

Brotherhood of the Kestrel

a plug-in for Escape Velocity Nova

Preamble

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
The Story	2
The Principle Factions	5
The Personalities	9
Ships and Technology	12
Tips and Tricks.....	25

The Story

What should have been the Golden Age of humanity has degenerated into disaster as the galaxy is slowly torn apart by the ravages of endless war.

For generations, the Great Expansion saw the human race move far beyond the confines of Sol where dozens of uninhabited new planets were discovered and colonized, their rich reserves of natural resources yielding unprecedented wealth and prosperity. It was not long until the Terrans made first contact with the Brox, a humanoid race of engineers and artisans. Their homeworld of Zarbroxx and its colonies were alive with mineral extraction and heavy industry which certain members of Earth's ruling council eyed with envy. After six months of peaceful coexistence, Terran warfleets entered the Brox home system and unleashed a truly devastating assault, eradicating most of the Brox's pitiful militia.

Faced with such overwhelming odds, the Brox quickly surrendered and became little more than servants to their human overlords. It did not end there, for as Earth's deep space probes and science cruisers moved deeper into unexplored space, three new races were met: the Hunn'sta, a peaceful agrarian tribe; the Calan, a semi-amphibious people; and the Sauridians, a reptilomorphic race of hunters. The first two were quickly annexed, their technology no match for the brute force of the Terran military and it was not long until their homeworlds of Hunn'stach and Calanar fell to defeat, in addition to their support colonies. Whilst the Sauridians fought long and hard, they too were unable to hold back the seemingly unending waves of Terran warships and starfighters.

The political and military leadership of Earth dubbed its systems and captured alien territories the **Terran Star Empire**, with the ubiquitous Colonial Navy at its call and for years the Empire punished everything it saw with an iron fist. Dissension of any form was not tolerated and those who dared question the authority of Central Command were made examples of in ways few would forget. However, over time, a rebellion began to take shape. Tiring of Earth's brutal rule, a small band of Brox guerillas set in motion a series of hit and raid strikes that would ultimately drive their Terran masters from their world. As word of the apparent Brox victory spread, the entire annexed outer rim of Earth's holdings became alive with rebellion. Those who were once slaves took whatever weapons they could lay hands on and fought back. Taken by surprise,

the Empire's forces withdrew to the relative safety of their own territory and prepared for a massive counterstrike. Realizing that they were no match for the Colonial Navy's warfleets on their own, the peoples of Zarbroxx, Calanar, Hunn'stach and Sauridia formed a military alliance that would be known as **The Weave**. When the Colonial Navy returned, they were met by an organized resistance boasting powerful new technologies and a new found confidence. While the Empire took substantial losses at first, the introduction of lethal new fleet craft such as the Sceptre class missile cruiser and Nemesis class heavy dreadnought have forced The Weave to go on the defensive once again as Naval forces pushed ever deeper into their space.

Over the past few years, very little has changed.

The Weave Alliance continues to battle a seemingly hopeless campaign against recapture by the unstoppable Colonial Navy.

The Sauridian Freehold is fighting not only to keep the Empire from again occupying its homeworld, but has embarked on a ruthless campaign to take the nearby independent Olympus system, forcing the Olympians to battle for their very lives.

The neighbouring colonies of Lethe Prime and New Cydonia continue their epic Resource Wars over water rights as both of their economies suffer at an ever increasing rate, as few merchants are willing to risk the loss of their transports to accidental weapons fire.

The Denebians, having only just declared their independence from Earth, begin what will likely be a futile attempt to halt creeping Empire annexation of their system and colony.

And the mysterious Artemis Group watches over it all, its motivations unclear.

The only true victors have been organized crime as both Empire and Weave policing forces have suffered considerably, with their personnel and hardware being continually seconded to the front lines. Numerous new pirate factions have risen to infamy as they stake out their claims and territories to the lucrative drug dealing and arms running opportunities that now permeate the universe like never before. These pirate brothers-in-arms, friend and foe alike, consider their frequently loose associations to be a brotherhood unto themselves. Armed with some of the most powerful ships in production and a

new generation of purpose-built weaponry, spacers refer to these gangs as "the brotherhood of the Kestrel".

Tiring of the increased dangers of life on a merchant freighter, you have just resigned your commission as first officer on a Consolidated Express secured freighter and purchased your own ship, a sturdy Kevlar class armoured shuttle. Leaving a life of legitimate business behind and blindly determined to forge your own personal path to glory, you head out into a universe writhing in absolute chaos. There are many choices that tempt you -- the relatively easy life of an independent pirate, with accountability to no one but yourself; the thankless existence of an intergalactic bounty hunter; or perhaps an association with one of the galaxy's more organized pirate factions? The decision is yours to make, but beware: in a time of near anarchy and golden opportunity, friendship and trust are fast becoming the rarest of all commodities...

The Principle Factions

Of course, everyone knows of the seemingly endless conflict between The Weave Alliance and the mighty Terran Star Empire. However, there are a wide variety of factions, both pirate and civilian, that have arisen over the past few years. Before heading off into the galaxy, you should take a few moments to make yourself familiar with each and every one. The following gives a brief description of each group including its basic history, holdings and leadership.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE ARE ONLY SIX PLAYABLE GOVERNMENTS though you will find yourself interacting with a wide variety of factions, both friendly and hostile, as your adventures unfold.

INDEPENDENT PIRATE COALITIONS

Having no home base in particular (although Blackthorne remains a popular destination), most of the galaxy's pirates tend to fall into this generalized category. Their holdings are extensive and range from the bustling drug laboratories of New Kingston to the counterfeiting rings and bunko artists of Privateer's Haven. Independent pirates rarely attack other pirates unless provoked, preferring to focus on the business at hand. It should be noted that other, more xenophobic, factions do not share any such philosophy.

