

SAGITTARIUS

October 3303

EYE

Issue -02



FLYING WITH CMDR ALLITNIL:

An Interview

YURI GROM AND THE EG PILOTS

Wannabe overlords or
humanity's guardians?

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Q4 3304

DISTANT WORLDS 2



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10,000
rescues





CANONN

*Interstellar
Research Group*



3304

The Legacy Campaign

- A CoR Storyline -

From beyond the veil
comes a voice,
comes a trinket,
comes a legacy,
comes a mission.

Remember...



EDITORIAL FOCUS



WELCOME TO SAGITTARIUS EYE

It's October 3303. In the birthplace of the Federation, the northern part of the America continent on Earth in the Sol system, the leaves are turning orange and red and falling from the trees.

Depending on who you ask, humanity stands at the cusp of a glorious war or ignoble extinction. Since our last issue some independent pilots have managed to 'kill' some Thargoid ships. What does this mean? Do we now have what it takes to 'take the fight to them'?

Perhaps. Back when North America was settled, doubtless some of the indigenous tribespeople managed to kill the odd white settler too — before being utterly overwhelmed by their superior technology.

Not all of us are convinced that our alien visitors mean us harm, though. They are abducting spacefaring humans, it's true - but I am yet to meet a pilot traversing the Pleiades who has been fired upon unprovoked.

But enough of the crisis. We have much to distract you this month: the truth about Yuri Grom, exclusive insights into the Alliance's conquest of one of the bastions of Federation rule, and a cockpit chat with one of the galaxy's greatest explorers.

So relax. It might never happen.

Souvarine
Editor

COVER STORY



YURI GROM



AND THE EG PILOTS

**Wannabe overlords or
humanity's guardians?**

By Souvarine

Since the summer of 3302 the name 'EG Pilots' has become common parlance across all of civilised space. Amongst the English-speaking community the group had been little-known before that point, but with the Dangerous Games event held last year, 'The Russians'--as they became known--rocketed to stunning success in a tsunami victory over their competitors.

Since that time, the group have become known for their intimidating efficiency and unmatched ability to mobilise vast numbers of pilots to further their ambitions. However, they remain one of the most mistrusted powers. According to their official propaganda, they aim to 'dominate the Galaxy' - a goal which, understandably, causes consternation amongst societies who have no wish to be dominated.

To cut through the speculation and hearsay, Sagittarius Eye spoke to one of the inner circle of this most controversial galactic group.

Despite his press pass, your correspondent was obliged to go through the standard diplomatic channels to arrange the interview. The EG Pilots' ambassadorial machinery is impressive, and for an introduction we had to tap our contacts in the upper echelons of the political landscape.

An introduction arranged, your correspondent was invited to fly to Euryale, the home system of the EG Pilots. An emerald-like planet, EG Prime, is the beautiful homeworld of the group, and Yuri Grom himself is rumoured to spend time there. Our interview however took place on the workmanlike station which orbits it: EG Main HQ.

Upon arrival, the Eye was tersely greeted and quickly ushered to a meeting room. We were to meet a Commander Altarf.

Altarf is a little-known figure on the galactic stage, and chooses not to court the limelight. However, ask around at any high-profile event and the politically connected will quickly nod recognition at his name. As one of the few fluent English-speaking officers of Yuri Grom's operation he has become something of the public 'face' of the power - the main spokesperson through whom the group do their business with the Galaxy's other powers.

Your correspondent expected, then, a gruff, assertive character. The man who entered the room shortly after we sat down certainly didn't disappoint at first glance - Commander Altarf is tall, with a military bearing and a weathered face. It was quickly apparent that this was no airbrushed mouthpiece for propaganda. Altarf is a military man who just happens to have become the group's main spokesperson, rather than the other way around.

However, as our conversation progressed, your correspondent found his initial impression increasingly belied. Over the course of the next hour, a picture emerged of a group frustrated with some of the misconceptions the media propagated about them - a group with similar aims and values to many others much more familiar and accepted.

Thanks for speaking to the Sagittarius Eye, Al Tarf.

Is Al your first name?

Not really, ALTARF is my old operative name. You can call me Boris, if you wish, but I prefer my operative name. Both fine by me though.

Altarf. What's your role with EG Pilots?

I'm an agent of EG Pilots (EGP) group, but my premier role is

an ambassador for Yuri Grom and EG Union (EGU).

Is there a leader under Yuri Grom?

Yuri Grom is our ultimate leader, but he relies on opinions of his officers. There's an Euryale High Council, in which every officer of EGP has a say. All opinions are equal, but of course, older officers' and veterans' opinions values the most. There's also a Prime Councilor for Yuri Grom, who conducts all day-to-day operations and planning. But Yuri Grom has the final word in everything.

And who is the current Prime Councilor?

Right now this role is technically vacant. The latest Councilor, Cmdr Rediskin, asked for the relief very recently and we're currently searching for a replacement. For now Cmdr Rediskin is still operating in this role.

Interesting! Are you going to throw your hat into the ring?

Well, I certainly have my hands full as it is right now, and I can't say that there's a replacement for me. While the role of Prime Councilor is 100% voluntary, the candidate must be prepared to work hard daily. It's a huge responsibility; the Prime Councilor is basically Yuri Grom's right hand, so he controls everything that doesn't require Yuri Grom's personal attention. I'm sure there are more suitable candidates in our ranks, and less busy as well

A statesmanlike answer. That makes sense.

When was EG Pilots founded?

It would be hard for me to name a particular date. We really don't have something you can call a 'birthday' - at least, it is not public. EGP was founded right after the establishment of Federal government in the Euryale system. EGP was Black Ops back then. I will take responsibility and say that you can call 09.06.3301 our first day. On that day, EGP alongside Yuri Grom, the former Federal Admiral, began a fight for independence of Euryale. On that day, the EGP was born, and we were no longer Federal Agents - we were Agents of the People of Euryale and Yuri Grom.

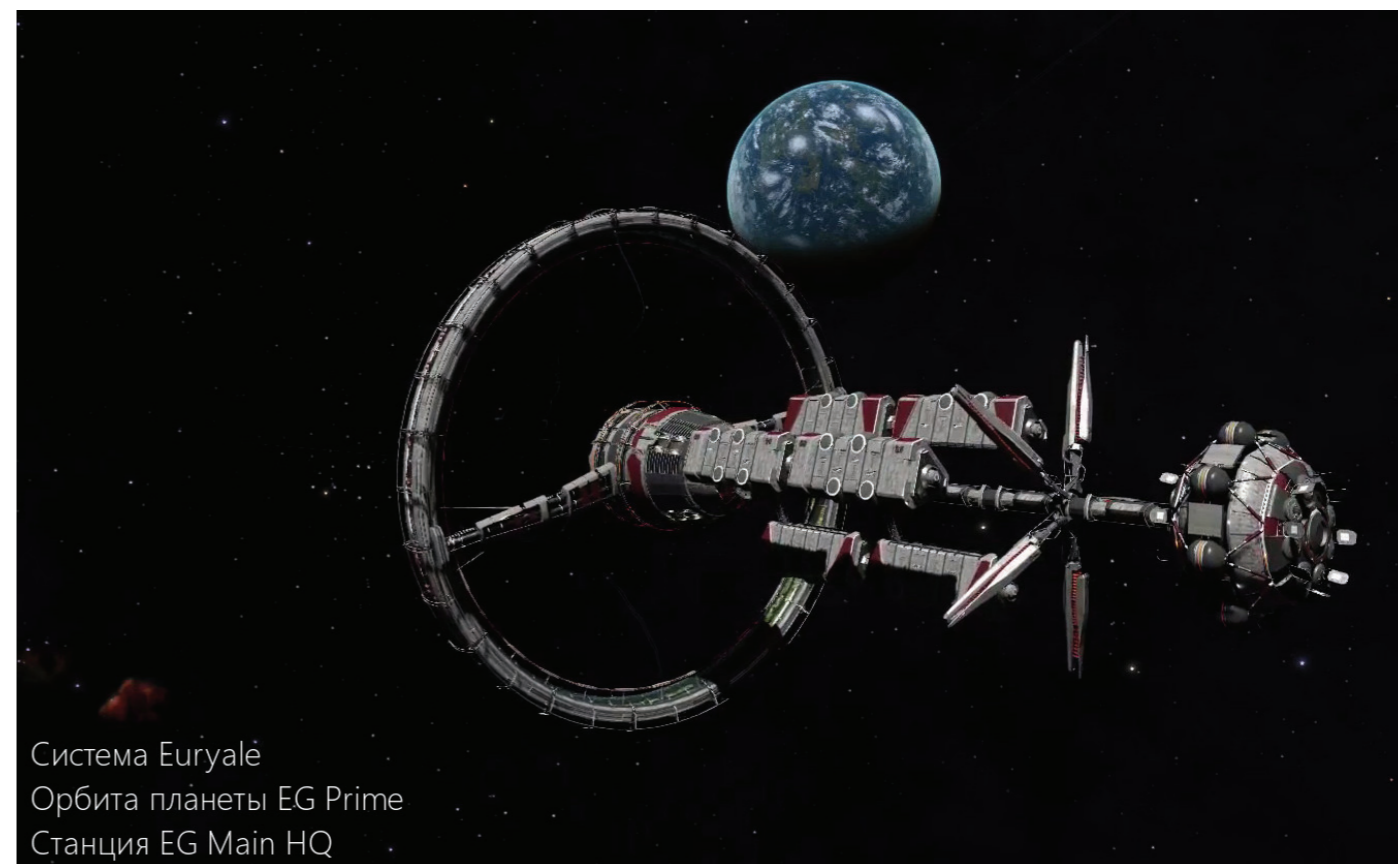
I see. Why did Yuri Grom defect from the Federation?

