

PREFACE



5

The Star League era, dating from 2571 to 2751, marks the Golden Age of Humankind. In this era, all of occupied space became united under a single political, economic, and military aegis—a feat that almost defies the imagination. For most of the period, peace ruled the Inner Sphere as well as the distant Periphery worlds, allowing science and technology to reach unsurpassed heights. The League was doomed, however. With its collapse, Humanity entered the period of continuous warfare that we know as the Succession Wars.

This volume is the most complete and accurate sourcebook ever compiled on the rise and fall of the Star League. Commissioned ten years ago by the First Circuit, this recently completed study represents the work of more than 250 historians, researchers, writers, and editors. Though much documentation has been lost in the centuries of war that followed the collapse of the Star League, ComStar is probably the only contemporary agency with the resources to piece together the history of the League.

Though we could not hope to include every fact uncovered, this volume does provide a thorough introduction to the most important people, places, and events. In particular, many will find new information in the account of how and why Ian Cameron went about making his dream of a united Humanity come true, how Stefan Amaris managed to become powerful enough to bring down the First Lord, and why General Aleksandr Kerensky did not seize power for himself after Amaris's death. The section on the Star League military is also the first presentation of what made the Star League Defense Forces the most powerful military in the universe. Also included are sections on the League's economy, political structure, culture, important planets, and celebrated personalities. We have also attempted to resolve contradictions or errors of fact that have crept into previous volumes.

Though we try to avoid editorializing, the careful reader will be able to draw his own conclusions about the many factors that contributed to the collapse of Cameron's noble experiment. His own motives for founding the League were a curious mixture of lofty dreams and a desire for power, as were the motives that persuaded most of the other member states to join. Idealism and ambition make for strange bedfellows, and the contradictions between them would eventually bring down the dream of peace and prosperity known as the Star League.

—Nonda Toolippi, Adept XIX-delta
Merle Jimmus, Adept XV-sigma
George Spelvin, Adept I-omega,
Research Team Maximus, Star League Project,
ComStar Archives, Terra
4 October 3028





Andrews in Star League uniform

If the star league had survived, I'd have worn the uniform proudly.
—In Honor of the Past, R.R. Andrews, Comstar historian and Collector, ConStar Press, Terra, 3024

HISTORY



INTRODUCTION

If written accurately, history is always a terrible disappointment for the idealistic, the romantic, and the opportunistic.

—From *History and Culture*, by James Dugan, University of Washington Press, 2031

Mere mention of the Star League is enough to transport the average citizen on a dreamy, romantic journey composed of white starships, miraculous machines, and wealth beyond comprehension. In these fantasies, the men and women of the Star League seem larger than life—smarter, wiser, and more beautiful than ordinary mortals. Even war becomes a more heroic, tidy affair in such a seeming golden age. Instead of conjuring images of lost lives and smoking ruins, one imagines Star League warriors basking in glory and the losers dying politely out of sight. These fantasies are, of course, more a testament to the entertainment media's ability to distort reality than to actual fact.

Another common misconception about the Star League is that it sprang fully formed from the mind of Ian Cameron, the legendary figure who made the League a political reality. It is true that he was a brilliant and charismatic visionary, but the roots of the Star League trace even further back to Terra, when the homeworld had become a battlefield of nations armed with barbaric nuclear weapons.



The Star League's most distant ancestor is the Western Alliance. Founded in the 21st century, the Alliance was the first successful attempt to mold whole nations, each with its own personal aims, into a single political entity. Next came the Terran Alliance, followed by the Terran Hegemony, each contributing to the eventual birth of the Star League. It is essential to understand how the early successes and failures of these forerunners influenced the Star League's creation and operation. This chronicle would also be incomplete if it did not give considerable space to the Camerons and others whose actions—for better or worse—shaped the Star League.

ROOTS

Long before the Kearny-Fuchida hyperdrive made interplanetary travel an everyday occurrence, Terra lay on the brink of total ruin. Two major superpowers, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, vied for domination of the planet, with each willing to risk almost anything short of all-out war for their goals. Though the two sides claimed to represent different political ideologies, both suffered from chronic corruption and internal conflicts.

In 2011, a Moslem assassin killed Oleg Tikonov, Premier of the USSR, initiating an internal power struggle within the Soviet government. One faction was loyal to Premier Tikonov's liberal policies; the other believed in a more conservative communism. The internal fighting soon became so violent that it spread to other nations under Soviet control. When the Poles staged an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow their longtime oppressors, the Soviets brutally stamped out the rebellion. The Western nations' sympathy for the Poles quickly turned to panic about their own safety when the massive Soviet military split into two evenly matched political factions fighting for control of the nation's nuclear arsenal.

With the fate of the world hanging in the balance, leaders of the West felt compelled to intervene. After liberating Czechoslovakia and Poland, the military forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization launched a daring invasion of the Soviet Union by way of the newly independent Latvian port of Riga. Their opponents were fanatical Soviet conservatives willing to die to the man. The liberal faction became allies because they were more interested in defeating the conservatives than fighting the NATO forces.

With the victory of the Soviet liberals, peace was restored. The costs were heavy, however, including the chemical destruction of Riga by a Conservative Soviet Army division. The United States now stood unopposed as the strongest nation in the world. Accustomed to having the USSR as its arch-nemesis, the USA was suddenly uncertain of its role. When the Prime Minister of Britain called for "a new alliance of Western nations," the best minds of Europe and America met to formulate the basic outline for what would eventually become the Western Alliance.

How much power a member-nation had in the new government depended on a formula based on a nation's resources, industrial output, and potential for development. The arrangement was similar to the way conglomerates organize their many divisions, and most members viewed it as the most equitable way to combine developed and undeveloped economies. The poor nations were especially supportive of the plan.

Many leaders from the United States of America were initially reluctant to join, fearing that the new alliance would result in a loss of the nation's power and prestige. It was only after the fledgling Western Alliance threatened a boycott of all American products and resources that the superpower agreed to join. Certain nations, such as the seven new ones created out of the breakup of the USSR, eventually joined the Alliance as full members after a probationary period.

One of the first acts of the new government was the creation of the Western Alliance Armed Forces, a military that would differ from previous multinational armies. The WAAF was conceived as a single military under a single command structure and supplied with standard weapons and equipment produced by all member-nations. Though the economic advantages of this arrangement were obvious, many people doubted whether a truly multinational force could fight efficiently. In 2023, the WAAF proved itself by preventing the Chinese from forcing Japan to join their own version of the Alliance, which they called the Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

It was not long before more and more nations began to seek the important benefits of membership in the Western Alliance. Because this was an era of relative peace, resources were being poured into scientific research to improve the quality of life rather than into production of bigger and better weapons. Under the Alliance treaties, science and technology was shared among member-nations, leading to the quick and democratic spread of new ideas and equipment. One of this period's most important inventions was an efficient fusion reactor that not only provided inexpensive and almost unlimited power, but set the stage for a future, even more radical discovery.



TERRAN ALLIANCE

By 2086, more than 120 nations, representing some 80 percent of the planet's population, had joined the Western Alliance. In recognition of its global status, the Alliance changed its name to the Terran Alliance. At about the same time, it cast off most of its previously benevolent

attitude.

At this point in history, Alliance formulas for admitting and governing nations had evolved into a mass of incredibly complex equations. Those formulas left poorer member-states feeling slighted, overburdened, and victimized because they were paying too much for too little in return. Strikes and violence became common as the people of the poorer nations struggled with the rich nations for social and economic equality. Despite this chronic situation, the Terran Media was more concerned with stories of amazing new scientific discoveries than with news of ruinous wars.

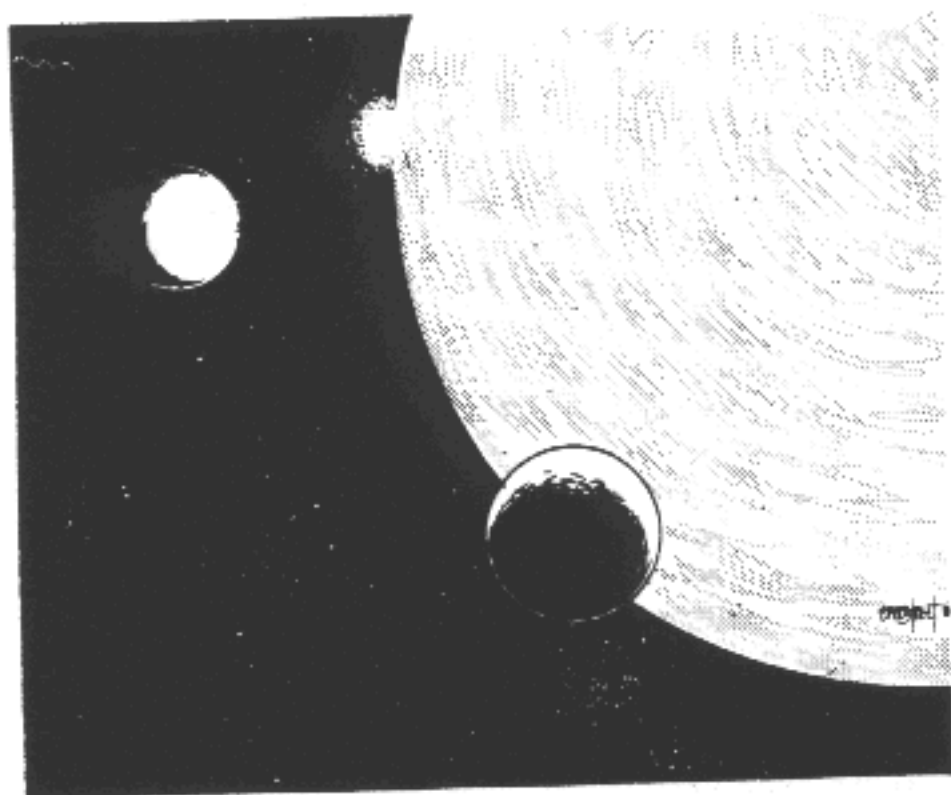
The mass production of fusion reactors one-tenth the size of previous reactors made possible many important technical advancements. Operating costs had also been drastically cut, making atomic power very inexpensive. After scientists discovered techniques for cleaning up Terra's fouled environment, environmental engineers turned their attention toward transforming Mars and Venus into habitable worlds.

All of these scientific discoveries paled in significance with the rediscovery of Kearny-Fuchida Pan-Dimensional Gravitational Mathematics in 2102. This breakthrough in Einsteinian physics seemed to suggest that if a hyperspatial field could be created around an object possessing mass, that object could travel instantaneously to a distant location. Through an intensive, top-priority research effort known as the Deimos Project, Alliance scientists developed the first faster-than-light space ship powered by the Kearny-Fuchida Stardrive. On December 5, 2108, the *TAS Pathfinder* successfully made the round-trip voyage between Terra and the Tau Ceti system.

After this triumph, Alliance shipyards tooled up to mass-produce colony and exploration ships in large numbers. Though there was considerable wrangling and even violence among member-nations over how to pay for these new JumpShips and who should be able to use them, most agreed that they should be built.

The Kearny-Fuchida drive freed a long-buried urge to exploration among the people of Terra. Now that it was possible to leave the homeworld and the entire Sol system for unseen worlds and uncharted lands, thousands, then millions, began to leap at the chance.

The first interstellar colony was established in 2116 on Tau Ceti IV, also known as New Earth. In 2172, the First Grand Survey reported that there were more than 100 Human-colonized worlds spread across a sphere 80 light years in diameter. Just 63 years later, the Fourth Grand Survey recorded more than 600 colonies.



TIMELINE: 2014–2027

2014

Second Soviet Civil War ends with the surrender of the last Old Guard-controlled ICBM site to Loyalist forces.

—True to their word, NATO forces begin to pull out of Russia.

—Leaders of the various Western powers meet in the newly reunited Berlin to discuss the British Prime Minister's call for "a new alliance of Western nations."

—NATO and the European Common Market are dissolved in favor of the Western Alliance.

—Leaders of various Soviet political and ethnic groups meet at Kiev. These representatives formally dissolve the USSR and create seven independent Russian States in a loose confederation. They are:

The Democratic Republic of European Russia
(formerly the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Moldavia,
and parts of the RSFSR)

The People's Union of Kazakh

The Islamic Republic of Turkmen

The Soviet Socialist Republic

The Democracy of Yakut

The Magadan Socialist Republic

The Confederation of Free Orient Peoples

—The seven states begin a ten-year probationary period, after which the Western Alliance will consider making them members.

2018

While working on a prototype fusion reactor at Stanford University, Professors Thomas Kearny and Takayoshi Fuchida notice anomalies inconsistent with known laws of physics. The two scientists publish "What Happened to the Universe When Einstein Wasn't Looking" in the September issue of *The Western Alliance Journal of Theoretical Physics*.

2019

Kearny and Fuchida publish "Einstein's Theories: The Cooked And the Raw."

2020

First full-scale fusion reactor is completed by a team of Harvard and MIT engineers and General Motors Corporation. The reactor exceeds all expectations.

—Kearny and Fuchida publish their famous paper entitled, "Now What?"

2021

Kearny and Fuchida publish "Pan-Dimensionality." Other scientists consider the contents of these papers to be even more amusing than their titles. The two scientists are laughed out of their jobs and their profession.

—Professor Takayoshi Fuchida marries Katherine Kurita. Many generations later, the descendants of this marriage will rule one of the largest and most powerful interstellar realms.

General Motors patents first commercially available fusion reactor.



9

2022

—China, the Hong Kong Collective, and the recently combined Korean States announce their intention to form the Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. This action is seen as a direct threat to the Western Alliance. Both sides actively court Japan, the one country that could make the ACPS a rival to the

Alliance. International tensions escalate.

2023

January—The ACPS announces a naval blockade of Japan to "better present its case to the Japanese people, free from the influence of Western venom-spreaders." The heavy pacifism of the Japanese leads them to decide not to fight the blockade unless absolutely necessary.

April—Supplies airlifted from the Western Alliance are insufficient to make up for the effects of the ACPS blockade. The Japanese government collapses. Public sentiment is split evenly between the two alliances. The Emperor of Japan assumes temporary control and imposes rationing. He requests major assistance from the Western Alliance.

May—First Western Alliance relief convoy leaves Pearl Harbor. It is composed of ships from both the U.S. and the Free Soviet Nations navies.

—ACPS says it will not back down.

—The Chinese cruiser *Iron Flower* runs over a surfaced Western Alliance submarine that had been scouting for the relief convoy. The submarine, the *USS Bremerton*, sinks with all hands.

—The *Akagi* and the *Kongo*, the two Japanese Defense Force destroyers closest to the incident, challenge the *Iron Flower* and order it to surrender. The Chinese cruiser opens fire. In the subsequent battle, the two Japanese ships destroy the *Iron Flower*, but not before the *Akagi* is sunk.

—The Japanese public sides with the Western Alliance. The Emperor frees the Japanese Defense Force from its strict rules of engagement. The JDF begins immediate military actions against the blockading ships of the ACPS.

—The relief convoy enters Tokyo Harbor. Western Alliance forces in the Free Russian States and in the member-states of India are placed on a war footing.

—As both sides gird for war, the Japanese launch an intensive diplomatic effort.

2024

The Osaka Agreement is announced early in the year. The accord provides for the entry of Japan, China, and the Korean States into the Western Alliance, with the proviso that they retain the power to resolve some regional questions without need for Alliance approval.

—The Western Alliance accepts Japan, China, the Korean States, and the seven Russian States as members.

—Takayoshi Fuchida, his credibility as a physicist destroyed by his controversial work, returns in disgrace to Japan. He and his wife, Katherine Kurita, set up a small stationery and oragami supply shop in the poorer section of Tokyo.

2026

First working fusion drive developed.

2027

The *AS Columbia*, a fusion-powered spacecraft, voyages to Mars.

—From *Official Timeline of Ancient Events, Volume X*, ComStar Press, 3022

POLITICS OF COLONIZATION

If the urge to explore new lands and see new sights called men and women to wander far from Terra, the growing political chaos within the Terran Alliance was the force pushing at them from behind. The Terran Alliance, which was unprepared for the discovery or ramifications of the Kearny-Fuchida drive, was equally unprepared to govern people light years away from the mother planet. At first, there was not much problem. The early colonists were usually small groups so totally dependent on Terra for technical support that they willingly complied with any Alliance government demands.

As the colonies began to swell in size, it was inevitable that many became self-sufficient. This led to tensions between the colonies and the Alliance government over the issue of local authority versus allegiance to the power of the motherworld. The Alliance was victorious in the first skirmishes, mainly because it still controlled the colonists' water supply.

That situation changed in 2177 with the formation of the Ryan Cartel and its fleet of iceberg-toting JumpShips. With a reliable source of water, frontier worlds could now support many more people and so quickly become independent of Terra. The tension and distrust between Terra and her colonies increased measurably.



10

In the Alliance capital of Geneva, the struggle eventually polarized an already weak governing body into two main political parties, the Expansionists and the Liberals, each claiming moral superiority for their position.

The Expansionists believed in the authority of the State over everyone, including men and women light years away. The development of the hyperdrive had swept their party into the Prime Ministry in the early 22nd century, and they had remained in power ever since. The Expansionists had no qualms about using force to achieve their aims and had often sent in the Alliance military to put down unrest in rebellious Terran nations.

The Liberals, on the other hand, were earning the reputation for being saints with horns. With every year spent out of power, they seemed to become more radical. Though they claimed to believe in the goodness of every individual, the Liberals gradually adopted the tough tactics of the Expansionists to regain power.

Opportunity knocked in 2236 when a coalition of colonies at the far edge of Human expansion declared their independence from the Alliance. The Expansionists wanted to severely punish the coalition, but unfortunately for them, the Alliance Global Militia was less an army than a heavily armed police. Only the Colonial Marines, a small branch of the Militia, was equipped with the resources for a journey to the rebellious worlds.

SWAMP FEVER

I'm just a ferry pilot for the Ryan Cartel. I take my iceship, the *Loving Woman*, and load up on pieces of ice that workers in mules break off from the main chunk that the JumpShip brings in. The ice is stored in my ship and I ferry it to the planet.

This trip, my landing point was Mucka Flats, the largest colony on Proserpina. I was a bit concerned that we still had not made contact with the planet by the time my ship was hitting the planet's atmosphere. Most ports would at least come on and say hello before you started your reentry. Common courtesy, you know?

The landing itself was routine enough. The automatic pilot meshed well with the port's automatic navigation systems and my ship hardly shuddered as it touched down. But then nothing. No one came with the cool-down tanks. No one came to begin unloading procedures. Nothing but silence...

We were walking close to the swamp's edge, wondering what the hell had happened to the port crew when Michaels suddenly went ashen and pointed at something in the swamp. It was as though the swamp had begun to react to our presence. The waters gurgled and bubbled, while vague masses under the muck began to move toward us.

The first one was huge, about two meters in diameter. As its broad, chitinous back broke the water, the creature's black shiny skin glistened dimly in the cloud-blocked sun. As it continued to rise above the surface, I saw three pairs of eyes reflecting a sick purple light, three armored and segmented legs, and three pairs of claws tipped with what looked to me like hypodermic needles meant for elephants.

My crew and I started to run toward the control tower. These things, whose shapes somehow reminded me of Terran limpets, began chasing us, but the big one's size kept it stumbling in the mud. This didn't stop the smaller ones, though. They had no problem speeding over the ooze and then over the tarmac of the port.

Mitchell, always the brave one, stopped and began taking shots at the little limpets with his pistol. Soon the limpets were all around him, and after a few moments one caught hold of his leg and began crawling up. Mitchell, try as he might, couldn't shake it off, and soon others were latching onto his leg.

Though small, those limpets had steel-strong mouth parts. Within an instant, Mitchell was howling in pain as they sunk their needle mouths into his legs. Mitchell began running toward the rest of us, who were now in the control tower watching in horror. He barely made it in before the rest of those horrors caught up with him.

Mitchell was pallid. Three limpets were still attached to his legs and it took three of us to tear each one off. We killed the devils with the business end of a nine-kilo wrench we had found in one of the control room lockers.

At first we believed that Mitchell had been poisoned by the limpets, but by sunset of the fourth day, Yolers, Bassers, and Johnson were suffering from the same hideous blotches, delirium, and retching.

Now I knew why there was no one in Mucka Flats. Everyone had either died of this swamp fever or taken to the hills in panic. I guess the only thing living in this part of the world is myself and those creatures, which are still clanking and crawling around this building.

I imagine that after a few days the smell of fresh blood or the sight of body heat, or whatever it is these devils go for, will disappear. They'll crawl back and sink back into that swamp. At least they'll do that without my blood in their bodies, because from the fever and the nausea I feel, it looks like I've got the fever, too.

—From an account left by Captain Henry Devillers, quoted in *Stories of the Frontier*, compiled by Richard Sturgis, Alliance Press, 2399

Undaunted, the Expansionists dispatched the Marines from Terra to punish the colonial rebels and to reestablish the Alliance's dominance. Confident that the Marines could handle a few disgruntled rebels, the Expansionist government was staking all its credibility on the venture. Denebola, a distant colony that had been the first to declare its independence, was the first target on a long list of worlds that the Marines were to force back into the fold.

Eighteen months later, the Colonial Marines returned to Terra in disgrace. Where they had expected to find only a few disgruntled rebels, they had been met by large, highly motivated armies instead. Though not well-equipped, the rebel forces outnumbered and outmaneuvered the Marines, who often arrived at the rebel worlds without proper maps or other reconnaissance. Losses were high on both sides, but the Marines lacked the means to transport reinforcements or adequate supplies from Terra. Faced with the prospect of ignominious defeat, they withdrew.

The Liberals made the most of this catastrophic Expansionist failure by condemning their opponents' foreign policy and challenging their right to rule. The Liberals quickly gained the support of other dissident groups and formed a coalition to take power away from the Expansionists.

Until now, the public had been apathetic about colonial events. Except for people who had relatives on the frontier, the colonies were of little interest except as a source of sensational stories about bizarre new lifeforms. That attitude changed quickly when the Liberal party made public a secret Expansionist memo revealing the government's intention to severely restrict emigration to the colonies.

A few months earlier, most citizens had never even considered leaving Terra. Now many were frightened and angry that the government wanted to deprive them of the right. Many suddenly switched their support to the Liberals who now enjoyed an unprecedented majority.

The Liberals swept the elections of 2237. Though the Expansionist Prime Minister was not obligated to step down, the opposition was so overwhelming that she had little choice but to resign. For the first time in decades, the Liberals were in power.

They wasted little time in changing the direction of Alliance governmental policies. First, they granted independence to all worlds beyond a small sphere of space radiating out from Terra. The problem was that the party leaders did not stop to inquire whether many of these colonies actually wanted independence. Some Liberals felt a sense of righteousness almost akin to the abolition of slavery in earlier centuries, while others believed that the colonies should be responsible for their own well-being. By 2242, the borders of the Alliance had shrunk to a sphere with a radius of only 30 light years.

CHAOS

It was not long before the Liberals' isolationism put them once more out of public favor. In giving independence to the colonies and freeing them from the oppressive regulations of the Expansionists, the Liberals had replaced repression with total disinterest. Despite efforts by major Alliance conglomerates to assist the abandoned colonies, the people of the frontier suffered so severely that their compatriots on Terra grew sympathetic to their plight. Demonstrations against the Alliance government became common, as the citizens of the homeworld grew increasingly angry at the government's obsession with transforming Terra, Mars, and Venus into space-Edens while the distant colonies starved. When the Terrans learned that one colony had starved to death because of a lack of food supplies, serious rioting erupted.



Seeing the growing discontent, the Expansionists fanned the flames of discontent and soon regained enough public support to rise to power in the general elections of 2242. This pattern of revolving governments continued for the next six decades, with the public becoming ever more apathetic. Election tampering was so rampant that even those who voted conceded that their votes counted for little. Indeed, the people's votes were bought and sold in the back rooms of the Alliance Parliament. Without any restraint from the body politic, political fighting between the two major parties escalated to physical fighting and rumors of political murder.

The situation was so unstable that it set off a huge flood of emigration from Terra and other crowded Alliance planets during the latter half of the 23rd century. Later known as the Exodus, this mass movement was made possible by the earlier open-door emigration policies of the Liberals. Millions of disgruntled citizens seized the opportunity to leave all the chaos and misery of Terra behind.

The large conglomerates' efforts to transport these colonists while trying to supply the colonies with adequate food and water was creating an economic strain. Scientific research suffered as industries geared up to meet massive colonial demands. Scientific research on many colony worlds became equally impossible, for everyone was preoccupied with just trying to stay alive. Even research sponsored by the Alliance government was difficult because the political fighting was all-consuming. Even universities and other research institutions were split into Liberal and Expansionist camps.

It was not long before political warfare between the Liberals and Expansionists took its toll on Alliance society as a whole. The economy slowed. Social welfare programs broke down. Even so simple a procedure as obtaining a driver's license became a nightmare of twisted laws and regulations.

JAMES MCKENNA

The Alliance Global Militia, after its humiliation by the rebel colonies, decided to stay out of the political turmoil. All that its leaders wanted was enough financing to gradually upgrade the force while remaining aloof from the political maelstrom. Rather than risk the AGM's anger, the Liberals and Expansionists cooperated. Thus did the AGM grow steadily stronger over the next decades, transforming itself into a true military once more.

During these years of Liberal-Expansionist political instability, the AGM built the first true interstellar navy and developed strategies and tactics that would become the basis of modern warfare. The renewed organization and quiet confidence of the AGM appealed to the public, who saw Militia service as a refuge from the chaos of the time. So attractive was military service that AGM recruiters were forced to turn away young male and female applicants.

Fleet Admiral James McKenna was the most famous officer during the last days of the Terran Alliance. A Canadian officer who had grown up in the wilds of the Yukon Territories, he would have likely been as comfortable with the life of a lumberjack as that of Admiral and empire-builder. Though McKenna did not begin formal schooling until age 12, he soon showed a remarkable aptitude for the sciences and history. He had never given much thought to military service, though, notwithstanding his family's long history of service to the Terran Alliance and to the Western Alliance before that.

When the AGM offered the young man a scholarship to Annapolis Naval Academy in the United States of America, he decided, after some deliberation, to accept the opportunity for a fine education. During his years at Annapolis, McKenna seesawed between winning honors for his exceptional academic ability and threats of expulsion for his many misadventures.

McKenna eventually did graduate with honors, but his early career in the Alliance Navy was equally checkered. Though unsurpassed in his ability to handle space vessels, his outspokenness often led to trouble. In his first ten years of service, McKenna dropped in rank five times for bad conduct. He finally settled down, but never lost his tendency to question and challenge what everyone else took for granted.

After years spent expunging his former reputation, James McKenna attained the rank of Admiral and took command of the



12

Alliance navy in 2295. With few superiors, he was able to undertake the construction of a true space navy. Until then, the Alliance Navy had been occupied mostly with transporting troops to and from worlds. Few in the Alliance foresaw either a need to build warships or a future that would encompass more than one interstellar power.

Admiral McKenna was one of those few, and he set about developing the first and best space navy for the Terran Alliance.

The first true combat warship, the *TAS Dreadnought*, was launched in 2300. During the next 14 years, Fleet Admiral McKenna launched six similar vessels, as well as 20 lesser warships, from the shipyards orbiting Terra, Mars, and Venus. Though many assumed that these ships were costly playthings for the charismatic Admiral, fate would call them into action sooner than even McKenna himself expected.



INTERVIEW WITH THE ADMIRAL

As I floated through the hatchway into the bridge, I peered into the dimness but saw no silhouette that matched James McKenna's frame. When I looked up suddenly, I was startled to see the Fleet Admiral floating just above my head in his Captain's chair. I had forgotten that in Zero-G the "ceiling" was just another stretch of deck to which chairs and instruments were bolted. It was logical but disorienting to see men and women sitting on the ceiling working instruments while the Admiral of the Alliance looked down into my upturned face. With his help, I floated up to him and strapped myself into a chair.

The Admiral was every bit as imposing as he appeared in the holos. He was tall and muscular, with long, unkempt blond hair that tended to float about him like a halo in Zero-G. He was gregarious, but it was easy to see the intelligence and calculation in his eyes.

MARTHA DEANS: Admiral McKenna, this is the most impressive vessel I have ever seen. But there are many people in the Alliance who wonder just why the *Dreadnought* was built. Weapons are usually built with a specific target or enemy in mind. Who or what is the *Dreadnought's* target?

MCKENNA: Well, ignorance for one. People used to believe that it was beyond the abilities of man to build such a massive ship. I believed otherwise, and I wanted to prove it.

DEANS: Do you always act so forcefully on your beliefs?

MCKENNA: Of course. How will you ever know if what you believe is right unless you have to get out there and prove it?

DEANS: There are many who say that's one of the reasons the Alliance is in such a political snarl. They think that fanatical belief in such things as political parties is the cause of all mankind's pain.

MCKENNA: I'm inclined to agree. Believing in a political party is not a sign of a person's intelligence, just his willingness to be led about by the nose. Individual conviction and decisive actions are the signs of true intelligence.

DEANS: How do you balance your personal beliefs with your duty to the Alliance?

MCKENNA: It isn't easy, and there are times when I seriously consider chucking all this for the Canadian wilderness.

DEANS: What keeps you here, then?

MCKENNA: I think the main reason for sticking around is in case fate steps in to give me and these ships an opportunity for action, or to do something that would improve life back on Terra and the other Alliance worlds.

DEANS: What would you do, given this opportunity?

MCKENNA: Now that depends on the situation, don't you think?

—From *Good Morning Canada*, holonews broadcast, September 15, 2313

THE ZOLI AFFAIR

In 2310, a new political party was established in the Alliance. Called the People's Independence Party, it claimed to be the voice of the forgotten. With unprecedented swiftness, the party attracted an enormous following among the previously apathetic population. By staging elaborate rallies, the PIP drummed up both considerable attention and monetary support, which suited its founder admirably.

Grant Zoli was the leader of the People's Independence Party. As the illegitimate child of a Kenyan mother and a New Zealander father, his early life had been a desperate struggle to stay alive in the urban slums of New Zealand. While spending time in prison for theft, the teenaged Zoli received an education and discovered that he had a talent for writing and for manipulating rules and regulations.

After prison, he found a job in politics with a small local party. With astonishing rapidity, he used that party as a springboard to become Prime Minister of New Zealand and the head of powerful political machine. Still not content, Zoli then parlayed the People's Independence Party into interplanetary politics. His true ambition was to be rich, which was his only motive for founding the PIP and entering the dangerous waters of large-scale politics.

The party's strong showing in the elections of 2310 made the PIP a major force and possibly the deciding factor in the upcoming Alliance-wide Parliamentary elections of 2314. It was not long before both parties were offering Grant Zoli both power and money for support. Hoping to drive the offers even higher, Zoli and his cronies remained noncommittal. It was not until just before the major elections that he made his decision.

Documents recovered long after the events revealed that in August 2314, Grant Zoli pledged the PIP to the Expansionists. A month later, he had a change of heart and switched his party's allegiance to the Liberals. On September 5, 2314, just a month before the elections, police found Grant Zoli dead in his New Zealand mansion.

News of his death created an immediate uproar. The Liberal and the Expansionist parties began to blame one another for the crime, while the slain leader's more zealous supporters initiated an assassins' war against both parties. The Parliament invoked martial law on Terra and sent the AGM to put down the rebellion in New Zealand, where most of the trouble was taking place.

Meanwhile, the Liberals produced evidence that Grant Zoli had been murdered by order of the Expansionist Party. The charge later proved false, but the accusations increased hatreds to a fever pitch that made the next events inevitable.

On September 30, guards of the leading Liberal boss left their post and drove across Zurich to the headquarters of the Expansionist Party. There, they stormed the building and killed everyone they found. The Expansionists retaliated, and soon battles between thugs of both parties were occurring all over the globe. Then both parties unleashed their secretly trained detachments of utterly loyal soldiers. What had been a war of knives and pistols escalated to a full-blown confrontation between two heavily armed sides. Though they fought mainly with each other, many thousands of civilians were killed.

A few units of the Alliance Global Militia were persuaded to join one side or the other, but most remained politically neutral. When asked by James McKenna to step in and stop the growing violence, the ground forces of the AGM agreed. The Battle of Zurich and the Battle of Bangkok stand out as two of their most heroic efforts.



13

TIME FOR A CHANGE

Attention all AGM members currently participating in the barbarities. Cease all hostile actions and return to your barracks or I will bombard you into oblivion.

—Communique from Admiral James McKenna to AGM ground forces fighting on Terra, June 2, 2315

Upon learning that Terra was in flames and that other worlds were about to erupt similarly, Admiral McKenna issued orders for the Navy's major warships and Marine troop carriers to rendezvous with his fleet currently orbiting Mars. No one knows whether McKenna acted spontaneously or whether he had planned his actions in advance. Some have claimed that the curious coincidence of all major warships and troopships being on duty, the revoking of shore leaves a month before the war, and the storage of extra ammo were all part of a grand plan devised by the Admiral. Though McKenna had never made a secret of his dissatisfaction with the government, certain facts, such as the collision between the warships *Wildcat* and *Yalu* because of poor navigation, seem to refute the claim of premeditation.

The real issue was that on June 2 a spectacular series of explosions pulverized and vaporized Strand Rock, a tiny island in the North Sea near Scotland. At the same time, another island, this one near Australia, was also being destroyed. These events sent a wave of shock around the globe and put a temporary stop to the fighting. Then came a message from Admiral James McKenna, that was broadcast worldwide:

"To the men and women of Humanity's cradle: attention. This is Fleet Admiral James McKenna onboard the warship *Dreadnought*. The destruction of the islands near Scotland and Australia was accomplished by the combined fleets of the Alliance Global Navy. I gave the order to open fire and I am just as ready to give similar orders should anyone on Terra attempt to jam my message to its people.

"You have all been suffering through a bitter war. Many, mostly the innocent, have been injured or lost everything they own in the fighting. Even the fortunate few who have gone unscathed thus far must have some friend or loved one who has suffered. Terra has been a dark place these past few weeks, with little hope of getting brighter.

"I ask you now: what is the purpose of this suffering? Do you believe that this war is a true and honorable one that will make your lives any better? Do you honestly believe that if one side or the other wins, it will benefit you?

"It is my view that all of us have been duped by the lies and deceptions of a few wily politicians. They have led you to believe that this war will somehow end your, and the Alliance's, problems once and for all. They lie. They struggle for personal power and not for your benefit.

"It is time for change. The government is corrupt and must go. We must bring back the voice of the people so that it may be heard. I propose the founding of a new government to replace the Alliance, a strong government responsive to its people, yet unburdened by constant and useless elections—a strong government that will reestablish Terra as the proper center of Humanity. Fellow Humans, it is time that we cease to behave in the violent ways of *Homo Sapiens* and begin to behave in the ways of *Homo Stellaris*, men and women of the stars.

"Those who share this view need only lay down their weapons and return home to await further messages. Those who do not agree to a change had best be warned. I intend to hunt every last one of you and feed you to the public that has been so badly abused."

The effect of McKenna's words was like a shot heard round the world. Almost every militia unit that had been fighting on one side or the other returned to their barracks. In many cities, citizens poured into the streets in support of Admiral McKenna and his call for a new order.

The leaders of the two parties, as well as a few AGM units, refused to surrender their right to kill one another over politics, however. True to his word, Fleet Admiral McKenna unleashed the firepower of his ships on exposed targets. Against those who hid from bombardment in cities, McKenna dispatched the Colonial Marines to root them out, alive if possible, dead if not.



HEGEMONY

The dictionary defines hegemony as "preponderant influence or authority, especially of one nation over others." In our own Terran Hegemony—the name given to our shiny new government—freedoms have been exchanged for "decisiveness" and personal rights abrogated in favor of blindly following one charismatic man.

—From *The Terran Hegemony: Monumental Fraud*, by Richard Thury, HBJ Press, 2321

The few remaining officers of the Liberal and the Expansionist parties were, as McKenna had promised, turned over to local authorities. Though the captives might have hoped to be freed when the furor died down, McKenna had correctly judged the mood of the people toward those who had mismanaged the planet's fate for the past six decades. Most of those former leaders were imprisoned for long terms. Twenty were executed, and only five were released.

Survivors of the AGM units that had refused McKenna's orders to return to their barracks might redeem themselves if they accepted a reduction in rank and assignment to units soon to see action. Most accepted the offer, and those who didn't were imprisoned.



As the dust cleared after the sudden fall of the Alliance, Admiral McKenna, still aboard his warship, issued what came to be known as the Hegemony Charter. The document outlined what McKenna called a "fair but responsive government free of all the vices and faults of the previous administration." The Hegemony, as McKenna saw it, would dissolve the Alliance bureaucracy

and empower a new class of officials called Planetary Governors. These governors would be appointed to rule in the Hegemony's name. Ultimate authority would lie with what McKenna euphemistically called "a single head of state chosen, but not ruled, by the people." It was clear that he viewed this head of state as just a few notches below the status of king.

There is considerable debate about whether or not Admiral McKenna wrote the Hegemony Charter. Most believe that he lacked the educational background. Other historians believe that beneath the Admiral's brusque attitude and military orientation there lurked a true intellect. McKenna was, they pointed out, a voracious reader and passionate fan of educational programming.

Many books about the Star League claim that McKenna declared himself leader of the new Terran Hegemony, but that is not true. He was elected as the Hegemony's first Director-General and Lord Protector in February 2316. From all evidence, the election was fair, despite a ballot indicating that McKenna would rule "until his death or voluntary retirement."

That the people of the former Alliance would willingly elect one man to rule over them without any legal recourse for removing him is remarkable. Perhaps the body politic was so tired of the old ways that they were willing to place their future in the hands of a man they admired, though of whom they knew little. Perhaps it was enough for them to know that the future would be different.

A NEW CHARTER

For the citizens who had elected and supported Director-General McKenna, the new government would prove to be a disappointment. On the surface, there was little to distinguish the new bureaucracy from the old. National or continental leaders ran their governments as they wished. On the global level, McKenna commissioned the creation of Planetary Congresses to replace the various parliaments and assemblies favored by the old Alliance. McKenna left enough latitude so that each world could alter the Planetary Congress as it saw fit. What the people did not realize was that the fine print of the Hegemony Charter contained a small provision that would authorize creation of a virtual nobility.

Director-General McKenna had blamed most of the Alliance's corruption on the ease with which politicians and governments could be overthrown. Because of this, most politicians were in constant fear for their political lives, with governments always in danger of collapsing before being able to accomplish their aims.

To prevent this from reoccurring, McKenna had the Charter specify that a Planetary Congressman would be elected for a two-year probationary period, after which the people could grant him a full eight-year term in office. Planetary Governors served for 18 years. Congressmen could be impeached, but only if convicted by a court of law and a referendum showing that a majority of the people wished to depose him.

The upper levels of the Hegemony government were less familiar to the people. At the pinnacle was the Director-General. Immediately below him was the High Council, nine of the most qualified Planetary Governors chosen by the Director-General. The High Councilors advised the Director-General on affairs of state and served as watchdogs over the bureaucracy. High Councilors served at the discretion of the Director-General or until voluntary retirement.

FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE HEGEMONY CONGRESS

A former lawyer, Sonya DuKirl was a member of the Terran Alliance Parliament in 2314. She was one of the few Expansionists in the Liberal-controlled Alliance Regional Parliament and one of the few with the character to fight her political battles fairly. She was considered something of a political dinosaur, and her Parliamentary fellows tolerated her impassioned speeches and legal maneuvering with amusement.

Early in 2314, the budget for Sirius, her homeworld, came before the Regional Parliament. The Liberal-dominated government did not approve a budget anywhere near what the planet needed, even though Sirius had just suffered massive crop failures. M.P. DuKirl was desperate to see the budget increased.

By now, Sonya DuKirl had gained a reputation as a scrupulously honest, but extremely tough, political fighter. Her constituents deeply appreciated her integrity, as did some of her political opponents. This gave DuKirl considerably more power than the normal member of Parliament, and many lesser politicians envied her unofficial clout.

When DuKirl appealed to them for aid, these dishonest members of Parliament promised to back her cause in exchange for deals that would have forced a compromise of her political morals. She refused and managed to use her legal abilities to maneuver the Congress into approving a budget increase for her planet. Unamused, Sonya's enemies in government and in Parliament had her thrown into jail for "highly suspect activities." The government then promptly forgot her. While the Expansionists and the Liberals cast aside all civilized pretenses and fought for control in the streets, DuKirl was in her cell, quietly penning books on political morality.

When the shooting stopped and Admiral James McKenna declared the creation of the Terran Hegemony, many of McKenna's followers were moved by Sonya DuKirl's case and acquitted her. They also made sure her story reached James McKenna. When he learned of DuKirl's courage and integrity, the new Director-General offered her a post in the government and DuKirl accepted.

The new government elected her the first President of the Hegemony Congress. Throughout her 30 years as President, DuKirl made McKenna's wishes for a strong and moral government a reality and ruled with fairness whenever the Director-General was absent. Toward the end of her career, she had won so much respect that the Director-General, the High Council, and the government willingly suspended the safeguards that protected the government from greedy presidents. They knew that President DuKirl could be trusted.

A year after she retired from her second term, Sonya DuKirl returned to her homeworld, where she died three years later. The Terran Hegemony erected a huge monument to honor her "dedication to integrity and honesty."

—From *Political Foundations of the Terran Hegemony*, by Precentor Nicholas Drasser, ComStar Press, 3011



15



Immediately below the High Councilors in importance and rank was the President of the Hegemony Congress. Elected by the people of Terra, the President ran the Terran Congress. He also served as the Director-General Pro Tem when Director-General McKenna was away from the capital or otherwise unable to fulfill his duties, which was often. Various safeguards, such as requiring that all High Councilors and commanding officers of the Hegemony Armed Forces agree on major bills and budgets, prevented the Director-General Pro Tem from taking advantage of his position.

The bureaucracy was decentralized. The headquarters of the Hegemony's bureaucracy, called the Offices of Administration, moved from New York City on Terra to new quarters on Luna and was built next to the huge dish antennae of the Crasos Communication System. Taxes were at first reduced, but each planet's service obligations, such as providing materiel and lands for the military, were increased.

Certain political activities became illegal in the new realm. Political parties were banned entirely, though the Director-General allowed groups of like-minded politicians to form what he called "Thought Groups." Electronic voting was banned and replaced with the old paper-ballot method. Though infinitely slower, it prevented the rampant vote fraud that had plagued the last few elections of the old Alliance.

TERRA'S ERRANT FLOCK

The reason the colonies broke from Terra was that the previous government treated them with either indifference or outright contempt. Now things are different and there is no longer any reason for them to remain out there in the cold.

—Director-General James McKenna, as quoted in *The First Lord Protector*, by Gregory Donn, HBJ Interplanetary Press, 2345

After ushering in the Hegemony Congress on Terra in early 2316, Director-General McKenna set about ensuring that all the former Alliance worlds joined his Hegemony. Though most planets joined gladly, a dozen more had to be convinced, usually through political arm-twisting. It took military persuasion before either Caph or Altair would join the Hegemony.

Once the Director-General was sure of his support at home, he turned his attention to worlds that lay just outside the Hegemony's boundaries. Using carrot-and-stick tactics, McKenna sought to enlarge his domain through intensive political propaganda backed up by an economic blitz of cheap consumer goods that he hoped would create a dependence on Terra.

Though his efforts did have some early success, most worlds had grown used to Terra's indifference and were content to keep it that way. They realized, however, that to refuse the Director-General of the Hegemony was courting danger. Some attempted to band together, others joined one of the other established realms, and most started to arm themselves. They had heard James McKenna's call for a united Humanity and his promise to punish "those fragmentists who believe that Humanity is like a sack of seeds to be scattered across the stars to live and grow independently of one another." McKenna made no bones about the fact that he did not intend to take no for an answer.

The Hegemony gave these colonies very little time to prepare. In March 2316, Director-General McKenna left Terra with a large fleet of warships bound for the wealthy independent worlds



16

of Quentin, Errai, and Helen. These worlds had just signed a defense pact among themselves. Though the planetary leaders realized they had little chance of preventing the conquest of their worlds, they hoped to teach the Director-General a lesson. To meet the HAF Navy, the three planets converted small fleets of cargoships and interplanetary messenger ships into warships by adding

lasers and missile tubes. They also beefed up their ground defenses by better equipping several divisions of trained militia and backing them up with a large force of volunteers.

Despite the dogged and sometimes fanatical determination of the Errai, Quentin, and Helen colonists, HAF military might prevailed. The fight to conquer these worlds was a bitter one, but the HAF used its lessons to devise an almost standard approach to subduing other recalcitrant worlds.

The campaign for a planet usually began months before the actual fighting, with the gathering of all information available on the target worlds. Once a tentative plan had been sketched out, the necessary troops were mustered and loaded aboard their vessels for the jump into the combat zone. Two large warships, usually a *Cruiser Class* or larger, and several smaller *JumpShips* carrying aerospace fighters, would make the first jump, materializing at the system's two jump points with their guns and missiles at the ready. These ships made sure that the jump points were free of enemy vessels before giving the all-clear to the vulnerable *JumpShips* carrying the troops. The Director-General himself, in his battlecruiser *Black Lion*, often led these efforts to secure the enemy jump points.

After the troopships and cargo vessels had arrived, attention would finally focus on the target world. Because intelligence about a world was often outdated, missing, or simply incorrect, the HAF first conducted reconnaissance patrols. Escorted by warships, special military survey vessels made runs toward the world to make detailed maps of the planet. The citizens of a world often violently opposed these runs, which crew members referred to as "naughty picture runs."

Once the commanders had a detailed picture of the world, they drew up and executed invasion plans. This usually included a swift run of troopships, escorted by warships, into orbit about the planet, where they would let loose with their *DropShips*. The targets of the *DropShips* were most often major cities and industrial centers. Water sources were also favorite targets, as most worlds were still extremely water-poor. If all went well, the planetary government would usually capitulate once it became clear that HAF forces controlled its people, water, and industries.

During his "Campaigns of Persuasion," Director-General McKenna acquired over 40 worlds in this way. The first campaign, which began with the capture of Quentin, Errai, and Helen, ended with the seizure of Towne in 2317. The second major campaign, launched in 2320, took Terra Firma and Capella, and eventually led to the capture of distant Nanking.

Despite the success of the offensives, certain problems and shortcomings were becoming apparent in the military of the Hegemony, most of them related to the poor performance of Hegemony equipment. The HAF did not have a true aerospace fighter, for example. Those fighters that were effective in space were terrible in an atmosphere, and the Hegemony's best atmospheric fighters were pitiful in the vacuum of space. This often made it almost impossible to provide complete protection for *DropShip* landings, which enemy fighter pilots used to deadly advantage. Compounded with other minor equipment problems, HAF actions often were hampered by delays and postponements.

BATTLE OF THORIN'S SHORES

The *THS Monitor* furled her sails and retracted the slender ribs and delicate silver fabric into the ship's interiors. Enemy activity had been reported in the Thorin area and the *Monitor*, an *Essex Class* destroyer, had been sent to inspect the situation.

Five days later, the *Monitor* arrived in the Thorin system's asteroid field. Maneuvering between the huge rocks, some encrusted with the metal huts and shacks of mining settlements, the ship slowed to a crawl. The gunners in the turrets squinted into their gun sights, trying to discern whether the dark-pitted shadows slowly tumbling by hid sleeker, more deadly forms.

The Captain of the *Monitor* resisted the urge to launch his fighters to help him see. He knew that in these tight quarters fighters would spend most of their time desperately trying to avoid becoming squashed fly-specks on some freight train of a rock. Better to keep his pilots alert and rested for the fight, the Captain thought. Still, it was the not knowing that ate at his guts.

Seven days, five hours, twenty-one minutes into the mission, five tumbling shapes suddenly came cutting in toward the *Monitor* like sharks in a black sea. Their angles of approach were well chosen. The *Monitor's* Captain observed that each vessel's path was within the arcs of fire of his weapon turrets.

The first accelerated and attempted to rake the aft end of the *Monitor* with laser fire. Going past, the Captain of the *Monitor* noted that it was a converted courier vessel. Low on armor but fast and nimble, couriers were once interplanetary messenger ships and the playthings of the ultra-rich. Now the Outer Realms were arming them and turning them into deadly fighters.

With a curse, Captain Michael Cameron ordered his fighters to launch and his destroyer to prepare for some deadly maneuvering.

—From *A Child's Biography of Michael Cameron*, by Jessica Cameron, Hegemony Press, 2498

VICIOUSNESS ON INGRESS

I've been a Sergeant in the Colonial Marines for over 20 malfing years. I served in the Alliance Global Militia and then in the Hegemony Armed Forces. I'm one of the best damn combat sergeants they've ever seen, which is why the brass came to me and offered me a transfer into the first CAAN regiment (Combined Armor, Air, and Naval Regiment). Prestige and extra pay are two things I've never turned down, a willing man being a third.

For the next year, I participated in the formation of the regiment. Being a grunt Marine, most of my duties were centered on helping create effective tactics and procedures to mesh with all the tanks, hovercraft, and fighters the regiment would have.

In 2316, the regiment was all set for action, and it wasn't too long before we got the word to mobilize for a new task force setting out to take Ingress. Briefings described the world as rich, with many natural resources and thriving industrial development. What made the planet a perfect target for a CAAN Regiment was that most of the planet's important cities were clustered around one large, deep sea.

I've never been a fan of JumpShips and travel through nether-dimensions. It always makes me sick, no matter how many barf-pills I swallow. Getting to Ingress put me into a pretty foul mood, which didn't get much better when I could feel our ship suddenly accelerate and shudder. Apparently the rebels at Ingress were better armed than what Intelligence had led us to believe.

As it turned out, the First CAAN was among the first regiments to make it onto the planet. Our DropShips landed in their assigned zones near the Ingress Sea, which had been semi-secured by Marine Jump Troops dropped earlier. Some



17

of our DropShips landed directly in the shallow waters and began unloading hovercraft and gunboats, while other DropShips landed the fighters in the large, flat valley that was to be our fighter base.

My troops and I strapped ourselves into our hovercraft and set off for our first combat mission. Grand Port was a major city down the coast. Our assignment was to attack the sloping beach and seize certain key points along the waterfront so that the dogfaces could land in their DropShips and take the rest of the city.

After we had sped along for an hour, our target became visible. It was infantry with anti-tank grenades and missiles. One white line of missile smoke became two, then three, then a whole thicket of white smoke streams all aimed directly at us. Most of the missiles were small heat-seekers, easily avoided with our flares and heat suppressors. Still, a few got through.

One hit the engine compartment and control surfaces of the hovercraft right next to us. The craft gave a shudder, then suddenly twirled to port as the engine detonated.

After the fight, we discovered that the enemy on Ingress somehow had access to ancient blueprints of missile weapons. These things were really antiques—some of the plans were for a missile used by the military of the old United States of America. All the enemy had to do was retool a few factories and they could start churning out weapons like cheap toys. Though the weapons were outdated, they were capable of causing considerable damage, especially when used in combination with sneaky guerrilla tactics.

The fight for Ingress was far from the peaceful persuasion the folks back home were led to believe. It was a war, pure and simple. Our weaponry, for all its high-tech glory, was sh*t, considering all it took was some country bumpkin with a handheld missile launcher to turn it into a pile of scrap metal.

—From *The High-Tech Toy Army*, by Randi Fahner (HAF retired), Terra Military Press, 2322



INTERREALM RELATIONS

The poor performance of HAF technology forced Director-General McKenna to reconsider his priorities. He saw that his dream of uniting all mankind under one flag would require a force vastly larger and more powerful than the HAF. Yet, James McKenna still devoutly believed that Terra should become the center of all Humanity.

Meanwhile, worlds outside the Hegemony had found it necessary or profitable to band together. The Marik Commonwealth, the Federation of Oriente, the Dominion of Regulus, the Federation of Skye, the Protectorate of Donegal, the Tamar Pact, the Crucis Pact, the Ozawa Mercantile Association, and the Capellan Republic were just a few of the alliances created at this time. Many had banded together for economic reasons; others hoped to protect one another from bands of marauding brigands. A few of the associations consisted of worlds conquered by a particular family bent on acquiring wealth and power.

By the 2330s, these associations had become large and vigorous independent domains, each with its own private military. Having already encountered a few of these militaries, McKenna knew he could not conquer them all. Privately, he doubted he could conquer even one without straining the Hegemony's resources.

Diplomacy suddenly became McKenna's most potent weapon. He began to tone down the rhetoric of his speeches. No longer did he speak of one realm uniting all Humanity, but instead described the Hegemony as the repository of all mankind's knowledge and compassion. Within the Hegemony government, McKenna also began to completely revamp the government's Foreign Affairs Department. In this era, many important diplomatic delegations traveled from the Hegemony to the worlds beyond its borders to exchange ambassadors and establish full diplomatic relations.



18

THE SYRMA AMBUSH

Despite improved relations between the Hegemony and the various pacts and confederations around it, there were still quite a few unaffiliated worlds that Director-General McKenna considered fair game. In 2335, he launched his third, and last, major offensive to seize certain worlds that he considered vital to the Hegemony's continued growth.

Most of these planets lay toward the Federation of Skye in what would one day be the Lyran Commonwealth. Two worlds, Syrma and Galatea, became the focus of McKenna's plans. Though both planets were technically within the boundaries claimed by the Federation of Skye, they were populated by an anti-technology religious sect that had no wish to join any interplanetary realm. The Federation had tolerated the inhabitants' wishes, but these resource and water-rich planets were too much of a temptation for Director-General McKenna.

The Terran Hegemony was initially successful. Drawing on lessons from its two earlier offensives, the better-trained and equipped HAF easily took Denebola, Milton, Alioth, Mizar, and Lyons. Morale was high in the various strike forces. Though technically in command, the Director-General had turned over most of his authority to his son, Admiral Konrad McKenna, who had his father's charisma and intelligence.

Since 2333, Konrad McKenna had commanded the HAF's Navy, over 300 warships strong, with skill and panache. Though he had yet to command in a heavy combat zone, everyone expected Konrad to perform like a McKenna. Most also expected that he would succeed his father as Director-General. When James McKenna announced that duties and poor health were forcing him to leave the strike force and return to Terra, Admiral Konrad McKenna took over.

Approaching Galatea, one of the main objectives of the entire offensive, Konrad McKenna broke with standard procedures by striking at the world without the usual Naughty Picture Runs. He claimed that there would be little resistance from the peaceful and technologically backward inhabitants, who were unlikely to have advanced weapons. Though the people of Galatea were indeed believers in low technology, they were more than willing to arm themselves with slug-throwing weapons. They used their superior knowledge of the planet to harass the HAF forces, many of whom died in the effort to subdue the people of Galatea.

After this serious error, the rest of the Hegemony strike force commanders were doubtful about accepting McKenna's judgments. Sensing this, McKenna began to blame them publicly for the problems, which his father would never have done. The Navy High Command still believed in Konrad McKenna, however, and stayed out of the feud brewing between the Admiral and the army.

After a difficult, year-long battle, Galatea was finally won. The Navy was assembled at the system jump points for the leap over to Syrma, when Admiral McKenna announced another, more serious break with standard campaign procedures. He believed that it was a waste of time for only the major warships to fight for the jump points so that the troopships could safely make their jumps. Instead, he wanted the cargo vessels and the troopships to make the first jump simultaneously with the warships. The Admiral reasoned that because Syrma was populated by the same sort of anti-tech colonists as Galatea, there would be no need to fight for the jump points. It would be more efficient for the troopships to jump insystem and immediately accelerate toward their target.



The other commanders violently disagreed, with even the Naval officers wary of such a risky move. When General Rebecca Danforth publicly branded the Admiral a fool, she was arrested and sent to the brig. The invasion of Syrma, as planned by Admiral Konrad McKenna, began on July 23, 2338.

What Admiral McKenna did not know, and his military intelligence had failed to uncover, was that the inhabitants of Syrma had struck a secret deal with the Federation of Skye after receiving news of Galatea. Though the Federation had no wish to ruin good relations with the Hegemony by actively defending Syrma, they did not take kindly to the McKennas seizing worlds so close to Skye, capital of the Federation. Thus did the Federation of Skye take the extraordinary and expensive step of building and spreading countless mines and Sleeper missiles at Syrma's main jump points.

Many of the mines exploded the instant the HAF ships fully materialized. There were even reports of some JumpShips actually materializing around mines. The heat and force of the explosions activated the dormant Sleeper missiles, which fired up their engines and sought out the survivors after the debris had floated by.

The folly of Admiral McKenna's plan quickly became apparent. The larger warships could withstand hits from many mines and missiles, but the less massive troopships and cargo vessels could not. Of the 29 troopships that jumped into the Syrma system with the first wave of the HAF, only two survived. Not only was this a tremendous loss of life, but it also effectively stripped the strike force's ability to invade and seize a planet.

Things were going to get even worse, however. Admiral McKenna's plan was for the second wave of ships to make the jump without waiting for word from the first wave. This meant that the survivors of the first wave now had to pick their way through the remaining mines and the floating hulks of destroyed vessels as the ships of the second wave started to materialize around them. Most managed to limp out of the way, but some could not, and another six vessels were lost.

Unfortunately for all concerned, Admiral McKenna's battleship came through the jump without a scratch. Instead of seeing the flaw in his planning, he blamed everything on the commander of the first wave, Vice-Admiral Harris Cather. So incensed was Admiral McKenna by the Vice-Admiral's supposed treasonous neglect that he held a court-martial right there amid the hulks of the many destroyed Hegemony ships.

The court-martial was a farce in which Admiral McKenna, acting as prosecutor as well as judge, laid all blame at the feet of Vice-Admiral Cather. As the trial dragged into its third week, the survivors of the disaster began to shake off the numbness of shock. At least ten crews privately vowed to mutiny if the Vice-Admiral were found guilty for Admiral McKenna's ineptness.

A day before the trial was finally to end, the *Black Lion* appeared alongside Admiral Konrad McKenna's flagship. The Director-General had left Terra as soon as news of the Syrma Ambush reached him. Deeply ashamed of his son's behavior, James McKenna apologized to the survivors and announced that he was stripping his son of all ranks and privileges. Assuming command of the remaining vessels, he ordered everyone back to Terra.

The *Black Lion* paused in the Syrma system for three hours after the departure of other Hegemony vessels. There has never been any official explanation for why James McKenna remained for so long among the twisted hulks of those lost Hegemony troopships.



DEATH OF JAMES MCKENNA

When details of the disaster at Syrma reached the Hegemony public, they reacted with shock and outrage. Public demonstrations and riots became widespread.

Die-hard supporters of the old Alliance and other critics of the Director-General used the Syrma Ambush to their advantage, blaming the disaster on the McKennas and the government they had created. This inflamed passions even further, as street demonstrations escalated to dissatisfaction with the Hegemony government itself.

Within the HAF, the Syrma disaster created a deep rift between the Army and the Navy. The Army, having lost two divisions of men and equipment, blamed the Navy for not realizing earlier that Vice-Admiral McKenna was incompetent. Navy commanders pointed out that the Army may have lost more in the disaster, but that the Navy had losses of 34 trained crews and as many ships of its own. If anyone was to blame for not seeing Konrad McKenna as a fool, the Admirals said to the Generals, it was the man's own father.

Public and military tensions increased as the Director-General refused to allow his son to be prosecuted for incompetence. This was further fuel for opponents of the Hegemony, and the bravest among them called for the Director's impeachment. Though technically impossible, the call to depose him almost immediately divided the Hegemony into two camps, with the state threatening to plunge into a chaos as destructive as that which had brought down the Alliance.

It was at that moment that the Director-General made a realm-wide broadcast to his people. With touching candor, he explained that he knew his office demanded that he punish Vice-Admiral Konrad McKenna for the Syrma fiasco, but he could not forget that Konrad was his son. Torn between his sense of duty and his desire to protect his son, the Director-General had decided that it was time for him to retire.

The announcement caught the entire Hegemony by surprise. Because of his truthfulness and humility, McKenna had once more won the people's support. Within ten days, however, he was beyond politics. James McKenna died of cancer at age 64.



RISE OF THE CAMERONS

I've spent much of my life in the military. I'm used to being forced to volunteer.

—Michael Cameron, as quoted in *The Life of Michael Cameron*, by Henrietta Vela, New Earth Books, 2399



20

The Hegemony, specifically the High Council, now faced the task of finding someone to replace the irreplaceable James McKenna. There was still enough public and political discord in the Hegemony over the Syrma Ambush to give the High Councilors a sense of urgency. Yet, they agreed that the next candidate for Director-General would need at least some of James McKenna's qualities, if not his name.

James McKenna's only offspring, Konrad, was out of the question. Disgraced and drummed out of the HAF, he had retreated to his London home, where he was quietly going mad among a jungle of house plants and 50 cats. Other close relatives, such as McKenna's sister Katherine McKenna or cousin Uston McKenna, were either too young, too uninterested, or too eager for the job.

Expanding their search to include more distant relations of the late Director-General, the Councilors eventually settled on two candidates. Graham Nellas, a nephew of James McKenna, represented the Pacific Northwest States of North America in the Terran Congress. Forty-five years old, he had served in the HAF as a Marine officer, winning a medal of valor for his actions in the conquest of Addicks. The handsome Graham was politically conservative and an excellent orator.

Michael Cameron, a third cousin to McKenna, was the other candidate, though some Councilors believed he was less qualified than Senator Graham Nellas. Only thirty, Michael was currently an officer in the Army Reserves. A scholarly man, all his life he had shown a marked distaste for politics or religion of any sort, believing instead in what he called "heart's honor."

One of the reasons the High Councilors were considering Michael Cameron was his learning and interest in serious research. He could discuss almost any topic with a knowledge equaled to or even greater than that of some experts. This led to his later becoming known as the first true Renaissance Man in centuries, which Michael considered the highest of praise.

The other quality that attracted the High Councilors to Michael Cameron was the passion he brought to everything he did. Someone once said that when he was deeply involved in a project, Michael "got a strange air of doom about him, almost as though you could hear the thunder of his mind and see the flashes of lightning behind his eyes." Other stories described Michael spending whole days and nights working on research projects or trying to solve various problems relating to his reserve unit.

Though some admired this quality of dogged determination, others called it obsessive behavior, perhaps even a sign of mental imbalance. In person, though, Cameron deeply impressed the Councilors with his honesty and intelligence.

MICHAEL VICTORIOUS

As the day for a decision drew nearer, the Councilors remained split over whom to recommend as the next Director-General, and the debate became more heated and tense. On the day before the announcement must be made, the Councilors were still hanging fire. Because of their inability to choose, they decided to submit the names of Graham Nellas and Michael Cameron to the people for consideration. Privately, many Councilors expected the public to choose the more personable Graham Nellas, while others hoped that they would appreciate Michael Cameron's genius, despite his unassuming demeanor.

According to political election rules laid down by Director-General James McKenna, the two candidates had to run strictly controlled political campaigns. The number and type of public appearances they could make was severely limited, and advertisements in the public media were banned. The late Director had wanted to make sure that the days of the people electing a photogenic person with a winning smile and vacuum between the ears were gone forever.

In place of a media blitz, the public witnessed frequent debates between Michael Cameron and Graham Nellas, before the holocameras as well as in the various print media. In the public debates, Graham Nellas came across as suave and self-assured, but perhaps too glib in expressing himself. Nellas also had actual experience in the Terran Congress, a fact he mentioned as often as possible. The public nevertheless voted for the serious and brilliant Michael Cameron by a large margin, reassured by his air of quiet competence. Incredible as was this upset, a total of three official recounts requested by the High Councilors turned up no evidence of vote tampering or changes in the results.

On January 17, 2340, Michael Cameron was sworn in as the second Director-General and Lord Protector of the Terran Hegemony.

GOVERNMENT AND SCIENCE

Michael Cameron spent his first few years as Director-General becoming acquainted with the Hegemony government. He also had to become accustomed to being in the spotlight, with which he was uncomfortable. Nevertheless, he poured fearsome concentration into his new job.

One of Cameron's first actions was to create the Hegemony Research Alliance Department, so that all government research projects, except military, could be centralized. Once this efficient management system was in place, the number of research projects funded by the Hegemony government quickly doubled. As the new Director earmarked more and more money for scientific research, other members of the government began to grumble. Though many protested to funding for studies of whether prophylactics could be made from paper, few could object to research that led to invention of a portable fusion generator small enough to be carried in a suitcase or to the discovery of cures for nasty alien diseases.

Aside from creating the influential HRAD, Michael Cameron initiated several more subtle governmental changes. Because of his genius and love of knowledge, many government officials, particularly those who reported directly to him, were stimulated to redouble their efforts. With this new emphasis on intelligence filtering throughout the bureaucracy, the government became unbelievably efficient.

FAMOUS CAMERONS

Sir Ewen Cameron (1426-1511)—The Cameron family can confidently trace its origins to 15th-century Scotland and a Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel. Before that, Camerons are mentioned in ancient Scottish writings, with most references relating to metal-working Camerons of the Scottish Highlands. Sir Ewen Cameron received his title from James Stuart IV, King of Scotland, in 1505. It was a reward for Ewen's participation in the battle of New Dryl Ford, a minor skirmish between forces of Clan Stuart and brigands attempting to steal food from the coastal town of New Dryl.

Richard Cameron (1648-1680)—A descendant of Sir Ewen and a founder of the Reformed Presbyterian movement, Richard Cameron objected to the alliance of Church and State under King Charles II. He and his followers seceded from the official Kirk to form their own. When they refused to take the official Oath of Allegiance in 1674, the group lost many of its rights and were viewed with deep suspicion by the government. After Richard Cameron died in the Battle at Aird's Moss, King Charles persecuted his followers severely in 1680.



Simon Cameron (1799-1889)—Simon Cameron was an American who served as U.S. President Abraham Lincoln's first Secretary of War. His early life was spent in Pennsylvania, where he made a fortune in railroads, banking, and newspapers. In 1824, he entered politics as a supporter of John C. Calhoun. In 1845, he was elected to Congress, and in 1860, was a presidential candidate. President Lincoln was persuaded to appoint him as Secretary of War, but within two years, Cameron's inefficiency compelled the President to ask for his resignation. Simon Cameron went on to serve as an Ambassador and a Senator until his retirement in 1877.

Simon Cameron is regarded by many American historians as the first state boss in American politics. During his political life, he faced numerous charges of corruption, but his widespread influence kept him from prosecution. Cameron became involved in a national scandal when he mishandled funds entrusted to him as a Commissioner for the Winnebago Indians.



21

Sir David Young Cameron (1865-1945)

A Scottish painter and etcher who was born in Glasgow, Scotland, David Cameron abruptly changed from the study of accounting to the study of art during his years as a university student in Glasgow. He later devoted his life to painting and etching in a style that emphasized austere line over emotional expression.

Kevin Cameron (1921-1945)—Kevin Cameron was a Scottish pilot in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. Before the war, he was a promising pianist, studying with several famous teachers in Europe. He joined the RAF in late 1938. He flew a *Hawker Hurricane* fighter in the Battle of Britain, shooting down five enemy fighters. He himself was shot down over France in 1944 and died in a German prisoner-of-war camp in early 1945.

Jessica Cameron (1960-2012)—An Australian biochemist, Jessica Cameron won the Nobel Prize in 2002 for her research into various vaccinations against retroviruses. She was also an ardent crusader for nuclear disarmament and pressed her government into declaring itself a neutral nation in 2010. She died in an automobile accident in 2012.



Timothy Cameron (2204-2238)—The Cameron family's only convicted murderer was born in St. Vincel, Scotland, and studied to become a colonial planetary engineer at the University of Glasgow. He left Terra in 2227 and settled down on Beta Colony, Murphrid, where he was in charge of managing the colony's meager plant and water resources.

In 2229, his wife, Bonnie DeKirk, gave birth to Mitchell Cameron. A year later, Timothy Cameron found out that the child's real father was Lymond Du Nong, a close family friend. Lymond Du Nong was found dead of pistol wounds on March 5, 2230. Timothy Cameron was tried and found guilty for the murder of Du Nong and spent the rest of his life in the Beta Colony Corrections Center. While in prison, he published a series of papers that would later lead to a revolutionary approach to planetary resource management.

—From *Cameron Family Tree*, by Duke Richard Frenser, Caph Genealogical Press, 2567

In the business arena, the Director-General was adamant about upholding morality. He insisted on strengthening government agencies that policed business and economic activity. He also encouraged the development of nontraditional economic systems on some worlds. Though this upset a few economic neanderthals, alternative economic systems such as socialism proved more appropriate than cutthroat capitalism on certain of the Hegemony's poorer planets.

THE NEW NOBILITY

The reason I have created the Peers List is not to reward people who I feel are somehow "superior" to the rest. Nor will I grant titles to people who follow some sort of approved religion, or who are of a "proper" race or lifestyle, or who blindly support my rule. To do so would surely spell ruin for the Hegemony. No, the reason I have reintroduced the concept of nobility is to reward people who have done more than what was expected of them, and have thus advanced all mankind's fortunes. It is a reward for action, not attributes.

—From a speech by Director-General Michael Cameron before the Terran Congress, January 1, 2351

In his speech before the assembled houses of the Terran Congress on New Year's Day, 2351, the Lord Protector of the Terran Hegemony dropped a cultural bombshell by announcing the resurrection of the medieval nobility system. The system would include six orders of titles patterned after the old English ranking. They were, in descending order of importance, Duke, Marquess, Earl, Viscount, Baron, and Knight. Each title would allow the holder certain privileges and respect as well as a parcel of land and money as a token of the Hegemony's gratitude. The Director-General announced that the first Peer List would appear in six months.

Why Michael Cameron chose to revive this particular class system is too large a question to resolve here, but a few comments are in order. First, it is important to note that Michael Cameron did not intend these titles to be passed on through inheritance. Right to the title died with the owner. At that time, the family of the deceased nobleman reverted to its former status, keeping only their land and money. Though Michael Cameron's notes later revealed that he had been tempted to allow the transfer of titles to the nearest kin, he decided that it would only "create a new class of snobs, instead of encouraging the worthy to aim high."

Second, one must remember that though titles were not used before the reign of Michael Cameron, a kind of noble class did exist in the Terran Hegemony. Most were rich industrialists, some were people with brilliant minds, and others were popular entertainers. Michael Cameron established a formal code of nobility that recognized the special accomplishments of others.

Some people were instantly opposed to the new nobility, claiming that Michael Cameron wanted to entrench his own family into the Director-Generalship. Others felt that the nobility system would reintroduce all the medieval evils, no matter what were Michael Cameron's high ideals. Still others believed that the system would lead to distortions in social development, and that the Hegemony should be moving toward a classless society, not a hierarchical one. Most just decided to wait and see who became the first noble.

Government officials were just as noncommittal, though upper-level bureaucrats secretly rubbed their hands together in anticipation of the money, land, and prestige they hoped to acquire. Each, of course, was certain that he was a candidate for peerage, as did the upper-level members of the HAF.



When Cameron announced his Peer List, the upper echelons were disappointed, but the common citizens were pleased. The Director-General read the names of the 31 men and women he considered worthy of titles. Eighteen had no involvement with either the government or the military, and not one was related to the Director-General.

Some of the first nobles are worth mentioning. Yumiko Sakuma was a famed novelist from an obscure village on Thorin and was Michael Cameron's favorite author. She had spent much of her life writing about frontier life and collecting stories about the various Exoduses. Besides the title of "Countess of the Arts," the Director-General offered her a major island on Thorin and a luxurious mansion. Sakuma refused graciously but regretfully.

Another of the first nobles was Professor Gregory Atlas, the team leader of a top-secret HRAD research project at the University of Zimbabwe. Though the nature of Atlas's work was not revealed when he received his title, it was later learned that he was responsible for refining and redesigning the technology of myomer bundles. He would eventually design one of the first WorkMechs, and his work became the basis for BattleMechs.

LADY MARGARET CAMERON

Lord Michael Cameron served as Director-General for 27 years before retiring in 2367. By the end of his reign, the Hegemony had enjoyed 15 years of unparalleled economic prosperity and political stability and regained its importance as the center of Humanity. The new nobility was a success, for many of the new nobles had gone on to accomplish even greater deeds after becoming titled.

Few will argue that Michael Cameron was a far-seeing and competent leader. It is not surprising that he would seek to strengthen the position of his heirs, which he did in the same year that the nobility system was created. Because of his popularity, there was little opposition to Cameron's Edict of 2351. In one stroke, he created the foundations of a ruling dynasty by making it legal for his daughters to retain the Cameron name after marriage. This meant that a female successor would come to power as a Cameron and also that her offspring would legally bear the name of the maternal line instead of the father's surname.

When Michael Cameron decided to retire in his later years, Lady Margaret Cameron, Michael's daughter, was the obvious choice to carry on his policies. Forty-two years old and a ten-year veteran of the HAF Navy, Margaret was almost as brilliant as her father. She was equally industrious and as intense, but more outgoing. Though Michael Cameron had been admired and respected, his seriousness always made him seem somewhat aloof. Lady Margaret, on the other hand, had grown up in the spotlight and enjoyed it.

In 2347, Lady Margaret married Alexander Ellis, a wealthy industrialist. They had three children: Raymond, Brian, and Judith. Though she retired from the Navy to raise her children, she remained active in the Hegemony government. It took only one hour for the High Councilors to agree to submit her name to the public. A month later, Lady Margaret Cameron was sworn in as the Hegemony's third Director-General.

Within the first year of her rule, Margaret presented a controversial bill to the government. The Military Recruitment and Preparedness Bill called for every adult to be drafted into the HAF as a member of his or her homeworld's militia. Every citizen would serve one month a year in military maneuvers until the age of 55. On worlds bordering other realms, each citizen would be issued a rifle to keep at home. This system would not only triple the size of the HAF, but also free professional soldiers for extra-potent units.

Oddly enough, the loudest protests against the bill were from high-ranking military and business leaders. The HAF complained that this new system would dilute, rather than strengthen, the military. They feared that the new militia units would be weak and thus a liability in battle. The business sector complained about losing a month's work from their employees, nor did they like the implication that they must support the inevitable massive buildup in equipment.

As for the public, those who objected morally could serve in nonviolent ways, or even be excused entirely if their soul demanded it. Most average citizens, though a bit fearful about the future, accepted their military duty to the state and appreciated the chance to earn extra money.

Director Margaret threatened to bypass the Terran Congress and go directly to the people to pass her military reforms. Fearing defeat and a political rift, the Congress relented and passed the Military Recruitment and Preparedness Bill.

The HAF, meanwhile, continued to push the limits of military technology. A new series of warships, the *Aegis* Class cruisers, were built during Director Margaret's reign. These ships were small, yet packed more firepower than previous cruisers and battlecruisers. The HAF also began to experiment with what it



23

called "Drop Pallets," bowl-shaped heat shields in which the tank sat while a computer within the pallet performed delicate maneuvering procedures with a series of jets. Though the first few attempts, using deadweights, were rousing failures, the HAF continued.

Lady Margaret Cameron also continued her father's interest in the sciences. The first commercial WorkMechs were produced during her administration, as well as the development of cheaper refinery technology for efficiently extracting metals from rock. This continued technological boom stimulated the economy and raised the standard of living in the Hegemony.

In fact, this technological acceleration forced the government to consider limiting the spread of new inventions to other realms. In her heart, the Director believed that sharing the Hegemony's superior technology would honor her father's and James McKenna's desire to see the Hegemony shine as a beacon of Human civilization. As the years passed, however, increasing tensions between the other interstellar governments and the Hegemony forced Director Margaret to agree, in 2380, to military and HRAD demands for legal restrictions on the export of sensitive technology. This policy became known as the Mother Doctrine, and sensitive and secret technologies were specified on an official list.

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF OPERATION MUSCLEBOUND, EXPERIMENT 45-B, DECEMBER 21, 2350

Experiment Summary: Professor Atlas and Team Musclebound—consisting of five section leaders and 14 assistants—are testing a new type of myomer bundle, smaller and requiring less motivating energy than previous models. The new myomer bundle, dubbed "The Schwarzenegger Bicep," was a collection of myomer strings interwoven with a new, electrically soluble nerve circuitry. The team hoped this would solve a problem that had plagued them for the past ten months: the uncoordinated contraction of individual myomer fibers, resulting in uncontrollable and useless twitching.

The myomer bundle, about two meters long and ten centimeters thick, was attached to the test harness, which was little more than a universal gym system using lead weights from a local health spa. The myomer bundle was attached with one end anchored to the concrete floor and the other to the pulley system of the test harness so that, if the contractions succeeded, the strength of the bundle could be measured by how much the bundle could lift.

ATLAS: Is everything all set? Unauthorized personnel out?... Everyone behind the safety barriers?... All right. Good luck, everyone. O.K. Devers, charge the myomer bundle.

DEVERS: Myomer bundle charge at 100 percent.

ATLAS: Trethers, measuring instruments ready?

TRETHERS: Yes, sir.

ATLAS: Fine. Iona, turn on the cameras. Countdown from five, four, three, two, one, discharge!

[Professor Atlas pushed the discharge switch. Immediately, all the potential energy stored in the myomer bundle became one swift and powerful contraction as the electric current traveled through it. The new myomer bundle composed of "Schwarzenegger's Bicep" contracted into a mass one-tenth its original size. It ripped the thick metal tubing of the test harness to shreds, causing ten-kilogram lead weights to be tossed into the air like confetti. Some of the scientists had to run for their lives to avoid the falling weights.]

ATLAS: My God. Am I hallucinating?

TRETHERS: Professor, the contraction was off the scale of my instruments!

ATLAS: Which means what?

TRETHERS: A pull of over one metric ton.

ATLAS: I think it's time to get rip-snorting drunk, don't you?



MILITARY ODDITIES OF THE HAF

Corncob Cruisers

The *Potemkin* Class cruiser, designed and built by Riga Interstellar Shipyards, may have been the oddest ship ever to appear in the Hegemony Navy. The basic hull was a thick cylinder with major weapon systems on its nose and around the retractable sails and the nozzles of the interplanetary engines; along the sides of the cruiser were 25 DropShip docking rings. *Potemkin* cruisers went into battle carrying 25 DropShips, though the type carried depended upon the particular mission. The old *Dictator* Class vessel, the forerunner of the *Overlord*, was used most frequently.

Potemkin Class cruisers performed well, but the enormous fuel requirements of 25 DropShips made it necessary for at least two fuel tankers to accompany each cruiser into battle, defeating the Cameron doctrine of highly self-reliant vessels. After participating in the liberation of Terra, the last *Potemkin* Class cruiser, the *Riga*, was decommissioned by the Star League Defense Forces in 2781. The *Riga* was recommissioned by General Kerensky in 2784, and eventually participated in the Exodus of the Regular Army.

Goony-Bird

In 2390, Johnson-Aldis Weaponries announced the production of a combat vehicle that would revolutionize the battlefield. Dubbed the *Thorizer*, after the Thorin flying predator, it was a cross between a large hovercraft and a jet fighter. The *Thorizer* spent most of its time on its hovercraft skirts, but hidden wings as well as concealed nozzles to provide jet propulsion would emerge if necessary. The *Thorizer* would then speed along the ground, gradually forcing more and more of its engine's exhaust through the jet nozzles and away from its hovercraft skirts as the wings lifted it off the ground.

As with most hybrid weapons, the *Thorizer* could not perform up to the standards of either of its parents. It was a poor hovercraft because it had no armor, and it was a poor fighter that could fly at only half the speed of its slowest airborne rival. The *Thorizer*, quickly dubbed the "Goony Bird" by its crews, lasted only 20 years, mostly in militia units.



24

The Wrong-Way Pack

The Starbird EVCMP (Extra-Vehicular Combat Maneuvering Pack), manufactured by the Park-Nieldson Propulsion Systems company of Altair, tested far beyond the expectations of all observers. The Starbird Flight Pack was to be worn by marine infantrymen for maneuvering between spaceships during boarding and search-and-seizure operations. That meant it had to be lightweight, tough, reliable, and equipped with advanced computer and navigation equipment. Because the Starbird met all these requirements, it is not surprising that, in 2399, the Marine Corps ordered more than a hundred thousand.

A few months later, the Hegemony Marine Corps began to receive numerous reports of soldiers directing that the flight pack go one way and having it suddenly accelerate in the other direction. At first, the Marine Corps ignored the reports, blaming the flight pack's erratic performance on inexperienced soldiers. As the number of incidents increased with time, reports reached the ears of the civilian government, which began to investigate. After much public pressure, the Marine Corps finally grounded all Starbird Flight Packs and began its own investigation.

The root of the problem was that the computer chips in the command maneuver center were poorly designed and constructed, leaving them extremely sensitive to overheating. Instead of completely failing, however, the chips would create what computer experts call "a heat-induced command flip-flop." The chips would interpret any command entered by the operator in its exact opposite form. It took trillions of dollars and nine months of redesign effort to get the Starbird Flight Packs back into active service in the Hegemony Marine Corps.

—From ComStar Research Bulletin No. 61283217, "Weapons Research in the Star League Era"



THE AGE OF WAR

RAYMOND CAMERON

In February 2380, Margaret Cameron was diagnosed as having cervical cancer. Though the disease went into remission two years later, she remained too feeble to properly rule the Hegemony government. In March 2382, she announced her retirement, suggesting her son Raymond Cameron as a replacement.

Though only 34 years old, Lord Raymond Cameron was not in particularly good health, either. A decade earlier, as a young pilot, he had been in a jet fighter accident that almost killed him. The accident left his face horribly scarred and he also suffered other injuries that continued to affect his health. Raymond was also sterile, but the High Council nevertheless nominated him and the public elected him as the fourth Director-General.

Raymond Cameron's wife was Katherine McQuiston, whose family had formed the Federation of Skye and were among the founders of the Lyrans Commonwealth. Up till now, relations between the Hegemony and the heavily industrial Federation of Skye had been cool because of the Mother Doctrine restricting the Hegemony from sharing technology. Businessmen on both sides of the issue hoped that Lord Raymond's accession would herald more profitable relations between the two realms.

It was not to be. Director-General Raymond was even more protective and attentive of Hegemony trade secrets than of his wife. Feeling neglected, Katherine began a romantic liaison with Raymond's brother, Lord Brian. Meanwhile, Raymond was further tightening restrictions on the list of secret technology.

In 2385, the planet Bryant voted that Director Raymond should rescind or modify the laws requiring the induction of every able-bodied man and woman into the HAF. In reply, Raymond cut off all government funds to Bryant and threatened military action if the people did not withdraw their demand. The Bryants had no choice but to reverse their previous request.

Heavy-handed actions such as this earned Director Raymond the animosity of the entire Hegemony. For the next two years, both the Congress and the public became increasingly hostile. No longer able to pass the laws he wanted, Raymond Cameron began issuing "Emergency" and "Temporary" Directives.

In late 2387, Katherine McQuiston became pregnant, creating a monumental scandal and sending Director Raymond into a rage. Brian Cameron was arrested. The entire realm braced itself for a political crisis as Raymond publicly charged his brother with treason, an offense punishable by death.

In an emergency meeting two days before the trial, the High Council attempted to change the Director's mind. They were unsuccessful. Shortly afterward, Raymond Cameron was found dead in the cloakroom of the Halls of Justice.

BRIAN CAMERON

The coroner's reports showed conclusively that Raymond Cameron had died of a coronary, brought on by medication he was taking. Yet rumors of assassination spread throughout the Hegemony, creating a split among the people. Many wanted all charges dropped against Lord Brian so that he could accede to the Director-Generalship. Others argued that even if Brian were innocent of murder, he was an adulterer and therefore unfit for the office of Director-General. When Katherine McQuiston gave birth to Brian's son, whom she named Richard, the scandal and debate rose to an even higher pitch.



It was up to the High Council to restore sanity. As there were no other Cameron relatives of sufficient skill to nominate, the Council decided to swear in Mitchell DuKirl, President of the Terran Congress and nephew of the late Sonya DuKirl, as Director-General Pro Tem. With someone at the helm of state, the High Councilors were free to prosecute the trial of Brian Cameron. This controversial

action was the only way the Councilors could imagine ending the situation without giving the impression of a coverup. For two months, they attempted to piece together a case against Lord Brian from the rambling diaries of the late Director. Then they presented their evidence to the Supreme Court. As expected, the Court threw out the case, and the High Councilors proceeded to publish everything they had found.

Their scheme was successful. When confronted with the insanely jealous words of Raymond Cameron, even the most suspicious person had to admit that Brian Cameron's greatest crime was indiscretion. In September 2388, the High Councilors nominated Brian as Director-General of the Terran Hegemony. Though he won by only a slim majority, Brian Cameron became the new leader.

During his 15 years in office, Director-General Brian Cameron made two important contributions to the Hegemony, the first immediately after his accession. During his mother's reign, he had served as Ambassador to the Draconis Combine. Even though the Kurita realm was in a relatively peaceful period under the lukewarm rule of Nihongi Kurita, Brian could not abide their martial philosophy. He knew that once the gentle Nihongi was gone, the belligerent Kurita blood would reassert itself. In preparation for renewed future tensions between the Hegemony and the Combine, Director Brian announced a major boost in military revenues in 2391.

Much of the new money would go toward the creation of huge military complexes on all worlds bordering the Draconis Combine. These complexes, which became known as Castles Brian, were built not to prevent an enemy from landing on a world, but from actually controlling it. Many of the Castles Brian were constructed in mountains, underground, and even beneath seas. Most had tunnels radiating from a central complex so that enemy attacks could be launched from various locations. The expense was enormous, but no one even questioned Director Brian's decision. Events in the Inner Sphere made it all too obvious that the backbreaking effort was prudent.

Lord Brian's second major contribution was the introduction of the Succession Bill of 2392. This bill set forth regulations by which the High Council could choose "the correct candidate for the Directorship," should a Director die without naming a successor. Though couched in legal finery, the bill in effect introduced hereditary succession. The bill's wording technically allowed for election of a candidate from outside the Cameron family, but the rest of the provisions made that almost impossible.

In 2399, Brian Cameron married Katherine McQuiston and legally claimed Richard Cameron, then eleven years old, as his son.

JUDITH CAMERON

In 2403, Lord Brian Cameron went to Elbar, a world that the Hegemony had recently acquired through a joint-ownership arrangement with the Federated Suns. The planet was once an arid and inhospitable wasteland that the Federated Suns could do little to transform. When the Hegemony provided assistance in the form of a water purification plant the Elbarians were able to build a small city surrounded by farms and ranches. Lord Brian had spent some of the best years of his life on a relative's farm on Elbar. During most of his visit in 2403, he rekindled fond memories by touring the new farms and ranches.

Just before he arrived at a small cattle ranch, some bored young men had begun teasing the ranch's prize bull. By the time the Director-General's entourage of cars and hovercraft arrived, the bull was enraged. As Cameron and his staff passed, the animal smashed through the wooden bars of its corral as though they were twigs. Before the Director-General's guards could react, the bull charged directly for Lord Brian, slamming into him with incredible force, and goring him severely. One of the guards shot the bull, but it was too late.

While everyone crowded around, Lord Brian, who was conscious and in pain, called the ranch owner to him. Fearful of being blamed for the Director-General's injuries, the man timorously approached. When Lord Brian asked if the bull had been important, the rancher admitted that it was his only bull and that his fortunes depended on the animal. Though Lord Brian was obviously in pain, he told his staff pay the rancher for the bull. When they asked why, the Director said that an animal cannot be blamed for its nature, nor should a rancher be punished for a bull with remarkable aim. He wanted both himself and the bull to be remembered. Brian Cameron died before he could be moved to a place of care.

The ranch owner took Lord Brian's remark to heart. He had the bull's head mounted and the horns, still smeared with the blood of Lord Brian, coated with plastic resin. By way of apology, he sent the mounted head to the Camerons on Terra. The family accepted the gesture and had the bull's head placed high on a wall in the main ballroom of Cameron Castle, just outside Glasgow, Scotland.



26

Lady Judith Cameron, younger sister to Brian, wasted little time in informing the High Council that she was the only rightful candidate for the Director-Generalship. Dismayed by such eagerness so soon after her brother's death, the High Councilors resisted passing her name on to the public.

Lady Judith was the youngest of Margaret Cameron's three children. Because Margaret had assumed that one of her sons would continue the Cameron dynasty, Judith had not been trained and molded to be a future ruler of the Hegemony. During a brief career in the HAF, she had shown a remarkable lack

of Cameron brilliance and an almost violent disregard for authority.

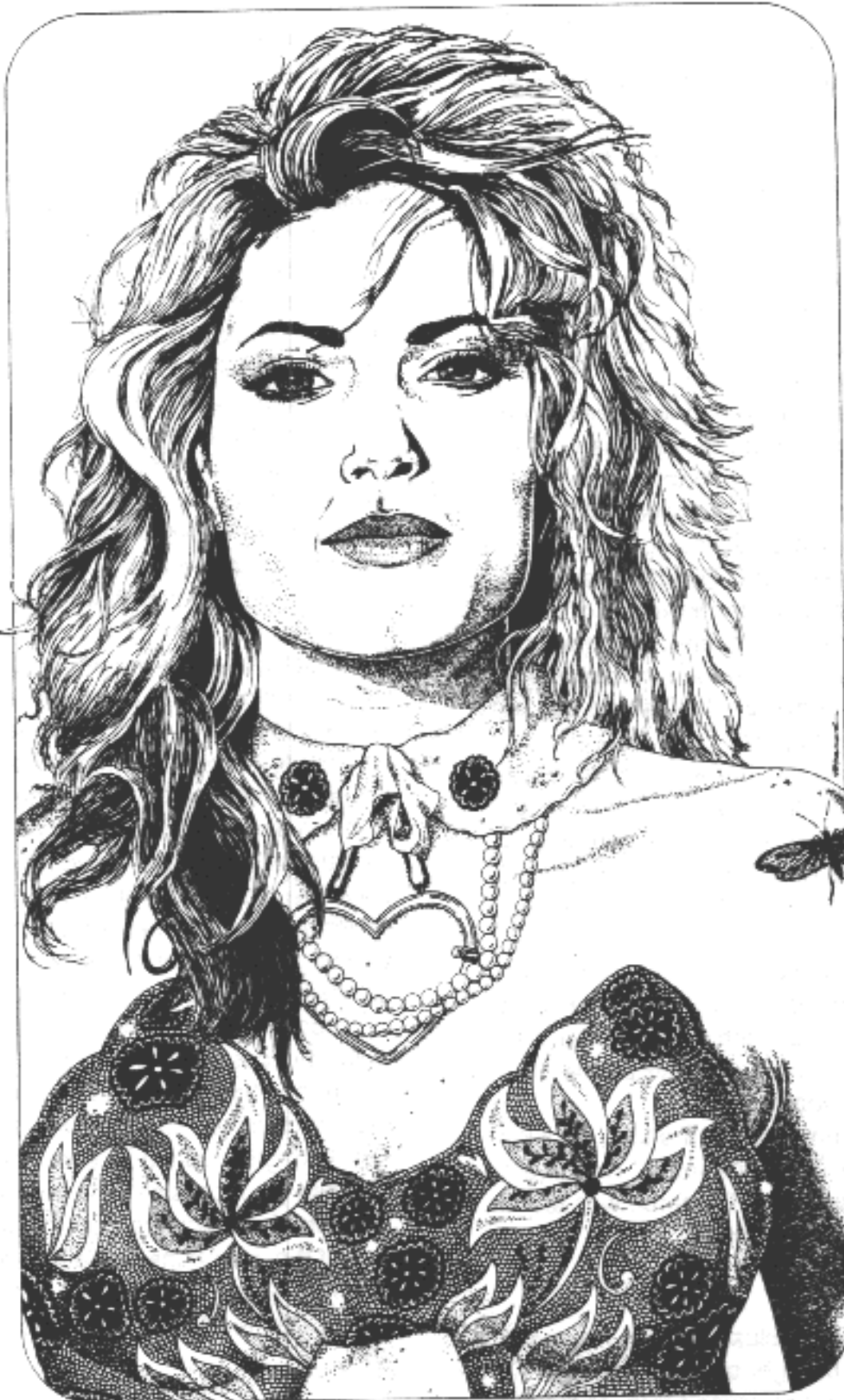
Based on her record, the High Council decided to search for another candidate. When no other likely prospect emerged, they reluctantly nominated Lady Judith as the next Director-General two months after her brother's death. The public showed their faith in Judith Cameron by confirming her appointment as the sixth Director-General.