MODERATE PIRATE FACTIONS

The busy colony of Hammond's Reach is home to the more moderate of pirates and freelancers. While the very idea of a "moderate" pirate faction may sound like a contradiction of terms, those who prefer a lower profile and a less violent way of life tend to eventually find their way here. However, a lack of extreme aggression should not be taken as a sign of weakness, as its membership is composed of some very capable field tacticians and freebooters. The moderates have no territory beyond Hammnd's Reach and its orbital refuelling station and are known to conduct a more low key approach to crime, mostly low level commerce raids and covert arms dealing. It has no allies, and, due to its low profile, is not high on the Colonial Navy's "Targets For Purification" manifests. At this time there is no current data as to this faction's leadership hierarchy.

THE MAFIA

There is very little information available regarding the Mafia, except that it is without doubt the most powerful and influential criminal faction known. It controls the bulk of the arms dealing and narcotics shipments throughout the core systems and administers over a dozen worlds, including several system sentinels. Its most prized possessions include Evildrome and four hyperspace jump generators. Located in all four quadrants of the galaxy, these highly specialized orbital satellites allow for an almost instantaneous transport from one part of the galaxy to another. The Mafia's fleet craft are among the best built ships anywhere, most of which are designed and built by defecting engineers from organizations ranging from Garik Electronics to Atinoda to Terran Naval Shipyards. It is widely believed that The Mafia is in cahoots with the Terran Star Empire's Central Command and Consolidated Express, both of whom receive a cut of the Mafia's substantial profits for their "cooperation". As such, both The Weave and the Sauridian Freehold are committed to bringing this faction to heel, though that may be easier said than done. The entire organization is operated by a poorly known trio simply referred to as "The Three Suits," all of whom are suspected Empire loyalists.

THE SERPENS TRIUMVERATE

This faction's membership is composed of the Colonial Navy starfighter pilot defector Darren Naish, the master forger Toni Weyler and the muscle of the organization, no-nonsense enforcer Richard "Stig" Walsh. This small triad of pirates is considered a relative upstart in the world of organized crime, but it has already begun to make serious waves. Its home base is located deep in The Badlands on a backwater station called Refuge, a place recognized throughout the galaxy as a safe neutral freeport. Along with a "pleasure planetoid" called Bordello, this small faction controls two of the more profitable of illicit businesses. While technically non-partisan, the Triumvirate is suspected by Empire intelligence to have "arrangements" with The Weave. Currently, its primary enemy is The Mafia, miffed at this small group's rise to power.

THE SUBNEBULA CARTEL

The Subnebula Cartel was established by the legendary pirate Carl Warrington, a highly respected commerce raider whose direct family runs what even Empire intelligence considers to be one of the most tactically sophisticated and well administered of all the galaxy's outlaw governments. The Cartel's specialty is contraband smuggling and fringe system hijackings, especially against Merchants Guild and Weave convoys. This has earned the Cartel the tolerance of the Empire, though Warrington himself considers his first allegiance to the Non-Alligned Worlds, having been born on Ursa Minor. Intensely hated by The Weave, any Cartel ship foolish enough to stray too long in alliance territory risks arrest or destruction.

THE K'RALI SYNDICATE

Based out of an abandoned Empire research post, the shadowy K'rali Syndicate is a Sauridian criminal organization that is best known for preying on Terran shipping lanes and cargo convoys. Precious little is known about this faction and it remains notoriously xenophobic, especially towards Terrans. The Syndicate maintains close ties with the Sauridian Liberation Armada by making generous donations to their homeworld's defense and is barely tolerated by both the Sauridian Freehold government and The Weave. Empire policeships have orders to destroy K'rali craft on sight, though the formidable shipbourne disruptors used by Syndicate vessels make such a directive easier said than done.

THE DARKSIDE FACTION

Without doubt the most despised, feared and brutal pirate coalition known, Darksiders tend to be shunned by mainstream freebooters due to their callous disregard for even their own personal safety. Their home base is located deep in The Badlands at the decrepit Darkside Port, along with several other Darksider holdings including the legendary Nidhogg Depository. This faction specializes in contract killings, political assassinations and daring commerce raids deep into both Empire and Weave space. As such, they have no allegiances whatsoever though Weave intelligence suspects this group maintains loose ties with the Mafia. Due to their reckless disregard, the Darkside Faction boasts a multitude of enemies, including The Weave, the Terran Star Empire and the Sauridian Freehold. In fact, the Empire's Central Command recently issued Purification Warrants for any and all Darkside vessels found in or near Empire space. Such a reputation makes this group a natural choice for more violent personalities and the faction itself was originally founded by notorious assassin Juan Lopez, considered to be one of the most dangerous men in the galaxy.

THE MERCENARIES GUILD

The Mercenaries Guild is headquartered on Gridrunner Station in the Risa system and was established in an attempt to allow for a more orderly approach to the bounty hunting and freelance policing opportunities created by the rise in intergalactic organized crime. The bulk of its members are reformed pirates, retired Colonial Naval officers or hotshot privateers. The Guild is not popular in pirate space and tends to be allied with the Terran Star Empire, due to the loyalty of Guild founder Jason Jordan. Extremely competitive, it is not unusual for the more hardcore members of this group to use a variety of dirty tricks to land the more juicy contracts.

THE DENEBIAN COALITION

Deneb III was at one point a small, relatively nondescript colony that was long ignored by the Terran Star Empire due to its lack of resource or strategic value. Recent improvements in cultivation and farming technology have transformed this colony into a major agricultural superpower and this little planet has become so wealthy and influential that the Terran Star Empire's Central Command recently issued an O.T.A. (Order To Annex) against the entire Deneb system. Fiercely independent, the Denebians have managed to muster a fairly strong military although it is unclear how long they can avoid Empire capture.

