



SAGITTARIUS

NOV 3303

ISSUE 3

EYE



HEROES OR VILLAINS?



LAVE RADIO

laveradio.com
every tuesday at 20:30 gmt



IN ALL OF SPACE,
FOR ALL THAT'S RIGHT.

IN EVIL'S FACE,
WE STAND AND FIGHT.

TO FOLLOW ONE RULE,
IS WHAT WE SEEK.

TO PUNISH THE CRUEL
AND DEFEND THE WEAK.

WHEN WE STAND TALL
OUR FOES WILL FALL.

FROM DE DARK WE RISE
AT THE ECHO'S CALL.





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GUTAMAYA

A futuristic space station or ship interior. In the foreground, a sleek, dark robot with glowing blue eyes and joints stands on a platform. The background shows a large, curved structure with glowing blue lights and a view of a planet with a green atmosphere. The overall scene is dark and high-tech.

ELEGANCE,
EMINENCE,
EXCELLENCE.

END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

There are approximately
20 to 30 trillion slaves
in the Galaxy today

**WINTERS AND THE
FEDERATION NEED YOU!
ACT NOW AND HELP US
ABOLISH SLAVERY**

EDITORIAL FOCUS



November is all about remembering

On the 5th November 1605--back when humanity was a single-planet species, and numbered fewer than a billion souls--a terrorist plot to assassinate a king was foiled. Since then, we have annually celebrated this event via the noble pursuit of blowing things up and setting fire to them. It is ironic that this anarchic practise commemorates a failed revolution.

This month we also remember the end of humanity's first 'World War' - a term that has lost meaning in this age of multi-star system conflicts. It was the first time our species managed to mechanise the process of slaughter. Never before had technology allowed us to kill each other with such inhumane efficiency. Worth switching off our holofeeds for a couple of minutes to reflect on that, perhaps.

It's also worth remembering how far life has improved for independent spacefarers since the advent of mass-market frame shift drives in 3300. Back then, as Erimus Kamzel recalls in his excellent interview this month, long-distance space travel was tedious and often hazardous. Now our drives are capable of surfing enormous distances between stars on the plumes of stellar remnants, our maps are littered with strange and humbling alien sights that have been discovered, and our navigational computers can steer us through the stars with unrecognisable accuracy and sophistication.

As our intrepid Rasudin reports, there are darker things in our recent history to remember, too. The grisly mementos in the INRA bases unearthed over the last few weeks beg the question: do we have an obligation to be humane to that which isn't human?

Souvarine
Editor

INTERVIEW

DISTANT WORLDS, AGAIN

AN INTERVIEW WITH
COMMANDER ERIMUS

The Beagle

The 16th of December 3300 a lone commander climbed aboard his Asp Explorer, set to travel further than any explorer had travelled before -- a solitary expedition codenamed 'Distant Suns'. Five weeks, 72,000 light years and 2,765 star systems later, Commander Erimus Kamzel jumped into one of the farthest stellar systems reachable from the Bubble. CEECKIA ZQ-L C24-0 is now better known to us all as Beagle Point, in honour of the first vessel to visit it - Commander Erimus's DSS Beagle.

Several months later, Erimus recruited the help of another seasoned explorer, Dr. Kaii, to plan another expedition. This time, it wouldn't be a one-man affair, but their hopes for recruiting a large number of participants were low. To their surprise, the expedition roster quickly grew to become the largest collective exploration travel the galaxy had ever known: codenamed 'Distant Worlds'. Over one thousand Commanders departed from Pallaeni in January 3302, but only 571 brave explorers survived the journey and reached Beagle Point by the following June.

During these six long months in the black the participants on the Distant Worlds Expedition charted the first galactic highway across the galaxy for the Galactic Mapping Project (GMP). The highway consisted of the many 'Jumponium'-rich systems scouted and discovered during the expedition, and subsequently charted on the GMP maps, along with many new points of interest along the route taken. The galaxy, although immense and still mostly unexplored, was now a more familiar place: it's incomprehensibly vast spaces had been crossed by many who came back to tell their wondrous tales and our perception of our position in it was forever and irreversibly changed.

Almost two years later, it looks like Erimus and Kaii have not quite scratched that exploration itch: indeed, Distant Worlds 2 was recently announced. Sagittarius Eye met Erimus for a quick chat about this new expedition.

Hello Erimus! What motivated you to embark in the solo expedition that became the Galactic Crossing Expedition?

In late 3300, when the new Frame Shift Drive (FSD) tech was being gamma tested and hyperspace links beyond the Bubble opened up, I embarked on a journey in a long range Cobra Mk III to the Eta Carina nebula via the Vela Molecular Ridge. It was a trip of 29,000 light years there and back as I came back via the Sagittarius near-arm rim, returning to Aulin Enterprise with around 60% hull remaining. I documented that trip in the New Horizons vid-log diaries. Around the same time Commander Zulu Romeo had made a successful flight to Sag-A* and back in his Cobra Mk III, a round trip of 46,000 light years. It was those early pioneering trips out into the black that proved ships were capable of long distance journeys. So it was those early adventures, along with the desire to test one's endurance, that motivated me personally. But I also hoped that the first galactic crossing would be recorded and archived for posterity, so I made a conscious decision to attempt the journey and document it in the Distant Suns vid-log diaries.

Once I had earned enough credits to purchase the (at the time) newly-released Lakon Asp Explorer, I set off to travel to the most distant reachable systems possible for

ships of that era. Back then there were very few non-solo trips, especially out into deep space. The first fleet expeditions were small in comparison to what we see today, and were mainly localized to points of interest throughout the Orion Spur. Long endurance trips were invariably only attempted by solo explorers at the time.

I remember being out on the far galactic rim and reflecting back on the journey, and feeling the immensity of the galaxy and how far away humanity was. Couple that with the sheer loneliness in what later became known as the Solitude Void region, it's an experience that's been impossible to recapture.

About that: how is travelling in the black alone a different experience than these larger expeditions? Do you have preferences?

I think back then we knew very little about what was out there. We never had any star filters or long range route plotters, no Jumponium injections, or engineered FSDs. The dangers of hyperspacing between a binary pair were unknown, and some of the early equipment available at the time often malfunctioned - the route plotter for example was limited to 100 light years and completely failed once you went beyond the Norma Expanse. So I guess solo exploration back then was akin to the ancient stories we read about of solo mariners crossing old Earth's Atlantic Ocean in a sail boat back in antiquity.

Even today we have a lot more hardware and technology that we never had in 3300, and the era of fleet expeditions is here to stay it seems. Fleet exploration offers a new dimension to long endurance trips as now explorers have that social element and the shared experiences along the way to enjoy - and with that comes the backup and help available should anyone in the fleet need it. We have Fuel Rats, mechanics carrying hull repair limpets, and even Rock Rats willing to help a fellow pilot prospect for Jumponium.

Having said this, in my opinion solo exploration will always be the first and foremost natural choice one makes when setting out as an explorer, as it offers a pilot a more visceral experience, and I think the majority of explorers are lone wolves at heart. Whereas large scale expeditions with hundreds of fellow pilots all focused on achieving a specific set of mission goals offers Commanders taking part a more interactive and cooperative experience when traversing the depths. For example, the Distant Worlds 3302 fleet was made up of over 1,300 pilots, all from different backgrounds, political affiliations and allegiances, yet for one specific mission they put aside all that and flew under one banner, one fleet, one team, helping and encouraging fellow fleet members to reach their goals. That's the power of fleet exploration, and in it's own right it's also a pretty unique experience.

