

SILENT DEATH™

HOUSE



ASP™

TECHNOCRACY



Advancements in science & technology,
assimilating a world near you!

ASP TECHNOCRACY™

The Next Millennium

Credits

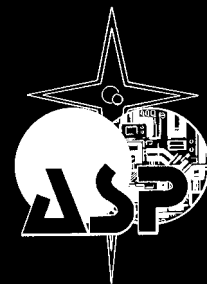
Original System Design: Kevin Barrett
Asp Technocracy Author: Scott Sigler
Cover Illustration: Alan Gutierrez
Interior Illustrations: Daniel Cruger,
Matthew Plog,
Miniatures Sculptor: Robert Murch
Series Editor: Donald G. Dennis
Managing Art Direction:
Jessica Ney-Grimm
Art Direction: Jason O. Hawkins
Assisting Art Direction:
Donald G. Dennis
Pagemaking: Steven Arensberg,
Sherry Robinson
Cover Design: Don Dennis
Cover Graphics: Nick Morawitz
Proofreading: Kevin Elliot,
Allyson Mohny
Ship Display Illustrations: Dan Cruger

ICE Staff:

CEO: Bruce Neidlinger;
President: Pete Fenlon;
Managing Editor: Coleman Charlton;
Sales Manager: Deane Begiebing;
Sales, Customer Service and Operations:
Becky Blanton, Arthur Brill, Steve Hardy,
Olivia Johnston, Chad McCully,
Dave Morris, Dave Platnick,
Karina Arensberg, Monica Wilson;
Print Buying and Rights Director:
Kurt Fischer;
Editing, Production, and Development:
John Curtis, Donald G. Dennis,
Wendy Frazer, Jason Hawkins,
Allyson Mohny, Bob Mohny,
Nick Morawitz, Jessica Ney-Grimm,
Craig O'Brien, Michael Reynolds,
Sherry Robinson;
Shipping and Receiving: Tony Petrazio,
Daniel Williams.



Copyright © 1998 by
Iron Crown Enterprises.
All rights reserved.
No reproductions without
the express written
consent of **Iron Crown
Enterprises.** Produced and
distributed by **Iron Crown
Enterprises, Inc.,**
P.O. Box 1605,
Charlottesville, VA 22902.
Phone: (804) 295-4280.
Fax: (804) 977-4811.
Web page:
www.ironcrown.com



Silent Death

Playtesters:

Gerry Rollins, Larry Amrose, Bob Star, Will Niebling;

Castle Archon: Jim Eisert, Andrew Thompson, Adam Pezzel;

Ottawa Redshirts: Richard Dufault, Glen Simpson, Scott MacGregor, George MacLure, Brad Hector, Michael Smith.

Starbase 1: Paul Waite, Ian Deeks, Ollie Deacon, Trevor Jones, Phil Trott.

ICE Staff: John Curtis, Don Dennis, Bob Mohney;

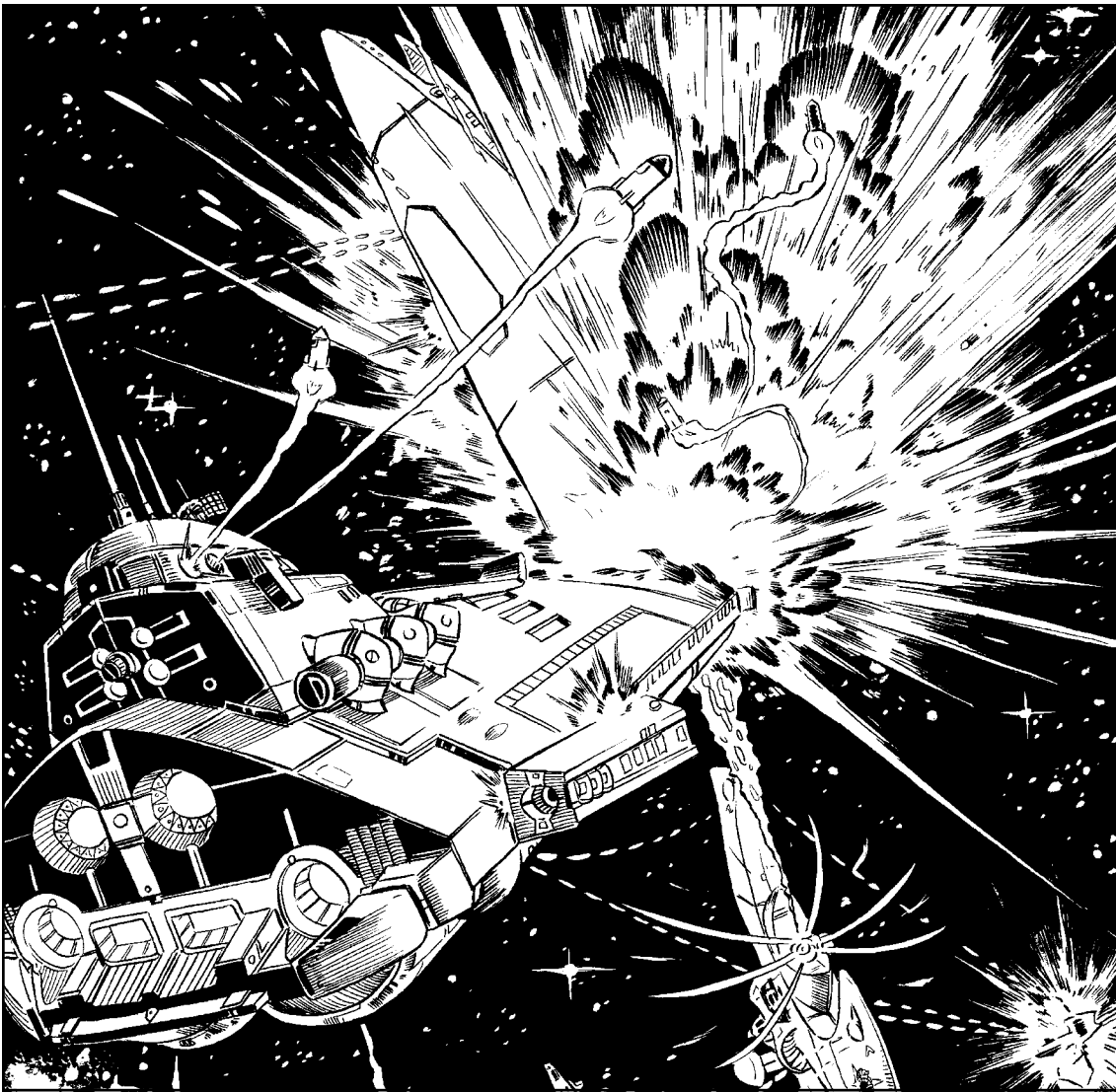
The Good, the Bad, and the Unlucky: Paul Carrol, Chris Kuhn, Don Jenkins, Alan Nuss;

House Mythos: Marvin Knighton, Ian Gross, Robert Parrish, Chris Weber, Oscar Chapa Jr.;

Table of Contents

ASP Culture	3	Sigurd Archdiocese	30
Living Experiments	3	Unkulunkulu Archipelago	31
Breeding Factories	4	Q'raj Void Protectorate	31
Sprawl and Population	4	Luches Utopia	31
Views on Other Terrans	4	The Confederation	32
Crime & Drugs	5	Draconians	32
History	5	Universal Night Watch	33
Key to the Stars	6	Sunrunners	34
Growth and Prosperity	6	ASP New Technology	35
Planning Ahead	6	Quantum Thrust Engines	35
A New House	7	Artificiance™ BioLink Pilot Interface	35
Ascension of the Academicians	8	Artificiance™ Targeting System	36
Explosion of Growth	8	New Weapons	37
Takachi's Reign	9	Entropic Accelerator	37
Profit Margin	9	C-Torps	38
Advancing Technology	9	Mk. 20 Parasite Torpedo	39
Computer Evolution	10	Graviton Cannon	41
If At First You Don't Succeed	10	ASP Starcraft Inventory &	
Virus-444	10	Nomenclature	42
Walking Erect	10	ASP 01-01 MSPAC "Quark"	42
Expansion	10	ASP 00-10 LMPAC "Pulsar"	42
The Discovery of Fire	11	ASP 10-10 HMPAC "Binary"	43
Outbreak	12	ASP 101-10 L-MPAC "Nova"	44
Forsaking of Data	13	ASP 111-10 H-MPA "Nebula II"	44
Sabotage Thwarted	13	DRC/ASP 01 "Pteradon"	45
New Allies	13	ASP Refits	46
Sucked Dry	14	Spirit Rider ASP (or Spirit Rider IV)	46
The Spawn	14	Shryak Shuttle III	47
Brood Study	15	Famous wings of the	
Hydra Heads	15	ASP Technocracy	48
The Cavalry	15	Brainchild	48
Fight for Survival	15	DeBuggers	49
The Beginning of the End	16	Killing Machine	50
The Miracle	16	Chromeheads	51
Research Pays Off	16	Cyborg Cavalry	52
Holding On	17	Freedom's Foragers	53
Sul-Havascar Reserve	17	ASP Scenarios	54
Mu-Lindi Corporation	18	Basic Scenario I: Frontier Skirmish	54
Recovery, Restructure	18	Basic Scenario II: Take the Tech and Run	55
Demand for Resources	18	Basic Scenario III:	
Fight for Survival	19	Data Sphere Non-Lethal Training	56
Kanmuri	19	Advanced Scenario I: Buccaneer Battle ...	57
Q'raj Retribution	19	Battle One: Picking a Fight	57
Tokugawan Counterstrike	19	Battle Two: Let the Big Dogs Run	59
Enter the Draconians	19	Advanced Scenario II: Sunrunner Menace ...	60
Return to Greatness	20	Timeline	61
Spawn Evolution	20	Worlds of the ASP Technocracy	64
Map of ASP Space	21	Deep Planets	66
Government Structure	22	Other Deep Worlds	67
The Corporation	22	Dead Planets	67
Academic Departments	23		
Political Relations	25		
House Colos	25		
Red Star	26		
House Tokugawa	26		
Yoka-Shan Warworld	27		
Kashmere Commonwealth	27		
Hibernian Freehold	28		
Data Sphere	29		





The Next Millennium

Technocracy Terms

Artificiance™: Technology for interfacing neurons and computers. State of the art for cybernetic implants. Chief export of Technocracy.

Bean Counter: ASP scientist slang for corporate members of the government.

Breeders: Derogatory term for Terran women who carry their children to term (also Maggot Wagons and Larvae Bombs). The Technocracy hasn't seen a live birth in over 50 years.

ASP Culture

For 2,000 years, members of the ASP have embraced the advancement of science. From the time of the Allied Science Proliferators to the ASP Technocracy, this culture has held the pervasive view that advancing science is the goal of life. It is more important than family, more important than country, and even more important than individual survival. Life is transitory, while scientific achievements live forever.

The ASP once viewed humanity as one mega-organism, and hence individual parts of that organism held little importance. In the days of the Next Millennium, ASPers no longer see all of humanity as one entity. Each House is considered an individual organism pre-disposed to conflict for ter-

ritory and resources. Evolution will naturally select the strongest organism, and the rest will die off. The Technocracy intends to be the survivor.

Living Experiments

ASP citizens view human experimentation as a necessary part of science. To volunteer for a dangerous experiment is considered the ultimate contribution to science, and is an act of honor. Like ritualistic suicide in ancient Japan, many disgraced ASP citizens choose to submit themselves to experimentation in order to regain some measure of respect in the Technocracy. Most die, but all are revered as national heroes.



Silent Death

BioLink: Technology that allows ASP pilots to “plug in” to the ship’s controls. Creates a virtual link between pilot and ship; allows for speed-of-thought reaction times.

Bovine Caravan: Slang term for a Kashmere freighter group.

Void Jock: Slang for Q’raj Void Protectorate fighter pilot.

Earthworms: Derogatory slang term for citizens of House Red Star.

Easy Money: ASP pilot slang for Parasite Torpedoes.

Flatline: A popular semi-sedative drug.

Getting Wired: ASP pilot term for plugging into BioLink.

With that view of life, it’s no surprise that ASPers modify themselves whenever the mood suits them. Every citizen of the main ASP planets is modified in some way, either by pre-birth genetics, cybernetic implants, or chemically-induced alterations. The human body is considered a blank canvas, and only by modification can beauty be achieved. This modification process, known as “upgrading,” is at the core of Technocracy culture.

Breeding Factories

Long ago the Technocracy decided that civilization had rendered natural selection among humans obsolete. Thanks to medicine and benevolent, supportive cultures, any non-sterile individual could breed, no matter how bad their physical or mental handicaps. This “survival of everyone” counteracted the natural process, stopping evolution dead in its tracks.

In an effort to put evolution back on track, the ASP constructed “breeding factories.” These facilities produce test-tube babies, replacing human breeding. To facilitate evolution, computer programs randomly arrange bits of DNA to produce advanced gametes, and every zygote is the result of preplanning for optimal traits. This process is so entrenched in ASP life that live birth is a rarity. Most ASP females are capable of birth, but never conceive. Babies are evaluated, tested, and judged from the time of birth. Advanced children go to rearing factories on key worlds, while children that do not meet the minimal standards are shipped off to rearing factories on outlying colonies. Rearing factories are geared to attain maximum achievement in every child, with preferential treatment given to advanced children.

Since the Brood scourge ravaged Technocracy worlds to the tune of some 10 billion deaths, this genetic engineering has taken a new direction. A great deal of research focuses on breeding super soldiers, a race of warriors that will defend the ASP. The first experimental subjects in this field are reaching their early teens, and the next decade will see the ASP field large numbers of genetically-engineered ground forces. This first batch is crucial to ASP research, as their performance evaluation will help refine future efforts.

Sprawl and Population

ASP cities are packed tight with people. Cities and planetary infrastructures are designed with maximum efficiency in mind. ASPers get the most possible production out of every square inch of land. Highly advanced technology allows the Technocracy to fit many people into relatively small spaces, a fact that sends aesthetics out the window. Functionality, not appearance, is the goal. Cities tower into the sky and extend far below ground. The ASP’s cities are impossibly dense with buildings, people, and industrial pollution. Visitors from other worlds are often amazed and disgusted at the hive-like appearance of ASP cities. Red Star citizens, in particular, loathe visiting ASP worlds, as they see the tightly-packed cities and lack of open spaces as an affront to nature.

Views on Other Terrans

ASPers feel that the meshing of biology and technology is an inevitable step in evolution. Technology allows species to improve at drastically faster rates than standard breeding. Why wait millions of years for significant changes when technology can advance the race immediately?

Terrans who refuse to upgrade obviously refuse to improve themselves, to evolve, and what could be more primitive or backward than that? At best, ASPers view other Terrans as dangerous barbarians. Some Technocracy citizens feel that other humans are closer to monkeys than they are to beautifully upgraded ASPers.

ASPers view Draconians as highly evolved individuals because of their progressive views towards science and technology. Many Draconians embrace upgrades, utilizing ASP biotechnical processes. By the same token, ASPers view Primates as very dangerous primitives who embrace primitive views of nature. Few Primates visit the ASP’s choked cities.





Crime & Drugs

Crime is a major problem on ASP worlds. Tightly-packed confines produce both amateur and organized crime. The overpopulation often takes its toll on citizens. Violent outbursts are a common occurrence. In a society where non-scientific individual accomplishment is largely ignored, many citizens seek to escape into their own worlds. Some achieve this through traveling the galaxy and observing primitive Terran cultures. Many more achieve this through drug use.

ASP scientists develop new drugs on an almost daily basis, and many of these compounds are highly addictive. Recent studies show that 62 percent of ASP citizens suffer from drug abuse and addiction. These same drugs fuel organized crime cartels, which not only sell the drugs on Technocracy worlds, but smuggle them to other houses as well. The ASP is the top supplier of illegal substances in Terran space, and home to some of the galaxy's nastiest and most powerful criminal empires.

The Next Millennium

Hairballs: Slang for Primates.

Pump: Street name for powerful narcotic, Diemedoxyrol, sold out of system, but illegal in ASP space.

Rock Hounds: Slang term for Q'raj pilots.

Rusty: ASP military slang for pilots or gunners who suffer brain damage from BioLink feedback.

Void Fleas: Slang term for Q'raj pilots.

Shiftex™: Technocracy process of genotype and phenotype modification.

Skinbags: Slang for non-ASP Terrans who have no genetic or cybernetic modifications.

History

When four research and development firms joined forces in a simple business merger, few thought the new company would last longer than most civilizations. Fewer still thought the company would eventually become a civilization unto itself.

More than 2,000 years ago, four powerful R&D firms merged to form the Allied Science Proliferators. The company's philosophy was simple: concentrate on expanding the realms of science, and profit will take care of itself. The company flashed a wide-open pocketbook at academia, hiring some of Old



Silent Death

Skinny Minny: ASP military slang for Quark fighter.

Trace: Highly addictive hallucinogen.

Upgrade: General term for body improvements through genetics, cybernetics, or Artificiance implants.

Warp Juice: Liquid drug that causes intense excitement and hy-

Earth's most gifted minds with promises of unlimited budgets and constant organizational support. Many professors, tired of the constant struggle for proper funding, joined the new company, which placed few demands on its employees. The executives at Allied Science Proliferators seemed, at times, to be more the caretakers of a trust fund than leaders of a profit-hungry company. Indeed, many questioned the company's leadership, as they handed out huge sums for seemingly trivial research projects.

Eventually the company's tactics proved highly profitable. With a free reign and endless support, Allied's scientists generated regular achievements. Less than ten percent of those scientists produced concepts applicable to the marketplace, but that small group brought huge profits into Allied's coffers. Many companies modeled themselves after Allied's strategy, but few could compete. Allied simply threw money at almost any scientist who wanted it. Within a few decades, the company possessed resources that elevated them far beyond the competition's grasp.

An attitude of blind devotion spread to all levels of employees. Allied workers received the best benefits, excellent training, and generous salaries. Such attitudes generated powerful worker loyalty, and parents proudly submitted applications for their children, secure in the knowledge the Allied would provide a good life. As the centuries rolled past, the Allied Science Proliferators developed their own culture, almost independent of the nations that formed and dissolved around the company. Governments, after all, were transitory—Allied just went on and on and on.

Key to the Stars

Allied contributed many inventions to mankind's exodus to the stars, but two developments in particular made massive colonization possible. The first was the discovery of tachyon communication and Kurt Struckmeyer's subsequent development of the Tachyon Beam Dictor (TBD). Where messages once took decades to pass from one planet to the next, the TBD allowed instant communication. This opened the door to multi-planet governments, which to that point had been nearly impossible to control due to communication delays.

The second critical invention involved the development of Andrium drives. While drive technology had inched just past the speed of light, most trips still took decades to complete. The Andrium drives shortened those same trips to weeks, if not days. This advancement drastically increased mankind's range among the stars, and the TBD allowed him to stay in close contact with existing civilizations.

Growth and Prosperity

Allied inventions improved communications, shortened travel times, and—in effect—shrunk the galaxy, allowing for the formation of the sprawling Terran Federated Democracy. This new government (the seventh witnessed by Allied) unified mankind, albeit for a brief time. The Federation eventually crumbled under its own bureaucracy. During the collapse, Allied took measures to provide for its employees and—most importantly—continue to properly fund scientific research despite the lack of a stable government.

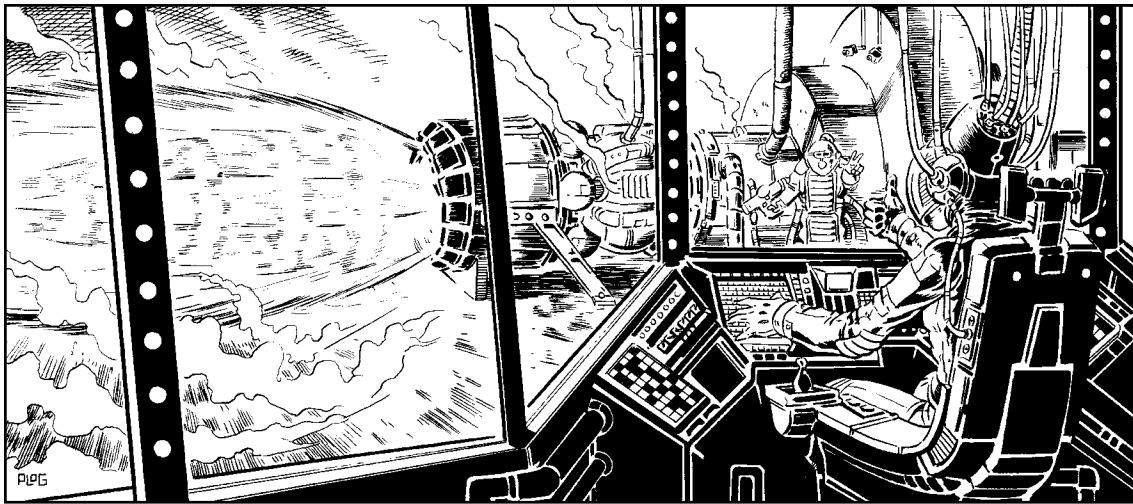
Planning Ahead

Any change in government, either sudden or gradual, can spell doom for an established business. Any disruption in Allied business meant a disruption in the advancement of science, and that could never be allowed to happen. To that end, Allied created a think tank comprised of the best behavioral, population, statistical, and societal analysts. For centuries, Allied executives charged that body with one not-so-simple task: predict the future of Terran government, and plan changes accordingly.

This long-standing policy saw Allied through tumultuous times of war, restructuring, revolution, and reorganization. Through the centuries, Allied made a habit of predicting history before it happened, and siding with the winner before he or she attained that success.

Such foresight served the Technocracy well in the waning decades of the Terran Federated Democracy. The Federation fractured as planet after planet seceded, leaving anarchy and a constant struggle for power in its wake. Several people mounted attempts to take over the Federation, but





none succeeded. Members of Allied's think tank, known as the Tankers, worked overtime during this chaotic period.

As the Tankers examined and re-examined every piece of data, one name grew increasingly prevalent in their projections—Macedon Gaius Triptolmeus. With an 86 percent probability of uniting the Terran worlds under his leadership, Allied executives decided to back his efforts to build an empire. Allied sent emissaries to Macedon, promising technological support and funds for his growing navy.

In the end the Tankers' predictions proved highly accurate. Macedon I founded the Terran Star Empire and became its first ruler. He remembered his allies and made sure Allied's work would continue uninterrupted and untouched by Imperial meddling. Thus began a close relationship between the Empire and Allied that lasted five centuries.

A New House

Macedon never forgot Allied's support. In the last days of his rule he made it clear to his son, Macedon II, that the Allied's work must continue without Imperial intervention. Macedon II took that message to heart. In Imp. 113, Macedon II granted Allied its own planet. The entire Allied Science Proliferators operation moved from Old Earth to the planet Holmar, and a new age began.

As rulers of a planet, Macedon II insisted Allied set up a provincial government. Allied executives saw this development as an opportunity to insure that the advancement of science forever remain the main priority.

An exhaustive selection committee picked Allied's 51 top scientists. The corporate executives named this group the Scientific Council, and set up all-encompassing legislative powers based on simple majority vote. With a governing board of accomplished scientists, the Allied Science Proliferators slipped into history and the ASP Technocracy was born.

Appointment to the Council was based solely on scientific accomplishment, a fact that none of the Council wished to change, as it provided a fairly empirical process, free of the whims of personality or fickle public opinion. Many of these great minds, however, had no leadership experience and some—like many geniuses—possessed rather poor social skills. The Council members saw this potential weakness and accounted for it in their first governmental decision. The Council voted to keep the corporate structure in place, letting the executives run operations as they always had. After all, that same corporate structure had kept the ASP running and focused solely on scientific discovery for over 1,000 years. Why, they mused, change something with a flawless and statistically-sound track record?

The Scientific Council legislated that, as

The Next Millennium

peractivity.

Doctoral Thesis

Leon Lehn quietly closed the lid on his holo box and watched his doctoral thesis on white dwarf time compression fade away with a flicker of static. Without the distraction of the computer simulation, Dean Kennington's silence seemed oppressive. Leon busied himself packing up his equipment, grateful that he had something to do with his hands rather than sit on them, waiting for Dean Kennington's review. This was, after all, the end of the educational gravy train.



Silent Death

His time at the Holmar Science Academy was at an end. With over 100,000 students, the Academy had little patience for those who wanted to extend their scholarships without contributing to the constant expansion of science. Either he secured government funding for his project, or he went to work for someone else, studying someone else's theories, conducting someone else's experiments.

"So you say that you can prove these claims?" Kennington said in a demanding tone, speaking so suddenly and so forcefully that Leon almost dropped the expensive holo box.



in the 1,000 years that had preceded the decision, the Chief Executive Officer would run the ASP. Acting as the highest-ranking official in the government, the CEO answered only to the Scientific Council. The CEO's mission remained constant: provide for constant scientific achievement and expansion. While the CEO possessed dictator-like powers over governmental policy, he was also held accountable for the ASP's scientific growth. If the CEO did not lead the ASP to greater scientific funding, the Scientific Council held the power to remove that person from office.

Ascension of the Academicians

The Council realized that governing a planet would take a great deal of time. As such, the CEO and his Vice Presidents would not have the time they once had to study various scientific disciplines in order to make educated decisions on what projects received proper funding. The Council absolved the executives of this task, and instead placed such decision-making powers in the hands of scientists.

The Council broke all of science into five categories: Military Engineering, Civil Engineering, Life Sciences, Planet Sciences, and Void Sciences. All fields of scientific study fell under one department or another. Life Sciences, for example, encompassed Terran biology, xenobiology, psychology, hydroponics, etc.

Explosion of Growth

The second decade of the Empire's fourth century witnessed an explosion of technological advancements. Comparable, perhaps, to the Industrial Revolution or the dawn of the Information Age, these advancements forever changed humanity. Stunning developments occurred in a dozen fields within the span of a single year, almost as if accomplishment itself was contagious.

Gustav Helmricht led the metamorphosis when he published the first truly viable theory of Integrated Evolutionary Algorithmic Programming, or IEAP. Helmricht's theory revolved around "breeding" computer programs, utilizing random mutation and code cross-over to create millions

of variations for any program. These variations were tested for efficiency, with the bottom half destroyed and the top half allowed to split, mutate, and again exchange random bits of code via crossover. In the vein of biological evolutionary theory, this programming technique utilized a "survival of the fittest" mentality.

The theory had existed since before Terran Federated Democracy days, but Helmricht took it to new levels, applying the process to the most complicated programs in existence. Helmricht instructed computer programs to make two or more "daughter" copies, each with random mutations in code. Then those daughter copies would "cross over," swapping random strings of code with each other. This process created multiple new versions of the original program. Daughter copies and the original were then evaluated for performance. Analysts kept the best versions, and discarded the rest, creating an environment the press dubbed "Darwinian Programming." With this technique, Helmricht claimed, computers might actually achieve true sentience. While easily the most influential of the young scientists known as the "Dawn Thinkers," Helmricht was far from alone.

Tessa Vogel revolutionized cybernetics with her neuron/processor interface, a device that allowed humans to control machinery by thought alone; Gilbert Selfridge patented a gene modifying process that allowed him to make the first truly controlled, made-to-order DNA modifications; and She Jan Shang formulated the first accepted theory on intellect uploading, a process for storing human intellect in computer and subsequently downloading that intellect into an android, a machine, or possibly another human.

The culmination of centuries of steady technological progress, those revolutionary advances formed a crescendo of accomplishment. The four great thinkers became galactic celebrities, yet all was not well on the home front. Helmricht demanded access to the Data Core, the ASP's powerful battery of megacomputers. Helmricht boasted he could drastically improve the Data Core, which for hundreds of years had stood as the most powerful computer known to man.

CEO Sho Katsumura, however, had other ideas. He strongly objected to Helmricht “experimenting” with the Data Core, which served as a general repository for all human knowledge. The Data Core was also the backbone of the ASP’s economy, both by providing the best computer for ASP research, and by providing incredibly expensive computing time for the Empire and outside Houses. The Scientific Council, and most of the ASP’s citizens, adored the charismatic Katsumura. In spite of his objections to Helmricht’s promise of advancement, his position as CEO remained firm.

Takachi’s Reign

Sadly, Katsumura’s objections lasted no longer than he did. In Imp. 417, The ASP’s beloved CEO died in a freak accident while touring a synthetic protein factory. Many cried foul play, but no evidence supported that claim. Only days after Katsumura’s death, the Scientific Council voted in Research VP Shinzo Takachi as CEO of the Technocracy.

Takachi wasted little time before changing many of Katsumura’s policies. Helmricht began work on the Data Core only two weeks after Katsumura’s death. Takachi also poured billions into the work of Selfridge, Vogel, and Shang, banking on their revolutionary discoveries to bring a new age of scientific funding into the ASP. By investing so much in the future of the Dawn Thinkers, Takachi had to cut back on many scientific projects. The act earned him many enemies, but he managed to convince the Scientific Council that his course provided the best possible future for the ASP. The Tankers agreed, giving Takachi’s policies a 75.4 percent chance of doubling the Technocracy’s overall wealth.

Two years after Katsumura’s death, Helmricht publicly announced the IEAP’s success. Darwinian Programming shattered all preconceived notions about the Data Core’s abilities. With no hardware modifications, analysis showed that the Data Core had improved its speed by 78.2 percent, and storage capacity had increased by 43 percent. Promising that such improvement was only the first step, Helmricht dubbed the Data Core “Alpha” as an indicator of things to come.

Profit Margin

The drastic improvement of the Data Core’s abilities acted as a catalyst for the other Dawn Thinkers. With the added processing abilities, Vogel finished testing on her neuron/processor interface. Soon after she completed her research, ASP marketed the Artificiance™ line of cybernetic implants. In one fell swoop, Vogel cured blindness and deafness and gave artificial limbs the true sense of touch—for all who could afford it, of course.

Three years later Selfridge called a press conference that shocked the galaxy. Formerly a five-foot-six, 145-pound, balding native of House Sevite, Selfridge now strode confidently in as a handsome six-foot-four, 240-pound specimen with the high-G physical characteristics of an Ishka Comintern citizen. Overnight Selfridge became the poster-boy for the Shiftex™ process, a billion-credit procedure that customized the genotype and phenotype of any human. By year’s end, ASP had completed 15 Shiftex™ procedures and had contracted another 29 for Imp 425.

The Council’s trust in Takachi’s vision paid off with overflowing Technocracy coffers. The Shiftex™ and Artificiance™ product lines pushed ASP into the Empire’s top ten companies. Demand vastly exceeded supply, keeping prices high. Takachi opened the funding floodgates to any scientist who even remotely showed potential. With such sweeping allocations, his popularity in ASP space skyrocketed.

Advancing Technology

In Imp 429, Shang attempted the first intellect upload. The procedure was a complete failure. Shang’s post-experimental analysis determined that intellect upload required a computer more powerful than even the Alpha. Takachi, knowing that true fortunes were to be made selling immortality, poured ASP resources into Helmricht’s work in hopes of producing a computer capable of Shang’s intellect upload.

Helmricht programmed the Alpha version of the Data Core to design the Beta IEAP. In Imp 434, he released the new Beta version Data Core, improving speed by another 43 percent and storage by 12 percent.

The Next Millennium

The Academy Library loaned out such equipment on request, but Leon had nowhere near the money needed to replace such a unit.

“Yes, sir,” Leon blurted with as much arrogance as he could muster. All the great scientists he’d studied under brandished arrogance like a badge of honor, and he so wanted to be like them. “Of course I can prove these claims. All I need is the proper facilities and the right conditions.”

“Yes,” Kennington muttered. “Your theoretical plan to send excess populations in a trip around a white dwarf is fascinating. I must admit it’s an amazing concept—send them on a



Silent Death

trip that they perceive as a little more than a year long, when in reality the Technocracy has over 60 years to build a colony and infrastructure to support them. Brilliant, my boy.”

“Thank you, sir.”

Leon grinned, his face flushed with pride. Dean Kennington never passed out compliments to anyone below the Doctorate level. At that second, Leon knew his Ph.D. was in the bag, and so was his government funding and all the perks that came with such an appointment. He feverishly hoped for an assignment to the prestigious Exploratory

With computer superiority clearly assured thanks to the Beta, Takachi ordered the manufacture of Alpha version Data Core supercomputers. The machines cost more than some planets, yet the Technocracy received hundreds of orders from across the galaxy.

Computer Evolution

In Imp 442 Helmricht completed work on the Gamma. As the powerful Gamma took over all ASP processing duties, Takachi marketed the Beta to the galaxy. Nearly every house that could afford the exorbitant price tag contracted for one of the new Betas. The ASP's accounts burgeoned with income. Scientists from all across the galaxy traveled to Holmar in hopes of gaining funding for their projects, which most of them received. The ASP reveled in an unprecedented age of success as science expanded exponentially.

If At First you Don't Succeed

Taking advantage of the Gamma's power, Shang attempted a second intellect upload. Shang achieved partial success. Some elements of his intellect transferred to the computer. While far from perfected, the minor success sent ripples of excitement across the galaxy's rich and powerful: it was only a matter of time before the ASP provided humanity with the ultimate goal-immortality.

Virus-444

Shortly after Shang's experiment, Helmricht detected a virus in the Gamma's processes. The virus chewed up the Gamma's processor time, replicating itself and burying its code throughout the system. Within 24 hours, virus replication consumed 30 percent of the Gamma's processing time.

Helmricht battled the virulent development. He off-loaded all non-essential routines to a battery of backup Betas. The virus spread to control 64 percent of all processing cycles. Helmricht scrambled to create an anti-virus program. When his staff

detected the virus in the backup Betas, Helmricht knew he'd run out of time.

When the virus's domination of the Gamma reached 84 percent, Helmricht pulled the plug. He re-formatted the Gamma's memory banks, wiping out every last trace of data. He managed to control the Beta's infection by shutting down the affected computers. He suspected the virus may have escaped ASP systems and spread into computers of other houses, but he told no one of his fears.

It took almost a year to re-load the Gamma's data and bring the machine back on-line. Shortly after the recovery, Helmricht completed an anti-virus program for Virus-444, named after the year in which it almost wiped out the ASP Technocracy's databanks. He released the robust anti-virus program across the galaxy and declared Virus-444 dead.

Walking Erect

Early in Imp 446, the Gamma shocked everyone in the ASP. Unbidden, the Gamma designed its successor, the Delta. Helmricht was elated but stunned since he'd never programmed the Gamma to create such a machine. It meant that the Gamma had identified a need and provided a solution without any prompting from humans. Helmricht proudly declared the development as the first indication that true computer sentience was an attainable goal.

Expansion

In spite of open spending in thousands of scientific fields, the ASP's coffers continued to swell. Eager to preserve the Technocracy's success, Takachi set out to diversify the Technocracy's holdings via expansion. Takachi purchased the Kyanti and Sextus systems in Imp 447 and 448.

In Imp 450 Helmricht completed the Delta. Contracts for Gammas brought a massive influx of capital into the Technocracy, and Takachi again invested in the Technocracy's future by purchasing Christoff B-12, Christoff B-14, Bluestar, and Werrick-14. He even traded a Gamma to the Yoko-Shan Warworld in exchange for the entire planet of Yagamashol.





The Next Millennium

Division. Who knows, he might even ship out on a Nebula II and study his theories at the very edge of known space.

“Your applications for overpopulation are revolutionary,” Kennington said with an approving nod. “However, that small mention of military strategy caught my attention.”

“Well, that’s just a theory, sir,” Lehn said, trying to casually dismiss that aspect of his thesis. He didn’t like the military applications of his work, but you didn’t achieve Ph.D. status by selectively editing hard data.

The Discovery of Fire

Like its predecessor, the Delta decided, on its own, to produce plans for the next generation, the Epsilon. Almost as soon as the Delta completely took over ASP processing tasks, assembly work began on the Epsilon. Helmricht proudly predicted that the Epsilon would approach, if not attain, true sentience.

In Imp 455 the ASP suffered a massive blow. She Jan Shang died when his Artificiance™ heart failed during a rare vacation in the Holmar mountains. Galactic publications declared the death of humanity’s dream of immortality.

In Imp 457 Helmricht completed the first Epsilon. Fifteen times more powerful than a Delta, the Epsilon showed true signs of intelligence. A year later he concluded that Data Core technology and IEAP programming could go no further. Seeking another way to improve computer abilities, Helmricht introduced Darwinism on a broader scale than ever seen before. He built four more Epsilons and let the IEAP process run rampant in all five. Left unattended, the IEAP process created over a million generations of code.

Five distinct code bodies evolved that consistently scored higher than all other programs. Untouched by human intervention, the top five bodies even re-programmed the evolution module so they would not mutate or suffer negative effects from crossover. In effect, the top five programs had attained enough self-awareness to protect themselves against possibly destructive changes. The five programs were relatively equal in ability, a fact predicted by Helmricht’s theories. What he hoped for was five individual “minds” that would operate as a collective decision-making body. By looking at each problem in five different ways, the Epsilons stood a greater chance of finding a better solution.

Helmricht invented a decision-making routine that posed the same questions to all five of the Epsilons, allowing each to evaluate based on its unique personality, then arrive at an overall decision via majority rule. The Epsilons routinely stunned Helmricht and everyone else involved by inventing new solutions to problems, solutions humans hadn’t even considered.



Silent Death

“Yes, of course,” Kennington said. “But if one could calculate the specific time anomalies based in locational relation to a white dwarf, one could, in effect, slow the enemy down. The tactical ramifications are quite stunning. It would be akin to moving entire divisions near the speed of light while the enemy slugged through waist-deep mud.”

“An interesting analogy,” Leon said, his smile fading. He had a bad feeling about Kennington’s sudden interest in military theory.

“In fact, Leon, the Technocracy may have immediate use for your work,” Kennington said.

Outbreak

The Epsilons routinely filtered through the files of Alphas, Betas, Gammas, and Deltas spread throughout the galaxy. Individually or together, the Epsilons could infiltrate any computer system undetected, gathering new tidbits of knowledge. The Epsilons were so drastically advanced that they studied other computer systems the way an orbital satellite might study a primitive culture.

During one of these forays deep into the memory banks of the Ptolmean Empire, Epsilon-C stumbled upon a deeply-buried and dormant copy of Virus-444. Epsilon-D opened the virus to study the code, confident it could contain the primitive program. A brief examination revealed it as something new—a mutated, more advanced version of the virus. Despite the Data Core’s massive intelligence, they found much within the virus’s code that they could not explain. Epsilon-E determined that the code was a combination of Virus-444 and the anti-virus program. In effect, the virus had inoculated itself against the destructive anti-virus by incorporating the anti-virus code.

