

# ORION

ROLE-PLAYING Game

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# THE SYSTEM

## CHARACTER CREATION

Before you start, you should make sure you have a copy of the [character sheet](#). Character creation in Orion is very simple, but the character sheet will still provide you with a good place to write down information about your character.

Character creation in Orion is mostly about coming up with an interesting concept. That should always be your top priority. Make sure your character has defined personality traits, backstory, motivations, and MBTI personality type.

Once your concept is complete, however, you'll need to choose your five stats. And once you've done that, you're done! Your entire character sheet in Orion amounts to only five numbers. So little you'll probably be able to remember them without even needing to write them down. So, without further ado: the five stats.

### STRENGTH (STR)

Your character's strength determines their natural physical ability, including mundane tasks like working with heavy machinery, climbing walls, moving heavy objects, smashing large objects, and even their ability to resist injury and death. It also helps determine damage in hand-to-hand and melee combat.

### REFLEX (RFL)

Your character's reflex determines their reaction time and coordination, including reacting first and evading dangers. Reflex is the primary defensive stat in ground combat.

### AIM (AIM)

Your character's aim determines their accuracy in aiming ranged weapons. Higher aim gives you a higher chance to hit and to do damage in both ground and space combat. Some weapons have autotargeters, which provide a significant aim boost.

### TECHNICAL (TCH)

Your character's technical expertise determines their ability to use and work with the various technologies in Orion. Higher technical gives you a better chance to repair damaged equipment, reverse-engineer technology, and use shipboard systems like scanners, weapons, and engines.

## KNOWLEDGE (KNW)

Your character's knowledge determines their level of knowledge about the history, science, and politics of the various worlds and factions in Orion. High knowledge gives you a chance to receive useful facts about the universe.

## SKILL CHECKS

A skill check is required in Orion whenever your character attempts to perform an action that requires some degree of skill. To perform the check, **roll a number of six-sided dice (d6) equal to your value in the relevant stat**, plus **one additional die for each 6** you roll (recursively), and **sum the total**. Use the table below to convert from your roll to your result:

all ones	failure
2 - 11	simple
12 - 23	average
24 - 35	difficult
36 - 41	incredible
42+	extraordinary

Your DM will compare your result with the difficulty of the task you were attempting for your character to determine what happens.

## CHOOSING STATS

To choose what your character's stats will be, you will be allowed to split up 30 points between the different stats (with no more than 15 going to any one). The more points you put in a stat, the more dice you will get to roll when performing skill checks for that stat. The number of dice you get to roll for a stat based on the number of points you put in can be found in the table below:

1 die	0 points
2 dice	1 point
3 dice	3 points
4 dice	6 points
5 dice	10 points
6 dice	15 points

It is recommended that you not drop any one stat too low, or you will be very vulnerable in that regard.

# GROUND COMBAT

## INITIATIVE

If, at the beginning of combat, combatants are equally aware of each other, then initiative needs to be rolled to determine who reacts first and thus who can take their turn first. Initiative rolls work like any other RFL roll. Whoever rolls highest takes the first turn, followed by second highest, and so on. Players may choose to move themselves down in the turn order from what their roll would allow them, but such a change is permanent. The original turn order holds until the combat is over.

## ACTION

Whenever a character takes a turn, they are allowed to perform any action, or series of actions, that the DM believes would reasonably take less than or equal to **5 seconds**. Since any action whatsoever is allowed, creativity in combat is highly encouraged, and will be rewarded by your DM, if it makes sense. If the DM believes that your action should involve a roll, you will be required to make that roll after you have selected your action.

## REACTION

After any other character takes their turn, any number of characters may decide to react to the action that the character taking the turn just made. Reactions can be any action that the DM believes would reasonably take less than or equal to **1 second**. Common reactions include attempting to evade (RFL) or parry (STR) an attack. If the DM believes that your reaction should involve a roll, you will be required to make that roll after you have selected your reaction. Commonly, if a defensive reaction such as evading or parrying is attempted, an opposed roll may be required, where the defender succeeds if their reaction roll is greater than or equal to the attacker's action roll.

## DAMAGE

If a character becomes injured as a result of combat, the DM will decide what the repercussions for that character may be. If the damage is serious enough that the DM decides that the character may become impaired, be knocked unconscious, or die, a fortitude roll may be required, which works just like any other STR roll.

