



a plug-in for Escape Velocity Nova

Preamble

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The Story

By the middle of the twenty-first century, research into the human genome had grown by leaps and bounds, the results of which finally saw an end to both cancer and inheritable diseases. However, as time progressed a darker side of this technology began to emerge as a wealthy aristocracy of society used this science to genetically enhance themselves and their offspring far beyond the capacity of the average person. By the latter part of the century, global society had reached the point where both government and academia alike were dominated by a clique of enhanced "uber-humans" who became colloquially known as the "elites". The rest of humanity, termed "mundanes", lived in virtual servitude. It was not long until the 'mundanes', tiring of increasingly extreme 'elite' oppression, initiated an uprising that history would record as the Eugenics Wars. Although the 'elites' controlled much of the world's military, they and their armies were hopelessly outnumbered by 'mundane' insurgents and, following a long and bloody conflict, 'mundane' forces scored the final victory during the historic Battle of Luna. Defeated and demoralized at having been beaten by those they considered to be 'lesser' humans, the 'elites' surrendered unconditionally and a new global government was formed. Its first order of affairs was to not only outlaw any future creation of genetically superior humans but to invoke a new constitution that guaranteed equality not just of race or gender but genes as well. This new order proved a resounding success and, with the Eugenics Wars consigned to the past, humanity was freed to undertake dramatic new pursuits.

In the early twenty-second century, radical new developments in both artificial gravity and hyperspace portal induction allowed the human race to finally escape the confines of the Sol system and spread throughout much of the known galaxy. Over the ensuing decades, numerous colonies and outposts were established with the resulting worlds forming a coalition known as the Earth Confederacy. For almost one hundred years this benevolent union spread wealth over an unprecedented scale and humanity finally saw an end to the evils of hunger and poverty that had plagued so much of its history.

Sadly, this utopia would soon fall, and in a most unexpected way. Two years ago, the entire northern quadrant of the Confederacy initiated a violent rejection of all things associated with Earth for reasons that to this day remain a mystery. These former Sol satellites began a brutal civil war and the resulting

wave of violence soon engulfed much of the Confederacy. Once again, the human race found itself consumed by the fires of war, though this time the battlefield was not confined to a small blue planet but spread across an entire galaxy. Insurgent forces, known collectively as The Faction, were eventually driven back before they had the opportunity to attack Earth though the price paid was terrible. The colony of Proteus III, once a paradise, was reduced to a radioactive wasteland through savage Faction orbital bombardment.

Ever since their initial failure to destroy Earth, The Faction has undertaken a new strategy. Discarding all of their warships - themselves modified Earth vessels - the Faction leadership established a shipyard deep in partisan space where mass production of a whole new class of warships began, ships whose abilities greatly outclassed anything in Earth's defensive fleets. Armed with these new starship designs and boasting fearsome new plasma-based weaponry, The Faction has since struck into Confederacy space as never before, and few believe that Earth's beleaguered military can hold out much longer.

It remains unknown as to just how The Faction has been able to build such a phenomenal war machine, though suspicions and conspiracy theories abound as the gradual demise of Sol's once pandemic influence has led to a select few megacorporations having attained unprecedented levels of power, to the point where they now wield more influence over certain sectors of the galaxy than Earth ever did. The Faction's possible benefactors are many. Perhaps Atinoda Design Bureau, a venerable shipwright firm that has in recent years evolved into a juggernaut notorious for its intolerance of any and all competition. Or the Dakura Resource Extraction Conglomerate, a once small mining consortium that during the distraction of Faction incursions has used its considerable military prowess to carve out much of the Trugati Asteroid Belt for its exclusive use, much to the chagrin of the Fringe Miners Guild, a loose association of independent miners who have seen most of their claims stolen and annexed. Possibly the secretive Spittal Arms Consortium, a powerful munitions company that controls the entire Serpens Nebulae though professes impartiality. Or even the expansive Neutral Planetary Union, which, despite its upstart nature and cordial relations with Sol, has absorbed many former Earth colonies who fear the fate of the Proteus system, should Faction forces push into the core systems. Despite the fact that all of these governments have gained considerable wealth and influence from the Confederacy's continued demise, there exists not one iota of evidence that would indicate their support of The Faction's violent xenophobic rampage.