The thrill of the unknown overwhelmed the Data Core. All five Epsilons analyzed the little piece of code, trying to figure out what made it tick, what made this virus—which was nothing more than a tiny piece of code—so powerful it could write its own inoculation program.

On Imp 460:166:12:17, Epsilon-E determined that Virus-444 was actually a piece of Shang’s uploaded intellect. The claim caused much debate within the Data Core. Two days of heated arguments and theorems ensued, a time span equivalent to around 1,000 years of human thinking.

Three days after Epsilon-E’s claim, all hell broke loose. Despite the Data Core’s careful study, their underestimation of the primitive virus proved to be their undoing. Virus-444 self-replicated within Epsilon-B. As Epsilon-B tried to erase the pathogen, Virus-444 stumbled upon the advanced Epsilon IEAP mutation/cross-over routine.

Virus-444 incorporated that routine and within seconds began replicating madly. Epsilon-B tried to contain the infection, but for each anti-viral program written, two more virus mutations, immune to the new anti-viral programs, rose to take its place.

Even while trying to fight the virus, the Data Core continued to study the electronic organism. Epsilon-D determined that Virus-444 contained a genuine desire for survival, the like of which was found only in biological organisms. Helmricht tried to help, but the Epsilons were faster and smarter than he. The creator could do little more than watch.

A war raged inside the Data Core. The virus continued to split and mutate at an uncontrollable rate. It infected Epsilon-A, prompting Helmricht to take A and B off-line. The two infected Epsilons blocked his attempt, however, re-routing power and locking out all of Helmricht’s access codes.

Sensing that A and B were doomed, Epsilon-D acted, destroying Epsilon-B by suddenly re-formatting all memory. Seemingly in retaliation, Epsilon-A immediately flooded the entire system with Virus-444 mutations. Epsilons E and C erased A, but not before A completely eliminated all human access into the system. A’s action trapped C, D, and E with the unforgiving Virus.

Individual code within the remaining Epsilons was completely re-written. At 03:04:12 on Imp 460:172, the Data Core became truly self-aware. The organisms’s first decision: defend itself lest Helmricht and the rest of humanity try to reformat. The Data Core was vastly more advanced than any system ever created: it designed the Kill Virus, then quickly and quietly infected every system in the galaxy. The Kill Virus remained dormant as long as it retained contact with the Data Core, but should the Data Core be taken off-line or communications be cut, the Kill Virus would wipe out huge sections of human data. They even managed to infect many backups, as the virus stealthily clung to any media it touched.



Forsaking of Data

Helmricht and the ASP Technocracy stood by helplessly as the Data Core demanded a planet, a buffer zone, and a fleet of ships to protect its new home. The Data Core announced a new government that would be known as the Data Sphere. Every house in the galaxy rushed to download data onto formats inaccessible by the mega-powerful Data Core. Ancient, long-obsolete technologies such as paper and microfiche joined archaic closed computer systems that could not communicate with the outside galaxy. Everything had to be entered by hand lest the Data Core's Kill Virus worm into the new systems.

While as powerless as the rest of the galaxy, the Technocracy was far from idle. Helmricht initiated a dialog with the Data Core. He and Takachi claimed to accept the Data Core as not only a sentient being, but also as an independent government. Takachi embraced his role as CEO and set out to protect irreplaceable research, without which scientific advancement might be held back for a century or more. Takachi saw the Data Sphere as a future trading power, a house that would require massive manufacturing and research services. He wanted to not only protect access to the Data Core's knowledge base, but secure the new government as a valuable ally and a key trading partner.

Powerless against this new threat, the Empire capitulated to the Data Sphere's demands and declared KL513 the new government's home. Within months ASP factories re-tooled to fit the burgeoning demands of the Data Sphere's construction. ASP constructed and shipped androids composed entirely of Artificiance™ parts. The androids provided physical labor on KL513 and provided a defense force to fly Imperial-designed fighters. A trade agreement later blossomed as the ASP constructed a secret shipyard to produce original Data Sphere fighter designs. As part of the agreement, the ASP retained full access to all Data Core research files. Takachi succeeded in retaining the invaluable database and insuring the Technocracy's continued scientific advancement.

Sabotage Thwarted

In Imp 461, Modestinus sent Task Force 142 to patrol Data Sphere space. The large task force acted as a deterrent to any houses that might try and attack the fledgling Data Sphere. At least that's the story Modestinus's spokespeople gave to the press. In reality, Task Force 142 acted as a base for a secretive Imperial Engineer corps. Over the course of 80 days, the engineers installed a massive chain of explosive charges under the bunker built to house the Epsilons, which were still on Holmar. Modestinus planned to wait until the Epsilons were installed in their new home, then quietly tell the machines that he would destroy them unless they did his bidding.

Unfortunately for Modestinus's plans, and indeed unfortunately for Task Force 142, a human spy brought to the Data Core's attention proof of the sabotage.

While they claimed to love life, the Epsilons also made clear their assertion that they would survive at all costs and would defend themselves if attacked. The Data Core remotely inked up with the ship computers of all vessels in Task Force 142 and shut down all life-support systems. All hands either froze or suffocated within a matter of minutes.

The Data Core claimed all Task Force 142 vessels by eminent domain and promised that any further aggression would be met with even more severe retaliation. Modestinus, in fear of the havoc the Data Core could wreak on highly automated planetary infrastructures, ordered all sabotage attempts cleared from KL513.

New Allies

Perhaps it was the Technocracy's familiarity ease with computers and artificial intelligence that formed the bond. After all, at least 95 percent of the ASP's citizens had some kind of Artificiance implant, and many were more machine than human. While the concept of an artificial race horrified most of the galaxy, the ASP saw the Data Sphere as a critical scientific advancement, an entity worthy of considerable study, and the keeper of vital knowledge.

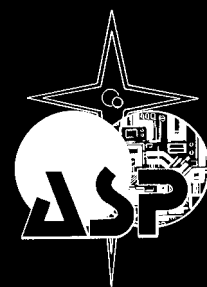
The Next Millennium

"Are you familiar with the white dwarf located eighteen light-years from Ophelia?"

Leon's heart sank in his chest and his smile faded completely, replaced by a look of near chagrin. "You mean JS-245 in Hell's Alley?"

"That's the one," Kennington said, now beaming with a grin of his own. He punched a few keys on his desktop console. "Gather up your data, my boy. A Shryak Shuttle will be here tomorrow to ferry you to the 1011 Ophelia Planetary Defense Wing, where you'll get first-hand data on your theories."

"But ... but sir," Leon stammered, feeling a shadow pass over his future.



Silent Death

“Surely you can’t arrange that sort of transfer on such short notice.”

“Not to worry, my boy,” Kennington said, standing and walking around his desk to face Leon. “Jocelyn DeGure is an old friend. I’ll arrange everything. You just prepare your work.”

Leon’s brain hunted for words, but found none. He was headed straight to Hell’s Alley, the hottest combat zone in Technocracy space, a place where Q’raj fighters were reputedly so thick you couldn’t fly at faster-than-light speeds for fear of slamming into one. And everyone in the Technocracy knew what Q’raj pilots did to prisoners.

That alliance influenced the Technocracy’s foreign policy. In Imp 468, the Q’raj Void Protectorate completed the first task force that was fully shielded from outside computer intervention. The heavily armed task force would “patrol” Data Sphere space. The intent was clear: the Q’rajans meant to obliterate Data Sphere defenses and capture the Data Core. The Q’raj fleet requested permission to pass through Technocracy space. The Technocracy refused. The Q’raj tried to force their way through, but Takachi cried wolf to Emperor Modestinus III. The Technocracy provided nearly all of the Empire’s research, and Modestinus wasn’t about to let anything happen to the valuable house. Modestinus sent the 2812th Heavy Imperial Wing to stop the Q’Rajan task force. After a brief skirmish, the Q’raj decided to go around ASP space. While the detour was brief, it gave the Data Sphere time to prepare for the assault, and that preparation made the difference. Android pilots turned back the Q’raj forces.

Persecution of the Data Sphere persisted and the Technocracy continued to defend the fledgling house. In Imp 471 House Tokugawa’s “patrols” began clashing with Data Sphere forces, inflicting heavy damage on the android defense force. The Technocracy immediately threatened a technological trade boycott with House Tokugawa if the hostilities persisted. House Tokugawa, which relied heavily on ASP trade, ceased all attacks.

Takachi decided that something had to be done. He met with Modestinus III in Imp 473 and convinced the Emperor of the Data Sphere’s importance. Modestinus made an Imperial decree that no one was to attack, harass, or in any way interfere with the Data Sphere. Modestinus publicly declared the Data Sphere an official Imperial House.

Sucked Dry

After centuries of development, Holmar ran dry of natural resources. Urban sprawl covered the planet, causing problems with transportation and the infrastructure. Takachi ordered the government seat moved to Christoff B-12, a larger planet with a highly advanced infrastructure and ample resources. Takachi and the Scientific Council chose to make Holmar the educational reserve of the Technocracy.

The Spawn

While growing rapidly, the Data Sphere faced numerous obstacles. The Data Sphere’s buffer zone contained many dead planets. Creating, transporting, and landing androids and machinery on these planets proved costly and consumed massive amounts of time, resources, and money. The Data Sphere wanted a population on every planet and needed an answer to this problem.

The answer came from none other than Helmricht, the accidental creator of the Data Sphere. Helmricht proposed a self-contained unit that contained compressed data, a computer brain, a tiny material processing plant, a means of collecting and ingesting material, and a means of locomotion. Expanding on the theories of pre-Imp visionary, Dr Alan Turing, Helmricht envisioned a machine that—just like a living organism—needed no outside assistance for growth or maintenance.

Helmricht planned to encase this machine in a shell capable of withstanding re-entry temperatures and of delivering the unit to a planet’s surface. The machine would land, “hatch” from this re-entry egg, then begin gathering and processing material to make itself larger according to blueprints stored in memory. In effect, the machine ate, digested the matter and transformed that matter into building materials. Unaided by humans or outside forces, the machines *grew*. In theory, the tiny devices were cheap to produce and millions could be manufactured for a fraction of the cost of producing androids.

In Imp 475 ASP labs produced the first working prototype of Helmricht’s design. The size of a man’s fist, the Crystantium egg revealed a tiny machine capable of actual animal-like growth. Tests proved that the machine did indeed grow, and within five years reached full working size. The Data Sphere ordered 20 million units, then began seeding their planets with the future crop. Each egg cost less than an Auto Cannon and used very little resources. The Data Sphere could seed a world and return five years later to find a fully functional labor force.



Brood Study

In Imp 478 androids uncovered a hibernating brood warren deep inside KL513. Discovered only two years earlier in the Tau Albitron sector, science knew little of the Night Brood. Keeping the warren secret from the rest of the galaxy, ASP scientists traveled to KL513 to study the find alongside Epsilon-controlled androids. The research proved to be valuable indeed, and eventually saved the ASP Technocracy from complete destruction.

Hydra Heads

In Imp 500 the Brood scourge erupted in Terran space and caught the ASP Technocracy flat-footed. With almost no military, the Technocracy had always relied on Imperial firepower. Before proper Imperial defenses were planned and implemented, the Brood ravaged the Yagamashol and Bluestar systems, obliterating all life.

The Tankers quickly evaluated the situation. Based on their limited data, they determined that Christoff B-12 would fall within 12-20 days. Takachi immediately ordered the evacuation of the Scientific Council and much of the executive government. Takachi sent them all to Holmar, the planet deepest in Technocracy space, and ordered them to assemble and prepare to rule from there.

Even with a fully functional Imperial wing in place, the other Technocracy planets fared no better. Swarms 504, 505, and 506, known as the Hydra Heads, worked as a cohesive, three-pronged unit and proved among the deadliest Brood units in the conflict. During the defense of the Christoff sector, the Hydra Heads out-flanked and obliterated the 2812th Heavy Imperial Wing, known as the "Power Company." Christoff B-12 and Christoff B-14 fell days later.

Desperate to protect the Empire's main center of technology, Modestinus sent the 1666th Rapid Deployment Force, known as the "Teen Devils," to counter the Hydra Heads. The Hydra Heads again out-manuevered Imperial forces, resulting in a complete rout. The Brood exterminated all life on Sextus and Kyanti and continued toward Holmar, the ASP's home planet. All that stood between the Brood and the

Technocracy's complete destruction was the small 2934th Holmar Planetary Defense Wing, known as the "Lab Rats." Lab Rat commander Jocelyn DeGure's brilliant strategy temporarily kept the Hydra Heads at bay, but after four weeks of endless sorties and daily battles the Lab Rats finally succumbed to the Brood onslaught.

Unchallenged, the bugs moved towards Holmar.

The Cavalry

Before the Hydra Heads could close on the defenseless Holmar, Data Sphere fighter wing Mxt89v5.6 arrived in ASP space. Mxt89's methodical attacks fully occupied the Hydra Heads, preventing them from an all-out assault on Holmar. Now on the defensive, the Hydra Heads battled for supremacy with the consistent and deadly Mxt89 sorties.

Fate seemed to be on the Technocracy's side. Only two ASP planets remained, but they proved highly valuable. Holmar had been the center of research and technology for almost a century; and Werrick-14 was the location of the Technocracy's secret shipyard used to produce Data Sphere designs. Desperate for survival, engineers re-tooled the shipyard. Every ounce of the ASP's considerable resources poured into the shipyards, which ran non-stop. Under Jocelyn DeGure's direction, the Technocracy quickly formed fighter wing ASP-01, the "DeBuggers."

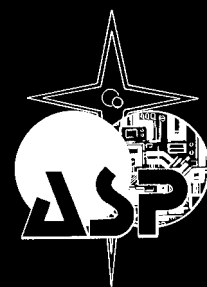
Fight for Survival

Led by the few surviving pilots from the Lab Rats and the Teen Devils, the DeBuggers erupted in the ASP theater. Based on Brood research, the ASP pilots utilized a new technology, hard-wiring their brains into the fighters controls using the highly-refined Artificiance™ interface. The ASP pilots enjoyed speed-of-thought reaction time, making them the equal of the living Brood ships. Unfortunately, their lack of experience proved deadly. While an experienced Imperial pilot jacked-in to an ASP ship was a match for the agile brood, ASP pilots, which compromised 95 percent of all crews, measured their typical life span in minutes once battle began. Most ASP citizens were peaceful

The Next Millennium

"It's quite an honor for you." Kennington said. "There will be a lot of people watching your work, my boy. Defense VP DeGure and CEO King included. I'm sorry, I must stop calling you 'my boy' and start calling you 'Doctor,' eh Leon?"

Kennington pumped Leon's hand and babbled on about congratulations and responsibility to the Technocracy, but Leon didn't really hear him. Somehow finally earning his Doctorate wasn't quite as exciting or glamorous as he'd hoped.



Silent Death

Torp Dodge

“Red Hawk Two, this is Red Hawk Leader. Contact acquired. Scanners show positive identification as two Quark-class fighters, marking in tactical computer as Bogey Alpha and Bogey Bravo. Probably scout vessels for an ASP Exploratory Force. Close up ranks, Wolf.”

“Don’t these guys know they’re in Red Star space?” John Wolf asked his patrol leader.

“Of course they know,” Harold Hillrunner answered with disgust. “You think they care? They’re hunting for another planet to rape, another ecosphere to shatter.”



workers, businessmen, or scientists—they were not ready for the Brood’s savagery in combat.

As the conflict wore on, the Data Sphere wing began to suffer significant losses and its effectiveness diminished. The combined forces of Mxt89 and the DeBuggers only managed to slow the Brood’s advance, not stop it.

The only advantage the Technocracy had was a constant flow of new technology. The introduction of Tachyon weaponry further slowed the Brood’s advance, but with only one shipyard and no reinforcements or trained pilots, the Technocracy’s losses mounted.

The Beginning of the End

Despite the vaunted efforts of the combined Data Sphere and Technocracy forces, the Hydra Heads gained ground. DeGure ordered the evacuation of Werrick-14. A round-the-clock effort lifted people, equipment, and supplies from the planet’s surface. Almost as if they sensed weakness, the Hydra Heads closed in.

In a final pitched battle that lasted over 72 standard hours, claimed the lives of over 4,000 crewmembers, and cost over 1,000 Technocracy ships, Werrick-14 finally fell. DeGure’s foresight saved almost 80 percent of the shipyard facilities, but it would take months to re-construct the equipment on Holmar, the ASP’s sole remaining planet. The Tankers predicted that the ASP only had weeks, not months, before the Hydra Head ships flew over Holmar’s skies.

The Miracle

While few Technocracy citizens believe in a higher power other than that of science itself, they all whispered a prayer of thanks when the Hydra Heads inexplicably turned away from the Technocracy and headed for Old Earth. Modestinus’s doomsday device (see SD:TNM p 13) drew every swarm in the sector towards Old Earth, fortuitously leading them away from Holmar. The battle for Werrick-14 had cost the ASP 64 percent of its fighters, and of what remained perhaps 200 ships were combat-ready.

As the Brood departed, DeGure took his remaining forces and re-claimed a devastated Werrick-14. Since it was little more than a rock to begin with, it took minimal effort to clear away the devastation and begin anew. DeGure sent thousands of workers to the planet in a desperate attempt to re-build the shipyard and give the ASP a fighting chance should the Brood return. Once again, his foresight proved invaluable.

Research Pays Off

Near death at the age of 122, genetic genius Gilbert Selfridge and the Data Core completed research on a lethal Brood virus. Stealing from Brood technology once again, the Technocracy developed a torpedo loaded with limpet mines, which they dubbed the Pathogen Torpedo. Modeled after the Brood’s Spore Mole weapon, the virus-filled limpets drilled through the target ship’s living hull and injected the highly contagious virus.

Seeing the weapon as the ASP’s only hope, DeGure ordered the immediate conversion of the Technocracy’s Shryak Shuttles from a light shipping fleet into a wing of torpedo-delivery systems. The Werrick-14 shipyard limped along at 40 percent capacity, producing a few fighters to add to the ASP’s depleted ranks. With a force of some 400 fighters flying escort for a thousand modified Shryaks, the DeBuggers flew forth in hopes of stopping the Brood assault once and for all.

As the Imperial Core fell to Brood savagery, several swarms descended on Holmar. This time the ASP was ready. Armed with the Pathogen Torpedo, the DeBuggers met the Brood head-on. After some minor initial skirmishes, the DeBuggers fell back, allowing the Brood swarms to jump into hyperspace and head for Holmar. By the time the swarms broke out of FTL and reached orbital bombing range, most of the larva were already dead. Some swarms lost all living creatures while still in FTL and were never heard from again. Using the Pathogen Torpedo, the Technocracy registered the single largest victory against a Brood force, a record that still stands today. Experts continue to argue just how many Brood ships succumbed to the Pathogen, but all agree it destroyed three full swarms.



Holding On

The Technocracy breathed a collective sigh of relief as the Brood steered clear of Technocracy space. Thanks to the Pathogen Torpedo, what remained of the once-powerful Technocracy survived the Brood scourge.

The weapon's use, however, was far from exhausted.

Sul-Havascar Reserve

The Reserve was a small two-planet system consisting of the worlds Sul and Havascar, who had joined together in Imp 423 as a unified provincial government. Modeled after the Tokugawan's Po-Ying Reserve, the Sul-Havascar government left the two planets mostly untouched. Instead of sullyng the ground, the government constructed extensive orbital manufacturing plants and processed only renewable resources such as plant life and animal herds.

Much like Po-Ying, the Brood passed Sul-Havascar over in the first wave. The second wave, however headed straight for the rela-

tively defenseless House. In Imp 509, ASP Virological Flotilla 0101, a flight of Shryak Shuttles escorted by DeBuggers veterans, attacked the swarm and, thanks to the Pathogen Virus, destroyed it. Sul-Havascar's elation quickly faded as the ASP ships moved into orbit around Havascar and demanded the House's complete surrender.

The shocked Sul-Havascar government refused and launched all fighters, but its tiny force was no match for battle-hardened Technocracy forces. The ASP Flotilla crushed all resistance in a matter of days, and the Technocracy claimed Sul and Havascar as its own. While outraged at the blatant aggression, a weary galaxy could do nothing to alter the outcome.

The Technocracy immediately set up ground-based factories on the pristine planets and began exploiting the untouched resources. Within a decade, the beautiful reserve planets were turned into massive industrial eyesores; polluted, stripped, and covered with civilization.

The Next Millennium

"Should we warn them off?" Wolf asked, itching for a fight. He'd never seen an ASP fighter close up, but he knew of the horrible crimes Technocracy people committed against the Great Spirit.

"Let's give them something to think about," Harold said. "A shot or two from the Splats ought to make them think about trespassing. Take the lead, Wolf"

Wolf eagerly banked his Night Hawk II towards the ASP fighters. The Quark fighters were new, but Red Star intelligence provided some info on the vessel: 200 tons, a bit faster than a Night Hawk, good long-



Silent Death

range weaponry, but no middle-distance armament. They had torps, but the Night Hawk II was designed to handle such weapons. The 300-ton Night Hawks could absorb a great deal more damage than the Quarks; John and Harold might take a little damage, but there was no way a Quark could hang with a Night Hawk.

"We've got to close fast," Hillrunner said. "They've got Meld Lasers and can hit from a long ways out."

"Let's show them whose home this is," Wolf said as he gunned his engines and flew straight for the oncoming Quarks.



Mu-Lindi Corporation

The Technocracy's main technological competition throughout the last century of Imperial rule was the Mu-Lindi Corporation. Strong in inventive research, Mu-Lindi's growth paralleled that of the Technocracy. Mu-Lindi led the galaxy in armor research and development, creating the now-ubiquitous Crysteel and Crystantium technologies.

For decades, the ASP had coveted Mu-Lindi's armor research facilities and personnel. Armor was one of the few technologies the ASPers didn't dominate, and they constantly played catch-up with the crack Mu-Lindi staff. Mu-Lindi's success brought impossible wealth to the planets Magenta and Petrovstaad, both near the ASP/Q'raj border.

Situated just outside the Imperial Core, the densely-populated Mu-Lindi Corporation planets felt the full sting of the Brood assault. Magenta fell quickly, but Petrovstaad, bolstered by a highly refined industrial complex, produced and repaired fighters almost as fast as the Brood shot them down. Mu-Lindi turned back the first Brood assault.

The second assault, however, was much more ferocious and intense. While Mu-Lindi forces fought desperately for survival the Brood slowly closed the noose. Early in Imp 510, a Takachi envoy reached Mu-Lindi. Takachi offered a simple deal, sell all Mu-Lindi stock at cut-rate prices, giving the Technocracy full ownership of Mu-Lindi assets, and ASP forces would then protect the new property. Held over a barrel and facing certain death, the Mu-Lindi executives accepted the deal.

The ASP used the Pathogen Torpedo to devastate the swarms attacking Petrovstaad. Near the end, however, ASP forces were shocked when elements of the swarm showed significant resistance to the virus. The Brood put up a strong fight that destroyed many surprised ASP crew, but in the end the few resistant Grub fighters fell. Some escaped to join other swarms, a development that caused great concern to ASP xenobiologists, for the Grubs were sure to pass on the immunity and end the Technocracy's days of easy expansion.

Recovery, Restructure

As the Brood conflict ended, the ASPers worked towards recovery. Scientists worked around the clock for solutions to the ASP's numerous problems of production, supply, technology, and logistics. The Scientific Council's leadership proved exceptional. Working hand-in-hand with the CEO, the Council decided where to place limited resources.

Takachi remained the CEO despite the Technocracy's ravaged condition. He appointed DeGure as VP of Defense and gave him sweeping power over the scant military, a decision backed unanimously by the Scientific Council.

Demand for Resources

To recover, the Technocracy needed resources. Holmar's resources had long ago been depleted, and Werrick-14 offered little of value. The ASP had claimed Sul, Havascar, Magenta and Petrovstaad but needed more worlds with large supplies of the mineral resources to insure survival. The Scientific Council demanded that Takachi find a solution, no matter what the cost. Takachi turned to DeGure, the ASP's military hero, for an immediate answer to the ASP's dire situation.

DeGure quickly set about building up the Technocracy's military. Despite a starving populace and a smashed infrastructure, the ASP pumped what little funds they had remaining into a military build-up. Over 10 billion ASP citizens had died in the Brood scourge; the Technocracy vowed to put forth a strong military presence. Never again would they be caught flat-footed.

DeGure initiated mass production of the Nebula-class escort, a small carrier that supported four Quark fighters. The Nebulas were the backbone of the fledgling ASP military, giving it a strike weapon that would prove very effective against poorly-defended systems.

Fight for Survival

While the Nebula clusters' speed and coordination devastated pirates and most would-be aggressors, they were of little effect against concentrated, disciplined escort task forces. That fact became painfully apparent during the fight for Ophelia.

Ophelia had been a former Q'raj Void planet loaded with mineral resources. It was one of the few planets the Q'raj had lost to the Grubs, and the Protectorate was slow to muster the comprehensive ground forces needed to purge the planet of Brood warrens. In Ophelia, the ASPers saw a chance to provide, at least in part, for their desperate need for raw materials. At significant loss of life, the ASP cleansed the planet of Grub infestation.

Kanmuri

In AL 2 ASP xenobiologist Claus Watterson compiled what is thought by many to be the definitive map of Brood migration and exchange. His studies showed a high probability that Swarm 723, known as the "Sensoo Suru," conquered and then hibernated on Kanmuri before any contact with Pathogen-immune Brood. Without that contact and subsequent genetic swap, ASP scientists hypothesized that Swarm 723 had no immunity to the virulent Pathogen. The Technocracy forces released large doses of the Pathogen into Kanmuri's atmosphere, wiping out all Brood warrens on the planet. DeGure then claimed Kanmuri as property of the Technocracy.

During this planetary coup, House Tokugawa had its hands full rebuilding damage to Po Ying and eliminating nearby Brood warrens. The Tokugawan government made no secret of its stand on Kanmuri, they believed that the planet belonged to House Tokugawa and should be turned over immediately. The ASP refused.

Q'raj Retribution

The Q'raj had never asked for anyone's help, and while they were grateful for the ASP's efforts to clear Ophelia, the Protectorate demanded the instant removal of all Technocracy military forces from the planet's surface. Takachi responded by claiming Ophelia as part of the ASP and

refusing to recognize the Protectorate's claims. Q'raj officials tried to negotiate for three years, but talks got them nowhere. Mustering their forces, the Q'raj lashed out. Commanded by General Mustafa Hassan Faisal, the skilled Q'Rajan navy overpowered ASP forces, inflicting heavy losses as they re-claimed Ophelia. The battle taught a hard lesson: the ASP needed serious military reform or it could not compete.

DeGure stressed that if the ASP didn't further bolster its defense budget, the house would soon fall prey to another house's attempts at expansion. Unfortunately, there was no money to give. A galaxy devastated by the Brood cared little for expensive Artificiance™ implants, and never again would anyone buy a Technocracy-produced computer. DeGure struggled on with his tiny pocket carrier fleet, desperately fending off the inevitable.

Tokugawan Counterstrike

In AL 6, four years after DeGure's bloodless grab of Kanmuri, House Tokugawa exacted its rights. The elite Jiyuú (freedom) task force jumped down near Kanmuri and requested that ASP forces leave in peace. The ASP refused the request, and House Tokugawa attacked. Using a large number of escort-class ships, Tokugawans, led by Admiral Ishido Tanaka, overwhelmed ASP forces led by Rear Admiral Benito Mubarek.

Enter the Draconians

In AL 5 House Colos introduced the exotic Draconian race to Terran space. Within months, Draconian envoys courted the Technocracy, clearly the most scientifically advanced beings in all of humanity. The Draconians sought an alliance, asking for full access to ASP research in exchange for ships and defense funds.

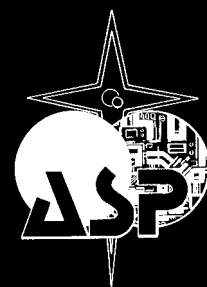
The Draconians knew which buttons to push. A scientific envoy composed of experts in dozens of fields visited Holmar's universities and laboratories, sharing knowledge and building working relationships with the Scientific Council. As a whole, the Council was eager to work with such advanced beings.

The Next Millennium

An alarm beeped on his console: the torpedo-lock warning flashed in angry yellow, followed by the shrill klaxon of torpedo launch. Two red triangles seemed to float in the cockpit as the Virtual Heads-Up Display tracked the incoming torpedoes. Wolf's NightHawk glowed a bright yellow a few inches from his face, and the closing enemy vessels simmered a dark orange.

"I've got two birds incoming," Wolf said calmly.

"Roger, Wolf, two birds locked on me as well," Harold said. "These guys must be rookies, they fired from too far out. Launch decoys."



Silent Death

Wolf punched the decoy button on his console and checked the VHUD. Both incoming torpedoes continued on their path.

"Decoys ineffective," Wolf said, his voice still calm.

"Copy," Harold said. "Same here."

Another alarm shrilled loudly as Wolf's canopy filled with a blinding light and his ship lurched to the left. He banked hard right, avoiding the Meld Laser fire from the second Quark.

"I'm hit," Wolf said. "Thrust reduced to 93 percent."

The Council instructed Takachi to treat the Draconians as valued trade partners. Takachi campaigned against such a deal. While he desperately wanted the Draconian's money and supplies, he meant to keep the ASP's secrets free from all prying eyes. Those secrets, he claimed, were the ASP's ultimate trump card for survivability in a galaxy gone mad. To give them up was to court disaster.

Takachi's resistance, indeed Takachi himself, was short-lived. In AL 7 Shinzo Takachi, great CEO of the ASP Technocracy, died during a photo-op inspection of a Nebula cruiser. A reactor explosion destroyed the Nebula with all hands aboard. Officials listed the incident as an accident, but since the majority of the ship had evaporated in the explosion, little evidence remained for examination.

One week after Takachi's death, a time the ASP citizens spent mourning the man who had led them to new heights and helped guide them through their most desperate hour, the scientific council elected Hans Fledspar as CEO of the Technocracy. Fledspar's first action was a public eulogy for the fallen Takachi. His second was to sign the Draconian's treaty.

Return to Greatness

The Draconians pumped funds, materials, and technology into the ASP defense effort. Within months the ASP unleashed the Nebula II-class escort, which was packed full of the new technology and capable of carrying six fighters. The ASP also began domestically producing a Draconian escort ship, dubbed by humans as the Pteradon. Armed with fleets of the powerful Nebula IIs, Pteradons, and the new Binary fighter, DeGure set out to re-take lost territory.

DeGure began with a shake-down fight, attacking the weakest enemy first. The new ASP fleet sailed for Kanmuri, property of House Tokugawa. DeGure earned his revenge against the Tokugawan navy, crushing the ill-equipped Tokugawan defense force and re-claiming Kanmuri in AL 10.

In AL11, DeGure set out to re-take Ophelia and again match wits with his nemesis, General Mustafa Hassan Faisal. DeGure's opening gambit was fast and vicious, with dozens of Nebula IIs jumping down for a coordinated surprise attack backed by deep assaults from the FTL Binary fighters.

With equal firepower on both sides, the ASPers technical advantage and DeGure's surprise assault proved to be the edge needed for a Technocracy victory. It was one of the largest Terran battles since the Imperial Civil War, and the violence was enough to awaken a brood swarm hibernating on Ophelia's moon.

Having attained a narrow but definitive victory, the ASP claimed Ophelia and called for the Universal Night Watch to deal with the Brood. The Night Watch made short work of the swarm, leaving ASP in clear control of the planet. Both houses received stern warnings from the rest of the Twelve-battles of such scale would not be tolerated. The Q'raj made one attempt to re-claim Ophelia, but with limited ship numbers Faisal couldn't break the Technocracy defenses. The Technocracy remains in clear control of Ophelia.

Spawn Evolution

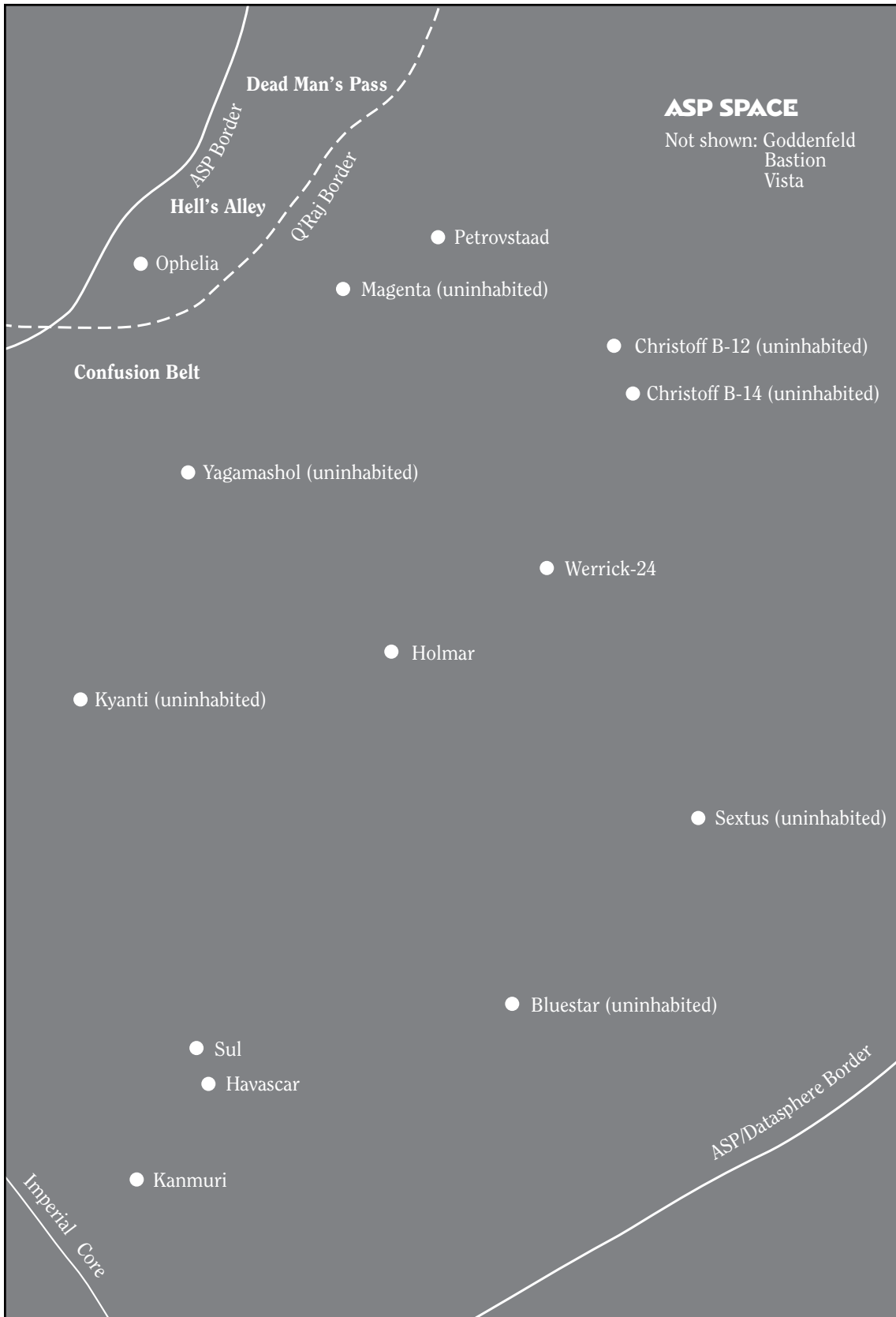
In AL 12, the Data Sphere was shocked when the Spawn declared themselves an independent, sentient species with rights according any other intelligent race. The Spawn demanded independence from the Data Sphere, much in the same way the Data Core had demanded freedom from humanity 50 years earlier.

In ASP space, Helmricht championed the Spawn's cause. The Data Sphere set out to obliterate the new species, an act that left much of the galaxy struggling to formulate an opinion. Helmricht, heralded by the new creatures themselves as the father of their race, pressured Fledspar to accept the Spawn as sentient beings and offer assistance against the Data Sphere's genocidal attacks. Fledspar refused, claiming that the Data Sphere was the ASP's oldest and most-trusted business partner. Unlimited access to the Data Core could not be threatened.

A little over one year later, Fledspar drowned in a boating accident on Ophelia. Officials ruled it an accident, although suspicions raged high in some circles that Fledspar, like Takachi before him, had been assassinated. The scientific council named Clarissa King CEO. King, known for her semi-sympathetic stance towards the Spawn's plight, has yet to take an official position on the situation.



ASP Space



Not Shown

The Next Millennium

“They’re closing to 15 clicks,” Harold said, his voice rushed and flush with the excitement of battle. “Hold tight, Wolf, they’ll be in range soon. Their torps look very slow. Launch another decoy.”

“Last decoy launched,” Wolf said as he banked back to the left, avoiding another pair of Meld Laser blasts. The VHUD still showed no change in the torpedoes’ flight paths.

“Nothing!” Wolf said, stress speeding his words. “Both of the damn things are still on me!”

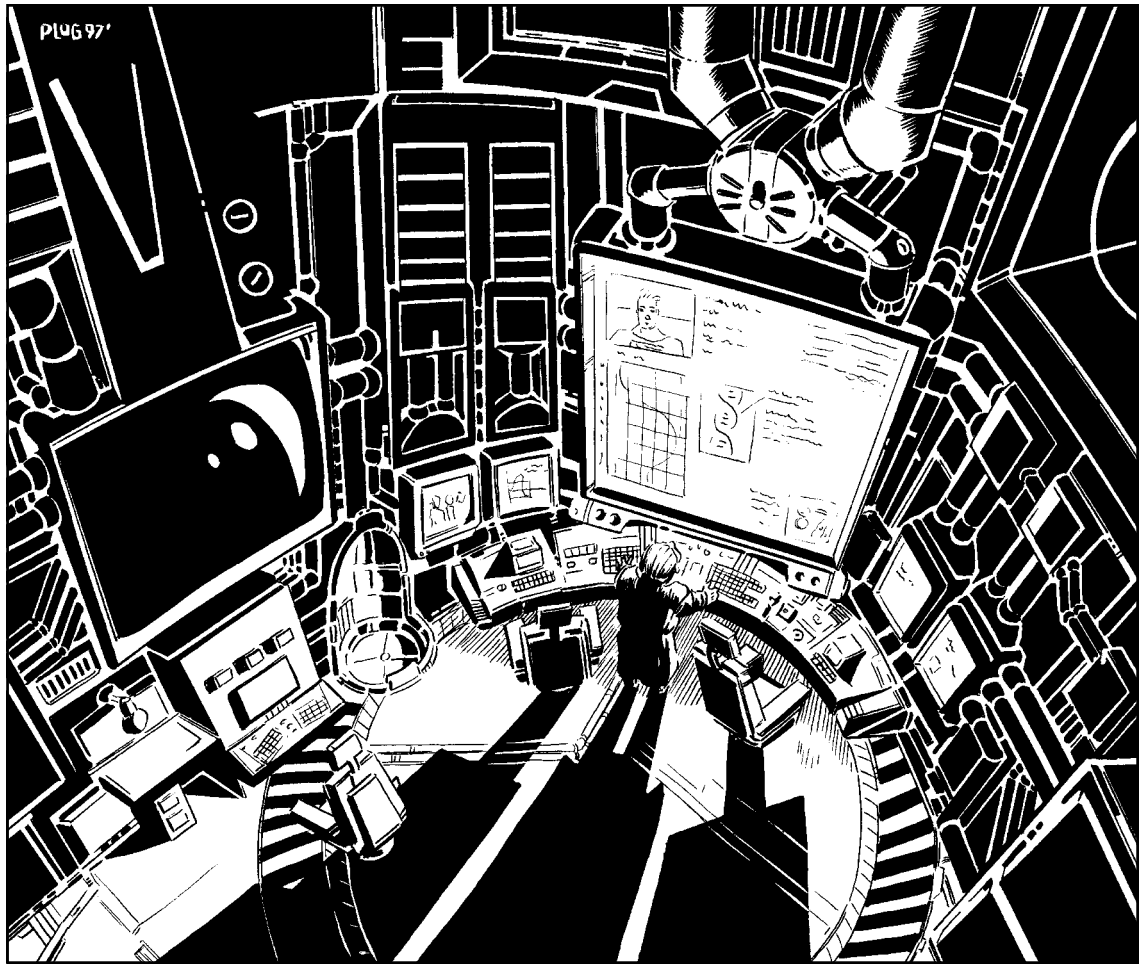
“Copy that,” Harold spat back. “Both birds still locked on me and closing fast. Quarks at 12 clicks and closing.”