# SPaCe CoMBaT

## INITIATIVE

If combatants are equally aware of each other, a character on each ship makes a TCH roll to engage defensive systems first, determining ship turn order. Individual turn order within each ship is determined using the same rules as ground combat.

## ACTION

When a ship takes a turn, every character in that ship gets to take a **5 second** action.

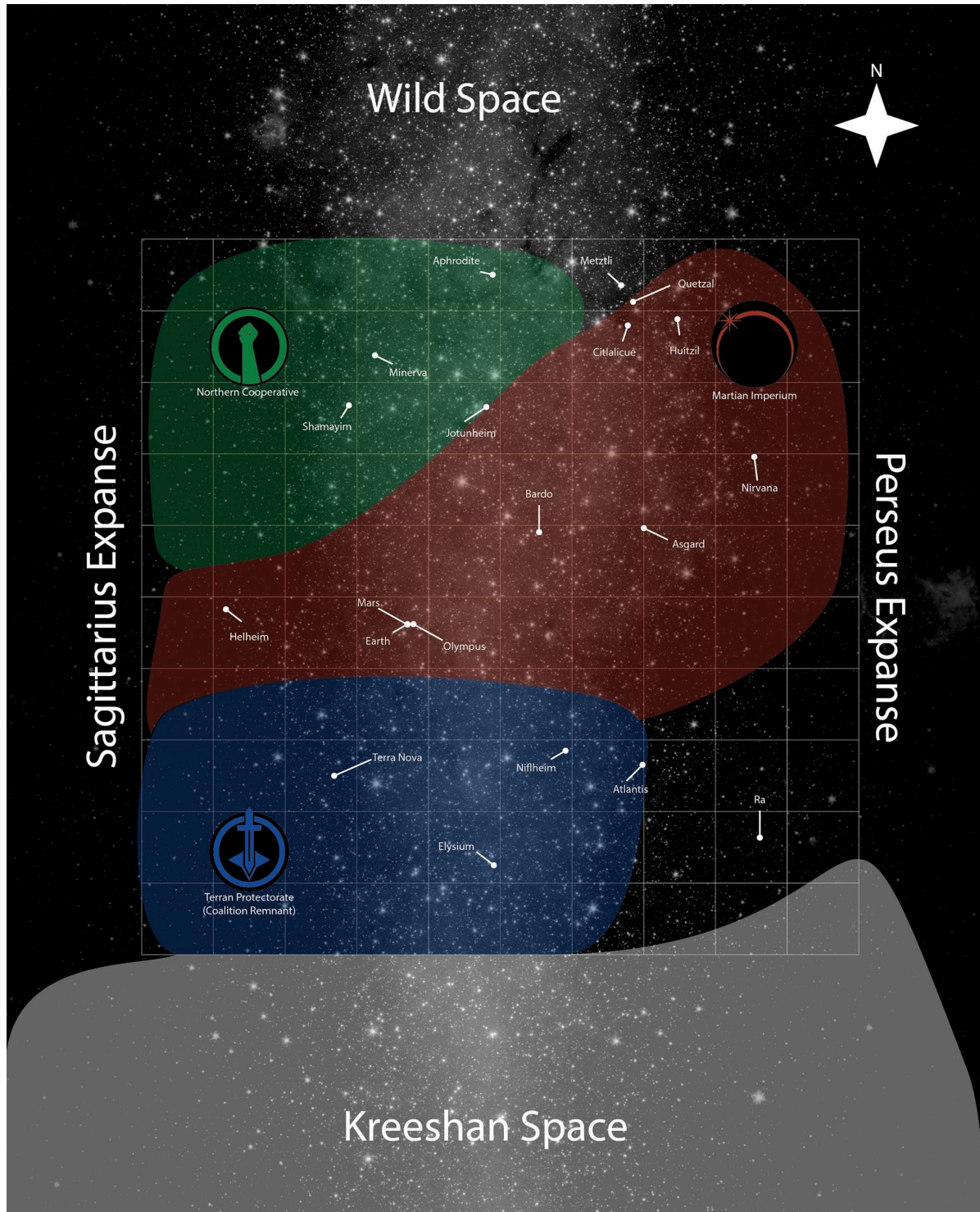
## REACTION

Same rules as ground combat.

## DAMAGE

Same rules as ground combat, but uses TCH for repairing damage instead of STR for surviving it.

