

# SVALARHEIMA

The planet that spawned the NeoColonial Wars and to this day remains a hotly contested sector between PanOceania and Yu Jing, Svalarheima is a planet rich in mineral resources and neomaterials that are hard to find in the rest of the Human Sphere, and little else. The freezing cold, the hostile terrain, and the prowler minefields and other automated defences left over from the war have made Svalarheima a dangerous planet to survive, let alone live on.

But Svalarheima has also been a place of great breakthroughs in research on rare metals and survival gear. Equipment that has been field tested on Svalarheima is rated past the needs for gear on other worlds, and native fruits and vegetables that manage to survive among the heavy snows of the planet have solved food problems on other planets. Svalarheima may seem like a world that no one would want to fight for, but in this century it is a planet that routinely seems to prove that it is indeed worth going to war for.

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## ***Planetary Statistics***

LAYOUT: Include Svalarheima's symbol

**Distance From Sun:** 1.3 AU

**Orbital Revolution:** 402 days

**Rotation:** 22 hours

**Diameter:** 1.65 R<sub>⊕</sub>

**Surface Gravity:** 1.6g

**Type of Government:** Lobby Democracy (Svalarheima) / Planetary Tribunal (Huangdi)

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister (Svalarheima) / Imperial Representative and Party Representative (Huangdi)

**Capital:** Odineheim (Svalarheima) / Shidong (Huangdi)

**Population of Planet:** 400 million

**Off-Planet System Population:** 500,000

**Primary Languages:** SvalarNorse, German, Spanish, Yu Jingese

**Svalarheima Anthem:** *De Forsølvet Bakkene Himmelen* (The Silvered Slopes of Heaven)

**Huangdi Anthem:** Xuě Tíng (The Snow Pavilion)

**Principle Industries:** Mining, Smelting, Defense

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## **Climate and Geography**

The coldest planet in the Human Sphere that still has a breathable atmosphere, Svalarheima is a blue and white orb of snow, rock, and metal. In the summer temperatures rise as high as 8° which allows for ice to melt across the planet, causing floods and shifting ice flows which make overland travel dangerous.

The surface of the planet appears to be relatively flat, but Svalarheima is actually a very mountainous planet. Thick sheets of compacted snow and ice — some dozens of kilometres thick — cover its many peaks and hills. Only the miners have any real clue about just how much rock there is on the planet, and they know that it's honeycombed with vast networks of mammoth caverns that worm their way down towards the planet's core.

There is one central ocean on the planet, and it splits the world in two. The northern and southern continents curl down into one hemisphere of the planet, separated by the turbulent Vannfrosset Straits. In winter the planet's ocean has been known to freeze in spots, creating a semi-solid mass that can facilitate truckers driving across its surface when the conditions are right.

Blizzards are a common occurrence on the planet, including the Fimbul storms that can produce whiteout conditions lasting for weeks. These storms often have winds that rage as high as 120 kph. Colonists refer to these winds, which can tear apart shelters and rip the flesh from those exposed, as the Yeti's Teeth. Most survival gear cannot stand up to the fury of these storms, and even those in environmentally secured exo-skeletons find that the servos and hydraulics on their suits freeze.

The areas near the equator — Nordkap, Arkhangelsk, Solokov, and Niflheim/Huangdi — are the most habitable and are where the majority of animal and plant life can be found. During the summer the weather there can actually creep past the melting point. By sharp contrast, Trollhättan and the lands at the northern and southern poles are frigid almost beyond imagination. The incredibly thick ice sheets of the southern polar region even feature cryovolcanoes.

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### ***No Man's Lands***

Many sectors of Svalarheima have been transformed by the NeoColonial Wars. Filled with explosives, booby traps, and automated defence platforms (many of which are now malfunctioning due to age), these No Man's Lands are incredibly dangerous. Petitions by the miners to disable the automated defence platforms have been denied.

O-12 has demanded that these areas be dismantled and cleared by Yu Jing and PanOceania, but both nations secretly suspect that hostilities could be renewed at any time and they use whatever pretexts necessary to maintain their defences. In truth, it's unclear if they have the records or resources to do so even if they wanted to.