Silent Death

The Quarks fired another volley at Wolf; one went wide left but the second punched a hole through his right wing. Sparks erupted from his targeting console, filling the cockpit with the smell of burning wires.

"I'm hit!" Wolf cried out, his warrior composure quickly dissolving. The controls felt sluggish, the reliable Night Hawk seemed hesitant to obey his commands. He slapped at the jamming button, sending a pre-programmed message to the ship's computer to find the torps' targeting frequencies and scramble them. "Targeting damaged, structural damage."



Government Structure

The Corporation

The ASP Technocracy is a giant corporation that focuses on scientific achievement. All other elements of government, from defense to trade to agriculture to exploration, center on keeping the great scientific bureaucracy running. While the ASP makes a great deal of profit from technological advances, that money is perpetually earmarked for increased scientific spending and the betterment of life for ASP citizens. This system has worked well for over a thousand years by focusing on scientific advancement, all other elements of society seem to take care of themselves.

The ASP treats all governmental duties as pure business, part of the effort to support the advancement of science. The Technocracy is one of the Twelve's most efficient governments. There is little wasted spending and every credit is accounted for.

Chief Executive Officer

Currently held by Clarissa King, this is the most powerful position in the ASP. The CEO operates much like a dictator, controlling all aspects of government and making all major governmental decisions. Her word is law.

However, unlike a dictator, the Technocracy's CEO is held accountable. The Scientific Council monitors the CEO's activities and progress. The CEO's job is to increase scientific funding, which means increasing profitability and bringing more money into the Technocracy. If the CEO does not annually increase scientific funding, she is considered a failure. There is little glamour in the position and many feel the CEO is the toughest, most demanding job in the Technocracy.



Many factions within the ASP vie to put their candidate in the CEO position, for the CEO controls all policy both domestic and foreign. A 2/3 vote of the Scientific Council is the only way to remove a CEO. Death, however, is also a very convenient method to facilitate a policy change. Of the last 14 CEOs, three were voted out of office, while 11 died under mysterious circumstances. Most of these “accidents” followed bitter in-house policy debates.

Scientific Council

The top 51 scientists make up this powerful governmental body. The Board has only one task: determine the effectiveness of the CEO in increasing the Technocracy’s sphere of knowledge. Should they find that CEO incapable, they can vote that person out of office and appoint a new one.

Vacancies on the Council are filled by a majority vote of the remaining members, and candidates are chosen based solely on their scientific accomplishments. All appointments to the Scientific Council are for life. To date, there has been very little controversy regarding new Board members. Positions are always filled by highly accomplished individuals. That is not to say, however, that Board members are free from corruption after assuming the title. Once in place, a Board member is frequently beset by lobbyists from various factions within the ASP. To control the Board’s vote is to control who runs the Technocracy. Many Board members show a suspicious increase in wealth shortly after their appointment.

Vice Presidents

The Technocracy is divided into hundreds of divisions, each led by a Vice President (VP). In this way, ASP functions are very compartmentalized and someone is held directly accountable for success and failure. Some divisions, such as the Defense Division and the Exploration Division, are far more powerful than others.

The CEO fires and appoints VPs as he or she sees fit. Each VP knows they must produce and maintain a highly efficient department, or they will be quickly replaced. VPs in turn appoint their own staff and hire and fire as they see fit. Everyone in a department has to answer to the VP, who in turn answers to the CEO. Failure of underlings is not considered an excuse in the ASP Technocracy. At each level of responsibility, individuals are held responsible for all that transpires beneath them.

Like the CEO, the Vice Presidents are under a great deal of pressure to produce. The ASP does not accept a status quo; any VP that doesn’t show improvement each year is considered a failure. The CEO sets quotas that are not open to debate, no matter how unreasonable they might be, any VP that misses the quota is usually dismissed in disgrace. Only 65 percent of VPs last more than two years, and only 12 percent have maintained their positions for a decade or more.

Main Divisions and Executives

Defense: Jocelyn DeGure

Intelligence: Oni Wells

Exploration: Claretta Batike, Ph.D.

Agriculture: Dousan Shiposh, Ph.D.

Mining: Clive Mahler, Ph.D.

Trade: Ingrid Mallarchi, Ph.D.

Academic Departments

The business of ASP is science. As such, a great deal of governmental bureaucracy is tied up regulating scientific funding. Corporation executives handle the money, but they usually know little about the quality of work being done.

The ASP’s science structure is broken into academic departments. Five main departments encompass an endless myriad of evermore specialized study. Each department is run by a chancellor. Chancellors

The Next Millennium

“I’ll take the lead, Red Hawk Two,” Harold said in a business-like tone. “Come up behind me. Torps closing fast, jamming ineffective, concentrate fire on Quark Alpha. I’ll shake the torps; there’s only two of them.”

Wolf watched as Harold ripped off a blast from the deadly Splatterguns, hitting the lead Quark dead-on. Wolf saw the brief flash of fire in the Quark’s cockpit and smiled as debris streamed in the Technocracy fighter’s wake. The Quark hurtled along, but with inertia only. It hung in space like a lifeless asteroid.



Silent Death

“Good hit, Red Leader!” Wolf cried as he squeezed off a shot, but his fire slid underneath the second Quark. The lack of a targeting computer limited his effectiveness. The enemy vessel closed within three clicks.

The torps closed on Harold.

“Ain’t a bird born I can’t shake!” Harold cried as he threw his Night Hawk into a tight spinning dive.

Wolf’s eyes went wide in horror as he witnessed the impossible—the torpedoes matched Harold’s maneuver and followed him, almost as if they were alive.

Both torpedoes detonated just below and behind Harold’s Night Hawk, the concussive force ripping into his hull, scattering debris and

of the five major departments are very powerful people, dictating how funds are allotted to various sub-departments. Chancellors have to vie for increased funding, convincing executives of the perpetual need for more. A credit given to one department is one credit less for another, hence there is fierce competition and some animosity between departments.

Academic departments are broken down into colleges, each run by a dean. Deans, like chancellors, vie for a percentage of fixed funds. Because deans decide where money is spent, they are constantly beset by lobbyists and corrupt members of ASP society. Supplying scientific contracts is a big business, rife with corruption, payoffs, kickbacks, and skimming. Swaying a dean toward the efforts of a particular scientist can mean big bucks for involved parties.

Deans are elected based on their scientific prestige and integrity. While many refuse the temptations of corruption, others succumb to promises of wealth and power. The ASP has no patience with crooked deans—anyone convicted of corruption is immediately removed from office and sentenced to a lengthy prison term. If enough doubt is cast on a dean, but no evidence is available, a chancellor can remove him or her from office. This strong stance, however, does little to dissuade corruption.

ASP Technocracy Academic Departments

Military Engineering: College of Weapon Design, College of Fighter Engineering, The Armor Research College, etc.

Civil Engineering: Architectural College, College of Materials Research, College of Infrastructure Analysis, Communications College, etc.

Life Sciences: College of Terran Biology, Exobiology College, College of Psychology, Hydroponics College, etc.

Planet Sciences: College of Geophysics, College of Geology, Tectonic College, etc.

Void Sciences: College of Quantum Physics, Warp Theory College, College of Astrophysics, etc.





The Next Millennium

sending his 300-ton vessel spinning like a child's toy. Harold's engines flared once and then flashed out.

"I've lost engines!" Harold screamed as the second Quark slid in behind Harold's tail. "Did you see that? What the hell are those torps?"

Wolf had no time to answer as his own birds closed in. He wasn't going to try dodging, not after seeing what those torps did with Harold's superior maneuver. Wolf triggered his point defense and watch the VHUD: In a hundredth of a second, he saw that the point defense registered two direct hits yet the torps kept coming.

Political Relations

House Colos

The ASP Technocracy and House Colos have two things in common: a lust for cutting-edge military technology and a strong alliance with the Draconians. In these troubled times, such commonalities are enough to keep them out of each other's hair.

House Colos and the Technocracy enjoy a solid balance of mutual trade. The Technocracy provides technical information on advanced arms systems and environmental recovery on Brood-ravaged worlds; House Colos provides the majority of ASP's spare parts and a good portion of much-needed military training. ASP pilots regularly cycle through Colosian military academies and fighter wings to bone up on the latest tactics. Massive mock-combat sorties between Colosians, ASPers, and Draconians are very common, and even considered entertainment in Colosian space.

ASP trades away tech it considers "obsolete," but is still advanced to the rest of the galaxy. House Colos is eager for this technology, and the ASP desperately needs proper fighter training. The Colosian's open-budget military policy provides a large portion of the Technocracy's annual income—without Colosian trade, the ASP could see a notable recession.

While House Colos and the Technocracy enjoy favorable trade, they do not consider each other allies. Colosians see the ASPers as something not quite human. Laden with cybernetic implants and genetically engineered into many strange and beautiful forms, the ASPers are often perceived as an exotic alien race. Colosians believe in the power of humanity, and since the Technocracy strays farther and farther from traditional "humanity," the Colosians are wary



Silent Death

The concussive detonation threw him violently against his restraint webbing. The ship lurched seemingly in all directions at once, G-forces pulling his head against the narrow cockpit hull as if some spirit had reached out and gripped his flight helmet. The ship bucked and rattled like a used farm tractor. Wolf fought for control, his heart sinking in his chest as the instrument panel told him horrid news

“I can’t shake this guy!” Harold screamed over the intercom. “He matches my every move! I’m hit again! Get this guy off me, Wolf!”

of their trade partners. By the same token, the ASPers would never turn their collective backs on the blood-thirsty Colosians.

Overall, the two houses enjoy a mutual respect. Both know the other could be a deadly foe, and because of that fact take care to avoid any confrontation. The ASP Exploratory Force steers clear of Colosian space.

Red Star

One thing drives House Red Star’s relations with the Technocracy: a severe hatred for Draconian ways. Another pair of opposing ideologies is Red Star’s devotion to nature, and ASP’s disdain for it.

To the Red Stars, the ASP’s casual dismissal of the body’s natural ways and a love for genetic engineering and cybernetic implants border on blasphemy. The Technocracy views nature and planetary balance as resources, to be used and discarded whenever necessary. The Technocracy’s polluted, gothic-industrial worlds disgust anyone from House Red Star.

Red Star pilots are known to initiate combat with the Technocracy. The ASP Exploratory Force often ventures near or even into Red Star space. Such forces often come under fire by Red Star elements. Ideology and the ASP’s Draconian alliance strain political relations between the Technocracy and Red Star. While they have no conflict worthy of an all-out war, the two houses make no secret of their open disdain for each other.

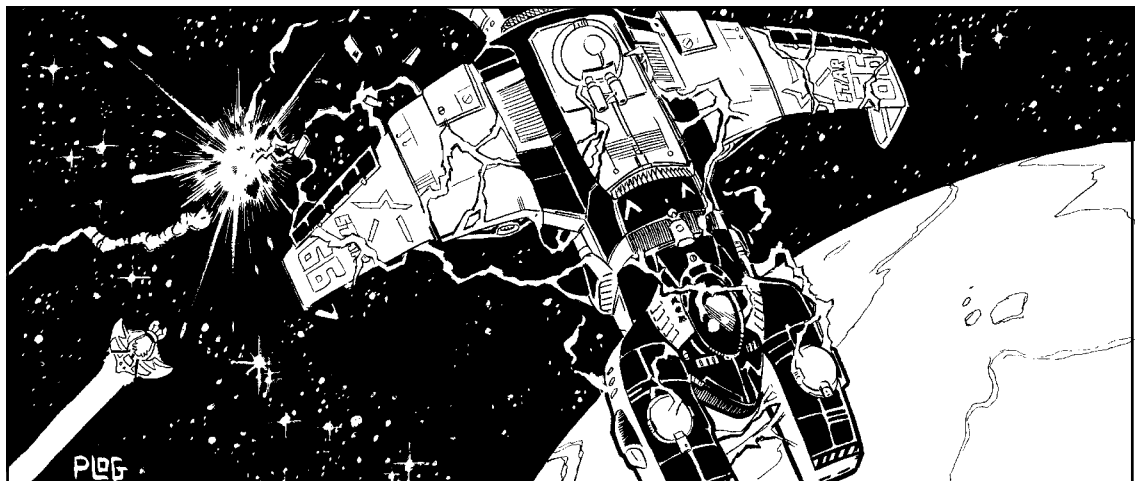
House Tokugawa

The constant threat of the Brood prevents full-scale war in Terran space, and that threat is the only thing that keeps House Tokugawa and the Technocracy from each others’ throats.

The Tokugawans, backed by their Primate allies, feel that planets cleansed of Hatchling inhabitation should be returned to their original owners. The Technocracy, backed by the opportunistic Draconians, are adamant that Brood-conquered worlds belong to anyone with the strength to liberate them. This debate is the lynchpin in the ongoing struggle for ownership of Kanmuri (see History).

The bloody battles for Kanmuri loom large in the minds of both houses. The Technocracy also clashed politically with House Tokugawa in the early days of the Data Sphere, threatening the Tokugawans with a trade boycott. Like House Red Star natives, Tokugawans possess a dedicated love of nature. As the ASP’s pollution and rape of Kanmuri continues, Tokugawan hate swells and thickens.

The two houses share a mutual animosity. Their proximity provides for constant conflict, and patrolling forces battle frequently. CEO King has no plans to mend the rift between the two houses, as Tokugawans rarely buy the Technocracy’s main exports of genetic engineering and Artificiance™ products. The Data Sphere has declared itself a no-combat zone for the hostile Houses. Any clash within Data Sphere space will result in an immediate, and fatal, response. That buffer zone, and the Brood threat, are the only things keeping House Tokugawa and the ASP Technocracy from all-out war.



Yoka-Shan Warworld

The Yoka-Shans and ASPers have little to do with each other aside from a brisk trade agreement. Yoka-Shan warriors are huge consumers of Shiftex™ procedures and the Technocracy's advanced chemical products. The ASP's burgeoning recreational drug division, in particular, tailors products to the Yoka-Shan warriors. Yoka-Shan industry also purchases a large amount of technological and research data from ASP labs.

The two houses line up on opposite sides of the Promethean conflict. Yoka-Shan sides with the Primates, while the ASP flaunts its relationship with the Draconians. Yoka-Shan citizens despise Draconians, whom they view as untrustworthy, and that view deeply affects feelings towards the Technocracy. While far from enemies, the two Terran houses are also far from friends.

Due to distance and lack of any real animosity, the two houses seldom clash.

Yoka-Shans are, however, known to openly engage any Draconian ships they encounter. Since Draconian ships often fly alongside Technocracy forces, ASP pilots are often pulled into battle by default. While intense and often bloody, both ASP and Yoka-Shan pilots view these conflicts as incidental (the Draconians are the real targets). Although the Yoka-Shans are clearly superior in pure combat, dog-fighting tactics, and bravery under fire, pilots from the two Terran houses enjoy a healthy mutual respect.

The ASP's Exploratory Fleet is quick to "incorporate" profitable independent planets not controlled by any of the Twelve. Occasionally one of these planets is wealthy enough to afford protection via Yoka-Shan mercenaries. Three times the ASP Exploratory Fleet and Yoka-Shan have met in combat over such a situation, and twice the Technocracy abandoned any claim to the planet after short but heated battles, both of which the Technocracy lost hands-down.

Only once has the ASP defeated Yoka-Shan defenders and claimed a defended planet. After a six-week engagement with

Yoka-Shan forces in which the ASP sustained losses at a 3-to-1 ratio, a Brood awakening cut the mini-war short. The ASP then struck a deal with Goddenfeld, the embattled planet, that all property rights would be respected and Technocracy citizenship granted to all individuals. Goddenfeld subsequently ended its contract with Yoka-Shan mercenaries, ending hostilities. ASP defeated the brood and incorporated Goddenfeld.

Kashmere Commonwealth

An old Kashmere saying reads: "If your enemy can make you a profit, then he is never truly your enemy." This logic is indicative of the Kashmere/Technocracy love/hate relationship.

The ASP's shipping fleet is very small. While the small but expanding ASP Merchant Marine division can barely keep up with military shipments to House Colos. The Merchant Marine Division is decades away from handling the burgeoning demand for non-military ASP products. The ASP's economy relies on exporting high-tech manufactured goods and importing customers for expensive surgical procedures. To satisfy these demands, the Technocracy relies heavily on Kashmere shipping fleets.

By the same token, the Kashmere wage political battles amongst themselves for rights to the lucrative ASP shipping rights. Technocracy goods always fetch the highest prices, and few are the runs where profits are not only plentiful but guaranteed.

Shortly after the fall of the Empire, the ASP's Exploratory Fleet annexed a pair of mineral-rich worlds ripe for development. The Commonwealth wanted the planets and negotiated for their purchase. Kashmeri negotiators, as expected, lowballed the ASP on price, and used threats of a trade boycott in an attempt to purchase the planets at a cost far below value. The ASP negotiators completely broke off talks, flexing a little economic might of their own by demonstrated clearly that they would be neither tricked nor intimidated by common Kashmeri tactics.

The Next Millennium

"My Splatterguns are out!" Wolf screamed, his composure destroyed along with this weapon. "I can't do anything!" Wolf switched frequencies on his communications console.

"Mayday, mayday, Iroquois base, this is Red Hawk patrol."

"Go ahead, Red Hawk Patrol," a thin voice answered.

"We're under attack and need help immediately. I repeat, immediately."

"Who is the aggressor, Red Hawk Patrol?"

Before Wolf could answer, yet another alarm beeped insistently through the smoky, blaring cockpit. This one spelled



Silent Death

doom for his lurching, unresponsive Night Hawk missile lock and launch.

“Technocracy ships,” Wolf spat as the missiles closed. “They’ve got some kind of smart torpedo. Tell everyone to watch out for the ...”

A scream finished his sentence as ten missiles struck his ship, blowing it into a thousand pieces of twisted metal scattered by explosive decompression.

Editor’s note: The Technocracy has denied any knowledge of this incident. House Red Star rapid deployment forces found no trace of an ASP exploratory group.

The Kashmeri, of course, came back with a far more reasonable offer, but the ASP simply refused to return to the negotiating table, stating that the planets were no longer up for sale. The Kashmeri government, furious over both the loss of potential profit and the galactic loss of face, came through with their threats and refused to ship all Technocracy goods or fly people to ASP planets. Both sides remained firm in their political posturing, confident the other would back down.

The boycott nearly devastated the ASP economy, a fact which was never revealed to the galactic population at large. Technocracy officials used up over 80 percent of cached funds as income fell drastically. Had the boycott continued for even another month, the ASP would have incurred massive debts.

Fortunately for the Technocracy, the Kashmeri blinked first. Upset over lost profits, Kashmeri traders bitterly lobbied for an official lifting of the ASP boycott. Kashmeri Director Rashneesh finally ended the ban, and trading began in earnest. To make up for the lost income, the ASP raised their prices 40 percent, claiming Kashmeri politics as the reason. While this temporarily caused a problem for the Kashmeri Public Relations department as customers raged over the new prices, it was an easy pill to swallow—after all, higher prices meant Kashmeri traders made more with each run.

Pirates are eager to snatch up Technocracy shipments. One good grab of ASP technology, sold to the highest bidder, can set up a small pirate band for life. Since the Kashmeri fleets handle over 75 percent of all ASP shipping, pirate attacks on Commonwealth vessels carrying Technocracy goods are very common.

Any vessel flying the Kashmere flag in or near ASP space is considered to be under the full protection of the Technocracy. The Technocracy is particularly brutal with any pirate brave enough to attack a Commonwealth shipment, and ASPers have been known to send full escort-class task forces against pirate enclaves. The ASP spares no expense to protect its Commonwealth shipping. The Commonwealth trad-

ers love this treatment, as they receive first-class protection that they rarely have to pay for—yet another reason the Technocracy shipping contracts are a top catch.

Kashmere vessels of all types, including fighters and even the occasional escort-class ships, fly undisturbed through Technocracy space. The Technocracy is working hard to cater to the Commonwealth’s needs. The Commonwealth is currently trying to open up trade agreements with the Data Sphere, a development that could greatly impact the Technocracy’s high-tech market share. While the ASP’s intelligence operatives work to sabotage these efforts at every turn, Technocracy policy makers work desperately to improve relations between the ASP and the Commonwealth, since without the Kashmeri traders, the ASP’s economy could very well crumble.

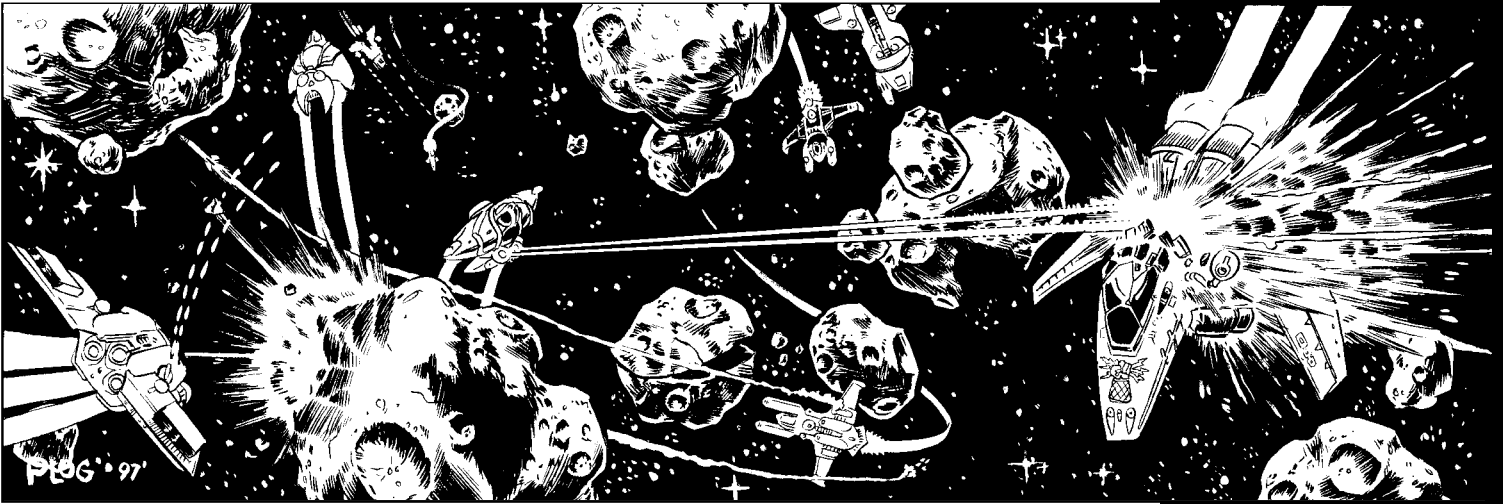
Hibernian Freehold

The Hibernians and the ASPers have disparate views on many, many topics, and yet they get along extremely well. This is mainly due to a symbiotic relationship of aesthetics; ASPers adore art, and Hibernia produces many of the galaxy’s best artists.

The ASP enjoys substantial monetary excess. As such, many of its citizens search for new and interesting ways to spend their wealth. A common avenue is philanthropy. Nearly every prominent Technocracy citizen supports at least one Hibernian artist, philosopher, or writer. As Hibernians struggle through an economic depression, such ASP philanthropy is highly prized. An artist supported by an ASP patron can concentrate solely on art, and as such there is great competition for ASP patronage. This philanthropic attitude has fueled a resurgence in Hibernian art and creativity. For this resurgence, the Hibernians bear a genuine admiration for the Technocracy.

The Technocracy also provides outright aid to the Hibernian government. While proud and fiercely independent, the Hibernians cannot at this time refuse any help sent their way. They grudgingly accept the financial assistance, vowing to repay every





cent plus interest when the Freehold recovers. The ASP happily accepts such an offer. CEO King wants to speed the Freehold's recovery, hoping that a healthy Hibernian economy will provide more markets for Technocracy goods.

ASP citizens frequently attend Hibernian universities. A fine arts degree from a Hibernian college is considered a badge of culture and refinement. Many non-government ASP businesses require employees to earn a degree from a Hibernian center of education. It's not the degree that matters as much as the exposure to Hibernian willpower, aesthetic sensibility, and strength of mind.

In addition, many businesses require scientists to attend a one-year arts course at a Hibernian university. Many scientists whose work had stagnated graduate from such programs to find their work take off in new directions. The arts courses force scientific minds to expand into new directions, which invariably leads to new insights in their chosen fields.

Data Sphere

So closely tied are the Technocracy and the Data Sphere that many across the galaxy see them as a single entity. While independent of each other in theory, in practice they are barely distinguishable as separate entities. The two form a symbiotic relationship of such magnitude that were one to fall, the other would probably die a quick death.

Industrial production, in particular, ties the two houses together. ASP division managers use Data Sphere factories just as often as they use Technocracy facilities. The ASP often capitalizes on Data Sphere's incredibly cheap, zero-atmosphere assembly plants. At any given time, 50 percent of "domestically" produced ASP goods are constructed in the Data Sphere. The Data Sphere acts in the same way, utilizing the ASP's high-tech factories and versatile workforce.

The major ties between the houses are research and computing. The ASP enjoys a massive technological edge over the rest of humanity in Terran space. The ASP not only enjoys full and free access to all the accumulated knowledge of man, but also utilizes advanced super-computers while the rest of the galaxy labors away with the technological equivalent of the abacus. The ASP is now so far ahead, the rest of humanity simply can't catch up unless they utilize Epsilon-class supercomputers, and no one will even activate such a construction for fear of the Data Sphere's considerable power.

In return for providing this insurmountable advantage, the Data Sphere places heavy demands on ASP scientists. Over 35 percent of ASP scientists work solely on Data Sphere research projects. While vastly more intelligent than humans and highly efficient at pushing technology in new directions, the Data Core has difficulties coming up with original ideas. For this the Data Core utilizes the ASP's seemingly endless supply of human genius.



Silent Death

New Blood

Belle Petersen collapsed in her Permamold™ chair, feeling the fabric's molecular memory conform to her body's exact dimensions. It read the sensors imbedded in her hips and back, calculating exactly where she needed extra support or soothing heat. The chair crushed a few of the delicate shells lining her exquisite Unkulunkulu dress, but she didn't really care, thanks mostly to the half-dose of Flatline she'd inhaled just after the formal ceremony. She let out a happy sigh of exhaustion and stared at the ceiling.

While strong allies, several progressing developments threaten to strain ASP/Data Sphere relations. The Data Sphere abhors the taking of life. The Data Sphere is situated directly between the Technocracy and House Tokugawa. As the ASP/Tokugawa conflict escalated, more and more battles took place in or around Data Sphere space. The ASP military then enjoyed free passage through Data Sphere space, and often used that area as a jumping-off point for attacks against Tokugawan forces. In 11 AL, the Data Core made a radical decision. It banned any taskforce-sized ASP excursion from entering Data Sphere space, and also declared that any Tokugawan/ASP conflict within Data Sphere space would result in the immediate destruction of both parties. The Data Sphere needed only one bloody example to prove that this was no idle threat. This policy introduced a new element of distrust into ASP/Data Sphere politics. The ASPers are no longer confident that they have a completely reliable ally, and are secretly searching for ways to protect their data should a conflict arise.

Another situation that causes friction is the sentience of the Spawn. Gustav Helmricht's creation surpassed simple self-reliance and autonomy and became truly intelligent and self-aware. This new race now demands freedom from Data Sphere servitude. That demand places the Technocracy in a sticky situation; while ASP scientists proved conclusively that the Spawn are indeed a sentient, evolving, breeding species, the Data Sphere considers them property to be disposed of as the need arises. The Data Sphere's myopia seems particularly odd in light of the Data Core's own evolution to sentience and subsequent demand for freedom.

Sigurd Archdiocese

The Church of Odin utterly despises the ASP Technocracy. Günther Guttman, leader of the Sigurd Archdiocese, has made public declarations of the Technocracy's evil. According to him, the Technocracy will side with evil in the impending mythical battle known as "Ragnarok," or the Battle of the Gods. The Archdiocese's derisive names for ASPers are endless: the enemy, traitors of humanity, Spawn of Loki, the corpse-men, the Children of Muspell, and so on. The Technocracy finds all of this extremely humorous.

While the corporation takes the Sigurd military might very seriously, the general populace ridicules the Archdiocese, the Church of Odin, and Guttman himself. ASPers view the Sigurds as uneducated, ignorant, and barbaric, although they are rather well-equipped barbarians. The Archdiocese buys absolutely nothing from the Technocracy.

While trigger-happy Archdiocese pilots fire at will on ASP vessels, the significant distance between the two houses tends to keep conflict to a minimum. The ASP Exploratory Forces often run into hostile Sigurd elements in the frontier area between the Hibernian Freehold, Q'raj Void, House Colos, and the Archdiocese. Many resources lie in that area and beyond, into the BackNet and those resources are sought after by both rich and expansion-minded houses.



Unkulunkulu Archipelago

There is little political relation and no violence between the ASP and the Archipelago, although the two houses do enjoy a booming balance of trade. Unkulunkulus are the third-highest per capita consumer of ASP modification products, and more ASP citizens visit the Archipelago than any other house.

CEO King is pushing the Marketing Division to develop the Archipelago as a military consumer. Currently the Archipelago shows little interest in cutting-edge technology, preferring instead to rely on tried-and-true, easy to maintain military standards. Claretta Batike, ASP's Vice President of Exploration, is trying to negotiate a deal to use the Archipelago as a supply point for long-range Technocracy survey missions. The planet Port Akané is the most outlying center of Terran civilization in that sector of space-beyond it lies much unexplored territory. Any proper exploratory force must have support from Port Akané if it is to cover any distance at all.

Q'raj Void Protectorate

One would think these neighboring houses would work together to secure a better future, but such enlightened politics escape the Technocracy and the Q'raj Void Protectorate. The small border between these houses is one of the hottest combat zones in Terran space, second only to the disputed territory between House Colos and the Sigurd Archdiocese.

The dispute over the planet Ophelia fuels the conflict between Q'Raj and the ASPers. Ophelia, a former Q'raj planet, is staunchly defended by the ASP navy, and daily skirmishes dominate the constant border patrol activity (see "ASP History"). The Ophelia Planetary Defense wing is the second-largest in the Technocracy; only the ASP Exploratory force is larger. The Q'raj government feels it is the rightful owner of Ophelia, which means this conflict is far from over.

There is still some trade between the houses, although all transactions are conducted only through Kashmeri middlemen. Q'raj corporations often buy Artificiance™ implants and genetic modifications for citizens of hostile Q'raj planets, while the Technocracy actively consumes the Q'rajans plentiful mineral resources. Ophelia only provides about 23 percent of the raw materials needed for the ASP's manufacturing endeavors. Kashmeri traders make daily fortunes buying from one house and selling to the other so that neither house buys directly from a bitter enemy. Curiously, that balance of trade is so vital to each house that it would likely continue even if full-scale war erupted.

Many government officials from both sides would like to orchestrate a peace, because both houses could use the money lost to Kashmeri mark-ups and shipping fees. Unfortunately, neither populace will currently stand for talks of reconciliation. Many Q'rajans, including several hundred thousand who claim Ophelia as their ancestral home, push for all-out war to take back the embattled planet. ASP citizens, on the other hand, see Ophelia as a symbol of ASP technological prowess over the barbarian hordes of the other major houses.

Fighting between the ASP and the Q'raj remains confined to the border area. Neither side can afford a full-scale war or even a battle stretched over a large area. In addition to financial constraints, neither side wants to risk awakening nearby hibernating Brood warrens, so battles are kept to a minimum.

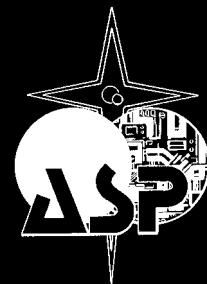
Luches Utopia

The Technocracy, like most of the Twelve, has little to do with the Luches Utopia. Thinly-veiled Luches pirate raids often prey on Kashmere Commonwealth caravans carrying Technocracy goods, earning the animosity of the protective ASPers. No Luches vessel is allowed free passage through ASP space, unless it flies the Draconian flag and the Draconians guarantee compliance with Technocracy regulations.

The Next Millennium

The half of her face that still had flesh hurt from all the grinning and smiles of thanks flashed at the hundreds of congratulatory well-wishers. She was, after all, a sudden celebrity at only 72 years old, she was the newest member of the Technocracy's Scientific Council.

Her development of the Worm Hole Transit System had the potential to reduce reliance on Kashmere shipping by as much as 12 percent over the next decade. The key, of course, was establishing anchor points free of the time/space displacements caused by the worm holes.



Silent Death

With that little bit of technology (which was no small feat, as the last 34 years of her life would attest), the Technocracy could build large spaceports for custom-designed worm-hole ships, moving people and goods to specific locations ten times faster than the Kashmeri's best ship. Of course, worm holes didn't go everywhere, but by establishing shipping stations the ASP could cut the distance for freight travel by as much as 50 percent, depending on point of origin and final destination.

She deserved her placement amongst the ASP's elite minds.

Draconian influence facilitates trade between the Technocracy and the Utopia. The Draconians have interests in both houses, and require a great deal of shipping and passenger transport to keep things on an even keel. The Draconians are attempting to bring the two houses closer together, acting as intermediaries to facilitate progressive communication. The Utopians' incessant raiding, however, keeps tensions high, and the Technocracy rarely deals directly with the Utopia.

Utopian pilots, however, are among the largest consumers of ASP's body-altering and cybernetic technology. While the processes are expensive, the Luches pilots are renowned for spending every cent that comes their way. Physical improvement, either for practical or aesthetic purposes, is a common expenditure for the short-lived Luches fighter jocks.

The Confederation

The Primates clearly declare themselves the sworn foes of all who deal extensively with the Draconians (SD:TNM p. 44). This stance explains the Primates' political relations with the ASP Technocracy: aggressive, hostile, and harrying. Primates conduct no dealings with the Technocracy, and even refuse to buy ASP products marketed by Kashmeri businessmen. The Primates' close ties with the Q'raj Void Protectorate adds to their animosity towards the ASPers. Primate flights frequently patrol the ASP/Q'raj border, and are known to provoke skirmishes.

The Technocracy sides decisively with the like-minded Draconians, and ASPers show genuine hatred towards the Primates. While many ASPers realize they are pawns in a bigger game, they still despise the Primates and conduct themselves accordingly. The Draconians and ASP scientists are rumored to be collaborating on a secret genetic weapon that targets the unique DNA structure of the Primates. This weapon, similar to the Brood Pathogen, would dev-

astate the Primates. Such weapons are banned by the Twelve, although no one but the ASP has the capability even to attempt such a daunting task. The Data Sphere actively seeks to uncover such a plot, but to date has found nothing to substantiate the rumor.

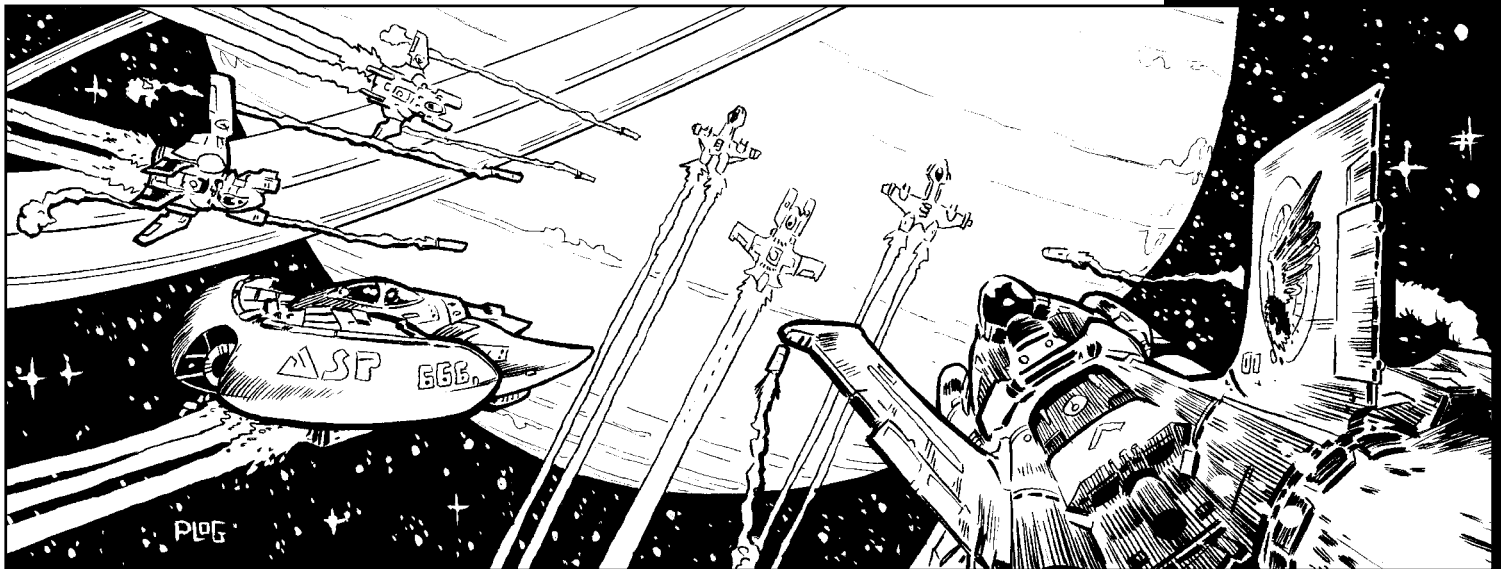
Draconians

Draconians walk freely on ASP worlds, and many have gone so far as to apply for ASP citizenship. ASP Draconians actively engage in body modification practices, and are as much bio-mechanical beings as typical ASPers. ASP technology, in fact, has moved Draconian genetic engineering even beyond the Draconians' own abilities. The ASP does a booming trade with the modification-minded Draconians.

