

# WAR OF ANNABEL'S STAR: 2518-2519

The War of Annabel's Star, more officially known as the Libra-Sagittarius War of 2518-19 (alternatively as Duchess Annabel's War or simply the War of the Duchess) took place in 2518 and 2519 in the Second Band of Known Space, in star systems located in the constellations of Libra, Ara, Scorpio, and Sagittarius. The war was a rather large one by colonial standards, pitting significant naval forces of two general coalitions against each other. These coalitions were Imperial Prussia and Japan on one side, fighting against the United Kingdom, the Panasian League, and Holy Russian Empire. Additionally, the New Roman Alliance played a supporting role in the war on the side of the Prussians and Japanese, along with occasional assistance from the "Khitan-Tunguska Free State" (unofficially known as the "Black Dragons").

## BACKGROUND

As with most wars, the War of the Duchess can trace its origin back to other wars that had come before. For the War of the Duchess, the seeds of conflict were sown in the Black Dragon War and the subsequent Xi Scorpio War.

## 2512: RISE OF THE BLACK DRAGONS

After decades of oppressive mistreatment and ever-increasing tensions, dozens of Panasian and Imperial Russian colonies throughout the Sagittarius, Scorpio, and Libra strategic command sectors revolted against their colonial governments. The "Khitan-Tunguska Free State" was founded on the Fenghuang (Phoenix) colony, in the Sagittarius star system Gliese 783. Immediate war ignited between these breakaway colonies and a new alliance of the Panasian League and the Holy Russian Empire.

The Khitan-Tunguska Free State and their rebel fleets of stolen Chinese and Russian-built warships were became known as the "Black Dragons." This was a reference to their former Russian-Chinese heritage, now identifying themselves as adopted descendants of the Mongolian, Manchurian, and Siberian separatists who'd long lived near the Black River of terrestrial Eurasia.

## 2516-2518: THE XI SCORPIO WAR

Meanwhile, far off in the Third Band of the constellation Scorpio, another long-simmering dispute between Japan and the Panasian League finally came to a head at Xi Scorpio, a gravitationally-bound group of six star systems 92 light-years from Sol.

The Panasian League had begun a massive colonization campaign in Xi Scorpio as far back as 2502, with a huge fleet

of 600,000 ton supertankers rebuilt into prefabricated colonies. This colonization fleet, gigantic but slow, set sail in a 5th-magnitude Darkstar wave that took them over six *years* to reach this far into Known Space. The idea was that, once they arrived with such a massive fleet of pre-built "cities," they could colonize the star cluster to such a degree that no other nation would mount a serious challenge.

By the time this slow Panasian fleet reached Xi Scorpio, however, the Japanese had already sent a smaller, much faster fleet to colonize two of the Xi Scorpio systems, and the treaties that mandated the Chinese claim on Xi Scorpio had come into question. Now, with "possession being nine-tenths of the law," the Japanese were going to be very difficult to dislodge from their two Xi Scorpio colonies without full-scale war, even with the Panasian League controlling the other four.

For decades this uneasy sharing of Xi Scorpio seemed to work ... until the discovery of "Hokkaido's Flower," one of the closest Earth-analog worlds yet found. Located in the Kurokawa star system (Xi Scorpio D) multiple colonization and sovereignty claims were immediately staked upon this "Eden world," especially between the Japanese and the Panasian League. Needless to say, such claims again brought tensions in Xi Scorpio to the breaking point.

All of this came to naught, however, when Khitan-Tunguska Free State rose seemingly out of nowhere and the Black Dragon War exploded across nearby star systems. The Panasian colonies in Xi Scorpio revolved, joining the Blak



Dragons practically overnight. The Japanese colonial administration in Xi Scorpio raised no protest, glad to be rid of their “bad Panasian neighbors.” The Black Dragons, for their part, made no move against the Japanese at first, already faced with all-out war against the Panasian League and the Holy Russian Empire.

The prize of Hokkaido’s Flower, however, proved just too impossible a prize to resist. In 2516, the Black Dragons seized the chance invade Japanese holdings in Xi Scorpio, take Hokkaido’s Flower, and make it their new capital. After all, these Black Dragons could never return to Earth in the wake of their bloody revolts against the Panasian League and Holy Russian Empire. Therefore they claimed what they called an “Earth and Sky” mandate, the right claimed for their future generations of have an actual home world.

The Black Dragon invasion of the Japanese colonies in Xi Scorpio was swift, brutal, and bloody. The Japanese were compelled to respond right away, but only had a few warships that could travel the 92 light-years to Xi Scorpio quickly enough. The Americans also had such a task force, and were coerced into joining the war when the Japanese invoked a mutual military assistance clause in the treaty that had ended the Japanese-American “Andromeda Arc” War of 2513-14.

Now forced together as unlikely allies, the former enemies of the United States and Japanese Navy embarked in a two-year war against the Black Dragons to retake the Xi Scorpio colonies, a war that finally came to a bloody conclusion late in 2518.