THE OLYMPIAN COUNCIL

The Olympus system is home to the colonies of Zeus and Hera. Whilst the former is plagued by thunderstorms and violent weather, the latter has evolved into a small but successful agricultural research center. Long ignored by the Empire due to its insignificant strategic value, the Olympians have become largely independent. In recent times, the Sauridian Freehold has begun to make hostile forays into Olympian territory, which many observers believe is an attempt to utilize Hera's economy to shore up the Freehold's war effort funding, or perhaps as a staging point for military forays deep into the core systems. Regardless of reason, the Olympians are mounting a fight to defend themselves, though most doubt they can hold back the Freehold for much longer.

THE ARTEMIS GROUP

Extremely little is known about this mysterious and covert organization that maintains a command base far beyond the outer rim. Intelligence indicates that The Artemis Group is somehow dedicated to maintaining balance amongst the galaxy's numerous governments and power blocks, though how such a monumental task could be accomplished is anyone's guess. There is no reliable information as to this faction's leadership or political leanings beyond idle gossip and the Artemis Group is looked upon with a degree of suspicion. However, it maintains an active policy of neutrality to which TAG agents apparently adhere.

The Personalities

There are a wide variety of differing personalities you will come across as you explore the numerous pirate dominated systems and stellars spread across the galaxy. Here are the biographies of the leaders of the primary pirate governments by their name, affiliation and known background.

"The Three Suits"

The Mafia

The leadership of the Mafia is poorly known, the three individuals who act as its executive simply known as "The Three Suits", in recognition of their favored attire. Authorities strongly suspect that one of the ringleaders is a former executive of Consolidated Express, a company long known for shady dealings and unfair competition, whilst the others are believed to have connections to the Empire. Other than that, intelligence regarding these men is virtually nonexistent.

Darren Naish

Serpens Triumverate

Born on the Empire industrial colony of New Britain in the notorious Woolston Ghetto, Naish's life of crime began at a young age when he joined one of the district's more infamous street gangs. Following repeated arrests for offenses running the gamut from petty theft to armed extortion, Naish was given the choice between an Empire "re-education facility" or enlistment in the Colonial Navy, of which he chose the latter, completing basic naval training at the age of 17. His superiors noted his uncanny knack for tactical skills, well honed by a misspent youth on the grim streets of New Britain, and enrolled him in the prestigious Nakirov Starfighter Academy, from which Naish would graduate as a member of the Navy's elite Second Order - the single most decorated starfighter wing in Colonial Naval history. Assigned as a Squadron Leader on the heavy dreadnought *Indignant*, Naish jumped ship at the first opportunity, which happened to be at the freeport of Levo, where he bribed a freighter captain for transport to the pirate hangout of Blackthorne. Upon arriving there with little more than a uniform and a sidearm, he formed an alliance with forger Toni Weyler and burly enforcer Richard "Stig" Walsh which would come to be known as the Serpens Triumvirate, named after the region of space where they conduct the bulk of their "business". Naish is currently wanted in Empire space on numerous charges, from Desertion of Duty to Theft of Naval Property, and,

according to Empire intelligence, is believed to have forged a deal of sorts with The Weave. He spends most of his time at the neutral freeport of Refuge deep in The Badlands and is sometimes seen in the *Wanton Disregard*, his extensively modified and personally reconfigured Swindon class heavy frigate.

Toni Weyler
Serpens Triumverate

Weyler heralds from the military-industrial colony of Landfall in the Centauri system, where her parents worked as research technicians in the Colonial Navy's Advanced Experimental Microfusion Program. Inspired by their success, she began a career in both drafting and virtual fusion core design, twice receiving the Empire's coveted Award For Design Efficiency for her work with encrypted subspace compression protocols. What seemed a bright future in computer program design would change during a trip through the hostile pirate space near the Lethe system, where her transport was disabled and boarded by a pirate raider. Weyler and several passengers were able to escape via one of the transport's lifepods, and were picked up by a cruiser belonging to one of the more moderate pirate factions who dropped them off at the pirate station Privateer's Haven. Stranded on a hostile starport, Weyler put her drafting skills to good use by offering to help design more effective false IFF codings in return for safe passage to Empire space. A deal was clinched with a local fence who was so impressed with the quality of her workmanship that he offered her a contract with a regional forger's guild. Realizing that she could make more credits in a day than she could in a lifetime slaving for the Empire, Weyler took the job... and has never looked back. After about six months of developing illicit ways of circumventing Colonial Naval security scans, she met a pair of freebooters who were having trouble with their ship's lidar encoders, a problem she repaired in record time. Amazed at her talents with anything computerized or electronic, the two pirates offered her membership in their small faction, at which point the Serpens Triumvirate was unofficially born. Weyler remains the brains of the outfit and makes a small fortune forging diplomatic passes, IFF codecs and counterfeit credit chips. Wanted in Empire space on counterfeiting and computer trespass charges, Weyler often commutes between her "work" at Privateer's Haven and her occasional home at a nearby colony in her ship of choice, a modified Starburst class picketship named the *Exemplar*.