# THE universe



# HISTORY

“Control of enemy planets should not be considered the objective of conflict. Rather, the goal must be to degrade and ultimately destroy the enemy’s ability to fight. Any planets conquered must be treated with only one concern: they must not be allowed to assist the enemy. Any and all methods are justified in this task, including, if necessary, the removal of the planet’s population.”

- *Strategic Planning Memorandum 2506.1-D (“The Bromwell Doctrine”)*

## INTERPLANETARY WARS (2100-2150)

By 2100, Earth’s nations were mostly economically unified, and had colonies on Venus, Mars, Io, and several asteroids. Over time, however, the colonies grew unhappy with Earth dictating policy, eventually declaring independence in a war that lasted several decades. The colonies and Earth were highly interdependent, so most conflict consisted of privateers funded in secret. Eventually, the planets signed a peace treaty and formed the Planetary League, which later became the United Interstellar Coalition after the first human colonies were founded outside of the Sol system.

## COALITION GOLDEN AGE (2200-2420)

After the discovery of VGEM and the invention of warp drive, the Coalition quickly entered an era of rapid expansion and technological development. Terraforming and ecoforming discoveries allowed the government to control over 150 inhabited worlds, and a mixture of competent leadership and near-unlimited resources lead to an unprecedented era of stability, prosperity, and peace.

## FIRST KREESHAN WAR (2420-2430)

The peace abruptly came to an end with first contact in 2423. A Coalition deep space ship encountered a Kreeshan exploration vessel near what would later be called Elysium. Little is known of the encounter, but both ships returned battle-damaged and blaming the other. A brief attempt at diplomacy quickly failed, and war broke out less than a year later. The initial struggle was fairly one-sided: the Kreeshan government lost most of its outlying colonies, and the Coalition fleet was closing in on Kreesh itself. In an act of desperation, the remainder of the Kreeshan military staged a feint in the Alpha Centauri system, while a large task force destroyed the Coalition homeworld defense ships, and bombarded Earth’s surface for nearly two days. Nine billion perished in the attack, and the Coalition was forced into a white peace.

## INTERWAR PERIOD & SECOND KREESHAN WAR (2430-2470)

For the next three decades, the Coalition rebuilt and innovated. The capital was relocated to Terra Nova, a formerly barren world rebuilt in Earth's image. Various proposals were offered for a way to win a second war. The eventual strategy was proposed by Supreme Overseer Joseph Bromwell, one of the few survivors of the attack on Earth. He argued that conquering territory was inherently useless, and pushed for a genocidal war of attrition. Once the fleet was rebuilt, the Coalition executed this plan with brutal efficiency, deploying antimatter bombs and biological weapons on countless Kreeshan colonies, and forcing a badly beaten Kreeshan military back to where they were before the attack on Earth. Then, in a controversial move, the Coalition Legislature accepted the Kreeshan government's conditional surrender. Kreesh lost most of its northern colonies, and both sides began the slow process of reconstruction.