The original Distant Worlds has been the most successful expedition ever attempted by the Pilot's Federation. Can you share some particularly fond memory about it, or some funny anecdote?

There are a few fondest memories; the expedition launch from Pallaeni being one as it was a time of great excitement, frantic coordination, and the culmination of three months' prep-work to get everything in place for the big



Commander Erimus

day. Another fond memory was the visit to Drake's Ridge (the 5th waypoint). That place was one of the weirdest and most mysterious places on the whole trip, a world

“Another fond memory was the visit to Drake's Ridge (the 5th waypoint). That place was one of the weirdest and most mysterious places on the whole trip, a world bathed in green sunlight and a layer of thick green mist, with reports of strange noises being heard in one of the mist-covered craters below the landing zone ”

bathed in green sunlight and a layer of thick green mist, with reports of strange noises being heard in one of the mist-covered craters below the landing zone. And another memory was obviously journey's end - the finale at Beagle Point, watching ship after ship come in to land at the Darwin's Legacy basecamp, culminating with livestreams beamed back to human space, and the appearance of the enigmatic Commander Salomé who gave a speech at Sanctuary Hill overlooking the landing zone. After months of travel, 81,500 LYs across the galaxy, it was a fantastic climax to an amazing journey.

A funny anecdote? One that I remember is watching the fleet flagship, the Zombie Wasp, a 1,000 tonne T9 laden with provisions, come in to land at the first waypoint out at the Shapley 1 system. It glided in gracefully and made a perfect landing. In local comms people congratulated its pilot, Olivia Vespera, for such a graceful touchdown, only to realise shortly after that Olivia was sat in her SRV 2 kilometers away, having recalled the ship and it had been the AI flying it all along.

So, looking forward, what can you tell us to introduce DW2?

It's very early days yet so I don't have specific details for the expedition, but I can say that it'll most likely be a re-run of Distant Worlds 3302. DW2 will most likely be a similar route and will tie-in with gathering map data and POIs for the Galactic Mapping Project (GMP). Initial indications show that it will be just as popular as DW, with already over 600 pilots stating they're interested in taking part - and there's still a whole year to go! We expect it to surpass DW by some distance in the sheer numbers taking part.

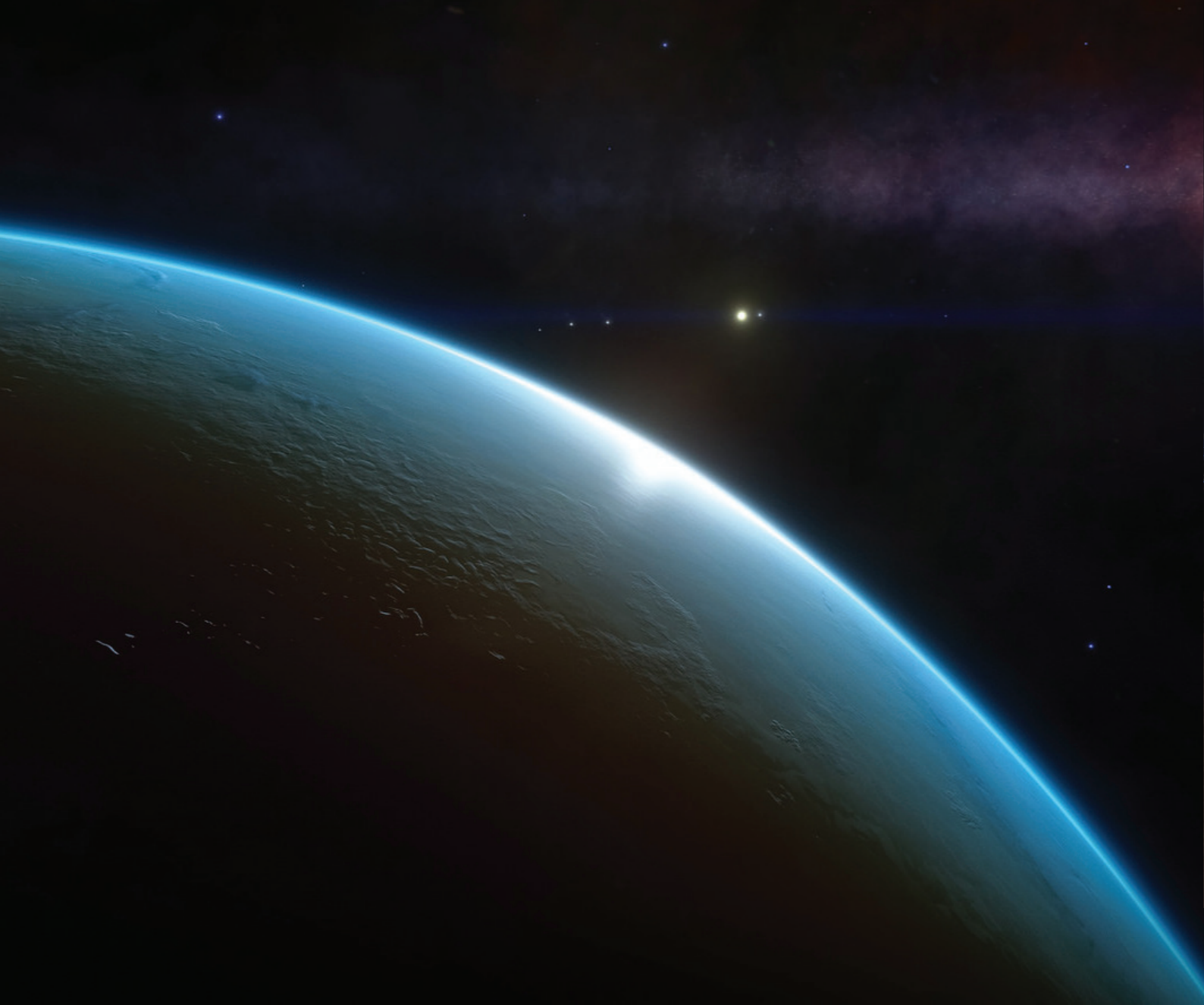
But will there be some specific objectives?

Without going into specifics I can give a brief outline of some of the aspects we intend to include this time around. DW2 will again incorporate mission goals issued via the Galactic Mapping Project, with an emphasis on biological research and surface POI charting - particularly locating and cataloguing geysers and fumaroles, geological surface features, and again scouting of Jumponium-rich worlds. But we're also planning on having more peripheral events and exploration-related projects incorporated into the overall journey this time around. At this early stage the idea is to travel to the iconic system, Beagle Point, where it is likely the expedition finale will again be held. But this is subject to change depending on the implementation of new discovery techniques rumoured to be in development from several science and technology institutes linked to Universal Cartographics. If new areas of the galaxy require investigating and charting, the GMP may issue updated expedition goals next year when we have more information.

Is there a provisional timeline for preparations?

