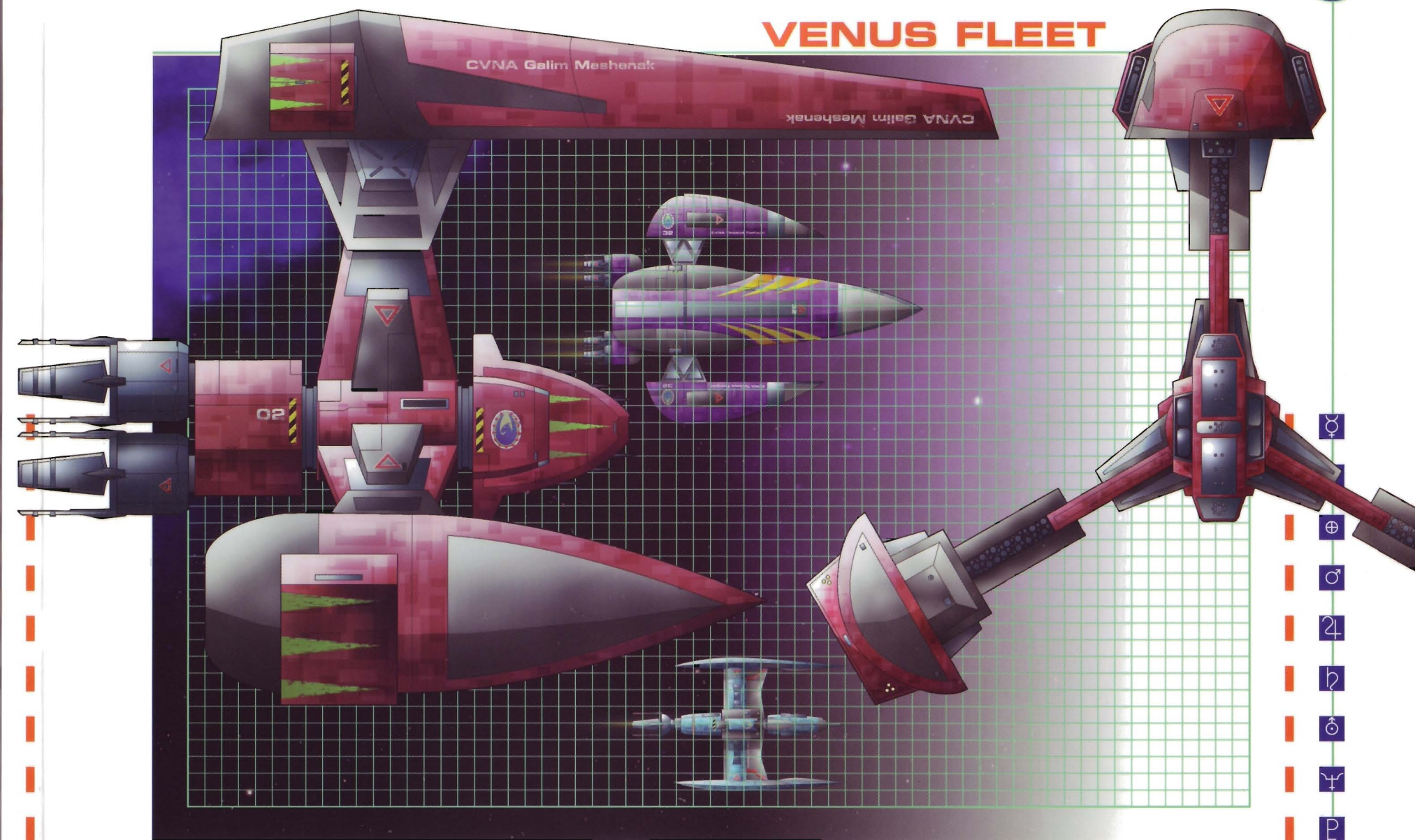




VENUS FLEET



by **DREAM POD 9**





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★ JOVIAN

CHRONICLES

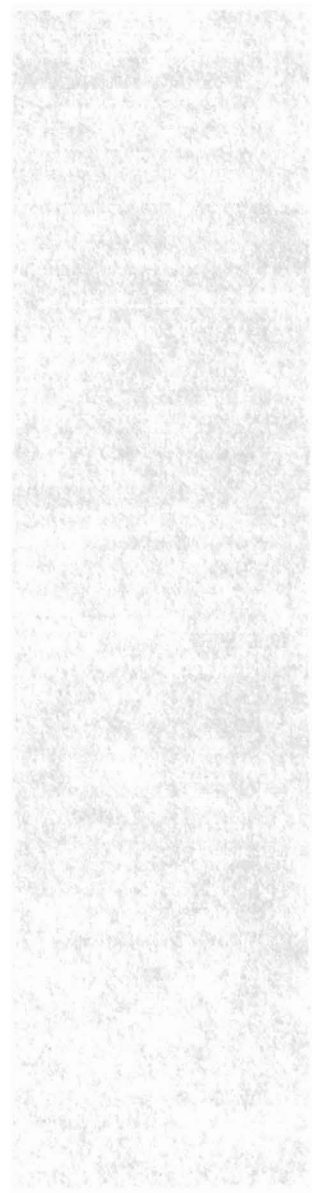
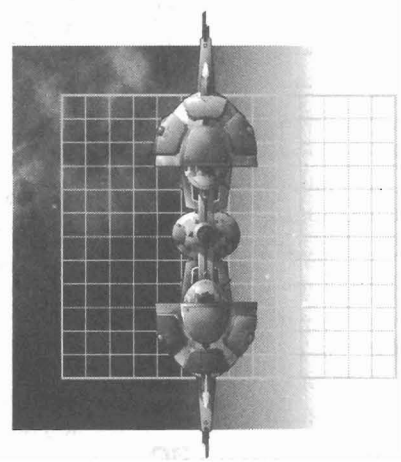




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To the Indianapolis crew, for all the
long hours

To Bobbi for helping out

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Dream Pod 9
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Stock DP9-319
Legal Deposit: May 2000
Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec
National Library of Canada

ISBN 1-896776-70-1
Printed in Canada



INTRODUCTION

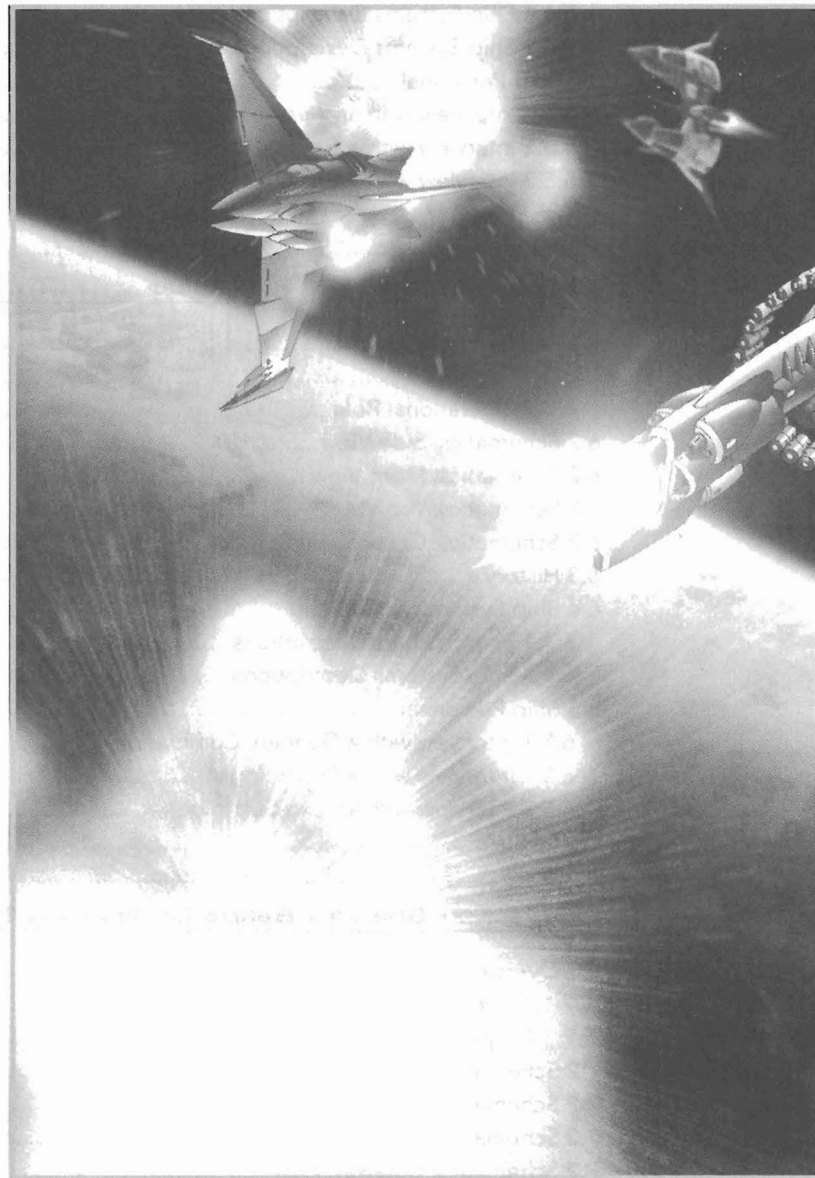


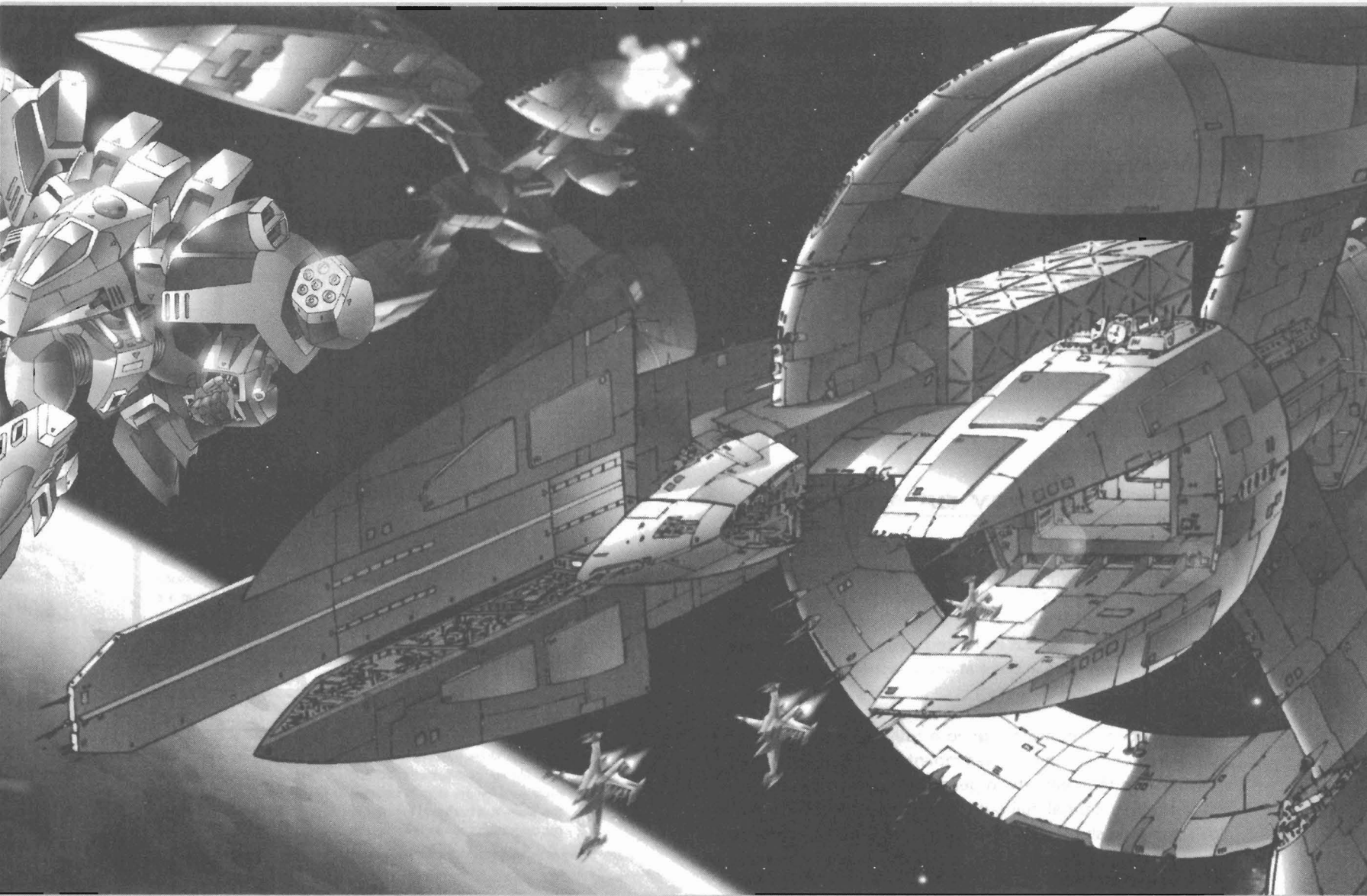
1.1 SHIPS OF THE C.V.N.A.

In the face of the rapid military buildup of the other solar nations, Venus cannot rely on its economic muscle to keep its citizens and assets safe from foreign predation. It is also insufficient for Venus to have only a force of exo-armors and other small craft, however numerous, as its sole martial arm. Warships are required to maintain Venus' defensive perimeters and escort its many offplanet resources from location to location. Without a space navy, Venus would be as vulnerable a target as Mars, whose extensive ground fortifications did nothing to protect from orbital attack in 2213.

Although Venus has had warships throughout most of its history, only recently have the various corporations that control the veiled planet deemed it necessary to work together to create a unified planetary naval force. By mutual agreement between the corporations, no Venusian city-state is permitted to possess a force of warships. Rather, each city-state contributes money, hardware and personnel (in equal proportions) toward a unified space navy. This rather odd situation is the result of VenusBank's actions in the early part of the 23rd century, which resulted in a public relations nightmare for all of Venus. In an effort to curb the ability of any one city-state to decisively influence Venusian foreign affairs without at least tacit approval from the other city-states, the Venusian naval forces were combined into a single force, not controlled by any single Venusian faction. Known as the Cooperative Venusian Naval Administration (CVNA), this new military power is in the process of upgrading older warships and creating a new generation of technologically-overachieving battlewagons.

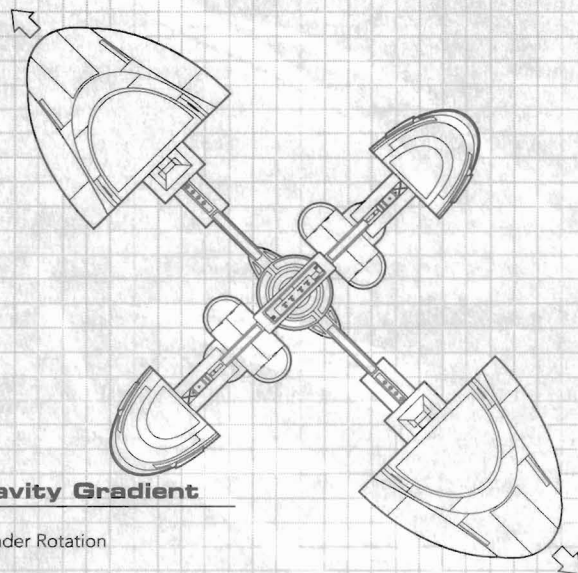
This manual presents information on the six most important Venusian warships. Simple floorplans and system diagrams are provided for each ship, as well as crew interviews, histories and samples of some of the ships' namesakes. Also included are sections on drones (autonomous computer-controlled vehicles that serve numerous functions) and two of the exo-suits used by ship-board security forces.







INTRODUCTION



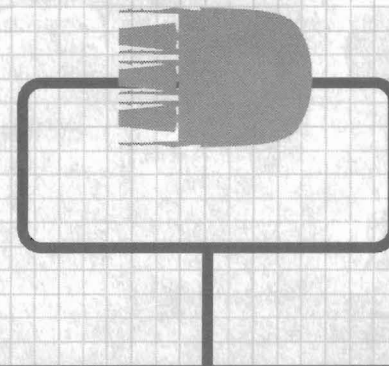
▼ Gravity Gradient

← Under Rotation →

► 1.2 ANATOMY OF A SPACESHIP

Each of the solar nations has a specific goal in creating warships. The Venusians are focused primarily on concealment and defense, and have little need or desire to amass any kind of invasion armada. Venusian ships are extremely difficult to build and maintain due to their numerous advanced weapons and defenses, but are also both effective in combat and relatively trouble-free when properly serviced.

Venusian spacecraft are designed mostly for short-range operation. Few Venusian ship classes mount rotating sections, and instead spin in their entirety to generate an artificial gravity gradient from their central hull out to their larger main hulls. This allows Venusian ships to have faster scramble times, since there is no spinning section that must be halted and locked down for combat maneuvering.



▼ Drive Section

The drives are kept far from the crew areas as both a safety measure and an aesthetic preference. The drives and their associated plasma combustion chambers are sealed systems that are virtually impossible to service outside of a spacedock environment.

▼ Main Hull

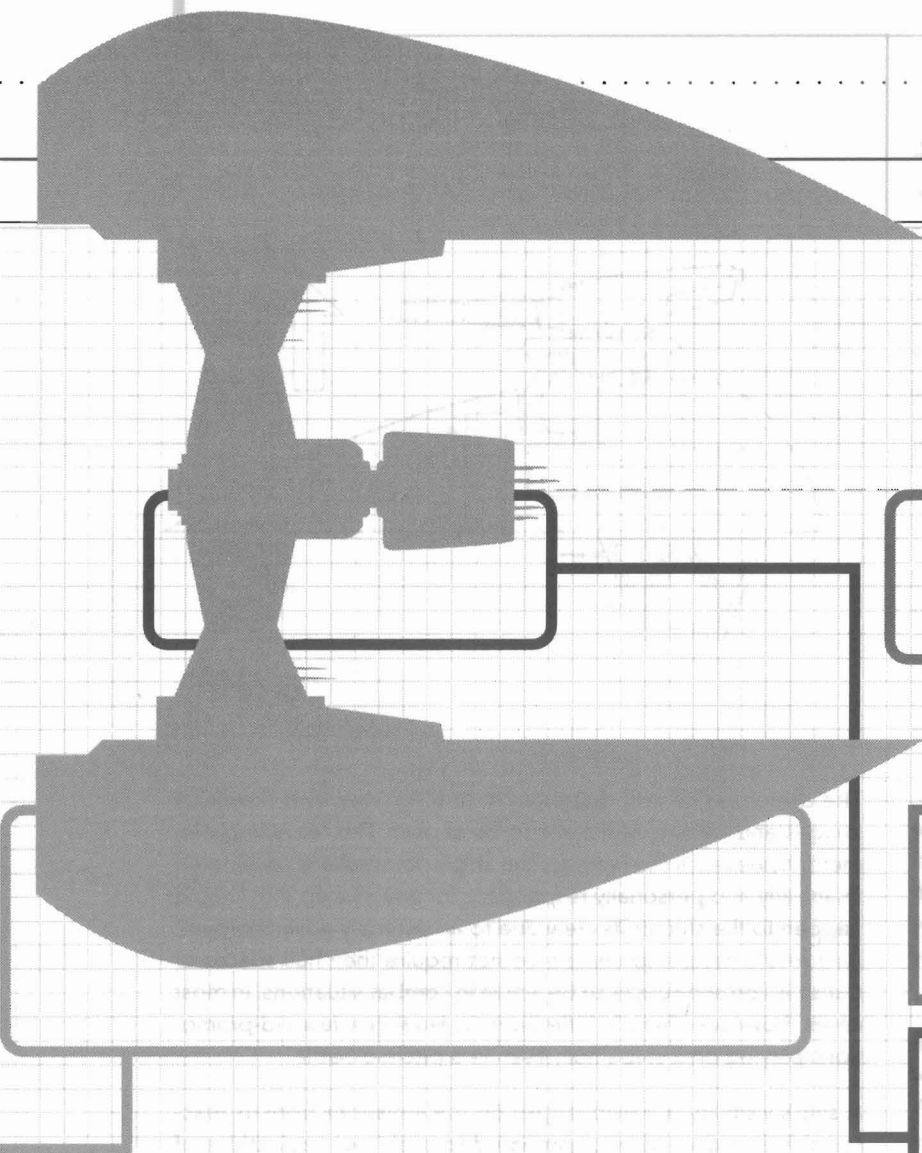
Venusian ships have two or more main hulls. Each one has its own life support system and control center, but both hulls are necessary for the ship to operate at full efficiency. For instance, the Shan-Yu's bridge is located in one main hull, while its strategic operations center is located in the other.

INTRODUCTION

1

ANATOMY OF A SPACE SHIP ◀

Shan-Yu-class Battle Cruiser 0



▼ Secondary Hull

The secondary hull is used to mount weapons and battlestations. Since the gravity gradient in these sections is extremely slight, the secondary hulls are usually uninhabited when the ship is not in combat.

▼ Central Hull

In most Venusian ships, this section is unmanned in non-combat operations and contains the primary sensors and comm equipment. On a few ships, like the Satrap, the central hull also contains a hangar bay and cargo area, as well as crew areas that do not require gravity.





INTRODUCTION

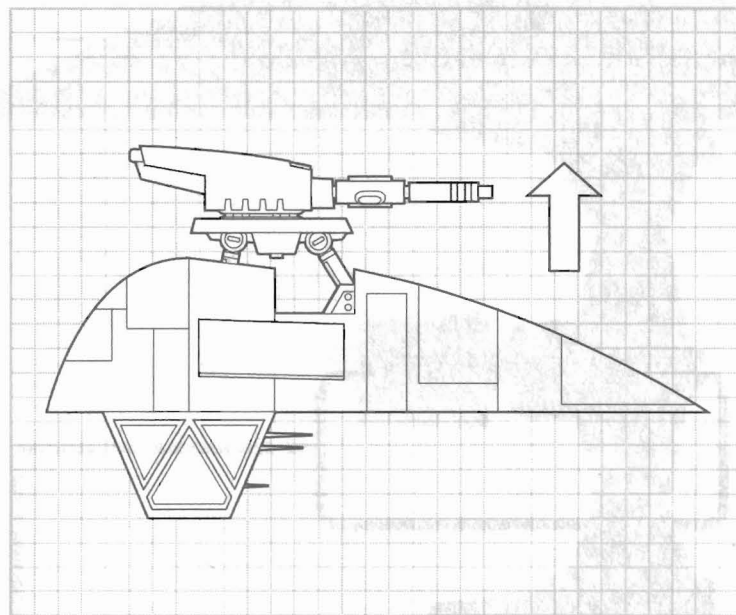


► 1.3 VENUS DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Venusian ships tend to use a multi-hull design, with the drive units along a long central spar, and two or three main hull units attached to the spar at equidistant points, like outriggers. Thus, the ship can spin itself to generate artificial gravity, without having to mount a separate rotating section, as on Jovian and CEGA vessels. The advantage of this system is that it allows for a faster scramble time and more solid construction. The disadvantage is that it makes Venusian ships fairly short-ranged compared to Jovian and CEGA ships. Due to their relatively small number, as well as their need for self-sufficiency, all Venusian warships have internal vehicle capacity of some sort, as well as catapults.

Older Venusian warships are easily identifiable as such, with visible weapons turrets and drab military paint schemes. However, the newest generation of Venusian warships look exactly like Venusian civilian craft, and it is planned for most of the older Venusian ships to be retrofitted to sport nonmilitary guises. Although they have been grouped into named classes in similar fashion to other navies, ships within the same class have cosmetic differences to make them resemble one type of civilian ship or another. For instance, no two Chieftain-class cruisers look quite the same; each one has additional modules, windows or drive sections that set it apart from its compatriots. Thus, in keeping with the CVNA's plan for eventual naval deployment and activity, an enemy encounter with any Venusian ship is potentially a military confrontation.

All Venusian ships are named after outstanding citizens as a form of recognition gift. Such a christening bears with it great honor and respect. There is a potential financial benefit as well; a ship's namesake gains full rights to large portions of the ship's hull, as well as a portion of any of the vessel's unsecured noncombat transmissions. These allowances are usually used to put huge advertising vid-membranes on the ships, although some owners choose to use their hull space for artwork, as a personal expression.



The owner has certain discretion regarding when and how such images and transmissions are to be shown. The leavening element, however, is the fact that the ship's namesake is considered financially and personally responsible for any mishap that should happen to the ship or its crew due to an untimely advertisement. As a result, most ship owners do not require their hull spaces or transmission allowances to be active in combat situations. In most cases, however, there is little harm in leaving a few vid-promotions playing on a ship's hull, even in a pitched battle.

A ship's visibility is based largely on the emissions from its reactor, drives and weapons; compared to such vast projections of energy, a few beer commercials hardly make any difference at all. Out of combat, however, the garish lights and broadcasts actually serve a useful purpose, helping the warships to blend in with other Venusian ships and making them even harder to pick out.

▼ 1.3.1 Hull Composition

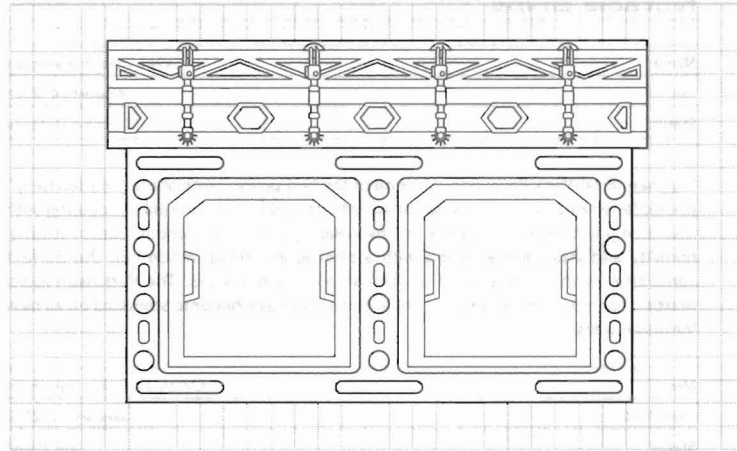
The skin of a Venusian warship is a complex multilayered covering designed for protection, disguise and attractiveness in equal measure. The ship's concealed systems are protected by advanced composite armor that combines heat-dissipation abilities with solid protection from physical impacts and penetration. Each section of armor is supported by a self-sealing membranous matrix; while it provides some radiation protection, this layer's primary purpose is to seal hull ruptures from micrometeorites and Kickslugs. Hiding the otherwise-conspicuous armor from unwanted inspection is a thin layer of radiation-absorbing material designed to look like decrepit civilian-grade hull material.

Atop all this is a thin electronic membrane. The membrane's opacity, color and luminance can be controlled electronically, turning it into a huge video screen for advertising, disguise and concealment purposes. Highly advanced forms of this video membrane are the basis for "cloaking" systems such as the one being tested on the Huang-Ti-class Observer Ship.

These layers are produced as interlocking segments of varying shape and size that can be overlapped for redundancy or hinged to allow hidden weapons and equipment to be deployed. To maintain the ship's integrity and spaceworthiness, the interiors of all weapon and equipment bays are also lined with radiation protection and some armor, so that no real vulnerable spots are exposed when the ship is preparing to fire.

▼ 1.3.2 Weapons and Sensors

Systems on Venusian ships are packed tightly into every available nook and cranny, in an effort to decrease overall vessel size while increasing crew comfort. This feat of engineering is made all the more impressive by the fact that most Venusian ships carry much more equipment than their Jovian or CEGA equivalents, and that all of this equipment is carefully hidden away from external view.



Sensor dishes and communications antennae are considered by the Venusians to be aesthetically unacceptable even on civilian vessels, and are stored under sliding covers when not in use. Venusian warships carry this doctrine further, concealing all weapons and military equipment under sensor-defeating hull armor, enabling the warships to be disguised as unarmed merchant ships.

Venusians tend to prefer using various types of missiles as primary armament for their warships. In addition to the standard heavy missile bays found on many Jovian and CEGA vessels, the Venusians also make use of clusters of smaller smart missiles designed to engage exo-armors and fighters at close range; these Cluster Munition Missiles (CMMs) are so maneuverable as to be able to reverse course after launch and pick off an exo-armor clinging to the launching ship's hull. On the other end of the guided-weapons scale are the autonomous Drones that come in a multitude of types, from innocuous camera pods to self-destructing anti-ship torpedoes. Laser weapons make up the majority of a Venusian ship's remaining armament; kinetic kill weapons and particle beam cannon are rare, due to the difficulty of concealing such weapons as well as their perceived inelegance (according to Venusian designers).



IMPERATOR PATROL CRUISER



Notable Ships

Name:	CVNA Joseph Parkinson
Launched:	August 24, 2206
Status:	Home Defense

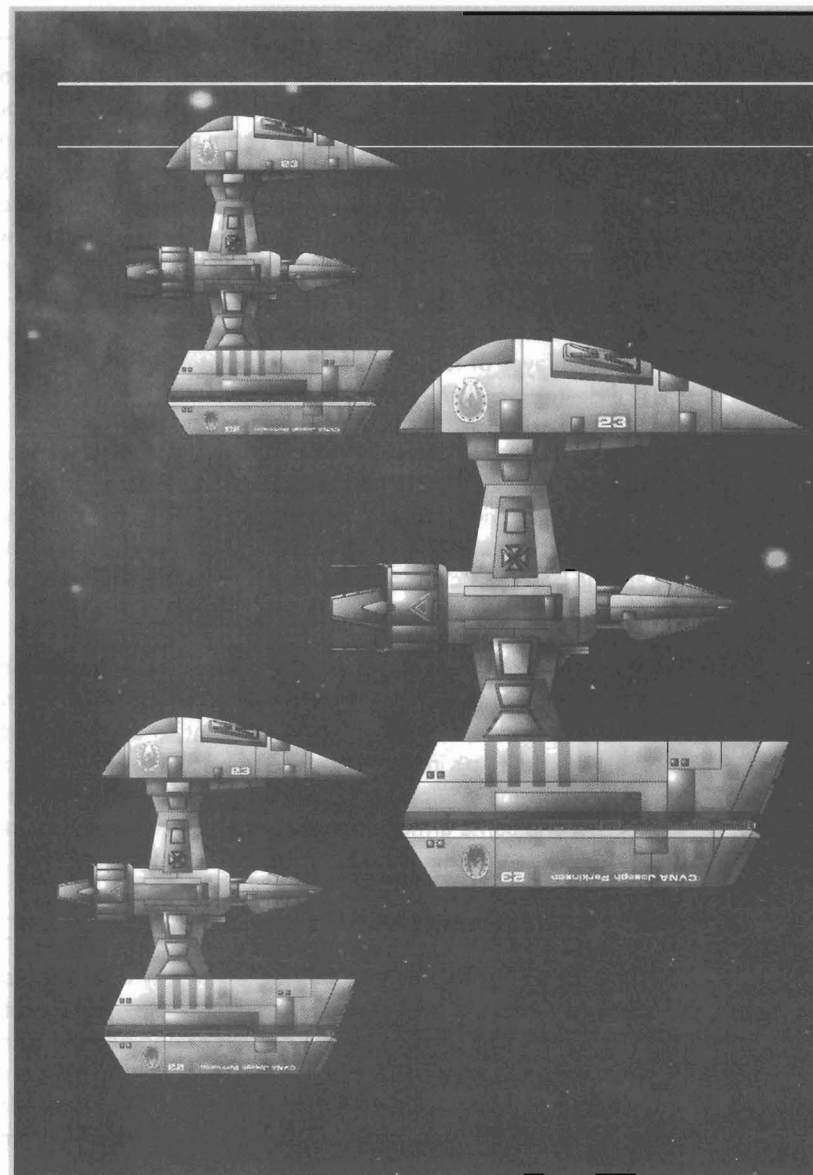
Engineer First-Rank Parkinson was one of the first proponents of the "hidden navy" principle, emphasizing the need for stealth, concealment and guile in dealing with the changing balance of power in the solar system. His combination of loyalty, humility and intelligence, along with a photogenic smile, made him the perfect candidate for the namesake of the first ship in the new class. The *Parkinson* was a testbed for many of the design conventions that have become standard on all new Venusian warships.

Name:	CVNA Akikumo Nakamichi
Launched:	January 22, 2152
Status:	Belt Patrol

In 2209, Citizen Akikumo wrote and directed *Coals*, an extremely well-received documentary detailing the events and aftereffects of the Birthing in Venusian history. His status and popularity earned him the award of a ship name. Akikumo is now a professor at the Bisset School of Arts in the Jovian Confederation, but the ship that bears his name is part of a watchdog fleet tasked with observing and regulating Jovian military movements in the Belt.

Name:	CVNA Cha Haruna
Launched:	March 8, 2197
Status:	Refit

One of a block of Bricriu-class ships purchased from CEGA by the Venusian Bank, the *Cha* was named for one of the accountants who helped to broker the difficult deal. The ship went missing in 2202 while on patrol in the Belt. A Belter salvage team discovered the derelict in late 2213 and returned the hulk to Venus for a significant finder's fee. The bodies of the crew were mostly intact, and evidence pointed to a fatal collision with several small objects sustained while pursuing a pirate vessel. The crew's bodies were properly disposed of, and the ship is undergoing a complete refit at the Carthage orbital shipyards near Venus.

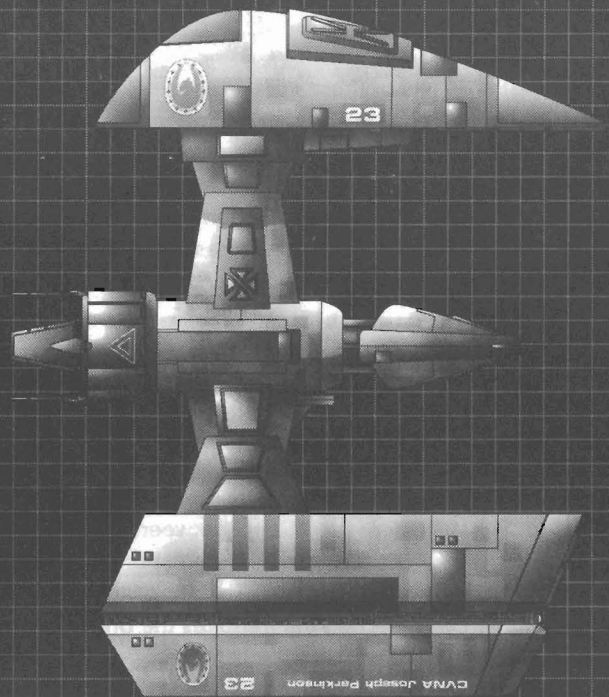


IMPERATOR PATROL CRUISER

2

IMPERATOR-CLASS PATROL CRUISER

CVNA Joseph Parkinson (2213 CONFIGURATION)



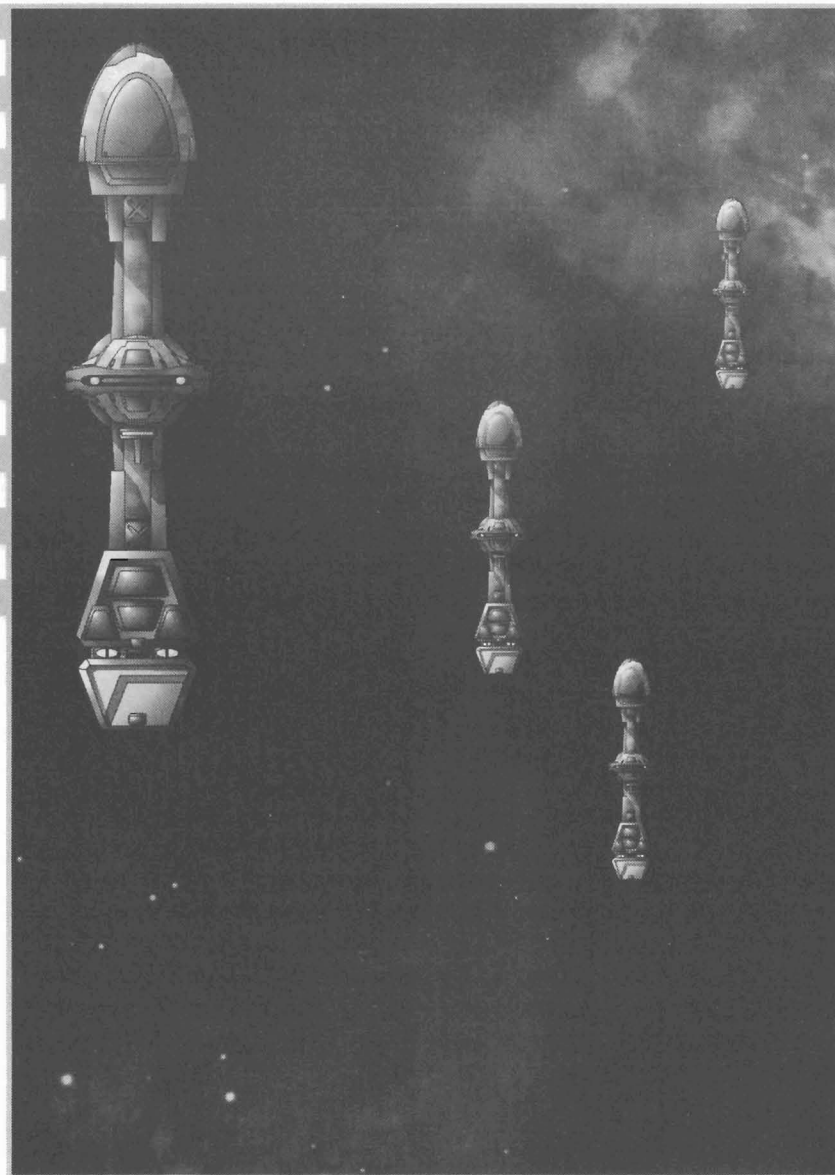
"On Venus, there will always be titles and salaries and ranks, but encompassing them all will also be the undeniable truth that every human life is vital to our nation's prosperity, and that the skillful and complete performance of even the most menial task shall serve to underpin our society and inspire us all to greater heights of achievement."

— Tzen Ming-Shang, *Rising and Reborn*, 2100





IMPERATOR PATROL CRUISER



► 2.1 OVERVIEW

In both Venus' incomparably crowded local space and the emptiness of open space, there is a constant need for a small, nimble ship that can fulfill a variety of roles and be effective at all of them. Up until about 2206, each Venusian corporation fielded its own model of patrol ship, most of them based off CEGA's ubiquitous Bricriu-class hull. While these ships were certainly serviceable, they did not excel in their duties as much as their masters desired.

Given the vast numbers of these vessels already in service, however, it would have been pointless to scrap them all in favor of a completely new design. A comprehensive refit and upgrade program was instituted instead, that took advantage of the Bricriu's inherent customizability to an unprecedented extent. The resulting ships, while retaining the Bricriu's basic frame and internal systems, look nothing like they used to, and are far more potent, both in war and peace.

Each Emperor-class ship incorporates the basic frames and structures of two Bricriu-class hulls, creating a double-hulled arrangement linked by a central unit containing the drives and sensor systems. One of the hulls supports most of the crew areas; overlaid atop the Bricriu's existing framework is a sturdy Venusian hull. Weapons and ship systems are stored between the two layers, with the crew being well-protected by both the Bricriu's structure as well as the new armored coverings. The opposite hull is primarily a hangar and cargo section that requires the Bricriu structure to be hollowed out and reinforced from the outside. The central unit is of completely new construction, making use of drive technology acquired from the Jovians and typically effective Venusian sensor systems.

The refit process saves on costs and produces a superb vessel. The Venusian government has access to hundreds of aging Bricrius. Only a few of those that are combined into these new ships are actually turned into warships; the rest become legiti-

mate civilian ships that are widely regarded as being an inspired usage of decades-old technology. All of the ships look similar, however, differing only in minor cosmetic and nonvital details. More recently, the Venusians have begun building vessels of this type from scratch, using lessons learned from the Bricriu conversions. These newer ships (some of which are Imperators) are cosmetically indistinguishable from the older ones, preserving the natural camouflage of the Venusian fleet.

▼ 2.1.1 Capabilities

Although small, the Imperator contains within its hull a surprising variety of equipment. High levels of automation and robotic assistance allow an Imperator to operate at full capacity with a crew approximately half the size of what would be expected for such a ship. Designed to engage fighters, exo-armors and smaller warships, the Imperator is armed mostly with light missiles and laser weapons. However, the quality of Venusian weapons is such that the Imperator is quite capable of taking on an enemy ship of the line and make a good showing for itself. In addition to six CMM pods scattered over the hull and a pair of partially-turreted lasers mounted in a forward bay, the Imperator also boasts a full-size anti-ship missile bay hidden behind its hangar. The ability to combat-launch a pair of fighters or exo-armors completes the Imperator's hidden armament.

Imperators are well-stocked with fuel and supplies, given that their assignments are generally more long-lasting and solitary than the duties commonly undertaken by other Venusian warships. The ship's double-hull design is put to good use, allowing simulated gravity during large portions of the ship's journey. Although speed is not a strict requirement for the Imperator's mission envelope, these ships are nevertheless quite fast, enabling superior response time in emergency/distress situations.

An Imperator possesses extensive medical and rescue equipment, all located in its secondary outrigger hull, partially as a quarantine measure, but also because it proved impossible to split the

facilities between the two hulls and still maintain acceptably efficient use of space. The main hangar contains space for up to three exo-armor-sized vehicles, and also has extra storage room for EVA pods and exo-suits. In a space-recovery situation, more than half the crew can be routed to rescue and medical duties, making use of the secondary hull's compartmentalized cargo areas as temporary recovery areas for survivors or salvaged equipment. For more extreme situations, the secondary hull also has an unusually large and well-equipped sickbay and a sturdy and spacious brig. Despite its small crew, the Imperator supports roughly twice the number of medical and security personnel present aboard other similarly-sized vessels.

▼ 2.1.2 Operational Role

As its class designation suggests, the Imperator is meant to operate alone or in small groups, patrolling various areas of the solar system. The nature of their task requires Imperators to be jacks of all trades; a given ship may be called upon to participate in a salvage/rescue operation, chase off pirates, transport prisoners and observe shipping activity all in the course of a single patrol run. The Imperator is second only to the Chieftain in the number of recorded combat engagements the class has participated in, and is the only Venusian warship class ever identified as such by foreign intelligence agencies.

Imperators are assigned to home ports on a long-term basis. Many of these ports are stations and yards in Venus orbit, but most Imperators operate out of Venusian-owned bases near other planets. A ship is usually sent to its home port after its initial shake-down, and is not reassigned except in extreme and unusual circumstances. An Imperator's patrol run begins and ends at its home port. After each patrol run, an Imperator is spacedocked for repair and general maintenance; although the Imperator is quite reliable (in relation to other Venusian warships), downtime for these ships averages twice that for ships of Jovian or CEGA design.

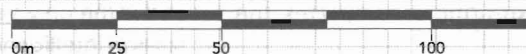
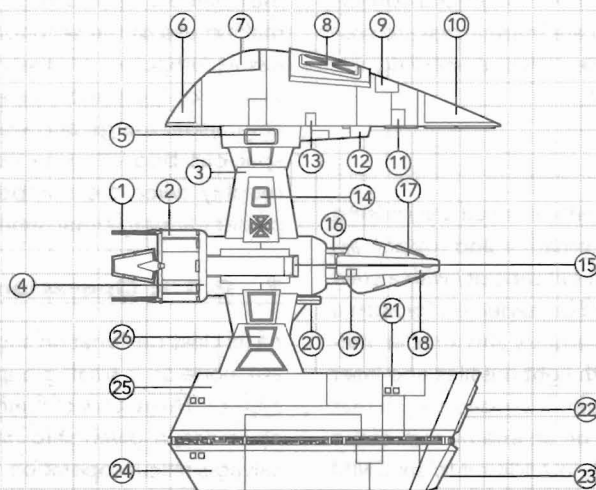




IMPERATOR PATROL CRUISER

► 2.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS

① Side View

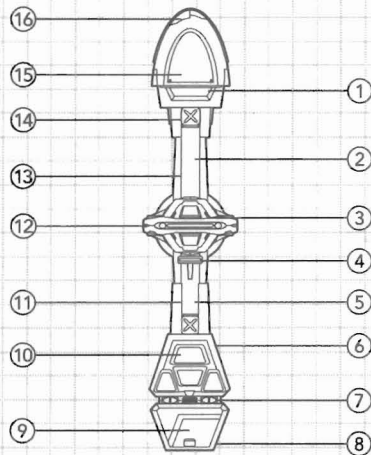


▼ Legend

1	Drive Fin	11	Airlock Hatch	21	Short Range Sensors
2	Exhaust Collimators	12	Auxiliary Screen Generator	22	Hangar Door
3	Engine Mount	13	Rotational Control Thruster	23	Cargo Bay Door
4	Main Hull Support Brace	14	Emergency Elevator Access Hatch	24	Missile Loading Door
5	Maintenance Bot Exit Bay	15	Emergency Gas Vent	25	Missile Bay (Closed)
6	Rear Vid-Membrane	16	Sensor Pod Mount	26	Emergency Elevator Access Hatch
7	Radiator Fins (Retracted)	17	Sensor Cluster (Retracted)		
8	Main Hull Docking Ports	18	Lateral PDS Emitter		
9	Observation Deck (Closed)	19	Lateral RCS Thruster		
10	Laser Housing (Closed)	20	Radar/Lidar Emitter		

2.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.) ◀

Front View ①



0m 25 50

▼ Legend

1	Auxiliary Screen Generator	11	Emergency Elevator Access Hatch
2	Hull Support Strut	12	Emergency Gas Vent
3	Lateral PDS Emitter	13	Outer Armor
4	Radar/Lidar Emitter	14	Fake Maintenance Access Hatch
5	Cargo Strut	15	Forward PDS Emitter
6	Vehicle Bay	16	Main Personnel Docking Ports
7	Docking Sensors		
8	Cargo Bay		
9	Cargo Bay Door		
10	Vehicle Bay Launch Door		

Specifications ▼

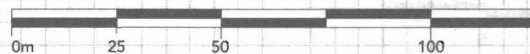
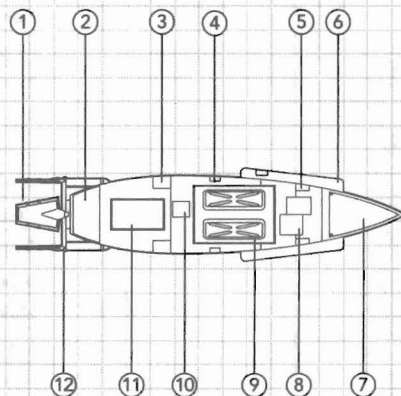
Name:	Imperator
Origin:	Cooperative Venusian Naval Administration
Manufacturer:	Various Shipyards
Type:	Patrol Cruiser
Control System:	Bridge w/astronomical display
Length:	100 m overall
Width:	20 m overall
Empty Weight:	750Tons
Loaded Weight:	1000 Tons
Main Drive:	1 x 10 MW
Secondary Powerplant:	1 x 800 KW
Main Thrusters:	1 x 25,000,000 kg
Apogee Motors:	78
Acceleration:	2.0 g
Onboard Sensors:	Fire Control Radar, Infrared/ Ultraviolet, Lidar, Magnetometer, Microwaves, Motion Detectors, Radcounter, Search Radar
Fixed Armament:	PDS, 1 x Laser Turret, 1 x Missile Bay
Additional Armament:	n/a
Defensive Systems:	Mag Screen
Equipment:	Escape Pods



IMPERATOR PATROL CRUISER

► 2.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)

① Top View

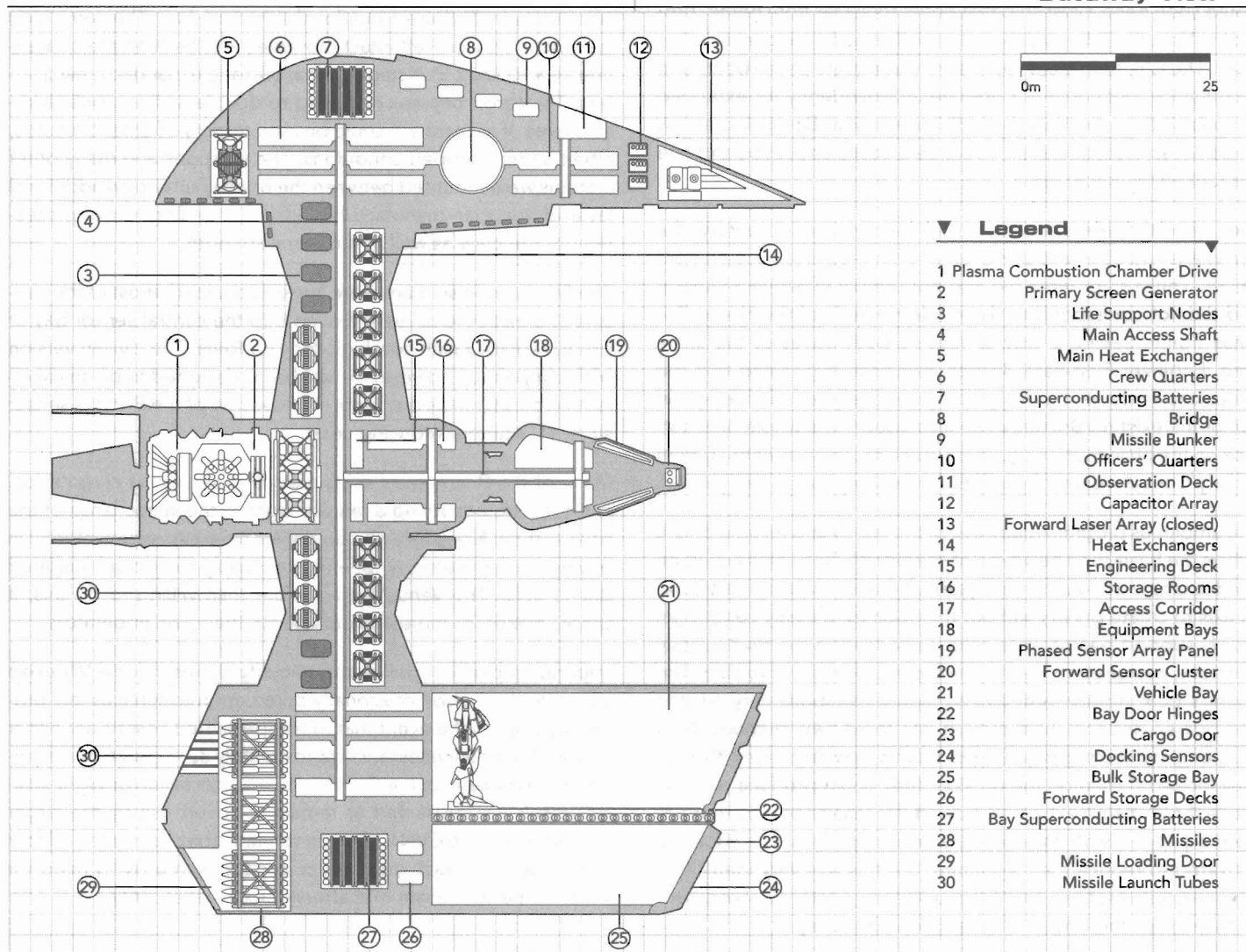


▼ Legend

1	Drive Fin	5	Airlock Hatch	9	Main Personnel Docking Ports
2	Engine Mount	6	Central Hull	10	Antennae Housing (Closed)
3	Maintenance Access	7	Laser Housing (Closed)	11	Radiator Fins (Retracted)
4	Rotational Control Thruster	8	Observation Deck (Closed)	12	Drive Fin Mount

2.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)

Cutaway View





IMPERATOR PATROL CRUISER



► 2.3 HISTORY

Early on, the military advisors to the Venusian Bank knew they would soon need a fast ship that could travel far from home, protecting Venusian interests abroad as well as performing many other tasks. The Chieftain-class vessels were adequate patrol boats and escort ships, but could not operate independently for extended periods of time, limiting their effective range. Designing a new ship from scratch, however, would be a costly endeavor, and one not looked favorably upon.

Ever since the late decades of the twenty-second century, the Venusians had been acquiring lots of Bricriu-class spacecraft from CEGA. These ships were old and not terribly effective anymore, and did not correspond to the modern needs of the Home Defense Force. Seeing a way to resolve both issues at the same time, Engineer First-Rank Joseph Parkinson suggested that the Venusians implement a design program designed to make good use of the existing Bricrius while also adopting a whole new outlook on the philosophy of building warships. Despite coming from a lowly clerical worker, the solution was too good to be ignored.

The ambitious program made use of the sturdy and reliable Bricriu hull as the basis for a new type of spacecraft. Two ships would be used to create a "catamaran"-type hull that could be spun around its axis to create gravity without the need for a costly centrifuge. Sturdy support beams were solidly attached to the Bricriu basic structure, designed to be the hardest elements on the ship. The Bricriu's bulk storage and gas storage tanks (both very reliable and proven designs) were moved into these new sections. New PCC engines were designed just for the new ship class; though they looked civilian on the outside, they could produce military-grade thrust, being extremely powerful for their size. The engines were equipped with as secondary collimator coils that could be activated to reduce their signature, but this was very inefficient. The engines' reaction mass tanks and associated plumbing were all taken from the Bricriu to save time and money.

The work then moved to the extensive modifications required for the older hulls. Many of the internal systems were discarded and replaced with modern control systems and fixtures. The Bricriu structure was hollowed out for the hangar bay. The remaining crew quarters were left intact, however, and became the quarantine area, sickbay, EVA staging area, brig and expanded crew quarters. The cargo bay was designed to double as the crew's recreation area. If necessary, it could be used to carry a fighter or shuttle, albeit under cramped conditions. The weapons and many other systems were mounted between the Bricriu hull and an additional layer of Venusian-manufactured armor, providing lots of protection for the crew as well as structural strength.

The Bricriu nose sections were largely scrapped; most of the sensors and instruments were moved into the central sensor bay or simply replaced with new high-tech gadgets. The civilian version of the Imperator, however — which was designed to be an excellent cargo ship in its own right — reused all of the Bricriu's sensor suite, thus further reducing costs.

Many of the Bricriu-mod ships are still in service as cargo ships, and they are becoming a familiar sight in the space lanes of the solar system. Many foreign companies have expressed interest in buying the conversions, offering to supply their own outdated Bricriu hulls. The Venusians are more than willing to do this; it simply makes for more camouflage for their own Imperators.

Imperators perform police and security duties in local Venusian space, and are also occasionally called upon to serve as low-profile spy ships in the event that more specialized vessels are either unavailable or unnecessary. Approximately 32 Imperators are currently in service with the CVNA, and another seven or eight similar vessels are suspected to remain in covert use by the larger corporations. The CVNA plans to construct between two and four new Imperators each year, keeping pace with a rising need for Venus to be self-reliant in matters of external security.

IMPERATOR PATROL CRUISER

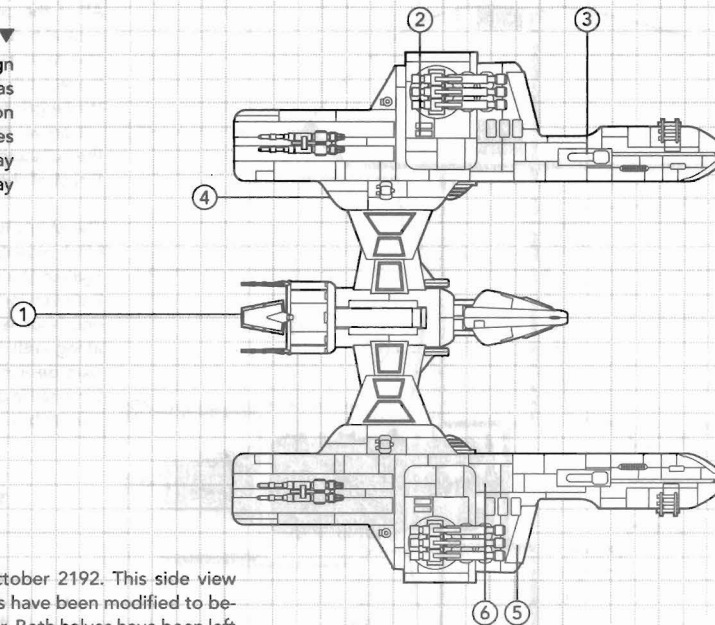
2

CVNA HIKARU SOVODA ◀

Imperator-class Vessels, 2198 0

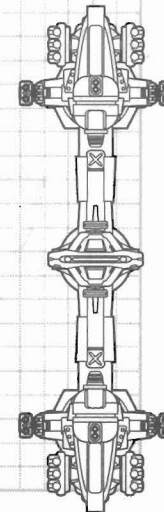
▼ Legend

- 1) Upgraded Drive Design
- 2) Crew Areas
- 3) Modified Nose Section
- 4) Hull Braces
- 5) Hangar Bay
- 6) Cargo Bay



CVNA *Hikaru Sovoda*: launched October 2192. This side view shows how the two Bricriu-class hulls have been modified to become the two halves of the Imperator. Both halves have been left largely intact — the early Imperator's armored hull concealed systems that were integrated within the Bricriu's hull. Both were then mounted on a new central piece to create a double-hull arrangement. The crew sections were inside, surrounded by the Bricriu's structure; all the major ship systems were mounted around them for extra protection.

The *Sovoda* is fairly typical of the converted vessels fielded by the CVNA in the early years of the program, before the designers agree that more drastic modifications were worth the added costs. More recent vessels have completely reworked hulls which have no outward resemblances to the Bricriu's they originally came from.

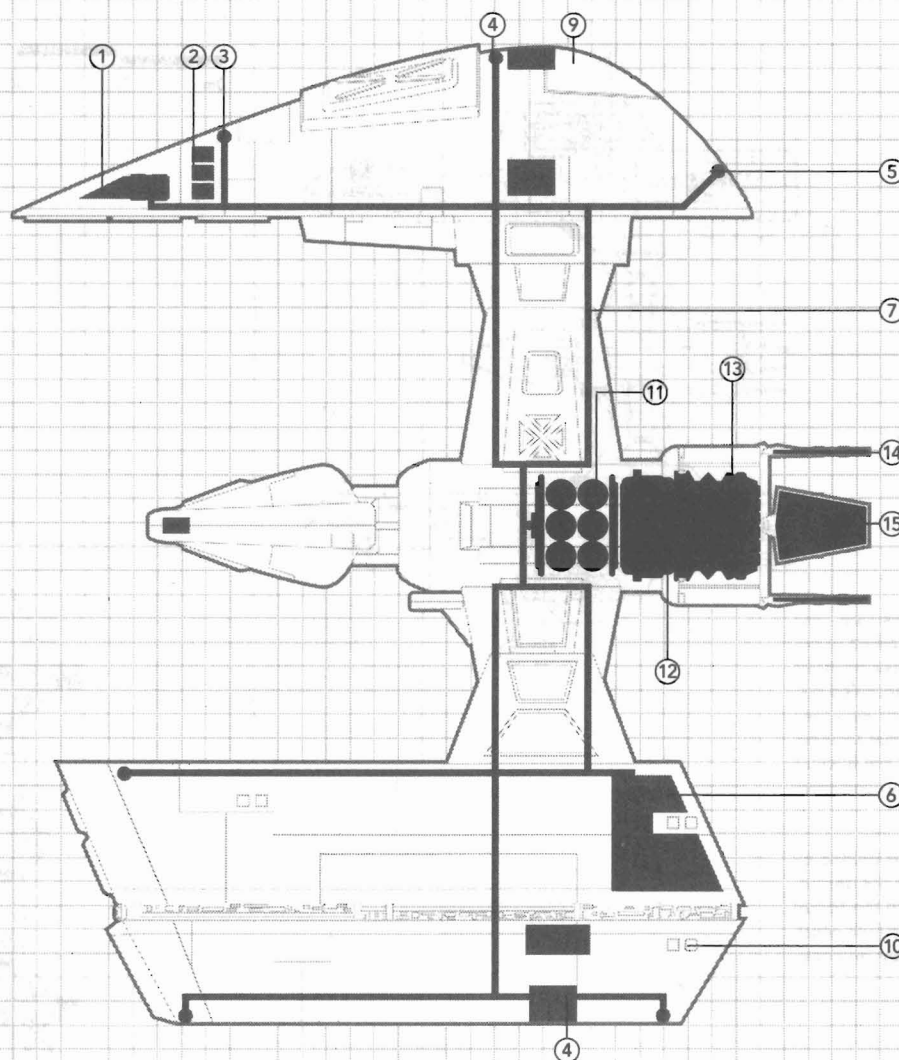




IMPERATOR PATROL CRUISER

► 2.4 SHIP SYSTEMS

① schematics



All of the propulsion systems are located in the central hull, well away from the main crew areas. The main tankage sub-systems are also placed there, both for shielding purposes and to reduce the length and complexity of the ducting. Strong vat-grown mono-spars form the basic structure of the hull support pylons, efficiently transferring the thrust of the engine to the rest of the ship.

The ship's weapon system are all concealed behind movable panels, or else mounted flush against the surface of the hull. Armament varies between individual ships, but most mount at least one laser weapon (not counting the PDS array) along with kinetic kill weaponry of a very compact design. The latter can collapse its accelerator array in a tiny volume to allow it to fully retract into its bay.

▼ Weapon Systems ▼

- 1 Area Defense Laser System
- 2 Power Couplings
- 3 Forward Array, Laser PDS Cells
- 4 Kinetic Kill Cannons
- 5 Aft Array, Laser PDS Cells
- 6 Heat Sinks
- 7 Main Power Conduits

▼ Propulsion Syst. ▼

- 9 Plasma Arc RCS Cluster
- 10 Hypergolic RCS Thrusters
- 11 Reaction Mass Tanks
- 12 Plasma Combustion Chamber
- 13 Exhaust Collimator Coils
- 14 EM Power Generation System
- 15 Heat Sink

2.4 SHIP SYSTEMS ◀

schematics ①

The sensor array of the ship is fairly conventional and is distributed across the other hull. Most of the antennae and basic processors are located in the central hull's forward section, where they have a good field of vision. Additional sensors are located on the extremities of the two outrigger hulls to complete the sensor coverage.