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### ***Fuel to Burn***

Due to the likelihood of fuel lines freezing and vehicles never starting up again, almost all vehicles on the planet are left running all the time. This has led to an increased need for fuel across the planet and fuel shortages are considered life or death situations.

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## **Flora & Fauna**

All life forms on Svalarheima have evolved to deal with the extreme cold and lack of surface vegetation. There is a vast ecosystem beneath the surface of the planet, burrowing into the ice for warmth. Surface life — primarily mammalian, with avian breeds as the second largest group — survives with thick coats of fur and blood containing a natural form of antifreeze.

Great tundra sloths make their burrows in the hill regions of Solokov, and the massive yohokgen beasts roam the tundra, using their great tusked mouths to dig in the frozen ground for insects and plants to eat. In Trollhättan an ape-like creature over 3 meters tall roams the wastes in packs. These wild animals have been named trolls by the colonists, and their blood is said to never freeze. Their gruesome practice of licking the flesh off their victims before eating it has been the subject of nightmares for colonists across the planet.

When it comes to vegetation, there are a few forms of plant life that have managed to survive, mostly in the subterranean caverns. Baldurwood trees, however, are great towering trees that secrete a filmy residue that they spread their roots through as they cling to rocks, stand out on mountain sides. These trees then become home for smaller mammals and birds that live on the planet, living in a close symbiotic relationship with these trees.

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### ***Ambrosia Berries***

Ambrosia berries grow to the top of the equatorial tundra in the spring time. Their seeds survive by tunnelling deep beneath the snow and grow slowly over several years before returning to the surface. They're considered a delicacy throughout the Sphere, but must be harvested quickly as the harsh environment and the predations of rapacious herbivores quickly destroy them.

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## **Economy**

If not for the abundance of neomaterials on the planet, Svalarheima would have been written off as a bad investment years ago. The costs of mining are immense, great icebreaking ships are required to break through the oceans to sustain transportation routes from the mines to spaceports, and the garrisons maintained by PanOceania and Yu Jing are a huge drain on potential profits.

The market value of Teseum alone, however, is more than enough to make the planet worth it. Only the planet Dawn has more Teseum reserves than Svalarheima, and each merchant ship with a hold full of Teseum is worth billions of yuan and oceana. Miners who manage to find their own seams are soon able to leave the planet as millionaires, living lives of luxury for only a few years work.

The true treasure trove of the planet, however, is the neomaterial Nessium. Although not as valuable as Teseum, Nessium has vital military applications and Svalarheima is the only place in the Human Sphere where it has been found in mass quantities.

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### ***The Rustbuckets***

The icebreaking ships of Svalarheima, known jokingly as the Rustbuckets due to their patchwork hulls and heavily reinforced design, run on fusion power plants and are in constant motion while at sea for fear they will get imprisoned by the unpredictable and rapidly refreezing ice.

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### **Nessium**

Named after Nessus, the centaur whose blood was a corrosive poison which caused the Shirt of Nessus to cling to Hercules and slay him, Nessium is a neomaterial which has been described by physicists as “spooky alchemy in a vat”. It allows for novel chemical reactions, and, when properly manipulated, it can be used to affect the strong nuclear force. It has proven irreplaceable in the creation of high-efficiency fusion engines and anti-matter drives.

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## **Demographics & Culture**

Svalarheima was discovered by the PanOceania vessel *Midgard* over a century ago and its crew, who hailed mainly from Norway, Scandinavia, and Germany, named much of the planet after famous lands and places in Nordic folklore. Early PanOceania colonization quotas resulted in settlement by a large number of northern Europeans, who embraced the naming conventions. The planet became much more diverse when the mining rush began, and today northern Europeans only make up 25% of the planet’s ethnic population. The remainder is a mélange of ethnicities, with large percentages from Cuba, Mongolia, Australia, Angola, and the Congo.

The largest settlements on the planet are the regional capitals of each territory. Mineral wealth from the smaller settlements and roving melt-rigs funnels through the cities, which are also home to the raucous nightlife of native stevedores and miners on furlough. Built to conserve heat and be as fuel efficient as possible, the cities are full of cramped hallways, and personal accommodations are expensive as many miners prefer to rent space in barracks while they are in the city. Many cities burrow down into the ice and rock, and the wealthiest often live down in the Deeps. (“As far from the Fimbul as money can buy” is a common saying.)

