have lost the Dawnline Shore – for now.

A NEW THRONE

THE KARRAKIN TRADE BARONIES & THE CONCORDANT ADMINISTRATION

In 5019u, the situation in New Creighton explodes into all-out war. Baronic Unified Command (BUC) scrambles forces in support of the Concordant Administration, the Baronies' planetside ally. The BUC was caught off guard by the Administration's sudden attack on the Perfect Ministeriat, but with the Armory escalating the Baronies has no choice but to match and overwhelm its rivals.

Struggling under the weight of its old Concern, the Baronies seek to ride the momentum of this sudden flare-up to secure its holdings in the Dawnline Shore – thus expanding its territory into a new frontier with room to house its massive population. Baronic representatives on CentComm point to Armory's aggressive response as a casus belli for Baronic escalation; with this justification, they argue they are fighting a defensive war and are thus entitled to respond in a swift and devastating fashion.

The Baronic forces in the Dawnline Shore are under the command of the BUC's Fleetmaster Alia Boudelier. The house companies of the Houses of Stone, Remembrance, Water, and Promise in the Shore are activated, their mounted chassis tasked to Fleetmaster Boudelier's command. Though independent while deployed on the ground, they are powerful naval assets while in transit. Unified on the field of battle for the first time since their loss in the First Interest War centuries ago, the Baronic forces fight not only for land, but revenge, glory, and the restoration of Karrakin honor.

BEATS

BEAT 1: CASUS BELLI – LATE 5019U
The Concordant Administration, the Baronies' allies on New Creighton, launch a global attack on their longtime enemies, the Perfect Ministeriat. Furious at their reckless actions, the BUC nonetheless steps up to support them, engaging the Armory 1st Dawnline Shore Fleet above the planet while attempting to support Baronic and Concordant forces on the ground. New Creighton is the bellwether: if they fail here, confidence in the BUC will be shaken at home…

Treat this as a normal combat engagement. Success for the PCs in this beat is predicated on defeating the Armory's forces. Victory, whether total or Pyrrhic, is enough. Losing here shakes noble confidence in the BUC and might lead to disciplinary actions (if the PCs' commanders even survive), but is not a major setback for the Baronies' campaign in the Dawnline Shore: there are many more ships and many thousands more soldiers to throw at the problem.

BEAT 2: WEIGHT OF STONE – EARLY 5020U
While the bulk of the Baronic naval forces push to trap the Armory's strength at DS1, thousands of transport ships struggle to ferry the combined forces of the Boulder Company, the BUC's ground troops, and a number of other free companies up from DS8 (Upper Laurent) before an Armory interplanetary missile strike hits the world. These soldiers are bound for New Creighton and, secretly, DS4 – New Madrassa – making a successful defense of the operation critical…

Success here is predicated on the PCs destroying an inbound kill vehicle containing a payload of orbit-to-surface missiles and destroying it before they can hit Upper Laurent. Treat this as an **Intercept** sitrep. Failure may not impact the naval battle above New Madrassa in later beats, it certainly impacts the ground fighting that will happen there as evacuating Baronic forces suffer heavy losses in the bombardment.

BEAT 3: PROMISE RING – LATE 2020U
Armory forces land on Terminal, the massive ring habitat and power station above New Madrassa. This unexpected assault on the Baronic backline prompts a swift call for reinforcements to intercept and destroy the Armory strike force above the ringworld. In the course of this defensive action, a coded communique comes in from Baronic Intelligence: this is not just a simple attack on New Madrassa's infrastructure, but a targeted strike on one of their VIPs. It is critical that this VIP does not fall into Armory hands, no matter what it takes…

To succeed in this mission, the PCs must stop the Armory forces from escaping with the VIP by carrying out a daring rescue operation before the enemy can bolt away. Treat this as an **Extraction** sitrep.

In extremis, the PCs can opt to destroy the ship with the VIP aboard rather than letting them fall into Armory hands, but this is far from an ideal outcome. While their superiors will ultimately stand by such a decision as better than the alternative, the VIP's familial relation to a powerful and influential figure within the Baronic nobility will result in political fallout and consequences for the PCs both within this campaign and further on in their careers. Success, on the other hand, will both earn them praise and open several doors for them.

BEAT 4: AS ABOVE – EARLY 5021U

At long last, Baronic reinforcements arrive via two major nearlight routes: the Long Rim apex route, a public route used by all factions and defended by Union, and a second, more direct route linking the Baronic Concern to DS11 (Gloria) – this one defended by the Armory. Shoreside BUC forces are tasked with meeting and escorting their allies, defending them as they shakedown from stasis…

Choosing to punch a hole through Union's defenses is the more straightforward of the two options, as the Union commanders along the Long Rim apex beachhead have been spread thin. Treat this as a normal combat engagement, though a next-generation Union battlecarrier design has recently been deployed to this route to bolster its defenses. Treat this as an NPC battlegroup comprised of a **Paladin** with the **Den Mother** template, along with 1-2 additional **Escorts** and/or 1 **Ace** accompanying it. This can be in addition to the standard number of NPC battlegroups if an additional challenge is desired.

If the players choose to battle the Armory, they'll also have to contend with an experimental vessel boasting unusual gravitic/blinkspace manipulation capabilities. Removing this vessel from the equation is imperative in order to allow allied reinforcements to safely spool up to nearlight. Treat this vessel as a **Needleship** with the **Mastermind** template, along with 1-2 additional **Escorts** and/or 1 **Ace** accompanying it. Treat this engagement as a **Hijack** sitrep, with the target vessel being the **Needleship**. Destroying the target ship creates a morass of gravitic anomalies and blinkspace wormholes that disrupt ship systems and dangerously interfere with transit through the route until they subside, counting as a failure.

Failure in this beat means the players will face stronger resistance during the next beat. Choosing to defend against Union in this beat will also mean they lose additional assistance during the next beat as well.

BEAT 5: VIVAT REX – LATE 5021U

The long-expected invasion comes at last. Armory forces, bolstered by reinforcements, arrive in numbers above New Madrassa, broadcasting on all channels that they have come to relieve the "siege" of Green Zone Alhambra – the Armory's embattled terrestrial base. Unmoved by this obvious ploy, the BUC declares that it will defend New Madrassa from the Armory's invasion forces. The NMU and Union call for peace; as the guns of the opposed fleets open up in the skies above, it is clear that peace is not an option…

This is the final engagement of the Dawnline Incident. The Armory nominally seeks to relieve its ground forces on New Madrassa, which are encircled in an 8x8 km "green zone" by a mix of local and Baronic ground forces. The Baronies cannot let this happen: New Madrassa, owing to its immediate proximity to the Dawnline Shore's blink gate, is the most critical world in the system. To let the Armory claim it, directly or indirectly, is to let it own the Shore.

If the PCs opted to fight the Armory instead of Union during **Beat 4: As Above** then Union offers them assistance in the form of three banked dice that can be spent by any players during this beat to either add **Accuracy** to their own single-target attack rolls or add **Difficulty** to enemy single-target attack rolls. Otherwise, Union forces are more focused on escorting civilians as they flee the world.

