

BATTLETECH

JIHAD: FINAL RECKONING



THE WAR IS OVER!

Terra is secure. The Protectorate is free. The Manei Domini are scattered. The Master has fled to his final refuge. As the last embers of the Word of Blake are finally extinguished across the Inner Sphere, a new nation is born—and a new era is dawning. Forged in the fires of the greatest war fought since the coming of the Clans, the Republic of the Sphere promises peace and stability few could have imagined since the start of the Jihad in 3067.

Jihad: Final Reckoning completes the Jihad plot book series started with *Blake Ascending*, wrapping up the final years of the war between the Word of Blake and the Inner Sphere, and establishing the birth of the Republic of the Sphere. With articles covering the final fateful years of the war, this book includes news stories and intelligence reports from across the Inner Sphere, along with additional rules and campaign tracks for *BattleTech* campaigns played using the *Total Warfare* and *A Time of War* game rules. This book also provides a snapshot of the postwar universe, laying the groundwork for future campaigns. Also included is a glimpse at the more fantastic weapons and assets the Word of Blake was developing before its final fall—complete with rules for top-secret units, including the Caspar III system and *Spectral* LAMs.

THOMAS MARIK, THE MASTER



THE SCOURING OF CIRCINUS



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CLAN INVASION ERA



JIHAD ERA



SUCCESSION WARS ERA



CIVIL WAR ERA



DARK AGE



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INN NEWS UPDATE...

Jihad: Final Reckoning

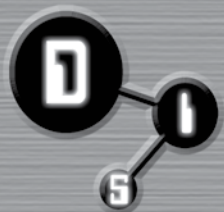


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SPECIAL THANKS

As the entire Jihad finally comes to its inescapable end, I would like to thank—once again—the entire BattleTech community, past and present, for their support and dedication after all of these years! It was six years ago that we first unleashed the Jihad on the BattleTech fans, but the journey to get here began long before then. As this adventure comes to a close, a new age awaits, and I look forward to seeing you there with us. To Randall Bills, for indulging this campaign, and leaving it to me to take the reins, thank you. (No, seriously; thanks!)

And to the writers—past and present—who have helped shape every aspect of the Jihad:

from Bryan Nystul, Randall Bills, Loren Coleman, and the rest of the FASA staff who were there at the beginning, to my assistant developer, Ben Rome (especially for taking those pesky Clans off my hands), Ray Arrastia and Matt Heerd for their tireless—and sometimes breakneck—efforts to layout these books when deadlines loomed impossibly large, and to the rest of the writers who contributed to this sourcebook series and behind the scenes, including: Joel Bancroft-Connors, Warner Doles, Craig Erne, William Gauthier, Jason Hardy, Chris Hartford, Ken' Horner, Kevin Killiany, Camille Klein, Nick Marsala, Dana Maynard, David L. McCulloch, Mike Miller, Steve Mohan Jr., Mike

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VINDICATION IN THE ASHES

ZACHARIAH
CIRCINUS, CIRCINUS FEDERATION
2 APRIL 3081

It was not supposed to happen this way...

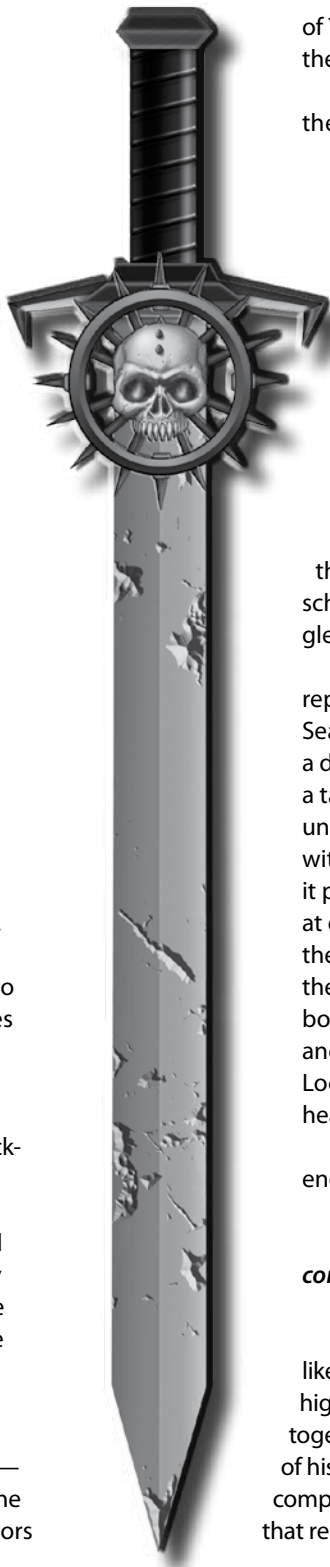
The holo-projector was enormous, a state-of-the-art device built to provide the clearest images, most vivid colors, and most precise details large enough and plain enough for any viewer to spot (as long as they were not legally blind). Mated to a computer deck with enough raw power and processing speed to track an interstellar war dozens—no, *hundreds*—of light-years across, it projected its images faithfully, perfectly, without so much as a flicker. This, despite the grainy, half-garbled transmissions it projected mere hours ago.

A final report, delivered stoically by a fleet commander who vowed to make the overwhelming enemy advance a costly one.

...And yet, it has come to pass.

The globe of light above the holo-projector now showed a scene of cheering masses, crowding the streets of a high-tech metropolis. With so much confetti and tickertape raining down from the skyscrapers above, it was hard to notice the scorch marks, cracks, and bullet holes in the buildings' facades. Likewise, the cracks in the ferrocrete roads, painstakingly sculpted to resemble ancient cobblestone, were also invisible as hundreds of soldiers marched in lock-step past the spectators to martial fanfare.

Their dress uniforms were dark blue, with sashes of gunmetal gray. Some were decorated with medals and insignia that appeared as only a momentary blur in the view field, but all wore the new insignia patch of their affiliation on the shoulder—the likeness of Mother Terra herself, surrounded by a ring of stars. These soldiers carried no weapons that could be seen by the cameras, but two of them—in the leading row—bore banners high enough for all to witness. One banner waved with the pale blue and white colors



of Terra, while the other mimicked a larger form of the logos on the soldiers' shoulder patches.

The insignia of the newly forged Republic of the Sphere.

All of history is a river, driven by currents of inertia that few can resist...

The parade image panned slightly, revealing the looming images of two humanoid BattleMechs—a massive *Zeus*, and an equally massive *Hatamoto-Chi*—marching shoulder to shoulder behind the ranks of soldiers. Both were giants of metal and weaponry, built by realms that had spent the last three hundred years trying to destroy one another. Together, they now shared the same gunmetal gray color scheme, trimmed in a polished, pale blue that gleamed in the mid-morning sunlight.

The image shrank, and suddenly a pair of reporters came into view in the foreground. Seated on the left was a bespectacled male with a dark complexion and graying temples, wearing a tailored black Nehru jacket over a deep emerald undershirt. On the right was a petite blonde with Asian features, whose blouse was so yellow it practically glowed on the screen. They spoke at each other through dazzling smiles, but with the sound muted, not a word of it echoed within the palace chamber. Data swirled around the bottom of the globe, scrolling past the reporters and obscuring the table they both sat behind. Local temperatures and weather forecasts. Recent headlines. Stock reports.

The mundane facts and figures of everyday life, endlessly sliding by as history made itself.

...And that fewer still can ever hope to comprehend.

Reclining in a throne made of marble, with the likeness of a spiked skull carved into the backrest high above his head, the Master held his true hands together, fingertip to metallic fingertip. The sleeves of his white robe gathered at his elbows, exposing the composite mixture of metal, plastics, and myomers that replaced the flesh and blood he had not seen in



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over fifty years. His eyes—also ripped away on that horrible, long-remembered day—now studied the man kneeling silently before him in the way only true vision could study a man.

Through the folds of his own white robes, ripples of heat flowed gracefully from the young man's well-sculpted form, while sinews of current traced lines through three of his limbs, and up along the side of his neck. The delicate balance of man and machine, the synthesis of nature and truth. Such potential and power, made possible only through devotion and knowledge.

If Calvin McIntyre at all feared what was to come, neither his flesh nor his tech betrayed such agitation.

Great men are those who can see the currents and navigate them to glory...

With a simple thought, the Master tuned his true hearing to the local communications networks, considering briefly the flurry of orders and acknowledgements streaming by as forces and crews gathered across the city of Zachariah. Theirs was the buzz of the hive, aware of the looming threat, and preparing to meet it. The airfields were already cleared; all squadrons launched to rally points in close orbit hours before, meeting up with DropShips arrayed just above the orbital reaches of Circinus' commsats. Meanwhile, the ground troops were scattered in loose formations throughout the region, close enough for mutual support, but far enough to react to threats from any angle.

At the surface-to-orbit stations, the Master could sense the spike in tensions by the chatter. He did not need to study their scrambled messages to understand why; of all the ground-based forces, they could best see what was coming now.

Beyond the commsats, the Master heard the voices grow silent—some in mid-scream; others while citing the Word. The enemy asked no quarter and expected none in return.

"*Sic in fit*," the Master said at last, his true voice shattering the eerie silence of the chamber and echoing off the walls even though the words were spoken barely above a whisper. *So it begins.*

"*Damn ant quod non intelligent, Domine*," Calvin replied, his voice strong and calm. *They damn what they cannot understand, Master.*

"You would have made an excellent Manus Domini, Precentor," the Master said, willing as much of a fatherly smile as his ruined face would allow.

Calvin McIntyre looked up at last, a grateful smile spreading across his own scarred and tattooed face. His eyes sparkled with genuine awe, a far cry from the contemptuous glare he once threw to those who praised him.

...But only a true Master can find a way to tame the currents themselves, to use history's own momentum as an instrument of true change.

"*Non nobis solum nati sumus, Domine*," Calvin said, once more bowing his head low. *We are not born for ourselves alone.* Long locks of his brown hair tumbled from his hood again, a lingering trace of the man's old vanities that clashed somewhat with his humble words.

The Master stood at last, the soft whirring of the motors driving his true legs almost inaudible beside the rustling of his robe. Calvin rose with him, only a moment behind. The young president of the Circinus Federation towered over his liege, but the Master had come to ignore such trivial physicality ages ago. Height was but another development of nature that could be overcome by technology, just like strength, stamina, and speed—but intellect, wisdom, and true devotion at any cost? *Those* were the traits that even machinery lacked.

Only the proper blending of mind, body, and technology could create true perfection, something nature alone could not accomplish.

The Master strode past Calvin, toward the holovid. Calvin turned and followed without a moment's hesitation.

So, what went wrong? Had the currents truly changed so much in just a few short years...?

"So very true, Precentor," the Master said as he watched the parade on Terra continue. "For those people—for *all* people—we can only trust in Blake's blessed wisdom, and the currents of history."

"The orders have been given, *Domine*," Calvin said. "We have made the struggle as grand as possible. Humanity united, as never before, even more so than when the Clans came. Is that not enough?"

For the first time in nearly a decade, the Master allowed his inner doubts to seep into his words. "One can never know for certain," he said, flatly.

...or, perhaps, there was now another Master?

With a thought, he reactivated the holovid's sound. The voices of the reporters picked up in mid-conversation while the 'Mechs thumped along behind them.

"...have been a few scares, but so far, none of them have proven substantiated," the woman was saying.

"That's right, Lorna," said the man. "And yet, despite all the extra security, the crowds today seem especially

VINDICATION IN THE ASHES

lively; not at all as subdued as they were during the Blaine administration."

"Well, today's certainly a new day, R.J.," the woman replied, never losing her smile. "Even with work crews still reporting the discovery of bodies in the hardest hit sectors of the Northeast Americas, Mexican Gulf, and elsewhere, the worldwide mood is nothing short of pure elation since the signing of the Republic Formation Treaty over two weeks ago. It is, as Primus Gavin Dow himself said, 'As if all of mankind can feel the kind of hope we long thought lost to the ages.'"

"Speaking of the Primus, Lorna," the man said, pointing back at the parade, "I think that's him coming up right now."

Calvin arched an eyebrow as the image zoomed in on Dow, seated high in the back of a white state car. The crowds on the streets obscured most of the vehicle from view, but the twin banners at the far front end waved visibly enough, displaying the familiar logo of ComStar. Dow himself, dressed in a tailored white suit with minimal adornments, waved and smiled broadly at the masses. Between his jovial look and his stocky frame, he almost reminded Calvin of the classic renditions of a Father Christmas (or an aging Outworlds farmer).

The Master caught Calvin's miniscule response. "Dow is nothing, Precentor," he said. "He is a merely a symbol of the dream that once was."

"Then the self-delusions remain," Calvin replied, wistfully. "The lessons were unlearned?"

"Certainly not," the Master chided. "But they will be lost on those who refuse to see, such as the leaders of our fallen brethren. They are the old Order, and the people know this."

Calvin turned to face his master again. "And Stone?"

Once again, the Master allowed a smile to show on his face. It seemed right enough in these final moments. *Stone, not Steiner-Davion. For a change. Calvin understood.*

The Master nodded. "Our unexpected variable," he said. "Yes. *He* has learned."

"But is that enough?"

The Master spaced Calvin a direct look, his true eyes meeting those of the young Circinian. "If not," he said, "then those we leave behind may have to remind the people of what they need to realize."

Merely jumping in front of history is not enough, but neither is facing it head-on. No matter how strong the personality, the current will simply wash away those who surrender to it, and erode away those who fight it...

"...coming up next is Belle Lee, regimental commander of Stone's Lament."

"That's right, R.J., and while I must say the dress grays look great on her, it feels kind of odd to see one of the most contentious commanding officers of the new Republic's defense forces outside of her usual battle gear."

"Or in command of her customary *Victor*, Lorna."

"Absolutely! You know, I heard that—"

Without warning, the image flickered and froze, then dissolved completely into a giant ball of gray snow. The Master once more listened to the communications chatter, sensing the spike in tension among the surface defenders. He tuned to the satellite frequencies. Nothing coherent remained.

"They hit the relays, *Domine*," Calvin said simply. It was not a question.

The Master nodded anyway. As apparent as the spoken remark was, what Calvin left unsaid finished the thought—the Regulans had no intention to talk this time. The world around them would not be told why it must burn, would not be given the chance to defend itself on even terms.

The Master smiled inwardly this time. Even Prince Titus Cameron-Jones had learned.

There was only enough wiggle room to set a course toward calmer waters, where less powerful currents held sway and history could be better managed. A better history, a tamer one.

Without a word, the Master turned away from the holo-projector, and started toward the distant balconies. In his true hearing, he sensed the commands being given. The ground trembled slightly as the distant batteries fired. In a moment, the skies would be filled with smoke, ash, and light.

The Regulans would waver before the unexpected ground fire, but not for long.

Before the Master, the grand doors to the outer balcony opened. Rays of muted sunlight streamed into the chamber, reflecting off lazy dust particles still floating through the air. Beyond, the sound of air raid alarms blared. Canned voices shouted warnings over distant loudspeakers, directing everyone not manning a heavy weapon to the bunkers scattered throughout Zachariah.

"A hit," Calvin reported as he joined the Master on the overlook. "One of their newer *Merlins*, by the sound of it."

"A worthy attempt," the Master said, over the rumble of another volley firing. His eyes tracked to the launch site, catching the vapor trails of the surface-to-orbit fire. A second battery, unseen from their vantage point, also fired.



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All our preparations, all our efforts, have led us to this day...

"This was not how I had originally envisioned it, Precentor," the Master finally admitted.

"Domine?" Calvin's voice betrayed only a hint of fear.

"The Third Transfer," the Master said. "For many years, I deluded myself, convinced that the Third Transfer of humanity's throne would be a peaceful one. I convinced myself to accept the second Star League as an omen, disregarding all data that ran contrary to the models I alone had computed."

"Ah," Calvin said, the fearful edge in his voice now gone. He understood.

"Only a unifying threat could bring the true cooperation of the Third Transfer—a danger so great, no sane man could stand idly by and allow it to exist in his universe. Terra herself united behind such a threat when the threat of overpopulation and governmental collapse hit its peak. The First Star League brought mankind together to end an age of endless, pointless war. The Clans brought us together again, but without a unifying leader..."

Another series of booms shook the palace. On the horizon to the east, a new sun dawned. The Master's sensors gauged the distance, computed the time before the sound and shock would reach them. He estimated the blast by the heat signature: five megatons.

"Fort Sanderstag," Calvin noted. "Seventy thousand, on a busy day."

The Master nodded, his eyes turning upward.

The day of our reckoning, but was it enough?

"There is no question now that the Transfers had less to do with the mantle of the First Lord than I once thought, Precentor..."

Calvin nodded sagely.

"No, it was the transfer of blessed Terra herself since the last of the true First Lords..."

Again, the surface to orbit batteries fired. Something streaked past overhead—a missile, barely more than a blur. Even without watching it directly, the Master could sense its target, its likely yield. The universe was shaking around them. Soon, all would be light and fire.

"...The first was the passage of Holy Terra to the Blessed Blake himself, as the League burned into memory..."

A flash. This time to the north. Calvin glanced that way, gripping the guardrails of the balcony tightly. He bowed.

"...The second was the passage of Holy Terra to our true Order, after we purged those who could no longer believe..."

The shockwave sent debris and dust swirling through the streets below. A thunderous boom drowned out the Master's words, but he did not stop speaking, and his eyes never wavered from the skies above. His legs kept him upright, locked into position. He would not leave this spot.

"...And now, at last, the Third Transfer has come. Not in the guise of a false Star League, masquerading as the real thing, yet powerless to act..."

Another flash, somewhere behind the palace. The second surface-to-space battery, without a doubt. The Master's true hearing picked up no further signals from either post. A persistent ringing drowned out all other senses. Spots swam before his eyes, and still he remained in place. He felt Calvin's body as the young Precentor tumbled against him. Frail legs, giving out in a moment of weakness.

The Master switched to his true vision, telescopic-thermal, telescopic-magscan. The missile clusters high above were spreading out now, scattering in the upper atmosphere. Their contrails of heat streaked past one another in all directions, forming a chaotic, ethereal web that filled the sky. Two burned straight toward Zachariah. Less than half a minute...

"...but as a new order, unifying, rising from the ashes of the old, bringing back the balance we lost when the Camerons fell."

It had to be enough! Though the names had changed, and the villains had changed, the outcome had to be no less than history demanded...

The Master looked down at last, taking in Calvin's features, covered now in blood from the chunk of masonry that had clearly struck him senseless. Lying in silent repose, blood and soot staining his robes and face, the last President of the Circinus Federation would sleep through his final moments.

...In the ashes of war, we shall find our vindication.

"We did our best, my young friend," the Master told him, even as a distant roar grew deafening behind him. "Now, it's up to them..."

Blake's will be done!

With a final, concussive flash, the universe dissolved in fire and light.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our INN special report, "State of the Sphere: 3081". I am your host, Bertram Habeas, and as always, INN thanks you for joining us on another truly historic retrospective.

It has been fourteen years, now, since the Second Star League dissolved, ending the brief revival of the humankind's greatest experiment. Though formed almost exclusively to bring about the end of the Clan invasion, the Second League stood as a beacon of hope to many in the Inner Sphere that perhaps the long centuries of the Succession War were now, finally, at an end. Though many who held that dream did so for noble causes and desires, it was those who championed hardest for the League's longevity—the Word of Blake—who harbored goals far more sinister in intent.

Having prophesized a glorious new beginning in the Star League's 3067 conference on Tharkad, the Word of Blake—a reactionary and repressive fragment of the ComStar Order—planned to escalate the war between the Clans and the Inner Sphere to genocidal proportions, hoping—in their words—to "destroy the invaders once and for all". For this, they had amassed secret armies and weapons of mass destruction not seen since the death of the original Star League, and somehow expected the civilized Houses of the Inner Sphere to embrace this plan with open arms.

When, instead, the dysfunctional Second League fell apart in a vote of no confidence, the vengeful Blakists unleashed their terrible weapons and nightmare armies upon us all, Clan and Inner Sphere alike. In the bloody fighting that raged afterward, every major realm and minor alliance in the Inner Sphere suffered such horrific losses and widespread destruction that many teetered on the brink of collapse—and some, sadly, fell over. The map of the Inner Sphere today now shows a fragmented collection of states where the Free Worlds League once united some four hundred worlds, and a void where the small Circinus Federation carved out its own domain. Key hubs of commerce and industry have been wiped out entirely, with billions of lives snuffed out.

In the heart of today's Inner Sphere now stands a new nation, a Republic, built on and from the ruins of the Blakists' war, a realm that may serve to remind all of mankind the horrors of the Jihad by rising from its ashes.

In this retrospective, INN has compiled first-hand accounts of the final years of the war, from the defeat of the Word on Terra, to the formation of the Republic of the Sphere. As with our past programs, we have striven to deliver the articles herein with a minimum of heavy analysis, so that you, as the reader, can make your own judgments.

All of the information presented tonight can be accessed through the downloaded media package to all personal data pads, trivid systems, and other media devices. When possible, actual video and audio footage has been included, along with transcripts and copies of written documentation.

As always, INN thanks you, our loyal viewers, for your patronage and support.

—Bertram Habeas, INN Special Correspondent, Terra, 13 January 3082

THE REAL DEAL

Devlin,

I'll cut right to it: Habeas is a fine spokesman for us on INN, but his starry-eyed optimism since Terra, and the contents of this retrospective, really only tell the public face of the story. With the bulk of the fighting now over Sphere-wide, and our network in place, Victor and I have compiled some supplemental data, which will be appended to this record. It is illuminating, after all, to see how accurate the various little reports can be, and yet how wildly different things look in the grand scheme between public perception and truth.

Sincerely,

—David Lear, 7 September 3082

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System Scan Initializing

SECURITY LEVEL AMBER



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Jihad: Final Reckoning (Reckoning) is a sourcebook for *BattleTech* that continues where the Jihad plot book series left off in *Jihad Hot Spots: Terra*. This book will provide players and gamemasters with an ongoing first-hand look at the events of the Word of Blake Jihad since the allied coalition's successful capture of Terra in 3078, through the year 3081, when the Republic of the Sphere was founded. To best reflect the ongoing mystique of this period, the material presented in this sourcebook—as with the previous *Jihad Hot Spots* books—uses the format of compiled news articles, interviews and first-person accounts. In addition, to reflect the truth of events that has come to light since the previous sources, this book includes a timeline describing those events now known to be true while also providing additional campaign scenarios and new game rules and units based on developments that followed.

Beginning with *Mopping Up: 3079-3081*, *Jihad: Final Reckoning* covers many key events that followed *Jihad Hot Spots: Terra*. A review of the known events—removed enough from the immediate chaos to be considered fact by nearly everyone in the *BattleTech* universe—is then provided in the following chapter, *The Jihad in Review*.

Following *The Jihad in Review* are the scenario tracks that apply to this period in time (called *Chaos Undaunted*). These tracks are compatible with the *Chaos Unbound* and *Chaos Unleashed* campaign systems outlined in *Blake Ascending* and the *Chaos Rampant*, *Chaos Overwhelming*, and *Chaos Eternal* tracks featured in *JHS3072*, *JHS3076*, and *JHSTerra* (respectively). These tracks are also compatible with those found in the *Jihad Turning Points* PDF-exclusive books available through battlecorps.com. Gamemasters and players can use these campaign scenarios, which follow the *Chaos Unbound* system, for any number of one-off games. We chose not to reprint the campaign system in this book (which originally appeared in *Dawn of the Jihad/Blake Ascending*, pp. 133-138) so as to provide more room for articles and “hard” rules later on.

Following the campaign tracks are two postwar overviews of the universe after the Jihad, beginning with *What Lies Beneath*, which reveals the military, industrial, and political state of the major Inner Sphere powers, as reported to Devlin Stone in a confidential addendum compiled by various intelligence sources. The next chapter,

The Legacies of the Word, exposes several rumors, secrets, and other potential threats left behind after the Word of Blake's final defeat.

The final section, *Jihad: Final Reckoning Rules Annex*, provides special new rules and units for advanced *BattleTech* game play whose introductions and/or use played a major role in the events featured within this book. Also included is a special *A Time of War* rules expansion for the Inner Sphere's newest affiliation: The Republic of the Sphere, which can be employed for players willing to venture into their own campaigns set in the wake of the Jihad and the rise of “The Republic”.

ABOUT THE CHAOS UNDAUNTED CAMPAIGN

The campaign tracks presented here follow the same rules as originally presented in *Dawn of the Jihad (DotJ)/Blake Ascending*. A free electronic version of this—*Chaos Campaign*—is also available on www.battlecorps.com. Players and gamemasters will also find these rulebooks handy, depending on the type of campaign run: *Total Warfare (TW)*, *TechManual (TM)*, *Tactical Operations (TO)*, *Strategic Operations (SO)*, *A Time of War (AToW)*, and *Merc Supplemental: Updates (MSU)*. References made to aerospace units in the Tracks will refer to those aerospace unit types featured in *Total Warfare* (such as fighters and DropShips) or those covered in *Strategic Operations* (such as JumpShips, space stations, and WarShips). Additional cited sources may include *Jihad Hot Spots: 3072 (JHS72)*, *Jihad Hot Spots: 3076 (JHS76)*, *Jihad Hot Spots: Terra (JHSTerra)*, *Starterbook: Wolf & Blake (SBWB)*, *Technical Readout: 3075 (TR3075)*, and *Technical Readout: Vehicle Annex (TRVA)*.

If a track does not specify certain parameters, the gamemaster decides what is fair for his or her particular player group. The overall intent of this campaign is to present gamemasters with a framework that allows them to bring their players through the massive conflagration known as the Word of Blake Jihad. Gamemasters begin this arc of the Chaos campaign with *Blowtorch*. Player groups begin this campaign arc with 500 Warchest points or whatever they had remaining at the end of the *Chaos Eternal* campaign from *Hot Spots: Terra (JHSTerra)*.

The *Salvage* special rule (see p. 136, *DOTJ/BA*) is considered active for all Tracks unless otherwise indicated.





connection/JIHAD: FINAL RECKONING/section03: MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

MOPPING UP: 3079-3081





MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

For many, the years after the fall of Terra were anticlimactic. Devlin Stone's Coalition had shattered Terra's defenses, delivering their justice to the Word of Blake's leadership at the very heart of the Inner Sphere. Though the war still raged elsewhere, the most intense fighting was surely behind us. The Word of Blake Protectorate was crushed on virtually every front, leaving only pockets of resistance to manage—pockets now bereft of Terran support. Cameron St. Jamais, Precursor Martial of the Blakist military, was dead, as was Alexander Kernoff, the head of the Word's deadly ROM. The Regular assault on Gibson a short time later had even decapitated the leadership of the Manei Domini—the fanatic, bionic abominations whose terror fueled nightmares across the Inner Sphere.

In the months and years that followed the Coalition's victory at Terra, the remnants of the Word of Blake's military might evaporated, their ships and troops scattering. Most fled as their positions were overrun, or surrendered to the overwhelming might of Coalition forces. Others fought to the bloody, bitter end, employing every dirty trick at their disposal to take out as many of their enemies as possible. Still others just melted away, hiding in the far corners of their respective worlds, slipping into the local populace. Though the enemy's heart had been torn out, its body still posed a threat—a threat that each realm and Clan in the Inner Sphere battled on its own fronts.

Yet even as the war devolved into a Sphere-wide mop-up operation, the leaders of the allied Coalition gathered to find a more lasting solution. In the end—with surprising support from the war-weary leaders of nearly every major power—a new realm was born to rehabilitate the worlds hardest hit by the Word of Blake's dominion, a buffer state that would forever remind the allies of their contribution to the defeat of mankind's greatest threat since Stefan Amaris himself. This new realm would be ruled not by bloodlines, but by a collective of the willing: the Republic of the Sphere.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

For most of the Inner Sphere, the post-Terra stage was set for a new equilibrium. Diplomacy, not combat, would ultimately decide the fate of the former Blake Protectorate (known in many circles as the Terran Protectorate at this point). Yet even as Devlin Stone's most ardent supporters emerged to throw their weight behind his grand experiment, the legacies of the Word and others who sought to employ Blakist-style terror for their own agendas tried (in vain) to maintain the Inner Sphere's bloody status quo.

TERRORISTS DIE IN FIREFIGHT

(3 January 3079)

Stanzach [INN] — Residents of the quiet Hayden Arms estate block in Janetown were rudely awakened this morning by what seemed to be a full-on military assault. Ghost Bear paramilitary police, working in conjunction with local authorities, cordoned

MELISSA ALLARD-LIAO, "RISING POWER"

(2 February 3079)

Shensi [St. Ives Press] – Growing political organization Renascent Hegemony hosted its inaugural event, a speech by Melissa Allard-Liao, at the People's Garden Amphitheater in Whitehorse yesterday. The verdant park formed a picturesque backdrop for the controversial gathering that drew five thousand attendees, despite the cool weather and light rain. A strong security presence kept the peace.

Founded just two months ago, Renascent Hegemony supports "[Fostering] the creation of a new Terran Hegemony from the ashes of the Word of Blake Protectorate." Allard-Liao headlined the event with a sixty-seven minute speech, and cited three factors in favor of her approach: First, the reconstruction costs—estimated in the trillions of C-bills per world—could be borne by this new nation. Second, creating a buffer zone between all five Successor States could keep the peace as the original Hegemony did during the golden years of the original Star League. Finally, she argues, that these worlds have changed hands so many times in the past century, that they cannot truly be beholden to any current state.

Additional rallies are in the works on another twenty worlds (including eight former members of the Confederation) recently liberated from Blakist shackles.

But is this a brilliant plan, or seditious grandstanding? Political analyst Rui Kong is one of many traditional Capellan nationalists in an uproar, and some would say, rightly so. "Allard-Liao's ideas are contrary to the best interests of the Capellan people," Kong explains. "These worlds have been Capellan for generations, but since Hanse Davion's ill-conceived invasion in '28, many Capellan citizens have toiled under the yoke of tyrannical oppression. For the first time in fifty-one years, these lands could be repatriated to their rightful place under Capellan rule. Ms. Allard-Liao's plan denies a generation of Capellan people their birthright."

off a large section of the estate just before 0300 hours, and instructed residents to seek shelter.

Unknown to residents at the time, police had tracked Albert Gronvold-Minami, one of the top leaders of the outlawed Motstånd movement, to a flat in the estate block. On the run after the bombing of the Omni-Paradise Hotel on Alshain earlier this week, Gronvold-Minami and a small cadre of compatriots decided to fight their way out rather than surrender honorably.

The brief battle saw the exchange of massive amounts of firepower and the near-total destruction of the estate block where the terrorists were holed up. Two more buildings on either side of the block suffered damage as well, and the city safety commission

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has restricted access to both. Confirmed dead include fourteen terrorists and six paramilitary police. Eight terrorists attempted to surrender to authorities, only to be executed on the spot. Among the dead was Gronvold-Minami himself, who was apprehended while fleeing the scene in a stolen car.

Though some legal activists have decried the lack of due process presented in this and similar actions across the Dominion, a majority of native Rasalhagians polled support summary execution of the terrorists. The use of explosives of Blakist origin in the Omni-Paradise tragedy—which killed 378 people, including Unity Council members Christian Månsdottir and Selanna Jorgensson—has turned many citizens against an organization that previously had at least tacit popular support throughout the Dominion.

Still at large are Cilla Amdahl and several other Motstånd leaders. Amdahl was last seen on Tinaca two weeks ago and Mimir and the Watch have made her apprehension their top priority.

FUNERAL FOR A HERO

(6 March 3079)

Terra [INN] — Tears and memories were to be found in abundance today in Geneva as one of the Inner Sphere's best-known heroes was laid to rest. General Andrew Redburn died just one week ago at the age of 75, barely more than two months after the final campaign of his long and storied career. In accordance with his wishes, he was buried in Geneva's Cimetière de Plainpalais, under a simple headstone.

A native of Firgrove in the Federated Suns, Andrew Redburn first rose to fame during the Fourth Succession War, when his Delta Company demonstrated the value of Hanse Davion's training cadre program. Later becoming part of the Kathil Uhlans at their formation, just prior to a daring raid on Sian, his actions in the war earned him the Medal Excalibur and a knighthood. By the time of the Clan invasion, Redburn had risen to the rank of lieutenant general, and led the Uhlans against the invaders in such actions as the counterattack on Twycross and as second-in-command of Task Force Serpent.

Following the birth of the Second Star League, Redburn was appointed to command the First Royal Division and was thought lost when that command fell to the Blakists on Tukayyid at the start of the Jihad. His recovery from a Word of Blake prison camp on Asta in 3077 led to a position with Devlin Stone's coalition. Throughout Operation SCOUR, Redburn functioned as Belle Lee's second, and commanded Stone's Liberators during that campaign and the assaults on Terra and Mars.

General Redburn died from complications due to a respiratory infection he is believed to have contracted during his incarceration in the Asta prison camp. In addition to family, he was attended at his deathbed by longtime friend Victor Steiner-Davion and a selection of officers. He is survived by his wife, famed Lyran historian Misha Auburn, their four children and nine grandchildren.

STONE MAKES THE DOZEN

And they just won't stay down! Yesterday's foiled assassination attempt showed two things:

A) Devlin Stone's luck holds. Already firmly at the top of the incidents-per-month ranking, he is now hunting for a record in diversity. Time to update that list... Lone battle armor? Survived!

B) It's time to start worrying. Granted, the assassin—a member of the former Word of Blake militia, according to press release—didn't even make it near the podium where Stone held his speech. But the fact that he was acting alone, in the heart of Tokyo, just shows once again how fanatical this conflict was, is and will remain. Stone has managed to antagonize a force of will, which has one single purpose left: To see him dead. The Coalition has bred a symbol to all, no matter whether they're good, bad or ugly. If it stands, we'll survive into a better future. If Stone falls... Well, we've been there for a couple of years.

Time to be pessimistic, then? Not really, for what let me sleep last night was the fact popular press was worried about the most: Stone didn't show up anymore after the shots rang out. No heroics this time, no benevolent gestures or "looking the assassin in the eye, personally". Granted, public opinion drops if speeches aren't finished and weakness is suspected immediately. But let's be honest: The reaction of Stone's security detail shows they are worried as well, maybe even getting a bit nervous. In this case: A good thing! After all, where there's worry, there's cautiousness. And cautiousness always helps when trying to survive. Or when attempting all-time records!

—Muriel Hanson, Terran Press OpEd, 17 April 3079

THE BEST OF TIMES

(21 December 3080)

Terra [ANDURIEN PRESS] – The Geneva Summit is over and heads of state are returning home. In principle, most parties agreed with Stone's vision, and his plan for a new realm will go forward, despite the absence of support from the Capellan Confederation. Details will be worked out over the next few months, with a formal treaty signing to take place in early spring.

Stone's new state will be called the Republic of the Sphere, not the Terran Republic as had been speculated. Partnering with ComStar for HPG administration and other as-yet undefined roles raised some concerns, but Devlin Stone assured skeptics that his new Republic will be "open to all" and intends to create a buffer zone between the Successor States, in order to foster stability and economic growth.

Though Stone has repeatedly discouraged or downplayed comparisons with Aleksandr Kerensky, he did address some historical similarities during the summit. Most notably, in a presentation by socio-economic historians, Stone demonstrated how the SLDF could have maintained the Terran Hegemony



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had Kerensky followed Stone's blueprint for peace. Speaking in support of Stone, an unidentified Nova Cat representative reminded the attendees of destruction wrought by the Jihad, likening it to the First Succession War, and stopping just short of blaming the last thirteen years on the assemblage.

Support for Stone's radical idea has been widespread, thanks to tireless appearances by Victor Steiner-Davion and David Lear, and grassroots efforts by Melissa Allard-Liao that proved very popular among coalition forces. Critics, however, ponder the backroom wrangling. The Federated Suns and Lyran Alliance, expected to oppose the Republic, supported it with surprisingly modest concessions: The Federated Suns will reclaim the lost

Kittery Prefecture worlds, and Hesperus II and Solaris VII will be remain under Lyran control even as the bulk of Skye Province raises a new banner. Even the Draconis Combine seemed to only offer a token resistance. Has the Inner Sphere finally grown tired of war?

BIRTH OF A NATION

Across the Inner Sphere—and especially among the smashed worlds of the Terran Protectorate—recovery was the order of the day after Terra's fall. Having borne some of the heaviest abuse in the final days of the Word's empire, the Protectorate turned wary—yet hopeful—eyes to Terra for guidance. While a great many of these worlds fully expected the banners of the Great Houses to rise over them again, the allied states that drove their liberation flew many standards. Speculation naturally revolved around the Coalition's leadership, but few could be certain what final form the new regime would take until the final Geneva Conferences began in the closing weeks of 3080.

VIOLENCE AT STONE RALLY

(22 September 3079)

Tikonov [TGB] — Heavy rains continue to hamper clean-up efforts from Saturday's shocking attacks on Vyacheslav Kozar Square in downtown Tikograd. The bombings, which came during a pro-Devlin Stone rally attended by an estimated six thousand people, occurred just after noon when thirteen groundcars, parked in locations around the square, exploded simultaneously. Though none of the scheduled speakers, including Melissa Allard-Liao and Tikonov-born actress Dasha Trubetskaya, were injured, the attacks took a greater toll on the crowd. The number of dead currently stands at 139; another sixty-seven individuals are in various hospitals around the city.

Speaking from the chapel at Beth Sokoll Hospital in the Chernigov District, rally organizer Melissa Allard-Liao had harsh words for those responsible for the attacks. "Whoever these cowards are, they will be found and brought to justice. There is no place in a free and open society for such callous disregard for human life."

When asked how Devlin Stone would handle such violence on worlds currently under his control, Allard-Liao had equally harsh words for her questioners. "How dare you try to make this tragedy into a political issue? Whether one is a Capellan or a Lyran, a citizen of the Combine or a follower of Stone, I think we can all agree that this kind of atrocity is inexcusable and unacceptable. I may be here in Tikograd to support a man who I believe to be our best hope for peace, but I pledge to work hand in hand with local authorities to bring these animals to justice."

So far, no organization or individual has claimed responsibility for the attacks. Police began an investigation as soon as the area was declared safe by the Department of Civil Safety, but the heavy rains that hit the city Saturday night have hindered their progress and raise the possibility that crucial evidence may be washed away.

PLAGUED BY BLAKE

(18 December 3079)

Denebola [NEBS] – The latest figures on the Redburn Virus are in. Named for Andrew Redburn (who contracted the disease while interned in a Blakist POW camp on Asta), leading research suggests the Blakists engineered the virus in an attempt to develop a potent biological agent. Though it bears some similarity to both influenza and adenovirus strains, the Redburn Virus is not generally thought to be contagious as no cases of the disease were reported by Redburn's associates prior to his death earlier this year. The disease is currently incurable and treatment focuses on mitigating the effects of symptoms.

Over twenty worlds report infection rates of 150 per 100,000 and eight worlds (Denebola, Liberty, Muphrid, Northwind, Nuskan, Styx, and Woodstock) report mortality rates in excess of thirty per 100,000; nearly twenty percent of those infected. By comparison, the perennial influenza virus is statistically less infectious, and results in death only in extreme or unusual circumstances.

A communicable strain of the virus, identified by infections of health care professionals on Denebola, has also been confirmed. This new strain is resisting established treatment protocols and public health officials are reportedly "concerned," but declined to comment citing inconclusive test results and insist a statement is forthcoming. Negative-pressure isolation rooms are now mandatory for all suspected cases, and health care professionals are encouraged to wear enhanced personal protective equipment whenever exposure is possible. Additional communicable strains are suspected on several worlds but have yet to be confirmed. Despite the possibility of an emerging pandemic, no quarantine orders have gone into effect.

Sources speculate that the disease may have been incubated on all former Protectorate worlds and released as part of a scorched-earth policy intended to bring genocide to any who strayed from Blake's path. Coalition representatives refused to comment.

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HISTORY'S FULL CIRCLE

New Avalon [FSNS] — "...And as 3080 comes full circle, so is it time for another circle to finally be closed. This circle is also one in time, but instead of months we speak of centuries. It began generations in our past, but it is a circle that today, I happily bring to final closure.

"Recent history has called it the Sarna March, the Chaos March, and the Blakist Protectorate. In the time of the first Star League though, the worlds of the region were part of a greater whole, the Terran Hegemony. When the Star League fell, when my ancestors—and those who reign over all of the other four Successor States—vied to be its replacement, the Hegemony worlds suffered unspeakable horrors. For all the Word of Blake is justly blamed for, the devastation of the Succession Wars did far more harm than the ten years the Word held sway in this region.

"While I share the shame over what my ancestor did in his time, so too I cannot fault his efforts completely. In those years, what was the alternative? Allow these worlds to slide into anarchy? Permit them be overtaken by realms which did not believe in the same basic human freedoms the Unfinished Book preaches? Were there any viable alternatives to inaction? Prince John Davion desired to protect and keep these worlds at the heart of the Inner Sphere safe. Thus, he found himself forced to wage the same wars as his peers—all to try and protect the legacy of the fallen League. His heart was in the right place, but perhaps the measures taken far outstripped that good intent. Centuries later, these same worlds would become my mother's protectorate when my father gifted them to her.

"Today is a new age. Today, there *is* an alternative. Today, one man has led a movement, a movement that has become a coalition. This coalition has brought freedom to the worlds of the Blake Protectorate. And in that freedom, something is rising, something that is new to us, yet follows in the noble footsteps of a better, bygone age. This new Republic, rising from the ashes of the Jihad, hearkens back to the legacy of the Camerons. This Republic—more than any Successor State that now stands—is the true heir and successor to the Terran Hegemony.

"People of the Federated Suns, it is time to let the worlds we have protected return to the guardianship of their ancestors. It is time the Chaos March became part of a new vision, a vision free from the Succession Wars, ready for a new age of peace and prosperity."

—From Princess-Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion's *State of the Realm Address*, Federated Suns New Service, 12 January 3081

GENOANS FOR STONE!

(19 November 3079)

Genoa [LA LANTERNA] — "Change is coming! I can feel it!"

Those were the words spoken today by Melissa Allard-Liao at a "Students for Stone" rally on the campus of Cella City Polytechnic. This dynamic young woman, who has recently made a name for herself throughout the Capellan Zone for her tireless advocacy of Devlin Stone and his reforms, was on Genoa to bolster the student movement here and lead a peaceful march through the streets of Cella to the campus amphitheater. Once there, Allard-Liao introduced a wide range of speakers, nearly all of whom were Capellan-born supporters of Stone.

Unlike many Capellan worlds formerly under the control of the Word of Blake, the citizens of Genoa are strongly in favor of Stone. A recent Shine the Lantern Poll™ indicates fully seventy percent of the populace has a favorable opinion of Devlin Stone and only slightly less (sixty-seven percent) would be in favor of joining a new realm founded by the Coalition commander.

One of the biggest reasons for such strong support is Students for Stone. Founded less than a year ago by Michael Peterson and Celia Stevens—both students at the college—the Students began as a collection of like-minded young activists, but has quickly grown into a major political force on Genoa. Peterson, who still suffers the effects of a brief stay in a Maskirovka detention center last year, was the final speaker at today's rally and had some words of encouragement for the crowd.

"They say we don't matter, because we're young; we're only students. They say that we don't appreciate the benefits and the glories of life in the Confederation. Do not let them dismiss you! Devlin Stone would not dismiss you! Your voice is loud, and your hands are strong. Together we can make change happen! On Genoa. On Liao. On Pleione, Poznan and Styk. Throughout all the worlds of Capella!"

CAPELLAN TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT FORMED

(25 April 3081)

Terra [INN] — Following comments made by Devlin Stone in his founding speech last week, the Office of the Exarch has announced the formation of several initiatives to facilitate the birth of the Republic of the Sphere. Chief among these is the Capellan Transitional Council, announced today in a press conference attended by David Lear and members of the new council.

"The purpose of this council will be to examine the ways in which these former Capellan worlds can be better integrated into the fabric of our new Republic. It will explore how the cultural traditions of these planets may enrich the whole, rather than segregate the few," Lear announced before introducing the members of the council's seven-person executive committee.

Taking the chairmanship role in the council will be Su Xiaose, former mayor of Huss on Acamar, who led an anti-Blakist resistance movement on his homeworld during its occupation by



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the Word. Chairman Su, 58, also has extensive business contacts throughout the region.

Also of note on the executive committee is Melissa Allard-Liao, the youngest member of the Transitional Council at 23. Miss Allard-Liao has spent the last two years traveling from planet to planet, speaking to supporters and detractors of Stone alike. Her efforts have occasionally resulted in personal danger, as seen in September 3079 when she was present at the devastating Vyacheslav Kozar Square bombing on Tikonov.

The full Transitional Council convenes next month in Geneva before embarking on a tour of formerly Capellan and Chaos March worlds. Expected to be high on the agenda for the meeting is the security of pro-Stone demonstrators on worlds still claimed by the Confederation. Several incidents in the last few weeks have pointed out the need for some form of organized protection for the demonstrators. David Lear has promised that the Council will be granted a special protective unit but did not reveal any details at this time.

...AND TO THE REPUBLIC

(1 May 3081)

New Samarkand [VOTD] – Addressing the Combine people today from the Sun Zhang MechWarrior Academy, Coordinator Hohiro Kurita formally recognized Devlin Stone's Republic of the Sphere. Honoring the Bushido Code, the Coordinator allowed all soldiers honor-bound to Stone to remain with the Republic military and retain any items of personal protection issued to them in service of the Dragon. Support for the Coordinator's generosity has been exceptional. Celebratory haikus are already appearing on major interweb sites and forums throughout the district.

A provision of the Republic Formation Treaty cedes the most grievously sundered worlds of the Dieron Military District to Stone's Republic, along with a smaller number of worlds from the Benjamin Military District. The change all but eliminates the DMD, but joint Republic/Combine administration on a number of key planets will maintain close symbolic ties with these honored worlds. The Coordinator will appoint Combine administrators in the coming weeks. VotD anticipates that these positions will be highly coveted, and expects that heroes of the Jihad will be among the first to receive this honor.

The Coordinator expressed displeasure at the political maneuverings of his peers, citing rumors of secret trade agreements inked by the Federated Suns and Republic and similar machinations by the Lyran Alliance. Holding the honor of the Combine sacrosanct, the Coordinator stated these rumors besmirched the reputations of all three houses. The Dragon did not comment directly on Stone's complicity in these arrangements, but noted that as head of the Republic, the fault for any disingenuousness rested solely on his shoulders.

The Coordinator concluded his address by wishing the new Republic and its leaders luck in the future, and called its creation a victory for all realms over the evils of Word of Blake and the chaos they brought with them. But, he also cautioned, the future can be treacherous, and if the successors of the Terran Hegemony are to succeed, they can only do so by respecting the integrity and sovereignty of their neighbors.

CLAN STONE?

Perhaps these defecting warriors believe that pledging allegiance to the man who conquered Terra gives them the feeling of pride they could not achieve back in their native Clans. The Nova Cats and Exiled Wolves, for example, have effectively become vassals for their respective Successor States. Even their most influential leaders now hail from the royal lines, with Phelan Kell a distant relative to the Steiner bloodline, and Minoru Kurita—the brother of the current Coordinator—taking an active role in Nova Cat council meetings. Warriors in these two Clans may be feeling that standing as equals in this new state will make up for being seen as the "expendable outcasts" by their estranged brethren in other Clans.

A NEW HOME

(21 March 3081)

Skye [SKYE PRESS] Editorial – Why does this Devlin Stone think he knows what's best for my family? Why should I have to choose between never seeing them again and bringing them to a combat zone? I've been here since we drove off the Wobblers in '74, but this rock is still infested. I've spent the last seven years dodging bullets, hunting down guerrillas, and being so afraid of booby traps that it takes me a couple shots of schnapps to get to sleep most nights. I lost a huge chunk of my leg in service to Archon and country, and I've been cast out like a second-class citizen. All I want to do is go back home and live a normal life on Kaumberg, but Stone's taken that away from me.

See, I'm not a member of the LAAF anymore. Fourteen years of service and suddenly I'm Republic Militia. Stone says I've got to make a choice, muster out on my own dime—and with those soulless carpetbaggers charging eight times the normal rate for a ticket off this rock, I sure ain't going anywhere. Or I can bring my family here, and they'll pay for it. They even say we'll get base housing, but we don't have that kind of space. I haven't had my own room since the old barracks collapsed, but they say that wasn't sabotage. I guess perfectly good buildings just fall down on their own around here.

A Wobbie sympathizer blew herself up in a farmer's market last week; eighteen people killed, twenty-seven more injured. I can't raise a family in this kind of place, and I'm not alone. Stone's doing this to service men and women all over his new Republic. We've got to stand up to him before it's too late.

DIERON WARLORD-IN-EXILE DECRIES "DEVLIN'S LAND GRAB"

Warlord:

I believe there is someone within your command circle that needs to be invited to dine with his ancestors. If you do not make the invitation, I will do so – and will also make sure your name is on the invitation.

While your stance on the coming accords is known, get over it. Your personal honor is less important than that of the survival of the Dragon. There are forces at play that you are not aware of, and now is not the time for me to explain this to you. Do your duty; shut your mouth.

–KM

>>>excerpted from the Drake<<<

According to an anonymous source within the Warlord's command staff, the deal between the *Gunji-no-Kanrei* and Devlin Stone is all but a signed contract. And not everyone is happy about it.

"It is nothing more than a brazen attempt by Stone to bolster his own-nation building exploits by feeding off the plump vines in the Dieron Military District," said our source. "And it's not the agreement that's appalling; it's the fact that the *Kanrei*—who apparently has the agreement of the Coordinator on this—has basically sold the heart and soul of the Dragon's war industries to a self-proclaimed peacemaker and social experimentologist! Does anyone realize what this means? The *Kanrei* has pulled the teeth from the Dragon, at a time when our ancient enemies across the borders froth for the chance to step onto our worlds once more."

The Warlord's staff (and reportedly the Warlord himself) has not taken well to the idea of simply giving over an entire military district to "the Stone and Lear show." Though the Ministry of Statistics and Information has backed up the *Kanrei's* claims that most of the industry within the allotted worlds have suffered extensive damage during the Blakist occupation and Stone's "rescue operation," the fact that so many of the Combine's ancient and historical worlds are being sold like common Davion chattel leaves a bitter taste in our mouths. When those industrial worlds, such as Dieron, are rebuilt and repaired, their output would be vital in helping the Dragon re-establish itself as a powerful Successor State. The *Kanrei's* reassurances that sixty percent of the output from military factories on these transferring worlds would be redirected back to the Combine seem to ring hollow in the face of Stone's highway robbery.

At least it seems that not everyone in the High Command is falling for Stone's thraxx-and-kanga show.

–From the *Dieron Drake*, 8 March 3080

Whatever their motives, they keep coming. Ranging from single Elementals to entire Clusters—all pledging their allegiance to Stone—there seems no end in sight to these defections.

The implications are such that now the military the Republic will inevitably form looks to be quite formidable. Imagine, an army that has the superior technology and skill of the Clans' genetically enhanced soldiers, with a local logistical network, and Sphere-born generals who are experienced in warfare that has seen just about every type of strategy and tactic used since the dawn of time. Unburdened by the arbitrary rules or trials of the Clans, Devlin Stone will have one of the most potent forces humankind has known since Kerensky.

Which may be what his new Clan followers see in this. As the guardian of Terra, savior of mankind from a madman and his monstrous soldiers, Stone is respected and a little bit feared by everyone who lived through the Jihad. His Clan followers might be hoping that Stone will make the decisions even their sainted Kerensky did not: to remain in the Inner Sphere, and keep things under control, as only a Khan can do.

—ISAP OpEd, 8 November 3080

A NEW HOME FOR A SHATTERED LEAGUE

"The Free Worlds League is no more!"

By now, even the MPs who once represented up have come to accept this fact. After centuries of rule by a hereditary,

military dictatorship, our worlds now stand, alone and apart, in a war-torn universe.

How—and why—we came to this point is beyond any one of us to define. Our forefathers were promised a democracy that never came. In their place, we received dukes and lords who gathered armies and power for themselves. They forged their alliances, the few speaking for many, while a dictatorship—however benevolent—evolved under the guise of a "national emergency". Unknowingly, they forged a recipe for weakness, a political disaster that drew us into partnership with the greatest evil mankind would know since Stefan Amaris.

Now, dozens of our worlds lie in ruins, subjected to the reign of Blake's power-mad descendants, techno-cultists who turned our own leaders against us.

No Parliament is coming to help us clean up the mess.

No Captain-General is coming to spare us the imminent threat of foreign invasion.

But still, there is hope! Hope for a brighter future! Hope for a future where WE have a voice!

A new order is coming to Terra, an order based not on blood ties to the past, but to the legacy of mankind's Golden Age, where our worlds were the gardens of the Star League! This Order will not yoke our future to Star Lords or House Lords. This Order can bring us the unity and stability we deserve without forcing us to send our sons and daughters into the meat grinder of war!



MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

It is time for those of us who have survived the sundering of our once great Free Worlds League to embrace a greater destiny!

Let us find a new home for the shattered remains of the League—in the Republic of the Sphere!

—Pamphlet distributed throughout several former Blake Protectorate worlds, December 3080

STONE: UNDER THE REPUBLIC, SKYE IS FREE AT LAST!

(14 January 3081)

Terra [INN] – The Geneva conferences are far from over, but a joint announcement made today by Devlin Stone and Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner brought to light the current state of a long-discussed matter regarding the extent of the post-Jihad Republic into the neighboring Lyran Alliance. Citing a preliminary agreement with Archon Adam Steiner, the two allied coalition leaders proclaimed the majority of the Skye Province—including the core worlds once known as the Isle of Skye itself—would be formally ceded to Devlin Stone's proposed Republic state to create a friendly buffer zone around Terra.

The historic agreement will leave certain key worlds such as Hesperus II and Solaris VII under the authority of the Lyran Alliance, but will enable Skye and its closest neighboring worlds

to realize a level of autonomy beyond what they enjoyed under the reign of House Steiner. While some details remain open, Skye itself is reportedly on a short list to serve as a regional capital under the new Republic, which Stone and his supporters proclaim will employ an interstellar form of democratic rule.

"Under this new arrangement," Stone told reporters at a special press conference, "the people of Skye will have a real voice in their government. From its local community, Skye will be an equal partner with the Republic, the will of its peoples respected even on the interstellar stage."

"No longer will Skye's fate be determined by the rivalries of ancient dynasties," Kelswa-Steiner added later, conjuring memories of the Succession Wars, and the centuries of bloodshed that often raged across the vital, industry-rich worlds closer to Terra. "Under this new Republic, we will know freedom from the cycle of war and tragedy that brought us to the Jihad."

In a separate press conference, Archon Adam Steiner also extolled the virtues of granting Skye its release from Lyran rule, saying that the time had come for the people of the Inner Sphere "to throw off the destructive habits of imperialism, and embrace a new age of peace and prosperity that [the Republic] represents."

DAWN OF A NEW AGE

(2 April 3081)

Terra [INN] – Across the Sol system and beyond, streets are alive with celebrations unlike any in recent memory—and with good reason! For the first time in over thirty years, it seems, the majority of the Inner Sphere is no longer at war.

It was, after all, in 3050 when the Clans came to the Inner Sphere, shattering a shaky status quo that lasted for a decade in the wake of the War of 3039. And ever since that fateful event, the realms of the Inner Sphere have been in turmoil, with armies constantly on the move and factories constantly churning out war materiel in pursuit of a technological edge. Although mankind briefly saw hope in the formation of the Second Star League, we would learn—all too quickly—how fragile that the peace and stability such an alliance of convenience would become. For it was in the very ending of the Clan Invasion the Second League brought about that a new war—the FedCom Civil War—would rage, and in its aftermath, of course: the terrible, Sphere-spanning Jihad.

Yet in the darkness of the worst conflict seen since the fall of the original Star League, a new hope emerged, and with it an alliance so broad that Clan and Inner Sphere fought side by side to end the mutual threat of unspeakable evil. The Jihad left none of us untouched, and perhaps, at last, we have learned the folly of war.

Although no new Star League has risen from the ashes of the war, today's celebrations mark what may well be the dawn of a new age with the birth of the Republic of the Sphere. Once considered a pipe dream, the Republic combines the dreams of visionaries with the willingness of today's leaders to finally put an end to the horror of interstellar war. Gone now—hopefully forever—are the dreams of forcing all of mankind to live under a single banner, but in its place, rising from the ashes of the worst of men, there now exists a new symbol of how much we as a people can live together, in peace.

There are those who would suggest that this new Republic—and its promise of a brighter tomorrow—is nothing more than political opportunism and wishful thinking, whitewashed by the euphoria of the Word of Blake's defeat. Perhaps this is so, but after thirty years of relentless, ever-escalating conflict, can we really give up on the dream that peace—lasting peace—is at least possible?

Surely, we have all earned the right to dream of a better future!

MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

WHERE THE WAR STILL RAGES...

The Coalition's victorious pacification of Terra did not end the Word of Blake threat overnight. The shadowy Master, who still commanded the most fanatical Jihadists, escaped both the fighting at humanity's home and the Regulars' strategic bombardment of Gibson. As he fled, many of the various Blakist field commanders still at large turned to guerrilla tactics, hiding among the populations of liberated worlds to strike at the allies from the shadows.

The most bloody fighting of this period unquestionably tore through the worlds of the crumbling Free Worlds League, as Regular ships relentlessly pursued the fleeing Master to his Periphery base. But the surprise, sphere-wide assaults known as

the Bloody Tricentennial also reminded the rest of the Inner Sphere that the Word remained a deadly threat to all who once opposed them. The widespread terror campaign, coming over a year after the allied victory on Terra, briefly threatened the fragile campaign of diplomacy and reconstruction that had already begun, as leaders and armies braced for a new wage of Blakist aggression.

SHADOWS OVER ORIENTE

[FWLS Santorini]: "Attention, *Zecheinu*-class vessel arriving at Escorial-L1. This is the ODS *Santorini*. Identify and burst Authorization or you will be flagged as hostile. Respond."

[Static]

[Santorini]: "*Zecheinu*-class vessel, respond at once."

[Internal]: "Viper Squadron, standby for launch. Hawk Squadron, alter vector to intercept new con—"

[FWLS Acari]: "*Santor*—i, this is ODS *Acar*—nsmittng Authorization, but our—nications are damaged. Re-send—or verification..."

[Santorini]: "*Acari, Santorini*. We are receiving your Authorization, but your audio is garbled. Standby..." **[Internal]:** "Hawk Squadron, close pass on contact. Verify ID and condition. Viper Squadron, maintain standby. Branth Squadron, to your fighters."

[Hawk-A]: "*Santorini*, Hawk-Actual here. I have visual. Markings and IFF consistent with *Acari*. I see multiple damage points to forward and midship sections... Jump sail is missing... No active targeting."

[Santorini]: "*Acari, Santorini*. What is your status?"

[Acari]: "*Santorini, Acari*. We have—m system damage, and engines—at eighty per—t. Damn Robes—it us hard at Ohrens—e lost the *Kustarachnae* and had to pull out—least we can still move..."

[Santorini]: "Affirmative, *Acari*. Standby to receive—"

[Hawk-A]: "IR burst! One—no, two of them—one o'clock high! Hawk Squadron, break right!"

[Acari]: "*Santorini!* We—two bogeys astern! P—dvise!"

[Santorini]: "*Acari*, come to and close ranks!" **[Internal]:** "Hawk Squadron, we read both inbounds. Cover the *Acari*. Viper Squadron, launch! Branth Squadron, load for capital engagement and launch as ready! Forward gunnery stations, match bearings with Target Designation Alpha!"

[Hawk-A]: "*Santorini*, Hawk-Actual. Sensors tag both bogeys as *Vincent*-class, Mark Thirty-nines by the silhouettes. They are tracking us."

[Santorini]: "Acknowledged, Hawk Squadron. Maintain cover on *Acari*. We're coming."

[Viper-A]: "*Santorini*, Viper Squadron is away! Vectoring for intercept on Target Beta!"

[Santorini]: "*Santorini* acknowledges. Weapons free and firing on Alpha."

[Acari]: "*Santorini, Acari*. We are tak—vy fire. Losing thrust. Port side manuev—out."

DEATH WARRANT

To: Regular Task Force Executioner, RPS *Delos*

Re: Standing Orders: Word of Blake Disposition

Be it known to all of our military forces that any and all signs of Blakist existence found on Gibson or within the Gibson solar system are to be scrubbed clean with extreme prejudice. This includes both the elite Manei Domini and regular Word of Blake Militia forces. No Word of Blake personnel are to be taken captive, nor is any of their equipment to be salvaged. Any structure, military or civilian, that is known or suspected to have housed, harbored, or supported the Word of Blake—either knowingly or as an incidence of occupation—is to be demolished to the fullest extent possible. The use of tactical and strategic weapons is authorized for any situation the field commander deems appropriate. Indeed, use of said weapons is highly recommended if it will shorten the engagement and/or reduce Regular casualties.

Any Regular soldier who is deemed by his or her superiors as holding back or showing mercy to any representative or ally of the Word of Blake is subject to court martial. Punishment for such dereliction of duty will be hard labor or summary execution. Mercenary commands who are proven to be lax in their contracted duties in following these orders will be subject to immediate contract termination and may be regarded as a potential Word of Blake confederate, sent to disrupt Regular operations. Field officers may thus consider such commands potential enemies of the state, and may detain and repurpose personnel and equipment from such non-compliant commands accordingly.

Signed

Captain-General Prince Titus Cameron-Jones

—Intercepted orders sent to Regular Task Force before their departure to Gibson, 26 January 3079



MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

[Santorini]: "We have your back, *Acari*." *[Internal]:* "Hawk Squadron, break and attack Alpha! Branth Squadron, away!"

[Branth-A]: "Branth Squadron is away! Vectoring for intercept on Target Beta!"

[Viper-A]: "Acknowledge, Branth Actual. Thanks for the assist."

[Branth-A]: "Not a problem, Viper Actual! We've been waiting to pay these Robe bitches back since Atreus."

[Hawk-A]: "*Santorini*, Hawk Actual! Alpha is changing course, veering off."

[Santorini]: "We see it, Hawk Squadron. Maintain pressure; we have her flank. *Acari*, slide to our port; keep us between you."

[Acari]: "Affirm—*torini*..."

[Viper-A]: "What the hell?"

[Branth-A]: "*Santorini*, Branth Actual! Beta is bugging out! Repeat, the Robes are running!"

[Santorini]: "Keep on them, Branth Squadron. Don't let them regroup! ... *Acari*, where did those fighters come from?"

[Acari]: "Peace of Blake be with you!"

[Santorini]: "Son of a bitch! Those are Shadow fighters! Engage point defen—! Mother—!" *[Internal]* "Damage report!"

[Hawk-A]: "The hell? That was a nuke! *Santorini*, Hawk Actual! What's your status?"

[Santorini]: "Standby, Hawk Squadron..." *[Internal]:* "Raptor Squadron, to your fighters! Capital batteries, target the *Acari*! All gun crews, weapons—Damn it!"

[Viper-A]: "IR surge! Viper Squadron, disengage! Target Beta is jumping!"

[Branth-A]: "Goddamn sucker punch! Branth Squadron, come about! Some of these bastards gotta pay for this!"

—Tactical Communications intercepts, ODS *Santorini*, over Oriente, 12 March 3079

BLAKIST RAIDS SAVAGE DUCHY OF ORIENTE

(20 March 3079)

Oriente [ISAP] – A series of Word of Blake attacks, carried out by at least four Divisions with WarShip support, ravaged the Duchy of Oriente, directly striking at least five worlds across the former Free Worlds League member state. Duchy officials say the month-long raiding campaign was executed with remarkable precision and focused specifically on denuding the region's aerospace and ground defenses, as a possible prelude to additional attacks.

Speaking on behalf of the Duchy government, General Royal Buchanan told reporters that the origin of the Blakist task force was unknown, but stressed that none of the attackers were believed to have been from among those that fled the allied campaign for Terra that completed earlier this year.

"We identified, in all, the colors of four distinct Word of Blake Divisions among the raiders," Buchanan said, "including one Shadow Division not previously encountered."

The raiders struck first at Ohrensen on 6 February, swiftly destroying the destroyer *Schrack* with a nuclear attack, before

dropping troops on the planet to smash the First Marik Militia and disable the local hyperpulse generator. Reinforcements from Kyrkbacken and Suzano—including the corvettes *Acari* and *Kustarachnae*—arrived within a week of the attack, but proved unable to overpower the Word of Blake task force. The *Kustarachnae* was reportedly destroyed while attempting to protect her sister ship and cover the arriving Fourth Fusiliers of Oriente, and the *Acari*—it was learned later—was seized by Manei Domini.

On 12 March, the raiders launched a daring hit-and-run against Oriente, using the battle-damaged *Acari* arrived as a Trojan Horse. The *Acari*, still apparently fleeing from Blakist raiders, took the carrier *Santorini* off-guard during her patrol of the Duchy capital. Once more employing fighter-delivered tactical nuclear devices, the *Acari* managed to cripple the *Santorini*'s KF drive. While the turncoat corvette was subsequently destroyed, its attack rendered the most powerful ship in the Ducal fleet unable to respond to the Word's secondary strikes, which fell against Les Halles, Dayr Khuna, and Jouques just one day later.

On Jouques, the damage was particularly severe, as the two attacking Word of Blake Divisions destroyed the defending Second Fusiliers, plundered their bases for supplies, and departed under the cover of a nuclear strike on three nearby population centers scarcely a week later.

Duchy officials have sent warnings of the Blakist task force to all nearby states—including the Capellan Confederation and the pacified Terran Protectorate—but as of this report, there has been no response from any of them, nor have there been further sightings of the enemy raiders.

TERRORISTS FLOOD DEEP HAMILTON

[Camera shows a disheveled man standing amidst smoking rubble with a massive dam behind him. Trucks race by in the background and uniformed workers frantically scramble to clear the debris.]

[Costamayor]: "This is Julian Costamayor for Umka World News. I am standing at the site of one of the devastating explosions that rocked the city of Deep Hamilton in the early hours of the morning. Rescue crews continue to search for survivors of the three dozen or so blasts that have ruined large areas of the city. The official death toll stands at 1200 for now, but that number rises with every passing hour."

[Costamayor begins to walk stage right and the camera follows him.]

[Costamayor]: "As you can see behind me, the commercial district of Deep Hamilton is particularly hard hit. There is hardly any building left unscathed by the attack. We do not as yet know who is responsible for this atrocity, though if rumors can be believed it is due to Word of Blake partisans hidden among the populace. Authorities have cen—"

[Camera shakes violently as a massive boom is heard. Costamayor stumbles but keeps his balance. Camera pans up to the dam, where a thin line of smoke rises from a spot near the center of the top edge.]

MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

"BLOODY TRICENTENNIAL"

(17 October 3080)

Terra [ISAP] – The reports keep coming in, with every batch of fresh hyperpulse transmissions: attacks—ranging from suicide bombings and one-man shooting rampages, to all-out assaults, and city-killing terror strikes—are taking place throughout the Inner Sphere. And, without fail, all of them are believed to be the handiwork of Word of Blake.

The casualty figures range by incident, with some as low as zero by virtue of vigilant security or poor planning on the part of the attackers, to hundreds—even thousands—of lives lost. The attacks have targeted everything from military personnel and government buildings to factories, schools, hospitals, and residential centers.

On Terra alone, massive explosions ripped through manufacturing centers in Europe and Australia, while stray BattleMech raids were reported in North America and Asia. In the city of Seattle, a rampaging *Flashman* sporting TerraSec colors managed to lay waste to over half of the city's commercial district before Coalition peacekeepers could reach it. Once cornered, the zealot MechWarrior detonated his own machine, taking two Coalition BattleMechs with him and spreading fire and destruction that took two days to contain. Casualty figures in that act alone are thought to be over ten thousand dead or wounded.

Officials in Geneva believe that these attacks have been coordinated to coincide with the tenth of October, the three-hundredth anniversary of the date that the leaders of the five surviving Great Houses of the first Star League appointed Jerome Blake as Minister of Communications. This act is regarded as something of a hallowed occasion to the fanatics of Word of Blake, because it eventually led to the formation of ComStar, the interstellar Order from which Word of Blake evolved. So far, ComStar officials have declined to comment on this connection.

So far, reports of these so-called "Tricentennial Attacks" have come in from close to fifty worlds across the Inner Sphere, including Aitutaki and Keystone in the Free Worlds League; Inarcs, Loxley, and Recife in the Lyran Alliance; Firgrove and New Avalon in the Federated Suns; and Isesaki and Marduk in the Draconis Combine. Early reports from Pandora and Itabaiana suggest that even Clan-held territories are not immune, and while little news has been forthcoming from the Capellan Confederation, there have been some rumors of major damage on St. Ives earlier this week, suggesting that Word of Blake cells remain active there as well.

In the Terran Protectorate, Word of Blake cells have reportedly attacked cities and garrisons on Arboris, Denebola, Oliver, Milton, and Sirius. HPG services to Lyons were also reported "unexpectedly lost" this morning, suggesting a possible terror attack there, but so far, Coalition officials can neither confirm or deny whether this is the case.

In response to these events, military forces throughout the former Blake Protectorate—and, in many cases, beyond—have been brought to high alert, and in the city of Geneva, virtually all government functions have been locked down until local security can be sure that there is no imminent threat to the planetary government.

[Costamayor]: *[voiceover]* "What the hell was that? Ricardo, are you getting this?"

[Camera wobbles as if nodding. A crack has appeared in the dam and a trickle of water seeps through.]

[Costamayor]: *[voiceover]* "Oh shit, am I seeing what I think I'm seeing? Folks, the Deep Hamilton dam has been attacked and it looks like it's going to fall! Oh Jesus! Oh sweet Jesus!"

[Camera turns and becomes shaky as Costamayor and crew run away from the dam. A deep rumbling noise begins, followed by a loud crack and then a roar.]

[Costamayor]: *[voiceover]* "Oh God, there's so much water! Addy, I lo—"

[Image blacks out; the words "SIGNAL LOSS" flash an instant later.]
—Umka World News live broadcast, Umka, 12 October 3080

HUNDREDS DIE IN CHEMICAL ATTACK ON ABBEVILLE

(14 October 3080)

Abbeville [ISAP] — The streets of LaBostrie lie silent this morning, two days after the horrifying attack that saw the death of hundreds of people in this town of just two thousand inhabitants. Most of the bodies remain where they fell; men, women, children and even animals sprawled across the pavement or locked in their houses in a vain attempt to avoid the clouds of death that filled the air. Cleanup efforts have been stalled by fears of remaining pockets of the as yet unknown chemical agent. Planetary militia hazmat crews are expected to arrive in LaBostrie later today but for now, this once-peaceful town stands as a monument to the savagery of the Word of Blake.



PARADISE LOST: STERILIZATION ON A GLOBAL SCALE

(13 March 3080)

Tamarind [ISAP] – The following is the testimonial of Burton Lindley, captain of the *Mule*-class *Leper Colony*, who witnessed the travesty at Paradise. It is believed the Regulans have begun using converted civilian ships for lower priority targets in their scourging, having almost exhausted their conventional aerospace forces since putting Gibson to the nuclear torch a year ago.

"We were headed to Paradise—there's irony—when about six hours out from the planet, traffic control started shitting itself. We got orders to go back to *Centralla's Toy*, our JumpShip, then into solar orbit, then were allowed into parking orbit around Paradise. I checked with Goggles...sorry, that's my first watch sensor operator...and apparently about fifteen minutes before Paradise Control lost its cool there'd been an emergence pulse from Paradise's pirate point. The L1 point of Paradise and its big moon Bliss, I mean.

"So, I was thinking maybe a return to the *Toy* was a good idea, forget the contract, because folks popping in at pirate points and staying radio-silent and shooting up early warning satellites are not good for business. Then Paradise calls us up and says, 'Hey, want lots of cash? You're on the right course for a scouting run...'

"I'd already cut the braking burn because, you know, velocity equals options, and the folks on the ground saw our ballistic path was aimed between Paradise and Bliss, a lot closer than any of the sensors in low Paradise orbit. *Mules* don't pack milspec sensors, but we would see something. Like, we could see Paradise's militia was launching some serious metal into low orbit but, you know, they didn't want to play their hand until they knew what was lurking at the pirate point. Once I got Paradise's bid above our contract and indemnities, yeah, I took the contract.

"The ships at the pirate point were a *Star Lord*, a couple of *Mammoths*, and some small military DropShip that Goggles couldn't quite figure out, probably a *Leopard-CV*. At a distance, it looked like the *Mammoths* were kicked out this weird chaff.

"I was expecting the fighters when we got closer, though we couldn't see the stealthy shits until they lit their drives. I skewed and punched it to two-and-a-half G's. They almost doubled our acceleration, but we led in endurance and initial velocity so they never got close. Good thing, considering what the chaff turned out to be. I could figure what the fighters carried.

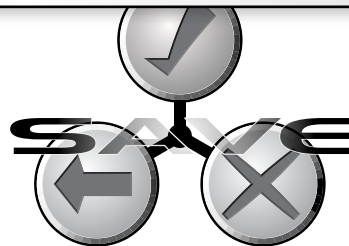
"When we got close enough for our radar to get some good pings, we saw the mystery *Mammoths* were belching out about fifteen objects per minute each, smaller than fighters. In total, they spewed the things for a couple of hours, and then the cloud of drifting whatsits started kicking toward the planet at random times and vectors.

"Goggles started losing it then. Took me a while to get the info past his weeping and shouting. He said this was a typical First Succession War tactic for when a House took a serious hating on a planet. Usually they'd nuke planets with WarShips or converted freighters from low polar orbits that eventually covered the whole planet. But sometimes L1 points were used, which was convenient for raiders and sending nukes anywhere in one throw with cheap chemical kick motors.

"Once they lit up, we saw the Regulans were using capital missiles, which had delta-V to spare and could cut flight times. And interception windows. I was also wrong about the random burns. The missiles weren't lighting randomly, they had precisely timed burns to lots of destinations on Paradise. Six hours later, us well on our way back to *Toy*, the defenders had done what they could. I don't know where Paradise got all those cutting-edge DropShips and fighters since my last visit, but they managed to bag several dozen missiles. The missiles were just too widespread, numerous, and small to be killed quickly, so there were still thousands left to hit the planet. Thousands of big damn nukes, multi-megatonners, lit up Paradise pole to pole within about five minutes of each other, zeroed in on every major city. For the towns and villages that didn't get a direct hit, those Regular bastards jacketed the bombs with cobalt, we could see the spectra in the flashes.

"The bastards got away, too. Before Paradise lit up, we saw a couple of militia DropShips burning to the pirate point when there was another jump pulse. The *'Lord* had to have a lithium-fusion battery because it'd jumped in only two, three hours earlier.

"I'm so damned glad I had Paradise wire my fee out by HPG in advance."



MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

LaBostrie, a planetary capital suburb known mostly for its abundance of warehouses and shipping facilities, became the victim of what is now being called the "Bloody Tricentennial" attacks on the morning of 12 October. It is currently unknown whether LaBostrie was the intended target of the attack or if it went off prematurely and the true target was somewhere within the more populous Cottonport.

Shortly after 0700 local time, residents near the Feuilletemps Cartage and Freight warehouse on Eugene Street called local utility services to report a strange odor. Within twenty minutes, a pale gray cloud was spreading out in the area. Surviving witnesses indicate that the cloud seemed to be emanating from the Feuilletemps facility. By 0730, the first victims began dying.

Luckily, the attack occurred in a location apart from most residential areas and at a time when not too many people were at work. Evacuation of the town began as a chaotic rush to safety but local police soon had a more orderly escape working. The death toll, estimated from survivor rolls and aerial observation, is expected to top four hundred, most of those among the town's poorest inhabitants. The entire town has been quarantined until further notice.

WHAT OF LOPEZ?

(5 December 3080)

Oriente [LNN] – At 0132 Terran Standard Time, 12 October 3080, the world of Lopez effectively ceased to exist. That was when the first of fourteen massive meteors struck the planet. Twenty-two hours later the last meteor fell and the bustling world of Lopez—home to some 2.6 billion people—was reduced to a scattering of survivors in the wildernesses of the planet's blasted, volcanic remains.

But what happened? What force reached through the stars to flatten an entire world? There is little doubt the act was man-made in nature, especially given the similarities between this event and others that have taken place during the Jihad. Indeed, the odds of such a stellar event happening naturally in the Lopez system make winning a League-wide mega lottery look like a safe bet. There was little warning of the impending disaster. Orbital scans, made by fleeing spacecraft, showed no signs of drive plumes driving the asteroids, like those used in the brutal assault of the Concordat's home world of Taurus. So how was this attack delivered? Why was it not detected sooner?

The only clues to the Lopez attack come from a single broadcast made by the prospector DropShip *Ice Princess*. Six weeks before the asteroids struck Lopez, the *Ice Princess* radioed Lopez's nadir jump monitoring station, reporting a large K-F signature detected outside the system's elliptical plane. Six weeks later, Lopez was devastated. Last month, investigators backtracking the course of the asteroids discovered the remains of the *Ice Princess* drifting along the same course the asteroids traveled. Although the DropShip has been hulled by capital-scale

weapons fire, her sensor logs were intact, and showed a sixty-second IR emergence signature and a WarShip massing at least one million tons appeared within one hundred kilometers of the vessel. Thirty seconds after the end of the IR Signature, the *Princess* was destroyed.

Since news of the *Ice Princess*' fate reached the general public, many have attributed the death of Lopez to rumors that the Word of Blake has developed a planet-killing WarShip. Given this latest evidence, more officials have begun to lend credence to these rumors.

ONLY WAY TO BE SURE

(14 February 3081)

Poulsbo [ISAP] – Millions are dead or dying on the disputed world of Poulsbo today as a result of an act both Lyran and Tamarind governments are calling "senseless genocide", carried out by a Regular task force hunting stragglers of the Word of Blake. Having already obliterated all life on Gibson, Paradise, and Diamantina, the Regulars came to Poulsbo—a strategic border world historically contested by both Houses Steiner and Marik—in response to rumors that Blakist forces loyal to the mysterious "Master" were on-planet. Instead, they found the Heart of Blake, a mercenary command that reportedly broke with the Word early in the Jihad.

The inbound Regulars reportedly ignored repeated hails by the Heart of Blake, as well as the planetary government operating from the capital city of Bangor Heights, insisting the Poulsbo was, in fact, a free world. These hails turned to pleas of mercy, and offers of liaison and intelligence exchange by the ex-Blakist force when the Regular fleet—dominated by the WarShip *Delos*, reached high orbit. All of these appeals came to naught, as the Regulars began an intense thermonuclear bombardment of the capital and the nearby Bangor military base, using cobalt-clad weapons for maximum effect. Additional strategic weapon impacts were reported on all five of Poulsbo's island continents, targeting any major population centers their sensors could detect from orbit.

Only after several inquiries were made by media agencies on Regulus did ISAP receive a response from a Principality representative identified as Junior Lieutenant Mitch Sherman:

"The modus operandi of the Word of Blake, from the very start, has been one of deception and misdirection that inevitably costs countless lives," Sherman told ISAP. "Thus, our field commands have been authorized to treat with suspicion any possible ploys that may be seen as potential Blakist treachery. This includes denying succor to any unit of former Word of Blake affiliation, claiming to be fighting against Word of Blake interests, as such units can easily be a front for infiltrators. Regulus has already suffered from the Word of Blake's ruses enough, and will chance no further deceptions by an enemy known to employ terror both as a means to its own end, or as a means to slip sleeper operatives onto supposedly friendly or neutral worlds."



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When questioned on the what-if scenario that perhaps the Heart of Blake was indeed sincere as to its break from the zealots, Sherman simply replied: "There was only one way to be sure".

Emergency responders to Poulsbo reported that virtually all civil and military transmitters on-world ceased operation during the bombardment, and that no aerospace traffic could be detected in-system, indicating that any survivors were unable to flee the Regular destruction. Relief ships nevertheless continue to scramble to the planet from both the Lyran Alliance and the Duchy of Tamarind.

ON THIS DAY, IT ENDS IN FIRE

(2 April 3081)

Circinus [RNS] – The battle in space ended hours ago; the last remains of the Word of Blake and Circinus aerospace swatted aside in a hail of weapons fire from our task force of DropShips and WarShips. Already, the Principality ships are assuming orbital positions, most along the equator. Meanwhile, our flagship—the RPS *Delos*—has taken a geosynchronous orbit over the city of Zachariah, capital of the Circinus Federation and last known refuge of the Word of Blake's treacherous Master, Thomas Marik.

Pursuant to standing orders, the fleet has maintained radio silence, relying instead on line-of-sight optics and pre-planned maneuvers to coordinate their attacks. Although several hails from Circinian and Word of Blake ships, fighters, and ground stations were made, our task force has not replied. This fleet will not be deterred by attempts at diplomacy, and it will not allow the Word of Blake's techno-terrorists any opportunity—however small—to electronically infiltrate and sabotage the task force.

Below us, through a thin field of space debris, now lies the last refuge of the Word of Blake's cowardly Master. Since fleeing Terra for Gibson, then for Paradise, the cult leader who planned and unleashed the Jihad upon the Inner Sphere has poisoned whole worlds with Manei Domini infiltrators. His fanatics, resorting to nuclear and biological weapons to stave off their inevitable defeat, forced the Principality—lacking support from Devlin Stone's Coalition—to respond in kind. In the wake of the pursuit, worlds have died, countless innocents sacrificed in the effort to bring evil to justice.

Although the allied realms who seized Terra from the Word of Blake have shattered the Master's primary power base, they have neglected to aid Regular in its drive to track down and destroy the last remnants of Blakist power in the Inner Sphere. Instead, condemning the Principality's actions as a "vendetta", the rest of the Inner Sphere has made it clear that the only way to end the threat of the Word once and for all is to deliver the final blow ourselves.

And today, as the DropShips of the task force execute their pre-defined missions, with the last of the strategic weapons at their disposal, we will—hopefully—bring the war against the Word to its final conclusion.

As the cobalt-clad missiles streak down to deliver fires of Regular justice on the pirate capital below, a sense of cautious optimism can be felt throughout the fleet. At very long last, we hope, this terrible war will end with this act, and the people of Regular—and the Inner Sphere—can finally begin truly healing.

FALL OF THE FREE WORLDS

Perhaps the most tragic casualty of the Jihad was the collapse of the Free Worlds League. Although expected for many years—especially with the start of the so-called Great Debate mere months before the Jihad launched—the reality of the oldest of the Successor States falling into total political collapse was perhaps the most dramatic transformation the Inner Sphere had seen since the demise of the original Star League. Not even the rise and fall of the Federated Commonwealth, the formation of the Free Rasalhague Republic, or the coming of the Clans had changed the map of our universe so much.

Just twenty years before, the Free Worlds held the industrial and economic keys to Inner Sphere survival in the palm of its hand. Today, ravaged from within by Word of Blake manipulation, the realm once seen as the largest democracy in human history lies in ruin, its surviving fragments facing an uncertain future.

FADING INTO UNCERTAINTY

(5 February 3079)

Atreus [ISAP] – In 2272, the historic stroke of a gavel called together the first ever session of the Free Worlds League Parliament. Numbering only eighty members, the first parliamentary session was tasked with forging a working government from the promise of the Treaty of Marik. What emerged was a nation unique among the Great Houses of the Inner Sphere. It was a union of worlds and cultures bound together by the promise of peace, prosperity, and freedom.

As the League's borders expanded, so too did the number of seats within the Parliamentary chamber. Despite efforts to limit the maximum number of representatives, political necessity and the tides of history pushed those limits higher and higher. By the mid 2700's Parliament seated 500.

Through the darkest of times—the fall of the First Star League, the Succession Wars, a Civil War and even the Clan Invasion—the League Parliament served as a unifying force. The citizens of the Free World League had a forum to voice their stance on any crisis. They had influence over the decisions and strategies that would see their realm through tribulations into a better tomorrow. The Parliament Hall stood as the greatest symbol of a commitment to a union greater than the sum of its parts.

The schism within ComStar, the founding of the Word of Blake, and the haven offered to them by the false Thomas Marik would prove to be the beginning of the Free Worlds League's end. The Word's bid for amnesty and safe haven cloaked a sinister agenda known only to a select few within the Order's

ITEM 2

Partial minutes from Free Worlds League Parliament (Atreus), provided by Office of Parliamentary Archive Services
SESSION CONTINUES: 0915 Atrean standard time, 28 January 3079

ITEM 2: Dissolution of the Free Worlds League, its governing bodies and attached offices.

Introduction is made by speaker of the parliament (SP) J. Hauert. After welcoming the attending he makes a personal statement, excusing himself for any sentimentality on his part. SP Hauert is sure that it won't affect decisions in any way. An explanation of the matter to vote on follows: SP Hauert likens disbanding the Free Worlds League to "a slide into a dark abyss of greed, shortsightedness and human incompetence where it will crash upon several Star Leagues and the remains of common sense".

Session continues with a pre-recorded holographic address by Captain-General Corinne Marik, stating her position on the matter. The Captain-General is excused from session due to important matters of state [SEE FILE APPENDIX 1]

MP Helm leaves assembly.

SP Hauert asks for other requests to speak. There are none.
VOTING PROCEDURE BEGINS [0931 AST].

MP present: 36. Regulation 1, Article IV rules that a two-thirds majority is needed. Fifty-two MP have transmitted their vote in advance (Accordance with Reg. 12, Art. II).

VOTING PROCEDURE ENDS [0952 AST].

In favor: 75

Opposed: 6

Abstentions: 3

Voices: 4

ITEM 2 PASSED.

MP Wolof is escorted from the hall.

Remaining acts to be fulfilled by Parliament and attached offices:

- 1: Court verification of the result
- 2: Denial of privileges to the rank of Captain-General
- 3: Appointment of stewardship distributing remaining League assets to appropriate member states
- 4: Issuing an official statement to citizenry

Final speech of SP Hauert: "The motion has passed. The Free Worlds League is no more. Goodbye Ladies and Gentlemen. Please put out the lights and close the doors on the way out."

Last Assembly of the Parliament of the Free World League ends.

most trusted leadership. Masked as missionaries and refugees, the Word of Blake established itself on every League world. Its representatives embedded themselves in every major facet of government, society, and industry. Cautiously at first, and then with bold audacity, they molded the Free Worlds League into a

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staging ground from which to seize Terra, and build their new Blake Protectorate, and eventually to launch their destructive Jihad against all mankind.

While the terror and chaos of the war affected the Inner Sphere as a whole, it rocked the Free Worlds League to its core and beyond. Every citizen was forced to side with or against the Word of Blake. The revelation of Captain-General Thomas Marik's true identity robbed the League of the line of succession that kept the government united. Members of Parliament were murdered, as were the Knights of the Inner Sphere. The Word demanded complete loyalty, and promised utter destruction to those who resisted. No realm suffered under the zealots' thumbs as completely or for as long as the Free Worlds League. The alliance forged by the Treaty of Marik was choked out of existence and replaced with enslavement to an insane cause. Each world was forced to fight for its own survival.

The mortal wounds to liberty proved too deep to heal when the Word was no more. Worlds that formed pockets of resistance against the Word felt no desire to reunite with those that failed to do so. The Marik family, itself dismembered and stripped of credibility, lacked the means to overcome these fractures. Reguluss and Tamarind declared their independence and claimed neighboring worlds for themselves. Andurien declared its own freedom more quietly, but with just as much finality. Other worlds followed and thus a union formed over 800 years ago finally unraveled into a collection of scattered states desperately hoping to rebuild.

Parliament Hall now stands eerily silent. Though this historic edifice is planned to reopen in May, as the Parliament of the Marik Commonwealth, gone now are the trappings of the League, and the throngs of delegates and staff scurrying about to legislate an interstellar nation hundreds of worlds strong. Its quiet, haunted echoes reflect the state of the League itself. Broken and wounded, these new nations must try to regain some measure of what they have lost.