In January 3304, myself and Dr Kaii will be recruiting an expedition team to help work on and flesh out several exploration-related projects we hope to incorporate into the expedition. By late spring of 3304 I plan to have the first

“I remember being out on the far galactic rim and reflecting back on the journey, and feeling the immensity of the galaxy and how far away humanity was”



tentative scouting mission plans drawn up for the Galactic Mapping Project that will task the Distant Worlds scouting team to map and chart specific locations across the galaxy. These locations will act as waypoints and basecamps for the DW2 fleet as it journeys en-route to the Abyss and beyond. An expedition itinerary and schedule is planned to be published by the late summer of 3304, with the official fleet roster registration following shortly after.

Do you know if DW2 will be a six month-long expedition like its predecessor?

“The dangers of hyper-spacing between a binary pair were unknown”

At this early stage we're not sure. Back in 3302 we had no engineered frame shift drive engines, so maximum ranges within the fleet barely got above 40 light years. The fleet average was around 33 light years so the time-frame on that trip was geared around those kinds of ranges and the time it would take for the fleet to travel from waypoint to waypoint. With the new technologies available today a trip across the galaxy isn't so time consuming as it once was, so there's a possibility that DW2 won't be as long as six months. But then again, it depends on what goals the Mapping Project set the expedition next summer. With longer jump ranges across the board we do have an opportunity to do a lot more actual exploration, and spend less time travelling, so the mission length will depend on those goals we set, and is something that will be announced in a few months' time.

Speaking of the Galactic Mapping Project: how is it proceeding? Do you have a rough figure for the number of POIs included in it? Is there some lesser-known destination you think more people should visit?

The GMP is becoming more and more popular, we've had more new submissions made to it this year than the

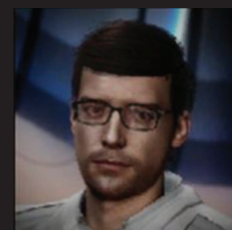
previous 18 months. There are currently 57 regions and over 1,200 individual points of interest now marked on the community map, and although the project is community driven and not sanctioned by Universal Cartographics, several of the GMP submissions have now been officially recognised; most notably Beagle Point, Rendezvous Point, Colonia, Hawking's Gap, and the Sagittarii Conflux.

As for lesser-known destinations, currently there is relatively little known about the upper 4th Quadrant (Mare Desperationis, The Abyssal Plain, Wagar's Reach etc), nor the upper 1st Quadrant (The Bleak Lands, The Tyros Ridge, Silentium etc). Those remote regions are so far away that seldom few travel there. And despite there being one or two large scale expeditions through those areas, regional information from there and POI submissions are still thin on the ground. There is a chance that some aspect of DW2 will venture into those regions, but again, we'll know more about the expeditions specific goals later next year.

Things have changed since 3302: most notably, hu-

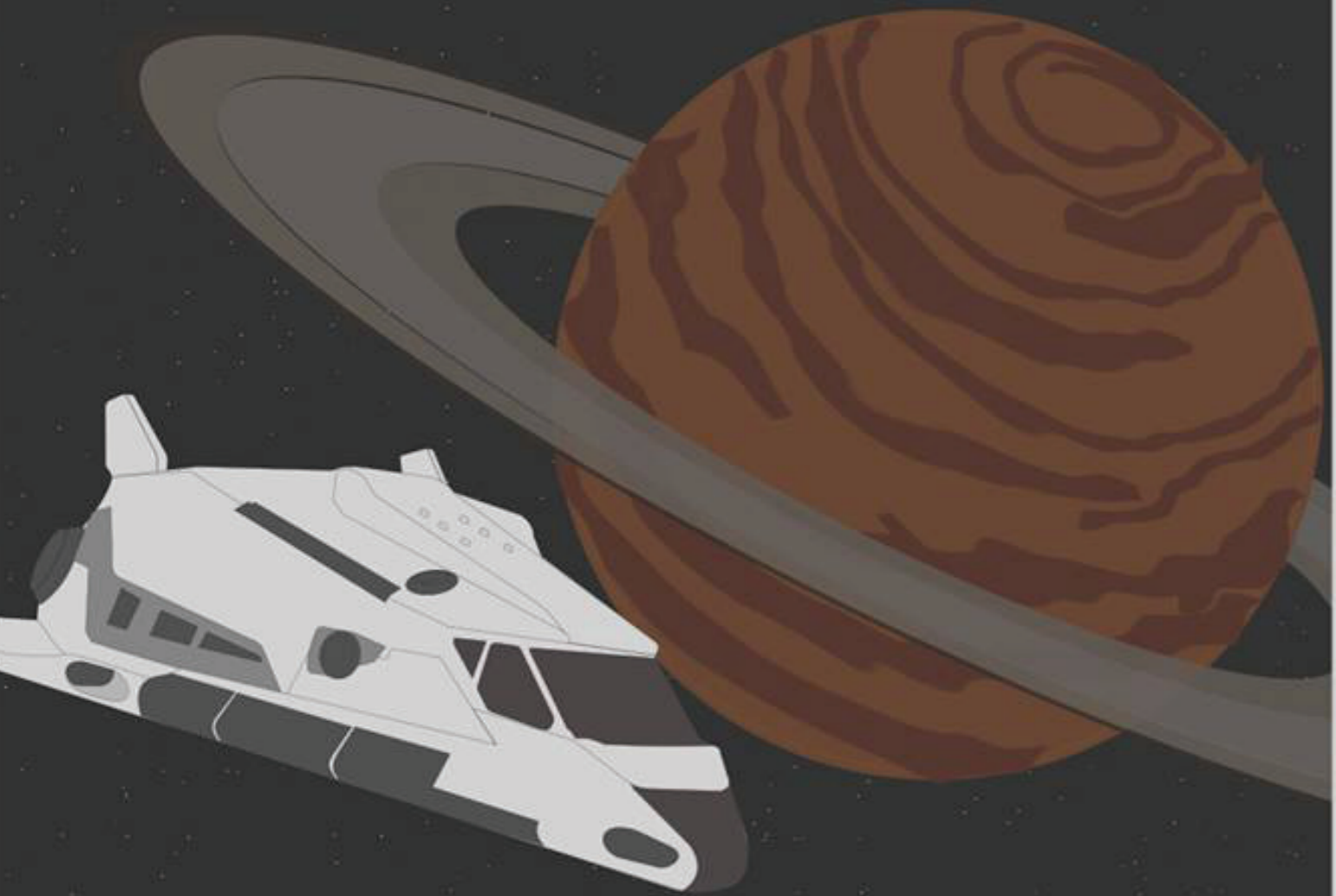
manity is now facing the uncertain threat posed by the Thargoids. So far, there have been no reports of hyperdictions outside of the Pleiades area, but a lot can happen between now and the expedition's launch. Do you think that the Thargoid invasion might create problems for DW2? Are you planning to recommend explorers to bring some defensive equipment with them?

We will obviously be conscious that deep space explorers now have a new element of potential danger to contend with, and as a consequence the Distant Worlds fleet will have armed escorts within its ranks. But we emphasise that this mission is one of peaceful exploration and scientific study. Contact protocols will be in place for all fleet members to adhere to during the expedition, and these will be prioritized on observation, study, and possible communication, with military action used as a last resort, and only if the fleet or individual ships among it are directly threatened by Thargoids or any other sentient races encountered.



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.

**DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO
FLY IN THE RINGS?**



**JOIN THE FEDERAL RECLIMATION CO.
MINING DIVISION!**



ENLIST TODAY!

