

SAGITTARIUS EYE

Q1 3306

ISSUE

26

FEATURING:

LORE TOUR ■ NOVA IMPERIUM
SURVIVING CGs ■ BROWN DWARFS
EXPEDITIONS ■ SALOMÉ OBITUARY
PANTAR STICKS ■ CO-PAWLOTS
STATIONS YOU HAVEN'T VISITED

COVER STORY:

NEWTON'S NGAMBIT



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SAGITTARIUS EYE

ISSUE 26

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EDITORIAL

Adurnis

We commanders are by necessity professionals when it comes to patience. The final frontier demands patience from us in traversing, exploring, and making a living in it. For every commander, from a trader repeating the same semi-profitable loop, to a miner firing limpet after limpet to find low-temperature diamonds, a bounty hunter trawling through scores of low-skill marks, or an explorer doing the old honk'n'scoop, there are no easy fixes, no fast solutions. Engineering a ship to our exacting specifications, for example, is a process that can take days, or weeks. For all the miraculous acceleration of our lives brought about by the frame shift drive, our galaxy is still incomprehensibly vast.



This isn't just true of the individual courses of our careers. We must also be patient with long-standing institutions such as the Pilots' Federation (PF), that regulate the capabilities of our vessels and our interactions with each other. While we all recognise that the PF provides vital and important base foundations for our work, we at times find ourselves disheartened by the slow and difficult process of innovation. For all that space travel is an awe-inspiring experience, it can be difficult to wait for new services and major milestones.

In recent months, we've asked our readers to be patient with us too, as we switch to a quarterly schedule. We know it can be hard to wait for something heavily anticipated, but as commanders we know that the wait can be part of what makes the end result worth it. As producers of this magazine, we make it our purpose to fulfil your expectations as best we can. Who knows? Perhaps, if we wait long enough, one day we'll find there's enough to write about to let us return to a monthly schedule. For now, though, patience is a useful virtue.



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THE LORE TOUR 3306

We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard.

— John F. Kennedy, President of the United States of America, Earth, Sol, 12th September 1962

Our past

Humanity's drive for exploration did not start with space: it took many millennia for us to chart the world we all originated from. Voyages were undertaken in primitive seagoing vessels, alongside expeditions across vast tracts of wilderness with virtually no mechanical aid whatsoever. It took centuries, but eventually maps were drafted, added to, and finally completed. By the latter part of the 20th century, our ancestors, all confined to Earth, knew the confines of their planet in great detail.

Space had always beckoned. There were astrologers and astronomers who had looked up into the night sky and wondered what was there long before we had the understanding or capability to do anything about it. The 20th century was marked by huge conflict, but it drove a technological impulse that enabled people to leave the confines of Earth for the first time.

Laughably primitive by the standards of today, chemically propelled rockets lifted those intrepid explorers into orbit and, before that century was out, to the moon. Humanity became a spacefaring culture, tentatively looking beyond the frail boundaries of the planet that had nurtured it.

Per ardua ad astra

Yet humanity had unlocked vast energies; power that could be used for good or for ill. The next century was marked by the worst conflict in the long history of our race, a third world war, one which devastated Old Earth and broke the established order of the political organisations that had once seemed permanent. Our original homeworld was never the same again.

Humanity paused, drew breath and recovered, pushing on outwards into the darkness. History never waits, but continues to be written as the future becomes the past.

Many commanders today will be unaware of the crises, events and locations that have shaped the Galaxy that they navigate around. A voyage across the Bubble today can be achieved in timescales that would shock and bewilder our early ancestors. Our intrepid explorers have voyaged to the other side of the Galaxy and returned intact, cataloguing countless wonders in the process. Traders ply their wares across historic systems with little knowledge of how those systems came to be.

The Bubble has been shaped by war, conflict, politics, conspiracy, sacrifice and outrage. There are dark secrets hidden in the void.



A tour of the lore

To foster greater understanding of our joint legacy, an historic tour is being arranged to which all commanders are cordially invited. It is planned to commence on April 2nd 3306 and participants are encouraged to make their way to Earth orbit in the Sol system to rendezvous with the tour guide. The tour will take the form of a series of guided journeys, stopping along the way to visit key locations in our history. Unsurprisingly, the initial rendezvous

will be concerned with the early history of Earth itself, leading to the formation of the Federation. The tour will then proceed chronologically, culminating in a summary of more contemporary events.

We understand that, along the way, commanders will be introduced to the most notable events in our past including: the first colonisation of an extrasolar system, the first interstellar conflict, the formation of the Empire, pre-hyperspace exploration, the introduction of hyperdrive technology, the rise and fall of GalCop, the Far Colonies and the Old Worlds and the more recent formation of the Alliance.

Along the way other, more esoteric, topics will also be covered: the tragedies that marked the early days of the Federation, the solemn fate of the generation ships, the unexplained fossils and artefacts found by early archeologists and even what happened during our first contact with those most terrifying of adversaries, the Thargoids.

The tour promises to shine a light into the past, and illuminate the personalities, events and locales for the current generation of commanders.

ITINERARY

Title	Date
So it Begins	2nd April
The Expansion	9th April
Bread and Circuses	16th April
The Writers Part 1	23rd April
Per Ardua Ad Astra	30th April
The Rise and Fall of GalCop	7th May
The Great Mystery	14th May
First Contact	21st May
The Writers Part 2	28th May
The Last Alliance	4th June
Ipsos Custodes	11th June
Beyond the Frontier	18th June

THE LORE TOUR 3306

Even that great hyperbolic mystery, that of Raxxla itself, is on the itinerary, though whether our guide will be able to provide any new information regarding this absurd myth remains to be seen. Intriguingly, the rendezvous location for this leg of the tour is currently listed as 'REDACTED': make of that what you will.

The itinerary also promises an investigation into the Intergalactic Naval Reserve Arm (INRA), along with more recent discoveries, including the long dead race of beings known as the Guardians.

The tour is scheduled to run for twelve weeks, with weekly updates being broadcast across the Galaxy. Commanders can tune in to the broadcast, watch holidays at their convenience or join the tour in person by travelling to the rendezvous systems each week at a set time.

The tour will be taking in certain locations that require interstellar permits from the Pilots' Federation. It is thus recommended that commanders investigate the requirements for acquiring these permits in advance, or utilise multi-crew facilities to join other commanders who have them. The permits in question are for visiting Sol, Achenar and Alioth.

Your guide

The guide himself is an historian of sorts. He is a curious fellow, something of a recluse, allegedly disposing of unwanted visitors with a small plasma accelerator. He originates from the earth-like world Eurydice in the Eulexia system, where his ancestors staked a claim in the year 3264. He does not appear to hold any academic qualifications but professes an infectious enthusiasm for documenting and communicating humanity's space-faring history since the 20th century. He is known to fly a vintage Cobra Mk III of the Cowell and McRath era which goes by the name of the *Robert Holdstock*.

A variety of special guests are expected to co-host some of the transmissions, drawing on sage experience from across the Bubble. The tour will be independent of any political affiliation and, despite protests from Federal and Imperial officials in particular, will seek to expose the unvarnished truth about the past, without spin.

It should prove to be an exciting venture and we recommend that commanders review the published itinerary and make plans accordingly. The tour promises to shine a light into the past, and illuminate the personalities, events and locales for the current generation of commanders in a way that has not taken place for several years.

For those commanders wishing to understand the political structure of the Bubble as it exists today, past interactions with the Thargoids, the still unsolved mysteries of the universe or even enhance their knowledge of the technology that has shaped our lives — this is the tour for you.

There is no cost of entry, but the guide has mentioned in passing that he is partial to ice-cream with thumpberry flavouring, Leestian Evil Juice and Anlian gin.

The itinerary can be found [here](#).





The Lore Tour 3306

Text: Drew Wagar

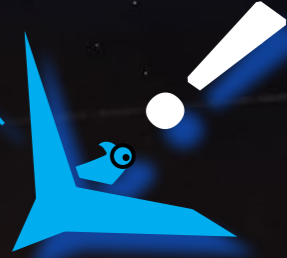
Images: OrangePheonix, Sebastian Wehmeyer, NASA public library

Art: ToCoSo

Design: LexMoloch



THE FALL OF NOVA IMPERIUM



A year and a day after the death of Emperor Kaeso Mordanticus at the hands of Admiral Denton Patreus in the Senate House, Nova Imperium lost its home. It was not the first time. This time, loyal servants of the Emperor promised, Paresa and its six billion inhabitants would not be relinquished again.

An Imperial observer recounts the recent history of the Galaxy's most high-profile insurgency.

Lavigny's Legion was one of the first and most powerful squadrons to support then-Senator Arissa Lavigny Duval's claim to the Imperial throne after the murder of her father in 3301. The Legion's support continued after her ascension to the throne made her banner that of the Empire.

Many years of support for the Lavigny family, and the patronage of the Emperor that it won them, paid off. With a reputation as a leading Imperial organisation pulling commanders into her service, the Legion, led by Admiral Lucius Lavigny and a council of commander praetors, has grown from a military organisation to a true government in control of twenty-one systems and over 26 billion imperial citizens. The Legion's influence is broad: they, alongside other factions and squadrons pledged to the Emperor, like the Chapterhouse of Inquisition, have empowered Imperial governments, expanded the Emperor's holdings, rebuffed Federal incursions, exterminated Thargoids by the thousands, and most recently, silenced rebellion.

Arissa Lavigny-Duval has struggled for legitimacy since before she ascended to the throne.

"When Emperor Mordanticus started Nova Imperium, Lavigny's Legion, like the Emperor, waited for the right moment to strike," explained Praetor Michael Brenton Lee, known to the Pilots' Federation as Commander St. Michael. "This culminated in the major battle in Paresa, led by Denton Patreus and Yupini Limited against Nova Imperium's armada. Many [Lavigny's Legion] pilots fought relentlessly day and night until Nova Imperium were destroyed the following week."

While the Battle of Paresa in early January of 3305 culminated in the capture and death of Emperor Mordanticus, it was not the end of Nova Imperium nor of Hadrian Duval's controversial claim to the throne. Still, in the wake of the battle, forces across the Empire refocused on human conflicts with the Federation and pirates, while Lavigny's Legion in particular cast its attention the then-escalating war against the Thargoids.

Lavigny's Legion's reputation in 3305 grew beyond a faction in service to the Emperor to a faction in service of humanity. Its EDGE (Extraterrestrial Defense Guard of the Empire) fleet was built into one of the most effective anti-Thargoid forces in the Galaxy, and its successes were numerous. When the Thargoids retreated from humanity's core systems, the Pleiades, and the Witch Head Nebula in August 3305, the Legion had played no small part.



The return of the Imperium

Yet while deployed against an inhuman threat, a past victory of the Legion had come undone: Nova Imperium, under the force of Hadrian Duval's Nova Navy, had reversed the Empire's success in Paresa and had gone well beyond its initial holdings to capture four additional systems: He Xincians, No Cha, Wayahukulha, and Yupini, defeating Yupini Limited in their home system.

