

THE LAND THAT TIME BEFUDDLED

AN INTRODUCTION TO ALPHA CYGNI

John D. Powers

Deneb is the obsolete name for the star system of Alpha Cygni, which immediately came back into use by its Terran colonists because it was shorter. The name is derived from 'Al Dhanab al Dajajah,' which is medieval Arabic for "The Hen's Tail." When viewed from Terra, it is the 19th brightest star in the sky. It is located approximately 1600 light years away from Terra, between both the Tholian Assembly and Gorn Alliance borders, but its high altitude above the galactic plane (almost 1500 light years) removes it far away from them.

Deneb is a spectral class A2 Ia white supergiant, whose luminosity is approximately 60,000 times that of Sol. It is about 25 times more massive, and it exceeds the Sun's diameter by about 60 times. Its luminance has been known to vary by as much as 0.03 magnitudes, due to turbulence in the huge star's photosphere, and this has been the cause of much concern on all of its colonies. Also, its predicted lifespan as a white supergiant is only 20,000 years, and it has raised many doubts among businesses about the viability of long term investments in the system.

The Denebian colonies are the most distant major human settlements in the Federation. The solar system contains three class M planets, all of which are inhabited, plus nine other major planetary bodies. Deneb IV was the first of the twelve planets to be colonized, on Reference Stardate 1/7203.25, by a group of Northern Europeans. Deneb V was next, in 1/7704, by a small company known as Brisbane Mining and Development, which opened up facilities for the mining of rytalin, which is, among other things, the base for Rigellian Fever antitoxin. Deneb II was the last, and it was colonized by members of both of the earlier Denebian colonies who weren't happy with the tense socio-political situation.

Interplanetary Relations

The only peaceful planet at Alpha Cygni is Deneb II. The fourth and fifth planets have been in a state of undeclared war since Deneb V gained independence. If the two planets were not under the threat of UFP trade embargoes, open warfare would probably have broken out years ago. The reasons for the belligerence are rooted in a long-standing religious struggle between believers on both planets. Additionally, the level of illegal activities that takes place regularly on Deneb IV has pushed the people of Deneb V into a state of near-paranoia. They are frightened silly by the possibility of a fusion of the two governments.

Perhaps, upon reflection, the tense situation resembles more the socio-economic differences in Eighteenth Century France, in that Deneb V, in the lead economically, exploits its position without regard for the interests of its neighbors. It realizes how much it has to lose, while Deneb IV realizes how much it has to gain. Both sides do what they legally can to interfere with the other's stability. They remain the most classic example of dissimilar cultures meeting in the middle with no foreseeable compromise.

Timeline of Denebian History

1/6511.12

The Warp 4.0 Colony transport *S.S. Heidelberg* departs Terran orbit, headed for Deneb, where an earlier probe had reported the presence of Class M planetary bodies.

1/2703.25

The *S.S. Heidelberg* reaches Deneb, and the passengers choose to land on the fourth planet.

1/7704.21

Based upon false reports by the government of Deneb IV, which were intended to bring commerce into the star system, The Brisbane Mining and Development Company, under UFP charter, establishes a mining colony on Deneb V. The unexpected discovery of rytalin deposits and an interstellar epidemic of Rigellian Fever boost the outpost's profits well past its expenses in only the first year of operation. Colonists of Deneb IV feel the icy hand of jealousy upon them, as they realize that they have yet to pay off the loan on their colony ship.

1/8203

The government of Deneb IV attempts to impose tariffs on Deneb V's commerce, which meets with armed opposition from the BMDC. The UFP intervenes on the part of the Company. It wins the issue, and sues Deneb IV for damages of over twenty million credits. Since Deneb IV is not a UFP member, its government refuses to pay off the debt, but the UFP freezes the colony's assets, forcing them to comply.

