Václav Hanka

Role: Captain

Secondary: Pilot

At a glance:

- ain't the smartest, but knows it and doesn't fret about it
- born leader
- always keeps his word
- leaves no one behind
- authoritarian
- harsh
- inspiring
- former Browncoat
- became Captain of a blockade runner by mistake

History:

Václav Hanka was born in Eavesdown, Persephone, some 52 years ago. Growing up around the Spaceport, he always wanted to leave the planet and see other worlds. When he reached the age of 16, he dropped out of school – wasn't any good at it anyhow – and hired with the Cunard White Star Line. Hanka served on several luxury liners for decades, but never rose above helmsman.

When the war broke out, he supported the Independent cause whole-heartedly. Moreover, life as a space-hand had proven to be less fulfilling than he had expected. Thus joining the Browncoats seemed the best thing to do, and so he did.

In the chaos of the first volunteer calls, the recruitment officer misinterpreted Hanka's previous employment: based on how unlikely it would be that a man of Hanka's age would still be a simple deck-hand, he filed him as having been an officer. Thus Hanka was assigned the post of first officer on a blockade runner, and didn't even fully realize, until he was already on the job.

Surprisingly, Hanka excelled in being an officer. While his lack of intelligence still was problematic at times, other talents came to bear that he never even knew he possessed. He proved to be a natural leader with an aptitude to getting the best out of the men and women under his command.

As a matter of fact, he was so successful, that he was promoted captain just over a year into the war and given command of his own blockade runner, the INS Jackal. He continued a successful blockade runner until the end of the war.

The surrender of the Independent forces caught the Jackal in mid-space with a hold full of supplies. But rather than surrender to the Alliance with a shipload of goods, Hanka chose to hide the cargo on an asteroid and then surrendered.

After repatriation he pooled resources with his former crew, rented a ship, fetched the goods and split the profit evenly among them. With his own share he bought a small ship, the Huang Bae, hired a crew and started his own business.

Personality

Václav Hanka is not the sharpest knife in the drawer, and he knows it. As a matter of fact, he is pretty stupid, but he doesn't fret, doesn't even much care, and has no complexes about it.

He has a way of looking someone in the eye that says "Yes, I am stupid. I know. You know. That's why I have smart people working for me, who tell me smart things, which I then do and thus I am successful. Now that we are over this, could we get down to business?" People tend to respect that. And those who don't, he doesn't care about (or deal with), usually to their disadvantage.

People he knows (and that's a lot) or that know him (even more) know to speak slowly to him, don't use big words, keep it simple. And they do so without any contempt. Václav Hanka is very well respected and known to keep his word, get the job done, and protect his men and women as well as his business partners.

But Hanka's one big talent is for leadership. He approaches anyone completely without prejudice, sizes him up, gets a good impression of his strengths and weaknesses very quick and works with both. He has the near-magic ability to put the right man or woman to the right task and to get the best results from anybody he works with. He inspires loyalty in those who work for him. It seems odd to some to obey a man they have to explain everything at least twice, but once they got over this, people tend to value his other qualities.

He is calm, dedicated and very determined. He retains a cool head in any crisis and is able to focus himself and others on resolving it or limit damage.

Hanka's demeanor is harsh at times. He is a hard man, and pushes his people to the limit (including himself). But he would never leave anybody behind, and cares deeply for his lot – even can be compassionate at times.

He is very authoritarian, and while he listens to his people on all matters, he would never allow anyone to question his authority. Then, few people ever do. And if anyone ever intends to, a quick glance on how fearsome Art O'Keeffe obviously admires Hanka is perfectly suitable to discourage this kind of thought.

Sarah Neumann

Role: First Officer

Secondary: Close Combat

At a glance:

- career naval officer
- former Browncoat
- disciplined and controlled
- cold and reserved
- can be violent
- loyal to Hanka
- keeps crew under control
- dislikes Reginald and Linda

History

Sarah was born some 34 years ago on Shadow, the middle child of three (she had two brothers). Her parents both were with the police force, and so it seemed natural for her to enter state service as well. So she enlisted, and went to the “Shadow Naval Academy”, a euphemistic name for the school the Shadow Naval Self Defense Force trained their officers in.