Imperator Duval had taken Mordanticus' title and adopted his isolationist purpose. Demanding hostility between the superpowers in the name of the Empire, Hadrian Duval undermined the security of an Empire focused on the preservation of all humanity in a bid for his own power. While that power never extended beyond Paresa and its surrounding systems, it was wielded effectively with a stable force, a stable government, and a population large enough to make the destruction of both no small prospect.

The Peraesii Empire Consulate, empowered by the ambassadors and agents of the Empire's Imperial Diplomatic Corps to govern the region and curb the resurgent Nova Imperium, had failed.

"Originally, it was thought that even though they had come back, they were still little to no threat," said Praetor Michael of the Legion's initial response. "I, on the other hand, knew what an ideology like this could do if left unchecked."

A quiet but steady campaign was planned. The Legion, through its support of the Peraesii Empire Consulate and other local loyalists, began a push, system by system, to undo the renegade Duval's gains. In mid-October, the first stage of the campaign began: the Legion would begin in Yupini, fighting to restore Yupini Limited. This did not take long: resistance collapsed and order was restored to Yupini on the 4th of November.

The Legion's next target would suffer greater consequences than Yupini: in No Cha, a system of 6.5 million, the Legion chose to employ criminals and assassins. Supported by the Consulate and the Legion, pilots of the Temurt Drug Empire were sent against Nova Imperium politicians and leaders, driving Imperator Duval to declare war on the Drug Empire. The war lasted four days, with Imperial pilots replacing criminal agents in a wave of force that swept Nova Navy aside.

"The Temurt Drug Empire was the easier power to back in that system. Peraesii Empire Consulate had no presence and we could tackle Nova's influence faster by backing the Drug Empire," explained Vexillarius Hassod. "Ultimately I'd rather have an anarchist government be in control of a system than that of a failed usurper... we can always fight it when circumstances make it necessary."

Commander Rainbro, a now-retired supporter of Nova Imperium and leader in Nova Navy, described the Empire's support for Temurt Drug Empire as opportunistic: "As far as I can tell, that was intended as a distraction to stop us expanding from another system... We had been using the system for bounty hunting."

While the Empire's victory in No Cha deprived Nova Navy pilots of hunting grounds to destroy criminals, it also deprived the system of law. No Cha remains free of Imperial control, whether in the name of the Emperor or her attempted usurper. Responding to questions on the future of No Cha's significant population, Lavigny's Legion stated an intent to eventually install the Peraesii Empire Consulate in the system "when the time is right."

He Xincians, a system of merely 3,300 souls, and Paresa itself fell shortly after. War in He Xincians was short and swift, with its sole station, Oosterhoff's Claim, claimed quickly by Yupini Limited at the end of November. Conflict came to Paresa days later. In Paresa, however, Nova Imperium's defeat came in a different form. Instead of war, Paresa was won through peace, as the Legion and the Consulate rallied the system's loyal citizens, clients, and patrons to make their allegiance to the Emperor clear in a rebuttal of Hadrian Duval's claim. His base of power lost, the Imperium failed in Wayahukulha on the 7th of December, 3305. Duval had become an Imperator without an Imperium.

A campaign report written by Vexillarius Hassod described a jubilant scene on Paresa:

"On the 31st of December, the Legion conducted a military parade in Paresa 3. A multitude of Lavigny's Legion ships could be seen flying over the night sky in a hue of purple engine trails. Smaller fighters flew lower in formation and turned in sequences. On the ground, hundreds of soldiers marched representing various factions such as Peraesii Empire Consulate, Lavigny's Legion and elements of the Imperial Navy Marines. Dressed in their resplendent white battle gear, they cheered while remaining in perfect formation."

It seemed the Legion's victory was final, and Duval had been defeated. The report continued:

"With Hadrian Duval on the run, Nova Imperium, having become bankrupt and having no systems under their control, has effectively been annihilated. The Peraesii Empire Consulate has taken charge of ensuring that they will never rise again."

Duval had become an Imperator without an Imperium.

Yet they did. Barely two weeks after the victory parade of Lavigny's Legion and Peraesii Empire Consulate in Paresa, the loyalists had once again lost. Nova Imperium's flag was raised again over Paresa on the 14th of January — followed by an overt declaration of war by the Admiral Lucius Lavigny one week later:

"These traitorous scum have once more reared their head in the same place it was squashed a while ago, with what seems to be a renewed spirit. The Legion will personally see to it that that spirit is crushed!"

Imperator Hadrian Duval had not made any public comments in weeks. Nova Navy and the Imperium were both leaderless, with Commander Rainbro still retired. The Legion called it a hostile takeover, but whether through guile or force, Nova Imperium had retaken the system. And true to Admiral Lavigny's word, the emperor's forces retook it less than two weeks later, this time with commitments by the Legion and its Praetors to ensure Paresa would remain of the Empire and not the Imperium forever.

Following this commitment and victory, Praetor Michael announced a new campaign to oust Nova Imperium from any system where it has a presence, if practicable. He and his comrades have developed a plan to remove the Imperium from any station it still controls. The Empire and its loyal squadrons and factions will doubtless support him, but there can be no doubt: what has fallen may still rise.

Emperor Arissa Lavigny-Duval's reign is not secure, and may never be.

Imperial challenges

If Nova Imperium endures far beyond the anniversary of Mordanticus' death, it would not be a new challenge for this Emperor. Arissa Lavigny-Duval has struggled for legitimacy since before she ascended to the throne. There was no doubt at her coronation that her father, Hengist Duval, had intended to marry her mother, Florence Lavigny, legitimising Arissa in the process. But this did not come to pass, with the old emperor's assassination by Brendan Paul Darius forcing the Senate to select the new emperor by choice, rather than accept her by succession.

The Senate's decision was called by Emperor's Dawn, for whom Darius was an agent, "a desecration of the traditions of the Empire." Like Nova Imperium, Emperor's Dawn had presented an ultra-traditionalist view of the Empire and had built a network of powerful contacts. Like Nova Imperium, Emperor's Dawn decried Arissa as false and female, arguing that the true emperor should be male. And like Nova Imperium, Emperor's Dawn proved incredibly durable. Yet where Emperor's Dawn was a network of dispersed cells executing terrorist attacks and assassinations, Nova Imperium sought to govern systems directly and to present a clear alternative to Emperor Lavigny-Duval beyond the faceless leader of Emperor's Dawn.

Dakshmandi and Maausk in September of 3301. Namarii, Tabaldak, LTT 874, Shambhala, and Svavi in October. Kausalya in December. Cell after cell of Emperor's Dawn forces and operatives were discovered and destroyed, breaking its back as an insurgent organisation. No true leaders were ever found, and no new emperor was ever named or offered by the organisation — nor captured by the Empire. With the unnamed usurper it upheld never uncovered, it is impossible to say whether Emperor's Dawn was truly destroyed, or if it was instead driven underground.

When Emperor's Dawn first surfaced, before Arissa had even been crowned, Imperial commanders in high halls whispered that perhaps it was Harold Duval who Emperor's Dawn intended to place on the throne. Harold had been declared insane by his father and cut out of the succession in response to his hedonism and, allegedly, his unorthodox views on slavery matching those of his daughter, Aisling Duval. Little is known of what an Empire led by Harold might have looked like, and his personal views are rarely on record. If rumours that he would have led a more liberal Empire were true, he would have been an unlikely match for the extreme conservatism of Emperor's Dawn — yet as the only known living male Duval at the time, there were few alternatives.

This is no longer true. Harold Duval still lives, but so does his nephew, Hadrian. The isolationist ultra-traditionalism espoused by Imperators Mordanticus and Duval are familiar. Networked, nameless insurgency failed for Emperor's Dawn, but only after many campaigns. Direct governance of Imperial populations failed for Nova Imperium, but only after bloodshed in the Senate and constant effort in Paresa.

The truth is that Emperor Arissa Lavigny-Duval's reign is not secure, and may never be. Marriage and issue may make succession from her line clear, but as long as Hadrian Duval lives, the risk of civil war remains. Whether one and the same or not, Emperor's Dawn and Nova Imperium both posed credible threats, and while loyal commanders like those of Lavigny's Legion have made solemn commitments in support of the emperor, they may find themselves defending those commitments against challenges from within the Empire for as long as she — and Hadrian — both live.

It is impossible to say whether Emperor's Dawn was truly destroyed, or if it was instead driven underground.

The Fall of Nova Imperium

Text: Misaniovent

Images: OrangePhoenix

Design: Balthazarn Noxx

Thanks to: Extremofire, Hassod, Imperius, Rainbro of Nova Navy, St. Michael

RENDEZVOUS in the Black

ORION AND PERSEUS EXPEDITIONS MEET

Two expeditions, setting off almost one month apart, share a waypoint and will meet up there. This will be one of the first times this has happened in the history of group exploration. We take a more detailed look at these two expeditions, destined to meet up far out in the vastness of the Milky Way.



The Perseus Reach expedition

Sometimes, big things start small. In this case, an expedition began with a ship: the humble Faulcon deLacy Sidewinder. The following question from Cmdr R4nger0 appeared on the Pilots' Federation forums: how much jump range can be squeezed out of a Sidewinder? Cmdr Dr.Nagi, a veteran explorer and expedition organiser, got to work to find out.

He discovered that, given the appropriate outfitting and engineering, every current small ship is now able to jump to Oevasy SG-Y d0, more widely known as Semotus Beacon. Just three years ago, during the Distant Worlds 3302 expedition, this would have been impossible.

"I contacted Chankk Saotome and Henkka77 because I knew they would be up for such a crazy idea," said Dr.Nagi, the chief organiser of the expedition.

Looking at charts from the Galactic Mapping Project, the explorers found the Perseus Arm to be rather devoid of marks, indicating few discovered points of interest. They decided that their experimental expedition would

go through the Perseus Arm towards the other end of the Galaxy. Only small ships would be eligible.

Because the expedition is restricted in this way, it faces different challenges from other expeditions. Small ships have less space for modules and a smaller fuel capacity, after all. As a result, Fuel Rats and Hull Seals will be of even greater importance than on other expeditions.

Because of this, the expedition was initially intended as a challenge for veteran explorers. However, contrary to the organisers' expectations, it attracted a large mix of veterans and newcomers alike.

The Perseus Reach expedition left Sol on February 8th 3306 and will visit a total of thirteen waypoints, start and end points included. Activities at these waypoints are not yet fully planned and will be decided as the expedition progresses. There are ideas for events at the waypoints; the main focus, however, will be on exploration, according to expedition organiser Dr.Nagi. The fleet is scheduled to reach its final destination, Semotus Beacon, on July 4 3306.



