# GREG VIDELL <br> THOUSAND SUNS STARSHIPS RUIES SUPPREMENT 



"HELPU MIN, HELPU MIN, HELPU MIN this is fast freighter Sunsubiro, Sunsubiro, Sunsubiro. HELPU MIN, Sunsubiro. Position 154 by 20 by 17. Our craft is under attack and losing pressure. We require immediate assistance. Four people on board, are taking an escape pod. AL VI."

## Vehicles of Glory

Without starships, the interstellar civilization of the Thousand Suns would be impossible. Starships travel the jumplines, bringing not only passengers and trade goods, but also protection against pirates and iraders, both human and alien. Starships press at a D into Wildspace, seeking out new worlds to exidr, settle, and conquer. They are mankind's greatecsinventions.

## Vehicles of Adventure

THOUSAND SUNS: STARSHPS is a supdientent that provides options for starships - constrycie?, operation, combat, and more - that expana Me rules presented in the THOUSAND SUNs RULEBOOK. This book gives players and Game Masters alike the tools they need to build and utilize any starship they can imagine, from fast, maneuverable fighters's to mammoth dreadnoughts. Designed to add depth witout unnecessary complexity, THOUSAND SUNS: STARSHIPS is an invaluable resource for any Thousand Suns campaign.


## GAMES

Thousand Suns Starships Revised is powered
by the 12 Degrees game system and produced by Grognardia Games.

# GREG VIDELL <br> THOUSAND SUNS STARSHIPS RULES SUPPLEMENT 


$c^{\delta}$

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# CHAPTER 1: THE NAVY 

She was performing certain rom: ge tasks - charting meteorites, watching for derelicts and her obstructions to navigation, checking in constantly witt ....scheduled space-ships in case of need, and so on - but atimarily she was a warship. She was a mighty engine of de:tuction, hunting for the unauthorized vessels of whatever Over or planet it was that had not only defied the Triplanetary League, but was evidently attempting to overthrow it; attempting to plunge the Three Planets back into the ghastly sink of bloodshed and destruction from which they had so recently emerged.

## ICHAPTER 1: THE NAVY

Though starships of all kinds travel the jumplines of the Thousand Suns, the largest number of them belong to the Navy. The Navy performs a variety of roles and its vessels and forces can be found almost anywhere, making them a common element of many THOUSAND SUNS campaigns. This chapter provides insight into the organization of the Navy and the mindset of its personnel as an aid to players and Game Masters alike.

## ROLES AND MISSIONS

Navies exist for a purpose: the jobs they undertake are called "roles," while the way they go about performing those roles are called "missions." Roles and missions shape the character of a navy. The kind and number of ships a navy procures, where it put its bases, how it trains its personnel, and a host of other issues must all be considered if an effective fighting force is to be created and maintained. A good navy will regularly question whether or not its current roles and missions remain relevant and how to adapt to a changing galaxy, if necessary. Of course, navies do not do this in a vaculn/ the governments they serve will have their own ideas of what they want out of their neet and how much they are willing to pay to get it. More than one navy in history hax been saddled with the wrong ship for the job because of the interference of bureaucnots and politicians. While it has occurred perhaps less often, navies have also been caree institutional tunnel vision by foreword looking leaders.

What follows is a short list of possible a navy might be assigned to perform. While not exhaustive, it is meant to spur the ination when creation the details for a navy in a THOUSAND SUNS campaign.

## DEFENSE



The most basic function of any navy is to protect the homeworld(s) from external threats. If nothing else, it makes the cost of victory by an aggressor just a bit higher, perhaps more than he is willing to risk, at least today. At the opposite extreme, the ability to positively insure the security of home space results in a population at ease and a more stable economic climate. Depending on how they are implemented in a campaign, access to jump points may also fall into this category.