To begin with, the PCs will face a normal combat engagement to blunt the first wave of Armory ships arriving to invade New Madrassa. A failure during the previous beat will mean the PCs face stiffer resistance from Armory forces, and that the wreckage of the first-wave ships and defense platforms has formed a Debris Field environmental modifier. Other environmental modifiers may be brought into play as well.

Success here throws the Armory's naval advance into disarray and places them on the back foot. Forced to settle in for a more protracted siege, they begin maneuvering orbital platforms into position to begin dropping reinforcements directly into Green Zone Alhambra, and following repair and resupply the PCs are ordered to spearhead an assault to destroy these platforms before they can begin deployment. Treat this as an Intercept sitrep. If the PCs failed or only achieved a Pyrrhic victory during the previous engagement of this beat, then the Armory presses forward implacably and it falls to them and the remaining defenders to stem the tide before it's too late. Treat this as a **Holdout** sitrep.

Overall defeat here sees Baronic forces retreating to San Simeon, Union pulling back to the blink gate, and the Armory establishing control over New Madrassa, beginning a brutal ground war to pacify the world. Baronic, Union, and local ground forces join together against the Armory, but the fight is likely to be hopeless as the Armory controls the skies. Baronic representatives move to protest in CentComm, demanding intervention to hold the Armory's aggression on New Madrassa. Union, slow to act, begins to plan a more direct method by which to stop the Armory's maneuvers…

Section 5 // Campaign Arcs
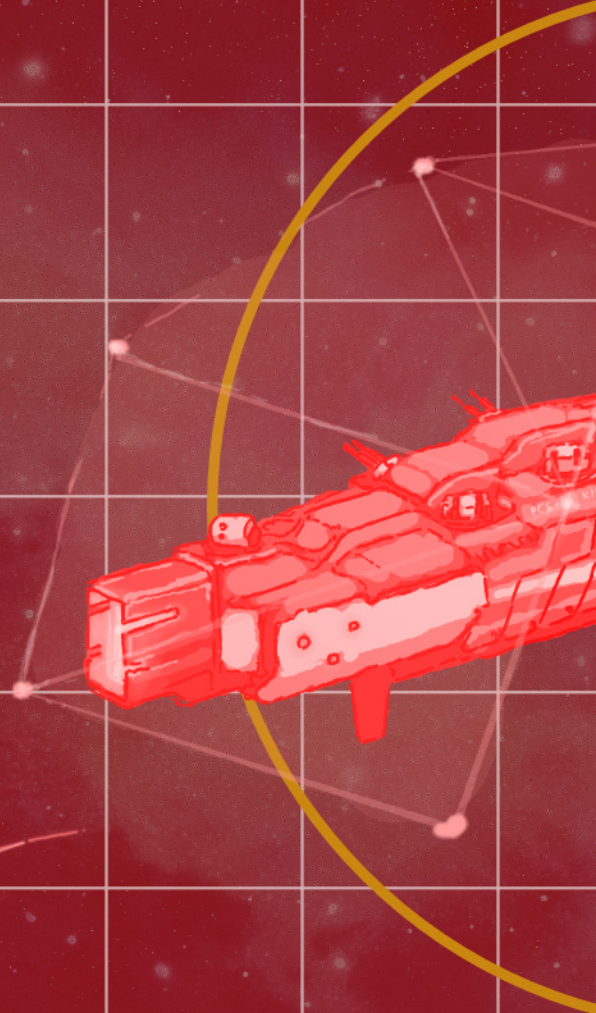
SECTION 6
SETTING & WORLDBUILDING TOOLS

At this point, you've got everything you need to play *Battlegroup* and dive into the Dawnline Shore conflict. For those who want to read more, this section contains additional details about the navies and naming conventions of the various galactic powers, as well as assorted worldbuilding tools, random tables, and setting information pertaining to naval matters within the world of *Lancer*.

DIASPORAN STATES

Diasporan fleets are rarely large enough to contend with the great powers of the galaxy. Even SSC, which maintains a comparatively small standing navy, outclasses and outnumbers all but the most developed Diasporan fleets. Regardless of this disparity, some Diasporan states have the organizational capacity and resources to deploy and maintain fleets of appreciable size and strength, maintain regular battlegroup-sized patrols, and go toe-to-toe with other major players.

You can use the following tables to generate the character, organization, and affiliation of any non-canon Diasporan state. Character describes the current prevailing national tone, history, and dominant culture. Organization describes the current and prevailing governmental structures. Affiliation describes any diplomatic relationships it has. Additionally, you may choose to further complicate the current politics or culture of this generated state by choosing either the **Interesting Times** or **From the Ashes of the Old** modifier.

STATE CHARACTER

1-2	Tyrannic
3-4	Egalitarian
5-6	Democratic
7-8	Communal
9-10	Tribal
11-12	Plutocratic
13-14	Imperialist
15-16	Dynastic
17-18	Ancient
19-20	Revolutionary

STATE ORGANIZATION

1-2	Monarchy
3-4	Oligarchy
5-6	Theocracy
7-8	Anarchy
9-10	Federation
11-12	Confederation
13-14	Hegemony
15-16	Corporate
17-18	Republican
19-20	Protectorate

STATE AFFILIATION   ROLL 1D20

1-2	None – Isolated/FirstComm
3-4	None – Pariah
5-6	None – Split Allegiance
7-8	Union – SecComm
9-10	Union – ThirdComm
11-12	Union – ThirdComm (Derivative/Offshoot)
13-14	Harrison Armory – Colony
15-16	Harrison Armory – Purview
17-18	Karrakin Trade Baronies – Concern
19-20	Karrakin Trade Baronies – Interest

OPTIONAL MODIFIERS

Interesting Times	Roll twice for **State Organization**: the first result is the old form of state power, the second is the emerging form.
From the Ashes of Old	Roll or choose from **State Organization**, then roll twice on the **State Character** table. The first roll is the old character, the second roll is the emerging one.

OBJECTIVE VESSELS & VERY IMPORTANT PERSONS

Use these tables to quickly generate an objective vessel or VIP for missions, sitreps, and narrative purposes.

ICONIC TRAIT

ROLL 1D20

1-2	A storied vessel, this ship (or its namesake) has a venerable history that goes back centuries.
3-4	This vessel is fresh from the shipyard, perhaps undergoing shakedown or on her maiden voyage.
5-6	Something about this vessel is deceptive; it may appear to be a different class, or possess hidden capabilities a ship of its type isn't ordinarily expected to.
7-8	This ship is considered to be cursed by those who've served aboard her, with a history of misfortune following in her wake.
9-10	A prototype vessel, this ship is equipped with experimental cutting-edge technology of some sort.
11-12	The history of this ship is a grim one, a participant in numerous bloody engagements in which no quarter was given.
13-14	One of the PCs has a personal history with this ship, a memorable encounter or even a rivalry.
15-16	A particularly ostentatious and opulent vessel, as much a symbol of prestige (or vanity) as it is a warship.
17-18	The design of this vessel matches no known class or manufacturer; it could be bespoke or the product of an unknown shipwright.
19-20	According to records, this ship once belonged to another navy, perhaps even your own, before being captured or salvaged after battle.