For the most part, food on Svalarheima is imported from worlds such as Yutang, Sol, and Neoterra. Even the freshest fruits and vegetables have a stale, frozen taste to them and so most food is fried in order to give it a tasty flavour. Other foods that are popular on the planet are yokogen steaks, troll livers, and fresh grapple fish taken from the frozen seas. Most restaurants prepare food in the Northern European style, but miners from Sol have brought with them Mexican and African cuisine, creating new fusion mixes with local ingredients.

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### ***Melt-Rigs***

These collections of large, mobile structures travel from one area to another, melting the surface ice in search of shallow mineral deposits. They take what they can and move on, usually selling the survey data to the highest bidder.

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### ***Furlough Storage***

Storage lockers and gear rental are thriving businesses on Svalarheim. Many miners feel much safer securing their personal belongings with a private business than running the risk of keeping it in a footlocker in the barracks.

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## **ARKHANGELSK**

The most temperate regions of the planet are found in Arkhangelsk. The mining is easier, life is more bearable, and the earliest colonial efforts were focused here. As a result, the Arkhangelsk region contains the bulk of the planet's population.

Ironically, however, the region — while still rich with opportunity — is much poorer in minerals than the southern continent. This makes it tougher for smaller operators, and larger mining consortiums are much more common here.

### **Arkhangel City**

The wealth of almost an entire continent flows through Arkhangel City and it shows in its neon excesses. In the heart of Furlough Row, holographic displays and AR advertisements entice miners to the nearest casinos and brothels to spend their new earnings. Three sprawling spaceports ruthlessly compete for seemingly every shipment, and their squabbles often spill out onto the streets of the city in the form of their associated union gangs.

## Skovorodino

The fortress-monastery of Saint John of Skovorodino is home to the Order of the Knights Hospitaller. It serves as both a bureaucratic centre and a place of instruction for novices. It is also an important bastion of defence against the expansionist ambitions emanating from Yu Jing's Youxiong.

## NIFLHEIM / HUANGDI

To PanOceania, the region is Niflheim and will always be so. To Yu Jing, it is Huangdi and a symbol that they stand equal with the Hyperpower.

Two years after Svalarheima's initial colonization by PanOceania, a massive Yu Jing fleet entered the system and set down upon Niflheim. PanOceania had focused its colonial efforts elsewhere, and the few outposts it maintained in the region were completely overwhelmed. The Blizzard Skirmishes which followed eventually snowballed into the First NeoColonial War.

Decades later, the region remains scarred with countless trenches, bunkers and No Man's Lands. Soldiers from both sides maintain patrols along the Solokov-Huangdi border and there are routine clashes between the PanOceanian naval blockades and land-based artillery emplacements.

## Chunqiu

The Chunqiu Spaceport is the major export centre for Yu Jing's mining activities throughout the Huangdi region. It's a bustling hive of activity perched atop ice cliffs nearly a kilometre high, with a culture heavily influenced by the Japanese and Filipino citizens Yu Jing imports to work the mines. During the spring, the streets run ankle-deep with melt-water pouring down to the sea below.

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### ***Fall of Chunqiu Port***

Huge tunnels lead down through the ice cliffs beneath Chunqiu to what was once a major naval port before Jeanne d'Arc destroyed Yu Jing's planetary navy during the Blizzard Skirmishes.

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## Kunlun

Nicknamed the "Cavern City", Kunlun is nestled into a honeycomb of mammoth caverns in the heart of the Valhalla Mountains. During the First NeoColonial War it was essentially the last bastion of Yu Jing resistance, but the twisting valleys

which surround it became known as the “fractal death” by the stymied PanOceanian troops.

**Lěngdòng Gǔ:** This military compound contains an extremely secretive research division commanded by Colonel Zhuo Shin and also serves as the base of operations for training Gǔiláng (Ghost Wolf) skirmishers.

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### ***Hyōshō Domes***

In the period between the Blizzard Skirmishes and the NeoColonial Wars, Yu Jing built a number of experimental “dome cities” in the central region of Huangdi. These domes were badly damaged during NeoColonial Wars and many remain abandoned (or completely reclaimed by the ice). Recently, however, Yu Jing has been making efforts to reclaim the settlements. Their plans to build new domes in Trollhättan, however, is creating fresh tensions with PanOceania.

