

10th SOLAR SAIL GRAND PRIX: KLAUS VON HEIDRICH IS IN THE LEAD

DESTINY's WAY

THE DAEDALUS CENTER MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO HAWKING SECTOR

EDITION:
2680.210 - 2680.240



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The hitchhiker's guide to Hawking Sector

A striking space drifting adventure

By Lieutenant 2nd grade John J. "Caterpillar" Barakus.

There is a common assumption among military pilots that the shuttle pilots are the babysitters of the force. The truth is that our job isn't characterized by the adrenaline that the position of a Bearcat pilot could offer but please consider the following.

The local system date is 2680.183, I am in the position of first officer of the Type R Shuttle "Lucky Pal" under the command of Captain Dominic "Aardvark" Santini and we are in the end of a TCN A.P.I.E. (Annual Progress Inspection and Evaluation), meaning that transport service needs are increased by 45% for this week. In other words, we had visited TCN bases and supply depots on

more than the half systems on Sol and Enigma Sectors within fifteen days. We were exhausted; additional to that, our passenger for the whole ride was "the" Vice Admiral Walter Stratton Anderson. However an optimistic climate was drifting around the cockpit as our last assignment, before our well deserved short leave, was to deliver the Admiral to the TC Training Area Alpha in White System, Hawking Sector and immediately after that "get back to where you belong" as he would say.

Our squadron the "Lifting Ants" is stationed for the three past years, here at Daedalus and it will stay put until the station is

finished and fully operational. Aside to the fact that we are far away from our home systems and families there are some undeniable benefits. The mild working environment, the ride will always get the best maintenance including the latest refit and of course the double paycheck. But I will stick to the "maintenance and refit" part by telling you that, although "Lucky" is an ancient tin can it was recently refitted to the latest technology the TC has to offer, including GP26 Glass Cockpit with support for NavCom AI ver 3.4 and for auxiliary navigation system a brand new Quine 5500C. Worth to point is that "Lucky" was also equipped with the edge of technology of



Arriving to White System and DESRON 27 for inspection of the training exercises.
Img. courtesy TCN Ensign Julius Sarantides.

A sleek, white and grey space shuttle with red and blue accents is shown in a dynamic pose, flying towards the viewer. It has glowing blue lights at the front and green lights on the sides. In the background, a large, complex space station or orbital platform is visible against a backdrop of a planet's horizon and a starry sky.

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deuterium fuel filters which effectively did as they promised to reduce the jump fuel consumption to 28%.

Moving further to my story, we have just left White system and reached Nav6 on Chandley after a successful jump. The fuel was enough, everything functioned as they should be and the only thing between us and our days off was the jump to Destiny system. The plan was simple, instead of setting autopilot to reach Nav1 and bypass the asteroid field of the system with a unanimous decision we chose to take the shortcut route by reaching the supply depot in Nav4 through the asteroid field and then continue straight for the Destiny jump point. We were aware of the dangers that manual navigation into a field could bring but we also knew that we would cut more than 6 hours of flight from our trip to Daedalus. And believe me when I say that

we couldn't stand to watch "Lucky's" cockpit not even a minute more than we were supposed to.

This is where Murphy's law gets into the game. "If anything can go wrong, it will". Six clicks before reaching our desired jump point, "Lucky's" master alarm starts blinking and the main warning buzzer screams furiously into the cockpit. We immediately check the A.S.D.M. (automated self diagnostics manifest) aka damage report. Which returns a reactor malfunction indication. Less than a minute later the shuttle started to loose power and before we could finish our emergency reactor shutdown procedures we are found drifting into deep space on auxiliary power transmitting "mayday" on all available TCN bands. Luckily the jump buoy was not busy by some kind of a long FTL message that HQ had to sent somewhere. So, we grabbed the

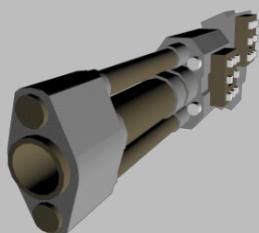
opportunity and opened a communication channel with Daedalus. The request for assistance was accepted but due to the increased traffic activity in the nearby sectors because of the A.P.I.E., S.A.R. would not be able to reach us until 27 hours later. Therefore TCT "Blessed Mary" was ordered to retrieve us and tractor our ship to its programmed destination at Tranquility Station in Armstrong system which is by the way the Quadrant's HQ. Next we should await our ship's repairs to be completed and return to Daedalus asap.