## 2517: BLACK DRAGON WAR SPREADS

As the Black Dragons were fighting the Americans and Japanese in Xi Scorpio, they were also fighting the Panasian

League and the Holy Russian Empire elsewhere in the Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius constellations. Overall, the Black Dragons did very well among the Third Band colonies in these sectors, since their original revolt and uprising delivered to them most of the colonies, bases, manufacturing, and even warships. Colonies closer in the Second Band were more bitterly contested, with the Holy Russian Empire and Panasian League doing steadily better they closer the battle areas were to Sol, and core system strongholds like the Panasian megacolony at Ross 154 and the Russian star fortress at Gleise 628. Still, the Black Dragons were doing tolerably well in the outer reaches of the Second Band, and outright winning in the Third Band, with the sole exception of the smaller Xi Scorpio War against the Japanese and Americans.

As this larger Black Dragon War continued into its seventh year, however, the situation became increasingly brittle for the Panasian League and Holy Russian Empire. As more and more ships, battlegroups, task forces, and finally full battle fleets were committed to these far-flung star systems, colonies and holdings closer to the core systems became increasingly vulnerable. Other colonial nations, most notably the Imperial Prussians and the New Roman Alliance, began to regard these Russian and Panasian colonies, so long too heavily defended to attack, with increasingly hungry eyes.

## 2518: TENSIONS AT ANNABEL'S STAR

Finally, in the summer of 2518, the Xi Scorpio War began to draw to a close. Ironically, it was the end of that war that lit the final fuse that would eventually lead to the outbreak of the new Duchess Annabel’s War.

By this time, the overall situation for the Russians and Panasian League had reached a breaking point. Not only were they still locked in a bloody and unending war against the Black Dragons, but they knew the Prussians and New Romans were eyeing their ever-more vulnerable Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius colonies.

Then, at the worst possible time for the Panasians and Russians, the Americans and Japanese won their war against the Black Dragons in Xi Scorpio. While this was indeed a setback for the Black Dragons, the conclusion of this war also meant that all the Black Dragon warships and resources that the Americans and Japanese had been tying down in Xi Scorpio would be free to redeploy against the Russians and Panasians.

The Russians and especially





Panasians had repeatedly warned the Americans and especially the Japanese ... in no uncertain terms ... that they would take a dim view of any separate peace brokered with the Black Dragons. Peace with the Black Dragons could mean war with the Panasians and Russians.

For the Americans this threat held little weight, almost all their colonies were in other strategic command sectors, remember they were only in the Xi Scorpio War because of a treaty clause with the Japanese. So the sharpening crisis in the Libra-Sagittarius sectors held little worry for them. Furthermore, they were actually engaged in a small “bush war” of their own against the Black Dragons (the Scorpion’s Tail War of 2518-19), so they weren’t signing any peace with the Khitan-Tunguska Free State right now anyway.

For the Japanese, however, eager to rebuild their precious Hokkaido’s Flower colonies, this was a peace they *had* to have. Clearly the Black Dragons weren’t going away, and with Hokkaido’s Flower (their most valuable colony) right along their string of star systems, tolerable relations with the Black Dragons would have to be restored. Thus, as the Japanese signed peace with the Black Dragons (their blood enemies of 2516-18), they antagonized and alienated the Panasian League to such an extent that they were soon forced into an amazing and ironic beginnings of an *alliance* with the Black Dragons against the Panasian League and, by extension, their allies in the Holy Russian Empire.

With yet *another* power now lining up against them, the Panasians and Russians clearly needed some allies of their own. Swallowing their pride, they reached out to another powerful force in the region; the United Kingdom.

Amidst all these embattled Panasian and Russian colonies fighting against the Black Dragons in the Libra-Sagittarius warzone, there was the rich British colony of Annabel’s Star (41 Arae). Located 29 light-years from Sol in the constellation Ara, this colony had once been a wedding gift to the Duchess Annabel of the British royal family. A binary

star system of a yellow main-sequence star and a red dwarf, the two stars shared a thick ring of planets, asteroids and other protoplanetary debris, rich in metals and plentiful with local sources of water, oxygen, and silicon and carbon for graphite construction of vast colonial complexes. Tensions had always been somewhat high in the region, as Panasian colonies surrounded 41 Arae and the Panasian government charged steep tariffs for shipping in and out of 41 Arae back to Sol and other British colonies. Yet once the Black Dragon War had broken out in 2512, Annabel’s Star had been something of

an oasis of peace in the Libra-Sagittarius warzone.

Now the Panasians and Russians, as outlined earlier, were in trouble against not only the Black Dragons, but also potentially the Prussians, New Romans, and incredibly, the Japanese as well. So they contacted the British Foreign Office and offered, in exchange for their alliance and participation in the Libra-Sagittarius War, 50-year leases in the Gliese 682 and 674 star systems. These two red dwarfs, although hardly remarkable in their own right, would form an unrestricted shipping lane from Annabel’s Star (41 Arae) all the way back to the core systems and Sol. Basically, it would open up Annabel’s Star to unrestricted and untaxed shipping and full colonial exploitation, and provide uncouped billions in new revenue to the British trade empire.

The British didn’t take the deal at first. They waited until Japanese task forces started redeploying out of Xi Scorpio back into outer Second Band Scorpio star systems like Scorpio 18 and HP79431, increasingly destabilizing the military situation faced by the Panasians and Russians. Then they forced a counter-proposal which the Panasians in particular were uncomfortably compelled to accept: not 50-year leases of Gleise 682 and 674, but permanent ceding of these star systems to the United Kingdom.