Richard "Stig" Walsh **Serpens Triumverate**

Walsh grew up amongst the industrial slums of the Mars colony, where at a young age he joined one of the local arms dealing consortiums. He spent several years smuggling stolen weapons components between the Sol and Darven systems, but was best known as the chief bodyguard and confidante to Juan Lopez, who was at that point an advisor to one of the Mars colony's more ruthless organized crime factions. Walsh was captured and arrested during a firefight with a Naval patrol cruiser and sentenced to thirty years at the foreboding Regula Penal Colony, but escaped after serving a mere two weeks. It should be noted that Walsh holds a deep grudge against his former employer, whom he still believes felt intimidated by his skills and set him up to be captured by Empire forces. Stowing away on a supply shuttle, he eventually made his way to the new pirate colony of Darven where he procured an immediate position as a minder to one of the starport's administrators. Bored with the lamentable wages and lack of "advancement" opportunities, he shuttled to the orbiting Blackthorne and it wasn't long until he received an offer from the up-and-coming freebooter Darren Naish who, having just received a commission from one of the regional pirate guilds, was on the prowl for a capable security officer. Suffice to say, Naish was impressed with Walsh's credentials and the two fast gained notoriety. The combination of Naish's tactical skills and Walsh's imaginative use of sheer brute force made them the scourge of the supply convoys who plied the profitable trade routes between Sol and the outer colonies. Considered to be one of the dirtiest players in the business, Walsh's genius with weapons is the stuff of legends, whether it be a simple dagger or the most sophisticated multiphased disruptor. There are very few lows he won't sink to in order to win a fight and he is currently wanted in Empire space on literally numerous charges, including piracy, felonious assault and weapons smuggling. Walsh spends a good portion of his time at a popular nightclub on Bordello where he is both manager and head bouncer. His personal transport is an extensively modified Stalker class gunship dubbed the *Nasty Bastard*, which can almost always be seen in dock.

Carl Warrington **Subnebula Cartel**

Originally from the wealthy colony of Ursa Minor, Warrington started a legitimate career as a navigational officer for Starbound Express before entering a life of crime. When the old Union of Earth Colonies began to collapse and be overshadowed as the Terran Star Empire gradually rose to power, security

forces were cut back drastically to be seconded to the front lines. This created a power vacuum quickly filled by a wide variety of freelancers and criminal gangs, a situation that only worsened when The Weave initiated the uprising against Empire occupation. Warrington realized it was only a matter of time until Starbound freighters came under organized pirate attack so abruptly resigned his commission and, deciding that he wanted a piece of the action, made his way to the decrepit Blackthorne Station. Within a few hours he was recruited into a local pirate faction and thus began his meteoric rise to infamy. His first mission was on a commerce raid near Farazon, and even as a rookie crewer, Warrington proved to be a remarkably gifted tactician, outmaneuvering and outsmarting his opponents with a polished finesse that quickly caught the attention of the ship's senior crew. He was offered his own ship, a modified Nova class corvette, with which he proceeded to launch what are still regarded as the most daring raids ever into the heart of Empire space. Warrington currently resides on Ambush Point, a sturdy starport orbiting a planet named in his honor. Deeply influential amongst the rank and file of the independent pirate factions, he has trained many of the galaxy's most promising young pirates and his tactical knowledge and combat skills remain the standard by which all others are compared. The Subnebula Cartel's expertise is in both high-risk smuggling and hijacking the Weave convoys that navigate the outer rim territories. Whilst having made a deadly enemy of the alliance, such targeted piracy has earned the Cartel the tolerance of the Empire, although Warrington personally considers his first and foremost allegiance to the Non-Aligned Worlds.

Juan Lopez

Darkside Faction

It is perhaps interesting to note that, unlike many of his ilk, Lopez was raised amongst the wealthy and privileged elite of New Istanbul, his parents both influential chemists at the colony's numerous medical research facilities. Lopez had access to the best schools and tutors, but somehow was never able to fit in with his friends and classmates, his vicious streak alienating essentially everyone he knew. His first taste of organized crime came when he was recruited by a local fence into smuggling chemicals from Flood Medical Technology's many warehouses to pirate holdings where they were used in the mass production of illicit drugs. He quickly became bored with drug running and, like many of his generation, headed to Blackthorne in search of greater glory. He was offered a job as an enforcer with a regional pirate guild and quickly moved up the ranks as his superiors realized his hidden talent for innovative violence. Lopez would soon find himself assigned to one of the Mars colony's more ruthless street

gangs; however, after a few months of running contraband through the Sol system, Lopez once again lost interest in his work and returned to Blackthorne in search of something different. He soon caught the attention of legendary raider Carl Warrington and spent two years training with the master pirate, proving himself a remarkably gifted gunnery officer and a brilliant boarding party leader. However, Lopez's impulsiveness and an increasingly obsessive love of wanton violence made him a poor team player, and several borderline psychotic episodes left Warrington no choice but to turf the youngster out of his faction, ending Lopez's career... or so it seemed. With no further future on Blackthorne, Lopez headed to Evildrome where he served a series of tours of duty with several different pirate guilds until he finally found his true calling as a hired gun and assassin. At the young age of 28, Lopez would become one of the most feared and dreaded contract killers in the business. He eventually formed his own association, a loose knit coalition of hitmen and hardcore pirates noted for their savage brutality. The group ultimately set up a base of operations in The Badlands and become known simply as the Darkside Faction. Lopez is one of the most wanted fugitives in both Weave and Empire territory, having been implicated in the killings of several government officials and peaceforcer chiefs; in fact, the Empire's Central Command recently issued a Purification Warrant for not just Lopez but for all members of his murderous gang. Lopez's personal flagship is the custom built *Crimson Lightning*, a ship like no other.

Sar Raa'sach **K'rali Syndicate**

This Sauridian crime boss is almost as secretive and mysterious as the syndicate he founded. Current intelligence regarding him is sketchy at best, but he is known to have fought during the original annexation of Sauridia by the Colonial Navy and played a key role in the Sauridian retaking of their homeworld several years later. He is a member of the Ra'saan Clan, one of the most highly regarded hunter castes on Sauridia, it having produced some of the finest warship captains and starfighter pilots of the powerful Sauridian Liberation Armada. Indeed, it was this clan that was responsible for some of the Colonial Navy's worse military defeats including the notorious Farazon Campaigns in which the Navy lost more than 200 ships and 150,000 officers and crew (though this was never made widely public by the Empire). Raa'sach has a reputation of being a truly brilliant strategist with a fierce loyalty to the Sauridian Freehold and a blood hatred of all Terrans. Like all high-ranking K'rali personnel his transport of choice is a customized Predator class heavy cruiser, his being known as the *Sr'taar Naa'ch* (rough translation: Star Hunter).

