


# SAGITTARIUS EYE

ISSUE **19**  
March 3305

THE  
  
LEAGUE

  
WOMEN OF  
SPACE

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Hutton Truckers • True Colours  
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# EDITORIAL

The Galaxy can be a daunting place for new independent pilots. With the keys to a little starship, one's horizons suddenly expand from one orbital or planet-side city to encompass billions upon billions of star systems.

Where do you go from here? A glance at the components market puts a lid on your ambition quickly: the purchase of a new frame shift drive seems a distant dream when it costs a hundred times what you expect to make from a single trading run. Sadly, we live in logarithmic times, and it takes a long time for a commander's work to begin paying off.

So when new pilots ask, "What should I do?" this writer has a recommendation: join a group.

Many people dislike the idea of pledging fealty. It seems at odds with the ideal of 'blazing your own trail', after all. But even for lone wolves, many Pilots Federation groups have something useful to offer, at least early in one's career.


First of all, they are tremendous repositories of shared knowledge. There are shortcuts and tricks to achieving many things in interstellar life, and experience and knowledge go a long way. Leverage that which others have. Rising through the Pilots Federation ranks is much harder on your own.

Secondly, a sense of community gives the Galaxy a heartbeat. No matter how much of a loner you are (truly, this writer understands), hearing the similar-but-different experiences of other pilots keeps the siren call of the flight seat loud and strong.

Finally, Pilots Federation groups are rarely about hierarchy. By their nature, leadership is generally a function of who contributes the most to the group's existence, rather than an unqualified dictatorship. Most smack of fraternity, not despotism.

Which to join? Fortunately, there are groups catering to almost every niche. If science is your interest, Canonn Interstellar Research make that their metier. Piqued by the mysteries of the cosmos? The Children of Raxxla are dedicated to unveiling the Galaxy's most elusive mysteries. Want to play the commodity markets, and don't take life too seriously? The Hutton Orbital Truckers (covered in this very issue) will welcome you.

There are tens of big groups, and hundreds of small ones. Avoid any that look like someone's little fiefdom, and always ask "what does this group offer me?" If the answer is guidance, support, community, shared goals, and a place to call home, that's good. If the answer isn't as obvious, move on.

Life as a fledgling Pilots Federation member can be hard, but others to learn from can make it easier — and more fun. 



Souvarine

# CONTENTS

## INTERVIEW

Who the hell are the Hutton Truckers? 8

## SCIENCE

True Colours: The Mystery of Thargoid Markings 14

## EXPLORATION

Stars and Unicorns: The Monoceros Constellation 20

## COVER STORY

The PvP League 28

## SHIPYARD

Mastering Flight Assist Off 36

## COVER STORY

Women of Space 42

## FEATURE

Trading the Good Stuff 56

Rare Commodities Spotlight: Witchhaul Kobe Beef 64

Co-Pawlots 66

## REVIEW

Elements 68

# WHO THE HELL ARE THE



Whether you've inadvertently accepted a mission to Hutton Orbital, heard shouts of "For the Mug!" echo across a crowded bar, tuned in to Hutton Orbital Radio or been suckered into heading out to Alpha Centauri in search of the legendary free Anaconda, it's likely you've heard of the Hutton Truckers. But just who are these garrulous galactic lorry drivers?



**Y**our correspondent arranges to meet one of their founding members, Cmdr Vingtetun, at a dingy bar on one of the lower levels of the infamous orbital platform, some 0.22 ly away from Alpha Centauri. Thirsty after our long supercruise journey, we sink our first pint.

Did the Hutton Truckers first become an organised group around the time of the Hutton Orbital community goal back in 3301, or did they exist prior to that?

As a group of pilots making our way in the universe, the most dedicated of Hutton Truckers came together to create a radio station and to lead the way with the community goal, ensuring that everyone could be cured of the debilitating condition M.O.D.S. (Mug Ownership Deficiency Syndrome). This core team was then asked by their fellow pilots whether they would carry on bringing silliness, fun and space trucking to the universe in the weeks and months after the commu-

nity goal completed and the mugs went on sale. We then researched how to create the radio station and built studios 1 to 3 at Hutton. These burned down after a few "incidents" but we're now up to Studio 5.

The initial 'mission' after the mugs were created was the first great Hutton convoy which ended up at Chaviano Gateway. Nearly 250 pilots came to Hutton and loaded each other's Type 9s full of mugs (using a cargo collection technique known as 'teabagging'), before transporting them (under fire from Pilots Federation and non-Pilots Federation pilots alike) in twenty jumps on a three minute jump timer, to the Mapor system over 168 light years away. We even had a refuelling stop half way courtesy of the Fuel Rats. It was an epic adventure which has been commemorated in the Ballad of Chaviano Gateway.

From there we created the G.I.M.P.P. run (the Galactic Intrepid Mug Proliferation Project) to deliver Hutton Mugs

to over twenty locations throughout space, including the headquarters of all the major powers and a few other notable locations.

Since then there have been numerous mug-related missions. Mostly to take them to stupid locations, or get them eaten by a Thargoid, or thrown into Sag A\* or glued back together again using Xeessee Ant Grub Glue, or to provide drinks at Beagle Point or... well, you get the idea. Jaques had a mug within twenty four hours of arriving in Colonia!

Anyway, these were the origins of Hutton as the Galaxy's foremost advocates of PwP – Pilot with Pilot interaction – a co-operative dedicated to shared endeavour.

When did the group become formally recognised as a minor faction?

The 'group' was formed at the behest of one Don Antonaci of Wolf 359 - a pirate Don who petitioned the Pilot's Federation to have Hutton recognised as a faction, so he could attack it. We did a ground assault on his family villa in the Wolf 359 system as punishment, but the Pilots Federation duly put through the application for recognition of Hutton, and the Hutton Orbital Truckers Co-Operative was formed - with Alvin Deefer as the nominated faction leader. And yes, he's actually a dog.

[coughing beer back into his glass] I'm sorry, for a minute there I thought you said your leader was a dog.

Yes, that's correct. We're a co-operative and Alvin is our figurehead. He has minions – that's us – so no one person is in charge. Also, it means we have a team of Momus Bog Spaniels zero-G trained for security detail at the orbital.

[valiantly ploughing on with the interview] Okay, so the radio station was created before the Hutton community goal, rather than after it. To backtrack for a second, and for those of our readers still unfamiliar with Hutton Orbital, could you briefly explain what's special about this place and

why the community goal seemed to attract a very particular kind of pilot?

The history of Hutton Orbital is written into the fabric of near-Sol exploration. Eden was the first world identified as potentially having water. An expedition was sent there and, when it was discovered that it was a volcanic, inhospitable place, a mining outpost was created. It became an out of the way, relatively unused outpost for humanity as the invention of frameshift drives and faster-than-light travel became commonplace.

With the advent of navigation beacons, Universal Cartographics tied ship systems into arrival points based on the 'main' star. Alpha Centauri, being a tri-nary star system, dropped pilots near Alpha Centauri A, with B being not that far away and Proxima (hilariously, the furthest) being 0.22 ly further out [Hutton Orbital orbits Proxima].

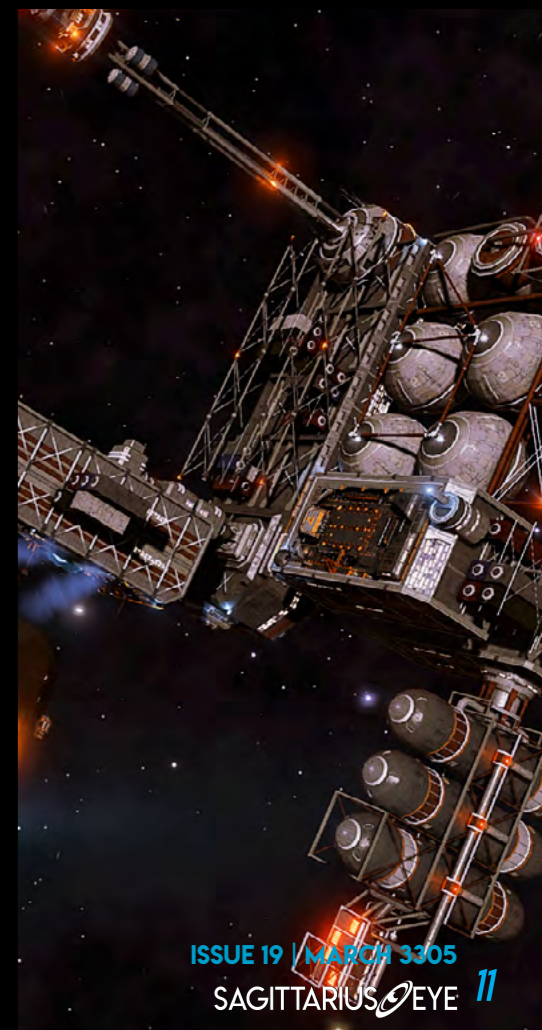
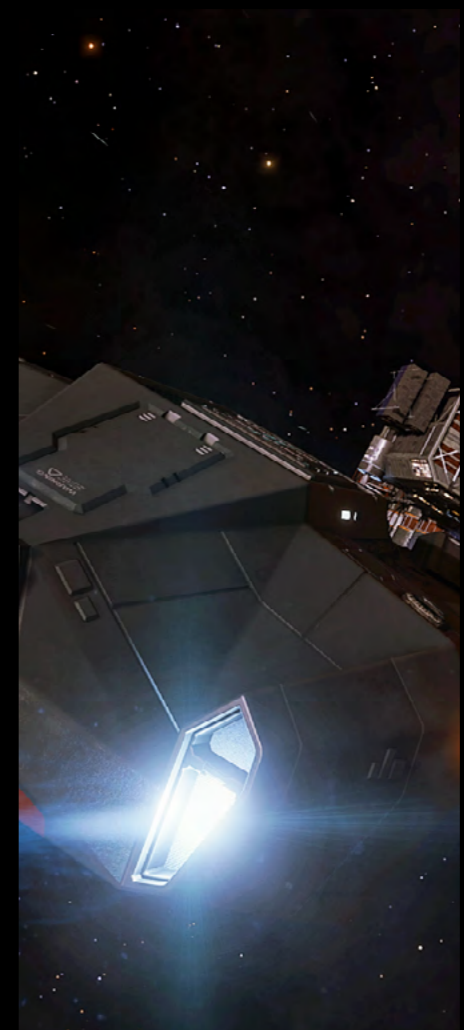
Over time, it became a mining hangout for people wanting to get away from society, with hermits and loners propping up the bar [Vingtetun gestures around the room to illustrate]. One in-

dustrious individual began making the now famous Centauri Mega Gin in an unused section of the station, and Hutton Orbital started its second life as a stop on the rare traders route.

It gained notoriety, a rite of passage. The joke originally started with a simple phrase: 'I went to Hutton Orbital, and all I got was this mug'. The funny thing was, there wasn't even a mug. All that flying, in a straight line, and there wasn't anything to commemorate it. It became a running joke, like asking someone to go to the stores for 'a long



I went to Hutton Orbital, and all I got was this mug.



weight' or 'tartan paint'. For some it was an endurance test.

*Ships failed the journey often - pilots having insufficient fuel to get to the end or abandoning their vessel somewhere on the run, and calling for help before space madness set in. An enterprising artist, known only as Muggsy, salvaged many of these ships and discovered that the remains of their frameshift drive plates would heat up when in supercruise. He decided to make mugs out of them so that the mug could go from being a fable to a reality.*

*In conjunction with Cmdr Nannie Dragon P and members of what is now known as the Hutton Orbital Truckers, he submitted an application to have it recognised as a tradeable rare item. It won with over 60% of the votes and the rest, as they say, is history.*

*It's special as there's nowhere else in the Galaxy with that long a supercruise journey. It's mind-numbingly dull and there's not much at the other end that makes it worth it - it's all about the journey and the 'laugh'.*

*Hutton Truckers embody that spirit - doing the difficult stuff just because it's there. Not for reward, not for the adrenaline kick, simply 'because'. It's no coincidence that the top [haulers] in the early days of Operation IDA, or many of the community goals, or those rescuing people out beyond Beagle Point were Hutton Truckers.*

*And it's not that they're all endurance racers, explorers, Canonn scientists and mystery solvers. It's that the pilots who nail their flag to Hutton's mast (it's a very nice flag, by the way) are, to a person, 'in' on the joke. They get it. They combat space madness through creativity, generosity, jokes, fun - the spirit of 'edible poets' and 'fat black felines'.*

*For the loneliest, most pointless place in the Galaxy to have such a sociable*

*set of pilots; for the most dull activity to generate such fun; for an out of the way backwater to have such traffic and support and have spawned 'forthemug' as a greeting throughout the Galaxy - that's all part of the joke.*

We love the Truckers' ethos (which is perhaps the defining characteristic of the group) but, lest our readers dismiss them as inconsequential,



**Hutton Truckers embody that spirit - doing the difficult stuff just because it's there.**

can we just be boring for a second and get some numbers? How many Pilots Federation members would you say you have, roughly? How many systems does your faction currently have a foothold in, and how many bases, stations and outposts are presently owned by the Truckers Co-operative?

*We're currently in twenty systems with forty-four bases. We have 2,500 members on our faction's daily communications hub and a little over 350 pilots actively involved in faction work. The Hutton helper, a flight computer that Truckers can fit to their ships, lists over 500 pilots who are or have helped out with various shenanigans. However, being a Hutton Trucker is more an 'ethos' than a state of membership. Many from Canonn, or the Fuel Rats, or FGE, Paladins and others consider themselves a Hutton Trucker. It's not an exclusivity thing.*

It reminds us a little of the Fuel Rats and their so-called anarchic-collective approach to membership and management. You seem like an equally affable and altruistic bunch, but are there people who don't get 'the joke'? Do the Truckers have any real enemies?

*Enemies? We've had a few groups attack us, but then we taught them the error of their ways. Gluttony Fang used to be with CODE - he applied to join Hutton when he saw that we were more fun and we even had a song recorded to commemorate it. Our Federal neighbours were a little salty at one point, but we're all friends now. They tried taking a system of ours using a non Pilots Federation faction so we went to one of their cities with fifty ships and videoed ourselves raining 250,000 tonnes of bio-waste down from the sky over the course of an evening. That's when they realised that fighting against Hutton was a no-win situation as we'd just make a laugh out of it. Oh, that and we have the best darned po-*



*litical team in the Galaxy with us. Enemies? Not really - just friends who haven't worked out the secret handshake yet.*

*We did get called a bunch of hippie carebears once by a member. We just said 'thank you' and went back to trucking. He quit and attacked one of our systems. Then he got bored and went away.*

The Truckers are notoriously good at manipulating interstellar politics to further their own ends. What are the group's long term ambitions in that direction?