## INCIDENT AT OUTER SEYCHELLES

The Imperial Prussians, for their part, were hardly pleased by the prospect of the United Kingdom joining the Libra-Sagittarius War against them. In an attempt to prevent the British from signing this deal, the Prussians soon sent several powerful task forces just outside the Annabel’s Star system in a threatening show of force, warning the British what signing that deal would mean.

The British, for their part, would hardly be cowed. Traditional enemies with Imperial Prussia, there remained

plenty of bad blood leftover from the Hercules Gate and Psi Serpentis Wars. They sent task forces of their own out to challenge the Prussians, who likewise refuse to back down.

On 12 August, 2518, the British signed the deal with the Panasian League, officially becoming their allies against the Black Dragons and anyone allied with them. At the moment this *probably* included the Japanese and the New Romans, but it wasn't until the Outer Seychelles Mandate Incident that the Prussians officially kicked off the conflict and the Libra-Sagittarius War was on.

The Outer Seychelles Mandate was an orbital colony in the outer Kuiper Belt of the Annabel's Star system (41 Arae). The colony was already on high alert after a near-suicidal fast fly-by run by the Prussian heavy cruiser *Franz Josef* (Captain Matthew Gold). But things finally came to a head when another battlegroup, centered by the heavy cruiser *Lützw*, mistook an approaching convoy of British merchant and passenger ships for a naval task force of the Holy Russian Empire on an attack vector. The *Lützw* and her battlegroup all opened fire, instantly destroying six freighters, two

passenger liners (killing over 1300 British civilians), and yacht registered to Duchess Annabel herself.

The British, needless to say, immediately declared war. The Japanese, in turn, declared war on the British while the Russians declared war on the Prussians and Japanese. The New Roman Alliance, promised at least one new colony from the Prussians at the successful conclusion of the war, likewise declared war on the British and Russians and Panasian League. The Black Dragons followed suit, although not being a diplomatically recognized state, practically no one noticed. Ironically they had become a footnote in the very war they had started back in 2512.

Whatever the case, the Libra-Sagittarius War was on. Raging through a belt of star systems relatively close to Earth (roughly 20-35 light-years), the density of naval power (and thus scale and ferocity of the battles) would be relatively high. Furthermore, the number of competing nations on either side of this coalitional conflict meant that this would be one of the larger wars to rock Known Space in recent decades.

## ENGAGEMENT 01 - INTERDICTION BY CARRIER STRIKE FORCE TSARINA TWINS SYSTEM / GLIESE 667 - 15 AUGUST, 2518

### OPPOSING FORCES

#### JAPANESE, NEW ROMAN FORCES

IJN *Kanoya* (CCE-79), *Kagoshima* class light fleet carrier

IJN *Sagae* (DCE 109), *Shimada* class light carrier

IJN *Yurakazu* (FE-18), *Akashi* class strike frigate

IJN *Wutazashi II* (FE-23), *Akashi* class strike frigate

NRS *Messina* (DD462), *Milan II* class destroyer

NRS *Taranto* (DD453), *Milan II* class destroyer

NRS *Trieste* (DD451), *Milan II* class destroyer

\*364 points

**SITUATION:** In the wake of the Outer Seychelles incident and the official start of Duchess Annabel's War, naval forces of the Holy Russian Empire and Panasian League quickly begin to mobilize in support of their new British allies. With powerful Imperial Prussian task forces already deployed in the Annabel's Star system (41 Arae), Russian and Panasian commanders agree to consolidate their task forces in nearby star systems before sending them to Annabel's Star. One such staging area is the Tsarina Twins system (Gliese 667), where a Chinese and Russian battlegroups start to mass at a series of large Russian naval bases.

However, Japanese intelligence already has word of these naval movements, warned by a source identified only as the "Red Kitsune," rumored to be a beautiful spy hidden somewhere in the Russian or Chinese command systems (perhaps both).

Accordingly, as Imperial Russian Navy starts to gather its strength at the Tsarina Twins system, one of the arriving

#### IMPERIAL RUSSIAN, PANASIAN LEAGUE FORCES

CPK *Gorshkova* (118), *Slava* class heavy cruiser

CPK *Nikova* (243), *Kutusov* class light cruiser

CPK *Semanovich* (259), *Kutusov* class light cruiser

CPK *Levaskaya* (366), *Gagarin* class light fleet carrier

PLN *Gu Cheng* (771), *Zhao Ha* class missile frigate

\*358 points

battlegroups is intercepted as it exits its Darkstar wave by a powerful Japanese light carrier strike group, escorted by an attack wing of three New Roman destroyers.

**REPORT:** The Russian approach is very aggressive, desperate to close the range so their heavy advantage in rail guns and especially plasma projectors will have the most impact on the much smaller ships of the Japanese-New Roman task battlegroup. But because the Russians and Chinese know they will certainly take the full shock of the Japanese ordinance strike (full strike of two carriers and full spreads of Ki-45 "Toryu" torpedoes), they have to stick together for maximum mass driver protection. This means they're effectively maneuvering with their slowest ship (the heavy cruiser *Gorshkova*), which means the Japanese and especially three New Roman destroyers will always have them at disadvantageous arcs, ranges, and firing positions.