1/9409

At the outbreak of the Four Years War, the BMDC loses major investments on the UFP-Klingon Empire frontier, and is forced into receivership. The very wealthy colonists of Deneb V, with their private funds, buy sufficient bonds to save the company, but in return they claim independence. Upon learning of this development, Deneb IV applies for membership status in the UFP, which is denied because of their refusal to accept Federation law.

1/9901

The research station on Deneb II is established by the UFP.

1/9908

Deneb IV negotiates an arms deal with the Orion Colonies, who sell them ten small gunboats they had salvaged during the Four Years War. Deneb V is forced to strengthen its military forces to counter the threat posed by Deneb IV and buy four surplus corvettes and an extensive planetary defense system from the UFP, who refuse to sell any sophisticated offensive weapons to either side. Over the years the military presence on both worlds slowly increases, but due to an initiative by the UFP ambassador to Deneb a treaty is negotiated in which both planets agree to limit their warship procurement to the current level.

World Log: DENEb II

System Data

System Name:	Alpha Cygni
Map Coordinates:	2.38N 7.22E
Number of Class M Present:	3

Planetary Data

Position in System:	2
Number of Satellites:	2
Planetary Gravity:	1.1 G
Planetary Size	
Diameter:	14,300 km
Equatorial Circumference:	44,000 km
Total Surface Area:	561,000,000 sq km
Percent Land Mass:	86%
Total Land Area:	482,460,000 sq km

Planetary Conditions:

Length of Day:	27 hours
Atmospheric Density:	Terrestrial
General Climate:	Desert

Mineral Content:

Normal Metals:	46%
Radioactives:	trace
Gemstones:	3%
Industrial Crystals:	trace
Special Minerals:	trace

Cultural Data

Dominant Life Form:	Mixed
Technological/	
Sociopolitical Index:	999994-94(Research Station)
Planetary Trade Profile:	CFFCCBA/D(D)

Deneb II is about as far away from the garden spot of the universe as you can get. It has the closest orbit of the three Class M planets in the Alpha Cygni star system, and it lies at the inner edge of the star's habitable zone. The average surface temperature on a normal day is 40 degrees Celsius. When the star is acting up, the temperature has been known to increase by as much as twenty degrees. If the planet did not possess an albedo (a measure of the amount of solar radiation reflected) on the order of 70%, the oceans (which have an average temperature of 50 degrees Celsius) would boil away, and the planet would be completely uninhabitable.

One may wonder why, in light of its climate, Deneb II is inhabited at all. Just after the Four Years War, the UFP did a mineral survey of the planet, hoping to find ryetalin deposits similar to those on the other worlds in the system. They didn't; however, one of the geologists unearthed the fossilized sandstone impression of a large insect, which very closely resembled that of the infamous Denebian slime devil. This raised some questions among the UFP scientific community, especially since the fossil was well over two million years old. The discovery sparked major scientific expeditions to both Deneb II and Deneb IV. The reasons are too numerous to explain in this space, but here are a few of the mysteries surrounding the find.

The theoretical age of all the Class M planets in the Denebian system exceeds that of the star itself, suggesting that they might have all been recently captured, perhaps less than a billion years ago. But the orbits of all the planets, save for the twelfth, are very stable, suggesting that they might have been in orbit a longer time. Based on fossil remains, the starting point for the more advanced life forms on Deneb IV was approximately a billion years ago. For having a billion years of evolution in a harsh (and probably changing) environment, the indigenous life forms of Deneb IV are woefully primitive. If that were not enough, Dr. Helen Aldrich, a marine biologist in charge of the undersea research efforts on Deneb IV, has submitted a report stating

that the Denebian slime devil could not have evolved there naturally. Most of the clues point to the conclusion that the planets cannot logically exist as they do, without the influence of some outside intelligence, traces of which have yet to be found.

The colony on Deneb II was established as an archaeological dig to find other traces of early Denebian life. Many interested volunteers from both Deneb IV and Deneb V came in search of jobs in return for sanctuary from the instability of their homeworlds, and these immigrants have started to build their own government. As of yet, the colony is too young to have become self-sufficient, and it is surviving off of supplies brought in from the UFP. If the research initiative were ever halted, the colony would soon fail.

