

DISTANT SHORES

Storyline Book Five (1943-1948)

CROSS-POOL CONTACT CONTINUING. LOCAL ALLY RESTLESS. PLACATE WITH ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IF NEED BE. LOST TRACK OF MULTIPLE SECONDARY EVENTS. RELEVANCE/IMPACT UNKNOWN. ASSIGN RESOURCES. ARCHETYPE FIGURE? EXACT LOCATION UNKNOWN, BUT SAFETY ENSURED. SECRECY PRESERVED. LONG TIERS AND DISSIDENT FACTIONS SUCCESSFULLY KEPT OUT. MAKE SURE ONLY REQUIRED AMOUNT OF HUMAN AND LOGISTIC RESOURCES IS EXPENDED TO AVOID REPETITIONS OF PREVIOUS PURGES. STABILITY INCREASING IN CENTRAL REGIONS. CORRECT. INCREASED CONTACT MIGHT UPSET THE BALANCE. CANNOT BE AFFECTED IN ANY WAY USING GROUP RESOURCES. CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO BE DETECTED. TOO FAST, UNPREDICTABLE. UNKNOWN ELEMENTS MAY BE COMING INTO PLAY SOONER THAN ORIGINALLY BUDGETED FOR. AS ALWAYS, TAKE ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS TO ENSURE CONTINUATION IN CASE OF DISASTER. ALREADY IN PLAY. THIS AGENCY CANNOT BE JEOPARDIZED. AGREED CROSS-POOL CONTACT CONTINUING. LOCAL ALLY RESTLESS. PLACATE WITH ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IF NEED BE. LOST TRACK OF MULTIPLE SECONDARY EVENTS. RELEVANCE/IMPACT UNKNOWN. ASSIGN RESOURCES. ARCHETYPE FIGURE? EXACT LOCATION UNKNOWN, BUT SAFETY ENSURED.

HEAVY GEAR

DISTANT SHORES

Storyline Book Five (1943-1948)

34 Autumn 1943 — 12 Summer 1948

"I wept as I read the most recent transmissions, now several weeks old, that the Black Talon team had sent us from Atlantis. Peaceful water, stretching from the sand to infinity. I never thought I would get to see it one day. In a strange twist of fate, the greed and arrogance of the New Earth Commonwealth may well re-ignite the fire that drove us forward, drove us to soar among the stars. Once this conflict is over — and I've come to believe we will win, for the freedom of societies across the Gate network — perhaps I will be able to visit those distant shores myself..."

— Nicosia Renault

Following in the steps of the original Black Talon team, Terranovan raiders lend a helping hand to their Liberati allies so far across interstellar space. The CEF continues to deploy new and improved technology built in the occupied factories of Caprice, testing it in brutal reprisal attacks in the Helios system. Meanwhile, the Black Talon continues its exploration mission, seeking out allies for the war efforts among long cut-off colony worlds. Unfortunately, the Terranovans soon realize they are not the only ones seeking reinforcement among the far-away stars...

Distant Shores, the fifth Heavy Gear Storyline Book, is the newest installment of the critically acclaimed Storyline series. It traces the cataclysmic events on the world of Terra Nova, the setting of Heavy Gear, through a collection of journals, articles and conversations. Distant Shores also features a useful appendix with a full time-line of events, advice for Heavy Gear players and profiles of important characters.

Produced and Published by Dream Pod 9, Inc.

5000 Iberville, Suite 332, Montreal, QC, Canada, H2H 2S6

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Printed in Canada

www.dp9.com

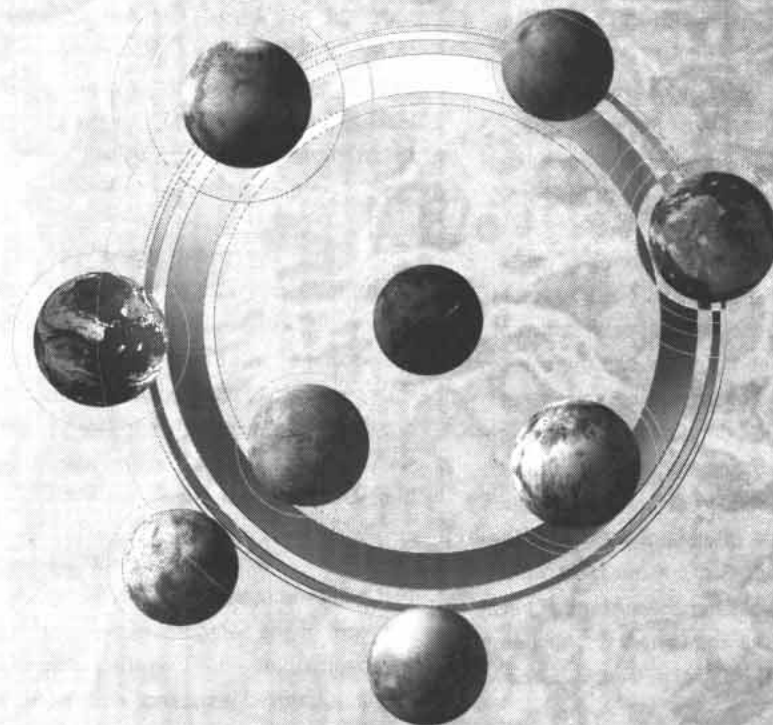
ISBN: 1-894578-66-X



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HEAVY GEAR

Distant Shores



Heavy Gear Storyline Book 5

34 Autumn 1943 to 12 Summer 1948

Home Front

From the Journals of Nicosia Renault

(12 Summer 1943) — Files, files, and more files. It seems that from my old role as spy, I am slowly turning into an historian; someone has to do it, I guess. Secrets and lies aren't the only things that make for interesting history, but they show a great deal more than any official record will ever prove. Paging back through my old records and journals makes for quite an evening's reading; when I think of all that's happened over the years, my perspective truly begins to change. The War of the Alliance, the assassination of Reverend Thor Hutchison, the Interpolar War... all terrible events when we lived through them, and now they are mere milestones on the muddy and treacherous path of History.

Even I couldn't have imagined the events of 1941, however, when Bh Bravo stuffed his faithful followers into that beaten-up old wreck of a spaceship called the Eastern Sun and blasted into orbit. He'd spent months rebuilding that old hulk to make it spaceworthy, theoretically, going so far as to load the corpses of his ancestors into the hold. I can only hope they've got something else to eat on their trip, wherever they're going. The ancient fusion drive destroyed buildings and land during the lift-off, reducing part of the city to magma in its rush to break free of the gravity well. All kinds of ships were sent from the other leagues to try and track the ship, but Bh Bravo took his Gateship into silent running mode and vanished. The last couple of ships came back about two seasons later, after poking their noses into hundreds of possible hiding places in the system. My best guess? The ship depressurized somewhere along the line and is now just a hunk of debris, or the controls blew and they fell into the sun. Hubris, indeed.

Speaking of the leagues uniting for humanitarian purposes, it was just last spring that the Westphalia Cabinet convened at the country house of Lang Regina and Vic... no, it's just Lang now. Those poor girls; it's always the children who get stuck in the middle when parents break up. Prophet help them if Fajil manages to convince Victoria to pull for custody of all four! Anyway, the Cabinet got together to debate, argue, bicker and discuss their next plan of action — it was inevitable, really, that they'd choose to send the Black Talons off on some chest-pounding commando mission, for what good it will do them. I've heard the various armed forces are busy training some of their elite for off-world

missions. The Prophet be merciful if both a Talon team and a Legion Noire force fall on a CEF troop... <chuckle>

Shirow's not doing too badly as Patriarch, all told; taking control of things in Skavara was a good move. He sent piles of troops in to fend off Khan's bandits, among the other unsavories just dying to take the city apart. Saragossa's making noises as well, the People's Front for Independence (SPFI) has stepped up its recruitment drive dramatically, postering and calling up favors. There's more there than meets the eye, to be sure.

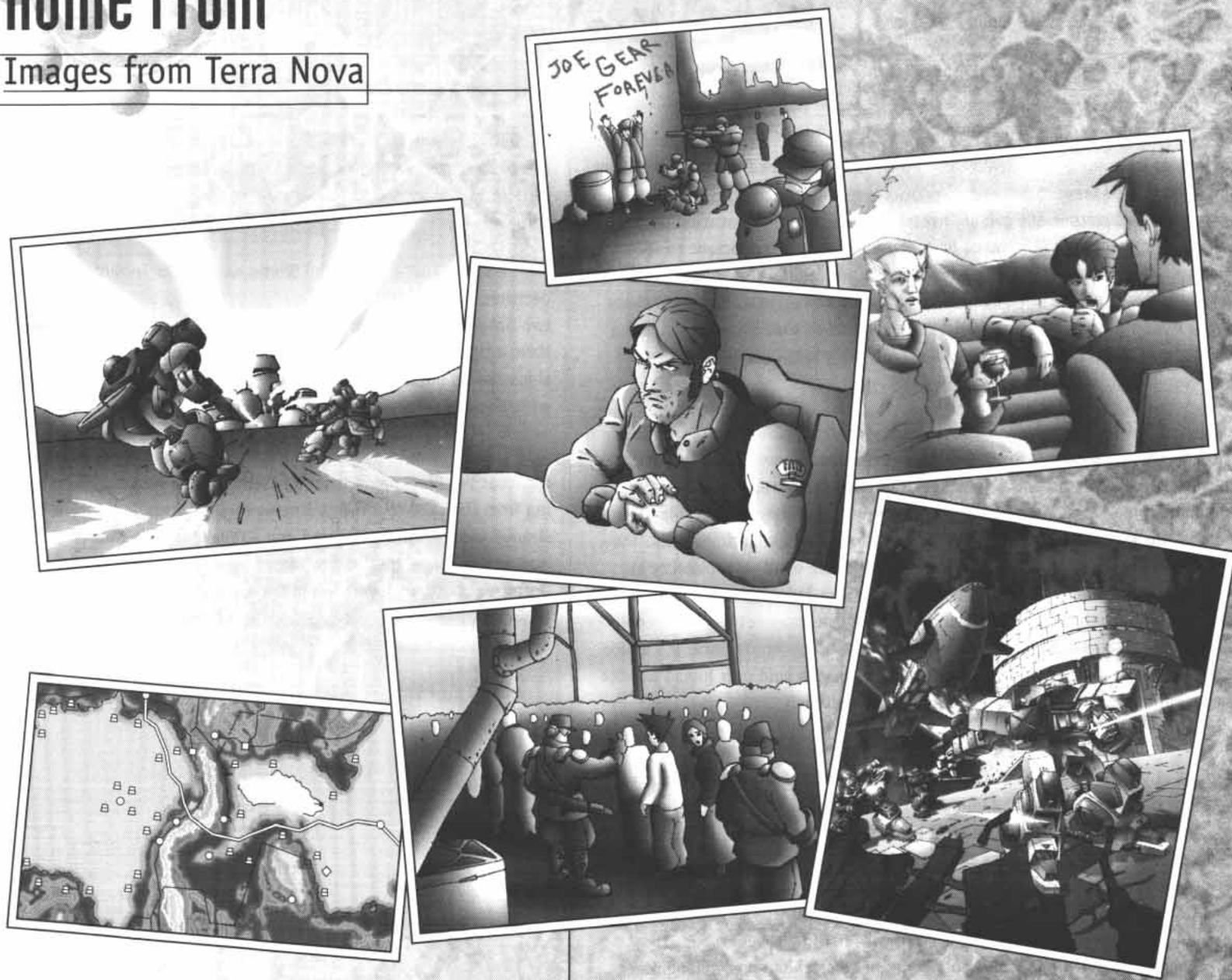
No recent news has come through on the GREL children; the Jan Mayan folks would be completely distraught at this point if they didn't know that one of the babies was currently safe with Sebastopol. They're worried sick about the second of these miracle children, but at least all has not been lost — Proust, if he's still alive, must know that his best chance of success is to keep the little one alive. She's his only hope for survival right now; if something happens while she's in his care, I can't even begin to imagine what the Jan Mayens would do to him. And I can imagine a lot.

The Humanist Alliance forces are moving again, as well. We had our first solid indication of their attempts to rebuild at about the same time that I got word of the Saragossa movement. Mykael Navar's managed what most thought was impossible — uniting the previously drastically opposed factions into one single, organized resistance movement. They started to lead raids against former HA territory almost instantly, striking against caches and bases in order to gather the supplies they so desperately need. There's no way that it could be the HA responsible for the raids in the North, however — their lines just don't reach that far. These raids all begin around the same date and typically involve small yet important objectives, with various levels of defense. Unless I'm mistaken, those would be CEF forces testing our defenses.

This year should prove very interesting.

Home Front

Images from Terra Nova



Distant Shores

From the Journals of Nicosia Renault

(12 Summer 1943) — Terra Nova seems to be pulling itself back together, at least for the moment. The military rumblings need to be watched, but things seem to be brewing beneath the surface, for the most part. Off-planet is another story altogether; it's getting harder to get accurate information out of anybody now, and the teams gating back and forth are often reluctant to speak about everything that's being going on over on Caprice. Ships go missing and fleets vanish, there have been more raids and spies and accusations of treachery in recent years than ever before, and I can only assume that things are building towards some hitherto unexpected resolution. I don't know if I want to be here when everything breaks.

After being hidden away, secretly imprisoned for almost two full cycles, the former Badlands Revolutionary Front leader Ernesto Jaxon was released. The Westphalia Cabinet seems to have decided once and for all that Earth was really behind the Peace River bombing, not the BRF, and they came to him to offer a pardon. He agreed to cooperate, but held out for a concession from them. They agreed to it, interestingly enough, and cleared the BRF of all responsibility at Peace River. I'm not sure exactly who they got to fake Jaxon's death in prison, but I have my suspicions. They announced it across all the news networks immediately, and now Jaxon's free to act as he needs to without interference. It's a nice little deal for him, but now the Cabinet's got a heck of a hold over him. I wonder if he's aware that he's just traded one prison for another?

Westphalia's got their fingers in everything these days. Their meetings at various country estates have proven fruitful, I suppose, although the amount of backbiting and complaining on the tapes more than outstrips any of the actually useful content derived from their endless discussions. If this is democracy, then please give me a dictatorship! At least orders are easier to transcribe than yet another pissing match between Lang and the rest of the cabinet. She's got to learn to compartmentalize her personal and work lives, or she's going to bring the whole cabinet down with her in one fell swoop. They've been sending the Black Talons out on a series of commando raids, among other missions, and that's had mixed success. The 77th managed to recover some vital

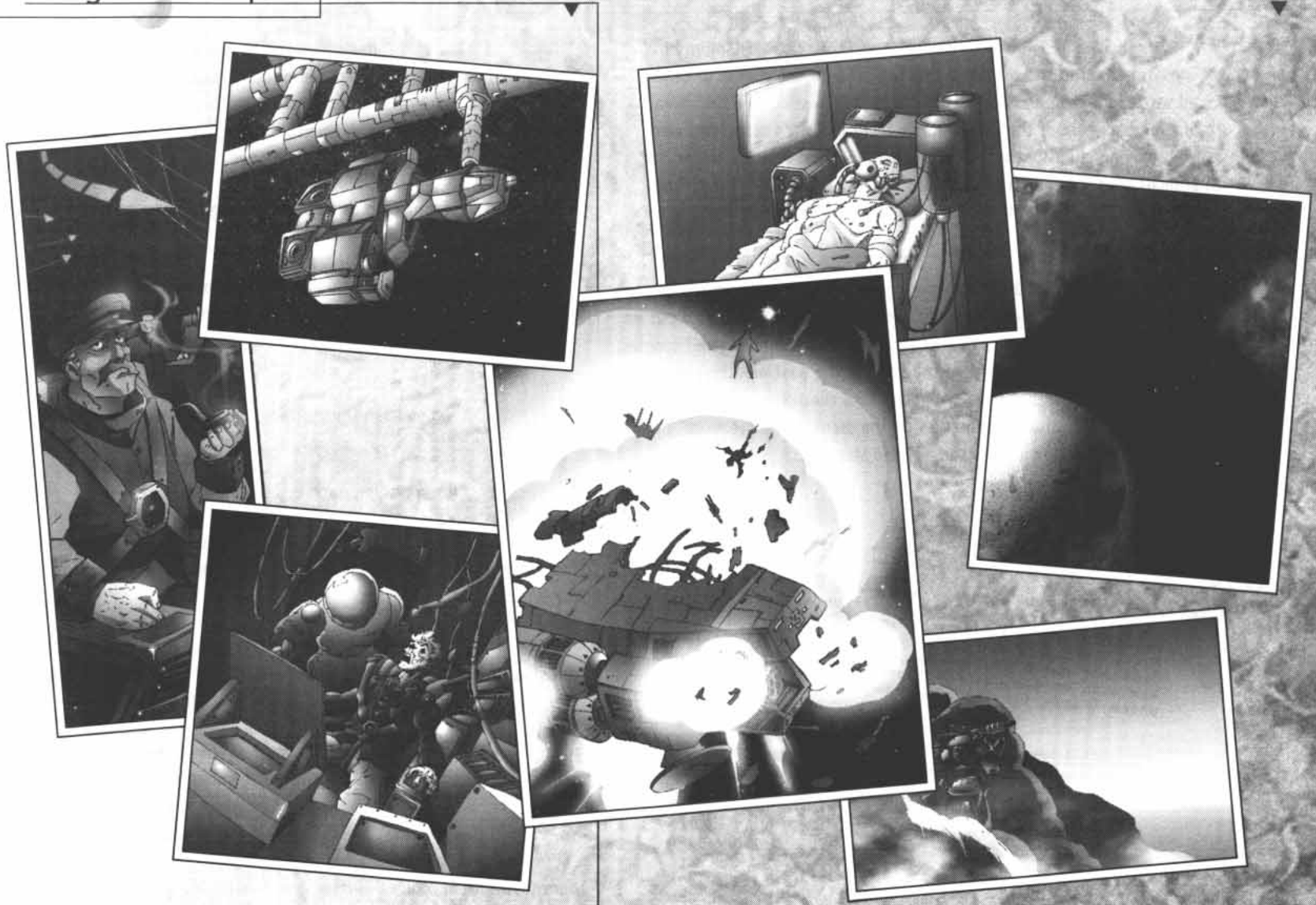
pieces of technology, but the CEF took that very, very badly indeed. They implemented a battle plan designed to stop the Talons in their tracks by destroying Terra Nova's space transport capacity, striking everything from carriers to the shipyards.

Last Autumn and Winter saw the implementation of the CEF's decisions, a series of raids and strikes taking out a number of ships — including two Gateships — and the repair facilities that Terra Nova could have used to fix them again. Now, of course, they'll need to repair the repair facilities before the ships can be put back into order, and who knows what Earth will have been up to while Terra Nova's been effectively grounded.

I wept as I read the most recent transmissions, now several weeks old, that the Black Talon team had sent us from Atlantis. Peaceful water, stretching from the sand to infinity. I never thought I would get to see it one day. In a strange twist of Fate, the greed and arrogance of the New Earth Commonwealth may well re-ignite the fire that drove us forward, drove us to soar among the stars. Once this conflict is over — and I've come to believe we will win, for the freedom of societies across the Gate network — perhaps I will be able to visit those distant shores myself...

Distant Shores

Images from Space



personal journal

Not Just Another Day

Prologue - The Bombing of South Lyonesse

Long blades of Johar grass swung lazily, caught on the morning breeze, as Darit stretched in the rising sun. He looked over the cluster of tents that made up his team's temporary camp. The camp was nestled in a lush area, just south of Lyonesse, east of the UMFA launch facility. Darit's associates were waking as well, moving clumsily through the camp, readying themselves for the day. Small animals chased through underbrush, little eyes peering through the leaves to peek at the activity. Darit took a deep breath of the fresh morning air and smiled.

This land was scheduled for development by one of the many UMF banks. He and his team from Breas University had gotten a temporary hold put on the development pending an investigation of Terra Nova's first endangered species, the Arrowhead Tree Hopper. Data they had collected in the past months had proven their suspicions: Any further encroachment into these lands would wipe out the only remaining Arrowhead population on the planet. After years of fighting the banks, the development would have to stop.

Game Resources



The Game Resources boxes are a new addition to the Storyline Book series. Each box contains suggestions and hints to use the unfolding events of the Heavy Gear universe for any given campaign. Some tips are meant for roleplaying, others for tactical tabletop wargaming; the icons at left show which is which (Faces for the RPG, Gear for tactical play).

Darit meandered through the camp, sniffing the air, tracking down the scent of cooking flapjacks. He found his wife, Mari and their son, Jerson crouched over one of the grills in the open-air mess. Mari was teaching Jerson how to flip the flapjacks just right so they stayed round, not folded or crumpled. Darit leaned against a tree.

"If you keep this up, he's going to make one heck of a chef," he said. Mari smiled.

"He should learn something to make a few marks for his poor, environmentalist father," she said. Darit chuckled.

"Ouch."

"Did you see the morning beams?" Mari asked, concentrating on the grill.

"No, anything good or just the same barnaby-"

"Watch it," she said, moving to cover Jerson's ears. Jerson giggled. "Your ploy worked. Mari Feldman-Schroeder will film a segment of her show here. Maybe tonight."

"Really?" Darit frowned. "You don't seem very excited," he said crossing to his wife and taking her hand, "She's a much better piece of publicity than that blowhard Kimsey." Mari stood up, rolling her eyes.

"I know, I know," she said, "I just find it hard to believe that anyone takes her..." Mari's gaze shifted to something behind Darit. "...seriously. Honey, what's that?" Darit turned and followed Mari's finger. Three streaks of boiling red were cutting across the azure sky toward them. It took Darit a few endless seconds to realize what he was looking at. Something, no, some things were falling from orbit, and they were not stopping.

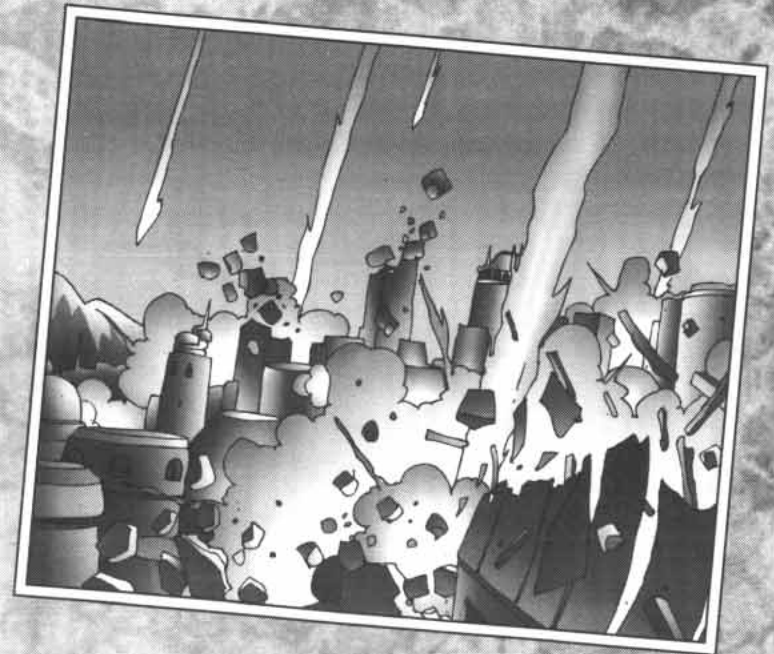
Not Just Another Day

Prologue - The Bombing of South Lyonesse

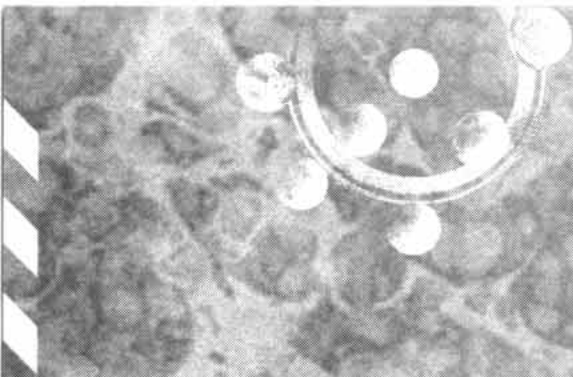
Darit's thoughts flew through the possibilities. It was an orbital attack, he thought, but the war was over years ago. It must be the Earth forces, somehow, they have returned to... my family. My family. He kept that thought as if holding it would lessen the pain of what was to come. All he could do was watch.

The first streak impacted many kilometers south, but they could still see the explosive shockwave roll across the horizon. The sound reached them barely thirty seconds later, a deep, horrifying rumble. Mari pulled Jerson tight to her body as he watched, wide eyed. The second streak smashed into the mountains to the southwest. Many of the team began running, scattering in all directions, shouting to each other. Darit knew better, he watched rooted in place trying to drink in the last seconds of his life. He squeezed his wife's hand.

The third impact struck the ground less than a kilometer away, flattening the entire forest in a second with the force of its impact. Heat and crushing sound rushed over Darit and his family, vaporizing them. The shockwave expended its massive, roiling energies against the surface of Terra Nova, leaving behind a city-sized firestorm as what remained of the forest burned.