Still, the heavy guns of the Russian cruisers do manage some damage, exploding the frigate *Wutazashi II*, while mass

aerospace and torpedo strikes cripple the flagship carrier *Kanoya*. For all their speed and long-range lasers, the fragile Italian destroyers are also all crippled, although only the *Wutuzashi* is lost for good.

**SCORING:** The Japanese have remaining: the light carrier IJN *Sagae* (20 points), 10 elite fighters and 20 regular fighters (70 points). Therefore they win by 90 points, a solid but minor victory.

## ENGAGEMENT 02 - INTERCEPT ENEMY BATTLESHIP TASK FORCE TSARINA TWINS SYSTEM / GLIESE 667 - 26 AUGUST, 2518

### OPPOSING FORCES

#### IMPERIAL PRUSSIAN, JAPANESE, NEW ROMAN FORCES

KMS *Franz Josef* (KS-1348), *Leopold* class heavy cruiser  
KMS *Kesseldorf* (KS-1415), *Hipper* class light cruiser  
KMS *Rossbach* (KS-1420), *Hipper* class light cruiser  
KMS *Nordwind* (KS-999), *Ostwind* class escort frigate  
KMS *Dresden* (KS-1633), *Regensburg* class frigate-monitor  
NRS *Messina* (DD462), *Milan II* class destroyer  
NRS *Taranto* (DD453), *Milan II* class destroyer  
NRS *Trieste* (DD451), *Milan II* class destroyer  
IJN *Sagae* (DCE 109), *Shimada* class light carrier

\*619 points

**SITUATION:** Although the Japanese and New Romans have won an opening victory in the Imperial Russian star system of Tsarina Twins (Gliese 667), no one has any illusions that the Russian position in this system is seriously threatened. Neither are the British flinching at Annabel's Star (41 Arae), despite the continuing Prussian buildup in the star system's cometary halo and outer protoplanetary disc.

Since neither the Prussians or the British seem strong enough to mount a shove against each other at Annabel's

#### IMPERIAL RUSSIAN, PANASIAN LEAGUE FORCES

PLN *Ming* (110), *Qin Shuangdi* class battleship  
CPK *Gorshkova* (118), *Slava* class heavy cruiser  
CPK *Nikova* (243), *Kutusov* class light cruiser  
CPK *Semanovich* (259), *Kutusov* class light cruiser  
CPK *Levaskaya* (366), *Gagarin* class light fleet carrier  
PLN *Gu Cheng* (771), *Zhao Ha* class missile frigate  
PLN *Lu Xun* (713), *Zhao Ha* class missile frigate

\* Russians are missing 2 fighters

\*618 points

Star, the Prussian commander (Vice-Admiral Joachim Graf von Hollachwitz) decides to shift his posture. Resolving to break the deadlock by reinforcing success, he dispatches Captain Matthew Gold and the *Franz Josef* task force quickly to the Tsarina Twins binary star system (Gliese 667), with orders to join up with the Japanese and New Roman forces already in place and deal a decisive blow to the Imperial Russian and Panasian League naval forces in that system. Thus cut off from the nearest allied star system, the British at

Annabel's Star might become more tractable to Prussian pressure.

Unfortunately for the good Count von Hollachwitz, a Russian K-56 class torpedo corvette has intercepted his communications, and has enough time to warn Russian and Panasian command. Thus, when Captain Gold's task force shakes off its Darkstar wave at Tsarina Twins and rendezvous with the New Romans and Japanese near the system's outermost gas giant ... he finds that the *Gorshkova* task force (their ships gingerly repaired after the previous battle) has been substantially reinforced.

The Russians have been joined the gigantic Panasian League battleship *Ming* of the People's Liberation Navy.



**REPORT:** The Prussians and New Romans spend the opening phases of the battle trying to shoot through the shields and knock down the armor of the battleship *Ming* (named for the Ming Dynasty), all while taking a terrific mauling from the Russian cruisers. Captain Gold then switches tactics and starts taking out the Russian cruisers, which his task force actually does relatively quickly. But by then too many of his ships have been crippled or driven off to seriously challenge the *Ming*. Keeping a stand-off distance where his enhanced rail guns have the edge over the *Ming*'s huge but relatively

inaccurate plasma projectors, his remaining ships manage to tear open the *Ming*'s port side and *almost* force her to break off the engagement.

Almost ...  
... but not quite.

**SCORING:** The battle is a draw, with the battleship *Ming* left on the table (242 points) along with the heavy cruiser *Franz Josef* (162 points) and light cruiser *Roszbach* (84 points), for a total of 246 points. As always, at least a 5% margin is needed in an assault-based game to claim a minor victory.