Judith surprised many in government by continuing her brother's policy of military build-up. She even requested that the Castles Brian, the series of fortresses built on Hegemony worlds facing the Draconis Combine, be built on worlds bordering the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation.

The Age of War had just begun when Lady Judith assumed control over the Terran Hegemony. Beginning with the clash of forces of Houses Marik and Liao over control of the Andurien star system in 2398, that era was one of almost unrelenting violence, with every major realm fighting for control of key border worlds. For the Terran Hegemony, located smack in the middle of all the fighting, this was a period of considerable tension. The HAF might be able to defend

itself against one enemy, but it would not stand a chance against two or more realms.

It was for this reason that Judith Cameron was so keen on expanding the construction of Castles Brian to border worlds along the Free Worlds League and Capellan Confederation. She felt that those two states, along with the ever-threatening Draconis Combine, were most likely to turn their avaricious sights on the Hegemony.



Director Judith did not fear House Marsden (which would become House Steiner upon the death of Alstair Marsden and the accession of his wife in 2408). The ties between the Hegemony and the Lyran Commonwealth had always been close, and her brother's marriage to one of the Commonwealth's famous McQuistons had made the bond even stronger. Relations were so good that the Hegemony and the Commonwealth, through the system of the joint-ownership of worlds, were carrying out extensive economic and industrial development of many marginal worlds in one another's realms.

Relations between the Terran Hegemony and the Federated Suns were also good, with similar joint-ownership agreements for several worlds, most recently Cartago. The Federated Suns had by now come under the tyranny of Etien, Edward, and Edmund Davion, whose ineptitude and callousness were threatening to tear apart the Federated Suns. Judith, who wanted to maintain peaceful relations with House Davion, consoled herself with the thought that if the Federated Suns should suddenly turn on the Hegemony, it would be a short-term war. The people of House Davion were already showing signs of rebellion against the tyrants.

The HAF saw considerable military action during the Age of War. The Draconis Combine, the Free Worlds League, and the Capellan Confederation continually tested the Hegemony's strength with "accidental" raids and "unintentional" strikes, but it was not until 2407 that the HAF saw major action. In that year, the Draconis Combine launched a full-scale offensive against the Commonwealth. Though the Combine forces appeared to be heading for the Commonwealth capital of Arcturus, the offensive suddenly veered away and began to force its way through the Federation of Skye.

When the Combine's intentions became clear, Alstair Marsden, Archon of the Commonwealth, asked Lady Judith for help, but she refused to commit her troops to a Commonwealth offensive against the Combine. Instead, she agreed to send HAF forces to worlds jointly owned by the Commonwealth and the Hegemony to assume complete defensive duties on those worlds. Her decision, which meant the shipping of a dozen divisions to such worlds as Blue Diamond, Lyons, and Nusakan, freed Commonwealth units to participate in offensive actions against the Draconis Combine.

The Hegemony Armed Forces faced the Draconis Combine Mustered Soldiery in only one major battle during this time. In 2408, the Third Assault Armored Division faced an equivalent number of Kurita regiments on the planet Lyons. In this battle, the Hegemony used its superior warships in a coordinated space-ground defense to achieve a major victory. The battle was very costly in terms of casualties, however.

On the opposite side of the Hegemony, the HAF turned back the forces of the Capellan Confederation, who attempted to take Terra Firma in 2409. In that battle, Hegemony ground forces, led by the famed Black Charger Tank Division, stood their ground against a superior number of Capellans and despite the presence of enemy naval support. The Black Chargers held the planet for two months before being forced to withdraw. It was not long before a major Hegemony relief force, complete with warships, arrived to retake the planet, however. The Chancellor of the Capellan Confederation, Aleisha Liao, eventually offered to make reparations for the invasion, but the bitterness and violence of this costly battle had created a deep rift between the two governments.



JOINT-OWNERSHIP OF WORLDS

Late in the 24th century, the Camerons realized that the limited number of worlds in the Terran Hegemony would eventually mean shortages of raw materials, the breakdown of industry, and collapse of the economy. Going to war to obtain new resources was ruled out almost immediately, however. Surrounded as it was, the Hegemony was not sufficiently strong to embark on conquest. Nor could it simply enter into a treaty agreement with one of the surrounding realms, for any such pact would most certainly require the Hegemony to share its superior technology. The Camerons had to find another way besides war to preserve their realm's technological lead and to obtain raw resources.

The answer came from David Ocrassa, a young planetary engineer assigned by Director-General Margaret Cameron to study the problem. He proposed that the Hegemony negotiate agreements with neighboring Houses to make previously uninhabitable worlds habitable. In return, the Hegemony would own half of the planet's mineral resources and have some representation in the planet's government. Though this arrangement would result in the loss of some closely guarded technology, the benefits outweighed the disadvantages.

When Hegemony leaders proposed joint-ownership ventures to the Lyran Commonwealth and the Federated Suns, they eagerly accepted. By the beginning of the 25th century, the Hegemony had transformed 20 such marginal worlds. As relations between realms improved over time, the Draconis Combine, the Free Worlds League, and the Capellan Confederation eventually made similar arrangements with the Hegemony. By the next century, the Hegemony was joint owner of more than 100 planets in the Inner Sphere.

—From *Resource Management and Exploitation in the Terran Hegemony*, by Precentor Nicholas Ferhill, ComStar Press, 2899

CIVILIZED WARFARE

Civilian deaths estimated at about a hundred thousand. Civilian casualties estimated about three times that. The number of dead is only a rough estimate because the threat of disease from the decomposing bodies forces us to bury the dead as quickly as humanly possible.

—Transmission by a member of the Interstellar Relief Force concerning genocide in the Tintavel system in November, 2412

News of the incomprehensible butchery that occurred on the planet Tintavel spread like a shock wave throughout the Inner Sphere. Even those responsible for the atrocities would later express regret and remorse for their actions. Despite this, everyone knew that the atrocities on Tintavel had begun as just another battle. Though it was like the battles being fought on countless worlds at that very moment, this one had been carried to extremes.

The revulsion that Chancellor Aleisha Liao, leader of the Capellan Confederation, felt for this episode transformed her from being just another trigger-happy leader into a person deeply committed to preventing future atrocities. Aleisha also had her realm's best interests at heart. At that time, the Capellan Confederation had only a tenuous industrial base, which was another good reason for finding a way to protect her realm's resources, industries, and trained personnel from the destruction of war.



After months of reflection and counsel with the best minds of her realm, Chancellor Aleisha drew up an 80-page document describing conditions for "civilized warfare." The plan encouraged battles based more on maneuvering and less on the use of destructive force—battles in a planet's more desolate sections and away from population centers. These provisions would also make warfare less expensive, which would be a relief to all the parties, for every state's supply situation was beginning to degenerate.

Chancellor Aleisha dispatched copies of her work to the leaders of all the warring realms, but expected only a lukewarm response. Instead, most rulers immediately communicated their wholehearted agreement. Only the twin despots of the Federated Suns, Edmund and Edward Davion, scorned the plan. So encouraged was Aleisha Liao that she immediately suggested a summit meeting on the Capellan world of Ares to further discuss and officially sign the Ares Convention.



[EDITOR'S NOTE: Many books place the signing of the Ares Convention on the planet New Olympia. This is incorrect. The Ares Convention was signed in the Grand Hall in the city of New Olympia on Ares. The planet New Olympia is in the Free Worlds League and not the Capellan Confederation.]

Many leaders balked at this latter proposal. Though all wished to discuss Aleisha's ideas, few were bold enough to venture so far into a rival state without adequate protection. Threatened with the collapse of her initiative, Chancellor Aleisha turned to Director-General Judith Cameron for help. She asked the leader of the Hegemony to provide naval escort and troops to safeguard the lives of the visiting dignitaries. The Chancellor believed that guards from the Hegemony, the cradle of mankind, would be the perfect symbol of the work the summit was called to do.

The people of the Hegemony were split in their views. Many still deeply resented the Capellans' attempt to take the Hegemony world of Terra Firma and wanted little to do with Chancellor Aleisha. Director Judith agreed to Chancellor Aleisha's request, however, believing that Aleisha's war proposals would be to the Hegemony's advantage and that to provide escorts and guards for the dignitaries would bolster the Hegemony's image. Thus were ten separate flotillas of Hegemony warships, hastily cleaned and painted white for the occasion, dispatched to transport the leaders of the great states to Ares. Members of the Hegemony's Marine Corps protected these heads of state.

Once the Ares meeting was underway, the leaders of the six Inner Sphere realms dominated the negotiations, which dashed any hope for unanimous agreement. Because the six Inner Sphere states were doing most of the fighting and most of the suffering in the wars, they thought they should do most of the talking. Unfortunately, they could not agree. Chancellor Aleisha had the support of Director-General Judith Cameron and Archon Katherine Steiner of the Lyran Commonwealth. On the other side were Combine Coordinator Robert Kurita and Captain-General Peter Marik of the Free Worlds League, who both believed that the Ares rules "would transform warfare into a kind of pavane better suited to ballerinas than to soldiers." Simon Davion, representing the Federated Suns for his cousin Edmund, was undecided.

Everyone was surprised when the Periphery outworlds also came out against the Ares Conventions, calling them a shabby Inner Sphere trick to force their proud people to lay down their arms. Despite the fact that the Conventions did not technically need majority approval, Chancellor Aleisha realized that if one major leader refused to sign, the others would do the same.

Both Simon Davion and Director Judith had remained relatively quiet during the debate, voicing only occasional comments. Now the Chancellor of the Confederation focused her attention on them. It is a testament to her skill that she managed to win Simon Davion's support after he had privately decided to vote against the Conventions. With the announcement of the Federated Suns' support, the Free Worlds League and the Draconis Combine also agreed to sign the new rules of war. They realized that if they did not, the other three Inner Sphere realms could unite against them.

Only two of the Periphery realms would sign the accords. For the other two, the Age of War would be business as usual. On June 13, 2412, the leaders of the eight signing states appeared on the balcony of the Grand Hall before a throng of cheering citizens. None was more pleased than Aleisha Liao, who accomplished what no one had thought possible.

Though hailed as an act of peace, the Ares Conventions made war legal. It was not long before every state had embarked on even more campaigns, adhering to the letter of the Conventions but totally missing the intention.

RICHARD CAMERON

Richard Cameron, the illicit child of Lord Brian and Lady Katherine McQuiston, came to rule the Hegemony when Judith Cameron stepped down in 2419. At the time of his aunt's retirement, Richard was a naval officer in command of the *Lola Class* destroyer *Beatrice*. His nomination by the High Council and election by the Hegemony public took place without difficulty.

Lord Richard is best remembered for his seizure of the Kentares system from the Federated Suns in 2431. Two decades earlier, relations between the two realms began to deteriorate when the Hegemony claimed that the Federated Suns had violated their joint-ownership agreement for the planet Cartago. In response, citizens of the planet, most loyal to the Federated Suns, alleged that the oxygen-generating factories were stripping oxygen from the air instead of adding to it in retaliation for recent economic sanctions taken by the planet's government. Lives were lost in the clashes between the two groups, and the Hegemony used this incident to take the planet permanently under its control. The Federated Suns attempted to retake Cartago a month later, but the HAF was too strong. After that, House Davion made



29

several more military and political attempts to win back Cartago, and the tensions increased with each action.

Director-General Richard Cameron considered Kentares to be an ideal site for a spearpoint thrust into the Federated Suns, and so decided to take that world. Though this was against the counsel of his advisors, he ordered the HAF to take that world in early 2431. The fighting lasted for six months, a long series of feints and maneuvering typical of warfare under the Ares Conventions. Though the HAF had less combat experience than the Federated Suns forces, its troops proved to be skilled at this near bloodless sport and finally pushed the Davion forces off Kentares.

After the boost this victory gave to the Director-General's popularity, he profited from the situation by revising the nomination laws in 2432. The law now stated that the Director-General had the right to choose his or her successors without consulting anyone. This further weakened the semi-democracy envisioned by James McKenna and moved the Hegemony toward constitutional monarchy. Though other states had long since adopted the idea of a ruling nobility, there was still opposition within the Hegemony.

CASTLE BRIAN FORTRESSES

"Well, cadets, the topic for today's discussion is defensive fortifications, namely the Hegemony's Castles Brian. First, who can tell me how many there are? Cadet Jackson?"

"As of last year, there were more than 120 Castle Brians. The six on the world of Lambrecht represent the most on any single planet."

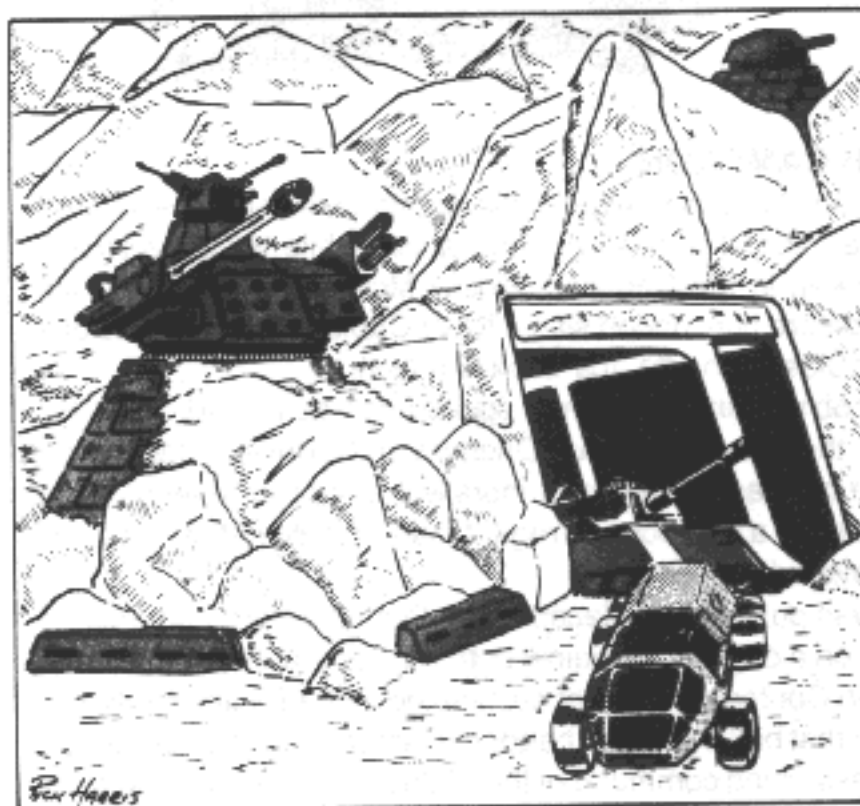
"Very good, Cadet Jackson. Now, who can tell me the average firepower and unit strength of a Castle Brian. Cadet Ivey?"

"Each Castle Brian has a minimum of 20 heavily armed turrets carrying an assortment of weapons and missiles. In addition to the 20 heavy turrets, there are at least 50 smaller turrets and 100 smaller antipersonnel bunkers. Each castle has an average of ten levels and enough garage space to house a full tank regiment, which could exit from any one of at least five separate and hidden exits. In addition to these active fortifications is the passive strength of the fortress itself, which is usually built deep inside a mountain and is virtually impregnable to anything but a full-scale nuclear blast."

"Excellent. Now for the big question. What is the purpose of a Castle Brian? Cadet Green?"

"To prevent the invasion and takeover of a Hegemony planet?"

"Absolutely incorrect. It has always been a failing of strategists to believe that a fortress protects and prevents the surrounding land from being taken over by an enemy. A fortress could only do that if it was built completely around the countryside it was to protect. Just look at what a mess the Maginot Line caused the French. They thought that building a huge network of fortresses would keep the Germans out. Trouble was, they were so confident of their Line that they didn't even bother to see it finished to the Atlantic coast. When the Germans wanted to invade France, all they had to do was run around the northern end of the Maginot Line into France. The French were so sure of their fortifications that they hadn't even bothered to design Maginot Line turrets to swivel around and fire into France. No, Castles Brian aren't meant to protect anything but themselves. Cadet Gulliam?"



"A Castle Brian is meant to be permanent hindrance against an enemy taking a planet."

"Can you expand on that thought?"

"Castles Brian, with their stockpile of weapons, food, and men, represent a permanent threat to any enemy attempting to seize control of the planet. Because more than one Castle Brian is on most border worlds, they represent a major hidden force that can attack the enemy almost at will. If an enemy really wanted to take a Hegemony world protected by Castles Brian, it would have to do so with a huge force of men and equipment and would have to remain on that planet for a very long time. It is a price most enemies are not willing to pay."

"Excellent, Cadet Gulliam. It's good to see that someone studied the material."

—Mars Military Academy, 2423



30

After the attempt on his life, Lord Jacob tended to be less strident and aggressive. He even relented in his attitude toward the lower classes with humanitarian acts such as the establishment of the Cameron Mercy Hospitals and Cameron Shelters for the Poor.

Though his personality was not the most winning, Director Jacob would be fondly remembered by the HAF for presiding at the birth of the BattleMech. Though research had been going on for decades, it was Lord Jacob who realized that the 'Mech could become the dominant weapon of war. After the first successful combat test of a prototype in February 2439, he made sure that production of BattleMechs became the government's number-one priority. For several years running, he devoted a significant portion of the realm's budget to construction of BattleMech factories on Hegemony and jointly owned worlds.

In 2443, a lance of BattleMechs from the 801st Heavy Armored Regiment met a company of Kurita tanks on Styx. Lord Kurita, seeking to exploit any weakness in the Hegemony's defenses, sent a heavily armed force to "test the Hegemony's resolve." The four 'Mechs easily trampled the entire company of Kurita tanks, leaving one to scurry back to its DropShip. It was not long before Lord Kurita received news of this fearsome new weapon in the Hegemony's arsenal.

In 2461, Combine commandos stole BattleMech plans from the Lyrans (who had themselves stolen plans from the Hegemony in 2455). In reaction, Lord Jacob accelerated plans to maintain and widen his military's technological edge. To accomplish this, the Hegemony sacrificed other programs, including those for naval warships. Those ships, which had once been the pride of the military, went a whole year without regular maintenance.

THE DECADENT CAMERONS

When Director-General Jacob died of a stroke in 2461, he left behind a regime that was the strongest military power in the Inner Sphere. This was due especially to the newest weapon in the Hegemony arsenal, the fearsome BattleMech. Yet Jacob had almost brought the economy to a grinding halt to build his 'Mech force because so many industrial forces had to be siphoned away from the civilian economy. As a result, the public now faced shortages of basic goods, a situation that had not occurred since the time of the old Alliance. At the time of Jacob's death, additional woes such as inflation and extended work days had stirred up the people's anger toward the government.

Jacob's son Theodore was his father's chosen successor. Because of his experience as an HAF officer, the uneasy public elected him as their ninth Director-General, hoping the new leader would prove more responsive to their needs. However, more than 25 percent of the Hegemony's voting population showed their distrust of the Camerons by voting against Theodore.

Instead, Theodore Cameron proved to be a half-hearted ruler. On certain issues, such as the passage of a restructured tax bill and the continuation of the HAF's buildup, he was very decisive. On other pressing issues, he waffled and wavered.

Lord Theodore also had a taste for extravagance and high living. He revived ancient customs such as lavish balls, horse races, grand banquets, and richly ornamented finery. Though it has never been proved, many of Theodore's wild parties were said to rival famous debauches of myth and legend.

What most outraged the public was Theodore's blatant use of Hegemony funds to build or restore palaces. He spent billions of dollars renovating Louis XIV's palace at Versailles for his own use. He also built Castle-by-the-Columbia, the Chicago Palaces, and 20 more on Terra and nearby Hegemony worlds.



JACOB CAMERON

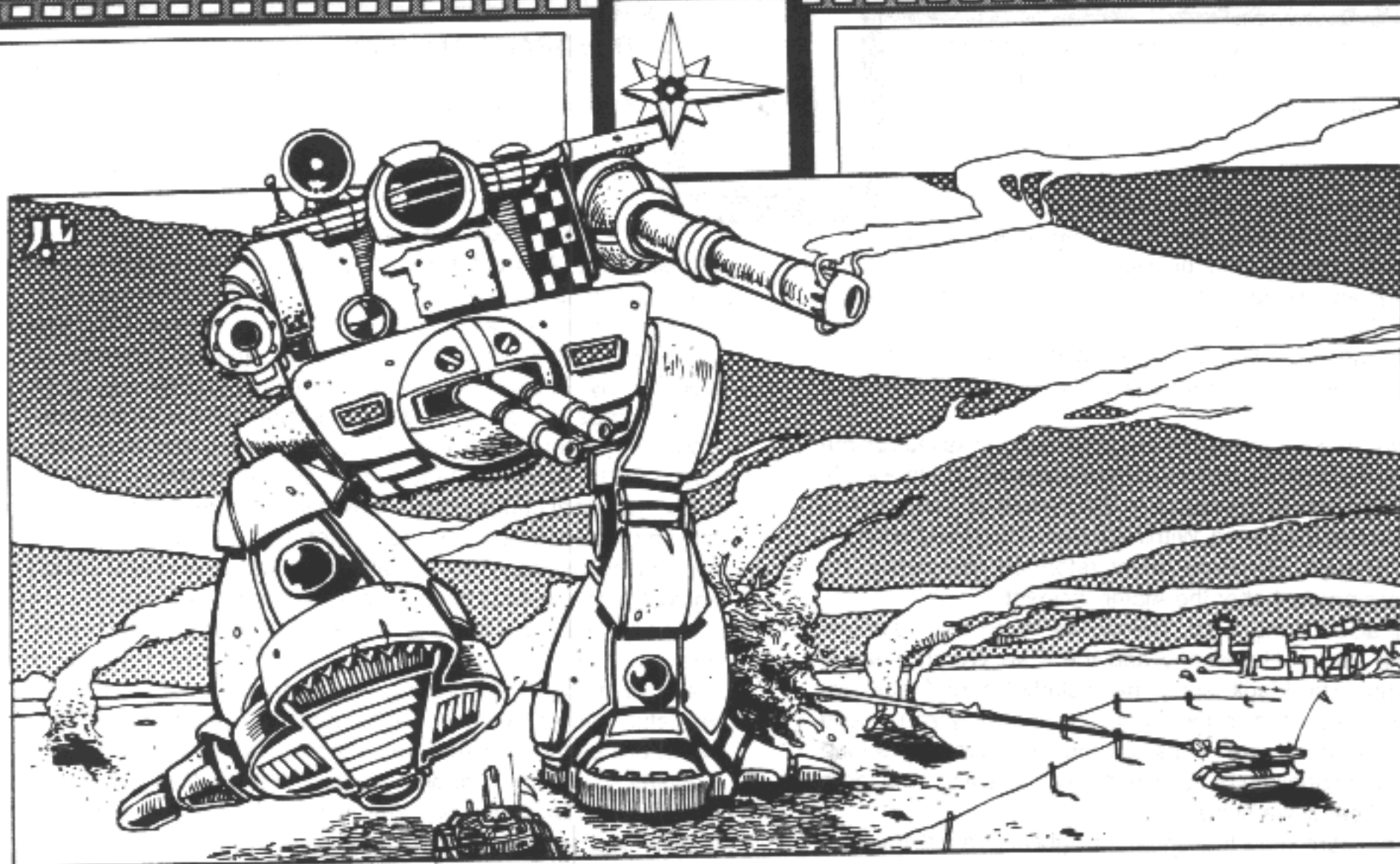
Jacob Cameron became the eighth Director-General after his father died of a massive heart attack while visiting a HRAD facility deep in the Canadian Rocky Mountains on Terra. Like James before him, Jacob was a Navy Captain, in command of a *Vincent Class* corvette, the *Crowned Lion*.

Jacob's doting father had spoiled him as a child, while his mother, the class-conscious Duchess of Northwind, taught the boy that he was socially and morally superior to others. Jacob grew up to be a pompous, arrogant man who alienated all but the most devoted sycophants.

It was pure ego on Jacob's part that he ordered the HAF to embark on a campaign against both the Federated Suns and the Capellan Confederation that culminated in the Battle of Tybalt in 2435. In that battle, Major Theodore Cameron distinguished himself by assuming command of the 132nd Heavy Armor Regiment after its commanding officer was mortally wounded. Though he led the unit to victory, the HAF offensive was a minor success at best, paid for with many Hegemony lives.

This campaign did not endear Lord Jacob to his public, whom he daily harangued for their supposed laziness. Several anti-establishment movements sprang up during this time to fight Jacob and his growing army of posturing minions. Some of these underground movements were no more than groups of disgruntled youths out for a night of rioting; others were bands of nobles and politicians determined to remove Jacob from power.

In February 2448, an unknown assassin slipped poison into Lord Jacob's champagne. Though he became deathly ill, Jacob had not ingested enough poison to kill him. Upon recovering, the Director ordered a blackout on news of the assassination attempt. Meanwhile, agents from the Hegemony Central Intelligence Department undertook the largest manhunt in the realm's history. In charge of the investigation was the young and ambitious High Councilor, Lady Terens Amaris.



FIRST COMBAT RUN

[EDITOR'S NOTE: On February 5, 2439, the first BattleMech received its baptism of fire on a desolate series of steppes near the North American city of Yakima. The BattleMech, a joint effort by more than 20 of the best weapons manufacturers in the Hegemony, was tested against four ancient Merkava heavy tanks specially fitted with remote control devices. The commander of the BattleMech and the first MechWarrior was Colonel Charles Kincaid.

The few people allowed to witness the first combat run of the BattleMech were debriefed. What follows is a transcript of a verbal report filed by Professor Htov Gbarleman, chief research scientist for Karena's Fiber Optics Interstellar, manufacturer of the BattleMech's sensor systems.]

Colonel Kincaid, with his usual impatience, rushed through the pre-test warmup and nearly ripped apart one of his umbilical connections trying to get the test started. As I began to monitor the sensor output, I noticed that the BattleMech's myomer-neural feedback circuits were faithfully echoing Colonel Kincaid's brain wave patterns. It was eerie—almost as though the 'Mech were technically alive and Kincaid was its spark of divinity. The Colonel's howl of sheer pleasure quickly cleared my head of that notion. He pushed the Mackie forward in a trot straight into the test range where four tanks waited among low, rolling hills.

One of the tanks opened fire. Its shot was true and hit the 'Mech just above the right hip. Everyone in the brightly lit bunker seemed to hold his breath as all the readouts fuzzed into snow at the blast interference. No damage! A piece of steel no thicker than my finger, strengthened by radiation casting techniques and impregnated with a sheet of woven diamond fibers, had stopped cold an armor-piercing shell. That same shell would have gone straight through a third of a meter of normal steel.

The tracking cameras watched as the Colonel swiveled his chest to bring his weapons to bear. Twenty years of my life seemed to focus into a single action that would take no more than five seconds. I watched as Colonel Kincaid used his sensors—my sensor—to pick out the tank hidden behind a group of small trees and bushes. He fired both his PPC and autocannon. Both shots were direct hits and the tank erupted into a ball of flame.

A thunderous cheer swept the bunker, while everyone present began to slap me on the back. Instead of feeling pleased at the 'Mech's performance, I felt increasingly sad.

I didn't realize why until Kincaid began to track down the last tank. The tank operator was sitting at his remote control panel next to me. I'll never forget the expression on the young man's face.

Outside, Kincaid had disabled the last tank. As he stood over it, he raised the 'Mech's right foot and brought it crashing down onto the tank. Before the hulk had a chance to explode, Kincaid twisted the 'Mech's foot deeper into the tank's carcass. Next to me, the operator of the tank was trying so hard not to show his fear that tears were streaming down his cheeks.

It hit me then that my colleagues and I had just turned loose one of the most powerful weapons ever conceived by man, but we were celebrating like giddy children. While my companions jumped up and down with glee, that poor boy was trying to hide the fact that in the instant his screens went black, he had wet his pants.

—From Terran Hegemony Document 0324610.04, Hegemony Research and Development Department, Military Weapon Systems Division, ComStar Archives, Terra

By July 2470, the public was fed up enough to stage the first general strike in the history of the Hegemony. It began in the small Terran city of San Antonio, on the North American continent, where Lord Theodore had demolished a local landmark to build a "small Texas ranch" for his use. Incensed, San Antonians organized a complete work stoppage the next day and took to the streets. It did not take long for the demonstration to become a riot. Within hours, similar strikes and demonstrations erupted in neighboring cities. By the next day, the entire continent had shut down. By the end of the third day, Terra was at a total standstill while her people were shouting the slogan, "Remember the Alamo!" in dozens of languages.

Realizing that this could turn into a full-fledged assault on the government, the High Councilors apparently took Theodore aside and persuaded him to apologize to the people of Terra and to promise to rebuild the Alamo. Within six days, things had returned to normal. Though Theodore never reformed completely, he became more prudent after the Alamo incident.

It was also during Lord Theodore's reign that relations between the Terran Hegemony and the Free Worlds League began to sour. The Marik family, particularly Carlos Marik, believed that the Hegemony's military build-up was only a prelude to an invasion of their state. Thus did the Free Worlds League embark on an expansion of its own military, focusing on a large and modern fleet of warships.

Lord Theodore knew that under the right command, the Free Worlds' new warships could pose a serious threat to the Hegemony worlds near their shared border. Taking personal command of the Hegemony battlecruiser *Kiev*, Lord Theodore led a massive naval assault against the Free Worlds fleet anchored at the Oriente star system. In the largest fleet action yet taken, more than 20 major Free Worlds warships were destroyed, while the Hegemony lost only two.

This created a political crisis within the Free Worlds League, resulting in a bloodless coup by Brion Marik against his older brother, the paranoiac Carlos. In 2478, Theodore Cameron offered to negotiate a peace treaty with the new Captain-General, which was signed in that year.

Theodore's fast lifestyle finally caught up with him in 2479, when he died of pneumonia after a three-day party during the wet season of the Thorin Monsoons. Succeeding him as tenth Director-General, though by an even smaller margin of popular support, was his daughter, Elizabeth Cameron.

Though Elizabeth Cameron was another lover of extravagance, she was not as wild as her father. She showed little interest in the fate of either the military or the economy, and it was only the intervention of her High Councilors that prevented a total collapse of the Terran Hegemony.

During Elizabeth's time, the HAF fought few battles. Instead, it continued to improve on its weapons, including lighter Battle-Mech frames, better computer systems, and AeroSpace Fighters. By the time Elizabeth died of New Earth Pox in 2501, the Hegemony was politically unstable, with the idea of dissolving the government being openly discussed.



DEBORAH CAMERON

It's not Peace through Strength but Strength through Peace that will be our motto.

—Director-General Deborah Cameron to assembled nobles and political leaders, April 2509

Lady Deborah Cameron, daughter of Elizabeth Cameron and Alexander Rimes, almost missed becoming the eleventh Director-General of the Hegemony. Because the public had been so unhappy with the reigns of Elizabeth and Theodore Cameron, a shocking 46 percent voted against Deborah on election day. Though illegal, political parties had sprung up on many worlds, all of them with a definite anti-Cameron, anti-Hegemony slant. The leaders of these managed to occupy many public posts, which led to a number of confrontations with the more traditional bureaucrats. Many nobles felt especially threatened by this anti-Hegemony sentiment, but Lady Deborah simply allowed the political storm to swirl around her. She took no action against even the most blatantly anti-Cameron agitators.

Lady Deborah finally assumed the Director-Generalship after much of the initial furor died away. She further calmed the realm by immediately proving that she would not be another wasteful, ineffective leader like her mother. The public greeted a series of measures aimed at repairing the damage caused by the wasteful spending of her predecessors with cautious approval.

The new Director-General was a scholar whose intelligence and seriousness soon led to comparisons with Michael Cameron. After many years of study at prestigious universities such as Oxford, the University of Washington, and Olympic College, she had become Professor of Interstellar Politics and Diplomatic History at the Military Academy of Mars in 2499.

With all her knowledge of history, Lady Deborah understood that the Age of War was seriously weakening the other states of Inner Sphere. As Director-General, she decided that the Hegemony would be wisest to use its superior military for defensive purposes only. Instead, she intended to increase the Hegemony's stability and stature through the peaceful means of trade and interstellar politics.

The Terran Hegemony had gradually been taking on the role of mediator even before Deborah's time. Seven times before her accession, other realms had looked to Terra to settle their disputes. Though the parties did not always follow the Hegemony's recommendations, no one had yet accused the Terrans of favoring one side or the other.

Lady Deborah hoped to expand this mediator role. In 2502, she delivered a series of speeches and papers outlining what she called her "Strategy of Aggressive Peacemaking." This strategy called for a policy of superior intelligence and diplomacy that would contribute to the well-being of other realms. Instead of waiting for other states to come to the Hegemony with their disputes, Lady Deborah would begin to offer mediating services to the other Houses, asking for only a nominal fee and unrestricted travel between enemy realms.

This emphasis on diplomacy and intelligence meant a complete overhaul and substantial expansion of the Hegemony's Central Intelligence Bureau (HCIB) and Department of Foreign Relations (DFR). Until then, the HCIB had concentrated on protecting and preventing technology from leaking to other realms. Now, under the Strategy of Aggressive Peacemaking, the agency would be responsible for learning all it could about every foreign realm. Though idealistic, Lady Deborah was realist enough to understand the value of secret information when attempting to settle a dispute, and she expected the HCIB to dig deep for dirty laundry.

There was plenty of work for the DFR and the HCIB under the new diplomatic doctrine. Though the Ares Conventions saved lives and property, these rules of war 'so made it easier for combatants to fight to an inconclusive draw. Disagreements over who had won or lost a planet were often more violent than the actual combat. As a result, dozens of worlds were in a kind of limbo because two states claimed its ownership. Neither side would allow any activity, not even farming, to take place until the question was settled, which could leave the local population seriously endangered. Due to Lady Deborah's diplomatic strategy, contested worlds began to welcome the sight of a Hegemony vessel approaching.

Lady Deborah's policy of Aggressive Peacemaking was not without some notable failures, but its many successes outweighed them. As news spread of the Commonwealth-Combine Ceasefire on Alrakis and the Phact Peace of 2538, it encouraged other realms to seek out Hegemony mediation. By 2540, Lady Deborah and her people considered the Strategy of Aggressive Peacemaking a resounding success.

For the Terran Hegemony, the benefits were twofold. First, every dispute settled between nearby realms made it less likely that the Hegemony would become involved in a war. Second, Director Deborah, by proving the reliability and worth of her diplomats, soon had strong political ties with other realms. This, as the Director had hoped, gave Terra some influence over its neighbors in the Draconis Combine and the Federated Suns, who had been aggressive toward the Hegemony in the past.

The general public was equally pleased. Though the Hegemony had managed to stay clear of a major war, there was always the fear of one in this era. The people of the border worlds felt the strain most strongly and were relieved by a policy that reduced the threat of war.

It was the military that objected to Director Deborah's strategy. A small minority within the HAF feared that her policies would starve and whittle away the military. Though most officers and troops were loyal, many career officers questioned what would become of their already meager role in Hegemony politics. Though they kept under wraps their resentment at being downgraded in importance during Deborah's reign, the seeds of discontent had been planted and would one day sprout and bear fruit.



33

HEGEMONY IN CRISIS

When Lady Deborah Cameron retired in 2542 after 41 years in office, she chose her son Joseph as successor. Though not the brightest of Lady Deborah's three children, Lord Joseph was the eldest and most experienced in the ways of the government. He had spent his military career as a combat officer in the Marine Corps, which had cost him his right eye in a training accident. When forced to transfer to a desk job in the Department of Foreign Relations, he distinguished himself as a skilled negotiator. At the time of his mother's retirement, Lord Joseph was the Hegemony ambassador to the Lyran Commonwealth.

Upon taking office as Director-General, the 35-year-old

Joseph Cameron promised to continue his mother's policies of funding diplomatic efforts at the expense of the military. Indeed, he publicly lionized diplomats as being worthier than soldiers. With this declaration of support for the hated Aggressive Peacemaking, the resentment simmering in the HAF began to boil. Secret warrior societies, or cabals, formed among the various branches of service. These groups vowed to force the new Director to reassert the military's supremacy over the diplomats.

Some have claimed that the HCIB failed to alert the Director to this growing movement because the Intelligence Bureau was in collusion with the cabals. This seems unlikely, because the HCIB did not share any of the military's grievances. The agency was, in fact, suffering from overwork rather than lack of work. Another possible explanation for the HCIB's lapse was that in 2549 they were deeply involved in efforts to re-infiltrate the Capellan Confederation's Maskirovka, which had purged all HCIB agents 20 years earlier.

Whatever the reason, the HCIB failed to recognize Marine Captain Henry Green's growing influence as

an opponent of Lord Joseph and his policies. After a few months in a cabal, Green became disenchanted with the group's cautiousness. He broke with them, vowing to take direct action.

Though Captain Green was little more than a bureaucratic clerk in uniform, he still remembered how to use his laser rifle. On the night of September 19, he climbed a tree outside the Director-General's palace on Terra and patiently waited his chance. For 27 hours, he remained there, watching as the sun rose and then set. Just as Green must have been wondering if fate had cheated him of his chance, a string of limousines drove through the palace gates. When they stopped in front of the palace's ornate doors, Lord Joseph stepped out.

Captain Green's first shot missed, but his second caught the Director-General before he could duck back into his limo. It is ironic that he had only just removed a specially treated overcoat that would have stopped any weapons fire. The twelfth Director-General of the Terran Hegemony died six days later, on September 26, 2549.



SEPTEMBER REVOLT

If push comes to shove, I'll push harder than you could ever dream of shoving.

—Lord Ian Cameron's warning to units participating in the September Revolt, quoted in *The Cameron Dynasty, Volume X*, by Duke Brian Dekerny, 2899

News of the assassination of Joseph Cameron generated various reactions. The general public expressed almost universal sadness, while the leaders of other states sent condolences to the Hegemony but asked that Lord Joseph's death not interfere with Terran diplomatic efforts. Shocked and shamed, the HCIB felt responsible for Lord Joseph's death and began a vigorous campaign to find and punish disloyal military personnel.

The military was rocked by the assassination. None of the cabals had expected that one of their number would resort to such a measure. With public support for the HAF at an all-time low, cabal members tried to conceal their activities even more. This did not prevent the HCIB from discovering two of the largest cabals a week after the assassination.

While all this was happening, Ian Cameron, Joseph's younger brother, came forward on September 28, 2549 to declare himself the thirteenth Director-General without waiting for the courtesy of a public confirmation vote. Though some democrats worried that the Hegemony had finally gone monarchist, most understood that the seriousness of recent events probably justified Lord Ian's actions.

The disgruntled soldiers within the HAF used this political irregularity as a pretext for a desperate plan to seize control of the government. On the night of September 29, elements of the Fifty-First Dragoon Regiment—"The Green Devils"—seized control of the Hegemony Congress, the Palace of the Director-General, and key government buildings in and around the capital city of Geneva on Terra.

Though the members of these units, all loyal to various cabals, were only a small fraction of the HAF, they were now in control of the government's nerve center. The new Director was at his private residence in Mexico City at the time of the uprising. When the news reached him, Ian Cameron ordered a regiment of his Household Guard to seal off the capital city with as little violence as possible.

Lord Ian then ordered that everyone in the military take an oath of loyalty to the Cameron family and the Hegemony. During the week, he ordered in all loyal units to seize control of as much of Geneva as possible. He then cut off all power, water, and food from the rebellious soldiers, while making sure that the rebel demands were made public. He assumed that it was better not to generate curiosity and possibly even support for them.

After ten days, the resolve of the rebels broke and they began to fight among themselves. When loyal forces moved in to protect some of the many citizens held hostage, a full-scale battle erupted. For most of that day, downtown Geneva became a 'Mech battlefield. Forces loyal to the Hegemony tried to restrain their fire so that stray shots would not damage the city, possibly harming innocent civilians. The rebels, under no such restrictions, began to take advantage of their opponents' hesitation. By nightfall, however, the loyalists' superior numbers finally overcame the rebels, and the battle ended. Surrounded and without hope, a battalion of rebels surrendered.



AN UNWELCOME TRIP

I've always believed in the romance and mystique of the military. My father was a Ship's Officer and my mother was a Marine Sergeant, so you might say that the military was more or less born into me.

When I was old enough, I chose the Army and spent most of my life following other people's orders. And I was pretty good at it. I received a commendation in 2540 for the way I handled my 'Mech in the Caph Incident. I was pretty certain that the military would be my home for the rest of my life. I'd be one of those grumbling old vets in the NCO Club, bitching with the rest of the gray-hairs about the stupidity of the young officers and the general cruelty of fate that was slowing down our bodies just when our minds were getting a clue as to what life was all about.

Then, about a year ago, a couple of stern-faced officers approached me with whispered stories of how the government was going pacifist. As I listened to them, I was tempted for a moment to join the "Royal Defenders of the Hegemony," as they called their cabal. I was no more a fan of Lady Deborah's and Lord Joseph's plan than any other soldier. As I said before, I was born and bred in the military and anything that diminished its value raised my ire.

In the end, though, I turned down their offer to join their secret society. For one thing, I didn't think my folks would have held these two in very high esteem. My father would have called them "know-nothings," while my mother would have warned me to keep track of my wallet whenever they were around.

A year later, I found myself sweating buckets, with my right arm twitching and bleeding uncontrollably in the rags of my uniform while my computer screamed in my ear. My 'Mech, a *Phoenix Hawk* Special, was in no better shape, as the breeze coming through a ragged laser hole in the cockpit wall told me. When I closed my eyes, I could tell that the 'Mech's left leg was mostly scrap metal and that somewhere deep in its gut, in among the bundles of trunk myomers and control wires, a fire was burning out of control.

I had always dreamed of visiting Geneva, the way most of us born on colony worlds do. Never in my wildest nightmares had I dreamed that I would be sitting here in my battle-wasted 'Mech while the sun set blood-red behind the ruins of the Senate Building and one of the traitor 'Mechs burned almost as fiery red nearby. I was sorry I had come to Geneva and I was so glad when I left it, and the military, forever.

—From *Tales of the September Revolt*, edited by Nicholas Trenny, Bronski Books, 2555

ONE SPECIES, ONE REALM

The unification of all Humanity into one realm is an obvious path. What I don't understand is why we broke up into petty realms in the first place.

—Lord Ian Cameron to his High Advisors, quoted in *The Statesman of the Stars*, by Duke Torrence Ferl, Belgrade Press, 2599



35

MAN WITH A DREAM

The September Revolt and its aftermath held Lord Ian's attention for some months after the last rebels had surrendered. The last stronghold of the soldier cabals, the Dresser Military Base on Lipton, had been subdued a month after the recapture of Geneva. The rebels were a considerable problem for the Director-General and the government. Treated too harshly, they would have an air of martyrdom about them; treated too gently, they would be free to rebel again.

Of the three thousand captured in the revolt, a thousand were condemned to death. The rest received life sentences, but most of those were paroled within ten years. This seemed to meet with the public's approval, much to Lord Ian's relief.

To assure the HAF that they were a strong and vital part of the Hegemony, Lord Ian reversed the trend of cutting the military budget by granting the military a huge increase to reestablish the HAF's technological edge over its neighbors. He also quietly, but surely, retired generals and admirals he suspected of being sympathetic to the cabals, replacing them with his own people. To prevent the government from being caught off guard again, Lord Ian expanded the HCIB, adding a special Department of Military Investigations (DMI) to ensure the full loyalty of the military. That was a big order, but Cameron realized it was vital to ruling as he, and not the military, pleased.

Perhaps an even greater threat to his rule was the economic situation of the Terran Hegemony when Ian Cameron came to power in 2549. By now, most Hegemony worlds had been depleted of natural resources, a situation that could bring the realm's technological achievements to a standstill. Cameron was determined to find a solution to the Hegemony's rapidly shrinking resources, for he was determined that Terra and her worlds would never become dependent on imports from the other Houses of the Inner Sphere. He believed that Terra was the heart of Human space and that it should always stand taller than the rest in terms of technical mastery and leadership.

It was hard-headed practicality as well as idealism that prodded Lord Ian to begin to act on a dream he had cherished for almost as long as he could remember: the complete and total reunification of all Humanity. Considering that his mother was Lady Deborah Cameron, originator of the Strategy of Aggressive Peacemaking, it is not surprising that his determination never failed, even when all seemed lost.

After his stint as an HAF officer, Ian Cameron had traveled extensively throughout the various interstellar realms as an ambassador-at-large, first for his mother and then for his brother. He had visited all but one of the Inner Sphere states and met with all but two leaders during that time. Though impressed with the diversity of people, ways, and languages, Ian came away believing more strongly than ever that all should be united—and that Terra, the cradle of all mankind, qualified as leader.

First, Cameron had to lay the foundation. In addition to revitalizing the HAF, he further expanded the Department of Foreign Relations. He also began to fund several research projects to improve interstellar communications, a step whose ramifications would later become especially important.

In documents recovered recently on Terra, it has been learned that Lord Cameron developed a long-term plan that he hoped would result in the creation of a "Star League." Those documents indicate that he estimated it would take 50 years to bring his dream to fruition. The first tentative step, to tie together the five Houses of the Inner Sphere by economic means, would be accomplished

after a decade of careful and meticulous preparation by the diplomats of the Hegemony.

Then fate stepped in and Lord Ian was given a chance to accelerate his timetable by many years.

FATEFUL ANDURIEN

Why don't some maps show Andurien? Don't you know your history, man? Andurien is where the Age of War started! Almost 200 years of misery were let loose there. It's not on the maps because it's a place best forgotten. The land is cursed with lost souls, the water polluted with the iron taste of blood. Andurien? Friend, it's just Hell with jump points.

—Captain Helen Redoar, quoted in *An Informal History of the Age of War*, by Nicholas VanBurn, Tharkan Press, 2549

In 2398, the Age of War began when the forces of the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation clashed over control of the much-disputed Andurien systems. After the Free Worlds won control of these planets, the Capellans still did not resign themselves to the fact. Meanwhile, the Andurien conflict seemed to trigger battles and confrontations between every power in the Inner Sphere in a chain reaction that lasted for more than 150 years. The Capellans never lost their desire to retake Andurien, though a century would pass before they made another attempt.

In 2528, Chancellor Calvin Liao launched the Second Andurien War by sending ground and naval units against the Andurien systems. Captain-General Albert Marik responded immediately, and once more war consumed the whole region. The devastating conflict lasted three years, with the Marik forces ultimately defeating the Liao invaders, even though seriously outnumbered. The war finally came to an end when Director-General Deborah Cameron persuaded the two leaders to attend a summit conference on New Delos in 2531. These peace negotiations confirmed Marik control of Andurien, settled dozens of other Marik-Liao border disputes, and required that the Capellans pay heavy war damages.

Though the Free Worlds League emerged victorious, Albert Marik was so deeply shaken by the death and destruction of the Second Andurien War that he became dedicated to the ideal of peace. In this, he was far ahead of Ian Cameron, who was only a boy of 17 in 2531. When fate finally did bring both men together, they would combine their dreams of peace and unity to create the greatest experiment that Mankind has ever known: the Star League.

Twenty years later, in 2551, Andurien once again became the focus of hostilities when Terrence Liao decided to attack the Andurien systems to prove that he was a strong male leader after two decades of female Chancellors. When the Third Andurien War broke out in that year, Albert Marik was 73 years old. Despite his dedication to peace, he dutifully accepted reinstatement as Captain-General and went forward to meet the enemy. Once more, the Free Worlds forces battered the Liao troops, but it would be five long years before Terrence would admit that he and his army were exhausted by the struggle.

It was in 2551, the same year that the Third Andurien War broke out, that Ian Cameron began the long trail of initiatives, talks, secret meetings, and negotiations that he hoped would lead ultimately to the realization of his dream of a Star League. In that year, he attempted to persuade Terrence Liao of the folly of the war against the Free Worlds, but the Capellan Chancellor had his heart set on making a name for himself. Though Terrence rejected Cameron's peace initiatives, Albert Marik was interested in what Ian Cameron had to say. Cameron also contacted Craig Steiner, then-Archon of the Lyran Commonwealth, in 2551. The two men met in a series of ultra-secret talks, but Cameron could not persuade the Archon to commit the strong industrial base of the Commonwealth to the plan for an interstellar government.

Cameron was not discouraged, however. By 2556, he again proposed that the Liao Chancellor and the Marik Captain-General meet with him on Terra to negotiate an end to the Andurien War. By now, the Capellans' poor showing in the war made Terrence Liao more than ready to accept the invitation.

The many weeks of treaty negotiations offered Ian Cameron a rare opportunity to earn the respect and trust of the Liao Chancellor and to further cement his relationship with Albert Marik. Albert was, of course, already privy to the Terran leader's dream of a government spanning the whole of Human space. Terrence, however, was dubious at first. Cameron patiently explained that he wished to end the debilitating Age of War by uniting the ten realms of the Inner Sphere and the Periphery under one government, with each one retaining its own identity, style, and internal authority. Though Cameron was persuasive, Chancellor Liao was not sure he could trust this new Star League to keep out of the internal affairs of each member-state.

What finally won Liao's cooperation was Cameron's promise to extend to the Capellans "favored-nation" trade agreements, financial assistance, and access to some of Terra's advanced technology. It was Albert Marik who executed the coup de grace when he agreed to cede the long-disputed Andurien systems to the Capellan Confederation. With this concession, Terrence Liao agreed to sign the Clashed Hands Agreement, a secret subtreaty to the Andurien Peace Treaty that officially ended the Third Andurien War in March 2556.

This secret trade and non-aggression pact laid the groundwork for the Treaty of Geneva, which established the intentions of creating the Star League, with the Terran Hegemony, the Capellan Confederation, and the Free Worlds League as founding members. Signed secretly on June 3, 2556, the Treaty of Geneva spelled out the basic terms for the new interstellar government. Each state would maintain control over its internal affairs, while the leaders would meet in a High Council to determine the outcome of important interstellar questions. The agreement named Terrence Liao and Albert Marik (and their successors) as the rightful hereditary rulers of their realms.



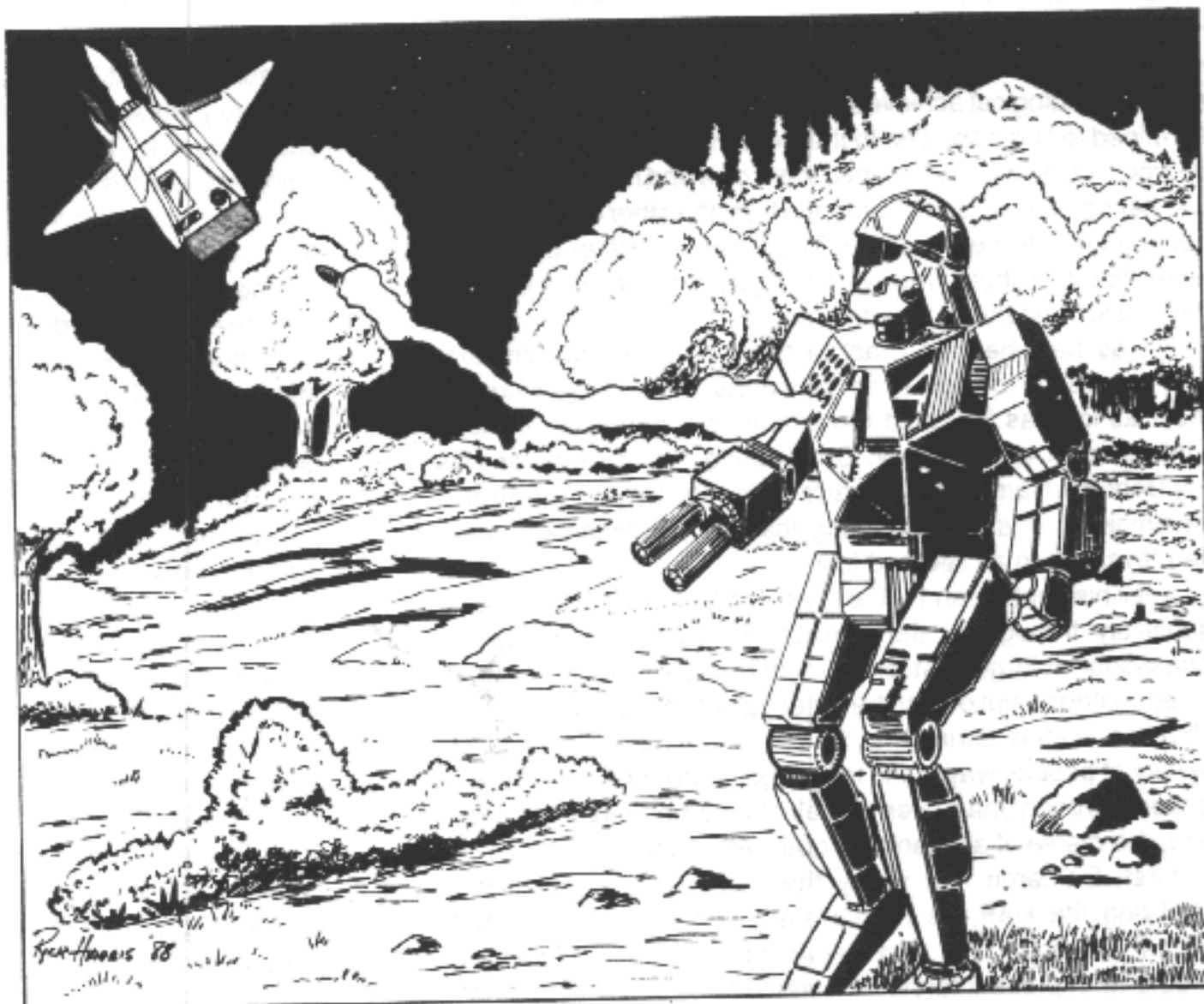
Once the Star League was fully in operation, it would unite the economies of all its members into a single structure, with a single currency, the Star League Dollar. There would be a number of regional economic exchanges for trading in the shares of all major corporations. Like Lady Deborah, Ian Cameron believed that few ties were stronger than economic ones. Though every House

leader who eventually joined the League would be concerned that their local industries would be swallowed up by foreign stockholders, the lure of buying into the immensely wealthy Hegemony firms would always prove to be irresistible.

The Star League would also raise a joint defense force, partially outfitted by member-states but based on the advanced Hegemony Armed Forces military technology. The HAF had at least a 30-year margin of technological superiority over all other Inner Sphere militaries and a 50-year margin over the Periphery realms. There was an even wider gap in certain key areas of military hardware. For example, the 'Mechs of the other House armies could not effectively fight attacks from the air, but the HAF could, aided by the Air Aggressor Fire Control Adjuster (AAFCA) attached to their 'Mech computers. Many a House MechWarrior would have given their souls for an AAFCA, which Hegemony warriors knew affectionately as "Auntie Antis." Now here was Ian Cameron willing to give AAFCA's to any realm that joined him.

In return, he seemed to ask ridiculously little. The other states must agree to recognize Lord Ian and his heirs as the only legitimate First Lords of the Star League. They would also be asked to contribute soldiers, equipment, and tracts of land for the Star League Defense Forces, as well as pay a membership tax in cash or raw materials.

This fateful document concluded with a statement that the three signatory parties would "continue to serve Humanity and Peace...with the eventual unification of all Humanity as our dearest wish."



SIGN OF THE TIMES

Late one night in 2553, my lance was patrolling the southern edge of the Brighton Cliffs, on the planet Cassias. After two months of heavy fighting, there had been little action for two weeks.

It was almost dawn as I walked along a chalk cliff, counting the minutes until I would be off duty. Suddenly I felt the ground give way beneath my feet. Firing my jump jets helped save me, but my 'Mech sustained damage around the cockpit, particularly the communication equipment. That meant I couldn't call on my buddies for help. Looking around with the few sensors left operational, I could see that I was half-buried in rubble and that one huge boulder had my right leg pinned behind me.

I'd only been sitting there, half-stunned, for a few minutes when a Kurita *Archer* appeared, followed by three others. The *Archer*'s hands were held up and the covers to its missile tubes were down and locked. Confused, I held my fire. The pilot opened the hatch to his cockpit and poked out his bare head. He continued his approach and didn't seem too concerned when I pointed my laser directly at him. He stopped a few meters in front of me and began to shout and gesture. Since I couldn't understand and wasn't about to open my cockpit, I made the malfunction sign with my 'Mech's arm to signal that I couldn't communicate.

In response, the *Archer*'s right hand swung up and seemed to be giving me a signal of its own. The first two fingers of the 'Mech's hand poked up, while the other two curled to its palm with the thumb over them. The gesture had no meaning to me. The Kurita warrior had by now returned to his controls, and the 'Mech was in motion. I allowed him to come closer, but what other choice did a *Stinger* have against four heavy 'Mechs?

The Kurita pilot lowered his 'Mech to its knees. As I watched incredulously, the *Archer* grabbed huge fistfuls of rock from around my 'Mech. One of the other 'Mechs, a *Phoenix Hawk*, moved forward and the two of them pushed the boulder off my 'Mech's leg. They helped me up and held me while I tested my 'Mech. It was in amazingly good condition, considering what it had been through. Then the warrior pointed me south along the cliff face to where I could make my way back to my unit. It wasn't until I rejoined them that I found out a cease-fire had been declared.

I never met the Kurita warriors who helped me out of my predicament because I was soon transferred offplanet. One thing that stayed with me was that Mech-Warrior's strange hand gesture. I asked many other pilots all the next year, but no one else recognized it, either. Finally, I consulted an historian at the university near our base. I showed him, half afraid it was something lewd. The man only smiled, and began to rummage through some old books, most filled with ancient, 20th-century photographs. Finally, he seemed to find what he was looking for and handed me a book open to a photo of a young man making the same gesture. The caption read, simply, "Peace."

—Captain Lessiva Toral (AFFS Ret.), quoted in *Anecdotes of the Age of War*, edited by Duke Oscar Flyth, Terran War Memorial Press, 2661



37

BIRTH OF THE STAR LEAGUE

While Ian Cameron was slowly but surely laying the groundwork for the Star League, he did not neglect Terra's role as mediator. All the while he was wooing the other major powers of the Inner Sphere, he also continued Terra's important role as adjudicator of disputes. In a number of these settlements, he was able to negotiate agreements that allowed the disputing governments to become co-rulers of a world, with the Terran Hegemony as administrator of the government. In exchange, the Hegemony received a percentage of the planet's gross income and was able to extend its sphere of influence. By 2555, the Hegemony was part-owner of almost 30 such worlds, arranged in five ragged lines radiating out along the borders of the Inner Sphere. These planets were almost all resource-rich. While the Hegemony's cut in the planet's resources seldom amounted to more than 10 percent of the planet's total gross product, that still added up to a substantial amount of manufactured goods and raw resources. Cameron had already gone a long way to solving Terra's economic problems. The creation of a Star League would complete the task.

The Hegemony's role as peacemaker was a great success publicly, and Director Ian Cameron was hailed as the greatest leader since James McKenna. Meanwhile, for the next 13 years, he continued his relentless, but secret, campaign to persuade the rest of the Inner Sphere to join with him in the Star League. It has been said that he was a man with a golden tongue, a skilled and charismatic negotiator. What few people know or wish to recognize was that Cameron had a very special assistant in his quest. That man was Albert Marik, who was able to offer clandestine and often devious assistance along the path that would eventually lead mankind to the Star League.

Modern historians now date the end of the Age of War with the signing of the Andurien Peace Treaty of 2556. Terrence Liao's invasion of the Andurien system must have been a kind of last gasp, for the people of the Inner Sphere had long since grown weary of the continual stress of war. By 2566, interstellar manufacture and trade in consumer goods had already begun to pick up because of the loosening of wartime priorities and trade restrictions. Raw materials were flowing into the Hegemony at an unprecedented rate, creating a major expansion of heavy and technical industries. The Hegemony was also doing a brisk business selling their finished products to the other states. With the general thaw, Cameron negotiated numerous trade and non-aggression pacts that led to lowering of nearly all trade barriers in the Inner Sphere and to a near-total cease-fire. No matter how much other House leaders might hold out against the idea of a Star League, Cameron and his secret ally Albert Marik knew that it was just a matter of time.

The other realms were experiencing similar economic booms, though the Lyran Commonwealth was having difficulty meshing its economy with the others. The Steiner government was at first unprepared to regulate the sudden inflow of money and resources. Whole planets were swallowed up by foreign industries while immigrants came pouring into the Commonwealth in search of jobs. Archon Tracial Steiner was finally forced to reimpose the trade barriers while her government rearranged, enlarged, and strengthened its power to control business.

Politically, the treaties had brought near-peace to the Inner Sphere. The remaining occasional outbreaks of violence were mainly grudge matches between groups of soldiers on contested planets. In the main, things had become so quiet that a few Inner Sphere leaders were considering agreements that would allow them to stand down their militaries.

SECRET NEGOTIATIONS

A secret is like keeping your virtue. You either feel smugly pious keeping it or deliciously wicked losing it with a friend.

—Grethella Dallas, infamous madam of "The Jade Gates," high-class brothels and escort services on Terra, ca. 2560

Though Ian Cameron wished to keep the Treaty of Geneva a secret so that it would not complicate negotiations with other Houses, the enormity of the accomplishment was too much for even Lord Ian's most trusted staff. Only a month after the signing, the entire Hegemony was abuzz with rumors of Lord Ian's Star League and what it would mean for Humanity. The vast majority of people were in favor. Anything that might prevent violence like that of the past century was worth trying. Though the Hegemony had not suffered as heavily as other states, her people certainly understood the tragic cost of war.

Yet, even as the rumors flew, some people questioned how the Star League could be effective unless all the interstellar governments joined. Was Lord Ian, in his effort to avoid war, leading the Hegemony directly into one?

It was not too long before rumors of the Treaty of Geneva had spread beyond the Hegemony's borders into the other states of the Inner Sphere. In the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League, corporations had begun to draw up plans to buy into Terran companies and ordinary citizens began to anticipate buying Hegemony products. Everyone looked forward to a boost in their standard of living. Even the troops, who would no longer be at war, were excited at the prospect of handling Hegemony weapons, which were legendary among the Inner Sphere.

When the other Houses of the Inner Sphere heard of the Treaty of Geneva, however, shivers of political panic shot through them. Three united realms, led by the technically superior Terran Hegemony, would be an almost unstoppable force. Cameron knew he could use these fears to his advantage, and so he and Albert Marik began to put on more pressure, most of it through clandestine activities. These included bribery and infiltration to influence the Steiner government, and interference in the affairs of the Federated Suns to precipitate that realm's economic crisis of 2566.

Of the three remaining Inner Sphere realms, the Lyran Commonwealth was by far the most important to the nascent Star League. The realm was ruled by House Steiner, which had managed to build the realm into an economic force second only to the Terran Hegemony. Though its military was only barely adequate, Cameron did not underestimate the Lyran.

The Commonwealth was so crucial to Lord Ian's plans that he had been attempting since 2551 to win that state's participation in the League. Leader of the Commonwealth at that time was Archon Craig Steiner, a wise and shrewd man then riding the crest of his popularity. Through careful manipulation of Lyran laws, he had managed to stimulate a boom in the Commonwealth's economy. This had attracted many eager Hegemony investors across the border to pour billions into Commonwealth corporations. Many firms even opened factories within House Steiner.

The Lyran Commonwealth and the Terran Hegemony had a history of good relations. The Federation of Skye, the industrial heart of the Commonwealth, had been settled by men and women who shared the Camerons' Scots ancestry. This cultural tie was further strengthened when Lord Brian Cameron married Lady Katherine McQuiston, a member of the Federation of Skye's founding family. Craig Steiner held out against Ian Cameron's persuasive arguments for joining the Star League because he



feared the Lyran economy would become absorbed by the Star League. After Craig stepped down in favor of Tracial Steiner in 2555, the new Archon decided it was in the Commonwealth's interest to join the League.

When Cameron and Tracial Steiner finally agreed to terms, the Archon knew that the Lyran military would benefit from participation in the new Star League Defense

Forces. It would shore up her forces, which were well-equipped but lacking in proper leadership. Even more important, two new Star League military academies would be built in the Commonwealth, one on Tharkad and one on Skye. This would give the Lyran legal access to the SLDF and at least some graduates would go on to strengthen the LCAF. Cameron and Steiner also negotiated a number of important military hardware contracts. Archon Tracial Steiner and Lord Ian Cameron signed the Tharkad Accords in 2558, officially marking the Lyran Commonwealth's intention of joining the Star League.

Lord Ian could now turn his full attention to the last two holdouts of the Inner Sphere, the Federated Suns and the Draconis Combine. The leaders of these realms each had his own reason to resist becoming a member of the Star League. Hehiro Kurita saw the benefits of membership, but he would need a powerful rationale to convince the Combine nobility to forswear the goal of Kurita supremacy in favor of a higher good. As for Alexander Davion, his state had only recently emerged from a civil war that had almost torn the Federated Suns apart. By mid-2550, the Davion government was deeply involved in efforts to reconstruct the ravages of war. Alexander had every intention of one day joining the League, but not until the Federated Suns was well on the way to recovery. He wanted the Federated Suns to join the Star League from a position of strength rather than weakness.

PREAMBLE TO STAR LEAGUE ACCORDS

We, the Lords representative of the six Inner Realms of the Human Sphere, in the name of Peace, free Commerce, and our people, do hereby enter the Covenant to be henceforth be known as the Star League.

We do so in recognition of the greatness of each member State, and of the qualities that made it great.

We do so willingly, in recognition that it is in the best interests of our Realms, our Lands, our Resources, and our people.

We do so with hearts open to Friendship with one another's Realms, and look forward to an epoch of Prosperity and Security.

After one and one-half centuries of warfare, we are ready to set aside the quarrels that have devastated our Realms. No longer shall we be benighted by the evils that have torn our worlds asunder, nor shall we waste our Energy, Strength, Resources, or the lives of our people in warfare and brutal conflict.

Instead, we greet a new Beginning, an Opportunity unprecedented in the Human Sphere, an Opportunity for every Realm to realize its full Potential, for every Government to work together in Harmony and Understanding, for every man, woman, and child to be safe, secure, and prosperous.

We pledge unto each other our Lives, our good Faith, and our Sacred Honor.

(signed):



By 2567, Alexander was ready to accept Ian Cameron's latest offer, which guaranteed that the Star League would carry out preemptive strikes against Combine targets in the event of a Davion-Kurita war. He knew that his realm's economy needed a boost, for it was still suffering from the effects of war and many years of secret tampering by Albert Marik's agents. The New Avalon Accords, signed October 27, 2567, formally declared the Federated Suns membership in the Star League.

Two years later, Ian Cameron made the same promise of military assistance to Hehiro Kurita, which gave the Draconis Coordinator an argument in favor of joining the Star League. The Treaty of Vega, setting forth the terms of the Draconis Combine's membership in the Star League, was signed August 15, 2569. At long last, the Star League was born.

INTERSTELLAR RELATIONS

Astrography and Astropolitics

While the shape of an interstellar realm is not as crucial as the shape of a continent is to its citizens, it does have a bearing on what its government can and cannot do. For example, a sphere-shaped realm can be far more aggressive in its interstellar relations than a realm with an equal number of stars that is drawn out into a long, amorphous shape. You can't be as aggressive when your star systems are hanging out like ripe fruit on a low tree.

—Lord Ian Cameron

Geography and Geopolitics

Anyone who says that geography doesn't have a place in interstellar relations should be sent to work in the diamond mines on Fellain II. There, they have to tunnel 50 kilometers beneath the surface and risk inhuman conditions to extract a few small diamonds desperately needed for the planet's armor industry. Yet, twelve light years away, on Sadalbari, a world of the Draconis Combine, gardeners can't sink a spade into the ground without uncovering diamonds as big as their thumbs.

—Lady Deborah Cameron

Economic Forces

I disagree violently with those economists who insist that people should be considered as just one of many different raw materials in a realm. That makes the average citizen no better than a pile of iron ore. People are both the cause and the solution to any economic problem.

—Lord Ian Cameron

Interstellarism

Interstellarism is thinking of Humanity made up of people first and interstellar political realms second. Once you begin to think that way, the differences between realms disappear and the universe becomes a web of interconnected economic and social ties. We must never forget that no matter where they were born, all people have common, basic needs.

—Lord Ian Cameron

—Collected from various sources, ComStar Archives, Terra

Over the next two years, the six leaders of the Inner Sphere met in a series of conferences in Geneva to hammer out exactly how the Star League would operate. By summer 2571, they had drafted a 2,000-page document known as the Star League Accords.

In an unprecedented moment of history, the six rulers of the Inner Sphere appeared on the floor of the Hegemony Congress on July 9, 2571. Each solemnly read the Preamble of the Star League Accords to the large audience gathered to witness the historic event. Each leader signed his or her name to the document, then stepped aside, handing the quill pen to the next. Coordinator Hehiro Kurita of the Draconis Combine signed first, then Prince Alexander Davion of the Federated Suns, then Archon Viola Steiner-Dinesen. She was followed by Chancellor Ursula Liao of the Capellan Confederation and Captain-General Albert Marik of the Free Worlds League.

Last to sign was Ian Cameron, deeply moved by the realization of his dream. First he shook hands with each leader, thanking him or her for leading their realms away from war and toward peace. After reciting the Star League Preamble from memory in a loud, clear voice, he, too, signed the document with a flourish. According to legend, a tear fell from Cameron's eye at that moment, accounting for the small stain just below his large, bold signature.

LORD IAN AND LADY SHANDRA

When tracing Star League roots, historians pay considerable attention to Lord Ian Cameron, Lady Deborah Cameron, and Lord Michael Cameron. No one has yet studied the contribution of Lady Shandra Noruff, who became Ian's wife. She was instrumental in the creation of the Star League, and many of her actions would be crucial to its survival.

In 2533, Shandra Noruff, Baroness of Neuble Downs, New Earth, was officially betrothed to young Ian Cameron by her father, the Duke of New Earth, and Ian's mother, Lady Deborah, Director-General of the Hegemony. This arranged marriage was unprecedented in the Hegemony, whose people prided themselves in honoring individual choice of marriage partners among its upper classes. In the other states of the Inner Sphere, arranged marriages for political purposes were common.

The public greeted the news of Lord Ian and Baroness Shandra's betrothal with disapproval. Indeed, the most violent opposition came from the betrothed themselves. Lord Ian, only 19, had just entered the HAF and was showing every sign of becoming an excellent officer. Attractive, charming, and a firm believer in sowing wild oats, he recoiled at the thought of having his fate tied to a woman he had never met. He was so angry that he refused to talk to his mother for a year, causing them both a great deal of pain.

Shandra was similar to Ian in many ways. At 17, she was preparing for her own military career and had no thought of pledging herself in marriage, particularly to a man she did not know. Like Ian, she broke off all contact with a parent, in this case, her father. Unfortunately, the Duke of New Earth was killed several months later in an aircraft accident before Shandra and he could be reconciled.

The first official meeting between the betrothed couple was not promising. After being introduced at a grand ball hosted by the Duke of New Earth, they acknowledged each other sullenly, then left the scene separately at the first opportunity. A bit shocked, the couple's parents considered breaking the marriage contract. After further discussion, the parents decided to make one more attempt by forcing the two young people to write to one another.

The letters, preserved by an historian of the Camerons, have survived intact and are now in the archives of our Blessed Order. What they reveal is the slow, almost painful, development of affection that was, at its worst, a clash of two highly intelligent people with set ways and set ideas. At their best, the letters express friendship and even romance. At first, Ian and Shandra did not realize that they were becoming increasingly attracted, but to the reader, their growing affection is as obvious as it is moving.

Two years later, the couple was married. On April 12, 2535, the wedding procession filed down from the ancient kirk overlooking Edinburgh, and the newlyweds were greeted by thousands of well-wishers and rose petals dropped from helicopters. Their limousine was escorted by two 'Mechs bedecked with flowers and colored streamers—one from Lady Shandra's unit and one from Lord Ian's.

This was not to be a fairy-tale marriage, however. Ian and Shandra argued, separated, and often grated on one another's nerves. Yet, they always reconciled, either on long private vacations, or through many heart-felt letters during separations.

In 2536, Lady Shandra gave birth to Timothy Cameron. Shortly afterward, the doctors informed the parents that Timothy had an inoperable heart defect. Neglecting their duties, the couple stood vigil over their infant for weeks until he died. Their grief was intense and some feared that the loss would split them apart. Nothing was farther from the truth. After two years of mourning, the two reentered public life, seeming to express more affection than ever. The public, who had loved the pair from the start, seemed to adore them more than ever after the tragedy. Shandra went on to become Commander of the Hegemony Armed Forces, and in 2571, Lord Ian appointed her Commander-in-Chief of the Star League Defense Forces.

Though Shandra did not immediately become pregnant again, Lord Ian made no move to appoint an heir. His only reply when questioned was to enigmatically call for patience. As the years passed, the people and public officials became concerned about what would happen if Ian Cameron died without an heir. Some even made so bold as to suggest that Cameron either take a new wife or mistress in hopes that a child would result.

On January 23, 2556, the Palace of Cameron, Lord Ian's residence near London, issued a terse, two-line press release: "The Cameron household is proud to announce that Lady Shandra Noruff-Cameron expects a child sometime in September. Lady Shandra is in the best of health and spirits." Lady Cameron was 40 years old. Nine months later she gave birth to a healthy son, whom the Camerons named Nicholas.



40

THE NEW ORDER

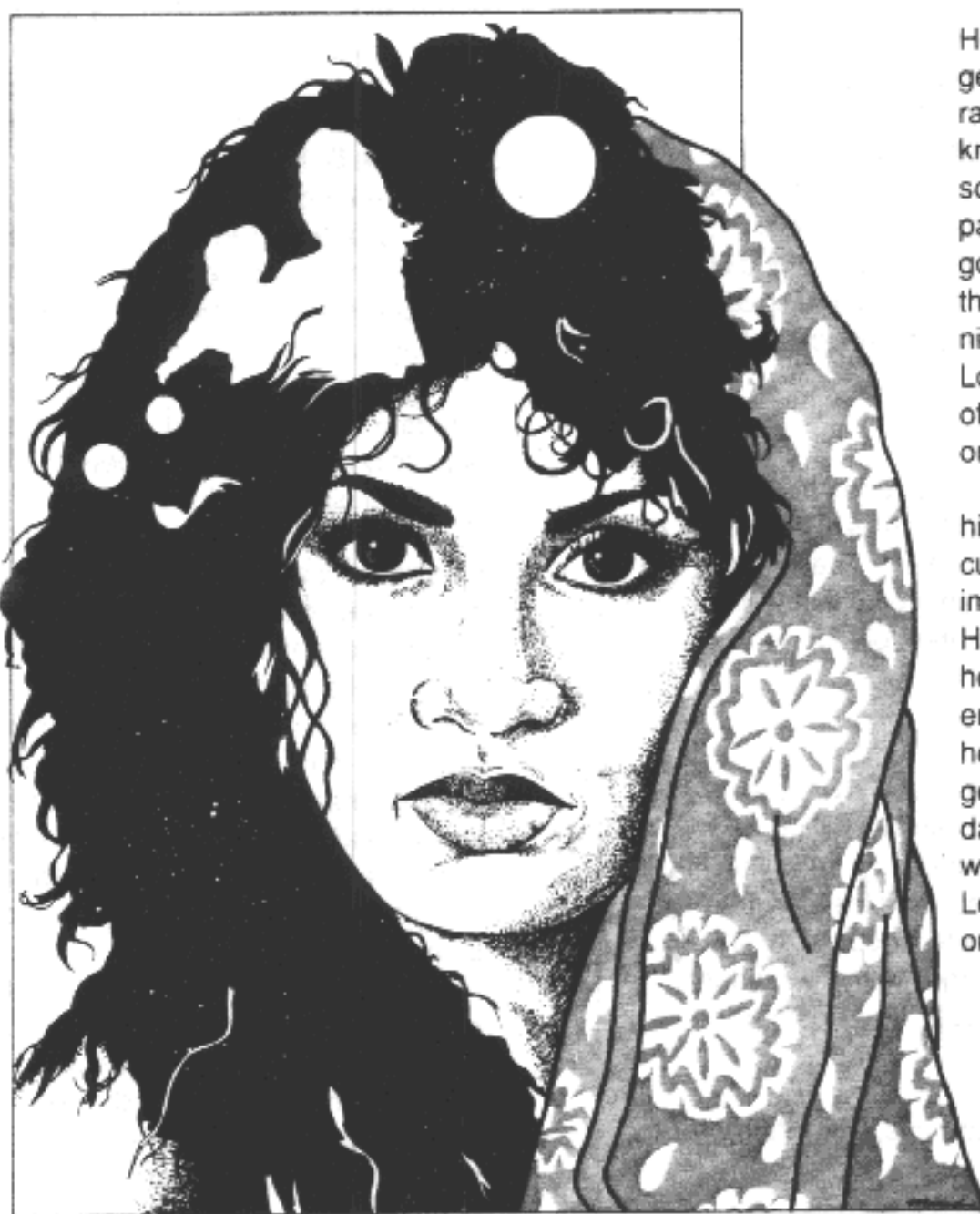
People everywhere greeted news of the Star League with excitement and anticipation. Things would be changing, and any change was welcome after the long Age of War. Even citizens of worlds little affected by the Star League wanted the new order to succeed. First, however, the Star League had to set up its government, which required more than three years of intensive negotiations by the leaders of all six realms. During this time, the fragile nature of the new alliance was threatened more than once.

The Star League High Council, composed of the heads of the six member-states, was created almost immediately after the signing of the Accords. To acknowledge Ian Cameron's status, he would be known as "First Lord." Not only was Cameron the prime mover behind creation of the Star League, but he was also the ruler of Terra, the cradle of man, which lay, quite literally, at the center of Human-occupied space. The High Council would be the pinnacle of the Star League government as well as a communications nexus for the swift dissemination of information to all the member-states.

The Star League capitol was located near the newly pristine Puget Sound of the North American continent of Terra. Construction had actually begun years earlier on what would be known officially as the Court of the Star League, but unofficially as Unity City. The city was to be huge, elaborate, and awe-inspiring, as befit the center of Humanity. Materials from all member-states were incorporated into its construction. Once built, the Court of the Star League was hailed as an architectural marvel. One visiting architect called it a "a fairy-tale place, where parking garages are as beautiful as the Taj Mahal."

At this time, the original High Council of the Terran Hegemony changed their name and rank. From now on, they were known as the First Lord's Advisors and headed up major departments within the Hegemony government in Geneva. Though the scope of their work was technically limited to aiding the First Lord govern the Hegemony, they often provided unofficial counsel on other matters.

Lord Ian soon realized that his duties as First Lord and the current political situation made it impossible to rule the Terran Hegemony effectively. In 2572, he assigned his Director-General responsibilities to either his heir or to the President of the Hegemony Congress. From that day on, the Camerons would always consider themselves Star League rulers first and Hegemony Directors-General second.





THE STELLAR COURT

With the signing of the Star League Accords, the Hegemony, and Terra in particular, became an important center of activity. Embassies for League member-states as well as branch offices of major foreign corporations were set up on every Hegemony world. Tourism boomed and passenger liners run by such major shipping companies as White Dove Interstellar, the Red Ball Express, and White Cloud Tourism became a common sight in Hegemony star systems.

Naturally, the Court of the Star League in Unity City was the prime focus. The many Court buildings comfortably housed fully staffed diplomatic missions for all member-states, as well as representatives from all the major corporations. Within the complex of polished walls was the headquarters of the Bureau of Star League Affairs. Also within the Court, but separated and isolated from the rest by a network of private gardens, high castle walls, and tunnels, were the private quarters of the First Lord and his family.

The interior of the Court of the Star League, which soon became known informally as "the Stellar Court," was built from materials from every corner of Human space. Silver filigree from Niomede enhanced the glow of Sadurni marble. Bharat teakwood, carved by the skilled artisans of Tharkad, was encrusted with Blue Fire Opals from Larsha. Everything had been chosen to impress the viewer with the fact that this place was the center of Humanity and not just the residence of the Star League government.

It was not long before the nobles who came to the Court responded to the beautiful surroundings by dressing for the occasion. The High Council, which normally met twice a year in the Court, attracted throngs of attendant nobles dressed in their finest. Amid the huge pillars of Kaifeng Shimmer Granite and in the filtered light of stained glass windows, nobles mingled in the Grand Hall. They awaited the appearance of the First Lord, who would take his seat upon the Star League Throne, which had been carved from white Suzano ivory.

—From *A Guide to the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Marvels of Humanity*, by Sandra Kinra, Tharkad Press, 2999



In 2573, the Bureau of Star League Affairs (BSLA) was officially created. This heart and body of the Star League government had six major departments: Social Relations, Economic Relations, Star League Revenue, Department of Education and Information, Star League Attorney General, and Star League Administrators.

The Department of Administrators was the most important. It was run by five State Administrators appointed by the First Lord and directly responsible for seeing that each member-state carried out the First Lord and the High Council's decisions. Under each State Administrator were various Regional and Planetary Administrators, who reported to their superiors and to the government of the member-state.

The government of the new Star League was designed to be a strong, yet flexible instrument to carry out the will of the First Lord and the Lords of the High Council. First Lord Cameron appointed more than three-fourths of the personnel to staff the BSLA's bureaucratic posts, which gained him virtual dominance over the functioning of the Star League government. [EDITOR'S NOTE: Future First Lords would take advantage of this power to water down laws with which they disagreed.] As for First Lord Cameron, he was circumspect in his use of this vast power. He often consulted with the other Council Lords about his appointments and tried where possible to find posts for anyone whom a particular Lord wished to favor.

ORGANIZING THE MILITARY

First Lord Cameron appointed his wife, General Shandra Noruff-Cameron, as Chief of Staff and Commander-in-Chief of the yet-unformed Star League Defense Forces. To accomplish the daunting task of creating a single military from the soldiers of six separate armies, Shandra divided the SLDF into six separate Military Regions, each corresponding to the borders of a member-state. Each region had its own military contingent that would include very few troops from that state. This precaution was intended to prevent an insurrection if the Star League should be forced to act against that state. General Cameron was also not to place too many soldiers from a state's rival into its SLDF contingent.

At the core of each region's force were group divisions from the Hegemony Armed Forces. Known as "Royal" divisions, these units formed the backbone of each region's force. Royal regiments and battalions were also scattered throughout other divisions of mixed soldiers to enforce the proper execution of orders.

Personality conflicts among the new SLDF officer corps were at first an immediate problem. Enlisted men might settle their differences with fist fights that easily ended up with the combatants buying one another drinks. Officers hid their rivalries under a civilized veneer. They could usually find more devious and destructive ways to express their competitiveness.

Because of these interstate and interservice rivalries, the First Lord and the Commander-in-Chief decided to make a high priority of recruiting and training officers specifically whose first loyalty would be to the Star League Defense Forces. The First Lord also won the right to recruit common citizens for SLDF military service. Though this would ultimately create serious tensions, it would also produce some of the Star League's greatest military heroes.

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PERIPHERY

The Periphery? It's like one big booby hatch. You don't lock up that crazy guy walking around your city screaming about God at the top of his lungs or exposing himself to school girls. You just give him a ticket to the Periphery.

—Duke Mitchell Frenser of Caph, quoted in *The Periphery Mistake: An Exercise in Misconceptions*, by Duchess Bethella Ganis, Terran Press, 2811



42

PRELUDE TO WAR

We've given a million men and women the knowledge to kill in new and exciting ways, then taken away their weapons and told them that they can't practice what they've learned.

—From a letter by General Shandra Cameron to Lord Ian Cameron, October 2569

In Ian Cameron's dream of Humanity united under one government, he had always envisioned the Taurian Concordat, the Magistracy of Canopus, the Rim Worlds Republic, and the Outworlds Alliance, the four major Confederations of the Periphery, as part of the Star League. Yet the fiercely independent governments and people of the Periphery did not share that dream. Those distant worlds had originally been settled by people disenchanted either with life on the Terran homeworld or in what became the five other states of the Inner Sphere. Why would they seek to realign themselves with Terra or her offspring now?

As for the leaders of the Inner Sphere, they were even more suspicious and hostile in their attitude toward the Periphery than they had always been toward one another. That did not prevent the Lyrans, the Capellans, and the Mariks from trading with Periphery governments when it was to their advantage. Truth be told, however, most people of the Inner Sphere looked down with ill-concealed contempt on their Periphery counterparts, misperceiving them as scoundrels, ne'er-do-wells, radicals, or savages.

The Cameron family had its own private hatred of the Periphery because of an incident that occurred in 2499. In that year, one Lieutenant John Cameron was a second officer aboard the *Orion*, an unarmed survey vessel exploring a star system beyond the Lyran Commonwealth. In the *Orion's* last message, the ship reported being attacked by an unidentified vessel. When an Hegemony searching party eventually located the survey vessel, it was an empty hulk with not a trace of crew. Though no conclusive proof ever turned up, some evidence indicated that a Rim Worlds Republic warship had attacked the *Orion*. The Camerons vowed that one day they would make those Periphery bandits pay dearly for the death of John Cameron.



It is ironic that the Star League, whose stated purpose was peace and good will among the stars, should have made war its first major undertaking. Known as the Reunification War, this conflict would claim more lives in 20 years of brutal fighting than had the Age of War, which lasted a century and a half. The purpose of the Reunification War was to bring the major governments of the Periphery into the Star League by force of arms.

Within weeks after the signing of the Star League Accords, Ian Cameron sent copies of the Accords to each of the major Periphery states, all of whom rejected the offer within the year. In public, the First Lord and his Council Lords expressed regret over this refusal, but the Periphery leaders had played right into their hands. Like nearly every powerful government that came before or after it, the Star League suffered from the imperialist urge to dominate. If they were no longer going to be warring with each other, then they would go to war with the Periphery.

Ian Cameron began to refer to the Periphery as the "lost worlds," while instructing the Star League propaganda machine to produce a variety of materials portraying the outworlders as everything from prodigal sons and daughters to the most murderous Neanderthals. Cameron also kept Star League diplomats busy making such proposals to the Periphery leaders as a galactic summit on Terra in 2572 (which every Periphery government except the Rim Worlds refused to attend) or a "favored-nation" trade package with the Taurian Concordat in 2573. The latter was particularly specious, for the Taurians' local products were superior to the exports the Star League was offering.

There was another, more pressing reason for a war against the proud and independent Periphery governments. Now that real cooperation existed between the Great Houses of the Inner Sphere, every government would have to significantly reduce its standing army. Even with the troops being contributed to the Star League Defense Forces, this would still leave hundreds of thousands of battle-hardened veterans without work—and without any other marketable skills.

The creation of the Star League Defense Forces took the best soldiers from each member-state, while the cream of the remainder quickly rose in the ranks of the individual state militaries. Yet even as the largest military force in mankind's history was being created, the new era of peace sent many trained soldiers back into civilian life. Many soldiers suddenly faced the unpleasant prospect of having to beat their sword into plowshares. Most had joined the military as young men and women. It was all they knew, all they were trained to do. Now they were suddenly expected to return to civilian life.

Many veterans found work as bodyguards for local nobles, and others banded into fighting units that hired out to nobles and governments to combat roving brigands. Some veterans, however, felt so lost that it was they who became the brigands preying upon their former masters. One of the gravest questions dominating High Council meetings of this period was what to do about the millions of unemployed soldiers roaming the Star League.

UNITED TRIUMPH MILITARY EXERCISES

In late 2571, a band of brigands, composed mainly of veterans from the Capellan military, attacked and razed a group of islands on the Capellan world of Milos. When the Capellans responded by sending in a 'Mech regiment, the soldiers recognized the brigands as former comrades and refused to attack. In response, the Chancellor of the Capellan Confederation asked the Star League for assistance from the Twenty-Second Royal BattleMech Regiment. Just as the Twenty-Second was overrunning the brigands on Milos, the Capellan regiment went to the rescue of their former comrades by counterattacking the Star League unit. The Twenty-Second managed to retreat without suffering too much damage, but news of this turnabout persuaded the Council Lords that something had to be done immediately.

Transcripts from the High Council Spring Session of 2572 indicate that every Council Lord except Archon Viola Steiner voted in favor of the resolution they placed before First Lord Cameron. If the wandering veterans could not be controlled, the Council Lords said, then each Great House would have to return its military to a war-time footing, a move that would threaten the SLDF's numerical superiority and destabilize the fragile League.

After consulting with his advisors and Commander-in-Chief Shandra, Ian Cameron responded by ordering the staging of a massive series of military exercises between the SLDF and the state militaries. These exercises would create work for unemployed soldiers, whom the League would hire as ersatz regiments to hold certain unimportant worlds while the real regiments were out participating in the exercises.

In fall 2572, the First Lord announced his plan for the United Triumph Military Exercises. Thirteen SLDF divisions and ten equivalent House units participated in the largest military exercises ever staged. Over 50 barren and lightly populated worlds became the game board where the exercises were played out. Most of these worlds were near the Periphery state borders.

Militarily, the exercises proved embarrassing for the Star League. Though technically and logistically superior to all other armies, the divisions of the new SLDF were still uncoordinated and unsure of themselves. They suffered many clumsy defeats and some outright disasters. One of these was the collision of the *SLS Rickover*, a *Congress Class* frigate, and the *SLS Davion's Heart*, a *Davion Class* destroyer on loan to the League, over the Marik world of Vakarel.

The exercises were also embarrassing politically. The leaders of the Periphery realms took special comfort in seeing the much-vaunted SLDF bested by ordinary House units. Gaining confidence that they could continue to resist Lord Cameron's demand that they join the League, some Periphery leaders began to openly scorn the Star League and its apparently inept military. Among the people, ribald songs and lurid caricatures of Lord Ian as a doddering old man began to appear in the Outworlds Alliance and the Magistracy of Canopus.

The only good salvaged from the United Triumph exercises was passage of the Border Guards Agreement of 2572, which allowed the SLDF to establish military bases throughout the Inner Sphere, particularly in Periphery border areas. These bases would soon become vital.



SPARKS OF SANTIAGO

A great flame follows a little spark.

—From "Paradiso," *The Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighierei

In 2572, First Lord Cameron learned of the presence of a regiment's worth of BattleMechs in the Outworlds Alliance. He had no idea from whom the Alliance had purchased the 'Mechs, but believed that they were going to use them as models for manufacture. In response, Cameron issued Directive 21, which informed key worlds in the Outworlds Alliance that they must accept SLDF units for their "mutual defense and protection against the numerous bands of outlaws and pirates that have infiltrated the region." SLDF troops and units from the Draconis Combine were immediately deployed into the Outworlds Alliance.

Though the Star League Regulars had explicit orders to concentrate on searching for the location of the Alliance 'Mechs, the Combine units were under no such orders. The Seventeenth Galedon Regulars, a typical Combine BattleMech regiment, was assigned to search Santiago City, a major metropolis and communications center of the Outworlds Alliance. With typical Draconian arrogance, the Galedon Regulars destroyed buildings, ruined businesses, and earned the animosity of every citizen in their search for the elusive Alliance 'Mechs.

Santiago civilians jeered and threw things at the Combine 'Mechs as they lumbered past. The children of Santiago, known locally as "sparks," particularly enjoyed this sport. They thought the worst thing that could happen was that a 'Mech would swivel its head to look at them while making deafening, unintelligible noises over its loudspeakers.

On December 14, 2572, this "sport" became deadly. While a lance of Galedon Regulars proceeded through a poor neighborhood, the local children taunted and jeered, ran between the 'Mechs' legs, and pelted the soldiers with a barrage of snowballs, stones, and other objects. Finally, one young warrior cracked open the cockpit of her *Locust* and tossed a can of coolant at a child running alongside her 'Mech. It is entirely possible that the warrior was only trying to keep the youngster from running between the legs of her 'Mech, but the can missed the fleeing child and struck the concrete before him. The can split open, exploding coolant all over the boy.

An enraged crowd gathered around the screaming child and the MechWarrior, whose lance had moved on. While trying to escape, the her *Locust's* legs tangled in the rusted-out shell of an abandoned vehicle and the 'Mech toppled over, crushing several people. The crowd attacked the fallen 'Mech with steel pipes, wooden boards, and anything else they could find. Completely panic-stricken, the young Combine warrior began to blindly fire her 'Mech's weapons. Twenty-seven Santiagans were killed and another 30 were wounded that day.