*Generally we're not an expansionist faction. We like taking places with silly names. Like Bonkers in Wolf 25, or George's Pants (I mean Pantazis). We have our eye on the Haghole too, Haghole would make a good partner for Bonkers. And we see ourselves as custodians of rare goods. We have four now - the Mugs, the Gin, the Pantaa Prayer Sticks and the Indi Bourbon. Our ambition is to master the art of not expanding any more and keeping Hutton space in investment and peace.*



Sounds like a big job! If our readers like what they hear and want to get involved with the group, what's the best way for them to get in touch with you?

*Well... there's this place... in Alpha Centauri... near Sol... just a short supercruise from the jump point. Only 0.22 ly after you arrive.*

*Alternatively, huttonorbital.com on GalNet has a faster load time and a handy radio station for the journey.*

*The green room in the radio studio welcomes pilots every Thursday evening and of course there's our TV channel at tv.forthemug.com.*

Fantastic. Well, thanks for your time and for being so voluble about the group's history and activities.

*Just remember, it's all #forthemug. Oh, and can I just give a quick shout-out to my fellow Hutton founders Psykokow, Snos, Evenstar, Spike, Erik Marcaigh and Simoof. Thanks chaps!*

**At this point your correspondent puts away his recorder and we settle in for a long evening of happy banter, sharing tales of Hutton and beyond. The next morning we remember that we completely forgot to ask where to go to collect our free Anaconda...**

**Who are the Hutton Truckers? They're the people who would befriend the devil and turn hell into the happiest damn place in the Galaxy.**

Who the Hell are the Hutton Truckers?

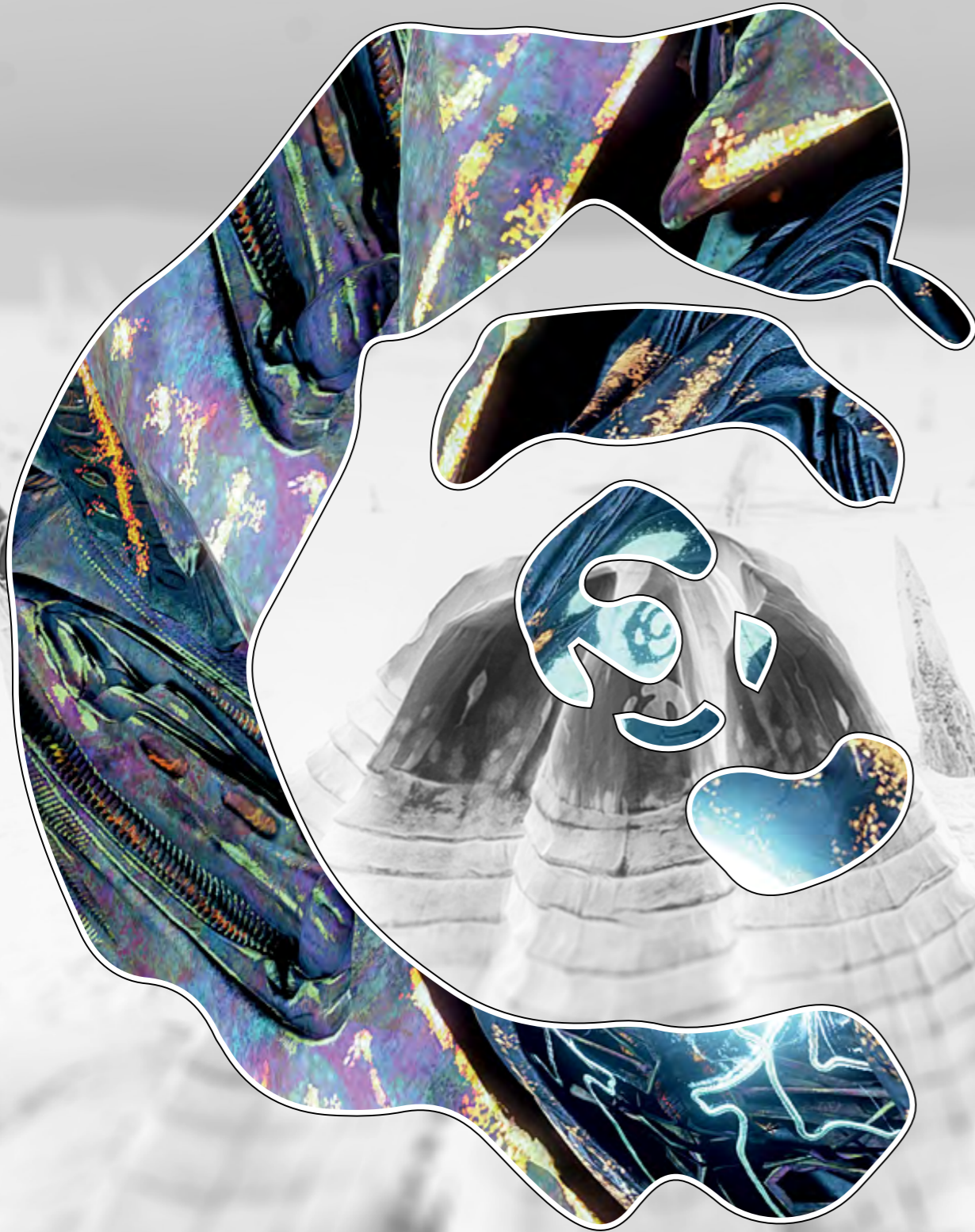
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# True Colours

the Mystery of Thargoid Markings

Thargoids: utterly dangerous.

Utterly alien.

Utterly mysterious.

Yet the question remains: are there more commonalities between this insectoid race and humanity than meets the eye? This month, we shine a light on efforts to decode the Thargoid symbols.

**W**hen we last covered the Thargoids, we focused on weapons of war. But the pen, as well as the sword, has power, and many argue that if we could find a way to communicate with the aliens, we could end our war with them.



## Evidence in plain sight

The Federal star and the Imperial eagle are universally understood. They are two of a multitude of logos, emblems, and crests that denote the hundreds of thousands of squadrons, factions, and other organisations throughout human space. We humans identify deeply with these symbols, living and dying beneath our banners.

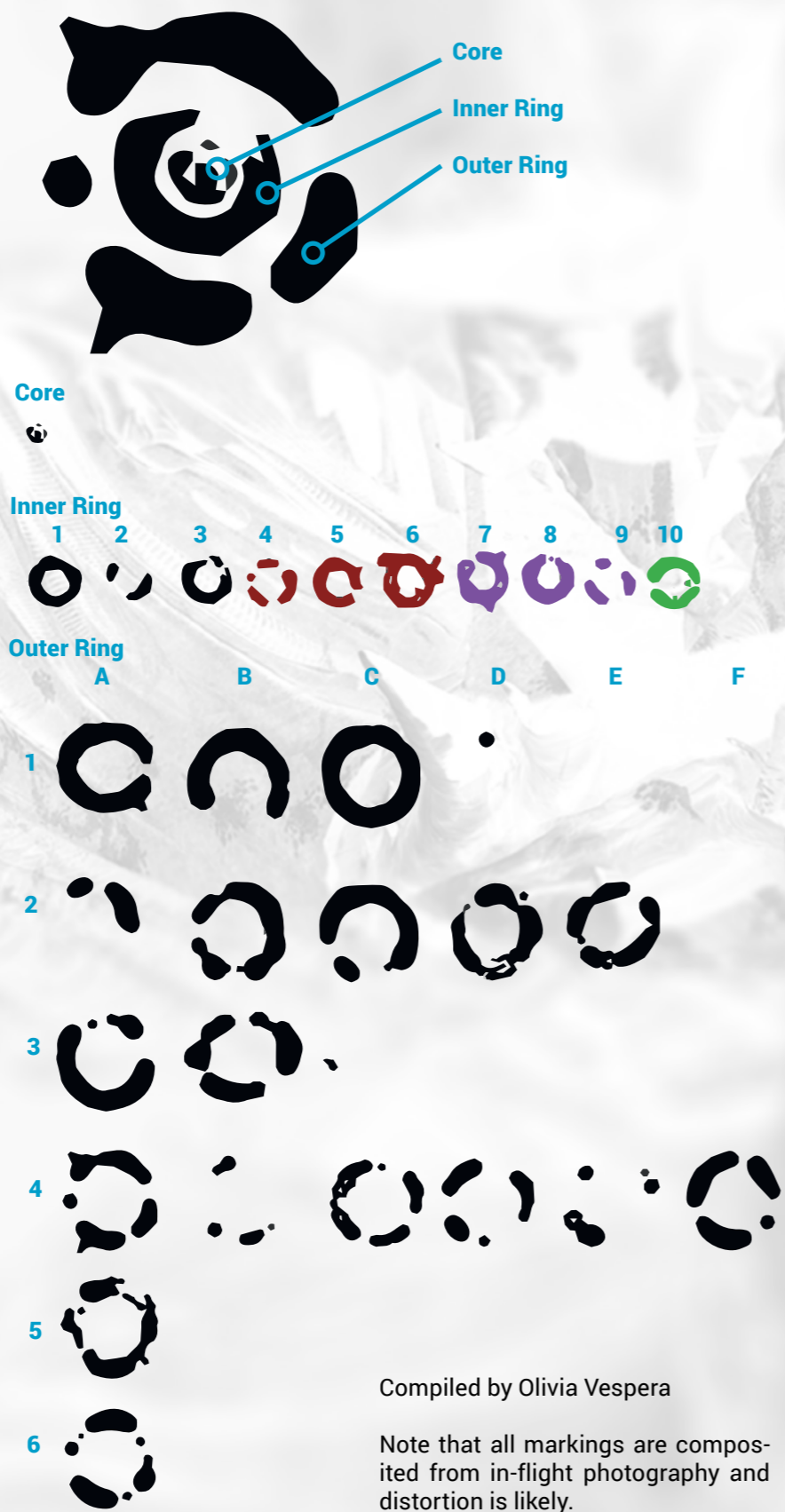
Thargoids, too, have symbols. These are totally different to any idea we have of 'writing' – they are concentric and abstract in nature, reminiscent of paint daubed on a cave wall, forming strange, circular whorls of different complexities.

Commanders Nicou, Olivia Vespera and Orodin have compiled images of these symbols and compared them, to try to work out what each of them might mean.

"Looking at Orodin's work. I could see that the markings were built from a set or library of shared elements," explains Olivia. She set about cataloguing these shared elements in order to help decipher them. "I collated the work of 'wildlife photographers' who helped me take images of Thargoid scans. In doing so I categorized them arbitrarily by the number of spots."

Olivia made contact and shared her findings with Nicou, of Remlok Industries – himself hard at work trying to decipher the same mystery. "These Thargoid markings required months of work. Eventually we succeeded in gathering a full spectrum of them," he told us.

One early observation the researchers made was that the central symbol is common to all known Thargoid markings. First seen on the 'Barnacles' in 3301, this is a simple splotch surrounded by a broken ring. It appears in the centre of all Thargoid Interceptors. "The inner rings are possibly the hive's 'logo'", Nicou sug-



## There could be other hives, perhaps with different motives and goals.

gests. "One funny thing: the inner rings aren't all in the same position. We don't know what this means, as yet."

Could this be clan, family, hive or civilisation insignia – like the eagle of the Empire, or the stars of the Federation? This simple insight is tantalising, as it suggests that there could be other hives, perhaps with different motives and goals.

It quickly emerged that each 'ring' was an archetype – one of a range of defined designs that any given individual might sport in that position in the concentric set. So, two Basilisks might share the same second ring, for example, but have distinct outer rings.

Nicou has a theory. "Like ants on Earth, [Thargoids] are all designed for specific purposes. A Cyclops is tasked to scout areas of space, while the Basilisks are good at intercepting ships in normal space. The Medusae excel in the assault of stations, while the Hydras are the 'queens' of conflict zones. Analysing the different markings from the youngest Cyclops to the more seasoned Hydras, we think it represents a cycle of maturity, [in which] each Thargoid grows and develops its own skills," he explains. Later, Nicou goes on to suggest that the more 'full' the middle ring is, the more mature that individual is – or the closer it is to the end of its life cycle.

If the symbology is a reflection of the Thargoid lifecycle, starting from something resembling a larva and maturing into a fully developed creature, perhaps there is even some kind of 'royal' phase after that. Who knows what the symbol on the Thargoid Queen would look like?


"What eludes us so far is the variant called Hydra. This specimen has one column [middle ring variant] so far, which makes it kinda special," Nicou explains.

The concentric nature of the symbols also hints at an order of increasing specificity. The central symbol is common to all individuals that have been seen – this could simply mean 'Thargoid'. The next ring outwards could denote the tribe that individual belongs to; the next outermost, the family group within that tribe, for example. In this way, complex information regarding an individual's origin and place in society could be conveyed with a single symbol.