It was the Federation who defected from Grom. While serving in Federal Navy as an Admiral, Yuri Grom witnessed many things. Things he didn't like--the insane corruption of Federal politicians, the unenviable existence of Euryale people, and more. He left the navy and thus his political career started.

The United Euryale First (UEF) party was created, the party that should've changed everything. Yuri Grom is an outstanding man--a charismatic leader, a great diplomat--and the people of Euryale loved him as they do now, and his popularity grew exponentially.

Soon UEF was the main political force in the system, they were winning elections one by one, and Euryale started to slip quickly from the hands of the Federation.

But one day the main ailment of the Federation showed itself. Key members of UEF betrayed their leader for money, or



Система Euryale
Орбита планеты EG Prime
Станция EG Main HQ

“If you govern by oppression, corruption and lawlessness you will face the consequences”

power, or for reasons known only to them. They expelled Grom from the party as a separatist and gave him to a Federal court. That's when people of Euryale rioted, and that's when the EGP turned against the Federation. That day the war started.

UEF members were later prosecuted by an independent Euryale court. And the Feds lost their system; but, as we know now, this was only the beginning of their misfortunes.

I see. How many pilots count themselves as members of the group now?

Difficult question. And it's not only about secrecy. Our slogan is 'Freedom Among the Stars', which means that everyone can do anything they want as long as it benefits our nation. We may be built as a military organisation, but our slogan is our rule. So people come and go, and come back.

If you want pure numbers I assume I can tell you this: We have over 300 active pilots. This number moves in both directions - we have about 40 core pilots that work every day. And then we have huge mobilisation resources - reserve pilots, veterans, mercenaries, former pilots and volunteers. Their numbers are in the several thousands. We use these resources when we really need them, like during the Rise to Power competition last year. This is our true strike force.

I understand that relations with the Federation have been difficult since the secession. How are relations with the other galactic Powers?

We have a good relationship with Sirius Gov and we are rather friendly with Simguru Panav Atnal. Of course you're aware of ZYADA, the largest international alliance to date.

As for the Feds and the pirate scum Kumo Crew--they are our enemies with no exceptions.

Could you tell our readers what ZYADA is?

If someone is unfamiliar with this alliance, which made a huge political impact on the galactic situation, ZYADA is a military alliance of Yuri Grom and the Empire. Each letter stands for a Power - Zemina Torval, Yuri Grom, Arissa Lavigny-Duval, Denton Patreus and Aisling Duval.

We have undertaken to protect our nations from our enemies. Each stands for the other. This alliance has been extremely productive since the very first day and we are confident it will be more so with each passing day.

Oh, and I forgot about Edmund Mahon. Despite a rather violent but short conflict in the past over the Lundji system, we have neutral to warm relations with them.

That's fascinating.

What challenges have you faced now you're a galactic power?

There are many. It was overwhelming at first. We were all fighters and special agents - damn good ones. We controlled several systems, but it was nothing compared to controlling billions of people. We were in dire need for logistics planners, accountants and so on. We were preparing, but were still caught off guard. It's in the past now, of course; right now Yuri Grom's domain is a working, living mechanism, and we're improving each day.

“The dominance of brute force if you do not respect these ideals.”





Yuri Grom prefers dictatorships. 'Dictatorship' is a highly charged word on English-speaking worlds – and has connotations of oppression and tyranny. How does that support your purported vision of 'freedom among the stars'?

It's simple if you know what are you talking about.

Each government type is a dictatorship over a certain group. Feudalism is a dictatorship of feudals, who rule over land where peasants work and protect them; democracy is a dictatorship of a ruling class, which funds the elections and the candidates; family is a dictatorship of elders, which you are bound to, before you reach adulthood.

We had long and hard discussions in the past over what government type we should be, and the discussions were going nowhere while time was short. So we left everything as it is: the dictatorship. Dictatorship of the people of our nation.

Yuri Grom is an outstanding figure and we chose him to be our leader. He is the most worthy and able of us all, but we are connected--we listen to him, and he listens to us. As for the word--we think it expresses everything we want, and we have examples of great leaders from the past who were dictators. But I understand that the word, though the meaning is constant, can

“Democracy is a dictatorship of a ruling class, which funds the elections and the candidates”

vary in perception for different cultures.

I can widen this word with words like Chieftain, Senior, Elder or Judge. Yuri Grom doesn't dictate what we must do. Rather, he thinks what is best for us, asks us what we think, and

then states the final decision based on the will of his people.

I see. Semantics is important to understand what Yuri Grom and the EG Pilots are all about, clearly. Does Grom wish to overthrow all governments that aren't dictatorships then?

Yuri Grom is not expansionist, as many think. There are certain criteria which are we consider beneficial, and if you share them, you and Yuri Grom will likely get along. If you govern by oppression, corruption and lawlessness you will face the consequences.

Ok. In that case, why is one of Yuri Grom's stated aims to 'dominate the Galaxy'?

The dominance of law, you can say. The dominance of ideas, which we consider positive and crucial for mankind. The dominance of brute force if you do not respect these ideals. This is what Kumo are facing now. They exist now only because of how insignificant and puny Archon Delaine is. His disappearance is just a matter of time.

I see. I suppose the Empire is a dictatorship too.

Indeed. We have many similarities with the Empire, which is why we chose them as our allies. We haven't regretted our decision so far. And it's been some time since ZYADA was formed.

Yes, it seems that there are many shared values.

So what are Yuri Grom's plans for the rest of 3303?

We plan to grow even more. To improve our economy. This is what I can announce in public, of course. We will continue to hunt pirates, especially the Kumo Crew, as well as those who support them--meaning the Federation.

Most of our plans are classified, I'm sorry.

What are Yuri Grom's views on the Thargoid threat?

We are very serious about this threat from the past. Our explorers were among many others who tried to find them, to find something to give humanity a better understanding of them.



Apart from preparing our combat pilots for the possible war, Yuri Grom has something very big in mind. Can't speak of it right now, but if we're lucky, you'll see what I mean.

Anyway, our pilots will be on the frontlines of our homeland when the Thargoids come, you can count on that.

Intriguing! Would EG Pilots ally with the Federation against the Thargoids?

This is the hard one, in some aspects. While we hate the Federation as it is and everything it represents, we were all citizens of the Federation. We still have friends and family there, and overall they are our people. We were united once. We will see the Federation undone, but not at the cost of its people.

This is the same reasons we do not wage an all-out war on the Federation--we do not want to throw the people of the Federation into the wildfire of war, even with the most noble intentions in mind. So the answer to your question is yes: if the Federation is so pathetic that it can't defend its citizens, we

will be there. If the Thargoids are too much of a threat for the Galaxy as a whole, we will unite humanity, because this is what Yuri Grom and EGU is about. But this doesn't mean we forget all the sins of the Federation. And, in the end, this is for Yuri Grom to decide.