TCS "Blessed Mary" is a 60s model Drayman class transport, its crew consists of 16 men. The ship's captain Jean Paul LaCutte aka "Papa Bear", a saturnine character at first contact, proved to be an officer with no desire to climb to the mountain of ranks nor to settle on a system with a wife and kids. He also showed

JERRY'S DEATH EMPORIUM

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outstanding performance on sarcastic taunting statements, just like “Don't get disappointed son! Many out there are just as inadequate as you are. Naaaah! You are the worst”.

Right after our retrieval, “Blessed Mary” went straight ahead to Nav3 and jumped directly to the quasar “inhabited” system Grissom. This system is dominated by one thing. Blue. The quasar stands in the middle of the system showing off its breathtaking blue emission lines. If TC hadn't build a constant monitoring station on Nav3, Grissom would have been just a bridge system between Hubble to Ladyman Quadrant.

It wasn't long since our trip with this transport was about to come to its end. Old “Papa Bear” hated drifters aboard his ship. His idea of HRM (human resource management) was straight and simple; “You eat? You work! There is a job even for a hopeless situation, just like yours”. And that was it. For a 12 hours trip the 8 hours we were down at the holds lifting and moving crates around but one thing was certain, time had passed and without even realizing it we had entered Armstrong. This system consists of 8 basic Nav routes were 6 of them are jump points to other systems of the quadrant. Is exactly the kind of system that we are referring to as “Capital”. In less than two hours we had reached Tranquility Base. Docking procedures didn't take long and soon enough “Lucky” fell on the hands of the station's deck crew. It seems that the

damage was serious because the “chief” insisted that he would have answers about the shuttle's status in more than 2 hours.

In the meantime we took the opportunity to have a drink at the officers lounge of the station which was pretty much the same as the one on our HQ, Daedalus. We were not surprised to see that in the far end of the room, near the wide convex window, a familiar figure was sitting there all alone drinking from a bottle of Altarian Brandy. We went straight to the bar without trying to attract much attention. I was in the mood to order an orange juice but before I was able to

us.

He said that he has to load a cargo of ore at Mu Cephei and deliver it on planet Oasis at Mahavier and from there return back to Tranquility with a full load of agricultural products and he asked if we wanted to join him on his “pleasure” trip. Even him, was amazed by our impulsive denial to his offer and this fact hold him from insisting on it. Simultaneously Dominic's intercom ringed. It was “chief” telling him that we had to meet him asap because he had bad news for us.

It seems that a small asteroid fragment managed to pass

*It seems that a small asteroid
fragment managed to pass
through the right engine intake...*

finish my sentence to the bartender the sound wave of a strong voice hit me hard from behind. “This is a drink for fagots not space jockeys! You two! Come to my table and have a real drink with me!”. It seems that old “Papa Bear” was very fond of both me and Dominic as well. “You work hard and eat less” he said and this is when our adventure actually started. He said that he threw a quick glance at “Lucky's” damages right after we docked with the station and that his estimation of repairs, by experience, would take no less than 5 days and for that reason he had a serious proposition for

through the right engine intake and by a miraculous way destroyed the rare deuterium filter bringing the fusion reactor to instability. Bottom line, “Lucky” would not be able to leave Tranquility until next week.

This came like a plasma bolt from the sky, the old man was correct and now our choices were limited. HQ ordered us to stay put and take our short leave on Tranquility base until “Lucky's” repairs were completed. Dominic's head was about to explode. He had plans to spend these days on Aldrin with the company of a beautiful lady



down from research.

Aldrin is an exotic system positioned south west in the Hubble quadrant. For the last century it is the number one resort for the whole sector. It is also true that the residents are so well connected all over the galaxy that even fanatics like those from Church of Man during the big raid of 70, who harassed the whole sector, left Aldrinians in peace. Although the system's location has neither any strategic advantage nor is a crucial commercial jump route, it has connections with both Armstrong and Sommers giving to its guests a convenient access from two different quadrants.