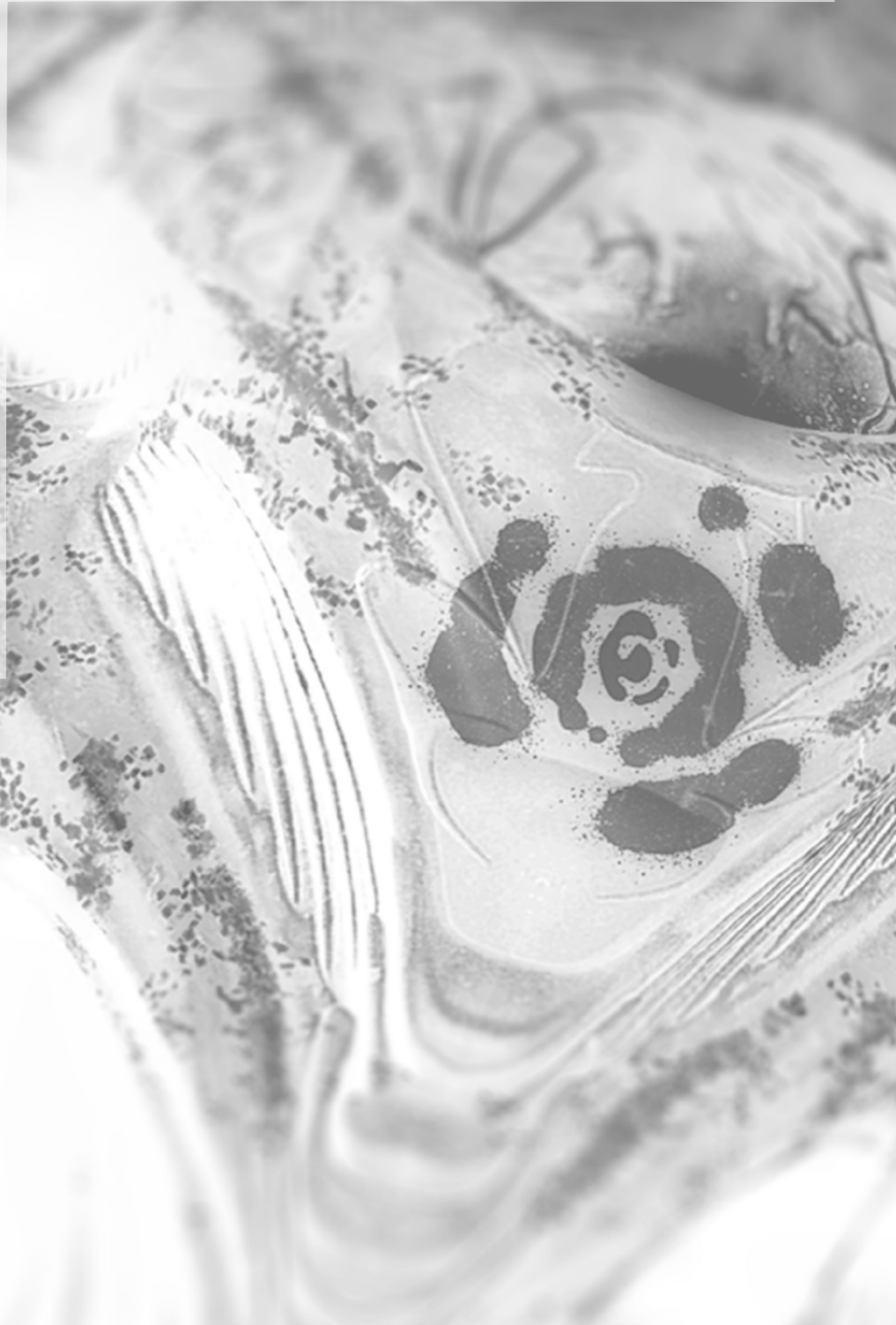
Sadly that's where the concrete observations end. "I don't know what the Thargoid markings mean," Olivia admits. "Personally I think they're names, in much the same way as we have faces."

### Why bother?

The pursuit of deciphering these images is no mere academic endeavour. To understand them would represent a breakthrough in our understanding of the Thargoids and their alien culture, potentially even leading to communication. Additionally, to understand the nuance of Thargoid factionalism – even if it were only a fraction of the thousands of human planetary organizations – would greatly increase our ability to engage them, even though the thought of playing politics with Thargoids is admittedly far-fetched.

But it is tantalising to reflect on the fact that sentience created these patterns, and that they undeniably hold meaning. Imagine what new opportunities might open up if we learnt this strange calligraphy? 

### Who knows what the symbol on the Thargoid Queen would look like?



*True Colours: The Mystery of Thargoid Markings*

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**Thanks to:**  
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FROM 4,725,620 CREDITS



Stars and Unicorns:

# The Monoceros Constellation



In this article, we will look at one famous constellation and the marvels an explorer can expect to find in it: Monoceros, the constellation of the unicorn.

**B**efitting a mythical beast from Earth's antiquity, the origins of this constellation are shrouded in mystery. Apparently, 'unicorn' at one time described several native horned animals in Earth's past, whereas in other epochs it was a beast of heraldry representing strength, purity and vigour. 'Monoceros' means 'the unicorn' in an ancient Earth language called Latin, although scholars trace the origin of the word as far back as Ancient Greek.

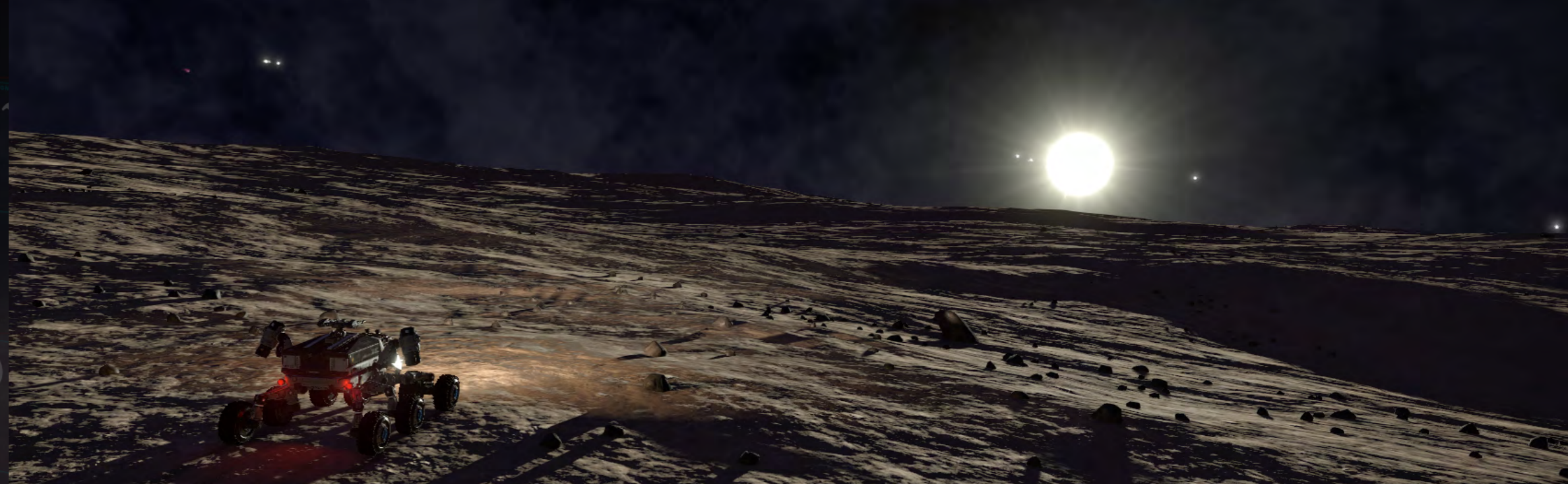
Monoceros holds a number of very interesting deep sky objects that are well worth a trip. Some of them are related to events of galactic proportions, while others are just fantastic places to visit. Some of them are close by — as close as a dozen light years — while others lie beyond the far reaches of the Galaxy's distant spiral arms.

If you want to get a sense of direction, search for the star system 12 Monocerotis in the Galaxy Map. It is a giant orange star and will guide you into the constellation. ▶

For those pilots who want to stare down a true inferno, there is **Hades Edge**. The system was so dubbed by explorers in January 3303 during the Distant Stars expedition. Its catalogue number is HD 49368, but that hardly catches the spirit of a huge, bubbling cauldron of hot plasma 170 times the size of Sol! The Edge's innermost two planets are ringed and landable but hardly more than baked, scenic chunks of rock and metal. Heat sinks are advisable.

Distant Stars was an expedition aimed at reaching the extremely remote **King Cobra Cluster** (Messier 67) high above the galactic plane. It was an undertaking that eventually doomed the whole fleet; a neutron star jet's frame shift drive (FSD) supercharge made the final jump possible, but without a neutron star on the other side, there was no way back. It is said that a graveyard of Ancondas and Diamondbacks marks their passing somewhere up in the cluster.

Staying in the Monoceros constellation, there is one particular area of space which may be the most heavily-travelled region in relative proximity to the Bubble: parts of the gigantic Orion Molecular Cloud complex overlap into Monoceros, and the area has been intensely surveyed ever since the first commercial frame shift drives became available. That is in part because Barnard's Loop and the Orion Nebula are two of the most iconic deep sky objects close to Sol, but it is also because the area is rumoured to hold a number of clandestine industrial operations. Some speculate it may be the domain of the Thargoids or another alien species, which would explain why Universal Cartographics have completely locked down several sectors of space there (see our investigation into 'permit locks' in Issue 14 of this publication).



Right inside all this is the Cone Sector, with its prominent **Cone Nebula** and the **Christmas Tree Cluster** (NGC 2264). Yes, that's right: the Cone Sector lies in Monoceros, not Orion, as often supposed. It is the epicentre of a swirling storm of secrecy, rumours and speculation. The last great endeavour to lift the veil of secrecy was the ill-fated voyage of the *Gnosis*, Canonn Interstellar's megaship, in September 3304.

The well-known science group tried to use their ship's superior jump range to bridge the permit-locked 'doughnut' of the Collinder 97 sector and land at one of the Cone Sector's stars. However, the *Gnosis* was hyperdicted and swarmed by Thargoids. Following this incident, the Pilots Federation and Universal Cartographics abruptly locked down the entire sector and made it inaccessible for any ship. This lent credibility to the theory that some kind of alien secret lies within.

“ The far reaches of the Monoceros constellation have always been of interest to astronomers and cosmologists

Past this troubled region are more sights to see in this constellation. **Hubble's Variable Nebula** (NGC 2261) was discovered by William Herschel, but bears the name of the astronomer who is credited for discovering redshift in galaxies, Edwin Hubble. The nebula is small enough – in terms of the Galaxy Map – to be overlooked, and since the nebula's central star R Monocerotis is shrouded in what is thought to be a dense cloud of gas, it even casts 'shadows' which result in stunningly beautiful 'fans' or 'veils'.

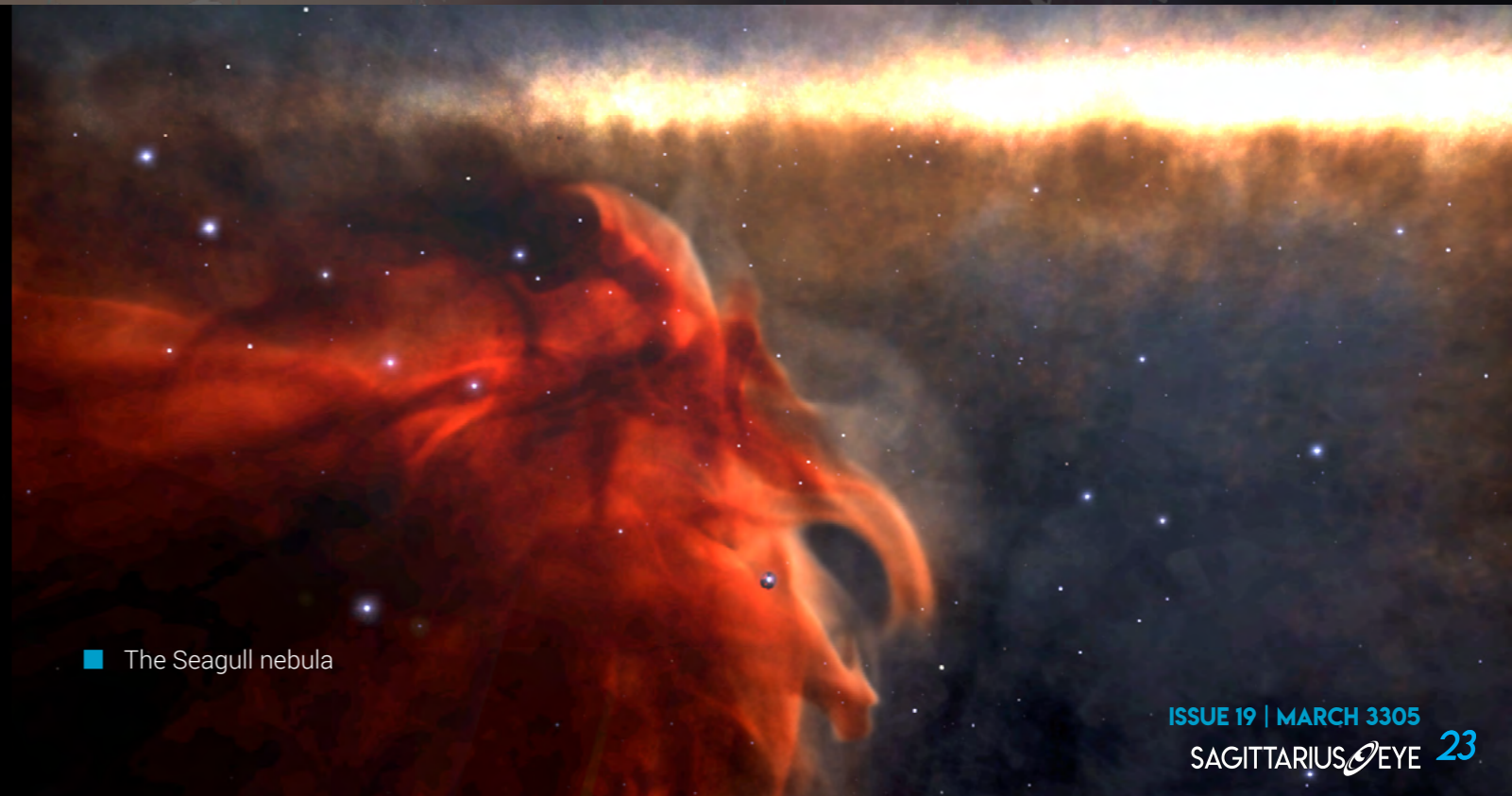
Want another small nebula for your 'places to visit' list? The **Butterfly Nebula** (NGC 2346) has two distinctive lobes, or 'wings', of heated dust. The dust comes from the intense solar winds of the binary star V651 Monoceros, as the bluish hot A-class star blows material away from its orbiting companion.