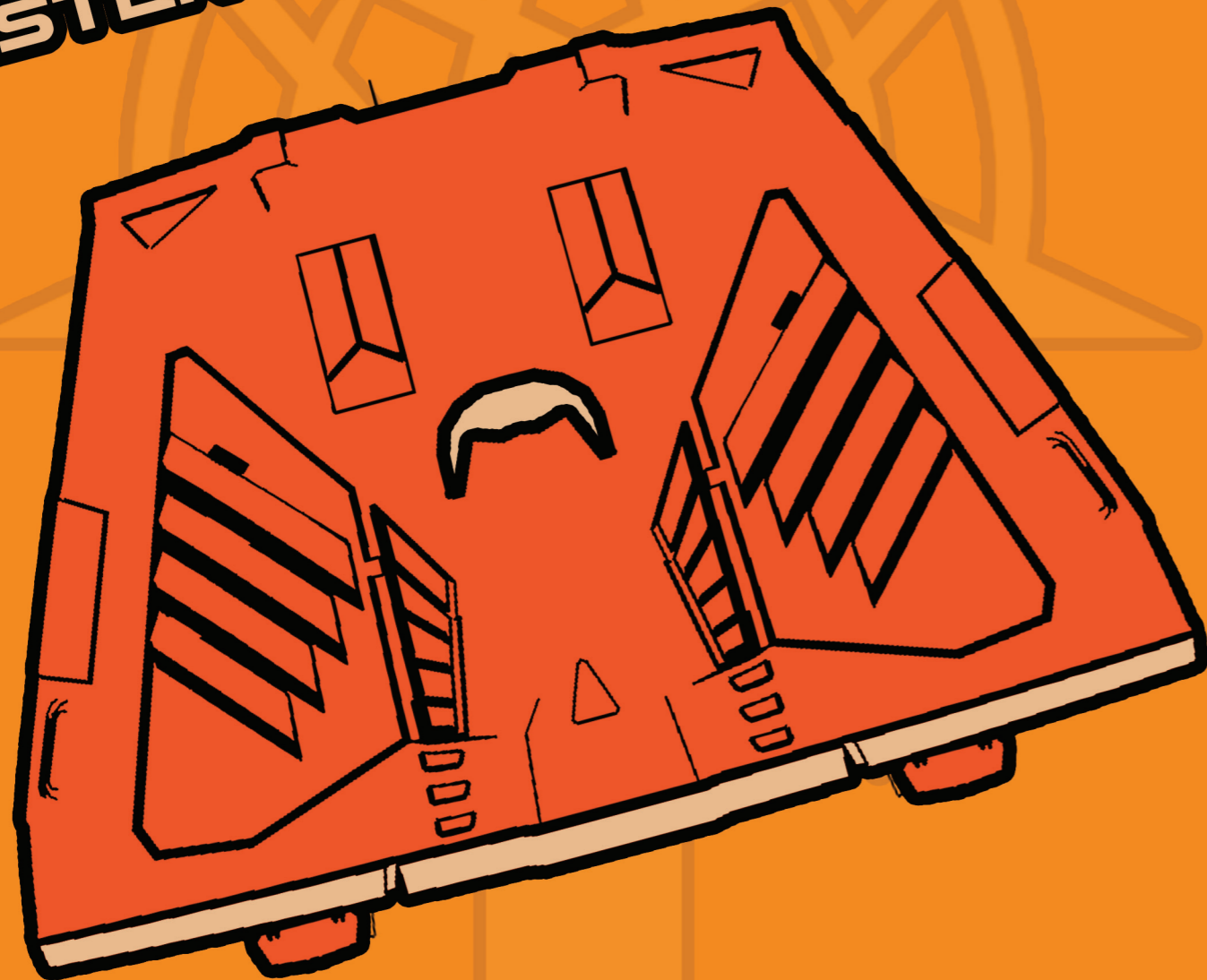
I see. Thank you very much for speaking to us! Is there anything else you'd like to say to our readers?

Thank you, I'm really glad we were able to speak. I hope your article will help people of different cultures to know and understand us better. We were thinking about the creation of a foreign wing of EGU, and we are still waiting for brave pilots from other nations to join. We have some already, but there should be more. All who share our ideals and vision - welcome. Come fight for The Freedom Among the Stars and for Yuri Grom!



Souvarine is an experienced field reporter. He writes about current affairs, galactic politics and discovery. His Sidewinder-class press ship, the Salty Weasel, can often be spotted in the heat of the action, ferreting out the story.

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MUSIC  **NEWS**  **GOSSIP**
GUIDING & ENTERTAINING PILOTS
ACROSS THE UNIVERSE



Andrew



Gaspurr

Event Horizons
A personal journey through the Milky Way
...since 3300

- a doomed and forgotten Alliance Expedition
 - the search for a friend
 - a Pilgrim's Path
 - the Distant Worlds
 - a tale to 'Remember...'
- (and more)

WIN
a ship paintjob
of your choice

Find some suitable and funny words that might fit this picture, and send your caption to sagittarius.eye@gmail.com. The winner will receive a paintjob pack of their choice.* See next page for last month's competition winner.

*excludes Cobra, Sidewinder and Eagle Variant packs, Pilot Starter pack and SRV Recon pack.





ISSUE 1 WINNER
Commander Actionman2222



Issue 1 of Sagittarius Eye's Caption Competition received many fine entries. After sifting through some very strong and hilarious suggestions, it is SAGi's pleasure to announce that the winner is Commander Actionman2222, whose entry is below

Derek, the SRV regional leapfrogging champion, finally realised his mistake...

Congratulations to the winner.

CURRENT
AFFAIRS

AN UNCERTAIN WAR

By CMDR WilfridSephroth



Are we at war?

The repeated encounters I have had over the last two weeks with those inscrutable entities we refer to as ‘Thargoids’ did not offer any clue to answering this question — the fatal question that looms over every human denizen of the Milky Way.

To some — possibly the very same trigger-happy members of the Pilots Federation who have been taking upon themselves the task of blowing to pieces the ‘alien invaders’ — the answer is obvious: yes, we are at war. But it seems to me that the minimal normative requirements necessary to declare a state of war are lacking, and that we are not even close to meeting them.

The reason is simple: we don’t know anything about these entities. We don’t understand their technology, their motives, their form of social organization — if any — and, most crucially, we are not in the position to know if they share any human concept at all. Including the concept of ‘war’. Indeed, even though we heard rumours about ‘Oresrians’ and ‘Klaxians’, we don’t know if those names are accurate. ‘Thargoids’ is as arbitrary a designation as any other label we assign to that which eludes our cognitive grasp, to achieve the illusion of control.

Without a more nuanced means for communicating with them than a battery of missiles, we will never shed any light on these unknowns. For what we know, the entities (spacecrafts?) we’ve met so far could be mere sentient machines, possessing no kind of sapience which would put them in the position of representing a warring opponent. Were our distant ancestors ‘at war’ with mammoths and sabertooth tigers? And yet, this analogy fails spectacularly to convey the genuinely alien character of the Thargoids. Prehistoric mammals were our close cousins compared to these inexplicable entities.

I have been “hyperdicted” twice by them, and an eerie “dance” ensued: my AspX trying to elude the two flower-shaped crafts, maintaining a constant distance from my ship with a seemingly supernatural ease, while mutely staring at me. That was as unsettling an experience as I’ve ever had in my many decades of space-faring. No human being can ever experience a deeper feeling of powerlessness and loneliness as I did when floating in the cold darkness of space, being silently examined by faceless and indecipherable forms of life.

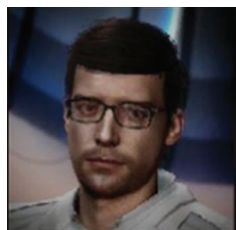
Perhaps against my better judgment I have also jumped into several of those ‘Non-Human Signal Sources’ — as my on-board computer has labelled them — commonly found in the Pleiades cluster. But even there, I have never been attacked without provocation. Yes, my attempts at communicating occasionally took me to approach them too much — the Thargoid equivalent of ‘too close for comfort’ I suppose — and I have been fired upon, but that’s a flimsy basis to declare their uncompromising hostility. Has anyone actually witnessed them spontaneously opening fire on human vessels? Of course, this opens a far more sinister question: if they didn’t destroy those ships, who did? Rumors about two separate factions or groups of Thargoids abound: what if we are still to meet the bad guys?

Someone will surely retort: “but they can be seen abducting people!” And that’s undeniable. But what do we know of the fate of those who are taken? Are they being rescued, or experimented upon? Reversing my argument, one could also hypothesize that we are nothing but animals for them: would you apologize to an ant colony if you were to pick up a few of its members to study them? I am not trying to convince you that the Thargoids are flower-shaped angels, coming to elevate us from our barbaric state of constant high-tech warfare. I am simply arguing that there’s very little that we know for sure, and that this ignorance could one day prove fatal to us all.

For as long as there will be no communication with these entities we will never ascertain whether or not the conceptual schemes of our two species are so utterly incommensurable to make it impossible to share basic ideas such as ‘war’ or ‘peace’. And we will never find out if they are the aliens we should be worried about. For now, we’ve been trading with them only one concept — perhaps the Galaxy’s most basic one — death.

As alien as they might be, I doubt that systematic extermination will represent a good precedent for a future cordial exchange of knowledge. Besides, we have already started to see how they are adapting to our newly-produced weapons — so much for AEGIS being a peaceful research institution!

We have no idea of what — or who — might be coming next. Maybe, just maybe, the smoke and debris of our temporary victories are occluding from view a far more lethal threat.



Wilfrid Sephiroth is a jaded spacer guided by the disenchanting purpose to uncover the false ‘awesome’ for the mundane it really is, and to reveal the interesting kernel of seemingly trivial events and happenings. He flies his Asp Explorer—the A.E. Van Vogt—around the Bubble, always looking for the next Big Story. Usually, it’s the Big Story that finds him first.

NO ATMOSPHERE? NO PROTECTION!