World Log: DENEb IV

System Data

System Name:	Alpha Cygni
Map Coordinates:	2.38N 7.22E
Number of Class M Present:	3

Planetary Data

Position in System:	4
Number of Satellites:	0
Planetary Gravity:	0.94 G
Planetary Size	
Diameter:	11,140 km
Equatorial Circumference:	35,000 km
Total Surface Area:	389,870,390 sq km
Percent Land Mass:	12%
Total Land Area:	46,784,447 sq km

Planetary Conditions

Length of Day:	26 hours
Atmospheric Density:	Thick
General Climate:	Warm Temperate

Mineral Content

Normal Metals:	36%
Radioactives:	trace
Gemstones:	19%
Industrial Crystals:	trace
Special Minerals:	1% (Ryetalin)

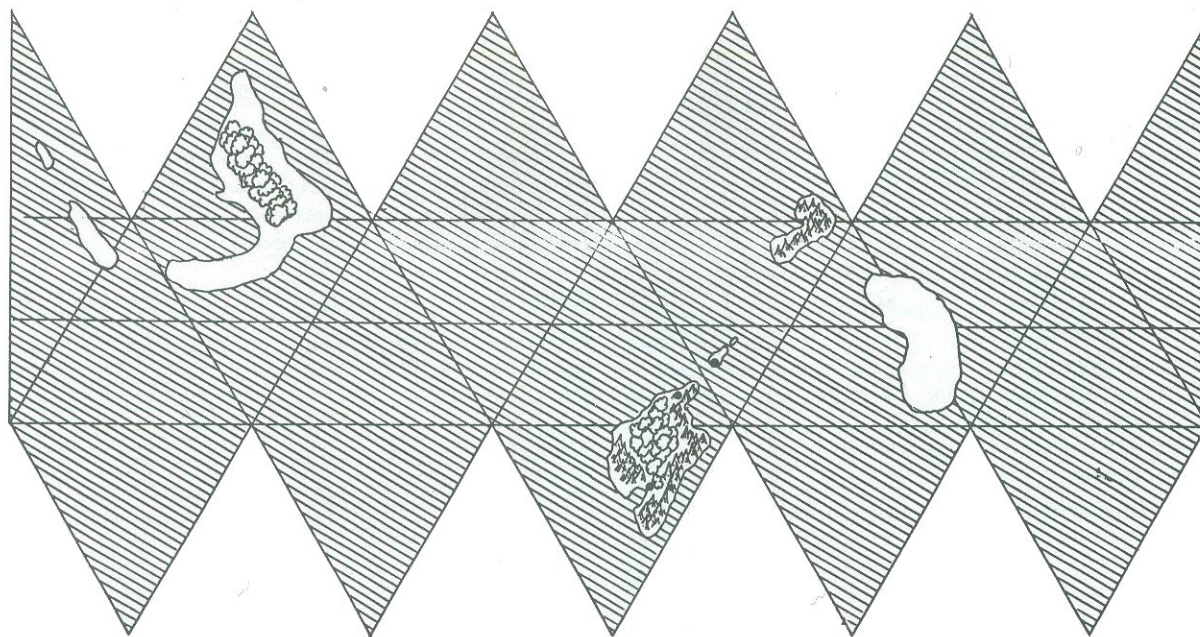
Cultural Data

Dominant Life Form:	Mixed
Technological/	
Sociopolitical Index:	988573-60
Planetary Trade Profile:	FDDADCA/A(C)

Deneb IV, since its colonization, has earned the reputation of being the wildest planet within the sphere of UFP influence. As such, it is a favorite among Star Fleet enlisted personnel and officers alike as a site for shore leave. The climate is on the warm side, with an average surface temperature of thirty degrees Celsius, though the intensity of the sun makes travelling unprotected in the daytime hazardous. As the old saying goes, if you're on Deneb IV and you want to get a tan, go check your mail. This has led to the evolution of what the colonists feel is the most exciting nightlife in the galaxy.

