

SEVEN WORLDS



Sample file



Settled Star System

Space Station / Human Outpost

Uninhabited Star System

Main Route (Stellar Communication Network)

Secondary Route

Dead-end Route

LEGEND



SEVEN WORLDS

SEVEN WORLDS TEST DRIVE

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introduction

THE FUTURE IS NOT A PLACE WE ARE GOING TO, IT'S A PLACE WE ARE CREATING. THE ROADS TO IT ARE NOT FOUND, THEY ARE MADE.

— JOHN SCHAAR

Welcome to the *Seven Worlds Test Drive*, your opportunity to check out this role-playing adventure about the survival of Humanity among the stars! Here you will find a short overview of the *Seven Worlds* setting, several sample characters, a compilation of some of the new *Seven Worlds* setting rules, and *A Mysterious Encounter*, the introductory adventure that kicks off the official *Seven Worlds* campaign!

WHAT MAKES SEVEN WORLDS SPECIAL?

Thanks for asking! Here are a few of the many things that make *Seven Worlds* unique:

- **Space Opera with a Hard-SF flavor.** If you like Science Fiction (SF), then you've probably heard about "soft" SF, the one with space battles that look like World War II dogfights in space and many humanoid English-speaking aliens with ridges in their foreheads. You might also have heard about "hard" SF, the one where science and technology are so accurate and detailed you need a Ph.D. in Physics just to understand what's going on. Well, ***Seven Worlds* is a soft-SF game with a hard-SF flavor.** We've based as much of the setting and rules on real physics and science as possible, while at the same time streamlining anything that interferes with a fun game. If you want a fun, unashamed space opera adventure that nevertheless gets (most of) its science right, this is the game for you! Also, check out the new included rules for space battles with a realistic bent!
- **Paper-and-pencil-and-technology.** Space is tri-dimensional, so why just look at a map on a page? If you have a compatible computer, smartphone, or tablet, go to www.sevenworldsrpg.com and download the *Seven Worlds* 3-D Starmap! **The *Seven Worlds* Starmap gives you a new level of game immersion by allowing you to explore in 3-D all the planets in known human space, with real star locations.** Travelling from planet to planet will never be the same again!

- **Not a setting with a story, but a story with a setting:** *Seven Worlds* has been designed as an awesome, compelling, epic campaign where the heroes have the opportunity to save their civilization or see it destroyed. Everything in this Setting Guide has been written to make the adventure more compelling and immersive. At the same time, the setting accommodates groups that don't want to play the main *Seven Worlds* campaign but would rather use its rich and detailed setting to weave their own stories into it.

WHO WILL YOU BE?

In *Seven Worlds*, each player takes the role of a member of the Circle, an independent organization dedicated to the protection of Humanity and the preservation of the peace. The Circle accepts heroes from all walks of life such as:

- **Pilots**, daring adventurers intimately connected to the deadly spaceships of the year 2217.
- **Soldiers**, individuals trained and prepared to fight and win all kinds of combat.
- **Diplomats**, specialists in negotiating their way out of difficult situations, and always getting their way.
- **Psions**, gifted individuals with the power to read minds and manipulate the universe with but a thought.
- **Scientists**, scholars with the knowledge to understand science and the universe that surrounds Humanity.
- **Explorers**, people ready to brave the unknown to discover new worlds, and to settle and build colonies on them.
- **Merchants**, experts in doing business between the worlds of human space.
- **Hackers**, able to deal with the computers of V-World, the digital world of 2217, and bend them to their will.

And many more!

SEVERAL QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE SEVEN WORLDS

Here's a very short overview of the universe of *Seven Worlds*. There's a lot more detail about this in the rest of the book!