She served as a first lieutenant on a patrol boat when the war broke out. Being a career naval officer, she didn’t have much stakes in politics, not much caring for either side. When the SNSF was integrated into the independent navy like all naval and paranaval forces of the rebellious planets, she fought for the Browncoats for she was a soldier and her country called.

This changed with the destruction of Shadow. She was there, when the Alliance attacked the planet. She fought in that short and lossy engagement. She was aboard one of the ships, when the surviving remnants of the all to small defending rebel force disengaged and retreated, clearing the way for the alliance to bomb her homeworld to dust.

Her parents died that day, like the rest of the planet, but her brothers both were with the Browncoats and not on Shadow. The younger one died a while later in Serenity Valley, but the older one is still alive. They don’t have contact, though – maybe they both remind each other too much of the life they lost, the home, the family.

Sarah became a dedicated and hatred-driven Browncoat. She made it to captain during the wake of the war, commanding the small security detachment on the “Freedoms Glory”.

She met Hanka just after the war, in one of the internment camps the Alliance erected for dissolution of the remnants of the independent forces. Conditions were bad in those camps; many former Browncoats were interned for months, those taken POW during the war even years. Some kind of camp economy emerged, with gangs of brutalized and disillusioned veterans pressing from newcomers whatever they had.

Hanka had set himself up as some kind of a mediator in the camp: he wasn’t able to get the gangs under control, but he could keep ‘em at bay. When Sarah came to the camp, a gang tried to rob her, as it was custom. She killed two, badly injuring a third. The mob wanted to lynch her for “murder”, but Hamka intervened and was able to save her butt. She has been with him ever since.

Personality

Sarah is a cold and business-like person, very disciplined and never showing much emotion or even affection. She interacts with the crew on a professional basis, and if you function smoothly, she likes you; if not, she makes you function smoothly.

She likes to be in control all the time; in control of the situation, but moreover in control of herself, and she don't find it easy to relax.

Generally she can be described as professional, efficient, competent, organized, practical and thorough; and that probably pretty much sums it up, at least at first glance.

She has a strong prejudice against anything even remotely alliance. While she tries to treat everyone on the crew with the same highly reserved distance, she dislikes Linda and secretly hates Reginald.

Sarah does have some anger management issues. Years of discipline and self control, all the suppressed emotions have taken their toll: when anger breaks loose, it does so with force. While she does try to keep her calm at all times, she can turn very violent. In a fight, she ain't going for knee-caps.

When Hanka wants to escalate a situation, he sends Sarah with Art and Reginald: with these tree characters together on a mission, mayhem is sure to ensue.

Sarah is very loyal to Hanka, respecting him and obeying him in any way. She does get along well with Art, and feels pretty much indifferent about the rest of the crew ('cept for Linda and Reginald).

Lately she has "befriended" Becan, looking after him and making sure he gets his meals. Maybe that is because he is calm and doesn't make any trouble – that's "function smoothly" in her book – or maybe she does have a heart after all.

She might not be the most likable person, but she makes one damn fine first officer. Hanka can totally rely on her, and it probably takes a personality like hers to keep that troublesome crew at bay.

Art O'Keeffe

Role: Gunman

Secondary: Interrogator

At a glance:

- dangerous and fearsome man
- very intelligent and talented
- cold-blooded killer
- protective of his brother
- friend and bunkmate of Burton
- nightmares about his war-crimes
- flashbacks
- always direct and truthful
- fiercely loyal to Hanka

History

Art O'Keeffe was born and raised to be a miner on Haven just like the rest of his folks. He is 32 now. He was content with this life and would probably have lived happily ever after, if it hadn't been for the war. Like most of his people, he supported independence, but unlike most of his countrymen he didn't want to remain dormant. He wanted to enlist. His older brother he usually looked up and listened to, Becan, was strongly opposed to this, but this time Art had it his way: he cashed all his savings, bought a passage to Persephone and volunteered with the 57th Eavesdown.

Over the course of the war the 57th became specialized in infiltration and guerilla warfare, and were considered special forces by the Independent High Command: famous to some, infamous to others.