The Orion expedition

Orion the hunter is one of the oldest constellations to be mentioned in human history. Its bright stars are easily visible to the naked eye from Earth, and because it straddles the celestial equator it can be seen from every habitable part of the planet. As a result, it has had many names throughout history. The Sumerians conceived of it as a sheep, the Egyptians saw their god Osiris, and the Germanic tribes saw a plough. The Ancient Greeks called it Orion, the great hunter, who was changed into a constellation after his death. We still refer to it by its Greek name.

The Orion Expedition's aim is to fill in the gaps on the map.

The development of better astronomical instruments led to the discovery of other well-known objects in this constellation: Barnard's Loop and the Horsehead Nebula. The former is notorious for being close to the Col 70 sector, from where the Thargoids are rumoured to originate.

Several of the stars in the constellation of Orion are well known. Betelgeuse, Alnitak, Mintaka, Rigel and Bellatrix are reachable by explorers without specifically outfitted ships because of their proximity to inhabited space.

Even though it is the same spiral arm that contains the Bubble, the Orion-Cygnus Arm feels underexplored when looking at the markings on the galactic map. Only a few stellar and planetary features are catalogued in this region. One Guardian ruin is known to be out there, but there could be many more discoveries to be made, perhaps even of human colonisation projects.

The Orion Expedition's aim is to fill in the gaps on the map. Starting at the aforementioned Betelgeuse, the expedition will head north along the Orion-Cygnus arm. Expedition organiser Cmdr Yanick stated that the ultimate goal would be a thorough investigation of the vast Orion-Persean Conflux. This region, where the Orion-Cygnus and Perseus arms of the Galaxy meet, has a high star density and is, in the wording of the expedition's description, "vast and essentially under-explored". Previ-

ous expeditions into this region (like Mercury 7, also organised by Yanick) have already discovered many interesting sites. Those, however, might only scratch the surface of this treasure trove of possible discoveries.

For this reason, most of the expedition's waypoints are located in the conflux region to offer the possibility of thorough surveys.

There are many activities planned for the different waypoints along the way, most of which include surface reconnaissance vehicles (SRVs). These games include racing (SRV and ship-launched fighter), cliff jumping, mountain climbing, and general shenanigans.

The waypoints are also intended to serve as rally points for both expeditions where commanders can meet up and share the stories of their journey.

The Orion expedition departed from Betelgeuse on January 12th 3306. There are fifteen waypoints, start and end points included. The endpoint for the expedition will be Explorer's Anchorage near the centre of the Galaxy. The scheduled arrival at the last waypoint is April 27th 3306.





The meetup

Both expeditions share one waypoint: Eolls Graae PG-E b15-4, also known as Bendurion's Present. Close to where the Perseus and Orion-Cygnus arms begin to diverge is a red and blue emission nebula. Body AB 1 b has high-pressure carbon dioxide geysers.

In the future, this system will not only be known for its interesting astronomical and geological features. The Orion and Perseus Reach expeditions plan to meet up there, 35,400 light years from Sol.



Such massive rendezvous have happened only very few times since the introduction of the frame shift drive in 3300.

Such massive rendezvous have happened only very few times since the introduction of the frame shift drive in 3300. The most notable occasion was certainly the meetup between Cmdr Erimus, returning from an eight-week mission to survey the galactic outer rim, and Cmdr R4nger0, crossing the galaxy in a Sidewinder. This happened on the March 1st 3301, 43,000 light years from Sol, in the Eactainds GN-W C1-6 system, now known as Rendezvous Point.

"I still vividly remember that day," recounted Cmdr Alec Turner. "Nothing like it (to the best of my knowledge) had happened before ... Loads of us watched the livestream transfixed as they slowly jumped towards a pre-arranged meeting point. The moment of their meeting was absolutely nail-biting. Everyone feared that a single bump could finish off Erimus' canopy. R4, often a fairly contentious charac-

ter who fueled his journey with whiskey and politics, sat motionless as Erimus, the consummate explorer and serious scientist, gently approached his ship. It was like watching the first moon landing. Just wonderful!"

The organisers of the Orion and Perseus Reach expeditions, Yanick and Dr.Nagi, have been friends for a while. When they found out their expeditions would cross the same region at approximately the same time, they decided to adjust waypoint rosters and schedules to make this special event possible. A rendezvous between commanders on an expedition is already a special thing — this correspondent experienced it himself when he was on the Distant Worlds 2 expedition last year. A meetup between two different expeditions, however, must surely be something else!

"It seemed like a fun event to have," Yanick explained. "These two groups of commanders meeting up far into the black, and very far from human civilisation... it has a bit of an untamed frontier feeling to it."

The meetup should result in a number of new friendships forming. As every commander who has ever been on an expedition will know, you come home with more comrades and friends than you left with; often many more.

On top of these social aspects, there is one very practical use to this meetup: as the Perseus Reach expedition is restricted to small ships only, this meetup with a number of larger ships presents an opportunity to stock up on necessary supplies like food, water, limpets, and coffee.

After this meetup the Perseus Reach expedition will head towards the edge of the Galaxy. It is a truly remote and lonely destination where every little bit of these supplies will be needed.



Rendezvous in the Black

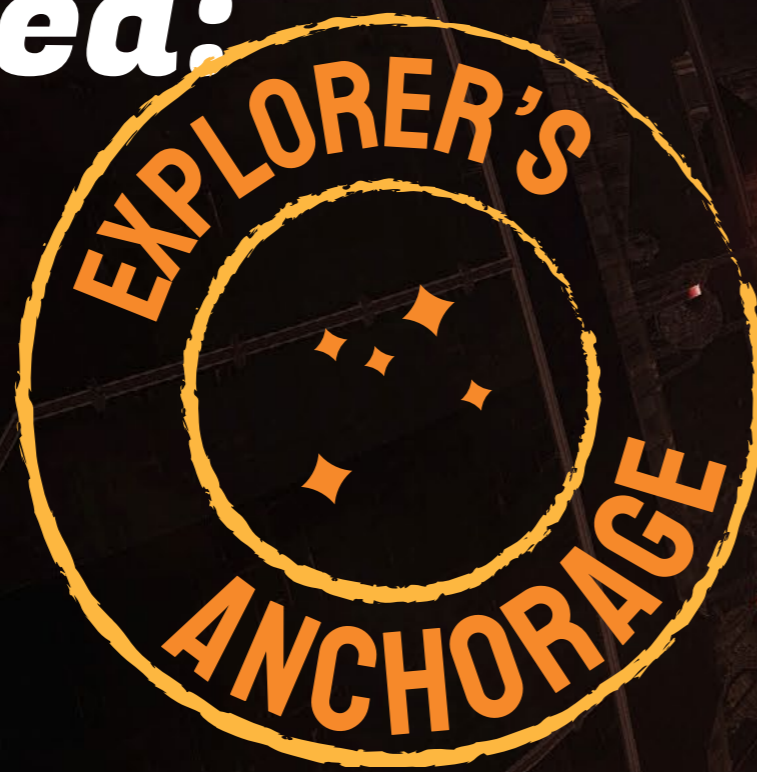
Text: LordTyvin

Images: Damon Forbes, Derek Djons, Jared Crue, Zer0axis

Design: McNicholl

Thanks to: Dr.Nagi, Yanick

Stations You *Haven't* Visited:



The revolution of the frame shift drive has brought humanity to a second mass frenzy of exploration. What was once the work of days or weeks is now accomplished in mere minutes. Brave commanders of the Pilots' Federation are spending weeks and even months at a time in the black, often alone and without aid. These explorers return with a wealth of data to be sold to Universal Cartographics, adding to the collective knowledge of our Galaxy bit by bit.

Still, even the frontiers are being settled, if only via token gestures. In a show of solidarity, the exploration community pooled their resources to construct Explorer's Anchorage in early 3305.

The Ocellus starbase is a far cry from the hardscrabble outposts that dot the road to Colonia. It is located a single jump away from Sagittarius A*, considered by many a *de rigueur* spacemark for the serious explorer. Such is the state of exploration that many of those who visit the fabled black hole aren't explorers, but tourists. Glimpses of Saud Kruger luxury are increasingly common among the worn hulls of Anacondas and Asp Explorers.

The station itself has a remarkable history, short though it is. Neither a superpower nor a megacorporation was responsible for its construction, but a grassroots effort derived from the Distant Worlds 2 expedition. The initiative to construct the station began in earnest on January 17th 3305, with three million tons of materials delivered in short order. Massive thruster nacelles were affixed to the main docking hub, and on February 21st, the core modules arrived at their final destination in Stuemeeae FG-Y d7561. Resources from local systems were mined to expand Anchorage's services in March, bringing it up to the standards of the Bubble.

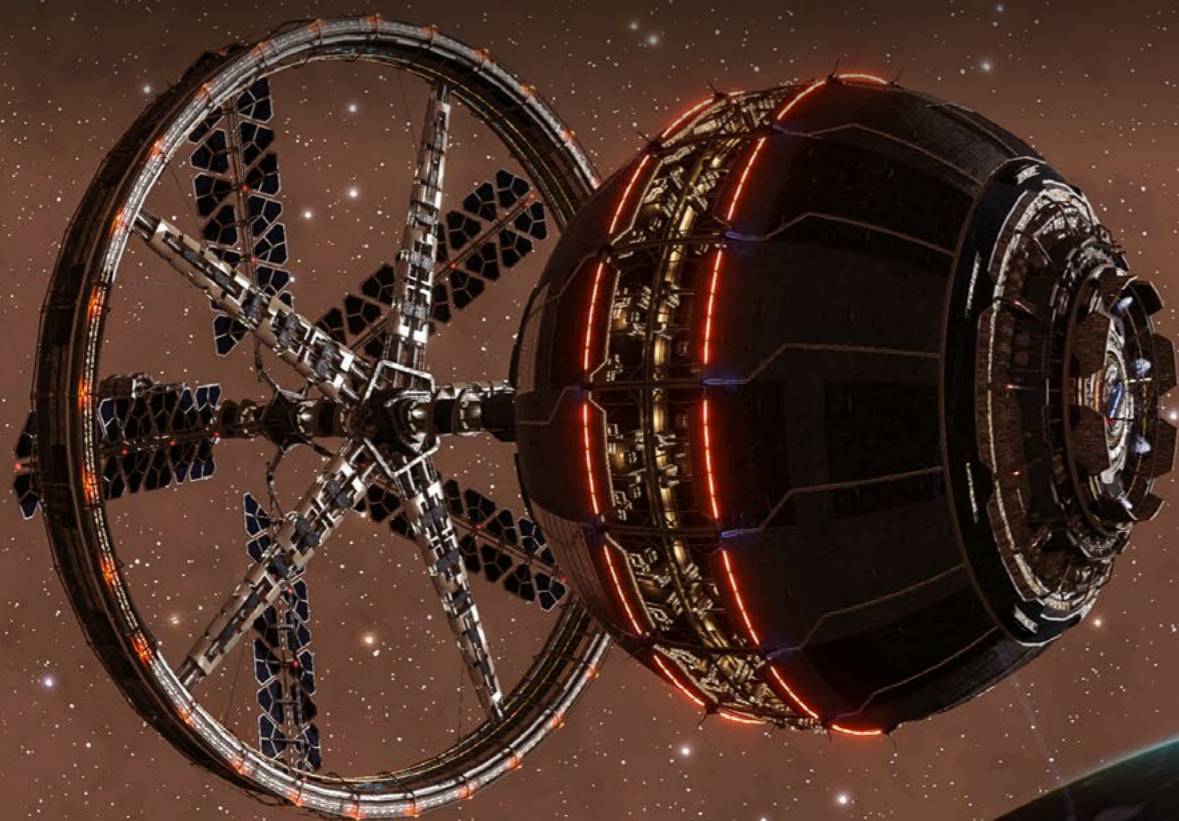
The station itself orbits an Earth-like world, lush and inviting. As of now there are no major colonies on its surface, but that will almost certainly change in the coming years.

