



# MANUAL

Written by Snorre S. Valen and Aidan Hotan

It's here at last! New Horizons - perhaps the biggest Escape Velocity Plug-in ever! This manual will help you get started installing and playing New Horizons and introduce you to the new galaxy that awaits you...

# ***THE MILKY WAY GALAXY: Current Status***

**No one is safe.**

The year is 2335 and the Milky Way galaxy is not a nice place to live. The past century has seen the beginning of the next great era of change. Change, while often good in the long run, has a way of turning life upside down for the people who get caught up in it. Guess what: You're in just about as deep as it gets. Here's a brief history of the past 70 or so years.

## **THE CIVIL WAR:**

**2274:** The Confederation government, finally pushed into seeing the Rebels as a serious threat, begins the largest ship-building endeavour since the Great War. The Terran Naval yards operate on continuous shift, turning out the most powerful warships the Core Worlds have ever seen. Particle beam technology finally gets deployed on front line vessels, as do several other highly classified new weapons systems.

Coming as a great surprise to the complacent Confederation strategic analysts, the construction effort does not have the desired intimidatory effect. Many independent fringe worlds are afraid that the Confeds are about to begin a new era of expansion and conquest. In order to protect their interests, several sign up with the Rebels, providing resources and ships.

**2275:** The Rebellion decides that it cannot let the Confederation finish its construction effort. In a crushing pre-emptive strike, the Rebels send the now famous Seventh Fleet to smash through the Confederation defences and blaze a path straight to the Sol system. The rebel ships are seriously out-gunned by the new Confederation vessels but the strike occurs before the Confederation navy has a chance to build enough of or properly deploy its new assets. The Seventh Fleet manages to take the outer defenders by surprise and force its way through to Sol. There the Rebel ships launch a deadly barrage of torpedos and missiles at the Confederation's primary staging bases.

Stardock Alpha is smashed into a useless husk and the Terran Naval Yards are severely damaged. The Confederation loses most of its top scientists and engineers in the devastation. Many of the remaining Rebel Seventh Fleet vessels are torn apart when the Confederation defence forces finally manage to scramble, but the Battle of Sol is deemed a victory for the Rebellion. The Confederation people are demoralised. The Confederation Navy, robbed of the necessary infrastructure to wage a forward campaign and already running low on raw materials, is forced to spread itself out in a desperate defensive posture. Thus begins the Great Decline of the Confederation.



The wrecked Stardock Alpha, now nothing more than a hazard to orbital traffic.

**2276-2300:** The victory at Sol rallies more support than ever before to the side of the Rebels. The Confederation, after having used most of its resource stocks to build the new warships, suddenly finds supplies drying up as the noose tightens around its edges. Commerce with the outer worlds slowly dies.

Meanwhile, the Rebellion and many other independent organisations are engaging in a new wave of exploration and colonisation. New resource caches are discovered and new colonies founded. Rebel scientists implement their own ideas, backed up by the almost unending resources flowing in from the rich and previously untapped fringe worlds. Extravagant research spending leads to a flurry of new technologies, once again increasing in scale the devastation humans are capable of inflicting upon each other. Soon the Rebel warships match and exceed the Confederation's own in their level of destructive power. Thus begins the final era of the Civil War.

**2300-2315:** Rebel ships make continuous assaults on the Core Worlds, wearing down their defences and forcing the Confederation to use up its few remaining resources.

**2315:** In desperation the Confederation rulers, working through Astex Corporation, commandeer commercial factories and mining operations in an effort to regain the upper hand in the War. Industry and trade even within the Confederation begins to die, as does their commercial civilian spaceflight infrastructure.

**2315-Present Day:** The Rebels continue their relentless attacks. The Confederation front lines become dangerous battle zones; non-combatant ships often get caught in the deadly crossfire. Civilian infrastructure collapses and Confederation worlds, already overpopulated, have their environments all but destroyed through overexploitation by the desperate government. It won't be long before this once feared power crumbles to ashes.

## THE GENERAL BREAKDOWN OF SOCIETY:

While the two major powers fight it out, the rest of the galaxy continues to develop and change. Here is a less orthodox, but nevertheless quite accurate, historical perspective.

**2269:** The outer Fringe Worlds begin to industrialise and the galaxy's general population starts to move away from the civil war zone. Within a few decades, more than 60% of the galaxy's population lives away from the central systems. The fringes start to get crowded.

**2273-2300:** Exploration ships are sent to discover new jump routes. The outer systems experience the Second Expansion at the same time the Core Worlds enter the Great Decline. The inhabited galaxy doubles in size as new technologies and a demand for raw materials allow freshly colonised worlds to rapidly establish themselves.

**2275-2290:** The Galactic Traders Association becomes extremely wealthy by providing most of the transport services between the expanding outer zones. They undercut privateers through bulk haulage savings but offset the damage to their image by providing private Captains with good deals on ships and parts from all over the galaxy in their strategically placed trading stations. Their distribution network now spans the entire galaxy.