Jason Jordan

Mercenaries Guild

Notorious bounty hunter Jason Jordan is known by the nickname "J-squared" to his closest friends. A highly regarded pilot and gunnery specialist, he is a founding member of the Mercenaries Guild and is one of the more militant members of this group. Jordan was born on Sirius Station, his parents technicians with Sirius Cybernetics Conglomerate, and at a young age he was piloting a shuttle with the kind of skill one would expect in someone many years his senior. A passionate Empire loyalist, Jordan enlisted in the Colonial Navy where he quickly rose through the ranks, not just due to his unflinching loyalty to Central Command but for both his expertise behind a weapons console and remarkable coolness under fire. At the age of 29, this gifted tactician made Naval history by being the youngest to ever be given command of his own ship, a Faralon class torpedo destroyer with which he would proceed to humiliate the Weave Alliance in literally numerous skirmishes. Apparently under consideration for an admiralty, Jordan's life would take an unexpected and drastic change in direction when, during a pirate raid on an S.C.C. supply convoy, both of his parents were killed in a firefight. Swearing revenge, Jordan resigned his commission, purchased a customized Kestrel class frigate and spent two long years hunting down his parents killers, eventually dispatching them and their ship in a skirmish near Darven. Jordan would go on to found the Mercenaries Guild and oversaw the construction of its headquarters at Gridrunner Station in the Risa system. Despite his success at avenging his family's death, Jordan bears a deep grudge towards all pirates and remains one of the most accomplished bounty hunters in the business, having procured a record number of arrests of wanted fugitives and privateers. Long a borderline fanatic when it comes to the Empire's rule of law, Jordan is an extremely dangerous individual who commands respect even from his enemies. He spends most of his time either at Gridrunner Station or in the field doing contract work and is commonly seen in the *Righteous Fury*, his heavily reworked Shilo class interdiction cruiser.

Layka Gratari

Moderate Faction

An industrial engineer by training, this Brox technician began as a promising shipwright, having graduated from the Zarbroxx Hall Of Technology with full honors, a secure future virtually guaranteed. Gratari began an apprenticeship on one of her homeworld's superorbitals where, along with several of her colleagues, she was assigned on a test flight of a reworked Resolve class dreadnought. What should have been a simple field trial of an improved fusion

drive turned into a disaster when her ship was accosted by a fleet of Naval battlecruisers. While the embattled Weave dreadnought was able to destroy one of its assailants and disable another, it was hopelessly outnumbered and was soon captured and boarded. The ship's skeleton crew, including Gratari and her fellow technicians, were taken as PoW's and sent to a prisoner internment facility at Northstar pending transfer to the Empire's penal colony in the Regulus system. In the meantime, Gratari and her colleagues were brutally interrogated and tortured for days by Empire intelligence agents before the prison transport arrived. By a stroke of luck, the shuttle ferrying her and the other captives was intercepted and boarded by a Weave missile frigate. Freed from certain death, Gratari made her way back to Zarbroxx, both emotionally and physically scarred. Having lived the relatively sheltered life of a scientist, she now knew first hand just how savage and cruel the Terran Star Empire was and vowed to do her part to bring it down. She resigned her engineering post and took ownership of a mothballed Tavora class attack cruiser, personally reconfiguring it into a powerful strike craft. She then gathered together a crew of experienced Brox naval officers and crew, christening her new ship the *Jalta Hahrees* (rough translation: Beautiful Dreamer). Gratari then began a guerilla campaign against the Empire's supply lines and trade routes, inflicting considerable damage until she realised it would make greater sense to loot the Terran freighters, using the spoils to fund both her campaign and The Weave's struggle against Empire reannexation. Gratari's group joined forces with the moderate faction of pirates that based their operations at Hammond's Reach; for, like all Brox, Gratari and her followers maintain an innate dislike of wanton violence, so the moderates were a natural choice of allies. Although Gratari and her crew technically operate outside of the law, they have the indirect support of The Weave, which allows them unhindered access to their fuelstops and resupply centers. Gratari is wanted by the Empire on a variety of charges, the least being piracy and destruction of naval property. The *Jalta Hahrees* is deeply feared by the rank and file of the Navy's supply bureaus and has managed to achieve almost mythical status for its daring exploits.

Vitali Taspirov
Allegiance Unknown

A brilliant and highly respected pirate, Taspirov is now in his late 60's and is largely semi-retired. He is believed to have been the mentor of Carl Warrington, having taught the ace raider everything he knows. Taspirov began his long and illustrious career as an enforcer for the Russian Mafia and moved his way up to a Regional Captain, controlling a large portion of the drugs that were run through the core systems to their buyers. No longer a major player in the business, he

now acts as a freelance recruiter, though his allegiance is not clear. A master manipulator, Taspirov remains a wild card in the world of intergalactic organised crime. He spends most of his free time at the Evildrome Boozarama's blackjack tables, always on the prowl for fresh talent and can often be seen in the local systems in his Nebulae class blockade runner *Udaloy*.

Mike Salter

Allegiance Unknown

This mysterious freebooter is known to frequent the rough and ready taverns of Blackthorne, seeking out talent for contract work. His forays have caught the attention of Empire intelligence but to date Salter has proven too savvy to track or capture. All that is known is that he was once a corporate officer with Atinoda Design Bureau until resigning his commission for reasons unknown. Several attempts to apprehend him by bounty hunters have proven dismal failures as Salter's penchant for hard starfighting is quite formidable. He is known to have destroyed a Mercenary Guild Shiloh class interdiction cruiser and three Starburst class picketship escorts with his personally redesigned Keldaran Systems Starscream class blockade runner, the *Silver Dragon*.

Ships and Technology

Starship technology has changed drastically since the beginnings of the Uprising against the oppressive Terran Star Empire several years ago, as has the quality and ferocity of shipbourne offensive weaponry. The following is a brief description of current faction fleet craft and their associated outfits, which you are strongly advised to familiarize yourself with.