Having spent the past few years as first officer on a United Galactic Express hauler and seen first hand the horror of civil war, you have resigned your post and undertaken a career as an independent merchant, investing the bulk of your meager savings into a sleek new Boundless class shuttlepod. As you pilot your new purchase out of Gateway Station's shipyard, an uncertain future awaits as you head into an increasingly unforgiving galaxy dominated by the law of the jungle; a universe where you exist as either predator... or prey.

Spare a thought for the prey.

The Factions

There are numerous governments and corporations spread across the galaxy from massive transgalactic conglomerates to small regional alliances. All spacers should take the time to familiarize themselves with both the major and minor players to be found in the RoP galaxy.



THE EARTH CONFEDERACY

Investigations into subspace portals and hyperdrive engines allowed humanity to bid farewell to the confines of the Sol system and expand throughout much of the known galaxy, with the resulting colonies forming a benevolent union known as the Earth Confederacy, and for almost a century the wealth generated by this unique collective bought about an end to the misery of starvation and endemic poverty. Two years ago, an abrupt and totally unexpected decision of the Confederacy's northern quadrant to violently reject their association with Earth led these former colonies to initiate a brutal civil war. These xenophobic insurgents, who dubbed themselves as The Faction, were eventually driven back before they could take Earth though the battle continues to this day. It is thought that Earth's already battered forces cannot hold on much longer and many in the Confederacy fear that an all out assault on the core systems is inevitable. Earth maintains cordial relations with the bulk of the galaxy's governments and counts among its allies the Neutral Planetary Union, the Maskirovka Shipwrights Consortium and the fledgling Fringe Miners Guild.



THE FACTION

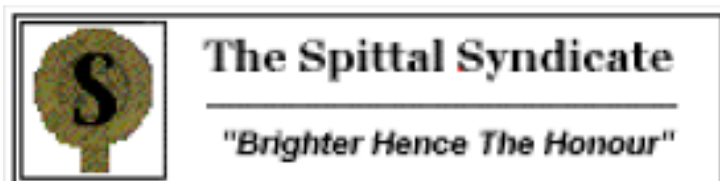
The beginnings of The Faction remain one of the greatest of all mysteries, and the only thing known for certain this group's intense hatred of Earth. Years of intelligence gathering has yielded next to nothing in regard to the origins of this deeply paranoid and xenophobic movement that out of nowhere enveloped the colonies of the entire northern quadrant, leaving behind nothing but a blind, insatiable hatred. As The Faction employed warships identical to those used by Earth, a stalemate developed though in recent times a new generation of remarkable warships has been mass-produced by this group whose abilities greatly surpass anything in Earth's arsenal. It is not known how Faction leaders were able to put together such a formidable force, and just what The Faction has planned beyond the destruction of Earth and the

Confederacy remains as unclear as to what could possibly encourage such violent malevolence. The Faction remains an inherent enigma and all Earth aligned ships are strongly advised to be on alert for hostile incursion, although independent traders and merchants are often allowed access into Faction territory without fear of attack.



THE NEUTRAL PLANETARY UNION (NPU)

The beginnings of the Neutral Planetary Union can be traced back to the original uprising by The Faction and its initiation of the current civil war with Earth. The Aeon system, home to a large orbital trading station, withdrew from Sol's administration following The Faction's wholesale and violent destruction of the Proteus III colony. Fearing a similar attack, the trader unions of Magellan Starport declared their independence from Earth and were soon followed by several neighboring systems. As The Faction has become increasingly powerful and Earth's influence waning, many other stellars have withdrawn from the Confederacy in the faint hope that they will be spared from slaughter. Despite having left Earth's orbit of influence, the membership of the NPU retains a close relationship with their homeworld and are currently beefing up their fledgling military force should things eventually take a turn for the worse. The NPU values its neutrality and its systems are considered to be a safe haven; indeed, it is not unusual at an NPU stellar to see blood enemies sitting at the same table.