- **The year is 2217** and Humanity has reached the stars. **Besides Earth, humans have settled six other worlds.** We also have several space stations orbiting important stars around Sol (the formal name for our Sun).
- **Two organizations have shaped the history of the last two hundred years: The Circle**, created to expand Humanity's reach into space; and **the Psion Brotherhood**, dedicated to the integration of Psions into human society. Psions are humans who have developed amazing mental powers called "Psionics," such as the power to lift objects (Telekinesis) and to communicate with thoughts (Telepathy).
- **Three individuals from the past have also shaped our history: William Donovan**, entrepreneur, inventor of the interplanetary and interstellar jump drives, and founder of the Circle; **Daniel Michaels**, the first Psion in recorded history, and a teenage friend of Donovan in their small home town in Arizona; and **Melissa Fischer**, the girl who was romantically involved with both, who influenced their actions during most of their lives, and who ultimately caused the souring of their relationship. How this unlikely trio changed the fate of Humanity is cause for endless debate and research amongst scholars, even today.
- **We have discovered one alien species**, or rather, they have discovered us. They call themselves **the N'ahili**, and are by all appearances vastly older and more powerful than we are. The N'ahili have provided us with the coordinates needed to colonize space, and have given us useful, advanced technology. However, even now, more than a hundred and twenty years after meeting them, they are as mysterious and unfathomable as ever. We have given up hope of ever understanding them, why they are helping us, or what their true intentions are.
- Even with technologies that allow us to "jump" to other star systems in a matter of seconds, **it usually takes one week to travel between jump points in two neighboring star systems.** Some of the farthest planets, such as Nouvelle Vie, are seventeen jumps away from Earth. This means a trip from Earth to Nouvelle Vie takes approximately seventeen weeks, or a little more than four months! However, communications technologies such as the Stellar Communications Network allow sending messages between planets in hours, or days at the most.
- **The Internet of the 21st century has evolved into something called V-World (for Virtual World).** Using Augmented Reality (AR) glasses, lenses and screens, we are always connected to V-World and can see and browse information at will. We can enter full-3D virtual environments to work, have meetings or just to have fun.
- **Friendly digital Assistants help us organize our lives and do many of our chores for us.** Behaving like a digital sidekick (with a personality) that lives in V-World, Assistants can do many things for us such as controlling the physical environment around us, help us locate important information, and even support during combat situations.
- **As the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Circle and the hundredth anniversary of the founding of Concordia approach, tensions are mounting** between forces in one of the frontier planets, Nouvelle Vie. We have explored all the star systems the N'ahili have given us coordinates for and have found no new planets to settle. Some wait for the N'ahili to give us the next batch of coordinates; others frantically search for undiscovered jump point membranes to other star systems; still others suggest that maybe we should just focus on what we have achieved and forgo expansion for some time.
- And strange reports have been arriving from stellar miners and explorers in Nouvelle Vie. Reports of mysterious sightings and weird energy readings. A few ships have also been reported missing...

a history of the seven worlds

IT IS QUITE CONCEIVABLE THAT 36,000KM WILL PROVE THE LIMIT OF HUMAN AMBITION. IT IS EQUALLY CONCEIVABLE THAT THE FANTASY-MADE-REALITY OF HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT WILL RETURN TO FANTASY. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE SPACE AGE IS OVER.

—THE ECONOMIST MAGAZINE, EARTH, JUNE 30TH, 2011 (206 YEARS AGO)

At the dawn of the 21st century, the word that best described mankind's feelings towards Space was *disappointment*. The great glories of the 20th century (Sputnik, Apollo, the Space Shuttle program) were behind, and the future looked like a long procession of unmanned probes sent to the corners of the Solar System. With luck, the most Humanity had to look forward to was a trip to Mars within a few decades.

Then, in 2017, William Donovan created the Circle Foundation.

THE FOUNDERS OF THE FUTURE

At age 44, William Donovan was already one of the richest men on Earth, founder and owner of EnergyNeering, the most successful technology corporation on the planet. Donovan's passion for space was well known, but he was still laughed at for the creation of The Circle, a foundation with the goal of "expanding Humanity's reach into space, and protecting humans from the dangers presented there." Less laughable was the fact that the Circle Foundation was endowed with non-voting stock in EnergyNeering, making it the richest NGO in the world.