20 - W I - 44



Current Affairs - Home

From the Journal of Nicosia Renault

(7 Winter 1944) — I said that things were quiet, and while it seems to be staying that way, there are indications that not everything is as it seems. There's movement in the background; those who do their best work behind the scenes are moving into place for — what? I'm still not sure. The puzzle pieces aren't fitting together quite as smoothly as I'd hoped. It looks like my best option for now is to wait and see.

The Revisionist Church in the North has been gathering its forces recently. Large numbers of followers were drifting away from the faith over the years, no longer convinced of the truth behind the Church's teachings. In response, the Church began a massive recruitment campaign, trying to bring the fallen back into the fold and convert the agnostics and atheists to boot. It seems to be working; the uncertainty engendered by recent events has brought people back to the faith in droves. Looking for moral and emotional support, they turn to faith to provide the guidance they seem to be lacking.

The Hands of Thor, a Revisionist revival sect, announced its existence just at the time when things were looking bleakest for the Church. They claim to be interested only in returning to the peaceful beginnings of the faith, probably a wise position to take in a world where everyone seems to be getting sick of war and raids and endless conflict. They also claim, however, that their members must all display the same moral forthrightness and "righteous strength of character" shown by such icons as Thor Hutchison. That disturbs me, somewhat. Despite their claims that all they want is peace, the idea of a bunch of revivalists running around testing people's moral fiber is an image I dislike. They've been remarkably successful in attracting folks back to the faith, and their humanitarian efforts have been tremendous, but they still bother me.

What worries me more, however, are the rumors I've heard about Reverend-Mother Maya Fajil becoming good pals with Grand Marshall Victoria Edden-Smythe. Given that the latter just got divorced, she might be emotionally vulnerable to manipulation. Edden-Smythe's a tough gal, but Fajil knows exactly

how to push her buttons. If Fajil decides to use the children as pawns, she'll have Edden-Smythe exactly where she wants her to be.

Things seem to be very quiet in the Mekong Dominion; they don't want to take any more risks until they see where the chips will fall, I guess. The Taipan of the Mekong Development Corporation, Arron Logan, is utterly ruthless and was partially responsible for the Interpolar War, leading the North to believe that the Dominion would side with them. A prudent man, he also made side deals with various people, including Badlands revolutionaries. The recent events, such as the bombing of Peace River and the formation of the Cabinet, have caused him to pause in his plans to gain control of yet more territories and resources. In any case, he and his fellows have stayed very quiet, dealing mostly with local unrest. Worth keeping an eye on, though...

Shirow and Masao — now that's an interesting match. Her pregnancy's apparently been very rough; the servants seem to think she's gone mad, just like her brother. If you ask me, it sounds like pregnancy hormones have finally given her the excuse she's needed to lash out at the world a little bit... the changes your body goes through can give you some very strange ideas. For me, it was an obsession with the 'Fungi on a Stick' from Weird But Tasty. Ugh.

Last Winter, the Khayr ad-Din Army dove into battle and began hunting down local bandits and brigand groups. I can only assume that they were going a bit stir-crazy in the sands. This created an exodus of sorts as the rovers were pushed further away from the Western Desert, toward the polar regions. It wasn't too long after that started that the new, rebuilt Peace River opened its doors and Paxton started production again. Getting more weaponry into the system is one way to keep an economy going, but given some of the tensions right now, it may not be the best thing for the survival rates in the Badlands. I can only hope that they've put better security in place than they had last time, although even a full battalion of soldiers can't stop a terrorist who's truly determined enough.

Aftermath

Westphalia Cabinet Meeting

>Westphalia Cabinet Security Recording<

>Time Code 05:44:42

>VI data downloaded Begin Playback<

[Insert Note: This was the first of many emergency meetings that took place after the attacks by CEF forces. Present are Elden, Makkins, Sing, Fersal, Eloi and myself. -Lang]

Lang: I think this is all of us. I'm surprised we had this many in such close proximity; thank you for coming.

Elden: We have no time for platitudes. What is the current situation?

Game Resources



RPG: Though they present a unified front to the rest of the Terranovan population, the Cabinet is actually a weak construct held together largely through the efforts and willpower of a few key figures. Despite sharing the same goal of defending their planet against external aggressors, they all have their own agendas, plots and needs. Patrons are a great resource for Gamemasters; they allow the latter to supply the Player Characters with missions, intelligence, equipment or transport. In this case, many members of the Cabinet are purposely not identified so you can fit your own patrons and important figures in. Patrons need not be military officers affiliated with Tanaka or Lang; they can be influential merchants, politicians, social figures

conversation

Eloi: While we cannot get a completely accurate assessment, we are still receiving reports from-

Sing: Hurry up! We don't have time for this-

[Insert Note: At this point Elden whispered something to Sing. Couldn't make out what he said, but it calmed her right down. Eloi didn't miss a beat. Talk to Tanaka about her promotion.]

Sing: My apologies; please continue.

Eloi: I'll be brief. The CEF fleet is still in our system. Our search fleets aren't going to be able to find them, as they are already under order to measure the extent of the damage. So far we know that their major objectives were our naval construction and support operations. Ellis Island itself took a number of hits, but most of the ships there were part of the quick counter attack and have survived with minimal damage. The shipyards at Zeus took the brunt of it; many of the ships under construction there were destroyed and the facilities are useless. Last we heard they were still counting their dead.

Elden: Prophet's mercy!

Eloi: There were multiple strikes on transfer stations. We still haven't heard how badly they were damaged. Reports say we've lost at least one. The worst news is-

Makkins: It gets worse?

Eloi: Sadly, yes. Our Gateships the *Leviathan* and the *Remar Vajra* were in drydock during the attacks. The *Remar* was heavily damaged, and we have no estimates as to how long it will need for repairs to be completed. The *Leviathan* was crippled, and the techs aren't sure if they'll be able to salvage it. So far it doesn't look good, and that's just space. Lieutenant Fersal has the report on our planetside damages. Fersal?

Aftermath

Westphalia Cabinet Meeting

Fersal: The groundside attacks are over, but their targets line up with Eloi's information. The Earth forces were definitely going after our launch resources; luckily, our counter attack at Ellis Island kept them from getting more than one run. This bombardment completely destroyed the South Lyonesse facilities and rendered the surrounding lands lifeless for kilometers. Our death toll for that attack alone was around eight to twelve thousand. I don't have reports yet on how many civilian lives were also lost. The only other attacks on our soil were a group of dropships that landed in the Badlands near Prince Gable. KADA engaged the enemy before they reached any populated areas. The reason for this landing confuses me; it had no obvious objectives. Unfortunately, we weren't able to capture any of the Earthers alive. There has been some conjecture that the drops were diversions to allow them to insert more infiltrators.

Sing: We should assume that that's the case. I'll start on a plan for counterintelligence operations; we don't want another Peace River.

Makkins: What about the Black Talons?

Lang: They are ready, and on an interesting note I've received a request from the UMF Army that we open the BT program up to more applicants.

Elden: Good. Let's hope that other governments follow this trend.

Makkins: This is all well and good, but we've forgotten something.

Lang: What's that?

Makkins: Retaliation.

Elden: Gods, man-

Fersal: What are you-

Makkins: Why such shock? They've attacked us, killed our people-

Sing: Not your people-

Makkins: All Terranovans are our people, Sing! What are we going to do? Wait for it to happen again?

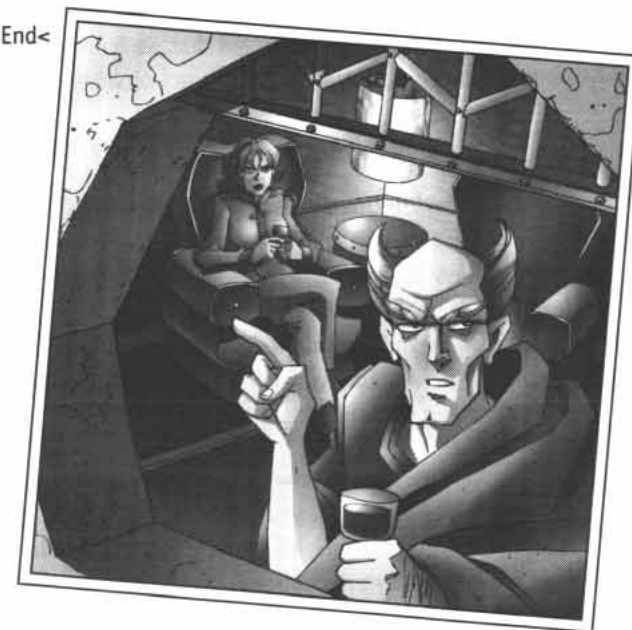
Sing: By the Spirits, you sound like Tanaka.

Lang: What's wrong with that?

>Silence<

Lang: This discussion is becoming tense; I suggest that we wait for the others to arrive before continuing. We should concentrate on gathering reports from our various governments and coming up with suggestions for our next move. Meeting adjourned.

>Recording End<



conversation

The Phoenix

Emergency News Report - Port Oasis News Net

We have a special report from Shen Allari in the Humanist Alliance capitol. Shen?

[To Live Feed] Thank you William. The chaos you see behind me is the remains of the Admin sector of Perth. Just a half hour ago the entire city was rocked with a series of explosions in this sector, setting fire to everything between the Term and Get canals. The rescue teams have not been able to get close because of the fires but it is believed-

What? Yes, yes. We now have it confirmed that the provisional government, was, in fact, in session when the explosions took place. The Estates General placed the provisional government here after the Theban Blight wiped out so many Alliance rulers. They have had to deal with the transition of power from the Alliance to the Republic and though there have been threats against the... the provisional government before they have never been... Okay, okay.

I have just been told that we have received a recording from the group claiming responsibility for this act of violence. Would you play that now?

[Audio Only - Symbol of a Flaming Bird]

With this act, we, the rightful rulers of this nation have made our first of many attacks against the Southern vipers who have invaded our lands. This is no less than an open declaration of war against the Southern Republic and its people. We will not stand by and watch you sully our lands with your flesh. You invaded us and we waited. You attempted to poison our ways with your culture and we waited. You took our very lives with your vat grown disease and we waited. And we learned.

We learned how to hurt you. We learned how to make you fear us. We learned how to cut out your roots from this land and take back what is ours. Let this serve as a warning to those of Republic blood. Leave now. From here on, there are no innocent Republicans.

The long night is over. We will destroy the shadow of the Republic with fire and rise from the ashes to reclaim our lives. We are the Phoenix.

[To Live Feed]

Well I... That was a recording from the group naming themselves the, uh, the Phoenix. This is the first announcement from such a group that we know of. Will, the fires are still raging here and we'll be hard pressed to get any further information for some time. Anything new at the studio?

[To Studio]

Thank you Shen. We have no word yet from our people at the Estates General or the MILICIA in response to these claims. Doubtless they have seen the same recording we have. Ladies and gentlemen we will be covering this story all day. Please stay with us.



Scandal

Tabloid



I've found this in the papers this morning. I don't know who has leaked this, or if it is indeed true, but someone has it in for you, bad. I don't care what you do with your personal life, and I don't think it should reflect on your leadership abilities, but too many people in the North think otherwise. I read carefully.

A Concerned Friend

Game Resources



RPG: Politicians always have to deal with scandals, real or imagined. PCs can be reporters, investigators or trying to clear someone's reputation. The gravity and nature of the scandal will obviously vary from location to location: a fornication accusation in Sorrento has more weight than in Ashanti.



Tactical: Though rare nowadays, there are times where a besmirched reputation was ground for a duel or even a small skirmish, especially in certain areas of the Badlands. And of course, professional trideo Duelists like those of the H6CT are prone to react to accusations (real or unfounded) with extreme Gear violence.

21.SP.44

Conspiracy

Secret Conversation

>Location: unidentified MILICIA supply warehouse, Southern Republic<

>Voice 1:< Hello? Anyone here?

>Voice 2:< Over here... and keep your voice down. You weren't followed, I hope?

>Voice 1:< Of course not. What do you take me for, a rank amateur?

>Voice 2:< Yes. >pause< Oh, don't look so offended. No insult intended. It's just that with the quality of training they're giving you people these days...

>Voice 1:< Which is exactly why we need you people's help! Did you bring it?

Game Resources



RPG: Increasingly tired of being seen as second-rate soldiers and citizens, MILICIA members are taking matter into their own hands. Finding good allies among other ambitious figures in the South, mainly across the political and corporate divide, they aim to increase their power base.



Tactical: MILICIA conspirators can be discovered by the Southern intelligence agencies: running battles may ensue as they try to disappear into nature, taking with them as much equipment as they can.

conversation

>Voice 2:< Of course. The Commandant didn't want to come himself, did he? I can't really blame him. In any case, it's always smarter to send someone else to take the fall.

>Voice 1:< Ah... What...

>Voice 2:< Don't worry, you're not in danger. >amused tone< It's not like I'm a Temoin or anything. Just an honest employee, doing his part to better his nation... and maybe earn himself some points with his superior.

>Voice 1:< Look, this place is secure but...

>Voice 2:< ...Better not play with the Monitor's nest, eh? Right.
>dull noise<

>Voice 2:< Here's the money, in small non-sequential notes. How cliché, but it does make things much easier for everyone.

>Voice 1:< Everything is there...

>Voice 2:< Obviously — unlike you, I don't need to take pay-off to do well. Peace, peace... Just a little gentle ribbing between friends.

>Voice 1:< We're not friends, just business partners. And the MILICIA is receiving additional supplies. We're being moved up to replace the units sent to fight against the CEF raiders.

>Voice 2:< Right. Say hello to the Commandant for us, and tell him we'll be in touch. You know, just to keep an eye on our little investment...

The End

Court Document

VALERIA DISTRICT COURT
In Re the Marriage of: Edden-Smythe/Lang
Court File No.: 99342265JF9b0bfb85b99

Victoria Edden-Smythe
Petitioner,
PETITION FOR and LEGAL SEPARATION

Lang Regina Alfreda
Respondent.
Victoria Edden-Smythe, Petitioner above-named, states and
alleges as follows:

I.
The true and correct name of the Petitioner is Victoria Edden-Smythe; that she resides in Valeria, Northern Light Confederacy.
<personal data hyperlink>

Petitioner is represented in this proceeding by Rosanna Harmer,
(Registration No. 9858579h7b) Attorney At Law. <data hyperlink>

II.
The true and correct name of the Respondent is Lang Regina Alfreda; that she resides in Fort Henry, Western Frontier Protectorate.

<personal data hyperlink>
Petitioner is represented in this proceeding by Choban Henry,
(Registration No. 89584879f5) Attorney At Law. <data hyperlink>

III.
The petitioner and respondent were duly married to each other on
<date> TN 1999, at <church>, Sorrento, United Mercantile Federation and since that date have been and are now wife and wife.

IV.
There are four children born of this marriage and their names, ages, and dates of birth are as follows: <data hyperlink>
and neither petitioner nor respondent are now pregnant.

V.
Petitioner seeks temporary maintenance, temporary custody, temporary child support, temporary possession of certain real and personal property, attorney fees, costs, and disbursements.
<continued>

First Contact

Field Transmission

>Transmission Intercepted<

>Begin Playback<

05:33:02

This is Gomar Setz of the Khayr ad-Din Army, Section 242, on scout duty outside Prince Gabriel. I've got droppers coming out of the sky. They don't match anything Polar. I've got back up. We're going to check it out. Over.

05:38:27

I see 'em now coming over the ridge. Were dug in and should be out of sight. They look like Gears... no, no... Hell! They're Frames. Repeat. We have keffer Battle Frames in sight. Prophet's spit! They're coming right for us! We need back up and air support, now!

05:42:14

We're taking heavy fire! Repeat, heavy fire! We had them pinned for a while, but their shuttle brought something big to bear on us. Lost three of us so far another heavily damaged running defense for us. We are retreating to the city that seems to be their objective. Please guys, have something waiting for us.

05:59:22

Man oh, man. I can't wait to report this one. The keffers are fighting like rabid dawgs. Their frames are fast as a... a... I don't know they're fast! These pilots are nasty, just won't stay down. We have back up now. Mills and Paget brought their folks but these Frames are kicking our... aw hell —

>Static<

>Transmission End<

transmission

Battle Report

Bluedawg Brawlers vs. BattleFrames

Patterns of fire exploded over the dunes, throwing spiked towers of sand into the dawn sky. The sharp crack of particle weapons could be heard between the shelling. Three battered Gears were riddled with shrapnel and thrown to the sand by the concussion, limbs flapping like broken toys. Not the best morning for Gomar Setz. His KADA group had already suffered heavy losses against a group of CEF BattleFrames, and now they were going to be exposed as they retreated over the open ground to the outskirts of Prince Gabriel. On top of which, his once formidable long-range arsenal had been reduced to a near empty autocannon. Setz tapped his com-set.

"We've got three more down, where the frack are you guys?!" he called, skating his Nemesis Jaguar backwards over the dry, packed dirt.

"Setz, this is Paget," Setz's com-set blared as he pulled his Gear around a boulder. "We're two clicks from your position and moving fast." Static burst across the bandwidth as a CEF particle shot sizzled the air near Setz's cover.

Setz knew that small boulders and old wreckage were not quite enough to protect from the heavy shelling. From his vantage point, Setz could see that the dozen or so other KADA defenders of his group were in the same situation, enemy shells raining down within meters of their position. Not all the cover held, and shrapnel punctured one Gear's fuel tank. The Gear moved in slow motion, covered in flames. Its head tilted back as the pilot tried to scramble free, but a half-second later machine and pilot were engulfed in an orange fireball.

"The keffs have an artillery piece over the dunes. It's tearing us up!" Setz called to Paget, then to his group, "Move back in twos. Don't give them time to get a bead." Again, the air filled with whistling. "Move it, Brawlers, move it!"

The blasts knocked Setz's Gear flat on its back. Thick black smoke filled his view. Setz frantically checked his warning lights — half his auxiliary systems were down and the autocannon was ruined. No fires. Setz breathed a quick thanks and righted his machine, which jerked and shook, but managed to get to its feet. As he scanned the open field, he thumbed the weapon select

switch to his only remaining choice. The Nemesis reached behind its shoulder and retrieved a Gear-sized sledgehammer.

"Brawlers, report." Setz called. Static. Half his com system was fried; he flipped to an open channel. Several of his group's Gears moved into sight, still crouching behind the remaining cover. One pointed out among the dunes and, with hand signals, pointed out the CEF BattleFrames ready to charge.

"Prophet's Spit!" Setz signalled back as his radio blared back to life.

"Watch the cursing," Paget scolded, "and thanks for the diversion."

Fat tracer rounds streaked high over Setz's head and over the dunes. Setz glanced behind him. "That crazy barnaby," he chuckled, ducking. Paget's red and black Kodiak was standing atop one of the town's condensing towers, heavy autocannon pumping fire at the frames. A second later, a fireball rose over the dunes. The rest of Setz's Brawlers regrouped with Paget's team, moving toward the industrial section of Prince Gabriel.

"That's your artillery, but we've still got a mess of frames closing on the city. Two waves, Setz. Call it."

Setz looked down at his hammer. "Let them," he answered, "I've got a plan." He motioned to his group and hefted the sledge. Paget came on the radio.

"Setz, you're on an open frequency. They'll hear everything we say!"

"Let 'em hear. We're going to do this the old fashioned way, if you take my meaning, going in like Dermot in thirty-two."

There was laughter over the radio. "And you call me crazy?" Paget's Gear stepped off of the tower slowing its descent with a blast from her jump-jets. The KADA Gears scattered into the labyrinth cover of warehouses and manufacturing plants.

Battle Report

Bluedawg Brawlers vs. BattleFrames

Continuing their headlong charge, the first wave of BattleFrames let loose a cloud of missile fire into the city. The section had been evacuated as soon as the fighting had begun, and the now-abandoned buildings were blown to bits by the barrage of missiles. Setz smiled; the industrial section now looked like a Khayr ad-Din Gear arena. This was his turf now.

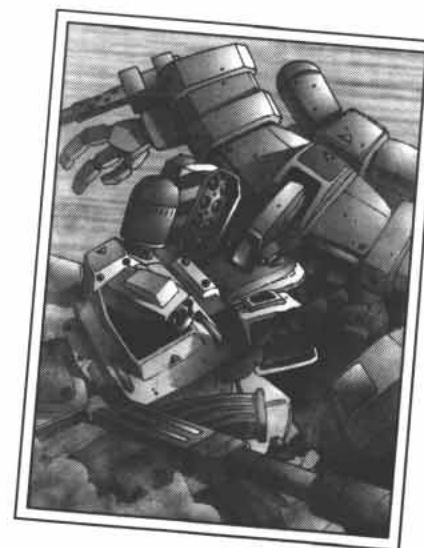
The Frames burst into the city, still racing on their secondary systems. The frames moved into the smoke and rubble, slowing, searching for the remaining Gears. As the lead frame stepped into a clearing, Setz's Nemesis emerged from a pile of rubble, sledgehammer in full swing. The CEF machine was knocked clear off its feet and into its partner, its head a flattened, sparking mess. The two landed in a crumpled heap.

Across the street, two Frames were leveling their weapons when a vibro-axe carved deep into the first's shoulder from behind. Hydraulic fluid and oil sprayed across the second's back as it turned to see the Cobra behind them fire its AP minigun. The shots tore across the frame's torso, ripping into vents and hoses. The engine sputtered black smoke and burst into flame.

Setz smashed the hammer into his second assailant's arm, crushing its shoulder. The Frame's arm slumped to the ground, and Setz's control panel beeped loudly. His battery power was almost gone. With their engines off, the Gears were practically invisible amongst the ruins, but battery reserves were only good for one or two attacks. That was plenty for close quarters like this. Across the rubble, the scene repeated itself as old arena pilots hammered the Frames in close range with sword, lance and club.

"Gentlefolk," said Setz, "start your engines."

The Gears roared to life and again backed into the rubble. They disappeared into the smallest places, under flattened buildings, behind alleys, leaving behind the fallen BattleFrames littering the streets. The second wave of Frames stopped as they came across their teammates. Their numbers had been cut



in half, silently and out of sight of the enemy. The lead vehicle motioned to the others and they began to retreat out of the city.

As they crested the first set of dunes, they saw Paget's team waiting for them. In the distance the CEF dropship was a smoldering wreck. While Setz's group was engaging the frames, Paget had worked her way around and cut off their retreat. "I know you can hear me, keff," said Paget, her finger playing across the trigger, "I suggest you give it- "

The surviving frames fired without hesitation, trying to retreat back to the city. Paget's team returned fire, knocking one enemy after the other off the top of the dune. The Frames that made it out of the ambush were caught by Setz's Brawlers. Soon, there was nothing more than piles of crushed hulks sprawled across the dunes.

"Dermot in thirty-two, huh?" said Paget, turning her machine toward the dropship. Setz leaned back in his cockpit, pulled off his gloves and helmet. Bernalia Dermot had lost an entire dueling team when she had them turn off their engines in the middle of a match. Flamboyant and charming as she was, the duelist never recovered her reputation.

"I figured that Dermot's tactics were sound," said Setz "she just didn't have the luck that I do."

Leader

Field Report

To: SRID

From: Agent Colburn

Re: New Leadership (cont.)

I believe we can confirm that the main drive behind the re-organization of the surviving Humanist forces is Mykael Navar — or someone who has assumed his identity. It might be worthwhile to run some DNA tests on the bodies we recovered at White Rock to verify this. Personally, though, I would assume that it is indeed the real person we are facing. His leadership abilities are just too good.

Game Resources



RPG: Leadership figures make great Non-Player Characters, though it's better not to let them hog all the spotlight. In this case, for example, Mykael Navar is better used as a patron giving orders and opportunities, rather than a fighter by the side of the PCs. His mere acknowledgement of the PCs might be reward enough after a difficult mission.



Tactical: Both the underground Humanist troops and several bandit gangs are running numerous skirmishes along the border of the Southern Republic (see previous Storyline Book). Most of the scenarios should take place in Jungle or Light Urban terrain, with Gears and other mobile units on the attackers side. See the MILICIA Army List for unit ideas for the defending forces.

The Phoenix Alliance raiders have shown surprising resilience, no doubt thanks to the strong leadership of Navar. If he was to be caught while in one of his field visits, it would deal an important blow to the neo-Humanist movement. He's getting a little old to play around with Gears, but I hear he can still hold his own. He's also quite smart, so don't expect him to fall for a simple trap.

The link between the various resistance groups seems to be holding so far, what with the mutual enemy they have to face. The cell structure they are using as thus far resisted my surface probes, which means I might have to start using hired help to dig deeper. There's always a weak link somewhere in a resistance movement, someone who'll trade information for safety.

I know that I've seen several convoys of MILICIA trucks heading toward various stations along the border — reinforcements? That would indicate he has been more even successful than I first observed. (By the way, you might want to warn the local MILICIA commanders in charge of this deployment to be a bit more careful — if I can map their movements, the enemy can as well.)

I've heard rumors of advances made toward certain groups in the ESE and beyond. I seem to remember that the Humanists were studying hover tanks at one point, so you might want to keep an eye on any travel between the region and Port Arthur... just in case.

The only real question remains... They are getting stronger. Where are they getting their supplies?

Balance of Power

Conversation

> *Personal Recorder Download*

> *Transcribing to Datafile*

Tanaka: Makkins has, surprisingly, come through for us. His associates in NuCoal are putting forth significant financial backing starting next week. Some of his associates are following suit, but not to the same extent.