THE SPITTAL SYNDICATE

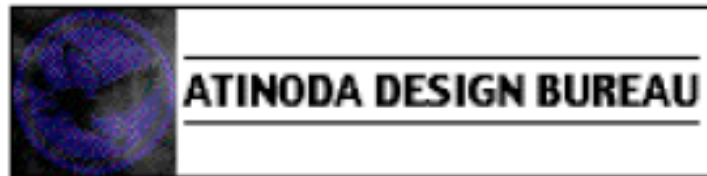
For decades, weaponry and military equipment was primarily built by an elite group of venerable companies like Gassault Munitions, Ferran-Golar, the TerraForce Arms Guild and Gallant ArmsTech. Nicholas Spittal, a brilliant energy weapons engineer, became disillusioned with what he considered the lack of vision of his employer, Consolidated Arms, and resigned his job to ultimately found the Spittal Arms Consortium, which has grown from a struggling company once located on a dilapidated orbital to a near monolithic megacorporation that boasts absolute control over the entire expanse of the Serpens Nebula. It is not known how Spittal managed to pull off this remarkable feat and there have long been rumors of initial financial help from organized crime, though Nicholas Spittal's savvy has left him untouched after numerous investigations. SAC specializes in directed energy weapons such as pulsed plasma drivers, antiparticle burst cannons and the ubiquitous scatter gun, a weapon designed to quickly break down shields that is so effective and parsimonious in its design that it has garnered praise from even the SAC's most hardened critics. The SAC is known to most spacers as simply the Spittal Syndicate and it insists to be a non-partisan entity in regard to the current civil war. Beyond that, little is known of its relations to the myriad

of corporate governments that now vie for galactic influence and territory. Spacers should take note that the SAC is notoriously conservative and maintains a zero tolerance in regard to aggressive acts in its space, though few are foolish enough to challenge the phenomenal warships fielded by this corporate juggernaut.



THE GUILD OF MERCENARIES AND BOUNTY HUNTERS (GMBH)

The current battle between the Earth Confederacy and The Faction has led to a dramatic increase in criminal activity as resources are redirected to the front lines, to the point where certain regions of the galaxy are now plagued with pirates and bootleggers. Enterprising freelance mercenaries were savvy enough to form a loose coalition known as the Guild of Mercenaries and Bounty Hunters, a group that now sees a considerable amount of business from both corporate merchant trader unions and indy spacers alike. The GMBH is headquartered at Port Paladin in the Onedin system where anyone is welcome to make an offer for the services of the numerous hired guns present.



ATINODA DESIGN BUREAU INC

Atinoda Design Bureau is best known for its flagship product, the Kestrel class light cruiser, a ship whose brilliant design has received critical accolades over the years. As Atinoda's influence grew, its leadership inked a deal with the Confederacy that saw the corporation leave its overburdened facilities on Luna and assume administration of the entire Avatar system. Atinoda quickly established a milestone in its history with the construction of an orbital shipyard, an executive headquarters and Osaki City, a colony built exclusively for its workers. However, once achieving absolute dominance of the higher-end starship market, it did not take long for Atinoda to show its true face and it began to systematically eliminate its competition by any means necessary, whether it be via hostile takeovers or economic sabotage. As the Confederacy was embroiled in an increasingly bitter battle with The Faction, Earth and its Trade Practices Commission were in no condition to intervene with Atinoda's unethical and often illegal actions. Now a true megacorporation in every sense of the word, Atinoda has total control a good portion of the commercial starship market and very few believe that its sole remaining competitor, Maskirovka Shipwrights Consortium, will be able to successfully compete. Although Atinoda welcomes all independent traders and other potential customers, it remains unclear as to what - if any - relationship this company maintains with the galaxy's shadier elements, though executives have explicitly denied any inappropriate dealings.



**MASKIROVKA
SHIPWRIGHTS
CONSORTIUM LTD**

Vitali Maskirovka was one of the Russian Consortium's most gifted starship engineers and for many years acted as a consultant for a variety of companies and manufacturers before establishing his own business, an upstart known as Maskirovka Shipwrights Consortium whose fortune and stocks quickly rose to fame as its first commercial starship offering, the now famous Nova class corvette, began mass production and took the market by storm. MSC soon gained the favor of administrators within the Earth Confederacy and was permitted to construct an impressive orbital shipyard in the Barnard system where the company maintains to this day its primary headquarters. Increasingly intense competition from Atinoda Design Bureau led MSC to release its Nebulae class blockade runner and, more recently, the Pulsar class destroyer and Quasar class heavy cruiser. All three ships proved themselves worthy in both battle and commerce though, considering Atinoda's greater resources, it is not known how much longer MSC can survive before joining the numerous other companies that have fallen in Atinoda's wake.