I recall being leaned back on the corridor of the visitor's apartments section waiting in line for my turn to register for a free of charge overnight and it was then that I saw a rather familiar silhouette but this time seemed a little different. There was a clear surprise in both my face and hers when our glances met with each other. With Lieutenant Keiya Chang have met during a red flag exercise on Miniya, Argent sector. She is a science officer for TC and I have to admit a very attractive one too. For a year now she is placed on the science division on Tranquility. After a quick meal we had together she came up with a very crazy idea. There are some privateers with pretty slick jump capable ships out there who provide inter-sector taxi services. Their prices are extremely low but of course they

do not divert nor stop to any other destination than the one programmed for their merchandise delivery and did I forget to mention? Their services are a bit illegal. Deck security is most often bribed by merchant guilds and they are usually turning a blind eye on this kind of transactions but militia is not. Anyhow, she was going to visit a friend of hers at David and she said that the privateer she bargains with has one more available seat on the ship and she could deal to get a better price if I cared to join her on this trip. Although risky, I decided to follow her after she reassured me that she will easily find someone else on David to return me back to Armstrong.

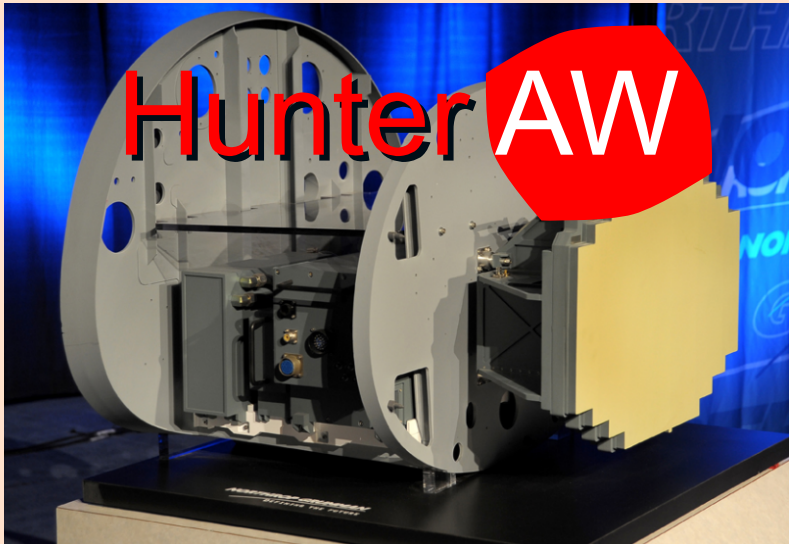
Half an hour after we paid and without many questions we were on board a Galaxy class merchant ship to which I won't

refer to its name for obvious reasons. The captain instead of taking the route to nav3 and go straight for David he directed his ship to nav5 and in less than an hour we jumped to Sommers. I must admit that this system has a wild beauty. Its only "child" is a gas giant whose atmosphere is burned by the systems red dwarf. Together they make an indeed interesting show. The system has two basic characteristics that make it unique. First an asteroid field in the middle of the system (nav4) which provides a physical defense and a good cover for a system station and second the one and only jump route to Mu Cephei. It is said that the one who holds Sommers, holds the half mineral wealth of the whole sector. No wonder why the pirates were stationed there for more than 10 years until TC made one of the most expensive anti-piracy operations to clean



A Lumbari class freighter en route.

Img. courtesy 𐄂𐄂𐄂 𐄂𐄂𐄂 𐄂𐄂𐄂 𐄂𐄂𐄂



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them up during the 50s.

A few hours later we reached nav6 and jumped to our final destination David. The reason for the three and a half hour deviation was unknown and uncommented too but with a simple guess the answer was simple; militia avoidance. It is common to find militia space blocks on passages with increased traffic just like in our situation the jump point from Armstrong to David.

Finally, we entered David. The crowded system. This system holds two of the most populous planets of the sector, Hong Kong and Beijing. The two planets are positioned on the two edges of the system “polarizing” the in-system traffic at north (nav2) and south (nav3) and eventually we were moving to one of them. Due to the Hong Kong's increased traffic it took us more

than an hour in landing procedures. I can still feel the hurt on my neck. The trip was really faster than a ferry connection but the accommodations did not meet my expectations. What you pay is what you get, I guess. Keiya, on the other hand, was as fresh as if she came out of her bath tab. Obviously this wasn't her first barbecue.