The original Terran colonists were non-conformists from Northern Europe and Scandinavia who banded together, bought a colony ship, and left behind the reins of suppressed expression. They had in common the longing to break away from the strict regulations which hampered the freedom they craved. Their motivation was not dissatisfaction with the government so much as it was with the control that the megacorporations had over the planet. The motto of their movement was taken from a twentieth century folk song by an artist named Jimmy Buffett: "I don't want to swim in a roped-off sea!"

The government that evolved on Deneb IV was heavily influenced by the free-spirited feelings of the colonists, but somewhere they went wrong, and they came out with what can best be described as



Deneb IV (Mercator Projection)

Carefully administrated anarchy. The government is widely referred to as 'The Family,' due to its similarities to the Terran Mafia. Despite the sinister connotations the name brings, the ruling group has little power in daily affairs, for the planet virtually runs itself.

The law enforcement on Deneb IV is the most laid-back in the Federation, primarily because the laws are subjective. Not to say that the police are ineffective; it's just that their policy toward criminals is one of deterrence. Patrolling the streets are heavily armed and shielded attack helicopters, which are authorized to use deadly force if the officer feels it is necessary. Since (with the exception of nuclear warheads) there are no restrictions on the ownership or portage of weapons, the usual procedure for dealing with armed criminals is to respond with crushing force. This has reduced the rate of violent crimes to below that of Terra.

The legal problem that has made Deneb IV infamous is so-called 'white collar' crime. The 100th edition of the Guinness Library of Federation Records states that an act of embezzlement occurs every two seconds on Deneb IV. Apparently the embezzlers themselves are protected because a reported ninety percent of the population is being blackmailed at any given time. Oddly enough, the total lack of control has created a balanced economy, although the reasons have defied analysis by experts for years. Perhaps the thing that holds the economy together is the strong ties that the planet has to the Federation-wide black market. The Orion Colonies are active in trading with Deneb IV, and it is theorized that that is where the millions of credits which are embezzled yearly go.

On the lighter side, Deneb IV is famous for producing the tastiest fish in the quadrant, and much of their population is geared to the fishing industry. The Denebians have gone to a lot of trouble to make the trade different from the automated fish farms of their native Terra, and have actually turned it into more of a sport. The typical fisherman will captain his own custom-made sailing sloop, which, while not

being terribly efficient, is a great deal of fun. Even though the planet is a fisherman's paradise, most of the annual crop is exported, and the diet of the colonists consists mostly of imported foods.

The colonists of Deneb IV are almost exclusively city dwellers, though there is a respectable amount of agriculture. The only dwellings present outside the urban complexes are the private retreats of government officials and the few wealthy. The cities themselves are loose and sprawling, unplanned, overbuilt and not particularly clean. Tall office towers dot some downtown districts, but most of the cities are low-rise structures, most less than ten stories high. The typical apartment building is three to five stories tall, with other structures being somewhat shorter. There are three major cities of this style architecture on the planet, all in the Southern Hemisphere. Two, Beras and New Oslo, are on opposite ends of the Southern Continent, and the third, New Hawaii, is spread over a chain of islands to the east.

The primary mode of intra-city transportation is walking, since the cities aren't really that big by UFP standards, having only about two million citizens each. Also available are the Yellow Grav-Cabs, which transit the three cities, and will go anywhere for a credit a kilometer. For extra-planetary travel, there is a starport three kilometers outside Beras, which serves as the trade center of the planet. It is the only place where weapons are prohibited, but there is always the possibility of being overlooked if what's in your wallet is worth more than what's in your holster.

