

THE REMNANT

The cataclysmic events of 2507 unleashed utter chaos on land and in space. The treacherous Battle of Vega had decimated and broken up humanity's fleets and the following Scourge invasion just 2 days later ended mankind's ability to wage war. The only survivors were those able to flee, those too far from the fighting and those able to hide on the surface beneath the enemy's notice. The poor souls in the last category would eventually become known as the Resistance and are still contributing to this day in the struggle against the great enemy.

For fleet elements within the Cradle world systems, hiding or resisting in any meaningful way would of course be impossible - the only ships to survive the slaughter were those that fled. Initially, the unmolested Colonies took in refugees by the millions. However, it was decided very early into the exodus to reconfigure the foldspace nodes on the Colonies. Such a grave choice was not taken lightly, as it would make it impossible for ships without the codes to accurately jump to their location. Although it would lead to the stranding of millions of fleeing refugees, the decision was made to prevent an enemy follow-up, since it was assumed they had somehow broken the node codes of the Cradle Worlds to facilitate their attack.

The only option for ship's captains fleeing the carnage was to simply make blind jumps away from any accessible jump point into the unknown. Jumps over short distances are still relatively accurate without the need for nodes, allowing small groups of ships to occasionally escape together.

Totally unable to resist the enemy in any meaningful way and entirely outclassed, these blighted remains of mankind's once great naval power were forced to ply the galaxy in darkness for almost 200 years. Survival was their one and only concern. Keeping vast ships fuelled, maintained and supplied is an entirely different challenge to that faced by their erstwhile comrades on the ground. Surely, many of these desperate bands slowly faded into frozen death in the void over this desperate epoch. Many harrowing tales of resourceful survival and tragic failure will likely never be known by the rest of mankind.

Recently, bands of Resistance fighters have been reactivating old pre-war foldspace surface nodes in desperate bids to bring any free remains of humanity to their aid. Some have even been maintained and kept from the eyes of the enemy since the invasion. In 2670, this call was finally answered by the newly resurgent and vengeful UCM by their spectacular Reconquest campaign.

The lighting of these nodes also brought some hope to stranded ships and flotillas out in the darkness.

Some have even made desperate jumps back to their former homeworlds, often driven by critically depleted supplies and sometimes just an insatiable need to discover what has become of their species. Since the Reconquest, these ships often jumped straight into an active warzone, something they surely did not expect!

Some lucky ships made contact with stunned and delighted UCMF forces and were immediately escorted from the frontline back to the Colonies for some of the most emotionally charged and welcome reunions on record. Others faced their final demise unlooked for amidst the titanic battles being fought in the void.

These rediscovered and surviving elements of the pre-war EAA Terran Grand Fleet have been designated as 'Remnant' by the UCMF. General combat directives call for their immediate extraction from the frontline for debrief back at the Colonies. The kind of people able to survive nearly 200 years of deprived isolation and keep a starship functioning unusually make for exemplary recruits. They have all spent their entire lives in space and under threat. Such encounters are of course rare and cherished by the UCM, frequently seized upon by the Office of Morale and Media for use in stirring propaganda content for the embattled populace to devour.

Unfortunately for the UCM, the choices that Remnant elements make before they encounter the UCM are entirely out of their control. For them to return at all, each stranded ship and flotilla must make a fateful choice entirely without guidance to return to a Cradle World with a functioning node - an insanely risky leap into the blackness. As such, Naval Intelligence estimates that hundreds or possibly even thousands of ships still hang in the void awaiting their moment of bravery or desperation to open the door back to their former homelands.

Once these ships are guided to the Colonies, they are assessed for their space-worthiness. Many are barely intact rust buckets, fit only to sadly limp their way to Niccolum's breakers yards under their own fading power. Others are surprisingly well maintained and are refitted with more modern scanner and ECM suites to join the UCMF. Ships are always in short supply and are welcome despite their age. Indeed, the UCMF still maintains a reserve fleet made up of pre-war survivors from the initial exodus and it is with these forces that proud Remnant's usually serve. Those that have been pressed into combat duty due to the demands of the Reconquest have generally performed well and often exceptionally, especially those still captained by the same grizzled survivalists that brought them into the fold.

There are also a handful of large independent forces out there. As of 2672, the UCMF knows of two of these. The first is known as the 'Vega Scrapfleet'. This sizable fleet is formed of the battered loyalist survivors of the Battle of Vega. In the aftermath, surviving ships still able to jump were ordered back to Earth and the Cradle Worlds immediately and were instructed to leave stricken vessels in system to await repairs in situ and resupply. Few relief vessels were to arrive of course, since the Scourge invaded 2 days later. During the invasion, the poor souls adrift in the wreckage-strewn void of Vega IV were forgotten amidst greater troubles. Even the intact Colonies made no attempt to affect rescue ops, since this was just one corpse-strewn battlespace among many and they had their own survival to focus on.