Beyond the basic considerations of planetary security, a navy can insure continued access to resources and the free flow of commercial traffic within its sphere of influence. The Terran State needs to make some trade-offs in terms of capabilities. Whereas homeworld defense is fairly static in nature, since it fixes on a rather large object in space with known orbital characteristics, the speed and maneuverability of a navy's ships now become a consideration. A ship has to be able to get from where it is presently to where it is needed elsewhere in a timely manner - and the destination could be just about anywhere in the system. A well armed vessel will do little good if the pirates are faster and can enter D-space before they fall within weapons range. Conversely, a fast ship gains a navy little if it is outgunned before the engagement even begins.

## POWER PROJECTION

A navy capable of power projection goes beyond simply trying to stop others from imposing their will through force and creates the ability to reach out and impose its own will upon others. Just because a navy has the ability to initiate conflict does not mean that it will, but the capability is there and it is a factor in rivals' planning.

The most basic form of power projection is diplomatic in nature. Commonly referred to as "showing the flag," it involves traveling outside of a navy's home space as a demonstration of strength, support of other governments and organizations, and adherence to treaty obligations, such as mutual defense pacts. Through these means, a navy acts as a deterrent to aggression, more so than in the case of a purely defensive force because it is capable of bringing the fight to an adversary and putting what he values at direct risk. Finally, while diplomacy is geared toward avoiding conflict, agreements between governments may require a navy to go to war on behalf of other worlds or in league with other navies.

A navy which can project power can also act preemptively, striking at an adversary first. Done properly, the initiative shifts and the adversary is put at a disadvantage. The political ramifications of preemption can be many. One man's preemptive strike is another's case of naked aggression, but that is usually the government's headache and not the Navy's. The most extreme example of power projection is colost; the government wants something, be it a world, revenge on an enemy, or all of the ats in the galaxy, and is willing to employ maximum force to get it.

## PRESTIGE

Sometimes a class of ship, or even a mavy, is put to space mainly for the sake of prestige. This happens when a gove ant decides that it will field a force not so much for military reasons but in order oriin status in the eyes of others. While such a navy may actually be credible, more than not it has been purchased at a premium price, is an inordinate drain on reparce, and never truly lives up to its full potential. A serious navy acquires prestige as a bro uct of its successful operation, because it knows that true prestige cannot be bought.

## INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Almost by definition, navy ships possess the finest sensors available. Beyond their obvious use in combat, they make it possible to gather detailed information about objects and events near the vessel, some of which have a bearing on future military operations and others which are more subtle. One of the most basic applications is to characterize the various electromagnetic signals associated with a ship such as its heat signature or active sensor emanations. Ships can be identified at a distance with such information and individual quirks associated with a specific vessel can uniquely identify it, perhaps giving insight into who commands it or its particular vulnerabilities. The more that is understood about sensor system performance, the easier it is to devise methods to jam or fool those sensors. On the more subtle side, simply monitoring traffic patterns can reveal the intentions of foreign powers or commercial interests. Beyond the technological, naval personnel acquire intelligence information through diplomatic interactions, military exchanges, or just good old fashioned espionage. Given the nature of interstellar travel in an imperial science fiction setting, it just makes good sense for a navy to keep its ear to the ground, so to speak. There is no way to know what you might inadvertently stumble upon.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

As an agent of an interstellar state, a navy is charged with enforcing its laws. Most commonly, this means conducting customs boardings and verifying the correct identity of ships passing through local space. Due to extended travel times, a naval vessel may be the only representative of a state's justice for weeks in any direction. This means that service members may be called upon by the representative of local governments or other authorized entity to investigate a crime or crimes that fall under the interstellar state's purview. Examples of such include interstellar flight to avoid prosecution, murder of high officials, destruction of ecosystems, trafficking in proscribed technologies or sapients, and the like. The naval commander on the scene has the right to decline requests for assistance in those cases where a more pressing military operation has priority. Depending on the political clout of the person making the request, or just as a matter of routine course, the commander's decision may come under subsequent review by higher-ups or have political ramifications.

