

PROJECT VALKYRIE



Narrative Background

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Table of Contents

Human Timeline	3
Seeker Civilisation Overview	8
History	8
Locations	12
Fleet Government	13
Military	13
Economy.....	16
Inter-Fleet relations.....	17
Strike Suit Manufacturers	18
Historical Overview	18
Integrated Starship Solutions [ISS] (Carolus)	18
Nixon Aeronautics (Atheling)	19
Hephaesta (Gobokku).....	20
Copperhead Suit Technologies [CST] (Iqembu)	21
Azagaya (Jama'ah).....	22
Special Strike Suits.....	23
Weapon Manufacturers	25
Historical Overview	25
Coeurdelion (Carolus).....	26
Arcwind Engineering (Atheling)	28
Boone Armaments (Jama'ah)	30
Ourorobos (Göbboku).....	32
Eddings-McLelland Industrial Technologies [EMIT] (Iqembu).....	34
Alien Artefacts	36
Artefact 01 - Oanne Creation Myth	36
Artefact 02 – Relic betrayal.....	37
Artefact 03 – Genocide Report	38
Artefact 03 – Military Dispatch	39
Artefact 05 - Letter to mate	40

Human Timeline

12 September 2057 03:55 GMT – A previously unknown comet appears in the sky. Astronomers from the European Southern Observatory, using the VLT at the Paranal Observatory in Chile report it passing Jupiter. It is heading for Earth, and is designated an NEA (Near Earth Object).

12 September 2057 08:41 GMT – The comet's position and speed are rechecked for the fourth time. The results confirm it will pass very close to Earth, and it is now designated a PHO (Potentially Hazardous Object).

13 September 2057 00:53 GMT – The comet's course is confirmed again, by six different observatories. It is on a collision course with Earth. Its estimated size: 11.5km by 2km. The comet is declared a 'planet killer'. Governments advise their populations to prepare for worst.

14 September 2057 – Both the Russian and American governments send shuttles to intercept the comet and destroy it before it impacts Earth. Both expeditions fail and all crew are lost in the attempt.

15 September 2057 08:04 GMT – The comet inexplicably begins to drastically slow its rate of approach and changes course slightly several times. The scientists and governments are baffled but are relieved, as the projected speed of impact means that life on Earth will not be wiped out.

15 September 2057 13:04 GMT – The comet strikes Bartlett Lake, Northern Territories, Canada. 91% of Canadian population are killed in the impact blast and subsequent earthquakes and tsunamis. 48% of US population is killed. Casualties are lower than expected, but the impact is still a worldwide catastrophe.

25 September 2057 – 07 June 2060 – Across the globe, countries attempt to recover with limited success. Low lying countries are completely engulfed by water, but most populations survive better than expected. Major Asian and African skirmishes erupt over food and water resources. Korea and China fire nuclear weapons in the conflict. Korea is entirely obliterated. China fares better but the fallout still devastates the country.

07 June 2060 – An international United Nations expedition to the impact site is launched.

15 July 2060 – The expedition reports a massive metallic construct buried at the crash site. It's clearly something which has been manufactured: an enormous alien spacecraft.

23 November 2060 – Attempts to gain access to the alien ship are unsuccessful, but the ship was damaged in the crash, and parts of the metal are able to be carbon dated. It is millions of years old. The ship is dubbed the 'Relic', as it appears to be dead or inactive.

14 March 2061 – The expedition finally makes a breakthrough and open communication with the Relic, although they are unable to understand any of the communications. Scientists begin work on translation software.

22 April 2061 – The translation software is finished. Initial findings reveal only that the ship's name is "N'mmo". Attempts to discover the origin of N'mmo or the reason it has crashed into Earth are unsuccessful: stellar coordinates which make no sense are retrieved from N'mmo's memory banks as is a log file showing that N'mmo

repeatedly ran a positional triangulation program on its approach to Earth, but other than that there is no usable information.

23 April 2061 – The USA declares its incorporation of the former nation of Canada and moves troops in to occupy it.

24 April 2061 – The international community condemns the US action, demands withdrawal from Canada, and declares common ownership of the Relic. The US resigns from the UN and ignores all the demands for it to withdraw.

25 April 2061 – Russia also resigns from the UN and moves troops into Canada. The UN forms an International coalition and sends a small contingent of soldiers while it prepares to send a major force troops too.

28 April 2061 – The first shots are fired, in a skirmish between US and French forces. UN Coalition forces land in force in Canada. Russian military forces move towards the crash site, and simultaneously attack the USA, striking Seattle and San Francisco.

30 July 2061 – Wars metastasise around Canada. American military power has been severely reduced by its decimated population and the aftermath of N'mmo's impact. Of the other countries traditionally able to field large numbers of troops, the Korean country is essentially nonexistent following its nuclear war with China. China is desperately trying to recover from the impact and the nuclear wars. The UN coalition is overstretched, as they are trying to keep peace in Africa, South America, Europe and the Middle East as well as claim a stake in the Relic.

26 December 2096 – The Russian forces capture the Relic site and frantically begin to continue the International Expedition's research into communicating with N'mmo while holding off the other military forces.

15 October 2103 – The Russians gain control of N'mmo and discover the remains of an alien fighter within it (the Garland). The American military stage a last offensive against the Russians but are thwarted and all but wiped out. The USA begins arming nuclear weapons. The Russians use N'mmo's weapons to simultaneously destroy the Pentagon, the White House, and the nuclear weapon construction sites at Los Alamos and Sandia, New Mexico; Livermore, California; Oakridge, Tennessee and Paducah, Kentucky. The Russians demand an unconditional surrender.

17 October 2103 13:17 GMT – The USA capitulates.

19 October 2103 – N'mmo moves into orbit. The UN coalition surrenders.

14 November 2103 – The Russians announce the dissolution of the UN.

01 January 2104 – The Russians instate an interim government of 40 ruling departments – the Döchin. The Döchin demands an immediate ceasefire in all conflicts. Iran resists, claiming they won't be bullied, the Döchin are illegitimate and that they don't recognise its authority. The Döchin use N'mmo's weapons and destroy the Iranian army. Iran capitulates and the Döchin are officially recognised.

15 January 2104 – The Döchin form the infrastructure of the extended global government, this is called the Ubykhia. The new Döchin military chain of command refers to the military as being part of the Ubykhia.

23 February 2104 – The interim Ubykhia abrogate voting rights. Anyone with a criminal record is denied a vote. The voting age is set at 25. Only people who own property and earn over a certain amount are allowed to vote. Iranians and Americans are denied any voting rights at all.

18 July 2104 – The first global elections take place. 85% of the new Döchin ministers are Russian, essentially meaning that the whole Ubykhia is under Russian rule.

July – September 2104 - There are protests, claiming the elections were fixed. The protests are quickly and brutally quelled.

28 September 2104 – The Döchin declares the protesters terrorists and set up a central intelligence bureau (essentially the secret police) within the Ubykhia. They announce that identity papers will be introduced and must be carried at all times.

2106 – Twelve 'Protectorates' are instated: 3 in the USA, two in Europe, two in Iran, three in Africa and two in China. These are essentially ghettos, and undesirable people are relocated there 'for their own safety'. They're not allowed to vote because they don't own the property there. They're also not allowed to leave the protectorates. They become hotbeds of sedition, but they're run with an absolute iron fist.

2110 – The first moon station is founded. It's a military base and mining operation for helium-3. Construction begins on the first space shipyard.

2112 – The shipyard is finished, and construction on the first fleet ships begins. These are Cruiser size, and are intended to be deployed in orbit around the Earth as a constant deterrent to terrorist activities. They use data from a system of geosynchronous satellites and are equipped with lower powered versions of N'mmo's weapons, capable of targeting a 5m square area from orbit. They're very unpopular on Earth, but are an excellent deterrent and visible protests and resistance to the Ubykhia dries up almost immediately. The protesters are driven underground and a nascent resistance movement is established.

05 April 2113 – The groundbreaking ceremony for a luxury resort on the moon takes place. The resort is to be called Tranquillity and although it's privately owned and run, the Döchin are assisting with the construction costs and logistics.

2115 – The cluster of support structures servicing the military base and mining operation on the moon (shops, bars etc) is granted township status. It's named Imbrium (it's in Mare Imbrium). Ubykhia sponsored immigration begins: if you're deemed to be acceptable and are able to put forward a case as to why and how you'd benefit the community, your transport costs are subsidised and you're given a plot of land and temporary accommodation while you construct permanent housing for yourself on your plot. A 'Frontier' atmosphere quickly grows, with bars, warehouses and cheap diners being the main business types.

2117 – The Tranquillity resort opens on the moon. It consists of a huge set of interconnecting biomes containing seven luxury hotels, offering a large range of facilities to its guests: restaurants, theatres, health spas, bath complexes, adventure sports in the low gravity, rover trips out onto the moon's unexplored surface, to see the various moon missions' landing sites etc. Tranquillity town opens nearby for the employees of the resort. The Ubykhia sponsor emigration out there in order to encourage people to set up support the resort employees. Shops, restaurants, schools and so on. It's similar to Imbrium, but much more civilised.

2118 – Lunar University is founded. It focuses on the sciences and on exploring the moon's surface.

2130 – The population of the moon reaches 150,000. The population of Earth has bounced back from N'mmo's crash and is now up to 4 billion. The first orbital suburb

is built and the Döchin choose who'll live there. It's mainly low-skilled low-income manual workers and a lot of manufacturing.

2147 – There are now seven orbital suburbs. They're quickly becoming slums (like the brutalist tower blocks of the 1960s). The population of the moon is 700,000. The population of the orbital suburbs is 12 million. The Ubykhia have been working hard on reverse-engineering N'mmo's propulsion and navigation technologies. One of the orbital fleet is overhauled and refitted to have FTL capabilities and more defensive weapons.

01 July 2147 – FTL wormhole technology is trialled successfully, and the fleet ship jumps to the Fomalhaut system.

03 March 2148 – A new fleet of ships begins construction. They're designed with FTL capabilities, ship-to-ship weapons systems and much more manoeuvrable standard engines. They're intended to be forerunners for the expansion of humanity into other star systems.

11 August 2151 – Deep space base is founded in Barnard's Star system. It's a military outpost designed as a precursor to civilian occupation of the system. During the founding ceremony, bombs detonate in Tranquility resort (which is seen as a place used by Ubykhia supporters and cronies). Simultaneously, suicide bombers detonate IEDs in the first orbital suburb's manufactories, in the lunar mining facilities and in Ubykhia offices on Earth.

2151 – 2158 – The underground resistance movement is hunted mercilessly. Rumours of resistance cells living entirely in space begin to surface. Construction mecha begin to go missing. An FTL drive is stolen, as are several large shipments of spaceship construction components.

25 October 2163 – One of the orbital suburbs is captured by the resistance, who call themselves the Seekers. They've been secretly installing the stolen FTL drive and secreting the construction mecha and components in it for years. They jump away to Epsilon Eridani, remove the Ubykhia operatives on board and begin to assemble their own fleet of ships using the suburb's manufactories, jumping often to escape detection. They also alter some of their construction mecha and weaponize them, creating the early non-transformable strike suits.

2179 – The resistance rebel, using their non-transformable strike suits and are defeated.

2179 – 2314 – The remaining rebels form five Fleets which run, hide, scatter and slowly rebuild. The Fleets become clans, keeping contact with each other, but due to need to stay unnoticed as possible they remain largely separate from one another. Only vessels trading between clans meet regularly. This infrequent contact causes clannishness, and suspicion between the clans. Yet although the clans feud and attack each other, they still remember that their true enemy is the Ubykhia.