During their campaigns Art has seen things, done things he isn't proud of today. They seemed necessary at the time, the need for success justifying the means, but with the Browncoats having lost the war, he wonders if there still is any justification.

He still feels strongly for the Browncoat's cause, but his past haunts him, and he has frequent nightmares and flashbacks.

The 57th kept on fighting after the official surrender and end of the war, and thus he, like all of his regiments personnel, was considered a war criminal for continuing to fight. When taken POW a couple of weeks later on some nameless, half terraformed moon, he was detained for reeducation for almost a year.

Upon his release he was sent to Persephone instead of home, according to the Repatriation Act that stated that POW were to be released to their place of enlistment (with the former Browncoat enlistment bureaus helping with the rehabilitation of former soldiers)

But a year after the war, all rehabilitation programs had already been cancelled, so here he was, with no funds, nowhere to go and no purpose.

Then he learned of the fate of his brother: When the Alliance came to draft him, he refused to go for fear to be forced to shoot on his own brother one day. Conscientious objectors are not really well liked by an Army that relies primarily on conscription, and so Becan was sentenced to twelve years of hard labor and sent to the Leavenworth Penal Facility.

Eaten up by guilt, Art was determined to free his brother, and it was such that he came into contact with Václav Hanka. Hanka immediately realized Arts potential (once his brother would be freed). He pulled some strings, and with heavy forgery, lies, bribes and some ex-Browncoat contacts was able to (incorrectly) establish that Becan had been a member of the Independents Intelligence Corps all along and was working as a spy on Haven when the Alliance "captured" him. He would thus be a POW and fall under the articles of the Repatriation Act and would have to be released immediately. It worked and Art and Becan have been with Hanka ever since.

Personality

Art O'Keeffe is a dangerous and fearsome man. That's obvious for everyone to see at first glance. When looking at someone, his stare seems to go right through any façade. Moreover, is glance seems to constantly scan the environment for threats – or better: for good positions to pose a threat to others. When looking at a man he seems to just see vital body parts, nerve clusters and exploitable weaknesses. Art O'Keeffe is definitely not a man one feels comfortable to be around.

Consequently he keeps mainly to himself, and apart from his brother Becan, Václav Hanka and, surprisingly, Reginald Burton he doesn't entertain many social contacts. Art deeply cares for and takes care of Becan, is fiercely loyal to Hanka, but Burton may be his only friend – odd, since the two have been enemies in the war, both very dedicated to their sides. They are almost opposite in character and make an odd couple.

But maybe it takes a former enemy to tear down Art's defenses, somebody who knows what he has seen, 'cause he's been there, too; someone who knows why he wakes up at night, screaming. But while Burton came through the war unscathed, Art came out of it part hardened, part broken.

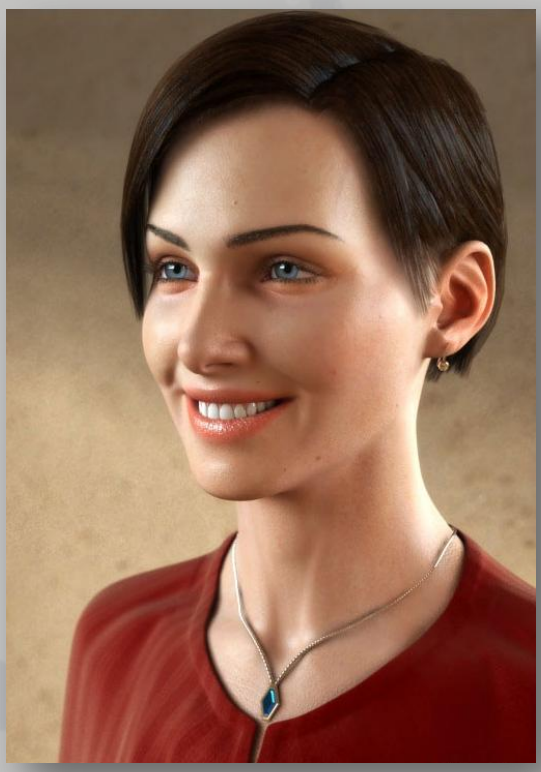
Perhaps that's because Art is an extremely intelligent and talented man. Unknown to most, he is very compassionate, thoughtful and a deep thinker. Such he can fully appreciate everything that has happened to him, that he has done during the war.