ICONIC VIP

ROLL 1D20

1-2	The ship's captain
3-4	One of the ship's crew, such as a senior officer or engineer
5-6	A defector, to be extracted or protected
7-8	A scientist responsible for top-secret technology
9-10	A diplomat whose safety is paramount
11-12	A spy, one of yours or one of theirs
13-14	A prisoner of war, in need of transport or rescue
15-16	A noble scion or high-ranking official
17-18	An NHP, either the ship's own or a different one
19-20	A fleet admiral, traveling aboard the ship in question

SHIP NAMING CONVENTIONS

Ships are known by their names in addition to their deeds; in fact, their names usually precede their deeds. You can use this table to narrow down the naming scheme of player or NPC ships if necessary.

THEME	ROLL 1D20
1	Mythic heroes and places
2	Cities, states, and administrative districts
3	Alphanumeric designations (i.e., "B-384" or "A24-V" and so on)
4	Rivers, lakes, and oceans
5	Creatures associated with air, the sea, and space
6	Mountains, valleys, and craters
7	Famous generals and admirals from history
8	Famous politicians, monarchs, and nobles from history
9	Valor, piety, and other virtuous traits
10	Gods and demigods
11	Mythic items, relics, or artifacts
12	Aspirational qualities associated with state character
13	Qualities, nouns, and virtues associated with state organization
14	Painters, sculptors, or composers
15	Ironic phrases, maxims, and puns
16	Victorious or commemorated battles
17	Famous leaders, currently alive
18	Months, named years, ages, weather phenomena, and seasons
19	Short code phrases composed of two nouns
20	Demons, devils, and gods of death or chaos

GENERAL HOOKS AND COMPLICATIONS

If you need *Lancer*-flavored hooks and complications on the fly, you can use this table to quickly establish a narrative framework to build from.

HOOK

1   Beset by pirates, you have no other option but to turn and fight…

2   A corrupt station keeper has refused to let your ships depart after completing paid-for repairs and refittings. Surrounded by their guardships, you decide to fight your way out…

3   A VIP and their retinue has hired your ships to escort them to their destination. They told you to expect trouble, but you didn't expect that to include Union chasing you…

4   You intercept a distress call from a floundered Trunk Security cutter and head to assist. En route, you detect another group of ships heading their way, weapons hot…

5   While you're chartered to escort a caravan of mining rigs from their plots to a nearby processing station, a desperate group of pirates attack…

6   You're smuggling supplies and weapons to Free Sanjak when a Baronic Unified Command patrol starts getting suspicious. As they come in close to board and inspect, you prepare for a close-up fight…

7   Your gig ferrying low–social credit citizens through the Purview has been sweet; however, when some "taxmen" and their ships come calling, you have no choice but to shoot your way out…

8   A spin-colony ship being towed for decommissioning suddenly lights up, flying on its own. The ship refuses to respond to remote autopilot commands, and worse, when a team boards to attempt to wrest manual control, it jumps away, leaving a flight of hostile drones behind. After mopping them up, your group has been tasked to hunt the "stolen" ship down…

9   You're on a boring but important duty: escorting a fully loaded water-ice mining convoy from the field to the larger fleet. Surely nothing will happen on this milkrun…

10 A life-flight of polytemporal Cosmopolitans is bound for an IPS-N realignment world. Normally, this wouldn't call for anything more than regular security; however, one of the Cosmopolitans on board is carrying a secret – a secret SSC is willing to kill for…

11 Out along the terminal shock, the enemy battlegroup that you've been tracking disappears, via some advanced stealth tech or something else. The only way you'll know where they went is if you go hunt them down…

12 You realign at nominal distance from the enemy shipyard; despite larger numbers of enemies on your scope than you expected, the attack must still go through…

13 The eggheads planetside are sure of it: the asteroids hurtling toward the planet are on a collision course. First, your ships will have to deal with them; then, you'll have to deal with whoever threw them…

14 A dead ship appeared in local space, and every boat above the world died. After it blinked away and you spent a week on repairs, your ships were ready. Now all that remains is to track it down via its conspicuous nearlight radian…

15 The battle rages around your ships, allies and enemies trading fire on all sides. You've navigated your battlegroup through the sprawling mess, and now the enemy's flagship lies vulnerable before you – or would, if it weren't for its retinue of ships. One last fight…

16 There is a secret war boiling in Purview space, with rebels taking a stand against the appetite of the Armory's legions; you've just nearlighted into the middle of the fight, and the Armory's guns have decided you're hostile…

17 A group of gas miners held hostage aboard their platforms wait for rescuers that are fighting deck to deck to free them. You and your ships must hold a cordon against the pirates' inbound relief forces…

18 An Armory force projection unit has launched without notifying flight control of their intent to depart. They have aligned along a trajectory well outside of any acceptable flight plan, and – according to records back at port, have outfitted themselves for combat deployment. No one knows where they're headed, and they're not responding to any hails. Time to investigate…

19 A Trunk Security unit has requested assistance taking down a notorious interstellar pirate group. You arrive at the rendezvous point to find the "pirate group" flying Karrakin flags…

20 In the course of a normal cruise, a damaged Volador ship snaps into realspace realignment. Before you can hail it, a Constellar Skyhook appears and orders you to stand down as it spools up their guns. Los Voladores, meanwhile, message you to ask for help…

NOTABLE SHIPWRIGHTS

JANUS COMBINE

The Janus Combine is a conglomerate of scientific foundations and deep-space engineering firms based on Umara, the capital world of the House of Water, in the Karrakin Trade Baronies. Devoted to the development of parasubjective strategic solutions that blend operator and platform together in lossless harmony, the Janus Combine is a moderately powerful player in the field of non-NHP inorganic minds. Primarily commissioned by the Baronic Unified Command (BUC), some Diasporan states have purchased fleet orders of Janus Combine hulls, subalterns, and cogent minds. Under the Federal Karrakin Monarchy's Agreements on the Rights and Duties of Noble Ventures, the Janus Combine provides 30 percent of its annual production for use by the BUC and other federal deep-space ventures. The remaining 70 percent of the Combine's output is leased for private sale, usually fleet contracts to Diasporan states and private entities with the necessary funds.

SYNGIN-DUAT

Syngin-Duat is an independent, minor corpro affiliated with a gnostic–monastic HORUS sect endemic to SSC's Constellation. Syngin-Duat technology is widely used aboard Skyhook-class vessels and Constellar Gendarme and Midnight subliners. Primarily a producer of systems and materials, Syngin-Duat does produce a range of limited-release monocoque hulls popular with EWAR specialists and navies that adhere to more esoteric doctrines. Syngin-Duat monocoques can be encountered among SSC's gendarmerie, in use as private yachts for the security forces of Karrakin nobility, and among the ranks of the BUC's EWAR vessels.

In addition to their own proprietary technologies, Syngin-Duat vessels utilize many Union Science Bureau-cleared HORUS technologies and systems. Documentation shows no clear link between SSC and Syngin-Duat, though the connection between the two corpros is plainly visible.

ARMADA SHIPYARDS

A venerable, middle-tier shipwright now operating as an autonomous subsidiary wholly owned by IPS-N, Armada Shipyards produces a vast number of functional, no-frills, and affordable hulls marketed toward developing Diasporan states. Armada, like IPS-N's internal Titan-Enceladus Field Project, is run as a lithe corpro that can develop new products independent of IPS-N's larger bureaucratic structures, while benefiting from its vast resource libraries.