Outside of the cities, the planet is largely untamed. Its foliated areas consist largely of both normal and giant fern-like plants, some of which grow to be as much as seven meters tall. The regions they thrive in can best be described as marsh. These giant swamps are filled with many varieties of potentially dangerous wildlife, including a smaller, amphibious relative of the Denebian slime devil.

World Log: DENEb V

System Data

System Name:	Alpha Cygni
Map Coordinates:	2.38N 7.22E
Number of Class M Present:	3

Planetary Data

Position in System:	5
Number of Satellites:	1
Planetary Gravity:	0.95 G
Planetary Size	
Diameter:	11,363 km
Equatorial Circumference:	35,700 km
Total Surface Area:	405,635,430 sq km
Percent Land Mass:	38%
Total Land Area:	154,157,740 sq km

Planetary Conditions

Length of Day:	31 hours
Atmospheric Density:	Terrestrial
General Climate:	Cool Temperate

Mineral Content

Normal Metals:	29%
Radioactives:	22%
Gemstones:	trace
Industrial Crystals:	trace
Special Minerals:	4% (Ryetalin)

Cultural Data

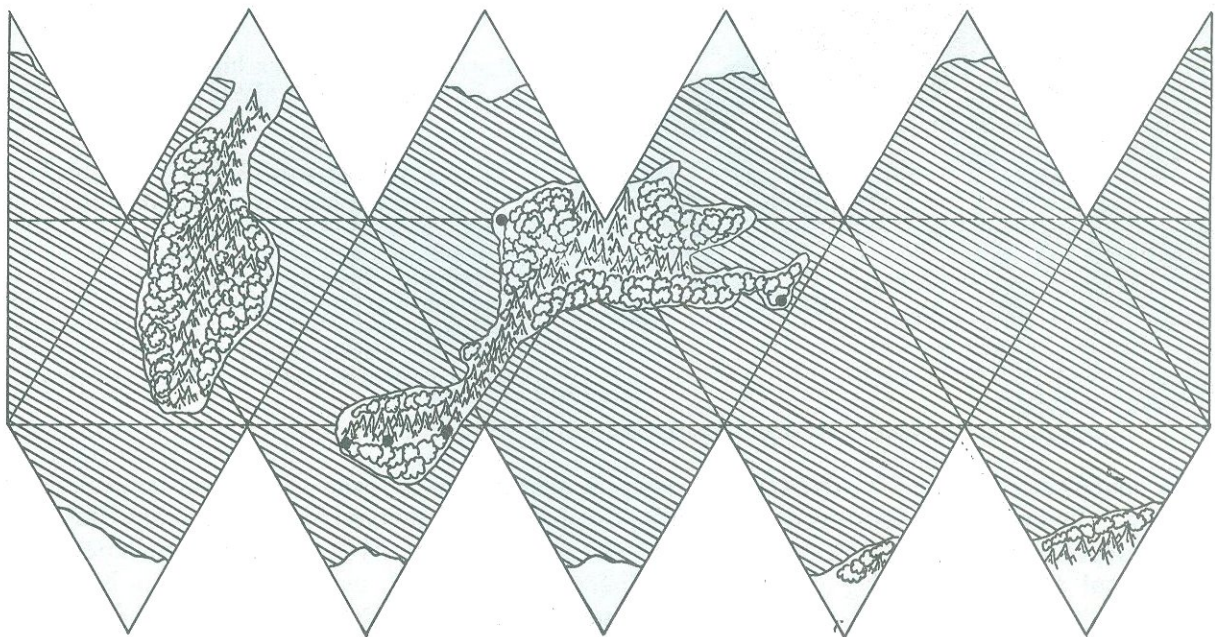
Dominant Life Form:	Human
Technological/	
Sociopolitical Index:	999694-76
Planetary Trade Profile:	CEAADCA/C(D)

Deneb V is the outermost inhabited planet in the Alpha Cygni star system, and as such, it is the coolest. The average surface temperature is five degrees Celsius. The surface of the planet sports three major continents, only one of which is Human-inhabited. The terrain is very rugged, with the typical mountain range soaring taller than five kilometers above sea level. The young forests which blanket the low-lying areas of the world are composed mostly of imported Terran evergreen conifer-types, which, in addition to lowering the planet's albedo (and therefore, as they grew, increasing the surface temperature), make the planet perpetually resemble New England at Christmas.