## ARGAN INSURRECTION (2500-2520)

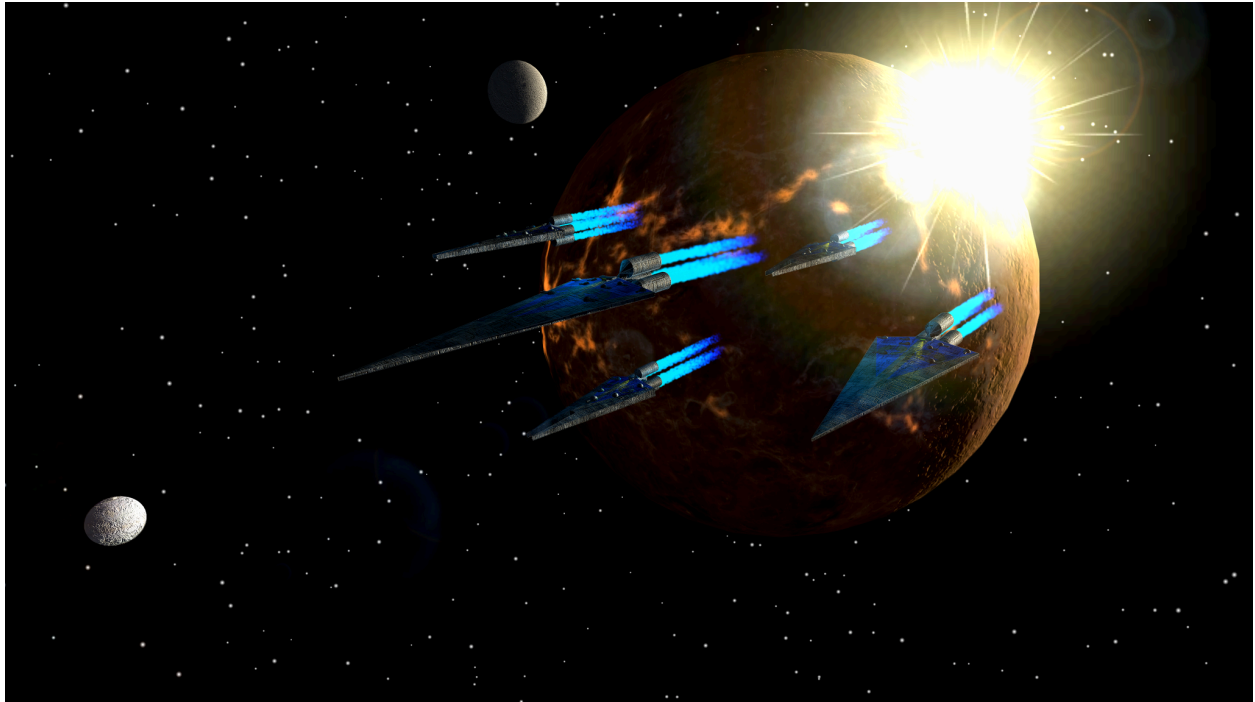
While many were glad to see the end of fighting, there remained many who saw the Coalition as weak and corrupt. A splinter group, calling itself the Argan, after a fictional human-worshiping alien race, popped up across human space. The movement gained political power and influence, and eventually had a candidate to oppose the Prime Minister in the closely-contested election of 2515. The Argan's defeat in the election was seen by many as the result of political malfeasance by the Legislature, and less than a year later, an armed Argan Insurrectionary Force rose up. Almost a third of the Coalition Fleet joined the rebels, who quickly absorbed Mars and several other planets and declared a Confederation. The Argan War involved over 100 worlds and had the largest ground battles ever fought. However, after only two years, problems emerged in the Confederation's structure. The rebellion had always been a loose alliance of varying interests: anti-unionists, human supremacists, dissatisfied military leaders, and corporate interests hoping to skirt restrictive Coalition law. This alliance structure ensured the fast development of the movement, but also prevented the formation of a strong government. The Argan Confederation imploded, and its worlds were quickly reconquered and returned to the Coalition.

## FALL OF THE COALITION (2580-PRESENT)

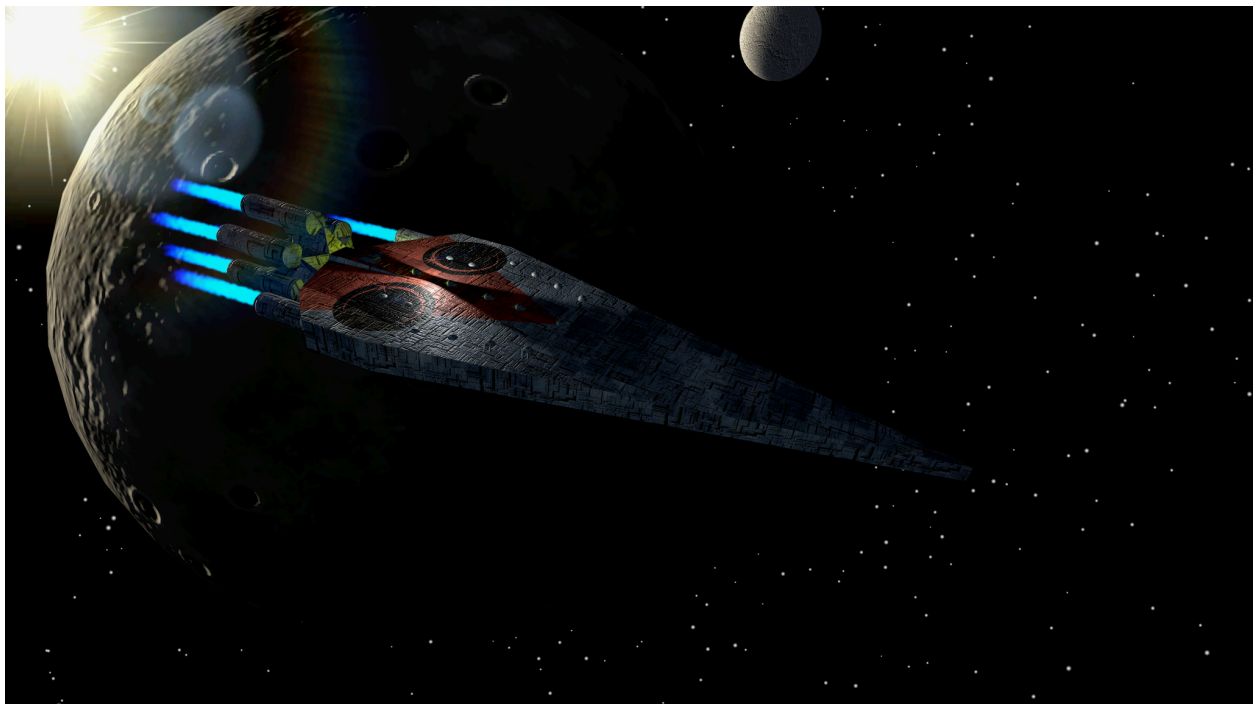
After the Argan War, the Coalition began to seek closer ties with the Kreesh. Part of this effort was joint military expansion along the Kreeshan southern border. But with most of the fleet so far from home, problems developed on the formerly secure trade routes. Piracy began to increase until eventually a self-proclaimed pirate kingdom called the Soldiers of Fortune sacked Asgard, a major trade world. The member worlds of the Coalition, already disgruntled, saw this as proof of the Coalition's fundamental flaws. The Coalition disintegrated and the Dark Age began. Between frequent war and the lack of