Repercussions of the Santiago Massacre were widespread. Anti-Star League demonstrations broke out in all the Periphery states. In 2573, the crisis grew even deeper after the Combine MechWarrior's court-martial took place on Terra instead of in a Santiago court. The people of the Periphery and their leaders were thoroughly convinced that the Star League was as treacherous as it was deceitful.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: There have been many versions in the telling of this incident. This account meshes several previous reports and includes new research.]

As a direct result of the Santiago Massacre, the ruler of the Magistracy of Canopus broke off negotiations over a border dispute with the Star League. In the Taurian Concordat, Protector Mitchell Calderon ordered military emergency measures to rapidly strengthen the Concordat's defenses. It was also in this period that all the Periphery governments but the Rim Worlds refused the Star League's call for a galactic summit and the Taurians flatly refused "favored-nation" trade with the League.

Though many BSLA diplomats counseled letting the furor subside, the Council Lords retaliated. In 2574, they passed a series of harsh trade restrictions and taxes intended to bring the Periphery to its knees. Though the new taxes brought about hard economic times—even the threat of starvation—for the people of those distant realms, their spirit of independence seemed to grow even stronger. War was inevitable and everyone knew it.

MALAGROTTA CRISIS

This is the Grex-Dex Mining Station on Fontana in the Malagrotta system. We will soon be under attack by five Taurian Concordat naval vessels. Mitchell Hensley, our foreman and a Navy veteran, tells me that the ships are a Winchester Class cruiser, two Wagon Wheel frigates, and one Pinto corvette, all armed and headed this way. For the love of God, help us. We're loyal to the Federated Suns and have no wish to end up as slaves to a bunch of gun-happy hooligans.

—Dispatch from a Davion mining colony on Fontana to the government of the Federated Suns, February 19, 2573

In 2499, huge deposits of titanium were discovered just beneath the sulphur-encrusted surface of the airless moon known as Fontana, which orbited the gas giant DeeCee in the Malagrotta star system. The discoverer of that moon, Grex-Dex Mining, had offices in the Federated Suns and in the Taurian Concordat. Upon learning of the discovery, both realms claimed the Malagrotta system, which lay in the unclaimed area of space between the two realms. Each side also dispatched military units to reinforce its claim.

In one of the few instances of cooperation between an Inner Sphere realm and a Periphery domain, the two sides reached a diplomatic solution. In 2511, they negotiated the Omsol Accord, which decreed that Fontana was so rich in titanium that there was plenty for both. They formally agreed to operate Fontana as a joint venture. The most important provision of the treaty was the promise that neither state would establish a military presence in the system.

In February 2573, the Omsol Accord was inadvertently broken. Five Taurian naval vessels, on maneuvers with a larger fleet in the nearby Drexia star system, strayed into the Malagrotta system because of navigational and communication failures. Unaware of their incredible blunder and unable to communicate, the five vessels calmly made their way to Fontana, hoping to repair their equipment and then leave. They were completely unaware that the panicked Davion miners on the planet had issued several distress calls to the Federated Suns.

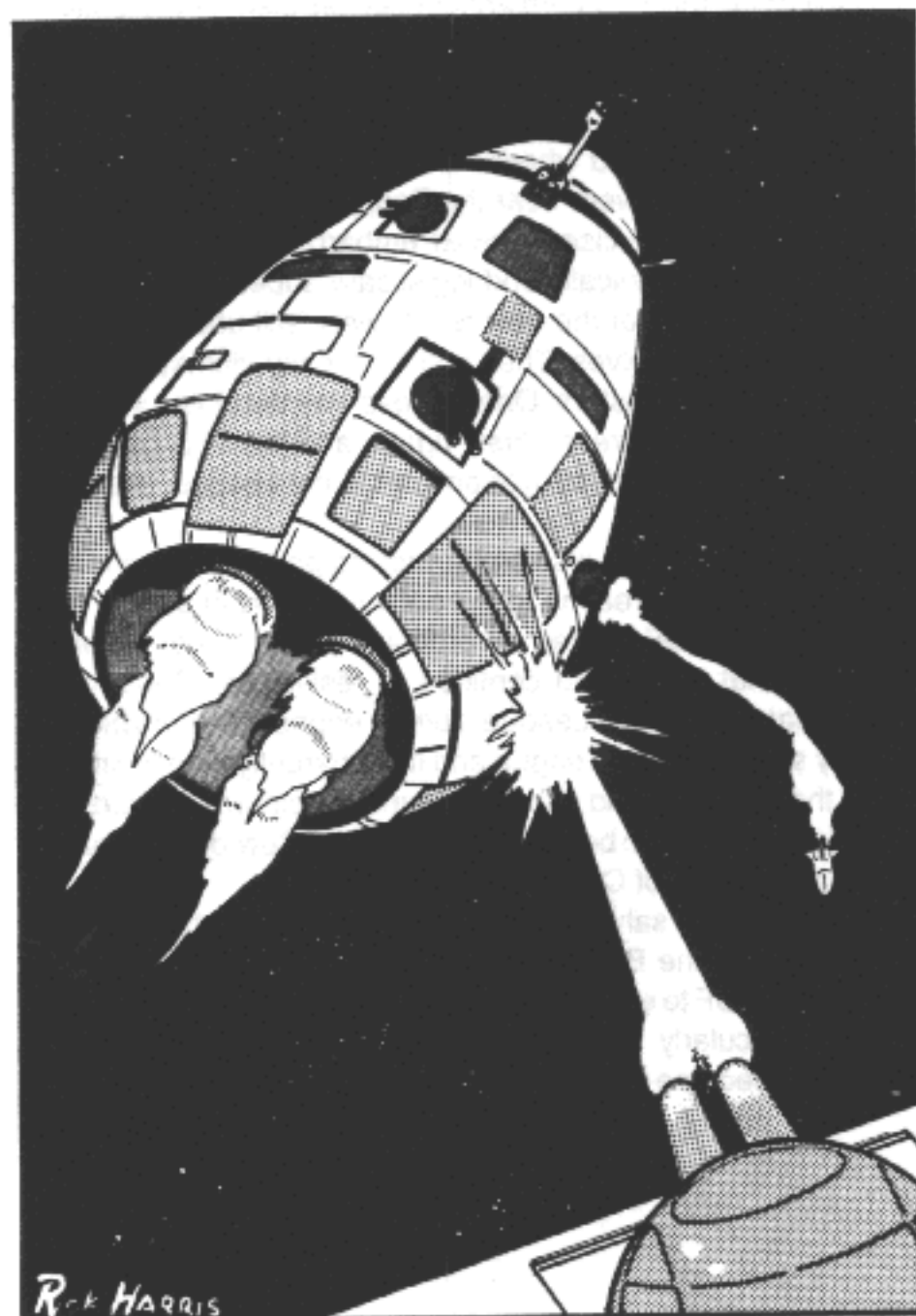
The Federated Suns dispatched ten vessels from its nearby naval base to look into this "cowardly Taurian sneak attack." Arriving at Malagrotta, they discovered the Taurian vessels floating above Fontana. The Davion commander immediately ordered his vessels to open fire on the Taurians. The battle lasted three hours and ended with all but one Taurian vessel captured or destroyed. Only the Taurian cruiser, severely damaged, managed to limp to the jump point and escape home.



When the truth came out later, the Malagrotta crisis might have blossomed into an interstellar incident. Instead, the Davion military covered up this officer's mistake while continuing to complain loudly about the Concordat's act of war in the Fontana system. The Armed Forces of the Federated Suns geared up for war. Troops were placed on full alert along the Davion/Concordat border and warships were moved in from the realm's interior in preparation for action. The Concordat, realizing that it was too late to let the truth speak for itself, placed its own sizeable military on alert.

When Lord Alexander Davion finally learned the facts about the Malagrotta crisis, he appealed to the First Lord to mediate the dispute, though he did not reveal his officer's stupid mistake. The Taurian Concordat flatly refused to deal with the First Lord, however. They claimed that their grievance involved only the Federated Suns and that the Star League had no business meddling in their affairs. Enraged by the Taurians' refusal, Cameron is reported to have said, "We have been compassionate and prudent long enough. I'll be damned if I'm going to pull any more punches."

Publicly, he announced that the Federated Suns had acted justifiably in response to unwarranted military attacks on civilian settlements. In notes regarding his decision, Lord Ian was apparently in favor of the Federated Suns occupying the Malagrotta system if the Concordat refused to pay reparations, but Archon Viola talked him out of it. The other Council Lords were split on the Malagrotta affair. The only thing all six could agree on was that something would have to be done about the Periphery.



LOSS OF FACE

I hereby swear my allegiance to the Rim Worlds Republic, its laws and its leaders. I also swear my heartfelt admiration for the actions and ways of distant mother Terra. May her beauty never dim. May her light ever be our beacon.

—From the Loyalty Oath required of each citizen of the Rim Worlds Republic, 2573

The only Periphery realm that did not inflame the animosity or suspicion of the Inner Sphere was the Rim Worlds Republic. Ruled by the Amaris family, whose ancestors had been high officials in the Terran Hegemony and who still retained Terran citizenship, the Republic was considered the one "civilized" domain among the outworlds. Indeed, the Inner Sphere did considerable business with the Rim Worlds. The other Periphery governments viewed it with contempt, however, and refused Amaris's offers to mediate between the Star League and the Periphery.

The Amaris family controlled the Rim Worlds by force of arms, and many citizens still pined for the days when they had enjoyed a true republic. When Gregory Amaris invited a battalion of Star League 'Mechs into the realm in 2572—ostensibly to train his troops but actually to strengthen his political position—the internal situation became even more unsettled.

In spring 2573, Rim Worlds dissidents dressed in Rift Republican Army uniforms stormed and seized a major prison for political prisoners on the planet Apollo. They were protesting the Amaris government's sympathy with the Star League government and the presence of a battalion of League 'Mechs on Apollo. After seeing about 50 prisoners, the rebels killed the prison commandant and his senior staff. In their message to Gregory Amaris, they threatened to blow up the facility unless all foreign forces were withdrawn from Apollo.

Within half an hour after receiving this ultimatum, Amaris ordered in the Fifth Amaris Fusiliers and the Amaris Republican Guard. Later, he also sent in artillery units to raze the headquarters compound. Amaris's private troops captured and killed anyone who escaped the first two onslaughts. When the people of the Rim Republic learned that Amaris's own troops had mowed down the rebels on Apollo, they were outraged. Violent protests broke out all over the Rim Republic.

When the civilian disturbances did not subside, Amaris instituted the Universal Act of Loyalty. This edict required that every citizen swear an oath of loyalty to both the Amarises and the Star League, or else forfeit their rights and belongings. Amaris eventually forced every Rim Worlder to take the oath, often by means of starving rebellious groups such as the miners of Lackhove into submission.



45

POLLUX PROCLAMATION

As I see it, you have two choices: you can join the Star League, or you can join the Star League. Either way you'll join. Whether you join as a full partner, sharing in the benefits of the League's wealth, or as beaten and bloody slaves forever in chains, is a decision totally your own.

—Duke Gregory Webbson, Star League emissary to the Taurian Concordat, 2575

The economic sanctions aimed at the Periphery created as much economic disruption in the Inner Sphere as among the outworlds. In the Lyran Commonwealth and the Free Worlds League, some major corporations were in danger of collapse because of their dependence on unrestricted trade with the Periphery. One of these was Far Star Traders, a huge shipping firm based on the Lyran world of New India. Far Star lost so much money during the first nine months of the sanctions that it went bankrupt. That cost the Commonwealth over a million jobs and plunged the entire Alarion Province into an economic tailspin.

When other realms also began to feel the effects of the sanctions, rumblings of discontent broke out among some of the common citizens. At the same time, others sympathized with the plight of the Periphery, and admired the independent spirit of its people. These citizens objected to the economic sanctions and began to campaign actively for a saner and more forgiving attitude toward the stubborn outworlders.

In December 2574, Ian Cameron summoned the Council Lords to an emergency meeting on Pollux, a Hegemony world. The debate over what the Star League's next action should be lasted a whole month. Lords Hehiro Kurita and Alexander Davion were in favor of war and argued that the League should send an ultimatum to the Periphery governments. Davion knew that gearing up for war would stimulate his state's ailing economy as well as help reconcile his people to membership in the League. The Kuritans, militant to the core, welcomed war as a means of proving their superiority as warriors.

The Steiner Archon was also in favor, believing that war would deflect the Lyran's attention away from other, more domestic, problems. Marion Marik, on the other hand, was worried that the Free Worlds would suffer a grave economic and social crisis if trade with the Periphery were no longer possible. Chancellor Ursula Liao was likewise more concerned with trying to solidify her position as ruler.

As for Ian Cameron, he did not need much coaxing. He had not worked for more than 20 years to see "a handful of savages and rabble-rousers" frustrate his vision of mankind unified under one flag. Indeed, he believed war with the Periphery would strengthen the bonds already forged with the other Great Houses of the Inner Sphere as well as give their surplus military plenty to do. Everyone believed that the Star League's superior military would subdue the Periphery in five years, at most. Cameron was certain that the benefits of Star League membership would erase any last traces of resistance.

With the majority of the High Council in favor of war, First Lord Cameron issued the Pollux Proclamation. Delivered to the Periphery governments on January 2, 2575, this strongly worded document stopped just short of a formal declaration of war. The Lords of the Star League gave the Periphery governments three months to respond.

The Independent States of the Periphery, as they had begun to call themselves, did not need that much time. On March 1, 2575, they presented the First Lord with their scathing reply. The Star League might be the mightiest foe any Human government had ever faced, but the stubborn outworlders did not shrink from the task. Autonomy was more important to them than any Star League high-tech gadgetry or military "protection." They would fight before they would give in.

Immediately after the Proclamation was issued, First Lord Cameron ordered the Bureau of Star League Affairs to create a huge media campaign to whip up support for the inevitable war. This obvious propaganda action created considerable controversy among BSLA Staffers. Many believed it was against the high moral purpose of the Star League to threaten war, and that it was doubly shameful to coerce the people with lies. The divisions within the BSLA became so bitter that the First Lord publicly stripped the Bureau's leader, Duke Mitchell DeGrason, of his position and his titles for actions "unbecoming a member of the Star League." This action was all the more shocking because the Duke was an old friend of Lord Ian and had been best man at Ian and Shandra's wedding.



46



TEXT OF POLLUX PROCLAMATION, 2575

My Lords and Ladies:

We stand poised on the verge of a great era, a time of realized potential, of peace, security, and freedom for every man and woman. We have taken strides toward these goals that are unprecedented in Human history by setting aside our regional, parochial differences and forging a union vaster and stronger than any previously devised.

In the course of this mighty achievement, we have struck down many barriers to harmony and understanding. One barrier that remains is the isolationism of certain areas that refuse to join in with this union, and thereby jeopardize everything for which it stands.

There is no good reason for the intransigence of people who will not recognize the greater good of laying down their independence for the sake of joining our League. There is no good reason for people to insist on resisting the superior wisdom of those who have come before them into the fold, nor is there reason for them to continue to seek their own lonely course far from the centers of culture and civilization.

This course of action is temporary. This course of action is provincial.

Furthermore, in consideration of the common goals we share, we must set aside our differences and pool our resources for the common good, once and for all.

The Star League stands for a unified Humanity. As First Lord of the Star League, it is my solemn responsibility to protect the welfare of that Humanity wherever it may be found, be it on Sian or Santiago, New Vandenberg or New Avalon, Andurien or Apollo, Castor or Canopus. Through me, the Star League assumes the awesome task of safeguarding the welfare of Humanity. It is a responsibility from which the League will never shrink, a responsibility it shall never lay down. The dark days of barbarism are over—we will not let them return again.

The only way to ensure equal protection for all, the only way to safeguard the liberties of each individual, is for every Human being to accept the benefits we offer, freely and openly. So long as a solitary individual of the most distant planet in the Periphery remains uneducated, impoverished, or disadvantaged, all are equally stricken.

This situation is not now, nor shall it ever be, acceptable. We intend to see that the majority is not denied the benefits of culture and progress at the hands of a minority of radical isolationists. We intend to extend our benevolent protection into every corner of Human-occupied space, whatever the cost, until every man, woman, and child prospers and flourishes. Let no one stand in the way of Human progress. The time for reunification has come, but some have made the grievous error of failing to heed the call. Instead, they chant, jeer, and jump about claiming independence, as if they were somehow beyond the grasp of their mother world. It is truly sad, but it seems that the cost of a united Humanity will be paid in blood.

To the poor people of the Periphery who live under the thumb of isolationists, my message is as follows: Take heart! The true light of Humanity will soon come your way and rip away the darkness that has shackled your lives for so long.

To the isolationist governments of the Periphery, my message is as follows: As you have shown by your uncivilized refusal to negotiate in good faith for better relations between us, I no longer restrain those of us who believe punishment is in order.

The purpose of the Star League is peace. The ideal of the Star League is peace. The Star League is eternally committed to the principles of peace. If the recalcitrant leaders of the Periphery force our hand and require us to go to war, the war will be total. No prisoners will be taken. No holds will be barred. If the Star League is forced to fight for peace, it will be a fight to the death.

REUNIFICATION WAR

The Reunification War was in reality four separate campaigns fought against the Taurian Concordat, the Magistracy of Canopus, the Outworlds Alliance, and the Rim Worlds Republic. Though the governments of the Inner Sphere tended to lump together these distant governments, the Periphery is, of course, not a place with astrographical boundaries but merely the name for the vast space surrounding the borders of the Inner Sphere.

Compared to the might of the Star League, or even to any of the Great Houses that formed it, the Periphery governments seemed like relatively easy pickings. Yet, the armies of these realms put up such a fierce struggle to retain their autonomy that it took the SLDF more than 20 years to subdue them.

BATTLE PLANS

Most histories date the start of the Reunification War with the Pollux Proclamation of 2575 and date the end with the establishment of the Territorial States in 2597. The first campaign, against the Taurians, began in 2575, though war was not officially declared until 2578.

By 2575, the Star League Defense Force was finally coalescing from a collection of uneasy allies into a unified fighting force. Cohesion and leadership were improving and the efforts of almost constant war games had sharpened the army and navy's fighting abilities. To build up the SLDF to a force capable of conquering four distant Periphery realms, First Lord Cameron issued Directive 22 in late February. This edict commanded each member-state to contribute troops from their House armies to the SLDF. This force would be known as the Star League Expeditionary Force.

The command structure of the SLDF consisted of a Military Operations Command, headed by General Shandra Cameron, and four Regional Operations Commands (ROCs), each led by the General responsible for seizing one of the Periphery states. Within the ROCs were various Task Group Commands in charge of the groupings of ground and naval forces being assembled for use against Periphery forces.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

At the request of the Independent States of the Periphery, I formally reply to your demand that we submit to the Star League or else suffer the consequences. My reply is simply this: Rest up, conserve your strength, and kiss your children goodbye because we have no intention of surrendering our sovereignty to a pack of politicians who think they are important because they huddle around Terra. Real men and women live free and independent of any feeble ideas about "the birthplace of Humanity" and other high-sounding drivel.

Real men and women do not need Terra, and if necessary, we are willing to give our lives to prove it.

—Grendel Roberts, Ambassador from the Independent States of the Periphery, to Lord Ian Cameron, March 1, 2575



The SLDF had 270 regiments and over 500 capital warships. Three regiments formed a brigade. Three brigades formed a division. Three divisions plus auxiliary and support units formed a corps.

Thanks to the United Triumph Military Exercises of three years before, there existed a network of military bases on worlds near the Periphery borders. In anticipation of war, Cameron had ordered that the bases be maintained and secretly expanded.

The countless military transports slowly making their way to the borders of the Star League created enormous disruptions in normal activities. The SLDF virtually took over worlds along key trade routes for months, even years, at a time, as military transports convoyed in from the interior. Warships of every conceivable design crowded around jump points, their sails fluttering idly in the solar wind. On the besieged worlds, military transports ferrying supplies occupied every available spot in the spaceports.

While these convoys were taking their places, along the way appropriating everything they needed, the Commander of the SLDF, the commanders of the four Regional Commands, and the First Lord were planning their strategy. Star League forces would drive straight toward the industrial heart and political center of each Periphery state. The supplemental forces supplied by League member-states would seal off the invasion route and cut off enemy attempts to mount their own offensive. These troops would also serve as a strategic reserve if the invasion force needed help.

The attacks against the four Periphery governments would not occur simultaneously, however. The SLDF strategists hoped that a successful, quick and dirty campaign against just one Periphery realm would persuade the others to surrender peacefully to the Star League. Possibly because of Alexander Davion's dislike of the Taurians, the Star League High Command selected the Taurian Concordat as the target of their first offensive.

THE TAURIAN CAMPAIGN

Between March 2575 and December 2576, the Star League ordered the deployment of the First, Third, Fourth, and Sixth Corps to the Concordat border. Meanwhile, a large Federated Suns auxiliary corps was placed along the Concordat border between the planets As Samik and Naka Pabni. They expected the campaign to last no more than six months.

As for the Taurians, Protector Mitchell Calderon had begun to mobilize his military for war the day after receiving the Pollux Proclamation. At the same time, the Concordat's industries geared up to produce arms and materiel. Of all the Periphery governments, the Taurians were the best-prepared militarily. This, along with the ferocious patriotism of the Concordat troops, turned the Star League's hopes for a "quick and dirty" military success into a fierce campaign that lasted many years.

The Taurians knew that they would be vastly outnumbered once the full might of the SLDF offensive task force was assembled against them. Until then, however, the Star League forces and the number of DropShips and JumpShips in the region were a mere fraction of their projected strength.

The advisors of Mitchell Calderon, ruler of the Taurian Concordat, counseled the launching of a preemptive offensive against the Davion auxiliary force before the four Star League Corps arrived in force. This offensive did not have any territorial objective. Rather, its aim was to destroy as many enemy vessels as possible, particularly troopships. In this way, the Taurians hoped to stall the League's offensive long enough for the Concordat to integrate reinforcements currently being trained in the Hyades Cluster.

The plan, code-named "Case Amber," was adopted in fall 2576. Under cover of tensions already existing between the



48

Concordat and the Federated Suns, Mitchell Calderon's navy managed to sucker three-quarters of the Davion navy into launching an ill-advised naval offensive in 2577. Once the Davion warships were far from their own border, the Taurians used another fleet of warships to cut them off. Desperately attempting to flee to the safety of the Federated Suns, the Davion fleet ran into a much larger

fleet of Concordat vessels lying in wait in the Tentativa system. When the battle was over, more than 20 Davion warships were destroyed or captured while the Taurians lost only three vessels. It was a stunning victory.

TENTATIVA

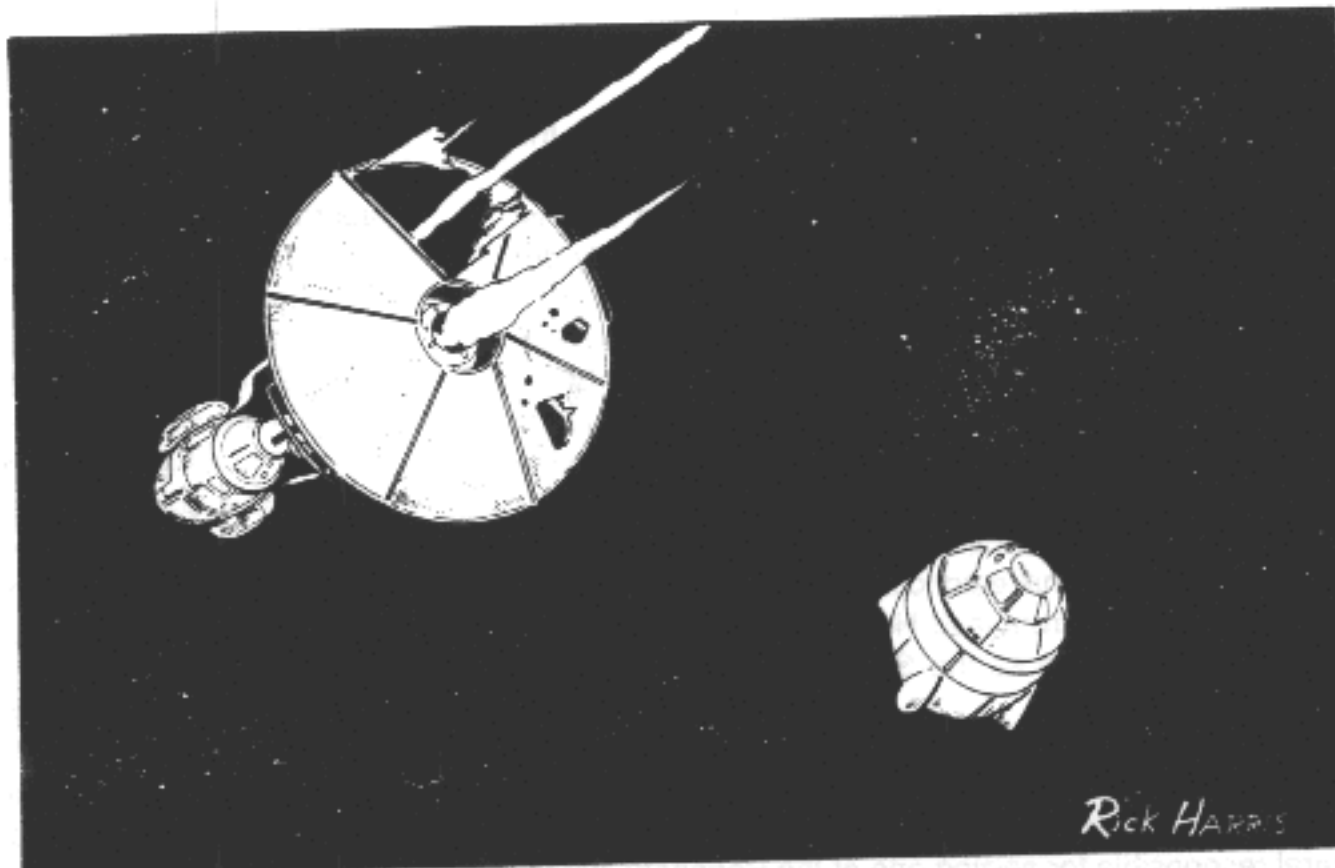
I don't remember climbing into the survival capsule. One moment I was sitting there, strapped into my gunner's couch, my fingers on the triggers. A second later, I was watching my ship, the *FSS Sword's Point*, slowly recede as the capsule's small rockets pushed me clear. The difference between those two moments was marked by a bleeding gash on my arm and the smell of my burned suit filling the cockpit of the capsule.

I was alone in a capsule that was rated to hold 20. No other lifeboats from our ship seemed to be about, nor could I locate any with the capsule's equipment. By looking out the porthole, I maneuvered the capsule to where I could watch the *Sword's Point*. Perhaps it would have been better otherwise because I ended up seeing her last moments.

I looked at her hull. Just a month ago she had been gleaming with a fresh coat of Davion red. Now she was ugly with laser rakes, missile craters, and cannon rips. Atmosphere bled from her in countless places where the Taurians' shots had compromised the hull's integrity. From a few of the larger holes, I could see a speck being sucked out into the vacuum; it would wriggle for a few moments, then grow still.

Suddenly one of her engines gave out. It wasn't an explosion, but an implosion. My guess is that a Taurian laser caught the engine in its reaction chamber, collapsing it and forcing its reaction mass into the main engineering room of the ship. The whole rear third of the ship began to crumble like a piece of tin foil. The force of the collapse tore open a seam in the hull, expelling a huge plume of gas. It glowed blue, a sure sign of radioactivity.

From somewhere above and behind me, a salvo of missiles raced toward the *FSS Sword's Point*. Most caught her amidships, breaking her spine. What was left of the ship's atmosphere whooshed out. Debris began to spin about in all directions, some of it entering orbit around one of Tentativa's planets, some drifting out of the system and into the wasteland of interstellar space.



I passed under one of the Taurian battlecruisers. For a moment, I considered ramming her with the capsule, but thought better of it. One little life boat couldn't do much more than scuff the armor on a turret. Better to live than waste my life making a few scratches on a warship. As I floated past, I saw barely a scratch on the battle cruiser. Its turrets whipped back and forth like Krester Snakes, spitting missiles or lasers at our ships.

Out of the corner of my eye, I sensed a flash. Turning the capsule to face it, I saw the *Eagle's Eye*, its bridge section trailing debris and atmosphere as the ship tried to ram a Taurian vessel. It missed, and the Taurians showed her no mercy, pouring shot after shot into her. As the *Eagle's Eye* drifted clear, it went completely dark; its power converters had been hit. Unless they could be reconnected in an hour, the crew would die as all heat drained from the ship. I watched it and counted the minutes. The lights never came back on.

I was eventually picked up by a Taurian cruiser. Twenty years later, most of them spent in a Taurian hard labor camp, I was finally exchanged back to the Federated Suns. I'm an old man whose memory has been failing recently. I forget the good things and remember the bad. And when I remember floating in that survival capsule, it's as though it had all happened just yesterday.

—From *Recollections of the Reunification War*, edited by Baroness Bethool Dryson, Star League Military Press, 2809

DESPERATE MEASURES

In May 2578, General Charles Mainstein Wexworth responded to the Taurians by leading the four Star League corps into the Hyades Cluster, hoping to capture the many Taurian industrial centers in an ever-tightening net. Though the SLDF won several important battles, the Taurians always made them pay dearly for their wins. On world after world, the SLDF would land with barely time to form up before Concordat Regulars began to storm the League 'Mechs in wave after suicidal wave. Perhaps because of this fierce resistance, the Star League finally declared war officially in 2578. Cameron and his High Council knew that now they would have the popular support they needed. In making that announcement public, First Lord Cameron stated that the Star League Defense Forces would no longer be bound by the Ares Conventions. When combating barbarians, he said, one must fight fire with fire.

By 2582, the Star League had captured more than a third of the Taurian systems, with heavy losses on both sides, but the Taurians had succeeded in tying down the majority of the Star League's best troops for four years instead of six months. The Taurian troops would simply not give up.

It was in this same period that the atrocities began in earnest. On Brussart, the Taurians revenged themselves for the destruction of the cream of their navy at Robsart by introducing slow-acting poison into the League's water supplies. On Weippe, they torched the food stores that would have fed the Federated Suns force for months, and on Pierce, they planted bombs in the sewer system under the League forces base.

Two years later, General Amalthia Kincaid replaced Wexworth after the elite Eighty-eighth Light Horse suffered 5,000 casualties in the Battle of Corigan. It was Kincaid who masterminded the development of the striker regiment to respond to the unconventional tactics of the Taurian guerrillas. In 2583, the indomitable Taurians launched Case Black, an elaborate plan that got an assassin close enough to Admiral Kincaid to kill her with a new weapon.

In summer 2584, General Amos Forlough was called in and given a free hand. Because of Forlough's policy of creating planetary blockades in orbit while his troops scorched every inch of territory on the ground, Taurian worlds again began to fall before the SLDF. In response to Forlough's brutal tactics, the Taurians attacked the SLDF on Diefenbaker. It was the largest Mech battle of the entire war and lasted for some five months. Though Forlough broke the back of the Taurian navy in this battle, the League lost many of its best warriors and the war dragged on for another three years.

Winning was all that mattered to General Forlough, who next sacked Hanseta, pillaged Victralla, and massacred civilians on Carmichael. By 2588, the Taurians could claim only a half dozen scattered star systems outside the Hyades Cluster. When Star League casualties rose to thousands in the seven-month-battle of New Vandenburg, Ian Cameron sent in Lord Damien Onaga to replace Forlough. Beginning in January 2590, Onaga led the elite Star Guards nearly unopposed through the last of the Taurian worlds.

The fierce Taurians did not surrender until September 22, 2596, six years after New Vandenberg. The Taurian War was finally over, though both sides were battered and bloodied. The next morning, Taurian Protector Marantha Calderon committed suicide.



HORRORS OF WAR

General Shandra Cameron stepped down from her post as Commander-in-Chief of the Star League Defense Forces in November 2575 when she suffered a heart attack. Replacing her was General Carlos Dangmar Lee.

General Lee had served for over 40 years in the Hegemony Armed Forces before becoming the SLDF's second Commander-in-Chief. After beginning his career as a common trooper from Northwind, he rose quickly in rank to receive more demanding assignments. Before his promotion to Commander-in-Chief of the SLDF, General Lee was head of the SLDF's Strategic Simulations Department.

Once in command, General Lee was immediately beset with the problems created by the Periphery military's victories. He reacted by strengthening chains of command and severely punishing anyone lax in following orders. Though this had little effect on his own troops, his stern warnings and reproaches quickly upset the allied units from the House militaries.

As the war moved beyond the opening surprises and settled into the monotonous hell of a more common and less flashy conflict, disturbing patterns were emerging. When First Lord Cameron renounced the tenets of the Ares Conventions in 2579, his enemies followed suit.

The most common horror was the massacre of civilians on many Periphery worlds and the wholesale destruction of their farmlands and industries. On the Periphery side, their desperate response was the use of Human-wave tactics to slow down technologically superior Star League units. Concealed until the last possible second, hundreds, sometimes even thousands of Periphery troops, most armed with only a laser rifle and a satchel charge, would charge an advancing Star League force. Firing their lasers, the soldiers would charge straight into the teeth of the Star League force. If a soldier was shot down, another behind him would grab his satchel charge and continue on. Though most of these troops never reached their target, those who did were numerous enough to cause many casualties among the SLDF.

In 2579, the Dog-Face Company of the 45th Royal Battle Regiment was the target of a Human wave attack while fighting on the small Concordat world of Werfer in 2579. Caught without infantry support, the Dog-Face 'Mechs could not prevent the Taurian soldiers from reaching their position or from detonating their explosives among the legs of the 'Mechs in an effort to cripple the machines. Some troopers tied a satchel charge onto a BattleMech's ankle, or more often, held the explosives to the 'Mech's leg in a suicidal hug. The Dog-Face Company lost the use of ten 'Mechs, all with destroyed ankle joints. Four of the ten MechWarriors piloting the 'Mechs were killed when Taurians rushed the cockpit section of the fallen 'Mechs, opened them, and tossed in explosives.

OUTWORLDS ALLIANCE WAR

The war against the Taurians kept the majority of the Star League's Expeditionary Force busy from 2575 to 2581, when Admiral Janissa Franklin broke the back of the Taurian navy in a two-week long battle on Robsart. Though the Taurians fought on for another 15 years, the victory at Robsart allowed the League High Command to begin their offensive against the Outworlds Alliance.

Grigori Avellar, President of the Outworlds Alliance, had no more intention of joining the Star League than any other Periphery leader, but he also knew that the Alliance military could never hope to defeat the Star League in combat. His was a mostly agrarian realm, with less than 120 light 'Mechs to defend it. Indeed, many of these 'Mechs were little more than beefed-up AgroMechs.

As elements of the Star League's Second and Fifth Corps and auxiliary Draconis Combine troops began to deploy along the Alliance border in June 2581, Avellar sent a secret delegation to Lawrence Davion of the Federated Suns. He hoped to make a deal that would keep his realm from being too badly damaged by the fighting. Meanwhile, General Amos Forlough and the Second Corps Regulars easily took the mining systems of Groveld and Bryceland in July of that year. Not long after, the Fifth Corps and a Draconis brigade made short work of Weissau, Schrimbeck, and Tabayama.

By early October, General Forlough was planning to drive directly against Alpheratz, the Alliance capital. He did not expect to meet serious resistance. What Forlough did not know, however, was that Lawrence Davion and Grigori Avellar had struck a deal. In one of the strangest twists in history, Davion mobilized three regiments of his most elite and trusted Household Guards to create a "special" unit. This unit was known as the Pitcairn Legion, after Commanding Colonel Elias Pitcairn, and they would fight secretly for the Outworlds Alliance against the Star League.

How and why did such a strange turn of events occur? When Alliance President Avellar approached Lawrence Davion in the summer of 2581, he offered the Federated Suns "protectorship" of a dozen agricultural and water-rich worlds along the Davion/Alliance border when the war was over. At that moment, Lawrence Davion felt betrayed by the League because it had not provided enough financial assistance to bail out the Suns's ailing economy and because the Star League had not yet honored its promise to formally declare Davion ownership of the Chesterton worlds. These and other political/economic considerations made Davion receptive to the deal that Avellar offered.

Control over the rich Alliance border worlds would assist in postwar recovery, and would also keep the Draconis Combine from conquering these same planets. In exchange, Davion pledged to work both covertly and overtly for an end to League military aggression against the Outworlds Alliance.

In October 2581, Lawrence Davion dispatched the Pitcairn Legion to the planet Sevon, where they encountered General Forlough on his deep-space drive toward Alpheratz. Both sides took heavy casualties. Because of that damage, Forlough was forced to wait for reinforcements of Kurita Galedon Regulars before he could resume his attack on Sevon. Though the SLDF finally captured the planet, the Pitcairn Legion escaped offworld.



50

Just two days before Forlough's final thrust toward Alpheratz, the League High Command called off the offensive. After the defeat of the Federated Suns fleet off the Taurian system of Tentativa earlier that summer, Lawrence Davion had demanded that Ian Cameron reassign Star League units to the Concordat front. Because Forlough's units were the only forces available, he had to give up a third of his fleet to another front.

Though no longer able to strike against the Alliance capital, Forlough and his Kurita auxiliaries took several more planets in early 2582. These easy pickings ended when the Fourth Rasalhague Brigade lost out to the Pitcairn Legion on Budigen. Frustrated and angry, the Combine troops went berserk, destroying property and massacring civilians. The brutal Forlough showed no mercy, either. On at least a dozen Alliance worlds, he ordered 10 percent of all civilians executed as an example to those who opposed the Star League.

The Outworlders, who had not believed themselves strong enough to challenge the Star League, now wanted nothing more than to fight these cruel invaders who murdered their people and destroyed their lands. Thousands joined the Alliance militia. To train these farmers and merchants in anti-'Mech warfare, Pitcairn assigned Captain Joshua March. They learned fast, but still had to depend on guile as much as military training.

Forlough was constantly frustrated by Lawrence Davion, who sent troops to occupy several worlds that were part of Forlough's attack plan, claiming they were under Federated Suns protectorship. In some cases, Davion commanders even refused Kurita units the right to land or resupply on certain of these planets. In reaction, Hehiro Kurita ordered his commanders to take as much territory as possible, which often left Forlough stranded.

While Davion and Kurita played out their own game of conquest, the newly trained and courageous Outworlders began to embarrass Forlough with their stiff resistance. Believing he could starve the Outworlders into submission, he put the torch to every world he encountered all through the spring and summer of 2583. Backed by Pitcairn's Legion, the Alliance forces responded with an ambush of Forlough's force on Tellman IV. In the day-long battle, the Alliance troops took out more than 200 Star League 'Mechs, losing about 100 of their own recently acquired machines. Neither side would ever fully recover from this Day of Vengeance.

The war against the Outworlds Alliance ended with a whimper rather than a bang. When General Kincaid was assassinated on the Concordat front, the brutal Forlough was transferred to command of the Taurian theater. His replacement, Major-General Franklin Barnex, was never able to obtain enough troops for a push on Alpheratz and seemed content to hang onto the worlds Forlough had conquered.

In 2585, the Alliance and the Star League signed the Peace of Cerberus, which granted the Alliance the right to govern itself under the supervision of the Star League. Though the Alliance had demanded the right to try General Forlough for war crimes, the League refused. It is estimated that 12 million people, mainly civilians, died before the two sides sat down at the negotiating table.

WAR AGAINST CANOPUS

Upon reading Ian Cameron's Pollux Proclamation, Magestrix Crystalla Centrella of Canopus asked her ministers, "What can he offer us that we cannot already buy?" No one knew that better than the Lords of the Star League, who lusted after the wealth and stability of the Canopian worlds.

The Magistracy of Canopus had grown from a handful of planets to a wealthy, unified realm of more than 50 star systems by concentrating on one major industry: pleasure. No matter how immoral or illegal something might be in other states, pleasure-seekers could find what they were looking for in Canopus—provided it did not hurt anyone else. The Canopian pleasure palaces brought in billions for the ruling House Centrella. Life was good, too, for the citizens of this realm.

Under the command of Captain-General Marion Marik, the Star League marshalled the 30-plus regiments of the Seventh Corps, plus twelve regiments of Marik troops, against Canopus. The Canopians had 17 'Mech regiments, 12 Home Guard regiments, and two fleets of small ships. Though they had money to fight a war, the Canopians knew they would have difficulty replacing 'Mechs and other materiel because they did not have the industrial capacity to replace combat losses. They would have to guard their resources carefully.

The Canopian campaign began in June 2577 when Marion Marik took Gouderak, followed by the fall of Umka in October, after a three-month-long struggle. Because the Canopians could not afford to slug it out unless they had to, their fighting strategy was to stay mobile, using hit-and-run techniques and evasion rather than brute force. This kept the Canopians somewhat scattered throughout the interior of their space, which at times worked to their advantage and at times did not.

The Canopian Colonel Adam Buquoy is credited with developing the strategy that kept the Canopians from being overrun by the well-supplied might of the Star League armies. Seeing the League commanders so dependent on high-tech equipment and on supply lines that had already grown very long by January 2578, Buquoy masterminded a raid that set the SLDF back six months. In a hard-fought but successful attack against Meadowvale and neighboring supply depots, the Canopians destroyed the League's major supply point in the region.

Marion Marik responded by constructing depots and staging bases all along her supply line. This slowed the Star League offensive for six months, but did not stop it. The turning point of the war occurred in the summer of 2583 in a two-day aerospace battle among the outer planets of the Thurrock system, one of the League's important supply centers. The Canopians had attacked, believing they had the advantage of surprise. Marik's squadrons were ready and waiting, however, and were able to virtually destroy the Canopian navy. Now was the Marik's chance to pounce on the capital world of Canopus IV, which she captured in April 2584 after a month-long battle that left heavy casualties on both sides.

The Canopian campaign dragged on for another four years, as one by one, Marion Marik took every last remaining Magistracy world. This campaign was as hard-fought and protracted as the others in the Periphery, but one major difference was Captain-General Marik's scrupulous adherence to the Ares Conventions. This prevented random destruction and helped to dispose the conquered Canopians to cooperate with the Star League.



RIM WORLDS WAR

Gregory Amaris, Lord of the Rim Worlds Republic, ruled over a people who resented the loss of their democratic rights and the truly republican form of government that had once existed. Amaris, with his dreams of power and conquest, hoped to build the Republic into a state equal to any of the Inner Sphere governments. Unfortunately for Amaris, he so alienated the people with his arrogance and misguided policies that they finally revolted against him.

The rebellion had already begun to heat up in the period just after the birth of the Star League when Amaris showed his support of the League in many public actions. At the same time that he approved the Pollux Proclamation in 2575, he also issued the Manchester Directive outlawing membership in the Rim Republic Army. Though the RRA was now little more than an honorary society, it was the Rim Worlders' last link to their former democracy. Amaris's agents rounded up and arrested, without due process of law, anyone suspected of being an RRA member.

The final straw came in April 2575 during a worker's strike at a 'Mech factory on the politically volatile world of Apollo. When Amaris called in the Fourth Amaris Dragoons to break the strike, the demonstrators (many of whom were RRA) overwhelmed the troops and declared themselves the Rim Provisional Government and Apollo as their base.

Amaris declared the whole planet to be under martial law and sent in every 'Mech he had to destroy the rebellion. Colonel Katherine Dormax, commander of the Seventh Amaris Legionnaires, refused the order to fire on her fellow citizens, however, and placed her unit in service of the rebel government. Shortly afterward, the Eighth Amaris Fusiliers followed suit. The whole northern continent came under the rebel banner. Amaris withdrew the remaining loyal units from Apollo and called on the Star League for help.

The SLDF had its hands full in the Taurian Concordat in 2575, and soon the Canopian campaign would begin to heat up. Thus, it was not until 2581 that the League could turn its sights on the Rim Worlds, where Amaris had been holed up at his private residence deep within the Republic.

The Star League called the Rim Worlds offensive Operation Mailed Fist. With the intention of driving toward the heart of the Rim Worlds, the League mobilized 18 regiments of League Regulars, six Free Worlds regiments, and three Lyran regiments.

Though the Rim Worlders had few 'Mechs or MechWarriors, the strength of their army had always been based on numerous wheeled, tracked, and hover vehicles. Patriotism and the love of freedom would also fire these motley irregulars to great heroism. As the months went by, Combine units arrived to bolster the sagging campaign. The rebels became even more determined because the Kuritans were often brutal toward civilians.

The months wore on, with the League capturing only a third of the Rim Republic eight years into the war. In March 2595, Archon Viola Steiner-Dineson arrived on Apollo in command of the Fourth Royal Guard. She had a clever plan to draw the rebels away from the capital, leaving it vulnerable to capture by her units plus Amaris reinforcements. The trap might have worked but for an unexpected failure in communications that left the Archon and her Guards trapped among three enemy 'Mech regiments. The Rim Worlds rebels destroyed most of the Fourth. Viola Steiner-Dineson was so badly wounded that she died a month later.

The Star League was simply too powerful, however. By 2596, the SLDF forces had hunted down the last of the rebels. The Rim Provisional Government surrendered in September of that year.

POSTWAR ERA

As of midnight September 3, 2596, the Provisional Government of the Rim Worlds Republic does hereby surrender unconditionally to the forces of the Star League. All citizens are ordered to cease hostile actions and lay down their weapons....I realize that the fight has been long and hard and to surrender now is a bitter pill, but to fight any longer would damn us to oblivion. May God have mercy on our souls, we don't want to see everyone die.

—Senator Benjamin Trivallor, spokesperson for the Provisional Government of the Rim Worlds Republic

With the surrender of the Rim Worlds and then the Taurian Concordat in 2596, the Reunification War finally came to an end. In 2597, the four conquered Periphery governments became Territorial States of the Star League, with large occupation forces present to enforce the will of the League-appointed Military Governors. Most of these garrison forces would be withdrawn by 2607, when home rule was reestablished and Star League Associate-Member status accorded to the four Territorial States.

To soften the trauma of these changes, the Star League launched a massive reconstruction effort and propaganda campaign to "foster good will between the distant frontiers and the cradle of Humanity." The people of the Periphery reacted with cynicism at first, finding it hard to believe such propaganda after all that had occurred. As the years passed and the Star League government's reconstruction efforts began to show results, many citizens of the Periphery began to feel a grudging respect for their former enemies.

For the next 150 years, the Star League would guarantee its people an unparalleled era of peace, prosperity, high technology, and improved quality of life. Ian Cameron did not live to see the true greatness of the Star League, which flowered only after the Reunification War.



52

A NEW FIRST LORD

In 2600, Lady Shandra Cameron died. Two years later, Lord Ian Cameron followed her. The Star League marked their deaths with a year of official mourning, and the High Council Lords ordered all Star League officials to wear black and all official vehicles to display a black stripe. This would become a tradition after the passing of every subsequent First Lord.

Ian's son Nicholas became leader of the Star League when he was 46 years old. None of the other High Councilors opposed his accession because the elder Cameron had trained his heir well for the power and responsibilities he would face.

Just after his 18th birthday, Nicholas Cameron had entered the Sandhurst Royal Military College, an SLDF Academy in Berkshire, England, on Terra, where he trained as both a Mech-Warrior and computer specialist. In 2578, he graduated with honors and was assigned to the Forty-third Royal Light Horse Regiment (later known as the Steeds of Nicholas). Within six months, he had been promoted to Lance Commander and in another six months to Company Commander.

In 2600, the Forty-third's posting was the small Concordat world of Badlands. It was a dangerous assignment, because tough and stubborn groups of Concordat rebels still roamed the arid mountains of the planet's southern continent, refusing to surrender. Twice, Nicholas Cameron was wounded in action. In the first incident, a small piece of shrapnel penetrated the cockpit of his *Rifleman* and slightly wounded the left side of his face. The second time was more serious. After walking his *Rifleman* into an ambush of three autocannons, his cockpit was completely destroyed before his company could come to his aid. Nicholas lost an arm and nearly lost his life.

He arrived back on Terra for recuperation just after his mother's death. Within weeks of the funeral, the First Lord appointed Nicholas First Lord-Designate. By 2602, he became First Lord.

NOT SO BAD

I realize that I'm supposed to live up to the high ideals of my youth and not cave in to the lure of comfort and security, but I *do* like these Star League folks. Yes, I remember all our war cries: "Remember the Republic," "Down with the puppet governments," "Kick the Cameron bastards out," and the rest—but that doesn't change the fact that things are better now than before the wars. We've got hospitals, we've got farms where once there were deserts, and we've got more jobs than there are people to fill them. And what do the Camerons ask in return? That we get up and pledge allegiance to the League flag, that we pay our taxes, and that we put up with a few BattleMechs stomping around. I call that a fair trade. Now what can you young rabble-rousers offer me that's better?

And, before you accuse me of being a League sympathizer, let me remind you that I was toting a laser rifle in the Black Hell Mountains and risking my neck against Star League 'Mechs long before you young firebrands were even born. Never accuse me of being a coward or I'll be tempted to shove my fist down your scrawny little throat.

I am not a coward, and I'm not a fool, either. So when you come around here throwing rocks and causing a ruckus, remember that being independent means having to take care of yourselves. Judging by the looks of you, we'd be in big trouble if we were suddenly independent. If you didn't have the Star League to change your diapers, what would you do?

—From *One-Eyed Jack*, a novel about life in the Periphery Territories, by Venalla Hafnerson, Star League Press, 2609



LEONARD'S FOLLY

In the grand and everlasting debate on which is more vital for a man, a well-built slut or a slug from a bottle, one thing must be said in defense of the bottle: it's always willing.

—Remarks attributed to Coordinator Leonard Kurita



53

The one sour note in the era of postwar reconstruction and the healing of war wounds came, predictably perhaps, from the Draconis Combine. In 2591, Coordinator Hehiro Kurita died after falling down a flight of stairs. Where Hehiro had been a skillful politician as well as a wise ruler, Leonard Kurita, his son and successor, was a willful, erratic, perhaps even unbalanced man. The fact that he was also an alcoholic and a libertine did nothing to improve his qualifications to rule a powerful state.

Indeed, his accession to the Combine throne was not auspicious. As soon as he received news of his father's death in 2591, the middle-aged Leonard decided to celebrate his new power by hopping from planet to planet across at least a dozen of his worlds in an orgy of women and drink.

This was, of course, in the midst of the Reunification War, and Ian Cameron did not appreciate the newest member of the High Council being off on a debauch instead of tending to crucial affairs of state. The new Coordinator only shrugged when he heard about Cameron's speech censuring him before the other members of the High Council. It was his first duty, Leonard said, to produce an heir, even if he had to visit every seraglio in the Combine to do it.

Both his excesses and his vices seemed to multiply as time went on. As a result, the Combine's District Military Governors had to assume responsibility for the Combine's role in the Reunification War. Nor did they yield any of this power with the war's end, for Leonard paid neither them nor his duties any mind.

Whether it was due to drink, drugs, or some intrinsic mental defect, the wildly unpredictable Leonard would sometimes order large contingents of BattleMechs to land on worlds near the Hegemony/Combine border. Perhaps he wanted to see what the First Lord would do. Cameron interpreted this behavior as deliberate aggression against his people and a challenge to his power. Cameron was also angry because Leonard's 'Mechs were badly needed elsewhere to fight the war.

While the Reunification War went on, Cameron limited himself to issuing ever more strongly worded protests. Once the Periphery war was over, he immediately took more direct action. As many units began to return homeward, Cameron began to order some of these to positions along the Hegemony/Combine border. Yet Leonard did not seem at all intimidated. Rather, he seemed inspired to new heights of folly.

In 2601, the unmarried Leonard Kurita decided it was time to search the Combine for the bastard children he had tried to sire ten years before. Though he located a few, the Coordinator was not satisfied. Obsessed with the idea of finding all his children, he began to have paranoid fantasies that Ian Cameron had spirited some of his offspring across the border into the Terran Hegemony.

In 2602, several lances of Combine BattleMechs, reinforced with platoons of infantry, landed on Asta, a world jointly owned by the Combine and the Hegemony and therefore a demilitarized zone. The Combine troops headed directly for the planet's schools and orphanages, where the soldiers ordered the fright-

ened children to line up for scrutiny. By the time elements of the Regular Army's Ninety-first Heavy Assault Regiment (The Armadillos) arrived, the Combine troops had gone, but not before taking 14 children whom they believed to resemble Leonard Kurita.

Even after medical tests proved that these children were not related to the Coordinator and they had been returned home, relations between the Hegemony and the Combine remained severely strained. Royal units of the SLDF were placed along the Combine-Hegemony border in a state of heightened readiness, for no one knew what scheme the erratic Leonard might conjure up next.

During the Fall 2604 session of the High Council, Coordinator Leonard stumbled into the Council Chamber, strode up to the First Lord, and spat in his face. When guards rushed forward with their weapons at the ready, the First Lord raised his hand to signal them to wait. Calmly wiping his face, he asked the enraged Council Lord what was the meaning of this act.

Lord Leonard launched into a tirade about how the First Lord was deliberately hiding his Kurita heirs. Waving a half-empty bottle of his favorite brew, Leonard next accused Cameron of deliberately attempting to gut the Combine of military forces during the Reunification War. Nicholas Cameron calmly denied the charges and invited the Coordinator to sit down to discuss the matter with dignity. Wobbling where he stood, the Coordinator screamed that he would do no such thing and threw the bottle at Nicholas Cameron.

The bottle missed the First Lord, but hit one of the guards. As the guard instinctively fired a shot with her laser rifle, the bolt grazed the Coordinator's right arm. Leonard leaped at the guard before she could react, stabbing her with a dagger that he pulled from beneath his robes. Then he ran from the Council Chamber while Nicholas Cameron and the other Lords tried to help the wounded guard. She died before medical assistance could arrive.

The guard's name was Sergeant Tanya Kerensky. To honor her attempt to protect him, First Lord Nicholas Cameron awarded the Kerensky family the special title, "Defender of the First Lord," and the right to attend any university or military academy. So began this great military line, whose name has become almost synonymous with the Star League.

Coordinator Leonard Kurita fled Terra for the safety of the Draconis Combine. When he arrived, he immediately began to assemble an army and a fleet for the invasion of the Hegemony. He did not listen to his family or his generals' pleas to reconsider. Even the normally timid public was uncharacteristically bold in demonstrating their opposition.

Leonard Kurita lent a deaf ear, even after his sister committed *seppuku* in shame. It truly looked as though the Hegemony and the Combine were about to go to war. With the Coordinator so unpopular among the other Council Lords, he would surely have to go it alone against the entire Star League. If this was to be war, it would be one the Combine could not win.

Before the first attack could be launched, Coordinator Leonard Kurita died mysteriously. It came out only much later that members of the Kurita family, humiliated and shamed by Leonard, had secretly tried the hopelessly corrupt Coordinator and found him guilty. Leonard had been assassinated at their command, averting a useless war. The Kurita family stood down the assembled warships and divisions and began to hope for a much saner regime under the new Coordinator, Blaine Kurita.

ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES

In many ways, the passing of Leonard Kurita marked the true, though unofficial, end of the Reunification War. By 2605, most of the participating troops had returned to the Inner Sphere and were making their way back to their homeworlds. Everyone was eager to sweep away the last vestiges of the bad years and enjoy the peace that the Star League had promised but not yet delivered.

With Leonard gone, the threat of war evaporated. The Star League forces poised to attack on the Kurita/Davion border were ordered down from War Alert status, but First Lord Nicholas Cameron decided that Star League or no Star League, he was taking no more chances. In another of the great ironies of history, the First Lord of the Star League asked his most trusted advisors and military strategists to create contingency plans for war with each of the other five members of the Star League at the very moment he was about to lead the Human race into its finest moment.

Though a minor economic depression affected every government immediately following the Reunification War, the Inner Sphere began to boom as corporations retooled their factories to produce civilian rather than military items. Trade with the new Territorial States was especially profitable because they lacked almost everything and were willing to pay with vital raw resources from their worlds. Once again it was cargoships laden with goods rather than SLDF troopships making their way among the worlds of the Periphery.



54

The period from roughly 2600 to 2650 has been often referred to as the Good Years. Freed from the demands of researching ever more potent weapons and of churning them out for war, the leaders of Star League member-states could direct their scientific and industrial resources toward creating a better life for all. The Terran Hegemony, the Federated Suns, and the Lyran Commonwealth were

the leaders in research and development, but the whole race benefited from the fruits of their research.

The Terran Hegemony could now return to what it knew best: high technology. Spurred on by a series of decrees from the Director-General, major industries adopted long-range plans for research programs aimed at widening the Hegemony's technological edge. Also important in shaping the Hegemony's future was a series of secret messages, only recently discovered by ComStar researchers, in which the government urged these same industries to voluntarily reinstate the ban on selling advanced technology. This was because Cameron was still not convinced that no other Lord would challenge his power. In return, First Lord Nicholas awarded the firms lucrative military contracts to help make up for any business lost.

Perhaps the most significant technological development during Nicholas Cameron's reign was the HyperPulse Generator. The origins of the HPG go back to the equations of the great Professors Kearny and Fuchida. In one obscure section of their papers, published in 2022, they speculated on the possibility of creating artificial jump points and they provided equations for generating them. Because the costs would have been astronomical, the scientific community did not pursue these hypotheses any further.

OTHER MAJOR TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGHS

The Jamerson-Ulikov Water Purification Procedure

First demonstrated in 2622, the J-U Purifier was a breakthrough that rivaled the development of the HPG in importance. The procedure, which used a filtering agent made from common sand, was half the size of the previous purification plant and could be produced at a third of its cost. The device was developed at the Caph Institute of Technology.

When news of this important technology was announced, it sparked considerable debate within the Hegemony government as to whether the J-U Water Purifier should be placed on the Hegemony's unofficial list of "sensitive" technology, preventing its sale to anyone outside the Hegemony. First Lord Nicholas decided that to suppress the device would be unusually cruel to those worlds that had to devote enormous resources just to obtain drinkable water. He approved the licensing of the purifiers to other member-states. Soon, previously marginal or uninhabitable worlds were opening up for colonization while other colonies blossomed with the aid of the J-U Purifier.

The Eligus Medical Diagnoser

Developed in the 2640s, the Eligus Diagnoser was the brainchild of the Saffel Medical Institute. Using the latest computer technology, the Diagnoser was capable of doing a complete medical work-up on a patient in an amazingly short time with only minimal Human assistance. The Diagnoser

also combined various devices, such as X-Ray, CAT, GRT, and VelRay scanners into one compact device. With the Eligus Diagnoser, it was now possible for a computer with the intelligence of a specialist to diagnose a medical problem and suggest a treatment in a fraction of the normal time and cost. The machine was so proficient that the Star League Medical Association would not allow it into hospitals until 2665 because of groundless fears that its use would throw thousands of doctors out of work.

Neural-Dimensional Computer Technology

While photon coursing had long ago replaced electronic wiring in computers, a major breakthrough occurred when several research groups discovered that light beams could be phased and modulated to represent more than simple on-and-off messages. The discovery resulted in the development of the Light Tree as the basic building block of computers and allowed computer designers finally to build a computer patterned after the Human brain. Though the resulting computer, called SIBYL, was in some ways a disappointment (not being able to "think" like Humans, as its designers had hoped), its ability to calculate and make rational decisions was a quantum leap beyond the capabilities of computers. Neural-Dimensional Computers were a development that the Hegemony kept to itself while funneling them into its military.

—From *A Timeline of Technology*, by Duchess Nichole Simon, Hegemony Press, 2734



GENERAL JOSEPH CAMERON

In 2598, Nicholas Cameron married Lydia Petersen, the Duchess of Bryant, just before his unit shipped out to serve in the Periphery Territories. As a member of the Department of Star League Education and Information, Duchess Lydia was involved in the public relations campaign to persuade the citizens of the Periphery Territorial States that the Star League was their far-away friend always willing to lend a hand.

The marriage was apparently a very good one, despite the difference in their ages. Duchess Lydia eventually became the Education Department's second-in-command, taking only a brief leave of absence to give birth to a son, Joseph. Nicholas Cameron was severely wounded on the Periphery world of Badlands on the same day his son was born.

Despite what was, by all accounts, a loving and proper upbringing, Joseph Cameron grew up to be a vain, devious, and aggressive young man. On Joseph's 16th birthday, his parents sent him on an extended tour of the Star League, accompanied by many admired and respected figures of the realm. They hoped that these dignified men and women would somehow influence their wayward son to change his ways.



Unfortunately, Joseph Cameron seemed even worse by the time the tour was over. At a loss, his parents turned him over to the SLDF, who sent the young man to the newly built War College of Mars as a cadet. The college staff was under strict orders from the Camerons not to give Joseph any preferential treatment. If anything, Nicholas ordered them to give the boy an extra-strong taste of reality so "he'll learn that foolish actions can lead to serious consequences."

In 2614, First Lord Cameron appointed Joshua Hoshiko as Minister of Communications. The next year, Hoshiko enlisted Cassie DeBurke, a brilliant young professor from the University of Terra (located near the Court of the Star League), to study the problem further. DeBurke realized that the cost to transmit matter through artificial jump points might be prohibitive, but the cost to transmit bundles of energy—modulated energy, such as simple radio waves—was within the range of modest reactors. If this idea could be converted into practical technology, it would make possible the instantaneous transmission of messages to receivers 50 light years away.

For the next 15 years, Professor DeBurke and her research staff worked secretly and feverishly on her theories. The culmination of their work was the first HPG station, built just outside the Court of the Star League, which transmitted the first HPG message on New Year's Day 2630. Once this revolutionary system was set up all over the Inner Sphere, it took a mere seven days to broadcast from Terra to Tharkad. Messages to the most distant Periphery planet took less than six months to arrive, at least twice the speed of the previous transmission time.

Another major change that First Lord Nicholas instituted was the unification of the entire Star League under one economic system. When he announced his ambitious plans in 2621, reactions were varied. Interrealm speculators vehemently opposed the idea, which was understandable because they made their living from trading in the various currencies and taking advantage of differing economic systems.

The Kurita government was at first opposed because they feared becoming too dependent economically on the other states of the Inner Sphere. The Steiner Archon also opposed the idea because it seemed to violate the sovereignty of an individual realm. The major corporations in all the member-states approved of the First Lord's economic plan, however. Indeed, a protest shutdown of 80 percent of all Lyran business forced the Archon to accept the plan. Businessmen saw a single currency as a way to raise profits and to simplify the maddeningly complicated monetary exchange system that hampered all their dealings.

The change over to the new money system officially began on July 1, 2623. The new currency was based upon the Star Dollar. The paper money had the official seal of the Star League on one side and a small holographic engraving of a spaceship on the other. The Council Lords suggested that Lord Nicholas's image appear on the bills, but he declined. Because every member-state had the responsibility of printing the money, under strict League supervision, each bill would also show the seal of its own realm.

As the First Lord had foreseen, the new economic system led to an unparalleled boom in trade. Merchants traveled to the farthest corners of occupied space, bringing prosperity and a better quality of life to all. Truly, this was a golden age of cooperation and the good life.

From 2632 on, the League began to expand at a rapid rate because of advances in water purification technologies that reduced the costs appreciably. The process was so much cheaper than what the Ryan Cartel iceships could provide that Ryan eventually went bankrupt. The other major difference was that these new water purifiers required high-tech maintenance, but that was no problem during this optimistic era. By the year 2640, more than 1,000 new planets had been colonized and the League had expanded to control a sphere roughly 540 light years in diameter.

Joseph's incorrigible behavior survived the academy, but he also developed a veneer of suave courtesy during that time. A year after leaving the academy, he married a young officer named Josephine Franks. She was one of the reasons that Joseph almost became respectable. Only on the battlefield, where he earned a reputation as a nasty fighter, did his true self fully emerge.

Joseph rose quickly in the ranks of the SLDF, despite several minor scandals. By his 29th birthday, he was a Colonel in command of a Royal regiment. He also became a father that year when Josephine gave birth to Michael Cameron. Believing his son's days as a delinquent were over, First Lord Nicholas appointed him Director-General of the Terran Hegemony in 2630.

The Mhan-Gradium scandal broke a decade later. Mhan-Gradium Light Conductor Industries was a small manufacturer of light pathways for computers. In 2641, they won an important government contract that gave them virtual dominance in their field. Several months later, investigative reporters traced a series of kickbacks and bribes from the company all the way to the Director-General's palace. The story went public, and for the next several months, Joseph Cameron repeatedly denied the growing evidence, calling it a lie fabricated by his many enemies.

Just as one reporter was promising the revelation of important new evidence, the man met with a sudden, mysterious death. Suspicion came to rest squarely on the shoulders of Director-General Joseph. The First Lord removed Joseph from his position as Hegemony Director-General until after the investigations, reactivated his commission in the Regular Army, and had him assigned to the backwaters of the SLDF as commander of the Wargame Arrangement and Planning Commission.

Four months later, Joseph died. While participating in a regional wargame with the 112th Royal Hussars (The Jokes of Joseph), his 'Mech stepped on an improperly prepared vibrabomb that blew its leg off. Joseph attempted to eject from his falling 'Mech, but the rockets fired before the cockpit hatch could open. The accident occurred just as the investigation into the reporter's death was leading to a warrant for Joseph's arrest.

During Joseph's few short months at the Wargame Arrangement and Planning Commission, he devised one of the most important training tools of the SLDF. These were a series of contests that turned warfare into a competitive event in the Star League. The competitions not only helped soldiers to keep their combat skills honed to a fine edge, but the contests instilled esprit de corps. Regional wargames determined which units would go on to face the champions from other regions. The cycle of competitions continued for four years until the final and ultimate wargame, the Martial Olympiad, was held to determine the best fighting units in the SLDF.

COUNCIL EDICT 2650

In 2646, Nicholas Cameron designated his grandson Michael as his successor. This surprised many who expected the First Lord to name one of his daughters or his second son, Mitchell, as Heir-Designate. The unexpected announcement, plus the cloud of suspicion that still clung to Joseph's memory stirred up considerable debate among the member-states. Michael Cameron attended the War Academy and graduated as a Naval officer, though he had a scholarly bent. Most of his military career was spent aboard the battleship *Arkansas*, first as its Science Officer and then as its second-in-command.



When Nicholas Cameron died in 2649, control of the Star League passed on to Michael Cameron by right of succession. While the Council Lords publicly welcomed the new First Lord, in private they wondered whether young Michael had enough political skill for the job. Several were looking forward to being able to manipulate him. Events in the Periphery territories would soon prove that the new First Lord was up to the tasks facing him.

Tadeo Amaris, a member of the ruling family of the Rim Worlds Republic, had begun an alarmingly rapid expansion of his military. By 2650, Michael began to receive urgent messages from agents in the area about whole cargoships filled with Battle-Mechs, tanks, and artillery pieces docking at Tadeo's homeworld of Apollo. They estimated that within three months Tadeo's military had swelled from eight regiments of battered light 'Mechs to 15 regiments of very capable 'Mechs of all sizes.

Where Tadeo was getting the 'Mechs was a mystery. The ships delivering the arms were registered to legitimate trading companies from several realms. When questioned, the firms replied that mysterious parties had asked them to ship the weapons with no questions asked. Because they had been paid well, the manufacturers complied, even though it was weapons and ammunition they were transporting.

The First Lord convened an emergency meeting to reveal this information to the other Lords and to seek their advice. The problem was that, technically, Tadeo Amaris was not acting illegally, for he had the right to build up his House forces. When Cameron sent Star League representatives to ask that he disband his army, Amaris quoted passages of the Star League Accord guaranteeing the right to bear arms.

When the High Council and First Lord met to consider the crisis, most expressed fear that this would be only the first of the powerful Periphery families to present a threat. The spectre of another Reunification War seemed to raise its head. The High Councilors believed that they had few choices. They could order the Regular Army and the Navy to march in and simply confiscate and/or destroy Amaris's weapons, without even the slightest pretext of legality. They could publicly demand that Tadeo disarm. Or they could change the laws so that Amaris's acts were illegal, forcing him to disband his excess regiments.

Though Michael Cameron was not entirely comfortable with the tactic of rewriting laws, the Council voted to proceed with the third option. The First Lord also persuaded them to approve a new law limiting the militaries of powerful Inner Sphere families and the House armies of each member-state. Council Edict 2650, the law's official title, dictated the acceptable size of military forces that governments and private families were allowed to raise. An even stricter measure had already been enacted in the Periphery, where even particular weapon systems were specified as unacceptable.

Amaris backed down after the Star League sent in several 'Mech regiments on extended maneuvers over the Rim Worlds border. The crisis ended without a single shot being fired when Amaris apparently disbanded his extra regiments. He secretly continued to build up his forces through reservists and the formation of local militias, however. It was only much later that anyone learned that Amaris was obtaining his 'Mechs from the Draconis Combine.

PEACE AND PROSPERITY

A FORTUNATE MARRIAGE

In 2657, First Lord Michael Cameron, who had "lived life to the fullest with many women," as one news commentator put it, finally fell in love. The woman who had won his heart was Duchess Katarina Mann, a beautiful and intelligent woman from a noble family that traced its lineage to the 15th century.

Katarina was born and raised on her family's estate outside Magdeburg in northern Germany. She had an early and keen interest in history and flying. She pursued both at the War Academy on Mars, where she became a superb aerospace pilot, a capable officer, and a scholar of ancient European history.

After graduation, Katarina was assigned to the Thirty-fourth Fleet Aero Wing (The Black Aces). Her mothership, the *Vengeance* Class DropShip *Nimitz*, was attached to the Forty-ninth Naval Flotilla when the Star League wanted to discourage Tadeo Amaris's political ambitions in the 2650's.

News of her father's death in 2653 cut short Katarina's promising military career. She returned to Terra to take up her father's position as her home region's political and economic leader. She sparked a boom in the region's economy by coaxing several major defense industries into building factories there. The First Lord met the elegant Katarina Mann on a visit to one of these factories.

Their courtship became something of a game followed by the whole Hegemony. Journalists, always eager for exclusive pictures or comments, stalked the couple incessantly. An overeager reporter from *Der Spiegel*, one of the Hegemony's largest magazines, was thrown to the ground by the Duchess, who was proficient in karate.

The First Lord and Duchess were imaginative in their efforts to escape the press. One of their favorite dodges was to spend a quiet, if not luxurious, week in the middle of an SLDF base, where the guards at the gates gave any inquisitive reporter a tour of the brig. Another time, Duchess Katarina took off in her personal cutter, leading reporters in their chartered vessels on a week-long chase as she tried to rendezvous with Michael.

In 2659, after several years of this courtship in public, First Lord Michael proposed and Katarina accepted. Their marriage took place in the Christian Cathedral at the Court of the Star League. The ceremony, with its medieval flavor, was remembered as one of the grandest pageants in League history.



57

For their honeymoon, the bride and groom boarded the First Lord's private JumpShip for a two-year grand tour of the Star League. Escorted by a fleet of military and private vessels, the two visited all five member states and the four Periphery Territories. The trip was a triumph of good will, with the elegant couple charming the nobility and the public wherever they went. Politically, the voyage

gave the First Lord a chance to cement his relations with the other member states. Even the economy benefited because the First Lord examined at close hand what his unified economy was accomplishing and what it was not.

When the two eventually settled down to a normal marriage back on Terra, romance gave way to reality. The Duchess despised the almost constant scrutiny that attended the wife of the First Lord, while the First Lord was angry at Katarina's reluctance to put her responsibilities as First Lady over other concerns, such as the situation in her homeland. For a few tense months, the marriage seemed doomed, but the couple's mutual affection eventually won out. This was fortunate because Katarina became

the First Lord's closest adviser as well as a voice for caution and peace during coming crises.



FIRST HIDDEN WAR

The new couple's charm could not prevent the Draconis Combine's withdrawal from the League's social, public, and economic affairs. The Edict of 2650, which placed a ceiling on the size of House armies, had forced the Kuritas to dismantle many units, including several regiments of BattleMechs. The Kurita family was insulted.

They believed that the Camerons had drafted the Edict to prevent the Combine from growing too strong. They might have raised an even greater storm but for the fear of being discovered as the arms supplier to Tadeo Amaris. Until they could find a proper response, House Kurita withdrew, slowly raising barriers between itself and the rest of the Star League.

Some of the Draconis Combine's isolationism can be attributed to a sweeping interest in ancient Japan, the Kuritas' ancestral homeland. The rise in the use of the Japanese language further isolated the Combine from the rest of the Star League. There was also an upsurge in interest in *Bushido*, the ancient samurai code of honor. One of the oldest and strictest of warrior philosophies, it suited the Kurita MechWarriors, who already saw themselves as a class apart and above society.

The Kurita family easily exploited *Bushido*'s emphasis on loyalty to one's lord and reliance on an uncompromising code of personal honor. In return for this loyalty, the Kurita rulers elevated MechWarriors ever higher by granting them many privileges. The most obvious of these was the right to wear samurai swords as symbols of MechWarrior status.



58

The first duel involving a member of the SLDF occurred in 2681, just outside Fort Shandra on the Kurita world of Benjamin. Dueling Master Amanda Kazutoyo, a MechWarrior from the Third Benjamin Regulars, lifted her *BattleMaster*'s fist before the main gates of the base and loudly declared that all Star League MechWarriors lacked courage and the warrior's spirit.

When the base commander asked her to leave the area, she refused and parked her 'Mech squarely in front of the gates. For ten days, she sat there in her *BattleMaster*, periodically reissuing her challenge to the MechWarriors inside the fortress. This game of psychological warfare wore down the good sense and resolve of the SLDF troops.

The resentment within the Regular Army finally reached the boiling point, and Lieutenant Bradley Grebbers and his *Warhammer* left the fort without permission to face Amanda Kazutoyo. The fight lasted little more than ten minutes after the two had located suitable ground away from the fort. With a series of incredibly precise missile shots, MechWarrior Kazutoyo disabled her opponent's legs, forcing the 'Mech to its knees. Lieutenant Grebbers was helpless as his opponent walked up from behind and placed her 'Mech's PPC at the back of the *Warhammer*'s cockpit. The coup de grace was quick, but very painful for the spectators.

The callousness of the duel was shocking. The commander of the regiment barely prevented his warriors from charging out of the fort and tearing Kazutoyo limb from limb.

URIZEN'S SCHEME

First Lord Michael vigorously protested this and other duels as reports of individual contests between Kurita and Star League 'Mechs reached Terra. Each time the First Lord complained, Urizen Kurita threw up his hands in consternation, telling Michael Cameron that the "duelists" were beyond his authority. He complained that most of them had once been loyal soldiers in the Combine military until Michael Cameron's edict on troop strength had forced their discharge.

The Coordinator did not tell the First Lord that these *ronin* (the Japanese word for masterless warriors) had been allowed to take their weapons with them. Most of them were then reassigned to nobles in the Combine government as "civilian bodyguards," a euphemism for a fully armed and trained reserve force.

Urizen told First Lord Michael that he could barely prevent the better *ronin* MechWarriors from challenging the Kurita military. He said that he had neither the time, the money, nor the troops to hunt down each masterless MechWarrior and strip him of his 'Mech. Coordinator Urizen did indeed control the *ronin*, however. His memos to his commanding officers show that he supported the *ronin* with transportation and supplies, and he even ordered the best of them to engage Star League warriors.

He hoped that humiliating the best of the Star League would reduce its prestige among the Combine common people. If enough commoners saw a Combine 'Mech disposing of a Star League 'Mech, perhaps they would be less willing to join the SLDF as soldiers and thus deplete the Combine's pool of labor resources.

At first, the Coordinator's plan worked quite well. Both freelancing *ronin* and champions from local 'Mech regiments began to defeat their Star League counterparts with shocking speed and ease. The Kurita warriors showed superior handling skills and control over their 'Mechs. The First Lord realized quickly that the duels jeopardized the Star League's prestige among the common citizens of the Combine. Should the League lose the people's respect, the SLDF units stationed in the Combine would be surrounded by a scornful and potentially hostile populace.



Along with *Bushido* came a fascination with dueling. At first, most duels were fought between men armed with swords, but duels between individual warriors in their 'Mechs soon became common. MechWarrior regiments contested to determine who was the best warrior, often with unfortunate results. Despite the losses, the Kurita leaders supported the idea of dueling as a way to improve the overall quality of their warriors and to promote a fanatical loyalty.

Ultimately, the better and bolder warriors began to challenge warriors from the SLDF regiments based in the Draconis Combine. Though this practice was politically dangerous, the Kurita family condoned it because they considered the SLDF's 500 bases in the Combine to be a kind of occupation force. The Coordinator could not demand that the SLDF force, numbering about 350 regiments, be removed without causing an immediate crisis, but he could harass them. These duels, which continued for decades, were a kind of hidden war occurring beneath the placid and prosperous daily life of most citizens in the Star League.



59

The First Lord also wondered how the Combine warriors were able to control their 'Mechs so well. He worried that they had discovered new technology, such as an improved joint system that allowed greater mobility. He ordered that one of the 'Mechs used by a champion be captured at all costs.

A month later, a *ronin* 'Mech marched up to the gates of Fort McHenry on Leiston. With the usual bravado, the warrior challenged the local champion. While the *ronin* recited the usual litany of insults, two forces of 'Mechs from the base approached from behind. By the time the *ronin* finally noticed, the force was on top of him. With several mighty pushes, they forced the 'Mech into Fort McHenry. Before they could persuade him to leave his 'Mech, he committed suicide. The 'Mech was shipped off to the Hegemony and examined.

When Hegemony engineers could identify nothing unusual in the 'Mech's construction, SLDF officers realized that superior training accounted for the difference in fighting abilities. Faced with this fact, the First Lord ordered his soldiers to refuse all dueling challenges until further notice. By this time, in 2682, five MechWarriors had been killed in duels and 15 had been wounded. The Draconis Combine made political hay from the First Lord's orders, never failing to make oblique references to the SLDF's seeming cowardice.

Deep within the Hegemony military, certain MechWarriors were undergoing extensive retraining as part of the ACMS (Advanced Combat and Maneuvering Skills) Project. From ancient Oriental martial philosophies to advanced neural-thought technology, these warriors relearned almost everything about piloting a BattleMech. The 52 warriors in the first graduating class became the SLDF's champions.

The first group of Star League champions arrived at their postings inside the Draconis Combine in late 2687. Colonel Donovan Fresnel of the Seventy-fifth Royal Hussar Regiment, then stationed on the Combine world of Minakuchi, was the first of the highly trained MechWarriors to participate in a duel. Challenging him was the champion of the local Combine regiment in his brand new *Marauder*. In his *Warhammer*, Colonel Fresnel was able, after an hour of fighting, to force his shocked opponent to a draw, a first for the Star League. Ten days later, Lieutenant Karen Graham, in her *Phoenix Hawk*, defeated a *ronin* MechWarrior on the planet Awano.

Any hopes that these successes would discourage the Kurita champions and *ronin* from issuing further challenges were quickly dashed. Now that the Star League finally had warriors worthy of fighting, the Kurita champions were keener than ever to duel.

Realizing that he could not prevent duels, the First Lord tried another tack. He began to send envoys to Combine bases, not to challenge their champions but to offer them commissions in the SLDF. There was little the outraged Coordinator Urizen could do about it, either. As the First Lord expected, only a few champion Kurita MechWarriors wanted to join the SLDF, but those who did became instructors in the Regular Army's expanded ACMS program. Renamed the "Gunslinger Program," the intensive training regimen eventually became an important part of the Military Academy of Aphros. Only the Academy's most skilled MechWarrior graduates won spots in the Gunslinger Program. To wear the crossed six-shooters on their uniforms became a great honor among Star League MechWarriors.

This dueling continued off and on into the next century and did not stop until 50 years later. The final tally between the two sides was a House Kurita victory 49% of the time, 47% for the Regular Army, and 4% of the time the combatants fought to a draw.

FAMOUS STAR LEAGUE GUNSLINGERS

Lieutenant Oha Heller

Champion of the 231st Light Horse Regiment from 2689 to 2693, Lieutenant Oha Heller was one of the first graduates of the Gunslinger program and among the first to score a victory when her *Dervish*, the *Wild Scream*, faced a *ronin Wolverine* BattleMech. In the next four years, she entered into ten duels, winning eight, losing one, and fighting to a draw once. She finally lost to a Kurita champion in a *Victor* BattleMech.

Colonel Daniel Allison

Commander and champion of the Twenty-ninth Royal Dragoon Regiment from 2701 until 2743, Colonel Daniel Allison and his *BattleMaster* lasted longer than any other SLDF Gunslinger. He was a phenomenal marksman and ended many duels in the first seconds with shots that disabled his opponents before they could take a step. After 42 years of dueling, Colonel Allison's record stood at 59-0-1. He retired in 2743 and became a major BattleMech designer for Kallon Industries.



Captain Wilbur Frews

Champion of the 124th Royal Heavy Assault Regiment from 2711 to 2718, Captain Wilbur Frews may have been the strangest graduate of the Gunslinger Program. He immersed himself in the Wild West mythos in the belief that to know everything about the ancient gunslingers would give him the edge over an opponent. After joining the 124th, he stopped wearing his uniform, instead dressing like gunmen of the ancient American West. Seven years of dueling took their toll, and by the end of 2718, Captain Frews had lost his mental stability. His commanding officers were finally forced to restrain him and send him back to Terra for rest and recovery. His record was a 19-0-0.

—From *The Gunslinger Project: A History*, by Frederick Galard, Albion Military Press, New Avalon 2823

TERRA'S IMPORTANCE

The Draconis Combine dueling has been called the First Hidden War because people everywhere, including inside the Combine, were blind to the seriousness of the events. Unless one lived nearby, news of the Combine and Star League 'Mechs' duels seemed the stuff of romantic fiction, even though the Combine's state-run news hailed every victor and provided extensive video coverage. This unreal quality was fine with the First Lord and the Council Lords. With the possible exception of Lord Urizen, no one wanted war when peace was so profitable.

The political serenity of the realm gave Michael Cameron the time to be with his three children. Jonathan, the eldest and most like his father, was an athletic boy who grew up to be an expert swordsman. Jocasta, three years younger, was a pretty child with an insatiable intelligence and a quiet demeanor. William, ten years younger than Jonathan, was the dark child. Though he was as attractive as his brother and sister, a cloud seemed to hang over him since birth, when he needed respirators to assist his breathing.

Culturally, the Star League was increasingly centered on the style of the Court of the Star League. Immigration laws had been relaxed between most member states, except for the Draconis Combine, whose government made it difficult for its citizens to leave. The Hegemony drew people like a magnet, increasing its population by a third during the reign of First Lord Michael.

Those unable to travel to the Hegemony watched and studied what was going on at the "Cradle of Humanity," as Terra was known. People hundreds of light years away followed everything that happened in the Hegemony, and the Court of the Star League, in particular. Hegemony holos, books, films, and art were all tremendously popular in the other realms. Billions watched shows that depicted court fashions, manners, customs, morals, language, and even the ways of wooing a mate. This universality pleased the Cameron family, who believed that their ancestors' dream of "One Species, One Realm" was finally coming true.

In 2690, Michael Cameron underwent a routine physical and learned that he had pancreatic cancer. Because the prognosis was poor, the First Lord announced his retirement on October 13, 2690. Lady Katarina, though she would have made an excellent leader, chose to minister to her ailing husband. Thus did Jonathan Cameron, the eldest son, succeed his father.

Michael Cameron spent his last years completing the immensely important *Journey of Humanity*. A 26-volume epic work, it is the history of mankind from the dawn of civilization to its author's retirement. Using the vast resources of the Library of the Star League, located near the BSLA, for most of his research, Michael had started the work decades earlier and poured himself into the task after his retirement. He not only served history well with his scholasticism, but he served art too in beautiful passages attempting to fathom the psychology of some of the most famous people in Human history. It was a tribute to Michael's strong will that he was able to complete these volumes during a time when he must have been in constant pain.

Perhaps it is an omen of Humanity's eventual renaissance that a copy of the *Journey of Humanity* survived the fall of the Star League and landed in the possession of our Blessed Order.



60

MYSTERIOUS DISASTER ENDS TRAILBLAZER MISSION

Court of the Star League (SLPI)—The Star League government announced today that *Trailblazer One*, the ambitious expedition launched 35 years ago to map and survey unexplored star systems, has been found floating above the third planet of the Omega Lord star system.

Court officials said that none of the ship's 479 crewmembers was found alive, though they did survive the mechanical breakdown that stranded them in the star system. Extensive interviews with highly placed sources reveal the following scenario. Two months ago, surveillance vessels of the 169th Flotilla picked up a faint HPG transponder signal coming from a distant group of unexplored stars. The commander of the flotilla, Commodore Thomas Jenkins, received permission from his superiors to track the signals.

The flotilla entered a small G Class star system that was the source of the transmissions, which had been identified as the *Trailblazer's* transponder code. The ships' instruments revealed that the *Trailblazer* was orbiting the third world of the star system.

The *Trailblazer's* exterior was in good condition, but a landing party of Marines and engineers found the ship to be a gutted hulk. Ship's logs made by the *Trailblazer* commander, Commodore Nia-mola Bendricks, report that a micro-asteroid had penetrated the vessel at the circuit junction that tied the ship's three jump drives into its computers. The damage rendered the ship's vital computer inoperable, stranding the *Trailblazer*.

After a year of attempted repairs, the crew mutinied and killed the ship's commander and most of the senior officer staff. The remaining 391 crew members went to live on the planet's surface, hoping that the planet's lifeforms would sustain them.

A platoon of Marines from the 169th Flotilla, aided by medical teams, landed on the planet to search for the crew.

When a landing party from the 169th investigated the crude fortress-settlement that the *Trailblazer* crew members had built, they found no survivors. Journals recovered from the site reveal that huge herds of carnivores and catastrophic diseases had killed the crew.

—From *Star League Press Interstellar*, November 19, 2690

MILITARY RENAISSANCE

I resent being called a warmonger. Just because I have an interest in keeping our military up to date does not mean the passion of a conqueror flows through my veins. In fact, the opposite is true. I want to so fortify our League that it would be foolhardy for even the strongest militaries to attack us.

—First Lord Jonathan, responding to reporters' questions about whether his massive military buildup was the prelude to war, 2694

Jonathan, the eldest son of Michael Cameron, assumed control of the Star League in 2690. Thirty years old, married to a noblewoman from the planet Sheratan, and at ease before the public, he projected the image of a confident man with few pretensions and affectations. People looked forward to decades of peace and continued prosperity under this handsome new leader.

With the exception of the Draconis Combine dueling, peace had become such a way of life that First Lord Michael had even considered proposals to cut the military budget. When First Lord Jonathan proposed a major expansion of the SLDF, therefore, it was a shock.

When asked why he wanted to pour so much money into the military, the First Lord explained that League scientists were on the verge of a "renaissance in military technology that would make all previous advances seem puny in comparison." Without funding, those discoveries might die stillborn, he continued.

Asked if he would share the new technology with the member states, First Lord Jonathan said that he would follow the laws regarding weapon technology. Any new weapon systems would go to Royal units in the SLDF first, to the other SLDF units a few years later, and finally to the House militaries after a decade or more. The member states would not get the new technology for many years, but they would benefit from hand-me-downs. Such devices as advanced computers, advanced personal weapons, and 'Mech designs that had been restricted to the Royal units would become available to the House militaries.

The thought of being able to purchase new and better equipment for their armies outweighed any doubts the Council Lords may have had about whether to build new and more lethal weapon systems just because scientists knew how to do it. First Lord Jonathan got the Council's approval for the funding.

The fruits of First Lord Jonathan's military renaissance began to appear in Royal units of the SLDF almost immediately. Improved 'Mechs, Headhunter Missiles, Snub-nosed PPCs, and countless new vehicles appeared, utilizing breakthrough research in such areas as energy and myomer technology.

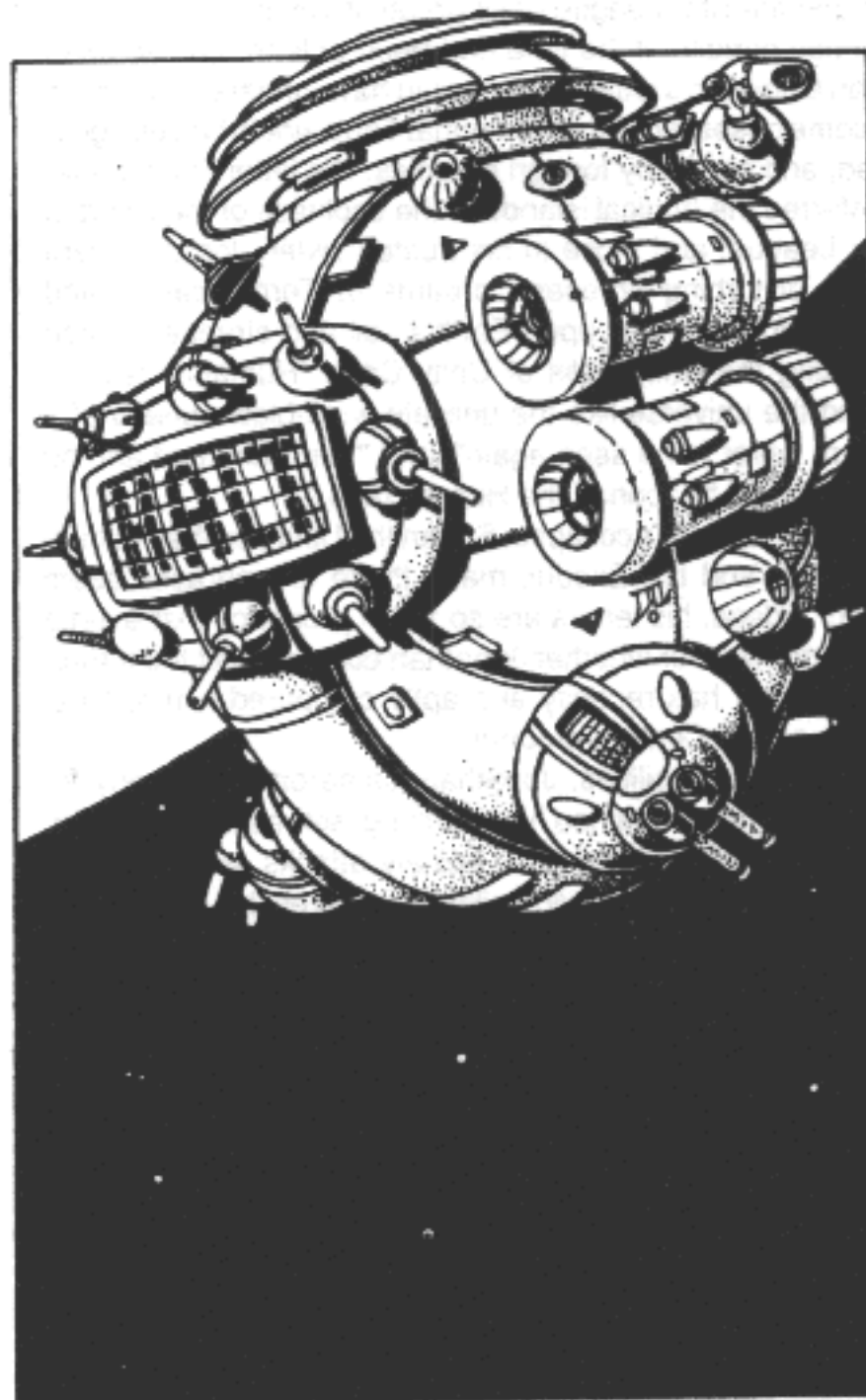
One of the most important weapon systems developed during this time was the Space Defense System. The SDS was a series of free-roving system defenders called M-5 Drones. The drones were automated warships that packed the punch of a battlecruiser in the frame of a *Lola* destroyer. These drone ships, dubbed *Caspars*, were designed to defend a planet against enemy vessels. Using an ultrasophisticated computer system, the SDS could easily operate with only a handful of Humans monitoring the system. The computers were capable of repairing themselves and of launching other drone ships from computer-run spaceports. Backing up the drone warships were ground bases that could fire huge lasers and missiles at any ship that evaded the drone warships.



This mammoth weapon system did give the Council Lords pause, especially because the new SDS networks were slated for construction only around Hegemony worlds. The First Lord assured the worried Lords that he had chosen these sites because the untried SDS networks should be near their place of manufacture in case of problems. The First Lord promised that when the systems proved reliable, the capitals of the member states would get their own SDSes.