Lang: That's odd — they don't have the economy to support outside powers, especially without any kind of return.

Tanaka: They're scared, Regina. They were right near the CEF drop site, and they'll be the first to be infiltrated... they're scared. This whole situation is going downhill far too quickly for my tastes.

Lang: It's been going downhill since Peace River, Kenichi.

Tanaka: No — no, this is different. Earth is harrying us now, prodding an already wounded animal. They think they can intimidate us into backing down. We need to start pushing back. Raids and scout missions aren't enough anymore. We need something bigger.

> *Silence*

Lang: What are you suggesting?

Tanaka: An Alliance.

Lang: Impossible. It's too soon. We-

Tanaka: Not impossible. We formed the cabinet — put things in motion — for just this sort of situation.

Lang: Yes, things that cannot be-

Tanaka: We can push up the timetable-

Lang: Dammit Tanaka, stop interrupting me! The Leagues don't know the big picture. That's why we started the Cabinet! It's going to take time.

Tanaka: We don't have that kind of time! We need to start using the power the Leagues have given us.

Lang: Power they don't know we have yet!

Tanaka: They'll know soon enough. You have to trust me.

Lang: Kenichi, I have always trusted you, but if you push this, everything we've worked for will crumble in our hands.

Tanaka: I disagree. Look at the Black Talon teams. We can use their selfless cooperation as a model. We can make the Leagues understand!

Lang: I know your opinions on this and its been very convincing to the public, but the people who make the decisions about world politics aren't fighting for their lives against Earthers, they're living quite comfortably in lush offices. They're quite happy where they are; the last thing they want is sand in their shoes.

Tanaka: Then we use the public against them. No matter how powerful, they must answer to the public, even in the South. This is how we got started; this is how we should proceed.

Lang: Kenichi... Fine. You've obviously got a plan; let's hear it.

> *Download Complete*

Desperate Friendships

Personal Journal

>Personal Journal Entry

>Timcode *date* 32:01:27

>Activating Encryption

>Recording Start -

I met with Kenichi tonight, away from the ears of the increasingly difficult Cabinet. Against my own morals, I have begun to record even our private conversations. I keep telling myself that these recordings are for some kind of prosperity. A record of who we really were during, what I feel, is the greatest change (challenge?) of our time. But in the end I still feel like a spy, some sort of vile political tool.

Could it be that because of my failures in my personal life I have turned to political loyalty? But Loyalty to whom and to what end. Nothing has made much sense since Victa left. Even the shock of the recent attacks has me moving on automatic, like some solemn Gear. Perhaps it is simply loyalty to duty. Kenichi is the only thing, no, person I've been emotional about since the divorce. And that's mostly anger.

The honest fact is I feel terrible about humoring Kenichi. I should be his ally in this, but I know him too well. Once he gets to this point, it is better to let him speak no matter how crazy he might sound, only I have to keep reminding myself that it was his crazy idea that started this friendship. I'm afraid that if I confront him on this, I'll lose the last true friend I have. As devastating as that would be, I still mustn't let it cloud my judgment. There is so much more at stake here than my happiness.

I have known Kenichi for too long and too well to not love him for the friend he is, but this man I've known is changing, I fear, for the worse. His constant exhaustion and obsession with personal and global redemption is beginning to make him desperate for change. Considering the delicacy of the times, this is a dangerous way to be. But is it dangerous to just himself or to us all?

>Recording End



Friend or Foe?

Trideo Broadcast

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to another installment of "Terra Nova Today." We have two guests with us tonight, Albert Van Houte <polite applause> and Laurent de Godefroy <polite applause> Mr. Van Houte is a political science lecturer at the University of Newton, while Mr. de Godefroy holds the Chair of Sociopolitical Economics over at the College d'Etudes Superieure. Gentlemen, tonight's topic is of course Port Arthur, the unknown quantity in the Badlands. Friends... or foes?

de Godefroy: Well, Germain, I believe that indeed, as the recent events have proved, we are still at risk. The imperialistic New Earth Commonwealth presents all the classic signs of a militaro-industrial complex run amok and turning on itself, which can only be sustained by a constant intake of new victims — in this case, ourselves.

Germain: and the other colonies, I presume.

de Godefroy: Certes, certes... Provided they still exist and have not succumbed to a disaster of some kind, either natural or man-made... As I was saying, the creature must thus feed itself, and although the Port Arthur appendage, if you will suffer such a gross comparison, as been on its own for a while, it can but reproduce the behavior of the larger entity.

Van Houte: Allow me to disagree here. While the CEF itself was certainly an example of the worst type of social organization possible, the fact that those it has left behind have managed to build a new life for themselves here on this planet say a lot. It is especially telling that they have managed to retrain their genetic constructs to serve purposes other than violence...

de Godefroy: Mere side effects. Cut off from the blood supply of the greater whole — to continue with the beast analogy — they had to develop their own life support system, which implies of course a whole social-like organization.

Van Houte: But couldn't they simply have *taken* what they needed from their neighbors, in effect, lived off the land?

de Godefroy: Errr... yes, of course. But doing so might have exposed them to retaliatory attacks by forces from the polar armies or, more likely, other equatorial communities, such as the... the Paxton-funded mercenaries?

Germain: The Peace River Defense Force?

de Godefroy: Oui! As I said, it would have opened them to retaliation and ultimately, destruction, should they have chosen that course of action.

Van Houte: But others have chosen that very route nonetheless. The GREL would-be dictator that managed to carve a small empire near the Great White Desert for a short time...

de Godefroy: A mere puppet flopping about, its strings cut. It is utterly irrelevant to my thesis...

Game Resources



RPG: Port Arthur remains an uncertain party for many Terranovans. Though they have largely gone native, most people see the former Earth troops with suspicions. What does not help, of course, is that despite Colonel Arthur's allegiance to his new home, elements within the ranks are still aligned with their old masters and providing them with supplies and help in the field.



Tactical: The armed forces of Port Arthur are perfect for Players wishing to field CEF equipment (hovertanks, GREs) without taking their campaign off the planet. It is also the sole force that has the resources to field both Earth and Terranovan equipment, which makes it an interesting army choice for the completist gamer.

Taking Side

Conversation

Wind whipped the fine dust into dancing streams outside the windows, but Colonel Charles Arthur III, master of the city-state of Port Arthur, wasn't watching them. His gaze was focused on the horizon. The most recent intelligence reports lay open on the desk nearby.

"They still hate us, don't they? After all this time..."

"Can you blame them?" Provoff was a younger officer who had come here as a mere trooper recruit, barely out of his teenage years. Most of his formative years had been spent on Terra Nova. "Like it or not, we are the enemy."

"But that's the point — we're not!"

Provoff smiled. "But they have no way of knowing that, do they?"

Colonel Arthur turned slowly away from the window. "No, I guess they don't." Time had etched more lines into his rugged face, and the decades spent under the desert sun had tanned his skin a deep rudy brown. More than time, however, the worries and the strain of caring for an entire city weighted heavily on his shoulders. "They should."

He went back to his seat and sat down heavily. "There are enough natives leaving here as citizens that the entire planet should have realized by now we don't present any danger to them."

"People can be turned, colonel. Especially poor, starving people." Provoff, as usual, played the Devil's Advocate. "And there were enough collaborators during the War to prove it."

"The War is long over, son."

"Not to them. Especially not after the raids."

"We had alliances with locals. The Humanists, for example."

"Most of which are gone or on the run; I would not be surprised to see Navar succeed in his little rebellion. We might yet hear from them."

"Perhaps. Not that we need them." He looked at the city spread under them. "We have done well for ourselves."

Provoff looked uneasy. "There might be another explanation for the most recent intelligence reports, sir. Two of them, actually. The first is, of course, that our network of informants is insufficient or being fed incorrect information to lure us into a paranoid state. This is quite possible — SecBuro has always been overstretched. I much prefer that explanation to the other one."

"Which is?" Arthur was not accustomed to seeing Provoff hesitate.

"Someone in SecBuro wants us to feel insecure and wary of the rest of the planet."



Playing the Wildcard

Personal Letter

Kenichi Tanaka,

First let me put your mind at ease regarding the secrecy of this contact. I have insured that no-one but my best courier has laid eyes on this package, and even she does not know of its contents. In this day of networked information technology, this ancient manner of communication seems the safest for the things I must tell you. You must understand the importance of discretion in these circles in which we move.

I realize that I am the last person you may trust in these matters; I have for too long been my father's daughter, my League's daughter. I have played the game of the Republic with as much efficiency and malice as any of our associates and learned much from it. The time for games has passed. I grant that the information I enclose and the course of action I suggest will help me in my goals, but I urge you to consider the fact that my ends are also yours in this case. The greater good demands action, and surely no plans and alliances made these past years have been accomplished solely for altruistic purposes.

I began cataloguing my father's activities out of boredom when I was quite young. Several times I was caught and warned away; this only made me more curious and careful. When I was old enough to understand the consequences of my father's maneuverings I realized that they were not in the best interests of the Republic, let alone the world. This continues to be the case. I did not care then, but in light of the all too real threat of extra-planetary aggression, I have been forced to look outside of my own sheltered world, and I am afraid.

I am afraid for our way of life, for my homeland, but most of all I am afraid for our society and way of life. We Terranovans have not always done the best with what we have, but I know, I have to believe, that it is better than what Earth will do with us. Will do to us. More people must understand this, they must know my fear.

I have attached my findings to this message. It includes a list of the activates and people that threaten our future. I know that much of this information will disturb you in these critical times, and for that I am sorry, but I can think of no one else to turn to. Help me stop the games, Kenichi. Help me turn the eyes of our homeland to the future.

In Trust,

Louise DeRouen

Game Resources



RPG: Though most of the hot spots are currently located at the frontier between the Republic and the former Alliance territories, the rest of the South is still simmering with local unrests and troubles. Rebels in the ESE want to get rid of the Emir system entirely, while bandits use the chaos to raid and pillage isolated villages.



Tactical: Bandit raids, lost MILICIA troops, Northern military advisors - almost any faction and troops can clash in the varied terrains of the Southern Hemisphere. Most actions will have very specific mission goals, such as "capture" or "recon"; very few battles will involve the complete destruction of one side or the other.

personal letter

Cleaning House

Audio Recording

>Bryon Marche: - Personal Recording

>Time Code 12:01:23 *Date*

>VI data downloaded Begin Playback

> Forward to Time Code 12:04:52

Marche: I can see no option but to eliminate the Northern import of competitive product in order to-

<Loud Noises>

<No VI Match Voice 1> Stay in your seat, sir.

Marche: What is the meaning of this?!

<VI Match Kenichi Tanaka> You tell me, Marche; the Republic wants to know why you have betrayed her. <muffled> Search the room.

Game Resources



RPG: Assassination has always been a powerful (if somewhat distasteful) political tool. Player Characters can get involved in several ways: they might be witness; they might inadvertently stop an attempt; they might be set up as patsies to take the fall (especially if this allows a nemesis to take them out of the picture); they might even be ordered to commit one!



Tactical: Not all assassinations need to be of the "cloak and dagger" kind. A rocket fired from a Gear standing on a hillside through the roof of a passing staff car will kill as surely as a poisoned needle. Most targets are smart enough, however, to surround themselves with troops and body guards

Marche: What? Tanaka, I've done nothing.

Tanaka: Arela Rheingold? Does the name sound familiar?

Marche: Tanaka, if this is about revenge-

Tanaka: How much did she know? Did she see so much that she deserved what you did to her — deserved to die in a manner I would not wish even on you?

Voice 1: Sir, we found it.

<Silence>

Tanaka: How far does this go and who is involved? How far, Marche?

Marche: ...all the way. Everything you need is in that file.

Voice 1: He's telling the truth, sir, this is it.

Tanaka: Good. I'm surprised, Marche: , you've redeemed yourself. I suppose you thought that this information would have gotten you somewhere?

Marche: That was my hope, yes, but now they'll hunt me down.

Tanaka: I'll save them the trouble.

Marche: Tanaka, no!

<Gunshot>

Tanaka: For Mademoiselle Rheingold.

>End Recording

Countermoves

Personal Recorder Log

>Personal Recorder Log<

>Time Index: 25:12:56<

Molay: Where have you been?

Voice [Unidentified]: There's been a lot to take care of since the bombing. What needs to be done?

Molay: Tanaka's been asking a lot of questions. About myself and my work; questions he has no business asking, about subjects he has no business knowing. He's not being subtle about it, either. He's using every contact he has, tearing the Estates General apart. He's already made several arrests.

Voice: That's his style, all right. Or was, years ago...

Molay: But why now, when we are so close? He's never had any ambitions for power. His involvement with the Cabinet is for some high and mighty... Why are you looking at me like that?

Voice: You know how he got involved. Think about it.

[Silence]

Molay: She finally did it, didn't she.

Voice: That's what I will assume. And he's been asking questions about you. It's simple deduction — she has turned against you and put up a very effective shield against retaliation. If you don't watch your step, you'll find yourself in the spotlight alone.

Molay: You wouldn't dare. When did you start thinking you were anything without me?

Voice: When you were outwitted by a child.

Molay: You're going to tell me that you support a military action, with our friend in the Badlands?

Voice: That's why he's there, isn't it?

Molay: You're mad.

Voice: I would have to be to get involved with you. Not an open action, no. Lieutenant Phiya is eager to get started and her cover is most convincing. All we have to do is get Tanaka looking the other way for a few days and the trail will go cold.

Molay: And my role in all of this?

Voice: Continue with your economic gambit. It will be a while before Tanaka realizes what you are up to. Just don't screw this up.

>End Log<



conversation

Power Showdown

Intel Report

"Emirate artillery pounded the mountains around Skavara since last week. Local authorities have blamed numerous civilian casualties, including at least twenty deaths, on Loyalist attacks over the weekend. Etherald Palace officials have said the bombardments have not targeted civilian villages. Shupar Sektor, one of the unit commanders in the region, has asked local tribal elders to help rout out "bandits and opposition forces," but they rejected his request, planning to take matters into their own hands with at least two hundreds fighters.

North of the city, two villages fell to anti-Loyalist forces. Sporadic gunfire and artillery outbursts could be heard near Skavara, sources in the city said, and residents were on edge, fearful of an attack. Intense bombing destroyed two bridges crossing the mountains into the city, leaving it with fewer access routes and isolating it further from the surrounding countryside.

Another contingent of bandit fighters who were holed up in the historic village of Bha agreed Monday to surrender to the Emirate forces if MILICIA troops are present, alliance sources said. The surrender is set to begin next week, although many of the fighters, under the command of known local bandit-king Jelal, were reportedly refusing to give up.

"This is Alban DuMaurier, reporting from the Eastern Sun Emirates."

Rebuilding

Requisition Report

>From: Jibril Haig
>To: HEO Milani DuBeau-Slovenski
>Re: New Facilities
>preceding page<

We have managed to relocate most of the surviving population and refugees in the new quarters. Life has gone back to normal for many of them, which is something we have to be thankful for. There are still a few problems here and there (see the sample memo attached, for your amusement), but we should be able to restart production on many of our lines in the near future.

Food has stopped to be a problem, thanks to those extra resources you managed to bargain for. I don't know where you got them and frankly, I don't care — they should tidy us up until the first crops come out of the greenhouses.

>continue<

>To: Lauren
>From: Joe
>Re: filters GY65957 and follow-up

Hey buddy,

I put in the requisition for those filters about a season ago — got any idea where they are? The boss has been riding my butt all week because the air conditioning equipment is not online in Wing B and he got about fifty families waiting. But I can't make a move on the blowers until I get those filters, see?

Other than that, work is progressing well. I got some trouble with some of the prefab panels out in the rear section, but I got a couple of boys and girls from the PRDF to come with their Gears and help out. Just a little more work — and those filters! — and we'll be up and running, at least on Wing B of this building.

Delays

Conversation

"I'm sorry, Miss, but the..." The old project director was now sweating profusely.

"I don't want to hear it. I've read the report." Paxton Acting CEO Milani DuBeau-Slovenski drummed her slender fingers on the hard polymerate desktop.

"We can ask for more support and material from the NuCoal delegates." The man's voice was croaked, as if he was being forced to say things that would inevitably cause him pain later.

"The old goats would make us pay through the nose. No, we'll wait a bit longer. It's not like the field production units won't be able to get these from our mining concessions anyway. And stop cowering, it's annoying. I'm perfectly capable of hearing bad news without killing the messenger."

Game Resources



RPG: The city-state of Peace-River may have been physically destroyed, but its spirit, although wounded, is unbroken. Paxton loyalists are scouring the planet calling in favors and gathering forces to plot their revenge against the forces of Earth. They might be willing to offer help or supplies in exchange for something the Characters own or can provide



Tactical: Numerous rovers, bandits and scavengers of all kinds have been attracted like vultures to the carcass of the city-state. Unknown amounts of riches and high technology still lie hidden under the rubbles and in half-collapsed passageways, and the overworked PRDF has its hands full dealing with them. They occasionally get help from the KADA.



The director could not hide the fact that he doubted her statement very much, but regained some of his composure. "It will take more time. They are still waiting for additional vehicles to replace the ones that have broken down due to the extra workload. And, if I may be so bold to add..."

He froze momentarily under the withering gaze of his superior. "...errr, the crew would need replacement as well. Many of them have been working almost without rest for the past season and..."

"Of course." She smiled thinly at his change of expression. "Oh, don't be so surprised. I'm doing this to keep the schedule, not out of the goodness of my heart. Next?"

The director got up slowly. "That is all for today. Unless you need me for something else..."

"No. You may go." She was already looking through her files, the director forgotten. He quickly exited the office, a look of palpable relief on his face.

Milani counted to ten and exhaled slowly. She glanced at the picture hidden in her wristcom and sighted. She slowly got up and moved to the small window. Her field office was a far cry from the opulent suite she once occupied within the original Peace River arcology. It overlooked the green and tan patchwork of the new Peace River; a well-meaning employee had covered the front of the small tower with a beguiling variety of jungle vine and other vegetation.

"More delays," she muttered. "Always more delays. But that's okay. Revenge is a dish best served cold. Very cold..."

Heavy Guns

Tech Report

To: Janis

From: Guy

Re: The gun and other misc. things

Attached File: 9756G97

Hey Janis,

I've attached the latest ballistic reports on the new gun. What a sweet piece of equipment it is! We've had some problems with overheating in the barrel, but I think that if we add a micron or two of alloy inside we should be fine. There's a bit of bad news, though. That's going to add at least a few thousand Marks to the cost of the manufacturing process. I know the bean counters aren't going to be happy about that, but there's little we can do about it (unless they want their precious guns to melt on the third firing!).

Game Resources



RPG: A Gear update program requires much investments and efforts: scientists and prototypes alike need protection from hostile intelligence agents and saboteurs, new pieces must be designed and tested, etc. Even acquiring a sub-production contract can be turned into an adventure for a corporate group!



Tactical: Prototypes have to be tested in the field! Check the Vehicle Compendiums for a few models, or use the vehicle design system in the Tech Manual, 2nd Edition to slightly update the stats of your favorite Gear design (+1 MP in one mode, upgunned autocannon, extra rockets, etc.). Do not forget those Lemon Dice (page 135 of the Tech Manual, 2nd Edition).

Jerod's team in hangar 3B have been making some spectacular process as well. They've been working on that old battered Grizzly, you know, the one we used to train the new kids on. He's been drilling and repositioning, and I've seen them bring in crates of spare parts. From the markings, I'd say those are racing parts for Dueling Gears. I thought Jerod had been watching too much trideo again (including that stupid Southern show — I keep telling him it's all fixed, but he calls it "sports entertainment," the idiot) but it seems to work.

From what we can tell, the reworked Grizzly can move with approximately the same agility as one of our old Hunters, though it's still a bundle to handle at high speeds. Jerod is very enthusiastic about the whole process, and he thinks it might be possible to do the same with a whole series of Gears (including other big models like the Southies' Spit). I tell him he's nut if he thinks the army's going to agree to buy shiploads of expensive racing parts. But hey, it works, and he'll meet his quarterly review with flying colors.

I went over the report you've sent me about the Southern programs. Hey, I agree with you, they got to be doing the same thing we are. I read the report about the new armor plate configuration for the Mamba, and if they start retrofitting their existing machines (how long does it take to change the engine assembly on one of those things, anyway?) the drill sergeants are going to have to change their entire tactical drills, eh eh.

I think we can grab an idea or two there. I was having a drink with a tech from Shaian — you know, Lida, the cute redhead I told you about last week? — and she was telling me that a bunch of people visited their offices last week, all official and everything. She thinks they were Cabinet people, but there were a few Westerners with them. From what she heard, the Protectorate wants to start bringing in their Cheetahs for refurbishing. I don't think they'll all go to the Strike config — wayyyy too expensive — but maybe they can toughen up the little bugger...

[<click here to continue>](#)

Gear Upgrade Program

Research Report

09.WI.44

02-29

A Happy Event

ETN Special Broadcast

Consort Lysia Masao-Shirow, gave birth to a baby girl last night after more than five cycles of marriage to Patriarch Shirow. The Eastern Suns Emirate has had its share of reigning female monarchs, so a female heir is a welcome addition to the family.

Congratulations kept pouring in for the planet's newest royal infant. In an exceptional show of good will, the Patriarch has indicated that the palace grounds will be open to the public next week, allowing the thousands of well-wishers lining up along the walls to sign their names in special books of celebration.

Despite the intense interest, it remains unclear when the public will get its first glimpse of the little heir. Access to the royal family is strictly controlled and limited mainly to pictures issued on birthdays and other holidays.

Game Resources



RPG: Though most Terranovan political entities have officially moved beyond the primitive "familial inheritance" leadership model, in practice many societies and social groups still use it (the ESE being the most blatant). It is not unusual to see an elder son or daughter succeed his father as the village chief, for example, and many CEOs and corporate movers groom their children for a future in the enterprise. Needless to say, the emotional and training investments made in these heirs make them both valuable and vulnerable to hostile interests. Assassination, kidnapping, influence traffic

"Nothing has been decided yet, but most likely the first glimpse of the baby will indeed be when the Consort has regained her strength," an official said. How the baby is introduced could hint at changes in the royal family as the Patriarch and Consort come into their own as parents. The media indicated that Lysia is likely to remain in bed for a week to two weeks. There may, however, be a glimpse of the baby when it is named later this week in a day to be filled with elaborate traditional ritual.



Kidnapped!

Palace Security

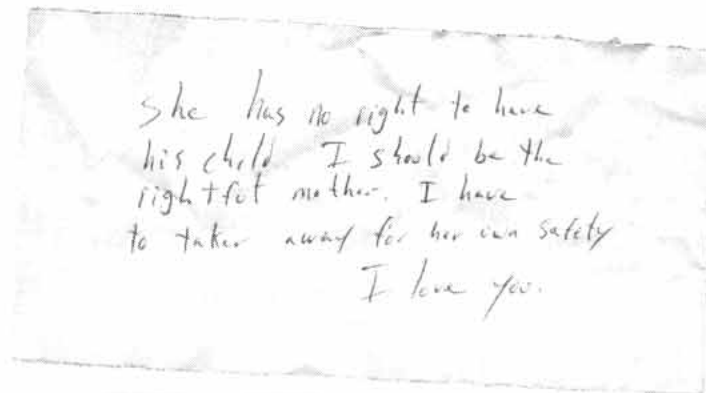
>To All Units<

Alert! This is a Class One priority alert!

One of the night guards has found the heir's nurses in a pool of blood, near Her Highness' room. They were killed with a silenced weapon, by a perpetrator who has inside access and security codes. There was a crumbled note besides the crib, but it could be a false lead.

Awaken the Patriarch and scramble the Guards — since the heir wasn't killed on sight, we can assume she's relatively safe for the time being. No one is to use weapons of any kind to avoid risking Her Highness' life. If any do, they'll answer in blood and pain.

The intruder cannot be allowed to leave the Ethereal Palace's ground!



Vid-capture 1:

There's nothing in this sector either — move on.

Vid-capture 2:

Wait! There, right at the corner... That's him!