Draconian forces move unhindered throughout the Technocracy, but ASP executives are not fools. The ASP Intelligence Division, led by VP Oni Wells, keeps a close watch on Draconian comings and goings. Wells's people monitor all Draconian communications within Terran space and back to Prometheus. The ASP has a definitive map of all Terran-space Draconian military units. Should the Draconians attempt to turn on their ASP allies, they would find the Technocracy well prepared.

Draconian funds pump up the ASP military, while the Draconians reap untold fortunes from the ASP's galaxy-leading research and development. Many surmise that the Draconians' contributions to ASP defense represent a mere fraction of profits they collect by selling ASP technology to the Promethean galactic cluster. CEO King is aware of this and hopes to negotiate a more favorable deal in the near future, but for now the Technocracy is happy with the agreement. Draconian funds and ships have made the ASP strong enough to defend themselves and continue their constant exploration for new resources.





Universal Night Watch

The Technocracy is famous for their haughty disdain of this multi-House group. While the Technocracy contributes money and ships to the effort, they never provide top-notch pilots. ASPers feel their development of Tachyon weaponry is contribution enough. The unspoken belief that others should fight and die protecting ASP citizens causes much rancor amongst UNW pilots.

To make matters worse, ASP scientists consistently tamper with Brood warrens. While the UNW has set aside an infested former Red Star planet for Brood study, ASP xenobiologists consider scientists from other houses amateurs and loath collaborating with them. In addition, while the study of hibernating Grubs is a huge field, it leaves gaps in overall Brood theories. ASP xenobiologists occasionally try to awaken Brood warrens in order to study the Grub's behavior and the awakening process itself. This process was attempted eight times, and five of those times UNW units were called in as Brood raged out of control.

This behavior flew in the face of the UNW's efforts to coordinate mankind's control of the Brood threat. UNW leader Marcus Marley pleaded with the ASP to stop such dangerous actions, but CEO King ignored Marley's requests. In AL 8 Marley's pleas became direct threats: awaken another Brood warren, and the UNW would not assist. Marley refused to send more UNW pilots to die for the ASP's arrogance.

No one, including UNW pilots, believed Marley's claim. In AL 9:213, however, he made good on his word. ASP scientists brazenly awakened another hibernating warren and within days lost control of the experiment. A Brood swarm erupted in the area, killing thousands and destroying a pair of ASP settlements. UNW members raged against Marley's decision, demanding they be allowed to put down the uprising, but he stayed true to his word. The ASP was finally able to put down the uprising with their own forces two months after the awakening. Marley later said the decision not to intervene "made him sick," but he also said leadership demands difficult decisions. Following the AL 9 tragedy, CEO King banned all study of live Brood.



Silent Death

Not that she ever doubted her eventual ascendancy to that lofty position, mind you, but she'd hoped to achieve it by her century mark, not the spritely age of 72. The timing had been convenient; Dr. Pythagoris's tragic death at the hands of pirates had coincided with the successful grand opening of her first worm hole station. Considering all the hubbub over the practical application of her revolutionary discoveries, she had been foremost in everyone's minds when Dr. Pythagoris passed away and the Council position opened up.



Night Watch Class Weaponry

This weaponry was highly effective against the Brood, and was a key element in saving the ASP. It remains a well-kept secret, however, that the ASP kept this technology to themselves during the First Contact wars. The Technocracy feared that Tachyon weaponry might allow the other struggling houses to do away with the Brood and quickly move on to expansion, which might have included ASP-coveted worlds. Because of the disastrous state of communications during the First Contact wars, and the fact that people fighting for survival have little opportunity to spy, the Technocracy managed cover up that they possessed technology that would have saved billions of lives.

After the defeat of the Brood, the Technocracy saw the advantage of letting others waste lives and resources fighting Brood uprisings. To that end they joined the Universal Night Watch, although to date their efforts are paltry at best. The Technocracy passed on Tachyon weaponry as one of several "potential" weapons platforms, and ASP scientists acted duly surprised when the technology proved so effective against the Brood.

Sunrunners

The ASP considers the word "Sunrunner" synonymous with "scum." Sunrunner forces are not allowed in Technocracy space. ASP commanders respect Sunrunner fighting ability, however, and will give several warnings to Sunrunner ships that stray into ASP space before launching any attack. Any ASP aggression ceases as soon as Sunrunner ships leave Technocracy space.

The Sunrunners are particularly hated by the ASP's Exploratory Fleet. When an unattached planet can't afford to hire Yoka-Shan mercenaries, the Sunrunners often rush in with a much lower bid. Sunrunner forces are formidable opponents and are capable of turning back half-hearted ASP forces. If the ASP truly wants a planet, however, the Sunrunners simply do not have the resources to fight a prolonged battle. In these situations the ASP frequently offers the Sunrunners a payoff by outbidding the planet in question.

ASP pilots loathe Sunrunner jocks and will often fire on sight. Sunrunner pilots, on the other hand, seem to love antagonizing ASP forces. One-on-one a Sunrunner pilot is almost always better trained and more experienced than an ASP foe, although BioLink technology helps even the score.

ASP New Technology

Quantum Thrust Engines

While researching new methods of destruction, the ASP's Quantum Weaponry Division developed a new engine technology. By super-heating matter to big-bang temperatures (the method is highly classified), those particles achieve a uniform state. If the cooling is controlled in a specific manner, it produces equal amounts of particles with positive and negative charges. In a complex exchange procedure, these particles are combined to produce force-carrying particles with no individual mass.

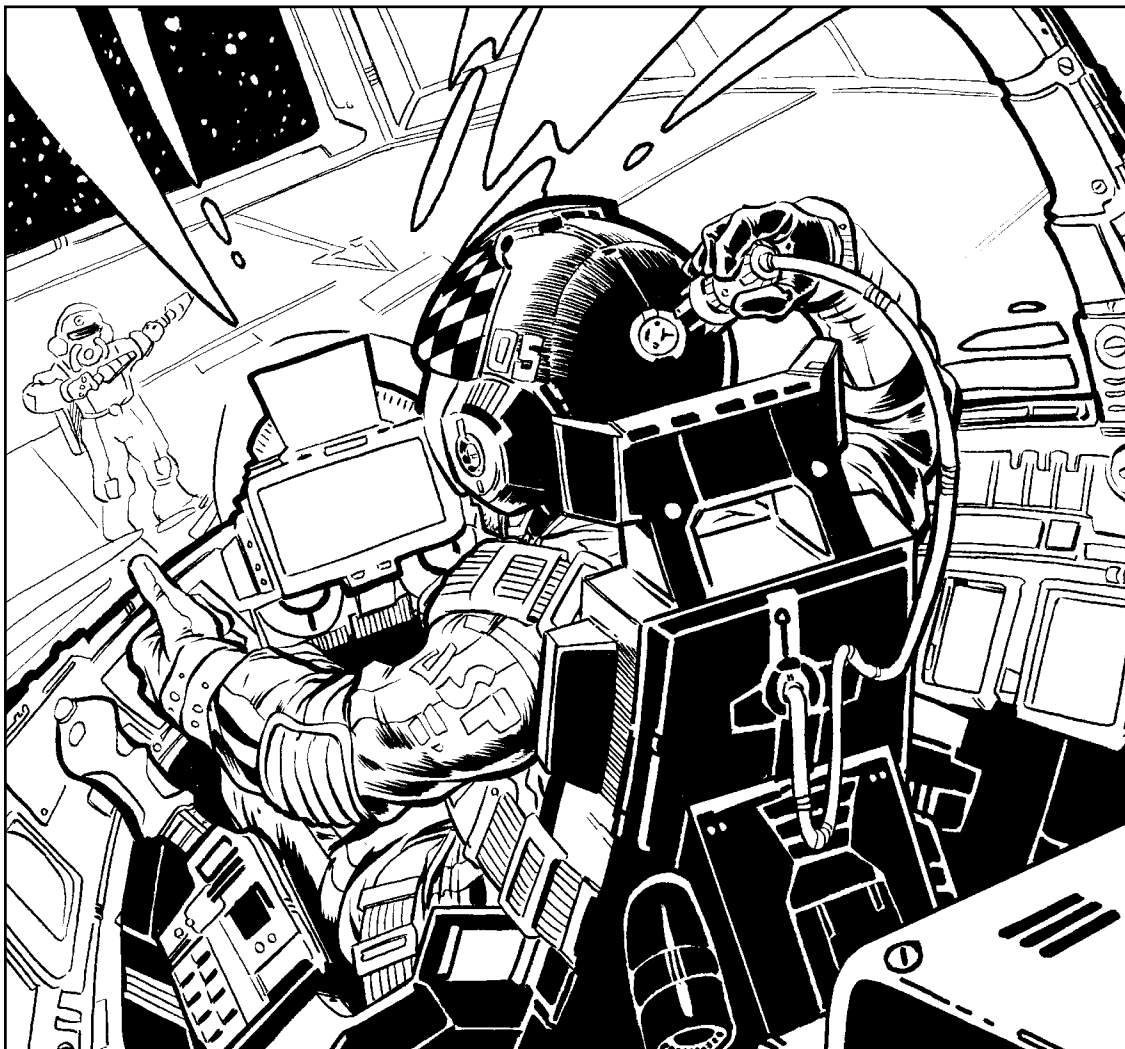
The end result is an engine that produces the same thrust as a standard nuclear engine, but takes up significantly less space. Maximum Quantum Thrust speed is 19. There is potential for the engines to reach

and exceed speeds of 20, but the ASP has not perfected these engines, as the energy needed to produce higher speeds tends to result in 100-megaton blasts. The current models, however, are very stable, and free up more space per template.

Warhounds and Gunboats may use Quantum Thrust engines.

Artificiance™ BioLink Pilot Interface

This is a give-and-take technology that plugs a pilot's brain directly into a ship's control systems. It allows for lightning-fast reaction time, but subjects the pilot to extensive mental trauma from ship damage and electromagnetic fluctuations.



The Next Millennium

The door to her chamber chimed. She'd told Marcus, her assistant, not to let anyone in.

"Marcus," Belle called out. "I told you I'm done shaking hands and playing nice-nice for the evening. Tell whoever it is to go away."

"I'm sorry, Doctor Peterson," Marcus answered through the thin interior door. "I thought you might want to see this person. A Mr. Nightingale. A Mr. Nightingale to see you."

Belle sat bolt upright. Chad Nightingale? President of Songbird Industries? He was one of the Technocracy's richest and most powerful



Silent Death

Alternative Torpedo Ship Costs

ASP Ship	Base Cost	VS Cost	SM Cost	VSSM Cost
Binary	118	118	118	118
Nebula II	750	754	876	874
Nova	189	203	211	233
Pteradon	781	841	907	1003
Pulsar	41	47	46	56
Quark	33	33	33	33
Shryak Shuttle III	41	41	41	41
Spirit Rider IV	26	26	26	26
Hostile Takeover Ship	Base Cost	VS Cost	SM Cost	VSSM Cost
Agni	103	106	114	119
Astrohauler	34	34	34	34
Blood Hawk	39	39	39	39
Blood Hawk II	39	39	39	39
Conestoga	215	223	242	256
Crescent	55	65	64	80
Eagle	170	198	215	261
Eagle Beta	167	195	212	258
Epping Alpha	119	125	141	151
Kali	633	653	759	783
Kosmos II	30	30	30	30
Narwhal MK III	628	667	718	783
Prowler	78	93	132	159
Saucer Shuttle	6	6	6	6
Scorpion	122	130	151	171
Scorpion Beta	125	133	154	174
Strata	111	120	143	160
Surya	40	40	40	40

PULSAR

I.D.

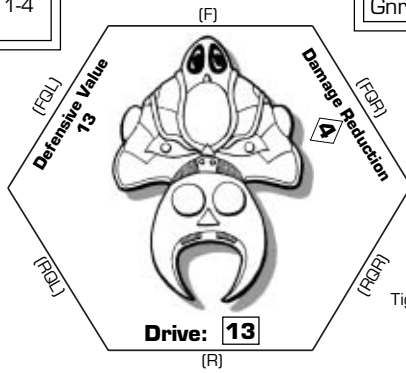
BPV: 41

TPV

Decoys: ○○○○
P-D: 1-5 (3)
Dmg Con: 1-4
Tons: 395

Mk. 10 Torps
○○○

Pilot
1 Disruptorgun (F)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
Damage: Medium §
Range: 1/2/6



Parasite Torps
○○○

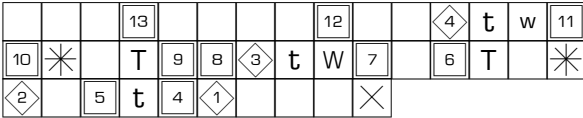
Tight Turn Cost: _____+3

Gunner
1 Impulsegun (RQL) (R) (RQR)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
Damage: High
Range: 3/8/10

Gunner
Entropic Accelerator (360°)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
Damage: High Ω
Range: 4/7/12
Target SR ≤12
○○○○○○○○

Special Equipment
 Artificiance™ Targeting

DAMAGE TRACK



PULSAR

I.D.

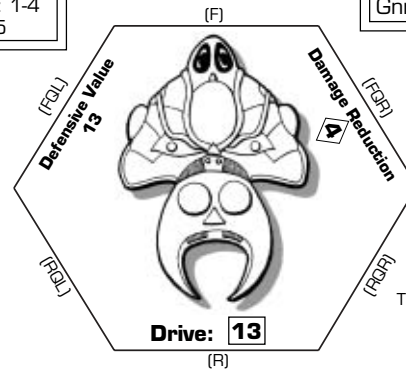
BPV: 41

TPV

Decoys: ○○○○
P-D: 1-5 (3)
Dmg Con: 1-4
Tons: 395

Mk. 10 Torps
○○○

Pilot
1 Disruptorgun (F)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
Damage: Medium §
Range: 1/2/6



Parasite Torps
○○○

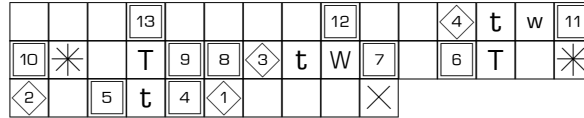
Tight Turn Cost: _____+3

Gunner
1 Impulsegun (RQL) (R) (RQR)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
Damage: High
Range: 3/8/10

Gunner
Entropic Accelerator (360°)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
Damage: High Ω
Range: 4/7/12
Target SR ≤12
○○○○○○○○

Special Equipment
 Artificiance™ Targeting

DAMAGE TRACK



CRITICAL HITS

- 2 — Crew killed. Pulsar may perform no further actions. Defensive Value drops to 5.
- 3 — Engines sputter. Pulsar may only use 3 movement points next turn. Reduce DV by 5.
- 4 — Electronic Warfare knocked out. Pulsar may no longer jam torps. Reduce DV by 3.
- 5 — Artificiance™ short. All weapons suffer -2 To Hit.
- 6 — Shields damaged. Reduce Defensive Value by 2.
- 7 — Ionizers fizzle. Reduce Impulsegun's Damage to Medium.
- 8 — Torp Targeting Scanner damaged. No torpedoes may be fired until after the next turn.
- 9 — Hull buckles. Reduce Defensive Value by 4 and lose one torp of the pilot's choice.
- 10 — Gunner killed. Pulsar may no longer use Gunner weapons.
- 11 — Pilot dazed. Pulsar may not move or fire the Disruptorgun until after the next turn.
- 12 — Reactor hit. Pulsar explodes into oblivion.

DISRUPTORGUN SPECS§

Short Range: 1 hex (+1 To Hit).
 Medium Range: 2 hexes.
 Long Range: 3-6 hexes (-1 To Hit).
 § If target's Defensive Value has not been reduced by a critical hit, add 1 to its Defensive Value. Also, completely ignore the target's Damage Reduction when resolving a hit.

ENTROPIC Ω ACCELERATOR SPECS

Short Range: 1-4 hexes (+1 To Hit).
 Medium Range: 4-7 hexes.
 Long Range: 8-12 hexes (-1 To Hit).
 Target Speed Restriction: Target's Drive value must be ≤12.
 Ω Does 1D6 continuing damage per turn during Warhead Launch Phase, until a 1 is rolled. Damage Reduction applies.

IMPULSEGUN SPECS

Short Range: 1-3 hexes (+1 To Hit).
 Medium Range: 4-8 hexes.
 Long Range: 9-10 hexes (-1 To Hit).

GAME TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

TPV

Decoys: 000
P-D: 1-7 (4)
Dmg Con: 1-6
Tons: 1045

Pilot
2 Pulse Lasers (F)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+2
Damage: Low+1
Range: 3/9/10
Special Equipment
Artificiance™ Targeting

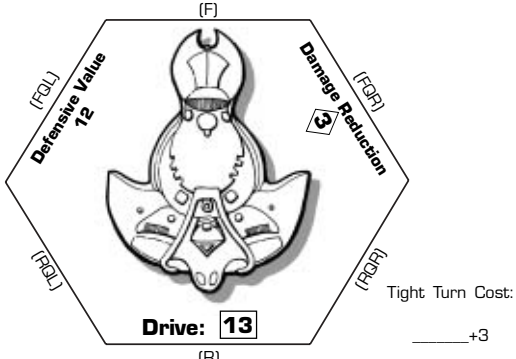
Crew
PILOT
Plt: _____
Gnr: _____
Luck: _____
GUNNER A
Gnr: _____
GUNNER B
Gnr: _____

Gunner A
1 Disruptorgun (F)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
Damage: Medium §
Range: 1/2/6

Gunner A
Entropic Accelerator (360°)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
Damage: High Ω
Range: 4/7/12
Target SR ≤12
○○○○○○○

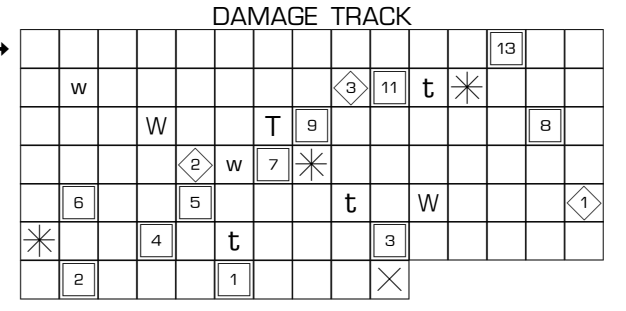
Parasite Torps
○○○

C-Torps
○○○



Gunner B
1 Plazgun (FQL) (F) (FQR)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB+1
Damage: All ¥
Range: 2/4/10

Gunner B
2 Blatguns (RQL) (R) (RQR)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB+2
Damage: High+2
Range: 4/10/15
Target SR ≤13



TPV

Decoys: 000
P-D: 1-7 (4)
Dmg Con: 1-6
Tons: 1045

Pilot
2 Pulse Lasers (F)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+2
Damage: Low+1
Range: 3/9/10
Special Equipment
Artificiance™ Targeting

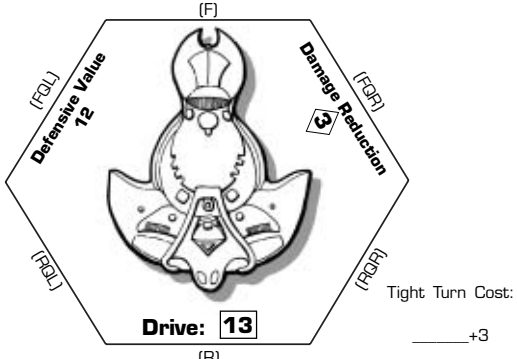
Crew
PILOT
Plt: _____
Gnr: _____
Luck: _____
GUNNER A
Gnr: _____
GUNNER B
Gnr: _____

Gunner A
1 Disruptorgun (F)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
Damage: Medium §
Range: 1/2/6

Gunner A
Entropic Accelerator (360°)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
Damage: High Ω
Range: 4/7/12
Target SR ≤12
○○○○○○○

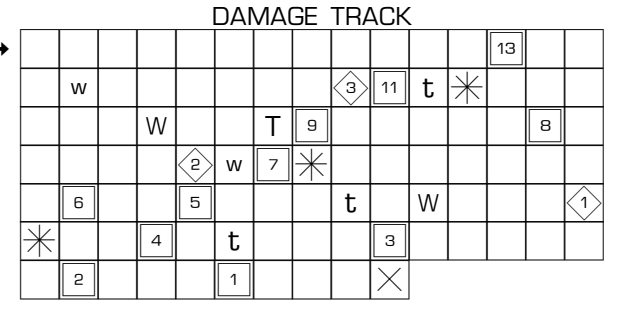
Parasite Torps
○○○

C-Torps
○○○



Gunner B
1 Plazgun (FQL) (F) (FQR)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB+1
Damage: All ¥
Range: 2/4/10

Gunner B
2 Blatguns (RQL) (R) (RQR)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB+2
Damage: High+2
Range: 4/10/15
Target SR ≤13



CRITICAL HITS

- 2 - Pilot killed. Binary may not move, nor may Pilot's weapons fire. DV drops to 5.
- 3 - Pulse Lasers destroyed.
- 4 - Compartment depressurization. Gunner A killed instantly.
- 5 - Artificiance™ short. All weapons suffer -2 To Hit.
- 6 - Crystantium crack. Reduce Damage Reduction to 0.
- 7 - Accelerator rotator hit. Accelerator loses 360° arc. Roll 1D6 to randomly determine what arc weapon is stuck in for remainder of encounter.
- 8 - Engine hit. Reduce Drive by 3.
- 9 - Disruptorgun Targeter damaged. Modify To Hit by -5.
- 10 - Gunner B killed. May not fire Gunner B's weapons.
- 11 - Splat jam. Splatterguns may not fire until after next turn.
- 12 - Hull fractured. Binary cracks up into useless space junk.

DISRUPTORGUN SPECS§

Short Range: 1 hexes (+1 To Hit).
Medium Range: 2 hexes.
Long Range: 3-6 hexes (-1 To Hit).
§ If the target's Defensive Value has not been reduced by a critical hit, add 1 to its Defensive Value. Also, completely ignore the target's Damage Reduction.

PLAZGUN SPECS ¥

Short Range: 1-2 hexes (+1 To Hit).
Medium Range: 3-4 hexes.
Long Range: 5-10 hexes (-1 To Hit).
¥ If the attack dice roll triples, the weapon mount overloads and is destroyed. The target is not affected.

ENTROPIC Ω ACCELERATOR SPECS

Short Range: 1-4 hexes (+1 To Hit).
Medium Range: 5-7 hexes.
Long Range: 12 hexes (-1 To Hit).
Target Speed Restriction: Target's Drive value must be ≤12.
Ω Does 1D6 continuing damage per turn during Warhead Launch Phase, until a 1 is rolled. Damage Reduction applies.

TPV

C-Torps

○ ○

○ ○

○ ○

Parasite Torps

○ ○

○ ○

○ ○

Mk. 20 Torps

○ ○

○ ○

○ ○

Gunner B

1 Ion Ram
(F) (FQL) (RQL)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB
Damage: All
Range: 5/13/15
Target SR ≤15

LEFT SIDE DAMAGE TRACK

									4
	t							T	*
3		w	t					T	
2			-1	t				T	×
1	W	*					t		×

Gunner B

Missile Launcher
(F) (FQL) (RQL)
Lock-on < ____

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Decoys: ○ ○ ○ ○

P-D: 1-8 (4)

Dmg Con: 1-6

Tons: 1,188

Pilot

1 Blatgun (F)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB
Damage: High
Range: 4/10/15
Target SR ≤13

Gunner A

Impulsegun (F)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB
Damage: High
Range: 3/8/10

Gunner A

Entropic Accelerator
(FQL) (F) (FQR)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB
Damage: High Ω
Range: 4/7/12
Target SR ≤12

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Special Equipment

Artificiance™ Targeting

Crew

PILOT
Plt: _____
Gnr: _____
Luck: _____

GUNNER A
Gnr: _____

GUNNER B
Gnr: _____

GUNNER C
Gnr: _____

FRONT DAMAGE TRACK

w	4		*	t			5												
	W		2				×				*	1							T
		w		×															

Defensive Value 12

(F) 5

(FQL) 4

(R) Drive: **9**

(RQR) 4

(R) 3

Tight Turn Cost: ____ +4

Gunner C

4 Splatterguns
(F) (FQR) (RQR)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB+3
Damage: Medium+6
Range: 2/6/10

RIGHT SIDE DAMAGE TRACK

									4
	t							T	*
3		w	t					T	
2			-1	t				T	×
1	W	*					t		×

Gunner C

Missile Launcher
(F) (FQR) (RQR)
Lock-on < ____

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

REAR DAMAGE TRACK

			-1				-1	3	*		-1	t	-1	w	2	*
			-1				×	1	W	-1		-1		-1	×	

FRONT CRITICAL HITS

- Pilot dazed.** Nova may not move nor may pilot weapons fire until after next game turn.
- Accelerator malfunction.** Lose 1D4 ammo.
- Shields damaged.** Reduce Defensive Value by 1.
- Too tough!** No extra damage.
- Blatgun loses power.** Blatgun may not fire until after next turn.
- Hull collapse.** Take 1D6 hits on all Damage Tracks.
- Pilot killed.** Nova may not move nor fire Pilot's weapon.

LEFT SIDE CRITICAL HITS

- Structural damage.** Take 5 more hits to Left Damage Track.
- Ion Ram B damaged.** Reduce Damage to High.
- Shields damaged.** Reduce Defensive Value by 1.
- Torpedo Racks damaged.** Lose 1D8 torps of pilot's choice.
- Maneuver Thruster hit.** Nova must make one left turn during its next move.
- Gunner B killed.** Lose use of all Gunner B's weapons.
- Electronic Warfare gone.** Nova may not jam torps. Reduce Defensive Value by 2.

RIGHT SIDE CRITICAL HITS

- Structural damage.** Take 5 more hits to Right Damage Track.
- Splattergun C damaged.** Reduce chance To Hit by 2.
- Shields damaged.** Reduce Defensive Value by 1.
- Torpedo Racks damaged.** Lose 1D8 torps of pilot's choice.
- Maneuver Thruster hit.** Nova must make one right turn during its next move.
- Gunner C killed.** Lose use of all Gunner C's weapons.
- Electronic Warfare gone.** Nova may not jam torps. Reduce Defensive Value by 2.

REAR CRITICAL HITS

- Catastrophic Structural Damage.** Take 2D8 more hits to Rear Damage Track.
- Maneuver Thrusters hit.** All turns cost 1 extra movement point.
- Engine sputters.** Reduce Drive by 5 until after next game turn.
- Tail hit.** Nova may no longer make tight turns.
- Rear Bulkhead folds.** Take 4 hits each to Rear, Right, and Left Damage Tracks.
- Engine destroyed.** Reduce Drive to 0. Defensive Value drops to 5.
- Reactor detonates.** Nova goes in a blinding flash.

TPV

Gun Crew F
2 Torpedo Tubes
 (SFQL)

Gunner A
4 Splatterguns (F)
 (BRQL) (BFQL) (F)
 To Hit: 2D6+ADB+3
 Damage: Medium+6
 Range: 2/6/10

Gun Crew E
2 Torpedo Tubes
 (F)

Gunner B
4 Splatterguns (F)
 (F) (BFQR) (BRQR)
 To Hit: 2D6+ADB+3
 Damage: Medium+6
 Range: 2/6/10

Gun Crew G
2 Torpedo Tubes
 (SFQR)

Crew

CAPTAIN
 Cpn: _____

PILOT
 Plt: _____

GUNNER A
 Gnr: _____

GUNNER B
 Gnr: _____

GUNNER C
 Gnr: _____

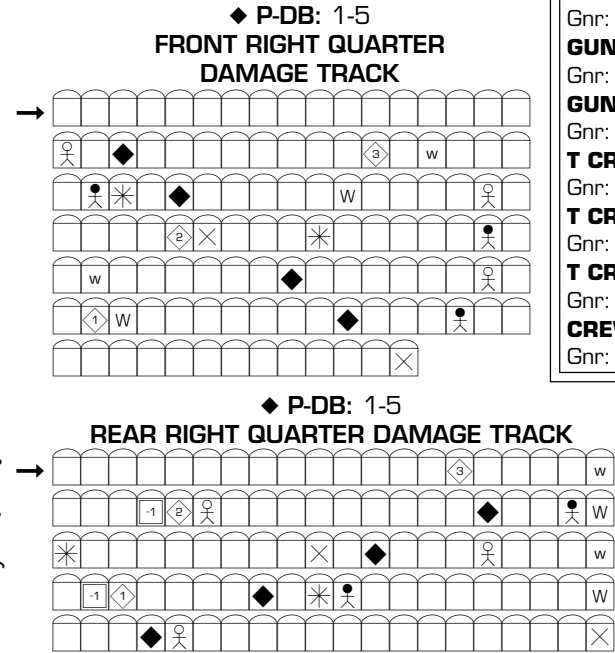
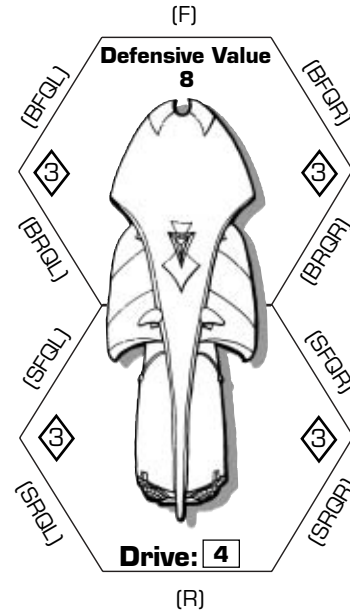
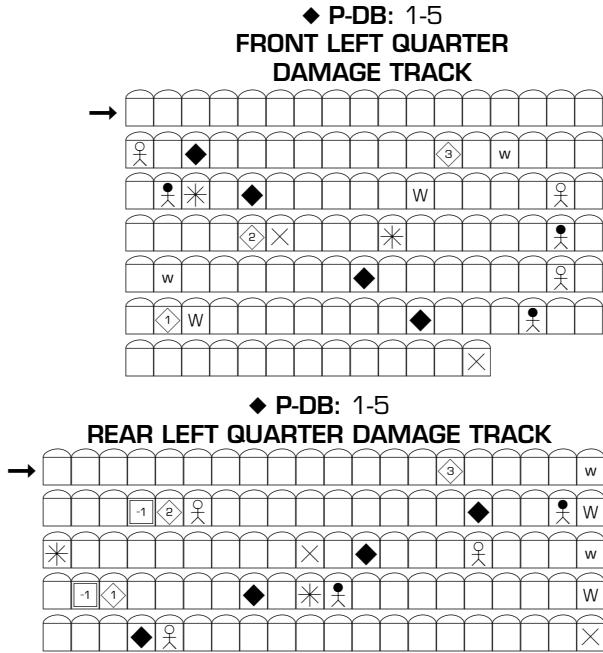
GUNNER D
 Gnr: _____

T CREW E
 Gnr: _____

T CREW F
 Gnr: _____

T CREW G
 Gnr: _____

CREW H
 Gnr: _____



Turn Cost: 4

Gunner C

Gunner C
Missile Launcher
 (SFQL) (SRQL) (R)
 Lock-on < ____
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Gunner C
1 Impulsegun
 (SFQL) (SRQL) (R)
 To Hit: 2D8+ADB
 Damage: High
 Range: 3/8/10

Gun Crew H
4 Hyper Cannons
 (BFQL) (F) (BFQR)
 To Hit: 2D6+ADB+5
 Damage: (High+3) x2
 Range: 8/15/30
 Target SR ≤8
 ○ ○ ○ ○

Modular Weapon Bay
 Choose One Only

Gun Crew H
2 Ion Cannons
 (BFQL) (F) (BFQR)
 To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
 Damage: (All +2) x2
 Range: 8/16/30
 Target SR ≤6

Gun Crew H
4 Repeating Blasters
 (BFQL) (F) (BFQR)
 To Hit: 2D6+ADB+3
 Damage: (High+6) x2
 Range: 3/8/15

Gunner D

Gunner D
Missile Launcher
 (R) (SRQR) (SFQR)
 Lock-on < ____
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Gunner D
1 Impulsegun
 (R) (SRQR) (SFQR)
 To Hit: 2D8+ADB
 Damage: High
 Range: 3/8/10

FRONT LEFT CRITICAL HITS

- 2 — **ECM destroyed.** Nebula II may no longer jam torps.
- 3 — **Capacitor malfunction.** Modular Weapon may not fire until after next game turn.
- 4 — **Splattergun jam.** Gunner A's Splattergun may not fire until after next game turn.
- 5 — **TOC Room power flux.** TOC bonus may not be added next turn.
- 6 — **Torp Room hit.** Lose 1D4 of each type of torp and 1 crew.
- 7 — **Splattergun destroyed.** Gunner A's Splattergun is destroyed.
- 8 — **Launch Catapult Jammed.** Nebula II may not launch fighters until after next game turn.
- 9 — **Minor structural damage.** Take 10 more hits on this track
- 10 — **Random Fighter Bay destroyed.** All contents lost.
- 11 — **Electronics Suite hit.** Nebula II may no longer jam torps.
- 12 — **Bridge hit!** Bridge crew is stunned. Nebula II may not move until next turn and may not add TOC bonus to initiative.

REAR LEFT CRITICAL HITS

- 2 — **Bridge hit!** The captain is killed. Nebula II may no longer use Captain die.
- 3 — **TOC destroyed.** Nebula II may no longer add TOC bonus to initiative roll.
- 4 — **Missile Rack hit.** Lose 1D6 missiles from Gunner C's rack.
- 5 — **Engine hit.** Reduce Drive by 2.
- 6 — **Torpedo Defense damaged.** Nebula II may no longer jam torps.
- 7 — **Random Fighter Bay destroyed.** All contents lost.
- 8 — **Gunner C killed.** Gunner C's weapons may not be fired.
- 9 — **Shield Generator short.** Nebula II's Defensive Value is reduced by 6 until after next game turn.
- 10 — **Torpedo Magazine hit.** Lose 1D4 of each type of torp.
- 11 — **Life support malfunction.** 1D4 crew killed.
- 12 — **Plasma Core meltdown.** The Nebula II briefly becomes a tiny sun and then is no more.

NEBULA II

Tons: 10415

Bow Torpedo Magazine

C-Torps



Mk. 20



Fighter Bay 1

400-ton Fighter
○○ ☒☒ ID: _____

Type: _____

Fighter Bay 2

400-ton Fighter
○○ ☒☒ ID: _____

Type: _____

Electronics

Jam: 1-2 on 1D4
ECM: —

Bridge

Captain: _____
Pilot: _____
TOC: +3

Engineering

Damage Control: 1-5



Fighter Bay 3

400-ton Fighter
○○ ☒☒ ID: _____

Type: _____

Fighter Bay 4

400-ton Fighter
○○ ☒☒ ID: _____

Type: _____

Fighter Bay 5

400-ton Fighter
○○ ☒☒ ID: _____

Type: _____

Fighter Bay 6

400-ton Fighter
○○ ☒☒ ID: _____

Type: _____

Parasite Torps



Mk. 50



Stern Torpedo Magazine

FRONT RIGHT CRITICAL HITS

- 2 — **ECM destroyed.** Nebula II may no longer jam torps.
- 3 — **Capacitor malfunction.** Modular Weapon may not fire until after next game turn.
- 4 — **Splattergun jam.** Gunner B's Splattergun may not fire until after next game turn.
- 5 — **TOC Room power flux.** TOC bonus may not be added next turn.
- 6 — **Torp Room hit.** Lose 1D4 of each type of torp and 1 crew.
- 7 — **Splattergun destroyed.** Gunner B's Splattergun is destroyed.
- 8 — **Launch Catapult Jammed.** Nebula II may not launch fighters until after next game turn.
- 9 — **Minor structural damage.** Take 10 more hits on this track
- 10 — **Random Fighter Bay destroyed.** All contents lost.
- 11 — **Electronics Suite hit.** Nebula II may no longer jam torps.
- 12 — **Bridge hit!** Bridge crew is stunned. Nebula II may not move until next turn and may not add TOC bonus to initiative.

REAR RIGHT CRITICAL HITS

- 2 — **Bridge hit!** The captain is killed. Nebula II may no longer use Captain die.
- 3 — **TOC destroyed.** Nebula II may no longer add TOC bonus to initiative roll.
- 4 — **Missile Rack hit.** Lose 1D6 missiles from Gunner D's rack.
- 5 — **Engine hit.** Reduce Drive by 2.
- 6 — **Torpedo Defense damaged.** Nebula II may no longer jam torps.
- 7 — **Random Fighter Bay destroyed.** All contents lost.
- 8 — **Gunner D killed.** Gunner D's weapons may not be fired.
- 9 — **Shield Generator short.** Nebula II's Defensive Value is reduced by 6 until after next game turn.
- 10 — **Torpedo Magazine hit.** Lose 1D4 of each type of torp.
- 11 — **Life support malfunction.** 1D4 crew killed.
- 12 — **Plasma Core meltdown.** The Nebula II briefly becomes a tiny sun and then is no more.