**THE DAKURA RESOURCE
EXTRACTION
CONGLOMERATE INC
(DREC)**

Daniel Dakura was for many years a respected corporate officer in a variety of small companies before striking out on his own five years ago to found DREC, the Dakura Resource Extraction Conglomerate. With his business prowess and contacts it did not take long for Dakura to build an impressive business empire respected throughout the Confederacy, though the sudden rise of The Faction was to fundamentally change this company. With both policing and government regulatory bodies in turmoil from the draining civil war that ensued, Dakura took advantage of the confusion to launch an unprecedented expansion into the Trugati Asteroid Belt. Having invested in a powerful militia to thwart pirate incursion, DREC turned its guns on the myriad of independent miners throughout the asteroid expanse, taking by force mining claims and orbitals and driving its competitors to the very fringes of Trugati territory. DREC now enjoyed a virtual monopoly on deepspace mining in the southern quadrant and, with Earth in no condition to intervene beyond voicing its disapproval, DREC began a major refit program of its small militia to yield one of the most powerful private space navies known. For the past two years DREC has dominated mining of the asteroid expanse and its competitors have tried in vain to fight back by forming a loose alliance known as the Fringe Miners Guild, though despite many armed incursions it has yet to take back any of the territory annexed by DREC. It is unclear as to what relations DREC maintains with the other players in the galaxy though there have long been suspicions that it harbors Faction partisanship and spacers traveling through DREC territory are advised to be very cautious.



THE FRINGE MINERS GUILD (FMG)

There was a time when mining of the Trugati Asteroid Belt, a region of the southern quadrant rich in resources, was undertaken by scores of independent companies and mining coalitions. The formation of the Fringe Miners Guild can be traced back to the ruthless annexation of the region by DREC, a powerful megacorporation determined to control the resource rich quadrant. Realizing that fighting DREC on their own was a losing proposition, the independent mining companies pooled their resources and formed the Fringe Miners Guild, an organization determined to take back what was stolen from them. The FMG's leadership established a secluded headquarters and commissioned the construction of its now ubiquitous F-class starships whose rugged design at last afforded the FMG a fighting chance. Despite DREC's overwhelming military superiority, the FMG scored one impressive victory in capturing the vital Balsara system, the only planet in the galaxy where the unique tucharium element can be found, an element whose density makes for ideal hull armor. However, it is highly unlikely that the FMG can last in the region much longer considering the sheer brute force of DREC and most observers believe the FMG will be finished in the not too distant future.



ACELERON BIOGENICS PLC

Over the course of the past few years, the research conglomerate Aceleron Biogenics has evolved from a struggling medical research consortium to what the business community recognizes as the undisputed leader in cutting edge genetic technology, and Aceleron currently commands a level of respect few other corporations enjoy. Aceleron was recently given administrative control of the Tyros system, a region relatively undeveloped by the Earth Confederacy, where the company is currently undertaking pioneering work into microcellular surgery and mod-plasmid bioengineering. Fiercely neutral, Aceleron has refused to take sides in the current civil war and has no formal contact with any of the galaxy's corporations beyond research side-deals with Flood Medical Technologies. Independent traders are always welcome in Aceleron space though should be warned that this company maintains its own very impressive militia and has a reputation of low tolerance for troublemakers.



FLOOD MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES INC

One of the most respected companies known, Flood Medical Technologies has for decades been the unchallenged leader into bimolecular research, having pioneered what are now routine operations involving cybernetic replacements, proactive neurosurgery and artificial skin. One of FMT's young up-and-coming executives recently left for Acleron Biogenics, though both corporations maintain cordial relations and frequently conduct joint venture research projects, the best known of which is the current attempt to rehabilitate those irradiated during The Faction's horrific orbital bombardment of the Proteus III colony using radiation bombs. FMT is no longer the powerhouse it once was, but this decidedly neutral company continues to enjoy a level of reverence few others enjoy.