His demeanor is calm, he is soft spoken, but doesn't talk much. When he speaks, he is direct, frank and truthful … no matter what. He simply isn't afraid of any consequences. People tend to believe every word he says, and are right to do so.

Compared to Hanka, there couldn't be two men more alike yet more different than those two: so different in their capabilities and talents, then so similar in their values, thoughts and view on life.

Hanka completely trusts him, and Art is the ships third in command – not being first officer only since he knows next to nothing about spaceships. He is in command on ground missions, though.

Linda Pak



Role: Electronic Warfare

Secondary: Medic

At a glance:

- shy
- awkward
- boring youth
- good listener
- easy going
- sometimes boyish
- passionate only for EW
- ex alliance navy lieutenant
- crush on Art
- friend of Chikako

History

Linda was born on Shinon some 27 years ago as the only child of a well to do doctor in Ri Zhao. Her parents expected her to follow in her father's footsteps all her life, and so she never really questioned it. She has always been a "good girl", doing well at school, being an obedient daughter to her parents, and joining Baotou Medical College after finishing high school. She had somewhat of a boring youth, never got into any troubles, never had a boy friend, always did as she was expected.

Her life changed totally with the outbreak of the war, when she was drafted into the alliance navy. Even though she had already been well into her third semester at medical college, she wasn't assigned to the medical corps but trained as an electronic warfare operator instead.

She did not only take quite a liking in the arts of electronic warfare, she kind of embraced it as if it actually was a way of life. She immediately fell in love with the subtlety and elegance of "the game", and was highly valued by her superiors for her capabilities. Due to her dedication to the job, she even rose up to First Lieutenant, highly unusual for a draftee. But one day, much to Linda's regret, the war ended. She wanted to stay with the navy, but forces had to be reduced considerably, and draftees, be them willing or not, had to go first.

Linda was disinclined to going back to become a doctor. Her parents had died in a suicide bombing during the war, and her former life was gone. As profane as it may sound to most, electronic warfare had become her passion, almost her raison d'être, and she wouldn't give up on that.

So she fell in with a band of smugglers – part time pirates actually – who had an armed ship with some basic EW to avoid detection. It was like this, that she met Hanka, although on opposing sides originally. The thugs had gotten word of one of the Huang Bao's runs and were after her cargo.

During the hide and seek that ensued Linda noticed that her adversary, while being a very untrained operator, had some very sophisticated equipment, probably an AN/WLR, a fine independent navy device that she had always admired in the war (and that Hanka had acquired on the black market).

Of course Huang Bao wasn't able to escape Linda's keen eyes (or better: sensors), so the thugs got to her cargo. While the thieves transferred the goods, Linda – very much to everyone's surprise – went up to Captain Hanka and asked him to join his crew as an EW-operator. Probably more startled than anything else, Hanka agreed, and she has been with Huang Bao ever since, spending as much time with her beloved AN/WLR as possible.

Due to her time at the medical college, she also acts as the ships medic, although she is far from being a doctor. She can act as a combat medic, but she ain't very good at it (especially since she has a weak stomach) and the crew usually claims to be rather treated by a reaver than to get under her knife.

Personality

At first glance, Linda seems to be very reserved, but actually she is just quite shy. She doesn't think too highly of her qualities as a woman, and tends to be nervous around people, especially good looking ones. She tends to be very silent and her behavior is always a little awkward.

Otherwise, Linda is very easy going. She doesn't have any prejudices, gets along with pretty much everyone, is hard to anger and easy to forgive. In a group she tends to be a follower, agreeing to suggestions, laughing at jokes, but never making either herself.

This might make her fairly nondescript, but her quick smile and open nature can be quite charming.

Recently she developed a little crush for Art O'Keeffe – not that he would ever notice (or that she would ever show). Around him she tries to be "one of the boys" and "a good pal", her behavior getting very boyish.

Her best friend aboard is Chikako, and when planetside, the two girls usually go out together. Chikako tries to introduce Linda to the more fun sides of life, and Linda acts somewhat as an anchor when Chikako plays it a little too wild once again.