METEOR IMPACTS KILL

FLYING WITH CMDR ALLITNIL: AN INTERVIEW

By Aura Lorell

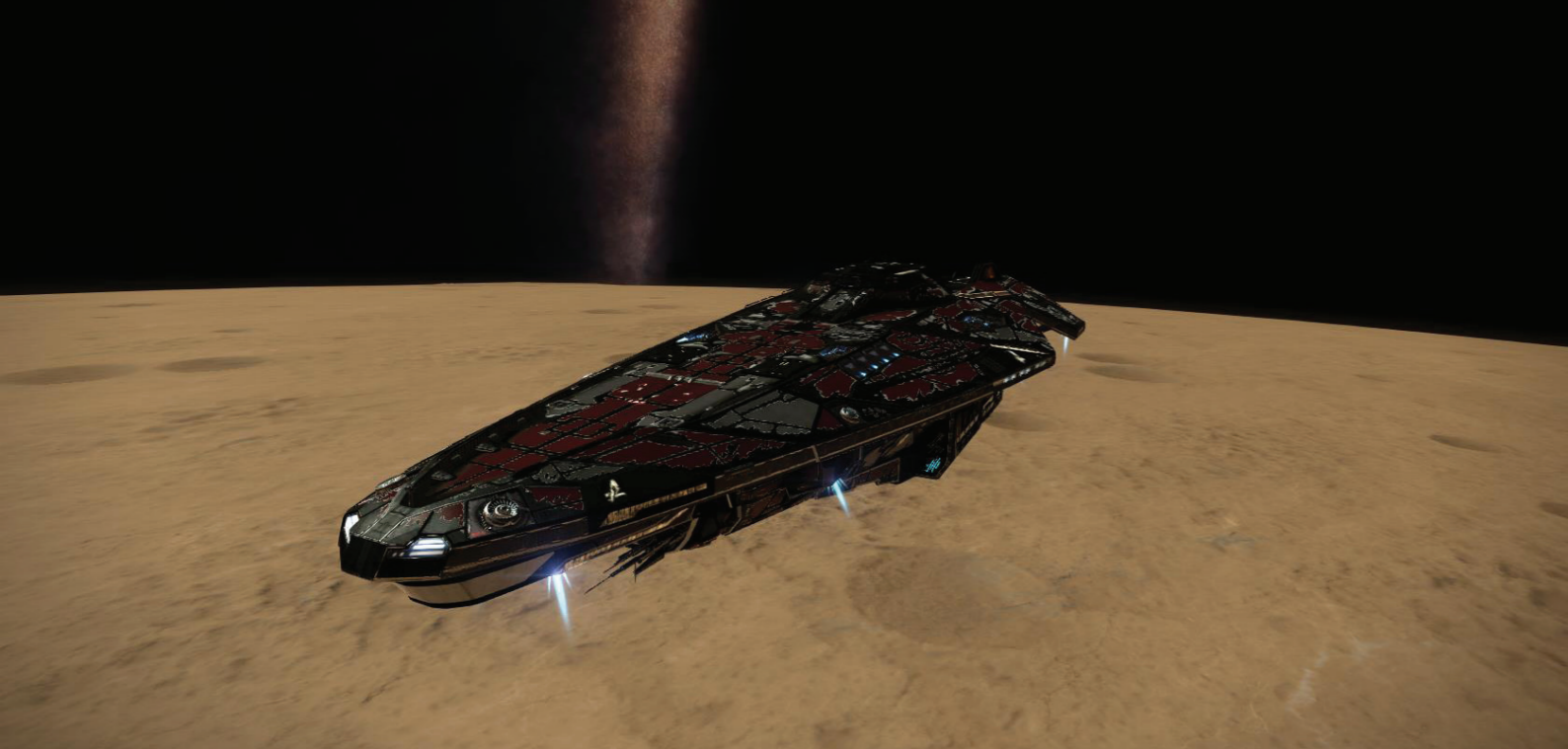
I met Commander Allitnil at his ship, using the telepresence suite, as he was thousands of light years away from me.

“Welcome,” he said. “I’d offer you a drink but they haven’t invented a way to drink while in telepresence. Yet.”

A grin broke the settled frown as he said those words, but it quickly disappeared. He was sitting across from me on the table, his tinted glasses in front of him, his hands never still. He followed my gaze to his glasses and another smile appeared immediately. “Too many neutron star jets,” he said.

His restlessness subsided a little when he started talking about his travels. His voice was soft but deep and passionate; the love for exploration filled his words and his hazel eyes sparkled throughout the conversation. A traveller, an inquisitive spirit, a loner: this is the story of Commander Allitnil.

“5.7 million light years (that’s more than enough to get to Andromeda and back...) and 137,000 systems”



Thank you for agreeing to talk to SAGi, Allitnil. Your name is well-known in the exploration community and beyond. Why?

My pleasure, and congratulations on the successful launch of the Sagittarius Eye. Why? I guess it's because the area of exploration I most enjoy is finding ways to get to difficult to reach places. Since the position of every system in the Milky Way is already known, we only need to determine a route to somewhere if it is beyond the route plotter's ability. That means heading into those really sparse areas where you need to jump on fumes or use boosts to make progress.

“The galaxy is starting to feel a little small so I hope we get the technology one day to head out to the globular clusters, the Magellanic Clouds and maybe even other galaxies ”

There are reports that your name as a first discoverer is everywhere on the galactic rim. How long have you been pushing the boundaries? How far have you reached?

I set off on my first long trip in early 3301. I had originally only intended to go to Sag A* but, inspired by the adventures of CMDR Erimus, I ended up taking my little Cobra Mk III all the way to the far side of the galaxy becoming one of the first CMDRs to get to 65,000 LY from Sol. The profits from that trip enabled me to buy an Anaconda and I then used that to see just how far I could go in each of the coordinate axis directions.

After that, as jump ranges increased, it became a passion to try and get as far from the Bubble and the galactic core as possible. I hold the records for the furthest south, east and west of the core and also the one for above the galactic plane.

That's extraordinary. Do you ever explore outside of sparse areas? Do you ever feel the draw to visit nebulas or other sites that can be reached through normal plotting?

I have performed a few scientific surveys of sectors not far from the core, concentrating on the most massive systems and earth-likes. I have been to a lot of nebulae in the past but they can sometimes feel a bit too much like tourist spots these days. That said, if I find myself travelling near one then I may well pop over to enjoy the views as they are always spectacular.

Have you discovered any planetary nebulae closer to the galactic rim? Are they rare?

Only one so far— Flyae Proae IN-S E4-1— but that's a couple of thousand light years from the actual edge. There's also Spongou FA-A e2 which is on the far side of the Formidine Rift and closer to the rim than my find but I don't know of any others so they are likely very rare.

How does it make you feel to be somewhere very few, if any, pilots have ever been?

There's a sense of achievement, obviously, but I really enjoy the idea of being completely alone. I've always been a loner and knowing there might not be another human for thousands of light years is something I'm very comfortable with.

Few people are able to be entirely by themselves for extended periods and still be comfortable. Still, telepresence is a unique feature our ships carry. Do you ever get visitors while you explore? Do you go and visit anyone? Do you meet with friends out

in the black?

I keep up with goings on via the various galactic messaging systems, but when exploring I prefer to be by myself and not have to worry about fitting in with other pilots' schedules. I have met up with others on occasion and was a member of the Distant Worlds Expedition so lots of meet-ups as part of that but I've not done so for a long time.

We still don't know much about you. Who is Allitnil? Tell us a few things about yourself and your personal history.

I come from the Newman Ring station in the totally unremarkable Hun Ahayuse system. My parents were cobalt refiners but that never appealed to me and I had dreams of joining the Federation navy. I did take some steps along that career but soon became disillusioned with the whole political structure of the galaxy. I bought my way out of the navy and set up as an independent pilot. I drifted about the Bubble earning cash here and there until one day I decided to take a little trip beyond the borders. I only went out about 500 LY but it was both scary and exciting and I fell in love with exploration.

And that's when the explorer Allitnil was born. You mentioned CMDR Erimus earlier. Have you been influenced or inspired by other explorers and, if yes, who?

CMDR Jackie Silver for her exemplary scientific work. CMDR Alot has also done a lot in that area too but mainly because his record runs got me interested in the Buckyball Sag A* race. There aren't really many others who have directly influenced me as I do try and live by the “blaze your own trail across the galaxy” maxim, but over the years I have learnt so much from so many Commanders and the whole community is an inspiration.

You mentioned the galactic limits you hold the record for. Are there any other notable moments and achievements you are proud of?

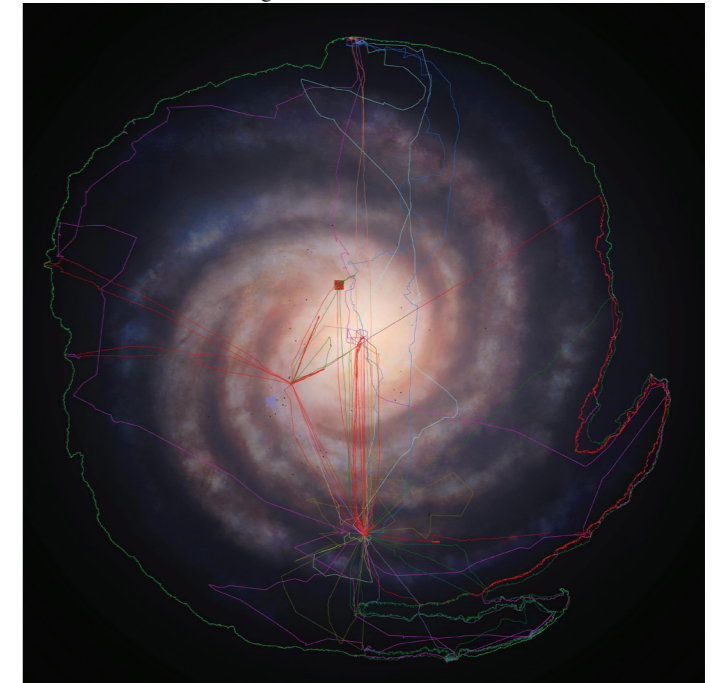
I hold the current record for the Buckyball Sag A* run at just over 2 hours. I once tagged every single body in a sector (NGC 6326 Sector - it's a very small one!) But, perhaps a little perversely given my previous answer, the event that I think of most is the first ever recorded meet-up at more than 65,000 LY from Sol, with Commanders Barefoot Bandit and Stulli in June 3301.