Space Defense Systems were usually deployed in orbit near a sun's two main jump points and the most important planet, but First Lord Jonathan wanted Terra to have a more formidable defense. Not only was the space around Terra strewn with automated warships that challenged each approaching ship with an "Identify-or-be-Destroyed" ultimatum, but so was the entire solar system. The area around the two standard jump points was especially well-protected. This SDS was named the Reagan Defenses for an obscure Terran leader who had dreamed of a similar system.

The huge number and cost of drones being built and deployed disturbed many people. They believed that the idea of an attack on Terra was ludicrous. Besides, they argued, Terra was for everyone; to encircle her with weapons went against Humanity. Discontent grew when the SDS accidentally destroyed three ships. Even after the glitches in the friend-or-foe identification system were remedied, many Terrans questioned the sanity of a man who believed their planet was in so much danger.



SEER OR MADMAN?

My greatest nightmare is that of Terra dying in explosion and flames. No hope exists amid the rubble, only the stomp of hulking 'Mechs, the smell of smoke and death, and the wail of orphaned children.

—From a letter by Jonathan Cameron to his wife, 2704

In response to the public's concern about the huge sums being poured into the SLDF, Jonathan Cameron spoke glibly of "covering every possible contingency" or of benefits from the general scientific advances that would eventually reach the public sector.

Meanwhile, from the Periphery came rumors of spreading discontent. In 2722, the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League pushed through Council Directive 41. Ostensibly giving the Periphery Territories more freedom, the directive actually gave Inner Sphere companies a free hand to loot the territories in all manner of unscrupulous business deals. Because war seemed likely, some people believed the First Lord was farsighted in building up the SLDF for another Periphery campaign.

Others believed that the First Lord was shoring up the SLDF because of the Draconis Combine's continued belligerence toward the Star League. If Jonathan Cameron was spending so much money on the military, those people thought, perhaps he was seriously considering waging war against House Kurita to rid himself and the Star League of its greatest irritant.

If these pundits of the time had been able to read some of Jonathan Cameron's letters, they would have understood that he had become obsessed with the fear that Terra would be besieged, captured, and ruined by foreign enemies. His letters to his wife, who preferred the tropical islands to the coolness of the Court of the Star League, and those to his trusted sister, Jocasta, were filled with disturbing phrases: "dreams of Terra scarred and mutilated"; "foreign flags upon Earth's soil and strange, coarse men walking the white halls of Unity City"; "Humanity leaving Terra and the universe like the delicate wind-blown seeds of a dandelion, never to be seen again"; and "Terra dimmed and no longer the bright beacon of the Human race."

The Star League's collapse, Stefan the Usurper, the destruction of Terra, and the Exodus make these few phrases seem prophetic. Indeed, his letters are so full of prophecy that even a skeptic might wonder whether Jonathan could predict the future. One researcher has recently and aptly compared him to Nostradamus, a 16th Century prophet.

Whatever his abilities, Jonathan Cameron paid dearly for them. Though he maintained his charming, self-assured exterior, he was tormented by insomnia, anxiety attacks, and losses of physical control similar to mild epileptic seizures. He said he had visions during these seizures.

Setting aside the prescience of his words, the tone of Jonathan Cameron's letters indicate that his mind was beginning to crumble. His emphasis on weapons and defense systems was obviously his attempt to protect the Hegemony, and Terra in particular. He hoped to create an "impenetrable shield of swords and ever-vigilant eyes to guard against any threat approaching Terra." That his creation eventually protected those who despoiled Terra is one of the great ironies of history.



MOTHER JOCASTA

The First Lord's sister, Jocasta Cameron, did not share her brother's torments of spirit. Where her brother was publicly open and outgoing, yet privately troubled, Jocasta had withdrawn from the pressures of political life to the wilds of Scotland. She joined the cloistered Benedictine Order, devoting her life to God in the serene privacy of the Abbey of St. Joan.

Little about her childhood suggested that Jocasta Cameron would surrender herself to prayer and contemplation. She was as bright and precocious as both of her brothers when it came to navigating the complexities of Court society. She loved the grand balls, the pomp, the ceremony, and the elegance of her high station in life. Many in the Court looked forward to the day when the intelligent Jocasta might be the Hegemony's Director-General.

At age 17, however, she heard the call of God, became a Catholic, and spent a year preparing to enter the Abbey of St. Joan. Though she frequently doubted her ability to survive life as a nun, she never doubted the calling. She entered the abbey on the day after her 18th birthday.

For the next two decades, Jocasta thrived on the ascetic lifestyle. The drug-related death of her younger brother, William, saddened her but did not shake her religious conviction or vocation. In 2704, after 23 years as one of the choir nuns, she became Mother Jocasta, a sign of her importance in the abbey.

Throughout these years, Jocasta maintained a close relationship with Jonathan. More than anyone else, she seemed to be aware and concerned about what was happening to him. His wife, who had lived mostly away from the First Lord, died in 2710. His son, Simon Cameron, had also been away from his father and thus unaware of what was happening.



MARY AND SOTO

Just as his obsession was beginning to crack Jonathan's public facade, a crisis arose that demanded the First Lord's total concentration. Associates later said that this crisis drained the last shreds of his sanity. Historians point to it as the beginning of the end of the Star League.

In 2696, while on a diplomatic mission to the Draconis Combine, Mary Davion, daughter of Prince Roger Davion, met and fell in love with Soto Kurita, son of Urizen Kurita and brother of the current Coordinator, Takiro Kurita. In spite of her family's protests, Mary and Soto married. Their union produced two sons and a daughter.

According to the ancient traditions of primogeniture, the entire Federated Suns would pass from the Davion family into the hands of the dreaded Kuritas upon Prince Roger Davion's death. Because Mary was raising the children as Kuritas and not Davions, Prince Roger was desperate to prevent them from claiming the Davion throne.

He thought he had solved the problem in 2700, when he passed the Act of Succession, which called for Mary Davion to relinquish her children's rights to succession and recognized Joseph Davion as heir to the throne. Mary signed her consent in 2702. The crisis seemed resolved when Prince Joseph succeeded Roger Davion in 2703.

The issue re-emerged when Mary Davion died in 2715, just as Prince Joseph was about to name his 19-year-old son heir to the throne. Almost immediately after her death, embassies from House Kurita arrived demanding that Mary's eldest son, Vincent Kurita, be named heir. The Davion family dismissed the claim as ludicrous. They did not expect the Coordinator of the Draconis Combine to take the matter to the High Council.

During the spring and winter sessions of 2716, Coordinator Takiro Kurita pleaded his case and produced convincing evidence that Mary Davion had expected her son to become Prince of the Federated Suns. The seeming authenticity of the Coordinator's documents, apparently signed by Mary Davion, cast doubt on the Davion Act of Succession and placed the question of who would rule the Federated Suns squarely in the lap of First Lord Jonathan Cameron.

The First Lord knew that if he decided the issue, there was a strong possibility that the losing party would withdraw his government from the Star League. Jonathan Cameron therefore ordered an investigative commission to study the question. He declared that if Prince Joseph died before the question was decided, the Star League would rule in favor of the Federated Suns. Though this was not entirely satisfactory to the Davion Prince, it guaranteed that his realm would not fall suddenly into the Kurita family's hands.

SECOND HIDDEN WAR

When the commission still had not decided anything after eight years, Takiro Kurita decided the issue for himself. The Kurita Coordinator assembled a large invasion force on the Federated Suns border and then began his offensive. In early 2725, the Eleventh Benjamin Regulars, a Kurita 'Mech regiment trained in city fighting, landed on the Davion world of Marduk.

The Federated Suns sought quick revenge. Prince Joseph, though his troops were unprepared, ordered a strike deep within the Draconis Combine. Though the war between the two most powerful Houses threatened to destroy the Star League, First Lord Jonathan hesitated. Increasingly plagued by visions of a destroyed Terra, the First Lord refused to commit Star League troops for fear of leaving the Hegemony undefended.



With Davion troops on the offensive, Coordinator Kurita used his assembled forces not to defend, but to launch a drive of his own. Draconis regiments began a push directly toward New Avalon. Though the Federated Suns blunted that drive and occasionally handed the Kuritans a setback, the Combine troops gradually gained ground during the next four years of the War of Davion

Succession.

At the Court of the Star League, impatience with First Lord Jonathan's detachment was growing. SLDF Commanding General Ikolor Fredasa was one of those most concerned. He led delegations to the abbey of Mother Jocasta Cameron in an attempt to persuade her to take over for her brother. When Mother Jocasta refused General Fredasa's offer of support for her to depose First Lord Jonathan, the General began spreading rumors that she was planning a coup. Knowing his sister would never do such a thing, Jonathan was enraged at the plotters. General Fredasa, BSLA Commander Gregory Wallace, and Revenue Director Brice Hinchcliffe IV were tried for treason and hanged.

This episode convinced First Lord Jonathan that he needed help, and he turned to his sister. Through her "suggestions," she became de facto First Lord. Jonathan quickly named Mother Jocasta's close friend, General Rebecca Fetladral, as Commander-in-Chief. General Fetladral immediately began to plan Operation Smother to stop the War of Davion Succession and reunite the Star League.

At precisely the same time, civil war erupted in the Free Worlds League over Marik succession. Many lives were lost in the five-year conflict, but the Star League remained strictly neutral, even when urged to intervene by the Capellan Confederation and the Lyran Commonwealth. General Fetladral and Mother Jocasta realized that the Steiners and Liaos were hoping for the departure of SLDF units so they could grab Hegemony worlds. Upon Mother Jocasta's advice, First Lord Jonathan declared the Free Worlds League fighting an internal affair and ordered General Fetladral to concentrate on ending the War of Davion Succession.

Not knowing that help would soon arrive and watching his troops being pushed back, Prince Joseph Davion made a decision that turned out to be fatal. To rally his troops, he took command of the counterattack on Royal. When his *Marauder* was disabled in the fight, the Kurita 'Mechs swarmed over him. The death of their Lord shocked the Davion troops, who fell back and soon retreated off Royal.

Before the Kurita forces could exploit their good fortune, Operation Smother began. Five flotillas carrying five Star League divisions were already heading for the contested worlds of Breed, Klathandu IV, Lima, Royal, and Wapakoneta. General Fetladral chose some of her best units: the Twenty-sixth Royal BattleMech Division (The Graham Division), the 159th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division (The Athena Division), the Thirty-ninth Royal BattleMech Division (The Denebola Division), the 160th BattleMech Division (The Sirius Division), and the First Jump Infantry Division (The Hellraisers from Heaven).

The simultaneous appearance of five Star League fleets and the dispatching of hundreds of Star League DropShips toward the five embattled planets surprised both the Davions and the Kuritas. None of the five landings met any opposition. On three worlds, Lima, Klathandu, and Wapakoneta, the arrival of elite Regular Army troopers and 'Mechs shocked both sides into agreeing to a hasty cease-fire.

On Breed, the Combine forces were less intimidated by the appearance of the First Jump Infantry Division. When they tried to retaliate, however, they discovered quickly that they were vastly outclassed.

On Royal, the Sirius Division met similar resistance, but the 160th still had most of its troops orbiting the planet in DropShips, putting its vanguard forces at a serious numerical disadvantage. In the end, though, the superior training of SLDF forces prevailed. In the 160th, in his first combat command, was a young Captain named Aleksandr Kerensky.

Operation Smother succeeded in ending the fighting. It also humbled Houses Kurita and Davion before the power of the SLDF. First Lord Jonathan, depending heavily on Mother Jocasta for advice, severely chastised both realms. He was harder on the Draconis Combine, restoring the border to its 2724 position and forever denying the Kurita claim to the Davion throne.

The Kuritans were bound to accept the First Lord's decisions, but they did not forget that the Camerons had again discriminated against and humiliated the Draconis Combine.

SURROGATE FIRST LORD

The attempted coup and Mother Jocasta's quiet advice and counsel made First Lord Jonathan realize how sick he was. The First Lord offered to step down in favor of Jocasta. She flatly refused, saying that her religious life came first, even above ruling all mankind. Though Jonathan's son, Simon, was old enough to take over, the First Lord barely knew him and trusted Jocasta implicitly.

They agreed that Jocasta, from her abbey in the cold Scottish highlands, would be First Lord Jonathan's most trusted adviser. With a sophisticated communications link to Unity City, Mother Jocasta became a temporary co-ruler.

The compromise worked well. Though Jonathan's mental and physical health worsened with age, he indulged in the few things that made him truly happy, such as building hospitals, contributing to relief efforts, and other humanitarian acts. He became deeply loved by the people of the Star League for his accomplishments during the last years of his reign.

Meanwhile, Mother Jocasta shouldered more and more of the government's burden. In 2735, the Council Lords journeyed to the Abbey of St. Joan for their autumn meeting. Seated behind the grillwork that separated her community from the rest of the world, Mother Jocasta chaired the session of the High Council, thereby assuming the highest powers and responsibilities of the Star League government.

Jonathan Cameron died in 2738 of a stroke. His funeral, attended by all the Council Lords and the League's highest nobility, was also attended by his aging sister. She had been de facto ruler of the Star League for the last three years.

In a short ceremony after the funeral, Mother Jocasta, as executrix of Jonathan's will, handed Simon Cameron the jeweled staff symbolizing the office of First Lord of the Star League. With that, Jocasta Cameron left the Court of the Star League for her beloved abbey, where she lived peacefully and no longer burdened with awesome responsibilities, until her death in 2742.



64

SIMON CAMERON

I see nothing that indicates the Star League will not last for a thousand years. We are stronger than ever before. Our lives are better than ever before. We are a better people than we were before. Why should not the Star League last into and beyond the next millennium?

—Simon Cameron, 2739

When Jonathan Cameron died in 2738, his 39-year-old son, Simon, had been the Director-General of the Terran Hegemony for four years. Because of his experience in dealing with Hegemony bureaucracy, he was amply qualified to become the First Lord.

Simon was neither glib nor suave. He was a no-nonsense ruler who spoke his mind bluntly and made even blunter demands. Beneath the brutally practical side of Simon was a deep

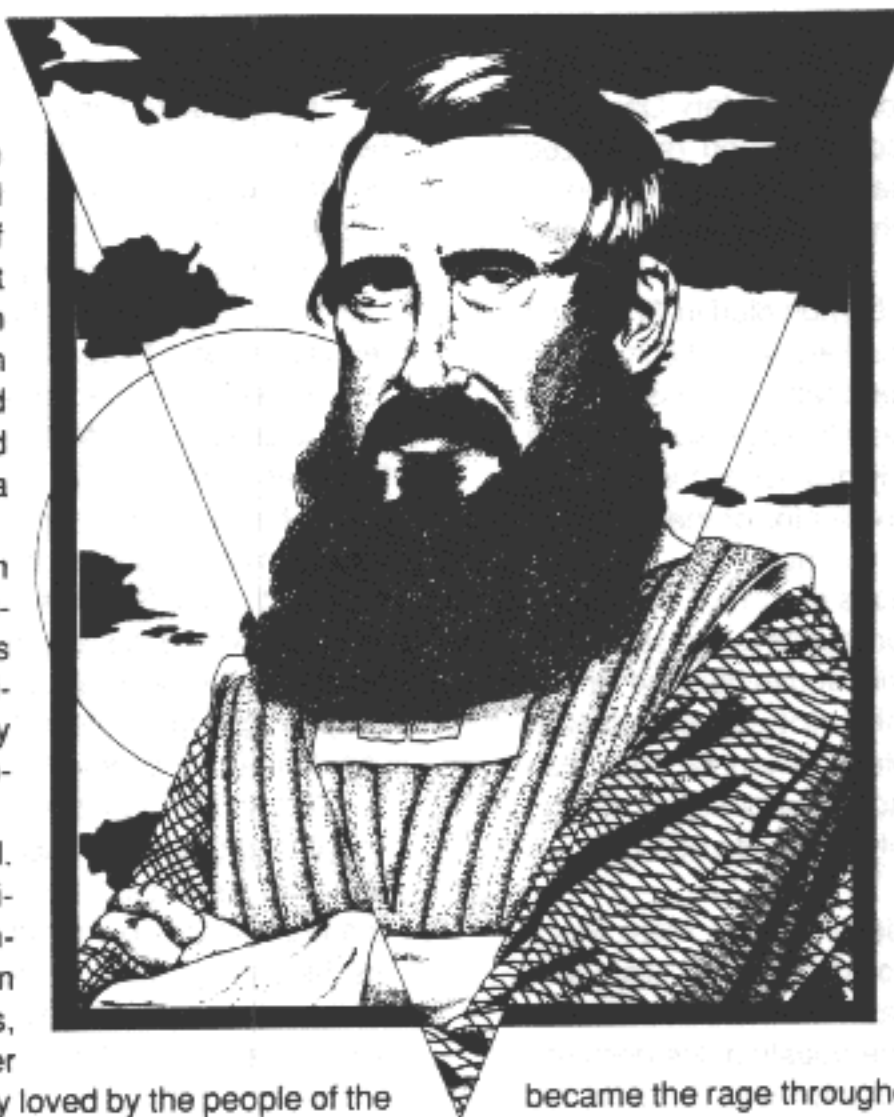
idealism, however. He read voraciously, as did most Camerons, and the authors he most admired were members of the recent Modern Chivalrists Movement. Writers such as Uston DeKirk, Toshiro Ohiriko, Mina Samuels, and Bonnie Cracken, believers in a strict code of personal behavior, deeply influenced the new First Lord's early development, so much so that he appointed Mina Samuels as one of his advisers.

Modern Chivalrists tried to adapt an ancient code to the modern era. They believed that morality and honor depended on three separate but entwined beliefs: belief in an ever-present God, belief in Goodness, and belief in strict mutual loyalty between a liege lord and his subjects. Because of their reliance on medieval writings and poetry, the Modern Chivalrists often referred to ancient legends, such as King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, to drive home a point.

It was not long before medievalism became the rage throughout the Star League. It soon influenced almost all aspects of the culture, with even societies far removed from the European tradition eventually taking a lively interest in the Modern Chivalrists. The pervasive legends of courtly love and feats of honor achieved by moral knights soon became tragic threads in the tapestry of events.

The First Lord encountered difficulty adapting his strict morals to the administration of the Star League. When he was Director-General, he had ruled a homogeneous realm whose people agreed with his beliefs. To rule ten different states, each with its own culture and values, was much different and much more complicated.

Though he believed in a strong military, First Lord Simon spurned the Space Defense Systems that were so important to his father. He allowed the completion of the partially built SDS networks, but canceled plans for the rest. Anticipating trouble in the Periphery, First Lord Simon instead ordered the construction of massive fortifications on key worlds in the four Periphery states. These forts were virtual copies of the ancient Castles Brian still in use on Hegemony worlds.



TROUBLE IN THE PERIPHERY

By the time Simon Cameron came to power in 2738, the Good Years were over for the four Periphery States. Gone were the days when the people on those distant worlds willingly obeyed the regulations coming from the Inner Sphere. There was a deepening anger instead.

The people of the Periphery had many reasons to feel as they did. First Lord Jonathan, preoccupied by his visions and worried about unrest in the Periphery, trusted the Council Lords' explanation of Directive 41 and signed it without further ado in 2722. The Directive, written by the Lords from the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League, appeared to grant the Periphery states limited autonomy, freeing them from many restrictions imposed after the Reunification War.

The freedoms were only cosmetic. Though changes did occur, the real power merely shifted from the Bureau of Star League Affairs to the governments and businesses of the Inner Sphere. Despite the withdrawal of the Periphery Administrators, who could veto laws proposed by the Periphery governments, ambassadors of the Inner Sphere realms held the real power. The five greedy Lords had tricked the First Lord into signing the directive. The BSLA had monitored and restricted exploitation of Periphery resources, but the new system allowed Inner Sphere businesses to suck the Periphery dry. Hegemony companies were no exception.

A wave of exploitative businesses swamped the Periphery worlds, setting up factories that consumed whole sections of planets. Products were sent to the Inner Sphere without benefit to anybody in the Periphery. Unaware that the rape of their lands was the fault of the Council Lords and not the First Lord, citizens of the Periphery focused their anger on the Camerons. Demonstrations outside Star League offices became common, and underground independence movements gained wide support.

By the time Simon became First Lord, Periphery support for the Star League had deteriorated beyond redemption. Lord Simon knew that Council Directive 41 was to blame, but recent divisiveness, such as the Davion War of Succession, left him in no position to try to repeal it. Instead, he strengthened military forces in the territories while privately condemning the Council Lords for their greed.

What worried the First Lord most was that scattered throughout the Periphery were 20 weapons manufacturers capable of turning out BattleMechs, heavy tanks, and DropShips. These manufacturers were under no scrutiny and no constraints. The First Lord learned from his agents that the factories operated around the clock and that anonymous parties purchased most of the weapons, which then disappeared without a trace.

The possibility that the militaries of the four Periphery realms could equal the Regular Army prompted the First Lord to build more fortresses in the Periphery. The First Lord hoped that the fortresses would be able to contain any uprising until help could arrive from the interior.

The Rim Worlds Republic, ruled by the Amaris family, seemed to be the only Periphery realm that the Star League could trust. Everyone daily pledged allegiance to the Star League and Terra, but a closer look at the Amaris high praise and admiration for the Star League made some observers skeptical.

The Republic's military furthered the uneasiness. The number of Rim Worlds regiments, while technically limited by the Edict of 2650, was actually three to four times that size if one counted the reserve and militia units, which could be fielded on short notice. The First Lord, heeding reports from his agents, kept the Rim Worlds Republic under control by building even more fortresses there than in the other Periphery Territories.



65

ENEMIES ONCE MORE

The Federated Suns, once a staunch supporter of the Star League, gradually withdrew its cooperation during Simon Cameron's reign. The Davion government raised economic and social barriers and began subtle propaganda campaigns to discourage young men and women from joining the SLDF. Mutual assistance between the two governments ceased.

Richard Davion never forgave the Star League for taking four years to force a cease-fire between the Federated Suns and the Draconis Combine. He saw those years of inaction, during which many Davion lives were lost, as a betrayal of a Star League promise to enforce peace between member states. The Davions felt no obligation to honor a government that did not keep its commitments.

Though First Lord Simon tried to reason with Richard Davion, it did not help. He had no choice now but to sit back and watch both the Federated Suns and the Draconis Combine drift further from real participation in the Star League.

In 2741, a gang of brigands attacked the Commonwealth world of The Edge, unleashing a battalion of brand new BattleMechs on the unsuspecting public. Firing at anything that stood in their way, the 'Mechs crashed their way to their objective, a rare-metals refinery and its stockpile in the center of The Edge's major city. More than 500 civilians died in the raid.

A year later, the Twelfth Lyran Regulars landed on the brigands' base world, Butte Hold, showing the gang no mercy. Afterward, the Lyrans interrogated the survivors and discovered that the Draconis Combine had supplied the brigands with BattleMechs. The news was outrageous, but the informers offered hard proof.

Archon Michael Steiner confronted Coordinator Takiro Kurita with that damning evidence at the Winter Meeting of 2742. The Coordinator denied nothing, saying only that the Lyrans, of all people, knew that business was business. In a rage, the Archon threw himself at the Coordinator, wrestling Takiro to the floor. Obviously, the former cautious good will between the realms was gone forever.

The leaders of the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League also contributed to the increase in interstellar tensions. Ewan Marik of the Free Worlds League was a belligerent lush, who liked to make boorish comments about everything said at High Council meetings. On the other hand, Warex Liao, Chancellor of the Confederation, was quietly building up the Capellan military.

Raids and reprisals between the member states were becoming common. The official explanations were to blame the raiding on a small number of very energetic pirates. This fooled no one, especially First Lord Simon Cameron, whose military was chasing these supposed bandits. SLDF warships and troops often pursued fleeing raiders into neighboring realms and saw them land at military bases. They even captured on holofilm some unmarked vehicles with enough gray paint stripped away to reveal the colors of a House military.

In 2744, the First Lord issued new orders to his troops: No longer was the SLDF supposed to capture bandits alive; Star League forces should shoot on sight any unmarked and unresponsive soldier, vehicle, or ship. The offending realms, of course, resented Star League interference. Warships began to escort the bandits on their missions and fire on any SLDF ships. Soon, small groups of warships were battling all along the borders.

No one wanted to provoke a full-blown war by accusing neighboring realms or by taking responsibility for raids. House leaders were content to let the "pirates war" rage while in public they smiled charmingly and wrung their hands piously. This era of hypocrisy and inter-realm aggression is known today as the Third Hidden War.

Simon wrote later that the League felt like a valuable tapestry that was about to unravel. Uncertain of what to do, he canceled the next two meetings of the High Council and then sent high-level officials to the capital of each member state to negotiate their growing differences. All that came of these efforts were lukewarm promises that the various House leaders would look into the problem.

PEACE MISSION, 2750

The diplomatic missions of 2743–44 failed to produce anything concrete. High Council meetings had degenerated to the point that the sullen Council Lords often sat, eyeing each other suspiciously and not talking. There was only an occasional outburst, usually from Ewan Marik, who drank through most sessions, to break the tense silence.

By 2750, the First Lord had finally had enough. If the Council Lords were not going to cooperate, he would appeal directly to the people to restore the unity of Star League. Gathering a huge fleet of warships to escort his private JumpShip, the First Lord left Terra on an ambitious five-year tour of his realm.

His first stop was the Lyran Commonwealth. After arriving at the star system of Skye, several DropShips and fighters escorted his private vessel to the planet. He addressed the assembled cadets of the Sanglamore Military Academy on the virtue of peace and on responding to the needs of the common people. He then visited workers at factories and farms, as well as visiting soup kitchens. After several days spent with the common citizens of the planet and ignoring the nobility entirely, he left Skye. While his ship was returning to the jump point and the rest of the fleet, the First Lord gave extensive interviews to the journalists whom he had invited to join him.

The effect of the First Lord's visit was electric. The sight of a First Lord speaking to people on city streets, riding bicycles, and even feeding slop to pigs on a farm instantly endeared him to the public. The interviews he gave to the reporters, in which he stressed the importance of involving common people in decisions, galvanized public opinion in support of Simon Cameron and the Star League. He repeated this strategy on the other Commonwealth worlds he visited.

The more planets he visited, the more interest and support for the Star League rippled to other worlds. For the first time in decades, the common people believed that they could affect political policy and influence the noble classes.



66

DEATH OF SIMON CAMERON

In February 2751, the First Lord visited the disputed world of Star's End on the Lyran-Rim Worlds border. While there, Simon was invited to visit the mining facilities of the large asteroid of New Silesia. Though it was not on his itinerary, Cameron accepted because of his interest in low-gravity mining.

On New Silesia, the First Lord met with the men and women living in the company's small domed city. Intrigued by their life, he eagerly accepted an offer to see how they earned their living. Simon Cameron and his entourage traveled down into the tunnels where the precious titanium and silenium ores were extracted from the asteroid. What he saw was a typical low-G mining operation. Mining robots cut at the asteroid with a series of lasers and diamond bits, while the robots' operators sat at the end of a pressurized tunnel a short distance away, using a control system very similar to a MechWarrior's control panel.

In Tunnel 5T, Level 42, the First Lord asked if he could control the mining robot. As he had been a MechWarrior and was familiar with the neurohelmet and controls of the mining robot, no one objected. He donned the helmet and confidently took the controls, looking through the thick glass window into the vacuum of the tunnel where the robot sat idling.

What happened next is uncertain. Cameras recording the event from inside the control booth and on the robot indicate that the First Lord must have made a mistake. The mining robot, which had been working at the far end of the tunnel, wheeled and charged the control booth. Simon Cameron tried to shut the robot down, but he either did not know how or the robot did not respond to the command.

The 30-ton machine crashed into the control booth, shattering the porthole through which the First Lord had been looking. The decompression sucked him through with great force against the front of the robot. His death was quick. Nine other people also died.

DECLINING TOURISM

Some sociologists believe that individuals' feelings and thoughts are shaped by history. To them, free will is meaningless because any ostensibly independent action is actually a reaction to social and economic conditions.

Others feel that mass behavior is useful in predicting the future. As proof, they point to the crash of the tourist trade in 2745. In the years preceding '45, tourism into and out of the Hegemony was extremely heavy. Ever since the creation of the Star League, the number of travelers had steadily increased.

In 2744, tourism was at its peak. The five major JumpShip lines (Red Swan Lines, Black Ball Express, Ozawa Passenger Interstellar, Blue Diamond Shipping, and Tamar Liners) had record earnings and plans to expand. All the major hotel chains were reporting similar growth and profits.

In early 2745, travel between member states dipped, then plummeted. By mid-year, the number of bookings dropped to about half of what was expected. There was no obvious explanation. Though the political situation was tense, there was not any major fighting between realms, and none of the leaders had restricted travel. There was no reason for people suddenly to fear space travel, nor were there economic problems that limited available cash. Everyone just decided not to travel anymore.

Some sociologists believe that people could sense the impending collapse of the Star League. Whether an indicator or not, the simultaneous decision of billions of people was an eerie precursor to the Fall.

—From *Divining the Fall: Road Signs to Disaster*, by Countess Yolopres, Terra Press, 2809

WAS SIMON CAMERON MURDERED?

The facts surrounding Simon Cameron's death, with their many inconsistencies and gaps, have invited countless theories, most of which conclude that he was murdered. Following are some facts and speculations raised by the High Council's Panel of Investigation into the death.

1) The mining robot, a Digger 500 built by Wotan Mining Industries, had been overhauled and inspected just ten days before the incident. There was nothing in the report to indicate any unusual defects.

2) Mining Operator Charles "Mole" Dryden reported that the robot had exhibited "damned unusual control twitching" two days before the incident. The robot was pulled off-line, but a check of its control system revealed nothing.

3) Examination of the robot itself proved fruitless because the collision had split one of the hydraulic reservoirs, spilling its highly corrosive fluid all over the computer center.

4) Log-in sheets indicate that Petrovia Drewsivitch, a robot technician, worked on the robot the night before the incident. The company had no record of an employee named Petrovia Drewsivitch, however. This is not conclusive because the company had very poor bookkeeping, but investigators were unable to find the woman.

5) One hour after the death of Simon Cameron was confirmed, government agents noticed a transmission from somewhere within the colony. Investigators were never able to find the source of the transmission or to decode it.

Speculation abounds about what happened in that tunnel. Most people believe that Simon Cameron was the victim of a plot. The Draconis Combine, the Lyran Commonwealth, and the Periphery states are the three possible villains mentioned most often. The Commonwealth is probably the least likely of the three, even though the First Lord's appeal to the people had caused the Steiners some political discomfort. The Periphery, with its countless anti-Star League groups, definitely had enough reasons to wish the First Lord dead, but it is unlikely that any of the Periphery realms had the resources to pull off the feat.

If Cameron's death was not an accident, the Draconis Combine is the one that most people think was responsible. Not only was there a longstanding feud between the Camerons and the Kuritas, but the Draconis Combine was also the next destination of the First Lord's Peace Mission. The Kurita family had always placed a high priority on maintaining complete control over the Combine population, and it is reasonable to believe that the Kuritas had the First Lord killed to prevent him from entering the Combine and appealing directly to the people.

With everything we know and love collapsing around us, it is unlikely that we will ever know if the First Lord was murdered or not. Even if we did, it is unlikely that it would make any difference in what is likely to happen next.

—From *Investigation into the Death of Simon Cameron*, by Paula Catterson, Terra Press, 2784



ERA OF DECLINE

During these sad times it is the responsibility of us, the Council Lords, to ensure that the Star League survives and that the Camerons continue on as its unbroken heart....

—From the joint statement issued by the High Council, April 3, 2751

THE REGENCY

First Lord Simon's death was not only a tragic shock, but it left the Star League without a leader when it needed one most. Lord Simon's only child, Richard Cameron II, was barely eight years old. Richard's mother had died a year earlier. Nor was there any other Cameron family member qualified to become First Lord. Where was the League to turn for leadership?

Richard Cameron was the Star League's only hope, but it would be at least a decade before he could rule effectively. Would there still be a League then? Many people could not imagine that the Council Lords would do anything but fight for ascendancy in the absence of a First Lord. Many others predicted that war was inevitable.

Archon Michael Steiner II of the Lyran Commonwealth, Chancellor Warex Liao of the Capellan Confederation, Coordinator Takiro Kurita of the Draconis Combine, First Prince John Davion of the Federated Suns, and Captain-General Ewan Marik of the Free Worlds League left for Terra as soon as they received news of First Lord Cameron's death. When they arrived, the Lords immediately entered the Council Chamber for a series of long meetings. They met day after day, often for ten hours at a time. As they left the Chamber each evening, their drawn faces and refusal to talk to reporters created a mood of foreboding. The dissolution of the Star League and a new era of war seemed imminent.

It was a stunning surprise when, on April 3, all five Council Lords gathered before the Star League Throne and read a joint statement to the gathered dignitaries. The five named young Richard Cameron as the next First Lord of the Star League but stopped short of giving him all of the powers. Instead, they appointed General Aleksandr Kerensky, commanding officer of the Star League Defense Forces, as Richard Cameron's Regent and Protector.

Tapes of the meetings between the five leaders reveal that the Lords never raised the possibility of dissolving the Star League. The five saw their responsibility as continuing the realm, not burying it. Later events showed that the five cooperated not because they believed in the Star League, but because each wished to expand his own power.

For the moment, the Star League had been saved. The people of the Inner Sphere reacted to news of the Regency with great joy. There were joyful demonstrations in support of the new Regent and the Council Lords. General Aleksandr Kerensky was already well known to the public as an extremely honorable and trustworthy officer.

KERENSKY'S EARLY YEARS

Of all the men and women who have earned mention in the Star League's long and rich history, few hold the awe, respect, and admiration of so many people as General Aleksandr Kerensky. His life and the effect it had on the lives of billions, as well as how he behaved in the chaos of the League's final days, have been the subject of thousands of books and shows. In many ways, he has come to represent everything that seems lost since the collapse of the Star League. Kerensky possessed such traits as honor, courage, compassion, and sympathy, so missing in our modern world.

Aleksandr Sergeyevich Kerensky was born on December 16, 2700, in Moscow, Terra. Legend has it that he was born in his parents' home during a blizzard. When his father saw that both Aleksandr and his mother were ill and it looked as though the child might die, the father bundled them both up in blankets and carried them from the warmth of their home through the howling winds to a hospital.

His father, Nikolai Maksimovich Kerensky, was head curator at the People's Museum of History. He had served as a trooper in the SLDF but retired after his first tour. He was a great, kind, bear of a man who took his son on tours of the museum after closing hours, telling Aleksandr grand stories about the various exhibits. Aleksandr's mother, Anna Tronchina Kerensky, spent more time in the military, rising to the rank of Sergeant Major before leaving the SLDF to become a major administrator in the Moscow city government. She loved literature, a love she passed on to her son, who was a voracious reader in English and French, as well as his native Russian.

Aleksandr's early childhood was plagued by a heart condition that required a major operation when he was just three years old. It took two years for him to recover fully. His early troubles left Aleksandr small, thin, and reserved. Nothing about his early schooling could have predicted that he would become such an important person. His teachers noted that the blond, blue-eyed boy was remarkably observant, polite, and shy. Indeed, one teacher later remarked that he might have wagered on Kerensky becoming a poet rather than a warrior.

At 18, his grades and manners won him a Star League scholarship to Tharkad University in the Lyran Commonwealth. While attending the university, he met Michael Steiner, a research assistant studying to become a professor. The two formed a deep friendship that continued throughout their lives.



68

During a routine physical, Aleksandr learned that he had a keenly responsive nervous system that could easily adapt to the strains of being a MechWarrior. The SLDF, looking at his excellent grades and background, offered Aleksandr a place in the next class of cadets at the Nagelring Military Academy. Despite his initial reluctance, Aleksandr decided to join because his parents and friends were so persuasive.

Cadet Kerensky completed training at the Nagelring with honors. He was immediately asked to join the Gunslinger Program at the War Academy on Mars. There, he learned to put his

Orion 'Mech through maneuvers that most people considered impossible for such an old BattleMech design. (Though Kerensky soon qualified for one of the Hegemony's ultra-sophisticated 'Mech designs, he, like many MechWarriors, had grown fond of his first 'Mech and never willingly piloted anything else.)

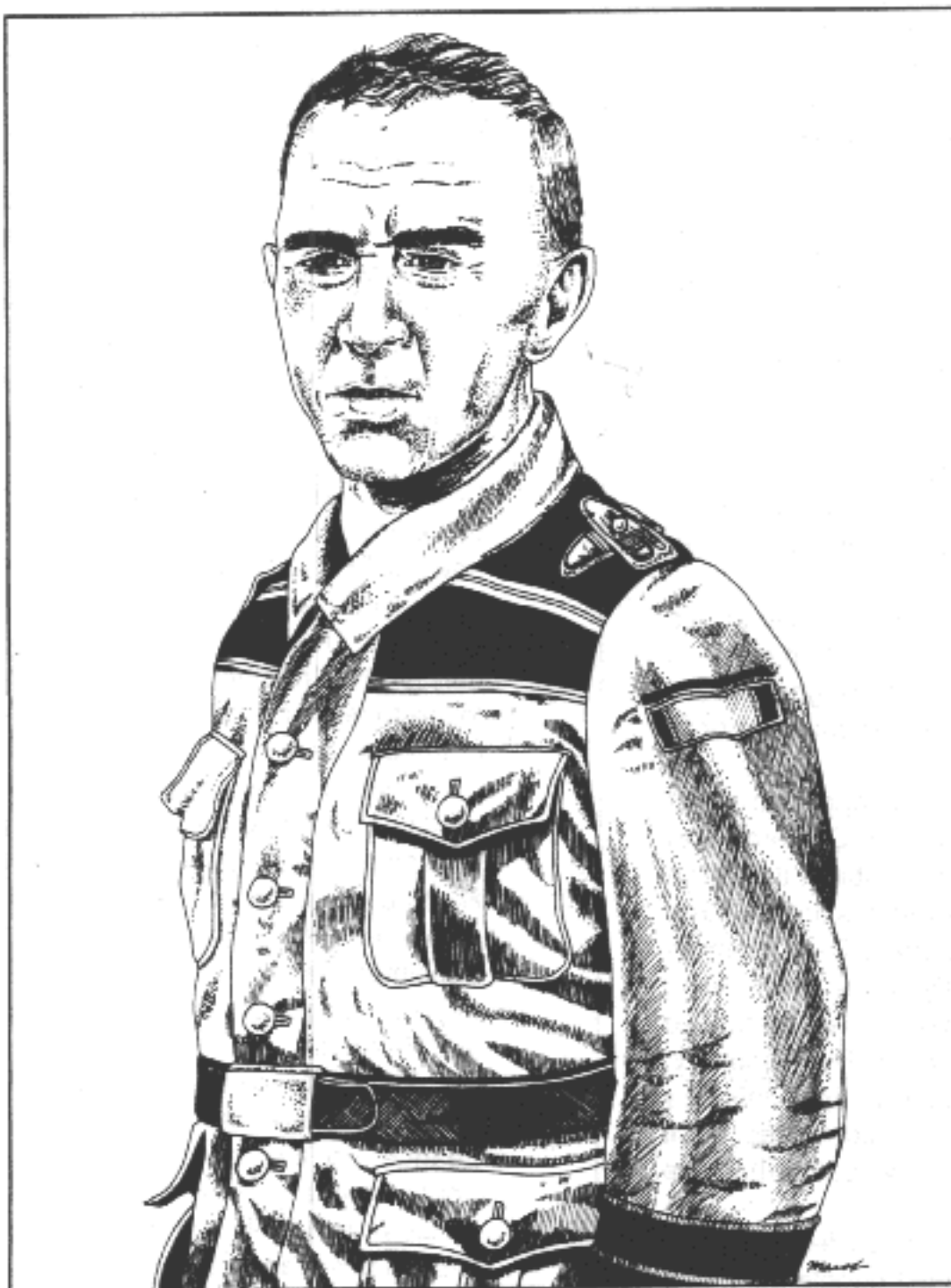
RISING THROUGH THE RANKS

MechWarrior Kerensky was assigned to be the champion of the 564th Hussar Regiment, then part of the 160th BattleMech Division (The Sirius Division). Stationed on the Draconis Combine world of Paris, the young officer fought four duels his first year, winning one. His abilities as a MechWarrior soon paled next to his budding skills as a leader. In 2729, the 160th BattleMech Division participated in Operation Smother. Kerensky, a Captain in his first combat command, led a lance that distinguished itself despite being outnumbered and surrounded by Combine forces on Royal. The commanding officers of the 564th Hussars

were killed in a DropShip collision.

Leaderless, the regiment was in danger of being split apart and destroyed piecemeal by a Sword of Light regiment from the Draconis Combine. Captain Kerensky stepped in and assumed command of the regiment. He successfully regrouped the Hussars and held off the Kurita regiment until his company was reinforced. For his quick thinking and actions, Aleksandr Kerensky was given the Medal of Valor and promoted to the rank of Colonel, one of the rare officers in the history of the SLDF to merit such a jump in rank.

The young Colonel was then given command of the 261st Royal Dragoon Regiment stationed in the Taurian Concordat. He spent a year commanding the regiment and became deeply embroiled in local politics. The corruption of the local government and the greed of companies from the Inner Sphere sickened him.



On five occasions, he arrested and tried corrupt politicians and businessmen, using an obscure provision in Periphery law that allowed SLDF officers of high rank to arrest men and women who represented a threat to the Star League. His actions won him the respect and admiration of many people in the Periphery.

Colonel Kerensky's crusade against corruption angered some of the Council Lords, who were responsible for the exploitation of the Periphery in the first place. Colonel Kerensky was a threat they had to remove. Chancellor Warex Liao came up with a plan that found ready support among the Lords. With effusive public praise, the Council Lords lauded the exploits of Aleksandr Kerensky, making him seem twice as heroic and important as he was. Hearing of a hero they knew little about, the public media traveled to the Periphery to do programs and articles about Kerensky, just as the Council Lords hoped. Their glowing reports made the First Lord eager to meet the dashing officer. He approved Kerensky's promotion and transfer in 2731.

The new Lieutenant General was somewhat shocked that almost everyone on Terra recognized him and considered him a true Star League hero. He responded to all the fuss with dignity, courtesy, and bemusement, which endeared him to the public all the more. The General met the First Lord, Mother Jocasta Cameron, and Jonathan's son, Simon. Simon Cameron and Aleksandr Kerensky became good friends.

Lieutenant General Kerensky was assigned to the Planning and Strategy Sub-Command, the think-tank of the Regular Army. He was promoted to Major General in 2733 and assigned as an aide to General Rebecca Fetladral, commander of the Star League Defense Forces.

The public's interest in General Kerensky did not wane. His frequent appearances at parties and balls at the Court of the Star League charmed the nobility. The media found him unusually charismatic and kept the public attuned to his life.

Though General Kerensky did not seek out this attention, he used it to his advantage when necessary. He publicly berated the Council Lords for their reluctance to investigate the huge Med-Tech Scandal of 2736, suggesting their reluctance might signal their involvement. The five Council Lords were enraged and demanded that General Kerensky be court-martialed under the Hooks Act, which prohibited members of the military from voicing their opinions on political matters.

For a short time, the First Lord seemed ready to acquiesce to the Lords' demand. The public outcry was so great, however, that the First Lord gave General Kerensky only a slap on the wrist. None of the Council Lords was implicated in the scandal, but neither did General Kerensky's popularity diminish.

When First Lord Jonathan died and Simon Cameron became the new leader of the Star League, General Rebecca Fetladral retired. She recommended Aleksandr Kerensky as the only person qualified to become the next SLDF leader. That recommendation, plus Simon Cameron's personal friendship with General Kerensky, greatly outweighed the objections of the Council Lords.

During First Lord Simon's reign, General Kerensky commanded the SLDF with great dynamism. Tirelessly, he toured fortresses and installations, inspecting the troops and the condition of the fortifications. During the 13-year reign of Simon Cameron, Kerensky inspected at least 1,000 SLDF bases throughout the Inner Sphere. During these visits, he inspired the absolute loyalty of his troops.



69

General Kerensky was also busy overhauling the military bureaucracy, eliminating waste and ruthlessly ferreting out any hint of corruption. He also tightened security around secret projects and intelligence-gathering. The result was a military that was much more responsive and efficient and no longer top-heavy with officers and administrators.

HIDDEN REALITIES

It's nice having a hero as our leader. His aura shines so brightly that it tends to blind anyone trying to watch us, making it much easier for us to get the job done.

—Chancellor Warex Liao, from private tapes of the Winter Meeting of the High Council, 2752.

General Kerensky offered to step down as SLDF commander when the Council Lords appointed him Regent of the Star League. Many people were surprised when the Council Lords rejected the General's resignation, but the Lords said he was too vital to be replaced on the brink of war. They doubted that the military could function properly without his guidance.

This was essentially true. The general's success at cutting away the fat in the military had given every officer, particularly the commanding general, more responsibility. If General Kerensky stepped down, the SLDF would be disrupted for months while a new commander learned to control the immense military machine. With the situation so tense in the Periphery, the Star League could not afford an unsteady and unsure military; it was essential that Kerensky stay on.

There was considerable speculation about whether the Lords had ulterior motives in refusing the General's resignation. Critics of the Lords felt that they wanted him to remain as commander so he would not be able to take an active part in running the government. This way, the Council Lords won public approval for appointing Kerensky as Regent and yet kept him from interfering with these plans. The scheduling of High Council meetings seemed to bear this out; they were consistently held when the general could not attend because of SLDF duties. Because of these scheduling conflicts, General Kerensky suffered the same fate as his ancient ancestor and namesake, becoming little more than a rubber stamp in the Star League government, often reduced to signing entire stacks of unread documents.

Within the High Council, the five leaders of the Inner Sphere realms continued their plans to gut the Star League. In the Spring Meeting of 2752, the five Council Lords passed, without the General's signature as required by law, an amendment to First Lord Michael's Edict of 2650. While the earlier Edict limited the number of troops that each House government could raise, the new amendment doubled the allowance. The next year, another Edict permitted the Houses to build up by raising taxes on the Periphery.

General Kerensky, who was inspecting Hegemony fortifications and SDS networks, was livid when he heard the news. He ordered all SLDF troops to increase their readiness in response to provocation by the Lords. He briefly considered challenging the legality of the order but decided against it.

The situation in the Periphery was heating up. The anti-Star League factions, which had been idle during the shocked months after Simon Cameron's death, were active again. Terrorist acts against SLDF bases and Inner Sphere companies were on the rise, with no end in sight. General Kerensky decided that having the Council Lords on his side in the event of a Periphery war was more important than trying to stop them from stockpiling weapons.

FABLES AND FAIRY TALES

There was always an air of disappointment hanging heavy about him. He looked as if the world around him were a poorly written novel.

—From *Richard Cameron: An Unauthorized Biography*, by G. R. Tillers, Sian Press, 2775



70

AMARIS THE SCHEMER

My loyalty to the Star League and to the young First Lord is unswerving. May God strike me dead if I ever do anything to harm the glory of the Star League and the Camerons.

—Stefan Amaris, October 2754

Richard, like all Camerons, grew up keenly aware of his family's history, nourished from childhood by tales about his famous ancestors. They were fairy tales, bedtime stories laced with virtue and passion and action, but regrettably short on fact. Richard's parents did not worry that the stories would give their child the wrong impression; there was plenty of time for him to learn the unvarnished truth.

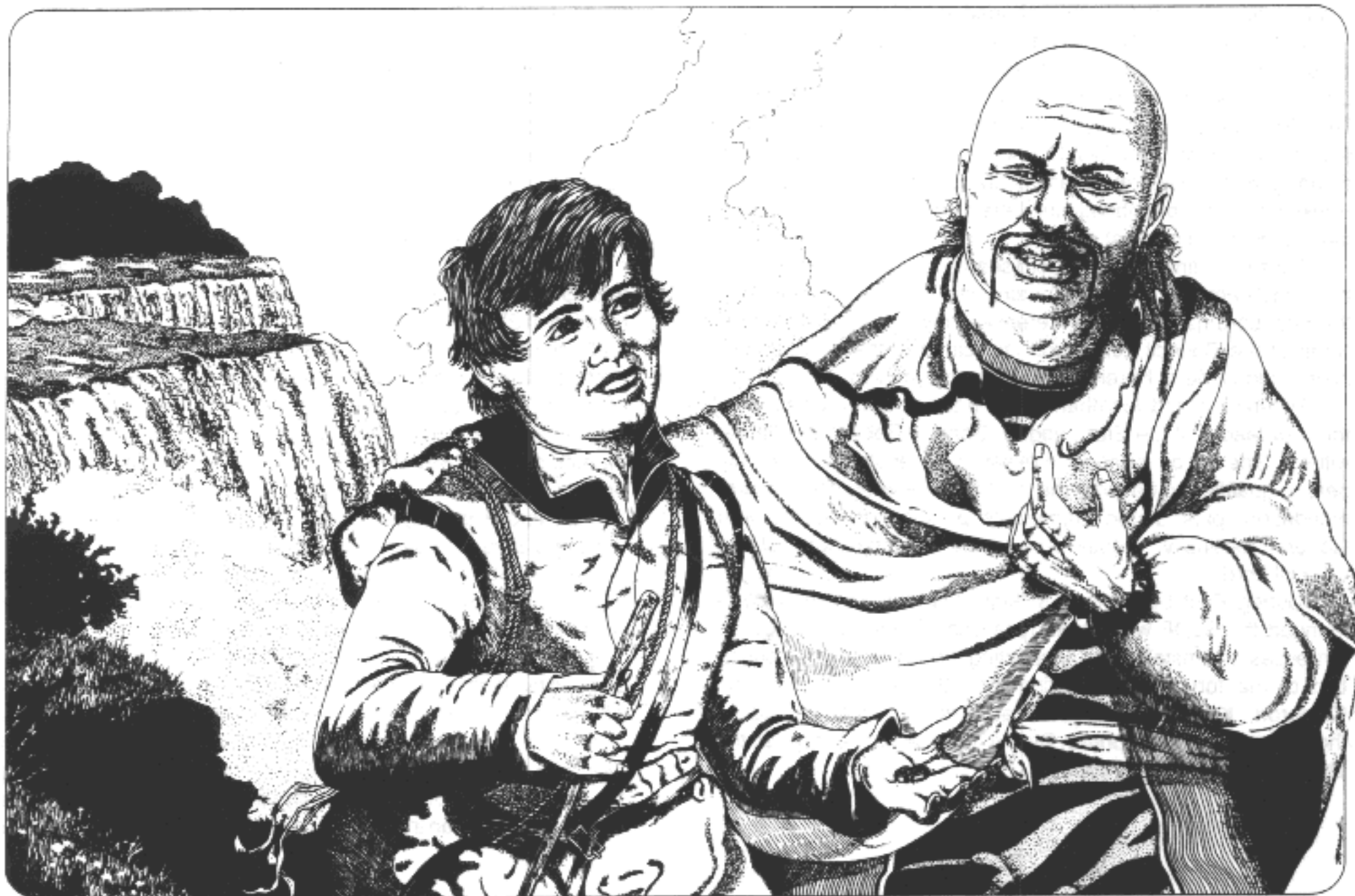
Then they died, leaving their child with the grandly romantic stories permanently etched in his mind as the truth about his line. As he grew, Richard began reading all he could about the great romantic heroes of literature. He became obsessed with figures such as King Arthur, Charlemagne, Roland, and Aragon because they reminded him of what he thought his parents were and what he should be. The many histories of the Cameron family did not interest Richard. He said that they were "too dark and filled with depressing lies."

Young Richard had very few people turn to after his parents died. He had only a handful of distant relatives, and they were scattered across the League. Because of his importance, the few children at Unity City shied away from him. Teachers, butlers, and maids were the only people that he would see for days. None of them seemed able to look past Richard's title and see the very lonely boy. Richard delved ever deeper into his books about kings, queens, and knights.

Stefan Amaris, leader of the Rim Worlds Republic, became a frequent visitor to the Court of the Star League during the Regency. As leader of the Periphery's most pro-League realm, his presence at the Court was welcomed by some, but most looked down on anyone from the Periphery. By making himself up like a bad imitation of Genghis Khan and deliberately playing the country bumpkin in public, Stefan Amaris played on these prejudices to mask his cunning. Seeing this seemingly harmless, roly-poly man, few thought to question why the ruler of such a distant realm suddenly showed such an interest in Court life.

Hidden behind Amaris's unimpressive exterior was a grand schemer. Ever since he could remember, Stefan had believed that his family and his realm had suffered at the hands of the Star League like the poor relations of a rich family. He felt the Star League and the Camerons had spent the last two centuries either ignoring the Amaris family's diligent attempts to show their worthiness or by behaving like a club-wielding policeman the instant the Amarises made a minor mistake.

Stefan Amaris had decided early in his life that he would avenge himself on the Camerons and the Star League and prove the Amaris name worthy of recognition. With the death of Simon Cameron, Amaris got the break he needed. The moment he heard about the First Lord's death, he began to read and study everything he could about young Richard Cameron: his likes, dislikes, what he read, and what he watched. Once he felt he understood this lonely boy, Amaris left the Republic for Terra.



The leader of the Rim Worlds Republic had done his homework well. When introduced to Richard Cameron in August 2753, he knew just how to attract the bored boy's attention and curiosity. From beneath his cloak, Stefan Amaris produced an ornate book of stories about chivalry and knighthood. When activated, a small holographic scene in wondrous color and detail appeared on one page depicting a scene from the text on the facing page. Richard was entranced by both the book and this mustachioed leader from a far-distant realm. The friendship blossomed, and soon Amaris was accompanying the lonely boy through his daily routine of studies and endless audiences with a long stream of officials.

Considering Richard's extreme isolation, his immediate fondness for Amaris is not surprising. Here was a man who understood his favorite stories, who claimed to share Richard's beliefs, and who seemed to listen. No one in Unity City cared enough for Richard Cameron to recognize that he was still a boy with a child's needs. The only person he found to comfort him would turn that trust to his own secret ends.

Under Amaris's influence, Richard Cameron began to change. He grew ever more petulant, demanding, and outraged when denied anything for any reason. He cried, he yelled, and he sneered, alienating the few people who did care for him. Amaris approved and even encouraged the future First Lord's expectations by saying that in the Rim Worlds Republic, Richard would be treated like a god.

Under Amaris's influence, Richard came to believe that everyone should bow to his will simply because he was a Cameron. Anyone who did not was an imbecile or a traitor, and the young First Lord took careful note of those who would not yield to him. He remembered every insult, every slight, however small, and waited for his 18th birthday, when he would have his revenge on everyone who did not show him the respect he was due. To restrain his anger for a decade required remarkable control, a sign of how vindictive Richard Cameron had become.

The Lords of the High Council, busy with their own unscrupulous plans, were pleased that someone was keeping the young First Lord occupied and not intruding on their work. Others of the court thought the two were just good friends. Yet some did not trust the overly polite Amaris, whose whispering into the First Lord's ear sent shivers down their spines. These nobles made several attempts to reduce Amaris's influence, but the First Lord believed he had finally found someone he could trust. As for General Kerensky, though Richard's Regent, he was so pressed by his duties as commander of the military that he had few chances to see the boy, let alone form an opinion about the friendship with Stefan Amaris.

When Stefan Amaris received a pile of extravagant gifts from the boy during the holidays of 2754, he realized how total was his influence over the boy. Knowing his position was secure, Amaris began to poison the lad's thoughts so that Richard began to see everything as a threat. If, for example, one of his teachers tried to discipline him, he would assume it was an act intended to shame the First Lord.

Amaris must have gloated privately at how easy it was to sway the child.



VULTURES GATHER

...I dreamt again last night, Jocasta. I dreamt of seeing the wheel again, but this time upon its rim were vultures black as night who looked expectantly at the young child who was laughing and playing with swords in the wheel's center...

—Excerpt from a letter by First Lord Jonathan Cameron to his sister, Mother Jocasta, 2729

When the Council Lords passed their laws imposing heavy taxes on the Periphery in 2752, they unleashed the fury of many underground Periphery movements bent on overthrowing the Star League. This unfair tax burden outweighed any previous political and ideological differences among these organizations and gave them a common rallying point.

Many Periphery worlds suddenly became battlegrounds after well-organized and well-equipped terrorists staged attacks. Taken by surprise, the SLDF forces in the Periphery suffered heavy casualties. The bombing of troop ships or the poisoning of a military base's water supply became commonplace.

The SLDF in the Periphery was ill-equipped to respond. 'Mechs were useless against lone saboteurs, and even the best-trained soldier had no defense against assassins supported by the local population. Even worse for the Star League, some SLDF troops were becoming sympathetic to the Periphery's cause.

General Kerensky had few choices. He could not keep his troops inside their bases like besieged knights in castles because it was their duty to collect taxes from the hostile people. Nor could he expect his troops to walk through the gates into one ambush after another. Hoping that the sight of more soldiers would discourage the guerrilla violence, Kerensky reluctantly ordered in more troops.

The Special Armed Services was the Regular Army's elite anti-terrorist combat organization. Recruited solely from members of the Hegemony Armed Forces, the SAS quickly established itself as the Star League's premier institution for covert operations and anti-terrorist missions. The few who knew of the existence of the SAS called its members the Blackhearts because they traditionally left their calling cards on the bodies of their victims. Their cynical motto was "in hoc signo vinces," which means "by this sign you will conquer."

In 2753, the SLDF had about 100 battalion-sized SAS squads. General Kerensky sent all but a few into the Periphery. He assigned them the monumental task of finding and rooting out the groups responsible for the terrorist activities "without resorting to equally violent actions." Outnumbered and facing a public as determined as the underground groups, the SAS began to resort to tactics as brutal as those of their opponents.

On the other side, the Periphery governments began to take a more active role in the growing revolt, secretly funding the underground organizations and providing them with support and alibis. The governments also began to hamper the efforts of SLDF forces to track down suspects.

Only the Rim Worlds Republic appeared to remain staunchly loyal to the Star League. Terrorism was not nearly as rampant there as in the other three realms. Indeed, the Amaris government made a big show of ruthlessly hunting down suspects accused of terrorism and handing them over to the Star League for trial.

In retrospect, it is easy to say that General Kerensky and the rest of the Star League should have been suspicious of the way the Rim Worlds Republic reacted to the revolt. At the time, however, the SLDF welcomed help from any quarter as it tried to contain what threatened to become a catastrophe.



72

CULT OF THE SAINTS CAMERON

After the deaths of Jonathan and Jocasta Cameron, some curious incidents and coincidences sparked a remarkable religious phenomenon in the Hegemony. Calling themselves "the devout believers of the Saints Cameron," the movement at its peak claimed a following of more than one million on Terra and another 50 million throughout the Hegemony, including many soldiers and officers.

The truth behind the "Mystical Revelations" that gave birth to the movement is hard to determine. A summary of accepted fact follows.

One year to the day after the death of Jonathan Cameron, Lieutenant Saul Robstein, a young soldier in the 191st Royal BattleMech Division, was struck blind and dumb while participating in a military exercise. Doctors could not explain his affliction. Three days after being struck, Lieutenant Robstein suddenly regained his sight and speech. He began ranting to the shocked doctors that the ghost of Jonathan Cameron came to him, a flaming sword in his hand. He said that the ghost told him that Jonathan's sister would die in two years but that her influence would be felt far into the future.

Two years and three days later, Mother Jocasta Cameron died. Five days after her death, another soldier, this time a gunner in the Seventieth Infantry Division, Trooper Sandra Ustus, was struck deaf, blind, and dumb. She also regained the use of her senses, but in five rather than three days. She claimed that Mother Jocasta prophesied that Simon Cameron would meet an unfortunate end at the hands of an "assassin's digging machine."

Both incidents were reported in magazines catering to the bizarre, but otherwise forgotten until the death of Simon Cameron in 2751 at the hands of an errant Miner 'Mech. A debate erupted in the Hegemony media over whether these events were just twists of fate or influenced by God. Eight days after Simon's death, Sergeant Heinz Mann inexplicably fell into a coma. Sergeant Mann, who served in the 290th Mechanized Infantry Division, had been in excellent health but his current condition baffled doctors for eight days.

The private letters and writings of Jonathan and Jocasta, including the many about bizarre dreams, were released to the media by the Court of the Star League staff. The writings were published in book form and became instant bestsellers. Many people read the books and dismissed them, but others took them as clear visions of the future and began to shape their lives accordingly. Eventually the believers began to meet together, forming a set of common beliefs and rituals. Among these beliefs was that both Jonathan and Jocasta were saints of God who watched over the Star League from heaven. When he awoke, Sergeant Mann told of visions of dozens of dead Camerons, lying in their own blood.

At first, the general public considered the Believers of the Saints Cameron to be crackpots. In 2753, however, the Believers' cause received a major boost. Richard Cameron met Stefan Amaris in a meeting supposedly divined by Jonathan Cameron in one of his letters written half a century earlier: "...a Cameron child shall stand before a distant ruler and be beguiled by his rough country ways and the interests that they share. I fear for the child because the distant ruler has cruel, dark thoughts..."



This drew more people to the Believers of the Saints Cameron. Symbols unique to the new religion began appearing everywhere. One was the Three Swords of Saint Cameron, representing the visitation of Jonathan Cameron to Lieutenant Saul Robstein. Another was a symbolic representation of the habit worn by Benedictine nuns. A third was a bloody throne. These symbols sprang up on the sides of buildings, machinery, and even BattleMechs.

The Believers of the Saints Cameron wielded considerable social and political power in the Hegemony during the last years before the Fall. The religion not only survived the chaos that followed, but it even grew, with small, fervent groups scattered throughout the Inner Sphere and the Periphery. The Believers, not surprisingly under the circumstances, added General Aleksandr Kerensky's name to the two Saints Cameron to form a trinity of divine figures from the last days of the Star League. Simon Cameron became a minor prophet even though he had shown little interest in spiritual affairs during his life and had appeared in no visions after his death.

Today, the religion has all but died out. Except for a few small pockets of Believers in the Periphery and in the Lyran Commonwealth, most of the lore has been absorbed into the huge mythos surrounding the final days of the Star League.

—From *The Death of Order, The Birth of Legends*, by Precentor Tamela Cresky, ComStar Press, 2999

BIRTHDAY PROCLAMATION

As unrest increased in the Periphery, the Star League began to suffer from the lack of Cameron control. Despite the new tax money flowing from the Periphery into the Inner Sphere, the massive buildup of the House armies still strained the economies of the five realms. The healthy economic signs of just a few years before—near-full employment, high wages, and major worker benefits—began to deteriorate. Unemployment climbed into double digits in three member states.

The five Council Lords ignored these economic problems, so preoccupied were they with outfitting and training their new regiments. They even lost interest in running the Star League. Without a First Lord, the Council Lords were supposed to be in charge. When only two or three attended meetings of the High Council, effective government became impossible.

The Bureau of Star League Affairs tried to handle some of the responsibilities without overstepping its legal bounds, but its efforts lacked the force of law. Many career diplomats and bureaucrats, whose loyalty and dedication had been the core of the government, began to resign in disgust. Morale plummeted throughout the Star League government.

Stefan Amaris was pleased. The growing government discord, the shaking of the realms' economies, and the continuing urban wars in the Periphery all fit into his plans.

His friendship with the now adolescent Richard Cameron was firm. Richard saw Amaris as his closest confidant and as a substitute father, and Amaris did everything to encourage that. Richard's trust was the foundation for all of Amaris's coming plans. Until 2755, Amaris had resisted the urge to manipulate the young leader. He wanted to be certain that Richard grew up trusting only him, but he also needed to soothe the fears of the few nobles suspicious of his intentions. After four years and with the young teenaged ruler eager to show his authority, Amaris began to exert more control.

Richard Cameron, though still too young to assume complete control, was allowed to sit in and comment on all High Council meetings. Until Amaris suggested it, Richard did not go to the meetings, which suited the purposes of the Council Lords just fine.

The appearance of the First Lord at the 2755 Winter Meeting was definitely a shock. The sight of the slim youth sitting in the ornate chair of the First Lord was disconcerting. Even more surprising was his announcement that, to honor his friend's birthday, he was making Stefan Amaris a Knight of the Star League. He added that, as a further sign of the Star League's gratitude to the leader from the Rim Worlds Republic, SLDF units would be withdrawn from his realm.

The Council Lords were too stunned to react. The First Lord received the necessary certifications from each Lord to make the proclamations legal before any Lord had the wit to question them. The Lords later wrote that each had been so perplexed by Richard Cameron's request that they thought to object only after the "Birthday Proclamations" had become law.

The Knighthood created considerable public controversy. Many people were outraged that a man of such "unscrupulous nature and backwoods origin" would be given Knighthood. To them, the Star League list of Knights was tainted by inclusion of a man of no worth or integrity.

The public was unaware of the struggle the second birthday proclamation created between Richard Cameron and General Kerensky. To abandon the Rim Worlds with only Stefan Amaris to combat anti-League forces was bad enough, but Richard Cameron specifically ordered General Kerensky to turn over all Star League bases and fortresses to the military of Stefan Amaris.

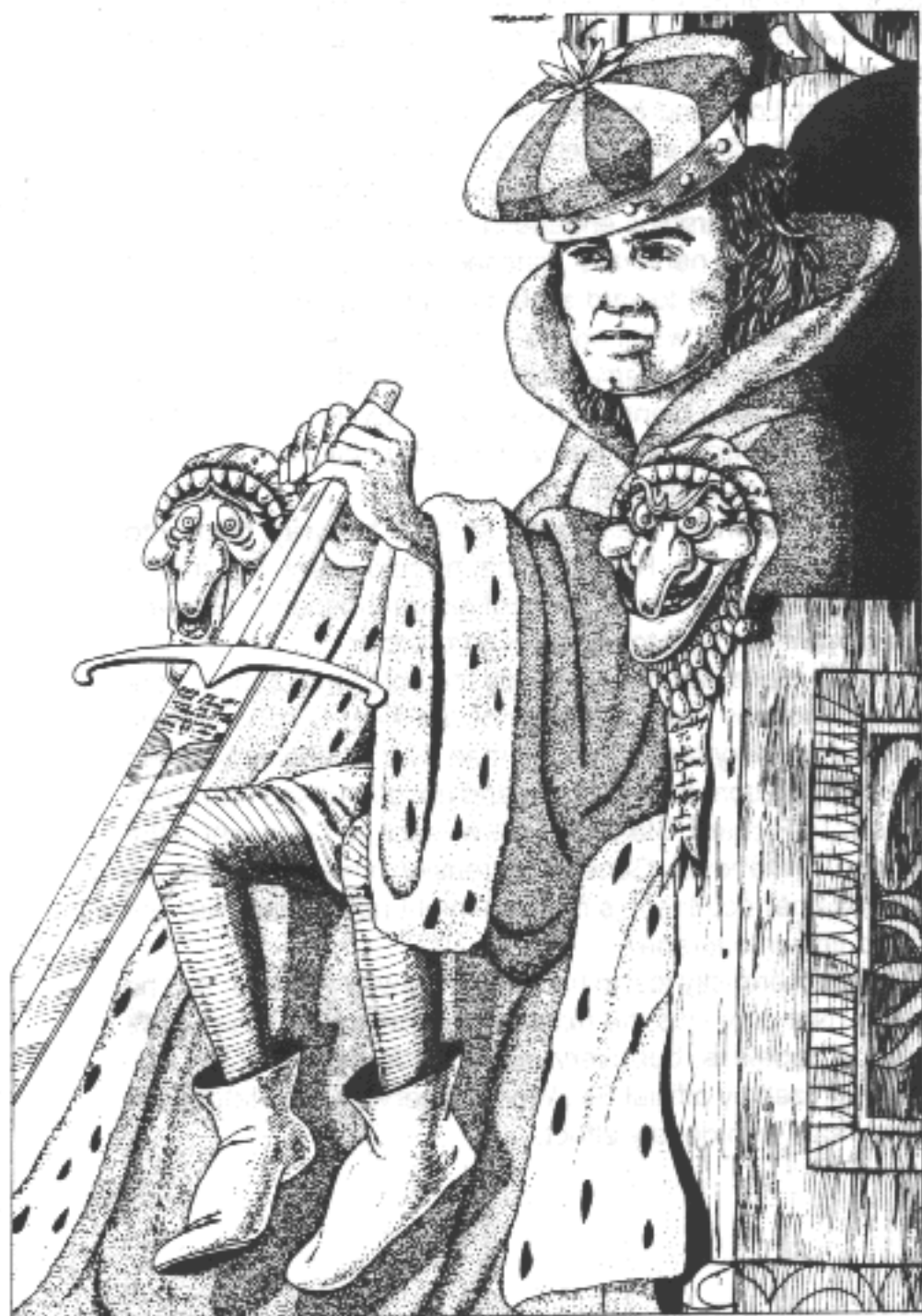


General Kerensky would not allow this. In a series of sharply worded messages from the Periphery, the General said that he would never submit to an order that "would hand over Star League technology to a Periphery realm." Richard Cameron, at the urging of Stefan Amaris, demanded that the General carry out his orders.

Though the Council Lords must have had their own misgivings, they sided with the First Lord. The High Council considered General Kerensky, with the might of the SLDF and charisma on his side, to be the more formidable adversary. Even if it meant siding with Stefan Amaris, the Lords were willing to do anything to drive a wedge between General Kerensky and the First Lord. With the First Lord and the High Council united against him, General Kerensky had no choice but to accept the orders.

The Regular Army began to evacuate its installations in the Rim Worlds Republic, but not before General Kerensky stripped everything from all the bases, forts, and fortresses. He wanted nothing handed over to the Republic that might benefit it or give it insight into SLDF operation.

Unfortunately, he failed. At Fort McHenry, a typical Star League fortress, stripping was so inept that more than 50 percent of the facility was left in working order, while at Hevrol Aero Base, computer memories were improperly wiped, leaving behind many files of sensitive SLDF documents. Stefan Amaris was overjoyed at obtaining access to the secrets of General Kerensky's military. These were the gifts he wanted, and he immediately began to scheme on how to use them to best advantage.



PERIPHERY UPRISING

FLEET MANEUVERS, 2757

The SLDF staged "Operation Persuasive Force," a military exercise in the Hegemony that involved more than 50 divisions, to judge the Terran Military Region's readiness to repel an enemy invasion. Star League divisions and warships outside the Hegemony made a multi-pronged push for Terra, while the units of the Terran Military Region tried to defeat them.

Few believed that Persuasive Force was just a training exercise. Everyone in the Periphery, from the government to the anti-League organizations, called it a rehearsal for the Regular Army's imminent invasion of the Periphery. The Council Lords, on the other hand, protested that the operation was an attempt to bully them.

In some ways, both were correct. The Regular Army High Command was using the information gathered from exercises to modernize plans for fighting in the four Periphery realms. It was also true that General Kerensky timed the operation so that the Council Lords would be aware of the might of the SLDF as they traveled to Terra for their spring session. The primary goal of the operation, however, was for General Kerensky to regain Richard's trust.

Kerensky invited First Lord Richard Cameron, then 13, to observe Operation Persuasive Force with him aboard the *SLS McKenna's Pride*. It was an offer that the young lad, steeped in the literature of romantic warfare, could not bear to pass up. Even General Kerensky's request that he come without Stefan Amaris did not dampen Richard's enthusiasm.

The First Lord and his Regent watched the operation together, from the first simulated clashes on the border of the Hegemony to its climax, three months later, around Terra. They watched fleets of warships engage in mock battles for control of star systems. They nervously watched as huge DropShips let 'Mech after 'Mech fall toward a planet's atmosphere. The First Lord and the General watched the fighting on the ground from a specially built, two-seat *BattleMaster*. To show the First Lord the darker side of war, General Kerensky took Richard to field hospitals to see from the many accidental injuries what the aftermath of a real battle might be.

General Kerensky was trying to fight his way back into Richard Cameron's life. Realizing that he had spent less than a month with the boy in the six years of his guardianship, General Kerensky wanted to get to know Richard better.

Stefan Amaris had been virtually the sole force shaping the thoughts, emotions, and character of the First Lord for years. Aleksandr Kerensky faced a young man who staunchly believed that nobility was born to the person and not something that could be earned. To Richard, Stefan Amaris was the embodiment of the noble man. Whenever General Kerensky hinted that Amaris might not be perfect, that his motives might not be altruistic, the First Lord flew into a rage.

General Kerensky lost in his efforts to sway Richard, and he lost badly. Not only was the mission of winning the First Lord's confidence hopeless, but every move made by the SLDF was being scrutinized by official Rim World observers, who later used what they saw with deadly effect.



74



ON THE QUESTION OF NOBILITY

[EDITOR'S NOTE: What follows is an excerpt of a conversation between General Aleksandr Kerensky and First Lord Richard Cameron II on April 19, 2757. The conversation was held in the General's quarters and was captured on his personal recording system, apparently without the First Lord's knowledge.]

GENERAL KERENSKY: You mentioned yesterday about "the nobility of the spirit." What did you mean?

LORD RICHARD CAMERON: Nobility...You know, that something people are born with that makes them either good or bad, rich or poor.

GENERAL KERENSKY: Born with? Can someone start out common but become noble?

LORD RICHARD CAMERON: I don't think so.

GENERAL KERENSKY: Could you be a friend to someone who had committed a crime, or was poor?

LORD RICHARD CAMERON: I doubt it.

GENERAL KERENSKY: No hope of redemption for the weary sinner, eh?

LORD RICHARD CAMERON: I don't follow.

GENERAL KERENSKY: Never mind. Look out there, your Highness; what do you see?

LORD RICHARD CAMERON: The *Aegis* about a klick to port, the *Michigan* to starboard. Several destroyers and a few DropShips.

GENERAL KERENSKY: And what do they represent to you?

LORD RICHARD CAMERON: The might of the Star League, the force by which the League can smite its enemies and create justice.

GENERAL KERENSKY: Justice can be created?

LORD RICHARD CAMERON: Of course.

GENERAL KERENSKY: How? Justice is justice. It is the indefinable purpose of God we look for in life. It's not something we can create.

LORD RICHARD CAMERON: Don't be funny, Aleksandr. Everyone knows that justice is one of the spoils of victory.

GENERAL KERENSKY: Might is right?

LORD RICHARD CAMERON: It is the noble way, isn't it?

GENERAL KERENSKY: According to whose definition?

LORD RICHARD CAMERON: Lord Amaris. He says that nobility is often just blind confidence.

GENERAL KERENSKY: And when you believe you are right, then anything you do is right?

LORD RICHARD CAMERON: Exactly. Why do you shake your head that way?

COMING OF AGE

The years between 2757–60 passed without any major crises. Stefan Amaris, ecstatic that General Kerensky had failed to influence the First Lord, continued to fill Richard's mind with worlds meant to enlarge his ego and shake his confidence in everyone except Amaris. General Kerensky, meanwhile, had returned to the Periphery. The show of force in the maneuvers had given General Kerensky a brief respite in the Periphery, but the depth of antipathy toward the Star League still required his presence there.

As the day of Richard's majority approached, the Council Lords were quickly losing the honor among thieves that had characterized the early years of the Regency. Old hatreds and grievances were rising to the surface once again. Unimpressed by General Kerensky's maneuvers, the Lords continued to build up their own militaries and to raid one another.



75

General Kerensky left for Terra as soon as he heard that the Council had issued orders without consulting him. When he arrived, he tried to convince the leaders of the Commonwealth, the Free Worlds League, and the Draconis Combine that any fighting between Houses could easily spread out of control. The three Lords hesitated, but they were content to let the border war continue because neither side seemed to be gaining ground. The war sputtered to a halt in early 2762, and the First Lord soon united the Council Lords, even the warring parties, in opposition to his actions.



In 2760, the raiding escalated into something more serious when a nuclear explosion on the Davion world of Demeter killed more than 200 people. House Davion claimed that the Confederation was responsible, and they demanded reparations. Barbara Liao, after only four days as Chancellor, referred the matter to the High Council. When the Council Lords could not agree, Prince John Davion began to prepare for his offensive.

The Federated Suns opened three fronts, targeting the Liao worlds of Tsamma, Wei, and Redfield. The offensive placed the SLDF units on those worlds in a precarious position between the warring forces. The SLDF units requested orders from General Kerensky, but instead received orders from the High Council to evacuate all the worlds being contested. The Regular Army left those worlds, but not before several officers were demoted for challenging the Council's authority to give them orders.



Richard Cameron turned 18 on February 9, 2762. Everyone, from the Council Lords to the commoners, looked forward to seeing what the young leader would do now. Most were relieved that the Star League had survived the Regency intact. With a Cameron back on the throne, they felt that things had to get better. It seemed that only the Council Lords and General Kerensky were worried as the delighted Richard celebrated his birthday.

A week later, the First Lord invited General Kerensky to his private quarters. Before Kerensky could even say hello, the First Lord thrust papers at him and excitedly asked that he read them. Stefan Amaris was also present, closely watching both the First Lord and the General.

What General Kerensky read was Executive Order 156, an order to disarm all House militaries and private armies. Any piece of military hardware larger than a laser rifle or more destructive than a grenade would be outlawed. Failure to comply would be a treasonous offense. This was Richard's revenge on the Council Lords. With one bold stroke, Richard intended to pay back every real and imagined insult he had even suffered. He would also do it in such a way that everyone would acclaim him as a man of peace.

Richard eagerly asked the General what he thought even before Kerensky could finish reading. When he finally spoke, General Kerensky said that he admired the spirit that went into the document but saw no chance of executing the order.

Amaris, who had remained quiet until then, interjected that Richard was the First Lord, and all the other Lords were bound by loyalty to obey him. "The Lords are bound to the Star League, of which Richard is only the first among six Lords," General Kerensky replied. "Though they look to Richard for leadership, the Lords look to the articles of the Star League Accords for the law," he went on. He knew the Lords would have plenty of valid reasons to challenge the legality of Richard's order.

Richard was crestfallen. He had expected General Kerensky's wholehearted support. Without it, he doubted that the other Lords would accept the order. Sensing Richard's mood, Amaris demanded to know whether Kerensky supported the laws of the Star League or its leader. The General turned and left the room without another word.

Despite the General's apparent disapproval, Richard issued the order at Amaris's urging. The Lords were outraged. Messages that smoked with anger arrived at Unity City. Then the Lords themselves arrived for an emergency High Council meeting. When Richard strode into the Council Chambers, followed by Amaris and a very somber General Kerensky, he had no idea how deeply his order had offended the other leaders because Amaris had kept it from him.

Richard Steiner II, Archon of the Lyran Commonwealth, asked if the order had been a mistake. Led by the Coordinator of the Draconis Combine, the other Lords began to shout their anger about the order and the order's author. Richard's stunned silence encouraged them to even louder protests.

Stefan Amaris pretended to be frightened. He defended the order and then behaved as though in fear of his life when the Lords directed some of their venom at him. When Takiro Kurita rose from his chair, Amaris feigned panic and called for the guards. They entered the Council Chambers, their weapons ready.

General Kerensky ordered them to lower their weapons and leave. The shouting died away and everyone looked at him. The guards, uncertain whom to obey, hesitated, then lowered their weapons and left.

It was the First Prince of the Federated Suns who put the question to the General of the Star League Defense Forces. "General Kerensky, where do you stand on this order? Do you support the First Lord in demanding that we give up our legal rights to our own militaries, or do you stand with us?"

"I swore an oath to the Star League when I entered the SLDF. I vowed to defend to the death the laws of the Star League and the uniqueness of each member state. I am loyal to my oath," General Kerensky said quietly, "which is why I must disappoint my First Lord and say that the Executive Order is, I believe, illegal."

The Council Lords were ecstatic, while the First Lord looked like a child who had just been severely scolded. Seated on his throne, Richard Cameron meekly signed a hastily drafted order rescinding Executive Order 156. For once, Amaris could say or do nothing.



AMARIS AND KERENSKY

Deeply ashamed at being bested by the Council Lords, First Lord Richard Cameron went into seclusion after the High Council meeting. He was also extremely angry with General Kerensky, certain that the other Lords had turned the General against him. Amaris fed these feelings with distortions and lies: that the Council Lords had laughed at him after he left the Council Chambers, that General Kerensky had called him a "child," and so on. Richard disbanded the High Council, vowing to rule by decree, and left the Court of the Star League for the small Star Palace he had built for Amaris in the wilds of the Canadian States. Cameron remained there for two years.

Convinced that the Council Lords and General Kerensky were conspiring against him, First Lord Richard began to govern by himself. His most important act was the Taxation Edict of 2763, which placed an even heavier burden on the Periphery. When the Periphery states refused to comply, Richard ordered General Kerensky to reinforce troops there and take change personally.

In 2764, Stefan Amaris left the First Lord and Terra to meet with General Kerensky in the Periphery. The stated reason for Amaris's visit was to try to reconcile their differences. Amaris had a very special peace offering for Aleksandr Kerensky. Because of the underground network among Periphery resistance movements, Amaris had information that would allow the General to smash one of the strongest terrorist organizations in the Taurian Concordat. Called the Taurian Freedom Army, the well-armed and organized band of rebels had stymied the Regular Army and even its vaunted SAS. The opportunity to remove such a menace was, Amaris assumed, worth considerable money or influence to the General.

When Amaris and General Kerensky met, the leader of the Rim Worlds Republic disclosed the information without conditions or demands for payment. This act of seeming friendship and honesty surprised the soldier. Despite his gratitude, General Kerensky told Amaris that he was a bad influence on the First Lord and should allow Richard to learn to rule by himself. Amaris surprised General Kerensky yet again by saying he would not be spending as much time on Terra as formerly. Responsibilities in the Rim Worlds Republic demanded that he return home.

The meetings did not end in friendship, or even in the lowering of General Kerensky's guard, but Amaris walked away happy. The fact that the General appreciated the value of his information about the Taurian Freedom Army was enough of a victory for Amaris to allow him to continue with his plans.

General Kerensky immediately acted on Amaris's disclosure. First, he had his own intelligence personnel confirm the information. He then sent three regiments of troops to Camadeierre, the stronghold hideout of the Taurian Freedom Army. Not only were the leaders of the organization captured alive, but the troops uncovered enough evidence to incriminate the government of the Taurian Concordat.

In the meantime, Amaris returned to Terra to say his farewells to Richard. He lied that General Kerensky had attacked Richard's friendship with Amaris and ordered the Rim Worlds leader to leave Terra within the month and return to his realm or be arrested.

Shocked, Richard offered to rescind the order. Instead, Amaris donned the cloak of self-sacrifice and said that he would return to the Rim Worlds for the sake of the Star League. Amaris urged Richard not to be angry with General Kerensky, but to have pity on the aging officer. The General just wanted to protect the First Lord from the coming storm in the Periphery, Amaris counseled. The First Lord should be thinking of ways to help General Kerensky fight the coming rebellion.

Amaris offered to help the First Lord and the Star League from the Rim Worlds Republic. He outlined a treaty that would allow regiments from his realm to assume the defense of the Terran Hegemony if a crisis arose. Amaris assured Richard that he could spare the soldiers; his republic was the most loyal of the four Periphery realms, and so rebellion there was extremely unlikely.

Richard shared his grandfather's deep fear of seeing Terra overrun. To know that the Hegemony could depend on the Rim Worlds Republic for assistance would be a great comfort. Richard eagerly accepted the terms of the treaty and signed it, without the High Council's knowledge, on July 21, 2764.

NEW VANDENBERG

As 2765 dawned, anti-League sentiment was further on the rise throughout the Periphery, spreading into worlds that had previously been loyal. The only exception to the disturbing trend was the Rim Worlds Republic.

General Kerensky and his soldiers were particularly puzzled by the constant violence in the Taurian Concordat because they had broken the TFA. The SLDF had expected a lull in the Concordat troubles and was caught flat-footed by the new violence. Many lives were lost in the new cycle of bombings and shootings. The worst atrocity was the destruction of Fort Simpson, home of the 265th Heavy Assault Regiment, by a terrorist in a car carrying a nuclear device.

Then New Vandenberg and 17 other Taurian worlds, with the permission of Concordat President Nicoletta Calderon, seceded from the Star League, though not from the Taurian Concordat. The Concordat itself did not secede, however. The Council Lords could not decide how to react. Finally, General Kerensky, under the mandate to suppress rebellion in the Periphery and to keep the Star League intact, landed on New Vandenberg and ordered the militia units there to lay down their arms. Because he had no evidence linking the militia to terrorist activity, General Kerensky considered the New Vandenberg units most loyal to the Star League. The General felt that if the SLDF could show the rest of the Concordat that the New Vandenberg militia calmly handed over its weapons to the Regular Army, it would be easier to ask the other militias to lay down theirs.

General Kerensky's plans were shattered when the New Vandenberg militia refused to give up its weapons. Stunned, General Kerensky hastily began negotiations with the soldiers, hoping to change their minds. News of the militia's defiance spread like wildfire throughout the Periphery. Anybody who had ever dreamed of defying the mighty Star League cheered them on. This celebrity status made General Kerensky's negotiations much more difficult and much more important. Any failure or mistake would surely turn the new celebrities of the Periphery into heroes or martyrs.

The mistake occurred when a firefight broke out at Fort Gorki between a platoon of militia that had been patrolling the fence of the base and a squad from the First French Regiment, whose vehicle broke down just outside the base. The squad tried to retreat but was cut down.

Unit records showed that Lieutenant General Dominique Petain, commander of the First French Regiment and one of General Kerensky's trusted friends, had no intention of retaliating for the incident. She knew that the delicate negotiations would be affected by how her troops behaved now that they had been provoked. She did not want her soldiers to be responsible for another Periphery war.



77

The Concordat regiment inside the fort did not realize how conscientious and peace-loving Lieutenant General Petain was. The militia expected to pay a heavy price for the incident. Each hour that passed without retaliation increased the tension. Thirty hours after the initial firefight, the Taurians could stand the anxiety no longer. In a wave assault, the entire regiment attacked the Star League troopers.

Her forces split by the attack, Lieutenant General Petain had to either let her regiment fight or succumb. The SLDF regiment showed its superiority but faced desperate Taurians, who feared for their lives if they surrendered. Fighting was protracted and costly to both sides.

A military tribunal later cleared Lieutenant General Petain of guilt in the Battle for Fort Gorki, but that could not change the tide of events. The entire Periphery, except the Rim Worlds Republic, rose up in rebellion as news of the battle spread.



YEAR OF A THOUSAND BATTLES

Like a wave of fire, the news of New Vandenberg's rebellion sparked similar revolts. On worlds where terrorist organizations had once been the Star League's only enemy, there now rose up whole regiments of men and women armed with weapons retrieved from secret caches. Worlds throughout the Periphery also seceded. Several SLDF units that had seen the injustices suffered by the Periphery joined the rebellion.

The rebels did not forget the guerrilla tactics their ancestors had used in the Reunification War. Suicide attacks, made by individuals in explosive heavy hovertrucks, or by whole crews in cargo ships, crippled many vital Star League installations. Communication and transportation centers were the prime targets of these attacks, and most were spectacularly successful. In one instance, a cargo ship laden with highly volatile fuel floated into an open cargo hold of the *SLS Nebraska*, a Star League battleship. The detonation split the ship in two, and one of the pieces collided with the *SLS Cairo*, a nearby battlecruiser.

Whole divisions were cut off from outside help. At first, the loss of assistance did not seem too important. Though well-armed, the regiments of rebel infantry that challenged the Regular Army were just brave citizens with only rudimentary training. The League troops' real opponents were the professional soldiers in the various militia units, but they were refusing to engage in combat, as though waiting for something.



78

A month into the war, dozens of 'Mech divisions arrived from beyond the Periphery boundaries and attacked isolated SLDF forces in all three rebel realms.

General Kerensky's worst nightmare had come true. The years of unrestricted 'Mech manufacturing by Periphery firms had allowed the creation of 50 full 'Mech divisions. Personnel for these divisions had been recruited

from militia units, mercenaries, and from colleges throughout the Periphery. The recruits had been sent to secret training centers, where mercenary units taught them how to use their 'Mechs. To cover their disappearance, the future MechWarriors were signed on as crew members of the trading vessels of the Black Crow Trading Company, the White Star Liner and Mercantile Company, and the Far Star Convoy. During the five years it took to train personnel for the divisions, the leaders of the Star League had no idea of what was going on, a sign of how deeply the people of the Periphery wanted independence from the League.

'Mechs and their crews had been hidden on key worlds. When news of the revolt reached their commanders, the 'Mechs performed a variety of missions, the most common being to kill the commander of the local SLDF contingent. This tactic, essentially just another suicide mission, was successful and weakened many SLDF units. Had it worked on New Vandenberg, where a battalion of 'Mechs attempted to kill General Kerensky, this tactic might have changed the course of history.

UPRISING

I had never seen violence. I know that sounds precious, but I hadn't. Sure, I've seen an occasional fistfight, even been in a couple myself, but here in Somab we pride ourselves on being above violence, or at least we did. Hell, we didn't even have a transceiver to pick up the news from Vandenberg. We had plenty of things to keep ourselves entertained: the mountain slopes, the streams, each other. We didn't need anything from the city below. They came here for entertainment.

Then came organizers for the TFA. Spouting grandiloquent phrases like "freedom from the League oppressors," or "justice and honest self-rule for New Vandenberg," they tried to get us to join them. They eventually left our town in disappointment, and we went back to looking after our guests.

We had met people from the Inner Sphere, mostly officers and soldiers from the local SLDF garrison. They came to Somab to ski, rest, and flirt with us just like anyone else.

Then someone blew up Crystal Lodge. A gaping black hole in the white snow was all that was left of the hotel and restaurants. The force of the blast had been so great that we couldn't even recover the dead.

The TFA was blamed for the explosion because many of the dead were soldiers from the local garrison. I looked at the list and saw that there were some important local politicians visiting as well, very vocal anti-League politicians. I guess the TFA was responsible, though. The League doesn't need to resort to bombings to get rid of its enemies. It just arrests them.

It didn't matter, really. A detachment from the 351st Dragoon Regiment, 'Mechs and all, entered our town and stayed. They interrogated everyone.

Their presence became an eerie fixture in our town, metal monsters on the street corners, soldiers with rifles walking through our buildings.

Huddled around the small holoset was how we heard the news about Fort Gorki. We saw the reports of the battle, saw the soldiers running in and out of the smoke and the fire. Already we could hear the screech of AeroSpace Fighters high above us and the commotion of the troopers outside.

On a cold, snowy night a week later, the TFA returned to Somab with 'Mechs and rifles. They slipped past the troopers guarding the town without being noticed. I was sitting in the bedroom of my second-floor apartment, and I saw their 'Mechs walk past my window toward the center of town. From one of the side streets came a League 'Mech, which was quickly riddled with gun and laser fire and put out of action.

The TFA 'Mechs then fanned out and began hunting the League 'Mechs. All I could hear was gunfire and explosions. I managed to get out of my building just before two 'Mechs, rockingly embracing each other like drunks, crashed into it.

I couldn't find a way out of the town without running into 'Mechs, their features lit up by the flash of their weapons. Running this way and that, I finally found myself climbing up the slopes with a group of other townsfolk. We walked and walked until we knew we were safe. We sat in the snow and watched our town being demolished.

The fires burned for two days, and the smoke hung over the ruins for weeks. The 'Mechs that survived the night's fighting moved off to fight elsewhere. We don't listen to the news anymore. No matter who wins, the Somab we loved is gone.

—From *The Faces of War: Interviews and Anecdotes*, edited by Collette DeNal, New Vandenberg Press, 2766

As the General left New Vandenberg for his flagship, he issued new orders for the entire SLDF. Divisions in the outer military regions of the five member states were to move "with vigor and force into the Periphery as soon as possible to relieve besieged units and take on enemy forces." Units stationed in the five House sectors nearest Terra and in the Hegemony were spread throughout the Inner Sphere to cover the planets vacated by troops heading into the Periphery.

Many divisions could not reach the Periphery quickly enough to save other SLDF units. Without support, most Star League forces in the Periphery could only hope to survive long enough to be rescued. Many units were forced to retreat to their bases for a final stand. Their opponents, the Periphery BattleMech forces, had no wish to waste their time on a beaten enemy and commonly issued the ultimatum: surrender or die. Few SLDF units surrendered. In most cases, Periphery forces dropped a nuclear bomb on the Star League troops and moved on.

Of the 50 divisions and regiments cut off by the uprising, 18 independent regiments and 13 complete divisions were annihilated.

By the end of 2765, more than half of the original 98 divisions in the region were lost or so severely mauled that they had to be disbanded. General Kerensky, faced with the possibility of being surrounded and cut off from the Inner Sphere, retreated with most of his forces back into the Inner Sphere.