THE MERCHANT TRADER UNIONS

The overwhelming bulk of starship traffic remains composed of those owned and operated by a variety of merchant guilds and trade coalitions, all of whom are demanding greater protection for their cargo as the pirate menace expands to epidemic proportions. First to respond to this need was Metroworks Heavy Industries, whose [Gala class Medium Hauler](#) is a popular choice of transport. Speed, maneuverability and fastcharge shielding combines with low operational costs and long range, making it one of the most common ships found in general use. A more specialized type of transport is provided by Allied Shipyards, whose [Goliath class Secured Transport](#) has been designed specifically for ferrying sensitive cargos and valuables. Better point defenses, including coaxial ion cannons, allow for a superior level of security. Garik Electronics Consortium is a new player in the field, having just entered into a potent partnership with Aerostar. Their widely available [Stalker class Gunship](#) yields a powerful and versatile defensive platform whose standard equipment includes multilaunch missiles and ECM pods, both ideal for protecting valuable cargo from hijacking attempts. The upstart Keldaran Systems has of late become a major player and its new [Starscream class Blockade Runner](#) offers unprecedented speed that is simply unmatched by any other manufacturer, while custom shipwright Tamos-Velai's [Firestorm class Heavy Bomber](#) has taken the market by storm, with no other fighter class able to match its heavy anti-ship weapons load. Not to be outdone, Atinoda Design Bureau continues to produce what are generally considered to be the finest mil-spec warships available outside of the military. While the Kestrel class cruiser remains Atinoda's most instantly recognized product, the new [Raptor class Light Warship](#) is an excellent mid-range defensive platform, fully equipped with coaxial pulse cannons and a wide range of launched ordinance. The company's most sophisticated offering is the new [Accipiter class Super Destroyer](#). Without doubt the most powerful ship available to civilians, this unique vessel employs batteries of coaxial ion

cannons to overload a target's shields and a massive integral heavy railgun to devastate any class of armor plate.

THE TERRAN STAR EMPIRE

The Colonial Navy is the enforcement wing of the Terran Star Empire and its ships are among the most powerful and meticulously engineered in production. All of the Empire's ships are built at the sprawling Terran Naval Yards facilities located on Luna. The backbone of the Navy is without doubt the **Prowler class Escort Frigate**, a simple ship which has performed in every conceivable role ranging from convoy defense to asset denial. The bulk of Navy fleet craft is composed of the new **Faralon class FLX variant Torpedo Destroyer** and the classic **Armada class Battleship**. Both vessels utilize sheer brute force, with the former carrying huge antiship torpedo caches and a particle beam with the latter boasting heavy ordinance and starfighter squadrons. The phenomenal **Sceptre class Missile Cruiser** is considered the next generation of multirole Navy fleet craft, with its massive stores of Venom class long range missiles and carried missile gunboat escorts, whereas the huge **Nemesis class Heavy Dreadnought** remains the most powerful warship ever produced. Starfighter squadrons are composed of the new **Vendetta class Multirole Interceptor**, the most maneuverable and well-equipped starfighter in production, and the CDX Starworks **Valhalla class Missile Gunboat**, an older yet highly versatile escort and attack platform.

THE WEAVE ALLIANCE

The alliance's space navy is primarily composed of **Argosy class Light Destroyers** and **Tavora class Attack Cruisers**. Whilst the former offers little in the way of shielding or armor plate compared to its possible adversaries, its cheap mass production costs tends to offset any disadvantage. The latter was The Weave's first true warship platform and was responsible for driving the Colonial Navy out of Weave space and back to the relative safety of Empire territory. Faced with increasingly sophisticated Naval fleet craft, The Weave began to mass produce the **Victory class Beam Cruiser**, a ship considered by many observers to be one of the best engineered warships in production. The massive **Resolve class Dreadnought** was hoped to represent a turning point in the struggle against Empire reannexation, but has proved to be rather unimpressive and its underpowered engines and overall poor performance has resulted in only a small number in active service. Weave starfighter forces are composed of the new **Tigershark class Interdictor**, itself a heavily rebuilt

Manta class light fighter, and the impressive [Stingray class Heavy Fighter](#), itself a superb anti-ship platform.

THE SAURIDIAN FREEHOLD

The Sauridian Freehold has always relied on massive, overpowered warships as the bulk of its fleet craft. Primitive projected-energy shields and fission powered stardrives make their ships more simple than those used by other factions, but these disadvantages tend to be countered by their strengths in the battlefield. Perhaps the most notorious Freehold ship is the potent [Cassarc class Laser Ship](#), a platform that has used rather simple hydrogen-flouride lasers to inflict heavy losses on Empire munitions supply convoys and starfighter squadrons. The Sauridians' primary frontline warship is the ubiquitous [Raachaak class Battle Dragon](#), a legendary vessel that remains one of the most agile of its weight class in production. Slower and more ungainly is the [Taarvat class Escort Carrier](#), which relies on its launch bays of mixed class starfighters and a massive cache of guided missiles for both offense and defense. The relative success of this ship has surprised many military tacticians as carrier-class fleet craft had long been considered an anachronism. Rounding out the Freehold's militia is the simple yet elegant [Naarstac class Light Fighter](#), whose stealthy design and speed make it a difficult target to track.

THE OLYMPIAN COUNCIL

The Olympus system is one of Earth's oldest colonies, established during the height of the Great Expansion. As the conflict between the Empire and The Weave has escalated, the Empire withdrew from the Olympus system to meet increased Weave insurgency, the result of which was the quasi-independence of this system and its planets. However, the withdrawal of Colonial Naval forces has created a power vacuum that the nearby Sauridian Freehold has been quick to exploit. The Olympians are currently involved in a serious war with the Freehold, which intends to capture their system and use it as an eventual corridor to core Empire holdings. The local governing body, known as the Olympian Council, has commissioned the construction of two ships that currently comprise the bulk of their defensive fleet: the [Poseidon class Heavy Cruiser](#) and the [Demeter class Strike Fighter](#). The former is a sleek vessel armed with heavy anti-ship ordinance and devastating plasma cannons, whilst the latter is a nimble, powerful platform whose shielding and weapons load is more like that of a light capital ship than a typical starfighter. While neither ship is a true match for the sheer brute force of a Sauridian Battle

Dragon or Carrier, both take advantage of their superior agility to run circles around the heavier class warships fielded by their foes.