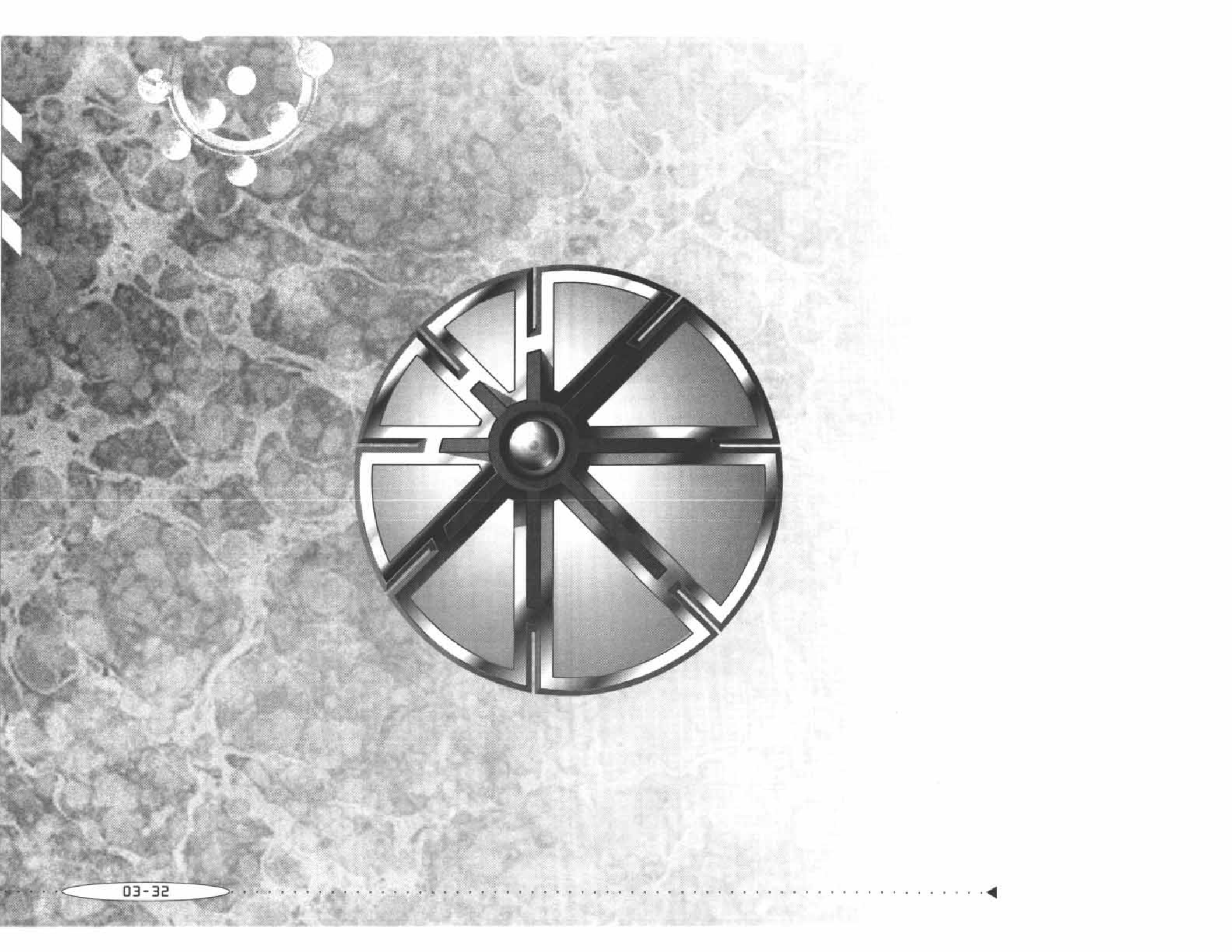
Vid-capture 3:

Moving fast — that's someone who knows the palace well.

Vid-capture 4:

Damn! We can see his face!

Correction — *her* face. Follow me!



Current Affairs - Caprice

From the Journal of Nicosia Renault

(7 Winter 1944) – I despise most of my contacts on Caprice at the moment, but complaining isn't going to get the communication channels to be any faster or more efficient. There must be a better way to get information back and forth, as the bits and pieces that I can manage to compile are obviously not giving me anything close to the whole picture. What information I have is no doubt woefully out of date, and I can only make guesses as to what's been going on in the meantime.

I get most of my communiqués smuggled in through Gatepods and by the Talons, and there have been a couple of lasercoms set up to beam reports through a micro-Gate — yet still, it's not enough. I've heard enough about Caprice to know that going there is not an option, but once the skies are open again and travel to the other colonies is possible once more, it might be better to make the trips myself rather than rely forever on these tiny scraps of data.

I can't help but wonder what happened at Bastille Alpha with the GREL and human prisoners. A large rebellion was planned seasons ago, and the caves beneath the prison breached, but I would have heard had the plans been successful. Even the dismal communications network between the worlds wouldn't have prevented that information from getting to me; even if my own contacts were prevented from sending, the information would surely have been made known to the Terranovan power-players, and once the data comes to ground it's a simple task to acquire. I can see three possibilities: the rebellion attempt failed; it's on hold for now while supplies are smuggled in or new contacts made; or it was successful, and appearances are kept up to avoid alerting the CEF to the changes in management. They would not be adverse to wiping out the whole mountain range from orbit if they had to.

I've seen some reports that give me pause; the CEF has finally discovered the existence of a long-suspected Fifth Column in their upper echelons. The fact that some of their highest-ranking officers are traitors will hopefully keep them so inwardly focused that they'll have less time to spend attacking Terra Nova. Come to think of it, this may be why I've heard nothing out of the Bastille —

Colonel Hendricks, the warden of the prison-fortress, has begun something of a major personal crusade to rid the CEF of the traitors. This means that his attention will be entirely focused on the forces themselves, leaving the Bastille to function on its own. That would be the perfect time for the revolt to strike, and I can only assume that, if the rebellion is still underway, that they've been waiting for just such an opportunity.

Our Liberati friends have been quiet but pleased; their plans are chugging along in the background, but the most positive result has come from nothing greater than the forces of sheer boredom! The CEF troops left on the surface have been sinking into depression and their morale has been dropping impressively low; their superiors obviously hadn't given much thought to the logistics of a long-term posting, and the troops have been assimilating into the population quite neatly. They don't get moved around often enough to break forming relationships, and I'd wager that if the CEF called everyone home today, there would be quite a large number of Caprician war brides and grooms tagging along as well. This can only mean good things for the Liberati, and poor response for the CEF when action is called for.

There are some odd reports in here about an unidentified man who seems to pop up quite often in offhanded remarks, on the edge of photographs, and in strange, seemingly random places across both Terra Nova and Caprice. I've found what seems to be scans of scraps of some people's journals in my in-box yesterday. The identity of the person or persons who sent me the scans — and why they sent them in the first place — remains unknown, for now, but someone out there is determined to bring him to my attention. Perhaps he's the missing piece in all of this...

Operation Icarus

Fleet Report

To: Fleet Admiral Winthrop

Cc: CEF Central Command, Vice Admiral Gresfield

From: Vice Admiral Edith Mubatu

Re: Operation Icarus

I have provided this summary as an overview of the results of Operation Icarus, completed three months previous. More in-depth detail can be found in the attached file ref. Icarus 89-792c.

I believe that Operation Icarus was very much a success in every aspect of its execution. We have not only crippled the Terranovan fleet, but crippled their morale as well. All objectives of the operation were met and some exceeded their expectations. Keep in mind that our information regarding the long-term results of the operation is still being reported by our agents. The current results are as follows:

1. Ellis Island (Crete): This objective was more difficult to achieve, due to its use as the headquarters for the Black Talon operations. The fleet gathered there was able to respond more quickly than we had anticipated due to readiness and exceptional leadership. I have put in a request that the Admiral in charge of repulsing our attack be assassinated.

2. Zeus Shipyards: The primary shipyards of the Terranovan fleet. Our strike team was able to destroy most of the yards and repair facilities. The personnel structures were turned into a graveyard. Without significant resources these facilities will not be operational within the next several years.

3. Transfer Stations: Gate travel requires these stations for refueling and passenger transport. Through disruptive strikes, we have narrowed the ally of approach to key Gates and significantly slowed intersystem travel.

4. Elimination of Gateships: We managed to discover the hiding places of two of Terra Nova's Gateships. The *Leviathan* registry #UAC-44271 has

been confirmed destroyed. The *Remar Vajra* registry #UAC-52121 was heavily damaged and will be out of commission for some time, considering the condition of their shipyards.

5. Planetary Bombardment of South Lyonesse Launch Facilities: Though our bombardment runs were cut short by the actions of the fleet at Ellis Island, our first strike was enough to wipe out a Northern launch base with additional destruction of surrounding areas.

6. Deployment of SLEDGE Combat Teams: This was a two-fold objective. First was to insert a fresh group of infiltration operatives into the Terranovan "Badlands," and second, a feint to draw attention away from the former, was a suicide group to test the readiness of our SLEDGE piloted Battleframes. Both were a success and we should be getting combat efficiency data from our operatives any day now.

7. Insertion of E-22 Virus Into the Hermes 72 Satellite System: Under cover of our other attacks, a tech squad was able to sneak past the Terranovan defenses and insert a specially designed virus directly into one of the Hermes 72 satellites. This virus acts as an espionage program, searching for keywords in their datafeeds and bursting information to a remote drone in the asteroid clusters. When discovered the virus is programmed to undergo an evolution into multiple virus types designed to infiltrate and disrupt communications and computer systems planet-wide.

As you can see, all of the objectives laid out in our original plan were met. Now that we have taken this first step, it is my belief that we should consider a group of follow-up attacks before the Terranovan forces can regain their footing.

Admiral Edith Mubatu

Operation Icarus

Field Report

20-SU-44

03-35

Arrival

Jaxon's Journal

Caprice Landfall, Day Eight.

Heaven's name! They picked the wrong man for this job. What were they thinking? I'm from the Badlands, the open desert wasteland and they send me to the largest city ever built. Even Peace River would've been a farmer's bungalow next to Gomorrah. Three hundred million people and they expect me to find one man. One man. They've lost a jewel to the sands and their brains as well.

So here I am. On another planet. Not at all where I thought I'd be at this age. Considering I assumed that I would be dead at my age, I should count myself lucky. The trip was less than pleasant, but Gwenlith and I aren't on a lottery holiday. Note to self — get someone to explain the local calendar.

When we were smuggled into the city by Liberati operatives, Gwenlith and I were enclosed in a cargo container and unable to see the city from the air. When we were finally released from our cramped prison, we were in the lower levels of the city. It was several days before I came to understand, appreciate and fear the immense size of Gomorrah.

Gwenlith and I traveled to a district kilometers away, only to find that we were still entrenched in this endless metropolis. If I could find a word better than "overwhelming" I would use it. Wrapping my mind around the raw idea of Gomorra was even more difficult than the crash courses in language, culture and Liberati security procedures.

Caprice Landfall, Day Eleven.

There are sections of the lower levels that are covered in a fine dust. Our Liberati guide tells me that it comes from the metal and composites that make up the city, which are slowly decaying. In any other city the winds or the motion of traffic would blow the dust away or people would pick it up as dirt, washing it away with regular cleaning. Parts of this city, however, have not seen regular contact in decades. This dust on my clothes and hands is the ash of a dead city. Decomposing so slowly that you cannot see it in your lifetime.

Caprice Landfall, Day Fifteen.

Most of our training is over. I am eager to begin tracking down our villain. I still feel unprepared. The only thing I've gotten a good grasp on is the language. Gwenlith still has to remind me about the basics of behavior and I've given up on the dratted calendar. I'm not sure what I'd do without her here. I'd probably be in CEF custody by now.

I think Gwenlith has taken a liking to one of our guides. Not sure I like that. I'm not sure that I trust these Liberati. Gwenlith should be more careful.

Caprice Landfall, Day Eighteen.

Had our first good lead. A Liberati spy in the North end of the city saw our man making contact with CID agents. I believe in miracles now.



Encounters

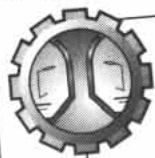
Jaxon's Journal

Caprice Landfall Day Eighteen, Supplemental

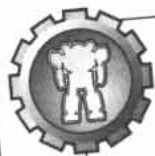
I'm exhausted — after all this travel, I'm still not adjusted to the local day cycle. I keep wanting to fall asleep at the most inconvenient moment, and I don't dare thrust the chemical stimulants that the Capricians seem to consume at an incredible rate.

Met with people all day yesterday, most of the Liberati and other underground fighters. Seems my arrival here was announced and I came highly recommended (though I'm glad they don't know the whole truth), so I'm getting less and less of the early suspicious looks.

Game Resources



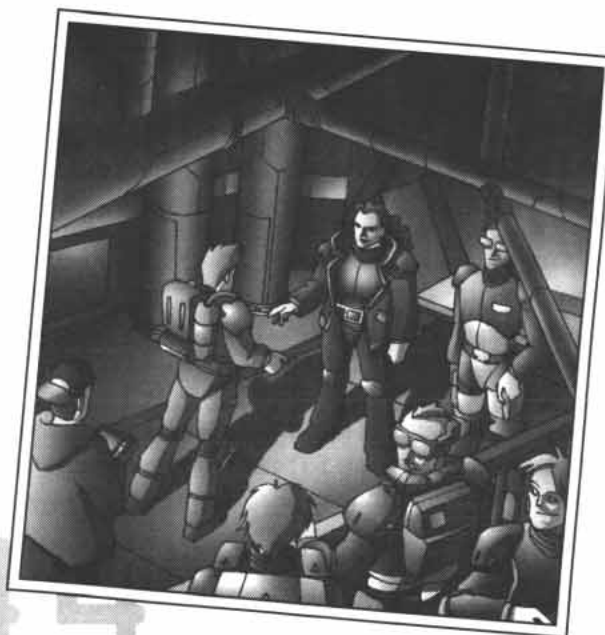
RPG: Though the Liberati and the Terranovans share the same goals, they come from different cultural backgrounds, and thus their approaches to a given problem will vary (and not necessarily mesh well). There is also the matter of distance — the Terranovans on Caprice are few and far from both leadership and support. They are not datarigged, though, making them perfect spies!



Tactical: The main Terranovan contribution to the Caprician underground resistance effort has been military advisors (mostly in the field of vehicle combat) and intelligence suppliers. The few Gears brought by each mission are put to good use in numerous secret raids, most of them aimed at acquiring more equipment for their local allies.

The one thing that bothers me is their approach. Beyond the whole inter-society communication thing — we're all using Anglic as a common language, even if I can't understand their accent — they've got a stubborn streak that makes it hard to agree on anything. They want to do things their way, and are using all the scrapes of information they got as bargaining tools to gain promises of equipment from me. I can't bring them anything, but they can't seem to understand.

This little expedition is going to be a lot more trouble than I first imagined, and I imagined quite a lot. Maybe I should have let them throw me into that Cabinet cell for good, back home...



Home Away from Naught

Field Report

A small Liberati mining operation sat nestled in the hills South of Harridis Ridge, in the Capra wastes. There was no movement save for a lone Pit Bull Heavy Gear darting between scaffolds and heavy equipment. The Pit Bull was closing on another Gear, a brown and white camouflaged Warrior that stood guard over a warehouse. The Pit Bull's mono-eye locked on the metal sentry and its engine revved. The bipedal machine launched itself into a zig-zag charge, weapons blazing. The Warrior sidestepped and returned fire, but was too late. In the cockpit of the Gear, Nathan Matthews smiled as his training readouts lit up like a Foundation Day parade. The Liberati were quick learners.

The Pit Bull screeched to a halt right in front of Nathan's own machine, auto cannon leveled at his cockpit. Nathan's Gear stepped back and put its hands in the air. Nathan could hear the Liberati pilot breathing excitedly over his com set.

"Very good," said Nathan, "but look to your right." The Liberati's Gear swiveled its head, looking over its shoulder. On a nearby ridge a squad of men were hunkered down behind rocks. One of them was hoisting an anti-Gear rifle. The Liberati pilot checked his HUD. Half way through his charge he had taken catastrophic cockpit damage.

"You were dead before you even got to me," said Nathan. The trainee groaned. "You need to keep your head moving," Nathan continued, "just a slight shake from side to side will do it. Gears have a slightly compressed field of view allowing you to see more than you normally would. It takes some getting used to."

"Even if I was watching my right, I wouldn't have been able to see the ambush," said the trainee, "How am I s'posed to see everything at once?" Nathan grimaced at the thick accent, even when they were speaking his language; he still had a problem deciphering the Liberati dialect.

"I'll teach you a trick, he said, "don't look directly at your target. Your peripheral vision is a lot more sensitive to movement and tracking. The FOV

compression enhances that sensitivity. Keep your target just off center — the computer will still track it as hostile and you'll get a better field of view."

"What if the 'puter goes down?" asked the trainee smugly. Nathan smiled and shot back his answer.

"That's what autofire is for." The training group laughed. Nathan checked his watch and winced.

"All right, people," Nathan called over his Gear's loudspeaker, "Let's wrap this up for today. We're going to have a peeping tom in the next twenty." According to hacked schedules, a CEF low orbit observation satellite was scheduled to pass overhead soon. Nathan kicked in the secondary movement system of his Warrior and skated across the training field to the hangers. He and the other pilot maneuvered their machines back behind the mining trucks, out of sight.

Nathan lifted the Gear's canopy with a tired shove. Technicians were already covering the bipedal machines with huge, dirty tarps. Nathan had to hop off the boarding scaffold to avoid being covered along with his machine.

Nathan stepped back and watched the Gears head disappear under the tarp, his helmet resting under his arm. In no time at all the techs had the gears covered and looking quite unnoticeable amongst the other bulky vehicles. Nathan shook his head. Two old, battered Gears and a dozen men to train while dodging spy satellites. The Liberati had decided to fight a war in the most silent way possible. They were normally such a boisterous, outspoken people, but when it came to fighting the CEF they were more deceptive than Southern politicians.

"Nathan!" shouted one of the trainees, Borar. Nathan grinned and gave him a salute. Borar laughed heartily. Borar was too big to pilot a Gear, his specialty was heavy weapons. Nathan was teaching him the best ways to take down five meter tall walking tanks without the armor or firepower afforded the Gears. Borar clasped his arm around Nathan's shoulder, treating Nathan to the unpleasant sweat and odor of the larger man.

Home Away from Naught

Field Report

Nathan smacked the huge man on the back, extricating himself from the bearhug. "Damn good thing we have time for showers before dinner, eh? You smell like a barnaby!" His friend laughed, making a large production out of sniffing his sweaty clothing.

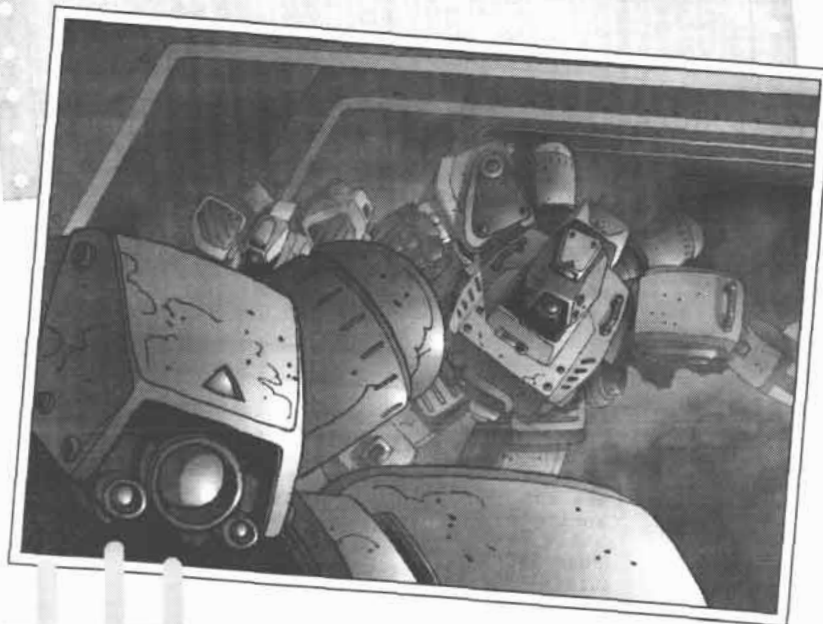
Nathan lost himself in thought as they walked back to shelter beside his new ally. The Liberati were a tough people. He had rarely seen people so sturdy, except in the Badlands. However, under all of that toughness was a deep and accepting warmth. The Liberati thought of Nathan as a brother, a fellow soldier and they would never let him want for anything. They had even tried to send several women — and a man — to him. They reminded him of the people back at Jasmine's Hope, his oasis tower home on Terra Nova.

He had received word months ago that his home had been destroyed in some mysterious attack soon after he left his planet. His spirit had been crushed when he heard that news, home and lover lost in one day. Sorrow and terrible guilt forced Nathan to focus everything on his larger mission. The Black Talons were not enough to take back Caprice and the Liberati, while they had the heart, needed the training and equipment to match their aggressors.

Now, coming back to Borar's tent, his belly and stein both soon to be full, he was amazed at how comfortable his life was becoming, despite the shadow of war around him. How much this cold wasteland was becoming a home. And he would not lose another home.

Liberati Eval
<Comburst 154-77422>
<Timecode 13:51 *date*>
<Decryption Enabled>
From: NM-0407
To: Center 77

The training is going well. Liberati are tenacious and creative pilots. A little headstrong. Have arranged a three-month rotation schedule for the Liberati in the region that can be disguised as regular work migrations. Am training several dozen pilots at once and more are asking to sign up. Need more machines and techs. Anything new on the underground idea? Satellite activity heavy in this region forcing more study of tactics than hands on work. Can you do anything about this?



Closing In

Security Investigation Recording

Timecode:

Decryption Enabled

V1: [VP Lock: Horace Casper, Captain, CID] Let's take a look at the recording — maybe we can see something you missed in your report.

V2: [VP Lock: Bernard Erat, Trooper, Gommorah Security Detail] Sir, I... I don't think...

Casper: Let's start from the beginning. What are we looking at?

Erat: This is the sec-camera near my duty station. It covers the back entrance to a tavern called King's Heart; a favorite of the pilots and dockworkers down in Red Town.

Game Resources



RPG: The CID is understandably very interested by the movements and activities of a resistance movement that was believed to be crushed. Since the first Talon mission, they suspect foreign involvement and are actively seeking out clues and persons that would lead them to the network, allowing them to shut off the supply pipeline.



Tactical: Though a CID investigation is unlikely to develop into a full tactical battle, there could be an occasional urban skirmish between foot troopers, cars and security Combat Mounts (see **[[Life on Caprice]]** for the game stats of the latter). The battle would most likely take place in a factory or urban terrain of some kind, unless the CID is attacking a Liberati camp in the highlands.

recording

03-40

Casper: Start the playback. Who is this?

Erat: That's the first guy. I spotted him earlier in the Heart. He was acting oddly, as though everything around him were new and strange. He had a woman with him.

Casper: What made you notice them?

Erat: I don't know. He kind of stuck out. Like I said, he was acting strangely, asking a thousand questionos about every-day things. Like he didn't know how to handle himself. The woman kept trying to explain things, as though she were teaching a child.

Casper: Did you report this behavior?

Erat: No, sir I didn't. I thought he may have been disabled or mentally ill — amnesia, perhaps.

Casper: I see. Run playback please... Freeze. Is that-

Erat: Yes sir, that's the woman he was with.

Casper: So our man and his girlfriend are waiting around in a bar. Security is moderate near the star port, and unless he had work clearance he wouldn't be there. He's not stupid. A stupid man gets himself shot at the gate. His girlfriend got him in and is coaching him on how to behave...

Erat: I suppose so, sir.

Casper: That wasn't a question, Bernard, just run the playback.

Erat: Yes, sir... This is when we noticed that something was going on in the alley. We started over, but-

Closing In

Security Investigation Recording

Casper: Freeze the frame. Who is this?

Erat: That's the second man, the one they encountered. We don't have any confirmation of his identity.

Casper: You don't know how he managed to breach all of our security protocols either, I suppose?

Erat: No, sir, but he does seem surprised to see the other two.

Casper: Noted — well observed. Let's try to trace the events. Our mystery couple waits for something, but in the meantime intercepts another intruder. They all pull guns and... begin a conversation? How odd. This is no mugging or assassination then, so... What was that? Back it up. Freeze it there.

Erat: Automatic fire, sir.

Casper: From your men?

Erat: From my men.

Casper: This is the part that you so carefully glossed over in your report, isn't it? Sloppily done, trooper — no warning, no attempt at arrest, just shoot first and then question their corpses? I'm sure you planned to get reams and reams of useful information out of them.

Erat: They had weapons drawn, sir—

Casper: Bernard, we have been looking for this second man since his arrival on Caprice. Capturing him would have been a real feather in your cap; those responsible for transferring you out of this scumplit into a much nicer hub would have seen fit to reward such service.

Erat: I... yes, sir...

Casper: Run the tape. Watch it with me. All three scatter. The woman returns fire, killing one of your men, and they get away. Not a very good evening for you, or the families of your troops. I can't say what will happen to you and yours now. I know that there are worse places in the city than this, boy. That is why we have procedure.

Erat: Sir, if there's anything I can do to—

Casper: You've already done it, Bernard, and quite effectively.

Erat: Sir, I'll do anything...

Casper: I'm sure you would...
Let's talk.



recording

Desperation Game

Jaxon's Journal, Part 2

Caprice Landfall, Day Twenty-Three.

We have been in hiding for five days now. The Liberati call this a safe house, but I don't feel very safe. After our failure in taking our target, the whole of Gommorrah is searching for us, no doubt with orders to kill. I cannot sleep. Every time I close my eyes I think I hear someone coming for us. I have been over our encounter in my mind countless times. The man we tracked down didn't seem to be part of the CEF. If he was, why were his own men firing on him? Why was he sneaking around behind taverns? He was so filthy, like he had been on the run for a while. None of it makes sense.

Gwenlith came away from our encounter wounded and I have had to tend to her. Her wound is infected with one of the many bacteria that crawl over this mad hell. I'm doing my best, but I am no doctor and the Liberati won't let us leave. I've got half a mind to go and find one myself. I cannot lose her.

Caprice Landfall, Day Twenty-Six.