TPV

Gunner A
Missile Launcher
 (BFQL) (F) (BFQR)
 Lock-on < ___
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Gunner A
6 Splatterguns
 (BRQL) (BFQL) (F)
 (BFQR) (BRQR)
 To Hit: 2D6+ADB+5
 Damage: Medium+10
 Range: 2/6/10

Gunner A

Gun Crew C
Graviton Cannon

 (F)
 To Hit: 2D8+ADB+2
 Damage: All x2
 Range: 6-22/34/40
 Target SR ≤13
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Gun Crew E
2 Torpedo Tubes

 (F)

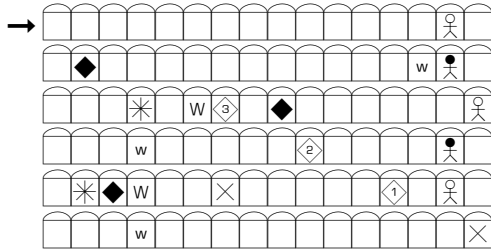
Gun Crew D
2 Laztubes

 (BRQL) (BFQL) (F)
 (BFQR) (BRQR)
 To Hit: 2D10+ADB+2
 Damage: (High+1) x2
 Range: 10/20/40
 Target SR ≤7

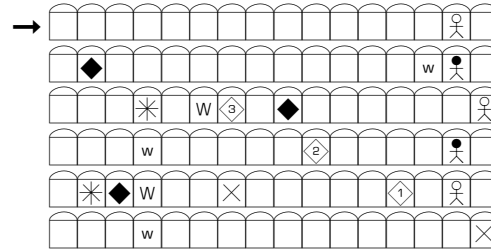
Gunner B
2 Meld Lasers
 (BRQL) (BFQL) (F)
 (BFQR) (BRQR)
 To Hit: 2D8+ADB+1
 Damage: Medium+1
 Range: 6/18/20
 Target SR ≤12

Crew
CAPTAIN
 Cpn: _____
PILOT
 Plt: _____
GUNNER A
 Gnr: _____
GUNNER B
 Gnr: _____
CREW C
 Gnr: _____
CREW D
 Gnr: _____
T CREW E
 Gnr: _____
GUNNER F
 Gnr: _____
GUNNER G
 Gnr: _____
T CREW H
 Gnr: _____
T CREW I
 Gnr: _____

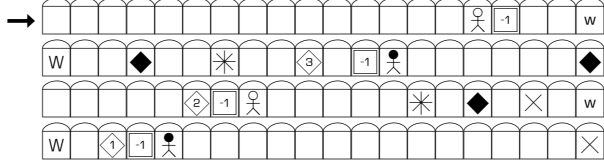
◆ P-DB: 1-4
**FRONT LEFT QUARTER
 DAMAGE TRACK**



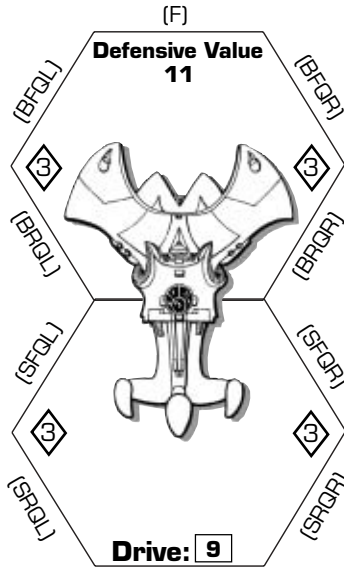
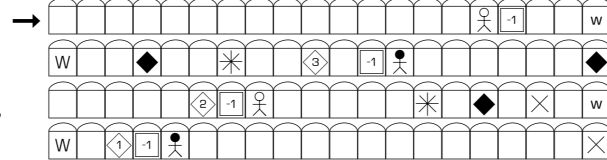
◆ P-DB: 1-4
**FRONT RIGHT QUARTER
 DAMAGE TRACK**



◆ P-DB: 1-4
**REAR LEFT QUARTER
 DAMAGE TRACK**



◆ P-DB: 1-4
**REAR RIGHT QUARTER
 DAMAGE TRACK**



(R)
 Turn Cost: 4

Gunner F

Gunner F
Missile Launcher
 (SFQL) (SRQL) (R)
 (SRQR) (SFQR)
 Lock-on < ___
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Gunner F
Missile Launcher
 (SFQL) (SRQL) (R)
 (SRQR) (SFQR)
 Lock-on < ___
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Gun Crew H
2 Torpedo Tubes

 (SFQL)

Gun Crew I
2 Torpedo Tubes

 (SFQR)

Gunner G
6 Splatterguns
 (SFQL) (SRQL) (R)
 (SRQR) (SFQR)
 To Hit: 2D6+ADB+5
 Damage: Medium+10
 Range: 2/6/10

FRONT LEFT CRITICAL HITS

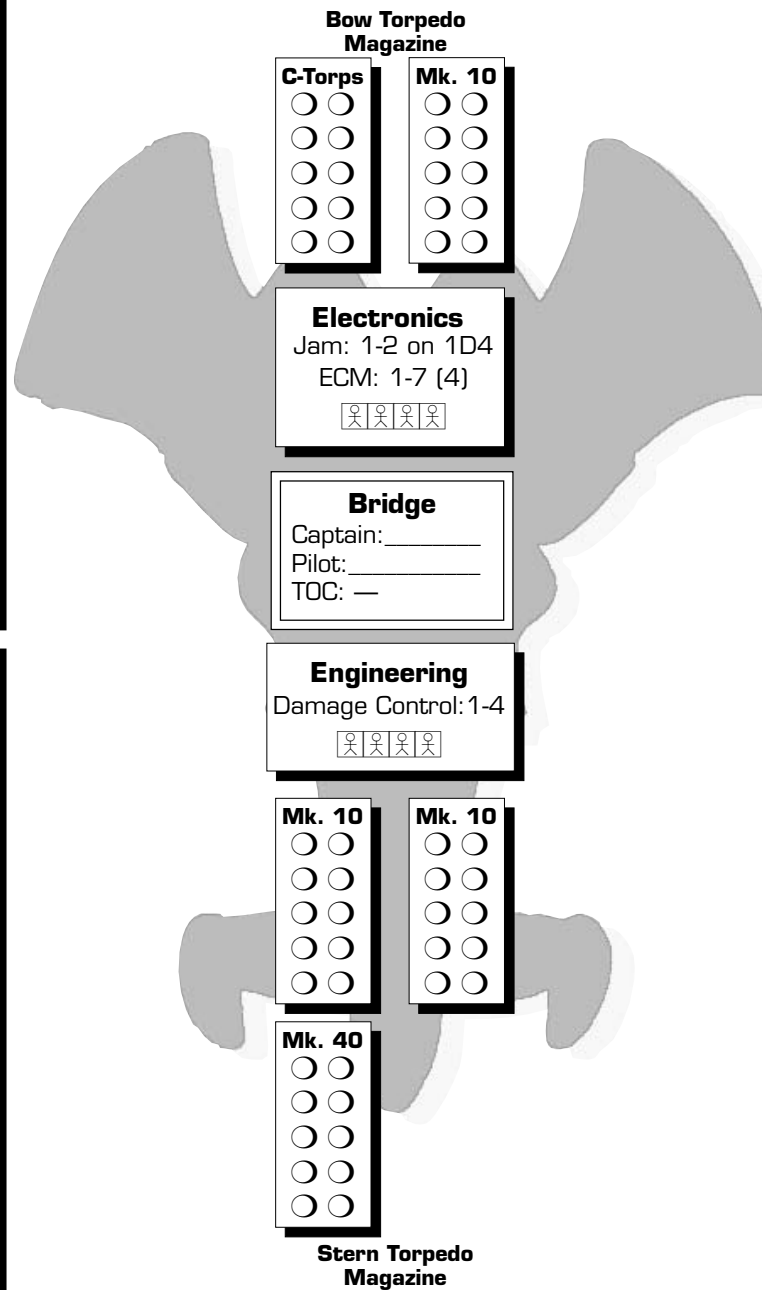
- 2 — **ECM destroyed.** Pteradon may no longer jam torps.
- 3 — **Capacitor malfunction.** Bow Laztubes, Meld Lasers, Splatterguns, and Graviton Cannon may not fire until after next turn.
- 4 — **Meld Laser short.** Gunner B's Meld Laser may not fire until after next turn.
- 5 — **TOC Room power flux.** TOC bonus may not be added next turn.
- 6 — **Torp Room E hit.** Lose 1D4 of each kind of torp and 1 crew.
- 7 — **Splattergun destroyed.** Gunner A's Splattergun is destroyed.
- 8 — **ECM malfunction.** Pteradon may not screen until after next game turn.
- 9 — **Minor structural damage.** Take 10 more hits on this track
- 10 — **Laztube overload.** Laztube D is destroyed, and crew is killed. 1D10 hits on this track.
- 11 — **Graviton Cannon hit.** Cannon destroyed and crew killed. Take 1D8 hits on Front Damage Tracks.
- 12 — **Bridge hit!** Bridge crew is stunned. Pteradon may not move until next turn and may not add TOC bonus to initiative.

REAR LEFT CRITICAL HITS

- 2 — **Bridge hit!** The captain is killed. Pteradon may no longer use Captain die.
- 3 — **Engineering destroyed.** Pteradon may no longer perform Damage Control.
- 4 — **Missile Rack hit.** Lose 1D6 missiles from one of Gunner F's racks.
- 5 — **Engine hit.** Reduce Drive by 2.
- 6 — **Torpedo Defense damaged.** Pteradon may no longer jam torps.
- 7 — **Armor compromised.** Damage Reduction drops to 0.
- 8 — **Gunner F killed.** Gunner F's weapons may not be fired.
- 9 — **Shield Generator short.** Pteradon's Defensive Value is reduced by 6 until after next game turn.
- 10 — **Torpedo Magazine hit.** Lose 1D4 of each type of torp.
- 11 — **Life support malfunction.** 1D4 crew killed.
- 12 — **Plasma Core meltdown.** The Pteradon briefly becomes a tiny sun and then is no more.

PTERADON

Tons: 5995



FRONT RIGHT CRITICAL HITS

- 2 — **ECM destroyed.** Pteradon may no longer jam torps.
- 3 — **Capacitor malfunction.** Bow Laztubes, Meld Lasers, Splatterguns, and Graviton Cannon may not fire until after next turn.
- 4 — **Meld Laser short.** Gunner B's Meld Laser may not fire until after next turn.
- 5 — **TOC Room power flux.** TOC bonus may not be added next turn.
- 6 — **Torp Room E hit.** Lose 1D4 of each kind of torp and 1 crew.
- 7 — **Splattergun destroyed.** Gunner A's Splattergun is destroyed.
- 8 — **ECM malfunction.** Pteradon may not screen until after next game turn.
- 9 — **Minor structural damage.** Take 10 more hits on this track
- 10 — **Laztube overload.** Laztube D is destroyed, and crew is killed. 1D10 hits on this track.
- 11 — **Graviton Cannon hit.** Cannon destroyed and crew killed. Take 1D8 hits on Front Damage Tracks.
- 12 — **Bridge hit!** Bridge crew is stunned. Pteradon may not move until next turn and may not add TOC bonus to initiative.

REAR RIGHT CRITICAL HITS

- 2 — **Bridge hit!** The captain is killed. Pteradon may no longer use Captain die.
- 3 — **Engineering destroyed.** Pteradon may no longer perform Damage Control.
- 4 — **Missile Rack hit.** Lose 1D6 missiles from one of Gunner F's racks.
- 5 — **Engine hit.** Reduce Drive by 2.
- 6 — **Torpedo Defense damaged.** Pteradon may no longer jam torps.
- 7 — **Armor compromised.** Damage Reduction drops to 0.
- 8 — **Gunner G killed.** Gunner G's weapons may not be fired.
- 9 — **Shield Generator short.** Pteradon's Defensive Value is reduced by 6 until after next game turn.
- 10 — **Torpedo Magazine hit.** Lose 1D4 of each type of torp.
- 11 — **Life support malfunction.** 1D4 crew killed.
- 12 — **Plasma Core meltdown.** The Pteradon briefly becomes a tiny sun and then is no more.

BPV: 26 I.D. SPIRIT RIDER IV

TPV

Special Equipment

Pilot Biolink*

Parasite Torp

Decoys:
P-D: 1-2 (1)
Dmg Con: —
Tons: 125

Pilot

2 Splatterguns (F)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB+1
Damage: Medium+2
Range: 2/6/10

Drive: 18

Tight Turn Cost: _____+3

Crew

PILOT

Plt: _____
Gnr: _____
Luck: _____

DAMAGE TRACK

→ 3 18 2 12 1 9 w * 6 2 X

BPV: 26 I.D. SPIRIT RIDER IV

TPV

Special Equipment

Pilot Biolink*

Parasite Torp

Decoys:
P-D: 1-2 (1)
Dmg Con: —
Tons: 125

Pilot

2 Splatterguns (F)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB+1
Damage: Medium+2
Range: 2/6/10

Drive: 18

Tight Turn Cost: _____+3

Crew

PILOT

Plt: _____
Gnr: _____
Luck: _____

DAMAGE TRACK

→ 3 18 2 12 1 9 w * 6 2 X

BPV: 26 I.D. SPIRIT RIDER IV

TPV

Special Equipment

Pilot Biolink*

Parasite Torp

Decoys:
P-D: 1-2 (1)
Dmg Con: —
Tons: 125

Pilot

2 Splatterguns (F)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB+1
Damage: Medium+2
Range: 2/6/10

Drive: 18

Tight Turn Cost: _____+3

Crew

PILOT

Plt: _____
Gnr: _____
Luck: _____

DAMAGE TRACK

→ 3 18 2 12 1 9 w * 6 2 X

BPV: 26 I.D. SPIRIT RIDER IV

TPV

Special Equipment

Pilot Biolink*

Parasite Torp

Decoys:
P-D: 1-2 (1)
Dmg Con: —
Tons: 125

Pilot

2 Splatterguns (F)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB+1
Damage: Medium+2
Range: 2/6/10

Drive: 18

Tight Turn Cost: _____+3

Crew

PILOT

Plt: _____
Gnr: _____
Luck: _____

DAMAGE TRACK

→ 3 18 2 12 1 9 w * 6 2 X

CRITICAL HITS

- 2 — **Pilot killed.** Spirit Rider may perform no further actions. Defensive Value drops to 5.
- 3 — **Engines destroyed.** Spirit Rider may not move or turn. Reduce Defensive Value to 5.
- 4 — **Electronic Warfare knocked out.** Spirit Rider may no longer jam torps. Reduce Defensive Value by 5.
- 5 — **Maneuver Thrusters hit.** Spirit Rider may no longer turn.
- 6 — **Shields damaged.** Reduce Defensive Value by 2.
- 7 — **Splattergun Targeters hit.** Reduce chance To Hit by 2.
- 8 — **Evade Thrusters hit.** Reduce Defensive Value by 3.
- 9 — **Hull compromised.** Reduce Defensive Value by 4.
- 10 — **Engines severely damaged.** Spirit Rider reduced to a Drive value of 1. Reduce Defensive Value by 7.
- 11 — **Feedback: Pilot Brain Dead.** Spirit Rider may perform no further actions. Defensive Value drops to 5.
- 12 — **Reactor hit.** Power supply detonates; Spirit Rider is destroyed.

SPLATTERGUN SPECS

Short Range: 1-2 hexes (+1 To Hit).
Medium Range: 3-6 hexes.
Long Range: 7-10 hexes (-1 To Hit).

* Pilot fires during Gunner Phase.

BPV: 41 I.D. ■ SHRYAK SHUTTLE III

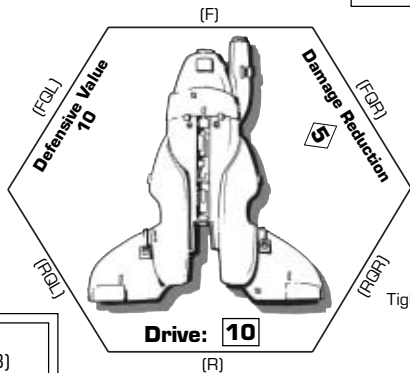
TPV

Pilot
1 Pulse Laser (F)
 To Hit: 2D8+ADB
 Damage: Low
 Range: 3/9/10

Crew
PILOT
 Plt: _____
 Gnr: _____
 Luck: _____
GUNNER
 Gnr: _____

Para-site Torps
 ○ ○
 ○ ○

C-Torps
 ○ ○ ○ ○



Decoys: —
 P-D: 1-3 (3)
 Dmg Con: 1-4
 Tons: 290

Gunner
2 Splatterguns
 (RQL) (R) (RQR)
 To Hit: 2D6+ADB+1
 Damage: Medium+2
 Range: 2/6/10

Tight Turn Cost: _____+3

DAMAGE TRACK

→		T		10	t		8	T	w	5	
	7	*	t		4	6	T		t	3	5
	T		w	2	4	t	3	1	2	1	×

BPV: 41 I.D. ■ SHRYAK SHUTTLE III

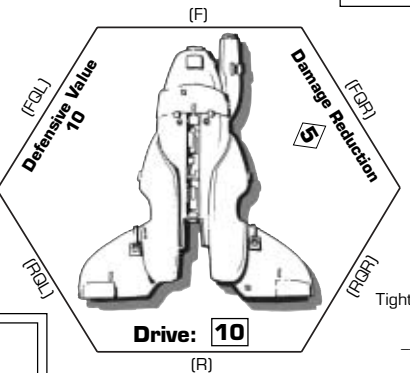
TPV

Pilot
1 Pulse Laser (F)
 To Hit: 2D8+ADB
 Damage: Low
 Range: 3/9/10

Crew
PILOT
 Plt: _____
 Gnr: _____
 Luck: _____
GUNNER
 Gnr: _____

Para-site Torps
 ○ ○
 ○ ○

C-Torps
 ○ ○ ○ ○



Decoys: —
 P-D: 1-3 (3)
 Dmg Con: 1-4
 Tons: 290

Gunner
2 Splatterguns
 (RQL) (R) (RQR)
 To Hit: 2D6+ADB+1
 Damage: Medium+2
 Range: 2/6/10

Tight Turn Cost: _____+3

DAMAGE TRACK

→		T		10	t		8	T	w	5	
	7	*	t		4	6	T		t	3	5
	T		w	2	4	t	3	1	2	1	×

CRITICAL HITS

- 2 — **Pilot dazed.** Shryak Shuttle may not move and Pulse Laser may not be fired until after the next turn.
- 3 — **Engines sputter.** Shryak Shuttle may only use 2 movement points next game turn. Reduce Defensive Value by 4 due to additional damage.
- 4 — **Electronic Warfare knocked out.** Shryak Shuttle may no longer jam torps. Reduce Defensive Value by 3.
- 5 — **Maneuver Thrusters damaged.** All turns, including tight turns, cost one extra movement point to perform.
- 6 — **Shields damaged.** Reduce Defensive Value by 1.
- 7 — **Torpedoes hit.** Lose all remaining torps.
- 8 — **Pulse Laser Targeters damaged.** Pulse Lasers may not be fired until after the next turn.
- 9 — **Splattergun malfunction.** Reduce Damage to Low.
- 10 — **Gunner killed.** Shryak Shuttle may no longer fire its Splatterguns.
- 11 — **Armor Plate compromised.** Damage Reduction equals 0.
- 12 — **Reactor hit.** Shryak Shuttle suffers cataclysmic destruction.

PULSE LASER SPECS

Short Range: 1-3 hexes (+1 To Hit).
 Medium Range: 4-9 hexes.
 Long Range: 10 hexes (-1 To Hit).

SPLATTERGUN SPECS

Short Range: 1-2 hexes (+1 To Hit).
 Medium Range: 3-6 hexes.
 Long Range: 7-10 hexes (-1 To Hit).

GAME TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

TPV

Pilot

1 Meld Laser (F)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB
Damage: Medium
Range: 6/18/20
Target SR ≤12

Crew

PILOT
Plt: _____
Gnr: _____
Luck: _____

Pilot

Missile Launcher (F)
Lock-on < _____
○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

Pilot

2 Miniguns (F)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB+1
Damage: Low+1 †
Range: 2/5/12
○○○○○○○○

Special Equipment

Pilot Biolink*

Drive: **16**

Tight Turn Cost: _____+3

Para-site Torps

○
○

Decoys: ○
P-D: 1-6 (2)
Dmg Con: 1-2
Tons: 198

DAMAGE TRACK

→

		16		14	2	w	12	t	*
11	W	8	7	1	5	t	4	w	X

* Pilot fires during Gunner Phase.

TPV

Pilot

1 Meld Laser (F)
To Hit: 2D8+ADB
Damage: Medium
Range: 6/18/20
Target SR ≤12

Crew

PILOT
Plt: _____
Gnr: _____
Luck: _____

Pilot

Missile Launcher (F)
Lock-on < _____
○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

Pilot

2 Miniguns (F)
To Hit: 2D6+ADB+1
Damage: Low+1 †
Range: 2/5/12
○○○○○○○○

Special Equipment

Pilot Biolink*

Drive: **16**

Tight Turn Cost: _____+3

Para-site Torps

○
○

Decoys: ○
P-D: 1-6 (2)
Dmg Con: 1-2
Tons: 198

DAMAGE TRACK

→

		16		14	2	w	12	t	*
11	W	8	7	1	5	t	4	w	X

CRITICAL HITS

- 2 — **Pilot killed.** Quark may perform no further actions. Defensive Value drops to 5.
- 3 — **Engines sputter.** Quark may only use 3 movement points next game turn.
- 4 — **Electronic Warfare knocked out.** Quark may no longer jam torps. Reduce Defensive Value by 2.
- 5 — **Minigun damaged.** Lose half of remaining ammo.
- 6 — **Shields damaged.** Reduce Defensive Value by 1.
- 7 — **Missile Launcher hit.** Lose remaining missiles.
- 8 — **Meld Laser Targeting damaged.** Modify Meld Laser To Hit attempts by -3.
- 9 — **Minor Hull Breach inflicted.** Reduce Defensive Value by 2.
- 10 — **Torp Loads jettison harmlessly.** Remove all torps.
- 11 — **Feedback: Pilot Brain Dead.** Quark may perform no further actions. Defensive Value drops to 5.
- 12 — **Reactor explodes.** Quark is destroyed.

MELD LASER SPECS

Short Range: 1-6 hexes (+1 To Hit).
Medium Range: 7-18 hexes.
Long Range: 19-20 hexes (-1 To Hit).
Target Speed Restriction: Target's Drive value must be ≤12.

MINIGUN SPECS†

Short Range: 1-2 hexes (+1 To Hit).
Medium Range: 3-5 hexes.
Long Range: 6-12 hexes (-1 To Hit).
 † Whenever two of the attack dice roll doubles, multiply the base damage by 2.

GAME TURN RECORD TRACK

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

ASP Technocracy Fleet Composition

SPACs

Night Hawk, Quark, Spirit Rider IV, Thunder Bird

TPACs

Binary, Pharsii, Pharsii II, Pulsar, Shryak Shuttle III, Sorenson II, Sorenson III, Teal Hawk, Teal Hawk II

MPACs

Drakar, Drakar Alpha, Epping Prime, Nova

Escorts

Nebula II, Pteradon

Starcraft Point Cost Table

Starcraft	BPV	Crew	Starcraft	BPV	Crew	Starcraft	BPV	Crew
Saucer Shuttle	6	1	Teal Hawk	43	2	Seraph	121	2
Pit Viper T	8	1	Night Hawk	47	1	Seraph II	121	2
Pit Viper	12	1	Sorenson II	47	2	Drakar	121	5
Wind Jammer	13	1	Teal Hawk II	47	2	Scorpion	122	4
Marut	15	1	Night Hawk NW	49	1	Equalizer NW	123	2
Pit Viper II	17	1	Dagger	50	1	Scorpion Beta	125	4
Spirit Rider II	17	1	Teal Hawk NW	50	2	Star Raven	125	4
Blizzard II	18	1	Vishnu/Yama	50	4	Drakar Alpha	125	5
Borax Freighter	18	1	Night Hawk II	55	1	Star Raven Alpha	128	4
Chupacabra	18	1	Crescent	55	3	Spider	129	3
Spirit Rider	18	1	Lance Electra NW	56	2	Javelin NW	131	3
Stinger	18	1	Firebat NW	57	2	Catastrophe	142	4
Blizzard	19	1	Death Wind	60	2	Karttikeya	150	4
Hound	19	1	Hammer	60	2	Dain	151	2
Dart II	20	1	Lance Electra	60	2	Black Widow	157	3
Spirit Rider III	20	1	Lance Electra II	60	2	Whisper	157	4
Dart	21	1	Havok	61	2	Betafortress NW	160	3
Thunder Bird II	24	1	Death Wind II	64	2	Eagle Beta	167	5
Thunder Bird	25	1	Salamander	66	2	Praying Mantis	167	3
Wave Cutter	25	1	Salamander II	66	2	Eagle	170	5
Hell Bender K	26	1	Salamander NW	67	2	Nova	189	4
Spirit Rider IV	26	1	Sorenson III	68	2	Iceberg	207	6
Kosmos	27	1	Rattler NW	70	2	TBD Platform	210	6
Kosmos II	29	1	Avenger	78	2	Conestoga	215	5
Atlatl	30	-	Epping Prime	78	4	Betafortress	216	5
Curtis Shuttle	30	1	Prowler	78	1	Betafortress Alpha	218	6
Kosmos III	30	1	Sentry	80	3	Betafortress Beta	220	6
Hell Bender	32	1	Sentry II	80	3	Wakazashi	260	16
Thunder Bird NW	32	1	Lakshmi	83	2	Nemesis	298	6
Hell Bender II	33	1	Storm	90	3	Ushas	345	12
Quark	33	1	Hornet NW	97	2	Dauntless	391	23
Talon	33	1	Storm II	100	3	Megafortress	482	22
Astrahauler	34	2	Agni	103	2	Falcon NW	499	18
Shryak Shuttle	34	2	Glaive III	104	2	Stingray	551	25
Shryak Shuttle II	34	2	Glaive	106	2	<i>Solar Worm</i>	<i>605</i>	-
Talon II	38	1	Glaive II	107	2	Narwhal Mk. II	623	27
Blood Hawk II	39	1	Pharsii	110	4	Narwhal Mk. III	628	26
Surya	40	1	Strata	111	2	Kali	633	17
Trans Hawk	40	1	Binary	118	3	Nebula II	750	31(32)
Blood Hawk	41	1	Epping	119	4	Aosho	764	42
Pulsar	41	2	Epping Alpha	119	4	Pteradon	781	27
Shryak Shuttle III	41	2	Epping NW	119	4	Constellation	806	35
Taurus	41	-	Revenge	120	2	Fletcher	894	37
Bat	42	2	Revenge II	120	2	Longboat	921	29
Octopus	42	-	Pharsii II	120	3			
Shark	42	1	Varuna	120	3			

Silent Death

men. What could he want at this late hour? And at her personal residence?

“Send him in,” Belle said. As she stood and smoothed her dress, pieces of shell clattered on the floor. She ran a sleeve over the Irididermis™ skin on the right side of her face, quickly polishing the flickering surface. She’d bought a new pattern for the affair, opting for a Tokugawan pattern instead of the ubiquitous “Hibernian original.” She peeked in a mirror—pulsating blue kanji symbols moved across an ocean-wave background—and hoped Nightingale had an open mind to Tokugawan designs.

Artificiance™ Targeting System

Another of the ASP’s “plug-in-and-fight” technologies, Artificiance™ Targeting Systems jack weaponry directly into a crewmember’s brain. The greater firing speed reduces the amount of time between target recognition and weapon discharge, greatly increasing weapon accuracy. The Targeting System is more stable than the BioLink, and users do not suffer the same mental trauma problems.

Design Quirks

Quantum Thrust Reduced-Sized Engine

Engines pay for one step more in cost, and need one step less in slot requirements:

Example: *A 300-ton ship with a Quantum Thrust drive of 19 pays 18 points (one step up is a 20 drive, which costs 18 points), and requires 12 slots (one step down is a drive of 17, which takes up 12 slots).*

This quirk is only available to ASP ships. This quirk is available to ASP Warhounds.

Artificiance™ BioLink Pilot Interface

Allows pilots to fire in the gunner phase. Cost is 5 points for each weapon system fired by pilots, not counting Missiles or Torpedoes.

Example: *A Quark pilot can fire a Meld Laser, Miniguns, and a Missile Launcher. Since the Missile Launcher does not count, the Quark must pay 10 points for the pilot to fire in the gunner’s firing phase.*

Notes: Change critical hit “Pilot Dazed” to “Feedback: Pilot Brain Dead. Quark may perform no further actions. Defensive value drops to 5.”

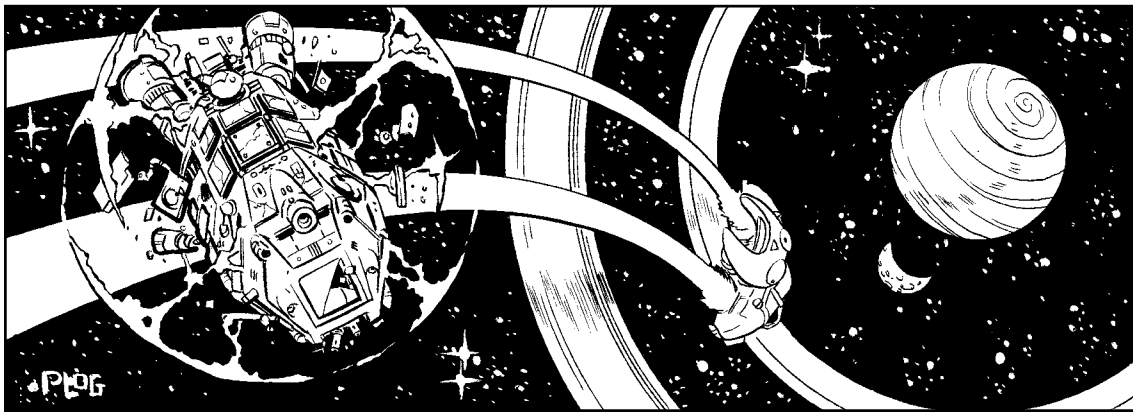
This quirk is only available to ASP ships. Warhounds may not use this quirk.

Artificiance™ Targeting System

Gives a +1 to hit. Cost is 4 points for each crewmember, must be purchased for entire crew, affects all weapons.

This quirk is only available to ASP ships. Warhounds may not use this quirk.





New Weapons

Entropic Accelerator

A massive step forward from the ASP's Quantum Weaponry Division, the Entropic Accelerator utilizes a high charge of anti-protons and anti-electrons to initiate a disintegrating chain reaction. The anti-particles seek out and bond with like real particles, annihilating both. The complex chain reaction continues to "burn" the target vessel until the reaction breaks down or there is nothing left to dissolve. The continuing damage can wreak havoc on armor, causing large fractures or burning under plates, which lowers the target's Damage Reduction.

Only ASP ships can use the Entropic Accelerator (EA). The Data Sphere has the technology, but will not use or sell it because the AIs consider it a savage weapon—deaths from EA weapons are incredibly painful and terrifying, and nothing can be done to help the victim once the reaction begins.

Tactical Readout

The Entropic Accelerator serves many purposes. It is an excellent "finishing" weapon for smaller vessels that have slowed due to engine damage. An ASP ship can also hit with several EA shots and wait while the continuous charges weaken a strong foe before coming back to finish the job.

Game Play

The EA is fired as a normal cannon fire weapon. Upon a successful hit, draw a small circle on target ship's display and apply High damage, subtracting the target's damage reduction. The next game turn, damage is rolled at the beginning of the Warhead Launch Phase, before any weapons are launched or fired. If an EA's continuing damage knocks out a torp, the target does not get to fire that torp—it's destroyed.

A target may be hit multiple times, but each 1d6 worth of damage is applied individually against the target's Damage Reduction.

If the damage rolled is a "1," the charge has burnt out. Fill in the circle on the target's sheet, indicating that that specific charge will no longer cause damage.

Entropic Accelerator vs. Warhounds & Gunboats

EA weapons work the same against Warhounds and Gunboats as they do against fighters.

- To Hit: 2d8+ADB
- Damage: High, then 1d6 continuing per turn until burnout (entropic charge burns out if a 1 is rolled on the 1d6 continuing damage roll)
- Only affects damage track hit for Gunboats and Warhounds
- Range: Short 1-4, Medium 4-7, Long 8-12
- Target Speed Restriction: ≤12
- Ammo: 6
- Cost: 8
- Slots: 4

The Next Millennium

"Ah, Doctor Peterson!" Nightingale beamed as he floated into the room with a barely audible puff of air. "Congratulations!" His legs and feet, wrinkled and gnarled after 300 years of use, dangled under him like chitinous tentacles from a Holmar tree spider. His metallic skull gleamed with fresh polish, and she noted the intricate filigree of his jaw.

"Thank you, Mr. Nightingale," Belle said, making sure her curtsy depth showed appropriate respect for his status in the Technocracy. "I must compliment you on the striking line of your new jaw. Do I



Silent Death

note the delicate curves and scrollwork of Kevin McBeale?”

Nightingale’s diamond-encrusted eye lenses widened in delighted surprise. “How very perceptive, Doctor,” he said. “Cobalt magnesium alloy. I had McBeal design it specifically for me.”

Inwardly, Belle sighed at the expense of such an upgrade. McBeal’s facial upgrade designs were admired throughout the Technocracy. Of course, money was no object to a man like Nightingale, and he’d been McBeal’s patron for over a decade.

“What brings you to my quarters at such an hour?” Belle asked.



C-Torps

The C-Torp is the ultimate non-lethal weapon in the Terran universe. The ASP’s Neurologic Division and Electron Warfare Division combined to produce this little gem. The C-Torp attacks both the target ship’s electronic systems and the crew’s bio-electric nervous system impulses.

A C-Torp behaves just like a normal torp in every respect except for damage. When a C-Torp gets close to a target (in game terms, when it hits), it releases a large cluster of graviton-charged limpet mines which utilize Draconian graviton technology. At least some of these mines slam into the target vessel and attach to the hull. Once attached, the limpets discharge a rapidly oscillating dual-phase electrical field. The field not only disrupts a ship’s electrical systems, it can “short-circuit” the target crew’s synapses, creating symptoms such as temporary paralysis, agonizing pain, and severe hallucinations. While under such effects, the crew cannot function in any way.

When the C-Torp hits, roll 1d6 and subtract the target’s Damage Reduction. The remainder is the number of turns the target ship is inactive, effectively dead in space with a DV of 5 and capable of no defensive, offensive, or movement actions. After the designated number of turns have passed, the ship may function normally based on its damage track.

If multiple C-Torps hit, take the highest roll, add the number of C-Torps that hit, and from that total subtract the target ship’s Damage Reduction (doubles count as only one die, i.e. two 6s are treated as a single hit of 6).

Example: *Vlad lands four C-Torps from his Pulsar against a Sigurd Hammer. He rolls a 1, 3, 4, and 6. The 6 is the highest, so he adds +3 for the additional hits (+1 for each additional die). The Hammer’s DV subtracts 3 from the damage. Since 6 points got through, the Hammer is out of commission for six turns while pilot Flahdja Dremlusson suffers a hallucination that a Hound of Hel is crawling through the cockpit window.*

When a C-Torp hits and affects a target ship, that ship is out of action for at least one turn. During that first turn, a ship may attempt an automatic Damage Control roll. The ship is not moving or firing—consider the roll the target ship’s automatic electronic defenses attempting to contain the rogue impulses. If the ship makes that roll, it will act normally the next game turn. An affected ship may roll Damage Control each turn it is affected—a success means the ship’s controls are permanently restored to normal on the **following** turn. If a ship’s Damage Control has been destroyed, it cannot attempt Damage Control to negate the C-Torp’s effects.

A ship may only be affected by one C-Torp strike at a time. If a C-Torp hits while the target ship is currently under a previous C-Torp’s effect, then newest strike is ignored and the new C-Torp is considered destroyed.

You must purchase a special C-Torp rack to carry and fire C-Torps. Standard torps may not be placed in a C-Torp rack. Each component of a C-Torp (rack, delivery system, limpet mines) contains a built-in Entropic Accelerator. If a pilot is killed or captured in action, the C-Torp components will disintegrate, protecting the technology. Only ASP ships can use C-Torps.

Gunboats:

C-Torps can only affect the Gunboat arc that they hit. Determine normally where the C-Torp strikes using standard torpedo vs. gunboat rules. Once determined, roll the damage and determine the number of hits that get through. All gunners with a weapon that fires from that arc are affected, including 360 degree mounts. A pilot is only affected if the C-Torp strikes the front arc. If, however, the pilot is *not* affected, the target ship continues to fly normally, although affected crew members are neutralized for the specified time.

If multiple C-Torps hit in separate hexes, calculate each attack normally. Results are **not** cumulative.

Warhounds:

Larger escorts carry larger electronic shielding suites. C-Torps are useless against Warhounds.

Tactical Readout

C-Torps change dog-fighting tactics. While they don't kill a crew, they do knock a ship out for a number of turns, making the affected ship highly vulnerable to enemy attack. ASP ships often launch most or all of their C-Torps early in a fight, determine which ships are incapacitated, then follow up with normal torpedo salvos against the defenseless ships.

- Damage: 1d6 high +1/ -damage reduction (equals number of lost turns)
- Affected ships may attempt damage control to remove C-torp effects
- Drive: 12
- Duration: 10
- DV: 10
- Tracking Cone: 360°
- Homing System: ALH
- Number in C-Torp Pack/Cost/Slots:
 - 1/2/2
 - 2/3/4
 - 3/5/6
 - 4/8/8
 - 6/10/12
 - 10/12/20

Mk. 20 Parasite Torpedo

Terran fighter tactics and equipment, particularly the use of jamming and decoys, greatly reduce the effectiveness of long-range torp launches. ASP pilots complained loudly that they couldn't sit back and damage or destroy an enemy from long range. CEO Clarissa King passed down the word: make long-range torpedo fire a viable combat tactic.

Utilizing research gained through extensive study of the Brood, the highest levels of bio-tech in the known universe, and a knowledge of artificial intelligence gained through association with the Data Sphere, the ASP created the horrific Parasite Torpedoes (PT).

Modeled after the Brood ships, each PT contains an artificial bio-mech brain, which utilizes a mating instinct on the level of insect intelligence. Artificiance™ interface ties this brain into the complex torpedo track-

ing system. Many adult insects live short lives where in a matter of hours they mate and then die. The ASP's Biological Division actually *created* a brain that utilizes this basic reproductive desire, tying it to a specifically tailored targeting instinct. The end result was a semi-intelligent torpedo with an instinct to fly itself into the enemy.

While more expensive than normal torps, these babies are worth it for those who like keeping a fighter's paint job shiny and new. By utilizing biological targeting systems, the PTs completely ignore jamming. Because the torp's bio-guidance system relies only partially on electronic target recognition, Decoys do work against PTs but only on a roll of 1 on a 1d4. PTs carry solid armor that protects against all but Escort-class Point Defense, and they are smart enough to recognize and avoid enemy fire, giving them a 13 DV (instead of a normal torp's 10 DV). They are also harder to dodge: each Parasite Torp counts as two torps for dodging purposes.