LYRAN AGGRESSORS PRESS INTO LEAGUE TERRITORY

(9 September 3079)

Tamarind [TAMARIND PRESS] – Ducal officials today confirmed that elements of the Fourth Alliance Guards have taken the planetary capital and primary spaceports of Nockatunga, making it the seventh former Free Worlds League world to fall to Lyrans forces in almost as many weeks. Taking advantage of the uncertainty throughout the region, especially after the official disbandment of the League in January, Steiner forces from the Lyrans Alliance's Bolan Province began surging across the border in early August, seizing a series of unaligned worlds from Galisteo to Megrez.

Fortunately for the inhabitants of these war-weary planets, the LAAF's attacks have been conventional in nature, and focused solely on defeating local garrisons, rather than an indiscriminate



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bombardment of strategic weapons designed to deliver maximum loss of life. Nevertheless, these unprovoked attacks, so soon after the allied victory on Terra, have underscored such naked aggression that has officials from Tamarind and Abbey to Tharkad up in arms.

"That [the Lyran Alliance] should stoop to blatant opportunism is hardly surprising," said Inira Guillard, a spokesperson for the Ducal family, "but one must wonder as to their sanity in pursuing warfare so quickly after barely surviving the Jihad."

"It is not the intention of the Lyran Alliance to engage its neighbors in all-out warfare," said Dominic Levaque, the Lyran ambassador to Tamarind. "The military actions being undertaken by the LAAF are being investigated, and rest assured that any wrongdoing by overzealous officers for military adventurism will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of our laws."

The only clashes between Tamarind-Abbey forces and those of the Lyran armies occurred on Epsilon and Nockatunga, two former League worlds actually located beyond the District's borders. In both instances, the defenders included the Thirty-fourth Marik Militia. Outnumbered, the Militia was forced to withdraw to minimize any potential collateral damage.

Meanwhile, diplomatic efforts to resolve these recent developments are already underway by both Lyran and Tamarind officials, hoping to stave off a potential war between the Duchy of Tamarind-Abbey and the Lyran Alliance.

FEAR, UNCERTAINTY FUEL NEW MERCENARY MARKET IN FORMER LEAGUE

(12 September 3079)

Al Jubaylah [MERCNET] – If you read some news sources you would think the mercenary industry is on its deathbed. Certainly, the Jihad was not best time in history to be a hired gun. The Kuritas went back to their old "death to mercenary" ways. The Word trapped good outfits in bad contacts and hired outlaws and other bad eggs to do even worse things. Throw it all into a war that rates up in the top five of all time for sheer body count, and no, the Jihad was *not* kind to the mercenary business, but it didn't kill it either.

Nothing can.

So what's the hot new merc market these days? Where are soldiers for hire flocking in droves? What is this decade's Chaos March? According to long-time INN reporter Rachel Franics, the new mercenary market is the Free Worlds League. (Or, to be more precise, the shattered states that *used to be* the Free Worlds.) With six major powers, scores of independent worlds, and hostile outside states at every turn, there is no shortage of need. Students of history will look back to the late thirtieth century and see similarities there to the current Free Worlds. Where the last few decades has been the time of the regiment-sized mercenary unit, today harkens back to the late Succession Wars, when a single company of 'Mechs could change the fate of an entire world.

There is no better example than Al Jubaylah. Content with independence, the Mullahs of Al Jubaylah were less than pleased when Regulus recently insisted they join the principality. Enter the Battle Corps mercenary command. Just last week, the combined arms outfit arrived on Al Jubaylah and set about aiding the world in preparing a warm welcome should Regulus decide not to take "no" for an answer. According to Francis, the Corps had its choice of a half dozen contracts, all of them in the former Free Worlds League.

The mercenary market is alive and well, you just have to know where to look.

HISTORIC TRADE PACT NORMALIZES RELATIONS FOR ANDURIEN, CANOPUS, SIAN

(13 December 3080)

Andurien [ISAP] – In the first such agreement in centuries, a historic mutual trade pact, signed by the governments of the Duchy of Andurien, the Magistracy of Canopus, and the Capellan Confederation, has brought together these three historically contentious realms in a common alliance of economic cooperation. The agreement culminates close to two years of cautious negotiations, as all three realms kept a wary on the on developments in the Free Worlds League and the former Blake Protectorate.

While the full text of the treaty still remains a guarded secret, a number of details have been passed along to the general public. First and foremost among these was a joint statement by the Capellan and Andurien realms that this agreement does not extend to military operations, and poses no direct military threat to either the treaty's signatory states or their neighbors. The treaty also allows for tariff changes between signatory states, but only after a timely review by representatives on all sides.

A particularly delicate matter that was reportedly addressed was the matter of border customs between shipments passing into and through signatory states. Citing issues of internal security and the receding—yet nevertheless still acknowledged—threat of infiltration by Blakists and other external threats, the Confederation was adamant about not granting "undue leeway" to merchants, even if they are members of the treaty's signatory states. Arguing against this on the grounds that the typically heavy-handed customs inspections and procedures of the other realms (particularly those of the Confederation) would undermine the very nature of the proposed agreement, the Andurien government offered the alternative of randomized inspection protocols, allowing a greater number of approved merchants to ply their trade between realms with reduced interference. Provisions on this matter in the final agreement have not been announced as of yet, but Magistracy officials speaking to ISAP reported that "an agreeable compromise" had been reached for all sides.

Implicit in this treaty, of course, is the acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the Andurien political state as a separate

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and independent entity from the now-defunct Free Worlds League by the other two signatory realms. This is of particular importance given the strained relations between Sian and other former League sub-states, such as the Duchy of Oriente and the Principality of Regulus, both of which still see the Confederation as a potential enemy in coming years—as well as the Terran Protectorate currently controlled by Devlin Stone and his allied coalition, which the Confederation has yet to formally recognize.

HALAS HEIR ENGAGED TO IRIAN SCION

(15 January 3081)

Oriente [LNN] — The capital city is abuzz today with the news of what will surely prove to be the social event of the year. Jessica Halas, the only daughter of the ducal family, is uniting in marriage with a member of the influential Hughes family.

A brief press release was issued to the Oriente media from the Grand Duke's public relations office last night. The press release read, in part: "The Duke and Duchess of Oriente are delighted to announce the betrothal of their daughter, Lady Jessica Sophia Halas, to Mr. Philip Michael Hughes of Irian.

"The ceremony will take place in Summer 3081 at the bride's family estate on Oriente. Further details regarding the wedding will be forthcoming."

Lady Jessica, 17, is currently a student at Oriente University. She and Mr. Hughes met during a university fundraiser for victims of the Word of Blake held in Amur last spring. A relationship between the two was rumored for several months before the couple went public in October.

In a follow-up statement from the palace this morning, Duke Thomas Halas was quoted saying "While as Duchess and Duke we recognize the tremendous diplomatic and dynastic import of this union, Sherryl and I would like to say that we are far more proud of our daughter and her husband-to-be simply as parents who wish their children all the happiness in the world."

Mr. Hughes, the eldest son of Justine Hughes, is a cadet relation to the famous IrTech industrial family. Social and political commentators were quick to speculate that a primary reason for the union would be to establish close ties between Oriente and the industrial capabilities of Irian, ties that would be strong even across national boundaries. Irian, like many former Free Worlds systems in the region, has declared its allegiance to Devlin Stone's new Republic of the Sphere.

LNN will of course bring you in-depth coverage of the wedding preparations in the months to come.

BRAVE NEW WORLDS?

(8 April 3081)

Oriente [ISAP] – The dissolution of the Free Worlds League has touched every system in and around its former borders in some way or another. Every planetary government—be it dictatorship or a parliament—must surely have faced the inevitable discussion that begins with the simple question of: "What now?"

Many worlds, fearing military adventurism from hostile neighbors, have extended diplomatic overtures to nearby states, offering membership in exchange for protection. Others—like Trinidad and Ibarra—have even discussed creating their own, all-new multi-system alliances for favorable trade and mutual defense. But by far the majority of these "stateless" systems have opted to stand on their own, maintaining full independence and content in the security that comes with being too small to be a threat among the larger mini-states.

Nevertheless, since the League formally disbanded in 3079, the active militia force sizes on the typical ex-League independent have grown to more than double their pre-Jihad size. Some have accomplished this by stepping up recruitment, while others have been retaining activated militia troops for longer tours. Systems bordering aggressive factions or other Houses have increased their defensive forces by roughly 300 percent, and local defense industries have seen orders for non-BattleMech units rising dramatically to the point where many claim an eight-month backlog. Military analysts believe that this trend will continue for a few more years at the very least even if the feared outbreak of rampant raiding and invasions never materializes.

Offensive operations between the unaligned ex-League systems remain non-existent. This has been attributed to a variety of reasons, from the more practical lack of interstellar transportation between these systems, to a lack of confidence among potential invaders of a swift victory on foreign neighbors, to the simple unwillingness to risk lives against former countrymen if diplomacy and commercial deals can be worked out instead.

Whatever the reasons, the breakup of the Free Worlds League may be an uncertain time for these unaffiliated worlds, but it has hardly unleashed the worst-case scenario many feared, of a League-wide war without end.

THE TAURUS WAR

Even as the war against the Word receded with the fall of the Blake Protectorate and the Coalition victory on Terra, as the Free Worlds League's collapse carried chaos through that region of space, another simmering conflict raged on, devolving into a quagmire as weary forces on both sides dug in for the long haul. Driven by centuries of simmering distrust and a long memory of mutual resentment, the Taurian Concordat and the Federated Suns' border worlds closest to them continued to ravage one another, stalemated more by exhaustion than a lack of resolve.



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For the Federated Suns, a concerted push might have readily demolished the Taurian threat, but doing so stood a better than fair chance of not only overextending the realms' badly taxed logistical network, but also upsetting a delicate political balance between the March Lords and the throne. Meanwhile, the Taurian military—its own grasp of authority at home now tenuous in the absence of clear victory and their Word of Blake allies—now found itself committed to a war they could not hope to win without great cost.

A WORLD HELD HOSTAGE

(17 June 3080)

Ridgebrook [INN] – Six weeks into the Federated Suns' Operation MATADOR and more than fifteen worlds have been taken (or retaken) from the Taurian Concordat. On some worlds, the fighting barely lasted longer than three days, with rapid air and ground strikes delivering precision hits to Concordat command structures or vital supplies. So how is it that Ridgebrook, a world hit in the first day of the war, remains under Taurian control?

The offensive was led by no less a person than Field Marshal Nathaniel Hasek, military commander for the entire Capellan March. Leading his personal regiment, the Syrtis Avengers, and the mercenary Fifty-ninth Striker Regiment, he wielded far more strength than the defending Concordat Jaegers. Ridgebrook, also major world in the Capellan March, had an active resistance against the Taurians. Superior force, intimate knowledge of the battlefield, and the support of the natives should have made for an easy victory, yet none ever materialized.

The death of 79 year-old Field Marshal Hasek in a Taurian ambush was certainly the first sign of an offensive gone wrong. The command struggle that immediately followed between the Avengers and the Strikers exacerbated the crisis, slowing the operation even further. But the AFFS, no stranger to difficult missions, still possessed overwhelming aerospace superiority and a healthy ground advantage. So why is Ridgebrook still in Taurian hands?

Because the Federated Suns' hands are tied. Kept quiet until now, INN has discovered that Ridgebrook is, in fact, a world held hostage. The day Hasek was killed, the Taurian defenders informed the AFFS attackers that all of the planet's major cities were booby trapped with nuclear charges. If FedSuns forces were to enter any of these cities, the nuclear devices would detonate, killing the attackers and costing countless lives.

Whether the threats are real or merely a bluff is uncertain, but it seems that the attackers are unwilling to take the chance and have kept their offensive away from the major population centers, creating an uneasy stalemate during which the Taurian and Davion forces clash only sporadically in the countryside. After the First Taurian Lancers managed to run the FedSuns blockade around Ridgebrook, it looks as though the Suns' tactics may not work out for long.

BEARDING THE BULL

[The image shows part of a BattleMech cockpit. Centered in the frame is Peter Remonde strapped into the jump seat. The arm of the MechWarrior can just be seen on the left side of the frame. The entire image shudders violently.]

[Remonde]: "That vibration was the ablative shielding blasting free. I am with General Marguerite McCaffee, commander of the Davion Assault Guards and we are now in freefall over the world of Flintoft. As I speak, Federated Suns forces are executing Operation MATADOR, a combined assault on nine Suns' worlds occupied by the Taurian Concordat."

[Video cuts to three Arondight DropShips making slicing runs through the upper atmosphere of a world, their capital missile launchers spitting fire down towards the world.]

[Remonde]: "Our assault began six hours ago with a coordinated aerospace assault. Orbital attacks targeted key command and control networks as wings of aerospace fighters pushed down to take control of the skies."

[Image cuts back as Remonde is thrown against the side of the cockpit. A censored curse can be heard from the General McCaffee.]

[Remonde]: "We are being heavily buffeted by the atmosphere and through my headset I can hear reports that the Bulls held back some aerospace forces. General McCaffee has just rolled her *Atlas* to allow it to fire at any TDF fighters that get past our aerospace screen."

"The BattleMechs of the Davion Assault Guards and First Syrtis Fusiliers are only the first wave of what is being billed as a lighting assault. Above us, DropShips are cutting into the atmosphere to deliver an entire regiment of jump capable battle armor to the battle site.

[The video cuts to that of a gun camera. In the corner of the screen can be seen the Com ID for General McCaffee. The video shows a half a dozen other assault 'Mechs descending nearby, and signs of an aerospace dogfight near the horizon.]

[Remonde]: "...As soon as we've established a beachhead, conventional forces will begin to pour in under the protective cover of the Assault Guards' 'Mechs and fighters. And you will be there to see it. We will be recording this invasion blow-by-blow from the cockpit of General McCaffee's *Atlas*..."

—Peter Remonde, FSNS, 5 May 3080

ALONE AGAINST THE BEAST

(6 March 3080)

Taurus [TCN] – Once again we find ourselves on our own, deserted by the last of our allies with the systematic disappearance of Word of Blake diplomats and liaisons ever since their crushing defeat on Terra. To many, this abandonment comes as no surprise. After all, since the turn of this century, it seems that one powerful ally after another has come and gone, leaving us to face those who would bring our proud realm to its knees.

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After even the great Free Worlds League turned their backs, we became the last major power to be allied with the Word of Blake. Is their disappearance a sign that they do not feel confident in our abilities to protect them should they seek refuge here, or a means of leading the genocidal Regulans away? Perhaps they are trying to assist us by leaving en masse, attempting to spare us the wrath of the combined forces of the Inner Sphere now hunting them down.

But where did they go? The Word has no home now. Their once-impenetrable Protectorate is shattered, with Terra taken by Stone's Coalition. Gibson lays wasted by the Regulans who seem intent on eradicating any sign the Word of Blake ever existed. We have chosen the losing side of a war, even if it may not have been the wrong side.

Regardless, we are once again left on our own to face the full wrath of the Federated Suns, who do not even have the suddenly passive Capellans to keep them distracted. How long can we hold out against this beast, determined to finally conquer us once and for all?

VENDETTA VENGEANCE

[The video shows a spacecraft bridge. In the background crew work quietly. A reporter floats in the foreground.]

[MacDermott]: "This is Joshua MacDermott, with TNS. I'm aboard TCS *Vendetta* in an undisclosed system. Any minute now, Senior Commodore Maximillian Vandenburg will order a jump to the planet of Firgrove, home of a Davion shipyard supplying vessels used to bombard our worlds. The goal is to attack the yard and then set up a blockade, seizing or destroying the enemy supplies. This, our intelligence believes, will finally force House Davion's WarShips out of hiding, enabling the Concordat navy to turn the FedSuns' own technologies against them.

[A claxon blares three warning calls before being replaced by a ship wide broadcast]

[ComOps]: "Attention all hands. Prepare for hyperspace jump in ten seconds. 10... 9..."

[MacDermott moves to the bulkhead and secures himself with an upright safety harness.]

[MacDermott]: "We have to stop recording during the jump; we'll be right back..."

[Video fades to black for three seconds. When it comes back, the bridge lighting is red and a feeling of chaos pervades. The camera pans back to MacDermott, still strapped to the wall, speaking in hushed tones.]

[MacDermott]: "We're not sure what happened. Sixty seconds after we began accelerating from our jump point, the *Vendetta* was rocked by a series of explosions. Bob, see if you can pick up what is being said..."

[The camera zooms in on a knot of officers all gripping the tactical table.]

[Unknown Officer 1]: "Damage is minimal, but if it keeps up—"

[Able Ritcher, First Officer]: "Do we know how deep the minefield is?"

[Communications Technician]: "Commodore, detecting inbound capital missiles!"

[Ritcher]: "Engage all point defenses!"

[Unknown Officer 2]: "We're sitting ducks if we don't do something, sir!"

[Commodore Vandenburg begins to speak but a gloved hand obscures the lens and muffles the sounds for a moment. The hand yanks the camera around revealing a space-suited marine.]

[Marine]: "You need to shut that off now!"

[MacDermott]: "But, but we have full acce—"

[The video goes black]

—Partial recording of TCS *Vendetta*'s attempted assault against Clyde Shipyards, Firgrove, 19 June 3080

PIRACY, ECONOMICS COMPLICATE FEDSUNS-TAURUS WAR

(22 June 3080)

Anaheim [ISAP] – The fighting between the Federated Suns and Taurian Concordat is dragging on past both realms' ability to fight it. With the level of destruction on all the affected worlds approaching that of the Second Succession War, factories and infrastructure are being laid to waste, worsening the devastation already wrought by the Word of Blake's Jihad. Many BattleMechs in this war zone are lucky to get half of their armor repaired and a third of their ammunition reloaded before heading back into the fight.

The Federated Suns is just too over-extended, with New Syrtis unable to coordinate much of the logistical requirements along the border. Even when supplies are sent, they become the focal point for raiders operating in this region, many of whom were scattered after the retaking of Malagrotta. This forces the AFFS to divide their scant forces between actually fighting the war, and protecting their ability to fight the war. Even here on Anaheim, the Suwama Munitions Factory has instituted a second shift to cover the demand for ammo that can't be filled from the usual sources.

On the other side, the Taurians do not have the same logistical issues, but they suffer similar difficulties nonetheless. With their smaller industrial base, equally wracked by Davion actions, piracy and possible Blakist subversion, they simply cannot afford to keep fighting. The Taurian GDP is down thirty percent from its mid-3060 averages, partly due to the worlds and productivity lost while pursuing this conflict, amid domestic crises that still include rebuilding efforts on Taurus itself. Despite deficit spending and dramatic cutbacks, the economic damage is becoming evident, even on the front lines.



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PEACE COMES WEARING HORNS

COMING OF AGE

(25 June 3080)

Erod's Escape [ISAP] – Baron Cham Kithrong's surprise announcement that he was stepping down as Protector of the Calderon Protectorate stunned many. His role as Marshal and subsequent rise to Regent-Protector of the breakaway state seemed destined to end at the same time as most other nation leaders—upon his death or forcible removal. Instead, as promised, the Protectorate's de facto military leader formally declared Erik Martens-Calderon, the son of late Taurian Concordat leader Jeffery Calderon, "ready to assume the duties that are his birthright".

Critics of this historic move have already emerged, claiming that Baron Kithrong is only stepping down symbolically, using Erik to become his mouthpiece while he rules from the shadows. Insiders, however, say that Kithrong might once have expressed doubts about the young boy years ago, but that Erik's drive and ability to become a "proper" leader since then have impressed his mentor. The successful arrangement of negotiations between the Federated Suns and the Taurian Concordat may have been fostered by the aging Marshal, but the initial proposal for the Protectorate to act as arbitrator came from Erik personally, who selected and sent the emissaries to the respective realms.

The official ceremony inaugurating the young Martens-Calderon will reportedly be "a private, quiet affair" compared to those of other states. This, at the personal request of the future Protectorate ruler, is likely intended to minimize any potential tensions with the Taurian Concordat, whose military government still does not recognize the outgoing regency's claim that Martens-Calderon should be made Concordat Protector as well.

WHO WAS IT, REALLY?

(1 August 3080)

Erod's Escape [CPN] – Could the asteroid bombing of Taurus—the event that turned an extended territorial dispute from a bitter quagmire to a genocidal slugfest—have been an inside job all along? Intelligence agents, willing to talk on the condition of anonymity, have said that they have verified documents from both Federated Suns and Free Worlds sources that show a string of classified Galax reports documenting a series of unsolved component thefts and other mysterious equipment disappearances at the DropShip manufacturing company's storage facilities months, even years, prior to the Taurus attack. Additional reports from these and other sources have also spoken of a Word of Blake "mining ship" that first appeared in the Deep Coreward Periphery, and a bizarre upswing in asteroid strikes across the Inner Sphere, including the worlds of Necromo, Algedi, and elsewhere. Although certain Taurian officials still believe these documents may be a ruse, the multitude of corroborating sources—some actively opposed to each other to this day—suggest that this "mining ship" and the asteroid attacks may, in fact, be related.

(4 July 3080)

Taygeta [TAYGETA EDITORIAL] – Who would have thought we'd have Taurians to thank for the end to the war with the Taurians? All right, so they they're the "Calderon Protectorate", but here on Taygeta the difference is pretty hard to tell. Still, I guess we have to make some concessions since these Calderonians (Is that even a word? It is now!) think nukes are a bad thing. That certainly sets them apart from the run of the mill Bull.

After the Taurians sent their nuke-happy WarShip to Firgrove, it looked like the fighting was going to heat up big time. Bookmaker odds on the Ridgebrook fight going nuclear didn't even have odds on "if"; it was all about "when" the nukes would start raining. So when diplomats from the Protectorate came knocking at New Avalon's door, saying they could bring the Bulls to the negotiating table, it's hard to imagine the First Princess not giving them at least a small listen.

Now, no one expected the Bulls to ever be willing to come to the table in the first place. Normally against any kind of civil conversation with the Suns, they make it pretty clear that after Taurus was attacked they were never going to listen to a "damned dirty Davion" again. This, of course, has made it downright difficult for us to tell them it wasn't us lobbying perfectly good *Overlords* at them. Apparently, the Calderonians managed to finally talk sense to the Bulls (Anyone want to bet it involved a sledgehammer?) and get them to realize it was the Word of Blake and not the FedSuns that tried to wipe out their capital.

And so there we have it. Just goes to show that it takes a Bull to talk to a Bull. Whatever. We on Taygeta are just glad this means we won't be getting any nuclear care packages in the mail.

Though many public sources in the Concordat remain reluctant to admit that they have been played (again) by other powers, it has become common knowledge that the Word of Blake was harvesting war materials from every corner of the Inner Sphere. Even the TCS *Vendetta*—a Blakist gift to the Concordat—began its life as "found technology", scavenged from an old Star League boneyard somewhere. Could the asteroid attack have been the Word's handiwork, to unleash Taurian frenzy against the Davion menace? Or was it the Capellan Confederation, who some still believe has manipulated the Concordat's fate since the death of Jeffery Calderon? Both theories have their merits, and it is clear that in both cases the suspects proposed would gain more from an embattled House Davion than the Suns would reap from a similar ploy.

The possibility of Davion innocence is slowly, reluctantly catching on in the Taurian Concordat these days. Where only thirteen percent of the populace on Taurus believed such things at the end of 3074, today—six years later—almost one in every three Taurians suspects that someone *other than* the Federated Suns may have been behind the atrocity.

Belief alone may not be proof, but if the Davions didn't bomb the capital of our motherland, then who was it?

MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

(19 April 3081)

Erod's Escape [ISAP] – In six decades covering interstellar news, I've had the opportunity to see some very momentous occasions. My first assignment was for the wedding of Hanse Davion and Melissa Steiner. I was there when the Star League was reborn and barely escaped Tharkad when it collapsed into the fires of the Jihad. And in all my years reporting this is one of the strangest events I have ever born witness to.

As unlikely as a FedSuns/Concordat negotiated peace was, few believed it would ever happen while the TCS *Vendetta* still sailed. Not only did the Calderon Protectorate bring this about, but they did so in a way that appears to have satisfied all three parties—and, in the process, created perhaps the strangest Federated Suns military command in history.

The *Vendetta* was placed in high geosynchronous orbit over the Calderon Protectorate capital of Erod's Escape. The crew is TDF caretaker crew—none having served with her during combat—while two-thirds of the marine quarters are occupied by Protectorate peacekeeping troops. The remaining marine quarters were given over to guest quarters. The quarters are to house official observers, who have full access to the ship and ensure that she does not cross closer to Federated Suns than the Pirates Haven Cluster. A small handful of these observers come from the Republic of the Sphere, the new nation born from the pan-Inner Sphere Coalition. The majority of the observers, however, are from the Federated Suns Navy.

I was there when the officers of the FSN arrived to take up their duty post. Under the command of Rear Admiral Elias Biggs, the Suns' officers floated through the boarding tube from their docked DropShip. As Admiral Biggs came into view, the Taurian band played the Federated Suns naval honors and the *Vendetta's* fore and aft naval lasers alternated to offer a fifteen-gun salute. As Admiral Biggs shook Commodore David Percy's hand I was struck by one overwhelming thought:

The TCS *Vendetta* is likely to go down as one of the oddest military commands in history.

RECONSTRUCTION

Many worlds and lives lay shattered by the Word of Blake Jihad (and the side conflicts that accompanied it). Political alliances, even those forged in the fires of war, remained strained both between realms, and within them. Weakened restrictions on anti-shipping actions and the damage to the hyperpulse generator network left many worlds in the dark, slow to receive goods or news.

With so much infrastructure damaged, the postwar Inner Sphere teetered on the brink of economic and political chaos that would have made the Free Worlds League's official disbanding

seem downright orderly. At the same time, the morale of the populations throughout the various realms fell to disastrous lows as more and more news of casualty figures came in.

Fortunately, even before the fighting settled down across the Inner Sphere, the healing process was already begun. In the hardest hit areas of the Terran Protectorate, Devlin Stone's Coalition and the Geneva Trials on Terra brought hope and a semblance of justice in the aftermath of the war. Elsewhere, state leaders took stock of their realms and began efforts to reorganize and regroup, letting their people know the worst was past and—hopefully soon—that order would be restored.

CAMELOT SUMMIT OPENS

(12 October 3079)

New Avalon [FSNS] — To those who doubted New Avalon would ever recover from the years of Word of Blake occupation, Princess-Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion has but one thing to say: "I hereby open this Camelot Summit and take the first steps into the future of the Federated Suns!"

While the average citizen is undoubtedly excited by the festivities that will coincide with the summit—including the exclusive Princess' Ball on Tuesday and the Citizens' Revelry on Friday—Princess Yvonne faces some tough challenges in the week ahead, as she and her top officials hammer out the many details of the hard road to recovery that lies before the realm. Already, speculation runs rampant in the streets and some gambling establishments are taking wagers on just what policy changes will be announced in the upcoming days.

High on anyone's list for discussion must be the Taurian situation. The obvious tensions between Princess Yvonne and Duchess Angela Hasek have placed the swift resolution of this war in doubt. Whether Yvonne will be able to rein in the Capellan March in accord with her public wishes to wind down the fighting remains an open question.

The increasing military adventurism in the Draconis March poses a similar problem for Duke Tancred and how he will choose to handle it. Reports out of Robinson say that the March Lord's cousins, Dukes Jerome and Mordecai, are reluctant to give up the independence they've enjoyed these last few years. Both men are expected to attend the summit.

The Camelot Summit sees a number of dignitaries appearing on New Avalon's social circuit for the first time. Chief among these are General Raymond-Roger Marsin, fresh from fighting pirates in the Outback and rumored to be in line for a major promotion, and the newest darlings of the media, Amanda and Isabella Hasek, the daughters of the late Duke George. The girls have been sighted on several outings with young Prince Harrison and are already becoming a favorite subject of paparazzi and the public interest.



CONFESSIONS

Counsel:

We've highlighted the relevant quotes from McKesson's journal for you to present to the jury at his upcoming trial. The non-bolded text is immaterial and irrelevant; we highly suggest you only display the important quotations.

The confession was signed in the presence of three psychoanalysts, of which you will have access to all three for their professional opinions on McKesson's state of mind. Because he is highly unstable, we recommend you not put him on the stand until after his fragile mental state is established in the minds of the jury.

Your cooperation is appreciated.

—Lisa Aarebrot, Associate Executive Counsel-General, Terra Protectorate, 3 February 3079

I, Precentor Jarvis McKesson, being in my right mind and sound body, do hereby relate the following confession to my captors. I do so with my own free will in hopes that one day, Mercy may absolve me of my sins committed against my fellow man.

My station of duty was command of the entire southwest Asian sector on Terra, with my command quartered in the megacity of Singapore. I ascended to this position on 9 February 3060. My duties were to maintain the peace throughout most of the region, interact with political dignitaries from various national provinces, provide security and assistance to those areas in need, coordinate training activities with visiting Militia units and those TerraSec units under my jurisdiction, and monitor the import and export of military hardware throughout the region.

In early October 3078, my main command facility fell under attack by Coalition forces, commanded by General Thomas Hogarth. Enemy forces included the Fifth Free Worlds Guards, the Com Guard's First Army, and the Second Davion Guards. **I quickly took command** of the TerraSec forces after Demi-Precentor Scott Abrams (a great friend **and** commander) was killed in the initial defense. My forces, which were undergunned outmanned by nearly three-to-one odds, **operated in defensive formations** as attempts were made to evacuate large portions of the city. Unfortunately, **several high rises burned, bombed by overhead fighter cover.** Hogarth's troops seem to operate **with** impunity, having **little regard for the civilian sectors they plowed through, outright destroying many historic and heavily populated districts as they moved towards my command center near Kallang Entrance No. 2.**

We held out for nearly a week; the majority of my surviving troops managed to escape through the Singapore Strait tunnels while my command staff and **I surrendered the Castle Brian to Hogarth and his men.** Despite my repeated assurances, Hogarth continued sending out "sweeps" to conduct block-by-block searches. Even as **I negotiated to surrender my forces—as I had instructed them to** hole up on Pulau Batam across the straits—Hogarth proceeded to **round up suspected agent provocateurs and imprison them. Most of the "suspects" were city authorities in uniform: police, rescue personnel, utility workers, and university students. They were given cursory examinations** by our overzealous captors **and then executed.**

Horried, **I managed to contact my remaining troops and a few mercenary units still under Blakist employ,** and implored them **to retake the facility. Anything to rid the city of its infestation.**

My troops caught Hogarth by surprise, pushing most of them back out of the city. I and two loyal soldiers **pursued and cornered Hogarth near Jurong Island,** where I **then** demanded his surrender. (I had hoped to use his capture as an opening for parley and to secure safe passage for my people.) We had just commenced the exchange when a sudden blast shook the ground violently, toppling Hogarth's *Atlas II* onto my damaged *Legacy* and trapping me. (I discovered what happened later: someone had **initiated the Castle Brian's nuclear failsafe measure.** I still grieve for the millions who died from the explosion and fallout.) My companions died as a nearby gas main exploded and Hogarth's aide-de-camp dragged them from their cockpits and finished them off with a bullet to their head.

Despite what lies my captors tell me, I know Stone and his Coalition didn't come to save Terra. **Terra was already saved from the horrors of the Inner Sphere;** Stone only brought **madmen** like Hogarth and Davion **so that the brutality of war could continue. It is men like them who need to be cleansed from the universe, in order to purify humanity and make it into the image we so longingly desire.** If there is anyone to be held up before such sham trials as the ones I suspect are coming, it is them. Not innocents like me. **I only wanted to protect humanity.**

I only did my duty.

***signed* Precentor Jarvis McKesson**

(aka "The Butcher of Singapore")

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THE PRINCESS AND THE DUCHESS

[Princess-Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion]: "So I think maybe we can finally see an end to this nonsense within six months. It might be rough on you for a bit, but I think you can handle it."

[Duchess Angela Hasek]: "Thanks so much for your concern."

[Yvonne]: "Is there something you'd like to get off your chest, Angela?"

[Angela]: "... Yes. Yes, there is."

[Yvonne]: "Well?"

[Angela]: "How dare you act like you give a shit about the Capellan March?"

[Duke Tancred Sandoval]: "Watch it, Angela..."

[Yvonne]: "No, no, it's okay. Let her speak her mind."

[Angela]: "You hypocritical bitch, sitting there, pretending like the welfare of my family and my people means anything to you. As if you didn't have blood—Hasek blood!—all over your hands."

[Yvonne]: "Meaning?"

[Angela]: "You know damn well what I mean! He was my brother!"

[Yvonne]: "You think I had George killed?"

[Angela]: "You bet your scrawny Davion ass I do! You were jealous of what George was accomplishing, of how he was standing up to the Capellans and the Blakies both. And doing a much better job of it than you could, hiding out God knows where, too scared to fight back."

[Tancred]: "Now, hold on there! That's out of line."

[Yvonne]: "No, it's okay, love. Angela is welcome to her opinion of me."

[Angela]: "You're so kind."

[Yvonne]: "Now, let me be frank, so there's no mistake: Every single one of us—myself included—is expendable when it comes to the safety of this realm. George was harming the Suns with his actions. I would not have chosen to have him killed, but I'm also not going to pretend that his death wasn't the best thing for the state at the time. Remember this: I am the Princess-Regent. I make the decisions. If you have issues with that, then we've got a big problem, you and I. And I'm not afraid to solve my problems. Understand?"

[Angela]: "Oh, yes."

[Yvonne]: "Good. You may go now, Duchess Hasek."

[Tancred]: "She's going to bear watching. Speaking of which, I've got a meeting with Jerome and—"

[Yvonne]: "Tancred, stay. We should talk..."

—Transcript of an alleged conversation between Princess-Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion and Duchess Angela Hasek, 13 October 3079

REPUBLIC, NO?

"We will no longer rely on outsiders for our own defense and well being. We will stand on our own, and ally only with those who recognize and respect a system's individual right to govern itself"

Those were General Hampton's words during his speech at the Hessens Veterans Society charity dinner last week, possibly revealing a policy he has been reluctant to share in the past few months. With Devlin Stone's reorganizing of the former Blake Protectorate and its surrounding systems, many have been speculating whose faction New Hessen's ruling military junta may declare for. But it is becoming clearer by the day that the General is not declaring for the Republic.

What could this mean? Does General Hampton know or see something in Stone's Republic that we do not? What could be making him hesitant to join what seems to be an up-and-coming state reportedly patterned on a more egalitarian democratic model than the feudal ones that brought us wars after wars?

Could Hampton's reasons be selfish? Reportedly, Stone is against large irregular military forces; would Hampton be thinking that he does not want to get rid of the sizable military and power base he has enjoyed as a mercenary-turned-war hero? Or perhaps he envisions himself as a potential new March Lord, alongside the Sandovals and Haseks? (After all, that Marsin guy did it, right?)

Whatever his motives might be, the General's voice has sway here—powerful sway. If he flexes that muscle enough, he could very easily talk New Hessen out of joining the Republic.

—Abigail von Patten, *This Week on New Hessen*, 26 November 3080

ABANDONED WORLDS

(29 June 3081)

New Syrtis [NANS] – How do you know when it's time to let go? A prudent decision-making process dictates rational thought is the driving factor. Sure, there are emotional considerations, but letting emotions get in the way is how the Jihad started.

In looking at the post-Jihad condition of any given asset, be it a military force beleaguered with casualties, a JumpShip held together with duct tape and bailing wire, or even an entire world bombarded with salted nukes, the primary consideration must be the almighty cost-benefit analysis. It's not easy to put a value on an intangible item, and many would consider it cold and callous at best to ascribe a value to humanity, but difficult decisions are the price of leadership.

At the scale of planets, one meter-stick is planetary GDP, and so it is that many interstellar realms are using the pre-Jihad gross product of their assets to determine the potential revenue the same assets may generate post-recovery. This can then be compared to the estimated cost of rebuilding the damaged assets, to calculate of return on investment. For example, if the pre-Jihad production value of the New Syrtis shipyards was about one billion pounds per annum, and the estimated reconstruction

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costs are one hundred billion pounds, then it would take one hundred years for that investment to start earning a return, assuming post-Jihad production remains on par. This is a greatly simplified example, as there are numerous additional factors that influence these figures.

When calculating these factors, it's also important to remember that the Inner Sphere suffers one major conflict every ten years. Thus, if the asset cannot recover the cost of reconstruction within ten years, a risk-adverse methodology should consider abandoning it in favor of more profitable efforts. Taken to any scale—from the smallest combat command to the largest industrial world—almost anything can be abandoned.

CORRECTION: The above introduction for "To Build or Rebuild?", originally published 21 June 3081, was erroneously attributed to David Lear. The correct author is David Leer. NANS regrets any confusion for this error.

CAN WE REALLY TRUST COMSTAR AGAIN?

(31 October 3081)

Kessel [KESSEL PRESS] Editorial – Really? Does this actually *need* spelling out? Trusting ComStar might be the worst idea since the Kentares Massacre. Let's review what they've done since 2788 (some of it by their own admission, mind you!). If you believe the conspiracy theorists (or some of ComStar's own historians), "The Blessed Order" has been behind every major conflict since the First Succession War, assassinated countless heads of state, basically plunged humanity into a new dark age, *helped* the Clans with their invasion, tried to take over the Inner Sphere with a universal interdiction, and—finally—gave us all the living nightmare that was the Word of Blake. Oh and don't forget they brainwashed—sorry, *indoctrinated*—generations of people into believing that they couldn't even make their toasters work without an offering to the "sainted" Jerome Blake.

Discount that *entire* list, and ComStar's verifiable perfidy still fills volumes. Sure, Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion led the task force that successfully ended the Clan invasion, and sure, he helped Devlin Stone defeat the Blakists—but I'm also pretty sure he *killed his own mom*. If that's how you earn a position of power in ComStar... well I'm sure not going to hire them to babysit my kid sister.

So now the great benefactor—Devlin Stone—wants to entrust the rebuilding and maintaining of his Republic's HPG network to ComStar. If they do a good job, they'll likely get contracts for the rest of the Inner Sphere, too. The day that happens I'm packing my bags and boarding the first JumpShip to Canopus IV. At least there I can get dinner and a holo first.

In the meantime, let's entrust care and feeding of the HPG network to the Successor Lords. We all know how good *they* are at settling differences... On second thought, no. Let's pull the plug on the whole thing and go back to killing each other with sticks and rocks. It'd be more civilized that way.

THE RETRO WAVE?

(13 September 3081)

Arcturus [INN] – The last fourteen years have destroyed more infrastructure and manufacturing centers across the Inner Sphere than any conflict since the Second Succession War. In some sectors, postwar production is less than twelve percent of prewar figures. Critical industries anticipate demand far in excess of supply for the next five to ten years. Optimistic projections show that some recovery efforts will still be underway when we enter the thirty-second century.

With the industrial might of the entire Inner Sphere nearly obliterated, it seems, RetroTech is here to stay.

A product of necessity during the Jihad, RetroTech marked a return to reduced military manufacturing standards not seen in the Inner Sphere in centuries. Simpler fabrication and less sophisticated core materials made it possible for a less-skilled labor force to produce war-grade equipment faster than traditional technologies. A company of outdated BattleMechs, while a poor choice against modern weapons one-on-one, could at least match the power of a modern lance of machines against a Word of Blake Level II.

Prior to the Jihad, the industrial powerhouse worlds that survived the Second Succession War were those that saw little damage and benefited from superior defenses. Most were prolific exporters, selling both military and consumer goods to customers throughout the Inner Sphere. During the Jihad, the Word of Blake specifically targeted these worlds, and thus most suffered far more damage than their less industrialized peers. As a result, many less-developed worlds rushed to take up the slack with whatever they had available.

As companies begin to rebuild their manufacturing capabilities, some continue to embrace RetroTech as a marketable concept. Arcturus Arms, for example, told INN that their refit facilities would be producing significant numbers of RetroTech designs in the coming decades, including the "Primitive" forms of the *Archer*, *Commando*, and *Dervish* 'Mech chassis, ideal for militia formations. With many major civilian conglomerates suffering as much or more than many defense contractors, some analysts expect the RetroTech phenomenon to enter the civilian markets as well. So, consumers may expect next year's appliances, cars, computers, aircraft, and possibly even fashions to take a hard look backwards.

ACHERNAR: AN EXAMPLE OF RECOVERY

[The video pans across an endless field of smoking debris. A silent Peter Remonde can be seen looking over the debris. A voice over begins.]

[Remonde]: "This was Achernar BattleMechs on Achernar just four years ago, a victim of the Word of Blake's scorched earth policy. Defeated, the defending Blakists brought much of the

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surface structure down upon themselves, rather than allow the Coalition to take the facilities—or its occupiers—alive.”

[The video fades out to a new scene. Well-manicured grounds replace most of the debris field while a large factory building almost shines in the early morning sunlight. Remonde walks into the frame.]

[Remonde]: “And this is Achernar today. The repaired factory building houses Valiant Systems, a company that will soon be delivering Fox armored cars and industrial vehicles to the new Republic of the Sphere, and plans are already in the works to expand the lines to build Ranger IFVs.”

[Remonde swings his arm to encompass the view.]

[Remonde]: “Here, in the newly forming Republic, Achernar is not the exception but practically the rule. One would have to reach back to pre-colonization Terra and the Marshall Plan in Europe to find a scale of rebuilding as one can now find on the worlds of the former Blake Protectorate. Even before Devlin Stone had wrung the concession of these worlds from the neighboring Successor States, his Coalition was hard at work, repairing the damage inflicted by all sides in the Jihad.”

[The video shows BattleMechs, in the colors of Stone’s Lament, in a montage of activities, including clearing debris, erecting structures, fighting fires and even being used as a makeshift amusement park ride.]

[Remonde]: “In a campaign that has not just won the hearts and minds of the Protectorate worlds, but also made tremendous strides in rebuilding them, Devlin Stone and his new Republic are finally bringing peace to the embattled worlds that circle Terra.”

—Peter Remonde, FSNS, Achernar, 15 August 3081

AND ELSEWHERE...

It goes beyond anyone’s doubts that the post-Jihad Inner Sphere is vastly different place than it was at the close of the FedCom Civil War. From the borders on the maps to the leaders and heroes who rose and fell during this period, we were—all of us—shaken from a strange kind of lethargy. We had grown accustomed to a universe that was always at war, yet even the common man had grown desensitized to its effects, the fighting distant and almost sterilized.

Sure, an occasional upheaval would bring the reality home to us once in a while, but it took something on the scale of the Jihad to awaken mankind to terrors we had not felt since the fall of the first Star League. Everywhere we now look, the game has changed, and for many of us, it could be a long time before we feel the equilibrium that was so completely shattered in the final months of 3067.

THE DRAGON REGROUPS

Honored Executives, Esteemed Leaders:

The following course is designed specifically for those of you who deal with the Combine worlds recently turned over to the authority and care of the Republic of the Sphere. We understand there are many questions to be addressed with regards to various details of the agreement; within the following coursework and follow-up symposia, we at the Ministries of Economy and Industry, along with the assistance of the Voice of the Dragon and the Office of the Coordinator, will attempt to better educate on the range of benefits and possibilities this historic agreement opens up for your ventures.

First and foremost, understand that these worlds will retain strong economic and industrial ties to the Draconis Combine. While the Republic’s flag may fly from the planetary capital, the worlds are still Combine at heart and their people remain connected to our illustrious past.

To that end, many of your satellite facilities and offices on these worlds will remain extensions of Combine businesses and will be maintaining adherence to our economic rules, tariffs, and guidelines. All exports from these worlds to the Combine will remain tariff-free and receive priority transportation status for the next twenty years. This is to ensure that the flow of goods to our more struggling possessions will not impact their delicate economies.

(Those of you who are involved in the Combine’s military rejuvenation and supply will receive additional benefits and exemptions; see Appendix D.7.i for a full breakdown.)

The attached course should take approximately four hours to complete. It is suggested that each of your primary executives, officers, and coordinators also take the course in a timely manner. In approximately one month, you will receive a supplemental course that is designed to address the concerns and situations of your common workers and affiliates. Please make sure that your human resource departments catalog and maintain accurate records as to who has completed the assigned courses.

With your cooperation, we can turn this bitter root into a stronger and more resilient Dragon. Only then can we rise up to our uncontested height and regain our stellar prestige.

—Mikko Platte, Minister of Industry

Taken from the intro letter of a comprehensive corporate officer program, “The Dieron Opportunity: Seizing the Sun”; distributed December 3081



MOPPING UP:

HEIRS TO THE DRAGON

(25 May 3079)

New Samarkand [VOTD] — Loyal subjects of the Dragon, today we celebrate the continuity of the Kurita line!

Our Coordinator unveiled the next generation of his dynasty before a gathering of cultural, political and media figures in Yamashiro yesterday. Attended by his cousin Miyako, the Keeper of House Honor, and Lady Mara Selencia, Abbess of the Order of Five Pillars, the Coordinator presented his wife and two sons to a stunned audience. It was a move reminiscent of that performed by his own father more than six decades past, when *Tenno* Theodore revealed his secret marriage and three children to his father, *Tenno* Takashi.

The Coordinator first presented his wife, Lady Fiona Kurita, the eldest daughter of a prominent Luthien business family. Married in a private ceremony in 3057, the two met at the Imperial Opera during a performance of Guritze's *La Tromba di Guerra*. In her brief comments to the assembled audience, Lady Fiona recounted her friendship with her husband's late sister, Omi, and the support they gave one another during the war against the Smoke Jaguars.

The next person to be introduced was the Coordinator's eldest son, *Shinno* Shinjiro, age 22. This press conference was, in fact, the second public appearance of the son with his father, though the first in which their relationship was openly acknowledged. Shinjiro, a recent graduate of Sun Zhang MechWarrior Academy, accompanied the Kurita delegation to Terra and was present at the funeral of General Andrew Redburn in March. Shinjiro-*sama* is set to begin his military service with the First Sword of Light in a few weeks.

The youngest of the Coordinator's two sons is *Shinno* Vincent, 17, a cadet at Sun Zhang.

The Coordinator cited an increase in Black Dragon activity around the end of the 3050s as the primary reason why it was decided to keep his family a secret at the time.

NEW MARCH, DUKEDOM FOR MARSIN

(16 October 3079)

New Avalon [FSNS] — In a dramatic speech this morning, Princess-Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion announced the most far-reaching restructuring of the Federated Suns since the Fourth Succession War fifty years ago. Citing numerous concerns, particularly an increase in pirate activity over the last decade as well as the formation of two secessionist realms within the region, the Princess declared the formation of a new Periphery March and installed a new March Lord to administer it.

"When many of these far-off worlds cried out for aid during the Jihad, we were sadly in no position to grant them succor," Steiner-Davion explained. "But we never forgot our suffering countrymen, and one man in particular showed the initiative to provide the assistance that the federal government could

CRUSHING DISSENT

.... And among that entire list of prominent names, only Doctor Timothy Booth could be found for comment. Many of these personalities, it should be noted, have been alternately for or against the decisions made by the Federated Suns government for the past few decades, and have been left mostly in peace—other than the constant surveillance and handlers following them around.

So why are these specific people falling silent?

Here's the deal: Every one of these blokes publicly proclaimed their belief that it was not the Word of Blake, but our own regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion, who had George Hasek killed. These patriots of the Capellan March never once advocated violence against the acting Regent, and yet they have quietly disappeared in the night, an occurrence typically seen only from the likes of House Liao or our former "First Princess" Katherine Steiner. Even Duchess Angela Hasek seems to be coming around to the truth that something's just not kosher here....

All this dirty work, over what? The fact that these individuals spoke up when they saw the evidence of a ruler killing her own to appease an enemy power? I thought we were free once Victor Steiner-Davion removed the Ice Queen from power, but I guess not. For all the problems he caused us, and how we looked for someone better, the reality is that during his reign we never saw these "middle of the night" tactics used against the realm's own subjects (and he had Loki at his beck and call!) That his siblings seem to have no issue doing this makes me nostalgic for the Victor days. And you regular readers recall just how low I held him in prior issues...

—Excerpt from the monthly pamphlet "Dark Side of the Suns" circulated September 3079

not. With his natural abilities and the resources granted by his position to defend the weak, he brought order and security to a region beset by predation and chaos. It is in recognition of this achievement that I, as ruler of House Davion and the Federated Suns, grant Raymond-Roger Marsin a patent of nobility, and full recognition as Duke of June, and Lord of the Periphery March."

While the full extent of this declaration came as a surprise to many government observers, most were expecting General Marsin to receive some kind of recognition from the Princess. His efforts over the last several years to eradicate the pirates infesting the former Malagrotta Cooperative have yielded spectacular results, including the return of these seceded worlds to the Federated Suns. Full details on the new March and its Duke have not yet been released, but it is assumed that one of the new Lord's first duties will be to finalize the reintegration of all Malagrotta worlds and begin the process of bringing the Filtvelt Coalition back into the realm.

Duke Marsin has scheduled a press conference for later this afternoon.

SWORDS TO SLAG: ANTI-SALVAGE TREND GAINS GROUND

(19 December 3079)

Rigil Kentarus [MERCNET] – Twenty-seven 'Mechs tower over the Paddington Metals facility, from the ubiquitous *Crusader* to the distinctive *Archangel*. Perhaps worth a billion C-Bills on the conventional market, Paddington will be making only a tenth as much from these wrecks—all of them machines captured or surrendered during the liberation of Rigil Kentarus. Paddington won't be repairing these 'Mechs or parting them out, but rather stripping them down to their base skeletons and smelting out the metals.

Per new legislation from the planet's ruling council, any weapon of war manufactured or used by the Word of Blake and acquired on Rigil Kentarus must be destroyed. But this world is not alone with such measures.

Many worlds, especially those in the former Blake Protectorate, have been passing laws or issuing decrees (official and otherwise) regarding the disposition of Blakist weapons. The wording may vary in scope and flourish, but almost all include the fearsome "Celestial" OmniMech series that were symbolic of the Manei Domini and other Word of Blake elites.

Many worlds have outlawed the use or sale of these designs, but few have taken the extremes that Rigil Kentarus has. On New Earth, components of these machines can be sold, but the frame itself must retire to one of the infamous "bone yards", most likely for scrapping of some sort. Freedom requires the chasses disposed of in a stellar body, concerned by the thought that they may one day be using remnants of a *Grigori* to remove their daily stubble.

At the end of the day, there is a certain irony in all of this. Like many conquerors, the Word of Blake let their weapons take on a symbolism of its own, in the hopes of inspiring fear and awe in their enemies. Now that their war is lost, and their remnants scattered, the Word's symbolism will join that of past repressive regimes, such as the Amarises or the Central Asian Alliance. As time marches on in the aftermath of the Jihad, the symbols that the Word hoped would win them respect will simply disappear, vanishing to the dark corners of lost trivia

TERRAN SECURITY ASSURED

(12 February 3080)

Terra [INS] – The operation began 20,000 meters above the North Pacific Ocean, when a platoon of Gurkha HALO troopers jumped clear of a Zugvogel aircraft. Of the twenty-one stealth-suited men who plunged through a North Sea storm, seventeen landed on the deck of the Word of Blake's rogue *Wyrn*-class SDS vessel, *Lowyfur*. The *Lowyfur* was on the surface for the first time in six months, and then only long enough to recharge its air systems. Given that, the Coalition forces had to move quickly. The Gurkha commandos were up to the challenge and quickly compromised the bridge structure, preventing the *Lowyfur* from immediately diving back into the ocean's darkness. This gave the Coalition just enough time to carry out the next part of the operation.

Blasting down from orbit—where they had lurked on months-long standby for just such an opportunity—*Aurora* DropShips swept over the massive submersible, disgorging two battalions of battle-armored soldiers. Led by former Free Worlds sergeant Tracy Rhys (hero of the Rio SDS complex assault), the mix of battlesuits stormed through the breach made by the Gurkhas. In a six-hour deck-by-deck battle, the Coalition forces rooted out the Word of Blake and brought the *Lowyfur* to bay. Now 3,000 meters below the North Sea, a victorious Major Rhys called in the Coalition submarines to tow the captured ship to shore.

After nearly two years of terrorizing the seas and shorelines of Terra, the final symbol of Word of Blake resistance on Terra has been rooted out. It is finally safe to go back in the water.

ANTI-BIONICS SENTIMENT SWEEPING SPHERE

(16 April 3080)

Potwin [ISAP] – Shizue Pauletta was killed last week, the victim of mob violence as dozens of people chased him through the streets and beat him to death because of his obvious prosthetic limbs. Such violence, while terrible, can only be expected in the former Free Worlds League, after the nightmare image of cybernetics-enhanced Blakists rampaging across Gibson, Regulus, and Atreus underscored the horrors of the Jihad. With history further vilifying bionics since the days of Gerald Marik, anti-cybernetics sentiment has always been strong in the League.

But Shizue Pauletta was not on a former League planet when a mob killed him; he died in the heart of the Federated Suns' Crucis March. Nor was he a former Blakist; he was an armored infantryman for the AFFS, and served alongside other Coalition forces in Operation SCOUR, where he suffered the loss of one leg and both arms fighting against the Word. Having mustered out, Pauletta was just trying to return to civilian life as a teller for the Potwin Bank and Trust.

Sadly, as horrible as this hate crime was, it is no longer all that uncommon as we enter a post-Jihad age across the Inner Sphere.

No longer are the Leaguers seen as "crazy Luddites", shunning artificial prosthetics and implants that promise a semblance of normalcy to those who lost limbs and such in war or accidents. Instead, disdain and distrust now follows anyone unlucky enough to require a bionic replacement of any kind, as survivors of the Jihad remember all too horribly the fanatical willingness of the Manei Domini to lop off healthy limbs for any combat advantage.



MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

Arbitrage Marketing has found that this trend is likely responsible for an over thirty percent decrease in advertising with cybernetic limbs in the past year. Even in entertainment this trend is apparent, with a rise in trideo villains who bear metallic arms or other "mods" marking a complete reversal from the Justin Allard clones that appeared on staples like *The Steinhearts* and other shows fifty years ago.

While prejudice and hatred are on the rise, not everyone is suffering from the new wave of anti-bionic sentiment. Amputees eager to hide their artificial replacements are turning to the latest and greatest techniques to do so, and finding companies willing to help. DigiClone of the Lyran Alliance has seen increases in their life-like myomer limb reconstruction materials, while TruSkin, makers of faux-skin coverings for bionic limbs, has also seen their stock prices double in the past six months alone.

YOU'LL NEVER TAKE OUR FREEDOM!

(22 May 3080)

Filtvelt [FFN] – Do they take us for fools? Are we supposed to suddenly believe the words that come from the poisoned honey of New Avalon? House Davion needs to wake up and realize we are on to their duplicity. We've been sucking down their swill for five hundred years, but no more!

In case nobody was paying attention, on 5 May the Federated Suns declared war on us. Oh they certainly didn't do it in any proper way and before you rush for your rifles, rest easy; they have not (yet) set foot on our worlds. But know full well that their so-called Operation MATADOR is not going to end with the Taurian nation. Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion has shown her true colors now. She claimed she wanted peace with the Concordat, just as she has claimed the same for our Filtvelt Coalition, and now she's trying to smash the Bulls into oblivion. Does anyone here think it will be different over here?

Just look at her new lapdog, "Duke" Raymond-Roger Marsin. She gave the entire Outback to a man who's made it his personal mission to crush our just coalition under his jack-boots. She escalates a war with a state she claims to want peace with, and gives our greatest enemy the power of life and death over the Outback. And we're supposed to be okay with that?

Now, my fellow citizen of freedom! Now is the time to grab your rifles. Join the Filtvelt Coalition Militia, volunteer at a refit yard. We may not have the factories of New Avalon, but we have hundreds of IndustrialMechs and thousands of Outback-tough vehicles that will make New Avalon choke should they come for us.

Let us all stand together and raise our voices as one. Let us tell these Davion bastards that they will never take our freedom, not even if they hit every single one of our worlds. They will *never* take the Coalition!

CHANGING CURRENTS

>>>ITAB/MERCH-CHAT/DS-PRIV#862<<4members>>

GNate: And so our new era begins.

FoxRun: Is anyone really surprised at the way things turned out?

GNate: Not me.

Jester: I lost big time on Hawker.

FoxRun: What, you actually thought he would beat Nagasawa? Are you mental?

Jester: Hey, what can I say, I thought his anger would put him over the top. So I was wrong.

ShiverMaster: Heh, yes you were.

GNate: I am surprised he is still saKhan. I wonder how long that will last.

FoxRun: At least now we will not be stuck with a loser Khan.

Jester: Watch it, Fox, you never know who might be listening in.

FoxRun: Bah.

GNate: I still cannot believe Khan Sennet retired.

FoxRun: Why not? She has been around forever and you know how she has been these last few years.

GNate: Yeah, but I figured she was in for life.

ShiverMaster: The warriors' loss is our gain. Sennet has always been half-merchant anyway. Just look at what she accomplished during the invasion. If it was not for her balancing out that idiot, we would have been in even worse shape than we were.

Jester: True.

ShiverMaster: I think Nagasawa will be good for the Clan. I like some of her ideas.

Jester: I foresee problems with a few of them.

FoxRun: Well, that is what she has Hammond for. You know he is going to be putting the pressure on her enemies. And a newly Bloodnamed ristar is hard to ignore.

GNate: Get ready for some Xoc and awe!

ShiverMaster: Er, right.

FoxRun: So Jester, how much exactly did you lose on Hawker anyway?

Jester: I have to pick up seven work shifts from my bunkmate.

ShiverMaster: Ouch.

MM_BarbS has joined the chat

MM_BarbS: Greetings.

ShiverMaster: Greetings, my Khan.

MM_BarbS: Master Merchant now, please. What is the topic?

Jester has left the chat

FoxRun: Trade restrictions on Lyran Peripheral planets.

MM_BarbS: Excellent.

—Excerpt from Diamond Shark Chatterweb logs (merchant caste), 9 June 3080

MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

FOR THE GREATER GOOD

(6 September 3080)

Styk [INN] – The removal of most of the middle management and all senior executives at Tao Mechworks this week signaled the first stage in the Capellan Confederation's plans to nationalize the company after Confederation courts ruled against it for actions of industrial espionage during the Jihad.

Tao's CEO, Robert "Bubba" Larson, initially claimed that the operations were part of a Word of Blake-engineered ploy, but this was later proven to be false by Maskirovka agents, who found information implicating Larson himself in the strike on rival Earthwerks' Grand Base factory sites. This act of industrial espionage resulted in the destruction of one of Earthwerks' fusion engine plants, and set up what could easily have turned into a full-fledged corporate war had the Confederation not stepped in and ordered a halt to both companies' operations pending a full investigation. This investigation was subsequently delayed for years when Tao's home system of Styk fell to Word of Blake a short time later.

"For the greater good of our national collective, we cannot have our own defense suppliers engaging one another in violence merely for the sake of a better market share," *Sang-jiang-jun* Talon Zahn said during a brief press conference discussing the nationalization. "For the sake of a petty corporate feud, Tao's actions against Earthwerks undermined the security of the Confederation as a whole, and such conduct is simply unacceptable."

Production at Tao Mechworks subsequently plunged to a near halt once word of the ruling against Tao became public. Many have since speculated, as reports of a new flood of workers en route to the company have begun to circulate, that the nationalization may also become a pretext for big changes at the facilities. Increased security—under Maskirovka direction—has prevented observers from gaining any clues beyond the recent increase in DropShip traffic to the site.

CLAN SPACE: THE NEW PIRATE FRONTIER?

(12 November 3080)

Arc-Royal [DBC] – Piracy, a scourge on humanity and in contention for man's oldest profession. Through the ages it has been wiped out many times, only to rise up anew, a product of the culture it finds itself in. There are two places that piracy thrives, where there is no law and where the laws are so oppressive that piracy and revolutions begin to blur.

This makes it unsurprising that the newest surge of piracy is within the occupied territories of the Clans. One of the few blessings of the initial Clan invasion was the eradication of piracy in the Periphery beyond the Lyran Alliance. Pirate haven

after pirate haven was scoured clean by the Clans, leaving nothing in their wake. Or so the Clans believed. Like human cockroaches pirates moved into the cracks of the society. Like a virulent mold they slowly rebuilt and adapted to the new threat. And as the Clans went from invader to occupier, their own shadow culture began to take hold as well. Inner Sphere pirate and Clan Dark Caste initially clashed, each intent on being the one to survive.

But as the Jihad took all our attention, the two shadow societies found common ground and purpose. Uniting against a common foe they took advantage of the divided attention of the Clans, exacting numerous small victories from the Jihad-harried Inner Sphere Clans.

As a new decade dawns on the Inner Sphere, Clan-occupied space now faces the highest rates of pirate activity in the Inner Sphere. Given the Clans have been unsuccessful in crushing their own Dark Caste, after centuries of trying, it is unlikely we will see an end to this new pirate threat.

For those of us on this side of the border, we can only hope that Clan space remains easier pickings than Lyran space.

SEEKING SANCTUARY

(20 January 3081)

Altoona [FSNS] – Another convoy of immigrants from the Outworlds Alliance jumped out of the Altoona system today, bringing the total number of convoys passing through to four. Like the previous groups, the Outworlds DropShips stayed for only a week to trade goods for supplies before lifting off to rejoin their recharged JumpShip and depart—all the while refusing to mention their final destination.

Where could they be going? If it was to resettle in the Federated Suns, there are plenty of systems on their way where they could have made landfall and been welcomed with open arms.

Could they be fleeing to another Periphery state, then? Sure, none of the others have been overrun by a Clan, but the fires of the Jihad have ravaged the more advanced Magistracy of Canopus, while the Taurian Concordat has virtually smashed itself pursuing a war with the Suns. Perhaps, then, they seek sanctuary in the fledgling realms of the Calderon Protectorate or the Filtvelt Coalition. Both theories make a kind of sense, as both realms have some similarity to the Alliance before the coming of the Ravens.

Wherever they are headed, it seems clear that big changes are happening in the Outworlds Alliance—big enough to drive many of its citizens away.



MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

INARCS PREPARES FOR SHOWDOWN

(17 March 3081)

Inarcs [DBC] – Sounding like the Captains Martial of the thirtieth century, Duchess Tamari LaRue of Inarcs claimed that the current state of affairs in the Inner Sphere was not stable enough to surrender the emergency powers entrusted to her over the LAAF forces reporting to her and her Inarcs Archonette.

“We have the Clans on one side, pirates on another, and an Archon who is giving our planets away to anyone who asks,” she said after a public announcement of Archon Adam Steiner’s recent call for all Archonettes to prepare their military commands for a return to the overall LAAF command structure, an act that will also lead to the eventual disbandment of the Archonettes.

As of now, all military and paramilitary forces in the Inarcs region still see Duchess LaRue as their ultimate authority.

“Right now, we are reporting to the Archonette,” said Colonel Scott Blackstone, commander of the Blackstone Highlanders. “Our last order through regular chain of command was to report to [Duchess LaRue] until she returned the Archonette back to their control. For now, we’ll just keep defending the Inarcs region. We trust her to have the region’s best interests in mind and not betray the Alliance. Once all the politicians are on the same page, we’re ready to slide back to our old role.”

While the Archon did not accuse LaRue directly of treason, several officials in the LAAF High Command have hinted that Tharkad views certain recent developments on Inarcs to be against the best interests of the Alliance, and which could be the harbinger of a full-blown rebellion. For a realm so torn up by war, there are fears that another civil war in the Alliance will tear the state completely asunder, much as has already occurred in the Free Worlds League. After the loss of a portion of the Skye Province to the Republic, unrest is rising throughout the Alliance, and many regional leaders have taken advantage of the Archon’s unwillingness to confront this issue more forcefully as a sign of leadership weakness. On Inarcs itself, most of the population appears to believe that Tharkad has yet to return to its pre-Jihad level of authority, and thus public support remains firmly behind their local leaders.

KAUMBERG ARCHONETTE DEFIES CALL TO STAND DOWN

(6 April 3081)

Kaumberg [TBC] – Since rejecting the most recent piece of legislation proposed by Kaumberg’s House of Lords to dissolve the Kaumberg Archonette, including both the title of its ruler and the miniature sub-state of worlds that answer to him, Archonette Erich Sheridan took his case to the airwaves two days ago. In a speech to all of Kaumberg—soon to be broadcast to the

remainder of the territory—Sheridan included this statement, “There has been too much bloodshed, too many lives lost, for us to trade safety for hope. The Blakists are still in Circinus, a greater threat to us now than to Tharkad, which remains unable to deliver sufficient strength to our region. The worlds of the former Free Worlds League cannot even agree to not fight amongst themselves, let alone against Lyran worlds like our own. We thus remain on our own, and—as long as I still serve—I will not let us go quietly into the night!”

Yesterday, the Kaumberg House of Lords formally approved a new bill authorizing Sheridan to resign the Archonette and hand the authority accompanying the position back to Archon Adam Steiner. The measure passed with a solid eighty-five percent of the votes “*ja*” and only seven percent “*nein*”. Said one Lord, “I don’t know what Sheridan thinks he’s going to do now, anyway. After the Democracy Now crisis, he hardly even used the troops we raised when we were being raided. At least Beuna is kicking some Eagle tail, but Kaumberg doesn’t need to be made an example of by someone who decides we’re a threat.”

Unlike a somewhat similar situation on Inarcs, the people of Kaumberg are not standing behind their Archonette. Two-thirds of the local populace feels that they are less safe with Sheridan retaining the position and risking an armed response from Tharkad. Many feel that he is hoping to gain some form of political concessions from Tharkad to give up the post, perhaps a dramatic increase in his title and holdings (Sheridan, like all of the nobility in Kaumberg’s House of Lords, holds the noble title of baron, and nominally rules a single, lightly industrialized county). Others have suggested that Sheridan’s reluctance to step down comes from a curiosity over the events unfolding in the Inarcs Archonette, which could have strong implications for the political stability of the entire Lyran Alliance. Either way, the majority agrees that Sheridan’s support at home is eroding fast, and he may be building a powerful enemy on the throne.

COORDINATOR’S SON WEDS

(12 May 3081)

New Samarkand [VOTD] — Loyal subjects of the Dragon, celebrate the continuity of the Kurita line!

In a private ceremony at the bride’s father’s estate on Kirei Na Niwa, *Shinno* Vincent Kurita wed Lady Ramiko Nishimura this weekend in front of a small group of friends and family. The bride’s dress was designed by her older sister, Yukio, and she was accompanied by several friends as well as her younger sister, Akiko. The groom was accompanied by his older brother, *Shinno* Shinjiro, and his cousin Kitsune, eldest son of Lady Miyako Kurita. He wore a simple traditional garment supplied by his father.

MOPPING UP: 3079-3081

The happy couple will honeymoon on Isesaki before Vincent-*sama* reports for duty with the Sixteenth Sun Zhang Cadre on Turtle Bay. Lady Ramiko is expected to reside on New Samarkand with the Coordinator and his wife during her husband's tour of duty.

Vincent-*sama*, 19, is a cadet at Sun Zhang, as were his father and brother before him. Lady Ramiko, 17, is the daughter of a tea merchant from Kirei Na Niwa. The couple met last year during joint humanitarian efforts conducted by the Academy and the Chrysanthemum Blossom School for Young Women after the devastating Torvillo River floods on New Samarkand. Vincent-*sama* proposed in January, after Lady Ramiko and her parents met with the Coordinator and his wife for the first time.

The wedding comes amidst rumors that the Coordinator is unhappy with his eldest son for his apparent unwillingness to take a wife. Though Shinjiro-*sama* has been linked with several eligible young women, he has thus far resisted his family's urgings to settle down, preferring to concentrate for the time being on his promising military career.

In a statement released just after the ceremony, the bride and groom thanked the public for their well wishes and urged that any gifts be sent instead in the form of donations to the Omi Kurita Foundation.

SHAME OF THE KELLS

Like brother like sister yes?

If there's anyone I feel for in all this it's Duke Morgan. That man is a hero, a legend...and what does he have to show for it? His kids are traitors! No better than garbage!

First, that little prick Phelan sells out to the Clanscum and leads them like he's freaking Genkis Kahn (sp?) or something. I went to school with him and he was always a dick. I knew he would end up bad.

But what happened to Caitlin? She's a pilot (better then mechwarrior) she's hot and she stayed here on AR with her dad. But now she's marrying a damn clanscum? Srsly? Yeah yeah he's one of the "good ones" HA! Trick question! There are no good clanscum! I used to think she's hot but now I just think she's nasty inside and outside. What kind of good Lyran girl roots a bloody clanscum?!?! gross!! She's going to have little clanscum babies I bet. Just what the universe needs.

I am so disgusted right now I could spew my ring out. Why are we letting clanscum steal out woman anyway? I guess its because their women are really more like men who want to touch them? I don't care if this Jeroen guy (what kind of name is that anyway? Dutch? WTF?) did fight the Wobblies and join the Hounds... they kick ass and clanscum has no business being in them! Why can't she get witha Celtic (even tho I'm Welsh not Irish) bloke like me I'm single! and I know how to treat the ladies!!!

Caitlin darling its not to late to change your mind. I'll sweep you off your feet and you won't have to root any clanscum ever again.

— Anonymous posting on Gréasán Domhanda public BBS, Arc-Royal, 15 June 3081

YOU DO NOT STAND ALONE

Take heart, my countrymen! You are not forgotten!

Long have the Capellan people been the subject of ridicule and persecution by our neighbors—and yet we remain strong! Long have we suffered the predations of House Davion—and yet we have reclaimed St. Ives from their clutches! We have beaten back the savage zealots of the Word of Blake, and found a worthy ally in the Magistracy of Canopus. For these acts and many others, the might and the will of the Capellan people can never be doubted or dismissed.

Just as our glorious ruler Sun-Tzu Liao stands unflinching in the face of attack, we too must be resolute. Devlin Stone and his "Republic of the Sphere" are nothing more than the latest warlords seeking to steal what is rightfully ours. Do not heed their propaganda. Do not lend credence to their accusations. Hold the spirit of *Xin Sheng* close to your heart and never doubt that we are working to free you. Your suffering will not be in vain!

They will offer you much and they will lay claims against your true home. They will seek, as the Word of Blake did before them, and the Steiner-Davions before *them*, to poison your mind and your heart against that which you know to be right.

Do not let them succeed! All Capellans know the truth of things. United, we cannot be defeated. When we forsake our countrymen for our own selfish gains, only then are we weak.

There will be dark times ahead. Forced to live under the rule of a foreign power you will seek to ease the pain of your condition. You will feel alone, and the light of *Xin Sheng* will seem a distant comfort. Be resolute, my brethren! In those darkest hours read these words and remember that *no* Capellan stands alone!

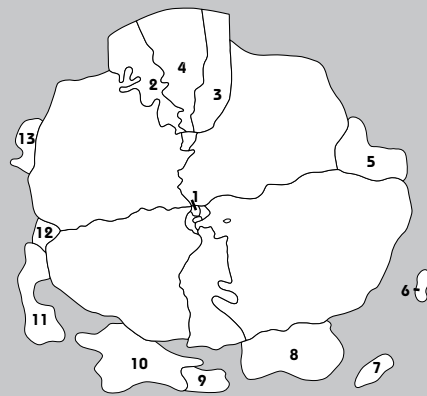
—Excerpt from the pamphlet *Celestial Truth*, publisher unknown.



THE JIHAD IN REVIEW

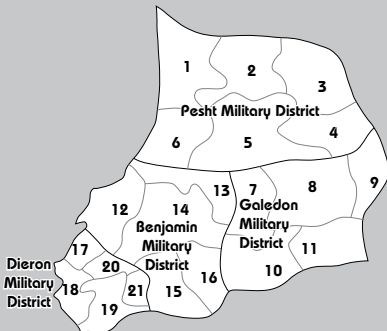


INNER SPHERE - October 3067



Inner Sphere Powers

- 1) Word of Blake
- 2) Clan Jade Falcon
- 3) Ghost Bear Dominion
- 4) Clan Wolf
- 5) Outworlds Alliance
- 6) Tortuga Dominions
- 7) Calderon Protectorate
- 8) Taurian Concordat
- 9) Fronc Reaches
- 10) Magistracy of Canopus
- 11) Marian Hegemony
- 12) Circinus Federation
- 12) Rim Collection

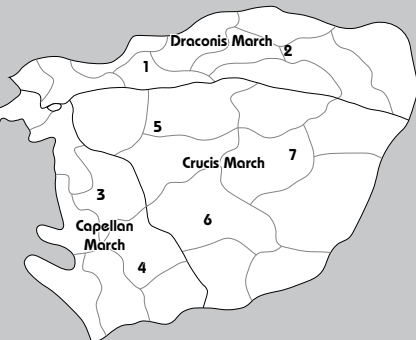


Draconis Combine

- Pesht Military District**
- 1) Albiero Prefecture
 - 2) Bjarred Prefecture
 - 3) Qandahar Prefecture
 - 4) Ningxia Prefecture
 - 5) Kagoshima Prefecture
 - 6) Irece Prefecture
- Galedon Military District**
- 7) Oshika Prefecture
 - 8) New Samarkand Prefecture
 - 9) Tabayama Prefecture
 - 10) Matsuida Prefecture
 - 11) Kaznejoy Prefecture

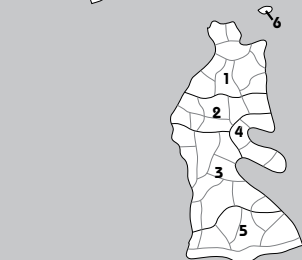
Benjamin Military District

- 12) Buckminster Prefecture
 - 13) Xinyang Prefecture
 - 14) Benjamin Prefecture
 - 15) Proserpina Prefecture
 - 16) Iruzun Prefecture
- Dieron Military District**
- 17) Vega Prefecture
 - 18) Kessel Prefecture
 - 19) Al Na'ir Prefecture
 - 20) Algedi Prefecture
 - 21) Ashio Prefecture



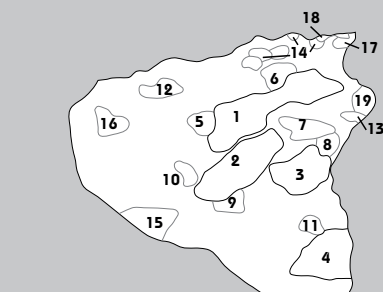
Federated Suns

- Draconis March**
- 1) Robinson Operational Area
 - 2) Woodbine Operational Area
- Capellan March**
- 3) Kathil Operational Area
 - 4) Taygeta Operational Area
- Crucis March**
- 5) Markesan Operational Area
 - 6) Chirikof Operational Area
 - 7) Minette Operational Area



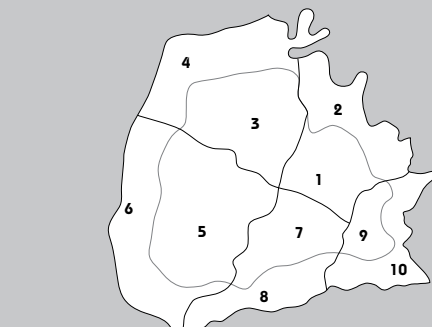
Capellan Confederation

- 1) Liao Commonality
- 2) Capellan Commonality
- 3) Sian Commonality
- 4) St Ives Commonality
- 5) Victoria Commonality
- 6) Tikonov



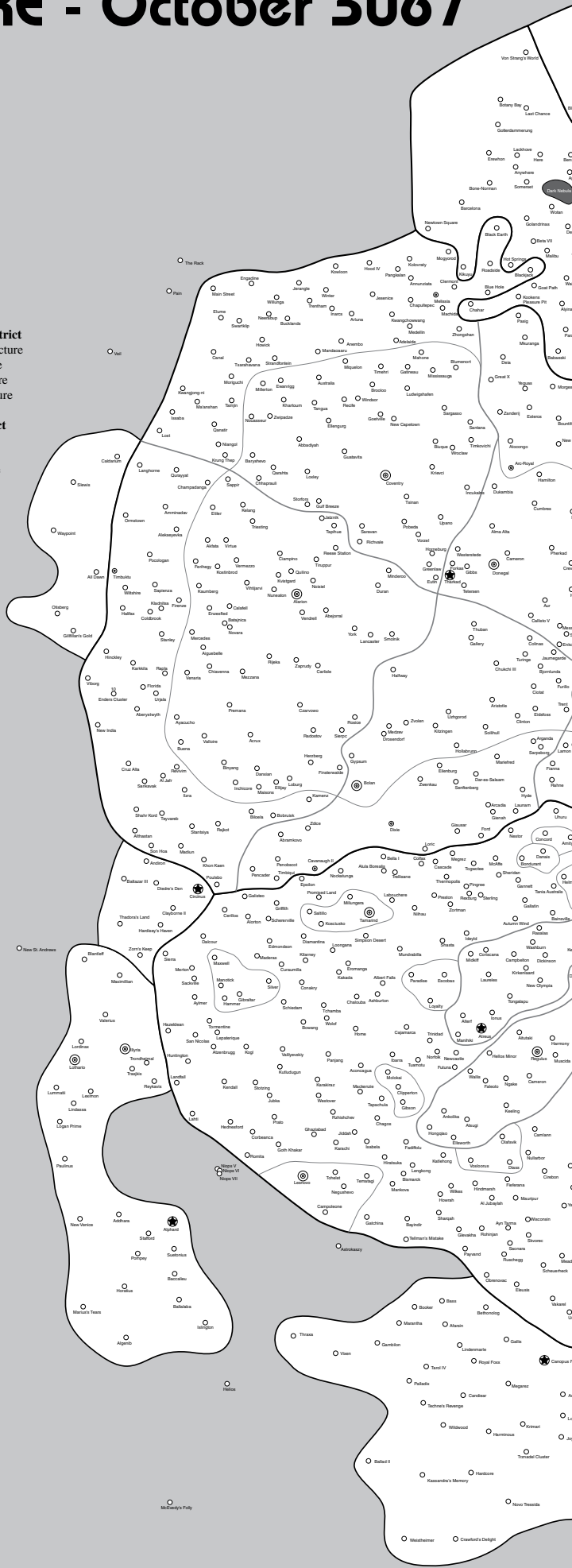
Former Free Worlds League

- 1) Marik Commonwealth
- 2) Principality of Regulus
- 3) Duchy of Oriente
- 4) Duchy of Andurien
- 5) Duchy of Graham-Marik
- 6) Stewart Commonality
- 7) The Protectorate
- 8) Duchy of Orloff
- 9) Regulan Free States
- 10) Principality of Gibson
- 11) Mosiro Archipelago
- 12) Duchy of Tamarind
- 13) Ohren Province
- 14) Silver Hawk Coalition
- 15) Rim Commonality
- 16) Abbey District
- 17) Sirian Concordat
- 18) Border Protectorate
- 19) Zion Province



Lyran Alliance

- Provinces**
- 1) Donegal Province
 - 2) Arc-Royal Theater
 - 3) Coventry Province
 - 4) Melissa Theater
 - 5) Alarion Province
 - 6) Timbuktu Theater
 - 7) Bolan Province
 - 8) Cavanaugh Theater
 - 9) Skye Province
 - 10) Freedom Theater





LEGEND

30 LIGHT YEARS

120 LIGHT YEARS OR 16.6 PARSECS

● Region capital

⊙ District capital

⊛ National capital

● Dead or Dying world

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS

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Coreward

Spinward

Anti-spinward

Rimward

THE JIHAD IN REVIEW

HIGHLIGHTS OF WAR: THE JIHAD: 3066-3081

*Remember, remember,
The Fifth of December,
The Word of Blake's fateful first shot!
The Great Houses' treason
Was Word of Blake's reason
The whole Inner Sphere went to pot.*

—Popular graffiti found scrawled on the walls of buildings throughout
Terran system, 3079

The Jihad has been a massively eventful conflict, spanning the entirety of the Inner Sphere, Periphery, and even Clan-held territories. It will surely be decades before all of the details of every major battle and campaign that affected this war will become known to us—if, indeed, we can ever know it all.

With literally billions of stories to be told of the events in this last decade of war, the best we at INN can manage in the here and now is a simplified look over the highlights of what has been. With that, we present to you the highlights of the Jihad below.

3066

(18 February) Word of Blake announces creation of Word of Blake Protectorate, including many Chaos March worlds

(7 March) Wolf's Dragoons, Northwind Highlanders, Dismal Disinherited form Allied Mercenary Command (AMC) in opposition to growing Word of Blake influence in the Chaos March

3067

(20 April) FedCom Civil War ends.

(8 September) With the recent deaths of four Clan leaders, the Northwind Highlanders exercise escape clauses in all current contracts and begin to return home for elections.

(10 October) Despite AMC efforts, Hall joins the Free Worlds League. Blakist machinations are suspected.

(15 October) Commanded by Wayne Waco, rogue mercenaries in Harlech City on Outreach launch a surprise attack against Wolf's Dragoons and the Hiring Hall. Roughly half of the on-planet Dragoons forces are destroyed by 19 October. Jaime Wolf killed in battle. Dragoons' "Condition Feral" assures no survivors of primary attacking forces including 51st Dark Panzer Brigade, Smithson's Chinese Bandits, and Waco Rangers. Evidence of Blakist influence uncovered.

(November) The Second Dismal Disinherited mercenary regiment arrives on Outreach from Tall Trees. Maeve Wolf, en route to Outreach with the Dragoons' Alpha Regiment—recently released from its contract—orders Gamma to also exercise its contract escape clause from Tikonov.

(28 November) The Star League Conference begins on Tharkad, with all Great Houses in attendance save Liao, and representatives from ComStar, Word of Blake, the Rasalhague Republic, and Taurian Concordat. After a scathing message delivered by courier from Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao, Princess Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion of the Federated Suns and Archon Peter Steiner-Davion of the Lyran Alliance announce plans to withdraw from the League, citing internal matters. Despite a desperate bid to enforce the body by inducting the Word of Blake and Taurian Concordat against a looming "no confidence" vote, the League formally dissolves.

(5 December) After a final threat from Word of Blake representatives, Tharkad and New Avalon are both attacked by Blakist fleets. In Tharkad's case, the attack is spearheaded by the long-lost LCS *Invincible*, now in Star League colors and crewed by Word of Blake. The opening volleys, which strike just outside Tharkad City, somehow set off a catastrophic meltdown of the city's reactor. Initial reports, however, say that a nuclear device is loosed on the capital instead.

At New Avalon, AFFS WarShips attempt to interdict the inbound Blakist fleet and successfully cripple the attacking flagship. Heavy fighting in space prefaces a subsequent bombardment aimed directly at Avalon City. Both the Tharkad and the New Avalon fleets subsequently drop ground troops on the respective capitals, estimated at nearly a full division each.

(7 December) In retaliation for the Harlech assault, Wolf's Dragoons leads a punitive AMC assault against Mars consisting of Beta

Regiment and Zeta Battalion, the Second Dismal Disinherited, and Lindon's Battalion, augmented by Home Guard forces and the Dragoons WarShips *Beowulf* and *Athena*. The assault fails with all forces reported lost one day later over Mars.

(15 December) Word of Blake forces blockade Northwind, destroying or capturing all Highlander transport assets, as well as the Northwind HPG.

(19 December) Luthien HPG falls silent.

(20 December) Word of Blake naval forces arrive in the Outreach system, destroy the Dragoons' defending WarShips *Nelson* and *Darius*, as well as the planet's orbital stations, and hold off a last-ditch defense by the Dragoons flagship *Alexander*.

(21 December) Clan Nova Cat forces on Tukayyid and elsewhere in Combine space, including their attached WarShips, abruptly withdraw to the Irece Prefecture.

Elements of the reactionary Black Dragon Society launch a coup against the Luthien government.

Blakist ground forces land on Outreach, initiating a massive battle on both primary continents.

(24 December) Word of Blake agents assassinate General Helen Thrall, head of the Sirian Concordance, and pin the act on Skye.

(26 December) Blakist forces unleash a devastating series of orbital bombardments and strategic nuclear attacks against the Dragoons and their allies on Outreach, reportedly annihilating all Dragoon presence on the Remus continent and devastating the forces on Romulus.

(28 December) The Dragoons flagship *Alexander* covers a general retreat by surviving Dragoons and allied forces from Outreach. The *Alexander* herself is destroyed. Blakist blockade of Outreach begins.

(30 December) Black Dragon forces gain control over Luthien.

Blakist forces complete conquests of Epsilon Indi, Fletcher, and Tall Trees.

3068

(1 January) Word of Blake naval and ground forces attack Luthien system. Reports of Blakist support for the loyalists are unconfirmed due to planetary blackout. Both loyalist and Black Dragon forces engage Word of Blake, sparking three-way battle for planetary control.

(21 January) The Word of Blake WarShips *Deliverance* and the *Blake's Sword*—last reported at Tharkad, appear at Tukayyid to attack the Com Guard forces headquartered there. The Com Guard WarShips *Hammerstrike* and *Blake's Vengeance* are destroyed.

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(28 January) Theodore Kurita suffers a stroke and falls into a coma while planning a campaign to reclaim Luthien. Hohiro Kurita, on Orestes at the time, does not immediately claim the throne.

Blakist WarShips use coordinated orbital bombardment to cripple or destroy all Com Guard troops stationed on Tukayyid, as well as any SLDF units that rise to their defense.

(4 February) A renegade Free Worlds League *Eagle*-class WarShip (the *Percival*) raids Skye, and units sporting Sirian Lancers colors land on the planet to engage in a two-day battle with Skye forces. Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner decries the assault, declares war on the League, and calls all Skye-loyal troops to come to the Isle's defense.

Word of Blake forces assault Dieron.

Com Guard forces around the Terran system begin to mass for CASE WHITE, a massive invasion aimed at Terra itself. The bulk of the Com Guard fleet and roughly eleven unengaged Com Guard Divisions are called up for the offensive.

(10 February) The first batches of Blakist reinforcements reach Tharkad and New Avalon, extending the ground wars on both worlds.

(20 February) Contact with Precenator Martial Victor Steiner-Davion, personally assigned to lead CASE WHITE, is lost when his flagship, the *Invisible Truth*, is ambushed en route to the staging area.

(27 February) Free Worlds agents assassinate Caesar Steiner, Margrave of the Cavanaugh II Theater, at his command post.

(1 March) The Lyran Alliance's Bolan Province follows Skye's lead in declaring war on the Free Worlds and begins coordinating assault strategies with Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner.

(9 March) ComStar's CASE WHITE invasion is launched.

(10 March) Bolan/Skye forces attack the Free Worlds League planets of Cascade, Megrez, and Togwotee in the first wave of their invasion, codenamed OPERATION ÜBERSCHATTEN.

(13 March) Due to widespread sabotage and an unexpectedly strong Blakist presence in the Terran system, CASE WHITE fails, though some ground landings succeed, prompting Blakist nuclear attacks in Europe and North America. The *Invisible Truth*, delayed until 17 March by an ambush, arrives too late to take part in the battle, and withdraws to report the total defeat of the CASE WHITE fleet, including all eleven divisions and over twenty Com Guard WarShips. An estimated six Blakist vessels and a division of ground troops are thought to have been destroyed as well.

(14-17 March) Blakist raiders, supported by WarShips (or DropShips mounting capital weapons), attack the key Lyran industrial worlds of Donegal, Coventry, and Hesperus II.

(20 March) Clan Wolf (in-Exile) sends a task force to Outreach to evacuate any remaining Dragoons survivors, successfully extracting over two companies of troops and scores of civilians despite heavy Blakist resistance.

LAAG troops redeploy in an effort to shore up the Free Worlds border, despite General of the Armies Adam Steiner's admonishment of Dukes Robert Kelswa-Steiner of Skye and Alder Umayr of Bolan for launching their joint invasion.

(30 March) The second wave of the Bolan/Skye offensive takes the League worlds of Colfax, Sheridan, Thermopolis, and Pingree.