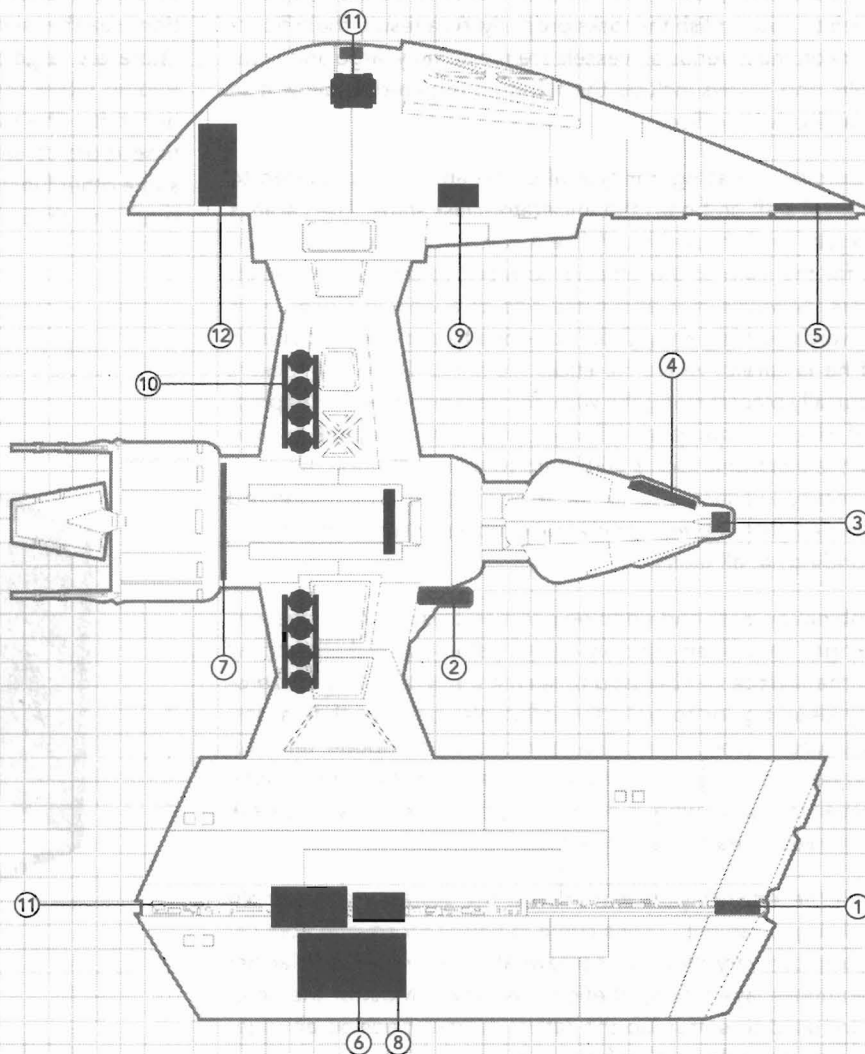
Like all modern spaceships, the Imperator is equipped with extremely redundant life support systems. The heat exchangers are coupled to panels in the outer skin of the vehicle to allow them to selectively radiate the ship's waste heat in a controlled matter. The main hangar has a separate high-powered life support node so the bay can be rapidly decompressed or filled.

▼ Sensor Systems

- 1 Docking Sensors
- 2 Microwave Pulse-Ranging Antennae
- 3 Shortwave Instrument Clusters
- 4 Phased Array Radar
- 5 Laser Ranging and LIDAR Emitters
- 6 Optical Sensor Cluster

▼ Life Support Syst.

- 7 Shield Generators
- 8 Hangar LS Systems
- 9 Secondary LS Nodes
- 10 Gas Storage
- 11 Superconducting Batteries
- 12 Heat Exchangers





IMPERATOR PATROL CRUISER



▼ 2.4.1 Officer's Quarters

The daily duties of an officer unfortunately include lots of paperwork. This, in turn, requires a relatively quiet and spacious place in where to accomplish the tasks properly. As a result, the officer's quarters on most Venusian vessels are reasonably large and comfortable, and always include the furniture required to allow it to serve as a private office.

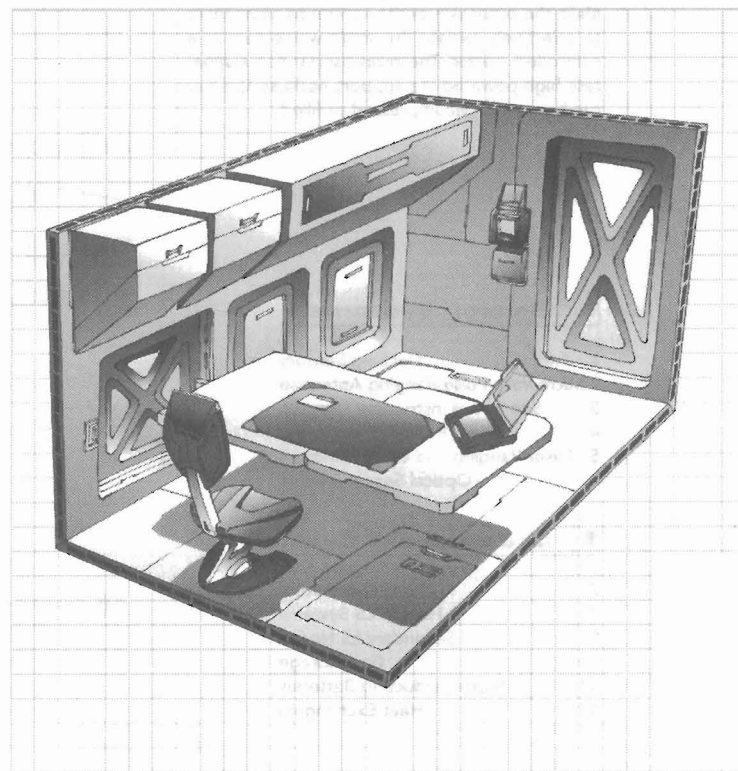
The room shown at right is typical of the amenities provided to lower level staff on board the Emperor-class ships. The cabin is rectangular and shaped much like a conventional planet-bound room for the sake of the officer's comfort. Like most spacecraft quarters, however, it is about the size of a walk-in closet — in other words, just big enough for someone to stand up and stretch out if he is careful where he sticks his arms. There are lockers strategically placed along the walls for storage and safe-keeping, one of which is equipped with a security system to lock in valuables (the electronic lock is fairly hard to defeat, though the code is generally available to all superior officers). Voice-directed orientable lights and environmental controls ensure comfortable surroundings at all times.

A combination desk and sleeping pallet folds down from one wall (the hinges have been omitted in the illustration). Hidden latches under the surface can be used to secure a sleeping bag for zero-gravity sleeping, or to hold the inflatable mattress that is normally stored in one of the compartments. A computer terminal swings out of the wall so that the user can work facing the door. Almost all the paperwork is done using this terminal, so the desk seldom needs cleaning up for sleep.

Beyond the officer's personal effects, the storage lockers hold several large cushions. These come in handy for several applications, and can vary their size somewhat via an inflatable bladder hidden under layers of synthetic goosedown. Most of the time, they are used to soften up the rather spartan bedside arrangement, or to provide seating for guests.

▼ 2.4.2 Downtime Room

The downtime room is a large (compared to the rest of the habitable areas) open room with softly-colored walls. It is a multi-function area that serves as a lounge, meeting place and dining area. There are large vidscreens all over the walls, and a number of folding tables that can retract out of the way outside of the dinner shifts. The majority of the ship's crew must go to the downtime room to stretch out, assuming it is not already in use for some other function, because their own personal quarters are too small and drab.



There is a small galley located to one side of the room's "lower" area; automated cooking devices can prepare a variety of meals, mostly based on prepackaged algae and vat-grown protein. Despite this, they are actually quite palatable, mostly because of the inventive presentation and use of spices. The galley is open all day, though it is often preferable to wait for the designated dinner time to have access to the tables.

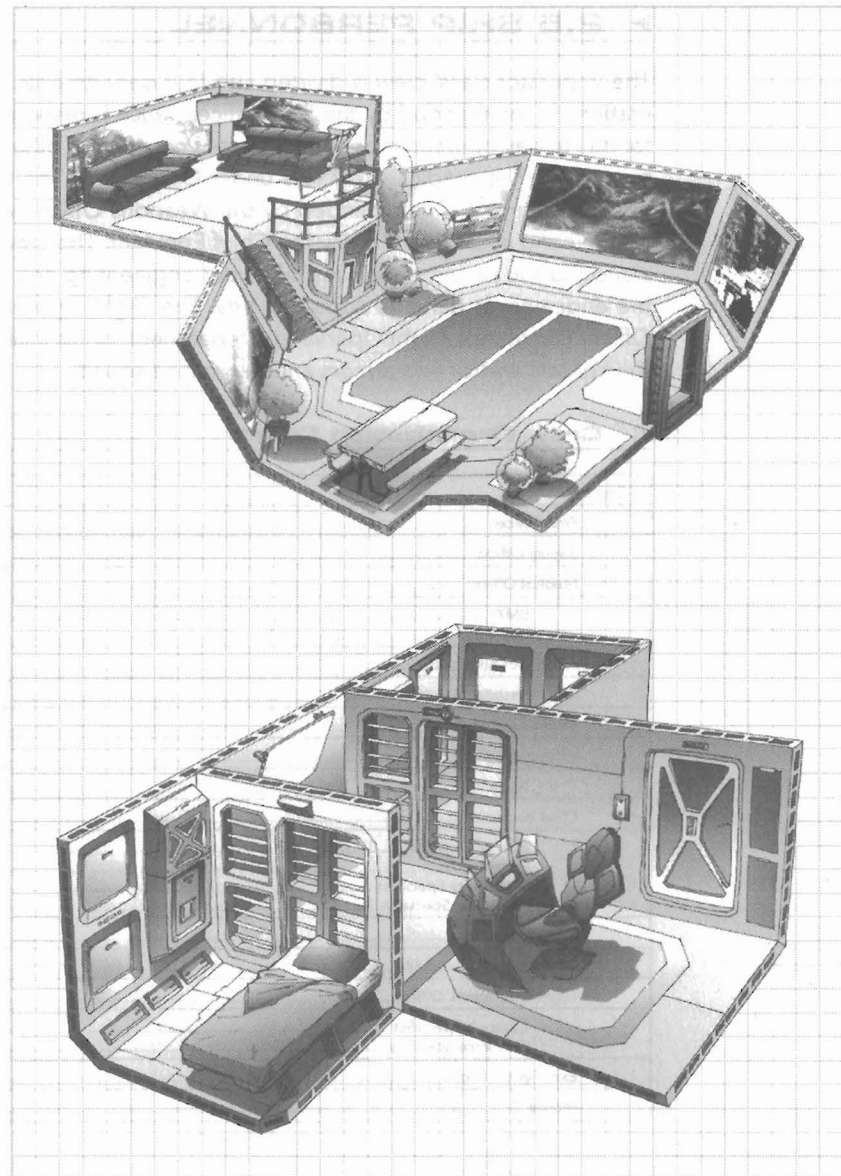
When not being used for dining, this room is often set up as a "garden," with various relaxing images displayed on the walls and soft background music. The back wall is covered with lockers; these store all manner of equipment used to convert the room for one function or another, such as pillows and zero-gee clips and nets.

▼ 2.4.3 Brig

The Emperor-class ships have dedicated brigs to hold criminals or mutineers until they can be brought to trial. The typical brig is a room with two cells, placed side by side so that one guard can see both rooms from his workstation.

Despite outward appearances, the cells have no access panels or hatches other than the main door. They are equipped with a single piece of lightweight multifurniture that serves as a bed, table and chair, and which folds up and clips to the wall for storage. A small cabinet on the wall holds equipment for hygiene, though it is somewhat embarrassing as it must be used in full view of the guard and the occupant(s) of the other cell.

A security alarm is prominently placed on the wall of the security station outside the cells, as well as a locked hatch that leads to a small security locker. There are vidscreens on the wall in the security station arranged for the prisoners' entertainment, but the prisoners must watch them through the combination of bars and security netting that seals each cell.





IMPERATOR PATROL CRUISER



► 2.5 SHIP PERSONNEL

The Imperator-class' crew is divided into four departments. Operations is commanded by the First Officer, which is responsible for day to day operations and anything not covered by other departments. The medical crew falls under Operations. The Gun- nery Department is commanded by the Weapons Officer, while Engineering is commanded by the Chief Engineer. The crew assigned to the security positions fall under Engineering and help the engineers in damage control duties. The Flight Operations Officer commands Flight Operations Department, which includes the fighters and/or exo-armors and the marine squad.

▣ Crew Organization Chart

Captain	
First Officer	1
Supply Officer	1
Medical Officer	1
EMT	1
Nurse	1
Aesthetics Specialist	1
EME Specialist	3
Helmsman/Navigator	3
Weapons Officer	1
Gunner	3
Chief Engineer	1
Master Engineer	2
Engineer	5
Electronics Specialist	1
Computer Specialist	1
Security Officer	1
Security Specialist	1
Flight Operations Officer	1
Catapult Specialist	1
Ordnance Specialist	1
Exo/Fighter Pilot	2
Marine	5

▼ 2.5.1 Interview with a Pilot

Name: Paolo Dallaire

Rank: Tai-i

Current Assignment: CVNA Titus Grimaldi



"There is no better job to have in the CVNA than a pilot's posting on an Imperator. I'll tell you why. You see, in other ships, with lots of pilots, lots of exos, everyone has to share the credit. If the ship is attacked, and the pilots scramble, it's all about the team, yes? On this ship, there's only two pilots. I just have to be better than one person, and the performance bonuses are all mine.

"I know, I sound like a foreigner, going on about 'personal fulfillment.' It's not my fault. An exo-armor is the most powerful war machine, you know, and it makes some people feel, well, very important. I'm part of something very big, yes, but I'm also piloting something very big too, you see? In fact, I truly answer only to the captain. I don't envy his job, though — we've got totally different career goal, and I just don't want to rise to that level one day. I just can't relate to a ship commande job.

"I get a lot of respect on this ship. People let me get to the galley first. I get an officer's cabin. I earn it, though. My exo-armor is my exo-armor. If something goes wrong with it, I can't blame a backup pilot, or even the technicians. It's my fault if I don't take care of the machine I fight in. That's normal for any Venusian ship, but on this one, a mistake will be very quickly noticed. Also, as head pilot, I have to work with the captain and flight ops officer to work out schedules and procedures. Between flying, maintenance and desk-jockeying, it's a wonder I have enough free time to make the other pilot feel useless."

▼ 2.5.2 Interview with a Navigator



Name:	Yingshu Lu
Rank:	Chu-sa
Current Assignment:	CVNA Joseph Parkinson

"My job, according to my mentor officer back on Venus, is to make the ship look casual without actually being casual. That's all she had to say. Gee, very helpful, isn't it? Do you have any idea what kind of hell my performance reviews are like? I have to plot courses that take us past our assigned patrol points, but which also look plausible for a cargo courier vessel.

"If we end up having to open up on someone, I have to help hide the fact that we were ever there. Even if we don't get seen (and we haven't), there are so many ways someone could downgrade me for perceived mistakes in judgment. For instance, if I decide to burn a little extra remass to hit a checkpoint on time, the captain can ding me for 'engaging in maneuvering behavior inconsistent with CVNA policy.'

"I researched some statistics. Of all bridge positions, navigators become the least likely to make it to command rank the longer they serve in that position. You'd better love your job, because it's not going to take you anywhere but down and out. Most of the navigators retire after a few years and end up in stress-management resorts for a while. Me, I love plotting courses; it's like juggling a dozen balls at a time, trying to balance everything out and still keep the whole thing moving along. I just hate the popularity contest I have to go through just to keep my job. If I ever get to be a captain, I'm going to make it a point to be extra nice to my navigator. It's just good karma."

▼ 2.5.3 Interview with a Security Officer

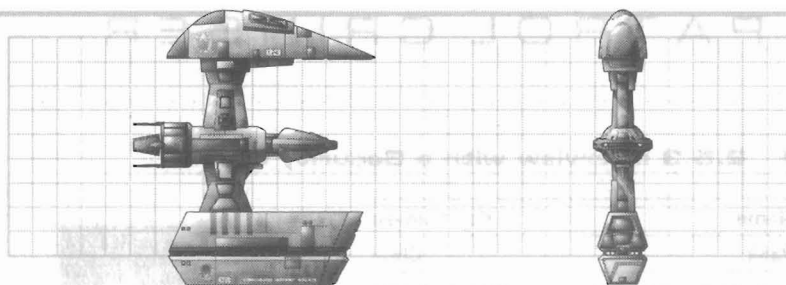
Name:	Koji Shimizu
Rank:	Chu-i
Current Assignment:	CVNA Akikumo Nakamichi



"Okay, so there's not a lot that needs security on a tiny little ship like this, right? Hmph. You are so wrong. Even on the routine trips, there's always someone who gets a case of cabin fever. The Emperor's just too small for a real Venusian to be comfortable with for too long, and on the kinds of jobs we get sent on, it's always too long.

"We may only have about forty people aboard, but it doesn't take much to get a fight started. Usually it's one of the pilots bullying a gunner, or some navigator going off the deep end, but the end result is that I have to rough 'em up a bit (for appearance's sake, you know), toss them in the brig for a few shifts, and then spend way too many hours doing paperwork. It's very much a cultural requirement — small ships are like frontier towns. You gotta show them who's the boss once in a while or they will forget and try to stomp all over you.

"When we run into a problem on a patrol, then things get really interesting. Since we don't have many specialized crewmembers due to the ship's size, any boarding parties usually involve me and a bunch of half-trained volunteers from engineering who are probably more of a danger to my back than a help. That's always fun. Then there are the search-and-seizures, when I get to play EOD rat and inspect containers and packages for undesirable items like, oh, say, bombs. And of course, there's always paperwork. But I only talk like this when I have time to think about it, because the rest of the time, I'm having way too much fun."



Imperator-class Patrol Cruiser

Overall Data:

Threat Value:	60800	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:	-	Cost:	103.3M	Ind. Iemom Dice:	3
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Movement Data:

Mode:	Space	Combat:	6 MP (0.6 g)	Top:	12 MP (1.2 g)	Maneuver:	-2	Range:	3000 hrs	ReMass:	2000 BPs
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Sections:

1x	Main Hull	1x	Central Hull	1x	EVA Hull
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Off & Def Systems

1x	Point Defense System	2x	Laser Array	6x	CMM
1x	Missile Bay				

Section: Main Hull

Main Data:

TV:	34000	Off. TV:	83000	Def. TV:	2500	Misc. TV:	17000	Prod. Cost:	60M	Ind. Iemom Dice:	2
Crew:	18	Actions:	6	Sensors:	-2/2km	Comm:	-2/10km	Fire Control:	+1		
Hull Size:	36	Default Size:	32	Base Armor:	50	Light:	50	Heavy:	50	Overkill:	50

Main Data:

Mode:	Towed	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Maneuver:	-	Range:	1000 hrs	ReMass:	-
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Perks & Flaws:

Autopilot	-	Lvl 1 Pilot	Reinforced Crew	3	Absorbs first three "Crew" hits
Backup Systems	-	Comm, FireCon, LifeSupp, Sensor	Stealth	2	Add to Concealment
Computer	3	CRE 0, KNO 0, PP3			
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 20 people			
HEP: Rad	4	Screen			
HEP: Vac	-	Against space			
Life Support	-	Full			
Passenger Accom	-	3,000m3			

Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
2	Laser Array	F	x20	7	0	+1	Inf	AD2, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	14	12214	n/a
1	PDS (ranged)	T	x10	1	+1	+6	Inf	AM, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	16	1401	n/a
	PDS (shield)	FF	x20	Melee	+1	+4	Inf	Conc. (Inst.), Def., E-Shld, H.	16	539	
3	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	32ea	Conc. (Inst.), HEAT, Missile	9	3105	2.7

Section: Central Hull

Main Data:

TV:	2800	Off. TV:	0	Def. TV:	2300	Misc. TV:	6100	Cost:	2.4M	Ind. Iemom Dice:	2
Crew:	6	Actions:	4	Sensors:	+1 / 3 km	Comm:	+1 / 15 km	Fire Control:	0	Type:	Lim.Prod
Hull Size:	32	Default Size:	14	Base Armor:	50	Light:	50	Heavy:	50	Overkill:	50

Movement Data:

Mode:	Space	Combat:	23 (2.3 g)	Top:	47 (4.7 g)	Maneuver:	-2	Range:	1,000 hrs	ReMass:	8,000 BPs
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Perks & Flaws:

Backup Systems	-	Comm, FireCon, LifeSupp, Sensor	Stealth	2	Add to Concealment
Cargo Bay	-	5,000 m3			
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 10 people			
HEP: Rad	4	Screen			
HEP: Vac	-	Against space			
Life Support	-	Full			
Reinforced Crew	3	Absorbs first three "Crew" hits			
Stealth	2	Add to Concealment			

Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

Section: EVA Hull

Main Data:

TV:	24000	Off. TV:	39000	Def. TV:	2500	Misc. TV:	31000	Cost:	40.9M	Ind. Iemom Dice:	2
Crew:	10	Actions:	5	Sensors:	-2/2km	Comm:	-2/10km	Fire Control:	0	Type:	Lim.Prod
Hull Size:	34	Default Size:	29	Base Armor:	50	Light:	50	Heavy:	50	Overkill:	50

Movement Data:

Mode:	Towed	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Range:	1,000 hrs	ReMass:	-		
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Perks & Flaws:

Backup Systems	-	Comm, FireCon, LifeSupp, Sensor	Reinforced Crew	3	Absorbs first three "Crew" hits
Cargo Bay	-	30,000 m3	Sick Bay	2	Two patients
2x Catapults	-	(450/mass)/s2	Stealth	2	Add to Concealment
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection System	-	Pods for 16 People			
HEP: Rad	4	Screen			
HEP: Vac	-	Against space			
Lab Life Sciences	0				
Passenger Accom	-	2,000 m3			

Off & Def Systems

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
1	Missile Bay	T	x30	5	-2	+5	40	Conc. (Inst.), HEAT, Missile	8	2644	2.3
3	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	32ea	Conc. (Inst.), HEAT, Missile	9	3106	2.7

► **Section: -**

▼ **Main Data:**

TV: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indy lemon dice: -
Crew: -	Actions: -	Sensors: -	Comm.: -	Fire Control: -	Type: -
Hull Size: -	Default Size: -	Base Armor: -	Light: -	Heavy: -	Overkill: -

▼ **Movement Data:**

Mode: -	Combat: -	Top: -	Maneuver: -	Range: -	Re. Mass: -
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▼ **Perks & Flaws:**

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect

▼ **Offensive and Defensive Systems:**

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► **Section: -**

▼ **Main Data:**

TV: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indy lemon dice: -
Crew: -	Actions: -	Sensors: -	Comm.: -	Fire Control: -	Type: -
Hull Size: -	Default Size: -	Base Armor: -	Light: -	Heavy: -	Overkill: -

▼ **Movement Data:**

Mode: -	Combat: -	Top: -	Maneuver: -	Range: -	Re. Mass: -
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▼ **Perks & Flaws:**

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect

▼ **Offensive and Defensive Systems:**

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► **Section: -**

▼ **Main Data:**

TV: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indy lemon dice: -
Crew: -	Actions: -	Sensors: -	Comm.: -	Fire Control: -	Type: -
Hull Size: -	Default Size: -	Base Armor: -	Light: -	Heavy: -	Overkill: -

▼ **Movement Data:**

Mode: -	Combat: -	Top: -	Maneuver: -	Range: -	Re. Mass: -
---------	-----------	--------	-------------	----------	-------------

▼ **Perks & Flaws:**

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect

▼ **Offensive and Defensive Systems:**

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► **Section: -**

▼ **Main Data:**

TV: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indy lemon dice: -
Crew: -	Actions: -	Sensors: -	Comm.: -	Fire Control: -	Type: -
Hull Size: -	Default Size: -	Base Armor: -	Light: -	Heavy: -	Overkill: -

▼ **Movement Data:**

Mode: -	Combat: -	Top: -	Maneuver: -	Range: -	Re. Mass: -
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▼ **Perks & Flaws:**

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect

▼ **Offensive and Defensive Systems:**

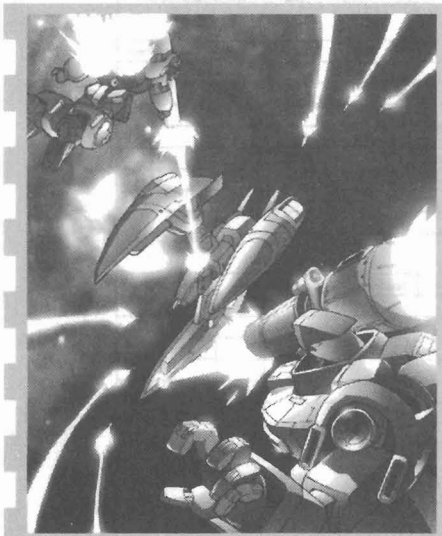
Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC



IMPERATOR PATROL CRUISER



► PART I: MIXED SIGNALS



The bridge of the CVNA *Chantal O'Connor* smelled like cleaning fluid. In fact, Tai-sa Taggart al-Raschid noted, even after two months, the whole ship still felt too new, too unused. *Like her captain*, he thought sourly as he presented Sho-sho Joshua Gould with a folded datafax. Gould roused himself from his seat with a rumble, and scanned the datafax. After a moment, his porcine eyes peeked out over the top of the page.

"You want this man to be given a CVNA posting on my ship?" Taggart heard the emphasis on 'my,' and struggled to hold down his anger; Gould was both a poor captain and an insincere Venusian. Gould continued, incredulous. "His naval training is more than a

decade old, he's been unemployed for years, and I notice you've conveniently left out his criminal record. Gods, Taggart, have you ever even heard of this man?"

"Yes, of course I've heard of him," Taggart retorted defensively. Then, softly, he admitted, "at least, I've heard of his family." He fingered the ornate sculpt-clasp at his neck. "They did a lot for us during the Birthing."

"A century ago," Gould noted. Taggart shook his head. Gould could not possibly understand.

"I owe him. He's asked for my help, and I intend to give him a chance."

"You're vouching for this man, then? On your personal credit?"

Gould demanded. Taggart hesitated for only a moment.

"Yes, sir," he affirmed. "As part of my intel team allocation, I'm requesting the recruitment of one Mischa Katayama as a civilian CVNA consultant and expert in Executor operations."

Gould shrugged. "It's your career, I guess. We'll send the orders out immediately." Taggart coughed.

"Gould-sama, I don't think it's wise to make such a transmission before mission completion. If someone were to intercept and decipher the orders—"

"They would have to decipher them, wouldn't they?" Gould interjected. "I hardly think that's a concern. All they'll see is an innocent civilian message with some signal noise. I think we are adequately protected. Anyway, I want to see this," Gould sniggered, "consultant of yours as soon as possible."

"Yes, sir," Taggart clipped out, doing his best to keep any hint of further disagreement out of his voice.

He'd argued against almost every one of Gould's decisions since the mission began, and each time, he'd been overridden. He'd been assigned to this ship as Gould's intelligence liaison, but Gould seemed intent on making sure all the glory was his.

Turning to more pleasant thoughts, Taggart imagined what the scion of old Toji Katayama would look like. He wondered about the questionable nature of the man's work and criminal record, but quickly dismissed the worries. He'd done the right thing. Now it was in the hands of the gods.

* * *

Looks like the gods dropped the ball, Taggart thought grimly.

Floating in his spacesuit, he looked down contemptuously at Gould, who huddled, shivering in his suit, under his own chair.

The bridge had already been evacuated, alarms were blaring all over the shattered cruiser, and the bridge viewscreen showed a gold and black Ryu exo-armor lounging casually atop the hull.

Thirty-two hours after the transmission had gone out, the STRIKE ships had attacked, with the Ryu at their head. Taggart had few doubts as to how STRIKE had managed to decode the O'Connor's communications. He waited for the Ryu to open fire and finish them off, but instead, the transmission light on the captain's console began to flash. Slowly, Taggart reached out and jabbed a button.

The face that appeared on the viewscreen was entirely nondescript, long, angular and Japanese. Taggart didn't notice the face. He focused instead on the man's uniform, a twin to his own black Intelligence Services attire, excepting the insignia, which were definitely not of Venusian origin.

"Are you the captain of this ship?" the face demanded. Taggart glanced down, and knew there was only one answer to give.

"Yes, I am."

The traitor smiled, one side of his mouth curving up like a scythe. "No, you're not. But that's all right. Your captain's obviously not worth half what you are." The smile vanished. "Here's my offer. You will transfer to our ship. Once you are aboard, your remaining crew will be allowed to send a distress call. If you are not aboard our ship in ten minutes, we will kill them all. It's that simple. Nine minutes and fifty seconds left."

Taggart met the traitor's eyes, and knew there was no point in arguing. He didn't look around him. He could still hear Gould whimpering. There was little hope that the man was even capable of understanding what Taggart was about to do for him. Grabbing a handhold, Taggart hauled himself out the bridge door.

* * *

There was barely enough light to make out the Japanese characters. Mischa Katayama looked at the datafax held in his unsteady hands, and sat down heavily. He hadn't expected any kind of response to his letter. Surely al-Raschid Tai-i would have looked up his file, and seen the pages of black marks. It had been almost a joke, a final self-pitying scream. Yet, here was a serious answer, an invitation, addressed not to a penniless failure but to a fellow Venusian.

Mischa looked down. On a table, near his elbow, were a dataslip with the word "Kinya" scrawled on the label and a charged pistol. He swallowed. It had been so close. The order had been on his lips when the datafax came through.

This is it, he thought. An end, or a beginning.

A voice interrupted his thoughts. It spoke from every wall, quiet and soothing. Like a human. Like him.

"Execute final command?" it asked indifferently.

"No," Mischa breathed at last. "Cancel that," he directed, louder. He took a deep breath, focused on a nearby wall camera, and announced, "Stand down self-destruct, and find me a civilian flight to Mars. Time to meet my angel."

As if in response to his sudden animation, the voice became distinctly quizzical. "I don't understand, but okay," it said. Mischa smiled and rose from his seat.

"You shouldn't understand," he said. "You're not me, after all."

He picked up the dataslip and tossed it toward a recycling bin. Smiling faintly, he turned back to the wall camera.

"At least, not yet."





Notable Ships

Name:	CVNA Oyama Hagane
Launched:	December 26, 2210
Status:	Refit

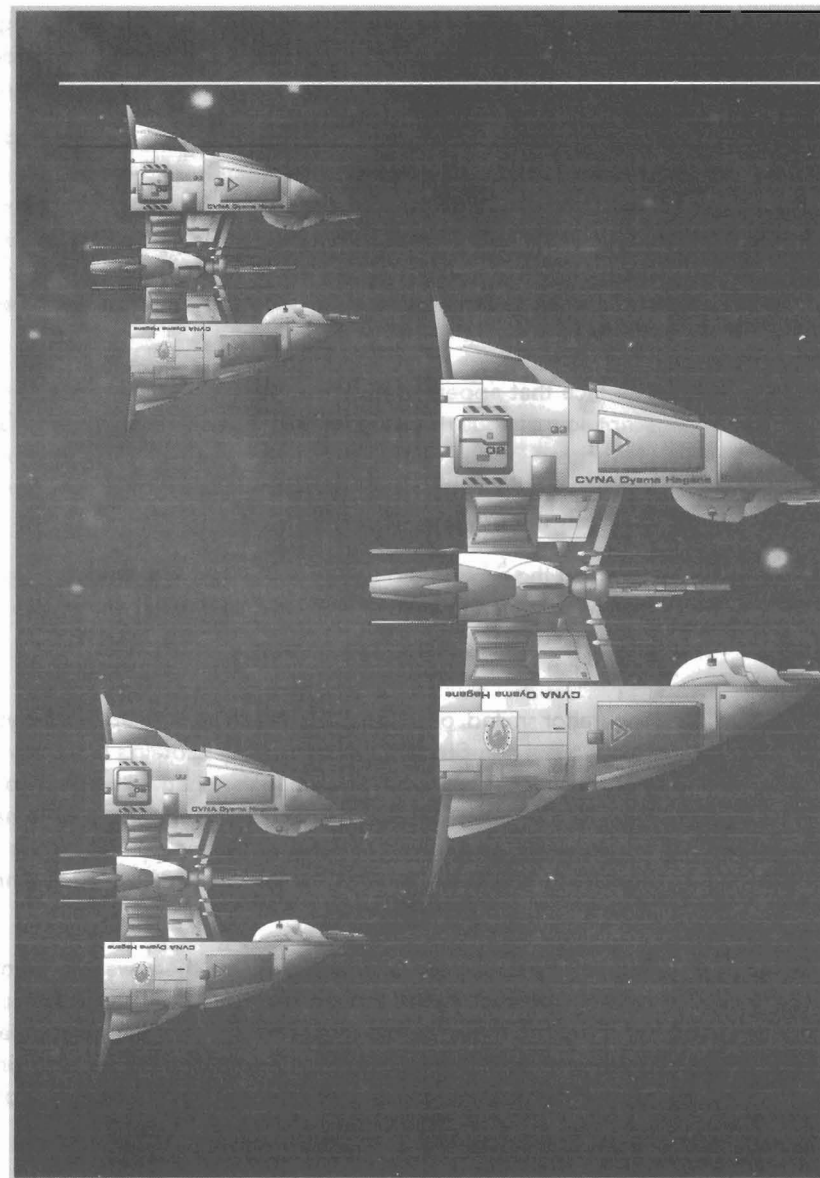
The *Oyama* was the first prototype of the Huang-Ti class, designed by the Venusian Bank as an experiment in standardizing spy ships and thus cutting costs. The real Oyama Hagane is the Operations Director of VenusBank's External Security Branch, and is well-known in the Bank's higher echelons as the logistical mastermind behind Operation Methuselah's supply chain and facility construction. The *Oyama* has recently completed its two-year series of field tests, and is currently undergoing a complete overhaul for both maintenance and data-collection reasons.

Name:	CVNA Vaclav Hoechst
Launched:	N/A
Status:	Building

Currently being fitted out in a sealed and monitored bay at the Carthage orbital shipyards, the *Hoechst* is named after the Venusian Bank agent who calmly and efficiently organized the Bank's withdrawal from the Jovian atmosphere in 2210 after the Jovians discovered Project Methuselah. Hoechst, whose real name is highly classified, has very little use for such an honor, but it is reported that he does appreciate the symbolism.

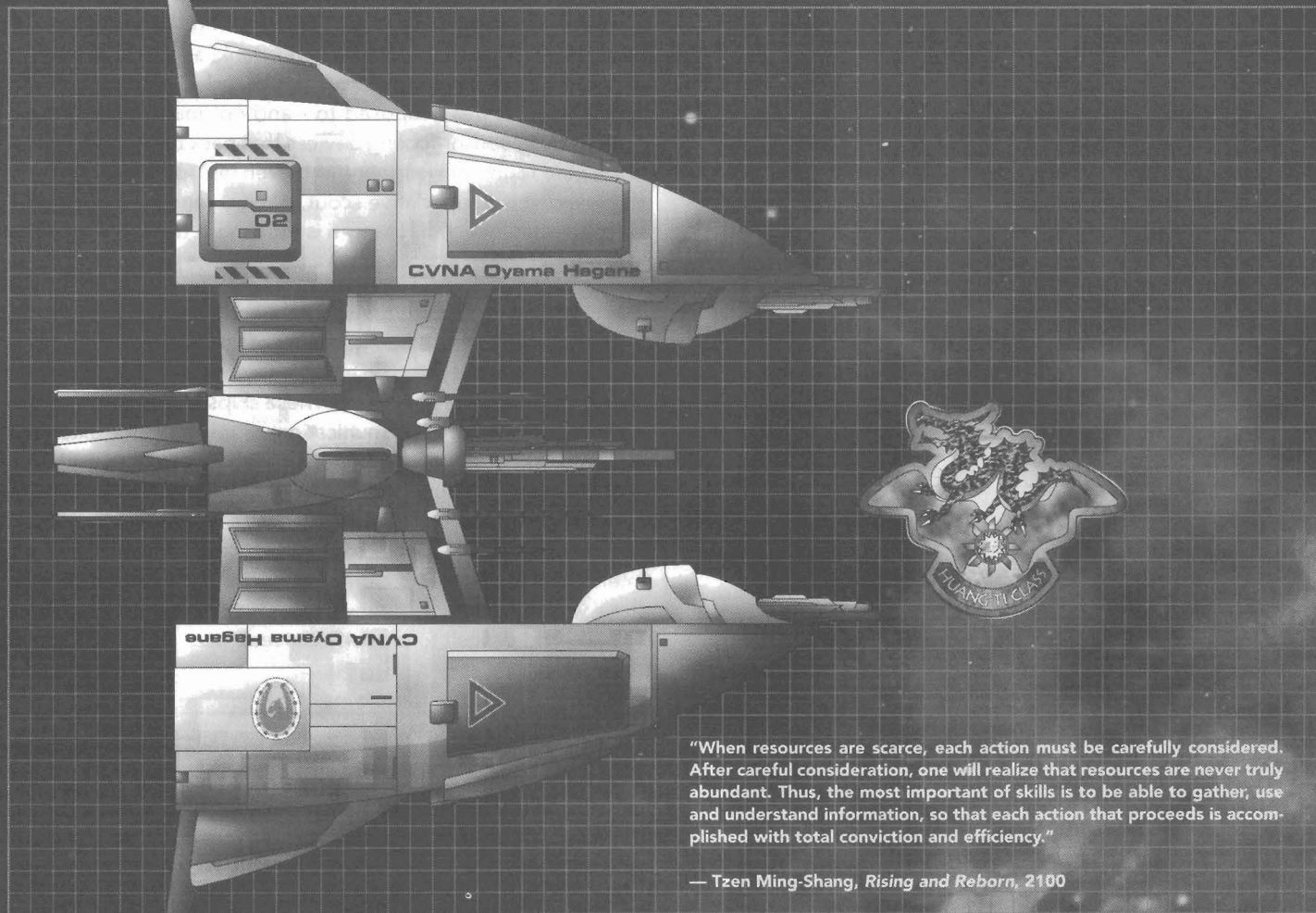
Name:	CVNA John Salerno
Launched:	N/A
Status:	Commissioned

In a move approved by every Venusian espionage office except for those affiliated with VenusBank, the next Huang-Ti-class ship to be constructed will bear the name of the VAC agent who headed the operation to reveal VenusBank's activities in 2210 to the rest of the Venusian corporations. Although the Venusian Bank, in its dealings with the other corporations, does acknowledge Salerno's role in bringing "fairness" to Venus' planetary politics, most outside observers are certain that this rather obvious jab has been felt deeply by the egos of VenusBank's board members.



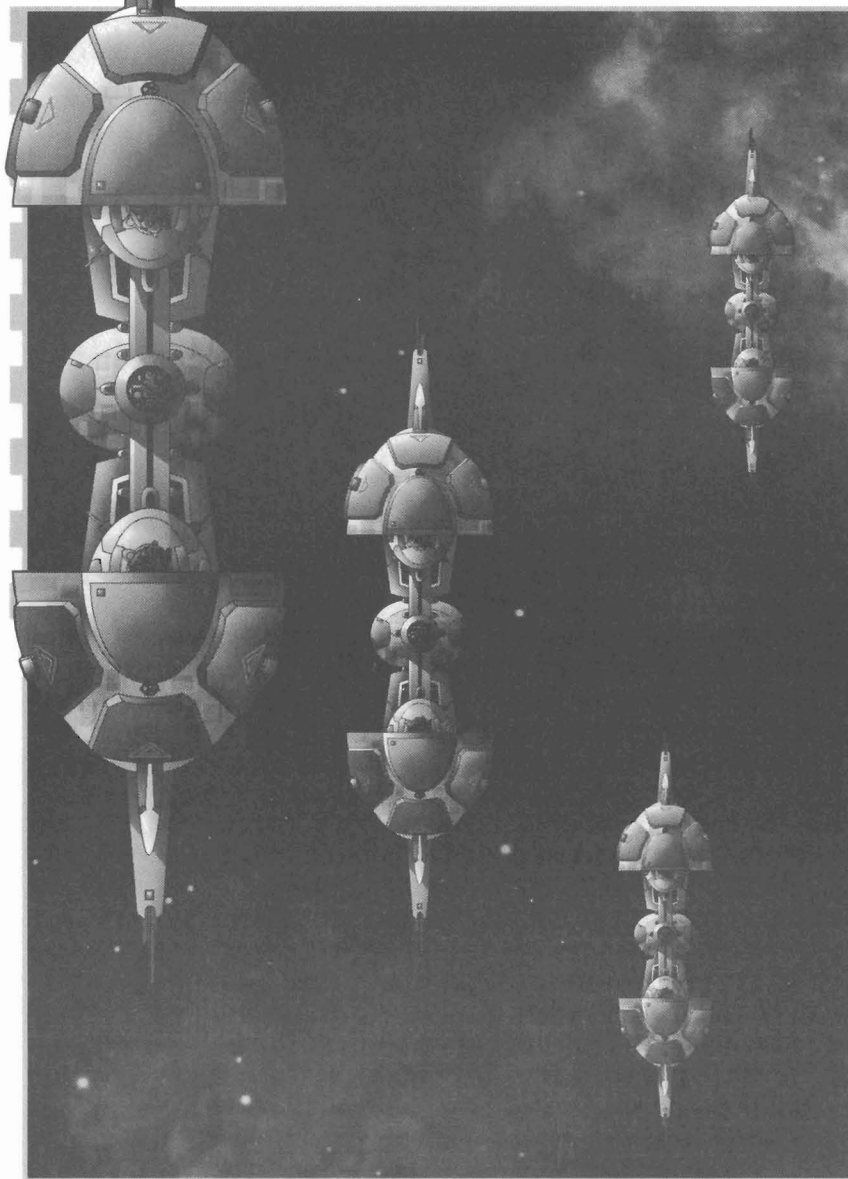
HUANG-TI-CLASS OBSERVER

CVNA Oyama Hagane (2213 Configuration)





HUANG-TI OBSERVER



► 3.1 OVERVIEW

When the CVNA was formed, it was widely known in Venusian executive circles that the Venusian Bank had used a group of highly customized stealth ships to ferry cargo to and from its Project Methuselah bases near Jupiter. Using this design (reluctantly released to the CVNA by VenusBank) as a base, a team of engineers from several arcologies created a warship that did exactly what it was supposed to - and not much else. The numerous bulky sensor-fooling devices that pack the Huang-ti's hull leave little room for weaponry, and even less for armor. Properly deployed, it is a superlative scout, but if an enemy should get a solid combat lock, the Huang-ti is little more than an expensive coffin for its crew.

The Huang-Ti-class ships are secrets among secrets; their names are classified and come from the ranks of Venus' intelligence community, they are not listed on any registry, and they bear no markings of nationality or allegiance. These ships are designed to operate alone, without communication or resupply, for extended periods of time. A special committee reporting to both the Venusian Planetary Advisory Board and the CVNA took six months to select a crew for the first Huang-Ti-class ship to see service, and the crew selection process for the two next vessels is similarly intensive. It is unknown if more Huang-Ti-class ships past the first three will be constructed; they are proving to be both expensive to build and difficult to properly conceal.

▼ 3.1.1 Capabilities

The Huang-Ti is the closest thing to an invisible ship the Venusian Bank's engineers were able to concoct. In addition to shielded engines, extensive temperature-control systems and a covering of radiation-absorbing material, the Huang-Ti is also equipped with a much larger (and correspondingly more difficult to use) version of the visual masking technology stolen by Venusian agents from CEGA's Lucifer and Typhon exo-armor projects. Linked into the ship's communications, sensor and hull vid-membrane sys-

tems, this "cloak" can hide all of the Huang-Ti's visual signature while simultaneously transmitting false signals and sensor images to an enemy ship, tricking the target into seeing nothing at all. The system has proven effective in trials at even close distances of a few kilometers, but even with multiple skilled controllers aided by powerful computers, the system cannot keep the Huang-Ti hidden if there are several enemies cooperating in a search.

The Huang-Ti, not being designed for frontline combat, is not terribly well-armed. Its lasers are powerful, but fixed to fire out of tiny slits, restricting their effectiveness. It carries a few dozen drones, but rather than the torpedoes and hunter-killers used by other drone-carrying Venusian ships, the Huang-Ti is obliged to carry bulky observer and electronic-warfare drones that take up extra space (due to the modifications needed to keep them both stealthy and maintenance-friendly) and serve little purpose in open battle. The Huang-Ti's array of CMM launchers is impressive, but it cannot carry enough ammunition to have any chance of fighting its way out of anything but the smallest skirmish.

Each of the Huang-Ti's two primary hulls has a small vehicle bay equipped with a compact catapult system. Any fighter or exo-armor may be carried, but the Huang-Ti's mission profile usually demands stealth and guile to the exclusion of all else (and with financial expense being the least important of worries). As a result, the Huang-Ti is usually assigned a pair of G-8 Korikaze special-operations exo-armors, which are equipped with stealth and masking devices even more complex than the Huang-Ti's own. These technologically bleeding-edge units can be used for advance scouting, shadowing, ambush or sabotage, and are each almost as irreplaceable as their mothership.

The crew of the Huang-Ti is a mix of hardened combat veterans with covert-operations experience and intelligence analysts with little to no military training. While the soldiers run the ship and are responsible for maintaining secrecy, the analysts gather data using the ship's sensors and use it to plan strategic moves or compose reports for transmission back to Venus. The analysts are, as

a rule, unaware that if their ship is discovered, it will be forced to self-destruct; their loyalty to Venus and the Venusian way of life does not extend to suicide. However, since no Huang-Ti-class ship has yet been put in this uncomfortable position, there is currently no shortage of eager Venusian intelligence officers happy to accept a posting aboard one of these vessels.

▼ 3.1.2 Operational Role

It is expected that the Jovian Confederation will be the primary target of the three Huang-Ti-class ships. CEGA is much more easily observed using spies on Earth and in the Orbitals, and Mars has, as far as Venus is concerned, little to hide. The vast amount of space covered by the Confederation is a perfect roaming ground for the Huang-Ti class. Even though the events of the Odyssey have put the JAF on guard for further Venusian incursions into Jovian space, there is no evidence that the Jovians have managed to improve their detection systems such that the Huang-Ti would not be an effective spy.

Also of some importance is a systematic inspection of clandestine activities in the Belt. STRIKE is an ever-present concern, and that organization's facility for predicting Venusian movements is all the necessary justification for tasking the CVNA's most advanced resources toward curtailing STRIKE's activities. It is also suspected that CEGA and the Jovians have numerous hidden outposts in the Belt; although these installations no doubt "go silent" the moment they detect a nearby vessel, it is hoped that they will reveal their secrets to a ship that cannot be seen so easily.

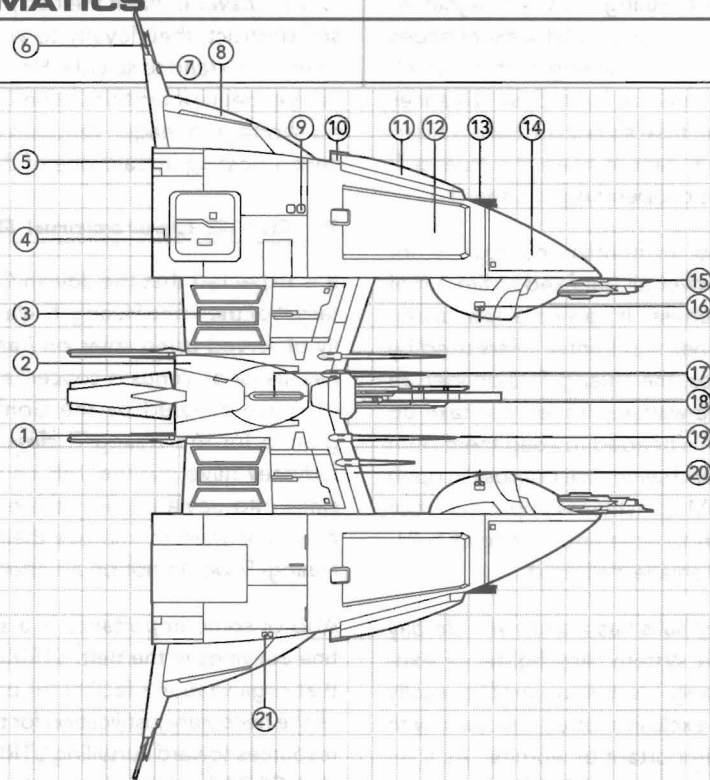
If an armed conflict should ever break out, the Huang-Ti class will be used to sow discord and confusion in enemy ranks, sabotaging key locations and carrying out hit-and-fade attacks on the enemy's bases. Even in the current, relatively warm political climate, the Venusian corporations are rapidly finding much common ground in their mutual desire to use the Huang-Ti-class ships to plant evidence, make troublesome individuals "disappear" and otherwise help turn the other solar nations against one another.





► 3.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS

● Side View

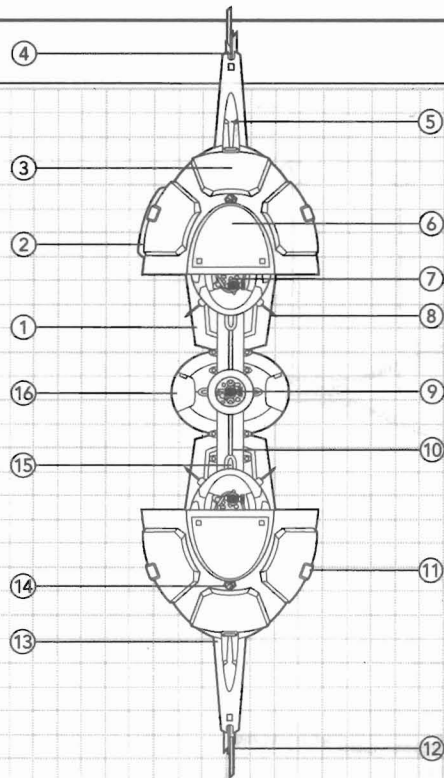


▼ Legend

1	Drive Fin (Extended)	10	Drone Bay Actuator	18	Telescope Cluster (Extended)
2	Drive Fin Mount	11	Drone Bay Cover	19	Enhanced Instrument Cluster (Extended)
3	Decoy Launcher Cover	12	Sensor Dishes (Closed)	20	Gas Storage Access Bay
4	Hangar Bay Door	13	Lidar/Rangefinder Emitter	21	Short Range Sensors
5	Rear Cloaking Transmission Cluster (Retracted)	14	Forward Weapons Bay		
6	Instrument Cluster (Extended)	15	Cloaking System Transmission Cluster (Extended)		
7	Instrument Housing	16	Omnidirectional Antenna (Extended)		
8	Electronic Warfare Pod	17	Directional Gas Vent		
9	Personnel Airlocks				

3.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.) ◀

Front View 0



0m 25 50

▼ Legend

1	Decoy Launcher Cover	9	Telescope Cluster (Extended)
2	Hangar Door	10	Gas Storage Access Bay
3	Drone Bay Cover	11	Drone Bay Actuator
4	Instrument Housing	12	Instrument Cluster (Extended)
5	Electronic Warfare Pod	13	Short Range Sensors
6	Forward Weapons Bay	14	Lidar/Rangefinder Emitter
7	Cloaking System Transmission Cluster (Extended)	15	Enhanced Instrument Cluster (Extended)
8	Omnidirectional Antenna (Extended)	16	Directional Gas Vent

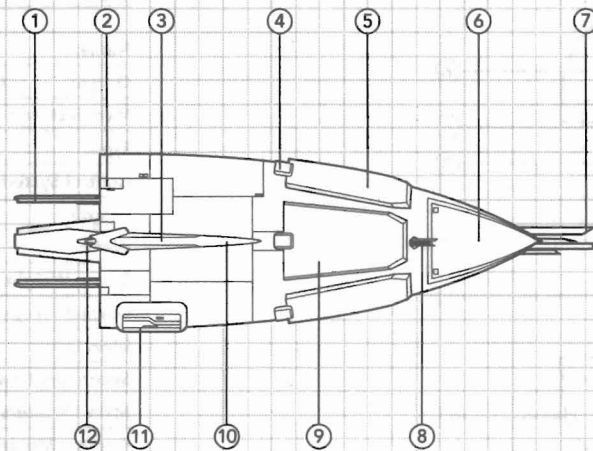
Specifications ▼

Name:	Huang-Ti
Origin:	Cooperative Venusian Naval Administration
Manufacturer:	Various Venusian Shipyards
Type:	Observer
Control System:	Bridge w/astronomical display
Length:	140 m overall
Width:	40 m overall
Empty Weight:	7,500Tons
Loaded Weight:	10,000 Tons
Main Drive:	1 x 20 MW
Secondary Powerplant:	1 x 4000 KW
Main Thrusters:	1 x 25,000,000 kg
Apogee Motors:	80
Acceleration:	2.0 g
Onboard Sensors:	Fire Control Radar, Infrared/ Ultraviolet, Lidar, Magnetometer, Microwaves, Motion Detectors, Radcounter, Search Radar
Fixed Armament:	PDS, 1 x Area Defense Laser Array, 2 x KKC turret
Additional Armament:	n/a
Defensive Systems:	Mag Screen
Equipment:	Escape Pods



► 3.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)

0 Top View

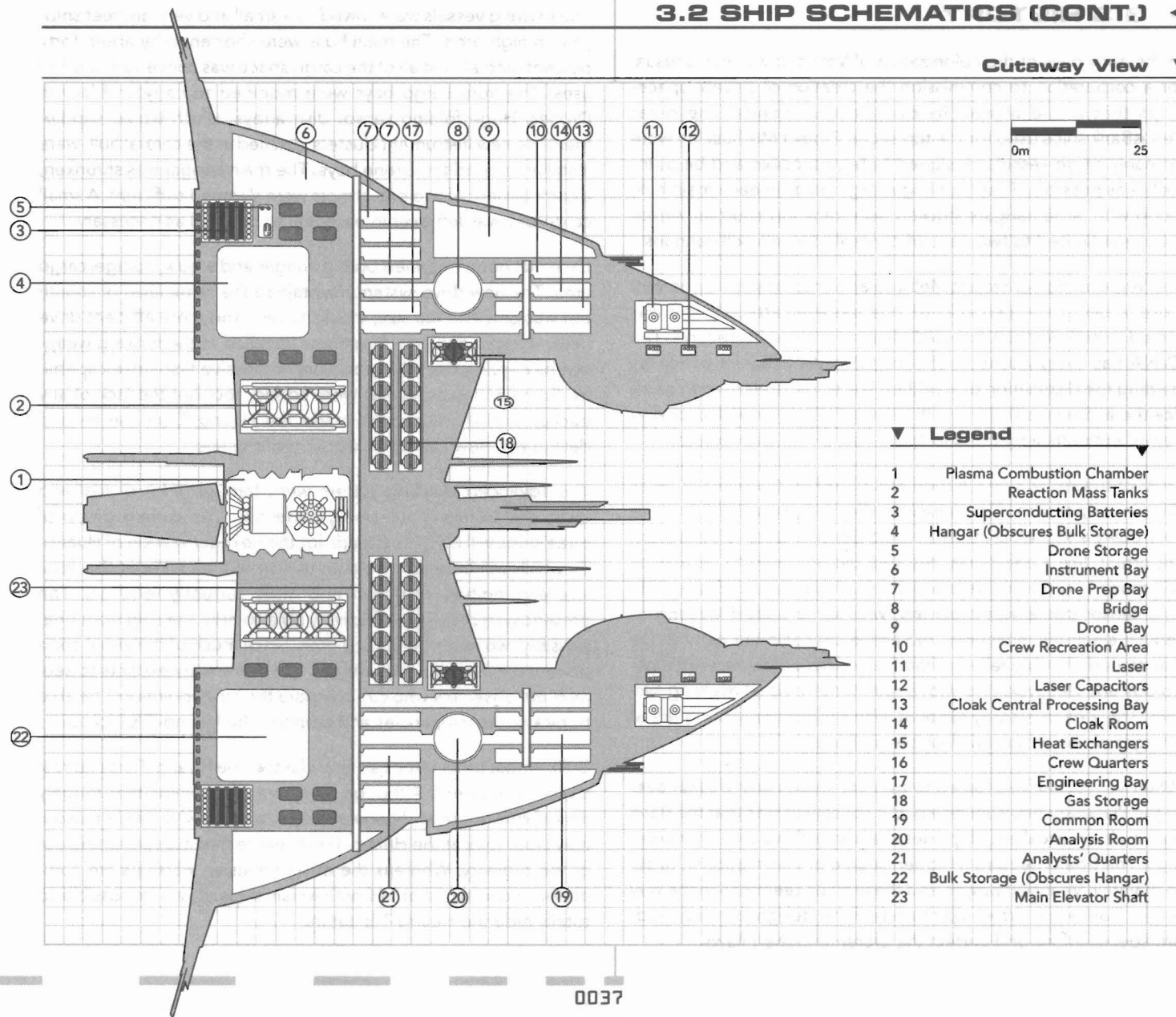


▼ Legend

1	Drive Fin (Extended)	6	Forward Weapons Bay	11	Hangar Bay Door
2	Rear Cloaking Transmission Cluster (Retracted)	7	Cloaking System Transmission Cluster (Extended)	12	Instrument Cluster (Extended)
3	Instrument Housing	8	Lidar/Rangefinder Emitter		
4	Drone Bay Actuator	9	Drone Bay Cover		
5	Sensor Dishes (Closed)	10	Electronic Warfare Pod		

3.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)

Cutaway View





► 3.3 HISTORY

In the early days of the colonization of Venus, it was not unusual for a corporation to commission the creation of private space-ships that would answer its own peculiar needs. The older VenusBank ships used for the top secret Project Methuselah were primarily cargo vessels, designed to ferry supplies and be as invisible as possible. They had huge cargo holds in each main hull, along with large hangars stocked with transport shuttles. Armament was limited to two pairs of concealed kinetic kill cannons.

The Venusian Bank's Project Methuselah transport ships came very close to being revealed in 2210; one was even attacked and was forced to self-destruct to avoid capture or close inspection. The CVNA has every intention of continuing VenusBank's policy regarding the disposition of stealthed spy ships, preferring to sacrifice the entire vessel along with its crew rather than risk exposing Venus' entire military buildup to the rest of the solar system.

Most of the vessel's conception was based on the need to be as discreet as possible. The drive was effectively stealthed, but was very bulky and inefficient as a result. Sensors were relatively unimportant; like a packhorse, the ship did not need to be able to see much in order to make a delivery. A standard civilian-grade ship sensor dome was mounted, with some added layering to reduce electronic emissions. No active concealment technology was carried; the ship relied primarily on older passive stealth technology and decoys along with a rudimentary visual masking system. The idea of actively sending false projections and signals at a target observer was not feasible until later.

When VenusBank was forced to turn the stealth-ship design over to the Planetary Advisory Board, the consensus was that the Bank had built an excellent ship, despite some flaws and shortcomings. The Board needed a hidden source of information in order to maintain Venusian power, and these ships seemed like the way to go. Plans were drawn up to update the design to more modern specifications and correct the aforementioned flaws.

The existing vessels were towed to a small and very discreet shipyard in high orbit. The main hulls were shortened by about forty percent, and almost all of the cargo space was converted to other uses. The front cargo bays were modified to carry and launch Drones. Huge folding sensor dish arrays, which would supplement the new instrument clusters installed in the central hull, were installed around the Drone bays. The main hangar was shrunk; a complement of two exo-armors were deemed sufficient. A small cargo bay was left over in each hull to be used as necessary.

Each hull now contained both a hangar and a bulk storage/cargo area. The new drive system maintained the same level of stealth but was only half the size, thanks to new and more efficient drive coils. A set of powerful lasers was installed in the forward weapons bay, giving the ship some very impressive first-strike capability. Some anti-exo missiles were added, too, but the lack of any backup anti-ship weapons made the Huang-Ti (as the revised design was now called) a poor ship of the line.

The advanced cloaking system went through a lot of trial and error, and in fact is still being perfected. The current group of three ships will be the testbeds for the next generation of Huang-Ti, which will hopefully be able to stay hidden without the massive expenditure of power and mass currently required. The present system is only effectively able to hide the ship from one, possibly two enemy units at a time. Since much of the visual component involves sending images that the enemy expects to see, multiple observers who can compare their viewpoints will be able to pick out discrepancies and pinpoint the Huang-Ti's location.

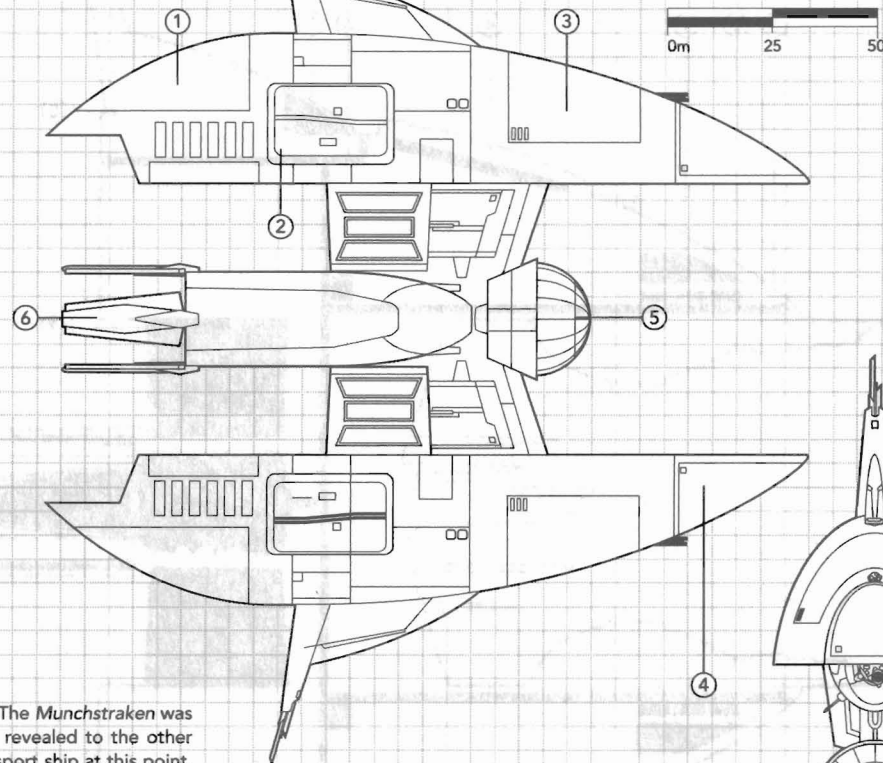
Unlike most other Venusian ship classes, the Huang-Ti has no real civilian equivalent. Although there are cargo ships that roughly resemble it in size and general shape, anyone who gets a reasonably close look at the Huang-Ti will realize that it is something out of the ordinary. Whereas the other Venusian warships are completely indistinguishable from civilian ships, it was impossible to totally hide the Huang-Ti's nature.