Over almost 2 centuries, those survivors faced unimaginable hardships, trials and challenges but emerged with a functioning fleet of pre-war ships larger than any other known; such was the scale of the battle and the resulting scrapyard of spare parts. Many are still stranded over Vega IV without functioning foldspace drives, but others have been repaired and have since made contact with the UCM. Survivors had reconfigured Vega IV's node just as the Colonies did, making it impossible for any but them to jump back accurately.

Unfortunately, relations have been frosty so far. They do not forget or forgive their abandonment and consider themselves an independent entity beyond Colonial authority. The UCM has been cautious in its diplomacy with this new factor so far and time will tell where negotiation will lead. Absorbing such a force would be a huge boon to the Colonies, but it seems so far that the fleet's leaders are loathe to surrender their authority to those that left them to die.

The second large force known is the Kalium Kabal. This fleet orbits the Colony of Kalium intact and unbroken since the Scourge invasion. Unlike the other Colonies that make up the UCM, the provisional government of Kalium chose to divorce itself from the other Colonies in the early days of the UCM's formation. Not liking the idea of centralised control from Aurum, this productive and fiercely independent Colony chose to reconfigure its nodes without warning, catapulting the Colony into isolationism.

Since that time, there have apparently been several civil wars and power struggles, resulting in a deeply troubling totalitarian regime. Such a society has not been known by humanity on this scale since the dark days of the 22nd Century. The Kabal, as the ruling body is known, is one and the same with the Army and the Fleet. Since its isolation, it has been using Kalium's shipyards (bested only by those of Niccolum, Olympus Prime and Earth) to turn out large numbers of ships to defend the Colony. Indeed, this is the only known place where pre-war classes of ships are still

built new, since the Kabal lacks the recourse to make the same technological progress as the UCM. Naval Intelligence infiltrators have even identified some new variants, often with weapons previously banned due to instability and likely a danger to their own crews.

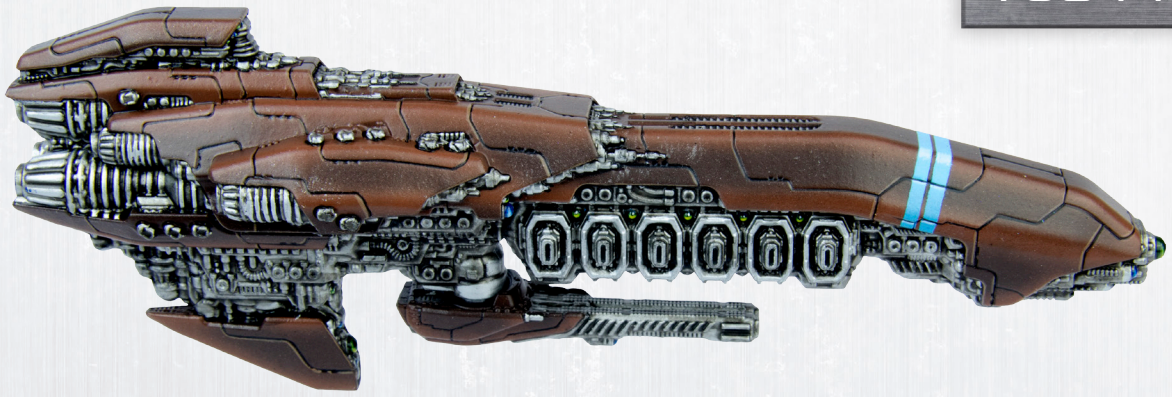
The jury is still out in President Bellaque's government as to what to do about Kalium and its sinister Kabal. The rogue Colony is currently keeping to itself and does not get involved in Colonial affairs. With the home front recently opened against the UCM by the Scourge, the President has her hands full with this far more pressing issue and has for the moment chosen a 'live and let live' policy. Time will tell of the wisdom of this directive.

Of course, one of the biggest inheritors of pre-war ships was the Post Human Republic. Naval elements that mutinied and escaped during the Battle of Vega presumably formed to core of the PHR's embryonic Grand Fleet. Although only observed in rearguard actions and defence perimeters, it seems that some of these ships are still in active service. Given the PHR's presumed lack of numbers, it's logical that recourse are not wasted. While technologically grossly outclassed by Republic-built vessels, these old ships fit better into PHR fleet doctrine than they do with the UCM. They often utilise broadsides and high toughness eschewed by current UCMF thinking. This illustrates how the pre-war fleet was the grandfather of both branches of modern humanity.