Initially, the Circle seemed to be nothing more than a publicity stunt. There was no practical means of going into space, after all, nor a compelling reason to do so. Until 2021, when EnergyNeering stunned the world by announcing the first stable fusion energy reactor that significantly surpassed the break-even point. The key to this reactor was a hard-to-find element called Helium-3, or ^3He . The reactor needed significant amounts of ^3He to produce energy, which EnergyNeering conveniently also announced it had. Although ^3He stockpiles on Earth have been very low since the dismantling of terrestrial production, EnergyNeering simultaneously announced a breakthrough procedure to effectively separate ^3He from other varieties of Helium in natural gas deposits. For the last eighteen years, EnergyNeering had been

secretly stockpiling ^3He for use in its fusion reactor project. The size of the available ^3He stockpile, plus the efficiency of the newly announced reactor, meant that Earth's energy problems seemed to be at an end, at least while the supplies lasted.

It was also in the first decades of the 21st century that Psions made their appearance. Men and women gifted with extraordinary powers, they could read thoughts, lift objects with their thoughts, and many other things. The first known Psion in history was Daniel Michaels, a U.S. Senator who left his position to found The Psion Brotherhood, an organization dedicated to detecting potential Psions and educating them so they could live better lives and be an asset to society. Soon Psions were collaborating with the police to solve cases, support trustworthy negotiations, help patients traumatized by terrible events, and do many other previously impossible things. Given the natural fear and distrust of non-Psions towards Psions, the fact that within a few short decades the Psion Brotherhood was a respected and indispensable part of society can only be attributed to Daniel Michaels' tireless efforts for integration.

It is interesting to note that Donovan and Michaels were teenage friends in the small town of Edmonton, Arizona, where they both attended high school. There they met Melissa Fischer, both men's only love, and the person who most influenced their future lives and decisions. The story of this trio and of how their relationship changed the world has been one of the most studied (and mysterious, even now) chapters of all recent human history.

HUMANITY'S FIRST STEPS INTO SPACE

By the 2030's several EnergyNeering fusion reactors were in operation, providing energy for important parts of the world. However, even with new procedures to create ^3He in particle accelerators and increased tritium production, ^3He was too scarce on Earth. This made it hard to increase production and

coverage to the entire planet. Earth's energy problems would not be solved unless more ^3He could be found.

Thus it was that the first missions to the Solar System were organized. In the 2040's the moon (a limited source of ^3He) was visited again, as well as Venus and Mars. But it was in the 2050's that the first missions to Saturn, a gas giant with an atmosphere rich in ^3He , were organized, and ^3He "harvesting" began in earnest.

It is around this time that both William Donovan and Daniel Michaels pass away, leaving the legacy of their respective organizations behind. After Donovan's death, his partner Melissa Fischer bequeathed to the Circle Foundation several of his digital notebooks. In one of them, the Circle researchers found formulas and a theory for the workings of an Interstellar Engine. They also found a set of numbers which could only be interpreted as coordinates in Space. The Circle foundation immediately turned to EnergyNeering to research and build this potentially game-changing technology.

Several months after donating her late partner's notebooks, Melissa Fischer mysteriously disappeared, and, despite many searches and investigations, was never heard from again.

INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL AND ALIEN CONTACT

By 2080 there was a steady supply of ^3He from Saturn and Uranus and Earth's energy problems seemed to be a thing of the past. EnergyNeering finished the first prototype of the Interstellar Engine and together with the Circle began testing. By 2089, preliminary trials seemed to be complete and the Circle selected a place to test. Using the coordinates in Donovan's digital notes, a Circle scout crew moved the ship to a position approximately one AU above the plane of the Ecliptic. When then they activated the Interstellar Drive, they found themselves next to Barnard's Star, six light-years away. After spending a few hours analyzing their surroundings, the crew jumped back to the Solar System. Mankind had discovered interstellar travel.

The excitement over this discovery was tempered by the fact that finding a "membrane", a location in space that allowed fast travel to other far-away locations, was a very difficult endeavor. In fact, over the next two years, despite the efforts of all of Humanity, no other jump points were found. How William Donovan deduced the location of the first jump point in order to put it in his notes was (and still is) an unsolved mystery.