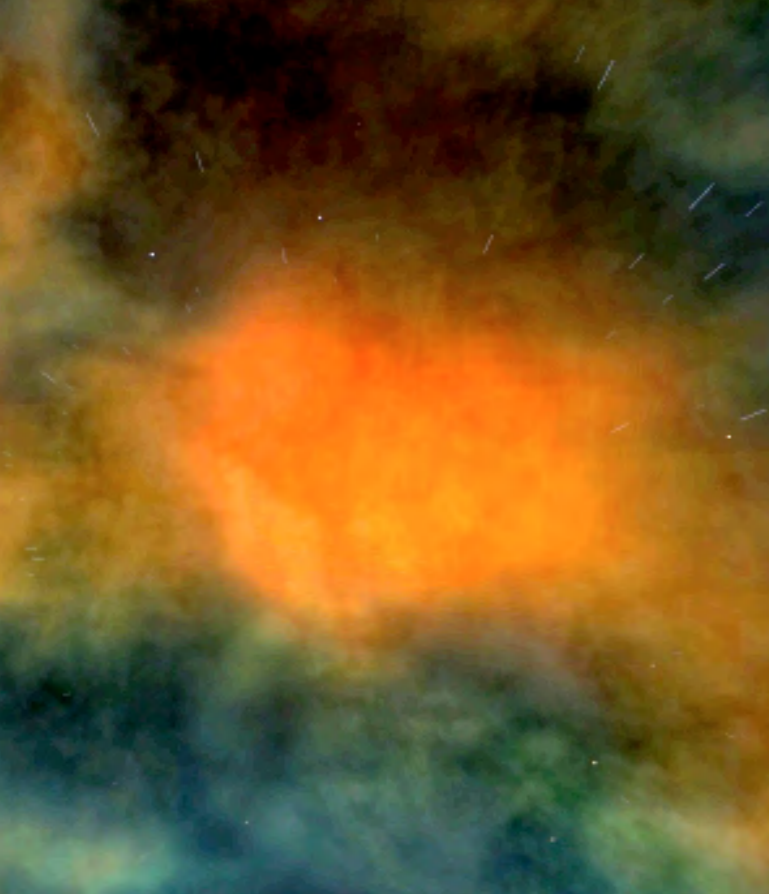
That companion was once thought to be a red giant star, but again FSD technology proved astronomers wrong: the M star has already shed too much of its mass to become a giant. ▶

■ The *Gnosis* megaship



■ The Seagull nebula





And then there is the **Seagull Nebula** (IC 2177), which is much, much larger than either the Butterfly or Hubble's Variable nebulae. It is an example of an 'H II region'. The term 'H II' refers to atomic hydrogen that has been ionized by the heavy radiation of massive and young stars, splitting the electrons from their atoms. This prevents atoms combining into molecules, so no star formation can take place.

It is part of the natural cycle: stars are born, ionize or evaporate their surroundings with their intense radiation, then explode or leave the dust cloud; and in turn, the remaining hydrogen can form molecules again, which will eventually give birth to new stars. The Seagull is a beautiful reminder of this cycle.

A small human outpost called Hell Port has been carved out of one of the bigger asteroids in the Seagull Sector DL-Y d3 system, so travellers can at least replenish their supplies - albeit for a steep fee.

One other nebula of note also lies in the realm of the unicorn: the **Rosette Nebula**. This is a hot spot in an even bigger cloud complex, and another H II region, like the Seagull Nebula. It contains the NGC 2244 star cluster, which probably formed out of the cloud. Its massive stars are now ionizing the surroundings, preventing any further formation of stars.

There is even a small mining community in the Rosette Sector CQ-Y d59 system, called New Beginnings, where pilots can call in for repairs, fuel and (limited) recreation. Approximately 5,000 light years from Sol, it's a recommended stop for travelers on long journeys.

The far reaches of the Monoceros constellation have always been of interest to astronomers and cosmologists, because these locations could prove or disprove a number of peculiar theories about the makeup of the outer spiral arm of our Galaxy. One of these theories, perhaps the most prominent, is the hypothesised **Monoceros Ring**.

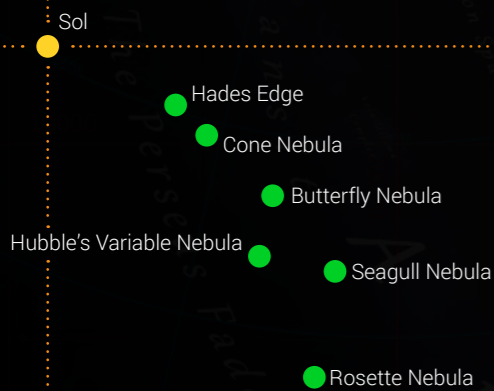
According to this theory, the Ring is a stream of stars left over from the Milky Way's impacts with a smaller galaxy called the Canis Major Dwarf Galaxy. There is evidence of this in several places between the Monoceros and Canis Major constellations. Astronomers postulate that consequently there should be some dense remnants of star stuff near the galactic plane, where the Galaxy's tidal forces are strongest. These remnants should be dense clusters of mainly old stars.

This fascinating theory stood for more than a thousand years, because it was impossible to just go there and have a look. This all changed, of course, in the 3300s with the advent of relatively cheap consumer-grade frame shift technology.



■ The Rosette nebula

“ **Monoceros holds a number of very interesting deep sky objects that are well worth a trip.** ”



■ Schematic map of the Monoceros constellation

At least one expedition into the Monoceros constellation was conducted soon after: the Monoceros Mission of 3303 by the Children of Raxxla and a survey team of the Rock Rats, numbering around thirty pilots. One of its goals was to either prove or disprove the existence of the Ring structure.

They did neither. Although they reported evidence of a number of smaller pockets and loose clusters of older stars, it was just not enough to prove or disprove the theory. To signal a possible return or an incentive for other explorers, the expedition 'lit a beacon' in the Jongoi MF-A d0 system, which lies very close to the galactic coordinates of (10,000, 0, -10,000). 'Beacons' are particular systems of interest logged via the Galactic Mapping Project, to act as waypoints for other explorers.

Another little-known goal of the Monoceros Mission was to scout the borders of the remote permit-locked region around the NGC 2286 star cluster. They searched for a possible fourth area of abandoned settlements, like the ones in the Conflux, Formidine Rift and Hawking's Gap. However, the expedition could not find any evidence of such activities, apart from a number of downed nav beacons and the occasional wreck of a tea freighter.

If you think these regions are remote, think again. If you plan to go further, you'll need to load some jumponium and ready the FSD: explorers have called these regions the Outer Arm Vacuus and the Perseus Fade, with good

reason. Stellar density drops rapidly out here, but for dedicated deep space jockeys there is always a way. If you persist through the thinning star field, eventually you will reach **Exterioris Australis**.

This patch of space is a conundrum. It is an overdensity of stars where one would least expect it: on the edge of the Galaxy. It is not dense enough to be a globular cluster – we know several exist in the Milky Way's spiral arms – and it is far too dispersed to be an open cluster. Maybe it is a mixture of both: a globular cluster mass dispersing as the Galaxy spins. Some even think it may be the remnants of the Canis Major Dwarf Galaxy. Who knows?

The region is too remote to study unless you are actually there – which is where intrepid pilots come in. Flight path analyses provided by the Pilots Federation and Universal Cartographics show that it is clearly an area of interest; so if you have nothing better to do, saddle up your Asp and go looking for answers, because no one seems to have found any thus far.

And beyond? Well, in terms of our Galaxy, there is no 'beyond'. You can go as far as Lyed YJ-I d9-0, named Amundsen's Star after a famous explorer. Our ancestors thought the world was a disk; if you've reached this far, you've reached the constellation's edge and are rewarded with a stunning view of the Milky Way behind you.

*Stars and Unicorns:  
The Monoceros  
Constellation*

**Text:** Andrew Gaspurr  
**Design:** Donald Duck  
**Thanks to:** The Galactic Mapping Project  
**Images:** Andrew Gaspurr, OrangePheonix, Reeney, Donald Duck, EDSM, SAGi Archives



# TRIPPLAN



BLAZE YOUR OWN TRAIL



# THE LEAGUE

For the past four years, the most skilled combat pilots from across the Galaxy have gathered together with one objective: to find out who is the best.

What started as quite a small event in 3301 has gained significant attention over the years, and the 3304 PvP League season saw a record-smashing twenty-seven teams enter, and most matches livestreamed to combat enthusiasts across the Galaxy.

Here, we break down the league's events, go over some of the tournament's unforgettable highlights, and look back at the league from the perspective of the competitors.

## Tournament structure

With each year bringing ever-larger numbers of teams to the tournament, significant restructuring has been necessary. Instead of using the group structure employed in season three (which caused controversy among some participants), season four utilised a double-elimination format. All teams would continue to fight their way through the tournament until they had lost twice, at which point they would be eliminated. After losing their first match, a team was transferred to the losers' bracket, where they had one last chance to make their way past the other losing teams and get a spot in the grand finals.

Round 1 saw a total of eleven fixtures, comprised mostly of newcomer teams. Those that won would proceed to the second round, where they found a highly-seeded team awaiting them.

A single match was a best-of-three fight to the death. Participating teams could choose between 4v4 (all medium ships) or 6v6 (4 medium and 2 small ships) compositions, with 4v4 proving to be the more fast paced and popular format.

## Newcomers' chance

Season four was unusual as many big names from previous leagues were absent. The most glaring absence was that of the Smiling Dog Crew (SDC). SDC competed in seasons one through three of the league, and were crowned champions of two of those. Another notable absence was that of the 51st TH Massilia, consistent participants and 4th place from season three.

Ade's Armada, former champions and twice runners-up, had experienced many membership changes since season three, to the point where no pilots from their previous teams were participating.

Combining all of these changes with the dissolution of previously-powerful groups such as the Renegades, who performed well in season three, this year was the chance for newcomers from across the Galaxy to find a new champion.

“ **MesaFalcon was able to reboot his ship when his hull integrity had reached 0%**

## Decisive victories

While the opening fights unfortunately saw a large number of forfeits, mostly due to poor preparation, the seven matches that went ahead proved immediately that this league would be the most gripping yet. Every played match resulted in 2-0, with some surprise upsets.

Notable results included newcomers Prism and the Screaming Eagles defeating well-established combatants the Blood Brothers from Alrai and Delta Squadron respectively. With Delta Squadron taking last season's Best Newcomer award, such a decisive result was a particularly unexpected outcome.

## A dark horse?

Round one's biggest surprise was yet to come. The following weekend saw a clash that many believed would be over before it started: Lavingy's Legion was to face the 44th Vulture Syndicate.

In the pre-season discussions the teams had collectively decided that Core Dynamics' Vulture was to be classed as a medium-sized ship. While it does only need a small landing pad, the ship's disproportionate firepower means it outclasses the rest of the small ship field. This was primarily to avoid all 6v6 matches employing Vultures as their two small vessels. This should have meant that the Vulture had little place in the league - or so it was thought.

As is clear from their name, the 44th Vulture Syndicate are enthusiasts of the heavy fighter. Prior to their first fight, they confirmed upon questioning: they would indeed be flying it exclusively in all their league engagements.

“ **As is clear from their name, the 44th Vulture Syndicate are enthusiasts of the heavy fighter.**

Most, therefore, dismissed them as brave amateurs, not knowing what they were getting into. When they came to face Lavingy's Legion — elite Imperial pilots serving the Emperor — in their first engagement, it was seen as a foregone conclusion. However, 44th managed to win the two first rounds and snatch victory from their opponents.

We were fortunate enough to be able to speak with Cmdr Hellfire, first in command of 44th. He described the team's feelings prior to their big stage debut, and addressed their ship choice:

*I wouldn't say that a wing of Vultures is unusual given the capabilities of the ship itself. If flown well enough it can be a threat to most of the bigger ships around these days. But given the current trend of most contenders flying larger ships, giving quite an advantage in combat, we weren't expecting anything to be honest.*

*The idea of taking part in such a competition wasn't about winning in the first place, but rather showing that there are still pilots relying on their piloting skills rather than using the best gear available on today's market.*

Despite being at an inherent disadvantage, this clearly did not affect the team's spirits. After their surprise victory, rounds two and three saw them up against the Warriors of Wyrd and notorious pirates from CODE respectively. Sadly, these two engagements would see 44th leave the tournament earlier than many expected after their first display, though their fight with CODE was not without controversy.

The tournament rules stated that if the two opponents could not agree on a location, then it would default to rocky rings. CODE were accused of choosing the rocky rings to give them an advantage against the nimble Vultures, despite many competitors and fans preferring the denser environment of ice rings. Cmdr Hellfire said:

*To be honest, I couldn't say exactly what happened. Our strategy was to use the environment to our advantage, when that didn't work and given that the CODE is a rather capable crew, we were quickly outgunned. The icy rings, being a dense environment, was the perfect location for Vultures with their low profile, high manoeuvrability and good average speed. In the end, we were shown that if it comes to raw power and in a more open space, the Vulture's defenses are not holding up as long as we thought when being under focused fire. As to why the CODE didn't want to go for the location we suggested, their leader spoke about doing something different since a lot of fights happened in icy rings already.*

*I don't want to dismiss their capabilities, but on the side of the 44th and some other pilots I know, their decision seemed more like wanting to strip us of our advantage in confined spaces.*

The location of engagements proved pivotal in many matches. Surprising differences of environment between fighting in icy rings versus rocky rings had in some cases been decisive, leading to recurring jokes amongst spectators and participants of “overpowered rocks”. Due to excessive use of high speed flight-assist off manoeuvres, many ships were destroyed drifting into asteroids, and many more damaged.

Despite exiting the tournament earlier than many fans expected after their win, it was widely agreed that though they had lost the league, the 44th Vulture Syndicate had won the fans' hearts, showing excellent sportsmanship and courage.



## Developing rivalries

As the tournament progressed, and weaker teams began to fall, strong competitors began to emerge. Old names such as the Guild of Rebuy Screenius Maximus (RSM), Ronin of Amarak, and Nomads, found themselves pit against newcomers like the Screaming Eagles, Diamond Dogs, and Top Tier.

Two newcomer teams found themselves getting particularly well acquainted: the Diamond Dogs and the Screaming Eagles (the subject of Issue 8's cover article). Full disclosure: this correspondent was fortunate enough to be on the Diamond Dogs' team. The Screaming Eagles had shown impressive strength straight out of the gate, with their defeat of Delta Squadron.

Their first meeting was in round two. The Eagles were fired up after their first display of dominance, but they knew their opponents wouldn't roll over. The Dogs had won their first round by forfeit, but as a result had the chance to analyse the Eagles' first engagement. Nobody dared to predict the result.