What's the total distance you've travelled so far and how many systems have you visited? Tell us of the most remarkable—or strangest—system you've visited.

5.7 million light years (that's more than enough to get to Andromeda and back...) and 137,000 systems. I think the most remarkable system I've found is Oedgaf DL-Y g0, a black hole on the very edge of the galaxy. Prior to its discovery it wasn't thought that there were any remotely close to the edge. The black hole lensing gives a unique view of the galaxy.

That is remarkable indeed. And the image is absolutely amazing. Were there any moments out in the black that you'd call the worst? Any situations that challenged you or endangered you?

There were a couple of times when I went to sleep without making sure the key systems were shut down and slowly flew into stars. I must have been exhausted as the heat alarms didn't wake me. First time left me with just 1% hull but I was able to limp home 15,000 LY without further incident. The second one didn't cause much hull damage but it knocked out a whole bunch of



modules and, much worse, corrupted all the data I had collected on that trip. It took several days of hard effort with the help of some boffins at UC to recover it all.

Exhaustion can be deadly in cases like these. Glad you managed to recover and return safely. Are your exploration trips long or do you tend to keep them short and frequent? How often do you go back to the Bubble? How long do you stay usually?

I'm typically out for around 6 to 8 weeks before heading back to the Bubble or Colonia but I can typically cover about 1,000 systems a week so the trips are quite long in that respect. Usually I'm heading back out within a couple of weeks.

Colonia is currently hailed as the new human outpost. What are your thoughts about the new colony? Would you consider making it your permanent home?

Along with many explorers, I had hoped that it might turn out to be something different without the factions and politics that are characteristic of the Bubble. Sadly, for me, it is increasingly looking like Bubble-lite. I do like catching up with Jaques when I'm there but don't really have any more time for the rest of the place than I do for the Bubble itself. I've got a few candidate uninhabited earth-likes for when I finally decide to settle down.

Speaking of the Bubble, what are your thoughts about the situation in Pleiades and the Thargoid

threat? Do you think the human inhabited Bubble is in danger of a Thargoid invasion?

I had hoped that we could establish peaceful relations with them but that's looking increasingly unlikely from what I've been hearing. Could have happened and been to all our benefit if Commanders weren't so hell bent on shooting anything that moves rather than talk. As it is, it does look like war and their technology looks superior to ours. If and when they take the initiative I can see much of the Bubble being laid waste.

Ominous but, ultimately, realistic. Attempting peaceful communication would definitely have been the sensible decision. Do you think that perhaps explorers will enjoy relative safety and not attract the attention of the Thargoids?

I hope so! They don't seem all that aggressive for now and are happy to just observe unless pushed too far. But if that changes, maybe we explorers can trade data on ammonia worlds for our lives...

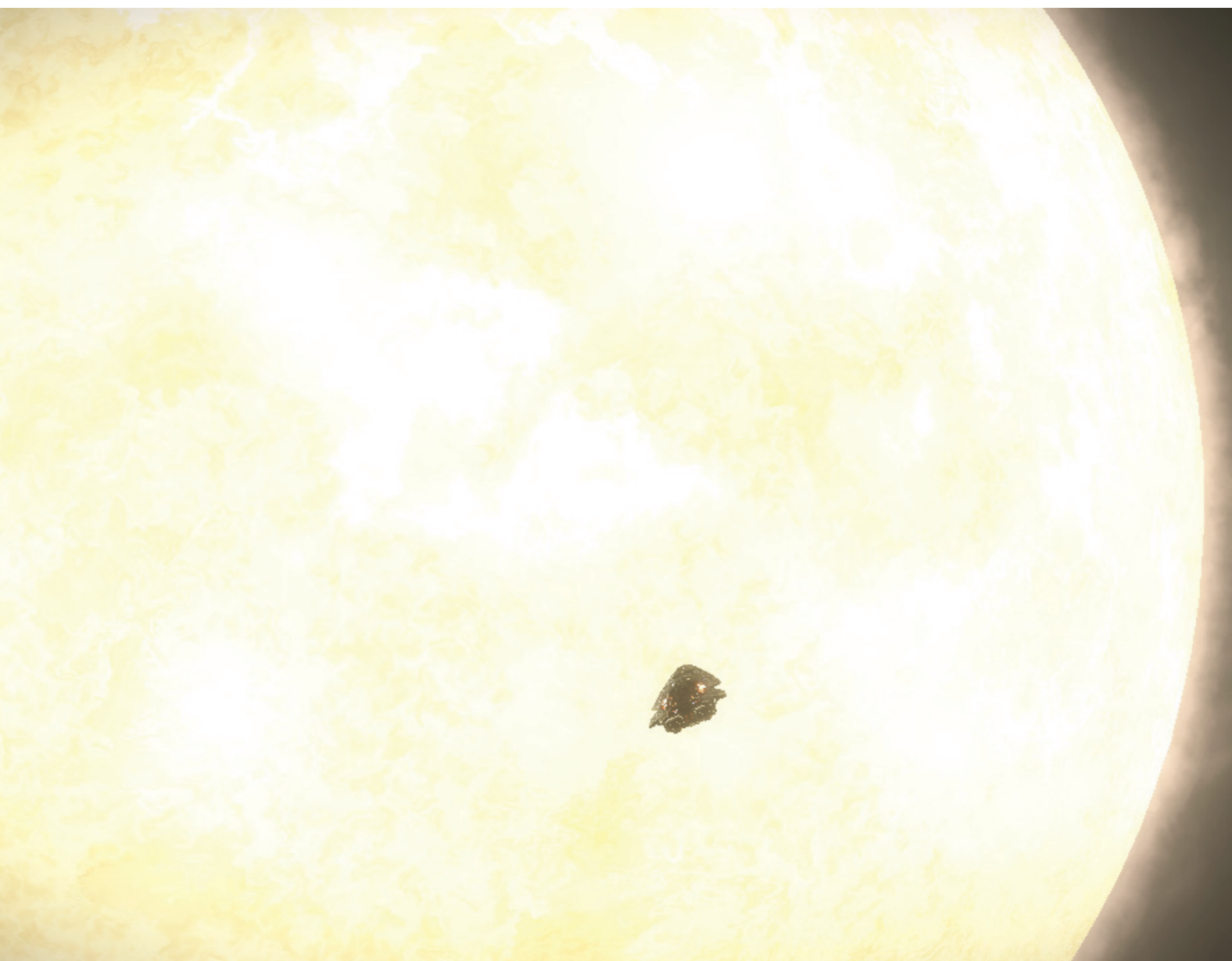
Indeed. Or perhaps help find a new home for humanity, away from the Thargoid menace. What does the future hold for you? What are your hopes and dreams?

“I had hoped that we could establish peaceful relations with them but that's looking increasingly unlikely from what I've been hearing. Could have happened and been to all our benefit if Commanders weren't so hell bent on shooting anything that moves rather than talk ”

I expect to keep on exploring, but maybe scale down things a little. The galaxy is starting to feel a little small so I hope we get the technology one day to head out to the globular clusters, the Magellanic Clouds and maybe even other galaxies. As for where I will be, probably somewhere way beyond the first star on the right!

Thank you again for agreeing to talk to us, Allitnil. It's been an honour and an absolute pleasure.

Thanks, been great talking to you. Even a loner likes a conversation every now and then.



CMDR Allitnil



Aura Lorell has a military background and rumour had it that she was involved in black ops too. When asked for details she smiles and says: “I’m just an explorer”. Attracted by the extreme ends of the galaxy, these days you’ll find her either high above—or below—the galactic plane, or at the rim of the galaxy where there are no systems further out.



For many years Mankind stood upon the Edge of the Abyss. Humanity fought against each other without care or regard for the sanctity of the Soul. We are now all witness to the beginning of the End of Days.

Sacra Oculus is an Independent Minor Faction on the edge of inhabited space, influencing the lives of millions of people each and every day. As part of the Border Coalition of Independent Planets, our Sacred Order is at the forefront of preparations to ensure that Humanity may either find release in the chemical mind adjusting reality of narcotics, the quick death that many seek through our distribution of Nerve Agents to the populace at large, or the opportunity for people to find Salvation in the Blessed and most Sacred Text of the Creator.