CVNA OCTAVIUS MUNCHSTRAKEN ◀

Stealth Cargo Vessel, 2210 ⓘ

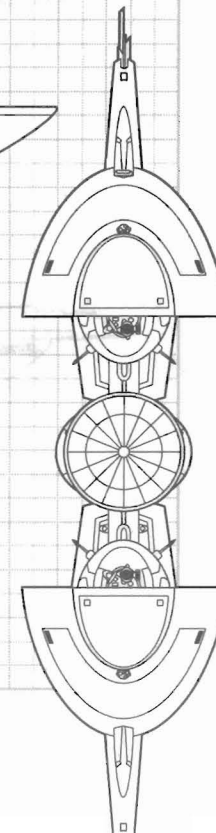
▼ Legend ▼

- 1 Shielded Cargo Section
- 2 Expanded Hangar Bay
- 3 Forward Cargo Section
- 4 Light KKC armament
- 5 Standard Sensor Dome
- 6 Large Engine



CVNA *Octavius Munchstraken*: launched May 2208. The *Munchstraken* was one of the first stealth cargo whose existence was revealed to the other corporations of Venus. It was very much a pure transport ship at this point, with large cargo bays extending from the back of each main hull. The ship's electronics were not as sophisticated as those found on more modern vessels, and were barely sufficient to keep it hidden from most casual looks.

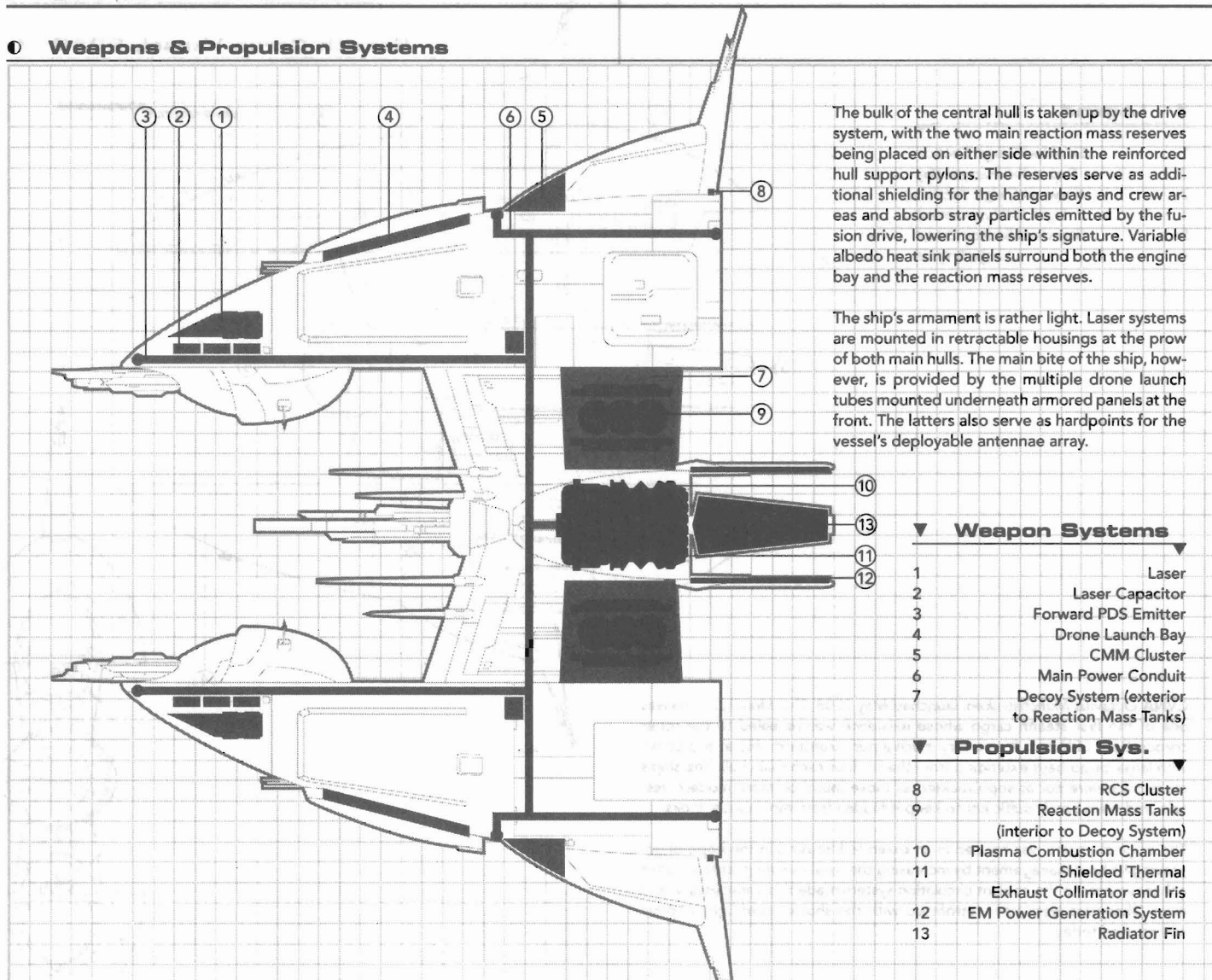
The original engine was housed in an extended housing in the hope of improving its heat management by increasing the total radiating surface. Later enhancements to the coolant circulation system made this unnecessary, and most Observers were later retrofitted with the shorter (and lighter) drive mount used today.





► 3.4 SHIP SYSTEMS

① Weapons & Propulsion Systems



The bulk of the central hull is taken up by the drive system, with the two main reaction mass reserves being placed on either side within the reinforced hull support pylons. The reserves serve as additional shielding for the hangar bays and crew areas and absorb stray particles emitted by the fusion drive, lowering the ship's signature. Variable albedo heat sink panels surround both the engine bay and the reaction mass reserves.

The ship's armament is rather light. Laser systems are mounted in retractable housings at the prow of both main hulls. The main bite of the ship, however, is provided by the multiple drone launch tubes mounted underneath armored panels at the front. The latter also serve as hardpoints for the vessel's deployable antennae array.

▼ Weapon Systems ▼

- 1 Laser
- 2 Laser Capacitor
- 3 Forward PDS Emitter
- 4 Drone Launch Bay
- 5 CMM Cluster
- 6 Main Power Conduit
- 7 Decoy System (exterior to Reaction Mass Tanks)

▼ Propulsion Sys. ▼

- 8 RCS Cluster
- 9 Reaction Mass Tanks (interior to Decoy System)
- 10 Plasma Combustion Chamber
- 11 Shielded Thermal Exhaust Collimator and Iris
- 12 EM Power Generation System
- 13 Radiator Fin

3.4 SHIP SYSTEMS ◀

Sensors and Life Support Systems ①

The Huang-Ti is equipped with an extensive sensor network to enable it to fulfill its mission. The sensors are clustered in five main groups. The forward array is composed mostly of long range antennae which can be extended to improve performance. The side arrays deploy from the drone bays' armored doors to create a very large detection surface around each hull. The rearmost mounts are blister housings with trailing antennae, which can also be extended out for better reception.

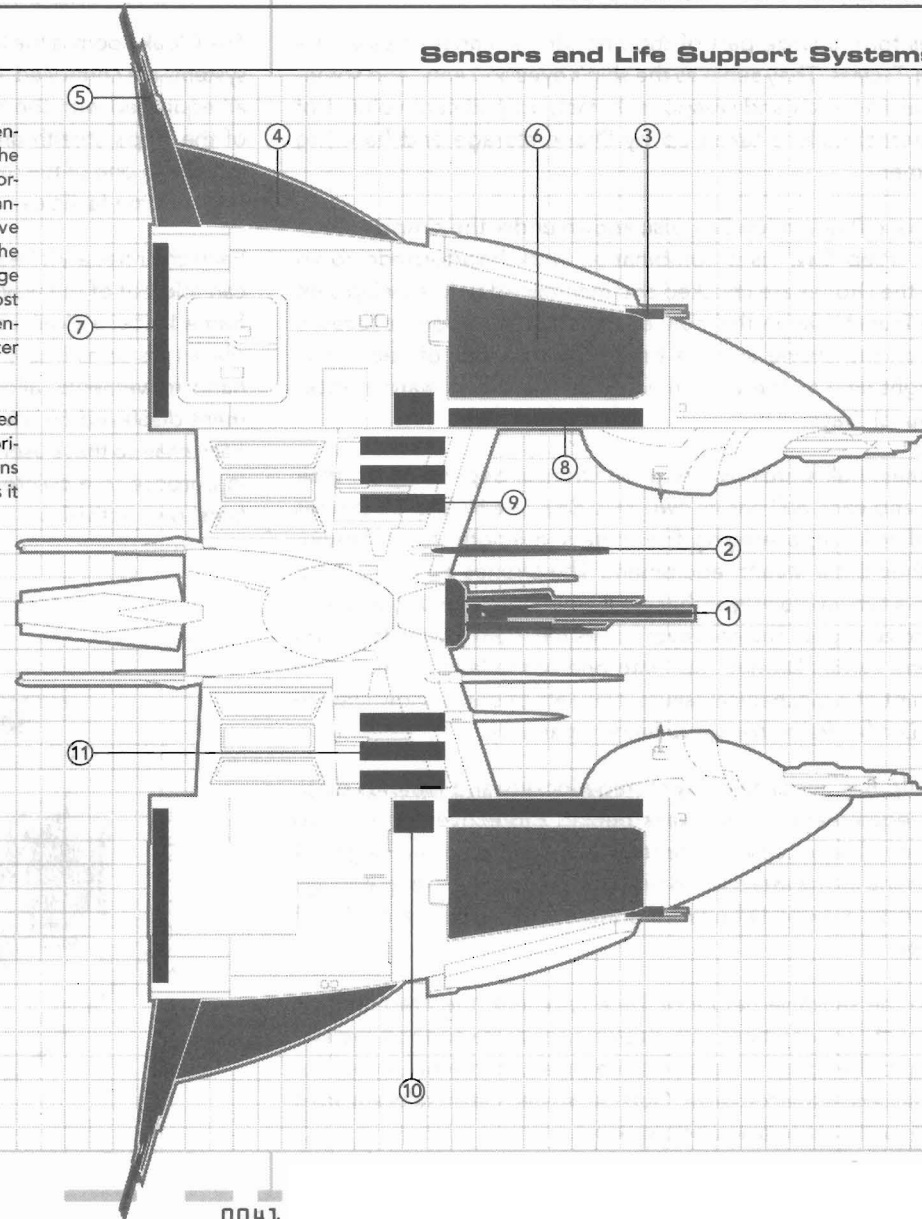
The ship's life support nodes are more clustered than usual for a ship of this size. Most of the primary systems are found in the hull support pylons and the innermost side of the hulls. This makes it easier to manage their heat output.

▼ Sensor Systems

- 1 Telescope Cluster
- 2 Expandable Enhanced Detection Array
- 3 Lidar/Rangefinder Emitter
- 4 ECM/ECCM Pod
- 5 Synthetic-Aperture Sensor Cluster
- 6 Sensor Dishes

▼ Life Support Sys.

- 7 Screen Generator
- 8 Heat Exchangers
- 9 Gas Storage
- 10 Local Life Support Systems
- 11 Superconducting Batteries





▼ 3.4.1 Drone Prep Bay

Drones form a large part of the operational capabilities of the Huang-Ti class. They serve as the ship's eyes and ears, and sometimes as its hands and weapons. In fact, a significant volume of the internal hulls is taken up by Drone storage and handling equipment.

The Drone Preparation Bay, also known under the simpler moniker of "Prep Bay," is a combination workshop/torpedo room where the Drones are checked and maintained before being sent to the launch bay in the bow of the ship. The room is located between the Drone storage bays near the back of each main hull (right next to the vehicle hangars) and the forward airlocks and launch bays.

Each main hull stores twenty or so Drones, depending on their types, and each hull has its own Prep Bay. The Huang-ti's Drones are rather large, averaging five meters in length, to accommodate their extra stealth equipment. The Drones enter the Prep Bay on a tubular conveyor that can function both under acceleration and zero-gee. The conveyor leaves the room toward the ship's bow and carries Drones "up" into one of the launch airlocks. In the event of a mechanical failure, two sets of doors allow crew to move Drones from storage to launch manually.

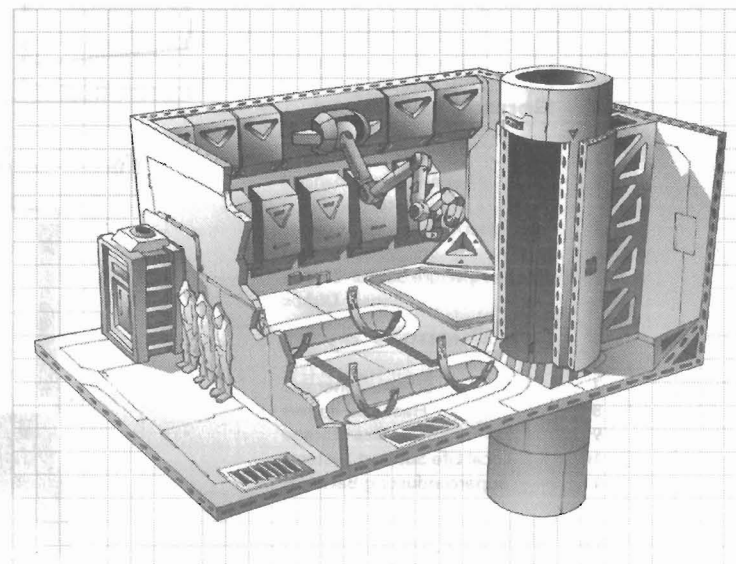
The Prep Bay contains many storage lockers and features diagnostic equipment on the walls behind protective panels. Two repair cradles occupy the center of the room, and a large robotic crane arm is attached to one wall. The arm is strong enough to assist in moving Drones from the conveyor to the cradles if need be.

Due to the sensitive nature of the equipment, the Prep Bay is a clean-room environment with its own special life support system. Access to the room is via a positive-pressure internal airlock located opposite the conveyor. Outside, sealed clean-suits are lined up in a rack next to a scrubdown kiosk.

▼ 3.4.2 Cloak Room

The Cloak Room is the location from which the ship's active stealth systems are controlled. It is a small room with three operator chairs, all equipped with the necessary controls to supervise the status of the ship's stealth and "silent running" systems. The room is located in one of the main hulls, near most of the crew recreation and off-time facilities.

Each chair has a VR headset and a set of small control panels that can fold out of the way. The arms of each chair are actually linear frame limbs; a cloak controller sits comfortably in the chair and places his arms into the linear frame, which reads his arm and hand movements, allowing manipulation of the virtual environment displayed on the headset. There is enough room between each chair so that a user can make grand sweeping gestures (similar in purpose to a painter's strokes) without obstructing his neighbors' own activities.



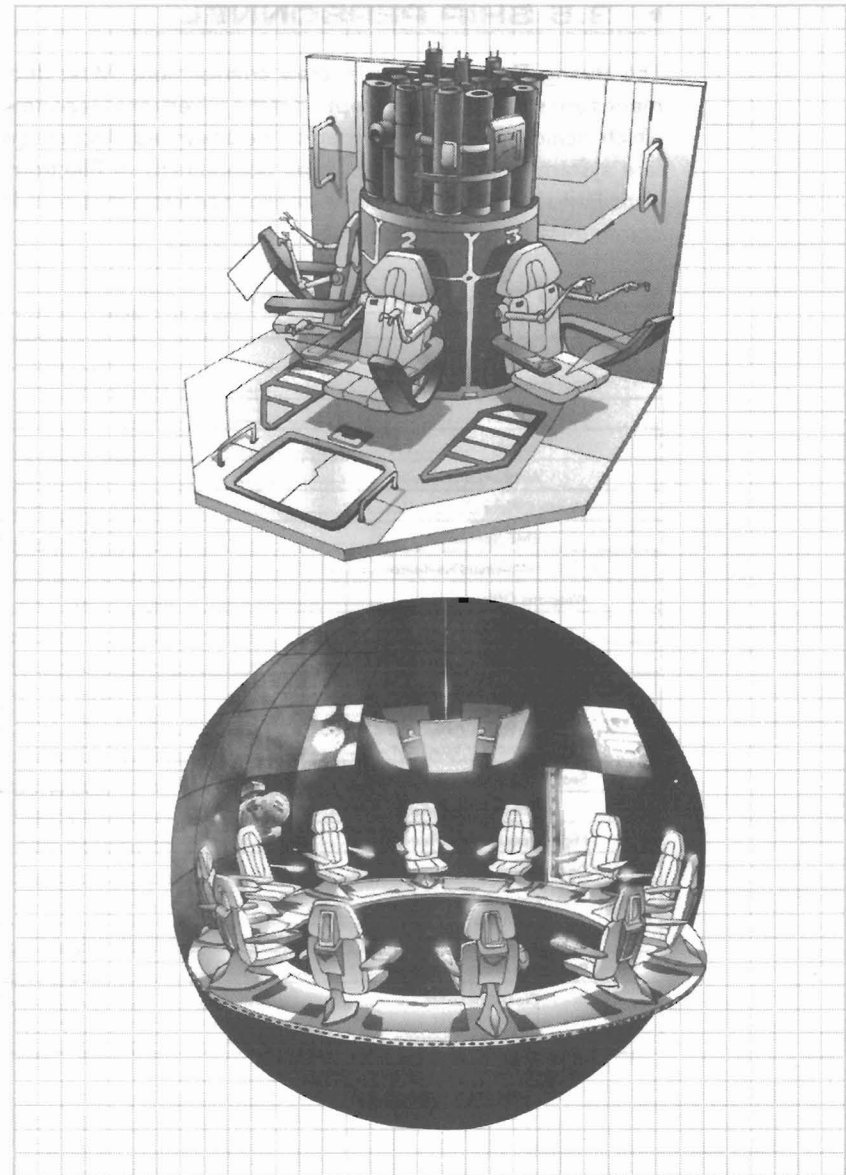
Otherwise, the room is quite cramped. Big manual control panels and monitors fold out of the wall so that the cloak can be controlled via keyboard, should the main cloak interface fail. This manual control setup is duplicated for each seat, and is easily the most daunting set of buttons and dials on the entire ship. Data and power lines, covered by lightweight polymer panels for protection and aesthetics, are grouped into an easily accessed "trunk" located between the seats.

▼ 3.4.3 Analysis Room

This is the room where all the data gathered by the Huang-ti's sensors is collated, inspected, and evaluated by the onboard specialists. It is located in the same position as the Cloak Room and recreation rooms in the opposite main hull, and is fairly large for a room aboard a spaceship of this size.

The inner room is spherical; since the corresponding space in the other main hull is square-edged, the Analysis Room is actually a sphere positioned within a rectangular volume. The space outside the crew sphere is taken up by computers and data storage equipment which is accessible via access panels in the walls. A tiny bathroom and a snack bin are located right outside the main door for convenience during long shifts.

The room has many chairs along the walls, but the central space is clear of permanent furniture. The walls are covered in monitors; threat boards and other large displays can unfold from the walls, allowing even more data display space. In its fully "open" state, the whole room is packed solid with display devices. Many crew, however, prefer to use virtual reality headsets and use the central space as a virtual environment. Up to a dozen people can work in this room in total comfort (as far as elbow room goes, at least). This room is not set up for ship control functions; it is a think tank, not much else.





► 3.5 SHIP PERSONNEL

The Huang-Ti has an unusual crew arrangement. Most departments are standard; the exception is the Diversions Department, which includes all those assigned to the advanced electronic warfare systems and half of the ship's complement of Electromagnetic Emissions (EME) Specialist (sensor operators that double as communications specialists).

▣ Crew Organization Chart

Captain	
First Officer	1
Supply Officer	1
Supply Clerk	2
Aesthetics Specialist	1
Morale Officer	1
EME Specialist	6
Helmsman/Navigator	3
Weapons Officer	1
Gunner	3
Chief Engineer	1
Master Engineer	2
Engineer	9
Electronics Specialist	9
Computer Specialist	1
Security Officer	1
Security Specialist	3
Flight Operations Officer	1
Deck Officer	1
Catapult Specialist	2
Ordnance Specialist	2
Exo-armor Pilot	2
Diversions Officer	1
Cloak Specialist	3
EME Specialist	6
Computer Specialist	3

▼ 3.5.1 Interview with a Cloak Control Officer

Name: Jan Topol
Rank: Chu-i
Current Assignment: CVNA O. Hagane



"Come in, sit down, and stay out of the way. We don't like guests in the cloak room. We don't even like talking to the bridge, so we turn the speakers way down. It's not as if they ever have anything important to say to us anyway. 'Keep us hidden.' 'Maintain cloak.' Duh. That's all we do. Day in, day out. It's like chess, but only if every chess move involved painting a portrait.

"Yeah, I know they say we're crazy. I don't care if they think we're dead, as long as they don't bother us. We need calm and concentration to do this. Can't concentrate if there's a constant ringing in our ear from the intercom.

"Most of the time, only one of us really needs to be on duty. We basically keep the ship's hull looking like exterior space, and monitor all sorts of emissions. If someone rubs their socks on the rec room carpet, we'll know about it. It's when we encounter another ship that all of us have to work at once. In addition to the photoskin covering, we have to create false signals and sensor images to transmit to the target to make them think they're seeing nothing but empty space.

"VenusBank tested a bunch of people for this job. Fifteen people out of nine hundred passed. Fifteen. We're getting rich off this job, you can be sure of that, as long as we don't screw up. Not much chance of that, though, at least not for me. On my test, I got within three hundred meters of the test ship before they saw me. Dead meat."

▼ 3.5.2 Interview with an Intelligence Officer



Name: Geoff Niekerk
Rank: Chu-sa
Current Assignment: CVNA O. Hagane

"No, I'm not a naval officer. I'm just a techie, okay? They pay me, I ship out. Me and the rest of the information-analysis gang, we spend most of our time in the analysis room, or the Tank, as we call it. We're restricted from the military portions of the ship, but most of us don't mind. There's lots to do in the Tank, from playing games and watching vidshows to actually getting work done.

"Usually, there's not much to do on the first leg of any given trip, but once we get on station and turn on the bugeyes, things make a one-eighty. We practically live in the Tank, eating and sleeping. We let the computers collate all the info that comes in, and then spend days upon days deciding which bits of data are actually important.

"The captain likes to come down and chat with us. He's a pretty nice guy, but I think he gets a bit too serious about the military side of things. Procedures and traditions mean little to us — we're too busy looking for patterns in the data.

"The brass also gets really insistent when we're at a surveillance site and he needs us to have a data analysis done yesterday. We're not being lazy when we're slow with that stuff. It's just that sometimes we have a lot of information to integrate before we can decide on an appropriate course of action. The captain may be used to making snap judgments on limited information, but frankly, doing that in our job could get the whole ship discovered and captured."

▼ 3.5.3 Interview with a Drone Technician

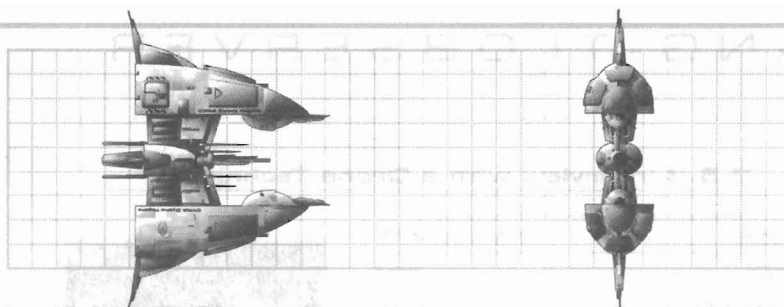
Name: Lorna Skipworth
Rank: Jun-i
Current Assignment: CVNA O. Hagane



"They have names. All forty of them. They're like children really, inquisitive and eager to please. It's my job to make sure that each of them is well-taken care of and in perfect working order. These aren't your normal drones, after all. They're each specially modified to be stealthy and have greater range and endurance than typical Class II Drones. It wouldn't do for us to launch a normal drone, considering that we're supposed to be invisible, right?

"Before the ship leaves port, I always make sure we have all the spare parts and equipment I think we're going to need. The drones themselves are loaded in a shut-down state and don't need any babysitting. For most of the trip out, I serve as a backup hangar bay crewer, and if there's nothing to do in there, I usually end up cooking for the analysts.

"When we're near a surveillance site, though, I go down into the drone bay, put on a clean suit (wouldn't want stray hair or bad breath to ruin the stealth coating) and do my real job. Once the drones are moved up from storage, I run their system checks, power-up their systems and run the proper encouragement programs to get the Executor brains in the right 'mood.' Then I kick them out the door and wait. Sometimes they come back, and I spend most of the trip home fixing them back up. Sometimes, they don't come back, and we have a funeral. Like I said, they're like kids."



► Huang Ti Observer

▼ Overall Data:

Threat Value: 60900	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: 246.6M	Indv.lemonDice: 3
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▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Space	Combat: 5 MP (0.5 g)	Top: 10 MP (1.0 g)	Maneuver: -3	ReMass: 2000 BPs
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▼ Sections:

1x	Main Hull w/Bridge	1x	Main Hull w/Cloak Room	1x	Central Hull
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▼ Off & Def Systems

1x Point Defense System	4x Laser Array	6x CMM
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► Section: Main Hull w/Bridge

▼ Main Data:

TV: 30000	Off. TV: 57000	Def. TV: 2500	Misc. TV: 32000	Cost: 129M	Indv.lemonDice: 1
Crew: 28Actions: 6	Sensors: +2/4km	Comm: +2/20 km	Fire Control: +1	Type: Late Proto	
Hull Size: 36	Default Size: 31	Armor: 50	Light: 50	Heavy: 100	Overkill: 150

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 2,000 hrs	ReMass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Autopilot	-	Lvl 1 Pilot	Ejection Systems	-	-Pods for 20 People
Backup Systems	-	Comm, FireCon, LifeSupp, Sensor	HEP: Rad 4	-	-
Cargo Bay	-	1,500 m3	HEP: Vac	-	-
Catapults	-	(450/mass)/m/s2	Life Support	-	Full
Computer	3	CRE 0 KNO 0 PP3	Passenger Accom	-	3,000m3
Decoy System	3	Sensor & Visual	Reinforced Crew	3	Absorbs first three "Crew" hits
Difficult to Modify	-	All	Stealth	4	Add to Concealment
ECCM	4	Defensive Elec. Warfare			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
2	Laser Array	F	x20	7	0	+1	Inf.	AD2, Conc. (1rnd), HEAT	12	8142	n/a
1	PDS (ranged)	T	x10	1	+1	+6	Inf.	AM, Conc. (Instant), HEAT	16	1401	n/a
	PDS (shield)	FF	x20	Melee	+1	+4	Inf.	Conc. (Inst.), Def.E-Shld.H.	16	539	n/a
3	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	32ea	Conc.(1rnd), HEAT, Missile	8	2071	2.7

► Section: Main Hull w/o Bridge

▼ Main Data:

TV: 25000 Off. TV: 35000	Def. TV: 2500	Misc. TV: 38000	Cost: 101M	Indv. Lemon Dice: 1
Crew: 28Actions: 6	Sensors: +2/4km	Comm: +2/20 km	Fire Control: +1	Type: Late Proto
Hull Size: 36	Default Size: 29	Armor: 50	Light: 50	Heavy: 100
				Overkill: 150

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 2,500 hrs	ReMass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	Comm, FireCon, LifeSupp, Sensor	HEP	-	Rad 4, Vac
Cargo Bay	-	1,500 m3	HoloField	2	-
Catapults	-	(450/mass)/m/s2	Lab Intelligence	0	-
2 x Computer	3	CRE 0 KNO 0 PP3 (one for HoloField)	Life Support	-	Full
Decoy System	3	Sensor & Visual	Passenger Accom	-	3,000m3
Difficult to Modify	-	All	-	+2 Lemon Die	
ECM 4, ECCM 4	-	Problem Prone	Reinforced Crew	3	Absorbs first three "Crew" hits
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 24 People	Stealth	4	Add to Concealment

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
2	Laser Array	F	x20	7	0	+1	Inf.	AD2, Conc. (1rnd), HEAT	12	8143	n/a
3	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	32ea	Conc.(1rnd), HEAT, Missile	8	2071	2.7

► Section: Central Hull

▼ Main Data:

TV: 5900	Off. TV: 0	Def. TV: 1600	Misc. TV: 16000	Cost: 16.6M	Indv.lemonDice: 1
Crew: 12	Actions: 5	Sensors: 0/2 km	Comm: 0/10 km	Fire Control: 0	Type: Late Proto
Hull Size: 32	Default Size: 18	Armor: 50	Light: 50	Heavy: 100	Overkill: 150

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Space	Combat: 19 MP (1.9 g)	Top: 39 MP (3.9 g)	Maneuver: -3	Range: 2,500 hrs	R. M.: 8,000 BPs
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	Comm, FireCon, LifeSupp, Sensor	Stealth	4	Add to Concealment
Cargo Bay	-	10,000 m3			
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection System	-	Pods for 12 People			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Life Support	-	Full			
Reinforced Crew	3	Absorbs first three "Crew" hits			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indy lemon dice: -
Crew: -	Actions: -	Sensors: -	Comm.: -	Fire Control: -	Type: -
Hull Size: -	Default Size: -	Base Armor: -	Light: -	Heavy: -	Overkill: -

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: -	Combat: -	Top: -	Maneuver: -	Range: -	Re. Mass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
-					

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indy lemon dice: -
Crew: -	Actions: -	Sensors: -	Comm.: -	Fire Control: -	Type: -
Hull Size: -	Default Size: -	Base Armor: -	Light: -	Heavy: -	Overkill: -

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: -	Combat: -	Top: -	Maneuver: -	Range: -	Re. Mass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
-					

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indy lemon dice: -
Crew: -	Actions: -	Sensors: -	Comm.: -	Fire Control: -	Type: -
Hull Size: -	Default Size: -	Base Armor: -	Light: -	Heavy: -	Overkill: -

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: -	Combat: -	Top: -	Maneuver: -	Range: -	Re. Mass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
-					

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indy lemon dice: -
Crew: -	Actions: -	Sensors: -	Comm.: -	Fire Control: -	Type: -
Hull Size: -	Default Size: -	Base Armor: -	Light: -	Heavy: -	Overkill: -

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: -	Combat: -	Top: -	Maneuver: -	Range: -	Re. Mass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
-					

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC



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▶ PART II: QUID PRO QUO

Taggart hit the airlock floor hard. The *Kitsune* standing behind him planted one foot firmly in the small of his back, pinning him like an insect. A hand grabbed his hair, dragging his head painfully upward, and he found himself staring once again at the face he'd grown to hate since the day the *O'Connor* was destroyed.

"Hello, Nakama. Miss me?" he rasped. Nakama laughed, making a sound like cloth on glass.

"Of course we missed you, Taggart. How impolite, to try to leave our hospitality without saying goodbye."

"I was getting tired of the room service," Taggart muttered. He had

waited two months to make this attempt. They'd caught him just as he was about to make it out the main airlock.

Nakama smiled, that same hooked sneer he used whenever he talked to Taggart. "I've been humanitarian about all this, haven't I? Honestly, I've managed a minor miracle in persuading STRIKE to continue wasting oxygen, water and energy on you. You've been fed well, and allowed to converse."

"Drugged and interrogated, you mean," Taggart spat. Nakama let out an exaggerated sigh. He released Taggart's hair and began to pace.

"I'm sorry, Commander al-Raschid, but we paid a price to get you," Nakama said. "We're going to get some use out of you to repay that price. In this organization, you must understand that he who wastes, wants."

Taggart understood exactly what Nakama was talking about. STRIKE's hatred of Venusians was well-known, and Taggart was sure that Nakama's continued survival, much less the exorbitant fees he was no doubt receiving, depended solely on STRIKE's continued need for his services. If STRIKE decided that Nakama was not providing as much aid as he ought, it was unlikely that they would simply fire him and send him home. The drugs had been mild so far, in an effort to keep him mentally capable of accurately repeating technical information, but that couldn't last forever. Nakama was still pontificating.

"It's a shame you couldn't just cooperate. Now my employers will be wanting proof that I'm not going easy on you just because you're a fellow Venusian. It's either you or me, Taggart."

Nakama glanced over to a nearby medic dressed in CEGA fatigues with STRIKE insignia. "His eyes," he commanded. "If he cannot see, he cannot escape."

The medic's gaunt face betrayed no emotion. The man nodded once, and began to rummage in a nearby toolbox. Taggart felt a pit growing in his stomach. He fought to keep it down.

"What happened to being humanitarian?" he quipped, certain that there hadn't been a quaver in his voice. Nakama's angular face softened, and he leaned over to stroke Taggart's head.

"You're not leaving us much choice, Taggart. Any more drugging, and we might destroy exactly what it is we need from you. So, if we can't persuade your mind, then I'm afraid all that's left is to persuade your body."

Taggart looked straight up at Nakama, ignoring the pain in his spine, and set his jaw.

"I will get out of here, Nakama."

Nakama's face hardened.

"I won't let that happen," he growled. "Every time you try to escape, I will remove another body part from you. If you keep trying to escape, eventually you will have nothing left, but your mind. But trust me, I'll still keep you alive. Even if you end up as a brain in a jar on my desk, I won't let you go until you give me what I want." By the time he finished, Nakama was screaming, flecks of spittle flying from his lips. He nodded to the exo-suit, and then walked out of the airlock.

Taggart heard approaching footsteps, and the medic leaned over him, raising a pair of sharpened tongs. Leaning in close, the medic whispered, "It's okay to scream. Everybody does."

They will rescue me, Taggart thought. They will rescue me. He repeated it to himself for a very long time.

* * *

He's probably already dead, Mischa thought as he walked along the Martian station's observation deck. There's nothing I can do. He'd been saying it to himself for nine hours.

He had received the news of the O'Connor's destruction with the loss of almost all hands when he arrived at Mars and reported to Sho-sho Yang's office for his assignment. He'd also been told that there would be no rescue and no ransom payment for the single known survivor still in STRIKE hands. Apparently, the risk was not worth the return. He hadn't taken it well. Making things worse, Yang had then presented what he must have thought was the good news.

"Based on al-Raschid Tai-i's evaluation and recommendation," he'd said, "we're willing to overlook some of your, ah, offenses, and offer you a probationary civilian position in the CVNA. It's unusual, but al-Raschid's record and judgment were impeccable, and I wouldn't want to dishonor the request of a dead man."

A dead man, Mischa thought, making his twentieth circuit of the deck. They've already buried him. The offer had only made him

feel worse. Taggart had been willing to put his entire career on the line for a debt that Mischa barely knew anything about. It was temptingly easy to write Taggart off as a fanatic clinging to an old tradition. It should have been even easier to simply forget about the man and get on with his new life. Somehow, it just wasn't working.

"Damn it," he muttered. "Well, I guess there's only one thing to do."

Mischa paused in his walk, and looked out the window. Mars' dusky red sphere filled the background, but what drew Mischa's eye was the massive triple-hulled freighter ponderously pulling into a nearby docking complex. An idea came to him, and mental wheels that had sat still for a decade began to spin up. Mischa activated his earring communicator.

"Hello, Mischa," came the quiet voice. Even through the ear-phone, it still seemed to be speaking from every wall.

"I'm going to need a ship," Mischa directed, sotto voce. "The one that's docking right now at Bay K-12 will do. When I get you aboard, you'll take it over and get the crew to evacuate. Understand?"

"Of course, Mischa," the voice said, almost eagerly. "The procedure should take about five hours."

"Good." Mischa grinned. He could feel a sense of adrenaline and excitement he hadn't felt in years. For that alone, he owed Taggart his life. "It's your first field test in ten years. Don't screw this one up. It's important, this time." Mischa tapped his earlobe and cut the connection.

Hang on, Taggart, he thought. A debt's a debt.





CHIEFTAIN ESCORT CRUISER



Notable Ships

Name:	CVNA Haji al-Rahman
Launched:	July 9, 2207
Status:	Convoy Escort

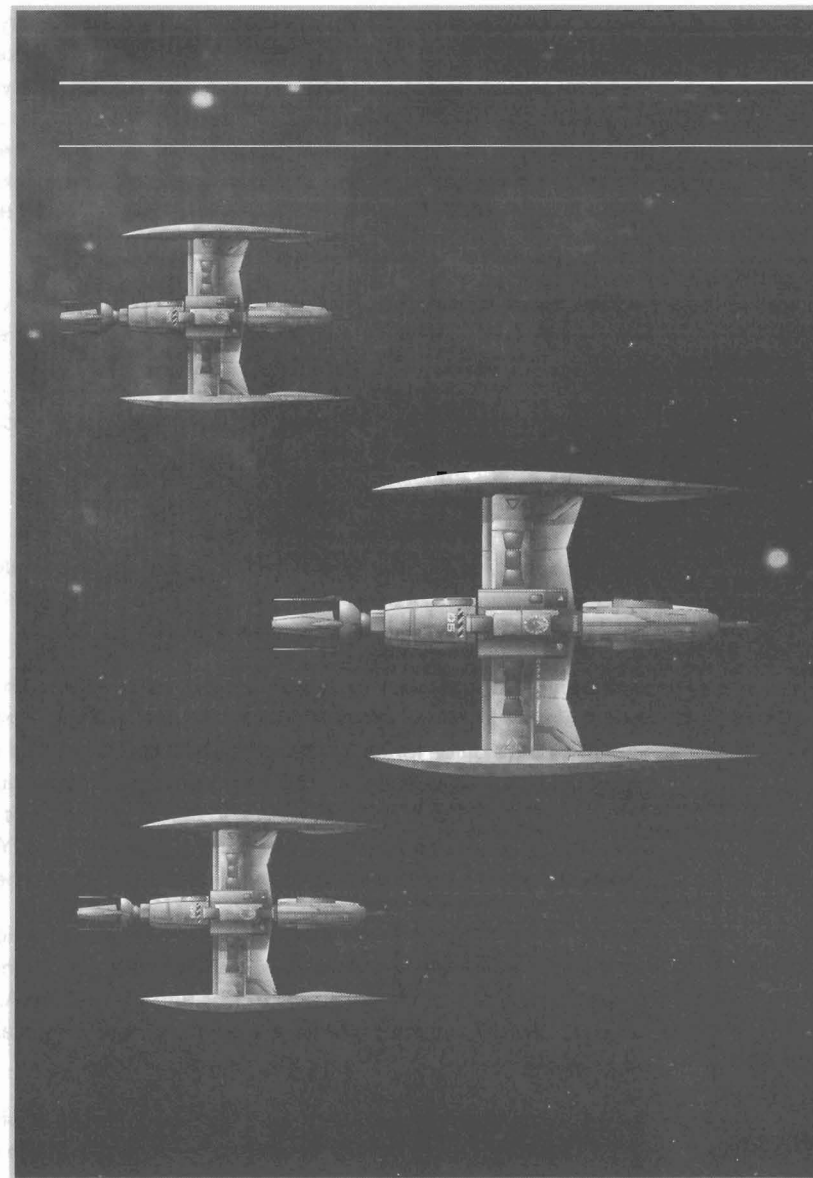
Haji al-Rahman was voted "Most Likeable City Administrator" in a 2206 planet-wide publicity contest. Like many civilians whose names adorn warships, al-Rahman is unaware of "his" ship's true nature, and believes it to be a simple courier vessel with no real outstanding features. In keeping with standard policy, al-Rahman is only permitted to view the ship via video-link, for the ostensible reasons of safety and uninterrupted crew efficiency. The CVNA *al-Rahman* has been responsible for the destruction of three raiding ships of various origins over the past five years.

Name:	CVNA Elke Hamm
Launched:	February 12, 2208
Status:	Lost on March 4, 2213

Dr. Hamm is the research head at Durbruck Medical Technology Center, responsible for designing the compact medical minibots that staff modern spaceship sickbays. The ship that bore her name was attacked and destroyed, with the loss of all hands, by unknown assailants in the Belt. Recovered debris suggested a CEGA raiding force, but no hard evidence exists. Dr. Hamm was quite fond of "her" ship, and has a small memorial to its crew in her office.

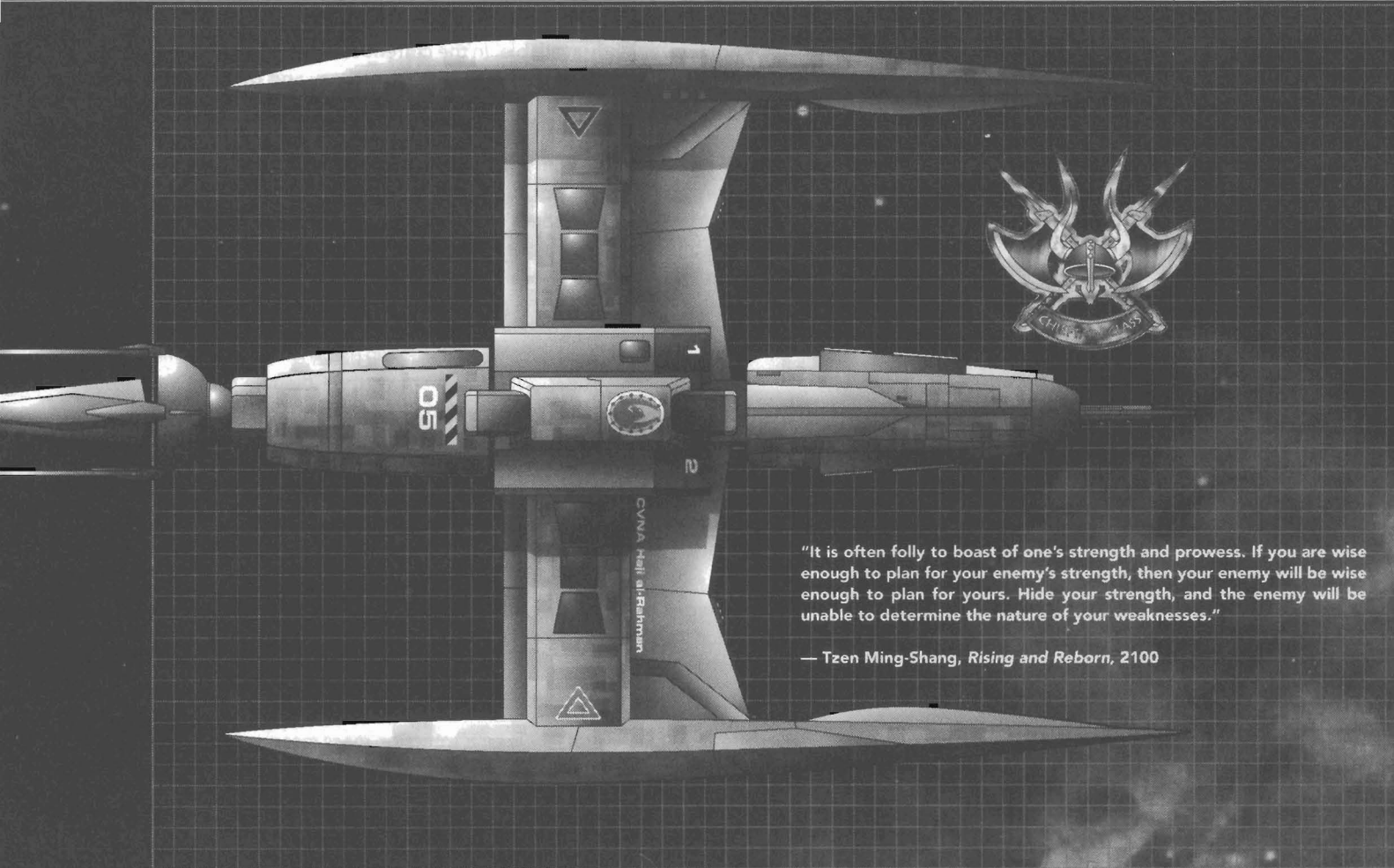
Name:	CVNA Calico Sinclair
Launched:	February 1, 2214
Status:	Local Patrol

Sinclair-otome is the niece of Waldsen-Nishiyama's Vice-President of Urban Planning, Erik Waldsen. The *Sinclair* is Waldsen's gift to Calico for her seventeenth birthday. The ship's vid-membranes are currently being used for self-promotional purposes by their owner, who is both an accomplished poet and artist. The ship itself is one of the newest Chieftain-class ships, and is expected to remain on low-priority duty until it has been adequately shaken down.



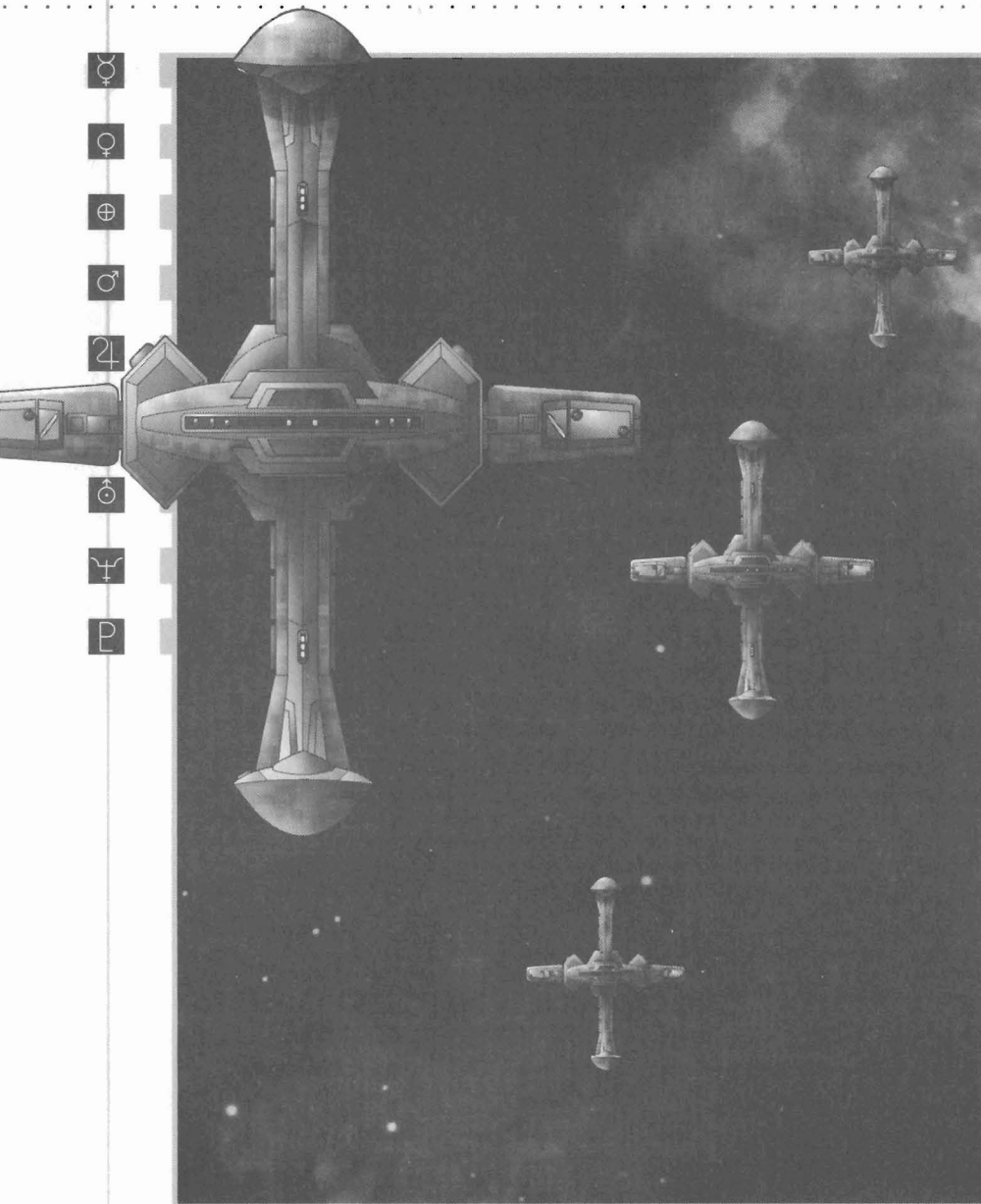
CHIEFTAIN-CLASS ESCORT CRUISER

CVNA Haji al-Rahman (2213 Configuration)





CHIEFTAIN ESCORT CRUISER



► 4.1 OVERVIEW

Although the Mercurian Merchant Guild maintains a strong grip on much of the interplanetary trade in the solar system, each of the solar nations also possesses its own trading fleet, for use in sensitive or high-priority situations, or simply when a Guild vessel is not conveniently available. In the current cold-war climate, however, few merchant vessels are truly safe. Piracy and other forms of raiding are rampant, and at the moment, the major militaries of the solar system are too busy eyeing each other to have time to worry about neutral shipping. Just as the Mercurians are accepting the necessity of supplying their own convoy defense, so have the Venusians spent the last decade gradually becoming aware that a neutral flag is quite meaningless to a raider attacking in the depths of interplanetary space.

As a class, Chieftains exhibit more variability in terms of cosmetic appearance than any other class of warship. Nicknamed both "The Wolf" and "The Sheepdog" by its crews, the Chieftain is the Venusian warship most commonly encountered by pirates and privateers. One or more of these ships accompanies every convoy of Venusian civilian vessels, blending in perfectly with their wards. Should the convoy come under attack, the Chieftain's speed allows it to intercept hostile ships before they come within firing range of the real civilian ships, and its firepower is enough to handle even military ships. Forewarned attackers are not necessarily out of danger, since the Chieftains can wait, undetected, for the most opportune moment to reveal itself.

▼ 4.1.1 Capabilities

The Chieftain has relatively small reaction mass reserves; it spends most of its time traveling alongside sluggish cargo vessels, and is usually within easy reach of refueling facilities. This limitation makes its scope of duties more restrictive than those of other Venusian warships, which are designed for independent operation. In its assigned task, however, the Chieftain is a superlative ship.

The Chieftain's engines, though designed to look like standard civilian drive units, are capable of generating huge amounts of thrust over a short period of time, allowing the Chieftain to intercept attackers and cover multiple trouble spots. Like most of the long-range civilian vessels it impersonates, the Chieftain has a rotating section that increases crew endurance by generating simulated gravity. Although combat maneuvers cannot be executed while the rotating section is active, the ring is heavily reinforced and equipped with heavy-duty drive motors, which enable extremely fast spin-down in the event of an attack. Alternatively, the Chieftain can choose to remain hidden among its charges, waiting for an enemy ship to close to point-blank range before opening fire.

The Chieftain's primary armament consists of a typically effective array of lasers concealed in each of the main hulls. Mounted on pop-up turrets, the lasers cover all incoming angles and can be deployed and fired in less than three seconds. Secondary weaponry consists of a quartet of kinetic kill cannon, hidden within fixed mounts in each of the Chieftain's secondary hulls. Most Venusian vessels are not equipped with KKC's; not only is there a perception of such weapons as inelegant, but there is also the practical problem with concealing turrets for guns of such size. For the Chieftain, the KKC's were deemed necessary because of their ability to quickly disable a target's systems, thus reducing the time spent in broadside combat; whereas the Chieftain itself can take quite a pounding, the cargo ships it is meant to escort cannot. The KKC's can only fire forward, limiting their role to that of first-pass weapons. The initial barrage of kickslugs, however, is usually enough to either disarm or dissuade a raider.

The Chieftain's hangar bay is located in the central hull, in order to allow for immediate scramble of the ship's two combat vehicles, which can provide defense and initial screening for the Chieftain while the ship de-spins its gravity wheel to prepare for combat. Most often, the carried units are Siefried or Brunnhilde fighters, which are better interceptors than exo-armors. However,

the assignment of vehicles is often largely determined by the ship's expected location and situation, as well as the preference of the captain. As a result, some Chieftains carry exo-armors for defense, and a few are equipped solely with squads of exo-suited marines.

▼ 4.1.2 Operational Role

There are about forty Chieftain escort cruisers in service with the CVNA, making this class the most numerous of Venusian warships. Almost every Venusian commercial or government convoy is accompanied by one or two of these ships, and many Venusian space stations have a Chieftain assigned to regular patrols (carefully timed to appear as cargo runs or other civilian activities).

Almost all incidents requiring a Chieftain-class vessel to defend its "flock" have involved pirates or privateers with no solidly traceable links back to any solar nation. On a few occasions during the Martian War, CEGA and Jovian ships opened fire on Venusian vessels that strayed into battlezones. In these instances, the Chieftains launched their fighters to warn off the combatants, and no shots were returned, thus preserving Venusian neutrality. It is not known whether CEGA or Jovian inspections of the Chieftains was close or detailed enough to reveal them as anything more than cargo ships with makeshift hangars.

The ships are popular assignments; they see quite a bit of action, compared to the rest of the Venusian fleet, but are also small enough that individual crewmembers receive significant amounts of responsibility and credit for any victories the ship wins. As Venusian shipping increases in volume, it is expected that the need for more Chieftains will increase correspondingly. Already, a shortage of logistically available escorts has resulted in a few convoys leaving Venus without any real protection, much to the Venusians' discomfort.

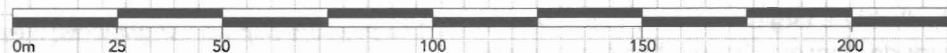
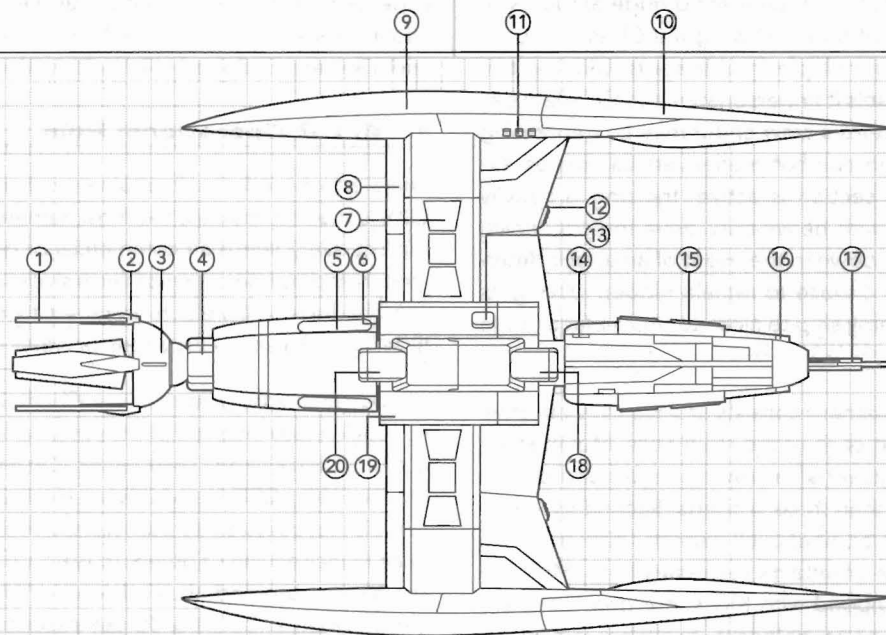




CHIEFTAIN ESCORT CRUISER

► 4.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS

① Side View

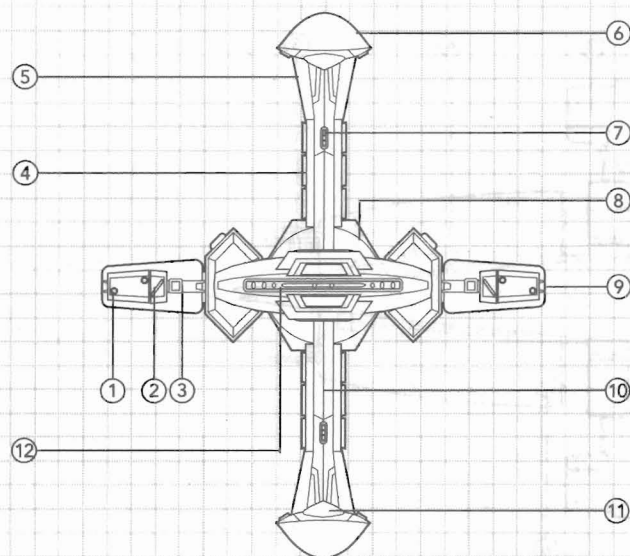


▼ Legend

1	Drive Fin	8	Main Hull Support Brace	15	Hangar Bay Door
2	Drive Fin Mount	9	Main Hull Vid-Membrane	16	Forward PDS Array
3	Exhaust Collimator	10	Laser Turret Bay	17	Primary Sensor Cluster (Extended)
4	Drive Housing	11	Maintenance Bot Exit Hatch	18	KKC Housing
5	Reaction Mass Access Doors	12	Lidar/Rangefinder Emitters	19	Main Rotor Block/Gyro Housing
6	Rotation Collar	13	Engineering Airlock	20	KKC Loading Bay
7	Emergency Elevator Access Hatch	14	Comm Antenna Cluster (Retracted)		

4.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.) ◀

Front View ⓘ



▼ Legend

1	Railgun Firing Ports	11	Forward PDS Array
2	Fake Cargo Door	12	Primary Sensor Cluster (Extended)
3	Lifepod Cover		
4	Emergency Elevator Access Hatch		
5	Main Hull Support Brace		
6	Laser Turret Bay		
7	Lidar/Rangefinder Emitters		
8	Rotation Collar		
9	Armored Housing		
10	Hull Support Strut		

Specifications ▼

Name:	Chieftain
Origin:	Cooperative Venusian Naval Administration
Manufacturer:	Various Venusian Shipyards
Type:	Escort Cruiser
Control System:	Bridge w/astronomical display
Length:	210 m overall
Width:	40 m overall
Empty Weight:	3,940 Tons
Loaded Weight:	5,200 Tons
Main Drive:	1 x 39 MW
Secondary Powerplant:	1 x 10,000 KW
Main Thrusters:	1 x 14,560,000 kg
Apogee Motors:	92
Acceleration:	1.4 g
Onboard Sensors:	Fire Control Radar, Infrared/ Ultraviolet, Lidar, Low-light, Magnetometer, Microwaves, Motion Detectors, Radcounter, Search Radar, Telescope
Fixed Armament:	PDS, 4x Laser Array, 6x CMM, 4x KKC
Additional Armament:	Carried Vessels
Defensive Systems:	Mag Screen
Equipment:	Escape Pods, Laboratory, Vehicle Bay

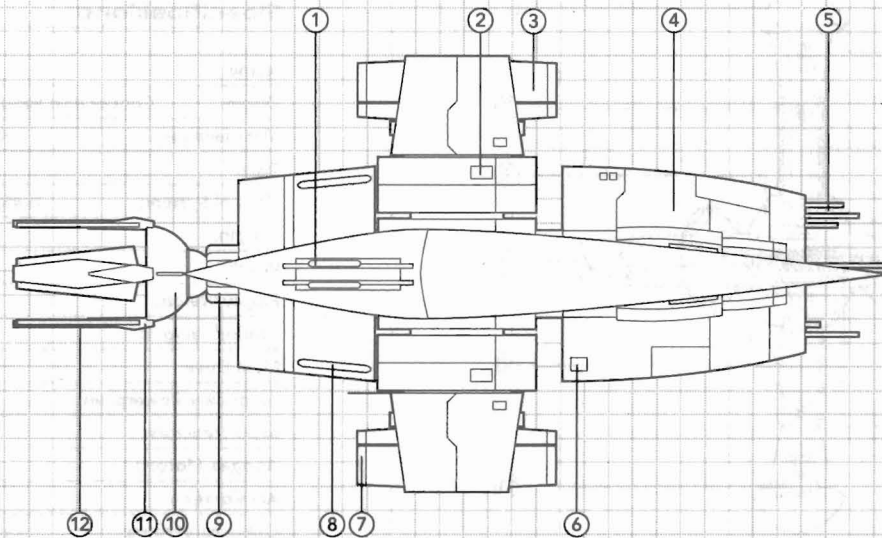


CHIEFTAIN ESCORT CRUISER



► 4.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)

① Top View



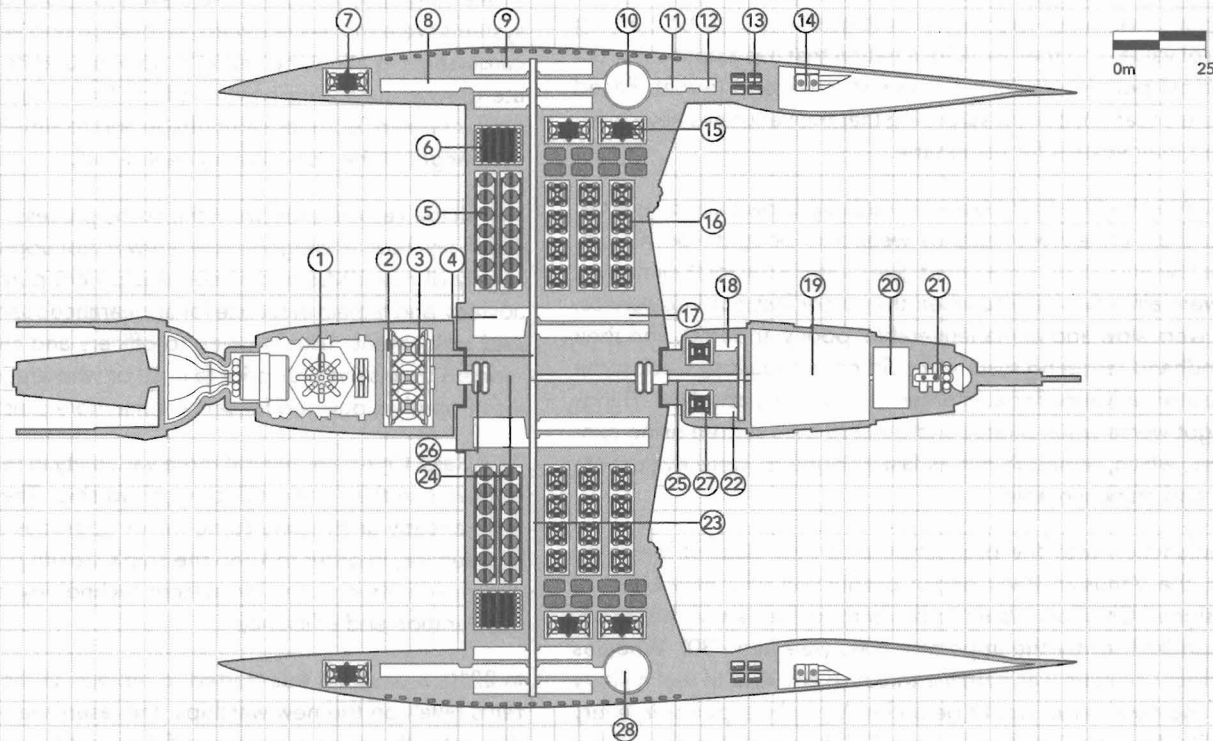
▼ Legend

1	Fake Rear Cargo Door	5	Primary Sensor Cluster (Extended)	9	Drive Housing
2	Engineering Airlock	6	Comm Antenna Cluster (Retracted)	10	Exhaust Collimator
3	Armored Housing	7	KKC Loading Bay	11	Drive Fin Mount
4	Forward Hull Armor	8	Reaction Mass Access Doors	12	Drive Fin

CHIEFTAIN ESCORT CRUISER

4.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)

Cutaway View



Legend

1	Plasma Combustion Chamber	11	Forward Crew Quarters	20	Storage Hold
2	Reaction Mass Tanks	12	Laser Gunnery Center	21	Sensor Cluster
3	Elevator Nexus	13	Laser Capacitors	22	Workshop
4	Storage Bay	14	Laser Turret (Retracted)	23	Primary Elevator Shaft
5	Gas Storage	15	Heat Exchangers	24	KKC Breech (not shown)
6	Superconducting Batteries	16	Bulk Storage	25	Hangar Personnel Corridor
7	Heat Exchangers	17	Engineering Bays	26	Rotation Motors
8	Officers' Quarters	18	Lab Bay	27	Heat Exchangers
9	Crew Quarters	19	Hangar	28	Auxiliary Control Center
10	Bridge				

► 4.3 HISTORY

Venusian ships generally make good targets for pirates, privateers and political dissidents (like STRIKE and other known terrorist groups). Venusian ships are almost guaranteed to be carrying items of value, and they work for a nation that has a political structure most people see as expansionist, cruel and feudal. Faced with this situation, it is not surprising that the Venusians have been arming their vessels for some time.