Linda changes totally when it comes to her chosen profession (or the profession that chose her, as she would put it). While generally not very eloquent, she could passionately talk for hours about electronic warfare to any bewildered audience incautious enough to even scratch the subject.

When it comes to the "hide and seek", she makes it seem like a ballet. She would call fire-control solutions "beautiful", describe disinformation feeds as if they were music and the like.

Other than about electronic warfare, Linda prefers to listen rather than talk. Actually, listening seems to be a talent of her, and over the time she has become – surprisingly, since she aint the most sociable character – the crew's unofficial "counselor": when anyone has a problem of a more personal nature, they usually come to her to talk. She won't have any fancy advice, but she's gonna listen.

Becan O'Keeffe

Role: Mechanic

Secondary: Driver

At a glance:

- broken man
- conscious objector during war
- was tortured
- leaky brainpan
- ignores people
- drinks a lot of beer
- flashbacks
- likes to stay on ship
- brother of Art
- “friend” of Sarah

History

Becan is the older brother of Art – two years older to be exact – and like him he was born on Haven to become a miner. Much calmer by nature than his little brother, he always used to look out for him and had an appeasing influence on his much more emotional brother.

Becan always had been very good with machines, and became a mining engineer with his folks, one of the best they had. When the war broke out and Art wanted to join, Becan strongly objected and tried to talk him out of this – knowing that his little brother was much too emotional to get through the war unchanged. But this time Art wouldn’t listen, would go anyway.

Later in the war Haven was occupied by the Alliance pretty much without opposition – the miners’ moon never had formally joined either side. When the war went on and losses mounted, the Alliance experienced serious manpower shortages and started heavy drafting. So Becan was ordered to report to Fort Barclay for service in the Alliance Infantry.

Fearing to have to fight his own brother, Becan refused to go. The Alliance didn’t take kindly on that. He was sentenced to twelve years, and sent to Leavenworth Penal Facility for punishment. The personnel the Alliance had to spare to man their prison camps surely weren’t the best they had, and thus the conditions in the facilities deteriorated rapidly during the wake of the war. Most were run by an odd mix of sadistic scrimshankers and brutalized front-swines, and Leavenworth was one of the worst.

Becan got beaten, raped, tortured and humiliated. And the really bad things he won’t even talk about. Becan got broken. When Art found him, there was not much left of his brother to recognize. He tried to help Becan to recover ever since, but with little success. His soul has fled somewhere nobody can reach him, maybe never to return.

Personality

Becan O'Keeffe is a broken man. He lives in a different world now, sees things differently and rarely interacts with people. There is not much personality left to speak of. He keeps quiet, speaks very softly and generally just does what is to be done.

He took onto machines instead of people. He had always been good with machines, but since he has been on Huang Bao, he works with them all the time, constantly repairing, tinkering, improving. He doesn't do anything else, 'cept sleeping and eating (irregularly). People he don't trust no more, especially not strangers. He tends to block them out, ignore them, probably not even see them.

Becan suffers flashbacks once in a while. He then goes catatonic, not moving or reacting at all for a couple of minutes, but doesn't seem to recall any of it afterwards.

As part of the crew, Becan is somewhat outside the chain of command. Of course he is not holding any rank aboard, but he also is rarely ordered to do anything. There is no need to. Becan is working constantly and always does what is needed, anyhow. When his world scattered a few years back, he couldn't do anything to fix things. Huang Bao is his new world, and he is gonna make sure, she don't break.

Becan doesn't like to leave the ship. He is going out on missions, at times, acting as the driver of the ships "cockroach", but he doesn't like it. He does join the tiperaries the crew holds when making port, though.

He sleeps little and irregular, and eats or drinks only when someone brings a meal to his workbench – except for beer, which he drinks constantly and has chachés of throughout the ship.

Art looks after him, of course, and Reginald too. But Sarah has also taken a liking in Becan (probably because he don't talk much and gets the job done – she likes people like that). She's taken a habit of bringing him his meals, and he seems to have gotten used to that.