Fleet licenses with Armada Shipyards are subject to a lengthy evaluation process overseen by the Union Naval Department's Diasporan Licensing Board (and a nominal approval process by Armada and IPS-N). Of the several Diasporan states that enjoy long-standing contracts with Armada, the most notable are New Madrassa United and San Simeon, both of which are key worlds in the Dawnline Shore.

CORREGIDOR GROUP

After Ras Shamra and IPS-N, Harrison Armory's third most prolific naval supplier is the Corregidor Group, an enclave corpro founded under Harrison II and bequeathed to his niece, Emile Salvacruz, of the 2 percent Creighton-Cruz forking line.

The Corregidor Group produces two distinct hull lines: The first is made up of licensed IPS-N clones built to Ras Shamran specifications. The second is bespoke vessels for the Armory's steward classes and officers wealthy enough to purchase commissions and supplement their existing commands. Built to accept Legion-standard fittings, munitions, and powerplants, Corregidor Group hulls are considered by Ras Shamran high command as complementary to existing, state-produced vessels; if one is wealthy enough to add specialized Corregidor Group hulls to their state-provided command, the legion will allow it, and prestige likely demands it.

ATELIER CELESTE

Of the Constellation's ateliers, Atelier Celeste is the most venerable and lauded supplier of Skyhooks and chassis mounts to the diplomatic and security arms of Smith-Shimano's Constellar Congress. The Atelier (though there are many, Atelier Celeste is referred to simply as "the Atelier") can trace its roots back to the founding of SSC, where it began as the firm's in-house design studio for engineers and designers working on producing reliable long-distance vessels and exo-suits for deep-space operations.

Building from a core series of pre-Union Cradelian plans enhanced by access to SSC's library of materials, construction methods, and signature design notes, the Atelier's Skyhook-class vessels are unmatched in build quality. Each Skyhook is hand-built by Atelier craftspersons and then finished by Atelier furnishers, outfitters, and designers. No more than 100 are produced each local year.

Skyhooks made by an atelier – whether Atelier Celeste or another – are rare and valuable, not only for their exclusivity and opulence but for their ability to operate in stable low orbit, and serve as transit points for atmospheric ships entering and leaving space.

UNION NAVY

Even in its scaled-down form under the Third Committee, the Union Navy is the largest and most capable navy in the galaxy by orders of magnitude. It has outposts, docks, installations, battlegroups, and patrols in almost every sector of space – those in which it does not have a presence, it can reach with priority access to the blink network. Union naval strength is best imagined as an inexorable accumulation rather than a limited resource: without fail, Union has the strength to respond to a threat or provocation – the only constraint on the application of such force is the amount of time it takes for battlegroups to arrive. Union can field any vessel of any type, from the largest, most unique dreadnoughts, to the smallest fighters.

BATTLEGROUPS

Battlegroups are led by officers of commander rank or higher and are the standard force composition in the Union Navy. The workhorses of Union's fleets and the most common structure for patrols, battlegroups are equipped to respond first to any distress calls, provocations, or flashpoints within Union's sphere of influence within a month. If Union is dispatching an auxiliary peacekeeping force, an interdiction force, or a DoJ/HR liberation team to address a critical scenario, it will be a force of battlegroup strength.

The presence of a Union battlegroup in an area acts as a demonstration of Union's ability to rapidly transit forces to the theater: a battlegroup, even on its own, is never really alone; it is almost always in constant omninet communication with its parent fleet, which is in turn in communication with the ring fleet to which it belongs (see below). Though the full strength of Union's naval forces might never be brought to bear in an engagement, each battlegroup represents just the point of a much mightier spear.

In addition to blink codebooks that allow them to bypass public queues at blink gates, Union's battlegroups also benefit from onboard NHPs, which assist with navigation, ship management, strategy, and tactics. A battlegroup's NHPs also have the ability to form a gestalt subjectivity called a fleet legion. The presence of a legion allows for near-perfect, instant information-sharing between ships, coordination, and power management, as well as predictive targeting and defense beyond what isolated NHPs can handle. Additionally, many battlegroups carry large detachments of marines and mechs aboard their carriers for conducting ground operations; even those battlegroups that are more purely naval in purpose still have decent complements of marines.

Battlegroups are typically composed of two to six capital ships and their escorts, not counting strike craft such as fighters or bombers. When multiple allied battlegroups operate in a theater, they are collectively referred to as a fleet, which is itself commanded and coordinated by an admiral. These ad hoc fleets are distinct from ring fleets, which are made up of the combined forces of an entire ring.

RINGS AND LINES
Rings are the concentric circles used to mark out Union's territorial and administrative divisions. They are also known as lines (i.e., the Andes Line, the Himalaya Line, the Annamite Line, etc.; see *Lancer*, p. 340). There are currently 11 rings in Union's administrative space.

UNION RING FLEETS

Union ring fleets (URFs) are the largest naval forces a hostile power could expect to engage. Encompassing the entire naval and ground strength of a ring, a URF can bring thousands of capital ships to bear alongside tens of thousands of subline ships. A URF, should it be called, is commanded by a ring admiral, a temporary rank created specifically for such a purpose. In most cases, the ring admiral reports directly to CentComm and NAVCOMM, and enjoys priority access to GalComm iteratives. No threat faced by Union has yet justified the deployment of a URF, though contingency plans do exist based on low-confidence GalComm forecasts. For the Union Naval Department, the URF is more of an administrative designation than a strategic or tactical one.

On paper, it is possible to engage and defeat a URF, though unlikely and not without knock-on complications. While not all of Union's 11 rings are as built up as those closer to Cradle, any one of them could respond with strength should a URF from a neighboring ring be defeated. Another consideration is that, when engaging Union directly, one must plan to lose access to the omninet and blinkspace. As it stands, these advantages enjoyed by Union – size, communications, and logistics – make it all but impossible for an enemy force to chart a course to total victory.

Should a URF be deployed, it would be far too large to deploy in one massed battle (even acknowledging that the overall scale of engagements would be much larger than in conventional interstellar warfare). URFs stream into combat theaters in a steady, increasing accumulation of battlegroups and fleets. Bolstered by unfettered access to the omninet and blinkspace, URFs do not suffer from the logistical hazards and pitfalls one would expect from a fleet of such size; fighting one would not just mean fighting the collected strength of an entire ring, but fighting against the very infrastructure of what makes interstellar travel and communication possible in the galaxy. Should a URF come into play, then, it is best, to represent it with a clock or otherwise accumulatory defeat condition, not necessarily as an enemy for players to fight (save for, say, pivotal scenes involving particularly important events, locations, or NPCs).

SHIP DESIGNATIONS
Union naval vessels have the following designations:
- **Frigates:** UNS-LS (Union Naval Ship – Line Ship)
- **Carriers:** UNS-CV (Union Naval Ship – Carrier Vessel)
- **Battleships:** UNS-BB (Union Naval Ship – Battleship)

NAMING CONVENTIONS

Whether they are operating under the direct command of the Union Navy or in support of DoJ/HR missions, the names of specific Union ships, battlegroups, and fleets themselves tend to fall on the "dry" (or "professional") side. They are usually named after figures or events from history, geographic and geologic features found on Cradle, and other proper nouns. While there is some variance, some principles tend to remain true.