As humanity spreads to new planets and new systems, the oppressive Ubykhia regime becomes more and more unwelcome to the new settlers, who tend to have a 'Frontier' outlook – wanting mainly to be left alone to get on with their new lives. Occasionally the new colonies become so troublesome that the Ubykhia will send a 'pacification fleet' to the planet.

09 November 2193 – Vessels from Fleet Three recover a derelict alien fighter, and discover it had the ability to transform. The Fleet Three scientists construct a crude transforming Strike Suit prototype. They share this technology with the other Fleets,

who begin development on their own transforming Strike Suits. Therefore they share technologies, and the transforming strike suits are developed. Although the suits have a shared heritage, each clan develops their own variants. The Seekers are biding their time until their chance comes. Then they will band together and present a unified front against the Ubykhia.

06 February 2202 – Fleet Two learns of one of the Ubykhia's 'pacification fleets' and manages to evacuate any of the population who want to leave and join the rebels. They call an emergency Meeting of the Fleets, where it is decided that the rebels will pursue a more aggressive raiding policy against Ubykhia forces, and will evacuate any further colonies under threat from the Ubykhia. The Fleets decide to encourage the formation of Privateer Companies, who will manufacture Strike Suits and weaponry, and who will employ fighter pilots known as Furies to perform these raids and engage in battles mainly designed to delay the Ubykhia pacification fleets and allow the colony populations time to evacuate safely.

Finally, taking inspiration from the Ubykhia's insulting name for them (Strannik), the Fleets decide that they should have a collective name for themselves, and decide on Seekers. It is felt that this name reflected the Fleets' search for a way to achieve liberation from the Ubykhia, while at the same time remaining benign – something which will hopefully encourage more support from the oppressed populace of the Ubykhia.

2382 – 'Present Day'. Player receives first message from K'lob

Seeker Civilisation Overview

Fleets:

Atheling



Iqembu



Jama'ah



Gōbboku



Carolus



Number of humans per Fleet:

Atheling 2,206,193

Carolus 1,299,524

Gōbboku 1,702,569

Iqembu 1,456,903

Jama'ah 1,883,529

Total number of Seekers:

8,548,718

History

On the 25th October 2163, anti-Ubykhian forces captured an orbital suburb. For five years the Resistance had been secretly installing a stolen FTL drive and secreting construction mecha and components in it. They jumped away to Epsilon Eridani, removed the Ubykhia operatives on board and began to assemble their own fleet of ships using the suburb's manufactories, jumping often to escape detection. They also altered some of their construction mecha and armed them, creating early non-transformable strike suits.

For the next twelve years, the rebel forces used the orbital suburb (which they renamed the Emyrea) as a home base, building up their fleet of attack suits and crude warships, exploring the galaxy and making a map of star systems with no Ubykhia presence, and paying special attention to those with good natural resources which could be mined and used to build more ships.

During this time, they also mounted very small-scale raids on Ubykhia outposts, and throughout the nascent Ubykhia-controlled Human Empire, rumours of guerrilla 'Strannik' began to appear. This served to increase resistance activities on Earth and in the offworld suburbs and colonies, but the raids did little to slow the increase in the Ubykhia's military might.

The rebel forces drew up a desperate plan to strike at Earth – the heart of the Ubykhia's power. Their plan was to attack two targets: the largest part of the rebel fleet would attack the orbital fleet, concentrating on disabling or destroying the Relic, and a smaller force would destroy the Ubykhia's parliament in Moscow.

The attack took place on 13th August 2179 and was a disaster for the rebel forces. The Ubykhia's Navy was superior in almost every way: more numbers, more firepower, better ships and more experience of combat. The only things the rebels had on their side were surprise and, because of their small force, manoeuvrability. Unfortunately, these two advantages were nowhere near enough, and although some slight damage was inflicted on

the parliament and the orbital fleet, the rebel losses were disastrous. An hour after the battle began, 72% of the rebel forces were destroyed. By the time they managed to jump away from Earth, 83 minutes after arriving in-system, only 13% of the rebel military remained. The remaining forces used their wormhole generators to jump randomly several times, leaving a system as soon as they entered it: jumping too frequently and too quickly for the Ubykhia to follow.

By the time the rebel forces finally returned to the Empyrea, even more forces had succumbed to damage sustained in the battle, and only 7% of the original military remained. This was deemed far too small a number to stand any chance of defending the civilian fleet should the Ubykhia find them, and the decision was made to split the civilian fleet into five separate convoys which would spread out into the galaxy and therefore stand more chance of avoiding detection.

The original rebels had been living in the orbital suburb, which was broadly segregated into blocks of Earth continents, and it was decided that these groupings should remain together in the new Fleets. This was not enforced though, and if anyone wanted to leave their nationality and join another Fleet, this was permitted. That was rare, and when the five Fleets went their separate ways, they were organised into the following groups:

Fleet One – North America, Australia and the UK. This was the largest Fleet in terms of population, and so took the Empyrea with them

Fleet Two – Mainland Europe and South America

Fleet Three – Asia (the largest proportions of this group being Chinese and Japanese)

Fleet Four – Africa

Fleet Five – The Middle East

The Fleets agreed to institute the same governmental arrangement which the Seekers had been using already (see below), and arranged a meeting for a year's time. They split the meagre remaining military ships between them, and jumped away from each other.

The first year was exceptionally difficult for the Fleets. In their shock at how completely their military forces were annihilated, and their fear of reprisals, they jumped from system to system much more frequently than they had been doing, only ever staying in a system for long enough to gather the bare minimum resources they could survive with. Their populations shrank as more of their manufacturing and scientific output was devoted to rebuilding their military strength (both physically and technologically), and some which meant that less resources could be allocated to the manufacturing of maintenance supplies for civilian ships, foodstuffs (at least those whose production required a degree of mechanisation), medicines and so on, which caused more of the elderly and infirm to die than usual. Tensions ran extremely high in the climate of fear which pervaded the Five Fleets and riots, mutinies and crime rose to never-before-seen levels, which shrank the populations even more.

Eventually, order was restored and the manufacturing needs of the military eased a little. This period of shared hardship caused the survivors to become more unified as a society, and by the time the Fleets rendezvoused with each other at the end of the year, the fleets were already beginning to resemble Clans. Each Fleet, while sympathetic to the troubles of the other four, regarded themselves as having suffered more hardships and coped more admirably. The first Meeting of the Fleets (as the yearly meeting came to be known) was short and subdued. Complaints were made by Fleets Two to Five about the fact that Fleet One had possession of the Empyrea, as its infrastructure made manufacturing, research and food production much easier. In response, Fleet One promised to devote 5% of the Empyrea's manufacturing facilities to producing goods for the rest of the Fleets, and donated 30% of its current manufacturing supplies to assist the other Fleets in building their own versions of the Empyrea. It was agreed that the Fleets needed a much more traditionally-structured military than the ad-hoc irregulars they had in place at that time, and plans for the military rank system and officer training syllabus were drawn up. The Fleet Councils also

placed law enforcement (but not the courts or judiciary) under the jurisdiction of the Navy, to be handled by Marines, who would double as the Navy's ground forces, should there ever be a need for such.

The Fleets went their separate ways again, having agreed on a meeting place in a year's time, and also on four smaller meetings, one held every three months, in which Fleet One would distribute the goods they'd manufactured for the other fleets.

This pattern continued for the next two decades. Gradually the Fleet Navies became more established and military production eased, allowing manufacturing to be switched back to the other essential commodities which had been in short supply for so long. Fleets Two to Five finished constructing their own orbital cities. This in turn led to population growth and a rise in the availability of luxury goods. A system of trade, using labour and goods exchange (see 'Economy') was established and agreed upon at the Meeting of the Fleets, and, although Fleet One no longer needed to devote any manufacturing output to the other Fleets, the quarterly meetings continued. They now served as an opportunity for the Fleets to trade with each other, rather than the one-way traffic from Fleet One out to the other Fleets it had originally been intended as.

The Fleets' more established Navies allowed scouting sorties to be increased, and to range further a field. During these scouting missions, they began to encounter evidence of other space faring factions: jettisoned waste materials, evidence of mining, drifting empty ships and so on. This led the Fleets to conclude that at least some of the missing rebels who jumped away from the 2179 attack on the Ubykhia but didn't rendezvous with the Fleets were still alive and hopefully still searching for the Fleets.

Then, on 09 November 2193, a scouting party from Fleet Three found evidence of a non-human civilisation: a small spacecraft, badly damaged and inactive, drifting amongst the Kuiper Belt of the KeKouan system. Fleet Three studied the craft, and discovered that it had the ability to transform between a traditional 'fighter' mode and a bipedal 'Mecha' mode. The *Garland*, as the alien ship was codenamed, was too badly damaged to repair, but Fleet Three were able to use the principles and techniques the *Garland* used to construct a very crude prototype transformable fighter, which they demonstrated at the next Meeting of the Fleets. They shared the technological advances they'd gained from analysing the *Garland* with the other Fleets, who immediately began research and production on their own version of the new type of fighter.

On 06 February 2202, Fleet Two intercepted Ubykhia communications detailing a planned assault on a colony which had become too troublesome and which the Ubykhia decided needed to be made an example of. Fleet Two was able to reach the colony first and offer evacuation to any colonists who wished to leave.

The rescued colonists were able to give Fleet Two a much more comprehensive report on the situation of the Ubykhia's populace than the Fleets had previously been able to gather on their own, and the level of atrocities that the colonists described were so worrying that Fleet Two's council decided to call an emergency Meeting of the Fleets.

At this emergency Meeting, the Fleets agreed that although they were in no position to mount a prolonged offensive campaign against the Ubykhia, their current level of resistance was too small. They arranged for some of the rescued colonists to return to the Ubykhia and act as covert agents, spreading the news of the Fleets' existence and developing a properly-organised Resistance which would be able to stage small-scale operations against military targets, relay news back to the Fleets, run a Black Market operation between the Fleets and the oppressed populace; and would also work to expand the Resistance network to all corners of the Ubykhia. The Fleets also agreed that, if possible, they would work to evacuate populations under threat from the Ubykhia military. It was also agreed that, wherever possible, the Fleet Navies would perform raids against smaller Ubykhia military targets. The idea behind this increased combat policy wasn't to inflict much damage on the Ubykhia's

military, but to act as both harassment for the Ubykhia and as a physical sort of encouragement for the populace, to give them hope.

Finally, taking inspiration from the Ubykhia's insulting name for them (Strannik), the Fleets decided that they should have a collective name for themselves, and decided on Seekers. It was felt that this name reflected the Fleets' search for a way to achieve liberation from the Ubykhia, while at the same time remaining benign – something which would hopefully encourage more support from the oppressed populace of the Ubykhia.

Despite this policy of liberating entire colonies leading to semi-regular influxes of disparate ethnicities, the Fleets became ever more clannish, their individual cultures retaining ethnic traits of the original Fleet populations and refining and enshrining them. The individual fleets also gave themselves names over the centuries, and are now known by the following names:

Fleet One are known as the Atheling

Fleet Two are known as the Carolus

Fleet Three are known as the Göbboku

Fleet Four are known as the Iqembu

Fleet Five are known as the Jama'ah

The populations of the Fleets swelled considerably, and this placed additional stress on the production facilities of the Fleets, which grew ever more strained as millions of additional colonists joined the Seekers. The Fleets were forced to abandon their rate of military expansion and devote their manufacturing output to meeting the subsistence needs of their populations. This caused considerable consternation among the Fleet Councils, as without constant replenishment, the Fleets didn't have enough munitions to continue mounting raids on the Ubykhia or to continue liberating colonies, but both of these were considered essential to the Seekers' continued support among the oppressed Ubykhia populace, and the Seekers' eventual goal of overthrowing the Ubykhia itself.