Dandan Tao

Role: Pilot

Secondary: Mechanic

At a glance:

- Cheerful
- naïve
- tells exaggerated stories
- flirtatious
- hooked to adrenaline
- hero worships mafia boss
- genius pilot

History

Dandan is 24 years of age now, but most who know her tend to think of her still being a teen, for she appears quite young for her age. She was born on Ariel, daughter to a farmer specialized in raising Tajima-Ushi. She picked up some basic farming skills there, but she wasn't meant for farming, she was meant for excitement. And she was meant for flying. She first stole her father's skiff for a small but exciting out-of-atmo ride at the age of eleven, and she got hooked immediately: hooked to flying, and hooked to the adrenaline. A couple of years later, her wealthy father bought her her own racing skiff, figuring if he knew what she was doing, and if she did it in official races, at least he'd retain some control over her.

Grown up, she joined the navy (war was long over) aiming to become a fighter pilot, but she earned a dishonourable discharge for disobedience. So – since she had fallen out with her parents - she raised a credit (with rather shady people) to buy herself into the elite Ariel-Tokubetsu Flight School to become a commercial pilot, but her fate there didn't differ too much from her "success" in the military.

So there she was, one of the best pilots around, but with no formal education and a large debt with Carsten Chijavadze, a local mafia boss. So she came to work for Chijavadze, becoming his jockey in the (highly illegal) sarge-races, no-rules cross-system races that are held regularly and the folks bet huge sums of money on.

With time Chijavadze took a liking in Dandan, even affectionately called her his little swallow for her piloting skills. He didn't want her to stay a jockey all her life (even though he earned a lot of money with her), since a jockey's life tends to be mighty short. He convinced her to bail out and introduced her to Hanka, a contact of his looking for a crack pilot, and offering a lot of excitement.

She had piloted a modified Pheidippides-class racer for Chijavadze, so she was perfect for the job and became part of the Likedeelers.

Personality

Dandan Tao is a lively, cheerful, optimistic, open hearted, naïve girl. She is undisciplined and hard to control, but you just can't be angry with her for long. Basically, she is still a child at heart, only now she has *big* toys and the whole 'verse as a playground.

To her the world is bright and colourful, and she tends to blind out anything bad. When telling a story, she usually exaggerates and embellishes it, making it much more exciting than it could possibly have been. She could tell about buying a fruity oaty bar, making it sound like the greatest adventure in human history.

Her major flaw is her addiction to excitement: she is literally hooked on adrenaline. She enjoys danger and tends to ask for trouble if getting "bored". She also is a bit overconfident of her piloting skills (if that is even possible), and this combination has made quite a few landings … well … "interesting" for the crew. Fortunately, she runs like a Swiss clock, if there is real danger involved and does magic behind the wheel.

She is quite flirtatious, enjoys the company of men and seeks amorous adventures in pretty much every port Huang Bao calls at. She doesn't take this serious, though, and is quite light hearted 'bout this kind of thing.

Dandan likes Hanka quite a bit (well, actually she likes everyone) and even respects him, but has a hard time trying to adjust do the harsh (to her way of thinking) discipline aboard Huang Bao. She tried to affectionately nickname Hanka "Daddy" once, but his look showed her not to do so. She calls him Cap'n now, but somehow it still sound like "Daddy". Hanka mainly leaves it to Sarah to try to discipline her, since he can't really resist Dandans ability to wrap him around her finger.

While liking most people she meets, Dandan seriously hero worships Chijavadze, her former employer. She knows the he mostly just exploited her and really doesn't deserve any worship, but rationality has never been one of her strengths. She writes letters to him regularly, and usually he even writes back.

Reginald Burton

Role: Security Specialist

Secondary: Gunman

At a glance:

- ex-Fed
- former Alliance soldier
- asshole
- very intelligent and talented
- well educated
- sadistic
- shows no respect
- arrogant
- cynic
- nihilist
- aggressive
- friend of Art O'Keeffe

History

Reginald Burton is an ex-Fed. And he was an Alliance soldier before that; a Volunteer, to be exact. With his 31 years he has had quite a career already, and lost it, too.

He was born the only child of a wealthy factory owner on Osiris. He has had a perfect childhood, went to the best schools and excelled at them; everything always went smooth for him.