strong central government and trade many planets regressed technologically, some to near-barbarism. The remaining civilized worlds turned inward for two centuries before major powers began to coalesce. Now, almost 400 years later, new factions rule human space with varying effectiveness and intentions.



A squadron from the Coalition's 107th fleet on maneuvers near the Kreeshan border



IMS *Sovereign* of the Martian Imperium patrolling the Quetzal Sector after battle

# Factions

“The Coalition had shifted, from a federal government with significant discretionary power, to an implicit arrangement between the Member Worlds and Terra Nova. The Member Worlds would stay loyal and contribute resources and personnel to the government, and in return, the Coalition would provide military protection, patrol the trade routes, and share the technological gains of its research. After the insurrection, this arrangement became more and more strained until after Asgard, it dissolved completely. The Coalition did not break up. It simply ceased to be.”

- Magnus de Croom, *The Decline and Fall of the Interstellar Coalition*

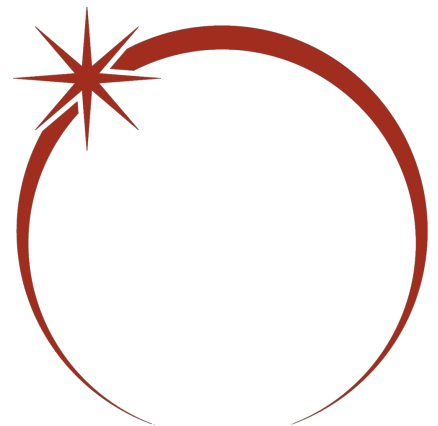
## Terran PROTECTORATE

The protectorate considers itself to be the cultural and political successor to the Coalition. Led from the old Coalition capitol of Terra Nova, the protectorate consists of about 50 worlds under roughly the same governmental structure. The leader of the Protectorate is the Prime Minister, who is elected in 5-year terms by the Terran Legislature, a body of Representatives allocated to each world in proportion to population. The current prime minister is Gerardo Eckstein. The entire territory has been in a state of cultural and technological stagnation since the start of the Dark Age, but the Protectorate inherited a sizable portion of the Coalition Interstellar Fleet, and thus can still hold its own against the other powers militarily.



## MARTIAN IMPERIUM

The original Imperium was founded during the Interplanetary Wars, nearly a millennium ago. The Martian government was subsumed into the Coalition during the original unification, but regained its secessionist tendencies during the Argan Insurrection. After the start of the Dark Age, Emperor Augustus II rebuilt the Imperium as a militant and expansionary empire, controlling almost 100 populated worlds. The government is controlled by the Emperor or Empress, who has large but not unlimited power. They are checked by a semi-independent judiciary and the Imperial Parliament, which is in theory representative of the people, but only open to Martian citizens. The current ruler is Empress Demetria V of Mars, who ascended to the throne a decade ago. The Imperium is the only one of the three powers to continue technological innovation, albeit at a



slower rate than the Coalition. Coupled with Mars' status as the industrial capital of Human Space, the Imperial Fleet is the most powerful in the Octant. The Imperium has been at war with the Northern Cooperative for the past five years, and has made significant territorial gains.