At the 2208 Meeting of the Fleets, it was therefore decided to encourage the formation of military service providers, who would be given Letters of Marque and Reprisal authorising raids against Ubykhia forces and the recovery of salvage which would then be sold back to the Fleet at fixed prices (similar to the way Prize Money was offered to the Royal Navy until its reform in 1918). These military service providers, known as Privateer Companies, would be responsible for the outfitting of their own craft, which would have to include not only attack craft but the Carriers that would house and transport them.

Due to the way the Fleet societies had been organised up to this point (essentially as Communist states, with almost all Fleet property held in common), no-one had the credits, carrier craft or manufacturing facilities needed to put together a Privateer Company, so the Fleet Councils agreed to donate older ships to groups of citizens wanting to form a Company, and offer low-interest loans in order to assist the refitting of these ships and the purchasing of the attack craft which would be needed. The Companies were also offered preferential terms on the purchase of any new vessels brought into the Fleets by liberated colonists. They also donated all their knowledge of transformable Strike Suits to the Companies.

The uptake on these initiatives was larger than the Councils had expected, with scores of Privateer Companies being formed in each Fleet. The Councils were delighted, but quickly realised that this explosion of PMCs caused its own problems, as none of the nascent Companies was really big enough to function as the self-sufficient fighting force the Councils had hoped would appear.

In order to try to rectify this situation, the Councils altered the terms of their incentives, and encouraged specialisation of the Companies, into dedicated Manufacturing Companies, who would produce the ships and weaponry for the combat-specific Privateer Companies. They also offered to lower the loan interest even further for Companies who joined together. This

had the desired effect, and within two years, the scramble of PMCs had resolved itself. There was now only one Company in each Fleet who produced Strike Suits, and another in each Fleet producing weapons for the combat Companies. The combat-specific Companies were still more numerous: there are eighteen Privateer Companies split between the five Fleets.

Locations

The Fleets are nomadic in nature, never having become powerful enough to feel confident in staking a permanent claim on a star system and settling there. As with most nomadic societies, however, they do have their own 'territories': systems with planets that have usable ecosystems, or have plentiful deposits of easily-mined ores. The Fleets visit these systems often (having first scouted them out using Strike Suits and non-transformable fighters to ensure there's no Ubykhia presence) and consider these their 'home' systems.

The Atheling home system is called Agrona, which is on the far side of the Crab Nebula from Sol. It has seven planets, two of which have ecosystems capable of supporting life – Huxley and Anesidora – and an extensive Kuiper belt which is extremely ore-rich. The Atheling have a semi-permanent mining and manufacturing station here, and rely heavily on the Navy's scouts to act as an early-warning system for any Ubykhia presence.

The Carolus haven't established even a semi-permanent presence anywhere, but regard the Messier-Alpha system as the focal point of their territory. As with all the Fleets' home systems, Messier-Alpha has several planets with usable ecosystems and is rich in resources which the Carolus can harvest and process into weapon and ship production.

The Göbboku claim the star system Shuǐwěiyī, in the Eridanus constellation, as their home system. This system has a bright blue star which spins so rapidly it's become flattened. Shuǐwěiyī only has one habitable planet, Duval, but this is three times the size of the Earth, and is more than sufficient for the limited use the Fleet puts it to.

The Iqembu home system is Thuban, which is over 300 light years away from Sol. Thuban's star is a white giant, over 250 times larger than Sol. It's located in the constellation Draco and has, despite its massive sun, plentiful life on its five habitable worlds, though none that has evolved to the point of sentience.

The Jama'ah have chosen to claim the Algol system as their own. This is a controversial choice, as the system is a well-known one. It is 92.8 light years away from Sol, and is also known as Beta Persei. It is a three-star system (Beta Persei A, B, and C) in which the large and bright primary Beta Persei A is regularly eclipsed by the dimmer Beta Persei B. The system's high profile means that the Jama'ah have a much more transitory presence there than the other fleets have in their home systems. They make very little use of the three Earth-like planets Algol boasts, preferring instead to expand the number of farm ships in their fleet to more than double the number the other fleets have. However, they make use of the extremely rich asteroid belt the system possesses.

Fleet Government

A democratically elected Fleet Council with a term of five years, led by a President and assisted by a Cabinet of six: Vice President, Chancellor (who heads the Treasury and takes charge of commerce), Admiral of the Fleet (who is not elected, but is appointed by the Council from the military's Admirals), Attorney General (who heads the law courts and justice system), Surgeon General (who is the chief of the Seekers' medical personnel and heads the health service) and Home Secretary (who takes charge of education, manufacturing, and whose job is usually seen as the most difficult to manage). All other aspects of government are overseen jointly by the Fleet Council

Most policy decisions are headed by the President, but voted on by the entire Council (the odd number is to ensure there are no deadlocks) and must gain a majority vote to be approved. However, certain decisions can only be made and must only be issued by the President (such as the declaration of a state of war).

Military

The Seekers' Fleet Defence militaries are modelled on a naval structure in terms of their command, as by far the greater part of the Seeker forces are spacecraft. There's no such thing as the OR('enlisted' men)/Commissioned Officer disparity in the Seeker navies. Everyone serves the first year at the lowest rank (see below). After this, if they show promise, they are sent to Command Training. This can happen immediately after the year is up, or whenever the person is deemed ready by their commanding officer. Not every member of the Navy shows enough promise (or the desire) to enter Command Training.

There are nine ranks, beginning with Rating and ending with Admiral of the Fleet:

Ratings

The lowest naval rank, and the one at which every member of the Navy starts their career; this is actually three ranks rolled into one. When signed on to a ship's books, the person is rated Crewman, if they have no prior experience of flying or maintaining starships (which is the usual case with new recruits) was given a rating according to his experience. Those with limited experience (usually refugees or people who have decided to change career) are Ordinary Seamen, while knowledgeable recruits are rated Able Seamen. Together these three ranks are known as 'ratings'. None of them outrank the other – the ABs aren't able to order the ordinaries or crewmen – but a person must be rated Able Seaman before they can be promoted or enter Command Training.

Warrant Officer

This is the highest rank it's possible to achieve without going through Command Training. Most naval personnel hold this rank. They make up the large amounts of technicians, engineers, mechanics, quartermasters, masters-at-arms and so on who are needed to maintain and run the Navy. Most of the gun crews are Warrant Officers too, although they are commanded by Midshipmen.

Midshipman

Midshipmen are the lowest officer rank in the Seeker military. Their duties depend on their role: if they're pilots, they can pilot non-transformable fighters. If they're engineers, technicians, or gunnery officers they will be in command of a small team under the direction of a Lieutenant (who will in turn be under the direction of the Officer of the Watch). If they're bridge crew, they will be under the direct command of the Officer of the Watch.

Lieutenant

Lieutenants are the backbone of the military's command structure. They have numerous tasks to fulfil. If they are pilots, they may be trained to pilot the non-transformable Strike Suits which are the heart of the Seekers' defensive capability. Lieutenant is the highest rank at which it's still possible to pilot fighter craft or Strike Suits. If the Lieutenant has ambition of higher rank, they must switch to bridge crew and learn to command a ship. Consequently, the fighter pilot ranks are fairly filled with Lieutenants, as piloting a Strike Suit is by far the most sought-after military role, as well as the most romantic. Once made a Strike Suit pilot, most people remain a Lieutenant for the length of their service.

If they are engineers, technicians or gunnery officers, they will command a 'watch' of several Midshipmen and many more Ratings and Warrant Officers, under the command of the Officer of the Watch. If they are bridge crew, they will be ranked First Lieutenant or Second Lieutenant, and will function as the Officers of the Watch, who command the entire ship when the Captain is not present; and act as XO when the Captain is on duty. In the very unlikely event that an enemy vessel is captured, they are most likely to be given command.

Commander

The next step up from Lieutenant is the rank of Commander. A Commander is effectively a Captain in all but official title. It is generally a 'holding' rank, awarded to someone who is due a Captaincy but for whom there is no vessel available. This rank is rarely given to anyone, but when it is used, it is either given to a Lieutenant who has commanded a ship well in the absence of a Captain (for example, if the Captain dies during a battle), or has been granted command of a vessel several times. Occasionally, a Captain who has survived the loss of their ship may be temporarily called a Commander and placed on another vessel as XO until a new command opens up for them.

Captain

The absolute ruler on their ship, the captain is responsible for everything that happens on board their ship, as well as the well-being of the crew, ensuring there are enough of them to have the ship ready for service, and even organising the purchasing of extras to keep them happy. They serve in one of the three Fleets, under orders from an Admiral, and may be placed in a squadron under a Commodore. Often however, they are given orders which take them on scouting or escort missions, and when this happens they are given general mission orders, but within these orders they are in complete control and are expected to act on their own initiative.

Commodore

A Commodore is a Captain promoted to take charge of a naval squadron. Commodores are usually the ones the Admiralty have earmarked for the most senior ranks.

Admirals

There are four Admirals in the Seeker Navy: three 'regular' Admirals who are each placed in command of a fleet of ships (one third of the entire Navy each, although these numbers are somewhat fluid depending on the needs of the individual fleets) and the Admiral of the Fleet, who serves on the Fleet Council, and takes total control of the Navy. Promotion from Commodore to Admiral is very rare, and only occurs when there is a vacancy. Promotion to Admiral of the Fleet is handled by a vote. The votes come from the President, the Fleet Council (though the current Admiral of the Fleet can't vote in this election), and from the three Admirals. If, after a General Election, the existing Admiral of the Fleet is not confirmed by the new Council, they could theoretically become an Admiral without a command (traditionally known as a Yellow Admiral), but in general they will resign instead, as almost without exception by the time a Commodore is promoted to Admiral, they're near the end of their careers anyway.

Role of the Military

The main role of the Fleets' military is to act as escorts to the civilian ships and to guard the Fleet's space stations and mining operations. They also perform scouting missions, finding suitable destination star systems for the Fleet's next jumps and acting as an early warning system for possible Ubykhia attacks.

More rarely, the military is used as an aggressive force, staging raids on small or poorly-defended Ubykhia military outposts, space stations and fleets, or providing cover if the Fleet is going to rescue a population deemed 'undesirable' by the Ubykhia.

Fleet military service works on a rolling "short tour" basis, in which military personnel work for a set period of time (six months for technicians, gunners, radar operators and so on, and three months for Strike Suit pilots and combat ship senior officers) and then receive half that tour time in leave. Due to the lack of traditional salaries, most military personnel take on extra work at the Trade Exchange (see 'Economy').

As with traditional militaries, leave can be cancelled at any time if the Fleet Council declares a state of emergency.

The Navy also employs Marines, who function as the Fleet's police force in everyday duty, but who form the Fleet's infantry when necessary.