## ENGAGEMENT 03 - FIRST BATTLE OF TSARINA TWINS TSARINA TWINS SYSTEM / GLIESE 667 - 09 SEPTEMBER, 2518

### OPPOSING FORCES

#### PRUSSIAN, NEW ROMAN, JAPANESE, B. DRAGON FORCES

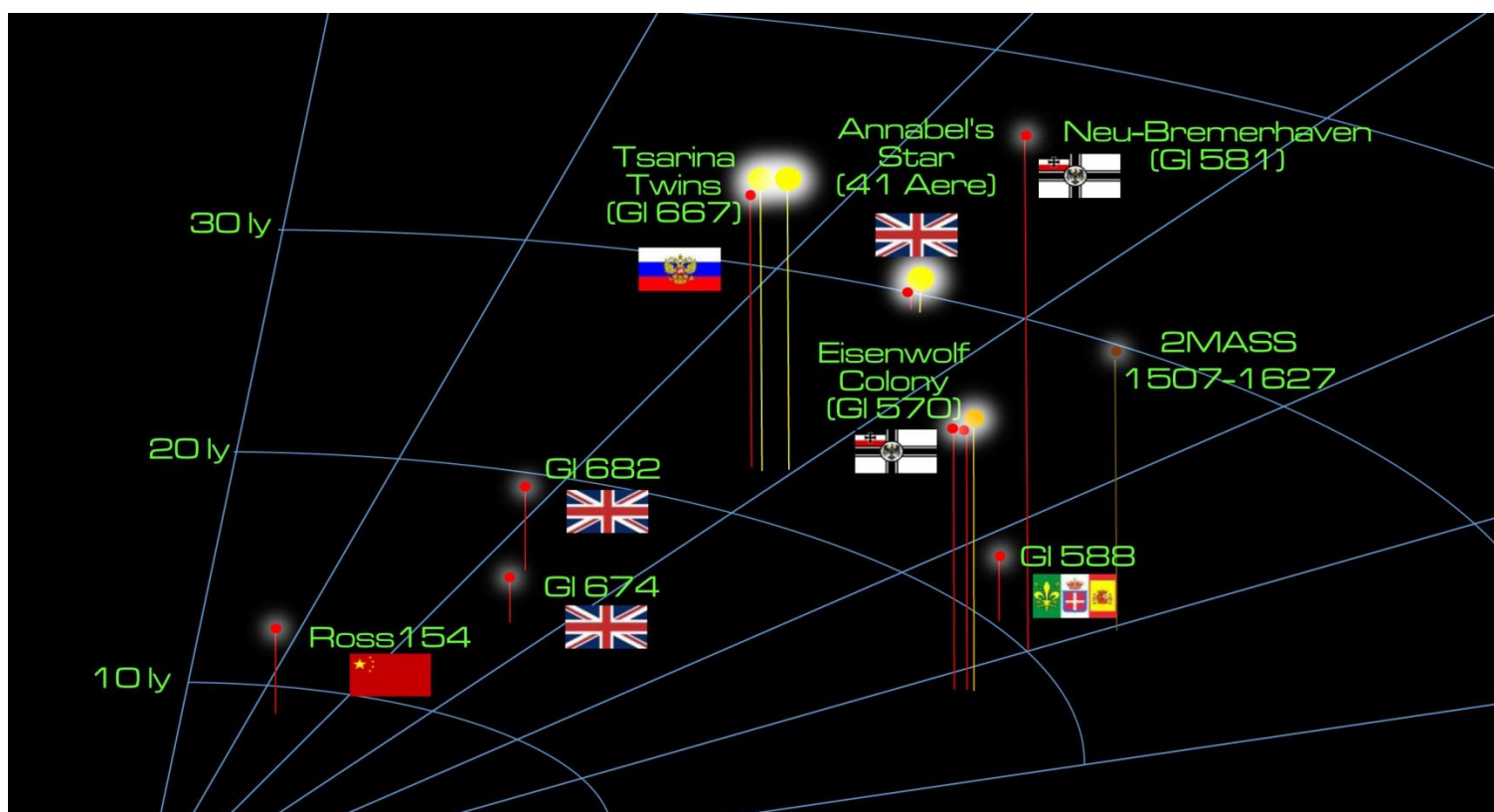
- KMS *Franz Josef* (KS-1348), *Leopold* class heavy cruiser
- KMS *Kesseldorf* (KS-1415), *Hipper* class light cruiser
- KMS *Oder* (KS-1590), *Maas* class destroyer
- NRS *Messina* (DD462), *Milan II* class destroyer
- NRS *Taranto* (DD453), *Milan II* class destroyer
- NRS *Trieste* (DD451), *Milan II* class destroyer
- IJN *Sagae* (DCE 109), *Shimada* class light carrier
- IJN *Kanoya* (CCE-79), *Kagoshima* class light fleet carrier
- IJN *Yurakazu* (FE-18), *Akashi* class strike frigate
- IJN *Tanakasha* (FE-19), *Akashi* class strike frigate
- KTS *Tzarakin* (197), *Slava* class heavy cruiser
- KTS *Zhang Jia* (471), *Xhia* class light missile cruiser

\*870 points

#### BRITISH-PANASIAN LEAGUE FORCES

- HMS *Kraken* (C 173), *Iron Duke* class heavy cruiser
- HMS *Inflictor* (C 214), *Indomitable* class light cruiser
- HMS *Requiem* (C 242), *Relentless* class light cruiser
- HMS *Vigilant* (R 36), *Valiant* class light fleet carrier
- HMS *Londonderry* (D 39), *Falklands* class destroyer
- HMS *Prescott* (F 183), *Cornwallis* class escort frigate
- HMS *Gage* (F 176), *Cornwallis* class escort frigate
- HMS *Vandeleur* (F 190), *Cornwallis* class escort frigate
- PLN *Xu Shan* (338), *Greater Xhia* class light missile cruiser
- PLN *Hohhot* (583), *Nanchong* class destroyer
- PLN *Shantao* (854), *Nanchong* class destroyer