CDX STARWORKS LTD

One of the few major mil-spec shipbuilders to survive Atinoda's hostile takeovers and dirty tricks, CDX Starworks nonetheless remains deeply suspicious of the megacorporation and has in recent times aligned itself with the NPU in hopes of currying favor with this rising power should Atinoda get any ideas. CDX specializes in the production of starfighter platforms, and the fact it has no involvement in building the classes of ship that Atinoda sells is likely the only real reason that it remains in business. Anyone is welcome at CDX's orbital headquarters and shipbuilding facilities located in the Aurora system as this company values the business that merchant traders bring.



CONSOLIDATED EXPRESS INC

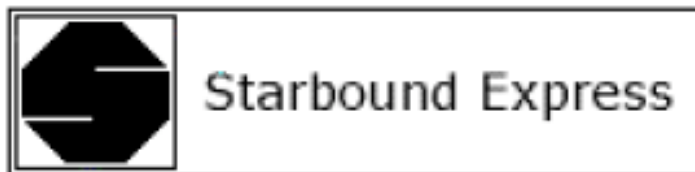
Devon Cruz was once a corporate officer in Starbound Express until his penchant for vice and insider trading cost him his job and his freedom. After serving a five-year sentence for embezzlement, Cruz made his way to the Darven system and quickly remade some old acquaintances whose money allowed the establishment of Consolidated Express. Ostensibly a legitimate courier company, those in the know recognize ConEx for what it really is - a front for organized crime and other dodgier elements of the galaxy.

Cruz holds a particular grudge against Starbound as he considers its board of directors responsible for his arrest and incarceration, and so uses the fact that his company makes most of its money from smuggling and currency laundering to subsidize ConEx's incredibly cheap haulage rates, thus undercutting his competitors with prices Starbound cannot possibly match. In fact, this tactic has been so effective that Starbound was recently forced to merger with United Galactic Express in a desperate attempt to avoid bankruptcy proceedings. It is not clear how ConEx is related to the galaxy's other factions though if there's illicit money to be made somewhere, it's a good bet that you'll find Devon Cruz pouring the drinks.



UNITED GALACTIC EXPRESS LTD

United Galactic Express has been in business for over fifty years and is by any measure one of the oldest corporations in the galaxy. With a reputation for reliability that's hard to beat, UGE has long dominated haulage within the core systems as its primary competitor, Starbound Express, decided to concentrate its efforts on long-range deliveries deep into the galactic fringe. However, recent underhanded tactics by Consolidated Express has forced a merger between UGE and its former rival and so far the pooling of their resources and experienced crews has kept both businesses afloat; however, considering that ConEx owner Devon Cruz never makes a promise that he can't keep, his oath to bring Starbound to its knees may well destroy UGE as well.



STARBOUND EXPRESS LTD

The commercial haulage firm of Starbound Express specializes in cargo deliveries to the outermost fringe of the Earth Confederacy and its skilled crews have a reputation of rarely losing a shipment to piracy, something few independent couriers can boast. Starbound's future seemed to be paved with gold until a colossal insider trading scheme by one of its executives, the firebrand Devon Cruz, nearly bought the company down in one of the worst business scandals on record. Cruz was convicted and, once having served his sentence, established Consolidated Express as a means to not only smuggle vice throughout the galaxy under guise of legitimate business, but to ultimately bankrupt the company that had him arrested. Unable to compete with ConEx's subsidized haulage rates, Starbound Express recently formed a business arrangement with its former rival, UGE, though even so it remains anyone's guess how much longer it can hold out now that ConEx proxy forces have begun deliberately targeting Starbound transports.

Ships and Technology

There are numerous governments and corporations spread throughout the galaxy and you would do well to familiarize yourself with what you can expect to encounter. Please note that not all of the following ships and their corresponding technology can be purchased at first, as some are mission bit controlled and will only be made available at set points in the game.