Our Priests and Initiates may be found operating in many systems across the Federation, the Empire, and the Alliance and all the way in Colonia, bringing religious succour to the Lost.

You have a choice. You can either save your Soul or be damned for all eternity. Our Priests are available to help guide you to a better path. Whether you are a psychopathic killer or a meek and respectable trader, you are all the Creator's Children.

Be part of an ever growing religious movement and protect rare trade commodities; most notably the illegal kind, so that humanity may continue to have the choice to either embrace the artificial fog of chemically induced clarity or to cleanse your Soul through devotion to our Cause.

Join us today as we forge a safe area devoid of slavery, Imperial Slavery or the sinful Consumer Technologies which distract the Faithful from their devotions and focus on the ultimate goal as set down by our Conclave, that of being the devoted Faithful responsible for determining whether humanity should live or die.



VISIT SOL!
*ACCESS TO SOL IS DENIED WITHOUT FEDERAL PERMISSION

THE MIGHTY GOD OF WAR

MARS

Eye on The Sky

The Aegis Deception –
Humanity's Real Invaders

By CMDR Rasudin

AEGIS





In the face of the ongoing Thargoid transgressions against humanity, Commanders have, until recently, been helpless. Our systems were vulnerable to their electromagnetic pulses, our scanners unable to process the strange readings from their vessels, and our weapons totally ineffective. The Thargoids are a terrifying threat. They are utterly alien; inscrutable, immovable, unstoppable. Is it any wonder, then, that the galaxy welcomed the news of an interpower coalition to resist them? Still, many times in history, nefarious men and women have used an illusion of altruism to seize power. Let's discuss the Aegis Initiative, shall we?

Announced in early August as a response to cries for inter-power unity in the face of the Thargoid threat, the Aegis Initiative is a collection of the greatest minds from the Federation, Empire and Alliance. Said Professor Alba Tesreau of the Achenar Research Council:

"It is imperative that we coordinate our efforts... while there may be antagonism between our governments, there is a strong desire for collaboration and cooperation within the scientific community."

Indeed, there is strong "antagonism" between the Tesreau's Empire and the Federation; only a few short weeks ago, the two superpowers came to blows in the Ho Hsi System, with the Federation-backed Ho Hsi Jet Comms Limited and Empire-backed Freedom Party of Ho Hsi erupting into conflict without warning. None can doubt the fierce hostility that currently exists between the galaxy's superpowers, particularly

the Commanders who support any of those factions. What does it mean, then, that these warring superpowers should be able to easily set aside their differences to fight our new enemies, the Thargoids? The answer is to be found in Aegis's clever new logo.

Observe the simple, but elegant shape of the three birds of prey—here representing the three superpowers—coming together. It's a pretty piece of artwork. But if you look deeper, you see that in coming together, the birds reveal something else. Look at the shape made by the birds' contrast. Do you see the flower already present at the center, binding the birds together? This logo is an illustration of a hidden reality: there is a hidden power behind this initiative, exploiting the Thargoid threat to combine all of humanity's resources for their own, mysterious ends. We must not allow them to hide from us. We must uncover the truth.

There are naysayers who say that in the face of such a terrifying threat as the Thargoids, of course humanity would come together on its own; but this is naïve and blind to the truth. There is a uniting force behind this Aegis Initiative, and though it fulfills one purpose in offering us the tools to resist our alien invaders, there is another purpose it also fulfills.

On April 29th, 3303, Commanders of all philosophies and walks of life united behind the banner of Lady Kahina Loren, also known as Salomé. She told the galaxy that she had uncovered a secret about the galaxy's superpowers, and asked for the help of independent Commanders in revealing it to all of humanity. Though Loren was killed by the now-despised Smiling Dog Crew, her compatriots Raan Corsen, Tsu Annabelle Singh, and Yuki Nakamura survived and discovered a series of listening posts in the Teorge System. As Singh and her escorts reached the listening posts ahead of the rest, the message Loren would die to reveal was broadcast: that a mysterious organization, in existence for centuries, has been manipulating the galaxy's superpowers behind the scenes. The contents of the message are too extensive to fully discuss here, but Senator Drew Wagar has written up an account of the whole sequence of events elsewhere.

Thanks to the efforts of Loren and her compatriots, we now know that the galaxy's 'superpowers' are not the all-powerful rulers of civilization we believe them to be. They are a mask, an illusion, a system propped into place by our true rulers. The Federation and the rest are all powerless to resist the desires of this group, this oligarchy. Here, now, we have an answer for our earlier question: How did the Aegis



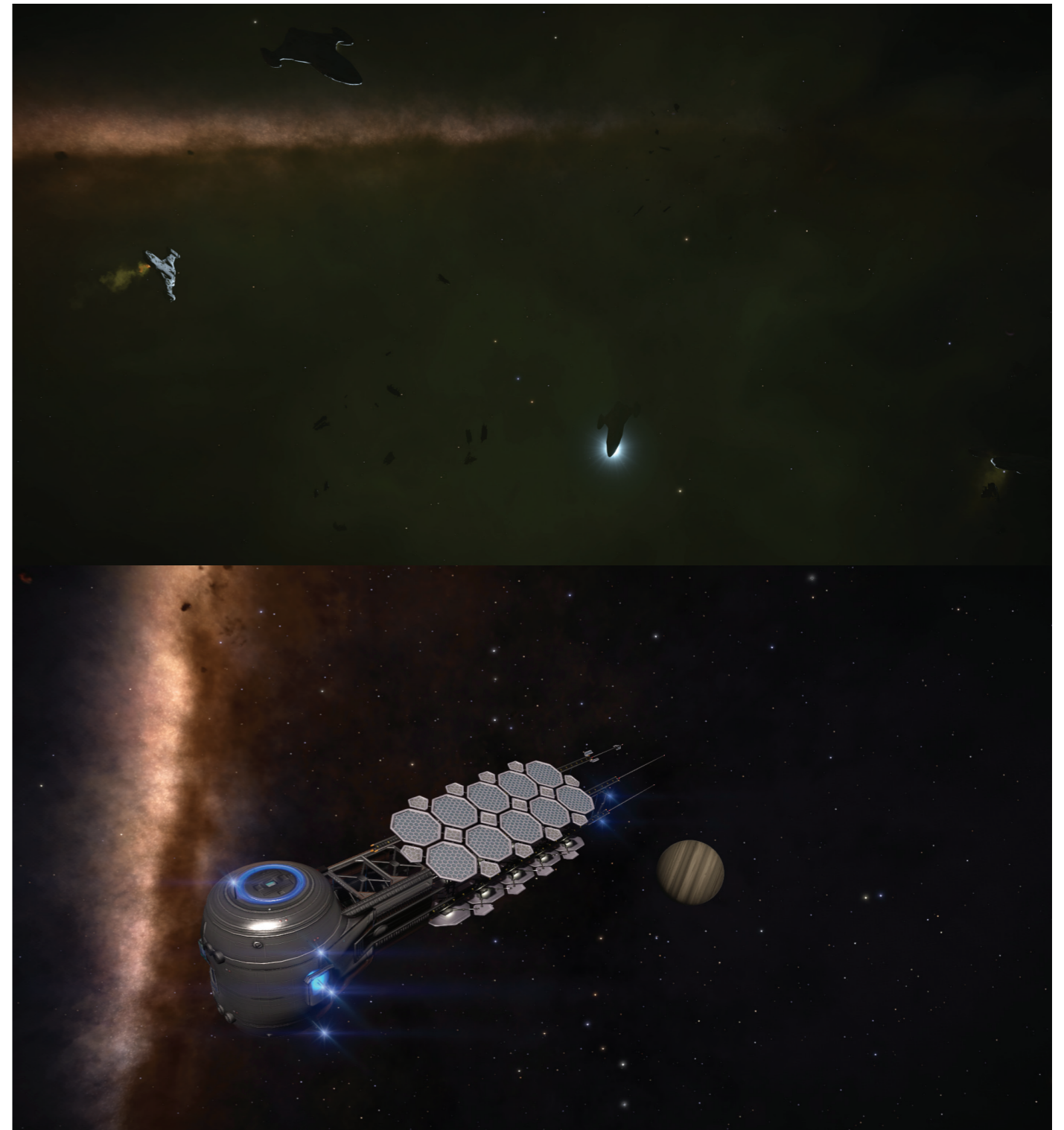


Initiative come to be if the Federation, Empire, and Alliance are so dramatically opposed? The answer is that these superpowers are not really in control. It has been publicly stated that Aegis receives its “substantial” funding from all three superpowers—but who is behind the superpowers’ direction? Could it be the mysterious organization Loren died to reveal? Could it be some other power, like Them (see my previous column)? There is plenty of evidence for either of these hypotheses, if you know where to look.

It is essential for all of us to see past the illusory systems that surround us. The Aegis Initiative is a lie, a mask, serving a purpose not made clear to us.