BATTLEGROUPS AND FLEETS

Union battlegroups typically adopt single-word codenames, usually proper nouns. There are few restrictions. Fleets are named in the order that they are raised.

Battlegroup examples: Battlegroup Comet, Battlegroup Ceremony, Battlegroup Orchard.

Fleet examples: 1st Fleet, 2nd Fleet, 3rd Fleet.

FRIGATES

Frigates are generally named for inland seas and lakes found on Cradle, seasons and months on Cradle, cities (extant or long gone) found on Cradle, and folk heroes and figures from labor history.

Frigate examples: UNS-LS *Tahoe*, UNS-LS *November*, UNS-LS *Kinshasa*, UNS-LS *Joe Hill*.

CARRIERS

Carriers are generally named for rivers and canals found on Cradle, forests on Cradle, folk heroes and events in labor history, capital cities (extant or ancient) on Cradle, and so on.

Carrier examples: UNS-CV *Nile*, UNS-CV *Daintree*, UNS-CV *Tompkins Square*, UNS-CV *New York*.

BATTLESHIPS

Battleships are generally named for naturalists and environmentalists, mountain peaks and canyons on Cradle, large geographic features on Cradle, theorists and writers, and so on.

Battleship examples: UNS-BB *William Keith*, UNS-BB *Shasta*, UNS-BB *Highveld*, UNS-BB *Friedrich Engels*.

SUBLINE SHIPS

Subline ships draw on a vast range of possible naming schemes, from cities and towns, to figures and creatures of legend and myth – anything deemed appropriate by the Union Naval Department Board of Names and Registers.

WINGS

Wings are typically given an alphanumeric designation: a letter based on their division placement (i.e., a ship's first wing would be "A") and a number based on their proximity to their command element (the commanding officer of a wing, for fighters, bombers, and mounted mechs, or the commanding ship in the case of larger subline vessels; i.e., "1" for the commander). For example, the command element ("1") of the UNS-CV *Tompkins Square's* first wing ("A") would be "A-1". In voice and text comms, the officer or command vessel would likely respond to a phonetic corresponding to their "A" designation. As a wing, they would be known as "Able-One", "Assassin-One", "Archer-One", or something along those lines.

All other wings in the A group would be numbered consecutively from their command element: A-2, A-3, A-4, and so on. Individual pilots are referred to by their callsign, save for the wing commander, who is referred to as "[phonetic] Actual" (i.e., Able Actual, Assassin Actual, Archer Actual, etc).

KARRAKIN TRADE BARONIES

The combined strength of the Karrakin Trade Baronies is second only to Union in terms of potential fleet size; however, as a uniquely structured federation of states and noble dominions, bringing the total united strength of the Baronies to the field would be an unprecedented undertaking. Regardless, each Karrakin world is capable of fielding a tremendous amount of naval power, whether alone or within a temporary strategic structure.

By Karrakin law, warships can only be authorized and fabricated by the Federal Karrakin Monarchy and organized under the BUC. The federal Karrakin armed forces crews and commands the Karrakin navy. Although it is technically illegal for the noble houses to possess naval forces of their own, many do in the form of converted yachts, barges, and other pleasure-craft armed for "self-defense."

NAVAL GROUPS

The most common naval force structure found in the Concern and the Interest is that of the BUC-commanded naval group. House companies are not allowed to field their own naval-tier ships; thus, the responsibility for pursuing the interstellar ambitions of the Baronies falls to the BUC – the Federal Karrakin Monarchy's own forces. The BUC controls both the Baronic navy and any ground forces that fall outside of the house company system. It is responsible for the every element of the Baronies' naval infrastructure, from logistics to force application.

BUC naval groups are usually outfitted for a wide variety of possible encounters. They range in size from a handful of ships to many dozens, though most contain six to ten ships of the line and their escorts. Each naval group is commanded by a group commander.

Although BUC naval groups do tend to use NHPs, they don't have blink codebooks. As military vessels belonging to a recognized state in Union, they may enjoy some faster cycling through blink queues, but they certainly don't have unfettered access to the network.

HOUSE COMPANY MISSIONS

Baronic house companies must lease ships from the BUC if they mean to engage in naval warfare or interplanetary maneuvers. The house (or houses) hoping to lease ships must submit a detailed application to the BUC describing the extent of the intended mission and must pay the salaries of the personnel that will crew and command the ships. Assuming a mission is approved, the BUC enjoys total oversight and, for its part, ensures that all naval considerations – logistics, navigation, and space/orbital combat – are handled so that the house company (or companies) billeted aboard its ships can perform their duties.

Most house company missions consist of between eight and twelve ships of the line and their escorts. Unlike most BUC naval groups, house company missions often field carriers laden with house company soldiers, chassis, and ground personnel. Such missions are still commanded by BUC group commanders, though they likely have the command staff of the house company they are escorting breathing down their neck.

Union considers house companies to be private organizations; as such, they have no priority access in blink gate queues.

FREE COMPANY EXPEDITIONARY GROUPS

Unlike house companies, the Free Companies are wholly private entities. As such, Baronic law entitles them to field their own naval ships and personnel as long as their full strength is registered with the BUC, they are maintained to BUC readiness standards, and they will comply with any calls to arms from the BUC, if ordered.

Free Company ships run the gamut from professionally crewed, purpose-built ships of the line built by master shipwrights, to cheap, converted civilian vessels upgraded with various weapons and tactical systems. The quality of the ships in a group is directly proportionate to and indicative of the power of its company: the larger, wealthier, more powerful, and better connected the company is, the better their supporting ships are likely to be.

SHIP DESIGNATIONS

Baronic naval vessels have the following designations:

- **Frigates:** FKS-RE (Federal Karrakin Ship – Rasée)
- **Carriers:** FKS-CV (Federal Karrakin Ship – Carrier)
- **Battleships:** FKS-BC (Federal Karrakin Ship – Battlecruiser)

For example, the full designation for the Baronic battlecruiser *Invincible* is "FKS-BC *Invincible*".

NAMING CONVENTIONS

BATTLEGROUPS AND FLEETS

Baronic fleet-strength forces are called "armadas", while battlegroup-strength detachments are called "naval groups". Both types of force are numbered in the order in which they are raised, following which is a name. Naval groups are either given the designation "Federal", named after the house with which their commanding officer is associated, or named after the house company they are supporting. Armadas take the name of the world to which their commanding fleetmaster is sworn. For example:

Naval group examples: Naval Group 2 Federal, Naval Group 1 Yond, Naval Group 33 Boulder.

Armada examples: Armada 1 Khayradin; Armada 5 Bo.

FRIGATES

Baronic frigates are referred to as "rasées". They are usually named after families, genera, and species of flowering plants. They may also be named for ignoble officers who have retired from the service or been killed in battle.

Frigate examples: FKS-RE *Dendrobium*, FKS-RE *Didier Haillet*, FKS-RE *Berthe Bonnel*, FKS-RE *Aberrans*.

CARRIERS

Baronic carriers are named for heroes of Karrakin myth and history, legendary weapons, and cities across the Concern. Carriers may also be named for living Karrakin nobles.