(April) Numerous raiders (either Blakist forces or their mercenary allies) hit Addicks, Edasich, Talcott, and New Valencia.

(16 April) Hohiro Kurita leads a DCMS task force to Dieron to confront Blakist forces there.

(25 April) Demeter's government submits to Word of Blake control.

(20 May) Skye/Bolan forces take Preston, Rexburg and McAfee.

(16 June) Unidentified invaders—later determined to be Word of Blake troops—invade Solaris VII, quickly overpowering any initial organized defense in the absence of the Com Guard forces relocated by the doomed Case White attack. In the confusion of the League-Alliance war, no one is at first certain who is behind the assault, but with so many stables and free agents on world, an underground movement quickly forms to wage an ongoing guerrilla war against the Word.

(18 June) Hohiro Kurita is captured by Word of Blake forces on Dieron, and is reported "missing, presumed dead".

(19-21 June) The Word of Blake invades and conquers Altair, Asta, Fomalhaut, and Yorik, most using a combination of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

(25 June) The infamous Bounty Hunter abducts Kai Allard-Liao while he is on a military inspection tour on St. Ives. Capellan officials blame Davion agents.

(28 June) Citing that the Confederation's perceived involvement with the Word of Blake, reports of massive Capellan troop build-ups near the border, and an alleged arms trade with the Blakists pose a clear and present danger to the Federated Suns, and further claiming Duke Allard-Liao's (unexplained) defection to New Syrtis, Duke George Hasek, Lord of the Capellan March, launches Operation SOVEREIGN JUSTICE, an unsanctioned invasion of the Capellan

Confederation. The campaign's stated goal is the isolation and liberation of the former St. Ives Compact from Capellan rule, and consists of three assault prongs aimed at encircling the region with a buffer zone of AFFS troops.

Skye/Bolan forces claim Shasta, Ideyld and Gallatin, even as the FWLM launches a successful counterattack on Preston.

(2 July) Led now by Marshall Jeremy Brett, the FWLM takes Colfax, McAfee.

Hasek's SOVEREIGN JUSTICE continues with the conquest of Minnacora, New Sagan, Capricorn III along one front, Relevow and Overton along the second, and Harloc, Decus, Purvo and Carmen on the third—all undefended worlds that fully link the attacking fronts together. Capellan counter-attacks begin.

(9 July) Skye/Bolan forces take Niihau, Autumn Wind and Gannett.

(10-14 July) Clan Snow Raven's Swift Wing Galaxy Naval Star raids the undefended Draconis Combine worlds of Enif, Galedon, and Tabayama in an apparent wave of reprisal strikes for the loss of the *White Cloud*.

(24 July) The FWLM reclaims Cascade, Gallatin, and Ideyld.

(1 August) By this date, the Word of Blake non-violently secures full control over the governments of Acamar, Arboris, Car Coroli, Caph, Capolla, Epsilon Indi, New Home, Terra Firma, and Shiloh.

The ComStar WarShip *Bordeaux* executes a daring raid on Tukayyid to extract Primus Mori and several key Com Guard officers stranded there by the Blakist WarShip blockade.

(5 August) Citing the loss of stability on Luthien and the Coordinator's ill health, Pesht Military District Warlord Kiyomori Minamoto formally assumes command of DCMS.

(7-14 August) FedSuns commandos and smaller 'Mech units attached to Draconis March stage a series of deep objective raids on the undefended Combine worlds of Altai, Chichibu, Junction, Barlow's Folly, Misery, and Beta Mensae V, allegedly looking for and liberating some FCCW-era POWs.

(20 August) Capellan March troops secure Aldertaine, Glasgow, Hexare, Imalda, New Westin, and Homestead even as Capellan counterattacks bog down two of SOVEREIGN JUSTICE's three fronts.

(22-30 August) Word of Blake assaults Liberty and Genoa, though resistance on Genoa continues.

(1 September) Jeremy Brett's FWLM counterattack hits Alchiba, Milton, Phecda, Alchiba and Wyatt. The following day, League troops strike at Ford and Gausar, and Loric, endangering the Skye/Bolan supply lines. Timbiqui and Poulsbo fall to League troops on 3 September.

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(10 September) The Free Worlds League overruns Dixie and Arcadia.

(11-17 September) DCMS forces raid the FedSuns worlds of Benet III and Cassias, and capture David and Xhosa VII, in reprisal for the recent spate of FedSuns attacks.

(20 September) FWLM troops take Alcor, Denebola, Mizar, and Summer.

Capellan and Hasek-sympathetic troops clash throughout the St. Ives region.

(28 September) League forces assault Khon Kaen, Penobscot and Cavanaugh II, driving back Lyran forces.

(3 October) The unexpected recall of both Knights of the Inner Sphere regiments to Atreus weakens the central thrust of Marshall Brett's counter-invasion of the Lyran Alliance.

Capellan March troops seize Housekarle, No Return and Randar as Duke Hasek rushes to resupply troops poised near at Sian.

(7 October) An orbital strike, blamed initially on FedSuns WarShips (and later on the Word of Blake), pummels the capital city on Sian. The attack kills Candace Liao—who is visiting Sian at the time—and Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao is feared dead among the ruins. Rather than shattering the Capellan resolve, the attack galvanizes the Confederation, as even elements of Free Capella and pro-St. Ives elements decry the apparent FedSuns attack. *Sang-jiang-jun* Talon Zahn declares himself Military Regent of the Confederation.

The Word of Blake captures Muphris, Thorin, and New Earth. The use of tactical nuclear weapons is alleged on all three worlds.

Clan Jade Falcon seizes Graus from the Lyran Alliance.

(16 October) Communications are lost with Canopus its neighboring systems.

(17 October) FWLM forces continue to press forward into Lyran space, striking at Syrma and Zebebelgenubi.

(24 October) The Knights of the Inner Sphere arrive on Atreus.

(25 October) During a hastily arranged parade in honor of the returning Knights, the Word of Blake attacks Atreus. Chemical weapons reportedly kill the bulk of Parliament and the Knights themselves, and a massive naval engagement between pro-Word and pro-League WarShips allegedly erupts in the capital system. Blakist propaganda broadcast just as the attack commences declares Captain-General Thomas Marik to be a fraud, shortly before widespread disruption of the local communications network begins.

Across the Inner Sphere, a flood of Blakist propaganda and other interference chokes the hyperpulse generator network with "white noise".

(26 October) After assassinating Primus Sharilar Mori and attempting to assassinate Anastasius Focht, disillusioned members of ComStar ROM—including the head of ROM, Victoria Pardeau—flee ComStar's command center on Orestes. Gavin Dow becomes de facto Primus of ComStar.

(1-7 November) Blakist raiders—involving at least one WarShip, one division of troops and unidentified mercenaries—attack Orestes. ComStar's 104th Division and the Rasalhague Republic's First Tyr Regiment are mauled, as is the *Bordeaux*, one of ComStar's last surviving WarShips. The Blakist forces are routed after a savage fight.

(9 November) The Word of Blake destroys the First Kittery Borderers and conquers Kittery "in the name of the Capellan Confederation." All HPG traffic on Northwind ceases amid rumors of a massive orbital assault.

(10 November) Warlord Minamoto, now proclaiming himself *Gunji-no-Kanrei* of the DCMS, decrees that the Combine's administrative and military capital is relocating to New Samarkand "for the duration of the current crisis on Luthien."

(15-21 November) Several AFFS troops stationed along the Draconis March launch unsanctioned attacks against the Combine worlds of Matsuida and Galedon V.

(27 November) Lyran forces reclaim Syrma and Zebebelgenubi.

(1-7 December) Renegade Draconis March forces launch a "deep attack" against Benjamin and decimate the Sixth Ghost there. ISF Chief Ninyu Kerai is reportedly killed. Meanwhile, Canopian troops led by Naomi Centrella rally on Sian.

(8-14 December) A Word of Blake strike force in the Periphery destroys ComStar's Columbus Outpost and the 151st Regiment of the Eridani Light Horse.

(10 December) Capellan forces hit Valexa and Tallin.

(20 December) Remarkably alive, Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao is freed from the rubble of the Forbidden City on Sian.

3069

(4 January) Hohiro Kurita is liberated from a Blakist prison camp on Dieron, reportedly with aid from surviving elements of the Royal Black Watch.

(5 January) The entire Snow Raven naval Star at Ramora is sabotaged and destroyed by Blakist-backed terrorists using Combine vessels and tactics.

(7 January) Lyran troops successfully reclaim Mizar, Summer and Alcor.

(8-21 January) Jade Falcon forces conquer Black Earth, Blackjack, Blue Hole and Roadside.

(26 January) Capellan counterattacks have by this point reclaimed several worlds seized during Duke Hasek's SOVEREIGN JUSTICE campaign. With the fall of Kittery, the central prong of Hasek's invasion has also been choked off and FedSuns forces begin to fall back further.

(1-7 February) DCMS troops return to Benjamin to engage the entrenched Draconis March renegades there.

(14-21 February) Word of Blake forces launch heavy raids against Pesht and Benjamin in an effort to further throw the Combine command structures into chaos. In the Marian Hegemony, a wave of rebellions—both passive and active—erupts in the former Lothian and Illyrian regions.

(18 February) Capellan WarShips secure St. Ives, Necromo and Warlock, while additional CCAF forces hit the FedSuns worlds of Ashkum, Bromhead, Frazer, Haappajarvi, Hadnall, Mendham, Manapire and Verlo.

(20 February) The Blakist assault on Benjamin shatters the Combine and FedSuns troops on the planet. Meanwhile, Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao publicly announces his engagement to Naomi Centrella and his adoption of her daughter, Ilsa Centrella.

(25 February) FedSuns troops retreat from Benjamin due to heavy casualties, even as Blakist "Pocket WarShips" continue to assault the planet.

(4 March) Operating under Blakist command, the Order of the Faithful pirate force destroys the Nimakachi BattleMech factories on Tematagi.

(1-14 March) Blakist forces and affiliated mercenaries attack Al Na'ir, Imbros III and Saffel, conquering all three worlds. Clan Wolf takes the Falcon-held worlds of Bessarabia, Biota and Cusset.

(18 March) A Lyran task force of DropShips and fighters fails to break through the Tharkad blockade.

(21-28 March) Capellan troops hit the FedSuns worlds of Safe Port, Glentworth, Wrentham, Robsart, Sirdar, Spica, Aucara, Jonzac, Lee and Cammal. Hasek recalls his offensive against the Confederation to defend against the Liao counterattacks. Meanwhile, the Taurian Concordat sends reinforcements into the embattled Pleiades Cluster.

(1-7 April) DCMS troops return to Galedon V to expel the invading Draconis March troops. Meanwhile, Blakist forces and affiliated mercenaries attack Ascella, Atlas, Moore, Royalston and Sabik, while additional forces out of Kittery hit the FedSuns worlds of Scituate and Gurnet.

(12 April) Word of Blake WarShips attack Alarion in the Lyran Alliance and Galax in

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the Federated Suns. At both worlds, the Blakists demolish the shipyards and make off with all jump-capable vessels they can capture, while poisoning the planetary ecospheres with extremely powerful biochemical weapons. At Alarion, the LAS *Fylgia* manages to escape.

(17 April) In the embattled Free Worlds League, "Thomas Marik" appeals to the League's member worlds to select new Parliamentary representatives and vows to remain as Captain-General until proper government is restored.

(1-14 May) Clan Snow Raven ships attack and seize the Combine worlds of Valentina, Budingen, Weisau and Schirmeck, even as Combine forces arrive to expel FedSuns forces on Matsuida and the FedSuns troops on Galedon V finally retreat in the midst of an epidemic outbreak. Meanwhile, Capellan Death Commandos raid Kathil and cripple the Davion shipyards there.

(7-21 May) Word of Blake and allied mercenary forces hit Alya, Ankaa, Cebalrai, Kessel and Vega. Alya, Cebalrai and Vega fall in conventional attacks. Kessel does not succumb despite the use of tactical nuclear weapons, in part because of the timely arrival of Combine WarShips. Blakist neutron weapons reportedly kill over 10,000 civilians on Kessel before the invaders retreat.

(14-28 May) The CCAF continues its border-wide assault on the FedSuns as the last of Hasek's troops find themselves on the defensive. Capellan troops hit Kathil, Jaipur, Ridgebrook, Manadree and Bacum, as their rimward drive begins a "leapfrogging" approach toward New Syrtis.

(1 June) Snow Raven forces capture Goubellat and arrive in the Galedon system with a full Naval Star. After bombarding several military bases from orbit, the Ravens give the "civilian castes of Galedon" one week to evacuate the planet.

(3 June) Word of Blake troops hit Kathil, destroying the shipyards already damaged by the earlier Capellan assault and capturing numerous jump-capable vessels still at hand there. Follow-up nuclear and biochemical strikes are launched, causing massive casualties, but FedSuns fighters reportedly intercept several inbound attacks.

(10-14 June) Clan Jade Falcon captures Mkuranga and Pasig.

(15 June) Kai Allard-Liao is liberated from New Syrtis by Death Commandos.

(14-21 June) Fighting between sympathizers and League loyalists erupts on Berenson, Irian, Procyon and Sirius as local governments and troops turn against Atreus and the "false" Thomas Marik.

(16 June) The Snow Raven fleet at Galedon initiates a massive city-by-city bombardment of the planet's surface, quickly achieving a level of carnage surpassing the Kentares Massacre. Planetary infrastructure collapses. Combined with the loss of planetary administration, most transportation and government controls, the deadly plague released during the earlier FedSuns/Combine fighting begins to spread among the survivors. Only about 30,000 Galedonians escape from the planet, to become Raven *isorla*.

(28 June) Marshall Jeremy Brett issues a League-wide appeal for unity in the name of the Free Worlds, officially expressing his support for Thomas Marik "in this time of crisis."

(1-14 July) The Word of Blake assaults Bharat, Deneb Kaitos, Ingress, Kawich and Ruchbah. Bharat and Ingress fall to a conventional assault, as does Deneb Kaitos and Kawich, but Ruchbah's inhabitants shift to guerrilla tactics. Meanwhile, Jade Falcon forces attack Deia.

(16 July) Apparently infected by the plague running rampant on Galedon, the Snow Ravens departing Combine space are forced to scuttle three of their own ships. The condemned vessels do not submit willingly, sparking a naval battle in an unidentified Combine system.

(20 July) Capellan forces shatter the last pro-FedSuns holdouts on Warlock.

(7 August) Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones of the Principality of Regulus declares himself Captain-General, building on past denouncements of the "false" Thomas Marik and his own legitimate rule over the League's next largest member state.

(8-14 August) Word of Blake forces swiftly conquer Addicks, Hoan and Tybalt.

(9 August) "Thomas Marik" is deposed by apparent pro-Blakist elements led by Corinne Marik, a niece of the last known legitimate Marik ruler. Meanwhile, the Capellan offensive against the FedSuns continues with assaults on Halloran V and Taygeta.

(10 August) Corinne Marik is sworn in as Captain-General of the Free Worlds League.

(15 August) Clan Jade Falcon completes its capture of Deia.

(21 August) Clan Snow Raven's task force—now reduced to two damaged WarShips—reportedly returns to the Outworlds Alliance world of Ramora.

(1-28 September) Blakist forces hit Achernar, Angol, Basalt, Castleton, Mirach, Scharar, Tikonov and Yangtze. Achernar, Angol, Basalt, Mirach, Scharar and Yangtze fall. Blakist mercenaries, however, fail to take Casleton despite several assaults, while Tikonov offers stiff resistance that includes

the destruction of the local HPG. The Word also assaults Van Diemen IV, shattering the Third Oriente Hussars

(7-14 September) Capellan troops assault New Syrtis and Taygeta, meeting stiff resistance on both worlds. Taygeta's defenders eventually withdraw to New Syrtis.

(15 September) The Draconis Combine High Command formally declares Galedon V under quarantine due to the uncontrolled outbreak of a mysterious plague.

(19-25 September) Clan Snow Raven and Outworlds Alliance forces lay siege to Dante, allegedly after confirming reports linking local terrorists to the Word of Blake. This heavy-handed act inflames secessionist sentiments noticeably on worlds like Baliggora and Ralldamax, creating a political crisis for the Avellars.

(27 September) ComStar forces mustering on Summer are on hand along with local Lyran defenders when a Blakist task force of "Pocket WarShips" and fighters attacks the planet. In the ensuing battle, a powerful thermonuclear device launched by a "Pocket WarShip" levels the planetary capital of Curitiba and decimates the on-planet defenders. Curiously, the Blakist forces then move on, leaving no occupation troops behind.

(1-7 October) Clan Wolf seizes La Grave, Domain, Orkney, Jabuka and Rasalgethi, shadowing the Falcon advances.

(4 October) The Word of Blake task force from Summer assaults Skye, only to be routed by the recently arrived LAS *Fylgia* and a complement of Skye DropShips and fighters. Though the Blakists possess WMDs, their nuclear attack on the *Fylgia* fails.

(7-14 October) Word forces augmented by "Pocket WarShips" attack Buckminster, all but shattering the Seventh Light Amphigean Assault Group and several Buckminster cities.

(13 October) Word of Blake naval forces bombard Capellan and FedSuns troops on Halloran V, creating a three-way battle for control of the planet.

(14-30 October) The Word assaults Algol, Algot, Azha, Kansu, Menkar, Menkent, New Aragon and Slocum. In several cases, the use (or threat) of WMDs and orbital bombardments is sufficient to devastate local defenses and assure a swift victory, though in the case of Menkent, the attack is little more than a bombing raid.

(25 October) Jeremy Brett calls for a formal cease-fire with the Lyran, publicly blaming the Word of Blake for the "misunderstandings" of the past few years. Communications disruptions delay the message for close to a month.

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- (1-7 November)** Word of Blake forces from Kittery conquer Spica and Denbar.
- (2 November)** Capellan forces repel a Word of Blake attack on Liao.
- (8-14 November)** Free Worlds units from Andurien and Zion launch strikes against Capellan space, hitting Betelgeuse, Sigma Mare and Second Try.
- (2 December)** Duke Umayr of Bolan receives and accepts Jeremy Brett's call for a cease-fire.
- (3-14 December)** Buchlau and Woodstock surrender to the Word of Blake without resistance, as the Word attacks Foochow, Gan Singh, Pleione and Wei with mixed results. Blakist forces are routed or destroyed at Foochow and Gan Singh, but prevail on Pleione and Wei.
- (8 December)** The Thirteenth Stalking Horse mercenary unit—one of the last AMC units still in operation—raids Talitha in the Free Worlds League.
- (16 December)** Word of Blake forces attack Glengarry, shattering the local defenders.
- (31 December)** By this time, LAAF forces have withdrawn from the captured League worlds of Autumn Wind, Gannett, Megrez, Niihau, Pingree, Preston, Thermopolis, Togwotee, Rexburg, Shasta and Sheridan, due to battlefield attrition and arrangements made between Duke Umayr of Bolan and Marshall Brett.
- 3070**
- (5 January)** Theodore Kurita dies. Hohiro Kurita is named Coordinator.
- (7 January)** Citing new evidence, the Capellan government declares that the Word of Blake—not the Federated Suns—were the culprits behind the bombing of Sian. In an astonishing turnaround, Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao calls for a cease-fire with Hasek's forces (including those still engaged at New Syrtis), and offers to unite against the common enemy.
- (15-30 January)** As Wolf Clan troops cut deeper into Lyran space—claiming Borghese, Ft. Loudon, Kelenfold and Tomans—the Jade Falcon incursion angles toward Arc-Royal.
- (1-7 February)** Despite Sun-Tzu's declarations, CCAF forces departing New Syrtis and Taygeta stage fighting withdrawals with a great deal of collateral damage. Duke George Hasek orders all his commands to "show no mercy" to the departing Capellans.
- (6 February)** Having weakened its defenses with prior raids, the Word of Blake captures Hesperus II and blockades the planet.
- (14-28 February)** The DCMS launches a massive thermonuclear bombardment of Galedon V as part of a final solution to the "Curse of Galedon," but officials on New Samarkand deny these claims.
- (15 February)** Taurian reinforcements bound for the Pleiades Cluster attack Midale and are destroyed.
- (27 February)** In a similar fashion to the Hesperus conquest, the Word of Blake assaults Donegal, capitalizing on defenses weakened since the start of the war. Meanwhile, a suicide bomber traced to the Word of Blake narrowly fails in an attempt to kill Lyran General of the Armies Adam Steiner on Atocongo.
- (14 March)** Baron Kithrong and his Calderon Protectorate declare war on the Taurian Concordat "in the name of all Taurian people," citing Shraplen's "ongoing obsession with reclaiming the Pleiades while the Word of Blake makes war on all humankind" as proof of his inability to rule.
- (18 March)** A Word of Blake strike force staging from the Circinus Federation attacks Blantleff in the Marian Hegemony.
- (19 March)** Alleged Word of Blake operatives assassinate Duke George Hasek. His aide and interim successor, Field Marshall Ally Swanson, eventually rescinds his "no mercy" order, allowing Capellan troops to return to their home space with minimal resistance.
- (20 April)** On An Ting, the sudden outbreak of a plague bearing an unsettling similarity to the Curse of Galedon prompts the Combine leadership to launch an immediate investigation.
- (24-30 April)** Word of Blake forces assault Buckminster, but Delta Regiment of Wolf's Dragoons blunts the attack—albeit at a terrible cost.
- (2 May)** Word of Blake raiders attack Hachiman, destroying the Hachiman Taro Electronics facilities.
- (21-28 May)** The Word launches a second assault against St. Andre, but again fails to secure the world.
- (7-14 June)** Jade Falcon forces attack Zanderij.
- (21-28 June)** Government and military forces on Alula Australis, Dubhe, Kalidasa, Stewart, Zion and Zosma declare their allegiance to the Word of Blake, expanding the Blakist Protectorate deep into League space.
- (11 July)** Clan Ghost Bear forces arrive at Tukayyid and destroy the Word of Blake ships there.
- (14-21 July)** A third fleet of Snow Raven WarShips arrives in Outworlds space, as Raven representatives reportedly intensify efforts to cement a long-standing alliance with the Periphery realm.
- (1-21 August)** The Marian Hegemony launches several raids on Free Worlds League planets—including Huntington and Hazeldean—after accusing the League of fostering ongoing anti-Hegemony rebellions.
- (12 August)** Lyran and Wolf (in Exile) forces on Zanderij finally repel the attacking Jade Falcons.
- (21 August)** Ragnar Magnusson addresses the Rasalhague Republic government on Orestes, launching negotiations on behalf of the Ghost Bear Dominion for an accord on behalf of "all Rasalhagian peoples."
- (22 August)** Rebel WarShips in the Shiloh system ambush and destroy two Word of Blake WarShips.
- (13-15 September)** Word of Blake forces, augmented by several mercenary commands, attack Sian and St. Ives, engaging Capellan WarShips near both worlds. Ground forces land on Sian but are repelled by the CCAF, augmented by Canopian troops and even elements of the discredited Free Capella movement.
- (13 October)** Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao marries Naomi Centrella, heiress to the Canopian throne.
- (30 October)** Blakist assassins kill Mandrinn Treyhang Liao, leader of Free Capella. His aides act on the Mandrinn's final instructions to formally dissolve the movement.
- (1 November)** Free Capella formally dissolves.
- (14-28 November)** Clan Hell's Horses returns to the Inner Sphere with the capture of Nyserta and Oberon VI from Clan Wolf.
- (22 November)** Blakist forces engaged in a heavy raid on Bethel are destroyed after calling down a nuclear attack on their own position.
- (1-14 December)** The Hell's Horses Clan takes Paulus Prime from Clan Wolf.
- (2 December)** Unknown bandits believed to originate in the Fronc Reaches raid the Taurian world of Argos.
- (7 December)** Having determined that the rapidly spreading epidemic on An Ting is in fact the Curse of Galedon, the DCMS High Command places the planet under quarantine.
- (9 December)** President Allison Carver of the Periphery planet Herotitus is assassinated. No one claims responsibility.
- (28 December)** Blakist forces launch surprise nuclear attacks on Tamar and Arc-Royal. At Arc-Royal, Wolf (in-Exile) forces manage to intercept the attack in space, but on Tamar, the attack "scours" several highly populated areas, including the primary headquarters for Clan Wolf.
- (30 December)** Units sporting FedSuns insignia launch a devastating attack on the Capellan world of Mitchell, targeting the planet's most populous industrial centers. At the height of the assault, two cobalt-laced thermonuclear weapons airburst over the planet's two largest cities, decimating the local population and salting the proverbial earth.



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(4 January) As part of a growing effort to contain the various border conflicts and coordinate a mutual defense strategy, Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion meets with General Adam Steiner and Khan Phelan Kell of Clan Wolf (in-Exile) on Arc-Royal.

(13 January) Clan Jade Falcon attacks Great X, but the fortified world quickly becomes a quagmire.

(21 January) The Word of Blake attacks Robinson.

(27 January) Magistris Naomi Centrella gives birth to Daoshen Liao(-Centrella). As the first legitimate child born of the union between Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao and Magistris Centrella, Daoshen is named heir to the Capellan Confederation, slating the couple's older child, Ilsa Centrella(-Liao), for the Canopian throne.

(28 January) In an apparent act of spite aimed at the retreating Blackhearts mercenary command, Word of Blake forces on Wasat detonate a nuclear weapon in the capital city, killing an estimated 30,000 civilians.

(31 January) In the fringes of Lyran space, the Democracy Now movement led by Calvin Strauss moves to establish the Alarion Province as a democratic stronghold, with Novara as its center.

(4 February) Khan Vlad Ward of Clan Wolf, reporting a "scouring" on Tamar, proposes a truce with the Lyrans. Also on this date, the Word of Blake attacks and seizes Pesht.

(8 February) Clan Jade Falcon assaults Morges.

(12 February) The world of Arkab suffers a devastating asteroid strike that kills tens of thousands. The Azami appeal to the embattled Combine government for aid but receive no reply.

(21-28 February) Clan Hell's Horses attacks Steelton, New Caledonia, Star's End, and Outpost, seizing all worlds from Clan Wolf before annexing the nearby systems of Skallevoll, Icar, Chateau, and The Edge.

(6 March) Regulus' Prince Kirc Cameron-Jones orders an attack on Oriente in an effort to destroy the false Thomas Marik and his host, Duke Christopher Halas of Oriente.

(7 March) Andurien raiders launch a failed attack against the Capellan world of Principia. Also on this date, a major protest against the Ghost Bear-Rasalhague détente breaks out at the Frihet Training Facility on Grumium. The First Grumium Armored Militia is forced to remove their own countrymen after rebel cadets take over the academy grounds.

(10 March) Democracy Now proponents stage an open rebellion on Enzesfled, storming the planetary duke's palace and sending numerous secondary nobles into hiding.

(11 March) During a conclave in the Dante system, a Clan Snow Raven flotilla is attacked by a suspected Blakist assault force that destroys the Snow Raven flagship, critically injures saKhan Broderick Sukhanov, and wipes out a full Galaxy of Raven forces.

(18 March) With the help of David Lear, Devlin Stone and a band of resisters escape from the RBMU 105 reeducation camp on Kittery.

(24 March) Capellan troops secure Detroit on behalf of the Magistracy of Canopus.

(7 April) Frustrated by Taurian resistance on Electra, Hansen's Roughriders use fuel-air explosives to clear out a Taurian base camp dug into a canyon on Electra. Taurian nuclear weapons are recovered after the battle.

(7-14 April) Clan Hell's Horses seizes Kirchbach, Verthandi, Rodigo, and New Oslo from Clan Wolf and consolidates gains on all worlds up to the Kirchbach line (including Chateau, Csesztreg, Lovinac, Alleghe, St. John, Bruben, Svelvik, Balsta, New Bergen, and Hermagor). Meanwhile, Jade Falcon forces attack Steelton.

(11 April) The Word of Blake's Forty-first Shadow Division sets the capital city of Crimson ablaze on Canopus. Also on this date, heavy naval and aerospace resistance—centered on the FWLS *Santorini*—defeats a Regular attack group sent to Oriente.

(12 April) Clan Jade Falcon sends a small force to Arc-Royal under a flag of truce.

(21-30 April) Clan Ice Hellion assaults the coreward worlds of the Jade Falcon Occupation Zone with a force of four Galaxies and thirteen WarShips. Encountering relatively light resistance, the Hellions claim thirteen coreward Falcon worlds, including Bone-Norman through Toland.

(25 April) The Kaumberg Planetary Guard mobilizes in response to urgent pleas from the embattled Enzesfled government, an act that further inflames the militant Democracy Now movements on Batajnica on Calafell.

(3 May) After months of "low-intensity resistance," the Solaris Home Defense League executes a daring assault on Solaris City, securing the city's International Zone.

(20 May) A new "Warrior House" of cybernetically enhanced Thuggee fanatics attacks Chesterton, suggesting a link between Kali Liao and the Word of Blake's Manei Domini. Chancellor Liao later denies authorizing the attack.

(22 May) An attack by apparent FWLM troops (later revealed to be the Forty-ninth Shadow Division) destroys the Second Regular Hussars on Wallis, leaving no survivors.

(25 May) Kaumberg Planetary Guard troops land on Enzesfled as Democracy Now riots break out on Batajnica and Calafell.

(6 June) The Word of Blake annihilates the city of Nova Roma on Alphard using a series of neutron bombs seeded throughout the Marian capital city.

(7-28 June) Clan Hell's Horses reclaims Steelton from the Falcons even as the Falcons hit back on Seiduts. The Horses also seize Liezen, Harvest, and Planting from Clan Wolf. Meanwhile, Clan Ice Hellion invades the Falcon-held worlds of Golandrinas, Dark Nebula, Wotan, Winfield, and Persistence.

(11 June) The Word of Blake forces in Solaris City are forced out by the SHDL, but not before destroying the planetary HPG.

(17 June) Without warning or explanation, "Warrior House Raksasha" abandons Chesterton.

(25 June) Clan Ghost Bear—on behalf of the Free Rasalhague Republic—requests ComStar to prepare for relocation out of Republic space.

(July) Clan Ice Hellion's advance into Jade Falcon territory stalls with heavy fighting on Bone-Norman, Somerset, Golandrinas, Wotan, Derf, Trel I, and Romulus.

(21 July) Clan Hell's Horses sends a special envoy to the Ghost Bears in an apparent act of reconciliation for their past feud.

(August) Clan Ice Hellion successfully captures Evcler from Clan Jade Falcon.

(9 August) The Free Worlds League government on Atrous cedes the world of Gibson to the control of Manei Domini Precentor Apollyon.

(11 August) In the Draconis Combine, the Azami population leadership declares a state of emergency and recalls all remaining Arkab Legions to Algedi against the orders of the Coordinator.

(14-28 August) Clan Hell's Horses' advance into Wolf Clan territory stalls at a line of worlds from Ferleiten to Zoetermeer. Meanwhile, Ghost Bear forces launch Trials on Balsta, Hermagor, and Dawn.

(17 August) The Word of Blake forces on Solaris reclaim the International Zone in a blitzkrieg assault.

(20 August) All communications from the Capellan world of Necromo fall silent. Later investigation reveals the world was struck by several rogue asteroids and at least one Word of Blake Shadow Division.

(25 August) An AFFS force sent on a punitive raid to Highspire is reportedly eradicated by two hybrid Manei Domini-Thuggee "Warrior Houses" on planet.

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(27 August) Democracy Now upheavals continue to spread through the Lyran Alliance's Alarion Province, with Mercedes, Aiguebelle, Mezzana, Vermezzo, and Virtue all experiencing demonstrations.

(30 August) On Canopus IV, the Ramilie's Raiders mercenary command is destroyed while helping MAF commander Hadji Doru escape from the occupied capital city.

(September) Clan Jade Falcon reclaims Erewhon from Clan Ice Hellion.

(6 September) In an apparent split within the movement, Democracy Now leader Kelvin Strauss denounces the more extremist policies of fellow leader Lindon Ashley.

(14 September) The world of Savannah declares independence from the Free Worlds League. Also on this date, Alys Rousset-Marik's Free Worlds Resistance raids pro-Blakist garrisons on Hamilton and Pollux.

(15 September) Taurian mercenaries briefly capture the FedSuns world of Brusett.

(27 September) After years trapped on Tharkad, Peter Steiner-Davion abdicates his authority as Archon of the Lyran Alliance to Adam Steiner, his General of the Armies.

(October) Clan Hell's Horses attempts to assault several Wolf Clan positions on Ridderkerk, Basiliano, and Hohenems but succeeds only in establishing footholds on Basiliano and Hohenems. The Wolves counterattack on Ridderkerk, Mozirje and Unzmarkt. Meanwhile, Clan Ice Hellion takes Gotterdammerung, Here, and Evciler from the Jade Falcons, even as the Falcons retake Anywhere and Lackhove.

(2 October) The Screaming Eagles mercenary command launches an unsanctioned attack the Outworlds Alliance world of Ramora, engaging Outworlds and Snow Raven forces.

(7 October) Richard Steiner—an apparent Blakist plant and LAAF deserter—assassinates Free Worlds League Marshall Jeremy Brett with an implanted suicide device.

(12 October) Devlin Stone's resistance movement on Kittery succeeds in neutralizing the last of the Blakist forces on that world.

(15 October) The Solaris Home Defense League manages to force the Word of Blake back out of Solaris City and into the Reaches.

(21 October) Clan Nova Cat finally comes out of their isolation to support Devlin Stone.

(22 October) Marik Commonwealth troops invade Savannah, crushing the local resistance.

(1-14 November) Clan Wolf forces the Hell's Horses off Basiliano and Hohenems, and retakes Mozirje, Feltre, and Unzmarkt, while additional strikes carve footholds on Planting. The Horses, meanwhile, turn on the Ice Hellion-controlled worlds of Apollo, Bensinger, Toland, and Von Strang's World.

(3 November) A joint Snow Raven/Outworlds Alliance force launches a reprisal strike on the FedSuns world of Kilbourne. Both sides suffer heavy losses.

(12 November) Coordinator Hohiro Kurita issues an ultimatum to the Azami on Algedi to "mobilize for the Dragon's defense or face the Dragon's wrath." The Azami do not reply.

(15 November) Omnis terrorists on Alpheratz set off a thermonuclear device in the heart of the Outworlds Alliance capital city of Famindas. Clan Snow Raven declares its WarShips a "safe haven" for the Alliance leadership.

(17 November) The Com Guard forces remaining in the Free Rasalhague Republic begin preparations to depart. Meanwhile, as part of a mutual defense pact, the Rasalhague KungsArmé prepares for a series of Trials against Ghost Bear champions.

(19 November) Therese Brett-Marik declares the Duchy of Tamarind independent of the Free Worlds League, names herself Duchess of Tamarind, and places her son, Photon Brett-Marik, in command of all FWLM forces previously commanded by Marshall Brett.

(29 November) The Marik Commonwealth begins a blockade of Augustine.

(December) The Ice Hellions' advance into the Inner Sphere is shattered by attacks from the Hell's Horses and Jade Falcon Clans. The Horses assault Botany Bay, Last Chance, Gotterdammerung, Lackhove, and Here, while the Falcons strike worlds from Winfield and Persistence to Evciler. The Hellions strike back at the Horses on Seiduts and Vantaa.

(11 December) The Word of Blake forces on Solaris finally withdraw from the planet after a long and bloody campaign.

(21 December) In the Lyran Alliance, Democracy Now's movement leaders, Kelvin Strauss and Lindon Ashley, are both attacked by assassins of unknown origins. Strauss is killed during a campaign rally on Novara, but Ashley narrowly escapes his attackers on Calafell.

3072

(11 January) A Lyran attack force led by Archon Adam Steiner and augmented by elements of Clan Wolf (in-Exile), the Kell Hounds, Wolf's Dragoons—and even a token Jade Falcon force—assaults and liberates Tharkad. Once Tharkad is liberated, Adam Steiner transfers the Archonship back to Peter Steiner-Davion.

(14-31 January) Clan Wolf pushes the Hell's Horses off Planting, Mozirje, Feltre, and Unzmarkt before accepting cease-fire terms from the Horses' Khan. Meanwhile, Clan Ice Hellion loses Persistence, Winfield, and

Romulus to the Falcons. Also on this date, the Combine WarShip *Siriwan* is destroyed by nuclear weapons over Algedi after issuing a final ultimatum to the Azami from *Kanrei* Minamoto and bombarding two Azami cities.

(21 January) ComStar's military forces begin to leave the Rasalhague Republic.

(2 February) A joint Com Guard-AFFS force liberates Robinson.

(14 February) Under the command of Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion, a coalition force composed of ComStar, LAAF, and Exiled Wolf troops successfully liberates Donegal from Word of Blake blockade forces.

(14-28 February) The Jade Falcons retake Evciler while the Hell's Horses reclaim Seiduts. Also by this point, reports from the Clan Occupation Zones confirm a complete shutdown of communication between the invading Clans and their homeworlds.

(20 February) The Filtvelt Coalition declares its independence from the Federated Suns.

(March) Devlin Stone's resistance topples the Blakist puppet governments on Scituate and Spica. Also at this time, Clan Hell's Horses assaults the Ice Hellion positions in the Dark Nebula, while Clan Jade Falcon and Horses troops land on Vantaa.

(15 March) Lindon Ashley resurfaces on Novara to take up the reins of Democracy Now's movement. At the same time, Kaumberg Planetary Guard forces land on Batajnica amid public outcry that the Lyran government is targeting the movement's leadership.

(22 March) A Word of Blake attack force sent to Arc-Royal is defeated after a major engagement in space and on the surface.

(28 March) The Word of Blake raids Buenos Aires, deploying another of their so-called "Magic Bullet" bio-weapons in the process.

(12 April) DCMS forces equipped with tactical nukes breach Algedi to liberate the captives taken during the *Siriwan*'s failed assault.

(14-30 April) The Hell's Horses and Jade Falcons shatter the last of the Ice Hellion troops in the Inner Sphere on Vantaa. In the midst of the weeks-long struggle, however, the planet's vital life-support industries are compromised. At the same time, Devlin Stone announces the formation of the "Kittery Prefecture" after defeating Blakist troops on Gurnet.

(1 May) A JumpShip loaded with ComStar HPG administrators expelled from the Outworlds Alliance arrives at Sterlington and is destroyed by local aerospace forces believing them to be a Blakist trick.

(5 May) Democracy Now leader Lindon Ashley calls for the secession of the Alarion Province from the Lyran Alliance.

(12 May) Word of Blake forces seize Benjamin.

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(23 May) Calderon Protectorate forces raid the Taurian Concordat worlds of Celano, Mirfak, Carvajal, and Charleston.

(6 June) The Word of Blake's Forty-ninth Shadow Division executes a surprise combat drop in the middle of Regulus City on Regulus and sets the provincial capital ablaze.

(12 June) Forces sporting AFFS colors attack Taurian defense forces on Althea's Choice and Jansen's Hold.

(19 June) A Blakist nuclear raid on Irece is thwarted by Clan Nova Cat's defenses.

(20 June) Kirc Cameron-Jones, leader of the Principality of Regulus, declares a purge throughout his realm.

(21-28 June) AFFS forces launch a "heavy raid" on the Outworlds Alliance world of Tellman IV in search of suspected Blakist command centers. The Snow Raven and Outworlds defenders, however, quickly defeat and capture the Davion troops. Also at this time, a spate of pirate raids strike at the Calderon Protectorate.

(25 June) The Democracy Now movement unveils its own army in the form of the mercenary Eriksson's Einherjar mercenary command.

(5 July) In an effort to calm the worsening situation on the FedSuns/Outworlds border, Duke Tancred Sandoval of the Draconis March offers a formal apology to the Snow Raven and Outworlds leaders.

(21 July) Nova Cat forces from Irece attempt to assault the Blakist forces on Luthien, but suffer severe losses in the process. Also at this time, the Hansen's Roughriders mercenary command succeeds in shattering the Taurian-backed Lone Star Regiment in the Pleiades.

(16 July) Word of Blake forces raid Guatavita.

(24 July) In the Avon system, the Nova Cat WarShip *Severen Leroux* destroys the renegade DCA WarShip *Urizen II*.

(7 August) Archon Peter Steiner-Davion announces the reactivation of the "Archonettes" policy, delegating broad powers to regional leaders in troubled peripheral areas in an effort to stem the tide of chaos as the LAAF and government infrastructures remain strained.

(13 August) A Word of Blake raiding force strikes at Markesan in an effort to destroy the FedSuns leadership there but is thwarted by the Princess-Regent's aerospace and naval defense forces.

(15 August) The Kaumberg Planetary Guard assaults Novara and shatters the Democratic People's Army, but not before Democracy Now's leader, Lindon Ashley, escapes.

(5-20 October) Under the guise of the long-missing Northwind Highlanders, a Word of Blake assault force hits Galatea and swiftly occupies Galatean City and its outlying areas.

(1-15 November) The DCMS attempts and fails to break the Word of Blake siege on Benjamin.

(12 November) ComStar-backed insurgents, supported by elements of Alys Marik's Free Worlds Resistance, briefly shatter the Blakist-controlled government on New Home and manage to rescue a host of "political prisoners" from an apparent reeducation camp, including Fritz Donner, the long-missing commander of the Circinus Federation's Black Warriors. Precentor Martial Victor Steiner-Davion uses this victory and others as a rallying call for a summit meeting on Arc-Royal.

(29 November) The Word of Blake's latest push against New Avalon's remaining defenders ends indecisively.

(16 December) A Nova Cat flotilla and ground forces suddenly attack Benjamin and overwhelm most of its defense forces before moving on. The assault enables DCMS forces still trapped on-world to overcome the remaining Blakist forces and reclaim the planet.

3073

(11 January) The Word of Blake reclaims the capital of New Home.

(22 January) During the long-anticipated international summit meeting between Lyran, FedSuns, Combine, Clan, and ComStar leaders, a sophisticated suicide bomb implanted within Fritz Donner—a key witness to Blakist operations within the Blake Protectorate—is detonated, killing and injuring many of the assembled delegates and paralyzing allied coordination efforts against the Word.

(27 January) In the Draconis Combine, a fresh purge of the Black Dragon Society nets officials as high as the Abbess of the Order of the Five Pillars.

(February) Amid reports of fighting throughout its Occupation Zone, much of Clan Jade Falcon's HPG network inexplicably shuts down.

(4 February) The Third Battle of New Avalon effectively ends in a Word of Blake victory after AFFS Marshall of the Armies Jackson Davion is killed and the Word of Blake forces under the command of Precentors Avitue and Geoffrey Zucker seize Mount Davion.

(18 February) With the blessings of Archon Peter Steiner-Davion, Combine business leader Chandrasekhar Kurita sets up a base on Arcturus for a multi-national coalition force he has assembled.

(March) Attacks from the Circinus Federation and opportunistic rebellions in the Lothario and Illyrian Provinces add to the destabilization of the Marian Hegemony.

(19 March) Following Filtvelt's example, most of the Malagrotta Combat Region declares its independence from the Federated Suns. Though protests from the Princess-Regent and her command staff are sharp, no military action is taken.

(3 April) In an unexpectedly harsh reaction to a contract dispute, the Word of Blake's Fifty-second Shadow Division eradicates the Martian Cuirassiers mercenary command on Hall.

(17 April) The White Tigers "Warrior House" launches a brutal raid against the Oriente world of Les Halles.

(11 May) Word of Blake forces attack Arcturus, specifically targeting the coalition of mercenaries and "independent forces" gathered there by Chandrasekhar Kurita. Both sides suffer heavy losses, but the Word withdraws abruptly, despite holding a tactical advantage.

(23 May) The Duchy of Oriente launches reprisal raids against the Capellan worlds of Jasmine, Eom, and Boardwalk.

(29 June) A joint Capellan-Canopian attack group hits the Free Worlds League planet of Aspropirgos, disrupting a major staging ground for Blakist operations against the Magistracy of Canopus. Over the course of twelve days, the Capellan-Canopian forces systematically destroy the Blakist staging grounds and most of the Forty-first Shadow Division's infantry support.

(15 June) Word of Blake forces raid Atocongo, inflicting heavy damage on the LAAF troops stationed there.

(29 June) The Word of Blake's Fifty-second Shadow Division destroys the survivors of the Legion of the Rising Sun on Alphard.

(30 June) After weeks of wrangling, representatives from the rebelling Azami worlds agree to come to Benjamin to discuss the crisis between themselves and the Combine leadership.

(17 July) Capellan forces raid the Free Worlds League planet of Shuen Wan and employ several tactical nuclear weapons in the attack, ostensibly as a warning against further League aggression.

(21 July) The Azami delegation en route to Benjamin is attacked and all of its envoys killed by a small force of Word of Blake fighters. The attack further imperils Combine-Arkab relations as the Azami accuse the Combine of deliberately failing to protect their emissaries.

(1 August) Devlin Stone arrives at Tukayyid and requests *sacon* from the local Ghost Bear garrison, stating that he wishes to fight a Trial of Possession for the use of Tukayyid's ComStar HPG compound for a period of one year. The

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Bears reluctantly agree, and Stone personally defeats the Bears' defending Star with a lance of his own 'Mechs.

(13 August) A Regular attack force attacks Gibson. Though they meet no resistance entering the system, the force is virtually eradicated on the ground by the defending Word of Blake forces led by the Fifty-second and Forty-ninth Shadow Divisions. Blakist WarShips in turn appear to shatter the Regular naval forces, leaving few survivors.

(21 August) The "false" Thomas Marik arrives on Sian under a flag of truce to negotiate a cease-fire between the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League. Word of Blake operatives attempt to assassinate the deposed Captain-General but are thwarted by Capellan security.

(21 September) At the urgings of his son, Titus, Kirc Cameron-Jones abdicates his throne. Titus Cameron-Jones becomes the new Prince (and Captain-General) of Regulus.

(30 September) The Word of Blake's Fifty-second Shadow Division attacks Caledonia, destroying the Twenty-second Skye Rangers.

(9 October) Captain-General Corinne Marik orders Regulus to abandon all claims to the Captain-Generalcy and stop resisting Atrean authority.

(12 October) Victor Steiner-Davion leads an entourage of Lyran, Exiled-Wolf, and ComStar representatives to meet with Devlin Stone on Tukayyid.

(14 October) Sun-Tzu Liao releases the remaining Canopian troops in Capellan space to return to their homelands.

(17 October) Hohiro Kurita agrees to meet with Victor and Stone on Tukayyid and prepares for immediate departure from Benjamin.

(22 October) A freak fuel explosion at the Forbidden City spaceport—ultimately attributed to Word of Blake assassins—destroys Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao's DropShip before she can board it.

(9 November) Chandrasekhar Kurita wins naval support from the Exiled Wolf Clan and the Lyran Alliance for a strike mission aimed at the elusive "Ruins of Gabriel."

(19 November) Rogue ISF operatives fail in an assassination attempt on *Gunji-no-Kanrei* Minamoto on Benjamin.

(25 November) Jade Falcon and Wolf Clan envoys, along with Duke Tancred Sandoval, Archon Peter Steiner-Davion, and Coordinator Hohiro Kurita, meet with Stone and other Inner Sphere leaders on Tukayyid. Coordinator Kurita offers Combine support for Stone on the condition that he refuse aid from half of the Nova Cat troops still defecting to his banner.

(30 November) To meet the Kurita delegation's requirement for their support, Stone fights a Trial of Refusal against the Nova Cats on Tukayyid's moon. Stone's victory forces half of the Nova Cat Clan to remain in Combine space. Also on this date, Capellan Death Commandos arrest Duchess Kali Liao on Highspire.

(10 December) Proclaiming a successful purge of Black Dragon elements in the ISF and local DCMS forces, Warlord Minamoto once more invites Azami representatives to Benjamin to resume negotiations.

(11 December) Devlin Stone details plans to liberate Coventry, Luthien, and Pesht, as well as plans to defend Skye from an inevitable Word of Blake attack.

(20 December) A Blakist operative assassinates Archon Peter Steiner-Davion while he is leaving Tukayyid. On his deathbed, Steiner-Davion names General Adam Steiner his successor in a recorded last will. The reformed Estates General on Tharkad ratifies Adam Steiner's position by the end of the year, and his first act is a promise to uphold Peter's support of Stone's alliance.

(26 December) Stone convinces Skye to accept allied aid in the defense of the vital world in the face of an imminent Word of Blake attack.

(28 December) Kali Liao is presented to Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao on Sian and is formally charged with treason against the realm and collaborating with the enemy.

(29 December) The Word of Blake's Fiftieth Shadow Division raids Bountiful Harvest but encounters stiff resistance from the Second Wolf Strike Grenadiers and the Fourth Wolf Guards Cluster and retreats with heavy damage.

3074

(5 January) Chandrasekhar Kurita releases his coalition force—under Lyran and Exiled Wolf Clan naval escort—to attack Odessa, suspecting the system to be the location of the secret Ruins of Gabriel. Word of Blake defense forces emerge to defend the base, which is revealed to be a moon orbiting the system's farthest planet. Though the Blakists manage to beat back the allied troops, however, their forces nevertheless poison the world of Odessa and withdraw to scuttle their now-exposed facilities.

(7 January) Two Divisions of Blakist forces—augmented by Kali Liao's Warrior Houses—launch a surprise assault against Forbidden City on Sian. At the peak of the fighting, however, one of Kali's Warrior Houses turns on the other, effectively eliminating both from the battle, turning the tide in favor of

the defending CCAF forces and forcing the Word of Blake forces into a rout.

(18 January) A Regular force led by Titus Cameron-Jones raids Irian, inflicting heavy damage and receiving heated condemnation from Atreus.

(21 January) A second delegation of Arkab leaders agrees to make one more attempt to meet with Minamoto to settle the Azami Crisis.

(10 February) Under threat of severe reprisals against Regulus, Prince Titus Cameron-Jones formally renounces his claim to the Captain-Generalcy and officially forbids any Regular forces or intelligence apparatus from interfering in "the greater affairs of the League and its allies."

(15 February) Word of Blake forces destroy Warrior House Lu Sann during an ambush on Herotitus.

(17 February) The Word of Blake's Fifty-second Shadow Division assaults Bolan, shatters the Second Brion's Legion mercenary regiment, and razes the Bolan capital city. Bolan's ruling family flees, leaving the planet in political turmoil. Also on this date, DCMS forces and Azami fighters repel a Word of Blake attack on the Azami delegation to Benjamin.

(7 March) Clan Ghost Bear moves to disrupt a Blakist Shadow Division covertly operating on Radstadt. In the fighting, the Blakist forces unleash several biological weapons and neutron bombs, poisoning critical parts of the planetary ecosystem.

(16 March) A joint Jade Falcon-LAAF task force attacks Coventry from Word of Blake blockade forces.

(21 March) The Coventry liberation is completed. At the same time, roughly three regiments' worth of allied troops arrive on Skye.

(25 March) The Azami delegation arrives safely on Benjamin. Although the ten-day discussions fail to bring the Arkab worlds fully back into the Dragon's fold, the two sides agree to focus all military energies on the common threat of the Word of Blake. The Combine promises to direct relief efforts to their stricken worlds.

(1 May) Several asteroids strike Taurus, obliterating the capital city of Samantha and killing Protector Grover Shraplen. Evidence recovered from the asteroid remains and Taurian asteroid field implicate FedSuns espionage, a charge House Davion vehemently denies.

(14 May) Archon Adam Steiner announces his engagement to Baroness Heather Fyhne, daughter of Arcturus' ruling Duchess, Arielle Fyhne.

THE JIHAD IN REVIEW

(19 May) The Taurian Concordat relocates its rimward forces to the FedSuns border, along with its newly unveiled *Quixote*-class WarShip, *Vendetta*.

(29 May) The Taurian Concordat launches a renewed invasion of the Federated Suns.

(15-30 June) The first wave of Taurian assaults captures Bromhead, Midale, Brockway, Hyalite and Lothair. At Bromhead, Brockway, and Midale, nuclear weapons are used to support the incursions, laying waste to several FedSuns military pickets. Within two weeks of the first strikes, over ten million FedSuns citizens and troops are dead.

(27 June) The Word of Blake launches its long-anticipated assault on Skye.

(21 July) The Word of Blake's Fiftieth Shadow Division hits Bolan again, seizing control over the Quetta City State.

(21-28 July) Taurian forces continue to advance into FedSuns territory, taking Lindsay, Carmichael, Diefenbaker, Lothair and Warren, creating two pincers aimed at the Pleiades Cluster.

(22 July) In an effort to break the weeks-long stalemate for Skye, Devlin Stone personally leads an ad hoc battalion into a flanking action that slams the Word's Third Division command center, capturing Precentor Callen at the peak of the fighting. The thin-stretched and leaderless Blakists quickly withdraw. A victorious Stone vows that the next target for liberation will be Hesperus II.

(15 August) After almost two years in hiding, Lindon Ashley resurfaces on Virtue and rallies the Democracy Now movement once more. The Kaumberg Planetary Guard, already scattered to train a credible defense force for the Kaumberg Archonette, is slow to respond.

(10 September) The Word of Blake forces on Bolan suddenly depart, but not before abducting thousands of Bolan citizens.

(14 September) The Word of Blake forces on New Avalon are recalled.

(27 September) While departing New Avalon, the Word of Blake's Forty-fourth Shadow Division detonates high explosive charges that partially collapse Mount Davion and seal up the entrances to the Fox's Den.

(1-14 November) An allied coalition assembled by Devlin Stone—and including forces from Clan Wolf, Skye, and ComStar—launches its assault on Hesperus II, taking on three defending Word of Blake Divisions.

(11 December) Archon Adam Steiner and Baroness Fyhne of Arcturus are wed in an understated ceremony on Tharkad. Within days of the wedding, it is announced that the Baroness is pregnant with the couple's first child.

(15 December) Clan Ghost Bear forces unexpectedly assault and overpower the Word of Blake defenses at both Luthien and Pesht. Ignoring all hails, the Bears eradicate the Word of Blake troops on both worlds (as well as any Combine forces that attempt to interfere) without once offering *zellbrigen*.

(20 December) Coalition forces finally shatter the last Blakist fortifications around Maria's Elegy on Hesperus II.

(29 December) The Ghost Bear forces on Luthien and Pesht have destroyed all Blakist presence on both worlds at this point, leaving very few survivors to flee or be captured.

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(8 January) Taurian forces launch invasions against Robsart, Horsham, and Brusett. Robsart and Horsham fall quickly, but on Brusett, the newly formed Fourth Taurian Lancers encounter elements of the Hansen's Roughriders. Despite employing nuclear weapons against the planetary capital and primary spaceport, the Fourth fails to destroy the Roughriders, and are destroyed instead by a Roughriders ambush.

(10 January) Princess-Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion and Tancred Sandoval-Davion return to New Avalon, re-establishing central authority on the FedSuns capital with a public display and a tour of the wreckage of Avalon City.

(27 January) The Word of Blake's Fiftieth Shadow Division raids Aur, shattering the Edasich Motors facilities.

(30 January) As suddenly as they arrived, the Ghost Bear forces on Luthien and Pesht depart from both Combine worlds, even as the nearest available DCMS commands scramble to fortify them.

(6 February) The Lyran Alliance formally places the Odessa system under "quarantine" due to extensive plague outbreaks that began nearly a year earlier.

(10 February) Taurian forces invade and capture Mendham. At the same time, AFFS and FedSuns militia forces, backed up by the Hansen's Roughriders, strike at Lothair, Warren, and Hyalite. Though the Taurians hold Lothair, Warren becomes a stalemate. On Hyalite, the Roughriders' use of fuel-air explosives quickly shatters the defending Gordon's Armored Cavalry, and allows the FedSuns to reclaim that world.

(11 February) Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao departs Sian, bound for Canopus.

(14 February) DCMS troops finally begin to arrive on the war ravaged worlds of Luthien and Pesht, finding no sign of Blakist troop presence in the wake of the Ghost Bear withdrawal. Also on this date, the Word of Blake's Twenty-second Division raids Wrentham.

(17 February) Lindon Ashley's Democracy Now movement stages uprisings while its "Democratic People's Army" raids the neighboring worlds of Akfata and Vermezzo. On Akfata, anarchy reigns after the ruling family flees the DPA assault. On Vermezzo, most of the three highest-ranking noble families (and their supporting government staff) are either killed or taken hostage by DN agitators.

(21 February) A FedSuns entourage journeys to the Outworlds Alliance to negotiate a settlement with the Snow Ravens, including the release of captured elements of the Third Crucis Lancers and Snow Raven aid in Devlin Stone's coalition. The Ravens assure the FedSuns that they will not strike again without provocation, but claim the captured Lancers as *isorla* of the "Raven Alliance" and refuse to join Stone's coalition.

(23 February) As a sign of goodwill, Yvonne Steiner-Davion gifts the captured Word of Blake vessel *Dark Light* (now re-christened the FSS *Excalibur*) to Devlin Stone.

(4 March) Pro-Democracy Now agitators bomb the Capital Arcology Complex on Ferihegy, killing over five thousand Ferihegy residents and producing a massive public backlash against the Democracy Now leader and his followers throughout the Kaumberg Archonette.

(17 March) Cybernetically-augmented forces from the Circinus Federation assault and conquer Khon Kaen and Poulsbo. Additional Federation troops attack the Marian Hegemony worlds of Blantleff and Maximilian.

(21 March) During a raid against the Ilesaki Shipping headquarters on Ilesaki, the Word of Blake's infamous Opacus Venatori kill Viscount Ernest Machida and level a wide swath of the Ukonosi City commercial district, including the Ilesaki Shipping headquarters building itself.

(2 April) Ryanne Nellis is elected Director of the Niops Association's ruling government after a hotly contested three-month campaign.

(5 April) Taurian forces attack and seize Wrentham, capitalizing on the damage inflicted by the Word of Blake raid there in February.

(11 April) As public outcry mounts over the increasingly radical actions of Lindon Ashley and his Democracy Now agitators, Kaumberg Archonette forces launch a two-pronged assault on Akfata and Vermezzo.

(13 April) Citing no confidence in the League's central government, the Rim Commonality formally bars all high-ranking Free Worlds representatives and invokes Camlann vs. Free Worlds, essentially breaking away from the Free Worlds League.

THE JIHAD IN REVIEW

(15 April) Hansen's Roughriders attack Amber Grove in Taurian space. Using a combination of nuclear and non-nuclear weapons secured from their victory on Hyalite, the Roughriders obliterate the central military headquarters, spaceport facilities, and the local militia, then spend the next few weeks smashing any target of significant industrial or military value.

(17 April) An unidentified Word of Blake Shadow Division reportedly retakes Gabriel in the Odessa system, backed up by an *Essex*-class destroyer and a *Black Lion*-class battle cruiser.

(25 April) Naomi Centrella-Liao visits Andurien as an envoy of both the Capellan Confederation and the Magistracy of Canopus. During the tense visit, the Magestrix reminds the Anduriens of the shared history of Canopus, Andurien, and House Liao, and pointedly warns Andurien against pursuing "ambitions of the past".

(30 April) As part of an effort to reinforce the fragmenting Periphery front, the AFFS redeploys several Crucis March Militias to areas along the Malagrotta-Filtvelt region.

(1 May) Kaumberg Planetary Guard forces reclaim Akfata, but in the fighting to retake Vermezzo, Democracy Now forces resort to scorched earth tactics and taking hostages to stave off their inevitable defeat. The destruction leaves thousands homeless, dead, or injured. On this same day, Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao departs from Andurien, en route to Canopus with a signed non-aggression pact that covers the Capellan, Canopian, and Andurien states.

(3 May) The Taurian WarShip *Vendetta* unleashes an orbital attack on Hyalite, aimed at destroying the military facilities and planetary HPG compound that were subverted by the Hansen's Roughriders.

(4 May) Prince Titus Cameron-Jones of Regulus marries Michelle Ryan in a modest ceremony in Regulus City.

(12 May) Word of Blake forces raid New Valencia, damaging the GM/Blackwell production lines there, but several of their escaping transports are intercepted and destroyed by AFFS aerospace forces.

(16 May) The Kaumberg Archonette hires the Kirkpatrick's Invaders mercenary command to augment its damaged military. Also on this date, Marshal Photon Marik strikes a deal with the Buena Archonette for a joint mission against the Circinian forces on Poulsbo and Khon Kaen.

(18 May) Lyran and Exiled Wolf WarShips arrive at Odessa to break the Blakist occupation there. The initial battle ends with a standoff.

(22 May) Even as the Blakist forces at Gabriel continue to search and plunder their fallen facility, a Ghost Bear attack force arrives from a pirate point nearby and immediately orders the Lyran and Wolf ships to stand down. After crippling one of the Lyran ships that attempts to intervene, the Ghost Bears engage the Blakists, but are unable to prevent them from escaping or scuttling the Gabriel facilities.

(30 May) The Word of Blake's Twenty-second Militia raids Brusett. The FedSuns mobilizes the WarShip *Kathil* and a small flotilla of supporting vessels to the planet, determined to head off the next Taurian attack.

(4 June) Black Dragon Society elements attempt to raid the FedSuns world of Bryceland for supplies, but are thwarted when the Davion commander orders the underground bunkers' demolition charges triggered.

(6 June) Unidentified raiders strike at the Protectorate worlds of Caph, Epsilon Indi, and New Home simultaneously, damaging Blake Protectorate forces, sparking theories of a rift in the Word of Blake leadership.

(21 June) A joint mission between FWLM and LAAF troops strikes at Poulsbo and Khon Kaen. The defending Circinus forces—including a mix of Word of Blake "irregulars" and Circinian "chain gang" troops—sell themselves dearly against the attackers, indicating that the Word of Blake is raising new Shadow Divisions in Circinus space.

(30 June) A Davion naval force led by the *Kathil* and her escorts meets the Taurian WarShip *Vendetta* at Brusett. Both sides employ nuclear weapons above and within the planetary atmosphere. The *Kathil* is destroyed, but the Taurians are forced to retreat, while several major cities on Brusett suffer horrendous collateral damage.

(18 July) An eight-kilometer wide asteroid (dubbed SH01378-A) slams into the highly populated Narosi continent on Shinonoi, a Combine world near the Blake Protectorate, creating widespread chaos.

(20 July) An insurrection against the Word of Blake on Tikonov finally shatters the Word's control over the planet. The retreating Blakist forces level over half the Tikonovian factory complexes.

(21-28 July) CCAF forces launch attacks against Wei, Menkar, and Pleione. In all three cases, the CCAF employ atomic weapons to crush the Protectorate defenders, leaving tens of thousands dead. Also at this time, the Hansen's Roughriders strike at Perdition, and subvert the Longwood's Bluecoats mercenary command there. Before departing, the Roughriders raze the Perdition factory complexes.

(1 August) *Kanrei* Minamoto joins with Devlin Stone in promising aid to the devastated world of Shinonoi, an act that spurs outcry from many Arkab world leaders.

(3 August) Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao leads a combined Capellan-Canopian force against the surviving elements of the Word of Blake's Thirty-fourth Militia on Canopus, reclaiming the capital world after a brief, but bitter struggle.

(14-28 August) Ghost Bear forces advance through Combine space, ignoring all hails. Their first strikes land on the Blakist-held worlds of Cebalrai, Vega, Eltanin, Alya. A second wave hits Kaus Borealis.

(20 August) During their desperate defense of Cebalrai, the Blakist forces there resort to detonating a large neutron weapon that wipes out the Seventh Bear Regulars and the Sixty-ninth PGC, the Blakist defenders themselves, and thousands of civilians.

(24 August) Mercenary-supported forces from the Kaumberg Archonette assault Virtue in force. The DPA defenders surrender after a two-week siege and Lindon Ashley is taken prisoner.

(1 September) On Baranda, the Remagen CrMM—commanded by Major General Raymond-Roger Marsin—soundly defeats a pirate incursion coming from the Malagrotta region.

(5 September) Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao formally returns to the remains of Crimson in a symbolic reinstatement of her birthright.

(7 September) The first aid ships arrive at Shinonoi to assist at local crisis centers. Also at this time, the Hansen's Roughriders' attack Grossbach.

(14 September) Devlin Stone leads a small diplomatic force to meet with the Ghost Bear troops on Kaus Borealis.

(21 September) The Ghost Bears agree to assist Devlin Stone's growing allied coalition.

(23 September) Unknown raiders (once more rumored to be Shadow Divisions) attack the WoBM and Protectorate Militia forces on Castor, Graham IV, and Pollux.

(6 October) Ghost Bears forces hit Kaus Media, Kaus Australis, and Ascella. At Ascella, Word of Blake Pocket WarShips destroy half of the Bears' inbound DropShips, stalling their advance.

(22 October) After working for the Malagrotta Collective breakaway government for several months under Letters of Marques, the Death's Consorts pirate group undergoes a sudden "change of management", and turns on Malagrotta itself.

(25 October) Gary Tiquahme, the new leader of the Death's Consorts, completes his coup on Malagrotta. On the same date, the Remagen CrMM shatters a suspected Consorts pirate base on the world of June.

THE JIHAD IN REVIEW

(30 October) Alarmed by the Malagrotta coup, the Filtvelt Coalition orders an increase in its militia and mercenary force deployments to the Malagrotta border region.

(2 November) Allied forces under command of Devlin Stone mount an expedition to liberate Galatea from the Eleventh Word of Blake Militia, but though the landings are initially successful, Blakist resistance continues for some time. At roughly the same time, a Ghost Bear delegation journeys to the Outworlds Alliance to negotiate for the Snow Ravens to support Stone's coalition.

(12 November) A terrorist bomb detonates within the council chambers of the Niops Association Council, killing Director Nellis and Chairperson Tran, along with a third of the other representatives and guests gathered. Chairperson Olsen, critically injured, is hospitalized in a coma. Brigadier L. Jamison Fallon of the NAM declares a state of emergency and dissolves the council, effectively declaring martial law.

(14 November) Tiquelme's Consorts and a host of other pirates hired out of the Pirate's Haven begin to expand their control throughout the destabilized Malagrotta region.

(21 November) Hansen's Roughriders move further into the Taurian Concordat, raiding Sterope and plundering the Sterope Defense Industries factories. Unlike previous attacks, the Roughriders leave the local factories intact.

(8 December) Irian's pro-Blakist regime is overthrown after years of bloody—yet largely hidden—resistance. The retreating Blakist forces resort to scorched earth tactics during their final withdrawal, destroying several IrTech facilities with tactical nuclear weapons.

(15 December) Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao departs from Canopus, bound for Sian. The CCAF's Red Lancers remain behind to bolster planetary defenses.

(19 December) Backed by Snow Raven support assets, Clan Ghost Bear resumes its offensive against the Blakists with an assault on Ascella. Coalition forces led by Devlin Stone arrive at approximately the same time. The Bears battle Blakist forces for two weeks over the primary spaceport and industriplexes, with WoBM forces employing scorched earth tactics the entire time, only to discover that Stone's Lament captured the capital city and HPG compound a week before.

(21 December) The Death's Consorts and their pirate allies aggressively establish occupation posts on the Malagrotta worlds closest to the Filtvelt Coalition in anticipation of an imminent confrontation. Meanwhile, the Remagen and Islamabad CrMMs, bolstered by various smaller

conventional forces, have established picket forces on Estuan, Agliana, June, Baranda, and Adelson, effectively surrounding the Malagrotta breakaway state.

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(14 January) In connection with the November bombing of the Association Council, Captain Alicia Carmichael of the NAM is arrested and charged with treason against the Niops Association.

(20 January) Stone's allied coalition finally ousts the last of the Word's Eleventh Division from Galatea.

(21 January) The Kaumberg Archonette puts Lindon Ashley and a handful of his key lieutenants on trial for crimes against the Kaumberg Archonette and the Lyrans Alliance.

(28 January) Reputed elements of the Black Heart Roses mercenary command break Captain Carmichael out of prison on Niops, sparking a battle between NAM forces and the Roses.

(7 February) Andurien fighters at Furud repel a Blakist strike force attempting to attack Magestrix Centrella-Liao's JumpShip.

(11 February) A Taurian raid on Panpour critically damages the Jalastar Mech production lines.

(16 February) Clan Snow Raven dispatches two naval Stars to join Devlin Stone's allied coalition, escorting the Ghost Bear delegation led by Aletha Kabrinski.

(17 February) Devlin Stone and his allies reportedly begin drawing up plans for a concerted coalition invasion of the Blake Protectorate. Also on this date, the Kaumberg Archonette finds Lindon Ashley and his lieutenants guilty of multiple crimes against the state and its people, and sentences all to death.

(20 February) Clan Diamond Shark offers its transport services to Devlin Stone's coalition.

(26 February) Lindon Ashley and five of his top lieutenants in the Democracy Now movement are executed by firing squad on Kaumberg.

(27 February) A rogue force (reportedly of ComStar origins) attacks Campbelton, targeting the Word of Blake's Twentieth Division there. During the battle, the attackers unleash several tactical nuclear weapons against the Blakist forces, incidentally destroying three major population centers where Twentieth Division forces are arrayed in defense, costing close to two million lives in total from the initial attack and the fallout.

Also on this date, the fighting between the NAM and the Black Heart Roses ends, with the battered mercenaries exiled from

the Association. As the Roses depart, a mysterious explosion holes their DropShip, leaving no apparent survivors.

(7 March) The Remagen CrMM attacks and seizes the pirate-held world of Gronholt, shattering two companies' worth of Death's Consorts and allied pirates. The surviving elements of these units retreat to Great Gorge, leaving Gronholt in FedSuns hands.

(10 March) The Mosiro Archipelago signs a defense pact with the Duchy of Andurien. The Third Andurien Rangers take up station on all three worlds of the tiny substate.

(17 March) A detachment from the Forty-ninth Shadow Division assaults Harmony. The attack employs nuclear weapons against a Regular facility of unknown nature.

(25 March) Allied scouts raid Rochelle, Kaus Borealis, Rio, and Halloran V.

(30 March) The Word of Blake's Fiftieth Shadow Division, led by Precentor Manei Domini Apollyon, arrives at Regulus under a flag of truce and issues a warning to Regular prince Titus Cameron-Jones against "military adventurism". Also on this date, Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao successfully returns to Sian under a joint Andurien-Capellan escort.

(1-25 April) Stragglers from Clan Ice Hellion reportedly raid the Periphery edge of the Ghost Bear Dominion, hitting Holmsbu, Constance, and Pinnacle, before Rasalhague KungsArmé forces manage to pin them down on Damian.

(5 April) Hansen's Roughriders return to FedSuns space, landing on the recently reclaimed world of Warren for supplies.

(6 April) A failed raid against Atreus, sponsored by Oriente, costs the lives of the Second Knights of the Inner Sphere. Also on this date, Canopian raiders hit Astrokasz with Capellan material support, targeting suspected WoB bases on planet and engaging elements of the Order of the Faithful. And, on New Syrtis, a violent protest erupts against the authority of March Lord Angela Hasek, allegedly instigated by Blakist agitators who claim that the FedSuns government, and not the Word of Blake, assassinated George Hasek in 3070.

(29 April) After refusing to join Stone's allied coalition, Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao and Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao state that CCAF and MAF commands will not interfere with any allied efforts to reclaim Capellan worlds.

(7 May) Clan Diamond Shark wins a Trial against Ghost Bear forces to establish an enclave on Tukayyid.

THE JIHAD IN REVIEW

- (14 May)** Representatives from Devlin Stone's resistance meet with General Hampton on New Hessen and receive permission to use the world as a staging base against the Protectorate.
- (22 May)** Khan Marthe Pryde is assassinated on Sudeten.
- (13 June)** The Taurian WarShip *Vendetta* arrives in the Warren system, seeking Hansen's Roughriders. The Roughriders withdraw to Keuterville, but this does not prevent the Taurians from bombarding the planetary capital and spaceports.
- (14 June)** DMI and MIO agents arrest and detain close to fifty "anti-government" leaders in connection with the public movement against the FedSuns leadership on New Syrtis.
- (30 June)** Citing "moral conflicts", Baron Cham Kithrong recalls all Calderon Protectorate forces loaned to the Taurian Concordat.
- (1 July)** The allied forces commanded by Devlin Stone launch simultaneous assaults on the Blake Protectorate worlds of Rochelle, Al Na'ir, Van Diemen IV, and Rio.
- (7 July)** Taurian forces pursuing Hansen's Roughriders bombard Keuterville. The Roughriders withdraw to Firgrove.
- (21 July)** The Ghost Bear-Snow Raven task force supporting Stone's allies moves on Dyev, Sabik, Moore, Lambrecht, Kervil, and Ko. Days later, an heavy deep-raid force hits New Earth, spearheaded by Com Guard troops, in an effort to determine how thin the Protectorate's interior defenses are.
- (15 August)** Protectorate forces attack New Hessen, employing tactical nuclear weapons and fuel-air explosives to clear and secure landing zones, but the determined defenders on New Hessen quickly trap the Blakist forces planetside. Meanwhile, FedSuns pocket WarShips and the Fox-class *New Syrtis* intercept the *Vendetta* and her task force at Firgrove. Both WarShips are damaged, but the *Vendetta* manages to escape.
- (6 September)** Commandos from the Principality of Regulus damage the SelaSys shipyards over Loyalty. The partially completed *Venturer*-class light cruiser moored nearby is destroyed.
- (7 September)** Word of Blake raiders—few operating in forces bigger than a Level III—begin striking worlds near the latest allied incursions, including New Kyoto, Algorab, Amity, Bordon, Connaught, Kessel, Alnasi, Ronel, and New Hessen. The Capellan Confederation bears the worst of these strikes, which hit Styk, Tsitsang, Wei, St. Andre, and Hunan. WMD use on all worlds is reported.
- (9 September)** Allied forces assault Angol.
- (10 September)** The Ghost Bear-Snow Raven forces working for Stone's coalition expand their cordon into the Blake Protectorate by launching strikes against Skondia, Lyons, and Pike IV.
- (17 September)** The TCS *Vendetta* and her task force return to Brusett, and begin to besiege the planet.
- (2 October)** The FCS *New Syrtis* arrives at Brusett to break the Taurian siege there. In the ensuing naval battle, a nuclear strike cripples the Davion ship, but not before her pocket WarShip escorts can inflict critical damage to the *Vendetta* and force her to retreat.
- (12 October)** A Taurian task force arrives at New Syrtis and hammers the planet with random orbital strikes and aerospace bombing runs, causing crippling damage to the Syrtian Shipyards as nuclear strikes devastate large swaths of the planet's equatorial regions.
- (20 October)** Resentment over the Trial process and Clan protocols for the integrated Rasalhague-Dominion defense forces reaches a boil when the Second Freeman and First Kavalleri Clusters mutiny against Dominion authority. Meanwhile on New Hessen, the Word of Blake insurgents trapped on-planet fall silent.
- (5 November)** Reacting to news of the Rasalhagian mutiny, the Ghost Bears stall their advance and send back all ethnically Rasalhague commands to deal with the situation.
- (18 November)** Allied forces on Yorri uncover two re-education camps where captured warriors from Clan Smoke Jaguar (presumably taken prisoner by DCMS forces during Operation BULLDOG and the fall of Huntress) apparently liberated themselves.
- (19 November)** During a festive New Independence holiday celebration on Arboris, a dirty bomb set off by Capellan agitators kills the popular WoB Precentor and several cabinet members. The extreme act polarizes the population into pro-Capellan and pro-Blakist camps.
- (21 November)** Blakist insurgents on New Hessen make a daring daytime raid against the New Hessen WorkMechs factory and succeed in smuggling a company's worth of mostly-finished 'Mechs.
- (2 December)** AFFS forces launch a series of independent assaults on Mirach, Caselton and Scharar. Lacking allied support (reportedly because they were launched by rogue elements in the AFFS command), these assaults quickly bog down.
- (4 December)** As Ghost Bear forces depart, the Lyran and Combine forces placed on Lyons to garrison it clash over their realms' joint claims to the world. The violent dispute forces Stone to redeploy additional allied forces to Lyons to end the fighting and expel the offending regiments.
- (15 December)** Word of Blake forces launch a counter-assault on Dyev, supported by several WarShips and Pocket WarShips.
- (16 December)** Chairperson Olsen finally awakens from the coma he had been in since the bombing of the Association Council and begins on the road to recovery as the Niops Association faces harsh political and economic times.
- (20 December)** Sensing imminent defeat, the Taurian forces stranded on Brusett resort to nuclear "scorched earth" tactics to destroy as many FedSuns ground forces as possible. FedSuns Pocket WarShips shell their positions repeatedly, adding to the carnage.
- (22 December)** In the wake of the failed revolt of the Second Freeman and First Kavalleri Clusters, the various disparate Free Rasalhague resistance groups have gone dormant.

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- (5 January)** Belle Lee's forces arrive on Lyons to settle the fighting between the DCMS and LAAF troops there, ultimately replacing both commands with elements of the Com Guard's depleted Sixth Army.
- (10 January)** Operation SCOUR, a four-pronged assault into the Protectorate aimed at Terra, begins on the League front with assaults against Acubens and Wasat.
- (20 January)** Clan Wolf hits Imbros III, quickly clearing the weak militia force. The attack is not part of the SCOUR objectives.
- (21 January)** The Lyran front of SCOUR opens under the command of Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner, liberating Cor Caroli in under a week, and advances on Gacrux.
- (30 January)** Acting independently, the Capellan Confederation liberates Genoa from the Word of Blake, and launches an assault on Arboris.
- (1 February)** On the FedSuns front, an assault against the factory world of Demeter quickly devolves into a brutal quagmire.
- (3 February)** Regular forces move to annex the Free Regular States, sparking outrage from Atrous and Oriente.
- (5 February)** The Combine arm of SCOUR begins with the assault on Telos IV.
- (12 February)** During a recon raid on Towne, allied forces discover over two regiments of Protectorate Militia forces on-planet, a large DropShip facility converting civilian ships into Pocket WarShips, and a limited, but active SDS network.



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(24 February) Coalition forces encounter Capellan troops during the fighting for Algot. At Devlin Stone's behest, the FedSuns-led Coalition group withdraws, leaving the liberation of Algot to House Liao.

(27 February) During the effort to retake Halloran V, a fully operational SDS reportedly destroys the Capellan WarShip *Franco Martell*.

(18 March) During the Ghost Bear-led attack on Asta, the allies rescue General Andrew Redburn—long thought to be dead after the Blakist assault on Tukayyid ten years earlier—from a Word of Blake prison camp. Redburn joins Stone's planning staff and once more works alongside Victor Davion, eventually taking over as Belle Lee's XO.

(3 April) The Word of Blake's 48th Shadow Division arrives on Halloran IV, retaking the world from the Capellans.

(17 April) During the effort to liberate Nashira from the Word of Blake, a miscalculated orbital strike called in by the Draconis front field commander accidentally vaporizes half of the planetary capital of Kyoto City, instead of the nearby Blakist fortifications.

(15 April) The Genoa Protectorate Militia throws off the CCAF attack force.

(1 May) After Manei Domini assassins kill off the other senior officers of the Lyran Group III, Leutnant-General Thomas Hogarth becomes senior officer of the allied attack force.

(20 May) During the allied effort to liberate Hean, a fully operational SDS destroys the FedSuns WarShip *Indefatigable*.

(3 May) While convalescing on Cameron, a pregnant Michelle Cameron-Jones is assassinated by Manei Domini Precentor Naamah—who was posing as a midwife at the time. The grisly murder takes place mere hours before Prince Titus of Regulus arrives to visit, leaving only his firstborn son Lester alive.

(14 May) After an ambush on Styx mauls the First Ivaarsen Chasseurs, the commander of the 19th Arcturan Guards authorizes a tactical nuclear bombardment of the Styx Protectorate Militia base complex, destroying an entire city and collapsing several mines in the area. When confronted, the Lyran commander infamously remarks "they're just Dracs, nobody important."

(17 May) After the terrorist bombing of three DropShips on Quentin and a Manei Domini attack on the task force commanders, Warlord Minamoto orders house-to-house

searches for Blakist insurgents, bringing in special ISF and OsP teams to track down any more hidden Domini.

(21 May) During the allied assault on Tigress several "dirty bombs" explode along a major transportation hub and surrounding cities, resulting in massive casualties and damage to both the Tigress Protectorate Militia and Clan Nova Cat's Delta Galaxy. Though initially thought to be Blakist sabotage, investigations confirm the nuclear devices were deployed by Capellan guerrillas.

(24 May) Regular forces and troops from the Marik Commonwealth engage in a lengthy—yet surprisingly clean—campaign for the world of Vosloorus.

(26 May) The struggle for Quentin is further complicated when a small Word of Blake fleet delivers several more Level IIs to reinforce the Manei Domini contingent already present.

(30 May) In the wake of the liberation of Sabik by allied forces, the planetary citizenry storms the local HPG station, killing most of the staff and critically damaging the transmission equipment before the Combine-led Coalition forces can intervene.

(2 June) Despite the planetary governor's immediate surrender to the incoming allied troops, the Acheron Protectorate Militia digs in around the planet's valuable 'Mech factories, forcing the FedSuns-front forces to root them out, an act that incidentally levels the factory complex.

(10 June) After a fierce struggle, Shiloh falls to allied Coalition forces including elements of Clans Wolf and Jade Falcon. At roughly the same time, the allies on the League front take New Hope without resistance, the local government having already ousted their Blakist overlords.

(30 June) Blakist resistance and the widespread use of biological weapons on Quentin force Warlord Minamoto to institute martial law, increasing friction between the Coalition forces and the local populace.

(14 July) After withdrawing in the face of the Coalition assault on Wing, the Third Free Worlds Guards defect to the Principality of Regulus.

(15 July) Com Guard forces lead the allied assault that seizes the vital industrial world of Kalidasa.

(28 July) After the bulk of the Forty-seventh Shadow Division is finally trapped and destroyed on Quentin, forcing the remainder to retreat, the local populace focuses its rage against the heavy-handed actions of the Coalition, prompting General Lee to reassign Com Guard troops to the planet's garrison.

(30 July) Tensions increase throughout Niops as calls increase for Brigadier Fallon to end the state of emergency. Niops VI places the other two worlds under an embargo in an effort to force the issue. Fallon immediately orders troops in to end the embargo.

(11 August) Word of Blake sends a combination of mercenary and pirate troops to retake Marcus, forcing the allies to withdraw to Dieudonne.

(18 August) The Capellan Confederation retakes Ningpo and Poznan, but not before both the Blakist defenders and the Confederation troops resort to nuclear and chemical attacks to destroy one another.

(19 August) Alleged Marian hegemony forces sack Niops V, shattering the NAM defenders present there. The raid forces Brigadier Fallon to redeploy troops intended to deal with the Association's internal rebellion.

(28 August) After a devastating friendly-fire incident in which Com Guard artillery struck a Ryuken-ni position, killing the commanders of the elite DCMS regiment, the Combine troops attack their Coalition allies.

(31 August) Forces from the Buena Archonette begin attacking several planets in the Free Worlds League, sparking outrage from both the Duchy of Tamarind and Tharkad.

(1 September) Coalition Commander Devlin Stone arrives on Buchlau with his Liberators, and seizes the world without a shot fired.

(10 September) The Regular forces on Vosloorus suddenly and mercilessly shatter the Marik Commonwealth forces.

(14 September) Supplemented by mercenary troops, forces from Niops VI invade Niops VII, intent on deposing the Fallon. The battle becomes a stalemate that slowly ravages the Association capital.

(18 September) Kirc Cameron-Jones dies. An autopsy reveals poison, believed to be the work of Blakist agents.

(22 September) Due to faulty intelligence, the Coalition battle for Chara becomes a bloodbath, savaging the Exiled Wolf Clan forces tasked with liberating the Protectorate world. The Wolves' defeat includes the loss of three allied WarShips to the system's SDS network.

On Regulus, Prince Titus Cameron-Jones once again renews his claim for the Captain-Generalcy, while Regular forces simultaneously attack the Marik Commonwealth planets of Fortuna, Newcastle, and Norfolk with nuclear weapons.

THE JIHAD IN REVIEW

(30 September) At Nanking, a FedSuns-led Coalition force arrives to liberate the planet at the same time as the CCAF. Unable to coordinate, both commands proceed to fight the Blakist defenders, then turn on each other after the Word falls. When the mauled Confederation troops resort to the use of tactical WMDs, the allied units withdraw.

(8 October) A massive Coalition force, comprised of Draconis Combine and Ghost Bear forces, begins its attack on Dieron.

(16 October) General Belle Lee leads a second allied assault on Chara, overcoming even the enemy's willingness to resort to WMDs against the Coalition. Weakened by the Exiled Wolves' previous assault and damaged supply lines, the Word of Blake forces surrender.

(31 October) Genoa falls to the allied Coalition. Its surviving defenders retreat to Terra.

(3 November) On Qandahar, a major Black Dragon cell takes over a large oil field and refinery complex, claiming to have overcome ISF operatives in the process. The renegade movement calls for other cells to likewise rise up against the "corrupt regime".

(11 November) Marian Hegemony legions attack the Free Worlds League planets of Kendall, Lahti, Landfall and San Nicholas.

(20 November) General Belle Lee's forces liberate Hall without a shot fired.

(21 November) Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik leads the Coalition forces that liberate Outreach, finding the one-time mercenary capital a scorched, ravaged world.

(4 December) Desperate to repel the invading Marian forces, the FWLM on Kendall resorts to tactical nuclear strikes, destroying most of the Hegemony's II Legio and forcing the Marians into retreat—but killing thousands in the process. The invaders fall back to Landfall.

(8 December) Northwind is liberated by Coalition forces, who find the famous Northwind Highlanders mercenary command completely intact (save for the complete loss of their aerospace and transport assets, HPG uplink, and satellite communications net), and unguarded by Blakist forces. The Northwind population, evidently victim of an elaborate deception played out over the last ten years, claim that they believed the Word was maintaining an impenetrable blockade around their world.

(13 December) On Enkoping, Heather Fyhne-Steiner (wife of Archon Adam Steiner) is attacked by a mob protesting the Lyran support for Stone. When guards open fire to disburse the crowd, creating a stampede, 29 civilians are killed and nearly a hundred wounded.

(19 December) As the Qandahar standoff continues with additional refineries and mining sites becoming Black Dragon holdouts, the Slaithwaite planetary government openly declares for the Society, prompting large cell networks on Kamarod, Nowhere, Korramabad, Pusht-i-rud and Ad Duwayd to follow suit.

On Korramabad, the Society cell calls for the deportation of the small Azami population on-planet.

(21 December) Ignoring local claims that it has thrown off Blakist control, the Confederation assaults the world of Zion, and faces a fierce defense that includes a partially operational SDS network.

(25 December) The Zaniah government surrenders peacefully to the allied Coalition.

(31 December) Despite a covert operation decapitating the Black Dragon leaders on Korramabad, the Society puts over 450,000 captive Azami citizens to death.

3078

(January) A new wave of Coalition attacks closes the noose around Terra even tighter from all sides.

On the Lyran front, Wyatt, Milton, and Phecda are taken, though the fight for Phecda critically wounds Duke Robert Kelswa-Steiner, forcing him to cede command of the front to Gregory Kelswa-Steiner.

On the FedSuns front, Marshal Kathryn Sandoval-Ito is killed during the invasion of Acamar, and succeeded by Marshal Jon Davion.

On the League front, Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik hits Asuncion, Chertan, Dubhe, Elgin, and Hsien. On Hsien, a three-way war erupts when Confederation troops arrive soon after and attack both Coalition and Word of Blake forces.

On the Draconis front, the combined DCMS-Ghost Bear commands bring in the newly liberated Northwind Highlanders for mop-up operations to secure Dieron.

(2 January) Upon hearing of the massacre on Korramabad, Coordinator Hohiro Kurita immediately dispatches the Second An Ting Legion to put down the rebellion.

(15 January) Duchess Therese Brett-Marik demands that Archon Adam Steiner intervene in the ongoing hostilities between Buena Archonette and the worlds near the Duchy of Tamarind. The crisis is now being cited as a key reason that Tamarind forces have not contributed to the Coalition.