\*870 points



**SITUATION:** After the clash of the *Ming* battle fleet and the *Franz Josef* task force, the balance of power in the Tsarina Twins system hangs on a razor balance. While neither side decisively destroyed the other, both have sustained plenty of damage and weeks are spent welding, patching, and grafting ships back together in preparation for the next inevitable engagement. The first clash was too small to be truly decisive, the second battle was much larger but ended in a frustrating draw when both commanders showed sufficient restraint not to throw away their remaining ships (and lives of their crews) in a desperate bid for victory that no one was going to win. Now it's a race not of maneuver or firepower, but of logistics and repair. The first fleet back on its feet will be the clear winner.

At first, it seems as if the Holy Russian Empire and Panasian League hold a clear advantage here. Tsarina Twins is their system, after all, they have ports and dry docks and repair facilities while the Prussians, Japanese, and New Romans are trying to put themselves back together in the Tsarina Twins cometary cloud.

The advantage seems to shift to the Prussians when it is revealed that the biggest Panasian asset, the battleship *Ming*, can't be repaired here in Tsarina Twins after all. The ship is simply too large, the Russians have no port big enough to hold her.

The Prussians, New Romans, and Japanese complete their repairs and start inching closer to the binary suns at the

center of the star system, like hungry wolves in the night closing on a campfire. Without the battleship *Ming*, the remaining Chinese and Russian battlegroups have no chance of standing against Captain Gold's heavily-reinforced task force. He's even joined by two cruisers of the Black Dragons.

This is the moment, however, when the British finally enter the war in a big, big way. While they don't have a battleship or fleet carrier in the area yet, they send the next best thing, Cruiser Squadron "K" under Commodore Rhea Aubrey, commanding from her flagship, the legendary heavy cruiser HMS *Kraken*.

The total firepower now amassed by both sides is sobering. Twenty-three warships and hundreds of fighters, bombers, and other aerospace craft are about to join battle in the largest battle since Mingyun Xing and Tamakura of the Xi Scorpio War, the Battle of Caledonia of the Andromeda Arc War, or the Battle of Novy Arkhangelsk of the Psi Serpentinis War.

One thing's for sure. *This* time the battle will be decisive. **REPORT:** The *Franz Josef* and *Kraken* exchange brutal broadsides (old rivals from at least two previous wars) while the carrier strike of the *Kanoya* and *Sagae* tries to score decisive damage on the Chinese *Xu Shan* battlegroup. However, the elite "Royal Griffins" and "Mad Hatters" aerospace strike squadrons of the HMS *Vigilant* largely break this attack, allowing light cruisers like the sleek HMS *Requiem*



and the old but redoubtable HMS *Inflictor* to rack up a decisive edge over the Italian destroyers and the smaller Prussian warships. Once the escort electronic warfare frigate *Nordwind* is disabled, the Prussian fleet becomes much more vulnerable from Panasian mass torpedo spreads, especially from the *Greater Xhia* class light missile cruiser *Xu Shan*. The Black Dragons stave off defeat considerably, the bloody and infamous *Zhang Jia* (with such a fearsome reputation from the Xi Scorpio War) wreaks tremendous damage before she's also crippled ...

Although their fleet never completely comes apart and even though they have inflicted horrific punishment on their opponents, it soon becomes clear that the Prussians and

their allies have taken more damage than the British and Panasians. Captain Gold makes the tough call and saves his fleet, giving the order to retire.

**SCORING:** The Japanese have the light carriers *Sagae* and *Kanoya* left, although their aerospace groups have been effectively gutted. The British have only the frigate HMS *Vandeleur* and the Panasians have their flagship *Xu Shan*, along with plenty of fighters and bombers of the Royal Griffins and the Mad Hatter aerospace strike squadrons to give them the win.

British and Chinese win by 186 points, which sounds like a lot but is in fact only a minor victory for a game of this size (870 points per side).

## ENGAGEMENT 04 - SPOILING ATTACK AGAINST ENEMY INCURSION NEU-BREMERHAVEN SYSTEM / GLIESE 581 - 22 SEPTEMBER, 2518

### OPPOSING FORCES

#### JAPANESE NAVAL FORCES

IJN *Kanoya* (CCE-79), *Kagoshima* class light fleet carrier

IJN *Sagae* (DCE 109), *Shimada* class light carrier

IJN *Yurakazu* (FE-18), *Akashi* class strike frigate

IJN *Tanakasha* (FE-19), *Akashi* class strike frigate

\*220 points

#### IMPERIAL RUSSIAN, PANASIAN LEAGUE FORCES

CPK *Suvorov* (262), *Kutuzov* class light cruiser

CPK *Syekyra* (314), *Sovnya* class destroyer

CPK *Rusalka* (330), *Sovnya* class destroyer

PLN *Xushi* (731), *Chenshi* class escort carrier

\*218 points

**SITUATION:** Needless to say, the British-Panasian win at the Battle of Tsarina Twins conclusively ends any Prussian, Japanese, or New Roman ideas of taking that star system any time soon. And yet despite the size and violence of that battle, there is no “shell-shocked lull” in the aftermath.