Carrier examples: FKS-CV *Anaxandron*, FKS-CV *Alouette*, FKS-CV *Baron Bilal*.

BATTLESHIPS

Baronic battleships are called "battlecruisers" and are named for heroes of Karrakin myth and history, worlds of the Concern, warrior virtues, and the major signs of the Karrakin deck of fates. Battleships may also be named for living figures of Karrakin high nobility.

Battleship examples: FKS-BC *Passacaglia*, FKS-BC *Umara*, FKS-BC *Valor*, FKS-BC *Broker's Demand*.

SUBLINE SHIPS

Like frigates, Baronic subline ships carry the names of genera, species of flowering plants, and ignoble officers who have retired from the service or been killed in battle.

WINGS

Wings are numbered according to their position in their carrier's (or group's) deck organization and carry the name of their parent carrier, sometimes abbreviated for convenience. For example, wings assigned to the carrier FKS-CV *Baron Bilal* would, beginning with the uppermost command element, be designated 1-Bilal, 2-Bilal, etc.

Individual pilots are referred to by their callsign, save for the wing commander for that ship, who is referred to as "[carrier] Leader" (i.e., Bilal Leader). Baronic pilots place a great deal of importance on their callsigns, and performing notable deeds is often accompanied by a ceremony in which their callsign is "graduated" to reflect this personal glory. The exception is the wing commander whose callsign always remains the same, as the honor of leading a wing is considered great enough to not require further elevation.

HARRISON ARMORY

Harrison Armory is a robust, centralized corpro-state with an incredible ability to punch above its weight. Proven in numerous critical battles against Baronic forces, the Armory enjoys unparalleled logistical and strategic vision backed by powerful, cutting-edge weaponry. Centuries of imperial expansion have driven the Armory's military development, creating a martial culture that produces disciplined officer corps and professional enlisted soldiers. Its broad territorial holdings are directly administered by its central government on Ras Shamra.

The Armory's entire naval power is comparable in size to the federal naval forces allotted to a single Baronic world, but the Armory's command over logistics, strategy, and center-point tactics makes it a nimble, comparatively fearsome threat with the ability to win wars in a single, rapid strike.

BATTLEGROUPS

Modern Armory battlegroups evolved from orbital support fleets. Only recently has Ras Shamra began to produce naval forces organized for full-scale combat. As a result, while the Armory's ships and personnel are equipped with some of the finest technologies, systems, and weapons in the galaxy, they are largely unproven in real battle. The fluid state of Armory naval doctrine manifests in a tendency toward the adoption of radical, unconventional strategies – and, just as likely, the potential for disaster.

Armory fleets are organized according to one of two doctrines: planetwatch and force projection. Planetwatch fleets are configured to support Armory ground legions and ensure total theater dominance. Force projection fleets, meanwhile, are the Armory's standard naval groups, meant to engage in a range of ship-to-ship actions.

SHIP DESIGNATIONS

Harrison Armory naval vessels have the following designations:

- **Frigates:** PCV-L (Purview Command Vessel – Line)
- **Carriers:** PCV-GC (Purview Command Vessel – General Carrier)
- **Battleships:** PCV-DN (Purview Command Vessel – Dreadnought)

For example, the proper designation for the Armory frigate *Hannibal* is Purview Command Vessel – Line *Hannibal*, or, PCV-L *Hannibal*.

NAMING CONVENTIONS

BATTLEGROUPS AND FLEETS

Armory battlegroups are numbered based on the order in which they were raised and named for the world from which they were raised, followed by their role (i.e., planetwatch or force projection). They may also have an agnomen, depending on their history. Armory fleets are temporary force organizations, as legion commanders can be territorial about their command, and are named for the task they are formed to accomplish.

Battlegroup examples: 3rd Ras Shamra, Planetwatch; 1st Cordoban, Force Projection.

Fleet examples: 1st Expeditionary Fleet, 2nd Expeditionary Fleet, 5th Purview Defense Fleet.

FRIGATES

Armory frigates are named for heroic figures of human and Armory myth and history, warrior virtues valued by the Armory, and ranking legionnaires, as well as c-suite Armory executives.

Frigate examples: PCV-L *Marco Polo*, PCV-L *Alacrity*, PCV-L *Praetor Charles Clemens*, PCV-L *Director Joseph Columbus*.

CARRIERS

Carriers are named for heroic figures from ancient Cradle, virtues, and heroes and executives of the Armory. They may also be named for "matronly" adjectives and qualities, Purview metropolises, and women of myth.

Carrier examples: PCV-GC *Gawain*, PCV-GC *Steadfast*, PCV-GC *Dutiful*, PCV-GC *Fearsome*.

BATTLESHIPS

Armory battleships are called "dreadnoughts" and are named for leaders of the Armory, as well as monarchs, conquerors, and composers from Cradelian history and myth. They may also be named for heroic or virtuous qualities, worlds of the Purview, and gods of power and import from various human religions and mythologies.

Battleship examples: PCV-DN *Creighton II*, PCV-DN *Charlemagne*, PCV-DN *Indefatigable*, PCV-DN *Orwell*, PCV-DN *Odin*.

SUBLINE SHIPS

Armory subline ships are named for minor cities in the Purview, minor heroes of Cradelian myth, and middle-tier Armory executives.

WINGS

Armory wings are alphabetically designated in order of their position on the carrier's force organization chart and named for their parent ship, sometimes abbreviated for convenience. For example, wings assigned to the carrier PCV-GC *Gawain* would, beginning with the uppermost command element, be designated Gawain-A, Gawain-B, etc. In voice and text comms, the officer or command vessel may assign a phonetic corresponding to their alphabetic designation, such as Gawain-Alpha, Gawain-Beta, etc.

Individual pilots are referred to by their callsign, save for the wing commander for that ship, who is referred to as "[carrier] One" (i.e., Gawain One). When in flight with a wing, this can also be combined with that wing's own designation. For example, when in flight as part of Gawain-A, the wing commander's callsign would more formally be Gawain One-A or Gawain One-Alpha, though in common practice this is often elided.

NORTHSTAR GALACTIC COMMAND

Northstar Galactic Command (NGC) is a proactive security force recently revived by IPS-N to manage the transportation and reactive defense of clients, goods, and resources outside of the Galactic Core.

Unlike the ships produced by clients through IPS-N's commercial hull licensing schemes, NGC vessels are owned and operated by IPS-N at all times, even when contracted to clients. When contracted out to a state or entity, NGC vessels continue to be maintained and operated by IPS-N staff, but are integrated into the client's command structure, operating much like mercenary forces.

The burgeoning conflict in the Dawnline Shore will be NGC's first test. For the first time, NGC detachments have been brought on by groups of private citizens and various Karrakin houses to provide security and interplanetary transportation in the sector. NGC's forces in the Dawnline Shore are widespread, but contracted out to multiple parties. Because of this, although NGC may be strong in a one-off fight, it is not considered to be a threat on par with Union, the Baronies, or the Armory.

IPS-N also oversees Trunk Security, a galaxy-wide anti-piracy force tasked primarily with reactive defense of interstellar shipping lanes, as well as limited proactive operations.