I managed to sneak Gwenlith past our Liberati friends and find a doctor. Now, I am wanted by both sides, as the Liberati are looking for us as well. I will not reveal myself until Gwenlith is cured. I was sloppy, but have covered my trail without bloodshed. Now, I watch Gwenlith sleep and my body begs to rest, but I can't — not until she wakes. The pistol I held for so long has gotten heavy. I have left it pointing toward the door in case someone comes.

It has been several days and the doctor is acting suspicious. He keeps asking me questions, trying to get me to say something about my homeworld. I must find a way to silence him. He was talking to a young boy this morning so I know they'll be coming soon.

Caprice Landfall, Day Thirty.

I almost erased the last two entries, but I thought they would serve better as a reminder. I am sitting in a Liberati camp well away from Gommorrah.

We are in a hilly region in the South Capra Wastelands, and the camp is alive with families. Children, precocious as they are, run and play; the adults are in a circle, laughing and telling stories. There is a Black Talon member here, teaching the Liberati how to use our Gears. It has been a long while since I have seen so much happiness. It reminds me of the Badlands and I am homesick.

Gwenlith tells me that I drove myself mad trying to protect her. Days of no sleep finally took their toll after she had woken up. Apparently it took some doing to pry the pistol out of my hands. Then the Liberati came and took us here. The boy I had seen was a Liberati messenger, the doctor a sympathizer. They told me that I saved Gwenlith's life, that the infection had spread to her lungs and without medical attention she would have drowned in her own fluids. My Liberati guides apologized for putting her in danger.

I keep trying to remember that last day. I don't remember Gwenlith waking up and I don't remember what I said, but she has been more talkative than I have ever seen her. As I rested, she has been by my side telling me stories of her youth and playing one of the Liberati flutes. She plays beautifully. I can no longer deny that I love her deeply. I feel the fool for not realizing it sooner. How can something so important be overlooked even in all of the current madness?

We will be resting here for a while waiting for things to settle down. I have begun to form a network of contacts in the city as well as a more solid cover for Gwenlith and I. If we can track down our scruffy man, I can get some answers. I don't want to go into the city again, but we need to be more prepared.

Caprice Landfall, Day Thirty-One.

Last night, Gwenlith told me that she is in love with me. She said she has been for a while and that I told her the same when I was delirious. I quickly told her again so she could hear the words when I was awake and aware. Then we sleep in each other's arms. I cannot see love in the eyes of the most wonderful woman in the worlds and they send me to find a single man in Gommorrah. They've picked the wrong man for this job.

The Great Escape

Liberati Report

hardcopy printout

To Cel Simon

From Watchteam, Vega Starport, Gamorrah

We are holding one of the CEF traitors in a safe house in Envry. She claimed responsibility for several acts of sabotage and espionage, including leaked information helpful during the recent Paladin Lots operation. We have checked her story and it appears solid. Trusting the traitors has never been easy, so I suggest you do your own research. However we do know the following:

The traitor was first spotted in the Vega Starport after disembarking a regular supply shuttle. She had contacted us for help getting out of the city and we were there to check her over before taking on the contract. As she left the main terminal, she was approached by several plain-clothed men, who we later learned were undercover CID agents. The woman attempted to use false identification to slip out of the arrest, but they had apparently already IDed her. At this point, one of ours dropped a smoke bomb in the crowd and screamed about a rad leak. In the ensuing chaos, the traitor ran with the agents close behind.

We followed the chase for eight blocks and three levels down before we were sure that we would not be seen. The CID equipment will come in handy, and we have modified it and placed it in one of our caches. She was very appreciative for our help and gave us all the information she had been able to gather before her escape. I have included copies of the information in all our regular message bins.

Three hours later, we spotted a small armored road carrier wandering the lower levels. A couple of our people drew it out, but were surprised to find a squad of CEF special forces inside. We scattered into the sublevels, but the crazy bastards were on us like rust mites on fresh steel. They were good and we had to use every trick in our repertoire to escape. No casualties, but scarred wits and a few wounded.

I've seen the CID put on good shows for their moles before, so I'm not about to say that this woman is the real thing. However, the information she gave us has checked out so far and we have spotted a few more patrols looking for her. Which brings me to you.

We figured that she — and our cell here — would be safer if she were outside the city, as she originally wanted. You are far enough away and not involved with any current operations, so you get to play babysitter. Amir Wick wants you to keep an eye on this one. I can't say it won't be fun.

Peace and Freedom,

Salvado



Crossing Paths

Personal Journal

"I still don't believe it," said Jophell as she walked beside Nathan through the Liberati camp. Nathan laughed.

"It's been what, two weeks? You should start believing."

"Come on, Nathan, your chances were slim enough just for survival, but to actually run into you again—"

Nathan stopped and turned to her. Jophell had been hiding at the Liberati camp after her narrow escape from her own government. The entire time she had been at the camp she had been surprised by just about everything, but definitely enjoying herself.

"Life can be pretty strange sometimes, eh?"

"Yeah..."

Jophell's gaze drifted to the clear plexiglass ceiling above them. The diamond-bright nighttime stars could be seen even through the smudged dirt. Nathan rolled his eyes.

"What is it with you and those stars?" He asked, "they'll be there tomorrow."

"These stars are the whole reason I'm out here, Nathan," Jophell answered quietly, "The only reason I did all of this was to get out here... well, up there." Nathan shuffled at the dirt with his foot.

"Sorry, I didn't... I thought..." he stammered. Jophell smiled sadly.

"That's okay, I don't expect people to understand. I guess I never really expected to get caught. I mean I've come so close a couple of times," she waved a hand skyward, "I figured someone out there was watching out for me."

"A charmed life is a dangerous thing."

"Hey, Nathan!!" Nathan winced; he knew that voice. Holli jogged across the camp towards him. Nathan had met Holli once before and she had formed an instant attachment to him. She was a tough young woman, their best runner, but she tried too hard to fit in and it put the others on edge.

"Holli, what are you doing back," said Nathan politely, "You were supposed to be gone for another two weeks."

"Change of plans. The Cids are looking for too many people these days," Holli answered, "I brought someone with me. My friend Sam, the one who helped us with the maneuvers in Tachyon Hub. She's from Terra Nova."

"Another Talon refugee?"

"No, she works for somebody else."

"Holli, I told you, nobody but Westphalia operatives are out here."

Holli looked skeptical.

"That's not what she—" A cry went up from behind them.

"ASSASSIN!! Assassin on the grounds!!"

The whole camp was on its feet. Adults were grabbing weapons and children running for hiding spots. In the confusion, Nathan spotted a woman moving toward one of the rear corridors. As he opened his mouth to call out, the woman turned enough, exposing her face through strands of blonde hair. It was Delilah Ambrose. For an endless moment Nathan's heart twisted painfully in disbelief. Then she was gone, the door bouncing shut. He ran after her, hurrying through the back corridor in a daze. When he reached the equipment hanger she was already halfway across, rigging her breathing equipment at a full sprint.

Crossing Paths

Personal Journal

"Delilah!" Nathan shouted. Delilah screeched to a halt and whipped around, pistol leveled on Nathan. As he came closer, her eyes widened. Nathan tried to speak, but too many questions caught in his throat. Delilah took a hesitant step forward.

"Nathan?" She lowered the gun. Nathan could not move.

"What...." he finally croaked out, "What have you done?"

"I had to find you..." she said, "They wouldn't... the Cabinet wouldn't let me come. The MILITIA burned our home, Nathan... there was nothing I could do... I had to find you... I found Earth spies... they helped me..."

Nathan wobbled as everything fell into place. "You work for Earthers," he spat. Bitter tears ran down Delilah's cheeks, and she dropped the hand she was extending towards him.

"Please, Nathan, this isn't our war," she pleaded, "come home..." Nathan looked at the hand. Rivulets of blood were drying into reddish-brown marks. She had killed one of Borar's family, probably the Amir Hasquin. No, she had killed one of his family. Nathan's eyes went cold and he reached for his pistol.

"Sam — Nathan!"

In a blur of movement Holli leaped over some of the heavy equipment and skidded to a stop right in front of Delilah. Her gun was out in a flash and trained on Nathan, whose own weapon never cleared the holster. Jophell had come up behind him, drawing an unsteady bead on Holli.

"What's going on, Sam?" Holli asked, looking at Delilah.

Nathan and Delilah's eyes were locked. A thousand words passed between the two lovers in a single twisted gaze of betrayal. Delilah put her hand on Holli's shoulder and holstered her gun.

"Holli," she said in even tones not taking her eyes off Nathan, "I'm walking out of here. Are you coming with me?" She slipped something into her hand from her sleeve. They could all hear the footfalls of others approaching. With a bewildered look, Holli nodded. Delilah pressed the detonator in her hand.

Explosive charges at the top of the equipment hanger went up, raining support beams and debris into the room. Nathan tackled Jophell to the ground, covering her with his body. He looked back. Through the rushing wind, blown dust and debris, he could see Delilah and Holli slipping out the rear entrance. Above the noise he could hear gunfire then silence. Then something heavy and sharp struck him in the back and everything went dark.

Game Resources



RPG: On the surface, the locals remain in a state of uneasy coexistence with the Terran invaders. Factories are starting to churn out CEF equipment, including the new Battle Frames (many of which are subtly defective). Corporations pay off part of their profits to the fleet, which then funnels them to officers on the take and relays the rest to the homeworld in the form of rare goods. The Commonwealth Integrity Directorate (CID) has been slightly reinforced by troops from the inactive occupation divisions, but these soldiers are not used to the subtlety required by street work. Lacking the necessary training, they have a tendency to be needlessly brutal and fast on the draw (much to the despair of the CID high command).

Witch-Hunt

Journal Entries

Day Zero

What makes a soul turn away from its mother? To tie a rope around her throat? Three more suspects were uncovered today. Their computers were confiscated and our technicians found seditious writings in their personal logs. They are being interrogated. One of them is an Admiral's aide. I fear that traitorous activity may have spread as far as fleet command.

Day Two

After much convincing, the aide has chosen to help us. The information he gave us led to suspicious activity by one of our fleet Admirals. How can one of such esteem have turned? I have given orders for his arrest.

Day Four

I met with the Admiral in question today. He denied all charges of being a traitor. I confronted him with the evidence — allowing a known prisoner escape CID custody. Still he denied the truth. Even after an hour of torture, he would not talk. I must think of something.

Day Five

The Admiral is resting comfortably in our medical center. I will give him time to heal before mentioning his family back on Earth. He must be made to understand that the CID has a very long reach.

Day Six

The Admiral held the pictures for a long time before he wept. I was quite creative in my descriptions and requests for cooperation. It took fifteen minutes, but he finally broke. Bereft of all dignity and courage, he babbled a confession that implicated other high-ranking officers in the growing ring of Fifth Columnists. Such a sight pained me, to see an officer

reduced to nothing more than a child. When he finally broke into sobs, I could stand it no longer and sent him to Bastille Alpha for reconditioning. I am convinced now that I can find this one central agent he mentioned, one point of contact for the traitors. It must be someone with great power, but once they fall the Commonwealth will be secure. I will find this One and stop him — whomever he is — from wreaking the destruction he has no doubt planned.

Day Eight

Colonel Rassul commended me on my work today, but denied my request for posting to Gommorrah. To think that an upstart like Caspar still holds rank over me! I toil away, going from station to station, ferreting out the CEF's greatest threat while he sits and grows fat. Perhaps Caspar should be examined, as well — he has been at his job too long.

Day Nine

I have dispatched a team of investigators to look into Caspar's activities. He has had close contact with many of the city's criminal elements, including traitors who claim connection to this mythical "Liberati" group. Perhaps he has found something he likes in among the deadbeats and thieves which populate the lower rungs of society. I shall investigate and prove what I can.

Day Thirteen

I had a visit from one of Rassul's lackeys today. I have fallen behind on my work with two other suspects to keep tabs on Caspar, but I know he is up to something. He has been searching for an individual from Terra Nova, a spy perhaps? He is trying to make contact. I will have to see to the matter personally.

Day Fifteen

Caspar is a Fifth Columnist. I have proof. He and his men were trying to contact a scruffy looking individual in the underbelly of Gommorrah, but

Witch-Hunt

Journal Entries

I managed to stop him in time.

The scruffy man escaped, but I managed to arrest Caspar. He was furious. I know that this will go well for me. My evidence is unshakeable and can show his involvement with the rebels, even the Terranovan spy network. Colonel Rassul will certainly see my worth now.

Day Eighteen

I have been called in for questioning. After all the work I have accomplished in the name of the Commonwealth, I have been cited for disruptive behavior. I have looked over my notes. I have studied my journals for any sign of suspicious activity in my past. I can find nothing, but still, I have been called in by my own Directorate. How can Rassul suspect me? I have been nothing but loyal. Perhaps she is the One and means to silence me. I must bring this to the attention of Central Command.

This is the final piece of evidence showing that Lieutenant Yarick was not in his right mind during the events of last month. I have, of course cleared Captain Horace Caspar of all charges that were erroneously brought against him. In consideration of Yarick's past work for the CID I have decided that he does not need conditioning, but have given him an honorable discharge to live out his days in a psych ward.

Lieutenant Colonel Krynn Rassul

5th Column

Intercepted Transmission

- > *Transmission Burst Intercepted*
- > *Running Decryption — Failed*
- > *Running Decryption — Playback-*

Earth situation better than hoped. Several key statesmen are in agreement with our agenda. Plans for continued infiltration of CEF upper echelon continue with little problems though CID very active here. Have agents in place to deal with this situation. Your CID situation understood. Will try to use new government contacts to remove heat. Activate Chimera for the discovered operatives. Contact with TN Black Talons still first priority.

Other colony governments still out of our reach. Need your team to develop plans for infiltration, beginning with Atlantis or New Jerusalem. Utopia poses certain difficulty. May have to try creative approach there.

>Playback Ended

Game Resources



RPG: Not all of the CEF human troops are highly motivated; many joined the army to escape poverty and starvation in their home territories, and never expected to be put in cold sleep and sent to the far reaches of the galaxy to fight a new kind of war. Not all of them are happy about the situation, and may be turned if promised a suitable reward.



Tactical: While it has never happened so far, a CEF supersoldier might decide to defect to the colonial side with his Battle Frame. It is more credible that a human trooper would do so, however. Protecting him and guiding him to safety while he inexpertly guide the war machine through the rugged highlands would be a difficult task, however.

Nerve Strike

Liberati Field Report

For - All Gomorrah Cels
From - John Jacob

One of the most frightening possibilities of the CEF's hold over Caprice has been their Seravin-3 virus and the launchers they have installed in areas of Gomorrah. We are happy to report that the Fifth Column revolutionaries in the CEF have made it possible to breath easier near the area of the Moor Mesa. Two days ago, both the launch system and the virus stored there were effectively neutralized by 5C efforts and 5C efforts alone.

We were contacted late last night by special courier reserved for 5C information. Part of the letter spoke of the need to prove themselves to us, without our aide. To this end a squad of "specialists" used Squatter guidance to enter Moor Mesa from below, circumventing outside security. The launchers were neutralized setting off a series of high intensity heat charges that sealed the



mechanisms and launch tubes. Then a neutralizing agent was released into the virus storage chambers that destroyed the virus. Even if they could launch, tear gas would be more effective. CEF security has, of course, been tripled at the other mesas, but now that we know how to destroy these threats, we can plan attacks on the Mayan and Hun mesas. Detailed information on the exact nature of the viral neutralizing agent and maps of the other two launch instillations has been included in this package.

Contact with the 5C has been in heated debate since they first revealed themselves to us. After this independent action, coupled with the amount of accurate leaked information that we have received, I believe that they deserve our support. We should be careful of course, but if there is any hope of shortening the CEF's time here, it lies in the brave members of those who walk inside the Beast.

Salvado

Game Resources



RPG: Commando-style operations are the meat-and-potato of the offensive arm of the resistance movement. Being vastly undermanned and underequipped in regard with their CEF adversary, they must compensate by striking quickly and hard wherever they are least expected. The hard part is the complete destruction of records and the extraction part, since as little information as possible must be left behind to keep the CID guessing about the nature of the attackers.



Tactical: Some of the operations require more muscle and firepower than what commandoes can carry. In those situations, Gears and Combat Mounts will be brought to the fore, being the only type of vehicle with both the mobility and combat abilities required. In most cases, complete destruction of the target will be necessary to prevent the CEF from learning the extent of the Terranovan supplies available to the resistance.

Holli's Diary

Downtime

It's been forever since I've done this — written in a journal, I mean. I don't know why I would start again, except that I really need someone to hear me and I don't know who that can be now.

I have no family, no friends, no compatriots. I grew up in the Alpha levels of Gommorrah, so I suppose that the city was as close to parents as I ever got. My friends were thieves like me, so there was never a lot of trust. Anyone I started to open up to was usually killed or put in jail before too long. I stopped trusting after a while; maybe I've seen too much for a person my age. Maybe I grew up too fast. Not like I had a choice. When the Liberati came to me, I thought by being useful that I could buy myself into their family, but they were too busy fighting their private little war. I thought I belonged. Then I met Sam the spy.

Sam was a hard case from Terra Nova. I was asked to keep an eye on her to see if she was the real deal. She caught on right away and told me so. She never let anything I did pass without comment. Sometimes she was pretty harsh. We went through a lot together — did a few Liberati jobs that really stuck it to the CEF occupation. Sam was so cool, so together, so professional, but the closer I got to her, the more I could feel that something else was driving her. Something beyond money or revenge. When I got up the courage to ask her about it she reprimanded me for being too involved with my target: her. I knew then that there was a whole side to her that I knew nothing about.

I saved her life once. She thanked me, then scolded me for risking my neck. She saved my life too. That's the point she stopped being a target and became a friend. Several times she told me that things were going to get bad, that I should find some other work to do. I thought she was just talking about the war.

A few days ago everything changed. Sam the Spy became Delilah Ambrose. She worked for the CID as an infiltrator. There was a stand off. I chose her side. I realized in that split second that Sam was the only person that had been honest with me and that, telling me to go was her way of protecting me from her fate. By turning on the revolution, she wasn't betraying me because I

was never a part of the Liberati, I was never part of their family. Delilah is my family. I saw her cry for the first time that day and I knew that she needed me as much as I needed her.

Delilah was silent for days. Occasionally, she would just cry on my lap. I think all she really needed was someone to be there for her. We're alike that way. I don't like the idea of helping the CEF. After the thing with Nathan, I don't think Delilah cares much for it either.

This morning, Delilah told me the whole story. It hurt, but she told the truth and truth is painful a lot of the times. She said she is going to find some way to get out of the CID work. She said that running around Caprice was no kind of life. She says she has a plan, but that it will be dangerous. I told her that I'd come this far, no reason to turn back now.

Game Resources



RPG: The CEF is not the only one to suffer from poor morale. Many Terranovans wish for a return to simpler times when each colony was isolated from one another. Some may wish to take revenge for perceived slights caused by the conflict. Regardless of their motivations, Terranovans and Capricians alike may work to impede the development of the emerging colonial coalition.



Tactical: Though it is unlikely that the highly motivated pilots sent by the Cabinet to Caprice defect or in any way act against the colonial interests, one or two bad apples might manage to make it through. Turncoats are more likely to be found on Terra Nova itself, where former CEF personnel or desperate Rover gangs might side with CEF raiders in battle.

Only Dinner

Conversation

Edith Mubatu glanced at the slender watch on her wrist. Twenty-three, thirty-two or whatever time it was on this godforsaken planet. The Vice Admiral was late. She poked her bread with a fork, reducing one end to crumbs.

"Will the lady be wanting another glass of wine as she waits?" The waiter's smile was laced with sarcasm. Here she was, in one of the most expensive restaurants in Gommorrah, in a dress uniform that was entirely too restrictive, and she was being stood up.

"No thank you." The words came like ice. The waiter stepped away sheepishly, perhaps realizing that this was a patron better not angered.

"Begging the lady's pardon," he said and quickly retreated to the back of the dining room.

"This is insane," muttered Mubatu under her breath. Suddenly someone's hand was on her arm, pressing heavily. Trained spacer reflexes took over and her hand flashed to the fork. Mubatu steadied herself as John Gresfield sat down across from her, then she relaxed. His light cologne lingered on her arm and his soft smile melted her anger.

"Is that the standard punishment for lateness in your command," Gresfield asked slyly, "a fork in the eye?" She dropped the instrument and it clanged loudly against her plate.

"Hello, Vice Admiral," she managed to say. Gresfield's smile broadened.

"Good evening, Vice Admiral." He folded his napkin onto his lap. He was in dress uniform as well, rank and medals still polished bright.

"Looks like you were a little busy," said Mubatu, "Is it all right for you to be here?"

Gresfield did not answer. He motioned to the waiter instead, asking:

"Do you know what you want?" Mubatu nodded, feeling slighted. The waiter took their orders and hurried off to the kitchen. Gresfield smiled again, but she could see the exhaustion in his eyes.

"It is good to see you, Edith," he said finally. Something caught in her chest, a sudden start and then a slow warmth.

"You too, John," she commented, letting a small smile play across her lips. For the briefest second there was only the two of them. The waiter set their drinks on the table and Gresfield downed his sweetwater and whiskey in one gulp, handing the empty glass back to the waiter. Mubatu arched an eyebrow.

"Rough day?" she asked.

"Rassul sent agents for me when my shuttle set down this morning," answered Gresfield, "I was in one of her interrogation rooms until two hours ago."

"Saints mercy!"

"It actually turned out better than I expected," Gresfield continued, "I answered her questions and afterwards we had a long talk."

"And?"

"And, they have warrants out for senior officers, Edith. It's getting hot. Luckily, you and I are in the clear."

"Because she believed your story?"

"I didn't tell her a story. I didn't lie at all. I told her everything we're planning." Mubatu sat in stunned silence. She accepted her food with a mumbled thank you and waited for Gresfield to explain. He looked out the huge bay window at the stars as he chewed his first bite.

Only Dinner

Conversation

"Do you believe that what we are doing is right for the Commonwealth, Admiral?" He asked. Mubatu opened her mouth to answer and then realized he was asking another question entirely. The ex-fighter pilot was no good at being obtuse. Mubatu bristled; she was not an academy brat any more.

"If you are asking me whether I think we are doing something wrong, then the answer is no," she said with her voice of ice. "If you are asking me whether Winthrop will think it wrong, then the answer is, of course. He will try to keep us out of his seat as long as he has the power to hold it." She stabbed into her food. Gresfield was looking at her, sizing her up, and she knew it.

"Where does his power come from?" he asked, his gaze steady.

"From Earth, but the local interests are divided amongst the Vice Admirals and the CID. We aren't in school, Admiral..." she stopped short, her eyes widening, but she quickly brought herself under control.

"If..." she said slowly, "if the Admirals were replaced and the CID was to remove their support, there would have to be a new Fleet Admiral. Winthrop couldn't run the fleet without any support." She stopped. Gresfield had gone back to eating.

"Why are you asking me this now, after everything I've done? Are you questioning my loyalty, Vice Admiral?" Gresfield leaned back in his chair with a hard look.

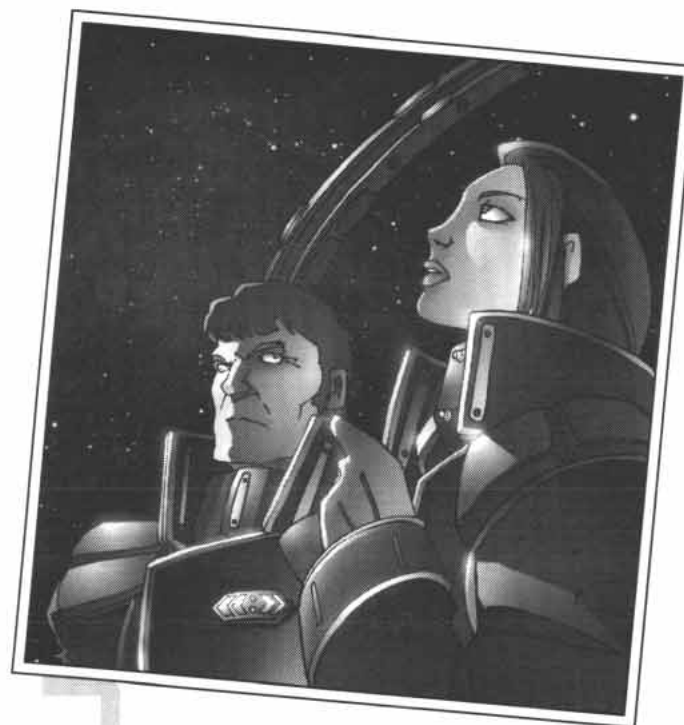
"I need to know that you understand what will happen if this doesn't work."