Quite the opposite, the next battle takes place almost immediately afterwards.

In what is being dubbed in the media as the “Annabel’s Alliance,” the British and Panasians are too badly damaged to mount an immediate follow-through strike to exploit their victory at Tsarina Twins. However, they put tremendous pressure on their Imperial Russian allies, who had no ships at the Tsarina Twins battle that ironically saved that system. If “Annabel’s Alliance” is to capitalize on this victory, it will be the Russians who have to carry it off.

On the “Eisenwölfe” side (roughly: Iron Wolves, the unofficial sobriquet for the shaky alliance between the Imperial Prussians, Japanese, New Roman Alliance, and Black Dragons, named for the “Eisenwolf” Prussian colony at the Gleise 570 star system), the situation is decidedly different. They have been firmly booted out of the Tsarina Twins system, but to keep the Anabelle Alliance from mounting counter-invasions of the Eisenwolf Colony at Gliese 570 or the Japanese Songubādo (ソングバード “Songbird”) colony at the HD140901 star system, the decision is made to launch limited spoiling attacks wherever possible ... if only to buy time for the Iron Wolves to regain their balance.

The first such skirmish comes at the Neu-Bremerhaven system (Gliese 581), a small red dwarf star system not far from the Eisenwolf colony itself. Here, the Russian *Suvorov* battlegroup has just dropped out of its Darkstar wave with orders to clear this outlying system of any Iron Wolf



resistance. However, they are met by the small but deadly Japanese *Kanoya* carrier battlegroup, a unit that has shown remarkable ability in recent battles to inflict amounts of damage out of all proportion to its weight.

**REPORT:** This turns out to be a very frustrating battle for the Russians and Chinese. They start off very aggressive, trying to rocket to the center of the board as rapidly as they can, hoping to close the distance with the smaller, lightly-armed Japanese warships. The Japanese, however, fade back, using superior speed and maneuverability to continually outdistance the Russians, hammering them with the successive waves of aerospace strikes and Ki-45 torpedoes. The Japanese do eventually lose their *Akashi*-class frigates, and the *Suvorov* gets herself terribly mauled while delivering a deadly broadside straight across the *Kanoya*'s stern. The *Kanoya* is crippled with her full bomber complement still

aboard (they'd just landed to re-arm), but the *Suvorov* is so badly damaged she has to break off. Now alone, the light carrier *Sagae* continues to outrace Russian and Chinese torpedoes, while her fighters and torpedoes continually chew away the two remaining Russian destroyers. They have to accelerate to such absurd lengths to catch her that they actually spin out of the battle area, leaving only the escort carrier *Xushi* ... with no torpedoes or fighters left. Completely outmaneuvered, the Chinese and Russians are forced to break off the engagement.

**SCORING:** The Japanese have the light carrier *Sagae*, along with three elite bombers and six elite bombers (24+5+9 points = 38 points). The Chinese have the escort carrier *Xushi* (10 points).

The Japanese win by 28 points, enough to give them the minor victory.

## ENGAGEMENT 05 - FORCE A BREACH INTO STAR SYSTEM'S OUTER DEBRIS BELT NEU-BREMERHAVEN / GLIESE 581 - 05 OCTOBER, 2518

### OPPOSING FORCES

#### PRUSSIAN, ITALIAN, JAPANESE, BLACK DRAGON FORCES

KMS *Kesseldorf* (KS-1415), *Hipper* class light cruiser  
KMS *Roszbach* (KS-1420), *Hipper* class light cruiser  
KMS *Nordwind* (KS-999), *Ostwind* class escort frigate  
NRS *Leclerc* (CL315), *Foch-Hispaniola* class light cruiser  
NRS *Corsica* (DD459), *Milan II* class destroyer  
NRS *Calais* (DD458), *Milan II* class destroyer  
NRS *Dominique* (FCV1011), *Bianca* class escort carrier

\*435 points

**SITUATION:** At least for the moment, the Iron Wolf strategy of small, mobile, hard-hitting counterattack against the superior weight of the Duchess Alliance seems to be working. Despite their clear supremacy in the wake of the victory at the Battle of Tsarina Twins a month ago, the British, Panasians, and Russians of the Duchess Alliance are having a hard time capitalizing on that victory, being frustrated by spoiling attacks like the one just carried out by the Japanese *Kanoya* carrier strike group against a Russian cruiser incursion in the Neu-Bremerhaven star system (Gliese 581).

Eager to redress this frustrating upset, the British assemble a scratch force to hit back in Neu-Bremerhaven. Commodore Aubrey's Cruiser Squadron "K" hasn't been fully repaired yet, so not all the ships will be available. Captain Henry Blessed is put in command aboard his venerable light cruiser HMS *Inflictor*, his force supplemented by part of the Panasian *Xu Shan* battlegroup.