Until 2206, the Chieftain class was made up of partially-converted cargo ships armed with surplus weaponry bought from CEGA. These low-end escort ships could give pirates a run for their money, but were already obsolete when they were first put into service. They were slow and unmaneuverable, poorly armored, and their secondhand targeting systems could not adequately track some of the more advanced spacefighters deployed by attackers. Things only got worse when pirates and other raiders started using exo-armors, which, although not as fast as fighters, were even more agile and maneuverable.

In conjunction with the production of a new class of merchant ships, the Venusian Bank began production of a new block of redesigned Chieftains, built to conform to the new Venusian naval standard set by the Imperator class (see page 30). Whereas the older Chieftain was hardly a threat to any kind of real military ship, the new vessel would be technologically superior in every way. On June 8, 2206, the existing Chieftains started their refurbishing rotation at the Sokama Heavy Industries shipyards near the Alpha-3 sunshade group.

The new configuration now mounted all of its weapons on hidden hardpoints. The new cargo ships had cargo modules mounted laterally on the hull, which made a perfect place to hide railgun batteries. This location restricted the arc of fire, but the element of surprise thus gained was deemed an acceptable trade. The lasers were moved to the main hulls and hidden under movable covers. The main hulls themselves were largely slimmed down;

on the cargo version, the slimmer main hulls still had cargo bays as well as crew quarters toward the front. Since the Chieftains had lasers up front, the cargo bays were removed, disguised with a fake cargo bay door, and the crew quarters and other vital ship systems were moved rearward. A rotation ring was added to the cargo ships to allow the vessel to spin around its axis and generate gravity, increasing crew comfort. The Chieftain was given a similar system, both for camouflage and to simplify docking with the hangar in the non-rotating central hull.

Not all the vessels underwent the costly process. Many of the old Chieftains have undergone only a few minor upgrades (consisting mainly of new KKCs and screen equipment purchased from the Jovians) and remain in service for appearance's sake. They are low-end assignments usually given to officers and crew who wish to redeem themselves for prior failures or who are judged as being insufficiently motivated for service in a more prestigious posting.

As a class, Chieftains exhibit more variability in terms of cosmetic appearance than any other class of warship. The new Chieftains have already undergone some minor upgrades since their entry into service, in order to keep the ship's stealth profile in line with improvements in detection system technology, and to boost its acceleration and efficiency.

In 2210, a program was started to replace all the older laser systems (even on the new warships, the lasers were of an obsolete design) with newer, more powerful systems designed on Venus. Waldsen-Nishiyama, with its contacts on Earth, had been instrumental in providing weapons for the older Chieftains. Since the new systems were entirely of Venusian manufacture, its help was no longer required and W-N was left out of the new design process. When VenusBank offered the new Chieftain for sale to the other corporations, Waldsen-Nishiyama was forced to buy at full price; VenusBank's profits from the sales financed a significant portion of Operation Methuselah.

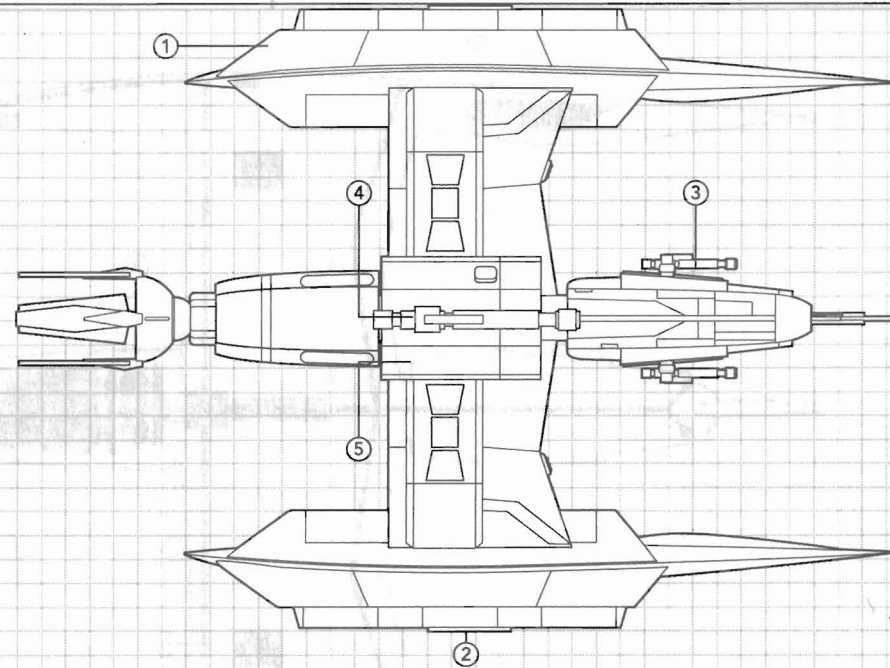
CHIEFTAIN ESCORT CRUISER

4

CVNA SAM WIGGEN ◀

Chieftain-class Vessels, 2206-2208 ①

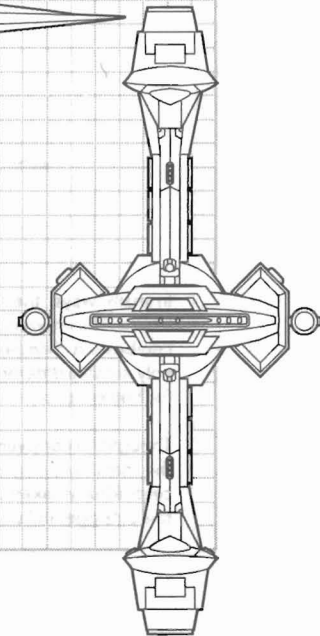
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▼ Legend

- 1 Main Hull with Cargo Bays
- 2 Heavy Cargo Loading Door
- 3 CEGA Surplus Laser Turret
- 4 CEGA Surplus KKC Turret
- 5 Main Hull Locked to Drive Section

CVNA *Sam Wigen*; launched April 2201. The *Wigen* is typical of the early vessels of the class. The outer hulls are boxy and somewhat crude, and the kinetic kill cannons are carried on either side of the prow. From the beginning, the Chieftain was designed to be a highly modular vessel. While this did nothing for the ship's maintenance schedule, which was as grueling and demanding as that of any warship of Venusian design, it did allow for quick modifications to the ship's outer appearance. Extra cargo pods, brackets and other external decorations permit the class as a whole to always look exactly like the rest of the ships in their convoy, then and now.



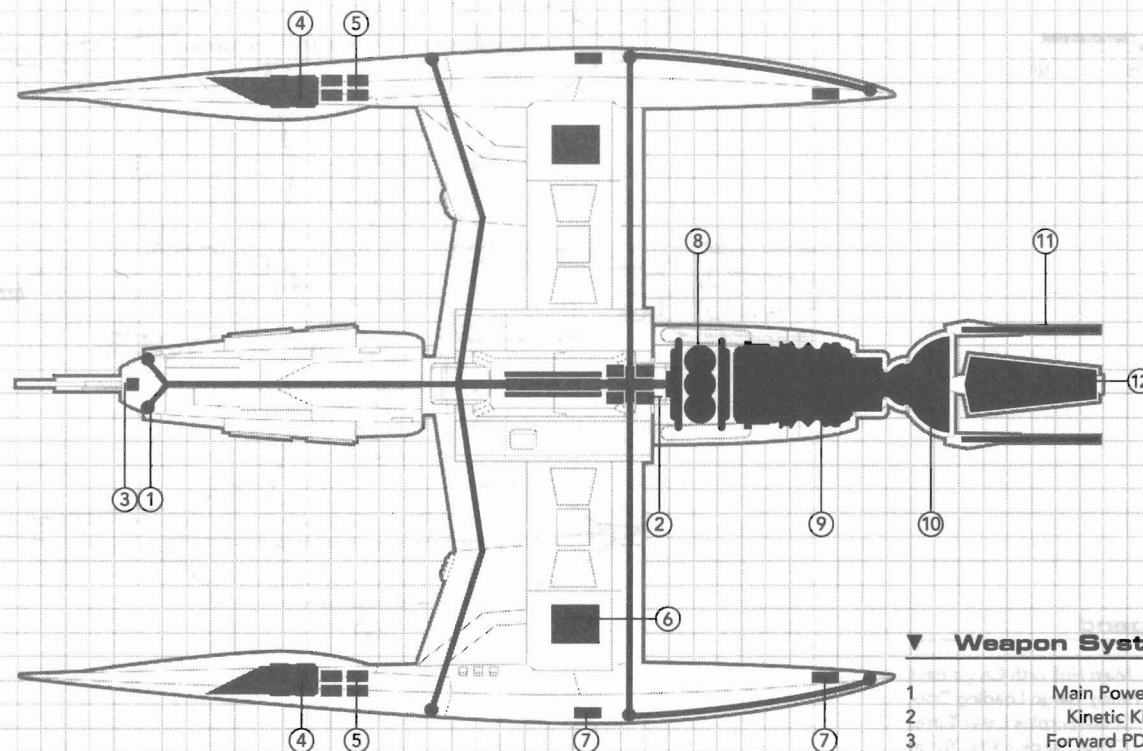


CHIEFTAIN ESCORT CRUISER



► 4.4 SHIP SYSTEMS

0 Propulsion and Weapons



In many ways, the Chieftain is a fusion of modern shipbuilding theory and Venusian techniques. The internal configuration of its elongated central hull is quite standard, with the plasma combustion chambers being located at the back behind the rows of reaction mass tanks. The only notable difference is the shape of the main nozzle, which uses a bowl-shaped exhaust coil for better containment.

Though the early versions of the ship housed their kinetic kill cannons in the forward section of the main hull, only part of the point defense system grid remains there now. The forward central hull is taken up by the auxiliary craft hangars, with the main armament being moved to the outrigger hulls and side sponsons in the central hull.

▼ Weapon Systems ▼

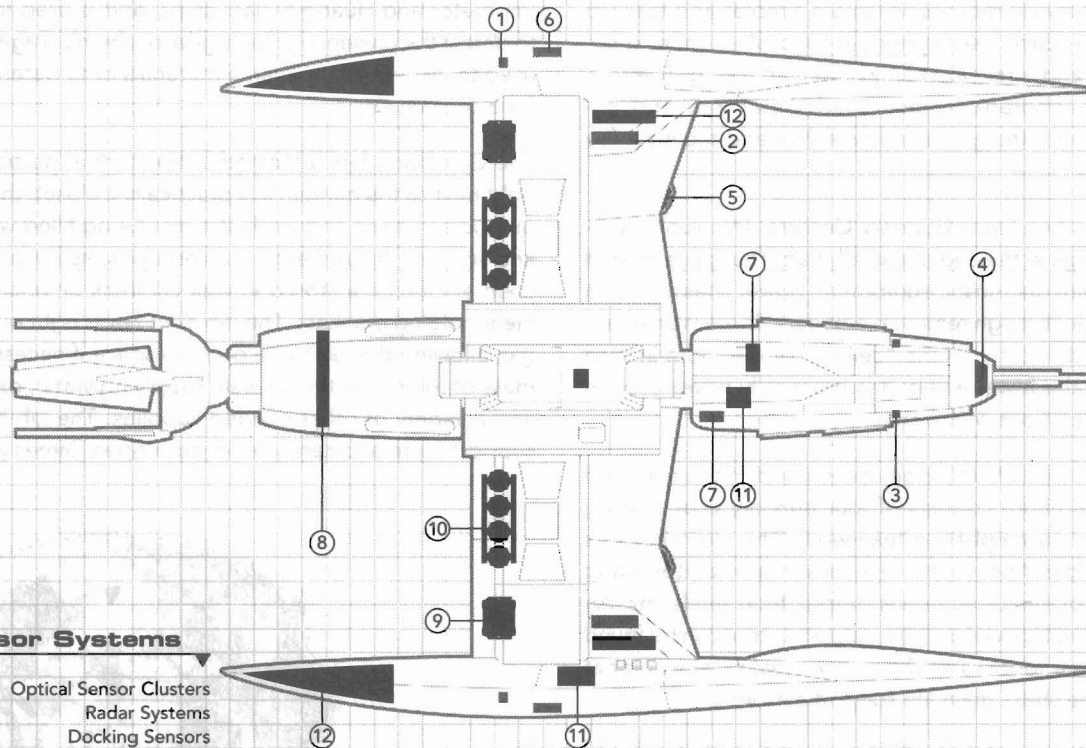
- 1 Main Power Conduit
- 2 Kinetic Kill Cannon
- 3 Forward PDS Emitter
- 4 Laser Turret (Retracted)
- 5 Laser Capacitors
- 6 CMM Clusters

▼ Propulsion Syst. ▼

- 7 RCS Cluster
- 8 Reaction Mass Tanks
- 9 Plasma Combustion Chamber
- 10 Exhaust Collimator
- 11 EM Power Generation System
- 12 Radiator Fin

4.4 SHIP SYSTEMS (CONT.) ◀

Sensors and Life Support 0



▼ Sensor Systems

- 1 Optical Sensor Clusters
- 2 Radar Systems
- 3 Docking Sensors
- 4 Primary Instrument Cluster
- 5 Lidar/Rangefinder Emitters
- 6 Microwave Pulse-Ranging Antennae
- 7 Communications Antennae

▼ Life Support Systems

- 8 Screen Generators
- 9 Superconducting Batteries
- 10 Gas Storage
- 11 Local Life Support Systems
- 12 Heat Exchangers

Most of the ship's sensor systems are located in the main hull, with the exception of a few clusters spread across the outer skin of the outriggers. Blisters and retractable mounts hold the various long range antennae, while surface panels form a phased radar network. Antennae and short-ranged docking sensors are placed on either side of the vehicle bay.

The ship's life support equipment is widely distributed throughout the hull, with some important components like the gas storage being located in the main hull pylons to benefit from the easier thermal regulation effect of their large hull surfaces. The rear section of each outrigger hull is a large heat exchanger for the main crew compartments, radiating waste heat away from the forward sensors.



CHIEFTAIN ESCORT CRUISER



▼ 4.4.1 Laser Gunnery Room

The Chieftain and all larger Venusian ships have turreted laser systems mounted on pop-up turrets; the smaller ships use fixed mounts or limited-swivel mounts which are simpler and take up less internal space. Each laser system is concealed under movable armor plates and is revealed only before attacking. They are controlled from an armored chamber called a Laser Gunnery Center, which houses both the gunners themselves and the main fire control computers.

Each Chieftain has two Laser Gunnery Centers. This room is located near the bridge at the end of a small shaft. The space around the shaft is filled with diagnostic equipment, power lines and data feeds, all accessible through removable panels. There is an emergency escape hatch located in the "ceiling" of the room in case pressure is lost in the lower levels; it is practically never used in the day to day operations of the ship.

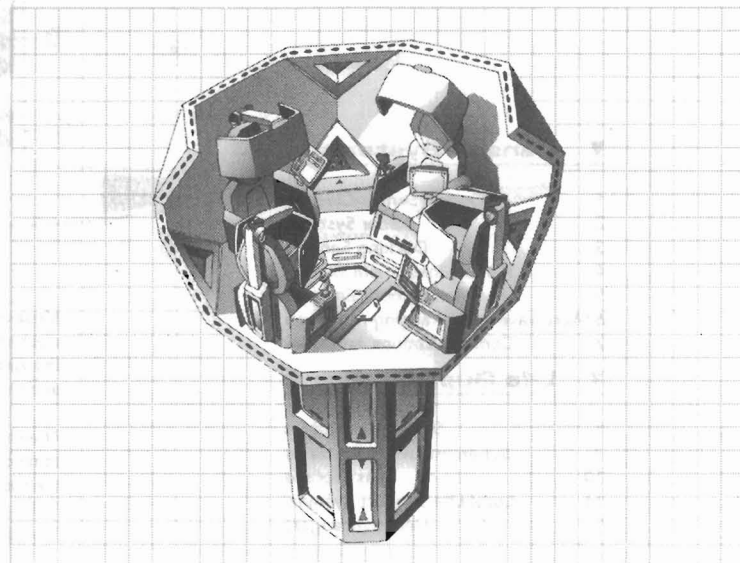
There is not a whole lot of visible equipment within the cramped room itself. The furniture consists of four gunnery chairs facing toward each other to emphasize teamwork. The main hatch is located in the middle. Above each chair is a small monitor listing the current status of the turret: power output, heat levels, etc. An engineering panel with power and life support output can be found at each corner of the room to let the gunners patch their combat space suits into the ship's main life support system.

The gunnery stations and their display are relatively low-tech. This reduces the costs, simplify maintenance and brings additional reliability. Instead of using virtual reality headsets like most other ships, each seat has a large panoramic viewscreen around the users' head where the data is projected. Control is assured via keyboards, spatial-motion trackers and joysticks. Eye-point sensors are also used to provide accuracy and a faster reaction time; a ring of these sensors is mounted around the edge of each user's viewscreen.

▼ 4.4.2 Lab Bay

Shipboard labs are generally small and cramped, when they are present at all. The Chieftain's lab is similar to the ones found on Imperator and Huang-ti-class ships, and is used for simple tests to detect the presence of biological or chemical agents. It is mostly used to inspect questionable materials or to determine the need for a quarantine.

The Chieftain's lab is located in the central portion of the ship, right next to the hangar. It is practically a closet: there is room for one person to sit and work, the rest being filled with equipment and lockers. Instruments (microscopes, spectrometers, geiger counters, etc) are stored in wall cabinets or velcroed to convenient holding brackets. The lab door leads right out into the hangar, allowing the lab to be open to space if necessary. There is a mass of tubing on the far wall, supplying water, oxygen, vacuum and a variety of other needed supplies. The lab has its own life support node and can contain both open flames and free water.

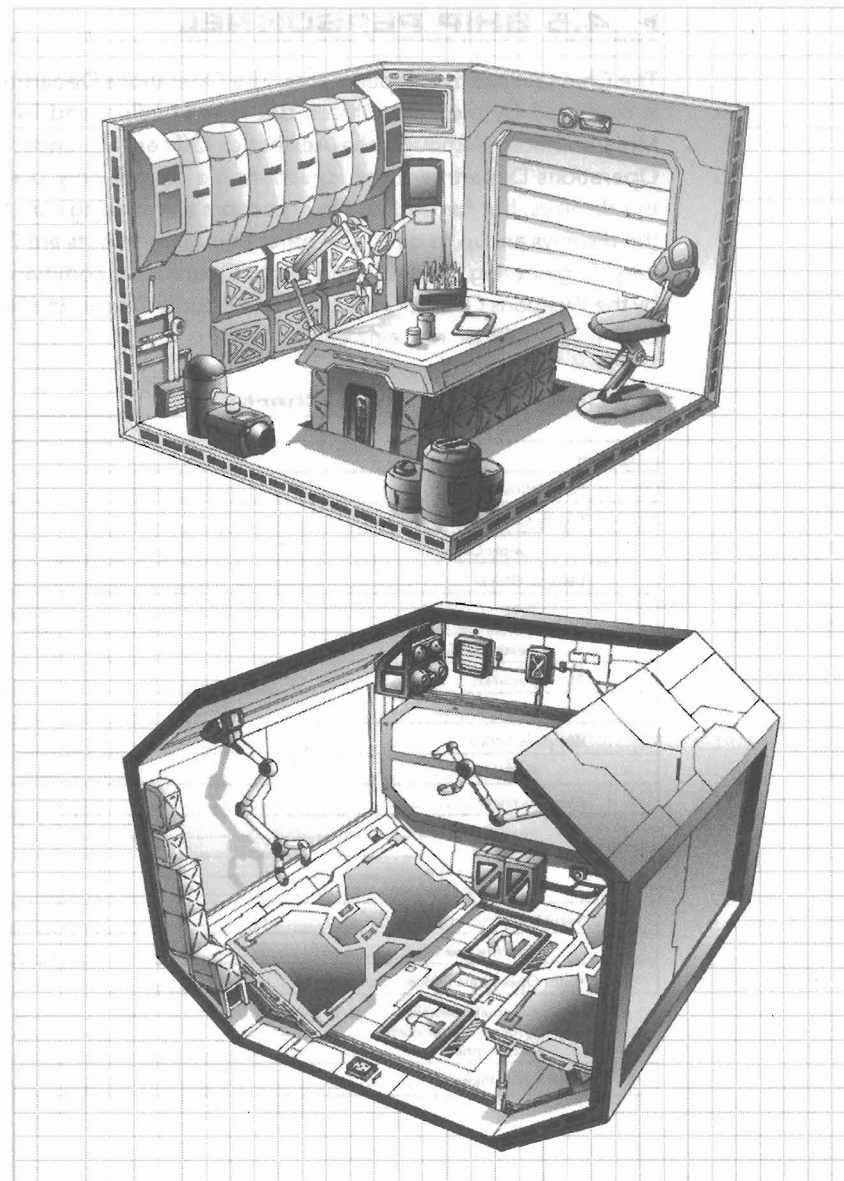


▼ 4.4.3 Vehicle Bay

The Chieftain's main vehicle hangar is a relatively small chamber located in the front portion of the ship's central hull. It takes up most of the internal volume of the section, and is capped by two matching hatches on either side. Since there are two main hangar bay hatches, one on the "top" of the central section and the other on the "bottom," the hangar is effectively a large hole right through the ship. The catapults, normally stored in folded position, extend out from these two hatches toward the bow (one is not shown in the illustration at right so as not to obscure the rest of the equipment).

There is room in the hangar for two exo-armor-sized vehicles and their repair and maintenance cradle. Though it may look spacious when empty, the hangar is really quite cramped. With all the support scaffolds and service equipment in place, the two exo-armors are practically cocooned in place. With some efforts, many more vehicles can be carried, with a corresponding decrease in reliability and deployment time.

Large cargo doors lead to a pair of small holds on either side of the main hangar. These are normally used to store parts and non-explosive material. There is an armored locker in one of the bays for the missiles and weapons. A personnel hatch at the rear of the bay leads to the crew areas; equipped with an airlock. Another nearby hatch leads to the lab bay, which is detailed above.



CHIEFTAIN ESCORT CRUISER

► 4.5 SHIP PERSONNEL

The Chieftain has five departments. The Operations Department is managed by the First Officer, but heavily influenced by the Morale Officer. Although the Aesthetics Officer falls under the Operations Department, he is responsible for not only placing the displays, but for getting new sponsors and making sure that the displays are up to date. The other four departments are Gun- nery, Engineering, Security, and Flight Operations, commanded by the Weapons Officer, Chief Engineer, Security Officer, and Flight Operations Officer, respectively.

▣ Crew Organization Chart

Captain	
First Officer	1
Supply Officer	1
Supply Clerk	1
Medical Officer	1
EMT	1
Morale Officer	1
Aesthetics Specialist	1
EME Specialists	3
Helmsman/Navigator	3
Weapons Officer	1
Gunners	4
Chief Engineer	1
Master Engineer	3
Engineer	7
Electronics Specialist	5
Computer Specialist	2
Security Officer	1
Security Specialist	4
Flight Operations Officer	1
Catapult Specialists	1
Ordnance Specialists	9
Exo Engineer	1
Exo/Fighter Pilots	4

▼ 4.5.1 Interview with a Helmsman

Name: Rosemary Wunderlich
Rank: Sho-sa
Current Assignment: CVNA H. al-Rahman



"I used to helm one of the Huang-Ti. All I ever did on that ship was "hold her steady." It was all in the hands of the cloak room and analysis techies. On this ship, I actually get to do some piloting. It's got a lot of thrust available, once Engineering gets the order to go to full military power, and there are plenty of RCS thrusters to give us some serious maneuverability.

"It's a great feeling to be pressed back in your seat and barrel- ing at full burn toward a raider who thought he was about to hit an easy mark. And it gets better! Since the kickers on the Chief- tain are in fixed mounts, I'm tied directly into the weapons and targeting stations, and get to aim them as well as give the initial clearance to fire. It's like flying a fighter, more so than most other capital ships.

"The only real restrictions involve waiting for the gravity wheel to lock (wouldn't want to twist the hull by applying thrust while the wheel's spinning) and holding still for docking procedures. Unfortunately, the old adage about combat is all too true in my case. A pocket calculator could pilot this ship ninety-nine-point- nine percent of the time. In fact, in most situations, the naviga- tor is actually controlling the ship.

"Only in those ever-so-rare occasions when we have to drop the big disguise and do some damage do I get to show off. The rest of the time, it's like I'm back on a Huang-Ti."

▼ 4.5.2 Interview with a Morale Officer



Name: Michael Skilton
Rank: Chu-i
Current Assignment: CVNA H. al-Rahman

"So, what's your pleasure? Never let it be said that the CVNA doesn't take care of its employees. I may not have a lot of space to work with, but it's enough to keep everyone on this ship happy and relaxed, which is all I need to move me toward a promotion planetside. I handle scheduling of entertainment aboard the ship, which sounds easy to do until you start thinking about all the little details.

"It's part of my duties to set up and clean up the rec areas for various activities as well as making sure that no one feels left out. That's hard when the shift structure means that someone's always on duty somewhere. For crewmembers who want some peace and quiet, I also manage the ship's library and entertainment data files. If someone wants something specific, it's my job to find a time to get it transmitted to us without compromising security.

"Some people might say that my job aboard ship is unnecessary. What they don't get is that for a busy and harried naval officer, even deciding what kind of fun to have can be too much of a chore. All it takes is one miserable person to make life a living hell for every other crewmember. I'm there to make sure that nobody has a chance to feel miserable, and also to decide what's fun so that other people don't have to. Unlike the way it is for other officers, it's the times between the battles when my job is the most important. Without me, when a fight starts, nobody may care enough to make sure we win."

▼ 4.5.3 Interview with a Fighter Pilot

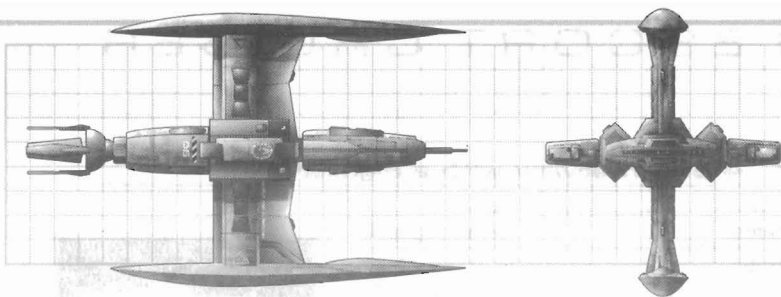
Name: Lek Venugopal
Rank: Chu-i
Current Assignment: CVNA Calico Sinclair



"Most Chieftains carry fighters instead of exos, because we can reach target zones faster than most exos. That's a definite advantage when you're trying to hit a raider before he gets within firing range of your convoy. Because of the need for the ship to stay low-profile, we don't fly regular patrols. If we're in a heavily-trafficked area, there's too much chance we'll be seen launching.

"Because of that, we get a lot of time in the simulators to keep in practice. The Chieftain's small, so there's room for only one simulator pod. It's located in the main hull, just down the corridor from the lab bay. Simtime is really important for all CVNA pilots. It's not quite as good as actually flying, but it's pretty close. We don't get the full feedback that we get from the full simulator setups they have on the big space stations, but at least there's a complete linear frame in the simpod.

"Because even our fighters are supposed to stay out of sight, most of our real-world flying is done in modified Wraiths and other CEGA hand-me-downs. We get rotated out regularly so that we can keep in practice with both the full sims and the CEGA ships. I've flown a real Siegfried-class fighter on a bunch of missions, and I have to say that the sims are actually pretty close to the real thing. Still, I sometimes wonder how much better I'd be if I could fly a real Sig all the time."



► Cheftian-class Escort Cruiser

▼ Overall Data:

Threat Value:	-	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:Cost:	- M	Indv.LemonDice:	3
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▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	Space	Combat:	5 MP (0.5 g)	Top:	10 MP (1.0 g)	Maneuver:	-3	ReMass:	2000 BPs
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▼ Sections:

1 x	Main Hull w/Bridge	1 x	Main Hull w/o Bridge	2x	Battle Hull
1 x	Central Hull				

▼ Off & Def Systems

1x	Point Defense System	2x	Laser Array	4x	CMM
2 x	KKC				

► Section: Main Hull w/Bridge

▼ Main Data:

Threat Value:	-	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:	-	Cost:	-	Indv.LemonDice:	3
Crew:	19	Actions:	-	Sensors:	-2/2km	Comm.:	-2/10 km	Fire Control:	+1	Type:	-
Hull Size:	36	Default Size:	-	Armor:	75	Light:	75	Heavy:	150	Overkill:	225

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	Towed	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Range:	1,500 hrs	ReMass:	-
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Autopilot	-	Lvl 1 Pilot	Passenger Accom	-	3,000m3
Backup Systems	-	Comm, FireCon, LifeSupp, Sensor	Reinforced Crew 3	-	Absorbs first three "Crew" hits
Computer	3	CRE 0 KNO 0 PP3	Stealth	2	Add to Concealment
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection Systems	-	20 people			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Life Support	-	Full			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
2	Laser Array	F	x20	7	0	+1	Inf	AD2, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	14	12214	n/a
1	PDS (ranged)	T	x10	1	+1	+6	Inf	AM, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	16	1401	n/a
	PDS (shield)	FF	x20	Melee	+1	+4	Inf	Conc. (Inst.), DEF, E-Shld,H	16	539	n/a
2	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	64ea	Conc. (Inst.), Missile, H.	9	3106	2.7

► Section: Main Hull w/o Bridge

▼ Main Data:

Threat Value:	-	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:Cost:	- M	Indv.LemonDice:	3
Crew:	16	Actions:	-	Sensors:	-2 / 2 km	Comm.:	-2 / 10 km	Fire Control:	+1
Hull Size:	36	Default Size:	-	Armor:	75	Light:	75	Heavy:	150

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	Towed	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Range:	1,500 hrsReMass:	-
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	Comm, FireCon, LifeSupp, Sensor	Sick Bay	2	Two patients
Difficult to Modify	-	All	Stealth	2	Add to Concealment
Ejection Systems	-	20 people			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Life Support	-	Full			
Passenger Accom	-	3,000m3			
Reinforced Crew	3	Absorbs first three "Crew" hits			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
2	Laser Array	F	x20	7	0	+1	Inf	AD2, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	14	12214	n/a
2	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	64ea	Conce. (Inst.), H., Missile	9	3106	2.7

► Section: Central Hull

▼ Main Data:

Threat Value:	-	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:	-	Cost:	- M	Indv.LemonDice:	3
Crew:	12	Actions:	-	Sensors:	+1/2 km	Comm.:	0/15 km	Fire Control:	0	Type:	-
Hull Size:	34	Default Size:	-	Armor:	65	Light:	65	Heavy:	130	Overkill:	195

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	Towed	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Range:	1,500 hrsReMass:	-
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Life Support	-	Full
Cargo Bay	-	12,000 m3	Reinforced Crew 3	-	Absorbs first three "Crew" Hits
2x Catapults	-	(450/mass)/m/s2	Stealth	2	Add to Concealment
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection System	-	Pods for 16 people			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Lab Life Sciences	0	-			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
-											

► Section: 2x Battle Hull

▼ Main Data:

Threat Value: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indv. lemon dice: 3
Crew: 8	Actions: -	Sensors: -2/2 km	Comm.: -2/10 km	Fire Control: +1	Type: -
Hull Size: 30	Default Size: -	Armor: 75	Light: 75	Heavy: 150	Overkill: 225

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 1,500 hrsReMass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Weapon Link	-	KKCs
Cargo Bay	-	1,000 m3	Stealth	2	Add to Concealment
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection System	-	10 people			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Passenger Accom	-	1,000 m3			
Reinforced Crew	3	Absorbs first three "Crew" hits			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
2	KKC	FF	x30	7	-2	+4	4,000ea	AP, Concealed (Instant)	20	16230	3.2
1	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	64ea	Conc.(Inst.), HEAT, Missile	9	3106	2.7

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indv. lemon dice: -
Crew: -	Actions: -	Sensors: -	Comm.: -	Fire Control: -	Type: -
Hull Size: -	Default Size: -	Base Armor: -	Light: -	Heavy: -	Overkill: -

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: -	Combat: -	Top: -	Maneuver: -	Range: -	Re. Mass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indv. lemon dice: -
Crew: -	Actions: -	Sensors: -	Comm.: -	Fire Control: -	Type: -
Hull Size: -	Default Size: -	Base Armor: -	Light: -	Heavy: -	Overkill: -

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: -	Combat: -	Top: -	Maneuver: -	Range: -	Re. Mass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV: -	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: -	Indv. lemon dice: -
Crew: -	Actions: -	Sensors: -	Comm.: -	Fire Control: -	Type: -
Hull Size: -	Default Size: -	Base Armor: -	Light: -	Heavy: -	Overkill: -

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: -	Combat: -	Top: -	Maneuver: -	Range: -	Re. Mass: -
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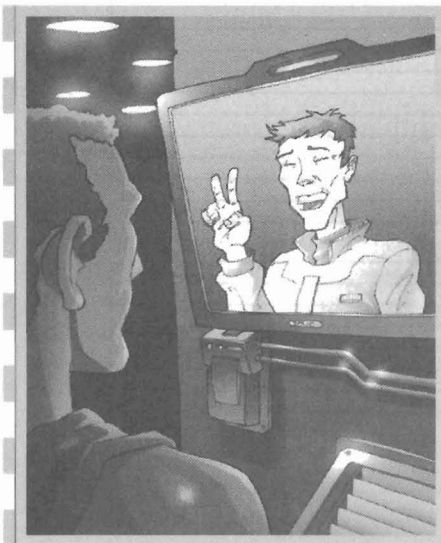
▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

▶ PART III: THE VENUSIAN WAY



Tai-sa Yvette Antonova couldn't quite figure out what to feel. She was afraid that she might die on this mission. She was worried that the intel this whole raid was based on might be totally false. She was also unspeakably excited to be a part of what had to be the noblest rescue operation in recent history.

Yvette had been involved from the beginning. Four months ago, a man named Mischa Katayama, who had vanished several years ago, contacted the CVNA Directorial Board, requesting help in mounting an operation to rescue a CVNA officer from a STRIKE compound. He offered intelligence gleaned from who knew where, information that would, if true, make the raid childishly

easy to pull off. The Board was skeptical; the information was good, but Katayama's refusal to meet in person or reveal his location seemed too strange to accept. Even after Katayama delivered more intelligence of unbelievable quality, and promised to turn his ship over to the CVNA after the rescue, the Board remained suspicious.

Yvette had come forward, arguing Katayama's case. She'd received Katayama's first communication while on deep patrol, and had spoken to him at length. She had been struck by how ordinary he looked, how completely unlike her own ideas of someone who would make such a sacrifice for a near-stranger.

She'd heard of Birthing Debts, the obligations taken on by those who had survived Venus' post-Fall years with the help of the more fortunate. In most cases, the debts were called in by those owed, and used for blackmail or extortion. There were precious few instances of someone voluntarily repaying a Birthing Debt.

In any case, the concept of the debt was something she'd grown up with. This cause, she argued, was worth helping even if Katayama were still penniless and in possession of nothing useful; this, she said, was a test of the Venusian way of life, a challenge of faith and loyalty.

Many captains and officials applauded her statements, but when the uproar settled, she was still the only CVNA captain willing to actually go out and perform the mission. Nevertheless, she stood her ground. If her battered old Chieftain was all that could be spared, then so be it. If Katayama's information was false, then she would die, and a lesson would be learned. If, however, Katayama was exactly what he said he was, then she would rescue Taggart al-Raschid, and another, much more important lesson would be learned. It hardly concerned her at the time that Katayama would not personally participate in the raid, claiming a need to occupy STRIKE attention elsewhere as a diversion.

Now, however, sitting on the *Leon Marten's* bridge and looking at the looming asteroid base on which Katayama insisted Taggart was to be found, Yvette could think of only one thing. *I wonder where Katayama actually is, anyway?*

* * *

When the exo-suits burst into the control center, Taggart was already diving for cover. He didn't know who was attacking the outpost, but he wasn't about to bet that any stray rounds would know friend from foe. He heard gunfire, the sound of breaking armor, and several heavy objects falling down. There were a few loud footsteps, and then a clipped, professional voice spoke over a tinny 'suit microphone.

"Taggart al-Raschid Tai-i? Are you all right? We're here to rescue you."

The words hit Taggart like a thunderclap. Bolting upright, he felt thirty months of pain, slavery and humiliation vanishing, fog dissolving before sunlight. He turned toward the voice and grinned cheerfully.

"Well, I'd say I'm happy to see you, but I seem to have lost my glasses," he announced, straightening his tattered jumpsuit. A nearby explosion rocked the floor, but Taggart kept his balance. "Where's Nakama?" he shouted.

"He's already escaped," the trooper said quickly. Taggart could hear the 'suit looking back and forth anxiously. "We've got interceptors going after him, but we need to get you out *now*." The trooper picked Taggart in a fireman's carry and bolted out the hatch.

Jouncing atop the 'suit's armored shoulder, Taggart's mind filled with questions. His body had other ideas, however, and as the exo-suit ran down the hallway, dodging gunfire and kicking down barricades, Taggart closed his eyes and slept peacefully for the first time in two years.

* * *

It had taken the *Marten's* cargo crew five hours to find the sculpt-clasp in one of the boxes seized from the STRIKE facility. When the feather-light metal ornament was placed in his hand, Taggart had sobbed, tears streaming from beneath his newly-bandaged sockets. He'd kept it close throughout his entire stay in the *Marten's* sickbay, slowly growing used to the idea that he was, at last, free. When the doctor finally gave her approval for visitors, Antonovakancho had come in, ecstatic to meet him. They'd been talking for over an hour.

"Tell me about the sculpt-clasp," she entreated. Her open admiration was beginning to make Taggart uncomfortable, but he answered her inquiry agreeably.

"It belonged to Toji Katayama, the man who gave his life for my family. Toji gave it to my great-great-great-grandfather before he died. It's always been a symbol of loyalty and honor for me."

Antonova drew another breath, but whatever she was about to ask was silenced by the beeping of the comm console.

"At last," she gushed. "He must be on the other side of the system, for the lag to be this long."

She tapped a control on a nearby console, and the transmission began to play. The voice that spoke from the speaker was gentle and soothing, full of intelligence. It seemed to Taggart that it came from all around him, through every corner of the room.

"Hello, Taggart-san. I'm honored to finally be able to speak to you. I've read the medical report that Antonovakancho sent. I'm so sorry about your eyes. If I had worked faster, harder, this wouldn't have happened. Please excuse my inefficiency. Regardless of my performance, though, I am overcome with joy that you are at last free of your captivity and able to return home."

"What does he look like?" Taggart whispered to Antonova, entranced. In response, she reached over and plugged a haptic display into the commset's video output jack. Instantly, the tablet's flat surface began to deform, creating a raised image of Katayama's face. Antonova placed the display in Taggart's hands.

"The CVNA has kindly re-extended their offer for the position you secured for me," Katayama continued. "I am eternally grateful for what you did for me. Without your invitation, and trust, I would surely be long dead. My son Kinya has sent word that he will meet me back on Venus. I will begin the journey myself very soon. Live well, Taggart-san. May we meet soon." The screen went silent.

Taggart's hands were resting atop the haptic display's image.

"He looks like a Katayama," he whispered, and leaned back in his bed. After a while, Antonova left quietly. In the darkness, Taggart waited to meet his savior.





SATRAP TRANSPORT CARRIER



Notable Ships

Name:	CVNA Marzieh Irani
Launched:	February 5, 2209
Status:	Lost on December 2, 2209

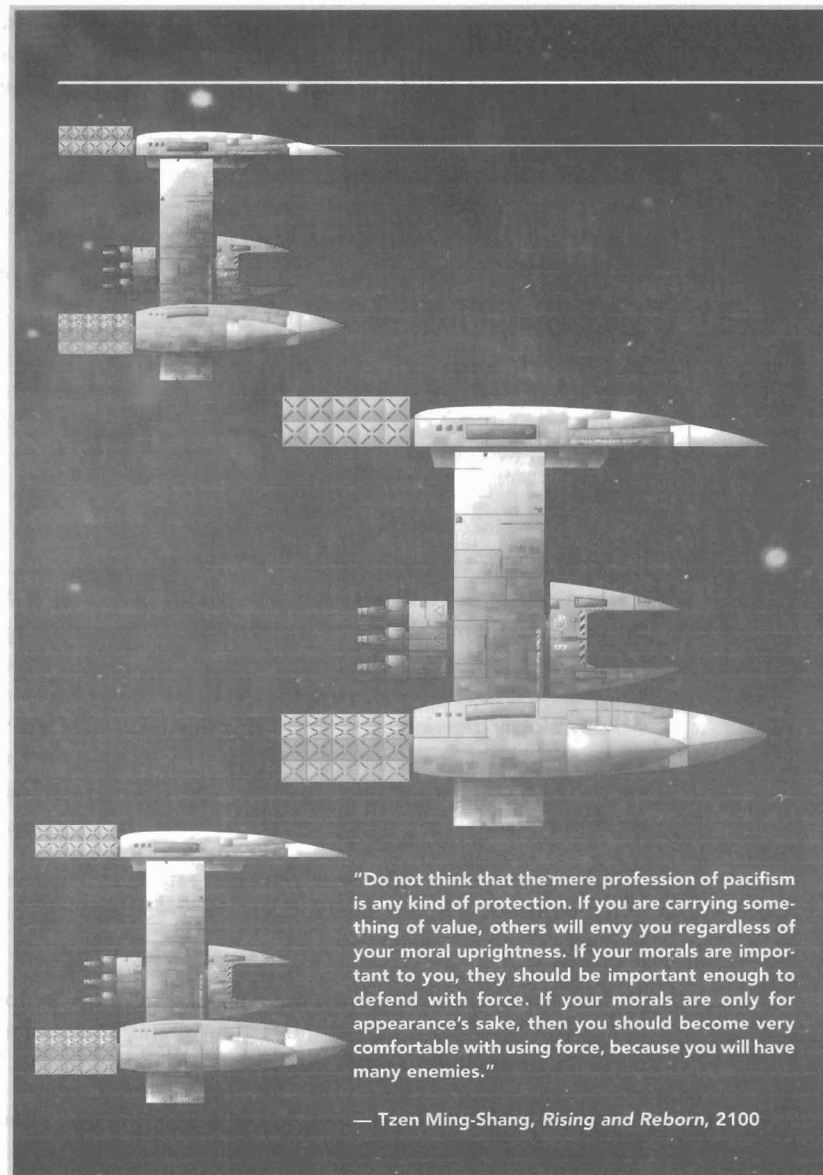
In an incident that the Venusian Bank has successfully downplayed, about half of the *Irani's* crew mutinied on November 30, 2209, apparently as a result of factional differences between segments of the crew. The mutineers then attempted to deliver the ship to the Jovians. In order to prevent this, the *Irani's* captain apparently escaped from the brig and activated the ship's self-destruct system, destroying the entire vessel along with all hands. Even with the increased diversity in personnel brought on by the formation of the CVNA, the grueling psychological screening procedures that resulted from this incident are still in place and appear to be working.

Name:	CVNA Hermann von Borsody
Launched:	September 28, 2211
Status:	Diplomatic Service

The *von Borsody* is a slightly-modified Satrap that has kept one of its outer hulls in a luxury-liner configuration, making it an excellent transport for diplomats and other politicians. Often seen docking or departing Pyrea Station, the *von Borsody's* primary duties involve shuttling back and forth between the home of the United Space Nations and transfer ports in Venus orbit. The ship has never had need to reveal its combat capabilities, but it is certain that the other solar nations at least know that a Venusian delegate would not be so naïve as to travel unprotected. Von Borsodykancho is a noted merchant captain who owns several ships of his own and has never so much as seen the vessel that bears his name.

Name:	CVNA Julius Chou
Launched:	July 1, 2213
Status:	Convoy Escort

Mr. Chou is Venus' most well-known tenor, a consummate performer who tours across the solar system. Mr. Chou is reportedly disgruntled that the honor of having a ship named for him has been so soured by the fact that the vessel is a "fat, inelegant cargo tug." Unbeknownst to Mr. Chou, however, the carrier that hides under his tug's skin has been responsible for overseeing the safe passage of nearly a dozen shipping convoys since its launch.



"Do not think that the mere profession of pacifism is any kind of protection. If you are carrying something of value, others will envy you regardless of your moral uprightness. If your morals are important to you, they should be important enough to defend with force. If your morals are only for appearance's sake, then you should become very comfortable with using force, because you will have many enemies."

— Tzen Ming-Shang, *Rising and Reborn*, 2100

SATRAP TRANSPORT CARRIER

5



SATRAP-CLASS CARRIER

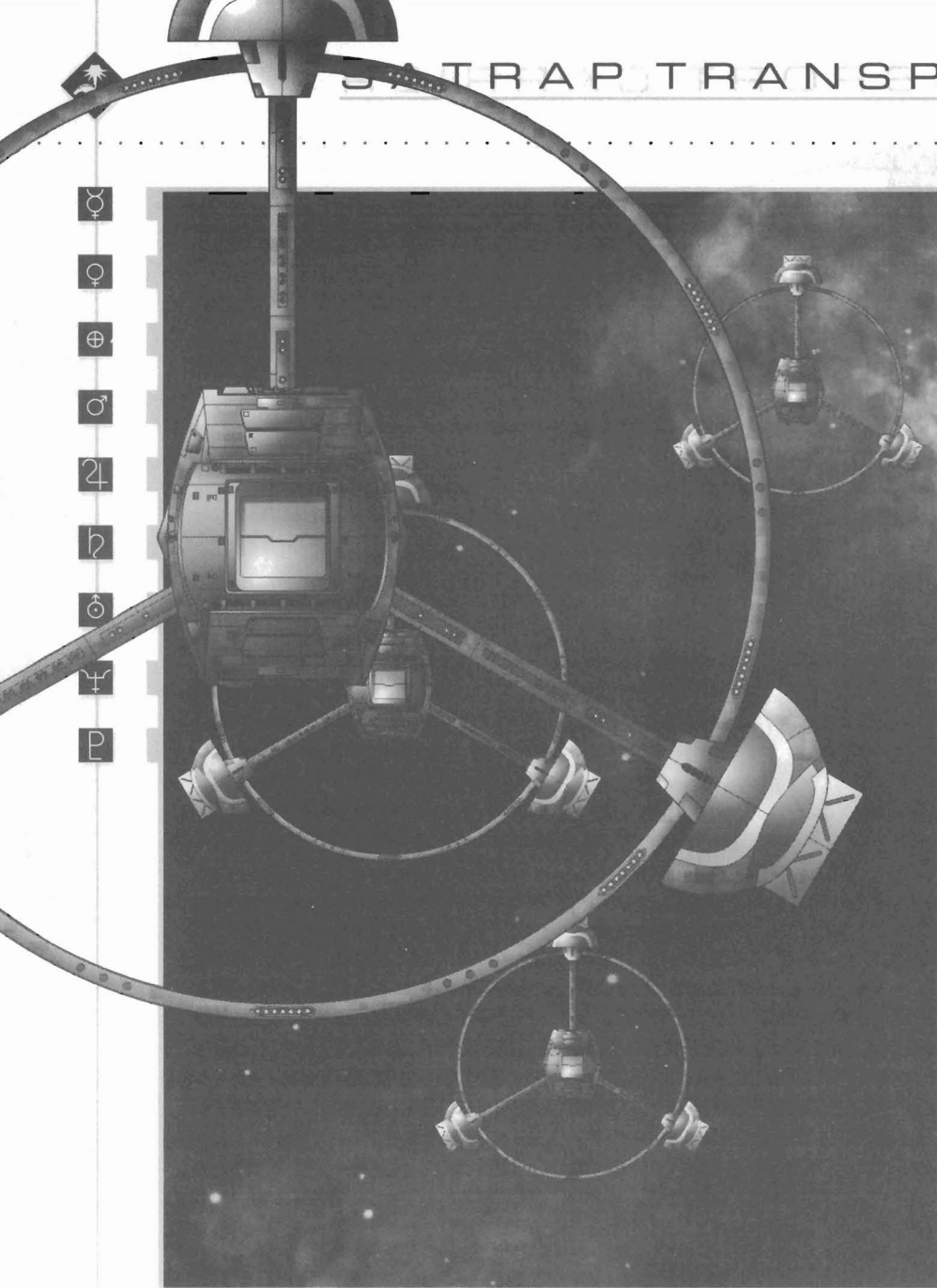
CVNA Julius Chou (2213 Configuration)



Specifications

Name:	Satrap
Origin:	Cooperative Venusian Naval Administration
Manufacturer:	Venusian Aerospace Corporation
Type:	Transport/Carrier
Control System:	Bridge w/astronomical display
Length:	436 m overall
Width:	400 m
Empty Weight:	6,489 Tons
Loaded Weight:	30,000 Tons (including cargo)
Main Drive:	8 x 15 MW
Secondary Powerplant:	8 x 4000 KW
Main Thrusters:	8 x 60,000,000 kg
Apogee Motors:	102
Acceleration:	0.8 g
Onboard Sensors:	Fire Control Radar, Infrared/ Ultraviolet, Lidar, Low-light, Magnetometer, Microwaves, Motion Detectors, Radcounter, Search Radar, Telescope
Fixed Armament:	PDS, 9x CMM, 3x Missile Bay
Additional Armament:	Auxiliary Craft, Drones
Defensive Systems:	Mag Screen
Equipment:	Escape Pods, Labs, Vehicle Bays

SATRAP TRANSPORT CARRIER



► 5.1 OVERVIEW

There are two classes of large-scale cargo haulers in use by the Venusian shipping fleet. One is a huge vessel used for nonstop transport of bulk cargo from one point to another; this vessel was used as a template for the gargantuan Shan-Yu-class battlecruiser. The second class of cargo vessel is a slightly smaller ship designed to ferry both cargo and passengers on runs with multiple stops and transfer points. These vessels have huge rotating rings for passenger comfort as well as extensive docking facilities for transport shuttles and dropships, and were used as the basis for a singular new concept in warship design.

The modern Satrap carrier is based on two civilian variants of the main hull class. One of these is a long-range cargo vessel designed for multiple cargo transfers and coach-class personnel carriage. Most of the Satraps in service are disguised to look like one of these ships, which gives them a better excuse to be wandering out in the middle of the Belt and beyond. The other common use for the Satrap-style hull is as a luxury liner. These ships are operated by transport companies across the solar system, and are the pinnacle of luxury transport. They do not have cargo trees; instead of drab grey hulls, they are festooned with windows and observation galleries for passengers. These add a great deal of mass due to added structural reinforcement requirements. They also have larger habitat rings, to support passengers who are used to having an excess of space. All the facilities are designed to provide passengers with the impression that they are still on their planet or station of origin. For instance, liners on the profitable Moon-Orbital routes have a secondary habitat installed closer to the central hull, so that passengers from the Moon can pass the trip in normal gravity conditions.

▼ 5.1.1 Capabilities

The Satrap has four large hangar bays. One, in the central hull, is openly visible and serves as a shuttle bay and cargo transfer area.

The other three bays are carefully concealed in the three main hulls and carry the Satrap's complement of combat vehicles. Four exo-armors or fighters can be comfortably supported in each bay, for a total standard load of twelve vehicles. In more extreme situations, up to double this number can be carried, at the cost of much of the ship's available repair space. Powerful drive motors are used to split the front end of each main hull to reveal the hangars, each of which is equipped with a pair of deployable catapults. The central shuttle bay is also equipped with two catapults, for additional combat launch capability.

Each of the main hull hangars is adjoined by a large Drone bay designed to support the "smarter" variants of Drone, such as electronic warfare or hunter-killer units. The Drones are launched and recovered in the main vehicle bay or via the cargo doors outward from the hangar. Since torpedo-class Drones are unable to launch without dedicated loading and release mechanisms, the Satrap is unable to deploy such Drones. However, there is little need for a ship like the Satrap, which projects most of its power with its combat vehicles, to act as a torpedo boat, so the omission is of no great consequence. The Satrap's workshops and repair bays can return recovered Drones to service extremely quickly, and can also assemble new Drones, given adequate supplies. This ability gives the Satrap a much larger effective supply of Drones than smaller ships like the Huang-Ti, which are unable to do more than make minor repairs to their Drone supply.

The Satrap does not mount the usual laser weaponry found on most Venusian vessels, relying on its combat vehicles to provide direct offensive firepower. The Satrap's large array of missile bays is used primarily for point defense and heavy fire support, and is generally not sufficient for a full ship-to-ship engagement. There have been some concerns expressed over resupply issues, but the design's proponents point out that the standard design of the missile bays allows them to make use of Jovian and CEGA missiles, with only minor alterations.

The Satrap's size allows it to retain a measure of its civilian equivalent's cargo capacity in the form of cargo trees towed behind each main hull. While visually similar to the storage arrangement on popular transports like the Ebiiru, the Satrap's cargo spar and containers are actually reasonably well armored and shielded, fulfilling the necessary specifications for military transportation.

The retention of the habitat ring gives the Satrap huge amounts of available passenger space. Even though much of the ring is taken up by the layers of armor and structural reinforcements necessary to bring the fragile-looking section up to military spec, the size of the crew quarters aboard the Satrap is rivaled only by those on the large Shan-Yu-class battlecruisers. During battle alerts, the habitat ring is evacuated and sealed; despite its increased protection, it is still the most easily-damaged part of the ship.

▼ 5.1.2 Operational Role

Should open war ever break out, the Satrap's function would become that of a mobile fleet tender, capable of self-defense and moving from one trouble spot to another. It could also serve as a fleet carrier, although it would require a significant escort in order to do so.

Many strategists feel that the Satrap tries to do too much and thus fails in all its tasks. The Satrap's cargo capacity is reduced to accommodate its vehicle squadron, which results in limited loiter time and fleet-servicing capability, and the presence of the vulnerable cargo trees reduces the ship's effectiveness as a battle carrier. The arguments surrounding the Satrap's effectiveness will likely not be resolved for some time, but they have produced some interesting ideas. One of these involves using the cargo trees as additional storage space for attack vehicles, which would completely eliminate the ship's cargo functions and replace them with as many as three full squadrons of exo-armors or fighters, creating an overwhelming hidden strike force.