THE DENEBIAN ORDER

Deneb III was at one point a small, relatively nondescript colony that has since transformed itself into an agricultural superpower. It has become so wealthy and influential that the Terran Star Empire's Central Command has issued an annexation order for the entire Deneb system. Fiercely independant, Denebian government officials realized that, with an imminent Colonial Naval invasion, they did not have the time to mass produce mil-spec warships of their own. Instead, they purchased a large number of Atinoda Design Bureau At-220B Kestrel class frigates and At-380 Accipiter class super destroyers and upon delivery began to upgrade them into even more substantial warship classes. The result of this endeavor was the now infamous Denebian **Lancer class Frigate** and **Longbow class Destroyer**. The former has proven itself a superb escort and patrol platform, ideal for hit and fade guerilla actions whereas the latter is a formidable front line warship. Coaxial neutron cannons, heavy anti-ship ordinance and a dense particle shielding allows the destroyer to match any Empire fleet craft in close combat.

THE MERCENARIES GUILD

Established to counter the organized crime networks that now permeate the galaxy, the Mercenaries Guild employs the formidable **MG2009 Shiloh class Interdiction Cruiser** as its primary fleet craft of choice. Basic subassemblies and components are provided by Terran Naval Yards which Guild engineers have worked into a ship known to most by its nickname, The Dragon. The Interdiction Cruiser has proven itself a truly superb asset, and its coaxial ion cannons, multilaunch missiles and even a pair of Rapier class heavy bombers allow it to counter anything the pirates have to offer. Available to partisans is the simple yet lethal **MG2003 Shadow class Slipcruiser**, a light capital ship that is difficult to track even under the best of conditions. While it lacks the massive firepower of the Interdiction Cruiser, this little ship can both give and take a substantial amount of punishment.

THE MAFIA

The most powerful of pirate capital ships are produced by Jeune Shipyards, where defecting Atinoda, Maskirovka and even Weave and Empire engineers work as the official warship supplier to The Mafia. First up is the **Wraith class**

Raider, a simple yet valuable fleet craft ideally suited for rapid hit and run attacks on lucrative supply convoys and couriers. More potent is the **Enforcer class Assaultship** whose purpose is to provide armed support to Mafia raiders on more risky hijackings and as the primary defensive platform for the numerous Mafia holdings spread throughout the galaxy. The **Dominar class Strike Cruiser** is a truly devastating ship designed for wholesale destruction. Dense shields, an integral pulsed beam weapon and tactical nuclear weapons make this one of the most formidable warships in production with this ship in large part responsible for The Mafia's continuing domination of intergalactic crime. Mafia heavy weapons include the deadly pulsed-plasma gun (PPG), a massive weapons system whose firepower and engineering quality meets or exceeds anything produced by the Empire or Weave. Designed by the Mafia as the primary outfit of its supercruiser, there are few shield systems or armour types that can withstand the impact of the highly focussed and compressed energy bolts. Guided weapons are in the form of Varista class quantum torpedoes, one of the most feared of all ranged ordinance. Its range and speed are unmatched by any other torpedo classed ordinance and its enhanced antimatter warhead yields a substantial increase in damage.

THE SERPENS TRIUMVERATE

Located deep in the badlands, the Serpens Triumvirate does not have the resources of some of the more powerful pirate factions. The mainstay of the Triad's fleet is the older, yet proven, Rockwell-Soyuz **Swindon class Heavy Frigate**, a ship which once composed the bulk of Earth's naval forces. Despite its age, when properly upgraded and outfitted, heavy frigates remain a force to be reckoned with.

THE SUBNEBULA CARTEL

Like many criminal organizations, the Subnebula Cartel mass produces its own customized starships and heavy weaponry. The most commonly encountered Cartel fleet craft is the ubiquitous **Tempest class Raider**, a sturdy gunship ideal for hijacking the lucrative trade convoy routes that border the fringe systems. More serious firepower is in the form of the **Prowler class Assault Frigate**, which excels at armed support and escort fleet interdiction. The most powerful of Cartel warships is the remarkable **Marauder class Heavy Cruiser**, specifically designed for defense of this faction's most sensitive assets and colonies. All the Cartel's heavier class ships are fitted with heavy plasma drivers, which direct blasts of drive plasma directly from the ship's primary

reactor. Ranged weaponry is in the form of the formidable Dragoon class fusion torpedo, the Cartel's variation of the classic Tarvo class antiship torpedo in which the tiny cobalt antimatter warhead has been replaced by a large flask containing heavy fusionable material.

THE K'RALI SYNDICATE

K'rali vessels are rumored to be based on black starcraft plans stolen from the Terran Star Empire and its lackeys, Atinoda Design Bureau and CDX Starworks. Regardless of source, K'rali craft are among the most powerful in use by organized crime and simply command respect from even the most seasoned freelancers. The elegant **Hunter class Raider** is this faction's workhorse platform, undertaking duties ranging from convoy attacks to system patrol and asset defense. Its more substantial cousin, the **Predator class Heavy Cruiser**, combines both speed and firepower in a way very few other government craft can match. Despite their antiquated technology, Sauridians remain the only race to have perfected disruptors, a unique weapons system that employs a sealed burst of antiparticles and neutrons that, upon impacting a target, devastates any matter contacted. Power restrictions kept disruptors to sidearm status though K'rali refinements in fusion reactors (as opposed to traditional Saur fission-based power) have allowed transformation of this truly devastating technology to shipbourne use.