**2294:** The Cygnus Corporation asserts its independence from governments and politics by buying its home system and setting up a military fleet to control the local space. So begins the era of the Mega Corporations. These competing organisations are responsible to nobody but themselves. Some sell food and supplies to the GTA and other traders, but most deal in more sinister wares. Weapons become the commodity of the age, more stable in price and demand than any other trade good.

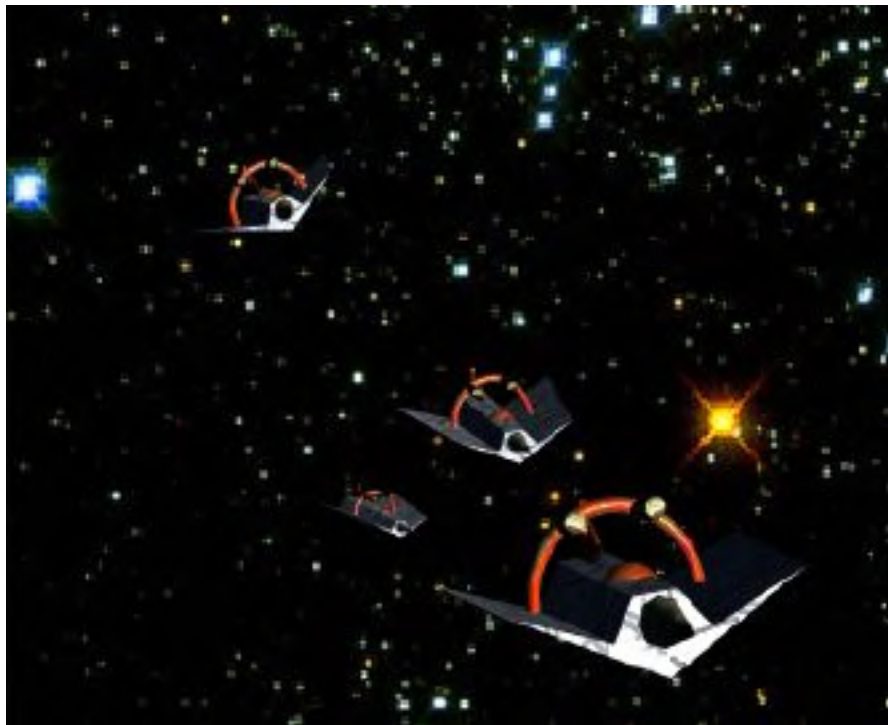
**Early 2300's:** Expansion continues. For the first time ever, over half of the galaxy's prosperous inhabited worlds exist outside the zone of influence of a unified political organisation like the Rebels or the Confederation. Inhabited space becomes far too big to police effectively, even if anyone bothered to try. The ongoing wars prevent the creation of any sort of galactic law enforcement organisation and promote regional factionism. Inhabited systems hire their own local defence fleets, but the uninhabited transit lanes become the domain of pirates and raiders. For many, crime becomes the easiest way to make a living.

Dangerous pirate cartels rise up, using their improvised warships to extort weaker governments into paying protection money. Fortunately their spheres of influence remain limited due to self-destructive and never-ending internal power struggles.

**2312:** Out of the ashes of society a small hope rises. The League Of Independence forms, beginning with a local mutual defence treaty between several independent colonies but soon becoming a major political alliance with members in all spiral arms. Their open trade policies and peaceful attitude soon make L.O.I. ports favourite stopovers for legitimate starship captains everywhere.

**2319:** Unfortunately, one of the pirate overlords manages to win the support of several prominent crime cartels. A new galactic menace, the Alliance of Pirate Overlords for the Enforcement of Autocracy (APOEA) is born. This group soon gains modern hardware and begins to terrorise the independent worlds, the traders and the L.O.I.

**2322:** A group of renegade Rebel officers, fed up with the mainstream Rebellion's lack of ambition, form their own splinter group, the Total Rebel Domination Faction (TRDF). They secure an area of space in one of the obscurer parts of the galaxy and go about constructing fortified bases and training their new recruits, creating a formidable fighting force. TRDF warships have yet to move on anyone, but nobody knows just what the faction is planning...



Rare shot of TRDF corvettes on a training mission.

...And there we have it. Welcome to a new era of galactic turmoil. Be assured your actions can and will alter the fate of the galaxy in ways you might never have imagined. There are certainly plenty of new horizons to explore!

## ***RUNDOWN OF CONCEPTS NEW TO N.H.***

The basic gameplay of New Horizons is similar to that of the original Escape Velocity, but NH possesses a few new features that you might not be used to.