**WE HIT
WHERE IT
HURTS**

GUTAMAYA

SPACE FACES

Readers, your chance to become a star is now! (and no, we're not talking about fuel-scooping failure.) Here's your opportunity to show off your spectacular visage and have it admired—or feared—by fellow Commanders around the Milky Way.

On those long-haul trips to acquire a Hutton Mug, during the downtime between bouts of ship-to-ship combat, or on those lonely jaunts beyond the Bubble we Commanders like to make the most of the latest 34th century technology to make sure we look our most impressive.



Some of us use it to improve upon nature's handiwork; some wear scars and irregularities with pride and some deliberately put a foot over the line of sanity into the deep unknown.

Regardless of whether you are a primping space-prima-donna sporting the latest fashions in eyewear, or whether you are a battle-scarred veteran of the spaceways who would think nothing of exfoliating with ammonia, we want to see you!

Submit your portrait to our galactic hub, and be sure to remember to include a short bio to add context to your portrait. We'll pick the most interesting, grotesque, beautiful, eccentric and evocative portraits to feature on our Space Faces each month.

Submissions can be made to sagittarius.eye@gmail.com. Imgur is the easiest way to share images.

THE ONLY
MAP
THAT
MATTERS
IS
THE ONE
YOU DRAW



Elite Dangerous Star Map: expert cartographics for explorers



Thank you for your submissions to October's Caption Competition! We're happy to announce that the winner, with the most votes from the Sagittarius Eye team, is Daman Gharib!

"You lookin' at me? You lookin' at me? Then who the hell else are you lookin' at?"

Congratulations Daman. We'll be in touch to award your prize!

CURRENT
AFFAIRS

THE PEGASI SLAVE RAILROAD - TERRORISTS OR FREEDOM FIGHTERS?



The Galactic Railroad claims to restore the freedom of people sold into slavery in the anarchic Pegasi heartlands. Black Omega, the controlling government of more than a dozen Pegasi sector systems, claims the Railroad are nothing more than a group of terrorists - and it's certainly true that they have admitted to fomenting riots and causing chaos across several star systems in the last few months.

"The first war ignited by the Railroad in Black Omega space has taken place... Our work there was much more effective than we realised... the situation became inflamed to the point of war."

The full text of this anonymous Galactic Railroad public broadcast portrays a heroic, rag-tag band fighting for freedom on behalf of those who cannot. However, many in the Pegasi region condemn them for disrupting commerce and everyday life - including Dr. Herbert J. Glaboski, Ph.D Neurobiology and Neuroreconstruction:

"In the last few days, the Pegasi region has been wracked with strife and war. A peaceful order which had been established and maintained was shattered."

In his paper "Wongo - A Scientific Inquiry Into The Motivations Of A Terrorist," Dr. Glaboski dissects the leader of the Galactic Railroad's character, actions and morals.

"...he himself had shown a complete lack of scruples when they [slaves] become fodder. But melodramatically, and insultingly to their memory, he "wept" for them. As a farce, we see that when CMDR #TAGER X is faced with the same opposition personally he turns tail and runs, effectively demonstrating that he has no remorse for those who sacrificed themselves for his cause."

Despite an apparent lack of public support the Railroad has continued to press a campaign of violence against Black Omega businesses. It is a move that seems to have worked. In the last few days, local news sources broadcast a statement from Black Omega establishing regulations for the 'fair treatment of slaves' and announced an end to the conflict with the Galactic Railroad. Apparently, peace is returning, as much as is possible in anarchy systems - but what does this mean for the Pegasi sector?

Your correspondent accepted an invitation from Monolith Preacher, the de facto leader of Black Omega, to visit 'Deggie's bar' at Clair Dock in Tjakiri - the heart of Black Omega territory. Unloading on the pad adjacent to mine was a shiny Beluga, from which groups of well-fed people were being ushered into the unloading terminal. Only the presence of extra security gave away what they really were - property to be traded.

Inside Deggie's, despite the swirls of artificial fog

and dim illumination, 'Preach' (as I was invited to call him) wore sunglasses. Blonde, handsome and pale, he seemed totally relaxed - leaning casually against a table, sipping from a bottle of Harma Silver Sea Rum. The skull emblazoned on his expensive coat seemed to be right at home. In another setting, another time, this man might have been a media star.

I wanted to understand how Monolith Preacher saw Black Omega itself.

"Black Omega are a paramilitary group offering hardware, bodyguard units and advisers to those in need within the Pegasi Sector. We offer a measure of protection to those who wish their own freedoms to be respected. We are proud members of the Pegasi Sector Commonwealth."

He delivered this with an orator's style. I was about to ask a follow-up, but he cut me off neatly.

"Our detractors claim that we are also involved in funding juntas, illicit smuggling of chemicals into systems where they are forbidden, gun running, people trafficking, forced religious conversion and brainwashing, manufacturing knock-off clothing and jewellery....the list is as long as they can make up crimes to ascribe to us, but none of them have any proof of such slander."

He made a dismissive gesture. "The fact is people just don't like to admit that self-governance can work with the right people at the helm."

There was no question at all that Preach considers Black Omega 'the right people'. I admit this was not the thuggish pirate lord I had expected. We talked amiably about the recent history of the Pegasi region before turning to the recent conflict with the Railroad, which did add a layer of frost to our interview.

"The Railroad have engaged in protracted guerrilla warfare against our systems with minimal provocation. This is not an insurgency as has been claimed, but rather a systematic escalation of terror tactics."

The shadows in the booths seemed much more menacing as I asked about claims that slaves in the Pegasi sector are victims of kidnapping or sold into slavery after being rescued from shipwrecks. Preach's large sunglasses rendered his expression unreadable.

"What you need to understand is that people are free to do as they please amongst consenting adults as long as it doesn't hurt anyone unwilling..."

His free hand waved around the bar, taking in the DJ, the child bartender, the dimly lit booths and what I was beginning to realise was the sounds of fighting coming from the back rooms.

"Suffice to say that we have a range of activities available here at Deggie's which would not be seen as 'correct' in the eyes of other governments."

SOLAR COLA

2 CR



THE FEDERATION'S FAVOURITE SOFT DRINK!

Alleged intel from the Railroad

there is still time to come over from the dark side.

War is coming. Are you really planning on fighting to maintain your slave markets?

I know you were never serious about helping the railroad from the start. But our achievements grow irrespective.

Perhaps its time to reconsider.

I stopped taking it seriously when I realised that you are anything but organised, and mostly talk. Your lack of transparency was your own undoing for our goals. You had your chance to work with an insider, but you've blown it. Good day.

I pressed him on the accusations of selling people rescued from shipwrecks into slavery.

"I must stress we have never rescued anyone from a ship disaster in order to bind them in chains. We hold by nautical standards and pyrat honour in this."

Preach was emphatic that I spell 'pyrat' correctly. I assured him I would, though its significance is still unclear.

"People are quick to judge... but perhaps one should wonder at what lengths freedom can really be given to people and still maintain an amount of moral conduct."

The Preacher continued talking at length about freedom and individual rights in something of a monologue before we got round to the topic of the recent settlement with the Railroad. To his credit, Preach seemed to take it in his stride and I never saw his composure break, even though it must have been a sore point.

"The settlement was a necessity. We did not wish to lose our systems and yet more lives waiting for this conflict to end at some indeterminable point in the future. This is another example as to how we have been stuck playing their game due to the nature of their attacks and 'headless presence', so to speak.