Privateers

The Privateer Companies are tasked with conducting the Fleets' offensive campaigns. Their Letters of Marque and Reprisal give them the authority (and indeed the duty) to seek out and engage the Ubykhia forces in order to weaken them and gather salvage for the Fleets. The Strike Suit pilots of the Privateer Companies are known as Furies and have the reputation of being rapacious and highly aggressive. They are all happy to take risks and engage larger Ubykhia forces, as the rewards for salvage are so appealing: a Fury can earn the equivalent of a Fleet Defense Force pilot's yearly salary for a few hours' tough fighting. This is balanced against the fact that the Furies must purchase their own weaponry and pay for the upkeep of their Strike Suits, but it's still a far better-paid position than the regular military can offer.

The Company command structures are much less rigid than the military's. Furies are essentially individual contractors, responsible for their own conduct and well-being. They rent a berth for themselves and their Strike Suit on a Privateer Carrier (which stay close to specific Fleets, but aren't strictly part of them), and employ the Carrier's agent (who earns a cut of any income the Fury makes) to find them specific missions or supply them with intelligence regarding the location of Ubykhia forces to engage. In-between specific missions, the Furies will typically search star systems for derelict ships or other sources of salvage.

The lucrative yet predatory nature of Fury life leads to frequent clashes with other Privateer Companies over salvage, as the Furies aren't given to a sharing mentality, and if they encounter a rival Company's Fury near to some salvage, they will attack them. Attacks on Furies under contract to the same Company are forbidden, and if this happens, the Fury will be expelled from the Company, as with so many volatile personalities on board a single Carrier, it's important that the Companies keep internal order as harmonious as possible.

More rarely, entire Companies are contracted directly by the Fleet Councils. This is almost always because the Fleet is planning to liberate a colony and needs a mobile offensive force to engage any Ubykhia forces and act as skirmishers, slowing the Ubykhia down sufficiently for the Fleet to complete the evacuation.

Economy

This is a complex beast due to the Seekers' need to transact commerce in three different markets: within their own Fleet, with other Fleets, and with the Black Market based in the Human Empire.

Within the Fleet, the Seekers mainly work in a hands-on anarcho-communist economy: because the nomadic Seekers do not have plentiful resources but have a lot of needs (food, clothing, furniture production etc. for ≈8 million people; manufacturing and engineering in order to keep the ships in the Fleet fleet functioning properly, weapons and ship manufacturing for defense and for expanding populations caused by the slow but steady influx of disaffected emigrants from the Empire, as well as refugees from planets and space colonies who have been deemed troublesome by the Ubykhia) everyone is granted rations for food and clothing and other necessities, as well as a place to live (eventually a cabin of their own, although they're billeted with other people if there's no room at the present). In exchange, they work a set number of hours per day at their trade.

The limited luxuries that exist are governed by a Trade Exchange economy: people can work extra shifts, or can donate goods or services to the Trade Exchange in return for credits. These credits can, in return, be used to purchase goods and services. Goods are stored in the Trade Exchange, and service contracts are drawn up, signed by the provider and then kept in the Trade Exchange. In order to alleviate the problem of unequal trades, the Trade Exchange sets the cost of these trades and people don't deal with each other directly.

Trade between Fleets is handled by a dedicated Trade Committee (usually made up from members of the Fleet's Trade Exchange and the Fleet's Treasury). Once a year, the Fleets all send their Trade Committees to a Trade Summit, in which trade prices are set depending on current stock of commodities and projected production for the year. Then, throughout the year, these prices will not change and the Trade Committee will trade on behalf of the Fleet, buying and selling based on a schedule of requirements drawn up by the Fleet Council. Trading can take place at any time, but due to the nomadic nature of the Fleets, this rarely happens except for at the Quarter Day Trade Fairs, held once every three months. Individual Fleet members don't really trade with other Fleets. This lack of contact leads to a fairly insular 'Clannish' outlook, as contact between individuals from different Fleets is extremely rare.

The Fleet Trade Committee also deals with the Human Empire's black markets. There's some small-scale counterfeiting operations in each Fleet, making forged Roubles – the Human Empire's currency – but by and large black market trading is handled by selling illegal items (such as cheap medicines which are highly taxed in the Human Empire) as well as weaponry directly to the Resistance. The proceeds from these sales are kept in the Fleet Treasury and used to buy intelligence, as well as manufacturing technologies and materials and so on, and a few luxuries which are donated to the Trade Exchange.

Inter-Fleet relations

The Fleets are nominally an alliance: they share intelligence and technology, and trade with each other at regular intervals; they will always side with each other against the Ubykhia, and will come to one another's aid if necessary. This does not stop disagreements between fleets, which can develop into feuds and occasional combat (though open war has never broken out).

These skirmishes almost always occur over territory. All the fleets have wide-ranging territorial claims, and if the scouts encounter other Fleets in their territory, they will engage them. This is rare, however, and inter-Fleet combat is almost always the preserve of Furies.

In their diaspora, the Fleets have also discovered traces of an ancient alien civilization whose technology far outstrips the Human Empire's, and salvage from these wrecks and derelicts is especially prized, so any other Fleet's scouts will certainly be attacked if encountered near this salvage.

Other than this, the Fleets have very limited contact and this has led to relations between the Fleets remaining cordial, but never particularly warm.

Strike Suit Manufacturers

Historical Overview

At the 2208 Meeting of the Fleets, the five Seeker Fleet Councils decided to encourage the formation of military service providers, who would be given Letters of Marque and Reprisal authorising raids against Ubykhia forces. These Privateer Companies would be responsible for the outfitting of their own craft. The Councils also encouraged the formation of dedicated Manufacturing Companies, who would produce the ships and weaponry for the combat-specific Privateer Companies. Soon, there were five Strike Suit Manufacturing Companies, one in each fleet, producing the transformable Strike Suits the Privateer Companies used.

Integrated Starship Solutions [ISS] (Carolus)

Integrated Starship Solutions have worked closely with the weapons manufacturer Coeurdelion to produce a Strike Suit which works extremely well with their weapons range. As such they have developed a Strike Suit which is reliable and relatively cheap to manufacture. This has allowed ISS to position themselves very comfortably as the dependable 'jack of all trades' Strike Suit manufacturer, and their Strike Suit is by far the most commonly used Suit among the Furies.

ISS produce the Valkyrie Strike Suit:

VX-031 "Valkyrie"



The standard choice for Strike Suit pilots; the Valkyrie's handling and speed, whilst certainly not disappointing - they are easily able to outmanoeuvre the Fleet Navies' non-transformable fighters - are considered fairly average among Furies. Its shields are extremely effective, however, and are fitted with a special performance boost that covers the ship in a blue glow, link with the thrusters to accelerate the Valkyrie to three times its usual top cruising speed and allows it to ram objects without taking damage.

Nixon Aeronautics (Atheling)

Nixon Aeronautics share several production facilities with the Arcwind Engineering Weapons Manufacturing Company, and this has resulted in a harmonious development process which has benefited both companies. As such the Nixon Aeronautics strike suit is well-suited to use in conjunction with Arcwind weapons.

Nixon Aeronautics produces the Aura Strike Suit:

VX-SS-03 "Aura"



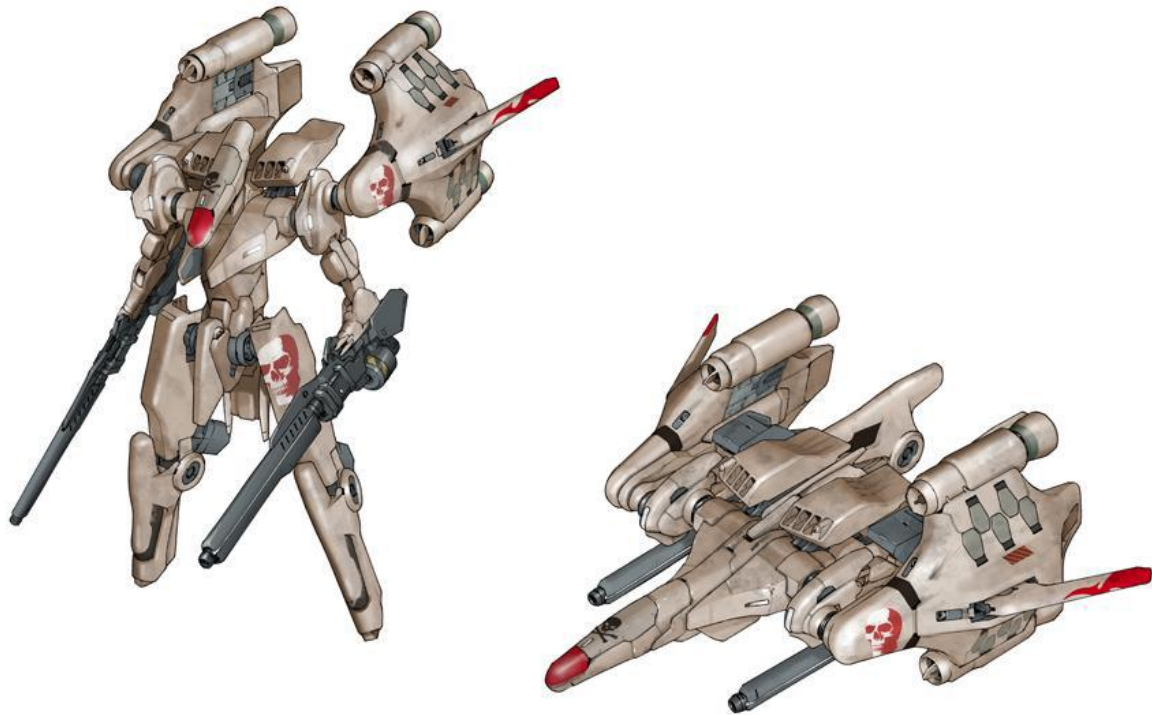
The Aura makes use of multiphasic forcefield technology to produce a Strike Suit with exceptional shields. The added power that the shields draw means that the handling and top speed are lower than the Valkyrie's. It boasts a special ECM discharge that nullifies beam weapons at close range, which is extremely useful on guerrilla missions where there is a high risk of encountering numerically superior Ubykhia forces in dogfights.

Hephaesta (Gobokku)

Haephesta were formed in 2209, and have developed a reputation for innovation and risk-taking. Their current Strike Suit is the fourth model they have produced, each one having superseded their previous offering. Unlike the other Strike Suit manufacturers, Hephaesta do not work with any of the Weapons Manufacture Companies, preferring instead to concentrate on advancing Strike Suit technology as much as possible.