MERCHANT TRADERS

A variety of small starship consortiums produce a remarkable variety of starcraft designed to suit the needs of just about any merchant or business conglomerate. The most ubiquitous of these vessels is undoubtedly the [Boundless class shuttlepod](#), a new release by Renetti Stardrive whose clean lines and sleek curves have taken the entry level ship market by storm. Haulage needs are amply provided for by Allied Shipyards' stalwart [Reliant class light freighter](#), its ubiquitous [Repose class bulk freighter](#) and its new [Resolute class heavy tanker](#) - between the three, just about every type of commercial goods transport is available. CDX Starworks, best known for its starfighters, has entered the haulage market with its reliable and sturdy [Argosy class freighter](#) whereas Metroworks Heavy Industries has filled the mid-range transport market with its [Gala class light hauler](#) and [Deva class fast courier](#), the former of which is a remarkably efficient freightliner while the latter is one of the fastest and most versatile ships there is. Krydanti Systems continues to offer the classic [Seeker class scoutship](#), a must-have for long-range travelers. Civilian starfighters are made exclusively by CDX Starworks, the basic of which is the [Defender class light fighter](#), followed by the fine multirole [Vindicator class heavy fighter-bomber](#), whereas those looking for serious firepower can choose the [Vanguard class tactical bomber](#). One of the more unique offerings is Sikara Heavy Shipyards' [Rigel class asteroid miner](#), a sturdy mining vessel with a truly frightening weapons load.

THE EARTH CONFEDERACY

All of the warships fielded by the military wing of the Earth Confederacy are purpose built by Sikara Heavy Shipyards, a venerable shipwright consortium that has been in business for almost fifty years. The "V-class" ships that compose the bulk of Earth's forces include the ubiquitous [Vista class heavy freighter](#), a type of armored transport that, despite its scruffy appearance, continues to

ferry the bulk of inner system commerce. Fighter needs are met by the [Valour class interceptor](#), whose dated design is augmented by decent firepower and cheap production costs. Earth's primary fleet craft are represented by the [Valiant class destroyer](#), itself a reliable if not sluggish workhorse, and the imposing [Volition class battlecruiser](#), a formidable frontline warship whose firepower remains the only obstacle to Faction dominance. All Earth warships are fitted with either turbolaser cannons or batteries are required and can carry either fixed or coaxial hyper rockets, a fast projectile that can burn through any armor. The battlecruiser boasts a flight deck of interceptors and a fixed heavy laser emitter.

THE FACTION

The oddly named Shipyards of the Glorious Revolution mass produces the fearsome "A-class" starships and the bulk of the weapons technology in use by The Faction, itself one of the most mysterious and dangerous organizations known. The most basic of Faction craft is the [Armor class secured transport](#), a tough and rugged freighter tasked with ferrying sensitive military supplies. Space superiority is assured by the [Absolve class heavy gunship](#), which boasts weaponry and agility that very few other starfighter classes can match. The [Ardor class light frigate](#) is a superbly built midrange vessel perfectly capable of escort and patrol duties, whereas the surprisingly maneuverable and heavily armed [Ardent class cruiser](#) makes up the backbone of Faction warfleets. [Adamant class heavy warships](#) are among the most powerful fleet craft currently in production by any militia, and there are precious few ships that can stand up to the incredible firepower of this marvelous piece of military engineering. Faction ships carry specialized plasma-based weaponry consisting of both fixed and turreted plasma cannons and long-range plasma torpedos. Cruiser classes have been fitted with gunship hangars and all Faction ships are composed of a stealthy tucharium based alloyed armor that is hard to visually track in the heat of battle. Considering that The Faction began with modified variants of Earth warships, just how it has put together such a deadly military in such a very short period of time is a matter that has so far eluded all explanation.

THE SPITTAL SYNDICATE

The Spittal Syndicate has the distinction of producing what are generally considered to be the finest warship classes in production in terms of

construction standards and equipment. All of the ships fielded by this conglomerate have a startling golden appearance, which is an artifact of the unusually high percentage of tucharium alloy that composes their hull armoring. System patrol and escort work is easily covered by the [Striker class interdiction patrolship](#), itself a fast and highly maneuverable starfighter that outclasses any competitor, whereas the backbone of Syndicate fleets are composed of [Enforcer class guided missile destroyers](#) whose namesake is their massive cache of guided ordinance. The most feared warship of all is the [Behemoth class planetary assault cruiser](#), a gargantuan platform bristling with weapons ports and heavy ordinance. What makes Syndicate vessels so destructive are their unique energy weapon systems which include rapid-fire scatter guns, drive plasma cannon ports, antiparticle guns and, most feared of all, the simply devastating shockwave cannon.