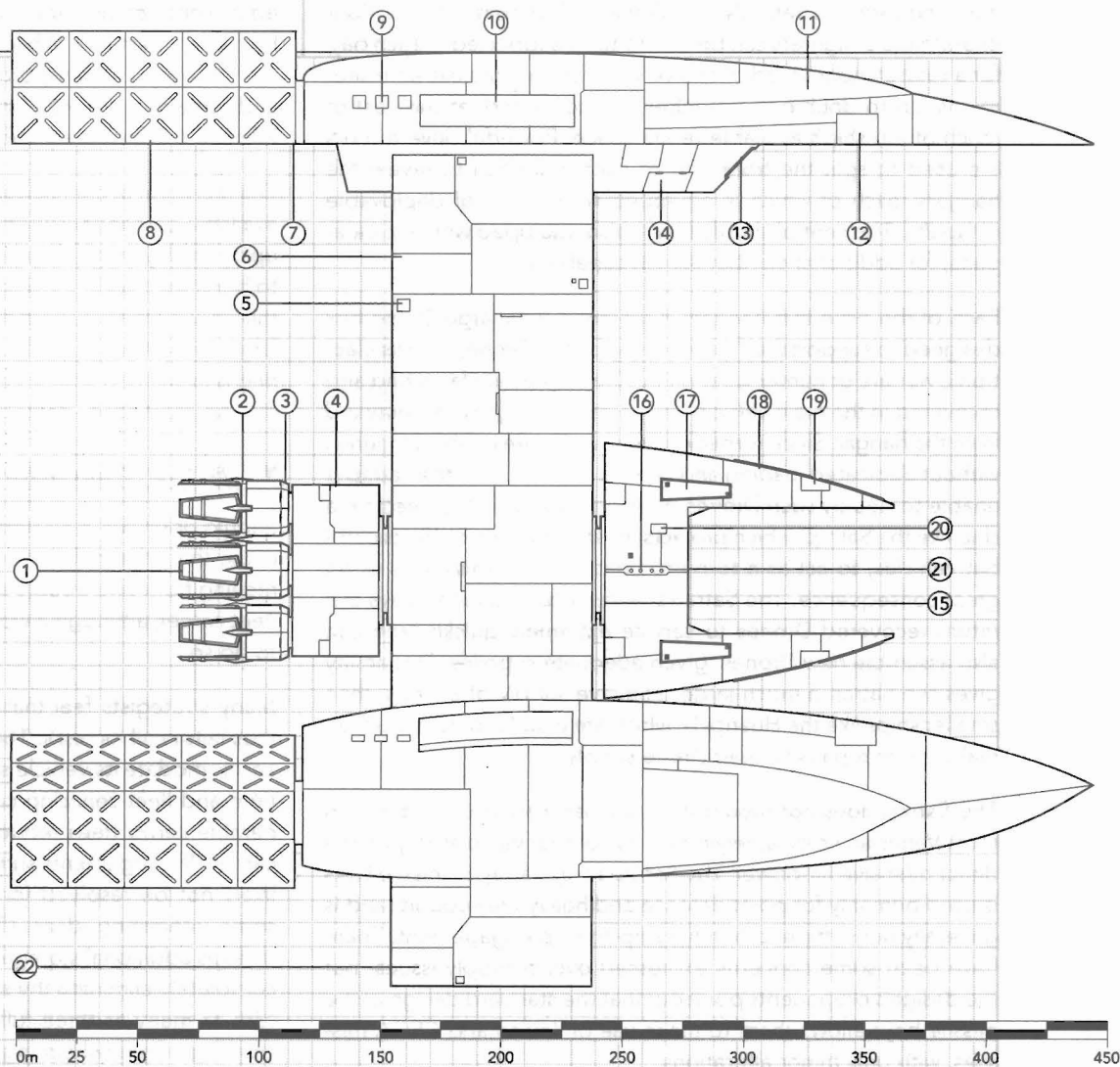
SATRAP TRANSPORT CARRIER

► 5.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS

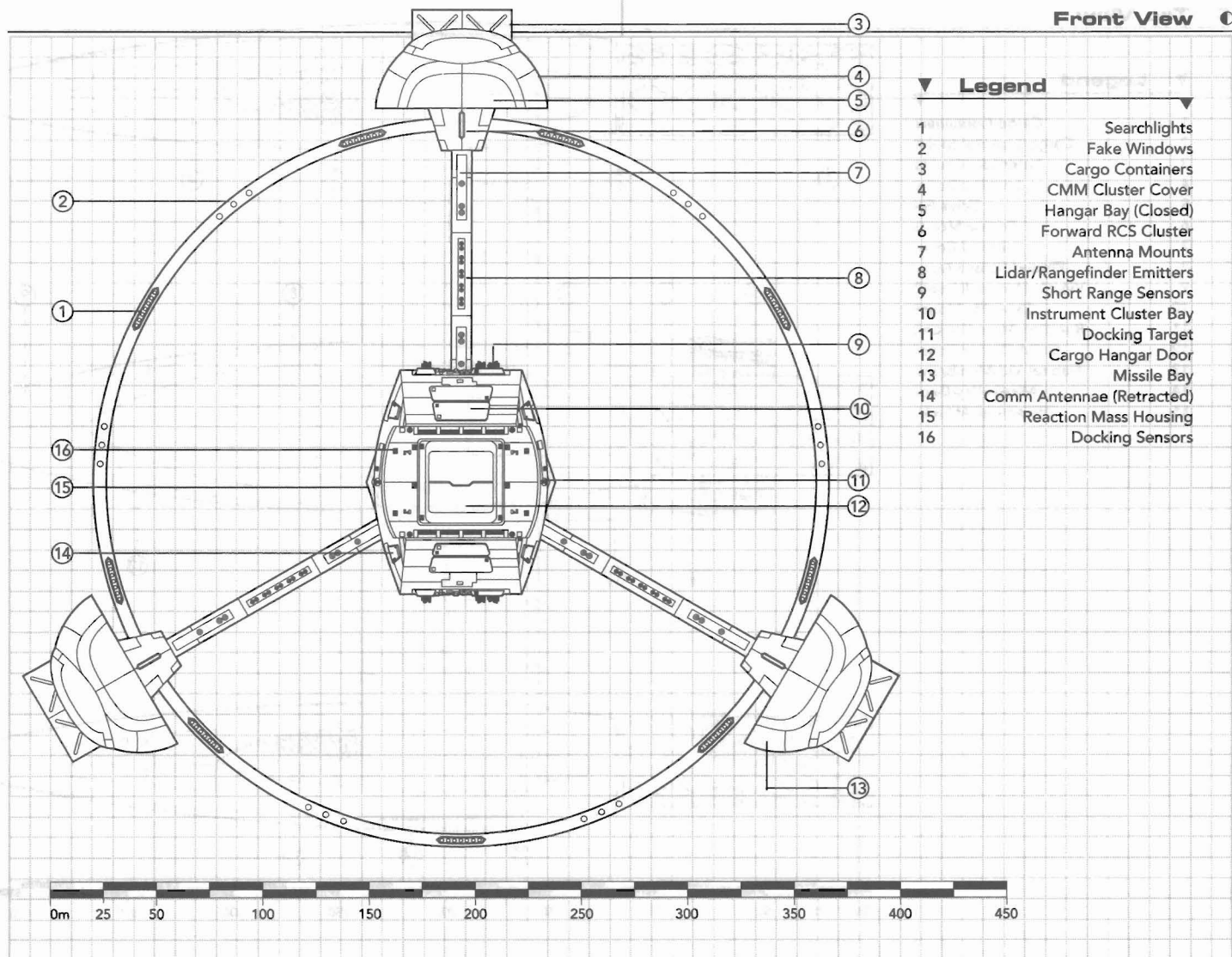
① Side View

▼ Legend

- 1 Drive Fin
- 2 Drive Fin Mount
- 3 Engine Mount
- 4 Reaction Mass Housing
- 5 Lifepod Cover
- 6 Habitat Ring
- 7 Cargo Tree Hardpoint
- 8 Cargo Containers
- 9 Lifepod Covers
- 10 Missile Bay
- 11 Hangar Bay (Closed)
- 12 CMM Cluster Cover
- 13 RCS Cluster
- 14 Personnel Airlock
- 15 Rotation Collar
- 16 Short Range Sensors
- 17 Workpod Access Bay
- 18 Instrument Cluster Bay
- 19 Docking Sensors
- 20 Comm Antennae (Retracted)
- 21 Cargo Hangar Door
- 22 Habitat Vid-Membrane



5.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)



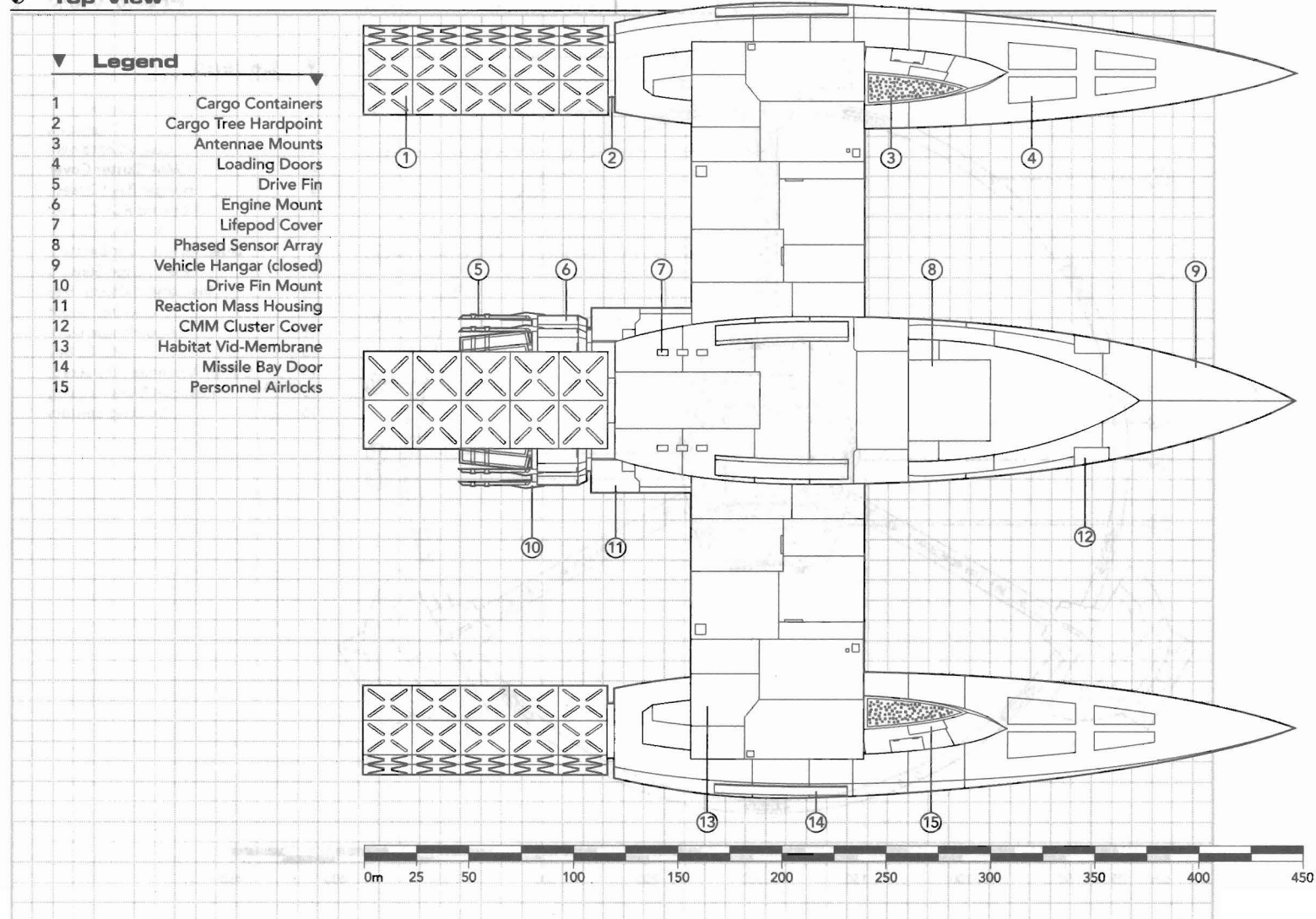


SATRAP TRANSPORT CARRIER



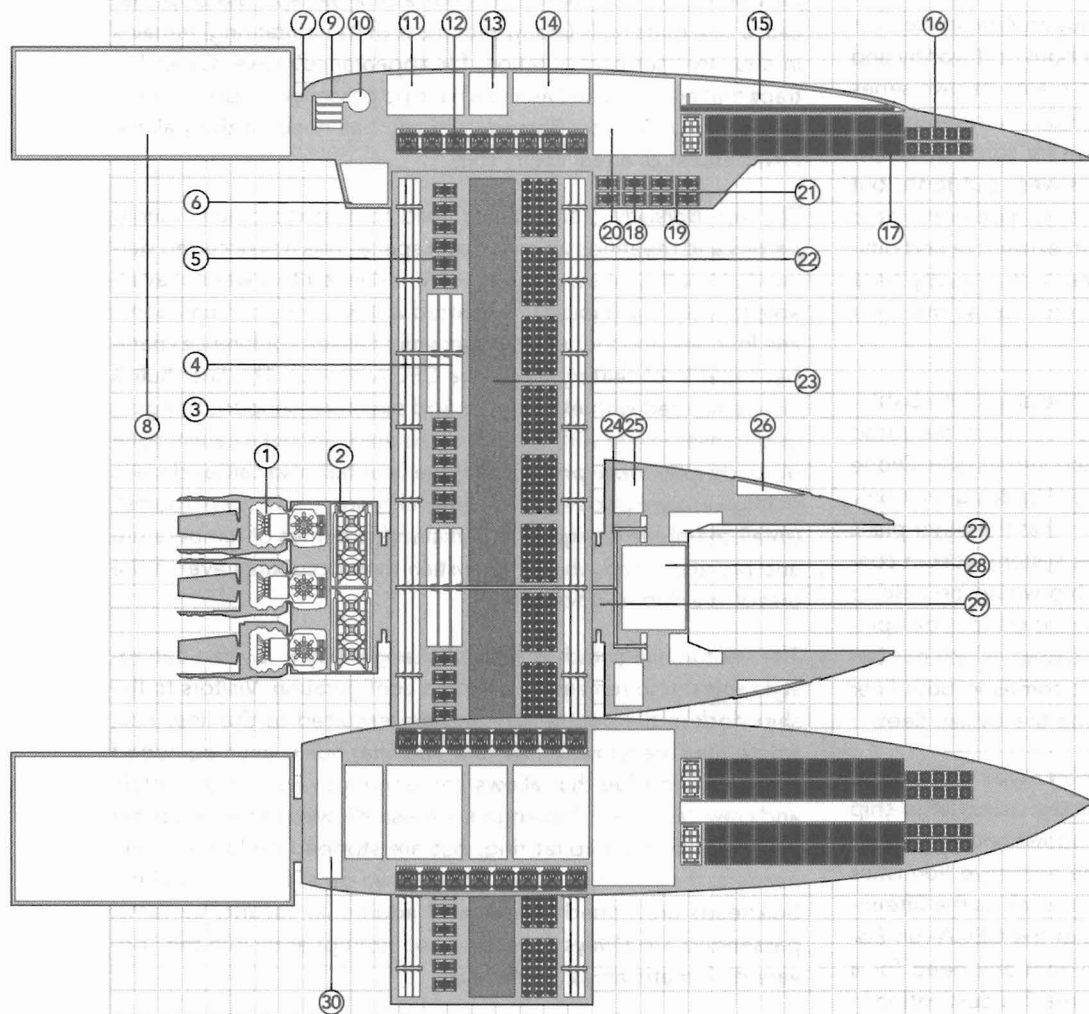
► 5.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)

① Top View



5.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)

Cutaway View ①



Legend

- 1 Plasma Combustion Chamber
- 2 Reaction Mass Storage
- 3 Crew Quarters
- 4 Officers' Quarters
- 5 Heat Exchangers
- 6 Storage Bay
- 7 Weapons/Eng. Control Center
- 8 Cargo Containers
- 9 Traffic Control Center
- 10 Bridge
- 11 Drone Storage and Prep Bay
- 12 Missile Bay
- 13 Drone Bay
- 14 Cargo Bay
- 15 Catapult
- 16 Bulk Storage
- 17 Superconducting Batteries
- 18 Launch Bay Actuator
- 19 Heat Exchangers
- 20 Hangar
- 21 Missile Storage
- 22 Gas Storage
- 23 Structural Reinforcement
- 24 Security Office
- 25 Storage Bay
- 26 Primary Instrument Cluster
- 27 Workpod and Exo-Suit Airlocks
- 28 Central Hangar
- 29 Habitat Rotation Motors
- 30 Workshops and Equipment Bay



► 5.3 HISTORY

In 2207, the new principle in ship design — warships hidden under civilian appearances — had percolated its way down to all the various Venusian corporations. The Venusian Aerospace Corporation, in particular, found the idea to be both noteworthy and cost-effective, and began a design effort to create its own series of disguised warships. Rather than purchase hulls from VenusBank (or worse, Earth), VAC decided to find a use for some of its surplus large cargo vessels. Many suggestions were put forth, but most involved an unacceptably large number of modifications to the ship's basic structure that would be both expensive and difficult to hide. Tyler Neroulis, a junior engineer with a spotty track record up to that point, produced what ended up as the most workable solution.

Rather than spend excessive effort to turn the ships into battle-ships, Neroulis outlined a cost-effective plan by which the cargo ships' forward cargo bays could be converted into missile, Drone and vehicle bays, creating an effective carrier. His design not only allowed the retention of the rotating section that the other plans regarded as a weakness, but also made the system work in conjunction with the hangars, such that the ship would be able to scramble-launch its entire vehicle complement without de-spinning its habitat section. The result was the Satrap, which has become the CVNA's only dedicated carrier. It comes in both liner and cargo variants, the better to hide among the civilian fleet.

The liner's engines are the same as the freighter-type ships, plodding and reliable. The ship is at least as massive as its cargo-ship brethren, due to the added mass of the windows and passenger amenities. Adding even more mass are the attractive flourishes added to the ship's hull by many cruise lines, such as the fifteen-meter-tall figureheads that adorn the hulls of the CEGA-run Borealis Line company. However, there is seldom any need for a ship of this type to accelerate powerfully or reach a destination in record time; the entire concept of luxury space ships is to take a leisurely approach to the normally frenetic pace of space travel.

A few Satraps were disguised as liners, so as to look inconspicuous in the inner solar system. The *von Borsody*, for instance, looks like a liner in order to better fulfill its role as a diplomatic ferry between Earth and Venus. It is not a true Satrap-class ship, because one of its hulls (along with most of its habitat ring) remains in a luxury-liner configuration, for appearance's sake. Other Satraps that are disguised as liners have no passenger capacity whatsoever; only the *von Borsody* actually has need of the palatial environment of a real luxury ship.

The *von Borsody* is sometimes used to host diplomatic dinner parties and meetings when in Earth space. This has occurred during diplomatic junkets when other Venusian territory was not available for use. The habitat ring is fitted with several posh ballrooms and lounges, and the liner hull contains a full-size conference chamber capable of seating the entire CEGA council. The liner hull is also reinforced with extra armor and structural support, bringing its defenses in line with the rest of the ship. Should a catastrophe occur despite these precautions, the liner hull also carries dozens of large escape pods and several thickly-armored "storm rooms" (small chambers designed to withstand extremes of temperature and radiation, and which can sustain their occupants even if the rest of the ship is vaporized).

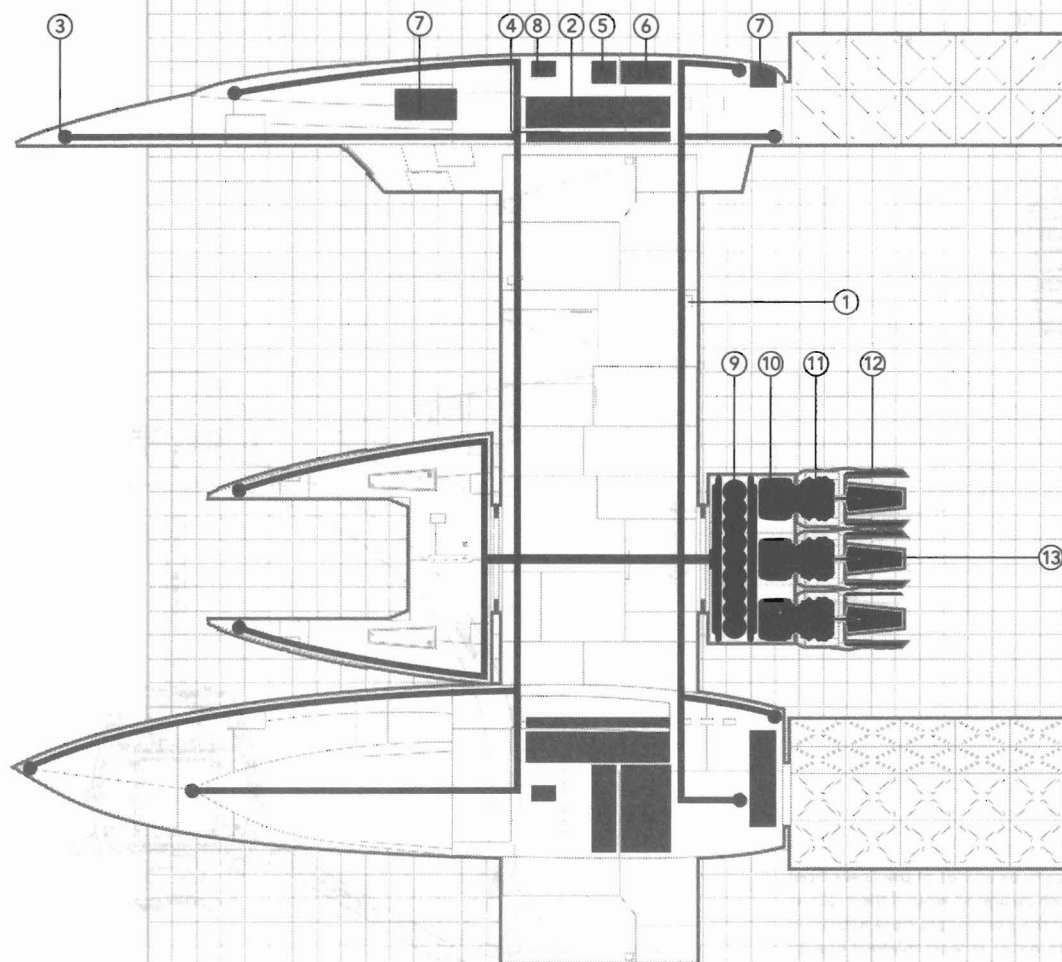
The central hull (which is the only hangar bay in civilian Satrap-style ships) also remains in a civilian configuration. Visitors to the ship dock in the central bay and are escorted to the liner hull, where they are allowed free run. The liner hull is even equipped with a fake bridge that allows passengers to watch the captain and crew "at work." Passengers are also allowed to freely wander two-thirds of the habitat ring, but are stopped by locked bulkheads at the junctions of each of the two other hulls. Behind the bulkheads are armed guards and additional security systems; passengers are always warned to not attempt entry into the "private diplomatic areas" of the ship.



SATRAP TRANSPORT CARRIER

► 5.4 SHIP SYSTEMS

① Propulsion and Weapons



The layout of the Satrap-class ships is divided into sharp sections, each with its own purpose and equipment. The propulsion section, located at the rear of the central hull, houses a number of plasma combustion chambers along with their support equipment in a sealed environment well shielded by both conventional and screen shielding. Safety is a paramount feature on this type of vessel, and the engines are known for their reliability.

The bulk of the Satrap's offensive power is constituted of its many attack craft, which are housed in the concealed launch bays that occupy the forward third of all outrigger hulls. They are backed by missile bays, both conventional and cluster-firing, and multiple drones. The ship's laser array most often serve in a defensive capability only.

▼ Weapon Systems ▼

- 1 Main Power Conduit
- 2 Missile Bay
- 3 PDS Emitter
- 4 Missile Storage
- 5 Drone Bay
- 6 Drone Storage
- 7 CMM Cluster

▼ Propulsion Syst. ▼

- 8 RCS Cluster
- 9 Reaction Mass Tanks
- 10 Plasma Combustion Chamber
- 11 Exhaust Collimator Coils
- 12 EM Power Generation System
- 13 Radiator Fin

5.4 SHIP SYSTEMS (CONT.)

Sensors and Life Support

The designers of the ship took advantage of the large surface of both the hulls and the habitat rings to lay down an extensive network of sensory elements slaved to a central dataprocessing computer. This compensates for the average quality of the ship's sensor processing equipment, which was chosen more for cost-effectiveness than efficiency.

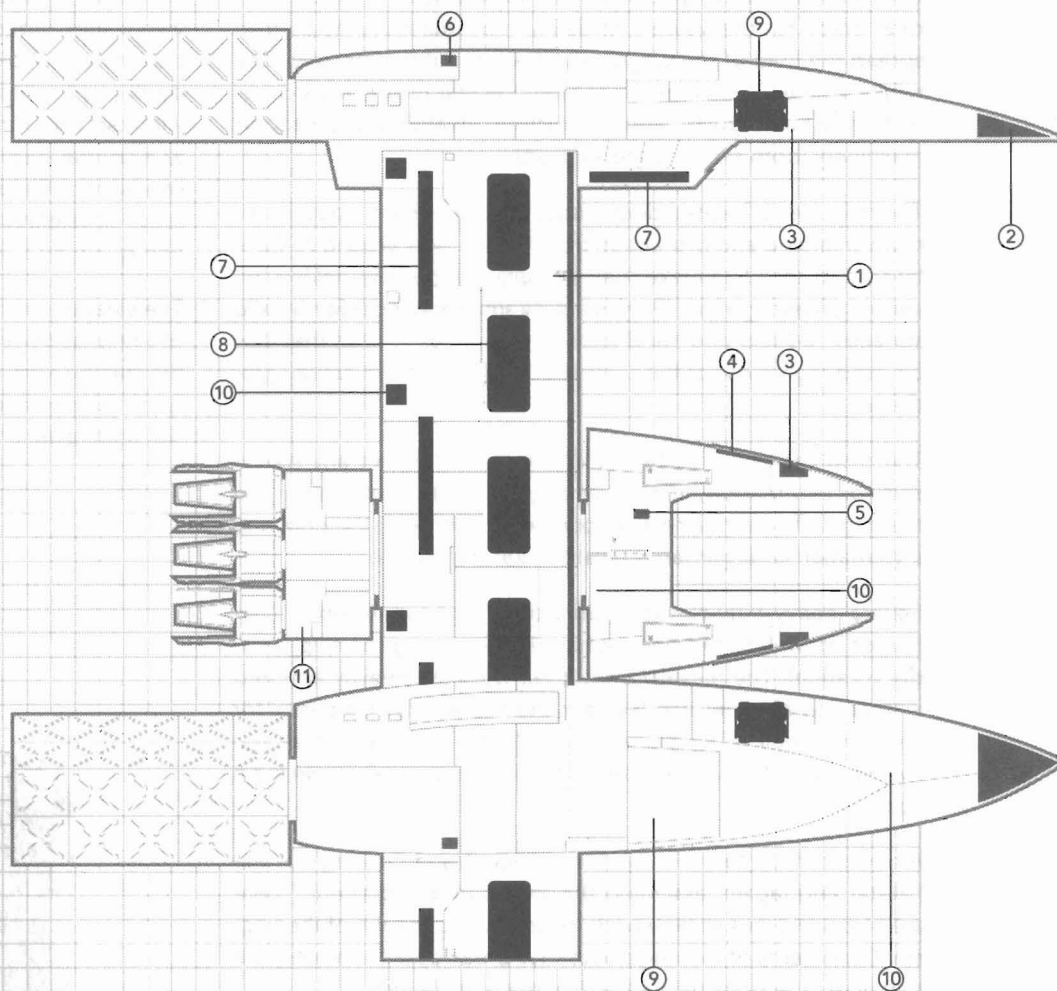
The life support system is highly modular and thoroughly distributed within the various sections of the hull to ensure maximum redundancy. Each segment of the habitat ring has its own node and heat exchanger, as well as an independent back-up power supply. This was to ensure the safety of the passengers of the liner version, but it has proven useful in battle as well.

▼ Sensor Systems

- 1 Lidar/Rangefinder Emitters
- 2 Radar Systems
- 3 Docking Sensors
- 4 Primary Instrument Clusters
- 5 Communication Antennae
- 6 Microwave Pulse-Ranging Antennae

▼ Life Support Syst.

- 7 Heat Exchangers
- 8 Gas Storage
- 9 Superconducting Batteries
- 10 Local Life Support Systems
- 11 Screen Generators





SATRAP TRANSPORT CARRIER



▼ 5.4.1 Habitat Ring

The illustration at right is a large-scale view of a cross-section of the Satrap's main habitat ring's structure. The ring houses both crew areas and ship systems as well as serving as a major structural brace for the vessel's three-hull configuration, helping to spread the load of the cargo modules throughout the ship. The habitable area is only one floor high; the rest of the ring's cross-section is taken up by armor, structure, shielding and support machinery (both ship and life support).

The crew area is located deep inside the ring, where it gets maximum shielding and protection from the systems around it. Gently-sloped corridors make their way around the ring, linking the various areas together. They are fairly small and include non-slip surfaces, ladders and handholds on two sides so that they can be used regardless of the current orientation of the gravity gradient.

The crew cabins are quite spacious for a warship (or any space-ship for that matter), and are arranged in rows along the rim of the ring. Officers' quarters run back and forth along the ring, and a recreation area/garden is located near the middle.

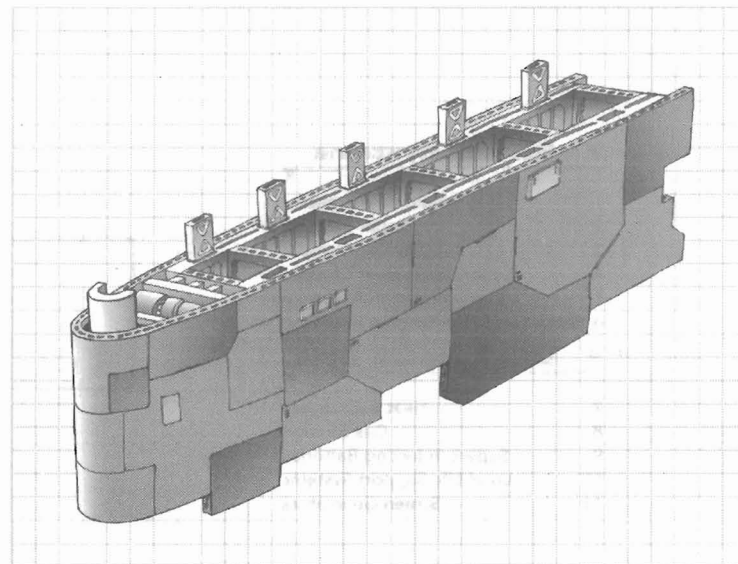
Several heavy-duty elevators carry crew "up" to the central section or "down" to the combat hangars (assuming the ship is under rotation). The elevators and their wells are heavily armored and structurally reinforced; in fact, the entire supporting strut for each main hull is an extremely solidly-built structure that can survive incredible tensile stresses thanks to nano-vat grown main spars.

Airlocks can be found in both the "floor" and "ceiling" of the habitat ring (again, assuming the ship is under rotation). There are also numerous escape pods located along the rim of the ring: small segments of the ring's outer hull break open, revealing the row of escape pods nestled within, ready for launch.

▼ 5.4.2 Hangar

The Satrap's hangars are much more well-equipped than the smaller ones found on other Venusian vessels. The Satrap has three main auxiliary craft hangars, each with two catapults, along with a pressurized cargo bay in the central section. The illustration at right depicts one of the hangars on the outer hulls in the deployed (or "open") position. It is a combat hangar, complete with four exo-armor/fighter maintenance and repair bays as well as a central staging area that can, in a pinch, store another two exo-armors. Because the ship cannot, when fully loaded, provide much acceleration, all hangar equipment is oriented for a rotation-generated gravity.

The catapult mechanism can fold upon itself and slide in and out of a recessed bay under the main floor. Both catapults start inside the staging area, so that the exos can be on the line while the bay is still hidden and be ready to launch the moment the forward hull splits open.

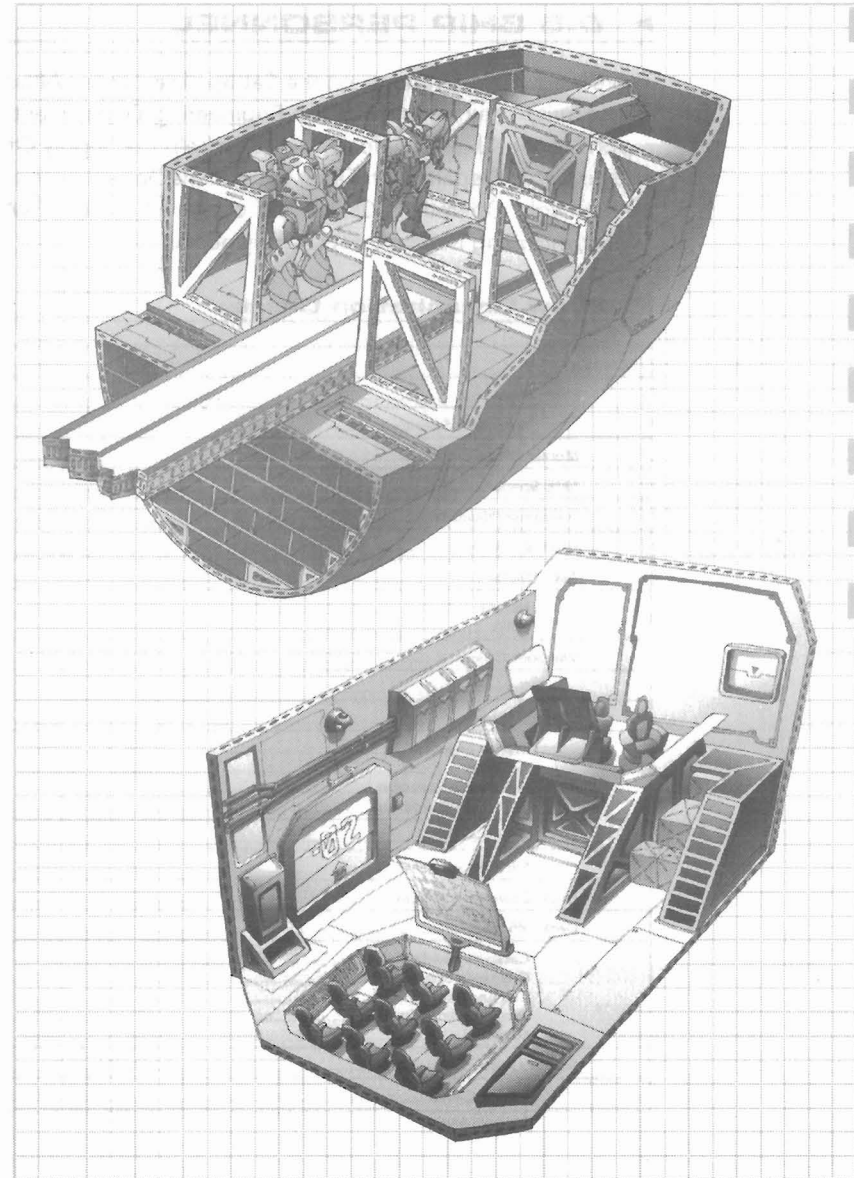


In the floor of the bay (the surface facing away from the central section), behind the catapults, is a large airlock hatch that leads to a small cargo bay that also has a hatch for a floor. This hatch leads to open space; in emergencies, the hangar crew can use both hatches to drop exos directly out the bottom of the hangar, using the ship's spin to give them an initial velocity. There is deployable emergency netting at the back of the bay, right in front of large doors that lead to the rest of the ship. The hangar adjoins both the hull's Drone bay as well as a fully-equipped machine shop and exo-limb repair facility.

▼ 5.4.3 Security Office

Located in the central section of the vessel, just off the cargo hangar, this room is the center of all security-related activities on the ship. There are smaller security offices throughout the rest of the hull, but this one is the security chief's home base. The marines aboard the Satrap get their assignments through the security office, and the main armory and weapons storage lockers are also located here.

The room is quite spacious, with several doors which can all be locked securely. One leads to the hangar and is quite large another leads out to a main corridor. A third door leads to a walk-in storage closet for body armor, and the last door leads to the brig. There are several workstations in the office for the security director to do paperwork on. On one wall, a heavy security panel covers the weapons locker, which contains pistols, masers and shotguns as well as some anti-boarding-party mines and explosives. Access to the locker is via keypad and bio-ID (a random selection of DNA, retina, fingerprints or voice); weapon carriage aboard ship is extremely restrictive, and is usually limited to security crew and, occasionally, senior staff. There are security cameras on the walls, linked to recorders that can only be accessed with simultaneous approval from the security chief and captain. The rest of the room is usable as briefing or staging space; cargo inspections take place here, as do interrogations.





SATRAP TRANSPORT CARRIER



► 5.5 SHIP PERSONNEL

There are five departments on the Satrap-class carrier. Although the security crew belongs to the Engineering Department and reports to the Chief Engineer, they often help the Supply Officer and his Cargo Department. Flight Operations Department is lead by the Flight Operations Officer and covers all combat EVA activities, including Marine troop deployments.

▣ Crew Organization Chart

Captain	
First Officer	1
Aesthetics Specialist	1
Morale Officer	1
EME Specialists	4
Helmsman/Navigator	4
Medical Officer	1
Asst. Doctor	1
Nurses	2
EMTs	2
Weapons Officer	1
Gunner	4
Chief Engineer	1
Master Engineer	1
Engineer	8
Electronics Specialist	5
Computer Specialists	4
Security Officer	1
Security Specialist	19
Flight Operations Officer	1
Deck Officer	1
Catapult Specialists	7
Ordnance Specialists	8
Exo Engineers	12
Exo/Fighter Pilots	8
Marines	20
Supply Officer	1
Supply Clerks	4

▼ 5.5.1 Interview with an Aesthetics Officer

Name: Petra Hofstadt
Rank: Tai-i
Current Assignment: CVNA Julius Chou



"First off, I'm a Corporate Liaison Officer. 'Aesthetics Officer' makes me sound like some kind of secretary. My job is to make sure that all those pretty vid-membranes on the ship's hull get used for what the ship's owner wants, without causing security issues with the ship's military operations. On other ships, I've heard this can be a problem, especially in combat situations.

"On a Satrap, though, there's hardly ever a reason to turn off the membranes. It lets people know exactly who we are and where we're from, which is just good marketing. I get requests for vid-time and -space from home base whenever the ship is capable of receiving civilian transmissions, and I then sit down and turn those requests into coherent images and advertisements for display on the hull.

"I don't get final say on when the membranes are on or off, though, which is really irritating. I can spend days working on a new visual scheme tailored for current events and synced to a broad-band transmission, and the whole thing can be cancelled if the captain decides he wants to be paranoid and overcautious. Sometimes, I guess, it's justified, like the time we had to go hunting for a pirate that had struck one of our convoys. If they'd seen us coming, they would have run for sure. As it was, we caught them by surprise and wiped them out. The captain gave me permission to welcome the pilots back with video fireworks. Maybe he's not so paranoid after all."

▼ 5.5.2 Interview with a Cargo Officer



Name: Bernho Bouise
Rank: Sho-i
Current Assignment: CVNA von Borsody

"Because we're both a warship and a cargo, I have a lot more duties than your average civilian cargo officer. In addition to maintaining the flow of traffic in and out of the holds and the hangar, I also have to keep up security protocols and perform damage control duties. In emergencies, I even have to take on the role of a deck officer, if we end up transporting extra combat units and have to use the central catapults as combat cats.

"That's when things get really hectic. The cargo duties don't go away. They just have to be handled with a bunch of exo-armors standing in the way. And if you think it's easier to move the cargo modules out of the way with big exos and micro-gravity, well, there's a nice place I'd like to sell you in the Venusian lowlands...

"Most of the time, though, there's nothing to do in the hangar, and so I can spend my shift in one of the cargo bays, double-checking inventory or inspecting the containers. I need to know at a glance where any given item is in the cargo bays.

"Let's say war breaks out, and we get assigned to act as a fleet tender. As ships match vectors with us, we'll need to get them fixed up and back out into the field as soon as possible. If I don't remember what I've got and where I've got it, I could end up with a complete backlog, and a lot of dead Venusians. I know, it's not an important job unless there's a war, but then again, in a war, everyone on this ship suddenly becomes very important."

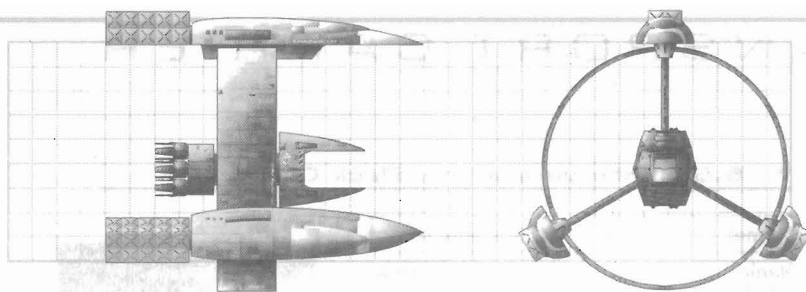
▼ 5.5.3 Interview with a Deck Officer

Name: Christiane Muller
Rank: Sho-i
Current Assignment: CVNA Julius Chou



"The Satrap's hangars are huge, considering that we usually only transport four exos or fighters per bay. When they're all snug in their cradles, there's a huge empty space right in the middle, where the catapult dollies are locked back. When we're doing scramble launches, we can move two vehicles out into the central area and get them prepped on the catapult while the hangar doors are still closed. That means that when the hangar does get opened to space, we've got two units already hot and ready to go. That's assuming, of course, that we've despinned the gravity wheel. If we haven't, and there's still gravity in the bay, then we just open up the bay in the middle of the central area and drop the unit right out, letting centrifugal force do all the work.

"Recovery's a bit trickier. Unlike a launch situation, a recovery requires the ship to be at a standstill, both in terms of maneuvering and the gravity wheel. We prefer to recover units through the main doors, because it allows the greatest margin for error. We can set up safety nets in the hangar, and we can even set up catch-cables on the catapults for use in decelerating incoming units. Unfortunately, it's often more secure for the ship's sake to recover exos through the small cargo hatch, since the cargo hatch doesn't require splitting the hull in two. In that case, the incoming has to match vectors and get reeled in. If something goes wrong, we'll definitely feel it."



► Satrap Transport Carrier

▼ Overall Data:

Threat Value: 193700	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: 279 M	Indv. lemon Dice 3
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▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Space	Combat: 4 MP (0.4 g)	Top: 8 MP (0.8 g)	Maneuver: -4	Range: 2000 hrs	ReMass: 4000 BPs
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▼ Sections:

1x	Main Hull w/Bridge	1x	Central Hull	24x	Pressurized Cargo Module
2x	Main Hull w/o Bridge	1x	Habitat Ring		

▼ Off & Def Systems

1x	Point Defense System	9x	CMM	3x	Missile Bay
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► Section: Main Hull w/Bridge

▼ Main Data:

TV: 33000	Off. TV: 47000	Def. TV: 5600	Misc. TV: 46000	Cost: 52.8M	Indv. lemon Dice: 2
Crew: 32	Actions: 7	Sensors: -2/2km	Comm: -2/10 km	Fire Control: +1	Type: Lim. Prod
Hull Size: 40	Default Size: 32	Armor: 75	Light: 75	Heavy: 150	Overkill: 225

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 2,000 hrs	ReMass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Autopilot	-	Lvl 1 Pilot	HEP: Vac	-	-
Backup Systems	-	-	Life Support	-	Full
Cargo Bay	-	90,000 m3	Passenger Accom	-	1,000m3
2x Catapult	-	(600/mass) m/s2	Reinforced Crew	3	-
Computer	3	CRE 0 KNO 0 PP3	8x Tool Arm	20	Cannot Punch
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 40 People			
HEP: Rad	4	-			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
1	PDS (ranged)	T	x10	1	+1	+6	Inf.	AM, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	16	1424	n/a
	PDS (shield)	FF	x25	Melee	+1	+4	Inf.	Conc. (Inst.), Def, E-Shld., H.	16	2372	n/a
3	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	64ea	Conc. (Inst.), HEAT, Missile	9	3106	2.7
1	Missile Bay	T	x30	5	-2	+5	40	Conc. (Inst.), HEAT, Missile	8	2644	2.3

► Section: 2x Main Hull w/o Bridge

▼ Main Data:

TV: 27000	Off. TV: 39000	Def. TV: 5600	Misc. TV: 38000	Cost: 4	0.5M	Indv. lemon Dice: 2
Crew: 32	Actions: 7	Sensors: -2/2km	Comm: -2/10 km	Fire Control: +1	Type: Lim. Prod	
Hull Size: 40	Default Size: -	Armor: 75	Light: 75	Heavy: 150	Overkill: 225	

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 2,000 hrs	ReMass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Passenger Accom	-	1,000m3
Cargo Bay	-	100,000 m3	Reinforced Crew	3	-
2x Catapult	-	(600/mass) m/s2	8x Tool Arm	20	Cannot Punch
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 40 People			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Life Support	-	Full			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
3	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	64ea	Conc. (Inst.), HEAT, Missile	9	3106	2.7
1	Missile Bay	T	x30	5	-2	+5	40	Conc. (Inst.), HEAT, Missile	8	2644	2.3

► Section: Habitat Ring

▼ Main Data:

TV: 8700	Off. TV: 0	Def. TV: 1600	Misc. TV: 25000	Cost: 87M	Indv. lemon Dice: 2
Crew: 8	Actions: 5	Sensors: -2/2 km	Comm: -2/10 km	Fire Control: 0	Type: Lim. Prod
Hull Size: 20	Default Size: 20	Armor: 40	Light: 40	Heavy: 80	Overkill: 120

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 2,000 hrs	ReMass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Sick Bay	6	Six patients
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 60 People			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Life Support	-	Full			
Passenger Accom	-	6,000m3			
Reinforced Crew	3	-			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
-											

► Section: Central Hull

▼ Main Data:

TV:	14000	Off. TV:	0	Def. TV:	6400	Misc. TV:	37000	Cost:	19.8M	Indv. lemon Dice:	
Crew:	16	Actions:	6	Sensors:	+0/2 km	Comm:	0/15 km	Fire Control:	0	Type:	Lim.Prod
Hull Size:	34	Default Size:	-	Armor:	75	Light:	75	Heavy:	150	Overkill:	225

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	Space	Combat:	58 MP (5.8 g)	Top:	117 MP (11.7 g)	Maneuver:	-4	Range:	2,000 hrs	ReM:	15,000 BP
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Lab Security	1	-
2x Catapult	-	(450/mass) m/s2	Life Support	-	Full
Cargo Bay	-	25,000 m3	Reinforced Crew	3	-
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection System	-	Pods for 30 People			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
High Towing Capacity	-	Double			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
-											

► Section: 24x Pressurized Cargo Module

▼ Main Data:

TV:	3500	Off. TV:	0	Def. TV:	400	Misc. TV:	10000	Cost:	1.6M	Indv. lemon Dice:	3
Crew:	0	Actions:	0	Sensors:	N/A	Comm:	N/A	Fire Control:	-5	Type:	MassProd
Hull Size:	16	Default Size:	15	Armor:	20	Light:	20	Heavy:	40	Overkill:	60

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	Towed	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Range:	5,000 hrs	ReMass:	-		
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Cargo Bay	-	6,000 m3			
HEP: Rad	3	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Life Support	-	Full			
No Sensors	-	-			
No Communication	-	-			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
-											

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV:	-	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:	-	Cost:	-	Indv. lemon dice:	-
Crew:	-	Actions:	-	Sensors:	-	Comm:	-	Fire Control:	-	Type:	-
Hull Size:	-	Default Size:	-	Base Armor:	-	Light:	-	Heavy:	-	Overkill:	-

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	-	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Maneuver:	-	Range:	-	Re. Mass:	-
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
-					

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV:	-	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:	-	Cost:	-	Indv. lemon dice:	-
Crew:	-	Actions:	-	Sensors:	-	Comm:	-	Fire Control:	-	Type:	-
Hull Size:	-	Default Size:	-	Base Armor:	-	Light:	-	Heavy:	-	Overkill:	-

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	-	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Maneuver:	-	Range:	-	Re. Mass:	-
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

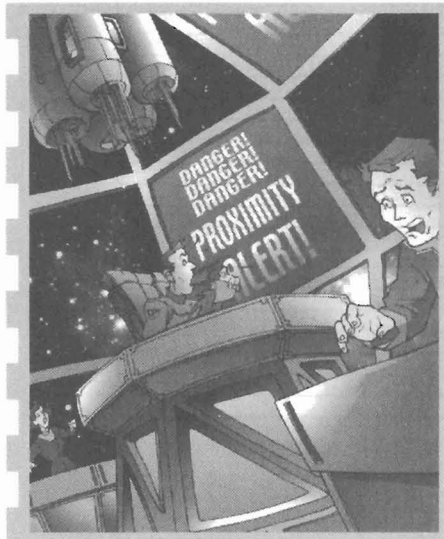
Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
-					

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC



► PART IV: RISING STAR



On the haptic display installed in his command chair, Taggart felt Katayama shaking his head in amusement. "This is how the fates work, I suppose," Katayama was saying. Taggart nodded in agreement. He had not been nearly so cheerful when he found that he would be long gone from Venus by the time Katayama's ship arrived.

"It sounds like they really want you to earn all that back pay you've accumulated," Katayama quipped. "I hope four weeks of medical leave was sufficient rest time for you."

Taggart wished he could tell Katayama about his new assignment. Practically the moment he'd been given his medical release, he had received orders to

act as an intelligence advisor aboard a prototype ship dubbed the Huang-Ti class. The whole project was a complete secret; it seemed that the CVNA was satisfied with Taggart's ability to keep his mouth shut. The ship's mission length was indeterminate, and he would be out of contact for the duration. Taggart hoped that Katayama would not view his silence as an insult.

"I know you may be unable to contact me," the transmission went on, as if reading his thoughts, "but don't worry. At this point, there's all the time in the universe for us to meet. I'm very patient."

The transmission ended, and Taggart shut the display down.

You and me both, Mischa-san, he thought. A few more months won't matter.

* * *

It's taken two long years, Taggart thought triumphantly, but it's worth it.

All around him, he could hear his analysts quietly passing information between one another, filling the Huang-Ti's analysis room with a low hum. Running his hands over his command chair's half-dozen haptic displays, Taggart felt the clear image of a Hammerhead-class dreadnought drifting along serenely less than ten kilometers away. The exo-armors were in position, and the bridge was waiting for his signal to begin.

The Huang-Ti had performed beautifully for eighteen months, hiding out all over the solar system, using its active stealth systems to elude all manner of detection. They had gathered vast amounts of data that would be used to finish the specs for the production model of the stealthed observation ship. It hadn't taken much effort to persuade the captain to let the ship's mission end on a high note, especially once he explained the nature of their target. They'd spent a few months spying and gathering data, and another few weeks picking out vectors and getting in position. Now, it was all about to pay off.

Taggart gestured toward one of his analysts, and immediately, the directives began flowing through the ship. Reports began to pop up in rapid-fire succession under Taggart's fingers. The Hammerhead's comms were being jammed, its sensors blinded, and its internal messaging system overridden by the Huang-Ti's electronics suite. After a moment, a familiar face appeared on Taggart's display, accompanied by sounds of confusion and terror.

"Hello again, Nakama," Taggart purred. "Miss me?"

Taggart felt Nakama's eyes widen, and he smiled.

"Taggart?" the traitor breathed. "Where—"

"Right here, you bastard," Taggart growled. Around him, the analysts let out an appreciative cheer.

Precisely on time, Taggart heard the Huang-Ti's main batteries open fire, and on his display, felt the Hammerhead's primary drive chamber vanish in a cloud of vapor.

"Taggart, wait," Nakama began, his eyes flicking back and forth. "I can make a deal. I can make you rich."

Taggart had to laugh. Nakama's gall, especially in the face of total defeat, was unbelievable.

"An eye for an eye, Nakama," Taggart declared. "It's that simple."

On one of his displays, Taggart felt two STRIKE exo-armors exiting the Hammerhead, only to seemingly self-destruct while still on their launch rails. Taggart's smile grew wider. Behind Nakama, more alarms were blaring, and on another haptic tactical display, Taggart could feel the shapes of two *Korikaze* exo-armors that had seemingly appeared out of nowhere, right next to the Hammerhead. Nakama opened his mouth again, but no sound came out. The display couldn't show it, but Taggart knew that Nakama was, for the first time he'd ever known, sweating. Sweating, and afraid.

"No need for interrogation this time, Nakama," Taggart wound up, savoring the moment. "Here are the research projects you wanted to know so much about. Take a good look. Oh," he added, "and just so I don't seem impolite this time," he paused to wave at the viewscreen, "goodbye, Nakama."

Nakama didn't get a chance to reply, but Taggart really wasn't interested in anything he had to say, anyway.

* * *

When the *Leon Marten* showed up to escort the Huang-Ti on the final leg back home, Taggart couldn't help but be impressed.

Antonova's ship had undergone a complete refit, and was now sleek, smooth and deadly, a sign of its captain's ascendant reputation.

When Yvette called over, asking to speak to Taggart, he was already waiting.

"Hello, Antonova-kanjo," he said cheerfully. "Did you get the package I sent?" Yvette laughed, shaking her head.

"It arrived five months after you started your assignment," she said between chuckles. "I don't know what to say. VenusBank execs have trouble affording some of that stuff." Taggart shrugged.

"It's my money," he said, serious. "I'll do what I want with it, and I wanted, in some minuscule way, to thank you for your help."

"You're more than welcome," Yvette acknowledged, bowing her head very low.

"Anyway," Taggart said, suddenly smiling again, "I'll make it all back after I get home. After all, this ship just eliminated a traitor and seized a CEGA warship, without a single scratch. We'll all get commendations, probably promotions, too. It's a great ship, and a great crew. I'm almost sorry to leave."

"What about your next assignment?" Yvette asked, a hint of her old hero-worship showing through.

"Absolutely nothing," Taggart announced happily. "It's been two years since I've set foot outside this very expensive and very comfortable tub, and I've got some major leave coming to me. I think it's about time I went and finally met somebody."

Antonova's face suddenly hardened.

"If you're talking about who I think you're talking about," she said, "I'm afraid you're not going to like what I'm going to tell you."





TSAR HEAVY CRUISER



Notable Ships

Name:	CVNA Galim Meshenak
Launched:	December 12, 2207; re-launched September 28, 2213
Status:	Martian Patrol

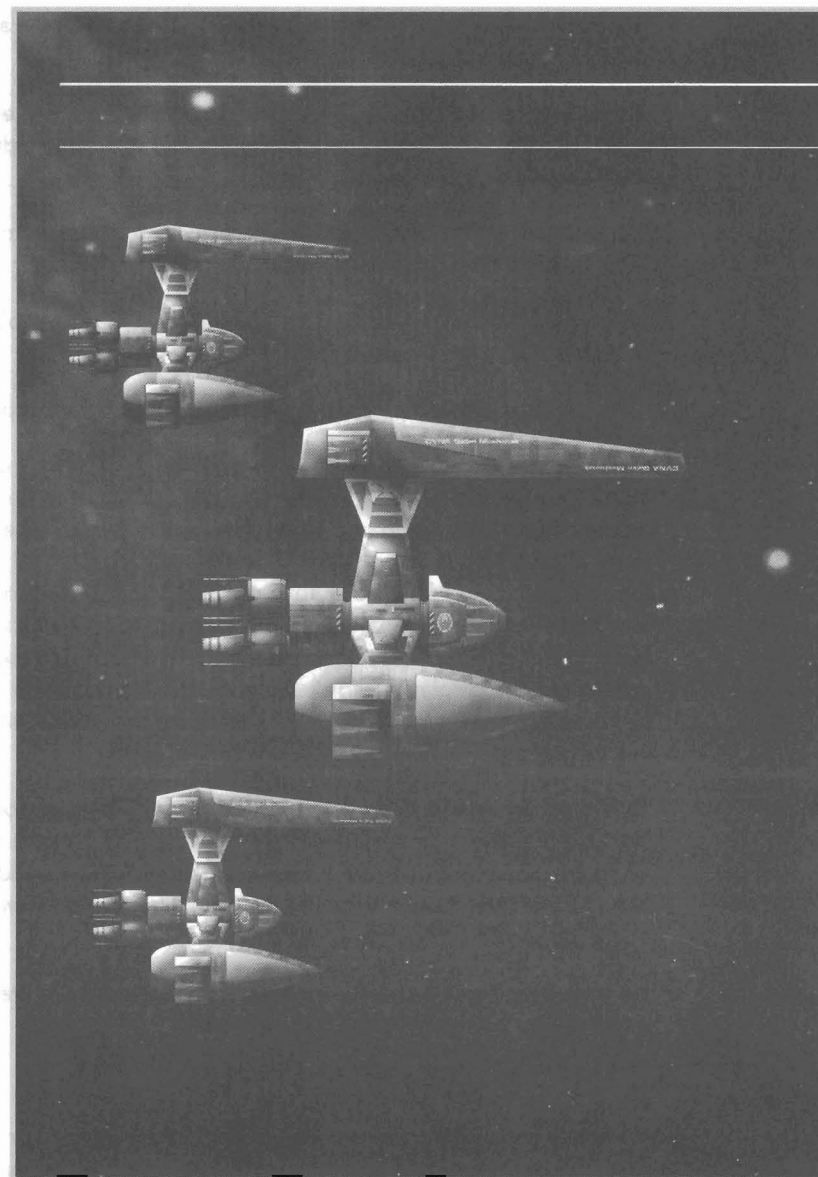
The *Galim Meshenak* is, to date, the only Tsar class ship to have made use of its orbital bombardment capabilities. In a Republic-Federation border skirmish, several touring Venusian vehicles were caught in the crossfire. When the orbiting *Meshenak* was alerted to the situation, its crew delivered a precise pattern of warning shots in less than three minutes, halting both forces in their tracks and allowing the Venusian citizens to move to safe ground. Once the Venusians were safe, the skirmish was allowed to proceed uninterrupted.

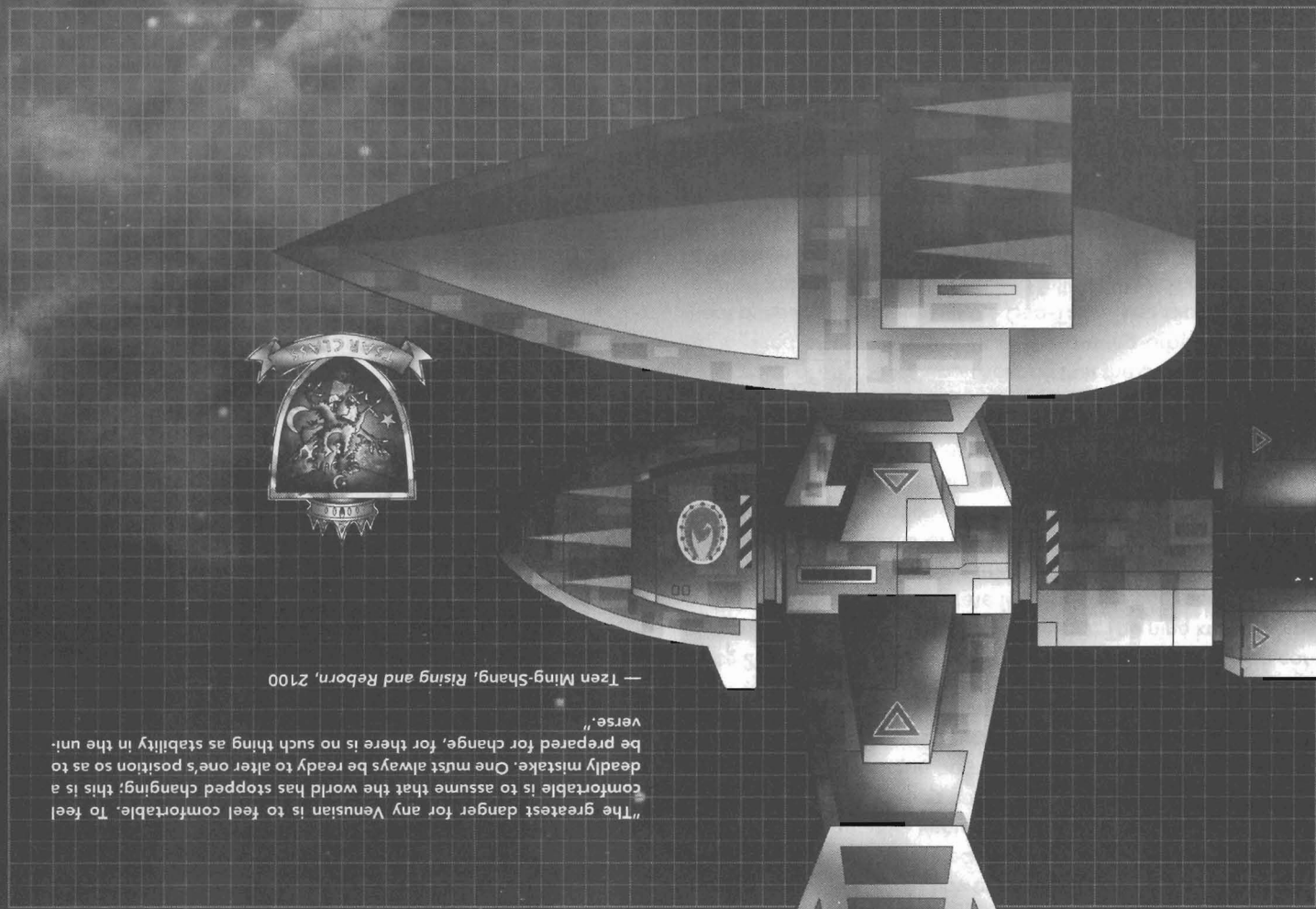
Name:	CVNA Dexter Slobotnik
Launched:	January 2, 2213
Status:	Home Defense

The *Dexter Slobotnik* is the first non-refit Tsar-class ship to be completed. As such, it has experienced a number of minor bugs and quirks not present in the Tsars that are conversions, a result of supposedly updated manufacturing and assembly techniques. Until the *Slobotnik* is running at acceptable levels, it is being kept close to Venus for testing and troubleshooting. Results of the tests are expected to smooth trials for later Tsars. The ship's status is quite pleasing to its namesake, who is using the opportunity to broadly advertise his financial management firm.

Name:	CVNA Mathilde Antonescu
Launched:	N/A
Status:	Commissioned

Expected to be the last Tsar-class ship to be built for some time, the *Antonescu* is named after a young girl who, in late 2213, led her three younger siblings out of the Chilean wilderness after a plane crash. Antonescu kept her charges safe, fending off wildlife, procuring food and exhibiting superhuman determination and intelligence. The facts that Antonescu's flight was both unlisted and unauthorized, and that no names of any of the crash's victims have been released, have been largely overlooked.





CVNA Galim Meshenak (2213 Configuration)

TSAR-CLASS HEAVY CRUISER

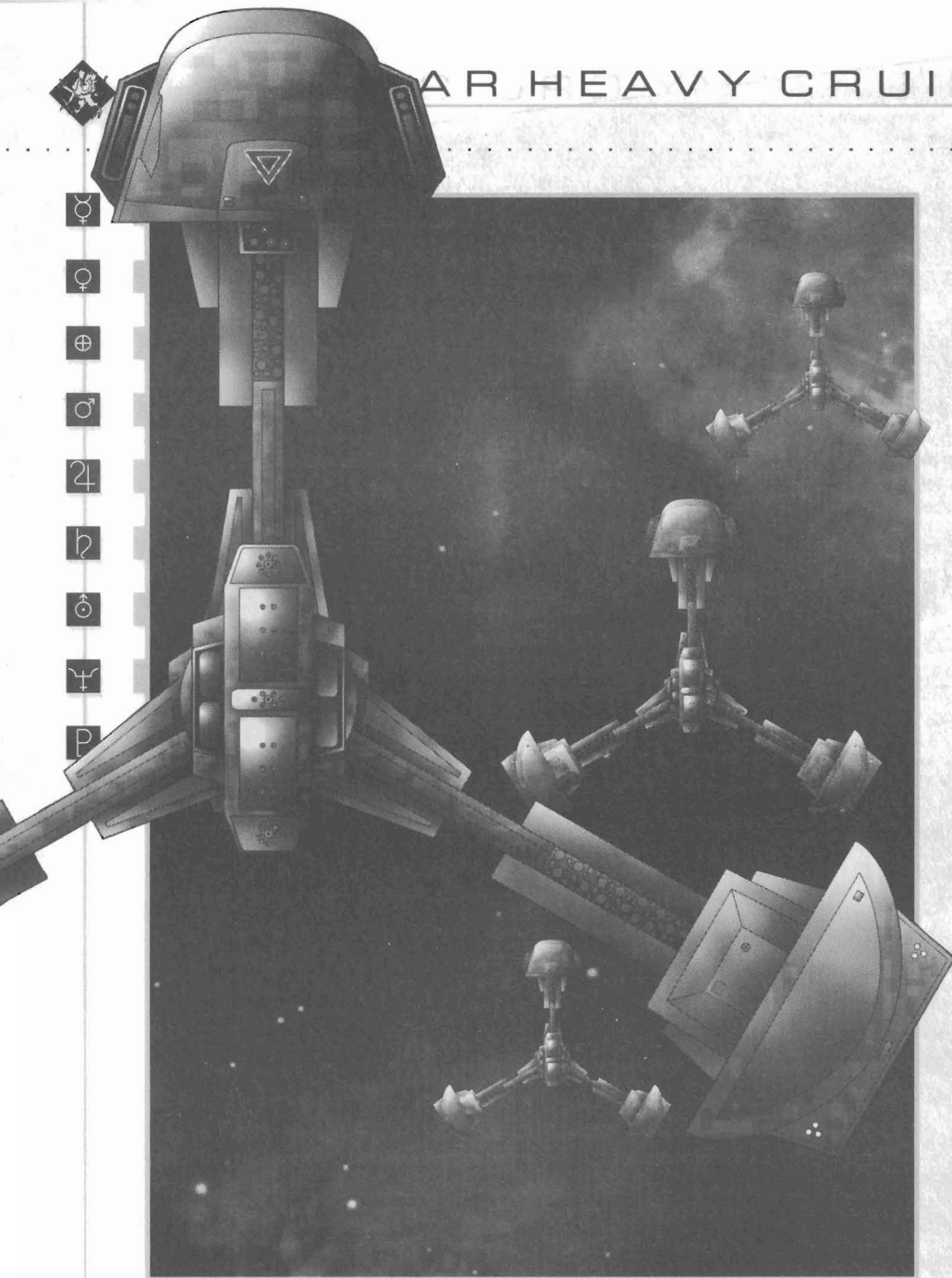
CVNA Galim Meshenak

CVNA Galim Meshenak

"The greatest danger for any Venusian is to feel comfortable. To feel comfortable is to assume that the world has stopped changing; this is a deadly mistake. One must always be ready to alter one's position so as to be prepared for change, for there is no such thing as stability in the universe."

— Tzen Ming-Shang, *Rising and Reborn*, 2100

AR HEAVY CRUISER



► 6.1 OVERVIEW

Until recently, Venusian warships were loyal only to their home corporation, operating without any knowledge of the activities of other Venusian naval ships that might be in the area. With the formation of the CVNA, however, the various groups of Venus-built warships were gathered together and united into a single force. The Cooperative Venusian Naval Administration is funded by all the major Venusian corporations, and makes up 99% of Venus' warship fleet. The only warships not under CVNA control are the private transports of corporate heads, and even these are required to be under close observation.

Since 2200, the largest warships in service with the Venusian corporations were the Gao-Tzu-class cruisers. The nine known ships of this class served as corporate flagships and command centers, but were in truth quite unremarkable in comparison to most Jovian or CEGA warships of the time. With the formation of the CVNA, all the corporations turned over their Gao-Tzu-class ships (along with the rest of their private navies) and implemented a joint project to thoroughly upgrade the vessels using the massive technological strides Venus had made over the past decade.

