

FUTURE ARMADA

DELUXE STARSHIP DESIGNS



MERCURY PROTOTYPE



Requires the use of the d20 Modern™ Roleplaying Game, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



Future Armada: Mercury

by Ryan Wolfe

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Overview

The ship known as Mercury is an experimental prototype – the result of a joint Human/Aleerin venture called Project Quicksilver. The goal of the ongoing project is to combine the best technology of each culture to advance the knowledge of both. To a great extent the project has succeeded and there will likely be other Quicksilver-class vessels produced in the future.

The inertial flux engine installed in the ship is the first of its kind used by either race (though similar drives are rumored to be used in some advanced alien cultures). This remarkable drive individually controls the velocity vector of every atom on the ship to produce unheard of speed and maneuverability (the plasma wake behind the ship is exhaust from the power core and has little to do with the motion of the ship).

The distinctive mirror-like hull surface is a result of the cloaking screen and ablative armored skin – another technological marvel, it renders the ship invisible to visual and electronic sensors. Combined with the latest in nanotech damage control and zero bore cannons, Mercury is lightyears ahead of the usual ships you'll find cruising the space lanes.

Mercury is piloted by an Aleerin of great renown. Though his given name is Alaru Ventaris, he is often just called "the Shepard", as he has personally lead many colonies to distant worlds and done much to spread the influence (and borders) of the Aleerin State. A hero among his people, and immensely wealthy, he is the motivating force behind Project Quicksilver. Now he captains the prototype ship – using it both to do good and to increase the fame of himself and the project.

While putting the ship though its paces, Alaru has his crew scan for any opportunity to be of assistance. He'll answer distress calls, join in manhunts, and even escort civilians through dangerous territory – making the most of any chance to display the capabilities of the ship and earn a bit more fame. Between such heroic endeavors, Mercury assists law enforcement agencies with criminal investigations and apprehensions. Though some officers resent the intrusion, Alaru has authorization from the highest levels and jurisdiction across all of human and Aleerin space.

When not patrolling the void, Mercury rests at Quicksilver HQ – hidden within a large asteroid on the border between human and Aleerin space. Here a cadre of technicians maintain the ship and work on improving the design for the next prototype.

Alaru Ventaris has the muscular, athletic build typical of his kind. He has a firm jaw and clear turquoise eyes. He keeps his head devoid of hair, revealing the circuit patterns embedded in his skull as well as over his body. Both he and his crew dress in grey and white shorts and sleeveless tops when flight suits or battle armor are not required.

His crew consists of a pair of young human women in their early twenties: Aurora and Dawn MacArthur. The strikingly beautiful sisters were handpicked by Alaru and are very skilled in handling the ship and supporting the Shepard's crime-fighting activities.

From a military family, both girls were training to become stellar marshals when recruited by Ventaris Industries. They spent several years mastering Aleerin starship technology and have been part of Project Quicksilver from the start. Both are confident and outgoing, enjoying the excitement of the job and the chance to try out cutting-edge technology. Aurora is slightly taller than her younger sister and has platinum blonde hair compared to Dawn's strawberry blonde. Aurora is also more of a 'people person' while Dawn prefers to focus on science.