Initially, I was planning to overnight at Hong Kong and the next morning after breakfast to start preparing for my return to Tranquility but it was not difficult for Keiya to convince me to stay for one more day. As long as I knew that I had the privilege of time on my “arsenal” I kept extending my staying at Hong Kong and my single night staying mutated into a five day vacation.

Although Dominic was backing

me up at the HQ, I knew that I had gone way out of my limits and I had to show up sooner or later. So, I asked from Keiya to make some arrangements for my return home with the same method that we left. After some time of mailing and phone calls she sadly informed me that the only ship available which supplied the kind of services I needed and in the time limit I required was a century old freighter with destination an astrophysics lab positioned into the famous Collins nebula. I never had any phobia of old ships and I also did not care that the freighter will first stop to load merchandises in Oldzie and then continue for its initial destination. What made me scared to death was that my ride would be a Lumbari class freighter. As a shuttle pilot I did have my face to face “encounters” with Kilrathi and although they



were elite members of some Kiltrathi clan community they had this barbaric attitude that always made me feel uncomfortable with them. But now it was different, I had to fly a three jump trip with a Kiltrathi on the helm.

Fortunately, the ship that I boarded was modified because the accommodations were way better than any other confed counterpart I have ever put my foot on. Also it turned out that the ship's captain was a destinian and his sidekick was a kilrathi and even more interesting was the fact that they started their partnership two years before the war was finished.

I must admit that my flight with those two guys was a lot more funny than my recent experience on "Blessed Mary". They had so many stories to tell that we had entered Oldziey, made our three hour distance to nav3 at planet Hutchen, loaded the cargo holds

with merchandise and took off without realizing it. Six hours later, we reached nav4 and successfully jumped to Mahavier. The rest of this flight continued in about the same manner, the destinian kept telling humiliating jokes about kilrathi and the kilrathi on the other hand retaliated threats about his life.

Several hours later and after we cut Mahavier into two pieces by flying straight from nav4 to the Armstrong jump point at nav1, I found my self again at deck B97 right in front of a furious captain waiting to get his hands on me and break me to pieces. You see Dominic knew that I was supposed to leave for a day or more and I was missing for almost six. Worst of all he saw me disembarking together with the crew of a kilrathi merchant freighter but the reason of his frustration was justified. "Lucky" was repaired and ready for departure almost two days

sooner than it was scheduled and my late arrival put Dominic in the difficult position to explain to our superiors why we deliberately are delaying our departure from Tranquility.

In any case, we did make it back to Destiny after an episodic week and I set up the autopilot to align our shuttle in a trajectory with nav6. The cockpit was covered with silence and as the time was passing by, my eyes were locked outside into the void of space but something in the background kept distracting me from my deep thoughts. It was something familiar, something that at the beginning seemed like a small star and kept growing up to the point that its hexagonal outline started to form into my eyes.

Dominic looked at me and said in a relaxed tone.

"Hey JJ... buckle up. We are almost home!"

IN A NUTSHELL

A QUICK AND DIRTY GUIDE TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY AROUND THE QUADRANTS

(PART 1)

DESTINY SYSTEM

Destiny system needs little introduction. It is the military hub of the Argent sector and home to one of the largest Space Flight Test Centers of the Terran Confederation. Its relatively "safe" location during the Terran-Kiltrathi war allowed for the development of

many wartime fighters and the evaluation of several captured enemy fighters and capital ships. The home base (Daedalus Station) is in a state of continuous reconstruction and upgrade. Finally it is within 2 jumps distance of four TCN training areas.

PHOENIX SYSTEM

A binary star system consisting of a blue and a yellow dwarf. The system has no habitable planets, only two jump points and very limited resources due to its several nebulae caused by the ultraviolet emissions of the stars. Its close proximity to Destiny however turned the system into an excellent advanced firing range and thus the Daedalus Training Area Bravo is located here.

17th Year WCCIC

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Space News

ALL TRAINING AREAS OPEN

For the first time, after several years, all four training areas of the Daedalus Space Flight Test Center are open again. With the first mission in Training Area Charlie (Reid system) scheduled for 2680.227 and already undergoing missions in TA Alpha (White system) and TA Bravo (Phoenix System) the Training and Operational Readiness Command of our base is again fully operational.

At the same time the ground and air/space strike assault range (or Training Area Delta) which is located on the nearby moon Icarus is active since late 2679.