ATINODA DESIGN BUREAU INC

Few companies can boast the success of Atinoda Design Bureau, which has gone from being a small-time Luna based shipwright to one of the most powerful and ruthless megacorporations in existence. Atinoda produces a specialized ship for just about every imaginable market, the latest release being the graceful [Peregrine class transport cruiser](#), which is more of a work of art than a freighter, offering superb point defenses in addition to ample haulage space. Another new venture for Atinoda has been the [Falcon class tactical fighter](#), the first starfighter platform made by this company that runs circles around anything built by CDX Starworks. The entry-level warship remains the [Raptor class frigate](#), a beautifully crafted vessel that packs quite a considerable punch despite its "sawed off" appearance. The flagship product of Atinoda is still the ubiquitous [Kestrel class light cruiser](#), a legendary vessel whose latest production upgrade continues the Kestrel's tradition of kicking ass and looking good doing it. A more powerful variant of the Kestrel is the new [Condor class heavy cruiser](#), a warship with heavier defenses, enhanced weaponry and attitude to boot. Atinoda also makes its own exclusive ships not generally made available to the public, which include the [Buteo class dreadnought](#), known as the "MegaKestrel". This unstoppable war machine was built to work in conjunction with the only known carrier platform, the new [Osprey class strike carrier](#). This unprecedented design boasts a flight deck of several Falcon class tactical fighters and is one of the most remarkable vessels currently in service.

MASKIROVKA SHIPWRIGHTS CONSORTIUM LTD

Maskirovka Shipwrights Consortium is probably best known for the classic lines of the famous [Nova class corvette](#), a ship that has been used in every conceivable role from basic in-system patrol duty to front line interdiction. Despite its age, this vessel shows no sign of slowing down but was augmented by the recent release of the [Nebula class blockade runner](#), a ship that relies more on speed than firepower and whose oversize engines and expansive cargo bays leave little to be desired in a merchant vessel. Maskirovka has only just entered the military market with two highly specialized platforms. The [Pulsar class light destroyer](#) is a brilliantly engineered midrange warship with a solid armor hull and a versatile weapons load whereas the stunning new [Quasar class cruiser](#) was built with destruction in mind. Bristling with turreted cannons and dual ordinance tubes, this impressive front line fleetship can go head to head with the very best. At this time only the Neutral Planetary Union uses Maskirovka warships though as time goes by sales are projected to skyrocket. Suffice to say, such entries into the military market - a field long dominated by Atinoda - has upset the ruthless monopoly to no end and many wonder just how long Maskirovka is going to last.

THE DAKURA RESOURCE EXTRACTION CONGLOMERATE INC (DREC)

The Dakura Resource Extraction Conglomerate (DREC) prefers to use brute force rather than legal eagles or boardroom shenanigans to expand their territory and this megacorporation's starships have done much to that end. Dakura Design Associates is the in-house shipwright of DREC and builds all of its "G-class" starships. Its first release was the ubiquitous [Gestalt class secured freighter](#), a vessel found throughout the Trugati Asteroid Belt that carries the bulk of DREC goods from ore to weapons. The [Guerdon class interdictor](#) is one of the best multirole interdiction fighters made, using a combination of EMP cannons and anti-armor missiles to great effect. System patrols are adequately provided by the solidly built [Gallant class patrol frigate](#), a brute of a ship whose heavy armor and versatile ordinance caches are a force to be reckoned with for any hostile entity. Rounding out DREC's fleet craft is the truly monstrous [Granite class interdiction cruiser](#), a simply awesome vessel that uses its absolutely phenomenal firepower to lay waste to any ship foolish enough to challenge DREC's authority. Indeed, the cruiser's combination of spatial charges and shipbourne fighters are enough to give even the toughest pirate or FMG captain second thoughts. Not to be forgotten are the simple yet potent

unmanned [Gauntlet class orbital defensepods](#), which are sold internally to a variety of like-minded factions.