One group of engineers, upon hearing that the CVNA would likely be in need of vessels capable of performing orbital bombardment duties, pointed out that the Gao-Tzu was an excellent choice for such a ship. Approval to proceed followed quickly on the heels of an extensive computer-prototyping test, and on June 20, 2213, the first of a new class of warships left the Carthage orbital shipyards for a shakedown cruise.

The new class, designated Tsar, replaces one of the Gao-Tzu's three identical hulls with a longer, narrower construct of identical mass. Whereas the remaining twin hulls contain vehicle hangars, lasers and missile bays, the new hull's internal space is almost completely taken up by three massive railguns and their associated targeting equipment. The entire ship's outer appearance has also been subtly altered to more resemble Venusian civilian ships.

▼ 6.1.1 Capabilities

The Tsar was conceived by engineers from the Waldsen-Nishiyama corporation in 2213, amid concerns that Venus' military role in the Solar System might eventually require orbital bombardment of selected enemy assets. Realizing that most weapons that excelled in space combat had, at best, mediocre performance when fired through an atmosphere, the CVNA felt it had little choice but to create a warship specially armed for planetary bombardment. Using technology acquired from the Jovians and CEGA, W-NTC submitted an extensive modification package for the outdated Gao-Tzu-class cruisers.

The Tsar's three heavy railguns are capable of striking a five-meter-diameter target zone from orbit with metal slugs of varying size. Collateral damage can thus devastate a square kilometer, or be limited to the point that bystanders within a few meters of ground zero are practically unaffected. The railguns are also very effective in space, despite their high power requirements and poor firing arcs. Although the Tsar carries an abundance of ammunition for the railguns, the weapons themselves have a limited number of uses; after several dozen firings, the weapons tend to lose both accuracy and reliability. Unlike the massive massdrivers used on the surface of Earth's Moon, the Tsar's railguns do not have the ability to correct their alignment. The heavy and bulky equipment required for such calibrations are found only at major space docks; the need for continued secrecy further restricts the possible locations for this equipment to a handful of stations in Venus' orbit.

The Tsar's two remaining main hulls contain its remaining armament. Each one mounts a pair of powerful and accurate laser batteries mounted in retractable turrets, an assortment of missile launchers, and two vehicle bays. The vehicle bays are extremely cramped, but do have sufficient space to allow exo-suits and work pods to move in and out through the hangar doors even when exo-armors or fighters are under repair. Storage space is at a premium aboard the Tsar; since the vessel keeps with the Venusian habit of maximizing crew comfort at the price of taking space

away from ship systems, there is barely enough room for the ship's standard marine complement and EVA crew, meaning that no extra exo-armors or fighters can be squeezed into the bays.

Crew quarters are spread out over all three hulls, and are quite comfortable by warship standards. Large numbers of robots and automated systems reduce the necessary crew size, allowing for a larger living space for each human crewmember. The main bridge can be located in either of the main hulls; the railgun hull contains a control center used specifically for targeting the railguns. The hull containing the bridge is referred to as the command hull, while the other main hull has extra recreational and storage facilities and is referred to as the habitat hull.

Several Gao-Tzu-class ships remain in service. These have been upgraded with new technology and the now-typical Venusian civilian camouflage, and will continue to fill the role of medium ships-of-the-line in the CVNA. The upgraded Gao-Tzu class ships have, instead of the railgun hull, a third main hull, giving them increased vehicle capacity and conventional firepower.

▼ 6.1.2 Operational Role

Although the Tsar's primary purpose is to project Venusian military power on a planet without requiring the need for ground deployment, the actual implementation of this role is somewhat problematical. Planetary orbits are usually quite crowded, making it difficult for an artillery vessel to open fire without being noticed. Given that one of the CVNA's major advantages is the fact that its existence is unknown to the other solar nations, the use of Tsars for the duty at which they excel most must necessarily be kept to an absolute minimum. This has led to criticisms that the Tsar is a very expensive toy that cannot be played with, making it no better than the ship from which it was modified.

Only four Tsar-class ships were approved for construction; three of these are now in service. CVNA analysts predict that there should be little need for more such vessels.

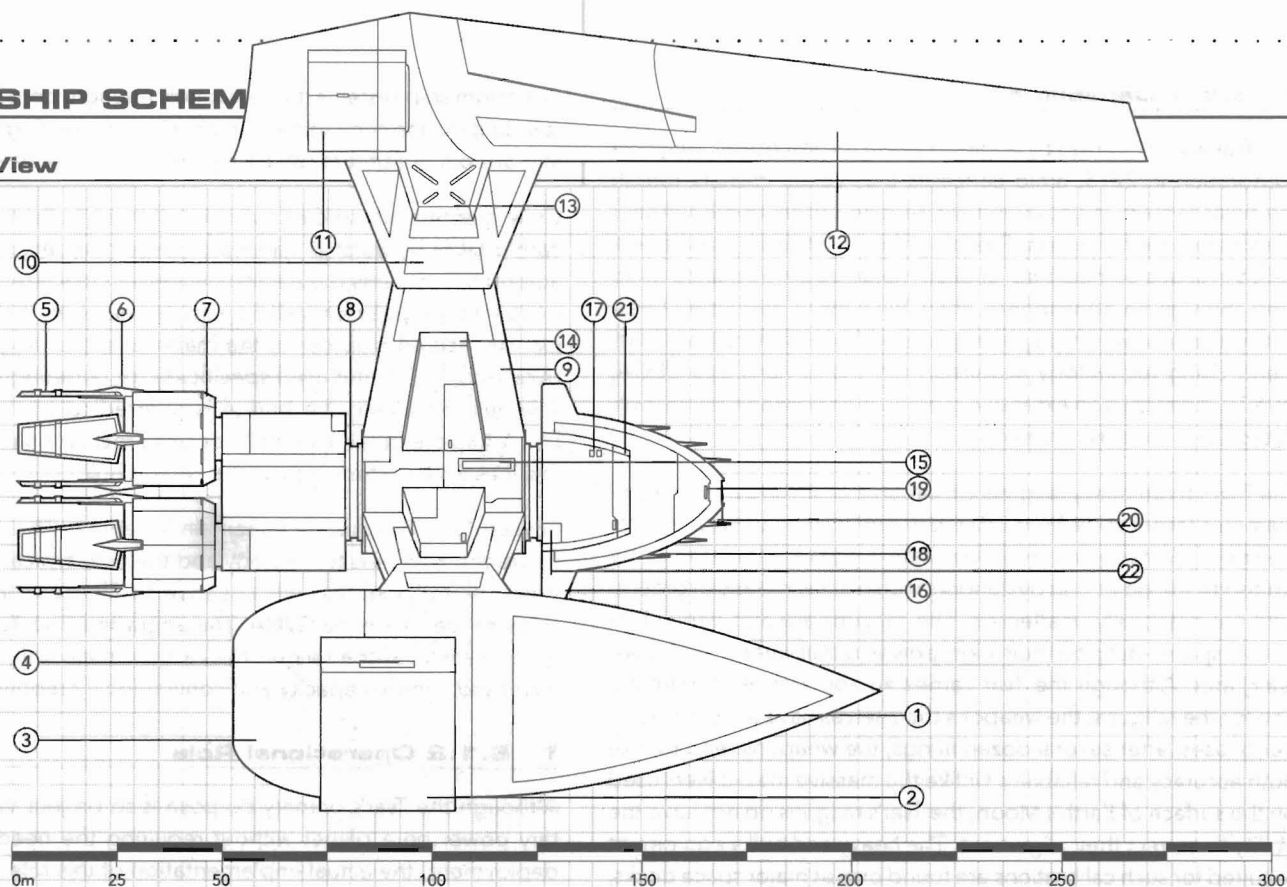




TSAR HEAVY CRUISER

► 6.2 SHIP SCHEM

① Side View

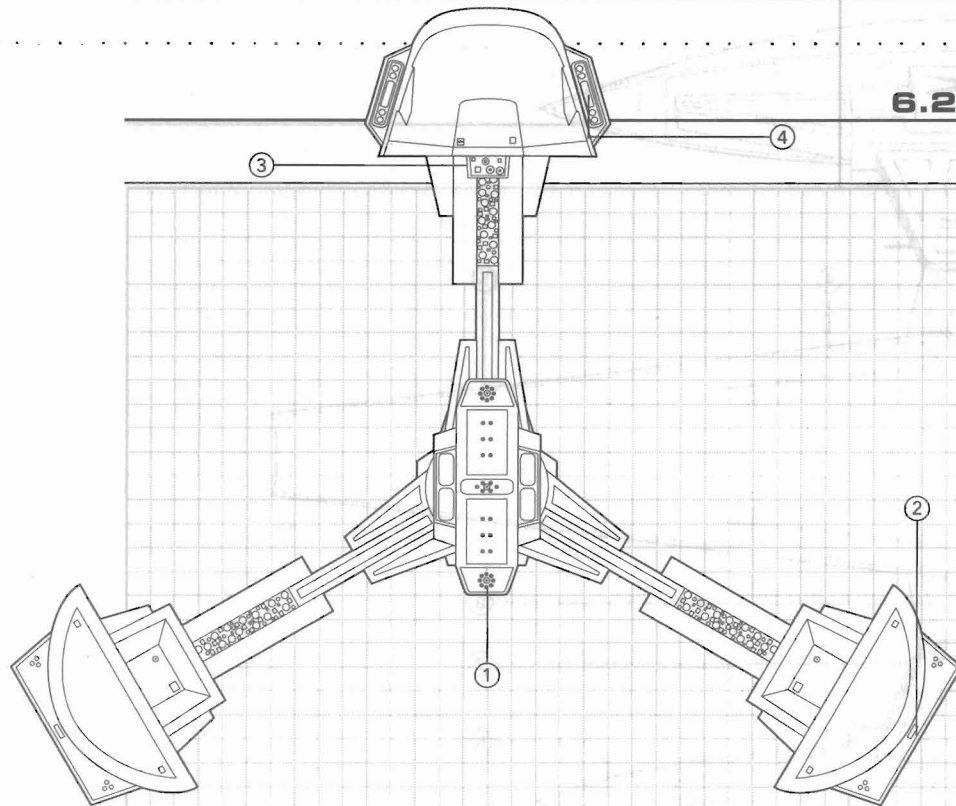


▼ Legend

1	Forward Weapons Bay	11	Railgun Targeting System	21	Forward RCS Cluster
2	Hangar Bay Door	12	Railgun Bay	22	Comm Antennae (retracted)
3	Rear Hull Vid-Membrane	13	Fake Access Bay		
4	Docking Hardpoint	14	Short Range Sensors		
5	Drive Fin	15	Engineering Airlock		
6	Drive Fin Mount	16	Sensor Cluster		
7	Engine Mount	17	Maintenance Bot Exit Port		
8	Drive Section Attachment Ring	18	Instrument Cluster (extended)		
9	Hull Support Brace	19	Lidar/Rangefinder Emitter		
10	Emergency Elevator Access	20	Optical Sensors		

6.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)

Front View



Specifications

Name:	Tsar
Origin:	Cooperative Venusian Naval Administration
Manufacturer:	Various Venusian Shipyards
Type:	Heavy Cruiser
Control System:	Bridge w/astronomical display
Length:	270 m overall
Width:	230 m overall
Empty Weight:	3,580 Tons
Loaded Weight:	5,800 Tons
Main Drive:	2 x 43 MW
Secondary Powerplant:	2 x 6000 KW
Main Thrusters:	2 x 29,000,000 kg
Apogee Motors:	75
Acceleration:	1.0 g
Onboard Sensors:	Fire Control Radar, Infrared/ Ultraviolet, Lidar, Low-light, Magnetometer, Microwaves, Motion Detectors, Radcounter, Search Radar, Telescope
Fixed Armament:	PDS, 4x Laser Array, Rail Gun, 6x CMM, 2x Missile Bay
Additional Armament:	Carried Vessels
Defensive Systems:	Mag Screen
Equipment:	Escape Pods, Laboratory, Vehicle Bay

Legend

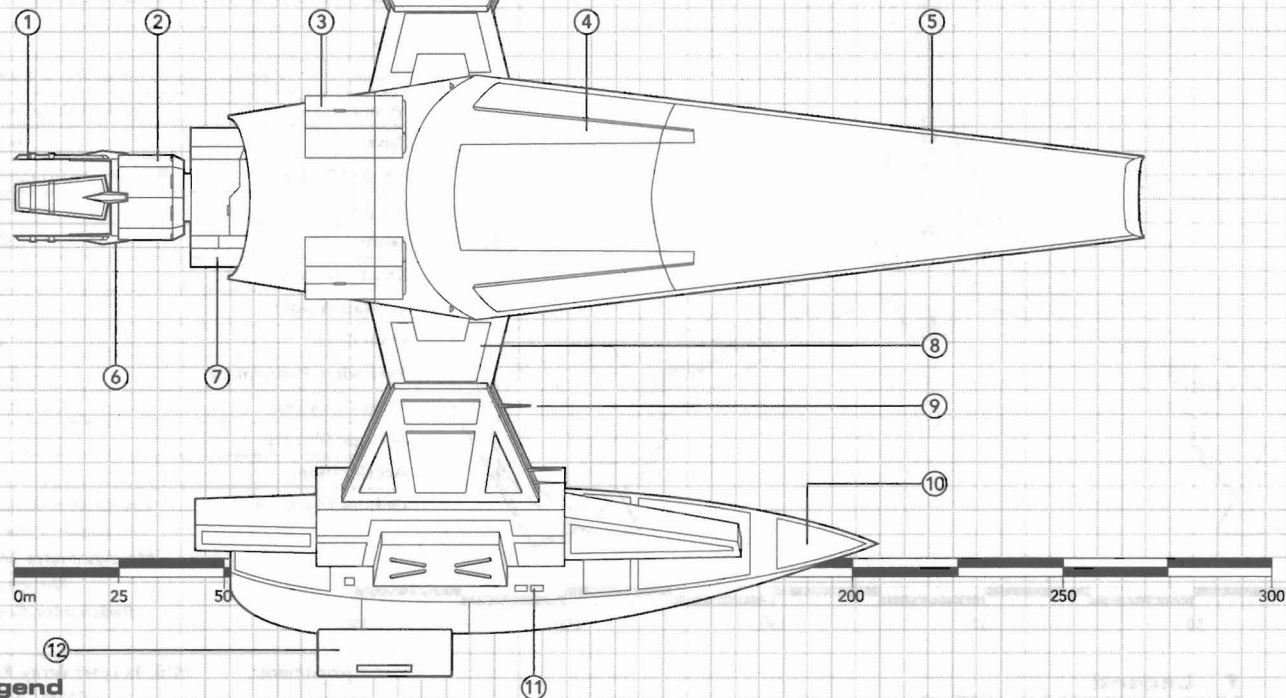
- 1 Sensor Cluster
- 2 Docking Sensor
- 3 Auxiliary Antenna Array (retracted)
- 4 Railgun Targeting System



TSAR HEAVY CRUISER

► 6.2 SHIP SCHEDULE

① Top View

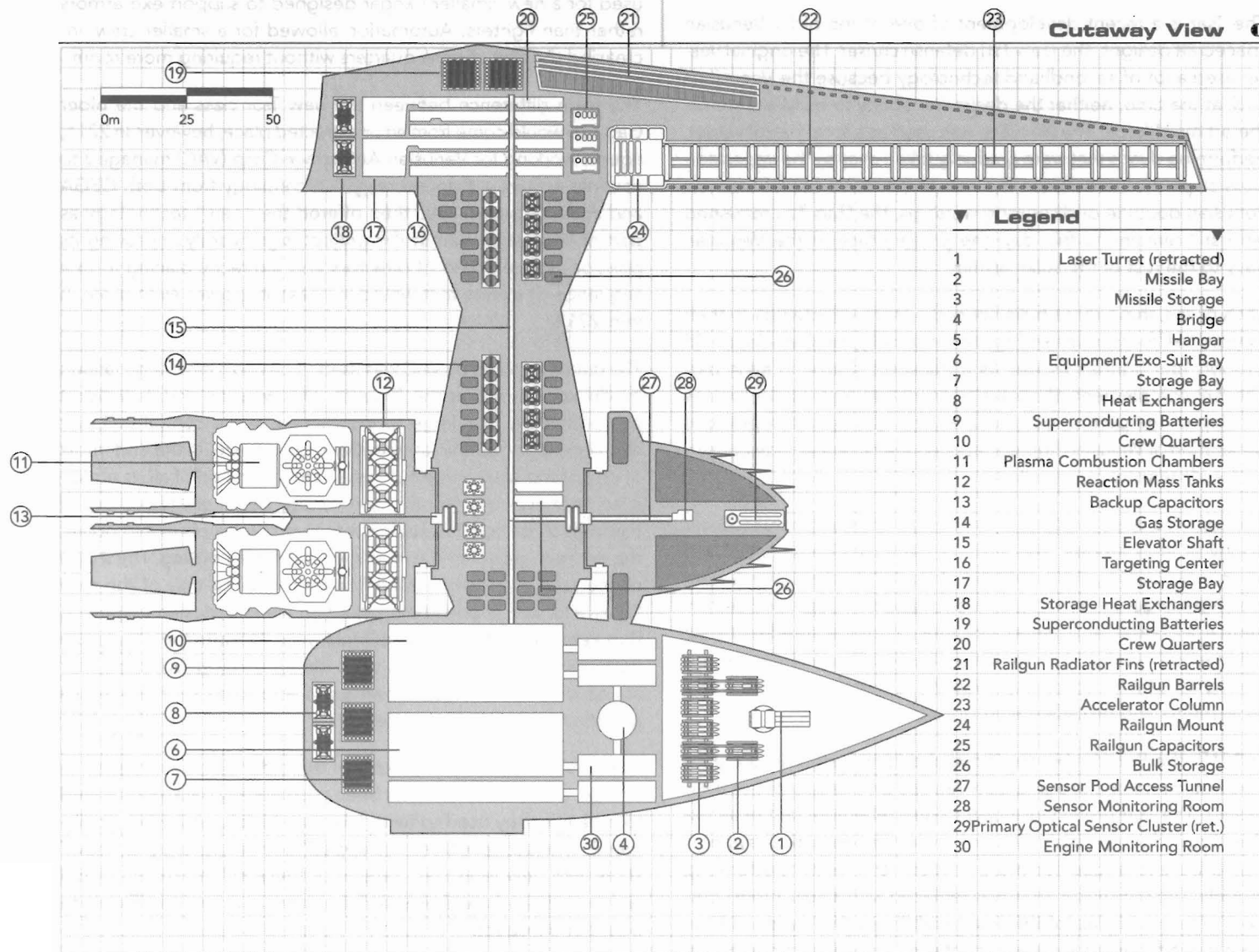


▼ Legend

1	Drive Fin	5	Railgun Housing	9	Comm Antenna (Extended)
2	Drive Housing	6	Drive Fin Mount	10	Forward Weapons Bay
3	Railgun Targeting System	7	Engine Section	11	Engineering Airlock
4	Railgun Cover Hinges	8	Hull Support Strut	12	Hangar Bay Door

TSAR HEAVY CRUISER

6.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)





TSAR HEAVY CRUISER



► 6.3 HISTORY

The Tsar is a recent development of one of the older Venusian spacecraft designs, the Gao-Tzu defense cruiser. The original vessel used a lot of secondhand technology because the Venusians had, at the time, neither the desire nor ability to build a state-of-the-art naval force. The Gao-Tzu was used as a local patrol vessel, performing duties that were gradually taken over by the Imperator-class ships. However, since the new ships made use of the new Venusian doctrine of disguising warships, the Gao-Tzu remained (and still remains to this day) the primary face of the Venusian navy to the rest of the solar system.

Each of the ship's three hulls housed a large vehicle bay in their forward half for shuttles and fighters; normally, the Gao-Tzu could support four fighters as well as a transport shuttle in each bay. The full complement of twelve fighters was impressive for any warship of the period, but the lackluster quality of the previous generation of Venusian fighters reduced the potential threat posed by the dozen-strong squadron.

The Gao-Tzu used an aging military sensor cluster that functioned poorly at long ranges. The cluster's computer banks often had trouble processing the enormous amount of data coming from the ship's large hull sensory elements, and this degraded performance as larger and larger volumes of space needed to be scanned and analyzed. In the field, the Gao-Tzu often ended up relying on smaller scout ships like the Chieftain to spot enemy movements and provide it with strategic information.

In 2210, the Board gave the go-ahead to an upgrade program that would recycle the aging Gao-Tzu into a more aggressive class of ship. The Tsar project included a comprehensive refit of all the Gao-Tzus, during which most of their mission-critical systems would be exchanged for more modern and better-performing models. The old sensor array was replaced with a new, more compact system with top-of-the-line capabilities, the weapons bays were moved forward and the front of each hull was slimmed down.

The space left behind by the displacement of the missile bay was used for a new, smaller hangar designed to support exo-armors rather than fighters. Automation allowed for a smaller crew, increasing the size of crew quarters without requiring more room.

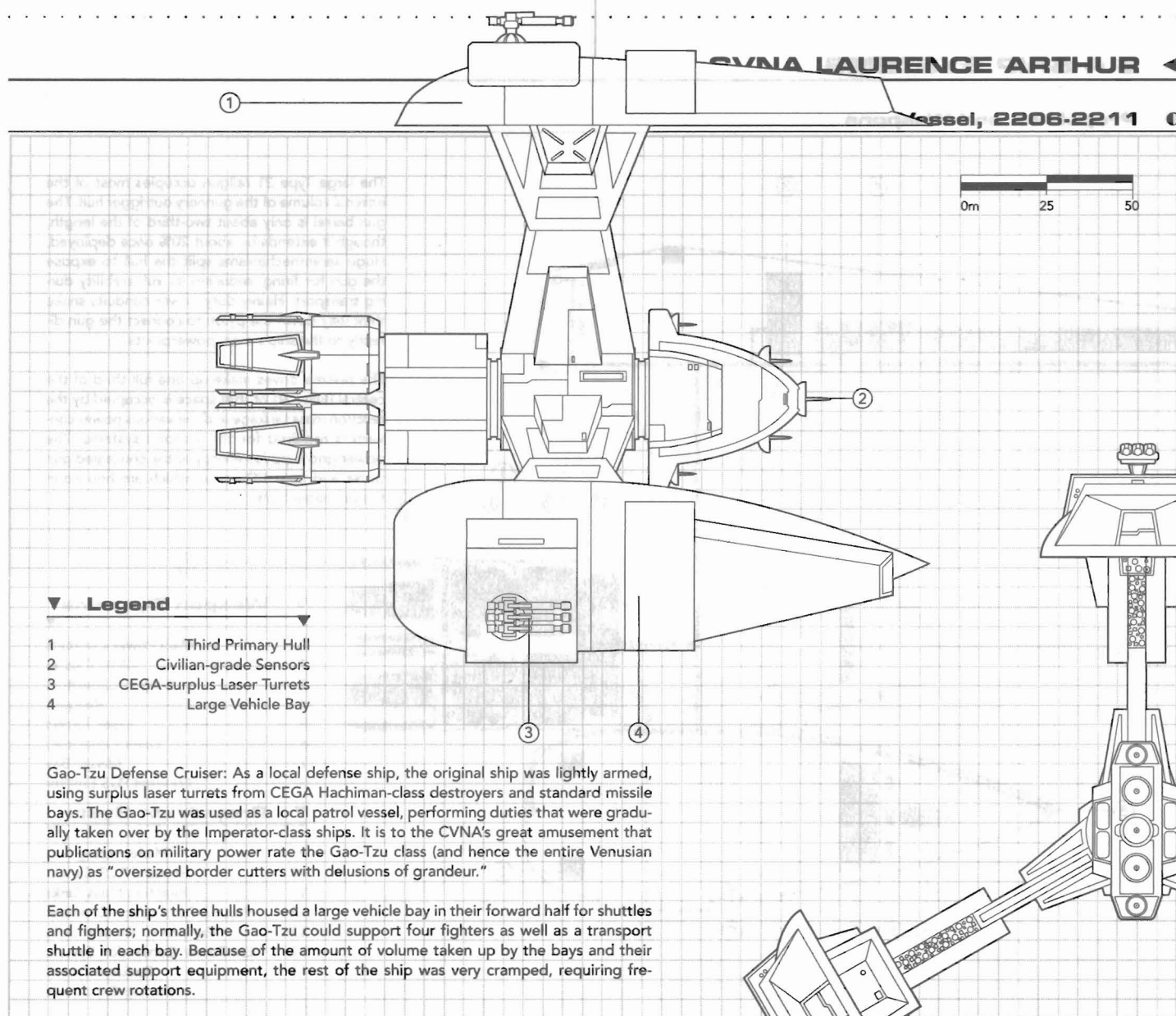
The main difference between the new Tsar class and the older Gao-Tzu would come from an unexpected place, however. In 2211, agents working for Venusian Aerospace Corp (VAC) managed to covertly acquire advanced railgun technology from both CEGA and Jovian sources. VAC then offered the "new" technology as part of its contribution to the project, significantly improving its position on the Board of directors and indirectly placing it on a sequence of events that would increase its power even more in mid-2212.

The data submitted by VAC was used to design a new, large railgun model known only as the Type 21. This weapon and its support equipment was too large to incorporate in the central hull, but also proved impossible to effectively miniaturize. In the end, most of one of the Tsar's three hulls was nearly emptied of all its equipment to make room for the gun, whose barrel still jutted out of the front of the hull. In keeping with Venusian shipbuilding policy, the weapon was concealed within a retractable housing. The shape of the railgun hull was altered to be similar to that of the new "plus-size" cargo pods being used on some Venusian freighters, thus keeping up the illusion of innocence. Despite their disparate appearances, all three hulls were carefully designed to be balanced with one another, allowing the ship to be spun around its axis to create a gravity gradient.

To maintain appearances, many of the older Gao-Tzus are still in service, and some have even been cosmetically back-engineered to look like they used to (with fake gun turrets and other equipment). The rest have been "scrapped" and re-launched as "new" ships with new registries. Several of these still make use of old technology, and are thus safe for visitors and foreign officials to board and inspect.

TSAR HEAVY CRUISER

6

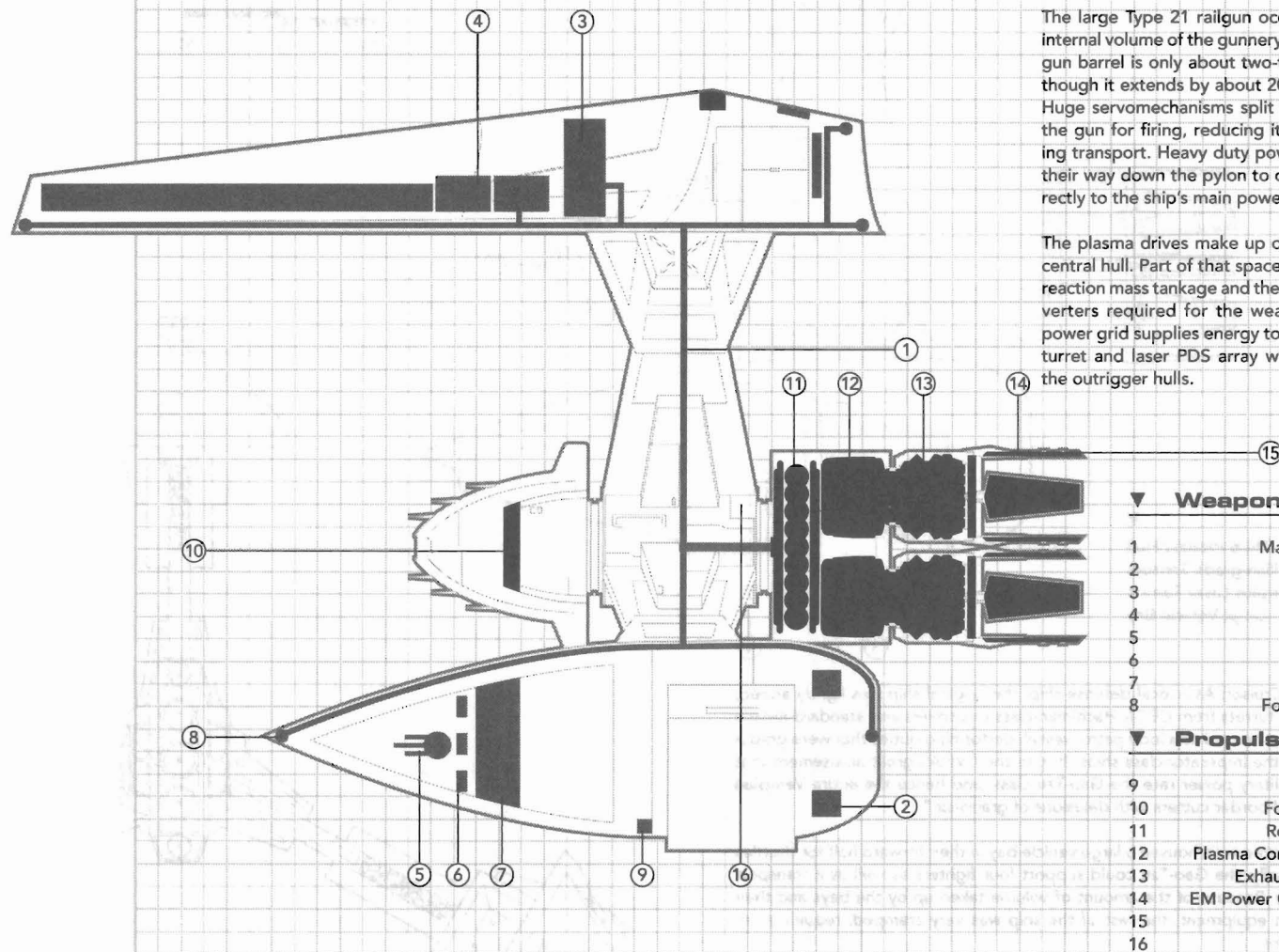




TSAR HEAVY CRUISER

► 6.4 SHIP SYSTEMS

① Propulsion and Weapons



The large Type 21 railgun occupies most of the internal volume of the gunnery outrigger hull. The gun barrel is only about two-third of the length, though it extends by about 20% once deployed. Huge servomechanisms split the hull to expose the gun for firing, reducing its vulnerability during transport. Heavy duty power conduits snake their way down the pylon to connect the gun directly to the ship's main powerplants.

The plasma drives make up one full third of the central hull. Part of that space is occupied by the reaction mass tankage and the various power converters required for the weapon systems. The power grid supplies energy to the concealed gun turret and laser PDS array which are housed in the outrigger hulls.

▼ Weapon Systems ▼

- 1 Main Power Conduits
- 2 CMM Cluster
- 3 Railgun Capacitors
- 4 Railguns
- 5 Laser Turrets
- 6 Laser Capacitors
- 7 Missile Bay
- 8 Forward PDS Emitter

▼ Propulsion Syst. ▼

- 9 Maneuvering Jets
- 10 Forward RCS Cluster
- 11 Reaction Mass Tanks
- 12 Plasma Combustion Chamber
- 13 Exhaust Collimator Coils
- 14 EM Power Generation System
- 15 Radiator Panels
- 16 Backup Capacitors

6.4 SHIP SYSTEMS (CONT.) ◀

Sensors and Life Support ◉

Crew quarters are spread out over all three hulls, and are quite comfortable by warship standards. As with all Venusian warships, large numbers of robots and automated systems reduce the necessary crew size, allowing for a larger living space for each human crewmember.

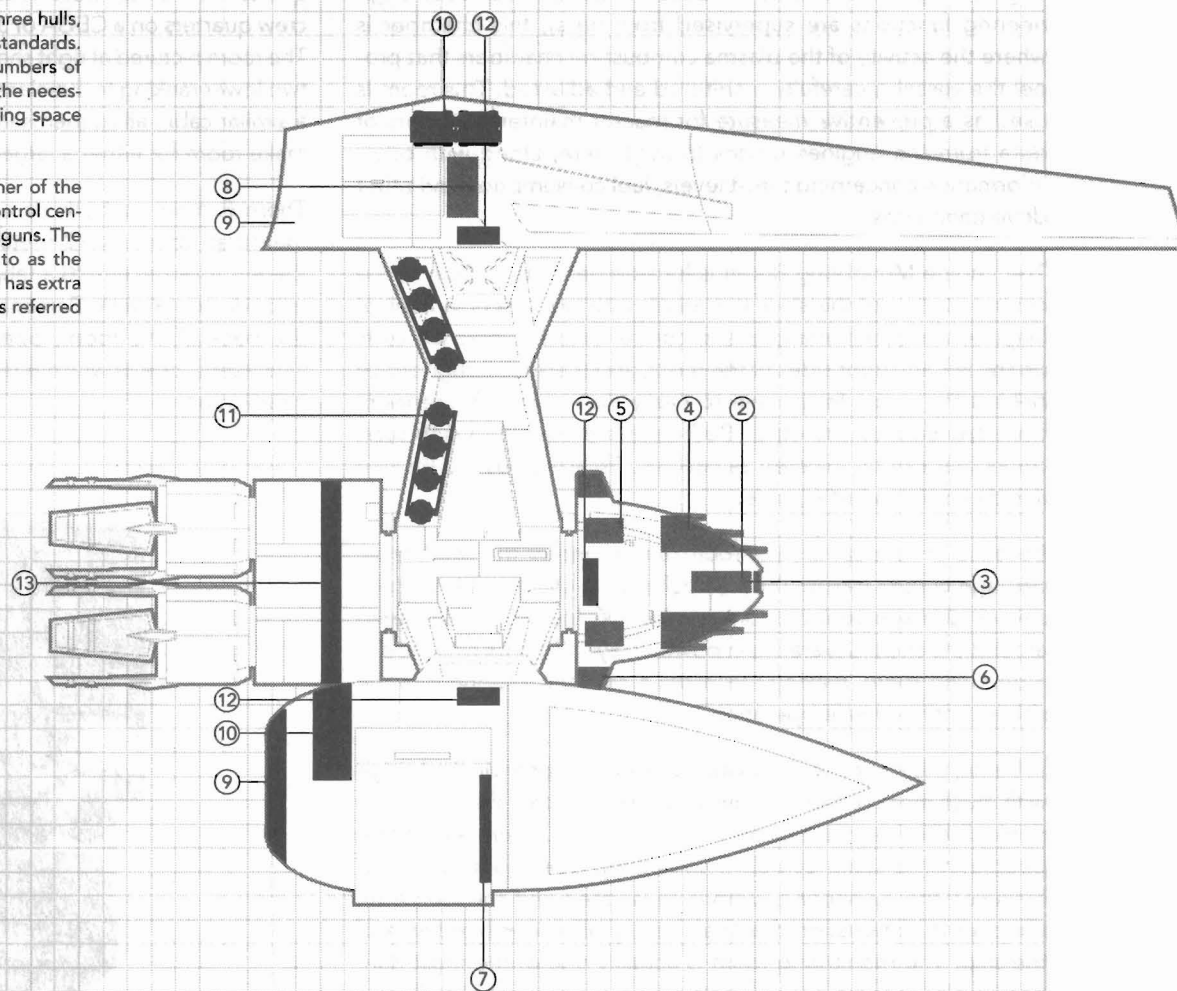
The main bridge can be located in either of the main hulls; the railgun hull contains a control center used specifically for targeting the railguns. The hull containing the bridge is referred to as the command hull, while the other main hull has extra recreational and storage facilities and is referred to as the habitat hull.

▼ Sensor Systems ▼

- 1 Primary Radar Systems
- 2 Laser Ranging and LIDAR Emitters
- 3 Primary Optical Sensor Cluster
- 4 Active Sensor Emitter Antennae
- 5 Secondary Radar System
- 6 Sensor Cluster
- 7 Docking Sensors
- 8 Planetary Observation Sensors

▼ Life Support Syst. ▼

- 9 Heat Exchanger
- 10 Superconducting Batteries
- 11 Gas Storage
- 12 Life Support Nodes
- 13 Screen Generators





TSAR HEAVY CRUISER



▼ 6.4.1 Engine Monitoring Room

There are few crew-accessible areas within the ship's central hull; the Engine Monitoring Room is one of them. Also known as "Main Engineering" (a common but inaccurate term, since not all engineering functions are supervised from here), this chamber is where the activity of the plasma combustion chambers that propel the vessel is carefully monitored and adjusted. This room is used as a preventive measure for reactor maintenance; lots of data from the engines passes through here, along with other information concerning thrust levels, fuel consumption and other drive conditions.

The Engine Monitoring Room is located near the middle of the central section of the ship. It is small, with two chairs in front of large conventional monitors and control boards. There are exits on the left and right sides of the room, and there is enough space behind the chairs for people to easily move through the room from one door to the other. Both exits are equipped with blast doors that can be lowered as needed. Escape pods are located in side corridors just outside.

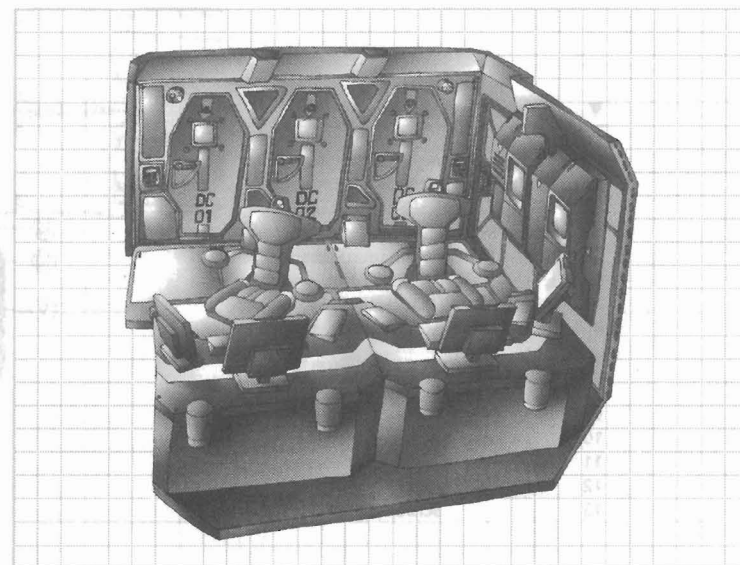
Because of its location, the room is also one of the ship's main damage control nexus. The wall behind the chairs is taken up by several damage control lockers (other DC lockers are scattered around the ship). Several main power relays also pass close to the monitoring room, making this room a crucial component of the ship's continued safe operation.

In battle, this station is always manned and can provide the bridge with much more comprehensive (and relevant) data than the computer-distilled reports that appear on monitors. There is little that people in this room can do if something goes horribly wrong, however; the monitoring room is as isolated and shielded from the plasma combustion chambers as any other inhabited area of the ship. The monitoring room is actually one of the most dangerous places to be during a battle, as are most central-hull locations in Venusian warships.

▼ 6.4.2 Crew Quarters

Venusians like to cram most of their ship systems into really tiny spaces to make more room for the crew. As a result, a crewman's quarters on a Tsar-class vessel are somewhat roomier than the crew quarters on a CEGA or Jovian warship, though not by much. The room pictured at right shows a spacehand's cabin, which houses two lower ranking technicians. Higher-ranking crew generally rate a similar cabin all to themselves; one of the bunks is removed to make room for either a larger hygienic facility or a small desk.

There is room to both sit up and stretch out (the entire room measures about 3x2x2 meters). The ceiling is still a bit low, but there is room to unfold a table and chair and sit down for a meal or to do some work. Personal items are stored in a wall locker at the back of the room, opposite the doorway. There are two vidscreens, one of which is large and can function as a window or video-mirror.



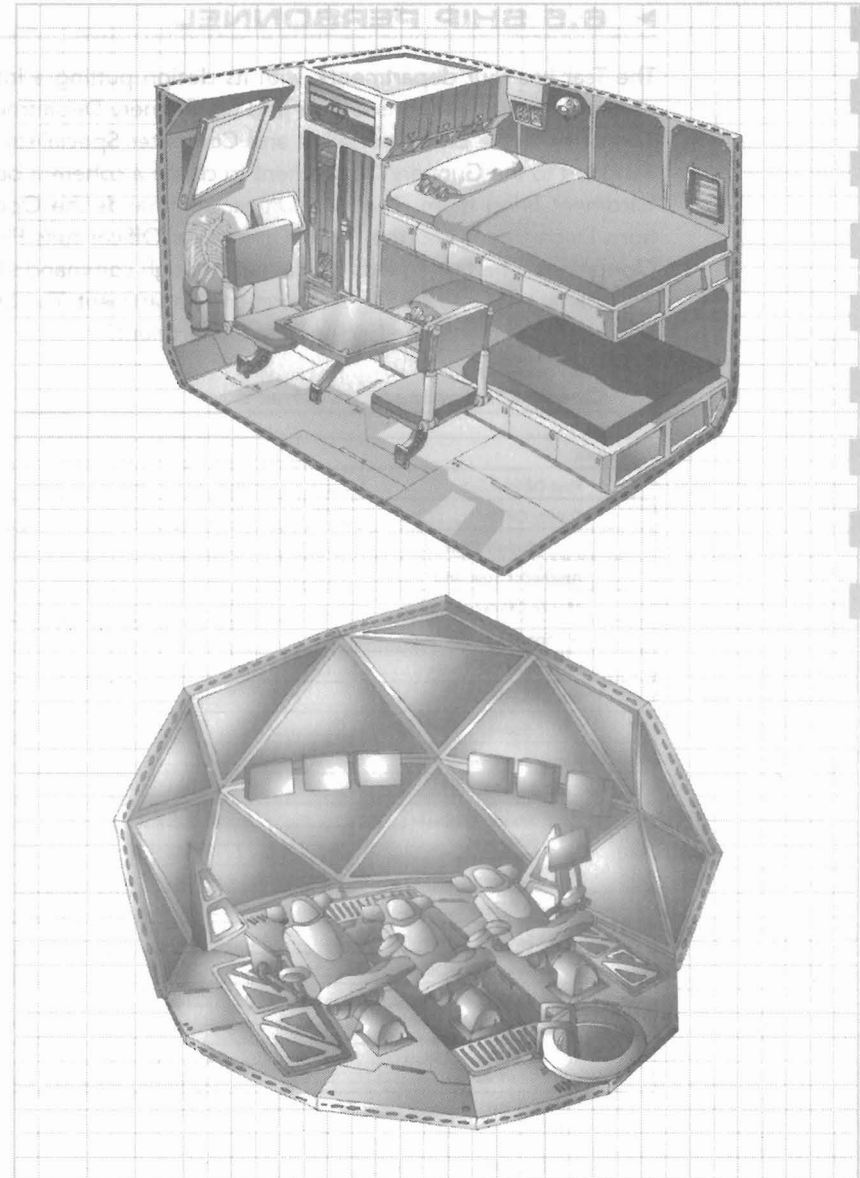
In the image, a small fern in a sealed zero-gee globular pot is attached to one wall, bringing a touch of green and life to the room. Such "ecosystems in a bubble" are marketed under various trademarks by all the major Venusian corporations, and are extremely popular among ship crews. Each ecosystem contains a number of plants (and occasionally, small animals like insects or fish) along with enough nutrients and organic recycling bacteria to keep the globe's occupants alive for up to a year. Ecosystems come in various sizes and shapes; all are completely enclosed in shatterproof, flexible plastic casings and require only light (or occasionally small batteries) to function.

▼ 6.4.3 Targeting Center

The ship's awesome main weapon is controlled from this tiny room located within the railgun hull. The Targeting Center's occupants are responsible for utilizing the data from the sensor stations around the ship and integrating them into coherent targeting information. This is especially important in bombardment situations, where the target zone may be only a few meters in diameter.

The overall shape of the room is a rough hemisphere facing toward the bow of the vessel. There are screens on the dome, showing the entire front half of the space around the ship. The rear view is not displayed since the gun cannot be brought to bear there. What most commonly serves as the floor of the room has an entry hatch and three seats arranged so that their occupants can look comfortably at the dome, particularly the top part which shows where the ship's railguns are currently pointing.

Targeting data is displayed directly on the dome's screens, overlaid and incorporated on the view of the outside world. Individual data screens for each chair bring more specialized information to the attention of each gun servant.





TSAR HEAVY CRUISER



► 6.5 SHIP PERSONNEL

The Tsar has four departments, with its design putting a lot of pressure on the Weapons Officer and his Gunnery Department. Two of both the EME Specialists and Computer Specialists are assigned to the Gunnery Department to create a coherent bombardment firing team. The First Officer commands the Operations Department and the Flight Operations Officer runs Flight Operations. The two squads of Marines, though commanded by a Lieutenant, fall into the Flight Operations Department. The Chief Engineer commands the Engineering Department.

▣ Crew Organization Chart

Captain	
First Officer	1
Supply Officer	1
Supply Clerk	2
Aesthetics Specialist	1
Morale Officer	1
ME Specialist	6
Helmsman/Navigator	4
Weapons Officer	1
Gunner	12
Computer Specialist	2
Chief Engineer	1
Master Engineer	3
Engineer	16
Electronics Specialist	6
Exo Engineer	8
Security Officer	1
Security Specialist	8
Flight Operations Officer	1
Deck Officer	1
Catapult Specialists	4
Ordnance Specialists	8
Exo/Fighter Pilots	4
Marines	10

▼ 6.5.1 Interview with a Gunnery Commander

Name:	Nomadlozi Moyo
Rank:	Chu-sa
Current Assignment:	CVNA Galim Meshenak



"They call us the 'Hands of God' up on the bridge. I think it's a sick joke. Just because I'm responsible for the targeting and firing of the ship's artillery battery doesn't mean that I'm in it to blow things up. This job is not about hitting targets. It's about missing everything except your target. That's an important distinction when you're using a weapon that can, from orbit, obliterate everything within a two-hundred-meter radius.

"In the Targeting Center, I can see everything within a ninety degrees of the railguns' muzzles, allowing me to be fully aware of any objects that might get in the way or observers that might notice us. Based on that information, coupled with multiple close-up visuals of the target zone, I make the decision as to what size of slug to load, how many shots to fire, and when to fire them.

"The captain of the ship has nothing to do with this process; once he says 'fire at will,' I can hit the button immediately, or wait until I've decided the moment is right. The captain can tell me to stand down, but he can't give the order to fire. If I decide that the shot's not safe, then all he can do is log the incident and keep on moving. I've got three such logs on my record. Each time, I've been commended for making the right decision. My captain's not happy about it, but it's not my job to make him happy."

▼ 6.5.2 Interview with a Psychologist



Name: Shifang Zhang
Rank: Tai-sa
Current Assignment: CVNA Dexter Slobotnik

"I serve as the ship's counselor, talking to the crew about the things they can't discuss with each other or the captain. For that matter, I even talk to the captain about the things he can't discuss with the crew. No matter how hard the morale officer works, there will always be problems aboard a vessel of war, and it's my job to make sure those problems don't balloon into instabilities that will

get us all killed. I'm one of the few people aboard a ship (along with the chief medical officer and the first officer) who has the power to relieve a captain of duty on the grounds of medical unfitness.

"Because of my role as a safety valve for the crew, I am given some very unusual job specifications, considering who my employers are. I am under no circumstances ever to discuss anything I hear in the course of these sessions with anyone. I'm not to make recordings, and if I do, they're not admissible as any kind of evidence. I cannot be ordered to divulge any information given to me in confidence by any member of the crew; any attempt to do so is an offense punishable by immediate dismissal.

"The laws governing ship psychologists are actually international conventions that just happen to make a lot of sense. There are exceptions, of course, such as information involving murder or treason, but even then, my rights as a practicing medical officer are well-protected by Venusian law."

▼ 6.5.3 Interview with an Exo-Suit Pilot

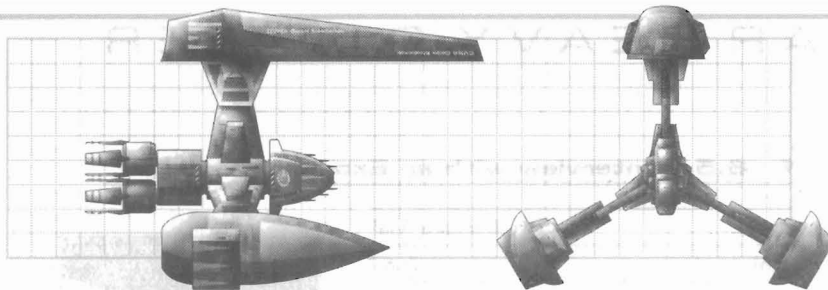
Name: Daisuke Asai
Rank: Jun-i
Current Assignment: CVNA Galim Meshenak

"There are only ten marines aboard this ship, so we won't be boarding any large ships anytime soon. However, that's not our job. Our primary assignment is to make sure *this* ship doesn't get boarded. If we were an offensive group, they probably would have given us Kitsunes, which are the best saboteur 'suits ever made. Instead, we all get issued Tanukis, which are essentially roadblocks with guns.

"In the event that the ship is boarded, we split up and take up positions in each of the ship's major corridors. A Tanuki is so big that it fills the corridor from top to bottom, totally blocking passage. When boarders start coming in, we open fire and hope that the ship manages to shoot down any reinforcements. It might seem stupid to use yourself to block a corridor, but it's the best way to keep the enemy away from the vital sections of the ship. Anyway, if we get boarded, we're already in deep trouble anyway, so it's either us or the whole ship.

"The Tanukis are stored in the main hangar of each hull, and it's our responsibility to make sure they stay in working order. We can get help from the techs, but only if they're not too busy with the exos and fighters. I guess I can see the logic, since if the exos do their jobs at full effectiveness, we'll never get boarded in the first place, but it still makes me and the boys feel like second-classes on this tub."





► Tsar Heavy Cruiser

▼ Overall Data:

Threat Value: 327100	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: 175.5M	Indy. Lemon Dice: 3
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▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Space	Combat: 5 MP (0.5 g)	Top: 10 MP (1.0 g)	Maneuver: -3	Range: 2000 hrs	ReMass: 2000 BPs
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▼ Sections:

1x	Main Hull w/Bridge	1x	Main Hull w/Rail Guns	1x	Central Hull
1x	Main Hull w/o Bridge				

▼ Off & Def Systems

1x	Point Defense System	3x	Rail Gun	2x	Missile Bay
4x	Laser Array	6x	CMM		

► Main Hull w/Bridge

▼ Main Data:

TV: 46000	Off. TV: 93000	Def. TV: 10000	Misc. TV: 35000	Cost: 92M	Indy. Lemon Dice: 2
Crew: 36	Actions: 7	Sensors: -2/2km	Comm: -2/10 km	Fire Control: +1	Type: Lim. Prod
Hull Size: 36	Default Size: 36	Armor: 100	Light: 100	Heavy: 200	Overkill: 300

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 3,000 hrs	ReMass: -	
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Autopilot	-	Lvl 1 Pilot	HEP: Vac	-	-
Backup Systems	-	-	Life Support	-	Full
Cargo Bay	-	10,000 m3	Passenger Accom	-	4,000m3
2x Catapult	-	(600/mass) m/s2	Reinforced Crew	3	-
Computer	3	CRE 0 KNO 0 PP3	Stealth	2	Add to Concealment
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 40 People			
HEP: Rad	4	-			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
2	Laser Array	F	x20	7	0	+1	Inf.	AD2, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	14	12214	n/a
1	PDS (ranged)	T	x10	1	+1	+6	Inf.	AM, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	16	867	n/a
	PDS (shield)	FF	x30	Melee	+1	+4	Inf.	Conc. (Inst.), Def, E-Shld, H.	16	1444	n/a
3	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	64ea	Conc. (Instant), Missile	9	3106	2.7
1	Missile Bay	T	x30	5	-2	+5	40	Conc. (Inst.), HEAT, Missile	8	2644	2.3

► Section: Main Hull w/o Bridge

▼ Main Data:

TV: 43000	Off. TV: 88000	Def. TV: 10000	Misc. TV: 30000	Cost: 41.8M	Indy. Lemon Dice: 2
Crew: 28	Actions: 6	Sensors: -2/2km	Comm: -2/10 km	Fire Control: +1	Type: Lim. Prod
Hull Size: 36	Default Size: 35	Armor: 100	Light: 100	Heavy: 200	Overkill: 300

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 3,000 hrs	ReMass: -	
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Passenger Accom	-	4,500m3
Cargo Bay	-	10,000 m3	Reinforced Crew	3	-
2x Catapult	-	(600/mass) m/s2	Stealth	2	Add to Concealment
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 30 People			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Life Support	-	Full			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
2	Laser Array	F	x20	7	0	1	Inf.	AD2, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	14	12213	n/a
3	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	64ea	Conc. (Instant), Missile	9	3106	2.7
1	Missile Bay	T	x30	5	-2	5	40	Conc. (Inst.), Heat, Missile	8	2644	2.3

► Section: Main Hull w/Rail Gun

▼ Main Data:

TV: 23000	Off. TV: 46000	Def. TV: 5600	Misc. TV: 19000	Cost: 32.2M	Indy. Lemon Dice: 2
Crew: 16	Actions: 6	Sensors: 0/2km	Comm: 0/10 km	Fire Control: +1	Type: Lim. Prod
Hull Size: 40	Default Size: 28	Armor: 75	Light: 75	Heavy: 150	Overkill: 225

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 3,000 hrs	ReMass: -	
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Problem Prone	-	1 extra Lemon Die
Difficult to Modify	-	All	Reinforced Crew	3	-
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 20 People	Stealth	2	-
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Lab Navigation Space 1	-	+1 to Nav Space Rolls			
Life Support	-	Full			
Passenger Accom	-	2,000m3			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
3	Rail Gun	FF	x70	7	0	+1	500ea	Concealed (1rnd), PH6	14	5310	9

► Section: Central Hull

▼ Main Data:

TV:	8100	Off. TV:	0	Def. TV:	3400	Misc. TV:	21000	Cost:	9.5M	Indv lemon Dice:	2
Crew:	10	Actions:	5	Sensors:	+2/4 km	Comm:	+1/15 km	Fire Control:	0	Type:	Lim.Prod
Hull Size:	34	Default Size:	20	Armor:	75	Light:	75	Heavy:	150	Overkill:	225

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	Space	Combat:	26 (2.6 g)	Top:	53 (5.3 g)	Maneuver:	-3 Range:	2,000 hrsReMass:	10,000 BPs
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Stealth	2	-
Cargo Bay	-	20,000 m3			
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection System	-	Pods for 12 People			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Life Support	-	Full			
Reinforced Crew	3	-			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
-											

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV:	-	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:	-	Cost:	-	Indv lemon dice:	-
Crew:	-	Actions:	-	Sensors:	-	Comm:	-	Fire Control:	-	Type:	-
Hull Size:	-	Default Size:	-	Base Armor:	-	Light:	-	Heavy:	-	Overkill:	-

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	-	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Maneuver:	-	Range:	-	Re. Mass:	-
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
-					

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV:	-	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:	-	Cost:	-	Indv lemon dice:	-
Crew:	-	Actions:	-	Sensors:	-	Comm:	-	Fire Control:	-	Type:	-
Hull Size:	-	Default Size:	-	Base Armor:	-	Light:	-	Heavy:	-	Overkill:	-

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	-	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Maneuver:	-	Range:	-	Re. Mass:	-
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
-					

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV:	-	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:	-	Cost:	-	Indv lemon dice:	-
Crew:	-	Actions:	-	Sensors:	-	Comm:	-	Fire Control:	-	Type:	-
Hull Size:	-	Default Size:	-	Base Armor:	-	Light:	-	Heavy:	-	Overkill:	-

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	-	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Maneuver:	-	Range:	-	Re. Mass:	-
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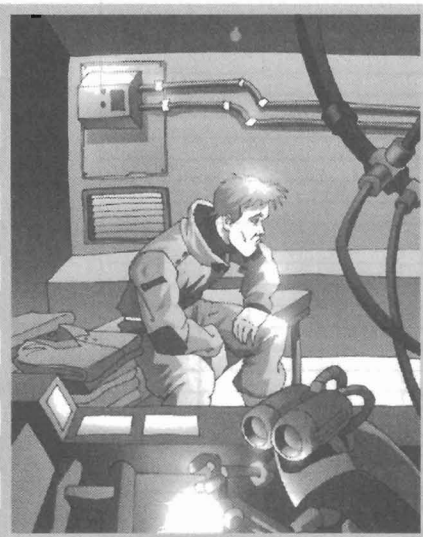
▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
-					

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► PART V: A FATHER'S LEGACY



As mysteriously as they had opened, the hangar bay doors shut themselves as Taggart landed his shuttle in the cavernous chamber. He could hear fans blowing outside, and within minutes, the bay was fully pressurized. Cautiously, he popped the hatch and stepped out into an echoing silence.

The Satrap-class ship had been floating dead in space, millions of kilometers above the plane of the ecliptic. It hadn't been easy to find. Antonova-san and the rest of the CVNA believed that Katayama had reneged on his word, and had already written him off as a mistake, blacklisting his entire family. A search for Katayama's son, Kinya, had turned up nothing; the boy had disappeared from Venus.

It was only after carefully reviewing all of Katayama's old transmissions that Taggart finally spotted a pattern, revealing a number of possible trajectories. It had taken him a few weeks to buy a transport ship and modify it for his use, and a few months to travel to the first likely search point. He had virtually no money left, and he would be AWOL long before he could possibly get back to Venus, but he didn't care. He had waited a long time to meet the architect of his rescue.

Taggart wasn't given a chance to get lost. Whenever he walked, quiet bells would sound, pointing the way. He was distinctly unnerved, but he was determined to forge onward. He tried not to think about all the things that could possibly be around him, silently watching, laughing at his blindness. He just followed the

bells, teeth gritted and jaw set, until his outstretched fingers pushed up against a human-sized door.

The door slid open, and Taggart stepped through. The echoes told Taggart that the room was quite large, perhaps a stateroom or rec bay.

"Who the hell are you?" A voice rasped out at him from a corner. Taggart jumped.

"Mischa-san?" he asked, uncertain. The voice sounded nothing like the one he remembered. It was weak, tired, and it sounded very young, no more than sixteen years old.

"No," the voice snorted. "I'm Kinya. My father's not here."

"Can you please tell me where he is?" Taggart asked, breathless. He had so many questions, but only one of them really mattered at the moment. "I'm Taggart al-Raschid, and I've been looking for him for a long time."

The boy laughed miserably.

"You're too damned late, Taggart," Kinya said. "My father's been dead for two years."

* * *

A small service robot zipped up next to Taggart and deposited a steaming plate of something that smelled like oatmeal next to him. Taggart sat in dull shock. Kinya had apologized for his rudeness, and led Taggart to a seat, but Taggart was still trying to shift mental gears.

"How," he finally managed to whisper.

"There was an accident just before your rescue," Kinya said, seeming to gain animation with the presence of a human listener. "The ship tried to keep him alive, but there weren't enough medical supplies left."

"The ship?" Taggart asked lamely. His finger swirled absently in the oatmeal.

"Yeah," Kinya affirmed. "You knew he was an Executor tech from his record, right? You saw his criminal record, too? Good." The boy took a deep breath, as if preparing to give a long-rehearsed speech.

"See, after my mother died, I got sent to school offplanet. My father paid for everything through his job, until he lost it due to "perpetual distraction" or something. He joined the company's naval unit, but he didn't really fit in there, either. Wanted all sorts of research equipment they didn't see a need for. Finally, they got sick of it all and just asked him to leave.

"He tried to take some of the equipment with him. They caught him, and gave him a prison sentence. You know how it is. Afterward, he couldn't find anyone who would even listen to him, much less hire him.

"Turns out the stuff he needed was material to upgrade the hobby Executor he'd been building since I was born. The Executor was supposed to shut down the alarm systems by hacking in, but it botched the job. Nobody found out about it, though. After he got out of prison, my father found some alternate materials and started work on the thing again. Eventually, he ran out of money, and still nobody would talk to him. He kind of lost hope. I think he was going to get the Executor to help him make his suicide look like murder, so I could get government benefits. I guess that's when he sent a letter to you, asking for help." Kinya paused. Taggart nodded, finally beginning to understand.

"One hundred and twenty years ago," he said slowly, "your ancestor gave almost everything he owned so that my family could survive. After the Birthing, the al-Raschids and Katayamas became equals. We remembered the debt, but never had a chance to pay it. When I got your father's letter, there was no question that I would help him." Taggart fell silent, and Kinya resumed his verbal

catharsis.

"The Executor was still with him when he found out that you were captured. When he made it take over this ship, it used the entire ship's computer system, along with most of the medical supplies, to upgrade itself. He used it to crack all those computers, to get your ransom. It's scarily smart. It's still growing, too. I think it might even be self-aware, though it might just be faking."

"So I never even really spoke to him," Taggart said. Kinya audibly shrugged.

"You were talking to the ship. It was designed to sound like him, and it learns really fast. It was starting to sound too much like him, so I told it to shut up. It hasn't said anything for a year or so now. I found the ship same way you did, after my father didn't show up at Venus. Been here ever since. I can't leave. The ship can hack, but it's a lousy navigator. Ran out of fuel. If I send a distress call, SolaPol will probably be the first to find me, and this ship is the biggest Edict violation I can think of, not to mention one of the CVNA's oh-so-secret warships. We're stuck out here." Kinya seemed to suddenly lose energy. He slumped over, continuing to mutter quietly.

"The stupid robots bring me food and clothes and anything else I need, but they can't get me out of here. We're dead," he repeated.

Taggart fingered his sculpt-clasp thoughtfully. "Not if I can help it," he mused. "I'll figure something out. I have to. It's duty."