There are already plans for hosting combined exercises with the Union of Border Worlds forces while there is an as of yet unanswered invitation to the Landreich Navy. Most importantly however there are scheduled coop sorties with Kilrathi forces the first of which have already arrived (see related article in this issue).

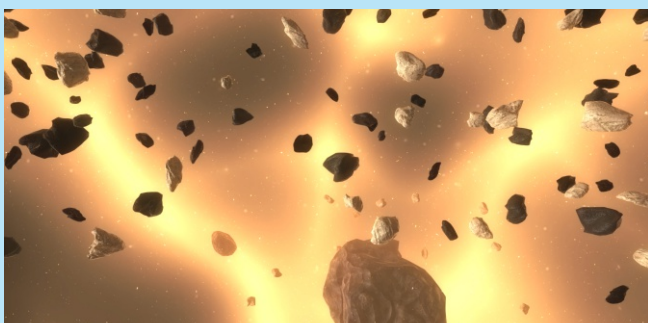
QUINE 5500C RECALLED

Only months after its official roll out the highly anticipated Quine 5500 is recalled back due to a bug discovered in the jump drive alignment mechanism. Effects of the bug range from jump sync failures and inability to link with local Navcom AI transmissions to complete shutdown of all auxiliary systems.



REID SYSTEM

Reid is a typical star system at its early stages of creation deep within a giant dust cloud. The system might end up as a vivid and alive civilization hub in a few billion years but at the moment the only thing



located here is the Daedalus Training Area Charlie. Used mostly for low visibility training sorties.

CHANDLEY SYSTEM

A paradox and strictly speaking not a star system at all since there is no star located here. Scientific research in the asteroid belt suggests there was a supernova explosion billion years ago and the asteroids are its remnants. However the system's strategic significance is undeniable by being the main route from Argent towards Hawking, Enigma and Sol sectors and the only route towards most systems in Ladyman quadrant.

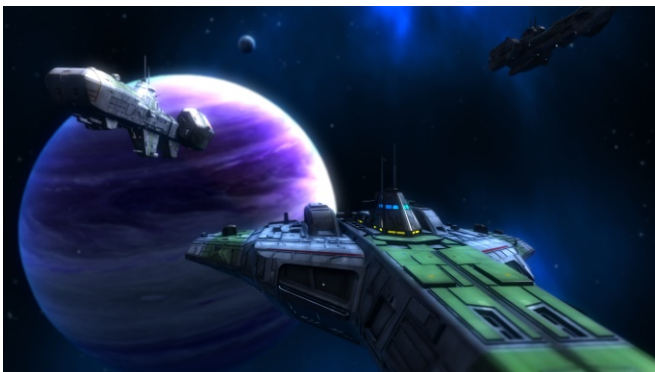


According to the company all model revisions from X.034889 to Z.230009 are to return to authorized dealers and service centers as soon as possible. It should be noted that faulty units found their way into several thousands government owned spacecraft.

Once again Quine Industries offers its apologies for any inconvenience caused.

DESRON 27 REACTIVATED

After several years the famous Destroyer Squadron 27 (DESRON 27) is reactivated under a new formation. The squadron includes the Exeter-class TCS Formidable (command ship), the Southampton-class TCS Sutherland and one to three Lugalbanda-class frigates. Its missions include flight-testing, training and combat readiness in all training areas under the supervision of Daedalus Space Center training command. The squadron is commanded by TCN Captain William T. Ryant in coordination with Space Force Colonel Lindsay Forman (Callsign "Cold Attack") who is in charge of fighter training.



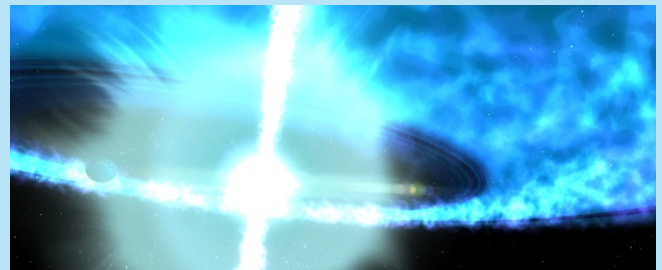
The DESRON 27 in Armstrong System.
Img. courtesy TCN Ensign Julius Sarantides.