Explorer's Anchorage itself is like an oasis in the desert. It is a welcome sight for explorers and tourists alike, a symbol of mankind's reach when it is determined to extend it. To set foot within the Ocellus is to celebrate the spirit of those who made its existence possible — and all who came before them as well.

Glimpses of Saud Kruger luxury are increasingly common among the worn hulls of Anacondas and Asp Explorers.

Neither a superpower nor a megacorporation was responsible for its construction, but a grassroots effort derived from the Distant Worlds 2 expedition.

The atmosphere within Explorer's Anchorage is remarkable. There is a sense of not only competence but *pride* exuded by its inhabitants. The station is new, and its crew works around the clock to keep its systems working flawlessly. Bulkhead walls are polished and clean. There is little bragaddocio among those settling down for a drink; to simply *be* there is an accomplishment that speaks for itself. The same is true of the local scientific community. Explorer's Anchorage is as much of a scientific installation as it is a haven for weary interstellar wanderers; only the best and brightest are granted the privilege of directly studying Sagittarius A*.



So too are there creature comforts that a commander's life seldom affords. The trappings of the Bubble are a welcome distraction for those who have spent months alone. Nightclubs, restaurants, and holothaters seem like odd allocations of resources so deep into the frontier, yet those who built the station were forward thinkers. Rumours of further — even scandalous — diversions are never far from one's ears, as are unofficial markets for prohibited goods. Explorer's Anchorage is by no means a criminal emporium, but it is a remarkable microcosm of the cooperative, self-enforcing harmony that is possible absent of formal government.

there is something special about gazing from one's canopy glass upon this particular Ocellus

It is impossible to gaze upon the Earth-like world from one of Anchorage's several observation platforms and not allow one's imagination to wander. The planet — still officially known by its Stuemeae FG-Y d7561 CD 4 designation — seems ideal for the nexus of a new enclave of humanity; one even more remote than Colonia. Still, it might be difficult for such an enclave to remain truly independent. Indeed, in the age of the frame shift drive, the journey between Earth and Sagittarius A* is the effort of a few brief days.

Ships come and go from Anchorage much like any other station its size, yet there is something special about gazing from one's canopy glass upon this particular Ocellus. The stars in the very centre of the Galaxy are bright and dense; the locale positively teems with stellar energy. Again, the imagination is stimulated. Surely this glorious core is a worthy seat of humanity, the Sol system provisional in comparison. Yet to gaze into the starry void is also to be sobered. Explorer's Anchorage is an island, not a continent. Even within the comfort of its massive hull, life hangs by a razor edge. Dreams and labour are the fuel upon which places like this run; the former impotent without the latter, and the latter rendered soulless without the former.

Humanity faces many challenges: natural disasters, the brinkmanship of superpowers, and the inhuman threat of the Thargoids all conspire to undermine the unity and peace that preserve us. Yet in the hearts of explorers can be found the very best of the human essence: the drive to explore, to challenge, and to make the dreams of one age the reality of the next.



Stations You Haven't Visited: Explorer's Anchorage

Text: M. Lehman

Images: Vex, Exorcist, Zer0axis, Sebastian Wehmeyer

Design: Balthazarn Noxx



FOGGY VULTURE BY SEBASTIAN WEHMEYER

DIGITAL ART/PHONE EDIT

Another exclusive phone edit. My favourite ship, which glides silently through the fog. I call it the "No idea" picture. I had no idea whether to keep and edit the original image, or delete it. Luckily I chose the former and with some layers of fog plus some lighting added in post, it became something quite respectable.

S. Wehmer



NEWTON'S GAMBIT



Flight assist: some of us turn it off a little, some of us turn it off a lot. Few of us leave it off for good. In this issue, we get to know a particularly ambitious group of pilots and speed junkies.

With flight assist (FA), a pilot flies their vessel in a manner not unlike an aeroplane in a standard atmosphere. FA off allows a pilot to decouple their velocity vector from the direction they are facing, without the flight computer automatically opposing each input when it's released.

The result is unnerving to the uninitiated. What used to be a vessel with a predictable flight behaviour is now an untamed beast trying to throw its rider.

Enter Newton's Gambit

Space-mad and borderline suicidal. Endlessly joyous and cheerful.

Comprised of commanders hailing from all walks of life and founded some time in 3303, Newton's Gambit is a group with only one common core principle: they are absolutely, unequivocally, addicted to keeping flight assist turned off. They argue that, as with most things in life, more is better; and when it comes to controlling a ship in the depths of space they might have a point. As it turns out, keeping FA off is actually a gateway to some otherwise inaccessible piloting abilities.

Boosts that accelerate ships in unintuitive directions; turns tighter than anything that should be possible; flight paths that seem to upend the laws of physics. To the commanders of Newton's Gambit, this mockery of the traditional movement of spaceships is simply another Tuesday morning. To find out more about how they operate, your correspondent enlisted.

Shortly after pledging, the training session began under the supervision of Gambit veteran, Commander Sanderling.

Let me give you a note on gravity and inertia! It can be a little dangerous approaching a planet in a fast ship FA off. If your speed goes over a certain point, usually around the 500 m/s mark – you may find that you can't actually brake. No matter what you do with reverse thrust, the damn ship just won't slow down.

It was noted that the speed indicator on your correspondent's heads-up display (HUD) read well over 600.

What's happening is that you've got too much inertia, and your thrust won't brake you until you've got control over the descent. In practice, this means you gotta stop falling, and start climbing. The best way to do this is to keep your nose level, and boost into your upwards thrusters only...

In a moment of sheer panic, given how the planetary canyons were fast approaching, several of the trainees angled their ships towards the sky and applied generous thrust. Again, Sanderling bellowed some helpful advice:

Don't pull the nose up to 90 degrees and try using your forward thrust! It doesn't work as well, and it looks silly. You can't see where you're going! If you're a little underpowered too, this'll actually kill you!

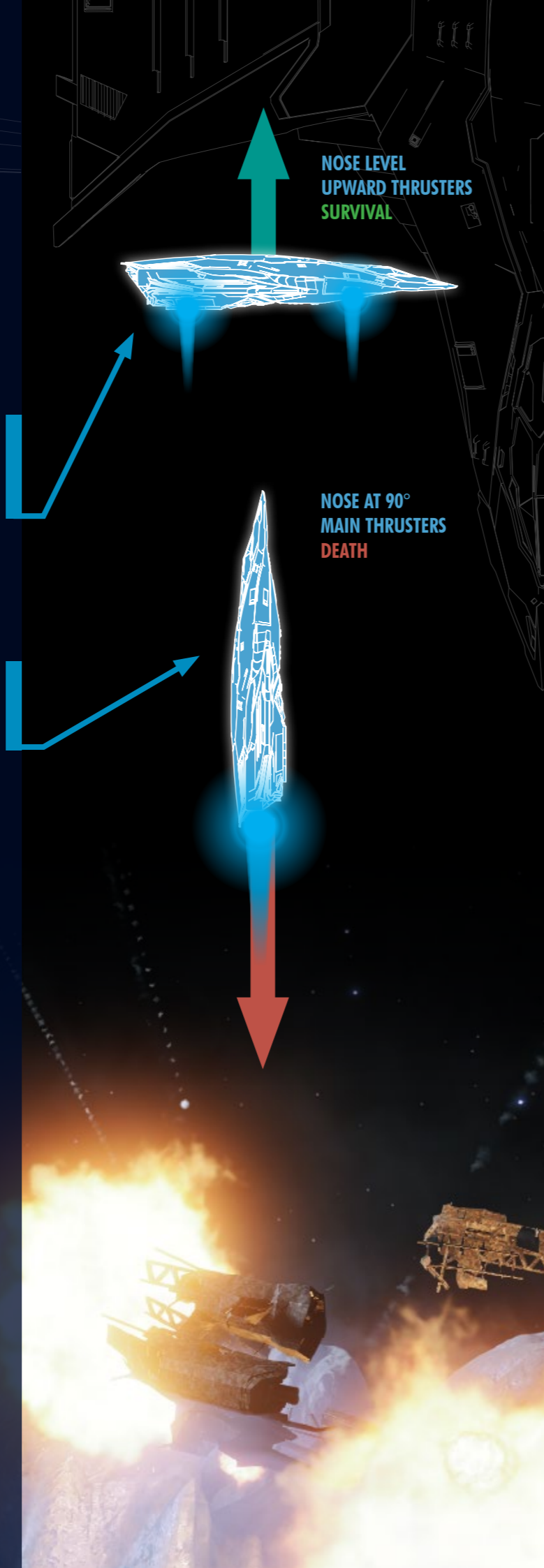
Too little, too late. As the Eagle Mk II pancaked into the ground, the group experienced the first ejection of the night. The first insurance claim was made, and the tempo for what constituted a training session with Newton's Gambit was set.

Even with the basic flight manoeuvres, every muscle memory instinct of flight was going to have to be re-trained. Simply put, FA off unlocked a terrifying yet tantalising level of control. The night continued and, little by little, steady gains were made.

The first thing that became clear was that the commanders of Newton's Gambit had mastered something that seemed unintuitive at first: simultaneously using two or even three thrusters, each on a different axis of motion, to achieve one continuous movement of a vessel. Sanderling explained:

A lot of people might not realise this, but you can 'stack' thrusters when FA off – greatly improving the ability to brake for example. If you're just moving in a straight line, and try to brake just using the single thruster that counteracts that movement, the entire system... well... it's all a bit slow to respond.

But flip the ship sideways a bit, maybe a little nose-down in orientation – then apply a combination of two or three thrusters to counteract that original line? Hey presto! Much, much better braking performance.



Tidbits of advice like this slowly began to shape the training session's direction. Quickly what was a group of pilots all vying for laughs and crazy stunts became a group of pilots studiously improving. Sanderling, Azi Agu and other veterans and commanders shadowed the new trainees. They mimicked their students' manoeuvres and

attempted to demonstrate what they were doing that was incorrect or simply unproductive. In their own way, each trainee began to grasp just exactly how to move swiftly and smoothly.