Hephaesta produce the Itano Strike Suit:

VX-93M "Itano"



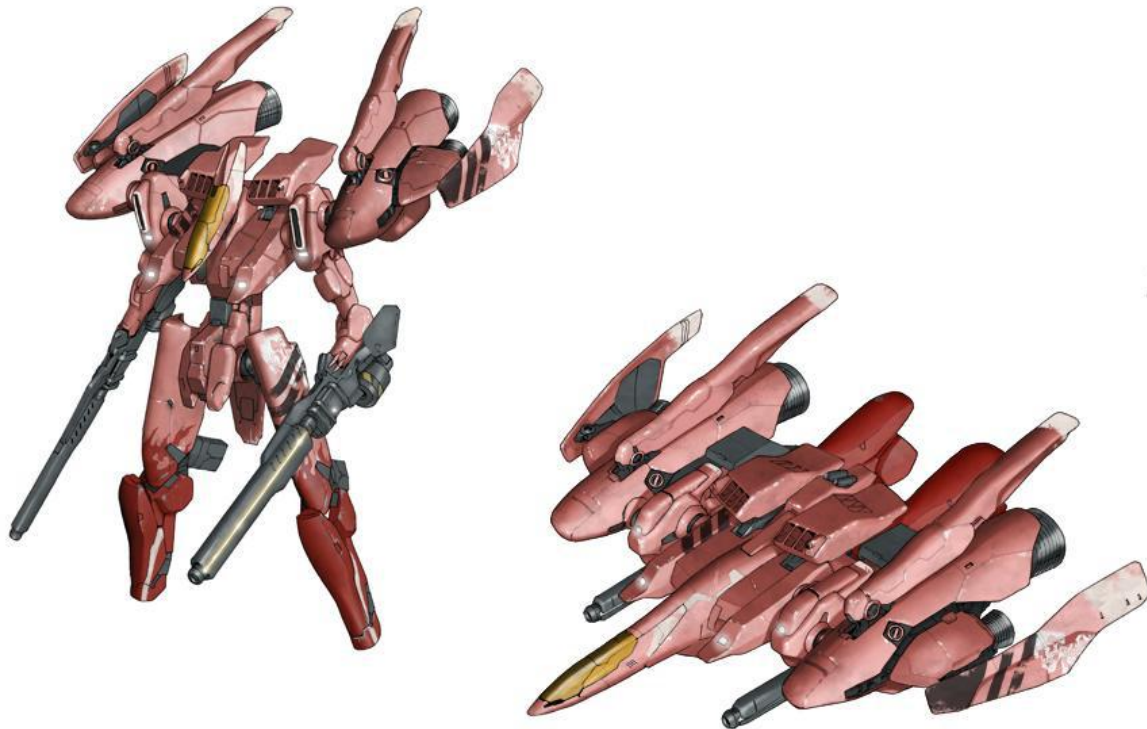
This missile optimised Strike Suit is fast and responsive, and Haephesta have taken the unusual but highly effective step of including an inbuilt missile cache which can easily make the difference in the life-or-death dogfight encounters which are the Furies' raison d'etre.

Copperhead Suit Technologies [CST] (Iqembu)

CST believe that Strike Suit technology is most suited to dog fighting, and to that end they have concentrated on producing a well-rounded suit with unique electronic countermeasures which enables the pilot to stay engaged with enemy craft for longer than they would be able to in other Strike Suits. This has made Iqembu a very popular company among Furies.

CST produces the Anaheim Strike Suit:

VX-078P "Anaheim"



Very similar to ISS's Valkyrie Strike Suit, the Anaheim has a slight edge in speed, and is at a slight disadvantage in terms of handling. It is also equipped with a powerful ECM pulse, which acts as a radar jammer at close range, meaning that the Anaheim is a very effective dog fighting Strike Suit.

Azagaya (Jama'ah)

Azagaya have taken their name from an ancient form of javelin - a weapon which was extremely fast and deadly. They have embraced these characteristics and have devoted themselves to producing a Strike Suit which will be able to fly straight and true into the heart of the enemy.

Azagaya produce the Phantasma Strike Suit:

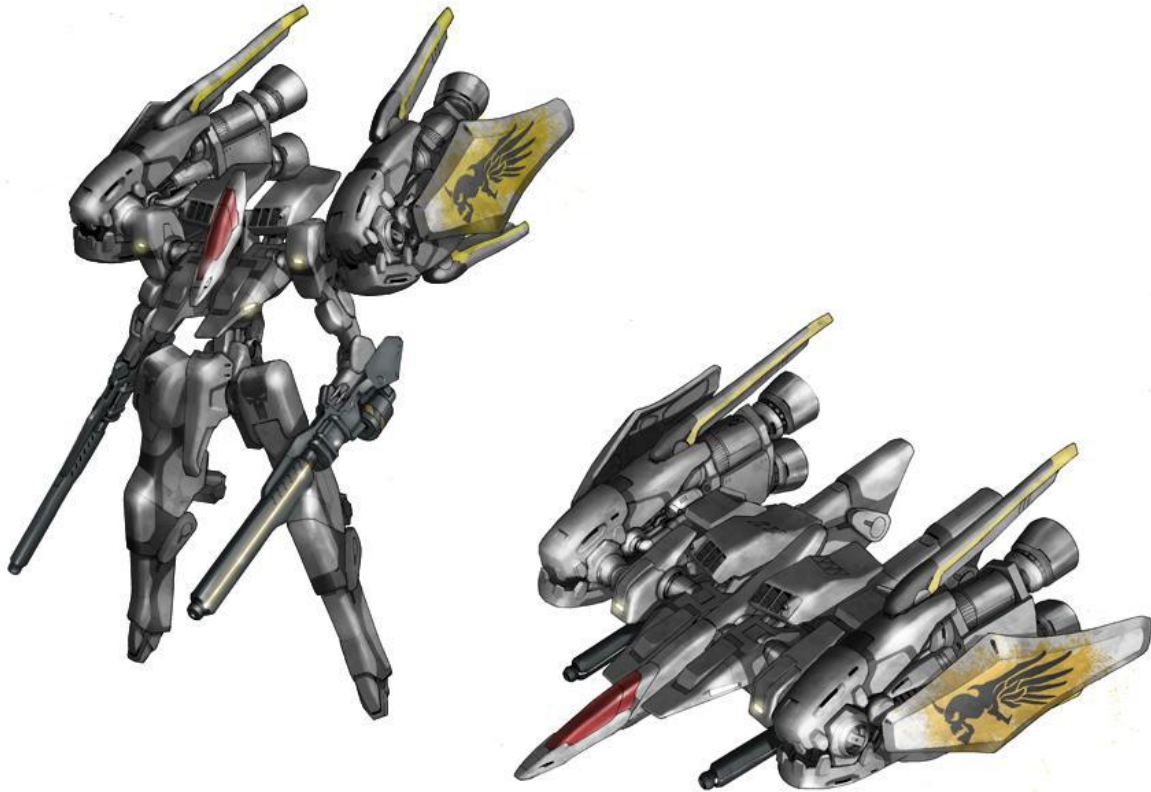
VX-052F "Phantasma"



Azagaya have produced an incredibly fast Strike Suit in the Phantasma, but have had to sacrifice shield strength as a result. Conscious that the Phantasma can't take as much punishment as other Strike Suits, Azagaya fitted it with a special mine deployment system, which releases smart mines that follow any nearby enemy ships.

Special Strike Suits

YX-095 "Durandal"



The Durandal is a collaboration between all five Strike Suit manufacturers, and is not yet ready for full-scale production. It boasts exceptional handling abilities and a stunningly fast top speed. It also features a one off time limited spherical super shield that deflects all damage for 10 seconds. [This Strike Suit is SECRET]

YX-000 "Garland"

Discovered by the Gobboku in 2193, this alien craft is the basis for all human Strike Suits. The Garland which the Fleets found was too badly damaged to repair, but the Gobboku scientists were able to reverse engineer some of the technology used in the Garland, which led directly to the transforming craft the Furies use. The Garland is believed to be incredibly powerful, very fast and with very strong shields. It appears to possess a medium range but devastatingly powerful energy wave cannon.

Weapon Manufacturers

Historical Overview

At the 2208 Meeting of the Fleets, the five Seeker Fleet Councils decided to encourage the formation of military service providers, who would be given Letters of Marque and Reprisal authorising raids against Ubykhia forces. These Privateer Companies would be responsible for the outfitting of their own craft. The Councils also encouraged the formation of dedicated Manufacturing Companies, who would produce the ships and weaponry for the combat-specific Privateer Companies. Soon, there were five Manufacturing Companies, one in each fleet, producing weapons for the transformable Strike Suits the Privateer Companies used. Although each Strike Suit is different, they all derive from the same technological origin, and they have been designed with standardised weapon hardpoints, meaning that each Suit can be equipped with weapons from all the Manufacturing Companies.

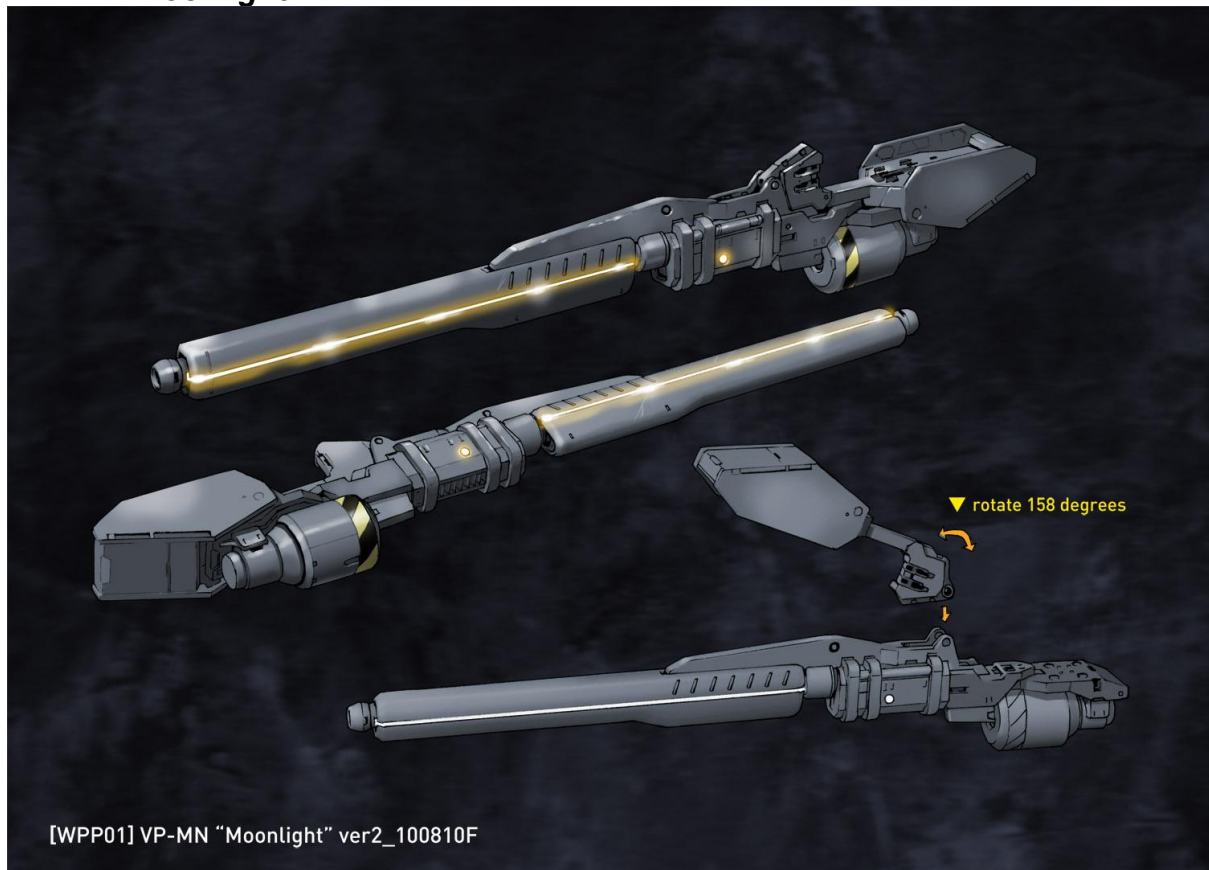
Coeurdelion (Carolus)

Formed in 2208, on the day that the Councils announced the formation of the military service providers, Coeurdelion are the only Weapons Manufacture Company that was not formed from the amalgamation of other Companies. Based in a purpose-built weapons manufacturing ship originally owned by company founder Jacques Maturin, who escaped from a colony which was about to be attacked by the Ubykhia, Coeurdelion have a reputation for extremely reliable but rather unimaginative weaponry which has made them the de facto 'standard' choice for Fury pilots.