The teams stuck with their selected team composition throughout the fight. Diamond Dogs had chosen three Fer-de-Lances (FDL) and one Alliance Chieftain, while the Eagles flew four FDLs. Even once official commentators had analysed the ships, weapon choices, and pilots, it was anyone's game.

For the first few minutes, the fight was close, with both teams losing a FDL at similar times. The fight, however, was to take an unexpected turn. Unbeknownst to the Eagles, and the commentators at the time, the Dogs' Chieftain had taken a direct plasma shot to its canopy just a couple of minutes into the fight.

The pilot? Well, put simply: your correspondent ended up having a hard time breathing for the remainder of the match.

With only D-rated life support equipped due to an oversight, the Dogs found themselves two ships down. In the face of a 3v2, the round would go to the Eagles.

Unfortunately for the Eagles, such luck would not grace them a second time. Having learnt their lesson, the Dogs brought caution and strategy into rounds two and three. Despite a close engagement in round two, round three clearly turned the tide against the Eagles, with a decisive victory for the Dogs.

Despite this early loss, the Eagles would go on to perform exceptionally, and secure a 4th place finish. After the league concluded, this correspondent was able to catch up with Cmdr L'Intouchable of the Eagles' team.

So, as newcomers to the league, what were your team's expectations prior to the start?

*The Eagles were a relatively isolated group before the League. From the few months of sparring I had participated in, I was able to form an idea of the team's capabilities. Whilst the group's experience as a whole was limited, the constant practice and willingness to learn led me to be more confident about my wingmates' capabilities. Naturally, I was not expecting for us to get as far as we did - there were some very competent opponents we had to face; but the team as a whole was expecting to make it through towards the Top-10.*

You certainly made a very strong impression at the start with Delta Squadron, and maintained confidence despite relatively early entrance into the losers' bracket. Did you ever feel at risk once that had happened, or were you still confident you could make it to later rounds?

*Personally I was confident we could keep on fighting. The team, having limited knowledge of the other pilots participating, was less predictive but enthusiastic nonetheless. Overall, I don't think there was ever really a drop in enthusiasm throughout the League... but I found that our predictions of the strength of our opponents were reasonably accurate.*

Looking back, is there anything you would have changed about your overall approach to the league, or were you satisfied with things like your practice, ship builds, and tactics?

*We did as much practice as we could if I'm honest. Pirates, contrary to popular opinion, often lead very busy lives... Our tactics were good though, they evolved appropriately during the League, and our builds were effective when they needed to be. Honestly, our barrier was not because of mistakes; we were tested up to our limits as a team, skill was the determining factor for us.*

Finally, were there any moments that stood out to you during the competition? Any nail-biting finishes or close calls that stick in your memory?

*Personally, what sticks in my head the most was when [Cmdr] MesaFalcon was able to reboot his ship when his hull integrity had reached 0% during one of our fights against Delta Squadron. It was events like these which made this League worth it for me; most of our close calls were from exhausting, long-running matches.*





The 44th Vulture Syndicate had won the fans' hearts.



### The late stages

The Screaming Eagles went on to win five matches in the losers' bracket, before being knocked out in the quarter finals during their second engagement with the Diamond Dogs. Interestingly enough, the Eagles managed to defeat Ronin of Amarak, the team that themselves sent Diamond Dogs into the losers' bracket in the tournament's first 6v6 engagement.

With the Eagles taking 4th place, all that remained to be settled was the top three. The final fixture of the winners' bracket was between RSM, who took the number three spot in season three, and the Nomads, a team who have shown great improvement since their group stage knockout in the previous league.

Though it was only their second match in the tournament, due to two forfeits in earlier rounds, the Nomads summarily defeated RSM in a dominant 2-0 display. They had been early favourites due to their fearsome reputation, and they most certainly justified it.

Following their engagement, RSM declared they would forfeit their fight against Diamond Dogs. They had already battled the Nomads, who were awaiting their fellow finalists, and did not want to deny the tournament a fresh match for the grand finale.

It was clear prior to the fight that the chances were heavily in favour of the Nomads. With Diamond Dogs also seeing a last-minute pilot dropout (with this correspondent being forced to substitute), most were able to predict the outcome.

Indeed, though the Dogs fought valiantly, it wasn't enough. The Nomads secured a 2-0 victory, losing only a single ship in the second round, thus proving themselves not only champions, but possibly the most improved team since the previous league.

With the scores settled for another year, season four certainly saw the greatest attendance and shake ups of any league yet. With shock results, gripping highlights, and countless ships exploding on rocks, we all now await the next league eagerly. Will old giants, such as SDC, return, and will the Nomads successfully defend their crown?

A full breakdown of the league and recordings of the livestreams from round two onwards are both available to the public.



*The PvP League*

<b>Text:</b> Mini_Watto	<b>Design:</b> McNicholl	<b>Thanks to:</b> L'Intouchable, Hellfire
<b>Images:</b> TwoSpoons77, Sirruf, SebastianWehmeyer		

# MASTERING FLIGHT ASSIST

# OFF

*The FA off mode allows [a pilot] to maintain momentum in one direction while pointing the nose of their ship in any direction they desire, while FA on mode allows one to alter existing momentum most easily. Both are situational and should be used accordingly. – Gluttony Fang*

The Flight Assist (FA) function is one of the most well-developed and enjoyable features of flying a spacecraft. It allows us to ignore Newton's Third Law and pilot our ships as though they were atmospheric dogfighters; the thrusters simulate atmospheric friction, meaning we do not need to counter our own thrust.

Many pilots find the prospect of turning avionics off a daunting one. 'FA off' is underused by both newbie and seasoned pilots, due to the steep learning curve that comes with countering your own thrust. Leaving the avionics nanny behind can seem scary - but it is well worth the time invested in learning.

*In addition to enhancing performance in combat, flying with FA off dramatically improves a pilot's enjoyment of exploring planetary features. Nothing beats flying through a canyon system with FA off. – Maligno*

**The familiarity needed to do this on instinct alone can only come with practice.**

### What is FA off?

If force is applied to an object in the absence of gravity it will accelerate in the direction of the force unless another force acts upon it to change its speed or direction. This can be more force in the same direction, causing more acceleration, or force in another direction, causing deceleration, course change, or both.

Flight Assist saves us from this. With it enabled, if we zero the throttle, our ship's avionics provide the exact amount of opposite thrust to slow us to a stop. This is intuitive and makes flying easier. Want to go in the direction your ship is pointing? Throttle up. Got there already? Throttle down.

However, Flight Assist limits our manoeuvring potential, by locking our direction of travel to the direction of thrust.

Turning off Flight Assist decouples these vectors, so that you can be travelling in one direction while facing another. This has obvious implications for combat, but also for general flight.

'Jousting' is the term used when two ships consistently approach each other very closely, inflicting large amounts of burst damage, then take wide turns afterwards to regenerate capacitors and attempt to heal while the line of sight is broken.

The biggest challenge that pilots encounter is learning to counter their thrust. Suddenly, you need to arrest your direction of travel by applying equal and opposite thrust to that which put you in motion: throttling down no longer brings you to a stop.

Gauging the thrust needed not only to bring yourself to a stop, but also to settle on a given direction or get yourself moving in another one is the hardest lesson of all. The avionics will no longer calculate the thrust needed - you must do it yourself. The familiarity needed to do this on instinct alone can only come with practice.

### Speed control

The first problem that a pilot encounters is likely to be the lack of speed control. Novice pilots often rely on their boost to make course corrections, drifting around between boosts at full speed. Not only does this make you a very easy target to hit, but it also reduces your ability to react to your opponent's manoeuvres.

Keeping your speed low is the best policy for any new pilot learning flight without avionics. Practice take-off, exiting, entering and landing at a station, in order to master the increments of thrust necessary to keep your ship under control.

Once you've become used to the handling required for these tasks, it's time to look at some of the more advanced tactics.



### The 'blue zone'

Your speedometer, the gauge to the immediate right of your scanner, is deceptively complex. Not only does it show your current speed (the horizontal bars lit up) and the current thrust input (the horizontal line that moves with your throttle), it also shows the speed range at which your ship is the most responsive to inputs.

The blue area on the gauge is known as the 'blue zone'. Keeping your throttle within this range will permit tighter turns.

**Leaving the avionics nanny behind can seem scary.**

### 'Boost bleeding'

Even with good thruster control, keeping yourself from drifting around in an actual fight is a real challenge when using boost.

The solution to this issue is known as 'boost bleeding'. This is a technique that uses both lateral and vertical thrusters combined with primary thrusters and boost to (offensively) make sharper turns and, (defensively) make you more difficult to hit.

In theory, it's a simple enough tactic: after you boost, apply and hold reverse thrust while you pitch up or down to loop around. At the same time, apply either concurrent or opposing vertical thrusters to tighten or widen your turn circle as necessary.

The extra thrust from the boost will be transferred to the lateral and vertical thrusters, thus decreasing your top speed but keeping your throttle closer to the 'blue zone' for maximum manoeuvrability. Increasing your pitch in these situations will allow you to make quick vertical and lateral corrections, making you both more evasive and better at landing shots with projectile weapons.



## 'Peeling': doing damage in wing fights

Boost bleeding is a common tactic when discussing evasive flying (defensive) or combat flying (offensive), such as in a 'dueling' scenario. But according to the experts, this tactic is most useful during wing fight chases.

*Often, keeping up with the target can be problematic: not only can you overshoot your mark, but the target will also be flying evasive manoeuvres; boosting frequently and spamming lateral and vertical thrusters and spinning around a lot. – L'Intouchable*

Time your boosts to keep up: boost straight after your target boosts. Use your boost-bleed skills to get up close and personal and stay with the target, keeping in the 'blue zone' for that manoeuvrability. Matching your target's velocity will give you more time to line up shots, especially for those annoying projectile weapons.

## Reticle manipulation

This is the trick of using your lateral and vertical thrusters in such a way as to keep your opponent's reticle moving, even when you are directly facing them to line up a shot. This will cause your enemy to take more time to line up their shot, increasing the likelihood that they will miss. Flying without avionics makes this much easier - tap the lateral thrusters once to get you moving and let your inertia do the rest.

This tactic relies on projectile travel time to be effective - weapons without projectile travel time, such as lasers, are impervious.

## Advantages of Flight Assist off

- The single most important advantage it grants the pilot is the ability to separate their flight vector from where they're aiming. This allows manoeuvres such as strafe shots, keeps you from 'tunnel visioning' on your target, and makes it much easier to stay evasive during a fight, as your flight vector and aim are completely independent of each other.
- Turning avionics off gives a noticeable buff to your ship's manoeuvrability and lateral thrusters, as your avionics are no longer trying to counter your inputs.



## 'FA off orbiting'

Cmdr Shwinky, an experienced combat pilot against both human and Thargoid opponents, has pioneered an Flight Assist off technique is known as 'FA off orbiting'. The principle of this is to use your vertical or lateral thrusters along with main engines to travel in a constantly curved trajectory - hence 'orbit'.

*This allows me to keep a certain amount of distance between me and my target and also keeps me from getting into a joust fight. – Shwinky*

You cannot replicate FA off orbiting using Flight Assist, as the lateral and vertical thruster strength is too limited by the computer control.

FA off orbiting, if done correctly, allows you to avoid a lot of damage - up to 90% - from a Thargoid Interceptor, whose attack patterns are quite predictable. Remember Commanders: keep your orbiting speed high, ensure your heatsinks are ready, and light that bug up with gauss cannons!

## Git gud

Becoming comfortable with disabling Flight Assist unlocks a new world of space flight. Undoubtedly useful, and decisive in combat, flying unaided by the avionics computer is rewarding in itself.

Try docking like a pro: disable Flight Assist while approaching a station's letterbox, throttle down and gently nudge your nose in the direction of the entrance. You'll keep drifting across the front of the station, but your nose will orient towards the entrance. Then nudge the stick back to arrest the spin, leaving you facing directly into the station, flick Flight Assist back on and let the computer bring you to a perfect stop. Voilà!

Start slow, keep away from that boost, and fly a cheap ship. Once you get the hang of it, you'll never look back.

*Remember, [bailing out] is part of the process of learning! My philosophy is that if you're looking at an insurance claim, it means you made a mistake somewhere that you can learn from - and believe me when I say that the best pilots in this Galaxy have seen that claim form many times. – Shwinky*

Mastering Flight Assist Off

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**Images:**  
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**Thanks to:**  
Gluttony Fang, L'Intouchable, Hellfire, Maligno, Mini\_Watto, Shwinky

# WOMEN OF SPACE

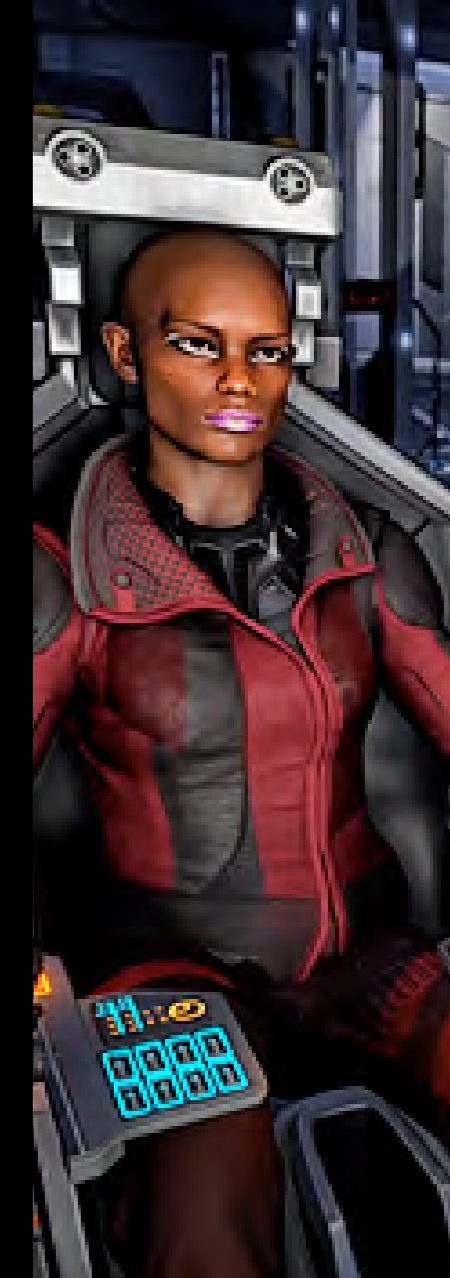
In a previous issue, we discussed bias in the galactic media against female political figures — namely, that they tend to be covered less frequently and in less comprehensive ways than their male counterparts.