Now began a curious tradition for the pilots of Newton's Gambit – the mid-session ship exchange. Ordinarily if a commander wishes to change their vessel to something else, the standard procedure is simply to dock at a station, check in with the storage team, and jump into one of their purchased and registered vessels.

Such a pedestrian way of exchanging their vessels is beneath the commanders of Newton's Gambit. They chose the route of the Demolition Derby, then taking a RemLok ride and ship exchange after yet another insurance claim.

You win by flying a spaceship like a spaceship, not a plane.

What you have to understand is that in this racket, rebuys are a badge of honour. It shows that you've pushed yourself learning. Or that you're downright mad. And frankly, we welcome both.

The happy-go-lucky demeanor of these commanders is refreshing. Most commanders in the Galaxy seek to minimise risk, while increasing the probabilities of success at every opportunity. Seldom do pilots seek to do the opposite and just charge ahead, consequences be damned.

Because of this, Newton's Gambit revealed itself to be more than just another mysterious faction with an agenda. Rather, it was a ragtag group of pilots seeking nothing else than to fly at their limit and to share that limit with others who were also seeking to embrace the full potential of their ships. What started out as a struggle to keep a vessel in place, had now morphed into an exercise in adrenaline and controlled insanity.

Refreshed from a round of crashing into planetary surfaces, the Gambit commanders began to form an impromptu conga line, led by Sanderling.

How about we do a bit of follow the leader? Eh?

A chorus of cheers rang out. As the group began flying through the canyons, faster and faster, the walls becoming ever narrower, Sanderling seemed in his element.

You know, I'd heard about people doing canyon running that just took things to a bit of an extreme. Sounded pretty good to me. I'm like that though; speed's where it's at for me. I'm currently the lead pilot on the famous Okinura Sprint Challenge, having finally been persuaded by veteran racer Terrorsidic to have a go at it. Turns out FA-off works pretty good...



As his Eagle grazed the side of the canyon wall, lighting up the thin shields on his vessel, Sanderling spoke for all the Gambit commanders as he bellowed:

Environment and terrain kill you faster than anything else in the Galaxy!

It was magnificent. An entourage of vessels all barreling down the planetary canyon walls, with a string of unsteady trainees in tow. An experience unlike any other in the Galaxy.

The group began to settle on a ledge of a canyon, some pilots electing to hover and spin in place while most trainees decided that powering down the engines would be a welcome change. They began swapping advice and manoeuvres.

The pilots vied for attention, performing manoeuvres with their ships in front of the rookies. After a time, Sanderling began the lesson again.

Something many people don't realise is that boost actually improves whichever thruster you are engaging when you dump that sweet speed into the engines.

A very interesting trick that even I have only been learning recently, is using the cargo scoop — which can be configured to lower only when you hold it down — to act as a speed brake in the middle of a boost. It basically caps your speed at about half of the usual boost speed, but leaves all the boosted rotations and responses on vertical and lateral thrust — turning your ship into a twitchy demon for a few seconds...

They are absolutely, unequivocally, addicted to keeping flight assist turned off.

Almost immediately the yellow thrusters of Sanderling's Eagle Mk II lit up as the ship spun around to do a quick high-speed fly-by. Pulling a graceful turn, he grazed a pointed stone structure with the tip of his nose, while holding perfect control over his vessel.

After a few hours, the first session for the trainees came to a close. After orbiting a touring Beluga liner, leaving scorch marks on the walls of the canyon and enduring heart stopping moments time and time again, the session began to break up as pilots headed their separate ways.

Oh, and for agility at slower speeds? The Core Dynamics Eagle is where it's at. 100%. The Gutamaya version is sadly lacking in every single way in terms of agility at speed, which is really its supposed selling point. Shiny but ill-conceived. Don't fall for the marketing hype! Don't take a bite of that apple! Or somethin'...

And his final, parting advice:

You win by flying a spaceship like a spaceship, not a plane.

Newton's Gambit

Text: Alexander Sepulveda

Images: OrangePheonix

Design: LexMoloch

Thanks to: Azi Agu, Eagle131, Madrax 573, Nic Kowalski, Sanderling, Who The F, Yaga-Shura

FEATURED ART



PANTAGRUE VS THARGOID INTERCEPTOR BY **MARKARIAN**
DIGITAL ART

Artwork of Pantagrue, a character that is based on the Elite rank insignia, fighting against a Thargoid Interceptor.

L'INTOUCHABLE
© ORRERE

SURVIVING

A TRADE COMMUNITY GOAL

You saw a community goal — an emotional appeal for famine relief — and, being the kind soul you are, you travelled out there in your Type-9. It was a pretty simple run with common goods, and you took out the shield generator to fit in even more. *788 tonnes at a time ought to make short work of this*, you thought as you dropped into the system...



The next thing you remember is coming around from the Remlok Ride of Shame, carrying a big insurance bill and no cargo.

You weren't even pirated. You were *ganked*. Your ship and her cargo were destroyed for no other reason than that someone simply wants to watch the Galaxy burn.

You complained to the Pilots' Federation. How can this happen? Where was security? Why was the perpetrator simply free to cruise around Diso unmolested? The Pilots' Federation simply shrugs at these complaints and gives you no meaningful answer. Local security tells you "we can't be everywhere."

The truth dawns on you: the police are minutes away when seconds matter, and the much-vaunted Advanced Tactical Response (ATR), with their powerful weapons, take so long to show up that they may as well not exist.

You are *on your own*. You can either whine on the usual Pilots' Federation forums — as many do — or you can learn how to do something about it.

Fundamentally, any event that attracts easy targets like trade ships is a magnet for the undesirables known as 'gankers' or 'murder hobos'. They are fully aware of the Pilots' Federation's complete indifference to what they are doing (in fact, they are rewarded for it in the form of small boosts to their combat rank), and also of the ineffectiveness of local law enforcement, even in systems that are considered 'high security'.

Some of these pilots might profess a higher motivation than a simple orgy of destruction, such as opposition to a superpower — for example, the blockade on the community goal to bring supplies to build the *FNS Nevermore* — but for the trader, it's all the same. You get interdicted by one of them, and your ship is destroyed. It doesn't matter *why* they did it: you still end up taking an unpleasant Remlok trip ending in a similarly unpleasant insurance bill.

But it needn't be this way. With a little work and some situational awareness, you can entirely avoid ever taking a Remlok ride during a community goal.

Step 1. Equip to survive

The fundamental truth is that the ganker will have a highly engineered ship: a better FSD interdicator than the authorities, better weapons than the authorities, and better shields than the authorities. A squishy shieldless Type-9 simply doesn't stand a chance.

Don't even consider shieldless builds. Don't consider weakly shielded builds either; the second largest module slot should be the smallest shield you ever consider, and use A-rated shields. Fit as many A-rated shield boosters as you can power. After you've fitted the shield boosters, if you have a remaining utility mount, fit a chaff launcher. Consider a heatsink launcher, too, if you have a very large ship like a Cutter. Do not neglect the hull — only use military

grade composites, and if you are using a ship such as an Anaconda with restricted military slots (or any ship with enough module slots) fit a hull reinforcement and a module reinforcement package.

But what about fighting back? What about offensive capabilities?

Don't bother: *if you fight, you will die.*

Offensive capabilities on your trade ship are a waste of power that could be going to a shield booster or another piece of defensive equipment.

Even without engineering, a trade ship with A-rated shields, A-rated shield boosters and military grade composites has enough survivability to seriously increase the trader's chances of escaping. The more the better, though: consider obtaining prismatic shields, and engineer those shields, shield boosters and hull modules. Every megajoule of extra shield strength is valuable. Engineering for reinforced shields is the best bet for extra shield strength,

“Despite the best precautions, at some point, you are going to be interdicted.”

and it's generally accepted that for shield boosters, heavy duty is the best option. If you have many shield boosters though, engineer half of them for heavy duty and employ resistance augmentation for the other half.

As an example as to what is achievable, consider the humble Type-7 with a 5A shield generator and four shield boosters. The shield generator is engineered using the 'reinforced' modification, two of the boosters with the 'heavy duty' mod, and the remaining boosters with 'resistance augmented'. This build boasts 900 megajoules of raw shield strength and 1,190 points of hull strength, and can still carry 214 tons of cargo. This is a Type-7 that has a good chance of escaping even from a 'wing gank' (multiple gankers). It can power the entire build with a standard, unengineered 5A power plant. Even partly engineered shields and shield boosters are worth the effort — and partial engineering only requires commonly available materials.

Don't neglect the power distributor and thrusters. Fit the largest A-rated thrusters and distributor that your ship will take: speed is also a determining factor in survivability. Engineer the thrusters (dirty drag drives) if you can.

There has been a recent trend that some murder hobos will equip with what are colloquially known as 'grom bombs': unguided missiles supplied by Yuri Grom that have the particularly unpleasant side effect of causing the frame shift drive (FSD) of the target to reboot. This will impair your ability to escape, so consider at least one point defence turret to reduce the chances of a hit by such a missile. For large ships, point defence is likely to be of more use than chaff, and you can fit multiple point defence turrets.

“

If you fight, you will die.

Step 2. Be aware

Too many commanders like to engage the supercruise assist, kick back, and catch up on the latest holo-vid series while they trade. Doing this at a community goal is a suicidal tendency.

Situational awareness is an important factor in survival. The presence of other Pilots' Federation commanders in a system running a community goal should not be a surprise, and it is best to make a habit of keeping track. Make sure you select every Pilots' Federation target, as merely selecting them will tell you what kind of ship it is, and this alone can give you a hint as to the commander's intentions.

To that end, make sure that your preferred interface mapping has fingertip settings for cycling your ship's target around other ships, and, more importantly, also for cycling around just hostile ships. Quickly selecting the latter on your scanner can be a life-saver should you find yourself under attack.

Any unidentified commander should be treated with suspicion. Certain ships should be treated with extreme suspicion: any Fer-de-Lance, for example, is guilty until proven innocent. You need to go on 'red alert' if you see one and watch it very carefully, or just jump out. You should also be suspicious of any ship that is not normally used for trade, and also of some (for example, Clipper, Cutter and Python) that can serve as both a trader and as a ganker.

One of the first things you should do when dropping into a star system — any system, not just your destination — is to check the list of Pilots' Federation members in-system. Your

ship will give you that list: make sure you know how to do this. Check it for any known troublemakers. There are certain commanders who are notorious, and it will be helpful to you to know who these people are, and whether you're sharing supercruise with them. You don't need to scan any ships to get this list.

Step 3. Don't fly in a straight line

We covered this in Issue 24's article 'When a straight line isn't shortest', so the point won't be laboured here. However, some further refinements to the ideas raised in this article should be introduced at this point.