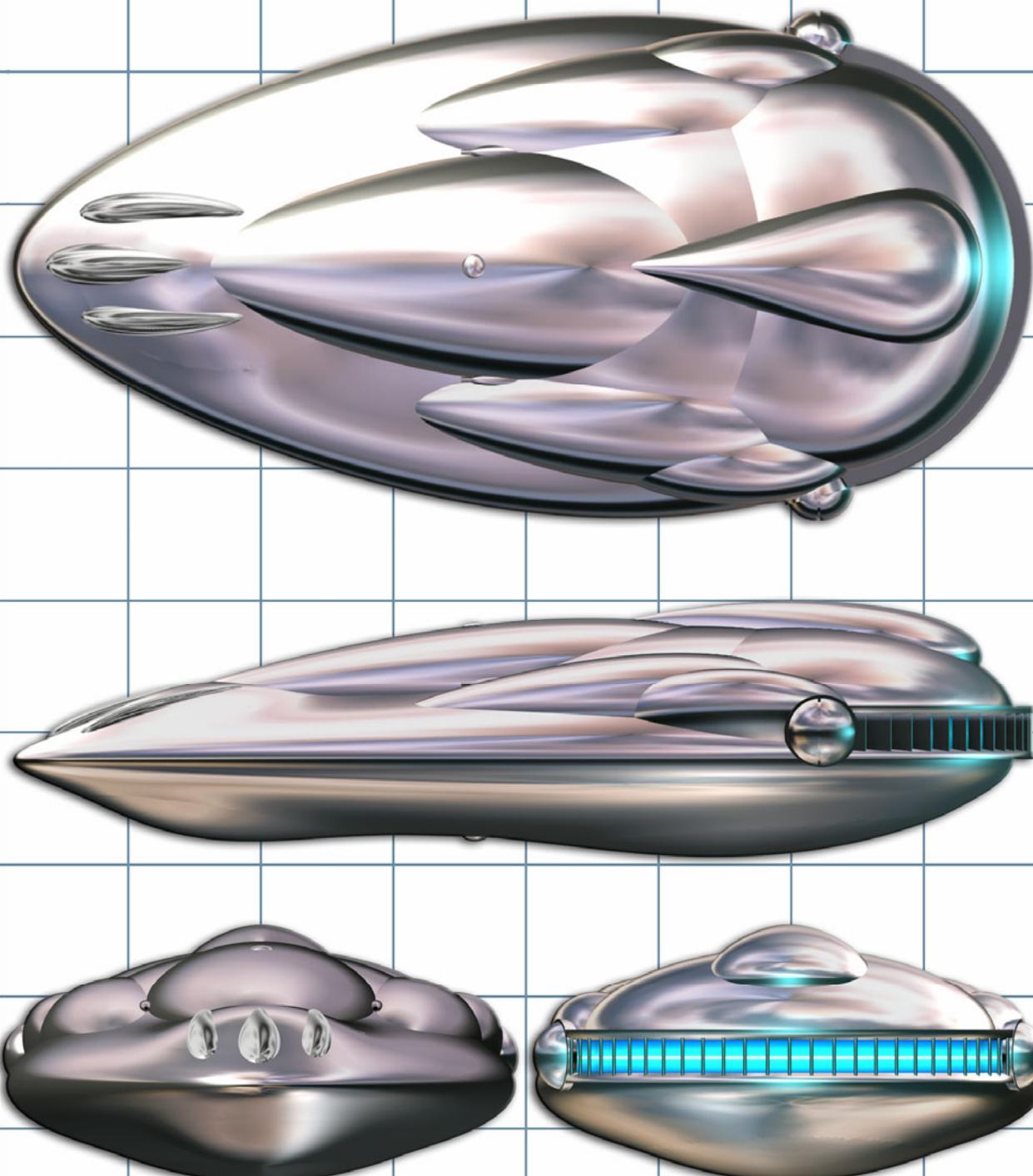
On the maps each square is equivalent to 5 feet (or 2 meters) unless noted otherwise.

MERCURY

Progress Level	8	Size	Colossal (-8 size)
Type	Ultralight	Tactical Speed	4,500 ft. (9 squares)
Subtype	Prototype	Length	155 ft.
Defense	9	Weight	1,800 tons
Flat-footed	7	Targeting Bonus	+5
Autopilot	5	Crew	3 (Custom)
Hardness	40	Passenger Capacity	3
Hit Dice	16d20 (320 hp)	Cargo Capacity	260 tons
Initiative	+4	Grapple Modifier	+16
Pilot's Class Bonus	+5	Base Purchase DC	66
Pilot's Dex Modifier	+2	Restriction	Military (+3)
Gunner's Attack Bonus	+11	Grappling Systems	Tractor Beam
Engines	Inertial Flux Engine, Thrusters	Armor	Ablative
Sensors	Class VII sensor array, Improved targeting system, Achilles targeting software	Communications	Drive transceiver
Defense Systems	Improved autopilot system, advanced damage control (3d10), nanite repair array, particle field, cloaking screen		
Weapons	2 fire-linked Zero Bore cannons (range increment 6,000 ft.) 2 fire-linked EMP cannons (range increment 4,000 ft.)		
Attacks	2 fire-linked Zero Bore cannons +8 ranged (24d8, 19-20) and 2 fire-linked EMP cannons +3 ranged (12d8, 19-20)+daze		
Attack of Opportunity	none		

FUTURE ARMADA

MERCURY



20 ft.