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### **Quanxue**

Quanxue is similar to the old lunar habitats, and, in fact, it is full of lunatics. Located in the centre of the province, the climate is so extreme and the conditions so demanding (despite most of the city being subterranean), that even the sanest start to feel the effects of the environment. The city is also the primary military base in Huangdi, and the streets are filled with a volatile mix of soldiers and White Banner Army veterans.

### **Shidong**

The base of Yu Jing’s orbital elevator is a large, bustling commercial city which has been named the capital of Huangdi. Huge amounts of money have been spent outfitting the city with the latest environmental modification technology to make life as comfortable as possible for corporate workers and commercial agents.

### **Shuangdong**

There are a number of small, frontier settlements dotting the coasts of Huangdi. These are a mix of whaling encampments, an old arctic village, a Siberian town, and a polar military base. Small huts and longhouses are common.

The most famous of these villages is Shuangdong (Frozen), which was the “star” of a propaganda campaign run by the Ministry of Information before the



NeoColonial Wars to show that the “icy spirit” of Huangdi could not be quenched.

### **Xuanyan and Youxiong**

The so-called Sentinel Cities, which bracket the eastern end of the Vannfrosset Straits, are relatively small, but have immense strategic importance. The Yuki-Onna and Yuki-Anesa air forces staged out of them are Yu Jing’s largest defence against the PanOceanian planetary navy.

Yu Jing seized Youxiong shortly after first landing on Svalarheima. It was meant to be toehold for the StateEmpire on the northern continent and the first Blizzard Skirmish was fought to contain their aspirations there. Yu Jing has never yielded the city, even during the hellish fighting of the Siege of Youxiong during the NeoColonial Wars.

## **NORDKAP**

The Nordkap peninsula is an upthrust of volcanic activity that pushes its mountainous peaks above the ice sheets which cover so much of the planet. The vision of clear land led the earliest PanOceanian expeditions to identify it as ideal for settlement and they established the first colony on the planet at Valontach Point.

Unfortunately, their assumption was erroneous. Nordkap has essentially no major deposits of neomaterials and ice-cavity hydroponic techniques proved far more successful for agriculture on Svalarheima than the wind-ripped surface. Although there are some mining operations targeting traditional materials (like iron), the peninsula is an economic dead zone.

### **Arendal**

Located in the Cape of Frosne Tårer (Cape of Frozen Tears), the Arendal Naval Base — the seat of PanOceania’s planetary navy — is on the southern end of Arendal Island. The island is also home to the SK-1 top secret military research facility. Most of the northern half of the island belongs to the Vulcain megacorp, although the purpose of their private reserve is unclear.

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### ***Niflheim Blockade***

PanOceania has maintained a naval blockade off Niflheim since the end of the NeoColonial Wars in defiance of O-12 directives. Relations with Yu Jing had thawed in recent years and plans were being initiated to end the blockade. The revelations of the Qingdao Report, however, has heightened tensions once again: PanOceania has increased its naval presence, and Yu Jing has responded by

deploying more land units to the planet and increasing the range of their aerial patrols.

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## **Valontach**

What prosperity Nordkap once had was predicated on Valontach remaining the seat of the colonial government. However, when O-12 moved the planetary capital to Odineheim following the NeoColonial Wars, the entire region was plunged into a depression.

## **SOLOKOV**

Solokovians often like to describe their region as “Svalarheima in miniature”. It has a little bit of everything that the planet has to offer, from the Fimbul-blasted peaks to the south, to the fjords of its northern peninsula and the temperate valleys in-between.

### **Ægir**

Ægir was once a major Solokovian port. During the NeoColonial Wars it was struck by a terrible fire which essentially destroyed the entire city. The inferno spread so quickly that many of the city’s subterranean arcologies were completely cut off from the surface. Most of those were simply sealed and left as charnel houses.

Some rebuilding has taken place, mostly in the area around the city’s docks. Ice rigs still come down the frozen river from the heights of southern Solokov, delivering goods to be shipped north into the Vannfrosset Straits.

### **Blårand**

The city of Blårand (Blue Ridge) is named after the curving mountain range it is perched atop. Hundreds of kilometres long, the Blårands are a razor-sharp crest of blue rock sheathed in vibrant blue ice. The uncanny colour is the result of the incredibly rich Nessium deposits in the rock.