Though forced to pull back in 2765, General Kerensky redeployed almost the entire SLDF and launched an offensive against the Periphery rebels the next year.



79

SETTING THE TRAP

All the while the other three Periphery realms were aflame with dissent, Amaris's realm, the Rim Worlds Republic, was almost ridiculously peaceful. On only a few worlds was there even a hint of rebellion, and these sparks were quickly and ruthlessly stamped out by the military of the Republic.

There was a report of only one major battle in the Republic, when one of the Periphery BattleMech divisions tried to invade the Rim Worlds Republic at Gotterdammerung. Twenty Rim Worlds regiments valiantly repulsed the invading BattleMechs. There was little, if any, Star League representation in the Republic at that time (the SLDF having been asked to leave the Republic in 2755), and so there was no independent verification of the heroic stand by the Republic military.

Only decades later did it become common knowledge that all the glorious stories from the battlefield, which included live reports on the fighting and interviews with the wounded, were a complete hoax. There had been no Battle for Gotterdammerung.

Stefan Amaris, far from the being the country bumpkin that he pretended, was a schemer of the first order. The reason the Rim Worlds Republic was suffering none of the ravages of war was because Amaris was one of the war's chief architects. Years earlier, he had met with leaders of all the major anti-League movements and had outlined his plans for the Periphery rebellion. It was Amaris who had suggested how BattleMech divisions could be outfitted and personnel trained to use them.

To the Star League, Amaris was a rabid loyalist determined to see his realm free of any anti-League activity. To the Periphery independence groups, Amaris was the clever ally who had rid his realm of the SLDF and made it a haven for their activities against the Star League. The ease with which he betrayed the Taurian Freedom Army to General Kerensky made it plain that Stefan Amaris's loyalties changed to fit the situation.

The need for fresh SLDF troops to relieve divisions that had been mauled in the Periphery required that more troops be called up from the Hegemony. By July 2765, more than 60 percent of the fighting units normally stationed near Terra had been called into the war, leaving behind increasingly fearful Hegemony citizens. At the urging of Stefan Amaris, First Lord Richard asked the Council Lords to use the House militaries to help put down the Periphery war. Because he had not held a High Council session in two years and because the First Lord's Taxation Edict had been largely responsible for the rebellion, the Council Lords had no intention of using their militaries. At the request of General Kerensky, however, most of the realms provided transportation and other services for SLDF units.

With the Terran Hegemony underdefended, rumors began to fly of suspicious troop movements in the Draconis Combine. It was at the height of these rumors that First Lord Richard Cameron revealed the treaty he had signed with Stefan Amaris, allowing for units from the Rim Worlds Republic to defend the Terran Hegemony. Even Richard did not know that Amaris had planted the rumors and had targeted them against the Draconis Combine to destroy the credibility of Takiro Kurita, a long-time critic of Amaris.

Initial reaction to the treaty was negative. Many in the Hegemony could not accept even the presence of the foreign troops, much less entrust them with the defense of the Cradle of Humanity. Those who disagreed with the plan became even more vocal when they learned that General Kerensky opposed it. When the General had heard of the treaty, he immediately sent the First Lord an alternative plan. Kerensky said the First Lord could easily hire regiments from the more trustworthy member states, such as the Lyran Commonwealth and the Federated Suns, to assume some of the defensive burden.



Then news of the Battle for Gotterdammerung reached the Hegemony. The glowing reports of the heroism and skills of the Rim Worlds troops blunted criticism of Amaris's intentions. Even General Kerensky, busy trying to control a growing disaster, said nothing further.

As soon as he received permission from the First Lord, Stefan Amaris had his best and most trustworthy units loaded onto transports heading for the Hegemony and Terra. Eager to show that he was a wise leader and had been right about Amaris all along, the First Lord celebrated the Republic troops' arrival on Terra with great pomp. The first BattleMech regiment to arrive, the Fourth Amaris Dragoons (nicknamed "The Far Guard" by the appreciative First Lord), was assigned to join the First Lord's personal troops, the Royal Black Watch Guards, in protecting the Court of the Star League.

Most of the Council Lords, preoccupied with their own affairs and trusting in the character and strength of General Kerensky, were unconcerned about entrusting the Hegemony's safety to Rim Worlds troops. Takiro Kurita, however, had always distrusted Amaris and tried to rally other Houses to an agreement for joint action. This failed because the other Lords were far more suspicious of Kurita than they were of Amaris.

Hegemony citizens began to raise questions about the number of troops that Amaris was sending. The designated number of troops were showing up, according to the accounting, yet Republican troops seemed to be everywhere in the Hegemony. The First Lord and his close advisers remained oblivious to the apparent discrepancy. In fact, Amaris was shipping two regiments for every one and concealing the fact by having extra units arrive in the Hegemony under false unit names. By the time Amaris was ready to act, almost half the forces of the Rim Worlds Republic had been redeployed to the Hegemony.

PERIPHERY MOBILIZATION

General Aleksandr Kerensky's response to the Periphery uprising involved almost the entire SLDF. Between one-half and three-fourths of Star League units actually fought there at one time or another during the crisis. About one-fourth of SLDF units were lost in the campaign.

Thirty 'Mech divisions were destroyed, and nine were disbanded because of heavy losses. In all, the SLDF lost units equal to 140 divisions, suffering more than one million casualties and even losing seven units who went over to the enemy.

General Kerensky mobilized so many units in the other military regions and sent them to the Periphery that he had to redeploy his remaining forces to cover the House districts. This left the Terran Hegemony so underdefended that few could object to bringing in troops from the Rim Worlds Republic.

With a strength of less than ten divisions left in the Terran Military Region, Star League forces were no match for the troops of Stefan Amaris. And thus did the mighty League topple.

—From *The Rise and Fall of the Star League*, by D.H. Rand, Tharkad Press, 2989

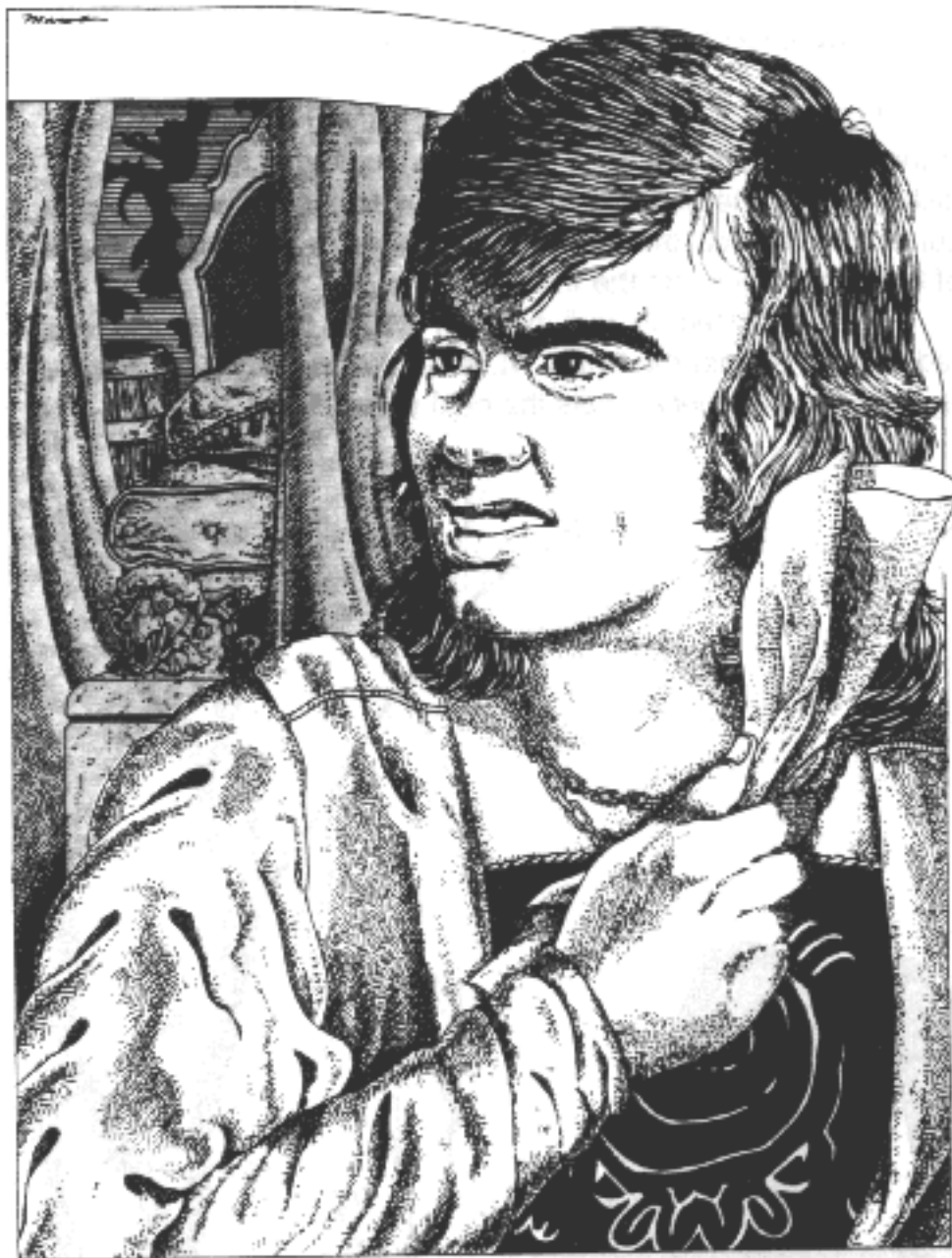


80

The duties of the Republican regiments were quickly expanding. At first, Amaris forces were asked to guard only secondary military bases. After several "helpful suggestions" from Stefan Amaris, the First Lord allowed Rim Worlds troops to man more sensitive bases.

Republican units soon controlled more than half the Castles Brian, the massive fortifications built on key Hegemony worlds. The Republican troops were well-acquainted with Castles Brian, thanks to Richard Cameron, who gave virtually identical fortifications to the Rim Worlds Republic when he withdrew the SLDF in 2755.

Republican officers were also infiltrating the bureaucracy of the SLDF, despite the efforts of many wary Star League officers. After the First Lord ordered SLDF commanders to give Republican observers the run of the realm, they watched and asked questions about the workings of every branch of the Regular Army. They were especially curious about the workings of the Space Defense Systems.



Eventually, the questions about the number of Republican troops, the curiosity of the Rim Worlds officers, and the underlying distrust of foreign forces became too much, and a group of high-ranking officers and nobles approached the First Lord. Richard Cameron scoffed at their fears that the Republican forces were up to no good. He was so fiercely loyal to Amaris that he angrily threatened to imprison any officer or noble who ever again publicly doubted Amaris's intentions. The First Lord then immediately sent a message to Stefan Amaris that his good name was being besmirched.

Deciding that the time for action had come, Stefan left for Terra aboard his private warship. He was eager and alert. All of his preparations had been completed, and everything was proceeding as planned.

KERENSKY'S FLIGHT

For MechWarrior Nicholas Henson and everyone of the 7734th Battle Regiment (The Star Vikings), the uprising came as a shock. Two weeks before the rebellion on New Vandenberg, he had been carousing with his classmates, celebrating their graduation and wondering where they would be assigned. Though he had hopes for action upon learning that he was Periphery-bound, Henson was given the boring job of patrolling the warehouses.

Henson had been listening to the news for further word from Fort Gorki when the station went dead. He flipped through the dial looking for another, but all the civilian stations had gone silent. Just then his CO popped up.

"Henson, this is the situation. The whole planet seems to have gone up in arms over the Fort Gorki fighting. General Kerensky's headquarters are under attack. He and his staff are headed here. Go to Warehouse 5 and open it up so that our Techs can get in there and start powering up some of those 'Mechs. When you're done, look for the General's convoy and guard it. Understood?"

Henson spent the next half hour assisting the Techs as they powered up a *Wolverine II* and an *Atlas II*. Using power they drained from his *Warhammer's* reactor, they inserted live fuel cores into the two 'Mechs and started them up. Just as the Techs were disconnecting the last power cord, a laser-scarred and blackened hovertank pulled into the warehouse. The hatches of the vehicle opened, and its occupants got out.

MechWarrior Henson recognized General Kerensky. The tall, muscular man stepped down from the vehicle and walked toward Henson and his 'Mech.

"At ease, at ease," came the General's voice through the speakers of Henson's helmet. "This isn't a parade. What's your name, warrior?" The voice was remarkably gentle for all the authority it carried, and the slight slavic accent gave it an unusual cadence.

"Henson, is it? Well, MechWarrior Henson, we're faced with what my people back home would call a snowy choice. The entire planet has rebelled and apparently has more than enough weaponry to give us a run for our money.

"I'm guessing the enemy 'Mechs are after me and will soon attack the spaceport. My DropShip is coming, but I don't know when. It will be close. Until then, I want to be able to fight, which is why you've been helping these good Techs to power up these 'Mechs. Excuse me a moment."

The *Atlas*, *Warhammer*, and *Wolverine* walked out of the warehouse and looked upon the inferno that had once been the spaceport. Suddenly, General Kerensky's aide called out that his sensors had picked up a fighter coming in from behind. Henson ran for the warehouse but stopped abruptly when he realized that no one was following him.

General Kerensky, in his *Atlas*, took a few steps forward and away from his aide. Both faced the approaching fighter and calmly waited. The fighter, a *Thrush*, dove and waited until the last instant to let loose a volley of missiles and laser fire at the two 'Mechs standing so defiantly below.



81

An instant before the enemy missiles reached them, General Kerensky and his aide let loose a salvo of their own missile and cannon fire. Then, with a speed and precision Henson had never seen before, Kerensky and his aide dodged their 'Mechs out of the way as the enemy

missiles exploded into the ground where they had been standing.

An instant later, the fighter erupted into a ball of flame as it passed over and crashed into one of the warehouses behind them. Sheepishly, Henson walked back from the warehouse and approached the two warriors, who, he could hear, were quibbling over whose missile had brought the fighter down.

"There you are, MechWarrior Henson. A wise move to hide. Don't worry. We're just too old to really care anymore."

There was a barrage of artillery shells that whistled over their heads and exploded nearby, demolishing several warehouses.

"Well, Henson, looks as if the enemy wants to save us the trouble of blowing up our stores. Let's find your company and lend them a hand. Lead the way."

The next 30 minutes became a blur of impressions and sensations for the young MechWarrior. The shock of arriving at the runway's edge and linking up with the remainder of his company just in time to see enemy 'Mechs appear across the runway, their weapons searing the ground and air about him. The crazy chase as the enemy 'Mechs pursued them through the maze of warehouses and buildings, every blind intersection becoming a potential ambush. The horror of seeing three friends being cut down. The anger he felt as he launched a Headhunter at an enemy 'Mech, and the elation felt as he saw the cockpit explode and the 'Mech collapse, smoke billowing from where the head had been.

Just as the remaining SLDF forces were surrounded and the noose was beginning to tighten, the ground began to shake, a hot gale came down over them, and a shadow fell over the Star League 'Mechs. Moving impossibly slowly over their heads was a *Fortress DropShip*, so close Henson felt he could touch it.

"Ah, good," was General Kerensky's only comment on their rescuer's appearance.

The loading onto the DropShip was eerily quiet, considering what had been happening in the battle just moments before. General Kerensky walked up to Henson, who was desperately trying to compose himself.

"I feel for you, Henson. To have such a disaster for your first battle is a difficult way for you to begin your career. You did very well today. Unfortunately, it looks as if disasters may be what we will be getting for a while. It is going to be a long and stupid war."

—Excerpt from the novelization, *Brian Henson, MechWarrior*, by Vincent DeVries, New Avalon Press, 2788

THE AMARIS COUP

Days of infamy, when some heinous act or crime is committed, are almost always bright and sunny. All have their faces pointed to the peaceful heavens above, making it that much easier to slip them the knife.

—Stefan Amaris to his officers the day after he usurped the Throne of the First Lord.

As he traveled toward Terra, Stefan Amaris listened closely to the news coming from the Hegemony and the Periphery. From the Hegemony, he heard very little to alarm him. Resistance to his Republican troops was growing but still too small to have any effect. From the Periphery came reports of continued heavy fighting, demanding General Kerensky's undivided attention. Pleased, Amaris sent streams of coded messages to his officers and agents in the Hegemony. By the time he arrived at Unity City on the snowy night of December 26, 2766, all of his key personnel were ready to act.

The next day dawned cold but beautiful, after the snowstorm of the night before. The storm left behind clear skies and a layer of fresh snow, through which Stefan Amaris and his guards trudged across the open courtyard leading to the First Lord's private chambers. Amaris had a nine o'clock audience with Richard Cameron, and he did not want to be late.

The Amaris group went unchallenged past the guards at the door, who had standing orders to admit Amaris and anyone with him. Carrying a large box tied with satin ribbons, Stefan Amaris continued with his bodyguards down the ornate corridors with their white marble pillars, past the sentries in their cloaks hiding ablative flak suits and weapons, and past the elaborate security strongpoints hidden among the decorative ornate carvings and sculptures.

When Amaris and his guards entered the private Audience Chamber of the First Lord, they found Richard Cameron eagerly waiting. Amaris and Richard exchanged greetings, with Amaris complimenting the First Lord on his decisive and capable administration since their last meeting. Then, with a flourish and a smile, Amaris handed the First Lord the present, saying it was a gift from one friend to another.

Richard tore through the wrapper and opened the box, only to discover another, identically wrapped package inside. Laughing, he repeated the procedure. After working through box after box, he finally discovered a large laser pistol set with ornate jewels and with the Amaris crest carved into the grip.

Amaris reached out and took the pistol from the First Lord, saying that it was a very special weapon, made to his exact specifications. He held the gun up to the light, letting the jewels catch and reflect it. Amaris then slowly lowered the pistol until its barrel was pointed at the First Lord's forehead.

From outside came the sounds of distant explosions. "It has begun," Amaris said as he pulled the trigger. As the body of Richard Cameron slumped to the floor, Stefan Amaris sat down in a plush chair and calmly watched his guards leap into action. They pushed aside a large painting on a wall, revealing a hidden panel that controlled the security systems for the First Lord's private quarters. On instructions from Amaris, to whom Richard had proudly shown the panel's workings years before, the guards quickly took manual control of the many automated security systems in that wing of the palace.

Amaris interrupted the guards only once. Motioning to the body of Richard Cameron and the growing pool of blood, he asked one of them to clean up the "unsightly mess."



CONQUEST OF THE HEGEMONY

Surprise is the best weapon to have in any arsenal. With it, all things become possible.

—Excerpt from the testimony of General Patrick Scoffins, Commander-in-Chief of the Republican forces in the Terran Hegemony, August 2780

Before 2765, there were 25 divisions in the Terran Hegemony. These included fleets, supplies, and planetary militia units. By December 2766, all but eight divisions, only two of them BattleMech divisions, had been sent to the Periphery. Reinforcing these divisions were a handful of independent SLDF regiments and planetary garrisons made up of aging veterans with Reserve status and young men and women hoping to get into a military academy.

Arrayed against the Regular Army in the Hegemony were Republican regiments and brigades with a total strength of 16 divisions. Even on Terra, Republican troops outnumbered the SLDF. Even as Stefan Amaris was murdering Richard Cameron, his regiments were pouncing on Regular Army units throughout the Hegemony. Republican troops used surprise to devastating advantage with such tactics as destroying Regular Army barracks filled with sleeping soldiers and flooding troopships with poisonous gas.

Regular Army forces stationed further from Republican forces fared little better. Amaris had made a point of having adequate air support for his strike. Among the weapons used by the Republican AeroSpace Fighters were nuclear bombs, which they used enthusiastically on the SLDF units untouched by opening moves of the coup.

Other prime targets were the Hegemony communications centers, for Amaris wanted to prevent any calls for help. Squads of Amaris commandos had little trouble seizing the lightly defended sites and shutting them down. Though HPG operators in the surrounding member states noticed the sudden cessation of messages from the Hegemony, it took days for their concern to work its way up through channels. By then, it was too late. Surprise and ruthlessness were the keys to Amaris's grand plan. It succeeded on almost every Hegemony world.

Because of the gallantry of some units, there were exceptions. Certain units, like the 3986th North American Infantry Battalion (The New Grunts), took to the wilderness of Hegemony worlds to fight a vicious guerrilla war that lasted until the liberations. The regiments in five Castles Brian also survived the initial onslaught and remained constant thorns in the Republicans' sides until Amaris got impatient and destroyed all five with the repeated use of nuclear devices.

The most valor was shown by the palace guards, who almost killed Stefan Amaris despite his elaborate preparations. Amaris was unaware of the full extent of the security measures in the palace. He did not know that when he fired his pistol, the laser light was picked up by a sensor in the ceiling, sounding an alarm in a control room. Within seconds, the entire Court of the Star League was alerted, including the warriors of the Royal Black Watch BattleMech Regiment, the Camerons' personal regiment stationed a few kilometers away.

Inside the palace, the guards raced down the halls to the Audience Chamber. They soon discovered that Amaris's guards had control of the palace's security systems. Hidden lasers killed many of them. Some pressed forward, relying on speed and their ablative armor. Three reached the doors of the Audience Chamber, only to be killed when Amaris's men opened the door and lobbed a grenade at them.

Two lances of the Black Watch escaped the traps set by the Amaris Dragoons and headed for the Court of the Star League. Unaware that Richard Cameron was already dead, the nine warriors prepared to meet the Dragoons and hold them off as long as possible so their First Lord could escape.

The last members of the Royal Black Watch met the forward elements of the Fourth Amaris Dragoons at Gorst Flats. Commanding what was left of the elite SLDF regiment, which had been made up entirely of graduates of the Gunslinger Program, was Colonel Hanni Schmitt. She had chosen an excellent site to make her regiment's last stand. With high, forested hills on one side and the waters of Puget Sound on the other, the nine 'Mechs of the Black Watch forced the Republican 'Mechs to bunch up and face them head on. Unable to use their numerical superiority, the Dragoons felt as if they had walked into a meat grinder that chewed up the first ten 'Mechs before they could even react. The commander of the Dragoons withdrew his forces.

Meanwhile, a platoon of guards with jump packs was hopping across the palace roofs toward the Audience Chamber. As they approached the inner buildings, they too came under attack from the defensive systems. Turrets with lasers meant to knock out enemy AeroSpace Fighters cut down several troopers slowly arcing through the air. The defenses were programmed not to fire if the shot would hit the palace. Using this to their advantage, the remaining troopers started making shallow but dangerous jumps, praying that the turrets would not risk shooting at them.

Upon reaching the roof above the Audience Chamber, the guards began to use lasers to drill holes into the building. They cut into the wall that held the panel Amaris was using to control the security systems, hoping to destroy it so that other troopers on the ground could assault the chamber. As they drilled, two AeroSpace fighters flashed past them high overhead on their way to destroy the last Black Watch 'Mechs. The turrets on the palace did not react. An instant later, a flash, then the incredible force of a nuclear explosion, shook the Court of the Star League. The Royal Black Watch Regiment was no more.

The guards on the roof feverishly continued to drill. After fifteen minutes, they broke through the last barrier and found their lasers had burned a hole directly above the wires. They lowered a small explosive into the hole and detonated it. The explosion blew out the wall, killing two of Amaris's guards and filling the Audience Chamber with debris and smoke. Amaris escaped injury only because he was standing next to a high-back oak chair that protected him.

Though unhurt, Amaris must have thought that his grand scheme had failed. Troopers were undoubtedly storming up the corridors, and he had only four guards with laser pistols to hold them off. The explosion, as powerful as it was, buckled but did not blow out the windows, which were made of safety glass laced with steel fibers. Unable to climb out or open the door that led to the First Lord's private quarters, Amaris was trapped.

Through the hole in the wall, he heard the approaching steps of palace guards. Just when he thought he was finished, the sounds of running changed to crashing noises, the explosions of laser fire, and the confused shouts of soldiers. Poking his head through the hole and looking down the corridor, Amaris saw Dragoon infantry pouring out of an armored personnel carrier that had plowed through the wall of the palace. The bodies of Star League troopers were scattered on the marble floor.



THRONE ROOM MASSACRE

Republicans quickly seized control of the Court of the Star League after rescuing Stefan Amaris. Amaris then broadcast an ultimatum over all channels that called for SLDF soldiers to lay down their weapons and surrender or he would kill the First Lord. The ruse largely succeeded. Many units, badly mauled or outnumbered by Rim Worlds troops, did lay down their weapons. Those who surrendered were forced to dig their own graves before they were shot.

Those who did not surrender were chased away from the major cities and then hunted down. Many lances of the 191st Royal BattleMech Division, of which the Royal Black Watch Regiment had been part, survived the initial slaughter and escaped. They continued to fight for two years, with some surviving to see the liberation of Terra.

Reasonably secure on Terra, Amaris listened with pleasure to reports from the other Hegemony worlds. His plan was almost a total success. Of the 103 worlds, 95 fell under Amaris's control in the first day. Though a few units held out and others resorted to raiding, Amaris forces controlled all the worlds by the end of the year. Many of the Castles Brian and the Space Defense Systems were captured intact and now belonged to Republican soldiers.

In a gruesome ceremony, Amaris forced the surviving soldiers of the palace guard to remove the Star League standard from the flagpoles and run up the Amaris family crest. Then Amaris ordered the prisoners shot and their bloody bodies buried at the foot of the flagpoles with the Star League flag as their burial shroud.

Amaris next turned his attention to the Cameron family. Richard's wife, Elise, and two-year-old daughter, Amanda, were in custody. Consulting computer records, Amaris traced the names and locations of everyone who might have even a trace of Cameron blood. He brought these people to the Court of the Star League, treating them with kindness and courtesy until the whole group finally arrived.

Amaris assembled 79 men, women, and children of the Cameron family in the Throne Room. Sitting on the Star League Throne and protected by many guards, he gave the distant relatives of the Camerons an ultimatum: swear allegiance or die. He had them brought before him, one by one, to answer. Not one of the first 20 yielded to Amaris, who accepted their answers and asked them to rejoin the rest.

The 21st relative of the Camerons, Jason Cameron Bashina, agreed to bow to Amaris. With a cruel grin, Amaris shot Jason Bashina with the same laser pistol that had killed Richard. With no chance to live, the rest of the Camerons rushed the throne, only to be cut down by the surrounding guards. After the smoke from the charred bodies had cleared, Stefan Amaris left the Throne Room and ordered it sealed.

Elsewhere on Terra, similar atrocities occurred. The Greenhaven Gestapo, a notorious mercenary band, took control of Rome and tortured the people of that noble city for a decade. In 2770, the mercenaries, after an attempt to extort money and riches from already-stripped Rome and Vatican City, killed Pope Clement XXVII and many cardinals and bishops of the Roman Catholic Church.

Across Terra and the Hegemony, Stefan Amaris destroyed everything that had to do with the Star League or the Camerons. Amaris wanted the memory of the Star League expunged from the face of every planet, to be replaced by his family crest, the symbol of the cruel Amaris Empire.

THE KURITA HOSTAGES

Stefan Amaris proclaimed himself First Lord in January 2767. This was the first transmission from the Terran Hegemony since the coup began. General Kerensky and the leaders of the other realms were shocked. Everyone had considered the Periphery uprising, not the Rim Worlds Republic, to be the threat. Even the suspicious Takiro Kurita, who had tried to warn the other Council Lords about Amaris, was caught off guard by Richard's death. Kurita knew that Amaris was a schemer, but the Coordinator had believed that Amaris would exercise control through his influence over Richard. Kurita had thought Amaris too shrewd to risk the reaction of the entire Inner Sphere and the wrath of General Kerensky and the SLDF.

As weeks passed and the fait accompli began to sink in, the House leaders began blaming each other for letting it happen. They also waited for General Kerensky to restore order. The General, however, was stunned. Immersed in a costly war, Kerensky was totally surprised by the coup. When he recovered from his initial shock, the General reasoned that Amaris could not have been foolish enough to attempt the coup without support from one or more of the other realms.

In fact, the Draconis Combine began to cooperate with First Lord Stefan. Shortly before the coup, Takiro Kurita had ordered his grand-nephew, Drago Kurita, to evacuate his post as Ambassador to the Star League because the Coordinator feared a popular uprising against the large number of Republican troops on Terra. Drago Kurita and his family did not get out in time, however. Though the 121-year-old Takiro had assigned most of his duties to staff members, he flew into a rage upon learning that Amaris had arrested Ambassador Drago, his wife, and their four children. After fretting for days because he knew how brutal Amaris could be, Coordinator Takiro had a heart attack. On the day before he died, Takiro made his son Minoru promise to resolve the hostage situation through negotiation.

Thus the Draconis Combine was civil and cooperative despite Amaris's brash goading of the Kuritas. Not knowing why House Kurita behaved in a friendly manner to the Usurper, the other Council Lords and General Kerensky feared that the Draconis Combine had been part of the plot.



84

WARRIORS WITHOUT A HOME

While we fought and died trusting that all was well back home, a cancer was allowed to grow that has now seized our hearts and souls. The Hegemony is lost and our hopes with it.

—General Aleksandr Kerensky, announcing the Amaris coup to his troops, February 15, 2767

In January 2767, General Kerensky led the attack to retake New Vandenberg. For a year, he had been at the head of an offensive to regain the Taurian Concordat. Though he faced stiff resistance from the Periphery forces, he finally gained the upper hand.

With the seizure of New Vandenberg complete and the submission of the Concordat likely to follow soon, the General hoped to pressure the neighboring realms to submit with a minimum of bloodshed. Yet certain things worried him. The large enemy BattleMech divisions, once so eager to engage in combat, began to avoid big battles. It seemed to General Kerensky that they were waiting for something.

His message to Terra, telling the First Lord of his victory on New Vandenberg, went unanswered. Then General Kerensky heard Stefan Amaris proclaim himself First Lord. An unbelieving Kerensky immediately asked for a status report from commanders in the Hegemony. The few still alive told the General that there was no hope for the SLDF units that were still fighting.

On May 19, the General received a message whose full implication filled him with horror:

FROM: Stefan Ukris Amaris, Emperor of the Amaris Empire

TO: General Aleksandr S. Kerensky, Commander of the late Star League Defense Forces

General:

I, with my infinite skills and aided by my loyal subjects, have struck, with a swiftness given only to the righteous, a blow that has corrected decades of injuries and slights to my family. I rule where the Camerons once called home. I control the Cradle of Humanity. All within the Hegemony have bowed before me; those who didn't are dead.

Join me, General Kerensky. Become my sword arm and help me impress my word and wisdom upon the other realms. I've no reason to hate you; I wish only peace between us. Join me and convince your men and women to follow you, and I will give you power second only to mine.

But should you dare turn a blind eye to the wisdom of my offer and decide not to join, then heed my warning: I control everything the Hegemony has. All its defenses, all of its fortifications are now manned by people loyal to me. Should you try to attack, every inch of Hegemony soil will be stained with the blood of the fallen, and every drop will be a burden upon your soul, which must already be heavy with guilt for allowing me to accomplish the complete control of your homelands.

(signed) Emperor Stefan Ukris Amaris I



The feeble attempt at conciliation and the mockingly adversarial tone of the letter confused General Kerensky. Even after the losses in the Periphery war, the SLDF was far the strongest military ever assembled. How did Amaris dare to antagonize its commander?

For three days, General Kerensky stayed in his quarters. His troops were more vocal in their reaction. Because Amaris was from the Periphery, many troopers wanted to go on a rampage, destroying anything and anyone from the Periphery. Just barely, their officers contained them and prevented a catastrophe.

Royal units, whose soldiers were recruited from the Hegemony, were the hardest hit by the news. Most of them wanted to leave the Periphery immediately to attack Amaris, but their officers ordered them to wait for General Kerensky's decision. One unit, the Thirty-fourth Royal BattleMech Division, would not wait. It left its post in the Outworlds Alliance and headed for home. It was later wiped out above Epsilon Indi, its homeworld, by that planet's automated Space Defense System.

General Kerensky finally broke his silence by issuing a long message to his troops and the people of the Periphery. He expressed outrage at what Stefan Amaris had done. He stated that, considering the nature of the Amaris family, there was little hope for the life of the First Lord or anyone who dared to show their loyalty to the Star League.

The General went on to say that a state of war obviously existed between the SLDF and the Amaris Empire. He cautioned his troops that it would be foolish to charge blindly at Amaris and his forces. The Rim Worlds forces were strong enough that the SLDF needed to plan strategy. General Kerensky said. Though the SLDF vastly outnumbered the Republican forces, General Kerensky knew that his adversaries would be in excellent defensive positions, and he worried that one or more of the House militaries, especially the Kuritans, might be fighting alongside the Amaris troops.

Addressing the people of the Periphery, he said it would be ridiculous for his troops to continue fighting the Periphery rebels to preserve a Star League whose capital was enslaved. He declared a cease-fire with all the Periphery realms except one. General Kerensky warned the Rim Worlds Republic that he



85

intended to seize the homeworlds of Stefan Amaris to use as his base of operations. This was not simply a matter of revenge. General Kerensky, mistrustful of all the Lords after what had happened, needed a command center, and the Rim Worlds Republic lay undefended.

His announcement calmed the soldiers of the Star League. Knowing that their leader, a man whose stature and charisma had grown to almost godlike proportions, was back in command gave everyone hope that all was not lost. Some still

disagreed with the General and felt that they should try to recapture the Hegemony immediately, but the news of the fate of the Thirty-fourth Royals restrained even the most impulsive among the soldiers. MechWarriors and common soldiers eagerly agreed with General Kerensky's plan to attack the Rim Worlds Republic as a chance to repay Amaris for what he did to their homeworlds.

RIM WORLDS CAMPAIGN

The decision to move on the Rim Worlds Republic must have been a difficult one for General Kerensky. He had long been a vocal opponent of what he called "war's unnecessary acts of stupidity against the innocent." Even during a battle's angriest moments, he had never succumbed to the temptation to strike an easy and telling blow against an enemy's civilian population. General Kerensky was an anachronism, more in tune with a time when warfare had a set of rules and a code of honor.

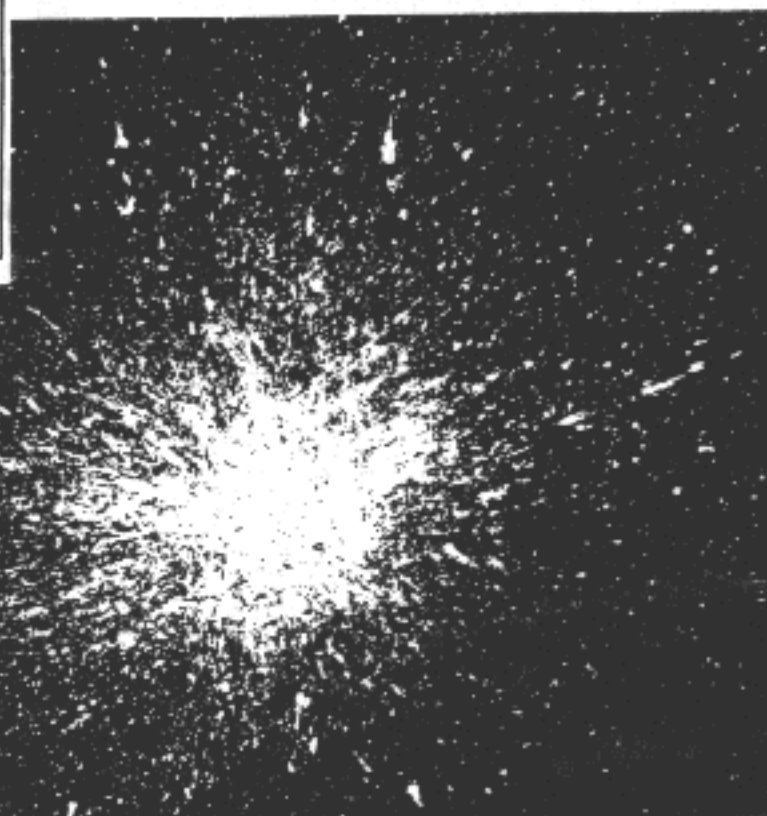
As news of General Kerensky's plan passed through the Inner Sphere, many people questioned its sense. These individuals believed that the General should stay in the Concordat, summoning his strength and planning his strategy. To embark on a campaign against the Republic seemed a foolhardy waste of effort and lives.

Some among the militaries of the five inner realms understood. They realized that the Republic was probably woefully underdefended. Officers of the five Houses also understood that the Rim Worlds Republic was the only Periphery realm that was not battle-scarred and exhausted. There was every reason to believe that General Kerensky would find plenty of supplies and equipment for his troops in the Republic. Some also realized that Star League forces would vent their frustrations on the Republic and thus be able to fight for the Hegemony with less passion and greater thought.





86



ADMIRAL BRASO'S LAST TRANSMISSION

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The Thirty-fourth Royal BattleMech Division was aided in its attempt to win back the Hegemony by the 568th Armed Transport Flotilla. The flotilla consisted of a single *Black Lion* Class battlecruiser, two *Aegis* Class cruisers, four *Lola* Class destroyers, one *Potemkin* Class cruiser/transport, and 20 transports and service vessels.

Commanding the 568th was Admiral Amanda Braso, a 30-year veteran of the Star League Navy and recipient of the Naval Medal of Valor, for her action during the Battle of D'Van's Star. What follows is her last transmission. The message was received and recorded by a small trading vessel that was watching the battle from a jump point. The message was forwarded to the Periphery.]

This is Admiral Amanda Braso, commander of the 568th Armed Transport Flotilla. I'm hoping that someone friendly to the Star League might be listening in and relay my message to the General. He has to know what has happened.

We materialized into the Epsilon Indi system on July 1 at 0900 hours at both the zenith and nadir jump points. No resistance.

We high-geed it to Epsilon Indi in two groups, I in my flagship and Vice Admiral Mitchell Justin in his cruiser, the *E. Presley*. A day away from Indi, we picked up a challenge from a drone warship. We gave the proper response. To no one's surprise, it refused our ID code. Our computer programmers took over at that point and attempted to worm their way into the controls of the Space Defense System. They tried everything but were rebuked by the computer's security system each time. My hat's off to whoever built the SDS; they built quality stuff, damn them.

As we drew nearer, more *Caspars* left their posts on the far side of the planet until all 56 were ready and waiting for us. There was no way to avoid a fight. I ordered Justin and his ships to change course and try to make it to the far side of the planet while my group would bear the brunt of the fighting. I was hoping that he might have a chance to unload his troops unopposed.

The *Caspars*, looking for all the world like warships from hell, are incredible to watch. They took the initiative, which surprised me, and performed an incredibly swift raking pass at my ships. Our gunners found it difficult to aim at the drone ships because of their speed and maneuverability. After they passed my ship, they concentrated on the *Rex*, a destroyer. Her commander made a fatal error and tried to run away. Like sharks around a whale, the drones encircled the *Rex* and sliced her to pieces. They went after the transports next. We managed to scatter the drones by diving into the middle of the fray, but not before they had gotten two troop transports. The gunners on my ship, bless their hearts, managed to get two of them by aiming at their tails. There seems to be an unusual weakness there that might be exploited by whoever follows us.

I ordered the remaining transports to launch their DropShips and 'Mechs, hoping that so many targets would confuse the SDS and that some would get through. The *Caspars* split into two groups, one to engage us and the other to slice through the cloud of DropShips and 'Mechs, their weapons firing at even the smallest tank-carrier. Many 'Mechs were lost, but some survived.

Then, without warning, one of the drone ships rammed the *Huston*, an *Aegis* Class cruiser. I was horrified to see both ships explode. I then watched helplessly the ground-based SDS lasers and missiles picked off our remaining 'Mechs and DropShips like so many kernels of corn thrown into a fire. One by one, 'Mechs and DropShips were singled out and destroyed. I estimated that of all the DropShips and 'Mechs I had in my group, maybe 10 percent actually reached the ground. Justin's last report said that his group fared a little better, but not much. I do not hold out much hope for those that did reach the surface.

I don't know how we are going to overcome these SDSes. The only way I can see to combat them is just hunting its warships down and destroying them all, then bombarding the hell out of the planet in hopes of destroying the laser and missile batteries on the planet's surface. I....

What? Evasive action to port! Gunners fire, maximum spread. Prepare for collision. (Sounds of explosions)

End of transmission.

When he heard what General Kerensky was planning, Emperor Amaris was livid. He sent messages throughout the Inner Sphere about "the butcher Kerensky" and "his unholy intention to attack innocent men, women, and children." He also sent messages to the remaining Periphery BattleMech Divisions that he had helped form, ordering them to defend the Rim Worlds to the last soldier.

The offensive began in August 2767 after General Kerensky and his forces approached the Republic from one side, and General DeChavilier, with an equal force, moved in from the other side. Before they attacked, the Star League force offered the Republic the chance to surrender. Mohammed Selim, Regent of the Rim Worlds Republic in Amaris's absence, flatly refused.

The Periphery divisions that Amaris had ordered to protect the Republic had refused the order. Their reasons were many, but the most common one was revulsion for what Stefan Amaris had done. The warriors in the divisions had wanted independence from the Star League, not the death of innocents. Without the protection of the Periphery divisions, the Republic had only reservists and a few militia units to defend against the most powerful fighting force in history. Against such odds, many Republican warriors simply gave up, either refusing to fight and going AWOL or defecting to General Kerensky's side at the first opportunity. The main contests were at the 20 fortifications scattered throughout the Republic.

Built decades earlier by the Star League, these fortifications were virtual copies of the Castles Brian in the Terran Hegemony. After Richard Cameron had ordered the SLDF to transfer the fortifications to Republican units, Stefan Amaris had used them to train his troops on how best to overcome the Castles Brian in the Hegemony. General Kerensky assaulted the Republican fortifications in a variety of ways: full frontal assault, combined assaults, bombardment from the air or space.

As expected, General Kerensky's troops fought the Republicans with unmatched fury. There were many acts that, under different circumstances, would have been called foolhardy and overly violent. The General and his command staff issued special orders in an attempt to prevent the Star League troops from committing the same sins as their enemies. To their credit, most SLDF soldiers controlled their emotions. There were exceptions. The massacre at Gutui Junction, where the Ninetieth Dragoons killed 100 POWs, was the worst incident.

The Rim Worlds Republic fell quickly.

PREPARATIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS

The Rim Worlds Republic had a wealth of resources badly needed by the Regular Army. What was not expected was the docile way the people of the Republic accepted the presence of so many SLDF units on their worlds and in their skies. This has never been fully explained, though some historians have speculated that even the citizens of the Republic were shocked at what Amaris had done.

Stefan Amaris sent new messages to the leaders of the five major Houses calling General Kerensky everything from an unprincipled schemer to the Great Satan. These messages had a new twist, however, in that they stated Amaris's terms for admitting the Great Houses to join with his new empire.

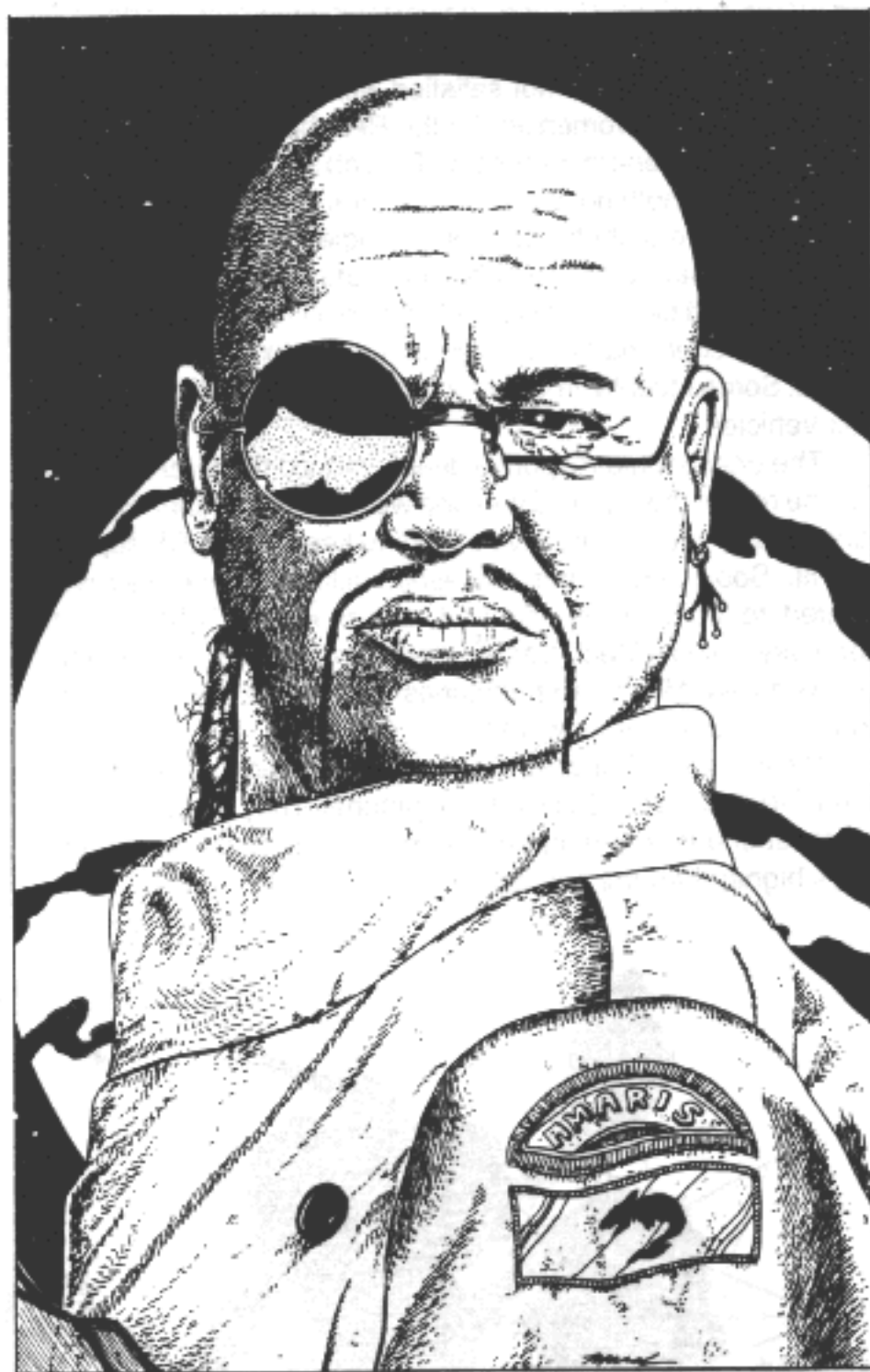
General Kerensky also called upon the five Houses to join him "in ridding Terra, the home of us all, of the Amaris scourge." He did not offer terms or try to persuade them to join; he merely stated that he considered it was a duty honorable people would undertake. Not one of the five member states joined either side.



Oddly enough, the Draconis Combine, the one realm that most thought would join Stefan Amaris, was actually the most eager to join General Kerensky in smashing the Usurper. Though Minoru Kurita had pledged to try to rescue his nephew peacefully, he privately did all he could to help Kerensky. Though pleased to have the support, General Kerensky was mystified by the Coordinator's public stance.

The other Houses had no such excuse. Members of their ruling families had escaped the Hegemony safely. The other Houses did not want to join the struggle for political reasons. To join the losing side would cause physical and political losses that could not be recouped, and none could predict the eventual victor. Though the SLDF was obviously more powerful than the Republican military, none of the leaders knew what secret deals might exist. All the inaction heightened the mutual suspicion.

For the next year and half, while both sides sought to win the support of the five Houses, the military of the Star League prepared for the offensive. General Kerensky grew more cynical and less trusting of the Lords. He created two groups of the divisions and regiments that were stationed in the Inner Sphere. One group stripped Star League bases of supplies and equipment and sent the materiel to the Republic. General Kerensky ordered the second group to test the defenses of Stefan Amaris. Emperor Amaris, too, began to prepare for the inevitable, building up his forces and strengthening fortifications.



The House leaders attempted to protect their interests without angering either side. The Capellan Confederation rebuffed Amaris incursions. The Draconis Combine, still trying to negotiate with Stefan Amaris, refused General Kerensky permission to stage raids on Amaris from Combine territory. Coordinator Minoru Kurita even forced the Third Regimental Combat Team, the Eridani Light Horse, to leave the Combine if it persisted in testing the Republican defenses. Colonel Ezra Bradley, commander of the Third RCT, was treated brusquely even though his unit had been based in the Combine. After an initial confrontation with the Free Worlds League, the Third RCT was allowed to use bases there. Colonel Bradley learned a lesson from the Thirty-fourth Royals, making only probing raids on worlds protected by an SDS in the hopes of destroying a few drones at a time.

Often these tactics worked, but sometimes they did not. Almost weekly, the soldiers training in the Republic heard about the deaths of their fellow soldiers. This news hardened their hearts and deepened their resolve.

VOLUNTEER REGIMENTS

Though the five Houses of the Inner Sphere adopted a neutral attitude toward the coming storm, their citizens did not. The coup and its horrors were felt deeply by the average citizens in all five realms. The Houses' refusal to join General Kerensky shocked and angered billions of people. Demonstrations in support of General Kerensky and against their government's decision were common and often violent.

Some people were not satisfied with just protesting. Thousands of men and women left for the Republic so that they could fight alongside General Kerensky. Though the Steiners, Davions, and Mariks did nothing to prevent this, the Kuritas and Liaos did. Meanwhile, sympathetic traders smuggled whole shiploads of men and women to the Republic or a Star League base. Many volunteers had been soldiers and officers in the House militaries who risked court-martial or even summary execution for going AWOL. Some MechWarriors and AeroSpace Pilots escaped with their vehicles.

The unexpected response deeply moved General Kerensky and the rest of the SLDF. Everyone was allowed to join. Even the very old and young were given tasks to keep the SLDF supplied and fit. Boot camps and makeshift military academies were created to train those able-bodied enough to fight. General Kerensky set up a MechWarrior school on Circinus. Its graduates received new 'Mechs from factories in the Free Worlds League and the Lyran Commonwealth.

By the time General Kerensky was ready to launch his offensive, there were 36 Loyalist regiments. They became among the most impassioned fighters, with casualty rates two or three times higher than the average.



88

HEGEMONY CAMPAIGN

You have your orders. All I can add is that I hope and pray some sort of sense will come out of this horror story because I certainly can't see any at the moment.

—From General Kerensky's address to his commanding officers, February 12, 2772

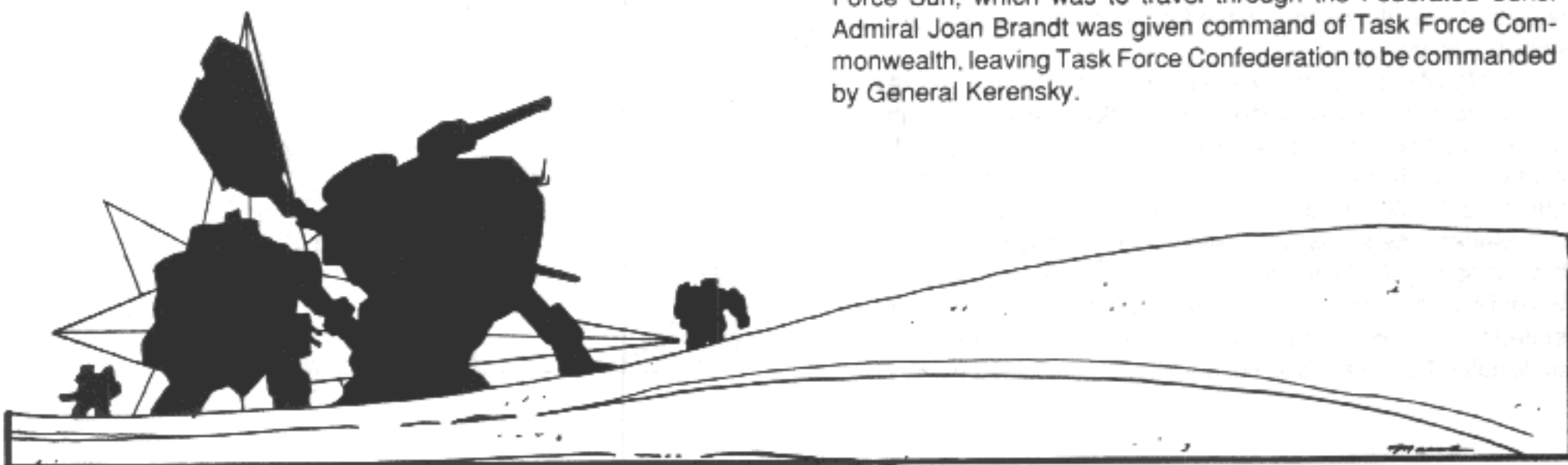
The Star League Defense Forces began leaving the Rim Worlds Republic in early 2772. They had spent a year and a half resting and preparing for the offensive, but that time could not replace the men and women who had been lost fighting in the Periphery. Most units were severely understrength. On paper, the General had 300 divisions and more than 200 independent regiments, but barely half that number in reality.

As the units began loading onto their DropShips and transports, General Kerensky received messages from the Inner Sphere that the leaders of the Lyran Commonwealth and the Federated Suns would allow the Star League soldiers to pass through their realms without challenge. These messages were not unexpected; each had provided shelter and information to SLDF units probing the Amaris defenses. The Free Worlds League, which had allowed the presence of the Eridani Light Horse, now refused the SLDF permission to use League systems as staging areas. Thus did Kenyon Marik again act on an old grudge against General Kerensky stemming from an incident when Marik served on General Kerensky's staff. Later in the campaign, Kerensky repaid Marik by using the Oriente system without the leader's consent. The loss of Marik support was partially offset by an offer of help from the Capellan Confederation.

With the aid of three realms, the General could shape his strategy. He divided his troops into three major elements, one to travel through each of the accommodating Houses toward the Hegemony. Once all were in place, the three forces would launch their attacks. The first objective was not to strike for Terra, but to link with each other and encircle Stefan Amaris and his troops. Only after the three had linked up and drawn their forces completely around the Hegemony would the General begin to move on Terra.

Some questioned Kerensky's strategy, arguing for a sudden thrust for Terra. The General had chosen the slow and cautious approach because intelligence reports indicated that Amaris had been successful in hiring mercenaries and had amassed more than 40 divisions. This, coupled with the lethal Space Defense Systems and the Castles Brian, made him a force to be reckoned with. Besides, the General was still worried that the Draconis Combine might side with Amaris and was not sure about the Free Worlds League.

General Aaron DeChavilier was given command of Task Force Sun, which was to travel through the Federated Suns. Admiral Joan Brandt was given command of Task Force Commonwealth, leaving Task Force Confederation to be commanded by General Kerensky.



The campaign for the Hegemony began on July 14, 2772, with SLDF divisions assaulting border worlds and with groups of warships venturing deep into the Hegemony, hoping to pick off a few enemy ships or bombard enemy positions. Worlds on the Hegemony's border with the Draconis Combine were lightly defended. With Minoru Kurita maintaining a nonviolent stance toward Stefan Amaris, the Emperor stationed few units facing the Combine. Sabik, Lambrecht, Kervil, Telos IV, and Murchison fell quickly. With Republican troops retreating before a superior enemy and with General Kerensky still afraid to expose his back to House Kurita, the SLDF paused to consolidate its gains. House Kurita, always ready to exploit a situation, sent Combine units to occupy the worlds the Amaris troops were vacating. When Star League forces later advanced, they were surprised to be fighting Kuritan troops on Vega, Imbros III, Styx, and Altair. Wanting no war with the SLDF, the Combine forces gave ground readily, only to return after General Kerensky's offensive had moved on.

Because Hegemony relations with the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth had always been cordial, the Camerons had built fewer Space Defense Systems and Castles Brian on those borders. The Regular Army used its superior training, equipment, and numbers to overwhelm Republican troops on such planets as Mallory's World, Ozawa, Syrma, and Zebebelgenubi. These fronts were where Star League troops found the first evidence of atrocities, the massacres of artists on Helen and of scientists on Zebebelgenubi.

Though this gave the SLDF an even greater sense of mission, General Kerensky's troops were bogged down on the Free Worlds and Capellan fronts. They also found more and more defenders as they attacked planets closer to Terra. Though Star League troops had a year and a half to train and plan, they were still largely stymied by the Castles Brian and the Space Defense Systems. The long and costly campaign to recapture Nusakan was a prime example.

Republicans soldiers changed the access codes on the Space Defense Systems, thwarting SLDF efforts to break through the security and into the computers. Other SLDF strategies, such as drawing drone warships away from a world with a decoy fleet, also failed. For the first two years, the only way for General Kerensky's soldiers to deal with an SDS was to fight with every drone. Though this worked, it was accomplished at the cost of at least three major warships for every planet protected.

Castles Brian proved equally difficult. Soldiers had maps of each world's Castles, but they did not know how the enemy would use the fortresses. The castles had miles of tunnels, large enough for BattleMechs to walk through, leading to at least 20 concealed exits. This made it virtually impossible for Regular Army units to be sure that Amaris troops were not popping up behind them. The interconnected bunkers and strongholds were concealed so well that it often did not matter if a platoon of soldiers knew that a bunker was ahead of them; they could not attack what they could not see without sacrificing themselves to draw fire.

The early successes produced prizes for the SLDF when they captured several key planets, such as Oliver and Ozawa, more or less intact. As General Kerensky's troops began to meet stiffer resistance, however, they also gained less from worlds closer to Terra. The woeful conditions of liberated worlds revealed how horrible life was under Emperor Amaris. Food, water, and power had been reserved for Amaris troops. The Republicans drained the resources and supplies from cities they did not need, often causing the loss of thousands of lives. Living in the countryside was no better. Farmers were told to triple the yield of their farms or die.



Government buildings were destroyed or defaced. On Saffel, the local garrison, in a fit of ill humor, painted the government buildings in harsh day-glo colors and gave them to prostitutes from the Republic. Universities and instructors suffered as well. Any research project that might have military application was moved to Terra so that the Emperor's scientists could monitor it. The rest of the university was destroyed. Professors who were of no value to the military were either killed or forced to build defenses for the local garrison.

By the end of 2774, General Kerensky's troops had seized only eleven worlds and were contesting another ten. They had lost 30 divisions and 40 major warships. Morale among the troops plummeted as the soldiers realized how terrible life must be for those still living under Emperor Amaris and how long it would take to free them.

NEW STRATEGIES

In November 2774, forces from Task Forces Sun, Commonwealth, and Confederation linked up. Emperor Amaris was surrounded by a ring of worlds, each thick with Regular Army units.

The military value of this ring is debatable. Even General Kerensky admitted that the idea of encircling Amaris was strategically impossible. The psychological effect of being surrounded did have a profound effect on Amaris, however. Once he heard that his troops had lost Slocum and Connaught, the final two worlds in the ring, he reconsidered his defensive strategy.

From recordings made by automatic devices in Unity City, it was later learned that Amaris was slowly losing his sanity. Gone was the exultation of those first few months after the coup, when he had staged huge parties and forced his high-born hostages to attend. By 2774, he was walking through the deserted Court with a laser rifle in his hand, firing at anything that reminded him of Richard Cameron or General Kerensky.

After the encirclement was completed, Emperor Amaris gathered his high command and ordered them to withdraw from worlds without either fortifications or an SDS and to pull back to worlds that did. He felt that this limited withdrawal would strengthen his hold over the key worlds. He ended his meeting with his officers by remarking that "I can't look at the stars anymore. Every time I do, they seem to constellate the face of Kerensky."

Emperor Amaris's orders were carried out in late 2774 and early 2775, as his forces pulled back from twelve worlds. Amaris was pleased that this would use his troops more effectively. When General Kerensky found out about the pullback, he had reasons to be happy as well.

The SLDF gained control of worlds scattered throughout the Hegemony. Officers and sailors of the Star League Navy quickly realized the importance of these worlds because their locations allowed Star League ships to jump across the Hegemony without using enemy star systems. Two of these worlds, Bryant and Asta, were within one jump of Terra and later became important as mustering points.

Recapturing another world, Carver V, provided a psychological lift as well. The SLDF units arrived to relieve the remnants of three Marine regiments that had been holding out since the coup eight years earlier. The units had received emergency supplies from the Eridani Light Horse that had allowed them to continue their fight.

Star League troops quickly garrisoned the twelve worlds. Amaris's forces had left plenty of minefields and booby-traps for the troopers to deal with, and the SLDF spent months removing and evaluating what the enemy left behind. On some key worlds, such as Graham IV, all that was left was nuclear devastation.

What Kerensky did find, however, led to a turning point of the war. Before the war, the planet Nirasaki was the headquarters of the Nirasaki Computers Collective. The NCC had been one of the major developers and contractors of the Space Defense Systems. It had had the responsibility of developing the incredibly intricate computer communications network that linked drone warships, ground weapons, and supply centers. When General Kerensky and Admiral Janos Grec, commander of the Star League Navy, heard that Nirasaki had been abandoned, they sent troops and scientists to the NCC research facility hoping to find something they could use against the Space Defense Systems.

At first it did not look promising. Most of the NCC buildings had been destroyed and the scientists rounded up and taken to Terra in the first year of the Amaris occupation. Searching the levels beneath the buildings revealed more of the same. The computer memories had been dumped and wiped clean. The paper files had been burned.

When a soldier discovered a small portable computer in a cleaning closet, it turned out that the computer's contents had been hidden by Professor Catherine Glimp. When Nirasaki was being seized by Republican troops, Professor Glimp realized that the Space Defense Systems would be major stumbling blocks to anyone trying to rescue Hegemony worlds. She filled the limited memory of the portable computer with information that she and her colleagues thought might help.

Unfortunately, they had no way to defeat an SDS. In their words: "We just did too good a job, never once imagining we might one day wish the stupid things were more vulnerable." The data Professor Glimp provided, however, allowed engineers and communication specialists to devise an electronic countermeasure. It was a device that swamped the primary communication channels of an SDS with static, forcing its computers to use backup links. The hope was that these secondary channels would be less effective in coordinating the various weapon systems. The device was also supposed to hamper the targeting of the SDS weapons.

General Kerensky had no way to test the effectiveness of the new ECM device except in battle. In March 2775, he led an attempt to invade New Home, an SDS-protected world just a few light years from the important planet of Keid. At the head of a large fleet of warships and transports, the General anxiously watched as the new ECM was tried. At first, it seemed to have little effect. The nearest drone warships responded to their presence and attacked. Other warships around the planet, however, and the missile and laser batteries on the planet, seemed confused about how to respond. Their ineffectiveness allowed the General to drop his troops with few losses. New Home fell quickly, and Kerensky finally had his first break of the campaign.

He wasted little time in exploiting his new advantage. From mid-2775 through late 2778, the SLDF launched a series of attacks against SDS-protected worlds. Terra could not be attacked directly because of its advanced and extensive SDS, and so the worlds around it became the General's targets. Because many of the worlds attacked were not protected by Castle Brians, the fighting on these worlds was relatively straightforward for the Regular Army.



90

On worlds like Dieron and Procyon, where there were Castles Brian, the fighting was especially difficult because there was no high-tech answer for overcoming an enemy firing from inside a bunker or for 'Mechs popping up from a hidden tunnel entrance. General Kerensky could have bypassed the mountains, where most castles were built, but that would have left whole regions vulnerable to attacks and atrocities from Republican troops, who thought nothing of killing civilians to hurt their enemy. The only solution was to break into the forts and hunt the enemy down. On Dieron, Republican troops had entrenched in the cities, too. The campaign for Dieron lasted two years, cost millions of lives, and devastated the planet and its economy.

In 2775, some of the mercenary units hired by Stefan Amaris began to surrender to the SLDF. Seeing the Space Defense Systems neutralized and the Regular Army's new tactics for combatting Castles Brian took much of the fight out of many Amaris soldiers and mercenaries.

Also in 2775, some of the Star League member states began to participate in General Kerensky's campaign. Supplies from the Lyran Commonwealth, the Capellan Confederation, and the Federated Suns began appearing at worlds held by General Kerensky's troops. While most of the aid was for the many millions of refugees, there was also considerable ammunition and other equipment for the SLDF. Some of the soldiers cynically thought that the member states had begun to contribute only after General Kerensky and his army had gained the upper hand.

Despite recent successes, General Kerensky felt far from certain of victory. For every world like Keid, where Amaris had destroyed the military installations but had found the planet too useful to ravage, General Kerensky captured another like Caph, once a jewel of the Hegemony and left in ruins by the Rim Worlds forces. The General had lost more than a third of his forces and almost half of his navy. He did, however, control all the worlds closest to Terra. He could turn his attention and his remaining forces to the awesome task of seizing the most heavily defended place in the universe.



LIBERATION OF TERRA

The Reagan Space Defense System was many times larger and more powerful than the others, and the engineers and scientists of the SLDF could offer General Kerensky no short cuts to defeat it. Brute force was the only way through the Reagan Space Defense System.

The General and his staff held months of conferences to shape the plans for capturing Terra. Code-named Operation Liberation, the resulting risky plan was to swamp the Reagan Space Defense System with so many targets that most of Kerensky's forces would be able to reach Terra's surface.

While his troops were preparing for the operation, General Kerensky issued a statement to Terra giving Stefan Amaris a chance to surrender. Amaris, by then almost totally insane, sent a long, rambling reply that, among other curious things, called General Kerensky the angel of death. Taking the reply as a no, the Regular Army continued to prepare for the assault. This could be the final battle and no doubt the biggest.

On January 23, 2777, soldiers on eight worlds loaded onto their DropShips. General Kerensky, in his flagship, the *McKenna's Pride*, watched as ships began gathering around the zenith jump point of New Earth. Twenty minutes before Operation Liberation was to commence, a taped message was flashed to all ships.

"Soldiers of the Star League, I've a few words to say before we begin. We've come a long way, my friends. From the far Periphery to just outside home, we have fought battle after battle. We've seen our enemy fall before us. We've seen our friends die. Now tired, bloodied, and battered, we are about to enter a battle that many have said is impossible to win. Perhaps they are right. Perhaps freeing Terra from the Usurper is humanly impossible. If it is, I'm not worried. I have long known that the men and women whom it has been my honor to command are more than just flesh and blood. That they are more than the sum of their physical parts. An unalloyed spirit runs through you like the sparks in diamonds. It is hard to put this into words but when I look into the eyes of even the lowest-rank trooper, I see the Star League. And I know that the worth of the Star League lies with the fact that it gave birth to and nurtured men and women like you. Friends, it is time to go home. Godspeed to all of you."



THE LAUNCH

Defeating the automated defenses at Terra's two standard jump points proved to be the easiest part of the entire campaign. The SDS had five major immobile battlestations at each jump point, their weapons ready to attack anything that materialized and failed to signal the proper code. To deal with this, General Kerensky ordered the automating of 20 aging JumpShips and 60 *Overlord* DropShips with sophisticated computer and guidance systems. The DropShips weapons were replaced with extra armor. Their massive holds were then stuffed with explosives.

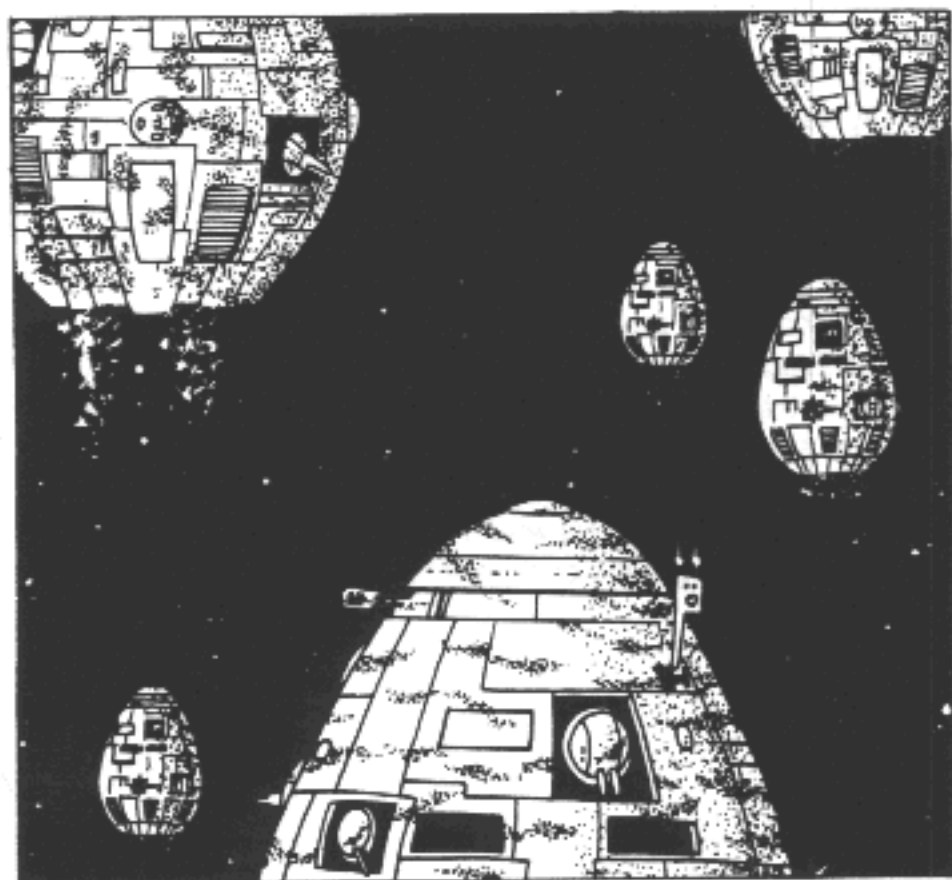
These unmanned ships materialized in the Terran system and accelerated immediately toward the enemy battlestations. Though many DropShips were destroyed, enough got through to detonate on their targets to destroy all of the battlestations.

Almost a thousand warships and troop transports surrounding the jump points of eight different worlds waited to make the journey to the Terran system and responded within minutes after receiving confirmation that the last obstacle had been cleared away. Because of the premium on speed, the General reluctantly agreed to cut the distance between jumping ships to one-fourth the norm so that extra ships could pack the points and make the jump. After fully materializing, ships had just five minutes to clear the jump point before the next group of ships materialized. If they made a mistake, groups of ships would materialize inside of one another. There was also no way to stop the operation should something go wrong; once it started, it would not stop until the last ship materialized above Sol.

Fate seemed to be looking out for the soldiers and sailors of the SLDF that day. Of the 932 ships that waited to make the jump to Terra, only 20 failed. Eighteen of those suffered drive failures at the point of departure without any loss of life. Of the remaining two, the troop transport *Richardson* suffered a partial failure of its station-keeping drives upon materialization. Captain G. T. Garret, realizing that he would not be able to move his ship out of the jump point quickly enough, ordered its DropShips to launch immediately. The DropShips made it clear of the jump point. The *Richardson* almost made it clear, but the corvette *Mississippi Queen* materialized with its prow inside the transport's engineering section. The *Richardson* exploded, with all hands lost. The *Mississippi Queen* sustained heavy damage but vacated the jump point before the next wave appeared.

Once the fleet was assembled into formation with the troop transports (armored DropShip carriers) surrounded by warships, it began a High-G acceleration toward Terra. The orders for the warships were to protect the transports at all cost. Though not discussed in the briefing rooms of the warships, the ship captains understood the unspoken order from the Admirals to sacrifice even their ships as a last resort to save the transports.

Four days before the main force was to rendezvous with Terra, 40 warships used pirate points to materialize just a day's travel from Terra. They were ordered to destroy as many drone warships as possible. Each *Caspar* carried the firepower of a cruiser and had the maneuverability of a destroyer. For the next two days, the Star League ships fought the swarm of *Caspars* that gathered around them. The cruiser *Sovetskii Soyuz* was the last warship to succumb to the sheer number of drones. The 40 Star League warships had destroyed more than 100 drones.



This left only 150 drone warships to challenge the fleet. With the main fleet still two days from Terra, the battle with the Reagan drone warships began. The drones, using the tactics that long-dead admirals had programmed into their distant computers, shadowed the fleet just outside of weapon range, waiting to single out ships to destroy. Occasionally, groups of two or three drones would suddenly accelerate and attempt to cut through the fleet with the ferocity of sharks. They concentrated their fire at the transports, destroying many. Whole divisions disappeared in a single pass of the deadly ships.

Twelve hours from Terra, with the sudden brightness of their engine exhaust signalling their acceleration, all of the drones attacked. Admiral Grec ordered most of his warships to meet them midway. Fighters scrambled from their carriers.

The two fleets opened fire, the flash of lasers and the angry exhaust of missiles casting eerie shadows on the hulls of the ships. Several drones broke through and drove toward the vulnerable transports. Clouds of fighters chased them down and destroyed them, but at the cost of more transports. Debris traced the path of General Kerensky's fleet.

As the battle wore on, the drone warships lost their tight organization as more were destroyed. No longer able to make coordinated attacks on the transports, more *Caspars* began defending against the Star League warships. The unspoken order was also having an effect. Captains of grievously wounded warships aimed their vessels directly at drones. Most of the time, the automated ships easily dodged the suicide attacks, but these tactics by their human opponents seemed to confuse the drones and make them more cautious.

By the time the fleet was two hours from Terra, the tide of the battle had turned. Star League warships outnumbered drone ships. Admiral Grec's warships caught the enemy in a crossfire. With the transports safe, the fighters returned to their carriers for refueling and rearming.



THE DROP

An hour from Terra, the fighters were ordered back into combat. They left their DropShips and warships and headed toward Terra to destroy 30 key laser and missile batteries on the continents of Europe and Asia.

To reduce their vulnerability to laser and missile fire, the fighters chose an especially steep descent angle. Many were shot down anyway, some by Republican fighters, but most by the automated defenses of the Reagan SDS.

Some 'Mechs were already making their descent when the first fighters reached their targets. DropShips were already releasing armor and troop carriers. The few fighters protecting the rain of 'Mechs and men had their hands full with Republican fighters that scrambled from bases all over Terra. Aiming for the thousands of 'Mechs, the Amaris fighters had little trouble scoring kill after kill. If the fighters sent to destroy the SDS bases could not accomplish their missions, the entire invasion was in jeopardy.

The fighters almost failed. Losses due to enemy fighters, ground-based weapons, and the treacherous descent were higher than expected. The remaining pilots, chased by Republican fighters and fired upon from the ground, needed to make every bomb count. They succeeded, but with extremely heavy losses.

Because of the skill and determination of the Star League AeroSpace pilots, 30 divisions made their drops onto Terra in relative safety. The first division down was the 146th Royal BattleMech Division (George S. Patton Division), which landed within striking distance of Moscow. The other divisions landed as far west as Madrid, Spain, as far east as Magadan on Asia's Pacific coast. Their landings went unopposed by the Republican forces, who were holed up in the major cities and in Terra's twelve Castles Brian. The few attacks came from AeroSpace Fighters and other air units, which retreated quickly when challenged.

General Kerensky landed a short time after the initial drop. He assumed control of the Patton Division and led the first assault to retake his home city of Moscow. As he did so, other units were launching similar attacks against other major cities and, more importantly, spaceports.

The General's tactics were tinged with conflicting emotions as he maneuvered his *Orion* BattleMech down streets he knew so well. Every building, every tree, every monument in the city was sacred to him, and the General knew that this battle would damage Moscow as much as it would his enemies. Seeing what his city had become under Emperor Amaris—the defaced monuments, the hospitals turned into mortuaries, the parks where daily executions had been held—enraged him beyond caring. Even the house where he was born had been destroyed.

With the aid of the Eleventh Mechanized Infantry Division, General Kerensky pushed the Rim Worlds units, the Thirty-third Amaris Dragoons 'Mech regiment and attendant regiments, out of the city and then surrounded them on the plains. For a long while, General Kerensky seemed to be waiting to call in air strikes and artillery barrages. Even when the enemy offered to surrender, it appeared that the General would let his anger rule the day. After two hours of sitting in the cockpit of his 'Mech, he finally accepted the surrender.

KERENSKY'S RETURN

The campaign to recapture Terra was long and bloody. It took eight years and cost millions of lives, consuming more than half of the most powerful military ever assembled.

Though the Periphery uprising had cost about one-fourth of the strength of the SLDF, General Aleksandr Kerensky still had an army of more than 300 divisions, and he threw the full force of it at Stefan Amaris.

The campaign cost more than half of General Kerensky's divisions, including 46 of the remaining 82 'Mech divisions, advanced weapons that mankind has been unable to replace.

From the beginning of the Periphery uprising to the Exodus of General Kerensky and his remaining loyal troops, the SLDF was reduced from a force of 486 divisions in strength to one of 113 divisions. Even with such horrifying losses, General Kerensky took with him a force stronger than any that remained. The Star League forces that did stay behind became the strongest units in the House militaries, with some surviving intact to modern times.

—From *Fall of an Empire*, by Grenville DuSimpson, Tharkad Press, 3021

INVASION OF NORTH AMERICA

You will fight to the last soldier, and when you die, I will call upon your damned soul to rise and speak horrible curses at the enemy.

—Orders of Emperor Stefan Amaris to his troops



93

By January 2779, Europe and most of Asia were in General Kerensky's hands. Though there had been some bitter fighting, especially for the Castles Brian, it was obvious that most of the Republican forces were massed on the North American continent. The Republican forces were using desperate tactics, including using entire city populations in chains as shields. To save lives, General Kerensky canceled plans to invade Africa and South America and instead focused on North America.

Getting there would be the biggest problem. Using Drop-Ships to ferry troops would expose them to the still-active SDS ground weapons in the Americas. The ten transoceanic tunnels that connected the continents had been destroyed by Amaris and were beyond quick repair. General Kerensky devised a plan that balanced safety and speed.

On January 15, a massive force led by the 322nd BattleMech Division (The Antarctica Division) and the Ninth Mechanized Infantry Division crossed the Bering Strait and entered the northern state of Alaska. At the same time, SLDF warships and fighters loosed an enormous barrage on SDS ground weapons to cover the descent of thousands of DropShips into the Mexican Republic.

Resistance to the simultaneous invasions was much stiffer than anything encountered in Europe and Asia. The elite of the Amaris military fought the Regular Army for every centimeter of land. On the northern front, the Antarctica Division's tenuous foothold on Alaska was almost taken away when two Amaris divisions threatened to push it back into the frigid waters.

Then Emperor Amaris assumed command of the continent's defense. He had been a good strategist, but years of paranoia had eroded his skills and judgment. By March, the northern force, reinforced by a landing in central Canada, was working its way down the coast toward Unity City. On the southern front, the 135th Royal BattleMech Division (Van Diemen Division) was leading Star League forces north along the coast toward the Court of the Star League. The states of Florida, Texas, and New York became secondary invasion sites, pinning down Amaris troops that might otherwise have gone to the aid of their Emperor.

The Amaris forces made desperate stands against the approaching Star League troops during June–July 2779. On the northern front, massive battles took place on Vancouver Island. To the south, Republican forces held the northern bank of the Columbia River against the 135th for three weeks. Star League forces finally broke through both lines, pushing Republicans back to the terrain around the Court of the Star League by September.

On September 3, 2779, forward elements of the Ninth Mechanized Infantry were the first to see the Court of the Star League. (The Ninth was known as the "The Pride of Puget Sound" because its ancestor division had once been stationed nearby.) The final battles proved to be the bitterest. Republican troops, true to their Periphery heritage, resorted to suicide tactics in futile efforts to prevent the Star League from regaining the city. Their desperate tactics delayed the final assault, which General Kerensky led personally.

The victory of the long campaign quickly turned sour, however, when Kerensky learned that Amaris was not in Unity City. Even before Star League troops reached the Court, Terran citizens welcoming the General told him that Amaris spent most of his time pacing the Imperial Palace.

Heeding the pleas of his wife, two sons, and three daughters, Stefan Amaris had left Unity City for the Star Palace that Richard Cameron had built for him in the Canadian wilderness years earlier. Amaris had renamed it the Imperial Palace, and there he waited.

General Kerensky left Unity City to his staff and turned his attention to Amaris. To make sure the Usurper did not escape, General Kerensky called on his second in command, General DeChavilier, to lead a special assault force. On September 29, 'Mechs from the elite Twenty-Sixth Royal 'Mech Division (The Graham Division) dropped on and around the Imperial Spaceport, which was located near Amaris's retreat. General DeChavilier's drop, which was soon reinforced by Drop-Ships carrying more troops, disrupted the Republican defense and cut off Amaris's only avenue of retreat.

General DeChavilier, commanding regiments from the Ninth and Twenty-sixth divisions, soon linked up with General Kerensky, who was commanding several regiments from the 328th Royal 'Mechs (Lion-Hearted Division). Together, they defeated the Republican guards protecting the area. Despite repeated ambushes, Generals Kerensky and DeChavilier subdued the opposition in one day and closed in on Amaris.

The two Generals, with two lances of 'Mechs guarding them, entered the large park that encircled the Imperial Palace. Members of Amaris's personal guards had been warned that General Kerensky would be coming in his olive-drab *Orion*. Actually seeing the 'Mech and knowing that commanding it was the mighty legend himself, however, made them hesitate.

General Kerensky pushed his *Orion* into a run. By the time the Republican defenders in their armored pillboxes on the wall began firing, the General was halfway to them. He quickly reached the walls, where bad firing angles for the pillboxes protected him. As General DeChavilier and the rest of the two lances silenced the pillboxes, General Kerensky's *Orion* smashed the gates of the Imperial Palace.

With that, the Republican soldiers inside laid down their weapons and cleared the way to Amaris's quarters. When the Generals approached Stefan Amaris, still in his now-tattered Emperor's robes, came out to meet them. He slowly drew the same laser pistol he had used to execute Richard Cameron, and laid it at the feet of General Kerensky's 'Mech. He then looked up, as if expecting his conqueror to say something. When no response came, Amaris shrugged and began to leave the Imperial Palace grounds.

The sight of the former Emperor walking ahead of General Kerensky's olive-drab 'Mech ended the resistance of the few remaining Republican soldiers. From a side entrance, Amaris's wife and children emerged. They ran to catch up and fell into step beside him without a word.

The General escorted his prisoners to the headquarters of the Ninth Mechanized Infantry Division, located in the remains of what had been a posh hotel for visitors to the Imperial Palace. General Kerensky treated the Usurper like a gentleman and ordered a suite of guarded rooms turned over to the Amaris family. In return for treatment that he did not really expect, Amaris gladly agreed to broadcast an order to his troops to surrender.

The effect of Stefan Amaris's message was immediate. Republican troops, mostly in the three North American Castles Brian, began to lay down their weapons and surrender. The message took longer to reach troops on other worlds, where fighting did not end until early November. Enemy troops, who surrendered by the thousands, were treated with respect, as ordered by General Kerensky.

END OF THE STAR LEAGUE

The General's advisers debated what to do with Stefan Amaris, his family, and his top aides. Many argued that they should be executed immediately, but General Kerensky felt that executing Amaris and his people without a trial would make a sham of all they had fought for. Only a few sided with the General, but no one dared challenge the legendary leader. The prisoners continued to live on in their luxurious cells.

After nearly a decade of war, General Kerensky and the SLDF rested. The people of the Hegemony and in some other realms celebrated. Star League troopers were heroes everywhere they went. General Kerensky allowed the atmosphere of celebration to continue for a month. Then it was back to work. He ordered his units to assess the damage to the Hegemony, salvaged what they could, and begin the reconstruction.

Two weeks later, while cleaning up the Court of the Star League and attempting to restore it to its former grandeur, troops unsealed the Throne Room. Even the most battle-hardened



94

soldier could not take the sight or the smell of the room for longer than a few moments. The outrage was immediate. The cry for Amaris's head grew so loud that General Kerensky had to be careful about who he assigned to guard the Amaris family.

Though he had been wading through the stack of administrative tasks that had built up, the General had to see the Throne Room for himself. Two weeks after the unsealing, Kerensky flew from the Imperial Palace to the Court of the Star League. He walked into the Throne Room, which had not been cleared, and asked to be left alone. Thirty minutes later, he came out and flew back to the Amaris's retreat. He ordered that Stefan Amaris, his family, and his aides be marched into a courtyard, where soldiers with laser rifles waited as each prisoner refused a blindfold. The General himself gave the order to fire.

When the deed was done, Kerensky was heard to mutter as he left, "There will be no sympathy for the devil."

Later that day, the General ordered the bodies preserved and protected until he could decide what to do with them.



PROTECTOR OF THE REALM

The civil war claimed more than 100 million people. Four times that number were wounded, and ten times that number were left homeless. The immensity of the devastation caused by Amaris stunned everyone, and a silence seemed to fall across the entire Inner Sphere.

Ruling over this sad domain was General Aleksandr Kerensky. He announced that he was reassuming his title as Protector of the Realm. He invited the Council Lords to come to Terra for meetings "to help guide us away from the memories of these devastating times."

Relief supplies and aid began pouring into the Terran Hegemony from all five Houses. Trading companies donated space on their ships to carry the supplies and donations to the Hegemony, but it was the common people who made the most heartfelt contributions. A massive outpouring of concern came forth from the citizenry of the five realms. They gave what they could afford, often taking food from their own mouths to feed the starving in the Hegemony. Even people in the Periphery, themselves not yet recovered from the ravages of war, felt compassion for the billions in the Hegemony and gave what they could.

Many people were stricken with remorse upon hearing about what life had been like under Stefan Amaris. Some had relatives in the Hegemony. Others felt guilty that their governments had allowed such a thing to happen. Many assuaged their guilt by traveling to the ravaged worlds to offer their time and skills to the reconstruction effort.

People looked forward to seeing Aleksandr Kerensky become the next First Lord. His fame, considerable even before the war, had grown to superhuman dimensions immediately after the liberation of Terra. Everyone took comfort in the thought that he would soon rule the Star League.

The Council Lords reconvened in the ruins of Unity City on October 10, 2780. The arguing started soon thereafter. The Council Lords, who shared none of their citizens' guilt for having stayed aloof from the civil war, fought among themselves for power. The past four years may have caused incredible grief to some but they had also created a wealth of opportunities for the House leaders. Among the few things that they agreed on was the appointment of Jerome Blake as Minister of Communications. They gave him the monumental task of rebuilding the League's communications network.

They were also agreed that General Kerensky would *not* be the one to lead them. To quiet the public cry for him to become the First Lord, the High Council unanimously stripped General Kerensky of his title of Protector on October 18 of that year. They then ordered him to demilitarize Terra and to disperse SLDF units to their peacetime locations.

In response, many people took to the streets to demonstrate in support of the General, even in the Draconis Combine and the Free Worlds League.

Before leaving, General Kerensky asked to meet the Council Lords one last time in the Throne Room, which had been mostly restored to its former glory. They agreed, though not without some misgivings.

After the five Lords gathered, the General entered carrying the ornate laser pistol of Stefan Amaris. The Council Lords' uneasiness turned to near panic when the doors to the room closed and General Kerensky sat on the First Lord's throne.

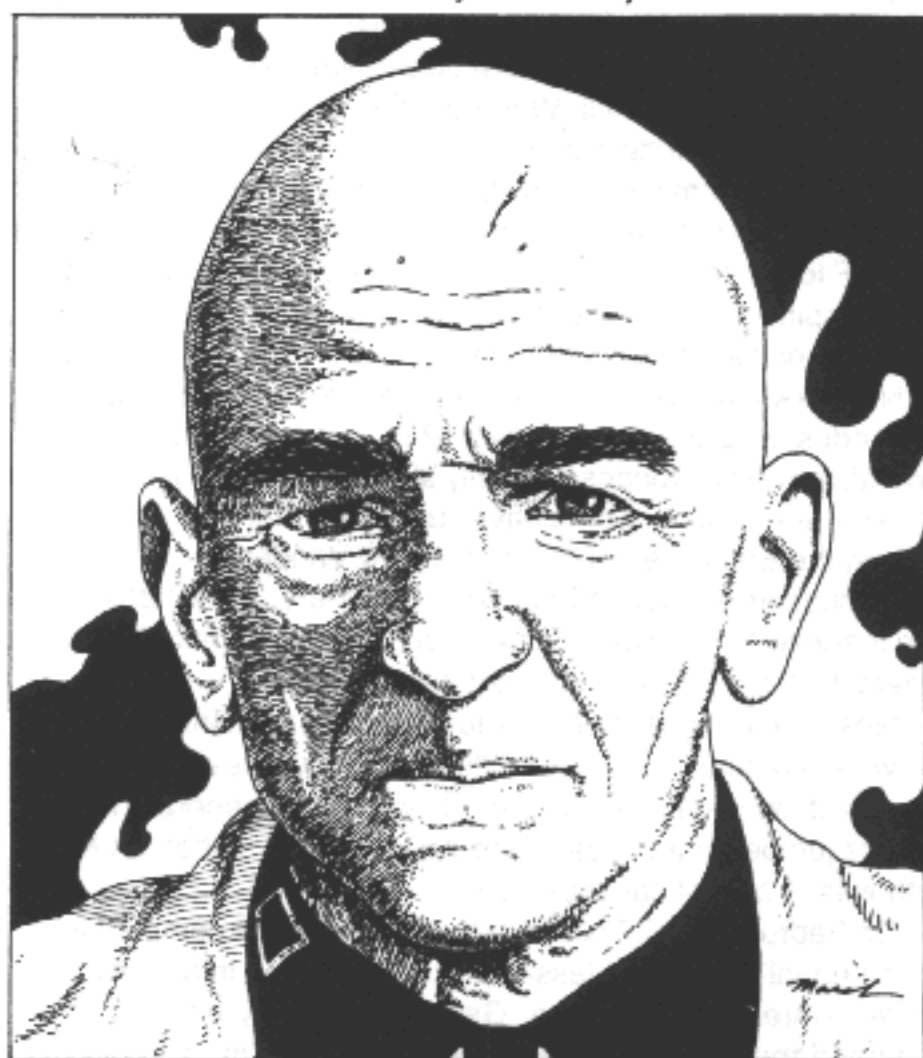
Though the Lords must have feared for their lives at that moment, Kerensky merely began an impassioned plea to the Council Lords to be lenient with captured Republican soldiers. With a sigh of relief, the Council Lords listened and agreed to the General's proposals for the treatment of the Amaris soldiers.



95

General Kerensky left Terra for New Earth, the temporary headquarters of the SLDF. There, he issued orders to his troops to treat the Republicans well and congratulated them on surviving the long campaign. "In the coming months some of you may envy the dead," he concluded. "The universe has become a very different place and you may feel that you cannot cope with it. Have courage. You and I have faced the worst; what comes next cannot be as bad."

A week after Kerensky's return to New Earth, General DeChavilier approached him with word that all of the Star League troops were ready to help overthrow the Council Lords. General DeChavilier wrote in his journal that the General smiled but politely refused the offer, saying that he was too tired for treason. He went on to say that as long as there was a Star League, he would remain loyal. Historians have pointed out that Aleksandr Kerensky was a military man, not a politician. Others have maintained that Kerensky realized that his age and lack of heirs meant an overthrow would only have delayed the inevitable.



As the weeks wore on and the High Council continued to meet, the continued existence of Star League looked more and more doubtful. The Council Lords could not agree on who would become the new First Lord. Their meetings turned into aggressive auctions, with each House leader attempting to trade huge sums of money, resources, and even whole planets in desperate schemes to become the ruler of the League. The only hopeful sign was the fact that the Council Lords were still on Terra and still talking long after the meetings had been scheduled to end.

On August 12, after ten months of deliberations, the five exhausted and angry leaders agreed to disagree forever. With a short written statement that they brusquely handed to some reporters, the five left for the spaceport and their individual realms.

The message read: "After long months of intense negotiations, we have reached an impasse on the question of who should become the next leader of the Star League. It is our opinion that the inability to find a new First Lord makes any further decision-making impossible. Therefore, we officially dissolve the High Council on this day, August 12, in the year of 2781."

MOBILIZATION

When news of the dissolution of the Star League reached New Earth, many soldiers believed that now General Kerensky would have an excuse to seize control. Instead, Kerensky immediately sent messages to the five Houses imploring them to reconsider their decision. For the next two years, he traveled to and fro across the Inner Sphere trying to get the leaders of the five Houses back into the Council Chambers, where he hoped they would reconcile and resurrect the Star League. His efforts had tremendous public support but did nothing to sway the House families, who seemed to prefer the new political alignment.