THE DARKSIDE FACTION

No other faction in the galaxy is more feared or dreaded than the lethal Darkside Faction, a band of pirates feared by even the most jaded of spacers. Darksiders produce a tough, scruffy series of raiderships that can both give and take tremendous punishment. The simple yet tough-as-tritanium **Dervish class Attackship** performs the bulk of Darkside incursions and hijackings and is a surprisingly tough scrapper for its size. The more potent **Demon class Attack Cruiser** was designed for armed support and system denial to unfriendly fleet craft and is more than capable of protecting this faction's most prized assets. **Deathbringer class Dreadnoughts** are simply phenomenal warships with the strength and durability to fend off the best either The Weave or the Colonial Navy has to offer. The essential Darksider weapon is the clever shield leech, a directed energy net that directs a field which, upon impact, envelopes the target vessel with highly unstable antihydrogen particles which quickly destabilize and detonate. The Darkside Faction can also lay claim to one of the most powerful directed energy weapons known: the focal point cannon.

A highly focused energy burst projects a field of supercharged ion particles towards an intended target. The resulting field interferes with the target's shield matrix by causing it to slowly depolarize and collapse. Powerful weaponry, rugged starships and an unhealthy appetite for destruction all conspire to make Darksiders the most dangerous and feared gang of them all.

OTHER CRIMINAL FACTIONS

There are a variety of criminal gangs and coalitions throughout the galaxy, most of whom have their preferred types and classes of ships. The three most common choices of transport are based on derelicts recovered and rebuilt by pirate-partisan engineers into truly impressive fleet craft. First is the ubiquitous **Halcyon class Commerce Raider**, a modified Argosy that serves as a popular entry-level pirate ship. For the more daring is the remarkable **Starburst class Picketship**, a powerful and deadly configuration that is in essence a heavily upgraded Maskirovka Nova class corvette, perfectly capable of deep raids into the Empire's core systems and the defense of larger, more slower allied capital ships. Top of the line is the truly notorious **Widowmaker class Interdictor**, a heavily modified variant of Atinoda's cruiser that is barely recognizable when compared to its Kestrel counterpart. Outfitted with a tritanium hull, particle shields and an improved spaceframe, this ship can go head to head with the very best and its destructive potential and relatively low operating costs have made it the ship of choice for more violent personalities. Known far and wide for its remarkable reliability is the **Hunter class Raider**, a favourite of The Scavengers, based on the spaceframe of the Nova class corvette. Its huge cargo holds and versatile weapons load, coupled with a cheap maintenance regime, make this a hard ship to beat. The recent introduction of the **Shadow class Light Warship**, a powerful and rugged capital ship, has given this small band of scrap merchants a new level of respect.

THE ARTEMIS GROUP

Very little is known of the Artemis Group and its shadowy agents, which have managed to infiltrate the starports and power structure of just about every government and guild known. Their purpose-built starships are quite substantial for an organization that claims to champion peace and neutrality. The ubiquitous **Serenity class Patrol Frigate** is a common sight throughout the fringe systems leading to Artemis' isolated command center and, despite their antiquated appearance, they pack quite a punch at both close and medium

range. The **Serendipity class Heavy Cruiser** is a remarkable piece of engineering, able to fend off the best of hostile pirate incursions and even the mighty Colonial Navy is known to maintain a degree of respect for this formidable platform. Artemis cruisers carry forced plasma beam emitters, which inflict considerable damage to hostiles.

Tips and Tricks

Now that you are aware of the new ships, firepower, factions, and challenges that await, here are some useful hints that should make your time in space go a bit easier.

- There are important differences between the types of pirates you encounter. MODERATE PIRATES (classed as "Moderate" when hailed) will **NEVER** attack your ship. INDEPENDENT PIRATES (classed as "Independent" when hailed and as "Faction" in their IFFs) will only attack if provoked and the STANDARD PIRATES (classed as "Pirate" when hailed) will of course **ALWAYS** attack you. You should **NEVER** attack a ship unless it draws first blood, and even then make sure it is not an a ship aligned with your allies. One wrong move and you can be in **VERY** serious trouble. All that being said, killing standard pirates will never have an adverse effect on your legal standing and is a great way to boost your combat rating.
- Every now and then you should stop playing EV and back up your pilot file. Why? Because corruption of your pilot file can and does happen, usually at the most inconvenient of times, and there is no known fix or cure. That way, should any problem occur you can simply load your most recent backup which sure beats having to start from scratch.
- Know who you're messing with! You should take time to read the chapters involving the assorted factions, understand who their friends and allies are, and adjust your behavior accordingly. In this game you can make some very serious enemies very quickly.
- If you are making too many enemies and are being attacked at every turn, there is a way out. Head to Privateer's Haven where you will find a wide range of forged diplomatic cards which will clear your legal standing in the systems controlled by (1) The Weave; (2) The Terran Star Empire and (3) all systems regardless of government. You can also find a variety of false IFF transponders for your ship. Bear in mind that some of these forgeries can only be employed once or twice before they are no longer effective.

- All of the pirate worlds now offer a wide variety of computer mission-based missions, from drug running to commerce raids. Other governments, such as the Mercenaries Guild, offer their own specialized computer mission jobs that pay higher than normal compensation. Keep your eyes peeled and you can make TREMENDOUS amounts of credits.
- Finally, this plugin can be quite challenging for even the most seasoned of EVN players. Several missions require you to dominate a planet as part of the story. If you are having trouble with this, try capturing or hiring a fleet of escorts. Also, remember that you do not have to defeat a planet's entire defense fleet in a single day. You can defeat a few ships, land or leave the system, and then come back to finish the job with fresh shields and ammunition. Just don't stay away too long. The defense fleet regenerates at the rate of approximately one ship per day.