A quick note: While not technically a navy, imperial science fiction has a rich tradition of featuring interstellar police forces that rely on fleets of starships to operate. Much of what is presented in this book can be applied to a so-called "Space Patrol" with only minor modification. Such organizations tend to operate ship the smaller end of the size range but this should not be construed as a constraint orsthry or players as they envisage their own campaign setting.

## SCIENCE



While much of the focus of a navy is on corroperations, it is a big galaxy with more than its share of undiscovered secrets. This cially true in settings which feature a progenitor race such as the Travelers (see THSAND SUNS, p. 253) who had a marked tendency to leave their old toys lying around. Fleet increases the chance that srmeth.g new or interesting will be identified for what it is. Depending on the capabilities o hip and its science staff, an immediate investigation can be launched or a preliminary analysis compiled for a dedicated science mission to follow. Lastly, there are times, such as when operating in a potentially dangerous region of space, when having a scientific mission hosted aboard a well-armed vessel just makes good sense from a safety perspective.

## "OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED"

Someone once said that if all you have is a hammer, everything begins to look like a nail. The navy gets pressed into service performing what amount to odd jobs because Fleet elements are available and someone thinks they should be applied to this or that need. These assignments run the gamut from conducting search and rescue operations to evacuating a stricken space station to refurbishing weather modification satellites and delivering a former government official into retirement. Appearances can be deceiving, though, and there is always the possibility that the most seemingly routine mission could turn out to be of much greater significance than anyone guessed.

## NAVY ORGANIZATION

Like all military forces, a successful interstellar navy possesses a clear structure. What follows is an overview of that structure, with an eye toward how it affects a THOUSAND SUNS campaign.

## HIERARCHY

In order to fulfill the roles assigned to it, a navy must be composed of numerous organizations all geared toward making the Fleet an effective fighting force. These organizations exist in a hierarchical structure with the very highest levels concerning themselves with the overall operation of the entire navy. Successively lower tiers take the orders and guidance from the organizations above them and apply them to the organizations over which they have control. As one works down the line, more and better information becomes available due in large part to communications suffering from less and less lag time in transit. What started out as guidance and general direction at the highest levels of authority becomes increasingly detailed orders that are ultimately carried out at the lowest levels of the Fleet.

Each level in the navy's hierarchy is tied to a set volume of space over which it exercises authority. By way of example, the senior most office/sbased at a capital world have nominal authority over the entire navy. The next rurez inw the ladder are groupings of sectors referred to as Naval Districts. Below the Dist* ts are the individual sectors and then their component star systems. Additional levelcf authority may exist below the system level but these tend to be established on an asis. Even navies not on the scale of a galaxy spanning state tend to use this same kiri structure, albeit with a few less "rungs" in the ladder.

## STAFF AND OPERATIONS

Running vertically through ney hierarchy are the Staff and Operations elements. The Staff focuses on the adminnati, e aspects of running the navy while the Operations side provides the pool of resources needed to accomplish missions. Information, guidance, and orders travel up and down within Staff or Operations and only pass between elements at the same hierarchical level.

As an example, the Senior Staff, which resides at the highest level of the navy power structure, identifies a need to beef up naval assets in a segment of the Marches. It transmits its intent to do so to its direct counterpart, Naval Operations. Both elements, agreeing upon a broad course of action to achieve this end, send guidance to their subordinate organizations located one level down at the relevant Naval District. The District Command Staff coordinates with District Operations on what assets within their purview will be assigned to the task and other pertinent details. Although more refined than the broad guidance received from above, the guidance sent down to the sector level Staff and Operations elements still needs refinement to bring it yet more in line with actual conditions and events. By the time the original intent of the Senior Staff, after traveling weeks, months or even years, reaches the individual ships, bases and personnel who will enact it, guidance from above has been converted into orders to be followed.

## COMMANDS

Within both the Staff and Operations elements are subordinate organizations referred to as "commands." A command specializes in a body of knowledge or type of activity that supports the overall success of the Fleet. In practice there may be some overlap or redundancy of functions between commands. Although not exhaustive, the following are examples of commands that might exist within both elements.