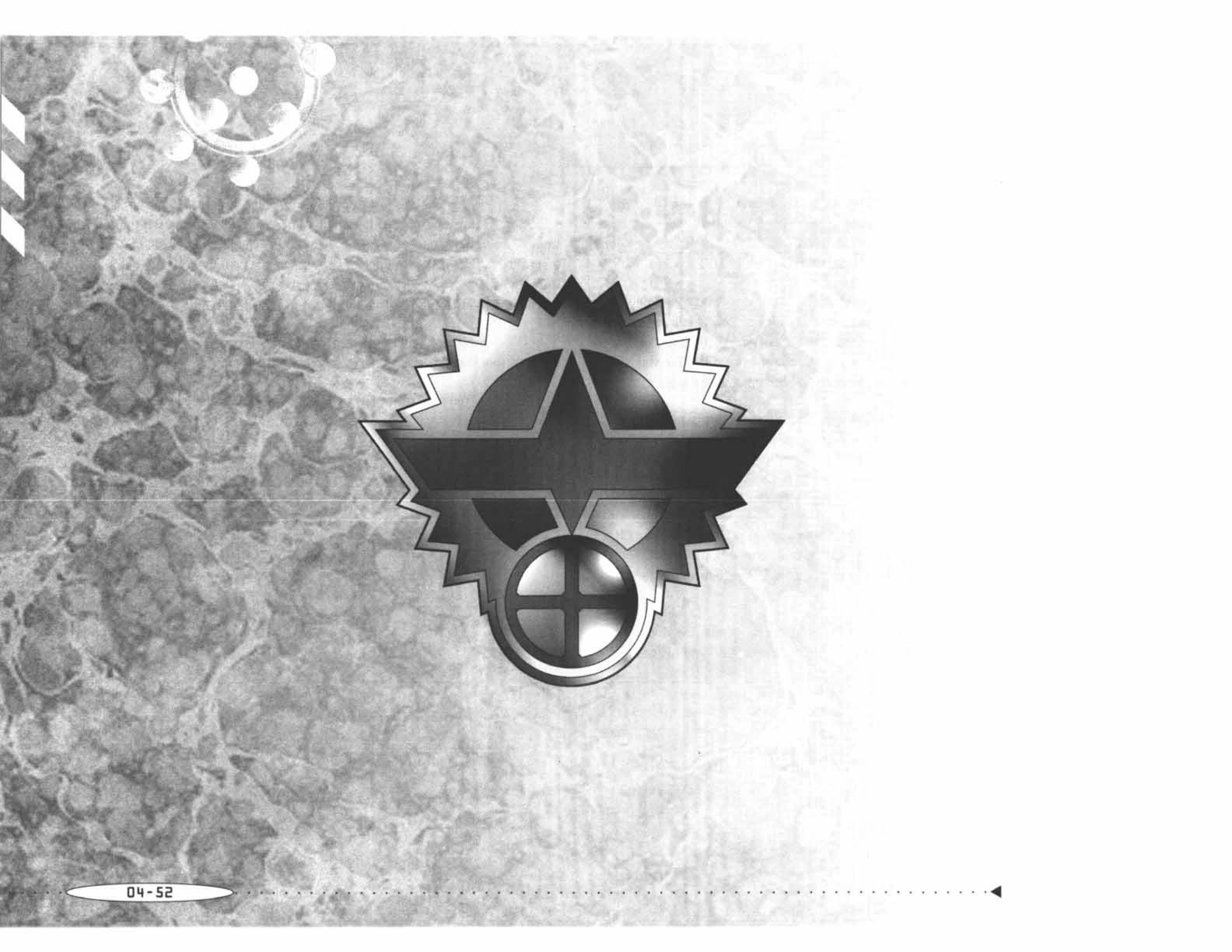
"I'm not a child, John," Mubatu hissed, "This has to be done."

"Don't be angry with me, Edith," said Gresfield, his expression softening, "I just wanted to be sure." He smiled. Inwardly, she cursed that fatherly smile; it had always quelled her rage. He was the only one who could do that. Gresfield continued: "You are one of the best tacticians we have. Your quick thinking at Terra Nova showed that to the brass. They will be looking for eager and dedicated officers to replace those lost in the witch hunts..." He hesitated.

"I need you," he said simply, turning his gaze to the window, "to help me make sure that this madness ends quickly. This is a conquest, not a bloodbath."

"You have me," she answered, saying more than she meant to.





Current Affairs - Space

From the Journal of Nicosia Renault

(7 Winter 1944) — More overt actions are being taken here in this arena than planetside, but it's still relatively quiet, compared to previous years. Bhravo blasted off into oblivion and no traces seem to exist to trail the *Eastern Sun*. Ships drawn from all the leagues searched for a full two seasons, but ultimately found nothing. Space is far vaster than we give it credit for, sitting on our lonely rock, and a great number of things can be hidden in its black depths. It even, amazingly enough, inspires poetic thought in the resolutely uncreative.

Most of the events from the past few decades seem to stem from improvement in spacecraft design. The Gate drive parts brought back by the 77th Talons' Winter 1942 expedition were carefully examined and analyzed at the Iandens Astro Development Labs' main orbital facility. They seemed really excited about it; guess they learn something new.

The entire operation was supervised from IADL's home base in Marathon, but it really was a collaborative effort for many of the brightest minds on the planet. Gawaine di Smit has been going over the specs so many times, I imagine she has worn out her holoprojector. But they are coming up with impressive things. If I followed the technical briefs correctly, this new type of Gate drive is more refined and able to seek out smaller Gates — therefore finding paths in space where none existed before.

This, of course, lead directly to the possibility of sending even more missions in enemy space. Following the overall success of the 1st Black Talon mission to Caprice, new pilots are recruited daily (or so it seems) to form additional strike teams. The Cabinet has been strutting the most photogenic pilots in order to polish the public image of the Talons, and I can just imagine the line ups at the various recruitment centers. Due to the pressing nature of the missions, though veteran pilots are sought from all origins to minimize training time, which strikes me as a really, really bad idea — who know what kind of asocial Gearjocks they'll be bolting together in a tiny cabin for weeks at a stretch? (On the other hand, this might be intentional. By the time they face the CEF, they'll be so pumped up they'll make terrifying fighters. But I digress.)

The leagues seem to think that the Talons' "smaller but smarter" philosophy is the way to go, and I've noticed increased traffic at the Moon Base recently. You can tell they've been sending their best and brightest military units throw up their lunch up there in the hope that they can stop relying on the Cabinet for their intelligence.

I've discovered a very strange piece of news in the feed sent by the Liberati. They have intercepted transmissions between various CEF ships that discuss the 7th Fleet, which was apparently sent to conquer additional worlds further along the Gate Web. I'm not surprised — I guess it was plain we weren't the sole victims of Earth's ambitions — but I'm a little sad to see it confirmed. The fleet has officially becomes "out of communication" because they missed another communication window. There's very little information beyond this, but something tells me we weren't the only ones to put up a fight when the uninvited guests showed up...

Ellis Island

Recorded Transmission

"Bring us around," Captain Wu shouted hoarsely, "line us up for a spinal!" The bridge lurched again and all the holos flickered at once. The helmsman punched at the controls and the displays began to change. The *Athena Defiant* spun in a slow arc, her point defense batteries swatting at the fighters buzzing around her. Wu waited an eternity; watching for the everything to line up just right. The ship lurched again as another barrage of missiles slammed into the hull.

"Fire!" They had maybe a fraction of a second. The gunner called out:

"Firing Spine!"

The brilliant white of the rail cannon round shot toward the CEF ship. Compared to the instant effect of lasers or particle weapon the round was painfully slow. Wu was already counting on a miss when the enemy vessel bounced sharply and began listing off course. The Sensor officer turned to Wu.

Game Resources



RPG: Unless they are part of one of the Terranovan space forces or the Talon programs, it is unlikely (but not altogether impossible) that Player Characters have access to space. Orbit and beyond is much like the high seas of old, or Antarctica in the Twentieth Century — remote, peopled mostly by armed forces and scientists.



Tactical: Space is a deadly environment, made even deadlier by combat. There are very few space battles, unless one force really needs some objectives. A better alternative would be skirmishes between spacesuited or Gear forces, either on the ground (a Moon, station or asteroid) or in space (presumably near a ship, station or other objective).

"Sensors read a massive 'Houser discharge, we've popped her tubes. The fighters are heading toward the ships that got past us."

"Captain Bell's group can intercept," said Wu. An uneasy feeling settled on his heart. He licked his lips. "Find me anything else out there." Wu swiveled his chair to face his communications officer.

"Martel." The com officer looked up eyes wide. "Tell the others to spread out to arrowhead formation — I think the SDC call it a spike — center on Ellis."

The first wave of ships had ripped into Ellis Island pretty badly before changing vector and heading to Terra Nova. Wu had been pulled from a deep sleep by his stoic first officer actually yelling over the intercom. Long range sensors had detected a small fleet of CEF ships speeding toward the station. Three chaotic minutes later he had contacted any available ships around Ellis Island. Getting them to take commands was a different story. Regardless of rank and experience, the other ships had their own Captains and their own ideas about how to handle the situation. In the end, it was only because he had been the first to give an order that anyone had listened at all. Keeping the rag tag group together was going to be more difficult than shouting orders, however. Wu took a deep breath and tried to figure everything out at once.

"Sir," called the com officer, as if on cue, "Captain Jarusio from *Mourner's Vengeance* is hailing us. Should I put him through?" Wu nodded, his attention focused on the updates from the multiple drones he and his makeshift fleet had set on the perimeter of Ellis Island station.

"Captain Wu, what the hell do you think you're doing? Those ships are headed right for Terra Nova!"

"I have eyes," said Wu, "We cannot catch them—"

"Are we even going to try?"

Ellis Island

Recorded Transmission

"Captain Jarusio, those ships are on a bombing run and straight into Bell's strike force."

"But--"

"There is a second wave coming," Wu said agitation grating his voice, "should I tell the survivors on Ellis that you want to leave them to pursue ships you cannot catch?"

Jarusio's face twisted but he said nothing and the transmission ended. Wu turned back to the displays. Still no sign of enemy ships. Wu spun the trackball in his armrest and the holodisplay spun with it. Around the defensive perimeter there were gaps where the few drones they had left were blind.

"Ferel," Wu called to his sensor officer, "Feed me the vector data on the ships we destroyed." The display was filled with shifting clouds of debris and their vectors. A large set fit nicely over one of the sensor gaps. Wu pulled up a list of the ships under his command. He quickly scanned and selected a half dozen then had the com officer contact their Captains. Once they were all connected Wu outlined his plan. When he was finished there was a long silence.

"With all due respect, Captain," asked Lieutenant Vasser of the NLCS *Glorious Rider*, "how do we know there is a second wave?"

"It is a standard CEF tactic," said Wu, trying to convince even himself, "they have multiple objectives; they'll stick to their basics."

"In other words," said Vasser with a weary smile, "You're playing a hunch."

"That's what we do up here, isn't it?"

Vasser nodded. None of the other officers argued. They knew where the blame would lay if Wu were wrong.

The small strike team moved off from their position on silent running. When they were several hundred kilometers distant they made a wide turn, cutting behind the scattered clouds of debris from the earlier battle. Wu ordered the *Glorious Rider* and the MDSV *Shan Hu* into the debris field. For long minutes nothing happened, then...

"Sir, we have high energy readings," the sensor officer called out, "Looks like particle beam fire on the *Shan Hu*."

"Do you have a fix on their position?"

"Yes sir, I'm reading two, possibly three ships." The helm officer tensed and gripped his control yoke. So much of Wu screamed for him to give the order. Vasser was a good officer and a decent human being. Despite their regional backgrounds, they had agreed to begin seeing each other outside of duty hours. Even so, a small part of Wu would not allow him to speak, that part of him that was coldly, clinically saving countless lives.

"Not yet," said Wu, "keep an eye on the passives. The *Rider* will make sure they show themselves."

Vasser would do that much for him, she was the only one who could in this bunch. The *Shan Hu* was vaporized within seconds. The *Rider* twisted and turned, but never retreated. Soon the holos lit with more enemy fire. Wu gripped the chair as the two ships and their crews died silently in space. Silently, but he knew, not painlessly. New data flooded the holos. Six CEF ships stood out against the debris in loose formation.

"All ships, ahead full," said Wu in quiet tones, "Arm all forward tubes. Charge for a spinal."

It was time to make them pay.

The Future

Essay

>From: Talon Intelligence

>To: Cabinet

>Re: Status Report CEF

>previous page<

The Colonial Expeditionary Force has three priorities at the top of its list: resolve the stalemate on Atlantis, determine the fate of the missing 7th Fleet, and crush Terra Nova once and for all so that it can concentrate its efforts on the rest of the human colonies.

Operation Icarus is likely only the first step in a program that is being elaborated to fulfill the latter objective. The operation was a quick strike against our space assets; notice that despite the brief orbital bombardment, no forces engaged in ground warfare. The relative success of this action, despite our

Game Resources



RPG: The imperialist and arrogant attitude of the Colonial Expeditionary Force make them excellent villains. They must be without doubt opposed and destroyed at every turn, since their way of life cannot work if freedom is left anywhere else. Yet, there is the possibility of redemption for many of their people — it's up to the Player Characters to discover who.



Tactical: The CEF, with their high technology and completely different blitzkrieg-based combat strategies, make a nice change of pace for tactical gaming. With the stepped-up offensive (composed mostly of raiding actions, rather than the stand-and-fight of the War of the Alliance), the Earth troops can be fought nearly anywhere.

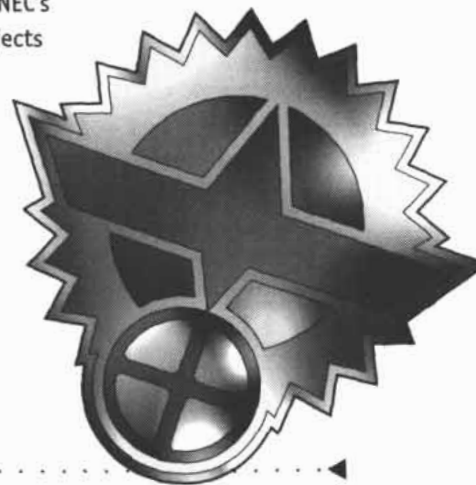
defenders' efforts, will curtail our own strikes against CEF targets in the Loki system. It is possible that they also intended to prevent us from contacting other colonies, though we have no idea what we would find there (presumably, they do, if conquest fleets were sent there before).

With the recent promotion of Edith Mubatu to the rank of Vice Admiral, the 8th Fleet has reached one of the final milestones of its resurrection from its near-destruction. Although its forces are not yet up to 100%, they are likely to be eager for a rematch — and this time, they won't make the same overconfident mistakes.

Our agents to the Atlantis system have already made contact with a few local representatives, though the latter seem extremely reluctant to talk to us (understandably so, might we add). The teams continue their progress, and we hope to have a full report on Atlantis and any CEF activity there within the next few weeks. As for the 7th fleet, we have managed to gain only scraps and bits of information; from what we can tell, though, we should definitely send some emissaries to the New Jerusalem system.

In addition to its other war efforts, the NEC has been working on improving its technology base. This research is largely being conducted on Caprice, which is turning into the NEC's war factory, and includes such projects as the new Battle Frames and the SLEDGE program. It also includes advances in Gatedrive technology, many of which are being paralleled by our own research efforts.

>next page<



Mission Beyond

Field Report

>To: Westphalia Cabinet
>From: Sous-Commandant Jasmine Eloi
>Re: Black Talon Missions to Atlantis and Utopia

The Black Talon mission to Atlantis had unique problems and advantages over the other occupied worlds. Atlantis is a water world. 97% of its surface is covered by oceans. This has given the Atlanteans a distinct advantage over the CEF aggressors in the waters away from the meager continental shelves. Therefore it is the Black Talon's job to eliminate threats on what little land there is, as well as reduce or remove the orbital presence of the CEF fleet. However, because of the slight landmasses, there will be little room to hide our operatives and equipment.

To this end the Black Talon strike team that was assembled consisted of smaller more maneuverable Heavy Gears than were used on Caprician missions, a larger number of drop ships and a larger space fleet. Now that Halben Kiskess' Combined Terranovan Fleet proposal has been accepted this will be their trial run. Communication with our network on Atlantis have concentrated on securing underwater vehicles large enough to launch our Hermes class drop shuttles and the further modification of the Water Viper model Gears. This will allow the Black Talon teams to quickly retreat to the safety of underwater camps, if need be.

The Atlantis mission is progressing well, but is still at the critical opening stages. It will be several more months before we can start calling it a success. The four worlds beyond Atlantis are still a bit of a mystery to us and will require the placement of intelligence networks before we can proceed. After the Atlantis mission this is our first priority.

On the other side of the Gate Web, Utopia has been causing problems from the start. Because of CEF occupation and our success with Caprice, they have stepped up the security surrounding the Utopian Gate. Thus, our network for Utopia is behind schedule and it has already caused difficulties in planning. From the information we have been able to gather, one of the Utopian

factions, the Unified Republic of Steelgate, has allied with the CEF and now rules the rest of the world. The other factions still wield power in their borders but Steelgate governors oversee them.

Also, as Utopia had been in a constant state of war during the Age of Isolation, almost all of the population lives underground in huge archeology clusters. Again, not the best environment for our current Black Talon teams. While Heavy Gear units will excel on the surface of this war torn world, the cities require a more Human scale approach. I have contacted our Caprician Liberati contacts for assistance in guerilla training. I recommend postponing the Utopia planning sessions until we get more information.

The Cabinet has a near impossible job before it. But impossibility seems to be our bread and butter. I have faith in the Cabinet's abilities and direction and continue to be in your service.



Evaluation

CEF Human Resources Archives

>To: Fleet Admiral Winthrop
>Cc: CEF Central Command
>From: Colonel Igor Prokovief, MD
>Re: 7th Fleet Personnel

Sir,

As noted in my previous report of nearly five years ago (re: File /46887GF7648), and in light of the current situation, I can but once more point out the psychological profiles of many of the fleet's officials. I actively campaigned against their inclusion, but Party allegiances prevailed, and we find ourselves with a missing fleet.

There is limited information to base my professional judgment on, but I believe I can offer a plausible explanation for what has happened. Despite the message we have received, I highly doubt our men were "converted" to whatever religious dogma serves as a social basis in the colony. It is far more likely that they have been turned through bio-chemical means, or more prosaically by offers of money and power.

The former hypothesis is interesting, but does present some weaknesses. For example, I very much doubt that the higher officers could be exposed to the necessary agent early enough for such a complete take-over of the fleet to take place. They would have had to break every protocol first, and I just don't believe they would have made it to their present ranks without such a character flaw showing. (At least, the doctors responsible are not from my department, which is tightly run.)

The second hypothesis is significantly more interesting. According to our files, New Jerusalem was little better than an agrarian paradise world when we left it. Such a place could offer only token resistance to an invading fleet, and it is quite possible that ambitious local figures entered into a deal with senior officers to carve local empires using the fleet's resources.

Either the take-over was botched, or some squabbling occurred, but something went wrong. The "religious conversions" we heard about might be nothing but distorted perceptions of the lower ranks, who of course were not included in the plan.

What did the mutineers hope to gain? An entire paradise planet to rule as they see fit, without interference from the Party and without having to share with the masses. Perhaps they believe we will leave them alone, busying ourselves with the other colonies.

In any case, I have taken the opportunity to prepare a set of files on each officer of Major rank or above, to identify those most likely to commit such a treasonous act. They are attached to this memo. Perhaps we might learn more on their behaviors and find some... arguments against them.

Game Resources



RPG: The CEF high command has been very careful to keep as much of the 7th Fleet's situation secret as possible to avoid effects on morale in the ranks. If this information was to come out, it would cause damage to the reputations of the officers in charge and would give a glimmer of hope to the resistance — not to mention offer them potential new allies to try and contact.



Tactical: What little is known of the situation in the New Jerusalem system (see above and next page) seems to indicate that the fleet has split into two entities, one loyal and one taking the side of the locals. Battles between CEF armed detachments might have occurred on several occasions, with the mutineers backed by local infantry forces.

Anxious Facts

7th Fleet Report

> *Transmission Burst Recorded*

> *Running Decryption*

> *Playback-*

<static> ...is Commodore <static> ...Darrel. <static> ...don't know if any of this transmission will reach you. We have precious little time to transmit through the gate so I shall be as brief as possible. The 7th fleet has suffered a mutiny. Admiral Untide was... was converted, or something, I don't know... by the established hierarchy of Jerusalem. Many men and ships turned against the Commonwealth mission. I rallied men away from his blasphemy and we are trying to fight our way back. <static> ...hiding in the system, but without the gateship we have no way back. We are in desperate need of assistance.

The colony is much more defensible than intel reported. The whole planet<static>

[*Realigning antenna - searching - searching - transmission found.*]

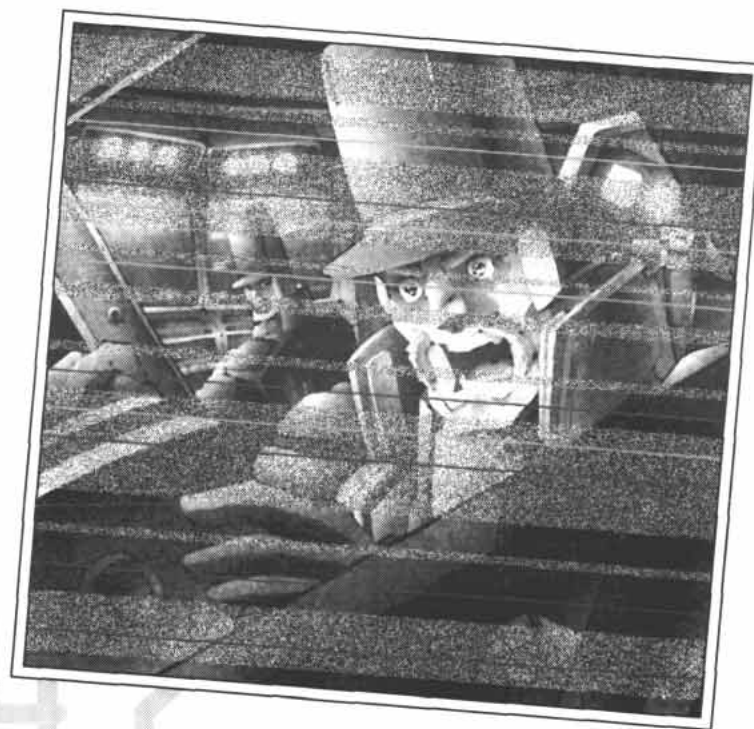
<static> ...this terrain makes our tanks almost useless. Our initial assaults were successful only because they let us. Repeat, they let us. After they met with the higher-ranking officers and things started going wrong. They <static> ...us with raids as they treated our officers to elaborate dinners. I don't know, something about finding God. after that everything started falling apart. Untide pulled his men from the front lines and then took them out of the fleet entirely.<static> ...he took the Gateship no one questioned it except for a few <static> ...still don't know if it was brain washing or dru<static> ...a large army of the Cardinal Themopolis came out of nowhere. Untide must have given him the codes for <static> ... around our defenses.

We've been using guerilla tactics and have broken down our tank crews and <static> ...into the infantry. The situation is very, very bad. Our only hope is in our CID compliment. They have been training the soldiers for their work. Diana <static> ...the CID Commander, believes that we can turn some of New Jerusalem's fanaticism against them.

We will begin our infiltration in a few weeks. I have<static>... the Commonwealth will prevail.

Ah, the Gate's closing we <static>

> *End Playback*



Stage Four

Engineering Report

To: Westphalia Cabinet, Special Projects Division
From: Iandens Astro Development Laboratory
Re: Project New Frontier, Stage Four status report

Dear Sirs,

I am proud to announce that stage four of Project New Frontier is well under way. We have begun the installation of the new generation gate drive into an actual ship. This is the most important step of this project during the long months that we have been working with the new gate drive.

Our tests in the past few months have shown an increased performance of the drive that we constructed over the captured CEF one. We cannot yet determine how much of a difference this will make in the field. So far we have been able to reduce the drive recharging time by 20% and improve the gate stabilization ratio.

The ship you provided us with for this part of the project is acceptable and we have finished roughly 75% of the structural modifications necessary to proceed. As per your instructions and in the interest of continued secrecy we have headhunted an entire construction team from the Zeus shipyards and brought them "in house." They are proving to be very knowledgeable and efficient, if a bit rowdy at times. [See attached datafile for budget adjustments.]

There was brief discussion among the project heads about rechristening the ship. However, within days a petition was quietly passed around and the discussion was halted by the order of 3,000 names. This comes as no surprise to you, I suspect, as a few of the names were from your own Cabinet. The ship will remain the Tienlung.

Conversion of the Tienlung's cargo bays into assault shuttle hangers is almost complete and we have taken the liberty of contracting a few of the Black Talon pilots as consultants. The most difficult part of this task has been to match

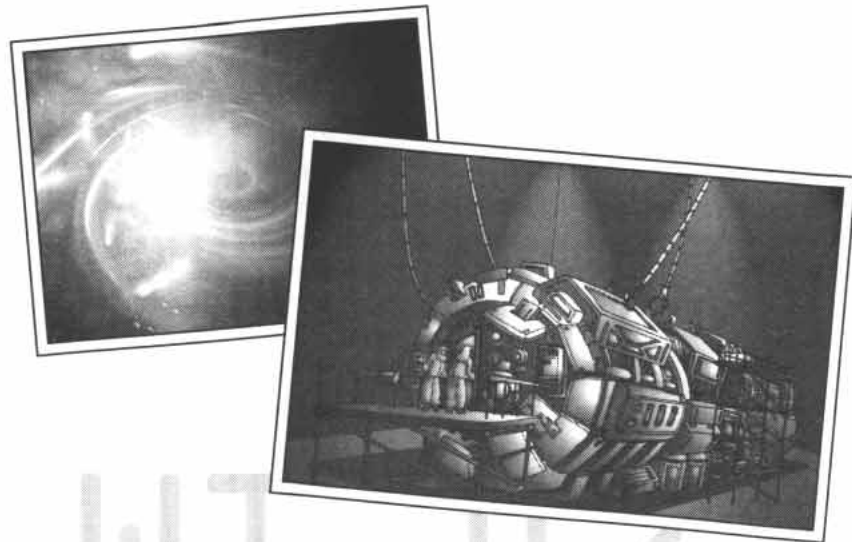
the ships power output with the weapons you suggested. Considering the power needs of the gate drive during combat simulations, we feel it may be necessary to remove some of the crew quarters and other nonessentials to make room for another power core. [See attached datafile for altered schematics.]