After two years, however, searching for a jump point became unnecessary, because the N'ahili arrived. Attracted by the energy released by the jump to Barnard's Star, the arrival of these aliens far more advanced than us caused a redefinition of the perception of our role in the universe. Fortunately, the N'ahili, while unfathomable beyond anything we've ever encountered, appeared to be genuinely interested in helping us reach the stars, and shared with us a crucial piece of information: The coordinates to jump membranes to several stars within twelve light-years of Earth. Suddenly we had everything we needed to expand to other worlds. And that's exactly what we did.

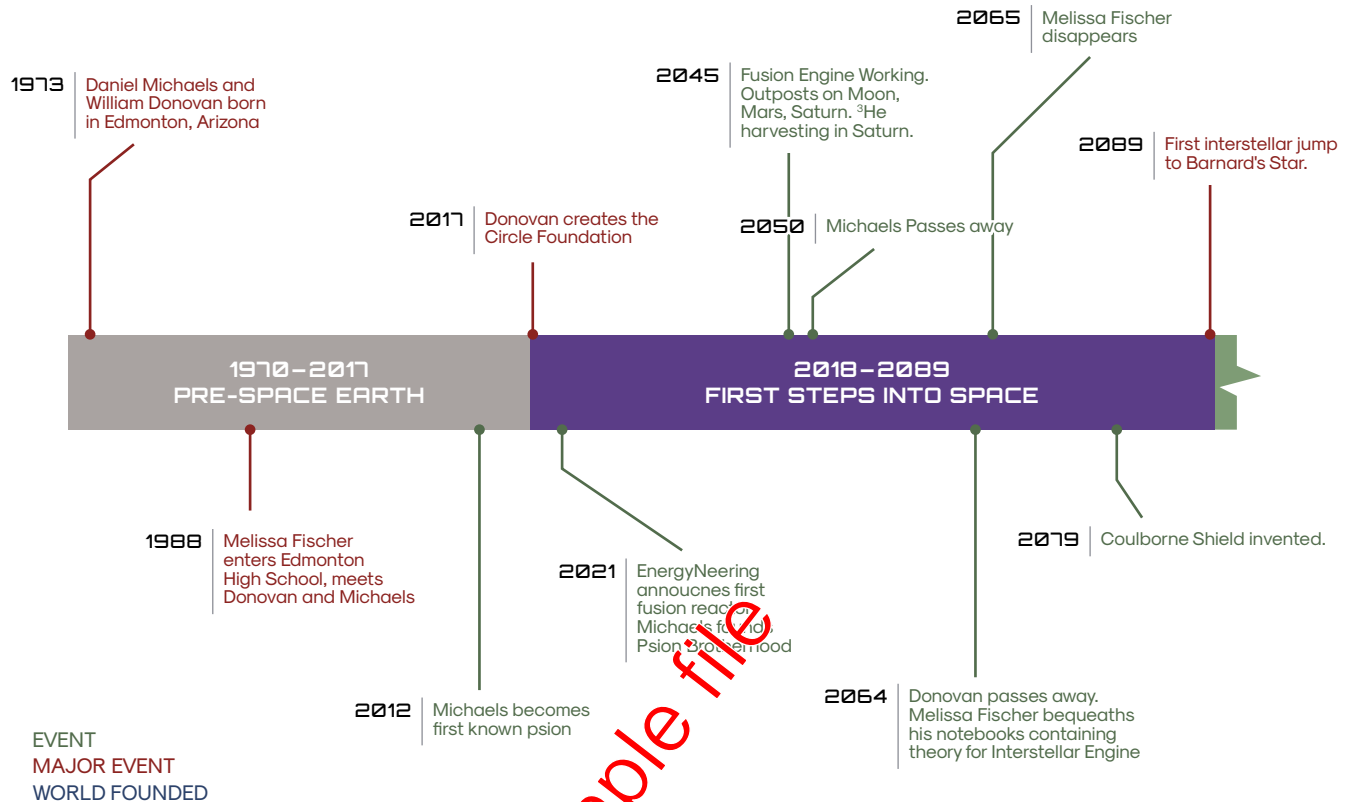
THE FIRST EXPANSION

From 2091 until 2133, Humanity exploded into space. Although most of the Solar System had been explored by now, there was little use in building huge settlements in hostile airless planets and moons like Mars or Saturn's moons when several Earth-like worlds were available for settling mere weeks away. **Zarmina** (nicknamed "Gee," in the Gliese 581 star system) was the first Earth-like planet settled by human beings, followed by **Apollo**, in the Epsilon Indi star system. Soon thereafter the N'ahili provided mankind with a second set of coordinates, extending our reach to about twenty-two light-years from Earth. Using this information, we successfully settled **Concordia**, in the Epsilon Eridani star system, and **Bay Jing**, in the Omicron 2 Eridani star system. Scientific settlements and space stations were also built around other stars.

Concordia and Bay Jing were particularly interesting and important planets. Two "garden worlds", planets extremely similar to Earth in atmosphere and temperature, they were also just one jump point apart. This made them an attractive destination for settlers.

Technology was advancing in other areas, too. The first nanomaterials, super-strong elements to build superstructures on Earth and in space, were becoming available. Engine capacity was also improving very fast. The Circle took a leading position in organizing migrations by designing and building massive Settler Ships capable of transporting thousands of passengers. The challenge was taking that many people from Earth, up the gravity well, and into space. Scientists began to design the first space tethers and space elevators to make it easier and cheaper to get from planetary surface into space and thus meet

TIME LINE



the challenge of moving many people from Earth to the settlements.

Then in 2133 something unexpected happened. A hitherto-unknown comet was discovered approaching Earth on an impact trajectory. How it evaded detection until a year before impact is still a hotly-debated topic among scientists. But the fact is, by the time we discovered Comet Sol-C/2132 N2 was coming for us, it was too late to do anything meaningful about it. With chaos and panic invading society, our hastily assembled emergency missions and rockets were able to break the object into shards, but several pieces, including a 4-km-across chunk of comet, impacted Earth on October 4th, 2133.