It should be noted that the famous DESRON 27 was assigned during the war as an escort for the Bengal-class carrier TCS-Forrestal posted in the Epsilon Sector. In a twist of fate the venerable carrier will transfer to Daedalus within the next months as the flagship of the newly formed Carrier Squadron 14 tasked primarily with deep strike training.

WHITE SYSTEM

Another lifeless and resource limited system. Apart from its use as a bypass route from Chandley to Grissom in case something happens to the direct jump route its only other role is as the first firing range for TCN in the area. The mild conditions found here makes Daedalus Training Area Alpha the location of choice for basic flight training as many pilots might very well remember.

GRISSOM SYSTEM



Three jump points formed around a high energy pico-quasar. Normally the system would be off limits for normal traffic. Unfortunately it is the only way towards Armstrong system and Ladyman quadrant and thus traffic is allowed through predetermined nav ways. Apart from a quasar monitoring station there is nothing else here and the less you stay the better.

ARMSTRONG SYSTEM

Armstrong is for Hawking what Destiny is for Argent. A large habitable system with multiple jump points towards several systems and the Confed HQ for both Hubble and Ladyman quadrants. Its main base "Tranquility Base" is similar in layout with our own but its focus is confederation management rather than flight testing and training. That's why whenever a lost pirate craft arrives there they come crying for help!

COLLINS SYSTEM

A barren system with an emission nebula field and a dying yellow star. We are told that the emissions of the dying star make the nebula field suitable for both high



efficiency refinery operations and astrophysics research and thus its only base is a “must-visit” location for aspiring astrophysicists around the sector. Notice: There is only one jump point in and out of the system.

MAHAVIER SYSTEM

The system's activities are based around the agricultural production of Planet Oasis. Oasis is one of largest Super-Earth planets in the known universe, with a fairly large temperate zone and thus its agricultural production is significant. Moreover the system is blessed with direct jump routes towards both centers of civilization in the area (Armstrong and David).

OLDZIE SYSTEM

Oldzie is a habitable system with several running productions including (mineral, agricultural and energy). Its direct jump point to David helps for the quick delivery of the goods to the market. It is known for the rivalry with the nearby Mahavier system for the largest production capacities.

SOMMERS SYSTEM

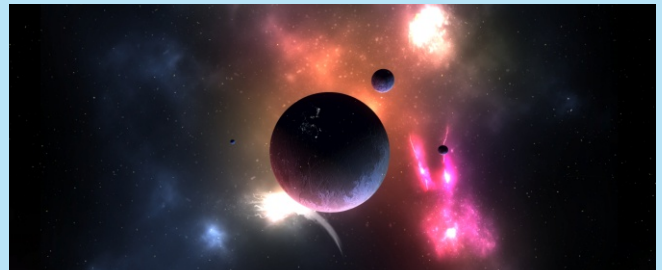
An otherwise insignificant system characterized by two things. Firstly its only planet is a “boiling” gas giant in locked rotation with a red dwarf. Secondly and most importantly it is the only route towards the Mu Cephei system. In the early forties the system's asteroid field housed the largest pirate base in the area but the system was cleaned and the base was destroyed by the mid-fifties. Since then there is little to no pirate activity in a 10 jump distance.



DAVID SYSTEM

The largest populated system in both Hubble and Ladyman quadrants. Its two huge terraformed planets along with their many also populated moons and the decades long peaceful conditions makes the system a preferred merchant destination from all over the sector. Ironically archaeological research revealed traces of prehistoric large scale space ship battles but the lack of similar traces in the nearby systems has confused them on how those armies got there in the first place.

ALDRIN SYSTEM



One of the most beautiful systems in the star region. The beautiful colored nebula surrounding the system and the diffused light makes the home planet the ideal vacation destination in the sector. Many confed officials, celebrities and millionaires are known to own villas here while the place is also a famous R&R destination for Daedalus personnel!

MU CEPHEI

Mu Cephei was known to mankind way before the first pilgrim explorers reached here. In fact astronomer William Herschel noted the star's red color as early as the late 16th century. What Herschel could not know is that the red super-giant's heat along with the vast asteroid fields of the system have turned it into one of the highest mineral and energy producing areas of our time. The harsh conditions however allow for two-months operations at best and the single jump point to and from the system makes for very difficult and slow navigation through dense asteroid fields.