Coeurdelion produce the following weapons:

Gun:

VP-MN "Moonlight"



Although it does not excel in any area, the Moonlight is a plasma cannon which has an unparalleled reputation for reliability and value for money. The Moonlight features both single shot and rapid fire modes. The single shot mode is most useful against enemy craft as it does a lot of damage over time, while the less powerful rapid fire mode is effective against multiple swarm objects such as enemy missiles. This versatility, when combined with its reputation, makes it an excellent choice for standard combat and salvage missions.

Missile:
VM-SR "Saur"



Another rock-solid weapon from Coeurdelion. The Saur doesn't stand out in either range or destructive power, but offers unrivalled reliability coupled with a respectable lock time and volley size.

Arcwind Engineering (Atheling)

Arcwind Engineering was formed from a conglomeration of four separate Manufacturing Companies who found that they couldn't afford to operate a manufacturing ship each. They found success in licensing Coeurdelion's missile technology and refining it, offering what is essentially a more powerful, specialised version of the Saur. The directors of Arcwind used this revenue stream to invest in their own research, which has produced the Mosquito. Their weaponry is most suited to the Aura Strike Suit, as when used together, they offer an extremely effective mid-to-close range firing solution.

Arcwind Engineering produces the following weapons:

Gun:

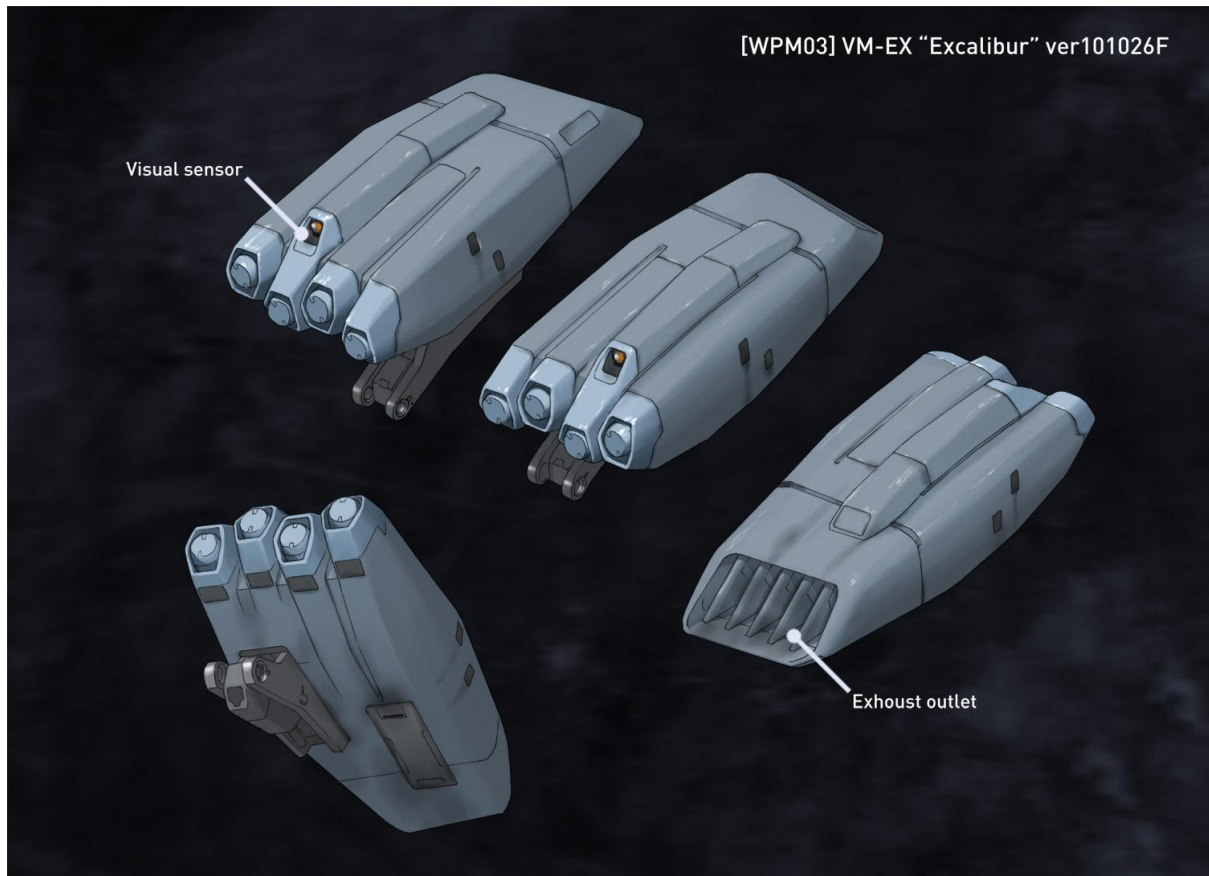
VP-MQ "Mosquito"



[WPP02] VP-MQ "Mosquit" 101031F

The Mosquito is a munition-based projectile shotgun which is extremely effective at short range, where it boasts a wide range of contact. It also offers a very fast solid munition gatling cannon, which is much less powerful but can be useful when confronting multiple enemies. When used in conjunction with a mid- or long-range missile pod and a well-armoured Strike Suit, the Mosquito can be an extremely deadly weapon.

Missile:
VM-EX "Excalibur"



Originally based on Coeurdelion's Saur missile pod, the Excalibur is more powerful, while retaining the lock speed, volley size, range which makes the Saur such a respected choice amongst Furies. The only aspect of the Saur which isn't matched is its peerless reliability, meaning that the Excalibur requires more frequent maintenance. The added costs haven't deterred Furies however, and the Excalibur is proving popular.

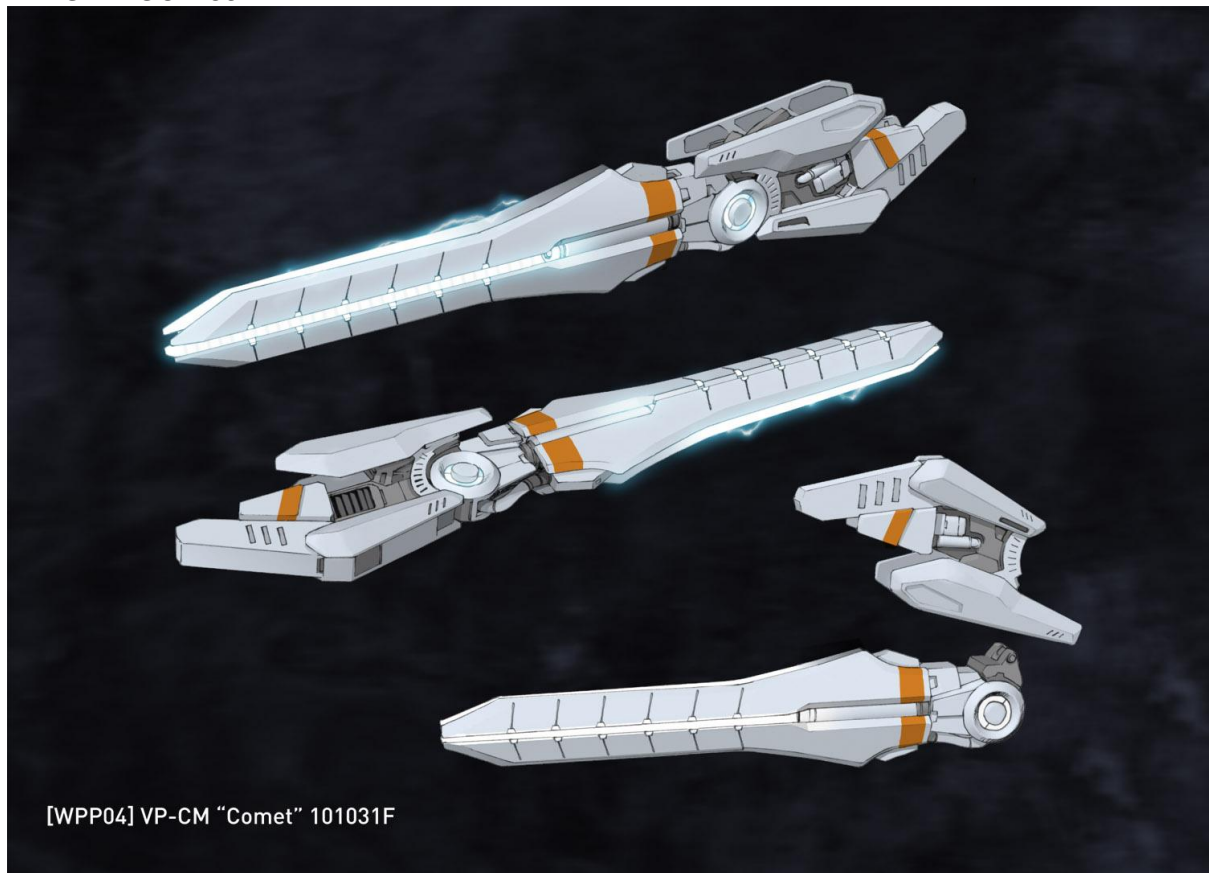
Boone Armaments (Jama'ah)

Boone Armaments are the newest and smallest Manufacturing Company. Founded by John Boone, a former member of the Jama'ah's Trade Committee who stepped in when the last of the Jama'ah's original Manufacturing Companies went bankrupt, buying the manufacturing facilities at an extremely low price. Boone then invested heavily in researching plasma weaponry, while at the same time producing a powerful but rather unreliable missile pod. Boone's success looked unlikely until they unveiled their experimental plasma cannon, which has quickly found favour with Furies who enjoy using high performance weaponry and don't mind paying the associated price tag.

Boone Armaments produce the following weapons:

Gun:

YP-CM "Comet"



[WPP04] VP-CM "Comet" 101031F

These experimental charge-based plasma cannon are considered a 'luxury' weapon, as its production cycle is lengthy and difficult. The resulting cannon is extremely powerful and has found an enthusiastic following among Furies who can afford the high price that Boone Armaments charge for it. It features a powerful plasma shot that has to be charged before firing and which also has a large area of effect on impact. This is ideal to use on fleet ships. It also features a separate precision rifle mode that has excellent range.

Missile:
VM-GT "Glint"



The Glint is extremely powerful and had excellent range, but this comes at a price. The lock-on time is poorer than most missile pods', and the reload time is very slow. The Glint is best used when paired with a mid-range gun, as its long reload time and poor lock-on are a distinct disadvantage when used in close-quarters dog fighting.