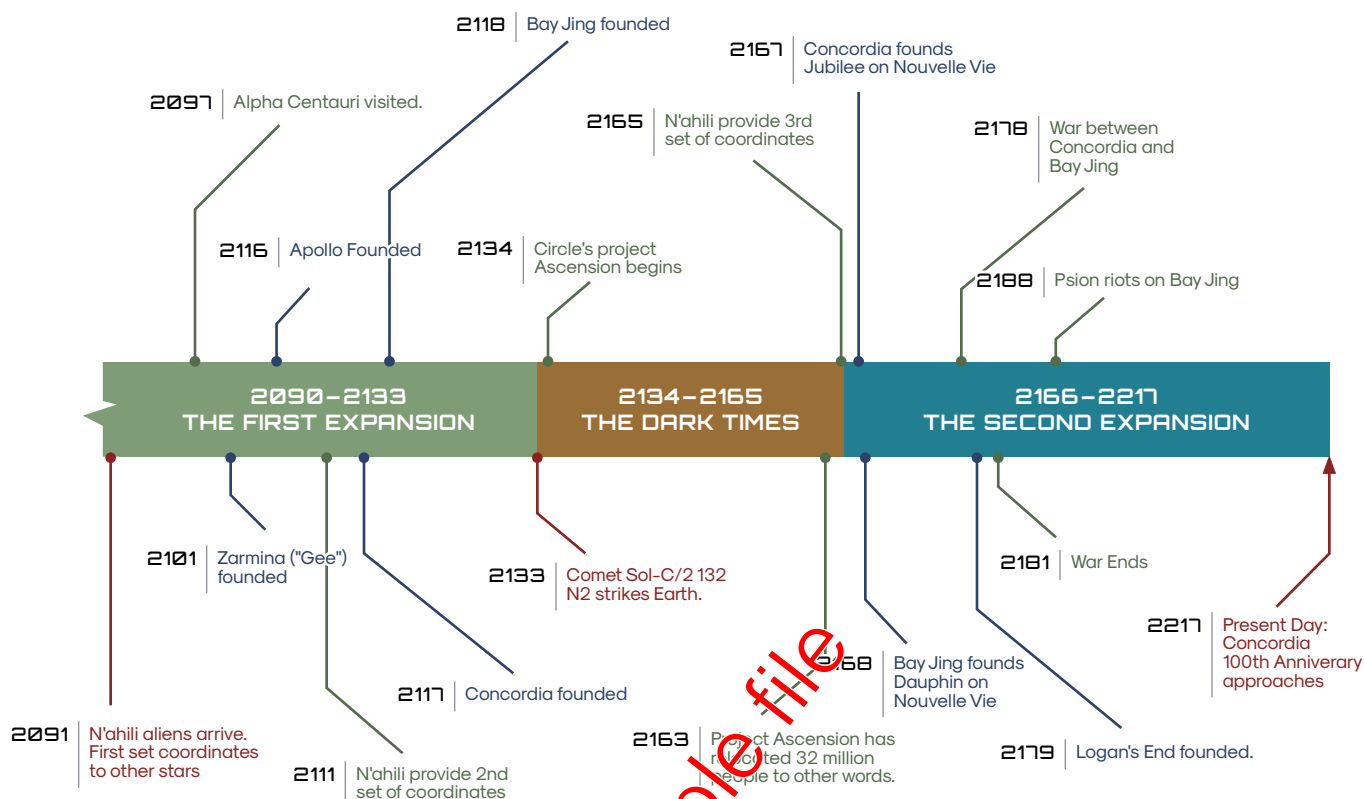
THE DARK TIMES

The weeks before impact had been used wisely by Earth's leaders, both preparing underground shelters and stockpiling large amounts of food, water and medicine. Still, billions died in the first hours after the impact, and many more in the coming weeks and

months as the Earth's ecosystem was disrupted and an impact-induced nuclear winter began. No corner of the Earth was spared the effect of the crash. Help was needed, and fast.

Both the Circle and the Psion Brotherhood took the lead in organizing the rescue. The Circle used their entire Settler Ship fleet to transport supplies to Earth and organize the remaining four worlds' support in food, fuel and energy. The other planets nobly fulfilled their duty and gave everything they had. Many members of the Brotherhood risked their lives organizing the rescue on the surface and coordinating the planets' activities with EarthGov, the caretaker organization that took responsibility for what remained of government on Earth.

Even so, from the beginning it was clear that the lack of a method to massively transport supplies down to the surface, and to transport survivors from the surface into space, would hamper all efforts at a successful rescue. The fact that the planets most likely to produce food and support survivors, such as Bay Jing and Concordia, were eight weeks away, also made rescue very difficult. Thus it was that the Circle spent every resource it had left on a bold



initiative. Dubbed Project Ascension, it involved the construction of two space tethers and the design of a new fleet of atmospheric transports and Settler Ships that interfaced with the tethers. Implementation took years, during which many hundreds of thousands died