(27 January) The Azami Brotherhood receives the news of the slaughter on Korramabad and dispatches the Arkab Legions there.

(February) A massive flu pandemic of unknown origin sweeps Sabik, killing almost 30,000 people before finally abating months later. With no functioning HPG, word of the crisis is slow in reaching nearby worlds.

(4 February) On Fomalhaut, the Combine front receives reinforcements to overcome heavy Word of Blake resistance that continues to hold the world.

(8 February) On the Lyran front, the Coalition attacks New Earth with roughly four Galaxies of mixed Clan troops, but encounters heavy resistance.

(9-17 February) Devlin Stone's attack force seizes Terra Firma after a week of fighting, but Blakist booby traps leave most of the capital area in ruins.

(19-27 February) Coalition forces liberate Epsilon Indi, but extensive damage poisons the water supply for several major cities.

(20 February) A Free Worlds League force is dispatched from Romita to rescue delegates stranded in the Niops Association. Neither the extraction force nor the delegates ever return.

(22 February) On the Federated Suns front, Epsilon Eridani falls to the Coalition after a fierce, week-long battle.

(March) The Coalition further closes its noose around the core Protectorate worlds.

On the FedSuns front, the allies invade Bryant, braving a working SDS network that destroys the Nova Cat WarShips *Spirit Vision* and *Severen Leroux*.

On the League front, the allies capture Graham IV and—with unexpected aid from a popular revolt—Pollux.

On the Combine front, Altair falls with minimal resistance.

On New Home, the Forty-third Shadow Division attempts to tie up the Coalition's command group, delaying the allied victory with deadly cat-and-mouse games.

(28 March) After a month under martial law following a series of assassinations on Korramabad, DCMS forces manage to restore order and arrest the remaining Black Dragon Society leadership on-planet.

(30 March – 15 April) The First Arkab Legion arrives at Korramabad to find the Black Dragon crisis resolved. Together with the Tenth Pesht and Second An Ting, they proceed to Slaithwaite, and topple the Society revolt there. Nearly three hundred Black Dragon leaders and sympathizers are publicly executed.

(1-8 April) On Liberty, allied liberation forces clash with elements of the CCAF, with neither side willing to leave Liberty to the other force. To avoid further bloodshed, the Coalition sends a negotiator.

THE JIHAD IN REVIEW

(9 April) A covert operation on Qandahar eliminates key leaders of the Prefecture's Black Dragon Society and restores the world to Combine control.

(12-23 April) After weeks of stalemate fighting on New Home, the Manei Domini receive reinforcements from two more Shadow Divisions delivered in a perilous near-planet jump. In the brutal fighting that follows, the allied forces are heavily savaged, losing two WarShips and over three regiments of troops in an effort to eradicate three Shadow Divisions.

(7 April) Fomalhaut surrenders to Coalition forces.

(1 May) The Principality of Regulus attacks Clipperton and Molokai. Local military commands cautiously welcome them as liberators.

(2 May) The Capellan Confederation attempts to retake Pleione, but the initial invasion by Warrior House Ma-Tsu Kai is virtually destroyed by Pocket WarShips.

(20 May – 5 June) After shattering the Word of Blake defenders on Rigil Kentarus, the Coalition forces—comprised mainly of Wolf, Jade Falcon and Ghost Bear warriors—divide the spoils among themselves via Clan Trials, over the fierce objections of the non-Clan allies present.

(28 May – 10 June) The CCAF launches a second attempt to take Pleione again, this time using WarShip support and liberal orbit-to-surface fire. The fighting is fierce, and does not end even after the capital falls and Capellan troops publicly execute the pro-Word leadership.

(June) While Coalition forces still recover on New Home, Devlin Stone leaves with a small assault force including a large contingent of Com Guard troops. When they return from the classified mission, the task force has suffered significant casualties.

(20 July) Coalition recon teams begin scouting the Terra system.

(15 August) The invasion of the Terra system begins as Coalition ships jump in near the Titan yards. The Word of Blake throws up a furious space defense against a fleet comprised almost entirely of Clan ships.

(17 August) Devlin Stone's main fleet arrives at a pirate point near Terran orbit. In the midst of a fierce orbital battle, Coalition troops drop toward sites across the globe. Devlin Stone's attack forces land in the American continents and Europe, while Belle Lee's groups target the Mediterranean area, North Africa, and Asia. Roughly 47 allied regiments—many weakened after months of heavy fighting—face off against 23 regiments' worth of defending forces, plus massive static defenses.

(18 August) Coalition forces under the command of Marcel Webb strike at the Word of Blake support bases on Luna.

(19 August) Stone's forces establish beachheads outside of Dallas/Fort Worth and in the Yucca Flats, but the assault on Hilton Head fails. Landings also occur near and around Rio de Janeiro, Sandhurst, Geneva, Singapore, Tokyo, Moscow, Cairo, Athens, and Sydney.

(25-30 August) After falling back from Hilton Head, Stone's forces move to regroup near Dallas, but intercept Blakist forces outside Little Rock. Heavy damage forces the allies to camp at Little Rock after the enemy retreats.

(28 August) Elite Word of Blake teams destroy the Athens spaceport, igniting a conflagration that consumes the historic city.

(1 September) ROM forces unleash chemical weapons to thwart the allied attack on Cairo, killing hundreds of thousands in the surrounding area.

(2-17 September) The Word of Blake loses Sandhurst, then England, before smashing allied forces at Amsterdam to weaken the Coalition siege at Geneva.

(3 September) During the brutal street-to-street fighting in Cairo, Word of Blake Precentor ROM Alexander Kernoff is injured and evacuated in the middle of the night to a facility in Novomoskovsk for treatment.

(3-16 September) After a commando effort to seize the Burraborang fortress in Australia fails, General Lee is forced to launch a direct assault against the entrenched defenders. Though the fortress finally falls on 10 September, pockets of resistance and enemy sabotage force the Coalition to spend five more days securing the site.

(7 September) As Stone's command rallies on North America's Eastern Seaboard for second push at Hilton Head, a cluster of cobalt-laced nuclear missiles slams into the heart of the Coalition's supply bastions in Dallas and Fort Worth, with collateral damage stretching across an excess of 200 kilometers.

(7-28 September) Hoping to capitalize on the nuclear strike, Word of Blake Precentor Martial Cameron St. Jamais personally leads the remaining Blakist forces in an assault on Stone's forces outside Little Rock, but a strong defense throws the Blakists back. One group of Word forces heads southeast, towards Hilton Head, while another breaks west toward a major firebase in Albuquerque; the third and largest moves towards Kansas City.

(8 September) Coalition special forces finally shut down the key SDS command center in Rio, disabling the remainder of the planetary orbital defense network.

(20 September – 28 October) General Lee's advance through the tunnel and mountain approaches into Sydney—and the Sekkaris fortress complex nearby—is gradual, due to heavy Word of Blake aerospace support. Likewise, Minamoto's advance on Cairo grinds down to a series of sporadic skirmishes.

(30 September) Word of Blake forces outside of Bratislava surrender after a horrific night battle with Coalition troops.

(2 October) At Budapest, Word of Blake and TerraSec forces manage to throw back superior Coalition numbers. At the same time, a Moscow raid by additional TerraSec security troops manages to penetrate the ancient city, but is annihilated by the allied forces holding the area.

(3 October) Allied forces manage to capture the Krupp Armaments facilities outside Budapest, forcing the Word to immediately surrounding the area.

(5-14 October) Coalition pursuit forces engage Word of Blake elements outside Dodge City. The shattered Blakists retreat into the Rocky Mountains.

(10 October) After Coalition forces break through to their allies within the Krupp Armaments site, a counterattack with heavy artillery support forces the Word of Blake into a panicked retreat.

(12 October) Kernoff returns to Cairo.

(17 October) The Word counterattacks the Singapore Castle Brian, but cannot hold it due to extreme casualties and engage the base's self-destruct protocols, annihilating Singapore and themselves in the process.

(1 November) At the orders of Precentor ROM Kernoff, the Word of Blake initiates a system-wide purge of all data stores in the Terran system and—through the hyperpulse grid—beyond.

(2-30 November) In the Cairo area, the Coalition receives reinforcements and manage to encircle the Blakist holdouts led by Kernoff.

(5-27 November) Devlin Stone's pursuit of St. Jamais' forces tracks down and destroys less than a quarter of the Blakists before they find safe haven in the shadow of Devils Tower on North America.

(10-27 November) General Lee assaults the Sekkaris fortress near Sydney with heavy artillery support, but the Word of Blake holds despite horrific damage. The Coalition soon learns the bulk of Sekkaris is actually located in a bunker complex beneath Botany Bay.

(14 November – 13 December) With Word of Blake largely contained at Cairo, Devils Tower, Hilton Head, and Sydney, the Coalition sends forces to shut down Word of Blake command centers on Mars. Clan warriors comprise the majority of this allied effort, having been forbidden to land on Terra itself.

THE JIHAD IN REVIEW

(26 November) Stragglers from St. Jamais' exodus, last seen headed toward Albuquerque, emerge to hit Stone's pursuing ground forces near Denver. During the battle, the Blakists detonate two nuclear devices.

(1 December) The Duchy of Tamarind officially declares its independence from the Free Worlds League.

(7 December) General Lee launches a two-pronged attack against the Sekkaris fortress, breaking through in three locations. While claiming much of the surface stations and bays in the initial week, the fighting bogs down around the two main egresses to the underwater facility.

(12 December) Some Word of Blake elements evacuate the Devils Tower complex. Cameron St. Jamais and a collection of determined Blakist defenders remain behind to face the Coalition assault.

(13 December) Desperate to break the stalemate for Sekkaris, Lee orders the destruction of both water tunnels under Botany Bay, flooding the facility and wiping out the majority of its remaining defenders.

On Mars, organized resistance against the Coalition ends with the destruction of the Pullo aerodrome.

(16 December) Kernoff attempts to break the western blockade at Cairo, pushing Coalition forces out of Giza and managing to re-take the small spaceport there, but a counterattack quickly forces the Word of Blake back.

(17 December) Word of Blake forces at Devils Tower employ tactical nuclear weapons in a desperate bid to stave off defeat.

(18 December) Cobalt-laced nuclear MIRVs launch from silos near Hilton Head and satellites in Terran orbit. At nearly the same time, a fifty-megaton sub-surface nuclear blast destroys the Word of Blake's Hilton Head complex. The MIRVs strike several sectors of the Eastern Seaboard Megalopolis, as well as the cities of Austin, San Antonio, Mexico City, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake City. The blasts and fallout kill over 100 million people, and almost completely shut down global communications for the next 48 hours.

(19 December) Coalition forces defeat the Word of Blake at Devils Tower. In direct combat with Stone, St. Jamais is killed. Spoilsport nuclear charges are set off in the Devils Tower interior complex. At Sydney, another surge of Blakist resistance emerges, using nuclear artillery to push the Coalition back.

(21 December) A large Regular JumpShip fleet—loaded with assault DropShips, fighter carriers, and troop ships—jumps to a pirate point in the Gibson system.

Throughout the crumbling Blake Protectorate, messages from a

(23 December) Precentor Alsace, now the ranking Blakist on Terra, calls for a worldwide cease-fire. Pockets of fighting continue regardless.

(25 December) The Reguan task force at Gibson begins a global bombardment of the planetary surface, targeting all major population and industrial sites. The assault eradicates the leadership of the Word of Blake Manei Domini, but the Master reportedly escapes to Paradise.

(26 December) Precentor Alsace formally surrenders Terra to the allies in Geneva.

(31 December) On Alshain, a massive bomb kills several hundred Ghost Bear and Rasalhagian civilians and several members of the Unity Council, including former Rasalhague Prince Christian Månsdottir. The renegade Motstånd terrorist group claims responsibility.

3079

(1 January) Warlord Minamoto orders a combined orbital and nuclear attack on the ROM headquarters in Cairo. Although collateral damage causes over a million casualties, the last major Word of Blake base on Terra collapses. Word of Blake's Alexander Kernoff is captured, but commits suicide before he can be removed from his ruined fortress.

(2 January) Ghost Bear paramilitary police kill Albert Gronvold-Minami, one of the top leaders of the outlawed Motstånd movement, on Stanzach.

(5 January) The Coalition captures the last of the Blakist defenders at Towra Point, effectively ending the battle for Terra.

(5 January – 23 February) The Regulans launch a conventional assault on Gibson to ensure the destruction of any Manei Domini survivors. Amid the hellish, post-apocalyptic wastes, several surviving Domini forces are rooted out and destroyed.

(9 January) Cilla Amdahl, the remaining leader of the Motstånd, narrowly escapes capture on Tinaca.

(28 January) The last assembly of the Free Worlds League Parliament is held on Atrous. Of the 83 votes tallied, 75 choose to disband the confederation of member states, officially dissolving the realm.

(February – March) The allied Coalition begins rounding up all of the surviving high-level Blakist commanders and their confederates to stand trial for war crimes on Terra.

(28 February) Andrew Redburn dies from complications stemming from an engineered respiratory infection bred by Blakist scientists.

(12 March) Word of Blake naval forces, using the FWLN *Acari* as a Trojan Horse, raid the Oriente system to cripple the WarShip *Santorini*.

(13–20 March) With Oriente's navy still reeling, Word of Blake forces raid Les Halles, Dayr Khuna and Jouques. The attack on Jouques includes nuclear strikes that wipe out three population centers.

(25 May) On New Samarkand, Coordinator Hohiro Kurita reveals the existence of his wife, Lady Fiona Kurita, and sons, Shinjiro and Vincent Kurita (ages 22 and 17, respectively), citing security reasons and "family tradition" for their concealed identities.

(June) Devlin Stone successfully negotiates to retain the services of the various planetary militia forces loaned to the Coalition, to remain on hand in defending the liberated Protectorate worlds.

(1 July) Coordinator Hohiro Kurita recalls all DCMS forces from the former Blake Protectorate, but leaves all planetary militias in place.

(August – September) Lyran forces seize the worlds of Galisteo, Epsilon, Nockatunga, Bella I, Colfax, Cascade and Megrez from the now-defunct Free Worlds League. In an effort to prevent the outbreak of total war, Archon Adam Steiner issues a proclamation declaring any further "unauthorized adventurism" an act of treason.

(22 September) Pro-Capellan agents detonate a series of car bombs at a pro-Stone rally on Tikonov, killing nearly 200 people. The violence—possibly aimed at Melissa Allard-Liao, a pro-Stone activist and daughter of Kai Allard-Liao—shifts public sympathies on Tikonov sharply against the Confederation.

(12–19 October) New Avalon hosts the Camelot Summit on New Avalon, attended by prominent political and military leaders from throughout the FedSuns. On the agenda: creation of Periphery March; determining the post-war direction for FedSuns; resolving the Taurian Conflict; continued restructuring of decimated AFFS. Summit opens with official dedication of the rebuilt Castle Davion and New Avalon City. Several balls and receptions provide public spectacle to bolster confidence in the government.

(16 October) Princess Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion announces the formation of the Periphery March. General Raymond-Roger Marsin is named Duke and Lord of this new March.



THE JIHAD IN REVIEW

3080

- (1 January)** The “false” Thomas Marik legally assumes the name of Thomas Halas.
- (12 February)** Coalition forces capture the *Lowyfur*, a massive floating platform and last bastion of Word of Blake resistance on Terra.
- (26 February)** A Regular task force bombards Paradise, using cargo DropShips and fighter support to deliver cobalt-laced strategic nuclear devices to the planet surface in an effort to obliterate the Blakist cells still operating on-planet.
- (15 March)** Envoys from the Calderon Protectorate arrive on both Taurus and New Avalon, appealing for an end of the Taurian-FedSuns conflict.
- (28 March)** Duke Christopher Halas dies of natural causes. His daughter Sherryl Halas becomes Duchess of Oriente, and Thomas Halas becomes Duke of Oriente.
- (1 April)** Clan Wolf re-establishes its capital on Tamar.
- (5 May)** Field Marshal Nathaniel Hasek initiates Operation MATADOR to reclaim FedSuns worlds lost to the Taurian Concordat.
- (11 May)** Barbara Sennet steps down as Khan of Clan Diamond Shark. Star Admiral Naomi Nagasawa becomes the new Khan.
- (14 June)** Nathaniel Hasek is killed in a Taurian ambush on Ridgebrook.
- (19 June)** The Taurian WarShip *Vendetta* attempts to raid the Clyde Shipyards at Firgrove.
- (25 June)** Baron Cham Kithrong steps down as Regent-Protector of the Calderon Protectorate, clearing the way to Erik Martens-Calderon’s ascension to Protector.
- (26 June)** Raiders in Word of Blake Thirtieth Division colors hit worlds along the Peripheral border of the Lyran Alliance and Free Worlds League.
- (2 July)** The Taurian-FedSuns War ends with a treaty brokered by the Calderon Protectorate. The treaty effectively cedes the Pleiades to the Concordat, and surrenders the TCS *Vendetta* to a joint-realm crew based in the Calderon Protectorate.
- (20 July)** A Word of Blake flotilla of Pocket WarShips and nuclear-armed fighters attacks Tukayyid, but is repulsed by Diamond Shark WarShips.
- (1 September)** As punishment for wartime acts of industrial espionage between rival companies, the Capellan government nationalizes the Tao Mechworks factories on Styk.
- (10 October)** The first of the Bloody Tricentennial attacks begin. By the time they end—roughly two months later—a range

of attacks targeting civilian, industrial, and military sites across the Inner Sphere affects over 50 worlds.

- (12 October)** Fourteen high-speed meteors delivered via manmade means strike Lopez, shattering dozens of major population centers and rendering the world inhospitable within days. The attack is attributed to a Word of Blake vessel likely responsible for similar asteroid attacks throughout the Jihad.
 - (30 November)** The Word of Blake’s Forty-ninth Shadow Division assaults Andiron in the Circinus Federation for unknown reasons, destroying the capital city, spaceport, and planetary water purifiers with orbital fire.
 - (December)** On Terra, leaders from virtually all of the major Inner Sphere powers, Periphery states, and the Inner Sphere-resident Clans, gather with the heads of the allied Coalition in a series of meetings collectively dubbed the Geneva Conferences. The discussions—notably boycotted by the Capellan Confederation and Magistracy of Canopus—center on the formation of a new buffer state from the remains of the Blake Protectorate.
 - (13 December)** The Capellan Confederation, Duchy of Andurien, and Magistracy of Canopus sign a trade pact aimed at normalizing relations between the three realms.
 - (20 December)** The assembled leaders on Terra depart for their homelands after reaching a basic agreement ceding the remnants of the Blake Protectorate to a new realm (the Republic of the Sphere). The formal incorporation of the new state will take place after months of additional arrangements are made between the neighboring realms.
- 3081
- (15 January)** Thomas and Sherryl Halas announce the engagement of their daughter Jessica to Philip Hughes, scion of the Irian Hughes family.
 - (12 January)** Princess-Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion announces the ceding of several additional FedSuns worlds to the Republic of the Sphere for an additional buffer zone. Similar declarations in the coming days acknowledge similar deals to incorporate former Lyran, Combine, and Free Worlds League planets into the Republic.
 - (25 January)** Clan Diamond Shark launches a reorganization effort at its various mercantile outposts.

(13 February) The Regular task force hunting down the Word of Blake Master and his Manei Domini escorts bombards Poulso, exacting the same “justice” already dealt to Gibson, Paradise, and Diamantina.

(14 February) In the Lyran Alliance, the Arcturus and Buena Archonettes are formally dissolved when their respective leadership cedes military authority back to the LAAF. Buena is formally recognized as capital of the former Alarion Province.

(7-15 March) Against the backdrop of weeklong festivities, representatives of all Great Houses save the Capellan Confederation sign the Republic Formation Treaty, formalizing the creation and recognition of the Republic of the Sphere. Devlin Stone is named the first Exarch of the Republic.

(16 March) Archonette Duchess Tammy LaRue of Inarcs resists political pressure from Tharkad to yield military forces to Alliance command, creating a tense standoff between the Archon and the remaining Archonettes.

(31 March) The Forty-ninth Shadow Division intercepts and destroys the Nightwatchmen over Andiron.

(2 April) The Regular fleet arrives at Circinus and begins a systematic global nuclear bombardment, erasing every city and military installation off the entire planet. The cobalt-laced strategic weapons and a mix of high-yield ground bursts ensure maximum casualties and sterilization of the Circinian surface. The Word of Blake Master and President Calvin MacIntyre are reportedly killed in the days-long siege.

With the last of the upper Word of Blake leadership destroyed on Circinus and the collapse of the Circinus Federation, the Jihad formally ends.

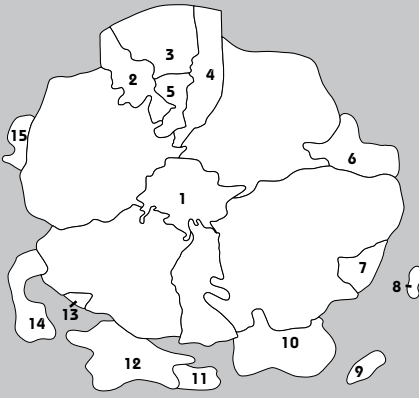
(6 April) Despite calls from the Kaumberg House of Lords to disband, Archonette Baron Erich Sheridan refuses to relinquish his title.

(19 April) In accordance with the treaty ending the FedSuns-Taurian conflict, the TCS *Vendetta* is formally ceded to the neutral Calderon Protectorate under a multinational crew.

(25 April) Exarch Devlin Stone announces the creation of Capellan Transitional Government to aid the integration of worlds in the former Chaos March/Capellan-contested region.



INNER SPHERE - March 3081



Inner Sphere Powers

- 1) Republic of the Sphere
- 2) Clan Jade Falcon
- 3) Clan Hell's Horses
- 4) Ghost Bear Dominion
- 5) Clan Wolf
- 6) Outworlds Alliance
- 7) Filtvelt Coalition
- 8) Tortuga Dominions
- 9) Calderon Protectorate
- 10) Taurian Concordat
- 11) Fronc Reaches
- 12) Magistracy of Canopus
- 13) Rim Commonality
- 14) Marian Hegemony
- 15) Rim Collection

Republic of the Sphere

- 1) Prefecture I
- 2) Prefecture II
- 3) Prefecture III
- 4) Prefecture IV
- 5) Prefecture V
- 6) Prefecture VI
- 7) Prefecture VII
- 8) Prefecture VIII
- 9) Prefecture IX
- 10) Prefecture X



Draconis Combine

Pesht Military District

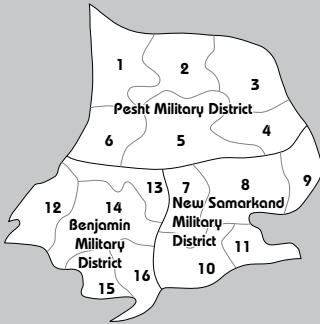
- 1) Albiero Prefecture
- 2) Bjarred Prefecture
- 3) Qandahar Prefecture
- 4) Ningxia Prefecture
- 5) Kagoshima Prefecture
- 6) Irece Prefecture

New Samarkand Military District

- 7) Oshika Prefecture
- 8) New Samarkand Prefecture
- 9) Tabayama Prefecture
- 10) Matsuida Prefecture
- 11) Kaznejov Prefecture

Benjamin Military District

- 12) Buckminster Prefecture
- 13) Xinyang Prefecture
- 14) Benjamin Prefecture
- 15) Proserpina Prefecture
- 16) Iruzun Prefecture



Federated Suns

Draconis March

- 1) Robinson Operational Area
- 2) Tancredi IV Operational Area

Capellan March

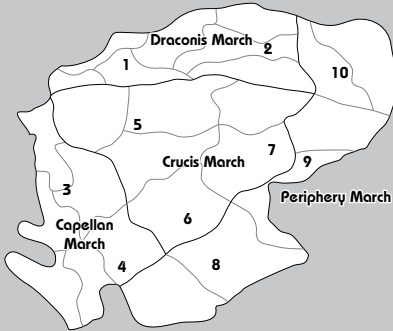
- 3) Kathil Operational Area
- 4) Taygetta Operational Area

Crucis March

- 5) Markesan Operational Area
- 6) Chirikof Operational Area
- 7) Minette Operational Area

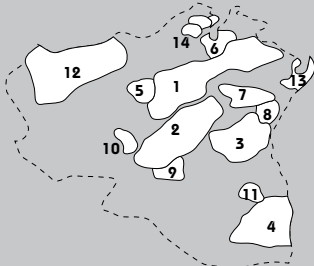
Periphery March

- 8) June Operational Area
- 9) Anjin Muerto Operational Area
- 10) Woodbine Operational Area



Former Free Worlds League

- 1) Marik Commonwealth
- 2) Principality of Regulus
- 3) Duchy of Oriente
- 4) Duchy of Andurien
- 5) Duchy of Graham-Marik
- 6) Stewart Commonality
- 7) The Protectorate
- 8) Duchy of Orloff
- 9) Regulan Free States
- 10) Principality of Gibson
- 11) Mosiro Archipelago
- 12) Duchy of Tamarind-Abbey
- 13) Ohrenson-Zion Province
- 14) Silver Hawk Coalition



Lyrn Alliance

Provinces

- 1) Donegal Province
- 2) Arc-Royal Theater
- 3) Coventry Province
- 4) Melissa Theater
- 5) Buena Province
- 6) Timbuktu Theater
- 7) Bolan Province
- 8) Dixie Theater

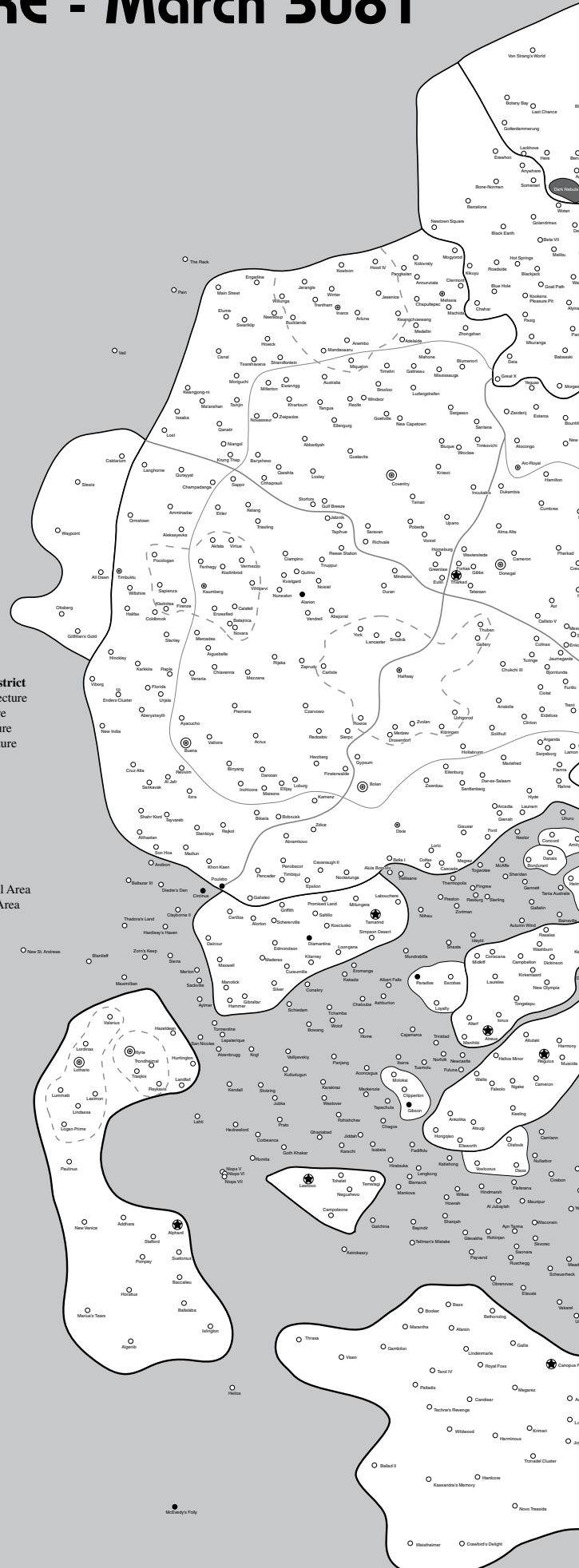
Archonettes

- 9) Inarcs Archonette
- 10) Kaumberg Archonette
- 11) Halfway Archonette



Capellan Confederation

- 1) Liao Commonality
- 2) Capellan Commonality
- 3) Sian Commonality
- 4) St Ives Commonality
- 5) Victoria Commonality





CHAOS UNDAUNTED

The campaign tracks presented here follow the same rules as originally presented in *Dawn of the Jihad (DotJ)/Blake Ascending (BA)*. A free electronic version of this—*Chaos Campaign*—is also available on www.battlecorps.com. Players and gamemasters will also find these rulebooks handy, depending on the type of campaign run: *Total Warfare (TW)*, *TechManual (TM)*, *Tactical Operations (TO)*, *Strategic Operations (SO)*, *A Time of War (AToW)*, and *MercSupplemental: Updates (MSU)*. References made to aerospace units in the Tracks will refer to those aerospace unit types featured in *Total Warfare* (such as fighters and DropShips) or those covered in *Strategic Operations* (such as JumpShips, space stations, and WarShips). Additional cited sources may include *Jihad Hot Spots: 3072 (JHS72)*, *Jihad Hot Spots: 3076 (JHS76)*, *Jihad Hot Spots: Terra*

(JHT), *Starterbook: Wolf & Blake (SBWB)*, *Technical Readout: 3075 (TR3075)*, and *Technical Readout: Vehicle Annex (TRVA)*.

If a track does not specify certain parameters, the gamemaster decides what is fair for his or her particular player group. The overall intent of this campaign is to present gamemasters with a framework that allows them to bring their players through the massive conflagration known as the Word of Blake Jihad. Gamemasters begin this arc of the Chaos campaign with *Blowtorch*. Player groups begin this campaign arc with 500 Warchest points or whatever they had remaining at the end of the *Chaos Eternal* campaign from *Jihad Hot Spots: Terra (JHT)*.

The *Salvage* special rule (see p. 136, *DOTJ/BA*) is considered active for all Tracks unless otherwise indicated.

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: BLOWTORCH

BLOWTORCH

First the Kanrei lights up the Blakist fortress then smears them all over the sand. But it's up to us "money grubber soldiers" to pick up the pieces in a radioactive hot zone.

Some "coalition" this is.

—Unknown mercenary commander outside Cairo, Terra; 3079

SITUATION

Outskirts of Cairo, Terra

Blake Protectorate

1 January 3079

Under pressure to end hostilities on Terra, *Kanrei* Minamoto ordered orbital bombardment of besieged Blakist forces at the Castle Brian in Cairo. Despite months of fighting, the coordinates were fouled during the fire mission and a million died as orbital fire rained down on the Suez and surrounding areas. Now your employer needs someone to go in, salvage what remains, and mop up any dissidents.

Oh, and don't mind the radioactive mess.

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: BLOWTORCH

GAME SETUP

Set up a mix of Badlands and Flatlands Terrain mapsheets. Treat all Wooded areas as Rough terrain and all terrain higher than level 3 are capped at a height of level 3. Convert all water hexes to Clear terrain at sublevel 1.

The players must decide if they will be the Attacker or Defender for this Track after map setup but before building their force. The Defender chooses their home edge.

Attacker

If the players are the Attacker: This force consists of up to 50 percent of the player's total force and is augmented by

elements of the Desert Wind mercenaries, an ad-hoc collection of vehicle crews loosely organized after the death of their commander in previous fighting. For every four 'Mechs fielded by the player, the Wind may field two vehicle units. The total force of the mercenaries may not exceed 50 percent of the player's deployed force and are of Regular skill level.

If the players are the Defender: The Attacker consists of the demoralized Desert Wind mercenary cadre and consists up to 75 percent of the player's deployed force. This force may only contain vehicle units and are of Regular skill level.

The Attacker enters on the edge opposite the Defender's home edge; this is considered the Attacker's home edge.



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: BLOWTORCH

Defender

If the players are the Attacker: The Defender consists of a broken Word of Blake Protectorate Militia squad, is 100 percent of the player's deployed force, and are of Regular skill level. They enter the battlefield from their home edge.

If the players are the Defender: This force consists of up to 50 percent of the player's total force and is augmented by elements of a battered Word of Blake Protectorate Militia Level II, consisting of a mix of vehicles and light BattleMechs of Regular skill level. The Blakist force cannot exceed 50 percent of the player's deployed force and is restricted to a maximum of six units.

The Defender begins the track with all units deployed no farther than two hexes from their home edge.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 300 WP

OPTIONAL BONUSES:

+800 Hot! Hot! Hot! Use a combination of Blowing Sand (see TO, p. 62), Extreme Temperatures (at 65 C) (see p. 62, TO), and Tainted Atmosphere (Radiological/Poisonous) (see TO, p. 56) rules for the battlefield.

+250 The Next Day. Apply this bonus if the player's force successfully completed one Objective in *End of Night* (see p. 128, JHST). (At least one Objective in this Track must be completed.)

+250 The Next Evening. Apply this bonus if the player's force successfully completed one Objective in *End of Day* (see p. 127, JHST). (At least one Objective in this Track must be completed.)

OBJECTIVES

Shatter the Opposition. Destroy/Cripple 80 percent of the opponent's force. **(Reward: +500 WP)**

(Hot) Line in the Sand. At least 50 percent of the player's force survives through Turn 10. **(Reward: +400 WP; double if any Optional Bonus is in play.)**

Make an Effort. Destroy/Cripple 50 percent of the opponent's force. **(Reward: +300 WP)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following special rules are in effect for this track:

Salvage

In addition to the standard salvage rule, if the player's force completes at least two objectives, they may randomly roll once on an appropriate Random Access Table and receive that unit into their total force for no cost. The unit is discovered among the scattered ruins along their patrol route.

AFTERMATH

Brutal doesn't even begin to define combat in a "hot" zone such as the one you just left. Fortunately, you managed to impress someone higher up; your contract's been extended and the opportunities afforded by this Jihad still keep rolling your way.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

HQ might have missed a nice fat storehouse somewhere down in the Docks district. Getting there without orders might be a hitch but if the salvage is worth it...

There have also been rumors of some renegade ROM soldiers (or even special forces) roaming the sands like a pack of wild dogs. Care to run a side trip and see if there's truth to the rumors?

NEXT TRACKS

Recondo, *Monkeywrench* (if this track was played as Defender), *Heavy Metal* (if this track was played as Attacker)

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: RECONDO

RECONDO

"I'd heard there was fighting on Terra prior to the invasion; Comstar hold-outs with a grudge, CASE WHITE survivors, malcontents, loners. You know, your typical rage against the something-or-other-cause-daddy-didn't-love-them types. I never really gave them much thought... or credit. Then Stone hits Terra, and the shoe is on the other foot.

"I mean, who deliberately lives out in some jungle eating boot leather and forgoing the basic necessities just to stay hidden so they can go blow up a TerraSec station?

"At what point is that even fun anymore?"

—Uncredited mercenary on ContinentalWatch, Terran News Network



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: RECONDO

SITUATION

Yucatan Provincial Kingdom, Terra

Blake Protectorate

29 January 3079

All the newsvids said the fighting was done. Your liaison says different. It seems there's a problem over on the Yucatan Peninsula in North America. Someone keeps hitting TerraSec facilities and now they've hit an important regional supply depot. Intel suggests they may be back. The contract says *low-intensity*. Your gut says otherwise.

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: RECONDO

GAME SETUP

Set up using a mix of Wetlands and Wooded Terrain map sheets (see *TW*, p. 263). For every two map sheets used, place 10 Level 1 Medium buildings randomly across the battlefield. The Defender openly identifies one building on the far edge of the map to represent the Supply Depot. The Supply Depot must be a minimum of 6 Hexes from any map edge. The edge furthest from the Depot is the Attacker's home edge.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of elements from the House Marik-backed mercenary unit Lola's Lights and is 75 percent of the Defender's total deployed force. Of these units, at least two must consist of the Clan technology base. The Attacker enters from their home edge, which is the edge farthest from the Supply Depot. The Attacker possesses a skill level of Veteran.

Defender

The Defender consists of up to 75 percent of the player's total available force. For every 6 units or squads fielded by the Defender, add one medium vehicle and one squad of battle armor; these are local police forces and have a skill level of Green. The Defender sets up all of its forces within 7 hexes of the Depot.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 500 WP

OPTIONAL BONUSES:

+200 Blame it on Rio: The Attacker fields at least one medium Inner Sphere OmniMech (any) in addition to their fielded forces with an Elite skill level.

+200 A Bad Day Just Got Worse: The Attacker fields at least one heavy Clan OmniMech (any) in addition to their fielded forces with an Elite skill level.

OBJECTIVES

I Can't Shake 'Em! Prevent the destruction of the defending police forces. **(Reward: +300 WP)**

If I Can't Have It... Prevent the destruction of the Supply Depot **(Reward: +200 WP)**

Pity is for Suckers. Destroy/Cripple at least 50 percent of the Attacker's force. **(Reward: +300 WP)**

No Mercy! Destroy/Cripple all of the Attacker's forces. **(Reward: +500 WP)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following special rules are in effect for this track:

Frequency Overload

Radio frequency jamming by the Attackers prevents communications until Turn 6, during which time the Defender suffers a -1 modifier to all initiative rolls.

Salvage

The players receive no salvage for this track.

AFTERMATH

Just imagine spending four months in the jungle, communications busted, living off of scraps, avoiding everyone you see while thinking your enemies might be just around the hill waiting to kill you? Yeah, that's the opposition you just beat down. These guys turned out to be *friendlies*. They were hitting various depots for food and intel, since the jungles on this side of Terra remain uncivilized thanks to centuries of "green thinking."

Oh, well, a tribunal can figure this one out.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

A trapper reported seeing several more BattleMechs deep in the jungle. Maybe some of those attacks weren't so friendly. Care to investigate and find out just how unsafe the jungle really is?

NEXT TRACK

Mainframe



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: MONKEYWRENCH

MONKEYWRENCH

Even after you smear a cockroach all over the cement, you still need to bend down and look at it, make sure it's well and truly dead.
—Unknown mercenary commander, circa 2114

SITUATION

*Outskirts of Portent, Gibson
Free Worlds League
26 January 3079*

Answering the Regulans' call for reinforcements, you found yourself instead on "mop up" duty after the Regulans practically glassed the planet. On the approach, it looked as if this was going to be an easy sweep; there couldn't be much left alive on the surface after suffering such an extensive orbital bombardment.

Sometimes, though, it pays to make sure. And the Regulans weren't about to make the same mistake they did in 3074.

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: MONKEYWRENCH

GAME SETUP

Set up a mix of Badlands, Light Urban, and Wetlands terrain map sheets (see *TW*, p. 263). All water hexes contain toxic water (see Special Rules, below). The Defender selects their home edge.

Attacker

The Attacker equals 125 percent of the Defender's deployed force and consists of the scattered remains of various Word of Blake Militias. Half of the Attacker's force has Veteran skills; the rest are of Regular skill. Assign 2D6 damage (+1D6 for each weight class above Medium, if applicable) to each unit. Reroll any result that would destroy or cripple the unit.

The Attacker enters opposite the Defender's home edge.

Defender

The Defender consists of up to 100 percent of the player's available force. Half of the Defender's force may begin the track deployed within 8 hexes of their home edge. The remainder of the Defender's force enters the battlefield at the beginning of Turn 2 through their home edge.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 600 WP

OPTIONAL BONUSES:

+500 Unholy Ground. Add this bonus if the Defenders successfully completed one objective in *Dante's Daydream* (see *JHS76*, p. 41).

+400 Short on Ammo. The Defender begins the game with half-full ammo bins (round up).

+700 Terrible Day. Increase all Attacker skill levels to Elite

OBJECTIVES

Failure. 75 percent or more of Attacker's forces exit through the defender's Home Edge after Turn 5. **(Penalty: -1,000 WP)**

Hold the Line. Prevent half of the Attacker from exiting through the Defender's home edge before Turn 10. **(Reward: +300 WP)**

Not a Chance in Hades. Prevent all of the Attacker's forces from exiting the Defender's home edge before Turn 15. **(Reward: +1,000 WP)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following special rule is in effect for this track.

Toxic Water

All water hexes on the board contain tainted water. The water has been contaminated with Class 1: Slightly Hazardous Chemicals Use Hazardous Liquid rules for water hexes (see *TO*, p.49)

AFTERMATH

Caustic water, fanatical Blakists, no support, it's enough to make you pack your things and catch a fast DropShip to a retirement home. But the Regulans were happy you blunted the Blakist's end-run out of their kill-zone. Still, the Blakists fought without regard for damage or loss of life on their way to somewhere important...

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

The Regulans were hell-bent on destroying the hated Manei Domini but they never found any. Your liaison says they may have located some and will pay well to have you check it out. Or maybe following those fleeing Blakists might be more your speed: find out where they're going and help the Regulans finish sterilizing the planet.

NEXT TRACK

Firefly, Wild Weasel

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: HEAVY METAL

HEAVY METAL

Traipsing through fields and farmlands looking for Blakist weapons of ultimate destruction is one of the dumbest wastes of my time—but at least they pay well for it. But then again, all it takes is just one tripped-over trigger on a one-kiloton warhead...

—Attributed to Private Darius Cotton, minutes before his death

SITUATION

Great Spine Mountains, New Home

Blake Protectorate

18 March 3079

Surprisingly, and despite prior dealings you've been contacted by a shady representative of Stone's Coalition for some low-key but important mission. Vague with details, something definitely feels "off" about this mission. It was not listed on the new MBC wire and you're being sent to a planet where hostilities supposedly ended months ago, as did all resistance...officially.

Unofficially, it's still a quagmire. And you just got dropped into the middle of it.

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: HEAVY METAL

GAME SETUP

Set up using a mix of Mountain and Hill Terrain map sheets (see p. 263, *TW*). Select and mark eight hexes to represent Barns and Farm Houses (Level 1 Light building; CF 20) and two adjacent hexes to represent a Woodmill (Level 3 Medium building; CF 50). Each Light building hex is separated from other buildings by a minimum of two hexes.

The Defender selects the home edge before force selection.

Attacker

The Attacker may deploy up to 50 percent of the player's total available force and enters opposite the Defender's home edge at the beginning of the Track.

Defender

The Defender consists of a mix of WoB Protectorate Militia Vehicles, Battle Armor and 'Mechs (Veteran skill levels) and is up to 75 percent of the Attacker's deployed force. The Defender sets up half of its force using the Hidden Units rules (see p. 259, *TW*). All remaining forces may be placed within 10 hexes of the Defender's home edge. No Defenders may be placed within eight hexes of the Attacker's home edge.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 700 WP

OPTIONAL BONUSES:

+300 Rough Terrain: Treat all light wood hexes as heavy woods.

+400 Playing the Odds. The Attacker deactivates all Active Probes for the first 15 turns.

+400 Don't Spook the Quarry. The Attackers enter the map two at a time until Turn 4. The Attacker's remaining forces may enter via their home edge at the beginning of Turn 5.

OBJECTIVES

Ripe for the Inquisition. At least 30 percent of the Defender's forces remain on the battlefield (either incapacitated or Crippled; Destroyed units do not count for this objective) at the end of Turn 10. **(Reward: +500 WP)**

Take 'Em Down. Destroy/Cripple at least half of the Defender's forces by the end of Turn 15. **(Reward: +500 WP)**

On Safari. Destroy all of the Defender's forces. **(Reward: +500 WP)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following special rules are in effect for this track.

Forced Withdrawal

The Defender's forces operate under *Forced Withdrawal* rules (see p. 258, *TW*) and will attempt to exit via the Attacker's home edge.

AFTERMATH

Of course they paid well. The Word *always* fights tooth and nail and few people are willing to get their hands dirty bringing them in. Fortunately, your paycheck wasn't one of the casualties. You might even be able to put some of this salvage to good use, if you can get it through Customs.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Militia survivors spoke of another possible enclave deeper into the Great Spine that needs investigation. Fortunately, it hasn't come down to house-to-house searches...yet.

NEXT TRACK

Jinx



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: MAINFRAME

MAINFRAME

Pain is the life about to go out of your body if you don't answer my questions.

—Attributed to Ghost Adept Omega Pope, Olson's Rangers

SITUATION

Oanhui, Fomalhaut

Terran Protectorate

12 April 3079

Anything that has the code name "Damocles" attached to it is bad news. Bad, bad news. Simple enough in orders but as experience has shown, never easy in execution. This time, it's burning down some town that has been harboring Blakist fugitives; according to the mystery agent's reports, the entire population is beholden to the Blakist cause and stands in the way of pacifying the continent.

The locals want some target dead. "Damocles" suggests alive. Your Coalition liaison doesn't really care.

Choices, choices...

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: MAINFRAME

GAME SETUP

Set up using the Coastline and Light Urban terrain map sheets (see p. 263, *TW*) and arrange them in a Chase format. The Defender selects their home edge and that of the Attacker.

Attacker

The players may deploy up to 50 percent of the player's total force but with a maximum of 6 of any unit type. The Attacker's force begins the game entering through their home edge at the beginning of the track.

The DCMS militia assigned to Fomalhaut reluctantly joins the battle late, entering from any remaining edge at the beginning of Turn 9. They are 25 percent of the Attacker's deployed force and are of Green skill level.

Defender

The Defender is elements of the outlawed Olsen's Rangers mercenary command that has gone to ground. They are an all-BattleMech force that possesses Veteran skills. The Defender's force is 150 percent of the Attacker's deployed force, to a maximum of three lances in size.

The Defender may utilize the Manei Domini creation rules (see p. 120, *JHS72*) only if the *Instant Upgrade* bonus is in play. Designate one pilot/trooper as the commander, Ghost Adept Omega Pope, who possesses a Gunnery Skill of 2 and Piloting Skill of 1.

The Defender sets up 75 percent of its force using the Hidden Units rules (see p. 259, *TW*). The remainder of the force enters the battlefield at the beginning of Turn 2 from the Defender's home edge.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 800 WP

OPTIONAL BONUSES:

+400 Dug-in Like Ticks Treat all buildings as double their starting CF.

+600 Instant Upgrade The Defender may upgrade one-fourth of the Rangers to Elite Manei Domini pilots/troops using the Manei Domini creation rules (see p. 120, *JHS72*).

OBJECTIVES

Failure. Less than 50 percent of the Defender is destroyed or crippled before Turn 15. **(Penalty: -1,000 WP; negates all other objective and bonus rewards)**

Following Orders. Destroy/cripple at least 60 percent of the Defender's force. **(Reward: +600 WP)**

Going Above and Beyond. Cripple/incapacitate Pope's unit by the end of the track. **(Reward: +400 WP)**

Burn it Down. Destroy/cripple at least 80 percent of the Defender's force and destroy all buildings on the battlefield. **(Reward: +800 WP)**



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: MAINFRAME

SPECIAL RULES

The following special rules are in effect for this track.

Olson's Rangers

Since going rogue from the Capellan Confederation early in the Jihad, the Olsen's Rangers have been suborned and "enhanced" by the Word of Blake Manei Domini, who assigned a few operative MechWarriors to keep them in line while using them to harass and entrap Coalition forces. As a result, the Rangers will not retreat from battle and will fight to their death unless incapacitated. If one of the Manei Domini-piloted Rangers is incapacitated or crippled, they will suicide their machines through either reactor overload or another method in order to avoid capture (though the other Rangers will simply surrender). The pro-Blakists mercenaries will go to any length necessary to cause as much collateral damage as possible.

When rolling to select BattleMech units belonging to the Olsen's Rangers, the controlling player may twice per lance on the Capellan Confederation RATs. Manei Domini-piloted Ranger units must be selected using the Word of Blake Manei Domini RAT.

Salvage

The players receive no salvage for this track.

AFTERMATH

The dirty, rotten militia "assigned" as support did practically nothing to help your cause and let you be the bullet sponge. Your unit is all shot up and a lot of civilians are wounded or worse. Of course they pinned it on you rather than their own lack of foresight. And it's all thanks to that "Damocles" character, may he rot in Hell.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Success or failure, the citizenry are the ones who suffered and they'll take it out on your unit any way they can. It doesn't take much to tip the garrisoning militias to see you as a "bad influence" and try to drive you off planet...

NEXT TRACK

Roadblock, Wild Weasel, Storm Shadow

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: JINX

JINX

They've brought peace, enlightenment and security to our world, whether we like it or not. Such is the "freedom" espoused by Stone and his collaborators. Xin Sheng!

—Pirated Free Capella broadcast, Nanking

SITUATION

*Kallentown, Nanking
Terran Protectorate
30 January 3080*

So much for Stone and his Coalition's efforts to make merc life easy. So much red tape and bureaucratic nonsense has cropped up lately it's nearly impossible to find good paying contracts any more under Stone's aegis.

Enter the corporate sector.

Kallon Industries is in desperate need of some "private security forces" to work out some of their own troubles on Nanking. Since the Coalition's well is drying up, why not hop onto a new gravy train?

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: JINX

GAME SETUP

Set up an urban battlefield using the Heavy Urban terrain map sheets (see p. 263, *TW*). The Defender secretly assigns one building as the convoy's origination point; the building must be located at least one mapsheet away from the Defender's home edge. The Defender also designates which hex side the building's exit door is located.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of 100 percent of the Defender's deployed force (including the transports). The Attacker is a locally hired mercenary unit of Regular skill level and includes at least two aerospace fighters or VTOL units.

Divide the Attacker's force into three groups. Group 1 enters the battlefield at the beginning of Turn 1 from the



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: JINX

edge opposite the Defender's home edge. Group 2 enters the battlefield at the beginning of Turn 6 from any map edge. Group 3 enters the battlefield at the beginning of Turn 8 from the Defender's home edge.

Defender

The Defender may deploy up to 100 percent of the player's available forces and begins the game on the Defender's starting edge.

Add 12 APCs (any motive system, Green skill level). Starting in Turn 4, 3 APCs will enter the map from the designated hanger exit with 3 more APCs exiting on Turn 6, 8, and 10.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 800 WP

OPTIONAL BONUSES:

+300 Dusk/Dawn. Use the Dusk/Dawn rules (see p. 58, *TO*).

+800 Union Station. Place a *Union-Class DropShip* roughly in the center of the playing area. Beginning in Turn 4 at the end of the Fire Declaration phase, roll 2D6; on a result of 5 or higher, the DropShip will target the closest Defender for that turn. The DropShip will fire through the end of Turn 12 or its destruction, whichever comes first. The DropShip's crew skill level is Veteran.

OBJECTIVES

Failure. 25 percent or more of the Transports fail to exit the battlefield through the Attacker's home edge. **(Penalty: -1,500 WP)**

Protected. Destroy/cripple 50 percent of Attacker's forces by Turn 8. **(Reward: +800 WP)**

Take me home. At least 75 percent of the APCs exit the Attacker's home edge by the end of Turn 14. **(Reward: +400 WP)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following special rules are in effect for this track.

Forced Withdrawal

The Attacking forces operate under *Forced Withdrawal*.

Salvage

The players receive 50 percent salvage. If they complete at least two Objectives, they are awarded two Kallon-produced units up to a combined maximum of 100 tons.

AFTERMATH

No matter how hard you try to win, sometimes you still lose. Those APCs got snapped up by some pirate group before Kallon could make good its delivery. Though the timing of the attack seems a bit too coincidental; does Kallon have a spy in their midst, or are they just that easy to read?

Was this really a bona fide attack or just a cover for a weapons exchange? The bitter taste in your mouth is palpable—and your corporate liaison was found dead in his quarters the next day.

At least Kallon had the decency to pay up. Barely.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Curious parties may want to know who hired that little marauding party, or even find out where that weapons buy was going. Is Stone's Coalition involved in illegal gun running on a Capellan-contested world? Or are the Blakists still hanging around like a bad virus?

NEXT TRACK

Snow Job, Roadblock

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: SNOW JOB

SNOW JOB

The art of the double-cross is in not letting the other party know you've screwed them over. Getting away with it is sweet indeed; but if one of them found out – well, it's not just your hide they're going to extract retribution from.

–Nameless Davion corporate agent liaison

SITUATION

Tong Shi Supply Depot, Nanking

Terran Protectorate

5 March 3080

Acting on some intel supplied to you by a good Samaritan, you traced the DropShip those weapons were delivered to across the continent to a remote civilian supply depot. If you can crack that egg you just might be able to recover some of what you lost and gain some insight into her origins and more importantly, her backers.

Payback can be a real bitch.

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: SNOW JOB

GAME SETUP

Set up using a mix of Heavy Urban and Badlands terrain map sheets (see p. 269, *TW*). Place a *Union*-class DropShip (the *Avarice*) in the center of one of the map sheets (removing a building if necessary).

The Attacker chooses their home edge; the Defender's home edge is opposite the Attacker's.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of up to 100 percent of the player's available force and enters via their home edge at the start of the track.

Defender

The Defender's force consists of up to 50 percent of the player's deployed force. Do not factor in the DropShip when constructing the force. The Defender is a blend of renegade Coalition forces and Nanking rebels, possessing a skill level of Veteran. The DropShip crew skill level is Veteran.

The Defender begins the track deployed anywhere on the battlefield.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 1,000 WP

OPTIONAL BONUSES:

+500 Overeager The Attacker begins with half of their deployed force; the remainder enters from their home edge at the beginning of Turn 6.

+1,000 Bad Intel Place an additional *Union*-Class DropShip (Regular skill level) in the center of an adjacent map sheet. This DropShip is also controlled by the Defender.

OBJECTIVES

Crack the Egg. Destroy/cripple/incapacitate/capture the *Avarice* before Turn 12 (**Reward: +1,000 WP**)

Make an Omelet. Destroy/cripple at least 75 percent of the Defender's units (do not count any DropShips) by Turn 15 (**Reward: +800 WP**)

SPECIAL RULES

There are no special rules for this track.

AFTERMATH

It's never easy taking down a DropShip, but the risk was worth the reward. Just the cargo alone was worth the effort though it will take a while to rebuild what you've lost. More importantly, you found information that shed light on who set you up. The codebook you found leaves little doubt as to the origins or allegiances of the parties involved: the Federated Suns. Seems a destabilized Nanking—whether in Capellan or Coalition hands—would serve Davion corporate interests well.

Looks like there's some sort of disagreement in the Kallon ranks; the ones who hired you didn't know they were being played for fools in corporate shenanigans. Either way, the company looks bad to both sides, and that's probably exactly how the Davion agents wanted it.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

The local government is hot that the players took down a DropShip on their soil without as much as a "by-your-leave." The players might have made more enemies than they realized. A chase and a desperate escape might be in order.

The renegades within the Kallon Corporation might also want to have a word with you, since you spoiled their own little party...

NEXT TRACK

Roadblock



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: ROADBLOCK

ROADBLOCK

...and never subscribe to that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" nonsense. That concept is a heap of dung. How do you know that you're not the subject of mutual hatred? It is foolish to trust another simply because you share the same foe.

Shoot them all, it is the only way to be sure you'll live to see morning.

—Alleged excerpt from the Maskirovka Training Manual, circa 3071

SITUATION

Ba bing Bien Mountain, Pleione

Terran Protectorate

4 May 3080

Just when you thought you'd left all that corporate nonsense behind, it sucked you right back in. This time, the contract came straight from the Capellan Confederation's official channels. Seems the Confederation doesn't take kindly to rogue corporate entities operating within its borders. Even if it's arguable that Nanking falls within said border.

Bottom line is this: join a Confederation unit already on-planet, let them point you at your target, and pull your trigger. Confederation makes its point, the backstabbers get dealt with, and you get paid.

Glorious.

So why do you detect the faint whiff of deception?

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: ROADBLOCK

GAME SETUP

Set up using a mix of Hills, Wetlands, and Flatlands terrain map sheets (see p. 263, TW). Designate and place six total buildings on the battlefield. All of these buildings must be classified as Heavy, Level 2 structures with a CF of 75 and all possess double basements.

The Defender selects their home edge first; the Attacker's home edge is the opposite of the Defender's.

Attacker

The Attacker consists of up to 100 percent of the player's total force.

Additionally, the player adds a force from House Hiritsu. This force can be up to 50 percent of the player's deployed force and have Elite skills. Designate one of the Hiritsu units as the field commander.

The Attacker enters through their home edge.

Defender

The Defender's force is 150 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force. Half of the force possess Veteran skills; the other half, Elite.

Deploy at least 25 percent of the Defender's force as per the Hidden Unit rules (see p. 259, TW) anywhere on the battlefield. The remainder of the force enters the battlefield in any arrangement from any map edge between turns 1 and 3.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 1,500 WP

OPTIONAL BONUS:

+700 Mined Out. 'Mechs or vehicles must make a Piloting Skill Roll with a +1 modifier when ending movement in clear terrain. A failed roll results in a one level fall into a sinkhole. Mark new sinkholes as sublevel 1.

OBJECTIVES

Blowing the Mine. Destroy all 6 building hexes before Turn 6
(Reward: +500 WP)

Retribution. Destroy/cripple all Defenders by Turn 15
(Reward: +1,500 WP)

Survival of the Fittest. Destroy/cripple all House Hiritsu units after Turn 10 (Reward: +750 WP)

SPECIAL RULES

The following special rules are in effect for this track.



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: ROADBLOCK

For the Confederation!

Starting in the Initiative phase of Round 8, the Attacker rolls 2D6. On a result of 9 or greater, all House Hiritsu units receive new orders and will fire on any non-Hiritsu units close to them. They will fight to death or incapacitation. All Hiritsu aerospace fighters, battle armor, and infantry units receive a bonus of +1 to all Gunnery skill rolls for the next turn if they end their current turn within two hexes of a Hiritsu BattleMech or vehicle unit.

Forced Withdrawal

The Defender's forces will follow Forced Withdrawal rules.

AFTERMATH

Somehow, somewhere, the Confederation got it into their heads that you were a Coalition plant and decided to end you

permanently. Where that little disconnect occurred you have no idea, but it's severely hurt your reputation within the Confederation.

At this point, it might be worth laying low or heading out to take on some of the more difficult contracts being waved around by the Coalition liaisons...

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Repairing one's reputation in a hostile nation takes guts but the rewards can be great. Maybe tracking down some of those Kallon cowards and setting the record straight might be a good first step. So is stepping back into the shadows and letting time and money repair all wounds...

NEXT TRACK

End of campaign OR move on to *Storm Shadow*

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: WILD WEASEL

WILD WEASEL

They have cut us. They have bled us. They have stolen our prosperity and reduced our cities to ashes merely for the sin of demanding to live free as Regulans, rather than as slaves.

Now is the time for retribution. We will bleed them as a butcher bleeds a calf and then bath them in the fires of Hell.

—Titus Cameron-Jones prior to the Circinus assault; March 3081.

SITUATION

System 129A-14H

Circinus Federation

1 April 3081

The Regulans require a reconnaissance in force of supposed "dead" worlds bordering the Circinus Federation. Word is they're hunting for any secret Blakist bases that might be scattered along the fringe that the fleeing rats might use as boltholes. They have selected your unit to participate in one of these recon missions to scan an abandoned colony.

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: WILD WEASEL

GAME SETUP

Set up using Badlands terrain map sheets set up in a Chase format but with long edges connected. Place three Hardened Level 2 buildings (CF 100) on the battlefield with at least 10 hexes between each building.

The Attacker designates which long map edge the Defender will enter from.

Attacker

The Attacker's force may equal up to 100 percent of the player's total force and enters the battlefield opposite the Defender's starting edge.

Defender

The Defender consists of elements of the 49th Shadow Division and equals 125 percent of the Attacker's deployed



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: WILD WEASEL

force. The Defender's force consists of all Manei Domini pilots/soldiers/crew. If not using the *Instant Upgrade* bonus, then all of the Defender's force has an Elite skill level, with 25 percent receiving an additional +1 bonus to all Gunnery skill rolls.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 1,750 WP

OPTIONAL BONUSES:

+800 Instant Upgrade The Defender upgrades all pilots/troops/crews using the Manei Domini creation rules (see p. 120, *JHS72*). (Do not count their value if using Battle Value rules.)

+300 Unfamiliar Ground Attackers suffer a -1 modifier to all Initiative rolls until Turn 6.

+500 Well Defended Add an additional force of Word of Blake Militia to the Defender's force. The militia is 20 percent of the Attacker's deployed force and has a skill level of Regular. These units enter the battlefield from any map edge not used by the Attacker or Defender at the beginning of Turn 3.

+500 Familiarity Add this bonus if the players successfully completed an objective in *Monkeywrench* or *Mainframe*; this may be cumulative.

OBJECTIVES

Scout Out. The Attacker scans all three building hexes before Turn 10. **(Reward: +800 WP)**

Tough Hombres. Destroy/cripple at least 50 percent of the Defender's force. **(Reward: +2,000 WP)**

Stone Killers. Destroy/cripple all of the Defender's force by the end of Turn 12. **(Reward: +1,000 WP)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following special rules are in effect for this track.

Forty-ninth Shadow Division

None of the units in the Forty-ninth will retreat from battle and will fight to their death unless incapacitated. If incapacitated or crippled, they will suicide their machines through either reactor overload or another method in order to avoid capture.

Forty-ninth Division 'Mech units halve any heat received from outside sources (so a single Inferno SRM missile would cause 1 point of heat), while vehicles and battle armor ignore the effects

of fire, and conventional infantry are only destroyed by fire on a roll of 10 or greater.

Any time a Forty-ninth Division force consists of at least one battle armor unit for every four units deployed, the controlling player receives a +1 bonus to Initiative, and all deployed Forty-ninth battle armor units receive a -1 modifier to their Gunnery and Anti-Mech skills.

Time Limit

At the beginning of Turn 11 and every turn thereafter, roll 2D6 if any building hexes remain unscanned. On a result of 6+, the Regulans target each unscanned building with an orbiting Pocket WarShip. The PWS will fire on the targeted hex in the subsequent turn, even if it is subsequently scanned.

Scanning

Buildings may be scanned by units without an Active Probe; such units must end their movement within 2 hexes of the target building and may not fire that turn. Units with an Active Probe must end their movement within 4 hexes of the target building and may fire during the same turn as scanning.

A scan is declared during the Fire Phase and takes place during the End Phase of the same turn, provided the unit remains functioning and does not have any sensor critical hits. Only BattleMechs and vehicles may perform a sensor scan.

Battle armor and infantry may conduct an interior search instead, using the Infantry in Building rules (see pp. 167-170, *TW*). The unit must begin and end their turn in the same building hex in order to conduct a proper search.

AFTERMATH

The Regulans weren't waiting for information; they were waiting for *confirmation*. Once you confirmed the presence of Blakist cyber-soldiers, all guns were hot regardless of friendly casualties. Every planetoid in the 129A-14H was washed with sterilizing fire.

You heard the next target was Circinus.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

There are a lot more "empty" systems out there that might harbor the stuff of nightmares. Or even lostech goody caches...

NEXT TRACK

Storm Shadow, Scrap Iron



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: FIREFLY

FIREFLY

All Points Alert: Be advised that Precentor John Garrick, a Person of Interest to Republic authorities, has been sighted on Hamal. Garrick is considered to be armed and dangerous and bonded contract agents are authorized to use deadly force if necessary in pursuit of POI.

—HPG all-traffic notice, 30 June 3081

SITUATION

Califa Hamal

Hamal, Word of Blake Protectorate (Former)

11 July, 3081

While undergoing refit and resupply, you receive a cryptic message that begins a series of meets and blind drops. The seemingly wild goose chase culminates in a shadowy meeting where a shady agent hands you a data file, coordinates, and a few “Wanted” flimsies.

The mission’s pretty hardcore: seems someone’s burying bodies before some rumored upcoming trials. You’re to hunt down Precentor John Garrick, Director of Nuclear Technology, Word of Blake, and deliver him or his ashes to the proper authorities.

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: FIREFLY

GAME SETUP

Set up using the Light Urban terrain (see p. 263, *TW*) in a Chase format. The Defender chooses their home edge first. The Attacker’s home edge is the opposite side.

Attacker

The Attacker may deploy up to 25 percent of the player’s total force and enters the battlefield from their home edge.

Defender

The Defenders are a Light of Mankind security force of Elite skill level and are 100 percent of the Attacker’s deployed force. The Defender secretly designates one building as their current safe house; that building retains its listed level but is converted to a Hardened building with a CF of 150.

The Defender may begin the track with up to 75 percent of its force placed as Hidden Units (see p. 259, *TW*).

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 2,000 WP

OPTIONAL BONUSES:

+400 Dug in Like Ticks. Treat all buildings as double their starting CF.

+800 Instant Upgrade The Defender upgrades half of its pilots/troops/crews using the Manei Domini creation rules (see p. 120, *JHS72*). (Do not count their value if using Battle Value rules.)

+800 Déjà vu. Add this bonus if at least one Objective is reached in this track and the player achieved one Objective on *Touchpoint: Hamal* (see p. 83, *SBWB*).

OBJECTIVES

Pest Control. Destroy/cripple at least 75 percent of the Defender’s forces before the end of Turn 14. **(Reward: +2,000 WP)**

Will He/Won’t He? Destroy/cripple at least half of the Defender’s forces before the end of Turn 10. **(Reward: +1,000 WP)**

Dead...With Prejudice. Destroy/cripple all of the Defender’s forces before the end of turn 10. **(Reward: +3,500 WP; Not cumulative with any other Objective.)**

SPECIAL RULES

There are no special rules for this track.

AFTERMATH

After a vicious firefight and spectacular effort to capture the highly sought-after Precentor Garrick, it turned out the man you ran to ground was in fact, a body double. The real John Garrick slipped away quietly through the sewers while his bodyguards delayed your forces. Now, the scent has gone cold. You may never be able to locate him.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Garrick had some help getting away; dedicate some time and effort and it’s very possible his trail may get warm again. There’s a very good chance he’s still in the city, if not on the planet. And there are certain higher powers willing to pay some serious coin to find this guy—dead OR alive.

NEXT TRACK

Storm Shadow, Scrap Iron



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: STORM SHADOW

STORM SHADOW

I'm so close, I can taste his cybernetic energy. These abominations MUST be hunted down and destroyed as the vermin they are. They don't qualify as human; the instant they took that metal to their flesh and worshipped it marked them for death in my eyes.

The sword of Damocles hangs over them all; I only need to find them and one by one, I will drop their death upon them.

—Partial journal entry, Agent Damocles

SITUATION

*City of the Sacredot
Bryant, The Republic of the Sphere
16 September 3081*

As Stone's Republic gets up and going, there's been an upswing in contracts specifically targeting former Protectorate leaders and Word of Blake commanders. They're dangerous, they're exciting, and a successful outcome can make you a hero.

An unsuccessful one? Well, you won't be alive to care much what the public thinks.

This one's a doozy: Precentor Berith, notorious leader of the outlaw Opacus and rumored to be the last high-ranking Manei Domini still alive, was sighted on Bryant. The mission's pretty straightforward.

Find him, and kill him. "Alive" is simply a bonus.

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: STORM SHADOW

GAME SETUP

Set up using a mix of Light and Heavy Urbain terrain map sheets (see p. 263, TW). Increase the weight and CF of each building by one Building Class category (i.e. a Light Building with a CF of 15 is now a Medium Building with a CF of 30).

The Attacker chooses the home edge of both sides; they do not need to be opposite each other.

Attacker

The Attacker's force consists of up to 30 percent of the player's total available force. In addition, there is a small Blake's Wrath special forces team attached to the Attacker's force; they are 100 percent of the player's total deployed force and are of Elite skill level. If the track is done in space, at least two of the Blake's Wrath vessels must be a Small Craft or Light DropShip that can transport marines/infantry and conduct boarding operations.

The player force enters the battlefield from the Attacker's home edge. The Blake's Wrath force enters the battlefield at the beginning of Turn 4 from the opposite edge of the Attacker's home edge.

Defender

The Defender's force is the scattered remains of the Forty-ninth Shadow Division. They are 75 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force and have Elite skills. If this track occurs in space, at least one of the Shadow Division units must be an assault-class DropShip.

The Defender sets up all of its units anywhere on the battlefield. Up to 25 percent may be deployed as Hidden Units (see p. 259, TW).

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 2,000 WP

OPTIONAL BONUSES:

+400 Concrete Maze Treat all buildings as hardened structures with a CF of (10 x 1D6) + 100 (This bonus is not available for space games.)

+800 Instant Upgrade The Defender upgrades all of its pilots/troops/crews using the Manei Domini creation rules (see p. 120, JHS72). (Do not count their value if using Battle Value rules.)

+400 Curtains The track takes place in pitch-black darkness (see p. 58, TO). (This bonus is not available for space games.)

+800 Asteroids Add 5D6 Asteroids to the battlefield (see pp. 44-45, SO). (This bonus is not available for ground games.)

OBJECTIVES

Crush them All. Destroy/cripple all of the Defender's forces. (Reward: +1,500 WP)

Intercept your Contact. The informant must exit the Attacker's home edge after Turn 10 but before the end of Turn 15. (Reward: +900 WP)

Make an Effort. Destroy/cripple at least half of the Defender's force. (Reward: +800 WP)

SPECIAL RULES

The following special rules are in effect for this track.

Informant

At the beginning of Turn 10, an informant makes a run through the firefight in an attempt to cross into friendly territory. The informant is in an APC that has a damaged motive system, reducing its MP rating by half. (If the track takes place in space, use a Small Craft instead of an APC.) The informant's vehicle crew has a skill level of Regular and enters the battlefield from the edge opposite the Attacker's home edge.

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: STORM SHADOW

Forty-ninth Shadow Division

None of the units in the Forty-ninth will retreat from battle and will fight to their death unless incapacitated. If incapacitated or crippled, they will suicide their machines through either reactor overload or another method in order to avoid capture. The Blakists will go to any length necessary to cause as much collateral damage as possible.

Forty-ninth Division 'Mechs reduce all heat from outside sources by half, while vehicles and battle armor ignore the effects of fire, and conventional infantry are only destroyed on a 2D6 result of 10+. Additionally, if the Forty-ninth deploys at least 25 percent of its force as battle armor in a scenario, the Division receives a +1 Initiative modifier, and all of its battle armor units receive a -1 target number modifier to all Gunnery and Anti-Mech Skill rolls.

AFTERMATH

While Precentor Berith was nowhere to be found on Bryant, there was a Manei Domini hunter-killer unit. Apparently they

were looking for the guy who has been tipping off The Republic's intelligence people to the whereabouts of various Blakist agents. Good thing "Damocles" managed to slip behind your lines during the brutal firefight.

And apparently, he's got the real goods on where Berith's going to be next. Time to mount up...

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Damocles mentioned something about a Blakist intel network still in operation on Bryant, which has been slipping various Manei Domini fugitives through the system in a form of "underground railroad" pipeline. Might be a good idea to check out some of his leads before lifting for Devil's Rock...

NEXT TRACK

Scrap Iron

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: SCRAP IRON

SCRAP IRON

I care nothing of methodology, or of collateral, or even of honor. I care for results, hard, cold, calculated results. Anything and everyone else is chaff, to be used and discarded as the situation warrants.

—Attributed to Com Guard agent "Damocles"

What am I going to do, you ask? In simple words just for you, my dear Stryker: I. Am. Going. To. Kill. You.

—Transmission from Precentor Berith, Devil's Rock; 31 October 3081

SITUATION

Gateway to Hades

Devil's Rock, The Republic of the Sphere

31 October 3081

Acting on information that agent Damocles swears is iron clad, a small detachment of Republic security forces and a few select mercenary commands were quickly moved to Devil's Rock. The entire objective was to intercept and capture the current head of the Manei Domini, Precentor Berith. The Republic hoped to capture and detain this high profile Blakist to put on public trial and put all of its eggs into Damocles' proverbial basket.

All proceeded according to plan but then went south in a hurry. Rather than laying a trap for Berith, the Precentor had instead laid his own trap for Damocles and whatever assistance he had dragged along with him.

Suddenly, the hunter had become the hunted.

CHAOS UNDAUNTED: SCRAP IRON

GAME SETUP

Set up using a mix of Badlands and Flatlands terrain map sheets. Convert all Wooded hexes to Rubble.

Each side secretly selects their home edge before the start of the track.

Attacker

The Attacker's force is elements of the Forty-ninth Shadow Division, led by Precentor Manei Domini Berith. The Attacker's total force is 100 percent of the Attacker's total deployed force and are of Elite skill level.



CHAOS UNDAUNTED: SCRAP IRON

Secretly designate one unit as Berith; this unit has a Gunnery skill of 1 and Piloting skill of 1.

The Attacker places 50 percent of their forces anywhere on the battlefield as Hidden Units (see p. 259, TW). The remainder enters from their secretly determined home edge at the start of Turn 2.

Defender

The Defender's force consists of up to 100 percent of the player's total available force. In addition, the Defender adds a Republic special operations force that is 50 percent of the player's deployed force and possesses Veteran skills.

Secretly designate one of the Republic's units as Damocles; this unit has a Gunnery skill of 3 and Piloting skill of 1.

WARCHEST

Track Cost: 4,000 WP

OPTIONAL BONUSES:

+1,500 Instant Upgrade The Defender upgrades all of its pilots/troops/crews using the Manei Domini creation rules (see p. 120, JHS72). (Do not count their value if using Battle Value rules.)

+1,000 Berith and the Opacus Add to the Attacker's force a Level II of BattleMechs. This should consist of Berith in his *Archangel Berith* and any five members of the Opacus Venatori (see p. 38, SBWB). If this bonus is used, disregard the Berith setup in the Attacker section.

+500 Overkill Add two additional Level I's of Demon battle armor with a skill level of Veteran.

OBJECTIVES

Survive. Destroy/cripple at least two-thirds of the Attacker's force. **(Reward: +4,000 WP)**

Succeed. Destroy/cripple all of the Attacker's force. **(Reward: +2,000 WP)**

Fail. Destroy/cripple less than half of the Attacker's force. **(Penalty: -3,000 WP)**

The Worm Turns. Damocles survives and is present on the battlefield at the end of the track. **(Reward: +1,000 WP)**

End of an Era. Berith is destroyed before the end of Turn 8. **(Reward: +1,000 WP)**

SPECIAL RULES

The following special rules are in effect for this track.

"Damocles"

A highly successful agent, Damocles applies a +2 modifier to all covert operational Checks and any Checks involving intelligence analysis about worlds within the Word of Blake Protectorate. If he is part of a force that opposes a Blakist force with Manei Domini, Damocles goes into a blind rage; he applies a +1 to-hit modifier to all weapon attacks against Domini targets, and a -2 to-hit modifier for weapon attacks against all other targets.

Forty-ninth Shadow Division

None of the units in the Forty-ninth will retreat from battle and will fight to their death unless incapacitated. If incapacitated or crippled, they will suicide their machines through either reactor overload or another method in order to avoid capture. The Blakists will go to any length necessary to cause as much collateral damage as possible.

Forty-ninth Division 'Mechs reduce all heat from outside sources by half, while vehicles and battle armor ignore the effects of fire, and conventional infantry are only destroyed on a 2D6 result of 10+. Additionally, if the Forty-ninth deploys at least 25 percent of its force as battle armor in a scenario, the Division receives a +1 Initiative modifier, and all of its battle armor units receive a -1 target number modifier to all Gunnery and Anti-Mech Skill rolls.

Precentor Berith

Due to his internal computer processor and Berith's extraordinary grasp of tactics, any time Berith is part of a force fielded in a track, the entire Blakist force receives a +2 Initiative modifier for the duration of the track. This bonus is negated, however, if Berith's 'Mech is destroyed, withdraws from the playing area, or receives two or more MechWarrior wounds in one track.

Berith is augmented with the following equipment (see JHS72 and SBWB): Triple Core Processor, Improved Prosthetic Arm/Hand, Pain Shunt, Buffered VDNI, Enhanced Multi-Modal Cybernetic Eye (left), Boosted Communications Implant, Boosted Receiver Implant, and a Secondary Power Supply.

AFTERMATH

When the hunter realized the trap had been reversed, agent Damocles went into a suicidal rage—no doubt antagonized through a series of public taunts from the Manei Domini commander. The fight between the two was rather anticlimactic, however. The Com Guard agent was vaporized in his seat by a concentrated blast from three Opacus BattleMechs.

Apparently after their prime target destroyed and the Republic forces demolished, the Blakists withdrew in proper order, disengaging from your unit in a timely fashion. Whether Berith meant to humiliate you by slipping your grasp or honor you by not calling down the remains of Hell on your head, the outcome was still the same: you and your people lived.

To fight another day? Well, that's always a question to face tomorrow.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

Nothing is heard of again from Berith or the Fifty-third Shadow Division; it's as if they just fell off the face of the Inner Sphere. Doesn't mean there are still contracts out there to pursue and track down leads on other Blakist sympathizers and rogue commanders, though.

NEXT TRACK

None; welcome to the end of the Jihad era.

WHAT LIES BENEATH





WHAT LIES BENEATH

Devlin —

And here, at last, we arrive at the culmination of our great war against the Blakist enemy. I can scarcely believe it myself, but we have defeated the foeman and carved out a new nation from the rubble. Our Republic, my friend, of which we have dreamed for so long. Congratulations are definitely in order. We've earned it.

But let us not get too complacent nor rest on our laurels for too long. There is still much work to be done ahead of us, many obstacles we'll need to overcome. We are mere weeks away from the official birth of the Republic and yet there remain so many things we still need to sort out. The bureaucracy that is slowly being built up both here on Terra and across the worlds of the Protectorate will one day be sufficient to handle the myriad complications of administering a major interstellar nation but for now much of the work rests on our shoulders and the shoulders of those we have chosen to work alongside us.

Not least among the many issues facing us is the fact that we don't yet have possession of all the worlds we want in our Republic. And I don't just mean the Capellan or League worlds that are tenaciously clung to by petty leaders more concerned with posturing for the masses than actually doing something to help rebuild their realms from the devastation of the Jihad. Nearly every House Lord, even those who openly support us and talk a good game about bringing change to the Inner Sphere, has his or her particular sticking point on which hangs the fates of millions. I know it's a rant you and I have shared so many times over these last ten years, but sometimes the casual selfishness of these self-important "nobles" makes me so angry I can easily see why the Word would want to drown them all in fire. That you manage to deal with them on a regular basis without putting bullets into a few heads is a testament to your patience and the correctness of the choice to make you the public face of our venture. I doubt I'd have the mental fortitude to resist my baser urges.

At any rate, if we're to make this thing work in the long run, we'll have to tread carefully in our dealings with the Houses... and the Clans too. Don't think I've forgotten them. On the contrary, just how to handle the prickly bastards weighs on my mind more and more these days. Vlad is the worst of the lot and the sooner he is put down the better it will be for all of us. I suspect that as long as he remains Khan we'll have trouble with all the rest as well; that man is a shit-stirrer of the highest magnitude and I swear I think he deliberately winds the other Khans up just for his amusement. Thankfully some of them aren't quite so bad, with the new Shark Khan actually quite personable. If more of them were like her, my life would be a hell of a lot easier.

Hmm, I've started to ramble on a bit. Before I go completely off the rails, I'm going to attach the latest situation reports my team and I have worked up for each of the major players. I'll wrap things up some at the end, but for all intents and purposes this should give you a good idea where we stand heading into the infancy of the Republic.

— David

ES BENEATH

THE STATES OF THE INNER SPHERE

For the sake of clarity, I am breaking down these overall reports on each major faction (or faction group) into three primary review categories here: Military State, Industrial State, and Political Landscape. Before we dive into the realm-by-realm reviews, allow me to explain the nature of these focus areas a little more completely.

THE MILITARY STATE OF THE INNER SPHERE POWERS

As is to be expected in the wake of a massive war, rebuilding their shattered forces will be the major priority for most—if not all—of the victorious combatants. At least, it will be for those who have enough surviving forces to make the effort worthwhile. Our own long-term goals are a bit different, however, and too successful a rebuilding effort on the part of the Houses and the Clans will be detrimental if we are to achieve the radical restructuring of society that the Republic is intended to presage.

The catch in all of the efforts to rebuild is a lack of an industrial base to supply new weapons and a shortage of manpower to operate them. With the damage done to both by the Word of Blake's rampage and the collateral conflicts that arose out of it, it will be quite some time before any interstellar power is even close to approaching pre-war levels of strength. That gives us a window in which we can steer things the way we want them to go. I'm thinking particularly of our ideas about restricting the size of BattleMech forces across the board; with so many 'Mech factories falling casualty to the Word or to liberating forces, the right economic incentives—backed by public sentiment stirred up by our agents—could effectively force the Houses and even the Clans to draw down the number of machines they field in their armies.

As far as their readiness to engage in further aggression, most of the realms friendly towards us probably won't have the strength to do so for a while longer, neither against the Republic nor one another. The Jihad hurt everyone and only the most foolhardy leaders would want to jump back into that kind of chaos. Which, of course, brings us to the fracturing Free Worlds League and the Capellans. These states pose the most immediate threat to the security of the Republic and will require dealing with sooner rather than later.

Another concern for the victorious Coalition members is losing battle-hardened troops to the bright and shiny future represented by our Republic. Already we've managed to stake claims to a large number of garrison and militia forces from several Houses and through various means—including coercion, bribery and appeals to idealism, alongside other, more honorable methods—have convinced them to "gift" us frontline regiments that they could rebuild themselves. No doubt all of the Lords and Khans privately gloat that they are taking advantage of our naiveté to get us to foot the bill for rebuilding these shattered units, much as they expect us to pay for recovery efforts on worlds they used to own, but what they're really doing is giving us a solid foundation to build a military strong enough to face down any existing army. It may take several decades but we've got the time and we've got the strength of purpose to see it through. One day they'll see just how they've underestimated us and given us the means to kick them where it hurts.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

The following reviews compiled from our various sources cover the major military factors we have been monitoring since the fall of Terra. For specific details of regimental strengths and deployments, I would refer to our recent *Field Report* series. A compilation report, accounting for more recent events, is being prepared as we speak.

THE INDUSTRIAL STATE OF THE INNER SPHERE

In general, the state of industry is the same across the entire Inner Sphere: the Word of Blake's rampage hit everyone hard and devastated whole planetary economies, likely for decades to come. Many critical manufacturers have been pushed to the brink of ruin and will require massive amounts of investment, patience and time to recover anywhere near their former state.

Of course, the main victim of this damage has been the defense industry. I'm not even going to list the many, many production sites destroyed or severely damaged during the Word's decade-long temper tantrum; the impact on the militaries fighting against them is well-documented by this point. The rise of so-called RetroTech has slightly mitigated the effects of this destruction, but the fact remains that with some of the biggest producers hemorrhaging profits and struggling to make war machines to today's advanced standards, the entire military-industrial complex throughout human space has been changed.

Need I spell out how nicely this fits into our plans? As long as we can keep the Houses and Clans from viewing the shortfalls as an opportunity to rebuild bigger and better, that is.

One of the keys to keeping a new arms race from spiraling out of control again will be to place effective limitations on the quantity of BattleMechs that the rebuilt factories churn out. While conventional vehicles and aerospace are devastating devices in their own right, only the BattleMech has achieved such fundamental impact in modern warfare that its neutering would deliver any hope of lasting peace. To that end, we are developing programs and incentives to shift production away from 'Mechs to either other war machines or, preferably, to more constructive output. As many of the components of BattleMech construction can be utilized in other industries—not the least of which is IndustrialMech design—we stand a good chance of making progress in this endeavor.

Of course, it was not just military industries that took a beating. Interstellar production of transportation, communications, luxuries, and even basic necessities were smashed on a great many worlds, sometimes by accident but just as often as part of a deliberate strategy to undermine the anti-Blakist forces by burdening them with a further-diminished civil support. When you are facing collapsing infrastructure, millions of deaths and probably millions more displaced citizens, it becomes a tough call to choose between pursuing the villains who created the situation, or saving as many failing systems as you can to minimize the losses. For all their faults, the Word certainly knew what they were doing in this regard. Even after their defeat was clear to all and the roaches were busy running for cover, they launched their "Bloody Tricentennial" attacks, which spent nearly as much—if not more—effort lashing out at civilian targets as it did military. The effects of this reprehensible assault on defenseless populations went far beyond the monetary damage done to the facilities they targeted, or the human toll of dead and

injured. With this one, short, coordinated campaign of violence, the Word has ensured that its presence will be felt for many years after the end of its own existence.

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE INNER SPHERE

Perhaps the greatest challenge in creating the Republic of the Sphere is figuring out how we fit into the relationships between the existing states that have established themselves many centuries ago. Since the initial Clan invasion in the 3050s, this complex interplay of diplomacy and warfare has changed in many ways, but is still ultimately stuck in the pre-Star League mindsets that condemned the Inner Sphere to three centuries of destructive conflict. The addition of the Clans themselves, as well as the militarization of ComStar and the schism that created the Word of Blake fanatics, shook things up to an extent never seen before, but soon enough—and despite the opportunity presented by the Second League—humanity returned to its status quo where interstellar relations are concerned. The Draconis Combine may have been slightly friendlier towards the Federated Suns, and the Free Worlds League might have enjoyed a new role as arms dealer to the other realms, to mention but two examples, but for the most part, relationships between the Houses remained a basically stagnant state of distrust.

Now we are dropping a brand-new state into the midst of all this and it is our responsibility to figure out how to make it work. Who can we trust? Who is waiting for the first opportunity to stab us in the back? Can we use one realm's paranoia towards its enemies to our advantage, or is it better for the Republic's survival in the long run to defuse those tensions?

Publicly, I'll say what our PR people want me to say and claim the moral high ground and a position of optimism, leading by example, but this is us, Devlin, and I'll say it here straight. With our survival at stake, every trick we can use to ensure the continued health and safety of the Republic is fair game. Military force is great and all but true strength lies at the conference table and in the backroom deals of government. The weaknesses of our neighbors are our best weapons with which to achieve our goals, and their failures to truly unite—internally or externally—are problems we can exploit for years to come.

Key to a number of those problems, in fact, is an issue near and dear to our plans: the nobility. You and I have long desired to weaken the hold these parasites have on the people and the troubles they stir up among and between the Houses are a perfect encapsulation as to why. It might even be in our best interest to encourage the divisions between the House Lords and their troublesome nobles. I'm not saying that it's likely we'll be able to do away with the feudal system completely because, frankly, that's a huge undertaking I'm not entirely convinced we'd ever find the resources or backing to tackle (the entrenchment of the class system goes far too deep into the hearts of our societies). But have a look at the data we've compiled on the powers of the Inner Sphere; you'll see quite a few opportunities for us to take advantage of their corruption and self-serving nature to advance our greater agenda.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

THE MILITARY STATE OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

Continuing to work well with us even now, the Lyrans consider us their friendliest neighbor—a particularly welcome scenario given their common borders with the Clans, the Draconis Combine, and the fractured Free Worlds. Indeed, while most realms surrendered their traditional territories to the Republic due largely to the sheer damage done to those worlds and their respective militaries' lack of ability and resolve to endure another conflict, the Lyrans have spun the affair as an excellent pretext to rid themselves of the most problematic elements of their Skye Province.

THE SUPPLY CHAIN

As an industrial giant, the Lyrans have always been able to lean on their military-industrial complex to provide its armies with better and bigger units, usually quicker than their enemies could. That ability serves the LAAF well, particularly in defensive campaigns, where their border forces might be bled by the enemy one day, only to receive fresh replacements from the interior the next. The Word of Blake threw a monkey wrench into that machine with their high mobility and willingness to target industries for destruction, not capture. This enabled the Word to ravage the Lyrans' industries with deep raids, including the formidably protected Hesperus II. Realizing the danger almost immediately, the LAAF found its supply chains drying up fast and desperately turned to the non-military industry to bail them out. Several civilian factories retooled their lines to produce RetroTech 'Mechs. Only now, with the emergency passed, have most of these manufacturers returned to their more familiar products (though a few remain, selling primarily to mercenaries and external parties).