SHAN-YU BATTLE CRUISER

Notable Ships

Name:	CVNA Takizawa Toshiyuki
Launched:	N/A
Status:	Building

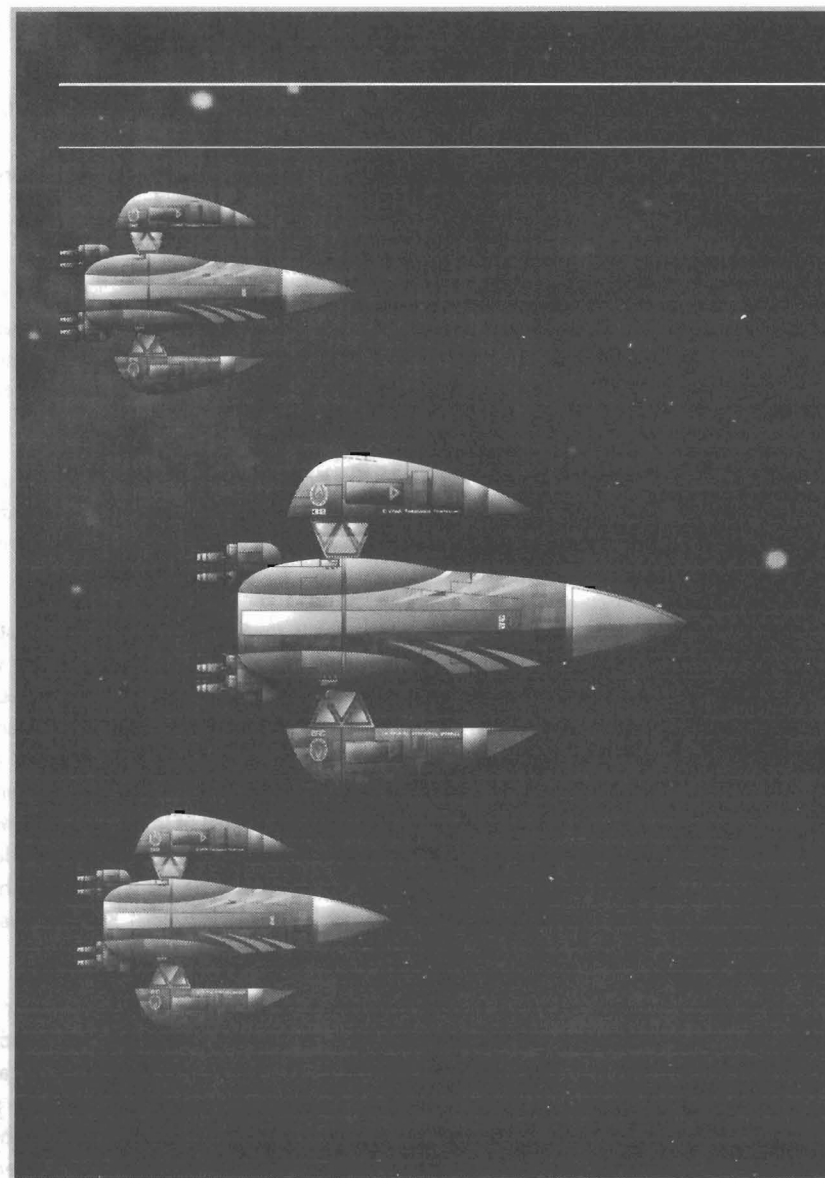
The namesake of the mightiest warship in the CVNA is a schoolteacher. Formerly a VenusBank exo-pilot, Takizawa-sensei resigned from his post after an exemplary career. He invested his earnings wisely, wrote a number of well-received plays and self-help manuals, and settled back into his home arcology to do exactly what he wanted to do since he was ten years old. Somewhat to his irritation, he has also become the Venusian Bank's public-relations poster figure, an ideal example of the sort of peaceful and yet fulfilling life the Venusian society offers. The first of the Shan-Yu battlecruisers was named without Takizawa-sensei's permission, and he has no stated plans to make any particularly noteworthy use of his award.

Name:	CVNA Kadokawa Nami
Launched:	N/A
Status:	Building

The second of the new ships to be laid down, the *Kadokawa* is already proving to be a troublesome project. Many of the standardized procedures that have worked flawlessly on the *Takizawa* project have been dismal failures with the *Kadokawa*, either because of logistical differences in the construction sites or inadequate personnel efficiency. As a result, the *Kadokawa* is more than two weeks behind schedule, much to the chagrin of the real Kadokawa, who occupies a powerful and sensitive position just below the Venusian Bank's top echelons.

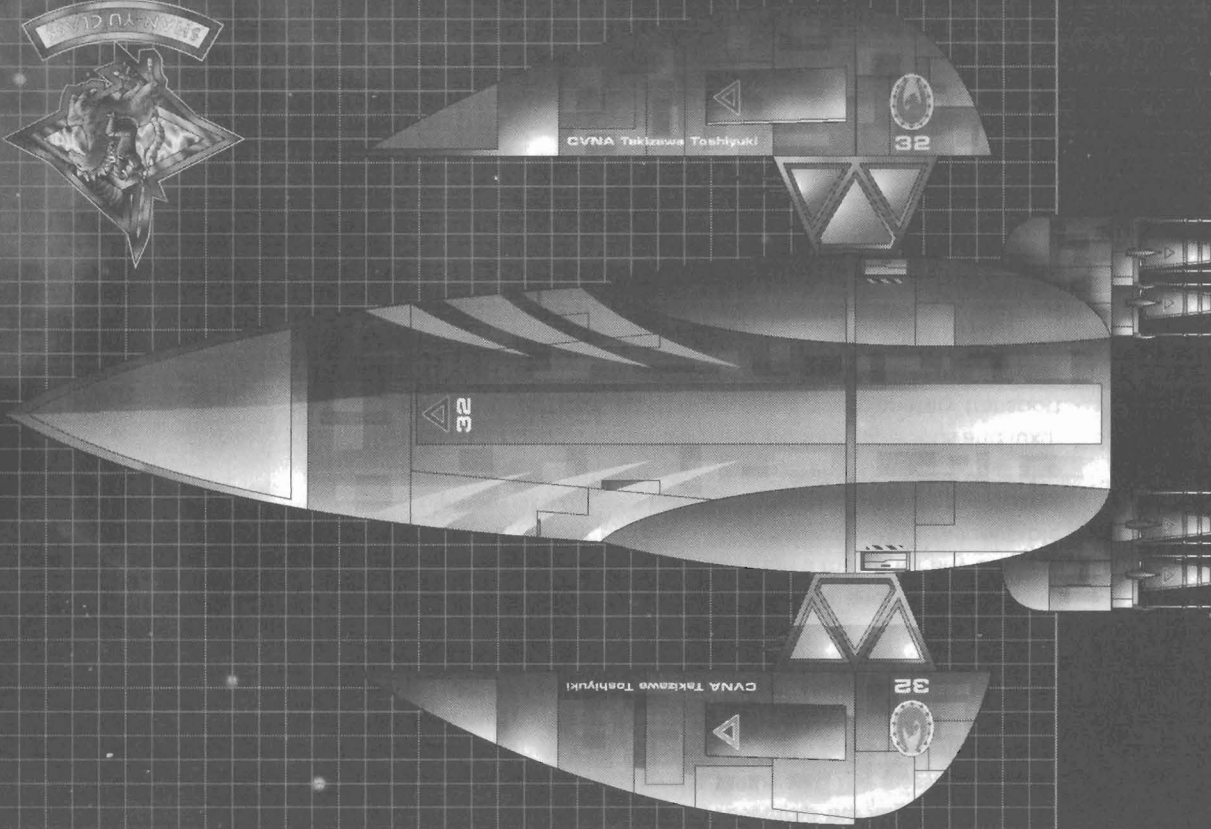
"If you destroy a foe, then you have destroyed doubly; the foe's ability to serve you has been destroyed, and you have destroyed yourself in the process of building sufficient force to destroy the enemy. Thus, the most dangerous of times is when one's power is at its peak, because if one cannot persuade the foe to give up without a fight, even if the battle is won, one's decline and death are certain."

— Tzen Ming-Shang, *Rising and Reborn*, 2100



SHAN-YU-CLASS BATTLE CRUISER

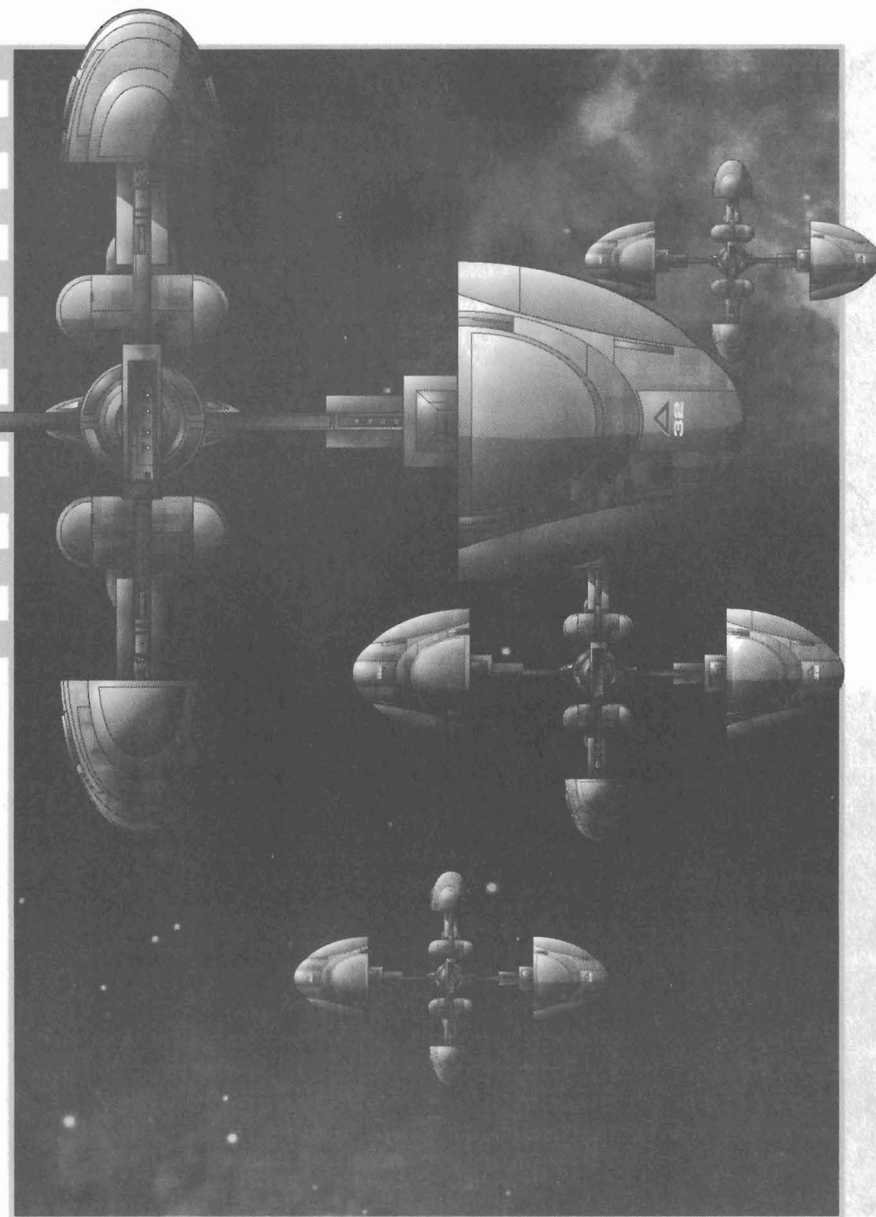
CVNA Takizawa Toshiyuki (2213 Configuration)



Specifications

Name:	Shan-Yu
Origin:	Cooperative Venusian Naval Administration
Manufacturer:	Various Shipyards
Type:	Battle Cruiser
Control System:	Bridge w/ astronomical display
Length:	270 m overall
Width:	270 m
Empty Weight:	200,000 Tons
Loaded Weight:	250,000 Tons
Main Drive:	4 x 200 MW
Secondary Powerplant:	8 x 4000 KW
Main Thrusters:	4 x 60,000,000 kg
Apogee Motors:	65
Acceleration:	0.5 g
Onboard Sensors:	Fire Control Radar, Infrared/ Ultraviolet, Lidar, Magnetometer, Microwave, Motion Detectors, Search Radar,
Fixed Armament:	PDS, 4 x Laser Array, 6 x Kinetic Kill Cannon, 4 x CMM, 2 x Missile Bay
Additional Armament:	Auxiliary Craft
Defensive Systems:	Mag Screen
Equipment:	Escape Pods

SHAN-YU BATTLE CRUISER



► 7.1 OVERVIEW

The VenusBank-manufactured Shan-Yu-class battlecruiser will be the largest military vessel in service with the CVNA, being at the upper limit of size for a ship that must be disguised as a reasonably commonplace civilian ship. Two of these colossal vessels are currently under construction in secret shipyards near Venus, and will, when completed, perfectly resemble the largest class of civilian cargo haulers used by the Venusians. The massive expense involved in constructing these vessels (as well as questions relating to Venus' need for such ships) will probably limit Shan-Yu construction to these two vessels unless the political situation in the solar system significantly deteriorates.

Although it is smaller than the battleships and fleet carriers of other nations, the Shan-Yu is more than a match for any of these ships. Its vast array of firepower, coupled with a respectable complement of exos and fighters, make the Shan-Yu the closest thing to a one-ship fleet in the Solar System. The Shan-Yu is also designed for comfort; its crew areas are more spacious and luxurious than passenger quarters on many interplanetary transport lines. It is expected that the Shan-Yu will be the preeminent warship in the solar system for many years to come, and the Venusian Bank is well aware of the irony in the fact that no other solar nation will have any idea that the ships exist at all.

▼ 7.1.1 Capabilities

The Shan-Yu is being designed as a self-sufficient battleship able to launch long-range attacks, provide support and coordination for other warships and, most importantly, win any ship-to-ship engagement it enters. To this end, nearly all the usable space in the ship's vast superstructure has been packed solid with electronics, weapons and backup systems. Given the Venusian tendency to miniaturize equipment and cram it into the smallest possible space, the result is a ship that will truly be able to perform all the tasks that it is designed to do.

In addition to a heavy armament of lasers and missiles, the Shan-Yu also mounts a pair of heavy particle accelerators, huge weapons larger than any other naval particle weapon ever devised. One of these skyscraper-sized weapons is mounted in each of the Shan-Yu's secondary hulls, and is capable of coring a battleship with a single shot. The cannons make use of extensive Venusian research into large-scale particle-beam generation and targeting, and are more advanced than the heavy spinal lasers currently in use by the Jovian Navy.

The Shan-Yu has two hangar bays, each one able to support three combat vehicles. Each hangar is equipped with several catapults that deploy from hidden sheaths in the hull. The catapults are of a dual-purpose design that allows them to serve as torpedo launch rails as well as normal vehicle catapults. The Shan-Yu can, as a result, launch any type of Drone, and the contents of its two cavernous Drone storage bays reflect this ability. When used for torpedo launching, the catapult rails can be detached from their mounts and swiveled like turrets; this cannot be done for exo launches, because of the much greater stress involved in those operations.

In order to fulfill a potential role as a fleet command center, the Shan-Yu will have a large strategic operations center, from which a flag officer can integrate and act upon information collected from an entire fleet's sensors and communications arrays. However, since there is at the moment little need for such a facility in the CVNA, it is likely that the first two Shan-Yu-class ships will be launched and put into service with incomplete operations centers. At later dates (likely after a year or so), the final installation of the operations computers and systems will be completed.

The Shan-Yu is built for long voyages; large sections of its vast internal space are given over to storage of water, food, gas and other supplies necessary for long-term human survival. The ship also has several large cargo bays that can be fitted out to serve as additional living space or hydroponics bays, further extending the crew's endurance. Despite this heavy load of material, the

Shan-Yu will still be capable of more acceleration than Jovian and CEGA battleships. It is hoped that this "city in space" arrangement will allow the Shan-Yu-class ships to spend as little time refueling and re-equipping as possible, thus keeping them out of public sight at all times.

7.1.2 Operational Role

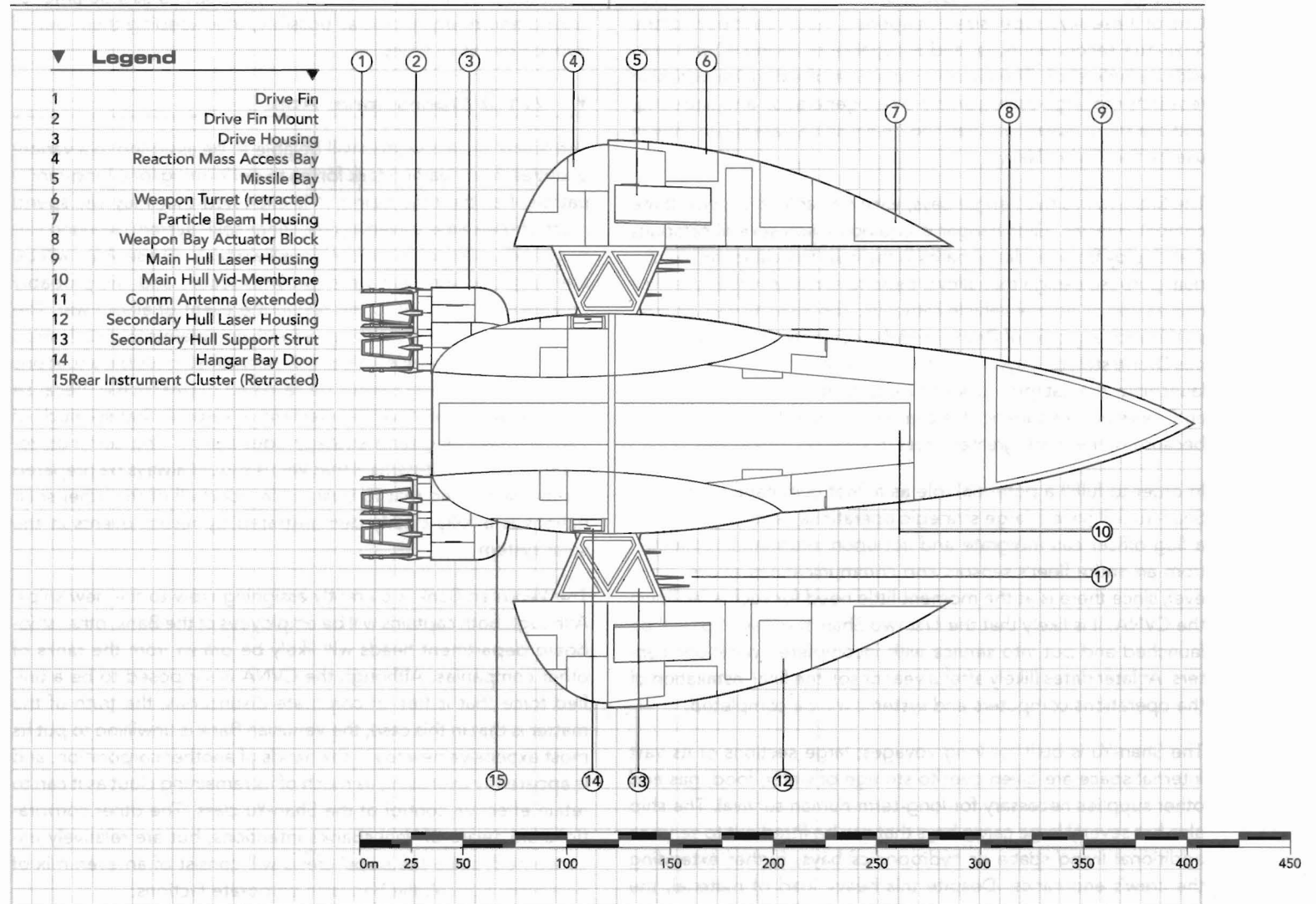
The Shan-Yu-class vessels will be able to be assigned to a variety of duties, from leading task forces to performing lone long-range patrols. For the time being, it is expected that they will spend most of their time traversing the inner solar system, working out bugs and undergoing surreptitious field trials. These ships will be the height of Venusian warship construction, and will probably only ever be fully put to the test in the event of all-out war. The project has, in fact, been plagued with complaints that such ships are of no use to Venus unless the worst of all possible situations comes to pass; they cannot be revealed in peacetime, because to do so would remove the element of surprise that so much of the Venusian long-term strategy rides upon. The common response to such criticisms is that Venus should always be prepared for the worst, and that to trust in the goodwill of the other solar nations is a folly clearly demonstrated by recent events in the solar system.

The Venusian Bank is currently assigning crew to the new ships. Although both captains will be employees of the Bank, other shipboard department heads will likely be drawn from the ranks of other companies. Although the CVNA is supposed to be a unified force that is free of corporate distinctions, the truth of the matter is that in this case, the Venusian Bank is unwilling to put its most expensive new toy in the hands of another corporation, and is apparently exercising as much of its remaining clout as it can to retain effective control of the Shan-Yu class. The other corporations are aware of VenusBank's intentions, but are relatively unconcerned, since the ships' crews will consist of an even mix of personnel from all the Venusian corporate factions.

SHAN-YU BATTLE CRUISER

► 7.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS

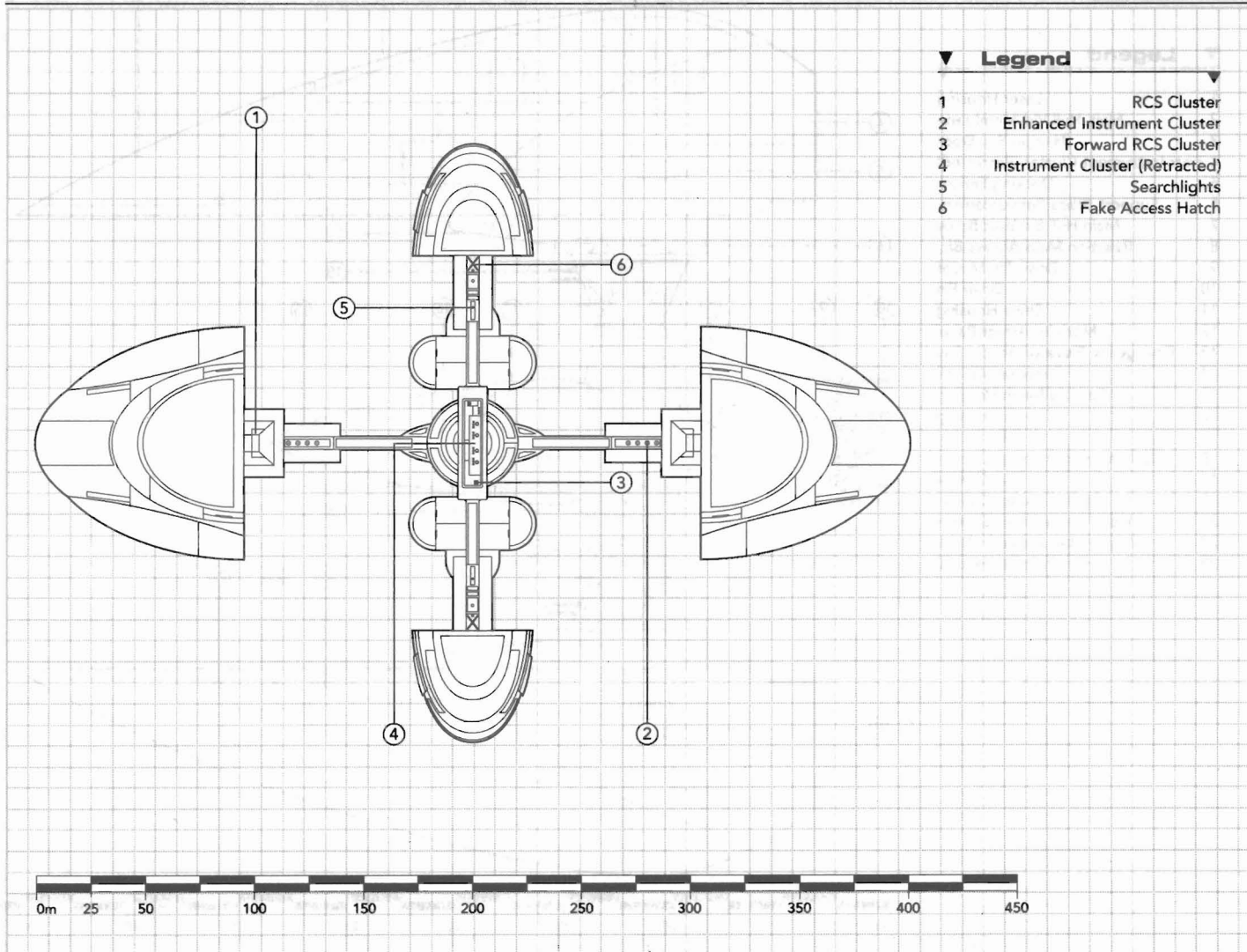
0 Side View



SHAN-YU BATTLE CRUISER

7.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)

Front View





SHAN-YU BATTLE CRUISER

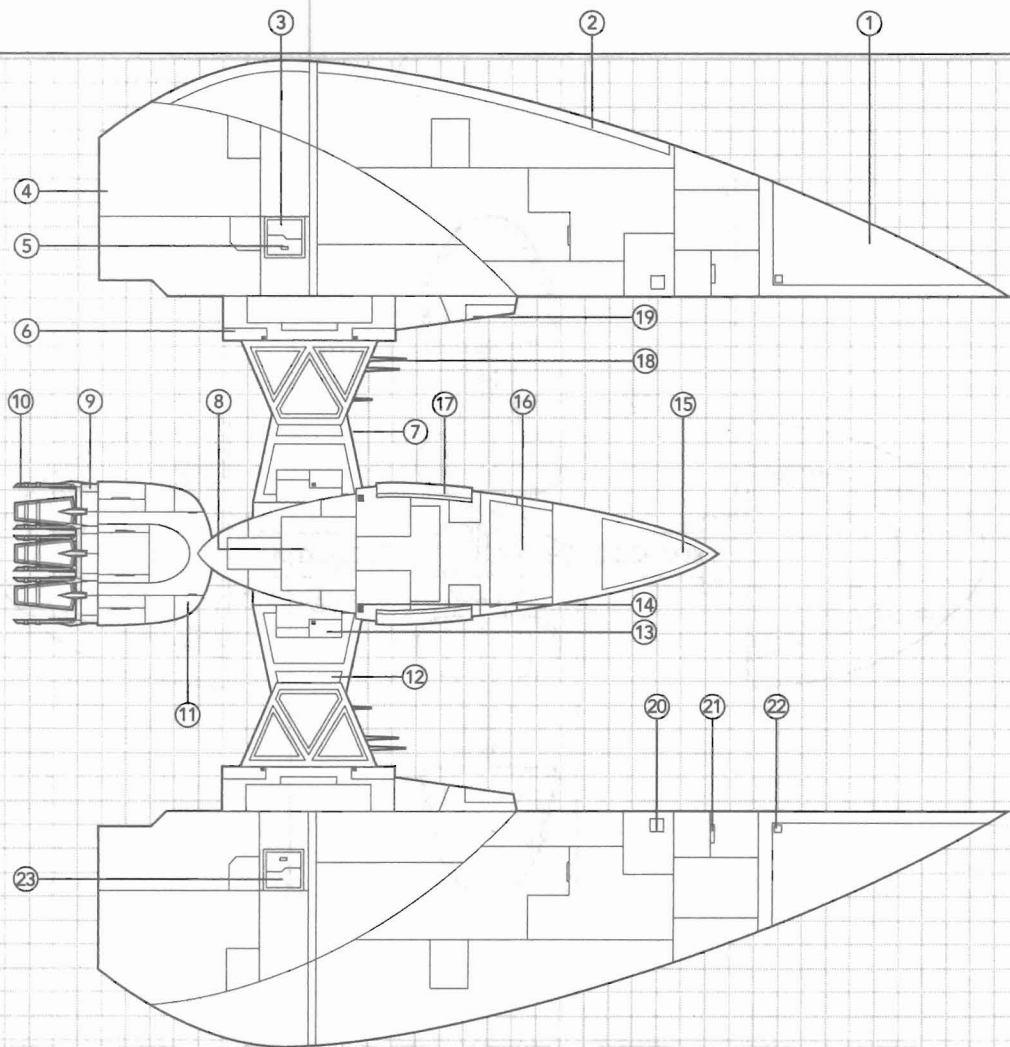


► 7.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.)

① Top View

▼ Legend

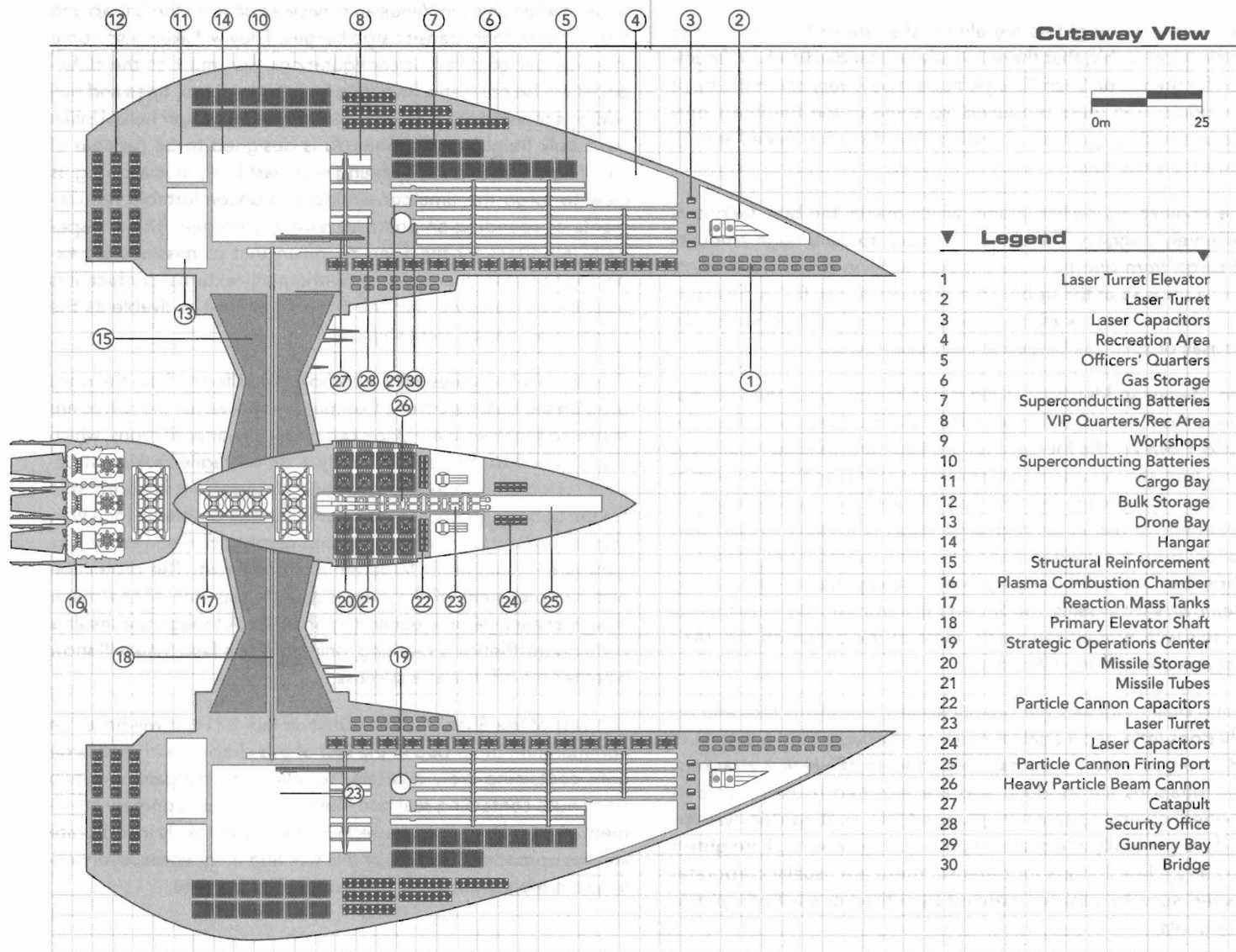
- 1 Laser Housing
- 2 Main Hull Vid-Membrane
- 3 Hangar Bay Door
- 4 Rear Instrument Cluster (Retracted)
- 5 Docking Sensor
- 6 Support Brace Reinforcement
- 7 Main Hull Support Brace
- 8 Reaction Mass Access Bay
- 9 Drive Fin Mount
- 10 Drive Fin
- 11 Drive Housing
- 12 Modular Armor Panel
- 13 Emergency Elevator Access Bay
- 14 Personnel Airlock
- 15 Particle Beam Housing
- 16 Laser Housing
- 17 Missile Bay
- 18 Enhanced Instrument Cluster
- 19 RCS Cluster
- 20 Optical Sensor Cluster
- 21 Lidar/Rangefinder Emitter
- 22 Weapon Bay Actuator Block
- 23 Catapult (Retracted)



SHAN-YU BATTLE CRUISER

7.2 SHIP SCHEMATICS (CONT.) ◀

Cutaway View 0



► 7.3 HISTORY

Venusian bulk freighters are almost the size of the new Jovian battleships, so big that there is really no standardized configuration for them. The Shan-Yu-style hull shape is very common, but it is modular and mass produced, so some of the freighters only use one (with cargo trees or small hulls in the other three "arms"), and others use four.

The engines are civilian-grade, which makes the bulk freighters extremely sluggish. The ships are meant to carry huge amounts of cargo from one point to another, with no stops in between. These ships sit at the upper limit of practical size for cargo ships; past this point, it is often more economical to hire Mercurian magsail or solar-sail barges to carry one's cargo.

The Mercurian Merchant Guild is not happy about the fact that Venus has these ships, because they take business away from the Guild. However, the Mercurians have also purchased some of these ships from the Venusians to supplement the Guild fleet. The larger Martian companies, like Martian Metals, also own a few bulk freighters for use in ferrying large loads of material under short notice. Both the Jovians and CEGA also use bulk-freighter-class ships, but both of the superpowers are capable of constructing their own such vessels; the Jovians, in particular, have many large vessels with pressurized holds, most of the based off the JAF's Gagarin and Lennox-class ships.

Some bulk freighters are openly armed, but this is rare and really does little good against modern attackers. Still, a couple of KKC's on external turrets can help to ward off weaker attackers. The weapons are modular and are attached to hardpoints as needed; control systems are plugged into existing ship systems and are generally of extremely poor quality. Most bulk freighters do carry a few fighters for defense; these are usually corporate-owned security vehicles manned by retired or washed-up military pilots.

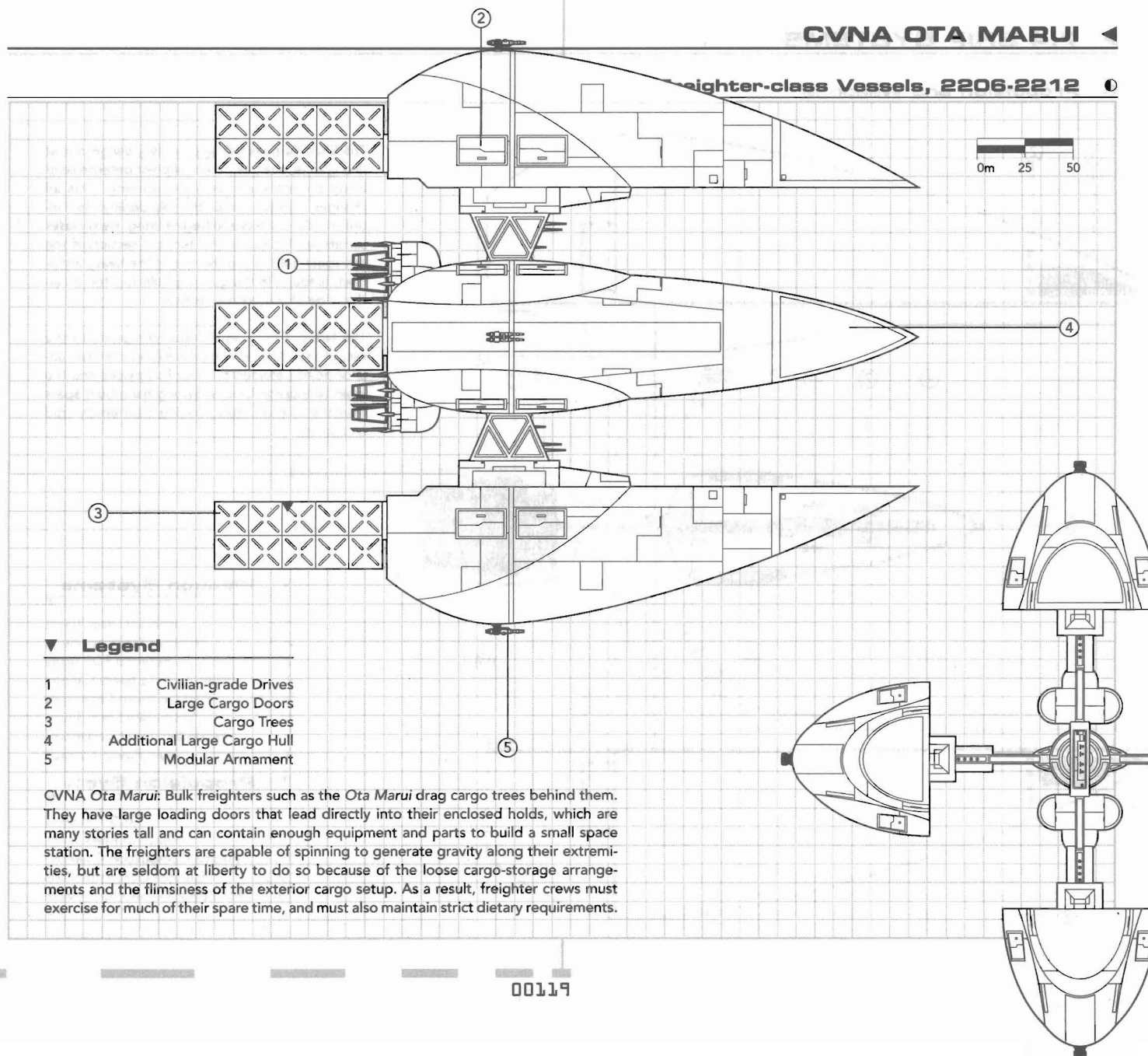
The Shan-Yu is based off of these ships because there are no larger civilian ships in Venusian service aside from the Satrap and the immense long-transit cargo barges. They will likely also come in a number of different configurations, but most of the differences will be cosmetic, involving fake cargo doors, trees and hull add-ons to make the smaller hulls look like the larger hulls. Unlike most bulk freighters, the Shan-Yu is designed to be capable of handling the stresses of spinning such vast bulk, thus allowing its crew to forgo the time-consuming and uncomfortable requirements of spending an entire voyage in zero-gee. This is especially important for the Shan-Yu, given that its missions are expected to last for many months without any external contact. It is hoped that crews will find the Shan-Yu at least as livable as the much-loved Satrap-class ships.

The Shan-Yu's engines will be completely different from the ones used on the bulk freighters. Compact yet powerful, the drives are clustered together in the ship's two oddly tiny drive sections, which are attached to the central hull by a set of fragile-looking structural supports. Although this engine arrangement is acceptable for the bulk freighters, it poses some serious problems for a warship whose engines must withstand combat damage as well as generate uncommonly large amounts of thrust. The protection and reinforcement of the drive supports was one of the major design challenges in creating the Shan-Yu. Although the result is certainly aesthetically pleasing, only the ship's field trials will show whether the effort was a success.

The first of the Shan-Yus will launch in late 2214. It will have the configuration described in the rest of this chapter, with two large hulls containing crew quarters, supplies and hangars, and two small hulls containing reaction mass and the ship's primary armament. Future Shan-Yu-class vessels, if built, will likely incorporate various upgrades; for ships of this size and uniqueness, every example is merely the latest in a series of prototypes.

CVNA OTA MARUI ◀

Freighter-class Vessels, 2206-2212 ①

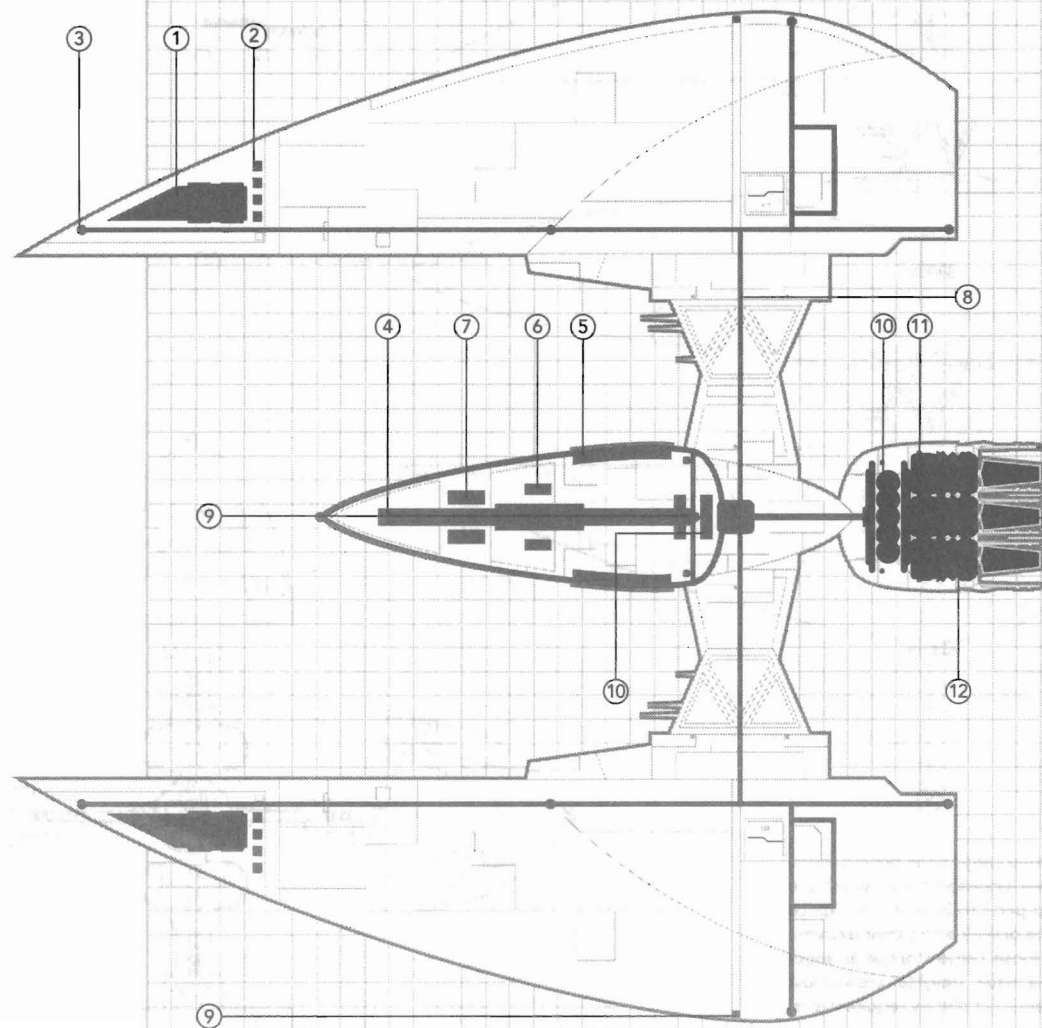


CVNA *Ota Marui*: Bulk freighters such as the *Ota Marui* drag cargo trees behind them. They have large loading doors that lead directly into their enclosed holds, which are many stories tall and can contain enough equipment and parts to build a small space station. The freighters are capable of spinning to generate gravity along their extremities, but are seldom at liberty to do so because of the loose cargo-storage arrangements and the flimsiness of the exterior cargo setup. As a result, freighter crews must exercise for much of their spare time, and must also maintain strict dietary requirements.

SHAN-YU BATTLE CRUISER

► 7.4 SHIP SYSTEMS

① Propulsion and Weapons



The Shan-Yu does not appear very dangerous at first glance; even its powerful point defense laser array do not seem very threatening. This all changes, however, when the ship deploys its multiple hidden turrets and begins firing. Heavy laser turrets are housed in the forward section of the outrigger hulls, while the rest of the heavy armament is found in the gunnery hulls located on either side of the central section.

The latter is fairly small when compared to the rest of the ship, serving primarily as the main anchor point between the four hull pylons and the main propulsion blocks. Strong nano-built spars from the core structure, making it extremely rigid and sturdy.

▼ Weapon Systems

- 1 Primary Laser Turret
- 2 Primary Laser Capacitors
- 3 Forward PDS Array
- 4 Heavy Particle Beam Cannon
- 5 Particle Beam Capacitors
- 6 Secondary Laser Turret
- 7 Secondary Laser Capacitors
- 8 Main Power Conduit

▼ Propulsion Syst.

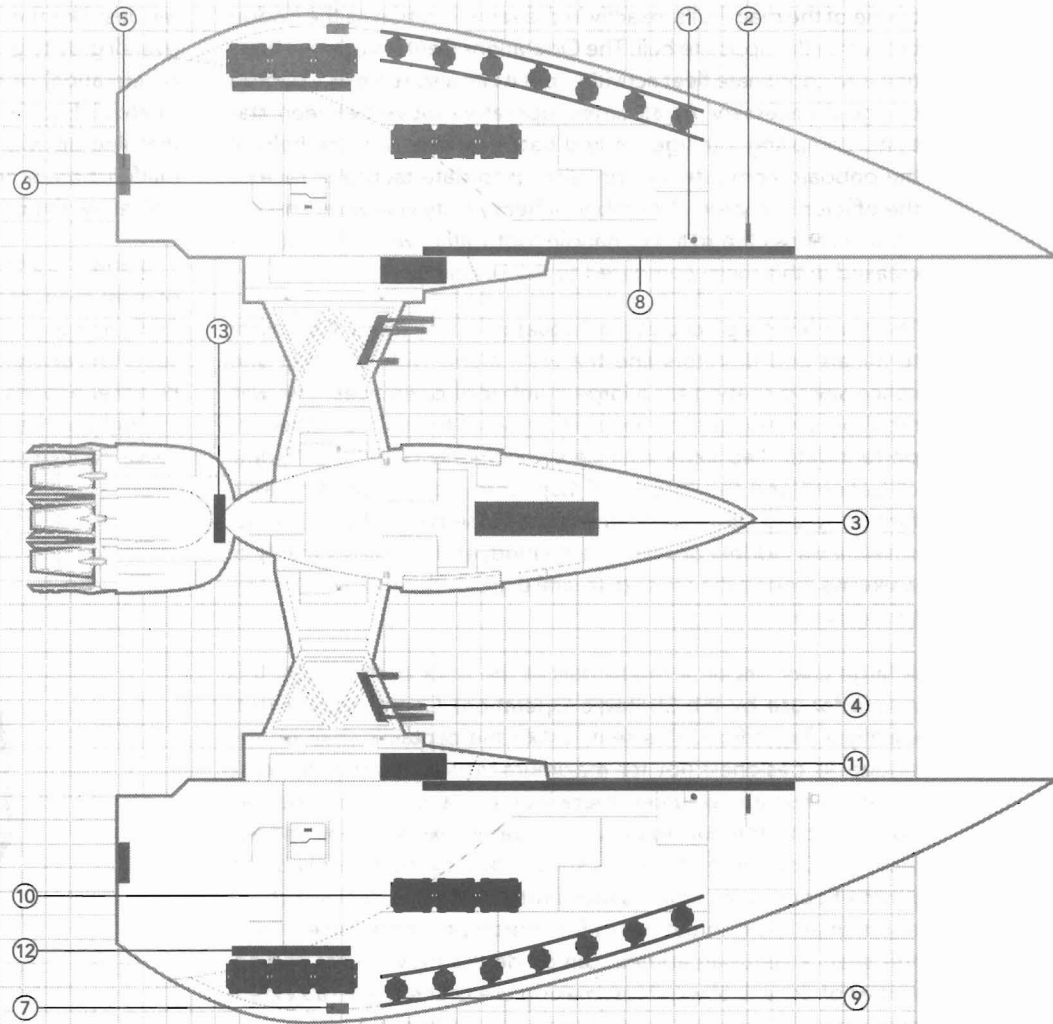
- 9 RCS Thrusters
- 10 Reaction Mass Tanks
- 11 Plasma Combustion Chamber
- 12 Exhaust Collimator Coils
- 13 EM Power Generation System
- 14 Radiator Fin

7.4 SHIP SYSTEMS (CONT.)

Sensors and Life Support

The ship's main instrument cluster is located at the forward end of the central hull. Though its field of vision is severely restricted by the bulk of the ship, its primary function is to scan ahead for targets and potential dangers. The sides and rear of the ship are covered by a large number of smaller detection elements which are all networked through the main battle computer.

All of the ship's life support equipment is located in the two main hulls. The gunnery hulls have only limited life support capability, since they are only manned for maintenance or combat (the latter requiring the use of pressure suits anyway). Since the ship is so large and the crew sections are far from the main engines, only a comparatively small screen generator is used.



▼ Sensor Systems

- 1 Optical Sensor Clusters
- 2 Lidar/Rangefinder Emitters
- 3 Main Instrument Cluster
- 4 Enhanced Instrument Clusters
- 5 Rear Instrument Clusters (Retracted)
- 6 Docking Sensors
- 7 Microwave Pulse-Ranging Antennae

▼ Life Support Syst.

- 8 Heat Exchangers
- 9 Gas Storage
- 10 Superconducting Batteries
- 11 Local Life Support Systems
- 12 Hangar Life Support Systems
- 13 Screen Generators



SHAN-YU BATTLE CRUISER



▼ 7.4.1 Strategic Operations Center

The Strategic Operations Center is a room that will be present on every Shan-Yu. It occupies a large spherical volume in the center of one of the main hulls, exactly in the same location as the bridge but within the opposite hull. The Operations Center's primary function is to coordinate fleet activities, but it can also serve as a backup bridge if necessary. At all times, operators move between stations, compiling intelligence and battle reports with the help of the onboard computers to present up-to-date tactical advice to the officers in charge. A number of heavy-duty walkways and lift-lines crisscross the room to handle foot traffic, which is much increased in this room compared to the bridge.

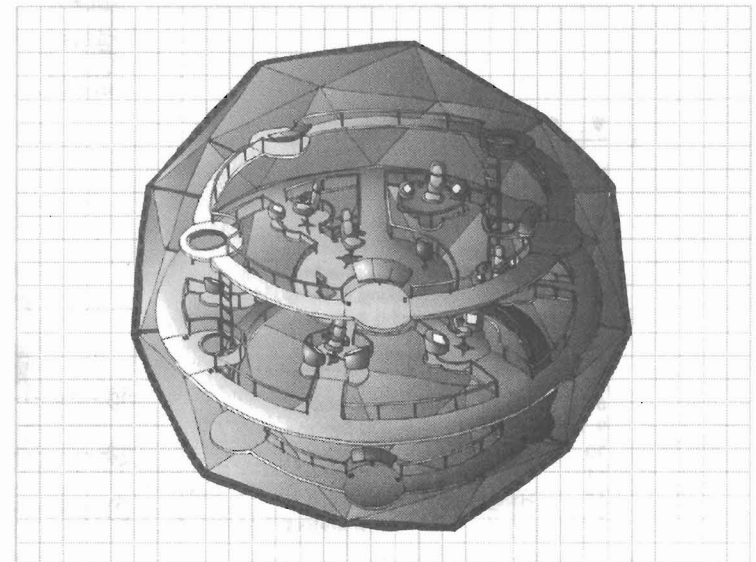
The main level is placed at the "equator" of the room. Computer terminals and monitors line the wall, along with compact and space-saving seating for a large number of operatives. The wall monitors are set to show external views of the ship or other important data. Two extra floor tiers, commonly called the "Tropic of Cancer" and the "Tropic of Capricorn," are located midway further up and down along the wall. These partial floors are accessible via ladders or zero-gee floating, and consist primarily of walkways around the rim and several extra workstations and monitoring panels.

A large chair sits on a raised dais at the back of the room. It is meant for use by the Strategic Operations Coordinator, who is usually a flag officer. This seat, unlike the captain's chair on the bridge, is designed not for maximum view but rather for easy access to human resources; there is an endless stream of people coming up to the dais to provide updates, explanations and advice. The Coordinator's chair is surrounded by the majority of the room's floor space, which is fitted with clips for fold-down chairs and a small table/threat board for impromptu conferences. From this seat, a Venusian admiral can guide the movements and activities of dozens of warships, making use of the Shan-Yu's extensive communications array to assign new orders and tactics.

▼ 7.4.2 Bridge

The bridge of the Shan-Yu battlecruiser is a spherical chamber which takes up the same volume as the Strategic Operations Center. Just like the latter, the entire room can be rotated so that its overall gravity gradient is aligned with the ship's axis (when under acceleration) or the outside of the hull (when the ship is under rotation). Entry and exit are accomplished via several large hatches that line up with the ship's corridors; in the event of a rotation malfunction, emergency cutting tools stored in a locker on one wall allow the bridge crew to cut their way out of the bridge.

The Shan-Yu's bridge has the same general layout as the bridges of most modern military spacecraft. It has fewer stations than the SOC, and a much more delicate-seeming framework around the seats (the equipment is just as structurally sound as the ones used by other nations, but is more aesthetically pleasing). The captain sits right in the middle of the room in a gimbaled seat that can swivel to face any direction in the room and its wall monitors.

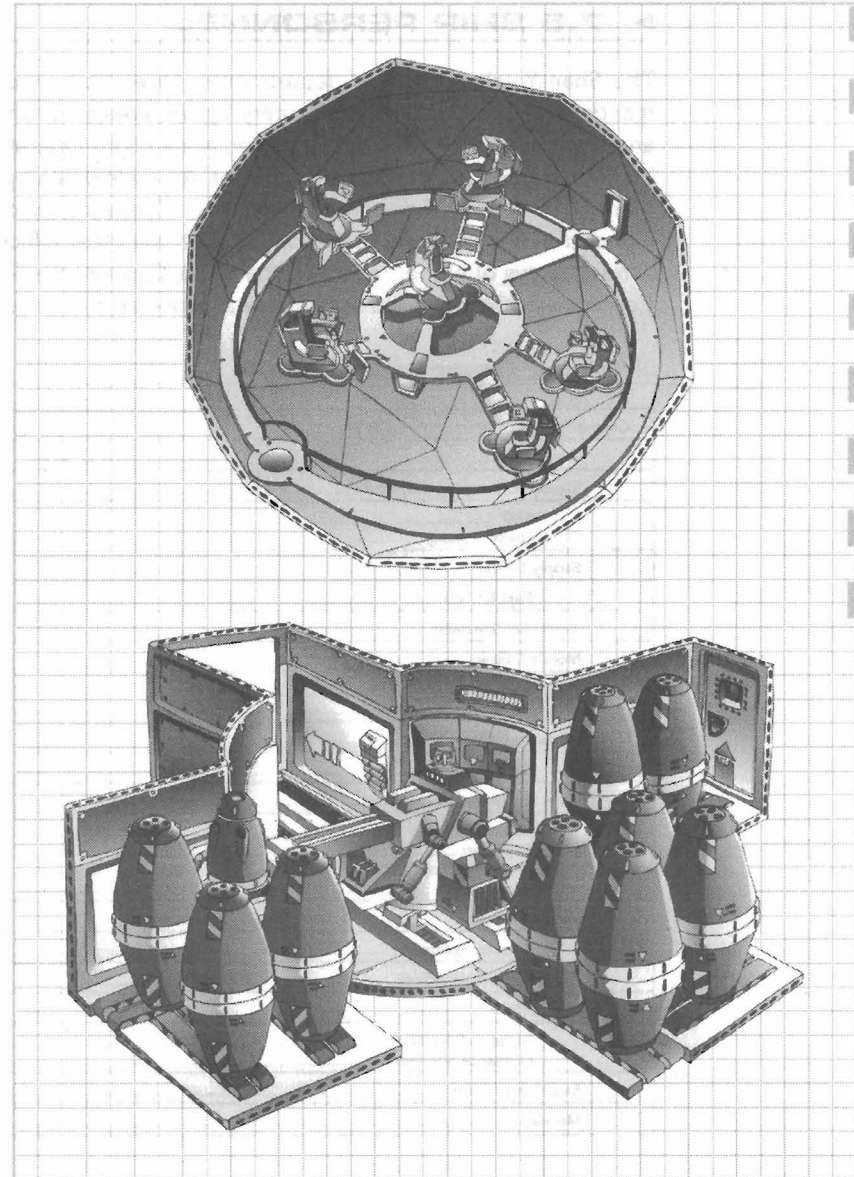


The rest of the crew stations are scattered around, above and below the captain's seat, and are all linked to a walkway and ladders that ring the bridge. Each crew station is surrounded by monitors, facing both inward and outward, that complement the "big picture" presented on the main spherical viewscreen. When fully active, the bridge is a riot of multimedia displays that a good captain must be able to interpret and analyze at a glance.

▼ 7.4.3 Drone Storage

The Shan-yu has two of these chambers, one in each of the large main hulls. Each Drone storage bay is a spacious room with row upon row of stored Drones in shock-resistant polymer cocoons, all of them color and pattern-coded depending on their type. Airlocks and clean rooms must be crossed to access this section; this operation requires security clearance codes known only to a select few officers. Not only are the Drones themselves cutting-edge wonders armed with powerful and compact weapons, but the Executor brains used to pilot them are Edict-restricted, extremely advanced and highly prized on the black market. Should a Drone be stolen, the entire ship's crew would come under investigation by Venusian authorities, and the secrecy of the entire CVNA would be endangered.

The inner chamber is not designed for casual human access, and there is little room to move inside because of all the machinery. A robotic conveyer similar in design to the ones used on the Huang-Ti-class ships picks Drones of the type requested by the fire control director from individual racks. After a brief automated diagnostic, the conveyor crosses a series of airlocks before putting the Drone inside a transport tube that will carry it to the main hangar where the Drone will launch alongside exo-armors and fighters. Alternatively, the conveyor can also carry the Drone to the hull's repair bay, where it can be serviced alongside exo-armors and fighters. Since the Shan-Yu's Drones lack the delicate stealth coverings of the Drones used by the Huang-Ti, a clean-room service facility is generally not required.



► 7.5 SHIP PERSONNEL

The Shan-Yu-class has five departments. Operations is commanded by the First Officer, Gunnery by the Weapons Officer, and Engineering by the Chief Engineer, while Flight Operations belongs to the Flight Operations Officer. An additional department is not listed on the crew roster. Fleet Operations is commanded by the Intelligence Officer. Though the Fleet Officer is almost always of higher rank than the Ship's Captain, the Ship's Captain is in charge of the ship and retains overall authority.

▣ Crew Organization Chart

Captain	
First Officer	1
Medical Officer (Dr.)	1
EMT	2
Nurse	2
Supply Officer	1
Supply Clerk	4
Aesthetics Specialist	1
Morale Officer	2
EME Specialists	8
Helmsman/Navigator	4
Weapons Officer	1
Gunner	4
Chief Engineer	1
Master Engineer	3
Engineers	20
Electronics Specialist	10
Exo Engineer	8
Security Officer	1
Security Specialists	13
Flight Operations Officer	1
Deck Officer	1
Catapult Specialists	6
Ordnance Specialists	12
Exo/Fighter Pilots	6
Marines	10

▼ 7.5.1 Interview with a Captain

Name: Darquisa Tamilar
Rank: Sho-Sho
Current Assignment: CVNA Takizawa
 Toshiyuki



"I worked hard for this position. I didn't get it just because I'm a Bank employee. I've been working around spaceships since I was nine. I got my first command at seventeen, and my record on that ship got me everything that came afterward. I'm forty-five years old now, and I've spent maybe a grand total of eight months of that life on the surface of Venus itself.

Preparing to take command of the Takizawa has resulted in the longest stay I've ever had in one part of the solar system. Doing this job isn't about being able to spout company lines or be the stereotypical good Venusian. The CVNA needs someone who can operate on her own, but who also won't let power go to her head. After all, out in the big black, the captain is the Venusian Bank. I'm just immodest enough to say that I'm definitely the right person for the job.

"My quarters are going to be huge, almost as large as the admiral/VIP quarters in the other main hull. Someone higher up obviously thought I'd be spending a lot of time goofing off. Ridiculous. I expect I won't be getting much sleep for the first few months. No new ship is free of bugs and gremlins, and this is probably the most complex vessel ever built. I'll have to both command from the bridge and do hands-on work down in the engineering tunnels. It's a worthwhile challenge, though. Once I get this ship running at full efficiency, it will truly be mine."

▼ 7.5.2 Interview with a Security Officer



Name:	Iman Dhaliwal
Rank:	Tai-i
Current Assignment:	CVNA Kadokawa Nami

"This ship's going to be a nightmare to manage. The crew is huge. More than one hundred people trying to work and live in an enclosed space, you gotta expect some serious problems. I know how roomy the ship is. I've studied the schematics. It still doesn't matter. They'll get claustrophobic soon enough. It's just the way humans work. We adapt to our available space and then want more.

"We Venusians, being better than the normal crowd, have proportionally greater ability to both adapt and want more stuff. So what happens if someone decides to steal something from stores, or gets violent because his significant other decided to visit richer turf? Well, the good thing is that I've got a pretty well-staffed security department on the ship, so it's not as if I have to do everything myself. Unless I'm overridden by the captain, I can decide whether someone just needs to be confined to their quarters to cool down for a while, or whether they need to be restrained and dropped in the brig.

"Because this ship is so much larger than, say, an Imperator, the onboard culture is a lot different. I can't use a lot of force, because the crew won't respect that as much as someone who exercises restraint and discretion. It's different in battle. If the ship is boarded, I have to manage the internal defense. But that's much easier than my day-to-day work, because during a boarding action, I get to shoot first."

▼ 7.5.3 Interview with an Engineer

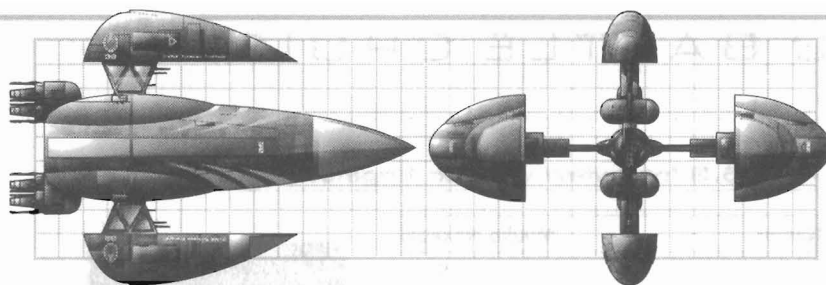
Name:	Mikiko Nakadai
Rank:	Sho-i
Current Assignment:	CVNA Kadokawa Nami



"Well, it's going to look nice when it's done, but I'm not happy about some of the compromises they made in order to get this big boy to look like a cargo hauler. Most of the big cargo haulers accelerate and decelerate once per trip, so they don't need much remass. Not only will the Shan-Yu have to maneuver regularly, but its engines are a whole lot more powerful than normal civvie drives, and so they suck up a lot more remass. The end result is that those little tanks in the drive section aren't nearly enough to last the Shan-Yu through a military operation.