on a devastated Earth while more conventional methods were used, but a few years after the impact, the Circle was evacuating and transporting to the settler planets almost thirty-five hundred people each day. Ships were cramped and travel conditions during those eight weeks to the other worlds were horrendous, but by and large the initiative met its goals. All in all, almost thirty-two million people were evacuated from Earth in the thirty-year period after the comet impact. Project Ascension was also crucial in delivering enough food, supplies and technology to sustain important parts of the population and to produce food locally.

Most of the refugees ended up at Concordia and Bay Jing, which saw their populations swell. In the power vacuum left by Earth, these two planets took on the role of leading and organizing Humanity. By 2150, when the effects of the impact began to fade, these two planets were the equals of Earth, if not in

population, at least in importance and technology. The well-known current rivalry between Concordia and Bay Jing dates from this time.

During these difficult times, the N'ahili did nothing other than watch, and did not help Humanity at all. Even though scientists believe this has more to do with the aliens' belief system than with any misplaced perception of indifference, this behavior did not gain the aliens any new friends. However, as 2165 approached, the N'ahili surprised humans again by providing a third, fresh set of coordinates to jump points, this time covering stars up to thirty light-years from Sol.

THE SECOND EXPANSION

The next twenty years saw the settling of two new Earth-like worlds: **Nouvelle Vie**, in the Gamma Leporis star system; and **Logan's End**, in the Eta Cassiopeiae star system.