Overall, everything is proceeding as planned and we are predicting that we should be finished ahead of schedule. We hope you are pleased with our progress.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jathan Micha

IADL Director



Stage Four

Engineering Report

Gate Drive

Fuel Tank

Hangars

Fury

Heatsinks

Gate Drive Diagram

19-WI-47

04-61

Talons

Progress Report

>To: Westphalia Cabinet
>From: Halben Kiskess, Head of Personnel
>Re: Growth of the Black Talons

To All,

We have a saying where I come from: "Cats and dogs don't mix well without blood." As with everything else about the Black Talons I am finding that even my basic understandings as a child are being challenged. And I welcome it. I am not a man given to exaggeration. I like to put things as simply as possible, polite or not. So you all will have to take it on my word that the Black Talons are the best thing that has happened to this planet in a long while.

Note, I said "planet." Sounds small doesn't it? Not as grand or encompassing as "world" or "nation" or any of the other words we use to make ourselves feel more important in the universe. And it should not be. We are one planet of many now and we have ignored this fact for too long. There are other worlds out there with people just like us. Some want us crushed under their regime and others just want freedom. We cannot ignore either.

The cats of the South and the dogs of the North have mixed and the only blood spilt was the blood of a common enemy. Our people in the BT teams have put everything else aside, their families, their personal freedom, their futures all so they could give the rest of us the chance to live longer more comfortable live. So just maybe the fight would not come home. Well it has and they are ready.

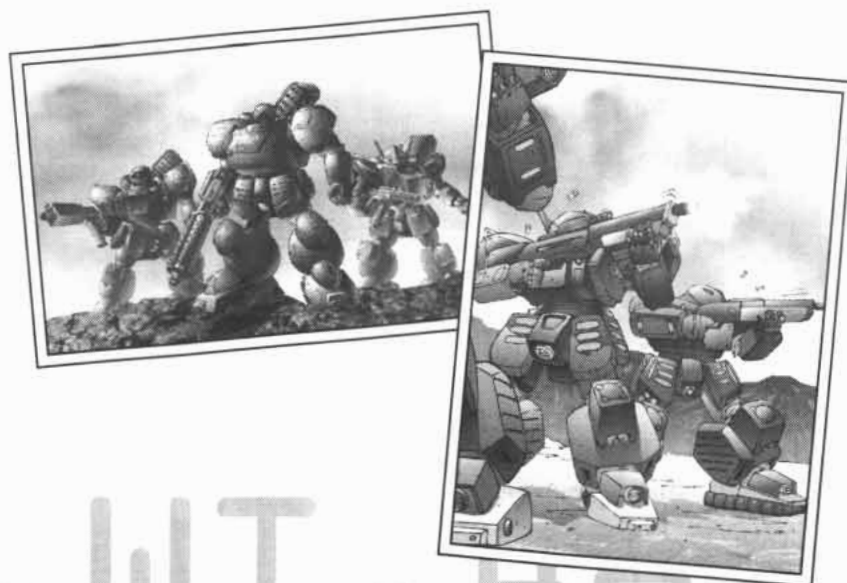
It is my belief, and I have already spoken to a few of you about this, that the BT program should be expanded to include other divisions of our military. The selfless actions of the Northern and Southern space groups during the recent attacks have shown that they are ready to work together. I have spoken to Captain Lueng Wu on this subject. He and his people stand ready to support my plans.

The Talon groups that have been sent to Atlantis and Utopia have already given us vital information on those systems. I am sure that you have looked them over and understand that we have our work cut out for us. Utopia proves that not all governments are ready to fight, especially in the face of the CEF fleets.

Cats and dogs fighting together. It is not as farfetched as you might think.

Sincerely with Honor,

Halben Kiskess



Letter Home

Personal Log Entry

Hi gang,

I won't be able to send you this letter until we get back in system (no cluttering the laser link with personal transmissions, you know), but I wanted to write nonetheless, if only to keep my sanity. If we get captured, it'll get erased with the rest — not that it'll matter much...

We've been gone for more than a cycle now. I think I'm starting to wear out the holoframe in my cabin, watching pictures of all of us together at the club in Port Oasis. I miss the place as well... good music, company, normal regular gravity(!). You know, the tiny stuff. Funny how you miss it most after a while. Not as much as I miss our circle, though.

We've managed to Gate through to the Atlantis system, and we're currently boosting toward the planet. We should reach it in a few more weeks. In the meantime, we're boning up on our ancient languages and hoping that the locals haven't changed them too much. If we are able to run the CEF orbital gauntlet — and that's a mighty big "if," which I try not to think about too much — we need to be able to talk to them. I'd rather not have come across thousands of light-years just to be shot by a local who thought I'm a rather skinny-looking kind of GREL!

We're using some of the transit time to reinforce the personal links we have forged in the squad since training. Luther and I have finally agreed to set aside our differences, even though I still think he's a thick-headed religious freak. (I think you'd like him, Mara — he's just your type, tall, muscular and empty-headed.)

The only thing we don't like is that we can't practice swimming in the Fury — Luther suggested using the half-empty reaction mass tanks, until someone pointed out that a) they are designed for easy access, and b) if he wants to soak up radiation from the fusion tubes, he's welcome to it (it might improve his tan). I'm glad we spent our summer vacations in Ashanti, so I at least had the basics down pat.

I'm eager to get down on the surface (well, what passes as the surface, anyway). I never thought I'd be able to see a new world with my own eyes, but here I am. I'm sure it'll be more than worth the risks.

Game Resources



RPG: The Black Talon and their use in a roleplaying session has already been extensively examined in the Black Talon Field Guide sourcebook. It might be noted that the Cabinet is looking to expand the program, and as a result many Player Characters have an opportunity to join the elite recon team. It would be an interesting theme to move a campaign off-world.



Tactical: Due to the nature of their missions, the Black Talon gets some very high technology machines and square off against a large number of foes ranging from the obvious (CEF raiders) to the secretive (intelligence outfits looking to weaken the Cabinet's political position by making their forces look bad in the field).

Aftermath

From the Journals of Nicos Renault

(01 Winter 1948) — The cycles follow one another and each seems to bring its own cargo of pain and misery. I've said it again, but maybe I'm getting too old for this — it just doesn't strike me as it used to. I reread my summaries and notes from just a few cycles ago, and they all seem hopelessly muddled. Of course, with hindsight it's easier to see the larger picture...

The strike at the Ellis Island shipyards and docks had pretty much the desired effects at first. Some of the Talon teams got called back sooner than originally planned to take advantage of a scheduled Gate opening, while others saw their stay extended (in some cases, largely). For a while, we were on the receiving end of quite a few of the punches traded so far in the new phase of what, for lack of a better term, I'm starting to refer to as the Colonial Wars. Somewhat bland, but it accurately describes the situation.

What the CEF probably didn't plan was the spacers' reaction. Tough people, they are. If the Earthers thought we dust-crawlers were bad, they should have learned their lesson during the orbital fights of the War. The spacers took the attack as a personal affront, and they've been patching up old ships left and right. If I didn't know better, I'd say they'd be tempted to launch an invasion of Earth all of their own! But for the first time in many years, we're building new space-ships. Men will travel the Gate Web again. Though I do wish it was for more peaceful purposes, once more war provides the impetus for the march of civilization, like it has so many times in the past...

The program has already started to bring some dividends, however. Several Talon teams (and, I hear, at least one polar team) have managed to make contact with factions on Atlantis. While their reports are fragmentary at best — the CEF orbital blockade being a much harder obstacle than first planned — the Atlanteans seem to be as fascinating as our Caprician allies. It is still too early to know whether they'll elect to stay neutral or join the Cabinet's little coalition. Apparently, they've been holding off the invaders without much effort, thanks to their extensive underwater installations. I hear a full report is on the way on their society and their current situation.

Game Resources



RPG: While Icarus was a tactical and strategic success, severely constraining the Terranovans' abilities to project their forces across lightyears, it has also got the planets' politicians and populations alike quite angry. Large numbers of youth are flocking to join the previously-overlooked space forces, and access to space might be easier as a result.



Tactical: Battle scenarios can be set in the last few hours of the raid as local forces try to mop up any CEF troops stranded behind by the destruction of their ship. Tense hangar-by-hangar cleanup operations might be necessary aboard powerless hulks slowly drifting out of their orbits when they are not collapsing around the combatants!

Aftermath

From the Journals of Nicos Renault

Locally, things aren't much worse or better. DuBeau-Slovenski has started expanding the PRDF again, and they seem to be using the special vehicles designed for the Black Talon. This means their factories are mostly back on line and schedule, which should please her to no end. It remains to be seen if her citizen-employees will be able to sustain the fire needed for her little revenge crusade. As for the Southern front, everything is up in the air. To my surprise, the Alliance Phoenix troops are holding their own, though they haven't managed to regain any other city-state. They are making it damn expensive for the Republic, though. This might explain the recent boost that the MILICIA got (which has to drive the Northern Guard brass up the walls — this might explain why they've started fiddling with their toys).

All those elements... and yet there's something that sits oddly with me, as far as the timing goes. The expert systems I've assembled to sort the data keep pulling together dispersed elements that nonetheless fit together — if you assume that someone else, either on this planet or an other colony, is doing exactly the same job as I'm doing, but using the results in a more active way to shape events to suit their own goals.

A doomed endeavor, I'd say, but history has proved me wrong many time in the past. Perhaps it's time that I look into this...

Game Resources



RPG: Atlantis remains an unknown quantity for most of the people of Terra Nova. They may have heard of the colony world during their schooling, but that's about the extent of it. Few beyond far-seeing politicians and the Westphalia Cabinet have any interest in a distant colony that may or may not exist anymore.



Tactical: It is too early to base tactical scenarios in the seas and islands of Atlantis, but the Black Talon have a training program in place to deal with the situation. They regularly conduct mock missions with their few Water Vipers (see Black Talon Field Guide) using some of the larger lakes across both hemispheres, using assorted Gears as stand-in Battle Frames.

03.WI.48

Unexpected Arrivals

Field Transmission

> Transmission Burst Received

> Running Decryption —

> Playback-

00:00:00

This is Black Talon observation vessel *Courage of Mercy*. We are reading Tannhauser reactions in our sector. We believe they are from Gate UT-01. That's the Heofon System, they're coming through from Utopia. Changing course to get a closer look.

00:47:03

First ship through, looks like a freighter of some kind, very bulky no... wait, reading a hard EM spike that one's a sensor ship of some sort. Doesn't match any CEF design that we're familiar with. Magnification doesn't show any portals or airlocks. Must be a drone. Pretty darn big for a drone.

Game Resources



RPG: The unexpected (at least by the Terra Nova/Caprice alliance) arrival of the Utopian fleet has thrown a monkeywrench into their plans. No one knows if they are facing the armed forces of an entire world or just one faction that has decided to throw its lot in with the New Earth Commonwealth, and this will force many to revise their plans or change their timing.

00:53:22

Another ship coming through... two other ships coming through. The sensor drone's moving off now. Calculating course. The other ships are releasing a lot of drone fighters, a... a cloud of them they're spreading out in formation. Fast little skags. Still not recognizing the designs. Definitely not CEF. Does anyone have Utopian silhouettes on file?

01:12:09

More ships now. More drone carriers looks like. They seem reliant on drones. I haven't seen any manned fighters. The ships are not pretty at all. Completely practical. Fusion tubes look a little out of date, but modified somehow. We're going to have to move back. With all those drones in the area the tracking computer can't watch them all. How do they keep up with all their sensory input?

01:28:13

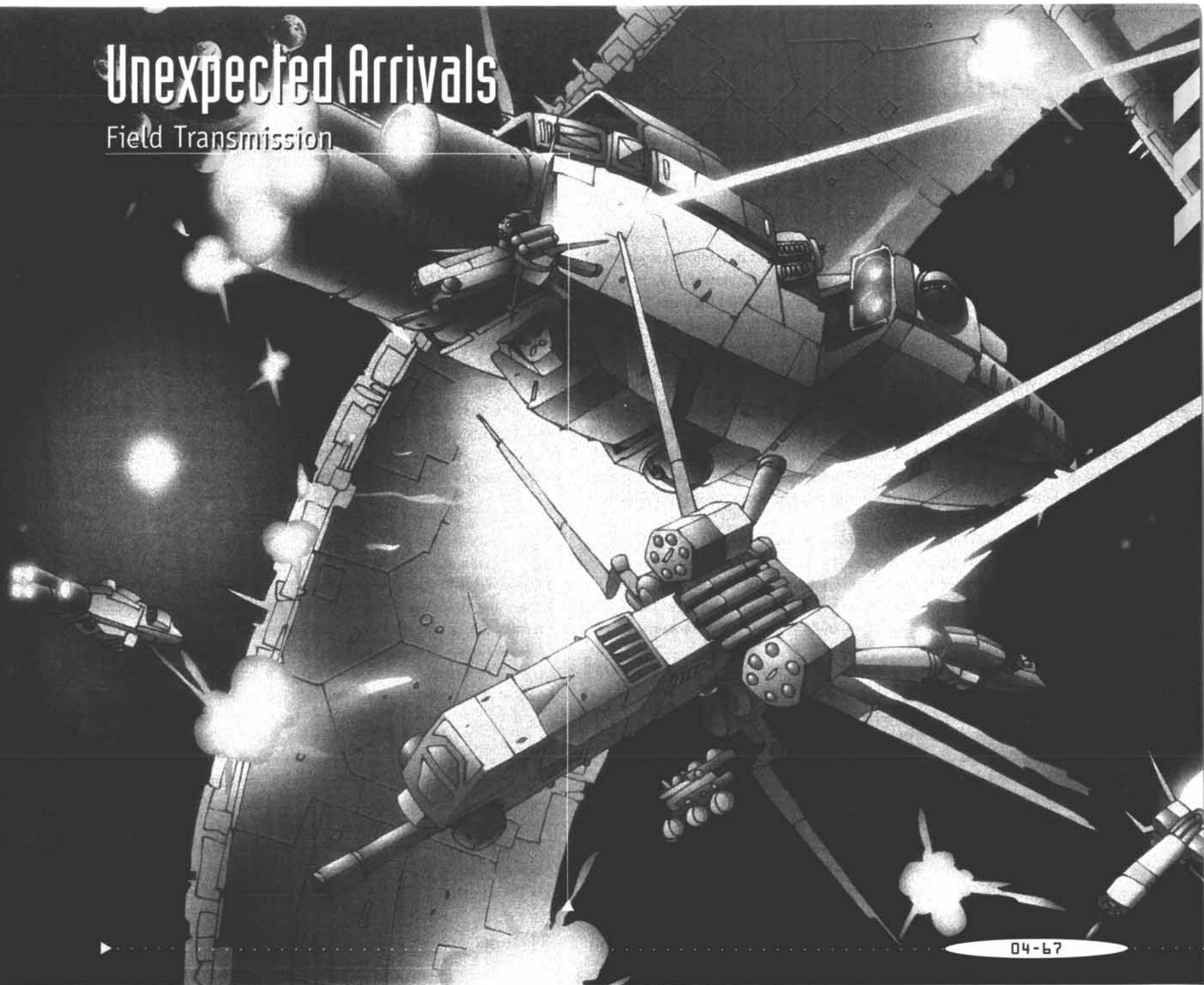
We're getting out of here! A dozen more ships with drones just dropped through, one after the other. Big blocky carriers and other capitol ships. Course computer shows they're headed right for Caprice. What the... <static> There's a CEF destroyer in the lead, bleeding confirmation codes to the way station!

<static> Crap! They've spotted us! Beginning evasive! Home, looks like the Utopians have entered the war and they're not on our side. Repeat, the Utopians have... <static>

>Signal Interrupted

Unexpected Arrivals

Field Transmission



04-67

Appendix

References for Readers of *Distant Shores*

Distant Shores is the fifth Heavy Gear Storyline Book and like its predecessors, it reveals the critical events unfolding in the Heavy Gear universe through the thoughts, conversations and journals of the characters involved. Like the previous books in this line, **Shores** eschews the traditional roleplaying game book format of game statistics and omniscient narration to present a more atmospheric and involving approach to Heavy Gear's epic story. This can be a little disconcerting, however, and this appendix (and the new game resources boxes) has been provided to help keep everything straight.

The *Who's Who on Terra Nova* section (pages 70-75) gives brief profiles on the most important people appearing in **Distant Shores**, along with indications of where to find more information about them (see abbreviation guide, below). The *Timeline of Events* places all the events in this book in strict chronological order, along with page references. They appear organized by region in the main text. Following are a few other elements to help in the reading experience.

What Has Gone Before: Terra Nova was once a rich colony of Earth, but was abandoned by an isolationist government centuries ago. Thirty cycles (local years) ago, Earth returned and tried to invade. Normally warring enemies, North and South patched together an alliance and repelled the invader. Old tensions soon started to erode any goodwill built by the conflict, however.

In **Crisis of Faith**, the last hopes for peace died out as chaos spread across the planet. A rebellion in the ESE spread to two more cities, creating a whole region called the Free Emirates, which then negotiated a deal with the powerful Southern Republic to ensure their non-intervention. The North, meanwhile, became more and more fervent in its Revisionist faith and came to identify the South as an immoral and even heathen enemy. Northern leaders also received information that the economically powerful Mekong Dominion would side with them in case of war. The Southern Republic then became aware of a threat coming from the Humanist Alliance, a league it considered its vassal. In the Badlands, Colonel Proust (an Earth-made supersoldier abandoned on Terra Nova) established a desert league of his own and recruited many other GREL supersoldiers to his

cause. One of his former allies, Soldier Roskiman, fled into the Western desert with his human lover Zaya, and Proust called for their capture. This growing chaos reached new heights when Thor Hutchison, the charismatic leader of the Northern faith, was assassinated on live trideo. With his death, many said, all hopes for peace were lost, and the Interpolar War began.

In **Return to Cat's Eye**, an already shaken planet is hit again by tragedy when Peace River is destroyed by an anti-matter device. Emergency crews from every league unite in the rescue efforts, while a full ceasefire is called. Later that summer, Kenichi Tanaka, Lord Chancellor of the ESE, discovers evidence that link Earth to the destruction and contacts his Northern allies to share the information. Forming a council dubbed the "Westphalia Cabinet," Tanaka and his allies draw both enthusiasm and attack. Meanwhile, a Cabinet memo creates a covert team, codenamed Black Talon, to be the first line of offense against the CEF.

Victoria Edden-Smythe and Lang Regina separate over irreconcilable differences. Each woman takes charge of two of the couple's four daughters, and Edden-Smythe returns to Valeria. Prime Minister Louis deRouen and Lord Jacques Molay attempt to assassinate ESE Patriarch Oliver Masao, but the plan fails, only to have the entire aristocracy of the ESE poisoned under orders from Masao, who commits suicide. The coroner's report makes mention of a strange substance found in Masao's brain. The only survivors are Raphael Bhervo, Lysia Masao and Nigel Shirow. The latter two are crowned Patriarch and Consort of the Eastern Sun Emirates, and move in to the Patriarch's palace.

Administrator Helena Hitachi dies in Peace River. Shortly afterwards, Paxton Acting CEO Milani DuBeau-Slovensky is approached separately by the Blue Crescent and the Westphalia Cabinet. Earth collaborator Garrick Vallis and BRF leader Ernesto Jaxon are taken into custody by Tanaka's men, though Vallis is later freed from prison by what appears to be a CEF commando operation and vanishes. The Khayr ad-Din army, along with forces from NuCoal and Port Arthur, drives the remaining New Human Republic forces away from the Great White Desert region. The NHR is reduced to a shadow of its former glory.

Appendix

References for Readers of *Distant Shores*

The Westphalia Cabinet sends covert agents to the Caprice system, who manage to recover vital pieces of information and intelligence. The Liberati is recruited as an allied group. The 1st Black Talon departs for Caprice using a Tannhauser gate and send back their last message, warning the Westphalia Cabinet of a weapon of mass-destruction (Project Brimstone) being assembled in the Caprice system. Emir Raphael Bhervo and his followers board the restored *Eastern Sun* and blast off into space, nearly destroying Skavara in the process.

In **Storm on the Horizon**, the action moves off-world, when ships from various leagues are dispatched to find the *Eastern Sun*. Emir Shirow sends troops to Skavara to keep the city under his control as bandits move toward the Mekong/Emirates border. The Saragossan People Front for Independence steps up its recruitment campaign, but their leader switches sides and allies with the Terranovans against the CEF. Raids destroy power plants and communication stations along the edge of Northern territories.

Humanist Alliance armed forces are rebuilding in an attempt to reconquer their homeland, managing to unite a number of enemy factions into a single movement. Humanist raids designed to gather supplies hit former Alliance territory. Northerners abandon the Revisionist faith in large numbers, and The Prophet's Shield starts a PR campaign designed to bring them back to the fold. The Hands of Thor, a Revisionist revival sect, announces its existence. To garner political support, Reverend-Mother Maya Fajil meets with Grand Marshall Victoria Edden-Smythe and becomes her new confessor.

Ernesto Jaxxon is offered a pardon by the Westphalia Cabinet in exchange for cooperation. The Cabinet clears him of the Peace River bombing and then fakes Jaxxon's death. Milani DuBeau-Slovenski builds a secret lab outside the New Peace River settlement. Tired of waiting for Louise deRouen to make a move against her father, Jacques Molay finds others willing to help. The CEF implements a battle plan designed to stop the Terranovan incursions; broken down to a series of raids and deep space strikes, it will be implemented over the following months. The retrieved Gate drive parts are examined and analyzed.

Lysia Masao becomes pregnant with Shirow's heir, but has a number of problems with the pregnancy. The Khayr ad-Din Army begins hunting bandits and brigands, and the rovers are pushed further away from the Western Desert, toward the poles. The Oasis towers of the New Peace River settlements open their doors; Paxton resumes production. A Liberati sympathizer helps to engineer the breakout of a captured Talon pilot. The existence of a "fifth column" within the ranks of the CEF is confirmed, and Colonel Hendricks, warden of Bastille Alpha, begins to purge the CEF of traitors. The GREL prisoners working in the galleries under Bastille Alpha break through into the caves beneath the installation.

The CEF's 7th Fleet, sent to conquer additional worlds, becomes officially missing when their radio silence continues. A "freelance Terranovan agent" makes contact with Liberati cells across Gommorrah. She claims she is not affiliated with the Black Talon program, but is actually sponsored by another Terranovan faction. An unidentified burn patient escapes from an hospital in the Badlands. His injuries make him a victim of the Peace River attack, but his biochemistry presents significant divergence from the population of the region.

Advice for Gamers: This book is not intended as a gaming aid in the traditional sense. It is much more like a novel or comic book. **Heavy Gear** is a roleplaying and tactical game, however, and many of the events in this book are designed to be fodder for game ideas. The CEF raids, the rise of the NuCoal as a Badlands power, the Eastern Rebellions and the various Terranovan conspiracies are all events that could feature heavily in a campaign.

Useful Abbreviations: All page references in this appendix are to this book, except when noted. To save space in the character profiles, we have used abbreviations. They are as follows: **CC1:** Character Compendium 1 (DP9-021); **DH:** Duelist's Handbook (DP9-005); **HALB:** Humanist Alliance Leaguebook (DP9-032); **HG2:** Second Edition Heavy Gear Rulebook (DP9-101); **ITB:** Into the Badlands (DP9-018) ; **LoC** Life on Caprice (DP9-047); **MDLB:** Mekong Dominion Leaguebook (DP9-036); **SB1:** Storyline Book 1; **SRLB:** Southern Republic Leaguebook (DP9-030); **TN2:** Second Edition Life on Terra Nova (DP9-102).

Who's Who on Terra Nova

Characters of Note

Amir Falcon

Leader of the Old Guard, Sendra Fallons, better known as Falcon, is an unusual candidate for a Liberati leader. She is a tiny, petite woman with a seemingly soft disposition. Sendra is Amir (senior officer) for the Yazaks (cells) growing in Bastille Alpha, where she is a prisoner herself. Sendra communicates with the outside world via a micro-burst transmitter she hid on herself when she first arrived. As leader of the Old Guard, she has been instrumental in bringing the GREs over to the Liberati's side. All the information stored on her Data-Rig is false. See **LoC**, page 25.



Charles Arthur III

The exiled Earth officer who built Port Arthur, Charles Arthur is living through difficult times. His allegiance with the Humanist Alliance has been undone, while his people are seen with growing distrust by the rest of the planet. Only his alliance with the desert communities of the New Coalition, and through them the Khayr ad-Din Army, has proven fortuitous. The latter even managed to break the renegade GREL leader Proust, one of Port Arthur's greatest opponents. See **TN2**, p. 123.