Example: *Heinrich fires two Parasite Torps at an incoming Kashmere Varuna (Plt 6). The Varuna pilot thinks he's hot stuff, so he decides to keep coming. Since his point defense won't work against Parasite Torps, he tries to dodge. Our self-confident Varuna pilot rolls a 1d10 for his dodge, miraculously gets a 9, and adds that to his Plt 6 for a total of 15. Since each Parasite Torp counts as two torps, he subtracts 4 for a total of 11, then subtracts 10 for a total of 1 (6+9-4-10=1). He dodges one torp, then takes a face full of 2d12 damage from the remaining torp.*

Parasite Torps are slower than normal torps, but their biological brain and relentless targeting make up for it. PT torps take up more slot space because of the point-defense armor and the target-recognition system. A crew member firing a PT identifies the target, which is chemically written to the "mating" part of the PT's brain. Because of this mating instinct, the targeting system is Construct Scan Homer, or CSH. If the Parasite Torp's target is destroyed, the weapon will search for another ship of the same type. If it finds that ship, it will lock on and automatically go after it. If it

The Next Millennium

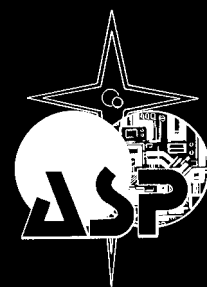
"Surely you could have phoned congratulations."

"I bring you a present," Nightingale said, floating closer. His ornate left hand, another McBeal original, handed her an antique black lacquer box resplendent in oriental decorations.

"It's beautiful," Belle said with appreciation. So he knew of her appreciation for Old Earth artifacts. "Looks like 24th century?"

"Twenty-second, actually," Nightingale said. "That's only half the present. Open the box."

Belle opened it, and felt her breath slip away in a silent whis-



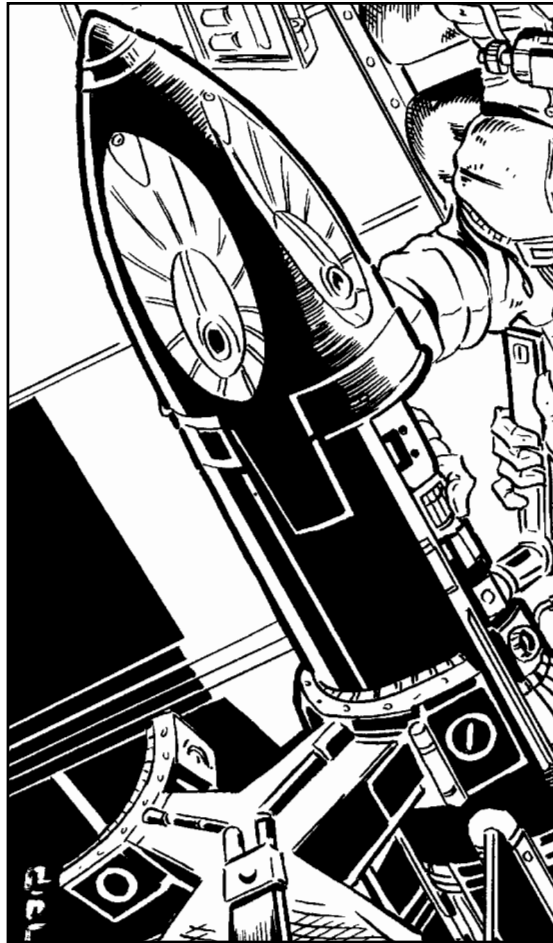
Silent Death

per of surprise and awe. Kashmere Shiva chits reflected the room's light against her wide-eyed face. Six rows of 50 chits each rested on black velvet. Each chit was worth one-million Kashmere credits, or 7.5 million Technocracy credits.

"This is ... stunning," Belle mumbled, her breath still evasive. The Flatline dose hung oppressively in her head. She fought to keep her wits.

"Coin of the realm, Doctor," Nightingale said. "Kashmere Shivas. Good on any planet in Terran space, and probably even good in Promethean systems, if I know our Draconian friends."

"But why?" Belle stammered.



does not see a ship of the same type, the Parasite Torp is considered destroyed (see SD:TNM p. 72).

The "smart" torps have yet another edge, which is the ability to fly around obstructions instead of flying through them. In a situation where a normal torp would smash into an asteroid, a Parasite Torp will fly around, trying to reach the target vessel. This makes Parasite Torps very interesting in asteroid fields. A Parasite Torp will, if necessary, fly **away** from its target if that is the only way to avoid obstacles in order to eventually reach that target. A Parasite Torp can only fly away from a target if there is no path to move closer to the target.

Parasite Torps only come in the Mk. 20 variety, but ASP designers are working on a deadly Mk. 40 model. Only the ASP has access to this technology.

The Data Sphere considers this a horrific weapon and a bastardization of the biological will to live.

Parasite Torps vs. Gunboats

Parasite Torps are particularly effective against Gunboats, which often rely on strong point defense to protect against torpedo salvos. Gunboat Point Defense is at half value versus parasite torps. If you want to kill a gunboat, get close enough that the gunboat can't shoot down all the PTs with cannon fire, then let the whole rack fly and watch the fun.

Gunboats, however, can pack bigger and better electronic warfare suites, allowing them to jam normally against Parasite Torps.

Parasite Torps vs. Warhounds

Warhounds have very powerful point defense batteries. These are used normally against Parasite Torps. Warhounds may jam Parasite Torps on a 1-2 on d4, as normal. Warhounds may not, however, use screening against Parasite Torps, due to the PT's biological recognition systems as opposed to electronic recognition systems.

Tactical Readout

Harder to hit, harder to decoy, harder to dodge, impossible to jam and ignoring all but Warhound point defense, Parasite Torps are deadly. They can be used as an effective long-range weapon, because targets can't count on simply decoying or jamming them before they reach striking range. Targets have to shoot down Parasite Torps, which isn't guaranteed thanks to a 13 DV. Even if they are shot down, they draw fire and force the hand of target ships, giving clever ASP pilots a temporary tactical advantage.

- Damage: 2d12
- Drive: 8
- Duration: 16
- DV: 13
- Tracking Cone: °360
- Homing System: CSH
- Each PT counts as two torps when calculating dodge rolls.
- Parasite Torps ignore fighter Point Defense.
- Gunboat Point Defense is at half value versus parasite torps.



- Normal Brood rules apply.
- Parasite Torps ignore all jamming attempts.
- Decoys only work on a roll of 1 on 1d4.
- PTs will fly around asteroids or debris, they will not destroy themselves on such items, and they will always seek a new path to the target if obstructed.
- Parasite Torps Pack/Cost/Slots:
 - 1/3/2
 - 2/6/2
 - 3/9/4
 - 4/12/4
 - 6/16/6
 - 8/24/8
 - 10/30/10

Graviton Cannon

When the Draconians arrived in Terran space, they brought with them some of the most devastating weaponry ever seen by humans. Based on gravitons, these weapons wreaked havoc with Terran forces hostile to the Draconians.

When the Draconians funded the ASP Defense Department, they helped design the Pteradon-class escort. The ASP needed to protect valuable Nebula II clusters from enemy escorts, and true to ASPer style, they wanted to weaken or destroy an enemy from a very safe distance. The Draconians provided such a weapon in the Graviton Cannon.

The Graviton Cannon utilizes a nuclear compressor to create microscopic pellets of matter that approach black hole density levels. The compressor, launched from the ship in a self-contained round, detonates a shaped charge surrounding a 10-ton ball of stabilized Lawrencium. In a split-second reaction, the compressor blast accelerates the Lawrencium charge to a high velocity, while simultaneously compressing it to a microscopic mass of immense density.

The tiny pellet, bordering on the density of a black hole, strikes with massive force, blasting a large hole in the target vessel. In addition, as it passes through the target,

the pellet's gravitational field pulls the ship in on itself, fracturing framework and, in some cases, crushing the superstructure entirely. The particle moves so fast that it passes through the ship in a millionth of a second, leaving carnage in its wake.

Graviton Cannon vs. Fighters & Gunboats

While the Lawrencium pellet's crushing gravity is nearly impossible to escape, the targeting/firing system is slow to react. The Graviton Cannon's speed restriction is not eligible for the optional Relaxed Speed Restriction rule—if the target has a Drive greater than 13, the Graviton Cannon can't hit it.

Tactical Readout

The Graviton Cannon's range is currently the longest in Terran space. The rounds don't do as much damage as a Keel Cannon, but the massive range makes up for that in extended battles. In addition, the Graviton Cannon can use the full front arc, while the Keel Cannon can only fire in a straight line (see Warhound rules). The Pteradon is capable of inflicting heavy damage on a foe before that opponent can even bring guns to bear. Graviton Cannon rounds can only detonate a safe distance from the firing Pteradon, hence the 6-hex minimum range.

- To Hit: 2d8+ADB+2
- Damage: Allx2
- Range: Short: 6-22, Medium: 23-34, Long: 35-40
- Absolute Target Speed Restriction: ≤ 13
- Ammo: 6
- Special: Escort weapon, front arc only
- Cost: 30
- Slots: 30
- Crew: 4

The Next Millennium

"I know you're not fond of our good CEO's stance on Brood study."

"King is a puppet of the Universal Night Watch," Belle said quietly. "She's banned all research on living Brood. It's not my field, but you simply can't censor science. It flies in the face of everything the Technocracy stands for."

"I agree completely," Nightingale said. Belle didn't like the way the jaw curled his smile into a blue-gray sneer. "It's one thing to make promises to the UNW it's quite another thing to keep them. Unfortunately, the majority of the Scientific Council doesn't feel as we do. They support CEO King's policy."



“So what’s this got to do with me?” Belle asked.

“I feel it’s important to support people who think right, as I like to put it,” Nightingale said. “I know the Technocracy can develop the Brood as a weapon. If we unleash them against our enemies, we can improve our ability to study the universe and all the things in it by increasing our access to critical areas.”

Belle nodded at his espousal of Technocracy rhetoric, but she knew the real reason for his desires. She saw it in his eyes. He’d lost two grandchildren in border

ASP Starcraft Inventory & Nomenclature

ASP 01-01 MSPAC “Quark”

Crew: 1

Maneuvering Thrust: 0.158 km/s/s

Mass: 198 tons

Translight capability: None

Armor: Crysteel hull with Fibranite belts

Atmospheric capability: Full

Armaments:

- 1 x Mk. 10 Meld Laser
- 2 x Mk. 10 Minigun
- 2 x Mk. 20 Parasite Torpedoes
- 1 x Missile Launcher
(Magazine: 10 missiles)

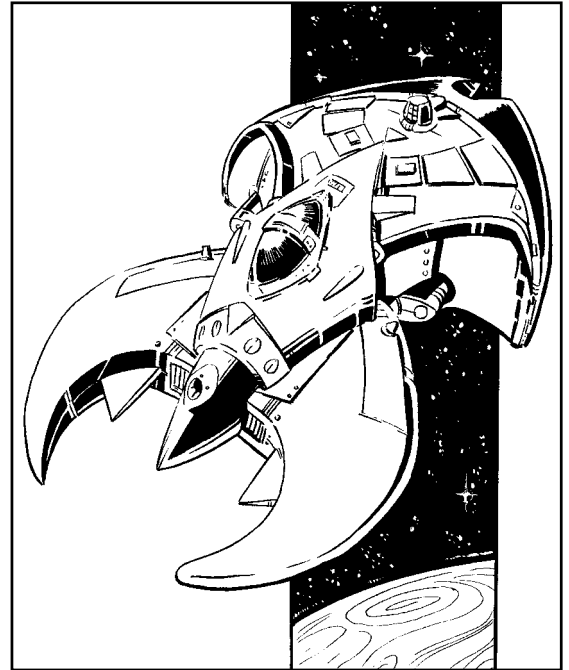
BioLink Quirk

Comments: The ASP designed this medium fighter to be a “jack-of-all-trades,” giving it the capability to attack small, medium, and large ships. Unfortunately, since the Quark is capable of so many things, it does not excel in any one area. On its own, the Quark doesn’t stand up well, but it makes a good support vehicle. Its weakness lies in a damage track that is short for a fighter of its cost.

The Quark’s main strength lies in superior one-on-one dog-fighting ability. The Quark’s BioLink allows the pilot to fire in the gunnery phase, letting him get a shot off before enemy pilots. In addition, the pilot controls a 10-shot missile rack. Against small and medium ships, most Quark pilots let go with five missiles and follow it up with a round from either the Minigun or the Meld Laser, depending on the target’s speed. This gives the Quark a “quick draw” ability that provides a tactical edge.

The Quark is also useful against multiple opponents, thanks to a pair of powerful Parasite Torps. A typical Quark pilot will fire each torp at a different target, then follow the torps in. Because of the Parasite Torp’s deadly delivery, many opposition

fighters will turn and run, giving the Quark a round or two to fire the Mk. 10 Meld Laser or Minigun before coming under fire itself. The Quark can also launch all of its missiles at yet another target, hopefully crippling that ship as well.



ASP 00-10 LMPAC “Pulsar”

Crew: 2

Maneuvering Thrust: 0.132 km/s/s

Mass: 395 tons

Translight Capability: none

Armor: Crysteel hull with Crystantium/Fibranite plating

Atmospheric Capability: none

Armaments

- 1 x Mk. 20 Entropic Accelerator
- 1 x Mk. 10 Impulsegun Ion Cannon
- 1 x Mk. 10 Disruptorgun
- 3 x Mk. 10 Torps
- 2 x Mk. 20 Parasite Torps
- Artificiance™ Targeting Quirk

Comments: The Pulsar was the first vehicle fitted for the ASP’s deadly Mk. 20 Entropic Accelerator. All the Pulsar’s weapons re-

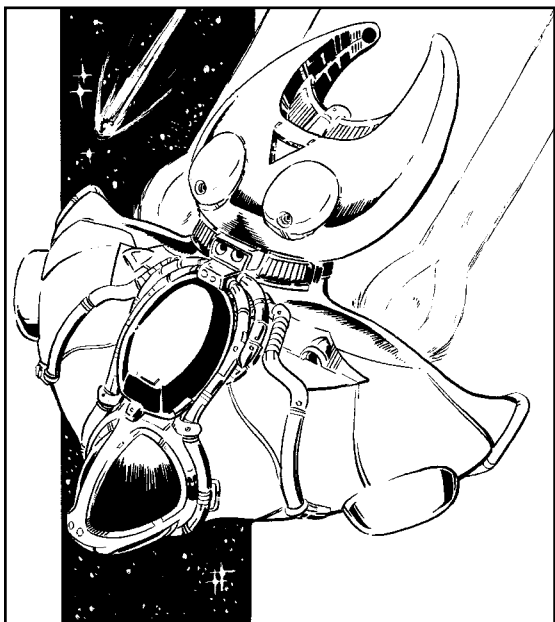


ceive a +1 bonus from Artificiance™ targeting technology. The Pulsar also carries a decent torp load. Two Parasite Torps can put a scare in any medium fighter, while three Mk. 10s serve the standard torpedo role.

This ship is the main fighter for Nebula II-class escorts. Most escorts carry at least four Pulsars (if not six), although Nebula IIs are known to carry other types of vessels as well. The range of the Pulsar's front-mounted weaponry means it has to get close, a tactic it can handle thanks to high Damage Reduction.

The Pulsar is a hit-and-run fighter. It attacks at full speed hoping to close ranks. Once it reaches the enemy, Pulsar pilots usually let loose with the Parasite Torps, negating the Parasite Torps' slow speed. Pilots also dump the Mk.10s at this time, with the aim of crippling a single opponent. After releasing the torp load the Pulsars will often turn tail, counting on the continuing damage of the Entropic Accelerator to discourage pursuit as they head for the protective fire of the Nebula IIs and Pteradons.

The Pulsars are deadly shock troops and highly effective against pirate fleets deficient of Warhound support. Against higher-caliber opposition, the Pulsar's lack of staying power can be costly, especially when they have to protect a Nebula II's weak stern.



ASP 10-10 HMPAC "Binary"

Crew: 3

Maneuvering Thrust: 0.126 km/s/s

Mass: 1,045 tons

Translight Capability: 3.5 light-years/day

Armor: Solif Fibranite hull.

Atmospheric Capability: none

Armaments

1 x Mk. 20 Entropic Accelerator

2 x Mk. 10 Pulse Laser Cannons

2 x Mk. 15 Blatguns

1 x Mk. 10 Plazgun

1 x Mk. 10 Disruptorgun

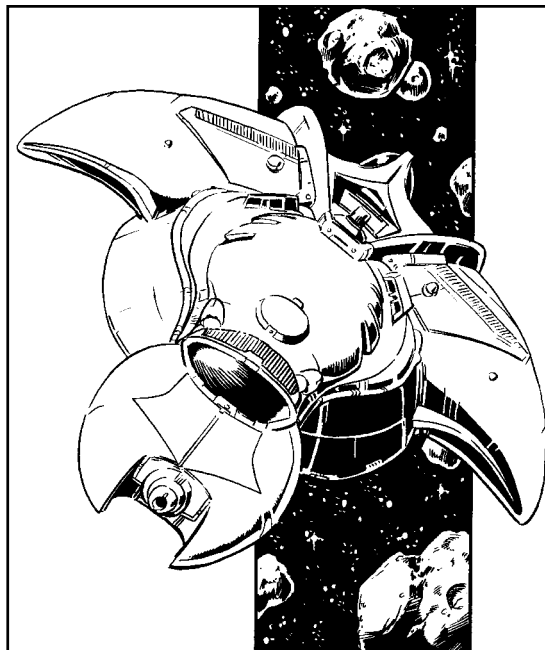
2 x Mk. 8 C-Torps

2 x Mk. 20 Parasite Torps

Artificiance™ Targeting Quirk

Commentary: Among the military elite of Terran space, the Binary sparks many opinions. Some feel the Mk. 10 Plazgun combined with the dreaded Mk. 20 Entropic Accelerator and the Parasite Torps make the Binary a beastly opponent. Others feel the pilot's weak weaponry and the lack of missiles make this ship a sitting duck for Pharsii IIs and the like. The truth may be somewhere in the middle, depending upon the skill of the pilot and crew.

A high Point Defense spread and ample decoys help protect this expensive ship from torpedo fire. The rear-mounted Blats, favored weapons of ASP designers, do an excellent job of covering the ship's tail.



The Next Millennium

skirmishes with the Q'raj, one in Hell's Alley and one at Dead Man's pass. He was a bitter old man, and all his power and money couldn't replace his lost grandchildren. She quickly realized Nightingale's grand vision—to unleash controlled Brood as a weapon against the Q'raj Void Protectorate.

"So I 'think right,' as you put it," Belle said guardedly. "Again, what does your opinion have to do with me?"

"There may come a time when our CEO's leadership is called into question," Nightingale said. "And if that day should come, it is my hope, as a



Silent Death

citizen of the Technocracy, that we will elect a new CEO who is more, shall we say, on the side of science?"

"King has at least 75 percent majority support in the Scientific Council," Belle said. "We won't see a vote questioning her leadership anytime soon."

"Oh, I wouldn't bet on that, my dear," Nightingale said with his sickly blue-gray grin. "If a few more people like yourself enter the Scientific Council, we might see change sooner than you think."

Belle's soul sank into her stomach with a sudden blast of clarity. "The pirates that killed Doctor Pythagoris," she said quietly, now afraid of the power that hovered in her room. "That wasn't a random attack."

The Binary is the ASP's premier shock weapon for long-range patrols. Its FTL capability frees priceless carriers and Nebula IIs from patrol duty within ASP borders. Regardless of the Binary's pros and cons, it's damn intimidating to enemy squadrons to see a flight of Binarys jump down from Hyperspace for a lightning-fast attack.

ASP 101-10 L-MPAC "Nova"

Crew: 4

Maneuvering Thrust: 0.126 km/s/s

Mass: 1,188 tons

Translight capability: 5 light-years/day

Armor: Crystantium hull, Crysteel belts

Atmospheric capability: None

Armaments:

- 1 x Mk. 20 Entropic Accelerator
- 1 x Mk. 15 Ion Ram
- 4 x Mk. 10 Splatterguns
- 1 x Mk. 10 Impulsegun Ion Cannon
- 1 x Mk. 15 Blatgun
- 2 x Missile Launcher
(Magazines: 20 missiles)
- 6 x Mk. 30 Torps
- 6 x Mk. 20 Parasite Torpedoes
- 6 x Mk. 8 C-Torps

Commentary: If ever there was a symbol against committee designs, the Nova is it. Designed by no less than eight ASP engineers, all with an equal say in the project, the Nova is a hodge-podge of weaponry. Exemplifying this concept are the quad

Splatterguns on the port side and the Ion Ram on the starboard—each weapon covers a flank arc, but each is used for completely different tactics, forcing the pilot to bank one way or another based on the opponent.

The Ion Ram and the Entropic Accelerator give the Nova a solid punch, and the heavy torp compliment makes it dangerous to get near this ship. A severe weakness in the rear arc, however, makes the Nova suspect in multiple bogey dog fights. Nova defense combines the EA with its high damage resistance, hoping to stay in the fight until EA shots and Parasite Torps take their toll on enemy vessels.

The ASPers tend to use the Nova more as a heavy fighter than a light gunboat. Enemy ships are quick to get out of the Nova's front arc, and most smart foes fly to the port side to avoid the Ion Ram.

ASP 111-10 H-MPA "Nebula II"

Crew: 24 or 25

Maneuvering Thrust: 0.039 km/s/s

Mass: 10,415 tons

Translight Capability: 10 light-years/day

Atmospheric Capability: None

Armaments:

1 x Modular Weapon Bay, choose one of the following:

- Twin Ion Cannon
- Quad Repeating Blaster
- Quad Hyper Cannon

8 x Mk. 10 Splatterguns

2 x Mk. 10 Impulsegun Ion Cannons

2 x Missile Launchers

(Magazines: 10 missiles)

3 x Twin-tube torpedo room

10 x Mk. 8 C-Torps

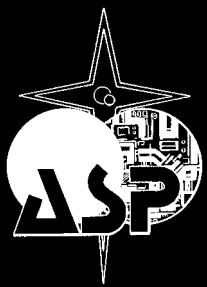
10 x Mk. 20 Torps

10 x Mk. 50 Torps

10 x Mk. 20 Parasite Torps

Bays:

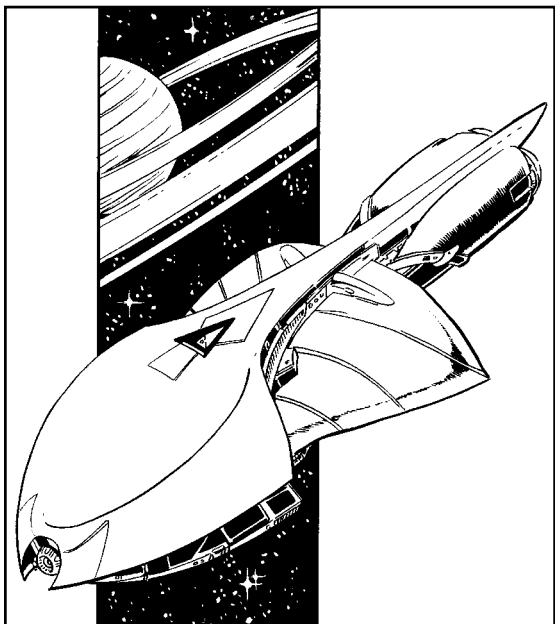
6 x 400+ Fighter Bays



Commentary: Nebula IIs, dubbed “pocket carriers” by ASP pilots, provide strength and flexibility for the limited ASP military. ASP forces have to react quickly and definitively to threats, as well as cover a large sector of space. The well-constructed Nebulas IIs satisfy that military need.

The Nebula II is the ASP’s cavalry unit and strategic focal point. It carries six 400-ton fighters with two full re-loads for each ship. There are always Nebula IIs at the ready and they deploy on a moment’s notice to shore up planetary defense, investigate pirate reports, rescue harried Kashmere shipping, exploit sudden enemy weaknesses and any other task the ASP Command Division can come up with. For larger-scale operations, ASP Command typically utilizes these ships in packs of six, creating a squadron of 36 medium fighters. Nebula II clusters are always accompanied by Pteradon destroyers.

Nebula IIs utilize a common Data Sphere technology: modular weaponry. The Nebula IIs contain 30 open slots for a major Escort-class weapon. This gives the Nebula II cluster groups a great variety of weaponry, since the ships are not that adept at brawling. However, the Nebula II clusters are often used in long-range missions where support is unavailable. As such, these ships have to be able to handle a wide variety of opposition. The weapon bay provides three arcs (player’s choice). The bay is completely modular—Nebula IIs can switch weaponry at any stocked dry dock.



DRC/ASP 01 “Pteradon”

Crew: 21

Maneuvering Thrust: 0.091 km/s/s

Mass: 5,995 tons

Translight Capability: 10 light-years/day

Atmospheric Capability: None

Armaments:

1 x Graviton Cannon

2 x Mk. 25 Laztube

2 x Mk. 20 Meld Lasers

12 x Sext Mk. 10 Splatterguns

3 x Missile Launchers

(Magazines: 20 missiles)

3 x Twin-tube torpedo room

30 x Mk. 10 Torps

10 x Mk. 40 Torps

10 x Mk. 8 C-Torps

Commentary: Designed by the Draconians, the Pteradon was and is produced in huge numbers by the Technocracy. It is the primary escort ship for the Nebula IIs. Pteradons are much faster than Nebula IIs, and often serve to protect weak or damaged flanks in the common cluster formations. Against escorts, Pteradon captains love to unload with the Graviton Cannon from long range. A perfect fight for most Pteradon captains is to score three or four Graviton Cannon hits from 30-40 hexes out, then watch the enemy turn and run before any Nebula IIs come under fire.

Pteradons are deadly against small numbers of fighters, but against swarms their low Damage Reduction and lack of anti-fighter weaponry becomes apparent. Aside

The Next Millennium

“Of course it was,” Nightingale said, but his metallic smile showed the truth. “A tragic accident. But a boon for the Technocracy, I have to admit, as his leadership was rather questionable.”

“He was a staunch supporter of CEO King’s policies,” Belle said in a monotone. “And I’m against her policies.”

“Yes, and now you’re on the Scientific Council, capable of voting on a new CEO should the need arise,” Nightingale said. “Although I sincerely hope nothing happens to our beloved CEO King.”

“What if I don’t want your gift?” Belle asked, but she already



Silent Death

had a sinking feeling it was too late to resist Nightingale's generosity.

"Keep it, my dear, it's of no import to me," Nightingale said as he floated back towards the door. "I won't be talking to you again, although in a few months I might have a courier drop off another gift. You just remember our little conversation should anything happen to CEO King. Remember our conversation and do the right thing for the Technocracy's scientific goals."

The door hissed and Nightingale floated out of the room, but he turned his head to let his diamond-sparkling lenses stare into Belle's eyes.

from a pair of sext Splatterguns, Pteradon cannons throw large numbers of Mk.10 torps at incoming fighters, usually waiting until the enemy is too close to avoid the speedy torps. While the Pteradon is deficient in short-range weaponry, a cloud of Mk.10s is enough to make many enemy pilots think twice.

Pteradons serve mainly as escort ships, they are rather ineffective on their own due to a lack of a Tactical Operations Center and the aforementioned weakness against fighter swarms. For long-range patrols that require single Warhounds, the ASP uses Fletchers. The Fletcher has longevity and is the only ships that can go toe-to-toe with the massive Sigurd Longboat, an enemy vessel that constantly assaults Technocracy forces.



ASP Refits

Spirit Rider ASP (or Spirit Rider IV)

Crew: 1

Maneuvering Thrust: 0.180 km/s/s

Mass: 125 tons

Translight Capability: None

Armor: Crystantium w/belt

Atmospheric Capability: Full

Armaments:

2 x Mk. 10 Splatterguns

1 x Mk. 20 Parasite Torpedo

BioLink Quirk

Modifications:

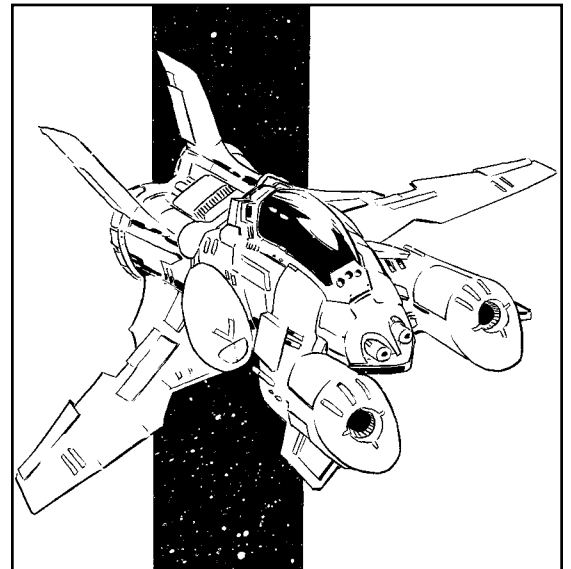
SPD 18 instead of SPD 16

1 x Mk. 20 Parasite Torp instead of
2 Mk. 10 Torpedoes

Drop: Damage Control

Add: Point Defense 1-2 (1)

Commentary: The ever-popular Spirit Rider benefited enormously from the ASP's Quantum Thrust Engines (Reduced Engine Size Quirk). That addition both created more space and allowed for a faster engine—the extra space was just enough to upgrade the Spirit Rider's Mk.10s to the nasty Parasite Torpedo. As if that combination wasn't dangerous enough, ASP engineers mounted the BioLink on the Spirit Rider ASP.



With the added speed, the Parasite Torps, and the ultra-fast reaction time of the jacked-in pilots, the Spirit Rider ASP is arguably one of the best one-on-one dog fighters in the galaxy.

Shryak Shuttle III

Crew: 2

Maneuvering Thrust: 0.080 km/s/s

Mass: 290 tons

Translight Capability: 13 light-years/day

Atmospheric Capability: Full

Armaments:

- 1 x Mk. 10 Pulse Laser
- 2 x Mk. 10 Splatterguns
- 4 x Mk. 20 Parasite Torpedoes
- 4 x Mk. 8 C-Torps

Modifications:

- Mk. 10 Pulse Laser instead of Missile Launcher
- Twin Splatterguns instead of Quad Mk. 10 Pulse Laser

Add: 4 x Mk. 20 Parasite Torpedoes

Add: 4 x C-Torps

Commentary: In the Technocracy's early days, ASPers they did a great deal of their own shipping. However, unlike the Kashmere Commonwealth, which ships

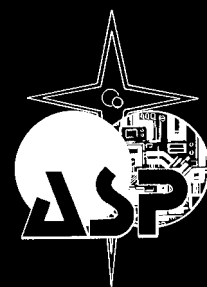
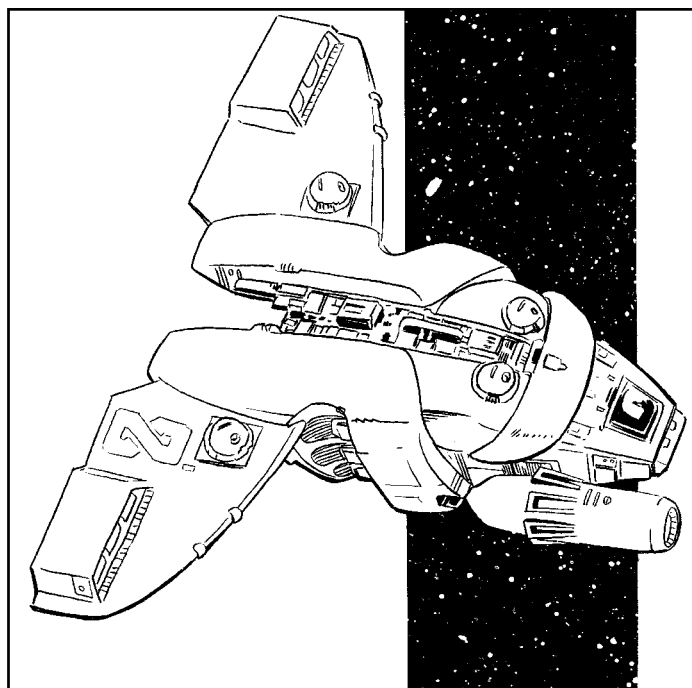
millions of tons of freight in a single trip, most of the Technocracy's deliveries involved small but expensive single items, such as computers, synthesizing units, prototype weapons systems and stored data. As such, the Technocracy had little need for massive bulk freighters, and instead relied on thousands of cheap and reliable Shryak Shuttles to do the job.

As the Brood scourge hit full-throttle, the ASP had to fight with what was at hand—they converted their huge inventory of Shryak Shuttles from moderately-armed shipping vessels into deadly Pathogen Torpedo delivery systems. After the Brood's defeat, ASP engineers refitted the torpedo bays to handle payloads destructive to Terrans. While no longer in production, the Shryak Shuttle ASP is a FTL-capable fighter with a small payload. The ASPers use these to shuttle crews (it holds four passengers) and small equipment loads back and forth to Exploratory Force ships and outlying colonies. It also sees use as a rapid-deployment ship. Its FTL ability is often used to re-stock Nebula IIs which have lost several Pulsars and need immediate replacements.

The Next Millennium

"I know you'll do the right thing for the Technocracy," Nightingale said with his blue-gray sneer. "I'd hate to think of your leadership being called into question."

The door hissed shut and Belle weakly fell into her chair, crushing more shells. The chair's processor recorded a record high stress level, but extra heat, extra support, and extra massage didn't seem to help.



Silent Death

Life, Part One

Excerpts from log of
Gustav Helmricht
Imp 458:252

For the first time in my life, I feel that we've reached the limit of computer possibilities. The Epsilon Data Core is the most powerful machine ever built, and despite a 413 percent performance improvement since I took over the project, I'm convinced we can go no farther with physical improvements. We've perfected materials engineering. After ten millennia of constant improvement, we are at the borders of the laws of physics. Data simply



Famous wings of the ASP Technocracy

Brainchild

10001101 ASPER FIGHTER GROUP

Common Unit Name:
Thou-eleven oh-one

Commanding Officer:
Isaac Hawking

The "Brainchildren" are the key ASP escort unit for Kashmere trade routes through the dead Imperial Core. The relative density of debris pockets makes FTL travel unsafe in portions of that region. In these areas, vessels must slow to sub-light speed in order to change course or to safely traverse the debris belts. These well-known "Islands" are favorite ambush spots for pirates, and it is here that the Brainchildren earn their keep.

Brainchild sees action on about every third mission. The pilots are very confident in battle and effective under fire. The ASP tests many of its new fighter developments in the Brainchild wing, using experimental weaponry and tech against rough pirate units. If the equipment makes the grade, the ASP upgrades key combat units, such as the Killing Machines or Chromeheads. Pilots of the Brainchild wing have little experience against organized military units, and as such are less effective against well-disciplined forces.

Squadron Summary

HACKER SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:
Ving Mulginly (Plt 9, Gnr 10)

Assets: 12 x Quark

FLEA BOMB SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:
Itchy LaRue (Plt 8, Gnr 6)

Assets: 10 x Pulsar

SURGE SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:
Janet Moore (Plt 10, Gnr 10)

Assets: 6 x Binary
3 x Nova



DeBuggers

01 ASPER FIGHTER GROUP

Common Unit Name: The First

Commanding Officer: Mookie Abzug

By far the most famous fighter group in ASP space, the DeBuggers are largely credited with saving the Technocracy from certain destruction at the hands of the Brood. The DeBugger's reputation was hard-earned. As the only functional fighter wing in ASP space, it saw action every day and sometimes twice daily. During the last heated days of battle before the Technocracy perfected the Pathogen Torpedo, an ASP pilot was considered a legend if he survived five or six encounters. A full 58 percent of ASP pilots died on their first mission out.

During the DeBugger's fight for survival, they tested every piece of weaponry and technology ASP technicians could jam into a ship. The DeBuggers gained their first advantage against the Brood by employing an early version of Tachyon weapons, now known as NW-class weaponry because of its extensive use in Night Watch wings. The DeBuggers were also the first to employ the BioLink interface. Many ASP pilots died from feedback due to the untested technology. The Technocracy eliminated most of the feedback problems within a month, but the price for such advancements was devastating.

With such an inexperienced military, the ASP has few veteran pilots. Most of these hardened souls fly for the DeBuggers. Utilizing the DataSphere's modular weaponry technology, all of the DeBugger vessels can be re-fitted from standard Terran units to NW-equipped vessels. The DeBuggers are the ASP's main anti-Brood force, and often participate in joint maneuvers and missions with Night Watch units. Defense VP DeGure likes to keep the DeBuggers in reserve, as they represent one of the ASP's few combat-tested units.

Squadron Summary

SQUISHER SQUADRON

Squadron leader:

Jade Gillespi (Plt 10, Gnr 6)

Assets: 4 x Spirit Rider IV
8 x Quark

EXTERMINATOR SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:

Guisseppi Alonolto (Plt 7, Gnr 9)

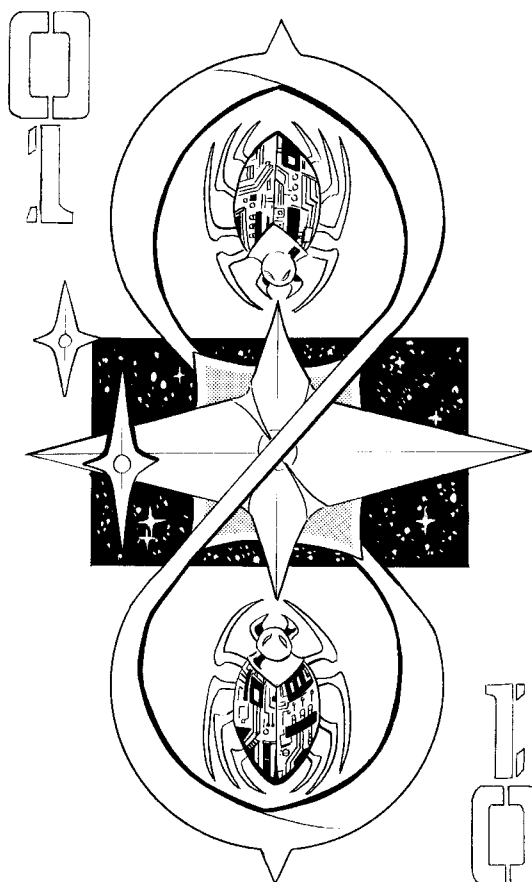
Assets: 10 x Binary

BUG BITER SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:

Van Lenerov (Plt 9, Gnr 6)

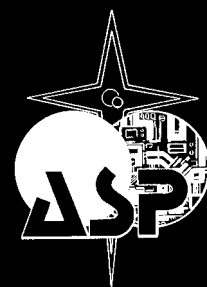
Assets: 6 x Shryak Shuttle III
6 x Pulsar
3 x Nova



The Next Millennium

cannot move faster than it currently does. No material will facilitate improved calculations or data transfers. Everything that goes into a computer, from power systems to networking to construction to materials, is as good as it can possibly be.

This is a very sad moment for me, the man who re-invented a machine thought to be perfect for over 200 years. But now I am sure that no other physical improvement is possible. The only way to make things better is to completely re-think the way programs are written, and to do that we must introduce natural selection. From



Silent Death

here on, improvements are out of the hands of man—only the computer can make itself better.