Interior Areas

Bridge

The command center of Mercury is custom designed for three crewmembers. The padded chairs slide forward so that the occupant is surrounded by displays and control surfaces. The central view screen at each station pulls data from the bow-mounted sensor pods to provide a three-dimensional view of the surrounding space.

The primary control surface has a few built-in buttons but utilizes a holographic projection for most input. This can create any desired control configuration on the surface in front of the seat – allowing for a customized layout while making the best possible use of the space available. This also allows any station immediate access to any needed controls or displays. Similar technology is used for control surfaces throughout the ship.

Under normal operating conditions, the central station is occupied by Alaru, who does most of the piloting himself. Aurora sits to his right and is primarily responsible for sensors and communications, while Dawn (on the left) tracks ship status.

Engineering

The engineering chamber allows for direct access to both primary inertial flux conduits and the artificial intelligence main processing core. Since these components can also be accessed from the bridge, this room is not usually occupied except when repairs or maintenance are necessary.

There are a pair of small restrooms at the aft end of the chamber. These contain toilets but no showers as the individual sleeping units double as sonic showers.

Hall

This short passageway connects the major areas of the ship. There are hatches in the floor and ceiling which lead to the exterior hull (where there is a pressure hatch and universal docking collar). Going in either direction requires a short climb through a narrow tube using a metal ladder. The upper ladder automatically extends down to the floor when the top hatch is opened. The entire hall can function as an airlock when the exterior hatches are used.

Lab

The small laboratory contains a variety of high-tech, compact equipment. It is designed to handle everything from electronics, to mechanics, to surgery and forensics. An examination table is hidden beneath the floor and most of the equipment can be reconfigured for many different uses.

Galley

Food aboard Mercury is provided from automated dispensers. While the various colors of goo do not look like much, they taste pretty good and are very nutritious.

This room also holds a large tale and has a sizable video screen embedded in one wall – making this a lounge as well as an eating area.

Crew Cabin

All three crew members share a common room. Instead of beds, Mercury is equipped with advanced, zero-gravity sleeping chambers. A person floats 'vertically' within the chamber to sleep. Lighting, temperature, and ambient noise can all be customized, as can the opacity level of the shell. These chambers are equipped with small video units and also function as sonic showers (there are no water-based showers on board).

The cabin has three sleeping chambers as well as a couch and work area with access to the ship's computer. In addition to their own sleeping chamber, each crewmember has a locker-like cabinet for uniforms and personal effects.

Guest Cabin

This chamber is identical to the crew cabin except that it has never been used. All of the equipment is on standby awaiting potential passengers.

Storage

There are equipment lockers in the air-lock chamber and adjacent storage rooms. These contain vacuum suits and all the gear needed for extra-vehicular activities and general repairs. The closet forward of each storage room holds general supplies.



Hold

A spacious chamber with a rounded ceiling 15 ft overhead, this area is often empty. Mercury is a prototype ship and the hold is designed to be customized for specific types of vessels. When empty, the sophisticated holographic projectors built into the ceiling allow this chamber to be used as a recreational area or practice room.

There are also plans on the drawing board for a possible medical module, passenger (or troop) berths, and even a shuttle bay (requiring large bay doors to be cut into ventral side of the hull). Alaru has a team at Quicksilver HQ working on a high-tech ground car. Once that is complete, the hold will likely be converted into a garage. At the aft end of the hold, which curves up to meet the ceiling, is a ramp which can be lowered to ground level when the ship is landed.

Air Lock

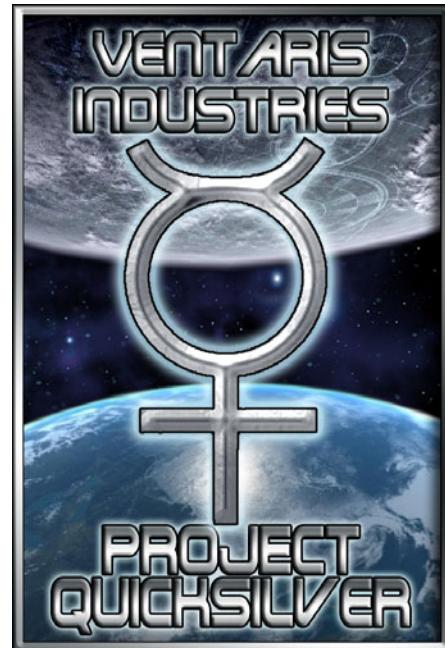
There is a long chamber along either flank of the ship. These chambers are entered from the crew or guest cabins and they allow exit though a sophisticated air-lock near the rear of the vessel.