Gervase Aschenbach

Aschenbach, a native of the Western Frontier Protectorate, joined the army at an early age. He fought under General Lang Regina during the War of the Alliance and later became an instructor at the Western Military Academy. His superb service record, combined with his loyalty toward Lang Regina, made him a perfect choice to become one of the founding members of the Westphalia Cabinet and the leader of the Black Talon. See **SB2**, page 12.



Rafael Bhravo

Rafael was denied his rightful Emir heritage by a relative. By the age of six, he displayed near genius intellect; he spent his days reading on the history of the ESE and Terra Nova. On Autumn 21, TN 1932, Rafael, followed by an entourage of 100 children entered Okavango and demanded his titles and lands back. The young boy's natural charisma made him popular among the masses. After the fall of the Masao dynasty, he gathered his followers and took off in the ancestral ship of the ESE, the *Eastern Sun*. No one has seen them since.



Eva Bukharin

A military officer in Port Arthur, Eva Bukharin is also the leader of the secretive Yakut Brotherhood. This shadowy order of expatriate Earthers maintains loyalty to the New Earth Commonwealth and its ruling party. They fully expect to aid in a second attempt to conquer Terra Nova. Bukharin thinks of Col. Charles Arthur as a traitor, and maintains contacts with loyalists across the globe. See **TN2**, p. 129.



Damien

Damien is the mysterious leader of the Saragossa People's Front for Independance (SPFI). Her real name, however, is Teresa Piepho, and she is a member of the highly secretive Hooded Knights, an *agent provocateur* unit created by the CEF for underground operation in the Terranovan leagues. Over the cycles, though Teresa has come to bond with the people she associated with, and is now throwing her lot with the Terranovans.

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Who's Who on Terra Nova

Characters of Note

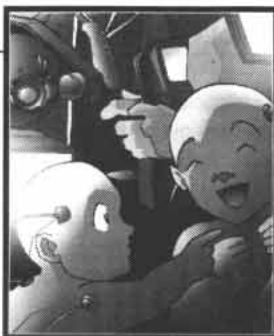
Helena Del Pulciano ♟

Del Pulciano crossed the Interstellar Gate at great risk in order to form an alliance between Terra Nova and the Caprice colony world, which is currently held by the CEF. She went and fought with the first Black Talon expedition to Caprice in TN 1941. Del Pulciano is a member of the Caprician resistance group known as the Liberati and serves as the liaison between them and the Cabinet. See **SB2**, page 78.



Derek and Tara ♟

The product of the GREL fertility program in Jan Mayen, these twin GREL-human hybrids are perhaps the only chance for a future for the displaced supersoldiers. Indeed, their design stripped them of the ability to reproduce. When Jan Mayen was destroyed during a North-South battle, Derek was rescued by Soldier Sebastopol and Tara by Colonel Proust. Their whereabouts are currently unknown. See **TN2**, p. 113.



Louis Philippe deRouen ♟

The ruthless Prime Minister of the Southern Republic, Louis Philippe deRouen does not hesitate to eliminate his enemies. Indeed, with the revelation that the Humanist Alliance had been plotting against the Republic, he ordered the use of the "Twin Falcon Contingent," a deadly biological weapon that results in the Theban Blight. The Republic quickly annexes the devastated Alliance. DeRouen seems unaware his own daughter is plotting against him. See **TN2**, p. 74.



Louise deRouen ♟

The only child of Prime Minister deRouen, Louise is his heir, confident and most dangerous enemy. Unwilling to simply wait to inherit leadership, she has used the ancient and secretive Order of the Falcon (and the cover identity of the "Dark Fox") to act against her father and bring about his downfall. She believes he is leading the Republic to ruin and she has made deals with army head Victor deBourgogne and AST Lord Protector Molay. See **SRLB**, p. 29.



Gawaïne Di Smit ♟

A renowned Northern astrophysicist, Gawaïne Di Smit discovered the possibility of micro-gates: very small Tannhauser anomalies that could link Terra Nova to new worlds. An admirer and ally of Proconsul Lang Regina, she has overseen tests aboard the Gateship *Laban Emuros* to detect these micro-gates. She helped to rescue the Caprician rebel Helen del Pulciano and is one of the chief developers of the Third Generation Gate Drive. See **TN2**, p. 44.



Milani DuBeau-Slovenski ♟

The Head Executive Officer of Paxton Arms, Milani has a reputation for utter ruthlessness. The terrorist bombing on the city-state of Peace River has been a terrible blow from which she has only just recovered. DuBeau-Slovenski's main concern at this point is to keep her corporation and people safe and rebuild their empire. Once this is done, she will see that they get just repair for the horror that has been perpetrated against them. See **HG2**, p. 41.

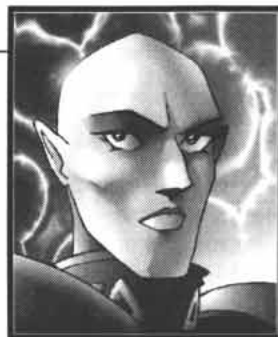


Who's Who on Terra Nova

Characters of Note

Victoria Edden-Smythe

The Grand Marshal of the CNCS, Victoria Edden-Smythe has led the North to war against the South. A devout Revisionist, she sees the South as a dangerous enemy responsible for the death of Second Follower Hutchison. Married to Proconsul Lang Regina, the two women have separated due to personal, religious and political differences; on the advice of her confessor, Victoria has just filed for divorce. See **TN2**, p. 39.



Revered-Mother Maya Fajil

A highly placed member of the Revisionist Church, Fajil is also a prominent member of the secretive organization known as the Prophet's Shield. Now that Thor Hutchison is gone, she has forged the group into a powerful tool, intent on bringing the church back to what she and her cohort see as the true heart of the faith: that Mamoud was the living incarnation of the Blessed Spirit. They wish to extend their dominion as far as possible. See **SB1**, page 104.



Vallis Garrick

A small-time Earth collaborator that had been hiding out in the Badlands since the end of the War of the Alliance. His recent reappearance and the inordinate amount of protection he has received from CEF troops has led many to believe he may be responsible for much more than a few executions, however. His current whereabouts are unknown, but many witnesses have placed him on Caprice, under CEF protection. See **Badlands**, page 54.



Vice Admiral John Gresfield

Born on the Moon, John Gresfield joined the NEC military as an aerospace fighter pilot. His tactical insight combined with canny political maneuvering and patronage saw him rise rapidly through the ranks. He was tasked with securing Caprice, the Gateworld. His success did his career no end of good, but he has now been stuck in the Caprician system for over twenty years and he is getting impatient.



Victorya Hiro

A childhood friend of Emir Nigel Shirow, Victorya Hiro has been his faithful companion and supporter for many years. Initially reluctant toward his politically-motivated marriage to Lysia Masao, she has grown more and more furious at being replaced at his side. The stress has started to affect her judgment, and she is sliding more and more toward irrationality.

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Ernesto Jaxon

The charismatic leader of the Badlands Revolutionary Front, Jaxon wished to see the Badlands free of polar and corporate domination. He led a loose coalition of revolutionaries stretching across the Badlands, including Peace River, until they were framed for the Peace River bombing. Captured by agents of the Westphalia Cabinet, he has agreed to work with them to find and punish those truly responsible. He is currently working with the Liberati on Caprice. See **ITB**, p. 57.



Who's Who on Terra Nova

Characters of Note

Lang Regina ♁

A hero of the war of the Alliance and the Proconsul of Fort Henry in the WFP, Lang Regina was not convinced that war against the south was in the best interests of the North. In cooperation with her Southern ally Kenichi Tanaka, she built the Terranovan alliance known as the Westphalia Cabinet, all the while keeping her eyes trained on the skies, where the threat of Earth still looms. See **CC1**, p. 18.



Kahn ♁

Kahn is the leader of the Reapers, a small, well-equipped bandit army which operates somewhere to the north of Loyang. Kahn's followers firmly believe him to be the reincarnation of the great Genghis Khan; no one has met him and lived to tell of it. Recently Kahn has begun brazenly raiding across the border into the ESE and they seem to be moving toward Skavara itself. So far Kahn's horde has thwarted the concerted efforts of the AST to destroy their reign of terror.



Jan Mach ♁

Jan Mach is the founder of the Coalition for Rightful Environmental Exploitation (CREE). Due to his high social standing and the many favors owed him by political figures, Mach is practically untouchable. A portrait of him having brunch with Prime Minister DeRouen adorns the east wall of his Port Oasis office. Jan Mach is an ardent supporter of the Southern Republic, but would prefer it to be directed more forcefully — by himself if need be.



Lysia Masao ♁

The sister of ESE Patriarch Oliver Masao, Lysia was also the wife of Farzad Hemami. She narrowly escaped assassination in the same strike that killed Farzad. She took refuge in Raleigh and eventually agreed to marry Emir Shirow of Basal and give him an heir. As one of the few surviving members of the Emirates' former ruling family, she is closely watched by several factions. Lysia just gave birth to a baby girl, heir to the Emirates. See **HALB**, p. 35.



Jacques Molay ♁

The Lord Protector of the AST, Molay was once head of the dreaded Southern Republic Intelligence Directorate, and still holds sway there. An enemy of Prime Minister deRouen, he has entered into an agreement with his daughter Louise to eliminate him and take power with her. Despite Louise's craftiness, Molay believes he can discard her later to rule on his own, for the good of the Republic. See **TN2**, p. 73.



Edith Mubatu ♁

The daughter of CEF Vice Admiral Angela Mubatu, Edith was groomed for the military lifestyle from a very early age. She idolized her mother, and she was devastated at her defeat and subsequent disgraceful discharge after the Terranovan invasion. With her own recent promotion to Vice Admiral and command of the 8th Fleet, she looks forward to restoring the Mubatu name by crushing Terra Nova under her heel — even if she has to take Admiral Winthrop out first to clear the way. See **CEF**, p.75.



Who's Who on Terra Nova

Characters of Note

Mykael Navar

Once the chief protector of the Humanist Alliance, Mykael Navar has seen his beloved league trampled by the Southern Republic. Taking what forces he could and fleeing east, he has found shelter among the Free Emirates and joined their cause to gain their support for the liberation of the Humanist Alliance. He has now taken the bold step of actually declaring war to the Republican leadership. See **HALB**, p.20, and **SB2**, p.35.



Colonel Proust

One of 100,000 of GREL supersoldiers abandoned by Earth after its invasion attempt, Proust has become convinced that the GREs must make their own destiny, as befits superior beings. He founded the New Human Republic and embarked on a campaign in the Western Desert to conquer part of the planet for his GREs. He was to ultimately fail, foiled by the combined effort of the KADA and the Jan Mayen forces. In his escape, he kidnapped Tara, one of the GREL-Human hybrid children born in Jan Mayen. See **CC1**, p. 46.



Nicosa Renault

A legendary spy of the Judas Syndrome and War of the Alliance, Nicosa spent much of the last fifteen cycles trying to balance intrigues in order to prevent a war. When Hutchison was assassinated in TN 1935, she struggled instead to ensure that the Badlands was not devastated and later helped organize the Khayr ad-Din Army. All the while she has been trying to understand the complex agendas leading Terra Nova into war after war. See **ITB**, p. 11.



Roskiman

Once the right-hand man of the renegade GREL leader Colonel Proust, Roskiman escaped to become master of his own destiny. He went into the Great White Desert to escape Proust's assassins, and there fell in with the mysterious Sand Riders nomads. He recently fathered a child to a Sand Rider woman, despite the GREs' normal infertility. They have managed to keep the child's existence a secret so far in order to protect him. See **Operation: Jungle Drums**, and **SB3**, page 49.



Samson

Samson is a Jan-class GREL that leads the Legion, the GREL underground resistance movement in Bastille Alpha. The GREs of the Caprician prison-fortress are the older model Legionnaires no longer loyal to Earth. The Legion, as they call themselves, now seek freedom. Samson's loyalty to the CEF is gone, replaced by a sense of kinship to all Legionnaires outside Bastille Alpha. He has begun a tense alliance with the Liberati group known as the Old Guard. See **LoC**, page 60.



Katryne Sanz

A famous Northern Gear trainer and one-time Duelist, Sanz was exiled from the North for her lack of faith. Traveling to Khayr ad-Din, she organized the motley Khayr ad-Din Army out of a collection of the best Gear pilots on Terra Nova. Together they made a stand for Badlands independence, fighting to keep the Gamma Maglev line from the polar forces. She remains in Khayr ad-Din, directing the KADA's postwar activities.



Who's Who on Terra Nova

Characters of Note

Soldier Sebastopol

A GREL stranded by Earth, Sebastopol has spent the cycles since then struggling against the violent instincts programmed into him. The father of the Perfect Form movement that teaches GRELS a path to peace through meditation and martial arts, Sebastopol is the opposite number of Colonel Proust. The two struggled over the GREL-hybrid twins in Jan Mayen, and Sebastopol managed to save Derek. He is currently in hiding with the child. See **TN2**, p.131.



Nigel Shirow

The rightful Emir of Basal, Nigel Shirow has led a rebellion against the crazed Patriarch Oliver Masao since TN 1931. When the mad Patriarch had the entire noble caste of the ESE put to death, Shirow seized the opportunity to take over the league. A growing rivalry between Shirow and Emir Bhravo of Okavango — another noble survivor — has created a need for him to acquire added legitimacy. He thus married Lysia Masao to produce an heir who would have a rightful claim to the Patriarch's throne. See **CC1**, p. 38.



Kenichi Tanaka

The Lord Chancellor of the ESE and a hero of the War of the Alliance, Tanaka shared his friend Lang Regina's doubts about the Interpolar War. He wants to save the South (and, by extension, Terra Nova) from power-mongers like deRouen and Molay. Tanaka helped to create the Westphalia Cabinet and the Black Talon in the aftermath of the Peace River bombing. Now that Shirow is in power, Tanaka devotes most of his time to raising support for the Cabinet's activities. See **TN2**, p. 73.



Jophell Taverson

Taverson was originally from earth. She enrolled in the CEF in order to fulfill her dream of traveling among the stars. She quickly grew disillusioned with the CEF's methods and goals, especially after she was assigned as a quartermaster aboard Monolith Station in the Caprice system. She now works covertly with the Caprician rebels in the hope that one day, she may take to space once more. See **LoC**, page 14.



Fleet Admiral Winthrop

Veda Winthrop is the highest ranking CEF officer outside the Sol system. All the blame for the failed Terra Nova and Atlantis operations are falling on his head. Factions within the NEC are constantly screaming to have him replaced; because of this, the Fleet Admiral is using harsher methods to achieve results. He will not accept any more mistakes from his subordinates, nor will he tolerate any rebellion in the conquered territories. See **LoC**, page 23.



Scruffy Man

A mysterious figure that seems involved in many of the recent events on Terra Nova, the Scruffy Man is believed (at least by those aware of his existence) to be an Earth agent. He has been sighted on both Terra Nova and Caprice, which would imply he has access to important transport resources. Little is known about him.



Timeline of Events

03•WI•44 to 09•SP•44

03 Winter 1944: Lysia Masao, Consort of the ESE, gives birth to her first child, a baby girl. The latter is the heir to the Ethereal Throne of the Emirates. Great celebrations start throughout the league, for the heir represents a hope of stability for the future. (See page 30)

05 Winter 1944: Victoria Hiro, the former lover and confidante of the Patriarch, kidnaps the baby by using her knowledge of the palace's layout and security features. Despite the best efforts of the Patriarch's guards, she eludes capture that night. (See page 31)

09 Winter 1944: Gear upgrade programs are in the work among every major armed forces on the planet. Older Gears are refurbished to increase their performances without requiring complete replacement with newer vehicles such as the ones designed by Paxton Arms for the Black Talon. (See page 28)

19 Winter 1944: On the advice of her confessor, who has access to evidence that show Lang Regina has been unfaithful to her partner, Victoria Edden-Smythe files for divorce from her estranged wife. The paperwork is quickly logged in at the local court, and does not attract great attention in the press. (See page 15)

A number of small CEF ships emerge in-system from a tiny Gate. They manage to pierce the Terranovan defences and head for low orbit where they release troops. KADA troopers intercept transmissions that leads them to an incoming raider dropship, which immediately releases Battle Frames that attack them. (See page 15)

Later the same day, more KADA forces engage a number of CEF Battle Frames in the Badlands. The raiders cause considerable damage and do not allow themselves to be captured, even when faced with overwhelming force. (See page 16-17)

20 Winter 1944: The attack segment of Operation Icarus, the CEF plan to destroy the Terranovans' space capabilities, begins in full force. A CEF strike force, coming in on the wake of the previous raiders, slips through a small Tannhauser Gate and spring a surprise attack on the Terranovan fleet anchored at the Ellis Island Station. The Terranovans manage to drive off the enemy, but not without taking heavy casualties in both men and ships. (See page 54)

The South Lyonesse launch facilities are bombarded by orbiting CEF strike ships, presumably the same that released the raiders' dropships. Much of the facilities and the surrounding area are blown to smithereens. Some of the enemy ships manage to escape. (See page 6)

21 Winter 1944: The Westphalia Cabinet meets in an emergency session to discuss the previous day's CEF strike and its aftermath. Not all members are present from the start of the meeting; some of the people attending call for immediate and decisive strikes against the enemy, but cooler heads prevail. (See page 10)

06 Spring 1944: Ernesto Jaxon arrives on the surface of Caprice after a secret voyage that has lasted many seasons. He begins a journal to note his impressions of the planet and Gommorrah during his first few days as a mean to safeguard his sanity. He is assigned a bodyguard to teach him the basics of language and customs to help him blend in. (See page 36)

09 Spring 1944: Nathan Matthews, a former Black Talon pilot stranded on Caprice, is teaching a group of Liberati freedom fighter in various Gear combat tactics. Nathan has previously learned that his Terranovan home town was destroyed in a raid not long after he left the planet, and he resolves to rebuild his life on Caprice with the Liberati. (See page 38)

Timeline of Events

07•SP•42 to 01•SU•42

13 Spring 1944: Jaxon meets with various resistance cells and Liberati groups in the hope of gaining clues as to the location of both Garrick Vallis and the scruffy man seen with him. The cultural differences make it hard for him to relate to the locals, despite his best efforts. (See page 37)

The rebellious Humanist Alliance forces officially declare war on the Southern Republic. Calling themselves 'Phoenix', they vow to restore the Alliance to its former glory and independent status by beginning an ambitious campaign of hit-and-run operations destined to force the Republic to split its peacekeeping troops between the ESE and former Alliance territories. (See page 12)

17 Spring 1944: The CID becomes aware of Jaxon and his personal hunt for a mysterious scruffy man. A squad arrives to take them both into custody, but the eagerness and ineptitude of the officer in charge allows them to escape. The CID lose track of him (and his prey) in the ensuing firefight. (See page 40)

17 Spring 1944: Jaxon, on the run from the CID, moves from safehouse to safehouse. He is saved by a Liberati sympathizer which take him out of the city. Jaxon falls for his bodyguard Gwenlith and starts making plans for rebuilding his life on Caprice, much like the Talon pilot he has met along the way. (See page 42)

18 Spring 1944: Jophell Taverson barely escapes CID agents in Gommorrah and goes underground, her cover as a loyal NEC citizen blown. A group of resistance fighters help her even though they are not entirely sure she isn't a CEF mole. (See page 43)

21 Spring 1944: A news tabloid accuses Lang Regina of an affair with her aide. Busy with the Cabinet's affairs, she does her best to ignore the accusations, despite the damage it causes to her in the divorce proceedings. (See page 13)

28 Spring 1944: Agent Sam (a.k.a. Delilah Ambrose) meets Nathan by pure chance during a field operation. Shocked to see her working as a double-agent, he turns his back on her in favor of his Liberati brothers-in-arms. (See page 48)

07 Summer 1944: Loyalists, bandits, and other rebel forces clash in and around the remains of the ESE city-state of Skavara. Many of the forces in presence live off the land, terrorizing the local populations and causing broad destruction. (See page 26)

The New Peace River settlement is nearing completion, with the majority of the surviving population now housed in permanent buildings. The Paxton directors turn to the task of rebuilding their power base. Paxton Acting CEO Milani DuBeau-Slovenski decides to take all the time they will require to ensure she will have the tools needed for her revenge. (See page 26)

11 Summer 1944: MILICIA troops start accepting bribes from a coalition of large Southern corporations. Unlike previous operations of the same genre, the money is funnelled back into the MILICIA itself to supplement its budget and make it a more effective fighting force. In exchange, several MILICIA officers agree to work in the best interest of the corporations. (See page 14)

Timeline of Events

11•SU•42 to 11•AU•42

20 Summer 1944: Vice Admiral Mubatu files her preliminary report on the success of the Operation Icarus raid in the Helios system. She is widely optimistic in her damage assessments in order to acquire power and prestige that will help her undermine the position of Fleet Admiral Winthrop. (See page 34)

15 Autumn 1944: Agent Colburn confirms that the main drive behind the re-organization of the surviving Humanist forces is Mykael Navar, or someone who has assumed his identity. The Phoenix Alliance raiders have shown surprising resilience, no doubt thanks to his strong leadership. The link between the various resistance groups seems to be holding so far. (See page 18)

16 Autumn 1944: Louise deRouen tells Tanaka about her father and his multiple contacts. She plays her hand and begins her program to remove his support with the ultimate goal of replacing him in the government. deRouen father, surprised, simply cuts his own connections to the affected party and observe her next move. (See page 23)

Kenichi Tanaka starts a clean-up of the Southern government based on the information provided by Louise deRouen. Despite an outward show of anger, he is quite methodical and careful to remove only people that oppose his own efforts as well. (See page 24)

17 Autumn 1944: Tanaka and Lang clash over the goals and future objectives of the Cabinet-driven coalition. Tanaka presses for a deeper engagement right away, but Lang is reluctant to play their hand so soon. (See page 19)

Later the same night, Lang worries about Tanaka and his attitude in both the recent Cabinet affairs and the deRouen incident. She remains distraught by the stress of the situation, which is compounded by her recent divorce, public relation problems and general feelings of isolation. (See page 20)

18 Autumn 1944: Caught unprepared by Louise deRouen's action, Jacques Molay receives a severe warning from his co-conspirator Jan Mach. Mach's business with the MILICIA officers is going well and he will not protect Molay if the latter finds himself in trouble with the Curia or the Westphalia Cabinet. (See page 25)

08 Winter 1945: A trideo special on Port Arthur is aired as part of the media coverage that follows the rebuilding efforts after the attack. Despite attempts at a balanced presentation, the show largely paint the Badlands city-state as a potential danger to the Terranovan societies. (See page 21)

Colonel Arthur, distraught over the situation, examines his motivations and decided firmly on the side of Terra Nova. One of his aides warns that they might have to worry more about enemies within than without. (See page 22)

03 Winter 1945: CID witch-hunts shake up the CEF hierarchy at all levels. Some of its agents are more zealous than others, and a few succumb to outright paranoia. Several innocent officers fall prey to their efforts, though a few of them are later cleared of all charges. (See page 46)

Timeline of Events

03•WI•43 to 34•AU•43

On the same day, an intercepted transmission hints at larger 5th column activities back on Earth. The lack of context and other code translation makes the message largely useless for field intelligence, however. (See page 47)

10 Spring 1945: A 5C commando unit disable the nerve gas nodes built as a safety precaution by the CEF within Gommorrah itself. The action paves the way to future collaboration with the Liberati. (See page 49)

09 August 1945: Vice-Admirals Gresfield and Mubatu plot to depose Winthrop as the leader of the invasion fleet during a dinner conversation. They do not hate the older man, but merely see him as an obstacle to their own agendas. (See page 50)

01 Winter 1947: The Westphalia Cabinet receives the first detailed reports on the missions sent to Atlantis and beyond as part of the Talon deep space exploration program. They all agree that these early stages are encouraging enough to warrant additional missions further along the Gate Web. (See page 57)

19 Winter 1947: The conversion of the Terranovan Tien-Lung Gateship into a dedicated Black Talon exploration vessel is completed. The crew vote not to change the name of the ship out of respect, and the ship is put into service opening Gates for the Talon missions in preparation for the trip that will take it deeper into the Gate Web. (See page 60)

11 Summer 1947: The CEF high command, worried about the status of the 7th Fleet, speculates that they might not have been vanquished or otherwise destroyed but might have simply mutineed. (See page 58)

A bad transmission received by an automated relay station gives credence to the mutinee hypothesis for the 7th Fleet. The transmission is suppressed by the High Command for reasons of fleet security — and to avoid encouraging others who might be entertaining similar ideas. (See page 59)

01 Winter 1948: Talon Head of Personnel Kiskess confirms the success of the Talon program. Teams of former enemies now work together for the greater good. (See page 62)

12 Summer 1948: A fleet of vessels, presumably arriving from Utopia, emerge from a Gate in the Loki system. A local Black Talon surveillance ship manages to send a coded warning home before being destroyed. The newcomers' intention are otherwise unknown, though they are accompanied by a CEF ship. (See page 66)

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Stock # DP9-067

Legal Deposit: December 2001 Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec
National Library of Canada

ISBN 1-896776-66-X

Printed in Canada