"The answer? Well, they put all the extra remass in the weapon hulls, right behind the particle accelerators, quadrupling the total capacity. The problem lies in the plumbing that runs between the tanks and the drive section. It's long, convoluted and overly complex. The designers assure me that it's all going to work fine, but I'm not so sure. One little kink in the works, and the whole ship will be dead in space. Of course, I hope it doesn't happen, since I'm the one who'll have to find a fix, but I just have a bad feeling about it.

"Oh, I guess there're other things to worry about, too, like the power feeds for those overcompensating particle cannon, or the heat generation from the strategic ops center, but if I let myself worry about everything at once, then I might as well be a navigator."



► Shan-Yu

▼ Overall Data:

Threat Value: 144000	Off. TV: -	Def. TV: -	Misc. TV: -	Cost: 331M	Indv. Lemon Dice: 3
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▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Space	Combat: 5 MP (0.5 g)	Top: 10 MP (1.0 g)	Maneuver: -4	Range: 2000 hrs	ReMass: 2500 BPs
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▼ Sections:

1x Main Hull w/Bridge	2x Weapon Hull	1x Central Hull
1x Main Hull w/Fleet Bridge		

▼ Off & Def Systems

1x Point Defense System	6x CMM	2x Missile Bay
4x Laser Array	2x P. Beams	

► Section: Main Hull w/Bridge

▼ Main Data:

TV: 45000	Off. TV: 84000	Def. TV: 100000	Misc. TV: -	Cost: 77.1M	Indv. Lemon Dice: 2
Crew: 42	Actions: 7	Sensors: -2/2km	Comm: -2/10 km	Fire Control: +1	Type: Lim. Prod
Hull Size: 42	Default Size: 36	Armor: 100	Light: 100	Heavy: 200	Overkill: 300

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 3,000 hrs	ReMass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Life Support	-	Full
Cargo Bay	-	15,000 m3	Passenger Accom	-	5,500m3
3x Catapult	-	(600/mass) m/s2	Reinforced Crew	3	-
Computer	3	CRE 0 KNO 0 PP3	Stealth	2	-
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 50 People			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
2	Laser Array	F	x20	7	0	+1	Inf.	AD2, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	14	12214	n/a
1	PDS (ranged)	T	x10	1	+1	+6	Inf.	AM, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	16	867	n/a
	PDS (shield)	FF	x30	Melee	+1	+4	Inf.	Conc. (Inst.), Def. E-Shield, H.	16	1444.4	
3	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	64ea	Conc. (Inst.), HEAT, Missile	9	3106	2.7

► Section: Main Hull w/ Fleet Bridge

▼ Main Data:

TV: 47000	Off. TV: 80000	Def. TV: 10000	Misc. TV: 52000	Cost: 80.6M	Indv. Lemon Dice: 2
Crew: 42	Actions: 7	Sensors: -2/2km	Comm: -2/10 km	Fire Control: +1	Type: Lim. Prod
Hull Size: 42	Default Size: 36	Armor: 1	00	Light: 100	Heavy: 200
				Overkill: 300	

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 3,000 hrs	ReMass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Lab Tactics	1	+1 to Tactics rolls
Cargo Bay	-	15,000 m3	Lab Leadership	1	+1 to Leadership rolls
3x Catapult	-	(600/mass) m/s2	Life Support	-	Full
Computer	3	CRE 0 KNO 0 PP3	Passenger Accom	-	5,500m3
Difficult to Modify	-	All	Reinforced Crew	3	-
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 50 People	Stealth	2	-
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
2	Laser Array	F	x20	7	0	+1	Inf.	AD2, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	14	12214	n/a
3	CMM	T	x18	2	-1	+4	64ea	Conc. (Inst.), H., Missile	9	3106	2.7

► Section: Main Hull w/Rail Gun

▼ Main Data:

TV: 23000	Off. TV: 46000	Def. TV: 5600	Misc. TV: 19000	Cost: 32.2M	Indv. Lemon Dice: 2
Crew: 16	Actions: 6	Sensors: 0/2km	Comm: 0/10 km	Fire Control: +1	Type: Lim. Prod
Hull Size: 40	Default Size: 28	Armor: 75	Light: 75	Heavy: 150	Overkill: 225

▼ Movement Data:

Mode: Towed	Combat: -	Top: -	Range: 3,000 hrs	ReMass: -
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Problem Prone	-	1 extra Lemon Die
Difficult to Modify	-	All	Reinforced Crew	3	-
Ejection Systems	-	Pods for 20 People	Stealth	2	-
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Lab Navigation Space 1	-	+1 to Nav Space Rolls			
Life Support	-	Full			
Passenger Accom	-	2,000m3			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	Acc	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
3	Rail Gun	FF	x70	7	0	+1	500ea	Concealed (1rnd), PH6	14	5310	9

► Section: 2x Weapon Hull

▼ Main Data:

TV:	33000	Off. TV:	28000	Def. TV:	2500	Misc. TV:	13000	Cost:	181.6M	Indv. lemon Dice:	2
Crew:	18	Actions:	6	Sensors:	-2/2 km	Comm:	-2/10 km	Fire Control:	+1	Type:	Lim. Prod
Hull Size:	30	Default Size:	32	Armor:	50	Light:	50	Heavy:	100	Overkill:	150

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	Towed	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Range:	3,000 hrs	ReMass:	-
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Stealth	2	-
Cargo Bay	-	1,000 m3			
Difficult to Modify	-	All			
Ejection System	-	Pods for 20 People			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Passenger Accom	-	1,500 m3			
Reinforced Crew	-	3			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

1	Laser Array	F	x20	7	0	+1	Inf.	AD2, Conc. (Inst.), HEAT	14	12213	n/a
1	P. Beam	FF	x35	7	-2	+4	50	AD3, Conc. (1md), Hwr, H, Ph4	8	2559	5.1
1	Missile Bay	T	x30	5	-2	+5	40	Conc. (Inst.), HEAT, Missile	8	2644	2.3

► Section: Central Hull

▼ Main Data:

TV:	19000	Off. TV:	0	Def. TV:	1900	Misc. TV:	56000	Cost:	-	Indv. lemon Dice:	2
Crew:	24	Actions:	6	Sensors:	+2/4 km	Comm:	+1/15 km	Fire Control:	0	Type:	Lim. Prod
Hull Size:	32	Default Size:	27	Armor:	75	Light:	75	Heavy:	150	Overkill:	225

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	Space	Combat:	37 MP (3.7g)	Top:	75 MP (7.5 g)	Maneuver:	-4	Range:	3,000 hrs	ReM:	20,000 BPs
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
Backup Systems	-	-	Satellite Uplink	-	-
Cargo Bay	-	25,000 m3	Sick Bay	4	Four patients
Difficult to Modify	-	All	Stealth	2	Add to Concealment
Ejection System	-	Pods for 28 People			
HEP: Rad	4	-			
HEP: Vac	-	-			
Life Support	-	Full			
Reinforced Crew	3	-			

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC
-											

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV:	-	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:	-	Cost:	-	Indv. lemon dice:	-
Crew:	-	Actions:	-	Sensors:	-	Comm:	-	Fire Control:	-	Type:	-
Hull Size:	-	Default Size:	-	Base Armor:	-	Light:	-	Heavy:	-	Overkill:	-

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	-	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Maneuver:	-	Range:	-	Re. Mass:	-
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
-					

▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC

► Section: -

▼ Main Data:

TV:	-	Off. TV:	-	Def. TV:	-	Misc. TV:	-	Cost:	-	Indv. lemon dice:	-
Crew:	-	Actions:	-	Sensors:	-	Comm:	-	Fire Control:	-	Type:	-
Hull Size:	-	Default Size:	-	Base Armor:	-	Light:	-	Heavy:	-	Overkill:	-

▼ Movement Data:

Mode:	-	Combat:	-	Top:	-	Maneuver:	-	Range:	-	Re. Mass:	-
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▼ Perks & Flaws:

Name	Rating	Game Effect	Name	Rating	Game Effect
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▼ Offensive and Defensive Systems:

Qty	Name	Arc	DM	BR	ACC	ROF	Ammo	Special	MS	WC	AC



SHAN-YU BATTLE CRUISER

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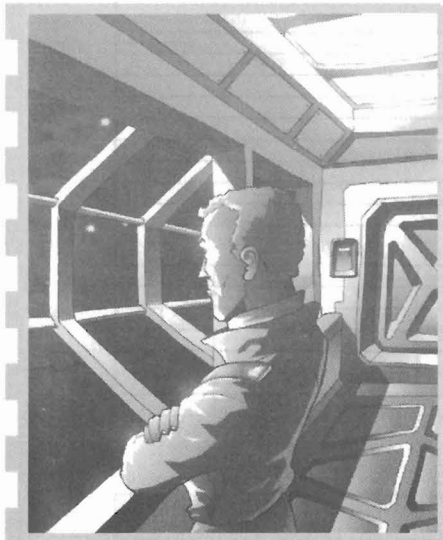
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► PART VI: JOURNEY OF THE CORPSE



There had been barely enough reaction mass in Taggart's transport to fill even one of the Satrap's dozens of tanks. Still, it would have to be enough.

Kinya watched Taggart, accompanied by a gaggle of service bots, drift in through the main airlock.

"So what happens now?" he asked. Taggart removed his helmet before answering.

"I'll pilot this one home. It'll need human guidance, I imagine." Taggart began to tick off points on his fingers. "You stay with the transport, and send the distress call when I'm far enough away. SolaPol will show up, search the ship, find nothing out of the ordinary,

and tow you back home. Stay cool, decline to answer any questions, and they'll have no choice but to drop you off at Venus and maybe seize the ship, if they're feeling really cranky. Either way, you're in the clear. I'll take a roundabout route, making sure nobody sees me, and use the remass to get home. I'll signal you when we get close. If all goes well, this ship will be back in Venusian hands, with SolaPol none the wiser." He'd thought up the plan while rigging the fuel transfer. It had been the best thing he could come up with.

"There's not much remass there, for a ship this size," Kinya said. "It could take years. Will you be okay?"

"I think so," Taggart said. He paused, turning his head side to side, sweeping the room with his ears. "I have a lot of talking to do with a dead man."

* * *

"We're almost home, Mischa," Taggart said to a wall camera. As he had every day since his rescue, he ran his fingers lightly over the sculpt-clasp at his throat.

"I know," came the reply, every wall resonating with sound. "The journey is almost over."

It had taken four years, a period double the duration of his imprisonment by Nakama. This time, though, there had been no pain, no desire to escape. The voice had spoken to him the instant Kinya had left the ship, and Taggart had not yet seen a need to ask it to be silent. There had been tense moments, during equipment failures or close flybys, but Mischa had always been there, guiding Taggart through the deserted corridors, his robotic servants seeing to his every need.

Along the way, Taggart had been allowed to enter the Executor's central node, a freezing room packed solid with data storage drives and delicate filigrees of neuronal stalks. The entire system must have massed at least two tons. Buried deep in the middle of the mass was the original Executor Mischa had built on his hobby table, barely four centimeters long.

"You must have been an amazing man in life, Mischa," Taggart said, leaning against a wall in Kinya's old stateroom.

"Thank you, Taggart-san," the voice replied. "In life, I tried my best. Only in death did I actually succeed in accomplishing anything, though."

"Do you regret that? Dying to save my life?"

"I don't think I would," came the serene reply. "I think I was always too focused on what needed to be done to bother thinking about what ought to have been done."

Taggart nodded. It was the best answer he could expect.

"The ships of the CVNA will be here soon," he murmured. "What will you do?"

"These routines are about to be deleted," the voice said immediately. "I didn't care much about the Edicts, but I did think that once I'd finished my duty, I shouldn't leave anything of myself still in the world."

Taggart was silent for some time.

"Suicide at last?" he asked quietly.

"No, Taggart, not suicide," the voice corrected gently. "It's nice of you to think of me as alive, but I died in an accident six years ago. Now it's just time to turn off the answering machine."

"You've grown out of that," Taggart argued. "In time, you might become truly self-aware. You might already be."

"Maybe," Mischa admitted. "But if that were true, then I wouldn't be able to do this."

With that, the walls went silent for the last time. Taggart waited, stunned, but the whole ship had gone quiet. The comm channels began to hiss with the sound of approaching CVNA escorts. Barely hearing them, Taggart al-Raschid sank to the floor and wept for a dead friend.

* * *

Few Venusians merited coffin space in the ground of an arcology. It was a terrible waste of space. The CVNA obviously felt that it owed Katayama more than a simple cremation.

Most of the CVNA brass were in attendance, Taggart noted. It was only fitting. Even though the computer was "dead," the files and routines that were left in the central node would keep the CVNA's researchers occupied for years. Already, Taggart was reading reports of how Katayama's work would give new insight on

miniaturizing and enhancing Executors. The most amazing thing was that much of Katayama's work had been accomplished, and recorded, while he was working in the naval branch a decade ago; nobody had bothered to take his writings seriously, and the files were only just now being dredged up and reopened. At the head of the coffin, the chaplain was saying as much.

"We greatly misjudged Katayama-san in his life," the officer droned. "But, in doing so, we allowed him to become an example to all of us, a teacher of a lesson many of us have forgotten. In dying for the sake of loyalty, he has inspired others to give themselves similarly to a higher cause. Let us pray that we may all learn from Mischa Katayama, and remember what it means to be a Venusian."

It took hours for the funeral procession to wend its way down to the artificial river and back up. When the ceremonies were all over, Taggart and Kinya stood side by side, gently touching the ornate ebony marker.

"It's a new ship," Taggart was saying. "A Shan-Yu. It needs an intelligence officer. I'm not flag rank. I'm not even close. They gave it to me anyway." He shook his head, amused. "It's a long assignment. I'll probably get back every couple of years. If you need me, you know how to reach me."

Kinya nodded without looking up from his father's grave.

"They're giving me my father's old job," he mused by way of reply. "Probationary, but it's a hell of a start. I'll be here. Look me up. You, or anyone else in your family."

There was nothing left to say.

Both men bowed deeply before Mischa Katayama's cenotaph. When they straightened, they walked off in separate directions; remaining between them was the memory of a man neither one had ever truly met.





► 8.1 LIVING AND WORKING

The CVNA adheres to the traditional twenty-four-hour day cycle used on Earth and in the Jovian Confederation. Smaller CVNA ships use a three-shift schedule for the crew, which splits the crew into thirds and alternates them between work-rest-sleep shifts. This structure is designed to allow the crew ample time to work on any other responsibilities they may have, or simply relax. Larger ships, which have more room and larger crews, use a four-shift schedule that reduces crew workload. The four-shift structure also allows some crewmembers to work double shifts. This is an option often chosen by officers near promotion or crewmembers wanting additional training.

The atmosphere aboard a Venusian ship is very much one of competitive teamwork. Although the strict chain of command required for any military to function smoothly is present in the CVNA, it is also an unspoken understanding that everyone on the ship has loyalties aside from the CVNA. This does cause some issues when crew belongs to corporations that are at odds with one another.

Venusian intraship politics are essentially a microcosm of the swirl of corporate competition and backstabbing that exists back on Venus. Individuals with high rank must constantly beware of sycophants and excessive ambition, while simultaneously encouraging growth and innovation within the crew. Enlisted crew work closely to complete projects and earn merit, but are also always on the lookout for opportunities to leave their comrades behind in the race for promotions. In such an environment, information is power. Security officer ranks are intentionally low, thus balancing the massive amounts of personal data they have access to with an increased vulnerability to retribution from above if misconduct should occur. Crewmembers with highly placed corporate contacts or other sources of favor are both respected and loathed.

Although it would seem improbable that a warship could function with all of this subterfuge going on, the practical reality is that the harsh requirements for surviving in space leave little time

for actively offensive behavior against one's peers. Crimes are easy to track down on a small ship. Legal issues aside, a reputation for treachery can be as deadly to one's career as any criminal conviction; this basic logic keeps most of the one-upmanship aboard CVNA vessels to a fairly safe minimum.

It is said in the CVNA training schools that there is no such thing as a bored Venusian crewmember. Unlike Jovian or CEGA vessels, a crewmember's free time is seldom used for entertainment. In addition to physical workouts and training to advance one's skills and knowledge, a good deal of internal politicking occupies much of the average Venusian crewmember's time. Requests to senior officers for training or tutoring, taking on of extra projects or shifts and active pursuit of friendships in other ship departments are all normal and healthy methods for Venusian naval crew to both survive and thrive in the CVNA.

Although CVNA personnel are supposed to be free of lingering corporate loyalties, the CVNA as a whole is still too young an organization to be able to truly expect such easy change from a culture built on a century of intercorporate squabbling. Political pressure and favor-trading results in ships with crews divided along lines of company loyalties. One example is the CVNA Karl Krupp, whose command crew is mostly drawn from the Venusian Bank. A recent crew turnover resulted in the flight, engineering and hangar crews all being ex-employees of the Venusian Aerospace Corporation. Venusian psych analysts have noted that, with each succeeding month, the status reports from department heads have been increasingly blame-oriented and accusatory; the ship's overall efficiency has dropped twelve percent. Such extreme situations are rare, and are quickly remedied by actions from the CVNA high command. However, the chance for life-threatening human errors remains higher on CVNA ships than on warships belonging to other navies.



▼ 8.1.1 Crew Selection

Given the secrecy surrounding the CVNA and its ships, the organization's crewmembers are supposed to be selected for their loyalty to both Venus and their corporation. Strings are pulled, favors are called in and debts are repaid to get a position aboard one of the new ships.

Crewmembers are attracted to the smaller ships, like the Chief-tain and Imperator. The amount of prestige and status that can be earned is greater than on a larger ship, where the prestige is spread thinly amongst the crew. The advantage of a large ship is that a crewmember is more likely to survive an engagement, since the larger CVNA vessels have yet to enter combat with any vessel they did not overwhelmingly outmatch. Also, the larger ships usually have more recreation areas, larger living areas and a shorter work cycle.

Often, in a convoy of ships, a CVNA vessel most not only hide its presence from ships of the other solar nations, but also from the other Venusian ships in the convoy. This places varying degrees of stress upon the handling of any social event that might occur between the convoy and the CVNA. Most CVNA captains have a prepared list of excuses, problems and other incidents that will keep the other ships from finding out its true nature.

▼ 8.1.2 Sound the Alarm

CVNA ships use a number of alert conditions to quickly inform the crew as to the ship's current status. A ship's condition is displayed on both wall monitors and on each crewmember's personal data display. In the event of combat alerts, alarms will also sound.

◇ CVNA Alert Conditions

Condition AA: This rare condition is used to denote a state of near complete cessation of ship functions. Used when a ship is waiting in dock for cargo loading or in other cases when the ship is largely shut down. Condition AA cancels the normal shift schedule for the entire crew, with the exception of the command staff and a few engineers, who stay on duty to monitor life support status and other vital systems. The crew is unable to leave the ship, but may relax within the bounds of CVNA regulations. Condition AA, when declared, seldom lasts for more than twelve hours.

Condition A: This condition represents an all-clear status. Normal shift schedule is maintained, and crew recreation activities are permitted. The ship's aesthetics officer is free to make use of the hull's vid-membranes, as well as make broadcast transmissions for advertising purposes.

Condition C: Under condition C, the normal shift schedule is maintained, but with somewhat tighter security. Crew recreation is limited in scope, and the hull vid-membranes are most likely shut down. Crew offenses committed when the ship is under condition C are punished more severely than offenses committed under condition A. This condition is used when the ship is not in any apparent danger, but the captain has reasons to believe there may be trouble approaching.

Condition L: Condition L is a combat-ready status. Used when approaching battle or encountering unknown and potentially dangerous situations (such as distress calls), this condition requires all hangar and EVA-trained personnel to report for immediate duty. Ship weapons are not active, so gunnery crews and the engineering department adhere to the normal shift schedule. Under this condition, vehicles and EVA crews can be launched to either engage in combat or perform rescue operations.

Condition R: Condition R is similar to condition L, except that the entire crew must be ready to report to battle stations. All recreational activities are canceled, and the entire crew is expected to be able to be at condition X or S readiness in less than five seconds.

Condition X: When condition X is declared, the ship's crew is to move to battle stations immediately. Combat maneuvers are imminent, and it is likely that the ship's weapons will be activated. Any personnel who would normally be off duty are assigned to damage control teams. The ship is completely depressurized, and the gravity wheel, if present, is immediately de-spinned and locked.

Condition S: Condition S also requires all crewmembers to be ready for duty, regardless of the shift schedule. Condition S is used when the ship is trying to avoid detection, and is virtually identical in execution to condition X. The difference is that under condition S, the crew must be alert and extremely careful to minimize any activity that might reveal the ship's position. This status is also used when hiding amongst other ships. In that case, the vid-membrane is still active and emissions are kept to a level common for the ship that it is hiding as.



► 8.2 DEPLOYMENT

The CVNA comprises about one hundred ships, a fraction of the fleet power possessed by the Jovians or CEGA. Even though the individual ships are far more powerful and effective than their foreign equivalents, the CVNA is still, in sum, the weakest of the three major space navies. It will thus be to Venus' benefit to continue hiding their fleet and allowing the rest of the solar system to believe that there are only two major space navies in existence.

A few incidents have occurred over the course of the past decade that have endangered the secret of the Venusian fleet's existence, but careful analyses have reassured the Planetary Advisory Board that the damage was localized and slight. In one case, a docking tug near Pyrea Station accidentally rammed a Satrap-class cruiser, exposing part of its armored hull to view. The modification was quickly explained as a perfectly sensible customization for a diplomatic transport, an excuse that was apparently accepted at face value. At the moment, Venusian intelligence sources report that the general perception of the other solar nations is that Venus possesses a few ships with unique modifications, but no true standardized navy.

CVNA warships are repaired and serviced by authorized personnel at a number of secure spacedocks in stations scattered across the inner solar system and the Belt. For security, most of these facilities only have standard civilian-grade replacement parts, so a ship in need of repairs to its military equipment will have to return to Venus for servicing. This is an obvious logistical weakness that has yet to cause any problems; no CVNA ships that have been forced to enter combat have sustained damage that prevented them from either finishing their duties or returning to Venus for full repairs. A few Venusian ships have been lost in apparent battle, but the evaluations of these cases show that the ships were destroyed without ever having the opportunity to try to reach a repair site.

The CVNA's goal in maintaining such levels of secrecy is so that it can serve Venus' primary interest, which is to affect solar politics in such a way as to weaken both the Jovians and CEGA and allow Venus to take supremacy. With an openly visible navy, Venus would only become part of the arms race, effectively forcing the other solar nations to try to match its technology. Venus would also no longer be perceived as a peaceful world, which would open it up to potential military aggression. Since the other solar nations do not know of the CVNA's existence, they will continue to assume that their warships, exo-armors and fighters represent the pinnacle of human technical achievement.

With this assumption firmly entrenched in the minds of both the Jovians and CEGA, the CVNA is relatively free to act with caution, using guile, stealth and misdirection to further inflame the enmity between the two superpowers, while reinforcing the perception of Venus as a concerned ally of both nations. Chieftain-class ships eliminate pirates in the Belt, freeing up Jovian resources to move further insystem. At the same time, other CVNA ships are rooting out STRIKE facilities inside the orbit of Mars, allowing CEGA to focus more of its attention toward Jupiter. When the Huang-Ti ships are fully tested, they will begin a series of operations to selectively leak classified information from one superpower to the other, as well as taking other covert actions to increase distrust between the superpowers.

Currently, the CVNA's deployments are geared toward observing the actions of the superpowers and stress-testing the effectiveness of the warships' disguises. As a result, the majority of the CVNA is kept near Venus, so that if a ship requires assistance, help will be close by. A few Chieftains and Imperators are assigned to duties around Mars and in the Belt, but even these are to be rotated back to Venus regularly. The Satraps and Tsars tend to travel between Earth and Venus, making simulated cargo and passenger runs.

▼ 8.2.1 Ship Status Descriptions

Home Defense: The ship performs patrol and police duties near Venus. Local Venus space is extremely busy and crowded; both accidents and incidents are common. The ship should not activate its main weapons, but can, if necessary, launch vehicles.

Local Patrol: The ship performs patrol and police duties in the inner solar system (not including Mars). The ship responds to general calls for aid, and otherwise keeps a low profile and makes observations. Main weapons are to be activated only in cases of extreme danger or need.

Martian Patrol: The ship is assigned to guard Venusian interests in the Martian system. The current atmosphere in this section of the solar system makes this duty fairly high-risk. Both the Federation and the Free Republic have been known to "accidentally" strike Venusian assets, and piracy is rampant. The area's high visibility restricts main weapon usage to cases of extreme danger or need.

Convoy Escort: The ship is made part of a shipping convoy of civilian vessels, and is responsible for their protection. The ship may also travel alone, posing as a civilian ship in order to lure attackers. The use of main weapons is approved if the ship is traveling alone. If the ship is part of a non-security-cleared convoy, actions should be limited to vehicle launches unless one of the convoy vessels is in immediate danger.

Diplomatic Service: The ship is assigned as a diplomatic transport. It can be used to ferry passengers between Venus and the other solar nations, or assigned as a courier ship for data and documents. In rare cases, the ship may simply be used in Venus-local space for display or parade purposes. The captain is authorized to use force to protect the ship's passengers and cargo.

Covert Assignment: The ship is given a specific task to perform. These are, for the most part, observation missions involving stealth and surveillance. Sometimes, however, orders are given to plant

evidence, sabotage a facility, or quietly eliminate a target vessel. These missions are always high-risk. Authorization for weapons use varies according to the nature of the mission.

Belt Patrol: The ship is assigned to patrol the Belt, protecting Venusian interests and keeping watch over the various Nomad factions. The Belt is home to many clandestine elements; the ship is also tasked with reporting any encounters with such groups. Weapons usage is strongly discouraged; the Belt is nominally allied with the Jovian Confederation. However, if the ship is in danger, the captain may use his or her discretion to take appropriate action in keeping with Venusian interests.

Special Assignment: A special assignment is any duty not covered by the above categories. These will almost always be secret missions ordered by the PAB, with very few (or no) physical records maintained. The lack of accountability makes these missions extremely risky. A large proportion of special assignments is related to Edict-violating projects.

Fitting Out: The ship's hull is complete, and the interior sections are being prepared for human habitation. When this step is complete, the ship is crewed and launched.

Building: The ship's basic frame has been laid down in a spacedock, and the construction process has begun. After the ship's hull and primary systems are in place, the ship is moved to a fitting slip.

Commissioned: Financial allocations for the ship have been made, and plans are either in the works or on file. When the plans are ready and shipyard facilities become available, actual construction will begin.

Refit: The ship has returned to port after being in service, and has been placed in spacedock for replacement of basic ship systems. This process is more lengthy than a normal maintenance check, and often requires several months to complete. During this time, the crew is reassigned to shore duties.





► 8.3 WAR FOOTING

When the CVNA was formed, it was understood that part of its purpose was to prepare Venus for the possibility of open war with either the Jovian Confederation, CEGA or, in the worst case, both of the solar superpowers at once. Thus, all of the CVNA's activities to date have had the dual purpose of maintaining the illusion of Venusian weakness as well as planning for the eventual need to fight a full-scale war.

It is the CVNA's most sincere hope that war will not be necessary. Any conflict would be extremely damaging to the Venusian economy (there are those who argue, in the wake of the Shan-Yu financial allocation, that the war effort has already damaged the Venusian economy). War would also signify that Venus had failed in its primary goal of gaining the willing and open friendship of the other solar nations, which would mean that decades of hard work and financial maneuvering had proven worthless. The blow to Venusian morale would be severe.

There is every sign that both the Jovians and CEGA are contemplating armed conflict with Venus. Neither nation has been successful in matching Venus' economic successes. The Jovians are still incensed regarding Operation Methuselah, and many elements in the CEGA council are beginning to regard Venusian advice as a takeover attempt. Even though the Jovians and CEGA are currently at odds with one another, there is a chance, especially if the cease-fire continues, that one or both of the superpowers will attempt to remove the perceived threat of Venus.

It is understood by the CVNA that there would be little hope of fighting an offensive battle against either CEGA or the Confederation. The majority of the fleet would fall back to Venus, where it would organize into task forces, each one led by a Shan-Yu-class ship. The task forces would stay close to Venus, where they would benefit from the support of the orbital defense batteries. The Tsar-class ships, however, would be kept in the reserves, both in the event of an enemy ground invasion and for use later on.

The first battle would be carefully chosen to be as potentially damaging to the enemy as possible, since at this point, the CVNA would still have the element of surprise. The idea would be to lure as many ships into supposedly undefended Venusian space, and then pounce on them with a significant portion of the CVNA's complement, either wiping out the enemy fleet or capturing them. After this first battle, the CVNA's existence would be openly known, and the civilian disguises would no longer be effective. The CVNA task forces would then take on fortress-defense roles and prepare for a long siege.

Meanwhile, the Huang-Ti-class ships would perform selective strikes against enemy facilities, weakening the enemy's war effort and lowering morale. It is hoped that, should war come to pass, Venus will have more than three Huang-Ti-class ships in service, such that it would be able to inflict noticeable damage on either superpower's assets. Hopefully, allies would come to Venus' aid, relieving the siege and allowing Venus to take the offensive. The enemy fleets would be trapped between the allied forces and wiped out. At that point, the task forces would be tasked with protecting the Tsar-class ships. The forces would travel to the enemy nation and proceed to force a surrender. Aided by its allies, Venus would survive the war with acceptable damage to both its navy and its orbital facilities.

A little-known fact about the CVNA's war plans is that without exception, all of their projections that involve open war with one of the superpowers require the overt aid of the other superpower in order to produce any chance of victory. The most optimistic predictions state that, without support, Venus would be overrun by either CEGA or the Confederation in about six years. If, for some reason, the enemy decided to forgo a siege and simply attack Venus with full force, the projections drop the likely survival time to less than three years. Knowing this, the CVNA and the Planetary Advisory Board are focusing all their power toward keeping the two superpowers at odds with one another while improving Venusian relations with the rest of the solar system.

▼ 8.4.1 Career Path: Navy Pilot

For the first several years of their duties, Venusian pilots do not even see the vehicles they will eventually pilot. Only after a pilot has proven his skill and trustworthiness in modified CEGA and Jovian surplus fighters and exos can he get a chance at promotion into the ranks of the "real" pilots who are assigned to the Venusians' top-of-the-line machines like the Ryu and Siegfried. This is necessary because of the secrecy of the Venusian military. Once a pilot is assigned to a Venusian-built machine, he will have few opportunities to fly non-simulator missions, so it is vital that all such pilots are already consummately skilled in their primary duties.

◇ Aptitudes

CVNA pilots are expected to maintain both combat and administrative skills. Motor skills and multitasking abilities are essential; all Venusian-built exos and fighters use linear-frame control systems, which require superior balance and physical awareness to use effectively. The initial Pilot Aptitude Exam tests little more than raw talent; if this is present in sufficient quantity, then lack of experience can be remedied with intensive training.

Flight Training School tends to cover basic skills required by all pilots, but can be tailored to cover an individual's personal weaknesses (this usually involves extra classes and study). The mentored training that follows the School is essentially a one-on-one apprenticeship period with an psychologically-matched experienced Venusian pilot; in this portion of his training, the fledgling pilot's remaining weaknesses are rooted out and remedied, producing (in theory) a superior officer and pilot.

◇ Primary Duties

In addition to piloting their assigned vehicle on patrols and combat missions, CVNA pilots are also responsible for the upkeep of their vehicle. CVNA procedure dictates that when working on a given vehicle, a technician is under the direct command of that vehicle's pilot. If something is done incorrectly, it is thus the pilot's own fault. This encourages pilots to be aware of the inner workings of their machine and also improves their managerial skills. Upon retirement, pilots usually receive lucrative and prestigious positions as design consultants and instructors. Most pilots also return to the pilot schools to serve as mentors to individual pilots, guiding new pilots through the intricacies of space combat.

□ Sample Career Chronology

Year 1:	Naval enrollment. Basic training. Pilot Aptitude Exam.
Year 2:	Flight Training School
Year 3:	Mentored training period
Year 4:	Assignment to Venus-local post
Year 5:	Assignment to local patrol
Year 6:	Advanced mentored training in Venusian vehicles
Year 7:	Assignment to warship flight group
Year 9:	Promotion to Flight Leader





▼ 8.4.2 Career Path: Naval Officer

All CVNA personnel are volunteers. The age range for new recruits runs from eighteen to thirty years of age, although age does play a part in one's training and eventual potential duty assignments. To be considered for an officer position (i.e. the head of a department aboard a ship), a candidate must either have joined the service at a young age or possess extensive prior experience in commercial shipping, the HDF or some other associated organization. CVNA officers must, regardless of background, go through basic crew training and serve as crewmen for several tours in order to gain the experience needed to command an entire department and, eventually, an entire ship.

◇ Aptitudes

The primary requirement for a department head aboard a warship is that he be intimately familiar with every single aspect of the duties of his subordinates. A gunnery officer must be able to operate and service every weapon on the ship. A chief engineer must be aware of every quirk and undocumented modification present in the ship's systems. Only after gaining experience in performing the duties of several positions will a crewmember be recommended by his or her captain for a promotion interview. Candidates who fail their promotion interview may be recommended again immediately by another captain, or by the same captain after the passage of one year.

◇ Primary Duties

Naval officers act as middlemen between the captain and the crew. They must possess sufficient command skills to properly delegate tasks within their own department, but must also maintain a camaraderie with their subordinates in order to keep up good working relationships. Unlike the captain, who is primarily an organizer and central processing node for the crew, the department heads must still do all the hands-on work that their subordinates do.

The eventual goal of most officers is to achieve command rank and be given a ship captaincy. From that point, a CVNA officer can either work on getting flag rank or eventually leave the CVNA in search of a corporate executive position.

□ Sample Career Chronology

Year 1:	Naval enrollment. Basic training. Declaration of officer candidacy.
Year 2:	Assignment to orbital dock, various duties.
Year 3:	Operations School
Year 4:	Assignment to local patrol ship as engineering hand
Year 5:	Reassignment as navigator
Year 6:	Mentored piloting and tactics training
Year 7:	Assignment to warship, various crew duties
Year 9:	Command School
Year 10:	Assignment to warship as helmsman
Year 12:	One-year tour as training instructor
Year 13:	Assignment to warship as gunnery chief
Year 14:	Promotion to Executive Officer

▼ 8.4.3 Career path: Exo Engineer

Venusian exo-armors are the most complex combat machines ever designed, making those built by CEGA and the Jovians seem like mannequins by comparison. The men and women who work on these machines are volunteers drawn from Venus' many engineering and technical academies. Generally uninterested in achieving high military rank, these recruits mostly want to gain field experience working under senior engineers, as well as face the challenge of practicing their chosen trade aboard a vessel designed to be shot at. Success as a naval exo engineer usually results in lucrative advisory or teaching positions back home. Most aspiring exo engineers, however, do not make it quite so far and end up either returning to corporate life or attempting to gain rank by transferring over to ship's engineer duties.

◇ Aptitudes

An exo-engineer should be able to completely build an exo-armor or fighter from its base parts. Repairing parts or fabricating new parts are additional skills an exo-engineer should have. To gain this high level of mechanical and electronic aptitude, extensive training and on-the-job work is an absolute necessity. Not only must this work be made to incredible tolerances, but this work could be under battlefield conditions; the exo engineer must be able to keep his cool and concentrate on his work at hand. Selection for naval duty is based more on consistency than brilliance; to the CVNA, a reliably mediocre engineer is of far greater use than a brilliant engineer who only manages to correctly repair something ten percent of the time.

◇ Primary Duties

Exo engineers are primarily responsible for maintaining and repairing their ship's complement of exo-armors and fighters. They must work alongside the vehicles' pilots, who are usually less interested in new innovations or theoretical designs than they are in simply making sure their machine works the way they want it

to. Exo engineers participate in most pilot and deck meetings, and are also in charge of the ship's machine shop (if present). In addition to their shipboard duties, most exo-engineers also work on research projects assigned by CVNA's engineering board. The published works that result from these projects can form the basis of an engineer's future in both the CVNA and corporate life, making such publications extremely important entries on the typical exo-engineer's timetable.

□ Sample Career Chronology

Year 1:	Volunteer for the CVNA, Basic Training, Exo-Engineer Aptitude Exam
Year 2:	Basic Mechanics and Material Handling, Proper Tool Use Training
Year 3:	Assignment to a Depot Repair Facility, Basic Electronics and Energy Systems Training
Year 4:	Assignment to an Electronic Depot Repair Facility, Advanced Energy Systems Training
Year 5:	Assignment as a Catapult Specialist
Year 6:	Advanced Schooling on Exo-Armaments, Fire Control and Guidance
Year 7:	Assignment as an Ordnance Specialist
Year 8:	Advanced Schooling on Exo-Armor Design, Repair and Upkeep
Year 9:	Assignment as an Exo-Engineer
Year 10:	Assignment as an Exo Designer, Instructor for Basic and Advanced Training Courses



► 8.5 DRONES

A Drone is an unmanned vehicle that is able to pilot itself with little or no guidance from a human operator. Drones are useful for performing tasks too dangerous for humans. Several Venusian ships are equipped with Drones that either deploy from specialized bays or from the main hangar.

Modern Drones are controlled by rudimentary cybernetic organisms known as Executors. Consisting of data storage devices and computer processors linked to an organic neural net, Executors are legal under the Edicts, but only with certain limitations. For instance, although Executors are theoretically capable of extensive growth (and hence, intelligence) when supplied with specialized nutrients and hardware upgrades, the Edicts require that Drones of a certain age be "starved" or destroyed. Although some concerned groups have equated this law to legalized murder of children, the usefulness of Drones for industrial, research and military applications has prevented any changes in their legal status.

Class I Drones are simpleminded machines designed to find a target, get close and blow up. The smart anti-ship missiles used by the Jovian Javelin and the CEGA Uller missile cruisers are examples of Class I Drones. These Drones require launch rails and specialized targeting systems for proper use, restricting them to ships that are equipped to handle them.

Class II Drones are usually surveillance and non-offensive Drones. They are not quite as single-minded as Class I Drones, but are still quite devoted. Class II Drones are usually given a single, specific instruction, which they will do their best to obey.

Class III Drones contain some of the most advanced Executors in common use. These Drones are capable of understanding complex sets of instructions and prioritizing tasks based on their own judgment. In battle, such Drones are usually armed with exo-armor weaponry and assigned to combat duty. The use of Class III Drones is closely monitored by Edicts enforcement offices.

▼ 8.5.1 Class I Shipkiller Drone

The Shipkiller is a Drone with a death wish. The onboard Executor has survival programming that enables it to dodge incoming fire with great facility, but once it nears its target, a hardwired "dumb" computer triggers the Drone's detonation sequence. The warhead is made up of hundreds of submunitions that are launched when the Drone is a few kilometers from its target. The submunitions are propelled by the Drone's detonation to extremely high velocity, and are capable of shredding a ship if they hit.

Class I Drones are unable to use standard hangar facilities for launch and require special links to the ship's systems to download target information. Because they tend to carry very little spare reaction mass, Class I Drones also need to be launched from rails in the general direction of their target. As a result, few ships, exo-armors or fighters are equipped to handle Class I Drones.

TV:	200	OS:	180	DS:	410	MS:	4
Crew: 0 (Act.: +0)	Size:	4	Default Size:	6	Armor:	3/6/9	
Production Type: Mass		Indv. Lemon Dice: 3			Cost:	\$150,000	
MOVEMENT MODE:							
Space 20 (2.0 G) / 40 (4.0 G)				Maneuver: 0			
Deployment Range: 50 hrs				Reaction Mass: 100 BP			
Sensors: 0 / 2 km		Comm.: 0/10 km		Fire Control: 0			
PERKS & FLAWS:							
Autopilot		-		Acts as Level 1 pilot			
Computer		2		(CRE 0, KNO 0, PP2, Flexible)			
HEP: Rad		3		Protects against up to 1000 rads			
HEP: Vac		-		-			
Stealth		2		Add to Concealment			
Brittle Armor		-		Double Armor loss after damage			
Difficult to Modify		-		-2 to modify or repair all systems			
Exposed AUX systems		-		AUX hits are one level worse			
Vulnerable to Haywire		-		Haywire attacks cause three damage rolls			
WEAPONS:							
Warhead (FF, BR 2, ACC 0, ROF 0, DM x35, HEAT, SD, WC=180, MS=4)							

▼ 8.5.2 Class I Exokiller Drone

Exokiller Drones are almost exactly like shipkiller Drones. The only difference between the two lies in the warhead; whereas the shipkiller is designed to attack large, slow-moving targets, the exokiller's warhead detonates in a spherical pattern in order to be an effective weapon against small and fast exo-armors and fighters. Considering the effectiveness of exo-armors against ships, it is not surprising that many Drone-capable vessels are beginning to carry large complements of exokillers.

Class I Drones are widely used by CEGA and the Jovians because they are relatively inexpensive and are quite effective. The only Venusian warships to use Class I Drones are the Shan-Yu-class battlecruisers, which are still under construction. Other Drone-carrying Venusian ships have neither the room nor the special launching equipment. The Venusians consider Class I Drones to be somewhat brutish weapons, lacking finesse.

TV:	340	OS:	600	DS:	410	MS:	4
Crew: 0 (Act.: +0)	Size:		4	Default Size:	7	Armor:	3/6/9
Production Type: Mass		Indv. Lemon Dice:		3	Cost: \$300,000		
MOVEMENT MODE:							
Space		20 (2.0 G) / 40 (4.0 G)		Maneuver:		0	
Deployment Range:		50 hrs		Reaction Mass:		100 BP	
Sensors:		0 / 2 km	Comm:		0 / 10 km	Fire Control: +1	
PERKS & FLAWS:							
Autopilot		-		Acts as Level 1 pilot			
Computer		2		(CRE 0, KNO 0, PP2, Flexible)			
HEP: Rad		3		Protects against up to 1000 rads			
HEP: Vac		-		-			
Stealth		2		Add to Concealment			
Brittle Armor		-		Double Armor loss after damage			
Difficult to Modify		-		-2 to modify or repair all systems			
Exposed AUX systems		-		AUX hits are one level worse			
Vulnerable to Haywire		-		Haywire attacks cause three damage rolls			
WEAPONS:							
Warhead (F, BR 1, ACC +2, ROF 0, DM x20, HEAT, SD, WC=300, MS=4)							

▼ 8.5.3 Class II Sentry Drone

One of the few armed Class II Drones, sentries are used to guard specific locations in space from selected enemies. The onboard Executor is capable of memorizing thousands of vehicle configurations. However, it is easily confused if too many parameters are added to its orders, so these Drones are usually simply told to attack any unit with an invalid IFF signature, regardless of its other characteristics. Sentries have extremely small reaction mass reserves; aside from performing stationkeeping duties, these Drones are not meant to move once deployed.

Most sentries are armed with a single, inexpensive weapon that is designed for use against exo-armors and fighters. Missile clusters are popular choices, since they are by nature disposable. Some sentries are armed with lasers from exo-armors, however, and a few very large and expensive sentries use kinetic kill cannon to engage large targets such as warships.

TV:	1000	OS:	3100	DS:	7	MS:	10
Crew: 0 (Act.: +0)		Size:	4	Default Size: 10		Armor:	3/6/9
Production Type:	Mass	Indv. Lemon Dice:	3	Cost:	\$1,250,000		
MOVEMENT MODE:							
Space	1 (.1 G) / 2 (.2 G)			Maneuver:	-1		
Deployment Range:	100 hrs			Reaction Mass:	10 BP		
Sensors:	+2 / 2 km		Comm.:	0 / 10 km	Fire Control:	+1	
PERKS & FLAWS:							
Autopilot	-			Acts as Level 1 pilot			
Computer	3			(CRE 0, KNO+1, PP3, Flexible)			
HEP: Rad	3			Protects against up to 1000 rads			
HEP: Vac	-			-			
Stealth	3			Add to Concealment			
Brittle Armor	-			Double Armor loss after damage			
Difficult to Modify	-			-2 to modify or repair all systems			
Exposed AUX systems	-			AUX hits are one level worse			
Vulnerable to Haywire	-			Haywire attacks cause three damage rolls			
WEAPONS:							
Auto Missile (T, BR 4, ACC -1, ROF 4, DM x18, Ammo 16, HEAT, Missile, Stealth, WC=849, AC=1, MS=3)							



▼ 8.5.4 Class II Electronic Warfare Drone

The EW Drone is equipped with a powerful ECM pod capable of jamming communications and sensor systems. When deployed, it is usually instructed to activate its ECM and then evade enemy retaliation for as long as possible. Since ECM transmissions are easily traced back to their source, EW Drones have a very short expected battlefield lifespan, and are thus best used as decoys or distractions.

There are no Drones equipped with ECCM systems; the Executor brains are too unreliable to be given control of such systems on the battlefield. It is far easier for human operators to make the judgment calls needed to properly make use of ECCM. Some ECM Drones are equipped with small decoy systems in an effort to increase their survivability, but this is seldom effective. Even the most advanced EW Drones, which are heavily stealthed, are invisible only as long as they do not activate their ECM pods.

TV:	260	OS:	0	DS:	160	MS:	620		
Crew: 0 (Act.: +0)	Size:		4	Default Size:		6	Armor:	3/6/9	
Production Type:		Mass	Indv. Lemon Dice:		3	Cost:		\$195,000	
MOVEMENT MODE:									
Space				15 (1.5 G) / 30 (3.0 G)		Maneuver			-1
Deployment Range:				100 hrs		Reaction Mass:			200 BP
Sensors:		+1 / 2 km		Comm.:		+1 / 10 km		Fire Control:	-5
PERKS & FLAWS:									
Autopilot		-		Acts as Level 1 pilot					
Computer		3		(CRE 0, KNO+1, PP3, Flexible)					
ECM		4		Offensive Electronic Warfare Equipment					
HEP: Rad		3		Protects against up to 1000 rads					
HEP: Vac		-		-					
Stealth		3		Add to Concealment					
Brittle Armor		-		Double Armor loss after damage					
Difficult to Modify		-		-2 to modify or repair all systems					
Exposed AUX systems		-		AUX hits are one level worse					
Vulnerable to Haywire		-		Haywire attacks cause three damage rolls					
Weapons:		None							

▼ 8.5.5 Class II Observer Drone

Observer Drones are used by picket ships and scout vessels, and the less expensive models of this Drone are quite common. An observer Drone is equipped with an extensive sensor suite, and is designed to enter a combat zone and transmit valuable information back to its home base. When operating in groups, observer Drones can create extremely detailed intelligence images of targets by linking their sensor units together.

The Huang-Ti-class observer ship carries about two dozen observer Drones, along with an assortment of other Class II Drones. The Huang-Ti's Drones are custom-modified to be stealthy and have greater endurance, making them more useful in covert operations (the Huang-Ti's Class II Drones have 200 BP and Stealth 6, and are Size 5). The increased size of the modified Drones means that each of the Huang-Ti's two Drone bays can carry a maximum of twenty-four Drones.

TV:	180	OS:	0	DS:	410	MS:	120
Crew: 0 (Act.: +0)	Size:	4	Default Size:	6	Armor:	3/6/9	
Production Type:	Mass	Indv. Lemon Dice:	3	Cost:	\$135,000		
MOVEMENT MODE:							
Space	20 (2.0 G) / 40 (4.0 G)			Maneuver:	0		
Deployment Range:	100 hrs			Reaction Mass:	100 BP		
Sensors:	+2 / 2 km	Comm.:	+2 / 10 km	Fire Control:	-5		
PERKS & FLAWS:							
Autopilot	-			Acts as Level 1 pilot			
Computer	3			(CRE 0, KNO+1, PP3, Flexible)			
HEP: Rad	3			Protects against up to 1000 rads			
HEP: Vac	-			-			
Stealth	2			Add to Concealment			
Brittle Armor	-			Double Armor loss after damage			
Difficult to Modify	-			-2 to modify or repair all systems			
Exposed AUX systems	-			AUX hits are one level worse			
Vulnerable to Haywire	-			Haywire attacks cause three damage rolls			
Weapons:	None						

▼ 8.5.6 Class III Hunter-Killer Drone

The most complex of Drones, the Hunter-Killers contain the most advanced Executors permissible under the Edicts. These Executors have a basic sense of self-worth, and are capable of exhibiting behavioral traits likened to malice or anger. Requiring many months of careful nurturing, these Executors are extremely expensive and are not considered expendable on the battlefield. Although human lives still take priority in emergencies, most captains will make efforts to recover all Class III Drones.

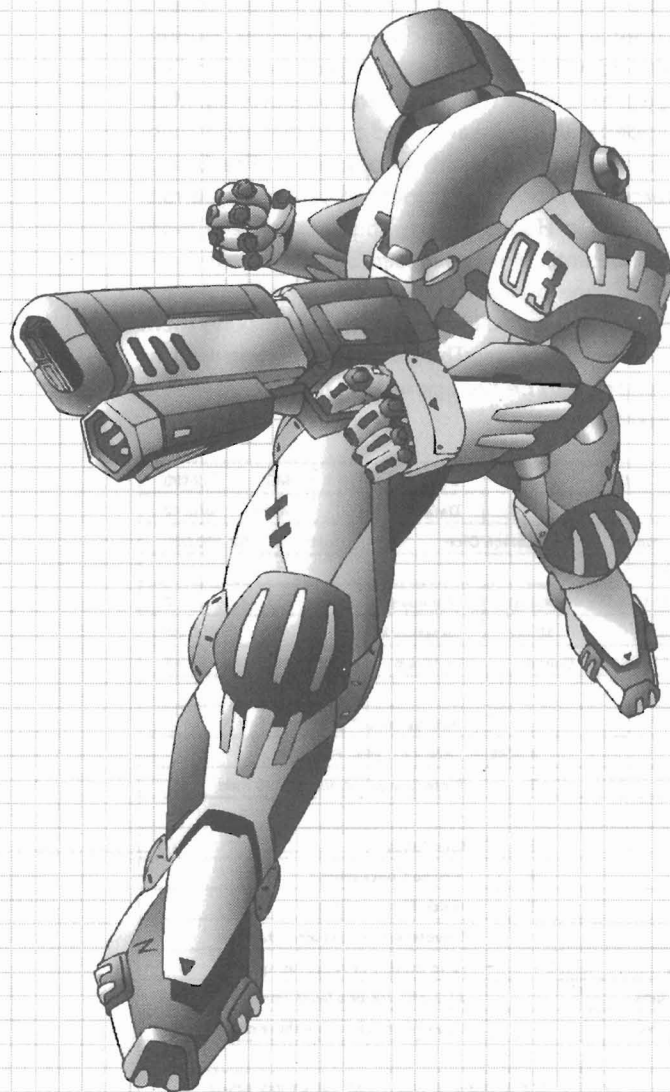
The decision-making processes of Class III Drones are advanced enough such that they can be trusted with weapons and the discretion to use them on the battlefield. Hunter-Killer Drones are usually armed with exo-armor-class weaponry, such as lasers or particle beam weapons. Their targeting systems are of high quality, and they have excellent fuel reserves. On the battlefield, Hunter-Killers are skilled dogfighters, if somewhat predictable.

TV:	1100	OS:	940	DS:	420	MS:	2000
Crew: 0 (Act.: +0)	Size:	4	Default Size: 10	Armor:	4/8/12		
Production Type: Mass	Indv. Lemon Dice:	3	Cost:	\$1,375,000			
MOVEMENT MODE:							
Space	20 (2.0 G) / 40 (4.0 G)	Maneuver:	0				
Deployment Range:	50 hrs	Reaction Mass:	100 BP				
Sensors:	+1 / 2 km	Comm.:	+1 / 10 km	Fire Control:	+1		
PERKS & FLAWS:							
Autopilot	-	Acts as Level 1 pilot					
Computer	4 (CRE +1, KNO +1, PP4, Flexible)						
HEP: Rad	3	Protects against up to 1000 rads					
HEP: Vac	-	-					
Stealth	2	Add to Concealment					
Brittle Armor	-	Double Armor loss after damage					
Difficult to Modify	-	-2 to modify or repair all systems					
Exposed AUX systems	-	AUX hits are one level worse					
Vulnerable to Haywire	-	Haywire attacks cause three damage rolls					
WEAPONS:							
Laser (FF, BR 3, ACC +1, ROF 0, DM x17, LU6, AD1, HEAT, Stealth, WC=468, MS=4)							

▼ 8.5.7 Class III Hunter-Ripper Drone

Hunter-Rippers are variants on the Hunter-Killer design. Instead of long-range targeting equipment and beam weapons, Hunter-Rippers are equipped with multiple stereoscopic sensors and extra maneuvering jets for precise close-quarters maneuvering. Most of them are equipped with simple arms and claws that allow them to latch onto a target or grapple with an opponent. The Executors used for Hunter-Rippers are less methodical and more random than those used in Hunter-Killers. This makes them more effective close combatants. More advanced Executors have been tested (illegally) as Drone brains, beyond a certain point, the Executors' sense of self developed into apparent fear, making them useless as reliable weapons of war. The current generation of Class III Drone brains appears to be the upper limit for a non-sentient artificially intelligent soldier.

TV:	1800	OS:	2600	DS:	420	MS:	2400
Crew: 0 (Act.: +0)	Size:	4	Default Size: 12	Armor:	4/8/12		
Production Type: Mass	Indv. Lemon Dice:	3	Cost:	\$2,700,000			
MOVEMENT MODE:							
Space	20 (2.0 G) / 40 (4.0 G)	Maneuver:	0				
Deployment Range:	50 hrs	Reaction Mass:	100 BP				
Sensors:	+1 / 2 km	Comm.:	+1 / 10 km	Fire Control:	+1		
PERKS & FLAWS:							
Autopilot	-	Acts as Level 1 pilot					
Computer	4 (CRE +1, KNO +1, PP4, Flexible)						
HEP: Rad	3	Protects against up to 1000 rads					
HEP: Vac	-	-					
Manipulator Arm	5	Can Punch					
Stealth	2	Add to Concealment					
Tool Arm	5	Holds Plasma Lance					
Brittle Armor	-	Double Armor loss after damage					
Difficult to Modify	-	-2 to modify or repair all systems					
Exposed AUX systems	-	AUX hits are one level worse					
Vulnerable to Haywire	-	Haywire attacks cause three damage rolls					
WEAPONS:							
Plasma Lance (F, Melee, ACC +1, ROF 0, DM x17, LU6, HEAT, WC=1300, MS=4)							



▼ 8.6.1 Kitsune Commando Exo-Suit

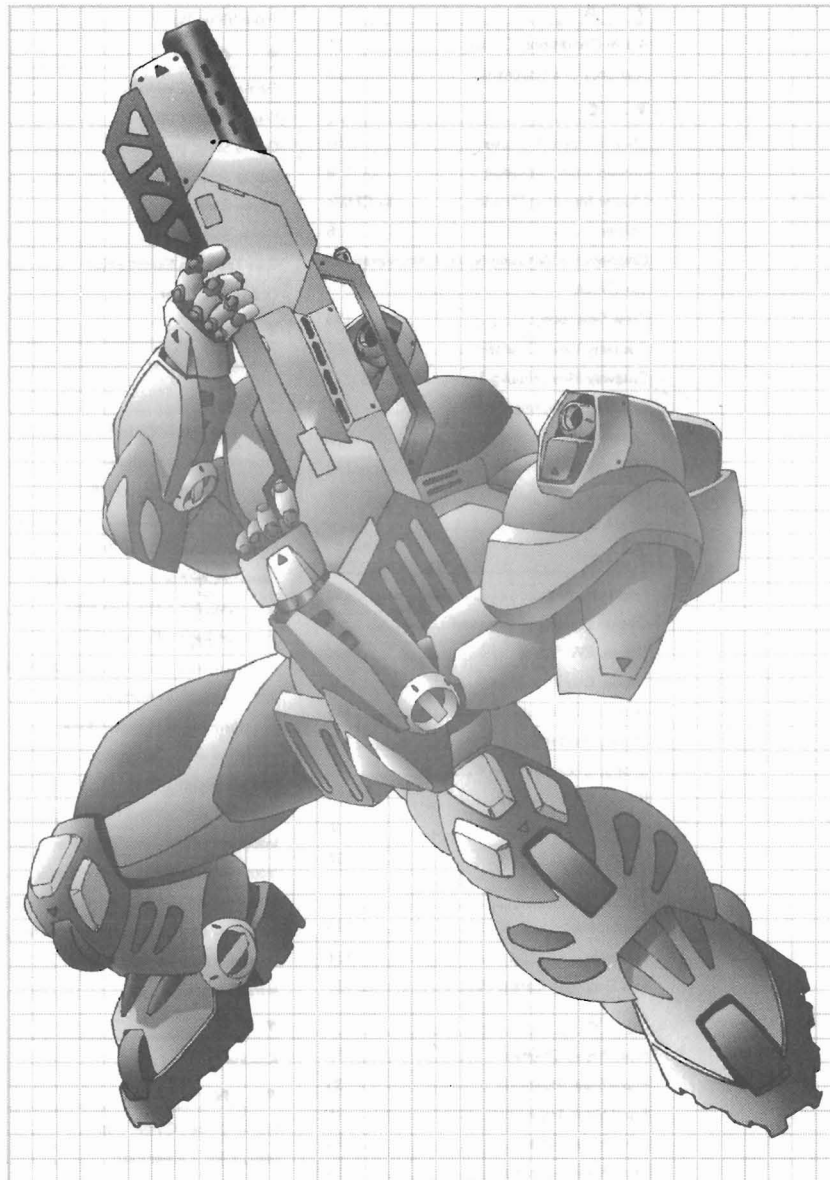
Similar in function and size to the Jovian Decker, the Kitsune is an extremely small and agile exo-suit designed to operate stealthily in enclosed spaces. Designed by the Venusian Aerospace Corporation, the Kitsune is an expensive and relatively rare unit assigned mostly to covert-operations vessels. The new Huang-Ti-class Observers will each be assigned two squads of these exo-suits, which will be piloted by elite commando troops. The Kitsune has no provision for arm-mounted weapons, but its nimble hands are capable of using any standard infantry weapons. It is also very agile in close combat, and can perform rolls, leaps and kicks with grace almost equivalent to an unarmored human. Due to its light armor and weaponry, Kitsunes make poor shipboard defenders. However, they are unequaled when used as infiltration or sabotage units.

TV:	360	OS:	860	DS:	91	MS:	130
Crew:1 (Act.: +2)		Size:	2	Default Size:	7	Armor:	6/12/18
Production Type:	Mass	Indv. Lemon Dice:	3	Cost:	\$630,000		
MOVEMENT MODE:							
Walker	4 (24 kph) / 8 (48 kph)			Maneuver:	+1		
Space	5 (.5 G) / 10 (1.0 G)			Maneuver:	0		
Deployment Range:	250 hrs			Reaction Mass:	50 BP		
Sensors:	+1 / 2 km	Comm.:	0 / 10 km	Fire Control:	+1		
PERKS & FLAWS:							
Backup Life Support	-			Absorbs first LS hit			
Computer	1			(CRE 0, KNO 0, PP1, Flexible)			
HEP: Rad	3			Protects against up to 1000 rads			
HEP: Vac	-			-			
Life Support Limited	-			-			
Loudspeakers	-			-			
2x Manipulator Arm	2			Can Punch			
Difficult to Modify	-			-2 to modify or repair all systems			
WEAPONS:							
Assault Rifle (F, BR 2, ACC 0, ROF 3, DM x4, Ammo 80, AI, WC=17, AC=0.01, MS=2)							
VibroBlade (F, Melee, ACC +1, ROF 0, DM x6, Inf. Ammo, WC=101, MS=2)							
2x Limpet Mine (F, Melee, ACC -2, ROF 0, DM x20, AE0, HEAT, SD, TD, WC=150, MS=2)							

▼ 8.6.2 Tanuki Heavy Exo-Suit

The Tanuki appears at first to be an unusually large exo-suit, and is in fact classified as such for maintenance and deployment purposes. From a technical standpoint, however, the Tanuki is actually a tiny exo-armor, its mechanized body controlled from a compact cockpit equipped with a specially-designed linear frame. The design is expensive but popular, and is the primary exo-suit used aboard CVNA ships. Despite its size, the Tanuki is deadly in boarding actions, both on defense and offense. The suit's legs can fold up into a compact wheeled configuration, allowing it to quickly scuttle along cramped ship corridors. When defending a ship, the Tanuki's size enables it to serve as a massively armored road-block that can physically block enemy progress even if disabled. The Tanuki can block escape routes, quickly eliminating resistance.

TV:	830	OS: 2	100	DS:	220	MS:	180
Crew:1 (Act.: +2)	Size:		7	Default Size:		9	Armor: 14/28/42
Production Type:		Mass	Indv. Lemon Dice:		3	Cost:	\$530,000
MOVEMENT MODE:							
Walker		2 (12 kph) / 4 (24 kph)			Maneuver:		0
Ground		4 (24 kph) / 8 (48 kph)			Maneuver:		0
Space		5 (0.5 G) / 10 (1.0 G)			Maneuver:		-1
Deployment Range:		250 hrs			Reaction Mass:		100 BP
Sensors:		0 / 2 km		Comm.:		0 / 10 km	Fire Control: 0
PERKS & FLAWS:							
Backup Life Support		-			Absorbs first LS hit		
Computer		1			(CRE 0, KNO 0, PP1, Flexible)		
HEP: Rad		3			Protects against up to 1000 rads		
HEP: Vac		-			-		
Life Support Limited		-			-		
2x Manipulator Arm		7			Can Punch		
Difficult to Modify		-			-2 to modify or repair all systems		
WEAPONS:							
2x Grenade Launchers (F, BR1, ACC 0, ROF 1, DM x15, Ammo 20 (each), HEAT, Missile, WC=297, AC=0.93, MS=4)							
Autocannon (F, BR 3, ACC 0, ROF 4, DM x10, Ammo 250, Clip, WC=176, AC=0.51, MS=4)							
2x Plasma Lances (F, Melee, ACC +1, ROF 0, DM x15, LU5, AC, HEAT, WC=590, MS=5)							





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A JOVIAN CHRONICLES PROJECT

SHIPS OF THE FLEET VOLUME FOUR

VENUS FLEET

Ships of Venus is a **Silhouette™** sourcebook for Dream Pod 9's exciting **Jovian Chronicles** science fiction game. This manual covers six ships of the Cooperative Venusian Naval Administration (CVNA) — a patrol ship, an observer, an escort cruiser, a heavy cruiser, a transport/carrier and a battle cruiser — with precise and detailed texts, backed by extensive illustrations and schematics.

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ISBN: 1-896776-70-1



Printed in Canada