The Human population is primarily made up of wealthy, conservative miners originally from New England. Very tight controls have been exercised to prevent political moderates or radicals from settling there and these controls, in spite of the colony's runaway economic success, have kept the population relatively low (c.2 million).

Any trader who braves the tight customs enforcement of Deneb V will find that the price paid for their goods will generally exceed that which they can get on Deneb IV, and that it is because of the government's insistence that no major commerce passes between the fourth planet and the rest of the universe. In recent years, this has led to an unfavorable balance of trade on the planet, and will have to change soon or else the economy will fall into a recession.

The diet of the colonists is relatively simple, mainly because the internal social pressures that affect them put a damper on their actual consumption of luxury goods, and therefore there is little market for them on Deneb V. Even though the climate is capable of comfortably supporting the colonists the major cities have all been covered with pressure domes, and the internal temperature is kept at about twenty-two degrees Celsius. The arrangement seems an expensive extravagance, and the only explanation is that it was done because the people



Deneb V (Mercator Projection)

(with one of the highest per capita GNPs in known space) could afford to do it.

The official religion of Deneb V is a Twenty-Third Century descendant of Roman Catholicism, and much of the planet's culture revolves around it. Anyone who is not an active church member cannot participate in government, but it seems that the colonists who aren't involved with the church could care less about the government. These practices are a point of confrontation with Deneb IV, which has no one official religion, and recognizes everything *except* Catholicism. Considering the governmental structure of both planets, if the respective populations took each other's place there would be no conflict, and peace would probably ensue.

Ask any self-respecting con-man what the penalty for fraud is on Deneb V, and he will immediately say, "D-death!," and then run away in abject fear. The law enforcement of Deneb V is the strictest in the known universe, and reportedly the punishment code is based on that of the Klingon Empire. The red tape involved in the legal process is so long and winding that some merchants are rumored to have had their starships repossessed while waiting for the Denebian customs officers to finish searching them. The rule of thumb for avoiding arrest and prosecution is to have a valid license for every conceivable instance, including sneezing.

The government behind all the silliness is the most efficient bureaucracy in the Federation; though, perhaps, and particularly in regards to Deneb V, an 'efficient bureaucracy' is a contradiction in terms. Cranky, cantankerous and generally suffering from some aggravation of the bowels, they should rightfully be considered the price one pays for high Deneb V profits. Irritate them only at your peril.

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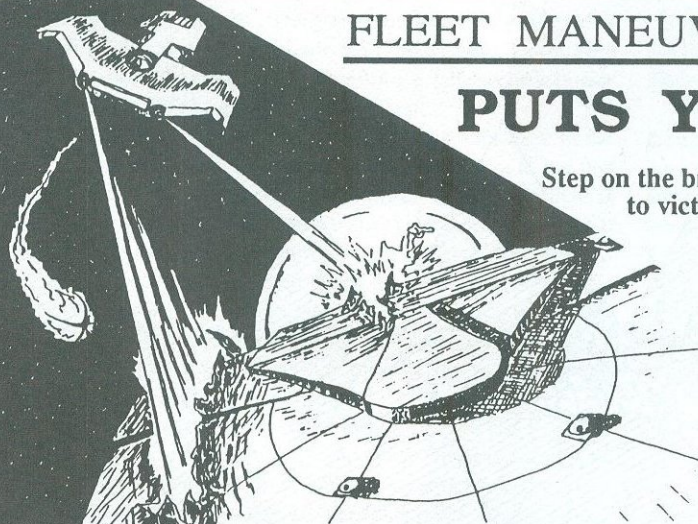
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