"We shall continue to keep Pegasi a free and independent sector akin to the mythical Libertatia, and I personally will continue my work with the Kumo Crew in order to try and keep this a reality on multiple fronts."

As we wound up the interview, having already spent a lot more time in Deggie's than I'd first anticipated, I offered him the chance to make a statement. He considered for a second, and launched into his comfortable orator's style.

"I wish to say that peace has been made, and once all this is over we look forward to attempting to regain some semblance of stability here for the sake of our constituents. I'll ask you to look around this club and see how many people are enjoying themselves. The kid behind the bar can mix more and better cocktails than most men thrice his age. The folks having a knife fight in the pits are seasoned fighters who do so of their own accord and make a good amount of money for 'first blood' combat, and we have medics on hand should anyone get too seriously injured. I myself am the reigning champion, and my title defence matches resulted in

the loss of but a single drop of blood in each. Our drugs are traded in the open and a cut of all the proceeds go to help local charity concerns. The...adult services have similar security, allowing people to indulge their vices with people who share them without fear of slander. Our resident DJ is said to be a collection of Nanites who refuses any attempt at gender or species classification and mixes the most unique music in the galaxy..."

Preach offered me a drink from his bottle. I wasn't sure if this was a test or a genuine sign of camaraderie, but considering how open the man had been I didn't refuse.

"More than anywhere else in the galaxy except possibly Harma itself, we feel this best encapsulates our motto: Freedom Sells Itself. We don't need anyone to liberate our populace. They are more free in Pegasi than anywhere else in the Bubble."

With that, The Preacher got up and walked into the back rooms. The ambient music cranked up a notch, and my time at Deggies was over.

It took me another few days to track down Daman, AKA Commander #TAGER X, apparently the mastermind behind the slave-freeing Galactic Railroad. The holofac was filled with static jumps and the exact features of the man I was talking to were distorted. He started by saying that he couldn't risk being traced, hence the poor connection.

I was anxious to understand what lay behind this man's decision to start a war against such a large and influential organisation as Black Omega. Daman revealed that he hadn't always been a freedom fighter:

"While working in systems around Hraean and Estae, I came across people being bought and sold like cattle against their will. I couldn't turn away, and began to realise that the only way to eliminate this kind of abuse was to fight to restore order in these anarchic areas of space."

Immediately it was clear that Daman was not the careless extremist I'd expected after talking to Monolith Preacher.

"The name "Railroad" was inspired by ancient history - the fight against slavery when we were a purely Earth-bound species. Unfortunately our nature has remained the same."

Something in his tone made me ask if he'd been personally affected by slavery. His response was illuminating - he avoided the question completely.

"I prize independence of thinking more than anything. I am not aligned to any power, and find elements of both Empire and Federation distasteful. But I can make that choice based upon personal belief and values. The most oppressive of peoples is the one who finds a free man and enslaves them."

We spoke for a time about Black Omega, and their claims that The Railroad is nothing more than a terrorist group. Far from the agitated response I was expecting, Daman's tone was confident:

"Since time immemorial, the refuge of every oppressor has been to label their opponents as terrorists. It's a badge the Railroad wears with pride when the title is being bestowed upon them by the likes of a pirate organisation like Omega."

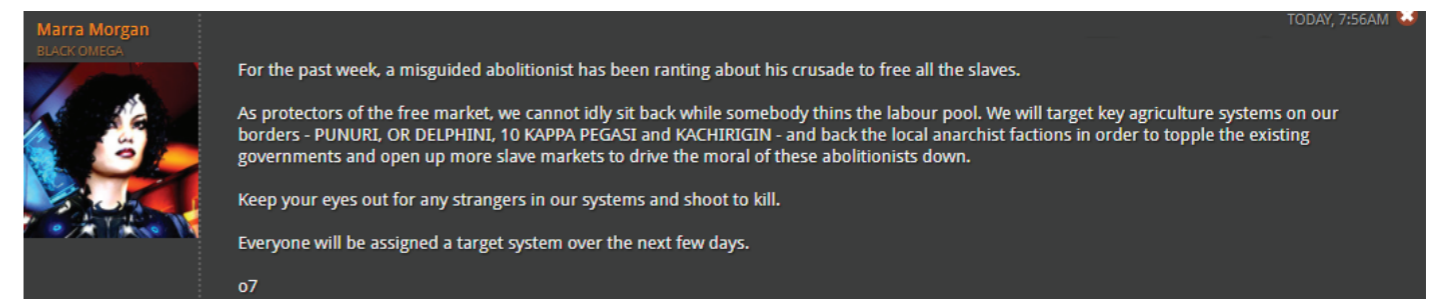
We spent quite some time discussing the Railroad's claims that it represents freedom for enslaved people, and claims to liberate them. I asked how the liberated slaves felt.

"The fact that many a free man was willing to die to help achieve their freedom was something they appreciated, and made me realise that though very high, the price of freedom from slavery wasn't something that could be measured in simple terms."

In a tense moment I asked about the innocent people that have been killed during the conflict, many of whom died as a direct result of Daman's actions or orders. His response was sharp, angry and defensive.

"Any insurgency will have to get its hands dirty - it is involved in asymmetrical warfare against an established opponent. We have to bear those scars for the sake of the goals we were trying to achieve."

At this point the holofac blinked out, and it was another hour before I could get back in touch. Daman apologised, claiming that he feared the signal was being traced so he'd needed to move to another channel. His image was sharper now. I was presented with a



Black Omega leaked intel

careworn man with a full beard and glasses. An image that reinforced my growing impression of a history teacher gone renegade.

It was time to ask about victory; The Railroad won, but I wanted to see how Daman felt about the concessions he'd secured from Black Omega, and whether he felt as though they would honour the deal.

"Our aim is the eradication of slavery. At the moment, that is a goal completely beyond our means. Which means that we have to accept pragmatic gains in the meantime. I have absolutely no love or time for Omega. But they serve a purpose in bringing some control over a sizeable number of systems in the Pegasi. Having them agree to a bill of rights, and to protect a 'liberation core' in their previous territories, means that while slavery continues there, at least we have got some agreement upon improved conditions and additionally the agreement to hold no slaves longer than five years."

I was surprised that Daman had such awareness of the realities of his crusade. I had expected someone more naively idealistic. Instead, again, I was firmly reminded of a scholar or teacher more than a terrorist.

"It's not ideal - nothing is in this universe we live in. But maybe the Railroad can claim to have made the Pegasi a slightly better place."

It's clear that Daman firmly and sincerely believes in the righteousness of what he and his allies are attempting, and that's he's not necessarily the delusional megalomaniac Dr Glaboski suggests. I offered Daman the chance to make a statement.

"With the re-emergence of Thargoids, it is a tragedy that humanity remains blighted by this form of trade in human flesh. It is our small hope that other pirate factions see this agreement and follow the example set by this bill of rights without the need for bloodshed and turmoil in the systems under their nominal control.

"To the Feds, Empire and the Alliance - when will you take it upon your shoulders to carry this responsibility to end such crimes?"

"We claim that the Thargoids are an unknown evil - and yet we do not admit or take the necessary steps to deal with the known evils within."

With that, this self-styled freedom fighter had to go. He told me before he logged off that he was moving on, and I got the impression he meant 'you won't be able to contact me again'. Where Daman will end up



The only known pic of CMDR #TAGERX

I've no idea, but I can't help feeling that he might just leave it a little better than he found it, assuming he doesn't die in the process.