## NORTHERN COOPERATIVE

A loose cabal of warlords, the Cooperative is a comparatively recent arrival on the interstellar stage. "Founded" 300 years ago as an alliance of convenience, the Cooperative exists mainly to coordinate the pillaging and extortion of its member empires. Planets do not so much belong to the Cooperative as are dominated by it, any planet within its territory must pay exorbitant tribute in resources and personnel. Those that cannot pay are destroyed, with their resources carried off and their people enslaved. The Cooperative is "governed" by a council of warlords, who in theory share equal stakes in power. In practice, the council often bends to the will of the most politically powerful warlord. Currently, that is Phrixos Thar, Patriarch of the Minerva Shogunate, which has led to relative political stability, and the placement of the Cooperative capital on Minerva. The Cooperative's fleet consists of stolen warships, converted civilian craft, and what roughly amount to guns and engines held together by duct tape. However, Cooperative soldiers and crew members are ruthlessly effective in combat.



## KREESH KONTAL-VOK

The Kreesh are a large, technically sophisticated race from the southern end of the Orion Arm. They fought the Coalition in the Kreeshan Wars, to date the bloodiest struggle ever encountered by either side. After the fall of the Coalition, the Kreesh have not been discussed, and many on the less advanced human worlds consider them a myth. Centered on the Kreeshan homeworld of T'nictal, the Kontal-Vok is a unique form of government with no clear human equivalent. Humans and Kreesh haven't had contact in several centuries, so information on their technology and military are vague. The Kreesh were seen as technologically inferior to humans during the Coalition era, but whether this continues to be the case remains to be seen.



# PLANETS

“The Legislature shall consist of Representatives from each Member World, with the number of Representatives proportional to the population. The Representatives shall be selected by each world by method determined by their Planetary Government. Each Representative shall have one vote on each issue brought before the Legislature.”

- *Constitution of the United Interstellar Coalition, Article II*

## EARTH

Occasionally referred to as Old Earth, the homeworld of humankind. Once the capital of the United Interstellar Coalition, until the surface was obliterated by antimatter and fusion detonations during the Battle of Earth in the First Kreeshan War. Most of the artifacts and lore of earth now reside at the Earth Memorial Archive on Terra Nova. The planet has been re-terraformed to class IV-A, but the surface is still mostly uninhabited, with only scattered retreats and research stations dotting what's left of the continents.

## MARS

The first planet colonized by humankind. At the onset of the Interplanetary Wars, the planet was unified as the Martian Imperium. The planet was partially terraformed to class III-A and then to class IV-A, and quickly became a center of industry. Mars is the homeworld of the Imperial Corporation, and home to numerous former Coalition and civilian shipyards, including the Imperial Corporation Foundry Complex, the Imperium Fleet Yards, and the Elysium Planetia Orbital Shipyards. After the Fall of the Coalition, the Second Martian Imperium claimed the planet, and became one of the largest, most technologically advanced, and longest-lasting players during the Interstellar Dark Ages.

The planet, and by extension the Imperium, is currently governed by Empresses Demetria V of Mars, whose bloodline the Imperial Parliament traces to Emperor Alexander I, the founder of the original Imperium. Martians believe that the original colonists of Mars represented the best of humanity, and thus those with more Martian blood are inherently superior to other humans. This has led to a three-tiered caste system throughout the Imperium, with “native” martians at the top, allied population in the middle, and conquered peoples at the bottom.

## Terra Nova

Originally a strategically important but barren class II world used as a military outpost during the First Kreeshan War, the planet was fully terraformed to class IV-A and converted to the new capital of the Coalition during the interwar period. Most of the new world is a nature reserve, populated with saved animals from Old Earth, but there are major cities dotted across the surface. Some of the more important areas include the Palatial Compound, which contains the Palace of the President and the Citadel of the Legislature, the Coalition Military Headquarters, which contains the Coalition High Command, the Office of the Supreme Overseer, and the Fleet Yards Executive Central Office, and the Department of Knowledge Sector, which includes the Old Earth Memorial Archive, the Monument Park, the primary branches of the Coalition Institutes of Medicine and Applied Science, the TRIAD Complex, and DSEF Central Command. The world itself is ringed with military and diplomatic space stations, and serves as the “rest point” for the Coalition Remnant Fleet. Terra Nova is the capital world of the Terran Protectorate, and sees itself as the spiritual and cultural successor of Earth, despite a period of technological and cultural stagnation lasting since the collapse of the Coalition.