The dramatic drop and recovery of military manufacturing exacerbated a perennial problem that has plagued the Lyrans for centuries. Beset by a leadership that tends to reward those who play at politics better than they command the battlefield, backgrounds and connections continued to factor in to which commanders received which supplies for the early half of the



Jihad. The Social General isn't gone by a long shot, but that role suffered greatly as the state's very existence was threatened and Adam Steiner assumed the Archonship.

This was most evidenced in the patchwork hardware many low-prestige LAAF forces maintained and the frequent disruptions in upper level military communication as rival social climbers competed for the throne's ear. As a result, the Lyrans relied more than ever on their mid-level officers to command the battles. We can only hope—for House Steiner's sake—that this time the lessons have been learned.

INTERNAL TENSIONS

Although the Lyrans are not suffering from internal dissension quite as badly as their other Successor State neighbors have, internal politics affect their military nonetheless. While the eternally rebellious Isle of Skye now lies within our Republic,

albeit without the prized worlds of Hesperus II and Solaris, the leaders on Tharkad have gained a measure of political stability. Unfortunately, this has been countered by the refusal of several semi-autonomous Archonettes—most notably Inarcs and Kaumberg—to return the troops under their control to LCAF authority.

In addition to making coordination of the overall military more difficult, this could result in a future showdown that will result in Lyrans killing Lyrans, further retarding an already slow military recovery. While each Archonette has relatively few troops under its command, and all of them together boast—at most—a handful of BattleMech regiments, these regional power blocs are impacting the LAAF's ability to cover the borders, especially along the Periphery fringe, where pirate activity among non-Archonette worlds is up sixty percent. If a diplomatic answer to this hamstringing of their forces cannot be found soon, we may expect one of the Archonettes to become an example to the others.

CLASHING VALUES

On the whole, the Jihad proved an interesting time for the LAAF; after the initial years of favoritism wore off and supplies grew scarcer, the rise of Adam Steiner as General of the Armies and then Archon restored some common sense

WHAT LIES BENEATH

to the quartermasters' distribution of replacement units. By the latter years of the war, supplies shipped faster to forces that were more proximal to combat zones and more reliable in battle, forcing prestige commanders staffed by status-seeking commanders to show more dedication and combat initiative. This egalitarianism by chaos has faded somewhat as the state of emergency recedes; the Lyran Guards and Royal Guards are once again at the top of the pecking order, for example, while regional militias only rank above the training cadres in priority. The outcome of this waxing and waning has produced a varied mix of technologies in all of the LAAF's regiments, while overall raising the quality and reliability of the LAAF's remaining troops. This change, unfortunately, will prove all too transient if the tendency for providing better gear to the more politically favored commands returns to its Civil War strength anew.

The clash of old values versus new wisdom for the LAAF is nowhere nearly as apparent as it is in the arguments Archon Steiner routinely has with General of the Armies Rebecca Simons. Unlike her predecessors, Simons—who hails from common origins, in stark contrast to the bulk of the LAAF High Command staff—has not backed down from her staunch views against what she considers the LAAF's "spoiled elite". This attitude has earned her many enemies in the Royal Court and more than a few heated confrontations with the Archon behind closed doors. Considering that Simons' attitude matches that of Steiner's own before the Jihad, the disputes seem unusual, but now that he rules a troubled, war-weary realm, it is apparent that the Archon is hoping a more "inclusive" armed force will be needed for the time being. In this, the Archon is clearly the wiser of the two, though Simons' dedication to raising the quality and competence of the Lyran officer corps is something to be encouraged as well.

THE DEFENSIVE SITUATION

Though the loss of highly populated worlds like Skye and New Earth may have been a blow to the Alliance's coffers in terms of tax revenue and the manufacturing output of Skye, retaining the strategically and economically more valuable worlds of Hesperus, Solaris, and others made the loss bearable to House Steiner. It also lessened the state's defensive strain in the region, by placing the burden of Skye factories on us, while freeing the Lyrans to focus greater defenses on Hesperus. Meanwhile, treaty stipulations between our two realms call for us to provide the Alliance with access to Skye's

valuable aerospace manufacturing output, a "favored-trade" status that further solidifies a friendly border with the Steiners.

The transfer of Skye and its defenses to the Republic was spun so well that it resulted in some spirited celebrations among the LAAF, though there was an awkward moment or two when the Skye Jaegers actually elected to remain with the Alliance instead. (Rumor has it that the "Going Away" party supplies provided to the Jaegers by the over-eager quartermasters were used instead to stage a "Farewell to Blake" party.) Individual defections from the Jaegers and other commands weakened several LAAF formations in the region even further than their wartime combat losses, leaving much of the remaining Skye Province defenders comparatively weak for the time being.

Further affecting the LAAF's recovery, while simultaneously adding to its strain, are the smaller conflicts that the Alliance has become embroiled in. The biggest of these have been the border skirmishes with Tamarind that began during the Jihad. Despite coming out on top in the end, there was little permanent gain on the Alliance's side. In addition to demonstrating a weakened chain of command between the Buena Province and Tharkad, some Lyran forces suffered up to twenty percent casualties in these battles. Fortunately for the Lyrans, Tamarind's greater losses will help ensure the former League state cannot launch reprisals for some time.

Potentially more disastrous, in the meantime, was the loss of the Fourth Alliance Guards on Poulsbo to the Regular bombardment there—a heavy blow to the psyche and morale of the Alliance. The Regulans' half-hearted apologies and claims of doing the deed "for the greater good" of destroying the Word of Blake have comforted few Lyrans, and there have been calls for bloody retaliation against the Principality. If nothing is done to defuse the situation, we can expect that the enmity between the states to increase.

Combined with the troubles on the border with the former League, the Alliance is also victim to pirates along its outer rim, while two Crusader Clans now share a border with the Lyrans. Given these threats to Alliance security, we should take every opportunity to assure House Steiner that not only are we their only friendly neighbor state, but that we can also provide safe travel and trade routes to their other key ally, the Federated Suns. As long as the Steiners stay in power and the Lyrans retain the attributes that have served them well through the centuries, a stable Alliance can only strengthen our mutual defenses.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE INDUSTRIAL STATE OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

After decades of relentless competition with the Free Worlds League for the top industrial power in the Sphere, the Lyran Alliance is once again alone at the top by a wide margin since the League's complete political collapse. The Lyran economy is slowly getting back into shape, with its postwar recovery efforts on all fronts receiving quite a shot in the arm in the form of government subsidies. While it would behoove us to monitor the breadth of the Alliance's entire manufacturing sector, this report will focus primarily on their military productivity.

The damage done by the Blakists was extensive; even though the Lyrans are still capable of outbuilding almost any two other realms today, they have to make hard choices on what to prioritize. The loss of several prime industrial worlds to the Republic were not crippling, but it still put a noticeable dent in the Alliance's capacity, enough to make them serious trade partners with us, and leave them beholden to our output for years to come.

ALARION (BUENA) PROVINCE

Buena Province (formerly the Alarion province) is primarily home to StarCorps' Lyran factories. StarCorps' Loburg facility came through unscathed, but the Son Hoa plants suffered significant damage in the last Blakist raid, leading to rumors that the conglomerate may consolidate their facilities on better-defended Loburg. A scattering of other manufacturers, such as Mountain Wolf, fill out Buena Province's production abilities.

The biggest loss to the region is, of course, its former capital. Along with the billions killed as the planet Alarion perished, the orbital shipyards there were destroyed as well, stripping away the Alliance's only WarShip-capable manufacturing site, and cutting deeply into the LAAF's aerospace supply. Having Gibbs as the only significant shipyard is too dangerous, so look for another shipyard to be built somewhere in Lyran space in the next few decades.

BOLAN PROVINCE

Offering little in the way of finished products ("little" being a relative term in the Alliance), Bolan's military manufacturing was not severely damaged by the Jihad. The BattleMech facilities on Furillo were instrumental in keeping the LAAF equipped, but it is perhaps Nashan's facilities on Gallery that proved even more important. With a dearth of military forces available, the satellite systems became a force multiplier, allowing fewer forces to safeguard a larger area.

The loss of Skye gave Bolan greater importance as it will nominally absorb Hesperus and Solaris within its borders. Both of these vital manufacturing worlds were hit hard during the

Jihad, with Solaris losing almost all production capability. Solaris is slowly recovering the ability to perform low-scale BattleMech construction, but these remain primarily for the arenas—an economic lode the Lyrans are loathe to disrupt, even for defense. Hesperus II, the crown jewel of Lyran military industry, was lost for the first time since becoming a Steiner possession, and suffered heavily during its recapture. Despite the damage, the plant can still churn out large numbers of over a dozen different 'Mech chassis and nearly as many tanks. We expect a few more lines to be rebuilt while others are simply being cleaned up and mothballed pending a more complete survey of the LAAF's defense needs.

COVENTRY PROVINCE

It is never easy being number two, especially when Hesperus II can out-produce the venerated Coventry Metal Works while still recovering from the effects of the infighting. Throw in their own damage and CMW—the pinnacle of military industry in the Coventry Province—probably has the farthest to go of any of the Lyran facilities that can be restored.

Luckily for the Alliance, Coventry is not the only planet in the province. Numerous smaller BattleMech factories are found throughout the region, from Norse Storm Technologies on Loxely to Defiance's secret R&D plant on Kwangjong-Ni. (Our operatives have been unable to penetrate the security surrounding this site, but given that it is a Defiance site, we can be sure its output will feed the LAAF at some point in our future.) Opportunities for purchases are more likely from the smaller manufacturers, particularly Blue Shot Weapons and J.B. BattleMechs. Blackstone is a questionable matter at present, currently building war materiel only for the defiant Inarcs Archonette.

DONEGAL PROVINCE

Home of the ravaged Tharkad, Donegal Province is now the main aerospace manufacturing hub of the Alliance. Gibbs possesses their sole JumpShip production facilities and WarShip maintenance capabilities, and shares much of the LAAF's fighter output with Tharkad. Luckily, their forward-thinking use of OmniFighters may help alleviate the losses of Alarion and Skye to a certain extent.

In addition to what the Blakists did not destroy on Tharkad, Arc-Royal has continued with its industrial expansion, producing close to ten different BattleMechs for the Alliance (in addition to what is made for the Exiled Wolves). Adding to the Lyran capabilities, the ancient capital of Arcturus has rebuilt some of its old arms facilities and is producing a variety of armaments in small quantities. Sadly, the provincial capital lost its military production capabilities during the Word of Blake's nuclear raid early in the war, delivering yet another blow to the Alliance's diminishing fighter fleet.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE LYRAN ALLIANCE

As different as they are, none of the Successor States can escape the fact that politics plays an immense role in the governing of their realms, no matter who sits on the throne—or, in the case of the Lyran Alliance for large portion of the Jihad, *thrones*.

With Tharkad blockaded and Archon Peter Steiner-Davion trapped behind enemy lines, power dispersed to a great many people. Much of the LAAF was kept under the command of the General of the Armies Adam Steiner, but as the chaos continued various autonomous Archonettes were introduced to manage local defenses, harkening back to an earlier point in Lyran history. While the hope was that these dispersed command hubs would function as effectively as the Arc-Royal Defense Cordon, the outcome was a diffusing of power and the inadvertent creation of petty warlords. Meanwhile, those members of the Estates General not killed or trapped on Tharkad convened on Melissia to manage the more mundane matters of state, achieving a level of authority typically above their station. (We need to remember, always, that the Estates General is not a congress or parliament, but an advisory body the Archons usually heed or ignore at will, yet for a time in the Jihad, this body of minor nobles did assume greater authority over the infrastructure.)

Operation SCOUR offered an opportunity to see Lyran leadership and teamwork in action. Led by Robert Kelswa-Steiner, the Lyrans demonstrated that they could serve as a powerful offensive force, but they also showed that they could still fall into old habits at a moment's notice. The Seventh Donegal Guards' dust-up with Sixth Pesht Regulars on Lyons demonstrated that most clearly. To his credit, Kelswa-Steiner held the rest of his task force on course, despite his own serious injuries later on, and that heroic image helped make it possible for his Isle of Skye to join us, taking another chunk out of Lyran leadership (though in this case, Tharkad likely breathed a sign of relief).

With the death of Archon Peter Steiner, Adam Steiner assumed the reins of power as Archon in a realm that has had far too many heads. Few, when gifted with power, are willing to relinquish it—and in the Alliance, the poster child for this truth has to be Duchess Tamari LaRue, ruler of the Inarcs Archonette. Citing “a continuing state of emergency”, she has refused to return her authority over the military forces and industries in her region back to Tharkad. At some point, the Archon must resolve the situation or we will see an Alliance more reminiscent of the Free Worlds League than the Commonwealth. Already, the remaining Archonettes are watching this stand-off with eager

interest, no doubt gathering allies while the rest of the power players in the realm are lining up to take sides themselves, each looking for his or her own angles.

How well and in what manner the Archon rebuilds his power base will be the main event, but Lyran politics is filled with plenty of additional conflict to keep the gossip sheets and noble courts busy. The armed forces are always a hotbed of political intrigue, where who one knows can be easily as important as one's battlefield prowess. The secretive Brotherhood of Cincinnatus still pulls strings in backrooms, while new alliances are forming as the meritocracy of the Jihad fades away. Recently appointed, General of the Armies Rebecca Simons has declared that reforms are forthcoming, but many have pledged to do so only to crumble under the pressure of the old guard.

The Estates General hopes to retain a more prominent position than it claimed before the Jihad, as they seem to be consolidating their hold over the rebuilding process, while leaving the more volatile decisions in the Archon's hands. Determining where the funds from the national coffers go always brings out the lobbyists and closed-door meetings with the titans of industry; this time, it will be on a scale bigger than ever. Even more interesting are the new level of interested parties. Where Defiance and Coventry argue over their shares, the companies that provide their machinery and raw materials will be jockeying for position as well.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Externally, the Lyran situation is filled with landmines. Two hungry Clans eye Lyran worlds and do not respond to diplomacy like the rest of the Inner Sphere. The rise of the Black Dragons in the Combine is a flashback to a different time in Kuritan society; one where the Lyrans were viewed simply as easy prey. How both realms negotiate their recovery will be important not only to them, but to our safety as well. The vacuum of the Free Worlds League may provide Lyran diplomats with a golden opportunity to play the various mini-states against one another, though Tamarind is still upset about the beating they took from LAAF opportunists. Relations with the Confederation government are cool, but Lyran businesses appear eager to gain a foothold there, a development we need to keep our eye on.

And of course we are the lesser of the evils on House Steiner's borders, working well with the Archon and his allies in the Suns. We have secured our hold on Skye by leaving Hesperus and Solaris under Tharkad's control, alleviating a long-time political headache in exchange for trade agreements. We may need to allay any further fears about our intent to take more worlds, but the Alliance has enough enemies to concern itself with for some time.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE DRACONIS COMBINE

THE MILITARY STATE OF THE DRACONIS COMBINE

Despite their cooperation with the Allied forces in liberating Protectorate worlds and in taking Terra from the Word of Blake, it has already become alarmingly clear that the Draconis Combine's cooperative spirit only goes so far. The ISF has already clamped down on information sharing in our hunt for potential Blakist holdouts in Combine territory, regardless of the fact that these threats might be on worlds proximal to Terra. Obviously, this has hampered our efforts to present a complete and accurate picture, but with reasonable confidence the following is presented in regards to the present state of the Draconis Combine Mustered Soldiery.

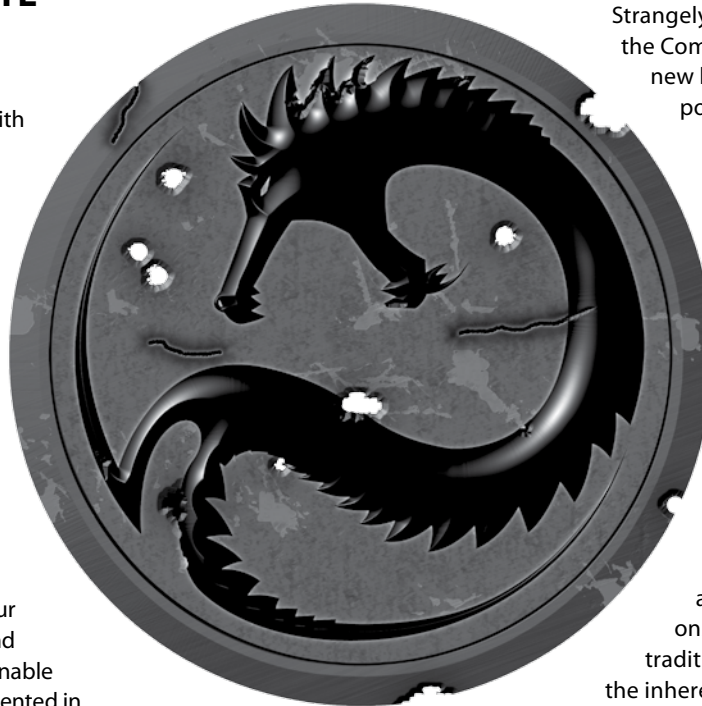
Ignoring all the rhetoric usually associated with the various militaries and their relative quality, the DCMS remains the gold standard by which the Inner Sphere militaries measure themselves in terms of individual skill. Unfortunately, this skill has always been hampered by the same fatal flaw that helped the Inner Sphere end the Clan invasion: hubris. In their warriors' quest for personal honor and glory, the DCMS' samurai may be superior to any of their foes in the Federated Suns or Lyran Commonwealth, but their adherence to honor rules has always dogged them. This made it possible for their more clever—or merely more numerous—enemies to overcome the Dragon's superior battle skills with guile or sheer attrition.

With time, the evolution of the DCMS under the reign of Coordinator Theodore Kurita saw no decrease in the individual quality of its warriors, but did see a reduction in the reliance upon personal honor as the primary guiding authority, making it possible to improve coordination between disparate unit types. While the MechWarrior and his BattleMech remains the pinnacle of military prestige and service, the respect paid to tankers, infantry, and pilots was elevated. No longer is it necessarily a MechWarrior who commands a battle, but simply the highest-ranking officer.

THREATS WITHIN...

Strangely, the reforms that have brought the Combine's martial prowess to new heights has become the focal point for a recurring "reactionary rebellion" in the form of the Black Dragon Society. Risen and crushed time and again since the days of the Clan invasion, this movement has proven nothing so clearly as the facts that its adherents are stubborn and that many among the DCMS can identify with them. Indeed, thanks to constant uprisings and the Dragon's grievous losses during the Jihad, many of Theodore's reforms are weakening before the onslaught of the military's more traditional elements, bringing with it the inherent prejudices and philosophies that have begun to experience another renewal in the ranks.

The Black Dragon Society so proliferated throughout the Combine before seeking the ouster of the Coordinator that even now the ISF rightly suspects all strata of society harbor sentiments for these counter-reformists. Ironically, that very suspicion contributed greatly to the Combine's willingness to lend us troops; by consigning to us potential threats to their internal security (such as the Ghost Regiments), rather than abduct and execute them as in days not long past, House Kurita sought to remove them as a direct threat to its rule while nominally retaining their combat capability as part of the Dragon's Might. This was a dreadful realization after the fact on our part, for it meant that we had potential agitators and terrorists in our midst, as well as the requisite ISF observers to watch every move made by us and by the possible dissidents. Though we expected the ISF's activities, the Black Dragon element was something we had not specifically planned for. Fortunately, we experienced no internal dissent. Whether this is because the alleged traitors were actually innocent all along, or they merely concealed their loyalties for the sake of future endeavors is anyone's guess. Nevertheless, we should scrutinize all Combine expatriates who seek to join the RAF.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

...AND THREATS WITHOUT

Whatever the causes, the Combine's reticence in lending us garrison troops during the Jihad has grown into full-fledged obstinacy in the war's aftermath. Already, they are insisting that we return their planetary defense forces, while also requesting more incentives to justify the ceding of the Dieron Military District to us—all in the name of appeasing the Coordinator's military commanders and Warlords. Included among their demands are percentages of output from the various factory worlds within our borders. Since New Samarkand is aware of the products their former factories produced, these requests are precise and detailed down to the last medium laser and communications system. Despite our intentions to seek reduced military production, the Combine's officials are insistent—almost to the point of desperation—and a huge reason for this evidently stems from an unspoken fear of the Snow Raven threat, as well as emboldened pirates on their Periphery frontiers.

The Draconis Combine is right to be paranoid. Between the pirate menace, multiple hostile Clans, two traditionally hostile Inner Sphere neighbors, and a new, uncertain neighbor in the form of our Republic, the realm is beset as never before. Given their traditional bent, we expect them not to be cautious, but aggressive. If nothing else, this stance saved them in the War of 3039, and since they know their neighbors to be as battered as they are themselves, we can only hope the Combine's warlords temper their enthusiasm to low level raiding rather than full conflict.

With insularity returning to the fore in Combine society, the reformations of the DCMS, still seen as foreign in origin, run the risk of dying out under Coordinator Hohiro's reign. Still, given the difficulties associated with returning their BattleMech numbers to pre-Jihad levels in a timely fashion—especially in light of the loss of so much of their military industrial complex—any effort by the DCMS to return to its elitist roots would be extraordinarily slow. If, in the meantime, their code of honor and the military stratification that came with it also return to the fore, the “class differences” between MechWarriors and the “lesser” (non-Mech) warriors will only increase friction in the ranks. Though unlikely to lead to a civil war, any such internal conflict is something we should pay particular attention to, as the Dragon's traditional means of alleviating internal pressures is to focus its aggressions against a foreign target.

THE DRAGON'S TEETH

One way in which the DCMS is attempting to alleviate internal pressures is by divesting itself of potentially troublesome units, such as the Ninth Sword of Light. The ISF's distrust of these former Second Sword of Light troops (who renounced their former Black Dragon brethren and fought against their

attempted coup on Luthien) never abated during the Jihad, even after the regiment's heroic actions during SCOUR. Thus the Ninth—only newly commissioned by the DCMS at the time of the Republic's birth—was the perfect unit to gift to us. The quality of these warriors cannot be questioned, nor should we openly suspect potential disloyalty unless we wish to drive them from our own ranks as well.

The rest of the Sword of Light brigade remains unwavering in their loyalty to the Coordinator, though their reduced numbers dampens their fervor and quality. As ever, these elite forces are receiving priority supplies and replacements, ensuring that once a full accounting is made of the restored units, the Sword of Light will once again serve as the DCMS' crown jewel.

The various Regulars regiments rank below the Sword of Light, but other commands are being neglected completely. With the Legion of Vega's homeworld now a part of the Republic, the DCMS has been delivering these regiments zero supplies. (Given that oversight, we may be able to lure these forces to our banner simply by offering them a base on Vega.) Meanwhile, the Ryuken formations are so shattered they cannot even field a single full regiment between the three surviving commands. The Ghost Regiments are a curiosity; once shunned by the ruling elite, these forces are third in line for replacements, trailing the Regular regiments, but at least better off than the Legions of Vega. Distrust of these criminal-born elements, suspected of complicity with the Black Dragons, explains their assignment to the Coalition push on Terra and their relegation to lower tier status, but—as stated earlier—these DCMS forces acquitted themselves well during SCOUR.

The other prominent Combine forces, including the Proserpina Hussars, An Ting Legion and Amphigean Light Assault Group, are being treated a little better than the Ghost Regiments, but they are further down the list for replacements simply because their numbers are so low.

The DCMS' recovery effort is being hampered by internal politics and redistricting. With the loss of Dieron to the Republic, and Galedon to the “Curse” plague, the Coordinator has worked up an entirely new Military District structure for his realm. Complicating matters further is the issue of Algedi and the Arkab Legions, who both remain reluctant to reconcile fully with the DCMS or the Coordinator himself. Even though the effective existence of the Azami Brotherhood was settled when the Azami and the Combine agreed to cede all Brotherhood worlds but Algedi to the Republic, and then establishing Algedi as a semi-neutral border haven for Azami who wished to retain their Combine loyalties, the DCMS leadership is still having trouble smoothing out the hostilities that erupted during the Jihad.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE INDUSTRIAL STATE OF THE DRACONIS COMBINE

While never the industrial powerhouse of the Inner Sphere, the Draconis Combine nevertheless has always had a high-quality military-industrial base to support the DCMS. As with the other Successor States, the Jihad saw industrial losses in the Combine mount until they were the worst since the First Succession War. Compounding the losses from both Blakist and the Black Dragon Society actions, the Dragon also lost a number of important industrial sites to us when they finally agreed cede much of the Dieron Military District to our Republic.

All told, the Combine lost upwards of thirty percent of their military industry as a result of the Jihad and its attendant conflicts. The following is an overview by district of the realm's industrial status. Their mobile assembly sites are unlisted, but were last reported to be stationed at Dover. The tactical advantage of these immense ships is unmatched by any other Inner Sphere power and should be accorded top priority in maintaining updated intelligence as to their location at all times.

PESHT MILITARY DISTRICT

Luthien suffered nuclear attack and Blakist occupation for several years against a backdrop of Society insurrection. The capital's eventual liberation only meted out more damage. As a result, all of Luthien Armor Works' main plants were complete losses. The rest of Luthien's industry was heavily damaged, but the Combine's efficient engineers and scientists have returned all but the BBP Industries plant to full production. (BBP is expected to resume full capacity within three months.)

Minor damage to Avon's Matabushi DropShip factory was repaired a few years ago. Qandahar's Dow-Nexus plant was more extensively damaged, and so those facilities only came back to full operational status six months ago.

BENJAMIN MILITARY DISTRICT

Unlike the other districts, the Benjamin Military District reported no military-industrial losses during the war. In fact, the addition of facilities on Kajikazawa increased the number of factory lines in this region. New construction has been kept under the tightest secrecy, but we have known for some time of the factories being raised on Dover and Tok Do. These will not be operational for at least two years per our intel, but without the need to repair all the factories they ceded to us, the Combine may be able to divert additional resources to accelerate the completion of these new sites.

NEW SAMARKAND MILITARY DISTRICT

The loss of both Galedon and An Ting to the Curse of Galedon plague were heavy blows to the Galedon District and the Combine as a whole. Industry, however, suffered surprisingly minimal damage here. Heavy damage to all facilities on Midway took them offline until the last few years of the Jihad. The Midway shipyards currently seem to be capable of new JumpShip construction, but all slips have been filled with JumpShips undergoing repair for the past year. The Telfar BattleMechs plant there is still under repair, but should reach full capacity within a year.

More important is the political structure of this district. In recognition of its historical importance and its current status as the capital of the realm, New Samarkand has been named the new command center for an eponymous Military District. At least part of this is due to the increased industrial importance of this world. Construction of various units was relocated here during the Jihad, and there is no indication that these lines will be relocated in the future. This has prompted additional defense forces and effectively returned prestige lost to the world centuries ago when Luthien supplanted New Samarkand as the Combine capital.

The new BBP Industries line on New Samarkand has yet to come online, and we remain in the dark as to what DropShip(s) will be built there. Intel indicates upgrades to the Independence plant may allow them to produce chassis that, originally built on Quentin, are currently lost to the DCMS.

DIERON MILITARY DISTRICT

We remain uncertain as to the fate of Dieron. While the Combine was ultimately agreeable (if extremely reluctant) to cede other worlds of this district to us, they were considerably more obstinate regarding the district capital. Though they eventually did agree—pending our promise to allow time to relocate the governmental apparatus—we should not be surprised at the reports of the Dieron District Gymnasium being dismantled and moved off-planet. Considering the skill of the Combine's teams at doing the same with factories exhibited during the Jihad, we should not be surprised.

Meanwhile, their cession of Al Na'ir, Altair, Kervil, Kessel, Quentin, Saffel, Shimonita and Yorii has gained us a number of functional, if damaged, factory sites. The Combine did extract guarantees from us to provide them with varying percentages of output from these factories, much as we promised the same to the Lyrans for the factories on Skye. Considering the obvious willingness of the DCMS to fight us over control, this seemed a minor and reasonable concession.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE DRACONIS COMBINE

Of our allies in the Coalition campaign, none (except, perhaps, the Ghost Bears) exhibited the same combination of proficiency and savagery as the warriors of the Draconis Combine. Personal honor demanded that these samurai exterminate their enemy with extreme prejudice and no mercy. For their shattered worlds, fallen Coordinator, and decimated populace, they carried out the demands of their honor with terrifying efficiency.

When Terra was won and accounting for the toll of victory began, the Combine had arguably suffered more than any of the other members of our alliance. Not only had their national capital fallen, but so had several district and prefecture capitals, either due to the sheer level of wartime devastation as seen on Dieron, or because of the shameful need to halt the spread of an incurable plague as on Galedon. The notion of simply *giving* worlds to us to form the Republic of the Sphere was almost laughable, and there was enough vitriol in some of the responses that for a time we feared another war could result. Three generations ago simply ceding worlds to a neighbor would have been unthinkable to the Dragon, but those times are past—for now. Though it still struggles with its reactionary elements, the new order of the Combine remains behind the will of its new Coordinator.

Inaugurated in an ocean of blood, Hohiro Kurita assumed control of his realm under the worst of circumstances. He was barely saved from the death pit of Dieron by DEST commandos and the remnants of the Black Watch, much like his escape from the Clans on Turtle Bay and Teniente during the Clan Invasion two decades earlier. His efforts in prosecuting the war were efficient and very much in keeping with the highest scoring graduate in the Sun Zhang Academy's history. His re-tasking of the DCMS to eliminate both the Black Dragons and take the fight back to the Blakists was nothing short of astounding.

Now that the war with the Blakists has wound down, the Coordinator must appease the hawks in his military while also appearing as a larger than life hero to the people. Simply giving away worlds to the Republic that were won by the blood of Combine samurai and citizens was simply unthinkable. Instead, Hohiro had to consider the larger picture. After the beating taken by the DCMS, they were in no condition to mount a new conflict against the Coalition forces that would surely support our Republic. Doing so would

have destroyed the Combine as both Clan and Inner Sphere neighbors alike pounced on his flanks.

Hohiro's calculation of the odds of success versus the need to rebuild his military and defend his borders was cunning, to say the least. Knowing that we desired the industry on a number of the worlds for our own recovery, balanced against the costs of rebuilding these worlds on the broader level—an effort the Draconis Combine would be hard-pressed to afford—he leveraged ownership of the worlds against us for significant portions of the military production there. The mutual respect between Hohiro and yourself played no small part in his decision, either, and the agreement saved face for all sides.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Combine's political stance toward the Republic now is much more favorable than towards its other neighbors. Considering that the current populations of the Republic worlds along House Kurita's border were once Combine citizens themselves, even the Warlords of the Dragon would be reluctant to levy war against them.

The Combine's other neighbors, however, receive no such benefit. The Snow Ravens are a particular target of the Dragon's enmity. Their arrival has upset a delicate balance of power along the Periphery border that persisted for decades. While the Outworlds Alliance was both a trading partner and a peaceful neighbor of minimal threat, the Ravens are an ambitious and hostile faction at least partly responsible for the death of a key Combine world. Indeed, as soon as peace was secured on our mutual border, Hohiro was freed from defending against the Republic, and gained additional assets to devote to protecting his state from the new Clan threat.

The complicating matter in the Combine leadership is *Gunji no Kanrei* Kiyamori Minamoto. There are too many indications to dismiss that support the notion that Minamoto himself is a Black Dragon. While he has directed purges against the movement, the inescapable conclusion is that these acts merely wiped out the more expendable members of the Society, allowing the rest to escape. If true, this means the Coordinator's closest confidant is actually one of his deadliest enemies, and another coup attempt like the one on Luthien in 3067 stands a much greater likelihood of success. We must be cautious in our surveillance. Until we can be certain, we cannot divulge our suspicions and be seen as meddling in the Dragon's affairs. Once we have ironclad proof, of course, we could gain the Coordinator's favor by exposing this insurgent threat so close to the throne.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE FORMER FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

THE MILITARY STATE OF THE FORMER FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

Although the Free Worlds League lies in pieces, it still represents a quadrant of human-occupied space filled with powerful states—states that have inherited the remnants of what was one of the most powerful House armies before the Jihad. We thus will break down the state of these military forces by the provinces that have risen to assume control over most of this region.

THE DUCHY OF ANDURIEN

With Duchess Dalma Humphreys pursuing a policy of political and economic cooperation with the surrounding states, the Rangers simply need to provide a strong enough bite to deter others from thinking Andurien's wares are easier to take than purchase. As a result, Andurien's defense forces—the Andurien Rangers—have proven to be tenacious defenders in the few instances they have been challenged, but lack sufficient numbers and support for offensive operations. Dame Humphreys realizes that tenacity and patriotism alone won't save her Duchy from destruction if any of the neighboring powers decide to truly apply force to the task, but luckily, Andurien's native aerospace industry has had little difficulty in putting top-of-the-line fighters in the hands of its talented pilots.

The Rangers' ground assets are rebuilding more slowly than the aerospace arm; conventional units currently make up a larger portion of these new regiments, which prompted the Rangers' overall commander, Major General Tracey Fenton, to reorganize these forces into four-battalion regiments in 3076. Each Rangers regiment nominally consists of one pure BattleMech battalion and three combined arms battalions, made up of mixed companies that typically include one 'Mech lance, one vehicle platoon, and one infantry platoon. Ideally, these infantry are intended to be battle armored, but with no native battlesuit production facilities in the Duchy, not all are so equipped. Those that are often wear imported Longinus or Theseus armor.

As part of the separation of Andurien from the League, Dame Humphreys restored the provincial colors and insignia the FWLM had eliminated in its push for standardization. Rangers warriors now wear the white and buff with pride, once again seeing their true loyalties reflected in their uniform.

THE MARIK COMMONWEALTH

The Army of the Marik Commonwealth is both the largest military force in the former Free Worlds

League and the one that represents the greatest threat to us.

With the Gryphons and the closely allied

Stewart Dragoons refusing

to withdraw from Stewart or Kalidasa, and the Second Marik

Militia recently taking up a threatening

posture on Hamilton, it seems unlikely

that we can convince Captain-General Corinne Marik to back down on her claims

to these worlds. Further, unlike most of the ex-FWLM, the AMSC is rapidly recovering its strength with large numbers of combat-experienced

troops. If the AMSC has a weakness, it is a shortage

of aerospace assets. The fighting to eject the Blakists

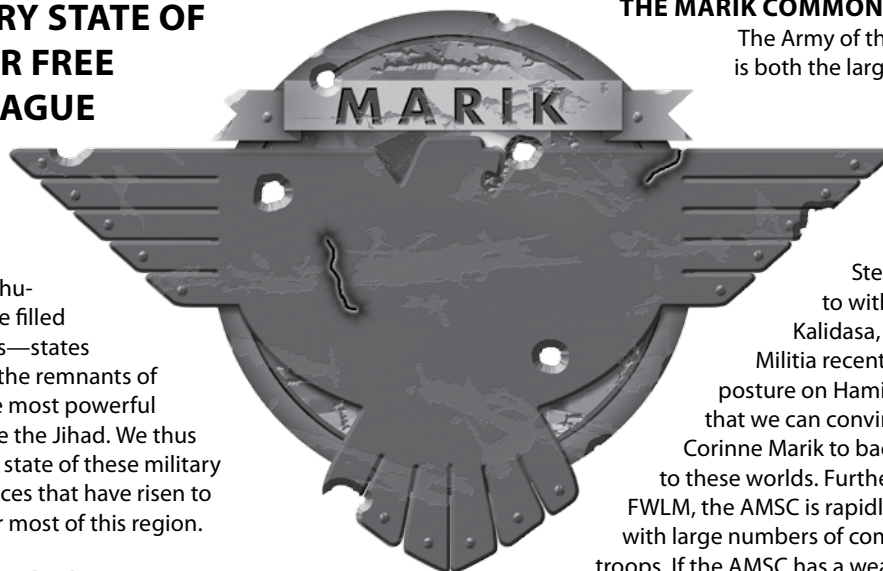
saw many fighter wings and DropShip flotillas devastated as the Blakists rained nuclear fire upon their former puppets.

After years of relying on the industry of the entire League, the Commonwealth's ability to replace its aerospace craft is extremely limited, and most regiments' air arms are scraping by with the bare minimum equipment.

Unable to obtain supplies from many manufacturers, Imperator Automatic Weaponry has stepped in to fill the gap. Many BattleMechs in Marik forces have been modified to mount Imperator supplied autocannons, with heavy and assault-grade Ultra autocannon becoming increasingly popular after the street-by-street fighting to eject the Word from Atreus. So common are such modifications amongst the Eleventh Atrean Dragoons that were it not for the purple eagle emblem many might mistake them for a Davion unit.

THE DUCHY OF ORIENTE

The pompously rendered "Duke's and Duchess's Own Corps of Fusiliers and Hussars" is second only to the AMSC in terms of military might among the ex-League states. The Blakist assault on Oriente shattered its orbital defenses, but delivered relatively minimal damage to the ground forces—most of which quickly recouped. While Oriente may have escaped some of the worst of the Jihad, the Duchy has yet to see the shadow of war lift from its daily life. Fighting is rampant along the Oriente-Regulus border, where Regular forces are known to raid the state both for supplies and sheer intimidation. In return, Oriente has struck back against Regular military supply depots and staging areas.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

Despite Oriente's numerical advantage over the Regular raiders, years of performing hit-and-run raids against the Word of Blake have made the Principality's troops experts at guerrilla fighting. Unable to intercept all of the Regular attacks, Duke Halas ordered the Fifth Oriente Hussars to suppress Regular supply bases on Muscida and Avior, cutting off the Regular raiders from their base of operations. Both systems' jump points remain under Oriente's control, with Ducal naval forces searching all inbound and outbound JumpShip traffic.

Along the Duchy's coreward border, Oriente liaisons have increasingly been seen with Orloff and Border Protectorate military forces, and recently a company of Orloff Grenadiers has relocated to Calloway VI to conduct joint training with the Second Oriente Hussars. With Duke Orloff's recent public statements, it now seems that a defensive pact between the three states is inevitable. Both of the smaller states are gravely concerned that the disillusion of the League will leave them vulnerable to attacks from the Capellans, Regulans, or Mariks, and Oriente—in their minds—best exemplifies the values they felt lost with the League. While such an alliance would bring Oriente interests closer to our borders, risk of combat against this Duchy is minimal as long as the Halas' attention remains occupied by the Regular incursions. Despite the cool reception we've received from Duke Thomas, he seems to accept the Republic as an acceptable neighbor and we retain cordial, if distant, ties.

THE PRINCIPALITY OF REGULUS

The Hussars are a force held together with spit, patriotism and bailing wire. Already stretched past its breaking point during the Jihad, the losses in their genocidal campaign against the Manei Domini and the Master, coupled with their preoccupation with keeping Oriente in line, have cost them dearly in manpower and equipment. Many a Hussar battalion is now comprised of little more than RetroTech 'Mechs, captured tanks, artillery cannons, and leg infantry.

Despite the limits of their equipment, the Regulans continue to fight with the tenacity of a cornered animal. The skills cultivated through years of fighting Manei Domini have made the Regular Hussars amongst the best strategic raiders and insurgent fighters in the Inner Sphere, with skill that would put Alys' men to shame. It also has given them an almost rabid fanaticism that particularly shows when they suspect their enemy of harboring Blakists—as the recent fighting on Dayr Khuna shows, where they resorted to firing tactical nuclear weapons.

This, combined with Prince Titus' increasing paranoia, has made Regulus a dangerous rogue state. Operationally, the Hussars possess no fixed organization; each formation is an ad-hoc assembly built from whatever was available at the time. They have revived the wearing of "dress blues" in place of the League's universal whites, and resumed using Andurien-inspired ranking conventions, but the command structure is in bad need of an overhaul.

Despite Prince Titus' public support for our Republic, I've begun looking into ways we could covertly aid Oriente in bringing the Principality to heel. Please look over the appended report and let me know what you think.

THE RIM COMMONALITY

Prior to 3081, the Rim Commonality never had a front-line military formation of its own, depending upon the FWLM for its defense. The Jihad revealed to the Commonality that they could not depend upon the League for their protection in times of crisis, and they seceded from the Free Worlds in 3075 to secure their own future. Unfortunately, providing for the defense of the state proved more challenging than they had expected. Forced to rely on the floundering Bad Dream mercenary outfit for much of the Jihad, the defection of the Fourth and Ninth Marik Militias to the Commonality brought much relief to its people.

Since 3079, the Fourth Militia has set about making itself at home in the Rim, establishing itself as the native fighting force, and has introduced new colors that are swiftly becoming the standard for the Commonality's defenders. The Fourth's machines are now painted a sandy-yellow scheme with crimson accents, while its warriors wear a simple uniform for both duty and dress wear. Simple and distinctive, this attire consists of a khaki closed-collar jacket worn over bloused trousers with a red fez. With almost no military manufacturing to speak of within its space, the Rim Commonality remains hard pressed for replacement equipment. This lack was only slightly alleviated when Colonel Bortmann sold the Bad Dream's remaining 'Mechs to the state before formally disbanding the command.

THE DUCHY OF TAMARIND-ABBAY

The former Theater Command for Operation BROKEN FIST has been serving as the de facto military of the Duchy of Tamarind since the early 3070s. With the dissolution of the Free Worlds League, the Tamarind theater forces were adopted by the Duchy to serve as its official military. Despite the change in status, all of the Duchy's forces continue to bear FWLM uniform and function along the same protocols as a League Theater command.

Many of the personnel are not native to the Duchy, but instead are expatriates of the Marik Commonwealth or the independent worlds who defected to Tamarind during the days of Blakist-controlled Atreus, and are now orphaned from the fallen League. Most remain not out of a connection to Tamarind, but out of loyalty to House Brett, or because they felt betrayed by Corinne Marik, or simply because the Duchy now forms the only real buffer between the Lyrans and the now vulnerable worlds at the interior of the fallen League. With such divergent goals and loyalties among its soldiery, the Duchy of Tamarind-Abbey may find it difficult to maintain a cohesive fighting force for years to come.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE INDUSTRIAL STATE OF THE FORMER FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

The largest issue facing manufacturers across the fallen Free Worlds League is not destruction of facilities, but restricted trade and unsecured supply routes. While the League functioned, commerce was streamlined and the safety of shipments all but guaranteed. Now, with each territory setting its own tariffs, and military checkpoints popping up all over the place, many companies are finding raw materials and components growing scarce while their prices skyrocket. What's worse, many of these smaller governments have taken to seizing shipments passing through to make up for local shortages, and out and out piracy has exploded throughout the region.

DUCHY OF ANDURIEN

The destruction of Lopez cost billions of lives, and also took with it a large chunk of Andurien's manufacturing apparatus. Despite this, Andurien Aerotech's surviving facilities on Andurien and Westover have continued to mass-produce their renowned civilian and military craft, exporting them across the former League and beyond. With some of the loosest restrictions on the export of military technology in the Inner Sphere, the Duchy is beginning to sell weapons to almost every major faction in the hopes of turning a profit.

Once restricted to the local defense force, the decision to open sales of the *Deathstalker* fighter to the Inner Sphere as a whole has been met with eager interest. Meanwhile, even though contracts between the government and manufacturers currently prohibit the sale of military vehicles to the Marik Commonwealth, Andurien Aerotech's Westover factories are under no such restriction, and continue to supply Captain-General Corinne Marik's realm with medium and heavy aerospace fighters.

MARIK COMMONWEALTH

A number of Irian satellite facilities set up in the Marik Commonwealth survived intact when the corporation turned against the Word. While output at these facilities is far lower than that of Irian's parent plants, it has kept a trickle of League stalwarts like the *Tempest* and *Albatross* available to the AMSC. Meanwhile, Earthwerks has completed repairs to the air filtration systems at its Keystone facility, but it will probably be a few more years before normal production is restored. In the meantime, the production of "Royal" variant *BattleMasters* and *Stingers*, reintroduced during the Blakist occupation, has proven to be a slick maneuver.

Both Irian and Earthwerks have expanded their exports in an effort to make up for huge corporate losses, but with the Commonwealth currently blocking sales to Regulus, Andurien, and the Rim, some of the biggest buyers outside of Marik and Oriente are actually the CCAF and AFFS. Imstar Aerospace

suffered little damage during the Jihad, but the CCCC is unhappy that the only aerospace fighter they currently manufacture domestically is the lightweight *Cheetah*. Imstar is currently pursuing converting one of their three *Cheetah* lines to build the older *Eagles* to make up the deficiency.

DUCHY OF ORIENTE

Recent events have forced the Duchy of Oriente to rely increasingly on its own manufacturing, straining its existing infrastructure to the limit. Earthwerks Inc., the Duchy's only native BattleMech manufacturer, used data from the New Dallas Memory Core to begin production of the royal *Phoenix Hawk* in 3076, later adding the modern PXH-7K model to accompany it. On Oriente proper, Etna Foundries' small battle armor plant has only recently begun producing completed suits after Blakist sabotage rendered many fabrication tools unusable early in the Jihad.

Meanwhile, Oriente Weapon Works only recently discontinued its RetroTech 'Mech production with the announcement of an exclusive trade agreement granting the Duchy's defense forces first priority to all products from its Emris IV plant.

PRINCIPALITY OF REGULUS

Unfortunately for the Principality, in destroying Gibson, the Regular Hussars eliminated their state's largest and most important military manufacturer. With only Ronin Incorporated and a handful of new startups remaining, and both Marik and Oriente engaged in active hostilities, thus refusing all trade with Regulus, the Principality is dangerously short on sources for new BattleMechs and battle armor. Despite extensively expanding Ronin's production facilities on Wallis, output remains extremely low, on par with many minor Periphery manufacturers.

The one silver lining in being cut off from many of their traditional suppliers is that the Lyran Alliance has removed the Principality from their blacklist for military weapons sales. *Blitzkriegs*, *Axmans*, and other traditionally Lyran designs have a strong appeal to the Hussars and their "smash mouth" combat tactics, and the number of these designs are slowly growing in their forces. Considering the fact that many in the Alliance are still screaming for Regular blood over the razing of Poulso, these machines are currently filtering in through intermediaries, rather than direct shipments from the Alliance.

OTHER POWERS

Neither Tamarind nor the Rim Commonality possesses any heavy military industry to speak of. The production of RetroTech BattleMechs—a trend gradually fading from the rest of the Sphere—thus continues at both state's capitals, as both struggle to establish some level of modern combat vehicle manufacturing. Thus far, attempts to woo corporations to expand within these territories with subsidies and contracts have yet to yield any major results, but it is likely only a matter of time.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE FORMER FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

The Free Worlds League has always functioned more like a confederacy than its more unified neighbor realms, creating a mass of often-competing, often-conflicting interests muddled by bureaucracy. The reign of the Thomas Marik doppelganger ironically solidified this realm into a coherent whole for a time, but this unity was shattered completely by the Word of Blake and their Jihad. With the League's official dissolution, foreign relations with this region of space have only grown more complicated. Where once we could have negotiated with only the central authority on Atreus, now there exists a multitude of independent political entities with which we now have to establish relations and work to build amicable ties.

PRO-REPUBLIC POWERS

Duchess Alys Rousset-Marik of Augustine has been both a boon and a burden to us in this capacity. To the people of those worlds subsumed by and neighboring the Blake Protectorate, her forthright, unpresumptuous nature combined with the Marik family heritage and gallantry in battle against the Word, combined to create a heroic leader figure. On many worlds such as Sirius, where the people felt neglected by Thomas and abandoned by the League, Alys is idolized as if she were some combination of a saint and a holo star. Many across the League agreed with her call to dissolve the federation after so many years of conflict and failure, and even beyond the worlds brought into the Republic, she has a great many supporters and admirers amongst the independent planets.

Unfortunately, Alys' refusal to accept the position afforded by her birth and stubborn opposition to the League's established conventions have made her—and, by extension, the Republic—extremely unpopular among the former League's many, more established power players. The obstinate demands of her cousin, Captain-General Corinne Marik, have essentially killed any chances of establishing friendly relations with the Marik Commonwealth, and with Corinne supporting Stewart's opposition to our territorial boundaries, the potential for open conflict has only increased.

ANTI-REPUBLIC POWERS

The Marik Commonwealth is a realm operating in a state of shock. While many suffered under the Word's puppet regime, for most of the Commonwealth's inhabitants, things seemed as serene and prosperous as they had been in the 3050s and 3060s. Thanks to the Blakist control of communications, many were

blissfully unaware of the atrocities being committed by their "allies" mere light years away, and this revelation has buried the Marik people in denial, embarrassment, and shame.

Captain-General Corinne Marik has to be the biggest case of denial of them all. Conducting herself as if the current political fragmentation were all just another of the League's passing internal squabbles, she continues to act as if she holds the ultimate authority across the whole of the former League. To that end, she supports the few worlds of the Terran corridor that are resisting integration with the Republic, arguing that it is each world's right to choose whether to join us, or remain with "her" League. With each passing day, however, even she has begun to accept that the sundered League may never again be whole.

NEUTRAL (AND ROGUE) POWERS

Meanwhile, most of the other major power blocs in the former League have embraced their newfound independence. While our relations with Oriente remain somewhat cool, House Halas has accepted the Republic and has made clear it does not (presently) oppose any of our territorial claims, although this may have more to do with pragmatism than truly seeing eye-to-eye. After all, with a hostile Regulus along one border and the Capellan Confederation on the other side, the last thing Oriente needs is another enemy.

Regulus is not just a threat to Oriente, either. Their unprovoked and pointless destruction of Paradise and Diamantina—in the name of "erasing the Master's stain on humanity"—have only shown them to be a deadly time bomb at the heart of the former League, a rogue state ready to attack anyone at any moment. An overwhelming sense of trepidation is sweeping over the independent worlds of the League nearest to the Principality. With no other recourse, many of the smaller states are already discussing alliances with other neighboring powers, for fear of falling to a Regular attack or simply finding themselves absorbed on less-than-favorable terms. Ironically, Regulus has a very positive view of the Republic, and we've done our best to encourage that outlook while continuing to distance ourselves from their actions.

Among the remaining mini-states throughout the shattered League, views of the Republic are overwhelmingly favorable. The Brett-Mariks of the Duchy of Tamarind-Abbey remain nominal allies, even though the defense of their small realm is taking up more and more of their attention. Meanwhile, both the Rim Commonality and the Duchy of Andurien see their own struggles for self-determination reflected in the Republic. Unfortunately, due to geography and military realities, we will be able to count on those nations for little more than trade partnerships and moral support.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

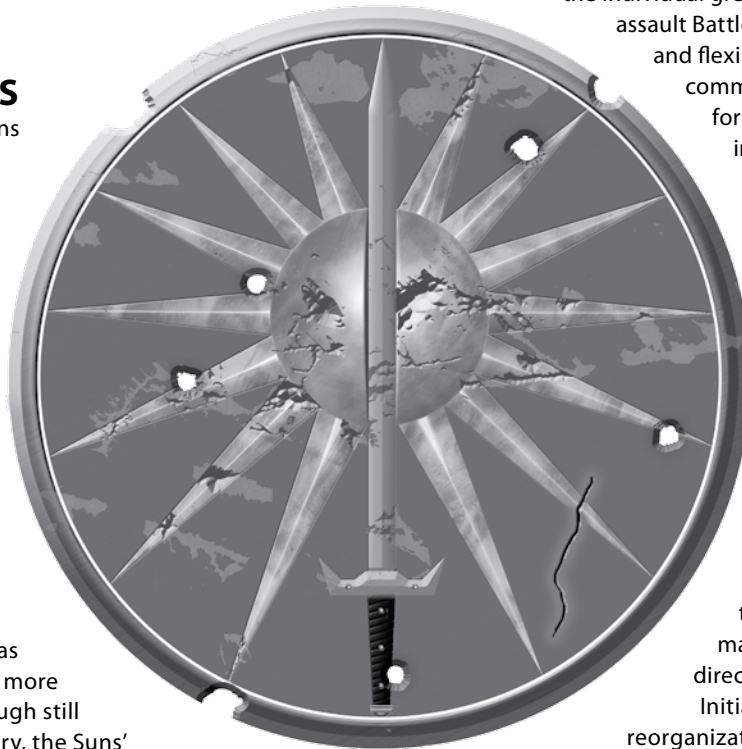
THE FEDERATED SUNS

THE MILITARY STATE OF THE FEDERATED SUNS

Continued good relations with the Federated Suns—and our own internal intelligence channels—have provided us an excellent understanding of the realm's strengths and weaknesses. While New Avalon publicly continues to play loose with its definition of active formations, our internal information provides a more accurate picture of the Suns' defenses. Indeed, many of the AFFS commands listed as "active" still consist of little more than a command staff. Though still in a delicate state of recovery, the Suns' military has made progress in stabilizing itself since the campaign to retake Terra, and with New Avalon's more defensive stance, we can be fairly well assured that the Suns will be better neighbors than rivals in the coming years.

REORGANIZING THE AFFS

Organizational efficiency has long been the hallmark of the sword-and-sun. Though lacking the individual skills of the Combine's "samurai" MechWarriors, the AFFS maintains a culture of organization and teamwork that enables its disparate assets to coordinate well. Where an individual FedSuns warrior may not be up to the standards of a Sword of Light, the sum of the whole makes AFFS formations highly effective. This was apparent in the creation of the RCTs during Hanse Davion's reign, as well as the new Light Combat Team (LCT) formations more recently introduced—the brainchild of Marshal of the Armies Jon Davion. The Avalon Hussar LCTs proved their worth during the Jihad. Demonstrating an ability to work as one, from



the individual grenadier trooper to the largest assault BattleMech, the LCT's portability and flexibility so impressed the high command that it became ideal for Regent Yvonne's strategy of internal defense in the postwar.

A single *Star Lord*-class JumpShip can transport an LCT's entire combat force, providing for a more flexible and responsive defense deployment. Much of the front line AFFS has—or will be—converted over to the LCT structure. Only a select portion of the AFFS will maintain larger RCT formations, to serve as the proverbial stick with which to threaten any neighbor who makes hostile noises in their direction.

Initial analysis of Marshal Davion's reorganization plan presumed that it would be quickly bogged down by the same military politics that resisted any significant changes to the AFFS for centuries. Even the charismatic and well-respected Hanse Davion was very careful in how he enacted his reforms and had to backpedal in the face of internal dissent on more than one occasion. Given this, it was strongly expected that a political backlash would halt the Regent and Marshal's extensive reforms, but no such reaction has occurred to date. We suspect that this is because the near-complete disintegration in the AFFS senior staff during the Jihad gave the Regent an unprecedented window of opportunity in which to introduce sweeping military policy changes. At no time in the history of the Suns has the military been so massively reorganized. BattleMechs from Bryant have been shipped across the nation to be fielded in combat formations on the Capellan border and talented officers have found themselves promoted two and three full ranks to fill senior staff rolls left empty by the Blakist assault on New Avalon.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

POWER TRANSFER

It is likely this senior military vacuum also contributed to the ease with which we have garnered the support of the Suns for the garrisoning of liberated Protectorate worlds. Yvonne's open door policy, which allowed any member of the AFFS to join the Republic, was initially met with heavy opposition—including that of her husband, Tancred Sandoval. Ironically, it is likely her policy resulted in fewer losses to the AFFS than there may have been had she attempted to stop the flood of volunteers to our cause. For our own part, we received so many volunteers we had to be circumspect, lest we overload our officer corps with former AFFS commanders. The fire of volunteerism even reaches to the garrison infantry units. With Yvonne touting our Republic as the worthy successor to the ancient Terran Hegemony, entire infantry regiments have volunteered to join us to be part of "history". These many volunteer infantry formations will make up for a large deficiency along our unstable Capellan front.

The almost wholesale transfer of the Deneb Light Cavalry to our banner is perhaps the best example of Yvonne's prescience in her policy. Based on our own internal agent reports, we know that the DLC would have willingly come to blows with Yvonne's loyalists had they been ordered to leave Deneb Kaitos. By creating her open door policy, this conflict was avoided, as was a potential political firestorm between the Suns and our forming Republic. The defection of the Deneb Light Cavalry regiments has been a boon to the RAF, and DLC elements will likely form the core of our front line brigades. (The members of the DLC who remained with the Federated Suns have been reincorporated into the Crucis Lancers.)

RECOVERY AND RESPONSE

The most notable change in the AFFS from our 3079 report is the restoration of several March Militia formations and the after-effects of Operation MATADOR, the Suns' lightning offensive against the Taurian Concordat. Using the new LCT configurations, the Capellan March has seen three formations reactivated, though only the Ridgebrook CMM is better than forty percent effective. The March Militias have already been deployed to garrison posts on worlds captured from the Concordat, training alongside the combat formations still present.

Lasting only three months, Operation MATADOR surprised even our own analysts. Using some of the best troops at her

disposal, including the elite Davion Assault and First Davion Guards RCTs, Yvonne's offensive hit a total of seventeen worlds. The Suns' offensive began by attempting to isolate the volatile Pleiades Cluster without sending forces into those volatile worlds. As a result, the Davions were not bogged down and the offensive could be considered a stunning success. Of the targeted worlds, only the TDF forces on Ridgebrook held out against the FedSuns assault and only then it was thanks to reinforcements from the TDFs premiere First Taurian Lancers, as well as the use of nuclear devices to hold major urban centers hostage. Even there, it is unlikely the Concordat would have been able to hold much longer via conventional means, had not the war come to as swift an end as it began.

With the mediation of the Calderon Protectorate—who feared that their Taurian cousins' use of WMDs would finally prompt the Suns to retaliate in kind—the Taurian Conflict was brought to a rapid, but uneasy end. The surrender of the TCS *Vendetta* to the Protectorate—where the vessel now orbits Erod's Escape under a peacekeeping crew of Taurians, Calderons and observers from both the Suns and our Republic—went a long way to restoring peace to the region. With the nuke-wielding WarShip no longer a threat, the Suns was more than willing to call an end to their assault. As close to half of their gains in the war were long time Taurian holdings, the Suns has its hands more than full in ensuring these worlds are peacefully pacified. With the entire Inner Sphere watching, the Suns must tread carefully, lest the Concordat throw off the peace treaty to defend its "oppressed" people.

MATADOR did not just succeed in bringing an end to a conflict. In another of Yvonne's clearly calculated plans, it has also served two other powerful uses. The first being a reminder to the Capellan Confederation—and, arguably, all other realms the Suns shares a border with—that the AFFS is still a capable fighting force. Internal to the Federated Suns, it has also buoyed Yvonne's popularity and her power base along with it. By succeeding in stopping the Taurian advances where George and Angela Hasek had failed, thus freeing Capellan March worlds from hostile occupation, and proving she is more than willing to use her army, Regent Yvonne has proven that she is no longer the "mouse" the Haseks (and others) saw her to be after the FedCom Civil War. This has cemented her rule as the Princess-Regent of the Federated Suns.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE INDUSTRIAL STATE OF THE FEDERATED SUNS

With one of the strongest military-industrial sectors and a history of opposition to pre-Clan ComStar, the Federated Suns was targeted early on by the Word. All but two of its key industrial worlds were heavily damaged in the fighting, and as a result, House Davion's manufacturing capability has been reduced nearly as much as its army. Only the highly distributed nature of the Suns' secondary infrastructure has allowed this realm to maintain its current military readiness, and offers just enough capability to enable a decades-long task of rebuilding. Doubling this challenge is a looming national recession, caused by the shift from the lengthy war footing to postwar recovery.

CAPELLAN MARCH

Caught between the triple assaults of the Word of Blake, the Capellan Confederation, and the Taurian Concordat, the Capellan March suffered a higher proportion of damage than any of the other Suns' Marches. The complete loss of the famed Talon facilities and the reduction of General Motors' Kathil industriplex to barely more than a tank manufacturing line are but the most obvious signs of the losses suffered across this theater.

New Avalon has shifted extensive resources to the Capellan March in an effort to accelerate repairs and garner positive press from the local populace, many of whom still openly accuse the Throne of abandoning—or worse, *betraying*—them during the early years of the war. GM's 'Mech facilities on Kathil remain shuttered and are not expected to resume production until at least 3090. Likewise, cleanup operations at Johnston Industries' New Syrtis factory prevent any manufacturing there. Johnston is trying to bring secondary sites up in the interim, but the critical shortage of *Dagger* OmniFighters continues to grow.

With the McKenna shipyards completely destroyed, only the Syrtis yards over New Syrtis remain to service the remaining JumpShips and WarShips in this region. These yards remain heavily damaged, but enough has been restored to start the long-awaited repairs on the FSS *New Syrtis*. Even so, repairs are expected to be a multi-year project.

CRUCIS MARCH

The loss of Fed-Boeing's Galax megaplex remains a stinging blow to the prosperous Crucis March, representing the single greatest loss of manufacturing capacity in the entire Federated

Suns. The long occupation of New Avalon was almost equally debilitating, as all but one factory was completely taken offline by damage or lack of parts.

At the heart of Regent Yvonne's Castle Avalon policy, the Crucis March has seen the most efforts to restore its factories to production. Sites that had primarily suffered from supply shortages and maintenance issues have mostly returned to full operations. Kallon's new Layover facility has been launching new *Vengeance* and *Arondight* DropShips for the Davion admiralty, and the company is already eyeing more of Salvatore's dormant yard space for an expansion.

As with civil reconstruction, military rebuilding on the capital is moving at breakneck speed. The Achernar surface facilities remain offline, but hope is they will restore production by the middle of this decade. Lycomb-Davion received the lion's share of rebuilding assistance from the throne, as the AFFS attempts to offset the loss of *Dagger* production with more *Lighting* and *Stuka* fighters.

DRACONIS MARCH

Never an industrial powerhouse to begin with, by the time of the Jihad, the industrial capacity of the Draconis March was a shadow of its sister marches. The only advantage of this poor industrial state was that the Word focused less of its attention on the Draconis March worlds during its campaigns against the Suns.

An unfortunate consequence of this is that the Draconis March has also received far less of a share in federal reconstructive aid. With the majority of the Suns' recovery resources pouring into the Crucis and Capellan Marches (and even the new Periphery March) the Draconis March has thus seen little change in its factory output since 3078.

PERIPHERY MARCH

So far removed from much of the hostilities of the last decade and a half, the peripheral region of the Crucis March saw little in direct damage. The suicide assault on Jalastar's factories and the more recent Word of Blake "Bloody Tricentennial" attacks—as well as the abortive Taurian WarShip assault on Firgrove—were the most notable events that caused any direct damage to the region. Instead, shattered supply lines and political unrest caused the most disruption to the industries in the newly formed Periphery March.

Production has resumed once more at the Clyde shipyards, though capacity still remains below maximum, due to damage from Blakist sabotage. Meanwhile, supply line issues continue to keep StarCorps' Crofton facility from expanding its production.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE FEDERATED SUNS

Support from the Federated Suns was expected. Even so, the level with which Victor's sister met the demands of eliminating the Blakist threat far outmatched our initial expectations. Given the vigor the Suns put into liberating their former Sarna March, we expected more of a struggle in securing those same worlds for the Republic, so the willingness with which Yvonne Steiner-Davion ceded those very same planets to us came as welcome surprise.

Princess-Regent Yvonne compared the rise of our Republic to that of the Terran Hegemony and the peace of the original Star League. While this comparison may be overly idealistic, it shows her continued improvements in the political arena. Admitting that the Federated Suns was ill-suited to protect these worlds was not an admission of weakness, as some pundits have maintained, but a calculated move to reinforce her position, focused on protecting the core worlds of her realm. Whereas some states have seen massive protests over the loss of worlds to us, the general feeling in the Suns considers our protectorate far more benign. "At least one section of our border is safe" has become a common refrain among FedSuns observers.

Where House Davion stands today is very much tied to the growth of its regent. Few would argue that much blame for the FedCom Civil War occurred as a result Yvonne's political naïveté. Indeed, had she not allowed herself to be so easily duped by her sister, the Civil War might never have occurred at all. It has even been argued that Yvonne is one of the key causes for the fall of the last Star League and the ensuing Jihad. It is likewise clear, however, that the Princess-Regent has learned from these past mistakes.

Deprived of her capital through much of the war, her nation attacked from at least two fronts, and saddled with a war started by one of her own March Lords, Yvonne began the Jihad in a position as tenuous as Hohiro Kurita's. Like her Combine counterpart, she faced this adversity and rose to the challenge. To replace her lack of military training, she instead tapped into her hard-won skills at judging people. Surviving the early Jihad, she gathered about her a core of strong advisors, most notably her husband, Duke Tancred Sandoval, and her Marshal of the Armies, Jon Davion. Growing from an on-the-run fugitive to a leader spoken of in some circles with the same reverence as her father, the Princess-Regent gains much credit for the Federated Suns' continued unity and its place as a powerful ally to our Republic.

It is clear that every move that Yvonne has made is part of carefully crafted plans. Evidence of this long-term thinking reinforces our belief that the once-naïve regent has finally

grown up. Her offensive against the Taurian Concordat did not just bring a final end to the near twenty-year conflict. It also reinforced her position with the people of the Capellan March, and further weakened Angela Hasek's power base in the loyal opposition. Creating the Periphery March, with General Marsin as its lord, not only gave the Outback assurances that New Avalon did care, it also tightly bound Marsin's loyalties to Yvonne, removing another potential threat to her rule.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Along with the Lyrans, the Federated Suns forms our strongest allied power bloc. Where we can rely on relative peace from the Combine and certain ex-Free World states, we can be assured of continued support from both the Suns' Princess-Regent and the Lyran Archon—so long as they remain in power.

The Federated Suns' relations with its other neighbors are a much more diverse prospect. Though wary of the Taurian Concordat, the Suns appears content to let sleeping dogs lie. In New Avalon's eyes, the gains made during Operation MATADOR, combined with the removal of the *Vendetta* as a threat, have reduced Taurians to the level of a snarling dog. Cautious diplomacy is also their course with the Combine and the Outworlds/Raven Alliance. The Suns' heavy focus on internal rebuilding means that only the Capellan Confederation merits any real attention from them. Outright conflict is unlikely for now, but both realms are still keeping their border troops on high alert.

Still, this report should not be taken as a glowing assessment of the Federated Suns. The challenges this realm still faces remain extremely daunting and it will require the political and military skill of all its leadership to hold things together. Both the Capellan and Draconis Marches remain in heavy unrest, tensely watching their neighbors and occasionally testing the limits of their authority.

Yvonne's husband and Prince's Champion is also a potential political time bomb. With Tancred suggested as being the actual man behind George Hasek's assassination (rather than Word of Blake agents, as the official line goes), it is likely that he is not above taking matters into his own hands. This is a trait common to the Sandoval line, but one that has gotten them—and the entire Federated Suns—into trouble before. Yvonne is often blinded by her continued Arthurian ideals. In her single-minded drive to her own goals, she runs the risk of making enemies within her own power structure. That she is also unable to formally take the throne for legal reasons further limits the power she can exert. So far, success has been her greatest strength, but were her plans to falter or fail, House Davion could quickly slide back into the chaos of an internal civil war.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION

THE MILITARY STATE OF THE CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION

With the defeat of the Word of Blake, there remains no greater threat to the continued safety of our Republic than the Capellan Confederation. While a number of others—most notably Marik Commonwealth ruler Corinne Marik—have also refused to recognize our sovereignty, only Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao and his Confederation possess both the resolve and the military power to truly endanger us.

As I surmised in my post-Terra intelligence briefing, the Capellan Confederation has been bucking the Sphere-wide trend towards smaller military forces and is rapidly rebuilding its CCAF with an eye towards restoring it to pre-war levels. If such growth goes unchecked, we may find ourselves with House Liao in command of the largest military in the Inner Sphere, and no possible means to prevent them from sweeping our troops from the rimward Prefectures. While we are all eager to move on to more peaceful times, I feel it is imperative that we make sure the Republic Armed Forces are properly equipped and prepared to oppose the CCAF before it's too late. The restructuring and rebuilding of our military needs to remain a top priority for the near future if we are to prevent Capellan adventurism.

So far, Chancellor Liao has proven shrewd enough to avoid direct confrontation against an enemy that possesses obvious strength, but we should have no doubts that he will move to reclaim the worlds he feels were wrongly taken from him at the first sign of weakness. At this crucial juncture, we can ill afford to give any indication that we lack the will or the strength to meet the Capellans blow for blow. The slightest sign of acquiescence might prove fatal.

THE CAPELLAN HUSSARS

The Jihad put an end to the impressions that the Capellan Hussars are mere parade units. Throughout the conflict, the four regiments of the Hussars Brigade were consistently found in the thickest of the fighting, and each time, they emerged victorious. With all four regiments at almost full strength, drawing on combat veterans from across the CCAF, no forces better personify

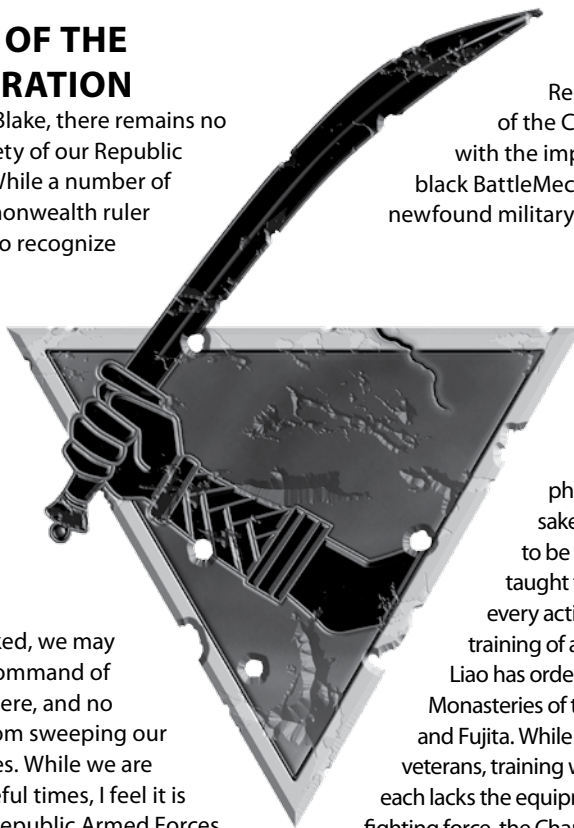
the tenacity and renewed sense of pride in the Capellan soldiery. With the Red Lancers now returned to Sian, each of the Commonality capitals is now graced with the imposing presence of the Hussars' red and black BattleMechs, a living monument to House Liao's newfound military resolve.

THE WARRIOR HOUSES

Unlike the CCAF proper, the Warrior House Orders have been slow to rebuild. While the Confederation is graduating an increasing number of cadets from its military academies, monastic orders cannot compromise their philosophical and spiritual dictates for the sake of mere expediency. Recruits continue to be taken into the Orders at a young age and taught to live the principles of the House in their every activity. With so much time invested in the training of a Warrior House aspirant, Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao has ordered the continued training at the Warrior Monasteries of the destroyed Houses Ma Tsu-Kai, Lu Sann, and Fujita. While each is little more than a home for geriatric veterans, training washouts, and young aspirants, and while each lacks the equipment or trained personnel to constitute a fighting force, the Chancellor has chosen to keep the door open to rebuilding the battalions in the far future, yet another sign that Sun-Tzu has no intention of accepting our idea of a new era of peace.

THE ST. IVES ARMORED CAVALRY

While they remain set apart from the rest of the CCAF due to their origins in the once-independent St. Ives region, the St. Ives Armored Cavalry nevertheless remains one of the Confederation's premier assault commands. Though the SIAC's loyalty to the state is no longer doubted after the bloodshed of the Jihad, Kai Allard-Liao's command of the Lancers has thus far prevented them from coming to blows with our forces. But while Duke Kai is calling for peace between us, he is walking a razor-thin line between loyalty to his cousin, his people, his principles, and his friends. Many of the warriors under his command are ready and eager for the Chancellor's order to attack our Republic, and his reluctance to do so has spawned suggestions from many of his command staff in the First Lancers that perhaps he should retire from active duty and return to St. Ives. Many seem to feel that Kai is simply too emotionally exhausted from years of fighting to carry on command of the regiment, but so far, he remains at his post.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

MCCARRON'S ARMORED CAVALRY

No force better exemplifies the Confederation's brand of irregular, no-holds-barred offense than McCarron's Armored Cavalry, and nothing better illustrates the Confederation's intolerance of our existence than the MAC's continued presence along our border. Months of posturing and skirmishes on Hsien led to our eventual withdrawal from the world, winning acclaim for Faith McCarron, who successfully convinced our field commanders that it was in their "best interest to fall back and let the politicians bang out control of the system rather than leave it to my troops to bang it out on your cockpits". The impressed Lord Carson chose to announce his retirement shortly thereafter, leaving command of the Fourth MAC to Archibald's daughter. Now the *Sang-shao* of Faith's Fortunate, Faith McCarron has closed the gap in experience with her brother Rhamses. Both have jokingly indicated they plan to complete to see who's more successful in "the coming conflict", a none-too-subtle reference to the CCAF belief that war with us is inevitable.

CITIZENS' HONORED

As their mercenary days fade into history, the Citizens' Honored Brigade has become one of the CCAF's front-line offensive formations, and is receiving appropriate support from CCAF supply and logistics. Each of the three surviving regimental commands are undergoing rapid re-supply with top-of-the-line equipment and are receiving some of the top cadets of the regional academies to make up for Jihad casualties.

THE CONFEDERATION RESERVE CAVALRY

The near total destruction of the Liao Cháng-Chéng during the Jihad necessitated the rotation of the bulk of the CRC to the Liao Commonality, so that the shattered command could rest and repair. Each of the Cavalry's four surviving regiments' performance during the Jihad was solid, if unspectacular. Better suited to defensive operations than offense, the CRC's commitment to a new offensive is unlikely. Even during Operation CELESTIAL VENGEANCE, the CRC's role in the fighting was often secondary, working in support of front-line commands such as the Capellan Hussars and the MAC.

THE CAPELLAN DEFENSE FORCE

With its surviving regiments virtually unharmed by the Jihad, and now standing watch over the industrial heartland of the Confederation, the CDF is in the middle of a rapid expansion. *Sang-jiang-jun* Talon Zahn recently announced the creation of the Fourth and Fifth Capellan Defense Force regiments, combining new graduates from Capella War College with experienced personnel from the CDF's first two regiments. With the Capella Reserves now of equal strength to the defense forces of the Confederation's other Commonalities, the region will prove significantly more self-reliant in the future.

THE LIAO CHÁNG-CHÉNG

The Liao Commonality reserves remain stationed along the relatively peaceful Capellan-Andurien border, enjoying the relative tranquility of duty outside a nuclear war zone. Until recently waist-deep in some of the Jihad's ugliest fighting, the Cháng-Chéng lived true to its name, holding back the worst of the Blakist onslaught and defending the body of the Confederation. Capellan media has been quick to make heroes of these warriors, their everyman character making them easier to identify with than the Red Lancers or Death Commandos, and some are rapidly finding themselves overnight media darlings as a result.

THE VICTORIA COMMONALITY RANGERS

Duty in the VCR has been relatively uneventful for some time. Despite the most destructive war in recent history raging all about them, the Rangers served in the eye of the proverbial storm, their days filled with little more than training exercises and the occasional pirate raid. *Jiang-jun* Petyr Andreyvich has petitioned the Strategios to allow him to expand the VCR to match the CDF in size, but has been told not to expect support for such a measure until existing CCAF commands reach full strength.

THE ST. IVES SENTINELS

Like their cousins in the SIAC, the Sentinels are spoiling for war, but in their case, more than Capellan pride motivates them. The Second Janissaries' betrayal in 3068 stained the honor of all the Commonality Reserves' honor, and the *janshi* of the Sentinels are desperately hoping that a war with the Republic will give them the chance to wash away that stain with the blood of the Chancellor's enemies. Both the Armored Infantry and the Mounted Fusiliers are suspected of launching a number of raids on worlds we claim that remain outside the Liao sphere of influence, perhaps hoping to instigate a retaliation that will spark full-scale war.

THE CAPELLAN BRIGADE

The weak links in the CCAF chain, if anything, are the discipline and morale of the former mercenaries who now make up the Capellan Brigade. Their discipline has grown worse, not better, since the Jihad. With the Highlanders assigned to dead-last priority for supply since the cessation of hostilities, *Sang-shao* Ambermarle is suspected of pilfering parts coming from Tao MechWorks bound for Marshigama's Legionnaires. Thus far, investigators have failed to link Ambermarle to the equipment theft, but few doubt she lacks the means or the motive. *Sang-shao* Marshigama has vowed to "settle things with that old sow" when next they come face to face.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE INDUSTRIAL STATE OF THE CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION

Despite significant damage to the Confederation's military-industrial base by Duke George Hasek's SOVEREIGN JUSTICE, the Blakists, and Andurien raiders, House Liao's capacity to produce war material has remained surprisingly formidable. Indeed, what brought most of the production lines across the Capellan state to a screeching halt was the disruption in raw material and component deliveries created by a nearly universal communications blackout in the middle of the war. In a less authoritarian state, local leaders would likely have acted on their own initiative to re-purpose material and assign weapons and equipment, but such gross breaches of protocol are unthinkable in the Confederation. Manufacturing was on the verge of returning to normal when a wave of terrorist attacks rippled across the Confederation during the "Bloody Tricentennial".

CAPELLAN COMMONALITY

The death of the Necromo system hangs over the Capellan Commonality like a dark cloud. While the Confederation officially refuses to acknowledge the loss of its ability to produce WarShips, with each day it becomes increasingly obvious that Rashpur-Owens will never be able to reverse engineer the Blakist-provided specifications that allowed the realm to produce compact K-F Drives. Without the ability to construct new drives, all Rashpur can do is try to repair and maintain the Capellans' few remaining vessels in between constructing new JumpShips for the state's devastated transport fleet.

Contrasting with its struggling orbital neighbor, Ceres Metals continues to operate at near-maximum capacity, providing the devastated CCAF with their signature *Vindicator* and *Thunder* BattleMechs.

LIAO COMMONALITY

Manufacturing fortunes in the Liao Commonality are decidedly mixed. Long-struggling military supplier Hollis Incorporated actually grew by leaps and bounds during the recent war. Hollis' location near the Confederation's border with the Blake Protectorate made it the only reliable supplier for CCAF units engaged in the fighting there, and Hollis expanded these facilities to conduct a variety of standardized refits and overhauls while even adding new production lines.

When remnant Blakist forces struck, the Hexare Grenadier mercenaries, undergoing refit on Corey, managed to eliminate the attackers before the factory could be completely destroyed. In contrast, Tao MechWorks has found itself under the sword of Damocles. Hammered first by Earthwerks' sponsored raiders in

retaliation for corporate espionage, Tao's Styk production center has been struck repeatedly by Blakists, most recently in 3080. Given the substantial damage, if Styk becomes a battlefield again, there may not be a factory left to fight over.

SIAN COMMONALITY

Despite the capital falling under siege numerous times, Hellespont's Sian factories managed to avoid crippling damage. While the Confederation praises its brave defenders for preventing the destruction, it is more likely that the facilities were deliberately spared thanks to Kali's machinations before the Word's invasion. The backlog in orders for *Pillagers*, caused by a shortage of Ceres-supplied electronics systems, is expected to take two years to fully clear out.

In the meantime, Hellespont's reactivated production center on Betelgeuse is picking up some of the slack by supplying *UrbanMechs* to fill depleted garrisons. With demand for RetroTech BattleMechs ended as the supply of standard BattleMechs has resumed, Hellespont has converted its low-grade factory lines into refit centers, taking in RetroTech *Firebees* and replacing their obsolete parts with more modern components.

ST. IVES COMMONALITY

No part of the Confederation has more deeply been scarred by the war than the St. Ives Commonality. Once an industrial jewel, St. Ives' numerous manufacturing centers were damaged in the brutal street fighting of Operation CELESTIAL VENGEANCE—only to have the Blakists inflict further damage. Output from HildCo, StarCorps, and Ceres Metals are all a fraction of what they were prior to the Jihad.

Heaping insult upon injury, a terrorist nuke leveled Ceres Metals plant on Warlock in 3080, utterly destroying the factories and killing thousands. Even though the moribund remnants of Free Capella denied any involvement in the attack, government accusations to the contrary successfully eroded what little public support remained to them. Nearly two dozen alleged "terrorists" were captured and publicly executed within 72 hours of the attack, as an example of Confederation justice.

VICTORIA COMMONALITY

The Capellan Strategios had considered Shengli Arms' subterranean facility on Victoria impregnable in 3067, but they apparently failed to account for the possibility of cave-in should multiple explosive devices be detonated within the underground caverns. Shengli Arms only recently finished clearing the last of the debris from their factory complex. While production continued during the recovery process, damage to the facility from the collapsing rocks has destroyed large amounts of critical equipment, delaying the complex's return to full operation.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION

The Capellan Confederation has cultivated a reputation for universal patriotism and fanatical loyalty amongst its citizens, a reputation Chancellor's Voice has played up in their propaganda—but which, in reality, is not quite true. Numerous secessionist and secession movements remain active within the Confederation, but the decision of a number of them to ally with the Word of Blake has thoroughly discredited them. The Capellan state has been widely successful in convincing the public that secession is equivalent to allying with enemies who would destroy them, be they Word of Blake or Davion invaders, and thus rebels are increasingly finding themselves turned in by their fellow civilians. Most resistance cells have gone into deep hiding, and none hold the kind of high profile, multi-system recognition that Free Capella once had.

As the centralized government of the Confederation prevents the sort of regional politicking more common amongst the Inner Sphere's other Great Houses, the differences between the Celestial Throne and the commonality leadership are minimal. With the sole exception of St. Ives, the leadership of the other Confederation commonalities is completely subservient to the Chancellor. While the state-controlled media has done its best to downplay it, my father, Duke Kai Allard-Liao, has found himself at odds with his cousin over his opposition to our Republic. Though I'm not sure he fully agrees with how we've claimed control over several former Capellan worlds, it is obvious that he believes disputing this simply isn't worth further loss of life on either side. After so many years of playing the good little Capellan, I suppose some of that FedCom upbringing had to leak out somewhere.

Unfortunately, this has left Duke Allard-Liao increasingly isolated, even in his court on St. Ives, where Capellan nationalism continues to grow. "Duke Kai Allard-Liao, war leader and hero" is a popular image in the media, but the reason Kai remains in the field with his Lancers these days is likely to avoid the political pressures at home.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

While the Confederation seems almost wholly isolated in interstellar relations, the reality is strikingly different. Although Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao's systematic manipulation

of virtually everyone to ever come in contact with him means few trust him further than they can throw a *BattleMaster*, my uncle is crafty enough to convince many leaders they are still getting the better end of his deals. Only the Canopians consider themselves true partners with and allies of the Confederation, but to think that the majority of the Inner Sphere would rally to our defense in the event of an invasion by the CCAF would be a grave mistake.

The Federated Suns—long the Confederation's greatest adversary—would likely support us in such an event, but even they may have trouble riding to our aid. The weakened and restructuring AFFS is ill-suited and unprepared for offensive operations, and would be hard-pressed just to defend their current borders from a new Capellan incursion. By abiding by the ceasefire he negotiated with the Princess-Regent, Sun-Tzu Liao has further played House Hasek against New Avalon by making House Davion itself the check on further attacks against him. Yvonne Steiner-Davion is so desperate for peace that she'll stomach no manner of offensive military action, and Sun-Tzu knows it. Allowing her the façade of peace for the time being gives House Liao the freedom to move against their other enemies unhindered.

Along his other border, the Chancellor has continued to hold to his non-aggression pact with Oriente and is slowly coaxing Andurien into the position of a satellite state using his wife's influence as intermediary. The overwhelming military superiority of the Confederation over the former League provinces leaves them little choice but to avoid provoking House Liao, lest they find themselves "liberated" by the CCAF. Already, intelligence operatives on several of the orphaned border worlds report pro-Capellan agitators, sometimes violently demanding integration with the Confederation. Those worlds that don't quickly align themselves with the two duchies will more than likely find themselves part of the Capellan state over the next few decades, if this trend is left unchecked.

The remainder of the Inner Sphere remains mostly indifferent toward the Confederation. Many, such as the Lyran Commonwealth and Marik Commonwealth, hold no love for House Liao at all, but nonetheless see the state as a business partner, both as an inexpensive source of raw materials and industrial manufacturing, and also as a market for finished goods. Others, such as the Principality of Regulus and Draconis Combine, are too distant from the Confederation to care about them one way or the other.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE REPUBLIC OF THE SPHERE

THE MILITARY STATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SPHERE

It is not easy building an army out of nothing. We have spent the past decade putting together a multinational Coalition of forces, but there is a world of difference between that and forging a permanent military out of disparate elements that range from friendly to hostile against one another (and more often fall somewhere in the middle). If we are going to make our new Republic survive in the long run, Devlin, we'll need to carefully manage the process of integration. Not only are there long-standing animosities to overcome—complete with a history of transgressions backing them up—but the Jihad has created a whole new set of problems to address. And now we have Clans in the mix, whereas before they were relatively contained in their Occupation Zones. The presence of so many units from so many different nations within the territory of the former Protectorate provides a unique set of complications for us to overcome in the next couple of years.

LEADERSHIP

One of the keys to overcoming those complications lies in those we have chosen to lead our efforts. It is unfortunate that Belle has refused to step up into the position; I have endured a number of recent conversations with her trying to change her mind, but to no avail. Still, perhaps she is correct that the best place for her is commanding the Brigades. We have already started planning for how to deal with the Capellans in the not-too-distant future and having her running things on the front lines is probably for the best. She is a demon in the field; not so wonderful behind a desk. Hell, she'd probably have both our livers for breakfast if she had to sit still for too long. I do think, however, that she will eventually need to be moved out



of the field and into a strategic position. Her popularity with the troops could prove to be a problem down the road as we begin to implement programs that I know she will have issues with. The last thing we'll need is opposition within our own house from someone with regiments of loyal troops backing her up. Neutering her influence over the soldiery would be a good idea for all our sakes.

He may be our second choice and there are still many who view him with suspicion or even outright hostility, but Victor is nevertheless an excellent commander and a motivator of men with experience in melding different groups into a coherent force.

He has expressed some reticence at taking up the post of Commanding General and I can't really say that I blame him. We have all suffered much at the hands of Word of Blake, but for Victor the Jihad was the capper to nearly two decades of bitter tragedy. In a strange way, being in charge of building our new army may just be good for him. His failures of the past have turned him into a man driven to see that our goals succeed and we can use that in ways we couldn't with another commander. I know you have some reservations about his selection, given that he is slated to be one of your Paladins, but I think it will work out just fine. Plus, this gives us some breathing room to find a more permanent candidate, one who can take over once the RAF is established and on its feet.

THE ARMY

Which brings us to the matter of how we're going to deal with the forces we now have at our command. None of the commands gifted to us by our Coalition allies are in great shape—hell, some of them are still barely hanging on—but they have given us a solid base from which to grow our Republic Armed Forces. Though they may not like each other too much, they all share a desire to make this work, even the Clan units. The key will be in how to forge them into a coherent whole and eliminate their sense of nationalism in the quickest and smoothest way possible.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

I think it goes without saying that the first step we need to take is to break the gifted regiments into smaller groups for posting across the Republic's worlds. Following the strategy we used during the campaign for Terra, we have begun to assign company and battalion-sized forces in tandem with those that hail from traditionally unfriendly nations as garrison troops. Those with the greatest animosity—such as the Ninth Sword of Light and the Deneb Light Cavalry—I have assigned to our tensest border zones, based on the hope that they will find the challenge of holding the line against a strong external foe will make better glue to bind them together. Plus, once the inevitable hostilities do erupt, these forces will sustain higher casualties, and thus require more replacements. This will facilitate our plans to integrate "foreign" troops among our line formations. This turnover in personnel and shared danger between battlefield comrades should have the desired effect of evolving these disparate commands, with their different command styles and histories, into true Republic forces in short order.