Start out by flying in the opposite direction, away from your destination. Keep close to the star until the star is directly between you and the destination station (and therefore the shipping lane, and probably most of the gankers) then fly directly away from the star, with the station also directly behind you. Do this until you are past the orbit line for the planet the destination station belongs to. You may even want to go as far as the orbit line for the next planet out, then start following this orbit line.

As our previous article explains, this won't be that costly in time, as — away from any planetary or stellar bodies — your supercruise speed will be very high. Any ganker will now have to detach themselves from the shipping lane, and it will be more obvious on your scanner if they are coming for you. The orbit line for the next planet out will also take you on a curving trajectory, which will mean you'll end up approaching your destination station from behind, and in the last third or so of your journey, as you begin to spiral in towards your destination, you will be facing the shipping lane and any ships there. This does a couple of useful things:

1. It allows you to scan every ship between the star and your destination system. Now you know who is flying what ship, so you can check ships for 'wanted' status (a sure sign of a ganker), and you can check if ships have an FSD interdicator (another warning sign). Prioritise scanning suspicious ship types like Fer-de-Lances or any other combat vessel.

2. It means any ship in the shipping lane would have to come out of the shipping lane and get behind you to interdict you. Most gankers won't bother given easier targets, and if they do, it makes it easier to see on your scanner.

If you see a suspicious ship heading your way, consider dropping out of supercruise altogether to prevent the possible interdiction from ever happening. You'll need to judge how long to remain in normal space, as if the suspicious ship is coming for you, no doubt they will try to drop in on your low wake. You want to time your exit to be happening just about this time. Keep a careful eye out and don't let the ship you saw ever get behind you.

Step 4. Know your escape route

Despite the best precautions, at some point, you are going to be interdicted — so you need a plan for when this happens.

The first and most paramount directive is *never* to try to evade an interdiction if it is a Pilots' Federation member interdicting you. If you see a hollow square on the scanner as the hostile that's interdicting you, immediately throttle to zero and submit. Firstly, gankers spend all day interdicting people. They know how to win an interdiction and have plenty of practice at it. Secondly, gankers have engineered FSD interdictors, far better than any system security ship. Just because you once evaded the police does not mean you can evade a ganker's interdiction. If you don't submit, you will be forcefully wrenched out of supercruise, and you will have to wait a long

“ Just because you once evaded the police does not mean you can evade a ganker's interdiction.

time for your FSD to become available again, during which time you will be fired on. If you submit, your FSD will cool down in mere seconds.

Then the question is: should you go back into supercruise (low wake), or jump to another system altogether (high wake)? The answer nearly always is to high wake. There are good reasons for this:

1. You cannot be mass locked when you high wake. If the ganker is in a Cutter and you're in a Type-7, it will take so long to get back into supercruise you will probably die before your FSD charges up due to the mass lock. However, you are immune to mass lock when high waking.

2. The ganker probably doesn't have a wake scanner, won't know where you've gone, and can't follow you. On the other hand, if you low wake, you will probably be interdicted again.

3. Even if the ganker has a wake scanner, a drop at the high wake destination, a bit of boost in normal space and another random high wake will make you nigh untraceable.

High waking does have a downside, though: you must now run the gauntlet all over again since you lost all your progress towards the station by jumping to another system. You at least have both your ship and cargo intact, and you have the time to wait until your shields fully recharge before trying again.

There is also the question of what to do while you are waiting for the FSD cooldown, and then the spool-up. The accepted wisdom is to put full power to shields (have four pips in shields and two in engines, and zero in weapons) and keep boosting towards your attacker until the FSD is fully spooled up for the jump. Four pips to shields will offer a significant boost to your shields. It effectively adds more than 50% more strength, which is huge, especially if you have them engineered. The remaining two pips in engines should allow you to use boost reasonably often,

and boosting towards your attacker means they frequently have to turn to attack you, reducing the amount of time they can keep weapons on you. Running away in a straight line, on the other hand, gives your attacker a nice easy shot — and worse still, allows them to shoot out your engines if your shields go down.

That said, if in a ship significantly faster and/or more agile than your



attacker, a better strategy might be to boost away from them with flight assist off and employ random vertical, lateral and roll inputs (not just mere aileron rolls while flying a straight line) while the FSD charges, and when it's charged, align to it, flip flight assist back on and hit boost to jump out. This a favourite tactic with an engineered Imperial Courier, and some pilots of these love to broadcast the phrase "meep, meep" in mockery of the slower ship. The origins of this phrase are lost to history.

What about low waking back into supercruise? Low waking (so long as you're not mass locked) does have a significantly faster FSD charge time, you don't have to line up with a particular destination to do it, and you don't lose your progress towards your destination. There are some circumstances where low waking is indeed acceptable, but consider very carefully before doing so. If you are in a strong ship such as a Cutter with engineered prismatic shields and a reinforced hull, you might nearly always consider low waking instead:

“

ATR, with their powerful weapons, take so long to show up that they may as well not exist.



nearly the only thing that mass locks a Cutter is another Cutter, so as long as your opponent is in any other ship, your FSD will charge very quickly. A Cutter with good shields can also take several interdictions: at a recent community goal, a Cutter belonging to the East India Company with engineered prismatic shields suffered no fewer than six interdictions in one journey, but only lost a single ring of shields in the process. The Cutter in question had 2.7 GJ of shield strength, and a very strong engineered hull, while carrying 728 tonnes of cargo. With these kinds of stats, low waking and continuing becomes perfectly practical.

If you choose to low wake, there are some additional techniques which can prevent the annoyance of repeated interdictions. Firstly, boost

towards the attacker when your FSD is charged. It is likely when you go into supercruise, the ganker will also immediately charge their FSD. However, you enter FSD in the same direction as you were going in normal space, so it is likely the ganker will be facing away from you and will have to turn around to get behind you again, giving you valuable time. A second technique is to immediately drop out of supercruise the moment you enter it. When the ganker gets into supercruise, they will not see you on their scanner, and it's quite likely they will find another victim before they find your low wake. Remain in normal space for thirty seconds to a minute, to give time for the ganker to fly somewhere else (and to recover some shield strength). At this point, turn back to the station and resume your journey.

It must be stressed, however, only low wake if you are not mass locked (and you must be certain), and if you have a very strong ship that can survive being interdicted multiple times.

Other resources

Traders are strongly encouraged to view the holovid made by Cmdr Rinzler of the notorious Smiling Dog Crew ([The Git Gud Guide To Trading In Open](#)) a couple of years ago on this subject. It makes many of the points discussed here and also demonstrates these techniques. While there have been a couple of changes since Rinzler made his tutorial (such as the Type-7 now having a more capable power plant), everything demonstrated in the video is still pertinent.

Surviving A Trade Community Goal

Text: Mack Winston

Images: OrangePheonix, Ziggy_GG, Donald Duck

Design: Donald Duck

Acknowledgements: Rinzler o7o7o7

Thanks to: BLIP, Bishnar

PANTAA PRAYER STICKS

RARE COMMODITIES SPOTLIGHT

George Pantazis, a singularly uninteresting system a short twenty-five light year hop from Sol, has in recent years found relative commercial success. Despite a balmy tropical paradise of an Earth-like world — one of the earlier locations to be fully terraformed — it is the proliferation of metal-rich bodies that has seen it become an important extraction and refinery location.

George Pantazis Sr, entrepreneur and millionaire developer, obtained rights to the system early on in the exploitation of near-Earth systems, using funding from the mineral and raw material extraction to begin the terraforming of planet Anew. Following in the philanthropic footsteps of George Cadbury, Andrew Carnegie and Joseph Rowntree, Pantazis viewed this 'utopia' of a planet as a place for his workforce to build a home, relax and enjoy life.

What started as a workers' paradise has over the centuries become a playground for the spacefaring middle classes, who buy up land and build villas and holiday homes. A steady gentrification of the planet pushed workers to migrate outwards in the Bubble or to the plentiful work at the refineries in the system.

Appalled at the change, a breakaway group of traditionalists staked a claim on another planet in the system, forming a colony of their own: a workers' commune as a retreat for fellow industrial workers. Espousing spirituality as a form of relaxation, they created the Pantaa Prayer Stick, and it began gaining popularity via word of mouth.

Unlike the carved prayer sticks of indigenous populations on old Earth, theirs was more akin to the burned incense sticks in temples, hippie gatherings and student bedrooms in pre-interstellar era Earth.

Made exclusively from oily, fragrant woods found only on Anew, the Pantaa prayer stick (the Pantaa tree being named after the system's benefactor) has a reputation for soothing the busy mind, relaxing the muscles and improving focus. Originally used by secular groups in pseudo-religious ceremonies, the sticks' ability to improve

Now regulated as a 'medicine', thus skirting the laws throughout the Galaxy on the trade in narcotics, the supply of sticks is limited.

focus was quickly snapped up by inventors, businesspeople and designers. After a time, production was industrialised and moved to Zamka Platform.

Now regulated as a 'medicine', thus skirting the laws throughout the Galaxy on the trade in narcotics, the supply of sticks is limited. This is primarily due to the incredibly slow growth of the Pantaa tree and the limited period in its life cycle where it secretes the resins and oils that give the sticks their properties; though there are rumours that stockpiles at Zamka always appear to be just high enough for any passing ship.

It is these items, much sought after by visionaries throughout the Galaxy, that bring pilots to this important stop on the rare trader's route, and they fetch high prices throughout occupied space. The 'sacred' nature of the

sticks is, on the face of it, pure marketing — added flavour to an already heady scent.

Now in the hands of the Hutton Truckers, eccentric trading co-operative and minor local power, they form part of their curated portfolio of rare goods — alongside Centauri Mega Gin, Indi Bourbon and of course their signature Hutton Mug — and can be found as part of care packages designed to enhance the leisure time of truckers, traders, explorers and adventurers throughout the Milky Way.

*Rare Commodities Spotlight:
Pantaa Prayer Sticks*

Text: David Pearson

Art: Beetlejude

Design: LexMoloch

WHAT ARE BROWN DWARFS?

Humans like neat categories, such as 'star', 'planet' and 'gas giant', and have devised criteria for classifying bodies as such. Nature, it turns out, isn't so picky.

We are reminded of this whenever we talk about brown dwarfs. They are neither stars nor planets. They do have some qualities of each, as well as being big gas giants. So what are they exactly?

Origins

All stars are born out of massive clouds of gas and dust. Their life-spans are determined by their mass and thus the amount of fuel they have. Stars are massive and hot enough to fuse chemical elements — mostly hydrogen — into others, thereby generating radiation that (simply speaking) manifests as heat and light. More massive stars burn their fuel quickly, whereas lower-mass stars burn it considerably more slowly, often over a hypothetical trillion years.

A star ignites when its formative gas cloud collapses, due to its own gravitational pressure or some outside force (such as the shockwave of a supernova blast), to the point where the mass of the core reaches the temperature and pressure needed for hydrogen fusion. But what happens if such a cloud core just isn't dense or massive enough to form a fully-fledged star? What if the resulting ball of gas, called a 'protostar', lacks the 'final punch', so to speak, to begin the process of fusing hydrogen?