What ongoing influence the Remnant will have on the Reconquest at large remains to be seen. The actions of the Vega Sprapfleet, the Kalium Kabal and those flotillas as yet undiscovered may well have a key part to play in the future. Such forces, although antique, still have teeth and will surely make an impact if and when they choose to act.

CENTURION CLASS CRUISER

160 PTS



A Centurion Class Cruiser may be used in either a UCMF or PHR fleet.

NAME	SCAN	SIG	THRUST	HULL	A	PD	G	T	SPECIAL
UCMF CENTURION	6"	6"	7"	12	2+	3	1-2	H	RARE, CERAMIC ARMOUR

TYPE	LOCK	ATTACK	DAMAGE	ARC	SPECIAL
UF/R-XN2 TWIN MASS DRIVER TURRET	2+	2	1	F/S	FUSILLADE 2
UF/R-N31 HYBRID GUN BROADSIDE	4+	6	1	S(L)	LINKED-1
UF/R-N31 HYBRID GUN BROADSIDE	4+	6	1	S(R)	LINKED-1
SHARK MISSILE BAYS	4+	D6+1	1	F/S/R	CLOSE ACTION

NAME	SCAN	SIG	THRUST	HULL	A	PD	G	T	SPECIAL
PHR CENTURION	8"	6"	7"	12	2+	3	1-2	H	RARE, CERAMIC ARMOUR

TYPE	LOCK	ATTACK	DAMAGE	ARC	SPECIAL
RELIC TWIN MASS DRIVER TURRET	2+	2	1	F/S	FUSILLADE 2
MEDIUM CALIBRE HYBRID BROADSIDE	4+	6	1	S(L)	LINKED-1
MEDIUM CALIBRE HYBRID BROADSIDE	4+	6	1	S(R)	LINKED-1
WASP DRONES	3+	D3+1	1	F/S/R	CLOSE ACTION

CERAMIC ARMOUR

Early human-built ships used large blocks and plates cast out of ceramic composites. These had excellent defensive qualities but were found to degrade rapidly in effectiveness during heavy combat. When a ship with Ceramic armour is crippled it reduces its Armour save by two (e.g. 2+ becomes 4+) in addition to the Crippling Damage result rolled for it.

The Centurion class was the most common vessel of cruiser tonnage in the pre-war EAA Terran Grand Fleet. It's simple but effective all-gun primary armament provides an excellent blend of destructive power and reliability. Examples of the class still operating today require low weapon maintenance, a welcome factor that certainly isn't the case with some of the more esoteric and experimental armaments in mankind's pre-war arsenal.

Its primary armament is broadsides of hybrid (now known as 'transition') mass drivers. These feature a chemically fired first stage, much like a conventional gun. The projectile is then accelerated further electromagnetically. This allows for a shorter barrel length and lower power consumption than pure mass drivers of the day. The class also features an oversized twin 'pure' mass driver turret, more in keeping with modern UCMF gunnery, albeit with much heavier projectiles and firing report.

The Centurion also features many of the typical advantages and disadvantages of vintage naval architecture. In bulk (although not in firepower), it is more akin to a modern Heavy Cruiser. It has truly excellent armour plating that outclasses all but defence monitors in the modern UCMF. This was costly and slow to produce however so has since fallen out of favour. It requires expansive and seamless armour panels that while lending superior protection are very expensive to replace in a post-combat refit. While in the post-invasion years the PHR took this technology to its extreme and refined it with local skin repair tech, the UCM chose to use smaller and more easily replaced panels. Either way, modern fleets chose easier maintenance over sheer protection.

Examples of the class still in use with independent forces are typically hamstrung by inferior pre-war electronics and close action warheads, leading to a low scan range and primitive target acquisition. Refitted examples in the UCMF and the PHR's Grand Fleet are usually modernised to current standards where possible.

Other factors in the design are more difficult to modernise. Unfortunately, all pre-war ships generally feature inferior point defence compared to modern equivalents. The most likely opponents in the pre-war days were other human ships and Shaltari, neither of whom favoured close assault. Captains paid a heavy price for this when faced with the Scourge, an enemy that prefers to do its killing at close range.

The use of broadsides in the UCMF is also at odds with its usual ethos, making the Centurion and other relics like it square pegs in naval strategy. However, having a wildly different tool to work with is often a boon to a skilful Admiral in the right situation, where these dinosaurs can remind modern upstarts that their fighting days are not yet at an end.