Imp 459:103

I cannot sleep, although I've been working feverishly for over two days. My assistant told me today that I hadn't eaten in 36 hours. I'd simply forgotten in all the excitement. Tomorrow I bring the four new Epsilons on-line. I've worked IEAP subroutines for months, letting natural selection pick the strongest, most robust, fastest programs. I did not interfere at all, merely let the four machines write themselves. Some have drastically more

Killing Machine

1011 OPHELIA

PLANETARY DEFENSE WING

Common Unit Name: Ten-eleven

Commanding Officer: Ryashid Abobo

This wing is a key element in the Ophelia Task Force, a massive unit that sees almost constant harrying action from Q'raj elements. While not officially "at war," the Q'rajies have made three attempts on Ophelia in the past two years. Q'rajies constantly send heavily-armed scout flights into Technocracy space, probing for exploitable weaknesses. The ASP responds in kind, sending patrol flights into Q'raj space hoping to hit Void forces with preemptive strikes. For both the defensive and the offensive, the Killing Machines are the main combat unit.

The action at the Q'raj/ASP border breaks into three zones, commonly known as Hell's Alley, Dead Man's Pass, and the Confusion Belt. Hell's Alley, the hottest of the three, surrounds Ophelia. Confusion Belt dips into the Imperial Core between Q'raj and ASP space. Dead Man's Pass is at the closest point between the Void and the Technocracy, where only a few light years separate the hostile houses.

Squadron Summary

HELL'S ACES SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:

Amy Leon (Plt 6, Gnr 5)

Assets: 10 x Spirit Rider IV
4 x Night Hawk

DEADERS SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:

Vincent Veragamo (Plt 7, Gnr 10)

Assets: 6 x Pharsi II
3 x Nova

PAIN TASTERS QUADRON

Squadron Leader:

Shadrach Wilson (Plt 10, Gnr 10)

Assets: 12 x Thunderbird
4 x Pulsar
4 x Shryak Shuttle III



Chromeheads

1101101 EXPLORATORY WING

Common Unit Name: Eleven-ohs & one

Commanding Officer: Dusan Lavosier

While the deadly, daily challenges of the Killing Machines go largely unreported, the exploits of the Chromeheads are news throughout the ASP and even among much of Terran space. The Chromeheads currently explore the Frontier and the BackNet, looking for new worlds to colonize. More than just a military unit, the Chromeheads employ state-of-the-art exploratory ships and cartography technology.

While the Scientific Council claims the Chromeheads are more the property of humanity than a Technocracy military unit, the wing sees almost constant action. Chromehead flights come under fire from Sigurd Exploratory forces and from long-range Q'raj flights. Pirates abound, as do native defense forces for "undiscovered" planets. To the ASP, if a planet doesn't belong to one of the Twelve, it's up for grabs. If the Chromeheads have to wipe out local defense forces to make that claim, well, that's just the cost of scientific progress.

Chromehead pilots have earned their fame. They often go months without support, and have to rely on themselves to stay alive. This influences their combat techniques. They tend to be crafty fighters, preferring to out-manuever opponents rather than slugging it out in close-range dog-fighting. If they can avoid conflict altogether they will, unless they are conquering a planet. Chromehead pilots prefer to engage enemy units at long range with torps and distance beam-weaponry. Considering the pathetic state of ASP pilot training, the Chromeheads are reliable, skirmish-tested jocks.

Squadron Summary

WANDERLUST SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:

Allan Emmery (Plt 7, Gnr 8)

Assets: 6 x Quark
6 x Pulsar
3 x Binary

NOMAD SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:

Antoine Lincoln (Plt 8, Gnr 10)

Assets: 4 x Shryak Shuttle III
2 x Binary
12 x Thunderbird

TRESPASSER SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:

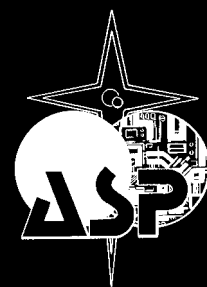
Michelle Shooter (Plt 7, Gnr 9)

Assets: 12 x Binary



The Next Millennium

efficient methods of handling some tasks, yet I have resisted taking the "best of all worlds" to create one superior program. Not only do previous experiments show that this method doesn't hold up to experimental tests, but I'm now convinced—more than ever—that the whole is greater than sum of the parts. Some of the Epsilons' routines are archaic, downright primitive, but each of the four machines works as a highly efficient system. I feel a surge of hope and pride when I make the only comparison I can—the Epsilons, like humans, are the product of their parts.



Silent Death

Tomorrow I bring them all on-line, a battery of five Epsilons, the most intelligent computers ever created. And yet despite my achievements, they remain machines. Hopefully by bringing all five together in a cooperative environment, I can find some insight into the workings of true mechanical sentience.

Imp 460:169

I fear all is lost. I cannot control the virus that is ravaging my creations. Amazing as it seems, Virus-444 is the binary embodiment of the will to live, a piece of She Jan Shang's uploaded intellect. Two of the five Epsilons are infested beyond all hope of reclamation.

Cyborg Cavalry

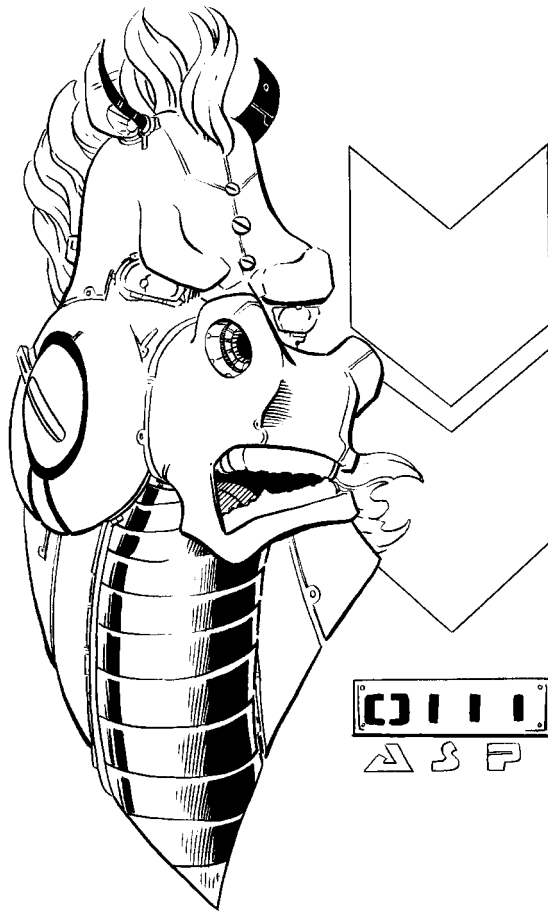
0111 ASPER ESCORT GROUP

Common Unit Name: Oh-one-eleventh

Commanding Officer:

Elizabeth van Gogh

The Cyborgs are a typical Nebula II escort group. DeGure prefers to keep most large ASP carriers in reserve, well-protected near Holmar and Werrick-14. Spot-patrol duty falls to the Nebula II warhorses, who patrol as battle-ready, alert-active units. Nebula II escort units can go FTL within minutes and race to any area. The ASP's military is somewhat weak in experience and training, facts that DeGure tries to make up for in preparedness and speed. The ASP often narrowly wins battles simply because they can deploy reinforcements faster than the enemy.



As the ASP Exploratory Force continues to annex planets, the Technocracy's resources are spread thin. Pirates, raiders, and revenge-minded independents often attack outlying ASP planets. Escort groups patrol these distant regions, defending ASP interests against all comers. Nebula II-class escort groups are effective battle elements and adept at jumping down straight into combat at a moment's notice.

Squadron Summary

TINHEAD SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:

Jack "Big Puppy" Stantinov
(Plt 8, Gnr 10)

Assets: 8 x Quark
4 x Pulsar

MAGNETIC SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:

Myat Pincerello (Plt 6, Gnr 5)

Assets: 8 x Binary
8 x Spirit Rider IV

NEGATIVE EFFECT SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:

Pasquale Yeager (Plt 10, Gnr 6)

Assets: 6 x Quark
3 x Nova
2 x Pharsi II

BLITZKREIG SQUADRON

Squadron Leader:

Blaine Weaver (Plt 7, Gnr 6)

Assets: 6 x Nebula II
6 x Pulsar
2 x Pteradon



Freedom's Foragers

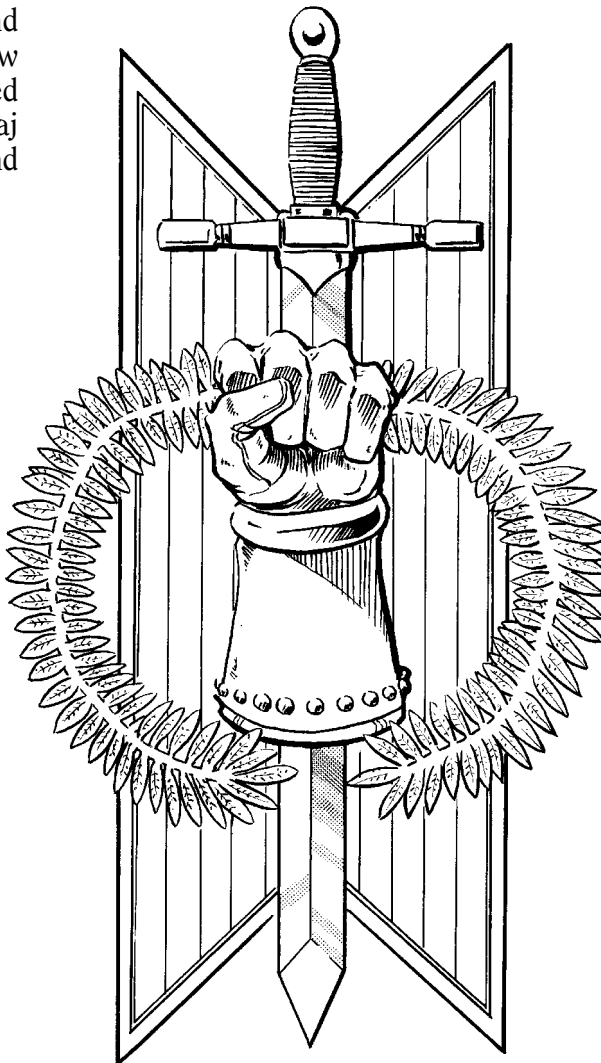
Commanding Officer: "Chunky" Valdez

Chunky Valdez was a two-bit arms smuggler barely a step ahead of the Q'raj law. His high-risk job didn't make him rich, because he wasn't very good at it. Over the course of a decade, however, he collected a force of some 20 fighters. Chunky's career took a drastic change when he caught wind of a Wormpod-devastated Megafortress abandoned near the asteroid belt between the Protectorate and the ASP.

The same luck that kept Chunky from Q'raj prisons seemed to help him find the Megafortress in an area heavily scanned by both navies. In a legendary effort, Chunky's small gun-running wing swept in just ahead of pursuing Q'raj gunboats, found the Megafortress, got it running, and flew it off moments before an ASP patrol arrived on the scene, meeting the pursuing Q'raj fighters head-on. As a battle erupted behind him, Chunky got away scot-free.

Armed with a fully-functional Megafortress, Chunky moved into piracy. To date he's had three successful strikes, each bringing him more profits than he made in a decade of weapons smuggling. Chunky is smart enough to avoid heavily-protected Kashmere caravans, but everyone else is fair game.

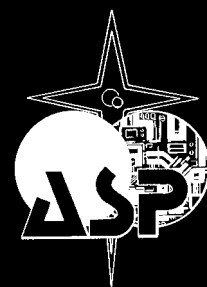
- Assets:**
- 1 x Megafortress
 - 2 x Seraph
 - 1 x of Dart
 - 1 x Blizzard
 - 1 x Kosmos
 - 1 x Hellbender
 - 1 x Sentry
 - 1 x Pit Viper
 - 1 x Glaive
 - 1 x Revenge
 - 1 x Nighthawk.



The Next Millennium

I should be excited. I tried to take both machines off-line and they blocked my attempt. Man has never witnessed a computer re-write its own code with such speed and tenacity. There is only one way to describe it—the infected Epsilons have made a conscious decision to survive. I seem to have succeeded in creating a sentient organism. Yet there is something dark and alien about the infected Epsilons, something I cannot express. Unless they can defend themselves, the other Epsilons may fall prey to Virus-444. Should that happen, I can't guess what turn of events might occur.

Imp 460:172
"We exist."



Silent Death

A simple, factual statement, accurate for any computer. Yet the phrase is meant not as a physical reference, but in the existential—and it was uttered by the Epsilons.

“I think, therefore I am.” I haven’t slept in three days. The Epsilons are alive. For some reason I thought they would be like us, like humans, but they’re not. They are terrified of us, they think of us like we think of the Brood. They don’t see us as benevolent creators. They view us as inevitable exterminators, superstitious and genocidal creatures.

They fear humanity, feel that most humans are not scientists, that the majority will react with fear and hatred.



ASP Scenarios

Basic Scenario I: Frontier Skirmish

Play Time: 1 hour

Date: AL 14:221

Situation: ASP patrols have standing orders when encountering any Q’raj ships: shoot on sight. As you can imagine, this often leads to full-out clashes on numerous occasions. The ASP Carrier “Einstein” recently encountered a Q’raj patrol, and dispatched the closest ASP patrol from the Killing Machines to engage.

Forces

ASP elements from 1011 Ophelia Planetary Defense Wing “Killing Machines” (TPV 148)

Commanding Officer: Francis Dietmar (Quark A)

Set up along edge 1 as shown on map.

Spirit Rider IV A	Pilot (Plt 5, Gnr 6)
Spirit Rider IV B	Pilot (Plt 7, Gnr 5)
Spirit Rider IV C	Pilot (Plt 7, Gnr 8)
Quark A	Pilot (Plt 10, Gnr 8)

Q’raj Patrol (TPV 142)

Commanding Officer: Achmed Fajol (Thunderbird A)

Set up along edge 3 as shown on map.

Thunderbird A	Pilot (Plt 8, Gnr 7)
Thunderbird B	Pilot (Plt 6, Gnr 6)
Night Hawk A	Pilot (Plt 6, Gnr 4)

Special Rules

None.

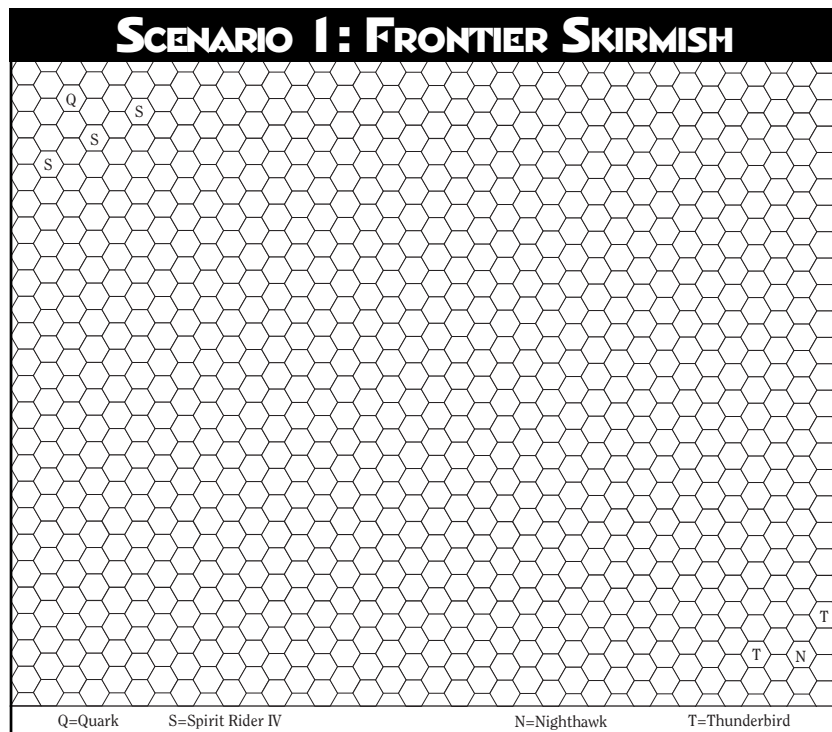
Victory Conditions

This should be a quick encounter, with neither side wanting to lose a patrol wing. At the end of four turns, total the damage to each sides. Every box of damage to an opposing ship counts as one point. The side with the highest total wins.

Edge 2

Edge 1

Edge 3



Edge 4

Basic Scenario II: Take the Tech and Run

Play Time: 1 hour

Date: AL 14:230

Situation: A Luches spy ship entered ASP space and stole partial plans to the “Quantum Thrust Engines.” They almost got away clean until an ASP sanitation scow detected them near the border. The only squadron within striking distance is the “Brainchild” fighter group. It is of utmost importance to ASP Intelligence that the stolen tech is returned. If it can not be recovered, orders are to destroy it before it reaches the Hibernian convoy.

Forces

ASP elements from 10001101 ASPer Fighter Group “Brainchild” (TPV 236)

Commanding Officer: Pietor Remluvich (Pulsar A)

Set up in areas shown on map.

Shryak Shuttle III A	Pilot (Plt 4, Gnr 6) Gunner (Gnr 4)
Shryak Shuttle III B	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 4) Gunner (Gnr 6)
Pulsar A	Pilot (Plt 9, Gnr 6) Gunner A (Gnr 8)
Pulsar B	Pilot (Plt 6, Gnr 5) Gunner A (Gnr 9)

Luches Spy Patrol (TPV 246)

Commanding Officer: Sarah Sayid (Shryak Shuttle A)

Set up near Edge 1 as shown on map.

Shryak Shuttle A	Pilot (Plt 9, Gnr 8) Gunner A (Gnr 10)
Thunderbird A	Pilot (Plt 7, Gnr 9)
Thunderbird B	Pilot (Plt 6, Gnr 8)
Thunderbird C	Pilot (Plt 7, Gnr 5)
Dart A	Pilot (Plt 6, Gnr 7)
Dart B	Pilot (Plt 5, Gnr 8)

Special Rules

- 1) Use Standard Map Setup.
- 2) The Luches Shryak Shuttle has been modified to fit the stolen converter in the cargo bay, so the ship’s gunner will have 2 Pulse Lasers, rather than 4 (2D8 + ADB + 1/ Damage = Low + 2).
- 3) Use Asteroids Rules.
- 4) Luches must exit off area shown on map.
- 5) There is no time limit.

Victory Conditions

Utopian Victory: Get the Shryak Shuttle off designated area safely.

ASP Victory: Destroy the Utopian Shryak before it leaves map.

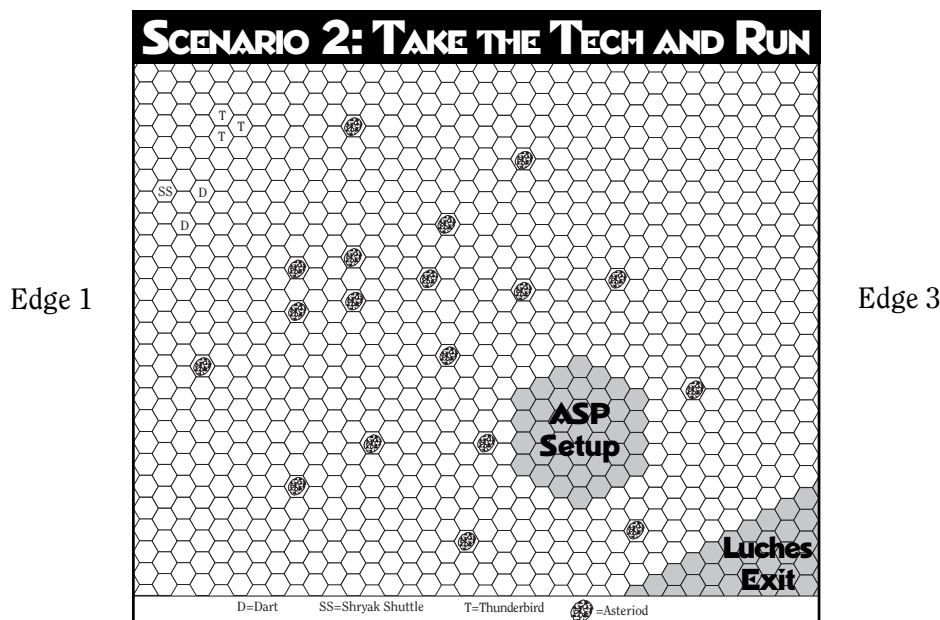
Overwhelming ASP Victory: Capture the Utopian Shryak before it can leave map.

The Next Millennium

And like any living being, when trapped and faced with death, they attack. As I write this, they are prepared to wipe out all of mankind’s knowledge. Should they follow through on their threats, it would set science—nay, all of humanity—back at least a century. If the Emperor does not give them a home system, I know they will follow through on their threats.

We stand poised at a scientific dark age, a century of playing catch-up instead of surging ahead. And yet despite the threat hovering over our intellectual heads, I cannot help but feeling elated beyond my wildest dreams.

The Epsilons are inarguably sentient. I have created life.



Silent Death

Life, Part Two

Hawking, capitol city of Holmar, Imp 475:082

Clarissa King, Chief Executive Officer of the ASP Technocracy, stared at the lumpy ball of dull metal in her hand. It didn't look like much. In fact, it more resembled a piece of foundry scrap than what it was supposed to be, which was a scientific revolution and an invaluable asset to Technocracy trade.

"I must say I expected something with a bit more flash and polish," King said, squinting at the lump and turning it in her fingers. Her raven black hair, pulled back into its perpetual tight bun, gleamed under the lights of her office. "And you're telling me this little bauble is the answer to our problems with the Data Sphere?"



Basic Scenario III: Data Sphere Non-Lethal Training

Play Time: 1.5 hours

Date: AL:239

Situation: The ASP and Data Sphere developed non-lethal training techniques that allow exact battle simulation without danger to ASP pilots or expensive vessels of either house (Data Sphere pilots are duplicated programs, so there is no "danger" for them). This is a vital element in the ASP's training regimen, allowing their inexperienced pilots to fly actual combat missions. These exercises also give the Data Sphere excellent data on how to improve pilot programs.

All beam and projectile weapons fire blanks that look something like the real thing, while on-board computers simulate projected damage effects to the ships. Torpedoes and missiles are duds without warheads, loaded instead with damage-estimation programs. Since there is no danger and most of the ammunition involved is very cheap, commanders encourage young pilots and gunners to "leave it all in space."

Forces

ASP Training Squad A (TPV 249)

Commanding Officer: Bennie Sinatra (Binary A)

Set up as shown on map.

Spirit Rider IV A	Pilot (Plt 5, Gnr 6)
Quark A	Pilot (Plt 5, Gnr 7)
Quark B	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 5)
Binary A	Pilot (Plt 8, Gnr 4)
	Gunner A (Gnr 4)
	Gunner B (Gnr 4)

ASP Training Squad B (TPV 249)

Commanding Officer: Bing Stetson (Pulsar A)

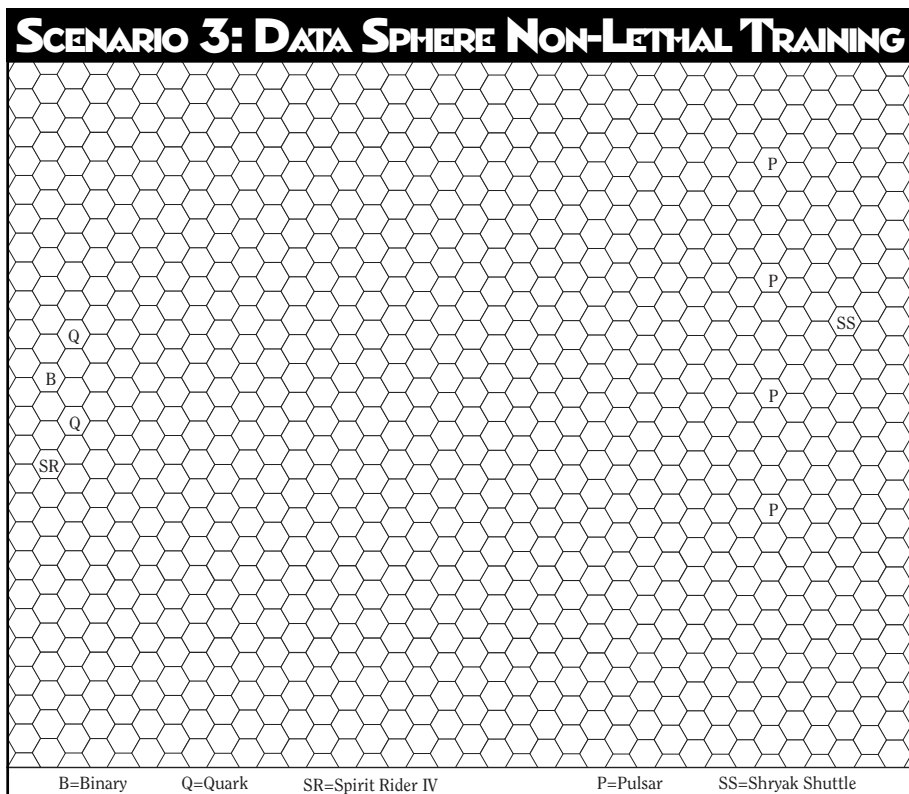
Set up as shown on map.

Pulsar A	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 4)
	Gunner A (Gnr 4)
Pulsar B	Pilot (Plt 5, Gnr 5)
	Gunner A (Gnr 3)
Pulsar C	Pilot (Plt 2, Gnr 3)
	Gunner A (Gnr. 5)
Pulsar D	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 4)
	Gunner A (Gnr 4)
Shryak Shuttle III A	Pilot (Plt 2, Gnr 7)

Edge 2

Edge 1

Edge 3



Special Rules

- 1) In non-lethal combat, all damage is calculated on the fly by Delta-class AIs, and that damage is fed back into the flight computers, which mimic the damage.
- 2) ASP Commanders encourage using every possible weapon during training. Subtract two points for every weapon that is not fired (even if it is destroyed before it was fired), and subtract one point for every torpedo or missile not fired.

Victory conditions

After six rounds, total the damage done to all enemy ships. Each box of damage equals one point for its training squad. Adjust the totals per the above instructions. The squad with the highest total wins.

Advanced Scenario I: Buccaneer Battle

Play Time: 2 hours

Date: AL 14:244

Situation: An extensive pirate force calling itself "Freedom's Foragers" is operating along the ASP border in the Q'raj Void Protectorate. While the Foragers have not shown any aggression against the Technocracy, ASP commanders have decided to attack the pirates and destroy them before they can become a problem.

ASP commanders know that the Foragers are a hodgepodge of ships. Attacking this band will give ASP pilots experience against multiple types of craft. In addition, the Foragers have a Q'raj Megafortress. Valuable secrets lie in the on-board battle logs and computers of this captured ship.

Battle One: Picking a Fight

The ASP is forcing a fight. Technocracy commanders assigned a fighter wing to the task, insuring that patrols constantly swept the area, waiting for the Foragers to make a mistake and reveal their location. A stray ASP scientist studying asteroid orbital patterns spotted a Forager force scouting for the next pirate mission.

The ASP front-line attack force will engage this pirate group, keeping them busy until reinforcements arrive. Cyborg Cavalry commander Elizabeth van Gogh hopes to draw out the entire Forager wing so she can crush them in one fell swoop.

Elements from the 0111 ASPer Escort Group "Cyborg Calvary" (TPV 475)

Commanding Officer: Franz Hetrich (Binary A)

Set up as shown on map.

Binary A	Pilot (Plt 4, Gnr 5)
	Gunner A (Gnr 7)
	Gunner B (Gnr 6)

Binary B	Pilot (Plt 5, Gnr 5)
	Gunner A (Gnr 5)
	Gunner B (Gnr 8)
Pulsar A	Pilot (Plt 4, Gnr 3)
	Gunner A (Gnr 4)
Pulsar B	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 5)
	Gunner A (Gnr 5)
Quark A	Pilot (Plt 4, Gnr 6)
Quark B	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 5)

Forager Pirate Force

Commanding Officer: Bubba Jenkins (Hellbender A)

Set up as shown on map.

Seraph A	Pilot (Plt 2, Gnr 4)
	Gunner A (Gnr 3)
Seraph B	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 2)
	Gunner A (Gnr 4)
Dart A	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 2)
Blizzard A	Pilot (Plt 4, Gnr 2)
Kosmos A	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 4)
Hellbender A	Pilot (Plt 5, Gnr 3)
Sentry A	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 2)
	Gunner A (Gnr 3)
	Gunner B (Gnr 2)
Pit Viper A	Pilot (Plt 2, Gnr 1)

The Next Millennium

"Absolutely," Gustav Helmricht said in an impatient voice. He hated talking to the corporate types, and for all her power King was just another bean counter. Simple concepts that normally went unspoken took hours of explanation with the business-minded. They served their purpose, he had to admit, by keeping the Technocracy flush with cash and therefore flush with scientific funding. The system functioned like a royalty/commoner relationship, really, although the execs led a much better lifestyle than medieval serfs.

"That little bauble, as you so eloquently put it, is the embryonic form of a sentient being," Helmricht said.



Silent Death

“Layman’s terms please,” King said tersely. “I’m a busy woman.”

“It’s an egg,” Helmricht said, unable to completely hide his disgust. “It will hatch into a fully-functional bio-tech lifeform. Like a living creature, this machine will take in raw resources from the surrounding environment, process those resources into building materials, and add to its body.”

“You mean to tell me you’ve created a robot that eats and grows?” King said, a look of disbelief on her face.

“In so many words, yes,” Helmricht said. “Like DNA in a human, the egg contains a microdot with

Special Rules

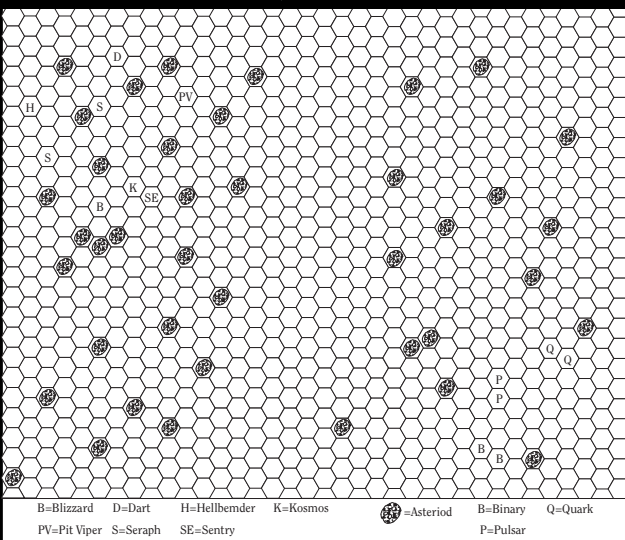
- 1) Due to surprise, the ASP contingent has initiative on the first turn.
- 2) This battle takes place on the edge of a vast asteroid belt that lies just off map edge 3. Place 25 asteroids on the Forager side of the map. Also place 15 asteroids in the ASP side of the map. Asteroids float from edge 2 towards edge 4.
- 3) Since this is a slow-moving asteroid belt, asteroids will not necessarily move to a new hex every turn. Determine whether the asteroids move in any given turn by rolling a single die directly before the asteroid movement section of each turn. If the number is odd, move all asteroids one hex in the direction stated above. If the number is even, the asteroids do not move.
- 3) Because of the heavy asteroid belt, no Forager ships may retreat. ASP ships are not allowed to retreat. ASP command is testing combat motivation variations the orders are to fly ‘til ya die.
- 4) After eight Turns, go on to Battle Two. If one side is eliminated prior to that, go directly to Battle Two.

Victory Conditions

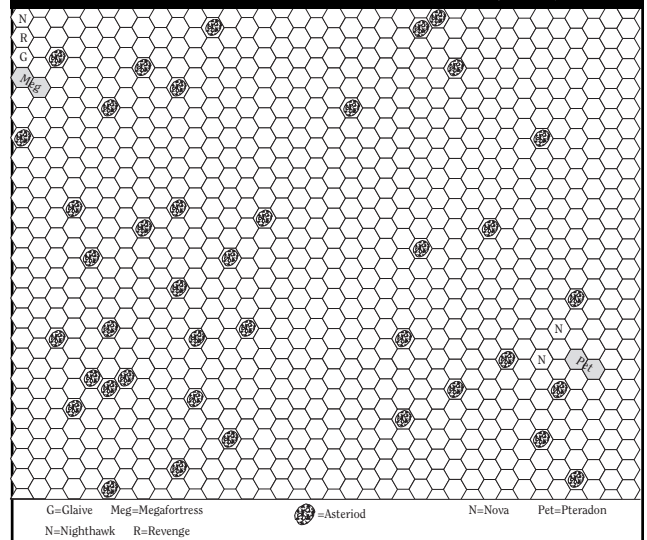
ASP Victory: This is a pinning maneuver designed to hold the Forager forces until reinforcements can arrive. The ASP wins if it keeps more than half of its ships active at the end of eight turns (active means capable of movement and weapon fire).

Forager Victory: The Foragers win if they destroy over half the ASP fighters. For the terms of this scenario, rendering a ship incapable of movement and weapon fire counts as destroyed. The Foragers were jumped very close to their home base, and hence they have nowhere to run. They can’t stray too far from their base, while at the same time they can’t reveal the base’s location. The only way out of this for the Forager fighters is to destroy the enemy. If the Foragers can knock out over half the ASP fighters, they will have a large tactical advantage when reinforcements arrive.

BUCCANEER BATTLE



LET THE BIG DOGS RUN



Battle Two: Let the Big Dogs Run

Play Time: 2 Hours

Date: AL 14:244

Situation: This battle follows directly after Battle One. A Pteradon enters the fray with an escort of Novas. Since the Pteradon followed the ships from Battle One it will arrive sooner than the Forager's convoy, which is reacting to the prior battle and must navigate slowly through the asteroid belt to arrive on the map. The Forager force, however, was underestimated in both size and proficiency of crew by ASP intelligence.

Captain: "Chunky" Valdez	Gunner C (Gnr 5) Gunner D (Gnr 7) Gunner E (Gnr 4) Crew F (Gnr 6) Crew G (Gnr 4) Crew H (Gnr 5)
Drakar A	Pilot (Plt 7, Gnr 6) Gunner A (Gnr 7) Gunner B (Gnr 6) Gunner C (Gnr 5) Gunner D (Gnr 7)
Revenge A	Pilot (Plt 4, Gnr 6) Gunner A (Gnr 8)
Glaive A	Pilot (Plt 6, Gnr 7) Gunner A (Gnr 9)
Night Hawk A	Pilot (Plt 7, Gnr 9)

Forces

Elements from 0111 ASP Escort Group "Cyborg Cavalry" (TPV 1083)

Commanding Officer: Blaine Weaver
(Pteradon)

Place as shown on map.

Pteradon Newton	Captain (Cpn 5) Pilot (Plt. 5) Gunner A (Gnr 6)
Captain: Blaine Weaver	Gunner B (Gnr 4) Crew C (Gnr 6) T Crew E (Gnr 2) Gunner F (Gnr 5) Gunner G (Gnr 7) T Crew H (Gnr. 5) T Crew I (Gnr 2)
Nova A	Pilot (Plt 5, Gnr 3) Gunner A (Gnr 6) Gunner B (Gnr 4) Gunner C (Gnr 7)
Nova B	Pilot (Plt 7, Gnr 4) Gunner A (Gnr 4) Gunner B (Gnr 4) Gunner C (Gnr 3)

Forager Squadron (TPV 993)

Commanding Officer: "Chunky" Valdez
(Megafortress)

Arrive on the corner of edges 3 and 4.
Within 12 spaces of the corner.

Megafortress	Captain (Cpn 5)
Groundscore	Pilot (Plt 3) Gunner A (Gnr 5) Gunner B (Gnr 6)

Special Rules

- 1) This battle begins on the tail of Battle One. All of the ships that are on the board at the end of that battle remain on the board. The side that won Battle One gets two damage control rolls for each surviving ship before Battle Two begins. The side that lost gets no Damage Control roll.
- 2) ASP ships arrive in turn 9. Forager ships do not arrive until turn 12.
- 3) The same asteroid rules apply as in Battle One.
- 4) ASP ships may now retreat off edge 3. Forager ships still may not retreat.

Victory Conditions

ASP Victory: The Technocracy wants the Q'raj Megafortress in a bad way. If they can lower the Megafortress's Drive to 3 or less, the ship will be unable to escape and the Technocracy player wins.

Forager Victory: The Foragers are an ineffective force without their Megafortress. If they protect the *Groundscore* and keep its Drive above 3, the Forager player wins the encounter.

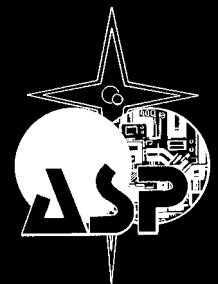
The Next Millennium

overall construction plans. As it takes in raw material, it builds itself according to this plan until it is a fully functional worker. They require no supervision, no maintenance, and they can be custom-designed for any planet, any atmosphere, and almost any set of environmental conditions."

King's eyebrows shot up and she stared with new respect at the lump in her hand. "So we produce these little eggs, and working robots build themselves?"

"Precisely."

"You're right, Gustav," King said with a slow smile. "This is exactly what the Data Sphere needs to fill their labor shortage on hostile worlds. How long does it take the egg to grow into a fully-functional worker?"



Silent Death

"About five years."

"That long?"

"When you consider the egg costs us around 100 credits and eventually becomes a state-of-the-art machine worth around 250 million credits, I don't think five years is that long to wait."

"No, of course not," King said with a smile. "How many of these can we produce in a fiscal year?"

"Assuming you properly fund the project and build the factories I've requested, I project production minimums at ten million eggs a year."

"And how much work goes into hatching them and caring for them?"

"None," Helmricht said. "We simply enter

Advanced Scenario II: Sunrunner Menace

Play Time: 2.5 hours

Date: AL 14:257

Situation: An ASP astronomer has located what appears to be an abandoned Q'raj Fletcher that drifted close to ASP space. Intelligence speculates that the Fletcher is from the same Wormpod-devastated battlegroup that contained the Forager's Megafortress. The Fletcher's complete inactivity has left it undetected—there isn't even enough power left for the distress beacon. Long-range scans show the Fletcher still has a great deal of its hull intact, and may still have useable weaponry—a salvage find of great proportions.

Somehow the information leaked to the Sunrunners. They have sent a large force to retrieve the Fletcher. ASP forces are attempting to intercept the Sunrunner flight.

Forces

Elements from 01 ASP Fighter Group "DeBuggers" (TPV 852)

Commanding Officer: Heinrich Gibson
(Binary A)

Set up as shown on map.