## Minerva

A small world close to the edge of human space, the world was terraformed to class IV-A a few centuries before the fall of the Coalition. It remained an unimportant mining planet until it became the homeworld of the Minerva Shogunate 200 years ago. As the Shogunate rose to one of the most powerful warlord empires of the Northern Cooperative, the planet grew in wealth and prestige. The surface is mostly oceanic, with major cities dotting the few land masses. The Thar Compound, the personal residence of the Shogun of Minerva, is said to itself rival some of the smaller cities in size.

## Quetzal

A backwater world, Quetzal was colonized only 200 years before the fall of the coalition, and was one of the final worlds to be terraformed to class IV-A. As the most populous planet in the sector, it was briefly a trading hub before interstellar commerce dried up. The surface has no oceans, and few landmarks. The capital and only major city is Pikeman’s Ridge, which has about 100 million residents, as well as a tether connection to a civilian spaceport. On almost the opposite end of the planet is Base 227, which was the primary command base for the 35th Directorate before the fall of the Coalition. The base has been converted for civilian use.

After the start of the Dark Age, the planet regressed to a mid-23rd century technological level before being conquered by the Northern Cooperative. The planet was rich enough to meet the extravagant tribute demands, and thus was left mostly alone as it decayed.

Roughly one year ago, the planet was conquered by the Imperial Martian Expeditionary Forces, and cultural integration efforts have been underway ever since.

## METZLI

Formerly an class II and decaying mining planet on the edge of human space, the planet was revitalized from economic obsolescence through occupation by the Cooperative. After Quetzal was taken by the Imperium, the Cooperative pulled out of the sector. The planet is now mostly populated by criminal elements and out-of-work miners, looking for fortune or a way offworld. The surface has one major dome city, with a tethered spaceport, and a number of smaller outposts. Most of the crust is covered with automated mining stations and mineral transport lanes.

# TECHNOLOGY

“At its core, warp travel is simply the art of putting yourself exactly nowhere, and staying there just long enough to end up where you want to be.”

- *Introductory Spacial Dynamics, 6th Edition*

**Warp Drives:** FTL travel is possible with warp drives, which use a gravity-modifying material called VGEM (variable gravitational exotic matter) to warp local spacetime around a ship. The process is highly energy intensive.

**Power Generation:** Standard power generation is accomplished using Deuterium-Tritium fusion generators. These generators lack the raw power output to power warp drives or heavier types of weapon and defensive systems, so warp and military ships use antimatter reactors in conjunction with standard fusion reactions. Antimatter is acquired from a number of sources, including antimatter nebulae and the magnetic belts of gas giants.

**Propulsion:** Spacecraft almost universally use Plasma Engines as their primary sublight drive, which superheat and energize heavy gasses and expel them as propellant. In-atmosphere craft use similar Plasma Scramjets, which use normal atmosphere and do not ionize their propellant.

**Personal Weapons:** While weapons technology varies from bows and arrows to directed energy weapons, standard advanced infantry weapons are repeating gauss cannons and portable rail guns. More specialized units use x-ray lasers and plasma casters.

**Starship Weapons:** Civilian ships and light warships will use medium repeating railguns for defense. Heavier warships use heavy railguns, long range ultraviolet and gamma lasers, plasma blasters, and antimatter torpedoes. Warships often have refractive armor and magnetic shielding to defend against laser and projectile attacks, and point defense weapons to defend against torpedos.

**Vehicles:** Military forces use a variety of self-propelled vehicles and aircraft, which can hover through the use of wide-nozzle, low-thrust plasma scramjets called plasma lifts. Civilian transport is often on mag-lev vehicles that move through vacuum tunnels.

**Sensors:** Ships use gravitational sensors to scan for planetary bodies and other ships. EM scanners can detect technology and some life signs, and advanced optical sensors can detect anomalies. There also exist specialized medical and engineering sensors for diagnostics.