### **WEAPONS:**

Some of the weapons concepts in NH deserve a quick description:

- The spreadfire gun uses the concept of simultaneous firing. Buying more of them does not increase the firing rate of the turret, but increases the number of bolts fired by the gun each time it discharges.
- N.H. makes much heavier use of beam guns than EV did. Beware. Fighting an enemy with beam guns provides extra challenges that require you to develop slightly new tactics, depending on how fast the enemy ship can move.
- N.H. includes Gravitec Mines. These objects are dropped from the back of a ship and lie stationary in space until something hits them, when they explode with considerable violence. They hang around for a long time, so keep a careful eye on the scanner when flying through a battle zone. Mines do not have target discrimination capabilities (With the exception that a ship's allies or escorts do not detonate mines dropped by that ship.).
- High firing-rate projectile weapons like the flechette gun require copious amounts of ammunition. Don't be too heavy on the trigger or you'll spend most of your time in the outfitter buying more shells (a better idea might be to steal them from ships you disable.).

There might be a few other surprises too...



## ASTEROID MINING:

This is a concept entirely unique to NH (as far as we know). By mining ore from asteroids you can make money without having to be a mercenary, trader or courier. Asteroid miners often get rich very quickly, but the work is dangerous. Rival miners have been known to turn their destabilisor guns on the competition...

To become an asteroid miner you MUST possess the Infinity Industries HI/320 "Astro" Asteroid Miner. It is the only vessel equipped with the capture mechanism necessary to collect asteroid fragments. The ship can be found at most higher tech level shipyards.



"Astro" Asteroid Miner

Once you have an Astro, head for one of the systems in the Trugatti Asteroid Belt. Flip through the targets on your scanner. The Astro's sensors have been specially calibrated to let you target ore bearing asteroids. Once you find one, go to it and hit it a few times with your destabilisor guns. (A strange resonance phenomenon between the ore and gun energy patterns can occasionally make it seem as if the ore bearing asteroids are sending out distress calls. Just ignore them... :-). The guns will eventually dislodge asteroid fragments that are small enough to collect. Your targeting computer will be re-configured to give relative structural integrity information if you focus it onto a fragment. They have to be mushed up a little before your ship's internal machinery can handle them. A fragment with red targeting bars is not yet ready for processing. Hit it with the guns until the bars turn grey. Now you can move over the asteroid and press the 'b' key to scoop it up. Note that you must keep the asteroid fragment targeted during this process so the remote manipulator arms on your ship have something to guide them. The big 'parent' asteroid is now useless; you can either ignore it or use it for target practice until it disintegrates. Once the bay is full or partially full, (it only holds a certain number of fragments, but filling it will require that you mine several large asteroids) travel to Liberty Station. Once there, go to the outfitter. (Asteroid fragments are not sold through the commodity exchange because they require special handling.). Select the Ore Fragment outfit and you can sell the fragments you collected at the going price. You could also buy them, but there is probably not much point in doing so.

## MISSION COMPUTERS:

While the basic system of selecting and accepting a mission from the list displayed has not changed, NH treats the mission computer concept in a different way to EV. The mission computer in New Horizons is a public bulletin board that you can access from the galactic communications nets. This means any member of the general public as well as corporations and governments can post a message offering work. Consequently, missions usually have a much more personal feel than they used to in NH. Specific terminals are usually censored by the governments who own them, but determined hackers can break into the system without too much trouble. Of course, only missions available from where you are will be displayed at any particular site. Also, corporations, the GTA and some other organisations utilise their own internal transport and messaging systems, so often there are no public access messages displayed on their terminals. A further consequence of the breakdown of society and the spiralling dangers associated with long distance space travel is the fact that most missions now pay more handsomely than you are used to. Unfortunately you will probably find yourself spending more on ammunition as well.

## MAIN MISSION SEQUENCES:

The main mission sequences (the ones you get from bars) in New Horizons are rather long and involved. They can also branch, so it is a good idea to regularly back up your pilot file, so you can go back and choose a different path without having to run through an entire set of missions again.

## DYNAMIC GALAXY:

The New Horizons galaxy is not a static group of systems; it can be changed quite dramatically depending on the outcome of various missions. Planets and starbases can get destroyed and systems will change their allegiance through revolution or invasion. When you complete a critical mission, you may see several systems you thought you had discovered disappear from the galaxy map. This means that those systems have undergone an alteration, and you will have to fly back to re-explore them in order to find out what has changed. For once your actions affect not only who is willing to deal with you, but can create entirely new opportunities and dangers. You also get to see up close and personal the consequences of your choices. Mess up this time, and all the fake ID's in the universe won't save you...

That should be enough to get started, the rest is for you to discover! So what are you waiting for?



## ***CREDITS:***

The New Horizons project was a dedicated team effort from the very beginning. Without even one of the following people it would not have been possible. Thanks go out to them all.

**Tobias Karlsen:** Responsible for many of the ship and outfit graphics, plenty of testing, mission ideas and sounds, as well as helping with publicity.

**Snorre S. Valen:** Developed the new galaxy and most of the sounds and music. Also conducted extensive testing and publicising.

**Kevin Dail:** Provided all of the high quality planet graphics and the new-pilot splash screen, as well as helping with testing.

**Kim Arnesen:** Composed the opening music for New Horizons.

**Aidan Hotan:** Dreamed up the original idea and put together all the contributions into one package. Also responsible for many of the missions, some of the ships and endless hours of bug fixing.