During normal operation, the inside “door” of the airlock is just an atmospheric force field. This allows crew to quickly enter the air lock itself. When the round exterior doors slide open, they simultaneously close on the interior side of the lock. There is a moment when the force field is the only thing between the ship interior and the void, but then the air lock doors are once again closed (on either the interior or the exterior of the lock).

Steep ramps can extend from the air locks down to ground level. Once stable, the ramps fold themselves into stairs. The ramp in the ship's hold is also used if the local atmosphere is breathable.

Cells

Either side of the hold is lined with a number of small cells. These can be used to haul prisoners, or as secure storage for important cargo. Each cell can be independently set for gravity, temperature and atmosphere. The largest two have beds, wall screens, and toilet facilities that retract out of sight when not in use. The other six are used for sensitive cargo, or for very short prisoner transfers (usually just hauling frozen criminals to the nearest police outpost).



Notes

Mercury AI

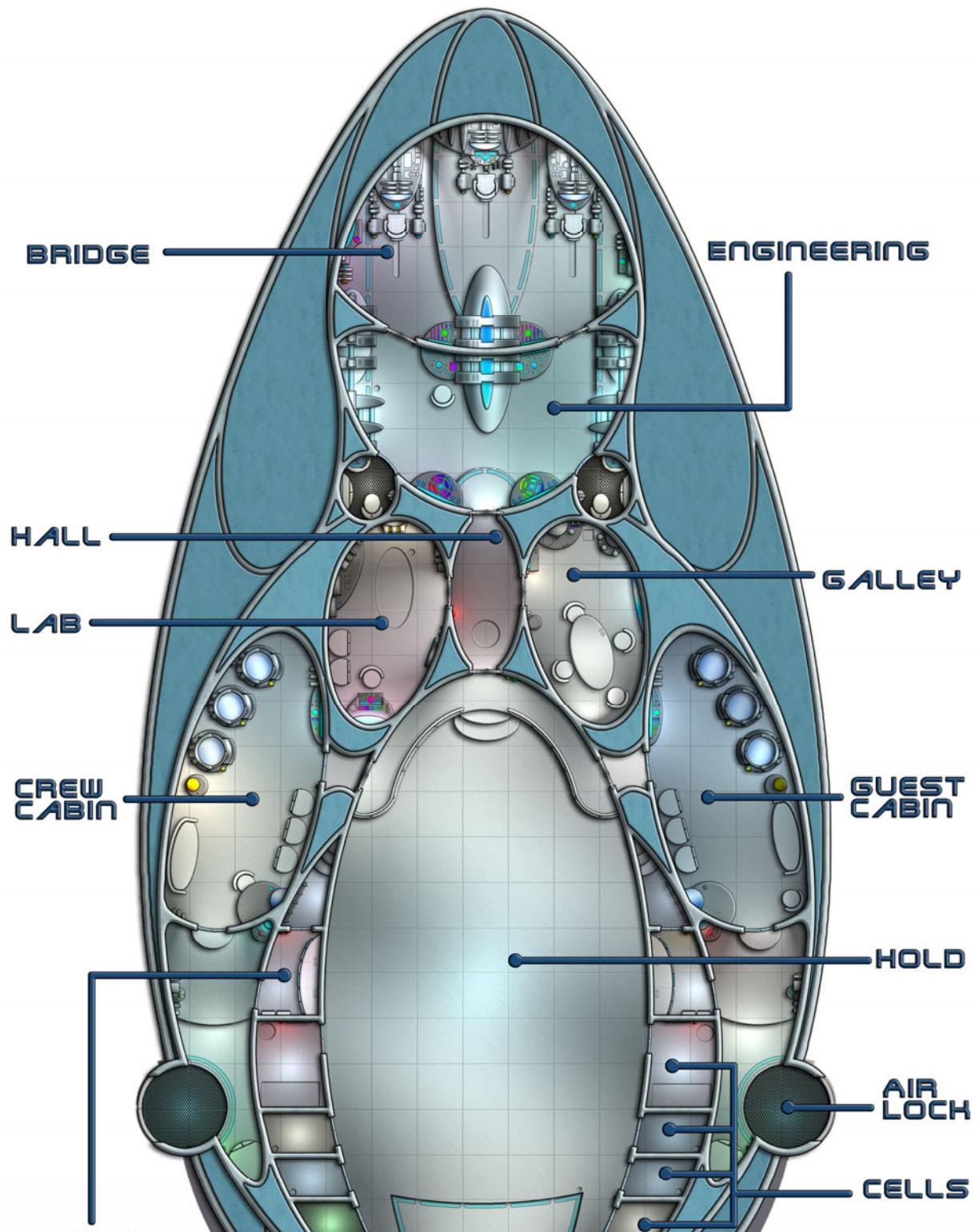
The ship computer has an experimental artificial intelligence (also called “Mercury”) that is capable of running the ship at a basic level. It has sensors and speakers throughout the vessel so that it can see what is going on and speak to the crew when required. The AI personality is emotionless and extremely logical. Its programmed voice is that of a soft-spoken, middle-aged man.