The Clan Galaxies we have received are a bigger problem, as they do not take to being broken up as well as the House troops have. Nor are the House troops very accepting of having Clan warriors stationed among their ranks, even after fighting side by side with these same warriors during SCOUR—a sentiment the Clan troops share. I fear that having Clan populations in the Republic in general will be a problem in the long run, but for now, we're just concentrating on getting the whole state up and running; we can worry about the rest later.

The Nova Cats are the more reliable of the Clan bunch, as you well know, so they are being put on the front lines. Their visions have convinced them that the Republic—and you especially—are the destiny of the Inner Sphere and their own people. This makes them far more willing to follow our orders than the Wolves and Falcons we inherited. The latter two we are keeping in reserve as garrison forces on several of the core Republic worlds for the moment. That's also where we're putting the few Ghost Bear and Hell's Horses troops who have flocked to our banner, as well as any Clan warriors who trickle in over the next few years. I had thought that we could integrate them into our front line commands as replacements for casualties, under the same policy we're using for the House troops, but this is proving to be a bit harder to manage for the Clans. The hyper-aggressive warrior

culture and extreme competitiveness fostered by Kerensky's society is tough to overcome, and we may not be able to ever fully dilute it. This will require more analysis and maybe even some radical solutions if we're to avoid having several heavily armed and volatile camps in our midst.

THE NAVY

The Republic Navy is, right now, pretty much a joke. It's a damn good thing that the other powers are in terrible shape themselves, because we have all of two functioning WarShips to our name, complements of the Nova Cats. Given the devastation all navies have suffered in the Jihad, I think we're safe in assuming that the era of large vessels is coming to an end and the Pocket WarShip concept will have legs for decades to come, if not longer, as everyone worries more about rebuilding conventional JumpShips over the WarShips. To that end, I'd really like to see if we can't hire away the Medusans from the AFFS to bolster the core of our own navy. We've had success with the Highlanders and Devil's Brigade among the major remaining mercenary groups, so I think—with adequate incentives—the Medusans won't be too difficult to acquire.

KNIGHTS

Regarding the composition of our regiments, I have had to do a major rethink from our initial plans of two years ago. I know you had originally wanted to pull all BattleMech forces into separate units, leaving conventional forces comprising the bulk of our troops, but I just don't think that will be workable. I don't want to have chain of command issues or inter-service rivalries mucking things up when it comes time to smack the Capellans around and most of our troops are used to operating alongside 'Mechs in the field anyway, so I think it's best for the time being to leave the 'Mechs where they are. We can always change things later once events settle down. Your idea about the Knights is a good one, though, and just needs some tweaking to make it viable. So instead of creating Knight regiments separate from the mainline RAF units, Victor has instituted a program whereby the most promising candidates and exemplary MechWarriors will be given honors as paragons of what the Republic citizenry should aspire to be. We'll leave these "Knights" with their units where they can function as examples to their comrades and leaders among our forces. We'll also be using

FORCES GIFTED TO THE REPUBLIC

DCMS

Ninth Sword of Light

AFFS

Fourth Deneb Light Cavalry

Eighth Deneb Light Cavalry

FWLM

Twelfth Atrean Dragoons

Fifth FW Guards

Third FW Legionnaires

Twentieth Marik Militia

Kristen's Krushers

LAAF

Skye Guard

Fourth Skye Rangers

Seventeenth Skye Rangers

Clans

CJF Alpha Galaxy

CNC Delta Galaxy

CNC Alpha Galaxy

CNC Tau Galaxy

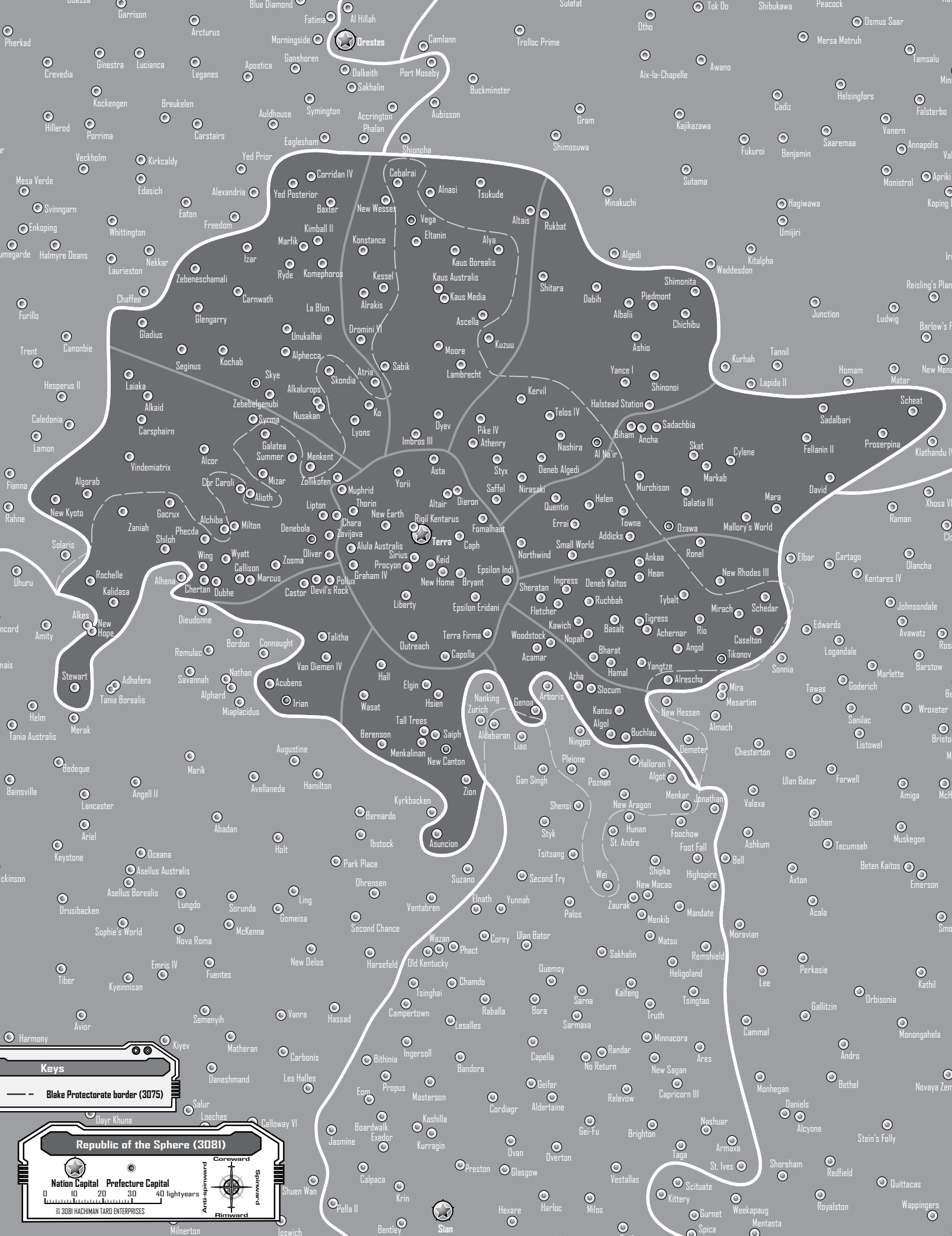
CWF Delta Galaxy

ComStar

First Army

Fifth Army

Sixth Army



Keys

--- Blake Protectorate border (3075)

Republic of the Sphere (3081)

Nation Capital Prefecture Capital

0 10 20 30 40 lightyears

© 3081 HACHIMAN TARO ENTERPRISES

Coreward

Antispinward

Spinward

Rimward

WHAT LIES BENEATH

strategic media campaigns to paint them as heroes to the general public and portray them as extensions of your ideals to the level of the everyday soldier. Of course any candidate for Knighthood will have to be of impeccable background and undeniably loyal to our cause, but Victor and his advisors have already identified nearly one hundred possibles and we should be getting that list for your approval very soon. (Theo had a brilliant idea to go along with this: Civilian "Knights" who are honored for their contributions to society in general. After all, it's not just the military that needs to have paragons and heroes. But we can talk more about it later.)

By my estimations, we've got as little as a few weeks before the Capellans become an issue; I wouldn't be at all surprised if Sun-Tzu launches some kind of pre-emptive assault around the time of the official ceremony. And don't think I've forgotten the threat posed by the League states either. We've got a good start on the RAF, but we still have a long way to go before our forces are truly Republic rather than a collection of allies. I know it sounds harsh, but the fighting that is to come will no doubt be bloody but it will also give us the best opportunity for building a lasting military.

THE COM GUARDS

Hidden, Praised, Damned.

Traitors, Saviors, Homeless Cast-outs.

No history of any other armed force in the Inner Sphere comes even remotely close to the roller-coaster ride that is the Com Guards' track record. Controversial at best, they have been a rogue element in Inner Sphere politics since the moment ComStar revealed their existence as its "security force". For the last forty years, practically no major military engagement, decision or development took place without the Com Guards throwing their weight in the ring. Not that others wouldn't have done this as well, but compared to a generic minor meddler, it is hard to ignore a full-fledged campaign force with enough resources, manpower and industrial capacity to make a House Lord blush. And this last statement does not even take into account that ComStar's Star League-fueled cornucopia spilled enough to spawn an evil offspring that did the same thing all over again, ultimately leading to the last fifteen years of war.

A war that has cost ComStar dearly, again. Atoning for their guilt, the Com Guards fought hard on the front lines from the very start of the war, and it is indisputable that without their sacrifices, many events will have gone down differently. In hard numbers, only one of the Com Guard's original six armies is currently declared combat ready. The rest were savaged to almost ninety percent losses across the board—well below the critical point where conventional wisdom calls a quits. And as for their navy, from the debacle of CASE WHITE to the last action over Terra, ComStar's fleet has been completely destroyed.

In the final days of the Word of Blake, many of ComStar's surviving military forces began to merge into our Coalition formations, and have since found themselves under our banner—all with the Order's unspoken blessings. The Com Guards Fourth Army, whittled down to a skeleton force after Chertan, formally disbanded in 3078, and was folded into the Revenants by General Lee. After the Luyten debacle, the Second and Third Armies were pulled into the Sixth to bolster its numbers for the push on Terra—only to be shattered by orbital defenses during the drop on Geneva, leaving few survivors.

First Army fared only marginally better, having their roster almost completely gutted by Manei Domini-induced civilian suicide attacks even before they reached their mission target Singapore. Which leaves us with the Fifth Com Guards Army. This, the only sizeable Army currently active, served as a rally point for all remaining Com Guards but is nowhere near full strength, and was left under our direction.

What the future holds for these warriors is uncertain. With all of the Com Guard forces nominally joining the RAF, Primus Dow has expressed an interest in formalizing the official disbandment of the Com Guards. After all, without official access to Terra's factory complex—something we clearly could not allow even under the best of times—the Order's ability to raise and maintain its own defensive forces is all but non-existent.

But whether this means that ComStar will truly disarm, or whether they will see this as an opportunity to "clear the slate" and begin raising a military force in secret again is anyone's guess at this stage. Dow may be more political than military, but what of the Primus after him?



WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE INDUSTRIAL STATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SPHERE

For all of the devastating fighting that took place in the Protectorate over the last few years, we have come out of the war with a fairly strong industrial base. While the Word targeted factories and production centers in the other realms, creating painful losses that will be tough to recover, our own hands-off strategy when it came to Protectorate industry has yielded rewards.

Terra especially is a bonanza, given how much effort and money both the Word (and ComStar before them) poured into restoring the old Terran Hegemony facilities. Though the liberation damaged a number of these locations—some quite heavily—only a few were completely destroyed or rendered irreparable. In this brief rundown of the state of the Republic's industry, rather than subdivide by Prefecture, I'm going to organize this by nearest House region.

DRACONIS COMBINE

In addition to the former Combine worlds we are keeping as part of the Protectorate, we have absorbed several other systems from the Dieron Military District that come with factories we can use. It is unfortunate that Cosby Manufacturing on Vega was relocated during the war, but the acquisition of many of its assets by the smaller MyoMaxx may work to our advantage. As we begin to implement our plans for reducing the number of BattleMechs in service, MyoMaxx and its facilities will be invaluable for the inevitable increase in IndustrialMech production.

Dieron is the other big loss in this region. The Word completely trashed the LAW and Terada facilities before they were kicked off, and Kurita's forces grabbed what they could during their own withdrawal when they ceded the world to us. As a result, it will be some time before those factories can be brought back online—if ever. It may just be better to write them off and start from scratch.

FEDERATED SUNS

It is interesting, but I don't think anyone has really noticed yet that of all the worlds we are receiving from the FedSuns, not a one has any major industry on it. Oh, several of the Protectorate worlds in that region do, but not any of the systems we are getting direct from the Davions. I'd have expected that to be more of an issue for the Combine especially.

LYRAN ALLIANCE

Skye is, of course, the big prize here, with Shipil and Cyclops the biggest gems in this deal. We have Robert and Gregory to thank for that, and for Skye in general. These factories came through the war with only minor damage and will prove essential

in our rebuilding plans. House Steiner wisely insisted we share the output with them, of course, but overall, the industrial advantage here remains ours.

BLAKE/TERRAN PROTECTORATE

The Coalition assault against the Protectorate hit a lot of factories hard, with few escaping at least some damage. Though we never specifically targeted these factories, it was often impossible to entirely avoid fighting in and around them as the Blakists fell back to defend them directly. With only a couple of exceptions, most should be relatively easy to repair and make functional once more.

New Earth is a total write-off. Not only did we have three rampaging Clans on planet, but the fully functional SDS system and the Word flotilla defending there made sure that little industry survived. It is a good thing that Robert has brought us Skye, because I place much of the blame for that fiasco squarely on his shoulders.

Mars is also pretty much a complete loss. Of the four major factories located there prior to the liberation, only Wangker Aerospace remains, having received only light damage in that campaign. Though for how long that will be the case is an open question, as Boeing-Interstellar is already sniffing around and making inquiries about buying up their facilities.

While nearly every factory on Terra suffered some damage, a bigger issue in the near future may come from the courtroom. We've already begun to hear rumblings from several of the larger corporations based here about compensation for damages incurred during the liberation. Executives at Krupp, in particular, have been vocal behind closed doors about their feeling that we—meaning the Coalition and its members—owe them for any and all damage done to their facilities and profits. Even in cases where the damage was clearly caused by Blakist troops, their argument is that our campaign of liberation was ultimately responsible for their losses. So far this talk has not gone much beyond boardroom bitching but I've put Lin on it to make sure things don't spiral out of control.

THE FUTURE

In the long run, the state of the Inner Sphere's overall industry will likely work to our advantage. We have already begun propaganda campaigns in support of our military "draw down" efforts, even though we have yet to publicly unveil them, and the lack of production capacity can only help in that effort. It will, after all, be far easier to convince companies to turn their efforts to other markets if they find the demand for more BattleMechs and other weapons of war simply drying up. Other measures may be entertained to assist in the reduction of wartime production, but we can discuss those later.



connection/JIHAD: FINAL RECKONING/section06: WHAT LIES BENEATH

WHAT LIES BENEATH



D. Lecossu

WHAT LIES BENEATH **THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SPHERE**

As much as the Blakist rampage damaged the other realms of the Inner Sphere, we have perhaps the toughest job of all. We are building a new state upon the ruins of more than one failed dream, with wolves and monsters at our very door. Many difficulties lie ahead, and how we meet them will determine as much about our Republic's future as its beginnings. I want to remind you of that now more than ever, Devlin. There are a number of pressing issues that must be confronted if we are to guide the Republic from its infancy into a stable adolescence.

First and foremost, we have the matter of Bethany or, rather, what she embodies. I'm truly sorry about her, Devlin; there are so many signs I should have seen long before her true identity was revealed to us. That bad a breach of security can never be allowed to happen again, though what I really fear is a repeat of something like the "Bloody Tricentennial". Placing Byron in charge of the effort to root them all out is a good step in that direction, as he has a personal stake in uncovering any more Domini influence that might remain within our borders. He is also coordinating with other national agencies on their own efforts. As is our "Ghost"; her mandate to act as an unseen counterbalance to the public Paladins is easily extended to keeping tabs on them and on any future Paladin candidates. Finding and eliminating the Manei Domini must remain a top priority if we are all to sleep easy ever again.

Second, despite our original plans, it looks like the nobility is going to be a necessary evil and simply cannot be ignored or eradicated as we had hoped. The old system is just too entrenched after all these centuries. What worked in small scale on Kittery is proving difficult to enact on a larger scale. In many cases, the local nobility has so intertwined itself into the fabric of society that many planets would shut down if we were to strip them of their power as intended. So that's out for the time being. But what we can do instead is co-opt them into our new order. That's why I have suggested making nobility an inherent qualification for several high-ranking positions, notably the post of planetary governor and election to the Senate. The latter position will be a mostly toothless one anyway, since you as Exarch will be the ultimate decision maker. But if we can make the nobles feel as if they have some modicum of power under the new system, we can get them on our side when it counts. And we always have the option of

stacking the deck, as it were, by elevating our own people to the noble class and then getting them into those high-ranking positions. I have several candidates in mind already: Sergio over on Mirach is an ardent supporter and perfect for that sleepy little world, and my own sister Melissa, I think, would be a good fit for Liao, once we solidify our claim to it. If we can place our own people into these positions—for at least the first decade or so—we can steer the Republic's development the way we want it to go while seeming to follow the will of the people.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

This brings me to our next big obstacle: foreign relations. There are some rather big programs and initiatives we will start implementing very soon, not all of which will be popular with our own people or the leaders of the Houses and Clans. It is essential, however, that we somehow get everyone on board or this will simply never work. The Clans require special handling and I've got a team of analysts and diplomats working on ways to defang their threat without diluting their strength—a challenge every bit as difficult as it sounds.

Of the five Great Houses, only two will likely join us without a fight. The Lyrans and the Federated Suns are, for the most part, in agreement with the reforms we've told them about so far—not *everything*, of course, but enough that we can safely consider them supporters and Adam and Yvonne are both easier to handle thanks to their idealism. The Capellans and the League states, as we've already decided, will likely require military solutions. That leaves the Combine. Here we will need to tread lightly and remember that our greatest weapon is appearance. Hohiro has already given his approval and preliminary support to the Republic, despite resistance from some quarters; he will feel honor-bound to that unless and until we do something completely beyond the pale. If we play things just right, we should be able to get the Kuritas to do the Republic's dirty work for us, simply to save themselves embarrassment.

We have come far since those dark days in the camp, my friend, but we still have a ways to go before we achieve everything we dreamed about back then. The heady rush of the last couple of years will soon give way to harsh choices and harsher acts but you have the strength to see it through. Even though there will be opposition to some of the more radical of our changes, in the end all the pain and suffering will be worth it and we will finally have the Inner Sphere we desire.



COMSTAR

Ah, ComStar! How could I forget the organization that now admits the last three years of fighting—and the Jihad itself—is probably all their fault? While Primus Dow may now seem eager to put down the sword of the Com Guards, the fact is that ComStar remains a potent threat to anyone who's ever sent an HPG message anywhere.

Nevertheless, ComStar is a valuable agency, and one the entire Inner Sphere is reluctantly agreeing to let back into the hyperpulse networks again. After all, centuries of gradual manipulation have enabled the acolytes of ComStar to become more than just an interstellar phone company; they're also the mail, news, and parcel service for well over eighty percent of the Inner Sphere. With so much infrastructure (and HPGs) now in ruin, few realms want to foot the bill for restoring services and training up a replacement for the vital avenues of interstellar communication. Thus, convenience and expediency once more is on the side of Jerome Blake's reformed descendants.

It is without question that Dow and his cronies will plan to leverage this into making ComStar a powerful political player once again, but there's a key flaw in his plan: We control Terra. Combined with the fact that a number of ComStar's administrative and intelligence assets have already been swayed to assist in the building of the Republic, we can—and will—put the Order on a shorter leash than it has enjoyed in the past. The people of Terra will not be dominated by a quasi-mystical secret society again; we will ensure that the ComStar of our time and into the future remains secular and relatively safe.

At the same time, though, we should avail ourselves of the golden opportunity this also presents in enhancing the security of our Republic and its intelligence-gathering potential. One of the ways is by actually aiding their efforts to reach the various powers of the Inner Sphere and Periphery who still view ComStar with suspicion and disdain. By making ComStar feel more like a partner, and helping to sell them to the war-weary states of the Inner Sphere that still hold them responsible for the horrors we've endured, we could wield one of the most powerful political tools available to modern man.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE CLANS

THE MILITARY STATE OF THE CLANS

Like most of the major realms, the Clans have suffered over the last decade. Though few committed large forces to our Coalition, most have seen their toumans reduced in size by a third, with the remaining forces operating at half strength. One would think that this would encourage more restrained behavior from the Clans, but strength is relative, and with everyone weakened by the war, there seems to be no great downside to inter-Clan raiding picking up right where it left off.

Driven as they are to test themselves in combat, it was only a matter of time until one Clan struck out against its neighbors in an effort to test their strength. This time, it was Clan Hell's Horses with a series of probes into the Wolf Occupation Zone. The Wolves proved eager for battle, hoping for some payback when Gamma Galaxy jumped the border in 3080 to hit Harvest and Seiduts. Unfortunately for the Wolves, the Horses were well entrenched on Seiduts and ground their counterattack to a halt. Clan Wolf retreated, leaving Seiduts to the Horses. Khan Cobb's death gave the Horses pause in earlier this year, which the Wolves exploited by sending troops to Kirchbach, Liezen and Bruben. This time, Clan Wolf clearly bit off more than it could chew when the defending Horses gutted Kappa Galaxy, and forced Beta and Gamma Galaxies again into retreat.

CLAN WOLF

These losses have placed Khan Vlad Ward's position as the great savior of his Clan under increasing pressure. While Ward remains arrogant, his Clan is undergoing a crisis of confidence. The Wolves touman is now at sixty percent of its pre-Jihad strength, and enemies surround the Clan. This puts the Wolves at a crossroads, needing to strike and prove their strength, but unable to do so without great risk. Making things worse is the Clan's decimated sibko program, which can only be mitigated by accepting more freeborns into the touman.

In terms of technology, the Wolves' front line Clusters are maintaining their edge by stripping the second line Clusters of any advanced equipment and OmniMechs. Since 3057, Wolf skill and confidence has been enough to mask the Clan's weaknesses. But after their latest failures against the Horses, élan may no longer be enough.

CLAN JADE FALCON

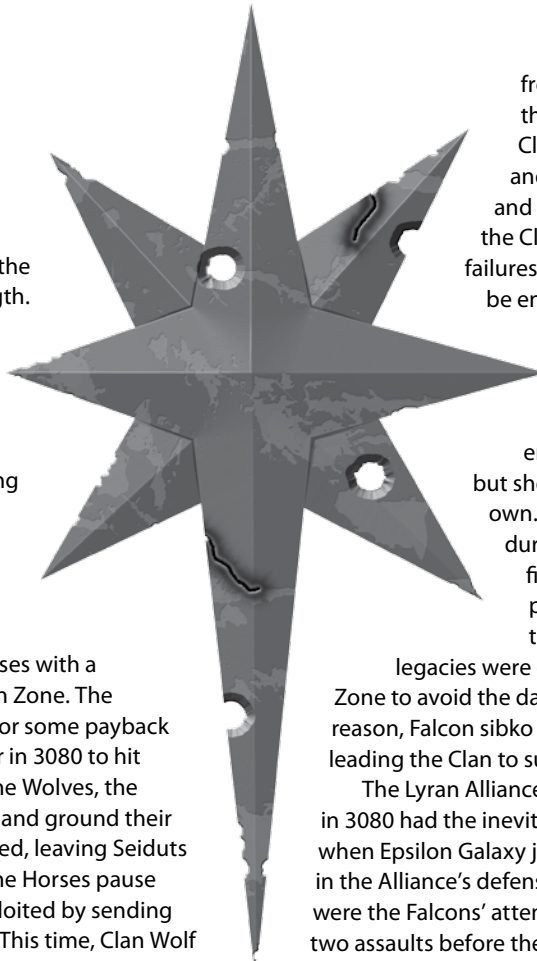
In the Jade Falcon Occupation Zone, Khan Clees would clearly enjoy making life difficult for Khan Ward, but she has more serious problems of her own. The Falcons lost twenty-four Clusters during the war, and what remains is at fifty percent strength. It was only the prescience of Marthe Pryde that ensured that copies of the Falcons' genetic

legacies were distributed through the Occupation Zone to avoid the damage done to the Wolves, but for some reason, Falcon sibko sizes are still smaller than expected, leading the Clan to suffer from a lack of Warriors.

The Lyran Alliance's ineffective probes of the Falcon OZ in 3080 had the inevitable result of sparking Clan reprisals, as when Epsilon Galaxy jumped the border and punched a hole in the Alliance's defenses before retreating. Less successful were the Falcons' attempts to take Graus, which sustained two assaults before the Lyrans finally quit the planet.

CLAN HELL'S HORSES

In contrast, Clan Hell's Horses seems upbeat about its future, but the Horses' recent victories hide the real difficulties they face. The touman is roughly comparable to Clan Jade Falcon's in size, which gives them a handy advantage over the Wolves, but the Wolves are not the Horses' only threat. After the Horses poached Falcon worlds in the aftermath of the Hellion Incursion, the Falcons have been eager to respond in kind. Meanwhile, Rasalhagian nationalists urge Clan Ghost Bear to storm the Horses' border to reclaim Rasalhagian worlds, while Motstånd and rogue Mimir agents continue to wage their covert war in the Horses Occupation Zone. To manage these threats, the Horses' touman is over-committed, and is unlikely to see many more offensive operations in the near future.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

CLAN NOVA CAT

The Nova Cats' touman largely came through the Jihad intact, despite heavy combat since the early 3070s. For the first time in decades, the Cats even rivaled their peers in size—until Alpha, Delta and Tau Galaxies declared themselves for the Republic. While this move had been expected by the Clan and received approval from the Coordinator, it also meant that the Cats' touman went from twenty-seven Clusters to thirteen in a single act. To make matters worse, the Clusters that departed were the Nova Cats' most elite and well equipped. This not only gutted the Clan's fighting strength but stripped it of many of its political elite, future leaders, and the warriors who would normally train the next generation.

About the best that can be said of the Clusters that remain is that they can successfully garrison the Irece Prefecture. This was proven in the face of recent Ghost Bear Dominion probes. But despite Draconis Combine acceptance of the situation it will undoubtedly lead to hard feelings and only increase the questions over the Clan's loyalty.

CLAN SNOW RAVEN

On the other side of the Draconis Combine, Clan Snow Raven seems to have gone into hibernation. Having assumed the burden for the defense of the Outworlds Alliance, Clan Snow Raven has rapidly found that their touman lacks the size to cover all of the Alliance worlds, leaving them reliant on the Alliance Military Corps to cover several of them. This has consequences at a military level with many in the poorly equipped Corps asking just what inviting Clan Snow Raven into the Alliance achieved.

More positively, with the Quatre Belle Naval Yards operational, the battered Snow Raven WarShips are finally receiving much-needed maintenance. With little need for their fleet now that the Jihad has ended, and faced with limited resources, some within the Clans have made the bold proposal to mothball some of their older ships once their refits are complete.

CLAN DIAMOND SHARK

As less is being seen of Clan Snow Raven's WarShip fleet, more is being seen of the Diamond Sharks'. Long left in the background to avoid causing alarm, the Clan's juggernauts are becoming increasingly common leading trade missions to the capital worlds of the Inner Sphere. Often assigned a Cluster of troops for defense, this traveling merchant approach is allowing us to get a good look at Clan Diamond Shark's touman for the first time in decades.

Though there are still big gaps in our intel here, most of the known Diamond Shark touman still remains on Clan's primary trading worlds of Trondheim, Twycross and Itabiana, far from prying eyes. While well equipped and nearing full strength, the fact remains we still have not seen half of the Clusters we know the Sharks to have had in 3067.

GHOST BEAR DOMINION

The most formidable of the Clan toumans remains that of the Ghost Bear Dominion. While the Clan elements are extremely understrength, the absorption of the KungsArmé has allowed the touman to increase in size compared to 3067. This position of strength compared to its neighbors made it easy for the Dominion to spare four Galaxies to garrison our Republic, though these are considered a loan only, and not a potential transfer.

The return of the Clan elements to the Dominion encouraged Rasalhagian nationalists to call for aggressive foreign policy regarding raids by Combine forces along the Dominion border. This has resulted in probing raids into the Irece Prefecture, with both sides suffering light damage.

Interestingly, the Ghost Bear Watch has seen more combat over the last two years than the rest of the touman. If the often-violent efforts to put down Motstånd and the occasional Word of Blake cells were not enough, Mimir has been active across the former Free Rasalhague Republic, especially within the neighboring Hell's Horses OZ (though the Watch denies their presence).

CLANS IN THE REPUBLIC

In addition to the Nova Cat Galaxies already mentioned, there are some additional Clan forces now making the Republic their home. Clan Jade Falcon's Alpha Galaxy and Clan Wolf's Delta Galaxy have both been officially disbanded by their respective high commands. Both of these were stationed in the Republic as garrison forces after serving among the Coalition during Operation SCOUR. Afterward, both Galaxies were below twenty-five percent strength, and subsequently experienced a steady drain of manpower as many warriors abandoned their Clan to join the Republic. Given Alpha Galaxy's rebellious nature, Clan Jade Falcon likely cut them off to avoid a fuss rather than force them to return home, but Clan Wolf gave its warriors more of a say in the matter, repatriating any who wished to return to the Occupation Zone. With four Galaxies now on loan to the Republic and similar manpower problems, the Ghost Bear Dominion is watching these events closely.

WHAT LIES BENEATH **THE INDUSTRIAL STATE OF THE CLANS**

With the apparent loss of their Homeworld holdings, it is not surprising that the Clans have been scrambling to rebuild their infrastructure within the Inner Sphere. However, with the exception of Clans Wolf and Hell's Horses, this has mostly consisted of enhancing existing facilities, rather than creating industries from scratch. This has resulted in widely varying fortunes for the different Clans.

CLAN INDUSTRY

All of the Clans in the Occupation Zones suffered during the "Bloody Tricentennial". Clan Diamond Shark lost Industriplex C on Itabaiana and Trelshire Heavy Industries was badly damaged. The Ghost Bear Dominion was left without a source of *Firemoths* when Facility Kappa-4 was destroyed, while Clan Jade Falcon lost the Red Devil Industries' vehicle lines (though that is arguably not a great loss, given the horrendous quality of that factory's output). Finally, the Word of Blake managed to take out the long-time pirate JumpShip yard located at Star's End, though it seems Clan Hell's Horses was already abandoning the aging and poorly maintained facility at the time.

As a whole, Clan military production is in remarkably good shape, with over seventy functional lines for 'Mechs alone. But this broad statement clouds the details. For starters, Clan politics prevents any one Clan having access to all of that production. Clan Jade Falcon won't be using Clan Nova Cat *Sphinxes* any time soon, for example. Additionally, the standards of production have dropped. At the time of this writing, only sixteen OmniMechs are being produced, with output dominated by retrograde—even Inner Sphere tech—BattleMechs. Finally, it gives no hint of rate of production. For example, while Clan Jade Falcon may produce an impressive six OmniMechs, Eagle Craft Group can only manage limited, high-cost runs, while Olivetti Weapons has been starved of resources to build its 'Mechs by ongoing rebellions and a lack of JumpShips. Perhaps the most significant result of all of this is the increase in the ratio of tanks, battle armor and even ProtoMechs in the Clan forces—all units that require less technical expertise and fewer resources to construct in numbers.

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Finally, we have to consider the state of the Clans' aerospace industry. With the launch of CSR *Mitchell Avellar*, there are now three sites in Clan-controlled regions capable of building JumpShips: Alshain, Butler and Quatre Belle. In addition to this, there are seven known DropShip yards, and three major small craft factories operating in Clan space.

Once again, however, the devil is in the details. The Clans are independent states that cannot rely on access to each other's assets. All Clans have to provide for their own civilian needs. Exemplifying this, most of the production coming out of Alshain is merchant ships, some of which are even being sold to civilians. Huge numbers of small craft are needed for mundane tasks like intra-system trade and customs patrols, while ancient Star League standards like the *Mule* and the *Danaïs* act as the lifeblood of non-military transport.

Given the needs of the Clans to rebuild their infrastructure it can be safely assumed that their naval construction—like that of the Inner Sphere—will be devoted to JumpShips rather than WarShips for the foreseeable future. Only in DropShips do we see a focus on military units, largely because no Clan outside of the Ghost Bears invested in its Inner Sphere aerospace production before 3070, and the Clans will need to ensure some kind of transport capability for their toumans. The more established Dominion is producing *Aqueducts* and *Mules* at twice the rate of their military craft and, over time, we can expect the others to follow suit.

CLAN ECONOMY

The Clans' commercial sector is a mixed bag. Surprisingly, the most successful is not Clan Diamond Shark but rather the Ghost Bear Dominion. While the former has been hampered by its relocation to the Inner Sphere and limited number of merchants, the Dominion has literally entire worlds devoted to making money with a population free and willing to do so. The Outworlds Alliance is likewise benefiting from its free population and injection of Clan resources. Additionally, all Clans but the Jade Falcons have an advantage in a (relatively) large ratio of docking collars to population. This allows for more interstellar trade than is normal in the Inner Sphere. Finally, the Occupation Zones are relatively remote and suffered less from the Word of Blake's predations.

Of course all is not completely rosy. When Clan standards are enforced, the economy suffers, and with the Jihad now over, all Clans are looking to reassert their authority. Every Clan is facing ongoing insurgent operations that are not likely to end with the Word's defeat. While most have strategies in place to mitigate the problem, they represent a nonproductive and unneeded strain on resources. Furthermore, the Clans are essentially living on a "credit bubble", despite being nominally command economies. This was necessary to establish themselves in the Inner Sphere, but eventually the bill will have to be paid.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE CLANS

As usual, it is hard to identify a single theme to the Clans. Given that the Republic has earned its place through martial prowess, all Clans show us a degree of respect offered to few Great Houses. Despite this, our position on Terra makes us a target for many Clans who are only waiting for an opportunity.

CLAN JADE FALCON

Clan Jade Falcon is perhaps the most frustrated with us, not so much over the fate of Alpha Galaxy but rather the actions of the Lyran Alliance. Not unreasonably, the Falcons expected some years of peace after assisting in the Coalition and have made a point of this in negotiations. As a Clan, they are naturally ambivalent about being attacked, but the fact that it comes right after a cease-fire was declared, is one more example of the “perfidious nature of the Great Houses”. More significantly, the death of saKhan Buhallin and the ascension of Diane Anu will see a change in the direction of the Clan. As much a technocrat as is possible for a Clan warrior, Anu may add some expertise to Khan Clees’ wilder plans, provided she can control her own flights of fancy.

CLAN HELL’S HORSES

As veterans of the campaign to defeat Word of Blake returned to Clan space, Khan Cobb had to weather a push by the rank and file to start a new drive to Terra. This came to an end in the face of Clan Wolf’s newest aggressions. The following two years would cost the Horses their Khan and saKhan, with the expected internal ructions. These events are likely to keep the new Hell’s Horses Khans occupied in the near future, and they are unlikely to pay much attention to the Inner Sphere outside the Clan Occupation Zones.

CLAN WOLF

In Clan Wolf, Khan Ward’s position is increasingly under pressure on two fronts. The first is the failure to significantly dent the Hell’s Horses holdings. The second is the apparent favoritism being shown to MechWarrior Katherine Wolf. While Khan Ward has had to face Trials over both issues, his victories have allowed him to have his way—for now. The good news for the Republic is that the Wolves are now too distracted by internal affairs to look at adventurism in our direction, but if Ward loses power without a like-minded successor, this could be a fleeting moment in history.

CLAN DIAMOND SHARK

In contrast, Clan Diamond Shark is increasingly involved with Inner Sphere affairs. The Draconis Combine has been most accommodating after the misadventure on Nykvarn. It is clear that the Combine owes the Clan for something and attacking Clan Diamond Shark only put them deeper in debt. The Halfway enclave in the Lyran Commonwealth represents a new level of penetration into the Inner Sphere. From here, the Clan’s merchant caste maintains connections with the major corporate players of the Inner Sphere, which in turn gives them influence from Tharkad

to Sian. In general, Clan Diamond Shark has a positive attitude towards the Republic, as long as it is allowed its privacy.

GHOST BEAR DOMINION

Another positive Clan is Clan Ghost Bear. If nothing else, Devlin Stone’s forces earned the right to control Terra and this is good enough for the Bears—for now. The Dominion has its own problems, of course. The benign neglect of the Jihad years has seen many of the stricter elements of Clan society ignored by the general populace while officials free from close supervision have become increasingly corrupt.

The Clan’s default answer, a strict crackdown, would restore the order people crave, but at the price of the freedom the Rasalhagian citizens demand, likely resulting in more uprisings. Raids by the now-reviled Motstånd terror group are almost welcome, as they provide an enemy around which the hybrid realm can rally. At least with the touman largely back in the Dominion, the Bears can live up to their part of the social contract with the natives and defend their citizenry from harm.

CLAN NOVA CAT

Even more pro-Republic is Clan Nova Cat. With the Cats, however, it is hard to see where the pragmatism starts and the mysticism ends. They famously joined the Coalition based on little more than a dream and have since followed it with a sincerity verging on fanaticism. But by the same token, the Republic provides Clan Nova Cat with a powerful counter-balance to pressure from the Draconis Combine. Questions about the Combine’s need for an independent Clan Nova Cat have been floating around for a decade and as the Combine struggles to rebuild they will continue to be asked. Thus recognition from the Republic represents legitimacy as well as a possible bolthole if things turn bad in the Dragon’s realm.

CLAN SNOW RAVEN

Sitting outside the Inner Sphere, Clan Snow Raven has adopted the Outworld Alliance’s traditional stance of not really caring about the concerns of the core powers. As it is, they continue their efforts to justify their presence to the denizens of that Periphery realm. Of most concern to them are the actions of the Federated Suns and Draconis Combine. The former seems largely placated by the Alliance’s recent diplomatic efforts, but the latter seems hell-bent to pay back the losses suffered in the early 3070s. For its part, Clan Snow Raven is taking a belligerent stance, much to the concern of many Alliance citizens.

THE COUNCIL OF SIX

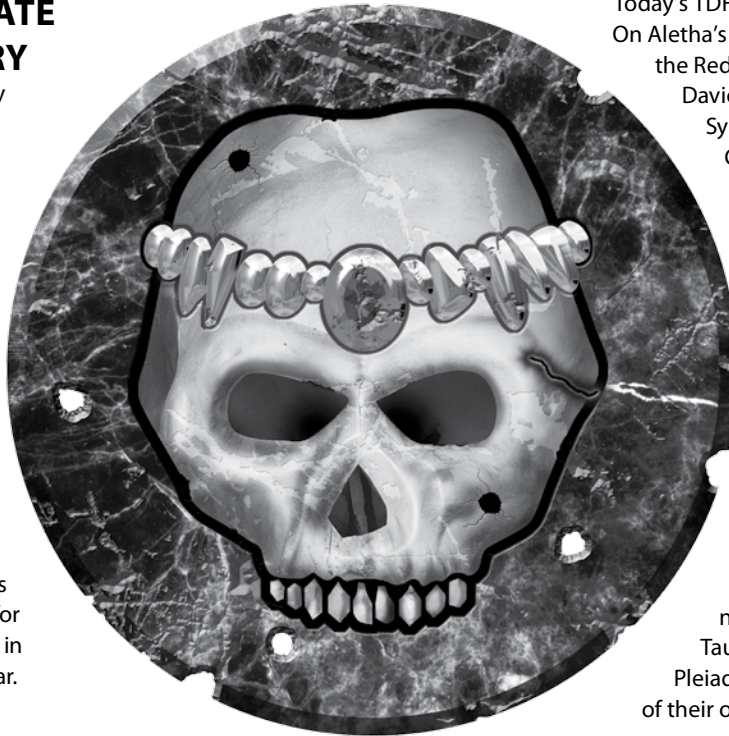
Finally, we must mention the Council of Six. Centered on Tukayyid, the Council of Six is made up of the Inner Sphere Clans with the exception of the Nova Cats and the Wolves (in Exile). Begun in 3075, it is intended to provide common governance for the Inner Sphere Clans. For now, the Council seems mainly concerned with stabilizing the Clan-occupied zones. Based on the Stone’s performance during the Jihad, they are willing to give the Republic a chance to prove itself, but will no doubt prove harsh judges if we fail in any capacity.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE PERIPHERY

THE MILITARY STATE OF THE PERIPHERY

The realms of the Periphery are—as ever—a contrast both to one another and when compared to the Inner Sphere. While some of the Periphery states experienced the horrors of the Jihad and saw their militaries crumble before the Blakist onslaught, others felt merely the mild peripheral effects of the Blakist war (if you'll forgive the unintended pun). While some Periphery states faced the brutality of Blakist weapons directly, others became puppets of the Word for a time—though the outcomes in both cases were typically similar.



TAURIAN CONCORDAT

The Taurian Concordat did indeed suffer from Blakist attacks, but the Taurians' historic distrust towards the Federated Suns saw them accept the notion that New Avalon was to blame for the asteroid bombardment that shattered the Concordat capital. Galvanized to strike against their age-old enemy, the Concordat—manipulated by Blakist collaborators—threw the entirety of its military might at the Federated Suns, seeking to punish House Davion for its heinous crimes.

In so doing, the small but fierce Taurian Defense Force was pitted against the largest military in the Inner Sphere. Though they mostly fought militias and small mercenary outfits, the TDF still was forced to rely upon weapons of mass destruction to defeat the FedSuns defenders. Indeed, it was elements of the Hansen's Roughriders who managed to give the Taurians a taste of the same when they used captured Taurian WMDs to strike back. And later, with so much of the TDF in the Suns, the same Roughriders would launch a campaign to savage multiple worlds in the Concordat single-handedly.

Even with their home worlds once again threatened, the Taurians continued their single-minded invasion of the FedSuns until—only a few months ago—evidence was made clear to their leaders that the Blakists, not the Davions, had committed the atrocities on Taurus.

Today's TDF is a shadow of its former self. On Aletha's Choice, the Ceti Hussars killed the Red Chasseurs to a man, while the Davion Assault Guards and the First Syrtis Fusiliers LCT annihilated the Concordat Jaegers on Flintoft. Much of the remaining TDF regiments have been reduced to a quarter of their strength or less, including the Taurian Guards, Third Taurian Lancers, and Gordon's Armored Cavalry. The First Taurian Lancers and Concordat Jaegers on Ridgebrook, and the First MacLeod's Regiment on Grossbach, are at little more than one-third of their nominal strength. Only the First Taurian Lancers battalion and the Pleiades Hussars can boast even half of their operating strength.

MAGISTRACY OF CANOPUS

In comparison to the TDF, the Magistracy of Canopus appears to have improved its defenses since the last reported data. The Magistracy Armed Forces avoided involvement in any of the later major battles of the Jihad, focusing solely on mopping up small pockets of trapped Blakists within their borders and repairing their damaged commands. Nearly all MAF regiments have already returned to full operational strength, though the incorporation of replacement troops has reduced overall quality in some cases.

The hardest hit to the MAF was the loss of so many of their top tier command officers when Crimson was firebombed, along with the destruction of the Canopian Institute of War. With numerous local academies also destroyed by the Blakists on other worlds, the Canopian initiative to improve the quality of its local militias has been set back.

The reconstruction of the CIW is already far along, with courses being taught in auxiliary facilities dotting the Canopian countryside. Meanwhile, instruction at local schools has been taken up in governmental buildings spared by Blakist guns. As an ally to the Capellans, the Canopians present a significant problem. Given the breakup of the Free Worlds League and past alliances between the Canopians and Anduriens, we should

WHAT LIES BENEATH

be aggressive in efforts to prevent an expanded military pact between them and the Capellans, as such could easily destabilize the entire region in favor of our avowed Capellan opposition.

MARIAN HEGEMONY

The Marian Hegemony fared relatively well, facing only Blakist-backed Circinians and mercenaries through much of the Jihad. Still, their losses were significant since the Legions are relatively small when compared to Inner Sphere militaries. The MHAF undertook rebuilding once the conflict with the Circinians began to fall off, but the rebellions in the Lothian and Illyrian Districts kept them occupied. Evidence that the Word-controlled Circinus Federation was manipulating both insurrections ultimately quieted the Illyrian quest for independence, but the Lothians seem undeterred.

To placate his restive population, Caesar Cassius focused his armies away from the rebellious Lothians and against the fringes of the Free Worlds League, likely in the hopes of appearing more magnanimous to Marian citizens. Overstepping his bounds, his invasion of multiple League worlds netted initial gains until a powerful defense by ex-League defenders, some employing nuclear weapons, forced the Fourth and Sixth Legions to return home bloodied.

The remaining Legions, especially the Second, continue to recover from losses taken during the Circinian invasion. The Fifth has apparently become the core of a new Lothian military, still active, but stricken from the MHAF's rolls.

FILTVELT COALITION

The defense forces of the Periphery's smaller nations continue to struggle against plagues of piracy and terrible deficiencies of infrastructure. The Filtvelt Coalition's militia force is full-strength in terms of troops, but lacks equipment, and thus the ability to hold off a sufficiently sophisticated attacker. Though some local industry and trade deals may remedy this in the future, at present the Thumpers mercenary command remains the strongest part of the Coalition's defense force.

FRONC REACHES

The Marshals of the Fronc Reaches have managed to recover much of their strength since the Jihad, with their mobile defense regiment claiming full-strength status for the first time in years. The reduction in pirate attacks and additional Marshals raised during the Jihad has gone a long way toward making this happen. Meanwhile, the Sentinels Brigade still consists only of the Fronc Cuirassiers, who have reached a bit over one-third of their intended strength.

It is worth noting that the Marshals have added massed numbers of non-'Mech forces to their TO&E, mainly home-built tanks tasked with static location defense, to free their 'Mechs up for more effective and aggressive actions against incoming

raiders. The Reaches also added several smaller mercenary outfits to their security forces, though many of these company-sized groups were troops who refused the offer of landholds to permanently join the Sentinels. Deployed along the Concordat border to guard against Taurian or pirate raids, these mercenaries are under strict orders not to sally forth on any raids of their own.

CALDERON PROTECTORATE

The Calderon Protectorate remains at about the same strength level as it fielded in 3079, with the third class of graduates of the New Hope Military University adding to the ranks of the Calderon Guard just a few months ago. Each of these Guard regiments is now at twenty-five percent strength, while the two Taurian Pride regiments have seen another surge in their numbers thanks to the influx of top graduates from NHMU.

Most significant was the addition of the WarShip TCS *Vendetta* as part of the peace agreement they brokered between New Avalon and Taurus. While still under repair from the massive damage taken in the invasion, and under the watchful eye of FedSuns and Republic observers, this WarShip immediately made the Protectorate a major power in the Periphery. Though still in need of repair after its brutal career in the Jihad, Erik Martens-Calderon has stated his intention to rechristen the vessel the CPS *Redemption*, and to dedicate its service to deterring piracy "from Taurian to Filtvelt space".

LESSER PERIPHERY AND PIRATES

Nothing worth noting has changed in terms of force size for the lesser Periphery states, though our assessment of the strength of the Niops Association Militia was apparently optimistic, as Word of Blake reprisals have blasted the NAM to perhaps ten percent of its pre-Jihad strength. At the other end of the Sphere, the Brotherhood of Randis recently elected to form a third battalion from their two overstrength battalions, leaving all at about eighty-five percent strength. This was deemed a necessary action to provide a more flexible defense force for their increasing population.

Many of the known pirate bases in the Periphery have largely become off-limits to those who would use them to strike at undefended border worlds. Though piracy itself remains alive and well, many bandit groups have moved into as-yet undetermined bases in the shattered Concordat area, the remnants of the Circinus Federation, and elsewhere. The pirate haven of the Tortuga Dominions has been remarkably quiet since the downfall of the Death's Consorts and we believe a power struggle is taking place there in the vacuum created after the Consorts' dramatic fall. The most worrisome pirate band now is the Calderon's Commando, which has apparently moved on from their suspected base in the Fronc Reaches, in favor of better hunting in the Concordat. Multiple simultaneous raids on as many as three worlds show their contempt for the shattered TDF by taunting them within their own borders.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE INDUSTRIAL STATE OF THE PERIPHERY

Periphery industries—particularly the civilian components, but also military manufacturing, in most cases—fared much better than those in the Inner Sphere. Of notable exception, of course, was the military productivity of the Taurian Concordat, which was savaged by various enemies throughout the war. In contrast, the Magistracy of Canopus managed somehow to expand its capabilities through the conflict without losing any. This put the Canopians above even the Successor States, none of which managed such a feat.

TAURIAN CONCORDAT

The Concordat chose its enemies poorly when it launched an all-out invasion of the Federated Suns. Devastating world after world in a genocidal fury levied against innocents, the Concordat's true hypocrisy surfaced when they labeled Hansen's Roughriders war criminals for using their own tactics and weapons against them. Blakist and Roughrider attacks ultimately destroyed *all* industry on Perdition, along with Taurus Territorial Industries on the Concordat capital of Taurus. The factories on Sterope and MacLeod's Land were also heavily damaged during the war, and still have yet to return to full capacity. Edge Industries on Celano completed repairs a year ago and has been supplying armor products round the clock, all of which is going to simply repair the badly mauled TDF.

The obstinate pursuit of war with the FedSuns saw entire worlds lost to offset the gain of the Pleiades. Perhaps securing the Cluster was a moral victory here, and a boon in resources after a fashion, but was it really worth the loss of Perdition and Organo, which also deprived the Taurians of the Pinard Protectorates factory and the exemplary Organo Flight Academy? As the Inner Sphere realms have shut down their RetroTech lines, the Taurians have been forced to increase theirs after the severe losses to the Suns. We expect them to maintain this primitive manufacturing for at least the next five years, while the ruling military junta tries to stabilize the war-battered state.

MAGISTRACY OF CANOPUS

The Canopians not only staved off the Word of Blake attack on Detroit, they were able to minimize damage to the factories on Canopus despite a Blakist occupation that began with the firebombing of their capital. Further impressing logistics experts, the Canopians built and supplied three Novis AT-H factories on different worlds during the Jihad.

With their minor factory damages repaired during the war, the Magistracy has already begun preliminary surveying and discussions with industry executives for expansion and new construction on other worlds. While this output has largely been diverted to supply their Capellan allies, MIM activity has managed to keep us—and the Capellans—from learning the specific aims of the realm's industrial expansion.

MARIAN HEGEMONY

With little industry to speak of before the Jihad, the Marians were fortunate in their city planning that their factories on Alphard were spared the destruction meted out against Nova

Roma. Alphard's industrial capabilities expanded marginally with the introduction of RetroTech manufacturing in 3074, which remains a major component of the Hegemony's military supply chain, especially given its need to rebuild after losses in the Lothian province and against the former Free Worlds League.

Rumors of new BattleMech construction starting on Pompey at the Hadrian Mechanized plant are unconfirmed, though it would follow Caesar Cassius' order to further expand the Marians' military production, so that a single attack cannot decapitate their entire industrial base, as nearly happened.

FILTVELT COALITION

The Filtvelt Coalition completed conversion of the Quikscell repair compound on Broken Wheel for hovercraft manufacture within the last year. The factory's output is intended to bulk up local defenses first before the Filtvelt Militia is supplied. The Coalition Armory plant on Filtvelt is still building RetroTech 'Mechs, since they have no other means to supply their MechWarriors without external trade.

Their entreaties for assistance to other realms, in the hopes of upgrading domestic factories to build non-primitive 'Mechs, have not yet met with success, but they do demonstrate the desire to establish full self-sufficiency for the Coalition's defensive needs.

FRONC REACHES

The converted civilian vehicle plants on Fronc and Rockwellawan overcame their previous supply and quality issues and are turning out large numbers of Hetzers and Vedette tanks. Though they are wisely keeping their numbers confidential, based on increased militia activity, we believe the Reaches have several regiments of tanks in the militia and Sentinels already.

CALDERON PROTECTORATE

The limited facilities on Diik are churning out RetroTech 'Mechs and fighters in respectable numbers for the Calderon Protectorate. Besides supplying the Fronc Reaches and the Filtvelt Coalition with their excess monthly output, the Fiefdom of Randis has been buying small numbers of the *Star Dagger* fighter for their local defense purposes.

LESSER PERIPHERY STATES

New St. Andrews has begun producing a new variant of the *Arbiter* and has purchased licensing to build *Wasp* and *Stinger* variants using either primitive or Succession Wars-era technology (our informants are uncertain as to which). Randis and Otisberg are likewise still building RetroTech 'Mechs, according to our latest intelligence.

PIRATES

All indications point to new variants of the tanks built by "Vengeance Incorporated", despite the chaos currently engulfing the Pirates Haven Star Cluster since the war. Reports of Vedettes with light autocannon and Hunters with MMLs are unsettling, as are the unsubstantiated rumors of a new *Brigand* variant produced by the only known factory complex run by and devoted to the pirate community.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE PERIPHERY

The states of the Periphery offer us the least threat in terms of our own security. However, we should try to think of them as a means to distract our immediate neighbors should hostilities erupt. By seeking friendly ties with those on the far borders of the Successor States, we would have a means to strike at the rear of any state seeking to invade the Republic.

MAGISTRACY OF CANOPUS AND FRONC REACHES

The Magistracy of Canopus would be the best ally to have in the Periphery. The problem, of course, is their blood ties to the Capellans, our most likely enemies among the Successor States. Short of initiating a Sphere-wide war to deal with the Capellans, our only real option is to foment distrust within the Magistracy. Given the Canopians' matriarchal leadership, any suggestion that the Magestrix is subject to—rather than an equal partner with—Sun-Tzu might be the best means to disrupt their alliance. Failing that, we will need to gain close ties with the Canopians' neighbors to force them into a defensive posture rather than support a Capellan push into the Republic.

Sadly, our options for allies among the Magistracy's neighbors are limited. The Fronc Reaches, though gaining defensive capability, have no offensive power. Their military arm has strict orders to operate only on Reaches worlds. There is one potential way in, though. The Canopian annexation of Detroit left the Reaches angry and distrustful towards their mother state. Perhaps a promise to aid the Reaches in retaking Detroit would get them to strike at the Canopians in the event of any adventurism by Sian. Otherwise, the Reaches is little more than a buffer between the Magistracy and the Taurians.

MARIAN HEGEMONY

On the other side of the Magistracy is the Marian Hegemony. Frankly, this realm would hardly be a powerful ally, even one of convenience. While they could pose a more significant threat to Canopian security than the meager Fronc Reaches, there is little chance of the Hegemony allying with us under any circumstances due to our remote and divergent interests. Only with extreme assistance to develop their military industry would they consider aiding us, and doing that would only undermine the plans we have for the intermediate future.

However, the Hegemony's interest in the worlds of the former Free Worlds League means they have little to devote to diversionary raids to aid a distant Republic ally. The

Hegemony's recent and ongoing loss of control in the Lothian province has also reduced their military strength, costing them an entire legion to date. Thus, the Hegemony is to be considered the least and last resort for potential alliance against the Canopians.

TAURIAN CONCORDAT AND CALDERON PROTECTORATE

On the far border of the Federated Suns sits the remnants of the Taurian Concordat. Much more a threat to the Suns without any input from us, their willing and eager use of nuclear weapons during their recent conflict places them in opposition both in temperament and methodology to the ideals we hope to develop. Further, the Federated Suns is the neighbor most aligned with our own interests and thus least in need of a check from the Periphery. As it happens, the internal turmoil within the Concordat will occupy that realm for years to come, what with rebuilding their worlds and military a top priority, while simultaneously trying to stave off the defections to the Calderon Protectorate and fending off increasingly bold pirate attacks. Considering the Concordat's politics, it would be best if we sought a regime change there through subtle propaganda, perhaps in the form of humanitarian aid, sent to assist in local reconstruction on Taurus and other Concordat worlds.

The Calderon Protectorate should be a boon in the Periphery. An independent-minded people possessed of superior state morals, they epitomize much of what we hope for ourselves. Their fierce defense against pirates and their refusal to support the Concordat's invasion of the Suns—particularly the dubious tactics the Taurian military employed while doing so—speaks well of the Protectorate's policies. We should thus be able to hold up this state up as an example for the rest of the Periphery. If we make it known that we respect the Protectorate's actions and intentions, it might inspire others to do likewise. This could even net the Protectorate more former Concordat worlds while improving our public standing in the region.

MINOR PERIPHERY POWERS

The rest of the Periphery is usually more concerned with survival than diplomacy. At best, we might cooperate with the smaller states, like Randis and Mica, to create havoc for the Snow Ravens in the Outworlds Alliance and the edge of the Combine, but this would be tantamount to signing their death warrants, as none of these micro-powers have the means to defend against a determined to eradicate them.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

MERCENARIES

THE MILITARY STATE OF MERCENARIES

The mercenary industry is a shambling tatterdemalion of its pre-Jihad condition. Involved on the front lines of the worst fighting in the Jihad (and on all sides), it is no surprise that mercenaries often bore the brunt of the casualties on many worlds. From the annihilation of most of Wolf's Dragoons on Outreach and Mars, to the blockaded Northwind Highlanders emerging unscathed after years of conflict, there are myriad tales to tell and many more that will never be known of mercenary courage and chicanery in equal amounts. The following are the briefest of summaries of some of the better known commands and how they fared during the Jihad, as well as several lesser-known forces that either formed during the war or rose to greater notoriety in that time.

HIRING HALLS

The loss of legitimate hiring halls on Outreach and Galatea has damaged the mercenary industry greatly. While many lesser halls—including rebuilt halls on Galatea—remain available for the gathering of professional soldiers and employers alike, the guiding hand of the MRBC is almost nonexistent. True, the organization still exists, but without the powerful Dragoons backing up its edicts, the Commission lacks the authority to oversee contracts and arbitrate disputes. It is doubtful that any other neutral entity will be found to fill the loss, since none will trust any form of ComStar oversight, nor would any House affiliation be accepted. A resurgent MRBC is a possibility, but it is just as likely that some proliferation of smaller realm-based hiring halls will facilitate contracts between mercenaries and the host state only.

If the latter happens, it may result in effectively neutering the mercenary industry, resulting in two likely outcomes: either mercenaries will be subject to worse treatment than before through lack of employment options, or mercenaries will gravitate toward one or more "trusted" employers at the expense of the rest.

ALLIED MERCENARY COMMAND

Founded by the Wolf's Dragoons, this assemblage of mercenary commands stood alone in sounding the alarm against Blakist expansion.

Despite the Houses ignoring their call to arms, the Word focused its early actions on these forces and showed no mercy in their pursuits. Aside from the

Northwind Highlanders—who found their aerospace

forces seized or

destroyed, and their

world blockaded

for years, all of the

other AMC member

commands sustained

no less than fifty percent

losses through the Jihad, with

most suffering far more. The

Dismal Disinherited, Lindon's

Battalion, Always Faithful,

Grim Determination, and the

Arcadians were all completely

wiped out. The Dragoons

themselves lost over eighty percent of their entire

command, as well as their entire fleet and base world of

Outreach. What remains of the once-greatest mercenary

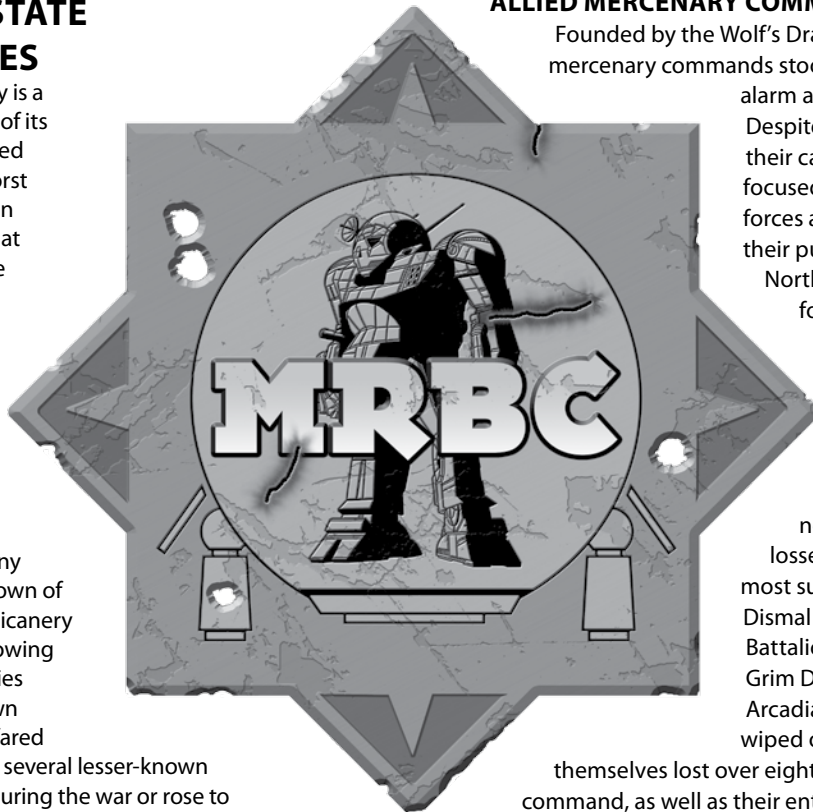
brigade is now a demoralized core of die-hards, many still

traumatized by the horrors of the Jihad.

KELL HOUNDS

The Kell Hounds were two full regiments strong before the Jihad. Now they can field just over a company of 'Mechs and struggle to support them with the shreds of their auxiliary forces. Jade Falcons killed the Hounds' commanding officer, Daniel Allard, in 3069, after which command fell to Akira Brahe.

The Crescent Hawks Company, a semi-autonomous part of the Hounds, parted ways with them after helping to liberate Tharkad, and was spared much of the eventual carnage the Hounds experienced—including the death of Christian Kell later in the war. During the deathtrap of Cairo, on Terra, almost all of the surviving Kell Hounds fell trying to dislodge the Word of Blake ROM forces. With just four 'Mech lances remaining, the surviving Hounds are defiant nevertheless, and intend to rebuild so they might defend Arc-Royal into the future.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

NORTHWIND HIGHLANDERS

The Highlanders were blockaded on their homeworld of Northwind when the Blakists caught their entire JumpShip fleet during the elections for new Clan elders. Trapped, and with no means to communicate with other systems after the Blakist WarShip captain obliterated both the planetary HPG station and the Highlanders' aerospace transports, the Highlanders maintained their readiness level but gave up all hope of escape until they were liberated by a Combine force.

As thanks, the Highlanders took part in the Combine thrust against the Word of Blake, including the final clearing of Dieron. On Terra, the Highlanders made up a significant portion of General Lee's Sydney assault force, where their superior numbers and condition helped them escape the meat grinder there with half the losses of other allied troops.

Now rebuilding, they already have raised enough qualified warriors to man replacement 'Mechs. Meanwhile, their few Dispossessed are providing training to the students at the Northwind Military Academy, delivering pointed instruction in the modern integration of combined arms and the limited defenses against WMDs. Since Northwind has its own factories, we expect the Highlanders to return to full strength in months not years, but they have responded enthusiastically to our overtures, and thus may not remain a mercenary force for much longer. After all, with Northwind itself under Republic control, the Highlanders now see the RAF as a viable means to ensure their homeworld is never again threatened.

THE CONDEMNED

Many mercenary outfits willingly took part in the Blakist Jihad, some even gleefully using WMDs in their attacks against both military and civilian targets. A great number of these rogue mercenaries have already been hunted down and exterminated. Few of them chose to surrender, knowing they would be convicted of war crimes and likely executed for their actions. Those that are confirmed as wiped out include the Fifty-First Dark Panzer Jaegers, the Broadsword Legion, Wannamaker's Widowmakers, Bronson's Horde, Carson's Renegades, Fist of Mokai, Hannibal's Hermits, Bullard's Armored Cavalry, Gray's Ghosts, the Martian Cuirassiers, and the Stealthy Tigers among many others.

Of the few Blakist mercenaries known to have escaped the Protectorate, warrants and bounties have been issued for their capture or death. Various hunters have already collected some of these bounties. Of these bounty hunters, a few have been offered membership in the RAF for special operation services. Our thinking is that these promising individuals may forge a foundation for some of our future covert forces.

PERIPHERY

As in the Inner Sphere, the mercenaries employed in the Periphery saw their share of combat, though typically at a much lesser magnitude than in the Successor States. All the same, many of these mercs demonstrated extraordinary courage under fire, while others casually broke their contracts to pursue other ends. Among those worthy of note are Ramilie's Raiders, who actually represent both categories noted above. Though they abandoned their duty station in the Fronc Reaches, they were instrumental in saving the underground on Canopus IV. Their selfless attack on the Forty-first Shadow Division allowed the leaders of the uprising to escape, though very few of the Raiders lived to join them. Among those who merely broke their contracts are Longwood's Bluecoats, who were so disgusted by Taurian neglect that they also went so far as to join Hansen's Roughriders in the process.

NEW FACES

The Jihad saw dozens upon dozens of famed mercenary units wiped out across the Inner Sphere, while others were shattered to the barest shreds of their former strength, yet clung to life through sheer tenacity. Lesser-known outfits surprised everyone by surviving the conflagration and appearing little the worse for the experience, though these "tough nuts" were few indeed. As a rule, most mercenary survivors of the Jihad were less than a regiment in size, with access to their own transportation assets. By not posing a serious enough threat, and retaining their own mobility, these commands were often overlooked by their would-be assassins, and could stay mobile to avoid being destroyed. Examples of these include Deliah's Gauntlet, Gannon's Cannons, Holt's Hilltoppers, the Flying Buttresses, Rianjamin's Avengers, and The Foul-Tempered.

Many other new mercenary commands were spawned by the war throughout the Inner Sphere and Periphery. Some died just as quickly as they appeared but others managed to survive and even thrive in the brutal war. As with most of the established forces that escaped extermination, smaller outfits were generally ignored while larger commands were easier to hit. This has created an influx of company-sized (and smaller) commands in today's market, while very few of the multi-regiment mercenary commands—like the Highlanders, Illician Lancers and Crater Cobras—now remain. This is a boon to employers, as a smaller command is more economical and easily transported. The *Kouki no Otakebi* and Thompson's August Warriors are just two of these new faces in the post-Jihad industry.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF MERCENARIES

Despite the aid received from numerous mercenary outfits in defeating the Blakist threat, the general population remains conflicted in its opinion of the mercenary industry. Without discounting their role in our victory, our own aims to reduce military sizes and control non-state forces will necessitate curbing the mercenary industry or outlawing its use entirely. Since mercenaries follow no flag, and are technically beholden only to those who pay the most, the use of such forces remains an inherent risk and a tacit approval of war as a means of achieving political goals. As this would allow a circumvention of the agreements we hope to cement between our Republic and the neighboring Successor States, this cannot be allowed to come to pass.

Before the Jihad, it would have been nearly impossible to entertain the notion of doing away with mercenary use entirely, but the massive losses suffered during the war might play into our favor now. With the MRBC shattered and so few large mercenary commands remaining, most outfits today are company-sized on average. The political leverage of the Wolf's Dragoons has crumbled and while they rebuffed us when we broached the subject of either laying down their arms or joining the Republic, we feel that was due more to their Clan heritage than to an outright refusal. Likewise, the Kell Hounds, themselves crippled, remain an essential component to check the Clans on the Lyran border, and any effort to remove them from the playing field will meet resistance from the Archon himself, to say nothing of the familial connections between the Kells and the throne.

Our biggest success thus far was recruiting the Northwind Highlanders to join the Republic—though I would be remiss in noting that, had they not effectively sat out the entire Jihad and tarnished their reputation in the process, it would not have been such an easy sell. Still, the Highlanders have already become an example to others, as a number of smaller merc commands have also been folded into the RAF or taken generous compensation packages to retire from the industry and settle in our borders. We must still tread cautiously here; while demilitarization of non-state forces remains our goal,

we have to avoid the appearance of forcing these men and women out of their cockpits and into retirement homes at gunpoint. Should that become the general belief, it will only drive mercenaries to other employers—such as the Capellan Confederation, which will surely never subscribe to our disarmament policies.

It's worthwhile to note that we've already identified a distinct correlation between the origins of mercenary commands and their opinions toward our Republic. Those who are descended from or inspired most by old Star League commands (admittedly few of which survived the Jihad) appear to hold us in high esteem, like the Northwind Highlanders. Others, who were founded after the Star League fell, such as the Kell Hounds, appear neutral to the Republic as a concept but look upon our notion of disarmament with disfavor. The same holds true for outfits that maintain loyalties to any particular House, such as the pro-Davion Twelfth Vegan Rangers. In these lattermost cases, we may find it easier to pursue our goals by appealing to the mercenaries' employing House, rather than attempting to recruit and disarm these commands ourselves.

We have a limited window of public approval that we should use to our benefit while we have the chance. We can issue a call to nationalize any pro-Republic mercenaries or offer long-term contracts to the mercenaries already in our service, extolling the virtues of job security and stability that come with such offers. Using the proper language should allow us to avoid appearance of indebting them to a "company store" situation but we can still, over time, win them over into permanent service in the RAF. This will likely be our best means to remove influential and capable mercs from the general service pool.

In all honesty, it may never be possible to eliminate the mercenary community entirely, especially not with the Successor States so reliant upon them. Thus, it must instead be our goal to reduce their power and influence, using the current public sentiment against war and warriors as a means to do so. With anti-war sentiment running high in our favor—even *among* mercenaries—there will be no better time to pursue this effort.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

CONCLUSIONS

As you can see, Deviln, the Inner Sphere (and I'm going to just include the Periphery and the Inner Sphere Clans in that lump from here on out so I don't have to keep saying "Inner Sphere and Clans" over and over) is battered and bruised and has a long road ahead of it to fully recover from the Jihad, but things are not entirely hopeless. This gives us a golden opportunity to position the Republic at the forefront of recovery efforts and "light the way".

The basis on which all postwar reconstruction programs will have to rest is, of course, infrastructure. The number one priority in that regard is transportation, as so much of the Inner Sphere's assets have been diverted and tied up in the war. With all of the losses to JumpShip and DropShip resources, re-tasking those vessels is one of the first things the states began as soon as it became clear the war was over. Our request to leave garrison troops where they were stationed in the Protectorate helped in that regard, as it freed up transport assets originally flagged to bring those support troops home and allowed them to be used to shore up faltering trade fleets. Unfortunately, the trend away from capital-class WarShips towards Pocket Warships is expected to eat into conventional DropShip production, and may continue to hamper commercial traffic at a time when commerce is needed the most.

The vast recovery projects that will be needed—and, in many cases, have already begun—on worlds across the Inner Sphere provide an interesting opportunity to advance one of our priority projects. If our intent is to reduce the number of BattleMechs in service across the board, we will need to provide alternatives to avoid the collapse of those companies and conglomerates that depended on military production to meet their profit goals and uphold their responsibilities to their shareholders. Convincing such manufacturers to redirect their resources into IndustrialMech production would be an excellent diversion of such material and efforts and could benefit the wider goal of infrastructure repair. To that end, Lin has assembled a team to work with some of the Republic's top producers on retooling their lines in this direction, and to develop programs and incentives to expand to any foreign corporations that plan to do business within our borders. If successful, these efforts should show other industry leaders the benefits of our programs, and will thus add economic pressure to achieve our "peace dividends", while still working on the state-based military side of the equation.

One final approach to the infrastructure repair effort took its first steps a little over a month ago with the establishment of the Republic Disaster Management Agency. Owing its genesis to a conglomeration of aid agencies and programs

formed to deal with the terrible aftermath of "Bloody Tricentennial", the RDMA is offering funding for reconstruction and expert assistance in the often tricky business of cleaning up the Word's mess. Currently, this agency is only operational within the Republic, but plans are being drawn up to offer its services internationally, specifically to all signatories of the Republic Formation Treaty. We have already received interest from several Lyran and FedSuns corporations looking to invest in the agency, as well as a generous donation from CEO Rendelli of Hachiman-Taro, in memory of the late Chandrasekhar Kurita.

One major concern in all of this is that we cannot allow any of the advanced research projects that the Word was known to be working on fall into the hands of anyone but ourselves. (Note: I'll have a separate report on some of the more significant of these projects available for you shortly.) Our agents have been scouring former Blakist facilities and data cores on dozens of worlds in search of these projects and destroying them—in most cases after securing copies of the research for our own use. There have been several close calls where our people barely got there in time before one of the House intelligence operations claimed the facilities for themselves, and at least one known instance where force had to be used to dislodge a Loki squad. Marcel, working closely with Galen and Byron, is well aware of these issues and has begun more concerted efforts to block the Houses' recovery of Word technology. They are certainly to be held back only as a last resort, but we may eventually need to consider using our own Shadows if this covert struggle deepens. This would allow us to maintain plausible deniability in the event that things go sour.

One would like to think that helping their people rebuild following a devastating war would be the number one priority of the nobility, as those who use their wealth and family history to place themselves in a position of leadership over the rest of their fellow men should ever be aware that the people are the basis of their power. But, alas, as it has been throughout history, we find that the so-called nobles of the Great Houses are, in fact, sometimes the biggest, most immovable obstacles in the way of progress.

The chaos of the Jihad has only made that deplorable tendency worse, as the Word's winnowing of the nobility has given the survivors more room to advance their own agendas without getting their own hands dirty—often at the expense of the common folk. Jockeying for position within the postwar order has become almost a sport in some realms, and not even the Clans are immune; as the Bloodhouses are more like the nobility that they would like to think. The ranks of the Clan toumans have too many holes now, and a lack of qualified candidates simply won't stop them being filled.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

Here in the Republic (as I've already mentioned), our strategy for diluting the power of the nobility is a two-pronged strategy. By packing their ranks with our own appointees and co-opting them into the political system so that their ambition and baser tendencies can be checked by democratic structures before they get out of hand, the bluebloods in our Republic will learn to be more responsive to the people. Obviously, that will not work as well in foreign states, nor will it work within the warrior-centric Clans, but we can take advantage of the inherent untrustworthiness of the nobility as a class to weaken their position outside our borders. I'm not yet giving any signoff on this plan, but I did want to bring it to your attention and get your feedback. Every state has its internal problems with their nobles: the Lyrans have Archonettes reluctant to surrender their newfound authority back to the Archon; the Federated Suns has two Marches ruled by ambitious families resistant to New Avalon's commands; the Combine has its reactionary families with both covert (and overt) ties to the Black Dragons; the Free Worlds League has pretty much always been a morass of competing houses who finally imploded the federal authority. Only the Capellan Confederation really has its nobility cowed to the point of a true central control, but even there they've reclaimed a huge swath of territory that was once independent and I'm betting the hereditary power structures on those worlds aren't liking the loss of authority to the Chancellor they're going to be forced into. Perhaps we should be looking at ways in which we can feed these tensions, to keep the aristocracies destabilized long enough that they become essentially toothless. Something to think about, certainly.

Finally, I have ready for your approval the final text of what we're now calling the Resettlement Act, attached under separate cover. I think we've got all the kinks worked out this time. We know this is going to be unpopular when we announce it, but we all agree that it needs to happen. We simply cannot maintain large, concentrated ethnic enclaves within the Republic's borders; that's just asking for trouble down the line as the external clashes between our neighbors

echo within our own borders. In the next few days, we'll be launching a major media campaign to influence public thinking on this issue, playing up the spirit of brotherhood that got us through the war and the universality of life in the Republic. Theo and his crew have done a bang-up job on something that no one is going to like and they did it without complaint; I'm hopeful that their efforts will reduce the resistance this policy will engender.

I'm not going to lie to you, Devlin. I fully anticipate that we may have to use force to carry out some of the planned initiatives. This will especially be true in those parts of the Republic that used to be Capellan. That can't be helped; if we left it up to the people, few would ever move of their own volition.

And once again, the Clans are going to present a special problem. While there may be enmities between Liao and Davion, or between Steiner and Kurita, *everyone* hates the Clans and having their enclaves in our midst is thus an issue we will need to confront head-on. I'm glad we have them and we could use the benefits they bring to the table, but we need to tread lightly. We're already keeping their military forces somewhat segregated from troops of non-Clan origin so maybe it's a good idea to do the same with their civilians. It seems to have worked for the Combine and the Nova Cats—well, to an extent, but nothing's perfect—and we could use the extra breathing room to figure out a more permanent solution that would take into account the prejudices of the rest of the population. Yet at the same time we need to avoid too much segregation, lest we alienate the parent Clans of these enclaves. Relocation may actually be rather easy for them as a result of the more insular enclave system the Clans have been used to, but their proclivity to fight any changes makes any effort along these lines fairly tricky.

The birth of a new paradigm is never an easy task and we've set ourselves some lofty goals. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't nervous about it all going wrong and I'm sure you feel the same way. But our will is unbreakable, our sword arms are strong, and our cause is just. We chose *Ad Securitas Per Unitas* as our new nation's motto for a reason, now let's make it happen.

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connection/JIHAD: FINAL RECKONING/section07: LEGACIES OF THE WORD

LEGACIES OF THE WORD





LEGACIES OF THE WORD

Devlin,

The Word of Blake may be shattered, but you and I both know that their passing leaves behind a lot of questions. Did we get them all? Are there more of them out there? Where did they raise the forces they used against us? How did they develop such new technologies in secret? Why didn't ComStar know? These are all good questions, but nobody sane is going to like the answers we've been finding.

Once it became clear they were going to lose Terra, Word of Blake's ROM operatives began a massive purge of all its memory cores—including not only those found on Terra, but those deployed throughout the Blake Protectorate. The purge was quite thorough, but over the years since we secured the system and tracked down the Word's few surviving fugitive leaders, we managed to piece together a significant amount of information. It may not be everything we'd want to know, but it certainly fills in enough gaps to get us some working answers.

Devlin, I know the temptations this data will present all too well. After my recent talk with Focht, I briefly wondered if some of that was just my Steiner upbringing, a family tendency toward the Machiavellian—but even Lear betrayed similar thoughts when we worked out some of these details. So, I will caution you now, before you read this full report: Do not let these facts pave the way for immortalizing the Word as a perpetual bogeyman for the populace to fear. The moment we prop up the Republic on such a mantle of fear is the moment you reduce this grand experiment to that of another House—constantly warning its people that General Kerensky lies in wait to avenge a fallen legend.

Instead, I urge that we keep these documents to ourselves, safe and secured until we can verify once and for all that the Word is no longer a threat to us. Let us safeguard our legacy without panicking the billions we just saved from the zealots' holocaust.

Sincerely,
—Victor Steiner-Davion

WORD OF BLAKE REMNANT FORCES

Many saw our conquest of Terra as the final triumph over the Word of Blake, liberating the cradle of mankind from the zealots. Though it was a major achievement, we swiftly learned that the destruction of the Word's military was farther away than we had hoped. Literally, so, as it turned out that many Blakist forces were simply not defending their Protectorate after all.

Fortunately, in spite of Kernoff's data purge, our conquest of Terra and the Protectorate helped us gather better intelligence on the true strength and military dispositions of the Word of

Blake than ever before, much of which neatly matched the material provided to us years ago by Chandrasekhar Kurita's efforts. A clearer picture of the dissent and break between the Master and Cameron St. Jamais has come out from questioning of prisoners and documents found across the Protectorate. This has also allowed us to get a good grasp on the dispositions and full strength of the Word of Blake Militia and associated assets such as Word-aligned mercenaries and their WarShip fleet.

SHADOW DIVISIONS

The Shadow Divisions were the most feared of the Word of Blake's assets during the Jihad, deployed whenever the Master needed an important job done—or for the sheer shock value. Originally built to take the battle to the Clans, the disbanding of the Second Star League led to these hellhounds being unleashed on the Inner Sphere itself. Originally, twelve Divisions were activated just prior to the Jihad, but evidence indicates that two more have been raised since. Given the information recovered from our final capture of Luyten 68-28, we have been able to reconstruct the fate of a many Shadow Divisions.

The Shadow Divisions were active on all fronts and theaters of the Jihad, often using super-jumps to rapidly redeploy to new targets and flashpoints. While several Shadow Divisions were damaged in these attacks, most managed to extract themselves and recover their strength. It was not until 3074, and the Clan Ghost Bear assault on Luthien that the first Shadow Division was finally destroyed, with the Forty-second Division crushed under the might of three Clan Galaxies. Since then, several more divisions have been confirmed destroyed. The Forty-third, Forty-fifth and Forty-seventh all perished on New Home, during the Week of Fire and their attempt to trap and kill Devlin Stone. Next to perish was the Fifty-first, which made its last stand on Terra.

The Regular bombardment of Gibson eliminated the Forty-first and Fifty-second Shadow Divisions, as they held the world in defiance, and the hunt for the Master eventually netted the Fifty-third on Poulsbo.

Of the remaining Shadow Divisions, their locations are not known, except that the some elements were seen on Circinus dying with their Master. The unaccounted Shadow Divisions include the Fortieth Division, last encountered on Hesperus II where it barely escaped annihilation. The Forty-fourth Division stayed for a year on New Avalon, leaving in September 3074, never to be seen again.

The Forty-sixth, Forty-eight and Fifty-fourth Divisions all fought on Luyten 68-28 in the failed attempted to corner and annihilate them, an action that devastated the core of the remaining Com Guards in 3078 and forced us to briefly abandon the hidden base world until after Terra's fall. Since that time, all three Divisions reappeared to savage the Duchy of Oriente in 3079 before disappearing again. And while elements of the Forty-sixth and Forty-eighth perished on Circinus, not all of the units could be accounted for. The Forty-ninth Division was

LEGACIES OF THE WORD

subduing Andiron when Circinus was annihilated, and arrived too late to help, but its aerospace elements were observed in Circinian orbit before escaping.

Since then, elements of these Divisions took part in an ambush led by Berith on Devil's Rock in late 3081, before slipping away. The Fiftieth Division served as a distraction for the Word of Blake Militias, hitting several commands in the Blake Protectorate during Operation SCOUR. Their last known action was on New Earth where they landed in the rear echelon of several of our Clan forces, hitting them so badly that our men were forced to retreat and thus gave the Shadows time to escape.

Early intelligence suggested that the Shadow Divisions were entirely raised in secret bases the Word of Blake inherited from pre-reformist ComStar simply dubbed "the Hidden Five", with Jardine identified as the specific base world for all of the Manei Domini. The emergence of the newly minted Fifty-third and Fifty-fourth Divisions so late in the war leads us to the suspicion that the Word of Blake has more bases capable of training and refitting Shadow Divisions and Manei Domini troops. While we suspect these could have been developed on Gibson or Circinus, sifting through the wreckage of the Luyten facilities showed that a great deal of Shadow Division equipment was also being staged at other suborned ComStar sites, which we have since begun investigating.

WORD OF BLAKE MILITIA DIVISIONS

The more conventional line forces of the Word of Blake were, of course, the Militia Divisions that played a key role in the establishment of the Blake Protectorate. These forces also served as attack forces against most of the high profile targets such as New Avalon, Tharkad and Luthien. With the intelligence

gathered from the Blakist command centers and the interrogations of captured officials and commanders on Terra, we have come closer to determining the dispositions of all WoBM Divisions. Some that were initially thought to be missing turned out to have been merged into damaged commands as reinforcements. This discovery also resolved our concerns that the Word of Blake had developed extra factories and training facilities for their line Militia.

WORD OF BLAKE MILITIA

Name	Last Known Location	Current Status
1st Division	Tikonov	Destroyed (3077)
2nd Division	Dieron	Destroyed (3078)
3rd Division	Dieron	MIA
4th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
5th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
6th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
7th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
8th Division	Sian	Merged with 2nd
9th Division	Rio	Destroyed (3077)
10th Division	New Earth	MIA
11th Division	Galatea	Merged with 2nd
12th Division	New Earth	MIA
13th Division	Ningpo	Destroyed (3078)
14th Division	Dieron	Destroyed (3078)
15th Division	Atreus	Destroyed (3077)
16th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
17th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
18th Division	Skye	Merged with 3rd
19th Division	Dieron	Destroyed (3078)
20th Division	Campleton	Destroyed (3076)
21st Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
22nd Division	Quentin	Destroyed (3078)
23rd Division	Dieron	Destroyed (3078)
24th Division	Sian	Merged with 3rd
25th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
26th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
27th Division	Atreus	Destroyed (3077)
28th Division	Dyev	Destroyed (3076)
29th Division	Pesht	Destroyed (3074)
30th Division	Loyalty	MIA
31st Division	New Avalon	Merged with 36th
32nd Division	Dyev	Destroyed (3076)
33rd Division	New Hessen	Destroyed (3076)
34th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
35th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
36th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
37th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
38th Division	Hesperus II	Merged with 3rd
39th Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)

SHADOW DIVISIONS

Name	Last Known Location	Current Status
40th Division	Hesperus II	MIA
41st Division	Gibson	Destroyed (3079)
42nd Division	Luthien	Destroyed (3074)
43rd Division	New Home	Destroyed (3078)
44th Division	New Avalon	MIA
45th Division	New Home	Destroyed (3078)
46th Division	Circinus	MIA
47th Division	New Home	Destroyed (3078)
48th Division	Circinus	MIA
49th Division	Devil's Rock	MIA
50th Division	New Earth	MIA
51st Division	Terra	Destroyed (3078)
52nd Division	Gibson	Destroyed (3079)
53rd Division	Poulsbo	Destroyed (3081)
54th Division	Jouques	MIA



LEGACIES OF THE WORD

Two major battles during Operation SCOUR faced significant resistance by Word of Blake Militia divisions; Dieron and Terra. At Dieron, the Word of Blake attempted to bottle up the Clan Ghost Bear forces. To do this, they brought to bear several WarShips and a task force made up of five Protectorate Militia Divisions (Acamar, Asta, Fletcher, Liberty and Milton) and five full WoBM Divisions (Second, Third, Fourteenth, Nineteenth and Twenty-third). Though the attempt failed and the Ghost Bears would go on to smash the Word on several other worlds, Dieron was one of the few worlds in the Protectorate where the Blakists combined several Militia formations to oppose the Coalition. The other concentrated effort was, naturally, the defense of Terra, where fourteen Militia divisions made up the bulk of the defending forces, alongside the Fifty-first Shadow and TerraSec.

With only the damaged Third, Tenth, Twelfth and Thirtieth Divisions at large, the threat posed by the conventional WoBM may not seem very high, but it is still a priority to apprehend these and bring them to justice for any crimes they committed in their service—or to prevent them from working with the missing Shadow Divisions and/or other missing Blakist elements still believed to be at large.

PROTECTORATE MILITIAS

In order to increase their defensive strength within the Blake Protectorate, the Word initiated a program to train and raise local militias from among the Protectorate's own populace. These Protectorate Divisions were primarily used to back up the defense of their homeworlds, but throughout Operation SCOUR, many were shuffled to reinforce counter-attacks against the Coalition in key areas. With their focus on local defense, and a lack of special weapons and directives, the commanders and troops of the Protectorate Militias were often local patriots who genuinely served only for a chance to defend their world against any invaders. The Word of Blake, recognizing this sense of "local patriotism" took full advantage of this motivation to ensure a reliable defensive line that they could manage without too much strain on their high-technology needs.

As our Coalition advanced, all of the Protectorate Militias were destroyed as coherent commands. While some pockets of resistance do linger on several ex-Protectorate worlds, the Word of Blake's collapse, and efforts by our envoys are steadily reducing this threat, through mostly peaceful means. We might even consider reinstalling many of these veteran defenders into our own local militias—after careful vetting, of course.