As for the Iron Wolves, they're also responding decisively to recent events in Neu-Bremerhaven. Warned again by their enigmatic "Red Kitsune" intelligence source, they know that the Duchess Alliance is sending more forces into this

#### BRITISH-CHINESE FORCES

HMS *Inflictor* (C 214), *Indomitable* class light cruiser  
HMS *Requiem* (C 242), *Relentless* class light cruiser  
HMS *Londonderry* (D 39), *Falklands* class destroyer  
HMS *Prescott* (F 183), *Cornwallis* class escort frigate  
PLN *Xu Shan* (338), *Greater Xhia* class light missile cruiser  
PLN *Hohhot* (583), *Nanchong* class destroyer

\*435 points

Imperial Prussian star system and have reinforced accordingly. Of course they aren't as strong as they wish they were in the wake of Tsarina Twins, but their weakened state is partially redressed by the arrival of the all-French *Leclerc* battlegroup of the New Roman Alliance, under the command of Captain Raphael deChalemonde.

**REPORT:** If there's a ship anywhere in Known Space that the officers and crew of the Cruiser Squadron "K" hate worse than the *Franz Josef*, it's the *Leclerc* and her aristocratic commander, the insufferable Raphael deChalemonde. Although the *Inflictor* doesn't get to engage her, instead cut off and tangled in a furious broadside duel with the *Kesseldorf* and the *Roszbach*, the *Requiem* is just fast enough to catch the *Leclerc* as she French light cruiser tries to stand off and engage with long-range 12MgKv lasers. The *Xu Shan* and *Hohhot* are right alongside, blasting away with close-range rail gun and 30kg plasma projector fire. Although she takes the *Requiem* and *Hohhot* with her (with plenty of help from her two escorting *Milan II* class destroyers), in less than three minutes the fragile *Leclerc* is adrift and burning in space. Although the *Inflictor* eventually

goes down as well, her veteran gunners and indomitable commander manage to ensure that the *Kesseldorf* and *Rosback* are likewise put out of action. After that it's a brawl of destroyers, but already the Iron Wolves have just taken too much damage. Again they are forced to withdrawal, although this victory is a narrow and bloody one for the British and Panasians.

**SCORING:** The French have operational: escort carrier *NRS Dominique*, 3 fighters, 2 bombers (10 + 6 + 4 = 20 points). The Germans have the escort EW frigate *KMS Nordwind* (33 points) = 53 points total. The British have the destroyer *Londonderry* (50 points), Panasians have the light missile cruiser *Xu Shan* (72 points) = 122 points. Annabel's Alliance wins by 69 points, minor victory.

Engagement	Size	Outcome	Imperial Prussia	Japan	New Roman Alliance	Black Dragons	United Kingdom	Panasian League	Holy Russian Empire
Eng 01 - Interdict Carrier Strike Group Tsarina Twins (15Aug18)	364	Minor Iron Wolf Victory	--	4	--	--	--	-1	-3
Eng 02 - Intercept Battleship Task Force Tsarina Twins (26Aug18)	619	Draw	0	0	0	--	--	0	0
Eng 03 - Battle of Tsarina Twins (09Sep18)	870	Minor Duchess Alliance Victory	-2	-2	-2	-2	4	4	--
Eng 04 - Spoiling Attack vs. Enemy Incursion Neu-Bremerhaven (22Sep18)	220	Minor Iron Wolf Victory	--	4	--	--	--	-1	-3
Eng 05 - C cruiser Action - Breach Outer Debris Belt - Neu-Bremerhaven (05Oct18)	435	Minor Duchess Alliance Victory	-2	--	-2	--	2	2	--
<b>RUNNING TOTALS</b>			<b>-4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-6</b>
<b>ALLIANCE TOTALS:</b>			<b>-4</b>			<b>4</b>			

CAMPAIGN TRACKING / MACRO RESOLUTION					
Battle Size	Scenario Points Involved in Battle	Game Result	Award	Description	% Chance Political Shift
Skirmish	Up to 100 points per side	Minor Victory	1	Routine encounter, rarely worth mentioning in reports.	0%
		Major Victory	2	Interdiction of small moons, asteroids, patrol bases.	0%
		Overwhelming Victory	3	Enough to win small moons, asteroids, patrol bases.	10%
Small Engagement	101-200 points per side	Minor Victory	2	Enough to win small moons, asteroids, patrol bases.	0%
		Major Victory	4	Enough to win a large moon, destroy or capture a base.	15%
		Overwhelming Victory	6	Can turn the tide of most wars. Major news and career boost.	30%
Large Engagement	201-400 points per side	Minor Victory	4	Enough to win a large moon, destabilize a planet.	15%
		Major Victory	6	Major shift in fortune, often enough to win a war.	30%
		Overwhelming Victory	8	Can easily end a war, unless winner was previously losing.	45%
Full-Scale Battle	401-800 points per side	Minor Victory	6	Usually wins a war for a faction already doing moderately well.	30%
		Major Victory	9	Usually enough to win a solar system, if not a whole war.	45%
		Overwhelming Victory	12	Seismic shift, can win a war even for campaign underdogs.	60%
Clash of Armadas	801+ points per side	Minor Victory	8-12	So big, can affect balance of naval power in whole sector.	45%
		Major Victory	12-16	Enough to win a star system, almost always a whole war.	60%
		Overwhelming Victory	16-20	Enough to win a sector, possibly topple a faction from power.	75%