THE FRINGE MINERS GUILD (FMG)

When DREC forcibly annexed the independent miners and trading co-ops that worked the expanse of the Trugati Asteroid Belt, those who escaped wholesale destruction formed a loose-knit coalition known as the Fringe Miners Guild. Faced with the twin threat of organized pirate rings and hostile DREC patrols, FMG commissioned the shipwright firm Kelani Engineering Guild to construct a series of durable, sturdy starships able to withstand both battle damage and the occasional scrape with bolides. The first of these vessels was the Feldspar [class armored freighter](#), a tough transport that can not only withstand a surprising amount of damage but also fight back with substantial point defenses for a hauler class, including an anti-armor missile rack. System patrol and long range reconnaissance was left to the very capable [Firestorm class patrolboat](#), a simple yet potent starfighter platform that can inflict a good deal of damage. The bulk of FMG warfleets are composed of [Fregata class patrol frigates](#), which despite their unkempt appearance are solid combat craft, though in recent times these ships have undergone a series of qualitative upgrades in an attempt to maintain parity with their pirate and DREC foes. Rounding out the FMG's "F-class" ships is the remarkable [Fearless class destroyer](#), a substantial heavy warship that uses its maneuverability and spatial charge banks to great effect during combat; in fact, this ship is at the moment the only reason the FMG continues to exist.

ACELERON BIOGENICS PLC

As Aceleron Biogenics grew from a small medical research consortium into one of the most influential megacorporations of all, its executive branch decided to found its own private shipwright firm using engineers and technicians from established shipyards. The result was the corporation's current line-up of "E-class" starships, all of which employ specialized anti-shield lasers as standard outfits. The [Epoch class transport](#) is the entry level platform in the series, tasked to safely deliver Aceleron's medical goods, a valued prize to hostile factions and pirates alike, though this freighter packs quite a punch for a mere hauler class and is openly sold on the commercial market. The introduction of the [Exalt class escort fighter](#) was a true milestone for Aceleron, as no longer was the company forced to purchase third party fighters and endure the time of

aftermarket upgrades. This brilliantly designed starfighter simply excels at convoy defense and very few pirates are foolish enough to take on a group of freighters with an escort fighter in their midst. Long range patrol of the Tyros system is tasked to the [Excel class patrol frigate](#), a well designed and stocky midrange warship whereas system denial and hostile interdiction are adequately handled by the enormous [Envoy class advanced warship](#), itself one of the finest fighting vessels currently fielded by any faction. With a prow mounted compressor beam and a hangar of escort fighters, there is little this ship has to fear.

THE GUILD OF MERCENARIES AND BOUNTY HUNTERS

Tasked with tracking down criminals and providing fleet escort services to both independent merchants and trade federations alike in the absence of a police presence as resources are drained by the civil war, the GMBH commissioned the upgrade consortium Icara-NAPO Refit Specialists to develop the [Terminator class strike cruiser](#). While at first glance an Atinoda Buteo class dreadnought, this ship is so much more. Enhanced shields, tucharium infused armoring and plasma based weaponry gives this warship the edge in any combat mission and it is only made available to the Guild's most trusted associates.

THE PIRATE FACTIONS

The war between the Earth Confederacy and The Faction has created a power vacuum as more resources are redirected to the front lines, a vacuum that has been quickly filled by a variety of pirate guilds and organized crime gangs. Pirate leaders tasked the renegade ship refit experts of Dicaros & Associates, located at several pirate layovers, to begin production of several highly specialized commerce raiders. The entry-level craft is the [Ravage class system raider](#), a modified stock Atinoda Falcon class fighter that carries the shields and weaponry of a light capital ship. The ubiquitous [Marauder class destroyer](#), based on the Kestrel class light cruiser, can defeat the best of government defensive fleet craft and its ample cargo space allows for easy looting of disabled targets. Top of the line is the deeply feared [Bloodletter class heavy warship](#), a heavy cruiser with an attitude built upon the spaceframe of a Maskirovka Pulsar class destroyer. With a hanger of bombers and a lethal antiparticle gun port, any ship targeted by this ruthless killer has little chance of survival. All three of these ships are fitted with merchant IFF transponders,

which allow them to enter any system undetected until the last minute, and perhaps best of all they are available to anyone with enough credits.