What is that purpose? Time may tell, but only if every Commander dedicates themselves to constant vigilance and truth-seeking. The true rulers of our society have not remained hidden for so long without considerable resources and expertise. We must ask some essential questions. Who really oversees the Aegis Initiative? Who directs its research? A good place to begin would be with Admiral Aden Tanner, Aegis’s military liaison from the Federal Navy. Said Admiral Tanner to Galnet News on October 6th:

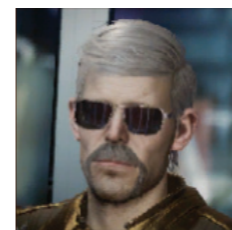
“The question is: What is the Thargoids’ objective? All available resources will be directed to answering this question.”



How do we know that the Admiral isn’t lying to the galactic community? Certainly the Feds have lied to us all before. Consider how, until very recently, stories of Thargoids were suppressed into rumor only, despite our now-evident history with them. As the Thargoids rapidly adapt to our new technology, the so-called efforts of Aegis become more and more suspect. What are they really trying to accomplish? Do they really know as little about the Thargoids’

motives as they claim?

I believe myself to be safe at the moment, concealed beneath the surface of an airless moon in the Pleiades, but my line of work is dangerous. There are many who want me dead, or worse, so I must conclude my writing here. I will continue my work as much as I am able. Fly safe, Commanders, if you can, and keep an eye on the sky.

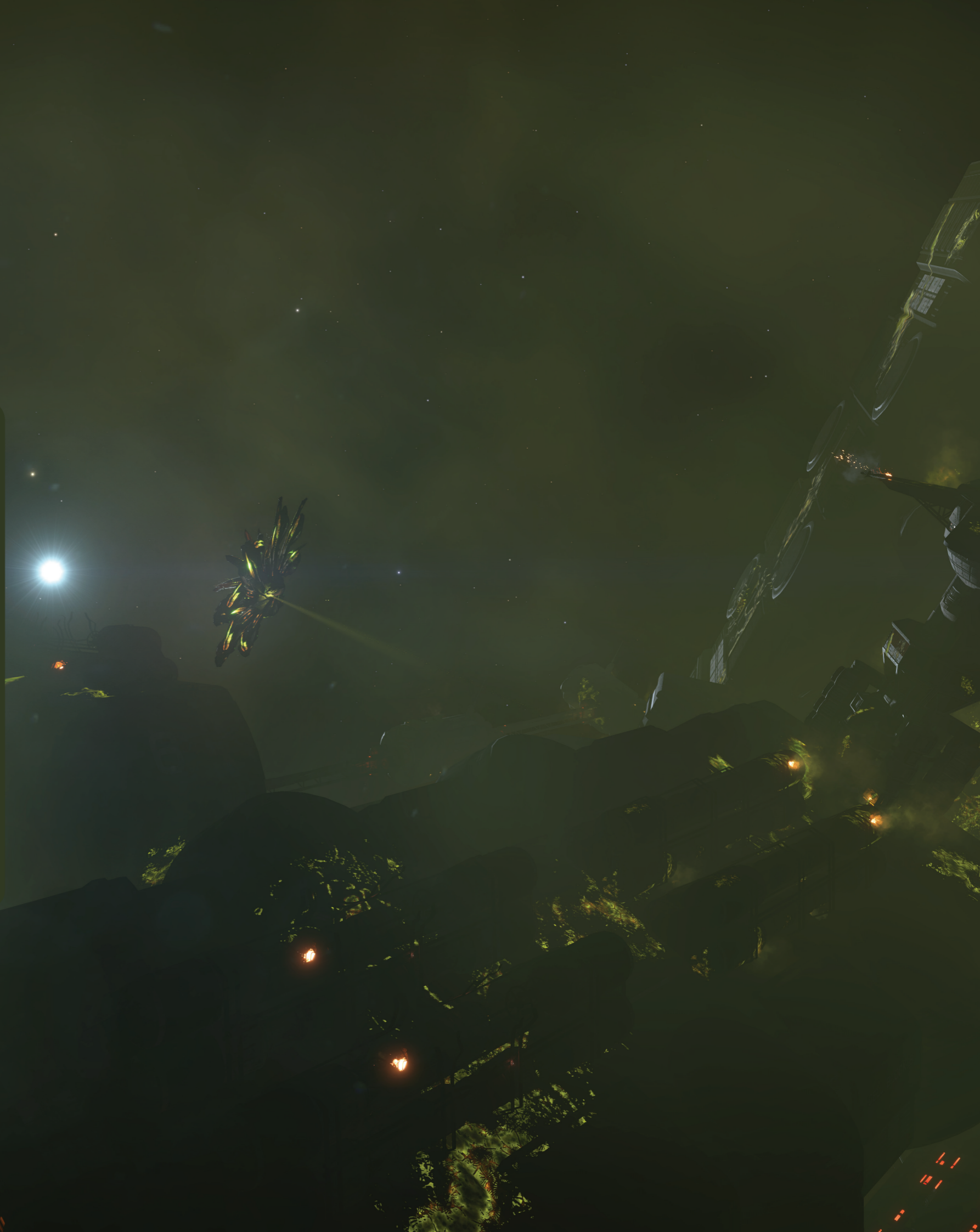


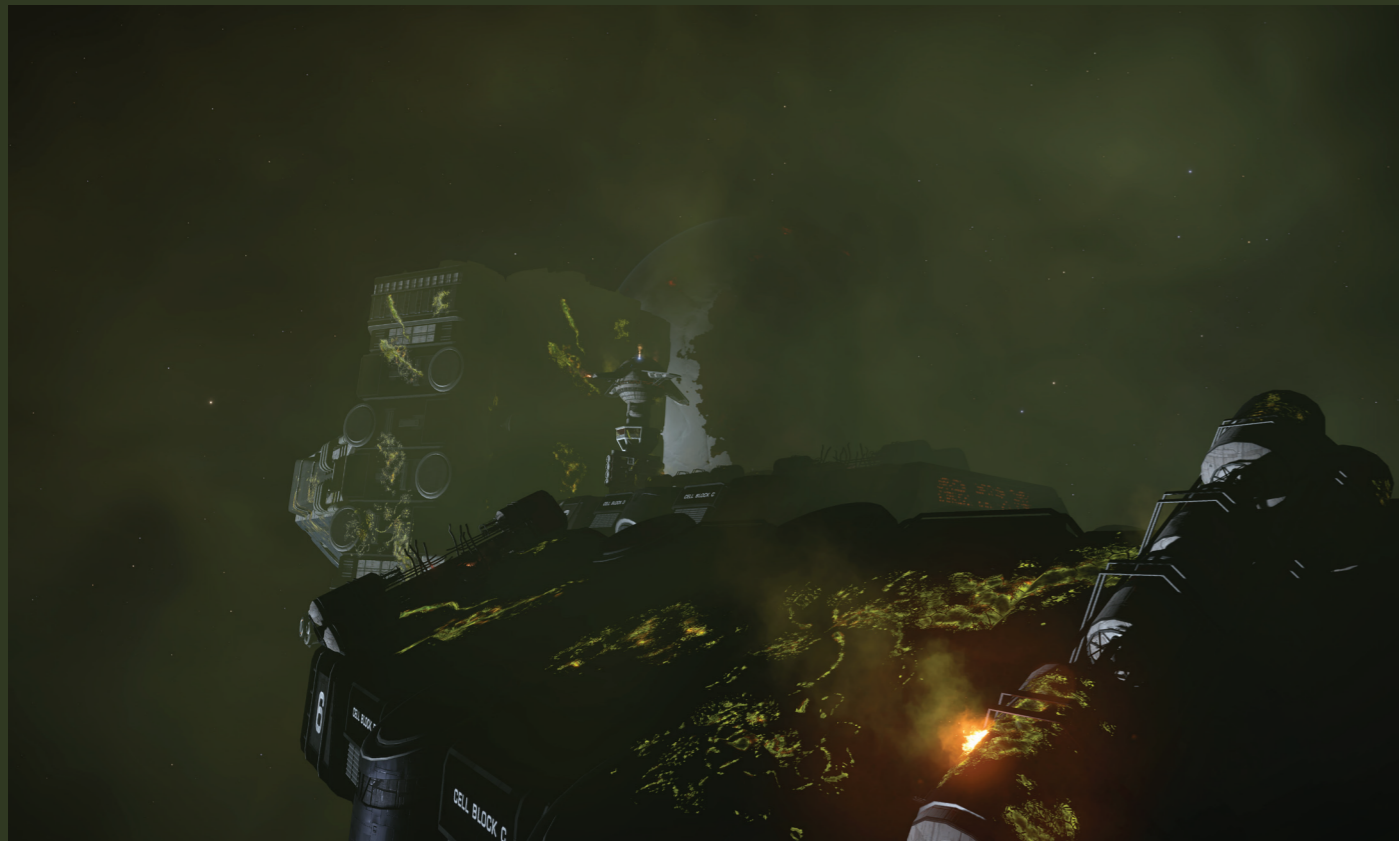
CMDR Rasudin’s articles have been called ‘conspiracy theories’ but he prefers to call them ‘unrecognized truths’. His Asp Explorer, the Bumbling Wasp, is difficult to find but often turns up where it is definitely not supposed to be.