For a protostar to begin hydrogen fusion it needs a core temperature of over one hundred million kelvin. That's a very high bar which requires immensely strong gravitation. The generally accepted lower mass limit is eight percent of the mass of Sol.

Below this, hydrogen fusion just isn't possible as the protostar's core temperature and pressure are too low. Astrophysicists have adopted a different scale for such protostars: one based on the mass of Jupiter. Protostars with between thirteen and eighty Jupiter masses become brown dwarfs.

Thirteen Jupiter masses is an important threshold for astronomers, because above that point, another interesting thermonuclear process begins: the fusing of deuterium. Deuterium — sometimes known as

In 1975, the astronomer Jill Tarter came up with the name 'brown dwarf'.

'heavy hydrogen' — has a neutron and a proton in its nucleus, unlike normal hydrogen, which only has a single proton. The fusion of deuterium is one of the very simplest of fusion reactions and requires only a fraction of the temperature needed for hydrogen fusion. Translated into mass and gravitational pressure, this temperature requirement (give or take a couple of tens of thousands of kelvin, depending on the surrounding dust, debris and magnetic fields) yields the 'thirteen Jupiter' threshold. These protostars are hot and dense enough to fuse deuterium with a proton into helium-3. It's also the reason why explorers find some very big gas giants to be rich in helium. The fusion process may have stopped long ago, but the helium is retained.

Looking for a suitable classification for these substellar objects, 20th century astronomers considered a number of terms. 'Dwarf' seemed appropriate, as the cosmos had already seen red dwarfs and white dwarfs. They weren't white, though — rather, they were very, very dim. The terms 'red' and 'black', on the other hand, were already occupied; so in 1975, the astronomer Jill Tarter came up with the name 'brown dwarf'. In the absence of better alternatives, this name has stuck, and it is certainly in-keeping with astronomers' knack for dramatic terms.

One colloquial description is that brown dwarfs are stars that “didn’t quite make it,” and while that’s not very scientific it is quite accurate. Imagine a gas giant eighty times the mass of Jupiter that’s capable of maintaining its own quintillion-ton fusion reactor over billions of years, and you have a picture. However, it’s still not considered a proper star. It’s still a dim, dwarf protostar incapable of maintaining the thermostatic equilibrium (a long-term balance of heat generation and heat output) that would put it on the main sequence of stars.

Are brown dwarfs really brown in colour? Not really, as most pilots will know. The reason is actually that brown does not truly exist in the optical spectrum. Compared to a star, a brown dwarf emits very little radiation, including visible light. Even compared to a dim red M-class star it’s still comparatively very faint, and many brown dwarfs emit mostly in infrared. The result is a very dark red colour, which made them exceedingly difficult to identify from afar, as was the case for Gliese 229B back in 1994.

Due to their low radiation output, more complex molecules like methane, carbon monoxide or even molecular hydrogen can form in their atmospheres. These molecules absorb specific portions of the optical spectrum, namely the more energetic — and hence ‘brighter’ — ones. The result is that many brown dwarfs actually look magenta in colour. The term ‘magenta dwarf’ would probably not have caught on.

You’re peering into a computer-aided refractor telescope. How would you know you have just discovered a brown dwarf?

As is often the case in optical astronomy, the answer is spectroscopy. With specific prisms, light can be split into its spectral components which can be measured with a spectrometer. Most chemical elements absorb specific wavelengths in the optical spectrum, making it possible

to analyse a body’s chemical make-up by looking for these “absorption lines”. If a brown dwarf has a considerable amount of methane in its atmosphere, the spectrometer will reveal this by showing a black line at the appropriate wavelength.

One of the earliest methods for identifying a brown dwarf was the so-called lithium test. Lithium is initially abundant in both stars and brown dwarfs. Its fusion temperature lies just below that of hydrogen, so all evolved stars will quickly burn through their lithium deposits, whereas brown dwarfs will retain them. This made distinguishing a star from a brown dwarf possible for early astronomers, although there are other variables like metallicity or magnetic fields that can ‘taint’ this test. It still was of great use to identify the first generations of brown dwarfs back in the 20th century and laid the groundwork for most scientific works on them.

So, if brown dwarfs are not real stars that blow up, collapse or inflate at the end of their lives, what will their inevitable fate be when their fuel runs out?

Deuterium fusion generates energy, although only tiny amounts compared to hydrogen fusion. It’s still enough to overcome the dwarf’s inward gravitational pressure, so the dwarf will radiate away heat (and some light) until its fuel is used up. In most cases, the reservoirs are thought to last several billion years, depending on the mass. In contrast to main sequence stars, when the fuel is used up there is no follow-up fusion process. The dwarf simply has no fuel left and fusion ceases. With all fusion gone and no other elements to burn, a brown dwarf will then cool over another couple of million years and then become an inert body.

That’s a fate they will most likely share in many ways with their ‘cousins’, the black dwarfs. Black dwarfs in turn are hypothesized white dwarfs that have cooled sufficiently to not

What if the resulting ball of gas, called a ‘protostar’, lacks the ‘final punch’?

One colloquial description is that brown dwarfs are stars that “didn’t quite make it,” and while that’s not very scientific it is quite accurate.

radiate any heat or light anymore. Such objects should by all means be next to impossible to detect, except maybe through gravitational astronomy or — as is more usual since the invention of the frame shift drive — by ‘frame shift astronomy’. None have been discovered to date.

So while brown dwarfs are not ‘true’ stars, they are thought to share the fate of most low-mass stars. One of the main differences is that, because they don’t blow up, eject their masses into interstellar space, to be otherwise consumed by stellar processes, their ‘dead mass’ does not add to the rejuvenation or recycling of the interstellar medium, which is the basis for a new generation of stars to be born.

Early explorers dubbed star systems containing a primary brown dwarf ‘dark systems’, and whether the term chosen was deliberately accurate or just for drama is unknown. But it’s close to the truth for the future of these bodies.

What Are Brown Dwarfs?

Text: Andrew Gaspar

Images: Exorcist, Martin Shepard, Zer0axis

Design: Donald Duck

OBITUARY

SENATOR KAHINA TIJANI LOREN SALOMÉ

For those who killed me, I bear you no ill will.

For those who wanted me dead, you have your wish.

For those who loved me and swore allegiance to me, your service and dedication were the brightest light in the darkness of my life. Do not let my death be the end of what you would see done.

My last request is that you always... remember.

— Salomé's Requiem,
Panacea Medical Centre,
HIP 17519 A1A

We all know how her story ends: Kahina Tijani Loren, known to most as the elusive and mysterious Salomé, was assassinated in the Anumclaw system on 29th April 3303. Whilst flying her Imperial Clipper *Seven Veils* towards a rendezvous in the Tionisla star system, she was interdicted en-route, her message and ultimate purpose lost.

Origins

Born in the year 3275 into a high-ranking Imperial family originally from the Haoria system, Kahina was surrounded by wealth and privilege throughout her life; little different from the upbringing of any other children in the privileged upper echelons of the Empire. She was the third daughter of Senator Algreb Loren, himself a controversial figure known principally for the invasion of the Prism system in 3297.

As remains common in the Empire today, daughters were used by their high-ranking parents to foster political alliances through arranged marriages. Kahina and her sisters were dutifully groomed for this role, being schooled in Imperial etiquette, dress, and decorum. As a young woman, Kahina was said to be cold and aloof, with an acerbic wit. She was known to support slavery and traditional Imperial values.

Kahina was said to support slavery and traditional Imperial values.

The rise and fall of the Prism system

The invasion of Prism was prompted by the discovery of significant deposits of tantalum in the system, demand for which had risen dramatically due to the recently-introduced frame shift drive. Settlers on the inhabitable moon Chione were almost entirely wiped out in an act of genocide committed by Admiral Brice, under orders from Senator Algreb. The move was not directly challenged by the Federation at the time.

Once established, Algreb had a palace built on Chione. The orbital station Hiram's Anchorage, constructed by Mastopolis Mining, served as a refinery and export facility for the tantalum. To further establish his control, Algreb used his daughters to cement alliances with the leaders of nearby systems.

According to sources on Prism, Kahina schemed to ensure that her eldest sister was married off in her place. A suitable wedding was arranged during 3300, but the event was interrupted when the few remaining settlers, now calling themselves 'Reclamists', staged a coup. They murdered Senator Algreb, his wife, his two elder daughters and most of his entourage. It was believed that Kahina had also perished in the attack. Several reports confirmed that her dead body had been seen in the remains of the Imperial palace, but no burial ever took place.

Prism fell into the hands of the Reclamists, now a strongly militant group. They were provided with arms and tactical support by the notorious warlord Octavia Quinton, who controlled much of the trade in the surrounding systems. They aimed to sell the system's tantalum to the highest bidder, pitching the Federation and the Empire into a trade war.

Kahina's dry wit and direct style won her unexpected popularity from the general populace of the Sol system

Kahina reclaims her home

Precisely what happened to Kahina during this period is a mystery. Several weeks passed before a wide-band message was received by the Imperial Herald news network purporting to be from Kahina, demanding that Admiral Brice forcibly reclaim the Prism system from the Reclamists. Admiral Brice immediately dispatched an Imperial fleet to the system, only to find that a Federal fleet was already in situ, seeking to annex the system and secure the tantalum reserves. A significant conflict took place in orbit of Chione as a result.

The Federal fleet ultimately withdrew. Kahina returned to Chione and personally executed the leader of the Reclamists with a Holva duelling blade. Then she adopted her father's mantle, becoming the youngest Senator in the Empire at the time, at the age of twenty-six. Perhaps more importantly, she'd reclaimed her home.

Arise, Senator Kahina

During 3301, Kahina conducted a tour of the Federation at the request of Chancellor Anders Blaine. Despite strong resistance and bureaucratic incompetence from Federal officials, Kahina's dry wit and direct style won her unexpected popularity from the general populace of the Sol system, who enjoyed and admired the way she flouted protocol during her visit. Having struck up an unlikely connection with the Federation, Kahina was summoned back to Achenar and made a number of public appearances there. Many speculated that she was making a play for power alongside others as the Empire struggled to select a new Emperor.

At the time, Kahina seemed more concerned with securing peace and stability for the Prism system. She leant heavily on advice from Ambassador Cuthrick Delaney in this regard and went so far as to defy Admiral of the Fleet Denton Patreus, demanding special privileges for the Prism system. However, it now seems that she was plotting something else for reasons known only to her.

Kahina becomes Salomé and the mysteries begin

On 21 July of that year a security alert was sent from the suite that Kahina had been occupying whilst on Achenar. The suite was found empty, with no sign of habitation, nor of Kahina herself. Many assumed that Patreus himself was behind her sudden disappearance, but he vehemently denied it. Kahina's ship was impounded and searched, and her tiara was recovered alongside an emblem bearing the word 'Salomé' on one side, and a symbol reputedly belonging to an infamous organisation known as 'The Dark Wheel' on the other. Many assumed she had been seduced into joining the folly of those who embark on the fruitless quest for Raxxla.