The Mercury AI can be considered to have the following stats:

Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 6
It has all knowledge skills and Navigation at +10 and can pilot at +4. It also has the feat Starship Operation (Ultralight).

Weapons

Note that Mercury only has a single pair of cannons installed, but these weapons can fire both zero bore beams and electromagnetic pulses. They can switch between modes in a fraction of a second, allowing both types of beams to be employed as if they were distinct weapons.



Crew

Alaru Ventaris ("The Shepard")

Charismatic 6 / Helix Warrior 6

CR 12; Aleerin; HD 6d6+12 + 6d10+12; HP 78; Mas 15; Init +2; Spd 20 ft; Defense 27, touch 17, flatfooted 25 (+2 Dex, +5 class +10 armor); BAB +9; Grap +12; Atk +12 melee (2d8+3, beam sword), or +11 ranged (3d6, Cryonic Rifle); SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +5; AP 6; Rep +8; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Occupation: Adventurer (Knowledge [Tactics], Pilot). Speaks Aleerin

Skills: Computer Use +14, Diplomacy +12, Gather Information +11, Intimidate +16, Investigate +6, Knowledge (Current Events) +7, Knowledge (Popular Culture) +7, Knowledge (Tactics) +7, Knowledge (Technology) +6, Pilot +11, Profession (businessman) +5, Research +6, Spot +6, Listen +6. Speak human standard

Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Starship Operations (Ultralight), Precise Shot, Armor Proficiency (Light, Medium),

Talents & Class Abilities: Charm, Favor, Captivate, Haul, Light Sleeper, Survivor, Darkvision (90 ft), Strong as an Ox, Superior Conditioning

Bonus Feats: Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Point Blank Shot, Renown, Windfall, Zero-G Training

Possessions: Cryonic Rifle, Plasma Pistol, Beam Sword, 4 Cryonic Grenades, Unisoldier Combat Armor with morphic metal alloy, Personal Force Field (DR 10/-), Chemical Truthtell (6 doses), Photon Shield, Wealth +15

Aurora and Dawn MacArthur

Fast 4/Dedicated 4

CR 8; human; HD 4d8+4 plus 4d6+4; HP 40; Mas 13; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense 22, touch 21, flatfooted 19 (+3 Dex, +8 class, +1 equipment); BAB +6; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (2d8+1, Beam Sword), or +9 ranged (2d10, Plasma Pistol); SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +5; AP 4; Rep +3; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Occupation: Law Enforcement (Diplomacy, Gather Information).

Skills: Computer Use +7, Diplomacy +8 or +11*, Investigate +7, Knowledge (Current Events) +5, Knowledge (Technology) +6 or +9*, Gather Information +9, Pilot +6, Research +7, Sense Motive +7, Spot +5, Speak Aleerini

Feats: Spacer, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Precise Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Starship Gunnery, Starship Operation (Ultralight)

Talents: Evasion, Uncanny Dodge, Skill Emphasis*, Aware
*Dawn has Skill Emphasis (Knowledge(Tech), while Aurora has Skill Emphasis (Diplomacy))

Bonus Feats: Point Blank Shot, Double Tap, Iron Will, Attentive

Possessions: Flightsuit, Beam Sword, Plasma Pistol; Photon Shield, Wealth +6

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