The galactic media also have an unfortunate tendency to ignore the exploits of female commanders in favour of their male counterparts. In the interest of countering some of that bias, we went in search of several prominent female commanders to tell their stories of adventures out in the black — and were not disappointed by the results.

## Welcome to the cockpit

While there exists no definitive measure of how many commanders exist of one gender or another, any interstellar traveller paying attention to such things will observe that encounters with female commanders are much rarer than those involving male ones. Whether ferrying cargo for community goals, mining a popular planetary ring site, or taking sides in one of the Galaxy's innumerable conflict zones, encounters with fellow commanders are almost always encounters with male pilots.

When *Sagittarius Eye* sent out the call for female commanders' stories, however, we were blown away by the response. We've not been able to include all of the submissions we were sent, sadly; this article is already more than twice as long as our internal guidelines usually allow. But the many stories we heard were variously touching, amusing, and impressive.



## Getting started

Commander Allcrowsareblack explained that she had come into her own as a pilot independently in August of 3303, soon after her brother.

"I was maybe a little later than many to take to space. As the only daughter of a Federal industrial family I had certain 'obligations' to fulfil, while my brother shot off into the Galaxy as soon as he could." Soon after that late start, she made up for it by forming a faction with two other commanders, called IPX, or 'Interplanetary Explorations'.

Some commanders were drawn into the interstellar life after seeing their husbands take to the stars. Commander Flossy, a well-known member of the Hutton Orbital Truckers, recalls that her husband was flying

ships almost thirty-five years ago, but at the time, she wasn't sure she was up to the task. However, when consumer-grade frame shift drives became widely available at the turn of the 34th century, she decided she was ready.

"Not being keen on combat, I joined the private faction Mobius, where I could generally fly reasonably safe in the knowledge that when I came across other commanders they would be friendly and not try to kill me," she explains. "Of course there were times when the group was infiltrated by aggressive commanders, but these were quickly outlawed as members reported them."

Commander Draxxor was another pilot encouraged to fly by her hus-

band. "I've currently been flying for a year now," she told us. "My one-year anniversary was on the 7th of January, and in that time I've had a fair few adventures and taken on a couple of challenges."

Commander Rheoney's husband (the videojournalist Cmdr Buur, with whom she runs the popular channel *The Buur Pit*) also introduced her to space travel. She began as a camera operator, riding along as crew on his ship to take footage for their popular video series. Doing this, she managed to earn thirty million credits — without even touching the flight stick.

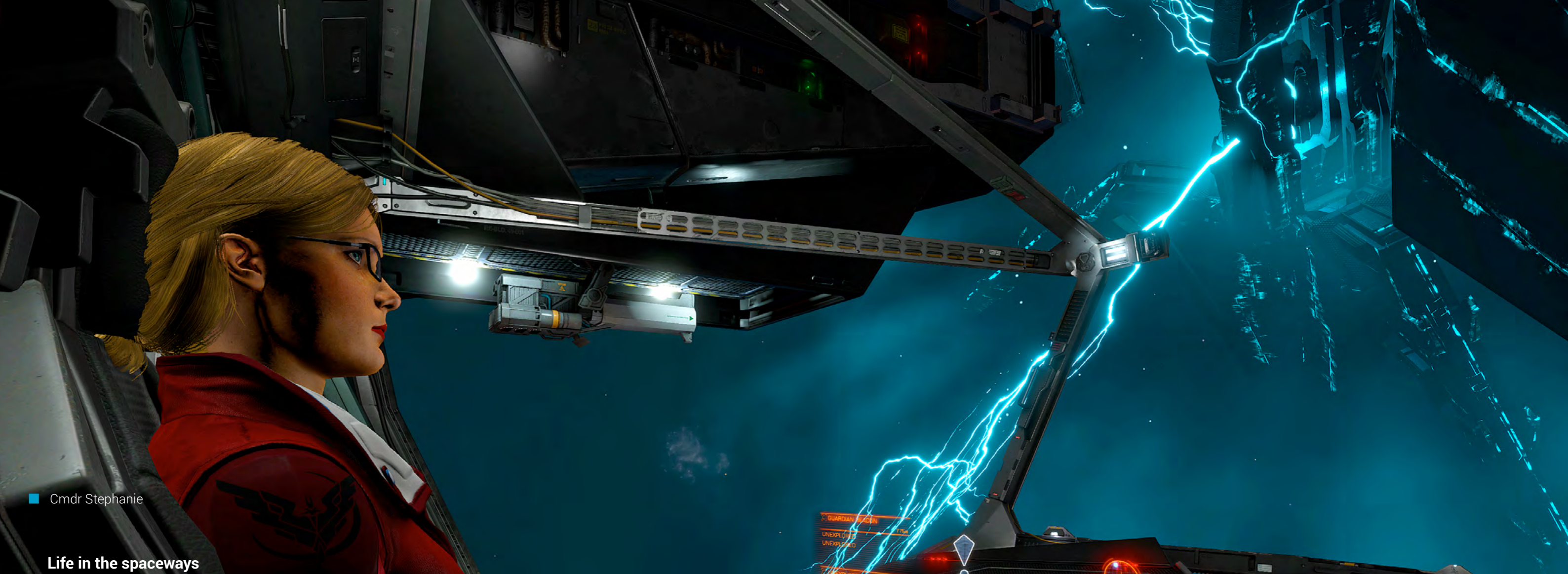
Commander Gryffindor 14, too, was drawn to the pilot's life thanks to a recommendation from her fiancé, who helped her in acquiring her first

**She managed to earn thirty million credits — without even touching the flight stick.**

few ships and learning about a career in the Pilots Federation.

Other commanders got off to a slower start. Commander Evelyn X's story began back in mid 3302. "As a fledgeling Sidewinder pilot who

had just got their licence, my hopes were high. Of course I managed to make a mess of landing my first few times and was fined one time for traffic control console repairs after my boosting through the slot caused one of the traffic controllers to spill their coffee all over the systems!" She laughs at the memory. "Anyway, I started my career out independent, trading rares on the Witchhaul [through] Lave circuit. Back then, piracy was at an all-time high due to the popularity of that run, which at the time was considered the best way to make money."



■ Cmdr Stephanie

## Life in the spaceways

Commanders are free to explore whatever and however many careers they like during their time in the cockpit – and the pilots we spoke to represented a diverse range of occupations. Commander Mini Valentine, who has been exploring the Galaxy from the age of thirteen, said: “I do a bit of everything really – from shuttling cargo around the Bubble, to deep space exploration, and mopping up pirates in between... I’ve even gotten involved in some piracy myself before. And with Distant Worlds 2... exploration is gonna be my main focus for a long while.”

Commander Natsrambles is one of the founders of the legendary Hammers of Slough, whose rough-riding competitive games are some of the most fantastic sights anywhere in the Bubble. “There is of course one thing we do well, and that is the science of exploding!” she told us.

“Angel Rose came up with the idea, smashing Sidewinders into each other for fun. Thus the now famous

Demolition Derbys, held at Slough Orbital, were born,” she explains. “Many brave – or just plain crazy – commanders fly their Sidewinders round the docking ring and try to ram competitors’ ships until they explode. The last surviving ship wins!”

Commander Talyne enjoys more peaceful pastimes. “When I am not doing work for the 8th Dragon Squadron, I’m either out bounty hunting, exploring or enjoying the new mining upgrades,” she told us. “Oddly I prefer the latter two lately. I love seeing the amazing sights while out exploring. The Heart and Soul is my favourite place to go. It was my first exploration trip. As far as mining... well, it’s quite satisfying to watch a rock explode in front of you!”

Commander Dana Jessica Booth is a famed pilot in the Close Quarters Combat arena. “I bounty hunted from day one in the Freeagle. All the way up to an Asp Explorer (that took an entire month from the day I got my pilot’s licence), then lost it flying

It felt to me like the Alliance was a society that looked out for one another.

without rebuy,” she remembers. “I got the Asp Explorer back in a single day of trading. I fought in the battle for Lugh. The Onionhead wars. But mostly, I was happy bounty hunting in my home system of Orcus.”

Flossy recalls her long-running interest in Bubble-spanning Community Goals.

“After a while, I heard about a new event – a ‘Community Goal’ (CG) to build a new station some way out from the core systems, and decided

to give it a try. Various commodities had to be transported to a nearer station which would be used to build the new one. I enjoyed this because it gave me a sense of purpose and there would be something to see at the end of it, which had me quite excited to play my small part. This was my first of many CGs that followed and I quickly became addicted to them – especially as it was a great way of also making lots of credits. I became a regular participant in all CGs except combat and loved doing them, and especially seeing and chatting to other commanders.”

Other commanders have taken to politics. Commander JTrinity, with whom this publication consulted in our *Ghost Ships* article last month, spoke at length about her rise through the ranks of the Alliance.

“The Alliance ethos fits really well with me. I’d been picked on plenty growing up and I really hate people who pick on others. It felt to me like the Alliance was a society that

looked out for one another rather than themselves and I’ve always been that person,” she told us.

“Over time, with lots of work, I was promoted through the ranks of the Alliance Office of Statistics (AOS) into a leadership role, and began my training on how to manage our commander factions’ systems. The more I learned, the more I enjoyed strategy. Strategy in fact would become my favourite part of life, but with combat remaining a close second.”

JTrinity’s political career has brought her to a position of considerable authority. “It became my responsibility to manage the influence in our systems and today I am a senior leader in AOS. I coordinate our wings and commanders. I recruit, I train and do all of the things required of me to keep up the good fight.”

She sees it as her responsibility to provide guidance and support to new pilots, too. “I often still try to find time to zip back to Asellus Pri-

mus looking for new commanders whom I can mentor, help out in bounty hunting by winging up with them, showing them the ropes. No strings attached. I do like being on the good side,” she told us simply.

Fledgling pilot Commander Rheeney may be, but she has quickly become a sought-after videographer – being tapped by other media creators (as well as this magazine) for her services. “It has turned into a complete passion project,” she told us.

She specialises in filming aspects of space that pilots aren’t normally able to see from the flight seat, therefore showing new sides of the Galaxy. In doing so, she’s created a career that perhaps most in the Pilots Federation had not previously considered. She’s also now moving into astrophotography. “The universe is just so beautiful,” she says simply.



## Milestones met and amazing achievements

Many of these commanders have accomplished incredible feats over their many hours in the cockpit. Draxxor recalls:

“My first big challenge was having the insane idea to deliver a Hutton mug to every station within fifty light years of Sol. That turned out to be over fifteen hundred stations, and the next week after completing that task I embarked on a group challenge, in which our aim was to get ten [Hutton] Truckers into the top ten spaces. We succeeded, but at a cost — our minds went pretty numb due to the sheer amount of coffee we had hauled. Those are my proudest moments.”

Commander Gryffindor 14’s proudest moment was buying her Clipper. “It was one of the ships I wanted to get after I started [flying],” she told us.

Dana Jessica Booth is proud of the influence she’s had on her sport. “I like to think I made the Eagle slightly more Meta favoured in CQC,” she

says with a grin. “Back when I was first flying the Eagle in CQC, it was a very unpopular choice. Thanks to my using it in matches, I think people saw it in a different light.”

As for accomplishments more broadly, a few come to her mind: “Beating Artysu live on a Pilots Federation CQC stream. Being made a Veteran on the CQC public server. Personally sinking the economy of two systems (Junga and Thosiao) when I was forced to trade for a week... going from an Asp Explorer to an Anaconda in the process. Helping Neon Raven and friends flip He Bo for the Alliance from the ‘Sons of Icarus’. I’ve also got first discovery on binary Earth-like worlds which has largely satisfied my desire to explore.”

Commander Maya Fey said that her greatest achievement was “to save more than 600 escape pods, some of them pulled from the tractor beams of Thargoid vessels. Also, surviving with my trusty [ship], *Maggie*, when I was still a newbie and two pirate Cutters engineered to the top interdict-

ed us. My tactics worked! My little *Maggie*, with only her thrusters and my tactics, survived against these two bad beasts!” She smiles at the memory.

Commander Flossy of the Hutton Truckers has a long list of media achievements to her name. She has recorded dialogue for Barnard’s Star News, Dockers, and of course Hutton Orbital Radio. For Barnard’s Star News, she “was told to just read it and not worry about what I was saying... So various swear words, double entendres and ‘iffy’ names were all spoken in a very matter of fact and deadpan manner. This in itself caused great hilarity amongst those watching and listening to our performance and I really don’t know how I managed to keep a straight face!”

Renaissance woman that she is, she also applied to the Fuel Rats after playing an exciting part in the rescue of Commander Selezen. “I didn’t know if I would be accepted, as a 64-year-old female pilot, but I was and made to feel very welcome!” she



recalls. “I read the SOP and started watching the rescue channel, noting how organised the rescues were, and eventually felt brave enough to start ‘calling jumps’ to any I saw which were nearby. When I felt I understood enough, I applied for a ‘drill’, which certainly lived up to its name! I must have spent about 90 minutes going through a mock rescue and then being interrogated about it. I was convinced I had failed when I was suddenly presented with a brand new shiny tail — I had passed! It is good to know that so much care is taken in drilling new rats to be sure of providing an excellent service.”

Flossy has excelled as a fuel rat, as she tends to in all things — qualifying for an ‘epic rescue’ and earning a commemorative laurel wreath and rondel, which she wears to Pilots Federation gatherings.

Mini Valentine’s proudest moments relate more to travel. “I’d have to say my trip to Colonia was one, and before that, I feel my greatest achievement thus far was my 1,000 km SRV journey across the surface of Europa. I greatly loved the fact that I could even just do that and at some point after Distant Worlds 2, I plan on doing a full circumnavigation!”

Commander ‘Long Distance’ Clara is similarly proud of her navigation achievements. “One of them was circumnavigating the rim of the Galaxy in a Viper Mark III in about six days; that was pretty hard work,” she recalls. “I also managed to bully Artie into telling me when Inara’s ‘birthday’ was, so I did a little expedition to draw the Inara logo on the galactic core. That was a lot of fun.” (Inara is a popular network for commanders, upon which Clara is a regular writer.)