Nouvelle Vie was unique in that it was born divided, with two separate colonies founded by the rival

planets of Concordia (the Jubilee colony) and Bay Jing (the Dauphin colony). The fact that these two colonies share the largest landmass in the mostly water-covered world caused conflicts that led to the first and only war Humanity has had in space. Concordia and Bay Jing went to war in 2178 around the orbit of Gamma Leporis, with the Circle and EarthGov taking a neutral stance.

During this time the Circle was instrumental in stopping atrocities from being committed, such as attacks on civilian vessels or dropping of projectiles on the planet. An important weapon in the Circle's arsenal was the use of the new Stellar Communications Network, a set of automated stations designed to broadcast information between jump points to most planets in human space. As had been discovered centuries previously, keeping the population of most planets informed of what was happening was one of the best ways to keep atrocities and barbaric actions from occurring. Not that the governments of Concordia or Bay Jing reacted kindly to the open coverage of their war activities.

The Psion Brotherhood also took an active role as a deterrent during the war, minimizing the violence with mind-reading and emotional suggestion without resorting to direct mind control.

When hostilities ended in 2181 (officially as a ceasefire but in reality as a result of a string of Concordian victories against Bay Jing), both the Circle and the Psion Brotherhood were hailed as the protectors of the peace in space. This ironically had the effect of increasing the simmering rivalry between these two organizations. The Circle returned to its headquarters in Concordia, temporarily abandoned to prevent the appearance of preferences during the war. Even so, relations between the Circle and Concordia have been difficult since the war.

In the case of Bay Jing, the government manipulated common sentiment against the Psion Brotherhood. The veiled attacks and abuse against the Brotherhood culminated in 2188 in the Psion Riots, a population uprising that ended with the lynching of hundreds of Psions. The scars of that episode still reverberate around today. The current leader of the Psion Brotherhood, Ganendra Nathan, is one of the survivors of the Psion Riots, and has devoted his life to healing the wounds caused by this conflict.

Logan's End was founded in 2179 by colonists looking to remove themselves from the chaos of the war. Although the existence of an Earth-like planet around the star of Eta Cassiopeiae had been known for years, the fact that the star was fifteen jumps away meant the planet was almost impossible to settle. This problem was solved with the creation of

Waypoint Station in the Alpha Lyrae /Vega star system, a convenient ^3He collection point and refueling stop for settler ships on their way to Logan's End.

PRESENT DAY

Things have become quieter since the war. Earth has now returned to its former level of maturity and influence, but it has to share the stage with the major powers of Concordia and Bay Jing. Nouvelle Vie has never found complete peace, as terrorist elements in Jubilee and Dauphin continue an undercover guerrilla war with their respective planets supporting from the sidelines; many believe sooner or later war will start again. Logan's End has become the ultimate frontier world, and its exotic jungles have made it a popular wildlife tourist attraction for the affluent. Technology has advanced to a point where engines, weapons, and material construction have improved significantly.

Exploration-wise, we have already explored most of the systems accessible to us via the jump points provided by the N'ahili. There are no new Earth-like worlds available, and there is no interest in settling hostile environments with so much space available in the currently inhabited *Seven Worlds*. Scout ships still try the needle-in-the-haystack search for jump points, but everyone is impatiently expecting the N'ahili to provide us with a fourth set of coordinates, while at the same time dreaming of a way for humans to wean off of our dependence on these strange uncaring aliens.

The Circle and the Psion Brotherhood continue their tireless job of helping Humanity evolve. The Circle still runs peacekeeping operations around Nouvelle Vie, where hostilities between the terrorist groups are increasing in preparation for the upcoming 100th anniversary of the founding of Concordia and Bay Jing.

In the last few years there have been several reports of strange activity in space. Strange energy signatures have been detected in space around the asteroid belt and in the far reaches of the Nouvelle Vie system. Ships have disappeared, and strange stories have circulated. In Nouvelle Vie, people have a tendency to view anything suspicious as the next "secret weapon" in the shadow war between Concordia and Bay Jing, but maybe something stranger is going on.