Freed of limits on the size of their militaries under the Star League Accords, the five families began massive buildups. They turned to the skilled soldiers of the Rim Worlds Republic, who were waiting for release from prisons in the Hegemony. Recruiters from the five Houses met every group of soldiers released. They offered money, rank, positions, and even titles to get them to sign contracts. MechWarriors and AeroSpace Pilots often received huge plots of land for their services.

In August 2783, General Kerensky heard that recruiters had been talking to SLDF units. When the General tried to keep the recruiters away from his troops, the House Lords asked for his resignation as commander of the SLDF. A month later, most of the Ninety-first Heavy Assault Regiment (The Armadillos) deserted the SLDF to join the Federated Suns. General Kerensky realized that the spirit that had made the Regular Army and the Star League so noble was fast eroding.

No one knows exactly when General Kerensky decided that the Exodus was the only answer. Most records left with the General, leaving historians with only sketchy notes and hints into the General's thinking. Some have suggested that Kerensky was planning the Exodus even before the New Vandenberg rebellion and the subsequent second war in the Periphery. Other historians have theorized that it was not General Kerensky's idea at all, but General DeChavilier who originated the plan.

Most of the evidence points to August or September as the time when General Kerensky settled on an Exodus of the SLDF. Records show that in September, activity at the General's headquarters jumped dramatically and that the HPG station on New Earth was in almost constant use.

On February 14, 2784, more than 100 division commanders and an equal number of lesser officers crowded into an empty wooden warehouse on Terra. General Kerensky and his High Command then explained Operation Exodus to the astonished officers. The Star League still lived within the heart and soul of each trooper and sailor, the General said, but this new cruel age would eat away at that spirit in no time. If so many lost lives were to have any meaning, the essence of Star League had to be saved. Thus, the Exodus. When Kerensky finished speaking, everyone present stood and applauded.

News of Operation Exodus traveled quickly through the SLDF. Soon every soldier was talking about it, yet the plan never leaked to the five Houses. Though secrecy was complete, many Believers in the Saints Cameron guessed what was about to happen from reading Jonathan Cameron's letters. There are also indications that Minoru Kurita suspected Kerensky's scheme.

Each soldier was eventually asked individually if he or she wanted to follow General Kerensky, and more than 80 percent said that they did. Most of the remaining 20 percent felt that leaving would be improper. A few whole units decided not to go, and like the Eridani Light Horse, played an important part in the future of the Inner Sphere. Most of the individuals who refused later died wearing the uniform of one of the five Houses.



96

Ship traffic among SLDF bases rose dramatically after the February 14 meeting. Star League shipyards grew hectic as workers hastily repaired damaged ships for the coming journey. Because 200 more transports were needed to carry the soldier's families and supplies, the SLDF went on a buying spree, snapping up all available ships from commercial JumpShip manufacturers.

Quartermasters began buying massive amounts of food and supplies. They bought on the open market from private companies in the other realms. Sometimes they even bought directly from the House governments. Star League military bases were stripped of all their supplies and parts, and families bundled up their lives into boxes and crates.

Despite the scale of the preparations, the preoccupied leaders of the five Houses, except for Coordinator Kurita, failed to realize what was going on until units in the Periphery and in outer reaches of the Inner Sphere began moving in August.

It was not until July, when the jump points around Hegemony worlds were thick with warships and transports, that the five leaders began asking for explanations. General Kerensky gave them none. He banned the SLDF from communicating with outsiders unless absolutely necessary.

STORM INHIBITORS

The Terran Hegemony gained influence over the other realms partly by providing high-tech services that others could not do themselves. One of these services was terraforming, and Storm Inhibitors were among the most advanced features of the process. Consisting mostly of huge orbiting reflectors that focused heat on clouds, the installations could not actually prevent storms but greatly reduced their severity.

Storm Inhibitors could change weather in other ways, too. By using heat, they could create high-pressure areas and guide rain clouds to parched areas. Storm Inhibitors could also warm a planet, or part of it, either to make it more comfortable for colonists or to melt icecaps or glaciers to provide water. The fall of the Star League took with it all production of Storm Inhibitors. The few that remain do not work properly because of the lack of maintenance and spare parts.

—From *Ghost in the Machine: Technologies Lost*, by Gwen Hill, Stormseed Press, Donegal, 2980

THE EXODUS

To those that we leave behind, let me say that we see no way to continue living in a civilization that spurns the ideals it once professed to hold so dear. Though we depart, our hope is that one day we might return.

—Last known transmission from the warship *McKenna's Pride*, assumed to have been written by General Kerensky

On July 8, General Aleksandr Kerensky flashed a one-word order to the ships assembled about him at the New Earth jump point and to the ships assembled above 50 other stars throughout the Inner Sphere. The order was "Exodus." More than a thousand ships made jumps that day.

General Kerensky's convoy headed into the Draconis Combine, making as many jumps as possible in the shortest time and making no outside contact. Across the Inner Sphere, other convoys were moving through the other realms toward the Combine. When asked the purpose of their journey, they replied: "Out on extended maneuvers."

They rested only in star systems with a sizable SLDF base. Food and other supplies had been stockpiled in these systems and were loaded onto the transports when the fleet reached the system. When the last group of ships was about to leave, the people on the base packed up and joined them. Some convoys stopped to pick up civilians, too, as on the planet Helen.

To the five Houses, the Exodus appeared to be a military mission. Warships guarded each fleet of transports, and the SLDF's reluctance to explain their extended maneuvers seemed to indicate that the General was planning revenge on one or more of the House Lords. Because Minoru Kurita had treated Stefan Amaris so well and Aleksandr Kerensky so badly, the Draconis Combine seemed a likely target. The routes of the convoys seemed to confirm that suspicion. The SLDF was still vastly stronger than any of the House militaries. It would not take much effort to depose any of the ruling House Lords and declare that realm the true Star League. Each of the five House leaders remembered every real or imagined slight to General Kerensky and was haunted by the fear of becoming the target of the General's wrath.

House Kurita had the most reason to worry. The Kuritas had always been at odds with the Camerons and the Star League. Almost everyone except Coordinator Minoru Kurita in the Combine felt certain that Kerensky was about to attack. Kurita believed he understood the honor-bound thinking of the General, and if he were correct, the worst response would be panic. The Coordinator told his realm to remain calm and wait. Coordinator Kurita's conviction that General Kerensky was planning to leave the Inner Sphere grew when the convoy's routes turned away from Luthien.

The first transports and warships arrived above the Combine world of New Samarkand on October 2, 2784. Daily, more and more ships appeared at the star's two jump points. By October 12, the entire fleet of 1,349 transports, carrying more than 100 divisions and their families and escorted by 402 warships, was in the New Samarkand star system.

The SLDF had two major military bases on the planet, each with large wilderness areas of deep forests and mountains. General Kerensky ordered that everyone be allowed to spend some time on the two bases before they left the Inner Sphere. For the next three weeks, a constant stream of planetary transports shuttled between the planet and the jump points. At night, the forests and mountains of New Samarkand were speckled with the campfires of men, women, and children all enjoying some rest before journeying on. Above them, their ships shone like stars in the night sky.

During this shuttling, General Kerensky completed his last duty in his old role of Protector; he gave the remains of Stefan Amaris and his family to the medical school at the University of New Samarkand.

On November 5, as the last DropShip was docking with its JumpShip, the first group of ships left New Samarkand for the Periphery. It took a whole day for all of the ships to leave the system. The last ship to leave New Samarkand was *McKenna's Pride*.

The fleet quickly moved through the Periphery. The last known star system where the fleet was seen was above the sparsely populated world of Gutara V, which, coincidentally, had been the site of one of Stefan Amaris's secret MechWarrior academies. After the 1,000 ships of the Regular Army left Gutara V, they were never seen again.



THOSE WHO STAYED BEHIND

Though the Star League Defense Forces remained loyal to General Aleksandr Kerensky through frightening times and 115 divisions joined him on his voyage into the unknown, there were some who stayed

behind.

In the long years between the execution of Stefan Amaris and the Exodus, recruiters from the five Inner Sphere realms attempted to lure Star League troops into the House militaries. Without their previous sense of purpose, a few soldiers and units of the SLDF were swayed, but the vast majority remained loyal to General Kerensky.

The idea of the Exodus, however, cost General Kerensky the loyalty of many more of his troopers. Units that declined to join the journey had enough love for the General to help keep his plans secret even though they would not join him.

When it became clear that most of the SLDF was not coming back, the five House governments looked eagerly at the few units that were left behind. A swarm of recruiters descended on these troops, most of whom were in the Terran Military Region.

With offers of high pay, promotions, and land, the realms of the Inner Sphere each recruited a number of units. The Free Worlds League wooed fewer units than the other realms but did eventually get one of the plums, the remainder of the Third Regimental Combat Team. These units, the Seventy-first Light Horse Regiment, the 151st Light Horse Regiment, and the Twenty-first Striker Regiment, survived to modern times as the elite mercenary Eridani Light Horse.

Other units, including the Twelfth Heavy Assault Regiment, the Twenty-fifth Striker Regiment, the Fifteenth Dracon Regiment, and the Fourth Tau Ceti Rangers, also kept their organization and identity to modern times. Most other units eventually broke up or were destroyed in the Succession Wars.

In all, the Draconis Combine recruited nine independent regiments of Star League forces, the Lyran Commonwealth recruited an infantry division and nine regiments, the Federated Suns got ten regiments, the Capellan Confederation got the biggest prize, the 360th BattleMech Division (The Bannockburn Division), and seven regiments, the Free Worlds League recruited the Eridani Light Horse plus two other regiments, and one regiment joined the Periphery.

In many cases, these units formed the backbone of key fronts in the Succession Wars, and often their weapons, training, and organization became models for House units.

—From *The Rise and Fall of the Star League*, by D.H. Rand, Tharkad Press, 2989

AFTERMATH

It is a favorite cliché among scholars to say that General Kerensky and his men disappeared into history. Almost immediately after the Exodus was confirmed, people began turning the story into romantic myth. Biographies, novelizations, and holo-shows purporting to tell the true story of General Kerensky, the coup, and the Exodus came out by the thousands, barely slowing when the Succession Wars started. One of the most telling pictures ever taken in the First Succession War was of a Davion infantryman in a foxhole, his rifle in his lap, reading a book whose cover asked the question on the minds of billions: "Where Did the General Go?"

There have been five attempts to trace the path taken by General Kerensky. During the height of the First Succession War, when it seemed that the Draconis Combine might conquer a huge chunk of the Federated Suns, the First Prince sent a fleet to look for the SLDF. The hope was that five JumpShips could find the SLDF and persuade them to come back on the side of the Federated Suns. The five ships returned two years later. They had gone more than 100 light years beyond Gutara V, following a trail of debris left by the General's ships. The trail eventually became confused and then stopped altogether, forcing the expedition to return.

The next four missions, two by the Federated Suns and two by the Draconis Combine, extended the scope of the search but yielded only a few tantalizing clues. Only recently, the Guided Light Expeditions have provided a clearer picture of where the General and his followers might have gone. The explorers discovered that the General probably did not continue in a straight line, as everyone had assumed. About 130 light years from the Periphery, the survey teams found proof that the fleet had changed course. This raises two new possibilities. One is that General Kerensky had a definite destination for his fleet, contrary to romanticists who believe he just leaped off into the unknown. The other possibility is that his descendants could be living just outside known space, waiting and watching.

If this proves to be true, it will help explain certain mysterious incidents that have occurred in the Inner Sphere since Kerensky's Exodus. One of the most well-known of these puzzling stories is the one involving the Minnesota Tribe.

In 2825, as the Second Succession War was just getting under way, a regiment of unidentified 'Mechs appeared in the



98

Draconis Combine. From a convoy of transports and DropShips, the regiment struck at the garrison on Svelvik, seizing supplies and then leaving. People were quick to notice that the 'Mechs were in excellent condition and painted according to Regular Army standards. The regiment fought using Regular Army tactics, and wounded or stranded MechWarriors killed themselves rather than be captured. There was a small symbol on each 'Mech that was later identified as a map of Minnesota, a geopolitical domain of North America.

The leaders of the Draconis Combine did not need further proof to be convinced that the Minnesota Tribe, as the regiment came to be known, was the vanguard of an SLDF attack. The Minnesota Tribe attacked three more worlds. During its last attack, its MechWarriors freed thousands of political prisoners on

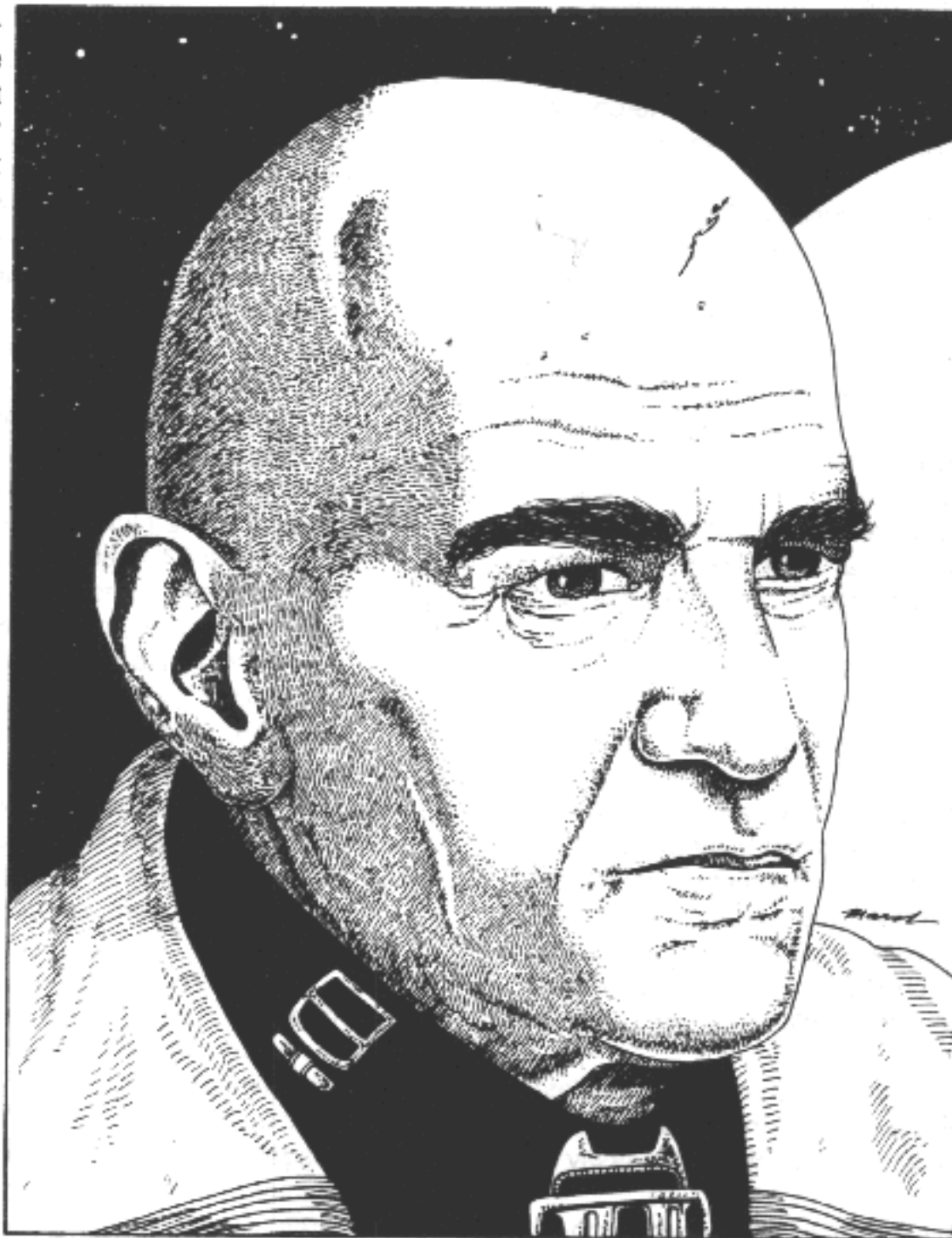
the Combine world of Richmond. The Minnesota Tribe then left the Draconis Combine and was never seen again.

Another curious incident was the departure of the Clinton Cutthroats during the Third Succession War. A reputable mercenary unit, the Cutthroats had been working for the Federated Suns when a courier vessel landed in the midst of a battle. A man and woman got out of the ship and asked to see the commander of the mercenary regiment. For three days, they engage in private talks with the unit's commander. Then DropShips, unmarked but obviously in excellent condition, landed and whisked the Cutthroats offplanet and out of the Inner Sphere.

These incidents are just two of many stories and observations that have accumulated over the years. Other stories revolve around the powerful Wolf's Dragoons, who many believe are part of the SLDF. Another favorite tale told in smokey taverns on cold winter nights is one about the Vandenberg White Wings, squadrons of white

AeroSpace Fighters that appeared on the Periphery edge of the Capellan Confederation escorting 20 Star League transports. The Disappearing Battleship of Merope is yet another story about a *Black Lion* battleship that was seen and filmed orbiting Merope, but then vanished when ships from the Inner Sphere came to investigate.

It is uncertain whether these stories are the wishful thinking of men and women eager for the return of the good days of the Star League or whether they are factual sightings. What is certain is the possibility that descendants of General Kerensky and his forces still live. Just outside our sphere of light, men and women may well be watching and waiting for the day of return.



SOCIOPOLITICAL STRUCTURE



99

The League, Liberty, and the Accords.

—Official motto of the Seventh Royal BattleMech Division
(The Keid Division)

No matter how wonderful the Accords might be, they are nothing until each and every citizen of the Star League bothers to acquaint himself with the new government. Only then will they realize that it really means nothing and that everything rests on the characters of their new rulers.

—First Lord Ian Cameron, from his diaries, October 2575

Because the Star League was such a bold experiment in peace and cooperation, people today assume that its government was staffed by political geniuses capable of solving any problem. Star League citizens were mere mortals, however, which is why founder Ian Cameron designed the Star League government on very practical foundations.

The Bureau of Star League Affairs, the BSLA, was the government's bureaucracy. Departments with sophisticated computers and communication systems kept track of every person in the Star League. The BSLA enforced the laws of the High Council and ran on yearly contributions from the six member states and on assorted taxes and license fees. The Council Lords, leaders of the six member states, met biannually on Terra. Their decisions shaped the course of the Star League.

At the pinnacle of the Star League was the First Lord, who was responsible for ensuring the stability and development of the fragile union of six cultures. His goal was to make certain that peace and prosperity were at the heart of every government action. Though the power of the six First Lords often exceeded what Ian Cameron had envisioned, the structure of the government remained constant throughout its history.

FIRST LORD

Ian Cameron used the term "first among equals" to describe the First Lordship, seeing his role as a continual moderator "who would shape the Lords' discussions toward a greater and stronger union of the member states." The Star League Accords granted the First Lord three major powers that made him far more than an equal to the other leaders. Furthermore, the First Lord could call upon other important resources that were unavailable to the other Lords.

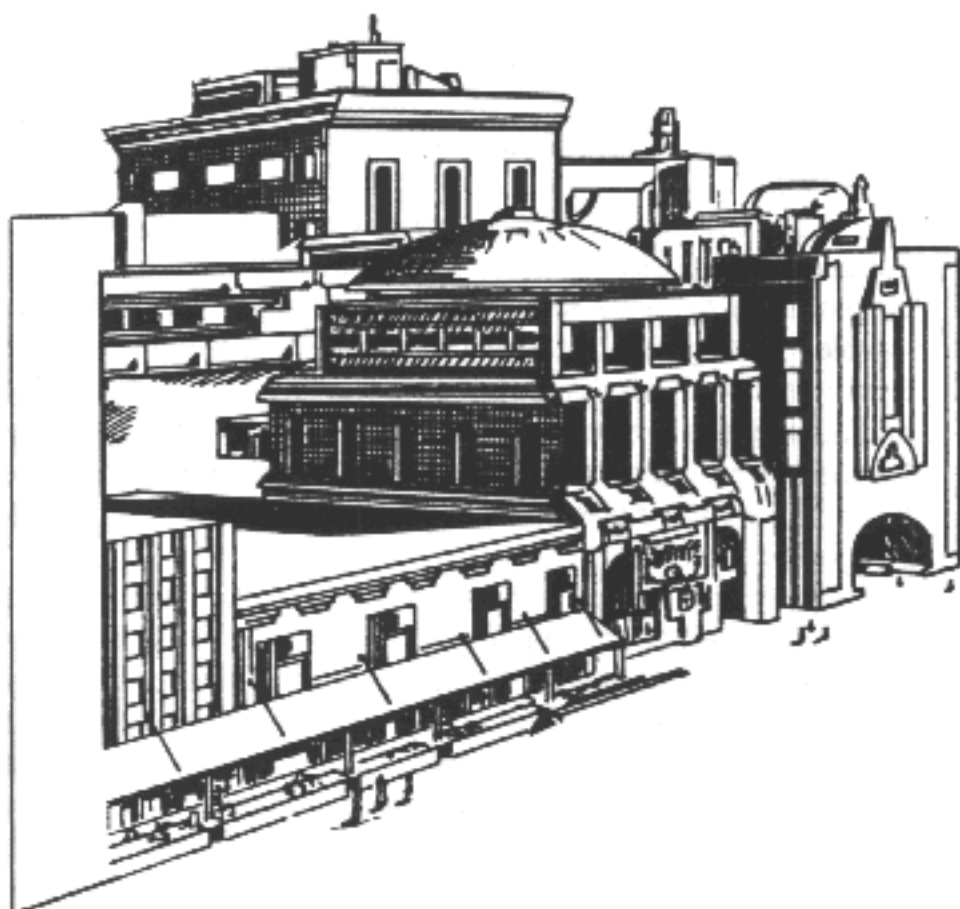
The First Lord could call on the Star League Defense Forces without the permission of the other Lords. He was not a commander in chief who could declare war without the Council's permission, but he had the authority to order the military to execute certain "defensive missions." Complementing this authority was the soldiers' willingness, even eagerness, to serve, giving the First Lord enormous power.

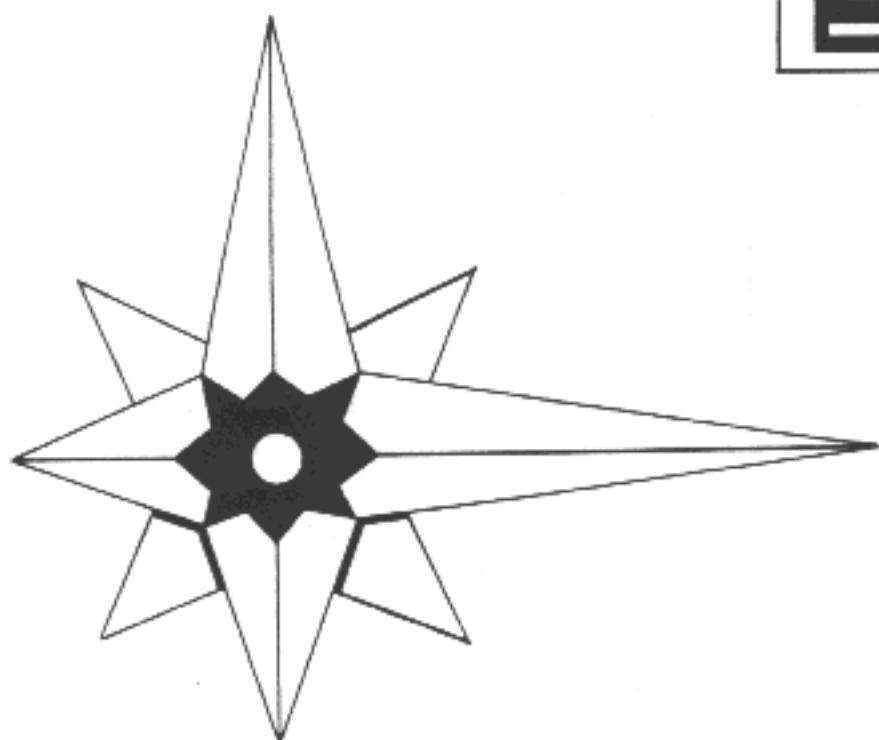
He also had considerable control over the Star League economy. Through the Department of Economic Relations, he could shut down any exchange or mint without consulting the other Lords. This could create economic chaos in a targeted member state. The First Lord could also shut down companies doing interrealm business. Those that angered the First Lord risked disastrous economic retaliation.

There was also a provision in the Star League Accords that stated: "No realm shall be forced to share any technological or agricultural secrets with the other member states." This gave the First Lord, in his role as leader of the technologically advanced Terran Hegemony, tremendous power. The Terran Hegemony was always extremely reluctant to share secrets that would diminish its technological edge. The Accords made that secrecy legal and allowed the First Lord to use his realm's technology as a major bargaining chip. Many people were willing to do anything he asked in exchange for Hegemony technology.

The First Lord also had the support of the Star League public. The Cameron family's mystique was so powerful that most people unhesitatingly gave their enthusiastic support to any request of the First Lord. Knowing that the First Lord had such great popular support, the leaders of the member states often agreed to policies that they privately opposed.

The Cameron family rarely used these great powers. The Camerons seemed to feel that they derived more power and moral strength by refraining from using their political weapons. This reluctance to flex their muscles sometimes forced them to compromise on an issue, a restraint noticed by both the Lords and the common people. The public loved the Camerons even more because of it. This belief that quiet persuasion and compromise were better than political warfare was undoubtedly the key to the Cameron style of leadership.





THE CAMERON STAR

During the months before the formal declaration of the Star League, an attempt was made to come up with a fitting symbol of the new realm. Many designs were created. Some were simple, many were ornately complicated, yet none caught the eye of Ian Cameron, the future First Lord.

The obvious symbol, a radiant sunburst, was dismissed from the first because it resembled the Federated Sunburst. Other star designs were tried. One, a central star, surrounded by five smaller stars, was considered favorable until someone asked whether the symbol would be redesigned once the Periphery realms joined the League.

The new symbol was discovered one day as Ian Cameron was visiting his niece, Tomasina Cameron-Havley, at a day care center. As he approached, he saw the little girl lost in concentration, desperately trying to draw a symmetrical star like the one her teacher had done. She could not and was left with a star with two of its rays longer than the others. When she gave up in frustration, the child noticed her uncle and held up the star to him. "This is a bad star," she said peevishly. Ian Cameron said that it wasn't, that it was grand because "it's a Cameron Star."

Ian Cameron took the child's drawing to several artists who developed and embellished it. Cameron then took these and sent copies to the rulers of the other houses with a letter explaining the story behind the design. All, even Coordinator Hehiro Kurita of the Draconis Combine, were enchanted by the story and the star and thus was Cameron's Star adopted as the official symbol of the Star League.

—From *A Reader's Digest History of the Star League*, by Vandreesen Joa, Lyran Public Press, Donegal, 3002



HIGH COUNCIL

The Lords of the six member states made up the official High Council. In their meetings, which were held on Terra in the High Council Chamber in the ornate palace of Unity City, they gathered privately to discuss the problems facing the Star League. There were two two-month sessions each year, the spring meeting in May and June, and the autumn meeting in September and October.

When faced with a crisis, the Council Lords could call a special meeting. The Lords were usually able to gather within a week. The Coordinator of the Draconis Combine was often the last to arrive, not only because of the travel distance, but also because the Coordinators were generally so reluctant to deal with the Star League.

During scheduled meetings, the Lords received biannual reports from the BSLA, detailing the financial, social, and military status of the Star League. At the spring session, the Lords studied, modified, and ratified the yearly budget. They were supposed to bring their annual contributions to the Star League's coffers with them to the autumn session.

Open discussion took place after the scheduled tasks were completed. Diaries and electronic records of the sessions show that any type of issue was raised. The Lords haggled over the steep licensing fees of the Department of Economic Relations, and they consistently complained that the First Lord was spending too much money on the Regular Army. Basically, they argued over everything. The only thing that they could not argue about was how the other Lords ruled their own realms.

If the subject was a matter of extreme concern, the Lord drafted a Council Directive or Council Order, which was put to a vote. A majority of those present was necessary for passage. The First Lord's vote broke ties. If some Lords were absent when a Directive was passed, the law was considered temporary until the full Council could meet to vote again.

Each Lord brought an entourage of his closest advisers, known as unofficial High Council members. They did the ground-work necessary to allow their Lords to dispatch routine matters easily and move quickly to the more pressing issues. In fact, many Lords let their advisers tell them how to vote. Each High Council bill or document carried six wax seals, each one representing the adviser of a particular Lord. Each Lord could check the seal to see whether or not his staff approved of the bill, and then vote accordingly.

These advisers became very powerful during the last few decades of the Star League. Many became nobles, and their positions on a Lord's staff became hereditary. Many advisers traveled throughout the Star League on fact-finding missions. Some used their prestige to become wealthy, then acquired land and businesses to become very rich. Though these actions were frowned on by many of the Lords, the First Lord often applauded them, saying that they were taking full advantage of what the Star League had to offer.

If the High Council was to consider a matter concerning the Periphery Territories, the four Periphery Administrators who controlled the territories for the Star League sat in on the meeting. The Administrators reported on the issue and participated in the discussion, but they could not vote. Though this gave the appearance of some representation for the Periphery, the truth is that important decisions were often made unexpectedly with no administrators present.

The High Council often summoned high government officials, important officers, and citizens to testify on an issue. Occasionally, when the Lords had little to do, they heard people's petitions.

ROYAL COURT

Though not an official part of the Star League government, the spring and winter gatherings of nobles, intellectuals, and celebrities at Unity City affected Star League politics.

These courts, usually led by the First Lord's spouse or by the Master of Protocol, existed only as social gatherings for the VIPs of the Star League, a time to put politics aside, a time for the best and the brightest to party. Sporting games, hunting parties in the wilderness surrounding Unity City, elegant dinners, and grand balls were on the daily agenda. These court sessions lasted for two months, during which even the harried First Lord allowed himself some fun.

Politics infiltrated even the most innocent events. Behind the festivities was rampant political and economic dealing. Business deals were made and broken like romances. Political favors were traded like party favors. Everyone was spying on everyone else. One observer speculated that more than one-third of all major business deals and at least ten major marriages were formulated during the festival days and nights of a Royal Court.



101

NOBILITY

Though nobility reappeared in the 24th century in the Terran Hegemony when Director-General Michael Cameron reinstated noble titles, it was never more than a glorified job description. Terran nobles never gained complete dominance over the public, as did nobles in the other realms. This was deliberate on the part of the Camerons, who wanted to avoid creating a class who believed they were superior to other people.

The Camerons accomplished this by never granting the nobles permanent positions in their planet's government. Though the higher nobles eventually gained power in government, they did so through their political abilities, not their titles. There was nothing to prevent the public from voting a noble out of office.

The title Duke or Duchess was the highest and most powerful. Dukes usually owned the most land and controlled most of a planet's major industries. There were also many Dukes without their own worlds. They were called "Vagabond Dukes," nobles who usually owned major industrial conglomerates scattered throughout the Hegemony.

Next in social rank was the Marquess and the Marquessa. This title was occasionally given to someone who made a significant scientific contribution, such as Professor Gregory Atlas, who was given the title Marquess of Military Technology for his work on myomer technology.

Counts and Countesses were often owners of large companies or large tracts of land on a world. The Count's allegiance usually depended on whether his company or land was tied to the holdings of the planet's Duke. If it was, the Count was expected to follow his leader's wishes. If not, the Count was more independent.

Baron and Baroness, the lowest ranks of peerage in the Terran Hegemony, were usually owners of modest companies or individual farms. Many Barons without land or a business were titled as a result of rewards while in the SLDF or the BSLA. Most Barons, because their lands or factories were usually controlled by conglomerates, answered to either a Count, Marquess, or Duke. In the Hegemony, Barons and Counts became extremely powerful local leaders because they usually stayed on their own planet and were more closely in touch with the common people. Many rose to lead the planetary government, to the dismay of their noble superiors. Some of the greatest tests of wills were between these politically powerful minor nobles and their aristocratic superiors.

BUREAU OF STAR LEAGUE AFFAIRS

The heart of the Star League government was the Bureau of Star League Affairs. Its six departments coordinated the laws and desires of the High Council.

The headquarters of the BSLA was in a huge pillared building that stood opposite the Royal Court, across the greenery of the People's Botanical Gardens. Beneath the impressive architecture were 20 underground floors housing the huge computer and communication facilities that monitored the flow of millions of reports and orders. The Royal Court and the BSLA were connected to each other and to other major buildings by an underground magnetic subway system.

These information-packed buildings were among the victims of Stefan Amaris's coup. Information was stripped from the computers, paper documents were removed, and the empty buildings were destroyed.



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Administrators represented the Star League government outside the Terran Hegemony. These men and women, trained in diplomacy and politics, were responsible for publicizing and enforcing the laws of the High Council. Because they were the first to face a political crisis, Administrators had to show initiative and withstand stress in dealing with belligerent foreign politicians.

The Commander of the BSLA controlled the Star League's bureaucracy. Next to the First Lord, the Council Lords, and the Commanding General of the SLDF, the BSLA Commander was the most powerful person in the League. The Commander's decisions shaped the Star League's legal enforcement and revenue-collection policies. The power of the Bureau Commander was so great that when one retired, the First Lord personally chose a successor loyal to the Camerons and the Terran Hegemony.

STATE ADMINISTRATORS

State Administrators were the Star League's ambassadors to the member states of the Inner Sphere. Each lived in the realm's capital city and kept in contact with Terra via a personal HPG station. The administrator monitored the realm's adherence to Star League laws. The many divisions and regiments of the Regular Army stationed in a realm provided the State Administrator with plenty of muscle to demand that a member state enforce Star League laws. In an emergency, a State Administrator could ask the SLDF commander to undertake military actions to uphold the Star League's rights.

As the years went by, those chosen to be State Administrators gradually narrowed to five families. Each family's familiarity with a realm became so great that few could challenge their credentials to become Administrators. In the Draconis Combine, where the post of State Administrator was extremely stressful because of constant tension between the Kuritas and the Camerons, the Isu family became the State Administrators. Time and time again, they prevented incidents from escalating.

The Hughes family of New Earth became the State Administrators of the Free Worlds League. They seemed unusually adept at deciphering the fragmented politics of that realm.

The Brewers were the State Administrators of the Lyrans Commonwealth. They were tough and capable economists who could judge how to implement the Terran laws without adversely affecting the vital Lyrans economy. They were also very willing to engage in frank and open discussions with the Steiner family, even if it meant risking relations between the Commonwealth and the Star League.

The Ling family became the State Administrators of the Capellan Confederation. As major landholders in the Tikonov Commonality, a major part of the Confederation, they could force a stubborn Chancellor to agree to Star League policies by threatening economic damage.

The State Administrators for the Federated Suns were the Green family, an unusually large family with strong and important ties to the Federated Suns government. Because of their thorough knowledge of the realm, the Greens devised new and innovative ways of enforcing Star League laws. The Cameron family attributed the cordial relations between the Federated Suns and the Star League to Green family tactics.



PERIPHERY ADMINISTRATORS

The Reunification War waged by the Star League to force the Periphery realms into the fold brought 20 years of destruction and death. The governments of the four realms, the planetary governments, and even the local governments were destroyed in the fighting, leaving the people of the Periphery with no way of governing their meager resources.

Even before the war ended, the High Council, realizing how horrid the aftermath could be, began sending aid to the Periphery. The Star League also sent Administrators to be sure that the supplies were wisely used. The first Administrators were lawyers and bureaucrats from the SLDF Judge Advocate General's Command. They set up new governments and coordinated reconstruction.

When the war ended, civilian diplomats from the BSLA assumed control from the SLDF officers. The Periphery was divided into four territories, each run by a Periphery Administrator. For the next 30 years, the Periphery Administrators were the highest authority in the four Territorial States.

The administrators gradually yielded powers to the people of the Periphery. The four Periphery Administrators then became much like the State Administrators, with one important difference. Periphery Administrators could strike down any law proposed by the Periphery governments that would endanger the Star League's control over the region.

In 2722, First Lord Jonathan Cameron signed Council Directive 41. It was supposedly a declaration of independence for the four Periphery governments, freeing them from the few remaining Star League restrictions. It also withdrew the Periphery Administrators and the Star League's planetary administrators. The Lords from the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League, who wrote the directive, thought the administrators were no longer needed.

Though it seemed to grant freedom to the four territories, the Council Directive was actually a sham. With the administrators gone, the Periphery planets fell prey to unscrupulous businesspeople and politicians from the Inner Sphere. The suffering in the Periphery during this period left a deep hatred that later exploded with dire consequences.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

Each member state of the Inner Sphere was divided into three administrative districts, used by the BSLA and the Regular Army. Each had a District administrator to enforce the rules and regulations of the Star League. His immediate superior was the State Administrator.

A State Administrator usually remained on a realm's capital world, but the three District Administrators traveled almost constantly. They were supposed to visit regularly as many of the major nobles and politicians in their region as possible. They also supervised the planetary Administrators.

PLANETARY ADMINISTRATORS

The BSLA built a Diplomatic Mission on every Star League planet with a population of at least one million. These missions and their administrators were vital to the League for many reasons, especially because they set an example of the Star League's ideals. Planetary Administrators were trained extensively in protocol and in the history of the world that they would administer.



103

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS

(See the **Socioeconomic Chapter.**)

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

In the Star League Accords, each signatory agreed to pay a percentage of his realm's gross national product to fund the Star League government. As the years passed, this revenue was supplemented by a variety of taxes, such as licenses for trading vessels or fees for renting advanced Hegemony technology. The Department of Revenue was created to collect the money and to keep strict ledgers.

History has shown that collecting taxes is always a thankless task and often a dangerous occupation. Working for the Department of Revenue was no exception. Member states usually paid willingly, but collecting money from planets sometimes proved difficult. Many worlds, particularly those in a member state's interior, felt no benefit from the Star League government and therefore no obligation to pay their taxes. Planetary governments often flatly refused to deal with representatives from Star League Revenue. To make these planets more cooperative, Regular Army troops on the planet and on nearby worlds commonly held very vigorous and public "maneuvers." This occasionally angered the realm's ruling family, who then complained about interference in their domain, but the House leaders rarely intervened.

Collecting taxes from individuals was even more difficult. Millions of people, many rich business owners, tried to avoid their taxes and fees. Special tax collectors, called Revenue Agents by the BSLA but Money Grubbers and Cameron's Thieves by the public, tracked down and captured the most flagrant violators. These agents had considerable combat training.

Planetary Administrators also monitored the planetary government's treatment of SLDF garrison units. This was a possible cause of tension because many planets objected to having foreign troops on their soil. Moreover, their governments did not like criminals' entering SLDF recruiting stations and escaping justice by joining the Regular Army.

Planetary Administrators were the eyes and ears of the Star League government. They were the first to know whether a new law succeeded or failed, and they were the first to recognize trouble brewing. Their job was occasionally dangerous. Many Planetary Administrators were killed when they became the focus of anti-League hatred. Planetary Administrators were often referred to as "the troopers of the BSLA."

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

The Department of Social Relations had two main functions in the Star League government. The department kept a database of political information about the member states and the Territorial States. Important records, such as copies of treaties, agreements, and the writings of each realm's leaders, were available to the public. It was hoped that the ready availability of the political thinking of every major realm leader would promote open and honest relations between the member states.

When relations broke down, the department performed its second function. The Department of Social Relations then activated its PERT (Political Emergency Response Team) organization, men and women trained to deal with potentially explosive diplomatic problems. Each team member had extensive training in diplomacy, types of political systems, and the backgrounds of each realm's leaders. Each administrative region had several PERTs, complete with JumpShips and DropShips, to race to political hotspots, armed with diplomacy.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

The Department of Education and Information was created to maintain an advanced education system and to provide information to anyone in the Star League with access to a library or computer.

In 2572, First Lord Ian Cameron issued Executive Order 4, which attempted to unite the education systems of the member states by outlining a curriculum that emphasized the study of foreign realms. It was an effort to promote peace through understanding. Called the Universal Curriculum, the series of books and class outlines was adopted by many schools in all of the member states.

The department also trained and licensed teachers. Teachers from the other realms traveled to the Terran Hegemony and the department's many teaching colleges to become official Teachers of the Star League, a highly coveted title, particularly in realms where teachers were in short supply.

The department also ran Prometheus Inc., a government-owned company that published books, managed libraries, and ran a vast computer database available to Star League citizens. Named for the Greek god who gave mankind fire against the wishes of the other gods, Prometheus Inc. published books to promote peace and understanding. The company also built and administered almost 1,000 libraries throughout the Star League. The Prometheus database connected all of the libraries with an information service that was free to anyone visiting the library or to any who had a personal computer. The information in the system's computers, which were on Terra, was extensive. The company and its computers were destroyed in Stefan Amaris's coup.



104

DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

This department was responsible for capturing and trying men and women accused of breaking Star League laws. The department was divided into two commands: the Attorney General's Command was in charge of prosecuting suspects, while the Judicial Command trained judges.

The Attorney General's Command depended heavily on the Star League Defense Forces to capture criminals. Under the Star League Accords, detachments of Military Police from the Regular Army had the right to search and seize anyone suspected of breaking Star League laws. They also pursued criminals who fled from one member state to another.

Such fugitives were either extradited to another realm or taken to a Star League court. The courts were usually built on border worlds owned or administered by the Terran Hegemony.

There were three levels of courts. The lowest were the Regional Courts, which handled most criminal trials. Next were the Appellate Courts, which reviewed lower-court decisions and also heard political cases in which planets or whole member states disputed a Star League law. The Supreme Court of the Star League, founded on Terra, in the District of Columbia, was the highest court of law. Its seven judges, two from the Terran Hegemony and one from each member state, heard cases too important or complex for the lower courts.

At first, people expected the Supreme Court to rubber-stamp the High Council or to split along regional interests. However, the first justices, led by Chief Justice Iona Devorla of New Earth, steered an independent course. The court continually sided with the right of a planet's people to determine their own fate, which often went against the wishes of the Star League leaders and the member states.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The Star League government's one major fault was that it depended on the wise rule of the Cameron family for guidance. If an unfit Cameron assumed control, the government quickly fell prey to all political vices, such as greed and the lust for power, that had been absent in previous administrations.

Another Star League government weakness was also a strength. The Star League was an extremely high-minded endeavor. Time and again, the government disdained the easy course in problem-solving. While these high principles saved the government's morals, it was often at the expense of speed and flexibility.

These weaknesses were completely overshadowed by Star League strengths. Its simple existence, binding together the six Inner Sphere realms, was a miracle. Its policies created a united economy that allowed goods and services to travel between realms. Its emphasis on education and culture showed people how little actually divided their societies.

The government of the Star League raised its citizens from the rubble of the Age of War to a level of wealth and sophistication that has never been matched.



STAR LEAGUE DEFENSE FORCES



105

I am the defender of the Star League; my strength is in loyalty.
—Motto of the Star League Defense Forces inscribed into the marble archway above the main entrance of the War Academy on Mars

The largest military ever assembled, the Star League Defense Forces had almost 15,000 regiments before the New Vandenberg rebellion. The navy had that many warships and transports. The SLDF was the unquestioned might behind the laws of the Star League.

Except for Royal units, every regiment in the Regular Army and every crew of every warship was made up of men and women from all of the member states. Though they were neither kept apart nor threatened by their officers to get along, there were few incidents of fighting between the soldiers from different realms. During training, each soldier learned that being a part of the Star League was more important than individual House rivalries. The Cameron family's greatest achievement toward uniting all Humanity was accomplished by the military.

The SLDF also earned respect for its advanced weaponry. Star League BattleMechs, fighters, and warships were far beyond what our capabilities can produce today.

The SLDF's bureaucracy was an efficient machine. To gather necessary information and dispatch orders while keeping track of and providing for the needs of its 100 million soldiers was a feat that boggles the imagination.

Believing that the goals of the Star League were noble, the soldiers' esprit de corps was what made the SLDF the strongest military in history. Never has there been an army so effective in conveying to the people a sense of common purpose through the quiet confidence of its soldiers.

COMMANDING GENERALS

GENERAL SHANDRA NORUFF-CAMERON (2571-2575)

When the Star League was created, First Lord Ian Cameron turned to his wife and commander of the Hegemony Armed Forces, General Shandra Noruff-Cameron, to realize his dream of a huge military made up of soldiers from every realm.

General Noruff, known to her soldiers as a disciplinarian, faced a monumental task. Besides the logistics of merging six very different militaries, there were bitter rivalries and hatreds among the realms after more than a century of wars.

For the first few years, the SLDF was composed mainly of divisions from the Hegemony Armed Forces and regiments on loan from the member states. There was no mixing within units, and commanders took great care in the placement of each.

While the new army was testing its abilities in a series of wargames, General Noruff was lobbying the Council Lords to pass key provisions of her plan to build a united military. A few Lords required a bit of arm-twisting, but General Noruff eventually got her majority.

The Border Guards Agreement of 2572 was one of the most important laws passed. It allowed the Star League government to purchase lands on member worlds for use by the SLDF. As soon as this order was signed, General Noruff ordered the construction of military bases throughout the Inner Sphere. Under her leadership, the SLDF built nearly 600 bases along the member-state borders and along the Periphery borders.

General Noruff also won the right to recruit soldiers from the member states. This was a key victory. Molding untrained men and women from every world into Star League troopers was central to the plan to make the SLDF troops loyal to the League over and above House politics.

After only four years as Star League Commander, General Noruff stepped down because of ill health. Despite her short term as Commander in Chief, her work and her vision had a lasting impact on the SLDF.

GENERAL DANGMAR LEE (2575-2597)

General Dangmar Lee took over from General Noruff and was soon immersed in the Reunification War. The Periphery realms had refused the Cameron family's rather heavy-handed efforts to persuade them to join the Star League. They formed their own alliance and an angry First Lord began to war against them in 2575.

General Lee had little time to advance the plans begun by General Noruff. During the Reunification War, the SLDF remained a collection of separate member-state regiments, with very few units containing soldiers from more than one realm. Though the SLDF was still young and untried at the start, General Lee won the war, which lasted 20 years.

In the confusion caused by the change of leadership, by the partially finished integration of the SLDF, and by a new war, the Council Lords made an unofficial change in how the Regular Army received its soldiers. General Noruff had wanted the SLDF to draft raw recruits from the member states. General Lee needed more than recruits to fight a war, and so the Council Lords began sending the SLDF trained soldiers. This allowed them to send soldiers who would remain loyal to their individual Houses. General Lee needed trained soldiers so badly that he accepted this change.

Despite that, Dangmar Lee is remembered as the first fighting commander as well as the person responsible for giving the Star League military bureaucracy its final shape.

GENERAL NICHOLAS KINNOL (2598-2646)

General Lee stepped down immediately after the Reunification War. In his place, First Lord Nicholas Cameron appointed General Nicholas Kinnol as the Commanding General of the SLDF.

General Kinnol was a charismatic man. With the Star League no longer at war, the General took up the task of continuing to reshape the Regular Army as General Noruff and First Lord Ian Cameron had intended.

His most controversial action was to challenge the member states' system of sending trained soldiers to the SLDF. He demanded the enforcement of laws passed during the first years of the Star League. He reasserted the right to establish recruiting stations on any planet and to accept anyone who wished to join the SLDF. This outraged the Council Lords, who decried it as an attempt to interfere in the affairs of the member states. Fortunately for General Kinnol, the First Lord agreed with him completely and issued Executive Order 34, which reaffirmed the SLDF's right to recruit anyone. General Kinnol quickly established recruiting stations on hundreds of worlds in the Inner Sphere and the Periphery.

With the economic boom in the Star League after the Reunification War, General Kinnol built up the SLDF. The number of divisions doubled under his command, and the Star League's training and education programs began to turn out soldiers who were troopers of the Star League.

GENERAL KILLIAN SQUARN-TURK (2646-2680)

When General Kinnol retired, General Killian Squarn-Turk took command of the SLDF and continued most of the programs begun by his predecessors. His only major change was to ask the High Council to allow retiring soldiers to buy their weapons with their usual muster-out bonus. Of course, soldiers could not purchase any Hegemony technology, which was still being jealously guarded.

This provision was controversial and caused many to worry about the proliferation of weapons in the cities. The policy was actually aimed at counteracting the scourge of pirates and brigands who were haunting the edges of the League. Most of the soldiers who bought their weapons went to the Periphery as guards on distant worlds.



106

General Squarn-Turk died in 2680. He is best remembered for expanding and deepening the curriculum at the military academies. To the General, an officer had to be as intelligent and sophisticated as he was deadly.

ADMIRAL DAVID PETERSON (2680-2707)

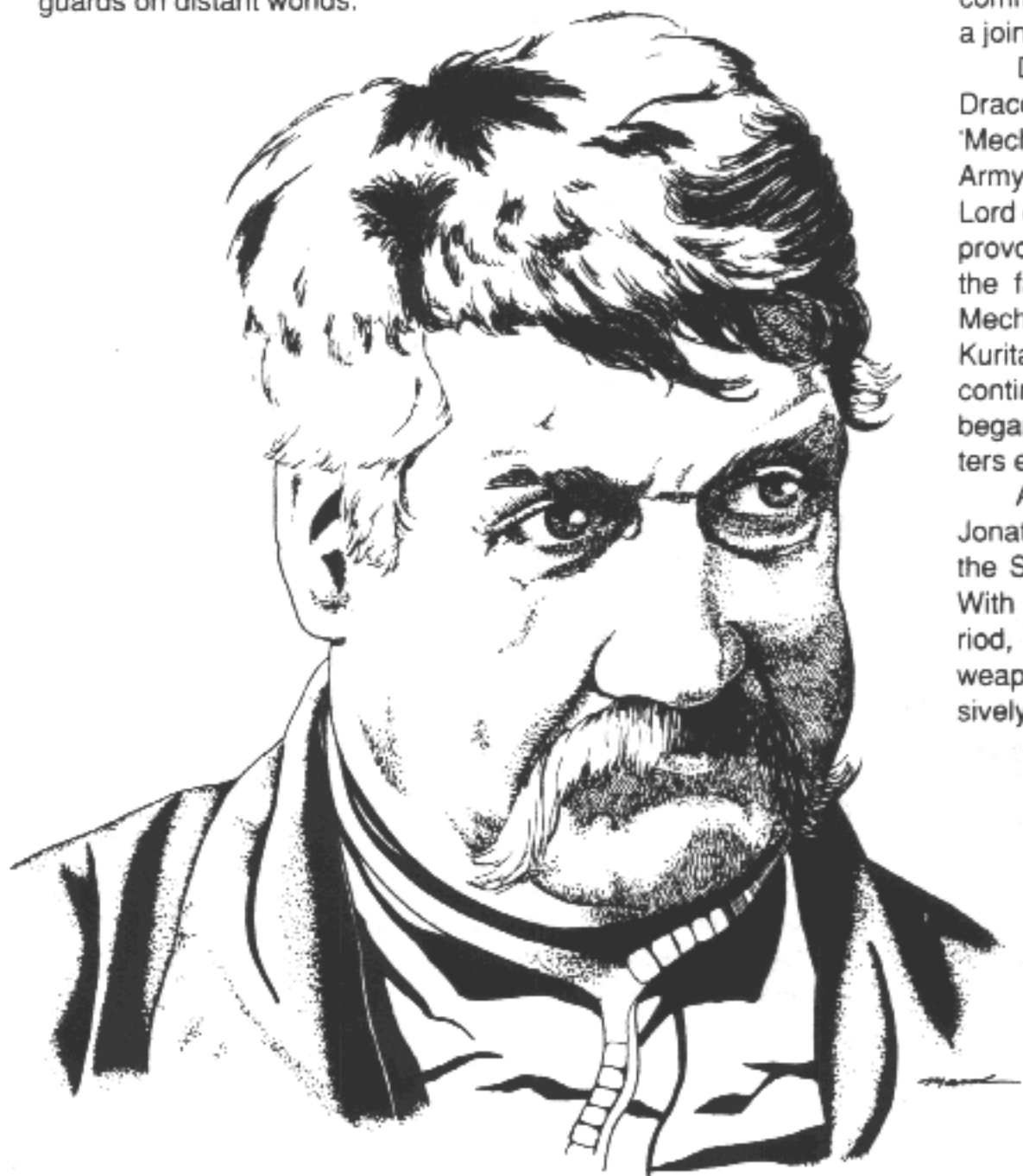
In choosing a successor for General Squarn-Turk, First Lord Michael Cameron went against the convention that the commander of the SLDF come from the Regular Army. Instead, he chose the head of the Star League Navy, Admiral David Peterson. It was a controversial decision, especially since the Admiral was only 45 years old, an age many officers considered too young for the job.

The First Lord's choice turned out to be a wise one. Admiral Peterson addressed one of the SLDF's greatest weaknesses, the lack of coordination between the Army and the Navy. Until his appointment, the Regular Army was considered superior to the Star League Navy. Every military operation revolved around the ground forces. The Navy's main function was to get the Army to and from the battlefield; everything else was secondary. As a result, warships had been permanently assigned to divisions and were not free to roam the Star League. This had created a deep gulf between the two services. The Navy felt like glorified bus-drivers, and the Army considered the Navy a pack of do-nothings too lazy to get into a fight.

Admiral Peterson freed the warships from the Regular Army and allowed them to exercise their independence by chasing brigands without reporting to the Regular Army. The Admiral also formed special task forces, consisting of a small group of soldiers and 'Mechs escorted by a warship, to hunt down bands of pirates. Finding them usually required traveling deep into unknown space beyond the Periphery. The captain of the warship had overall command of the task force, the first time the Navy had control over a joint operation.

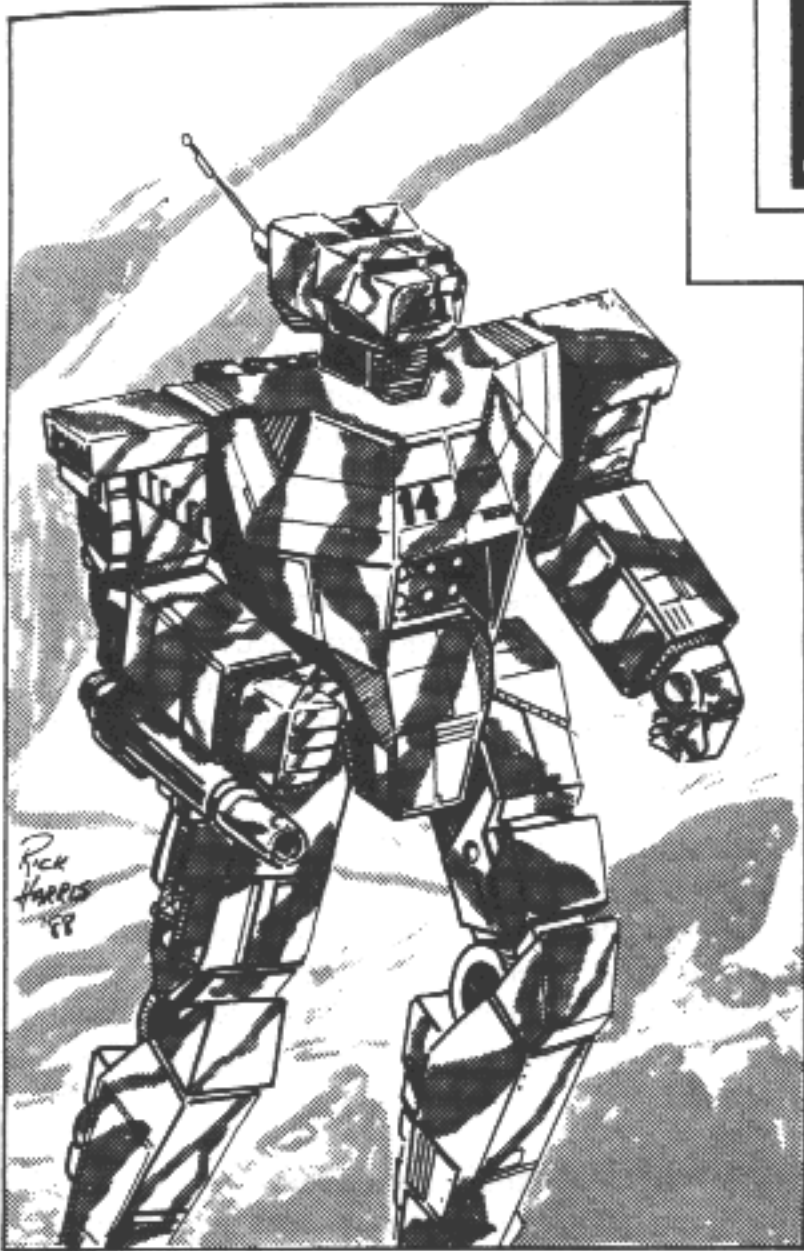
During the command of Admiral Peterson, warriors from the Draconis Combine started challenging soldiers from the SLDF to 'Mech duels, duels in which the Combine shamed the Regular Army. Not wanting a war with the Combine, the Admiral and First Lord chose not to retaliate and ordered SLDF troops to refuse all provocations. Admiral Peterson and the First Lord then designed the famous Gunslinger Program, which taught Star League MechWarriors and soldiers how to compete against their skilled Kurita opponents. Though the highly skilled Combine warriors continued to seek out duels, the special Star League Gunslingers began to give good accounts of themselves, with many encounters ending in draws.

Admiral Peterson was also a major architect of First Lord Jonathan's military renaissance. He laid out the basic designs of the Space Defense Systems and oversaw their development. With rapid advancements in military technology during this period, Admiral Peterson was especially careful to assign new weapons only to the Royal units, which were composed exclusively of soldiers from the Terran Hegemony.





107



THE WINNING EDGE

One of the triumphs of the SLDF was its continued technological lead over the House armies. The Star League managed this by pursuing a vigorous research program and by selling equipment to the House armies only after the SLDF had deployed a newer system. Only rarely did one of the House militaries receive a new vehicle or other piece of equipment that incorporated the newest technology.

Compared to 'Mechs of the 31st century, Star League 'Mechs in the middle 2700s had more efficient and lighter fusion plants and engines, more efficient heat sinks, longer-range weapons, smarter missiles, advanced electronics, and better-trained pilots. House 'Mechs of the time were no match for those in the SLDF.

The Amaris coup stopped most research. When Stefan Amaris gained control of the research centers, those scientists who survived put no effort into helping the Usurper.

We can only imagine what technology General Kerensky took with him when he left the Inner Sphere. He took technology that was never released to House forces, and he took enough resources to create an industrial base wherever he ended up. He also took enough military scientists to continue the research and development of weapon systems.

—From *The Past, the Present, and the Future*, by Clio Edge, House Publishing Service, New Samarkand, 2987

GENERAL IKOLOR FREDASA (2707-2729)

General Ikolor Fredasa was Admiral Peterson's aide. When the Admiral died in a DropShip accident, First Lord Jonathan Cameron named General Fredasa to the command.

General Fredasa, with his love of publicity, became known as "The Father of the Military Renaissance," a title he did not really deserve even though he continued to introduce new technology and to build even more regiments.

The General was the most socially active of all the commanders of the SLDF. He attended all the parties, saw all the right people, and took greater care of his appearance than did most mistresses of the court.

When Jonathan Cameron became increasingly distant and disturbed, General Fredasa was one of the first to question his ability to rule. General Fredasa was the leader of a group of government officials who visited Jocasta Cameron, the First Lord's sister, in her convent and offered support for her to depose her insane brother. When Jocasta refused the offer, General Fredasa began to spread rumors that she was planning a coup attempt.

General Fredasa was the first of three officials to be caught, tried for treason, and hanged by an enraged First Lord.

GENERAL REBECCA FETLADRAL (2729-2738)

Jonathan Cameron's mental illness, while not cured, was contained after his sister convinced him that he was ill. Jocasta soon became the de facto ruler of the Star League. One of her first "suggestions" to the Council Lords was to appoint her friend, General Rebecca Fetladral, to be commander of the SLDF.

General Fetladral pushed her soldiers to a higher state of readiness. There was no public explanation for this at the time, but it was later learned that Dame Jocasta Cameron had shown General Fetladral copies of Jonathan's letters. These dark messages, filled with dreams and visions of a fallen Star League, deeply disturbed the General.

Jonathan Cameron's words shaped the General's administration of the SLDF. She agreed to almost everything he requested. Space Defense Systems, designed under Admiral Peterson, were built and put into place. Fortifications were completed, and new troops were trained, all in an effort to prevent the First Lord's visions from coming true. The eagerness with which she obeyed the First Lord and defended his controversial plans for the SLDF often put General Fetladral at the center of controversy.

When Jonathan Cameron died in 2738, General Fetladral immediately resigned, though she was still young. She said that she was tired of the constant controversy surrounding her command. In fact, she felt that her aide, General Aleksandr Kerensky, was the only hope to preserve the Star League and to prevent Jonathan Cameron's visions from coming true.

GENERAL ALEKSANDR KERENSKY (2738-????)

An account of General Aleksandr Kerensky's life can be found in the history section of this book. Suffice it to say that the life of General Kerensky and the Exodus of the Regular Army beyond the farthest known star became legends that even the smallest child could retell centuries later.

RECRUITING

Executive Order 34, issued by First Lord Nicholas Cameron in 2606, reaffirmed the Star League Defense Forces' right to recruit men and women from any member state without interference from its government.

The SLDF opened hundreds, and eventually thousands, of recruiting offices on all of the heavily populated worlds in the Inner Sphere and Periphery. The offices had all the rights of a diplomatic mission. Once someone walked through the front doors, that person was governed by the laws of the Star League, not the member state.

The public was enthusiastic. Many men and women were caught up by the growing mystique of the SLDF and wanted to join. The number of volunteers was so great that the SLDF scrapped its plans to draft citizens from the member states.

The House governments were not so enthusiastic. The fact that anyone could join and could thereby escape their laws angered the House leaders because soon criminals and dissidents were flocking to SLDF enlistment centers. In 2631, the Coordinator of the Draconis Combine and the Chancellor of the Capellan Confederation demanded that something be done. Realizing that the situation could become dangerous, First Lord Nicholas relented, surprising the two leaders.

The First Lord issued Executive Order 35, which amended the previous order. The new law allowed the member states to petition the Star League government to locate and punish SLDF personnel who were accused of crimes. The two Lords who had complained the loudest about fugitives in the SLDF learned that the new order was just a partial solution. The SLDF did find many who had been accused of crimes, but they were tried under Star League laws. The Judge Advocate General's Command vigorously prosecuted crimes such as murder or theft but winked at others, like "public-speaking" or "failure to obey a moral superior."

This new order stood until the Star League's collapse, with the Draconis Combine and the Capellan Confederation continuing to complain that criminals were escaping justice by enlisting in the military. At times, they acted on their complaints. The two realms tried many times to prevent certain individuals from entering recruiting stations. They even tried to prevent recruits from leaving the offices for SLDF bases.

On the capital world of the Draconis Combine, police officers once stopped a transport carrying recruits to the Fort Luthien military base. Police boarded the transport and began looking for a dissident noble who had severely chastised the Coordinator for his treatment of common people. The noble had had plastic surgery to alter his appearance before he tried to flee the planet, and so the police asked each recruit's name. With the infectious camaraderie of the SLDF affecting even the recruits, everyone aboard, including the women, protected their fellow soldier by claiming to be the noble. With the police confused and wondering what to do, Star League troopers arrived to escort them off the transport.

The recruiting offices of the Star League Defense Forces became permanent fixtures of most large cities and a comfort to many of the citizens. Children looked in awe at the smiling recruiting officers in their dress uniforms who were handing out regimental patches, pictures, and models of Star League vehicles. Recruitment posters and advertisements in the local media built the mystique of the Regular Army in the minds of the young men and women. By the time they reached the legal age, many entered the recruiting offices with pride.



108

MILITARY EDUCATION

Young men and women between the ages of 16 and 18 and with exceptional physical and mental ability were invited to try out for one of the 200 military academies run by the Star League Defense Forces. Candidates came from all of the member states, from all ethnic groups, and from both sexes.

The testing usually consisted of a five-hour examination, both oral and written, and a two-hour test of physical prowess. Those who wished to become MechWarriors or AeroSpace Pilots ended the day-long examination with the dreaded "Skull Cap" test. A candidate donned a neurohelmet and attempted to move a small model of a BattleMech. Those who could were accepted. Those who could not, once they regained consciousness, were offered positions in different branches.

Cadets spent the next four and a half years studying a wide range of subjects. General education accounted for about 40 percent of the student's curriculum. The remaining time was spent studying military history, strategy and tactics, and the operation of modern weaponry. Once a year, the cadets performed maneuvers.

Graduates from military academies began their four years of service in the SLDF with the rank of Sergeant. Though starting academy graduates at the rank of Sergeant was unusual, it reflected the SLDF's policy of making a cadet earn his commission. It also added to the mystique of the Regular Army when a Lieutenant, a rank that enemies expect of green officers, fought like a veteran.

MILITARY ACADEMIES ON TERRA

Terra, the birthplace of mankind, was also the birthplace of war. During the Star League, it was the center of all military thought, with more than 100 major military academies, most having histories extending back many centuries.

Because Michael Cameron graduated from the Sandhurst Royal Military College, in Berkshire, England, it was considered the best of the military academies. Sandhurst, the War Academy of Mars, and the Military Academy of Aphros were referred to as the War Triad, the three foremost academies. All of the Terran academies tested new methods of teaching cadets and were important centers of military research.

Many other academies on Terra, though not as prestigious as Sandhurst, were also good. The Saint Cyr Military Academy of France, the Frunze Military Academy, the Malinovsky BattleMech and Tank Academy of Russia, the Krieg Universitat of Germany, the Kure Naval Academy of Japan, the West Point Military Academy, and the Annapolis Naval Academy were just a few of the other top academies.

War Academy of Mars

The War Academy of Mars served not only as a training facility for cadets, but also as a headquarters for the SLDF. Facilities on Terra handled the bureaucracy of the SLDF, and the War Academy dealt with the strategy. Graduating from the War Academy usually guaranteed an officer plenty of action and responsibility.

Military Academy of Aphros

Built on a high plateau and surrounded by wastelands, the Military Academy of Aphros served as one of the major centers of the SLDF's Gunslinger Program. The academy also trained fighter and DropShip pilots.

Combat College of New Earth

Built in 2331, the Combat College was the first military academy on a foreign world. The college prided itself on being equal to any academy on Terra. To prove their worth, the graduating warrior and pilot class always challenged the Sandhurst graduates to a military contest. It was a tradition that continued until the Amaris Coup, when students from both schools had their final exams fighting Republican forces.

Fleet School of Keid

Next to the Annapolis and Kure Naval Academies, the Fleet School of Keid was the largest training facility for naval personnel in the Star League. Each of the schools had several warships and JumpShips to train crews.

Flight Academy of Graham

The Flight Academy was one of the few schools devoted to teaching fighter pilots. It was also one of the few orbiting space academies. More than 2,000 pilots graduated from the academy every year.



109

University of Proserpina

The University of Proserpina was a small but very tradition-bound school. During the early years of the Terran Hegemony, ten members of the Cameron family were trained there. This became the basis of the school's traditions, and students were forced to obey very unusual customs because one of the Proserpina Camerons had done the same thing years before. This rigid tradition turned out many snobbish officers who often had difficulty unlearning their sense of superiority.

Foreign Academies

The Sanglamore on Skye, the Nagelring on Tharkad, and the Albion Military Academy on New Avalon were the only accredited SLDF military academies built outside the Terran Hegemony. Throughout the life of the Star League, attempts to build academies in other realms fell through because of tensions, misunderstandings, or suspicions. As a result, when the coup by Stefan Amaris and the first years of the Succession Wars devastated all of the military academies in the Terran Hegemony, only the three foreign academies remained as examples of SLDF military education.



TWELVE PRINCIPLES OF COMMAND

1. Objective. Always keep a clear goal in mind. Without it, the lives you lose are meaningless.

2. Offensive. When given the chance, attack and remain on the offensive for as long as possible. The enemy is weakest when backing up, and so are you.

3. Unity of Command. Always know who is above and below you in the chain of command and what they are doing. It will not only help you in times of trouble, but it will also give you a better sense of how your mission fits into the overall picture.

4. Strength. Never willingly enter battle at a numerical disadvantage. Even the sloppiest army can defeat you if it is bigger.

5. Economy of Force. Do not waste your effort and supplies. Use just enough of your force to inflict the maximum amount of havoc on the enemy in the minimum amount of time. Save the rest of your strength to exploit your gains or protect yourself from counterattack.

6. Maneuver. Learn the value of maneuverability. Being able to speed across the battlefield in a coordinated wave of force can overwhelm the toughest opponent with a minimum of bloodshed.

7. Surprise. The element of surprise effectively doubles your force.

8. Intelligence. Information is like eggs, the fresher the better. A good guess might win a battle, but a bad one can eventually lose a campaign.

9. Simplicity. If a plan looks messy on paper or in a computer simulation, it is too complicated to succeed. The best plans often turn out to be ones drawn in the dirt and explained with a few hand gestures. A good solution applied with vigor immediately is better than a perfect solution ten minutes later.

10. Maintenance of Morale. Instill pride and sense of duty, worthiness, and loyalty into your soldiers. Keep them informed, rested, and happy. Officers should visit the front often, not to meddle but for personal contact with the troops.

11. Administration. This is the duller, most mind-numbing of chores, but doing it properly is infinitely better than facing the enemy without ammunition.

12. Mercy. Be firm and win the day, but once the fighting is over, treat your prisoners with respect and courtesy. Not only is it the correct and moral thing for a soldier of the Star League to do, but once enemy soldiers hear of your merciful treatment, they might also be more willing to surrender.

—From *A Primer to Tactics and Strategy*: 34th Edition, edited by General Aleksandr Kerensky, SLDF Press, 2742

UNIFORMS IN THE SLDF

Soldiers in the Star League Defense Forces wore uniforms that plainly identified branch of service, rank, and unit.

The uniforms also fostered an esprit de corps and had great symbolic importance. Soldiers have put themselves in danger to protect their portable clothes-care machines so their uniforms would not stay dirty.

Star League citizens gave soldiers in uniform great respect. People gladly gave soldiers their seats, allowed them to walk to the head of lines, and freely offered them the best they had. So great was the public's awe of soldiers that a historian of the time rather scornfully called the uniform "that khaki halo that makes it obvious to all that the wearer was someone who could do no wrong." In general, the soldiers lived up to the people's expectations; committing a crime while in uniform was perhaps the most shameful thing a trooper could do.

Civilians of the time showed their admiration by copying the style of the uniforms. For almost the entire life of the Star League, fashion designers created and refined what was called the "Trooper Look," which incorporated elements of the soldiers' uniforms into business suits, dresses, and jackets. Children collected military memorabilia and watched holo-shows about the noble defense forces.

Bits of the SLDF uniforms survive in the uniforms of the five Houses today. Examples are the School Rag of the Lyran Commonwealth Armed Forces and the knitted cap worn by JumpShip crewmen in the Free Worlds League. Even ComStar apparel owes portions of its appearance to the uniforms worn by the magistrates in the administration section of the SLDF.

The following are some typical examples of Star League dress. There were variations over the years. For example, the ceremonial swords worn by officers of the Royal Guards began as blunted daggers when the Star League was created but grew longer over the years until they became rapiers and cutlasses during the League's final days. The half-jacket worn by soldiers of the Regular Army and the cummerbund of naval personnel came in many colors and patterns to indicate the wearer's world of origin or military academy.

DRESS UNIFORM (ARMY)

Against military tradition that the dress uniforms of officers should be grander than those of enlisted personnel, the Star League Defense Forces designed formal uniforms that accentuated the wearer's branch of service rather than his rank.

The basic color of the dress uniform worn by members of the Regular Army was olive drab. On the left shoulder was the rank patch, on the left were campaign ribbons and service stripes. Knee-high leather boots covered the pant legs. Gloves, usually matching the boots, were worn outdoors. A standard cap was also part of the uniform.

An olive drab half jacket was worn over the thick shirt of the uniform. Running from the right shoulder down to the left hip was a World Sash. Each Star League member world designed a pattern of colors to be worn by natives of their world who entered the Regular Army. Officers sometimes replaced the World Sash with a School Rag that signified a certain military academy. Unit insignia appeared near the top of the sash. Completing the uniform was a Cameron Star on the left chest.

Officers from Royal units, divisions from the Terran Hegemony that formed the core of the SLDF, were allowed to wear ceremonial swords. At first, the sword was nothing more than an



110

ornately carved blunt dagger. As the years passed, the types of swords changed and gradually became more lethal and even more ornate.

Marines wore uniforms that were dark blue with red highlights, but otherwise identical to the ones worn by the Regular Army.

DRESS UNIFORM (NAVY)

The dress uniform of the Star League Navy was substantially different from that of the Regular Army. A knee-length white coat with gold piping was worn over purple pants and shirt. On the high collar of the coat were two purple Cameron Stars, and the standard naval cap was also in purple.

Naval Honor Cords, which were awarded for actions and for years in service, were worn on the left shoulder and draped across the chest. Cuff stripes on a naval officer's jacket denoted an admiral, with each stripe equivalent to a general's star in the Regular Army. A lower officer wore his rank on his left shoulder.

The School Rag, a cloth cummerbund, wrapped around the waist. Its color showed the officer's naval academy. Officers from the Terran Hegemony wore a sword belt over the cummerbund. The naval ceremonial sword remained the same length throughout the Star League era, but the style of the hilt changed often.

For outdoor ceremonies, naval officers wore gray gloves.

DUTY UNIFORMS (NAVAL ENLISTED)

The duty uniforms of the sailors of the Star League navy were designed for safety and efficiency. A khaki jumpsuit covered a warm gray flannel shirt. Rank patches appeared on the right shoulder strap, front and back. Naval personnel wore thick purple boots to prevent foot and leg injuries.

A sailor wore a Communication Device, called a CD, on the left wrist. The CD allowed the wearer to communicate with sailors in different sections of the ship and served as a small audio computer that allowed the wearer to load programs that offered step-by-step instruction for complex tasks. The CD also collected medical information, gathered by sensors woven into the sailor's suit, that could be transferred into a medic's computer in an emergency. Officers have similar CDs that allowed them to talk with other officers on the secured command channels of the ship. A thick knitted gray and purple cap, affectionately known as the "Cameron Dome Warmer," completed the uniform.

DUTY UNIFORM (NAVAL OFFICERS)

The duty uniform of Star League naval officers was very similar to that of the sailors. A high-collar shirt replaced the collarless one worn by the enlisted personnel. An officer's jumpsuit was white along the right side and had the Cameron Star stitched onto the left shoulder strap. A white knitted cap bore the rank patch.

MECHWARRIORS

The uniform worn by a MechWarrior of the Regular Army was a marvel of electronic sophistication.

MechWarriors wore tan long-sleeved shirts and shorts made of a synthetic, heat-resistant cloth woven around a network of tubes of varying diameters. Hookups at the cuff allowed the warrior to connect his gloves to the shirt and cool his hands. Covering the shirt and shorts was a cooling jumpsuit in camouflage colors. Unlike today's jackets, the Star League cooling jumpsuit extended down the front and backs of the warrior's legs and around the feet, preventing MechWarrior Hotfoot, the common modern problem of gradual loss of feeling in the feet caused by repeated exposure to excessive heat. The cooling systems

used a synthetic coolant that was three times more efficient than water in removing heat from a person's body. The formula for the liquid has long since been lost. Though the cooling system plugged into the 'Mech as today's cooling jackets do, a warrior of the Regular Army had a pump and heat exchanger on his belt for emergency use.

A Star League warrior's neurohelmet could perform many more functions than today's helmet even though it was smaller and lighter. The neural biofeedback apparatus was much more sensitive and did not require contact with the wearer's scalp as they do today. The feedback was so sharp and powerful that a warrior could actually fight with his visor and windows blackened, relying on the sensors that feed information directly into the brain.

When properly worn, the uniform was airtight and had its own air supply. This gave the warrior much greater confidence when fighting on a world that had no atmosphere or one that was poisonous. The rank patch appeared near the throat on the helmet pad, though this changed over the years. A warrior kept only small personal weapons, usually only a dagger and what the warriors called their "persuader," a palm-sized laser that had the range and power of today's laser pistols.

FIGHTER PILOTS

A Star League fighter pilot wore a flight suit that was far superior to what pilots wear today. Sewn into the coolant suit, which also doubled as a G-suit to prevent pilots from blacking out during high speed maneuvers, was a unique semi-exoskeleton. Made of a plastic steel alloy that has been lost, the exoskeleton protected the pilot's chest, back, arms, and legs. The exoskeleton could absorb the shock of a blast without inhibiting a pilot's movement. In fact, the pilot could use small motors in the exoskeleton to act as a power assist when the pilot needed extra strength during high-speed maneuvering.

The fighter pilot's neurohelmet was large and cumbersome, but its capabilities were amazing. When in combat against multiple foes, the fighter lowered the steel visor of his helmet and went into the CTNA mode. CTNA stood for Complete Tactical Neuro Presentation. Fighter pilots in the SLDF said CTNA made its wearer feel as though he were flying through space without a fighter. A pilot could turn around in his seat and look to the rear as if the fighter were not even there and see if any enemy fighters were approaching from behind. This was accomplished with sophisticated sensors embedded in the fuselage of Star League fighters. The sensors fed their information to the CTNA, giving the pilot a convincing depiction of space around them in a variety of modes, such as infrared, ultraviolet, and simple color vision.

Multiple backup systems, particularly in the environmental controls, helped fighters survive longer than modern ones can.

Most pilots were unconcerned about ranks. When a pilot wore the rank patch at all, it was affixed to the exoskeleton near the shoulder.

ARMOR CREWS

Crews of military combat vehicles in the Regular Army had similar protection to that of MechWarriors. A crewmember wore an olive drab cooling suit that was similar, though not as extensive, to that of a 'Mech pilot. Crewmembers of tanks, hovercraft, armored personnel vehicles, and self-propelled artillery wore standard field jackets over the suits. Some armored crews, particularly those that operated in rough terrain, wore shoulder pads that protected both the shoulders and neck.



Star League technology was so advanced that the helmets worn by vehicle crews performed almost all of the functions of the neurohelmets worn by MechWarriors today. The cameras and sensors on their vehicles helped the armored crew navigate and take advantage of the terrain far better than the tank crews of today, who have only optical periscopes. The helmet also contained a communication system that allowed the wearer to talk to his crew.

Rank patches and unit insignia were worn on the left shoulder. Half-gloves, standard issue boots, a holster for a sidearm and a pouch to carry ammunition, batteries for a laser pistol, and other effects completed the uniform.

INFANTRY UNIFORM

Troopers in the Regular Army wore uniforms that seemed too light and thin for the battlefield. Gloves and standard-issue boots covered the cuffs of olive drab pants and shirt. A legless step-through jacket in standard camouflage fit over the shirt. The trooper's rank patch and unit insignia appeared on the shoulders of the jacket. A trooper wore a small backpack that carried a powerful battery for the soldier's laser weapon and the trooper's personal items. When the unit was traveling, the soldier's sleeping bag was tied to the bottom of the pack.

The most obvious difference between the trooper of the Regular Army and the foot soldier of today is the full helmet worn in the SLDF. From the few surviving specimens and from research, engineers have learned that the helmet was a marvel of electronics and strength. The design provided an excellent field of vision for the soldier. The three panes of the visor were made of a secret polarizing, clear polymer that provided excellent protection against bullets and that turned to silver tone the instant it was hit with the light of a laser. Through voice commands to the internal computer, the trooper could switch to several modes of vision. Infrared allowed the soldier to see hidden heat sources, and EE (Electronic Emission) vision showed him the source of manmade electronics. The trooper also had sighting screens that projected onto the visor of his helmet to help him aim.

TECHNICAL AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL (ARMY)

The uniforms worn by technicians, those who maintained and repaired military hardware, and support personnel, those responsible for logistics and bureaucracy, were very similar to those worn by the infantry. Rear-echelon soldiers did not wear a camouflage jacket and wore a simple cloth cap instead of a helmet. Technicians' uniforms were embedded with strands of lead to help protect them from radiation, which is a common hazard near vehicles. Their jackets had a number of hooks for tools.

ENGINEER'S UNIFORM (NAVY)

Engineers aboard warships, DropShips, and JumpShips wore a uniform that could double as a space suit for occasions when the technician had to leave the ship or enter a damaged section. The white suit was made of several layers of insulating fabrics and tubes that carried fluid to keep the engineer warm. Despite the suit's complexity, it was only a few kilograms heavier than other uniforms. The high collar hid the helmet ring, which connected a large helmet that had lights and a camera. On the belt was a portable air supply and hook up points for a larger air supply called a maneuver unit, which gave the wearer more mobility outside the ship.

RANKS

The Star League Defense Forces rank system was designed to advance a soldier steadily until he reached the rank and position best suited to his ability. The system was patterned after that of the Hegemony Armed Forces, with five grades for enlisted personnel, one for warrant officers, and seven for officers.

Enlisted personnel and warrant officers wore a Rank Patch on the left side of the chest and on the cap. Officers wore a series of bars or stars.



112

LIEUTENANT

When a Master Sergeant showed tactical skills on a battlefield and seemed able to inspire the soldiers around him, he was offered a chance to go to Officers Candidate School. Graduates received commissions in the SLDF, beginning their careers as Lieutenants. Sergeants who had that rank as graduates of a military academy received their commissions directly upon distinguishing themselves on the battlefield. Lieutenants most often served as Platoon and Lance Commanders. Some Lieutenants also served as Executive Officers to Company Commanders. A Lieutenant wore a green bar.

CAPTAIN

Captains were usually Company Commanders. In the Navy, Captains usually commanded DropShips. Both were expected to show considerable initiative in combat instead of depending on orders from above. Captains wore two green bars.

MAJOR

Majors were battalion commanders in the Regular Army. Majors were expected to be in the front lines with their troops. This made Majors of the SLDF much more experienced and respected by their juniors than were their counterparts in private and House armies. In the Star League Navy, Majors commanded destroyers or cargo and troop JumpShips. The insignia worn by Majors were two green bars with a round silver pip in the center.

COLONEL (COMMODORE)

Colonels were regiment commanders in the Regular Army. Reaching this rank meant that the officer had spent at least ten years in the military and had exhibited great skill. In the Navy, the equivalent rank of Commodore commanded major warships or jump stations. Colonels and Commodores wore a small star.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL (REAR ADMIRAL)

Lieutenant Generals in the Regular Army commanded brigades and regimental combat teams. Occasionally, an extremely skilled Lieutenant General commanded a division. As a commander of several units, a Lieutenant General needed strategic and administrative skills. The equivalent naval rank of Rear Admiral usually commanded a fleet or shipyard. A Lieutenant General wore a three-dimensional star, and a Rear Admiral wore a single stripe on the jacket cuff.

MAJOR GENERAL (VICE ADMIRAL)

A Major General usually commanded a division or sometimes a corps. Often a Major General was in charge of the defense of a vital world that was in danger of attack. In the Star League Navy, the rank of Vice Admiral was given to an officer who was in charge of the naval presence in one of the military regions. The insignia of Major Generals were two three-dimensional stars. Vice Admirals wore two cuff stripes.

GENERAL (ADMIRAL)

Generals were commanders of armies, army groups, or administrative commands within the SLDF bureaucracy. The commanding officer of the Star League Navy was given the rank of Admiral. Generals wore three three-dimensional stars.

COMMANDING GENERAL (COMMANDING ADMIRAL)

This title went to the overall commander of the SLDF. He needed the First Lord's nomination and the approval of the other Council Lords. The SLDF Commander In Chief wore four three-dimensional stars or four cuff stripes.

RECRUIT

A Recruit entering one of the thousands of boot camps run by the SLDF began with the rank of Recruit and wore a white Rank Patch. Recruits retained this rank after boot camp and on their first posting.

PRIVATE

After surviving their first battle, recruits were promoted to the rank of Private. The Rank Patch for a Private was white, divided into three diagonal sections.

CORPORAL

To reach the rank of Corporal in the SLDF usually required at least a year of experience. As a result, Corporals tended to be far more experienced than their counterparts in other armies. Corporals in infantry units usually led squads. Corporal was the highest rank the average trooper achieved. The Corporal's Rank Patch was like the one worn by Privates except the top and bottom sections of the patch were green instead of white.

SERGEANT

Sergeants made the most important tactical decisions on the battlefield. They faced the battle up close and ugly, and they had to make the instant decisions that controlled the fate of the people they commanded. The rank of Sergeant usually took three years of service in the SLDF to attain. Sergeants were usually platoon leaders in infantry units. MechWarriors fresh from military academies started their careers at this rank. The Sergeant's Rank Patch was green.

MASTER SERGEANT

To reach the rank of Master Sergeant, a trooper usually had to serve four years in the SLDF, part of the time spent learning how to become a better leader. A Master Sergeant usually commanded a company's best platoon. Experienced Master Sergeants sometimes commanded lances in BattleMech companies. Lower ranks sometimes called the Rank Patch of a Master Sergeant the "WWPatch" or the "Which Way Patch" for the way the green design resembled four arrows pointing in different directions.

WARRANT OFFICER

The rank of Warrant Officer was reserved for experts in a technical field, such as computer programming or Mech maintenance. Warrant Officers received extra training in their fields and usually had less combat experience than other soldiers. A Warrant Officer usually commanded an engineering company. Warrant Officers had status and pay comparable to a Lieutenant, but in combat situations they were expected to yield to more combat-experienced Sergeants. Warrant Officers wore a blue bar.



113

MAJOR



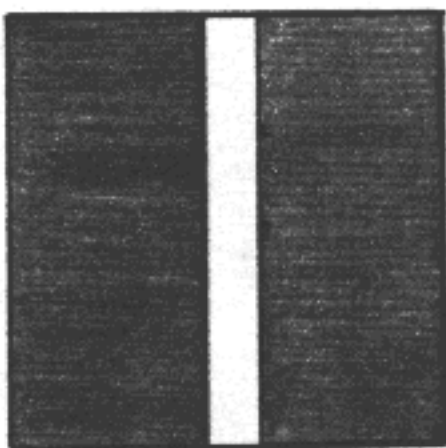
CORPORAL



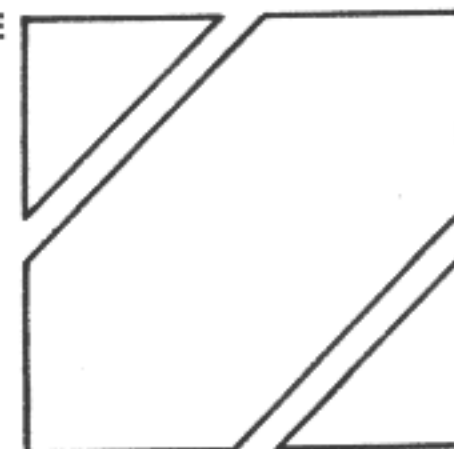
LIEUTENANT



CAPTAIN



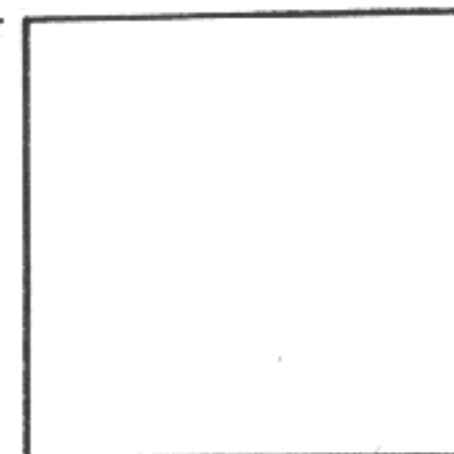
PRIVATE



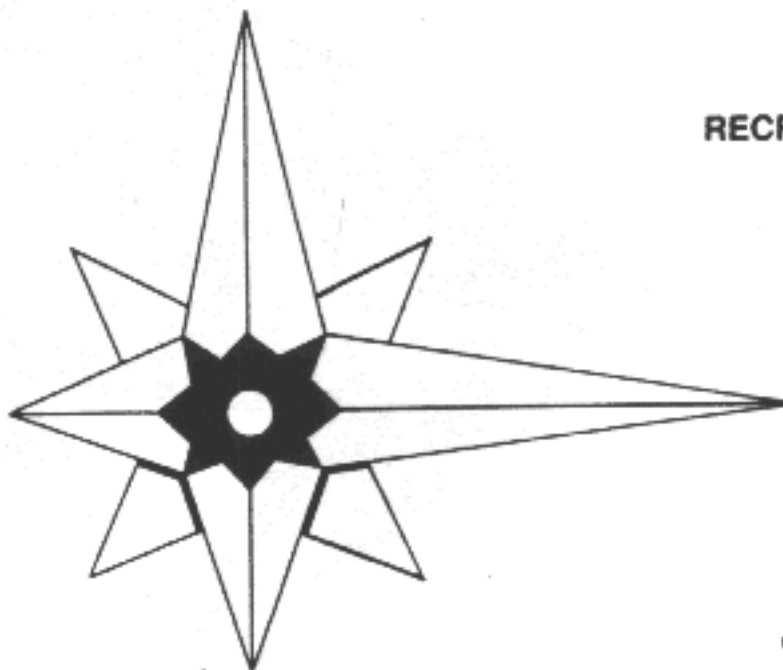
MASTER SERGEANT



RECRUIT



SERGEANT



WARRANT OFFICER



LIEUTENANT GENERAL (REAR ADMIRAL)

COLONEL (COMMODORE)



MAJOR GENERAL (VICE ADMIRAL)



GENERAL (ADMIRAL)



COMMANDING GENERAL (COMMANDING ADMIRAL)

STRUCTURE

The organization of the SLDF was extremely complex. The force was divided into 15 departments, called commands, with separate functions and personnel. Despite the complexity of this set-up, each command took pride in performing its task with a minimum of personnel, often only one-third to one-half what the House militaries needed for considerably smaller armies. Each command relied heavily on computers and constantly updated records to keep track of what remained to be done. Back-up copies of records were kept at SLDF headquarters on Terra, Mars, and other strategic locations.

REPLACEMENT-DEPLOYMENT COMMAND

The job of the Replacement-Deployment Command was to make sure that each unit was at full strength. It was the Rep-Dep Command's duty to transport recruits and new officers from the boot camps and academies to their first postings. This was accomplished in stages, with huge troop transports picking up the assembled soldiers and taking them to a Rep-Dep Center in the appropriate military region. There the soldiers were put on smaller vessels to be taken to their units. It was also the responsibility of the Rep-Dep Command to take the retiring, the wounded, and the dead from the SLDF to their homes.

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S COMMAND

This command had the responsibility of administering the SLDF's code of conduct and justice to its soldiers. Because the Star League forces came from ten different realms, the JAG Command had an extremely sensitive task. Soldiers accused of serious crimes had the right to counsel.

The JAG Command also ruled over newly captured lands under martial law and over worlds whose populations were continually rebellious. It was the JAG Command and its many military governors who administered the Periphery worlds after the Reunification War until the Star League government assigned civilian administrators.

QUARTERMASTER COMMAND

The Quartermaster Command had the seemingly impossible chore of meeting the needs of 100 million soldiers. The shipping of supplies was the Quartermaster Command's primary responsibility. The Quartermaster Command was also responsible for policing military contractors to ensure that they met SLDF contracts, that the quality was high, and that companies were not sharing military secrets with foreign realms.

TRANSPORT COMMAND

The Transport Command was responsible for seeing that soldiers and supplies reached their destinations. To use its incredible fleet of transports and troop carriers as efficiently as possible and to deliver to cargoes as quickly as possible, the Transport Command drew up huge, intricate timetables of arrivals and departures. These timetables were updated constantly. Computers linked together by HyperPulse Generators regulated, organized, and traced the ships coming and going from each planet throughout the Star League.



129

INTELLIGENCE COMMAND

The Intelligence Command was the information-gathering arm of the SLDF. Realizing that anything they overlooked or thought too uninteresting could be fatal for someone, Intelligence Command personnel collected anything, no matter how trivial, from the strengths of House troops to intimate details about a terrorist leader's personal habits. These bits of data were organized and sent to the appropriate Intelligence Section. Most of the information was collected by agents, by equipment in SLDF bases, and by remote listening posts. Many of these listening posts were automated devices on asteroids or moons. To retrieve this information, the Intelligence Command used special JumpShips that looked like common freighters. The command also ran two academies on Terra, the Riley Intelligence College and the Samsovitich College of Intelligence Gathering.