## STAFF ELEMENT

Because of the large number of naval personnel, there are a similarly large number of commands in its Staff.

## SENIOR STAFF

The Senior Staff is responsible at the most conceptual level for molding a force that meets an interstellar state's perceived needs. It engages in mid to long range planning to keep the Fleet relevant into the future. The successive organizational tiers that are subordinate to the Senior Staff are called Command Staffs.

## PERSONNEL

Responsible for hiring, discharging, and all of the dersunal record keeping for everyone from the lowest enlisted person to the highest ániral, this command is un-glamorous but absolutely necessary. It most often touches the lives of service members when it issues assignments, considers promotion to higher .nd hands out awards and decorations.

## TRAINING

Training is vital to any military organizatin in order to optimize efficiency and safeguard the lives of Fleet personnel. This is pricularly true of the navy, which is deeply reliant on technology. This command is repon. 1 , le for recognizing the need for training, developing the course(s) of instruction go with it and operating the navy's school(s). The naval academy, or academies, might fall under this command's purview or may exist as independent entities which nonetheless implement programs developed by the Training Command. Teaching at the Naval Academy or a service school is usually considered a critical stepping stone to better or higher level assignment by service personnel.

## PROCUREMENT

Another unglamorous command, it too is vital to the Fleet's success, whether buying the basic supplies needed to keep ships and bases running or procuring the most cutting edge battleship.

## LOGISTICS

While Procurement obtains what the Fleet needs, it falls to Logistics to get the materiel where it needs to be in sufficient quantities to keep things running. Ironically, this command may lack ships of its own, relying instead on contract commercial shipping or vessels "owned" and operated by the Operations element.

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Nowhere perhaps does technology change faster than in military applications. This is exemplified in the constant development of new weapons followed by new defenses followed by yet newer weapons. Navies may opt to do their own R\&D, rely on the private sector, or some

Just because a character is meant to have a naval background does not mean that he is limited to the Navy career package. A career admin clerk could be created using the Civil Servant package, a Naval Intelligence officer from the Spy career, and of course a Navy doctor employing the Doctor set of skills. Scouts and Scientists also have a place in navies that value exploration and scientific inquiry. There's no need to feel constrained just because there's one career labeled "Navy".
combination of the two to maintain their fighting edge. This command will also run the Fleet's laboratories and research complexes, should it have any.

## MEDICAL

Not only must the Fleet be able to deal with the causalities that come with combat, it needs to keep its personnel healthy in the first place; the Medical Command is charged with these duties. Given the wide range of environmental conditions to which members of the Fleet may be exposed - varying gravity, atmospheric composition and alien pathogens to name just a few - this is a complex task. Further compli@g it is the fact that the Service may be made up of a diverse mix of species and clades.

## LEGAL

Where there are rules and laws, there a d for the interpretation and adjudication of them. While in service, personnel are sap pet to naval justice and not civil law.

## INTELIIGENCE

As noted above, the Intelligencernmand is primarily interested in military matters but also contributes to an inters tiar te's overall security posture.

## FACILITIES

Facilities Command is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of all naval installations and ships. Depending on the particulars of the setting, it may run the navy's shipyards, direct the work done by private contractors, or both.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Because of the nature of long distance communications in the Thousand Suns, an entire command is devoted to this important service of the Fleet. More than just a purveyor of electronic messages, it also concerns itself with moving priority items that do not go through the usual, and often slower, logistics channels. It also maintains a sizeable cadre of courier personnel charged with assuring the safe delivery of "the mail."

## SCIENCE

This command is responsible for meeting the navy's needs for scientific inquiry and advice.

## CHAPLAIN/OTHER

Depending on the societal underpinnings of the navy, it may provide for the religious needs of its personnel by means of uniformed clerics. Similarly, a navy might put any practitioner of a skill held in particularly high esteem by society in its ranks.


[^0]:    DEDICATIONS
    To Heidi, Alex, and Nikki for their boundless support and enthusiasm, as well as to all the people over the years who have influenced this work in one way or another, whether they know it or not.