He is highly intelligent, very talented and well educated. He would even be good looking, if he wanted to. Everything was set out for a perfect life … if it wasn't for his miserable character.

When the war broke out, he immediately volunteered for the Alliance. Nihilist that he claims to be, he states that he actually didn't even care which side to join, that he just wanted to participate in the war – eventually choosing the Alliance because he liked their uniforms better. While there may actually be some truth in this, people who know him better (and there aren't many who even want to) think that with the Alliance's cause he – for the first time in his life – actually found something to believe in.

He took to war like a fish to water and quickly rose in rank. As a matter of fact, he actually enjoyed the war. On the rare occasions that he tells stories (that is: on the rare occasions anyone wants to hear one of his stories), he speaks of the war as the best time of his life.

By the mid of the war he was given command of a company of the infamous 12th Guard Regiment, one of the special regiments for occupation and anti-guerilla warfare the Alliance raised when they occupied more and more planets and insurgency became an increasing problem.

After the war, his unit got demobilized, and so he joined the police force becoming a Fed. Again, he excelled and quickly climbed the career ladder. His superiors considered him fit for higher responsibilities, and he was destined to become police chief of Osiris one day.

It was when he was circling departments in preparation for higher ranks when his career came to a sudden and unseemly end: while working in the drug department, he started to take drugs himself.

Maybe he was just bored with his new life, maybe there were some deeper reasons, he got addicted quickly. That didn't end his career immediately, but it caused him to fall in with more shady folk, both in- and outside the force.

Becoming corrupt to finance his increasing drug demand, Burton was one of the Feds Hanka had to bribe in order to liberate Becan. But Burton tried to double cross Hanka, and so his addiction was revealed to his superiors. His career scattered, Burton tried to get back on Hanka, but Art overwhelmed him and he was taken prisoner.

Hanka put him through cold turkey, and then gave him the choice to start a new life as a crew member or leave the ship and take a deep breath of nothing. Burton couldn't resist, and stayed with the crew ever since, partly because he quickly befriended Art, one of the few people he actually respects in the 'Verse.

Burton as a Soldier of the 12th Guard Regiment

Personality

Reginald Burton is an asshole, plain and simple. Life granted him with everything: talent, wealth, luck. But he chose to become an arrogant, sadistic, aggressive and altogether miserable prick.

Once you accept this and get over it, you can get along with him surprisingly well, because he usually doesn't even care enough about his fellow beings to cause them much trouble.

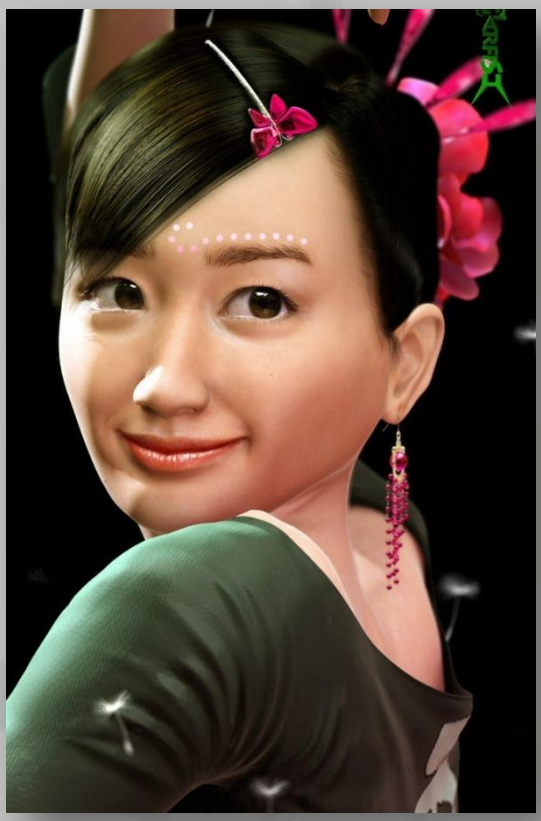
Of course he is nihilistic, sarcastic, cynical and arrogant all the time and tends to comment everything in that manner – you'll just have to learn to blend that out. Should anyone ever reply to his remarks, he is in for a discussion, and Burtons high intelligence and learning lets him usually "win" discussions, even if he is totally in the wrong.