SPECIAL FORCES COMMAND

The Special Forces Command was responsible for training and outfitting elite units of soldiers. The Special Armed Services unit, known as the Blackhearts, was trained in counterespionage and for campaigns against terrorists. Another Special Forces unit was the All-Weather Combat Corps, which was composed of 'Mech battalions trained for unusual battlefield conditions, such as vacuum combat or nonstandard gravity. These units were known as the Foul Weather Fiends. The Flying Lions, officially known as the Special Forces Aero Wing, was an elite unit of AeroSpace Fighters that performed particularly difficult missions. This unit also had a precision flying team for public demonstrations.

RESERVE COMMAND

The Reserve Command controlled the reservists and their supplies, providing vital pools of strength for an emergency. Retirees from the SLDF played an important part in reserve units. Soldiers often received promotions for joining the reserves upon mustering out of the regular service. The equipment kept on soldiers' homeworlds was usually old, but it was kept in fine condition. The Reserve Command also supervised the planetary garrison units on Hegemony worlds.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMAND

The Communications Command was, in many ways, the forerunner of ComStar. Its most important function was to operate the SLDF's countless portable HPG stations, connecting the many scattered units in a web of communications. The portable HPG was developed just a few years before the Star League was formed, and it was one of the Hegemony's most closely guarded technological secrets. It could be towed by a large truck and fit comfortably in the hold of even the smallest DropShip.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMAND

The Administrative Command was the upper echelon of the SLDF bureaucracy. Only the Bureau of Star League Affairs was larger. The Administrative Command collected and sorted the records of the other commands. Despite its size, the command was remarkably efficient and never made the major blunders that seem to characterize the large bureaucracies of today. The Administrative Command also ran the SLDF's many military academies and boot camps.



130

MEDICAL COMMAND

The Medical Command was responsible for the care of the soldiers of the SLDF. It had hospital JumpShips, DropShips, and ground vehicles. It also had many orbiting hospitals. The medical complexes on the more populated worlds. The technology of the Medical Command was the most advanced in the Inner Sphere.

HIGH COMMAND

The High Command of the Star League Defense consisted of the commanding officers of the service commands and the commanders of the 20 military districts and regions. Presiding over the High Command was the Commanding General, Commander of the SLDF.

The main headquarters of the SLDF and the meeting place of the High Command was The Citadel. Located just outside the Court of the Star League, The Citadel was a 30-story black pillar next to a spaceport. On the tower were windows and observation decks for traffic controllers. Around the base were entrances for AeroSpace Fighters and 'Mechs. Buried under the imposing tower, which was so strong that it once withstood the impact of a fighter with little damage, was the rest of the SLDF's headquarters.

When in the field, the High Command met on a battlecruiser that had some of its weapons removed for communications equipment. The Commanding General and his staff were not expected to be on the front line, but many Star League Commanders exposed themselves to danger, some repeatedly.

Because the command style of the leaders of the SLDF varied considerably, the makeup of the High Command varied also. Some commanders preferred to have plenty of advisers, and others trusted just one or two close friends.

ROYAL COMMAND

Upon the creation of the Star League, the High Command of the Hegemony Armed Forces became the Royal Command of the SLDF. Because the HAF units entered the SLDF intact, becoming the military's only units composed of soldiers from just one realm, the Royal Command was assigned to handle any special problems that might arise in the Royal units. This command also had a second, and less well-known, mission. It operated as a shadow High Command, allowing the First Lord on several occasions to issue private orders to Royal units. An example of this occurred in 2699 when Jonathan Cameron used the Royal Command to order Hegemony units to seize the 20 Gal-Tech Weapons factories because they were selling Hegemony military secrets to the other member states.

MEMBER-STATE LIAISON COMMAND

This command was responsible for maintaining good relations between the Regular Army and the member states. Liaison officers were important on SLDF bases and castles because they served as buffers between the regiment and the civilians.

A more important function of the Liaison Command was to ensure that the soldiers considered themselves citizens and guardians of the Star League, not as Kuritans in the SLDF or as Lyrans in the SLDF. The Cameron family had realized from the beginning that the SLDF could function only if its soldiers put their origins and House loyalties aside. During SLDF's formative years, the First Lord depended on Liaison Officers in every unit to ease tensions between factions. Officers who exhibited the necessary skills received extra training to recognize and understand the differences between soldiers from various realms and be able to give them a sense of common spirit. The relatively smooth and peaceful integration of Star League forces was testimony to the Liaison Command's capabilities.

REGULAR ARMY COMMAND

The Regular Army Command controlled the Star League ground forces. The command was divided into eight sub-commands, with each responsible for its branch's weapons and equipment, among other duties. The BattleMech Sub-Command, though representing a fighting arm vital to the SLDF, was not as all-important as 'Mechs are today. The Armored Sub-Command took care of combat vehicles and the soldiers who operated them. The Trooper Sub-Command represented the interests of infantrymen. The Fighter Sub-Command took care of the Regular Army's AeroSpace Fighters and their crews. The Artillery Sub-Command controlled the many artillery units in the SLDF. The Engineering Sub-Command saw to it that the SLDF's magician engineers had the material and equipment they needed. The Resupply Sub-Command was responsible for storing supplies from the Quartermaster Command and distributing them to the front-line troops. The Planning and Strategy Sub-Command was the think-tank of the Regular Army. These officers' projections, aided by advanced computers, were highly accurate in predicting enemy actions.

NAVAL COMMAND

The Star League Naval Command controlled and supplied the thousands of ships used by the military. It was divided into six sub-commands: the Warship Sub-Command, the DropShip Sub-Command, the Naval AeroSpace Sub-Command, the Transport Sub-Command, the Marine Corps Sub-Command, and the Planning and Strategy Sub-Command.

WEAPONS INDUSTRIES

The Terran Hegemony was by far the largest manufacturer of weapons in the Star League. It had more than 300 manufacturers of major systems and hundreds of subsidiaries that made parts and lesser weapons. Each company, though technically independent, was monitored by the SLDF's Quartermaster Command and the BSLA's Department of Economic Relations, either of which had the authority to seize control of the firm if necessary.

The Hegemony Research and Development centers and the Hegemony Military Sciences labs, where scientists and engineers from different companies met and traded information, were the sources of most BattleMech designs, though some companies claimed to have developed particular weapon systems. The Hegemony government owned the rights to all of the major weapon designs and had the right to contract with more than one company to manufacture a particular weapon. This gave the government great flexibility to ensure that the HAF, and then the SLDF, had all the weapons it needed.

TYPES OF FACTORIES

BattleMech factories, though varying in location and size, fell into two main types: those built before 2455, when the Hegemony was the only domain to have BattleMechs, and those built later. Factories built before 2455 looked much like any other factory, out in the open with, at most, a fortified perimeter wall. The major security concern was preventing spies from stealing secrets. After Lyran commandos stole BattleMech plans from a factory on Hesperus II, however, there was no longer any reason to worry that spies might steal secrets. Instead, companies knew that their 'Mech factories would become targets in any war, and so they built them to withstand an attack. BattleMech factories built after 2455 were constructed inside mountains, under the ground, and even under the seas. They also had Hegemony Armed Forces bases nearby.

The Defiance facility on Hesperus II, with its five assembly lines, was an average BattleMech factory of the Star League era. Factories with less than five assembly lines were usually owned by small companies or were designed for making prototypes and experimenting with variants of existing models.

Most factories that made AeroSpace Fighters were built like BattleMech factories on a planet's surface, but many companies manufactured their fighters in shipyards floating around a planet or at a jump point. An HAF fighter base was usually built over an underground AeroSpace Fighter factory to protect it and so that its pilots could test the factory's fighters.

Factories that produced armored vehicles, such as tanks, hovercraft, and self-propelled artillery pieces, were either combined with BattleMech factories or built in caverns of earth and rock.

Building warships required factories in orbit, either around a planet rich with the required resources or orbiting a star's jump point, using the abundant energy to power the huge forges required for warships. Exposed as they were, these factories were usually protected by plenty of AeroSpace Fighters and warships from the SLDF navy.

During the Star League era, Hegemony weapon manufacturers made deals with the governments of foreign realms. Under these agreements, many weapon companies built factories in foreign realms. The Hegemony's scrutiny of these factories was fierce. Royal forces were quick to seize any facility that violated strict provisions against disclosing military secrets.



131

MANUFACTURERS

What follows is a partial list of major manufacturers and the location of their headquarters. Most companies had many factories, but the largest was usually located near the company's headquarters.

Battlemechs

Bergan Industries—New Earth
Briden BattleMechs Unlimited—Errai
Cosara Weaponries—Northwind
Diplan 'Mechyards of Ozawa—Ozawa
Earthwerks—Terra
Ford Military Limited—Terra
General Mechanics—Mars
Kong Interstellar Corporation—Connaught
Maltex Corporation—Errai
Mitchell Vehicles—Graham IV
Newhart Industries—New Earth
Orguss Industries—Marcus
Ostmann Industries—Terra
StarCorp Industries—Fletcher

AeroSpace Fighters

AeroFighter Unlimited—Oliver
Allied AeroSpace Inc.—Pollux
Boeing Interstellar—Terra
Bowie Industries—Wasat
Caletra Fighters—Fletcher
Harvard Company, Inc.—Epsilon Eridani
Iona Light Shipyards—Capella
Mitchell Vehicles—Graham IV
Newhart Industries—New Earth
Wanker Aerospace—Mars

Warships

Blue Nose Clipperships—Mars
Boeing Interstellar—Terra
Dekirk Aerospace—Graham IV
Delhi Warships—Capella
Di Tron Heavy Industries—Terra
Krester's Ship Construction—Terra
Mitchell Vehicles—Graham IV
Nicholas Spacecraft—New Earth
Thompson's Shipyards—Keid

Armor

Aldis Industries—Terra
Grumman Industries—New Earth
Jolassa Armored Vehicles—Tybalt
Killosh Industries—Bharat
Leopard Armor of Terra—Terra
Mitchell Vehicles—Graham IV
Numall Armored Weapons—New Earth
Paulina Weapons—Tigress
Ulston Armor—New Earth
Yelm Weapons—Fletcher

BASES AND DEPOTS

Well-equipped bases are essential to any military. Bases provide a place to store supplies, a place to rest and to call home, and a defensive position where a unit can hold off attackers until help arrives.

The Star League had thousands of military bases throughout the Inner Sphere and the Periphery. Each inhabited planet had at least one SLDF base or depot. The Border Guards Agreement, signed by the Council Lords in 2572, gave the Star League Defense Forces the right to purchase land on any world. Though the presence of foreign soldiers irked some of the Council Lords, the Reunification War and the rebels' near success convinced everyone to give the SLDF unrestricted range.

The Generals' highest priority in locating bases was to establish circles of defense around Terra. Three defensive rings were built. The innermost, sometimes called the Home Circle, was the heavily fortified border of the Terran Hegemony. Bases in the second ring were on worlds about 250 light years from Terra. The third ring was established on the borders between the Inner Sphere and the Periphery, 500 light years from Terra. These rings were connected by five lines of forts and castles built on borders between member states. Between the rings were smaller bases. Most of the major bases built on the rings of defense were also the headquarters of divisions or the home ports of major fleets.

In the Periphery, bases were larger and had stronger defenses. They were also evenly distributed throughout the four realms, each within a short journey of the next.

The most common types of bases are described below.

FORTS

These were the typical SLDF bases. Most were built to accommodate a single regiment. Forts had facilities to house and care for the unit's soldiers and families. Forts also had extensive maintenance and communications facilities. People of the host planet provided food and water on a contractual basis. If the fort was the posting of an independent regiment on a potentially hostile planet, it was self-sufficient. Each fort had its own AeroSpaceport for fighters and DropShips. The extent of security of a fort depended on the nature of the world where it was built. If the world had a troubled history, the fort was given extensive protection, such as walls and guard towers.

CASTLES

Castles were built on worlds that were either extremely important or that had rebellious populations. Often built into the sides of mountains or underground beneath meters of concrete, castles were stockpiled with weapons and honeycombed with tunnels for the soldiers to reach ambush points.

CASTLES BRIAN

The most famous and the most awesome type of castle was the Castle Brian. The first Castles Brian were built on Hegemony border worlds to deter neighboring realms. Each could hold up to two brigades in their endless series of tunnels and BattleMech caverns.

OUTPOST CASTLES

The Star League built Outpost Castles after the Reunification Wars to suppress further rebellions. The Outpost Castles were very much like Castles Brian, a fact that led to the deaths of many troopers during the Amaris Coup because it gave his forces a thorough understanding of Castles Brian and how to defeat them.



132

PORT CASTLES

Port Castles were complex creations carved out of stone. Each had a small spaceport built into a highly protected position so that the regiments in the castle could be relieved during a fight. Few Port Castles were built because the spaceports, no matter how well-defended, were vulnerable to attacks from the ground and the air.

MINI-CASTLES

Smaller versions of castles, Mini-Castles held only one regiment and had fewer exits and entrances. Mini-Castles were sometimes built around a Castle Brian to serve as its first line of defense.

SUPPLY DEPOTS

There were many different types of supply depots. On worlds considered safe, supply depots were little more than a collection of warehouses guarded by an infantry unit. On hostile worlds, however, they were either located inside a fort or castle or hidden for emergency use.

NAVAL BASES

The Star League Navy had more than 15,000 warships, JumpShips, and DropShips. To build and service them required more than 500 orbiting naval bases, each a huge collection of shipyards, moorings, and housing for sailors. An AeroSpace Wing and two destroyers were assigned to defend each naval base. When the tensions reached a high level during the final decades of the Star League, a cruiser was added to the ships protecting each base.

SECRET BASES

Many different types of SLDF sites were called secret bases. Most were simple information-gathering stations and employed a small group of Regular Army operatives from the Intelligence Command in a few concealed buildings. Larger research stations were also considered secret bases. Secret depots were built outside the Terran Hegemony to hide supplies of advanced weapons meant for Royal units only.

To make sure that secret bases went undetected, army engineers performed many incredible feats, regularly diverting rivers, draining lakes, building land in the middle of oceans, and leveling mountains. Their real expertise was hiding what they built. They could make buildings look like a clump of rocks or hide a spaceport beneath a lake. Even when doing "courtesy" jobs for member states, SLDF engineers showed their talent for camouflage. The flood-control project on the Roja River on Tharkad, where the engineers sculpted the land and created tree-covered dams that appeared to be mountainsides, was one of many examples of their work.

Because of the engineers' skills, there may be hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of secret SLDF bases that have yet to be discovered. Almost every year, one is found somewhere in the Inner Sphere. Most of these had been stripped by General Kerensky's departing soldiers, but occasionally someone finds an installation that was not cleaned out. The information from these secret bases can be very important, and the potential reward prompts many to continue the search, despite the difficulty.

UNIT COMPOSITION

ARMY GROUPS

The Star League was divided into ten military regions, each corresponding to the borders of a member state or territory. Each of the five military regions that corresponded to the member states was further divided into three districts. The divisions and regiments stationed in each of the five House military regions and the ships and support units that attended them were organized into an army group. Each Army Group bore the name of the ruling family of its member state: Army Group Marik, Army Group Steiner, and so on. As well as being the supreme authority in a military region, the general in command of an Army Group also had to represent the SLDF in the politics of the member state.

ARMIES

There were 20 armies in the Star League Defense Forces. All of the divisions, regiments, and warships in the Terran Military Region were organized into an army. There was also an army for each of the Territorial States. The three districts of each House military region each had an army. A typical army had three or four corps under the overall command of a general or sometimes an admiral. These armies were born in the great expansion of the SLDF, taking over for the corps in charge of each district during the time of the Reunification War.

CORPS

A corps was a group of divisions, regiments, and warships that fought and trained together. A corps had one to three BattleMech divisions, two to seven infantry divisions, and usually a number of independent regiments. Each corps also had a contingent of warships and transports. Most corps were assigned to protect 30 inhabited worlds and the surrounding space, though some were responsible for more than 100 worlds.

DIVISIONS

The division was the heart of the Regular Army. Each division was responsible for a sphere of star systems one jump in radius. Occasionally, a division was responsible for protecting only one extremely important planet. A division in the Regular Army consisted of three brigades of three regiments each, plus reserves, a Ground Aero Wing with 54 fighters, and support units. Some divisions had fewer than three brigades, and some had four or more.

BattleMech Division

The offensive punch of the Regular Army was the BattleMech division. Each division had two brigades of BattleMech regiments and a brigade of Mechanized Infantry regiments.

Mechanized Infantry Division

The Mechanized Infantry division provided most of the mass of the Regular Army. Each had two brigades of Mechanized Infantry and one brigade of 'Mech regiments. A BattleMech division was expected to create holes in enemy lines, and Mechanized Infantry divisions were expected to exploit them. They also bore the brunt of defensive stands.

Infantry Division

Slow, but not as dependent on vehicles, the Infantry division was a throwback to the days of foot patrols and foxholes. Infantry divisions were used in terrain that barred vehicles, such as heavy forests, mountains, and cities. Each Infantry division contained two brigades of Grunt Infantry and one brigade of light 'Mech regiments.



133

Jump Infantry Division

Jump Infantry divisions were used for missions that required surprise and swiftness. These divisions had two brigades of Jump Troops and one brigade of 'Mechs. The division also had two Ground Aero Wings to carry and protect the Jump Troops.

REGIMENTS

The Regular Army had seven different types of BattleMech regiments. Unlike today's BattleMech units, companies and even battalions consisted of a single 'Mech type. Though this might have made a unit vulnerable to an attack that took advantage of a weakness in that particular type of 'Mech, it vastly simplified maintenance and repairs. The SLDF occasionally violated this policy and made special "Multi-'Mech" or "Buddy" companies of MechWarriors who had been friends in the academy but qualified in different 'Mech designs. These units were assigned to the independent regiments.

Line Regiments

These regiments appeared in BattleMech brigades. Their simple organization of lance-company-battalion-regiment is similar to the way 'Mech regiments are organized today, except that most line regiments did not have their own AeroSpace Fighters, instead getting air support from the division's Ground Aero Wing or from Fleet Aero Wings from orbiting warships. Most line regiments' coats-of-arms incorporate a sword into their design.

Heavy Assault: The knock-out punch of most 'Mech brigades, these regiments had 'Mechs of heavy-to-assault weight and had a fourth company of attached artillery.

Battle: The core of most 'Mech brigades, these units contained medium to heavy BattleMechs.

Striker: These regiments were used for reconnaissance and breakthrough attacks. They used light to medium BattleMechs and had at least one Recon company made up of Land-Air BattleMechs. Striker regiments often had pairs of AeroSpace Fighters attached to them.

Independent BattleMech Regiments

These regiments were designed to operate without support from a division. They were used against enemies too small to justify the use of a division but too large to leave to infantry regiments. Independent regiments often fought alongside Infantry Divisions. In keeping with their independent nature, these 'Mech regiments had companies of non-'Mech weapon systems, such as Jump Troops, hovercraft, tanks, and fighters. To describe the three types of independent 'Mech regiments, the SLDF used the names of ancient types of horse cavalry. In keeping with this sense of the cavalry, the independent regiments often incorporated a horse into their coats-of-arms.

Dragoon: Against well-equipped enemies, the Regular Army sent a Dragoon regiment, normally composed of heavy to assault BattleMechs, tanks, and hovercraft.

Hussar: Hussar regiments were the most common independent regiments in the SLDF. They used medium to heavy 'Mechs, tanks, and hovercraft.

Light Horse: The Light Horse regiments were extremely mobile, made up of light to medium vehicles. There was also a special emphasis on reconnaissance in Light Horse units. Each Light Horse regiment had at least two Recon companies of information-gathering 'Mechs, like *Ostscouts*, and information-gathering vehicles as well as regular 'Mechs. The Star League often dropped a Light Horse unit onto a world to discover the size of enemy forces. Light Horse regiments were also grouped together to act as quick-response units called Regimental Combat Teams.

Cavalry, Armored, Aerospace, And Naval Regiments

The CAAN regiments were Marine Corps units designed for use on water-rich worlds. They consisted of BattleMechs, tanks, hovercraft, fighters, and water warships.



134

THE MARTIAL OLYMPIAD

The art of war is simple enough. Find out where your enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike at him as hard as you can and as often as you can, and keep moving on.

—General Ulysses Simpson Grant

AEROSPACE FIGHTERS

The Star League Defense Forces grouped AeroSpace Fighters into four kinds of units: Ground Aero Wing, Fleet Aero Wing, Independent Aero Wing, and fighters attached to other units. Each had a specific set of responsibilities and duties.

Ground Aero Wings were assigned to divisions. They maintained air superiority above the division and provided fire support for ground forces. There were 54 AeroSpace Fighters in a GAW, arranged into nine squadrons. Each squadron had just one fighter type. Each GAW also had 54 combat aircraft and 54 transport aircraft, also in squadrons of six. Attached to the Aero Wing was a detachment of combat engineers to build runways and erect hangars and other buildings.

Fleet Aero Wings were formed when the Star League Navy organized warships into a task force. AeroSpace Fighters assigned to DropShips and warships were combined under the command of the senior fighter pilot. The FAW was responsible for protecting the fleet's lightly armed ships, such as transports and troop ships. In a planetary assault, the FAW accompanied the DropShips to clear the air above the landing zone until a GAW or fighters attached to the unit could take over.

Independent Aero Wings were unattached GAWs assigned wherever a division needed extra support. A battalion of mechanized infantry was attached to each IAW.

Besides those in Aero Wings, other AeroSpace Fighters were attached to independent BattleMech or Armored regiments. A pair of fighters was usually assigned to each company of the regiment, though the fighters shared an airfield.

OTHER UNITS

Though Armored and Infantry regiments were not as important to the SLDF as BattleMech regiments, administrative officers still paid careful attention to their composition. Armored units were organized in much the same way as line BattleMech regiments. There were Assault, Heavy, Medium, and Light Tank regiments, and each had just one type of tank. There were also Hovercraft and Wheeled Armor regiments. Most tank regiments were assigned to divisions as anti-'Mech regiments or were given garrison duty.

There were four types of Infantry regiments: Mechanized, Grunt, Jump, and Marine. Each regiment was organized as infantry regiments are today, with three battalions of three companies each. Companies were broken up into three platoons.

Artillery was usually organized into Artillery regiments attached to divisions. There was occasionally an artillery battalion attached to an individual 'Mech or Armored regiment. There were also AirMobile Artillery Batteries with their own special air transportation.

Keeping the Star League Defense Forces in fighting shape during peacetime was a challenge. The experience of other peacetime militaries taught the Generals of the SLDF that men and women, no matter how well equipped and trained, could not be called soldiers until they faced and overcame their fears on the battlefield.

To test the soldiers of the SLDF without disturbing the peace or losing lives, General Joseph Cameron drew up an extensive series of wargames that culminated in the Martial Olympiads.

What General Cameron envisioned was 50 "skirmishing worlds," arenas throughout the Star League to test troops' fighting skills. These worlds were barren, with few inhabitants and no native lifeforms. There, the divisions and regiments of a corps engaged in wargames while the warships attached to the corps had their own competition above.

The best units in an army were gathered up into a temporary "hero corps" and pitted against the hero corps of a neighboring army in another round of competitions. Winners of these regional contests then went to Mars for the Martial Olympiad. After 2704, the final competition was held on Outreach.

There were more than 100 "events" in the Olympiad. Divisions and regiments were pitted against each other on a variety of battlefields. Some events had a division defend or attack Sparta, a city complete with roads and tall buildings but no people. Other events tested a unit's ability to hold off an attack by a force two or three times its size.

Above Mars, AeroSpace Fighters and DropShips, when not defending or attacking ground units, were competing among themselves. Throughout the Sol system, fleets of elite warships played out their own contests.

The SLDF took great precautions to avoid deaths and injuries. Energy weapons were set on low power. Autocannons shot rounds one-tenth normal strength, and missiles were fired with soft warheads that dented armor but did not penetrate it. Infantrymen wore body armor studded with sensors that reacted to special weapons that shot low-power lasers instead of bullets.

Despite these precautions, the wargames were still dangerous. Judges and an incredibly sophisticated computer system called the ComRef watched over the battlefield. The computer monitored every participant through special hookups to vehicle computers and infantrymen communications systems, as well as an array of optical, acoustic, and magnetic sensors throughout the battlefield. Special paints covered BattleMechs, fighters, DropShips, and warships. When hit by an energy weapon, the paint chipped away to reveal a layer of highly reflective silver coating. When sensors picked up the telltale reflections of silver, the ComRef immediately cut off the attacker's energy weapons to prevent real damage. The computer also disabled the target vehicle according to how it would have been damaged had the attacker's weapons been at full strength. The computer system, aided by the human judges, also regulated combat between vehicles and infantrymen, who were vulnerable to vehicle-weapons even at low strength. A separate computer, the NavRef, controlled air and space combat.

Despite the precautions, injuries and deaths occurred, though their numbers were small compared to the millions participating in the contests. For the soldiers, the games were rigorous and frightening, which was the whole point of the exercise. Soldiers who later saw real combat often credited their lives to the realistic nature of the games.

A variety of medals and ribbons went to the soldiers and units who won events in the Martial Olympiad. The most coveted was the Shandra Noruff Medal and Ribbon, which went to the best overall performers in the games.

These wargames, held every four years, were expensive. Though the games were funded by the Star League treasury, the Council Lords were especially critical of the Olympiads. The House leaders were no doubt disconcerted by the sight of millions



135

of soldiers, all extremely loyal to the Star League, maneuvering about in their realms. Furthermore, units from House militaries were excluded from the Olympiads until 2676. Even after that, the House troops were consistently eliminated in the early round.

Despite the Council Lords' objections, the wargames were extremely popular media events. The media had access to much of the data ComRef and NavRef were receiving from their sensors. Taped contests between military units became like sporting events to the people of the Star League, with decorated officers performing color commentary and fans of a particular division or regiment flocking to see them depart for the next round of contests.

These competitions continued to be popular for a century, until General Kerensky halted them so the SLDF could focus on the real war.

MARTIAL OLYMPIAD CHAMPIONS 2640-2736

Martial Olympiad

Best Division
1st, Mars, 2640
2nd, Mars, 2644
3rd, Mars, 2648
4th, Mars, 2652
5th, Mars, 2656
6th, Mars, 2660
7th, Mars, 2664
8th, Mars, 2668
9th, Mars, 2672
10th, Mars, 2676
11th, Mars, 2680
12th, Mars, 2684
13th, Mars, 2688
14th, Mars, 2692
15th, Mars, 2696
16th, Mars, 2700
17th, Outreach, 2704
18th, Outreach, 2708
19th, Outreach, 2712
20th, Outreach, 2716
21st, Outreach, 2720
22nd, Outreach, 2724
23rd, Outreach, 2728
24th, Outreach, 2732
25th, Outreach, 2736

316th Royal BattleMech Division (Rio Grande Division)
225th BattleMech Division (Battle of Moscow Division)
83rd BattleMech Division (Balan Division)
316th Royal BattleMech Division (Rio Grande Division)
50th Royal Infantry Division (Flame Keepers of Greece)
225th BattleMech Division (Battle of Moscow Division)
13th Royal Infantry Division (Superstition Division)
181st Royal Mechanized Infantry Division (King's Own Scots Rifles)
316th Royal BattleMech Division (Rio Grande Division)
318th BattleMech Division (Swamp Fox Division)
262nd BattleMech Division (Chief Joseph Division)
13th Royal Infantry Division (Superstition Division)
262nd BattleMech Division (Chief Joseph Division)
181st Royal Mechanized Infantry Division (King's Own Scots Rifles)
318th BattleMech Division (Swamp Fox Division)
225th BattleMech Division (Battle of Moscow Division)
349th Royal BattleMech Division (King Henry Division)
50th Royal Infantry Division (Flame Keepers of Greece)
318th BattleMech Division (Swamp Fox Division)
161st Mechanized Infantry Division
81st BattleMech Division (Devils of Devil's Rock)
349th Royal BattleMech Division (King Henry Division)
81st BattleMech Division (Devils of Devil's Rock)
161st Mechanized Infantry Division
179th BattleMech Division (New Home Division)

Best Regiment

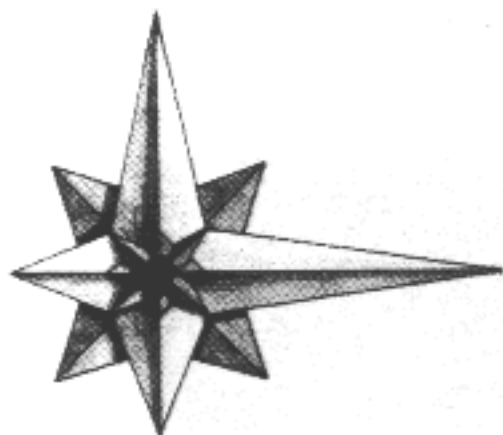
90th Dragoon Regiment
228th Striker Regiment
90th Dragoon Regiment
302nd Hussar Regiment
228th Striker Regiment
309th Heavy Assault Regiment
13th Royal French Demi-Brigade
512th Striker Regiment
90th Dragoon Regiment
55th Royal Light Horse Regiment
302nd Hussar Regiment
55th Royal Light Horse Regiment
228th Striker Regiment
13th Royal French Demi-Brigade
29th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment
29th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment
51st Hussar Regiment
299th Heavy Assault Regiment
305th Battle Regiment
902nd Royal Hussar Regiment
231st Light Horse Regiment
302nd Hussar Regiment
51st Hussar Regiment
309th Heavy Assault Regiment
320th Dragoon Regiment

Best Warship

SLS Ark Royal
SLS Michigan
SLS Israel
SLS Ukraine
SLS Richelieu
SLS Hiryu
SLS Yorktown
SLS Iona
SLS Cyclone
SLS Victory
SLS Enterprise
SLS Whitewind
SLS Bishop's Regret
SLS Golden Hind
SLS McKenna
SLS McKenna
SLS Nimitz
SLS Bismarck
SLS Ymir
SLS Hindenburg
SLS Kiev
SLS Hindenburg
SLS New Jersey
SLS Nelson
SLS White Cloud

MEDALS AND DECORATIONS

The Star League used many medals and awards to honor its leading soldiers and citizens. The Cameron family was always ready to reward people who did their best for the Star League. The Camerons felt these honors encouraged others to work for the League. Many of the honors included money, land, or a promotion. Receiving a Star League medal also usually brought similar recognition from the recipient's native realm. Below are some of the major medals and orders of the Star League government.



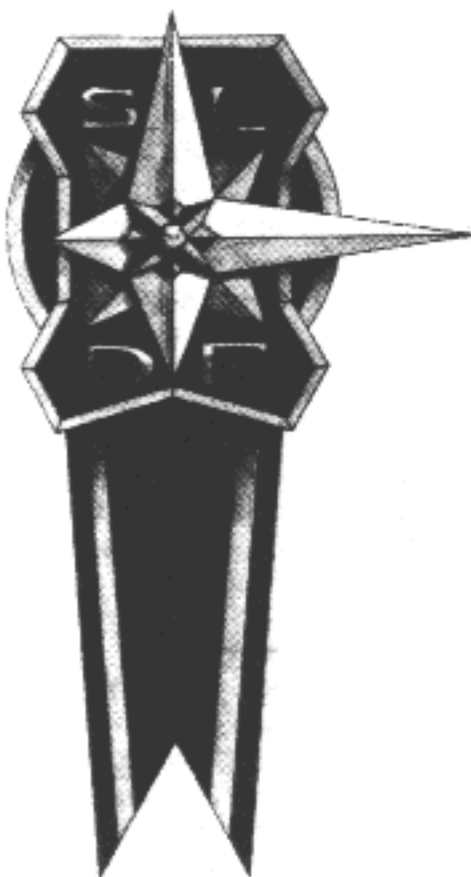
STAR LEAGUE MEDAL OF HONOR

The Medal of Honor was the highest single award that could be given to a citizen of the Star League. In the military, the recipient was usually a soldier who exhibited extreme courage upholding the honor of the SLDF in the face of overwhelming odds. For civilians, the medal was given to

people whose individual action either raised the standard of living or markedly improved relations between member states. The medal was presented by the First Lord himself in an impressive ceremony held at the Court of the Star League. A substantial endowment accompanied the medal, as well as the honorary title, "Keeper of the Star League's Honor." Those who received the Medal of Honor almost always were later named to the Order of the Sword or to the Order of the Dove. The medal is the official emblem of the Star League in precious metals and jewels, hung on a blue, green, and white ribbon and worn around the neck.

MEDAL OF VALOR

The Medal of Valor was a military decoration for conspicuous gallantry and professionalism in the face of enemy forces. The Commander of the SLDF made the presentation. The medal, the SLDF symbol in precious metals worn on a silver and black ribbon, carried with it an automatic advancement in rank, except for ranks above colonel. It also carried a substantial cash bonus and the expectation that the recipient would be inducted into the Order of the Sword upon retirement.



HEGEMONY MEDAL

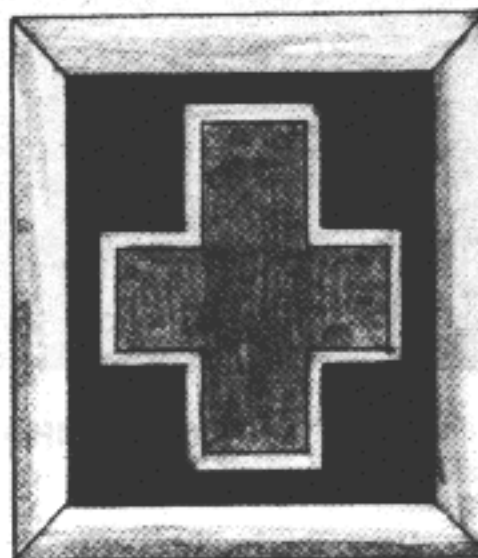
The Hegemony Medal was given to soldiers from the Terran Hegemony whose actions served as an example of what a soldier from the Star League should be. Soldiers received the medal for their nonmilitary conduct, particularly in relations with people from foreign member states.

SHANDRA NORUFF RIBBON

The Shandra Noruff Ribbon, named for the SLDF's first commander, was awarded to the winners of the Martial Olympiad, the huge competition between regiments and divisions from the SLDF and the House militaries that was held every four years. The ribbon was a wide gold and green streamer adorned with an image of a charging lion, the Noruff family symbol. The year was affixed in gold. The ribbon was highly prized by regiments, divisions, and the crews of warships. Individual winners, such as the best MechWarrior or AeroSpace pilot, were allowed to paint the Noruff lion on their vehicles.

DEKIRK MEDAL

This was given to diplomats and politicians whose work substantially improved the moral stature of the government.



STAR LEAGUE RED CROSS

This was given annually to the best doctor or group of doctors and nurses whose actions saved lives.

THE MCKENNA WHEEL

This was awarded yearly to crews of warships who were chosen as the best trained and most efficient in the Star League Navy.



GEERSON FLYING CROSS

The best fighter pilot in the SLDF received this annual award, which is named for Lieutenant Naomi Geerson, the Hegemony's first AeroSpace ace.

ORDER OF THE STAR

The Order of the Star was the highest lifetime honor the Star League bestowed upon its citizens. To become one of the 100 Knights of the Star meant that the citizen's life had been filled with many instances of advancing the Star League. The Order of the Star included civilians and soldiers. Knights received money, land, and the honor of giving their opinions to the First Lord, the leader of the Order of the Star.



137

ORDER OF THE SWORD

The Order of the Sword honored soldiers whose careers had shown repeated bravery and adherence to the tenets of the Star League Defense Forces. Recipients carried the title Knights of the Sword and wore a large medallion on a sash. The commander of the SLDF was the order's leader.

ORDER OF THE DOVE

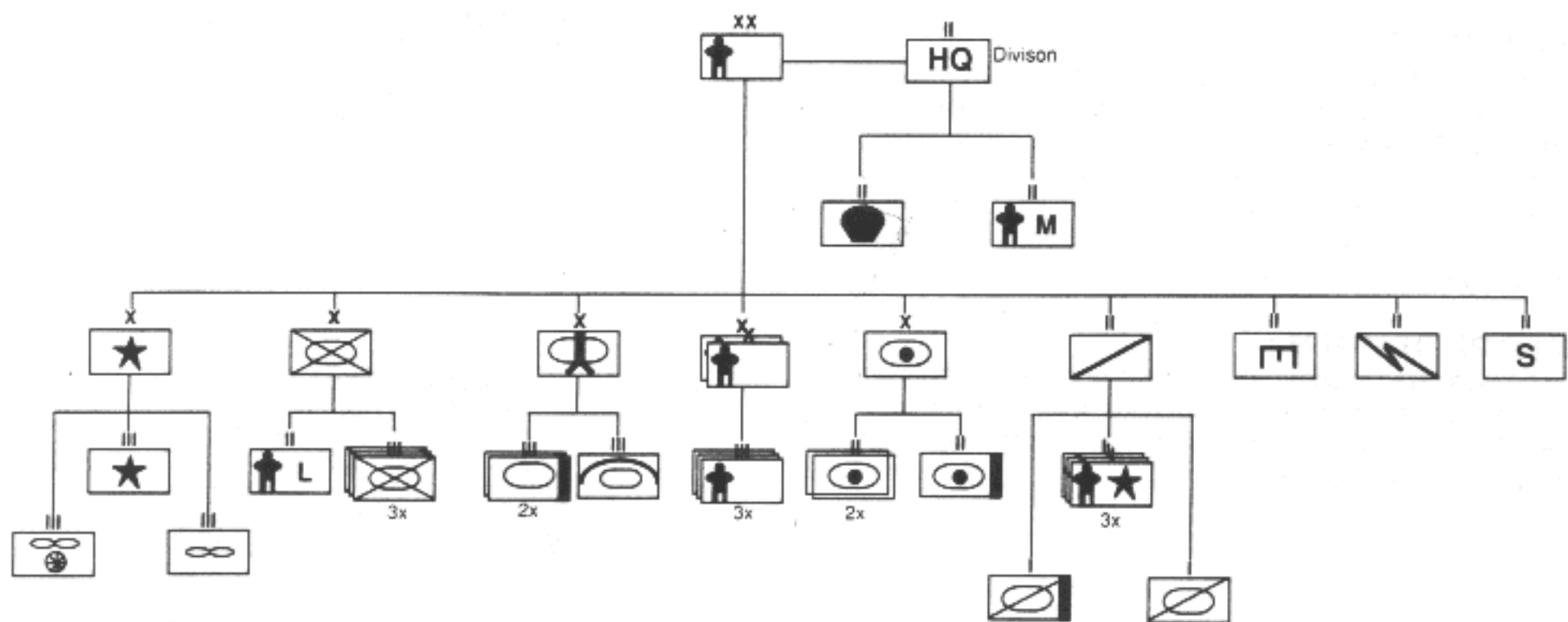
The Order of the Dove was given to men and women who had devoted their lives to peace and the unity of the Star League. Most Knights of the Dove were from the Bureau of Star League Affairs, though some artists, business leaders, and others were honored as well. Like the Knights of the Sword, the Knights of the Dove wore a large medallion on a sash. The commander of the Bureau of Star League Affairs led the order.

ORDER OF THE PALM

This was given to administrators who significantly improved the bureaucracy or who exposed corruption. It was inspired by an ancient Terran movie about one naval officer's battle against a pompous and cruel superior.



BattleMech divisions in the Star League Defense Forces were patterned after German Panzer Divisions of the 20th Century. A panzer division had three regiments of tanks and mechanized infantry as its main force, but the Star League 'Mech division fielded three brigades, nine regiments, of 'Mechs and Mechanized Infantry.



DEPLOYMENT OF THE REGULAR ARMY

To the Star League Defense Forces, the Inner Sphere consisted of everything within 500 light years of Terra. The Inner Sphere was divided into six military regions, each corresponding to the territorial boundaries of one of



139

the six member states. Each region, except the Terran Military Region, was further divided into three military districts. District One took up a wedge of space between the Terran Hegemony and the 250-Light-Year Circle. Military Districts Two and Three split the region of space between the 250-Line and the 500-Line. An army occupied each district. In the Periphery, there were four military regions, each roughly corresponding to one of the four Territorial States.

MILITARY REGIONS

STAR LEAGUE DEFENSE FORCES IN 2764

Infantry Divisions: 50

Mechanized Infantry Divisions: 200

Jump Infantry Divisions: 75

BattleMech Divisions: 125

Independent Regiments: 304

FORCES FIGHTING PERIPHERY UPRISING

Unit Type	Taking Part	Destroyed	Disbanded	Joined Rebels
BattleMech Divisions	87	30	9	-
Infantry Divisions	217	76	17	1
Independent Regiments	205	61	6	6

FORCES DEFENDING AGAINST COUP

Unit Type	Taking Part	Destroyed
BattleMech Divisions	3	1
Infantry Divisions	6	6
Independent Regiments	7	7

CAMPAIGN TO RECAPTURE TERRA

Unit Type	Taking Part	Destroyed	Disbanded
BattleMech Divisions	82	44	2
Infantry Divisions	218	112	24
Independent Regiments	212	102	12

FORCES IN EXODUS

BattleMech Divisions: 32

Infantry Divisions (all types): 76

Independent Regiments: 63

EXPLANATION AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following table shows the deployment of Star League units in 2764, the redeployment in 2765 due to uprisings in the Periphery, units that defended the Terran Hegemony from Stefan Amaris's coup in 2766, units that participated in General Kerensky's campaign to recapture Terra from 2767 to 2779, and the eventual disposition of units when the SLDF ceased to exist in the Inner Sphere in 2784. The chart uses the following abbreviations:

TMR: Terran Military Region

FWLMR: Free Worlds League Military Region

LCMR: Lyran Commonwealth Military Region

DCMR: Draconis Combine Military Region

FSMR: Federated Suns Military Region

CCMR: Capellan Confederation Military Region

D1: District One

D2: District Two

D3: District Three



140

TERRAN MILITARY REGION (TMR)

FIRST ARMY

Headquarters: Terra and Mars

Unit	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
I Corps					
48th Royal BattleMech Division (The Goliath Division)	TMR	-	survived	destroyed	
191st Royal BattleMech Division (The Zavijava Division)	TMR	-	survived	destroyed	
6th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	TMR	-	destroyed		
74th Mechanized Infantry Division	TMR	-	destroyed		
156th Mechanized Infantry Division	TMR	-	destroyed		
290th Mechanized Infantry Division	TMR	-	destroyed		
89th Jump Infantry Division (The Gotchas)	TMR	-	destroyed		
175th Jump Infantry Division (The Luzon Knifers)	TMR	-	destroyed		
34th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment	TMR	-	destroyed		
277th Light Horse Regiment (member of the Terran RCT)	TMR	-	destroyed		
138th Hussar Regiment (member of the Terran RCT)	TMR	-	destroyed		
118th Dragoon Regiment (member of the Terran RCT)	TMR	-	destroyed		
593rd Striker Regiment (member of the Terran RCT)	TMR	-	destroyed		
406th Battle Regiment	TMR	-	destroyed		
269th Independent Aero Wing	TMR	-	destroyed		
X Corps					
7th Royal BattleMech Division (The Keid Division)	TMR	LCMR D1	-	destroyed	
29th BattleMech Division (The Polypheme Division)	TMR	CCMR D1	-	destroyed	
70th Infantry Division	TMR	DCMR D1	-	heavy losses	disbanded
26th Mechanized Infantry Division	TMR	FSMR D1	-	survived	Exodus
36th Mechanized Infantry Division	TMR	CCMR D1	-	destroyed	
282nd Mechanized Infantry Division (The Denebola Division)	TMR	FSMR D1	-	heavy losses	disbanded
56th Royal Jump Infantry Division	TMR	FWLMR D1	-	destroyed	
209th Light Horse Regiment	TMR	FWLMR D1	-	destroyed	
112th Royal Hussar Regiment (The Jokes of Joseph)	TMR	LCMR D1	-	heavy losses	disbanded
114th Hussar Regiment	TMR	DCMR D1	-	survived	joined DC
20th Dragoon Regiment	TMR	FSMR D1	-	survived	Exodus
XXI Corps					
99th BattleMech Division (The Gog Division)	TMR	FSMR D1	-	destroyed	
138th BattleMech Division (The Stonewall Jackson Division)	TMR	FWLMR D1	-	destroyed	
164th BattleMech Division (The Hannibal Division)	TMR	DCMR D1	-	survived	Exodus
10th Infantry Division (The Welsh Foot Division)	TMR	LCMR D1	-	destroyed	
92nd Mechanized Infantry Division	TMR	FWLMR D1	-	destroyed	
111th Mechanized Infantry Division	TMR	LCMR D1	-	survived	Exodus
203rd Mechanized Infantry Division	TMR	DCMR D1	-	destroyed	
17th Jump Infantry Division (The Golden Talon)	TMR	CCMR D1	-	survived	Exodus
8th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment (The Black Sea Regiment)	TMR	FSMR D1	-	destroyed	
35th Light Horse Regiment	TMR	CCMR D1	-	survived	Exodus
51st Dragoon Regiment (The Green Devils)	TMR	CCMR D1	-	destroyed	
32nd Striker Regiment	TMR	FWLMR D1	-	heavy losses	disbanded
201st Striker Regiment	TMR	DCMR D1	-	survived	Exodus
12th Heavy Assault Regiment	TMR	LCMR D1	-	survived	joined LC
305th Royal Heavy Assault Regiment	TMR	DCMR D1	-	destroyed	

7 BattleMech Divisions

16 Infantry Divisions

18 Independent Regiments

Total Number of Divisions: 25

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE MILITARY REGION (FWLMR)

EIGHTH ARMY

Army and Region Headquarters: Talitha

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
III Corps					
43rd Infantry Division (3002nd Heavy Tank Regiment)	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	heavy losses	disbanded joined LC
100th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
194th Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
185th Jump Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
11th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
48th Hussar Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
305th Dragoon Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
367th Royal Dragoon Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
211th Striker Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
457th Heavy Tank Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	heavy losses	disbanded
587th Royal Artillery Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
5008th Mechanized Infantry Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
VII Corps					
316th Royal BattleMech Division (The Rio Grande Division)	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
335th BattleMech Division (The Joan of Arc Division)	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
246th Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
275th Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
297th Mechanized Infantry Division (2004th Battle Regiment)	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	heavy losses	disbanded joined FS
86th Jump Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
35th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
19th Light Horse Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
28th Light Horse Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	survived	joined DC
78th Hussar Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
81st Dragoon Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
149th Dragoon Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	survived	joined FS
221st Dragoon Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
XIX Corps					
67th BattleMech Division (The Epsilon Eridani Division)	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
131st BattleMech Division (The Hercules Division)	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
7th Royal Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
30th Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
3rd Jump Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
49th Jump Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
68th Royal Light Horse Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
89th Light Horse Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
205th Hussar Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
306th Hussar Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	heavy losses	disbanded
31st Dragoon Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
399th Battle Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
105th Heavy Assault Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D2	-	destroyed	
XXV Corps					
157th BattleMech Division (The Napoleon Division)	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
360th BattleMech Division (The Bannockburn Division)	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	survived	joined CC
66th Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
14th Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
46th Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
70th Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
451st Striker Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
189th Battle Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	survived	joined CC
312th Heavy Assault Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
2nd French Infantry Regiment	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	
256th Independent Aero Wing	FWLMR D1	FWLMR D3	-	destroyed	

6 BattleMech Divisions

16 Infantry Divisions

27 Independent Regiments

Divisions in District: 25

NINTH ARMY

Army and District Two Headquarters: Chalouba

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
XVIII Corps					
352nd BattleMech Division (The Attila Division)	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
91st Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
120th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D2	Periphery		survived	Exodus
108th Jump Infantry Division	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
20th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment (The Saipan Regiment)	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
183rd Hussar Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
245th Royal Hussar Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
42nd Dragoon Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
102nd Dragoon Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		survived	Exodus
312th Dragoon Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
XII Corps					
15th BattleMech Division (The Bryant Division)	FWLMR D2	Periphery		survived	Exodus
151st Royal BattleMech Division (The Ulysses S. Grant Division)	FWLMR D2	Periphery			unknown
32nd Infantry Division	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
13th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D2	Periphery		survived	Exodus
32nd Royal CAAN Marine Regiment (The Iwo Jima Regiment)	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
13th Light Horse Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		survived	Exodus
22nd Light Horse Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
502nd Battle Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
52nd Heavy Assault Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		survived	joined DC
189th Heavy Assault Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		survived	Exodus
XXXIV Corps					
405th BattleMech Division (The Golden Pharaoh Division)	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
44th Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
59th Mechanized Infantry Division (The New Kyoto Samurai)	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
62nd Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
301st Hussar Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
19th Dragoon Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
187th Royal Striker Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
3555th Independent Aero Wing	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
471st Medium Tank Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
257th Hover Armor Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
85th Marine Infantry Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
9999th Mechanized Infantry Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		survived	Exodus
XLI Corps					
245th BattleMech Division (The Marne Division)	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
275th BattleMech Division (The Altair Division) (104th Striker Regiment)	FWLMR D2			survived	Exodus
172nd Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D2	Periphery		survived	Exodus
218th Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D2	Periphery, joined rebels			
35th Jump Infantry Division	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
30th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
51st Light Horse Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
13th Hussar Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
384th Striker Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
387th Battle Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery		destroyed	
1st French Cavalry Regiment	FWLMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
802nd Independent Aero Wing	FWLMR D2	Periphery		survived	joined FWL

6 BattleMech Divisions

11 Infantry Divisions

27 Independent Regiments

Divisions in District: 20



TENTH ARMY

Army and District Three Headquarters: Cirebon

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
IV Corps					
125th BattleMech Division (The Talitha Division)	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
149th BattleMech Division					
(The Erwin Rommel Division)	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
168th Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
190th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
41st Jump Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
147th Light Horse Regiment	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
42nd Hussar Regiment (member of 1st RCT)	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
XIII Corps					
254th BattleMech Division					
(The Terra Firma Division)	FWLMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
39th Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
63rd Royal Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
160th Jump Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
237th Hussar Regiment	FWLMR D3	Periphery, joined rebels			
11th Dragoon Regiment	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
XXVI Corps					
372nd BattleMech Division (The Asia Division)	FWLMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
14th Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
190th Jump Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
210th Jump Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
9th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	unknown	
75th Light Horse Regiment (member of 1st RCT)	FWLMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
138th Dragoon Regiment (member of 1st RCT)	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
XXXIX Corps					
21st Royal BattleMech Division					
(The Antaeus Division)	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
58th BattleMech Division (The Pollux Division)	FWLMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
42nd Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
82nd Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
146th Mechanized Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
120th Jump Infantry Division	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
(4674th Striker Regiment)				joined DC	
195th Royal Light Horse Regiment					
(member of 1st RCT)	FWLMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
7th Hussar Regiment	FWLMR D3	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded

6 BattleMech Divisions

13 Infantry Divisions

9 Independent Regiments

Divisions in District: 20

Total Number of Divisions: 65



LYRAN COMMONWEALTH MILITARY REGION (LCMR)

ELEVENTH ARMY

Army and Region Headquarters: Zollikofen

V Corps

331st Royal BattleMech Division
(The North American Division)
151st Mechanized Infantry Division
153rd Mechanized Infantry Division (The Vein-Openers)
184th Mechanized Infantry Division
80th Royal Jump Infantry Division
135th Royal Striker Regiment
208th Striker Regiment
257th Battle Regiment
541st Battle Regiment

2764

2765

2766

2767-2779

2784

LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1

LCMR D3
LCMR D3
LCMR D3
LCMR D3
LCMR D3
LCMR D3
LCMR D3
LCMR D3
LCMR D3
LCMR D3

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

survived
destroyed
destroyed
survived
survived
survived
survived
destroyed
destroyed

Exodus

unknown
Exodus
Exodus

XXVII Corps

413th BattleMech Division (The Grand Association Division)
3rd Infantry Division
61st Infantry Division (The Michigan 61st)
(346th Heavy Tank Regiment)
55th Mechanized Infantry Division
129th Mechanized Infantry Division
92nd Jump Infantry Division
11th Royal Heavy Assault Regiment
23rd Heavy Assault Regiment
2nd French Cavalry Regiment
188th Royal Independent Aero Wing
687th Hover Armor Regiment
958th Artillery Regiment

LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1

LCMR D2
LCMR D3
LCMR D2
LCMR D3
LCMR D2
LCMR D3
LCMR D2
LCMR D3
LCMR D2
LCMR D3
LCMR D2
LCMR D3

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

destroyed
destroyed
heavy losses
destroyed
survived
destroyed
survived
survived
destroyed
survived
destroyed
destroyed

Exodus
disbanded
joined FWL
Exodus
joined LC
joined FS
Exodus

XLIX Corps

280th BattleMech Division (The Hall Division)
295th BattleMech Division (The Blue Star Division)
185th Mechanized Infantry Division
205th Mechanized Infantry Division
236th Mechanized Infantry Division
9th Jump Infantry Division (The Meteors)
25th Jump Infantry Division
110th Hussar Regiment
294th Hussar Regiment
97th Dragoon Regiment
170th Dragoon Regiment

LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1

LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

destroyed
survived
destroyed
destroyed
survived
destroyed
destroyed
survived
destroyed
destroyed

unknown
joined LC
joined DC

LI Corps

5th BattleMech Division (The Alula Australis Division)
146th Royal BattleMech Division
(The George S. Patton Division)
67th Infantry Division
11th Mechanized Infantry Division
27th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division
37th Mechanized Infantry Division
14th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment (The Tripoli Regiment)
16th Light Horse Regiment
59th Royal Light Horse Regiment
69th Hussar Regiment

LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1
LCMR D1

LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2
LCMR D2

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

destroyed
survived
destroyed
destroyed
survived
destroyed
destroyed
survived
destroyed

Exodus
Exodus
Exodus

6 BattleMech Divisions

18 Infantry Divisions

18 Independent Regiments

Divisions in District: 26



145

TWELFTH ARMY

Army and District Two Headquarters: Deia

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
II Corps					
11th Royal BattleMech Division (The Orion Division)	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
92nd BattleMech Division (The Sheridan Division)	LCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	destroyed	
28th Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery	-		
18th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division (The Pride of Leningrad)	LCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
29th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded	-	elements joined DC
29th CAAN Marine Regiment	LCMR D2	Periphery, joined rebels		survived	Exodus
38th Light Horse Regiment	LCMR D2	Periphery	-		
XXX Corps					
118th BattleMech Division (The Jotun Division)	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
229th BattleMech Division (The Chara Division)	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
97th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
118th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded
123rd Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	unknown
99th Light Horse Regiment (The Brights of Brewler)	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
51st Hussar Regiment	LCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
XLII Corps					
259th BattleMech Division (The Fomalhaut Division)	LCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
127th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
154th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed			
164th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
101st Royal Hussar Regiment	LCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	survived	joined CC
258th Dragoon Regiment	LCMR D2	Periphery	-		
LXI Corps					
322nd BattleMech Division (The Antarctica Division)	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
41st Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
54th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	-	unknown
65th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
126th Jump Infantry Division	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
25th Striker Regiment (member of 2nd RCT)	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	heavy losses	joined LC
299th Heavy Assault Regiment	LCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
2369th Independent Aero Wing	LCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus

6 BattleMech Divisions

13 Infantry Divisions

9 Independent Regiments

Divisions in District: 20



THIRTEENTH ARMY

Army and District Three Headquarters: Zapруды

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
VI Corps					
62nd Royal BattleMech Division (The Rephaim Division)	LCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
142nd BattleMech Division (The Ingress Division)	LCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed		survived	Exodus
44th Royal Infantry Division	LCMR D3	Periphery			
103rd Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
133rd Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
111th Light Horse Regiment	LCMR D3	Periphery		destroyed	
19th Hussar Regiment	LCMR D3	Periphery, heavy losses		disbanded	
XX Corps					
209th BattleMech Division (The Ardennes Division)	LCMR D3	Periphery		destroyed	
308th BattleMech Division (The Punjab Pass Division)	LCMR D3	Periphery		survived	Exodus
148th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D3	Periphery		destroyed	
173rd Mechanized Infantry Division *	LCMR D3	Periphery			unknown
174th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D3	Periphery		survived	Exodus
100th Hussar Regiment	LCMR D3	Periphery, joined rebels			
902nd Royal Hussar Regiment	LCMR D3	Periphery		survived	Exodus
XXVIII Corps					
409th BattleMech Division (The League Division)	LCMR D3	Periphery		destroyed	
181st Royal Mechanized Infantry Division (The King's Own Scots Rifles)	LCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
186th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D3	Periphery, heavy losses		disbanded, elements joined rebels	
195th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
203rd Striker Regiment	LCMR D3	Periphery		destroyed	
305th Battle Regiment	LCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
XXXI Corps					
438th BattleMech Division (The Commonwealth Division)	LCMR D3	Periphery		destroyed	
196th Mechanized Infantry Division	LCMR D3	Periphery		survived	Exodus
133rd Jump Infantry Division	LCMR D3	Periphery		heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined DC and CC
178th Jump Infantry Division	LCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
204th Jump Infantry Division	LCMR D3	Periphery		destroyed	
10th Heavy Assault Regiment	LCMR D3	Periphery		destroyed	
1002nd Independent Aero Wing	LCMR D3	Periphery		survived	Exodus
687th Artillery Regiment	LCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
6 BattleMech Divisions					
13 Infantry Divisions					
9 Independent Regiments					
Divisions in District: 20					
Total Number of Divisions: 66					

DRACONIS COMBINE MILITARY REGION (DCMR)

FOURTEENTH ARMY

Army and Region Headquarters: Dieron

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
VIII Corps					
135th Royal BattleMech Division (The Van Diemen Division)	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
160th BattleMech Division (The Sirius Division)	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
11th Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
65th Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
3rd Mechanized Infantry Division (The Junkers Division)	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
5th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined FWL
17th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
23rd Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
179th Jump Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
102nd Royal Light Horse Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
139th Light Horse Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
231st Light Horse Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	survived	joined LC
75th Royal Hussar Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
XIV Corps					
185th BattleMech Division (The Northwind Division)	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
251st BattleMech Division (The Lipton Division)	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined FS
28th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
32nd Mechanized Infantry Division (The Aztec Division)	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
34th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
51st Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
53rd Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
64th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
159th Jump Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
22nd Royal CAAN Marine Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
12th Light Horse Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
149th Hussar Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
152nd Hussar Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
XXII Corps					
305th BattleMech Division (The Nirasaki Division)	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
349th Royal BattleMech Division (The King Henry Division)	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
68th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
77nd Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
79th Mechanized Infantry Division?	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	survived	unknown
94th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division (The Bavarian Division)	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
95th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus, elements joined DC
124th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
131st Jump Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
229th Hussar Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
64th Dragoon Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
108th Dragoon Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
181st Dragoon Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
XXXII Corps					
410th BattleMech Division (The United Member States Division)	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
137th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
192nd Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
210th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
99th Jump Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
106th Royal Jump Infantry Division	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
125th Jump Infantry Division (The Portuguese Men of War)	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
320th Dragoon Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
369th Striker Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
3rd French Infantry Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	survived	joined CC
169th Independent Aero Wing	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	destroyed	
235th Royal Artillery Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D2	-	destroyed	
9873rd Mechanized Infantry Regiment	DCMR D1	DCMR D3	-	survived	Exodus

7 BattleMech Divisions

27 Infantry Divisions

18 Independent Regiments

Divisions in District: 36



FIFTEENTH ARMY

Army and District Two Headquarters: Hassi R'mel

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
XV Corps					
52nd Royal BattleMech Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
(The King of Bashan Division)	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
81st BattleMech Division (The Devils of Devil's Rock)	DCMR D2	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded		
47th Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
1st Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
8th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
24th Mechanized Infantry Division (Division du Aquitaine)	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
33rd Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
39th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
58th Jump Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
16th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
20th Light Horse Regiment	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
XXIII Corps					
199th BattleMech Division (The Kursk Division)	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed		elements joined rebels	
284th BattleMech Division (The Caph Division)	DCMR D2	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded,	destroyed	
29th Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements
63rd Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-		joined LC and FWL
				destroyed	
73rd Mechanized Infantry Division (The Turkistan Hunters)	DCMR D2	Periphery	-		
106th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	survived	Exodus
132nd Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
142nd Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
82nd Royal Jump Infantry Division (The All Americans)	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	-	joined CC
84th Light Horse Regiment	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
189th Light Horse Regiment	DCMR D2	Periphery	-		
XXXV Corps					
326th BattleMech Division (The Mantuffel Division)	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	-	unknown
341st Royal BattleMech Division (The Black Prince Division)	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
13th Royal Infantry Division (The Superstition Division)	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	unknown
155th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
160th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	destroyed	
167th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
212th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-		
243rd Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
119th Jump Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	survived	Exodus
29th Royal Dragoon Regiment	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
291st Dragoon Regiment	DCMR D2	Periphery	-		
XL Corps					
398th BattleMech Division (The European Division)	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
8th Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
259th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
267th Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
272nd Mechanized Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-		unknown
7th Jump Infantry Division	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements
					joined DC and CC
13th Jump Infantry Division (The Blackcats)	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
310th Dragoon Regiment	DCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	survived	joined FS
91st Heavy Assault Regiment (The Armadillos)	DCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
687th Independent Aero Wing	DCMR D2	Periphery	-		

7 BattleMech Divisions
27 Infantry Divisions
9 Independent Regiments
Divisions in District: 35



SIXTEENTH ARMY

Army and District Three Headquarters: Casere

XI Corps

34th Royal BattleMech Division (The Epsilon Indi Division)
168th BattleMech Division (The Czar Peter Division)
49th Infantry Division
38th Mechanized Infantry Division (The New Delhi Grenadiers)
47th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division
57th Mechanized Infantry Division
66th Mechanized Infantry Division

67th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Indiana Division)
68th Jump Infantry Division
71st Light Horse Regiment (member of 3rd RCT)
151st Light Horse Regiment (member of 3rd RCT)
19th Striker Regiment (member of 3rd RCT)
21st Striker Regiment (member of 3rd RCT)

2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
DCMR D3	Periphery	destroyed		
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded	-	elements joined DC Exodus
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	joined FWL
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	joined FWL
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	joined FWL

XXXVI Corps

196th BattleMech Division (The Gettysburg Division)
208th BattleMech Division (The Thorin Division)
21st Infantry Division
71st Mechanized Infantry Division
75th Mechanized Infantry Division
80th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Texas Rangers)
89th Mechanized Infantry Division
99th Mechanized Infantry Division
59th Jump Infantry Division (The King's Own Jump Troops)
40th Dragoon Regiment

DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded		
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			

XLIV Corps

299th Royal BattleMech Division (The Protector Division)
355th BattleMech Division (The Africa Division)
1st Infantry Division (The Big Red One)
114th Mechanized Infantry Division
126th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Bullfighters from Seville)
131st Royal Mechanized Infantry Division
(The Los Angeles Division)
158th Mechanized Infantry Division
138th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Chicago Division)
100th Jump Infantry Division
124th Royal Heavy Assault Regiment
5th Dragoon Regiment

DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	-	unknown
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			

L Corps

441st BattleMech Division (The Federation Division)
165th Mechanized Infantry Division
171st Mechanized Infantry Division (The Paris Surgeons)
189th Mechanized Infantry Division
193rd Mechanized Infantry Division
30th Jump Infantry Division (Murphrid Lightning)
46th Jump Infantry Division (Rain of Steel)
287th Heavy Assault Regiment
2525th Independent Aero Wing

DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined rebels		
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
DCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
DCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus

7 BattleMech Divisions

27 Infantry Divisions

9 Independent Regiments

Divisions in District: 35

Total Number of Divisions: 106



150

FEDERATED SUNS MILITARY REGION (FSMR)

Army and Region Headquarters: Small World

SECOND ARMY

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
IX Corps					
9th BattleMech Division (The Oliver Division)	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	destroyed	
39th Royal BattleMech Division (The Denebola Division)	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
69th Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	destroyed	
9th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Pride of Puget Sound)	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
78th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	destroyed	
111th Jump Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	destroyed	
90th Royal Light Horse Regiment	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
76th Royal Dragoon Regiment	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	destroyed	
XVI Corps					
75th BattleMech Division (The Atlas Division)	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	
100th BattleMech Division (The Castor Division)	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	
53rd Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
105th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Cameron Highlanders)	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	
136th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	
128th Jump Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	
125th Light Horse Regiment	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	
62nd Hussar Regiment	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	
XXIX Corps					
159th BattleMech Division (The Wellington Division)	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	survived	Exodus joined FS
(1008th Heavy Assault Regiment)					
46th Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	destroyed	
163rd Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	
169th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
215th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	destroyed	
148th Jump Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	destroyed	
184th Light Horse Regiment	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	destroyed	
38th Hussar Regiment	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
LII Corps					
175th BattleMech Division (The Katukov Division)	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	
90th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Old Abe Division)	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	
152nd Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	destroyed	
222nd Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	heavy losses	disbanded joined LC Exodus
(567th Striker Regiment)					
1st Jump Infantry Division (The Hellraisers From Heaven)	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	survived	
84th Hussar Regiment	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	
35th Dragoon Regiment	FSMR D1	FSMR D2	-	survived	joined Periphery
57th Dragoon Regiment	FSMR D1	FSMR D3	-	destroyed	

6 BattleMech Divisions

17 Infantry Divisions

9 Independent Regiments

Divisions in District: 24



THIRD ARMY

Army and District Two Headquarters: Sullivan

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
XVII Corps					
8th BattleMech Division (The Teutobochus Division)	FSMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	survived	Exodus
26th Royal BattleMech Division (The Graham Division)	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
159th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division (The Athena Division)	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
219th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	survived	Exodus
225th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded	-	elements joined DC and FS
235th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
XXXIII Corps					
129th BattleMech Division (The Despair Division)	FSMR D2	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded	survived	Exodus
154th BattleMech Division (The Small World Division)	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	Exodus
59th Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
242nd Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	Exodus
247th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	survived	Exodus
253rd Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	Exodus
257th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
LXVI Corps					
179th BattleMech Division (The New Home Division)	FSMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	heavy losses	disbanded
261st Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	-	unknown
268th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
280th Mechanized Infantry Division ?	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
294th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
296th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Oregonians)	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
LXIX Corps					
205th BattleMech Division (The Alamo Division)	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
299th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	survived	Exodus
300th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Martians)	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
53rd Jump Infantry Division (The Cyclones of Castle Rock)	FSMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	destroyed	
123rd Jump Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
132nd Royal Jump Infantry Division	FSMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-	destroyed	
6 BattleMech Divisions					
19 Infantry Divisions					
Divisions in District: 25					



FOURTH ARMY

Army and District Three Headquarters: Hobbs

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
XXXVII Corps					
35th BattleMech Division (The Anak Division)	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
60th Royal BattleMech Division (The Anakim Division)	FSMR D3	Periphery, destroyed	-	destroyed	
62nd Infantry Division	FSMR D3	Periphery	-		
166th Mechanized Infantry Division (Red Diamond Division)	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined CC and FWL
229th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
142nd Jump Infantry Division	FSMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
29th Hussar Regiment	FSMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
159th Hussar Regiment	FSMR D3	Periphery, joined rebels			
LIV Corps					
116th BattleMech Division (The Gargantua Division)	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
173rd BattleMech Division (The New Earth Division)	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
50th Royal Infantry Division (The Flame Keepers of Greece)	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
248th Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
249th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Force From Ford)	FSMR D3	Periphery, destroyed	-		
208th Jump Infantry Division	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
90th Dragoon Regiment	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	-	unknown
LXII Corps					
202nd BattleMech Division (The Waterloo Division)	FSMR D3	Periphery, destroyed	-		
255th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
270th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Rhodes Rifles)	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
281st Mechanized Infantry Division	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
101st Jump Infantry Division (The Screaming Eagles)	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
168th Jump Infantry Division	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded
255th Light Horse Regiment (member of 4th RCT)	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
111th Dragoon Regiment (member of the 4th RCT)	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
55th Royal Light Horse Regiment (member of 4th RCT)	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
247th Dragoon Regiment (member of the 4th RCT)	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
LXX Corps					
263rd BattleMech Division (The Zollikofen Division)	FSMR D3	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded		
41st Infantry Division	FSMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
52nd Mechanized Infantry Division (The Pride of Sevastopol)	FSMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
238th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Czech Lancers)	FSMR D3	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded	-	elements joined rebels and LC
152nd Jump Infantry Division	FSMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
191st Royal Jump Infantry Division	FSMR D3	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded		
31st Light Horse Regiment	FSMR D3	Periphery, destroyed			
129th Dragoon Regiment	FSMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus

6 BattleMech Divisions

18 Infantry Divisions

9 Independent Regiments

Divisions in District: 25

Total Number of Divisions: 74



CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION MILITARY REGION (CCMR)

FIFTH ARMY

Army and Region Headquarters: Epsilon Eridani

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
XXIV Corps					
83rd BattleMech Division (The Balan Division)	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	destroyed	
150th Royal BattleMech Division (The Rigil Kentarus Division)	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
72nd Infantry Division	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
175th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division (The Desert Rats)	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	destroyed	
187th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Brandenburg Lancers)	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	destroyed	
189th Jump Infantry Division (The New Orleans Division)	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined FWL
197th Jump Infantry Division	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	destroyed	
281st Light Horse Regiment	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	destroyed	
5th Hussar Regiment	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	survived	joined FS
90th Hussar Regiment	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	destroyed	

LV Corps

171st BattleMech Division (The Zhukov Division)	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	destroyed	
189th BattleMech Division (The Marshal Ney Division)	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
71st Infantry Division (The Sydney Division)	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	destroyed	
197th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Florida Swamp Foxes)	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	survived	unknown
210th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Errai Laserers)	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	destroyed	
116th Jump Infantry Division (The Arizona Devils)	DDMR D1	CCMR D3	-	destroyed	
235th Light Horse Regiment	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	destroyed	
145th Hussar Regiment	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	destroyed	
121st Royal Dragoon Regiment	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	survived	Exodus

LX Corps

201st BattleMech Division (The Errai Division)	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	destroyed	
213th BattleMech Division (The Carver Division) ?	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	survived	unknown
64th Infantry Division (The Free South Africans)	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	destroyed	
191st Mechanized Infantry Division (The Upper Silesian Division)	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
145th Jump Infantry Division (The Pride of Berlin)	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
155th Jump Infantry Division	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	destroyed	
221st Light Horse Regiment	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	survived	Exodus
146th Dragoon Regiment	CCMR D1	CCMR D3	-	survived	Exodus
15th Dragoon Regiment	CCMR D1	CCMR D2	-	survived	joined CC

6 BattleMech Divisions

13 Infantry Divisions

9 Independent Regiments

Divisions in District: 20

SIXTH ARMY

Army and District Two Headquarters: Yuris

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
XXXVIII Corps					
89th BattleMech Division (The Cyclops Division)	CCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
190th BattleMech Division (The Procyon Division)	CCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
23rd Infantry Division	CCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
19th Mechanized Infantry Division	CCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
51st Jump Infantry Division	CCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
LXIII Corps					
231st BattleMech Division (The Fletcher Division)	CCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
249th BattleMech Division (The Agincourt Division)	CCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
4th Royal Infantry Division (The Gurkha Rifles)	CCMR D2	Periphery	-	destroyed	
85th Mechanized Infantry Division	CCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
29th Jump Infantry Division	CCMR D2	Periphery, destroyed	-		
LVII Corps					
262nd BattleMech Division (The Chief Joseph Division)	CCMR D2	Periphery, heavy losses	-	disbanded, elements joined rebels	
309th Royal BattleMech Division (The Black Charger Division)	CCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
49th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Colony Commanders)	CCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
101st Mechanized Infantry Division	CCMR D2	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined LC
12th Jump Infantry Division	CCMR D2	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
6 BattleMech Divisions					
9 Infantry Divisions					
Divisions in District: 15					

SEVENTH ARMY

Army and District Three Headquarters: Sadurni

LIII Corps					
218th BattleMech Division (The Quentin Division)	CCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
225th BattleMech Division (The Battle of Moscow Division)	CCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
26th Infantry Division	CCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
20th Mechanized Infantry Division	CCMR D3	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded
50th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	CCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
LVIII Corps					
246th Royal BattleMech Division (The Saffel Division)	CCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed	-		
250th BattleMech Division (The Stalingrad Division)	CCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus, elements joined FS
19th Infantry Division (The Philippine Division)	CCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed	-		
81st Mechanized Infantry Division (4th Tau Ceti Rangers)	CCMR D3	Periphery, heavy losses	disbanded		joined CC
28th Jump Infantry Division	CCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed	-		
LXXI Corps					
268th BattleMech Division (The Geronimo Division)	CCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed	-		
272nd BattleMech Division (The Custer Division)	CCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
17th Infantry Division	CCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed	-		
2221st Mechanized Infantry Division	CCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
60th Jump Infantry Division	CCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
1003rd Light Horse Regiment (member of 5th RCT)	CCMR D3	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
1010th Light Horse Regiment (member of 5th RCT)	CCMR D3	Periphery	-	destroyed	
982nd Royal Striker Regiment (member of 5th RCT)	CCMR D3	Periphery, destroyed	-		
997th Striker Regiment (member of 5th RCT) ?	CCMR D3	Periphery	-		unknown

6 BattleMech Divisions
9 Infantry Divisions
4 Independent Regiments
Divisions in District: 15
Total Number of Divisions: 50
Total in Inner Sphere: 386

PERIPHERY MILITARY REGIONS

SEVENTEENTH ARMY (Magistracy of Canopus)

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
XLIII Corps					
219th BattleMech Division (The Bull Run Division)	Periphery	destroyed			
255th Royal BattleMech Division (The Sherman Division)	Periphery	destroyed			
68th Infantry Division (The Thai Militia)	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus, elements joined LC
2nd Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	destroyed			
16th Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
279th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division (The Chara Cossacks)	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
21st Royal Jump Infantry Division	Periphery	destroyed			
38th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment	Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined rebels		
43rd Royal Light Horse Regiment (The Steeds of Nicholas)	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
119th Light Horse Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
321st Hussar Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	unknown
1st Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
16th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
605th Battle Regiment	Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded		
114th Heavy Assault Regiment (The Titans of Tymons)	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
3687th Royal Independent Aero Wing	Periphery	destroyed			
589th Heavy Tank Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
XLVIII Corps					
260th BattleMech Division (The Little Big Horn Division)	Periphery	destroyed			
271st BattleMech Division (The Outreach Division)	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
60th Infantry Division	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
22nd Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	destroyed			
31st Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
265th Mechanized Infantry Division (Pride of Pittsburgh)	Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded	-	elements joined rebels and CC
38th Jump Infantry Division	Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded
1894th Light Horse Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	joined FS
11th Hussar Regiment	Periphery	joined rebels			
106th Hussar Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
405th Royal Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
412th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
8th Striker Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	joined FS
599th Battle Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
205th Heavy Assault Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	joined LC
658th Marine Infantry Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
1007th Jump Infantry Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
XVIII Corps					
279th BattleMech Division (The Bunker Hill Division)	Periphery	destroyed			
286th Royal BattleMech Division (The Minsk Division)	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
55th Infantry Division	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
93rd Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	destroyed			
108th Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined rebels		
256th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Belgium Fusiliers)	Periphery	destroyed			
48th Jump Infantry Division	Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined rebels		
31st Royal CAAN Marine Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
149th Light Horse Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
300th Hussar Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
302nd Hussar Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
22nd Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	joined LC
38th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery				unknown
741st Royal Striker Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
125th Battle Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
3058th Independent Aero Wing	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
698th Light Tank Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			

6 BattleMech Divisions
15 Infantry Divisions
30 Independent Regiments
Divisions in Region: 24

EIGHTEENTH ARMY **(Outworlds Alliance)**

XLV Corps

287th BattleMech Division (The Tobruk Division)
292nd BattleMech Division (The Dieron Division)
52nd Infantry Division
110th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Royal Irish Fusiliers)
116th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Flanders Division)
206th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division
(The Democrats of Brazil)
208th Mechanized Infantry Division
279th Light Horse Regiment
128th Hussar Regiment
150th Hussar Regiment
192nd Royal Hussar Regiment
395th Dragoon Regiment
396th Dragoon Regiment
199th Striker Regiment
587th Battle Regiment
247th Heavy Assault Regiment
125th Independent Aero Wing

2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	unknown
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	-	-	-	joined FS
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded		
Periphery	destroyed			

LXIV Corps

298th BattleMech Division (The Battle of Thorin Division)
311th BattleMech Division (The Red Plains Division)
209th Mechanized Infantry Division

217th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Altair Guards)
226th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division
(The Wild Ones From Yorii)
252nd Mechanized Infantry Division
61st Royal Jump Infantry Division
27th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment (The Guadalcanal Regiment)
167th Light Horse Regiment
178th Light Horse Regiment (The Stone-Throwers)
288th Hussar Regiment
45th Dragoon Regiment
68th Dragoon Regiment
238th Striker Regiment
512th Striker Regiment
201st Battle Regiment
125th Royal Hover Armor Regiment

Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded		
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined FWL
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	-	-	-	unknown
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	joined FWL
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	-	-	-	unknown
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded		
Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded

LXVIII Corps

315th BattleMech Division (The Yorii Division)
318th BattleMech Division (The Swamp Fox Division)
48th Infantry Division (The Black Watch Division)
135th Mechanized Infantry Division
147th Mechanized Infantry Division

149th Mechanized Infantry Division
157th Royal Mechanized Infantry Division
199th Light Horse Regiment
200th Royal Light Horse Regiment
205th Light Horse Regiment
258th Hussar Regiment
74th Royal Dragoon Regiment (The Dogs of Dogarish)
89th Dragoon Regiment
361st Dragoon Regiment
228th Striker Regiment
231st Striker Regiment
963rd Independent Aero Wing

Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded		
Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus, elements joined CC
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	joined LC
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded
Periphery	-	-	-	joined CC
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	unknown
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	joined DC
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	unknown
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	joined DC

6 BattleMech Divisions
15 Infantry Divisions
30 Independent Regiments
Divisions in Region: 24



NINETEENTH ARMY **(Taurian Concordat)**

XLVI Corps

321st BattleMech Division (The Andrew Jackson Division)
328th Royal BattleMech Division (The Lion-Hearted Division)
36th Infantry Division
161st Mechanized Infantry Division
162nd Mechanized Infantry Division (The Soldiers of Troy)
62nd Jump Infantry Division
65th Jump Infantry Division (The Tornadoes)
216th Light Horse Regiment
218th Royal Light Horse Regiment
242nd Hussar Regiment
94th Dragoon Regiment
105th Dragoon Regiment
126th Dragoon Regiment
509th Battle Regiment
265th Heavy Assault Regiment
309th Heavy Assault Regiment
568th Grunt Infantry Regiment

2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded,	elements joined rebels	
Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded,	elements joined rebels	
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	-	-	-	unknown
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	-	-	-	unknown
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	

LVI Corps

329th BattleMech Division (The Asta Division)
359th BattleMech Division (The Montgomery Division)
35th Infantry Division
176th Mechanized Infantry Division
251st Royal Mechanized Infantry Division
95th Royal Jump Infantry Division
129th Jump Infantry Division (The Jumpers of Mars)
267th Light Horse Regiment
208th Hussar Regiment
211th Hussar Regiment
349th Dragoon Regiment
351st Dragoon Regiment
359th Dragoon Regiment
1st French Regiment
13th Royal French Demi-Brigade
605th Independent Aero Wing
105th Wheeled Armor Regiment

Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	-	-	-	unknown
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded		
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	joined DC
Periphery	-	-	-	unknown
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	unknown
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	unknown
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus

LXV Corps

364th BattleMech Division (The Zulu Division)
368th BattleMech Division (The Apache Division)

31st Infantry Division
33rd Infantry Division
177th Mechanized Infantry Division
156th Jump Infantry Division (The Moscow Blizzard)
192nd Jump Infantry Division (The Angels of Orleans)
241st Hussar Regiment
131st Dragoon Regiment
141st Dragoon Regiment
206th Dragoon Regiment
239th Dragoon Regiment
261st Dragoon Regiment
267th Dragoon Regiment
331st Battle Regiment
458th Battle Regiment
477th Battle Regiment

Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined LC unknown
Periphery	-	-	-	
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded		
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	destroyed			
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded
Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
Periphery	destroyed			

6 BattleMech Divisions
15 Infantry Divisions
30 Independent Regiments
Divisions in Region: 24

TWENTIETH ARMY
(originally Rim Worlds Republic)

	2764	2765	2766	2767-2779	2784
XLVII Corps					
370th BattleMech Division (The Bonnie Prince Charlie Division)	Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded		
376th BattleMech Division (The Giap Division)	Periphery	destroyed			
22nd Royal Infantry Division	Periphery	destroyed			
179th Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	destroyed			
183rd Royal Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
245th Mechanized Infantry Division (The Latvian Rifles)	Periphery	destroyed			
200th Jump Infantry Division	Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined FS and DC
235th Royal Hussar Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
151st Royal Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
179th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
277th Dragoon Regiment?	Periphery	-	-	-	unknown
279th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
280th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
296th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
315th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
335th Royal Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded		
345th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
LIX Corps					
382nd BattleMech Division (The Westmoreland Division)	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
406th BattleMech Division (The Grand Rift Division)	Periphery	destroyed			
199th Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
200th Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined rebels		
202nd Mechanized Infantry Division (The Pride of Cuba)	Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined CC
237th Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
206th Jump Infantry Division (Death From Above)	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
213th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
218th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
229th Royal Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
300th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
308th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
235th Striker Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded
287th Royal Battle Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
298th Battle Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
325th Royal Heavy Assault Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
2555th Royal Jump Infantry Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
LXVII Corps					
416th BattleMech Division (The Association Division)	Periphery	destroyed			
423rd Royal BattleMech Division (The Enterprise Division)	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
428th BattleMech Division (The Concordance Division)	Periphery	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined rebels		
18th Infantry Division	Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded, elements joined DC and LC
227th Mechanized Infantry Division	Periphery	destroyed			
233rd Mechanized Infantry Division (The King of Denmark Division)	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
211th Jump Infantry Division (The Troopers from Lipton)	Periphery	destroyed			
26th Royal CAAN Marine Regiment (The Ducks of Recba)	Periphery	destroyed			
228th Light Horse Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
232nd Light Horse Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
218th Hussar Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
223rd Hussar Regiment	Periphery	destroyed			
192nd Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	joined rebels			
199th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	joined FS
200th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	survived	Exodus
205th Dragoon Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	destroyed	
259th Battle Regiment	Periphery	Periphery	-	heavy losses	disbanded

7 BattleMech Divisions

15 Infantry Divisions

30 Independent Regiments

Divisions in Region: 25

Total Divisions in Periphery: 98



The Star League economy revolved around the Terran Hegemony and its advanced technology. As the physical and economic center, the Terran Hegemony usually sold its superior products to the other member states and bought raw materials. The need for natural resources sparked a thorough exploration and exploitation of worlds throughout the Star League, which in turn created more industries. In an ever-expanding cycle, the economy of the Star League, fostered by the Hegemony's needs, became so powerful and rich that it erased the scars left by the Age of War and produced a dreamlike standard of living.

ECONOMY OF THE TERRAN HEGEMONY

In the 22nd and 23rd centuries, families lined up to leave Terra for new colonies hundreds of light years away, but businesses were extremely reluctant to follow. Most major Terran corporations were unwilling to risk their precious technology. Instead, they shipped resources from the colonies to Terra to become finished products. As a result, resource-poor or distant colonies received little economic aid, and the huge conglomerates exploited nearby worlds and those with a wealth of resources.

As the deposits nearby began to run out and shipping costs were becoming prohibitive, the Terran conglomerates had no choice but to build factories in the colonies near the available resources. The colonies boomed. New cities sprang up, new areas were opened to development, and uninhabitable worlds were made livable. Many worlds, particularly those near Terra, became self-sufficient.

This exploitation cycle ended abruptly when Director-General James McKenna failed to force the distant colonies into his new Terran Hegemony. When he decided to abandon his efforts, he was actually acknowledging the sovereignty of realms that had fought against Hegemony control. The industrial giants of Terra were very concerned because they had no guarantee of unrestricted travel beyond the borders of the Hegemony control. The conglomerates realized that resources would quickly become very scarce.

The Cameron family, who assumed control of the Hegemony after James McKenna's death, were well aware of this situation. Director-General Michael Cameron established the Hegemony Business Information Exchange (HBIE) in 2343 to coordinate government and business efforts. The HBIE established economic doctrine that guided the Hegemony for several centuries. The cornerstone of the policy, enacted by First Lady Margaret Cameron in 2380 and known unofficially as "The Mother Doctrine," was a series of laws prohibiting the dissemination of advanced Hegemony technology without government approval. There were harsh penalties for violation.

The Director-General had realized that as long as her realm had limited resources, it could not continue to outproduce its neighbors. The Camerons needed to protect their only advantage, Hegemony technology, which was already a decade ahead of the other realms.

The Hegemony Research and Development Centers, created by Michael Cameron to coordinate government research projects, were expanded under the Mother Doctrine to coordinate commercial research projects. They were also a conduit for the exchange of information between the government and manufacturers. The major conglomerates generally accepted the Mother Doctrine, believing that they could use their advanced knowledge to create superior products for sale to foreign realms.

With commercial research projects progressing before their eyes, Hegemony officials could easily determine what technology was too advanced for exportation and enter it on the Official List of Sensitive and Secret Technologies. Any technology remotely connected with the military, even a simple spray that improved the durability of HAF uniforms, went onto the list. In some instances, the HBIE stepped in to prevent the export of a holo-film that showed a glimpse of a protected technology.

Firms that felt the government had no right to restrict what they could sell to other realms quickly dubbed the prohibited items "The Cameron Blacklist." At first, several companies tried to ignore the restrictions. The seizure of several factories and treason charges against a few corporate executives ended resistance to the Mother Doctrine.

Despite great vigilance, the Hegemony could not prevent the smuggling of some of its technology by unscrupulous companies or by foreign agents. Technology was expanding so rapidly that the government tolerated an occasional loss, knowing that the stolen technology would soon be obsolete.

The government allowed the release of certain secrets. Several joint-ownership arrangements and other deals in the years preceding the Star League used Hegemony technology to improve another realm's marginal worlds. The Hegemony's reward in such agreements was often natural resources, which were beginning to dwindle by the beginning of the 26th century, despite government efforts to promote conservation.

The Terran Hegemony's economy had reached its limit when Ian Cameron assumed control in 2549. His options were unpleasant. One was to die a slow death as resources from Hegemony worlds trickled to nothing. Another was to increase imports, risking that other realms would use their advantage to gouge the Hegemony. Ian Cameron chose a third, characteristically brilliant solution: creation of a Star League.

STAR LEAGUE ECONOMY

The creation of the Star League in 2571 was much more than the political alliance of the six major realms of the Inner Sphere. It was the unification of six disparate economies. The Star League Accords contained provisions that dropped the economic barriers between the six realms. Each House leader had the right to govern the economy of his realm, but the newly unified economy proved so profitable that the Lords rarely balked at Star League suggestions.

The Department of Economic Relations, a part of the all-encompassing BSLA, had the right to judge when one member state took unfair economic advantage of a neighboring realm or independent world. The Camerons, always great believers in business ethics, did not tolerate greed on the part of companies or realms. The guilty faced stiff fines and embargoes.

The department also closely supervised trading companies that hauled products between realms. In 2582, the Shippers License Act required trading companies to conform to strict guidelines. A company that did not comply was barred from the many major ports accredited by Star League.

Many small companies could not afford to license their ships and operated illegally in the League-wide black market. These ships plied the shadows of the League, landing at worlds whose officials and populations, perhaps ignored by major companies, gladly allowed the ship's owners to sell their wares.

Though the government did not tolerate these "Free-Jumpers" officially, the League made no effort to curtail their activities. Because the purpose of the Shippers License Act was to ensure a measure of control and conformity among the big trading companies, the 900 Free-Jumpers actually provided a service by taking goods to the League's poorer sections.

CURRENCY

Though the economies of the six member states prospered under the Department of Economic Relations, it was not enough for First Lord Nicholas Cameron. Following his father's vision, Nicholas announced in 2621 his intention to finish uniting the member states' economies by creating the Star League Dollar. This became the standard currency everywhere. The member states were allowed to print the new currency for their own realms under close supervision, but the Star League government determined the amount.

First Lord Nicholas also set up the Central Stock Exchange (CSE), which allowed ten regional exchange businesses to trade shares in foreign companies. In addition to aiding the economy, the exchanges promoted peace between realms. Having economic interests in neighboring states made war less attractive.

The Central Stock Exchange was located in the Terran city of London. The other stock exchanges and the Star League mints were set up on border worlds between the member states. They were grouped in cities built by the Star League for the use of economists, brokers, and company executives. The cities' protection came from the SLDF, which usually had a major military base nearby.



160

EXCHANGES AND MINTS

Broker's Haven, El Giza

Printed FWL and CC currency. Destroyed in First Succession War.

Commerce City, Epsilon Eridani

Printed CC currency. Destroyed in the Amaris Coup.

Currency, Narellan

Printed CC and FS currency. Destroyed in First Succession War.

Monetary Gain, Talitha

Printed FWL currency. Destroyed in the Amaris Coup.

Moniesville, Preston

Printed LC and FWL currency. Destroyed in First Succession War.

Profitica, Stanzach

Printed DC and LC currency. Destroyed in First Succession War.

Prosperity, Ozawa

Printed FS currency. Destroyed in First Succession War.

Success, Lambrecht

Printed DC currency. Ransacked during the Amaris Coup.

The Exchange, Deshler

Printed FS and DC currency. Destroyed in Second Succession War.

Trader's City, Zollikofen

Printed LC currency. Destroyed in First Succession War.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS AMONG REALMS

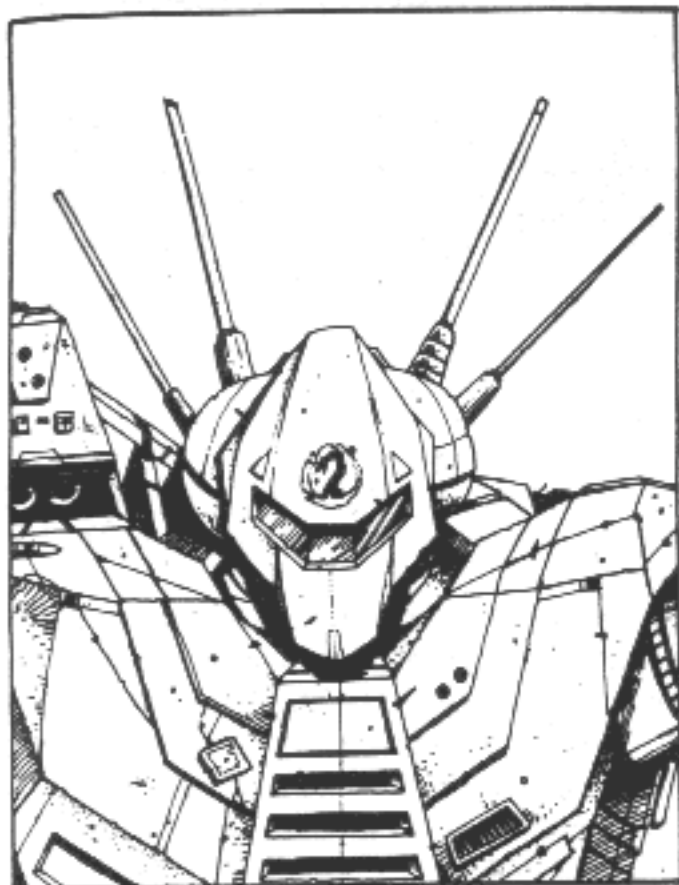
Lyran Commonwealth

Of all the member states, the Lyran Commonwealth was the one most like the Terran Hegemony. The Federation of Skye, the portion of the Commonwealth closest to Terra, was as developed as the Hegemony, and the Lyrans also had ample natural resources. There were hundreds of worlds that had not been fully explored, let alone used up.

The Lyrans were also extremely skilled businessmen and traders. Their trading vessels were common everywhere, and many wealthy Lyran businessmen had connections to countless industries throughout the League.

Thus, the Commonwealth was the Hegemony's most formidable economic adversary. Throughout the period of peace that came to be known as the Good Years, it was the Commonwealth that questioned the First Lord's plans, contested the Hegemony's continued reluctance to part with its advanced technology, and challenged its dominance in the marketplace.

Because of their close rivalry, there was very little trade between the two realms. The Commonwealth was not willing to part with its raw resources unless the Hegemony shared its restricted technology. Because that was unacceptable to the Directors-General, trade between the realms was confined to personal and entertainment items.