ESCORT/SECURE PREMIER PACKAGE

The standard interplanetary escort and VIP package that NGC offers to new clients, the Escort/Secure Premier (E/S-P) package, is built around a core pair of carriers, escort mech wings, rapid defense frigates, and a healthy complement of marines. E/S-P packages are intended to defend and rapidly transport NGC's clients, with the ships outfitted accordingly.

SHIP DESIGNATIONS

NGC vessels are deputized by the faction, group, or entity that has contracted them. In addition to bearing the flag and designation of their client, NGC vessels have their own internal designations. The proper designation for an NGC vessel on contract conforms to the client's organizational structure; the proper internal designation for an NGC vessel is based on NGCs own markers:

- **Frigates:** NGCS-FF (Northstar Galactic Command Ship – Frigate)
- **Carriers:** NGCS-CV (Northstar Galactic Command Ship – Carrier)
- **Battleships:** NGCS-BB (Northstar Galactic Command Ship – Battleship)

For example, the full internal designation for the NGC frigate *Professional* would be NGCS-FF *Professional*.

NAMING CONVENTIONS

NGC ships adopt the naming conventions and designations of their clients for the duration of their contracts. Internally, they follow the same naming conventions as Trunk Security and other IPS-N vessels.

FLEETS

NGC does not operate independently; its ships integrate into the organizational structure of their clients. Trunk Security, on the other hand, is structured as a policing and reactive security force, rather than a proactive force projection navy. Its battlegroup-strength forces are called "force patrols", and are named according to their area of operation and the order in which they were raised. Trunk Security does not have a fleet-strength organization, but multiple force patrols are grouped into divisions.

Trunk Security battlegroup examples: Dawnline Force Patrol 15, Charlie's Gap Force Patrol 2.

FRIGATES

NGC frigates are named for simple qualities associated with IPS-N virtues and mythic creatures associated with flight or the sea.

NGC frigate examples: NGCS-FF *Keen*, NGCS-FF *Thunderbird*.

Trunk Security frigates are identified with simple two- or three-digit alphanumeric tags, with additional phonetics to differentiate between frigates with duplicate numbers.

Trunk Security frigate examples: *34-Charlie, 56-Kilo, 203-China*.

CARRIERS

NGC carriers borrow their names from North, Central, and South American gods and mythologies. Additionally, they are often named using qualities related to IPS-N's internal virtues.

NGC carrier examples: NGCS-CV *Chaac*, NGCS-CV *Honest Deal*.

Trunk Security carriers are identified with simple, four-digit alphanumeric tags, with additional phonetics to differentiate between carriers with duplicate numbers.

Trunk Security carrier examples: *1100-Kilo, 1900-Gold, 1001-Hotel*.

BATTLESHIPS

NGC battleships are named for islands found across Cradle and IPS-N's conservation worlds; they may also, like frigates and carriers, be named for qualities related to IPS-N's internal virtues. Trunk Security does not field any battleships.

NGC battleship examples: NGCS-BB *Gibraltar*, NGCS-BB *Ithaca*, NGCS-BB *Unshakable*.

SUBLINE SHIPS

NGC subline ships are named for large or carnivorous fish, sharks, and aquatic mammals found across the galaxy.

Trunk Security subline ships have a wide variety of names, but are denoted first by a four-character alphanumeric key, split by a hyphen, with one letter in the second digit: 9A-38, or 2B-99, or 8Z-21, and so on.

WINGS

Wings are named following their parent ship, sometimes abbreviated for convenience, and numbered according to their order on the flight deck. For example, wings assigned to the carrier NGCS-CV *Chaac* would, beginning with the uppermost command element, be designated Chaac-1, Chaac-2, etc. Trunk Security wings use the accompanying phonetic of their parent ship where applicable. For example, wings assigned to the carrier *1900-Gold* would be designated Gold-1, Gold-2, etc.

Individual pilots are referred to by their callsign, with wing commanders given specific callsigns that are particular to their parent ship. For example, the wing commander aboard the NGCS-CV *Chaac* is always designated THUNDER, while the wing commander aboard the carrier *1900-Gold* is always designated JACKKNIFE.

CONSTELLAR SECURITY

Constellar Security is the official body responsible for a number of Smith-Shimano Corpro's security and intelligence organizations (both on-book and off-book), organizing them within a single force structure for operations outside of the Constellation. Constellar Security itself is an arm of the Constellar Congress, Smith-Shimano's civic governing body; as such, Constellar Security groups, vessels, detachments, and so on, are organized under the auspices of the Constellar Congress, not Smith-Shimano.

Most Constellar Security forces in the Dawnline Shore are based on the ground. Tasked with providing security for Constellar Congressional delegations, diplomats, and development officers, these forces operate from unique, low-orbit mobile platforms – Skyhook-class carriers. Constellar Security only fields few other ships: a mix of corvettes and mounted chassis wings, all rated for atmospheric and vacuum operations.

Agents of the Constellar Midnights – SSC's off-book deniable operations force – are rumored to be operating in the Dawnline Shore. As of yet, this has not been confirmed.

SKYHOOKS

Large ships that blur the line between space station and carrier, Skyhooks have massive internal and external carrying capacity: in transit, a Skyhook can support a dozen mounted mech wings stored internally and multiple externally mounted corvettes and gunboats, along with up to a thousand personnel in well-equipped and comfortable quarters.

When deployed, Skyhook carriers allow for long-term, self-sufficient ground-to-space transportation; when converted for space travel, they are suitable for interplanetary and interstellar long-hauls.

SHIP DESIGNATIONS

Skyhooks are denoted by the designation C-HK (Congressional - Skyhook).

NAMING CONVENTIONS
FLEETS
Constellar Security does not have a fleet-equivalent force structure. Its largest force organizations are around battlegroup size. These forces are referred to as "missions" (abbreviated to "M.") and given code names.

Battlegroup examples: M. Capital, M. Signet, M. Crown.

CARRIERS
Skyhooks are, by function, carrier ships. Constellar naming follows internal SSC bicode terms, combining two nouns into a code phrase.

Carrier examples: C-HK *Sightline Green*, C-HK *Canopy Atlas*, C-HK *Pinnacle Dome*.

SUBLINE SHIPS AND WINGS
Constellar Security identifies both subline ships and wings as "gunboats" , and both carry the same prefix: GB. They are differentiated by a marker character, either "C" for large subline vessels or "W" for fighters, bombers, and mechs, and are named in reference to their Skyhook. For example, C-GB Pinnacle 1, C-GB Pinnacle 2, and C-GB Pinnacle 3 are corvettes assigned to the C-HK *Pinnacle Dome*. W-GB Canopy 1 and W-GB Canopy 2 are two fighter wings assigned to the C-HK *Canopy Atlas*.

Individual strike-craft pilots are referred to by their callsign, save for the wing commander for that ship, who is referred to as "[carrier] Alpha" (i.e., Canopy Alpha).

COMMS CHATTER

If you're playing *Battlegroup* via text (whether in real time or play-by-post) and want to be "in character" or write an after-play summary, this section offers some tips on presenting your communications in the style of in-game comms chatter, much as would play out during an engagement.