**It was just the most brilliant thing to see.**

She isn’t retiring any time soon, either. “Right now, I’m in the middle of a Phileas Fogg-type challenge I set myself, to see if I could cover the distance between the Milky Way and the Andromeda Galaxy in 80 days. I just passed the halfway mark after about forty days of travel and it’s turning out to be one of the hardest things I’ve done, just because of the sheer distance — the total trip is 2.5 million light years and it’s something

of a constant slog at the moment! But if I complete it, this’ll be one of my proudest achievements, I think, however silly.”

It is work for and with other members of the Pilots Federation of which Commander Rheeney is most proud. However, some of her fondest memories aren’t of achievements, but of experiences:

“I recently drove my SRV for the first time, having flown down to the Pleiades sector to go into a Thargoid installation. Accompanied by other commanders, we brought the resources to trigger the star map. Even though the other commanders knew what would happen, no one spoiled this for me — and it was just the most brilliant thing to see (and of course, film!)”

While she seems intent on continuing her video career, Rheeney hopes to see more of the Galaxy. “There are so many things I haven’t seen yet, like space pumpkins and other flora and fauna. I have a particular wish to visit the sites of some human/Thargoid battles after following distress signals in Maia and Merope,” she told us.



■ Cmdr Stephanie

## For the Dove

Some of the commanders we spoke to were instrumental in one of the highest-profile events of recent years — the emergency ‘meta armada’ to the megaship *Dove Enigma*, to repair it following Thargoid Sensor damage.

What started as an effort to help the community ended in one of the most memorable trips I’ve gone on.

“The idea of marking a commander’s final journey, which at the time there was a real chance he wouldn’t survive, was a powerful drive,” remembers Allcrowsareblack. “That context meant so many of those that joined were of a particular mindset, so the camaraderie was amazing. In my case I was also lucky enough to lead the expedition [in my region], which completely changed my engagement with the community.”

Commander Aveldina, a Pilots Federation member since 3303, agrees. “I think for me it was because it was such a big unknown to me at the time. The biggest distance I had travelled previously was only 14 kly and I really felt like I had no idea what I was getting into; but wanted to help and knew the trip had to be immediate to help.”

The trip acted as a launch pad for further travel. “I wrote down all of the touristy locations people were recommending to other commanders and visited them, which really is what made that trip for me... What started as an effort to help the community ended in one of the most memorable trips I’ve gone on,” she told us.

■ Cmdr Aveldina



■ Cmdr Rheeeny



## Not just fun and games

As beautiful and exciting as the Galaxy can be, it is far from a safe place. From the Thargoid invasion to the cruelty of our own species, danger abides across the Bubble and beyond.

“We’ll fight the Thargoids, but never other commanders,” said Allcrowsareblack of her combat group, the Crow’s Flying Circus. She is sceptical of the motivations of the powers with regard to the ‘war’:

“It’s possible the Thargoids are being manipulated by humans to draw out this conflict. There is some manipulation going on somewhere, I’m sure. In large scale conflict there is always someone pulling strings behind the scenes. Whether it’s the Thargoids being manipulated or ourselves is, as yet, unclear. I suspect a little of both. We’ll find out in due course.”

She adds a sobering point. “You know what really worries me? With nearly 10,000 commanders [at the time of writing] out of the Bubble on Distant Worlds 2, the defence provided by independent pilots will be greatly reduced. The incursions we’ve been seeing of late will run rampant and the Bubble risks becoming fragmented, if not occupied to some extent.”

“Thargoids fascinate but also scare me,” Draxxor comments. “I’m not a fighter, but I do try to help out wherever I’m useful, whether it be repairs or evacuations.”

“I would rather study alien life than fight it,” concurs Aveldina. “I would personally like to see reconciliation with the Thargoids, or at least a higher level of understanding of the current conflict and its motivations, as it has always felt as though it’s based on some fundamental misunderstandings that cannot be resolved due to a lack of ability to communicate.”

Commander Talyne asserts that if we can learn to trust our ships more, we’d fare better in the conflict. “If people only understood that you can connect to your ship and actually feel it as more than just metal and wires, in the end, fewer lives would be lost to war,” she muses.

## Galactic politics at large

Evelyn X is more hawkish. “Our Galaxy needs to change and it needs to unify to fight the under-emphasised threat of the Thargoids, who are killing millions of humans every day. My first port of call in that respect is to end inter-faction political squabbles and it starts with the Empire, and that journey begins with ending its empowerment of slavery.”

Evelyn is vocal on this topic. “I firmly believe that this is rampant across both the Federation and the Empire, the legal presence of Imperial slaves normalises the idea of not having free will and gives moral leeway to the idea of the non-legal kind,” she explains.

“Yes, Imperial Slaves have a significant increase in life quality over unregulated ones, but I truly do feel that what Aisling is doing to criminalise the ownership of Imperial Indentured Servants is for the benefit of mankind as a whole.”

Maya Fey is less interested in changing the political landscape of the Empire, but still has strong feelings about it. “I am independent and I plan to keep being independent. But I don’t like slavery. So, perhaps I should support Aisling Duval, no? But she looks very emotional to me, and in the politics game you need to be a little cold blooded. But that makes you many times a bad person... so... I just want to fly.”

She shakes her head as a memory surfaces. “Perhaps I should explain you how I didn’t obtain my permission to Sol. It was one of my childhood dreams. I had my opportunity when a very important official from the Federal Navy granted me a permit to Sol if I did a job for him: a discreet transport. In the middle of the job, I noticed that I was transporting illegal slaves. It was a big shock for me. I diverted the route, freed them in an independent system and disappeared. I am a decent smuggler.”

Draxxor sympathises with the desire to remain out of politics. “I listen to the news, but I don’t get involved in politics and all that jazz. I do think Operation IDA needs a bit of help though, with the repair efforts. I helped a little bit last year.”

The universe is just so beautiful.

“I was born on Earth, so I’ll always have a soft spot for Sol and the Federation, though I find myself mostly working with the Alliance and independent factions,” adds Mini Valentine. She has stronger feelings on current affairs than Draxxor or Maya Fey:

“I’m not too much a fan of how authoritarian the Federation has become, and don’t even get me started on the Empire... With controversial topics, I’m not really that up to date on what’s been going on beyond the Thargoids... granted, doing long hauls outside the Bubble contributes to my being out of the loop. The aliens are quite a real danger though, and, at least to me, it seems like the factions aren’t doing enough, and leaving it up to the Pilots Federation... [which] just isn’t enough, I feel.”

## The trails we blaze

A common motto of the Pilots Federation is the independent-minded, bootstrap-lifting directive to ‘blaze your own trail’. It can be a lonely philosophy if carried to extremes.

Commander Empress Nix found the solitude formidable, at first. “It’s been a little lonely, [flying], so I didn’t have a draw,” she recalls. “I found the Fuel Rats when I got stranded one time, and that was a fun experience. [But that was] honestly the most human interaction I ever had.”

However, she plans to get back in the flight seat. “Friendships or rivalries are always exciting to witness first hand... I just love making new connections,” she told us.

Nix’s story reminded us how important company can be. The stories told by these women of space are overwhelmingly tales of cooperation – whether in filming for a video, rescuing a stricken station, guiding new pilots or rescuing escape pods. They remind us that ours is a joint mission, and we are companions in it.

“I think it’s wonderful that *Sagittarius Eye* is doing this piece,” ‘Long Distance’ Clara said. “Without being at all militant about it, I’ve been stepping up to participate for a while and have experienced an awful lot of stupidity as a result of being a female in various communities. The Pilots Federation, with a few rare exceptions, has been a very different place where I’ve felt more comfortable than I have in most others, thanks to the attitude... I think it’s a testament to the community that a publication such as yours chooses to run an article like this.”

We began this editorial project with little idea as to the direction that the article would take, beyond highlighting the exploits of the women with whom we share the spaceways. As the interviewees have opened up to us, we’ve been struck by the diversity of careers: both in and out of the cockpit, the stories we’ve heard have entertained, impressed, humbled and amused us. So, rather than draw them together into a pithy argument to conclude, we’ve decided to leave them as they are – so they can inspire you, too.

We would like to encourage more women to take to the stars. Space is a big place – there is plenty of room for a few more.



Women of Space

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### Thanks to:

Allcrowsareblack, Aveldina, Draxxor, Empress Nix, Evelyn X, Flossy, Griffindorgirl14, Jessica Sonnet, JTrinity, ‘Long Distance’ Clara, Maya Fey, Mini Valentine, Natsrambles, Rheeny

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# TRADING THE

# GOOD STUFF

Trading is one of the most ancient professions of the human race, pre-dating even the existence of currency in the form of barter. It is also a profession with a deceptively simple rule: buy low, sell high. To be successful this is the only thing that really counts.

On Earth, trade began connecting the distant continents as faster and more elaborate sailing ships took to the oceans. The mechanics of trade grew more complex, but at the heart of it the cardinal rule 'buy low, sell high' always remained.

As human civilisation broke free of the Earth, and spread across the Galaxy, so did the need for trade: the miners on a barren rock needed food, and the farmers on the lush agricultural planets needed machinery and raw materials. Just as the ancient wind-powered tea clippers once crossed the oceans on Earth, hyperdrive-equipped ships began to cross the vast interstellar distances in the hopes of buying low and selling high.

## Space trucking

Any pilot who's spent more than a minimal amount of time around regular traders will have heard the term 'space trucking', with the die-hard traders often referring to their ship as a 'truck' and themselves as 'truckers'.

Historians will tell you that the word 'truck' refers to large surface vehicles used to move goods in the late Industrial Age on Earth. They were ungainly box-shaped vehicles, optimised to move large quantities of goods and little else. They reached their pinnacle with the Australian land trains - some of which could carry a similar tonnage to a Lakon Type-6, measuring over 50 metres in length.

Truckers in that time would generally not be the people performing the trades, but would rather take contracts to move goods for other people or companies. The modern space trucker, however, has far better access to the open goods market and can decide on their own loads. As such, they have more in common with the independent merchants of Earth's great naval age. This makes trading highly accessible to the new pilot, requiring little more than a ship, cargo racks, and enough credits to buy some basic commodities.

## The commodities market

For the new pilot, it's difficult to beat the simplicity of trading on the open commodities market. You don't need to have reputation with any faction to do it, and you don't need a specific kind of ship. As long as there's a commodities market where you are, you can get started right away.

The drawback of commodity market trading for the new pilot is that it often simply doesn't make much money, and – especially for the neophyte – it's quite easy to end up buying high and selling low, which will soon lead to financial disaster. But avoid that pitfall, and it's a start to a career that's easy to pick up, and also a way to get yourself positive reputation at a station.

What a commodity market trader has to do is simple: find a station with a commodities market that has a high supply of certain goods at a low price, and a destination also with a commodities market that has a high demand for those goods. Ideally, the trader will want to make a route of stations so their ship's cargo racks never go empty. These routes are usually described as follows:

- **The A-B-A route:**  
A route that allows the trader to buy a high supply commodity at station A, sell it at station B, then buy a high supply commodity at station B and sell it back at A.
- **The A-B-C-A route:**  
Similar to the A-B-A route but with another waypoint where a profitable sell and a low-cost buy can be made on the commodities market. It's sometimes known as a triangular route due to having three different waypoints.



For a time, a trader could make a record breaking 8,000 credit per tonne profit.

More elaborate routes are possible as waypoints are added, expanding on the idea of the A-B-C-A route. This kind of route was epitomised by the East India Company's Galactic Silk Road in 3301, which had seventeen waypoints, with a round trip distance of over two hundred light years. Unfortunately, the route was short-lived as the shifting sands of supply and demand, increases in piracy, and political interference caused parts of it to become unprofitable.

For the trader who wants to try their hand with open market trading, it's recommended to trade the more valuable commodities as these tend to have the best absolute profit margins. High-value metals and Imperial Slaves tend to top the list, although trading the latter may have a moral dimension that some traders dislike. The trader should also watch out for systems that have a pressing need for certain goods.

Take a system subject to an outbreak of disease. This usually results in a very lucrative market for basic medicines, which are easily sourced from high tech or industrial economies. Unusual conditions can arise for all sorts of commodities: for instance, a big efficiency gain in bulk production of polymers in the 76 Sigma Ceti system and strong competition between corporations resulted in a buy price so low that, for a time, a trader could make a record breaking 8,000 credit per tonne profit by shipping from Shaw Orbital to surrounding star systems.

Commodity market traders should not rely on the Galaxy Map in their ship's astrogation suite. The standard suite has very limited capabilities; while it can tell you where basic trade flows currently are and give you information on economy types, the information is very rudimentary. A successful trader is far better off consulting one of the privately-owned trade guides that are just one GalNet search away. The EDDB has one such guide, as does Inara. These guides in particular can advise you on commodity prices and are updated in near real-time, and are today considered an essential tool for a profitable career in the business.

## Rarities and oddities

A variation on open market trading — and one pretty much guaranteed to turn a good profit — is the trade in rare goods. A number of items are unique to certain spaceports and are typically sold in small numbers to open market traders, and when sold far from their sources will always fetch a good profit.

In 3301 there was a boom in the trade of rare goods, particularly from the worlds around Lave, where there is a cluster of half a dozen systems producing unique items. Even with limited supply, a pilot in a Cobra Mk III could fill their hold, travel some distance and sell at a very respectable profit, far exceeding the profits available for other open market trade goods — despite the distance involved. At the time, it was by far the most profitable thing that a pilot could do in a small ship like the Cobra, and the trade turned into a gold rush — prompting the Lave Cluster to be nicknamed 'The New Caribbean' after an area of Earth which was renowned for the trade in rare and exotic items in the days of sailing ships.

While the boom has ended, it's still recommended that the new trader explore the rares trade - with the high per tonne profits and the capabilities of the modern frame shift drive, you can still make good money without needing a huge ship. You don't need to do anything special to trade in these goods - these are traded like any other commodity and can be purchased in the commodity market at the station where they are available.

Rares are always in high demand at distant stations. While you can make money faster by contract trading, the beauty of trading rare goods is that they are very profitable and you do not need to curry favour with the supplying faction, so you can get started right away. It's also a good way to take a tour around the Bubble, and if you're looking for a station to call home, selling a hold full of rares will make you popular with the station's owners.

Having the favour of your home faction is something that will be very useful when you start contract trading. But beware — not all rare goods are legal Galaxy-wide. The Federation even went to war against Kappa Fornacis in early 3301 in an attempt to suppress the trade in one of the items on offer, the narcotic Onionhead.