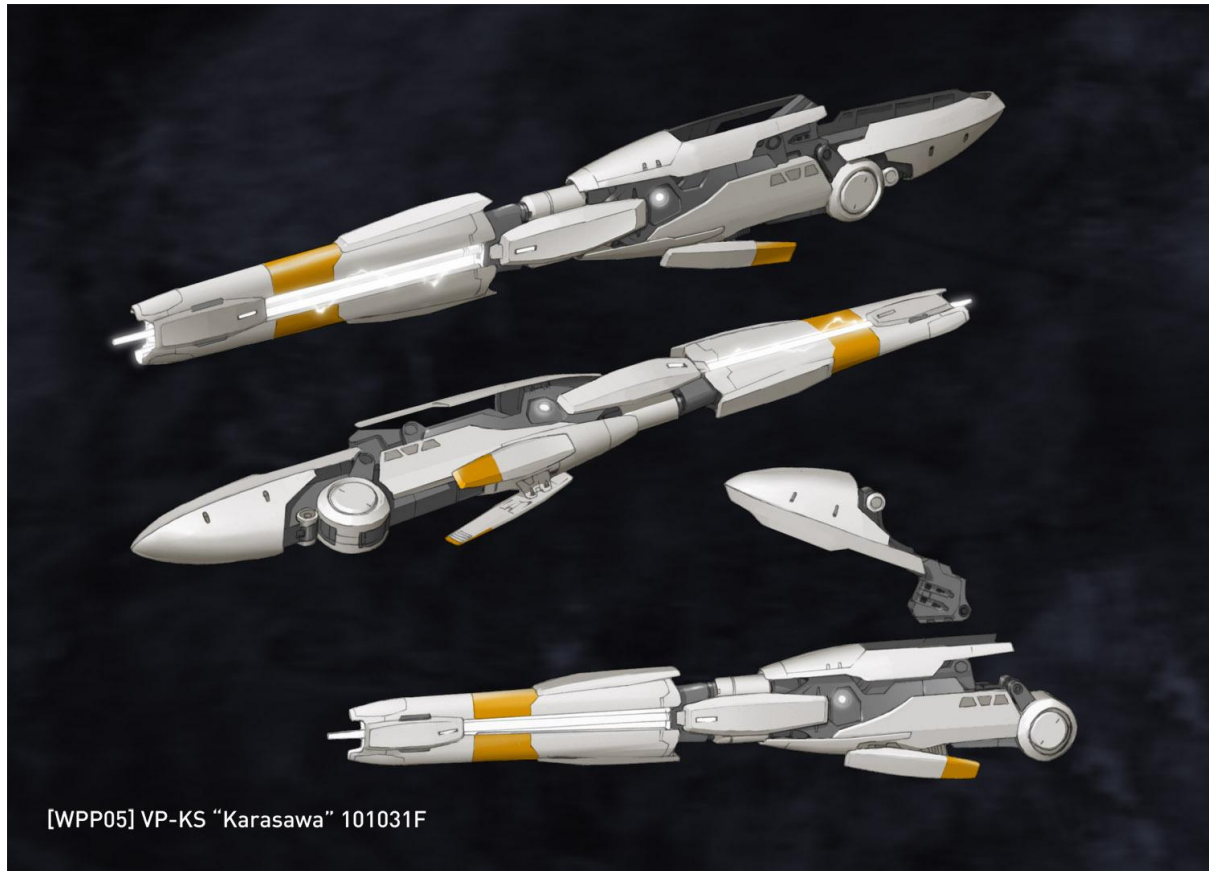
Ourorobos (Gōbboku)

Ourorobos are a secretive Company who have not yet released any mass-production weaponry and who keep their research extremely close to their chest. As a consequence there are many rumours about the direction Ourorobos are moving in terms of weaponry, with wild stories of esoteric technologies such as dark matter pulse missiles and directed micro-wormhole guns. The anticipation for Ourorobos' first product line is reaching fever pitch among the Furies.

Ourorobos produce the following weapons:

Gun:

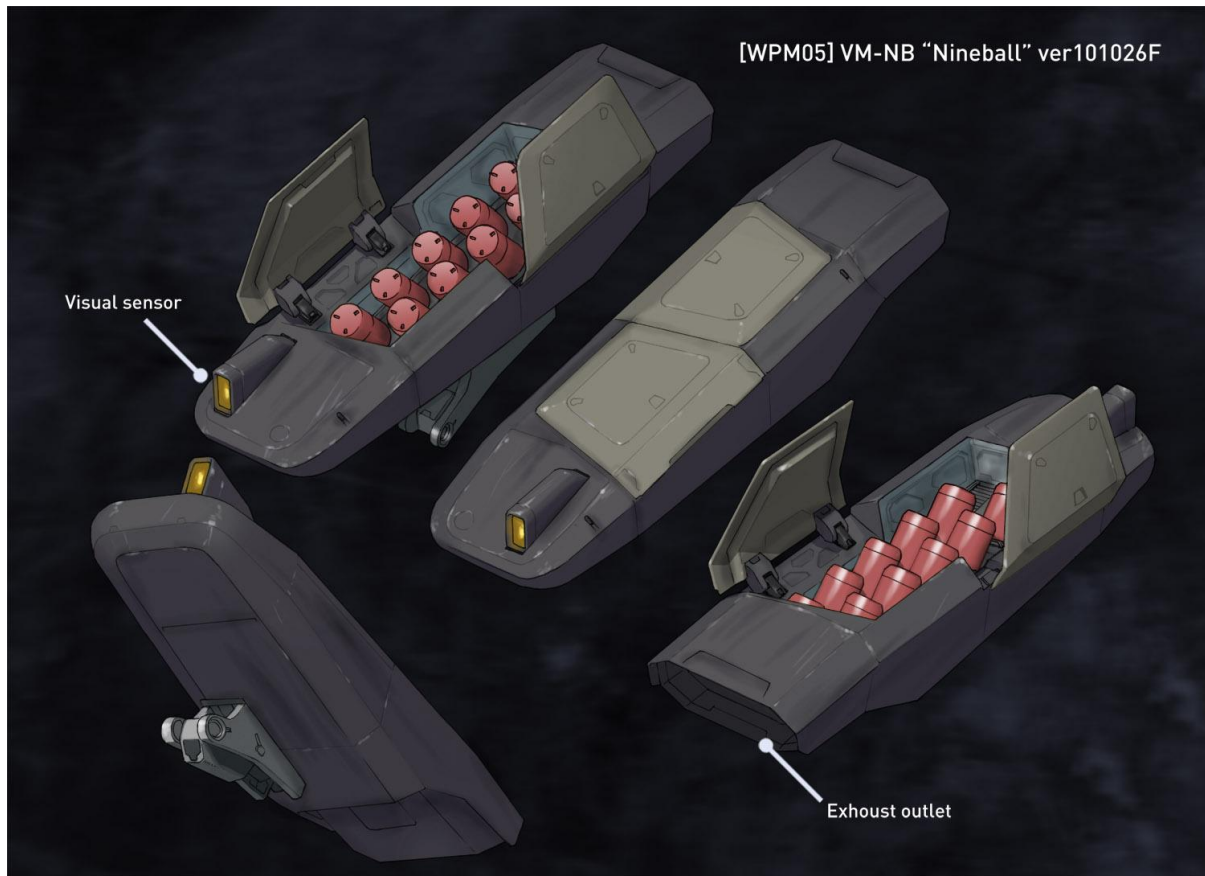
YP-KS "Karasawa"



[WPP05] VP-KS "Karasawa" 101031F

Ourorobos has only recently completed work on its gun, which is not yet in mass-production. The Karasawa is an extremely attractive weapon for any Fury. It is an experimental constant plasma beam launcher with an additional ion-chain mode. The beam launcher mode, known as *Beam Lance*, fires a lance of concentrated plasma that does increased damage over time when in contact with a single enemy. The Ion Chain mode is a faster firing ion charge that arcs between enemies on contact. Each shot has a small area of effect and also does a limited damage over time. It is excellent against incoming missiles.

Missile:
YM-NB "Nineball"



Not content with one innovative new technology, Ourorobos are also developing an experimental missile pod, the Nineball. This is a new prototype short range missile with excellent damage and an area effect of damage on impact. In addition to its high damage, it boasts by far the best lock on time; volley size and per-missile reload time of any missile pod.

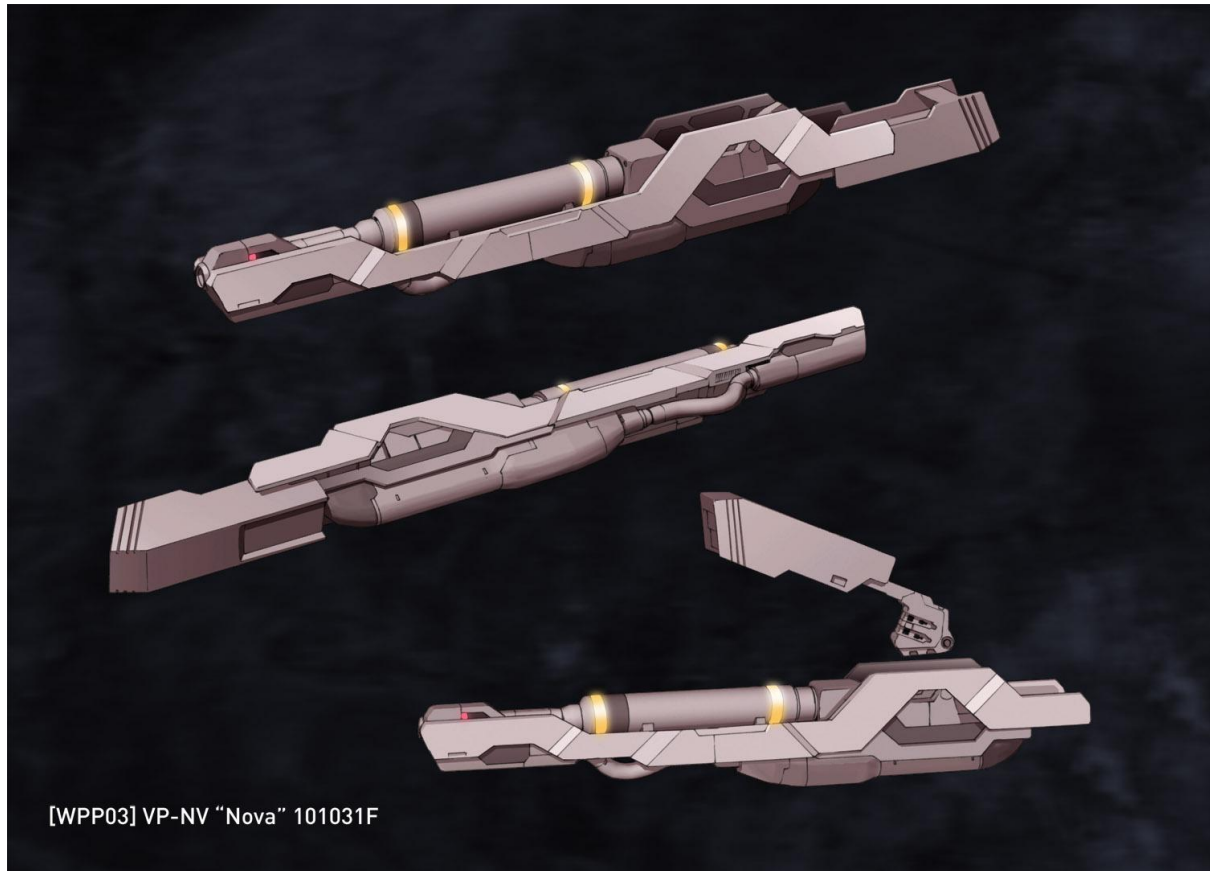
Eddings-McLelland Industrial Technologies [EMIT] (Iqembu)

An aggressive company whose ideals favour explosive power and direct assaults over more refined tactics, Eddings-McLelland have worked hard to perfect a weapon set to support this philosophy, and have built up a wide fan base among the gung-ho Fury community. Their weaponry also works well as a complement to the longer-range armaments produced by other Companies, allowing for a flexible battle plan. This has broadened EMIT's appeal beyond the less strategically-minded Furies.