OPEN COMMUNICATIONS

Open-channel, ship-wide, and fleetwide communications – ALLCOMM (or ACM) text – share a simple format, usually dictated by commanding officers or those authorized to issue such messages. In ALLCOMM text, messages are relayed in all-caps and new speakers are introduced with an open channel symbol: >//

ALLCOMM text is a catch-all designation for all types of communications, and is specific enough for the kinds of communications that tend to take place in *Battlegroup*. Other formats – some more private, some coded differently, and so on – do exist, but ALLCOMM is the Union-space standard communications format.

MARKERS

ALLCOMM communications happen in real time, meaning they don't need to be introduced with date, time, or location markers; however, if you would like to add markers (either at the time or in retrospect), then note the date, the purpose of the message, and the issuing authority using the following template:

```
TIMESTAMP:
CODE+++PURPOSE:
DISTRIBUTION:
MESSAGE TO FOLLOW:::
```

You might fill this marker out as follows:

```
TIMESTAMP:          (4.3.5016u 0600 CrST)
CODE+++PURPOSE:     TOWER GOLD+++MISSIVE
                    TO BATTLEGROUP
DISTRIBUTION:       TAG "BG_COMET"
MESSAGE TO FOLLOW:::
```

Here, "CrST" stands for Cradle Standard Time, a time system used throughout the Milky Way. Cradle Standard Time uses a month/day/year format for dates, but you can use whichever format works best at your table.

IDENTIFYING SPEAKERS

In ALLCOMMS messages, the speaker is indicated by a three-letter label and parenthetical official designation, all within square brackets, following the open comms marker, like so:

```
>//[AUG(UNS-LS_03272)]:: SEND MESSAGE
```

In this example, the message originates from a Union frigate, UNS-LS_03272 *August*. The ship's short identifier, AUG, comes from its name (*August*), and its official designation, UNS-LS_03272, stands for "Union Naval Ship – Line Ship, hull number 03272". The identifier and the message are separated by two colons.

Initial responses follow the same format (i.e., a three-letter label and a parenthetical official designation, both contained within square brackets). After this, both parties shift to an abbreviated format for condensed transcripts. In standard Union transcripts, the abbreviated format only lists the three-letter designation and the last two digits of the official designation, like so:

```
>//[AUG(UNS-LS_03272)]:: SEND MESSAGE
>//[MKH(UNS-LS_03738)]:: RECEIVE
>//[AUG72]:: WE HAVE YOU ON LRD SWEEP
            MKH38+++DO YOU SEE US?
>//[MKH38]:: AFFIRM+++WE SEE YOU
```

In subsequent messages, formal ALLCOMM conventions stipulate that the speakers be addressed using this shortened form.

IN-LINE PUNCTUATION

Instead of standard written punctuation, ALLCOMM chat uses a blend of replacement symbols and 1:1 punctuation marks drawn from written English (as a side note, *Battlegroup*, like *Lancer*, is written in American English, though the actual linguistic constructions used in the setting may be different).

The most important replacement symbol to know for accurate ALLCOMM chatter is that the period (".") is replaced with a series of three unspaced plus symbols ("+++"). This mark can function as a break and as a full stop, but, as in the following example, is not needed to end a message:

```
>//[AUG72]:: WE HAVE YOU ON LRD SWEEP
            MKH38+++DO YOU SEE US?
>//[MKH38]:: AFFIRM+++WE SEE YOU
```

By contrast, commas (","), question marks ("?"), and exclamation point ("!") all remain the same in ALLCOMM text.

LISTS

Lists of objectives, units, navigational points, and so on, are frequently found in ALLCOMM text. The beginning of a list is indicated three unspaced colons (":::"), with the list itself appearing in parenthesis and individual items separated by commas, like so:

```
>//[AUG72]:: [MKH38] PROCEED VIA THE
             FOLLOWING ROUTE:::(NAV 1, NAV
             2, NAV 3)+++CONFIRM
>//[MKH38]:: WILCO+++PROCEEDING
```

Some commanders forego the formal construction and simply separate their lists with "+++". This is acceptable, though it can make for difficult record keeping down the line. If one were to apply this less formal method to the above text, it would look like this:

```
>//[AUG72]:: [MKH38] PROCEED VIA THE
             FOLLOWING ROUTE+++ NAV 1+++NAV
             2+++NAV 3+++CONFIRM
>//[MKH38]:: WILCO+++PROCEEDING
```

ABBREVIATIONS

The text of messages following the speaker tags is abbreviated wherever possible; however, do note that text isn't abbreviated simply for the sake of shortening messages, but to remove extraneous text while preserving the intended meaning (i.e., "objective" is often shortened to "obj", "torpedo" to "torp", etc). There is nothing official about what is abbreviated and what isn't; abbreviations (as well as acronyms, nicknames, and so on) are often implicitly agreed upon by the groups that use them. Text can also include links to data packets, formatted as necessary.

SUBTEXT

Unlike ALLCOMM messages, which are a simple back-and-forth, private communications between officers on the same ship or officers in the same battlegroup or fleet play out as threaded comments under an original or opening post. This is the officers' subtext: a thread of comments shared by officers in private or open conversation amidst the clamor and general comms of battle. There are usually no more than two people engaged in any given thread, although a third or fourth may sometimes be brought in.

In any given subtext thread, the original post appears first and is identified with a single right arrow (">") followed by the usual two slashes ("//"). The next speaker is marked as ">>", the third as ">>>", and the fourth as ">>>>", like so:

```
>//hello world
>>//hello you
>>>//hello all
>>>>//goodbye
>//goodbye
```

In subtext, it is not usually necessary to indicate in-text who is speaking, as the number of arrows fills this role. As with normal text communications, though, subtext can differ in format depending on the users interacting with it!

Subtext tends to use normal, American English punctuation (i.e., no "+++" or "===" notation, necessarily) and tends to be presented only in lower case, though case change is acceptable.

EXAMPLE CONVERSATION

Below is an example of what a standard, formal ALLCOMM text conversation looks like rendered on the page, with the "end transmission" punctuation ("===") included. This punctuation is used in transcription to indicate that a connection has been broken and transmission from the speaker has ceased.

```
TIMESTAMP:          (4.3.5016u 0600 CrST)
CODE+++PURPOSE:     TOWER GOLD+++MISSIVE
                    TO BATTLEGROUP
DISTRIBUTION:       TAG "BG_COMET"
MESSAGE TO FOLLOW:::
>//[AUG(UNS-LS_03272)]:: SEND MESSAGE
>//[MKH(UNS-LS_03738)]:: RECEIVE
>//[AUG72]:: WE HAVE YOU ON LRD SWEEP
             MKH38+++DO YOU SEE US?
>//[MKH38]:: AFFIRM+++WE SEE YOU
>//[AUG72]:: [MKH38] PROCEED VIA THE
             FOLLOWING ROUTE+++ NAV 1+++NAV
             2+++NAV 3+++CONFIRM
>//[MKH38]:: WILCO+++PROCEEDING
>//[AUG72]:: FLASH COMMS WHEN YOU ARRIVE
             [MKH38]
>//[MKH38]:: WILCO+++COMMS AT ALL NAV
             POINTS?
>//[AUG72]:: CORRECT+++COMMS AT ALL NAV
             POINTS
>//[MKH38]:: WILCO+++REDSHIFTING, [MKH38]
             CLOSING COMMS
>//[MKH38]:: ===
>//[AUG72]:: ===
```

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