NAVAL ASSETS

Beyond the Shadow Divisions, the greatest strength the Word of the Blake demonstrated was its extensive navy. Built around a core of ships salvaged from the Ruins of Gabriel (in the Odessa system, the second of the "Hidden Five" worlds we have discovered), any ships the Word could capture further

augmented this fleet. By far, the largest segment of the Word's black navy came from the Free Worlds League. Early in the war, the Blakists managed to usurp the commands of almost half of the FWLN, and destroyed another quarter of the League's might fighting those crews loyal to the Captain-General.

Amazingly, the Word seemed content to use its fleet in piecemeal fashion, instead of concentrating vessels to take out important targets. By not challenging the wounded fleets of the Great Houses or Clans directly, this strategy proved one of our enemy's biggest blunders of the entire war, as it made it possible for the various factions to dismantle the Word of Blake navy one ship at a time. As with the Militia Divisions, the Word only concentrated its fleet in two major actions during Operation SCOUR. Thus, Dieron and the Word's final stand at Terra became the largest fleet actions outside of CASE WHITE. Fortunately for us, the divisions within the Word of Blake leadership, and their seemingly lack of an overall strategic plan, prevented them from deploying in a manner that was effective against Coalition forces.

Only a handful of Word of Blake WarShips still remain unaccounted for—most of which were last seen in 3079, during their short offensive against the Duchy of Oriente. Two ships from the Gabriel cache lead this pack—the WBS *Vigilant Guardian* (Sovetskii Soyuz-class) and WBS *Blade of Divinity* (Vincent Mk. 39-class)—followed by a trio of Marik vessels—the FWS *Corinth* (Thera-class), FWS *Hippolyta* (Agamemnon-class) and FWS *Opilione* (Zechetinu II-class). These vessels, along with the Shadow Divisions that most likely accompany them, are a good match for any of the remaining navies the Great Houses can presently muster.

With only three operational WarShips in our own arsenal, these Word of Blake ships would be a serious threat to any world they appear over, if they were to return anywhere. Lacking full-scale WarShip production, we are focusing heavily on Pocket WarShip construction. But, to be frank, we are still a long way from having enough of these vessels to provide adequate protection to at least our most vital worlds.

MERCENARY ASSETS

Some of the most brutal troops deployed by the Word of Blake were actually mercenary commands hired from the various hiring worlds before and during the Jihad. Usually picking the down-and-out outfits, with bad reputations and few scruples, these mercenaries were short on job options with reputable employers, and the Word capitalized on that by giving them many of the least savory tasks the Word needed done. Attacks like the assault on the Wolf's Dragoons and the death of Jaimie Wolf were just the tip of this iceberg. On several other worlds in the Blake Protectorate, these mercenaries struck against civilians and resistance groups, often kidnapping and torturing innocents to ferret out those who actually stood against the Word's dominion.

WORD OF BLAKE NAVAL ASSETS

ORIGINAL WORD OF BLAKE FLEET

Name	Class	Destroyed
<i>Herald of Wisdom</i>	<i>Aegis (2750)</i>	CASE WHITE (3068)
<i>Enlightened Direction</i>	<i>Naga</i>	CASE WHITE (3068)
<i>Syrstart</i>	<i>Pinto</i>	CASE WHITE (3068)
<i>Gorgon</i>	<i>Pinto</i>	CASE WHITE (3068)
<i>White Devil</i>	<i>Riga</i>	CASE WHITE (3068)
<i>Herald of Justice</i>	<i>Aegis (2750)</i>	New Avalon (3068)
<i>Stalwart Defender</i>	<i>Soveitskii Soyuz (2750)</i>	Nusakan (3068)
<i>Herald of Retribution</i>	<i>Aegis (2750)</i>	Sian (3070)
<i>Faith's End</i>	<i>Lola III (2750)</i>	Benjamin (3072)
<i>Blade of Holiness</i>	<i>Vincent Mk. 39</i>	Benjamin (3072)
<i>Light of Hope</i>	<i>Baron</i>	Luthien (3072)
<i>Sword of Promise</i>	<i>Carson</i>	Luthien (3072)
<i>Red Angel</i>	<i>Riga</i>	New Avalon (3072)
<i>Immortal Spirit</i>	<i>Aegis (2750)</i>	Coventry (3074)
<i>Light of Faith</i>	<i>Baron</i>	Odessa (3074)
<i>Blade of Righteousness</i>	<i>Vincent Mk. 39</i>	Luthien (3074)
<i>Deliverance</i>	<i>Essex (2750)</i>	Tukayyid (3074)
<i>Blake's Sword</i>	<i>McKenna</i>	Tukayyid (3074)
<i>Enlightened Spark</i>	<i>Essex (2750)</i>	Gabriel (3075)
<i>Light of Glory</i>	<i>Baron</i>	Dieron (3077)
<i>Dawning Horizon</i>	<i>Essex (2750)</i>	Dieron (3077)
<i>End of Wisdom</i>	<i>Lola III (2750)</i>	Dieron (3077)
<i>Righteous Justice (flagship)</i>	<i>Farragut</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Blake's Ascendant</i>	<i>Black Lion (2750)</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Rays of Enlightenment</i>	<i>Black Lion (2750)</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Sword of Enlightenment</i>	<i>Carson</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Hidden Meaning</i>	<i>Essex (2750)</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Divine Forgiveness</i>	<i>Essex (2750)</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Divine Command</i>	<i>Naga</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Celestial Threads</i>	<i>Naga</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Milvano</i>	<i>Pinto</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Mayenne</i>	<i>Pinto</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Perdition</i>	<i>Dante</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Salvation</i>	<i>Dante</i>	Terra (3078)
<i>Blake's Redemption</i>	<i>Vincent Mk. 39</i>	Circinus (3081)

CAPTURED SHIPS

Original Name	Class	Destroyed
<i>Nueva Badajoz</i>	<i>Aegis (2750)</i>	Shiloh (3070)
<i>Xanthos</i>	<i>Black Lion (2750)</i>	Shiloh (3070)
<i>Olympic</i>	<i>Aegis (2750)</i>	Arc-Royal (3072)
<i>Troy</i>	<i>Agamemnon</i>	Arc-Royal (3072)
<i>Dark Claw</i>	<i>Essex</i>	Necromo (3072)
<i>Bors</i>	<i>Eagle</i>	Benjamin (3072)
<i>Robinson</i>	<i>Fox</i>	Benjamin (3072)
<i>Robert Kelswa</i>	<i>Fox</i>	Benjamin (3072)
<i>Vision Quest</i>	<i>Aegis (Clan)</i>	Luthien (3075)
<i>Fire Fang</i>	<i>Whirlwind (Clan)</i>	Dyev (3076)
<i>Righteous Fury</i>	<i>Aegis (2750)</i>	Dyev (3076)
<i>Hollings York</i>	<i>Congress (2750)</i>	Dyev (3076)
<i>Araneida</i>	<i>Zechetinu II</i>	Dieron (3077)
<i>Karelia</i>	<i>Zechetinu</i>	Dieron (3077)
<i>Tirana</i>	<i>Zechetinu</i>	Dieron (3077)
<i>Aineas</i>	<i>Agamemnon</i>	Dieron (3077)
<i>Sardis</i>	<i>Thera</i>	Dieron (3077)*
<i>Mordred</i>	<i>Eagle</i>	Dieron (3077)
<i>Tristram</i>	<i>Eagle</i>	Dieron (3077)
<i>Percival</i>	<i>Eagle</i>	New Earth (3078)
<i>Lioness</i>	<i>York</i>	New Home (3078)
<i>Bedevere</i>	<i>Eagle</i>	Gibson (3078)
<i>Impavido</i>	<i>Impavido</i>	Gibson (3078)
<i>Melissa Davion</i>	<i>Avalon</i>	Circinus (3081)

*Not destroyed; captured by Clan Snow Raven

SHIPS NOT ACCOUNTED FOR

Name	Class	Last Known Location
<i>Vigilant Guardian</i>	<i>Soveitskii Soyuz (2750)</i>	Les Halles (3079)
<i>Blade of Divinity</i>	<i>Vincent Mk. 39</i>	Dayr Khuna (3079)
<i>Hippolyta</i>	<i>Agamemnon</i>	Dayr Khuna (3079)
<i>Corinth</i>	<i>Thera</i>	Jouques (3079)
<i>Opilione</i>	<i>Zechetinu II</i>	Jouques (3079)

While several of the more prominent mercenary commands were cornered and destroyed during Operation SCOUR and its immediate aftermath, there remain plenty of elements from these forces still at large, raiding and causing trouble. With rising bounties placed on these scattered mercenary commands and their warriors, we suspect many have already scattered across the Inner Sphere in the hopes of avoiding capture, living the pirate's life on the lam. Others, we believe, may have disbanded themselves, their members breaking up to take their chances at blending into the local crowds. Regardless of these efforts, intelligence assets both within and beyond the Republic are working to locate these fugitives, and bring them to justice.

LIGHT OF MANKIND AND ROM

The Shadow Divisions and WarShips may be among the Word's most dangerous elements still at large today, but even half a dozen Shadow Divisions can only realistically appear in a few places at once. The same cannot be said for the Light of Mankind. This special actions branch of the Word of Blake ROM has again and again shown itself capable of striking a wide array of targets, as many demonstrated during the infamous "Bloody Tricentennial" attacks in 3080, where they struck a coordinated blow against multiple targets all across the Inner Sphere. Using every weapon from a simple gun and assassination, to multiple nuclear detonations at factories, the LoM's strikes showed that



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even with their leadership in ruins, the Word could muster itself for deadly action. Hunting the remnants of the Light and Word of Blake ROM has become a top priority, but with the key ROM headquarters in the Sol and Gibson systems destroyed, and the adaptability of its field commanders in covert ops, this task may take years, even decades. Meanwhile, our best mole hunters and other assets have been dispatched to key worlds throughout the Republic in an effort to track down any cells still operating within the former Protectorate. Precious few have been discovered so far, and while we have not seen any large scale coordinated attacks in over a year, we can only consider the risk of additional Blakist terrorism high. These fanatics have shown great capacity for patience in their attacks, and as the next months will be a very critical phase for the Republic's stability, we can expect the Word's agents to do everything in their power to bring us down.

THE "HIDDEN FIVE"

In October 3078, Manei Domini's Precentor of Technology, Vapula (née Devon Cortland), surrendered to the Northwind Highlanders on Dieron. As one of Apollyon's chief scientists, Vapula engineered the Celestial OmniMechs, the Demon battle armor, and the Spectral aerospace fighters that became iconic throughout the war. He also headed a number of clandestine projects, making him a high-value source for much of our current intelligence on the Word of Blake, the Manei Domini, and their Master. Four days after Precentor Alsace surrendered Terra to the Coalition, Vapula was delivered to Lin Murakami at one of our bases on Rigil Kentares for a thorough debriefing.

The following is the transcript of this debrief.

Sir,

As we'd hoped, Cortland has indeed lost faith in The Master. He dropped his pretentious Manei Domini trappings and introduced himself by his birth name. He agreed to help, and I've been debriefing him since our doctors managed to extract most of the technology the Robes wired him up with. He can be rather aggravating (as you'll see in these transcripts) but I believe he will be invaluable resource. He's offered up some intriguing information on the Hidden Five as a show of good faith. I'm afraid it's not coordinates, but it's still worthwhile—transcript attached. I'm going to arrange for a plausible escape attempt and staged death so we can keep him off the radar.

In Service,

—Lin

LM: "Recording. This is Lin Murakami. Debrief of Devon Cortland, 30 December 3078. Let's get right to it. You were going to tell me about the Hidden Five?"

DC: "They're all secrets wrapped in shadows."

LM: "Oh, good. Clichés. What do you mean by that?"

DC: "It's, um, rather complicated. Why don't you start by telling me what you know, and then I'll provide the missing information?"

LM: "No. Not going to happen. You've refused to cooperate for three months. Suddenly, two weeks ago, you had a change of heart, and I'm just supposed to take your word on everything?"

DC: "It would be easier if you did. This way will take longer."

LM: "I'll make the time. Now, about the Hidden Five?"

DC: "I'll remember this was your choice. Quid pro quo; how did you arrive at that number?"

LM: "Intel identified five names: Jardine, Gabriel, Taussen, Mayadi, and Obeedah."

DC: "We're obviously going to have to start from the very beginning. Are you familiar with Major Edwin Keeler?"

LM: "I don't recognize the name."

DC: "He's the engineer who hid the Star League cache on Helm; required reading for any lostech prospector."

LM: "What does he have to do with the Five?"

DC: "Nothing. He dammed off an underground river and used the caverns it left behind as a storage depot. He sealed the whole thing off by relocating an incredibly large slab of granite. It hid in plain sight for two hundred-fifty years until Grayson Death Carlyle discovered it."

LM: "I don't follow."

DC: "You wanted the long version. As Star League engineers go, Keeler was rather pedestrian, working with severe time constraints and limited resources. A better example of their acumen is the flood control project on the Roja River on Tharkad. They built a series of dams that resembled the surrounding mountain range."

LM: "Damn it, Cortland! Give me something I can use here."

DC: *[unintelligible]*

LM: "What was that?"

DC: "I called you myopic."

LM: "That wasn't the word you used. We're going in circles. I don't need history lessons from you. Just tell me where to find the Hidden already!"

DC: "I can't."

LM: "Don't play games with me, Cortland."

DC: "I'm not." *[sighs]* "I'm making this as simple as I can, but if you keep interrupting me—"

LM: "Fine. I'm listening."

DC: "The Master is, well if you'll forgive another 'cliché', a master at deception."

LM: "We've been over this already. We know what tricks the Blakists used—"

DC: "No! You know we—excuse me—they used tricks. It is, most assuredly, not the same thing. An example: in '73, when the Fifty-second Shadow Division appeared on Alphard in June, then Gibson in August, and immediately

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after on Caledonia, you assumed that we painted units in counterfeit livery and let you see them to mislead you."

LM: "But now we know how—"

DC: "You think you know. What other explanations did you consider?"

LM: "I'm not going to play games. Are you going to give me intel on the Hidden Five or not?"

DC: "This isn't a game. Now, if you'll indulge me?"

LM: "Fine..." [*unintelligible*] "The leading theory was that the Fifty-second had split into multiple Level IVs and conducted maneuvers on each world to give the appearance that the full division was present."

DC: "And how did you conclude that was incorrect?"

LM: "Based on observed damage and repairs to surviving units, we were able to determine that—somehow—it was the same command."

DC: "Once you knew it was the same force, moving quickly from world to world, how did you explain it?"

LM: "LF batteries, command circuits and pirate points. We still don't know the entire composition of the Blakist fleet."

DC: "You didn't know, so you guessed."

LM: "I wouldn't call it a guess. We did detailed analysis based upon the available details."

DC: "Semantics."

LM: "Fine. We guessed."

DC: "How did you respond when you first heard of the 'superjump' theory?"

LM: "I'm not an astrophysicist."

DC: "You mistake my question. I'm asking, did *you* think it was possible?"

LM: "Of course not. Not even Star League scientists could have made it work."

DC: "So, if the Star League couldn't do it, then it's impossible?"

LM: "Well, no."

DC: "Is that the same logic guiding your search for the Hidden Five? I'll take that as a yes. I presume you've read Starling's treatise on the subject?"

LM: "About how it's impossible to hide a world? Yes."

DC: "There's that word again. Is it *impossible*?"

LM: "Well, it should be. The logistics alone... Look, Starling has it right, only ComStar could pull it off."

DC: "And since the reformed, information-sharing ComStar says they didn't?"

LM: "Starling points out that they have a history of lying, so—Occam's Razor and all that—you are a scientist, aren't you?"

DC: "And the Word *couldn't* have developed 'superjump' technology? The Fifty-second Shadow *couldn't* have moved that fast? The Star League *couldn't* have hidden a facility on Helm? If you ever expect to find the remaining Hidden worlds you need to purge

'impossible' from your vocabulary. Understand? Another example: Odessa."

LM: "We already found the Ruins of Gabriel."

DC: "Because you knew what you were looking for! If Chandrasekhar Kurita hadn't all but handed it to you, you could have searched the Odessa system in vain for years. The Star League's Corps of Engineers were masters of concealing things in plain sight, and they used all their tricks on Gabriel. And not just Gabriel, they hid everything using the utmost of their talents. Thousands of hidden installations, left untended for 300 years and we've discovered a mere handful."

LM: "But Starling—"

DC: "No! Enough of Starling. You keep quoting him like he's the Kearny of our generation. His analysis is factually flawed. Gabriel alone is proof of that. It wasn't depopulated. No clandestine supply network supported it. Warning buoys don't guard the jump point."

LM: "What about Ste—"

DC: "Don't even *think* of bringing up Stevens!"

LM: "He actually found Jardine!"

DC: "*She*! If you would quit being such a simpleton for five minutes you'd understand that these Hidden worlds could be anything and anywhere. Gabriel should have taught you that. Taussen could be hidden in plain sight like the Helm facility, or the Roja River dams. Or, it could be a *Newgrange*-class yard ship lurking at some La Grange point or Trojan orbit. It could even be multiple installations, hidden in asteroids, around twenty systems. You don't know what it is, so you guess, and your guesses all assume the worlds are planets. So, why did you invade Odessa?"

LM: "To liberate—"

DC: "No! Spare me the altruistic rhetoric. You hit Odessa because you couldn't locate Gabriel on your own. Without Kurita's assistance you'd have thought it was *on* Odessa. No one you've ever captured and interrogated has led you to the Hidden Five, and they won't—though I'm sure you'll keep wasting your effort. Do you want to know the simple truth?"

LM: "Can you say anything simply?"

DC: "ComStar is *not* lying. They can't tell you where the Hidden Five are located because they *don't know*. The Master purged that information over thirty years ago."

LM: "No. No way. There's no way all traces of that information could be eliminated. The Master would have to silence everyone who's ever known about them."

DC: "How many do you guess that is?"

LM: "Hundreds at least; pilots, cargo masters—"

DC: "Forget about them. You've ever run an operation at a location so secret you still don't know where it is?"

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LM: "Um, yes."

DC: "The leaders are the only significant asset when you do that. How many do you think the Five Worlds Cabal has?"

LM: "A handful at most."

DC: "Precisely. The Master is one, of course, and he and Apollyon each have only one protégé. Now, how many outside that camarilla do you think they trust?"

LM: "As few as possible, but Blakist units are disappearing. The Hidden Five are their best option to regroup, so they must to have a way to find them. That doesn't work unless more than just the leaders know the locations."

DC: "Oh, but it does. In fact, it's painfully simple. Final example: how did the Clanners hide the Exodus Road?"

LM: "They kept it a secret from the invasion force."

DC: "Specifically, no one person possessed the whole route, so no one person could compromise that information."

LM: "Is that how it works for the Hidden Five?"

DC: "Yes. In days past, ComStar issued a special noteputer to those few leaders trusted with the information. With the appropriate security protocols, they could plot a self-purging course that was never stored in the JumpShip's memory."

LM: "So, then ComStar *has* to be lying."

DC: "Have you been listening? Waterly was the last Primus who knew about the Hidden Five. She planned to use their assets to reinforce garrisons after Operation SCORPION shut down the Sphere. The Master himself intervened when it became clear that SCORPION wouldn't work. After Waterly's death, you can be sure Mori and Focht were never informed. None of ComStar's present leaders knew they had the information, and even if they did, their security protocols were disabled when the Master purged the data."

LM: "Can you get me one of these ComStar noteputers?"

DC: "No, but they're just smoke and mirrors. The data is embedded in HPG firmware; you could put the software on any noteputer and access it."

LM: "Why didn't you say so twenty minutes ago? Give me your password and—"

DC: "It doesn't work that way." *[unintelligible]* "You needed three separate passwords to decrypt the information under the old system, and the Word of Blake made some improvements since then."

LM: "Like what?"

DC: "You have to be Manei Domini. Our—excuse me—their version works something like the DI computer in a 'Mech. A Manus within a certain range of an HPG thinks his way through the security protocol. Implants read this information, and transmit the decryption key to the HPG. The HPG transmits the course to the Manus and it self-purges after a set duration."

LM: "If that's the case, why haven't we found leads in Blakist communications? Why aren't we hearing of this through prisoner interrogations?"

DC: *[unintelligible]* "Do you comprehend the meaning of self-purges? No one capable of retrieving the information is ignorant enough to store it in another medium."

LM: "Okay, so we capture some Shadow Division leaders and coerce them to provide the information."

DC: "Blake's will! You still don't understand. You'd have to get *three* Manei Domini to willingly think through the security protocol. If you try to coerce them, you'll just activate their suicide implants. And not just *any* three will suffice. You need very highly placed individuals—officers. It isn't going to happen. How many Manei Domini have you captured?"

LM: "Very few."

DC: "None, I would wager, that didn't want to be captured—either to gain information or to self-destruct in range of some prime target. Am I right?"

LM: *[sighs]* "So then, what about breaking the encryption on the HPGs?"

DC: "That's theoretically possible, but analysis suggests it would take years to defeat the encryption algorithm, and it's changed regularly using an embedded CPL message on the H323 signaling band that initiates the firmware update and rebroadcasts to all peers."

LM: "Now that we've taken Terra that will stop."

DC: *[sighs]* "Can you comprehend anything I've said? As long there is a single member of the Five Worlds Cabal to transmit the message, it will ultimately spread to all the HPGs. This update could be embedded in any standard message, and it's effectively undetectable."

LM: "So what you're telling me that the information I want is thirty kilometers away on Rigil's HPG, but there's no real way for me to go get it?"

DC: "More or less."

LM: "That's not acceptable. These worlds are a safe haven for every single Blakist that escapes the fall of the Protectorate. Until we eliminate them as a military threat, we have to assume they're out there rebuilding, rearming, and planning to move against us. We have to find them."

DC: "You clearly aren't seeing the big picture. Any of the remaining Hidden Worlds could hold a wealth of weapons of mass destruction—WarShips, 'Mechs, assault ships, and Blake knows what else. That's more than enough to shift the balance of power for any faction, particularly with everyone so depleted. Who do you *trust* to find them? Who wouldn't keep the discovery a secret and use those resources for their own ends? I guarantee you this: you won't be the only one's looking."

THE "HIDDEN FIVE"

The following information about the so-called Hidden Five worlds is the best we have gleaned so far that Cortland has confirmed for us. Much of this meshes with the material we have received from our allied sources, including Chandrasekhar Kurita's network, Interstellar Expeditions, and even data that we were fed from Thomas Halas himself. As you can see, it's pretty paltry when we get to the worlds we have not yet found, and it has become clear that while Cortland may have been able to confirm their existence, he has not been to more than one of these bases.

Once again, Devlin, I recommend that we keep a very tight lid on this information while we continue to track down the few leads we do have. Until we can locate and neutralize these hidden bases, we dare not go public. Imagine the panic if the public learned that there are not only over ten Blake Divisions unaccounted for, but that they probably have at least three hidden base worlds well stocked with resources, manpower, and technology to run to.

"JARDINE"

Jardine is the Hidden World we now know the most about. Sadly, everything we did discover came too late to do us much good, as the Jihad was in full swing, and the Word took extreme measures in wiping out the planet. Subsequent reconnaissance missions to the site have confirmed no signs of surviving cities, factories, or enclaves of any kind. Indeed, the only signs of technology are the remnants of the warning satellite network originally seeded throughout the system by ComStar centuries ago.

What we do know about Jardine is that, at the time of the Star League, it was a pleasant and pastoral world. Blessed with slightly more than 80 percent surface water, it was home to abundant expanses of woodlands and jungles and a range of native wildlife, dominated mostly by a host of feline mammalians. Human settlements on this world largely stemmed from peoples of the Pacific Island regions on Terra, particularly those of Hawaiian, Filipino, and Polynesian backgrounds. Most settlers in the world's early colonial period tended toward agrarian and ranching pursuits, eventually leading to the rise of a number of agricultural and livestock exports—the most famous of which was the tabiranth, a large, intelligent, and easily domesticated creature prized by many of the Star League's wealthy elite as a riding and hunting mount. With little heavy industry on-world, most of Jardine's major cities were based on commercial and shipping interests, though a number of medical research institutions also called the world home. Still, it was the tabiranth that Jardine would be known for when the world vanished from the maps after the Star League's collapse, the apparent victim of a border dispute between the Lyran Commonwealth and the Free Worlds League.

In truth, it appears, the still fairly new ComStar Order executed an elaborate and drawn-out "bait and switch" with Jardine during the latter years of Jerome Blake's administration,

first changing the world's name on official maps to Herakleione. Using the pretext of surveying the HPG network, ComStar's ROM retroactively "updated" the records while the Great Houses warred against each other, all but wiping Jardine's original location out of history by simply changing its name in archival maps as well. When Lyran intelligence then learned of a staging base for chemical weapons was located on Herakleione, LCAF raiders apparently delivered a nuclear assault against the sparsely-populated planet, rendering it uninhabited and tainted. ComStar, acting in its neutral, humanitarian fashion, then set up warning satellites with House Marik's blessing, quarantining Herakleione and thus stealing Jardine from the Inner Sphere.

However the Five Worlds Cabal (as it has been called) managed to maintain the secret through the centuries, they did so by some strict population and technology control measures. According to an alleged survivor of the planet's population, only a single major settlement was maintained by ComStar's "guardians", and most of the industry on world took place underground, with no significant contact with the outside universe. Amazingly, the Cabal guardians allowed the people of Jardine to follow what was happening to the Inner Sphere in a roundabout way, but kept them laboring under the belief that the House Lords would destroy their world if they ever learned it was still inhabited.

Interestingly, it appears the very act of keeping Jardine a secret also limited its productivity. Instead of becoming some kind of secret factory or army training center, the world's population was devoted more toward advanced medical and cybernetics research. It was this pursuit that ultimately led to it becoming the unwitting birthworld of "the Master", when a critically wounded Thomas Marik was brought there in the 3030s. Rebuilt with technologies not seen since the Star League—but nevertheless wholly artificial tech—Thomas Marik was doomed to rule his birthright in secret, through the proxy we now know as Thomas Halas. Our belief is that, for at least a decade or more, Thomas remained on Jardine, where he gradually grew more detached and delusional.

The report gleaned from the late Dr. Brooklyn Stevens—who not only rediscovered Jardine in 3067, but actually returned from there with a Jardinian native to verify her claim—suggests that Apollyon and the first six thousand cybernetic troops called the Manei Domini were all produced on Jardine first, mostly from members of the local population. The development of these warriors shocked some of Jardine's less devoted subjects, leading to a rise of "wanderer tribes", gypsy groups who lived beyond the Word's central enclave. Were it not for these gypsies, it is doubtful we ever would have learned as much as we know today about this world.

Soon after Dr. Stevens' report, a coded virus traced to Dobless Information Services in the Lyran Alliance popped Jardine's historical location back onto some maps produced in the late



THE "HIDDEN FIVE"

3060s. This prompted the Word of Blake to launch a secret manhunt for Stevens, and also tipped off the "false" Thomas Marik about the breach (since it seems the imposter Captain-General was no longer working fully under the Word's direct authority). "Marik" sent some of his Knights to rescue Stevens before the Master's Manei Domini could reach her, a chase that led them all the way to Donegal even as the first nukes started falling in the Jihad.

The Word eventually caught up with Stevens, but apparently not before she leaked further information to the imposter Marik, revealing Jardine's actual whereabouts and the existence of the Five. But when Marik sent a follow-up recon mission to the world, a massive traps volcano had already erupted, spewing a continent's worth of molten rock across the surface where the Word's enclave allegedly existed. The coincidence is certainly hard to ignore, and reports throughout the Jihad suggest that Apollyon himself somehow unleashed the cataclysm that destroyed his own homelands. To manage such an event through manmade means would only have been possible with Star League-era mega-engineering, according to our analysts, but as the planet is still resurfacing itself, it may be decades before any more conclusive theories can be developed to explain how this was done.

"GABRIEL"

The names of the other four Hidden worlds were revealed, reportedly, by Dr. Stevens' Jardinian companion, as was the core concept that one of each world was specifically located within the borders of a different Great House state. This was evidently because ComStar wanted secret and well-removed fallback positions to retain their control of the HPG network if any of the House Lords ignored their neutrality and overwhelmed Terra.

Jardine was the Hidden for the Free Worlds League; Gabriel was the one set in Lyran space.

Gabriel, as it happens, was not "disappeared" by ComStar via the same elaborate name swap and data revision Jardine underwent. In the case of this member of the Cabal, the disappearance was already accomplished thanks to the fact that the SLDF itself made it so. Built as a staging area for the Star League's operations in the Rim Worlds Republic, Gabriel was meant to be a secret repair site for Star League navy vessels at a time when the other Houses refused to openly aid Kerensky's war with Stefan Amaris the Usurper and his Rim Worlds Republic. The Odessa system—located as it was along a route between the Rim Worlds capital of Apollo and the core systems of the Terran Hegemony—provided a perfect place to establish just such a site in one of the icy moons in the system's outer fringe. Being located so far from the normal jump points, with an orbital position so far removed from the system's primary that it aroused no real interest to any of the locals, this chunk of ice, riding above the a massive dust ring of the nearby

gas giant, was easily hollowed out by a Star League core of engineered in just a few months' time. Using habitats and the hulls of numerous mothballed ships, Gabriel Base became a major shipyard that benefitted both from absolute anonymity and access to civilization in the event of catastrophe. Deals with the Odessan underworld even secured occasional supplies needed to sustain the complex in its early years, all the way up to the Exodus.

Unlike Jardine, of course, Gabriel had no native population, so when ComStar inherited the site from Kerensky (complete with the General's seal of approval, we believe), they had to rebuild its functioning personnel from scratch, along with its secret connections to the nearby inhabited world of Odessa. From what we have gleaned, the Cabal leaders for Odessa kept their true nature a secret from their Odessan contacts for most of the centuries to follow, leading them to believe they were, in fact, representatives of a former Rim Worlds faction who were hiding from Lyran authorities. In exchange for generations of service that essentially installed and cemented the power base of the world's ruling lines (the Fisk family, among others), these "fugitives" kept Gabriel well stocked and off the grid.

Like Jardine, Gabriel kept a low profile to avoid detection, and was essentially the site of a mothball fleet even bigger than the one ComStar would later maintain at the uninhabited Luyten and Ross systems. In many cases, WarShips that disappeared in the days of the early Succession Wars wound up at Gabriel to be stripped or repaired and hidden away for later use. Many of these ships lingered in the dust rings of the gas giant for centuries, encrusted with mundane debris to appear as unremarkable chunks of the planetary halo, but pristine and ready for service below. Others, hidden in the same fashion, were merely spare parts hulls.

Through our research—as well as that of Chandrasekhar Kurita's network, and some preliminary prewar findings by WolfNet—the Gabriel outpost was even home to the infamous LCS *Invincible*. Long thought lost to a misjump in the Succession Wars, the last of the Inner Sphere juggernauts had actually been hijacked and boarded by Cabal agents during her final voyage home, to be restored at Gabriel. Also reportedly serviced at the site were one—if not two—*Newgrange*-class YardShips, one of which was captured later at Coventry. As the space navy center of the Cabal, we believe that Gabriel is also the site where the Word of Blake developed and perfected its "superjump" technique.

Unfortunately, like Jardine, Gabriel is also now a complete loss. The Ghost Bears' interference, shortly after allied forces worked together to capture the facilities, led to a battle between Clan forces and Word of Blake Manei Domini determined to deny the Cabal's secrets to the allies. During the ensuing battle, the Gabriel facility's self-destruct protocols were engaged, destroying the shipyards and compromising the centuries-old superstructures that had kept the ice moon together.

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THE REMAINING THREE

The remaining three of the Hidden are known to us only by name, as none of our sources could identify their coordinates or their true nature. A few other details have been raised, but their validity is suspect without any sort of confirmation. These details are as follows:

"Taussen"

Believed to be the "Davion" world of the Hidden Five, "Taussen" may have been a similar case to Jardine, complete with a native population and removed from the maps via a similar bait-and-switch routine. If, like the other Hidden, this world had a dedicated area of focus, we are uncertain as to what it might have been.

"Mayadi"

"Mayadi" is thought to be the Hidden world located in Kurita space. Its references, almost exclusively coming

from Dr. Stevens' Jardine companion, are almost always in past tense, and there have been suggestions that a catastrophe befell the world since it was "disappeared" by early ComStar. Based on this, we think "Mayadi" may have been a biological weapons research site, perhaps the one responsible for the "Magic Bullet" bio-weapon cocktails that wiped out the likes of Alarion and other notable worlds. The catastrophe, we surmise, would likely have been an outbreak of one of their own weapons, rendering the resident population extinct.

"Obeedah"

By process of elimination, we suppose the Hidden world of "Obeedah" to lie in Capellan space, but given the maps of the late Star League/First Succession War period, it is possible that this world now lies in FedSuns territory instead. As with "Taussen" the nature and focus of this world is unknown.

SECRET SUPER-WEAPONS

The last section for your review is a review of the secret "super-weapons" Word of Blake was developing (or may have been developing) at the time of Terra's fall. As you know, many of these weapon systems actually saw some combat and thus can be confirmed as having achieved at least a limited production. A few others, on the other hand, can only be partially confirmed, their exact specifications and any prototypes lost in combat, or during the Word of Blake's data purge.

CASPAR III SAS

R&D Start Date: 3070

Prototype Design and Production: 3077 (Word of Blake)

Status: Never Deployed; All Prototypes Destroyed

The Star League Caspar drone system was the pinnacle of artificial intelligence, a feat not replicated since the League's collapse—despite the Word of Blake's best efforts. However, one thing the original drones were never capable of was independent hyperspace travel. In order to move from one system to another, a human crew had to board each K-F equipped drone vessel and manually jump the ship to its new home system. For centuries, this was popularly believed to be a security measure, preventing anyone from taking control of the Caspars and using them as an offensive weapon. After the capture of the Word of Blake Wyrmsubmersible fortress, *Lowyfur*, and its intact data core, we have learned that safety, more than security, was actually the driving reason for the Caspars' system-bound nature.

Star League records, recovered from the *Lowyfur*'s data core, revealed a research program on an autonomous jump-capable version of the Caspar system. Apparently, in more than seventy percent of "live" jumps, the Caspars' delicate artificial intelligence would become dangerously disoriented. These drones would then "panic", reverting to a self-preservation mode that shut out all

outside orders and assumed all nearby craft were threats. These early experiments led to the installation of safety mechanisms on all Star League Caspars that shut the drones' brains down before the KF Drive could activate, but rendered them completely dormant in the process.

The Word of Blake partially overcame this fatal weakness by accident when they failed to master the "brain mapping" technique the Star League used in its original Caspar artificial intelligence systems, resulting in the so-called "Casper IIs", but the drones had to rely on constant human input for peak efficiency, and still suffered a loss of functionality during test jumps.

To combat this, the Word developed the Caspar III Command Automated Robotic System (CARS). While not foolproof, the Caspar III CARS provided a key control component that managed to lower the chances of "artificial psychosis" to "acceptable" levels. Coupled with the ability to carry and launch other drones, the new Caspar III was intended to supplement the Word's rapidly diminishing human naval crews, and even provide a fully operational offensive fleet presence in the virtual absence of human input. Unfortunately for the Word, only one prototype Caspar III command vessel was ever built—as a variant *Monolith* JumpShip that was destroyed during the battle for Titan. Had the Word been able to fully roll out these Caspar IIIs and enough Caspar II drones to work in concert with them, they could have extended the war several more years at least, as their drones launched attack missions across the Inner Sphere.

HYPERPULSE BOMBS

R&D Start Date: 3070 (Word of Blake)

Prototype Design and Production: N/A

Status: Never Deployed; Research Abandoned

Whenever a state shows an inkling of advanced, secretive military research, one of the first topics of speculation is anything involving the esoteric field of hyperspace physics. Kearny-Fuchida torpedoes, HPG cannons, jump point interdiction field



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generators, JumpShip trackers, HPG jammers, secret bases in hyperspace, and so forth. Stefan Amaris' "Victory Weapons" are a favorite source of such speculation, but most major realms have engaged in hyperspace weapons research at one time or another.

Investigations have found that the O'Neill Shipyards did conduct a preliminary paper and simulation study of the potential for "hyperpulse bombs" in response to a Word of Blake request for proposals. This study confirmed what hyperspace physicists have known for centuries: without a Kearny-Fuchida core to focus and amplify it, a hyperspace field is not very dangerous. Using a hyperpulse generator to create a particularly strong pulse at a target destination will, at most, "stun" modern military units with an effect similar to an electromagnetic pulse (EMP), while WarShips participating in real-time HPG command circuits are barraged by a sufficient number of pulses to dazzle their sensors and control systems for minutes after the communication ceases. A particularly powerful, single pulse might achieve similar effects in a target, while a large pulse might even serve as a useful non-lethal weapon for crippling the data infrastructure of a major city or military base. Unfortunately for those theories, most modern Inner Sphere military units are quite resistant to such EMPs.

The Militia proposal, though, was specifically seeking a physical damage effect using a hyperpulse generator (or field initiator) but avoiding the large K-F core. And the desired weapon had to be small, to fit in a capital missile or drone fighter. The Word was apparently hoping for a radical new type of anti-shiping missile, different in nature from a nuclear weapon. Under these hardware limitations, the O'Neill Shipyards emphatically indicated the request was impossible. Without a core to provide sufficient energy and focus to a hyperspace field, a hyperspace weapon with a reasonable chance of killing personnel or damaging vehicles was impossible. When the O'Neill response was apparently confirmed by leading hyperspace physicists in Terran universities, the Word of Blake abandoned their quest for "hyperspace bombs" in 3072.

Unfortunately for Terran taxpayers, the Word took the "K-F core is required" finding to heart and began investigating "Kearny-Fuchida torpedoes."

The O'Neill Shipyard report is more interesting for its bibliography. It apparently had access to Star League Defense Force research, including the seminal "Philadelphia Project" of the 2740s. This project is a treasure trove of findings about hyperspace physics myths and truths, such as the possibility of jamming HPG signals with hyperspace interference patterns—if one knew exactly where the departure or arrival point of the pulses would be. (The SLDF had hoped the Philadelphia Project would enable interdiction of jump points but found the energy requirements to be "impractical," which, when considering the scale of energy that the Star League regularly harnessed, is an impressive statement.) The Word, like the SLDF, apparently decided that interfering with one or two HPGs with ruinously expensive "hyperspace jammers" was not worth further trouble.

MACHINA DOMINI

R&D Start Date: 3061 (Word of Blake)

Prototype Design and Production: Circa 3074 (Word of Blake)

Status: Combat-Ready Prototypes Deployed in Limited Numbers

The underlying philosophy behind the Word of Blake's Manei Domini is difficult to understand for many outside the Word, as well as many within their ranks. Without repeating the work done in numerous reports on the subject, we will crudely summarize this philosophy by indicating that the chosen Hands of the Master consider their biological aspects as inferior manifestations, obstacles that inhibit greatness. Augmentation with mechanical devices is considered the ultimate goal, an evolutionary step forward.

To our knowledge, this philosophy has only found its epitome in the Manei Domini's fearsome infantry assets. The augmentations of their MechWarriors are comparatively more sedate.

Yet fragmentary reports obtained from the Gibson underground prior to the planet's scouring suggest that the Word has found a way to take matters to a new level. A new BattleMech, identified as the "Gestalt", emerged as a quintessential hunter-killer tailored to handling local resistance. In one instance, the rebels managed to down a solitary machine, at which point the MechWarrior ejected. Though the ejection initially appeared to be that of a full-head ejection system, the rebels instantly found themselves under fire by an armored trooper instead. The rebels were able to take out the unexpected power armor as well, but at significant cost. The report went on to detail some of the particulars of this new Blakist armor, revealing a unique control system even more radical than seen with previous Domini MechWarriors.

Apparently the MechWarrior in this case uses a specialized version of VDNI that connects to his PA(L), which in turn sits in a specialized "cradle" in the 'Mech's head. This system effectively renders the suit a cockpit control system unto itself; the MechWarrior issues his instructions via his VDNI per normal, while the 'Mech interprets the data from the VDNI and direct bio-feedback from the suit. This intricate setup appears to be superior even to the traditional VDNI system, and even seems to obviate the need for most of the functions of the 'Mech's DI computer and the gyro. The Interface Suit setup, only possible through the use of a Direct Neural Interface, thus has enabled the Word of Blake to create a 'Mech without any gyros, saving tonnage and internal space while still maintaining superior operational skill.

The benefits in cost, durability and payload are obvious, but the added bonus is how the Word was able to make even the Interface Suit a combat-viable system, dramatically improving the odds of an ejected MechWarrior surviving or eluding an enemy intent on her death or capture. The Manei Domini represent a substantial investment of the Word's resources, so this is an attractive feature for a military that has a relatively more difficult time replenishing its field losses.

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OPERATION MEGIDDO**R&D Start Date:** 3069 (Word of Blake)**Prototype Design and Production:** 3070 (Word of Blake)**Status:** Network Deployed

One of the most disturbing aspects of the Word of Blake SDS in the Terran system is that it seemed pre-programmed and even designed to fire its nuclear weaponry at the inhabited worlds of the Terran system itself. The final bombardment of Terra utilized *Megiddo*-class launch platforms that volleyed nuclear-armed capital missiles in what fragmentary Blakist records call “Operation MEGIDDO”—referencing the biblical Armageddon.

The launch included a number of warheads with cobalt jackets meant strictly to enhance fallout. The modern all-fusion nuclear weapons used by the Word of Blake (and all other modern, nuclear-armed states) contain no radioactive material and would only produce short-lived fallout in ground bursts unless so deliberately “salted.” Since this is only an inconvenience to military forces, forcing them into NBC protective gear that hinders freedom of movement somewhat, it is easy to recognize that the bombardment was meant to kill Terran civilians.

The final bombardment apparently fell short of expectations for two reasons. First, the Terran SDS was far short of its planned deployment. There were fewer *Megiddo* launchers deployed than were really required to bombard all the major residential areas of Terra and Mars, and none seemed to be deployed in the Belt (which was apparently at the end of the list for Word defensive equipment.) The damage inflicted could have been far worse (even worse than the actual one hundred million who did die), but there was apparently a dispute in the upper ranks over using “Operation MEGIDDO” against Terrans. In fact, the destruction of Hilton Head Island might have been self-inflicted in an attempt to abort the complete activation of MEGIDDO.

Launches were thus rather desultory and most of the *Megiddo* launchers were found and disarmed in an unused state. Securing so many nuclear weapons from the multi-national Coalition was a significant diplomatic challenge for Devlin Stone.

While it is clear what Operation MEGIDDO was intended to do, the reasoning behind it gives insight into some of the core leadership of the Word—as does the dispute over its usage. Much of the Word’s personnel and allies were motivated by practical goals, like the Terrans’ desire for some form of revived Hegemony, and the Core Worlders’ interest in protection from the mayhem of the House Lords, and a general desire to save the Second Star League from the “depredations of the Houses.” This majority fought intelligently and sensibly in defense of the Word of Blake Protectorate. However, there was another faction—led by the mysterious “Master”—who often acted in more fanatical, illogical fashion. This was seen in late 3067 when the Word’s first response to the collapse of the Second Star League was to bombard the capitals of the “culprits,” the Federated Suns and Lyran Alliance, then to “purify the heretics” while bellowing pronouncements to “obey the Master.” These sorts of extremist actions took a back seat to more considered

public relations and military campaigns in the 3070s, though they left an indelible mark on the Inner Sphere’s perception of the Word. Apparently, the extremists did not disappear from Word’s leadership as time went on; they simply behaved themselves for a time.

Their desire to “purify” through extermination factored into the construction of the *Megiddo* platforms, which was a multi-year development and deployment process initiated when the Word was at its most successful in prosecuting the Jihad. It seems that the Word was both concerned about the reliability of its Terran allies and—if the internal strategic assessments we’ve found are correct—had probably realized as early as 3069 that it had bitten off more than it could chew in actively engaging so many factions. Operation MEGIDDO could thus be the ultimate way of “saving” the Word and previous Terra from barbarian invasion or treachery by allies.

Fortunately for Terrans, sanity still reigned in the Word’s leadership in its last days and the Operation was largely aborted.

“ERINYES”**R&D Start Date:** Circa 3065 (Word of Blake)**Prototype Design and Production:** Circa 3066 (Word of Blake)**Status:** Deployed; Whereabouts Unknown

The *Erinyes*, by our estimates, is likely a modified *Newgrange*-class YardShip developed originally for mining operations, first observed by Second Star League intelligence as early as 3066 in the Deep Periphery. The vessel was reported by some sources as carrying an extremely large weapon mount that ran the length of the ship and could hurl projectiles large enough to obliterate a stationary spacecraft or station in one shot. Disturbing secondary accounts, however, suggested asteroid hurling capabilities, and with that in mind, we have issued the following (muted) advisory to our forces to be on the lookout, as we have yet to confirm or capture this rogue asset.

SUPERHEAVY BATTLEMECHS**R&D Start Date:** 2777 (Rim Worlds Republic)**Prototype Design and Production:** Circa 3077 (Word of Blake)**Status:** Combat-Ready Prototypes Deployed in Limited Numbers

In the minds of many (who aren’t confined just to the Lyran Alliance), creating BattleMechs is a matter of scale. If you need a better BattleMech, you make a larger one. There is some truth to this thought process, as larger BattleMechs usually have more armor and firepower at the expense of speed. The cost in land speed is a major factor that has prevented the development of ‘Mechs beyond 100 tons, but there are legitimate engineering concerns that make it difficult to even create them. Previous attempts, most notable “Amaris’ Folly”, all occurred in a time when the requisite technologies simply did not exist.

The Word of Blake has apparently been able to use technological breakthroughs from the last several years to push past most of those technological barriers, using interesting new myomer/TSM hybrid actuators to overcome the failures of



"ERINYES"

>>Report Begins:

Intelligence Alert #0000798: WBS *Erinyes*, *Newgrange*-class YardShip (armed)

Release To: Republic of the Sphere Navy (RSN), Captain grade and higher. Republic Armed Forces (RAF), brigade commanders and higher.

Date: 06 Dec 3081

Classification: Top Secret: Alpha Priority – Eyes Only

Decoded WoB ROM files have confirmed the existence of a second Word of Blake *Newgrange*-class YardShip. This second YardShip is referenced as having been heavily modified for offensive operations, though these exact modifications are not known. Referred to as the WBS *Erinyes*, the name is assumed to be a reference to the Greek goddess of retribution. This further supports the references to the vessel being better armed or equipped than the known WBS *Newgrange*, *Blake's Mercy* (which was rechristened the *Mercy* and continues to assist in the rebuilding of the O'Neill yards).

Previously unconfirmed reports had led Coalition intelligence to suspect the *Blake's Mercy* was not the only *Newgrange* in operation by the Word. With all WoB *Faslanes* accounted for and the *Mercy* tied to the Coventry system, reports of another "supership" were too frequent to be fully dismissed.

At present RAF Intelligence is not prepared to associate all these "supership" sightings directly with the *Erinyes*. Many of these reports border on the fantastical and cannot be seriously considered. For example, the destruction of Arkab was clearly the work of a rogue asteroid and not any capital-scale weapon fire. Putting aside these fringe reports, there is still enough data to warrant increased vigilance by Republic military forces. Even an unmodified *Newgrange*-class ship possesses enough armor and firepower to represent a dire threat to any system save Terra (and even at Terra, the damage it could do would set back reconstruction by at least a decade).

RAF ground commands need to likewise remain wary of this ship. With integral support for a battalion of BattleMechs, over fifty ASF or small craft and a half million tons of cargo, the *Erinyes* could easily carry a planetary assault force that can threaten most Republic systems.

Any sightings or information on the *Erinyes* (Sensor and Data schematics for *Newgrange*-class ships are attached to this report) should immediately be reported to RAF intelligence with a copy of that report going to all Prefecture commanders.

Caution: It is imperative that this report not be leaked. The rumors of Word of Blake planet killing weapons remain high in the general public. This report could cause undue panic as well as alert the Word to our knowledge of their secret WarShip.

>>Report Ends

the past. They contribute to the overall much heavier internal structure of the Super-Heavy BattleMechs, who also require a Heavy-Duty Gyro to remain upright. Structural demands remain excessive, but any Super-Heavy BattleMechs benefit from a relative wealth of internal space compared to a regular 'Mech as a

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consequence of their immense frame, which substantially wider and taller than a regular 'Mech.

The final product, embodied in the BattleMech designated "Omega", appears to have some niche functionality. Notably more durable than regular 'Mechs, they are at their best when deploying bulky weapon systems in numbers greater than a regular 'Mech can achieve. It is clear that the Blakists developed several weapon configurations before settling on the "Omega" version, including one that was rumored to have been equipped with four Clan HAG-40 cannons.

Despite their apparent success, the intrinsic problems of Super-Heavy 'Mechs remain. They continue to have inferior mobility, which allows the majority of mobile units to avoid them while on they are on the offensive. They're also substantially more vulnerable to hostile artillery and air strikes. In close quarters, their limited mobility can prove an extreme liability. All these vulnerabilities were exploited to destroy the few "Omegas" the Word deployed on Terra.

There are indications that the Word was looking at three- and four-legged designs to mitigate these problems, but without mobility excess of fifty kph or jump jets, its not likely that any military will replicate the Word's innovation in 'Mech design.

K-F TORPEDOES

R&D Start Date: 3071 (Word of Blake)

Prototype Design and Production: N/A

Status: Never Deployed; Research Abandoned

The concept of a "torpedo" based on a Kearny-Fuchida drive is a perennial favorite amongst "armchair admirals," with the earliest known proposal for their construction dating to Alliance Parliament records in 2236. These hypothetical weapons have been proposed at least a dozen more times amongst seven Inner Sphere militaries, but they were uniformly rejected before advancing beyond paper studies. The Word of Blake seems to be the first nation to advance to hardware testing owing to a poorly overseen Militia procurement system.

A "weaponized" K-F drive gives the appearance of an attractive weapon: it can be stored literally light-years away from the jump point(s) it defends, arriving in an instant to cripple hostile JumpShips and WarShips because a jumping K-F drive generates a strong "warp" in space that can maul nearby vessels and personnel, with some risk as far away as twenty-five to thirty kilometers. This effect is damaging but survivable to many vessels and personnel, but is amplified in any other K-F drives caught in the radius to the point the target K-F drive will almost certainly be destroyed.

However, there are several issues that usually kill the K-F torpedo before it gets beyond a paper study. First, the most destructive K-F drive influence is only generated with a K-F core, which is why HPGs do not significantly affect nearby vessels, structures, or personnel. The smallest K-F core ever built is 2,500 tons using the fantastically expensive subcompact core technology. Most K-F torpedo studies immediately focused on

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standard K-F cores to minimize cost, but the torpedo still ends being a very expensive weapon that can only be produced slowly (compared to most weapons) from conventional shipyards. The Blake testing program apparently started by converting some salvaged *Scout*-class JumpShips to test beds, and then planned to manufacture dedicated subcompact cores because of germanium mining bottlenecks. Despite some accounting legerdemain in reports that allowed the project to run for several years, revelations of the cost for an initial operational torpedo battery cancelled the project.

Second, a careful study of operational scenarios reveals other shortcomings of K-F torpedoes. To begin with, K-F torpedoes are basically, in a strategic sense, a one-shot weapon. As soon as a military witnesses torpedoes in operation, there are obvious counter-tactics to largely nullify them in subsequent encounters.

The essential elements of anti-torpedo defense are the speed-of-light limitations of torpedo network sensors (even when fitted with HPG relays) and that space is very big. Standard jump points are huge and blur into the near-endless viable jump volume surrounding a star system's proximity limit, making a dense network of sensors impossible. Arriving ships, even standard JumpShips, will usually have enough time due to sensor lags to maneuver sufficiently far from their arrival points that a torpedo "fired" at them will arrive in the wrong place. And while jump signatures may be detectable at ten or more astronomical units, the drive plumes of erratically maneuvering JumpShips, DropShips, and WarShips can only be seen at much, much shorter ranges. Since it is not practical to fit every sensor platform and K-F torpedo with an HPG, sensor lags may actually be in terms of hours. Over such periods, ships can maneuver beyond the jump point's limit and prevent torpedo attacks all together, assuming they did not arrive too far from a star system's proximity limit.

About the only valid place to protect with K-F torpedoes are compact pirate points where time lag will be under a few seconds, but also where conventional weapons would work just as well.

Even ideal locations like pirate points reveal the next anti-torpedo defense tactic. JumpShips in an arriving fleet always need to be concerned about fratricidal drive interference so their arrivals are carefully spaced and timed. In other words, K-F torpedoes could only hope to destroy one JumpShip per torpedo. And while a K-F field can annihilate small quantities of matter (useful for keeping JumpShips from being riddled with space dust and solar wind ions), this annihilation has a distinct "choke limit." Torpedo proponents hoping that direct interpenetration of a target ship will result in jump point-sweeping titanic explosions will be disappointed, as the actual interpenetration explosions are modest and sometimes survivable even to the ships involved.

And, finally, if the torpedo is not successful in its attack, it is likely a single-use weapon as the targets will find the fragile, almost-bare K-F drives to be easy prey.

The Word abandoned the torpedoes when these limitations became clear.

DRONE BATTLEMECHS

R&D Start Date: 3052 (Word of Blake)

Prototype Design and Production: Circa 3073 (Word of Blake)

Status: Combat-Ready Models Deployed in Limited Numbers

The concept of warfare attrition is often understood to refer to material losses on a strategic or tactical level, but also includes the attrition of skilled and experienced personnel. For the majority of humanity's militaries, a significant investment in time and funds is required before an individual may be capable of operating a modern war machine. In doing so, the individual is exposed to the risk of death, extinguishing a resource that can be extremely difficult to replace.

The ability to operate relevant war machines by remote has long been considered a powerful strategic advantage, by dramatically reducing the extent to which skilled personnel are exposed to hostile fire. For a while, it seemed as if humanity would wage mechanized warfare strictly by such proxy, until the advent of small fusion engines made it possible for almost any military unit to sufficiently disrupt communications between controller and drone as to make the technology effectively moot in anything but rear areas.

Improvements in communication technology over the centuries have caused a periodic re-examination of drone technology, never leading to any new breakthroughs. The evolution of the Caspar system of the Star League seemed to spell the end for military applications for drone technology.

Despite this, there seems to be a fair amount of evidence indicating the Word was evaluating the technology with vigor. This is understandable from a resources perspective; as the war progressed, the Word proved very poorly suited to replenishing the proverbial brain drain of its ranks. The actual application is unclear. There are rumors of quad 'Mechs with ample ECM gear to assist in maintaining communication, and there is a persistent rumor of an entire Division of drone 'Mechs and tanks that was supposedly deployed on Gienah at one point. This drone Division has not been confirmed to exist, but several examples of drone Quads have been recovered.

It is clear that the Word intended to create specialized drone units, deploying them as needed. Some would engage hostile infantry, others battle armor, while yet others were built to engage 'Mechs and vehicles. Whatever threat was discovered or targeted would then be engaged by drones specifically suited for the task. This required frequent "bussing" of drones to combat zones, a task that could be completed reliably by lesser-skilled operators, who could be replaced in a moment by a more-skilled operator in case the unit was attacked while being transferred. In fact, it was a key aspect of this strategy that the true experts could swap drones as the situation on the ground demanded, ensuring the Word always had its very best operators where it mattered most, and would never be deprived of their skills. Degrading a hostile force of drones would thereby gradually concentrate the top skills of the unit in the surviving drones.

The prominence of the *Revenant* drone can be explained as pragmatism on the part of the Word. Unable to create its specialists, it can still cash in on the other advantages of a large drone unit even if their only 'Mech is a generalist.



LEGACIES OF THE WORD

SPECTRAL LAMS

R&D Start Date: Circa 3075 (Word of Blake)**Prototype Design and Production:** 3076 (Word of Blake)**Status:** Deployed in Limited Numbers

Land-Air 'Mechs (LAMs) have long occupied a curious place in the annals of military technology. First developed by the Terran Hegemony for the SLDF, these convertible BattleMechs offered superior mobility and flexibility to reconnaissance forces and light strike teams, as well as a variable support unit for combat commands whose needs could differ between ground or air combat missions at a moment's notice. LAMs could also be readily deployed by DropShips configured for either 'Mech or fighter transport operations.

Unfortunately, many design limitations inherent in the LAM conversion system resulted in units that were competent as fighters or 'Mechs, but mastered neither role as well as a dedicated machine of similar tonnage. Furthermore, even in the Star League's day, improvements in fusion engines, structural components, and weapon systems were rapidly overcoming the few advantages that LAMs enjoyed. Coupled with the more expensive and sophisticated pilot training and maintenance needs for these units, LAMs remained a minority unit type in the centuries after the Star League died—so much so that once the last LAM factory in the Inner Sphere was destroyed on Irece in 3050, the active numbers of LAMs in fighting trim rapidly plunged until—going into the Jihad—these hybrids were effectively extinct.

It therefore struck many warriors by surprise when LAMs were sighted again in the closing days of the Word of Blake's reign on Terra and Gibson. On both worlds, limited numbers of never-before-seen LAMs—dubbed the Spectral LAMs for their visual similarities to the Word's Spectral OmniFighter series—engaged allied and Regular forces in defense of the Word. Nostalgic fans of the classic LAMs of the first Star League, on the other hand, wondered openly why it had taken so long for any modern power to bring back these flexible combat units.

As it turned out, analysis of captured and wrecked Spectral LAMs soon proved that the Word of Blake discovered the same harsh limitations of the Star League LAMs still applied to anything they could devise in their own factories. Even by using more compact and efficient Clan technology, the Word's Spectral LAMs lacked the ability to truly combat modern BattleMechs and aerospace fighters of equal weight, largely due to their inability to make use of weight-saving components such as extralight engines and endo steel construction. As the factory sites associated with these units were destroyed during Terra's liberation and the Regular sterilization of Gibson, the few surviving Spectral LAMs are, like their progenitors, likely destined for the museums of the future, the last gasp of a dying breed.

HPG CANNON

R&D Start Date: 2750 (Terran Hegemony)**Prototype Design and Production:** Circa 3076 (Word of Blake)**Status:** Prototypes Unconfirmed

It is clear that subsequent to deploying the Ground-Mobile HPG unit, the Terran Hegemony continued research into weaponizing the device in some way. There is no evidence that they ever succeeded in achieving much. While the interference inherent to the small HPG devices had tactical applications, the liabilities exceeded any practical deployment.

There are indications that the Word of Blake rekindled research in the hopes of developing a weapon that could disable any BattleMech with a single shot. While no physical examples of an "HPG Cannon" have been recovered to date, several strange events throughout the Jihad's last years may be explained if the Word indeed succeeded. There are rumors of a super weapon of some sort being added to Apollyon's *Shootist* that would also explain a few (rarely observed) events during battles against him.

It is speculated that an HPG Cannon creates a K-F event at the point of impact with a target unit. The event itself is extremely small, but delivers a massive amount of energy as it attempts to tear open a pinhole into hyperspace. If the K-F event makes a direct hit against a fusion-powered target, it could instantaneously cause a catastrophic containment loss, setting off the reactor in a massive plasma explosion. The accuracy of the weapon is unknown, but given its nature, it is likely that it can cause some damage even without a direct hit—unless that is, the target is large enough and hardened enough to resist the effects, such as a DropShip or other large spacecraft.

The HPG Cannon, if its properties are correctly attributed, does seem to present substantial risks. While likely an extremely brief burst even by HPG standards, the risk remains that some matter is blasted from the target in to the event, with potential "misjump" style consequences for the weapon's user. This means that it is theoretically possible for the attacker to be vaporized simply by firing his own weapon.

While probably entirely unfeasible, the very concept does bring the specter of HPG weaponry blasting a target site with radiation from light-years away. Such a nightmare scenario would rewrite the conventions of warfare as dramatically as did the advent of nuclear weapons in the mid 1900s.



RULES ANNEX





RULES ANNEX

The following section provides additional rules for BattleTech covering new and experimental units developed by the Word of Blake during the final years of the Jihad. Players interested in using these rules should bear in mind that, in virtually all cases, these units and technologies saw only the most limited production in the final days of the Word of Blake, failing to reach the numbers or the level of production to turn the tide of the war. During the fall of Terra to the allies and its immediate aftermath, all known factories manufacturing these units have been destroyed, but salvage and stray Blakist escapees are possible avenues that players and GMs may use to bring these units back into play.

Terminology: In these rules, the term “unit” is used as it is in *Total Warfare (TW)*, to refer to a single battlefield element, such as a ‘Mech, conventional infantry platoon, battle armor squad, aerospace fighter, or spacecraft.

RULES ANNEX

“MACHINA DOMINI” INTERFACE (EXPERIMENTAL)

The “Machina Domini” interface was an experimental effort by the Word of Blake’s Manei Domini to further enhance the connection between MechWarriors and their machines, while simultaneously protecting the warrior from the most brutal punishment. Based loosely on Clan ProtoMech technology, the “Machina Domini” ‘Mech uses a specialized three-level control system that requires a VDNI-enhanced MechWarrior, a modified power armor suit, and a compatible interface cockpit. Combined, these technologies create a control system that achieves a true symbiosis between man and machine, while protecting the warrior from virtually all harm. The Machina Domini interface obviates the need for both the BattleMech’s gyro and most functions of the Diagnostic Interpretation (DI) Computer.

“MACHINA DOMINI” INTERFACE (EXPERIMENTAL)

The “Machina Domini” interface requires three key components to function: A MechWarrior equipped with either a buffered or standard Vehicular Direct-Neural Interface (VDNI) implant (see pp. 129-130, *JHS3072*), a PA(L) suit equipped with a BattleMech Neural Interface Unit (see below), and a BattleMech equipped with a BattleMech Interface Cockpit (see below). Without all three of these components in working order, the “Machina Domini” connection (and, of course, the BattleMech itself) will not function.

In game play, a “Machina Domini” BattleMech functions in accordance with standard rules, with the following modifications:

- **MechWarrior Skills:** A BattleMech operating with an active “Machina Domini” interface automatically receives a –1 modifier to all Gunnery and Piloting target numbers.
- **Piloting Skill Checks:** Even if the “Machina Domini” ‘Mech still mounts a gyro, any critical hits to Gyro slots are ignored while the “Machina Domini” Interface is working.
- **MechWarrior Damage:** The “Machina Domini” MechWarrior ignores all pilot damage from head hits and internal ammunition explosion effects, but can still be killed if the head location is destroyed. MechWarrior damage from overheating will still occur if the BattleMech sustains any Life Support critical hits, as will MechWarrior damage resulting from failed Piloting Skill rolls made during a fall.
- **Hostile Environments and Hull Breaches:** If operating in a hostile environment, the “Machina Domini” MechWarrior will suffer no effects unless the cockpit armor is breached *and* the PA(L) interface suit is reduced to an armor value of 0.
- **Cockpit Critical Hits:** If the Interface Cockpit itself suffers a critical hit, the “Machina Domini” MechWarrior will receive two pilot hits from the attack, the PA(L) suit he is wearing will suffer 1 point of armor damage, and the BattleMech will receive the equivalent damage of a single Gyro critical hit. On a second critical hit to the Interface Cockpit, the “Machina Domini” MechWarrior will suffer two more pilot hits, the PA(L) suit will suffer an additional 1 point of armor damage, and the interface connection will be critically damaged (treated as a second Gyro hit). (If, through Interface Cockpit critical hits, the interface suit is reduced *below* an armor value of 0, the suit and the MechWarrior wearing it are considered destroyed.)
- **Ejection:** A “Machina Domini” may eject from his ‘Mech at any time per the standard rules (see pp. 196-198, *TO*), but receives a –2 target number modifier when doing so, to reflect the added resilience of the PA(L) interface suit. Once ejected, the “Machina Domini” MechWarrior is treated as a single battle armor unit with a squad size of 1 trooper. The armor value of this unit is equal to that of the PA(L) itself, minus any armor damage sustained from Interface Cockpit hits.
- **Special Pilot Abilities (Optional):** At the players’ discretion, the use of the “Machina Domini” interface can also impart one free Gunnery or Piloting Skill-based Special Pilot Abilities featured in *A Time of War* (see pp. 219-224, *AToW*), regardless of the ability’s pre-requisites. The nature of this ability must be determined before play begins and is selected by the “Machina Domini” ‘Mech’s controlling player.



RULES ANNEX

"MACHINA DOMINI" INTERFACE (EXPERIMENTAL)

CONSTRUCTION
RULES

Construction Rules: In addition to a MechWarrior equipped with some form of VDNi implant, the "Machina Domini" Interface requires two additional components: The BattleMech Neural Interface Unit (which is built into the interface suit), and the BattleMech Interface Cockpit (which replaces the standard BattleMech cockpit).

Technology Base and Rating

The "Machina Domini" Interface system—including the BattleMech Neural Interface Unit and the BattleMech Interface Cockpit—are available only to the Inner Sphere Tech Base. For Availability purposes, their Tech/Availability Ratings are: E/X-X-F.

BattleMech Neural Interface Unit (NIU)

The BattleMech NIU can only be mounted in the interface suit, which must be constructed as a PA(L)-type battlesuit. This item weighs 100 kilograms and occupies 2 slots in the suit's torso location.

BattleMech Interface Cockpit

The Interface Cockpit weighs 4 tons and takes one extra Cockpit critical slot. The Interface can only be installed in BattleMechs, and may not be mounted in a Torso location. The Interface Cockpit cannot be protected with Component Armor, nor can it be combined with a Cockpit Command Module or any other Cockpit types (including Small Cockpits). A BattleMech equipped with an Interface Cockpit also may not employ the Cramped Cockpit or Rumble Seat Design Quirks.

A BattleMech with an Interface Cockpit may be constructed without a gyro, in which case the usual Gyro slots on the unit's Critical Hit Table are treated as empty, and can be used for other components.

ROBOTIC DRONE BATTLEMECHS (EXPERIMENTAL)

Running increasingly low on qualified MechWarriors and eager to boost the defenses around Terra as Devlin Stone and his allies closed in, the Word of Blake turned to drones to beef up its forces. Although most of these efforts focused on the aerospace battle, the fighting for Terra revealed that the Word was also field-testing 'Mech-based robotic drones.

ROBOTIC DRONE BATTLEMECHS (EXPERIMENTAL)

The rules for using Smart Robotics are presented in *Jihad Conspiracies: Interstellar Players 2* (see pp. 124-125, IP2). In a nutshell, robotic drone BattleMechs function as normal four-legged BattleMechs with the following modifications:

- **Piloting:** Robotic drone 'Mechs suffer a +3 Piloting Skill target modifier due to the lack of a human pilot (the normal quad 'Mech modifier of -2 still applies).
- **Initiative:** By themselves, robotic drone 'Mechs suffer a -4 Initiative modifier.
- **MechWarrior Effects:** Drone 'Mechs suffer none of the pilot hits or damage from head hits, falls, overheating, or internal explosions, and ignore Morale rules. Critical hits to a robotic drone 'Mech's cockpit or life support slots destroy the drone's CPU and deactivates the unit.
- **Hostile Interference:** If exposed to a hostile ECM field, EM Pulse, or Haywire Pod, the robotic drone's sensors will be overwhelmed. When this happens, the 'Mech's controlling player must roll 1D6. On 4 or less, the robotic unit retreats to its home edge as if it were a crippled unit (see p. 258, TW). On a 5, the drone continues its previous movement (if any) along its last heading for 3 turns, but performs no other attacks (treat any possible collisions with other units or buildings as a Charging attack); after 3 turns, the unit acts normally. On a 6, the drone goes berserk, closing with and attacking the nearest active unit of any type for as long as it remains within the hostile ECM bubble; once outside the bubble, the drone will behave normally.



ROBOTIC DRONE BATTLEMECHS (EXPERIMENTAL)

CONSTRUCTION RULES

Construction Rules: For construction purposes, the robotic drone control system for 'Mechs also remains the same as presented in IP2. 'Mech-based robotic drone control systems cannot be employed by two-legged (biped) 'Mechs, but can be employed by four-legged (quad) IndustrialMechs and BattleMechs alike.

Technology Base and Rating

The 'Mech-based robotic drone system is available to both Clan and Inner Sphere Tech Bases. Its Tech/Availability Ratings are: D/E-F-F.

Tonnage/Space

For units under 10 tons in total mass, the robotic drone control system adds no additional weight beyond the unit's standard cockpit weight. For units 10 tons and over, the robotic drone control system adds 5 percent of the unit's total mass (rounded up to the nearest half ton) to the standard cockpit weight. (Robotic drone control systems cannot be combined with Small Cockpits or other alternative/advanced Cockpit options.)

Installing a robotic drone control system does not alter the number of slots occupied by a standard cockpit; even the Life Support critical slots remain in place on a robotic drone 'Mech's cockpit (as they reflect vital sub-systems that maintain the robotic "brain").

SUPERHEAVY 'MECHS (EXPERIMENTAL)

Although numerous attempts were made since the development of the BattleMech, practical limitations in chassis, myomer, and actuator demands—coupled with the skyrocketing weight-to-power ratios of combat-grade fusion engines—made the development of 'Mechs massing more than 100 tons unfeasible for practical deployment. While a few specialized designs did emerge in industrial applications (typically relegated to use in low-gravity environments where their oversized mass was less crippling), the failure of superheavy 'Mech concepts throughout the ages were legion. By far the most infamous was the original *Behemoth* design, developed under the brief reign of Stefan Amaris in the final years of the original Star League. Also known as "Amaris' Folly", the superheavy *Behemoth* never made it past the prototype stage. Its legendary failure would live on through the Succession Wars, and was often cited as the reasons no BattleMech could ever break the hundred-ton barrier...

That was, until the Word of Blake unveiled its deadly "Omega"-class BattleMechs during the fateful defense of Terra in 3078.

SUPERHEAVY 'MECHS (EXPERIMENTAL)

Superheavy BattleMechs and Superheavy IndustrialMechs are available in two-legged (biped) and four-legged (quad) body types, just like standard 'Mechs. In game play, Superheavy 'Mechs function in accordance with the standard rules for a 'Mech of their type, with the following modifications:

- **Unit Height:** Superheavy 'Mechs are considered to stand 3 levels (18 meters) tall for line of sight purposes. When prone (or hull down), a Superheavy 'Mech is treated as standing 2 levels high for line of sight purposes. Superheavy 'Mechs do not receive any cover modifiers for terrain that stands 2 levels or more below their current height (so a Superheavy 'Mech standing upright in Depth 1 Water, or behind a Level 1 building would receive no Partial Cover effect).
- **Stacking Limits:** Superheavy 'Mechs are so massive that no other vehicles or 'Mechs may share the same hex as they occupy. Even friendly vehicles and 'Mechs must maneuver around a Superheavy 'Mech's hex during the Movement Phase. (Infantry—including battle armor—is unimpaired.)
- **Movement:** Superheavy 'Mechs reduce by 1 the MP cost for the following terrain types: Woods, Jungle, Rough, Rubble, and Buildings. All other terrain types and conditions (including elevation changes and lateral movement for quads) cost the same number of MPs as they do for standard-size 'Mechs.
- **Buildings:** Superheavy 'Mechs cannot climb buildings. When entering or exiting a Building, a Superheavy 'Mech applies a +4 target number modifier for all rolls made to determine if the structure sustains damage.
- **Advanced Movement and Piloting:** If using the advanced Taking Damage rules (see p. 23, TO), Superheavy 'Mechs receive a -4 Piloting Skill target modifier. If using any Bog Down special rules (see p. 62-63, TO), Superheavy 'Mechs apply an additional +1 Piloting Skill target modifier.
- **Attack Modifiers:** All weapon and physical attacks against a Superheavy 'Mech receive a -1 to-hit modifier, to reflect these units' larger silhouette. All physical attacks performed by a Superheavy 'Mech suffer a +1 to-hit modifier, to reflect their reduced agility. If a physical attack between two units includes a Superheavy 'Mech on a different level, consult the Different Levels Table (Superheavy 'Mechs). This Table adds to the one found in *Total Warfare* (see p. 150, TW).

SUPERHEAVY 'MECHS (CONTINUED)

- **Infantry:** Anti-'Mech infantry attacks against Superheavy 'Mechs receive a -2 to-hit modifier, to reflect the greater ease of such attacks due to the unit's sheer size and lower range of motion. (Although Superheavy 'Mechs are larger, they may not carry more than 1 battle armor squad per 'Mech under the Mechanized Battle Armor rules, nor may they be subjected to more than one anti-'Mech Swarm Attack at one time.)
- **Critical Hits:** Although items in the arms, legs, and torsos of a Superheavy 'Mech occupy only half the normal critical slots as normal (rounded up), a critical hit to any item is considered a "single" critical hit. If the critical hit strikes an ammunition slot, however, *all* ammunition in that slot is affected, even if the slot reflects two standard slots' worth of munitions. Likewise, a critical hit to any slots that contain multiple heat sinks (as may occur in the case of standard or compact heat sinks) will destroy *all* of the sinks in that Superheavy critical slot. As with normal rules, critical hits to a critical slot that has been previously struck will have no further effect and must be re-rolled.
- **Gyro Hits:** Even though they make use of Heavy-Duty Gyros, these systems are seriously taxed by the oversized nature of the superheavy design and as prone to damage as a standard gyro type. As a result, it only takes 2 critical hits to destroy a Superheavy 'Mech's gyro.
- **Compact Engines:** If the Superheavy 'Mech mounts a Compact Fusion Engine, the engine is considered destroyed at 2 Critical Hits, rather than 3.
- **Transporting Superheavy 'Mechs:** Superheavy 'Mechs may be transported by DropShips, but because Superheavy 'Mech cubicles do not currently exist, they must be transported as bulk cargo and cannot be dropped from airborne transports.

DIFFERENT LEVELS TABLE (SUPERHEAVY 'MECHS)

Target is:

Standing Superheavy 'Mech 1 level higher
 Standing Superheavy 'Mech 1 level lower
 Standing Superheavy 'Mech 2 levels lower
 Prone Superheavy 'Mech 1 level higher
 Prone Superheavy 'Mech 1 level lower
 Prone Superheavy 'Mech 2 levels lower

Allowed Physical Attack

Charge (Kick Table), Punch (Kick Table), Club (Kick Table), Physical Weapon (Kick Table)
 Charge, Punch, Kick, Club, Physical Weapon
 Charge (Punch Table), Kick (Punch Table), Club (Punch Table), Physical Weapon (Punch Table)
 Punch, Club, Physical Weapon
 Charge, Punch, Kick, Club, Physical Weapon
 None

SUPERHEAVY 'MECHS (EXPERIMENTAL)

CONSTRUCTION RULES

Construction Rules: Construction of Superheavy 'Mechs (BattleMechs or IndustrialMechs weighing from 105 to 200 tons) follows the same rules as the existing *TechManual* 'Mech construction rules, except as noted below:

Technology Base and Rating

Superheavy BattleMechs and Superheavy IndustrialMechs are available only to the Inner Sphere Tech Base under these rules. For Availability purposes, their Tech/Availability Ratings are: E/X-X-F.

Configurations

Superheavy 'Mechs may be constructed as two-legged or four-legged designs. Superheavy BattleMechs may be constructed as OmniMechs, but Superheavy IndustrialMechs may not.

Maximum Weight and Increments

Superheavy 'Mechs weigh from 105 tons to 200 tons in total mass, increasing in 5-ton increments.

Internal Structure

To support their massive weight, Superheavy 'Mechs use an enhanced form of internal structure known as Superheavy Structure. Superheavy Internal Structure is available in Industrial (for Superheavy IndustrialMechs only), as well as Standard and Endo-Steel (for Superheavy BattleMechs only).



SUPERHEAVY 'MECHS (EXPERIMENTAL)

CONSTRUCTION
RULES

Industrial Superheavy Structure: Industrial Superheavy Structure takes up 40 percent of the Superheavy IndustrialMech's total weight (rounded up to the nearest half ton), and occupies no slots on the Superheavy IndustrialMech's Critical Hits Table.

Standard Superheavy Structure: Standard Superheavy Internal Structure takes up 20 percent of a Superheavy BattleMech's total weight (rounded up to the nearest half ton), and takes up no critical space on the Superheavy BattleMech's Critical Hits Table.

Superheavy Endo-Steel Structure: Superheavy Endo-Steel Structure takes up 10 percent of a Superheavy BattleMech's total weight (rounded up to the nearest half ton), and occupies 7 slots on the Superheavy 'Mech's Critical Hit Table (the equivalent of 14 critical slots on a standard BattleMech).

Other Structure Types: Under these rules, no other internal structure types are available to Superheavy 'Mechs.

Structure Points: To find the number of points of structure per location that a Superheavy 'Mech's structure provides, see the Superheavy 'Mech Structure Table.

Head/Cockpit

The cockpit assembly for a Superheavy 'Mech is reinforced, and provides 4 points of internal structure in the head location. The maximum head armor that can be supported in this location is also increased to 12 points. However, as a result, the cockpit of the Superheavy 'Mech design is increased to 4 tons. Under these rules, Superheavy 'Mechs cannot use standard-size 'Mech cockpits, Small Cockpits, Torso-Mounted Cockpits, Interface Cockpits, or Drone Cockpit types, but they can install Command Consoles.

SUPERHEAVY 'MECH STRUCTURE TABLE

Total 'Mech Mass	Superheavy Structure Weight			Internal Structure Points by Location				
	Standard	Endo Steel	Industrial	Head	Center Torso	L/R Torso	Each Arm	Each Leg
105	21	10.5	42	4	32	22	17	22
110	22	11	44	4	33	23	18	23
115	23	11.5	46	4	35	24	19	24
120	24	12	48	4	36	25	20	25
125	25	12.5	50	4	38	26	21	26
130	26	13	52	4	39	27	21	27
135	27	13.5	54	4	41	28	22	28
140	28	14	56	4	42	29	23	29
145	29	14.5	58	4	44	31	24	31
150	30	15	60	4	45	32	25	32
155	31	15.5	62	4	47	33	26	33
160	32	16	64	4	48	34	26	34
165	33	16.5	66	4	50	35	27	35
170	34	17	68	4	51	36	28	36
175	35	17.5	70	4	53	37	29	37
180	36	18	72	4	54	38	30	38
185	37	18.5	74	4	56	39	31	39
190	38	19	76	4	57	40	31	40
195	39	19.5	78	4	59	41	32	41
200	40	20	80	4	60	42	33	42

SUPERHEAVY 'MECHS (EXPERIMENTAL)

Engine

The Engine Rating for a Superheavy 'Mech is computed as normal. Superheavy IndustrialMechs may only use standard and Large fusion engine types, while Superheavy BattleMechs can use any fusion engine type (including Compact, Standard, Light, XL, XXL, and Large). The weights for fusion engines may be found in their appropriate engine tables in *TechManual* (see p. 49, *TM*) or *Tactical Operations* (see p. 308, *TO*). Non-fusion engine types lack the power to keep a Superheavy 'Mech mobile, and so such engines may not be selected.

Space: The critical slot space requirements of a Superheavy 'Mech's engine are half of those normally required in a similar standard BattleMech. See *Superheavy Critical Space*, below, for more information.

Supercharger: Superheavy 'Mechs cannot make use of Superchargers.

Gyro

Regardless of their type, all Superheavy 'Mechs *must* employ a heavy-duty gyro. (This includes Superheavy IndustrialMechs, overriding the ordinary restriction on such items.) All other gyro types lack the durability and stress tolerances necessary to keep these oversized machines balanced.

Space: On a Superheavy 'Mech, the Heavy-Duty Gyro occupies only two critical slots in the Center Torso.

Jump Jets and Underwater Maneuvering Units

The challenges of supporting and balancing a Superheavy 'Mech as it stands, walks, or runs have proven so significant that there are presently no jump jet systems capable of safely providing Jump MP for these machines. Superheavy 'Mechs thus may not mount Jump Jets, Improved Jump Jets, Jump Boosters, or Partial Wings of any type.

Likewise, no UMU equipment has been developed that can safely propel and maneuver a Superheavy 'Mech underwater. Underwater Maneuvering Units may not be installed in a Superheavy 'Mech.

Musculature

In order to meet the incredible demands of their design, Superheavy 'Mechs use larger actuators and thicker, harder myomer bundles to provide the strength, flexibility, and resilience they need. This musculature is incompatible with all forms of MASC, Triple-Strength Myomers, and the Actuator Enhancement System.

Armor

Aside from the exceptions noted here, Superheavy BattleMechs can use any and all types of armor available to BattleMechs, while Superheavy IndustrialMechs can use any and all types of armor available to IndustrialMechs. As with standard-sized 'Mechs the maximum armor points per location is equal to twice the location's internal structure value, and all torso locations must divide this armor between front and rear facings. A Superheavy 'Mech's head location may carry up to 12 points of armor.

Modular Armor: Under these rules, Superheavy 'Mechs may not install Modular Armor.

Armored Components: Under these rules, Superheavy 'Mechs may not use Armored Components.

Stealth Systems: The sheer size of a Superheavy 'Mech's profile renders it unable to use stealth armor and other stealth systems effectively. Thus, BattleMech Stealth Armor, the Chameleon Light Polarization Shield, the Null-Signature and Void-Signature Systems all have no effect when mounted on a Superheavy 'Mech. (ECM Suites still function normally, however.)

Superheavy Critical Space

The immense size of the Superheavy chassis provides ample internal space in the torsos, arms, and legs, but simultaneously requires heavier and bulkier actuators to function. As a result, all equipment mounted in the torsos, arms, and legs of a Superheavy 'Mech—other than arm and legs actuators—effectively occupies half of its ordinary critical slot space (rounded up). This rule includes all non-actuator and non-internal structure critical slots, including those for armor, weapons, ammunition, heat sinks, and engines.

Ammunition: In the case of ammunition bins, every critical slot of ammo placed in the torsos, arms, or legs of a Superheavy 'Mech may carry up to two slots of ammunition. This rule does not change the number of shots provided per ton of ammunition; it merely reflects the number of ammo slots that may be "doubled up" in one critical space. Only ammunition of the same weapon type may be combined in this fashion, but if the weapon in question uses multiple ammo types, the different types (by ton) can be combined in the same Superheavy critical slot. (In such a case, the controlling player must always keep track of the different ammo types that are sharing the slot.)

Heat Sinks: Superheavy 'Mechs may carry as many heat sinks per critical slot as will fit into two critical hit slots on a standard 'Mech. This means that a Superheavy 'Mech can fit up to 2 standard (single) heat sinks per critical slot, or 1 Clan double heat sink (if using Mixed-Tech rules), or 4 compact heat sinks. Inner Sphere double heat sinks require two critical hits on a Superheavy 'Mech, but cannot share critical slots. When noting the location of slots where more than one heat sink is present, the number of heat sinks occupying the slot must be identified in the critical hit table.

COSTS AND BATTLE VALUES

The following rules expand on the standard cost and battle value computation rules for the special units featured in this rules addendum.

“Machina Domini” Costs

Calculate the C-bill costs of a “Machina Domini” unit—PA(L) or BattleMech—as normal, but consult the Special Technologies Costs Table for those components specifically unique to the “Machina Domini” interface system.

Robotic Drone ‘Mech Costs

Calculate the C-bill costs of a Robotic Drone unit as normal for its type, but consult the Special Technologies Costs Table to find the cost of the Smart Robotic Control System that replaces the unit’s normal cockpit/crew systems.

Superheavy ‘Mech Costs

Calculate the C-bill costs of a Superheavy ‘Mech as normal, but consult the Superheavy ‘Mech Component Costs Table for those components specifically unique to Superheavy ‘Mechs.

“Machina Domini” Battle Value

Calculate the Battle Value of a “Machina Domini” unit—PA(L) or BattleMech—as normal, with the following additions:

The BattleMech Neural Interface Unit alone has a Battle Value of 0.

A BattleMech equipped with a BattleMech Interface Cockpit multiplies its Final BV by 1.30.

Robotic Drone Battle Value

Calculate the Battle Value of any unit equipped with a Smart Robotic Control System as normal, but when finished, multiply the unit’s final BV by 0.95 to reflect the robotic controls.

Superheavy ‘Mech Battle Values

Calculate the Battle Value of Superheavy ‘Mechs as normal, with the following exceptions:

Gyro: For BV purposes, treat a Superheavy ‘Mech’s Heavy-Duty Gyro as a standard Gyro.

SPECIAL TECHNOLOGIES COSTS TABLE

Item	Cost (in C-bills)	Tech Rating	Availability
<i>“Machina Domini” Technology</i>			
BattleMech Neural Interface Unit	650,000	E	X-X-F
BattleMech Interface Cockpit	1,500,000	E	X-X-F
<i>Robotic Drones</i>			
Smart Robotic Control System	5,000 + (10,000 x Item Tonnage)*	C	E-X-F

*Refers to the full weight of the standard Cockpit, plus any additional tonnage applied by the drone system.

SUPERHEAVY ‘MECH COMPONENT COSTS TABLE

Component	Cost (in C-bills)	Tech Rating	Availability
<i>Superheavy Cockpit</i>			
BattleMech	300,000	E	X-X-F
IndustrialMech	200,000	D	X-X-F
Superheavy Musculature	12,000 x Unit Tonnage	E	X-X-F
<i>Superheavy Structure</i>			
Standard	4,000 x Unit Tonnage	E	X-X-F
Endo-Steel	16,000 x Unit Tonnage	E	X-X-F
Industrial	3,000 x Unit Tonnage	D	X-X-F
Superheavy Actuators	2x Standard Actuator Cost	D	X-X-F

Engines: For BV purposes, replace the normal Engine Type Modifier with the appropriate Superheavy Engine Type Modifier value shown in the Superheavy Engine Type BV Modifier Table.

Explosive Components: When assessing the BV of a Superheavy ‘Mech that carries explosive ammunition or components, treat the Superheavy ‘Mech

as a Clan ‘Mech if the explosive components are in a location protected by any form of CASE (if the location is protected by CASE II and the explosive component is any type of Gauss weapon, subtract nothing). If the Superheavy ‘Mech makes use of explosive components not protected by CASE systems, treat it as a standard Inner Sphere ‘Mech. Remember, however, that these rules apply per slot, regardless of how many tons of explosive components occupy said slot.

SUPERHEAVY ENGINE TYPE BV MODIFIER TABLE

Engine Type	Modifier
Standard	1.0
Light	0.825
Compact	1.0
XL (Inner Sphere)	0.75
XL (Clan)	0.825
Large	1.0
XXL (Inner Sphere)	0.5
XXL (Clan)	0.75
Large XXL (Inner Sphere)	0.5
Large XXL (Clan)	0.75



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"MACHINA DOMINI" INTERFACE ARMOR

The prototype power armor component of the Word of Blake's "Machina Domini" project never got a proper name as far as anyone alive can tell. What is known from the few samples reported and recovered to date, is that this armor is essentially a heavily modified PA(L) suit that uses bio-feedback and neural-impulse technologies to enable its warrior to not only pilot the suit itself, but an entire BattleMech. This is accomplished through a unique control system and a specially designed interface cockpit in the 'Mech.

Clearly dependent on the Vehicular Direct-Neural Interface (VDNI) implants that many of the Word of Blake's fanatical Manei Domini have used in the past, the interface armor somehow amplifies the trooper's level of motor control so much that it renders most of the BattleMech's DI computer functions moot and even eliminates the need for a gyro (something previous VDNI systems could not even overcome). Beyond the slight savings in tonnage and component space in the core of a

properly-equipped BattleMech, the exact benefits of this technology are not fully understood, but it is possible that the interface was an early phase of a larger project the Manei Domini were working on when Gibson was pulverized.

Outside of its use as a control system, the Interface Armor carried the maximum protection possible for a battlesuit of its size, and carries both a "Firedrake" Support Needler, and a second mount for a lighter anti-personnel weapon. These capabilities would make the trooper within a dangerous foe to conventional infantry, and certainly puts to shame the amount of protection and firepower an average ejected MechWarrior can boast in the field—but given the fact that these suits are clearly intended for the cybernetically enhanced Manei Domini, this choice of armor and firepower may just as well be a means for their MechWarriors to perform "double duty" as anti-personnel forces.