There are no serviceable overland routes out of Blårand (although plans to dig a huge tunnel to the northern coast are periodically bandied about). Instead, Nessium is shipped out from a terrifying aeroport with a runway cantilevered out from the mountain.

The air is incredibly thin at this altitude. Oxygen masks are a common sight, whether worn on the streets or draped over the shoulder inside the hermetically sealed buildings.

## **Odinheim**

Standing in the shadow of the Valhalla Mountains, Odinheim is the nominal planetary capital. Originally it was just a mining outpost established on the Bay of Frigg and the original capital of the planet was Valontach in the Nordcap province. When the Blizzard Skirmishes ended, O-12 mandated that the capital of the planet be a neutral ground where both sides could gather.

Although it is supposed to remain an open city for workers from both PanOceania and Yu Jing, the truth is that since the NeoColonial Wars the city has been surrounded by PanOceanian blockades. Although it is easy for PanOceanian citizens to pass through the western Huginn Gate, the eastern Muninn Gate is heavily secured and Yu Jing citizens are allowed to enter the city only after passing through a “neutral” zone of gun emplacements and TAG squadrons and then undergoing heavy screening.

One of the first things visitors notice when they visit the city is the number of abandoned public works projects located outside of the city. With cooperation between the two powers constantly strained, heated aqueducts, new apartment buildings, and even other space ports sit half built and covered in snow from years of neglect when their designers refuse to cooperate.

**Hermes Interplanetary Spaceport:** This neutral station is operated by Bureau Hermes and policed by private military companies. Meant to prevent either side from having total control of space travel on the planet, the HIS is a bureaucratic nightmare, with permission required from representatives of O-12, PanOceania, and Yu Jing before anything can be done.

**Port of Odinheim:** Odinheim is the main port of egress for most of Solokov’s exports. A constant stream of icebreakers pound north across the Vannfrosset Straits to Arkhangel City and back.

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### ***The Gray Warts***

Squat, grime-gray warehouses surround the Hermes Interplanetary Spaceport filled with cargo waiting to be shipped to its destination but trapped behind a nightmarish wall of red tape. The “gray warts” are said to sprout up like mushrooms.

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### ***The Rust Regatta***

Each year a race is held between icebreaker ships through Odin's Fjords along the Bay of Frigg. The ice in the area is thicker than in other parts of the frozen seas and only the strongest ships are able to survive the regatta.

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### ***Under the Icy Waters***

The seas of Svalarheima are its second most important natural resource. The Muspelheim geothermal power plants capitalize on the temperature differential between the boiling hot areas of the ocean floor and the icy surface waters. Many of these underwater bases have been expanded with fisheries to capitalize on the abundance of sea life in the lower depths, including vast schools of grapple fish and the huge Svalarheiman emperor crabs.

PanOceania's ongoing blockade of Niflheim/Huangdi, however, has recently been targeting Yu Jing's fishing vessels. Admiral Tanner Fowler II publicly denies any accusations of persecution, but has been secretly encouraging his patrols to be as harsh as possible.

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## **TROLLHÄTTAN**

A bleak and blasted land far from the equatorial temperate zones. Civilization in Trollhättan only exists because Fimbul storms allowed the PanOceanian outposts here to survive the initial Yu Jing invasion, and maintaining the region as a polity allows PanOceania to effectively block Yu Jing expansionism. Military bases were sunk under the ice, with long, cobweb-like tunnels allowing the Svalarheima Winter Force to pop up seemingly out of thin, icy air.

During the ceasefire prior to the Central Stage of the NeoColonial Wars, Nessium was discovered in the Trollhättan Caverns. Despite the incredibly inhospitable nature of the region, this created an influx of miners into the caverns in search of their fortune.

## **Ensom Dal**

In the Ensom Dal, or “Lone Valley” as it’s known in SvalarNorse, there is an isolated Moto.tronica R&D facility used for testing their equipment under the most extreme temperatures and conditions. Known for making “the pretty blue TAGs”, they are working on developing advanced auto-medical systems in their Remote Presence cockpits.