MUSINGS FROM MAIA

By BlackmailGnome

It is with the confirmation that our greatest galactic competitors have returned that finds me sitting at a table overlooking the docking area of Obsidian Orbital. Below, an elaborate dance is acted out between crafts of all shapes and sizes, from heavily laden gunships to decrepit explorers, as the constant drone of tower control can be heard through even these thick walls. It is a sight expected well within the comforts of the Bubble, yet hundreds of light years away from the birthplace of humanity, a new urgency is felt in this artificial atmosphere.





Interesting Times

In my youth I would spend a lot of my time reading books and stories from the previous millennia, stories about fabled dragons and small folk derived from ancient beliefs that once occupied villagers around hearth fires. Amongst those stories was a fantasy series that both ridiculed and added to the then contemporary genre, a worthy feat even by today's standards. Contained within one such story was the insult, "May you live in Interesting Times" which was misunderstood by the main protagonists often to comic effect. Yet, I am now drawn to that very insult in a way that stretches my credibility as a writer. In a society when the status quo rules supreme, anything remotely interesting is frowned upon or even outright fought against.

And, oh, how we embraced the status quo of our little Bubble.

It might be surprising that the term status quo can be used to describe the Bubble, after all control for inhabited systems is in a constant state of flux, powers fight against each other for the very resources contained, while lifestyles clash resulting in many different definitions of what is counted as lawful. Yet we have been doing this for millennia, since our great ancestors waved pointed sticks at one another, it is only the means that have changed.

Horsell Common

Another literary work springs to mind in our current climate, the classic War of the Worlds, by H. G.

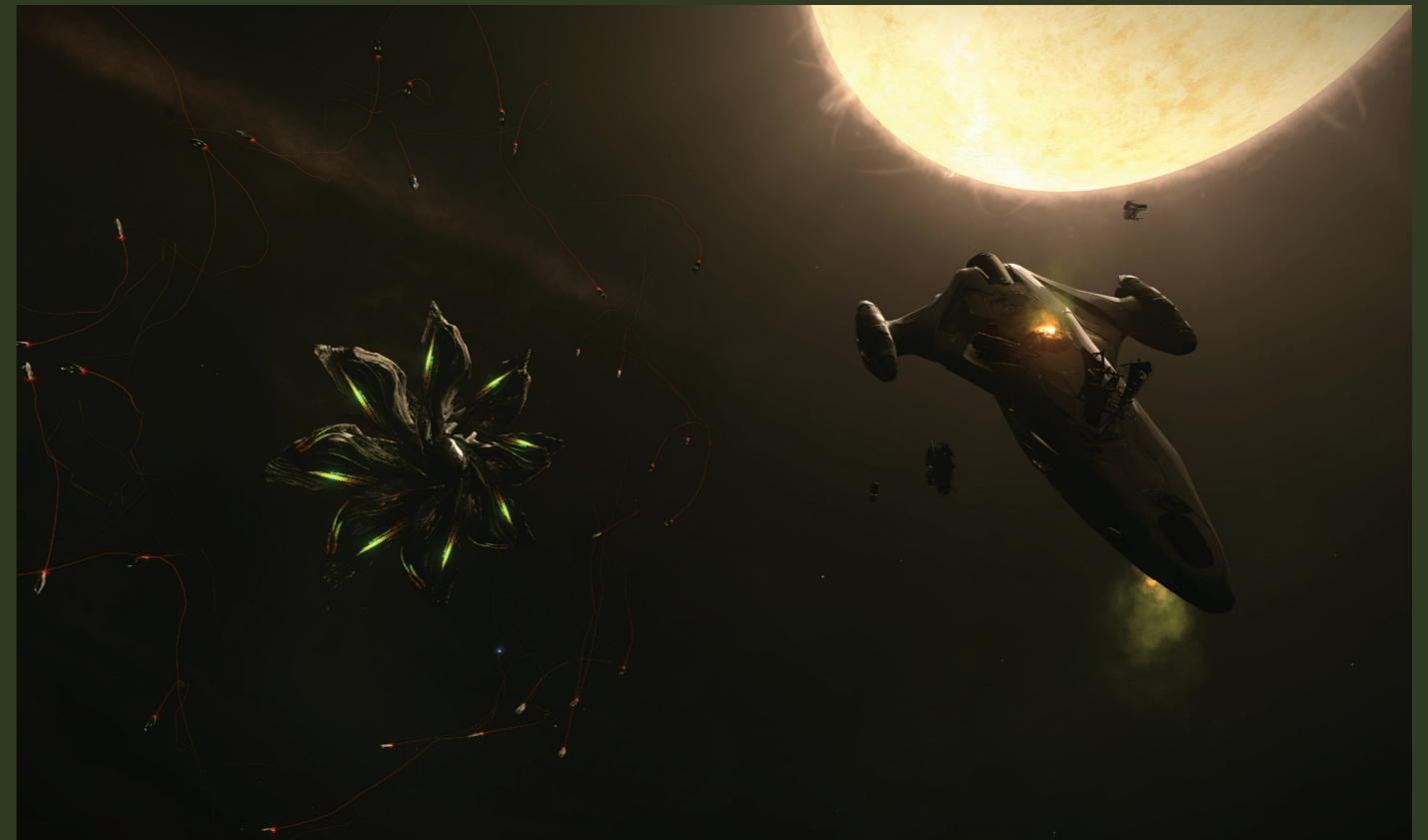
Wells. A science fiction masterpiece written at the end of the nineteenth century during the height of the British Empire, it dealt with the fall of one empire to another – in this case the Martians. The story is well known, and has been regurgitated thousands of times, yet there is something enduring about the fall of the invading empire at the hands of natural biological elements, as if it is the Earth repelling the invaders rather than humanity.

Our previous encounters with the Thargoids very much followed the biological elements, although there was nothing natural about the virus created. Much has been written and debated about the conduct during that time, and no doubt more will be written as a counterbalance to our current predicament.

This in turn brings me back to the novel, early on after the first cylinder falls upon Horsell Common, the military reassures the public that it has everything under control and life should continue as usual. Very similar to our collective trust of authority in the bubble. We might fight against the Federation or vow to bring down the Emperor but when someone with a badge says "nothing to see here", collectively we agree and get on with our minor acts of rebellion. There is nothing new to this, after all we've been under the control of the few for our entire evolution as a race.

Exodus

While the general populace continues with life, it is



with no surprise that Commanders from the Pilot's Federation have ventured towards the Pleiades Nebula. Perhaps they are cut from a different cloth, but these Commanders do not fall into the general populace category. We find one another drawn towards the uncertain, and yes, I include myself in this number.



Not all Commanders share the same ideals, after all we have different alignments, to use an old pen and paper role play term. Some are aggressive wanting to destroy the unknown, others wish to study and some even want to form relations with our old foe. Some even believe that we should prepare for an exodus to Colonia, as all human life is at threat within our Bubble. It is a sentiment encountered in hushed tones throughout, as if some unwritten rule

negates the possibility and those who prepare for it are viewed as the doomsayers of old.

Yet, as I sit recording this I have witnessed a multitude of battle damaged ships dock, often barely in time before their systems fail. Military and mercenary, explorers and traders, the designation of the craft means little to those "invaders" out there – the way the Martians in the War of the Worlds treated all of humanity as one. It has even been reported that they harvest the escape pods of our ships, a case of fact aping fiction perhaps.

A planned exodus and transfer of power to the Colonia 'bubble' has merit, yet we are attached to our place in the universe after all it has been home for a very long time.

Withdrawal

A rumour around these parts hints at the military withdrawal of both the Empire and Federation, and recent GalNet articles seem to confirm this. Yet this has done little to diminish the activity levels in the nebula. Individuals and collectives are waiting for the opportunity to fill the potential void of retreating superpowers, struggles between factions will play out like our galactic competitors are figments of imagination rather than potential threats.

The threat perceived depends upon who you ask but many agree with the view that expansion from the nebula is a distinct possibility.

Some will argue that these times are indeed interesting, a sentiment that I can wholeheartedly agree with.

The logo consists of the letters 'S', 'E', 'P', and 'T' in a bold, white, blocky font. The letters are stylized with sharp, angular edges and a slight 3D effect. The 'S' is a simple block letter. The 'E' has a horizontal bar at the top and a vertical bar on the right. The 'P' has a vertical bar on the left and a horizontal bar at the top. The 'T' has a vertical bar on the left and a horizontal bar at the top. The letters are set against a dark background with a bright sun or star in the center, creating a lens flare effect.

SEPT

SOCIAL ELEU PROGRESSIVE PARTY

A view of the Earth from space, showing the blue and white atmosphere and the dark blue of the oceans. The Earth is curved, and the horizon is visible. The background is a dark, starry space.

EXPLORER'S NATION

Thargoids? Stay calm and have a PEREZ BEER.



The Allies [Aid]

Don't drink and fly.
Drink responsibly.