## The contract market

If the inhabitants of star systems relied purely on open market traders, they would probably find themselves short on supply of many items. For low value items, the profit per tonne for a market trader is very poor.

Consider basic necessities such as food products. An agricultural world may sell fruit and vegetables at 322 credits per tonne, and an industrial station may pay 895 credits per tonne. While this is clearly profitable, there will always be something far more profitable to be hauled instead. For this reason, factions in any given station will usually put out orders for goods that are in demand. The trader can pick these up from the faction's mission board, and often there's a range of goods orders that can be taken. They may range from small orders that can be completed by a small ship in a single trip, to very large orders for several thousand tonnes needing many trips by many ships.

**The beauty of trading rare goods is that they are very profitable.**

They can be in either direction — in other words, a request to supply certain in-demand items to the faction, or a delivery order to another station. They can be more profitable, and like commodity market trading, they will result in the pilot gaining a good reputation with the trading factions that are offering and are in receipt of the goods. The Pilots Federation recognises these contracts, too — so you will also gain trade rating when taking these jobs.

Occasionally, a faction may have a very large project in hand and may advertise this to the Pilots Federation. The Pilots Federation will in turn advertise this as a 'community goal', and many of these require the supply of a very large quantity of goods. The required goods will usually be in high demand, and attract high levels of profit; and added to this there will be a contribution-based bonus for the participating pilots should the goal succeed. Partaking in community goals is one of the best ways to make money through trading — though participants should be aware of the increased risk of piracy associated with a high-profile initiative.



## Piracy

No introduction to the art of trading would be complete without discussing piracy. A new trader may start their career thinking nobody could possibly want their goods – but they would be wrong. You could be carrying a cargo of biowaste, and someone *will* want to take it off you.

The motives for piracy vary – victims tend to lump them all into one category as violence junkies. After all, why would anyone want their six hundred tonnes of nearly worthless biowaste being delivered under contract? Detailed reasons vary, from other factions wanting to disrupt a competitor, to the lawless in stolen ships needing to finance repairs. It does mean you need at least some basic defences – at least enough to escape an attack and jump into hyperspace.

**You could be carrying a cargo of biowaste, and someone will want to take it off you.**

The community goals mentioned earlier are often particular targets for piracy. For example, the recent call by the Imperial Navy for the supply of goods in the Sirsir system had profits on the order of 6,000 credits per tonne – but for the pirate liberating these goods from a passing trader, who of course hasn't had to pay for the goods in the first place, the pirate would be expecting 25,000 credits per tonne. This attracted the more well-heeled pirates, who especially preyed on weakly-equipped trade ships. This particular trade mission also brought out the opponents of the Empire who instead of simply menac-

ing traders to drop some cargo, attacked and destroyed as many trade ships as possible. Those foolhardy traders who chose to fly without a shield in order to fit in just a few more tonnes were a particularly attractive target, and soon regretted this choice.

When you are trading, especially on a high-profit trade route or a trade mission for a particular faction that may be opposed, you'll need to be on alert. Should you be interdicted, you will need to quickly assess whether you're being interdicted by a pirate who will just ask for some of your cargo, or by someone who simply wants to disrupt the trade route by destroying your ship.

Pirates tend to make their demands quite quickly. They tend to fly a powerful ship that can carry a good amount of cargo, for example a Python, Imperial Clipper or Cutter. Those who want to simply destroy you are more likely to be in a well armed combat ship such as a Fer-de-Lance. It may be your best choice to simply comply with the pirate's demands in the first case, but in the second case you need to run. These tactics are outside the scope of this article, but there are best practice video guides available which are worth watching.

### In conclusion...

Trading is a straightforward way to make a living in the Galaxy as well as gain friends amongst the factions that run stations and outposts, but that does not mean you can do it without thought or without shields. However complex you want to make it, just remember there's only one thing you're ultimately trying to achieve: **buy low, sell high!**



ITEM	INFO
<b>BASIC MEDICINES</b>	Basic medicines are usually not a particularly profitable item, until a star system declares a medical emergency. Profits greater than 5,000 credits per tonne can be made by shipping basic medicines from an industrial economy to a system in outbreak. Basic medicines are also cheap to buy, making this an excellent way to trade for the new pilot. And just think of all those lives you'll save while making an enormous profit!
<b>RARE GOODS</b>	Try to trade these items at least 150 light years from where you bought them for best results. You're guaranteed a profit on the order of 15,000 credits per tonne.
<b>HIGH VALUE METALS</b>	High-value metals often make great 'hold fillers' to use up any space left over while contract trading, as they are widely available and are in demand in many systems. A profit between 2,000 and 5,000 credits per tonne can be made. These items do tend to attract piracy due to their high intrinsic values.
<b>POLYMERS</b>	Unexciting but highly profitable. Recent advances in polymer production and high levels of competition keep the price to buy low, but very high demand in consuming systems makes for an excellent sell price. Record-breaking profits of more than 8,000 credits per tonne have been reported. Somewhat of a 'unicorn' of a commodity, by being both very low risk to transport and highly profitable at the same time.
<b>IMPERIAL SLAVES</b>	Some pilots will find this trade morally dubious, and some star systems ban it. The Empire also looks dimly on the supply of Imperial Slaves to anywhere outside of the Empire. However, for the more morally flexible commander, profits of more than 6,000 credits per tonne were found during the Imperial supply appeal in Sirsir.
<b>CERTAIN FOODS</b>	While most bulk raw foods are not particularly profitable, some of the harder-to-get items will command a good profit. As an example, a good trade route for fish or fruit and vegetables can net over 4,000 credits per tonne.
<b>MILITARY ITEMS</b>	At times, weapons and other military items can yield good trading profits. Recently, one trader reported a profit of over 6,000 credits per tonne while shipping military fabrics. Battle weapons can also make a good profit, but beware – the trade in weapons is illegal in many systems.

*Trading the Good Stuff*      **Text:** Mack Winston      **Design:** Balthazarn Noxx      **Images:** OrangePhoenix, Rheney



RARE  
COMMODITIES  
SPOTLIGHT



WITCHHAUL

K O B E

B E E F

Hornby Terminal

Japanese cattle are something of an historical anomaly. The breeding of the Kobe or 'Japanese Black' occurred owing to the introduction of international stock to the previously isolated Japanese bovine gene pool. The later stock, known as Tajima cattle, is the source of Kobe Beef and has been since the 19th century.

It is small wonder then that Kobe beef which was prized as a delicacy in the 20th and 21st centuries on Earth became a rare commodity in the genetic libraries of generation ships being sent out into the stars during the following centuries of the third millennium. However, managing to integrate this particular strain of animal into a new ecology would prove extremely difficult.

Initially, Japanese companies refused to export the Kobe brand beyond the shores of their own island nation. This resulted in the popularity of 'Kobe-style' beef being sold in the United States of America and other countries. However, a deal was struck with JAXA, the Japanese Space Exploration Agency, to introduce limited amounts of Tajima cattle stock to the Martian colonies. Once this trial proved successful, genetic samples were frozen for export and sold to several corporate generation ships.

Only one colonial mission, however, managed to establish itself and successfully introduce Tajima cattle to the local environment - and that was the mission to Witchhaul. Today, Witchhaul production of Kobe Beef is the only variant that remains of the old Japanese source. Environmental problems on Earth caused the extinction of Japan's cattle herds sometime in the 21st or 22nd century.

Witchhaul Kobe Beef immediately differentiates itself from other, inferior, meat products. Steak cuts have rich texture, delicate marbling and unctuous tenderness; living up for once to the gorgeous promotional images you often see around restaurants. There are no moments of disappointment between ordering your food from the display, seeing it arrive and eating it. At all times, the customer is aware that there is a celebrity on the plate.

Cooking Witchhaul Kobe Beef for yourself is quite an experience. The smell emanating from an open oven, grill or hob as it sears the meat is heady and alluring. The promise of dark, juicy flesh is constant, but there are subtle changes, indicating to the connoisseur when a prime cut might reach rare, medium rare or medium. Anything more is a waste, leaving the promise of a unique meal utterly unfulfilled.

Some chefs promote the thermal bathing and boiling methods. These produce less of an aroma, but do result in wonderfully tender meat that seems to melt in your mouth.

The propensity of many human societies towards vegetarian diets means that meat products can be a niche market in some areas of the Galaxy, but Witchhaul Kobe Beef is worth making an exception for. A meal that includes such a delicacy should be experienced at least once before you die.



Rare Commodities Spotlight: Witchhaul Kobe Beef

**Text:**  
Allen Stroud

**Design:**  
Balthazarn Noxx

**Art:**  
MAD-7



## Co-Pawlots

Co-pawlot name: **Biscuit, the Piebald Menace**

Commander name: **Souvarine**

Co-pawlot designation: **Chief Mouser**

Discovered living under a shed on an Earth-like world, the Chief Mouser now hassles the rest of the crew into keeping correct hours, as – despite her best efforts – they persistently try to remain asleep at 05:00.

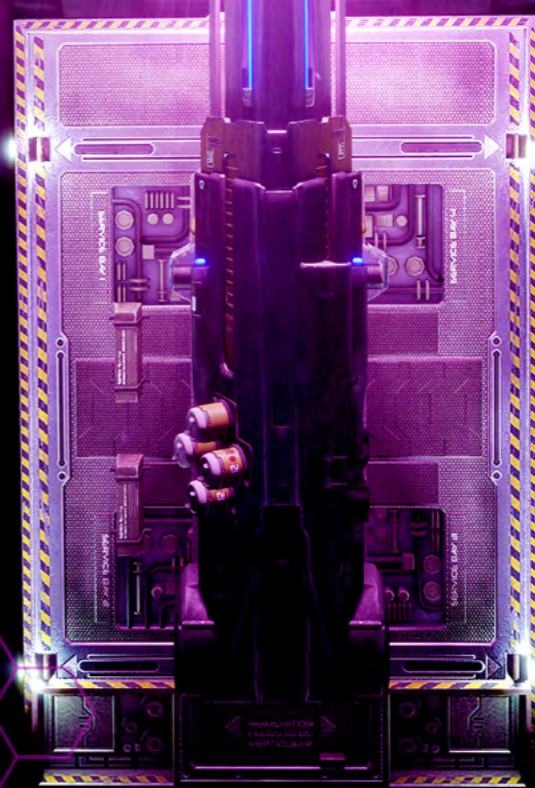
Her other duty is to patrol the hermetically-sealed ship several times per day, checking for strange cats. Thanks to her diligence and dedication, to date not one strange cat has been discovered aboard the ship.

Do you have a Co-Pawlot you'd like to share with the Galaxy? Hop on to [www.sagittarius-eye.com/submissions/](http://www.sagittarius-eye.com/submissions/) and let us know! Be sure to include their name, role aboard your ship and any particular story about them you'd like to share.

**Text:**  
Souvarine

**Design:**  
McNicholl

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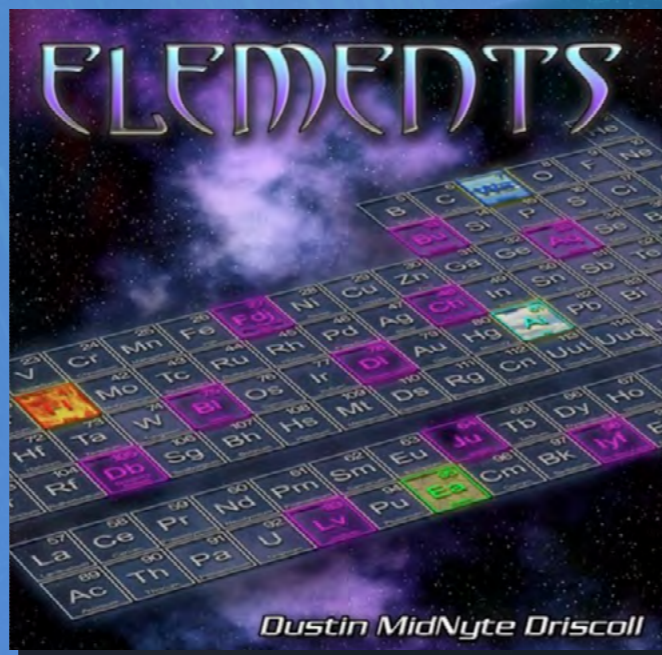
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ISSUE 12  
August 2004  
Featuring:  
History of Rocketry • State of the Empire • The Third Race  
Krait Mk II • Commander Kingmonster • Bad Science • Co-Pawlots



Dustin 'MidNyte' Driscoll first created *Elements*, his solo instrumental album, in 3298. Entirely without vocals, its ten tracks vary between metal and what is historically known as 'prog rock' — and as such, are reminiscent of some of the late 20th century's most iconic screen films.

Many of the tracks would not be out of place in a 1980s classic; probably something with burly men flying helicopters in their vests. It's possible that one of these men has an antagonistic relationship with a woman in authority because he secretly fancies her, and it's causing him to take the sort of damn fool risks that are going to get us all killed. Honestly, you could drop some of these tracks over scenes in *Top Gun* and they would not be out of place.

MidNyte is bashful about the quality of the recording, but in truth, it is remarkably polished for the work of one artist. The more metal-rich tracks, like *In Your Face*, could easily

be recently-unearthed Metallica songs. But there's a diversity here which marks *Elements* apart from simple aping of past masters. The thrash is lifted by synthesised and piano melodies, which soar above the mashing chords and lend a thoughtful, reflective feel to some of the tracks, as in the surprising *Leaves* and *Blaze*.

*Fire Dance Jam* is this writer's favourite; a thrashing, snarling, stomping victory chant, heavy with reverb and epic melody.

MidNyte has revisited *Elements* in recent weeks and is currently in the process of re-recording it. The higher-quality recording will be called *Elements HD* and will be available for download from his [online platform](#).

*Elements* is a very solid album in the unabashed style of a particular musical moment in history — all the more striking because it is the work of only one, very talented, artist. Pick it up.



**GALNOTE**  
Your Life, Your Theme

Elements:

<https://soundcloud.com/dustin-midnyte-driscoll/sets>

Online platform:

<https://soundcloud.com/dustin-midnyte-driscoll>

*Elements*

**Text:**  
Souvarine

**Design:**  
McNicholl

**Photo:**  
StarFox

**Thanks to:**  
MidNyte, Tanith Low

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