EMIT produce the following weapons:

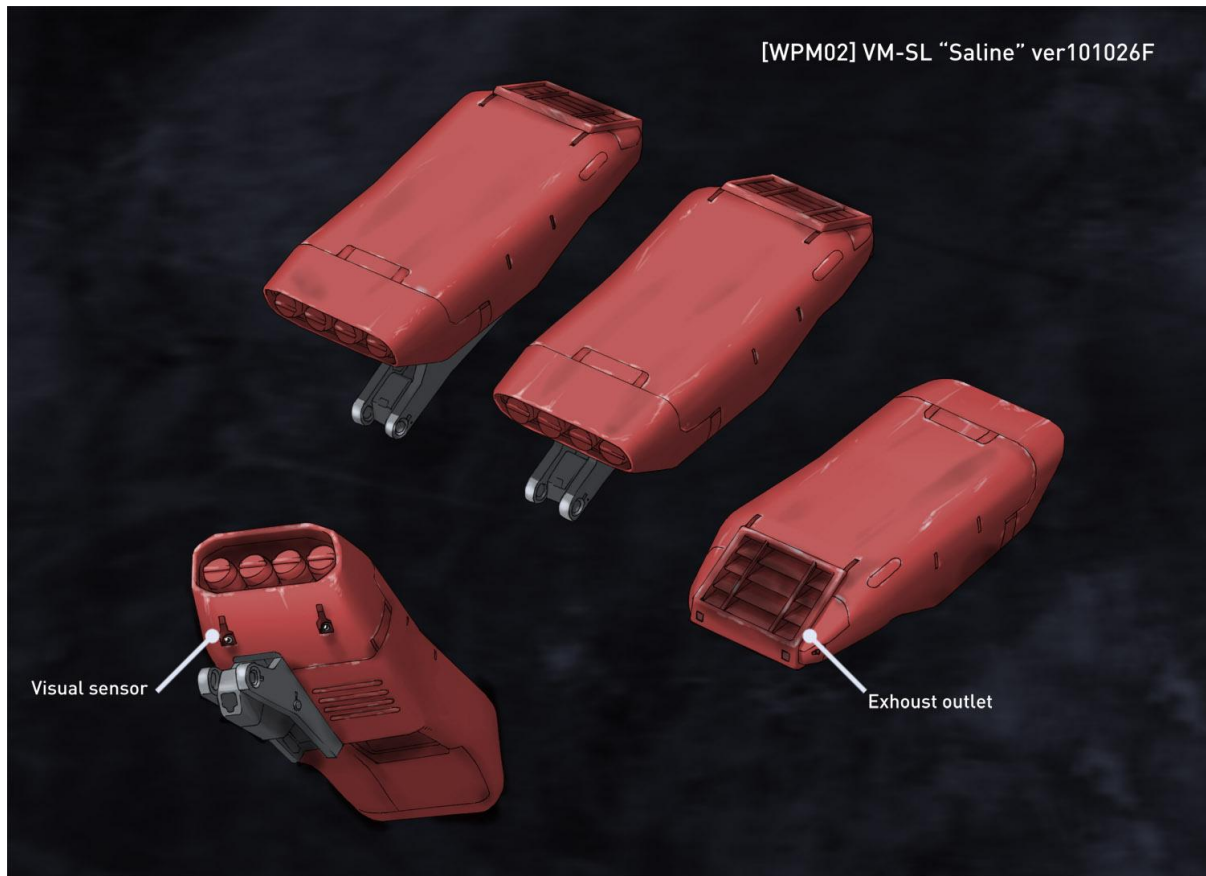
Gun:

VA-NV "Nova"



The Nova is a munition based gauss gun that can switch to faster firing auto-cannon. In its Gauss Cannon firing mode, it shoots a very powerful single shot, but one which causes the Nova to overheat easily. In its auto-cannon mode, it inflicts less damage on enemies, but runs much cooler and will stand up to much more prolonged use.

Missile:
VM-SL "Saline"



This is a short range and high lock speed missile pod with a small area of effect in terms of damage on impact, ideal for dogfights. The large missile volley size and short reload time complement EMIT's powerful Nova gauss cannon and produce a formidable short-range dogfighter.

Alien Artefacts

Artefact 01 - Oanne Creation Myth

Before, there was only darkness, and the darkness was absolute.

There was no light. There was no heat, and there was no cold. There was no land. No sea. No sky. No sun or moon. No being - living or dead - traversed the stars, because there were no stars to traverse, and no beings to traverse them. Only the darkness. Unending and alone.

No time passed, because time did not exist.

In the endless no-time, darkness grew lonely, and in its loneliness wept a single tear.

Darkness named the tear Oan because it was the first thing to exist.

Darkness marvelled at Oan's beauty, and set it spinning for to admire it more. As Oan spun, it grew larger and larger, and spun faster and faster, and grew larger still.

Seven shining specks of water flew away from Oan, and those seven specks each split into seven more specks, and those specks each split into seven more specks, and thus were the stars formed.

Darkness was diminished by the coming of the stars, for they brought light into existence and light is painful to darkness. Darkness shrank away from light, and light grew stronger and brighter and pressed into darkness and created heat from the contact.

Oan grew warm from the heat created by the contact between light and darkness. It grew warmer and warmer and began to boil and steam rose from the boiling surface of Oan and created the sun and the moons and the sky and the clouds. So much steam rose from Oan that it dried out and a patch of land was created.

On the land were the seven volcanoes from which all life emerges, and the first things to emerge from the volcano were the Seven Souls: N'mmo, K'lob, Sh'kti, Am'terasu, A'sir, B'ga and Es'ge M'lan.

Artefact 02 – Relic betrayal

[UNRECOVERABLE DATA]...have turned against us! It is unthinkable, but nonetheless it has come to pass and we must now accept our situation. The conditioning has failed and our saviours are now our enemies. This abomination is clearly the result of sabotage by !Rnsh'vs and their accursed silent acceleration programme. They have taken advantage of our collective weakness and produced this desperate blow.

It was clearly a mistake to work with the other talons on the conditioning process, but this mistake can be turned to our favour. We have an opportunity now to use our own fireflowers to savage !Rnsh'vs in such a way as to deflect the attention onto T'mh. Once this is done we will either collaborate with the other talons on a sanction against both parties or offer our aid to either side depending on their reactions.

Meanwhile it is vital that we reactivate the conditioning. We cannot stand alone against the Souls but uniting again would show too much weakness to the other talons. We will reactivate the conditioning and then assert our own overlay onto it. We must have the cooperation of the souls if we are to open the new door...[UNRECOVERABLE DATA]

Artefact 03 – Genocide Report

[UNRECOVERABLE DATA]...Triptych of Perihelion; Primary Rotation; Domination of !Rnsh'vs Algon.

SENDER: !Rnsh'vs Uln
RECIPIENT: !Rnsh'vs Y.Kna
TOPIC: Cleansing of □-3

!Rnsh'vs Uln greets !Rnsh'vs Y.Kna with abject respect and submits fully. This !Rnsh'vs commission is complete. The object □-3 is now pure and ripe for annexation. Oan and Darkness have willed another victory in our inexorable progress. It is as ordained. Oan will enlighten all objects in this galaxy and our dominion will be complete.

□-3 suffered minor ecosystem damage due to the use of relativistic weaponry but climate modelling suggests this will not pose any problems for the Primary Seeding Stage of annexation; and ground tremors should not occur for any more than three Rotations, after which time Seeding could be accelerated to Secondary Stage.

The Unclean of □-3 did not pose a significant threat to !Rnsh'vs forces. As expected, the level of technological development was not sufficiently advanced to offer any challenge to !Rnsh'vs troop force shields or weaponry, being limited to crude manual powered kinetic projectiles and physical barriers. !Rnsh'vs casualties were primarily due to weaponization of environmental hazards by the Unclean: rock falls, landslides and similar ineffective tactics.

!Rnsh'vs casualties: 2,307 returned to Darkness

Unclean casualties: 7,893,034,923

Unclean survivors: 0

!Rnsh'vs Uln awaits instruction and will hold position above □-3 until further orders are received.

By Grace of Darkness. [END OF FILE]

Artefact 03 – Military Dispatch

[START OF FILE] _CODEKEY AUTHENTICATED__DECRYPT
INITIATED__TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS__SCAN ONLY – WIPE AFTER
INTERPRETATION_

TRANSMITTED: Fourth Octet of Anhelion; Tertiary Rotation; Domination of ?Gltr'yd
Vkk.

SENDER: ?Gltr'yd Rpucz

RECIPIENT: ?Gltr'yd V!dgs

TOPIC: Sequence Domination

From the blazing spur ?Gltr'yd Rpucz, Superior of the Maw, Executive of the Volery and Oppressor of Ships and Vessels employed and to be employed in the Weeping Nebula.

Whereas Overseer ?Gltr'yd Y'Shn of ?Gltr'yd Fang *Trgon'p* is displaced to the *!Ttpih*, Overseer ?Gltr'yd Brdb Returned To Darkness: you are hereby required and enjoined to proceed into the *Trgon'p* and take upon you the Charge of Claw and Overseer of it; dominating and demanding all the Feral and Underfoot belonging to the said Fang to conduct themselves in their several uses with all due Obeisance and Fear to you their Claw; and you likewise to obey the Standard Published Duties as what Demands and Dominations you may from time to time receive from any of your superior Ferals for service of ?Gltr'yd Vkk. Henceforth ?Gltr'yd V!dgs nor any of its Underfoot may fail as they will suffer the contrary at their Peril.

You are to proceed herewith into the P'BMakr system there to intercept the !Rnsh'vs fleet and directly engage. You will rend, immolate or annex them as Spoils.

And for doing so this shall be your Domination.

Gte?fpy, Genus Quadrant.

Attention ?Gltr'yd V!dgs, Hereby appointed Overseer of Fang *Trgon'p* and all Subservient Feral and Underfoot.

By Demand, Oppressor ?Gltr'yd Rpucz

_END TRANSCRIPT__SCAN ONLY – WIPE AFTER INTERPRETATION_ [END OF
FILE]

Artefact 05 - Letter to mate

[START OF FILE] TRANSMITTED: Primary Octet of Retrograde; Trine Rotation; Domination of ?Gltr'yd Xxa.

SENDER: Ltup.Oj ~Aqi!

RECIPIENT: Ltup.Oj ~Aqr!

TOPIC: Spawn progress

Flame of my soul ~Aqr!

This sequester in the brood system is almost complete. The larvae clutch develop quickly in the warm fluid of the deepcradle. Already the surest are developing oral discs and force exploratory dumbstrikes upon their unworthier broodlings. You would feel glory on observing them, ~Aqr! in all truth. The deepcradle hag is even now growing wary of their speed and aggressiveness. It fears all too clearly the circadia when the brood develop perception, for then its devourment is assured. The conditioning oppression of the deepcradle hag is well rooted however and it is most assiduous in maturing the larvae. My toxin glands pulse to observe its fearful duty to our clutch!

I believe a full septus may develop maws simultaneously and I give suppliance to Oan that our clutch was numerous enough to sate the appetite of such a propitious horde. When the septus have finished feasting on the unworthy broodlings and are burrowed into the deepcradle hag, we will return to you so that you may witness the Emergence.

A few mere octets to abide, ~Aqr! before we are joined once more. Oan will that they pass with speed. My soul grows still and silent. I long to feel the sting of your palps and taste your toxins again, to witness the star banish Darkness by the shores of ^Dt'io. I keep in my soul the knowledge that once this sequestration is done, our claw will have grown formidable and dominant.

May Darkness bless you and Oan give you heat, always.

Ltup.Oj ~Aqi! [END OF FILE]