Type: M-D Interface Armor

Manufacturer: Word of Blake

Primary Factory: Gibson

Equipment Ratings: F/X-X-F/D

Tech Base: Inner Sphere (Experimental)

Chassis Type: Humanoid

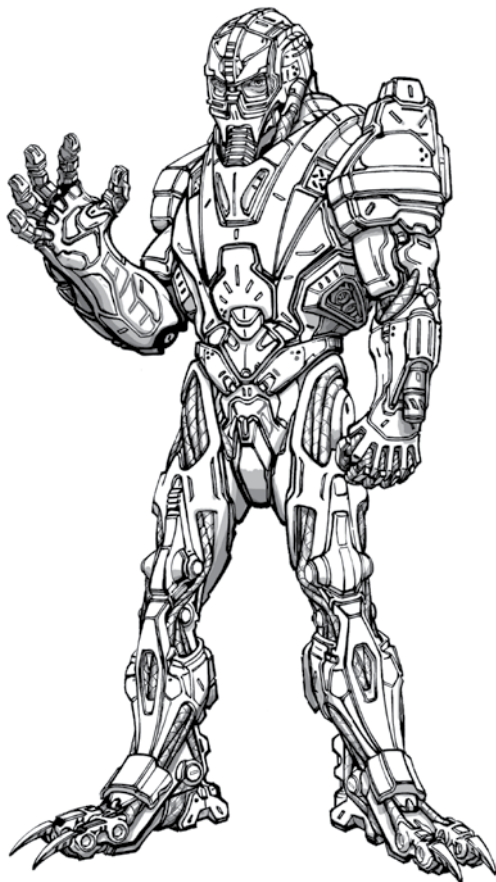
Weight Class: Power Armor (Light)

Maximum Weight: 400 kg

Battle Value: 10

Swarm/Leg Attack/Mechanized/AP: Yes/Yes/Yes/Yes

Notes: May not be operated without VDNI Implant; Features the following Design Quirks: Prototype, Difficult to Maintain, Obsolete/3081



Equipment		Slots	Mass
Chassis:	PA(L)		80 kg
Motive System:			
Ground MP:	3		50 kg
Jump MP:	0		0 kg
Manipulators:			
Right Arm:	Armored Glove		0 kg
Left Arm:	Armored Glove		0 kg
Armor:	Standard		100 kg
Armor Value:	2 + 1 (Trooper)		

Weapons and Equipment	Location	Slots (Capacity)	Mass
Firedrake Support Needler (30 shots)	RA	1	50 kg
Anti-Personnel Weapon Mount	LA	1	5 kg
BattleMech Neural-Interface Unit	Body	2	100 kg

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D2X-G "GESTALT"**Mass:** 45 tons**Chassis:** D2 Prototype**Power Plant:** Hermes 315 XL**Cruising Speed:** 75 kph**Maximum Speed:** 118 kph**Jump Jets:** Rawlings 55**Jump Capacity:** 180 meters**Armor:** Divine Spectre-C Heavy Ferro-Fibrous
with Void-Signature System**Armament:**

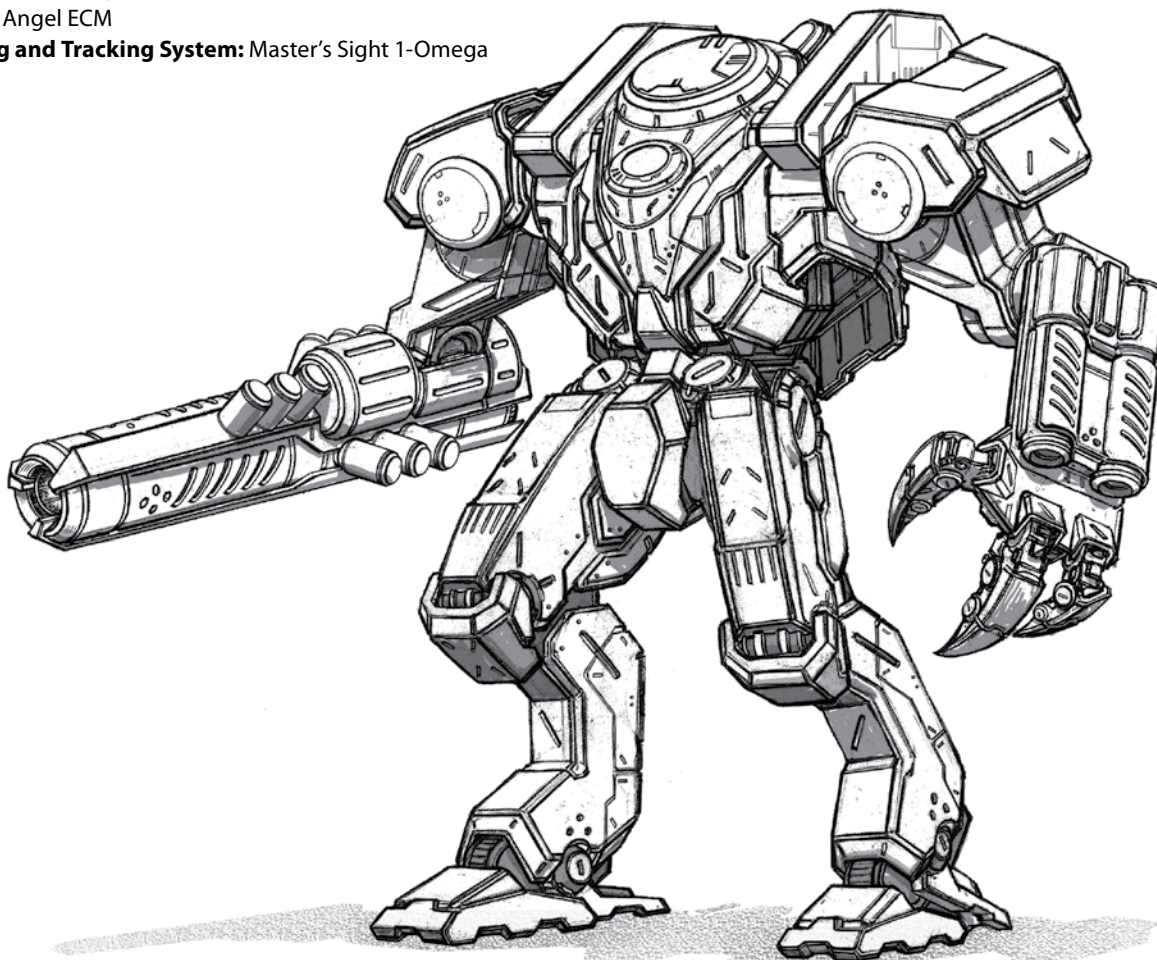
1 Blackburn "Divine Wrath" Heavy PPC with PPC Capacitor

2 Siplan M3-XR Extended-Range Medium Lasers

Manufacturer: Gibson Federated BattleMechs**Primary Factories:** Gibson**Communications System:** Master's Voice Cel-Alpha
with Angel ECM**Targeting and Tracking System:** Master's Sight 1-Omega**OVERVIEW**

The D2X-G was the first—and only—"Machina Domini" BattleMech model produced by the Word of Blake before the Regulans destroyed the Gibson factories in 3078. Codenamed "Gestalt" by Gibson's resistance movement because of its unique control interface, it is unclear if this unit was planned as part of a series of interface-capable 'Mechs to complement the iconic Celestial series, or if the Word was planning to modify them to modular technology later on.

While still in the prototype stage, "Gestalts" were extensively field tested on Gibson and made several forays against the Gibson's recurrent rebel movements. During these actions, these 'Mechs proved adept at a variety of missions, from high-speed recon, pursuit, and interdiction, to ambush tactics that truly allowed their combination of Void-Signature and Angel ECM



RULES ANNEX

systems to shine. Although there are no confirmed accounts of "Gestalts" being felled by the local insurgents, it was during a number of their forays that we learned of the battlefield capabilities of the interface suits, when the MechWarriors would exit their machines for a more up close and personal approach.

Before the Regulans bombarded Gibson, the Manei Domini managed to only get a dozen or so of these "Gestalts" off world. These units exclusively served in the Master's entourage, and at least one Level II's worth were among the Blakist ground forces that tried to stand against the Regulans on Diamantina. With the apparent demise of the Master on Circinus and the disappearance of the Manei Domini, no one has seen any more "Gestalts" or other evidence of the "Machina Domini" in the Inner Sphere.

Type: "**Gestalt**"

Technology Base: Inner Sphere (Experimental)

Tonnage: 45

Battle Value: 2,542

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:		4.5
Engine:	315 XL	11
Walking MP:	7	
Running MP:	11	
Jumping MP:	6	
Heat Sinks:	10 (20)	0

Equipment		Mass
Gyro (None):		0
Cockpit (Interface):		4
Armor Factor (Heavy Ferro):	148	7.5
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso	14	17
Center Torso (rear)		10
R/L Torso	11	14
R/L Torso (rear)		8
R/L Arm	7	14
R/L Leg	11	20

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Heavy PPC	RA	4	10
PPC Capacitor	RA	1	1
Angel ECM Suite	CT	2	2
2 ER Medium Laser	LA	2	2
Void Signature System	*	7	0
Jump Jets	RT	3	1.5
Jump Jets	LT	3	1.5

Notes: *The Void Signature occupies one critical slot in every location except the head; This unit can only be piloted using a battlesuit that is equipped with a BattleMech Neural-Interface Unit; Features the following Design Quirks: Prototype, Obsolete/3081

RULES ANNEX

SHP-X4 "OMEGA"

Mass: 150 tons

Chassis: Superheavy Template Endo-Steel

Power Plant: 300 Vlar XL

Cruising Speed: 21 kph

Maximum Speed: 32 kph

Armor: Aldis Plate with CASE II

Armament:

3 M-7 Gauss Rifles

2 Imperator Code Red LB 10-X Autocannons

Manufacturer: Skobel MechWorks

Primary Factories: Terra

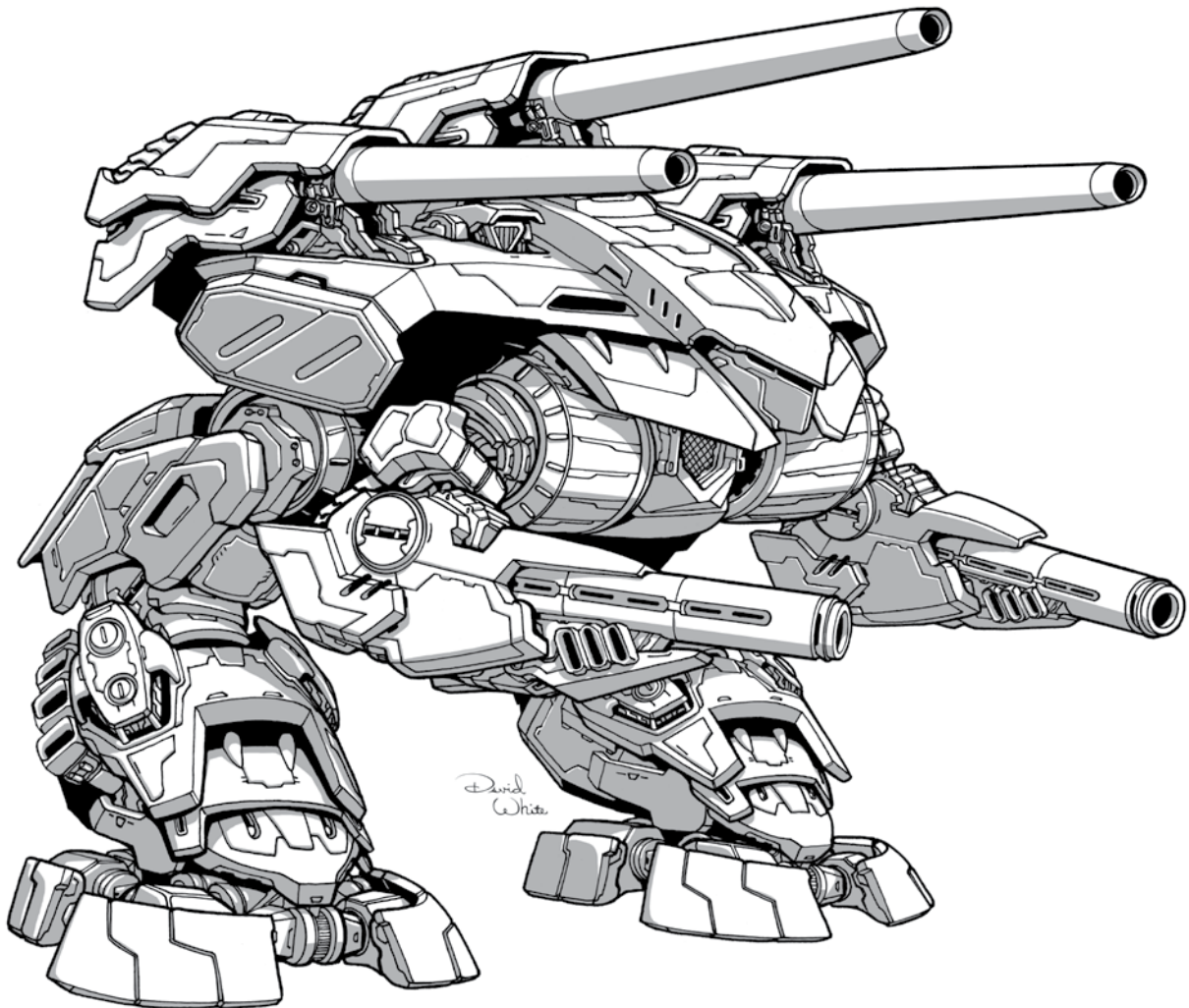
Communications System: Skobel Wave VI Comm
with Improved C3 Computer

Targeting and Tracking System: Falcon 12b Watcher

OVERVIEW

Weighing in at an incredible 150 tons of armor and weapons, the SHP-X4 "Omega" is the first truly viable Superheavy BattleMech ever made. Although similar concepts were attempted since the Terran hegemony developed the first BattleMech, most met with dismal fates, including the so-called "Amaris' Folly", a Superheavy BattleMech that ultimately became the template for the Clans' *Behemoth/Bane* assault 'Mech.

Although still clearly in the prototype phase when deployed, close to thirty SHP-X4s were manufactured by Skobel MechWorks in Russia at the time of the allied invasion of Terra. Judging by their appearance and components, these 'Mechs took a number of cues and design specs from older, established Star League and Blakist machines, such as the *King Crab* and the *Vanquisher*.



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Many of the components—particular the armor, weapons, and cockpit systems—used in the “Omega’s” development are of fairly mundane origins, but the enhancements found in the underlying chassis and musculature of the salvaged wrecks we have obtained demonstrated how the Word was able to overcome the failures of past Superheavy ‘Mech efforts. Using a skeleton structure easily as massive as that of a comparable reinforced frame, oversized actuators, and a myomer system that is both bulkier than the norm, and strengthened with enhanced hybrid fibers, the Word managed to overcome the hurdles that crippled previous experiments. The resulting frame, while wholly unsuitable for a standard-sized ‘Mech, results here in a machine that stands half again as tall as a *King Crab*.

Powered by an extralight Vlar 300, the large-bodied “Omega” proved slow and cumbersome in actual combat, but its thick hide, and a mix of three Gauss rifles and two LB-X autocannons made for a lethal defense unit, able to hammer enemy ground forces or even act as a low-altitude anti-air battery. Combined with other unexpected defenses—including a mass of drones, mobile defense platforms, and LAMs—the “Omegas” kept allied forces mired in fighting on multiple fronts during the fight for Terra.

The majority of the “Omegas” built were stationed in the vicinity of Devils Peak, where Cameron St. Jamais made his last stand, but others were sighted at Hilton Head Island and in Cairo. All of these units were destroyed and accounted for after the fighting. The Superheavy manufacturing wing of Skobel was also destroyed in the final days of the invasion.

Type: “Omega”

Technology Base: Inner Sphere (Experimental)

Tonnage: 150

Battle Value: 3,001

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:	Superheavy Endo	15
Engine:	300 XL	9.5
Walking MP:	2	
Running MP:	3	
Heat Sinks:	10	0
Gyro (Heavy-Duty):		6
Cockpit (Superheavy):		4
Armor Factor:	432	27
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	4	12
Center Torso	45	60
Center Torso (rear)		20
R/L Torso	32	45
R/L Torso (rear)		19
R/L Arm	25	44
R/L Leg	32	62

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
LB 10-X AC	RA	3	11
Ammo (LB-X) 20	RA	1	2
CASE II	RA	1	1
Gauss Rifle	RT	4	15
Ammo (Gauss) 32	RT	2	4
CASE II	RT	1	1
Gauss Rifle	CT	4	15
Ammo (Gauss) 16	CT	1	2
Improved C3 Computer	CT	1	2.5
CASE II	CT	1	1
Gauss Rifle	LT	4	15
Ammo (Gauss) 32	LT	2	4
CASE II	LT	1	1
LB 10-X AC	LA	3	11
Ammo (LB-X) 20	LA	1	2
CASE II	LA	1	1

Notes: Features the following Design Quirks: Difficult to Pilot, Prototype, Obsolete/3079, Distracting, Command BattleMech, Rumble Seat

RULES ANNEX

UBM-1A "REVENANT"

Mass: 30 tons

Chassis: Endo Steel

Power Plant: GM 180

Cruising Speed: 64 kph

Maximum Speed: 97 kph

Jump Jets: None

Jump Capacity: None

Armor: Standard

Armament:

2 Medium Pulse Lasers

2 ER Medium Lasers

4 Light Machine Guns

Manufacturer: Devils Peak Production Site

Primary Factories: Terra

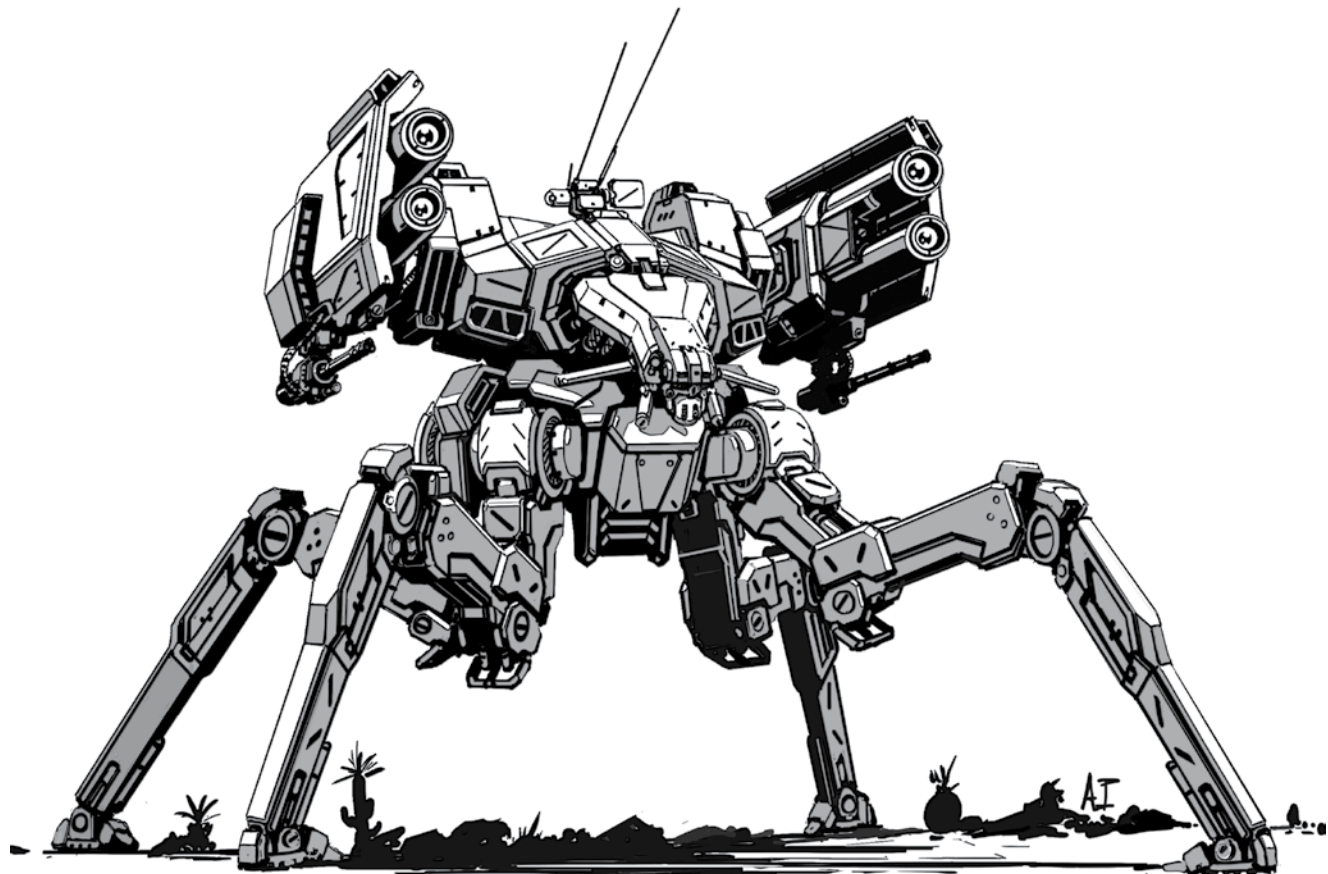
Communications System: Unknown

Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

OVERVIEW

In 3075, the Word of Blake forces throughout the Terran solar system began receiving shipments of newly developed unmanned BattleMechs that intelligence initially could not find a source for. It was not until allied forces overran Cameron St. Jamais' command post at Devils Peak in North America that we learned of a manufacturing center wholly devoted to the assembly and production of autonomous drones for ground defense. While at least three models of robot drone 'Mech were encountered during the fights for Terra, Mars, and Luna, by far the most numerous of these was the lightweight "Revenant".

Built mainly to deter infantry and light armor, the "Revenant" drones sported a mix of medium-sized lasers and light machine guns. With speed and armor typical of Succession Wars scout 'Mechs, they proved to be largely unremarkable combatants. Many were dispatched easily enough, but their sheer numbers, unfamiliar design, and often-erratic behavior under ECM occasionally gave occasional pause to the Coalition attackers. Clumsy, and often fighting without any real regard for tactics or survival, the "Revenants" led many allied forces to suspect that



RULES ANNEX

they were some new form of Manei Domini, but as more reports came in and salvage crews examined the wrecks, it became clear that these drones were part of a desperate effort to shore up the Word's flagging defenses.

In the fierce fighting for Devils Peak, the production lines for the "Revenants" and other robotic Blakist 'Mechs were destroyed, and a computer virus left by the Word's agents wiped all schematics and programming specs for these units. Nevertheless, research is ongoing to fill in the gaps about these 'Mechs, in case they were just the tip of the Word of Blake's unmanned nightmare.

Type: **"Revenant"**

Technology Base: Inner Sphere (Experimental)

Tonnage: 30

Battle Value: 784

Equipment

		Mass
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	1.5
Engine:	180	7
Walking MP:	6	
Running MP:	9	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	10 (20)	0
Gyro:		2
Cockpit (Robotic):		4.5
Armor Factor:	96	6
	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	6
Center Torso	10	12
Center Torso (rear)		6
R/L Torso	7	10
R/L Torso (rear)		4
R/L Front Leg	7	11
R/L Rear Leg	7	11

Weapons and Ammo Location Critical Tonnage

2 Light Machine Guns	RT	2	1
ER Medium Laser	RT	1	1
Medium Pulse Laser	RT	1	2
Ammo (LMG) 200	CT	1	1
2 Light Machine Guns	LT	2	1
ER Medium Laser	LT	1	1
Medium Pulse Laser	LT	1	2

Notes: Features the following Design Quirks: Non-Standard Parts, Obsolete/3079



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S-PW-1LAM PWWKA

Mass: 30 tons

Chassis: Spectral-L Series PW1L

Power Plant: GM 180

Cruising Speed: 64 kph

Maximum Speed: 97 kph

Jump Jets: GM ATO 100

Jump Capacity: 180 meters

Armor: Durallex Divine Protector

Armament:

3 Clan ER Medium Lasers

Manufacturer: Master's Wings Aerospace

(formerly Brigadier Corp)

Primary Factories: Gibson

Communications System: Master's Voice Cel-Beta

Targeting and Tracking System: Master's Sight 1-Omega

OVERVIEW

The Spectral Land-Air 'Mechs came as a complete surprise to Coalition and Regular forces fighting the Word of Blake's elite in the late 3070s. Prior to their appearance, LAMs had been broadly accepted as an extinct area of BattleMech design, the last embers of their legacy lost during the 3050s both from attrition and their inability to compete with 'Mechs or fighters of similar weight. As these three brand-new convertible BattleMechs proved, the difficulties inherent in LAM design were such that even the Word of Blake's vaunted engineers were hard-pressed to overcome, resulting in units that—like their forebears—still failed to excel on the modern stage.

Like all LAMs, the *Pwwka* (named for shape-shifting spirits of ancient Welsh lore) is unable to use lighter engines, structure, or armor, making it hard to compete with today's fast 'Mechs and fighters. It also failed to make use of the modular technology seen in the dedicated Spectral aerospace fighters and Celestial BattleMechs—likely due to balance issues that would certainly endanger an LAM's mechanically precise conversion process. The fact that none of the Spectral LAMs were Omnis would seem to bear this theory out.

As a result, the best the Word's designers could do to give the *Pwwka* any edge over its centuries-old progenitors was to add double heat sinks and Clan-made medium lasers to the mix. Even the use of a small cockpit (and, presumably, VDNI-equipped pilots) demonstrated the effort to squeeze every last gram of performance enhancement possible from limited options. A single-ton bomb bay gave the *Pwwka* the ability to add some ordnance to its mission, but in many cases, this storage was instead used for additional fuel, as the LAM lacked flight endurance.

Pwwkas saw action in limited numbers against the aerospace and ground forces of the Principality of Regulus and the Duchy of Oriente, where they always worked in the company of other

Word of Blake Manei Domini units. Very few (if any) saw action against other allied forces. Since the Gibson factories that produced the *Pwwka* were completely destroyed, everything we now know about this particular LAM comes exclusively through the study of wreckage salvaged by the Regulans and Oriente.

Type: **Pwwka LAM**

Technology Base: Mixed Inner Sphere (Experimental)

Tonnage: 30

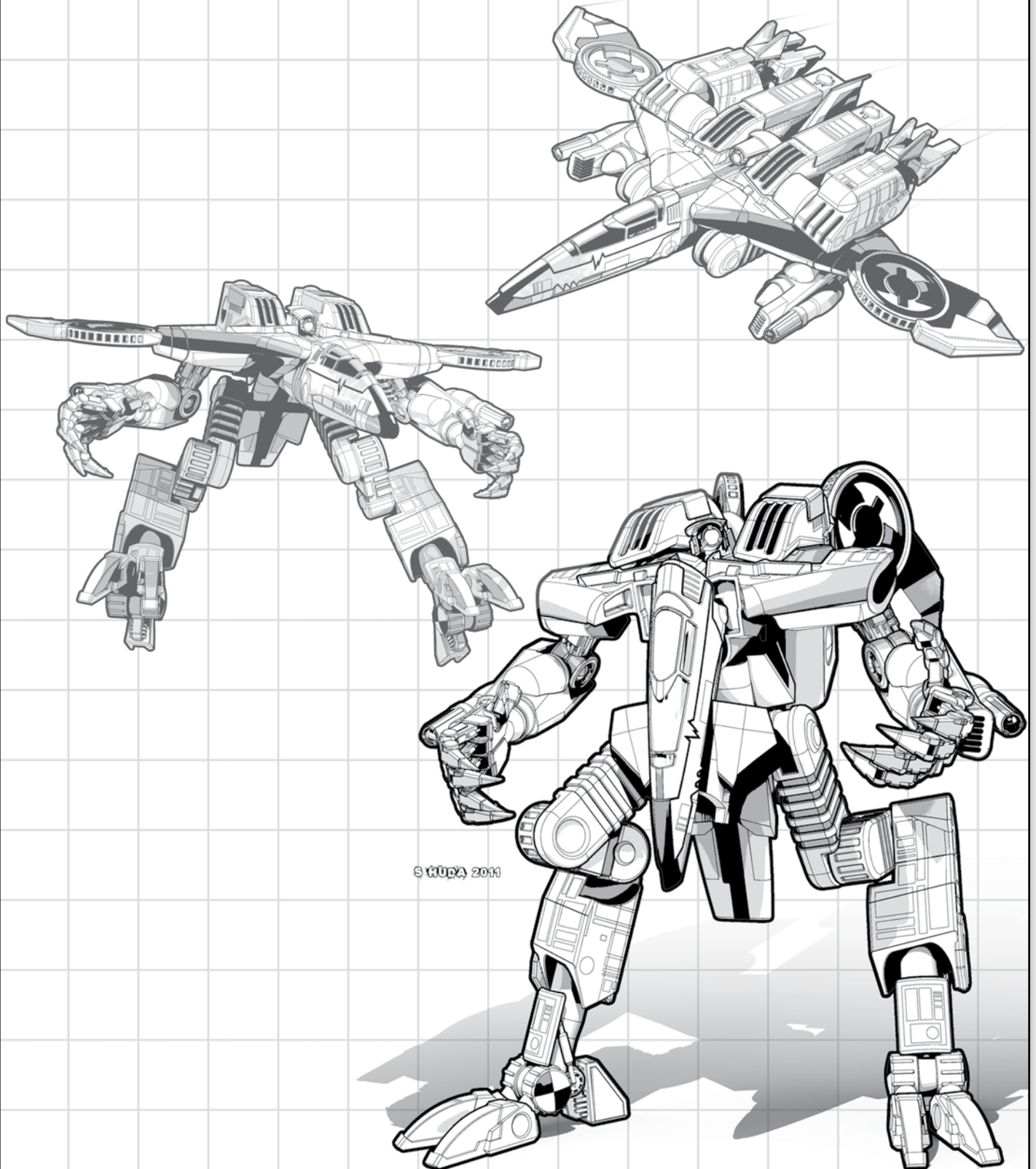
Battle Value: 1,638

Equipment	Mass	
Internal Structure:	3	
LAM Conversion Equipment:	3	
Engine:	180	7
Walking MP:	6	
Running MP:	9	
Jumping MP:	6	
AirMech Cruise MP:	18	
AirMech Flank MP:	27	
Safe Thrust:	6	
Max Thrust:	9	
Heat Sinks:	10 (20)	0
Gyro:		2
Cockpit (Small):		2
Fuel:80	0	
Structural Integrity:	10	
Armor Factor:	96	6
	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	10	12
Center Torso (rear)		7
R/L Torso	7	9
R/L Torso (rear)		5
R/L Arm	5	9
R/L Leg	7	11

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
ER Medium Laser (C)	RA	1	1
ER Medium Laser (C)	H	1	1
Bomb Bay	CT	1	1
ER Medium Laser (C)	LA	1	1
Jump Jets	RL	2	1
Jump Jet	RT	1	.5
Jump Jet	LT	1	.5
Jump Jets	LL	2	1

Notes: Features the following Design Quirks: Non-Standard Parts, Obsolete/3081

S-PW-1LAM PWWKA





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S-YR-1LAM YUREI

Mass: 40 tons

Chassis: Spectral-L Series YR1L

Power Plant: Nissan 200

Cruising Speed: 54 kph

Maximum Speed: 86 kph

Jump Jets: GM ATO 100

Jump Capacity: 150 meters

Armor: Durallex Divine Protector

Armament:

1 Clan ER Large Laser

2 Clan ER Medium Lasers

Manufacturer: Master's Wings Aerospace (formerly Brigadier Corp)

Primary Factories: Gibson

Communications System: Master's Voice Cel-Beta

Targeting and Tracking System: Master's Sight 1-Omega

OVERVIEW

The *Yurei* is the middleweight member of the Word of Blake's Spectral LAM series, Named for shape-shifting demonic spirits of Japanese folklore, this model—only ten tons heavier and twenty-five percent faster than the *Pwwka*—was nevertheless intended to be the workhorse of the series.

Once again, the *Yurei's* most advanced technologies come in the form of double heat sinks and Clan-made laser weapons, though the addition of CASE II protecting the internalized bomb bay makes it possible for this LAM to survive the potential of a catastrophic internal hit. Still, as with its smaller sibling, the *Yurei* is an unremarkable performer as a medium 'Mech or fighter, able to be outrun (and certainly outgunned) by most units of comparable weight in today's market. This means that the selling points for this machine lie in its shock factor as an LAM, the skills of the elite Manei Domini pilot for whom it is designed, and the use of Clan tech to make the most of its limited payload tonnage.

The *Yurei* enjoyed almost a year as the Word of Blake's cutting edge in military technology before the *Waneta* entered production at factories on both Gibson and Terra. Like the *Pwwka*, the *Yurei* only appeared in numbers against Regular and Oriente forces, and its design specs are known to us only through the study of the few samples that survived being shot down in good enough shape for salvage. Unless the Word of Blake has additional factories hidden elsewhere, it is doubtful that we will see any more of these LAMs—or the others in the Spectral series—in the future.

Type: **Yurei LAM**

Technology Base: Mixed Inner Sphere (Experimental)

Tonnage: 40

Battle Value: 2,106

Equipment

		Mass
Internal Structure:		4
LAM Conversion Equipment:		4
Engine:	200	8.5
Walking MP:	5	
Running MP:	8	
Jumping MP:	5	
AirMech Cruise MP:	15	
AirMech Flank MP:	23	
Safe Thrust:	5	
Max Thrust:	8	
Heat Sinks:	10 (20)	0
Gyro:		2
Cockpit (Small):		2
Fuel:80	0	
Structural Integrity:	12	
Armor Factor:	128	8
	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	12	13
Center Torso (rear)		10
R/L Torso	10	11
R/L Torso (rear)		9
R/L Arm	6	11
R/L Leg	10	17

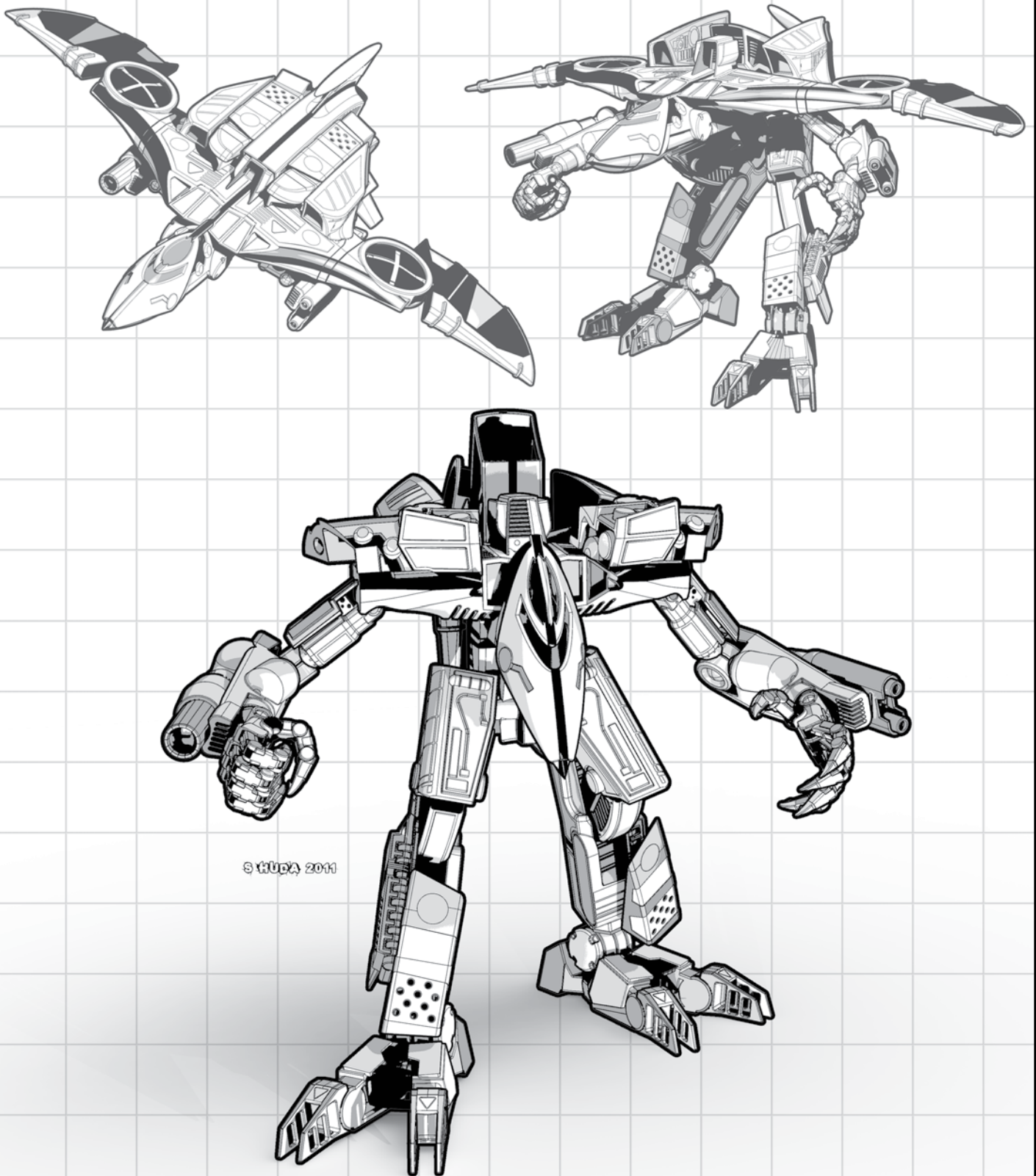
Weapons and Ammo Location Critical Tonnage

ER Large Laser (C)	RA	2	4
Bomb Bay	RT	1	1
CASE II	RT	1	1
2 ER Medium Lasers (C)	LA	2	2
Jump Jets	RT	3	1.5
Jump Jet	CT	1	.5
Jump Jets	LT	3	1.5

Notes: Features the following Design Quirks: Non-Standard Parts, Obsolete/3081



S-YR-1LAM YUREI





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S-WN-2LAM WANETA**Mass:** 55 tons**Chassis:** Spectral-L Series WN2L**Power Plant:** DAV 220**Cruising Speed:** 43 kph**Maximum Speed:** 64 kph**Jump Jets:** Chilton 950 Improved Jump Jets**Jump Capacity:** 180 meters**Armor:** Durallex Divine Protector**Armament:**

1 Clan ER Large Laser

1 Clan ER Small Laser

2 Clan LRM 15 Launchers

Manufacturer: Master's Wings Aerospace,

Bannock-Braigh Aerospace

Primary Factories: Gibson (Master's Wings), Terra
(Bannock-Braigh)**Communications System:** Master's Voice Cel-Beta**Targeting and Tracking System:** Master's Sight 1-Omega**Overview**

The *Waneta* is the largest tri-modal LAM ever built, and ties the long-lost *Shadow Hawk* LAM as the largest LAM ever designed. Its name is reportedly derived from ancient AmerIndian beliefs, and is presumably a reference to shape-shifting spirits (as with the other two LAMs), but our own research cannot prove that conclusively, and we think the Blakists may have taken some liberties with the name. Of the three LAM types fielded by the Word, this one was the only model produced at both Gibson and Terra, and thus the *Waneta* is the only new LAM type that allied forces can confirm fighting in direct combat.

The *Waneta* boasted the most potential of all three Spectral LAMs, even though it suffered from the same limitations in structure, engine, and armor options. Here, not only did the Blakists resort to Clan weaponry, double-strength sinks, and the combined effectiveness of VDNI pilots with a small cockpit, they also installed improved jump jets to enhance its mobility. With the extra thrust from these jets, the *Waneta* gained a surprise boost in its hybrid- and fighter-mode performance, though it sacrificed tonnage in the process that could have gone toward extended fuel reserves, more weapons, or even bomb bays.

The *Waneta's* debut quickly deposed the lighter *Yurei* as the "dogfighter" of the Spectral LAMs, thanks to its boosted thrust and increased firepower. Yet even then, its limited endurance—thanks to both a light ammunition load for its LRMs and low fuel capacity—made for a troubled reign. Like all LAMs, the *Waneta* is merely a BattleMech that can play at being an aerospace fighter; in so doing it masters neither the skies nor the ground particularly well.

Like the other Spectral LAMs, the *Waneta* is already an extinct design. Its factories were destroyed in the final days of the Jihad. On Gibson, the Regular bombardment annihilated all trace of their production; on Terra, fierce fighting around the Bannock-

Braigh Aerospace complex and suspected sabotage left nothing for the allies to salvage.

[Addendum: After-action reports from our sources in the former Free Worlds League have indicated that the Manei Domini did develop a bomber variant for the Waneta that downgraded to standard jets so it could use the saved space for bomb bays. These LAMs were identified by their slower acceleration in combat, and for the special ordnance they carried during the Word's defense over Circinus. None of these survived the Regular gunners.]

Type: **Waneta LAM**

Technology Base: Inner Sphere (Experimental)

Tonnage: 55

Battle Value: 2,713

Equipment

Internal Structure:

LAM Conversion Equipment:

Engine: 220

Walking MP: 4

Running MP: 6

Jumping MP: 6

AirMech Cruise MP: 18

AirMech Flank MP: 27

Safe Thrust: 6

Max Thrust: 9

Heat Sinks: 10 (20) 0

Gyro: 3

Cockpit (Small): 2

Fuel:80 0

Structural Integrity: 18

Armor Factor: 144 9

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	18	15
Center Torso (rear)		12
R/L Torso	13	15
R/L Torso (rear)		10
R/L Arm	9	13
R/L Leg	13	16

Head 3 9

Center Torso 18 15

Center Torso (rear) 12

R/L Torso 13 15

R/L Torso (rear) 10

R/L Arm 9 13

R/L Leg 13 16

Weapons and Ammo Location Critical Tonnage

ER Large Laser (C) RA 1 4

ER Small Laser (C) RA 1 .5

LRM 15 (C) RT 2 3.5

Ammo (LRM) 8 RT 1 1

LRM 15 (C) LT 2 3.5

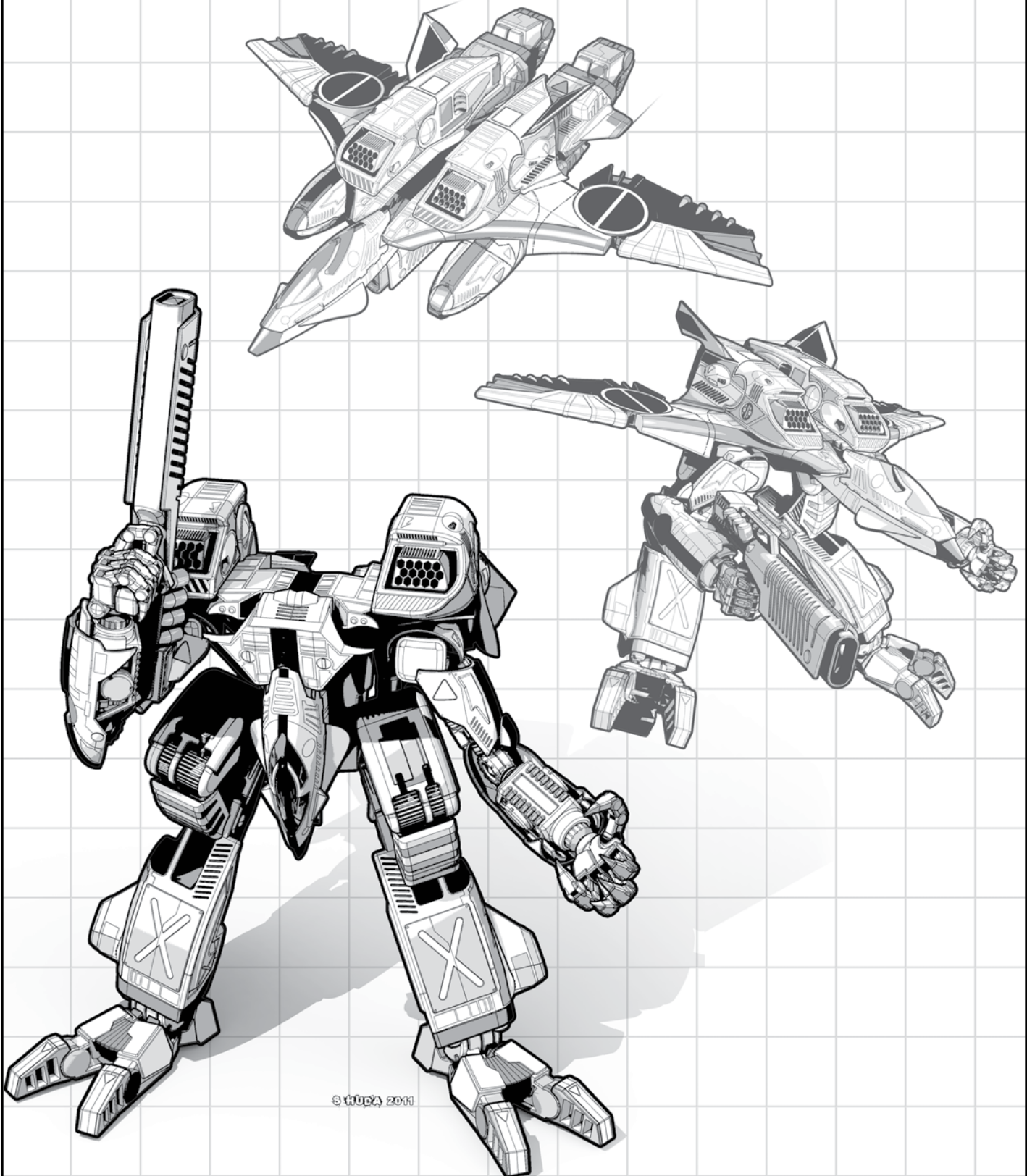
Ammo (LRM) 8 LT 1 1

Improved Jump Jets RT 6 3

Improved Jump Jets LT 6 3

Notes: Features the following Design Quirks: Jettison-Capable Weapon (ER Large Laser), Non-Standard Parts, Obsolete/3081

S-WN-2LAM WANETA



BATTLETECH™



BATTLE ARMOR RECORD SHEET

BATTLE ARMOR: SQUAD 1

Type: "MACHINA DOMINI"
INTERFACE ARMOR Era: Jihad
Gunnery Skill: _____ Anti-'Mech Skill: _____
Ground MP: 3
Weapons & Equip. Dmg Min Sht Med Lng
Firedrake Support 1 [DB, AI] — 1 2 3
Needler
BattleMech Neural
Interface
Armor: Standard
Mechanized: ☒ Swarm: ☒ Leg: ☒ AP: ☒

1		○○○
2		○○○
3		○○○
4		○○○
5		○○○
6		○○○

BV: 90/10

BATTLE ARMOR: SQUAD 2

Type: "MACHINA DOMINI"
INTERFACE ARMOR Era: Jihad
Gunnery Skill: _____ Anti-'Mech Skill: _____
Ground MP: 3
Weapons & Equip. Dmg Min Sht Med Lng
Firedrake Support 1 [DB, AI] — 1 2 3
Needler
BattleMech Neural
Interface
Armor: Standard
Mechanized: ☒ Swarm: ☒ Leg: ☒ AP: ☒

1		○○○
2		○○○
3		○○○
4		○○○
5		○○○
6		○○○

BV: 90/10

BATTLE ARMOR: SQUAD 3

Type: "MACHINA DOMINI"
INTERFACE ARMOR Era: Jihad
Gunnery Skill: _____ Anti-'Mech Skill: _____
Ground MP: 3
Weapons & Equip. Dmg Min Sht Med Lng
Firedrake Support 1 [DB, AI] — 1 2 3
Needler
BattleMech Neural
Interface
Armor: Standard
Mechanized: ☒ Swarm: ☒ Leg: ☒ AP: ☒

1		○○○
2		○○○
3		○○○
4		○○○
5		○○○
6		○○○

BV: 90/10

BATTLE ARMOR: SQUAD 4

Type: "MACHINA DOMINI"
INTERFACE ARMOR Era: Jihad
Gunnery Skill: _____ Anti-'Mech Skill: _____
Ground MP: 3
Weapons & Equip. Dmg Min Sht Med Lng
Firedrake Support 1 [DB, AI] — 1 2 3
Needler
BattleMech Neural
Interface
Armor: Standard
Mechanized: ☒ Swarm: ☒ Leg: ☒ AP: ☒

1		○○○
2		○○○
3		○○○
4		○○○
5		○○○
6		○○○

BV: 90/10

BATTLE ARMOR: SQUAD 5

Type: "MACHINA DOMINI"
INTERFACE ARMOR Era: Jihad
Gunnery Skill: _____ Anti-'Mech Skill: _____
Ground MP: 3
Weapons & Equip. Dmg Min Sht Med Lng
Firedrake Support 1 [DB, AI] — 1 2 3
Needler
BattleMech Neural
Interface
Armor: Standard
Mechanized: ☒ Swarm: ☒ Leg: ☒ AP: ☒

1		○○○
2		○○○
3		○○○
4		○○○
5		○○○
6		○○○

BV: 90/10

LEG ATTACKS TABLE

BATTLE ARMOR TROOPERS ACTIVE	BASE TO-HIT MODIFIER
4-6	0
3	+2
2	+5
1	+7

SWARM ATTACKS TABLE

BATTLE ARMOR TROOPERS ACTIVE	BASE TO-HIT MODIFIER
4-6	+2
1-3	+5

SWARM ATTACK MODIFIERS TABLE

ATTACKING ENEMY BATTLE ARMOR TROOPERS ACTIVE	FRIENDLY MECHANIZED BATTLE ARMOR TROOPERS ACTIVE					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	+0	+0	+0	+0	+1	+2
5	+0	+0	+0	+1	+2	+3
4	+0	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4
3	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
2	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6
1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7

BATTLE ARMOR EQUIPMENT

Claws with magnets -1

SITUATION*

'Mech prone -2
'Mech or vehicle immobile -4
Vehicle -2

*Modifiers are cumulative

SWARM ATTACKS HIT LOCATION TABLE

2D6 ROLL	BIPEDAL LOCATION	FOUR-LEGGED LOCATION
2	Head	Head
3	Rear Center Torso	Front Right Torso
4	Rear Right Torso	Rear Center Torso
5	Front Right Torso	Rear Right Torso
6	Right Arm	Front Right Torso
7	Front Center Torso	Front Center Torso
8	Left Arm	Front Left Torso
9	Front Left Torso	Rear Left Torso
10	Rear Left Torso	Rear Center Torso
11	Rear Center Torso	Front Left Torso
12	Head	Head

TRANSPORT POSITIONS TABLE

TROOPER NUMBER	'MECH LOCATION	VEHICLE LOCATION
1	Right Torso	Right Side
2	Left Torso	Right Side
3	Right Torso (rear)	Left Side
4	Left Torso (rear)	Left Side
5	Center Torso (rear)	Rear
6	Center Torso	Rear

TROOPER NUMBER	LARGE SUPPORT VEHICLE LOCATION*
1	Right Side (Unit 1/Unit 2)
2	Right Side (Unit 1/Unit 2)
3	Left Side (Unit 1/Unit 2)
4	Left Side (Unit 1/Unit 2)
5	Rear (Unit 1/Unit 2)
6	Rear (Unit 1/Unit 2)

*Unit 1 and Unit 2 represent two battle armor units



BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

'MECH DATA

Type: UBM-1A "REVENANT" (Drone)

Movement Points: Tonnage: 30
Walking: 6 Tech Base: Inner Sphere
Running: 9 (Experimental)
Jumping: 0 Jihad

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	ER Medium Laser	RT	5	5 [DE]	—	4	8	12
1	Med. Pulse Laser	RT	4	6 [P]	—	2	4	6
2	Light Machine Gun	RT	0	1 [DB, AI]	—	2	4	6
1	ER Medium Laser	LT	5	5 [DE]	—	4	8	12
1	Med. Pulse Laser	LT	4	6 [P]	—	2	4	6
2	Light Machine Gun	LT	0	1 [DB, AI]	—	2	4	6

BV: 784

WARRIOR DATA

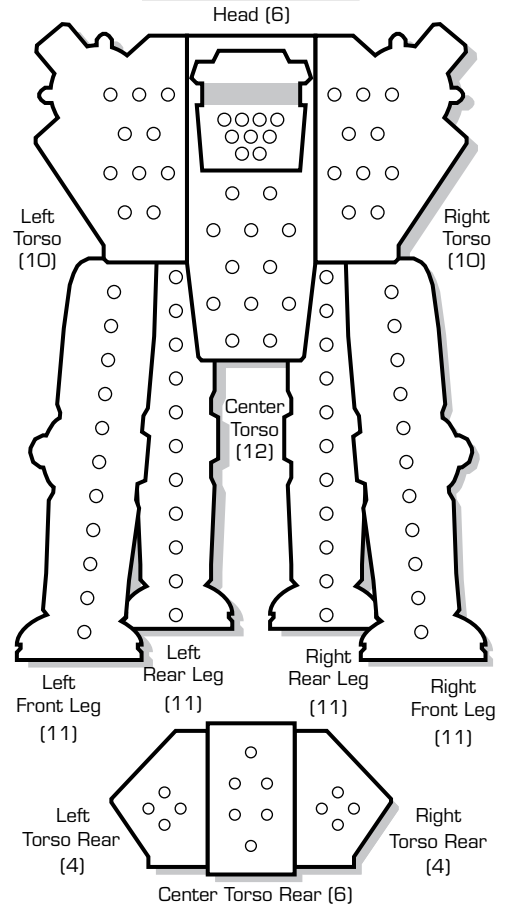
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Front Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

Left Torso

- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- ER Medium Laser
- Medium Pulse Laser
- Light Machine Gun
- Light Machine Gun
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

Left Rear Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Endo Steel
- Roll Again

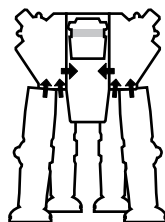
Head

- Life Support
- Sensors
- Robotic Cockpit
- Endo Steel
- Sensors
- Life Support

Center Torso

- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Gyro
- Gyro
- Gyro
- Gyro
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Ammo (Light Machine Gun) 200
- Endo Steel

Engine Hits ○○○
Gyro Hits ○○
Sensor Hits ○○
Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Front Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

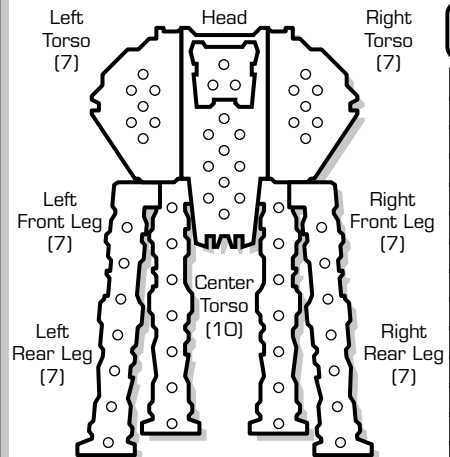
Right Torso

- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- ER Medium Laser
- Medium Pulse Laser
- Light Machine Gun
- Light Machine Gun
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

Right Rear Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Endo Steel
- Roll Again

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 10 (20) Double
30	Shutdown	○
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	○
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	○
25	-5 Movement Points	○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○
20	-4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	-3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	-2 Movement Points	○
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	○
5	-1 Movement Points	○

Heat Scale

Heat Level
30*
29
28*
27
26*
25*
24*
23*
22*
21
20*
19*
18*
17*
16
15*
14*
13*
12
11
10*
9
8*
7
6
5*
4
3
2
1
0

BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

MECH DATA

Type: D2X-G "GESTALT"

Movement Points: Tonnage: 45
Walking: 7 Tech Base: Inner Sphere
Running: 11 (Experimental)
Jumping: 6 Jihad

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	Heavy PPC	RA	15	15 [DE]	3	6	12	18
1	PPC Capacitor	RA	+5	+5 [DE]	—	—	—	—
1	Angel ECM Suite	CT	—	[E]	—	—	—	6
2	ER Medium Laser	LA	5	5 [DE]	—	4	8	12

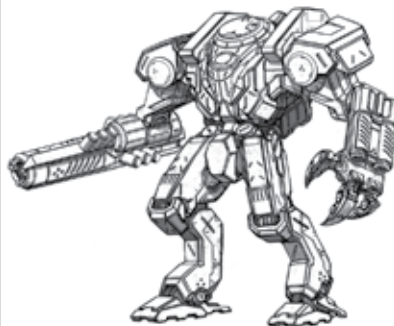
BV: 2,542

WARRIOR DATA

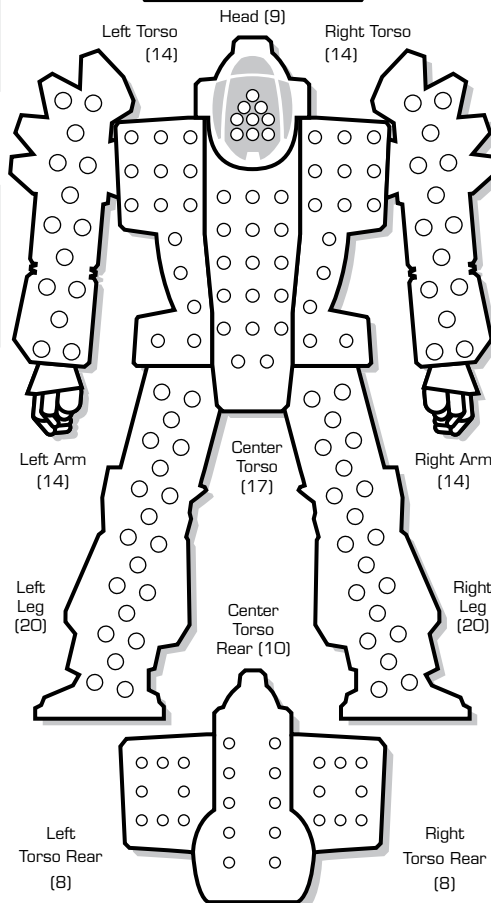
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

- 1-3
- Shoulder
 - Upper Arm Actuator
 - Lower Arm Actuator
 - Hand Actuator
 - ER Medium Laser
 - ER Medium Laser

- 4-6
- Void-Signature System
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous

Left Torso

- 1-3
- XL Fusion Engine
 - XL Fusion Engine
 - XL Fusion Engine
 - Jump Jet
 - Jump Jet
 - Jump Jet

- 4-6
- Void-Signature System
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous

Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Heavy Ferro Fibrous
- Void-Signature System

Head

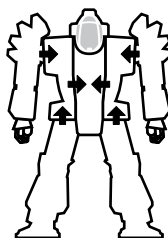
- Life Support
- Sensors
- Interface Cockpit
- Interface Cockpit
- Sensors
- Life Support

Center Torso

- 1-3
- XL Fusion Engine
 - XL Fusion Engine
 - XL Fusion Engine
 - XL Fusion Engine
 - XL Fusion Engine
 - XL Fusion Engine

- 4-6
- Angel ECM Suite
 - Angel ECM Suite
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Roll Again

Engine Hits ○○○
Gyro Hits ○○
Sensor Hits ○○
Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

- 1-3
- Shoulder
 - Upper Arm Actuator
 - Lower Arm Actuator
 - Hand Actuator
 - Heavy PPC
 - Heavy PPC

- 4-6
- Heavy PPC
 - Heavy PPC
 - PPC Capacitor
 - Void-Signature System
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous

Right Torso

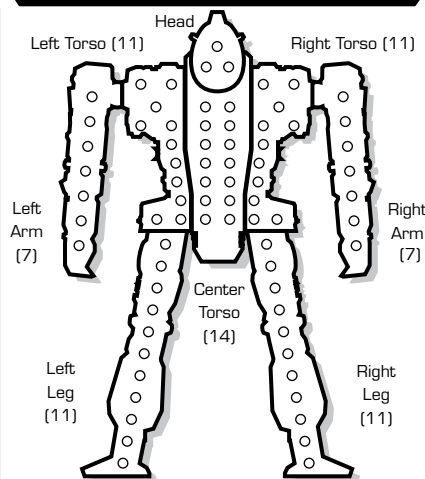
- 1-3
- XL Fusion Engine
 - XL Fusion Engine
 - XL Fusion Engine
 - Jump Jet
 - Jump Jet
 - Jump Jet

- 4-6
- Void-Signature System
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous
 - Heavy Ferro Fibrous

Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Heavy Ferro Fibrous
- Void-Signature System

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects
30	Shutdown
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+
25	-5 Movement Points
24	+4 Modifier to Fire
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+
20	-4 Movement Points
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+
17	+3 Modifier to Fire
15	-3 Movement Points
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+
13	+2 Modifier to Fire
10	-2 Movement Points
8	+1 Modifier to Fire
5	-1 Movement Points

Heat Sinks:
10 (20)
Double



Heat Scale

Overflow

30*
29
28*
27
26*
25*
24*
23*
22*
21
20*
19*
18*
17*
16
15*
14*
13*
12
11
10*
9
8*
7
6
5*
4
3
2
1
0

BATTLETECH

'MECH RECORD SHEET

MECH DATA

Type: SHP-4X "OMEGA"

Movement Points: Tonnage: 150
 Walking: 2 Tech Base: Inner Sphere
 Running: 3 (Experimental)
 Jumping: 0 Jihad

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng
1	LB-10-X AC	RA	2	10	—	6	12	18
[DB,C/F/S]								
1	Gauss Rifle	RT	1	15 [DE,X]	2	7	15	22
1	Gauss Rifle	CT	1	15 [DE,X]	2	7	15	22
1	Gauss Rifle	LT	1	15 [DE,X]	2	7	15	22
1	LB 10-X AC	LA	2	10	—	6	12	18
[DB,C/F/S]								
Improved C ³ CPU	CT	—	—	[E]	—	—	—	—

BV: 3,001

WARRIOR DATA

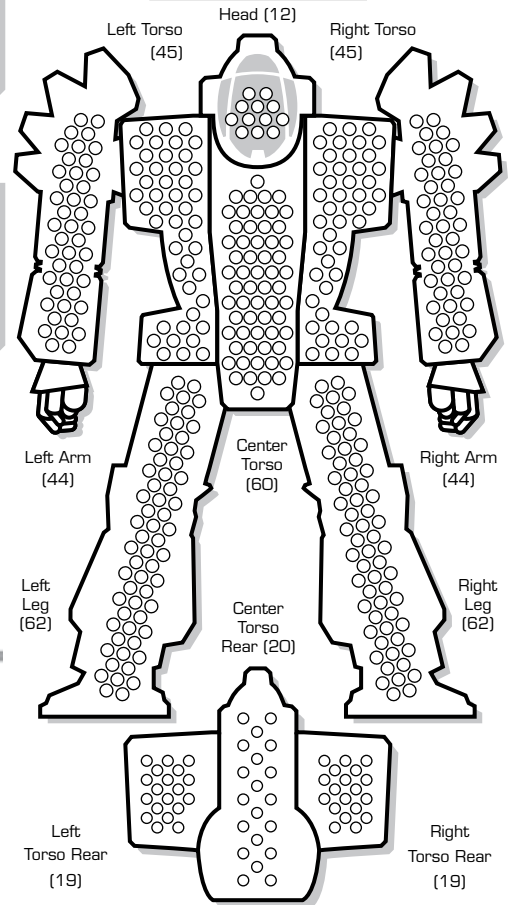
Name: _____

Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- Lower Arm Actuator
- LB 10-X AC
- LB 10-X AC
- LB 10-X AC

- Ammo (LB 10-X AC) 20
- CASE II
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Left Torso

- XL Fusion Engine
- XL Fusion Engine
- Gauss Rifle
- Gauss Rifle
- Gauss Rifle
- Gauss Rifle

- Ammo (Gauss) 16
- Ammo (Gauss) 16
- CASE II
- Superheavy Endo Steel
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Superheavy Endo Steel
- Superheavy Endo Steel

Head

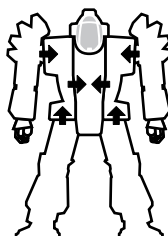
- Life Support
- Sensors
- Superheavy Cockpit
- Superheavy Endo Steel
- Sensors
- Life Support

Center Torso

- XL Fusion Engine
- XL Fusion Engine
- XL Fusion Engine
- Heavy Duty Gyro
- Heavy Duty Gyro
- Gauss Rifle

- Gauss Rifle
- Gauss Rifle
- Gauss Rifle
- Ammo (Gauss) 16
- Improved C³ CPU
- CASE II

Engine Hits ○○○
 Gyro Hits ○○○
 Sensor Hits ○○
 Life Support ○



Damage Transfer Diagram

Right Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- Lower Arm Actuator
- LB 10-X AC
- LB 10-X AC
- LB 10-X AC

- Ammo (LB 10-X AC Cluster) 20
- CASE II
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Right Torso

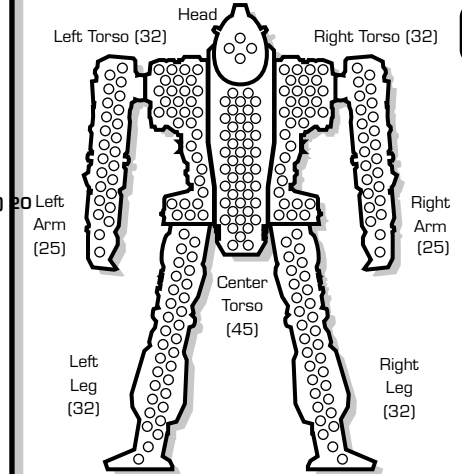
- XL Fusion Engine
- XL Fusion Engine
- Gauss Rifle
- Gauss Rifle
- Gauss Rifle
- Gauss Rifle

- Ammo (Gauss) 16
- Ammo (Gauss) 16
- CASE II
- Superheavy Endo Steel
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Superheavy Endo Steel
- Superheavy Endo Steel

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks: 10 Single
30	Shutdown	○
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	○
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	○
25	-5 Movement Points	○
24	+4 Modifier to Fire	○
23	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	○
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	○
20	-4 Movement Points	○
19	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	○
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	○
17	+3 Modifier to Fire	○
15	-3 Movement Points	○
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	○
13	+2 Modifier to Fire	○
10	-2 Movement Points	○
8	+1 Modifier to Fire	○
5	-1 Movement Points	○

Heat Scale

Overflow
30*
29
28*
27
26*
25*
24*
23*
22*
21
20*
19*
18*
17*
16
15*
14*
13*
12
11
10*
9
8*
7
6
5*
4
3
2
1
0

BATTLETECH

LAND-AIR BATTLEMECH RECORD SHEET

LAM DATA

Type: S-PW-1LAM PWWKA

Tonnage: 30 Tech Base: Mixed Inner Sphere
(Experimental)
Jihad

Movement Points:

BattleMech Mode	AirMech Mode	Fighter Mode
Walking: 6	Cruising: 18	Safe Thrust: 6
Running: 9	Flank: 27	Max Thrust: 9
Jumping: 6		

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng	Aero
1	ER Medium Laser (C)	RA	7	7 [DE]	—	5	10	15	7 (M)
1	ER Medium Laser (C)	HD	7	7 [DE]	—	5	10	15	7 (M)
1	ER Medium Laser (C)	LA	7	7 [DE]	—	5	10	15	7 (M)

Fuel: 80

BV: 1,638

WARRIOR DATA

Name: _____

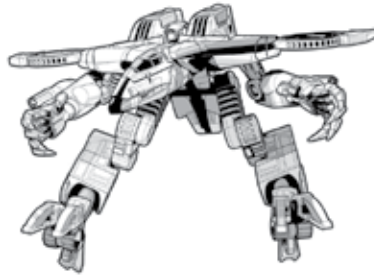
BattleMech Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Aerospace Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

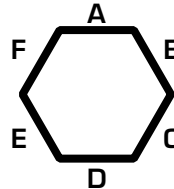
Hits Taken

1	2	3	4	5	6
3	5	7	10	11	Dead

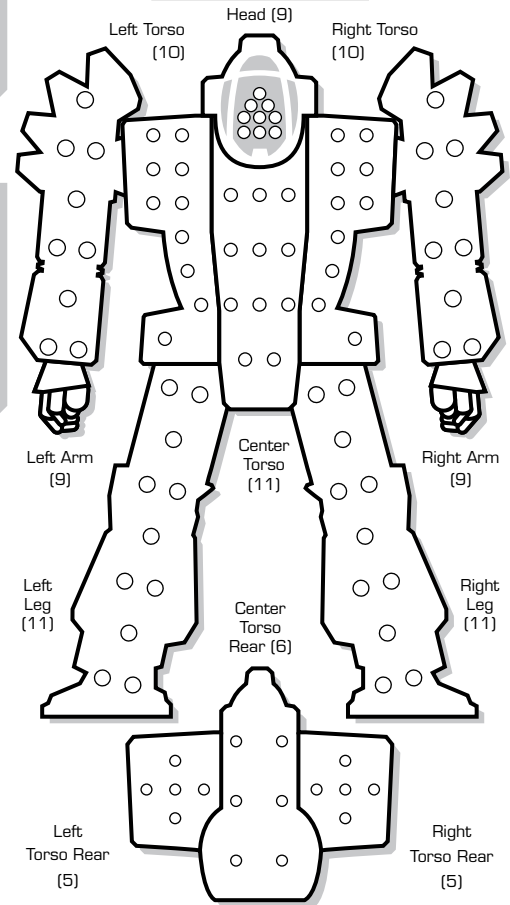
Consciousness#



Advanced
Movement
Compass



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- Lower Arm Actuator
- Hand Actuator
- ER Medium Laser (C)
- Roll Again

- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Left Torso

- Landing Gear
- Avionics
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Jump Jet

- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Jump Jet
- Jump Jet

Head

- Life Support
- Sensors
- Small Cockpit
- Avionics
- Sensors
- ER Medium Laser (C)

Center Torso

- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Gyro
- Gyro
- Gyro

- Gyro
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Landing Gear
- Bomb Bay

Avionics ○○○○
Engine Hits ○○○○
Gyro Hits ○○
Sensor Hits ○○
Landing Gear ○
Life Support ○
Structural Integrity
○○○○○
○○○○○

CATALYST
game labs

Damage Transfer
Diagram



Right Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- Lower Arm Actuator
- Hand Actuator
- ER Medium Laser (C)
- Roll Again

- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Right Torso

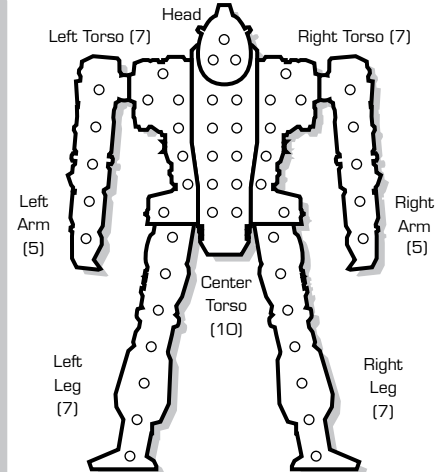
- Landing Gear
- Avionics
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink

- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Jump Jet
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Jump Jet
- Jump Jet

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects
30	Shutdown
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+
25	-5 Movement Points
24	/Rand. Movement 10+
23	+4 Modifier to Fire
22	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+
21	Shutdown, avoid on 8+
20	-4 Movement Points
19	/Rand. Movement 8+
18	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+
17	Shutdown, avoid on 6+
16	+3 Modifier to Fire
15	-3 Movement Points
14	/Rand. Movement 7+
13	Shutdown, avoid on 4+
12	+2 Modifier to Fire
11	-2 Movement Points
10	/Rand. Movement 6+
9	+1 Modifier to Fire
8	-1 Movement Points
7	/Rand. Movement 5+

Heat Sinks:
10 (20)
Double
(AirMech +3)

Heat
Scale

Overflow
30*
29
28*
27
26*
25*
24*
23*
22*
21
20*
19*
18*
17*
16
15*
14*
13*
12
11
10*
9
8*
7
6
5*
4
3
2
1
0

BATTLETECH

LAND-AIR BATTLEMECH RECORD SHEET

LAM DATA

Type: S-YR-1LAM YUREI

Tonnage: 40 Tech Base: Mixed Inner Sphere
(Experimental)
Jihad

Movement Points:

BattleMech Mode	AirMech Mode	Fighter Mode
Walking: 5	Cruising: 15	Safe Thrust: 5
Running: 8	Flank: 23	Max Thrust: 8
Jumping: 5		

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng	Aero
1	ER Large Laser (C)	RA	12	10 [DE]	—	8	15	25	10 [E]
2	ER Medium Laser (C)	LA	5	7 [DE]	—	5	10	15	7 [M]

Fuel: 80

BV: 2,106

WARRIOR DATA

Name: _____

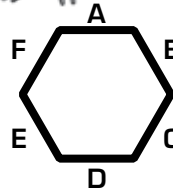
BattleMech Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Aerospace Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

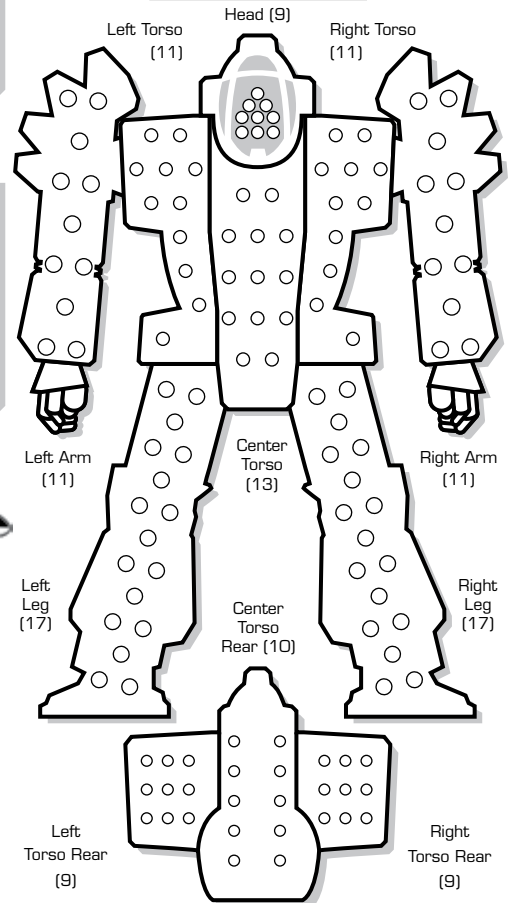
Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



Advanced
Movement
Compass



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- Lower Arm Actuator
- Hand Actuator
- ER Medium Laser (C)
- ER Medium Laser (C)

1-3

- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

4-6

Left Torso

- Landing Gear
- Avionics
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Jump Jet

1-3

- Jump Jet
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

4-6

Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Head

- Life Support
- Sensors
- Small Cockpit
- Avionics
- Sensors
- Roll Again

1-3

Center Torso

- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Gyro
- Gyro
- Gyro

1-3

- Gyro
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Landing Gear
- Jump Jet

4-6

Avionics ○○○○
Engine Hits ○○○○
Gyro Hits ○○
Sensor Hits ○○
Landing Gear ○
Life Support ○
Structural Integrity
○○○○○○○
○○○○○○○

CATALYST
game labs

Damage Transfer
Diagram



Right Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- Lower Arm Actuator
- Hand Actuator
- ER Large Laser (C)
- Roll Again

1-3

- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

4-6

Right Torso

- Landing Gear
- Avionics
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink
- Jump Jet

1-3

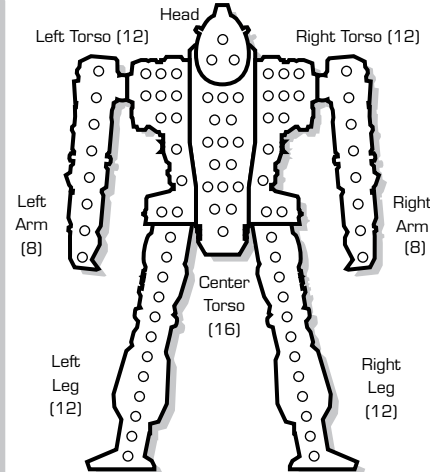
- Jump Jet
- Bomb Bay
- CASE II
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

4-6

Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects
30	Shutdown
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+
25	-5 Movement Points
24	/Rand. Movement 10+
23	+4 Modifier to Fire
22	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+
21	Shutdown, avoid on 8+
20	-4 Movement Points
19	/Rand. Movement 8+
18	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+
17	Shutdown, avoid on 6+
16	+3 Modifier to Fire
15	-3 Movement Points
14	/Rand. Movement 7+
13	Shutdown, avoid on 4+
12	+2 Modifier to Fire
11	-2 Movement Points
10	/Rand. Movement 6+
9	+1 Modifier to Fire
8	-1 Movement Points
7	/Rand. Movement 5+

Heat Sinks:
10 (20)
Double
(AirMech +3)

Heat
Scale

Overflow

30*
29
28*
27
26*
25*
24*
23*
22*
21
20*
19*
18*
17*
16
15*
14*
13*
12
11
10*
9
8*
7
6
5*
4
3
2
1
0

BATTLETECH

LAND-AIR BATTLEMECH RECORD SHEET

LAM DATA

Type: **S-WN-2LAM WANETA**

Tonnage: 55 Tech Base: Mixed Inner Sphere
(Experimental)
Jihad

Movement Points:

BattleMech Mode	AirMech Mode	Fighter Mode
Walking: 4	Cruising: 18	Safe Thrust: 6
Running: 6	Flank: 27	Max Thrust: 9
Jumping: 4		

Weapons & Equipment Inventory (hexes)

Qty	Type	Loc	Ht	Dmg	Min	Sht	Med	Lng	Aero
1	ER Large Laser (C)	RA	12	10 [DE]	—	8	15	25	10 (E)
1	ER Small Laser (C)	RA	2	5 [DE]	—	2	4	6	5 (S)
1	LRM 15 (C)	RT	5	1/Msl.	—	7	14	21	9 (L)
				[M,C,S]					
1	LRM 15 (C)	LT	5	1/Msl.	—	7	14	21	9 (L)
				[M,C,S]					

Fuel: 80

BV: 2,713

WARRIOR DATA

Name: _____

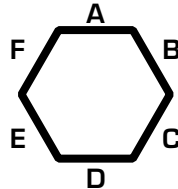
BattleMech Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Aerospace Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

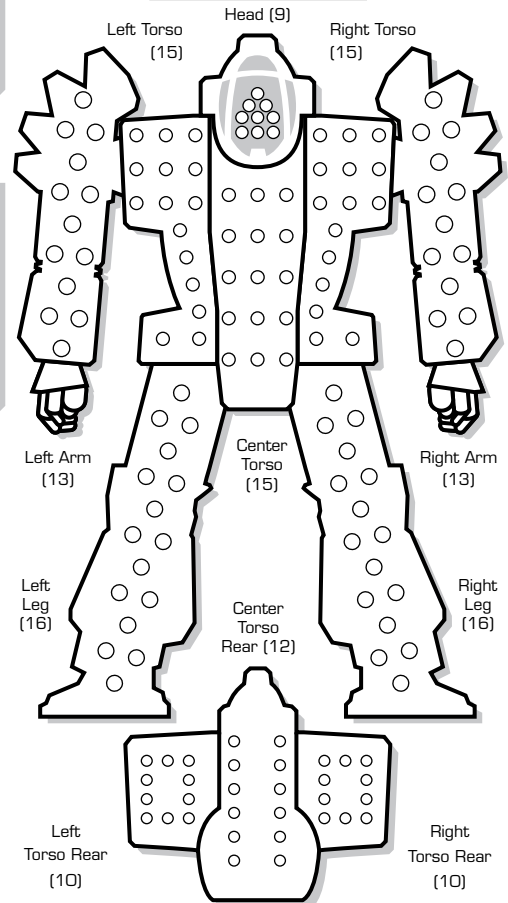
Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Consciousness#	3	5	7	10	11	Dead



Advanced
Movement
Compass



ARMOR DIAGRAM



CRITICAL HIT TABLE

Left Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- Lower Arm Actuator
- Hand Actuator
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink

- Double Heat Sink
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Left Torso

- Landing Gear
- Avionics
- Improved Jump Jet
- Improved Jump Jet
- Improved Jump Jet
- Improved Jump Jet

- Improved Jump Jet
- Improved Jump Jet
- LRM 15 (C)
- LRM 15 (C)
- Ammo (LRM 15) 8
- Roll Again

Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Head

- Life Support
- Sensors
- Small Cockpit
- Avionics
- Sensors
- Roll Again

Center Torso

- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Gyro
- Gyro
- Gyro

- Gyro
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Fusion Engine
- Landing Gear
- Roll Again

Avionics ○○○○
Engine Hits ○○○○
Gyro Hits ○○
Sensor Hits ○○
Landing Gear ○
Life Support ○

Structural Integrity
○○○○○○○○○○
○○○○○○○○○○

CATALYST
game labs

Damage Transfer
Diagram



Right Arm

- Shoulder
- Upper Arm Actuator
- Lower Arm Actuator
- Hand Actuator
- Double Heat Sink
- Double Heat Sink

- Double Heat Sink
- ER Large Laser (C)
- ER Small Laser (C)
- Roll Again
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

Right Torso

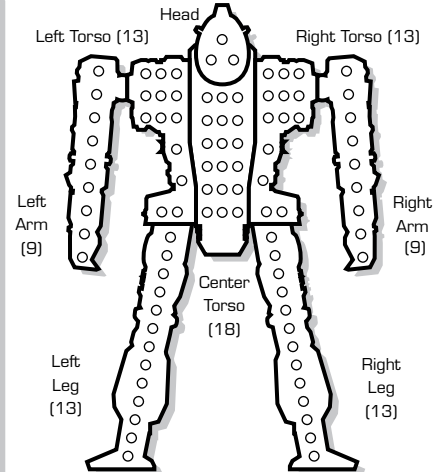
- Landing Gear
- Avionics
- Improved Jump Jet
- Improved Jump Jet
- Improved Jump Jet
- Improved Jump Jet

- Improved Jump Jet
- Improved Jump Jet
- LRM 15 (C)
- LRM 15 (C)
- Ammo (LRM 15) 8
- Roll Again

Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Roll Again
- Roll Again

INTERNAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



HEAT DATA

Heat Level*	Effects	Heat Sinks:
30	Shutdown	10 (20)
28	Ammo Exp. avoid on 8+	Double
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+	(AirMech +3)
25	-5 Movement Points	
24	/Rand. Movement 10+	
23	+4 Modifier to Fire	
22	Ammo Exp. avoid on 6+	
21	Shutdown, avoid on 8+	
20	-4 Movement Points	
19	/Rand. Movement 8+	
18	Ammo Exp. avoid on 4+	
17	Shutdown, avoid on 6+	
16	+3 Modifier to Fire	
15	-3 Movement Points	
14	/Rand. Movement 7+	
13	Shutdown, avoid on 4+	
12	+2 Modifier to Fire	
11	-2 Movement Points	
10	/Rand. Movement 6+	
9	+1 Modifier to Fire	
8	-1 Movement Points	
7	/Rand. Movement 5+	
6		
5		
4		
3		
2		
1		
0		

Heat
Scale

Overflow

30*
29
28*
27
26*
25*
24*
23*
22*
21
20*
19*
18*
17*
16
15*
14*
13*
12
11
10*
9
8*
7
6
5*
4
3
2
1
0

BATTLETECH™

BATTLETECH ERAS

The *BattleTech* universe is a living, vibrant entity that grows each year as more sourcebooks and fiction are published. A dynamic universe, its setting and characters evolve over time within a highly detailed continuity framework, bringing everything to life in a way a static game universe cannot match.

However, the same dynamic energy that makes *BattleTech* so compelling can also make it confusing, with so many sourcebooks published over the years. As people encounter *BattleTech*, get hooked and start to obtain sourcebooks, they need to know where a particular sourcebook is best used along the *BattleTech* timeline.

To help quickly and easily convey the timeline of the *BattleTech* universe—and to allow a player to easily “plug in” a given sourcebook—we’ve divided *BattleTech* into six major eras. (For those that own the *BattleTech Introductory Box Set*, the year dates in parentheses following each era’s title correspond to the maps found in the *Inner Sphere* at a Glance sourcebook.)

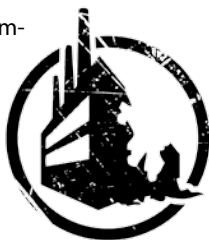
STAR LEAGUE (2570)

Ian Cameron, ruler of the Terran Hegemony, concludes decades of tireless effort with the creation of the Star League, a political and military alliance between all Great Houses and the Hegemony. Star League armed forces immediately launch the Reunification War, forcing the Periphery realms to join. For the next two centuries, humanity experiences a golden age across the thousand light-years of human-occupied space known as the *Inner Sphere*. It also sees the creation of the most powerful military in human history.



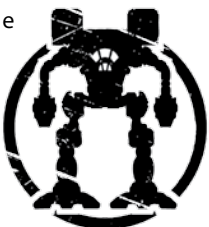
SUCCESSION WARS (3025, 3030, 3040)

Every last member of First Lord Richard Cameron's family is killed during a coup launched by Stefan Amaris. Following the thirteen-year war to unseat him, the rulers of each of the five Great Houses disband the Star League. General Aleksandr Kerensky departs with eighty percent of the Star League Defense Force beyond known space and the *Inner Sphere* collapses into centuries of warfare known as the Succession Wars that will eventually result in a massive loss of technology across most worlds.



CLAN INVASION (3052, 3057)

A mysterious invading force strikes the coreward region of the *Inner Sphere*. The invaders, called the Clans, are descendants of Kerensky's SLDF troops, forged into a society dedicated to becoming the greatest fighting force in history. With vastly superior technology and warriors, the Clans conquer world after world. Eventually this outside threat



will forge a new Star League, something hundreds of years of warfare failed to accomplish. In addition, the Clans will act as a catalyst for a technological renaissance.

CIVIL WAR (3062, 3067)

The Clan threat is eventually lessened with the complete destruction of a Clan. With that massive external threat apparently neutralized, internal conflicts explode around the Inner Sphere. House Liao conquers its former Commonality, the St. Ives Compact; a rebellion of military units belonging to House Kurita sparks a war with their powerful border enemy, Clan Ghost Bear; the fabulously powerful Federated Commonwealth of House Steiner and House Davion collapses into five long years of bitter civil war.



JIHAD (3067, CURRENT)

Following the Federated Commonwealth Civil War, the leaders of the Great Houses meet and disband the new Star League, declaring it a sham. The pseudo-religious Word of Blake—a splinter group of ComStar, the protectors and controllers of interstellar communication—launch the Jihad: an interstellar war that will ultimately pit every faction against each other and even against themselves, as weapons of mass destruction are used for the first time in centuries while new and frightening technologies are likewise unleashed.



DARK AGE (3132+)

Under the guidance of Devlin Stone, the Republic of the Sphere is born at the heart of the *Inner Sphere* following the Jihad. One of the more extensive periods of peace begins to break out as the 32nd century dawns. The factions, to one degree or another, embrace disarmament and the massive armies of the Succession Wars begin to fade. However, in 3132 eighty percent of interstellar communications collapses, throwing the universe into chaos. Wars almost immediately erupt and the factions begin rebuilding their armies.



SOURCEBOOKS

As Catalyst Game Labs continues to publish new *BattleTech* products (and reprint previously published products), easy reference logos—corresponding to those above—will be printed directly on their back covers. This will allow retailers and players alike to know at a glance what eras are covered by a given product. For additional ease of reference, era logos will also appear on product's sell sheet, on-line products page and so on.

Note that if a Catalyst Game Labs *BattleTech* product does not contain an era logo, then it is considered a core rulebook or supplement to be used across all eras, such as the *Introductory Box Set*, *Total Warfare* and so on.