The Draconis Combine

For a closed realm often at political odds with the Camerons and the Hegemony, the Draconis Combine was amazingly willing to trade. While its economy had much potential, it was weak. Many Combine planets were technologically backward.

Because the Combine's natural resources were so plentiful, the Kurita family was happy to trade for sophisticated items to improve the underdeveloped sections of the realm. The Kuritas did not want to appear too eager to buy Hegemony products, and so most of the Combine transactions were handled by intermediaries. This practice was particularly useful when the Combine and the Hegemony were feuding. The Combine continued to buy Hegemony products even at the height of a crisis.

High on the Combine's list were factory robots and construction equipment, followed closely by ships and ship parts. In return, the Combine sent the Hegemony metals and chemicals. Though trade with the Combine was sometimes risky, it was usually very profitable. Realizing that the Hegemony and the Combine needed each other, the Camerons never threatened to halt the trade in the many political crises with House Kurita.

The Federated Suns

The Terran Hegemony got along best with the Federated Suns. The Davion family, without the industrial might of the Commonwealth or the anti-Cameron bias of the Kuritas and Liaos, approached the Hegemony as simple customers.

The economy of the Federated Suns was similar to that of the Draconis Combine, with many backwater worlds. Because the Davions were so pleasant, the Camerons were often overly courteous to the Federated Suns. Machinery bought from the Hegemony arrived with advisers to install it and teach the buyers how to use it. The Camerons even bent their restrictions on advanced technology and sometimes offered the Federated Suns items that were contraband for other realms.

In return, the Federated Suns sent the Terran Hegemony great shiploads of resources. By the end of the Good Years, the Federated Suns was the Hegemony's largest source of raw materials. These cordial and lucrative relations continued until the fall of the Star League.



161

The Capellan Confederation

The Capellan Confederation and the Terran Hegemony had a history of tensions that began long before the creation of the Star League. Any hopes for improvement disappeared during the Reunification War. The Liaos did not want to fight the Periphery realms, with whom they did considerable business. The Confederation reduced its commitment to the SLDF and charged a fee for every soldier who moved through the realm. The First Lord retaliated, but in ways hidden by a veneer of courtesy and civility. After the war, the tensions relaxed temporarily.

The Capellan Confederation was the poorest of the member states. The realm's early history was dominated by the Liao family's conquest of small domains. Politics and war left little energy for development, leaving the Capellan Confederation with only pockets of industrialized factory worlds.

Because of this, the Confederation was in no position to snub Hegemony goods. Indeed, the Confederation was one of the Hegemony's best customers, especially for farming equipment and other goods that helped make the most of Capellan resources. However, the Capellans quietly grumbled about the high cost of every purchase. If something broke down, the Liaos were furious, claiming they were deliberately cheated. Exasperated Hegemony merchants began privately calling Capellans "the Complainers."

Because many of the Confederation planets had never been mined, the only products available to the Hegemony were such natural resources as food, timber, and meat animals.

The Free Worlds League

The Free Worlds League was a realm with well-developed resources and a strong industrial base. Its businesses ran efficiently and competed against Hegemony and Commonwealth companies.

It was easier for the Hegemony to deal with the Free Worlds League than with the Lyran Commonwealth. Despite their business acumen, the Free Worlds leaders were not tough negotiators, mainly because the Marik family was in constant flux. Regional loyalties often superseded laws made by the Free Worlds government. Instead of dealing with one representative of the Free Worlds League, Hegemony companies received dozens of visits from buyers representing each homeworld.

With so many trading delegations from the Free Worlds League buying Hegemony products, some of them became indebted to the Terran Hegemony. Five times during the Good Years, the debts owed to the Hegemony by the FWL reached a critical point. The Hegemony tried to force the rulers of the Free Worlds League to limit the number of its buyers. When that was unsuccessful, the Terran Hegemony in 2729 cut off House Marik's credit, sparking the Atreus Credit Crisis.

The Mariks thought that they could survive the crisis by halting purchases of Hegemony machinery. As months became years, however, the old machinery began to fail. Unable to buy replacement parts, the Free Worlds League watched its economy crumble.

In 2732, the Captain-General decided he had no choice but to rid his realm of debt by allowing the Hegemony to take whatever raw resources it wanted. For a year, the Hegemony took shiploads away from the Free Worlds League.

After the Atreus Credit Crisis, the Free Worlds League used restraint in its purchase of Hegemony products. Hegemony merchants found this trade chaotic and confusing, but profitable.

The Periphery

The Hegemony did a great deal of unfair business with the Periphery Territories. The Reunification War placed the Periphery under Star League control. The Bureau of Star League Affairs ran its economy. For major projects or purchases, the BSLA announced the nature of the contract and then awarded it to the company with the best bid. Hegemony companies always won the contracts. The companies and governments of the other member states complained bitterly, but they could not dispute the advantage of the Hegemony's advanced technology.

Once they began to do business in the Periphery, Hegemony companies easily prospered and expanded. Though the BSLA had laws and rules to prevent exploitation of Periphery people and resources, the rubble and blighted worlds of the war's aftermath created a chaotic trading climate. There was no organized resistance if a company charged too much or stripped too much of the land's resources.

Once the Council Lords removed all moral restraint, Hegemony companies began stripping whole planets of their resources and shipping them home without any pretense of paying. It was not long before the troops of Stefan Amaris eliminated those companies and the mountains of stolen raw materials lay unused near destroyed factories on Hegemony worlds.



TOP TEN HEGEMONY COMPANIES



CERES METALS

Headquarters: Sao Paulo, Brazil, Terra

Regional Offices: Capella, Coventry, Ward, Kimball II

Ruling Families: Kimball family of Terra; Igota family of Thorin

Business Profile:

Ceres Metals was formed on Terra in 2322, when business leaders were beginning to realize the problems created by space travel and the profits it promised. At first, Ceres was exclusively concerned with mining rare metals and chemicals from nearby worlds like Mars and Venus, but the exodus of people from Terra offered the small company even greater opportunities in star systems far from Terra and Sol.

Under the leadership of the Kimballs and Igotas, the company ventured to the colonies and diversified. By the time the Star League was formed, Ceres Metal had established itself as a major manufacturer of JumpShips, DropShips, precision instruments, and military hardware. Its factories were scattered throughout the Hegemony and member states.

Ceres Metals made its biggest profits in trade. Ceres JumpShips, carrying huge cargo DropShips, established many major trade routes that are still used. The company soon became extremely large and vital to many worlds. The biggest complaint lodged against Ceres was from the ruling families of member states, who charged that changes in JumpShip routes interfered in the politics of their realms.

Ceres Metals was one of the few Hegemony companies that survived the fall of the Star League and the Succession Wars. The core of its industrial might, its factories and shipyards inside the Hegemony, along with its headquarters, were lost in the fighting, but it still operates hundreds of mining, refining, and manufacturing operations.

A VIEW FROM THE PERIPHERY

High-boron alloy, a metal similar to the aligned-crystal steel used in BattleMech armor, was once produced by the hundreds of tons per year in several factories, including ones on Hesperus II, Ozawa, Geifer, New Delos, and Lambrecht. It was used in construction on planets with high incidence of seismic activity, including portions of the west coast of the North American continent, just a few hundred kilometers from the Star League capitol. It was also used for government buildings throughout the Hegemony, and to a lesser extent, the other Inner Sphere realms. High-boron alloy was part of what made Castles Brian so strong.

The factories that produced the alloy have all been destroyed, in the coup by Stefan Amaris, in General Kerensky's campaign to liberate the Hegemony, and in the Succession Wars. The small surplus from the factories was used long ago for fortifications. Though the technology to produce high-boron alloy still exists, it would be very expensive to set up the factory and retrieve the new materials. The House leaders would not hesitate to allocate those resources to BattleMech manufacture, but construction materials have a much lower priority.

High-boron alloy is especially valued for its heat conductivity, tensile strength, toughness, and rigidity. In the hands of a good architect, it is also one of the most beautiful of building materials. It also is very durable.

—From *The Price of Independence*, by Antonia Ximenez de Katsuhira, Alliance Press, Alpheratz, 3020

DI TRON HEAVY INDUSTRIES

DI TRON HEAVY INDUSTRIES

Headquarters: Tokyo, Japan, Terra

Regional Offices: New Earth, Sirius, Zebebelgenubi

Ruling Family: Toshimotos of Terra

Business Profile:

In 2203, Iyeasu Toshimoto unified 20 major Japanese industries, creating Di Tron Heavy Industries.

At first, the new company focused on grabbing a large share of the construction market in the Hegemony. Its subsidiaries built cities and military bases for the government. After the creation of the Star League, Di Tron expanded and diversified. Di Tron Shipbuilders was created, and soon ten shipyards were building quality spacecraft for the civilian and military markets.

The Toshimoto family did not get along very well with the Kurita family of the Draconis Combine. This became obvious from the limited, and often dirty, business deals between the two. Why the two families did not get along is uncertain, but apparently one family had offended the other in the latter half of the 23rd century.

Most of Di Tron Heavy Industries died with the Star League. Only one shipyard in the Lyran Commonwealth survived. It operates under the name Ioto Industries, manufacturing Drop-Ships for that realm.

ULSOP

ULSOP ROBOTICS

Headquarters: Gray Valley City, Zebebelgenubi

Regional Offices: Terra, Murchison, Tharkad

Ruling Family: None, elected Chief Executive Officer

Business Profile:

Once a subsidiary of the long-forgotten International Business Machines, Ulsop Robotics broke with its parent company in 387 and grew to become the Star League's major manufacturer of advanced robotic devices.

Ulsop made most of its money designing and building assembly-line robots. The quality of these machines, which often ran for decades without repair, was unquestioned, and served to make Ulsop officials like saints to governments, which cited them as examples to other manufacturers. The quality of Ulsop factory robots and their total reliability allowed the company to branch out into other areas where robots could be useful.

Ulsop's first experiment was the *Bright Star* Automated Scout JumpShip. Built in 2545, the ship had an extremely sophisticated computer that was designed to map stars and planets in an unexplored region. To test its capabilities, the ship was launched from above Ozawa to map the surrounding star systems. The ship promptly malfunctioned and began to leave the Hegemony. Its designers could not regain control, and it was last seen above New Samarkand.

Ulsop had other, more successful, experimental projects. One was its Guardian series of automated security guards. Ranging from the tank-like Giant Guardian, to the vaguely humanoid Swift Guardian, these robots became standard equipment at high-security-conscious factories. Ulsop's efforts to build a combat robot failed; trained soldiers could always outperform it.

First Lord Jonathan Cameron looked to Ulsop to build key sections of his Space Defense Systems. Ulsop designed the artificial intelligence of the SDS ground bases.

Very little of Ulsop Robotics survived the coup by Stefan Amaris and the wars that followed. What did survive was taken over by the Lyran Commonwealth.



163

DUKEMPIC

F • O • O • D • S

DUKEMPIC FOODS

Headquarters: New Leningrad, Keid

Regional Offices: Terra, Venus, New Home, Terra Firma

Ruling Family: None, elected Chief Executive Officer

Business Profile:

Dukempic Foods was famous throughout the Star League for exotic foods. Company representatives visited every planet with indigenous lifeforms searching for a new plant or animal for new food items.

To make sure its products were safe, Dukempic Foods had an extensive exobiology department. The department's main laboratories, near the company headquarters, were massive, well-equipped, and second only to the research facilities of the member states, which often came to them for assistance.

The company found that it could earn quite a bit of extra money, as well as speed its analysis of lifeforms, if it allowed the public to use the temporary exobiology research stations it had established on colony worlds. The company also earned extra money by analyzing alien creatures the public brought in. Many of the company's best-selling food items were found this way.

Archaeologists stumbled upon the duplicate records of Dukempic Foods in the late 29th century. It had been assumed that all of Dukempic Foods had been lost in the collapse of the Star League. The duplicate records, found in the mountains of Terra Firma, helped provide food sources for marginal worlds.



MITCHELL
VEHICLES
INTERSTELLAR

MITCHELL VEHICLES INTERSTELLAR

Headquarters: GreenVale City, Graham IV

Regional Offices: Mars, Venus, New Earth, Sirius

Ruling Family: Mitchell family of Graham IV

Business Profile:

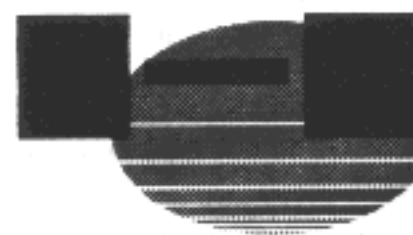
Mitchell Vehicles was an industrial giant from its inception. It formed in 2108 when three major North American automobile manufacturers joined forces. By the time the Star League began, the company was manufacturing JumpShips, DropShips, and all types of ground and air vehicles. It also had huge contracts with the Hegemony Armed Forces for warships and military vehicles. During the Good Years, the company had more than 200 factories and shipyards in the Hegemony.

For most of its history, Mitchell Vehicles Interstellar was remarkably patriotic. Its executives believed strongly in the rules and regulations of the Hegemony government and were never accused of selling a banned item to a foreign realm. It built no factories outside the Hegemony.

The Amaris coup and the collapse of the Star League obliterated the company. Almost nothing remains of Mitchell Vehicles except the ruins of a few factories that have long since been picked clean.



MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES



HOLDEN
PLANETARY
ENGINEERS

QUO MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES

Headquarters: London, Terra

Regional Offices: Tharkad, Atreus, Sian, New Avalon, Luthien

Ruling Family: Jasper family of Terra

Business Profile:

Quo Medical was the largest manufacturer of medical equipment and one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the Star League.

Quo Medical always had an uneasy relationship with the government of the Terran Hegemony because of a long dispute over whether the company was registered in the Hegemony or the Lyran Commonwealth. The company claimed that its offices on Tharkad opened one day before its headquarters in London, and so Quo Medical was a Commonwealth company. The Hegemony government disputed this claim. The argument was important because the Cameron family wanted Quo Medical products and equipment on its Official List of Sensitive and Secret Technologies. The battle was unsettled for three centuries, until the company finally won in Star League courts.

Some records, such as blueprints of medical machinery and the chemical diagrams of medicines, survived the downfall, but the technology required to build them is long forgotten.

HOLDEN PLANETARY ENGINEERS

Headquarters: Cirus Crater, Mars

Regional Offices: Terra, Venus, Sirius, Caph

Ruling Family: None, elected Chief Executive Officer

Business Profile:

The terraforming of worlds was an extremely profitable business during the Good Years, and many companies jumped in to take advantage. Holden Planetary Engineers was by far the largest.

Holden was originally a part of the Hegemony government until 2408, when the Hegemony High Court declared that the government was restraining trade by doing all its own terraforming projects. The BSLA's Habitability Department, run by David Holden, was privatized and grew quickly. By the time of the Star League's collapse, Holden had performed more than 300 terraforming projects. It manufactured such equipment as oxygen factories and storm inhibitors. It also bred microbes and plants that aided the terraforming process.

Not much was left of the company after the coup by Stefan Amaris. The tidbits of information about the terraforming process that scientists have today came from the ruins of the Holden Planetary Engineers headquarters.

DUTALLA DREVERS: TRADER

After a five-year stint in the SLDF, frugal MechWarrior Dutalla Drevers had saved a sizable sum. She used it to buy a *Griffin BattleMech* from the government, a privilege granted to MechWarriors who have served the SLDF faithfully.

She then looked for a job as a guard for a noble family, but instead found Nicholas Cystrosos, the owner of a private merchant vessel in an area of the Periphery where she had been stationed. He specialized in trading among the lawless frontier worlds on the far side of the Periphery Territories. Recent losses to pirates made him realize that he needed a way to protect his property and to "persuade" some of his more reluctant customers to pay their debts.

For the first years of their partnership, Drevers was content to sit in her 'Mech to protect the trading that went on around her. As time wore on, she became convinced that she could do well as a trader, too. Intrigued by Drevers' confidence and ideas, Nicholas Cystrosos decided to let her try.

She made bags out of cargo nets so that she could carry large items across the back of her 'Mech. She also modified her 'Mech by adding compartments to its legs for carrying more goods. This was connected to a sophisticated money-teller system that could receive payments and dispense goods with Drevers still in her 'Mech.

When she did not have to guard the ship, Drevers, with the blessings of her boss, loaded up her sacks with goods and walked to towns and villages that were too isolated by bad terrain for other traders to reach. She was often gone for weeks at a time, returning only when she had sold everything or when it was time for her ship to leave.

She walked up the main street of a village, broadcasting over her 'Mech's speaker system that she was just a trader and not hostile. As she waited in the town square people cautiously approached the massive, armored traveling salesman.

Drevers quickly realized that Star Dollars were in short supply on the frontier, and so she learned to barter and trade for goods. She traded portable water-purification systems for gold, hand-held communicators for rough Derrellic Quartz, and portable holosets for Carpathian goats.

With her bags of merchandise and money, Drevers became the target for every adventurous robber on frontier worlds. She could usually scare off all but the most persistent attackers with her weaponry, but on ten occasions, she was forced to battle other 'Mechs. Of the ten encounters, Drevers won six, in two her cargo was destroyed and her cargo was damaged in four, in spite of the severe disadvantage of carrying extra weight.

The profitability of the trade outweighed the loss of the other four cargoes. Her career as a 'Mech Trader lasted 20 years. Drevers became a legend along the frontier. Other warriors adopted her way of making a living, but none was as successful. When she was 50, Drevers retired with a sizable fortune to Sabik, where she spent the rest of her life traveling across that hellish planet's surface in her 'Mech.

—From *Sketches of Famous Frontier Figures*, by Tossant "Tex" Abrams, FarAway Press, 2787

NIRASAKI

COMPUTERS COLLECTIVE



165

NETC

NIRASAKI COMPUTERS COLLECTIVE

Headquarters: The Blue Heron Commune, Nirasaki

Regional Offices: Terra, New Earth, Caph

Ruling Family: None, communally controlled

Business Profile:

The Nirasaki Computers Collective, a unique force in the Star League computer industry, was founded in 2599, when three students from the College of Talitha decided to form their own company. Their "Scientific Commune" quickly rose to become an innovative leader in the design of computer systems.

The company was built on the principles of communal responsibility, a corporate style with no real leaders. Though this made the company rather chaotic, it encouraged the workers' creativity. Their innovative computer designs were the most sophisticated in the Hegemony. Most of the NCC's products were for the HAF, but the company's personal computers, Blue Lotus PCs, were extremely popular with Hegemony citizens.



KRESTER'S SHIP CONSTRUCTION

Headquarters: Station Alpha, orbiting Terra

Regional Offices: Keid, Thorin, Terra Firma, Yorii

Ruling Family: Krester family of Terra

Business Profile:

Krester's Ship Construction was one of the Hegemony's largest shipbuilders. During the height of the Star League, the company had more than 30 shipyards, six of them outside the Hegemony.

When the company was planning its major designs, the huge *Behemoth* and *Mammoth* DropShips, the government had assured them that nothing would prevent sales outside the Hegemony. When the first prototypes made their maiden flights in 2658, however, the government reversed its decision and slapped both ships on the advanced-technology blacklist. The company could sell its new ships only in the Hegemony. This unexpected decision caused extreme financial hardship because the company had been counting on foreign sales to recoup its huge development costs.

In 2650, the two prototypes were stolen from their moorings above Keid by two crews from an unmarked JumpShip. Once the JumpShip with its hijacked DropShips was in the Lyran Commonwealth, they were auctioned off to the highest bidder, who took them and disappeared. The Hegemony government, certain that a foreign shipbuilder would develop two new DropShips resembling the hijacked ships, finally allowed Krester to sell the *Mammoth* and *Behemoth* to foreign customers.

Some officials thought Krester engineered the hijacking to press the Hegemony to relent. If the Camerons believed that, they never let on. Krester continued to be a major manufacturer of ships for the Star League Defense Forces.

NEW EARTH TRADING COMPANY

Headquarters: Meridith, New Earth

Regional Offices: Terra, Sirius, Caph, Altair

Ruling Family: Newcombe family of New Earth

Business Profile:

The New Earth Trading Company may have been the first interstellar trading company. How it learned to profit from the chaotic exodus of people leaving Terra for distant colonies during the 22nd century became a pattern for other trading companies.

The company was quick to diversify when the wave of colonists from Terra became a trickle. One of the company's many new interests was robotics. From the two major NETC research centers, one near the corporate headquarters on New Earth and the other near Sydney, Australia, Terra, came major technological advances.

Competition between the NETC and other robotics companies, such as Ulsop Robotics, was often fierce. In order to compete, NETC often bent the rules, particularly the laws governing the export of high-technology items. Hardly a decade passed without a new accusation that the NETC violated trade laws. Along with the frequent firings and fines, this created an outlaw image, which the company used advantageously in its advertising, especially in other realms.

Despite questions about its trustworthiness, the NETC received contracts to design and build major components of the Space Defense Systems. The company also won the challenging task of designing artificial intelligence programs for automated warships. They responded by developing the first "mental map" of a human's brain, that of Admiral Kinru Dvarahal, a noted tactician whose fighting abilities became institutionalized far into the future. With the NETC's artificial intelligence, the drone warships fought with all of Admiral Dvarahal's cleverness and skill against the ships of General Kerensky.

The New Earth Trading Company survived the fall of the Star League and the wars that followed. However, most of the company's high-technology subsidiaries were destroyed, forcing the firm back to trading, its original strength.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

To say that the economy of the Terran Hegemony was the most robust ever seen is an understatement. The average income of a person employed by a modest Hegemony company was about ten times what it is today. Coupled with the staggering array of consumer goods available in the Hegemony, life during the Star League seems like a little bit of heaven.

The Hegemony economy did have weaknesses, the most damaging being the lack of raw materials and the need to protect its technological advantage. Perhaps the Cameron family's greatest challenge was balancing the needs of the Hegemony economy with those of the Star League. They created a single economy among the six member states that was based on the Hegemony's superior industries but that allowed the Hegemony companies to maintain their technological superiority. It was a system that worked well and that formed the foundation of a peaceful and prosperous Star League.

SOCIETY



166

The society of the Terran Hegemony was once characterized as being "a noisy, argumentative harmony." The people of the Hegemony prized frank and open discussions just as deeply as they valued cooperation and negotiations. This brief chapter describes how these conflicting qualities, combined with a broad and intensive education, made the people of the Terran Hegemony the core and model upon which the Star League was based.

RELIGION

It was once believed that religion and science were mutual adversaries that could not peacefully coexist. During the Terran Hegemony's era of greatest scientific achievements, however, church attendance was the highest it had been in centuries.

The people of the Hegemony were remarkably religious. Religious writings of the period were laced with references to everyone's duty to honor ideas, arts, discoveries, and everything else that came from Terra, the Cradle of Humanity. Everyone in the Hegemony took his obligations seriously.

All of the ancient religions, including Roman Catholicism, Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam, had large and devoted followings in the Hegemony. Newer religions, especially those born on other worlds, were basically scorned.

The major religions coexisted peacefully in the Hegemony. Visitors would have been struck by the sight of churches, synagogues, and mosques clustered together in a beautiful park or on a picturesque hillside.

Religious intolerance was extremely rare and was usually confined to sparsely populated worlds. When it did occur, inter-faith organizations tried to end the discord through teaching. Sanctions, such as excommunications, were levied against people who persisted in hateful behavior against those of a different faith. These measures usually worked, but the Buddhist-Hindu riots in the Thorin city of Ramallah in 2711 showed that these efforts were sometimes insufficient.

All of the old religions had their headquarters on Terra. Each had its own bureaucracy and kept its own records of births, deaths, marriages, and religious ranking.

The forces of Stefan Amaris were very cruel to all religions during the coup. The massacre of the Pope and cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church and the entombment of the Islamic leaders in Mecca were two of many atrocities carried out by the soldiers of Stefan Amaris, who seemed to have a virulent hatred for any religion. Throughout the Hegemony, synagogues, churches, and temples were destroyed or desecrated, and valuable records were either stolen or destroyed.

Though the religions survive today, their grandeur of the Good Years is gone. Ruins of the desecrated houses of worship still haunt many cities on the worlds around Terra. People living nearby shun them, claiming that the ghosts of the murdered visit the crumbling walls.

EDUCATION

Education was always considered vital to the survival of the Terran Hegemony and the Star League. Executive Order 4, issued by First Lord Ian Cameron in 2572, was a series of laws and suggestions seeking to unite the educational systems of the member states. It did so by offering a group of courses "aimed at promoting unity and peace by enlightening our young men and women about the other states that make up this noble experiment called the Star League."

The curriculum began with the youngest child, with approved picture books and stories about the lives of children in other member states. As the child grew older, he received books about the other member states and the Star League. The curriculum was completed at League universities that required all students to take special courses about the Star League and its member states. Hegemony teachers and authors, and even members of the Cameron family, wrote the teaching materials.

The First Lord had no legal power to alter a domain's internal structure, and so the Executive Order was mostly voluntary. Four of the five member states adopted the Universal Curriculum; only the Draconis Combine flatly refused. Though many of the schools altered the curriculum later, the original emphasis on peaceful coexistence and diplomacy remained influential.

In the Terran Hegemony, the average citizen had 14 years of education, which usually began at age five and ended with graduation from a three-year college and a Bachelor's degree in a chosen field. This was two years more than the average citizen received in other member states and three years more than in the Periphery. The average Hegemony citizen would be considered a near-genius today in our era of bombed-out schools and devastating lack of knowledge.

There were many reasons why Hegemony citizens were so well-educated. From their first day of school, they were exposed to computers, and by the time they graduated from college, they were skilled computer operators, no matter what their profession. The Camerons also honored teachers, making the profession highly respected by the rest of society. Teachers in the Hegemony had unique incentives; they received bonuses whenever one of their former students completed a grade with honors.

GOLDEN TEN UNIVERSITIES

The Golden Ten Universities were built in the Terran Hegemony during the 2580s. They represented the pinnacle of the Cameron family's education goals. Scholarships to those universities were given to students from all over the League and were based solely on grades. Other things, such as titles or ability to pay tuition, were not factors. Graduates usually went on to become important members of the Star League bureaucratic and diplomatic corps.

University of Thorin

This university was nestled in the dark forests of Thorin's northern continent. The focus was on economics. The university was severely damaged during the Amaris coup and was later abandoned. The forest has taken over the deserted campus.

Caph Institute of Technology

CIT specialized in the study of the natural sciences, particularly paleontology and chemistry. It was built atop a high hill and surrounded by an electronic barrier system to keep the planet's terrible lizards from entering. The university was gutted by the forces of Stefan Amaris. Caph was the scene of bitter fighting after the fall of the Star League, leaving the campus in ruins and the lizards extinct.

Universities of the Puget Sound States

This was a group of five universities and colleges near the Court of the Star League on Terra. The violence of the Amaris coup and the savagery of the conquering Republicans destroyed three of the universities. The remaining two were used by the Amaris forces as receiving points for the information they took from other Hegemony colleges. During the liberation of Terra, one of the remaining schools, Pacific Lutheran University, was destroyed. The remaining college, the University of Washington, and its vast booty of stolen information, survived the war. Most of the information in its extensive computer system was wiped clean one week before General Kerensky and his soldiers began their Exodus. The little information that survived is still available.

Academies of Keid

These were three separate colleges: the Jugens College of Metallurgy, the Deborah Cameron College of Diplomatic Studies, and the Simon DeFrey College of Economics. All three schools had high standards, and graduates usually became prominent in their fields. The Republicans destroyed all three. The Amaris forces did not know that an annex to the A of K existed on the opposite side of the planet. It survived untouched and became a vital source of information for future generations.

University of Mars

This university's specialty was journalism. Its students published the *Martian Times*, an influential newspaper sold throughout the Hegemony, and produced a holonews program. Its teachers and students were murdered by Republican troops for refusing to publish propaganda for Emperor Stefan Amaris. Valuable historical information has been recovered from the ruins of this university.

New Earth University

This university concentrated on the care and running of commercial spaceships. Because of this, the university was divided into two campuses. A large space station served as the university's JumpShip and DropShip training center, and the second campus was an academic center. Neither school survived the forces of the Rim Worlds Republic.



167

James McKenna University

This university in the Terran city of Glasgow was devoted to foreign relations. Its students joined the Star League diplomatic corps if they graduated with high marks. The university was first defaced by Rim Worlds forces, then destroyed during the battles to liberate Terra. Little was recovered from the rubble.

College of Talitha

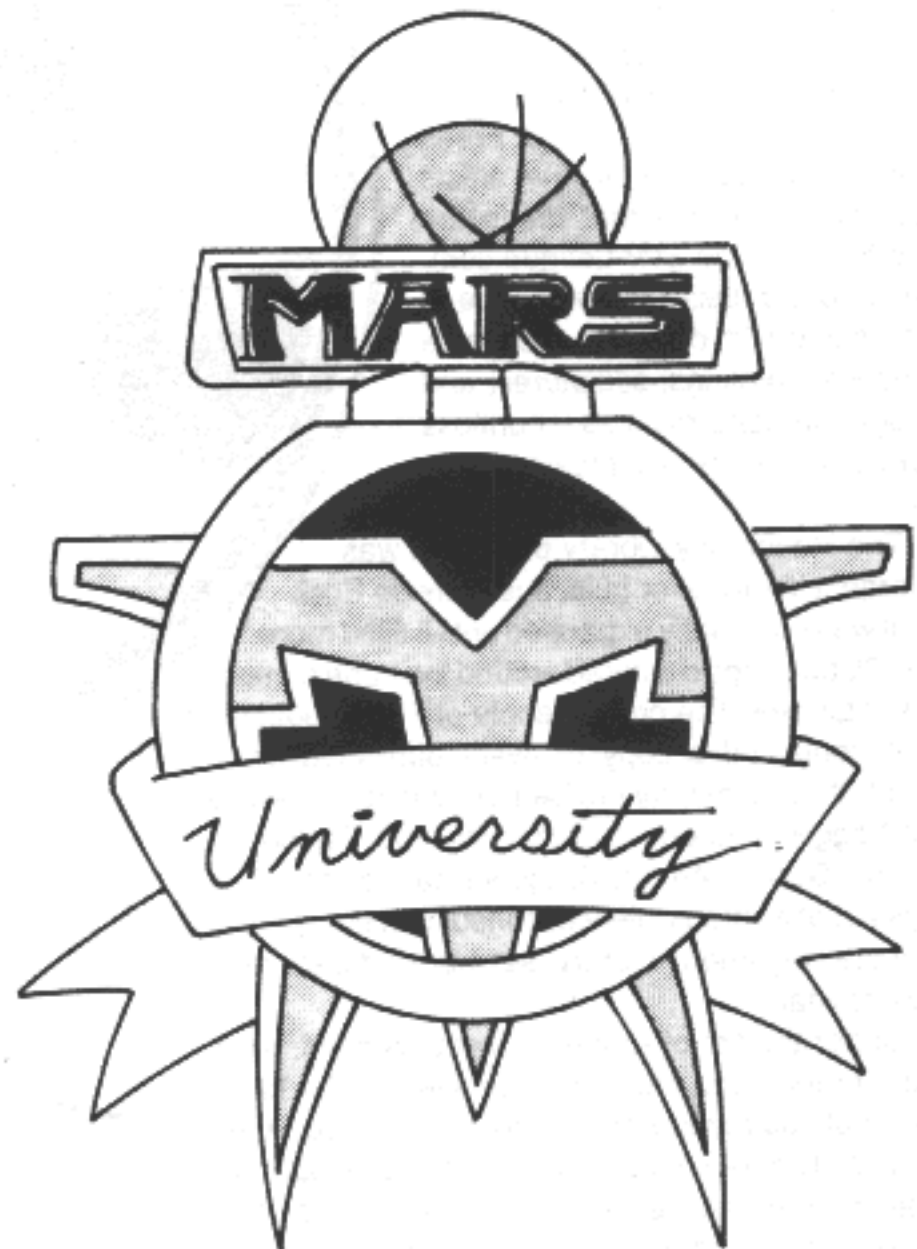
Design studies were the specialization of the College of Talitha. Its students learned how to design everything from personal hygiene devices to JumpShips. There were close ties between this college and Hegemony Research and Development Centers. The Amaris forces were quick to search through its records and secret projects. They left little behind. Today the college stands abandoned.

University of Lambrecht

This university focused on the hard sciences, such as physics and astronomy. It was destroyed during the fight to liberate the planet from the Republicans. Intelligence agents have recently turned up information that the school's faculty may have hidden their notes and computer memory on secret projects.

Addicks University

This university was devoted to training teachers and professors. To provide a realistic training environment, Addicks ran five other schools in which teacher trainees could develop their skills with real students. Nothing remains.



ARTS

The incredibly sophisticated technology of the Terran Hegemony made it a worker's paradise. With 90 percent of the population well-versed in advanced computer skills, job training usually meant simply acquainting the trainee with a new computer program. People with mechanical skills, those who could disassemble machines or fix computers, were highly prized and could command top wages. The pay was high, and the workplace usually congenial and relaxed. The work week averaged 35 hours on industrialized worlds.

When not working, people in the Hegemony had a huge media industry for entertainment. Hundreds of channels were available on the holo-entertainment sets, which, though luxury items today, were found in every Hegemony household in the Star-League era. People also had easy access to live entertainment. Every city had orchestras and musical groups of all types. Theaters were common, and many troupes toured the Star League.

Art and artists were highly respected. In a realm where most jobs consisted of pushing buttons, those who survived on their creativity were considered a cut above the average person. The ancient tradition of patronage, in which the rich and nobles supported a struggling artist, was revived during the early years of the Star League. Freed of their financial worries, the artists blossomed in a way that made the Good Years of the Star League comparable to the Italian Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries. To house the books, paintings, sculptures, and to stage the performances, countless libraries, museums, and theaters were built.

The Hegemony Library on Thorin was the largest library ever built. Just outside Ecol City, it was constantly expanded until it filled more than 100 buildings clustered around the huge domed Central Library. The proud people of Thorin boasted that it contained a copy of every published book. Though that claim may not be true, the library was a mind-boggling warehouse of information. During the coup, the Second Amaris Dragoons set it on fire. That single act of wanton violence, consuming every building of the Hegemony Library, set mankind back hundreds of years.

Under the fist of Emperor Stefan Amaris, other major libraries and museums suffered similar fates. Those not destroyed were looted and defaced. A few survived. The Museum of Ancient Art on Caph, the Library of Star League Peace, and the Institute of the Arts on Northwind were the three most important survivors. Even they were damaged by the First and Second Succession Wars.



168

What was created during the golden years of Star League art went far beyond anything that came before or since. Artforms were created, like Laser Performance Art or Cryogenic Air Sculptures, which totally disappeared once the League collapsed and the Succession Wars began.

What remains of art from the Star League is now scattered throughout the Inner Sphere. For many, the fall of the Star League is mourned, not only for the loss of technology or of a peaceful existence, but for the works of art that were trampled beneath the boots of war.



LASER SCULPTURE

In ancient Japan, the Emperor proclaimed craftsmen who kept specialized skills alive to be living natural treasures. Artisans from samurai-sword makers to kabuki actors were so honored.

One of the odder bits of irrational tyranny perpetrated by Hohiro Kurita in the late 30th century was rescinding this status for laser sculptors. It seems that the greatest of these artists/artisans, who used precision settings on high-tech instruments to create laser sculptures of amazing purity out of any number of materials, was a man named Matsuo Biswas, who made impassioned sculptures in praise of peace. The Star League had been his best customer, using his works to adorn government buildings throughout the Terran Hegemony and the rest of the Inner Sphere, though rich patrons were to be found in all six major houses.

Hohiro Kurita disapproved of peace. Despite the fact that Biswas was two centuries dead by the time Kurita made his judgment on Biswas' art, he was banished from the Draconis Combine; though he left no heirs, having been a lifelong bachelor, his progeny were also banished. All artists working in the medium were ordered to cease and desist immediately.

The Draconis Combine was the only realm that subsidized the immensely expensive process of laser sculpture. Since the beginning of the Succession Wars, no artist has had the means of working in this medium.

—From *Hohiro Kurita: A Biography*, by Joan Trait, Investigations Press, Celeano, 3002



169

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The society of the Terran Hegemony had many strengths: its monetary wealth kept poverty to a minimum; everyone was highly educated; and religion, the arts, and political differences were protected and encouraged. There is very little to fault, aside from a certain pettiness among the classes.

The other realms, though admiring this harmony, did little to imitate it. Aside from altering their education programs to suit the Universal Curriculum and from copying fashions and art, the ruling families of the five Inner Sphere realms made little effort to change their societies.

Perhaps the Terran Hegemony's greatest societal weakness was its inability to transfer its philosophy to the other member states.

SOCIETAL PROBLEMS

Despite the seemingly idyllic nature of Terran Hegemony society during the Star League era, there were problems. One of the worst was the conflict between urban and rural communities. By 2700, more than 85 percent of the population was employed in the cities, and most of the rest were in the country on the ranches and farms. Though one might expect the city dwellers to look down on the farmers, the situation was quite the opposite. The farmers felt superior, that working in the sun, toiling and sweating (even though most farms were as automated as factories) made them better than the urban button-pushers. The farmers, wearing their tans like medals, ordered city people about.

Though this attitude was never carried beyond fistfights, there were times when aggressive farmers refused to sell food to the cities. The usual result of these farmer strikes was that the city went hungry for a few days and the farmer lost money. On some worlds, the problem became chronic.

There were similar conflicts between the newly rich and those who had inherited their wealth, between space-goers and land-huggers, and between civilians and career military personnel. All of this was generally on the level of snubs and slights, however, and rarely was someone's life or property endangered.



ATLAS OF THE TERRAN HEGEMONY



170

The Terran Hegemony was the heart and soul of the Star League. It provided the Star League with its leaders, its science, and its culture. The Hegemony was by far the League's smallest member state, occupying only 105 worlds clustered around its capital, Terra.

At the height of the Star League, the Terran Hegemony also had influence over an additional 72 worlds. It got footholds on many of these planets in elaborate business treaties with neighboring realms. The Hegemony gained a presence on still more in its diplomatic efforts to settle disputes over contested worlds. The Hegemony stepped in and managed the planet's affairs, dividing the profits with the realms disputing the claims.

This atlas examines 18 worlds of the Terran Hegemony. Aside from giving the usual pertinent data about star type and system description, the atlas briefly tells what a planet was like during the glory days of the Star League, contrasted to what it is today. It also tells the present ownership of a planet and describes any discoveries of Star League technology made there. This atlas then lists the other worlds of the Terran Hegemony, the worlds it jointly owned with its neighbors, and the contested worlds it was asked to administer.

If there is a working recharge station at one or both of a system's jump points, then the entry will list *Zenith* and/or *Nadir* to indicate at which jump point the station is located. *Percentage and Level of Native Life* is a rough estimate of how much of the world's plant and animal life is indigenous, as well as stating the highest level of development reached by its fauna.

World Name: Bryant

Star Type: F5IV

Position in System: 4

Time to Jump Point: 15 days

Recharging Station: Nadir

Present Affiliation: Capellan Confederation

Population: 23,500,000 during Star League, 63,000 today

Percentage and Level of Native Life: 40%, Mammal

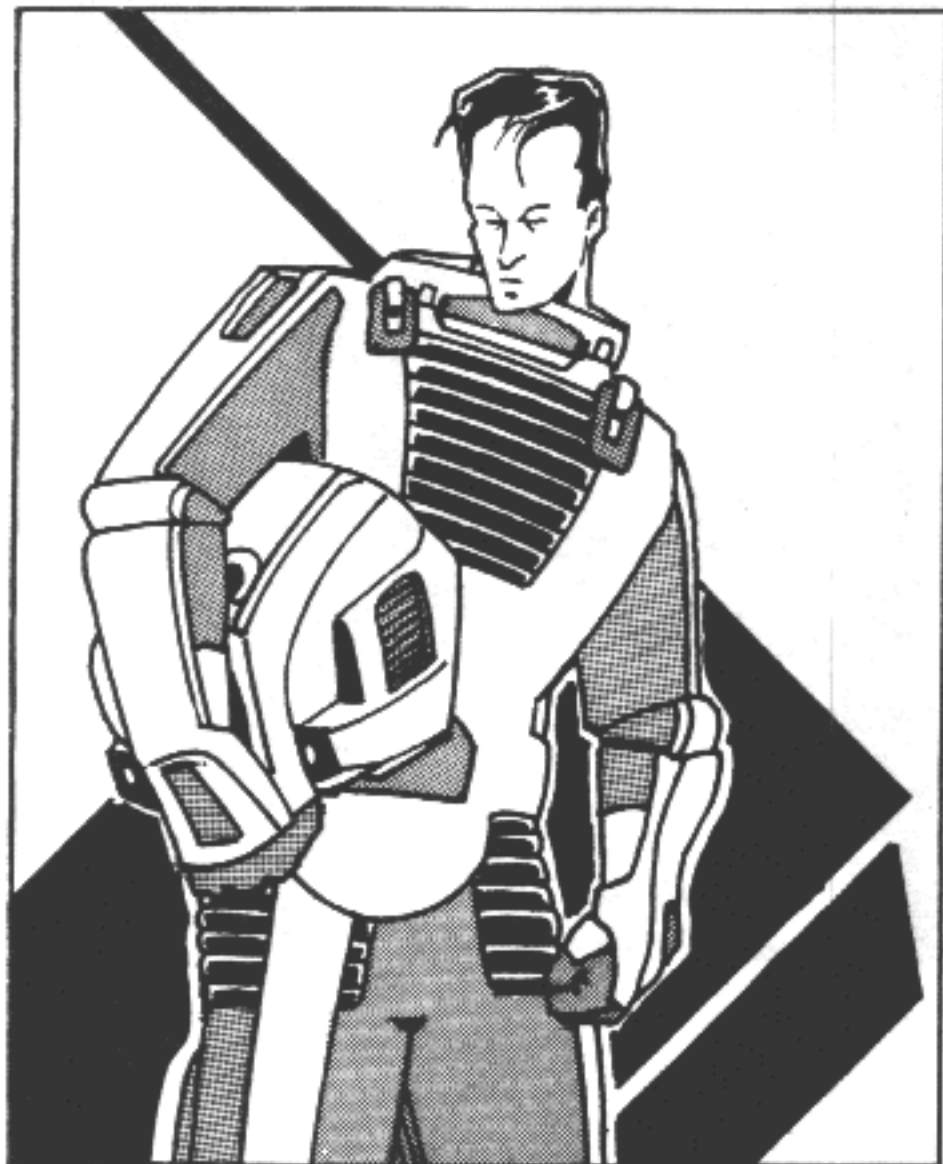
Colonial Resources, the Hegemony department assigned to arrange and coordinate expeditions to new worlds, made the planet Bryant seem enticing. It told of chemical and metal resources, fertile soils, and deep seas. Many men and women, lured by the glowing reports, lined up to join expeditions to Bryant. What had gone unmentioned in the accounts was that Bryant had a harsh climate that lashed most of the planet's surface with storms and winds approaching 300 kilometers per hour. For the first two centuries, colonization was confined to the planet's polar regions, where the men and women lived a cold, but quiet, existence.

In 2478, the Terran Hegemony put the first Storm Inhibitor into geosynchronous orbit around Bryant. The Storm Inhibitor is a reflector that is aimed at clouds gathering above a planet's oceans. The concentrated heat on the clouds did not prevent storms but lessened their severity. The change in the weather soon allowed colonists to begin settling the temperate regions of the planet.

Once the colonists could begin farming the warmer lands, Bryant became an important agricultural center for the Hegemony. Many of the planet's indigenous lifeforms, such as the Crowley Lizard Cow and the Jewel Bass, became delicacies. Tourism became important to Bryant's economy because of the planet's many beaches.

Then came the forces of Stefan Amaris. Republican pilots used the Storm Inhibitors for target practice. The remaining Inhibitors became the final strongholds of the SLDF. The soldiers died like insects beneath a magnifying glass. With the Storm Inhibitors gone, the planet's climate has once again become stormy.

The planet's population has been moving back toward the poles because of the worsening weather. They leave behind abandoned cities, which valiant ComStar researchers have been risking their lives to search for Star League artifacts.



World Name: Caph
Star Type: G5V
Position in System: 3
Time to Jump Point: 7 days
Recharging Station: None
Present Affiliation: Federated Suns
Population: 3,000,000,000 during Star League,
1,000,000,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 20%, Reptile



171

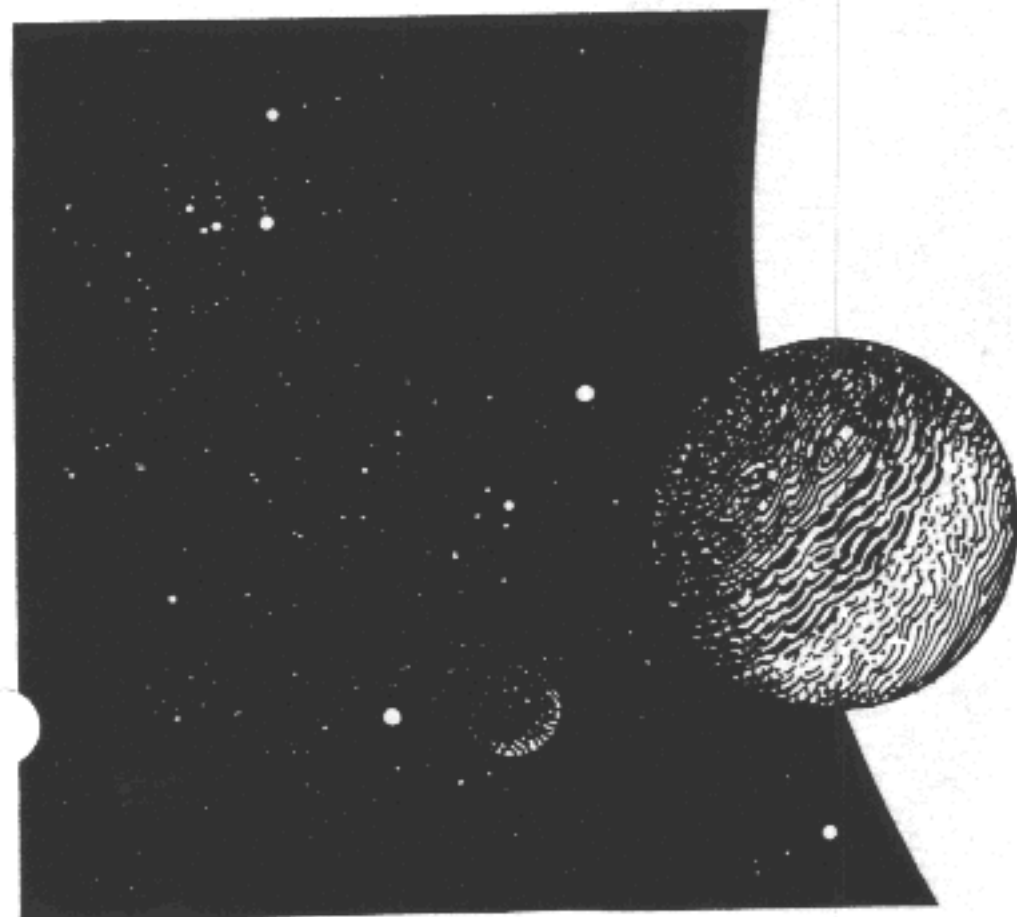
World Name: Carver V
Star Type: K0V
Position in System: 5
Time to Jump Point: 5 days
Recharging Station: Zenith
Present Affiliation: Capellan Confederation
Population: 119,580,000 during Star League,
130,000,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 90%, Reptile

Caph was a difficult world to inhabit at first because its native lifeforms were so ferocious. Caph's evolution was at a time of terrible lizards. Though this provided scientists with opportunities to learn how life must have been on Terra during the age of the dinosaurs, colonists were not happy to be coexisting with carnivores bigger than houses. An electronic barrier system eventually was devised that made life more bearable. Much of the original design work for BattleMechs was done at the famous Caph Institute of Technology, inspired in part by a desire to make Caph more hospitable. Several early 'Mechs were stationed on Caph to kill dinosaurs that broke through the electronic barriers.

During the Amaris occupation, the Republican troops, in addition to their usual atrocities, removed the dinosaur barriers around the cities. The huge reptiles terrorized the planet's population for several years.

Though Caph became a center for advanced engineering research, chemicals are what first attracted colonists and industries. Several important chemical companies, including WOD Interstellar and Pfizzler Chemicals, along with a major drug company, DB Bowins Pharmaceuticals, established major factories on the planet. Caph Institute of Technology, one of the Hegemony's most prestigious universities, was built outside New Brunel, the capital of Caph, in 2309.

The Caph Institute of Technology was gutted, and then burned to the ground by the Rim Worlds troops. Use of chemical biological weapons during the Succession Wars wiped out the dinosaurs. The search for Star League technology has revealed little of interest in the ruins of the university. Recently discovered documents, however, imply that there are several research stations in the deep jungle of the planet's Steam continent.



More than 85 percent of Carver V's surface is covered by pale-blue seas, making it an important source of water for drier Hegemony worlds. The planet's many aquatic lifeforms, the large ocean-going reptiles called Crocales being the most spectacular, were soon exploited by colonists. Crocales were hunted for their hides, which made an iridescent green leather much loved by the rich of the Star League.

The Hegemony government built fortifications on Carver because it bordered the Capellan Confederation, a realm that was not a trusted neighbor. The nature of the planet made the construction of the usual Castles Brian impractical. In 2402, construction began on the Quantico Marine Fortification around the planet's largest island.

The first line of defense in this unusual fortress was an extensive series of weapon towers surrounding the island. Looking like the teeth of some gaping mouth, each tower was topped with at least one weapons turret to shoot down approaching ships or aircraft. Each tower was connected to Quantico by tunnels. The island itself, with its mountains and lush tropical life, had two major spaceports, El Toro and Baku. It also had several fortified naval bases to launch submarines and other vessels.

When the Star League was formed, Quantico was chosen to be the administrative and training center of the Star League Marine Corps. Camp Pendleton, just outside Bellacqui, the planet's largest city, became the SLMC headquarters. A small island next to Quantico was renamed Parris Island and turned into a massive boot camp.

Troops of the Rim Worlds Republic launched one of their most relentless attacks to take Quantico. The tenacious defense by the three CAAN regiments became one of the most stirring stories to come out of the dark days of the Civil War. After destroying Republican forces stationed with them on the island, the Marines fought off repeated assaults by Republican forces. For the next six years, the Amaris forces threw themselves at the Marines, only to be pushed back into the sea.

Just when the Marines' parts and supplies were running low, the Third Regimental Combat Team, the Eridani Light Horse, fought through Republican forces to bring the Marines equipment. With new supplies, the Marines held Quantico until they were relieved by General Kerensky in 2773.

Today, very little remains of the fortification. What was left after the years of fighting was stripped away before the Exodus by General Kerensky's forces, leaving empty towers jutting out of the water around the island.

World Name: Dieron
Star Type: G3V
Position in System: 4
Time to Jump Point: 9 days
Recharging Station: Both
Present Affiliation: Draconis Combine
Population: 2,398,000,000 during Star League;
5,284,000,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 35%, Amphibian



World Name: Graham IV
Star Type: G2V
Position in System: 4
Time to Jump Point: 9 days
Recharging Station: None
Present Affiliation: Free Worlds League
Population: 200,000,000 during Star League,
3,000,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 40%, Mammal

Settled during the original Exodus of the 22nd century, Dieron was one of the most highly developed worlds, both culturally and industrially, during the Star League. It was an administrative center for the BSLA and capital of the Draconis Combine Military Region. In this function, it was also the headquarters for the Fourteenth Army and a major electronics center for the Regular Army. Though the planet survived the coup by Stefan Amaris intact, it was severely damaged in General Kerensky's campaign to liberate the Hegemony. The Regular Army stripped the few remaining buildings before leaving the Inner Sphere.

Since the collapse of the Star League, Dieron has been the capital of the Dieron Military District in the Draconis Combine. Legend has it that Minoru Kurita chose Dieron to be a provincial capital just so he could boast of having one of the crowning glories of the Star League so prominent a part of his own realm.

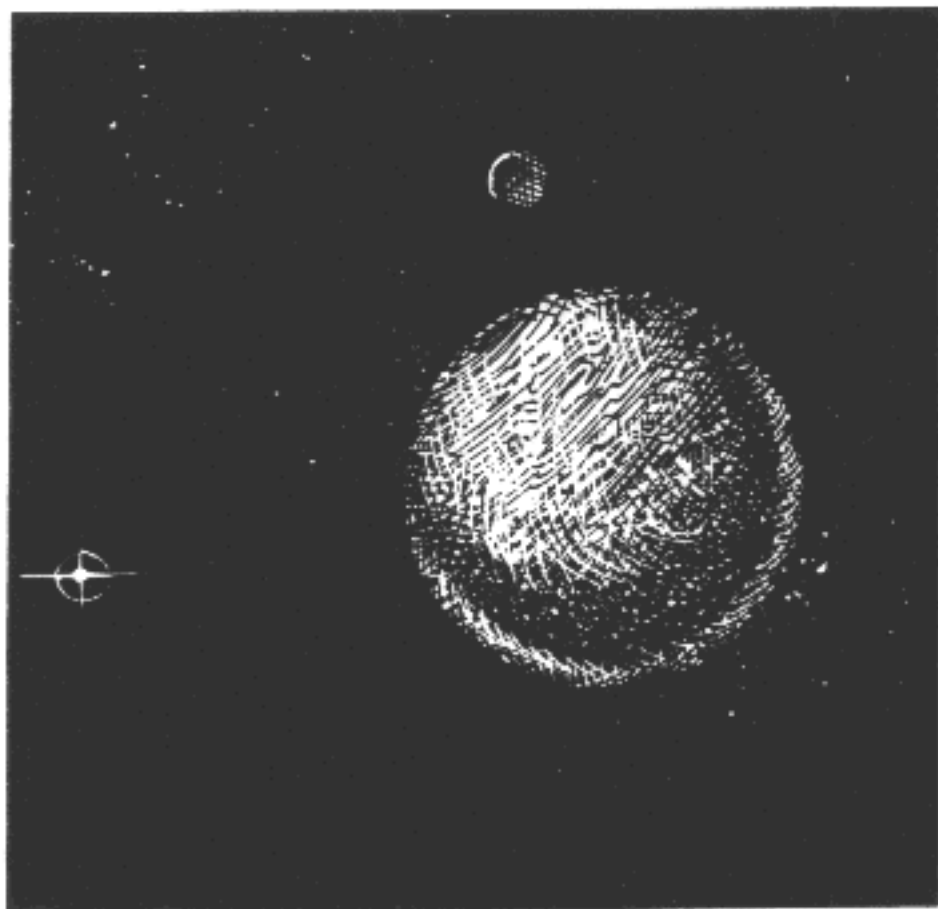
The standard of living on Dieron is surprisingly low for a major industrial world, because Takashi Kurita's policy of restricting travel within the Combine prevents the Dieronese from seeing how much of their productivity is taken from them and how little is imported in return. The planet is, in fact, a hotbed of resistance to Kurita rule, perhaps the most discontented Kurita world outside the Rasalhague Military District.

The great dream of many of the people of Dieron is to find technology in the mountains, where prospectors search for remnants of Star League facilities the way they seek out gold on other worlds. Periodically, rumors sweep the planet about discoveries of bountiful caches. As often as not, these rumors are started by agents of Takashi Kurita to dangle hope before people's eyes and to keep their minds off rebellion.

Graham was an important center of heavy industry in the Terran Hegemony. Six companies, each with a large city for its workers, built major manufacturing plants on the planet's surface. Two, Dekirk Aerospace and Mitchell Vehicles, were important contractors to the SLDF.

Republican forces exploded a nuclear device above the capital of Graham, Dekirk City, when it refused to hand over SLDF troopers who had escaped from a nearby Castle Brian. To the amazement of the Republican forces, the ruins of the bombed city slowly, then with increasing speed, sank into the ground. When they ventured to the crater's edge, the Amaris forces discovered that Dekirk City had been built over a secret Hegemony aerospace research and development facility.

The Republicans' bomb was especially radioactive, and so it was many years before anyone was able to climb into the crater and through the rubble. Even now, researchers cannot venture into many areas of the ruins because of the danger, but they have recovered many significant documents and projects. The Dekirk site is expected to provide more valuable clues to our knowledge of aerospace technology as other areas cool off.



World Name: Helen
Star Type: MOV
Position in System: 4
Time to Jump Point: 3 days
Recharging Station: Zenith
Present Affiliation: Federated Suns
Population: 30,000,000 during Star League, 200,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 30%, Mammal



173

World Name: Keid
Star Type: G6IV
Position in System: 5
Time to Jump Point: 7 days
Recharging Station: Zenith
Present Affiliation: Capellan Confederation
Population: 5,300,000,000 during Star League, 4,573,000,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 15%, Mammal

Named for the wife of the planet's discoverer, Donald Matthews, Helen is a small world orbiting a small red star. There are few resources on the planet, and the animals that crawl about on its surface have no ready commercial value. The few colonists who came to Helen lived a quiet life under the dim sun, with little commercial activity on the planet. Then Helen, with its quiet countryside and lack of commercial bustle, began attracting artists from the Hegemony and the neighboring Federated Suns.

Helen became an important center of artistic expression during the Star League era. Groups of artists established colonies on the planet that grew into cities, each devoted to a specific art form. WhiteWay became the city of actors; St. Gaudens was the city of sculptors; Van Gogh, the city of painters; Jagger was the city of musicians; and Atwood became the city of poets and writers. Parnassus City, the capital of Helen, was where the arts met. The city, with its many museums, theaters, gardens, and libraries was considered as beautiful as Unity City on Terra.

During the Civil War, Helen was placed under the control of the Burning Tygers, a mercenary band of criminals and outcast soldiers of the Capellan Confederation. They showed the planet little mercy.

Helen was a favorite world of General Kerensky, and he spent many happy times there. He loved the planet so much that he ordered Task Force Sun to liberate Helen before other worlds. The Regular Army liberated the planet in 2773, but discovered that most of Helen had been ransacked. Parnassus City and the other major cities had been destroyed. Many of the artists had been killed. The SLDF found only a few pieces of artwork in the rubble. The rest had either been stolen by the Tygers or destroyed.

General Kerensky remembered Helen and its survivors when he and his soldiers were leaving the Inner Sphere. Several SLDF ships visited Helen, and the officers offered the few remaining artists the opportunity to join the Exodus. More than 300 artists and their families accepted.

Today, Helen is still an important center of the arts, but it cannot compare with what it once was. Archaeologists looking through the ruins of the cities still occasionally find caches of artwork hidden by the artists before the Burning Tygers arrived.

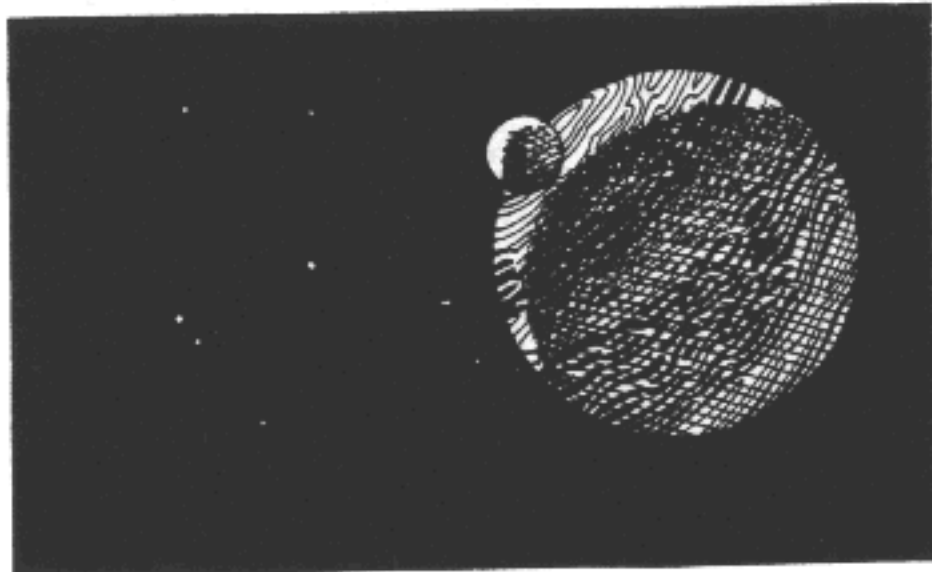
Keid's fertile land and predictable climate made it an important agricultural center. Several major agri-businesses, such as Ballard-Edibles and Agr-Corp of New Earth, established huge farms and ranches on Keid. The giant Dukempic Foods was based there. Other companies followed, turning Keid into a major center of agriculture and food production during the Star League era.

In the 2500s, several major deposits of rare metals and chemicals were discovered on the planet's southern continent. Because of the extent of the planet's metal resources, ten companies built large Zero-G factories near the star system's two major jump points. Two of them, Thompson's Shipyards and Krester's Ship Construction, were major manufacturers of warships.

Because of the planet's importance, the Hegemony Armed Forces built two Castles Brian on Keid, Fort Grissom and Fort Settlemyer, as well as a major military academy, the Fleet School of Keid.

The Republicans caused great damage, but did not destroy Keid. They destroyed both fortifications, three cities, and the orbiting factories. Enough businesses survived to help restore Keid's importance after the fighting had stopped.

Keid has recently become the center of considerable Capellan activity. There are rumors that Liao vessels had picked up faint signals from beyond the star system's last planet. During the SLDF's effort to liberate Keid, there was a naval battle between two Star League destroyers and four Amaris corvettes, and it is possible that the mysterious signals could be related to that battle.



World Name: Mars

Star Type: G2V

Position in System: 4

Time to Jump Point: 9 days

Recharging Station: Both

Present Affiliation: ComStar

Population: 71,000,000 during Star League, 1,000,000 today

Percentage and Level of Native Life: None



174

World Name: Murchison

Star Type: F6V

Position in System: 3

Time to Jump Point: 14 days

Recharging Station: Nadir

Present Affiliation: Draconis Combine

Population: 2,983,000 during Star League, 4,673,800

today

Percentage and Level of Native Life: 45%, Mammal

Mars became the first planet ever explored by man when, in 2017, seven crewmembers of the *Altair* landed on its red plains. Colonists soon followed. In 2110, Project Lowell, mankind's first attempt at terraforming, began with the seeding of the two polar ice caps with Arctic Blue Moss, a genetically enhanced plant. The thick moss eventually caused the ice to melt and evaporate into the atmosphere, thickening it to an almost breathable pressure. Other areas of the planet were covered with other hardy plant life to convert the carbon dioxide into oxygen and capture the sun's heat in its greenery. Asteroids made of ice were smashed into Mars to provide additional water, and the deep craters they made became the sites of domed cities.

By 2201, rebreathers were unnecessary, and the temperature was well above freezing. Active economic exploitation of Mars began. Mining companies took the lead, digging for the many deposits of metals just beneath the planet's surface. Industry followed. When the Star League was created in the 26th century, there were more than a million people on Mars, in 20 domed cities.

First Lord Ian Cameron wanted a complex of military academies built on Terra, Mars, and Venus, to take advantage of each world's unique climate. The War Academy of Mars was completed in 2601 in a huge canyon about 100 kilometers southeast of Olympus Mons. The Academy was a vast complex of buildings, spaceports, battlefields, and barracks. The cliffs were hollowed out into many levels of rooms, hangars, machine shops, and elevators to the plateaus above.

During the first months after Stefan Amaris's coup began, the officers of the War Academy and their cadets fought off the Twenty-third Republican Dragoons for six weeks before a frustrated Rim Worlds commander ordered a nuclear bomb dropped on them.

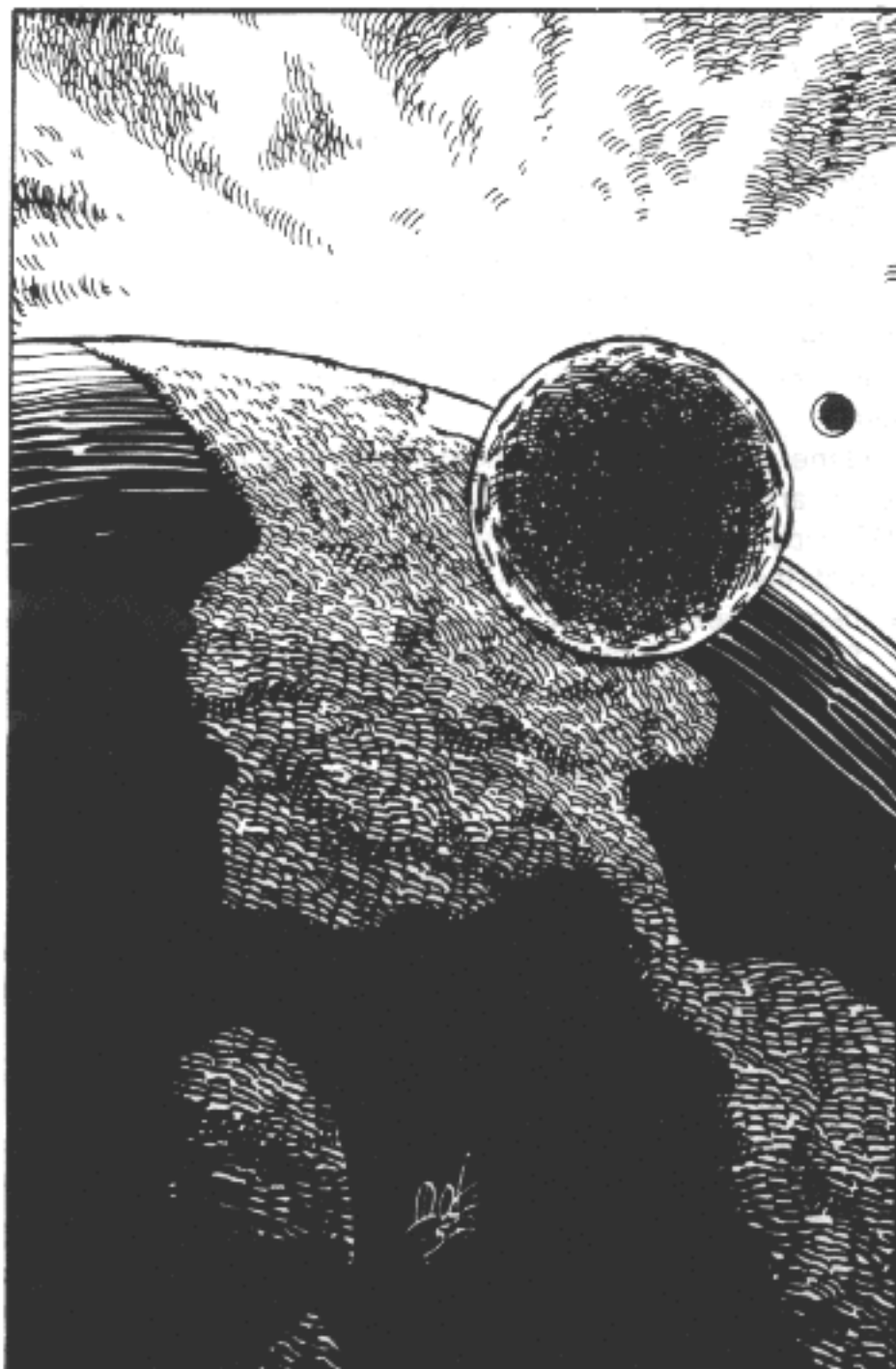
Very little remains of the War Academy, only the rooms of the hollowed-out cliffs and a small group of buildings that were shielded by the explosion. Even these were defaced by the victorious Republican troops. Archaeologists discovered an extensive network of secret tunnels that were crammed with equipment and records apparently put there by members of the War Academy during their fight with the Amaris troops.

Republican forces destroyed eleven cities. The ruins of those cities have yielded valuable artifacts and records. The remaining nine cities house workers of the six major mining companies that still work the Martian soil.

Murchison is an unusual world. When this star system was still young, one of its gas-giant planets, Hebron, was knocked out of orbit and headed toward its sun. It eventually fell into a closer orbit, where it caught the young planet Murchison as a moon.

As a result, Hebron dominates the skies of Murchison. Murchison orbits the gas giant once every 26 hours as well as spinning on its own axis, and the mixture of these two motions creates considerable time confusion for people not native to the planet. The sight of Hebron rising and setting, the stars spinning about, and the planet's sun moving swiftly makes some people physically ill, an affliction the natives call "The Murchison Muddle."

The SLDF built several important research stations on this unique planet, basically to study time stress. These institutes were not heavily damaged by the Civil War, and much information was left behind after General Kerensky's Exodus. Researchers have recovered considerable information about chrono-biopsychology, the study of time's effects on people's emotional and physical condition.



World Name: New Earth
Star Type: G8V
Position in System: 4
Time to Jump Point: 6 days
Recharging Station: None
Present Affiliation: Lyran Commonwealth
Population: 4,423,000,000 during Star League, 100,000,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 60%, Mammal



175

World Name: Nusakan
Star Type: K0V
Position in System: 3
Time to Jump Point: 5 days
Recharging Station: None
Present Affiliation: Lyran Commonwealth
Population: 4,000,000 during Star League, 20,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 40%, Amphibian

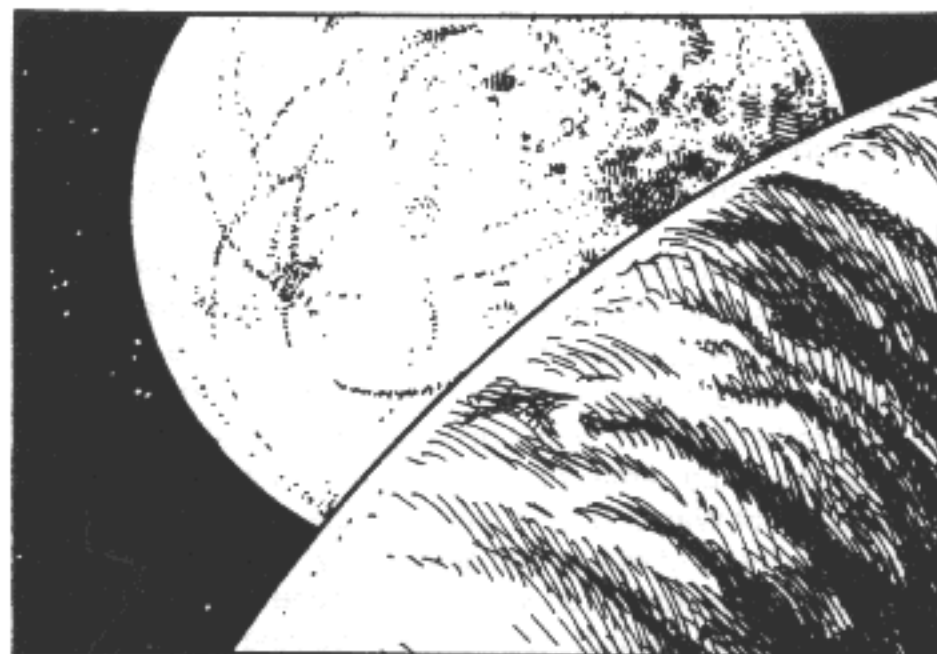
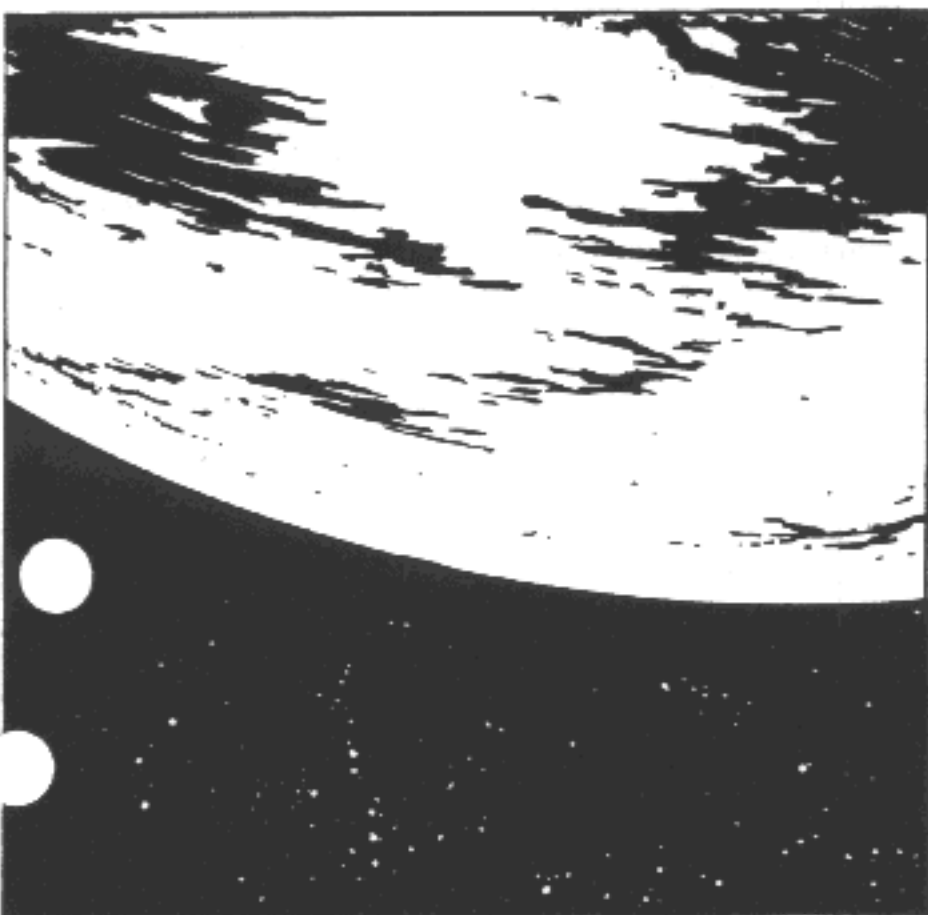
New Earth was an unexpected bonus success for the men and women who made the first interstellar voyage. On December 5, 2108, the *TAS Pathfinder*, the first JumpShip, voyaged from Terra to the Tau Ceti system and discovered that not only were there planets orbiting the star, but that one of them was blue and green and very appealing. The glowing reports of the *TAS Pathfinder's* crew convinced many to colonize the planet.

New Earth had more than just pretty landscapes and exotic animals. Deep deposits of metals and rare chemicals soon attracted heavy industry. By the time of the Star League, New Earth was a major industrial center. Several major companies had their headquarters there. Five of them, Bergan Industries, Grumman Industries, Newhart Industries, Nicholas Spacecraft, and Ulston Armor, were major contractors for the Hegemony Armed Forces and the SLDF.

New Earth was the scene of some of the bitterest fighting in General Kerensky's campaign to recapture the Hegemony. The forces of Stefan Amaris destroyed whatever they could when it became clear that they could not hold the planet. With its grandeur and economic base destroyed, the planet's civilian population suffered greatly in the aftermath and through the Succession Wars.

The Lyran Commonwealth dominates the world today. The centuries and the gradual decline in technology have closed many of the planet's industries, but the New Earth Trading Company owns several functioning Star League-era factories, one of which manufactures extremely valuable JumpShip parts.

There has been intense activity on the New Earth continent of Conseco, sparking rumors of a huge cache of Star League artifacts.



Nusakan is a dim little world. Its one valuable resource is its abundance of high-grade silicon. Nusakan became a center of computer technology during the Star League era. Jobs City, the capital of Nusakan, was the headquarters of Interstellar Business Computers and Potter Light Computers. The Terran Hegemony heavily defended the planet with an SDS system, three Castles Brian, and twice the normal number of military bases and spaceports.

During the Amaris coup, Nusakan was the scene of heavy fighting. Republican troops ambushed SLDF units stationed there inside two of the Castles Brian. Present-day legends say that the fighting deep within the two forts continued for weeks, causing the land of nearby towns to shake with the underground explosions. The third base, Fort Romas, held out for a year before it was eliminated by a nuclear bomb.

When General Kerensky's forces came to liberate the planet from the Republican forces, the SDS destroyed many Star League warships. Two of them, the cruiser *SLS Havana* and the destroyer *SLS Dularam*, spent their final moments plummeting through Nusakan's atmosphere. The wreckage of the two ships can still be seen.

The Castles Brian and the wrecks of the warships have yielded many useful artifacts. Unfortunately, the computer industry, which had been so large and vital, was razed by Amaris forces. Nothing has been found in the ashes of the factories.

World Name: Oliver
Star Type: M5V
Position in System: 1
Time to Jump Point: 2.5 days
Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
Present Affiliation: Free Worlds League
Population: 3,129,000,000 during Star League,
 2,329,000,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 5%, Mammal



World Name: Ozawa
Star Type: K5II
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 4 days
Recharging Station: None
Present Affiliation: Federated Suns
Population: 6,590,000,000 during Star League,
 4,125,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 20%, Mammal

Oliver was one of the most quickly developed of the early colonies during the first Exodus. It was as if the early colonists were determined to bring the Industrial Revolution into space with them. The population grew rapidly, then miraculously leveled off as the natural resources of the planet were exploited more and more efficiently.

By the time of the Star League, Oliver was one of the leading industrial centers of the Inner Sphere. Throughout that era, the planet maintained its economic base. Its people sowed the seeds of their own undoing, however, by basing more and more industry on military production. The planet became the headquarters for AeroFighter Unlimited, a major producer of AeroSpace Fighters. The shining city of Warez, once a leader of research and development of new forms of wealth and productivity, relied more and more on BattleMech production, which made it one of the primary targets of aggression when the wars started. Nothing is left of this city but the shells of its buildings above ground and a labyrinthine series of tunnels underground where techs still repair BattleMechs. The Brigadier Corporation factory at Gordon still produces 'Mechs.

One of the worlds most damaged in the Succession Wars, Ozawa is a mere shell of the world that once stood proud of its history, culture, industry, and science. Everything that had been desirable about living on Ozawa made it a target of nuclear weapons from both the Draconis Combine and the Capellan Confederation.

It was settled in the first wave from Terra, mostly by Japanese colonists. Though they had some trouble adjusting to the planet's extreme weather and extraordinary tides, they discovered important mineral deposits that made it worth their while to battle the harsh conditions. The planet soon became a center for technology relating not only to terraforming, but also protecting the planet's natural beauty. The colonists, who by this time had become numerous, were careful to preserve the clean environment.

The world became an industrial, scientific, and economic gem. First came the electronics industry. This technological base drew other companies' attention. The giant Ulsop Robotics conglomerate located an experimental facility on Ozawa. It was there that scientists did much of the research and development that led to the Space Defense Systems. Ozawa also was the headquarters for Diplan 'Mechyards, a major producer of BattleMechs.

After the industry and science came the financial institutions. The Star League built the city of Prosperity, a financial hub that featured a regional stock exchange and the mint for currency used in the Federated Suns.

The fall of the Star League ended Ozawa's Golden Age. Because of its importance, this world was seized by the Federated Suns but was attacked repeatedly during the First Succession War by both House Kurita and House Liao. The attacks, including several nuclear bombings, left the planet in ruins. Lethal levels of radiation still dot the world. The city of Prosperity was obliterated.

Despite the devastation, Ozawa is important today. Though its beauty is gone and its reduced population now lives in domed cities, the planet is the capital of its administrative area in the Federated Suns bureaucracy. It is also the headquarters of the Intelligence-Gathering Services division of the Ministry of Intelligence, Investigations, and Operations.



World Name: Sabik
Star Type: A2V, A5V (binary)
Position in System: 9
Time to Jump Point: 43 days
Recharging Station: None
Present Affiliation: Draconis Combine
Population: 70,000 during Star League, 2,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 20%, Plant



177

World Name: Sirius
Star Type: A1V
Position in System: 6
Time to Jump Point: 47 days
Recharging Station: No
Present Affiliation: Contested (FWL-CC)
Population: 700,000 during Star League, 20,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: None

There was very little in initial surveys to recommend Sabik for colonization. It orbits twin stars, each three to four times the mass of Sol. There was little of interest on the planet's surface except an exceptionally stubborn plant that carpeted most of the planet's valleys with its deep purple leaves. There was no indication of sizable mineral deposits. For colonists looking for somewhere to live, the planet had little appeal.

It was the planet's harshness that prompted the SLDF to build its Harsh Terran Test Center and its Special Armed Services Training Center on Sabik. At the HTTC, new 'Mech and vehicle designs were put through their paces in the broiling heat.

When the Draconis Combine assumed control of this planet after General Kerensky and his troops left, they found that little remained. Both the HTTC and the SASTC were stripped bare. Since then, the Combine has maintained a small military base on Sabik, called The Dragon's Stool, and there is a ComStar HPG station as well. ComStar researchers have been investigating the HTTC and the SASTC, but they have been cautious so they do not arouse the suspicions of the local Combine authorities. They have discovered that the SLDF left more behind than the Combine realized.



When discovered in 2167, Sirius VI was considered a poor candidate for colonization. Its atmosphere lacked oxygen, and its surface features were undergoing almost constant upheaval from seismic quakes and volcanoes. Huge deposits of many minerals, metals, and jewels convinced many people to risk their lives to eke out a very profitable existence on the surface of Sirius VI.

After five decades of watching small bands of struggling miners live out of cramped spacecraft and survival shelters, the major mining companies moved in. In 2220, they decided to terraform Sirius VI. Oxygen factories were built on the planet's shifting surface, and special sulfur-hungry algae were spread across the orange plains.

A century later, Sirius VI had changed completely. Vegetation had taken over, and the oxygen content was high enough to allow unaided breathing. The ground was still restless, causing almost monthly disasters. Because of the planet's seismic activity, companies like Hiller's Refineries and M-F Construction would not build factories there. Instead, they built orbiting factories. Workers at these orbiting factories were housed in two space colonies, called "The Projects," built by the Hegemony government. Each colony could support 10,000 workers in Terra-like comfort.

During the Amaris coup, Republican AeroSpace Fighters destroyed the two colonies without provocation or reason, killing 8,000 people. The Republicans went on to strip the planet of its accessible resources, then abandoned the colonists to fend for themselves. The Amaris forces stopped food and water shipments to the planet. Most colonists left Sirius VI, but more than 9,000 died on the planet's surface.

Sirius recovered and has become an important source of raw and manufactured goods to the Capellan Confederation, which assumed control of the world when the League collapsed. The advance of the Free Worlds League, which now contests the system, and the collapse of the last oxygen factory might jeopardize the future of Sirius.

Archaeologists made an interesting discovery near the capital city of Verter's Find. Hidden by a hill in which it was built was an intact Seismic Suppressor Station. Hegemony engineers could apparently sense approaching earthquakes and suppress them by setting off a series of explosives buried and waiting in the many faults on the planet. Though there is considerable doubt that this system actually prevented earthquakes, the sensing devices are far more advanced than anything available today, and they may be able to increase our knowledge about seismic activity.

World Name: Terra
Star Type: G2V
Position in System: 3
Time to Jump Point: 9 days
Recharging Station: Both
Present Affiliation: ComStar
Population: 12,000,000,000 during Star League,
6,000,000,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 100%, Mammal



World Name: Venus
Star Type: G2V
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 9 days
Recharging Stations: Both
Present Affiliation: ComStar
Population: 202,500,000 during Star League, 9,000
today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: None

Terra was, without doubt, the most beautiful planet in the universe when the Star League was in full flower. By the 26th century, technology had eliminated pollution. This, coupled with the exodus of more than three-fourths of the planet's population over the years, allowed Terra to regain some of her natural beauty. Forests grew back over abandoned farms; streams and rivers washed themselves clean; and the air became sweet once again.

Because so many people left Terra for the colonies, many cities were abandoned and were eventually reclaimed by Mother Nature. The cities that remained, usually ones with great historical significance, were restored and improved to take advantage of modern transportation and sanitation. Heavy industries were confined to parks outside the cities.

During the years of the Star League, there were two capitals on Terra. The capital of planetary and Hegemony politics was Geneva, on the continent of Europe. It had little industrial importance but was the center of the Hegemony bureaucracy, with more than 100 government buildings. The seizure of Terra by troops of Stefan Amaris in 2766 caused extensive damage to the city, especially to the government buildings and their precious records. Today it is the location of Earth University, a major liberal arts college.

The war to liberate Terra from Stefan Amaris did not damage the planet as extensively as it did some Hegemony worlds. Every crater, every crushed city, every defacing of a Terran landmark seemed twice as upsetting because it was a wound against the Cradle of Humanity. All five continents were touched in some way by the Amaris occupation or the fight to liberate the planet. North America suffered the most damage, especially around the capital of the Star League. The Court of the Star League, once called "the brightest jewel worn by Mother Earth," was turned into a city of ghosts by the coup. The initial fighting caused considerable damage to the city. Once there, the conquerors became more systematic in their destruction. Buildings were demolished on a whim, or left to stand, only to be desecrated in some foul way.

After its liberation in 2780, the city could still support thousands, but those who had fled did not return. The few who had been in the city during the Amaris occupation left soon after the shooting was over. They said that too many evil things had happened in the city, that the city had to be haunted.

It is easy to see why they thought this. The buildings' soaring architecture contrasts uneasily with the horrors that went on inside them. Now, only the curious, criminals looking for sanctuary, and our archaeologists willingly venture into the Court of the Star League. Over the years, the removal of artifacts from the city has produced many discoveries. Soon the city will be left empty.

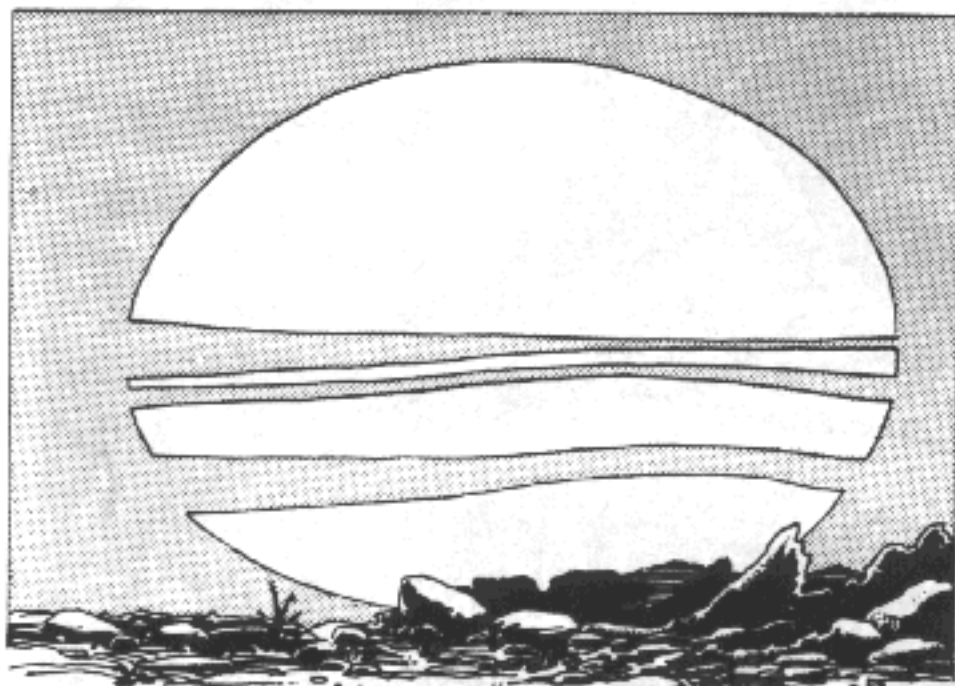
Other places of major importance are the 20 HRAD (Hegemony Research and Development) facilities scattered across the planet, the 10 known HMSL (Hegemony Military Science Labs), the 20 Castles Brian, and the 500 SLDF bases.

Efforts to terraform Venus began in the late 2100s. After 20 years of scattering airborne algae in the planet's thick atmosphere to free up trapped oxygen and colliding the planet's surface with countless ice asteroids, the planet's climate had mellowed enough for manned exploration in 2203. Twenty huge atmosphere-reconditioning factories were built to continue the atmosphere's change.

When the colonists began arriving, their main concern was mining. In 2245, however, Timothy Gothic discovered that the planet's surface, thick with chemicals, could be made into an excellent fertilizer. He and his friends set up the first farm on Venus by importing soil from Terra. It was an instant success. When a way to make artificial soil was developed on Venus, Terran agribusinesses took a keen interest. Large ships laid down layers of artificial dirt over large areas of the planet's surface. Venus began to produce enough food to feed Terra, Mars, and itself, with considerable left for the struggling colonies. Aphros became the planet's capital city in 2232.

A decade later, the Military Academy of Aphros was completed. Like its sister academies on Mars and Terra, the MAA trained soldiers for the SLDF. Also like the other academies, it was destroyed during the first few months of the coup by a nuclear device. Studies of the ruins have yielded very little, though the search continues.

Since the fall, Venus has been slowly reverting to its hellish past. Ten of the automated atmosphere stations have failed, and the planet's atmosphere has changed considerably. The hectares of farms based upon layers of artificial soil are slowly diminishing. Harsh winds strip the abandoned lands of their soil. There are only three inhabited cities: Aphros, Kilic, and Genny. The other cities and towns have been abandoned. Investigations of those cities are underway. Recent measurements indicate that the planet will no longer be habitable in 40 years.



World Name: Zebebelgenubi
Star Type: A3IV
Position in System: 6
Time to Jump Point: 40 days
Recharging Station: None
Present Affiliation: Lyran Commonwealth
Population: 125,000,000 during Star League, 70,000 today
Percentage and Level of Native Life: 60%, Plant



179

OTHER HEGEMONY WORLDS

The following Hegemony worlds are now part of the Free Worlds League: Alula Australis, Berenson, Bordon, Castor, Connaught, Devil's Rock, Marcus, Pollux, Talitha, Van Diemen IV, and Wasat. The planets of Callison, Dieudonne, Dubhe, Wing, and Zion were jointly owned by the League and the Hegemony.

The Lyran Commonwealth absorbed the following Hegemony worlds: Alioth, Chara, Lipton, Lyons, Milton, Rigil Kentarus, Thorin, Wyatt, Zavijava, and Zollikofen. The two realms shared ownership of Alchiba, Blue Diamond, Cor Caroli, Galatea, Mizar, and Syrma.

The following became part of the Draconis Combine: Al Na'ir, Altair, Asta, Athenry, Atria, Dyev, Imbros III, Kervil, Ko, Lambrecht, Nirasaki, Pike IV, Styx, Telos IV, and Yorik. The Hegemony and Combine shared ownership of Moore and Nashira.

The Federated Suns annexed the following planets: Addicks, Angol, Ankaa, Basalt, Deneb Kaitos, Errai, Fomalhaut, Galatia III, Hean, Kawich, New Rhodes III, Nopah, Northwind, Quentin, Rio, Ruchbah, and Saffel. Elbar, Mallory's World, Mara, Mirach, and Schedar were jointly owned by the Terran Hegemony and the Federated Suns.

The Capellan Confederation, which systematically seized as many Hegemony worlds as it could when the Star League collapsed, ended up with the following: Acamar, Achernar, Arboris, Azha, Bharat, Epsilon Eridani, Epsilon Indi, Fletcher, Genoa, Hall, Hamal, Hsien, Ingress, Menkalinan, Nanking, New Canton, New Home, Outreach, Ronel, Saiph, Sheratan, Small World, Tall Trees, Terra Firma, Tigress, Tybalt, Woodstock, and Zurich. The Hegemony owned Ningpo, Slocum, Tikonov, and Yangtze jointly with the Capellan Confederation.

Contested worlds administered by the Terran Hegemony are listed below under the two realms in dispute.

Free Worlds League and Capellan Confederation: Andurien, Carbonis, Claybrooke, El Giza, Fletcher, Fujiidera, Gomeisa, Hamilton, Holt, and Mosiro.

Lyran Commonwealth and Free Worlds League: Alorton, Denebola, Millungera, Preston, Saltillo, Savannah, Sheridan, Sierra, and Stewart.

Draconis Combine and Lyran Commonwealth: Engadin, Gram, Halesowen, Kiesen, Lovinac, Minkuchi, Setubal, Stan-zach, Sulafat, The Edge, Unzmarkt, and Vorarlberg.

Federated Suns and Draconis Combine: Delacruz, Deshler, Fellanin II, Homarn, Huan, Kesai IV, Misery, New Mendham, Sadalbari, and Valentina.

Capellan Confederation and Federated Suns: Andro, Capolla, Jaipur, Mandaree, Midale, Narellan, Robsart, Stein's Folly, Valexa, and Wappingers.