Burton doesn't show any respect for other people. He does obey Hankas orders, but doesn't show whether he does so because he respects him or because … well … everybody does.

The only exception from Burtons general attitude towards people is Art O'Keeffe, the only person he actually considers a friend. The friendship of those two remains a mystery to everyone else, but all are glad about it, since it helps to integrate those difficult personalities into the crew.

Burton even started to look after Becan. Not that he would care any for that useless lunatic, he does so simply out of friendship for Art.

Chikako D'aubigne



Role: Business

Secondary: Socialite

At a glance:

- studied economics
- party girl
- wants it all
- hedonist
- former addict
- ex-prostitute
- greedy
- social chameleon
- freezes in combat
- alluring
- offers hardly any friendship

History

Chikako was born 24 years ago to a well-to-do family of franko-japanese origin. She had a rather uneventful youth, went to good schools, and to a good college afterwards. She had always been ambitious, wanting to make it to the top, since she is a hedonist and enjoys the finer (and more expensive) things in life. So she went on to the University for higher grades of education, intending to become a doctor of macro-economics.

She had always been used to spending more money than she had, and this flaw continued – worsened actually – when she was at the university. Parties, dresses, fancy cars, stylish penthouse and the like: she was living the life of the rich and beautiful, while being only the latter.

She compensated for her lack of funds by having wealthy boyfriends, maybe unconsciously at first, but she is reflected enough to have noticed that she was obviously very much attracted to men with money.

With her way of life, always wanting more and taking it to the edge, it was probably only a matter of time, that she would get on drugs. She was taking high society drugs, expensive ones, to be sure, but addictive none the less. Soon she needed more money to finance her drug consumption, than any wealth boy-friend would be willing to give, so she figured why not make a business of being a “girlfriend” altogether?

Like so many throughout history, she financed her drug consumption with prostitution, but unlike most, she did it very successfully and high paying. She was nothing like a companion, of course, but very talented, and made the most of it. She already had many “friends” in the upper class, and thus had no problems finding the right clientele.

But with time, the drugs were eating away at her, and she came into trouble with the law. That's how she met Reginald Burton, who used her as an informant for a while, before he had his trouble with Hanka. When Burton had joined Hanka's crew, he remembered her and thought she would be a valuable asset. She was serving a short sentence in jail by then, and the crew of the Huang Bao got her out, put her through very hard cold turkey and offered her a job afterwards. She agreed.

Personality

Chika wants it all, and she wants in now. She wants to live fast and die young … and skip on the latter part. She loves luxury, is a party girl, enjoys good food and wine and generally takes pleasure to the limit. She is a blushless hedonist.

Chikako is quite a beauty, but more than that, she can be breathtakingly charming if she wants to. Be it the cute girl, the admiring beauty, the understanding woman, the good pal, the femme fatal – she can play it all. She has an intuitive grasp on what others want to see in her and changes personalities like a chameleon colours.

But she also is a cold and calculating person. As much as she likes to sing, dance and laugh, to generally enjoy herself, her emotions are quite shallow. She hardly has any friends, hardly offers any friendship, and her smiles are usually fake.

She doesn't have much morals to speak of, doesn't refrain from doing anything she deems necessary – or better: profitable. This doesn't mean she is dysfunctional in human society, or even in the crew. She can play by the rules, since that is often the most effective way. It's just that she sees no real difference between trading stocks and trading slaves.

Actually, she is even quite loyal to the Likedeelers, at least by her standards, and Linda is the closest thing she's ever gotten to a friend. She is not too likely to betray her crew, since she knows that alliances are hard and slow to build and in the long term usually more profitable than any short term gain. She knows the crew would never leave her behind and protect her from harm. That doesn't make her to like them, but to … value them, in her way.

Her only major weakness – at least to her set of mind – is her inability in combat. When violence ensues, she freezes for what seems like an eternity, and isn't of much use afterwards, either. She has started gun-training with Art lately, and can hit a target dummy by now, but that doesn't help much with the freezing.