Kahina, now cloaked in her mysterious pseudonym Salomé, abandoned both her senatorial responsibility and her allegiance to the Empire, becoming the figurehead of a shadowy cabal known as the 'Children of Raxxla'. This further cemented the assumption that she had embarked on a foolish treasure hunt. What actually prompted this dramatic change of focus is unclear, but most sources now agree that, unlikely as it seemed at the time, Kahina had stumbled upon some genuine information and gone into hiding in order to investigate it.

A year passed with no news of her or her whereabouts, though it is known that the Children of Raxxla were involved in a number of deep space exploration voyages into three notable regions of the Galaxy: the Formidine Rift, Hawking's Gap, and the Conflux. Salomé herself even appeared at Beagle Point, indicating that she had voyaged all the way across the Galaxy in her search.



The logs revealed a troubled woman, ill at ease with the quest she had carried out.

Intrigue, assassinations, abduction and trial

Three days after an assassination attempt on Admiral Denton Patreus in the Cemiess system, there were sporadic reports of a 'Cmdr Salomé' in the vicinity. None were substantiated, but a month later the Imperial Senate announced that Senator Kahina Tijani Loren had been arrested and charged in connection with the attempt on the admiral's life. Both Patreus and Princess Aisling Duval publicly denounced Kahina during this period.

Kahina was formally stripped of her senatorial rank and transported to the Prism system for trial. She was found guilty of masterminding the assassination attempt and sentenced to life imprisonment within Koontz Asylum in the Daibo system. Many protested the verdict, but it was upheld. The Children of Raxxla launched an attack on the flagship of Admiral Denton Patreus in the Eotienses system in retaliation, leading many to brand them as terrorists.

In keeping with her usual flair for the unexpected, Kahina's prison convoy was destroyed en-route to her incarceration by forces unknown. The attack was thorough, not even leaving escape pods intact. Kahina was presumed dead a second time.

From this point the intrigue continued to thicken. Kahina, once again masquerading as Salomé, reappeared and was identified as complicit in the theft of meta-alloys

from Darnielle's Progress in the Maia system, collaborating with individuals from across the Federation and the Alliance. The Empire took a dim view of this thievery and ultimately issued a five million credit bounty on her, with instructions to shoot on sight.

Salomé's death and revelation

At about the same time, encrypted messages were received from the Col 70 sector. Salomé and her companions were revealed to be hiding in the 46 Eridani system and were chased towards the Bubble by hundreds of bounty hunters, including the notorious Cmdr Besieger, himself in the employ of Admiral Patreus, who eventually interdicted and destroyed Salomé's ship. In part due to her sacrifice, her companions arrived safely at their destination in the Tionisla system which, in turn, led to the revelation of the Teorge listening post logs.

These logs revealed that Kahina, as Salomé, had been working to reveal a vast conspiracy perpetrated by powers operating above the Federation, Empire and the Alliance and manipulating the powers for the purpose of ensuring humanity's survival in the face of an impending cataclysmic invasion by the Thargoids. Known euphemistically as 'The Club', this group is believed to be composed of senior figures across the breadth of humanity's influence, with an agenda that spans centuries. Although Salomé did reveal their conspiracy, their members' identities remain unknown to this day.

Hidden messages

Months after her death, a message was recovered that led to the Panacea Medical Centre, a facility orbiting planet A1A in the HIP 17519 system. Audio logs from Salomé were hidden at the facility, providing a post-mortem message to her followers and an explanation of her actions. Clearly she had known she was in danger of being killed.

The logs confirmed the conspiracy, but also revealed a troubled woman, ill at ease with the quest she had carried out and the guilt she bore for both the battle of Chione and subsequent deaths of fellow conspirators and followers. The weight of responsibility had worn heavily on her, and she no longer valued her own life towards the end.

Legacy

Kahina Tijani Loren's legacy remains a point of controversy. Many have branded her a terrorist and a murderer, following in the footsteps of her genocidal father. Certainly many thousands died at her hands or as a direct result of the actions she took. Others describe her as a coward, abrogating her responsibilities as a Senator and risking the prosperity of the Prism system as a result. That she manipulated both people and organisations to her own ends is undeniable.


Others claim she lost her grip on sanity, perhaps because of guilt, becoming a victim of her own madness; they say the conspiracy was merely within her own mind, and her death was tragic but meaningless. If so, she wasn't the first to be caught up in the psychosis of those who seek out the truth behind Raxxla and the Dark Wheel. Critics point out that the cataclysmic Thargoid invasion she warned of never occurred — at least, not in the way she described.

But others hold her up as a heroine: a champion of freedom, a convert to promoting peace and stability regardless of political boundaries. She engendered a loyalty that approached a messianic furore at its peak. Thousands were prepared to lay down their lives for her, undertaking dangerous voyages out into the darkness to search for clues and mysteries. To them she became more than a leader: she was an inspirational symbol of hope and salvation. Some even dubbed her the patron saint of explorers.

She proved herself a formidable adversary, not afraid to confront the highest authorities in both the Federation and the Empire. She notably humiliated Princess Aisling Duval during an unscheduled holofac transmission, and is reported to have beaten Admiral Denton Patreus in a sword duel. In her time, she rubbed shoulders with President Zachary Hudson of the Federation and Prime Minister Edmund Mahon of the Alliance.

Few remain who knew her personally. They tell of yet another aspect to her character: a woman who was fiercely loyal to her friends, acknowledged her mistakes and tried to make them right, and cared deeply for the fates of those who entrusted their loyalty to her. Still, all agree she was short-tempered, arrogant and self-assured.

Thus she remains an enigma — but there are few in the worlds of the Federation, the Empire and the Alliance who haven't heard the name of Salomé, the erstwhile Senator of the Prism system.

Lady Kahina Tijani Loren, 3275–3303. 

Obituary: Senator Kahina Tijani Loren — 'Salomé'

Text: Drew Wagar

Images: OrangePheonix, SebastianWehmeyer, Starfox

Kahina Loren images: Drew Wagar

Design: Balthazarn Noxx



Commander name: DragonxFangz

Co-Pawlot name: Prince

Co-Pawlot designation: Stellar Serpent

Co-Pawlots

Being one of the leaders of The 8th Dragon Squadron, I always thought having a reptile as a pet would be great. A perfect mascot for the squadron. Now that I've spent time with him both on-station and on my ships... not so much.

He's adorable to look at — don't get me wrong, everyone seems to love him — but if you stop paying attention to him, even for a second, he's gone. I spent probably a good two hours combing through the nooks and crannies of my Anaconda hunting him down when he slithered away: found him tangled amongst the loose cables above my pilot's chair. Faulcon DeLacy really need to work on their cable management. I think I'm going to keep him on Coney Gateway and not let him have adventures on my ships any more.

SANCTIONED LIFEFORM DETECTED

Co-Pawlots

Design: McNicholl

Thanks to: DragonxFangz



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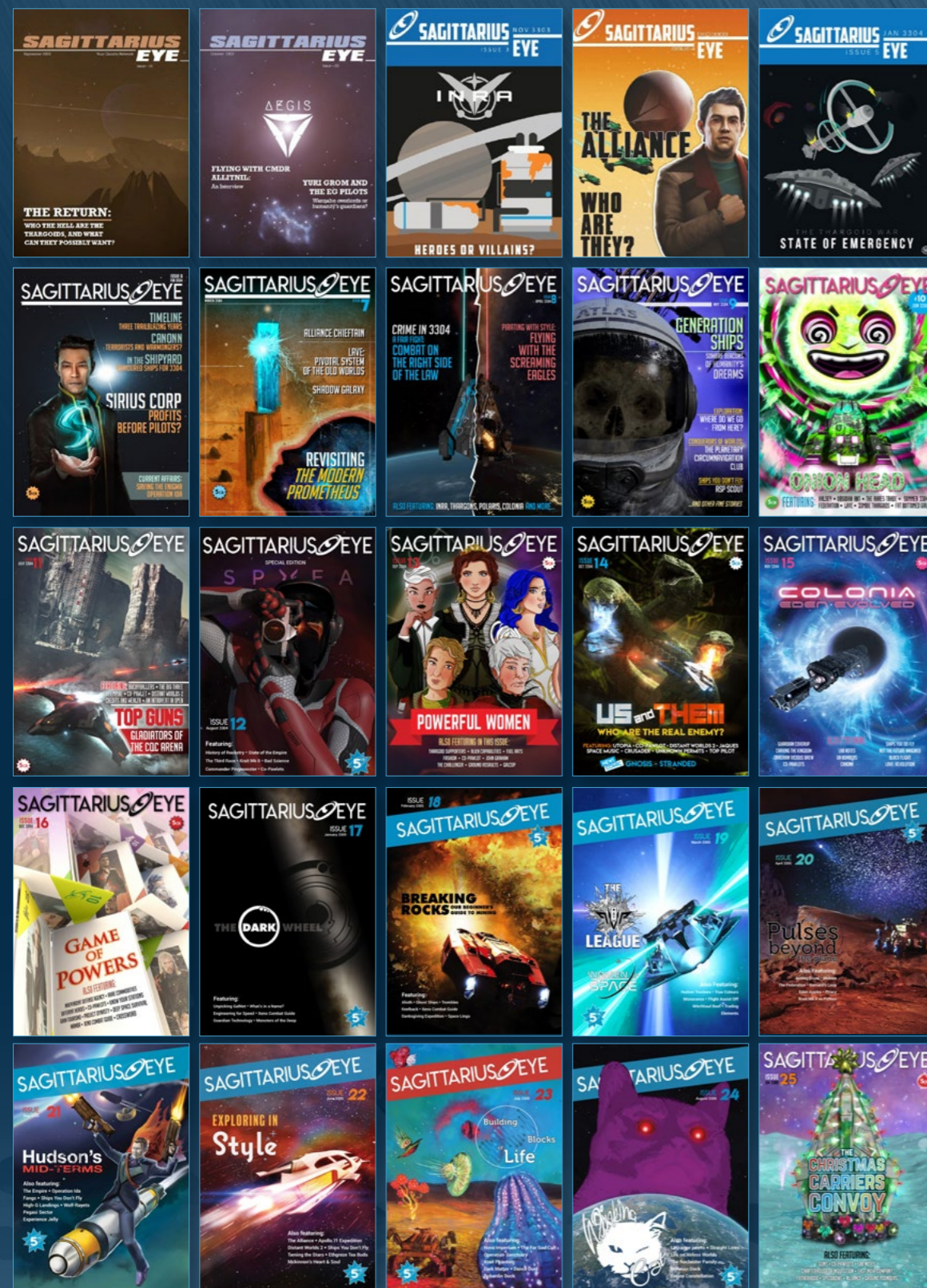
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