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### ***Nykåfjord Outpost***

This PanOceanian outpost can lend emergency assistance to those stuck in the wastes as well as defence for any PanOceania outpost that may come under attack. The soldiers stationed at Nykåfjord refer to themselves as the Troll Hunters, and several paint their armour and weapons to resemble the creatures. A soldier is not considered a full member of the regiment until he kills his first troll.

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### ***Nordic Warriors***

Svalarheima is home to an ultranationalist PanOceanic faction known as the Nordic Warriors of Heimdall. They see the icy world as the perfect training grounds for their radical ideology and have established training camps in the wastes of Trollhättan where they teach their radical ideology of racial superiority.

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### ***Mjolnir’s Handle***

A 10-metre tall pillar of Teseum known as Mjornir’s Handle was found in the frozen wastes of Trollhättan. Those who have studied the Handle are divided on

whether it could be the result of a natural process or not. If it is not, then it is likely of unknown extraterrestrial origin (although some claim it may just be a hoax).

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## EPSILON ERIDANI SYSTEM

The epsilon Eridani system is a turbulent and violent system, where a large prevalence of asteroids has led to debris scattered across the system. Svalarheima is the most habitable planet in the system, with the other planets being either absolutely inhospitable to human life or possessing no real value.

### Orbitals

In keeping with the Peace of Concilium, both PanOceania and Yu Jing are required to keep their orbital stations separated by at least 200 kilometres. This has led to both sides rushing to put out space stations and satellites to fill the sky above the planet and force out their competitors. As such, there are many space stations orbiting the planet that have only a few maintenance personnel onboard, and many more of these stations suffer catastrophes and fall into the planet's atmosphere due to lack of fuel, inferior design, or accidents.

**Tollan Orbitals:** The Tollan orbitals are military installations created by PanOceania during the NeoColonial Wars. Hellcat interdiction teams used the platforms to perform terminal velocity drops into Niflheim/Huangdi. Most of them have now been mothballed, but Yu Jing insists that they should be completely dismantled under the terms of the Peace of Concilium.

**Unity Station:** The largest astroport above the planet, the woefully named Unity Station is a bi-spherical station generating gravity through counter-rotation. The clockwise spinning hemisphere is controlled by Yu Jing and the counter-clockwise hemisphere is controlled by PanOceania. The station is a very cold place both environmentally and from a design aspect, as the original architects and engineers refused to work with their rivals. As a result, the station has no unified set of design schematics and engineers from both sides are routinely forced to fix a station that always seems one micro-fracture away from exploding.

### Other Stations

**Fourth Battle Chapel of the Knights Templar:** Originally moved to Svalarheima's orbit during the NeoColonial Wars, this floating monastery was the regional headquarters of the Knights Templar. When Templars were disbanded, the Curia divided the vast station among the various Military Orders

to serve as a staging area during the Final Stage of the wars. The Templars honeycombed the station with secret chambers, and there are constant rumours of a “Templar ghost” (possibly a rogue AI) that haunts the station.

**Fenris:** The Fenris anomaly is a gravitational lens with no corresponding mass that lies between Svalarheima and Nidenheim. A joint O-12 scientific project has established Tyr Outpost, a research station to monitor and study the anomaly.

**Kõsmet Caravanserai:** Located at the Vila Booster between the wormholes leading to Neoterra and Yu Jing, Kõsmet is an important neutral ground for representatives of PanOceania and the Jade Empire.

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### ***Epsilon Eridani System***

#### **STAR**

**Ran:** 3.73 Class K2 (high level of magnetic activity)

#### **PLANETS**

**Svalarheima (1.3 AU)**

**Asteroid Belt (3 AU):** Composed mainly of fragments of a planet, this belt is the source of the many meteor strikes on Svalarheima.

**Jotunheim (3.38 AU):** Gas Giant – Class I (Ammonia Clouds)

**Asteroid Belt (20 AU)**

**Nidenheim (40 AU):** Gas Giant – Class I (Ammonia Clouds)

**Dust Disk (35-100 AU):** A vast field of debris blankets the edge of this system. Composed mainly of dust and ice fragments, there are asteroids and planetary fragments scattered throughout the field which are used as bases for both miners and pirates.

#### **CIRCULAR ROUTES**

C2 to Varuna/Neoterra

C3 to Shentang-Yutang/Paradiso

C7 to Earth/Paradiso

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