So here it is. The two sides of this war over slavery. On the one side the flamboyant, stylised, Monolith Preacher of Black Omega and the Kumo Crew. A man who prizes personal freedom above all else and who sincerely believes that people should be allowed to be completely free of all fetters. However, he seemed to find it hard to understand that the slaves being bought and sold around the Pegasi Sector might not share the same view of freedom, and they themselves might not consider themselves to be free to say no.

On the other side we have the reserved but driven Daman, Commander #TAGER X, a man who apparently started a slave rebellion across multiple star systems simply because he, and people like him, perceived freedom being held back. It seems that Daman feels each life lost quite deeply, and is governed by a fine moral balancing act that seems to equate to 'do more good

than harm'. Still, this man seems too willing to accept collateral damage - not just to the stability of entire star systems, but the lives of hundreds in pursuit of his own ideals.

Black Omega's main complaint is not that they were challenged, it's that they weren't challenged face-to-face in what they would call honourable combat. The Railroad on the other hand accepted they couldn't win an upfront battle, and so set up many small brushfire rebellions that were hard to put down. As The Preacher said during our interview, a 'headless presence'.

Between these two sides are the slaves themselves. How do they fare in all this? Are they better off?

Throughout my travels in the Pegasi Sector I managed to get some words with various slaves both before and after the end of the conflict.

The slaves I spoke to before the settlement seemed resigned to their fate. Very few of them felt they had any options and were simply making the best of it, trying to survive and avoid as many punishments as possi-

ble. The better-treated ones seemed almost to feel as though they were valued beyond their material worth, and I met one or two who openly spurned the concept of being set free. In many ways these people reminded me of those who spend so long incarcerated that they find the idea of not being imprisoned highly uncomfortable - even to the stage where they begin to respect their captors and resist release.

After the settlement I spoke to some of those same slaves again about the prospect of being made free after five years. Many were concerned, asking questions like "Where will I live?" and "how will I eat?" However, many had a glint in their eyes and a spring in their step - people who knew they just needed to survive and

endure a little longer to regain freedom.

As to the future of slavery in the Pegasi sector? I doubt the efforts of the Railroad will stop it anytime soon. The mass of history is very large and it'll take a significant long-duration burn to alter the trajectory of a whole sector; and even then, the chances are slavery will just be pushed into another sector of space. Should we settle for the concession that slaves will be treated well and offered freedom after a set time--a kind of industry regulation--or should we continue to strive for a total eradication of slavery in all its forms?

I will leave you with the slogan of Black Omega: *Freedom Sells Itself.*

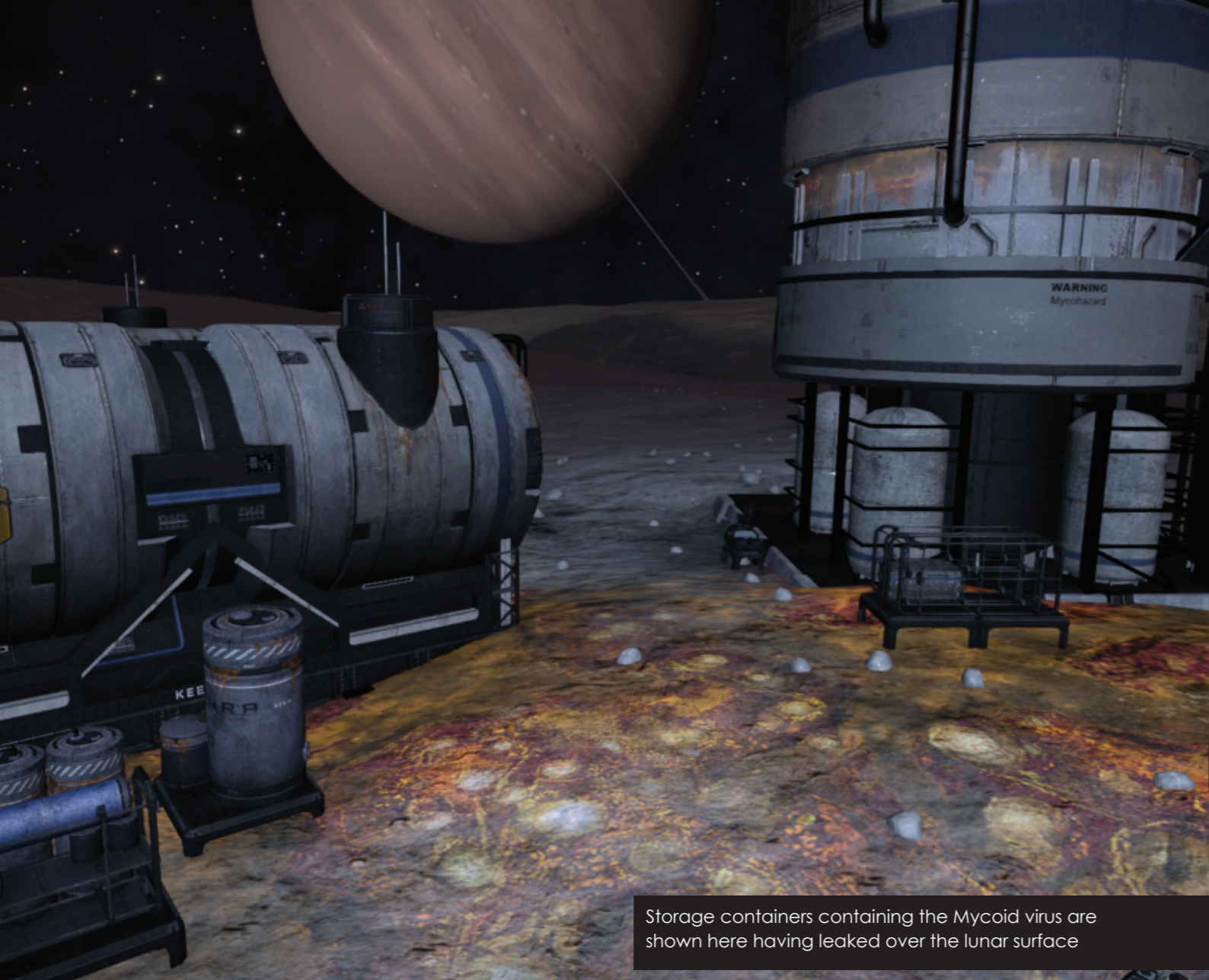


Louis Calvert enjoys nothing more than exploring the facts behind a mystery and getting to the 'truth' of the matter. Not disciplined enough for a career in the Sciences and not dedicated enough for a career in Law Enforcement, his only recourse was to become a journalist. He can be found chasing a story in his battered Cobra, the Lady Macbeth.

I N R A

Relic of a Past and
Present War

“They represent a piece of our history as long-forgotten as the Thargoids—but with the latter resurfacing in the galactic consciousness in a huge way, interest in this ancient organization has begun to rise”



Storage containers containing the Mycoid virus are shown here having leaked over the lunar surface

INRA stands for the Intergalactic Naval Reserve Arm, not Invasive Necrotic Research Association. I cannot tell you how disappointed I was to learn this during my investigations into the recently-discovered INRA bases.