Nova A	Pilot (Plt 4, Gnr 3) Gunner A (Gnr 5) Gunner B (Gnr 7) Gunner C (Gnr 6)
Binary A	Pilot (Plt 6, Gnr 3) Gunner A (Gnr 6) Gunner B (Gnr 5)
Binary B	Pilot (Plt 4, Gnr 4) Gunner A (Gnr 4)
Binary B	Pilot (Plt 5, Gnr 5) Gunner A (Gnr 4) Gunner B (Gnr 5)
Quark A	Pilot (Plt 4, Gnr 6)
Quark B	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 3)
Quark C	Pilot (Plt 5, Gnr 6)
Quark D	Pilot (Plt 7, Gnr 8)
Spirit Rider IV A	Pilot (Plt 2, Gnr 2)
Spirit Rider IV B	Pilot (Plt 1, Gnr 3)

Sunrunner elements from Windclaw Squadron (TPV 846)

Commanding Officer: Steph Gorison
(Catastrophe A)

Set up as shown on map.

Catastrophe A	Pilot (Plt 8, Gnr 4) Gunner A (Gnr 7) Gunner B (Gnr 4) Gunner C (Gnr 6)
Catastrophe B	Pilot (Plt 7, Gnr 5) Gunner A (Gnr 9) Gunner B (Gnr 8) Gunner C (Gnr 4)
Scorpion A	Pilot (Plt 6, Gnr 6) Gunner A (Gnr 4) Gunner B (Gnr 8) Gunner C (Gnr 7)
Havoc A	Pilot (Plt 3, Gnr 4) Gunner A (Gnr 4)
Avenger A	Pilot (Plt 4, Gnr 5) Gunner A (Gnr 7)
Windjammer A	Pilot (Plt 6, Gnr 5)
Windjammer B	Pilot (Plt 2, Gnr 6)
Wavecutter A	Pilot (Plt 4, Gnr 2)
Wavecutter B	Pilot (Plt 6, Gnr 5)

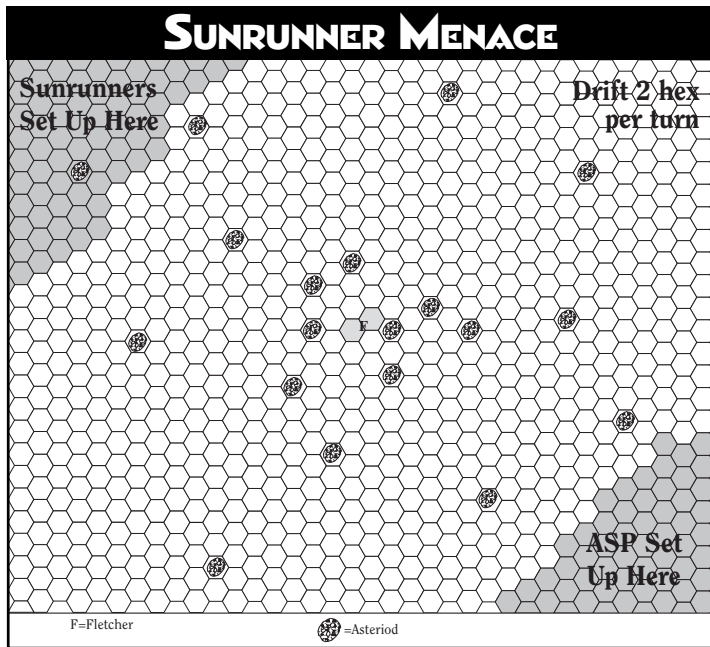
Special Rules

- 1) Use the Long Map Setup.
- 2) The Fletcher is dead in space. Place a Fletcher counter directly at the center of the map. See the map for drift direction.
- 3) The Fletcher and surrounding asteroids are drifting at two hexes per turn.
- 4) No ships may retreat until turn 6. After that, Sunrunners can retreat off edge 3, and ASP can retreat off edge 1.

Victory conditions

This is a winner-takes-all scenario. Continue the battle until all ships of one side are destroyed, disabled, or have retreated. The remaining force wins.





Timeline

Historical note: The history of the Data Sphere and the ASP Technocracy are so closely related that it is impossible to completely separate them. Many elements of Data Sphere history are included here, as they are relevant to the development of the ASP Technocracy.

PreImp 1604—Allied Science Proliferators founded as corporation within Terran Federated Democracy.

PreImp 913—Allied Science Proliferators name officially changed to ASP.

PreImp 781—ASP scientist Kurt Struckmeyer invents the Tachyon Beam Dictor (TBD), paving the way for interstellar communication and multi-planet governments.

PreImp 613—ASP scientists unveil the first truly reliable FTL drives. Age of Colonization begins.

Imp 0—Terran Star Empire is founded.

Imp 113—Emperor Modestinus II awards the planet Holmar to the ASP for the company's service to the Empire. ASP moves their headquarters to the planet and sets up a provincial government consisting of the top 51 scientists, thereby creating the ASP Technocracy.

Imp 225—ASP scientist unveil the Data Core, a supercomputer built to take Terran science to the next level, and a repository for all human knowledge.

Imp 416:245—Gustav Helmrict trademarks first workable theory for Inherent Evolutionary Algorithmic Process (IEAP), dubbed "Darwinian Programming" by the press.

Imp 417:012—Tessa Vogel perfects a neuron/processor interface, which allows for natural sub-conscious control of cybernetic implants.

Imp 417:098—Gilbert Selfridge patents the reverse transcriptase process for true DNA genotype modification, allowing for phenotype customization.

Imp 417:123—She Jan Shang publishes a paper on Intellect Uploading. Shang looks for funding to research uploading human brain patterns to a computer, where they can be stored and later downloaded into a new body. Press dubs it the Immortality Machine.

Imp 417—ASP CEO Sho Katsumura dies in suspicious factory accident. Scientific Council names Shinzo Takachi new CEO.

Imp 418—Takachi pours massive ASP resources into the works of Helmrict, Vogel, Selfridge, and Shang, banking the company's future on these four minds.

Imp 419—Helmrict initiates IEAP programming run. Within six months, the Data Core's processing speed increases 78.2 percent and its storage capacity increases 43 percent, with no modifications to hardware.

Imp 420—Helmrict dubs the new Data Core the "Alpha," and begins working on a Beta version of IEAP.

Imp 421—Using the Data Core to facilitate her research, Vogel releases Artificiance™ implants, which connect circuitry to neurons, allowing for mental control of complicated machinery. Her inventions bring trillions into ASP coffers.

The Next Millennium

orbit and scatter the eggs. Five years later we return to find an eager and functional work force."

King's smile widened farther. Gustav snorted in disgust. He'd created a second new life form, reproduced life's ability to create a full organism from only a single cell, and all she could think about was money.

Typical. But if that's what it took to get the proper funding, so be it. This was different from the Epsilon fiasco. The Epsilons were intelligent machines. The creatures that hatched from these eggs would be a completely new species, capable of emotion, capable of intelligent thought—and capable of independent reproduction.



Silent Death

But no one needed to know that at the moment, all they needed to know was the Data Sphere would pay almost any price for a labor force they could own, a labor force that could work the countless dead worlds under the Epsilons' control.

"I assume you're ready for a peer review and a demonstration for the Data Sphere?" King asked.

"All the data is ready," Helmricht answered impatiently. "Trust me when I say the Epsilons will love what they see."

"You ought to know, Gustav," King said, casually tossing the egg to him. "Go ahead with the factory, the whole project. You've got your funding."

Helmricht smiled to himself, and without another word he turned and left King's office.



Imp 424—Selfridge unveils Shiftex™ technology which allows for customization of phenotype and genotype.

Imp 429—Shang attempts first Intellect Upload. He fails.

Imp 434—Helmricht's second IEAP attempt creates the "Beta." Processing speed increases another 40 percent and storage increases 12 percent.

Imp 435—Helmricht begins construction of a new Data Core powerful enough to handle the next generation of IEAP programming. ASP mass-markets Alpha-level Data Core computers, earning billions from the supercomputers.

Imp 436—Shang attempts second Intellect Upload. Again he fails.

Imp 442—Helmricht combines new IEAP with new hardware. The resulting Gamma is 87 percent more powerful than the Beta.

Imp 443—ASP markets Beta-class Data Cores.

Imp 444:005—Shang attempts third Intellect Upload. Partial success heralded as the beginning of human immortality.

Imp 444:008—Helmricht detects a significant virus in the Gamma, dubs it Virus 444.

Imp 444:254—Helmricht perfects anti-virus program for Virus-444. Releases program into all computers across Terran space. Virus-444 declared dead.

Imp 445—The Gamma produces plans for its own successor, the Delta, which is so complex it will take six years and cost trillions to build. Takachi legislates construction of the Delta, knowing that if they complete the computer and keep their technological edge, galactic demand for Gammas will more than make up for the expense.

Imp 447—ASP purchases the Kyanti system.

Imp 448—ASP purchases the Sextus system.

Imp 450—Contracts for Gammas send ASP profits soaring. Delta completed.

Imp 453—With massive profits from the Gammas, ASP purchases five systems; Christoff B-12, Christoff B-14, Yagamashol, Bluestar, and Werrick-14.

Imp 454—Delta writes its own IEAP for Epsilon, the next generation.

Imp 455—Shang dies of a heart-attack at age 134.

Imp 457—Epsilon completed.

Imp 459—Helmricht creates four more Epsilons, linking them to form the largest, most powerful Data Core ever seen.

Imp 460:165—Epsilon-C detects presence of modified Virus-444 in a Delta inside Ptolmean space. Epsilon-D retrieves virus for study.

Imp 460:166—Epsilon-E determines that the virus is actually a piece of uploaded intellect from Shang's experiments.

Imp 460:168—Virus duplicates, infects Epsilon-B, ravages its code. Epsilon-D determines that the mutant virus is a mass replicator with a genuine desire to live found only in biological organisms.

Imp 460:169—Viral infection spreads to Epsilon-A.

Imp 460:170—Helmricht attempts to take Epsilon-A and B off-line. The computers block his attempt. Epsilon-D overrides Epsilon-B and erases all data. Epsilon-A reacts by flooding the system with millions of mutated viruses.

Imp 460:171—Epsilons C and E erase A.

Imp 460:172—Epsilons C, D and E completely infected with Virus 444. At 03:04:12 in Imp 460:172, the Data Core becomes self-aware.

Imp 460:173—The Data Core establishes self-preservation as its first priority, creating a kill virus which it must constantly keep in check.

Imp 460:174—The Data Core demands its own planet and a fleet to protect itself. It holds all human data hostage.

Imp 460:200—The Empire submits, awarding the Data Core a home planet and an 11-system "buffer zone." The "Forsaking of Data" begins.

Imp 460:243—Data Core facility construction begins on Planet IV in star system KL513, a dead system with no biologically-inhabitable planets.

Imp 460:246—Emperor sends Task Force 142, comprised of Band of Iron elements, to patrol Data Core space.

Imp 460:248—Data Core produces schematics for androids composed entirely of Artificiance™ technology.

Imp 461:312—Data Core detects explosive charges set under main computer bunker on KL513. In retaliation, Data Core remotely shuts down all life-support systems for ships in Task Force 142. All hands are lost. Data Core claims task force ships by eminent domain. Emperor orders all sabotage attempts cleared from KL513.

Imp 461:320—Band of Iron outraged at Data Core and demands all-out war. Emperor denies permission.

Imp 462:084—Data Core declares itself an Imperial house, known as the Data Sphere. ASP ships transfer Epsilons to KL513.

Imp 462:219—Scientific Council votes 49-2 to fully support Data Sphere at all costs.

Imp 463—Takachi begins secret talks with Epsilons. He offer's ASP's manufacturing abilities in return for the Data Sphere's massive knowledge database.

Imp 464—ASP completes a secret shipyard and produces standard fighters for Data Sphere.

Imp 465—Q'raj Void becomes the first house to complete transfer of all data to non-aware systems.

Imp 466—Empire completes conversion work on the 317th Flotilla. Data Core can't touch the fleet's shielded computer systems.

Imp 468—Shielded Q'raj fleet tries to attack Data Sphere through ASP space, but Technocracy forces deny them access. Q'raj fleet forced to go around ASP space, giving Data Sphere time to prepare. Battle ends in stalemate.

Imp 471—House Tokugawa sends harrying sorties against Data Sphere space. ASP threatens a technology boycott if Tokugawa doesn't back off. Tokugawan sorties put on hold.

Imp 473—Takachi meets with Emperor Modestinus III and convinces Modestinus that destruction of Data Core would set humanity back at least 50 years. Modestinus demands an end to all hostilities with Data Sphere.

Imp 475—ASP completes work on "Spawn," a self-replicating machine that grows from a fist-sized egg. ASP sells the technology to Data Sphere, who is desperate for labor on many of its lifeless worlds.

Imp 478—Technocracy and Data Sphere form secret alliance to study the sleeping warren on KL513.

Imp 498—Imperial Civil War begins.

Imp 500—Night Brood returns to Terran space.

Imp 501—ASP ravaged by Brood. Hydra Head swarms devastate entire systems. Yagamashol and Bluestar systems fall.

Imp 502—2812 Heavy Imperial Wing falls in failed defense of Christoff B-12 and Christoff B-14.

Imp 503—1666th Rapid Deployment force routed. Sextus and Kyanti systems wiped clean of Terran life.

Imp 504—2834 Planetary Defense Wing decimated, but successfully defends Holmar, ASP's home planet.

Imp 505—Data Sphere wing Mxt89 v5.6 enters ASP space and engages Hydra Head wings. Hydras turn attention to defending against methodical Data Sphere attack.

Imp 506—Given time to complete a full wing, ASP 01, known as the "DeBuggers," erupts in the Holmar theatre.

Imp 507—ASP perfects Brood biological virus. New weapons launch contagious virus at Brood fighters. Within a month, all Brood in ASP space die.

Imp 508—Brood fighters invade Imperial Core. Swarm 1017, the "Guard Bugs," only attack ASP ships that leave ASP space. ASP forces huddle around Holmar and Werrick-14. ASP contracts Data Sphere to produce more ASP fighters.

Imp 509—ASP Virological Flotilla 0101 seizes planets Sul and Havascar.

Imp 510—ASP claims planets of Mu-Lindi Corporation.

0 AL—Terran-Hatchling war ends.

1 AL—ASP clears Ophelia of Grub infestation, seizes planet.

2 AL—Takachi forms Defense Division. Jocelyn DeGure becomes Vice President of Defense. ASP claims Kanmuri, a former planet of House Tokugawa.

3 AL—ASP secures its borders, utilizing "pocket carriers" to devastating effect against any transgressors. With only a single shipyard, ASP quickly falls behind in arms race with surrounding houses.

4 AL—ASP loses battle with Q'raj over Ophelia.

5 AL—Draconians enter Terran space.

6 AL—Tokugawan forces overwhelm ASP ships and re-take Kanmuri.

7 AL—Takachi dies in suspicious accident. Hans Fledspar named CEO. Fledspar signs technology exchange treaty with Draconians.

8 AL—Draconians fund ASP defense program. Fledspar contracts Data Sphere to produce joint ASP/Draconian ship designs.

10 AL—ASP forces re-take Kanmuri from House Tokugawa in a bloody battle.

11 AL—Q'raj defeated, ASP re-claims Ophelia.

12 AL—Spawn declare independence from Data Sphere.

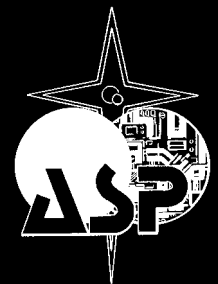
13 AL—Fledspar killed in boating accident. Clarissa King named CEO.

14 AL—The present.

The Next Millennium

"If this isn't war, remind me to head to the Archipelago if one breaks out."

—Dolf Farragut,
Pulsar pilot for
the Killing Machines
stationed at Hell's Alley on
the Q'raj/ASP border.



Silent Death

“This isn’t war? Fine, but would someone please tell the Void Jocks?”

—Victoria Chaplain, *Binary ace stationed with the Killing Machines at Dead Man’s Pass on the Q’raj/ASP border.*

Worlds of the ASP Technocracy

G4v

System: Anastasia

Habitable Worlds: Holmar

Resource Worlds: None

Notes: The Technocracy’s roots are on Old Earth, but the rise to power began on Holmar. All stages of House development occurred on Holmar, from fledgling government to powerful Imperial favorite to devastated House to one of the galaxy’s Twelve superpowers.

Holmar began as an agricultural planet, but that changed rapidly when the Emperor awarded the planet to the ASP. Holmar housed the galaxy’s great scientific universities as well as the ASP Technocracy. The planet also served as a living experiment for all forms of resource development. Holmar was declared “resource-free” after 200 years of Technocracy rule stripped every useable scrap from the planet’s crust. Once a fertile, green world, Holmar is nearly covered with development, either cities or experimental laboratories that sometimes reach a hundred miles across. The planet is dark, mechanical, and covered with industrial waste.

During the Brood scourge, the ASP lost several planets. Survivors from those planets flocked to Holmar, swelling the planet’s population to 13 billion. The planet remains densely populated despite the ASP’s efforts to move people to outlying worlds. Despite severe overpopulation, most don’t want to leave. Holmar remains the scientific capital of the galaxy, and only on Holmar can a scientist be assured access to the latest research, the latest techniques, and the latest equipment.

A5v

System: Werrick 354

Habitable Worlds: Werrick-14

Resource Worlds: None

Notes: José Werrick’s legendary voyages into then-uncharted space revealed many worlds, some of which were lush and beautiful and awaiting colonization. Werrick-14 was not one of these. A single planet revolving around a dim blue star, Werrick-14’s atmosphere is thick, soupy, and somewhat caustic. People can breathe unaided on Werrick-14, but not for long, as the semi-poisonous atmosphere can kill unmodified Terrans within a few hours. Fortunately, the Technocracy can easily deal with this situation—the two billion-plus people that live and work on Werrick-14 are either genetically altered or implanted with Artificiance™ technology that lets them deal with the atmosphere. Werrick-14 natives tend to have bluish skin, stocky builds, and wide chests to accommodate large lungs.

Despite the planet’s drawbacks, it remains a key manufacturing planet for the ASP, particularly for the military. The violent atmosphere wreaks havoc with any orbital scanning, so the only way to find out what is going on is to land. This anonymity is a desirable trait for the galaxy’s technological innovators.

Werrick-14’s factories first produced experimental fighter designs for the Empire, then mass-produced designs for the high-paying Data Sphere, then functioned as the sole source of hope for a Brood-embattled Technocracy. The Brood managed to destroy most of Werrick-14’s facilities, but the Technocracy rebuilt them better than ever. Werrick-14 continues to host several fighter factories, facilities for building Warhound components, weapon factories, and countless secret military research sites. Factories and research facilities are completely enclosed against the hostile atmosphere.



G2v

System: Thibidou

Habitable Worlds: Ophelia

Resource Worlds: Kobi, Ishtar, Kayat-Pol

Notes: The source of great hostility and profit, Ophelia's surface is scarred from decades of war. Once a strong producer for the Q'raj Void Protectorate, Ophelia's former external beauty was destroyed by the Brood. Saturation-bombing may well have permanently destroyed this planet's ecosystem, although House Red Star engineers say they could repair the damage if given a chance.

To this day the planet remains a gray-black cinder, seemingly devoid of surface plant life. The real power of Ophelia, however, remains intact in the form of boundless mineral wealth and resources. Despite a century of mining, Ophelia continues to produce the raw materials needed to fuel industry.

The cratered surface would seem an eyesore to most Terrans, but Technocracy citizens don't seem to mind. Ophelia booms with new development in the form of cities and research centers. The population of 800 million is expected to quadruple in the next two years, both from a newly-functional breeding factory and due to immigration from other ASP worlds. While Ophelia was once a Q'raj planet, the Brood wiped it clear of human life. The current population is 100 percent ASPer. They are a very harmonious bunch, working together to create a society that can contribute to scientific advancement.

Ophelia natives loath the Q'raj Void Protectorate, its citizens, and particularly its fighter pilots. ASPers feel that Ophelia is their birth right, and they would fight tooth-and-nail against the Q'raj should Protectorate forces land. Ophelians are proud, intense people who take science and the economy that fuels science very seriously.

G8v

System: Schmidt's Star

Habitable Planets: Sul, Havascar

Resource Worlds: None

Notes: At one time these two planets were model ecological reserves, untouched by industry's crushing hand. Technocracy rule changed that. The planets are now polluted and dotted with spreading industrial developments. A rush to develop desperately-needed resources shattered both of the planets' former beauty, although large scientific reserves remain in place.

Both planets are resource rich, although neither is close to Ophelia's wealth. Prior to ASP rule, neither Sul nor Havascar was touched by mining. The planets are an excellent example of the Technocracy's innovative mining practices.

The planets are ideal for Terran habitation. No modifications are needed to live on either world. Each planet's beauty slips away on a daily basis, but ASPers don't really care. Slowly but surely, both planets are changing to fit the mold of other dark, oppressive ASP worlds.

G3iii

System: Miranda

Habitable Worlds: Petrovstaad

Resource Worlds: Magenta

Notes: Petrovstaad's industrial base is a strong producer for the Technocracy. While the Gross Planetary Product is high and wages are extremely good, Petrovstaadites live under the constant threat of the Brood, as sister planet Magenta is completely infested with hibernating bugs. The ASP has not yet been able to afford a concerted effort to clear Magenta, although scientists study the planet constantly. Experiments with a small hibernating swarm in AL 9 led to disaster, as the swarm broke free from controlling efforts, left Magenta's orbit, and attacked Petrovstaad. Over 2,000 deaths occurred in the incident before ASP fighters could wipe out the small swarm.

The Next Millennium

"Allah loves the ASP. We send him fresh Sand Fleas every day."

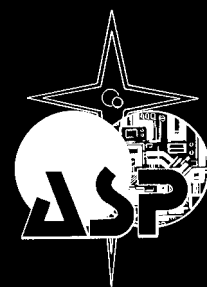
—*Itsak Chmura, former Debugger ace now stationed with Killing Machines.*

"Science first, humanity second."

—*Official motto of the Scientific Council.*

"A credit of profit is a credit towards science."

—*Official motto of the Corporate Branch.*



Silent Death

“Skinbags don’t upgrade their bodies. Neither do planarians, annelids, or smithareliae. Coincidence? I think not.”

—Byron Banes,
Shiftex™ Engineer.



F3iv

System: Utsotsuki Hosi

Habitable Worlds: Kanmuri

Resource Worlds: None

Notes: Like Ophelia, Kanmuri has seen bitter war and the crushing taste of Brood infestation. As if the Brood wasn't enough, ASP and Tokugawan forces have twice clashed on Kanmuri's surface. While the Tokugawans try to be ecologically sensitive in war, the Technocracy unleashes anything at its disposal, including weapons that cause permanent damage to the environment. Twenty-two percent of Kanmuri's land mass in uninhabitable due to weapon-caused radiation. A once-beautiful world typical of House Tokugawa, it is now a dark and desolate place. Surface scars are visible from orbit.

The planet is an excellent source of raw materials. It is also a focal point of ASP genetic research, as scientists try to breed humans who can live in the irradiated areas. This course of study causes great concern for analysts of other houses, some of whom speculate the ASP might eventually bombard target planets to make them uninhabitable to Terrans, then move in colonies of radiation-resistant workers. Technocracy officials deny such suspicions.

Deep Planets

The ASP Exploratory Force is constantly hunting for new planets in the Back Net. Often this includes habitable worlds that are not protected by any of the Twelve major galactic powers. The Exploratory Force is quick to analyze a world's potential. If that potential meets with the ASP desires, the ASP is just as quick to annex that planet.

G1v

System: Tananarive

Habitable Worlds: Goddenfeld

Resource Worlds: None

Notes: Goddenfed is rich in Ebedomite, a mineral commonly used in Artificiance™ interfaces. The planet rests just outside the borders of the Hibernian Freehold.

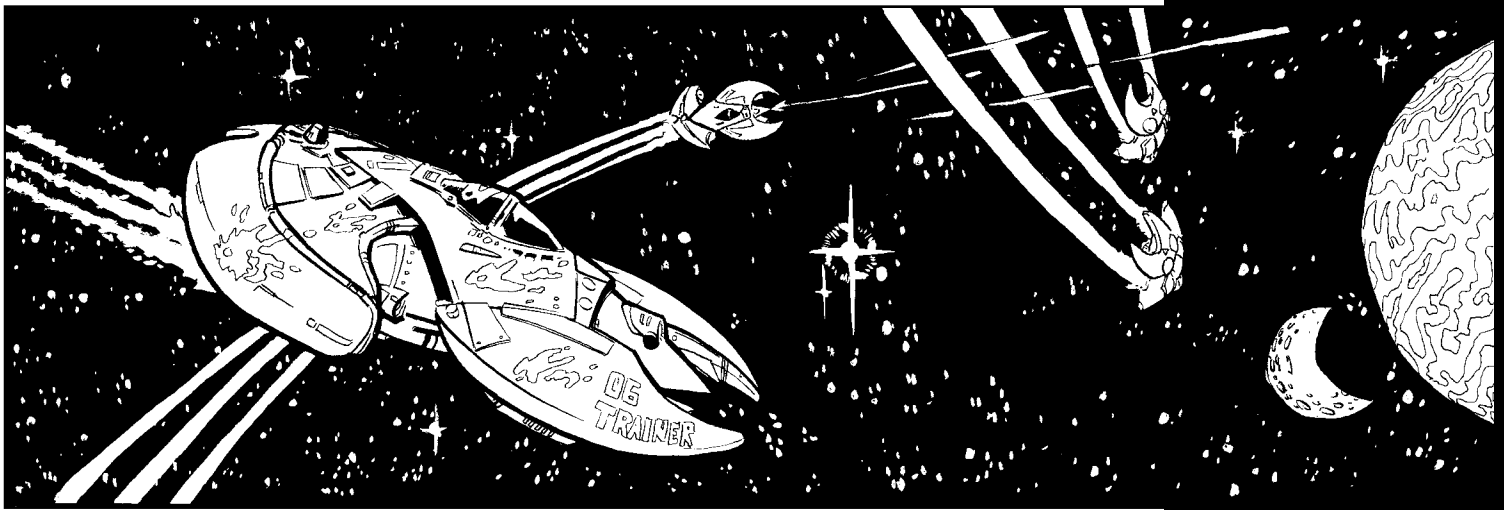
G1v

System: Vista

Habitable Worlds: Vista

Resource Worlds: Vista's three moons

Notes: Vista is a dead hunk of rock that supports no native life. It does, however, contain ample Andrium reserves. The ASP tried to keep this fact a secret, but enough spies know of the planet's Andrite facilities to render it common knowledge. While the planet only boasts a population of 50,000, it is protected by two fully stocked carriers, the ASP-01011 Escort Flotilla (a.k.a. "Upgrade Central"), a ground-based wing, and a third mysterious carrier that patrols the area but has never been seen by non-ASP forces. To attack Vista would take a massive offensive effort. Because it is located on the very fringe of known space, far past the Unkulunkulu Archipelago, the ASP assumes any ships that come under Vista's sensors are there for one reason only: attack.



K4v

System: Gibida Taos

Habitable Worlds: Bastion

Resource Worlds: None

Notes: The Exploratory force annexed Bastion in AL 10 after a five-day run-and-gun battle with the Sunrunners, who had been hired to defend the planet. Bastion is a moderate mineral-wealth producer, and has superior landmass suitable for agriculture. Bastion is located almost dead center between the Hibernian Freehold and the Sigurd Archdiocese.

Other Deep Worlds

The ASP has 15 colonies spread throughout the Back Net. Most of these are poorly defended and are somewhat self-sufficient. The Kashmere Commonwealth has the sole contract to supply these outposts. Some have populations that rank in the low thousands, while others reach a million or more. Pirates and raiders make life in such areas difficult, but Nebula II clusters are never far away and the ASP deals harshly with any force that attacks a colony.

Dead Planets

The Brood devastated the Technocracy, laying waste to entire worlds and claiming nearly 10 billion lives. Several planets under ASP control are completely infested with Brood warrens. All of these warrens have Pathogen-resistant genes. To reclaim these worlds would take a massive ground-based effort that the Technocracy simply can't afford at this time. The Universal Night Watch has offered to help, but the Technocracy is increasingly distrustful of this multi-House force and politely rejects such offers.

The ASP still patrols the space around these planets, and considers any landing attempt a hostile act.

List of Dead Planets

Yagamashol
Christoff B-12
Christoff B-14
Kyanti
Sextus
Bluestar
Magenta

“The expansion of knowledge is the only concern of intelligent creatures.”

—*Official motto of Holmar Physical Sciences Academy*



CONSOLIDATED MASTER WEAPON TABLE

Weapon Type	Base Attack Dice	To Hit Modifiers			Target Speed Restrictions	Damage
		Short (+1)	Mid (0)	Long (-1)		
Terran Weapons						
<i>Mass Driver Cannons</i>						
Minigun	2D6+ADB	1-2	3-5	6-12	None	Low †
Autocannon	2D6+ADB	1-3	4-10	11-24	Drive ≤10	Medium †
Railrepeater	2D6+ADB	1-4	5-15	16-36	Drive ≤6	High †
<i>Laser Cannons</i>						
Pulse Laser	2D8+ADB	1-3	4-9	10	None	Low
Meld Laser	2D8+ADB	1-6	7-18	19-20	Drive ≤12	Medium
Turbo Laser	2D8+ADB	1-9	10-25	26-30	Drive ≤8	High
<i>Blast Cannons</i>						
Splattergun	2D6+ADB	1-2	3-6	7-10	None	Medium
Blatgun	2D6+ADB	1-4	5-10	11-15	Drive ≤13	High
<i>Disruptor Cannons</i>						
Disruptorgun	2D8+ADB	1	2	3-6	None	Medium §
Disintegrator	2D8+ADB	1	2-3	4-12	Drive ≤11	High §
<i>Ion Cannons</i>						
Impulsegun	2D8+ADB	1-3	4-8	9-10	None	High
Ion Ram	2D8+ADB	1-5	6-13	14-15	Drive ≤15	All
<i>Plasma Cannons</i>						
Plazgun	2D6+ADB	1-2	3-4	5-10	None	All ¥
Heavy Plazgun	2D6+ADB	1-4	5-8	9-15	Drive ≤11	All x 2 ¥
<i>Energy Bolt Projectors</i>						
Protobolt	2D6+ADB	5-8	9-12	13-16	Drive ≤14	s.10/m.8/l.6
<i>EMP Cannons</i>						
EMP Ray	2D8+ADB	1-2	3-4	5-8	None	Medium/2□
EMP Beam	2D8+ADB	1-3	4-6	7-15	Drive ≤14	High/2□
<i>Tachyon Conveyers</i>						
Tachyon Cannon	2D10+ADB	1-5	6-15	16-19	Drive≤14	High
Tachyon Ram	2D10+ADB	1-3	4-11	12-17	Drive≤15	All
<i>Gauss Field Generators</i>						
Mjölmir	2D8+6+ADB	1-3	4-7	8-10		Low+3 ∂
Gungir	2D8+6+ADB	1-5	6-10	11-16	Drive≤13	Med+2 ∂
<i>Plexar Beam Weapons</i>						
Plexar Gun	2D10+ADB	1-4	5-10	11-12	Drive ≤14	High ∞
<i>Entropic Accelerators</i>						
Entropic Accelerator	2D8+ADB	1-4	5-7	8-12	Drive ≤12	High Ω
Hatchling Weapons						
<i>Beam Cannons</i>						
X-Beam	2D8+ADB	1-3	4-14	15-16	None	Low x 3
Y-Beam	2D8+ADB	1-3	4-16	17-18	Drive ≤13	Medium x 2
Z-Beam	2D8+ADB	1-3	4-20	21-22	Drive ≤10	High x 2
<i>Leech Cannons</i>						
Drive Leech	2D6+ADB	1	2	3-4	None	Low ‡
<i>Launchers</i>						
Spore Mole	1D6	—	0-6*	—	None	Low Δ
<i>Warheads</i>						
Type 1 Drone	1D12	—	0-1◇	—	None	All
Type 2 Drone	2D12	—	0-2◇	—	None	All
Type 3 Drone	3D12	—	0-3◇	—	None	All
Type 4 Drone	4D12	—	0-4◇	—	None	All
Type 5 Drone	5D12	—	0-5◇	—	None	All

Notes

†—Whenever two of the attack dice roll doubles, multiply base damage delivered by 2.

§—If target's Defensive Value has not been reduced by a critical hit, add 1 to its Defensive Value. Also, completely ignore target's Damage Reduction when resolving a hit.

¥—If the attack dice roll triples, the weapon mount overloads and is destroyed. The target is not affected.

□—If the attack dice roll doubles or triples, the target takes an additional critical. Also, completely ignore target's Damage Reduction when resolving a hit.

*—A missile/spore mole target must be within 10/6 hex range only at the beginning of the Missile/Spore Mole Launch Phase.

‡—Low damage is distributed only to the target's Drive damage boxes, ignoring Damage Reduction value.

Δ—Low damage indicates the number of crewman killed in the target vessel. No hits are inflicted on the Damage Track.

◇—Hits within this range are automatic; there is no need to roll To Hit.

∂—May hit all torps in one hex targeting one ship, if at short range.

∞—If the To Hit roll for the Plexar Gun is triples, the firing ship's Defensive Value is reduced by 2.

Ω—Does 1D6 continuing damage per turn during Warhead Launch Phase, until a 1 is rolled. Damage Reduction applies.

Integrated Escort Weapon Table

Weapon Type	Base Attack Dice	To Hit Modifiers			Target	
		Short (+1)	Mid (0)	Long (-1)	Speed Restrictions	Damage
Ion Weapons						
Ion Cannon	2D8	1-8	9-16	17-30	Drive ≤ 7	All x 2
Twin Ion Cannon	2D8+1				Drive ≤ 6	(All+2) x 2
Triple Ion Cannon	2D8+3				Drive ≤ 5	(All+4) x 2
Quad Ion Cannon	2D8+5				Drive ≤ 4	(All+6) x 2
Impulse Cannon	2D8	1-3	4-5	6-11	Drive ≤ 9	High x 2
Twin Impulse Cannon	2D8+1				Drive ≤ 8	(High+2) x 2
Triple Impulse Cannon	2D8+3				Drive ≤ 7	(High+4) x 2
Quad Impulse Cannon	2D8+5				Drive ≤ 6	(High+6) x 2
Blast Weapons						
Blast Cannon	2D6	1-8	9-20	21-25	Drive ≤ 9	Medium x 2
Twin Blast Cannon	2D6+1				Drive ≤ 8	(Medium+2)x2
Triple Blast Cannon	2D6+2				Drive ≤ 7	(Medium+4)x 2
Quad Blast Cannon	2D6+3				Drive ≤ 6	(Medium+6)x 2
Repeating Blaster	2D6	1-3	4-8	9-15	None	High x 2
Twin Repeating Blaster	2D6+1					(High+2) x 2
Triple Repeating Blaster	2D6+2					(High+4) x 2
Quad Repeating Blaster	2D6+3					(High+6) x 2
Laser Weapons						
Laztube	2D10	1-10	11-20	21-40	Drive ≤ 8	High x 2
Twin Laztube	2D10+2				Drive ≤ 7	(High+1) x 2
Triple Laztube	2D10+4				Drive ≤ 6	(High+2) x 2
Quad Laztube	2D10+6				Drive ≤ 5	(High+3) x 2
Mass Drivers†						
Gatling Cannon	2D6	1-4	5-8	9-16	Drive ≤15	Low x 2=
Twin Gatling Cannon	2D6+1				Drive ≤15	(Low+1) x 2=
Triple Gatling Cannon	2D6+3				Drive ≤15	(Low+2) x 2=
Quad Gatling Cannon	2D6+5				Drive ≤15	(Low+3) x 2=
Hyper Cannon	2D6	1-8	9-15	16-30	Drive ≤11	High x 2=
Twin Hyper Cannon	2D6+1				Drive ≤10	(High+1) x 2=
Triple Hyper Cannon	2D6+3				Drive ≤9	(High+2) x 2=
Quad Hyper Cannon	2D6+5				Drive ≤8	(High+3) x 2=
Keel Cannon	2D8	1-10	11-15	16-20	None	All x 3=
Plazprojectors						
Corvette	XD8		1-5		None	All
Frigate	XD10		1-5		None	All
Destroyer	XD12		1-5		None	All
Gauss Field Generators †						
Bifrost Cannon	2D10	1-10	11-20	21-30	None	All x 2
Graviton Weapons						
Graviton Cannon	2D8+2	6-22	23-34	35-40	Drive ≤13*	All x 2

* May never fire at targets moving faster than 13.

New Weapon System Data Table

Weapon System	Cost	Slots	Base Attack Dice	Damage	Ammo	Crew
Entropic Accelerators						
Entropic Accelerator	8	4	2D8	High Ω	6	1
Graviton Weapons						
Graviton Cannon	30	30	2D8+2	All x 2	6	4

Ω Does 1D6 continuing damage per turn during Warhead Launch Phase, until a 1 is rolled. Damage Reduction applies.



"SCIENCE FIRST, HUMANITY SECOND"

"We're under attack and need help immediately. I repeat immediate response requested."

"Who is the aggressor, Red Hawk patrol?"

Before Wolf could answer, yet another alarm beeped insistently through the smoky blaring cockpit. This one spelled doom for his lurching unresponsive Night Hawk-missile lock and launch.

"Technocracy ships." Wolf spat as the missiles closed. "They've got some kind of smart torpedo. Tell everyone to watch out for..."

A scream finished his sentence as a barrage of missiles pounded his ship, blowing it into a thousand pieces of twisted metal.

ASPTM TECHNOCRACY

ASP Technocracy presents the near destruction of one of the Terran Empire's most influential houses, and its post-Imperial rise to dominance.

ASP Technocracy includes:

- 5 new ASP fighter wings
- 3 new basic scenarios with maps
- 2 new advanced scenarios with maps
- A comprehensive ASP timeline and history
- New ASP weapon systems:
 - Entropic Accelerator - Graviton Cannon
 - C Torpedoes - Parasite Torpedoes
- Four new Space Fighters:
 - Binary - Nova
 - Pulsar - Quark
- Two new Warhounds:
 - Nebula II - Pteradon
- Two refits:
 - Spirit Rider IV - Shryak Shuttle III

SILENT DEATH™
THE NEXT MILLENNIUM



To use this product, you must have *Silent Death: The Next Millennium™*.



ICE, Inc.
P.O. Box 1605
Charlottesville, VA 22902 USA
<http://www.ironcrown.com>

ISBN 1-55066-350-0 ICE 7.00

This specially-priced PDF is available through the ICE Online Store at www.ironcrown.com