They represent a piece of our history as long-forgotten as the Thargoids—but with the latter resurfacing in the galactic consciousness in a huge way, interest in this ancient organization has begun to rise. There are whispers of a virus called 'Mycoid' that decimated the Thargoids in our last war with them. Six bases, believed to be leftover facilities from INRA before its dissolution in the 3200s, have been discovered on the surfaces of various airless planets. What is the real history of INRA? What have they got to do with the galaxy as it is today? And why are they being discovered only now, at the hour of our greatest need?

INRA, in its time, was the equivalent of our Aegis Initiative (see my previous column, The Aegis Deception, for my thoughts on Aegis). It was formed as a joint Federal-Imperial initiative—you see, they've done this before—to combat the Thargoid invaders of the time. Public reception of INRA was positive, seeing the organization as an example of the cooperative genius that arises when the superpowers work together. They didn't have our modern insight into the inner workings of our governments.

According to my research, INRA was a ruthless organi-

zation, using the goal of destroying the Thargoids as a justification for any method. Few records exist today of their work, but it is more or less clear that their most successful experiment was that of a virus called 'Mycoid', developed when one researcher observed the effects of a certain breed of fungus on Thargoid test subjects.

The virus was devastatingly effective, humanity's most useful tool in repelling the invaders. It was mass-produced at many INRA bases, including the Mayes Chemical Plant in HIP 59382. When, just a few weeks ago, a Commander stumbled across Hollis Gateway, an abandoned INRA base on the surface of Hermitage 4 A, they discovered a series of storage tanks marked "Warning: Mycohazard," from which a strange substance was leaking. Nestor Cartesius, an Imperial Senator, gave voice in an article of GalNet News to an idea the whole galaxy was considering: can we use that research—that virus—in our struggle now?

Setting aside the dubious ethics of using a virus created through experimentation on live subjects, I find it doubtful that the Mycoid virus could be effective in countering the Thargoids' current attacks. First, if the weapon was so effective during their last invasion it stands to reason that the Thargoids might, in over a hundred years, have developed a means to counter it. According to INRA records, it was



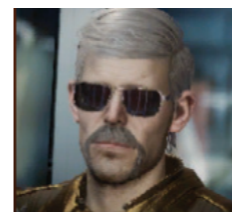
Hollis Gateway an Abandoned INRA base

not difficult for human researchers to create an effective vaccine. Also, we have no way of knowing if the samples that have survived to this day would be viable specimens from which to clone more. We have not yet recovered records of how INRA was able to produce the virus, and given the extensive work someone, or something, has put into expunging all records of the previous Thargoid invasion from our history, it seems unlikely that we will. What, then, can we learn from INRA?

We can learn, for a start, that Federal-Imperial cooperation in the face of the Thargoids is nothing new. Aegis is not an unprecedented initiative, and there is really nothing to stop the superpowers from cooperating in other ways as well. We also know that as much as these organizations may claim to be conducting research to understand the aliens, they really are engaged in weapons research only. We should not be naïve about this. Finally, we must investigate the nature of the cover-up which forced all knowledge of the human-Thargoid war into legend. We know that history repeats itself, and if we do not demand accountability of our protectors in the present, future humankind may forget everything that happens in these present days of war.

In recent days, even more INRA bases have been discovered by dedicated Commanders. One base in HIP 16824 references INRA attempts to reverse-engineer the Thargoids' hyperdrive technology. Where has this research gone? There is at least a partial answer contained in the logs of this base; they tell of a dangerous attempt to lure in Thargoid ships to test new weapons technology - and in doing so, drew in a kind of "mothership" that apparently destroyed them. We had to uncover this knowledge for ourselves. Our overlords will not share it willingly with us.

Throwing caution to the wind, I have visited some of these bases in my stealth-modified Imperial Courier for my research, listening to voice recordings that sound eerily as though they might have been recorded today, and not more than a hundred years ago. These bases are not just relics; they are important memorials from which we can understand our present. All Commanders, regardless of political alliance or involvement in the present war, should visit these sites and judge for themselves whether or not history is repeating itself. I must conclude this transmission here; fly smart, 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.

FIGHT FOR THEM



SYSTEM OF THE MONTH

Humanity's explorers are its most unsung heroes, intrepid pioneers of humanity's greatest frontier: our galaxy. Exploration is a thankless task; countless lonely days spent far from civilization and any kind of social interaction, but in exchange for their dedication, explorers behold sights never before witnessed.

We here at Sagittarius Eye would like to encourage all explorers to share in their fantastic discoveries by submitting four or five screenshots of your favorite recently-discovered system for our new System of the Month feature. Something about that system should be particularly memorable or remarkable, and you should be the first discoverer.

Email the images along with your thoughts to sagittarius.eye@gmail.co.uk and this time next month we may share your discovery with the entire readership of SAGi. Fly safe, Commanders!



“Raxxla - Where Art Thou?”

“The mythical plant Raxxla. Does it exist, or does it not? If it does, then on Raxxla there’s an alien construct that’s a gateway to other Universes, and all that’s in those Universes in the way of bounty, and treasures, and aliens, and life...”

- Unknown Source - often attributed to the quasi-mythical Trader “Rafe Zetter” of Lave, circa 3100.

*Some Raxxla hunters believe it's an alien megastructure (artist impression)

Let's be clear, Raxxla is a myth. Despite the fact that there is no shortage of people who are willing to risk it all to head off into the black in search of this alluring legend, and the riches it supposedly holds, it remains a myth. Yet, despite the fact that we really know nothing about the planet (if it even is a planet), there are a few things that keep coming up time and again almost every time the legend is retold:

- People have found it - This is a core aspect of each version of the legend.
- Raxxla is often associated with a little-known and hard to find group known as 'The Dark Wheel'.
- There's something on--or in--it that is some form of portal or gateway to... somewhere else.

Most/all of the people who come back after finding it apparently only have time to tell a friend-of-a-friend's-sister-in-law's-co-pilot before meeting some mysterious and often grisly demise, or just vanishing entirely.

There are often riddles and puzzles associated with it, that apparently serve as some sort of map or guide, creators unknown.

In our effort to give the average pilot a chance to get to grips with this slippery legend we have sought out a few of those intrepid explorers who fearlessly search for this elusive place, despite the risks that come with this search. Iron out your tinfoil hat before reading any further...

Commander MacrosTheBlack maintains a public log of his quest to find Raxxla and he's been kind enough to share a few words with us today:

"Raxxla, a certain celestial body. Place that isn't a place, door that is also the key. The myth. This legend has captivated many commanders in the galaxy, including myself. I started the quest to find Raxxla over two years ago, however with 400 billion star systems there's a lot of systems to search!

The Elite missions mentioned in my logbook* gave me a small hope of finding something; but alas, with the disappearance of the missions and no clues whatsoever, it's not easy. At all. Currently I'm circumnavigating the galaxy on the Outer Rim on a one year trip, hoping to find clues at the very edges of the galaxy with the Black Void on one side and the splendid brightness of the Core on the other. I want to believe."

*Cmdr MacrosTheBlack refers here to his extensive public travel logs which detail tantalising clues offered by a faction known as 'The Dark Wheel', who are only reachable after attaining Elite ranking and visiting Jameson Memorial in the Shinrarta Dezhra system.

Others have interesting ideas that Raxxla may not even be a planet at all. Commander DrNoesis says:

"I have a horrible feeling [Raxxla is] a metaphor for our ships - a place that's not a place (because it's a ship) and which has a [Hyperdrive] that is both a door and key (to accessing witchspace) and is capable of taking us to anyplace in the galaxy.

Seriously, Raxxla is like some horrific theoretical fractal set - the closer you look, the more and more infinite it becomes."

How about that? Perhaps we've all found our own personal Raxxla. Back in the early days of spaceflight,

before frame shift drives (FSD), travelling any distance was dangerous. Even more than today, many pilots of old felt special kinship with their ships that served as both homes, protectors and means to earn a living in a hostile and dangerous galaxy. It's entirely possible that some spacers consider their ships "gateways to universes of bounties, treasures, aliens and life...".

Taking a break from his well-deserved downtime between expeditions Commander Patrick Falcon shared with us details of his discovery of the crash-site of the famous explorer Finn McMillan.

"I am not someone given to speaking in terms of absolutes so when I speak of Raxxla I always preface my statements with the qualifier of "if Raxxla exists". yet, if you were to press me for it, I would have to confess that I have no doubt that Raxxla is as real as Earth. I believe it with all that is in me.

There are so few clues to the Raxxla mystery that almost any thread is worth pursuing. This is what led me into the Formidine Rift where I located the crash site of Commander Finn McMillan. I was able to salvage what was left of his Asp Explorer, the Ouroboros, and decrypt his personal log files which included his research into Raxxla.

McMillan believed that Rafe Zetter's alien structure is, in fact, part of a Talmor Lens, the construction of which was the sole purpose of an alien civilization which called itself the "Oisir-Raxxla". The evidence of this is tenuous at best but can be pursued by anyone who can find the link between the names of 'Steven Eisler' and 'Robert Holdstock'. The information is there for those willing to pull back the curtain.

McMillan's logs, journals and research as well as the remains of his ship and his body were ferried back to the bubble. Research into additional legends and stories chronicled by those who preserved the original Dark Wheel myth continues with the hopes that somewhere inside those stories are further clues which will bring us closer to finding Raxxla and unlocking our galaxy's deepest secrets."

Commander Falcon's recovery of McMillan's research data will undoubtedly spur on others to continue the hunt. It's worth mentioning that until recently the Formidine Rift itself was nothing more than a legend, a region of near-impassible darkness, a source of whispers that turned out to be entirely real.

Whatever your interpretation or particular theories about the true meaning of Raxxla, no-one can deny that this legend has been captivating the imagination of a certain wild-eyed subset of the spacefaring community for at least 200 years. Stories of Raxxla possibly even stretch back over a thousand years into the very earliest days of faster than light space exploration. If Raxxla exists in the form that many believe - an inter-dimensional gateway on a planet of exotic, advanced alien technology - it certainly will represent something momentous in the history of humanity, the potential for us to become an intergalactic (or interdimensional) civilization. It could be that the secret of Raxxla has been hidden, as some suggest, by some shadowy cabal until they decide we are ready to reach beyond the Milky Way.

We wish you luck on the hunt for Raxxla, Commanders!



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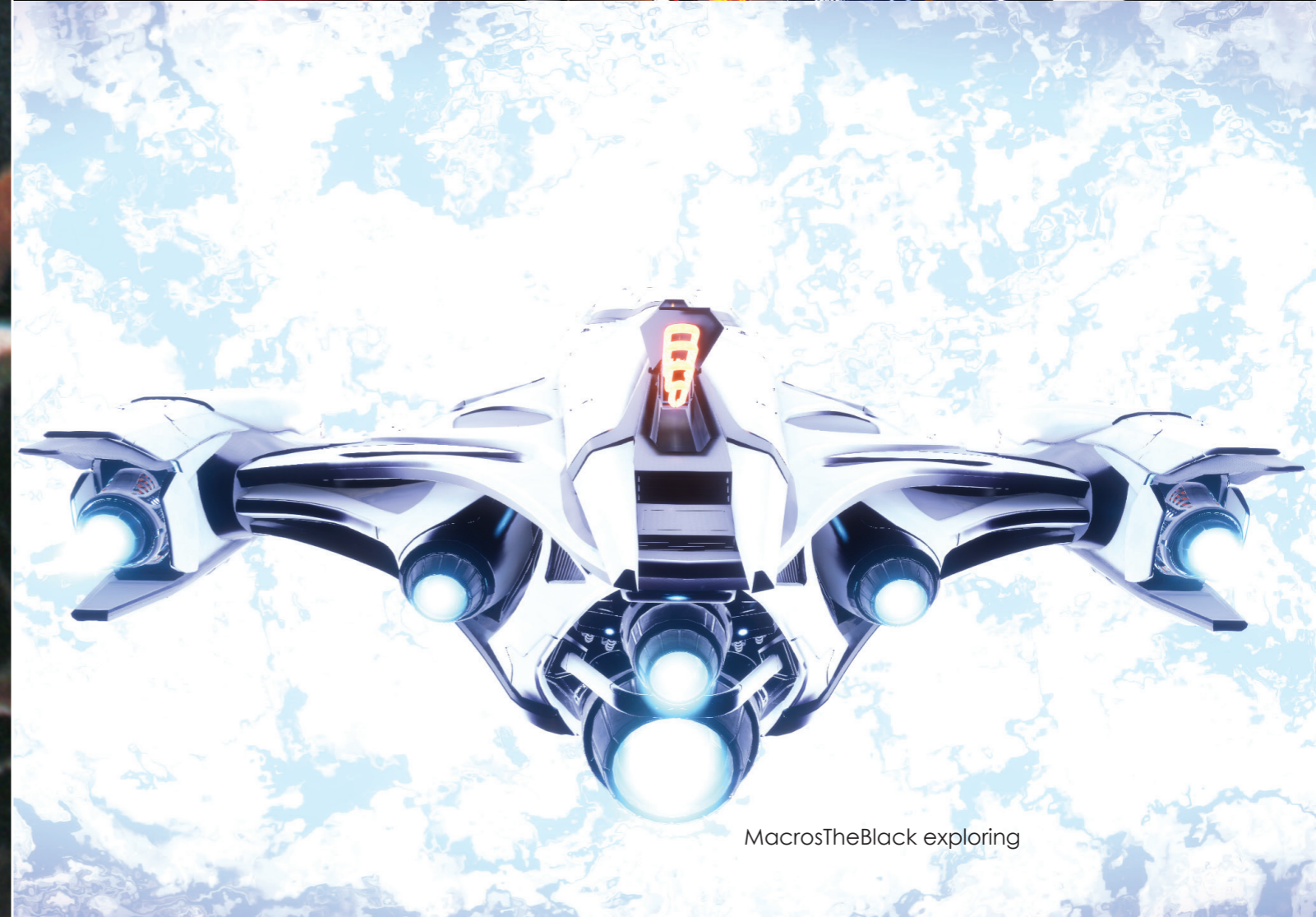


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A Talmor Lens depicted by Graham Wildridge



MacrosTheBlack at the helm



MacrosTheBlack exploring



Many believe Raxxla is guarded by a group who have used the riches of other universes to build a paradise.

WHEN YOU'RE RETURNING FROM A LONG EXPEDITION,
YOU DON'T WANT TO RELY ON LUCK.



YOU WANT A GROUP THAT HAS ALREADY ESCORTED HUNDREDS
OF EXPLORERS TO KEEP YOU AND YOUR DATA SAFE.

IRIDIUM WING

